



Loving to learn; learning with love

Newsletter 6 : 5th October 2026



Delicious melon enjoyed by the gardening club, grown in our very own greenhouse!

Newsletter Headlines and Quick Links

- **Tuesday 6th October** - Welcome to our Classrooms, Years 1 to 6 - Drop in 3.30 - 4.30 (for clubs) and Reception parents' evening
- **Wednesday 7th October** - Reception parents' evening
- **Friday 9th October** - Reception parents' evening
- **Friday 9th October** - Flu vaccinations (time TBC)
- **Friday 9th October** - 11+ results day - emailed at midday
- [Vision and Values](#)
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Helping Each Other Grow

As we move further into autumn, there is something rather special about this time of year. The changing leaves, cooler mornings and signs of harvest remind us of the rhythms of growth. Seeds are planted, nurtured and watered, and in time something wonderful begins to emerge.

This week, I have been reflecting on the words of St Paul:

"I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow... For we are co-workers in God's service."

1 Corinthians 3:6, 9

It feels like a fitting message for our school and our shared value of teamwork: no one person makes the harvest happen. One person plants, another waters, someone else tends and cares, and gradually, through the contribution of many, something begins to flourish.

This week, we reflect on this truth as we say a heartfelt farewell to **Pauline Horner**, who is leaving us after many wonderful years of service. Pauline's journey with us began by giving her time to read with our children, before moving into her role as a midday supervisor. She has been such a deeply valued member of our team and is loved by all of the children, her warmth, care, and dedication over the years have helped so many of our young people flourish, and she will be greatly missed by us all.

There is perhaps no better visual example of this collective effort than the photographs in this week's newsletter of the delicious melons grown in our school garden! How fortunate we are

that our children have opportunities to plant, nurture, and harvest something themselves. Our Gardening Club, so wonderfully led by Penny and supported by our parents, gives children the chance to learn about responsibility, patience, and perseverance, while developing a real connection with the natural world.

The warm weather has also meant that we have been able to make the most of our wonderful outdoor spaces. Class 2 have taken their Maths and Geography learning outside, making the most of every opportunity to learn beyond the classroom. And, of course, our Reception children need no encouragement at all! They are always ready to get outside, particularly if there is mud and water involved. We can only apologise for the amount of washing that must be happening at home!

All of this connects so closely with our vision, Loving to Learn; Learning with Love. We want our children to develop a lifelong love of learning, while knowing that they belong, that their contributions matter and that they can help others to flourish too.

I am continually reminded that learning doesn't just happen in books or inside classrooms. It happens when children work together, solve problems, get their hands dirty, try something for the first time, encourage one another and discover that something they have cared for can grow. These are the experiences that stay with us.

Karen Robinson
Headteacher

Come and See Our Learning!

We are really looking forward to welcoming parents and carers into school to have a look around your child's classroom and the wider school. You are very welcome to pop in at pick-up time or after club. Your children will have the opportunity to show you some of the high-quality work they have completed so far, and our teachers will be available for a catch-up and to answer any questions you may have. I will, of course, also be around and very happy to chat.

Our curriculum pages have now been updated on our website, so please do take a look if you would like to find out more about what your child will be learning this year. You can find these under ['Our School'](#).

As we continue through this beautiful season of growth and harvest, let us remember that our school is a community where we all have a part to play. Together, we plant seeds of curiosity, kindness and confidence, and together we help one another to grow.

"We live by each other and for each other. Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much."
— Helen Keller



Outdoor Maths in the sun in Class 2

Attendance and Holidays

As we settle into the new school term, I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to our entire school community. Seeing our classrooms filled with enthusiastic young learners each morning is a true privilege, and we deeply appreciate everything you do to help your children arrive happy, confident, and ready to learn.

We have recently received a number of requests for term-time leave. I fully understand how challenging and expensive family holidays can be during school breaks, and I hold quality, uninterrupted family time in the highest regard. It is always with a very heavy heart that I have to decline term-time holiday requests, it is genuinely something I wish I could authorise, but as headteacher, I am bound by Department for Education (DfE) statutory guidance.

I would like to share a little context on how these national rules work and why every single day in the classroom counts so much for your child.

DfE Guidelines & The "Persistent Absence" Threshold

Under national guidance (*Working Together to Improve School Attendance*), headteachers can only grant leave of absence in **exceptional circumstances**. The DfE is explicit that standard holidays, lower travel costs, or work schedule availability do not meet this definition.

Here is why timing early in the academic year is particularly tricky:

- **The 10% Trigger:** The DfE defines **Persistent Absence** as missing **10% or more** of school sessions.

- **Early Term Impact:** Because persistent absence is calculated based on the total number of days taught so far, taking just one 5-day holiday early in the autumn term instantly drops a child's attendance below 90%.
- **Local Authority Monitoring:** Crossing this 10% threshold automatically places a child on the Local Authority's persistent watch list. This is a system-generated trigger that we are legally required to report, regardless of a child's overall historical attendance.

