



Vernham Dean Gillum's Church of England Primary School Newsletter



Creating compassionate, courageous, creative citizens for the future in God's love

March 2026

Dear Families,

I came across a new word the other day: 'Equilux' which means 'equal light'. This fascinating term speaks to a subtle, yet scientifically accurate, distinction. I was familiar with the more commonly used term 'equinox' which means 'equal night' and is frequently used to describe the moment when we supposedly experience 12 hours of daylight and 12 hours of darkness. However, this definition is not quite accurate due to the way sunlight is refracted and scattered by the Earth's atmosphere.

The astronomical spring equinox, which marks the precise start of spring in the Northern Hemisphere, is today, Friday, March 20th. Yet, due to the effect of the atmosphere bending the sun's light and a lingering glow after sunset adding some bonus sunshine, the actual day of 'equal light' - the spring equilux - was on Wednesday. This phenomenon means we will have slightly more than 12 hours of daylight on the day of the astronomical equinox itself, making the Wednesday before the true balance point. It's a wonderful reminder of the constant, subtle shifts happening in our natural world, as we head towards the Summer Solstice and the longest day of the year.

As we reach this point of seasonal transition, I wish all our families a positive and productive end to the spring term. I also hope you enjoy a restful and refreshing Easter break. The Easter period is a meaningful time for reflection and community, and many of you may be marking it by reflecting on the Easter story or attending special services and events within our local community and churches. It offers a valuable opportunity to pause, recharge, and reconnect with family and friends before we begin the final term of the academic year.

Many best wishes,

Ian Hickman
Executive Headteacher

Safeguarding

WhatsApp Now Allows Under 13's

WhatsApp has long been a source of concern for schools, including ours, particularly due to chat groups where minor issues can quickly escalate.

In a recent, and unexpected, development, WhatsApp announced that children under 13 can now use the platform through 'Parent-Managed Accounts'. These accounts are set up on the child's device by the parent but are managed from the parent's own device.

Key features of these Parent-Managed Accounts include:

- No Access to AI or Ads: The child's account will not have access to AI features within WhatsApp, nor will it display advertisements.
- Contact Management: Parents have control over who can contact their child and which chat groups they can join. Children cannot join any group without a parent's approval. Messages from unknown contacts are first sent to the parent for screening and approval.
- Activity Notifications: Parents receive alerts regarding their child's activity. This includes notifications when a child adds a new contact, turns on 'disappearing messages', or blocks/reports a contact.

Link

<https://blog.whatsapp.com/introducing-parent-managed-accounts-on-whatsapp>

Link

https://faq.whatsapp.com/875902238256170/?cms_platform=android

I hope this information is useful and that you can use the links above to help keep your child safe online.

School Christian Value



This half-term our spotlight is on the Christian value of Justice. Our daily act of worship is based on a theme linked to justice.

"The Lord has told you what is good. He wants you to act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God." Micah 6:8

Cyber Ambassadors

We are pleased to announce that Zoe, Roni and Leo have been appointed as our Cyber Ambassadors. In this role, they will help raise awareness about staying safe online. They have already begun their training and are looking forward to sharing their knowledge with others.



Beep Beep Day

Beep Beep Day is a road safety initiative designed to teach young children the basics of staying safe near roads. It focuses on simple but important habits, such as holding hands with a trusted adult when walking near traffic, crossing at safe places with an adult, and using an appropriate child seat when travelling by car.

To mark the occasion, Robins Class enjoyed a walk around the village, where they practised how to cross the road safely. They remembered to look both ways and listen carefully for traffic before stepping onto the road. Along the way, they also explored different road signs and talked about why they are important in helping to keep everyone safe.



Mother's Day Workshop

Thank you to Hannah Hannington and Kate Bickett for coming into school last week to help the children with the Mother's Day craft. The children thoroughly enjoyed choosing their flower and selecting sweets for their mums, making the experience both fun and meaningful.



Easter Raffle

Thank you to all the parents and local businesses who have generously donated to our Easter raffle. We now have a wonderful selection of fantastic prizes available.

If you would like the chance to win, raffle tickets can be purchased via Scopay at £1 per ticket. Once payment has been made, tickets will be sent home with your child. The raffle will be drawn on Thursday 26th March.

Thank you for your continued support of this school fundraising event.



Easter Egg Hunt

Next Friday, the PTA will be hosting an Easter egg hunt for the children on the school grounds from 3:00pm. They have kindly asked for a small donation for each child taking part, which can be made by

scanning the QR code below. Thank you for your support.



