

# Whitwick St John the Baptist CE Primary School

## Autumn Term 2 Newsletter

### Headteacher



It has been a fantastic half term, full of exciting learning, new knowledge and many achievements to celebrate. There has been *Penguin Power* everywhere, with pupils showing real enthusiasm, resilience and pride in all that they do.

The children continue to be a real credit to their families and to the school, both in school and when representing us beyond the school gates. We regularly receive positive comments from visitors, as well as from staff and members of the community at places we have visited, who are always impressed by the pupils' behaviour, manners and attitudes to learning.

In collective worship, our themes of **Peace** followed by **Love** have inspired thoughtful reflections and meaningful discussions, as they always do. The children's ideas about how they can show love during Advent and the Christmas season were particularly inspiring and showed great empathy and maturity.

The last couple of weeks of term have been especially busy, and it has been lovely to welcome so many of you into school for our various events. Your support and involvement really do make a difference and help to create such a strong school community.

On behalf of all of the staff at Whitwick St John's, we wish you a peaceful and joyful Christmas break. We are looking forwards to welcoming the children back into school on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2026.

### Fundraising

We have been overwhelmed by the support shown at our recent fundraising events. The money raised has gone straight back into classes so that the children can see and feel the benefits. This has included funding Christmas gifts for all pupils, as well as resources to enhance lunchtime experiences, such as a bubble machine, craft activities and construction sets.

Once the final raffle total has been confirmed, the remaining funds will be shared between classes to contribute towards their immersion experiences linked to upcoming topics.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support.

## Lunchtimes just got EVEN better!

We are thrilled to share the amazing impact of your generous donations during our recent fundraising events. Thanks to your kindness, we've raised **over £400 so far**, which has allowed us to purchase a fantastic range of new lunchtime play equipment, including:



- A bubble machine to make our disco days even more exciting
- Loom band bracelet-making kits
- Toy cars and play mats
- Gymnastics ribbons and scarves
- Cup stacking equipment
- Magnetic drawing pads
- Musical instruments
- Art supplies including Large rolls of paper and wax crayons

These additions have transformed lunchtimes! Children are happier, more enthusiastic, and tell us that playtimes are now so much more enjoyable. Your support truly makes a difference—thank you for helping us create such a fun and engaging environment for our pupils.

Whilst on the theme of fundraising...

Our recent non-uniform day in aid of Children in Need raised a staggering £373.65, which has gone directly to help children across the UK. Your generosity through all our fundraising events is truly incredible—thank you for continuing to make such a positive impact!



# Choir News

## Choir Thank You Message

A huge thank you to all of our wonderful choir members for their fabulous performances and incredible dedication during what has been a very busy term.

The children have represented the school brilliantly in the community, performing on numerous occasions — many of them in the rain! Despite the challenging weather, their enthusiasm, resilience and positive attitudes never wavered. They sang with confidence, smiles and real pride, showing true commitment to their choir and to one another.

We are so proud of the way the choir has supported each other, risen to every challenge and shared joy through music. Thank you also to families for your ongoing support with rehearsals, performances, and encouragement.

Well done, choir — you have been fantastic!

Mrs. Thomas

# Preschool

Penguins have been busy using the power of play to learn all about *transport* this month. Our forest school adventures have inspired wonderful storytelling, and we especially loved reading *The Very Busy Spider* before building our own spectacular webs in the woods.

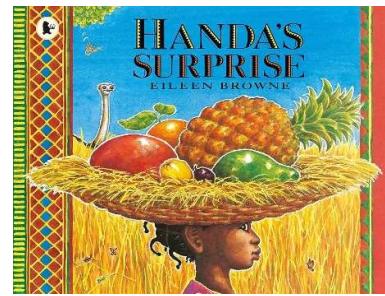
We also celebrated our very first Preschool Christmas Party! It was truly heart-warming to hear our children singing proudly with their families, and the dancing was nothing short of incredible.

