



## *'Child centred learning in the heart of the community'*

19<sup>th</sup> December 2025

Dear Parents and Family Members,

As we reach the end of this term, it is a pleasure to reflect on the sense of community and achievement that has defined the past few months. The lantern parade in the centre of town was a wonderful example of how our school comes together with local families to celebrate creativity and tradition. Last Friday's Christmas Fayre on the Infant Site was another highlight, bringing families together to enjoy stalls, festive activities and, of course, the children's singing, which filled the space with joy. These events remind us how important it is for children to share these experiences with their friends and loved ones, and it was fantastic to see so many of you supporting them. FIS raised an incredible £911 to support enrichment for our children.

This term has been exceptionally busy, with a wide range of learning opportunities and enrichment activities taking place across the school. From curriculum projects to community events, the amount that has been achieved is something we can all be proud of. The children and staff team have worked incredibly hard, and the energy and commitment shown throughout the term have been inspiring.

We are also deeply grateful for the continued parental engagement that has enriched school life this term. Thank you to everyone who joined us for the Reception Christmas Crafternoon and for taking part in the Maths Curriculum Workshops, which have helped strengthen the link between home and school learning. A special thank you goes to the Friends of Ilchester School (FIS) for their tireless fundraising efforts and commitment to providing opportunities beyond the classroom. Their support ensures that our children benefit from experiences that broaden their horizons and make their time at school even more rewarding.



## Jack and the Beanstalk

One of the real highlights of this festive season was giving the children the opportunity to enjoy a live pantomime performance of *Jack and the Beanstalk* right here in school. We were fortunate to host two performances so that every child could experience the magic of theatre in a familiar setting. The show was full of energy, laughter and classic pantomime fun, with plenty of audience participation. The children loved joining in with the famous “Oh yes we did!” moments and singing along to the lively songs.

The dancing and humour kept everyone entertained, and some of our teachers even found themselves taking part in the action, much to the delight of the audience! This wonderful experience was made possible thanks to the generous support of the Friends of Ilchester School (FIS), whose fundraising efforts brought a touch of Christmas magic to our school. We are incredibly grateful for their commitment to creating memorable opportunities for our children.



## Flying Santa

We all know that Father Christmas is incredibly busy at this time of year, but he still managed to squeeze in a visit to our school to collect the children's letters with the help of his cheerful elves. The excitement was palpable as the children handed over their carefully written wishes, knowing that Father Christmas would be taking them all the way to the North Pole – by helicopter! We are certain his reindeer were saving their energy for the big flight on Christmas Eve, so a little help from RNAS Yeovilton made this magical moment possible. We are truly grateful for their continued links with our community and for helping to create such a memorable experience for the children.



## Classes 1 and 2

Classes One and Two have been incredibly busy over the last few weeks. The staff are incredibly proud of the children for their efforts and enthusiasm in learning and performing our Christmas Nativity, *Ned's Christmas Discovery*. They are absolute superstars who certainly shone bright up on the stage!

A huge 'thank you' to the families who attended the Reception Christmas Crafternoon, we had a wonderful time making and creating, and getting covered in glitter with you! These events alongside Christmas Lunch, the Panto, Christingle and Flying Santa create such special festive memories for our children and are certainly a very special start to the winter break!

In class, we have been pushing ourselves in our Maths and have been subitising bigger amounts, counting higher than ever before and learning about odds and evens, and doubles. The children are blowing us away with their number knowledge!

We have been working hard designing, sewing and evaluating our own felt Christmas star decorations. This was certainly a challenge, but the children persevered and created some beautiful pieces which I am sure will be treasured for years to come.

We have also been busy writing letters and lists for Father Christmas! We have learnt more about the postal system and wrote some Christmas cards for members of our community. We took a walk to the post box to post them and can't wait for them to be delivered!



### Class 3

In Maths, we have been practising how to share equally and have been learning to write number sentences using the division sign.

The class have really enjoyed learning about animals and their habitats in their Science lessons. We have looked at how animals have adapted to suit the environment they live in.

The wind and rain did not dampen our spirits at Forest School! We used sticks that we found to make some fabulous decorations. We used leaves that we collected to create line drawings with pencil and ink. We also learnt how to apply wax relief techniques, using oil pastels and water paints.

