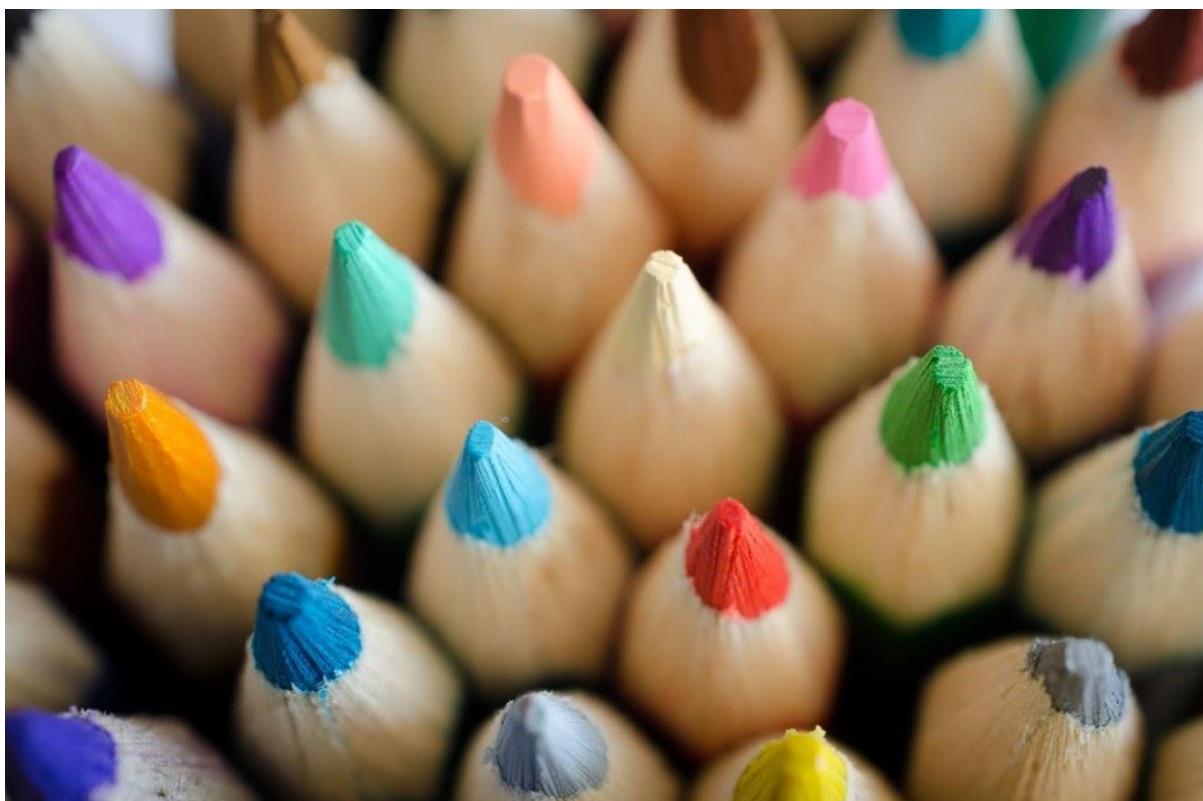




Watlington Newsletter October 9 2026





Dear Parents and Carers,

Over the past two weeks, there has been a wonderful buzz around school as children have embraced new learning opportunities and celebrated each other's successes and continued to demonstrate the kindness, curiosity and enthusiasm that make our school such a special place.

One highlight was National Poetry Day on Thursday 1st October, when classes explored this year's theme of 'Wonder'. We spent time discussing the many different forms that poetry can take and encouraged children to think like poets by noticing the small details around them and capturing the wonder they see in the world. It was fantastic to see the creativity and imagination on display throughout the school, and are looking forward to sharing some of the children's poetry during our Family Assembly this afternoon.

