St Mary’s Catholic Primary School

Newsletter Number 4

**End of the First Half Term**

Thank you so much for giving your time to parent meetings this week. We all find it helpful to hear from you at the start of the year and how you feel the children are progressing and to share their successes.

This year our whole school writing approach has created a very rapid and successful start. In each of our classes children are introduced to a book and together they become familiar with the structure and the language. As knowledge of the text develops children are more able to write with confidence and skill.

We have been using this approach across the school since January and we have seen a great improvement in pupil confidence, engagement and skill.

Across the school we are now encouraging a new approach to feedback. We do not give as much written feedback to children. Instead we give some written feedback and teachers spend more time in class talking with the children and developing the children’s skills to identify what they are doing well and what they need to do next to improve their work. This is developing children’s independence and their awareness of skills to improve.

We have been very pleased with the impact that this is having in class and we hope that you have enjoyed seeing this in children’s work.

Teachers have been adding more information to our school website in the curriculum area so please take some time to look at this.

**Right to say ‘stop’ and ‘tell’**

As we did last year we have been working with all pupils to develop their skills and confidence to respond to any worries or concerns. We have been working with them to understand that solving problems is important. We are working on helping them to develop their skills positively and if they recognise that these are not solving to ask for help by telling someone. In school every child is naming at least one person in school and one out of school who they feel is safe to tell.

You may wish to talk to your child about this.

**Homework**

A firm and positive partnership between home and school is one key to success for our children and we really value the strong support we have from parents at St Mary’s.

We ask every child to read, rehearse spellings and to practice specific maths skills such as number facts for adding and subtraction as well as times table facts. This should be happening as often as possible at home.

In addition teachers will set specific home tasks that will support your child’s learning which are relevant to their class learning. This means that they will not necessarily be set a directed task every week.

There are many ways to make reading, spelling and maths learning fun and exciting. In the summer lots of children took part in the library reading challenge and others are now working on the 100 book challenge through the library.

Learning maths facts by heart is a very positive way to give your child a headstart. There are resources on our school website. If you would like further ideas and resources to engage your child then please do speak with their class teacher.

Next half term we will be holding phonics workshops for Robin Class parents.

If you have any questions or concerns about homework then please do speak to your child’s teacher or to Mrs Mannix.

**Winter Uniform**

Please be reminded that when we return to school after half term children will be in winter uniform. School sports hoodies are now available in Honiton Sports Shop and can be worn on Thursday as part of our PE uniform and in their second PE lesson of the week.

**Running Track – Inspire Day**

**Please use the following link to read the article that featured in the Mid Week Herald.**

<http://www.midweekherald.co.uk/news/cycling-ace-opens-new-path-1-5723092>

**Harvest Festival**

We had a lovely celebration in school thinking about what we have and how we can all do small things that make a great difference.

Our youngest pupils told us the story of The Little Red Hen with such energy. Our School Choir performed two beautiful songs and we all were amazed by the many contributions of dry food for Axminster Foodbank. Thank you.

The next day all of the goods were packed up into bags. Jack and Jonas, Year 6 Eagle pupils, travelled with Mrs Mannix, Mrs Clist and Mrs Clark to The Axminster Food Bank. The staff were genuinely overjoyed by the amount of food we shared.

We learned that Axminster Food Bank started in 2012 and continues to support on average 20 families per week. Axminster Foodbank is in the Axminster Wellbeing Centre which offers a range of support services to individuals and families. They are keen to take on new volunteers and referrals. Follow the link to find out what they offer.

<http://axminsterwellbeing.com/>

**Year 4 and 5 Resilience**

We planned a Wildside camping experience for our year 4 and 5 pupils for this half term to give them a focus on developing resilience.

They left school on Thursday 8th October for a two day adventure.

They faced constant rain and wild winds. It truly was a wildside adventure. Teachers were very impressed with the team spirit, fun and have a go attitudes of all who take part.

A huge thank you to families for your support of this event and to Mrs Fudger, Mrs Gill and Mrs Walters, who left their centrally heated homes and their families, to make this event possible.

**Sports News**

**Sports Captain Training**

On Tuesday our sports captains went to Colyton Grammar School to receive training on delivering interhouse festivals. All the children took part in five challenges from the School Games Website and all of them led a challenge, recorded the scores and announced the results. At the end of the training the pupils appeared confident and excited about being able to run challenges at school.