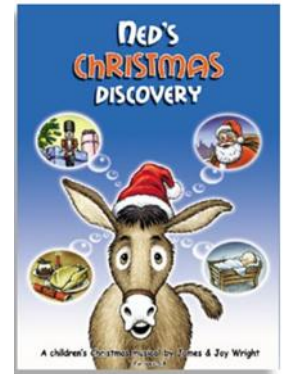
Everyone enjoyed making their Christingle and learning about what it represents. Class 3 were very respectful and sang beautifully at our Christingle church service.



## Class 4

It has been a very busy few weeks in the Infant Department!

Class 4 did a tremendous job, alongside the other Year 2 children, leading our Christmas production of *Ned's Christmas Discovery*. The children remembered their lines, delivered them confidently and sang with enthusiasm. I am extremely proud of them. A special shout out to Charlie for taking on the lead role and Brooke for her amazing solo. I can't wait to see them all in their next production when they are in the Juniors.



In Maths, we have continued work on multiplication. We have been drawing arrays and developing our recall of times table facts for 10x, 2x and 5x. We have also been measuring in centimetres accurately with a ruler and solving length problems.



We have now completed our Science unit on animals. We have learnt about animal groups; mammals, reptiles, amphibians, fish, birds and insects. We have also learnt about life processes and what it means to be alive; knowing that all living things move, respire, sense, grow, reproduce, excrete and need nutrition (MRS GREN). We looked at animal habitats and why animals live in those habitats and how different animals are suited to different habitats. Did you know that camels can close their nostrils to stop sand blowing up their nose?

We really enjoyed our Christingle service this week, joining up with 3 other classes across the school.



I wish you all a very merry Christmas and best wishes for the new year.

## Class 5

What a busy few weeks we have had in Class 5!

Firstly, I would like to say what a fantastic job the children did in the school nativity performance. They worked hard to learn their lines and the songs for the production and made us all very proud! Well done Class 5.

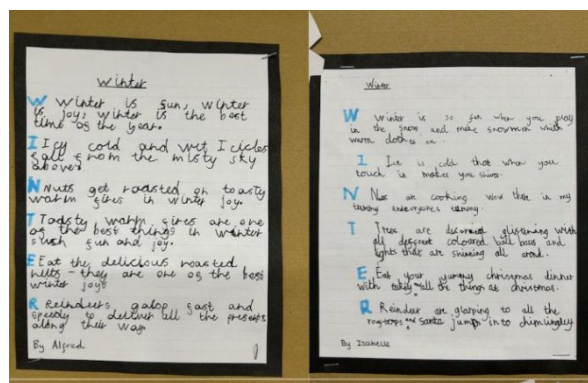
In English, we have been reading and writing a selection of Christmas poems. We have been looking at rhyming patterns, poetic language and have written some fabulous acrostic poems all about winter. These are on display in the corridor outside our classroom. Please do take the time after school to have a little look.

In Maths, we have been practising measuring in centimetres and metres and solving problems involving length.

For Geography, we used Digimaps to zoom in and look closely at the town of Ilchester. We looked at the map key and how different transport networks were represented.

The children highlighted A roads and B roads on their own maps of Ilchester as well as the River Yeo.

During our time at the Forest School site, the children created some beautiful Christmas decorations which will be coming home with them at the end of the week. They loved playing hide and seek on the Forest School site as their weekly reward.



## Class 6

Class 6 children have been extremely busy getting into the festive spirit in the run-up to Christmas! The children have had a wonderful time creating Christmas decorations for the classroom, making yummy cakes for our coffee morning and working alongside Class 1 to make our Christingles. We have also been very lucky to be able to watch the KS1 nativity as well as a pantomime, which we thoroughly enjoyed.

Alongside the festivities, learning has continued in full swing. In English, the children have been developing their character description skills, beginning with detailed descriptions of the *Iron Man* by Ted Hughes before moving on to designing and describing their very own imaginative monsters.

In Science, the children have also shown great enthusiasm for our topic on food chains. This included an exciting visit to Forest School, where they searched for real-life evidence of food chains in the natural environment.

