

St Mary's

Church of England Junior School

No: 6
21st November 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

Thank you to the families who represented the two Old Basing Schools at Remembrance Sunday Services. Wreaths were laid at the War Memorial in town and at St Mary's Church.

In school the pupils were amazing last week in observing the two minutes' silence on Remembrance day. During a special assembly on Remembrance Day we thought about Captain G. W. Wellsted, a former pupil of the school and the son of two teachers here. Our school log book from 1915 states: *"July 4th, Mrs Wellsted not in school today owing to the arrival of bad news that her son, Captain James G. W. Wellsted had been 'killed in action'. The news arrived yesterday and the school closed early."* It is believed that the author was the husband of Mrs Wellsted and the father of George. Devastating news for the parents who were both in the employment of the school. His name lives on as part of the Old Basing war memorial today & in the hearts of the school community and a local family.



We were delighted to be invited to be part of a welcome service for the new Bishop of Basingstoke, Kelly Betteridge, which was held on Saturday 15th November, at St Mary's Church in Andover. The service marked her official introduction to the Diocese of Winchester following her consecration in October 2025. We were invited to be part of this service, along with only 2 other schools, as the interviews for this role were held here at St Mary's Junior School back in June. Our Senior Choir performed beautifully singing 'Carry the Light'. I was so proud of this group of children! Thank you to the families who accompanied them and attended the services and thank you Mrs Malone for leading them so well! Thank you also to Mrs Parsons and Mrs Bond for coming with us to support the choir.



Last week saw our annual 'Friendship Week' at St Mary's to mark national Anti Bullying Week. Pupils took part in a wide range of activities around friendship and anti-bullying. On Odd Socks Day there were many brightly coloured socks on show! Odd Socks Day marks the start of Anti-Bullying Week and is an opportunity to encourage people to express themselves, and celebrate their individuality and what makes us all unique! The theme of the national Anti Bullying Week this year was 'Choose Respect' a phrase that has been talked about a lot in school.

The whole school enjoyed a joint playtime with the infant school last Thursday as part of Friendship Week. Half of our pupils made their way across to the infant school and half of them came to us. It was lovely to see our Year 6 pupils playing so sensibly with the younger children. We look forward to doing the same later in the year.

Last Friday the school was full of spots to raise money for Children in Need, thank you for your generous donations. Our fundraising total currently stands at £490, well done St Mary's. Donations can still be made by following this link:

https://www.justgiving.com/page/st-marys-ce-junior-school-old-basing-14?utm_campaign=lc_frp_share_transaction_fundraiser_page_donation_received_-_nth_donation&utm_content=5742e8c2-c622-46d3-bfc0-fd928e631707&utm_medium=email&utm_source=postoffice&utm_term=1763132796783

It was lovely to see so many parents, relatives and friends in school yesterday to watch Brunel class's sharing assembly. They entertained us with their acting and musical skills. It was great to see how confident they were to perform in front of a large audience and I know Mrs Stephens was proud of how they worked so well as a team to plan and rehearse their assembly!

Finally, we are looking forward to the F.O.O.B.S Christmas Market next week and the fun of present wrapping after! Year 5 are looking forward to continuing with their outdoor learning opportunity with Mrs May and Year 6 will have a fun week starting their Bikeability training. We also are looking forward to upcoming church visits, Russell class's sharing assembly and the Church Tree Festival in a few weeks.

Music Mark Recognition

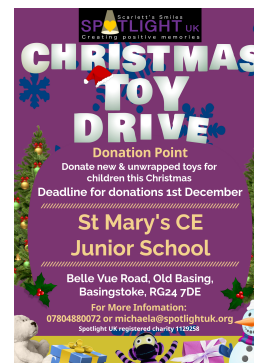
We are thrilled that the school has been recognised for ambition & quality in music education by Music Mark. This award recognises the outstanding contribution that Mrs Malone makes to our school community through curriculum music lessons for all pupils and through providing a vast range of extra-curricular music opportunities for the children for free, from choirs, to ukulele club to recorder clubs! Through accepting this award we pledge to:

- *advocate for the importance of music education in the curriculum and creative life of our school.*
- *provide an equitable, diverse and inclusive music education for every young person.*
- *welcome opportunities to broaden our musical horizons by working with providers in our community and beyond.*



Spotlight Christmas Toy Appeal

A reminder that we are supporting Spotlight's 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. Donations can be brought into school until 1st December. Please do spread the word around different organisations and work places as anyone can use the school as a donation hub. Thank you to those who have already donated, thank you for your generosity.



