

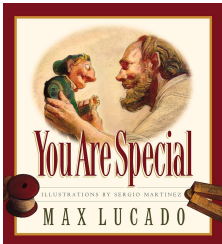
St Mary's

Church of England Junior School

No: 11
13th February 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope that you all have a lovely half term break, hopefully next week and when we return we will have less rain, more sunshine and see more signs that spring is here!



Year 3 were amazing this week in their musical production of Max Lucado's "We are special". The singing was fantastic and they all worked so hard to learn their parts. It was a real team effort, well done Year 3! I can't wait to see them in their Year 6 production if this is what they can do now! Thank you to all of our Year 3 parents/carers who helped with learning lines, song words and for your help with costumes.

Last week Year 4 enjoyed a short walk around the local area looking at land-use as part of their geography topic. They were very sensible and came back with many photographs, notes and sketch maps to use in subsequent sessions. This week all three Year 4 classes have visited QMC Primary Science Centre as part of their unit on Sound, they had a great time and learned lots. It has been a very busy and hands on fortnight for them!



Year 5 enjoyed their first aid training last week. Thank you to First Aid Angels who have provided this training for us.

On Tuesday we marked Safer Internet Day in school, Children were reminded how to keep themselves safe on-line and we banned all interactive white boards for the day to encourage screen free time! We would encourage all parents to consider how much time our children spend on devices and watching various screens during their day.

There were many rules broken today for 'Dare To Be Different Day' – the teachers have not been happy! Thank you for your support for this F.O.O.B.S fundraising event.

As you will have seen from all of the newsletters, this half term has been a busy one. We look forward to future learning and enrichment opportunities next half term.

Attendance

As well as closely monitoring attendance, we are now closely monitoring pupils who consistently arrive at school late, after 8:50am when children should be ready in their class. Being consistently late for school, even by 10 minutes, can equate to a week or more of missed education over an academic year. Many children who are late also find it difficult to settle into the classroom in the morning as they have missed instructions, registration and early work opportunities which are often used to over learn key facts and recall previous knowledge.

We are pleased to share that at the end of this half term, whole school attendance stands at 97.5% and this places St Mary's 6th out of 422 similar schools in Hampshire that share daily attendance data with the DfE. Thank you for your ongoing support in ensuring good attendance for your child.

Sporting News

This week 40 pupils represented St Mary's at the Basingstoke District Cross Country event at Down Grange. Well done to everyone who took part in a long, muddy race with tough competition! Well done to Freddie in Year 5 for getting through to the county finals to represent the Basingstoke district and to William for coming 4th in the Year 3/4 race!

St Mary's have enjoyed many other sporting successes this term with the boys and girls football teams winning games against St John's. The girls have played their quarter final game against Oakley winning that match 3-0. As the girls progress to the semi-finals of the district cup, the boys currently top their league. The badminton team performed superbly against multiple other schools, coming back from the Basingstoke Schools competition yesterday with bronze medals!

Thank you to the parents and relatives who have helped transport children to these events, without the support of our community we would not be able to give the children these opportunities as the cost of coach transport would be prohibitive.

Safeguarding

Please find attached to this newsletter the February Safeguarding update. This includes information about children's mental health and sense of belonging and Safer Internet Day 2026.

Book Week Homework Project

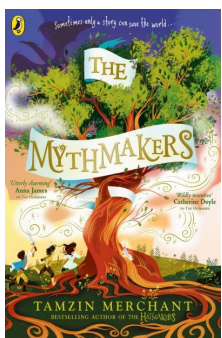
Please make sure you have read the parentmail that went out on Wednesday about our Book Week project. This week your child will have been given a wooden spoon to take home. Their task is to decorate the spoon as their favourite book character. They may use materials they already have at home, such as felt tips, colouring pencils, fabric, or small craft items, to bring their character to life. They could create a simple fabric outfit for the spoon if they wish!

We look forward to seeing their creations and hearing about their favourite book characters on Monday 2nd March to kick off Book Week!

