



St. Mary's Church of England VC Infant School

'Sharing, Caring, Learning and Loving with God'

Summer Term Newsletter Wednesday 21st July 2021

Head's Message

Dear Parents and Carers,

What an extraordinary year it has been! Together we have navigated our way through a national pandemic, defeated many a challenge along the way and reached the end of this academic year. I would like to communicate my heartfelt thanks to all members of our St Mary's family for persevering and being a united team. Together we have achieved great things.

Safeguarding: Attached is the latest online safety newsletter from Herts for Learning which contains some interesting reading around keeping young children safe when they are online and whilst using Xboxes and Play stations.

Health and Safety: Please see the letter that was sent to parents on 16th July 'Changes to contact tracing in education and childcare settings' as this letter details everything that parents/carers need to know from 19th July.

Whilst we understand that school life will look a lot more like 'pre-covid' from September, anything could happen in the meantime. Therefore, a letter will be sent to parents at the very end of August outlining anything that you need to know. What we would like to share in advance is opening and closing times for covid or non-covid times. I do appreciate that this is important for parents to know now to support with working commitments.

If we are out of covid measures:

Gates open: 8.45am

Classroom doors open: 8.50am

Registers taken: 8.55am (A bell will be rung at this time and the gates will be closed)

(If your child has a sibling at the Juniors, then please drop off at the Juniors first)

If covid measures are required, then we will continue with our staggered times:

Year 2: 8.45 - 3.00pm

Year 1: 8.55 - 3.10pm

Reception: 9.05 - 3.20pm

Growing Our Church School Distinctiveness: Working Towards Our Key Ideals

Uphold the Values of God: This year we have modelled and demonstrated our knowledge and importance of the following values: respect, thankfulness, courage, compassion, responsibility and humility. Please continue to ask your child to model these through the summer holidays and discuss their importance.

Nurture Creativity and Encourage Curiosity: In the early years we have been busy harvesting the vegetables we have grown. The children have really enjoyed planting, watering and observing the various plants growing in our early years setting. We have grown potatoes, broad beans, carrots, radish, garlic, onions, leeks, tomatoes, various herbs and strawberries. The children enjoyed tasting the home grown produce, although some of them found the radish a little on the hot side for their taste! They have all been willing to give them a try and some have been surprised by how much they enjoyed them.



Learning Together, Flourishing Together: We have been inspired, in the Early years, by the sporting events taking place such as Wimbledon and the Euros 2020. Many children have been keen to play tennis and football as a result, whilst others have developed their co-ordination and balance by riding bikes and scooters. Sport is a great way to, not only get fit, but learn how to show each other respect, communicate, work as a team and problem solve.



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Supporting Parents to Support Learning at Home: We had a very successful transition meeting, via Teams on Thursday 8th July, to welcome the new families that will join us in September. Unfortunately, due to Covid restrictions we have not been able to welcome the children and their families in person, but we have worked very hard to ensure they have received all the information they need to support a smooth transition into our early years setting.

Connecting Communities: The Reception team have worked with the St. Andrew's, St. Paul's Walden and Weston Way Early Years settings to support the development of their outdoor learning environments. Seeing our environment and our pupils in action was a very positive experience for us all, particularly as it really exhibited the range of experiences available for our pupils and the 'Planning in the Moment' approach that the children have thrived under this year. Our Early years team are also engaging in a tri-partnership across schools to enhance the development of speech and language of our youngest pupils. Miss Edey received a very exciting invitation from the Ambassador of the Czech Republic and will be a guest at Kensington Palace next week, honouring the works of Franta Belsky, the Czech artist who commissioned a sculpture to St Mary's in 1951. Miss Edey is very excited to be attending this garden party and will share some photos in the new academic year. Miss Basra is in the process of creating an art project for the Autumn term to link with a Czech school. Watch this space!

Maths Hub: Over the course of this year, we have been working with the NCETM on a Maths Mastery Readiness programme. We have had five collaborative sessions working with other schools across Hertfordshire and five 1 to 1 sessions with our Maths mastery specialist, which were personalised to the needs of our school. Across the school all teachers have implemented a mastery approach to teaching mathematics and have benefited from the CPD offered by the programme. Next year we will enter the 'developing' stage of the programme and will further implement mastery strategies within our teaching. We are looking forward to being able to visit other schools and collaborate in person with other schools in our area.

Church School Distinctiveness: We had a church school 'health check' this term with the Diocese, who were delighted to see our new vision in action and were particularly impressed with how pupils modelled and demonstrated their values and learning behaviours. We are setting up a new 'church school distinctiveness' working party in the new academic year, and we will share with you our actions and plans from these meetings. We are also excited to announce that the Bishop of Hertford is in the process of organising a visit with us to formally open and bless our new spiritual garden which the children have designed.