Finally, in Geography, we have been learning about the Somerset Levels and why it is prone to flooding. To explore this further the children experienced a (very muddy) trip to the Coates Willow and Wetland Centre to see for themselves how humans' impact and control the local environment.

## Class 7

It has been an exceptionally busy end to the term with many exciting events and activities going on. The children have been incredibly adaptable to the changes in routine and that is a huge credit to them. In our Maths work, the children have explored a unit on measure, including money, converting units of length and perimeter. It was fabulous to have so many parents join us for our workshop at the beginning of the month and take part in our learning, the children enjoyed having you there.

In English, the children finished their unit on the book *Leon and the Place Between* by writing a discussive piece around the pros and cons of circuses, explaining the opposing viewpoints clearly and without bias. Following our fieldtrip to the Somerset Levels recently, the children have been inspired to write poetry influenced by the wonders of the natural world and based upon the poem *The Secret Story* by Margaret Wise Brown.

To put our Geography learning around the Somerset Levels into context, the class visited the Coates Willow Centre near Stoke St Gregory to learn about the history of the area and how willow growing and weaving is so successful there. The children also saw first-hand how humans manage the wetland environment to minimise the impact of flooding on the nearby homes and farms.

The children brought in some fabulous home learning projects recently that were based around our pre-historic Britain history unit from earlier in the term. We have some ingenious and creative minds in the class as the children came up with lots of different ways to create models of Stonehenge. Well done, everyone.



## Class 8

We have had a fabulous time preparing for Christmas in Class 8! From making truffle chocolates (yum!); decorating the tree in our classroom; preparing the Human Christmas Fruit Machine Game (for the Christmas Fayre); making Christingles (not *too* many sweets were sampled in the process...); to singing our hearts out learning all the words to the many Christmas songs we have performed both as a class and as a school – our classroom has been a right little Santa's workshop of festive activities!



We have also really enjoyed learning all about Somerset and why it is prone to flooding. We have discovered that most of Somerset consists of very low-land and is not very high above sea-level which coupled with the temperate climate we live in results in a lot of land becoming flooded during the winter months. We have investigated how most of Somerset used to be flooded and that it was only really in the 1700s that it was drained to make it usable land. Did you know that rhyndes are purpose-built channels which can direct excess river water away from potentially flooding nearby villages? We saw some on our (very muddy) visit to Coates Willow and Wetland Centre when we were investigating how humans' impact and control the local environment.



## Class 9

As always in Class 9, we have had an extremely busy term complete with academic learning and so many more enrichment activities! With the main highlights being all our Santa and Christmas activities, I have been so impressed with the focus and love of learning they have all been displaying in our regular lessons.

We have explored all about our Earth and environment through our Science and Geography units, focusing on local energy use and the effect it has on our environment. As a result of this, we have created our DT cam project using recycled cardboard!

We have explored the picture book, *The Matchbox Diary*, and written a set of hilarious instructions and detailed recounts in English. In maths, we have polished up our statistics unit and are ready to move onto shape and position in the New Year.

Wishing everyone a wonderful Christmas and a Happy New Year!



## Class 10

Alongside all the wonderful events that we have, it's been lovely to reflect on all the learning the children have completed. In Science, they explored space and were full of wonder about the solar system. Our Geography learning focused on renewable energy and caring for our world, while in RE, the children thoughtfully explored the meaning of the Incarnation. We ended the term creatively in DT, with the children designing and making their own toys.

We were very excited to receive replies from our pen pals at North Cadbury Primary School this week! The classroom was buzzing as the children read their letters and shared what they'd learned about their new friends. There were lots of

smiles, excitement, and chatter as everyone got stuck in. We're looking forward to writing back in the New Year and continuing our pen pal conversations!

Year 6 had a fantastic day visiting the Houses of Parliament alongside children from Ash Primary School. It was a lovely day filled with sightseeing and shared experiences, starting with a walk down The Mall and past Buckingham Palace, before enjoying time in St James' Park. From along the way, the children also spotted famous landmarks including the London Eye and The Shard in the distance. It was a memorable trip that brought learning to life and was enjoyed by all.



## Class 11

We can hardly believe the Autumn term has already come to an end! Class 11 has achieved so much, and we could not be prouder of them.

