



St. Mary's Church of England VC Infant School  
'Sharing, Caring, Learning and Loving with God'  
Spring Half Term Newsletter Friday 14<sup>th</sup> February 2020

**Head's Message**

Dear Parents and Carers,

What a busy, but exciting half term we have had at St Mary's. The Spring Term is always very exciting for our children as they become more and more confident in their settings and begin to embrace the greater challenges of the Year. I wish you all a safe and enjoyable half term.

**Safeguarding at the Heart**

**Health and Safety**

As you are aware, we had our Health and Safety Inspection earlier in the term and were judged an overall good with many areas outstanding. Most of the areas graded good have already been developed further since inspection and we are confident that we are heading towards outstanding in all areas.

Please can parents refrain from parking across driveways, including the school gates and help us to keep a positive relationship with our neighbours. Thank you.

**Design and Technology**

Parents have been sent a permission form for handling, preparing and eating foods as part of 'Design and Technology' lessons. We politely request that parents inform us of any changes to medical or dietary needs on an ongoing basis.

**Safer Internet Day**

This week, all pupils engaged in 'Safer Internet Day' activities to develop their knowledge of the importance of staying safe online and who to talk to when required. Parents have also been sent an e-safety newsletter. Please do have a look at some useful apps to support parents.

**Network hands**

Each class has a network of hands which identifies the people in school that each individual child feels they can talk to. This is displayed for pupils as a constant reminder of who can help them in school.

**Safeguarding Superhero**

We are in the process of designing our very own St Mary's safeguarding superhero. The idea behind this is that pupils can identify the qualities of what you need to do and know to keep safe.

**Growing Our Church School Distinctiveness**

**Working Towards Our Key Ideals**

**Uphold the Values of God:** When holding discussions with our pupils in both worship and assemblies, pupils have been demonstrating their ability to identify and refer to the importance of our school values. These are firmly rooted in our school life. During weekly golden table sittings, pupils are always keen to share the values that they have shown in school or at home. Our values education is having an impact on the positive choices that our pupils are making.

**Nurture Creativity and Encourage Curiosity:** Within our daily maths fluency sessions, instead of modelling one route to solving a problem or a simple question, pupils are being encouraged daily to be creative in finding different ways and to also explore new ways that others have shared. This is impacting on pupils' ability to find methods that work for them as an individual.

**Learning Together, Flourishing Together:**

**Assessment for Learning:** Our new assessment for learning policy has had a huge impact this term. Pupils can articulate the areas of strength against their learning intentions and the areas that they need to grow. Pupils have been positively responding to areas of growth in their polish pens and I have been delighted to hear that some pupils are even doing this with their parents at home! This has enabled pupils to verbally reflect on their learning with a member of staff, with a partner or small groups.

**Enriching our Music Curriculum:** We are delighted to announce that starting after half term we will have a peripatetic music teacher who will be in school every Friday morning who will deliver an exciting programme of music provision to each class across the school. They will use percussion to develop a range of musical terminology and skills from tempo to dynamics. Pupils will have an opportunity to develop singing confidence and rhythmic ability, developing their technique through a series of ensemble and solo performances, as well as gain an understanding of song structure and lyric writing. Children will be introduced to basic musical symbols as well as learning what importance they have within music; they will be taught different styles of world music and be encouraged to ask analytical questions; the children will be shown different musical instruments commonly used nationally and internationally. The programme is very exciting, and we cannot wait for our first sessions after half term.

**Supporting Parents to Support Reading at Home:** This week, teachers have been assessing pupils' reading of common exception words, fluency, phonemes and knowledge of suffixes. Teachers have been updating diaries with the next words for parents to focus on at home. Some of these are still being completed and will be sent to parents by the end of the first week after half term.

**Connecting Communities:** We are all set and ready to launch our **outdoor lunchtime enrichment** after half term. Each week, we will introduce one new activity to our pupils in an assembly and they will be trained to both play the game and use equipment safely and sensibly. Year 5 and 6 pupils from the Junior school will be leading these activities every lunchtime.

*Friendship  
Trust*

*Generosity  
Peace*

*Perseverance  
Thankfulness*

*Compassion*

*Forgiveness  
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**One Message:** We have been further developing our communication systems for parents and our PTA are also reviewing their systems for booking events to enable this process to be easier for the PTA and parents. Watch this space!

**Did you see your Head teacher and Hertfordshire improvement partner on Twitter?**

Herts for Learning @HertsLearning · 3h  
 Verity Edey, headteacher of St Mary's Infant School reported on her recent Ofsted inspection with advice about encouraging inspectors to see what your school has done really well and how empowering it can be for subject leaders to take on deep dives.

