



Silchester Church of England Primary School SCHOOL NEWSLETTER – Autumn 1 2023

Dear Families of Silchester,

Welcome back!

I do hope that you and your families had a lovely summer and that you are enjoying/surviving this late heatwave that always seems to arrive the first week after the holidays! It has been wonderful to welcome you all and see so many smiling children happy to come back to school. Term has started really positively at Silchester, and it has been a joy to see your children learning in their classrooms and playing together so nicely on the playground. Thank you also for your warm welcome – it is a really lovely to start my mornings to greet you all at the gate.

What has happened so far

As you are aware, this term there have been a few changes to our school! I am delighted to introduce our new Senior Leadership Team which consists of Glen Golding (executive headteacher), Louise Webb (deputy headteacher), Lina Ouazzani (teaching & learning leader) and myself, Rachel Moir (head of school).

We are also very pleased to welcome some new staff members to our Silchester Family:

Jess Mursell (year 3 teacher on Thursdays and Fridays), Mrs Rolfe, Mr Ellea and Mrs Dougall (learning support assistants) and a warm welcome back to Louise Pulford (year 5 teacher).

As well as new members to our team, we have made some environmental changes to the school. We've moved offices around, given the staffroom a revamp, created a PPA room for teachers to work, added learning spaces to enable breakaway groups for differentiated learning, repurposed the Rainbow Room to incorporate a social and emotional space, and painted several of the classrooms and corridors. We hope that school feels fresh, warm and inviting so that the children have an engaging environment in which to learn.

What is yet to come

I am so excited to be leading Silchester through this next chapter. We are currently in the process of creating our school evaluation framework to ascertain the key areas for development. This will then directly inform our School Improvement Plan. When this document is complete, we will share it with you so that all are aware of the school's collective direction. We are also implementing staff training to construct a 'Silchester Way' to detail our teaching and learning pedagogy. Again, we will share this with you when complete.

Vision and Values

The 'why' behind anything that we do must be centred on our core values as a school and a community. As such, we are looking to review the Silchester School values. We are seeking to identify what you believe to be the most important values for us to live by and for our children to learn. The Diocese will be supporting us throughout and we have a training session coming up for our staff team and governors. It is so important to us that you get a voice in the development of our collective vision and values so we will be sending out a survey in the coming weeks to gather your views. Our collective worships will also seek to include our children in this collaboration and to gather their ideas.

Communications

Communication is often a challenge to get right! We want to share the information required without overloading your inbox. We have inherited some issues regarding the systems and processes currently in situ and we are working hard to resolve these. There have been several technical glitches this week including implementing Arbor effectively and a broken phone line. Neither of which have been conducive for an ideal start! We do apologise for the inconvenience this may have caused and can assure you that we are working hard to correct. Should you be aware of any parents not yet registered with Arbor – please direct them to

the office for a paper copy of this newsletter and strongly urge them to download the app. This will ensure that all communications get through to everyone. Any difficulties with Arbor at all – please see Tracey Boulter in the office.

Communication going forward will include the following:

- School Newsletters (such as this one) on a half termly basis to update you with whole school news, general housekeeping admin and key dates.
- Learning Overviews every half term to share what the children are going to be learning.
- Curriculum Newsletters at the end of the half term to share the learning achievements.

Open-Door Policy

In addition to regular communications, we offer an open-door policy at Silchester. If you ever have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to pop in and see us, talk with your child's class teacher or give us a call (once the phone lines work!) We are experiencing a high level of emails as there are several concerns to address regarding historical unresolved issues. Whilst we will always try to respond to these emails within five working days, if anything is ever missed during this busy first period, please do let us know.

Website

We are aware that our website needs an overhaul! Plans are afoot to revamp this in order to make it more functional, informative and effective. We aim to ensure that the information you need can always be available to you through this medium. It will take us time to put this into action, but I want to assure you that it is on the way! With that in mind – if any of you are web designers and fancy a crack at improving our school website – we would gladly accept help!

Meet the new head

If you would like to stay for a cuppa after drop off on Friday 15th September, then I would love to meet and chat. This will be a very informal chance for you to meet me so that we can get to know each other better and you can share your thoughts and aspirations for the school. You can also catch up with your parent-friends and there will be biscuits!

Open Classrooms

On Thursday 28th September, we would like to invite you to come in to class at 2:30pm. This will give you the opportunity to meet your child's class teacher in person and to hear about the upcoming year. Your child can show you around and show off some of their work.

SEN

We have noted that there are several enquiries regarding SEN provision. Therefore, we would like to offer an SEN information meeting at 9am on Wednesday 20th September. This meeting will consist of a short presentation to explain the SEN identification process and consequent implementation of provision and individual support plans. It will also be a chance for you to meet with Bryony Bligdon, Lou Webb and myself. Hopefully we will be able to address or otherwise investigate any questions or concerns you have regarding SEN at Silchester.

Additionally, we are hoping to meet individually with all parents of children with an Education and Health Care Plan in situ throughout this first term.

