

THE OTTER

THE NEWSLETTER OF OTTERBOURNE CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL.



Dear Families

We have once again reached the end of the school year, and what a year it has been with some of the most extreme weather we've experienced (the playground outside Wren Class registered 52° at one point). We also end the year with an incredible set of results from across the school, including the KS2 SATs, which you can find within this newsletter. My thanks must go to the entire teaching team for the part they have played in these outcomes, and to all members of the support staff, who strive to ensure every child is supported to succeed here.

We also have so many volunteers to give thanks to for the time they give up to regularly supporting our children with reading, or through a club (knitting is very popular!). This year, we invited all volunteers to a thank you tea party hosted by governors and children. It was a lovely event and hopefully demonstrated just how much we appreciate the time and effort that our volunteers give to the school. I can see this being a regular event in the school diary! My thanks must also go to *The Otter* who kindly donated to the school following their World Cup event. We are hoping to add something to our science or outdoor curriculum and are very grateful for their support, which came as a complete surprise. Thanks also must go to the Fowler family for their donation of musical instruments.

The children have given us some incredible memories this year. From some outstanding performances in this year's Drama Club production, to Young Voices choir singing together in London. From personal displays of musical talent in our worships, to a range of fun moments during Otterbourne's Got Talent. The children showed their determination throughout the year too, not only to overcome challenges in learning, but to overcome personal challenges during our residential weeks. Whether this was related to staying away from home, pushing themselves to go higher or getting into the water, your children have embraced everything that we have put to them, and they should have so much pride for going outside of their comfort zones.

The final act of the year is a new addition to the calendar. In September, our Otters 'rang in' their school year on the new school bell which was donated by a previous family of the school. Today, this year's Year 6 children will be the first to 'ring out' their time here, after which all of the children will head off for the Summer holidays. Year 6 parents are invited in to school for this event, but it is starting at 3pm, so if you are here a little early for pick up, you will see it all taking place at the reflection space by the orchard.

I hope that whatever you are doing and wherever you are going, you have a happy, fun, and safe summer break. We look forward to welcoming the children back on Thursday 3rd September.

With best wishes

Mr Geraghty

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2026 Otterbourne Church of England Primary School Data

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE – Good Level of Development

School	Hampshire	National
83.3%	76.1%	72.3%

Phonics Screen

School	Hampshire	National
Year 1 - 70.8%	Year 1 - 82.2%	Year 1 - 81.9%
Year 2 - 100%	Year 2 - 55.8%	Year 2 - 53%

YEAR 4 – Multiplication Tables Check

	School	Hampshire	National
Average Point Score	22.8		21.6

END OF KEY STAGE TWO – SATS Results

Subject	School	Hampshire	National
Reading (Greater Depth) Average Scaled Score*	87.2% (40.4%) 108.8	74.6% (30.5%) 105.6	74.1% (30.6%) 105.7
Writing (Greater Depth)	93.6% (27.7%)	73.4% (13.8%)	73.2% (13.4%)
Maths (Greater Depth) Average Scaled Score	93.6% (42.6%) 107.6	75% (25.9%) 104.8	74.2% (26.7%) 104.9
Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling (Greater Depth) Average Scaled Score	93.6% (46.8%) 109.3	71.9% (27.4%) 104.9	72.8% (29.9%) 105.4
Science	98%		82%
Reading, Writing, Maths Combined (Greater Depth)	87.2% (19.1%)	62.8% (8.6%)	62.5% (8.6%)

*a scaled score of 100 is the 'expected standard'; 110 is 'greater depth'.

Results are unvalidated and may be revised following checking and validation by the Department for Education.

Thanks and well done to Mr O'Dowd, Miss Squibb and all of the staff and parents who have supported our extra-curricular sports provision this year. Due to the inclusive approach, the range of activities we participate in and the way that physical education is part of the school culture, we have achieved the Platinum Sports Award again this year. More than anything though, we have to say 'congratulations' to all of the children who have represented the school throughout the year. We've had a lot of personal out-of-school success too, and I love sharing these achievements with the children during our celebration worships, so please keep bringing in the medals and certificates.



