

Aldbury's 'Churches Count on Nature' Event



Aldbury Primary School recently took part in *Churches Count on Nature*, a national initiative that celebrates God's creation while supporting conservation efforts and the protection of local wildlife.

As part of the event, Class Two spent an afternoon exploring the beautiful grounds and churchyard of St John the Baptist Church. The church holds a special place within the school community, overlooking the school grounds and providing the familiar sound of church bells each Tuesday morning during practice sessions.

Working in small groups, the pupils carefully identified and recorded a variety of flowers, grasses, insects and trees. There was great excitement when both a Red Admiral butterfly and a Peacock butterfly were spotted during the survey.

As the pupils shared their discoveries, it was clear that the experience had inspired not only curiosity but also thoughtful reflection. Many spoke about the beauty of the natural world around them, demonstrating a growing appreciation of God's creation and an understanding of the importance of cherishing and caring for this precious gift.

175 Years of Northaw

Northaw Primary School has been celebrating 175 years of educating children. Officially founded in 1851, the school has served the local community for more 175 years, evolving from a small charity-funded free school into the thriving Church of England primary school it is today.

Throughout its history, the school has adapted to changing times, overcoming challenges and growing through the dedication of successive headteachers, staff and supporters. Generations of local children have benefited from its strong tradition of education, resilience and community spirit.

The school marked this special milestone with a Jubilee Jamboree on 26 June. The day was filled with celebration as every pupil created a piece of framed artwork reflecting what the school means to them. Rev Chris led a time of prayer and reflection before pupils enjoyed a picnic lunch together during the summer heatwave, making the occasion a memorable one for the whole school community.



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 vacancy adverts to: hannah.churchill@stalbandsdiocese.org

Holywell Welcomes Bishop Richard



Holywell School was delighted to welcome the Bishop of Bedford, Bishop Richard, on 28 May. During his visit, he led a special collective worship based on the school's mission,

'Live Life in All Its Fullness'.

Bishop Richard shared three key messages with the pupils: that they are precious, called to show compassion, and never alone. Reflecting on John 10:10, he reminded the school community that they are loved by God, called to love others, and that Jesus is always with them.

As part of the visit, Bishop Richard toured the school and met with members of the Junior Worship Team and Values Ambassadors for a lively 'Grill a Bishop' session. Pupils asked a range of thoughtful questions and learned about his journey to becoming a bishop, his strong sense of calling from the age of 16, and his 14 years of service as Bishop of Bedford.

Bishop Richard encouraged pupils to be "bridge-builders, not fence-builders", always striving to be peaceful problem-solvers. He also shared that John 10:10 is his favourite Bible verse and that *The Lost Sheep* is his favourite parable, reflecting his appreciation of Jesus as the Good Shepherd.

The visit was an inspiring and memorable experience, giving pupils a valuable opportunity to learn more about faith, leadership and service.

St Augustine's, Dunstable, Prayer Meetings

The weekly lunchtime prayer meetings at St Augustine's Primary continue to be a valued source of calm, reflection and community. Held in the Forest School area, these gatherings provide an opportunity for pupils to step away from the busy school day and spend time in quiet reflection.

Surrounded by nature, pupils take time to give thanks, share prayers and support one another. The sessions create a welcoming and peaceful environment where children feel a strong sense of belonging and connection.



All Saints' Outdoor Spiritual Spaces



Following the success of the *Spiritual Spaces* experience at All Saints', Datchworth last year and positive feedback from pupils, the whole school took part in an outdoor version of the event on 19 June.

Held across the school grounds, the day was designed to support pupils' spiritual development through a range of creative, reflective and engaging activities. The outdoor spaces encouraged children to explore big questions, reflect on their experiences, and deepen their connections with God, themselves, others and the wider world.

Pupils enjoyed a variety of thoughtful activities, including using bubbles to 'blow their worries away', taking time to be still and wonder, exploring the natural world through their senses, planting seeds, researching countries taking part in the World Cup, and writing wishes and prayers for the world. The event provided a valuable opportunity for reflection and was enjoyed by pupils across the school.

Summer Term at John Donne

John Donne has enjoyed an exciting summer term, including new playground markings funded through the Tesco Blue Token scheme and a generous parent donation. An inclusion grant has enabled the creation of a wonderful outdoor reflection area, while funding from the A428 Black Cat Grant has supported plans for a new outdoor learning area. The school looks forward to seeing this develop further next term.

The youngest children enjoyed a trip to London by train, with a day of sightseeing and a visit to see Paddington Bear. The oldest pupils took part in their residential visit, demonstrating excellent teamwork and giving one another the confidence to face their fears.

Other highlights of the term included trips to the farm, class assemblies, swimming lessons, and Mother's Day and Father's Day breakfasts.

