



Checkendon Church of England (A) Primary School

Respect

Integrity

Compassion

Courage

Hope

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October 2025 Newsletter 85

Meet the team (part 2)

Behind every great school is a team of dedicated, passionate professionals who make learning engaging, supportive, and fun. In this series, we'll introduce you to the people who help make our school such a special place – from teachers and teaching assistants to office staff and beyond. Get ready to meet the faces who inspire, guide, and care for our students every day!

Acorn Class (Reception)

New to Checkendon, **Mrs Byron** brings 30 years of experience in early years education. She has held a variety of roles, including at children's centres in Sonning Common, Goring, and Woodcote, which gave her valuable insight into supporting families in health, finance, and education. Before joining Checkendon in September, she spent 12 years as a Reception teacher at Peppard Primary. She is excited to be part of the Checkendon community and is enjoying getting to know her class and colleagues. Originally from Caversham, Mrs Byron lives locally with her husband, two daughters, a cat called Mercutio, and a dog called George. She adores her pets and enjoys hobbies such as crochet, scrapbooking, and music. Her favourite film is *Mamma Mia*, whose soundtrack reminds her of home growing up. Her goal this year is to help the children be happy, confident, and successful while discovering their individual "superpowers."



Miss Gomm is already a familiar face, having previously supported Mrs Lunn in Willow Class as well as working as an HLTA in Acorn Class during the afternoons. Her journey into working with children began as a play leader at SuperStrike, a holiday club where she discovered her love of supporting young learners. She then went on to complete her Level 3 Diploma in Child Care and Education, building on her skills and passion for helping children thrive. In addition to her role in the classroom, Miss Gomm also runs our After School Club, where she enjoys creating fun, safe, and engaging activities for children at the end of the day. A fun fact about her is that she was once a pupil in Mrs Hillier's class! A constant source of amusement for the children is guessing which of her many trainers she will be wearing each day.

Acorn Class TA, Mrs Wallace, joined Checkendon last year and has quickly become a valued part of the school community. Although she is proud of her personal connection to the school as all five of her children attended Checkendon, see if you can spot their names on the bricks outside Acorn Class. She began her career many years ago as a TA at Micklands Pre-School in Reading, before taking time out to raise her five children, and she is also a trained Holistic Therapist. Originally from Finchampstead, she lives locally with her family, three dogs, Meg, Peaches, and Rosie, and a cat named Cola. An avid gardener and fan of long walks, she enjoys being outdoors and staying active. Her favourite TV show is *Slow Horses*, and if she could have one superpower it would be the ability to fly, perfect for a quick escape to a desert island. Her motto is Audrey Hepburn's: "Nothing is impossible, the word itself says 'I'm possible'."



Silver Birch Class (Years 5 and 6)

Mrs Cox is the Year 5 and 6 teacher and a senior teacher at Checkendon, supporting curriculum planning and coordinating maths. She is also completing the National Professional Qualification for Headteachers, bringing the latest research and best practice to the school. She has worked in education since 2009, starting as a parent governor and teaching assistant before completing her primary PGCE in 2014. Her career has taken her to many schools across Oxfordshire, and she is delighted to be back at Checkendon, a community she describes as aspirational yet protective of children's need to play and explore. Outside school, Mrs Cox lives in Wallingford with her two adult children and her Bengal cat, Max. She loves reading, needlework, and has an impressively large CD and record collection. Her motto is: *"Do it afraid!"* Her goal this year is to guide Year 6 through SATs with as little stress as possible while creating wonderful memories of their final year at primary school.



Mrs Walker, Silver Birch TA and occasional office administrator, has a long association with Checkendon School. Her children were pupils here and she was, at that time, Chair of the School Association. She has 14 years of experience as a teaching assistant, firstly at Stoke Row primary school as a one-to-one helper before joining Checkendon in 2012. She has worked in every year group but thrives on the challenge of helping to prepare children in year 5 and 6 for their SATs and the transition to secondary school. Prior to having children, Mrs Walker studied Civil Engineering before working in Logistics planning. Originally from Scotland, Mrs Walker now lives locally with her husband, 3 grown up children, a dog and 2 cats! Outside of school, she enjoys volunteering, travelling, countryside walks (especially with a tea and biscuit stop!) and reading. Her current favourite book is *All the light we cannot see*, by Anthony Doerr.



Mrs Tarbox is a vital part of our school office. Having previously worked as a TA, she has a deep understanding of our children and their needs. Both of her daughters attended Checkendon School, giving her a valuable perspective from a parent's point of view as well. She has been involved with Checkendon for 13 years and manages the office, an incredibly demanding role that involves juggling teachers' and parents' requests while being on hand to support any unwell children. As Mrs Hillier often says, she couldn't do her job without Mrs Tarbox!

Attendance figures: 95%

Acorn Class
98%

Oak Class
96%

Willow Class
93%

Silver Birch Class
93%

The importance of attendance: Every day counts!

