



SILCHESTER CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Compassion, Courage & Respect

Dear Families of Silchester,

Season's greetings, Christmas cheer and goodwill to you all! Heartfelt thanks, as always, for your support and care for our school this term. As we head off into the holidays, we want to share some highlights from each classes curriculum and learning so far this year:

Mrs Dowling says...

Goodness what a first term! Ladybird Class have made me one proud teacher with all that they have achieved so far. They have hit the curriculum at lightning speed and are all reading and writing cvc words, subitising to 5, becoming excellent sharers, just to name a few! We have had a magical term with our drama workshop, trip to the theatre, Germany afternoon and being brave performing on the stage to our families and friends. I suspect the children are all looking forward to a good rest and I can't wait to welcome them back in the New Year 😊



Miss Dodson and Mrs Hammill say...

This half term, our learning theme has been "Making and Creating", with a special focus on the story The Disgusting Sandwich. The children had great fun creating their own revolting sandwiches and writing step-by-step instructions for their most favourite sandwich, exploring the use of imperative (bossy) verbs to make their writing clear and effective. Alongside this, we have also spent a huge amount of time preparing for the Nativity. The children worked incredibly hard learning songs, and their enthusiasm and effort truly shone through in the performance. They should be extremely proud of themselves, and we hope you enjoyed watching it as much as we enjoyed preparing it! As part of our History topic on Toys we created our own Chestnut Class Museum and investigated lots of toys old and new. We also had fun finding out about the games we played in the past with a visit from a grandparent.



The Autumn 2 half term is always a magical time, filled with all things Nativity and Christmas. To round off our "Making and Creating" topic, we enjoyed lots of festive activities this week, including decorating Christmas biscuits, sewing our own DT Christmas stockings, making Christmas cards and making cheerful, dangly snowmen! We wish you a wonderful Christmas full of joy and happiness and I look forward to welcoming you back after the Christmas holidays



Miss Mitchell says...

It's been a busy half term filled with fun, festivities, forest school and flu — but we made it! This term we welcomed Miss Thompson into our class, and we thank her for all the Friday fun she's brought. We have shone so brightly in our Twinkl Nativity, and we hope you all enjoyed our show. Thank you for supporting your child with both their lines and their costumes! Forest School has been a real highlight, and we've loved taking part in activities such as bug hunting, tree climbing, den building and more. We've also been working hard to learn our times tables, and some of us have even earned our apprentice certificates.

Our topic this term has been Up, Up and Away, where we learned about how flight has changed over time and how it affects us. We kick-started our learning with a paper aeroplane competition — here we all are getting ready to test our creations. From all the adults who work in Hazel Class, we want to wish you a very Merry Christmas, and we look forward to seeing you in the New Year for another exciting term of learning.



Miss McNally and Mrs Hammill say...

Autumn Term 2 has been an exciting and inspiring half term for Sycamore Class, centred around our Antarctica topic. The children were incredibly lucky to take part in a live assembly with polar explorer **Robert Swan**, who spoke about his experiences in Antarctica and the importance of protecting our planet. This was followed by our fantastic **Antarctica Experience Day at Gilbert White**, which really brought our learning to life.

In English, the children produced some of their **best writing so far**, creating detailed and imaginative travel guides to Antarctica. They worked hard to organise their ideas clearly and used ambitious vocabulary to describe the landscapes, wildlife and extreme conditions of the continent.

In Maths, we focused on **fact families**, exploring the relationships between multiplication and division. We then began our journey into **fractions**, carefully laying the foundations using key vocabulary such as *equal*, *part* and *whole* to support secure understanding moving forward.

Our work on **team building and resilience** has

continued in PE, with children developing confidence, cooperation and perseverance through a range of physical challenges. In Science, we explored **electricity and circuits**. The children showed excellent problem-solving skills, carefully troubleshooting why a circuit might not work, even when it appeared correct at first glance.

It has been a busy, enriching half term, and we are so proud of the enthusiasm, curiosity and resilience Sycamore Class have shown throughout their learning.



