

Townsend Opens New Chapel



Townsend School was delighted to welcome distinguished guests to its official opening of the School Chapel, dedicated to the memory of former Headteacher Mr Andrew Wellbeloved. The service was led by

The Right Revd Dr Alan Smith, Bishop of St Albans, as one of his last engagements before he retired in May. The Guest of Honour was HM Lord-Lieutenant of Hertfordshire, Mr Robert Voss CBE CStJ, who, along with The Mayor of St Albans, Cllr Jamie Day, took part in the service.

This opening took place just over a year since the sudden passing of the former Headteacher of 30 years. The Chapel has only been possible due to the year-long fundraising campaign, for which the school is very grateful to former students and staff, the local community, as well as various churches and the Diocese of St Albans for their generous contributions. The chapel is now a beautifully adorned space with light wooden furniture, accessible to all members of the school community for reflection and worship.



The chapel is situated next to the school library in a building that Mr Wellbeloved was instrumental in developing, and opened a year after he began his headship in 1995. The Chapel overlooks a prayer and reflection garden, which has been returned to its former glory as part of this campaign.

Headteacher, Mr Anthony Flack said:

"I am thrilled that we have been able to open a Chapel and multi-faith worship space for the whole school community to use. Our inclusive and welcoming school now has a dedicated space for individual reflection and worship, which is in keeping with our values and traditions as a church school that welcomes families of all faiths and of no faith. Mr Wellbeloved was a truly inspirational leader, and it is fitting we are able to commemorate his sad passing with a Chapel he would have loved Townsend to have."



Vacancies Webpage

The Vacancies page on the diocesan website gives you an additional platform to advertise job openings in your school free of charge. Do send any vacancy advertisements to hpuddfoot@stalbans.anglican.org

Collective Worship at Ickleford

At Ickleford Primary School, the pupil led Collective Worship Team regularly leads worship that not only brings bible stories to life but also offers meaningful opportunities for reflection and prayer. In their recent worship on the theme of *Hope*, the team shared a rhyming retelling of the resurrection story, reminding all that God can transform situations in extraordinary ways, just as He raised Jesus from the dead.



As part of the schools ongoing commitment to creating prayerful spaces linked to their Christian values, the team introduced the latest Prayer and Reflective Station. For each value, children are invited to a quiet space where they can choose to pray or simply pause and reflect. This time, they set up outside in the school courtyard, which has a good footfall during lunchtime. Each child was invited to hold a ribbon while thinking about something they were hoping would change, before tying it somewhere special as a visible reminder of their hopes and prayers. The team chose to tie the ribbons to a cross, symbolising resurrection and new beginnings.

This reflective practice has quickly become a cherished part of school life, with pupils responding with great enthusiasm. As the school continues to explore their values through worship, they look forward to seeing the special reflective spaces the Collective Worship Team will create next.

Sutton's Grand Opening

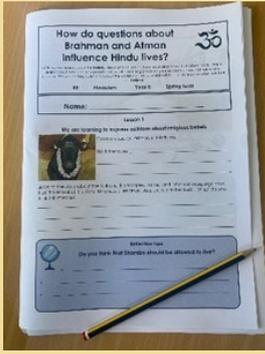


Sutton Primary School held a 'Grand Opening' of their new buildings that have enabled them to become a Primary School (formally Lower).

Bishop Richard conducted a blessing of the new Hall and

Classroom and led collective worship that was enjoyed by the school community, the Contractors, Architects, Central Bedfordshire Council Officers, local residents and church. It was a proud moment in the school's history.

Curriculum Development at Nash Mills



Nash Mills have been working hard to enhance their RE curriculum to make it more engaging, inclusive, and knowledge-rich for all pupils. A key development has been the creation of bespoke curriculum workbooks for Key Stage 2 RE topics. These workbooks are designed to support both teaching and learning by providing carefully selected resources and structured opportunities for pupils

to revisit and recap key knowledge throughout each unit. This ensures that learning is embedded and meaningful.

