



Axbridge C of E Academy

Together We Inspire, Thrive & Excel

"I have come so that you may have life, life in all its fullness"

John 10:10

Issue # 20

9th February 2026

Dear Families,

As we reach the end of this half-term, I want to take a moment to say how incredibly proud I am of the children of this school!

This term, we have seen genuine progress in every sense of the word. Academically, children are building knowledge and making links through their inquiry-based learning. Socially, they are showing maturity in friendships and teamwork. Emotionally, they are demonstrating resilience, empathy and a growing ability to articulate their thoughts and feelings. It is a genuine privilege to be part of this journey!

Our recent SIAMS inspection also affirmed what we see each day: that Axbridge is a caring, pupil-focused place of learning. That commitment to ensuring every child flourishes academically, socially and emotionally, remains at the heart of all we do.

A separate letter will be coming home today with further details about our Book Week celebrations in March. This is always such an amazing week, celebrating the importance of reading and developing our collective love of all things books!

This week has also been particularly special as we have marked Children's Mental Health Week. Children have spent time in class and collective workshops reflecting on belonging and identifying safe places in their lives. These conversations have been empathetic, honest and deeply encouraging. They link beautifully to the Learning Conversation being sent home this half-term too, we hope you enjoy exploring this together.

It was also a genuine pleasure watching (and joining in with) the children, as they enjoyed their PTA Silent Disco treat! The joy, laughter and amazing dance moves on display were a joy to behold! Given the overwhelmingly positive feedback from the children, I can confirm that this will now become a regular part of Axbridge life....next time, we want the parents involved too!

It leaves me with wishing you all a happy and healthy half-term. With fingers crossed for some warmer weather, sunshine and those longer spring days ahead, we hope you enjoy some restful family time too. We also look forward to seeing those who are able to join us for our DIY SOS Day on Saturday 14th.

With warmest wishes,

Mr Dominic Shillabeer

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February

Monday 9th - Children's Mental Health Week

Tuesday 10th - SIAMS inspection

Tuesday 10th - Safer Internet Day

Tuesday 10th & Wednesday 11th - Silent Disco Day

Wednesday 11th - Year 4 Roman Day

Thursday 12th - Valentine's - wear red for School in A Bag

Thursday 12th @ 3.25 to 4.25pm - PTA Valentines Crafternoon

Thursday 12th February - school closes for Half-Term at 3:20pm

Friday 13th is an INSET Day

Saturday 14th February - DIY SOS day

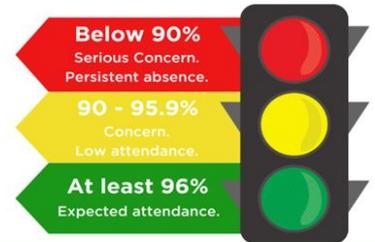
Monday 23rd February - return to school

Tuesday 24th - PTA Film Night

Friday 27th @ 9.10am - Church Service.

ATTENDANCE

Every day counts!



Expected attendance means having no more than seven days off this school year!

Whole School Attendance was 96.5 % last week.



Our Christian Values are:
Community
Courage
Love

Our Christian Vision is;
"I have come so that you may have life, life in all its fullness"
John 10:10

Our Learning Skills are:
Thinking
Social
Self-management
Communication
Research

Congratulations to our certificate winners this week, we are so proud of you!

	Pine	Hazel	Chestnut	Redwood	Oak
Star of the Week	George	Maddy	Jake	Lucien	Anya
Christian Values	Aria	Archie	Jude	Theo	Gracie
Learning Skills	Edith	Ottilie	Lacey	Ethan A	Aubree

Headteacher's Awards

Star of the Week	William Oak	Christian Values	Mila Redwood	Learning Skills	Isla Redwood
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House Points

	Black Rock	Crook Peak	King's Wood	Strawberry Line
This week	222	237	255	202



SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN IS A RESPONSIBILITY OF US ALL

Safeguarding Lead: Mr Dominic Shillabeer

Deputy Safeguarding Leads: Miss Kellie Nash and Mrs Kate Febrey



On Tuesday, we welcomed our SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) inspector into school. It was a full and uplifting day in which every aspect of our life together was explored; our vision, values, collective worship, RE, curriculum, inclusion and the ways in which we nurture every child to flourish.

