Raynsford

Church of England Academy

December 2025

Welcome

As we approach the end of this busy but joyful term, the school is filled with singing, rehearsals and that unmistakable festive excitement. It has been a half term full of memorable learning experiences, special visitors and fantastic achievements from the children. Thank you for your continued support and for working in partnership with us to ensure all children thrive.

Classroom Changes

We are delighted to welcome **Miss Faulkner**, who will be joining Raynsford as the new Year 3 teaching assistant in January. Following a very strong response to our advert and a large number of high-quality applications, we were extremely pleased to appoint someone with such experience, strong knowledge and a genuine passion for nurturing confident, independent learners.

Until she begins, Year 3 will continue to be well supported by:

- Miss Middleton
- Mrs Gibson
- Mrs Griffett (Mon/Tues/Fri)
- Mrs Dilley (Wed/Thurs)

We are very grateful to the whole team for ensuring consistency, stability and high-quality provision throughout this transition.

Enrichment & Learning Highlights

Year 3 Viking Day

Year 3 experienced a brilliant Viking workshop led by "Harold Haroldson." Children learned about Viking raids, daily life, artefacts and beliefs. They acted out battle scenes, explored Viking punishments and examined replica swords, shields and helmets. It was a hands-on, fully immersive day that brought their history learning to life.

Year 2 Astronaut

Year 2 have continued their fascinating journey through space this half term. Following their immersive Space Day with **Mike Culley, Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society**

The children explored:

- what life is like aboard the ISS,
- how rockets launch and land,
- the science behind craters and meteorites,
- and what future space missions might uncover.

These experiences have truly brought their learning to life and inspired some very enthusiastic future astronauts!

Year 4 School Trip

Year 4 enjoyed an excellent trip to the **Verulamium Museum in St Albans**, where they explored Roman artefacts, discovered what life was like in Roman Britain, and took part in hands-on activities that brought their history learning to life.

The children were brilliantly behaved throughout the day, asking thoughtful questions and showing great curiosity. Staff at the museum commented on how engaged and polite they were. A real credit to Raynsford Academy.

Visit from World-Renowned Palaeontologist

We were thrilled to welcome **Professor Jeff Wilson-Mantilla**, a world-renowned palaeontologist, who spent the afternoon with our children exploring the world of dinosaurs, fossils and life millions of years ago.

The children were absolutely captivated, their questions could have rivalled any museum panel! From handling real fossil specimens to learning how palaeontologists uncover the secrets of the past, it was a truly unforgettable experience.

PTA News

Our wonderful PTA have been incredibly busy this half term, organising events, fundraising opportunities and seasonal activities for the whole school community. We are very grateful for their ongoing hard work, creativity and commitment.

PTA Quiz Night – Friday 21st November

A huge thank you to everyone who attended the PTA Quiz Night.

It was a fantastic evening of teamwork, laughter and friendly competition, bringing together parents, staff and friends of the school.

The night raised an incredible £850

School Happy Bags - Clothing Collection

Thank you to all the families who generously donated clothing to our School Bags Collection. Your contributions not only support sustainability but also help raise essential funds for school projects and enrichment activities. This event raised a fabulous £96.75

All money raised will continue to go towards improving our outdoor garden area for the children in the Spring Term.

Upcoming PTA and Christmas Events

Christmas Disco – Wednesday 10th December

Tickets are available to purchase via ParentMail now.

School staff will be present to supervise children throughout the event.

The PTA will be running a range of exciting stalls including:

- glitter tattoos
- nail painting
- lucky wheel
- tuck shop

Children may bring a small amount of money to enjoy the activities.

Donations of chocolate bars for the Chocolate Tombola are very welcome and can be left in the reception donation box.

Father Christmas Visit, Christmas Jumper Day & Christmas Lunch - Thursday 11th December

As always, Father Christmas will make a special visit to Raynsford, meeting every child from Rayndrops to Year 6 and delivering a small gift.

This also coincides with Christmas Jumper Day, where children can wear a festive jumper (with their usual school uniform) and donate £2. It is also our Christmas Lunch day, which can be ordered in the usual way.

Christmas Gift Sale – Friday 12th December

Our popular Christmas Gift Sale returns!

Children will have the opportunity to choose a present for someone special, and the PTA team will wrap it beautifully so it can be placed straight under the Christmas tree.

Please pre-pay the **£2 gift contribution** via ParentMail.

Preschool will hold their own separate sale to ensure all children can take part.

EYFS & Key Stage One Nativities

We are delighted to share this year's Reception and Key Stage One nativities

This year's performances include:

- **Year 1 and Year 2:** *A Wriggly Nativity*
- **Reception:** *The First Christmas Nativity*

Performance Dates & Times

- **Monday 15th December:** 1:45pm – 2:45pm
- **Tuesday 16th December:** 5:00pm – 6:00pm

Carol Concert – Wednesday 17th December

Families are invited to join us for a festive evening featuring:

- mulled wine
- hot chocolate
- mince pies
- and beautiful Christmas songs performed by the children

A lovely way to celebrate our school community at Christmas.

