



Courthill Newsletter

October 2025

Headteacher's Message

Mrs Carter, Headteacher

As we come to the end of an extremely long and busy half term, I want to take a moment to extend my heartfelt thanks to every member of our school community. Your continued support, positivity and partnership make a real difference to the life of our school, and it's been wonderful to see that reflected in so many ways over the past few weeks.

A very special welcome and well done to our Reception children, who have settled seamlessly into school life. On a recent tour for prospective families joining us in September 2026 (yes, we are already planning that far ahead!), many parents commented on how impressed they were by the behaviour and engagement of our youngest learners. This is a testament to the nurturing environment created by our staff and the support from families at home so thank you for all you are doing.

Thank you also to all families who attended our recent Parents' Evenings. Your kind words of encouragement and gratitude mean so much to our teachers, who work tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure every child thrives. Knowing that their efforts are having a positive impact is incredibly affirming. To everyone, please take a few moments to [complete the parent survey](#) – we really do appreciate your views.

We are also delighted to introduce our new PTA team, who have hit the ground running! Their first event, the Bingo Night, was a resounding success and raised around £800 for the school. They are already busy planning more exciting events including the Christmas Fair, movie nights, and the ever-popular Cakey Fridays. We are so grateful for their energy and commitment.

You will have received information about the many initiatives we are working on this academic year. One highlight is the introduction of Kinetic Letters to support handwriting development. We are already seeing the benefits of this in children's confidence and fluency. We are also continuing to develop our vision for physical activity and well-being, helping children understand the importance of a healthy body and mind in being the very best version of themselves.

Before I sign-off, I want to thank you for your very generous Harvest Festival donations – they made an incredible display enjoyed by the children at our assembly. We will use these donations for our own food bank, which will be put to good use in our school community. Finally, I hope you all enjoy a fun (and possibly restful) half term break. We look forward to seeing you back to school on Monday 3rd November.

Governors' Letter

Astra Monahan, Co-opted Governor, on behalf of the Governing Body

First of all, a warm welcome to you if you are a grown-up that belongs to one of our incoming Reception children! With a full cohort of 120 in the year group, there's a tangible 'buzz' coming from our new Bees, Butterflies, Ladybirds and Dragonflies as they settle into their learning routines. And to those returning families with children in Year 1 and Year 2: where did the summer holidays go?!

The Governing Body here at Courthill oversees the aims and objectives for the school, and its policies and targets. We meet regularly throughout the year to monitor the school's progress and we offer both support and challenge to Mrs Carter.

This month, we learned that Mrs Carter and her team continue their sharp focus on positive behaviour and a relational approach to supporting our children to be the best they can be. This means that staff continue to get to know the children, build positive relationships with them, and understand their emotional needs when managing behaviour effectively. Mrs Carter also shared her keen vision to instil healthy habits for both physical and mental well-being. For example, giving children more opportunities for physical activity and sensory circuits to enhance readiness for learning.

And across the school year groups, you might have heard your child talking about the monkeys, penguins and lizards in their classrooms! But don't be alarmed: rather than visits from real wild animals, teachers are introducing children to Kinetic Letters and a range of animal characters and poses to help them with their handwriting. Mrs Elkins explained how this scheme is designed to help the children make their bodies stronger, learn the letters of the alphabet, hold their pencil correctly and encourage flow and fluency in their writing. To find out more, and for an opportunity to visit school to see how it works, do come along to the Kinetic Letters Workshop ([see letter for details](#)).

As we end the first half term, which has been packed with school photos, a Phonics evening, Cakey Friday, PTA Bingo night, Dr Bike visits, Parents' Evenings, Fab Finishes and Harvest Festival, I hope you reach the October half term with a chance to rest and recuperate with your friends and family. See you on the other (CHRISTMAS!!!!) side.

Year Updates

Year Reception

We cannot believe the first half term is coming to an end! We are so incredibly proud of all the children and how well they have settled into school life. They are blossoming daily; showing confidence, independence, and demonstrating many of our school values.

This half term, the children have been exploring routines, building friendships, and learning to understand their emotions. We have loved sharing family photos in class and discovering what makes each of us unique. We also enjoyed reading 'Handa's Surprise' and tasting the different fruits from the story. This led to wonderful conversations about likes and dislikes, and the similarities and differences between us.

The children had a lovely surprise when some of their previous nursery key workers visited to see how well they have settled. It was delightful to see their excitement and enthusiasm as they gave personalised tours of the Reception base, proudly pointing out what they have been doing in their new school.