While we are not yet able to share the final outcome, as this remains subject to the formal quality assurance process, I am delighted to say that it was an extremely positive experience and I very much look forward to sharing the final report with you in approximately 3-4 weeks' time.

What stood out to me yesterday was the authenticity of our community and the teamwork that truly exists at this school. You'll be happy to know that the children spoke with honesty and confidence about what it means to enjoy 'life in all its fullness' John 10:10. This is a wonderful reflection of the trust you place in us and the relationships we have built over time. I would like to extend a special thanks to those families who also gave up their time to share their experiences of the school.

Above all else, it cemented in my mind what a truly special place Axbridge C of E Academy is; and how strong and genuine the partnership is between school, church and community.

Thank you to everyone who contributed: our amazing staff who prepared so thoughtfully, pupils who represented the school so beautifully, local partners and Trust colleagues who support and challenge us, parish partners who walk alongside us, and families who entrust us with their children each day.

We look forward to sharing the report with you soon.

Half-Term Book Recommendations

The Carnegie Awards Longlist for illustrated books has just been announced, with all of the books found below. Mr Shillabeer's recommendation is *The Café At The Edge of The Woods*, a fun, slightly silly short read, with a brilliant rhyming pattern. My children enjoyed it and I loved reading it! Let us know if you manage to read any of the books below, we think they're great! We always love a book recommendation too!



Be Back Soon
Jenny Bloomfield
Andersen Press
Age Range: 4+



Beanie the Banshee
Steve McCarthy
Walker
Age Range: 7+



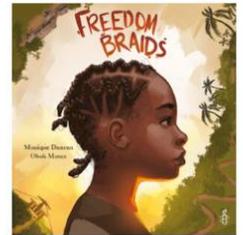
Coorie Doon
Jill Calder
Walker
Age Range: 3+



Don't Trust Fish
Dan Santat
Andersen Press
Age Range: 4+



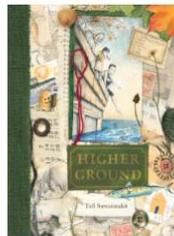
Fia and the Last Snow Deer
Dermot Flynn, Eilish Fisher
Puffin
Age Range: 9+



Freedom Braids
Oboh Moses
Lantana
Age Range: 5+



Good Golden Sun
Brendan Wenzel
Sallywag Press
Age Range: 3+



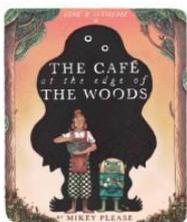
Higher Ground
Tull Suwannakit
New Frontier Publishing
Age Range: 6+



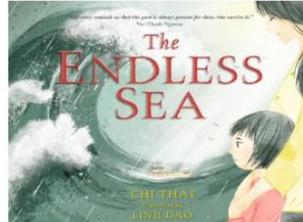
Lord of the Flies: The Graphic Novel
Aimée de Jongh
Faber & Faber
Age Range: 12+



Sleep Tight Disgusting Plob
Huw Aaron
Puffin
Age Range: 3+



The Café at the Edge of the Woods
Mikey Please
HarperCollins Children's Book
Age Range: 4+



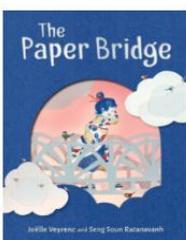
The Endless Sea
Linh Dao
Walker
Age Range: 5+



The Faerie Isle
Dermot Flynn,
Walker
Age Range: 10+



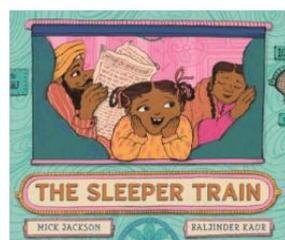
The Ordinary Life of Jacominus Gainsborough
Rébecca Dautremer
Post Wave Children's Books
Age Range: 7+



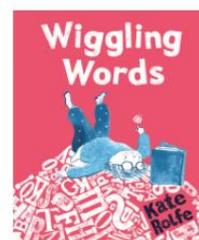
The Paper Bridge
Seng Soun Ratanavanh
Floris Books
Age Range: 4+



The Playdate
Clara Dackenberg
Lantana
Age Range: 4+



The Sleeper Train
Baljinder Kaur
Walker
Age Range: 3+



Wiggling Words
Kate Rolfe
Two Hoots
Age Range: 4+



Wildful
Kengo Kurimoto
Pushkin Children's Books
Age Range: 7+

February Holiday Camp



16th -20th February
8am-5pm (shorter days available)

Arts & Crafts
Sports
Forest School
Lot's more

SMC
SPORTS MASTERS COACHING



Pudding Pie Lane,
Langford,
BS40 5EL

Childcare Vouchers Accepted Here!

