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**Working together to be the best we can possibly be.**

**I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. *Philippians 4.13***

23<sup>rd</sup> January 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

Another busy week at The Rackham! This week we have been asking pupils if they would like to become a member of our Eco-Council.

### **Attendance:**

This week's attendance: 91.8%

The Rackham has a policy on Attendance. Please follow this link to read the policy on the school website. [Policy Library | The Rackham C of E \(VC\) Primary School](#)

Thank you to all our parents and carers for supporting our drive for improved attendance. The Government has identified a child's attendance of 96% and above is the key figure to give best chance of academic progress. Please can we remind you that absence must be reported to the office by 9am on each day of absence.



**Safeguarding: Attendance** *Will you take the 30 day challenge for your child to positively improve attendance? Excellent attendance promotes positive progress and greater attainment.* To take part is easy, simply ensure your child is in school by 8.45am every day. There are 30 school days from the first day back in January until February half term. Good luck!



**Wellbeing and Mental Health:** The birds seem to know that spring is on its way. This weekend is the RSPB's Big Garden Birdwatch. Why not join in? Link here: [Big Garden Birdwatch](#)

**CONTACT US**

**Contacting staff at The Rackham C of E Primary School and Pre-School:** Where parents and carers wish to contact staff to update or pass on a message, please email [office@rackham.cambs.sch.uk](mailto:office@rackham.cambs.sch.uk) or speak to a member of the Office Team.

## **St Andrew's Church: Exciting news!**



We have a new Rector! Here is his introductory letter:

Your new Rector... in his own words

It has been suggested that I write a piece for parish magazines and websites across the villages I will be serving - which I am more than happy to do. My name is Chris Hollingshurst, I am married with three adult children and have been ordained since 1999. Prior to that I worked as a logistics planning and operations manager for a major parcels company. I am passionate about faith in Jesus Christ and the ministry of his Church, but when you get to know me, you may also see me getting a little excited about different forms of music, football and motorsport.

So what am I currently doing? For the last five years I have been what is called a Residentiary Canon at Guildford Cathedral. For those not familiar with Church structures, a Residentiary Canon is simply a full-time clergy position within a Cathedral community, working with the Dean and other colleagues as part of a team. In Guildford I have been responsible for Public Engagement and Pastoral Care at the Cathedral.

Prior to coming to Guildford, I have been a vicar in two different Surrey and SW London parishes and, at various stages, have also been involved in vocations and schools work for the Dioceses of Guildford and Southwark. In my first clergy post, I served as a rural Curate (assistant priest) in thirteen villages to the west of Cambridge, also within Ely Diocese. Indeed, I was ordained in Ely Cathedral and am looking forward to 'coming home'.

Because I started in village ministry, spending time with those beyond the walls of church buildings as well as regular worshippers has always been a crucial part of my ministry. This will continue to be so as I get to know the group of eleven parishes legally called (wait for it!) 'The Benefice of The Isle of Ely Villages Team'. I will of course be spending time in each of them: Coveney, Haddenham and Aldreth, Little Downham, Little Thetford, Mepal, Stretham, Sutton, Wentworth, Wilburton, Witcham and Witchford, and I hope to support and enhance the faithful ministry presence and witness in each community.

Given such a large grouping of church communities, a principal way to do all this is by working collaboratively with the parishes, within what is called the Ely Deanery (which stretches to Soham and Littleport), with the Diocese of Ely, and with other relevant partners. Together we will be seeking to build 'a community of communities' across the Isle of Ely as a whole. This has to be a priority if we are to grow Christian faith and serve the wider local community in 2026. Given the size and geography of the Benefice, I am looking forward to welcoming a Benefice Team Vicar, and possibly other colleagues, to share in this work.

I'd love to meet as many of you as possible when the Acting Bishop of Ely installs me as Benefice Team Rector just after Easter, on Saturday 18th April. The service will be held at St Andrew's Sutton at 2.30pm, timed to make it easier for all ages to be present. All are welcome, whether you currently worship in one of the 11 churches or not, even (and perhaps especially) if you are simply curious!