In English, the children have been writing letters to our local MP, Sarah Dyke, and were able to deliver them in person when we visited the Houses of Parliament. In Science, they have been learning about Earth and Space and are able to talk in lots of detail about what our Solar System is like. Meanwhile, in Geography, they have been undertaking lots of research into how people are affecting the environment through energy use and learning more about Hinkley Point. They also showed real perseverance when building their Cams toys in DT.

Alongside all of this, the class has embraced the festive spirit by learning songs, making Christmas cards and baking delicious mince pies for our annual Christmas Coffee Morning. Well done, Class 11! We hope you all have a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



## Online Safety

### **Artificial Intelligence Guide for Parents and Carers**

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is now part of everyday life, with tools like ChatGPT, image generators, or AI features in apps. If you're unsure what these tools do or how to keep your child safe, the Internet Matters Parent Guide to AI Tools is a great resource. It explains AI in clear, simple language and lists popular tools children might encounter. The guide also gives safety tips—such as why filters aren't perfect and why it's important to supervise and talk with your child. It includes ideas for using AI in positive ways, while reminding us to check accuracy and encourage responsible use.



Read the full guide here: [www.internetmatters.org/resources/parent-guide-to-artificial-intelligence-ai-tools/](http://www.internetmatters.org/resources/parent-guide-to-artificial-intelligence-ai-tools/)

### 500 Word Competition Winners

The winners of the school 500 Word Story-writing competition were announced in a special celebration assembly. Well done to Reuben for winning Bronze, Isla for winning Silver and Bella for being awarded Gold! The judges were very impressed with all of the stories this year and it was a very hard decision to choose the top three. These three stories built a fantastic atmosphere and took the reader on a real journey with twists and turns throughout.



Everyone had lovely time at our Christingle services at St Mary's Church led by Reverend Bruce. Last Friday, the children supported each other at the Junior Site with making their Christingles and learning what each part of the Christingle represented. It was lovely to watch the older children support the infant children. Each service gave the children a chance to pause and reflect. They behaved beautifully and represented the school with pride, making it a very special experience for everyone involved.



### Year 6 Visit to Parliament

Year 6 pupils enjoyed an exciting and educational trip to London, where they had the opportunity to visit the Houses of Parliament.

During the tour, pupils explored Westminster Hall and learned about the roles of the House of Commons and the House of Lords. They discovered how laws are made and the important part Parliament plays in running the country. The children were especially fascinated by the history of the building and its links to key moments in British history. Both groups were able to sit in the viewing gallery and watch real debates take place in both the chambers of the House of Lords and the House of Commons.

The trip also included time to admire famous London landmarks, including Big Ben, Buckingham Palace and 10 Downing Street, making it a memorable day for everyone. Pupils represented the school brilliantly, asking thoughtful questions and showing excellent behaviour throughout the visit.

Our local MP Sarah Dyke even popped in to see us when she heard we were visiting. She was very impressed with all our questions and the letters we had written her, and she even asked Maeve's question in a debate in the House of Commons – giving Maeve and the pupils of Ilchester School a shout-out. She has promised to stop by to watch our girls football team playing a match soon. The trip was a fantastic learning experience and a wonderful opportunity for Year 6 to deepen their understanding of citizenship and British values.

### [Escapeline Workshop Year 4](#)

Our children in Years 3 and 4 took part in an important Escapeline workshop focused on helping them recognise and manage risks carefully. Learning how to stay safe and make informed choices is a vital part of growing up, and we are proud to give our pupils the tools they need to protect themselves. We were delighted to welcome the High Sheriff of Somerset, Janet Montgomery, who joined us to see the Escapeline team's fantastic work in action. It was a wonderful opportunity to showcase how our school community prioritises safety and wellbeing for every child.

### [Nativity](#)

This year's nativity *Ned's Christmas Discovery* was a roaring success. The children showed incredible Bravery standing on the stage and performing like true professionals. Thank you to our parents and family members for joining us for this special event. We know you are as proud of your children as we are.

