

NEWSLETTER

Friday 9th January 2026



Happy New Year!

Dear Parents and Carers,

I am writing to share some personal news with you. After much careful thought, I have decided that I will retire at the end of this academic year. This has not been an easy decision, but after 28 years as a Headteacher, I am ready for new adventures.

Some of you will know (and may even have been taught by me), that I started my teaching career at Elsenham Primary school 38 years ago before heading off on a career journey that has seen me teach in a further 2 schools before going on to lead 4 other schools. It has been an absolute pleasure to complete the final 6 years of my career as Headteacher of our school.

Working at Elsenham primary school alongside such wonderful children, dedicated staff, committed governors and a supportive parent community has been a privilege. I am incredibly proud of all that we have achieved together and of the caring, inclusive, and successful school our children enjoy today.

Please be assured that the remainder of the year will continue as normal, with a strong focus on teaching, learning, and the wellbeing of every child. I am fully committed to ensuring a smooth transition and will work closely with the governing body and staff to support the appointment of my successor. Governors will begin the recruitment process imminently and will update you in due course.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you sincerely for your trust, support, and partnership over the years. It has been a joy to watch your children grow and flourish, and I will treasure the many memories we have made together.

There will be time later in the year to say farewell properly. In the meantime, I look forward to continuing to work with you, the staff, the governors and the children throughout the coming months. Here's to an exciting 2026 for all of us!

Kind regards,

Linda Todd, Headteacher

KEY EVENTS next week

Monday 12th January	Clubs start this week
Wednesday 14th January	Swimming gala
Thursday 15th January	Census Day—please have a school lunch!

Our new SENCo

Hello. My name is Jules Cowell and I'm very excited to be joining the Hub Team at Elsenham. I have been teaching for almost 30 years within Norfolk, London and Essex. During my teaching career, I have worked as a Specialist Teacher, SENDCo and as a teacher in enhanced provisions for autism and speech and language.

In my spare time, I enjoy getting muddy outdoors, going on walks with friends and being creative.

Please do come and introduce yourself when you see me around the school or on the school gate. I look forward to meeting you and supporting your children.



Elsenham School now has a Facebook page for updates and sign-posting. Please follow us using the link below or by searching Elsenham School.

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61584591046587>

Mrs Eleanor Carruthers
Assistant SENCo

Something new

On Monday we started off the term with an Oracy assembly all about 'Thunks', and from now on as classes will be discussing the same weekly 'Thunk'.

Thunks are questions that make the children think.... There are NO right or wrong answers to these questions – simply their answers.

The children do, however, need to think about their answers and be able to justify them – in other words, they will not say the first thing that comes into their head, and, they must be fully prepared to explain their answers when they give them.

During 'Thunk' time, they will listen to other peoples' answers and be ready to discuss their ideas.

Ask your children about Thunks.

SEND Coffee Morning

Thursday 22nd January

8:45am

The Studio



Please do come and meet Jules Cowell our new SENDCo, at our SEND Coffee Morning – everyone is welcome.

This is an opportunity to chat, ask questions and to let the Hub team know what you would like support with for your child in future sessions.

We're also pleased to welcome Chloe Hill from the Essex Family Forum, who will be joining us to share a short feedback update from the Elsenham parent survey.

We look forward to seeing you!

Yr 6 get scientific

Year 6 were excited to be back in school this week after the Christmas break, straight away getting stuck into some hands-on science learning. As part of their learning about adaptation and evolution, the children compared how long they could keep a hand in icy water with and without a 'blubber glove'. They were fascinated by how effective the insulation was and thoroughly enjoyed testing it for themselves.

The activity developed key working scientifically skills, including making predictions, carrying out a fair test, measuring time and recording results. Pupils were able to clearly explain how animals such as seals and polar bears have adapted over time to survive in cold climates, making strong links between the experiment and real-world science.



Understand the Digital World

The children's commissioner, Dame Rachel de Souza, has recently published a new guide:

[What I wish my parents or carers knew: A guide for parents on managing children's digital lives](#)

"Supporting children's safety is a shared responsibility between families, schools and wider society. For parents and carers, this responsibility has become increasingly complex as children's lives are now deeply intertwined with the digital world. Many parents face difficult decisions about how to balance protecting children from online harm with enabling access to spaces that are now central to learning, socialising and play.

This guide recognizes the complex, rapidly evolving landscape in which children – and parents – are navigating. It focuses on the challenge of managing children's everyday online habits.

This guide was written with the direct involvement of children in England. It is a reflection of their views. My office visited schools to speak to teenagers, and spoke to my Youth Ambassadors and Youth Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Panel to get their expertise on what works and what doesn't work between parents or carers and children in the 21st Century. When I speak to children about what they would do differently when it comes to being online, with the benefit of hindsight, I ask them: would they give a smartphone to their own teenager? Almost unanimously, they tell me no. They want to be protected from it as long as possible. Children are clear that they value firm, informed and protective boundaries when adults have concerns about the content they are accessing online.

