‘Child centred learning in the heart of the community’

20th November 2026

Dear Parents and Family Members,

What a wonderfully busy few weeks it has been at Ilchester! At times, it has felt as though the children have hardly been in their classrooms, with so many exciting enrichment opportunities taking place across the school. From inspiring workshops, trips and visits from special guests to outdoor adventures through our Forest School programme, our pupils have enjoyed a wealth of experiences that have brought their learning to life. These opportunities help children develop confidence, curiosity and a love of learning, and it has been a pleasure to see their enthusiasm and engagement throughout.

This week, our focus has been on Anti-Bullying Week. During a whole-school assembly, we explored the theme of "Break the Silence", encouraging children to speak up if they are worried about themselves or someone else. We discussed the importance of using our voices and seeking support from trusted adults when something does not feel right.

As part of this learning, we revisited our STOP acronym, which helps children understand the difference between friendship difficulties and bullying. STOP stands for Several Times On Purpose and reminds children that bullying behaviour happens repeatedly and intentionally. We also encourage children to Start Telling Other People, ensuring they know that speaking to an adult is always the right thing to do if they are concerned.

Across the week, children have taken part in a range of age-appropriate activities, discussions and lessons within their classrooms. These have provided valuable opportunities to explore kindness, respect, inclusion and friendship, while helping children understand what positive relationships look like and how they can support one another. We are super proud of the maturity and thoughtfulness our pupils have shown during these important conversations.

Early Years

We would like to share some of the wonderful learning experiences that our children have been enjoying at Pre-School this half-term.

The Tiggywinkles and Nutkins children have been taking part in a range of fine motor activities to help them strengthen the muscles in their hands and fingers. Developing these skills will support them with writing, drawing, and other everyday tasks that require hand control. We have also been enjoying number and shape hunts, helping the children develop their numeral recognition and shape identification skills through fun and active learning experiences. The children have also enjoyed dressing up and learning about how important our Emergency Service Heros are.

In the Puddleduck room, the children have been exploring a variety of activities designed to help them learn and recognise colours, their favourite game at the moment is 'Find the Dot'! They have also been taking part in activities that help them understand the concepts of big and small. The children have successfully identified big and small animals, blocks and trees.

The Puddleducks have also been reading *Yoga Babies* and have developed their yoga skills. The children have really enjoyed moving their bodies and coping the pictures to copy the poses on the book.

All the children at Pre-School have enjoyed Forest School over the past few weeks. They have had great fun making mud pies and exploring the natural environment.

As part of our learning about Diwali, the children explored different colours and textures found in nature and created their own beautiful Diwali pattern using leaves, berries, sticks, feathers and even a few bricks.



The children paid their respects on Remembrance Day by taking part in craft activities and join in the two-minute silence . They also joined the rest of the school in supporting Children In Need.

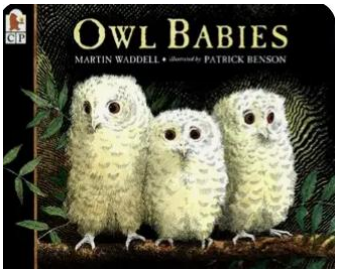
Reminders
As the weather is getting colder, please could you ensure your child comes to Pre-School with appropriate clothing, coats and footwear so we can all enjoy playing outside in all weathers.

Thank you for your continued support, we look forward to sharing more of the children learning and achievements with you very soon.






Venus



So far this half term, we have been reading *Owl Babies*. In English, the children have moved on from writing single words to writing simple sentences and they have been developing their careful segmenting skills, saying each sound they hear in a word before writing it down. They have become increasingly confident in applying their phonics knowledge independently during their writing.



In Science, the children have loved learning about nocturnal animals and exploring the woodland at night. They have enjoyed playing in dark dens and experimenting with torches and shadows. As part of this learning, the children have been developing their vocabulary and explaining how they can change shadows and why this happens.

In Maths, we have been developing our understanding of the composition of numbers to 10, exploring how numbers can be made from smaller amounts. The children have used a range of practical resources to investigate different ways of making numbers and to explain their mathematical thinking.

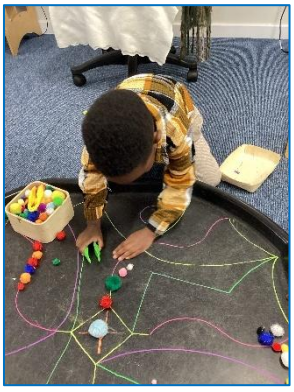
We also took part in the whole-school Remembrance Service. The children created collage poppies during play and, in Art, produced beautiful mixed-media pictures of a poppy field using watercolours and oil pastels.

The children have been enjoying learning Spanish each week. They have been practising greetings during registration and when saying ‘hello’ to each other in the morning, and they have also started to learn some numbers in Spanish.

In RE, we have been learning about the festival of Diwali and have begun exploring why Christmas is important to Christians.







Apollo

In English, Apollo class have thoroughly enjoyed reading our new text *The LightsThat Dance in the Night.* The year one children have written setting descriptions inspired by the beautiful illustrations and drawn their own story maps to retell the story. We are currently in the middle of writing our own versions of the story remembering finger spaces, capital letters and full stops in all sentences. Reception children have enjoyed sharing the story and looking at the variety of Arctic animals.



This week in Maths, we have been practising our fluency with number facts to 20 and solving problems using number facts and number bond. This includes missing number problems such as: ? – 5 = 4 or 8 + ? = 12. If your Year 1 child has not already logged onto Numbots please do give it a try as they love to play the game and it really does help to improve their fluency. You can download the app onto any device and will find the log in details in your child's reading record book.

Reception children have been working on number formation and recognising different representations of numbers to 10. They have been playing lots of games that involve subitising and counting with one-to-one correspondence. Thank you to all parents and other adults that joined us for our maths workshops this half term. We love to have the opportunity to share what your children are learning.