Safeguarding update - Our Duty to Safeguard Children

As a school, we have a legal responsibility to keep all children safe. This means that if we ever have concerns about a child's welfare, we are required to share those concerns with Children's Services so that the right support can be put in place. Please be assured that this does not mean parents have necessarily done wrong - our role is simply to act in the best interests of every child. Working together with families and professionals helps ensure that children are safe, happy, and able to thrive.

If you think you, your child or family are in need of support from professional agencies, please do contact us, we are here to help.

Health and Safety

Please can you ensure that nuts or items containing nuts are not brought into school in packed lunches. We have some pupils in school with serious nut allergies. Thank you for your support with this. Please can we also remind you that no children should be on the timber trail or playing in the woodland area after school, this includes younger siblings.

New Book Recommendations

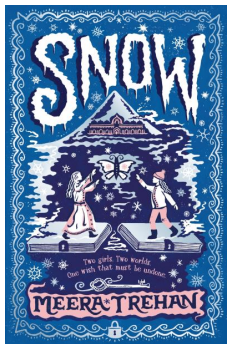
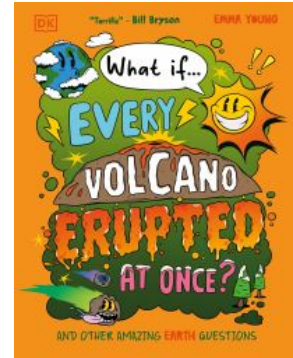
7+ Readers:

'What If Every Volcano Erupted At Once?'

By Emma Young

Find out the answers to 33 crazy and laugh-out-loud questions about the Earth with science author Emma Young.

Prepare to learn all about the Earth from rocks to rivers and countries to climate in this engaging question-and-answer book.



9+ Readers:

'Snow'

By Meera Trehan

In this beautiful winter fantasy, an imprisoned princess needs the help of a girl from the modern world to undo a wish gone wrong and save her snowy kingdom.

An enchanting tale of courage and unlikely friendship that makes the perfect gift for fans of Frozen, The Snow Queen and The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe.

Talk Homework!

This week what will you come up with for this question? Can you justify your answer?

“Would you rather be able to fly like a bird or swim like a dolphin?”

Friends of St Mary's Church

Please find attached information about the upcoming Friends of St Mary's Church pantomime! Some of our year 6 pupils are part of this production!

Governors' Corner

It was a pleasure to attend the open morning for parents considering applying for next September's Year 3 intake. Despite the wet snow falling outside it was well attended by about 30 parents. The morning began with tours of the school that were led by pairs of eager Year 6 children who answered any questions and were a credit to the school. Mrs Lillywhite and Mr Gibbs then outlined the ethos of the school, the broad curriculum and the range of enrichment activities available. Finally, some children from Year 6 and Year 3 read pieces that they had written about what they liked about the school. It was great to see the pride that children had in their school and I'm sure that the prospective parents were impressed. Mrs Lillywhite, Mr Gibbs and Mrs Medlin answered specific questions from individual parents and offered to answer any later questions by email.

Paul Skinner, Foundation Governor

Coffee Morning

Thank you to the parents who joined us and the infant school at our last coffee morning, it was lovely to have Zoe and Sarah from Primary Behaviour Support join us. Our next parent's coffee morning will be here on 11th February 2026.

Attendance

Please find attached to this newsletter our updated attendance policy. This has been updated to reflect Hampshire's new guidance on the issuing of penalty notices for unauthorised holiday. Schools are now authorised to issue penalty notices to parents who attempt to avoid penalties by scheduling holidays that fall below the threshold, including during weeks containing Bank Holidays or INSET days.

