VERNHAM DEAN GILLUM'S C.E. PRIMARY SCHOOL

✦ SCHOOL NEWSLETTER & COMMUNITY BULLETIN ✦

Autumn Term 2026 | Issue 2 | Date: 25th September 2026

✉ MESSAGE FROM MR HICKMAN

Dear Families,

This half-term in Collective Worship, we have been exploring values of Care, Community, Respect, and Inclusion.

We began the term looking at how small, quiet acts of care can bring about giant changes, much like the story of The Tin Forest and the parable of the growing seed.

Recently, we've been thinking about Belonging and Diversity using a very familiar tool: LEGO!

This week, we looked at two different images of bricks. One which showed only red oblong bricks; functional, but a bit plain! The other held a vibrant mix of bricks, wheels, curved slopes, transparent tiles, and arches. Together, we realized that if every brick in the box were identical, you could only ever build a plain red box. It takes every single unique, oddly shaped piece working together to build a masterpiece.

We linked this to 1 Corinthians 12, where the Bible reminds us that a community is like a body with many different parts:

"God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as He wanted them to be."

Have a great weekend.

Mr Hickman

✉ SAFEGUARDING

Online Harm Groups

CEOP Education has produced new guidance to help parents understand online harm groups and how children can become drawn into them.

These groups may initially appear friendly or supportive before introducing secrecy, pressure, harmful challenges, threats or blackmail. The guidance explains some of the warning signs parents can look for and, importantly, how to respond calmly if they are worried about their child. https://www.ceopeducation.co.uk/parents/articles/online-harm-groups/

Staying Safe While Gaming

Online games can be a great way for children to play and socialise, but as we know many games now include messaging, voice chat, purchases and interaction with people they do not know offline.

Ofcom's Parents Power Up guidance gives families a simple framework built around Check, Chat and Change - checking account details and settings, talking about who children play with and changing safety or parental controls where needed.
https://www.ofcom.org.uk/online-safety/protecting-children/parents-power-up-how-you-can-help-your-child-stay-safe-while-gaming-online

SCHOOL CHRISTIAN VALUES

Our core Christian values guide everything we do across our school community:

- **Courage:** Overcoming challenges and standing up for what is right.
- **Compassion:** Showing kindness, care, and empathy to everyone.
- **Creativity:** Exploring, discovering, and celebrating our God-given talents.

This Month's Theme: Truthfulness

This half-term, our spotlight is on the Christian value of Truthfulness. Our daily acts of worship are centered around truthfulness, helping children explore honesty, integrity, and building strong, trusting relationships.

"Our love should not be just words and talk. It must be true love, which is shown by what we do."
- 1 John 3:18

CLASSROOM UPDATES

Robins Class

This week in Robins, we have continued learning new sounds in our phonics lessons and even mastered our very first tricky word!

In Maths, the children loved becoming human balancing scales. They explored the classroom finding different objects to compare, discussing which items were heavier and which were lighter.

As part of our topic work, we have been learning all about making healthy choices. We had great discussions about how these choices affect our bodies, focusing on the importance of brushing our teeth regularly and getting plenty of sleep!

Kingfishers Class

This week, the Kingfishers have been diving into the world of animal habitats! We explored what makes the perfect home—from plenty of food and reliable shelter to a safe environment. Comparing the distinct habitats of the Town Mouse and Country Mouse, the children had wonderful discussions about which lifestyle they would prefer and why.

In English, we have been enjoying the story of Q Pootle 5. The children wrote letters to the friendly little alien, offering top tips on what to pack for a visit to our school. They did a fantastic job using expanded noun phrases (adjectives and nouns) to add detail, such as "a sharp pencil."

In Maths, we have been reinforcing our understanding of number bonds and partitioning numbers.

To top it all off, we took full advantage of the beautiful sunshine and brought our learning outdoors!

Owls Class

Owls Class have been hard at work this week!

In English, we have finished reading Kites and Lemonade and are now busy writing our very own sequels. The BFG continues to keep us entertained during reading sessions - we are now absolute experts at understanding his unique vocabulary! In Maths, we have moved on from place value and are now learning about money and using calculations to solve problems.

In the afternoons, we have been learning about different types of energy and how we use them, practicing our greetings in French, and sharpening our football skills!

The children in Owls Class have settled in brilliantly and are working together as a fantastic team.

WRAPAROUND CARE - NIGHT OWLS

Looking for engaging, high-quality after-school care for your child? Night Owls offers a warm, friendly environment where children can relax, socialize, and dive into a different featured theme every day of the week!

Here is a look at what we have planned:

Monday - Art & Design: A creative start to the week! Children get hands-on with arts and crafts, giving them the opportunity to design and make unique masterpieces to take home.

Tuesday - Cooking Club: Culinary fun in the kitchen! Children learn basic cooking skills while making delicious treats such as pizzas, cheese straws, jam tarts, and cornflake cakes.

Wednesday - STEM Club: Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math come alive! Exciting hands-on activities include building giant marble runs, launching paper rockets, constructing marshmallow structures, discovering how flowers absorb water, and writing secret messages with invisible ink.

Thursday - Board Games: A fantastic session for strategy and play! Children can spark their imagination by creating a custom board game of their own, or spend time challenging their friends (and teachers!) to classic favourites.

Friday - Puzzles & Brainteasers: A relaxing end to the school week! Pupils can unwind while working together or independently on a variety of fun puzzles, jigsaws, and logic challenges.

Whether you need regular childcare or coverage for busy workdays, Night Owls ensures your children are safe, learning, and having a brilliant time after the school day ends.

To register your child for Night Owls, please contact the school office to request a registration form. Once registered, your account will be updated on ScoPay so you can easily book your child's sessions.