A huge **thank you** to the amazing local businesses and supporters who helped make this celebration possible: Colledges Florists, Lioness Beauty, KCR Service Centre, Whitwick Co-op, Tesco Ashby, Craig Smith at Stealth Black

Belt Academy, Ruby's Chip Shop, Louise at HSBC, EVM Cleaning, and our very own local superwoman, Jane Griffin. Your generosity means so much to our children and community



## EYFS



The children in EYFS have had a wonderful start to their journey at big school! They are already showing great independence, settling into new routines, and feeling very grown up as part of our school community.

Our story focus this term has been *Handa's Surprise*. The children have loved exploring the story, writing their own lists of fruits using their initial sounds, and retelling the story in their own words. They have also been very creative, weaving beautiful baskets for Handa to carry to Akeyo, decorating fruit to place inside them, and even using real fruit to print with paint.

We are so proud of how quickly the children have embraced phonics. They have made an amazing start and are feeling very grown up with their very first reading folders. Already, their enthusiasm and progress in reading has been fantastic!

It has been a joy getting to know each and every child, and we can't wait to learn more about them as we continue our exciting journey together.

## Year 1

Year 1 have had a very successful and enjoyable half term. The children have worked hard and shown a positive attitude to their learning.

In **Geography**, the children learnt about **hot and cold places**, identifying the **equator** and discussing which countries have hot or cold climates. They explored the **physical features of hot deserts**, and after half term will learn about the people who live in hot and cold deserts and how they adapt to survive.

In **English**, the children studied the story ***Lost and Found***. They enjoyed creating **freeze frames** to explore key moments and wrote **setting descriptions of Antarctica**.

In **Maths**, the focus has been on **partitioning numbers to 20**, identifying how many **tens and ones** make each number.

We have also enjoyed festive activities, including **hot chocolate outdoors**, learning about **being a good friend**, **Christmas crafts**, and singing for **Carols for Cancer**.

The children are working very well together and are showing increasing **determination and perseverance** in their learning. Thank you to parents and carers for supporting children with their **pink practice books**. New work and reading book changes will begin in the New Year.



## Year 2

### Year 2 Shine in a Truly Moving Nativity Performance



This week, our Year 2 children treated us to a *truly moving* performance of the nativity story, beautifully brought to life through “I’m Gonna Shine.” The magic of the occasion was heightened even further by hosting the performance in the church, whose peaceful atmosphere and stunning surroundings added a special sense of wonder to the story.

The children sang with such clarity and heart. Their beautiful singing filled the church and captured the spirit of the season perfectly.

We were also incredibly impressed by their confident speaking. Every line was delivered with such pride, helping to tell the story with warmth and meaning. The children’s lovely dance moves added an extra sparkle to the performance, bringing smiles all around.

A huge well done to Year 2 for their hard work, energy, and teamwork. You certainly shone brightly—just like the Gloria in the story!

## Year 3

### Year 3 News: From Castles to Quakes!

Year 3 have had an exciting and action-packed start to the term, diving into history, geography, science and even a new language!

Following our fantastic trip to Tamworth Castle, the children were inspired to explore the events leading up to the Battle of Hastings and the fierce battle for the throne. They have shown great curiosity, asking thoughtful questions and making connections between what they saw at the castle and what they are learning in class.

We have now launched our new topic, Angry Planet Earth, where the children are discovering how dynamic our planet can be. They have been learning all about earthquakes, including *why* they happen and *where* they are most likely to occur. As part of our immersion into the topic, Year 3 took part in an earthquake safety role-play, practising the important steps of Drop, Cover, and Hold. They also created colourful and informative safety posters to share their knowledge. They have now begun exploring tectonic plates and the powerful Ring of Fire, developing a strong understanding of the forces shaping our world.

In Science, our focus has turned to Light and Dark. The children have been investigating different sources of light and carrying out hands-on tests to find out which materials are the most reflective. Their predictions and teamwork skills have been wonderful to see.

Year 3 have also taken their first steps into learning French. They have enjoyed practising numbers to ten, colours, greetings, and the four seasons.

## Year 4



What a wonderfully busy and memorable half term it has been for Year 4!

The children have shown fantastic enthusiasm, curiosity, and resilience across all areas of the curriculum, and we are incredibly proud of everything they have achieved.