#edutwitter #Ofsted



**Stimulating Surroundings:** This half term we have been using the environment as the third teacher in the classroom. This idea is based on national research with positive outcomes for pupils' learning. One pupil during our school council meetings felt that he could now use the environment to help him to spell common exception words as these were visible and he knew where to find them. We have also been creating more interactive displays for pupils to engage with. We have seen the value in documenting child-initiated questions and adult directed questions which allow us to see the journey of learning that the class are taking.



**Where Next in Developing our Church School Distinctiveness?**

We will be considering as a school how we can develop our pupils to becoming courageous advocates who take action to support others.

We will be introducing our vision statement after half term to all stake holders and calling on all members of our community to help us to represent this through an exciting art project.

**Our value of the half term** has been 'perseverance.' This has raised the profile of the importance of 'If at first you don't succeed, try, try, try again!' Children have made their own links to perseverance when receiving green for growth in their work. Many of our pupils can verbalise that if they persevere in changing green to pink then they are making progress and developing their skills as a successful learner. Our value for next half term will be, 'forgiveness.'

**Enriching Experiences:** On Wednesday the 5th of February we were visited by a panto company, 'M and M Productions.' They performed Cinderella and the children thoroughly enjoyed the performance. It was wonderful to see them join in singing and clapping along and reciting times tables. In the classroom they were then able to discuss the performance and review it talking about their favourite parts. The Year 1 classes went on to do an active literacy activity based on the story. Thank you to the PTA for raising money to fund this.

**Pupil Voice:** This term we have developed exciting daily reading carousels. Children have enjoyed playing common word snap which has increased their fluency of word recognition. Pupils can enjoy texts by a range of selected authors, revise phonemes, take part in guided comprehension or a guided read with the class teacher. As a result of pupil feedback, we will be developing reading areas further to ensure that they are cosy for reading, but also in a calm and quiet area of the classroom. We will also be working with pupils to design different common word games other than snap. Please discuss this with your child at home. We would love to hear their ideas.

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**Parent Voice: 'Listening to Each other So That We Can all Flourish Together'**

<b>You Asked for ...</b>	<b>So we...</b>
A more regular newsletter	Produced a fortnightly Flyer
More reminders of events coming up	Placed an updated calendar onto the Friday Flyer
More effective methods of making payments online	Set up School Comms payment system
Information regarding church school distinctiveness	This is now part of every half termly newsletter
Supporting friendships at lunchtimes	Employed a sports play leader to model games and developed an enrichment programme for next half term.
Some staff at lunchtimes that are in school all day	Recruited some of our teaching assistants for lunchtime roles.
Earlier access onto the first playground	Opened the gates earlier
More information for parents on how to support their child with reading	Gave you reading strategies, reading targets and will be sharing tracking of common exception words.
Support in enunciating phonics sounds	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BqhXUW_v-1s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BqhXUW_v-1s</a>
Greater consistency between the Infants and the Juniors so that parents know procedures.	Started to link some of our policies e.g. attendance and assessment. We will be beginning an inter school development plan between the schools next half term.

**'Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds'**

**Family Winter Walk:** Thank you to everyone who took part in our Family Winter Walk (Family daily mile) at the end of January. It was lovely to see so many enthusiastic families joining in and enjoying themselves.

**Family Mile:** The next Family Mile will take place on Friday 28th February. We hope to welcome even more families. The one following this on Friday 27th March will be in aid of Sports Relief, watch this space, further details to follow.

**Play leaders:** We have been working very hard to offer the children more structured activities at lunchtimes and from the 2nd March Year 5 and 6 play leaders will support our children at lunchtimes to keep them physically active playing games or teaching them new skills.

**Basketball Club:** There are still some spaces left at basketball club which runs on a Wednesday after school. Please speak with the school office for further details.

**'Succession Planning and Growing Our Leadership Team'**

I am delighted to inform you that we have appointed Mrs Thorp as our new Deputy Head Teacher who will be joining our team from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020. Mrs Thorp is an exceptional leader and an outstanding teacher who has had a wealth of experience of leading across the primary phase. She has a track record of being instrumental in leading outstanding provision for vulnerable pupils and for coaching staff in order to lead curriculum areas to ensure the greatest impact for pupils. Mrs Thorp has already significantly reduced workload for our teachers and improved the effectiveness of our assessment systems. She will be working closely with our current Deputy Head in the summer term to ensure a smooth transition of roles. We are all looking forward to welcoming Mrs Thorp into our school community.