Mental Health Award at St Michael's



In 2024, St Michael's Primary School, Bishop's Stortford received The Emotional and Mental Wellbeing in Schools Mark in recognition of its commitment to ensuring that the curriculum, ethos and pastoral support meet the holistic needs of the school community.

Last month, the school achieved a further accreditation, recognising its progression to Advanced Practice. Assessors praised the school for its commitment to supporting the wellbeing of pupils, families and staff, and for the measures it has put in place that go "above and beyond".

The school recognises that mental health is a core part of its educational mission, supporting the success and wellbeing of all learners.

Remembering a Colleague at St John's



On 17 November, the St John's, Digswell community came together with family members to honour the memory of a much-loved colleague, who sadly passed away in June 2025. The service was held in the newly built SEN playground garden,

a peaceful space chosen for its significance and connection to the children she supported with such dedication.

During the service, a special tree was planted in her memory, an enduring symbol of her kindness, commitment and the lasting impact she made on the school. The school choir gave a touching performance of *The Lord's My Shepherd*, filling the garden with music that reflected the warmth and unity of the occasion. Staff, pupils and members of the clergy also shared heartfelt poems and prayers, offering words of comfort and celebrating her life.

In a generous gesture, the family presented a donation to the school. This gift will support the development of the SEN garden through the addition of a new mud kitchen and further playground equipment, enriching the experiences of the children she cared so deeply about.

Her legacy will continue to grow within the heart of the school community, symbolised by the tree planted in her honour and the joyful play it will inspire for years to come.

Neurodiversity Week at Puller Memorial



Puller Memorial proudly celebrated Neurodiversity Week, a time dedicated to recognising, understanding and valuing the different ways people think, learn and experience the world.

As part of the celebrations, each class took part in a creative door decorating project. Pupils worked together to design colourful displays highlighting the importance of inclusion, acceptance and respect for all. The doors were transformed

with artwork and positive messages, creating a vibrant atmosphere throughout the school.

The displays showcased pupils' creativity and understanding that everyone's brain works differently, and that these differences make the community stronger. They also served as a reminder of the importance of kindness, inclusion and celebrating individuality.

The school is incredibly proud of the effort and enthusiasm shown by pupils and staff as they continue to create an environment where everyone feels valued, supported and able to thrive.

St Nicholas' Stevenage STEM Projects



Eight Year 1 pupils recently took part in a Primary Engineers STEM project and attended a celebration event at Stevenage Leisure Centre on 6 May.

The children presented their projects to judges in pairs and demonstrated the trains they had made. Pupils from

a number of schools attended, showcasing a range of fantastic train designs.

The school was delighted that two Year 1 pupils won an award for their Princess Train project.

Art Week at Park Street Primary

Park Street Primary School recently enjoyed a vibrant and inspiring Art Week, with children immersing themselves in the colourful world of Wassily Kandinsky and his famous concentric circles. Throughout the week, pupils explored colour, shape and pattern, producing eye-catching artwork while developing their creativity and artistic confidence.

One of the highlights of the week was an art festival-style carousel of creative stations set up outdoors, where children worked collaboratively, shared ideas and experimented with a range of artistic techniques. The celebrations culminated in a wonderful after-school showcase on the final day, providing pupils with an opportunity to proudly share their creations with parents and carers, who enjoyed viewing the impressive artwork produced throughout the week.



St Helen's Exciting Extracurricular Events

It has been a busy and exciting time at St Helen's, Wheathampstead, with a range of trips, workshops and events taking place alongside pupils' learning.

One of the highlights was a production of *Joseph* involving pupils from Years 3, 4 and 5. The children embraced the opportunity and delivered performances that received high praise. KS2 singers also took part in Young Voices, as well as choir concerts with consortium schools at Christmas and Easter.

Pupils have participated in a variety of sporting events, including rugby, football, fencing, kwik cricket and netball. The school continues to offer opportunities that are both competitive and inclusive, ensuring all pupils can take part. Years 5 and 6 also enjoyed their residential trips, where they challenged themselves, tried new experiences, and demonstrated perseverance and determination.

Looking ahead, the school is excited about forthcoming developments, including a new music room and redecoration projects across the school.

Castle Federation Explore St Alban's Story

This term, the Spiritual Ambassadors at Castle Federation led collective worship across both Victoria Infants and Thomas Coram School, sharing the inspiring story of St Alban and his courage in the face of adversity.



As part of their preparation, the ambassadors visited St Peter's Church, where they worked with Fr Stuart to learn about the story of St Alban and Amphibalus. They explored Alban's journey to Christianity and discovered how he sacrificed his life to protect Amphibalus by taking his place before the Roman soldiers.

During worship, pupils reflected on how they can demonstrate bravery and courage in their own lives. The ambassadors also enjoyed identifying two depictions of St Alban within St Peter's Church and learning more about his story.

