

# NEWSLETTER AUTUMN 2025



## Whimple Primary School

Issue 6

10.10.25

The mornings and evenings are definitely starting to draw in now. Please remind children to bring in a waterproof coat (named) so they can access some fresh air when the weather isn't dry.

### Parent Consultations

You should have received an email explaining how to book for a parent consultation. Please make every effort to attend—the meetings are not that long, and have to be timely to fit everyone in, however, they provide an opportunity to discuss how your child is getting on and any areas of concern that needs to be worked on with your support. If you have any issues, please call in at the office.

### Headlice

We have had a number of cases of head lice across the school. Head lice are spread by direct head-to-head contact and therefore tend to be more common in children because of the way they play. Please try to give regular head checks and provide good hair care to help identify and treat head lice early. Children are still able to attend school. For more information on what to look for and how to treat them go to: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/head-lice-and-nits/>.



Elm Class	Ellis L and Mahroosh
Ash Class	Ella and Lydia
Oak Class	Neave and Calum
Beech Class	Sophie and Matilda
Willow Class	Ellie and Alice
Lunchtime stars:	
Elm Class	Lola
Ash Class	Corey
Oak Class	Calum
Beech Class	Adele
Willow Class	Finley



## Federation News from Mr Jolliffe






This week, the first of our Governor Hub meetings took place at Thorverton. Now that the federation comprises ten schools, we have split into three Hubs for the first board meeting of each term. This gives governors the opportunity to spend time focusing on a small group of schools and to have time to talk to the Heads about their school's strengths and development opportunities. We are very pleased that a new school governor is joining the Brampford Speke team but we have spaces for school governors for other schools as well. If you are interested in finding out more about this role, please do contact me via your child's school office; there is more information later on in this newsletter.

### JOIN OUR GOVERNING TEAM – MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN EDUCATION!

We are seeking a dedicated and enthusiastic individual to join our **School Governing Boards**. As a governor, you'll play a crucial role in shaping the strategic direction of our school, ensuring the best possible outcomes for the children.

#### What's Involved?

-  Attend **three Hub Board meetings per year** (one per term) and an **AGM in September**
-  Read and engage with the **Head's report**, generating insightful questions
-  Participate in an **annual school review** and **attend school events and learning walks**

#### Commitment:

- Meeting dates are scheduled **in advance**, ensuring sessions are **efficiently run from 6–8pm**
- New governors complete **Devon County Council (DCC) training online**
- You'll be assigned a **mentor** to support and guide you through the process

This is a **rewarding opportunity** to contribute to your local school, bringing your expertise and passion to a dynamic team. If you're interested, please send a brief **Pen Portrait** outlining why you'd like to get involved to **Heidi Last, our Clerk to Governors** ([hlast@exevalleyfederation.org.uk](mailto:hlast@exevalleyfederation.org.uk).) We look forward to welcoming you to our team!

### SPY DOG & SPY CAT STORIES

We have been made aware that the series of books called Spy Dogs/Pups and Spy Cat, written by Andrew Cope contain a link to a website which has been compromised. We have checked the school bookshelves but if you have any of these books at home, please ensure that children do not try to access the website.

### PRAYER ROOM

Every half term, a group of parents meet to pray for the federation schools. The next prayer room will be on Friday, 24<sup>th</sup> October at 9.30am at Silverton Evangelical Church [School Road, Silverton EX5 4JH]. Please contact Andy Mathers [[apmathers@gmail.com](mailto:apmathers@gmail.com)] for more information.

### BHM POSTER

This week's poster is about six Black people who have shaped Britain's past and continue to have an influence today. They are an important reminder that Black history has been at the heart of Britain's story.

Governors from the East Hub schools (Thorverton, Silverton and Whimble) met on Tuesday, 7<sup>th</sup> October 2025. Alongside discussions of attendance, behaviour, SEND and safeguarding, which are generally positive across the Hub schools, Heads of Schools also provided an overview on their target areas for the school development plans. Thorverton reported that they were working towards their climate action plan, increasing their focus on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, children understanding AI and pupils acting as agents of change within the school and wider community. Whimble's focus was on building cultural capital with planned opportunities for pupils to perform in public. Governors were pleased to hear that Whimble have been awarded a gold award for 'Skills Builder' over the summer which assesses eight essential skills. Finally, Silverton's focus is on flourishing communities, Black History Month has been a recent focus and there has been an increase in communication with parents undertaken through stakeholder engagement.

Discussions around health and safety highlighted a need for grounds and building maintenance across the schools and the best way for this to be undertaken. Staff wellbeing was addressed in relation to the demand placed on teachers across the classes. Finally, governors were updated about the process of Thorverton Pre-school becoming part of the school, this is currently with the local authority and is awaiting further information.

Of particular note was the outcome of the school review that recently took place at Thorverton, which highlighted many positive areas, most importantly, how very welcoming and respectful the children were. This is a lovely reflection of the children across the school and federation.

