

WELCOME TO THE NEW SCHOOL YEAR - A LETTER FOR STAFF, CHILDREN, PARENTS & CARERS

AN INVITATION AND A WELCOME

September 2026

Welcome back!

I hope that you have all had a good summer break and have managed to find some time to relax, recharge and enjoy yourselves. It certainly has been a summer to remember — with some wonderfully sunny days and, at times, rather more heat than any of us really knew what to do with! Whatever you have been doing, I hope that the summer has given you an opportunity to spend time together as families and to enjoy a well-earned break. Now, of course, it is time to begin again.

There is always something rather special about the start of a new school year. The classrooms are prepared, the uniforms are hopefully still reasonably clean, you have found a pair of shoes that fit, you have practiced the school run and you have located your bookbags. There is that mixture of excitement — and perhaps a little nervousness — about what lies ahead. A particularly warm welcome goes to all those children (and their parents and carers) who are starting school for the very first time. Starting school is a huge milestone. There will be lots of new faces, new things to learn, new friends to make and, no doubt, a few moments when you wonder where everyone has gone and why your grown-ups have left you there! But don't worry — you are going to be absolutely fine. And there is one thing you can be sure of: I am your vicar, and I hope to be around for the next six years! I hope that over those years we will get to know one another, celebrate together, ask some big questions together, and discover that church is a place where everyone has a welcome.

I am really looking forward to visiting Powick, Madresfield and Callow End Church of England Primary Schools during the year, meeting pupils and staff, joining you for assemblies and special occasions, and continuing to build the relationship between our schools, our churches and our wider communities. This month there is something particularly exciting to look forward to: On **Sunday 13 September 2026 at 11am**, we will be gathering at **Powick Church for a special Education Sunday service**, bringing together children, families and staff from all three of our schools. It will be the first time that we have tried to bring all three school communities together in this way, and I very much hope that lots of you will be able to come. I know it's busy for families but your attendance would be most appreciated. The service will hopefully include contributions from children from the three church schools and, I hope, plenty of opportunities for us simply to celebrate the wonderful work that takes place in our schools every day. Education Sunday gives us a chance to say thank you for our teachers and support staff, for governors and volunteers, for parents and carers, and most of all for the children themselves. Schools are about far more than lessons and bookbags: they are places where children grow in confidence, discover their gifts, learn how to live alongside others and begin to work out who they are and who they might become.

As we begin another school year, I hope we can remember that every child is precious, every child has something to offer, and every child deserves to know that they are valued and loved.

So, to everyone returning to school after the summer: **welcome back!**

To those starting a new year: I hope it will be full of discovery and friendship.

To those starting school for the very first time: **a very special welcome to you.**

And to all the teachers, staff, governors, parents and carers: thank you for everything you do to help our children flourish. I look forward to sharing something of the journey with you.

May this new school year bring curiosity to learn, courage to try, kindness towards one another and plenty of reasons to smile.

And I look forward to seeing many of you at Education Sunday at Powick Church on Sunday 13 September at 11am — when, for the first time, Powick, Madresfield and Callow End can come together as one school family.

With every good wish and prayer for the year ahead,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gary', followed by a long horizontal stroke that ends in a small vertical tick.

Rev Gary Crellin

Vicar of the Old Hills Malvern Churches

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A parent's prayer for children as they start a new school year (adapted from a prayer written online by Tanner Olsen)

Lord,

We place our children in Your hands as they begin this new school year.

Thank You for the gift of their lives, their unique personalities, and the plans You have for them.

Help me trust that You are with them in every corridor, classroom, and conversation.

Grant them courage to face new challenges, wisdom to make good choices, and joy in the moments of growth.

Surround them with teachers who will guide them well, friends who will build them up, and experiences that will shape them for good.

Protect them from harm—both seen and unseen.

When they feel overwhelmed, remind them they are never alone.

When they succeed, remind them to give thanks.

When they fail, remind them that Your love never changes.

Help me, Lord, to encourage and not pressure, to listen more than I speak, and to pray for them more than I worry.

Let this year be successful and may our schools be a place of growth, exploration and good learning.

Amen.