London Marathon

In April 2026, Miss Dickinson will be running the London Marathon in support of Mind, a charity that provides advice, support, and information to help people experiencing mental health problems, while also working to raise awareness and promote better mental health for all.

If you would like to support Miss Dickinson in raising funds for this important cause, please click the link below or scan the QR code to donate. Thank you for your support.

https://www.justgiving.com/page/milliemaidickinson?utm_medium=FR&utm_source=EM&utm_campaign=LFCFRUK_60DaysToEvent_Active



REMINDERS

Rucksacks

Rucksacks should be brought into school for school trips and special activities.

For everyday use, book bags are recommended as they are ideal for carrying reading books, reading records, homework, and letters.

Thank you for helping us keep our classrooms and cloakrooms tidy.

Snacks

Please provide your child with a healthy snack such as fruit, vegetables, or cheese for break time.

Thank you for supporting a healthy and enjoyable snack time for all.

Parking

When dropping off or collecting your child, please use the Burydean car park.

We kindly ask that you refrain from parking in School Close, as this is a residential area, and please do not use the school staff car park.

Thank you for helping us keep our children and community safe.



March

- 24th - Easter Service at 2:30pm
- 25th - Kev's Comic Masterclass (in school)
- 26th - Easter Raffle Draw
- 26th - Work Showcase at 3:10pm
- 27th - Easter Egg Hunt at 3:00pm (PTA)
- 27th - Break up for Easter

May

- 8th - Non Uniform Day - Bring a bottle for tombola
- 11th - Y6 SATS Week
- 18th - Owls Class Trip to Stonehenge

June

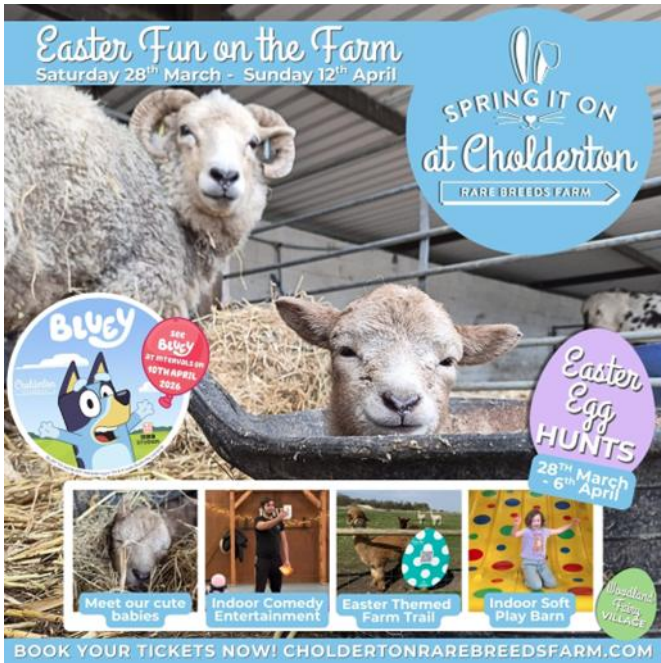
- 5th - Non Uniform Day - Bring a bottle for tombola
- 12th - Pyjamara
- 18th - Whole school archaeology dig
- 29th - Class photographs

July

- 3rd - Non Uniform Day - Bring a bottle for tombola
- 4th - Village Fete

INSET DAYS 2026

Friday 3rd July



Join us this Easter holidays for a full day of fresh air, farm fun and family adventures.

Spring it On is back and bigger than ever. Spend the day with us feeding our rare breed animals, cheering on the racing pigs, going guinea pig or Highland cow fishing, enjoying animal encounters, exploring 40 acres of countryside, climbing through the woodland adventure playground, zooming along the zip wire, bouncing on trampolines and playing in our indoor soft play barn.

As part of the Easter holiday celebrations, Bluey will be on the farm on Friday 10th April 2026 at intervals throughout the day, including a short story time session at:

11am
12pm
1pm
2pm
3pm

You can select your preferred session time when booking your tickets, included in your farm admission. There will be opportunities to take photos, so don't forget your camera.

Important information for 10th April: Please arrive at least 45 minutes before your booked session time. Tickets are limited and we highly recommend booking online in advance. All tickets are non-refundable and non-transferable. Book early to avoid disappointment and take advantage of our Early bird discount where you can save £2 per person!