Our School Council has also been hard at work, meeting to discuss a range of exciting projects. They have started with the introduction of a Buddy Bench, which will provide opportunities for older children to support younger pupils during breaktimes and lunchtimes. Alongside this, School Council members have been discussing charities they feel passionate about supporting through fundraising activities and identifying national awareness days and events that they would like the school to recognise and celebrate throughout the year. It has been wonderful to see them demonstrating such thoughtful leadership and a genuine desire to make a positive difference to our both our school and wider community.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to our food bank collection for this afternoon's Harvest Assembly. Your generosity will make a real difference to local families, and we look forward to donating the collection next week.

Whilst special events are always memorable, some of the most rewarding moments for me are the everyday successes that I have the privilege of seeing across the school. Over the last two weeks, I have watched children proudly share their creative writing with staff and friends, seen our older buddies enthusiastically high-five their Year 1 children when they have earned house points or received praise in class and observed thoughtful discussions during our oracy work, with children learning how to build upon, question and respectfully challenge one another's ideas. These moments may seem small, but they reflect the confidence, resilience and sense of community that we are so proud of.

Finally, a quick update regarding the 'Meet the Headteacher' session that was advertised for Tuesday 13th October. Unfortunately, only four people signed up, and upon reviewing the list we discovered that one of those was Mr Gale! As a result, we will not be running the session in this format but will contact those people to offer them a time to meet with me individually. If there is a better time or format for a future event like this that would be preferred, please do let us know.

Have a lovely weekend all!

Vicky Pickford

Headteacher

Happy times at Happy's Circus!



What a fantastic time we had welcoming Happy's Circus to our school last Saturday! The children and families thoroughly enjoyed this very special experience, from the spectacular laser show and hilarious clown acts to the incredible acrobatic performances that left us all amazed. It was fantastic to hear the children's laughter and excitement - perhaps some children are now inspired to become clowns or acrobats themselves!

The stalls on the playground added to the fun and created a wonderful atmosphere for everyone to enjoy. A huge thank you to everyone who helped make the event such a success.

The hard work, dedication and enthusiasm that went in to organising such a memorable experience for our children and school community did not go unnoticed. We are incredibly grateful for the time and effort that went into making it happen!

And finally, one last 'thank you' to Marc and Justine for your roles as PTA Chair and Treasurer. Keeping a PTA running is no mean feat, particularly at a time when money is tight for so many families and finding volunteers to help can be a challenge. The income your committee has raised for the school has had - and continues to have - a huge impact. Thank you.

Housekeeping Reminders



Drop off and collection. Learning starts at 8.45am, - please help your child to be on time! Reception to Year 6: School starts at 8.45am (gate opens at 8.40am) and ends at 3.15pm. Nursery: Nursery starts at 9am (gate opens at 8.40am) and ends at 3pm. Arriving late for drop off and collection can be unsettling for your child.

Parking. A reminder to use marked bays only, and to not drive beyond, or block, the wooden gates. The green gates to the rear of Icknield Community College and next to our school site are an **emergency access route**. Please do not park blocking this entrance. This has happened on several occasions recently and presents a significant Health and Safety risk.

Clubs pick up times. Please ensure you arrive on time to collect your child from any clubs they participate in. As a reminder, these are the current clubs finishing times.

- Choir **4pm**
- WR Sports **4.15pm**
- Mindfulness **4.15pm**
- Little Masters **4.30pm**

School uniform. Your child should be wearing full school uniform every day, this includes footwear. If you need support with buying items, let us know and we can help. If your child is not wearing correct uniform they will be provided with spares.

We continue to have a huge amount of second hand uniform and we are encouraging families to recycle and reuse, so please get in touch if there are any items you need.

PE kit. Children are required to wearing their PE kits on PE days. This should be a NAMED, plain PE kit. If there is a chance that it may rain or your child will get muddy, please provide

further kit or school uniform for them to change in to. If your child is not wearing correct PE kit, they will be provided with spares. If wearing shoes with laces, please ensure your child can do the laces independently. Earrings will need to be taken out or covered with tape for PE lessons.

For more information on uniform, please click [here](#).

Wellies. As the weather becomes colder and less predictable, it is really important that children have a pair of wellies in school. Please can these be the right size, named and in a bag so that they can be hung up if needed.

