

*'Spurring each other on with love'*

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## Holocaust Memorial Day Presentation

The children in Year Six were visited by Jonathan Marshall M.B.E, who came to talk to them about Solly Irving's story. Solly was a Holocaust survivor who visited schools for a number of years, telling his story of survival. After Solly's death, Jonathan has continued to visit schools on behalf of his friend to share the story. The children were able to link this story with their knowledge of pre-war Jewish Life and the lead up to the war. Jonathan finished his talk with Solly's words 'Try to create a better world than the one that I had to endure'. We were all really impressed with the children's careful questions, sensitivity and application of knowledge. Well done Year Six.



## Bickleigh Down Sporting Round Up: Netball

It has been a fantastic season for netball at our school. Year Five pupils took part in a netball fun event where they developed key skills before enjoying competitive matches, showing growing confidence throughout the day. One of our netball teams competed in a development tournament against six other Plymouth schools, winning all of their matches, scoring a combined 26 goals and not conceding a single goal. The other team also took part in a highly competitive tournament against six schools; for some pupils this was their first experience of netball, yet they performed with great confidence and teamwork, winning every match, scoring an impressive 48 goals and conceding just six. Well done to all the pupils involved for representing the school so positively and demonstrating excellent netball skills, teamwork and sportsmanship.



## Devon and Somerset Fire Rescue Visit

We were pleased to welcome a representative from the Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service's education department, who led a whole-school assembly focused on what fire fighters do, how to call for help in an emergency and how we can all help firefighters. Following the assembly, they delivered engaging and informative presentations to our Year Two and Year Five classes, highlighting key fire safety measures within the home.

The sessions covered important topics such as identifying common household fire hazards, including electrical items, candles, and stoves, the critical role of smoke detectors, and what to do in the event of an emergency. The children were highly engaged, asked thoughtful questions, and gained a deeper understanding of how to stay safe. As part of their community support, the fire service also offers a **free smoke alarm fitting service** for families who may require it. Please visit their website or contact them directly for more information.





## High 5 Wrap Around Care Nerf Activity

On Tuesday 20th January, High 5 wraparound care hosted an exciting Nerf activity session in St Cecilia Hall. The hall was buzzing with energy as the children took part in a range of fast-paced games, showcasing fantastic teamwork, enthusiasm and smiles all around.

The session was filled with laughter and friendly competition; it was wonderful to see how much fun the children had in a safe and well-organised environment. A huge thank you to the High 5 team for providing such an enjoyable and memorable experience for the children. Their next fun event is entitled K Pop Inflatable Disco Party will take place on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2026 at a cost of £11 per child (3.20 - 5.30 pm). Please contact High 5 for more details regarding bookings.



## PFA Movie Night

The PFA treated our children to another fantastic Movie Night on Wednesday 21st January, featuring the ever-popular Mario movie. The hall was transformed into a cosy cinema, with children snuggled up under their comfy blankets while enjoying popcorn, candy floss and hot dogs.

The children were thoroughly engaged in the film and, for those who wanted a quieter alternative, a designated colouring table was available throughout the evening. This thoughtful addition ensured that everyone could enjoy the event in a way that suited them.

A huge thank you to the PFA for organising yet another successful and enjoyable movie night. The smiles on the children's faces said it all!





# Important Dates and Events for Parents and Carers



## February 2026

Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup>: PFA Spring Disco: Foundation, KS1 & KS2

Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> High 5 K Pop Inflatable Party After School Activity (£11 per child)

16<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup>: Half Term Break

## March 2026

Thursday 5<sup>th</sup>: World Book Day Celebration - (Non-Uniform/Mufti)

Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> - Friday 6<sup>th</sup>: Foundation Balanceability Training Sessions

Monday 9<sup>th</sup> - Friday 13<sup>th</sup>: Year Five Bikeability Training Sessions

Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> March: High 5 Neon Dodgeball After School Activity (£11 per child)

Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> - Friday 13<sup>th</sup>: PFA Mother's Day Present Room

Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> - Thursday 26<sup>th</sup>: Parents' Evenings

Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> Class Photos

## April 2026

Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> April: Spring Music Festival for Foundation, KS1 & KS2

Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> Last Day of Term Early Dismissal @ 1.15 pm

3<sup>rd</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> : Easter Break

Monday 20<sup>th</sup>: All pupils return to school

Friday 24<sup>th</sup>: Military Family Breakfast @ 8.10 am (All pupils wear purple accessories (purple hair accessories, socks etc) in celebration of Month of the Military Child)

Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> April - High 5 Inflatables After School Activity (£11 per child)

## May 2026

Monday 4<sup>th</sup>: Bank Holiday

Monday 11<sup>th</sup> - Thursday 14<sup>th</sup>: Year Six SATs Assessment Week

Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup>: PFA Summer Disco for Foundation, KS1 & KS2

