

ELY ST MARY'S NEWSLETTER - SPRING 1, 2026



Welcome from ESM New Headteacher Mr Graves

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we begin this Spring term together, I want to share how delighted I am to have joined the school community here at Ely St Mary's. Even in these first few days, it has been clear to me what a special place this is. During a “getting to know you” activity with staff, they described the school as ambitious, community-minded and solutions-focused - three qualities that shine through in everything I have already seen. They also spoke with real pride about the strength of the team here, and how they approach every challenge collaboratively. It is a privilege to step into a school with such a strong shared ethos.

I have also had the pleasure of spending time with the children, both in classrooms and around the school. Joining them in lessons, at play and over lunch, and enjoying a snowy first-day playtime together. Their warmth and curiosity have made me feel incredibly welcome.

In my first assembly of Spring term, we explored the theme of new beginnings and light. I encouraged the children to think about how they can be a light for others this term—through kindness, friendship, and courage - and to reflect on the people who are lights in their own lives.

I am very much looking forward to getting to know you over the coming weeks and working in partnership to ensure every child continues to thrive. Thank you for the warm welcome I have already received; I am excited for all that this term will bring.

Kind regards,

Oliver Graves



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY - SPRING

Tuesday 6 January - First Day of Spring Term

Wednesday 7th January - United Voices Rehearsals 8.15am

Thursday 8th /Friday 9th January - Whole School Samuel Thomas Workshops

Week commencing Monday 12th January - Clubs and Overture Music start

Tuesday 13th January - Y3 Ely Museum Experience - Iron/Stone Age Workshops

Thursday 15th January - Y5 Raptor Foundation

Monday 19th January - Y6 Weighing and Measuring (NHS)

Tuesday 20th January - Y5 Ely Museum Experience - Anglo-Saxon Workshops

Thursday 22nd January - United Voices - Festival of Flourishing Performance (London)

Wednesday 28th January - Choir Rehearsals start 8.15am

Wednesday 28th January - Y4 Ely Stained Glass Museum - Islamic Workshop

Tuesday 3rd February - Y6 Ely Museum Experience - WW2 Workshops

Week commencing 9th February - Children's Mental Health Week

Tuesday 10th February - Safer Internet Day

Friday 13th February - Last day of Spring 1

Monday 16 February - Friday 20 February - Half Term

Monday 23 February - First Day of Spring Term 2

Week commencing 23rd February Brain Buddies (MHST) Y5 weekly 10 weeks

Monday 2nd March - Y6 Bikeability 4 days

Monday 2 March and Wednesday 4 March - Spring Term Parent Consultation Meetings

Thursday 5th March - World Book Day

Week commencing 9th March - Science Week

Tuesday 17th /Wednesday 18th March - Easter CSI, St Mary's Church

Tuesday 24th March - Y6 Northampton Saints Tag Rugby

Friday 27 March - Last Day of Spring Term

Monday 13 April - First Day of Summer Term



UNIFORM

Winter Clothing & Uniform Reminder

As we move into the winter months, please ensure your child brings a warm coat to school each day and wears footwear suitable for outdoor use.

We would also like to remind parents of key uniform expectations:

- Plain, flat black trainers, shoes or boots
- Neat hairstyles; long hair must be tied back, especially for PE/Games
- No make-up, nail varnish or fashion accessories (including novelty headbands)
- Navy blue jumpers; plain hoodies for PE/Games only
- No jewellery to be worn during PE/Games
- Pupils should come to school in their PE kit on PE/Games days

PE Safety:

Shin pads (football/hockey) and gum shields (rugby/hockey) are strongly recommended. Gum shields should be taken home and sanitised after each use.

Why uniform matters:

A smart, consistent uniform promotes equality, safety and a sense of belonging, helping pupils feel ready to learn.

Thank you for your continued support.



NATIONAL YEAR OF READING 2026

This year marks the National Year of Reading, a celebration of the joy, power, and importance of reading for children of all ages. At ESM, we are passionate about helping every child develop a love of reading – not just for learning, but for pleasure too.

