St Mary's

Church of England Junior School

No: 5
7th November 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope that you all had a lovely half term break, we are looking forward to a busy half term ahead.

This week started with an INSET day here at St Mary's. As part of staff professional development we had a training day led by an English advisor from Hampshire Improvement and Advisory Service (HIAS) who supported staff in the teaching and application of phonics knowledge to support reading, spelling and writing outcomes.

On Tuesday Year 3 took a trip to The Anvil to watch a super concert by The Philharmonic Orchestra; 'Orchestra Unwrapped'. The children were able to experience live classical music and thoroughly enjoyed hearing a range of pieces. The children were a delight and behaved superbly. There were even a few budding conductors in the stalls! A great afternoon was had by all.

Year 5 enjoyed a visit from the Science Dome on Wednesday. Each class visited the dome to find out more about space and the planets to launch their new topic, it was lovely to hear them talking about what they learnt after.

We are looking forward to the Year 3 F.O.O.B.S disco this evening, I am sure they will all have a great time!

Next week, we will commemorate Remembrance Day in school with a special assembly and silence on 11th November. Thank you to Charlotte in Year 5, and her sister at Old Basing Infant School, who will represent the schools by laying a wreath at church this Sunday. Thank you also to Elsie in Year 5 and her brother who will represent the schools at the Remembrance Service at the War Memorial Park.

Please do make sure you make a note of dates from our newsletters and keep an eye out for messages and forms on Parent Mail – we are a busy school with lots going on. We are looking forward to a fun and productive end to the Autumn term.

Attendance and Reporting your child's absence

Thank you for your support in ensuring good attendance for your child. At the end of October whole school attendance was 97.6% which ranks St Mary's in the top 10% of schools nationally.
Please can we remind all parents to call in every day if your child is off due to sickness so that we can complete daily absence codes.

Spotlight Christmas Toy Appeal

Once again this year we are supporting Spotlight's Christmas Toy Appeal by being a collection point to help ensure that as far as possible, all children in our local area receive a present this year. Items do need to be new and unwrapped.
We are collecting donations up until Monday 1st December.
Please spread the word around different organisations and work places as anyone can use the school as a donation hub. Thank you to those of you who have already donated items.

Friendship Week and Odd Socks Day

The week commencing 10th November is our annual Friendship Week which coincides with National Anti-Bullying week. This year we will incorporate Odd Socks day on Monday 10th November to celebrate the fact that we are all unique. You do not need to buy anything special or donate money for this event – just look in your odd socks drawer at home! During the week pupils will take part in a wide range of activities about Friendships and Anti-Bullying. We will also share a break time with Old Basing Infants which was great fun last year!

Children in Need 2025

We will once again be supporting the Children In Need Appeal with a non-uniform day on Friday 14th November. We would love to see as many people as possible celebrating the charities spotty theme by being 'SPOTacular'. Can you create your spottiest outfit to support this great charity?
Donations to this charity can be made through this link:
https://www.justgiving.com/page/st-marys-ce-junior-school-old-basing-14?utm_medium=FR&utm_source=CL

Online Safety Sessions

A reminder that we are holding an online safety session led by Lee Colvin this month for all parents. Please book your place ASAP!
To book your place on either the face-to-face session or virtual session, please follow these links:
(Places are limited for the face-to-face session; therefore, registrations will be monitored and the booking form will close if necessary.)

To book the face-to-face session at St Mary's Junior School on Monday 17 November at 6:00pm, please follow this link:
https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=ehrpnaGn_U-DffOAw45I2EsA8xCuGZREpmBSiYA03vlUNE9WUjM1OFo2V001RlNYOEJUU0hWVU03US4u

To book on the virtual session Tuesday 25th November 6:00pm, please follow this link:
https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=ehrpnaGn_U-DffOAw45I2EsA8xCuGZREpmBSiYA03vlURFlGSFRNVlVCRDZPSUJXVFZBUkk2VUw2Qi4u

Year 5 Parents – Calshot Information Evening

We invite parents of pupils in Year 5 to attend a Calshot information meeting led by Year 6 staff on Thursday 20th November at 6:00pm. This will be an opportunity for parents to find out more about this exciting opportunity that lies ahead!

Sporting Success!

We are pleased to share that last half term many of our sports teams had cause to celebrate! Our Year 5 and 6 table tennis teams performed extremely well in the Basingstoke Team Table Tennis Competition, with the girls A team winning their category and the boys A team coming second in theirs. This means that both these teams qualitfy for the county final taking place later this month. In addition, the boys football league started well with a win over Fairfields school. In the upcoming weeks, there are football, netball, rugby and further table tennis competitions scheduled. Good luck to all involved and thank you to our parents who help transport pupils to these events.