In addition, they're excited to share that, thanks to generous fundraising efforts within our school community and a successful grant application, they have recently acquired a set of virtual reality (VR) headsets. These innovative tools are already transforming the way their pupils experience RE. With the VR headsets, children can now explore significant religious sites and cultural experiences from the comfort of their classrooms, including journeys to the Vatican City, an Indian Gurdwara, and the historic city of Jerusalem. These immersive experiences are helping to bring RE to life, deepening understanding and empathy by allowing pupils to 'step into' the places and traditions they are learning about.

Aldbury Primary 'Count on Nature'



Aldbury Primary is less than 50 yards away from the peace and tranquility of St John the Baptist church. The churchyard itself is home to an abundance of life, from minibeasts to foxes, rare wildflowers to badgers. At the beginning of June, the school took part in celebrating the wildlife in their churchyard by observing and

recording the plants and animals found living there during The Great Big Green Week. Part of an initiative created by the Church of England environmental programme, 'Count on Nature' brings the community together by recognising the beauty and wonder of God's creation and the frailty of wildlife in the community. The children gained an insight into life in their immediate environment, linking this with their science topic of microhabitats and biodiversity.

Tewin Cowper Attend Young Voices 2025

Tewin Cowper's 'Singing for Fun' club worked very hard every Tuesday lunchtime to learn a vast array of songs in preparation for Young Voices 2025 at London's O2 Arena. When they arrived on the day they practiced with the composer for many hours, and by 7pm the arena was packed full of proud family and friends who had come to watch. The children sang as part of the largest choir in the world, topping 8,600 children!



Exciting New Chapter at Dunton Junior



A proud milestone was celebrated on 29 April, as local councillors, school leaders, and key project partners joined together with the children for a special ground-breaking ceremony at Dunton Junior

School. This memorable event marked the official start of an exciting expansion project that will help shape the future of the school.

The ceremony included a symbolic first dig, tours of the site, and conversations about the improvements to come. Once completed, the new building will feature three additional classrooms – including a hands-on learning space for cookery, art, and design. Other enhancements will include modernised washroom facilities, improved accessibility, and a new secure perimeter – all helping to create a more inclusive and future-ready environment for pupils.

The event also offered a moment to acknowledge and thank the dedicated local campaigners whose efforts helped to keep the school open. Their passion and commitment are now being rewarded – with bricks, mortar, and a wealth of opportunity for future generations.

All Saints' Spiritual Spaces



The 'Spiritual Spaces Experience' held at All Saints' Primary, Datchworth in March was a huge hit, with lots of positive comments from pupils, staff and governors. During the

experience, everyone got the chance to try being in different spaces to help them to consider their relationships with themselves, others, the world and beyond. The spaces included a peace garden, sensory smells to evoke memories, fizzy forgiveness bottles and a sorry sand tray.

Lots of children said that they enjoyed the plants that Mrs Sharp brought in to help them to think about their relationship with the world. The cardboard boxes were also popular and helped them to focus on what they love about their homes and consider how it might feel to be homeless and how they can respond to this.

Weston's Young Organists



Weston Primary are pleased to share that three children at their school now play the organ once a month in Holy Trinity Church. Holy Trinity organist, Hilary Bailey, teaches the children to play the piano and as part of these lessons she has been teaching them how to play the organ. Weston are very proud of Isla, Sophie and Mia, who now not

only play the organ before and after school church services, but also accompany Hilary during the service. This is a great example of the school and wider village community coming together to give pupils the best possible opportunities.

Little Munden's Musicians



The musicians at Little Munden School have been very busy over the last term. On Good Friday, several members of the choir joined the adult church choir to sing during the Friday

service at All Saints Church, Little Munden. They also sang a piece on their own and were involved in the dramatic retelling of the Easter story. Just after the Easter holiday, all the children who do either choir or music lessons went on an outing to Standon Church to a lunchtime concert. These concerts happen once a month but this time the school's music teacher Mrs Hembrough was playing the violin. It The children all really enjoyed listening to her, especially at the end when she played Beauty and the Beast! Little Munden were very proud of how well the children represented their school, and it made them extremely grateful for the close links they have with all the churches in their benefice.