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Mr Hiscox is Retiring

Whether it is gathering up fallen leaves with the 'goat', clearing blockages in urinal pipes or undertaking a wide range of running repairs around the school, Mr Hiscox has spent the last six and a half years with his hands on pretty much every part of the school. We have been so very lucky to have benefited from his range of 'handyman' skills and the time he dedicated to helping keep the grounds and building smart and safe for the children. Mr Hiscox has always gone 'above and beyond' including helping with the FOS events at weekends and in the evenings and we are going to miss having access to his incredible knowledgebase – there is nothing Mr Hiscox doesn't know!

It's now time for Mr Hiscox to hang up the sink plunger and take to the open road with his wife, as their plans include lots of sightseeing in their campervan, as well as visiting America. We all wish Alex the very, VERY best for a wonderful and relaxing retirement.

Alex, thank you for all you have done for the children, the staff and the families of Otterbourne.

Caretaker Vacancy

We are very pleased to have the support of a member of the community over the summer to ensure the school is ready for our return in September, but beyond that we are yet to find our new caretaker. If you know of anyone who might be interested in this vital role, please ask them to contact the school or look on the Hampshire Education Jobs website.

Other Staff Changes

Sadly, as so often happens at the end of a school year, we also have to say a few goodbyes to members of staff for a variety of reasons:

Mrs Law, Mrs Rees and Mrs Qureshi who work across the school have changed the lives of the children in their care with their compassion, empathy, warmth and ongoing commitment to ensuring the children have the chance to thrive. When a child in the daily care of a learning support assistant says, 'I'm going to miss you because you help me do things I didn't think I could do', you know just how important these members of the team are to the children.

Mrs Tear and Miss Gilbert, have been incredible in the office supporting me, Mrs Davenport and, *quite simply*, all of our families on a regular basis and we are incredibly sad to see them leave.

I recognise that this looks like a lot of change, and of course it is sad for us to have to see anybody leave, but I want the reasons for this to be known. It is no secret that the school has had to accept the strategic decision by Hampshire to reduce its size back to 30 children in each class. This has an impact on an already very challenging school budget - which all school budgets are – and that means that sadly we have to reduce staff numbers accordingly. I am happy to tell you though, that Mrs Law and Mrs Rees have already secured new roles in local schools.

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Gravel Appeal

Year R are creating a new construction area in their outdoor provision and would like some donations of gravel. If you are able to source some and bring it into school, please get in contact with the office or let Mrs Bertacchini or Mr Geraghty know.

INSET Days: -

A reminder that our Inset Days for next year are as follows:

Tuesday 1st September

Wednesday 2nd September

Monday 2nd November

Monday 4th January

Tuesday 4th May

Meet the Teacher – Save the Date

In September, there will be an opportunity to meet your child's new teacher and receive some important information about teaching and learning in your child's new phase, including how you can support your child at home.

Please make a note of these dates in your calendar for September

Tuesday 8th September – Year 3/4 in Wrens Class (presentation followed by visits to individual classes – parents to enter via Wrens outside door)

Wednesday 9th September – Year 5/6 in Red Kites Class (presentation followed by visits to individual classes – parents to enter via Red Kites outside door)

Thursday 10th September – Year 1 and Year 2 presentation in classes (parents to enter via the Squirrels and Hedgehog classroom doors)

Moving up questions.

There is a lot of information on the Guide to School pages of the website, and I still welcome and questions you think we could address on an FAQ page as I would always hope to keep you fully informed about life at school. For Year 1, Mrs Smith will be emailing out anything parents need to know about the new school year during the holidays.

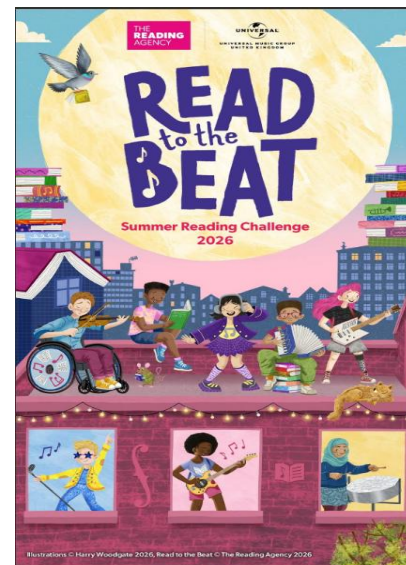
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Summer Reading Challenge

Last week, we had a visit from Chandler's Ford library who told us all about this year's Summer Reading Challenge. This challenge has already begun in libraries across Hampshire and the children can sign up in any local library or by following [this link](#). The Summer Reading Challenge is about encouraging children to continue reading and enjoying books through the school holiday. Taking part in the Summer Reading Challenge and reading during the summer will help them when they return to school or start school for the first time. Children who have signed up for the Summer Reading Challenge and visit a library will be given a collector pack and a sticker for each book they have read, that includes listening to an eAudiobook, being read to, using a fact book to learn a new skill or reading a comic. Children who read six books and log their reads at the library or online will be able to collect a sustainable medal from their local library.



