

Friday 12th September 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

This week, my highlight has been welcoming our new Reception and Nursery children into school. I have been so impressed with the successful way that they have seamlessly integrated into school life and look forward to seeing the Reception children here for full days next week.

For our new Reception parents, we welcome you to the school and to our federation community. I provide a weekly update each week with news on both schools and with important information. Hopefully, you will find this useful.

Attendance and Punctuality

Attendance at school is hugely important for all children. Often children's pattern of attendance at school is set in Nursery and Reception and so we want to see all of our children in school, on time, every day.

Research shows that children with attendance above 97% throughout their time in school have an increased chance of doing well in exams such as GCSEs and A-Levels. Those attendance patterns start at an early age.

If your child needs to be absent from school due to illness, it is essential to let the school office know as soon as possible – we will chase up any absence, where we do not hear from families.

It is important to state that we will not authorise holidays under any circumstances and other absence, including visiting family abroad is unlikely to be authorised. This is because the school holidays are generous, with 13 weeks per year of school holiday. Please book any trips during these times, rather than disrupting your child's education.

Punctuality is also very important. Every time a child is late for school, even by a couple of minutes, it has an impact. These children will often have to come in through a different entrance, will find that other children have already put their bags and coats away and they are coming into a settled classroom, where others are already working. Most classes do their phonics and reading work at the beginning of the day and these lessons are crucial for all children to be in.

Sports Awards

Mrs Allen and I were privileged to be able to attend the West Berkshire Sports Awards this week, where two groups of our children were acknowledged with awards. Firstly, our Year 3 and 4 girls' football team from last year were highly commended for their achievements last year, including winning the County Cup. Josh H from Year 6 last year was also awarded an award for outstanding young leader. Well done to all of the children.



Sporting Thanks

On the subject of sports, we would like to say a huge thank you to Mr Niven, who has sourced a brand-new football kit for St Nic's school. We are really thankful for such a kind donation and I am sure that the kit will get a lot of use.

Friends of St John's and St Nic's Meeting

There will be a meeting of Friends of St John's and St Nic's committee via Zoom on Monday 15th September at 7pm. All parents are welcome and the link for the meeting is below:

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/78056390360?pwd=tLZFxNcOn7ZbiJ2Th2VkZttRA4YtNS.1>

Meeting ID: 780 5639 0360

Passcode: b2Kz0g

The meeting is expected to last no more than 40 minutes.

Key Date Changes to be Aware of

Following on from last week's update (available on the federation website), there are a couple of updates to the dates that were sent out:

Share and Celebrate for parents of children in Nursery and Reception will be taking place during the week beginning 29th September. This is an opportunity for parents to come into school with their child for a few minutes at the beginning of the day and for your child to share their learning with you. Parents are invited to come to one of the following two sessions:

- Wednesday 1st October at 8.45am **or** Friday 3rd October at 8.45am

The date of the St John's Christmas service has also needed to change due to a prior booking at St John's church. The service will now take place on Wednesday 17th December at 9am.

Year 2 Choir

Mrs Jones will be running her choir/singing club for children in Year 2 during Wednesday lunchtimes (12.30pm). The choir often performs at church services and other school events, such as the

summer/Christmas fairs. If your child would like to join, please email the school office as soon as possible. The first session will be next Wednesday, 17th September.

Newbury Show

There will be a display from St Nicolas School at the Newbury Show this year, which is taking place on Saturday 20th and Sunday 21st September. Please do look out for it in the schools' tent.

St John's Church Harvest Service

All parents are invited to join the all-age family harvest festival service at St John's Church on Sunday 5th October at 10am.