### [Christmas Coffee Morning](#)

Last Wednesday, our Key Stage 2 children walked to Ilchester Town Hall to perform at our annual Christmas Coffee Morning. Each class had been practising a Christmas song, and the performances were absolutely brilliant and enjoyed by young and old alike. The children also prepared a range of delicious treats to donate and made gift boxes to deliver to local businesses which were gratefully received. Well done, children!



### [A Big Thank You to Ilchester Cheese Company!](#)

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to Ilchester Cheese Company for their generous donations of gifts and cheese packs for our children and parents. These wonderful treats were shared with the children yesterday, and both the children and their families were truly delighted and grateful. We are so appreciative of the support from local businesses and companies who help strengthen our school community. These partnerships are incredibly valued and make a real difference - Thank you!

### [Maths Workshops](#)

A huge thank you to all the parents, family members and guardians who were able to attend our recent maths workshops. They proved successful and the feedback from the questionnaires were very positive and really highlighted how valuable these sessions were. Each class enjoyed showcasing some of the learning they have been doing this term, and it was wonderful to see the children so confident and engaged. We would encourage as many parents as possible to attend future sessions, including our upcoming reading workshops in the spring term.

<b>READING WORKSHOPS</b>	<b>SPRING DATE</b>
Class 1	Tuesday 17 <sup>th</sup> March
Class 2	Tuesday 17 <sup>th</sup> March
Class 3	Thursday 19 <sup>th</sup> March
Class 4	Friday 20 <sup>th</sup> March
Class 5	Wednesday 18 <sup>th</sup> March
Class 6	Thursday 12 <sup>th</sup> March
Class 7	Friday 6 <sup>th</sup> March
Class 8	Tuesday 3 <sup>rd</sup> March

Class 9	Monday 9 <sup>th</sup> March
Class 10	Tuesday 10 <sup>th</sup> March
Class 11	Monday 2 <sup>nd</sup> March

### [IRINEC Donation for Mental Health and Wellbeing](#)

I am delighted to share that, alongside Mrs Dickinson, our Family Link Worker, I have successfully secured funding from IRINEC to provide a counsellor to support a small number of children in the new year. This is an exciting initiative that we are trialling to assess its impact, with the potential to extend this provision in the future. Parents of the children who will access this support have already been contacted, and we have met with the counsellor to ensure a smooth start. We look forward to welcoming them to the team in January and are hopeful that this additional layer of support will make a meaningful difference for the children involved.

### [Staffing News](#)

As a school, we would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to Mrs Penny Simpson for her incredible dedication and commitment to Ilchester Community Primary School over the past 14 years. During her time with us, Mrs Simpson has positively impacted the lives of hundreds of children, bringing care, expertise, and compassion to everything she does. Her early work supporting children with additional needs on a 1:1 basis was truly transformative, helping the children to thrive and reach their potential. Mrs Simpson's nurturing manner and unwavering support for both pupils and parents have made her an invaluable part of our school community. While we are deeply saddened by her decision to leave, we wish her every success and happiness in the future. Thank you, Mrs Simpson, for everything you have given to our school; you will be greatly missed.

Mr Dave Grosvenor started in his role as Site Manager on Monday. We would like to extend a warm welcome to him and look forward to seeing the site and building improvements under his extensive skillset and experience.

### [House Competition](#)

A huge 'well done' to all the children in Dragon, who are our house winners for this term! The results were as follows:

- 1st Place – Dragon – 997 House Points
- 2nd Place – Wyvern – 914 House Points
- 3rd Place – Unicorn – 833 House Points
- 4th Place – Griffin – 775 House Points

The children from Dragon celebrated their hard work and achievement with some festive treats. Well done, to all the children for their fantastic effort this term!

## RBO

Hosted by the Royal Ballet and Opera, KS2 embarked on a fun musical adventure exploring *The Magic Flute*, one of the world's most famous operas! We got a virtual front row seat to the songs performed by the Royal Opera artists, met characters (Prince Tamino, Princess Pamina and the Queen of the Night) and sang along with other children from across the country! Not only was this a fun and accessible enrichment opportunity for all children, but their creativity, confidence and cultural capital have been enhanced through developing their performing and listening skills. Keep an eye out for snippets of beautiful singing on our school website in the New Year!