This week, we have been learning about pets, discussing what makes a good pet and what doesn't! Some of you may have already met our new class pets (cuddly toys), who will be spending time in each child's home. We can't wait to hear all about their adventures!

Thank you for all your support. We hope you have a restful half-term break and we look forward to welcoming you back as we begin our new topic: Let's Celebrate!

Year One

We are thrilled to share the fantastic beginning we have had in Year 1! It has been a joy to see the children settling confidently into their new classes and routines. Their enthusiasm for learning has been infectious and they are thriving in our vibrant Year 1 environment.

As part of our Superhero Me topic, the children have been captivated by a range of exciting stories, with

'Supertato' quickly becoming a firm favourite! They have loved becoming detectives, solving the mysteries of the Evil Pea, and using these adventures as inspiration for their writing. Through oral rehearsal and sentence writing, the children are developing their key writing skills. They are doing a brilliant job remembering capital letters, finger spaces, sounding out words and full stops, helped along by our catchy 'Strong Sentence Song'! These fundamentals will continue to be a focus throughout the year.

In Maths, the children have been introduced to our Number Sense sessions. They are growing in confidence and fluency with number facts, especially recognising quantities without counting. This skill will support their ability to solve calculations with ease as the year progresses.

In Geography, we have explored maps, identifying human and physical features. The children have shown great curiosity and understanding as they begin to make sense of the world around them. And we loved celebrating the end of this half term with our Superhero Dress-Up Day!

We are incredibly proud of how smoothly and positively the children have transitioned from Reception. Thank you for your continued support. We are looking forward to an exciting year ahead!

Year Two

We are delighted with how well our Year 2 children have settled into the new school year. Their enthusiasm, curiosity, and positive attitudes have made for a wonderful start, and we are so proud of how quickly they have adapted to life in Year 2.

To kick off our first topic, the children embarked on an exciting journey 'around the world', visiting China, Italy, Hawaii, and Australia – all from the comfort of our classrooms! This imaginative adventure not only sparked their curiosity about different cultures, but also provided a rich context for developing their knowledge of the world we live in. We built on this in our geography lessons where we have been exploring the seven continents and five oceans, creating a strong foundation to learn about hot and cold countries later in the year.

In English, we have been using the inspiring texts 'Emmanuel's Dream' and 'Pinocchio' to recap and refine the children's sentence writing skills from Year One. This has included focusing on the structure of a sentence, using the conjunction 'and', as well as learning about adjectives to create more interesting sentences.

In Maths, we have been diving into place value and using number bonds to help add numbers by bridging to the next ten. The children have really persevered with this learning, and we will continue to revisit this throughout the year.

Looking ahead, we are excited to begin our next topic, 'Out of this World', where we will learn about the first moon landing. We will discover more about Neil Armstrong's incredible journey into space and compare this with fellow explorer, Christopher Columbus. It promises to be an inspiring and thought-provoking topic!

Thank you for your continued support. We look forward to another fantastic half term of learning and discovery!

PTA update

Thea Downey, on behalf of the PTA

As we draw a close on the first half of the Autumn school term, we want to extend a heartfelt thank you for your continued support. Every donation, every event attended, and every bit of your time makes a huge difference to our school – we are so grateful for all you do! We are also excited to introduce our new

committee members: Ruth Bignell; Bex Evans; Gabrielle Heritage; Anju Poolchund; Ruth Richards; Anna Rymill; and Nicola Blackman. We are also very grateful to Ashley Woodford for taking over the reins of the PTA website, which is invaluable to us. This is an amazing addition to the existing PTA team and we are already working hard to bring more fantastic events to our school, which we can't wait to share with you!

Fundraising Highlights

- Pre-loved Uniform Sale.

Our preloved uniform sale raised **£62.50!** While it may seem small, it's these events that steadily contribute to important improvements at Courthill.

- Cakey Friday for Year 2.

Thanks to everyone who contributed to Year 2's Cakey Friday, we raised a fantastic **£311**. This event not only fills the playground with delicious treats, but it also helps fund essential school resources.

- Bingo Night.

Our biggest success so far this term: Bingo Night raised a fantastic **£800!** These funds go directly towards things like new equipment, classroom supplies and enriching experiences for our children.

Why These Events Matter

Fundraising is vital for maintaining and improving the school environment. Thanks to your support, we have been able to:

- Purchase **items from Year Group wish lists** to enhance the resources and equipment in the school.
- Book **festive theatre trips** to the Lighthouse. We are thrilled to announce that the children will be going to the Little Robin Red Vest this Christmas! It's always a magical experience that we couldn't do without your help.
- **Christmas Books**. We are planning a little festive surprise for the children, but we will keep it under wraps to maintain the magic of the season!