Mrs Forrester and Mrs Cook say...

Year 5 have had a fantastic term, and we are extremely proud of their enthusiasm and effort. We began the term with an exciting trip to Ufton Court, where the children took part in team-building activities, woodland games, a super senses trail, den building, a campfire and a boogie bash. They demonstrated our learning behaviours of independence, collaboration, communication and resilience throughout. In English, the children explored *The Tempest* by William Shakespeare, writing their own playscripts and performing scenes with excellent acting and characterisation. In Maths, the children worked hard on fractions, shape and translation, showing great focus and perseverance. During RE, Year 5 enjoyed thoughtful discussions about the two birth narratives and explored different interpretations. In Design and Technology, the children created a Christmas

decoration while practising their sewing skills. They all took great care in their work and we hope you enjoy their creations!

Well done, Year 5, for such a positive and successful Autumn term!

Miss Dadral says...

Year 6, you have been absolutely amazing this Autumn 2! We had an incredible WW2 day and truly immersed ourselves in learning about the war. You explored the Windrush story with curiosity and respect, creating some outstanding pieces of work. In English, you expanded your writing skills through *Rose Blanche* and showed real empathy for those who suffered during the war—something I am so proud of. In maths, we tackled adding and subtracting fractions with different denominators. It was tricky at times, but you all showed resilience and are definitely on the right path! I can't wait to see all the fantastic things you will achieve in the new year.



Whole School Reindeer Run

We are so looking forward to ending our term with our reindeer run! All children will be making their own antlers and participating in the run this afternoon to try and raise money for St Michael's Hospice. It feels like the perfect amalgamation of creativity, compassion and fun! Many thanks to those of you have donated, our link is still live so **if you're able, please sponsor your little reindeer using this link:**

[St. Michael's Hospice \(North Hampshire\): Host Your Own Reindeer Run!](#)

N/B there is an automatic platform fee that can easily be removed before donating.

Englefield Snowman Trail

Here we 'snow' again! The Englefield Estate Snowman Trail is back for 2025. Wrap up warm and head out with family and friends and see how many you can find! The 20 wooden snowmen have been painted by local children, and you can find them in woodlands near Mortimer West End, Mortimer, Silchester and Burghfield Common. This year's trail will be open every day from Thursday 18th December until Monday 5th January 2026. If you need a helping hand to track down the snowmen, an interactive or pdf map can be found using the following link: [Englefield Estate Snowman Trail](#)

Extra bonus points for finding the two snowmen below painted by some of our children at Silchester.



Lockdown/Fire Drills

A few parents have been nervous at the fact that we have practiced our lockdown drill at Silchester recently, so I just wanted to explain and hopefully put everyone's mind at rest. As a school we have numerous policies and procedures for multiple things. Children's safety will always be our number one priority. To be health and safety compliant, we practice these procedures, just like we practice a fire drill, so that we can be as prepared as possible for any emergency, even though it is extremely unlikely we will ever need to do so. Practicing a lockdown drill sounds much scarier than it actually is!

Teachers keep all children in their classroom and communicate a headcount to the office so that everyone is accounted for. We try to do this without children even being aware that it has happened and is simply a chance for staff to feel confident in the procedure. In the summer term, when the weather is kinder, we will practice a full lockdown which will involve evacuating the school to the sports field. When we do this, we will not scare the children with any age-inappropriate talk and instead turn it into a game or a race for a long-distance register etc. I will let you know in advance of this practice so that you are prepared for any conversations should they arise. Please feel free to come and talk to me at any time should you have any questions or concerns.

A word from the Governors:

As the Governing Board, our role is to support and challenge the school leadership so that every child can thrive. We're very proud of the progress made this year and wanted to share some highlights. 2025 has been a busy year for Silchester, with a lot of amazing achievements – we had a very successful visit from Ofsted, we got great results in KS2 SATS, the Year 4 times tables test and Year 1 phonics and the EYFS area refurbishment and new outdoor learning shelters are fabulous! The governors would like to take this opportunity to thank the staff for their dedication, resilience and hard work!