The local significance of St Alban's story made a particular impact on the pupils. Many had visited St Albans, and the close connection to the local area helped bring the story to life, making it especially meaningful and relatable.

Seeds Sailing On



St Mary's Church and St Mary's Primary, East Barnet, recently came together for a special 'Seeds Sailing On' collective worship service held at the school. The service focused on themes of hope and

reflection, bringing together families, staff, pupils and members of the wider community.

The school was delighted to be joined by the St Mary's School Choir, whose singing added greatly to the celebration. The service provided a meaningful opportunity to reflect on the year so far, look ahead with optimism, and strengthen the links between the school and parish communities.

These regular worship services are a wonderful public witness to the partnership between the church and school, as well as a form of wider community outreach.

Bishop Jane Visits St John's, Digswell

On 19 May, St John's Primary, Digswell was delighted to welcome the Bishop of Hertford, the Rt Revd Dr Jane Mainwaring, to the school. Her visit formed part of a day spent in the local parish of Digswell, providing pupils and staff with a wonderful opportunity to meet her and learn more about her role within the Church.



During her visit, the Bishop joined the whole school for collective worship, toured the school, and met with several governors and a selection of School Pupil Parliament representatives. The visit provided a valuable opportunity to showcase the life and work of the school community.

Faith Leaders Visit Wenlock School



Facilitated by the Luton Council of Faiths, a number of faith leaders (including Hindu and Baha'i) spoke to Year 6 pupils at Wenlock CE Academy in Luton on Friday 26 June 2026. They spoke about some of the core beliefs at the heart of their respective faiths, and how, despite differences in their cultures and religious practices, they work together for the good of Luton.

Pupils were invited to notice similarities and differences between the religious practices and beliefs of the different faiths represented and to reflect on how we learn to live well with people whose religion or beliefs are different to ours. "If someone is being bullied for their faith, we should stand up for them," one pupil said.

The pupils had some interesting questions for the panel too: "What do you do if someone thinks their religion is superior to yours?" or "How do you feel about people from other faiths?" The panel's answers reflected the shared view that whilst we may think that our faith is better than someone else's, this does not mean we cannot develop curiosity towards someone else's faith, and to listen to them with respect and to understand what is important to someone else; we don't need to tear down someone else's beliefs to be confident in our own.

The faith leaders shared stories about the many ways that in Luton people from different faith communities set aside their differences and work together to bring solidarity, harmony and unity of purpose.

One of the events that brings people is the Luton Council of Faiths annual Peace Walk (on 26 September 2026)– this year celebrating its 30 year anniversary. The walk will encompass a visit to St Mary's Church, Guru Nanak gurdwara and Luton Central Mosque.

If any school leaders would like support in inviting faith leaders in to their school in this way, with the aim of inspiring pupils to think about the importance of curiosity towards someone who has a different faith or culture, and to explore how we can live well together despite our differences, please contact the interfaith advisors: www.stalbansdiocese.org/parishsupport/community-support/interfaith-engagement-and-mission/

Watford St John's Turns 10!

Watford St John's C of E Primary celebrated its 10th birthday earlier this term. As the only Church of England school in Watford, the school opened its doors to 30 Reception children in 2016 in a small village-style hall. Its purpose-built school building opened two years later and now, more than 60 staff members proudly educate over 400 children to "Grow in Love and Respect". The school celebrated its anniversary with special activities and assemblies, as well as a large family party attended by the whole community. Everyone is looking forward to the next 10 years and beyond.



Cockernhoe's Colour Run

Pupils, staff, families and friends came together for a colourful and energetic Colour Run at Cockernhoe School, enjoying an afternoon filled with fun and community spirit.

Participants completed the course while being showered with vibrant powder paint, creating a spectacular rainbow of colour across the school grounds. Children, staff, siblings and parents all joined in, with pupils particularly enjoying the chance to return the favour by covering parents in colour at the end of the event.

Supported by the PTA, the event not only brought the school community together but also raised valuable funds for future school projects and activities. Headteacher Simon Philby thanked everyone who took part, volunteered and donated, recognising the strong community spirit that made the day such a success.



The Colour Run was a memorable highlight of the school year, celebrating fun, friendship and togetherness.

St Paul's, Langleybury's Colour Run



The recent Colour Run at St Paul's, Langleybury was a great success, bringing together pupils, staff and families for a fun-filled celebration of community and belonging.

Participants completed the course while being showered with colourful powder, creating an atmosphere full of laughter, energy and excitement. The event highlighted the strong sense of togetherness within the school community and was enjoyed by all who took part.

Thanks to the generosity of families and friends, the Colour Run raised an impressive £1,303.29, which will support future school projects and provide additional resources for pupils.

A highlight of the school year, the event was a wonderful example of the school's vision of belonging in action, and the community is already looking forward to next year's Colour Run.