**Stockland Cross Country**

On Wednesday 17th October we took our year 3/4 and year 5/6 cross country teams to compete in the second Stockland Cross Country race of the season. We were greeted with a dry autumn afternoon and despite a few injuries the children were ready to race.  The children were superb with nine out of our twelve runners improving on the last race's positions. One of our children improved their finishing position by fourteen places.  What an improvement!

**Axminster Town Football Club and Millwey Rise Football Club**

On Thursday 18th October we welcomed Mr Mark Burrough (a level 2 qualified football coach) from Axminster Football Club and Mr Murnane (a level 2 qualified football outfield and goalkeeping coach) from Millwey Rise Football Club to coach the children in football skills and playing matches during their PE lessons. All the children had a brilliant time. If your child is interested in playing football they can contact Mr Mark Burrough on 07816769154 to find out about training times at Axminster Town Football Club for your child.

**Bicton Cross Country**

We wish our year 3/4 boys cross country teams best wishes when they represent the Axe Valley in their age group in the East Devon Cross Country competition on the first week back after half term on Friday 2nd November.

**Gymnastics Club – Change Of Time**

Unfortunately Emma Rowe has had to stop doing after school gymnastics at St Mary's from half term because she now has her own premises from which to run her club. This is very sad for us as Emma's involvement in the school has encouraged many children to take up gymnastics and become involved in Axminster Gymnastics club itself. As well as this, her classes at school were very popular. However, there is light at the end of the tunnel as Emma has offered to run two morning clubs at St Mary's on Wednesdays and Fridays starting after half term if we have the right numbers. These clubs will run from 8am to 8:55am. With the last 5 or 10 mins being spent with children getting changed in their uniform. We are very fortunate to offer these clubs exclusive to St Mary's and it is a wonderful chance for working parents to use the extra time in the morning.

If you are interested in your child taking part in the gym club, please contact Emma directly on 07717310198 and/or info@axminstergymnastics.co.uk

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**Electronic Daily Registers**

Next half term we will introduce electronic registers in school. The paper copies have to be hand checked and collated and then re- entered by admin staff onto a data base. This is an unnecessary and time consuming duplication of tasks.

As a result we will not do a school meals register in the same way. At the moment all orders are checked daily to ensure that what you have ordered fits with the class registers.

Next half term we will be reviewing this system. To support us please can you ensure that you continue to order a meal via Parent Pay or send your child in with a packed lunch.

In the event of parent error no child will ever be left without food but we are working to ensure that systems are streamlined and duplication is eliminated.

Thank you in advance for your continued support.

**Friday paper bag lunch**

For the last three weeks we have been trialling Friday lunch in a paper bag. As part of our work on democracy we have had a whole school vote. The outcome of the vote will be announced in our whole school celebration assembly today.

**PARKING –** please be reminded that the car park is not to be used by parents at any time in the school day. Whilst we appreciate that this is not the most ideal situation then we ask that all parents respect this.

A reminder that for the safety of all the car park should also not be a short cut into the school.

During half term a parking chain will be added to the church parking spaces to ensure that church staff will always have reserved parking. This will be in place when we return to school on Tuesday 30th October.

We have had a number of calls from concerned local residents as parents are parking too close to the junction of Sector lane. This is very dangerous and is against the highway code – cars should not be parked within 10 metres of a junction.

**Christmas Shoe Box Appeal**

This year we will be supporting the Rotary Club with their Christmas Shoe Box appeal. Like last year, children are asked to fill in a shoebox (wrapped in Christmas paper) with items from a specific list for children of different ages. This year, the Rotary Club will be sending boxes to: Montenegro, Moldova, Romania, Albania and the Philippines because of the tragic storms they’ve had recently. Last year we collected 100 boxes which is a fantastic result. It would be incredible if every child could get involved is such a wonderful charity and make a disadvantaged child happy this Christmas. Please can all boxes be in school by Tuesday 6th November.

Wishing you a very safe and happy half term holiday.

Children return to school on Tuesday 30th October.

**Future Diary Dates**

School Disco

Remembrance Service in school Friday 9th November

11.11.18 Remembrance Service for Year 6 pupils- all families welcome – Minster Church

Sunday 25th November first Sunday in Advent

Dates for Advent Services will be confirmed at the start of next half term.

St Mary’s Catholic Primary School

Living, loving and learning with God

