



St Mary's Catholic Primary School
Newsletter Number 6

Inspire Day

On Friday 7th December we feel extremely privileged to welcome Sheku Kanneh Mason and his sister Isata to our school.

Sheku and his sister are part of a large musical family. All are well known for their musical skills. Sheku is a cellist who was chosen to play a solo at Prince Harry's wedding. His sister is an international pianist.

They will work with our orchestra, then have a question and answer session with Owl Class and then perform for the whole school. They will also share some of their own experiences of our values: have a go, aim high and resilience.

Sheku and his sister regularly perform at sell out concerts around the world. They are in Devon to perform at a concert on Thursday evening and agreed to come to St Mary's because of our own focus on developing musical skills. A huge thank you to Mrs Burrough again for her hard work in promoting our pupils and opportunities to develop their musical experience.

Sheku and his sister have worked very hard for their success and we expect the experience will inspire us all.

A reminder that if your child is at all interested in trying musical lessons then please do talk to their class teacher, Mrs Burrough or Mrs Mannix.

Choir Success

We have reached the finals of BBC Radio Devon Christmas Star For Christmas choir competition. There were only three other schools in the final of the small schools competition. Thank you to all those parents who have voted and shared the competition with friends and families.

The competition closes on Thursday at 4pm. Thank you to all of you who took the time to vote. We will hear tomorrow morning if we have been successful.

Mole Avon

Well done to Owl Class and members of the choir who worked hard to learn some Christmas songs to sing at Mole Avon's late night shopping event. The energy and enthusiasm of the children helped get the evening off to a flying start. Our children were described as 'wonderful' by many members of the public and Bridgett from Mole Avon was very grateful for our presence. Thank you to the parents who supported this event.

Beehive

On Sunday our choir and orchestra have been invited to join South West Camerata at their annual Christmas Concert. We are hoping that most of our choir and orchestra members will be able to attend.

Taekwondo

This term Woodpecker, Kestrel and Eagle Classes have taken part in Taekwondo lessons in school. All pupils from Year 2 to 6 have had the opportunity to take part in the after school club.

Watching pupils demonstrating their skills to parents and family this week has highlighted why we wanted them to have this experience. Improved self discipline, team work and self confidence were extremely evident. Well done everyone.

Christmas Events

Christmas Shopping

For those of us who have not previously experienced this PTFA event it is not a shopping day for teachers or adults. It is an opportunity for pupils in school to choose and wrap presents for family members.

PTFA will have a wide selection of quality items; many items provided by parents. These are unwanted gifts or very good quality items that family members no longer need. Some items have been purchased by PTFA.

Children will be selected class by class to select gifts and be helped to wrap them.

Each item will be £1.00. PTFA ask that individual children do not bring more than £5.00.

This is a lovely opportunity for children to select items for family members with some independence. They do really enjoy this opportunity.

Permission slips and communications

Please could you ensure that any consent forms, permission slips and related forms are returned promptly to the school office or class teacher.

If you have changed any contact details please keep us updated. If we need to reach you in an emergency it is critical that we have the correct details.

Fire Safety – staying safe – awareness and positive action

It is important that children are aware of the ways that we keep ourselves safe. We do this in positive ways that allow them to develop awareness and skills. We appreciate that for some children this can create questions and sometimes worries.

In the last few weeks we have been practicing the fire safety procedures with all children. Last week we told the children that the fire alarm would go off as part of a practice and that we would repeat it again this week. Children left the building promptly and quietly to ensure that we were lined up and everyone was accounted for within three minutes.

Attendance – absence request forms

These have been updated by Devon County Council. They do not make it clear what is considered to be an authorised absence. As I have explained previously, we follow Devon and National guidelines, in order to achieve a consistent response to all absence requests.

Attendance really does matter and the national guidelines protect the most vulnerable children and families in the school system. Having a policy that does not give authorised absence, except for very exceptional direct family wedding and funerals, allows schools to closely monitor attendance and to step in with support when attendance changes.

At St Mary's we notify parents at the end of the first time if absence is below 95 %, even when we know the reasons for the absence. When pupil attendance falls below 90 % we will always contact families to ensure that together we are doing all that is possible to show improvements in attendance.

We are very grateful to all families who work with us to arrive at school on time each day and to maintain high levels of attendance. If you ever have any concerns about your child's attendance then please contact the office to speak with myself or our pastoral support worker, Mrs Clist.

Thanking you. Mrs Mannix

PARKING – The church members have had some challenges recently. They have been unable to find any spaces and have also found themselves blocked in. Father Anthony was unable to park one day when he was here for a service.

We all appreciate the challenge of not having a large enough car park but please do be aware that church parking bays now have individual posts blocking the parking bays.

Any parent still making use of the parking area is asked to take the time to seek alternative parking.

The 2 spaces in front of the St Marys's sign are for staff only. Please do not pull into these places to drop off your children.

Advent a time to stop

Everyone is busy getting ready for Christmas. Advent is a season of four Sundays inviting us to stop and reflect on the celebration of Christmas – Christ's birth.

We are sharing the themes of Advent week by week : hope, peace , joy and love. We look forward to sharing this with you at our forthcoming Christmas Services.

Future Diary Dates

KS1 Nativity for parents – Tuesday 11th December 6pm

KS1 Nativity for parents – Wednesday 12th December 2pm

Music Celebration for parents- Friday 14th December 2.30

KS2 Christmas Service for parents -Wednesday 19th December 9.30 am -

School Christmas Lunch Thursday 20th December – please order via Parent Pay

Christmas Mass – all welcome Friday 21st December 10 am

End of term Friday 21st December 3.30p.m.

First day back for pupils Tuesday 8th January 2019

Last day of summer term – 24th July 2019

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Living, loving and learning with God