When a book might help

The library have created a '**When Book Might Help**' page for parents that need advice on finding books that tackle specific subjects or themes that children may find challenging at different times. Please visit [When a book might help | Leisure and culture | Hampshire County Council](#). This and other resources can be found on the library Kids Zone. [Kids Zone | Leisure and culture | Hampshire County Council](#)

Summer Postcard Project

Keep your postcard in a safe place this summer ready for the Summer Postcard Project. We look forward to receiving them in over the holidays and in September. If you choose to post your postcard, please add the class name to the address. Thank you.

Volunteer Thank You

On Thursday, many of our volunteers joined us for a Thank You Tea Party. The governors kindly baked cakes and Year 6 children from our Children's Council became waiters and waitresses for the afternoon and served them, before singing some of their Leavers' songs. A huge thank you to all our volunteers this year who have supported the school through fundraising activities, hearing readers or helping on trips. We are keen to recruit new volunteers to hear readers across the school in September, if you are interested, please contact Mrs Holland.



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A New Trim Trail

Children's Council, who have been seeking and analysing pupil views for a new trim trail, were very excited to discover this week that FOS have raised enough money to turn their ideas into a reality. They are pictured here, in the exact spot the new trim trail will be, on the top of the field by the steps. We are currently seeking quotes and designs but hope this will become a new feature of our school by the Spring Term 2027.



Learning in Action

How to look after our school

- 1 First put your stuff in your locker.
- 2 Next when you take your jumper off put it in the jumper box.
- 3 Then if there is rubbish in the hallway pick it up and put it in the bin.
- 4 After that don't eat your snack while running.
- 5 The next morning be good in Pe.
- 6 The next day put your Pe stuff in the box.
- 7 At break don't run on the tiles.



How to keep my school tidy

1. Put you're rubbish in the bin.
2. Play nicely.
3. Dont litter.
4. Be kind.
5. Be sensible in the toilets.
6. Be good to others.



Year 2 have been developing their computing skills and learning how to insert pictures and edit text. They then used these skills to create posters about looking after our school.



Year 6 have been trying desperately to get the signatures of all their friends.

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Year 5/6 children have written questionnaires to find out about children's experiences of playtime across the school. This data is helping them to create guides to a pleasant playtime to help others with their playtime issues.



Year 5 have been learning to estimate angles.



Year 5/6 have been designing and cooking their own WWII rationed recipe: Potato Pancakes complete with a seasonal vegetable. There were many different versions created and the children enjoyed tasting and evaluating their recipes.



The children have been helping Mrs Simpson put the final touches to our Creation Container. It is looking absolutely incredible. Well done to Mrs Simpson and all the children that have contributed!

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Children in Year 3/4 have been tasting salad ingredients and designing their own Italian Salad to make.

Food Bags

The HAF programme is here to support low-income families over the summer break and is a childcare lifeline for many. This summer, over 200 HAF schemes will be running across Hampshire, offering a wide range of fun activities alongside nutritious meals for children and young people.

Bookings opened on 22 June, and we are keen to ensure that all eligible families are aware of and able to access these opportunities.

For summer 2026, there is a new central booking system, making it much easier for families to find and book activities. The system includes built-in eligibility checking, so parents and carers no longer need to use previously issued HAF codes. New schemes are also being added regularly in the run-up to the holidays.

Families in our area can visit a direct booking site (copied below) to:

Find local holiday clubs

- Book places
- Join waiting lists where sessions are full

Funded by the Department for Education, the HAF programme enables local authorities to provide free healthy food and enriching activities during school holidays for children who receive benefit-related FSM.

