



Our school is a friendly and vibrant community, where all of God's children flourish and gain the knowledge, wisdom and skills needed to care about themselves, their community and their world.

Friday 26th January 2024

Headteacher's Update

Dear Parents and Carers,

Having longer and warmer January days has really helped the children and we have had a very settled week at school. The children's heads are down and there has been some fantastic learning going on in every Year Group. Year 3 have taken soil samples in order to investigate what they contain and Years R, 1, 2 & 3 have been busy making bird feeders in preparation for the Big School Bird Watch. They stuck seeds into a fresh apple which they hung from a tree and then threaded Cheerios onto string. This led to a joke from one of the children, who asked: "what do you give a sad bird for breakfast?" You've guessed it "Cheerios!"

I popped into the Nursery on Wednesday morning and loved being with the children. Thanks to the brilliant teaching they receive, they have developed so much since they started and are doing so well with their counting and phonic sounds. I was especially both impressed and a little surprised when they were given the choice between play and learning - and they chose learning! We as a staff must be doing something right!

On Tuesday evening, the Governors had their annual AGM meeting and it was so wonderful to have such an accomplished collection of people gathered around the table in the Green Room. We must never forget that these faithful and committed people are volunteers and give up their precious free time to support improvement initiatives across the school in order to give our children the best possible start in life. I am so grateful to each and every one of them. You'll be pleased to hear that one of our much-loved former Head Teachers, Mr John Bird, was present and we're hoping to see a little more of him in the coming days. He still feels passionately about St Mary's and was so impressed by the talk Miss Hutchings gave, along with the work she and Miss Hinkley have done on History within the school.

Speaking of History, Rebecca Rideal, an acclaimed historian who tutors at Oxford University's Summer School for Adults, listened to some of our Year 5s' fantastic Podcasts on the Shang Dynasty and gave some really encouraging feedback. She said they were full of fascinating information, told in an upbeat and engaging way and was pleased to hear that Rick Astley is now a historian too! (Ask the children to explain!) Thank you to all the staff who made this learning so exciting and purposeful.

And finally, I finish with some rather wonderful facts that the Year 4s have shared with me about Beavers. Did you know that Beavers' teeth are orange and they don't stop growing, that their bottoms smell of vanilla and they are coprophagous animals, which means they eat their own green poop and extract its nutrients and minerals. Now I wonder why the children remembered those particular facts?

Have a wonderful weekend and enjoy the sunshine.

Amanda



Prayer of the Week

Dear God,

Thank you for all your help and for my new bed.

Thank you for my teachers and all the gems I get when I'm good. Thank you for my Mummy.

Please take away all the bad things in this world.

Amen

Ralphy, Myha and Caroline

Polite Request

Please can we ask you to be mindful and respectful of neighbours' drives when parking on the roads surrounding the school. Cars are parking in front of neighbours' drives, making the neighbours late for work or appointments.

Please do not drive onto the school site to collect your children from after school clubs. Please park in the surrounding roads and walk to the school. When driving onto the school site where other parents and children are waiting, this can become a health and safety issue. Thank you.



PTFA Logo Competition

Winner of the PTA Logo Competition will be announced in the last week of this term. Thank you for all of the amazing entries.

School Term Dates 2023/2024

Term 3

Start of Term 3	Tuesday 2 nd January
End of Term 3	Thursday 8 th February
Staff Development Day	Friday 9 th February

Term 4

Start of Term 4	Monday 19 th February
End of Term 4	Wednesday 27 th March
Staff Development Day	Thursday 28 th March

Term 5

Start of Term 5	Monday 8 th April
End of Term 5	Friday 24 th May

Term 6

Start of Term 6	Monday 10 th June
End of Term 6	Friday 19 th July
Staff Development Day	Monday 22 nd July
Staff Development Day	Tuesday 23 rd July

Reading Volunteers

We are looking for Parents/Carers to come in to school to support the children in developing their reading skills.

Listening to a child read is important for many reasons and plays a crucial role in their overall literacy development.

If you have some time to spare and would like to help, please contact the class teacher or speak to Mrs. Harrison.

Thank you.

