



# St. Mary's Church of England VC Infant School

*'Sharing, Caring, Learning and Loving with God'*

**Autumn Half Term Newsletter** Friday 20<sup>th</sup> December 2019

### *Head's Christmas Message*

Dear Parents and Carers,

On behalf of all the Governors, staff and pupils we hope that you all have a wonderful, relaxing Christmas filled with peace and joy. This time of the year is one of great excitement for pupils and they have enjoyed performing carols, being part of the Nativity and joining in with many of the festivities that the school has to offer. I am sure that they will continue to sing many a song to you over the festive season!

### *'Safeguarding at the heart of all we do'*

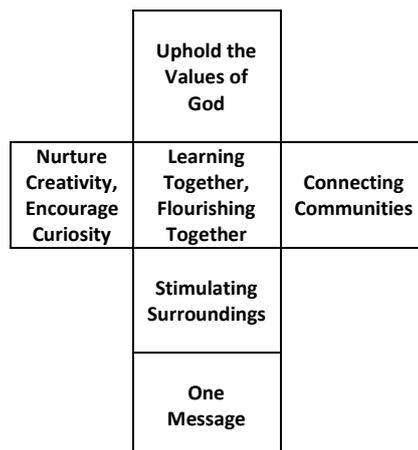
**Ofsted found our new safeguarding measures 'effective.' Here is a celebration of this from Ofsted.**

"Staff are very caring about pupils and keep them safe. Adults are aware of when and how to raise concerns about a pupil's welfare. Leaders make sure that all staff receive regular safeguarding training. Leaders record any concerns about a pupil's well-being and work with other organisations appropriately. Governors conduct regular safeguarding reviews to make sure that pupils are safe. The school's records of the checks they make on adults working in the school meet requirements. Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe in school. All parents responding to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, agree that their children are safe at school."

### *'Growing Our Church School Distinctiveness'*

#### *A Journey to Creating our Vision – Key Ideals*

We are delighted to share with you the six key ideals that all stakeholders have now agreed will underpin our vision. When making decisions for our pupils we will ensure that these decisions encompass these ideals in order for our school community to flourish.



***Our Vision will be rooted in the Bible story of Jonah.*** The story of Jonah is about God's love for the whole world rather than just the people we like or who are the same as us. It encourages acceptance, allows second chances and calls us to tolerance of people who might be very different from us even though they look the same. In a school which has a low proportion of other faiths and a high white British percentage of children it is vital for us to address questions of diversity and tolerance. The story of Jonah demands that we do just that.

***Where Next?*** Now that we have our agreed key ideals and a link to a Bible story that represents our school's context, the Christian Distinctiveness Working party will now meet next term to compose a clear and concise vision statement that will be prominent on documentation and around school. This will also be linked to the visions of the Diocese of St Albans and the Church of England's vision for education. During this process we have been networking with two other outstanding church schools to share best practise. This is a process which time is important to be invested in as it will set our school's direction for the future.

We look forward to sharing the vision statement and an in depth explanation of the story of Jonah and its link to St Mary's in the New Year.

***Our Value of the Half Term*** has been 'generosity.' This has raised the profile of the importance of not just being generous with giving items of value to those in need but also to ensure that we are generous with sharing our values. One child linked the idea of generosity to the Christmas story. "The three wise men were generous because they gave gifts to Jesus." Another child linked generosity to when people offer friendship or love. Our value for next half term will be perseverance.

*Friendship*      *Generosity*      *Perseverance*      *Forgiveness*      *Respect*      *Courage*  
*Trust*      *Peace*      *Thankfulness*      *Compassion*      *Humility*      *Responsibility*



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### ***'Learning Together, Growing Together'***

Next half term, teachers will be communicating the following information in reading diaries so that parents/carers can further support their child's fluency of reading. These will include:

- The next common exception words for children to learn
- The next common suffixes for children to learn
- The next phonemes for children to read

We will also be setting up 1 minute reading challenges in class where progression in reading fluency will be measured. This will be shared with parents each half term so that you can see their progress in reading fluency. Please continue to use the reading strategy leaflet which you were provided with at parents evening to develop your child's repertoire of strategies.

### ***'Stimulating Surroundings'***

As a staff we have been researching what makes an effective learning environment and the impact it can have on pupils. At the start of term we created working walls for literacy and maths as well as some of our topic work. This has enabled pupils to remember their learning so that they can build onto it the next day. During the course of the year we will be focussing on developing more natural, calm looking classroom environments. We are so very fortunate to have an inspirational outdoor area for learning and we want to almost bring our outdoor environment inside! Watch this space! If you have any unwanted bamboo sticks, trellising or hessian that you would be kind enough to donate please can you send it into the school office.

### ***'Connecting Communities'***

Parents asked for a more regular newsletter and we responded to this by producing a fortnightly flyer. We have also created a table of dates which we clearly identify any changes or additions. This will continue.

Miss Edey will be working with a board of local businesses in Hertfordshire to develop a network of support from professionals outside of the education sector which will provide further ideas for growing our school.

In January Miss Edey will be presenting to 90 Hertfordshire Improvement Partners in order to share experience of Ofsted under the new inspection framework. This will be an opportunity for St Mary's to support other Headteachers and improvement partners in preparing for their inspections and will provide future links for our community.

