



Dear Parents and Carers,

It's been a busy term filled with learning, creativity and celebrations. Christmas is a time to reflect on hope, peace, and love and we take this time to remember the true meaning of Christmas. The Bible tells us: "Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord." (Luke 2:11).

We have lots of news to share with you from this term.

Staff News

A Sad Farewell to Miss Dean and Mrs Dilley

As the term draws to a close, we say a heartfelt goodbye to **Miss Dean** and **Mrs Dilley**, who have been such valued members of our school community. Their dedication, care, and hard work have made a lasting impact on our children and staff. Mrs Dilley is returning to teaching. We are truly grateful for everything they have contributed to Cowbit St Mary's Church of England Academy, and they will be greatly missed by us all. We wish them every success and happiness in the future.

Welcome

We are delighted to welcome back Mrs Smith, who is now teaching in Maple Class. The children have been so happy to see her back in the classroom, and we are equally thrilled to have her as part of our team again.

Mrs Smitheringale will also now be teaching two afternoons a week alongside her SENCO role, where she will be contactable on Wednesday and Friday mornings.

Christmas Celebrations

Children in Ash and Elm Class brought the story of Jesus' birth to life through their wonderful Nativity performance, "A Midwife's Crisis." It was a joy to see their enthusiasm and talent as they shared the message of Christmas with us all. We are so proud of every child who took part.

Last week, everyone enjoyed a Christmas dinner, where they all ate together in the Village Hall with Christmas music playing.

Thank you very much to our local business Adam Clark Custom Colour Coatings for treating everyone to lunch.



Hope



Perseverance



Forgiveness



Kindness



Respect



Responsibility

This week, every child created a beautiful Christingle with the help of our Lay Minister, Sally. These special symbols remind us of Jesus as the Light of the World and the hope He brings. We then gathered together for our Christingle and Carol Service, where the children proudly held their Christingles and sang the carols they have been practising for weeks, filling the Church with the spirit of Christmas.

What a fantastic way to celebrate the festive season! The whole school enjoyed a wonderful trip to see the pantomime Rapunzel, filled with laughter, music, and plenty of fun. The children were captivated by the performance and loved joining in with the classic pantomime cheers and boos! To make the day even more special, everyone enjoyed a delicious ice cream during the interval - a real treat that added to the excitement.

Raising money for charity

This term we have raised money for the Poppy Appeal and for Children in Need. We raised £95.51 for Children in Need, thank you for bringing in your loose coins, we were able to make a Pudsey face out of them.

Police Visit

Police Officer Emma visited to talk with the children about feelings and behaviours. We discussed what "fills our bucket" — the things that make us feel happy — as well as behaviours that can make us feel sad. The children completed worksheets related to these ideas and watched a video about ways we can spread happiness to others. They also had the opportunity to try on parts of the police uniform and talk about the role of the police in our community.



Further up the school we also had a talk about how we shouldn't be using racist language and behaviour and how that makes others feel.

Victorian Day in Elm

Elm Class enjoyed dressing up as Victorian school children and being greeted by their Victorian school teacher. During the day we looked at some original school books from Cowbit School from 1906. We had a Victorian arithmetic and writing lesson. We listened to the first chapter of *Alice in Wonderland*. During the afternoon we played traditional playground games such as oranges and lemons and in and out the dusty bluebells.



Virtual Author Visit

We enjoyed a whole-school virtual author visit with **Konnie Huq**, creator of the popular *Cookie and the Most Annoying Girl in the World* series. Konnie shared a fun and engaging overview of her books, which follow the adventures of Cookie — a quirky, curious, and brilliantly imaginative character whose everyday life turns into hilarious and relatable chaos.



During the session, Konnie spoke about the importance of using our voices to make a difference, reminding the children that even "little voices" can create big change. She explained how issues such as climate threats inspired her stories and motivated her to encourage young people to stand up for what they believe in. This links nicely to our courageous advocacy sessions across the school – *Be the Change you want to see in the World*.

The pupils listened brilliantly, asked thoughtful questions, and were thoroughly inspired by her creativity and enthusiasm. Keep an eye out for Konnie Huq's books, including her newest titles, which will soon be available in our school library.

Class Assemblies

We also held some class assemblies this term for our *Be the change you want to see in the World* project. The assembly for Ash Class looked at using bird feeders, Elm Class looked at saving bees, and Oak Class talked about litter picking. Parents were invited in and we hope you enjoyed these assemblies.



Clubs next term

Monday - Maths Games and TT Rockstars with Mrs Cornwell

Wednesday - Archery with Elite

Thursday - Film Club with Mrs Smith

Friday - Multi-sports with Elite.

All clubs run straight from school until 4.20pm. Please sign up on MCAS. There are 20 spaces available for each club.

Mrs Links will be running a year 6 Quiz club in preparation for SATS. First club will start on 8th January, please message Mrs Links on Class Dojo to sign up.

Swimming

We are pleased to have arranged for all pupils in Years 3, 4,5 and 6 to go swimming every Monday afternoon starting Monday 12th January 2026 and the last one being Monday 30th March 2026. Pupils will be accompanied and supervised by staff members from our school. The pool is unable to accommodate any non-swimmers so children who are not swimming (due to illness) will remain at school and participate in normal lessons.

