



Oxfordshire County Council
Mill Lane Community Primary School
The Windmill Community Nursery
Mill Lane Chinnor Oxfordshire OX39 4RF
Head Teacher Miss Tineke van der Ploeg
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Newsletter

Thursday 3rd September 2026

Dear Parents / Carers,

Welcome to all the new families who are joining us today, not only in the Reception Class, but to some of our older classes too. We hope you settle quickly into the school and enjoy all that Mill Lane has to offer.

The next 2 years should be an exciting time with lots of change to how the school looks. Over the summer holidays, a new, spacious modular building was built. This will house our Year 6 class whilst a new Year 5 and 6 classroom block is built. A contractor has been appointed for this work and demolition of the old huts should start in October. During this work, the Year 5 children have moved into the main building where the old ICT suite used to be. The ICT suite room was cleared and decorated over the holidays in order to provide an extra classroom. This does mean, we now have 3 classes in one area. However, they do all have their own classes plus a shared area. Unfortunately, there is a lack of cloakroom space especially for hanging up lots of items. With this in mind we ask that all KS2 children only bring a bag for their books and pencil case and no other bags. On P.E days and forest school days, we ask for children to come to school in their kits so there will not be extra bags clogging up the corridor spaces. Once the Year 5 & 6 classes have been built, work will start on creating bigger classes for the Year 3 & 4 children. We will keep you updated on how everything is progressing and any potential impact it may have on the day to day running of the school.

Staffing

We are pleased to welcome Mr Richard Surman to Mill Lane. Below is a list of the members of staff working in each class:

Nursery: Suzie Pocock, Bev Hardstaff, Emma Rockall, Amanda Maxwell

Reception: Cliona Macdonald, Mia Neasham, Michelle Morgan, Angela Oakley, Millie Hudders

Class 1: Lucy Horn, Karen Foord, Helen Gilbert, Sarah Kennedy, Donna Scarlett

Class 2: Lottie Jones, Ben Davis, Lynne Worley, Sian Kelly

Class 3: Alex Grazier, Sarah Richardson, Sarah Daly, Juliette Richards

Class 4: Oliver Horn, Samantha Smale, Andrea Leavesley

Class 5: Richard Surman, Ruby Matthews

Class 6: Ali Kershaw, Tineke van der Ploeg, Alison Bird, Sheryl Hipwell, Debbie Godfrey

Admin Team: Caroline Hiley, Matthew Wingrove

Caretaker: Victor Zammit

Cooks: Amanda Walker, Jackie Evans

Communication

If you would like to speak to the class teacher, you can contact them by ringing at the start or the end of the day (01844 352106) or by emailing the office (office.2465@mill-lane.oxon.sch.uk). There is no direct email to class teachers, as we are mindful of teachers' work life balance in that they should not feel obliged to respond to emails in the evening. All emails received by the office are immediately forwarded on to the class teachers. Teachers are very busy welcoming the class first thing in the morning so it is easier if you speak to the teacher at the end of the day if you would like a face to face meeting.

If you would like to contact the school regarding any matters regarding SEN, we have set up a specific email address which will be monitored daily by the SEN team. The email address is SEN@mill-lane.oxon.sch.uk.

Each class has its own dedicated page on the website where you can find all the relevant information for that class including any letters sent out, class routines, useful websites etc. On our school website, you can also find a calendar of events, copies of newsletters, and term dates. We will continue to send out our weekly newsletter, as parents found this very useful last year. This will share key information for the upcoming week as well as celebrate successes and highlights from the week just gone.

At the end of this newsletter, there is a reminder of the term dates for this year and there is also an overview of events for the whole year, not just this term. We will do our best to adhere to these dates, but sometimes unforeseen circumstances lead to changes. We will aim to give you as much notice as possible of these changes.

Smartphone Free School

Most of you may remember, that at the end of last year, we took the decision to become a smartphone free school. As a reminder, this means children cannot bring smartphones to school. If a child does bring a phone to school, it will still need to be handed in to the class teacher. We also ask parents not to use smartphones on the school site unless there is an emergency. Most children are keen to tell you about what they have been doing. It is also a safeguarding measure as phones can be used to take photographs.

Homework

We want to provide more structure to homework, prepare children for secondary school, and reduce over-reliance on online learning. All KS1 and KS2 children will receive a **homework book** for their weekly activities.

Each week, homework will include:

- **Spellings:** a list of words with suggested practice activities. Children can also use the online program *Spelling Shed* for games and quizzes and assessments.
- **Reading:** at least 15 minutes a day to an adult, recorded in their reading diary.
- **Comprehension:** a short reading task.
- **Maths:** one reasoning problem to complete.