## PRIDE IN OUR ROOTS



**MARY SEACOLE**  
Fearless nurse and entrepreneur whose skill and compassion during the Crimean War won the gratitude of soldiers and the admiration of a nation.



**JOHN EDMONSTONE**  
Formerly enslaved in Guyana, he became a respected taxidermist in Edinburgh and taught Charles Darwin, influencing the science that reshaped how we understand life.



**DIDO ELIZABETH BELLE**  
Raised in one of Britain's grandest households, she navigated privilege and prejudice with dignity, quietly challenging the racial attitudes of her age.



**FANNY EATON**  
Jamaican-born muse of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, whose image redefined Victorian ideals of beauty and remains immortalised in art.



**SAMUEL COLERIDGE-TAYLOR**  
Celebrated composer whose music blended African, Caribbean, and European traditions, earning him worldwide acclaim and the nickname "the African Mahler".



**GEORGE BRIDGETOWER**  
Virtuoso violinist who performed with Beethoven and dazzled audiences across Europe, his talent defying the limitations others sought to place upon him.

Black presence in Britain spans centuries. Some were born here, many came through empire, building lives in towns and cities. They created culture, shaped society, and challenged prejudice. The six lives honoured here are part of that deeper legacy – a reminder that Black history has always been at the heart of Britain's story.

[blackhistorymonth.org.uk](http://blackhistorymonth.org.uk)



## Mental Health Awareness Day

Looking after our mental health is as important as our physical health. Children are taught different strategies, depending on their age to help support this. Today in assembly, we all shared some breathing techniques that can be used by anyone at anytime. Ask your child about Balloon Breathing and Box Breathe.

### Why Breathing Matters for Mental Health

**Reduced anxiety and stress** - Deep breathing activates the parasympathetic nervous system, signalling safety to the brain

**Improved focus and attention** - Oxygenating the brain enhances cognitive function and concentration

**Better emotional regulation** - Breathwork creates a pause between feeling and reaction

**Enhanced classroom climate** - Collective breathing builds community and shared calm

**Accessible tool for life** - Students can use these techniques anytime, anywhere

### The Science

Deep, slow breathing activates the vagus nerve, which runs from the brain to the abdomen. This triggers the parasympathetic nervous system - our body's natural "calm down" response - reducing cortisol (stress hormone) and increasing feelings of relaxation.

### Did You Know?

The average person takes 20,000 breaths per day, yet most of us breathe shallowly, using only the top third of our lungs. Teaching students to breathe well can increase oxygen intake and improve cognitive function.

### Life Skill

Unlike many mental health interventions, breathwork requires no equipment, costs nothing and can be used anywhere, anytime. It's a skill students carry with them for life.

**Whimble church has a bumper crop of harvest services this year.  
Family focused or traditional? Come to either or both!**

### Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> October at 12:00 noon

St Mary's church would like to invite all parents and children to a traditional harvest service on Saturday 11th October. The 12.00pm service will be followed by a 'bring and share' lunch in church. Anyone wishing to bring produce, fresh or otherwise, to take to the altar during the service are welcome. To help with seating numbers a sign-up sheet is in the back of the church.

### Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> October at 10:30am



Come and join with us as we celebrate a Harvest Gathering for all the family, with special guests the Young Farmers. We will have Coffee & Cake (from 10:15am), our live worship band, and the baptism of baby Harry!  
Would you like to make a food donation for someone in need? You can bring a non-perishable harvest gift, and everything we collect will be donated to the Cranbrook Food Hub.

# Dates for your diary

## October

Tuesday 14th	Year 6 Bikeability this week
Monday 20th	Willow Class swimming - session 5 of 5
Monday 20th	Willow Parent consultations
Tuesday 21st	Willow, Beech, Ash and Elm Parent consultations
Wednesday 22nd	Oak and Elm Parent consultation
Thursday 23rd	Oak Parent consultations

## November

Thursday 27th	Mufty day for Christmas hamper items
Friday 28th	Non Pupil Day

## December

Thursday 11th	Carol Service at Whimble Church for KS2 6pm
Friday 12th	Christmas Fair
Wednesday 17th	Nativity KS1 at Whimble Church 4pm

## Term dates for pupils - 2025/26:

**AUTUMN TERM 2025**      **4th September to 19th December 2025**

*Half term: Monday 27th October to Friday 31st October 2025*

*Non-pupil days (i.e. staff only): 2nd and 3rd September, 28th November 2025*

**SPRING TERM 2026**      **5th January to 2nd April 2026**

*Half term: Monday 16th to Friday 20th February 2026*

*Non-pupil days (i.e. staff only): 5th January 2026*

**SUMMER TERM 2026**      **20th April to 22nd July 2026**

*Half term: Monday 25th May to Friday 29th May 2026*

*Non-pupil days (i.e. staff only): 26th June 2026*

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