



Newsletter 8

6th February 2026

Dear all,

How strange it felt to be told we're one of the top 30 schools in the country! But that is what The Telegraph told us recently, and who are we to argue? [The Telegraph's Primary School Rankings](#) use factors including results in KS2 SATS and attendance. This gave us a score of 39/40 based on their criteria, which was good enough to be placed 27th in the country and by far the highest in Somerset.

This was then picked up by The County Gazette who gave us a nice article both online and in their print versions, resulting in lots of smiling faces on the front cover.

It is an accolade that means both a lot and nothing at all. In many ways we can treat it with a quick shrug of 'That's who we are and what we do' before moving onto the next thing.

But also, occasionally, we need to slow down and appreciate good news and recognition when it is passed our way. We know what a good school we have here and the body of evidence is building up – our SIAMS inspection in September said lovely things about our school culture and the strong collaboration we have with our local community without really talking about children's academic achievement. But equally, we have to celebrate the fact that children do really well at Stoke academically, resulting in them being really well-prepared for their next steps.

Part of our challenge as a small village school is letting everybody know what we do here. So don't be shy – if you know people who are looking for school places make sure to recommend us!

Flooding

Despite the disruption that the recent flooding could have caused I was extremely grateful to staff and families at the height of the floods recently. When plenty of local schools (on hills) closed their gates, we remained



open with 75% attendance and all staff in despite there only being one route in and out of the village. Another sign of the resilience of the school and community, the support of families and the dedication of staff.

Wassailing

Wassailing feels like quite a long time ago... mainly because it was. But what a great way to start the term and it already feels like it is building into a tradition that I hope will stretch years into the future alongside egg shackling and maypole dancing. A Stoke Tradition Triad, if you will. Theo and Dorothea were drawn to be this year's wassailing king and queen and it was great to see so many children and families join us again to make our ivy crowns and a huge amount of noise as we paraded down to the orchard. There we toasted the trees, sang our songs and drunk delicious apple juice. Fingers crossed for a great harvest.



Stoke Egg-stravaganza

Talking of egg shackling (something that I had the pleasure of doing on Matt Chorley's Radio 5 show last term) - it is that time again.

Monday 23rd February: Decorated egg competition with the theme 'Heroes and Villains'. A reminder to this long-standing annual tradition: one (hen's) egg each – go wild with the imagination

Tuesday 24th February: Egg shackling at the start of the day. Keep fingers crossed for the weather. All children need to bring in one **unboiled** hen's egg. May the best egg win. Time to find those chicken feet...



Curriculum focus: Music

Among our many talents we are undoubtedly a musical school. The music lessons that children receive from Mr Selby are fantastic and give children an introduction to a range of musical styles and opportunities. Over the past year you may have been treated to Ravens singing sea shanties, Kingfishers giving a drumming performance and (of course) our wonderful performance of The Lion King. Beyond the core offer we also have plenty more in our music offer:

- Piano lessons with Mr Selby
- Brass and woodwind lessons with Mrs Meikle on Tuesdays
- School band with Mrs Meikle after school on Tuesdays
- Choir with Mrs Webber after school on Mondays
- Opportunities to perform in concerts and local events
- And singing. Lots of singing, for all. Across the curriculum, throughout the week, in collective worship and in our end of year productions.



Times Tables Rockstars – NSPCC Rocks

Children in KS2 have been battling out today as part of NSPCC Rocks on Times Tables Rockstars. There is a one-hour limit to stop children playing all day (and night), attempting to answer as many times tables questions as possible. Last year we did very well – I'll send an update to let you know how we do this year!

Staff changes

It has been lovely to have Mrs Boobyer on our staff since the beginning of term working with children across the school but particularly in Otter Class.

We are also lucky to have *Miss Baldwin* join our team for the rest of the year, someone we know very well and are delighted to welcome back. After half term Mrs Rodgers will be taking up the opportunity to teach at West Monkton Primary School for 6 weeks while we welcome Miss Newstead coming the other way. Mrs Rodgers will still be on site regularly, and all will be back to normal after Easter.

Raven Class Activity Week

Raven Class have had details of their activity week in the summer which replaces the annual residential for this year. Before word spreads that we are no longer doing a Raven Class residential, we are! But every other year. This will save parents a considerable amount of money while also allowing us to give children a much wider

range of opportunities and experiences: this year will include sailing, a theatre trip and a visit from [The Exmoor Game School](#).

David Rowland

Headteacher

Key dates:

Monday 16th February – Friday 20th February	Half Term
Monday 23 rd February	Decorated eggs brought into school
Tuesday 24 th February	Egg shackling (start of school)
Wednesday 25 th February	Whole school swimming starts – every Wednesday
Thursday 5 th March	World Book Day
Monday 9 th March – Wednesday 11 th March	Parents Evenings (meeting times tbc)
Tuesday 24 th March – Monday 30 th March	Book Fair
Thursday 2 nd April	Easter Service in the church
Friday 3 rd April – Sunday 19 th April	Easter Holidays



Parent advice & support

Healthy lifestyles

School transitioning

Emotional health

is your child 5-19 and are you looking for confidential help and support?

A safe and easy way to contact your School Nursing Team

Just send a text

07480 635 515

Disclaimer: This is not an emergency service; it operates Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm and is only available by using a UK mobile number. Your messages are stored on our secure system and can be seen by the School Nursing Team who run our ChatHealth Service. Although this is a confidential service, in the event of an safeguarding issue the School Nurse has a duty of care to act on this and may escalate the concern.

Improving LIVES




CHOICE ADVICE

Somerset Choice Advice is a free and impartial service which supports families with advice and practical support through the school admission and appeals processes.

This service exists to ensure that parents can play an active and informed role in securing a school place for their child

Call us on **01823 356 903**

Fill in our online form www.somerset.gov.uk/choice-advice

Contact us via email choiceadvice@somerset.gov.uk or scan the QR code






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