Celebration Assemblies

Friday's worship will be an opportunity for us to celebrate the children and praise their efforts and successes. We will be awarding our new Silchester Star certificates! Should your child wish to celebrate an out of school success as part of this assembly, please feel free to send in any medals, trophies, certificates etc. on a Friday.

PGL

Our Year 6 will soon be embarking on the exciting PGL residential! This is an incredible opportunity full of adventurous and memorable experiences. Mrs Forester would like to invite all Year 6 parents and children to attend a PGL information meeting straight after school on Friday 22nd September.

Additionally, it has been brought to our attention that the problems experienced with setting up Arbor payments have left people with a limited amount of time. I should therefore like to offer an extension for anyone who would like longer to pay the full amount. The school will cover the costs in the interim until balances can be settled. It is also possible to use childcare vouchers to contribute to this trip. Should you wish to do so, please contact the school office for details.

Open Days

We will soon be holding Open Days for parents of children who will be starting school in September 2024. Should you have a child this age (or know of anyone who does!) please note our Open Day times in the key dates below. This will be an opportunity to learn more about our school and to have a tour. Look out for the poster advertising this event coming soon!

Harvest

The church will be leading the children in our Harvest Festival Worship on Monday 9th October. Should you wish to send your child in with a food donation on this date – we will be collecting for our local food bank.

Extra-Curricular Clubs

In school, we offer a wide range of all aspects of curriculum. It is important to us that children are offered diverse opportunities to develop their skills and interests.

As well as The Oaks Afterschool Club, we currently have:

- Football, tennis and netball after school clubs already running.
- Hampshire Music Service KS2 brass & woodwind lessons available in school
- A private drum teacher who is keen to start offering drumming lessons.
- The restart of the choir is imminent thanks to the kind volunteers prepared to help.
- Restarting a Relax Kids class is also on the cards.

More information on these activities will be shared as soon as it is available.

Creative minds – Kayleigh Notman will be starting up a Creative Club of afterschool art and craft sessions. This will now be running at school on Wednesdays 3:15pm – 4:15pm and run over a 6-week block at £8.50 per session. For more information or to book a place, please contact Kayleigh directly via the following email address: Kayleigh.notman@creativeminds.art

General reminders

- Timings of the school day – 8:45 – 3:15
- Named PE kits to be kept in school please.
- If your child is in Year 4, 5 or 6 and you wish to grant your permission for them to be released independently at the end of the day, please notify their class teachers who can update our records accordingly. Otherwise, to ensure their safety, we will not let children leave our care unless they are released directly to you.
- We'd like to have a closer look at homework so currently are only sending home regular reading books for all and spelling and times table practice where applicable.
- Children are allowed to bring in a snack for playtimes from Year 1 upwards. Please may these be 'healthy snacks' and avoid chocolate/crisps etc.

Thank you

And finally... I want to extend a huge thank you to you all. Thank you for your warm welcome to Silchester. Thank you for your patience whilst we pick up pace and overcome initial obstacles. Thank you for raising

such lovely, polite, friendly children; and thank you for making it through to the end of this mammoth newsletter! They won't all be this long – promise!

Have a great weekend,

Rachel Moir

Head of School
Silchester Church of England Primary School

Key Dates

Event	Date
Meet the new head - coffee morning	Friday 15 th September : 9am – 10:30am
SEN information meeting	Wednesday 20 th September: 9:00am - 10:30am
PGL information meeting for Year 6	Friday 22 nd September: 3:30pm – 4:30pm
Open classrooms – meet the teachers	Thursday 28 th September: 2:30pm – 3:15pm
Newbury News – New Starter photo for Year R	Friday 29 th September
Harvest Festival – foodbank donations received	Monday 9 th October
School Nurse Year R check – Autumn born children	Monday 2 nd October
PGL residential – Year 6	Monday 2 nd October – Friday 6 th October
Phonics in action – come and watch a Year R phonics session	Thursday 12 th October: 9:00am – 9:30am Friday 13 th October: 9:00am – 9:30am
Open Days for new Year R intake - 2024	Wednesday 11 th October: 9:00am – 10:15am Thursday 19 th October: 2:00pm – 3:15pm Wednesday 1 st November: : 9:00am – 10:15am
School photos – individual, siblings and families	Monday 6 th November
Stay and Read Parents invited to cuddle up and read with their child.	Friday 24 th November: 9:00am – 10:00am
Flu Immunisations	Friday 8 th December
Nativity Performances	Monday 11 th December Tuesday 12 th December Wednesday 13 th December
Christmas Carol Concert	Tuesday 12 th December: 6:00pm – 7:00pm
Phonics information meeting for Year 1 and Year R parents	TBC
Addressing Anxiety – workshop for parents Strategies from our Educational Psychologist	TBC
Parents Evenings	TBC
INSET DAYS	Friday 20 th October Monday 19 th February Monday 22 nd July Tuesday 23 rd July