Throughout the year, children will take part in a range of exciting reading activities, themed days, and opportunities to explore new books and genres. We also encourage families to enjoy reading together at home, as shared reading plays a vital role in building confidence, vocabulary, and imagination.

Together, let's make this a year filled with great stories, curious minds, and a lifelong love of reading.



WHOLE SCHOOL TIMES TABLES

Learning and practising multiplication tables is a key focus for us this year, as they play an essential role in supporting children's progress and confidence in Maths. A secure knowledge of times tables helps pupils work more fluently, solve problems more efficiently, and tackle new mathematical challenges with greater confidence.

Regular, short practice at home can make a real difference. We encourage families to support and encourage children by practising little and often – through quick quizzes, games, songs, or everyday conversations. Positive praise and reassurance go a long way in helping children feel confident and motivated.

By working together, we can help every child build strong mathematical foundations and a positive attitude towards Maths.



PARENT CONSULTATIONS

Our parent consultations will be taking place on Monday 3rd March and Wednesday 5th March. A letter will be sent to parents nearer the time with details of how to book appointments on MCAS.

SPRING 1	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5	YEAR 6
As a Reader and Writer...	The Iron Man - Ted Hughes: Tension Writing The Stolen Spear - Saviour Pirotta: Stone Age narrative	Varjak Paw - Narrative Writing	Narrative Writing: This morning I met a whale Balanced arguments: Should people pay for parking in Ely?	FASE Reading focusing on extracts of books Reading for Pleasure Narrative Writing The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe - The Blitz/Evacuation Persuade Why come to ESM? The Island
As a Mathematician...	Times Tables Multiplication and Division Fractions	Times Tables Multiplication and Division Factors	Multiplication and Division Fractions Arithmetic Times Tables	Number Times Tables Decimals Fractions, Decimals and Percentages
As a Geographer and/or Historian ...	The Stone Age How did life change in Britain from the Stone Age to the Iron Age? Where are some of the biggest places on Earth? How does Eastern Europe compare to the UK?	Mediterranean Europe Is the Mediterranean a good place to live?	Rivers KQ : Where do rivers come from?	WW2 How did events after World War I help Hitler rise to power in Germany? The Fall and Rise of Hitler
As a Scientist...	Light and Dark: How do we use light to help us see?	Ecology: How do local ecosystems work?	Living things KQ : Can I talk about life cycles and reproduction of living things and their habitats?	Electricity KQ: How can we control electricity within a circuit?
As an artist and/or designer...	Exploring, designing and making packaging - DT	Roman architecture: Can I produce sketches of Roman architecture and statues?	Still life and watercolours.	Self Portraits Modigliani Picasso Drawing/Chalk and Oil/ Digital/ Pastels/Mixed Media
As a Technologist...	Music Maker	Scratch Programming	Code and Scratch nested loops	Online Safety Online relationships Computing Programming Microbits
As a Musician...	Charanga Can I apply music knowledge to reggae?	Exploring & developing playing skills Recorder	Exploring & developing playing skills Recorders	Exploring & developing playing skills Ukeles
As a Linguist... French	Animals I like and don't like	Family Tree and Faces	Time in the city	Talking about sports, the verb jouer
As an Athlete...	Yoga/Tag Rugby	Yoga/Tag Rugby	Tag Rugby/Badminton	Tag Rugby/Badminton
As a Global Citizen (RE & PSHE)	What is a good life? Diversity and Community	What is a good life? Diversity and Community	What is a good life? Diversity and Community	What is a good life? Diversity and Community

Visiting Artist - Samuel Thomas

All children joined visiting artist Samuel Thomas for workshops to get a real insight into the processes and mindset of a professional artist.

On Friday we all joined him for an assembly and Question and Answer session. Our key takeaways were:

- Find something you love
- Be kind to yourself
- Good art takes time to create.