Our new unit of learning in Science is all about the animal kingdom and we have begun by grouping and classifying different types of animals. The children love sorting a pile of toy animals into their categories and discussing what was the same/different about each one.













Luna

We have been enjoying lots of different poems this half term! We loved listening to firework poems and collecting lots of adjectives. We watched some fireworks to think of our adjectives and enjoyed seeing a Catherine Wheel too. The children wrote their own version of *Like to be a Firework*. This week, we have been reading a book called *The Secret Sky Garden*. The children have written predictions and enjoyed the beautiful illustrations. Next week we will describe the setting.

In Maths, we have been practising counting in 2s, 5s and 10s. We have been learning multiplication and division. The children have been using cubes to make ‘groups of’ for multiply and sharing cubes to divide. The children have solved simple problems. Year 2s have been using the times and divide sign too. Well done, Luna Class you have worked hard in Maths.



In Science, we have been looking at animal groups and sorting animals. We have talked about why animals are in each group. In RE, we have been talking about the Lord's Prayer and looking at ways of praying. We completed our Waterfield Way task and enjoyed a camp fire in Forest School. The children toasted a marshmallow. They also enjoyed exploring the frost and playing a game of hide and seek.

This week, we made our lanterns. We had lots of fun getting messy and creative. They are going to look fantastic for the parade. Despite the wet weather, we had a fantastic trip to Yeovil as part of our Geography. The children were excited to go on a bus and drive through naming familiar features.

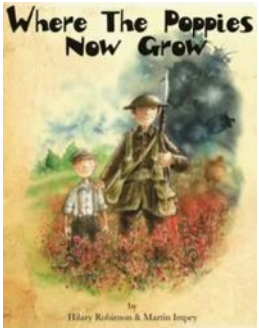
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We compared lots of features to Yeovil and talked about how Yeovil is much bigger. The children enjoyed counting shops and seeing a toy shop too. They loved playing in the park in Ninesprings. Thank you to the volunteers who helped on our trip!

Veritas



In English, we have been sharing the moving book of '*Where The Poppies Now Grow* by Hilary Robinson and using this as a stimulus for writing. We have written some super descriptions of a World War I trench using powerful adjectives and vocabulary to build a picture in the reader's mind. We have also written letters in the role of one of the main characters, Ray, who rescued his best friend, Ben, when he was injured in no man's land. The children included lots of details in their letters home as Ray. We will be displaying some of our work.

Last week, we also enjoyed taking part in an online activity – Michael Rosen's Big Poetry Party. It was great to see Michael Rosen live, performing some of his poems. He is one of our favourite poets, and his poems make us laugh.



In Maths, we have continued working on our addition and subtraction skills using the column, written method. I am very grateful to parents who came along to our maths workshop and could see a maths lesson in action. It was great to share with you our work and the children were proud showing off their skills. Well done, Veritas. We are now working on money, totalling coins, making amounts, adding amounts for shopping and calculating change.





In Science, we are learning about how the needs of all animals and how animals are grouped and classified. We have looked at six main animal groups; mammals, reptiles, amphibians, fish, birds and insects, and the features that all animals in that group share. We used this information to help us categorise animals.



In Geography, we are finding at about the town of Yeovil. We have located it on maps and this week we went on a rather wet trip to visit Yeovil to look at the geographical features, human and physical. Our thanks to our kind parents and volunteers who supported us on our wet walk. We are comparing Yeovil to Ilchester.

We really loved our session at Forest School and completed our Autumn Waterfield Way activity – to toast a marshmallow. It was great to sit around our first campfire and toast delicious marshmallows. Great fun was had by all and our first stamp collected in our Waterfield Way passports.





Minerva

This half term in English, the children have begun writing their own exciting stories inspired by the Ancient Egyptians. Using the humorous text, *You Think You've Got It Bad? A Kid's Life in Ancient Egypt* and drawing on the knowledge they developed during last half term's History learning. The children have explored what life was like in Ancient Egypt and used this understanding to create authentic settings, characters and events within their writing. We have been focusing on planning, developing and writing complete narratives while applying the grammar and descriptive language skills learnt throughout the term.

In Maths, we have been learning about division, beginning with practical activities involving sharing objects into equal groups. The children have used a range of concrete resources to build their understanding before gradually moving towards recording their thinking and developing confidence with the formal written method for division. It has been wonderful to see the children's increasing fluency and reasoning as they explain their mathematical thinking.





In DT, we have started our new project by exploring and evaluating existing shell structures used for food packaging. The children have been investigating how different packages are designed and constructed in preparation for designing and creating their own Christmas biscuit boxes later this term. They have enjoyed discussing the strengths and weaknesses of different designs and considering how packaging can be both practical and appealing.





A special mention must go to the fantastic home learning projects completed this term. The effort, creativity and enthusiasm shown by the children was truly impressive. It was clear how much time and thought had gone into each project,

and the children confidently shared their learning with their classmates. They demonstrated excellent knowledge of their chosen Ancient Egyptian focus and were able to answer questions and discuss their work with great pride. Thank you for your continued support at home.





Vulcan

The class have been busy over the last few weeks since returning from the half term break, starting new units of work and engaging in different workshops and activities.

English work has been based around the story *The Dragon Machine* by Helen Ward which explores the story of a little boy called George and his adventure to return mischievous dragons to their home. The children have explored using a variety of descriptive vocabulary to vividly describe the character of George, the settings he encounters along the way and then using their imaginations to predict how they believe the story will end.

In Maths, the children have continued to investigate the use of fractions to describe amounts less than one whole and subsequently make the link with decimals including tenths and hundredths. Following this, the class have been brushing up on their knowledge of 2D shapes.

In other subjects, Vulcan have been studying the geography of the United Kingdom and our place in it by interpreting and producing maps of the landscape, understanding the anatomy of the human body through the role of bones and muscles and learning to introduce ourselves and describe objects to develop a conversation with others in Spanish.

