

St Mary's

Church of England Junior School

No: 8
18th December 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

We have made it to the end of a busy, but fantastic autumn term!

On behalf of all the staff, I would like to thank you all for the kind sentiments, lovely cards and gifts we have received this week, your messages and thoughts are appreciated.

I must start our round up of recent events with a mention of some special visitors we welcomed to St Mary's on Tuesday! Father Christmas and his elves swapped their sleigh for a flying visit to us in a Chinook from RAF Odiham. This was a surprise for the pupils of St Marys and Old Basing Infant school and hopefully a memory they will cherish!



We kicked off our festive celebrations at St Mary's Church Tree Festival on Saturday 6th December. Our Junior Choir sang beautifully, it was great to see them perform alongside the singing club from Old Basing infant school which is led by Mrs Malone; this is a great way for the two schools to work together and support transition at the end of Year 2.

Our school tree - *'The transformation of Scrooge, from greed and loneliness to love and hope'* looked beautiful, well done to all those who helped make decorations for it.

On Sunday 7th December, the streets of Milestones Museum were filled by the sound of our orchestra as part of the museum's Christmas Market. They entertained friends, family and visitors to the museum with a range of festive songs.

They all performed brilliantly

and with confidence; many visitors were surprised to see the sounds they heard were from a children's orchestra! Thank you to the volunteers who regularly help with our orchestra and thank you to the staff that supported these musical events over the weekend.



Our musicians continued to entertain the crowds at our annual Christmas concert held in school last Tuesday. We enjoyed performances from groups and soloists; we were especially proud of our younger Year 3 performers who took part in their first concert.

Last Friday evening some of our Year 6 pupils visited the Haymarket Theatre to watch a performance of Dickens' 'A Christmas Carol'. Thank you to the staff who accompanied this group. They all had good time and it was lovely to hear that members of the public commended them on their behaviour and conduct. Well done Year 6!

It was lovely to see the church packed on Wednesday night for our annual carol service. Well done to all of the children who read and thank you also to the adults who did a reading for us. Our senior choir sang beautifully – I think there may have been a few wet cheeks after they sang 'Carry the Light'! Thank you to our school governors who provided and served the seasonal refreshments after the service. Thank you for your generous donations to the retiring collection for The Camrose Centre, £190.09 was donated today.

Well done to Dickens class who entertained us last week with their sharing assembly, it was lovely to see how confident they are already after just one term with us.

This week has ended with Christmas parties, end of term church visits and our Christmas lunch today – I think that all of the children are now ready for the break!

Dates, photo galleries and news can also be found on our newly designed website - do take a look!
[St Mary's CofE Voluntary Aided Junior School - Home](#)

Finally, I wish you, and your families, a very happy Christmas and all the best for 2026. I look forward to welcoming you all back to school on Monday 5th January.

Christmas Community Projects

It is important that our school community gives back and forges links with those in our local community. This Christmas, each year group has undertaken a small project to share our school value of love – showing selfless service to others.

Year 3 wrote Christmas cards which were delivered along with a small gift to their Year 2 buddies at Old Basing Infant School. Year 4 made cards and delivered chocolate for staff at Basingstoke Police Station, Basingstoke Fire Station and for those working out of Basingstoke Ambulance Station. We thought about those members of the emergency services who will be working over Christmas to help others and are unable to enjoy the festivities with their own friends and family.



Pupils in Year 5 designed and delivered cards and pencils to all of the children at Old Basing Village Nursery. The annual year 5 walk there to stay and play with the nursery pupils was postponed due to weather conditions, they are looking forward to a visit in the Spring when the paths have dried up!

Year 6 pupils made gift boxes using their knowledge of 3D shape nets. These were filled with Christmas chocolate treats and delivered to the residents of Basingfield Court Care Home. Thank you children for all your efforts and kindness.



Prayer Space

The last two weeks has brought our autumn term Prayer Space which give pupils an opportunity to reflect on different themes and in particular to explore prayer through different activities. They are welcoming to all. This term there were opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own gifts and talents, pray for others around them, send Christmas cards to a friend or family member, reflect on things that they are thankful for over the last year and to think about things that they may want to ask God for guidance with. Thank you to members of our school community who volunteered to come and help run activities in prayer space

'I liked prayer space as you could make things, like cards, whilst thinking about other people and I liked all of the lights.' Alannah Year 4

'I liked making the baubles giving thanks, I gave mine to one of the LSA's.' Joshua, Year 3
'Prayer Space was calm and wonderful.' Jack Year 4

Ofsted

As you will know from the communication sent out from Old Basing Infant School and ourselves last week, there have been major changes to the Ofsted school inspection framework.