School Drop Off and Collection

Please take care when dropping off your children and please do not drop off or stop in front of the school gates. White's Field car park is always busy at the start and end of the day so could I please remind you to take care when using the car park.

Children arriving after 9.00am need to enter the school via the main entrance and reception. Children arriving after 9.15am will be marked as absent for that session. If your child is unwell, please ring the school as soon as possible (preferably before 9.30am) and inform us of the reason for the absence so we can maintain accurate records. For this week and next week, we will allow parents through the side gates to drop children off in Year 2 to 6, once they are settled we will ask parents to leave them at the gate and let them go through on their own.

Scooters and Bikes

We are more than happy for the children to ride their bikes or scooters to school. However, if your child brings a scooter or bike they **should not ride it at any time on school grounds**; this includes the pathway which runs alongside White's Field as this is generally very busy with adults and children and is not very wide.

For safety, children should not ride scooters or bicycles on the path at the front of the school or through the main gates.

- Children riding bikes to school **must wear a cycle helmet**.
- Children riding scooters are also strongly advised to wear a helmet.
- Bikes and scooters should be parked in the racks outside the hall.

Breakfast Club / After School Club

Mrs Hipwell, Mrs Worley, Mrs Leavesley and Mrs Walker continue to run our breakfast club. Children can arrive at the breakfast club any time after 8am and they need to go to the big hall via the front entrance. Children must be dropped off by an adult who needs to register them at the front desk. You must pre-book to use the breakfast club as it gets very busy. The cost for the breakfast club is £2.

The school no longer manages the After School Club. Sessions are booked through the S4All website: www.s4aclub.co.uk

School Photographs

The school photographer will visit Thursday 22nd October. On this day the photographer will be taking individual children's photos as well as sibling groups. Due to very few people buying class photographs over the last few years, the photographer will only be taking class photos for the Reception Class and Year 6.

Reception Intake September 2027 Open Day

For parents of children who will be starting school in September 2027, we do not have dedicated open days, instead we are open for viewing at any time; just ring the school office to make an appointment to look around the school.

Lost Property

Each term, we are left with lots of lost property and on a daily basis we find items left around various parts of the school. If they are named, we are able to reunite them with their owner fairly quickly. However, if not they will be placed in a lost property box in the office area at the front of the school. Please feel free to come to the front reception to look for any lost items.

Our second-hand uniform is available in the front reception area. This makes it much easier for families to browse and find any items they might need. Everyone is welcome to pop in and take a look.

Choir

The KS2 choir (Year 3 to Year 6) will continue to be run by Miss van der Ploeg and Mrs Hardstaff. It will be on every Friday from 8.15am to 9am and it will start on Friday 11th September. We will be performing at the O2 as usual on Monday 18th January 2027. If your child is interested in joining the choir, all they need to do is turn up on Friday. Children come in to school through the front reception area.

Joyful Music Tuition

Joyful Music Tuition provide piano, guitar, ukulele, recorder and drum lessons at school. Guitar lessons are offered to pupils in Year 3 and above, drums and ukulele are offered from Year 2, and piano and recorder group are available from Year 1. Spaces for individual tuition are offered on a first come, first served basis. To book lessons on any of these instruments, or just to register your interest, please email Gail Roberts on

joyfulchinnor@outlook.com or call 01844 351193. More information can be found on the Joyful Music enquiry letters in the school office.

There will be a new lunchtime recorder group starting up in Term 2 for children in Year 1 and above. Please email Gail Roberts on joyfulchinnor@outlook.com if you would like your child added to the provisional start list.

Joyful Music lessons for existing pupils will start the week commencing Monday 7th September; please could all children ensure that they bring their books and instruments to school on the relevant day. Thank you and happy music-making!

Yours sincerely,

Tineke van der Ploeg

Term Dates:

Please find below a list of term dates for this year:

Term Dates 2026 – 2027

Term 1: Thursday 3rd September 2026 to Friday 23rd October 2026

INSET Days Tuesday 1st and Wednesday 2nd September, also Friday 2nd October

Term 2: Tuesday 2nd November 2026 to Friday 18th December 2026 (1.45pm finish)

Term 3: Tuesday 5th January 2027 to Friday 12th February 2027

INSET Monday 4th January 2027

Term 4: Monday 22nd February 2027 to Thursday 25th March 2027 (1.45pm finish)

Term 5: Monday 12th April 2027 to Friday 28th May 2027

Bank Holiday Monday 3rd May 2027

Term 6: Tuesday 8th June 2027 to Wednesday 21st July 2027 (1.45pm finish)

INSET Monday 7th June 2027

Diary Dates: Here are the dates for the whole year which we try to keep to as much as possible; however, they may have to change. We will try to let you know as soon as possible.