Further information is available via the FAQs:

[Hampshire Holiday Activities and Food \(HAF\) frequently asked questions](#) | [Health and social care](#) | [Hampshire County Council](#)

If there are any queries, the HAF team can be contacted at:

connect4communities@hants.gov.uk (please include *FAO HAF* in the subject line)

Info specific to each district area:

Families in the New Forest can visit the [New Forest HAF Booking Site](#) to find local schemes, book places or add their names to the waiting list.

Families in Test Valley can visit the [Test Valley HAF Booking Site](#) to find local schemes, book places or add their names to the waiting list.

Families in Winchester can visit the [Winchester HAF Booking Site](#) to find local schemes, book places or add their names to the waiting list.

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What Parents & Educators Need to Know about SKIN BETTING

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

'Skin betting' is the term used when players gamble using virtual in-game items, such as weapon 'skins' or character cosmetics. Although these items appear purely decorative, some can hold significant real-world value. Research suggests that children as young as 13 have engaged in this type of betting, often on sites with limited age checks or safeguards, blurring the line between gaming and gambling.

UNREGULATED PLATFORMS

Skin gambling typically takes place on third-party websites that are not licensed or regulated. These platforms often lack age verification, making them easily accessible to children. By linking their gaming accounts, users can deposit skins, place bets, and withdraw winnings as cash or higher-value items – often without adults being aware these activities are happening.

REAL-WORLD VALUE

Skins may look like simple cosmetic upgrades to in-game items and characters, but some are worth hundreds or even thousands of pounds. They can be traded or sold on online marketplaces, meaning they function much like real money. When young people bet with skins, they are risking items of genuine financial value, even if no physical cash is exchanged directly.

INFLUENCER PROMOTION

Some gaming influencers and streamers have promoted skin betting sites in their content. This can make the behaviour appear normal or even desirable, potentially encouraging younger audiences to engage in these activities without fully understanding the risks involved.

SOCIAL STATUS PRESSURE

In games such as Counter Strike: Global Offensive (CS:GO) and Fortnite, rare skins can act as status symbols. Young players may feel the pressure to own high-value items to fit in with peers. This can lead them to take risks – such as using gambling sites – to obtain desirable skins, similar to how branded goods can influence behaviour offline.

LIMITED OVERSIGHT

Skin betting can take place both in-game and on external websites that parents and educators may not be familiar with, because skin betting does not always resemble traditional gambling. It can go unnoticed until significant losses have occurred, in both items or money.

GATEWAY BEHAVIOURS

Skin betting mirrors many aspects of traditional gambling, including chance-based outcomes, reward systems and excitement. Early exposure to these mechanics can normalise betting behaviours before children and young people even reach legal gambling age. Research indicates that this may increase the likelihood of developing unhealthy habits later, particularly if early wins create a false sense of control or skill.

Advice for Parents & Educators

UNDERSTAND IN-GAME ITEMS

Familiarise yourself with the games young people are playing and learn whether they include tradable or sellable items. Titles like CS:GO and Rust are known for skin marketplaces, but similar systems are increasingly common across games.

LOOK FOR WARNING SIGNS

Be alert to changes in behaviour, such as secrecy around gaming, a strong focus on acquiring specific skins, or a sudden loss of in-game items. These could indicate involvement in skin gambling and provide an opportunity to start a conversation about it.

DISCUSS VALUE AND RISK

Help children and young people understand that cosmetic items like skins can carry real-world value. Explain that losing them through betting is comparable to losing money, therefore reinforcing the connection between in-game actions and real financial consequences.

USE CONTROLS AND SAFEGUARDS

Make use of parental controls and platform settings to restrict trading, purchases, and access to external websites. Where possible, disable marketplace features on games and monitor young people's account activity to reduce the risk of unauthorised transactions.

Meet Our Expert

Nathan David is Head of Foundation and Programme Lead for Esports Coaching at the University Campus of Esports.
Bubba Goodhart is a Senior Lecturer and Head of Events at the University Campus of Esports, as well as President and Co-Founder of the Videogames and Esports Foundation.

#WakeUpWednesday

The National College

See full reference list on our website

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**After School
Art Club**

**Otterbourne Primary
School**

Mondays: 3.30-4.30 pm

12 weeks

Book and pay on our website
www.flyingcolourededucation.co.uk

07387325331 hello@flyingcolourededucation.co.uk