**Feast of Christ the King Sunday 24th November**

Well done and thank you to Owl and Woodpecker children and families who joined the parish for Sunday mass this week. A couple celebrating 50 years of marriage who had grown up in Axminster, attended St Mary’s school and married in the church were in mass with many of their family members and Father Anthony celebrated this and it being a feast day with much incense. Having never seen this before one of the children observed that it was special effects! In fact, Owl and Woodpecker children were the real special effects at mass. They read and sang beautifully.

*Father Anthony explained during the mass that Jesus lived an extraordinary life. He never behaved like a king. His promise was always that He would love us. His message was consistently to Love one another as I have loved you. He also taught that there is nothing that we can do that sets us outside of His love.*

*As a faith school we work to live these values every moment of every day. We work to ensure that every child is treated as an individual: that they are each supported to grow in love and confidence as they discover their talents and learn to share their talents to make the world a better place.*

*We also teach children restorative approaches. We encourage them to recognise when they have made a wrong choice and not to think it is acceptable to make a wrong choice back again. That is not the same as allowing them to be treated unfairly or to be trodden on by others. We teach them to respect each other and to try to be peacemakers. There will be times when children get this wrong as they continue to learn to navigate relationships and we work with them to give them the tools to do this well.*

 *On the way home from church I heard on the news that young people had been arrested for aggressive beahviour in a large Birmingham city centre cinema, where many families were there to watch Frozen 2. The young people had machetes. One of them was 13 years old. In a world where some children have learned to hit out angrily at others I deeply believe that our faith messages can equip our children to be empowered and happy young people who will know who they are and that they have something positive to offer the world.*

*If you have any worries or concerns about the relationships teaching and behaviour aproaches we use at St Mary’s please do not hesitate to speak with me directly.*

**Safety at St Mary’s**

**Parking at St Mary’s**

We have continued to have near misses in the school car park, the most serious being when cars have reversed out of the car park without noticing children.

We are extremely grateful to the many parents who do find alternative parking but remind all parents that there is no reason why anyone should access the car park at the front of the school between 8.15 and 9.00 am and 3.00 and 3.45 pm.

**PLEASE DO NOT USE THE CAR PARK**.

**Crossing Patrol**

Thank you to all parents who have been working safely to cross Lyme Road each day.

Charlie Dunn’s mum, Caroline, should be joining us in January as our new crossing patrol hero. We are very much looking forward to having a safe crossing patrol back again.

**Parking Permits for St Mary's parents at Pippins Community Centre**

A small number of parking permits are available to purchase from the Pippins Community Centre (Stoney Lane). Permits cost £20 and are valid until the end of the Summer term 2020. They permit parking in the Pippins car park at school drop-off and pick up times, though some restrictions do apply. If you would like to find out more, or to purchase a permit, please pop in to the Pippins Centre or email pippinsbookings@gmail.com. All proceeds from the sales of permits go towards running the community centre.

**Robin Class Garden Upgrade**

Over the next week we are expecting a local gardening company to work on the extended garden area in Robin Class. There will be a screened area created on the edge of the field to allow materials to be brought into school using the gate at the end of the field. Robin Class will not be accessing the extended play area whilst the work is being undertaken. At all times the safety of the children will be our priority.

**Teaching and Learning Update November 2019**

You will be aware that we had a very positive end to last year having had a very successful Ofsted review and strong data that was significantly above national.

We were very pleased to have all of our work acknowledged. It is important to us that you as parents know that we are working to build on that.

Below are some of the key actions we have been taking this term.

**Religious Education**

As a faith school religious education and Catholic Life is part of our core provision. We follow a programme called God Matters and also have introduced a prayer reflection resource called Ten Ten. Over the last year we have given time to staff to develop their knowledge of the curriculum and especially to find a range of ways to explore the teaching of RE. Artwork, drama, debate and discussion are much more a part of the children’s experience. As well as this having visitors and going on visits are happening much more of the time. This term as a whole school we have also had a theme which came from the Pope of building our common home. The recycling work and giving work we have been doing is all connected to this.