Thursday 21<sup>st</sup>: New 2026 Foundation Intake Meeting @ 5pm

25<sup>th</sup> - 29<sup>th</sup>: Half Term Break

## June 2026

Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup>: All pupils return to school

Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> - Friday 12<sup>th</sup>: Year Four Multiplication Tables Check

8<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup>: National Phonics Screening Check

Monday 15<sup>th</sup>: Foundation & Key Stage One Sports Day

Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup>: Key Stage Two Sports Day (Years Three to Six)

Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> PFA Father's Day Present Room

Friday 19<sup>th</sup> : PFA Father's Day Present Room

Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup>: 1<sup>st</sup> Visit: New Foundation Intake Induction Day @ 1.30 pm

Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup>: 1<sup>st</sup> Visit New Foundation Intake Induction Day @ 1.30 pm

Friday 26<sup>th</sup>: PFA Mufti Day

Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup>: New Foundation Intake Induction Day @ 1.30 pm

July 2026

Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup>: 2<sup>nd</sup> Visit: New Foundation Intake Induction Day @ 1.30 pm

Friday 3<sup>rd</sup>: PFA Mufti Day

Friday 10<sup>th</sup> : PFA Mufti Day & Summer Fayre

Friday 17<sup>th</sup>: Year Six End of Year Trip to Woodlands

Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> : Year Six Production @ 6 pm

Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> : Year Six Production @ 2pm

Year Six Leaver's Disco @ 5pm - St Barnabas Hall

Friday 24<sup>th</sup>: Last day of term                      1.15 pm dismissal

Welcome to Our New Families!

A very warm welcome to all the new children and families who have joined our school this term. It is an absolute pleasure to have you as part of our community, and we would like to thank you for choosing Bickleigh Down Church of England Primary School as your school of choice. We look forward to getting to know you and working together to ensure your child feels happy, supported and successful as they begin this exciting new chapter with us.

## Attendance Letters

As part of our ongoing commitment to promoting excellent attendance, we will be issuing attendance letters to parents and carers of children whose attendance is currently 90% or below. Nationally, this level of attendance is defined as persistent absence.

Letters will be sent to families where there is persistent lateness, unauthorised absences (including term-time holidays), or a high number of authorised absences, such as those recorded for illness or other approved reasons.

If you receive a letter and your child's absence has been due to genuine illness, please be reassured that there is no cause for concern. These letters are a statutory notification, required to inform parents and carers when a child's attendance has fallen below the national expectation.

We appreciate your continued support in ensuring that children attend school regularly and arrive on time, helping them to make the most of every learning opportunity and achieve their full potential.

## Road Safety Concerns

We continue to receive a high number of concerns regarding the safety of children while walking to and from school each day. Both local residents and parents have raised ongoing worries about motorists driving at excessive speeds and failing to adhere to speed limits and road signage in the area surrounding the school.

In addition, there remain persistent issues with parents and carers parking on double yellow lines and in close proximity to the zebra crossing. This significantly restricts visibility and poses serious risks to pedestrians, particularly our children at the busiest times of the day. The safety of our pupils is a shared responsibility. We ask all members of our school community to work together to ensure that children can travel to and from school safely. By parking considerately, observing speed limits and road signs, and modelling responsible behaviour, we can help prevent accidents and ensure a safer environment for everyone. Thank you for your continued cooperation in being proactive, rather than reactive, in keeping our school community safe.

## Supporting Learning at Home: Little Steps, Big Impact!

We encourage all parents and carers to support learning at home by ensuring that children spend at least 15 minutes each day practising their reading, spelling and times tables, in addition to completing their weekly homework.

Research shows that short, consistent bursts of practice, often called distributed practice, are far more effective for long-term retention than less frequent, longer sessions. Just 15 minutes a day helps children consolidate what they learn in school, build confidence, and develop strong independent study habits. These daily routines support improvements in vocabulary, fluency, maths fact recall and overall academic achievement.

Why this matters for your child's progress:

- Reading practice builds comprehension, communication skills and general knowledge – all critical for accessing the wider curriculum. Pupils who read regularly at home tend to perform better in English and across other subjects.
- Spelling practice reinforces word patterns, increases accuracy in writing, and supports confidence in expressing ideas clearly.
- Times tables recall underpins almost all aspects of maths. Rapid recall frees up working memory for problem-solving and higher-order thinking, which secondary schools increasingly expect.

By the time children reach secondary school, they are expected to learn more independently, manage homework demands, and tackle complex tasks across subjects. Daily practice helps children develop the self-discipline, organisation and resilience that teachers value - skills that transfer directly into the world of work and everyday life in modern Britain. Employers and further education settings consistently highlight the importance of strong literacy and numeracy skills, along with self-management and a positive attitude toward learning.

Thank you for your continued support in helping your child develop positive learning habits and achieve their potential. Together, we can build confident, capable learners ready for the challenges of secondary school and modern Britain.