COULD YOU BE ELIGIBLE FOR FREE SCHOOL MEALS?

Did you know that applying for Free School Meals does much more than just provide a daily hot lunch for your child? It also unlocks essential extra funding for our school!

The government criteria for Free School Meals have recently changed, meaning more families may now be eligible for support. Even if you have checked in the past and didn't qualify, we strongly encourage you to take a moment to check again.

Why apply if your child is in Reception, Year 1, or Year 2?

We know that all infants automatically receive Universal Free School Meals in school. However, it is still vital that you submit a formal application if you meet the financial criteria.

When a family registers for Free School Meals, the government awards our school additional funding known as the Pupil Premium.

How this extra funding helps our school:

For every registered child, our school receives extra funding each year. We use these funds directly to support our pupils by funding:

- One-to-one and small group learning interventions
- Subsidized school trips, residential visits, and extra-curricular clubs
- New books, equipment, and learning resources

How to check and apply:

Checking your eligibility is quick, easy, and completely confidential.

- **Apply online**: https://apply.cloudforedu.org.uk/ofsm/hants
- **Need help?** If you are unsure whether you qualify or would like assistance filling out the online form, please pop into the school office or email us at and we can carry out this check on your behalf. We are always here to help in complete confidence.

Thank you for taking the time to check, every application truly makes a huge difference to our school community!

ATTENDANCE

As of today, our whole-school attendance rate stands at **94.13%.** While we are currently tracking just above the national expected rate of 94%, our aim is to keep working together to drive this number even higher.

Every day at school counts. When children attend regularly, they build strong friendships, develop confidence, and make continuous progress in their learning. Even missing just a couple of days a month can quickly add up to weeks of missed learning over the course of the year.

We know that illnesses happen, but we want to work with you to ensure every child gets the most out of their time at school. If you are ever unsure whether your child is well enough to attend, or if your family is experiencing challenges with getting to school on time, please reach out to us, we are always here to help and support you.

Thank you for your continued support in prioritizing regular school attendance!

SUMMER READING CHALLENGE

We are thrilled to share some fantastic news with our school community! Vernham Dean Gillum's C of E Primary School has been officially recognized by the Summer Reading Challenge 2026, receiving the award for Most Improved School!

This year's theme, Read to the Beat, encouraged pupils to dive into books and discover the joy of reading over the summer break. Thanks to the incredible enthusiasm, effort, and dedication of our children, our school saw a brilliant increase in participation and reading achievements.

A huge thank you to all our parents and carers for supporting reading at home, and well done to every single pupil who took part in partnership with our local libraries. We are so proud of your hard work - keep up the wonderful reading!

REMINDERS

School Uniform: Please ensure that all items of your child's uniform are clearly labeled with their name to help us return any misplaced clothing quickly.

PE Kit: Please send your child to school with their full PE kit on Monday morning. Kits will stay at school for the week and will be sent home on Friday afternoon for washing.

Water Bottles: Please ensure your child brings a named water bottle to school every day.

Safety Outside School: We kindly ask all parents and carers to ensure children do not climb on the metal container behind the pavilion before or after school. We want to keep everyone safe, and climbing on this equipment poses a real risk of injury. Thank you for your cooperation in helping us keep our children safe!

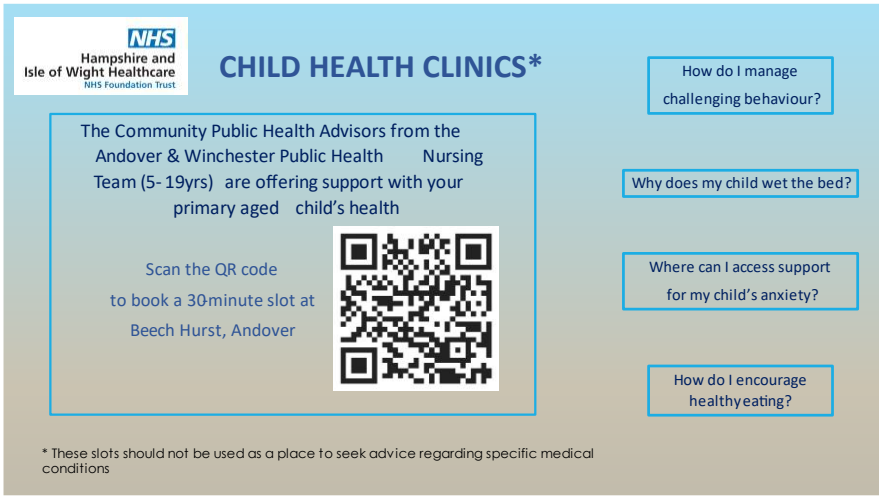
INFORMATION FOR PARENTS











DATES FOR THE DIARY

DATE	EVENT DETAILS	TIME / LOCATION
5th October 2026	Y5 & 6 Residential	5th - 9th October 2026
16th October 2026	Red for Racism Day	All Day
20 October 2026	Work Showcase	3:10pm - 3:30pm
22 October 2026	Harvest Festival	2:30pm
22 October 2026	YR 2027 Open Morning	10:00am - 11:00am
22 October 2026	Individual Pupil Photographs	09:00am - 10:00am
22 October 2026	Harvest Festival Celebration	2:30pm
26 October 2026	Half Term	All Week
02 November 2026	INSET Day (Staff Training)	All Day (School Closed)
5 November 2026	Robins & Kingfishers trip to Marwell Zoo	All Day
12 November 2026	YR 2027 Open Afternoon	1:30pm - 2:30pm
13 November 2026	Children in Need	All Day
23 November 2026	Nasal Flu Vaccine (Whole School)	TBC
3rd December 2026	Christmas Craft afternoon YR 2027	TBC
17 December 2026	Christmas Tree Festival	TBC