Book now!

www.sportsmasterscoaching.com

Holiday Club Plan **SMC**

FEB HALF TERM-17TH-24TH



Chinese New Year

SALT PAINT FIRE WORKS, WISHING TREE
LANTERN MAKING



Random Acts Of Kindness

KINDNESS BINGO CARDS, KINDNESS BOARD
KINDNESS ROCKS



Pancake Day

PANCAKE DECORATING & FOREST SCHOOL



Perfume Day

DESIGN PERFUME BOTTLES, MAKE PERFUME
FOREST SCHOOL



Love Your Pet Day

JUNK MODELING, PET HOUSES
CLAY NAME TAGS



Pokemon Day

POKEMON HUNT, CREATE YOUR OWN
POKEBALL & POKEMON



WEDMORE HOLIDAY CLUB



For ages 5-13 years, from £23*
per day, 9.00am-4.00pm, at
Wedmore First School grounds



In the winter, have fun doing
outdoor adventure activities in the
forest school grounds, and enjoy
our outdoor swimming pool in the
summer!**



Enjoy a jam packed day of
playing games, sports, and arts
and crafts!



Bring packed lunch, snacks,
refillable drinks bottle, outdoor
adventure clothing, and weather
dependant items (sun cream,
waterproofs etc).



Visit our Junior
Activities Page here:

Contact Kings Fitness & Leisure at
01934 744939 to sign up NOW!



*£23 if booked 3 weeks in advance, alternatively, £28 per day, if booked after this time frame
**This is a seasonal, weather dependant activity.



HOLIDAY CLUB At Kings Fitness & Leisure



For ages 5-13 years
from £23* per day
9.00am-4.00pm.



Extend the day with early
drop-off and late pick-up
from £4.50 per session



Have Fun playing games,
sports, going swimming,
and doing arts and crafts!



Bring packed lunch, snacks,
refillable drinks bottle, swimming
kit, weather dependant items
(sun cream, waterproofs etc).



Visit our Junior
Activities Page here:

Contact Kings Fitness & Leisure at
01934 744939 to sign up NOW!



*£23 if booked 3 weeks in advance, alternatively, £28 per day, if booked after this time frame

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Wessex
Learning Trust
We Learn Together!

VALENTINES CRAFTS

THURSDAY 12TH FEB 3.30 - 4.30 PM

£5 per child
includes a snack

To book please email pta@axbridgefirstschool.co.uk
with Child's name and class

Account details to transfer are
Name: Axbridge First School PTA
Sort code: 30-91-84
Account number: 00284059

DIY SOS DAY

Saturday 14th February • 9:30am - 4:00pm

Where - Axbridge C of E Academy
All welcome and refreshments provided

FILM NIGHT

BLUEY: THE SIGN

OLAF'S FROZEN ADVENTURE

TOY STORY: THAT TIME FORGOT

TUESDAY 24TH FEB 3:30-5PM

£4 PER CHILD

To book please email pta@axbridgefirstschool.co.uk
with Child's name and class

Account details to transfer are
Name: Axbridge First School PTA
Sort code: 30-91-84
Account number: 00284059

In Touch

in Axbridge, Shipham & Rowberrow Benefice & Crook Peak Parish
Sunday 8 February
2nd Sunday before Lent

Sunday 8 February

1000	BADGWORTH	Holy Communion
1600	ROWBERROW	Holy Communion
1800	SHIPHAM	Evening Praise
1800	COMPTON BISHOP	Evening Prayer

Taking place this week

Monday 9 February

1100	Axbridge Warm Spot, Church Rooms (ends 1300)
1930	ASR Homegroup, Sue's, 29 Beech Road (ends 2100)

Tuesday 10 February

1930	CP Homegroup, Crooklands, Old Coach Rd, Cross (ends 2100): see p4
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Wednesday 11 February

1945	Christian Meditation Group, Axbridge Church
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Thursday 12 February

0900	Crook Peak online morning prayer https://www.achurchnearyou.com/benefice/01-1258H/service-and-events/
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Friday 13 February