Albury Primary's Church Services



Last term, Albury Primary celebrated Easter in a special service together with Puller Memorial School. It was a beautiful occasion where children shared art, readings, and songs. It was a time filled with joy and creativity, as the pupil's contributions truly reflected the spirit of Easter. They were also grateful to see so many parents join this celebration of faith.

Albury also passed on a heartfelt congratulations to Revd Tayo Wale-Falope, who was installed as the Priest in Charge of Albury, Little Hadham, and Much Hadham on 26 April 2025. The service, led by the Rt Revd Dr Jane Mainwaring, was a profound moment of renewal and commitment to the Gospel. Mrs. Hopwood had the privilege of welcoming Revd Tayo on behalf of Albury Primary, and they were delighted to see Lydia, an ex-pupil, participate so confidently in the service. Her clear and unwavering voice as she presented bread and wine was a testament to her faith and growth in the community.

The school look forward to continuing their worship and partnership with Revd Tayo as he brings a joyful and lively spirit to their church services, enriching the school

St Catherine's Worship Backdrop



St Catherine's Primary, Ware have created a new worship backdrop in their hall which shows their vision in the heart of their community.

Roger de Clare Remembers

Roger de Clare First School have worked hard to create a curriculum offer that inspires their children as well as teaching them the necessary knowledge they need. However, often the most powerful and memorable moments come from when they join with local and national celebrations and commemorations.

On Bank Holiday Monday, they upheld the annual opportunity of performing maypole and country dancing in the village. This has been a time-honoured tradition for the school which sees their Year 4 children dance in the arena and a deserving nomination be crowned as May Queen. This year, as the sun welcomed them into the center of the village, the school were delighted to be supported by many parents, carers, residents and those from further away.

Later that same week, the school joined the national celebrations for the 80th anniversary of VE Day. Children and staff arrived at school dressed in red, white and blue and the day began with collective worship filled with remembrance and reflection. The children then undertook a range of learning and activities in their classrooms and all enjoyed visiting the firepit as a small bonfire was lit in both celebration and in hope that the peace those brave men and women fought for will continue.

Sarratt's Certificate of Recognition

On 1 May, Sarratt Primary School had the distinct honour of welcoming the Lord Lieutenant of Hertfordshire, Robert Voss, to their school. During his visit, Mr. Voss presented them with a special certificate in recognition of their outstanding collaboration with the local charity, Electric Umbrella.

For the past seven years, the school has proudly partnered with Electric Umbrella, a charity dedicated to working with learning disabled adults to bring the joy of music into schools. This partnership has been instrumental in promoting diversity, creativity, and inclusivity within the school community.

Sarratt are also thrilled to share their recent success with Britain's Got Talent, where they supported Electric Umbrella with an original song, "Acceptance", written alongside Electric Umbrella members. This achievement highlights the incredible talent and dedication of the students and the Electric Umbrella community.

The certificate presented by Mr. Voss celebrates the positive impact of Sarratt's ongoing efforts to unite the world through music and create a better, more inclusive environment for all. Sarratt School are proud to be 'heroes' of Diversity, Creativity, and Inclusivity and are incredibly grateful for the recognition.

They look forward to continuing their work with Electric Umbrella to inspire and uplift their students and the wider community.



NEWS FROM OUR SCHOOLS

An Exciting Term at St Giles' Primary



St Giles', South Mymms has had a wonderful summer term, including a vibrant performance and the simple joys of playing outside once again on their school field.

The highlight for many was the choir's performance at the Royal Albert Hall. A testament to the talent and commitment of their students and the dedication of their music teacher, Mrs Watt and Deputy Head, Mrs Dowdall.

The school's learning extended beyond the classroom with a fascinating trip to the Houses of Parliament. The grandeur of the buildings and the sense of history were truly captivating. A particular highlight was the opportunity to meet a lord, who generously shared insight and answered the children's questions.



Additionally, a new lunchtime chess club has been added to the school's list of extracurricular activities.



Now that the school field is open, the recent dry weather has given the school a sense of relief and a boost of enthusiasm, with the joyful sounds of children playing, running, and taking in the wide-open space of St Giles'.