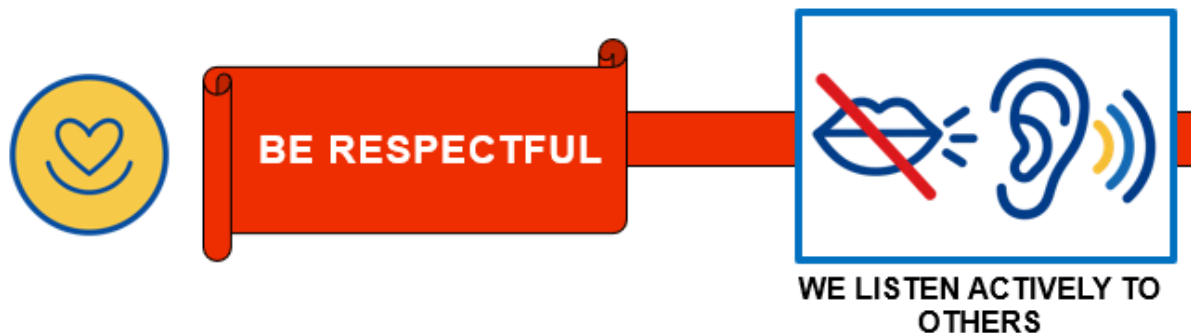
Devices. Please be reminded that children should not be wearing watches that have games, access to the Internet or the ability to make calls or send messages. If absolutely necessary, children in Year 6 can bring in phones which will be stored away from use during the school day.

Snacks. A reminder that break time snacks should be fruit or vegetables to encourage healthy eating habits.

Fidgets. Fidget toys are not permitted in school. If your child needs something like this then we will provide this for them in school.

Thank you for your support.

Active Listening Focus



We all know that being able to 'listen actively' is a hugely important life skill. Whether it is to fully engage with learning something in class, listen to a friend or show respect at an event, positive behaviours like 'active listening' need to be explicitly taught to children so that they can learn what's expected, how to demonstrate it and strategies to be able to still do this when things are more challenging.

Over the last couple of weeks, we have been teaching this skill in classrooms and in assemblies. We have explained why 'actively listening', being silent and looking at the person who is talking is important in many situations, especially events where there is a large number of people like a celebration in church, a remembrance service or a school assembly.

We have explicitly talked to the children about strategies for managing distractions, which, we saw they found challenging in the family assembly this afternoon as they were so excited to see so many of you join us!

Our expectations are really simple - eyes on the speaker, voices off, hands and legs to yourself and actively thinking about what the person is saying. This both demonstrates respect in the situation but also allows everyone to listen and learn. As with all behaviours, this is something we will need to continue to praise, teach, remind and support children with, particularly our very youngest or those with additional needs who may need some adaptation.

Consistent messaging from everyone is always really helpful, so please do talk to your children about this at home or when the occasion arises or if you are joining any services or celebrations where they can put this skill to practice. We can also support the children by modelling this as much as possible in family events in school so that they have as many opportunities to be successful as they can.

Thank you.

Parent Governor Opportunity at Watlington Primary School



Watlington Primary School's Governing Body works collectively to support and challenge the school for the benefit of all. Our success is built around a shared commitment to the school, bringing a blend of different skills and backgrounds.

To support developing the best future for the school, we are actively looking to increase the diversity of our Governing Body to better reflect the school and local communities which it serves.

The Governing Body of the school provides strategic oversight for the school ensuring clarity of direction and holding the Headteacher and leadership team to account for both educational and financial performance.

Parent Governors are elected to the Governing Body for their skills and expertise and can be drawn from any part of the school community. Time commitments include six Full Governing

Body meetings per year, which are generally held in the evenings, in addition to a termly link meeting with the associated teacher. We currently have **two** places available for Parent Governors.