Throughout the half term, Year 4 have consistently shown *Penguin Power* by working hard, supporting one another and striving to do their best—even when learning felt challenging. They have lived out our Christian values through acts of kindness, respect, responsibility, and compassion, both in and out of the classroom.

One of the highlights of the half term was our informative and interactive visit to **Bosworth Battlefield**. The children immersed themselves in history, deepening their understanding of the Battle of Bosworth through engaging activities, expert-led talks, and hands-on exploration of the site. They asked thoughtful questions, made excellent links to our classroom learning and demonstrated exemplary behaviour throughout the day. The trip truly brought our History learning to life and sparked many lively discussions back in class.

In Design and Technology, pupils have been busy designing and creating **pneumatically operated toys**. They explored how air pressure can be used to create movement and carefully applied this knowledge to build imaginative and functional designs. The children showed perseverance when refining their ideas and took great pride in their finished products. Their creativity and determination were wonderful to see.

Finally, we were incredibly proud of the children when they hosted a **memorable Christingle service at church**. The pupils spoke clearly and confidently, sang beautifully and demonstrated deep understanding and respect throughout the service. It was a truly special occasion that reflected the children's spiritual growth and their ability to contribute meaningfully to our wider school community and it was a joy to share it with all who attended.

## Year 5



This half term, Year 5 have completed their World War 2 history topic, with the highlight being their fantastic visit to Beaumanor Hall. As evacuees for the day, the children experienced codebreaking, explored an air-raid shelter and learned about rationing and life during the war.

In English, they have developed their writing skills through a range of different text types, while in Maths they have focused heavily on fractions. We have now immersed ourselves in Topic 3: Greece, where the children enjoyed tasting Greek foods and exploring the human and physical geography of the country.



Across the wider curriculum, the children have learned about forces and materials in Science, continued to strengthen their Art skills and deepened their understanding of online safety and building respectful relationships. They have also taken part in a variety of extra-curricular activities and have shown great confidence, independence and resilience throughout the term.

Year 5 wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

# Year 6

## Year 6 – A magical term to remember!

Another eight weeks have flown by in Year 6, filled with exciting learning and memorable moments. It has been a lively and enriching start to the year, with plenty of new knowledge explored across the curriculum.

In History, we ventured into the world of The Ancient Maya, uncovering their beliefs, number system and daily life. The topic sparked lots of curiosity and the classes enjoyed diving into the mysteries and stories of this ancient civilisation. Our English work also linked closely with this theme as we explored the legend 'Quetzalcoatl Brings Chocolate to Earth'. This led to imaginative narrative writing, with the children developing creative descriptions and story structures inspired by the tale.

In Maths, the focus has been on fractions, giving the children the chance to build on their knowledge of methods, spot patterns and apply their understanding in different contexts. The topic has offered plenty of opportunities for discussion, helping them to deepen their confidence with trickier concepts.

As we moved into the festive season, Christmas activities brought lots of excitement and variety to our days. We enjoyed a wonderful trip to the pantomime to see Cinderella and in true panto fashion, when asked if we had a good time, the answer was..."Oh yes we did!" We also took part in our cherished Christingle Service, filling the church with candlelight and reflections on the meaning of Christmas. To round off the celebrations, our Carols for Cancer performance brought beautiful music, festive warmth and a lovely sense of community to the end of term.

We hope all our Year 6 families enjoy a Merry Christmas filled with joy, rest and plenty of seasonal cheer. We look forward to welcoming everyone back in the New Year for learning that is even more engaging and new advent



# Sporting News



## Sportshall Athletics Success

Some of our Year 5/6 children showed incredible determination and fantastic sportsmanship at the recent Sportshall Athletics event at Ivanhoe School. They gave their best in every event, supporting one another and showing true teamwork. Overall, our school finished **4th in the competition**, a brilliant achievement that reflects the children's hard work, commitment, and positive attitude. We are all very proud of their efforts!

## NWL "Let's Get Moving" Awards

We are thrilled to share that our school was nominated for **Primary School of the Year** at the NWL Let's Get Moving Awards and proudly received the **2024/2025 Spirit of the Games Award**. In addition, Whitwick was awarded the **Gold School Games Mark**, recognising the wide range of sporting opportunities on offer and the commitment of our staff and pupils to an active, healthy lifestyle.