We would also like to thank and recognise the hard work of the governors who have stepped down over the past 12 months. Heartfelt thanks to Sally Raeside, to Paul King who has stepped down as Chair, and to Cynthia Howells and Mary Viney who were governors for 9 years. We really appreciate all the time and expertise you dedicated to the School.

We would also like to thank the children of Silchester for your enthusiasm and embodying the values that make Silchester such a wonderful school, and to the parents for making it such a happy supportive community. We look forward to seeing our school flourish next year and wish everyone a happy and relaxing Christmas!

From the Governing Body: Liv Edwards (Chair), Danny Gibbons (Vice Chair), Deb Forrester, Rev Karen West, Kirsten Johnston, James Stacey, Emily Clapson, Vanessa Dore and Kate Wright.

And finally...!

I remain so grateful to be blessed as part of our community both in and out of school. Many thanks for all your kindness and support. I sincerely hope that you and your families have a joyful and peaceful Christmas. It can take a lot out a person to create 'Christmas Magic' - look after yourselves and each other. The Power of PACE poster overleaf may be nice to apply to yourself as well as your children!

Don't forget that the first Monday back is an INSET Day so we will look forward to welcoming your children back to school on **Tuesday 6th January** and can't wait to start another year together.

Rachel Moir

Rachel Moir
Head of School

The Power of PACE at Christmas Time

There are a lot of feelings flying around at Christmas time for children and adults alike. Finding the right balance for YOU is something to work towards. PACE - Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity, Empathy



Beacon House
Therapeutic Services and Trauma Team



Playfulness isn't the same as playing but is enjoying time with someone else or yourself in an unconditional way.

This can look like a 5 minute sofa snuggle with someone, walking hand in hand, swapping cringey cracker joke or even taking yourself off for a cry on your own if that's where you're at and trying to leave behind any guilt about it.

It's about showing a real interest in someone, or yourself, and finding something you really enjoy about them - or you. Even if that's 2 minutes alone with yourself outside the front door!

Acceptance means sitting with strong emotions or perspective of another and knowing that you might not be able to take these away. There may be no words of advice to give, strategies to implement or thoughts to share, only comfort by offering your safe presence.

It is allowing uncomfortable sensations and emotions to be in your own body without judgement. Accepting their existence.

For an example of this and Empathy, watch the YouTube clip called 'Brené Brown on Empathy' or find inspiration from the song 'Hold Space' by Ward Thomas.

Curiosity isn't about asking "why?" even when this is exactly what we want to know! It's about wondering what is going on inside for someone or ourself.

It's about taking the risk of being wrong "*Can I share my ideas with you... I wonder if... I might be wrong, so tell me if I am, but here are my thoughts...*"

A way of letting someone know that your mind is on their mind and genuinely interested in anything at all that's going on in there without judgement.

It is practising this same non-judgemental curiosity within ourselves.

Empathy can take a lot of energy at Christmas. Sitting with the disappointment of a child who hasn't got the gift they hoped for "*I can see the sadness in your eyes that it's not what you wanted*" or accepting our own disappointment that the time hasn't felt very festive "*I am where I am and things are how they are and I'm going to do my best to feel okay with that*".

A top tip is try to move away from reassurance or denial of feelings - others or your own. Naming what is happening for ourselves or another helps us in our offering of empathy.

To PACE oneself: "To do something at a speed that is steady and that allows one to continue without becoming too tired."



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Silchester

Church of England Primary School

Open Days

9:00am – 10:15am

Wednesday 22nd October

Thursday 6th November

Extra date
added!

Thursday 8th January 2026

Is your child starting school in September 2026?

We invite you to come and have a look around our wonderful school.

Our Open Days will consist of a brief presentation, followed by a tour of the school and the opportunity to ask any questions.

We hope to welcome you soon!



