

# THE OTTER

*THE NEWSLETTER OF OTTERBOURNE CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL.*



Dear Families

It's been another great week here in school, from the Year 4's starting their swimming lessons to a group of Year 5's winning a maths competition at The Gregg School, of which there is more later, and everyone enjoying World Book Day.

Sadly though, we end the week having to say goodbye to someone who, in a very short amount of time, has made a tremendous impact on the children in Otter Class (Year R). Mrs Dicker joined us early in the Autumn Term on a temporary basis to support Mrs Bertacchini in further improving all that we offer our youngest children. I am incredibly thankful that we had the opportunity to work with Mrs Dicker but sad that the children have to see her go so soon.

On a happier note, I am pleased to be able to share with you that Mrs Holland, who has been instrumental in the development of the school's curriculum in recent years, was successful at interview recently, and will officially take up the post of Deputy Headteacher from the start of the Summer term. Mrs Holland told her class this news earlier today as we shared that Mr Marshall will be re-joining the teaching team to allow Mrs Holland to fulfil her wider school responsibilities, and the reaction to both bits of news couldn't have been more positive. I am sure you will want to join me in congratulating Mrs Holland on her promotion; I am looking forward to working with Mrs Holland in this role as we continue to improve all that we do for your children.

Best wishes for a good weekend

Mr Geraghty

## **World Book Day Bonus – blanket appeal**

There is more about World Book Day 2026 later in the newsletter but something really positive came out of our choice to focus on the benefits of reading for relaxation and having the theme of 'Bedtime Stories'. The children were invited to bring blankets with the aim of sharing reading with friends, and they really took to it. So much so that at lunchtime many children were outside in the sun, sat calmly on blankets chatting together. It was lovely to see and we would like to give this choice to the children each day if possible, so if you have any blankets at home that would be suitable for our children to use, and you are happy to donate them to support this, we would be extremely grateful. Thank You.

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## Keystage 1 Spring Gardens

As the first signs of Spring are now appearing in the school, and we turn our attention to Easter, we want to offer our younger children and their families the chance to participate in a creative activity that celebrates the season.

This isn't a competition, and anyone in our Year R, Year 1 and Year 2 classes can take part. There are also no set rules so you can let your creativity flow, and everything you need could be just outside your door.

Finished 'gardens' should be brought in to school on Friday 27<sup>th</sup>, when we will invite the whole school to view them outside.

Year R, 1 and 2  
Spring Garden Parade

**FRIDAY 27<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2026**

You are invited to design and make your very own spring garden inspired by nature and Easter.

Please bring your miniature garden to school on this date to create a spring garden parade which will be enjoyed by children from across the school.

## Gregg School Primary Maths Challenge – WE WON!

We are incredibly proud of the eight Year 5 pupils who took part in The Gregg School Primary Maths Challenge this week. Two teams represented our school and demonstrated fantastic teamwork, problem-solving skills, and mathematical thinking throughout the competition.

Both teams worked brilliantly to tackle a range of challenging questions, showing resilience, determination and excellent mathematical reasoning. Their hard work certainly paid off; one team came away as the overall winners, with our second team scoring 4<sup>th</sup> place, out of 28 teams. The pupils were fantastic ambassadors for the school, showing great enthusiasm and supporting each other every step of the way. It was wonderful to see their confidence grow as they worked through the different challenges.

A huge well done to everyone who took part.



## Wild West Costume Call!

Our upcoming drama production is heading to the Wild West, and we need your help!

We are looking for any checked shirts, neckerchiefs, waistcoats, cowboy-style accessories or other Wild West paraphernalia that children could wear as part of their costumes. If you have anything at home that you would be happy to donate, we would be very grateful.

Tickets for the production will be on sale soon!



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## World Book Day- Bedtime Stories

It was amazing to see the children arriving at school looking so cosy and relaxed in their bedtime clothes. The children had a wonderful day developing their love of books and learning how reading is good for our wellbeing.

Our day began with our assembly where the children discovered the books they could buy with their WBD vouchers this year and they got to hear about their teachers' favourite books and how reading makes the teachers feel. They really enjoyed the teachers' story being read aloud, chosen by the learning council, which was titled, 'The Formidable Teachers'. Throughout the day, the children enjoyed hearing books read by different teachers, shared what they love about reading, made book recommendations to their peers and other exciting activities. At lunchtime, many of the children chose to take their blankets out to play and created reading corners on the playground.