## NLSSP Dodgeball

Dodgeball continues to be a fantastic sporting activity for so many of the children at school!



## Year 3 and 4 Festival

Monday, 17th November, marked the first in a series of exciting events for some of our Year 3 and Year 4 pupils — and what an incredible start it was! A flutter of pre-event nerves certainly didn't hold anyone back. From the moment they arrived, the children threw themselves wholeheartedly into the activities, showing brilliant teamwork, determination and, most of all, genuine enthusiasm. They took part in a series of fun, fast-paced games in a round-robin format,

teaming up with pupils from other schools. It was wonderful to see them collaborate so confidently, cheer each other on and embrace every challenge with huge smiles. A fantastic event all round — we couldn't be prouder!

## Year 1 and 2 Festival

Our Year 2 children represented the school brilliantly at the Dodgeball Festival on 18<sup>th</sup> November. They worked hard, listened well and had lots of fun trying out a new sport, making new friends and working well as a team with children from other schools. It was great to be able to offer this amazing opportunity to our children in KS1 and the children who were able to attend, certainly made the most of it, by playing enthusiastically, whilst behaving wonderfully throughout the event!



## Year 5 and 6 Development competition

On the Thursday of the same week, a mixed Year 5 and 6 team took part in a pooled group competition against eight other local schools. With three games played per match, the children ended up competing in an impressive total of 18 games — and their hard work paid off as they secured a place in the semi-finals! Their attitude throughout was outstanding. They remained positive, focused and determined, and were an absolute joy to

watch and to take to the event. The children brought tremendous energy, great teamwork and plenty of smiles — absolutely brilliant!

## Year 5 and 6 Excel competition

In the final school Dodgeball competition of the season, our Year 5/6 team took part in 15 games alongside 7 other local teams. Our children played with great sportsmanship and skill in what was an extremely closely matched competition. The camaraderie and commitment within the team in each event was fully on show and earned a mention from NWLSSP manager, saying they were such an honest team that made his and the young leader's jobs a lot easier.



## Year 5-6 Girls Tony Moore Football Match v Willesley

Our Year 5–6 girls played their second Tony Moore pool match at home against Willesley on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> November and came away with a fantastic 5–0 victory! We were incredibly proud of their excellent teamwork, determination and brilliant sporting attitude throughout the game. A superb performance from start to finish — well done, team!



## Year 5-6 Girls Tony Moore Football Match v All Saints



Our girls' football team played their third and final Tony Moore pool match at home against All Saints on 10th November. It was an exciting, end-to-end game played in a fantastic spirit, with great teamwork and determination shown throughout. The final score was 4-0 in our favour. They represented our school brilliantly.

## Year 5-6 Mixed Kirby Shield Football Match v Woodstone

On Monday 3rd November, our Kirby Shield team played their first pool match at home against Woodstone. It was a very competitive and exciting game and the team put in an excellent performance throughout. They started the competition with a fantastic 3-1 victory! Well done to all the players for their effort.

## Year 5-6 Mixed Kirby Shield Football Match v Broom Leys

Well done to our Year 5-6 Kirby Shield team, who played their second pool match of the competition at home against Broom Leys Primary School on Monday 17th November. It was a fantastic game, with both teams showing great skill and determination. Whitwick's performance, attitude and effort were superb throughout and at the final whistle the team secured a well-earned three points. We are extremely proud of the players and the way they represented the school.



## Year 5-6 Mixed Kirby Shield Football Match v Ashby C of E

Well done to our Year 5-6 Kirby Shield football team, who earned a brilliant 4-1 win against Ashby CE Primary School. Whitwick played superbly, showing great effort, teamwork and determination throughout. This result means the team has now won all three of their matches so far.

## Leicestershire County Football Final

Well done to our mixed Year 5–6 football team, who on *Saturday 15th November* represented North West Leicestershire in the Pokémon Leicestershire County Finals at Judgemeanor Community College in Leicester. The children showed superb determination and excellent sportsmanship, competing brilliantly against very strong opposition. We are incredibly proud of their effort, teamwork and attitude throughout the tournament.