The children have also welcomed several visitors into class recently. Beth from the Mental Health Support Team came in to work with the class on recognising their big feelings and how to cope with them while Gary and Sophie from

Carymoor taught the children to become habitat crime scene detectives and use their excellent detective skills to solve a crime. Both workshops were great fun and enjoyed by all.







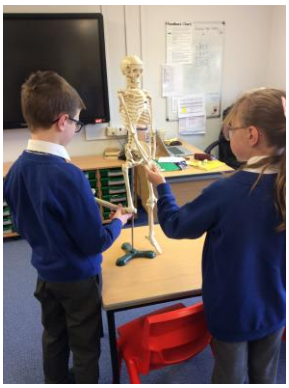






Neptune

Neptune Class has been working incredibly hard recently, particularly in Maths where we have been learning to tell the time and convert between 12-hour and 24-hour clocks. This is a tricky skill that requires plenty of practice, and the children have shown great determination as their confidence has grown. Please do keep practising this at home by asking your child to convert times for you throughout the day. Every little bit of extra practice really helps.



In Science, we have been thoroughly enjoying our learning about animals. We have explored why humans, and other animals have skeletons and the important jobs they do. We also took our learning outdoors during Forest School, where we investigated the relationship between predators and prey. The children showed great ingenuity when building shelters for prey animals, creating cosy nests and insulating hideouts with moss. They certainly enjoyed being out in the fresh air and showed plenty of resilience when the heavens unexpectedly opened!

Our learning continued with a fantastic workshop led by Carymoor Environmental Trust. We learnt about wildlife native to the Southwest and how scientists identify which animals have been in an area by examining the clues they leave behind.

The children particularly enjoyed taking part in a "Poo-Dunnit" investigation before becoming wildlife detectives in a crime scene investigation to discover who had murdered Woody the pigeon. Using footprints, feathers, hair samples and their new knowledge of animal droppings, they successfully identified the culprit. It was a memorable and exciting afternoon!





I have also been very proud of the creativity shown in the children's recent homework projects. It was wonderful to see such a wide range of ideas, from Egyptian pyramids and scenes made from salt dough to landscape paintings inspired by special places. Some children even used their science knowledge about magnets to design and create their own games. The quality of the projects was fantastic, and I have enjoyed celebrating everyone's hard work and creativity in class.



Libertas

Welcome back to school, everyone! We've had a lovely start to the half term, with the Libertas calendar already being so full. Here are just a few snippets of what we've been up to.

First, we welcomed a visit from the Mental Health Support Team, where children explored different thoughts and feelings, expanded their emotional vocabulary,

and learned universal regulation strategies. Our visitors spoke about what it feels like to feel ‘fizzy’ and helped the children create personal calm kits.

Next, we took part in fundraising for Children in Need on Pudsey Day. The children enjoyed creating and decorating origami Pudsey faces and drawings, while many also participated in our ‘Splat the Teacher’ challenge. Thank you to everyone who contributed to this important cause and helped support such a worthy charity.

In English, we have begun our new class text, *Letters From the Lighthouse* by Emma Carroll. The novel follows evacuee Olive Bradshaw and her brother Cliff as they travel from London to Devon during World War II. Through the text, children will explore a range of writing genres, including informal letters, diary entries and newspaper articles, continuing to develop both their creativity and grammatical skills. We were also fortunate to take part in Michael Rosen’s *Silly School Stuff* Poetry Party on Michael Rosen Day, where we read, listened to and wrote poetry inspired by everyday experiences at school.

In Geography, we have begun learning about trade through an engaging trading game. Children quickly discovered that different countries have access to different resources and worked hard to negotiate trades to increase their earnings. The activity encouraged determination, strategy and communication while helping children understand how modern trade works between the UK and its trading partners.

We are all very excited for the remainder of the half-term, especially as Christmas approaches. We look forward to sharing more of our learning with you soon.



Jupiter

This half term in Design Technology, the children are designing and creating their own mechanical cars. As part of this project, they have been exploring how electronics can support a vehicle's design. This week, the children used a micro:bit to create an electronic number plate. They programmed their own algorithms, downloaded them onto the micro:bits and tested their designs to create flashing displays. Over the coming weeks, the children will begin building their cars, drawing on their knowledge of a range of mechanical systems and electrical circuits.

In Science, we are learning about Earth and Space. This week, we had the exciting opportunity to interview an astronaut and learn about life aboard a space shuttle. The children asked lots of questions: they discovered what astronauts eat, how they keep clean, how they exercise to stay healthy and even how they go to the toilet in a zero-gravity environment.

The experience brought our learning to life and helped the children understand some of the challenges of space travel. Over the coming weeks, we will continue to explore the solar system, investigate the movement of the Earth, Moon and Sun, and consider how scientific discoveries have helped us to understand our place in the universe.





Juno

It has been another busy and exciting few weeks in Juno Class filled with creativity, outdoor learning and inspiring writing.

Juno Class has been writing some wonderful Remembrance poems, thinking carefully about the importance of remembering those who have served and sacrificed. The children have also enjoyed getting creative during Forest School making festive Christmas trees.

In English, we have been reading *Survivors* by David Long, a fascinating collection of true survival stories. Inspired by the book, they wrote newspaper reports about miners trapped underground for 14 days and retold the dramatic story of a canyoneer who had to cut off his own arm to survive. Their writing has been full of suspense and detail.

In DT this half term, the children have been learning about vehicles which are used to explore space – including the Mars Rovers. So far in this unit, they have researched previous vehicles and begun to build key DT skills including circuit building, attaching pieces of wood to build a frame, and attaching wheels to an axle so that the vehicle can move freely. The children have also planned how they are going to make their vehicles, preparing for a creative session coming up soon.



Attendance Matters

Good attendance is one of the strongest indicators of future success, and our target for all pupils is 96% attendance or above. We also closely monitor punctuality, with lateness reviewed regularly by our Attendance Officer and myself as Headteacher. Children at the Infant Site can arrive from 8.45am, with registers closing at 9.00am, while children at the Junior Site can arrive from 8.40am, with registers closing at 8.55am. Any child arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late. If you are experiencing any barriers that are affecting attendance or punctuality, please do get in touch. We are here to work with families and provide support wherever possible.



