



St. Mary's Church of England VC Infant School

'Sharing, Caring, Learning and Loving with God'

Autumn Half Term Newsletter 24th October 2019

Head's Welcome

Welcome parents/carers to our first half termly newsletter. It has been a productive start to the term and our pupils have settled into their new classes and are now in full swing of learning.

Our Vision

Staff, parents, pupils and Governors have now all had their input into our shared vision. After half term the final version of this will be presented to all members of our school community including an explanation of how our vision links to our context.

'Safeguarding at the heart of all we do'

All staff have a weekly safeguarding update meeting whereby any new government initiatives are discussed, and current safeguarding issues are addressed. Safeguarding is the first discussion in all staff meetings and senior leadership meetings. This is also a standing item on all Governor committee meeting agendas. The Governors, some parents, some pupils and Miss Edey met with a safeguarding auditing team from county. This helped us to review, reflect on and develop our safeguarding practice. We would like to thank parents for supporting the immediate changes that we made and for the parents and pupils who were interviewed. This process has continued to keep safeguarding at the heart of all we do.

Please can parents ensure that they are not mounting pavements or grass when parking in our local area as this is causing a risk to the safety of our pupils.

'Growing Our Church School Distinctiveness'

Our value of the half term has been 'friendship.' This has raised the profile of the importance of establishing good relationships with peers. Pupils are now confident in explaining the qualities of a good friend. Thank you to parents for using our friendship resource provided by the Diocese of St Albans to further consolidate the importance of friendship at home. Our value for the next half term will be 'generosity.'

We have worked with two other church schools to establish positive networks to impact on effective leadership of our church school. From our first meeting we have now set up our own 'Christian Distinctiveness Working Party' whereby we are looking at how we can improve local and global links to aid understanding for our pupils of why communities need to connect and the benefits that this can have for both parties.

It was overwhelming to see that so many parents/carers came to support our Harvest Festival. Thank you for your donations and for celebrating with us.

'Showing Respect'

Remembrance Day poppies: Poppies will be available for the children in school after half-term. The Year 2 children will distribute them to classes for any child who wishes to donate for one.

Children will be holding a two minutes silence at 11am on Monday 11th November in assembly.

'Black History Month'

It is so important in our society that we educate our children in school and at home to respect the differences between people. 'Black History Month' was originally founded to recognise the contributions that people of African and Caribbean backgrounds have made to this country over many generations. Mrs Waldwyn led an assembly as part of black history month by talking about famous people in society such as Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandella and how they helped to make lives better for black people when they were not treated equally. We then went on to talk about other differences between people such as eye and hair colour and how regardless of colour, height or weight we should be respectful to all and always consider the feelings of others as a result of our actions.

'Diwali'

Thank you to Mrs Dhillon who came to talk to the reception children about Diwali and how her family celebrates it. She came dressed in her traditional dress, brought diva lamps for us to look at and even gave the children sweets to celebrate Diwali.

'Everyone a Leader'

We are committed to growing all our staff as leaders. All teaching assistants have been given an area to lead within the school in order to develop our provision. Miss Waldwyn and Mrs Thomas are planning a project to improve our lunchtime and playtime provision for our pupils so that there are more physical activities available and so that pupils can engage in more team games.

Two of our aspiring leaders are embarking on a National Professional Qualification for Middle Leadership starting in January. Some of our support staff have been empowered to enrol on courses at college in their own time to develop their maths and literacy skills.

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'Learning Together, Growing Together'

Across the school we have been working together to adapt our provision so that learning is more active. This is having an impact on engagement within lessons. Our Reception pupils are now actively learning on entrance to the classroom in the morning through busy fingers which is supporting their fine motor development. Thank you to parents for supporting this change in routine.

We have been sharing our expertise with two student teachers in training from the University of Bedfordshire. They are in their final year and have been learning and growing within our team.

As reported in the 'Head's Update' we have been reviewing our curriculum intent to ensure there is a clear progression of skills across the whole school for each subject. Our subject leaders have had training to develop and sustain effective subject leadership skills.

'Stimulating Surroundings'

We have been reflecting on our school environment and staff have trialled and implemented greater use of working walls to document the learning journey in discrete subjects and for topic work. We are finding that this is having an impact on our pupils remembering their learning.

One of our volunteers has been gardening and improved the courtyard area outside the staff room.

'Connecting Communities'

Communicating effectively is important to us. Thank you for completing our communication and engagement questionnaire. We are in the process of analysing the results of these and will communicate the findings and solutions after half term.

I can confirm the process for communicating concerns. In the first instance please speak with your class teacher. If you feel your concern has not been resolved, please speak with your child's Key Stage Leader. The Key Stage Leader for the Early Years is Mrs Waldwyn and the Key Stage 1 leader is Mrs Harrison. If after speaking with the Key Stage Leader your concern has still not been resolved, then please make an appointment with Miss Edey. To make an appointment with Miss Edey or a Key Stage Leader, please contact the school office.

We are working with St Mary's Junior School, our PTA, the local fire and police service to host a fireworks display. We are very excited to be working together to provide this for our local community on 9th November.

'Together we can change young lives' Children in Need

15th November is 'Children in Need' day. The children can come to school dressed in spots or non-uniform and pay £1. All money collected will go to Children in Need.

'Supporting Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning'

Mrs Jablonski and Mrs Evans have welcomed children back to the weekly SEAL Club on Wednesday lunchtimes. Children from all the KS1 classes meet to socialise and play board games. They learn to share, take turns and play co-operatively with children from different classes. Sessions end with a quiet, mindful refectation time with an opportunity to relax to music before the start of afternoon lessons.