## Year 5-6 Girls Tony Moore Football Match v Hugglescote

On Friday 31st October, our Year 5–6 Girls' Football Team played their first Tony Moore group match at home against Hugglescote. Both teams played brilliantly and it was a closely matched game from start to finish. The girls showed great teamwork, effort and determination throughout and the final score of 1–1 reflected just how evenly balanced the match was. Well done to everyone who played!

## Year 5-6 Girls Tony Moore Football Match v Willesley

Our Year 5–6 girls played their second Tony Moore pool match at home against Willesley on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> November and came away with a fantastic 5–0 victory! We were incredibly proud of their excellent teamwork, determination and brilliant sporting attitude throughout the game. A superb performance from start to finish — well done team!

## Year 4 Handball Festival

On Thursday 7th November, a group of our Year 4 children took part in a Handball Festival, where they had the opportunity to put their skills into action against other local schools.

They showed great enthusiasm, teamwork and effort throughout and it was wonderful to see them enjoying the experience. Well done to all who took part!



## **Cross Country Race at Sir John Moore**

On Saturday 1st November, over 50 children from Whitwick took part in the first cross-country event of the season at Sir John Moore Primary School. Despite the challenging weather, the children showed fantastic resilience, enthusiasm, and all of them enjoyed taking part. Well done to everyone who represented the school so brilliantly!

What an incredible day for our Year 5/6 Girls Football Team at the Leicester City Primary Stars Tournament!

The girls were unstoppable in the group stages – flying to the top of their group after playing six matches, winning four and drawing two, and conceding only two goals across the entire stage! Their teamwork, determination and confidence were clear to see in every game.

Their fantastic performance carried them all the way to the final, where they battled bravely. After a tense match, the result came down to penalties, which they unfortunately lost.

What made us the proudest today was not just their football, it was their attitude. Every adult and member of staff at the event commented on how polite, respectful and well behaved the girls were throughout the entire tournament. Even in the disappointment of the final, they represented our school with kindness, sportsmanship and a brilliant team spirit.



## Years 1-4 Inclusive Sports Event

This half term, some of our Year 1-4 pupils took part in The Inclusive Sports event, which was held at Forest Way School. This was a fantastic opportunity for them to try out and improve their accuracy, balance and co-ordination skills whilst taking part in a wide range of team games.

All of the children had a fantastic time, and worked really well together alongside children from other local Primary Schools and Forest Way School



## East Midlands Regional Trampolining Competition

A big "well done" to Nancy who recently took part in the East Midlands Regional Schools Trampolining Competition at Hinkley Leisure Centre.

Nancy is also the first person ever to represent Whitwick St John the Baptist CE Primary School in this event, and she did so brilliantly; we are all very proud of her achievements!





## Uniform

In preparation for the new academic year, I would like to take this opportunity to remind everyone of our school uniform expectations. We appreciate your continued support in ensuring that all our pupils come to school dressed appropriately and ready to learn.

Our current school uniform is as follows:

- **Navy cardigan or jumper** with the **school logo**
- **Black or grey trousers** (not tracksuit bottoms) or a **skirt/ / pinafore dress/shorts**
- **White or blue polo shirt** (no logo required)
- **Black shoes or trainers** with **minimal logos**

Pupils are welcome to wear **blue and white chequered summer dresses or jumpsuits**, in keeping with our school colours.

Please ensure that **all uniform items are clearly named**, so that any lost items can be quickly returned.

Wearing the correct uniform helps promote a **sense of belonging** and ensures that all our pupils feel part of the school community. Thank you for helping us maintain these high standards.

## Safeguarding

### **Protection Children is everyone's business!!**

At Whitwick St John the Baptist CE Primary School, we understand the utmost importance of having robust systems for protecting children and safeguarding their welfare. All our staff and volunteers are vigilant and alert to any potential concerns about our pupils. We have a comprehensive safeguarding and child protection policy, which is available upon request from the school office.

If you have any concerns, please speak to the head teacher. We will treat your concern seriously and with the utmost care.