More information about the Live Lessons can be accessed here: [https://youtu.be/7bPlbG76\\_eo](https://youtu.be/7bPlbG76_eo)

## SASP Mentoring

A year ago, our school took the decision to fund the SASP mentoring scheme, and the impact on the pupils who have taken part has been incredible. This programme has provided vital support for children, helping them to develop their pastoral, social, and emotional skills in a nurturing and structured way. We are especially grateful to Aaron for his dedication and for now extending his work to offer additional, targeted support for military children through funding from the Armed Forces Covenant. Children are selected for the scheme by the school in partnership with SASP based on specific criteria, ensuring that those who will benefit most receive this opportunity. The testimonies from the children have been lovely to read with one child stating *'I feel braver to speak up in my friend group and take part in my learning'* and another saying *'My confidence in PE is better and I feel like I have made more friends.'* We truly value this collaborative approach and the positive difference it continues to make in the lives of our pupils.

## Christmas Fayre

The recent Christmas Fayre was a fantastic celebration of community spirit and festive cheer. A huge thank you goes to the Friends of Ilchester School (FIS) for the time and effort they dedicated to organising and running this event. The children sang beautifully, creating a wonderful atmosphere, and there was an impressive range of stallholders offering candles, jewellery and crafting supplies. It was great to see so many parents and community members giving their time on a Friday evening to support the school. Thanks to everyone's generosity and involvement, the event raised an amazing £911, which will go towards providing further enrichment opportunities for our pupils.

## Poppy Appeal Total

I am delighted to report that this year's annual Poppy Appeal has raised an incredible £510.92 for the Royal British Legion. We are staggered by the generosity of our families, and it is lovely to see our value of Kindness in action.



## Father Christmas Visit

The children were all beyond excited to see Father Christmas on the last day of term. He spent a long time talking with the children, hearing all about their holiday plans and their last-minute gift requests!



The children were all gifted a book, kindly donated by FIS in memory of Miss Waterfield.



## Forest School Update



Over the past couple of weeks, we have seen some exciting developments on our Forest School site! We have been lucky enough to have local company Land and Water working on the site, kindly donating time and resources to create some fantastic shelter building frames and a fire circle complete with benches. In addition, the Grandad of one of our children has been busy creating bespoke hedgehog houses and mini beast hotels for the site.

During the Autumn Term, each class has visited the Forest School site twice to take part in a variety of outdoor learning activities. Our outdoor learning sessions will continue in the Spring Term. If we have any parents, family or friends who know, or have links to, a tree surgeon or landscaping company, please can you make the school office aware as we are looking for branches for shelter building and bark for our 'woodland floor'.



## Safeguarding

At Ilchester we will always say that our most important job in school is to keep everybody safe. OFSTED recently reported that 'the school's work in safeguarding is underpinned by staff wanting to do the best for all its pupils.' We take our safeguarding duties seriously and have developed a culture where everyone takes responsibility to safeguard children. Over Christmas emotions can be heightened and safeguarding concerns can increase. If you have a concern about a child or young person, you can call Somerset Direct on 0300 123 2224.

## Message from our Family Link Worker – Hayley Dickinson

Merry Christmas to you all. May you all find glittering moments amongst the beautiful chaos of the season. May you all find moments to look back and reflect from throughout the year. The wonders you may have forgotten about because life is busy, especially Christmas. The moments where you thought it was all impossible, yet you made it.

Children think it's all about the presents, but what they will really remember is the magic. And so do we. Take good care of yourselves and your loved ones and we will see you in January.



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I would like to take this opportunity to extend my gratitude to our parents and family member for your continued support over the last term. The partnership between home and school remains central to ensuring the children flourish and thrive.

As the Christmas break approaches, we hope it provides you with time to relax, recharge, and enjoy memory making with your special people. On behalf of all the staff and pupils here at Ilchester Community Primary School, I would like to extend our heartfelt thanks for your continued support. We wish you a restful Christmas, and we look forward to welcoming you back on **Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> January** for the Spring Term.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Michelle Mordue  
Headteacher



## Dates for your diary

Christmas Holiday: Monday 22 <sup>nd</sup> December –2 <sup>nd</sup> January inclusive
INSET Day 5 <sup>th</sup> January 2026
Return to School: Tuesday 6 <sup>th</sup> January 2026

