



Believe Enjoy Strive Succeed

Principal Comments

I'm not sure what happened to the Super Moon but we have had a wonderful few weeks here at St. Mary's. On Wednesday I was privileged to meet some of our new parents and pupils for September 2017. I can say with the greatest pride that they were ever so complimentary about our school. The classrooms were buzzing and the use of our outside areas had a real impact. The visitors were amazed with our space, the use of the woods and the wonderful classrooms. There were a few moments yesterday when I actually had a small tear in my eye; perhaps it was the wind?

Harvest festival was fantastic as I am sure you will agree. There was a genuine sense of awe and pride in the work we do to thank God for what he has brought us and gave us all a deeper appreciation of the good in our lives. I must say another huge thank you to the Harbour Church and particularly Sarah Webber for her support and time. I must also thank you for your very generous donations to sustain our charitable work in Burkina Faso. We were able to contribute £216.69 to the fund and work towards our target of at least £1,200.00 per year. This is a wonderful project and should unite us all with pride that we are helping such a disadvantaged community.

May I thank you all too for supporting our Poppy appeal. We had several pupils offer their time to sell them and we were able to raise a good sum of money to support those who have given us so much. Our Y3 pupils organised a very memorable "poppy walkway" in our Forest School area, which the whole school were able to experience. This developed a real sense of purpose, responsibility and citizenship for our children.

The curriculum continues to provide our pupils with amazing opportunities. The trip to London for Y4 to see Charlie and the Chocolate Factory and the French exhibition are just a few examples of the wonderful things that are happening.

Attendance - You will of course have read our Ofsted inspection by now. One of the reasons we were not Outstanding was the attendance figures. This means that the school must continue to work hard to improve attendance. Attendance in school has a huge impact on progress and achievement. The learning opportunities that the children miss in one day is very difficult to catch up on and over time, leads to under achievement. We do a lot in school to improve attendance and offer our pupils with high attendance the chance to have uniform free days, class treats and prizes at the end of the year and are exploring new initiatives (your ideas are very welcome). Our aim this year is to have attendance above 95% for all pupils. This will mean that your child's attendance will be closely tracked. I will be personally contacting the families of pupils whose attendance falls below 95% to see if there is anything we can do to help improve attendance. 95% is the figure at which I will be consulting wider services and should the figure fall below this, we will have to consider the use of penalty notices. This is not our favoured approach as we feel working together will achieve the best outcomes. Here are a few ways in which we can improve attendance:

- * Attendance is a parent and student responsibility.
- * Let your child know that you think attending school daily is important.
- * Show them you are interested in their school activities and tell them that you want them to do well in school.
- * Communicate with the school. If you are stuck, late or can't get in – I am sure we can help.
- * Good attendance habits start at an early age. Make sure your child goes to school regularly and on time. This helps them develop a positive view of school and the importance of attendance.
- * Take an interest in your child's school work. Check homework for accuracy and completeness.
- * Do not provide inappropriate excuses for your child to miss school.
- * Do not let them take time off from school for minor ailments – particularly those which would not prevent you from going to work.
- * Set good examples and enforce rules. Speak well of the school and support school staff.
- * Make sure your child knows you do not approve of him/her being late or absent.
- * Do not let your child persuade you into making an excuse for him/her. Don't give up.
- * Reward good behaviour and take it one day at a time.

I know that we have a strong community around the school and we all want the best for our children. I really am asking you to go the extra mile and ensure that attendance and punctuality is a priority for everyone. In this colder period of the year, sickness, colds and fever are more prominent. Healthy eating, good hand washing practise and plenty of water go a long way to keeping us all healthy.

Finally, thank you all so much for your comments and time in completing the survey on our website. We will send a report and actions to take in due course. There have been some very useful suggestions and some really innovative ideas brought to us; so thank you again for your involvement and care for our school.

Jack & The Beanstalk Pantomime

Once again, we have booked a block of seats at the Leas Cliff Hall for parents and children to go and see this year's panto—Jack and the Beanstalk. This is a whole school family event.

All tickets are priced at £7.50 (special school rate). If you would like to join us, reserve your tickets by completing the form that went out in your child's book bag. Tickets will be allocated on a "first come first served" basis.

If you would like any further information, please see Carol Errington or Rose Milton.



Smoking on Site

May I remind you that St. Mary's school site is a non smoking site, this includes vapour cigarettes. Thank you.

Admission to School—September 2017

If your child is due to start school in September 2017, you can now apply for a place either on line at kent.gov.uk/ola or by paper application, which can be obtained from the school office. This must be done by midnight on 16th January 2017. If you apply online, please keep your log on details safe and use your registered email address for all communication with the admissions team. If you apply on line, an email will be sent to you after 4.00 pm on Tuesday 18th April 2017. Letters will also be sent out that day. If you have any queries, please speak to Mrs. Smith or Mrs. Gardiner in the school office. Thank you.

St. Mary's PTA Christmas Fayre

The PTA will be having their Christmas Fayre on Friday 16th December from end of school (3.15 ish to 5.00 pm). Further details to follow.

Caterlink Survey

Caterlink Catering has sent us a link to an online survey which they have asked the academy to pass on to parents if they wish to complete. Please feel free to comment. The link is:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/NVZ55MF>

Bicycle/Scooter Permits

If your child wishes to bring his/her cycle or scooter to school, please make sure you complete a form and obtain a bicycle/scooter permit which should be attached to the cycle/scooter. Today, there were eleven cycles/scooters in the cycle shed and only one had a permit attached. Thank you.