



Greenford CE VC Primary School *Newsletter*



16.10.26

Welcome

Reflections on My First Half Term

As we approach the end of our first half term, I wanted to take a moment to reflect on what has been a busy, exciting and thoroughly enjoyable few weeks at Greenford. When I arrived in September, I knew I was joining a small village school with a strong sense of community. What I hadn't quite appreciated was just how much warmth, character and enthusiasm I would find here.

The greatest pleasure has undoubtedly been getting to know the children. Their curiosity, humour, creativity and individuality make every day interesting. I am regularly reminded of what a privilege it is to work in education.

I have also been enormously impressed by the dedication of our staff. Schools are busy places, and a tremendous amount of thought, care and hard work happens behind the scenes. I am grateful for the support and commitment with which colleagues have welcomed me, and for the obvious care they have for our children. **Greenford is such a lovely school, but being a lovely school is not the limit of our ambition.**

Children deserve an education that is exciting, creative, ambitious and, above all, enjoyable. Childhood is precious, and schools should be places of laughter, imagination, adventure and discovery. I want our children to experience the joy of learning something new, the satisfaction of overcoming a challenge and the excitement of discovering new talents. My ambition is for a rich, memorable curriculum that inspires curiosity, nurtures creativity and enables **every child**, whatever their starting point, to achieve their very best.

At the same time, children flourish when they feel safe, when expectations are clear and when the adults around them are calm, consistent and encouraging. Creativity and structure are not opposites; they work best together. When children feel secure and understand what is expected of them, they are free to concentrate on learning, exploring and enjoying themselves. This thinking has been behind several of the small changes introduced this half term. Our STAR routines are helping children understand what good listening and learning look like. We have also been focusing on good manners, kindness and respect, not simply because these make school a more pleasant place to be, but because they are important qualities to develop for life.

There have already been some wonderful things to celebrate. Hearing the children sing traditional hymns together with such enthusiasm has become one of my favourite parts of the day. Our School Council is beginning to take an active role in shaping school life. I have been encouraged by the initiative shown by children who want to improve their environment, support others and take on responsibilities. Our new buddy system is going from strength to strength. These may seem like small things, but collectively they help shape the culture of a school.

In fact, I think all of this is captured beautifully in the hymn we have been singing together this week: *This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine.*

My first half term has largely been about learning, building relationships and establishing some important foundations. There are already many strengths to celebrate, and I am excited about what we can build upon together. Over the coming months, our focus will increasingly turn to developing our curriculum and ensuring that every child is both supported and challenged to succeed.

Our aim is to make Greenford an even better place to learn, grow and belong: a place where high expectations sit comfortably alongside warmth and kindness, where children feel confident to be themselves, and where learning is both purposeful and joyful.

I also recognise that when a new Headteacher arrives, some things inevitably change. There will be decisions that are immediately welcomed and others that may require a little more explanation. I want parents to understand not just what we are doing, but why. Every decision should come back to what we believe is best for the children, and I will always be happy to explain the thinking behind our approach.

Although we still have another week before half term, I felt this was a good opportunity to share these reflections and, importantly, to invite yours. I am always interested to hear what you think is working well, what you particularly value about Greenford and where you feel we could improve. We will not always agree on every decision, but I firmly believe that open, constructive conversations between school and home are an important part of making a good school even better.

With that in mind, I will be around during our upcoming parent consultation evenings and would love the opportunity to chat with as many of you as possible. No appointment is necessary and there is no particular agenda. Think of it as an informal "Ask Me Anything". Whether you have a question, an idea to share or simply fancy saying hello, please do come and find me.

Finally, thank you to everyone who has made me feel so welcome. I have thoroughly enjoyed these first few weeks and feel very fortunate to be part of this community. There is a great deal to look forward to, and I am excited about the journey ahead.

Harvest Service

We were all incredibly impressed with the children's involvement in our Harvest Service this week. From their wonderful performances and thoughtful readings to their heartfelt prayers, every child played a part in making it such a special occasion. Their behaviour, enthusiasm and engagement were equally impressive. Well done, everyone, for such an energetic and joyful celebration of Harvest! It was also lovely to see such a fantastic turnout of parents, friends and members of our wider community coming together to celebrate with us. Thank you to everyone who joined us and thank you for the gifts, which are on their way to the Dorchester Food Bank.



Macmillan Coffee Morning

Wow! What a fantastic job our Year 6 pupils did running the Macmillan Coffee Morning this week! They were wonderful hosts, showing confidence, maturity and initiative as they welcomed guests and worked as attentive waiters and waitresses. It was lovely to see them taking such pride in their responsibilities and making everyone feel welcome.