Term 1

Friday 11th September: Year 2 WOW day

Friday 11th September: Climbing wall workshops

Wednesday 16th September: Skateboard workshops

Friday 18th September: Sponsored colour run (raising money for early years)

Thursday 1st October: 8.40am – 10am LWS open morning for Year 6

Friday 2nd October: INSET day – school closed

Tuesday 6th October: 6pm – 8pm LWS Year 6 open evening

Wednesday 7th October: Year 2 trip to Oxford story museum

Wednesday 7th October: Year 6 trip to Oxford Castle

Wednesday 14th October: 9am Harvest festival celebrations

Friday 23rd October: Flu vaccines

Monday 20th to Friday 23rd October: Arts & Culture week

Thursday 22nd October: School photographs

Friday 23rd October: Last day of term

Term 2

Monday 2nd November: Children return to school

Friday 6th November: 6pm MLSA fireworks night

Monday 9th November: Start of antibullying week

Friday 13th November: Mufti for Children in Need

Wednesday 2nd December: 3.30pm – 6pm open evening to come and see your child's work

Monday 7th December: Termly report card goes out

Wednesday 9th December: 10am KS1 Christmas performance dress rehearsal

Wednesday 9th December: 3.15pm to 8.30pm Parents evening

Thursday 10th December: School trip to Panto – Sleeping Beauty (Aylesbury)

Friday 11th December: 9.30am Nursery Christmas performance

2pm KS1 Christmas performance

Monday 14th December: 10am Reception Christmas Performance Dress rehearsal

Tuesday 15th December: 2pm Reception Class Christmas performance

Wednesday 16th December: Christmas dinner and Christmas jumper day

5.30pm KS2 Christmas concert

Friday 18th December: 1pm Celebration assembly

1.45pm Early closing (no after school club)

Last day of term

Term 3

Monday 4th January: INSET day – school closed

Monday 4th – Friday 8th January: Year 6 residential to Kilvrough

Tuesday 5th January: Children return to school

Monday 18th January to Friday 22nd January: Assessment week (children will complete midyear assessments)

Monday 18th January: Choir to O2

Monday 8th February to Friday 12th February: Science week

Friday 12th February: Last day of term

Term 4

Monday 22nd February: Children return to school

Monday 1st to Friday 5th March: Book Week

Thursday 4th March: World book day

Wednesday 10th March: 3.30pm – 6pm Open evening to come and see your child's work

Thursday 18th March: 3.30pm Spring concert

Friday 19th March: Comic relief mufti day

Monday 22nd March: Termly report card goes out

Wednesday 24th March: 3.30pm to 8.30pm Parent evening

Thursday 25th March: 1pm celebration assembly

1.45pm Early closing (no after school club)

Last day of term

Term 5

Monday 12th April: Children return to school

Monday 3rd May: Bank Holiday - School closed

Tuesday 4th May: am Secret Garden performance

Wednesday 5th May: 9.15am School May Day celebrations

Monday 10th May to Thursday 13th May: Year 6 SATs

Wednesday 12th May: 7pm New Reception parents meeting

Wednesday 26th May to Friday 28th May: Year 4 camp out

Friday 28th May: Last day of term

Term 6

Monday 7th June: INSET day – school closed

Tuesday 8th June: Children return to school

Tuesday 8th to Friday 11th June: Year 4 multiplication check

Monday 14th June to Friday 18th June: Year 1 & 2 phonics screening check

Friday 18th June: 9.30am to 12pm Sports Day

Thursday 24th June: KS2 Thame Partnership Sports event

Monday 28th June to Friday 2nd July: Assessment week (children will complete their end of year tests)

Friday 2nd July: Class swap day & LWS taster day

Wednesday 7th July: 3.30pm – 6pm Open evening to come and see your child's work

Tuesday 13th July: Reports go out

Wednesday 14th July: 10am Year 5 & 6 dress rehearsal

Wednesday 14th July: 5pm to 7pm Meet your child's new teacher evening

Thursday 15th July: 2pm & 7pm Year 5 & 6 performance

Wednesday 21st July: 9.15am Celebration Assembly

1pm Leavers Assembly

1.45pm Early Closing (no after school club)

Last day of term