Parents, Carers and Wider Families Working in Partnership: Pastoral Care: Transitioning into new schools and classes can be an anxious time for children and Mrs Archer has been working alongside teachers, TA's and the staff at the Junior school to ensure a smooth transition for the children. Mrs Archer has continued working with children 1:1 and in groups sessions. As well as supporting the children, Mrs Archer is here to provide support for the whole family and can be contacted at the school to discuss any concerns and provide further support.

Summer activities: CBBC's Newsround website has some great ideas for some summer activities

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/48840232>

The Covid-19 pandemic has caused lots of uncertainty for many families, if you need to visit a foodbank here are a few options;
Letchworth, Hitchin and Baldock Foodbank Food parcels for those in need. Mrs Howard Memorial Hall, Letchworth. Tue & Fri 10-2pm, Our Lady's Scout Hall, Hitchin. Tue & Fri 10-2pm, St Mary's Church Hall, Baldock. Tue & Fri 10-2pm. **Email:**



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info@lethworth.foodbank.org.uk Tel: 07825 300 437

Best Before Café Letchworth Surplus or unsold supermarket food is donated to the café & can be collected by residents for a small donation. They often leave food outside The Dell, in Baldock. If you sign up to their Facebook page they let people know on there where and when food is being left. The Garden Square Shopping Centre Tues 12.30 - 2.30pm & 5 - 6pm, Wed 12.30 - 2.30pm, Fri 12.30 - 2.30pm. Email: bestbeforecafe@gmail.com Tel: 07904 108024

Letchworth Salvation Army Providing food to local residents. Norton Way North. Tues and Thurs 9.30 - 11.30am. Email: Letchworth@salvationarmy.org.uk Tel: 01462 677263

Too Good To Go App - lets you rescue a Magic Bag of food so it gets eaten instead of wasted. You won't know exactly what's in your order until you pick it up - it's all part of the surprise. https://toogoodtogo.co.uk/en-gb?utm_medium=Search&utm_source=Google&utm_campaign=UK_B2C_Paid_Marketing_Search_Google_Brand&gclid=EAlaIQobChMliO3Rkt3k8QIVG-rtCh3u4gl0EAAYASAAEgloJfD_BwE

Forest Schools



This term, Mrs Archer has been developing the Forest School area so that next year all classes will be able to have access to it for their outdoor learning. There will be opportunities for exploration, creativity, teamwork activities, learning new skills and much more!

Thank you for your generous donations towards this exciting project for all of our pupils to enjoy.

Activity for the summer:

Build a bug hotel - Encourage [insects](#) to your garden or at your local woods by building them their very own residence using sticks, planks of wood or old pallets or crates piled up with bricks between the layers.

Your child can fill the gaps between the layers with things to make their visitors at home, such as cardboard tubes, shredded paper, feathers and pebbles, and keep checking every day to see who has moved in.

Pupil Voice

Worship Acolytes: Feedback to our acolytes this term, was that they loved the singing part of worship and pupils wanted to do even more singing. Therefore, Miss Collins met with all pupils to ask them what they loved most about their school. **"We love that everyone shares and cares."** **"I like that I am part of a big team."** Their voice was then transformed into the lyrics to their very own school song, composed by Miss Edey and Miss Collins. Over the holidays, Miss Edey is getting the song professionally recorded and this will be something exciting that the children can look forward to learning in September. In addition, the acolytes gained ideas from peers for a school prayer which we will continue to work on in the next academic year. Well done everyone!

Eco Warriors: This term, our Eco-Warriors have been very active in their own classes thinking about how we might work towards some of their planned actions. For example, two of our Reception Eco-Warriors wrote a wonderful, thoughtful letter to Miss Edey, asking for her permission to complete a litter pick in our local area. When presenting her with the letter, they responded to any questions very maturely, thinking carefully about why litter picking is something that we, as responsible humans can and should do - "to help protect the animals, otherwise, they might die". They had also thought about the resources that they might need to carry out this eco-positive task and put forward a very convincing plan which could be utilised and replicated by all our Eco-Warriors to come, truly reflecting our school values and leading the way as role models for our whole school community. Our Chair of Governors also visited the children to commend them for making a difference. Well done to all our Eco-Warriors for everything that you have achieved this academic year!

Our House Captains: This term our house captains have been very busy totalling the house points earned by members of their house. All the children in the school have worked hard to display positive learning behaviours and earn house points. This term the winning house is Rowan with 229 points. Their motto for this half term has been: "You are braver than you believe, stronger than you seem, smarter than you think." In addition, we have had our sports day activities within our own bubbles. Each child competing for their house team to decide which house earns the sports cups. This year our winning team was Horse Chestnut



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Pupil Parliament: It is the end of another term and the end of the year. The pupil parliament members in each year group have worked hard thinking about what they would like to happen across the school and the changes we could make. They have challenged themselves to think about how their ideas and the ideas of their peers can be used to the school a more enjoyable environment. Some of these ideas will now be taken forward to the autumn term and passed on to those new pupil parliament members. We will say a goodbye to our Year 2 members and wish them well and hope they continue their interests in the junior school.