Safeguarding update

Please find attached to this newsletter November's safeguarding newsletter.

Governors' Corner

We are currently seeking a new foundation governor to join our governing body.
In addition to being full members of the governing body, foundation governors have a particular role in ensuring that the school upholds its distinctive Christian ethos.
These vacancies must be filled by community members who feel that they could work to develop the foundation ethos of our school. (Ideally, foundation governors should be members of the local Church of England parish or have an affiliation to one of the other churches locally, although this is not essential.)
There are immediate and lasting benefits to becoming a school governor. In volunteering your time, you are making a positive contribution to the success of the school as well as having an impact on the lives of its pupils, staff and the local community. The role can also really help you to develop your own skills and understanding.

We would warmly invite anyone interested in finding out more about the role to contact the school office to arrange an informal chat with our Chair of Governors Sefton Lucas or with the Headteacher Gemma Lillywhite.

Health and Safety - Timber Trail and Woodland Area

Younger siblings must not use the Timber Trail or play in the woodland area while they are waiting for older siblings to come out of classes. We ask that all children brought onto our site are supervised by an adult at all times for their own safety. Thank you for your support in this.

F.O.O.B.S. news

Hello from F.O.O.B.S! We hope the Year 3s have a brilliant time at their disco this evening!
Thank you for all of your donations for the Christmas Market this week. It is shaping up to be another wonderful event for the children! Don't worry if you have forgotten, we will be doing a final collection from the schools on Monday so please do bring any remaining donations in on Monday morning. Tinsel Tokens, our new Christmas Market currency, will be on sale via the website (www.foobs.weebly.com) from Monday allowing you to purchase in advance rather than sending cash in with your child on the day of the Market. Cash will still be accepted for those preferring that method of payment.
Our Letter to Santa kits are on sale now via the website containing everything your child needs to send off their wishlist to the big man.
We will be having a Happy School Bag collection on 18th November, please see email for further details of what can be donated. Bags will be sent home via the children soon.

Coffee Mornings

Please see the date below for our upcoming Autumn coffee morning which will be held here at St Mary's.

Gemma Lillywhite
Headteacher

The following INSET days for this academic year have been agreed with Old Basing Infant School and approved by our governors.

Inset Days for 2025/26
Fri 19th December 2025
Mon 23rd February 2026
Fri 22nd May 2026

Dates for your Diary
w/c 10th November – Friendship week
10th November – Odd Socks day
11th November – Y6 Weighing & Measuring
12th November – Parents Coffee morning 09:00-10:30
14th November – Children in Need non uniform day (wear something spotty)
15th November – Welcome service for the Bishop of Basingstoke – Senior Choir performing (Yr 5/6) St Mary's Church Andover 2pm
17th November – Online Safety Session for Parents zt St Mary's 6:00pm
18th November – Whole school flu vaccinations
18th November – Happy School Bag charity clothing collection
19th November – Year 2 open morning 9:30am -11:00 am
20th November – Brunel Class sharing assembly 2:45pm
20th November – Year 5 Parents Calshot Information Evening 6:00pm
24th November – F.O.O.B.S Christmas Market
24th-28th November – Year 6 Bikeability
25th November – Virtual Online Safety Session for Parents – time TBC
2nd December – Year 5 Church AoW (Parents welcome to attend) – 1:30pm
4th December – Russell class sharing assembly 2:45pm
5th December – Theatre Workshop for Year 6 in school
6th December – Christmas Tree Festival, St Mary's Church Old Basing Junior Choir (Y3/4) & Infant Singing club performing 11:30-12:30
6th December – Milestones Museum Christmas Market, Orchestra (Thursday group) performing 3:00-4:30pm
9th December – School Christmas Concert (school band and various small groups selected by instrumental teachers) School Hall 6-7pm – Details TBC
11th December – Dickens class sharing assembly 2:45pm
12th December – Year 6 Haymarket Theatre Trip (evening)
17th December – Class Christmas Parties
17th December – School Carol Service St Mary's Church 6-7pm Senior Choir performing
18th December – End of term Church Visits am (times tbc)
18th December – Christmas Lunch!
19th December – Inset Day (school closed to pupils)

22nd December–2nd January – Christmas Holidays

5th January 2026 – First day back

11th-14th May 2026 Year 6 SATs tests
1st-12th June 2026 Year 4 Multiplication Tests