Together, we raised an impressive **£167 for Macmillan Cancer Support!** A huge well done to our Year 6 children, and an enormous thank you to all our families who generously donated cakes, gave their time, came along to support the event and contributed so generously. Your kindness and generosity made the morning such a success and demonstrated, once again, the wonderful community spirit we have here at Greenford. Thank you!

Year 4 Futsal Tournament Success

Our Year 4 pupils recently took part in the futsal tournament held at Beaminster School, marking the first school team sporting event of the year. The team of nine represented the school brilliantly, winning 3 of their 5 matches and securing an impressive 3rd place overall. A particular highlight was a fantastic victory over our local rivals, Sticklands.

The children demonstrated excellent teamwork, determination and perseverance throughout the tournament. Their behaviour and sportsmanship were outstanding, and they supported and encouraged one another in every game. We are incredibly proud of the way they represented our school and congratulate them on a fantastic achievement.

Well done to the team, and thank you to Mr Shears for accompanying the children and supporting them throughout the event.



Fidget Fingers – Supporting Concentration and Self-Regulation

You may have heard your child talking about our new approach to 'Fidget Fingers', which we have introduced in place of the routine use of fidget toys in classrooms.

We recognise that some children find small movements helpful when concentrating or managing their emotions. However, research into fidget toys is mixed, with limited evidence that they consistently improve attention or learning. In some circumstances, they can actually become a distraction, something we have also observed in our classrooms.

Rather than simply asking children to stop fidgeting, we are teaching them discreet 'Fidget Fingers' techniques that they can use independently, without needing additional equipment. This reflects the wider evidence around self-regulation, including guidance from the Education Endowment Foundation, which emphasises the importance of explicitly teaching children strategies to manage their own learning and behaviour.

Of course, every child is different, and where a child has particular sensory or additional needs, we will continue to provide appropriate individual support as part of a holistic approach overseen by our SENCo, Miss Attwell. We already make a range of adjustments across the school, including the use of tactile regulation resources, adapted seating and consideration of the classroom environment, according to individual needs.

Our aim is simple: to help children develop the skills to manage their attention and emotions while maintaining calm, purposeful classrooms where everyone can learn.

Fidget Fingers

Small movements. A calmer mind. Ready to learn.

Sometimes our bodies need to move. Fidget fingers are discreet, quiet ways to keep our hands busy so we can stay calm, focused and ready to learn.



Thumb presses
Press each fingertip to your thumb, one at a time.



Hand squeeze
Gently squeeze your hands together, then release.



Thumb rub
Slowly rub your thumb around your palm.



Finger interlace
Interlace your fingers, then squeeze and release.



Finger taps
Tap each finger, one at a time (or all together).



Finger roll
Roll an imaginary object between your thumb and finger.



Finger stretch
Open your fingers wide, then gently make a fist.



Circle trace
Use your thumb to make small circles on your palm.



Finger rub
Gently rub your fingertips together.



Quiet hands. Calm minds. Bright learning.



Reminder – We Are a Nut-Free School

A gentle reminder that Greenford is a **nut-free school** due to pupils with serious nut allergies. Please ensure that packed lunches and snacks do not contain **nuts or nut-based products**, including peanut butter, Nutella and cereal bars containing nuts. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation in helping us keep all our children safe.

School Council's Eco-Friendly Fundraiser!

I was delighted this week to receive a very persuasive letter from our School Council, requesting permission to hold a non-uniform day to raise money for more environmentally friendly school supplies. They had researched the cost of refillable glue sticks and pens and explained how these could help us reduce waste. **How could I possibly refuse?!**

So, on **Friday 23rd October**, children are invited to come to school in non-uniform in exchange for a suggested donation of £1. Of course the school council would welcome donations of any size! All money raised will go towards purchasing reusable and refillable stationery for our classrooms.

A huge well done to our School Council for showing such initiative, responsibility and care for our environment. What a wonderful example of pupil leadership in action!



Dear parents and guardians, we are planning on doing a non school uniform day on Friday 23rd October, therefore we would like children to bring in 1 pound minimum, but any more donations would be appreciated. The money will go towards our school equipment, like glue stick refills.

PIC•COLLAGE

Secondary and Upper School Applications – September 2027

A reminder to parents of Year 6 pupils that the **deadline for applying for a secondary or upper school place for September 2027 is Saturday 31st October 2026.**

Applications can be made online using a smartphone, tablet or computer via the Dorset Council website:

www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/school-admissions Please ensure you submit your application before the deadline.