At the end of October whole school attendance was 97.6% which ranks St Mary's in the top 10% of schools nationally.

We closely monitor school attendance and look for patterns in absence. We are currently monitoring pupils who are repeatedly late or absent on the same day of the week, pupils who are absent immediately before or after a school holiday and those who have recently worsened from previous good attendance.

F.O.O.B.S. news

Hello from F.O.O.B.S! Thank you for all your donations for the Happy School Bag collection on Tuesday. We raised a fantastic £300!

The much anticipated Christmas Markets are being held next week! Monday for the Juniors with online sales of Tinsel Tokens closing yesterday. Friday for the Infants with online sales for Tinsel Tokens closing on Wednesday. If you don't buy Tinsel Tokens, please send your child with cash, if they would like to take part.

Letter to Santa Kits will be sent home to those who purchased them in the coming days. Please send replies into school the week commencing 1st December.

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

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

8th December – Year 6 Weighing & Measuring (rearranged date)

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 (non uniform/Christmas jumper day)

17th December – School Carol Service St Mary's Church 6-7pm Senior Choir performing

18th December – End of term Church Visits am:

09:15am – Russell, Mitchell, Paulet, Austen

10:00am – Nightingale, Brunel, Nelson, Conan Doyle

11:00am – Davies, White, Wellington, Dickens

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

Christmas Events 2025

Yes, it's only November, but the festive season is fast approaching so here are a few dates for your diaries!

Please do read and take on board all of these dates and arrangements for our festive celebrations especially if this is your first St Mary's Christmas!

Parents/carers of pupils involved in the various seasonal choir and orchestra events have already been sent information about these

F.O.O.B.S Christmas Market

We are excited to once again hold the F.O.O.B.S Christmas market on **Monday 24th November**, information has already come out about this from F.O.O.B.S. Thank you for all the donations made for this event.



Carol Concert

We are putting together plans for our annual Christmas Carol Concert which will be held in the church on **Wednesday 17th December at 6:00pm**, we look forward to welcoming you to this special service. All are welcome to attend, please do bring along family and friends.

Christmas Cards

The children at St Mary's have traditionally loved using our Christmas post boxes to post cards to friends and staff. The Christmas post boxes will be out from **Monday 1st December** from which cards can be brought into school to post. Please make sure that envelopes are marked with full names and classes to help our Year 6 elves deliver them!



Christmas Parties

All classes will have their Christmas party during the afternoon of **Wednesday 17th December**. We ask for children to bring in their own individual small box/bag of 'party food' for them to enjoy during the party. Please note this is in addition to their normal packed lunch or school dinner.

This day will also be a non-uniform/Christmas jumper day and we look forward to seeing lots of festive attire!



End of term Church visits

You are welcome to join us at our end of term church visits on **Thursday 18th December**. Classes will visit church at the following times. Please contact the school office if you are able to help walk down to church with your child's class.

Services will start at the following times, children will leave school 10-15 minutes before these times.



- 09:15am – Russell, Mitchell, Paulet, Austen
- 10:00am – Nightingale, Brunel, Nelson, Conan Doyle
- 11:00am – Davies, White, Wellington, Dickens

Christmas Dinner

Finally, thank you for returning your children's Christmas dinner orders. Our annual Christmas lunch will be held on the last day of term, **Thursday 18th December**.



OBIS AND ST. MARY'S JUNIOR INVITE
YOU TO

OLD BASING SCHOOLS COFFEE MORNINGS

Meet with Mrs Thompson and Mrs
Medlin along with staff from the
Primary Behaviour Service.



**Wednesday 12th
November**

**Wednesday 11th
February**

Wednesday 25th March

Wednesday 20th May

Wednesday 1st July

**St. Mary's
Junior School**

9am - 10.30am

St Mary's

Church of England Junior School

Come and chat, ask
questions and get
support for the
challenges we all face
as parents.