Project Touchline at St Mary's, Stotfold

This term St Mary's, Stotfold were delighted to welcome back Chris Andrew from Project Touchline. Chris delivers a brilliant programme, teaching Christian values through sport. Each session starts with an inspiring collective worship, then sport coaching sessions for classes, integrating Christian Values such as kindness, respect and perseverance into the games.

A stand-out aspect of Project Touchline is the lunchtime prayer club. Chris introduced prayer club on his first visit in 2024 and it has continued to flourish. This is a space where children pause to reflect and pray together.

Project Touchline has left a vibrant legacy, where children can see and live the school's values through sport and then take this into the rest of the curriculum and also their daily lives in and out of school.



St Mary's Ware Explore Places of Worship

On 10 June, St Mary's Year 5 classes travelled to Bedford to explore three places of worship; an Islamic mosque, Anglican church and Sikh gurdwara as part of a faith tour. They seized the opportunity to ask many questions and came back with a better understanding of what connects the faiths of Islam, Christianity and Sikhism.



St Mary's High Welcome Revd Elizabeth

On 30 April, representatives from St Mary's High, Cheshunt were delighted to attend and take part in the Licensing Service for the new Team Vicar, Revd Elizabeth Fellows. The service was led by the Bishop of Hertford, the Rt Revd Dr Jane Mainwaring, and attended by the Archdeacon of Hertford, the Venerable Janet Mackenzie who is a member of the school's governing body, as well as members of Broxbourne Council and many local parishioners. Other governors and staff of the school were also present, and Headteacher Mr Richard Vaughan read a prayer to welcome Revd Elizabeth.



St Mary's High welcome Revd Elizabeth to their community, and look forward to seeing her soon at their school.

Watford St John's Cathedral Away Day

Watford St John's had the pleasure of taking part in their first ever Cathedral 'Away Day' this term. Their Year 5 children enjoyed being able to travel on the 'Abbey Flyer' line train to St Albans and when they arrived, they found the cathedral such a beautiful and inspiring place to be.

'I particularly liked the story of how the Cathedral was built and its deep historical significance. It was beautiful inside and out.' (Molly)

'What was special to me - was lighting a candle in the spot where St Alban is believed to have sacrificed himself to protect a priest. It felt powerful to be part of something greater, standing in the very place where such a meaningful act took place. I was fascinated to learn that St Alban was buried there, and that the soldier's (who took his life) eyes popped out.' (Aadvik)

'I really enjoyed the physical activities during the visit, especially being part of a mind map which had 5 stations with different tasks. It helped me reflect on myself.' (Joshua)

'The children reported that the visit was interesting, educational and most importantly peaceful — it made learning more engaging and enjoyable. I am definitely looking to coming back next year. Thank you.' (Mrs Lukina, class teacher)

St John's Infants Learn about Prayer



St John's Infant School, Radlett, were delighted to welcome Revd Ollie to their school, who led a special workshop on prayer to support the children's understanding

of its importance. The children engaged in a variety of reflective and creative activities to explore how prayer can be a part of their everyday lives. They also took time to learn about how people of other religions pray, considering both the similarities and differences in these practices.

NEWS FROM OUR SCHOOLS

Bishop Jane Visits St Mary's East Barnet



St Mary's Primary, East Barnet were really excited to welcome the Rt Revd Dr Jane Mainwaring, Bishop of Hertford, to their school last half term.

Bishop Jane led their Eucharist Service in school and helped to share communion too – it was a very special day. The Mustard Seeds (pupil worship leaders) read from the Gospel and led the intercession prayers.

It was a real pleasure to take Bishop Jane on a school tour – she visited every class. The children had prepared questions for her, including 'How long have you been a Bishop?', 'Do you go to your own church?', 'What has been your biggest obstacle since you started being a Bishop?', 'Do you move in the same way as the Bishop in chess and do you play chess?!' It was great to hear about Bishop Jane's entry into her role as the first female Bishop of Hertford!

The children were also very intrigued to hear about Bishop Jane's outfits. Some of the youngest children were lucky enough to get to try on the Bishop's stole and cope. She was particularly impressed with some of the older children's understanding of why a Bishop carries a crozier and they likened it to the way that she acts like a shepherd for people!



