



Dear Parents,

We are now into our third full week back at school and everything has settled down well. Our Reception children are now full time and it has been lovely to welcome them into Liturgy on a Monday morning and see them around the school.

We had a lovely day last Friday when we 'Talked like a Pirate' as well as wrote about pirates. The day was an 'Everybody Writes' Day and my kidnapping in assembly by two TAs, gave all of the children the opportunity to write about this in the form of newspaper reports, wanted posters, descriptions of the kidnappers etc. The children all looked fabulous in their costumes and everyone had a lot of fun.

Thank you to the parents who came to our 'Meet the Teacher' evening yesterday. I hope you found the session useful. One question that came up was why we held three sessions. The reason for this was so that parents with more than one child in the school would be able to attend sessions in each of their child's class.

Please see the information below about Free School Meals and Pupil Premium. It is really important that anyone eligible for Free School Meals registers for this, even if you already receive a free meal for your Key Stage 1 child as it enables us to get extra funding to support your child. You can read the details below but do ask Mrs Hay our Finance Officer about it too if you need anything explained.

In this and some of the future newsletters, I am going to include a 'Did you know?' item. This will give you some information about the school and how we run which might be of interest to you.

### **Late starts**

There are some usual children still arriving in school after the gate has closed at 8:55am and needing to go in through the school reception entrance. Please can we remind you that school starts at **8.55am** each day. This is the time the gate closes and children should be in the playground/building by then. This is so lessons can start promptly at 9:00am. Parents will be contacted when it is apparent that the children are late on frequent occasions.



### **Harvest**

This week on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> September, we will be celebrating Harvest. To mark this occasion, we have decided to collect food items which we will then donate to the local food bank. Please could you bring in the items on Friday morning. We will also be holding a special assembly at 2.30pm so please come and join us if you can.



### **New date for our Early Years Open Day**

Our Early Years Open Day will now take place on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> October. The time slots will be 10.00-11.00 and 2.00-3.00pm.

### **Christmas Bazaar**

On Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> December, St Mary's Church are holding a Christmas Bazaar. It will run from 10.30am -1:00pm at The Guildhall, Axminster. This year there is space for some arts and crafts tables. Would you like to sell your products? If so please contact Pat 01297 598317 email: [pat.bullock@tesco.net](mailto:pat.bullock@tesco.net) for an application form. All requests to be in by 9<sup>th</sup> October 2015 please.

### **Coats in school**

As the weather is changing and getting a little chillier, please would all children bring a coat to school.

### **Book Fair**

Our Book Fair is coming from Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> October to Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> October. It will be a perfect opportunity to buy books for children for Christmas.



### **Did you know ...**

that we track every single child's progress every half term? Teachers make assessments of your child's achievement and once their assessments are completed, we hold Pupil Progress meetings. These are where I discuss every child in the class with each class teacher, look at the progress your child is making and talk about any other strategies or help that is needed. Information is also passed on to Mrs Wright in case there are any SEND implications.

### **Dates for your diary**

Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> September - Cake sale after school raising funds for Robin and Woodpeckers' trips  
Friday 25<sup>th</sup> September – Eagles' Class Mass 10am (Church) and Harvest Assembly at 2.30pm (Hall)  
Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> October - Early Years Open Day  
Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> October - National Poetry Day  
Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> October - Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> October - Book Fair at school  
Friday 9<sup>th</sup> October – Kestrel's Class Mass at 10am  
Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> October - Ada Lovelace (Science Day)  
Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> October – Parent Consultation Evening  
Thursday 22 October – Parent Consultation Evening  
Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> October- Diocese Inset Day - school closed to children (To be confirmed)

### **Pupil Premium Grant**

In years gone by, parents would apply for their child to have Free School Meals if their family was in receipt of benefits. This system has changed. Children eligible for Free School Meals now receive much greater benefits through the Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) and it is definitely worth checking to see if you can claim this benefit.

The grant is worth £1320 per pupil in 2015/16 and is provided to pupils who meet the criteria below. This money comes directly to the school for us to invest in educational provision for your child. There is certainly no stigma attached.

### **Children in Key Stage 1**

In Key Stage 1 ALL children now receive free school meals, but if you are eligible under the criteria below please do apply because the school will receive the £1320 to help your child.

If your family circumstances change and you no longer meet the criteria, your child will not receive free school meals in Key Stage 2, but the school WILL continue to receive PPG each year for your child for 6 years!

### **Children in Key Stage 2**

In Key Stage 2 your child will receive a Free School Meals, but this will not be known to other children as the information is simply held in the school office. Most families pay in the office for lunches and trips, so the children are not aware of who has paid / not paid. The children themselves will not necessarily be aware. If family circumstances change, your child will not receive free meals, but the school will receive the grant to support their learning for 6 years!

### **Who is Eligible?**

The school only receives this money if parents apply for it.

Parents are eligible to apply for this grant if they receive **one or more** of the following benefits:



- Income Support (IS)
- Employment & Support Allowance (income related)
- Child Tax credit **without** Working Tax Credit with an annual taxable income (as assessed by HMRC) of less than £16,190
- Income based jobseekers Allowance (IBJSA)
- Guaranteed Element of State pension credit
- Support under part V1 of the Immigration & Asylum Act 1999.
- Universal Credit
- If you have recently become unemployed but are still receiving Working Tax Credit, you may be entitled to free school meals for a 4 week period only (applies to Key Stage 2).

### **Additional Benefits**

Children who receive this grant can claim a free school jumper or cardigan in the first year of funding and may also be entitled to a reduction in the cost of residential visits in Key Stage 2. The school uses the PPG to fund these incentives.

### **Impact on Learning**

The School is held accountable by the government, so if your child receives this grant, the school must use it to support their learning. We achieve this at St Mary's by employing teaching staff to work more closely with your child in small groups or individually to help them improve their Literacy and Maths. We fund sports clubs to meet the needs of children and we buy additional resources targeted at individuals and groups of children. Without the PPG the school would not be able to provide these extra opportunities.



Children who have a parent in the Services are also eligible for a grant of £300 and children in care or who have been adopted receive £1900. If you meet one of these then please do check your situation is known to the school.

### **Thursday 1st October is School Census Day**

The school census is a statutory return which takes place during the autumn, spring, and summer terms. The data collected is used by the Department for Education and the Local Authority. The number of pupils in school on Thursday 1st October 2014 will be used by the government to work out funding for our school in the following academic year.



This year it is particularly important that as many Reception/Year 1 and Year 2 children as possible stay for a school lunch on this day, because the number of pupils having a lunch will determine how much funding for Universal Infant Free School Meals the school receives.

We will be having a special themed menu based on the story of Paddington Bear and children are invited to bring their own special bear to school to join them for lunch! All children, including KS2, having a school dinner on Thursday 1st October will also be entered into a prize draw for a Paddington themed prize.

So please support the school by arranging for your Reception/Year 1 and Year 2 child to have lunch on this day and help the school to gain all the funding it is entitled to.

**Special Person**

*W/e 11<sup>th</sup> September      W/e 11<sup>th</sup> September*

***Robins***

Ella P

Alfred W

***Woodpeckers***

Ben C

Sophie B

***Owls***

Harry E

Harrison G

***Kestrels***

Dylan B

Elliot H

***Eagles***

Will M

Talia H

**Attendance**

Week ending 11th September 98.81%

Week ending 18<sup>th</sup> September 96.4%

Our attendance target is **96.2%**



With best wishes,

*Angela Herrera*

Mrs Angela Herrera  
Headteacher

*Living, loving and learning with God*