Online Safety

The recent 2026 Ofcom (ofcom.org.uk) report published in May highlights how digital technology is becoming an increasingly important part of children's everyday lives. Many primary-aged children use online platforms for learning, creativity and keeping in touch with others. The report also reminds us of the importance of teaching children how to think critically about what they see online, particularly as AI tools become more common. Regular conversations at home and school about online safety, respectful communication and managing screen time remain essential in helping children develop healthy and positive online habits.

Online Behaviour and Digital Life

- 86% of 8-17 year olds have heard of AI tools such as ChatGPT, Copilot or Gemini.
- 56% of 8-17 year olds have used AI tools, up from 50% in 2025.
- Among AI users, over half use AI for schoolwork or homework.
- 35% of 8-9 year olds have used AI tools.
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Social Media and Online Pressure

- 33% of children aged 8-17 who use social media or messaging apps say they feel pressure to be popular online all or most of the time.
- 70% of children aged 8-17 say they feel this pressure at least sometimes.
- 65% of children aged 8-17 are mainly consumers of content rather than creators, preferring to watch and follow others online.

Online Safety and Critical Thinking

- 46% of children who have seen AI-generated search summaries believe the information is always accurate.
- Around half of teenagers say they are confident they can recognise AI-generated content, but Ofcom found this confidence is often misplaced.

Negative Online Experiences

- 23% of children aged 8-17 reported experiencing nasty or hurtful behaviour during the past year.
- Of those who experienced hurtful behaviour:
    - 47% said it happened through social media.
    - 43% said it happened face-to-face.

Next term we will be running a parent workshop to increase awareness of Online Safety and how to best support your children in staying safe online. We look forward to seeing you there.

Forest School

We had a fantastic time at Forest School these last two weeks as we completed our Autumn Waterfield Way challenge. The children were delighted to sit around their campfires, where they toasted marshmallows and enjoyed this special outdoor experience together.





It was wonderful to see everyone having so much fun while collecting their first stamp of the year in their Waterfield Way passports. As well as completing the challenge, the children enjoyed exploring the frosty surroundings and taking part in an exciting game of hide and seek. It was a memorable session filled with adventure, teamwork and plenty of smiles!

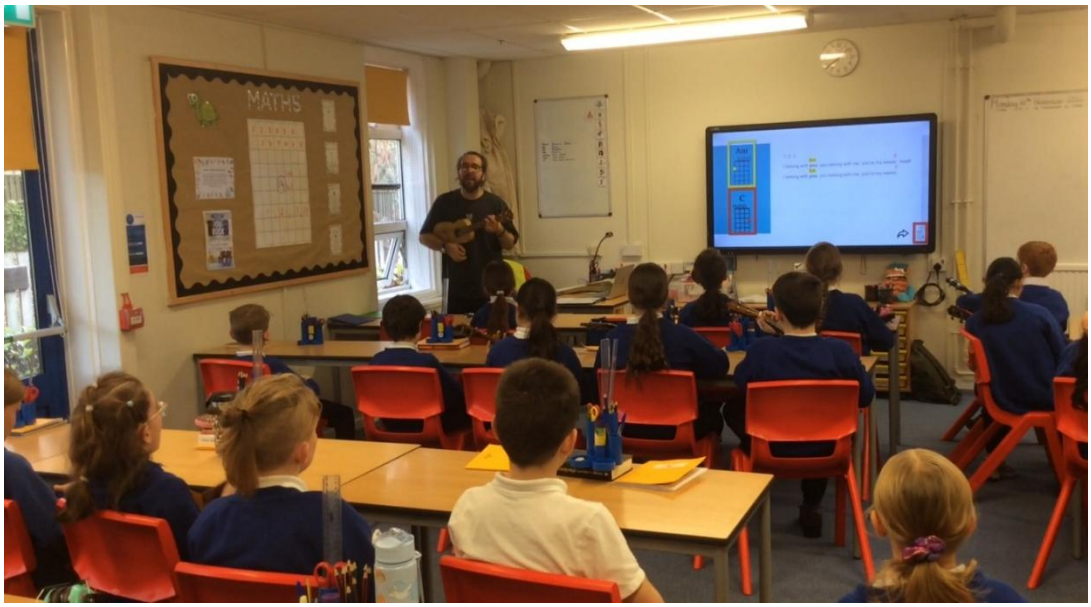
Music

Music continues to thrive across the school this term! Our Year 4 and Year 5 pupils are enjoying weekly ukulele lessons with Mr Male, who is helping them develop their instrumental skills while learning popular songs such as *Riptide* and *Ho Hey*. Earlier this year, Mr Male also worked with our Year 3 and Year 3/4 classes, giving even more children the opportunity to experience learning a musical instrument.

Alongside classroom music, we run both a Choir Club and a Percussion Club at lunchtimes, providing pupils with additional opportunities to develop their musical talents, work collaboratively and perform together. We are also delighted to offer private music tuition with Mrs Faulkner, enabling children to receive specialist instrumental teaching and further develop their musical skills. If you are interested in these opportunities for your child, please contact the school office.

As we move towards the festive season, children have begun rehearsals for the Lantern Festival and community Christmas events. These performances provide valuable opportunities for pupils to build confidence, share their learning and

contribute to the wider community. We look forward to showcasing their hard work and musical achievements with families and friends in the coming weeks.



Screen Time Guidance

The Government's new guidance encourages families to focus on balance when it comes to screen use. Choosing high-quality content, limiting screen time for younger children, enjoying screens together and protecting time for play, reading, sleep and family interaction can all help children develop healthy digital habits. Please see the infograph at the end of the newsletter for further guidance.