My wife, one of my sons and our little dog will be moving to Little Downham in late March. We plan to take in the Fenland air most days, so do say hello if you see us walking the dog in your village at any stage.

I look forward to meeting you all!



**Are you eligible for Pupil Premium funding?** Pupil Premium represents additional funding that the government gives to schools for each pupil considered to be disadvantaged. Poverty or low income is the single most important factor in predicting a child's future life chances, with many pupils in low income families having low attainment by age 16. The Government believes that the Pupil Premium is the best way to address these underlying inequalities between children eligible for free school meals (FSM) and their peers by ensuring that funding to tackle disadvantage reaches the pupils who need it most.

**Eligibility:** If you are receiving any of the eligible benefits listed on the free school meals page, you can apply for free school meals and allow your school to receive the Pupil Premium funding.

Additionally, as part of the school registration process and their yearly data checks, you will also have the option to sign up for pupil premium. Apply here: [Apply for Education Welfare Benefits - Introduction - Cambridgeshire County Council website](#)



**Starting preparation to be school ready:** Use this handy checklist below to prepare your child for moving to Reception in September 2026. Pre-School pupils can also work on these things too! Do please contact the office if you would like any further advice or support. Thank you.

 <b>Getting ready for school checklist</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/>		I love helping my parents read stories.
<input type="checkbox"/>		I have fun drawing.
<input type="checkbox"/>		I enjoy playing games like hopscotch.
<input type="checkbox"/>		I like counting my toys and my toes.
<input type="checkbox"/>		I enjoy eating with my family.
<input type="checkbox"/>		I like naming the colours of my favourite things.
<input type="checkbox"/>		I can say 'Please' when I ask for something, and 'Thank you' when I get it.

**Uniform orders:**

Uniform items for school and pre-school pupils are now available from Sigma. Primary School: [Clubs & Groups - Sigma Embroidery & Printing](#) Pre-School: [Clubs & Groups - Sigma Embroidery & Printing](#) Orders must be placed by parents and carers and will then be delivered to school and given to the children to bring home.

 <p>Registered Charity No: 1105505</p>	<b>Save the date!</b>	<b>FWR events:</b>
	Thursday 29 <sup>th</sup> January 2026	FWR meeting at 7.30pm in the school hall. All welcome
	Wednesday 11 <sup>th</sup> February 2026	Film Night – booking will open on Friday 30 <sup>th</sup> January and close at 9am on Monday 9 <sup>th</sup> February
	Friday 27 <sup>th</sup> March	Doughnut Day – more information available soon.

**Activities and Events:**



**WADSY**  
PERFORMING ARTS

**NEW CLASSES STARTING JAN**  
MONDAYS 4:30 - 5:45  
AGES 6-12  
ARKENSTALL CENTRE  
HADDENHAM  
Book at: [Wadsyouth.com/workshops](http://Wadsyouth.com/workshops)



**BOOST YOUR CHILD'S SWIMMING THIS HOLIDAY**

AGES 4-16 YEARS

Weekday holiday courses are the perfect power-up for regular swimmers or a great taster to Better Swim School swimming lessons.

Speak to a member of staff or scan the QR code to find out more.

BETTER



Children are welcome from age 4 (at school) to 12

# February

*Holiday Club*

Join us this February half term for a week full of fun, games, crafts and adventures!  
Our Holiday Club offers action-packed days designed to keep children happy, active and inspired.

- ✓ Games & Sports
- ✓ Arts & Crafts
- ✓ Creative Baking
- ✓ Forest School

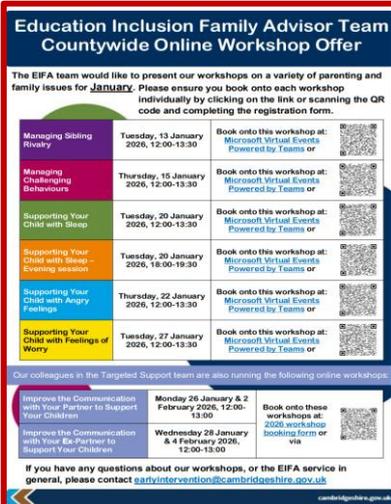
Monday 16<sup>th</sup> - Friday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2026