Parent Curriculum Meetings

We will be holding some curriculum meetings for parents on the following dates. All parents are welcome to join us for these, where we will predominantly talk about reading, writing, spelling, phonics, handwriting and maths in the relevant year groups:

- Year 3 and 4: Tuesday 23rd September at 6pm at St Nic's
- Year 5 and 6: Wednesday 24th September at 6pm at St Nic's
- Year 1 and 2 Tuesday 30th September at 6pm
- Reception: Friday 10th October at 9am and 2.30pm

St John's School Photos

Our photographer will be coming to take individual school photos at St John's on Wednesday 24th September. Please could Year 2 children come to school in their uniform on this day, and bring their PE kit with them to change into once photographs have been taken.

St Nic's Reading Challenge

There is a new reading challenge for children at St Nic's starting this year. Every read that is recorded in a child's reading record will add up towards a badge that the children can achieve. This is not aimed to take place simply for this year, but will be cumulative during their time in the school. Hopefully, many of our current Year 3 children will be able to amass 450 reads during their time with us. The badges will be awarded as follows:

- 150 Reads = Bronze badge
- 300 Reads = Silver badge
- 450 Reads = Gold badge

Year 2 Reading and Marvellous Maths

Please find the link for our guided reading book Chicken Little. If you have a dictionary at home encourage your child to find definitions of words they do not know. It is an important skill to use their knowledge of alphabetical order to find words within a dictionary.

[https://parents.fft.org.uk/viewer/?pdf=Chicken Little&d=The%20Tale%20of%20Chicken%20Little](https://parents.fft.org.uk/viewer/?pdf=Chicken%20Little&d=The%20Tale%20of%20Chicken%20Little)

Maths

This week we have been consolidating the children's understanding of numbers to 100 using base ten (tens and ones).



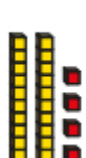
For example, this image represents the number 36 or 3 groups of ten and 6 ones.

The children have also learnt that it is easier to group objects into tens to make counting quicker.



For example, this image represents 27:

We then moved onto place value charts, where the children are shown base ten and have to record it



Tens	Ones
2	4

on a place value chart. For example,

For homework this week call out any two-digit number and ask your child how many tens are there or how many ones? You might be walking outside and spot numbers on doors, number plates etc.

Pick two numbers e.g. 35 and 53. Ask your child which number is the greater one and ask them to explain how do they know. 53 is greater because it has five tens while 35 only has 3.

Alternatively here is a link to an online resource: <https://www.topmarks.co.uk/place-value/place-value-charts>

Phonics books for This Week

Year 1: <https://parents.fft.org.uk/S33> On the Train to Troon

<https://vimeo.com/781543041/e860f05c54>

Year 2: <https://parents.fft.org.uk/YR2> The Tale of Chicken Little

Upcoming Dates

Monday 15 th September:	All Reception children in for the full day
Thursday 18 th September:	Year 3 Rock Workshop
Friday 19 th September:	Year 6 Racing to School
Tuesday 23 rd September:	Pyjama Day – both schools
Wednesday 24 th September:	Individual photos at St John's
Wednesday 1 st October:	EYFS Share and Celebrate 8.45am
Friday 3 rd October:	EYFS Share and Celebrate 8.45am

Tuesday 7 th October:	St John's Harvest Service 9am
Wednesday 8 th October:	St Nic's Harvest Service 2pm
WB 13 th October:	Foundation Stage parents' evenings
Tuesday 21 st October:	Diwali celebration in both schools
Thursday 23 rd October:	End of Autumn term 1 (schools end at the usual time)
24 th Oct to 2 nd Nov:	Half Term Break
Monday 3 rd November:	Start of Autumn term 2
Wednesday 3 rd December:	Foundation stage nativity 9.30am
Thursday 4 th December:	Foundation stage nativity 9.30am
Thursday 11 th December:	St John's Christmas Lunch (St Nic's Christmas lunch will be confirmed later)
Wednesday 17 th December:	St John's Christmas Service 9am
Wednesday 17 th December:	St Nic's Christmas Service 2pm
Thursday 18 th December:	Last day of term; 1.30pm St John's; 1.45pm St Nic's

Yours sincerely,

Keith Harvey
Executive Headteacher