KS1 Geography Trip

As part of our Geography learning, Key Stage One enjoyed an exciting (but very soggy) field trip to Yeovil. The children explored a range of important features found in a larger town, including the library and the law courts. Throughout the visit, they observed how Yeovil differs from our own small town of Ilchester, noticing the larger number of shops, public buildings, roads and services available. The trip provided opportunity for pupils to develop their understanding of human geography and compare different communities within Somerset.

Despite the very wet weather, the children showed fantastic enthusiasm and resilience throughout the day. We managed to enjoy a break in the rain at Ninesprings, where the children had the chance to play. Although it was certainly a rainy adventure, everyone had a wonderful time, and we have returned to school with lots of new knowledge and experiences to share. Thank you so much to all of our parent helpers who make the trips possible.






Snowdrop Play therapy

We are delighted to be working with Play Therapist Laura Wilson, an independent practitioner this academic year. Play therapy provides children with a safe, supportive space to explore their feelings, build resilience and develop strategies to help them navigate challenges they may be experiencing.
Where staff feel a child may benefit from this support, the school will make a referral, and Laura will then contact parents directly to arrange an initial meeting. This provides families with an opportunity to discuss their child's needs, understand the process and decide whether the service is right for them.
This is an invaluable service for our children and families, and we feel incredibly fortunate to be able to offer access to it completely free of charge. Early emotional support can make a significant difference to a child's wellbeing, confidence and engagement in school, and we are grateful to have this expertise available as part of our commitment to supporting every child to thrive.

Somerset Councillor Meeting

Our School Council recently had the pleasure of welcoming John Bailey, a Somerset Councillor, to school. He spoke to the children about his role and

explained how he works to serve the people of Somerset, helping to make positive changes that improve the lives of those living in our communities.

The School Councillors certainly put him through his paces, asking a range of thoughtful and insightful questions about local issues, decision-making and how councillors represent the views of residents. Their curiosity, confidence and maturity were a credit to the school.

During his visit, Mr Bailey also had the honour of presenting each School Councillor with their official School Council badge. It was a proud moment for the children, who have embraced their responsibilities with enthusiasm and commitment.



We were incredibly proud of how well the councillors represented Ilchester Community Primary School. They conducted themselves with professionalism throughout the meeting and are taking their duties very seriously as they work to ensure the voices of their classmates are heard.

MHST Team Update

The Mental Health Support Team has continued to work closely with children in school, providing valuable support to help promote positive wellbeing and emotional resilience. Through targeted sessions, children have been supported to understand and manage their feelings, develop coping strategies and build confidence in navigating everyday challenges.

We were also delighted to welcome Beth and Lily into school, who delivered staff training focused on *Big Emotions*. The session explored how big emotions can affect children's behaviour, wellbeing and learning, whilst providing staff with practical strategies to recognise, respond to and support children experiencing overwhelming feelings.

In addition, the team delivered engaging workshops across the school, giving pupils the opportunity to explore a wide range of emotions in an age-appropriate way. Children learnt about where different feelings can be experienced within the body, discussed how emotions can affect us physically and emotionally, and developed a toolkit of strategies to help regulate and manage their feelings

positively. These sessions have provided children with valuable language and techniques to support their emotional wellbeing both in school and beyond.

Football

It has been a busy few weeks for our school football teams, taking part in several fixtures and tournaments. Two weeks ago, the Year 5 and 6 boys' team took part in the south-east Somerset round of the ESFA Schools' Cup and did fantastically well against seven other local schools, winning four games, drawing one and losing only one to a very strong Holy Trinity team who went on to win the tournament. The boys finished in third place overall after a tense final fixture that would ultimately decide who finished in second place and thus progress to the next round of the competition. Unfortunately, a draw wasn't to be enough on this occasion. Well done boys, we are extremely proud of you and your efforts while representing our school.

Last week, football returned to Ilchester for the first time in a little while as the school hosted a mini PPAT tournament involving our neighbouring schools, Countess Gytha and North Cadbury. In overcast and damp conditions, the team played fantastic football to win both of their matches comfortably in the end after having had to battle back after an early scare from North Cadbury. The matches were played in a great spirit, and we look forward to visiting the other schools over the coming weeks for return matches with our girls and lower KS2 teams.

It was the turn of the girls' team in the second football tournament of the week. Following the boys the previous week, the team took part in the south-east Somerset round of the ESFA Schools' Cup on a cold afternoon against nine other local schools. The girls showed fantastic skill and great counter-attacking instinct to finish third in their group and sixth overall with a record of two wins, a draw and two losses. Fabulous effort girls, we are very proud of you all.

The girls took to the field once again this week in a round robin tournament against fellow PPAT schools Countess Gytha and North Cadbury. They continued their good form to win first match comfortably 4-0 and draw a tight, end to end second game 1-1. Football is thriving at Ilchester School.







Children in Need

On Friday last week, the school showed its support for the BBC's annual Children in Need fundraising appeal by wearing spots for the day. To do our bit during the week, the school held our popular 'Splat in the Hat' competition where the children had the opportunity to splat their teacher in assembly. All week, coins were placed in the hats in each classroom amid much discussion and excitement as to who may get splatted. In the end, it was Neptune and Veritas classes who collected the most coins and so it fell to Mrs Poulton and Miss Hamm to get splatted. Thank you both for being such good sports. In all, over 25kg of coins were collected which raised £343.70 for this worthwhile cause.

The school has also received word that a group of our students have gone above and beyond in order to raise further funds for Children in Need. Last weekend, Alfred, Amelia, Charlie, Freddy, Rosie and Tobias, under their own initiative and their desire to take action to do something for those less fortunate, set up a stall selling items they no longer needed. Through this selfless attitude their efforts will make a difference. Well done to you all, we are immensely proud of you.




Remembrance in School







This week, the whole school community came together for our annual Remembrance Service. Every child, from our youngest children in Pre-School through to Year 6, gathered to reflect, remember and pay their respects. We were incredibly proud of the maturity and respect shown by all of our pupils as they observed the two minutes' silence. It was particularly moving to see even our youngest children recognise the significance of this moment, demonstrating such thoughtfulness and understanding.