NEWS FROM OUR SCHOOLS

Tewin Cowper Launch OPAL



This month, Tewin Cowper Primary officially launched OPAL (Outdoor Play and Learning). Although OPAL has been gradually introduced throughout the year, the programme continues to develop as the school expands play opportunities for all children.

The launch marks an exciting milestone and introduces the school's new Play Policy, supporting creativity, teamwork, resilience and wellbeing through high-quality play experiences.

As part of the launch, the school held a Class Bingo Competition to collect second-hand and unwanted play equipment. Year 4, Juniper Class, celebrated becoming the OPAL Bingo winners with an extended playtime. Pupils have been especially excited to explore the new wheeled zone, den-making area and social spaces.

The positive impact of OPAL is already evident, with children embracing opportunities to explore, imagine, collaborate and problem-solve together. It has been wonderful to see such enthusiasm and enjoyment during outdoor play.

Summer Term at Ardeley St Lawrence



It has been a busy few weeks across Ardeley St Lawrence Primary, with children enjoying a range of learning opportunities both in and beyond the classroom.

The younger pupils enjoyed a visit to Church Farm, Ardeley, where they learned about farm life and had the opportunity to meet and care for the

animals.

Year 5 and Year 6 pupils have also taken part in visits to St Lawrence Church, exploring its history and learning about its role within the local community. Their enthusiasm and excellent behaviour have been a credit to the school.

As they prepare for their move to secondary school, Year 6 pupils continue to be excellent role models, demonstrating kindness, maturity and leadership.



Investing for the Future at St Peter's Primary, Rickmansworth

At St Peter's, there has recently been an opportunity to celebrate the positive developments made to the school estate. To help address the challenges of climate change, air conditioning has been installed in communal spaces and classrooms. Combined with a successful bid to the Diocese for a full solar panel installation, this has enabled the school to nearly offset its energy costs entirely.

A strong and collaborative partnership with the Diocese of St Albans is helping to ensure that pupils can flourish and thrive in a comfortable environment. The school extends its thanks to the team involved, and to Ruth Garman for her continued support with their buildings and estate.

NEWS FROM THE SCHOOLS TEAM

Volunteering Opportunities with St Albans Cathedral's Learning Department

St Albans Cathedral Learning Department is looking for volunteers. Whether you want to help lead a variety of school trails during term time or help with their arts and crafts at Family Discovery mornings during the school holidays, they'd love to hear from you. Full training - and plenty of tea and coffee - will be provided. Please contact:

volunteers@stalbanscathedral.org

Headteacher and CEO Changes

A warm welcome to our new substantive headteachers who have joined us or moved within our family of Church Schools since January:

Marcus Ray, Clifton All Saints'; Sarah Young, Studham Village Academy

Our thanks and best wishes accompany those who are leaving or have left their school since January:

Barbara Young, Ardeley St Lawrence Primary; Rebecca Byrne, Clifton All Saints' Academy; Siobhan King, All Saints', Datchworth Primary; David Bower, Dunton and Wrestlingworth Federation; Lorna Elkes, Little Gaddesden Primary; Anna Spyropoulos, Ravensden; Lisa Larham, Renhold Primary; Lisa Finnegan, St Michael's Primary; Olivia Burke, Wenlock Academy; Geoff Holmes, Weston Primary

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

And finally...

A Message for the End of Term

Dear Colleagues,

As we reach the end of another academic year, on behalf of the Board of Education and the Schools Team, I would like to offer my sincere thanks to all who serve our diocesan schools with such dedication, skill and faithfulness.

The summer term is often both a season of celebration and a time of considerable demand. Across our schools, pupils have continued to flourish in their learning and personal development, while staff and leaders have worked tirelessly to support them. From classrooms and governing boards to offices, kitchens, playgrounds and parish partnerships, the commitment shown by so many colleagues has enabled our schools to continue offering an education rooted in Christian values, high standards and care for the whole person.

This year has brought its share of opportunities and challenges. Schools have continued to navigate a complex and evolving educational landscape whilst remaining steadfast in their vocation to serve children, families and communities. I am continually encouraged by the wisdom, resilience and compassion demonstrated across our diocesan family of schools, and by the way in which the teachings of Jesus continue to shape daily life and decision-making.

Our strength lies in the relationships we share and the support we offer one another. Together, we continue to nurture communities in which children and young people can grow in wisdom, hope and confidence, knowing that they are valued and loved by God.

As the summer holiday approaches, I hope that you can find opportunities for rest, refreshment and time with those who matter most to you. Please be assured of our gratitude and our prayers for you, your colleagues, your governors, trustees and members, and the communities you serve.

May the summer months bring renewal and peace, and may God bless you abundantly as you prepare for the year ahead.

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Jeremiah 29:11

With every blessing,

Duncan Gauld
Director of Education

We hope you have a wonderful 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