

Newsletter

**Goodbye to our local hero**

Mr David Swift’s service to the school, helping parents and children to safely cross the road has been hugely valued. He is there twice a day every day come rain or shine. We will miss him but thank him sincerely for agreeing to continue for this half term and for his years of service to our school.

Many parents have made a contribution to his leaving gift. If you haven’t already and wish to do so please let the office know. Friday 18th October will be his last day with us.

We all wish Mr Swift well in his retirement and hope that as many parents as possible will take the time to wish him well over the next few days.

**Next steps for crossing patrol**

At this point we still do not have a replacement for Mr Swift. If you know of any one who might be interested please ask them to contact school or. Colin Savage at Devon County Council, Tel 01392 383000 for further details.

Please note that we will most likely **not** have a crossing patrol adult after the October half term holiday. If your child crosses the road on their own please let the office know and we will work to ensure that there is appropriate supervision.

**Teaching and learning**

We have had a very positive start to the year with all children settling well to the new class spaces, adults and routines. Our Friday celebrations this term have highlighted the focus and engagement of so many of the children as active learners with a desire to aim high. Our values do seem to be fully embedded and we have seen many excellent examples of them at work this half term.

Parents evening are one opportunity to hear and to see how your child’s learning is progressing.

We continue to be grateful to parents who support us in so many ways by ensuring that their child is ready for learning each day, is supported with the additional reinforcement tasks of reading, learning number and times table skills, practising spelling and adding to their wider experience of learning.

I hope that parent consultation meetings this week have further reassured you of the quality of learning in each class. If you have any questions or concerns about your child’s learning experience this half term please do always speak to your child’s class teacher at the earliest opportunity and if you remain concerned never hesitate to speak to me, either in the morning or by arranging a meeting via the office.

Please never be concerned if you find I am speaking to you about your child. I do appreciate that as a headteacher I may be unusual in knowing each child as an individual and as a learner at St Mary’s but as a teacher and SENDCo for many years I find this is the most effective way of measuring how well the school is doing. We are a close staff team and as I am most often outside in the mornings it is often me who will take on that role. As a faith school we believe that each child is unique and it is our task to work with each child and with you to discover what their unique talents are, to encourage and support these, as well as to strengthen any areas of challenge so that every child feels valued and develops a high level of self belief and skill.

**Our Common Home**

This term as a whole school we have shared a theme of caring for our common home, which came from a letter sent by Pope Francis to all children. Our common home includes our classrooms, playgrounds, whole school, community and beyond.

We did think that we would be introducing our younger children to the idea of recycling, to catch up on the work our older children did last year.

We found that lots of children had lots of information about the issues of plastic waste and tree cutting in particular, which they have learned from tv and the internet.

What we have been doing is reassuring all children that there are lots of actions we can take as individuals and groups that can make positive changes. It has resulted in some very valuable and meaningful work.



**Expressive Arts**

You will all recognise that St Mary’s has a strong reputation for music and for sport. We continue to work to develop these and alongside them to offer wider experiences for children to flourish.

This term we have been focussing on reading for enjoyment, the spoken word and on art and dance. We are hoping to extend opportunities in the next year to include more of the expressive arts. For those who are not already aware Music Seeds, each Thursday morning before school, is a wonderful opportunity to explore music alongside creativity. It develops confidence and gives children a strong foundation in responding creatively through music. Please do consider this for your child.

**Car Parking**

**A reminder that parents are not allowed to access the car park at the front of the school from 8.30 to 9.15 or between 3.00 and 3.45pm. At other times if you are dropping off or picking up and there is space in the staff bays it is acceptable to use the space.**

Whilst we appreciate that it would be convenient for schools to have parent car parking facilities you can appreciate that no school in a town or village context will have the luxury of land for this purpose.

St Mary’s parish have made space available so that school staff are able to park. You will understand that parish staff and parishioners should be able to park when required and should be treated reasonably by our school staff and parents. Please accept and respect this situation by not parking in the area.

**A further reminder that the car park area should not be used as a pedestrian walkway. The foot path provides safe access to the school gates.**

**Harvest Giving**

Please support the local community this harvest by giving an item for the local foodbank.

Please also join us if you can for our Harvest Service on **Friday 18th October at 9.00am**. Robin and Woodpecker Class will melt hearts with their poetry and song and the choir will perform songs for your entertainment and reflection.

All are welcome.

**Shoe Box Appeal**

Please consider putting together a shoe box or sending items for Owl Class to put together shoe boxes.

As we have explained previously, the children who receive them are not only delighted with all of the treasures they receive but are overwhelmed by the sense of hope knowing that children and families have taken the time to care about them.

Completed boxes need to be in school for collection on **1st November.**

**Hilary’s Lunch**

Please consider taking part in the second of Hilary’s Lunch events on Wednesday23 October in half term.

Hilary is a school governor and parishioner at St Mary’s. She is a talented cook who works as volunteer helping our children with healthy cooking activities. This term Hilary has been working with Woodpecker Class and has been involved in activities for our Health Week.

Do support the event if you can.

**Dance Festival Week Tuesday 29th October to Friday 1st November**

A reminder that we return to school on Tuesday 29th October.

Each day that week children will work with a professional dance team.

Please ensure that PE kits are in school.

Parents are invited to share in their learning on Friday 1st November .

Eagle and Kestrel class are at 9.00am

Owl, Woodpecker and Robin class are at 2.45pm

**RSPB Wild Challenge**



A chance to get close to nature and help wildlife. The challenge has lots of stages and is a very fun way of helping local wildlife too. Further details can be found at rspb.org.uk/wildchallenge or follow the link below :

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/fun-and-learning/for-families/family-wild-challenge/>

**Dates for your diary –**

**Eagle last Wednesday 16th October (last one is now not after half term due to the dance week).**

**Owl first swimming session Wednesday 6th November**

**October half term holiday – last day Friday 18th October and first day back Tuesday 29th October**

**Friday 8th November ‘Zero to Hero’ Cafod Workshops helping children to positively explore the issue of climate change.**

**Monday 11th November @ 9.00 am Remembrance Service in school parents welcome**

**10.30 Our older pupils will attend The Axminster Remembrance Service at The Minster Church.**

**Tuesday 19th November Tempest coming into school to take the children’s photos**

**Friday 22nd November flu vaccinations in school**

**Friday 29th November House Team Event for St Andrew’s Day**

**Sunday 1st December Advent begins**

**Monday 9th December @2.30pm Nativity for parents**

**Tuesday 10th December @ 2.30pm and 6.00pm Nativity for parents**

**This year Robin, Woodpecker and Owl Class will lead the Nativity**

**Monday 16th December @9.00 am KS2 Advent Service**

**Wednesday 18th December @ 9.00 KS2 Carol service**

**Friday 20th December end of term**

**Monday 6th January 2020**

