



St Mary's Catholic Primary School
Newsletter Number 7



Advent Mass to celebrate the end of term

This Friday 21st December, our last day of term at 10.00am all pupils will celebrate mass in church with the parish. All are welcome.

Christmas Jumper Charity Appeal for Save the Children - <https://christmasjumperday.org>

This day was officially on 14th December and we had thought that it was too close to recent fund raising events and the Christmas Fayre but lots of our parents asked about us taking part. So on Friday 21st December, the last day of term, all children are invited to come out of uniform in a Christmas jumper. If they don't have a jumper please don't buy one – wear something that sparkles and bring a voluntary contribution (suggested £1) for the Save the Children Charity.

End of term – a time to stop and a time to reflect on where we are and where we are going next

We have had a very busy and productive term. It is hard to believe that our newest children have only been with us for weeks. They are all so much a part of our school life.

Our values are now known by everyone.

Our literacy and numeracy work has continued to develop and children's understanding of what makes them successful, what they are doing well and what they need to do next to improve, has significantly improved during this term.

Our children have been more active. Every child now takes part in a 15 min track activity and even our youngest children are now running a daily mile.

On 22nd November we had a whole day external review of safeguarding and the recent report identified that we have secure systems and procedures to ensure children are safe.

We have also had a focus on small positives that together make a huge difference, from turning a sad face into a smile to fundraising events.

We have had lots of positive feedback from visitors, pupils and parents.

We continue to work hard to ensure that we develop learning opportunities in all areas of the curriculum.

We will be sending out questionnaires at the start of the new year but please do consider completing and returning the note at the end of this newsletter. Please do take a moment to give some feedback on any positives as well as areas for us to work on. Your support and feedback is very valued.

PTFA Thank You

A huge thank you to our amazing PTFA team. This term their organisation and on going support at events has made such a difference. Thank you to all who contribute come rain or shine,, before, during and after school. Please consider contributing wherever you can.



Music is alive at St Mary's

This half term we have had a very strong focus on music across the school and in the community.

Our choir had the success of being finalists in the Star For Christmas Competition.

Performances at The Beehive in Honiton, The Heritage Centre and at Silverleigh residential home were extremely well received with cards and phone calls from the public praising our pupils and the quality of their performance..

Following The Beehive performance a member of the local community who has no connection with the school was so impressed with our pupils they called to ask if they could offer us a financial gift and went on to write a cheque for £500.00.

Owl and Kestrel Class have both performed at local events, again with very positive feedback.

Kestrel Class attended an event at Pippins Centre where they sang carols at a memory café, where older adults with memory loss were taking part in an event to recall their won childhood Christmas memories. All involved were extremely appreciative.

A highlight of our half term music focus was our Inspire Day when Sheku and Isata Kanneh Mason worked with our pupils before performing for us. Both are very high achieving musicians. Sheku won the BBC Young Musician of the Year Award in 2016 and this year performed a cello solo at Prince Harry's wedding. His sister is a world class pianist. It was an amazing opportunity for our pupils to hear them play and to spend time with them.

It generally was a wow moment for our school.

Our end of term Music Assembly and our Nativity and KS2 Service were all great celebrations of music. They really were wonderful experiences and showcased the many musical skills of our pupils.

Eagles have been learning to play the ukulele and will be continuing this next term. Next term Kestrel and Owl class will be learning cello and viola respectively.

A reminder that any one in Year 3, 4, 5 or 6 can join the choir. New members are welcome. We have many performing opportunities during the spring and summer terms.

Staffing Changes

Mrs Brett and Mrs Clark are leaving us at the end of term. We have been thanking them for their work and have shared cards and gifts and best wishes for their next steps.

In January we welcome Mrs Newcombe back to the office. We are more than delighted that she is returning to work with us. Mrs Blathwayt will work on Monday and Tuesday with Mrs Newcombe working Tuesday to Friday.

Mrs Reid will teach Woodpeckers on Monday and Tuesdays next term with Miss Greaves teaching them on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. They will be joined by Mrs Jackson, an experienced teaching assistant, who will work full time.

We also welcome Mrs Hogarth, who will join Kestrels to teach them on Fridays.

Attendance

First absence letters at the start of next term

We will send out a first absence letter to all parents who have a child with attendance below 95% and 90%. 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.

Next term

Please consider responding to the questions at the end of this document.

Communication

Our newsletter and communications with children do work to keep everyone up to date with everything that's happening. It is always on our school website. Sudden changes are communicated via email to relevant groups of parents or direct to individual parents by email and phone.

The St Mary's Facebook page was set up for parents not staff of St Mary's. It is not a forum we should use. We are looking to using a wider forum of media to share information with you. Any suggestions are appreciated.

New school starters September 2019

If you have or you know of children who will be starting school in September 2019 please do note that the application deadline is 15th January 2019.

The online application can be found by following the link below:

<https://new.devon.gov.uk/educationandfamilies/school-information/apply-for-a-school-place/apply-for-a-primary-school-place>

Parish News

First Communion

We are planning to start first communion classes at the start of next term. These are expected to be run on Monday in school from 3.00pm to 3.30p.m.

If you are interested in your child taking part in this special journey then please do ask Mrs Mannix in the first instance or email or write via the office.

Coffee and Cake – forward notice

We continue to work with the wider church on ways to develop more links. We are hoping that parents of St Mary's will attend a weekly coffee and cake session after school drop off each Friday. No agenda just an opportunity to chat with home made cake guaranteed to spread some cheer. Further information in the new year.

Car Park Consultation

We recognise the challenge that all schools face with a lack of adequate parking and congestion at busy times. At St Mary's we have the challenge of not having a car park at all which is not unusual but can cause difficulties. We continue to work with the church on ways to progress this and invite parents of St Mary's to a meeting on Friday 18th January at 2.00p.m. to consult on where we are and any thoughts on ways to make improvements.

Future Diary Dates

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

First day back for pupils Tuesday 8th January 2019

Please note that the last day of the summer term is 23rd July 2019

This is a change to the original date.

Please consider responding to these questions

Feedback and next steps.

Please consider the following and return your response via email or paper copy at the start of next term.

Many thanks in advance for your continued interest and support.

Name of adult :

Name of child in school :

This term I think the following have been positive :

This term I have thought that the following could be further improved :

(Please be specific and if possible give thoughts and suggestions on ways to make improvements)

I would be interested in information sessions / training courses in :

Phonics skills for pupils

Grammar terms

Maths workshops for pupils aged 4 – 7 pupils aged 8 – 11

On line pupil safety

Any other :

Please circle any of the areas below that you would like to receive further information:

I would be willing to take part in a working party to give feedback on ways to further develop the school

I would like to receive more information about being on the steering committee to progress The Unicef Rights and Responsibilites Award which St Mary's has registered to achieve.

I would like to consider volunteering at St Mary's.