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

You Asked for ...	So we...
We haven't had any requests this term to respond to. Please do communicate with us if you have any future ideas.	

'Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds'

This half term all the children have taken part in an Olympic dance workshop. Each year group learnt a dance that represented a different country that participates in the Olympics. Reception learnt a Chinese inspired dance, year 1 Greek and year 2 African. The children were thoroughly engaged, and the teachers made a good effort to join in, even when the moves were a little challenging! The dance instructor also shared information about the Olympics and the countries the dances were inspired by.



Growing Our Staffing Team

Miss Corcoran has been welcomed onto our team and has already met with pupils and staff.

We have been very blessed to work with Miss Collins from Enigma Music Services this year. She has transformed music in our school and there has been nothing more heart-warming this year than listening to our pupils sing after so long of not being able to. Whilst Miss Collins won't be delivering our music lessons next year, she will still be working with us on some exciting music projects. Not only has Miss Collins had a tremendous impact on our pupils, but she has also led our staff choir, created professional recordings and spread joy among our team. One of our staff choir songs will be revealed in our 'celebration of successes' assembly on the last day of term. Keep your ears open!

Ms Gwinnett, from the Hertfordshire Music Service who already knows our children and delivers our wider opportunities provision, will now be taking on the delivery of the music curriculum in addition. Miss Edey will be leading singing worship, staff choir and may even be able to extend this to parents once we are back to 'normal life.' (Watch this space parents/carers)

Miss Smith will return as Mrs Ewer and we wish her all the best on her wedding day and can't wait to hear all about it.

Ms Gamble's contract with us has come to an end. Ms Gamble has been a true asset to our team and she has had a significantly positive impact on the pupils in her care. We hope to work with Ms Gamble again in the future.



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

Fundraising: Thank you to everyone who has supported this PTA through what has been a challenging time for all of us! We have been delighted to fund events for the children such as the Reindeer Day back in December and Birds of Prey in May, as well as distributing £2000 cash to our schools to spend on equipment for our children. Despite the challenges Covid presented, we showed our can-do spirit and successfully moved events online such as the gin tasting and virtual bingo; so even when we couldn't do fundraising in person, we were still able to support our children's St Mary's experience.

We have lots of exciting plans for next year - Virtual Bingo, Competitions, Discos and FIREWORKS! A full run down of details will be sent through in September - but it will be busy! We do need more help to deliver our events - please message pta@stmarysinfants.herts.sch.uk if you can help in any way at all.

Dates for the diary:

Virtual Bingo Evening - play at home with all the family: 6-8pm Friday 21st September

Fireworks: Sunday 7th November

Summer Fete: Friday 1st July from 3pm

and much more...!

In the meantime, have a wonderful summer and we will meet again in September!

Emma Rowe, Chair - St Mary's Schools PTA

Final Thought

We wish our Year 2 pupils the best of luck as they spread their wings and fly to Year 3. You have each been a blessing to our school and we hope that you continue to flourish as you continue your journey through the Juniors. Keep reaching for your goals and remember that it is not what something is, but what it can become!

We look forward to welcoming our new pupils and parents into our St Mary's family in September.

Attendance (%) Summer								
Week ending	11.6.21	18.6.21	25.6.21	2.7.21	9.7.21	16.7.21	21.7.21	Average across the weeks
Starlight	96.2%	93.5%	90.0%	90.2%	86.7%	Bubble Closed	61%	89.0%
Sunshine	97.7%	91.9%	96.3%	98.1%	96.7%	Bubble Closed	62.5%	93.8%
Venus	97.6%	93.8%	88.6%	98.2%	94.2%	Bubble Closed	69.0%	92.5%
Mars	97.9%	92.1%	95.7%	90.1%	94.7%	95.4%	75.6%	92.5%
Saturn	100%	97.2%	93.9%	87.5%	88.0%	94.7%	70.7%	94.2%
Jupiter	100%	95.7%	86.8%	83.9%	87.1%	96.7%	76.2%	91.4%
Whole school	98.3%	94.2%	91.7%	90.9%	90.8%	95.6%	70.5%	92.2%

Whilst we have been operating under Covid restrictions, we have taken a pastorally lead approach to levels of attendance that have fallen below that expected. We would like to remind parents that we are now running our attendance policy as per pre-covid. Once a child has 15 unauthorised sessions within the current and/or previous term, a Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued. We will be working with and supporting families in September to ensure pupils are in full attendance and have access to a full education.

Wednesday 21st July

End of Term – School Finishes

Yr2 – 12.40pm

Yr1 - 12.50pm

Reception 1pm

Thursday 22nd July

SUMMER BREAK BEGINS

Wednesday 1st September

INSET Day

Thursday 2nd September

Return to School

Gates open 8.45am

Doors open 8.50am