**PTA 'Connecting the Community to Raise Funds to Enrich our Provision'**

It has been yet another successful half term for our PTA who have continued to work together to put on exciting events for our children. It was great to see many of you at our Frozen event and I know that due to its success we hope to see another similar event soon.

Family Bingo - Thursday 27th Feb, hosted at Infant School in the Main Hall, straight after school. All St Mary's children and their families are welcome to take part, children from Infants must be accompanied by an adult. Infants Parents v Juniors Parents Sport Relief Football match on Sunday 15th March. Details of how to get involved will follow very soon but please put the date in your diaries.

We are incredibly proud at St Mary's that we have a strong, forward thinking, passionate and committed team of parents who are going above and beyond in order to support the school's key ideal of 'learning together and flourishing together.' The PTA are having a huge impact on our children's experiences for example the pantomime last week was funded by our PTA and was thoroughly enjoyed by all. Some of our children talk all day about having a hot chocolate after school. They are really making the difference. Please do get in touch with Mrs Rowe if you can offer any time or support in other ways to the PTA. All parents are part of the PTA and every offer of support helps and is really appreciated. Alternatively, if you are unable to help but you know someone in the community that could support us, please do all you can to get them in touch with us. Thank you.

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**'Remembering Those Who Made A Difference in Our Community' The Life and Times of Vivian Crellin – Reminiscences and Music** April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020. The Knights Templar School, doors open at 6.00pm for 7.00pm start. The Knights Templar School will be holding a memorial evening on April 1<sup>st</sup> to celebrate the life of Mr Vivian Crellin who passed away recently. Mr Crellin was the headteacher at The Knights Templar School between 1960 and 1984. He was also involved in a wide number of community groups, including the Baldock History Society and spent some time as a district councillor. The evening will celebrate all aspects of Mr Crellin's life in Baldock and is therefore open to anyone who wishes to come. Doors will open at 6.00pm where there will be time to share memories and see memorabilia. The memorial will start at 7.00pm and will be a mix of music, readings and memories. Mr Crellin's son will be present and will say a few words. If you would like to come, please email [froper@ktemplar.herts.sch.uk](mailto:froper@ktemplar.herts.sch.uk) so we can confirm numbers. Additionally, if you have any memories that you would like to share with us before the event, we would like to have these on display on the evening, so please send to the above email address. Mr T Litchfield, Headteacher, The Knights Templar School

Half- term attendance Spring 1						
Week ending	7.1.20	13.1.20	20.1.20	27.1.20	3.2.20	Average across the half term
Starlight	96%	93.8%	96.9%	94%	95.4%	95.2%
Sunshine	99.5%	95%	98%	92.8%	97.9%	96.6%
Venus	98.9%	98%	96.7%	98.7%	93.7%	97.2%
Mars	97.5%	95%	97.7%	89%	96.7%	95.2%
Saturn	90.6%	97%	98.9%	98.6%	97%	96.4%
Jupiter	98%	98.6%	94.8%	97%	99%	97.4%
Whole school	96.8%	96.4%	97%	95%	96.7%	Whole school average 96.3%

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<b>FEBRUARY/MARCH/APRIL DATES</b>		
<b>FEBRUARY</b>		
<b>Monday 17<sup>th</sup> February–Friday 21<sup>st</sup> February    Half Term Week</b>		
Monday 24 <sup>th</sup> February	School Nurses in for Reception Classes	
Tuesday 25 <sup>th</sup> February	School Nurses in for Reception Classes	
Thursday 27 <sup>th</sup> February	PTA Family Bingo Night venue- Infant School	Doors open 3:10pm
<b>MARCH / APRIL</b>		
Tuesday 3 <sup>rd</sup> March	Year 1 to visit St. Mary's Church	
Thursday 5 <sup>th</sup> March	World Book Day	
Monday 9 <sup>th</sup> March	Parents Evening (booking information to follow)	3:30 – 6:00 pm
Tuesday 10 <sup>th</sup> March	PTA Mother's Day Present Event	TBA
Wednesday 11 <sup>th</sup> March	Parents Evening (booking information to follow)	3:30 – 6:00 pm
Tuesday 23 <sup>rd</sup> March	PTA Easter Egg Hunt	
Monday 30 <sup>th</sup> March	Easter Service at Church all classes- parents welcome	9:30 – 11:00 am
Friday 3 <sup>rd</sup> April	End of Term – School finishes at 1:30 pm	
<b>Monday 6<sup>th</sup> April – Monday 20<sup>th</sup> April    Half Term</b>		

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