Why Catching Up Can Be Challenging

Our teaching staff plan vibrant, fast-paced lessons designed to build knowledge step-by-step. When a child misses a week of school, the learning gap can feel quite overwhelming for them when they return:

- **Phonics & Reading:** In Reception, missing just one week means missing **5 new phonic sounds**. Missing these foundation blocks can quickly impact a child's confidence when blending words and reading independently.
- **Maths:** In primary math, concepts build sequentially day by day. A single week often covers an entire unit, frequently involving over 15 pages of structured workbook learning.
- **Wellbeing & Pressure:** Returning to school while peers have moved ahead to new concepts can cause unnecessary anxiety and pressure for a young child as they try to settle back in while catching up.

Supporting Every Family

Attendance is a central area monitored closely by Ofsted and the Local Authority because national research consistently shows that regular attendance directly correlates with higher academic progress and stronger peer friendships. Recently, schools locally have faced formal interventions primarily due to low attendance figures, which highlights how closely this is scrutinised across the country.

Our absolute priority is to ensure your children feel supported, safe, and happy at school every day. If your child is feeling under the weather, experiencing anxiety, or if your family is going through a difficult period, **please come and talk to us**. We are here to partner with you, and we have many supportive strategies, from early morning check-ins to flexible support plans, to help your child attend comfortably.

Thank you so much for your understanding, your trust, and your partnership as we work together to give our children the best possible start in life.

[Attendance Policy](#)

Vacancy

Join Our Team: Midday Supervisor Opportunity!

We are looking for an enthusiastic and caring **Midday Supervisor** to join our fantastic school team as soon as possible.

This is a wonderful opportunity to spend time with our children during their free playtime, supporting their games, encouraging positive play, and helping ensure lunchtimes are safe, happy, and fun for everyone.

If you or someone you know would be interested in joining our friendly school community, please do share this with them!

Click on our website to find out more: [Midday supervisor vacancy](#)

Midday Supervisor Vacancy

St Margaret's CE Primary School

Midday Supervisory Assistant

G2 (Point 3—6) £25,219—£25,614 pro-rata
6.25 hrs per week £3,549 - £3,605 Actual salary

Start Date: As soon as possible

As a Midday Supervisory Assistant, the post-holder will supervise children in the dining hall/classroom and on the playground. Following appropriate Food Hygiene Training, the post-holder may be required to assist in serving lunches.

No qualifications needed, but experience with children, patience and a good sense of humour are essential.

Further information and an application form are available from and should be returned to: Mrs Alex Drakes, St Margaret's C of E Primary School, Main Road, Withern, Alford, LN13 0NB; E-mail: Office@st-margarets-pri.lincs.sch.uk; Telephone 01507 450375. An Application Form can also be downloaded from our website

<https://stmargaretsceprimaryschool.co.uk/index.html>

Diary Dates and Events

An overview of the dates for this term - more details for each will follow in subsequent newsletters and communications.

Please note - we have included all the term dates for this academic year. Please remember that your child should be in school during term time. Poor attendance has a negative impact on a child's attainment. Please remember that we cannot authorise term time holidays except in exceptional circumstances.

Date	Event
Tuesday 6th October	Welcome to our Classrooms, Years 1 to 6 - Drop in 3.30
Tuesday 6th, Wednesday 7th and Friday 9th October	Reception Parents' Evenings
Friday 9th October	Flu vaccinations (Time TBC)
Friday 9th October	11+ results day - emailed at midday
Monday 19th October	Y4 and 5, 11+ Parent and Child information session 3:20-4pm more information to follow
Friday 23rd October	School Disco PTA
Friday 23rd October	Last Day of Term 1
Monday 2nd November	First Day of Term 2
Monday 2nd November	Stay Safe Partnership: Emotions Workshop - Year 1 and 2 Positive Boundaries Workshop - Year 3 and 4
Friday 13th November	Children in Need
Friday 20th November	Great Athletes - athlete visit to school
Monday 23rd November	Flu vaccinations Mop Up Session
Monday 30th November	School Fayre and Santa's grotto
Tuesday 15th December	School Panto (Skegness)
Friday 18th December	Last Day of Term 2
Monday 4th January	Staff Inset Day
Tuesday 5th January	First Day of Term 3
Tuesday 12th January	Online Safety Workshop - Year 5
Friday 12th February	Last Day of Term 3

Date	Event
Monday 22nd February	First Day of Term 4
Thursday 4th March	World Book Day
Friday 19th March	Comic Relief
Thursday 25th March	Last Day of Term 4
Tuesday 13th April	Staff Inset Day
Wednesday 14th April	First Day of Term 5
Monday 10th - Thursday 13th May	Year 6 SATS week
Wednesday 19th May	Road Safety - Year 1, 2, 3 and 4
Friday 28th May	Last Day of Term 5
Monday 7th June	First Day of Term 6
W/b Monday 7th June	Year 4 Multiplication checks
W/b Monday 14th June	Phonics screening checks
Wednesday 30th June – Thursday 1st July	Year 5 and 6 Residential Trip to Rand Farm Park
Wednesday 21st July	Last Day of Term 6