Victoria Infant's Prayer Bears

Victoria Infant School introduced some new members to their school family - class Prayer Bears. Each class has a Prayer Bear who is sent home with a member of the class every Friday. Whilst children have the bear, they think about the school values of kindness, respect, resilience and thankfulness. Children add pictures, drawings, thoughts or a prayer to the class notebook. The bear is then returned to school by the following Thursday and time is given to share in their class worship the thoughts written in the Prayer Bear book.



St Michael's Spiritual Garden

St Michael's primary, St Albans have finally been able to open their Spiritual Garden which they have been working on for a long time. The garden was originally designed by the School Council and Worship Ambassadors who wanted a large, circular seating area centered around a cross and a water feature as the focal point.



To open the garden, each class had a turn at coming to explore the area and learn about how it will operate. They all decorated a rock to place in the garden and said their own prayer of thanks as they tied a piece of ribbon to the willow den area. As one child said, "it is very peaceful here. I can't wait to come and sit here at break time."

NEWS FROM THE SCHOOLS TEAM

Focus on Governance

This will be my last governance article for the newsletter, as I will be retiring from my role as Governance Adviser for the Schools Team at the end of this academic year.

Since I started in 2016, it has always been a pleasure and a privilege to work with governors, school leaders, clerks and clergy on all things governance related. Thank you for the great conversations, the goodwill and the positive working relationships that have made the job so enjoyable. My work has often involved interpreting and advising on the 'tools' of governance, those rules and processes we all have to work by; but these are a means to an end. Governance is ultimately about ensuring children in our schools get the excellent education they deserve; thank you for all you do to help that happen.

With all good wishes,

Belinda Copson
Governance Adviser

And finally...

Headteacher and CEO Changes

A warm welcome to the new substantive headteacher that has joined us since January:

Michael Speed, St Andrew's, Stanstead Abbotts

Our thanks and best wishes accompany those who are leaving or have left their school this and last term:

Sharon Brown, Barley and Barkway Federation; Gurjit Virk, Bromham; Duncan Gauld, Chess Valley Primary Learning Trust; Andy McBurnie, Manshead Academy; Philip Wheatley, Ridgeway Learning Partnership; Jeremy Fisher, Spellbrook; Alison Rafferty, St Michael's, St Albans.

Our appreciation also goes to all those who have, or are about to, step in as interim or acting heads.

End of Summer Term Message from the Diocesan Director of Education

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

As we come to the end of another academic year, I want to express my sincere gratitude to all those who contribute so generously to the life and mission of our church schools across the Diocese.

To our headteachers and leaders, teachers, support staff—thank you for your tireless commitment to the education and flourishing of children in your care. Your resilience, creativity, and compassion continue to shape lives in profound and lasting ways.

To our governors, trustees, and volunteers—your dedication behind the scenes makes an immeasurable difference. Your wisdom, stewardship, and prayerful support ensure that our schools remain places of hope and excellence.

Thank you to all those in linked churches for your faithful partnership in nurturing the spiritual life of our school communities. The support you provide through worship, care, and connection is a vital thread in the fabric of our diocesan family.

We know that the national education landscape continues to present challenges—rising needs, limited resources, and the pressures of accountability. Yet through it all, your dedication to nurturing the minds, hearts, and spirits of our children has remained strong. In classrooms, playgrounds, halls and offices, your work has not only shaped young lives but has also borne witness to the hope and love at the heart of our Christian mission.

As we pause for rest and reflection over the summer, I offer these words from the prophet Isaiah as a reminder of the strength we find in God's presence:

"But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint." (Isaiah 40:31, NIV)

May you all find time to rest, to be refreshed, and to rejoice in all that has been accomplished. We look forward to the year ahead with hope and confidence, trusting in God's faithfulness as we continue this shared ministry in education.

With every blessing,

Duncan Gauld

We wish you all a restful Summer break!

Living God's Love in Education: Enabling Life in all its Fullness

Schools Team, Diocese of St Albans, Holywell Lodge, 41 Holywell Hill, St Albans AL1 1HE

01727 818170 schools@stalbans.anglican.org

www.stalbans.anglican.org/schools