Mobile Phones

Please can we remind all parents that currently only Year 6 pupils are permitted to bring Smartphones into school and they are then kept securely locked away in the office. From September 2026, no children will be permitted to bring in smart phones to school. 'Brick' phones will be allowed to be brought in and again these will be securely stored during the day, St Mary's adopted these rules last year in line with many other schools across Basingstoke and Deane as part of the Smartphone Free Childhood initiative. Our mobile phone policy is attached to this newsletter.

New Book Recommendations



'The Mythmakers' By Tamzin Merchant (Age 9+)

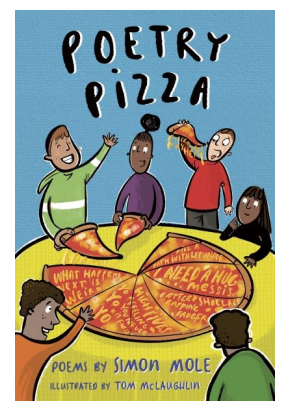
Desperate to tame his "half-wild daughter", Gwyn's father takes her to the court of King Uther to be transformed into a lady. Fabulously ferocious in her refusal to play the part of a pretty ornament, here Gwyn encounters a kindred spirit — a wild boy by the name of Merlin who "shone with the colours of the woods". After fleeing the court, the duo traverse an enchanting manifestation of Britain, encountering magical beings and beasts, and the young prince Arthur ahead of uniting as a trio to protect the ancient Oakheart tree, for its loss would mean the vanishing of all magic. From intriguing ivy-sparked opening, to star-strewn celestial end, *The Mythmakers* showers readers in spellbinding adventure. (Age 9+)

'Poetry Pizza' By Simon Mole (Age 7+)

Has your dad ever filled up the bath with 48 litres of lemonade? Have you ever seen a battle rapping badger? Have you ever felt so tired that you can only think in zig zags?

Welcome to the poetry world of Simon Mole - a place of **rhyme, rhythm, and wonder!**

Bursting with laughs, lyricism, and heart-warming moments, *Poetry Pizza* is a spellbinding collection of poems. From magical creatures that deliver marshmallows to your bedroom when you're bored to a cure for the end of day blues, these poems celebrate the wonder of words, the joys of everyday life and the power of imagination. Whether you're reading aloud, performing for friends, or dreaming up verses of your own, this is a book you'll return to time and time again. Funny, fantastical, and full of feeling - there's a poem in here for everyone!



Talking Point!

This week's family talking point encourages imagination as children (and adults!) picture exciting possibilities - dinosaurs, ancient times, future inventions, and new worlds and develops explanation and reasoning skills as it will get children to talk about why they chose their answer, helping them to practise expressing ideas clearly!

"Would you rather travel to the past or the future?"

Healthy Lunchboxes

It can be difficult to always prepare your child's lunch or let them sneak in a couple of extra treats, but having a mixed and balanced lunch will allow your child to feel fuller and concentrate more.

If you make a packed lunch for your child then this NHS website has all sorts of quick, easy, healthier lunchbox ideas and tips. [Lunchbox ideas and recipes – Healthier Families - NHS](#)

St Mary's is a nut free school. We have a number of students in school who have severe nut allergies and can be seriously affected by someone else who is eating or may have recently eaten nuts. Please ensure your children understand why we are nut free, which also includes Nutella. In a healthy lunch, you should look to include:

- A starchy food such as bread, rice or pasta
- A portion of fruit and a portion of vegetables
- A dairy product such as cheese or yogurt
- Protein such as eggs, meat or some cheeses.

Parking

Please can we request that unless you have a child who also attends Old Basing infant school, please do not park in the infant school car park, as it means that there is even less space for the parents of their children to park and be in school promptly.