We have always celebrated through music and look forward to sharing the nativity, Key Stage 2 Advent and Christmas singing with you later this term.

**Reading**

Reading was already a strength at St Mary’s. This term we have continued to work on ways to ensure that our assessment of individual pupils ensure that children’s needs are well understood and gaps are identified and closed.

The October staff INSET day was dedicated to reading. All teachers accessed a national training presentation and together we reviewed our reading provision and created an action plan for future change.

Our reading programme combines developing reading skills and comprehension with an enjoyment of reading.

We have many books for formal teaching and we have been reviewing this to ensure that we provide a strong progression of reading books.

We have been looking at ways to ensure that children’s own reading is maintained by making class book areas a positive feature of each classroom and to give our youngest pupils time in our own library. Although small, our school library has an excellent stock of books.

We have also been working with Axminster library to look at ways to build links.

**Maths**

Last year, as a school, we worked with High View, a Plymouth outstanding teaching school. Their maths lead is a national lead and he worked with us at St Mary’s to plan for ongoing improvements in our daily teaching. Through this we accessed training with the National Maths Hub network, which is the training network for the Governments Excellence in Mathematics Programme.

This year Mrs Gill and Mrs Fudger are taking part in the first year of a three year school development programme with the Maths Hub to ensure that all of our improvements are in line with best practice. Both teachers are working as school leaders to establish school wide improvements.

**Wider Curriculum**

You may be aware that we are now working with a new Ofsted Framework (Sept 2019). This has not changed the Curriculum (National Curriculum 2014) but it has been specific in ensuring that all schools work to provide a broad and quality curriculum.

From our Ofsted in July we know that we already had a solid start in offering many subjects to a high standard. We continue to make progress with this and to develop our skills and knowledge to further improve our offer to the children.

We work to ensure that children experience subjects in meaningful ways by making links with visits and visitors as well as through practical learning in school.

We are currently working with four schools in the Trust on ways to ensure that going forward our curriculum is well planned.

**Parent Questionnaire Feedback**

Thank you to all of those parents who took the time to complete the hard copy of our questionnaire during parent evenings in October. Attached is a short report for your interest. We are a very small staff team and we do believe that we work effectively and we work hard. We constantly work to find ways to improve on what we are doing and to seek best value. If you do ever have any questions or concerns please always ask.

**Giving update**

**Children in Need**

Congratulations to everyone who contributed to Kestrel Class bring and buy. We were overwhelmed by the quality of toys and books that were brought into school. In itself this was a fantastic recycling venture. Kestrel Class were excellent organisers; sorting and categorising items and then displaying them beautifully for sale. They then took turns to visit classes to collect younger children and helped them to visit all of the items before making their choices. It was lovely to see Kestrel Class working as caring and effective leaders for the younger children.

In total they raised £272.43. Congratulations to Kestrel Class.

**The Poppy Appeal** also raised £191.06 which will go to support Armed Forces Community.

**Bags to School** is a Dragonfly venture which we support. This year our school share of the bags came to an incredible 140 Kg of material, which is the equivalent of the weight of an adult gorilla. That is an amazing recycling venture.



**Dates for your diary –**

**\*PLEASE NOTE – ALL CLUBS FINISH ON FRIDAY 6TH DECEMBER\***

**Year 6 PE Academy Workshop – Thursday 28th November**

**Eagle Class Homelessness Awareness – Thursday 28th November 3.30pm**

**Christmas Fayre – Saturday 30th November 10am – 12.30pm**

**Nativity service – Monday 9th December 2.30pm, Tuesday 10th December 2.30pm & 6.00pm**

**Woodpecker Team Challenge – Tuesday 10th December**

**PTFA Christmas Shopping Day – Friday 13th December – an opportunity for children to buy Christmas items as family gifts**

**KS2 Advent Service – Monday 16th December 9am**

**Choir & Orchestra Performance – Monday 16th December 6pm**

**KS2 Carol Service – Wednesday 18th December 9am**

**School Christmas dinner day- Wednesday 18th December**

**Last day of term – Friday 20th December**

**First Day Back – Monday 6th January 2020**

**Note last day of summer term is Tuesday 21st July 2020**