



Newsletter 15 22nd July 2026

Dear all,

The end of the year is always a funny time. There is so much to celebrate while also knowing that it is a time of change. We are proud of the achievements of our leavers – children and staff – while also looking forward to welcoming new faces into the school community. This final newsletter of the year, then, is a bit of both...

Year 6 leavers

Firstly to our Year 6 leavers. Our oldest children are, as ever, heading off to a number of different schools and futures.

Some have been with us since Reception, while others joined this year. But they all leave as one, knowing they are forever Stokers and can be proud of what they have achieved here. I know they are looking forward to one last celebration together this evening.

In this morning's leavers service they spoke so well and confidently about their memories and hopes for the future. To sum up the words from Desiderata (in twenty words or fewer) one more time...

Be yourself, be kind, stay calm, keep trying, believe in yourself, and remember that life is beautiful.

Staff leavers

I must be close to using up my remaining quota of nice things to say about Mrs Daniels. After arriving straight from teacher training college, Mrs D finally leaves Stoke after 38 years. An incredible achievement in any profession, thirty-eight years in one school is almost unheard of. An entire teaching career dedicated to one



community, one school and generations of children is something truly special. We congratulate Lisa on a career that any teacher would be proud of, and we wish her a long, healthy and very happy retirement. She has earned it many times over.

No such quota used up for Eve, who also joins Lisa in retiring after 11 years at the school. Eve is hugely popular with children and staff (not just because she serves the food...) and will be sorely missed. Eve has approached each day I've known her with a straight matter-of-factness blended with a wicked sense of humour. Another of our staff who seems to know every single person in the village (and known by each of them in turn), Eve has often been my go-to person when I need something Stokey explained to me (and when I'm feeling a bit low energy around lunchtime...) Once again, we all wish Eve a wonderful retirement!

Finally, Mrs Webber might not have been with us quite as long as Lisa or Eve, but she has had quite the impact this year! Popular with children and staff, and a natural Stoker, she will be missed by us all next year. Thankfully, she is staying within the Oak Partnership so won't be too far away, and we look forward to seeing her at future events. Good luck, Rachel!

Staffing next year

I wrote to future Kingfisher class parents recently to confirm the news that Mr Williams (who the children already know from his PE lessons at Stoke this term) will take on the role of Kingfisher class teacher next year.

I am also very pleased – relieved, even! - to confirm that we have managed to persuade Miss Baldwin to stay with us for two days a week from September, largely based in Kingfisher class. Miss Baldwin, again, is a very popular member of staff among children and adults and we are very happy that she is staying with us into the new year.

Some thank yous...

Our school has an amazing community supporting it, and it would be impossible to thank everyone individually who has contributed to the success of the school this year. However, at the very high risk of leaving someone important off the list, I would like to thank the following people:



- The staff, for their dedication, smiling faces and commitment to every child;
- Mr Selby and Mrs Meikle, for bringing the joy of music every week;
- Gemma, Sue and Marie, for volunteering throughout the year, listening to readers and making a difference;
- Friends of School, for your wonderful support of the school through fundraising and events
- Reverend Simon, Reverend Martin and the Open The Book troupe, for delivering Collective Worship through the year;
- Parents and carers, for your unwavering support of the school, our (sometimes crazy) events and our ethos
- And - of course – the children, for making this place really special.

Sports Day

Sports Day was a truly Stoke affair, played out in great spirit, with the whole array of STOKERS learning behaviours on display. While the competition was hard fought between the houses, the children were wonderful in supporting one another and challenging themselves. The afternoon was also extremely well supported by parents and Friends of School. Both parents' races ended without injury, which was my primary concern... Thank you and well done to everyone!



The Bookshop At The End Of The World

What an afternoon and evening this was! Some amazing performances from across the school featuring individuals, classes, the band, the choir and the whole school, pulled together with some serious acting talent. They looked great, they sounded great, they sang their hearts out. It is moments like this when our small school seems to punch well above its weight, pulling off a performance a school ten times the size of ours would be proud of thanks to the enthusiasm and energy of the children, backed by a brilliant supporting cast of adults working together. Proud doesn't cover it.



Ravens Sailing

Ravens had earned a day off after their brilliant performance on Tuesday night, and their sailing trip on Durleigh reservoir – postponed from the heatwave – gave them the chance to experience something new and exciting under the tutelage of the team at Durleigh Sailing Centre. A great day had by all!



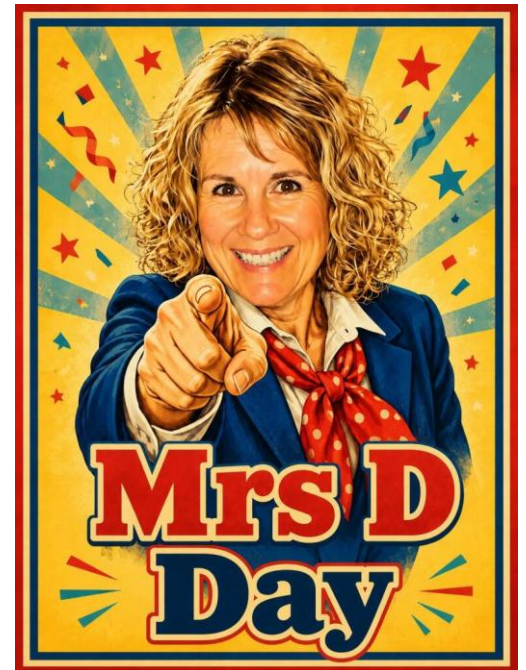
Mrs D Day

If anyone has ever organised a secret party before, they will know the stresses involved in that. Now imagine having 57 children and a village as your co-conspirators...

Planning – under the working title ‘Operation Welsh Dragon’ – was a top secret affair, and it was a relief to see the weather hold out and the plans come together. Mrs Daniels masks, poems, Mrs D Day badges, a front fence display and a secret video were some of the surprises in store, and it was great to see so many families and well wishers join us during the day. A fitting way to see off a true Stoker.

Somerset Cricket

On Monday we were joined by Malcolm from Somerset Cricket for a taster morning, with all children involved in cricket games and skills. Lots of our children are involved in local clubs and there are plenty of activities happening through the summer. If your child enjoyed it, find out more!



Whole school trip to Magdalen Farm

On Tuesday it was the turn of our annual whole school trip, this year to Magdalen Farm near Chard. Although the coach was a bit hot and sticky, the day was glorious, with children involved in a number of different activities including den building, pond dipping and learning about the different wild animals around the site. The children (and teachers) came back covered in camouflage, tired but happy. A lovely way to end the year.



Finally, children start back slightly later next year – we look forward to seeing everybody again on **Tuesday 8th September**.

Have a lovely summer!

David Rowland
Headteacher

Safeguarding Information:

If you have any safeguarding concerns, please direct to one of our safeguarding team members: Mr Rowland or Mrs Anderson.

If you are worried a child is at risk of harm or in danger, please contact Children's Social Care on 0300 123 2224 or by email at: childrens@somerset.gov.uk