8:00 AM - 5:45PM £35  
9:00AM - 4:00PM £27

Spring Meadow Infant School, High Barns, Ely, CB7 4RB

**BOOK NOW**

Scan the QR code for bookings or email [info@activeplayeducation.co.uk](mailto:info@activeplayeducation.co.uk)



**Education Inclusion Family Advisor Team Countywide Online Workshop Offer**

The EIFA team would like to present our workshops on a variety of parenting and family issues for **January**. Please ensure you book onto each workshop individually by clicking on the link or scanning the QR code and completing the registration form.

Managing Sibling Rivalry	Tuesday, 13 January 2026, 12:00-13:30	Book onto this workshop at: <a href="#">Microsoft Virtual Events</a> Powered by Teams or
Managing Challenging Behaviours	Thursday, 15 January 2026, 12:00-13:30	Book onto this workshop at: <a href="#">Microsoft Virtual Events</a> Powered by Teams or
Supporting Your Child with Sleep	Tuesday, 20 January 2026, 12:00-13:30	Book onto this workshop at: <a href="#">Microsoft Virtual Events</a> Powered by Teams or
Supporting Your Child with Sleep - Evening session	Tuesday, 20 January 2026, 18:00-19:30	Book onto this workshop at: <a href="#">Microsoft Virtual Events</a> Powered by Teams or
Supporting Your Child with Angry Feelings	Thursday, 22 January 2026, 12:00-13:30	Book onto this workshop at: <a href="#">Microsoft Virtual Events</a> Powered by Teams or
Supporting Your Child with Feelings of Worry	Tuesday, 27 January 2026, 12:00-13:30	Book onto this workshop at: <a href="#">Microsoft Virtual Events</a> Powered by Teams or

Our colleagues in the Targeted Support team are also running the following online workshops:

Improve the Communication with Your Partner to Support Your Children	Monday 26 January & 2 February 2026, 12:00-13:00	Book onto these workshops at: <a href="#">2026 workshop booking form</a> or via
Improve the Communication with Your Ex-Partner to Support Your Children	Wednesday 28 January & 4 February 2026, 12:00-13:00	

If you have any questions about our workshops, or the EIFA service in general, please contact [earlyintervention@cambridgeshire.gov.uk](mailto:earlyintervention@cambridgeshire.gov.uk)

**EIFA Workshops**

To book, please see the above EIFA workshops poster.

- Supporting your Child with Feelings of Worry – 27/01/2026 @12:00–13:30
- Supporting your Child with Feelings of Anger – 02/02/2026 @ 18:00–19:30
- Supporting your Child with Feelings of Worry – 05/02/2026 @ 18:00–19:30
- Family Wellbeing -10/02/2026 @ 12:00-13:30  
Cc = evening workshops



**Dance & Acro-gymnastics with The Lane Academy for Reception to Year 4 at The Rackham Primary:** We are excited to be able to offer spaces to new members at our Dance and Acro-gymnastics club. The club runs every Monday from 4.30 - 5.45pm and children take part in dance as well as gymnastics, where they will learn and build confidence in new skills. We are also excited to be offering ISTD dance exams to the children attending and these will take place in March.

If you would like to book a place for next term, please use this link: [Dance & Acro-Gymnastics @ Rackham Primary School \(4 - 9yrs\) at Witchford Rackham Primary School, Witchford | Lane Academy | Powered by ClassForKids](#)

Looking forward to seeing everyone on Monday.

Best wishes,

Miss Turner

**Dates for your diary:**

29 <sup>th</sup> January	Year 3 Parent or carer school dinner invitation - booking closed
29 <sup>th</sup> January	FWR Meeting at 7.30pm in the school hall
2 <sup>nd</sup> February	
11 <sup>th</sup> February	FWR Film Night – booking will open Friday 30 <sup>th</sup> January
13 <sup>th</sup> February	Last day of term
Half term	