Remembrance holds special meaning within our school community. As a school with many families connected to the Armed Forces through RNAS Yeovilton and the wider military community, we are especially aware of the sacrifices made by serving personnel and their families. For many of our children, remembrance is not only about reflecting on history but also about recognising the service and commitment of parents, relatives and loved ones who continue to serve today.

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to all of our military parents and family members for their service. We also recognise the unique challenges that military life can bring, including periods of separation, deployment and uncertainty. Your resilience, dedication and sacrifice do not go unnoticed, and we are proud to be part of a community that supports and values its military families.

The dignity and respect shown by our children during the service reflected the kindness, empathy and understanding that make our school community so special. It was a poignant and memorable occasion for everyone involved.

RNAS Yeovilton Remembrance Service



We were honoured to be invited to the RNAS Yeovilton Act of Remembrance at the Fleet Air Arm Memorial Church. Mrs Lovett and Mrs Bleasby accompanied a group of Year 6 children, who represented our school with maturity and respect as they took part in the service and laid a wreath created by our pupils. It was a meaningful opportunity for the children to pay their respects and reflect on the sacrifices made by those who have served our country.



Shoe Box Appeal

Thank you to everyone who supported the Shoe Box Appeal. As a local community, we have been able to send over **200 shoeboxes** to support children and families across Ukraine this Christmas. Your generosity will help bring comfort and joy to those facing extremely difficult circumstances, and we are incredibly grateful for the kindness shown by our school community.



500 Words Story Competition

Earlier this term, our House Captains launched a 500 Words Story Competition encouraging children to put their imagination and writing skills to the test. We

were delighted by the number of entries received and thoroughly enjoyed reading the wide variety of creative stories submitted.

A huge well done to everyone who took part. Every entrant has been awarded 10 house points in recognition of their effort and enthusiasm. Congratulations to Lilly, whose story, *The Clockmaker's Secret*, was chosen as the overall winner. Lilly has been awarded 100 house points, and her winning story is published at the end of this week's newsletter for you all to read.

We would also like to congratulate Robyn whose story, *The Secret of the Elves*, received special recognition. Robyn has been awarded 50 house points for her achievement. Well done to all of our talented writers for making the competition such a success!

Safeguarding Update

As Anti-Bullying Week comes to a close, we have been reminding our children about the importance of kindness, empathy, and most importantly breaking the silence when something does not feel right. The NSPCC website has a wealth of advice and specifically supports families in talking to children about difficult topics in order for them to open up. Click the link to find out more: https://www.nspcc.org.uk/advice-for-families/talking-about-difficult-topics/

Safeguarding remains everyone's responsibility, as ever, if you have a concern about a child or children, you can report it anonymously to Somerset Direct on 0300 123 2224.

As another busy week draws to a close, I would like to thank all of our families for the wonderful support you continue to give the school. Working together makes such a difference for our children.

Looking ahead, there is a growing sense of excitement as we approach that time of year filled with performances, parties, singing, festive jumpers, raffles and enough glitter to keep the cleaners busy until Easter. And yes, before anyone points it out, I know it's only November... but I have officially mentioned the Christmas word! Thank you, as always, for your continued partnership and support.

Yours faithfully
Michelle Mordue
Headteacher



AUTUMN TERM 2026 - Dates for your diary

Tuesday 24th November	Kindness Day
	Lantern making at the Junior Department
Wednesday 25th November	PPAT Football Y3/Y4 @North Cadbury 3:00-4:30pm
Thursday 26th November	Swimming Jupiter 9:00-11:00am (4/5)
Friday 27th November	KS2 Respect assembly with James Tostevin 1:20pm
	Village Lantern Parade from the Infant Department at 5:30pm
Monday 30th November	Yr 6 Autumn End of Term assessments (all week)
	YSGA Football @Bucklers Mead Y34 4:00-5:00pm
Tuesday 1st December	Years 3 and 4 visit to Mosque (Yeovil)
	Selected children from Jupiter and Juno to sing to diners at the Ilchester Arms 12:30pm
	Primary Carols event Huish Episcopi (School Choir) 2:45-6:00pm
Wednesday 2nd December	House Point Challenge
Thursday 3rd December	Swimming Jupiter 9:00am-11:00am (5/5)
	Provisional Date for RNAS Yeovilton Flying Santa
Friday 4th December	FIS Christmas Fair
Monday 7th December	Stage-Ed Panto (gifted by FIS)
Wednesday 9th December	Christmas Crafternoon – Reception 2:00–3:00pm
	KS2 Christmas Coffee Morning at Ilchester Town Hall
Thursday 10th December	NSPCC Christmas Jumper Day
Friday 11th December	Nativity – For Pre-School Parents 9:30am
Monday 14th December	Infant Nativity 9:30am and 6:00pm – For Infant Parents
	Christingle making in classes
	Christingle Service – Junior Children at school
Tuesday 15th December	Christingle Service - Pre-School, Reception and Parents to church – Leaving for church at 1:20pm
Wednesday 16th December	Christingle Service – KS1 Children at school 9:00am
	Whole-School Christmas Lunch
Thursday 17th December	Forest School – Veritas, Apollo and Luna Classes
Friday 18th December	Last Day of Term Mufti day with visit from Father Christmas and class parties
Christmas Holiday Begins 18 December 2026 – 3rd January 2027 Inset Day 4th January 2027 Spring Term Begins on Tuesday 5th January 2027	

SPRING TERM 2027 - Dates for your diary

Wednesday 13th January	Teacher Tower of London Familiarisation (online Y5/6)
Thursday 14th January	Swimming Neptune 9:00-11:00am (1/1)
Tuesday 19th January	Curriculum Workshop Venus & Apollo (Yr R) 9:10am
Wednesday 20th January	Curriculum Workshop Apollo (Yr 1 only) 9:10am
Thursday 21st January	Curriculum Workshop Luna class 9am
	Swimming Neptune 9am-11am (2/5)
Friday 22nd January	Curriculum Workshop Veritas 9:00am
Thursday 28th January	Swimming Neptune 9am-11am (3/5)

COMMUNITY EVENTS AND NEWS

IDCA

STEP INTO CHRISTMAS!