Upcoming Events

- **Movie Nights** (Y2 on 11th November; Y1 on 12th November; YF on 19th November). A fun evening where the children can enjoy a movie with their friends. (Year 2's date was moved from the original date of Wednesday 12th to avoid clashing with the open evening at Baden Powell).
- **Christmas Cards and Coasters**. Beautiful keepsakes designed by the children, perfect for gifting during the festive season.
- **Y1 Cakey Friday** (21st November). Year 1 parents, get ready for your turn to bake and enjoy another delicious fundraising event!
- **Christmas Fair** (Friday 5th December). Save the date for our biggest event of the year! We will need volunteers to make it a success, so please consider helping out.
- **Christmas Raffle**. Our raffle will be full of wonderful prizes, so keep an eye out for ticket sales next half term!

Thank you again for your unwavering support. We couldn't do any of this without your help and support. For details regarding tickets as well as other information about the PTA, please visit www.courthillpta.co.uk

Other Updates

Attendance

You may have noticed that attendance is high on the Government's agenda. We also care deeply about this as we know, put simply, children do better at school if they attend regularly. Of course, as an infant school,

we recognise that our children are young and therefore susceptible to bugs and viruses – and we totally understand, it cannot be helped when children get ill and need to stay off school. Nevertheless, we want every child to have the best possible attendance, ideally 96% or over. It’s been a very good start: our whole school attendance is 97% (though we know this is likely to drop off as time goes on).

You might be surprised to know how lateness can impact attendance. At Courthill, our gates open at 8.35-8.45am. We know that occasional lateness cannot be helped. However, as the table below shows, frequently being late (even by 5 or 10 minutes) can significantly add up to days of lost learning, so please do all you can to get your child into school on time. Thank you for your continued support with this.

Minutes late per day	= days of learning lost per year
5	3.2
10	6.5
15	9.5
20	12.5
30	19

Christmas at Courthill

We thought you might appreciate a heads-up of activities taking place for Christmas at Courthill.

- Christmas Fair: 5th December (4.30-6.30pm).
- Y1 and YR festive theatre trip: 9th December.
- Y2 festive theatre trip: 10th December.
- Reception Fab Finish: 11th December.
- Reception Christmas Stay and Play: 16th December (9am).
- Y2 Christmas Songs/Performance: 17th December (9am).
- Y1 Christmas Songs/Performance: 18th December (9am).

Community Updates

Support for families

- **Early Help & Targeted Intervention Service.** Early Help Access Point Public 01202 126 668 EHAccessPoint@bcpcouncil.gov.uk
- **BCP Food Map:** [Food Map](#) The Access to Food map shows all the different types of community food support available in our area, and how you can access them.
- Our website lists other organisations that support families: [click here to find out more.](#)

Important dates

Mon 27 th – Fri 31 st October	HALF TERM – school closed to pupils
Mon 3 rd November	School returns after half term
Tue 4 th November	Tour for children joining YR in September 2026
Mon 10 th November	Anti-Bullying – wear odd socks (details to follow)
Tue 11 th November	Movie Night Y2 (PTA)
Wed 12 th November	Movie Night Y1 (PTA)
Wed 12 th November	YR Phonics Morning (see email)
Wed 12 th November	Tour for children joining YR in September 2026
Thu 13 th November	Kinetic Letters – handwriting workshop for parents (see letter)
Tue 18 th November	Flu Immunisation for children (see NHS letter to opt-in)
Tue 18 th November	Tour for children joining YR in September 2026
Wed 19 th November	Movie Night YR (PTA)
Thu 20 th November	YR Phonics Morning (see email)
Fri 21 st November	Y1 Cakey Friday
Thu 27 th November	YR Phonics Morning (see email)
Fri 5 th December	Courthill Christmas Fair (details to follow)
Tue 9 th December	YR and Y1 trip to Lighthouse (details to follow)
Wed 10 th December	Y2 trip to Lighthouse (details to follow)
Thu 11 th December	YR Fab Finish (details to follow)
Fri 19 th December	School closes at 1pm for Christmas holiday
Mon 22 nd December – Fri 2 nd Jan	Christmas holiday – SCHOOL CLOSED
Mon 5 th January	INSET DAY – SCHOOL CLOSED TO PUPILS

**THE
LIGHT
TRAIL**

ST LUKE'S PARKSTONE
CRAFT | FOOD | FIREPIT

Friday 31st
October 4-6pm

For more information contact Anna on
Kidsandyouth@stlukesparkstone.org.uk