As parents, carers, and educators, our job must begin and end with our children's care and safety. It's what they expect and what they want from you.

As one young person told me: "Don't be afraid to be firm... If you are worried [that] your child is seeing harmful content and you don't know what they're watching and it's affecting the behaviour, just take it that you know best – they don't."

I hope this guide will be a useful resource for your school community."

celebrating success

Xmas4schools

By ordering your Christmas cards etc.
you raised £313 for the school!

Thank you!

Look a what Piper got up to during the
Christmas holidays



Councillor Catherine McAreevey

22 Dec 2025 · 🌐

So proud of this inspiring 10-year-old who had the opportunity to visit the Mayor and sit inside the council chamber! 🏛️ ✨

As a member of her school council, she's been learning firsthand how leadership, decision-making, and democracy work — and hearing directly from the Mayor brought those lessons to life. The visit highlighted just how important inclusion is in leadership, showing that every voice matters and that representation begins with listening.

She took lots of photos to share with her classmates and has some new ideas for getting some of her plans implemented in her school.

Mayoral visits like this are an important and enjoyable part of the role, helping young people understand how local government works, how inclusive decision-making shapes strong communities, and how they too can contribute. It's a powerful reminder that engaging with young leaders builds confidence, civic responsibility, and a deeper respect for democracy. ✨

Who knows, maybe one day she will be a mayor herself 🙌.

STARS OF THE WEEK

Acorn	Hadley
Cherry	Willow
Beech	Finn
Chestnut	Roy
Silver Birch	Jensen
Cedar	Danni
Sycamore	Frankie
Rowan	Cooper
Elm	Jessica
Ash	Charlie
Willow	Alice
Pine	Reggie
Maple	Ava
Oak	Isla

CONGRATULATIONS!

The winner of the
golden dustpan was
Year 3!



No Reason To Be Late – Plan Ahead!

We have received the following notification from Affinity Water.....

I am writing to advise you of the upcoming reinforcement works scheduled to take place in your area between January 2026 and May 2026. While we appreciate that these works may cause some disruption, they are essential to improving the infrastructure of our existing network. We would be grateful if you could share this information with all relevant members of your community.

All permits for the works listed below have been granted and approved by the local authority. Road closures are subject to a 12-week Traffic Order process, during which all stakeholders — including emergency services — should be notified.

The programme will run in four phases with the first as follows:

1. 12/01/26 – 15/02/26 – Henham Road between 8am and 5pm

Three-way traffic lights will be in place from outside The Crown Inn to the entrance of the new Crocus Drive development and on the bend past residential properties on Henham Road.



Snow day closure arrangements

As the weather turns more wintery, I wanted to remind you of our emergency school closure arrangements in the event of adverse weather.

We will aim to make a decision and inform parents via parentmail by 7.30am. We will always do our best to remain open, however, we will prioritise the health and safety of our staff and pupils.

We may opt for a delayed start at 10am, to allow us the time to clear the site to make the car park and walkways safe.

We may decide to cancel after school clubs to enable staff to travel home before forecasted worsening weather comes in.

If we close for more than one day we will set work and parentmail this out to parents. (On day one we think the children should enjoy some snow fun!)

Parents are able to see the full list of school closures on the Essex County Council website: Emergency School Closures, we will also post information on our web site. Please avoid blocking the phones with enquiries.

DIARY DATES

JANUARY	
Mon 19 th	Young Voices Yr5 at the O2
Tues 21st	Sycamore class Assembly—doors open 2.30pm for a 2.40pm start
FEBRUARY	
Tues 3rd	Pine class Assembly—doors open 2.30pm for a 2.40pm start
Tues 10 th	Safer Internet Day Cedar class Assembly—doors open 2.30pm for a 2.40pm start
Fri 13 th	Year 4 Tudor Day FOES valentine tuck shop after school
Mon 16th Feb – Fri 20th Feb - HALF TERM BREAK	
MARCH	
W/C 2nd	Literacy week
Tues 3rd	Willow class Assembly—doors open 2.30pm for a 2.40pm start
Thurs 5 th	House Poetry Competition Heats
Fri 6 th	World Book Day dress up day for Elsenham Primary
Sun 8 th	FOES Mothers' Day event
W/C 9 th	Science week
Fri 13 th	Relaxed dress rehearsal by Yr 4 to EYFS and KS1 at 1.30pm House Poetry Competition Final FOES disco night
Mon 16 th	Yr 4 Dress rehearsal to KS2 at 1.45pm
Tues 17 th	Pupil summit for future leaders at the cathedral- identity and diversity—selected pupils
Wed 18 th	Yr. 4 performance 1.45pm & 6pm
Wed 25 th	Parents evening – 3.30pm – 5.30pm
Thurs 26 th	Parents evening – 4.30pm – 7.30pm
Fri 27 th	End of term awards assembly / Church Easter service 9.30am Last day of term – finish at 1.30pm
Mon 30th March –Fri 11th April – EASTER HOLIDAYS	
APRIL	
Tues 21st	Chestnut class Assembly—doors open 2.30pm for a 2.40pm start
Tues 28 th	Yr4 HFL Maths challenge Beech class Assembly—doors open 2.30pm for a 2.40pm start
MAY	
Mon 4th	BANK HOLIDAY—school closed
W/B 11 th May	Yr 6 SATs week
Mon 25th May – Fri 29th May – HALF TERM BREAK	
JUNE	
Wed 3 rd	Sports Day
Sat 6 th	FOES summer event
W/C Mon 8 th	Phonics screening
Tues 9 th	Reserve sports day
Tues 9 th	Yr3 HFL Maths challenge
Tues 9 th	6pm Welcome talk to new Year R parents 2026/2027