Governors' Corner

As a team of school governors we have opportunities to learn about different aspects of the role of being a governor in training provided by Hampshire County Council services for schools. A few months ago I attended an online course "Understanding Finance in Schools", which for me was a useful revision of a previous course a few years ago. Although I am not a member of the Resources subcommittee of the Governing board, it's still important as a governor to know about the ways the school is financed- where the money comes from and how it is spent. More recently we had a whole governing body training session. This was an in person training session with a trainer from Hampshire, held at the school. It was good that we had an excellent attendance with Staff, Parents, Local Authority and Foundation governors all present. The topic was "Evaluating Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development", and was an opportunity to reflect on the broader aspects of achievement within the school. It's good for pupils to grow and develop in these areas as they gain skills to help them through life, and it links very much with the School's Christian values of Love, Courage and Creativity. It helped governors to see where the school is doing well, and discuss where things can be even better.

Philip Hiorns Foundation Governor

F.O.O.B.S. news

We hope all the children had fun on their Dare To Be Different Day today and we are wishing you all a wonderful half term.

Tickets are on sale now for our F.O.O.B.S Quiz Night, 28th February. Come along for a night of fun, food and fantastic raffle prizes.

Entries for the FOOBS Trail and Fun Runs are open. The event is taking place on Sunday 11th October and early bird entry costs apply to the trail runs until 28th February. The 2K Fun Run sells out every year so grab your entries early for only £5 per person!

[F.O.O.B.S. - Home](#)

Old Basing Schools 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 coffee (and biscuits!)

Mrs Medlin (our SENCo) and Mrs Thompson (OBI SENCo) will be attending alongside the Primary Behaviour Service.

Meet us 9am to 10.30am on:

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

Inset Days for 2025/26

Mon 23rd February 2026

Fri 22nd May 2026

Dates for your Diary

16th-20th February – Half term

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

24th February – First day back

w/c 24th February – After school clubs start back this week

26th February – Year 5 visit to Old Basing Nursery

28th February – F.O.O.B.S Quiz Night

2nd March – Book Week

4th March – Year 4 French Café

w/c 9th March – No after school clubs this week

9th March – Year 5 QMC

10th March – Year 5 QMC

10th March - Year 3 Church visit (parents welcome) 1:30pm

11th March – Parents Evening (not Paulet Class)

12th March – Parents Evening (not Paulet Class)

17th March - Year 5 Church visit (parents welcome) 1:30pm

18th March – Year 3 Roman Drama Day

21st March – F.O.O.B.S Easter Fair

25th March – Parent & Carer coffee morning 09:00-10:30am

25th March – Global Friends Day (non-uniform details to follow)

26th March – Austen class sharing assembly 2:45pm

27th March – End of term church visits – times to be confirmed

30th March – 10th April – Easter Holidays

13th April – First Day Back – start of Summer term

20th April – Austen Class to Gilbert White

22nd April – Conan Doyle and Dickens Class to Gilbert White

23rd April - Nelson class sharing assembly 2:45pm
24th April – F.O.O.B.S Year 4 Disco
30th April - Conan Doyle class sharing assembly 2:45pm
4th May – Bank Holiday Monday
11th-14th May 2026 Year 6 SATs tests
12th May - Year 4 Church visit (parents welcome) 1:30pm
20th May – Parent & Carer coffee morning 09:00-10:30
22nd May – INSET Day (School closed to pupils)

25th – 29th May – Half Term

1st-12th June 2026 Year 4 Multiplication Tests
1st June – Brunel Class to Gordon Brown Centre
4th June – Sports Day
5th June – White Class to Gordon Brown Centre
8th June – Mitchell Class to Gordon Brown Centre
8th June – Year 3 to QMC (Class TBC)
9th June - Year 3 to QMC (Class TBC)
12th June – Reserve Sports Day
16th June - Year 3 Church visit (parents welcome) 1:30pm
18th June – Year 4 trip to Ufton Court
24th June – Year 5 trip to Costello
24th June – Year 6 Diocese Leavers Service – Winchester Cathedral
30th June - Year 5 Church visit (parents welcome) 1:30pm
1st July – Parent & Carer coffee morning 09:00-10:30
5th July – F.O.O.B.S Summer Fair
13th -16th July – Year 6 Show Week
17th July – Family Picnic, joint with Old Basing Infants
20th July – Year 6 Leavers Service - St Mary's Church
21st July – Year 6 Leavers Party
22nd July – End of term Church Visits – times TBC
22nd July – Last Day of term