If you can't make any of the above dates, please do contact our school office to arrange an individual tour.



COLLABORATION



RESOURCEFULNESS



REFLECTIVENESS



COMMUNICATION



RESILIENCE



INDEPENDENCE

Autumn Winter
2025 2026

WEEK ONE

3/11,
24/11,
15/12,
19/1,
9/2,
9/3

MONDAY

Option One

Plant Balls in Tomato
Sauce with Rice

Option Two

Autumn Vegetable
Lasagne

Vegetables

Vegetables of the Day

Dessert

Cheese and Crackers

TUESDAY

Beef Lasagne with
Garlic Bread

Cheese & Tomato Pizza
with wedges

Vegetables of the Day

NEW Apple Crumb Cake
with Custard

WEDNESDAY

Roast Chicken, Stuffing,
Roast Potatoes and
Gravy

Vegetarian Wellington
with Roast Potatoes and
Gravy

Vegetables of the Day

Fruit Medley

THURSDAY

Chicken Biryani

BBQ Vegan Sausage
Pasta with Garlic
Bread

Vegetables of the Day

Jelly with Mandarins

FRIDAY

Fishfingers or Salmon
Fishfingers with Chips &
Tomato Sauce

Cheese and Bean Pasty
with Chips and Tomato
Sauce

Vegetables of the Day

Syrup Sponge with
Custard

WEEK TWO

10/11,
1/12,
5/1,
26/1,
23/2,
16/3

Option One

Classic Cheese and
Tomato Pizza
with Wedges

Option Two

Mild Mexican Chilli with
Rice

Vegetables

Vegetables of the Day

Dessert

NEW Gingerbread
Cookie

Spaghetti
Bolognese

Vegan Spaghetti
Bolognese

Vegetables of the Day

Chocolate and Beetroot
Brownie with Chocolate
Sauce

BBQ Chicken with
Seasoned Potatoes
and Sweetcorn Salsa

Quorn with Seasoned
Potatoes and
Sweetcorn Salsa

Vegetables of the Day

Fruit Salad

Meatballs in Tomato
Sauce with Rice

Creamy Chickpea and
Coconut Curry with Rice

Vegetables of the Day

Sticky Toffee Apple
Crumble with Custard

Breaded Fish or
Fishfingers with Chips &
Tomato Sauce

Cheese Whirl with Chips
and Tomato Sauce

Vegetables of the Day

Vanilla Shortbread

WEEK THREE

17/11,
8/12,
12/1,
2/2,
2/3,
23/3

Option One

Macaroni
Cheese

Option Two

NEW Chefs Special
Lentil Curry with Rice

Vegetables

Vegetables of the Day

Dessert

Oaty Cookie

NEW Chicken 50%
Enchilada Bake with
Paprika Wedges

Tomato Pasta

Vegetables of the Day

Pear Crumble with
Custard

Sausage with Roast
Potatoes and Gravy

Vegan Sausage and
Roast Potatoes
with Gravy

Vegetables of the Day

Fruit Salad

BBQ Chicken
Pizza With wedges

Cheese & Tomato Pizza
with wedges

Vegetables of the Day

NEW Jamaican Ginger
Cake with Custard

Fishfingers with Chips &
Tomato Sauce

Red Pepper Frittata with
Chips & Tomato Sauce

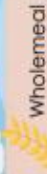
Vegetables of the Day

Comflake Tart

MENU KEY



Added Plant Protein



Wholemeal



Vegan



Chef's Special

Available Daily: - Freshly cooked jacket potatoes with a choice of fillings - Bread freshly baked on site daily- Daily salad selection - Fresh Fruit and Yoghurt

ALLERGY INFORMATION:

If you would like to know about particular allergens in foods please ask a member of the catering team for information. If your child has a school lunch and has a food allergy or intolerance you will be asked to complete a form to ensure we have the necessary information to cater for your child. We use a large variety of ingredients in the preparation of our meals and due to the nature of our kitchens it is not possible to completely remove the risk of allergen cross contact.