Regular attendance is one of the most important factors in a child's learning and success. Every day at school gives children the chance to engage in lessons, develop skills, build friendships, and grow in confidence. Missing school, even a few days, can make it harder to keep up, understand new concepts, and feel part of the school community.

Attendance isn't just about academics. School helps children develop social skills, teamwork, routines, responsibility, and resilience. That's why we encourage all families to prioritise attendance and work with us if challenges arise, together, we can help every child thrive.

When Ofsted visit, they look closely at attendance as a marker of family engagement. We are aiming for *"above national average and improving further"* to secure the best outcomes for our school.

Remember: Every day counts – be here, be involved, be successful!

We have been asked to remind all parents NOT to use the preschool car park. Many thanks!

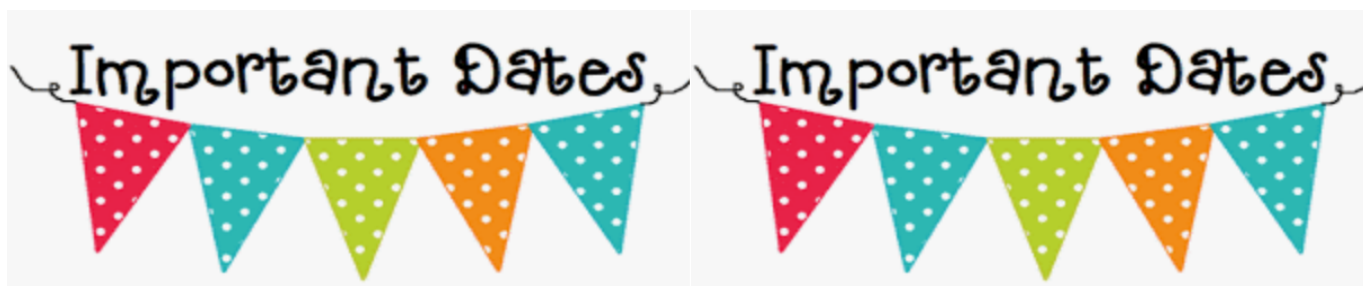


Harvest Festival Donation

We are incredibly grateful to our school community for their generous contributions to the local foodbank. Thanks to your kindness, we've been able to provide much-needed support to families in our area.

Your donations truly make a difference and reflect the caring spirit of our school community.

Thank you!



Term 1

Monday 15th September 8.50 Oak Class Parent Information Session
 Monday 15th September PM Oak Class Forest
 Monday 15th September 3pm Acorn Class Parent Information Session
 Wednesday 17th September 3pm Silver Birch Class Parent Information Session
 Thursday 18th September Swimming 1
 Thursday 18th September 3pm Willow Class Parent Information Session
 Thursday 25th September Swimming 2
 Wednesday 1st October 2025 at 2.30 Harvest Festival in the church (all welcome)
 Thursday 2nd October 2025 After school – exhibition of Oak Class Lighthouses
 Thursday 2nd October Swimming 3
 Thursday 9th October Swimming 4
 Thursday 16th October Swimming 5 (last one)
 Friday 17th October 2025 9am Open Celebration Worship (all welcome)
 Wednesday 22nd October 2025 at 3.20 term ends
 Thursday 23rd October 2025 INSET – First Aid training for all staff
 Friday 24th October 2025 INSET Day

October holiday Monday 27th October 2025 – Friday 31st October 2025

Term 2

Monday 3rd November 2025 Term starts
 Wednesday 17th December 2025 2.30 Christmas Church Service (all welcome)
 Friday 19th December 2025 9am Open Celebration Worship (all welcome)
 Friday 19th December 2025 at 1 pm term ends
Christmas holiday Monday 22nd December 2025 – Friday 2nd January 2026

Term 3

Monday 5th January 2026 Term starts
 Friday 13th February 2026 Open Celebration Worship (all welcome)
 Friday 13th February 2026 at 3.20 Term ends
February holiday Monday 16th February 2026 – Friday 20th February 2026

Term 4

Monday 23rd February 2026 Term starts
 Wednesday 25th March 2026 at 2pm Holy Communion Easter Service (all welcome)
 Friday 27th March 2026 Open Celebration Worship and class cups (all welcome)
 Friday 27th March 2026 at 1 pm Term ends
Easter holiday Monday 30th March 2026 – Friday 10th April 2026

Term 5

Monday 13th April 2026 Term starts
 Monday 4th May 2026 Bank Holiday Monday (no school)
 Wednesday 20th May 2026 at 1.30 Pentecost followed by Maypole and Country Dancing (all welcome)
 Friday 22nd May 2026 Open Celebration Worship (all welcome)
 Friday 22nd May 2026 at 3.20 Term ends
Late Spring holiday Monday 25th May 2026 – Friday 29th May 2026

Term 6

Monday 1st June 2026 INSET Day
 Tuesday 2nd June 2026 Term starts
 Wednesday 15th July 2026 at 2.30 Celebration Worship in church (all welcome)

Friday 17th July at 9am Open Celebration Worship and Class Cups (all welcome)
Friday 17th July 2026 at 1pm Term ends
Monday 20th July 2026 INSET Day