When the bell rang for 'Drop Everything and Read' the children spread out into cosy corners which they created with their blankets and cushions, some in the sunshine, to enjoy reading. Year 6 read to their Year R buddies, and it was wonderful to see everyone enjoying books in their own relaxing ways. Some of the children shared how reading makes them feel:

*"When I read my worries go far away and I enter a new world."*

*"Reading makes me feel intrigued and excited."*

*"Reading makes me go into a magical sleep."*

*"Reading helps me to go to bed."*

*"Reading makes me feel joyful, like I'm lost in a wonderland."*

*"I love reading in nature with the birds tweeting."*

*"Reading makes me feel relaxed, especially next to my cat."*

*"Reading about other people makes me feel lucky."*

*"I like feeling like I'm in the book."*

For more information about the benefits of bedtime reading, or to read the Formidable Teachers assembly story, please see this information on our school website at [Otterbourne Church of England Primary School - World Book Day 2026](https://www.otterbourneceps.org.uk/World-Book-Day-2026)



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## World Book Day Community Council Project


Our Community Council has been busy this week wrapping and hiding a collection of “book treasures” around the village!

If you're lucky enough to find one, we'd love to hear from you. Please email us at [books@otterbourne.org](mailto:books@otterbourne.org) to let us know where you discovered it. You're also very welcome to share a photo of you enjoying the book at home.



Once you've finished reading, please re-hide the book for another family to find. Better still, if you're heading out of the village, take it with you and leave it somewhere new. Let's see how far our books can travel!

We'll be tracking their journeys in school and can't wait to see where they pop up next.

Happy reading!




**You have found...**  
**BOOK TREASURE**  
*from*



**COMMUNITY COUNCIL @  
OTTERBOURNE C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL**

*We love reading at our school and for World Book Day,  
we want to share this excitement!*



If you have found this special treasure, please take it and share at home.  
We would love to know how far our books have travelled.  
Please send us an email so we can track them: [books@otterbourne.org](mailto:books@otterbourne.org)

**WHEN YOU ARE FINISHED, PLACE IT SOMEWHERE DIFFERENT FOR THE NEXT FAMILY TO FIND!**

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## Bookmark Competition

Learning Council had the difficult job of judging the bookmark competition this week. There were lots of very creative entries with some very inspirational quotes about why reading is so good for our wellbeing. These will now go on display in the school and the library.



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## LEARNING IN ACTION PHOTOS



This week in Year R has been all about seeds, seeds and seeds! The children have been hunting for seeds, creating their own seeds with playdough and planting seeds outdoors. We can't wait to see what will grow!



There was lots of excitement in Hedgehog Class when Kit brought in his chicks to show the class.



Year 1 have been looking for signs of spring.

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The Year 6 boys football team played Kingsworthy Primary this week which ended with a 4-4 draw.



The sun inspired the children into a huge spontaneous Macarena dance at playtime this week; the vibe spread and it was lovely to see so many joining in!

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## Latest FOS Information

Please follow these links for the latest information on class lists.

School Uniform donations:

<https://app.classlist.com/events/#/events/view/1371800935>

General donations:

<https://app.classlist.com/events/#/events/view/1426070654>

May Fayre Planning Group:

<https://chat.whatsapp.com/BuzcuwSIEipKqAoSMk56q7>



## EASTER EGG TRAIL

**WHEN:** Thursday 26th March

**WHERE:** On the playground after school

**PRIZE:** An Easter treat for every child who enters

**TICKETS:** Must be purchased on Classlist by Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> March so we can buy enough prizes. One ticket needed per child.

**HOW IT WORKS:**

- Children being collected at normal finish time can complete the trail with their parent/carer.
- Children attending an after-school club will complete the trail with their club friends & staff.
- All children can take part – siblings also welcome!
- You will receive a trail via Classlist which you can print out but it's not necessary, children can write the letters they find on a piece of paper to work out the secret Easter word.



Scan to get your tickets on classlist

## Wonder Woman Shop

13 MARCH 2026  
ALL GIFTS £4

Children can purchase wrapped presents for anyone they would like. Please purchase tickets via Classlist by 8pm on Thursday 12th March



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## **Children and Phone Safety - NSPCC**

The NSPCC's guidance on children, mobile phones and online safety is a useful resource for DSLs to draw on when communicating with parents. It addresses one of the most common questions schools are asked: when is a child ready for a phone, and how can families manage the risks?

The guide offers balanced, practical advice on readiness, boundary-setting, parental controls, and ongoing conversations about safe and responsible use. Including or signposting this resource in a parent newsletter can help reinforce consistent messages between home and school, reduce anxiety, and support a shared approach to online safety.

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/children-phones-online-safety/>