Friday 27th November - Ilchester Town Hall



LANTERN PARADE

Meet in Northover Layby at
5:45pm for 6pm parade

VISIT FROM SANTA

Father Christmas will announce
the winners of the lantern and
bauble competitions





TREE LIGHT SWITCH-ON

The winner of best lantern will
switch on the Christmas tree lights

HOTDOGS AND FESTIVE STALLS

Join us for hotdogs, mulled wine and hot
chocolate, as well as stalls and music until 8pm

Prizes will also be awarded to the winners of the Scarecrow Competition!


IDCA's
Christmas
Fair
Sat 28th Nov
11am – 2pm
Ilchester Town Hall
Visit Santa
Local craft and produce stalls
Refreshments
Raffle
Mug Tombola
Snow Machine on the Green

Wessex Scouts and Lendiniae Explorers Christmas BINGO

Come along to help fundraise for Wessex Scout Group and Lendiniae Explorers with the annual Christmas Bingo!



Raffle and refreshments are also available!

12th of December 2026

DOORS OPEN AT 1700 PM

EYES DOWN AT 1800 PM

Ilchester Town Hall, Ilchester

Cash or Card available

Yeovil Christian Support Trust
The Gateway
Addlewell Lane
Yeovil
Somerset
BA20 1QN
Tel. 01935 726576
Email:lordslarderyeovil@gmail.com
Web:www ycstyeovil org.uk
Charity no. 1092843

22nd October 2026

Mrs Michelle Mordue, Headteacher,
Ilchester Infant and Junior Schools,
Ilchester,
Somerset,
BA22 8JL

To all the students, parents and staff of Ilchester Infant and Junior Schools,

Thank you to all the students, parents and staff for your kind donation of **102 items of food** in support of the work of The Lord's Larder Food Bank in Yeovil. Your continued support is very much appreciated.

We have been working to help those in our community for 35 years now, having started in 1991. We know that the food bank is a vital lifeline for single people and families who run out of money for various reasons, and then require emergency food support, while in crisis.

Last year we were able to give out **154,550 items of food** which went into **3913 emergency food parcels** to help a total of **8272 local people** (this figure breaks down as 4947 adults and 3325 children in a total of 1826 families).

So far this year (to the end of August) we have already given out over **83,059 items of food**, to help **5,004 people (of which 1,872 were children).**

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for choosing to support the work of the Lord's Larder Food Bank, and to pass on the heart-felt gratitude from all those we were able to help each year, without your support this would not be possible.

Kindest regards,

Mat

Mat Callaghan Operations Manager Lord's Larder Food Bank & Lord's Larder Community Fund

YEOVIL, WE'RE COMING

JPL JUNIOR TRAINING CENTRE

WHEN	EVERY FRIDAY STARTING 13TH NOVEMBER
WHERE	BUCKLER'S MEAD ACADEMY
WHO	U7 & U8 5PM - 6PM BOYS & GIRLS







Oct/Nov/Dec 2026



Somerset Council

Somerset School Nurse Team Newsletter

Welcome to the Somerset School Nurse Team newsletter!

The school nurse team is made up of Specialist Community Public Health Nurses, and Assistant Practitioners. We specialise in promoting the health and wellbeing of children and young people aged 5—19 years and cover primary and secondary schools across Somerset.

This newsletter will be delivered termly, and is intended to keep you up-to-date on all the things we are doing as a service, and will include topics and links relevant to physical and mental health.

We hope you find this newsletter helpful but please do feedback anything you would like to be added.

Somerset children & young people · Health & Wellbeing · Phn School Nursing

Feedback QR code



What is SEND support?

(Webinar for Parent Carers and Young People)

Do you have questions about SEND support and how education settings should meet a child or young person's special educational needs?

Join our **free webinar** to learn more about SEND support in education. There will also be an opportunity to ask questions during a Q&A session at the end of the webinar.

Wed 21 Oct 2026, 7.30-9.00pm | Thurs 22 Oct, 10.00-11.30am

For more information on how to join visit:

Workshops and Information Days



With coughs and cold season fast approaching please remind your child of the importance of good hand hygiene..

Washing Your Hands song - CBeebies





Are you experiencing issues with your child around toilet training?

If so please click on the link below to find useful information and advice...

Potty training your child - Best Start in Life - NHS

If your child has already started school and is still in nappies/ pullups please contact the School Nurse Team for support!

Text Chat health: 07480 635 515

If your child is experiencing issues with daytime/nighttime wetting often the situation can be improved by following the...

4 Steps to a Healthy Bladder

1. **Check the bowel**



It is important to rule out constipation as a full bowel will reduce the capacity of the bladder to expand

2. **Check for a UTI (Urinary Tract Infection)**

Bugs in the bladder can cause issues around wetting so it is important to check for infection



3. **Drink plenty!**



The bladder is a muscle and all muscles need exercising, visit the link below for advice regarding how much your child should be drinking

4. **Relax to wee**

Ensure your child is comfortable sitting on the toilet, encourage them to take their time & encourage boys to do sit down wees



Children's bladder health – what's normal and what can go wrong - ERIC



Somerset Council



Disclaimer: This is not an emergency service; it operates Monday to Friday 9am - 5pm and is only available by using a UK mobile number. Your messages are stored on our secure system and can be seen by the School Nursing Team who run our ChatHealth Service. Although this is a confidential service, in the event of a safeguarding issue the School Nurse has a duty of care to act on this and may

Has your child missed their flu vaccination?



If so, the School Aged Immunisation Nursing Team (SAINT) are running a number of walk in clinics.

NO APPOINTMENT NECESSARY!