1100	Lenny's Community Café, Shipham Church (ends 1400)
1930	ASR Benefice Choir Practice (ends 2030)

Saturday 14 February

1000	Prayer Hub, Shipham Church (ends 1100)
1400	Crafternoon, Axbridge Church Rooms (ends 1600)

Next Sunday, 15 February, Sunday next before Lent

0800	LOXTON	Holy Communion
1000	AXBRIDGE	Holy Communion
1000	BIDDISHAM	Morning Worship
1000	SHIPHAM	Together in Worship
1600	ROWBERROW	Evensong

10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators

FOSTERING A SENSE OF BELONGING

Helping children feel like they belong is vital for their emotional wellbeing, academic success, and overall development. A true sense of belonging reduces anxiety, builds confidence, and supports resilience. These ten tips are designed to help parents and educators create inclusive, caring environments where children feel accepted, safe, and valued.

1 USE EVERYDAY MOMENTS



Belonging is built in the small moments. Use daily routines such as meals, school drop-offs, or quiet times, to check in, offer praise, or listen. These interactions don't need to be lengthy to be meaningful. Consistent gestures of connection and warmth show children they are important, making them feel seen, appreciated, and truly part of the home or classroom community.

2 INVOLVE THEM IN RULE-MAKING



Inviting children to help create rules or routines gives them a sense of shared ownership and responsibility. When their voices are heard, they feel respected and included in the decision-making process. This empowers children, fosters cooperation, and reduces resistance. Whether at home or school, co-created expectations are more likely to be followed because they come from a place of mutual respect.

3 VALIDATE ALL EMOTIONS



Acknowledging a child's emotions, whether positive or challenging, helps them feel accepted as they are. Validating statements like "I can see that made you upset," or "That sounds really exciting," support emotional expression and connection. Children who feel emotionally safe are more likely to seek help, participate openly, and trust the adults around them - all of which contribute to a sense of belonging.

4 HIGHLIGHT HIDDEN STRENGTHS



Go beyond academic success or good behaviour and take time to recognise a child's less visible qualities, such as thoughtfulness, resilience, or humour. Noticing these strengths sends a powerful message that they are valued for who they are, not just for what they do. This boosts self-esteem and helps children feel accepted in a world that often focuses on external achievements.

5 SHOW CURIOSITY ABOUT CULTURE



Ask respectful, open questions about a child's cultural background, family customs, or celebrations. These conversations create opportunities for children to share what matters to them and to feel proud of their identity. Whether at home or in school, valuing cultural experiences helps all children feel that their heritage is respected, and that they belong in a diverse, inclusive environment where every voice counts.

6 BELONGING BUDDIES



Pairing children with a peer they might not typically choose can foster new connections and break down social barriers. Assigning short projects, games, or shared responsibilities gives them a reason to interact. Buddy systems help quieter or less confident children feel included and supported. Over time, these intentional connections can develop into meaningful friendships, strengthening the wider sense of community and inclusion.

7 AVOID LABELS AND COMPARISONS



Avoid labelling children by behaviour or comparing them to others, as this can damage self-esteem and foster exclusion. Statements like "Why can't you be more like..." may unintentionally make a child feel less worthy. Instead, focus on individual progress and strengths. Encouraging children to celebrate their own achievements, however small, helps them develop confidence and feel valued for being themselves.

8 MAKE TIME FOR ONE-TO-ONES



Spending regular one-to-one time with a child shows that they matter on an individual level. These moments can be as simple as reading a book together or chatting during a walk. Focused attention, free from distraction, builds trust and emotional connection. It lets the child know they are important and cared for, which is crucial for developing a strong sense of belonging.

9 REFLECT THEIR INTERESTS



Whether at home or in school, including children's interests in daily life reinforces their importance. Display their artwork, talk about their favourite books, or include their hobbies in family activities or lesson plans. Seeing their identity reflected in their environment tells children they belong. It shows that their passions, preferences, and contributions are valued and that they have a place in the group.

10 EMPHASISE 'WE' OVER 'THEY'



Use inclusive language that reinforces unity and shared identity. Phrases like "Let's figure it out together," or "We all help each other here," promote collective responsibility and connection. Avoiding divisive terms like "those children," or "that class" helps children feel part of a supportive group. Language shapes experience, and inclusive language fosters environments where every child feels safe, welcomed, and included.

Meet Our Expert

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See full reference list on our website

#WakeUpWednesday®

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