Ofsted have produced a video for parents that explains the the new grading's and report cards that schools will be receiving. As it states in the video, the new 'Expected Standard' is a high standard, it means a school is doing everything that it should be and the video explains more about the 'Needs Attention' grade. This is not a failure, but highlights areas where improvements could be made.

As in previous communication and this video, there is no correlation between previous Ofsted grading's and the new system as it is a completely new framework, new inspection process and the areas of inspection are now different.

The video for parents produced by Ofsted can be viewed here:

[New Ofsted report cards and grades: a guide for parents](#)

Uniform

Thank you for your support in ensuring most children have the correct uniform on each day, we have seen a huge improvement in PE kit so far this year with the majority of pupils wearing plain black tracksuit bottoms.

Please can you ensure that your child is wearing their shirt and tie on non PE days, unless there is a prior agreement with the school as to why your child cannot wear the correct uniform.

Toys from home

Please can you ensure your child does not bring in toys or fidgets from home, unless previously agreed with your child's class teacher. We are seeing an increasing amount of toys and personal items being brought in and as I am sure you can imagine it can cause upset if they are misplaced!

Attendance

At the end of term the school's overall attendance stands at 97.6%

We have seen an increasing number of requests of leave during term time for holidays. In line with Hampshire County Council guidance on school attendance, these will not be authorised except in exceptional circumstances.

Safeguarding

Do not feel alone if you have any concerns about the welfare of a child, friend or relative over the Christmas period. Please do make a note of these useful contacts:

Hampshire Children's Services

Members of the public please telephone: 0300 555 1384

Hampshire Adult Services

0300 555 1386

NSPCC

0808 800 5000

Childline

0800 1111

Police

101 or 999

Domestic Abuse - Safe to Talk

0800 111 4998. In an emergency call 999, if you cannot speak, press 55 when prompted.

Year 3 Applications for September 2026

Don't forget that the application window for applications into Year 3 in September 2026 will close on 15th January 2026.

Governors' Corner

Throughout the year, and perhaps especially at this time of the year, we may feel overwhelmed by all the various communications we receive from all sorts of sources. If you are reading this, then at least you hopefully feel that the fortnightly newsletter is worth reading. As the lead Governor for Safeguarding can I highlight the additional attachment that since October has come monthly - "Spotlight on Safeguarding". This is really useful in providing information to keep our young people safe. Do make use of it.

The last week of term has all the extra activities as we approach Christmas. It is good as Governors to be able to join in with some of these activities and to see the result of hard work from both children and staff.

On behalf of all the Governors, I hope that you will have a good Christmas break, and look forward to good progress in 2026.

Philip Hiorns, Foundation Governor

F.O.O.B.S. news

IT'S (nearly) CHRISTMAS! Last week of term and what a festive week it's been! As we say goodbye to 2025, we want to extend the biggest thank you to you, for all your support towards F.O.O.B.S. this year. You have helped us to continue to provide wonderful enrichment for your children and help create fun school memories. We look forward to creating more fun events in 2026.

Wishing you all Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year.

Coffee Mornings

Parent and Carer Coffee Mornings

Our half-termly coffee mornings are an opportunity for parents to get together, share ideas and challenges over a cup of tea or coffee!

Meet us 9am to 10.30am at St Mary's on:

11th February

25th March

20th May

1st July



For even more news, updates and photos, don't forget to visit our website:

<https://www.st-marys-jun.hants.sch.uk/>

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

19th December – Inset Day (school closed to pupils)

22nd December–2nd January – Christmas Holidays

5th January 2026 – First day back

w/c 5th January – After school clubs start this week

7th January – Year 5 Swimming starts

7th January – Year 3 Iron Age Day (here)

13th January – Year 6 Church visit (parents welcome) 1:30pm

14th January – Year 5 Swimming

15th January – Paulet class sharing assembly 2:45pm (please note change of date)

16th January – F.O.O.B.S Year 5 Disco 5:00-6:30pm

21st January – Year 5 Swimming

22nd January – White Class Sharing assembly 2:45pm

26th January – Year 5 Art Workshop (Southampton Art Gallery) here

28th January – Year 5 Swimming

29th January – Nightingale class sharing assembly 2:45pm

3rd February – Year 4 Church visit (parents welcome) 1:30pm

4th February – Year 5 Swimming

w/c 9th February – Year 3 Show week

9th February – Year 4 science visit to QMC (details to follow)

10th February – Year 4 science visit to QMC (details to follow)

11th February – Year 5 Swimming (last one)

13th February – Dare to be Different Day

16th-20th February – Half term

23rd February – Inset Day (school closed to pupils)

24th February – First day back

11th-14th May 2026 Year 6 SATs tests

1st-12th June 2026 Year 4 Multiplication Tests

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.