'Keeping Safe'

Mrs Green will be delivering an assembly on E-safety after half term. She will be ensuring that pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe online with clear procedures for what to do if they don't feel safe.

All of our pupils took part in a 'who can we talk to?' session whereby they identified school staff that they felt comfortable talking to if they had a worry. Each class has represented this visually and this is accessible as a constant reminder to all pupils.

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'Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds'

Mrs Thomas delivered an assembly to the school to promote the importance of physical activity both in school and at home, activities they could take part in and to reintroduce the 'Healthy Selfie' board. The staff have also been sharing their physical activity with the children. Miss Edey led a whole school Zumba session to give pupils exposure to this type of dance and to promote enjoyment of physical activity.

The whole school took part in a Diwali dance workshop to raise awareness of different cultures and celebrations and of course to keep fit and active. Mrs Thomas will be analysing the questionnaires that she sent out this week and will be considering new clubs and ideas for physical activity in school.

Reception class had a visit from a hygienist who talked about the importance of looking after our teeth. All the children were given a bag of goodies to help them. Thank you very much to Mrs Smith for taking the time to help us learn about people who help us.

'Caring for our Planet' Gardening club have been busy planting daffodil bulbs for spring and finishing them with pansies for colour. Each class has its own container. They have also been making bird feeders to place around the calm garden, bug hotels to provide a habitat for our local bug residents and they have even planted seeds for an early display of flowers next year.

'Enriching Experiences'

Year 2 visited St Mary's Church on 30th September to investigate the different signs and symbols inside and outside the church and their meaning. They also named and described the different parts of the building. All classes will be visiting the church to support their learning in RE this academic year.

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

Our PTA do an incredible job to raise funds to enrich the education of our pupils. All parents are part of our PTA, please do help in any way you can.

- Christmas Jumper Jumble - The date is now set for Monday 25th November from 2.30pm. Please come and bag a bargain on the day (and maybe have a sort through for donations lurking in a forgotten cupboard in the meantime..?)
- Family Daily Mile - Thursday 28th Nov - Come and support your children with their daily mile activity and support the school by purchasing a delicious healthy treat or drink.
- Home Clothes Day / Chocolate and Sweets Donation Day - Friday 6th December. Please bring a bar of chocolate or bag of sweets (any size) in exchange for wearing home clothes to school that day. The donations will be used to stock hoopla and the tombola at the Christmas discos, so please give generously!
- Christmas Disco - Infant Disco is Wednesday 11th December, 4.30-6.30pm. Junior Disco is on Thursday 12th December (Y3/4 4.30-6pm and Y5/^ 6.30-8pm). Please help your PTA deliver lots of stalls and treats at the event. There are free tickets available for helpers and their child. Please get in touch with Emma Rowe to book or see her in the playground! pta@stmarysinfants.herts.sch.uk

Please come and join us on Thursday 14th November at 7.00pm or Thursday 5th December 7.00pm at the Orange Tree to get involved.

Autumn 1st Half Term Attendance Figures

Whole school up to 21.10.19 – 97%

Week ending	6.9.19	13.9.19	20.9.19	27.9.19	30.9.19	7.10.19	14.10.19
Starlight	Staggered start	95.8	98.1	92.2	95.5	97	93.7
Sunshine		99.2	95.6	100	97.6	95	98.4
Venus	94.8	99	97.2	97.9	98.6	99	94.5
Mars	98.8	96.7	96	94	97	96.7	97.7
Saturn	96.6	100	98.6	94.5	99	97	98.6
Jupiter	93.8	96	95.5	99	98.6	97	96.2
Whole school	96.2	97.8	96.9	96.2	97.8	97	96.5

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November Dates		
Date	Event	Time
Saturday 9 th November	Community Fireworks on the school field	Gates open 5:00pm Fireworks start at 6:30pm
Tuesday 12 th November	Pupil photographs	
Thursday 14 th November	New parent tours	11:00am
Thursday 14 th November	Reception visit to the library	
Friday 15 th November	Children in Need. Wear spots or non-uniform £1	
Sunday 17 th November	Christian Choir singing in St Mary's Church	9.30am
Monday 18 th November	Big Write	All day
Thursday 21 st November	Victorian Wow day Year 1 Year 1 pupils come to school dressed in Victorian costume	All day
Friday 22 nd November	New parent tour	11:00am
Monday 25 th November	Christmas jumper jumble	2.30pm
Wednesday 27 th November	Reception parent stay and play	8.50 – 9.15am
Wednesday 27 th November	Reception parents viewing of learning journals	2:45pm
Thursday 28 th November	Family daily mile	3.10pm
Friday 29 th November	Occasional day School closed	
December Dates		
Thursday 5 th December	Advent service in church Parents welcome	9:45am
Thursday 5 th December	Flu vaccinations	
Friday 6 th December	Own clothes day in exchange for sweets or chocolate	
Saturday 7 th December	Christmas Tree Festival at St Mary's Church	10am – 6pm
Sunday 8 th December	Christmas Tree Festival at St Mary's Church	2.00- 5.00pm
Tuesday 10 th December	Reception Christmas concert	2:15pm
Wednesday 11 th December	Secret Santa £3 per gift	
Wednesday 11 th December	Christmas disco	4.30 - 6.30pm
Wednesday 11 th December	Christmas dinner and Christmas jumper day.	All day
Sunday 15 th December	Christian Choir and others involved in St Mary's church nativity service	9.30am
Tuesday 17 th December	Key Stage 1 Nativity at St Mary's Church Key Stage 1 parents welcome	10:00am
Thursday 19 th December	Christmas party in class	2.00pm
Friday 20 th December	School finishes at 1.30pm	1.30pm

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