Monday 9th March

Dear Parents and Carers,

**Expansion Update**

In a previous newsletter I wrote to explain that the local authority have been in discussion with us and that this is dependent on a new housing development in the local area being given planning permission. To date this has not happened. The local authority continue to progress the plan so that if the development is given the go ahead they have completed every task to begin an expansion.

In the next few weeks the local authority will be asking for your opinion on the development in advance of going to planning.

St Mary’s currently accepts 20 children into each year group and we have five class bases. That means that the school was planned to accommodate 140 children in total and have mixed classes throughout KS1 and KS2 with foundation ( Robin Class ) being foundation only. We are currently full across the school with mixed age classes in most year groups. In September we will be mixed age throughout the school.

**Why expand ? What does it mean for St Mary’s families and children ?**

Taking the school from five classes to seven would take the school to what is known as one form entry. I have taught for 30 years and much of that time have worked in schools of this size. Children enter the school with one group and will stay with this group for every year they are in school. At St Mary’s I have seen some benefit in having options to move children into different groupings but it is also true that there is a stability in remaining in one group.

For me the greatest benefit is in having more teachers to deliver the depth and range of roles in a primary school. Currently we each have to wear many hats and whilst you have seen that in two years we have become a very strong team and have been able to offer an ever improving experience for the children. Having more adults would bring further expertise and capacity as well as more funding to give us further options to improve resources available.

I do feel that we are working hard and smart at St Mary’s to make the most of the strengths and overcome the challenges and I feel that if we expand we would continue to do that.

As a Headteacher my role is to be a guardian for the school in the time I work here. I have taught and lead for many years but this is my first headship. I have not been asked previously to make such a decision so have spoken to others across the trust. They consider that if the housing development takes place we should embrace the possibility to expand as an opportunity for the children of St Mary’s both for now and for the future.

The local authority have set all financial boundaries and then within that we have worked together to achieve a positive outcome for a development. We would have a modular building that would have all the day to day facilities that the children would need.

The local authority will be sending you the plans and asking for your views. I would be most grateful if you would take the time to respond to this.

Thanking you most sincerely for your continued interest and support.

Mrs Mannix

Headteacher