For further information on the role of school Governors, please look on the National Association of Governor's website www.nga.org.uk/Be-a-Governor or please contact liam.walsh@acertrust.org.uk , who can arrange for an informal chat with one of our current governors

If you are interested in this opportunity, please email liam.walsh@acertrust.org.uk by **4pm on 1st November** including a brief personal biography and detailing why you would like to become a Governor at Watlington Primary School.

Forest School

We are hoping to refresh our resources in the Forest School this term, please take a look at our 'wish list' in case you are able to help. We would really appreciate any donations.

- Rope, paracord (nylon rope used for climbing etc.), bungee cords in any lengths.
- Kitchen peelers (for woodcraft)
- Small wooden planks (approx. 1 metre or less) and small log slices
- Tent pegs, tarpaulin or camouflage net (for den building)
- Garden tools, e.g. secateurs, wood saw, pruning saw, rake, trowels, gardening gloves (small)

Phonics Books



If you are a parent of a child who started here, at Watlington Primary School, in our 'Hedgehogs' class, we need your help! We are missing some of our Essential Letters and Sounds phonics books. These are the little blending books and other phonics books we send home weekly. Each book costs us around £6 to replace. We need each set to remain

complete, so we can match books to our teaching. Please can you look at home for any books that may have come from school and return these promptly? Drop any returns in at the school office please.

Gold Awards



Robins: Tilly

Hedgehogs: Rory, Lottie, Isabella

Bats: Ethan

Owls: Bo, Alyosha

Foxes: Nicholas

Badgers: Clara, Evie

Red Kites: Olivia, Dolly

Golden Eagles: Harry

Dates - this section is regularly updated.



- Monday 12th October: Flu immunisations
- Monday 19th October, Wednesday 21st, Thursday 22nd: Year 5 Bikeability (details to follow)
- Wednesday 21st and Thursday 22nd October: Parents' evenings
- Friday 23rd October: Term ends at 3.15pm, 3pm (for nursery)
- **Monday 26th - Friday 30th October: Half term**
- **Monday 2nd November: INSET (teachers only)**
- Tuesday 3rd November: Term 2 starts
- Tuesday 3rd, Wednesday 4th, Thursday 5th November: Year 6 Bikeability (details to follow)
- Sunday 8th November, Watlington High Street: Remembrance Parade
- Tuesday 10th November: Individual and sibling school photos
- Tuesday 10th November: Early Years open evening (prospective new parents)
- Monday 16th November: Anti-bullying week
- Tuesday 18th November, 9.30am: New parents tour (prospective new parents)
- Thursday 26th November: PTA Disco (R, Y1 and Y2: 3.15-4.30pm; Y3, Y4, Y5, Y6: 4.45-6.00pm, details to follow)
- Friday 11th December, 9.30am: Foundation Stage Nativity
- Wednesday 16th December, 5.30pm: Christmas service at St Leonard's Church, Watlington
- Thursday 17th December: Christmas lunch, and jumper day (over school uniform)

- **Friday 18th December; Term ends at 1.15pm**

ASSEMBLY AND OPEN AFTERNOON DATES 2026 – 2027

Term 2

Wednesday 11th November – Remembrance 9.00m

Friday 20th November – Red Kites assembly 2.30pm

Term 3

Wednesday 6th January – Open afternoon 3.15pm-3.45pm

Friday 22nd January – Foxes assembly 2.30pm

Friday 5th February – Badgers assembly 2.30pm

Term 4

Thursday 4th March – World Book Day assembly 2.30pm

Friday 19th March – Hedgehogs assembly 2.30pm

Term 5

Wednesday 28th April – Owls assembly 2.30pm

Tuesday 18th May – Open afternoon 3.15pm – 3.45pm

Friday 28th May – Bats assembly 2.30pm

Term 6

Friday 11th June – family assembly 2.30pm

Monday 19th July– Y6 leavers assembly 9.00am

Tuesday 20th July – End of year assembly 9.00am

SWIMMING START DATES 2026-2027

Red Kites- Tuesday 3rd November 2026

Badgers – Tuesday 8th December 2026

Foxes – Tuesday 9th February 2027