- Preschool: 14:30 – 15:00
- KS2: 16:30 – 17:30 (children to return to school at 16:15)

Christmas Church Service – Friday 19th December

We will end the term with our Christmas service at **St Mary's Church** on **Friday 19th December at 9:30am**.
The children will lead readings, prayers and songs. Families are warmly invited, though space is limited.

Sporting News

Result for the Raynsford Netball Team!

Last Monday, our brilliant netball squad were absolutely INCREDIBLE, showing determination, teamwork and nerves of steel. They truly shone and didn't crumble under the pressure for even a second!

We're thrilled to share that Raynsford came joint 1st with Langford, competing against six other teams. An amazing achievement and one we are all incredibly proud of!

PE Update

During the festive period, each class will have one outdoor PE session per week, as the hall is in use for Christmas rehearsals.

- Year 1 – Tuesday
- Year 2 – Tuesday
- Year 3 – Thursday
- Year 4 – Wednesday
- Year 5 – Tuesday
- Year 6 – Friday

Please ensure your child wears appropriate outdoor footwear and warm layers.

The Raynsford Reporter

This month's edition has been brought to you by our brand-new pupil journalists: **Emily (Year 6)** and **Bella (Year 5)**. Both are passionate about writing and wanted to create a newspaper-style update to share what life is really like across the school.

Armed with notebooks, curiosity, and plenty of questions, they've been busy interviewing pupils, gathering ideas, and reporting on the exciting learning happening at Raynsford Academy.

Written by Emily and Bella

Welcome to the life of a Raynsford student, this term we have been focusing on Years 2 and Year 4, asking them questions about their favourite things about Raynsford. Here's what our investigation uncovered…

Year 2: Reaching for the Stars

The Year 2 pupils told us they have really enjoyed Maths and English this term, and Abigail was especially proud to receive a Headteacher Award. They also had their exciting *Space Day*, where they learned all about the Space Race between America and Russia. Abigail said this was her favourite part of the day.

Alexander enjoyed designing space buggies, which the class will be making later this term. Lots of the children said they feel their English skills have improved, especially their reading. They are also proud of their handwriting, as improving handwriting is a big focus across the whole school.

Year 4: Romans, Respect, and Rapid Times Tables

The Year 4 pupils we interviewed said they love being at Raynsford because of our school values and the chance to take part in sports tournaments. They also said they appreciate having great sports equipment to help them practise.

This term, Year 4 have been learning all about the Romans. On their school trip to the Verulamium Museum, they enjoyed exploring both inside and outside exhibits and finding out what has changed from the past to the present, and what has stayed the same! They also told us they have been working really hard on their times tables and feel proud of how much they've improved, especially when playing times-tables games.

Safeguarding

Roblox update

Roblox has announced new safety measures, including mandatory facial age checks for chat access, which aim to create safer, age-appropriate communication on the platform. Younger users, especially those under nine, will have more restricted chat settings unless a parent chooses otherwise, helping to reduce inappropriate contact and keep children in safer digital spaces. These

updates, rolling out worldwide from December to January, could set an important new standard for online safety.

To help keep your child safe on Roblox, visit the Roblox Parental controls page. Ensure your child signs up with their correct age so the appropriate safety settings are applied, and review these settings regularly. Build a list of age-appropriate games and consider turning off in-app spending or setting limits. Explore communication options by restricting or disabling chat and direct messages. Spend time exploring the platform together to understand how your child uses it. Keep having open conversations about their gaming habits, and visit the NSPCC Online Safety Hub or Roblox's Parent Guide for more detailed advice and support.

Key Dates

We will continue to share more details regarding our key events

• Monday 8th December	Year 6 Immersive Day
• Wednesday 10th December	School Disco
• Thursday 11th December	Christmas Jumper Day Christmas Lunch Special visitor
• Friday 12th December	Gift Sale
• Monday 15th December	EYFS and KS1 Nativities (afternoon)
• Tuesday 16th December	EYFS and KS1 Nativities (evening)
• Wednesday 17th December	Preschool Carol Concert KS2 Carole Concert
• Friday 19th December	Christmas Church Service

Finally…

As we head into the final weeks of term, I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to all our families for your continued support during this incredibly busy and wonderfully festive period. From nativities and carol concerts to sports events, discos and Christmas celebrations, it is always a privilege to see our whole school community come together.

Our children continue to amaze us with their resilience, kindness and determination, truly living out our FRIEND values every day. We are immensely proud of them.

Wishing you all a calm and joyful run-up to the holidays. If you have any questions about upcoming events, please just get in touch.

Thank you

A big thank you to Arcade Nursery for their kind donation of this year's School Christmas Tree

Many more trees available