JULY	
Wed 1 st	Open evening 4.30pm – 5.45pm
Fri 3 rd July	Relaxed dress rehearsal to KS1 of Yr. 6 play FOES frozen Friday
Tues 7 th	1.45pm Dress rehearsal to KS2
Wed 8 th	Yr. 6 performance 1.45pm & 6pm
Fri 10 th	FOES disco night
Thurs 16 th	HT awards assembly
Fri 17 th	Yr 6 Leavers Assembly
Fri 17th	Last day of term—finish at 1.30pm

Please note that whilst we will do our best to keep to these dates, circumstances may require us to make a change

Autumn Term:	Tuesday 1 September 2026 (NPD) – Friday 18 December 2026 <i>Half Term 26 October – 30 October</i>
Spring Term:	Monday 4 January 2027 – Thursday 25 March 2027 <i>Half Term 15 February - 19 February</i>
Summer Term:	Monday 12 April 2027 – Wednesday 21 July 2027 <i>Half Term 31 May – 4 June, and May Bank Holiday - 3 May</i>

CHALLENGE

DESIGN AND MAKE YOUR OWN HEALTHY RECIPE

TO FEATURE IN OUR SCHOOL COOK BOOK

ENTRIES ON AN A4
SHEET

- Title of dish
- Ingredients
- Method




INCLUDE A PHOTO
OF YOUR DISH

What's on this JANUARY at



All take place at Crafton Green, Chapel Hill, Stansted CM24 8AQ, are funded by TouchPoint and are free of charge (donations welcome), unless otherwise stated:

Regular TouchPoint events and activities:

MONDAYS

10am-12pm: Memory Lane Café (dementia support)
6:30-7:15pm: Women's Running & Fitness*
7:15pm-8pm: Women's Body Blitz*

TUESDAYS

9:15-10:15am: Yoga Mindfulness
12:15-1pm: Community Food Share - Elsenham Memorial Hall, CM22 6BY
10-11am: Pilates - Pam's Place, Thaxted, CM6 2RL
11am-12pm: Chair-based Pilates - Pam's Place, Thaxted, CM6 2RL
1:40pm-2:30pm: Chair Boogie seated exercise - Wimbish Primary School, Maple Lane, Tye Green, CB10 2XE

WEDNESDAYS

12pm: Chair-based yoga (45 mins)
1pm: Chair Boogie seated exercise (40 mins)
2:30-3:15pm: Community Food Share - Stansted Social Club, 10-12 Lower St, CM24 8LP
6:30-7:30pm: Women's 'Stronger You'* - Elsenham Village Hall, CM22 6DD
7-8pm: Yoga - Birchanger Primary School, Birchanger, CM23 5QL

THURSDAYS

9:15-10am: Chair-based exercise - Takeley Old School Community Hub, CM22 6OJ
10am-10:45am: Community Food Share - Takeley Old School Community Hub, CM22 6OJ
10am-3:30pm: Community Café
3-6pm: TouchPoint Teatime

FRIDAYS

8:30-10:30am: Free Breakfast Club
9:15-10am: Women's Bootcamp*
9:15-10am: Running Group Couch to 5K - Recreation Ground, Stansted
10-11am: Community Food Share - Saffron Walden Baptist Church, CB11 3HD
10-11am: Friday Walking Group
10-12pm: Friday Social
1-1.45pm: Community Food Share - Crafton Green, Stansted

SATURDAYS

10-11am: Community Food Share - Crafton Green, Stansted

SUNDAYS

10:30-11:30am: Yoga Mindfulness
1pm-4pm: Sunday Afternoon at the Movies: **NOTE:**
Sunday 4th and Sunday 18th January ONLY.

***Women Only**

For more information, visit
our website:



Also this month at Crafton Green:

Winter Wellness Evenings

- 7pm-8.30pm, Tuesday 6th January: Meditation
- 7pm-8.15pm, Tuesday 20th January: Yoga Nidra

Bereavement Café, with St Clare Hospice:

- 10-11:30am, Wednesday 7th January
- 10-11:30am, Wednesday 21st January
- 7-8:30pm, Wednesday 28th January

Peabody Trust drop-in housing advice session:

- 11am-3pm, Thursday 15th January

Essex Police Advice session:

- 10am-12pm, Thursday 22nd January