Please can we remind parents of the process for communicating concerns as this has changed since the beginning of the year. In the first instance please speak with your class teacher. If you feel your concern has not been resolved, please speak with the Deputy Head. If after speaking with the Deputy Head your concern has still not been resolved, then please make an appointment with Miss Edey. To make an appointment with Miss Edey or our Deputy Head, please contact the school office.

Both Miss Britton from the juniors and Miss Edey have been working together to review some of our school policies so that they are the same. This will ensure that on transition to Year 3 our pupils are already equipped with some of the procedures. For example in January we will be changing our assessment for learning policy so that it is the same as the Juniors and so that we are having a greater impact at the point of learning within the lesson. This will be introduced with pupils in the New Year. It will involve a **tickled pink** for areas in their work that meet the learning intention, **green for growth** for areas that need growing and **purple polishing** for editing and improving work after adult feedback.

We still have a few spaces for parents to read with a small group of children in Reception during next half term on Friday afternoons. If you are a current volunteer, we need you!

### ***Retirement***

Mrs Waldwyn will be retiring at the end of the academic year in July 2020. We thank her for providing a long standing service to the school since 2001. When the time comes, she will be greatly missed by staff and the families in our community. We look forward to hearing Mrs Waldwyn's plans for retirement and know that she will really enjoy her last two terms teaching pupils in class. As this is a senior role and we must recruit well in advance, we will be advertising for a Deputy Head over the Christmas break.

### ***Growing Our Team***

We are delighted to announce that we have recruited Mrs Warne-Holland as our part time Business Manager. She will be joining us in January and she will be leading the office management and premises. This will strengthen our non-curriculum based areas in the school. She comes with a wealth of experience and we know that she will be an asset to our team.

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Mrs Berry will be teaching Year 2, Saturn class and she has already enjoyed meeting pupils and parents. She has many talents that she will be able to share with our team in January.

### ***'Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds'***

This half term all the classes took part in weekly gymnastics lessons. It was great to hear how well the children progressed and developed through the half term. Next half term we will all be engaging in dance. The theme for the dance will be linked to the topic relevant for each year group.

Due to the feedback we received from parents about clubs we will be offering the following clubs next term:

Monday: Dance (all year groups)

Tuesday: Athletics (Year 1 and 2)

Wednesday: Basketball (All years)

Thursday: Football (All years)

Please sign up as soon as possible to secure a space.



### ***'Caring for our Planet' Christmas Tree Festival***

This year we made two trees for the St Mary's Christmas Tree Festival; one was made by the children of key stage 1 and one by our Reception children. We decided to make a 'Save the Planet' tree. We have been learning about the impact that plastic pollution is having on our wonderful world, especially in our oceans. We made lots of decorations using recycled materials such as plastic bottles, bottle lids, tin cans and jar lids. We wanted to do our bit for the planet and had lots of fun doing so!

### ***'Enriching Experiences'***

In year 1 we held a Victorian wow day which the children really enjoyed. We experienced what a Victorian classroom was like. We also made a toy which children would have played with in the past and Mrs Lewis came in to speak to the children about what school was like when she was a child. We learnt some traditional songs and made observational drawings. Thank you to the year 1 parents for helping the children to dress up.



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

Our PTA have continued to do an incredible job to raise funds to enrich the education of our pupils. The PTA have worked tirelessly this term, demonstrating amazing teamwork and creativity with our pupils at heart. The fireworks were incredible and the disco was a huge success. It was great to see that so many families supported this and had a really great time. Our pupils are really lucky to have exciting events organised for them by our PTA volunteers. This term the PTA have funded a collection of iPads to support and enrich our curriculum. Please 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.

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Autumn 2 <sup>nd</sup> Half Term Attendance Figures							
Week ending	8.11.19	15.11.19	22.11.19	29.11.19	6.12.19	13.12.19	Whole term
Starlight	92.6	95.9	94	92	95.8	98	95
Sunshine	97	97.6	96.7	95	98	92.7	97
Venus	96.4	97.9	98.6	98.7	97.9	96	97
Mars	93.7	96.7	96	92.9	96	99.7	96
Saturn	99	96.9	97	91	97.9	96	97
Jupiter	93	96.6	97.9	92.7	97	97.6	96
Whole school	95.3	96.9	96.8	93.9	97	96.8	96.6

DECEMBER / JANUARY DATES		
Friday 20 <sup>th</sup> December	School finishes at 1.30pm	1.30pm
JANUARY		
Monday 6 <sup>th</sup> January 2020	INSET DAY – Staff only	
Tuesday 7 <sup>th</sup> January 2020	School starts for Children at 8:50am	8:50am
Thursday 16 <sup>th</sup> January 2020	Themed Menu – Posh Dog Day	
To Be Arranged	Themed Menu – Chinese New Year 2020	
Wednesday 29 <sup>th</sup> January 2020	Frozen Event	TBA
Friday 31 <sup>st</sup> January 2020	Family Daily Mile	3:15pm
FEBRUARY		
Tuesday 11 <sup>th</sup> February	Stay and Play- Reception Classes	8:50–9:10am
Friday 14 <sup>th</sup> February	Look at Learning Journals – Reception Classes	2:45pm
Monday 17 <sup>th</sup> February–Friday 21 <sup>st</sup> February - Half Term Week -		

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