Somerset School Aged Immunisation Nursing Team | Somerset NHS Trust

Back to school can mean a return of those pesky 'head lice'!



How do I treat head lice?
Medicated lotions and sprays may not always be needed, the 'wet combing' method can be very effective at getting rid of headlice.

The 'Wet Combing' Method:



- Wash your hair with ordinary shampoo
- Apply **lots** of conditioner to the hair (any conditioner will do)



- Comb the **whole** head of hair from **roots to the ends** using a special **fine-toothed** comb (detection comb). These can be bought online or from a pharmacy



- It usually takes about **10 minutes** to comb short hair, and **20—30 minutes** for long or curly hair
- Use this method on **days 1, 5, 9 and 13**, so you catch any newly hatched lice
- Check everyone's hair again on **day 17** to make sure they are free of lice.

If you need medication, this can be bought from a supermarket or pharmacy. Some medicated treatments may need repeating after a week to kill any newly hatched lice

For more information on treating headlice head to...

Head lice and nits - NHS

ORAL HYGIENE



With a significant rise seen recently in child tooth extraction, please can we remind you of the importance of good oral hygiene

- **Brush teeth twice a day**: ideally first thing in morning and last thing at night
- **Use a fluoride toothpaste**: use a pea sized amount containing at least 1000ppm of fluoride
- **Brush for 2 minutes**: ensure your child brushes for 2 minutes covering every tooth and surface
- **Spit don't rinse**: after brushing your teeth spit the excess toothpaste and avoid rinsing



How to Brush Your Teeth Animation MCM

Somerset School Nurse Team Contact Details:

Email: schoolnurseduty@somerset.gov.uk

Tel: 0300 790 9854

The Clockmaker’s Secret

On a cold, frosty Tuesday morning, Elara pushed the brass key into the lock of the ancient wooden door. She still couldn't believe her grandfather was gone! It hadn't even been a week since he'd been buried, and she was still in shock that he'd left her his most important possession, the clock shop.

She stood in the middle of the small room and gazed at the hundreds of ticking clocks. The room smelled strange; she couldn't quite put her finger on it, but it felt familiar, safe. The sun shone through the window, warming the room. Suddenly, something caught her eye. Shimmering in the sunlight was a strange-looking clock; she didn't remember seeing it before.

She slowly walked toward the strange object when the room was suddenly filled with the shrill chiming of hundreds of clocks. Elara screwed up her face and covered her ears. The sound was deafening; she closed her eyes tightly, trying to block out the horrifying noise. She lifted her head slowly and suddenly realised she could no longer hear anything, not even the clocks ticking.

Then, from somewhere far away, a low moan began. It grew louder and higher until it became a terrible wail, rising and falling, rising and falling. Elara's heart pounded. That wasn't a clock. She ran to the window. The street outside had changed.

Elara crept outside. The road was crowded with people hurrying past, gas masks bouncing at their sides. Above her, the sky throbbed with the drone of engines.

"Don't just stand there!"

A small, grubby boy grabbed her hand and dragged her towards the shelter at the end of the street. They had barely reached the steps when a deafening explosion shook the ground. Dust rained down on them.

Elara squeezed her eyes shut. Her hand slipped into her pocket and closed around something cold and smooth. The strange clock! She didn't remember picking it up, but its small hands were spinning wildly. A shrill chime filled her ears, and everything went white.

When she opened her eyes, she was back in the shop. Silver moonlight now shone through the shop's window, and the clocks ticked softly around her. Elara let out a shaky breath. It must have been a dream.

Then she heard it. A cough, behind her.

She spun around. Standing between two grandfather clocks, his face smudged with soot, was the boy from the street. He stared at the ticking clocks with wide, frightened eyes.

"Where am I, Miss?" he whispered.

Elara’s mouth went dry. “What’s your name?”

“Albert, Miss. Albert Hale.”

Elara gasped and reached for the old photograph of her grandfather on the counter. A young boy with the same freckled face grinned back at her. Underneath, in Grandad’s handwriting, were the words: Albert, aged 9, 1941.

UK Government

NHS

A GUIDE TO SCREEN TIME

UNDER 5s

BEST START IN LIFE

How to help little brains develop healthy screen habits



How much screen time should my child have?

Limit total screen time, wherever possible.

Under 2 yrs: Avoid screen time except shared activities with family that encourage bonding and interaction.

2-5 yrs: Try to keep to 1 hour a day. Less if possible.

What content is better content?

Young children's brains are over-stimulated more easily than adults', so they need specifically tailored content.

Slow paced content: Choose content with simple stories and clear, slow speech, so emotions are easy to follow.



Safe content: Use parental controls to block inappropriate, harmful material.

Social media: This isn't made for young brains, so it should be avoided.

AI: Don't let them use AI toys, tools, or chat-bots until we know more about their effects on children.

Safe screen swaps: Switch fast-paced style videos for slower-paced content with simple stories.

How does my screen use affect my child?

Lead by example: Children's brains are like sponges – they'll copy your screen use habits. Be mindful of how often you use screens around your child.



When and where is it okay for my child to use screens?

Set clear boundaries for screen use. This gives children time for activities and play that help them develop.

Avoid young children using screens alone. Try to keep bedrooms and mealtimes free from screens.

Why not try... watching and discussing content with your child? Conversation helps their development.



Safe screen swaps:

Mealtimes: Swap screens for music, games or conversation – make it social.

Bedtimes: Swap screens for bedtime stories 1 hour before sleep.

My child has SEND. Is the advice the same for us?

Children with disabilities or special educational needs may benefit from tailored screen use. And for some, assistive technology can be an important tool for communication and everyday participation.

They also need ample time for interaction, play, and sleep. Try to avoid screen time for these activities.





How does screen time affect my child's development?

Large amounts of screen time are linked with negative effects on children's health and development. It can affect social, emotional, language & brain development, sleep, eyesight and weight.

Young children learn best through warm interaction with parents and carers – reading, play and conversation. These early moments build the foundations for life.