Children should bring their swimming kit and towel to school, and they will get changed at the pool. Swimming kits should consist of a one-piece costume, bikinis are not suitable. Trunks should be short, not knee length.

Swimming hats are compulsory. We ask for a £3.50 voluntary contribution per week to cover costs for transportation and a lifeguard. This can be paid through MCAS and consent given here too. Payment will be non-refundable.

Friends of Cowbit

Friends of Cowbit have been very busy planning and putting on events this term, all to help with the cost of school trips for the coming year. We have had a film night, a disco and a Christmas Fayre, thank you for supporting these events.

We are always looking for volunteers to help, even if it is making hot chocolate on a film night, wrapping presents, going shopping for supplies, making sweet cones, folding raffle tickets to name but a few things that go on behind the scenes. It doesn't need to be a big contribution but every little helps as there are only a couple of people organising these events for parents and children. If we don't get any more volunteers, events like this, including discos will not happen and the children will miss out.

Primary School Applications for Younger Siblings

Applications for Primary School starting September 2026 open on 17th November 2025 and close on 15th January 2026. We will be having our open morning on 22nd October from 9.30am-10.30am.

Breakfast Club

Breakfast Club is open every day at 7.30am. A charge of £3.50 is made which includes breakfast and entertainment. There is a variety of activities each week including arts and crafts, Lego, games and TT Rockstars. **Breakfast Club now needs to be booked and paid for in advance.** There is a discount if you attend all week as the price will be reduced to £15 for the full week. There is also a sibling discount, where if two or more children from the same family attend, the cost will be reduced to £2.50 per child.

Class Dojo and MCAS

Every family has been invited to Class Dojo and MCAS. Please join if you haven't already. Class Dojo is our message system to parents and on it you will find reminders and things happening in school. It is also a quick way for you to contact us if you ever have a question or concern. MCAS is where you will need to pay for trips and book into clubs, please make sure you checked that your permissions and details are up to date, especially the permissions which relate to Trust wide publications.

Attendance

Late Arrival at School

The school gates open at 8.40am and lessons start at 8.50am. If your child is arriving after 8.50am they are missing learning time. If you arrive after 9.20am you will get an unauthorised mark which goes down as a half day absence. These unauthorised late marks count as 1 absence towards the 10 unauthorised absences in 10 weeks so you could end up getting a fine for unauthorised absence just for being late on a regular basis.

Minor Illnesses

If we think your child is too ill to be in school, we will ring you and ask you to either bring some medicine for them or ask you to pick them up. Too many children are staying off school with a cold, or a sore throat or other minor reasons when they could be in school learning. Quite often when the children return to school, we are told they were fine by lunchtime. Once distracted they usually feel better! Missed school means missed learning opportunities.

First Day Calling

In order to comply with safeguarding procedures and follow our attendance policy, we will continue to operate a 'first day call' when children are absent. If your child is absent from school, we would appreciate if you could telephone and let us know before 9.30am. If your child continues to be off, please call **every day** or expect a call from us.

Home Visits

If any child is absent for a period of **3 days or longer**, we will complete an unannounced welfare check where we conduct a home visit to check everybody is safe and well. If there is no answer, a calling card will be left asking you to contact school as soon as possible. We will still complete a home visit if you have called, in line with new expectations.

Attendance Penalty Notice

The current Government guidelines now make it clear that **Headteachers are instructed that they may not grant any leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances.** As a result. Any holiday requests will be unauthorised unless exceptional circumstances can be evidenced. If a pupil has 10 unauthorised sessions (5 days - 10 sessions) accumulated within a 10 week period, a Penalty Notice may be issued. The Penalty Notice comes directly from Lincolnshire County Council, and the offence is £160 per child, per parent but if paid within 21 days this will reduce to £80 per parent per child for the first offence. Everyone has been given a formal warning letter which is valid for 2 years. It is a legal requirement for us to make sure everyone receives a letter and is aware of the rules.

Please note this is for unauthorised absence. If your child is ill, please call in as usual and let us know. We understand that everyone gets ill, the above guidelines are for absences such as holidays or days off school that are not for medical reasons. If you need to get a dentist or doctor's appointment for your child, please try and make these out of school time but if it can't please let us know, you may be asked for proof of appointment if these are happening regularly.

School Attendance Letters

The expected level of attendance- 95% and above. This term you will receive a letter about your child's attendance if they have missed more than 4 days of school since September. If their attendance does not improve in the next term, you will be invited in for a School Attendance Tracking meeting where we will try and help with any issues and work with you to improve attendance. If your child has missed more than 7 days of school since September you will receive a letter inviting you to a School Attendance Tracking Meeting, aimed at working together to improve attendance.

Attendance Raffle

As part of our action plan to improve school attendance, if your child has been in school every day of the week, they will receive a raffle ticket to enter our termly draw. The more raffle tickets they have, the higher their chances of winning our attendance prize. We have a prize for a child in Key Stage One and a prize for a child in Key Stage Two. This term

Dates for Your Diary

- *Friday 19th December - End of Term.*
- *Tuesday 6th January 2026 - Back to school.*

On behalf of everyone at Cowbit St Mary's Church of England Academy, we wish you and your families a very Happy Christmas and a blessed New Year. May your celebrations be filled with love, joy, and the warmth of togetherness.

Thank you for your continued support and for being such an important part of our school community.

The Cowbit St Mary's Church of England Academy