# Parking



Please remember to park only in legal parking spots and to respect and adhere to all posted no-parking zones. Your cooperation in maintaining a safe environment around our school is greatly appreciated. Let us work together to ensure the safety of all our students and families.

We would kindly like to remind everyone to drive and park safely and considerately when dropping off or picking up children from school. Unfortunately, we have seen and heard reports of some dangerous and inconsiderate parking and manoeuvres.

The safety of our children is always our top priority, so please ensure you are parking appropriately and driving with care around the school.

## How Can You Help?

- Park further away and walk to school
- Keep your speed down
- Park in a safe place following the Highway Code.
- Do not park on pavements
- Turn your engine off as soon as you have parked
- Keep the school gates clear at all times - stopping here, even to drop off your child for a short period of time, is dangerous
- Do not enter the school car park unless authorised to do so
- Do not block local residents' drives
- Leave the middle of the road free, with enough room for other road users to easily pass through
- Leave enough room for emergency vehicles to easily pass through
- Make sure your child leaves and enters your vehicle safely to and from the pavement
- Check for pedestrians and cyclists before opening a car door
- Take care when reversing
- Remember - it only takes one vehicle to be parked inconsiderately for there to be an impact on accessibility to emergency services or others. Do not be that one.

Further to the notice sent on WEDUC on 23/01/25. Please note that parking violations can be reported through the following link. <https://www.leics.police.uk/contact/af/contact-us-beta/contact-us/driving-vehicles-traffic/report-illegal-parking/> Thank you to those drivers who put the safety of our pupils first.

## Free School Meals

If you think, your child may be entitled to free school meals, please claim these by contacting the following number: 0116 3055417 or visit <https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/education-and-children/social-care-and-supporting-families/free-school-meals>.



It is particularly important for parents of children in EYFS, Year 1, and Year 2 to register, even if your child is already receiving a free hot meal. Registering will enable the school to access funding for your child every year while they remain in primary school. They are not obliged to have a hot meal every day. This funding will help provide valuable support for your child.

## Nut Free School

Please can we remind you that we are a nut school due to children with allergies? Children **should not** be bringing anything into school that may contain any type of nut or anything that is brought in will be confiscated and returned at the end of the day. This includes Nutella products. Your cooperation in keeping our school environment safe for all students is greatly appreciated. Thank you for your understanding and support.



## 'Rockhopper' Breakfast and After School Club



If you require a space in our breakfast or after-school club, we kindly remind you to book via ParentPay. For any inquiries, please contact Miss Steadman on Weduc or phone 07704 144227 or the school office 01530 832116.





## Term Dates 2025-2026

### Autumn Term

Bank Holiday	Monday 25 <sup>th</sup> August 2025
Schools Open	Tuesday 26 <sup>th</sup> August 2025
Mid-Term Break	Monday 20 <sup>th</sup> - Friday 24 <sup>th</sup> October 2025
Schools Close	Friday 19 <sup>th</sup> December 2025

### Spring Term

Schools Open	Tuesday 6 <sup>th</sup> January 2026
Mid-Term Break	Monday 16 <sup>th</sup> - Friday 20 <sup>th</sup> February 2026
Schools Close	Friday 27 <sup>th</sup> March 2026

### Summer Term

Schools Open	Monday 13 <sup>th</sup> April 2026
May Day	Monday 4 <sup>th</sup> May 2026
Mid-Term Break	Monday 25 <sup>th</sup> May - Friday 29 <sup>th</sup> May 2026
Schools Close	Wednesday 8 <sup>th</sup> July 2026

## Term Dates 2026-2027

### Autumn Term

Schools Open	Wednesday 26th August 2026
Bank Holiday	Monday 31st August 2026
Mid-Term Break	Monday 19th – Friday 23rd October 2026
Schools Close	Friday 18th December 2026

### Spring Term

Schools Open	Tuesday 5th January 2027
Mid-Term Break	Monday 15th – Friday 19th February 2027
Schools Close	Friday 19th March 2027

### Summer Term

Schools Open	Monday 5th April 2027
May Day	Monday 3rd May 2027
Mid-Term Break	Monday 31st May – Friday 4th June 2027
Schools Close	Friday 9th July 2027

