



## Church of England Junior School

**No: 14**

**27<sup>th</sup> March 2026**

Dear Parents and Carers,

Thank you for your support over the last term. We are really pleased with the work that has been going on and the progress the children have made in their learning.

We are delighted to share with you that Mrs Bridges and her husband have safely welcomed baby Rupert into their family, I am sure you will join us in congratulating them on this happy news.

There are always things to improve and as a staff team we are always looking at how we can move the school forward to benefit the children and improve outcomes. We continue to work on improving writing outcomes for all pupils and it has been great to see some really good progress so far this year. It was nice that our Ofsted report acknowledged this work, '*The school is closing these gaps by developing the teaching of writing and helping staff to check pupils' understanding more consistently in lessons.*' We have also been working this year on adapting our maths curriculum to support all learners.

I hope that you enjoyed reading the joint newsletter sent out yesterday from ourselves and Old Basing Infant School. Although we are two separate schools, it is very important for us to work closely together for the best interests of the children who mainly transition to us from there. Mrs Denning and I meet frequently to discuss strategic priorities and subject leaders from both schools meet regularly to ensure there is continuity and progression from the Early Years up to the end of Year 6. This Thursday we all enjoyed our second joint playtime of the year, these have become very popular with children in both schools!

Year 3 enjoyed their Roman Day last week. The brilliant Openbox Theatre Company returned to school and instantly transported the children back nearly two thousand years! Do read our news article on the website to find out more.

This week we enjoyed Global Friends day, learning more about our link school in Uganda and hearing from Reverend Dodi who has recently come back from Katakala. Thank you all for your donations to help support the school there. Our Global Friends Day has raised over £450 so far – thank you!

On Thursday we enjoyed Austen class's sharing assembly, it was great to see how confidently our youngest pupils performed in front of their friends and family. Well done to them all!

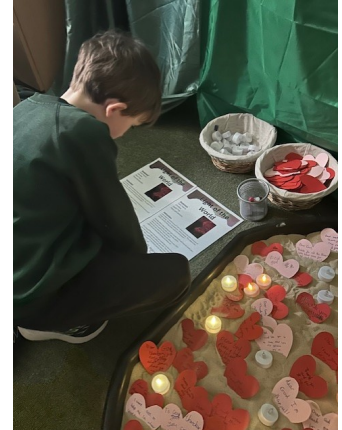
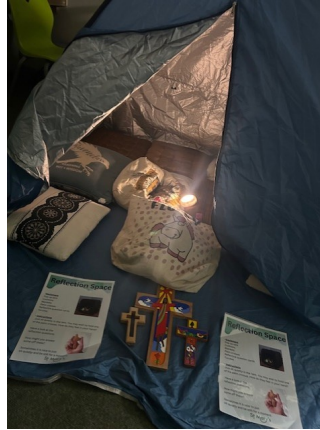
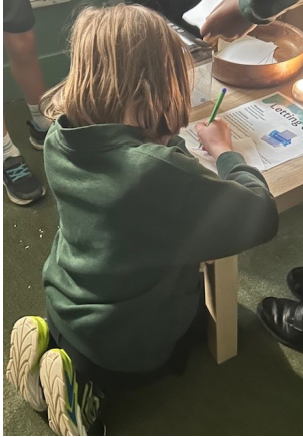
A huge thank you to all the F.O.O.B.S committee, staff and other volunteers who helped run the Easter Fair last weekend. It was lovely to be on the door with Mrs Denning and see many of our pupils come, it was also lovely to meet some of the infant school pupils and families who we look forward to welcoming to St Mary's in the future. Thank you again F.O.O.B.S for your hard work.

Congratulations to our Tag Rugby Team who played 3 matches on Monday afternoon, winning them all - thank you Mr Wheeler for coaching them! Congratulations also to the Year 6 boys football team who played in the district finals on Tuesday afternoon with other schools who had topped their leagues. After two tough games they finished 3<sup>rd</sup>, well done boys for showing good team spirit and perseverance.

Finally, may I wish you all a happy and healthy Easter and a good break from the school run over the next two weeks! Children please stay safe if you are out playing on your bikes or scooters and remember all that you have learnt about keeping yourself safe online if you have some time on your electronic devices. I look forward to seeing you all back in school on Monday 13<sup>th</sup> April.

## Prayer Space

Over the last two weeks we have enjoyed visiting our Spring Term Prayer Space. A prayer space is an area that has been transformed for a few days with a range of creative activities that encourage personal reflection. There was a Lent and Easter theme this term with activities that gave the children an opportunity to reflect on their own qualities and a chance to thank and think of others in our community. During this term's prayer space the children made Easter bags for those in the local community who help us. This week they have been delivered to various people including, Old Basing Health Centre, Day Lewis Pharmacy Old Basing, Old Basing Infant School, Basingstoke Fire Station, Basingstoke Rural West Policing Team and Friends of Old Basing Schools.



## Year 4 Multiplication Check – Year 4 Parents

As we prepare for the Year 4 Multiplication Tables Check in June, we are encouraging all children to continue practising their times tables regularly at home. Short, frequent practice makes a real difference to confidence and quick recall. There are lots of fun, free online games that can help, such as Hit the Button, Times Table Rock Stars and other multiplication online multiplication games. Just a few minutes each day can really help boost speed and accuracy. Thank you for your continued support in helping the children feel ready and confident, not only for their MTC but also for using and applying tables facts in other areas of maths as they move through the school.

## Easter Egg Raffle

Thank you to everyone who bought a raffle ticket, congratulations to those who were drawn out today. We are all winners as the money raised will be used to purchase new small playground equipment that the children have said they would like. Thank you all again and thank you to our staff who kindly donated all of the prizes.

## School Dinners

Please ensure your dinner money account is in credit at all times so that you are able to book meals easily. Meal options on the new summer menu are available to book now on ScoPay for the summer term.

## News from The Costello School

This week I met with the Headteacher's of our cluster schools and the Headteacher of The Costello School (our feeder secondary school).

Mr Conway was pleased to share the positive responses they had received from new Year 7 parents regarding how their children had settled in and how transition went this year. The move from Year 6 to Year 7 is always an anxious time for children and parents, so it was lovely to hear such positive feedback on the experience for our children who moved on to The Costello School.

## **Parent feedback included:**

*"The school made the transition to secondary a lot smoother than I had expected."*

*"Thank you to everyone at Costello for the truly outstanding care and support provided. The positive impact this has had during the transition into secondary school has been remarkable, helping to build confidence and happiness in a way that has made a real difference. It has also had a hugely positive effect on family life. Your dedication and support are deeply appreciated. Thank you so much."*

*"They really took the time to understand what was needed and supported every stage of the transition, which made a huge difference."*

*“Starting secondary school felt huge, but having the right support in place made it a much more positive experience than we expected.”*

*“They made sure no one felt left behind and that reassurance meant everything during such a big change.”*

*“It’s been such a positive change for our family and we’ve seen a real difference in confidence and happiness at home.”*

*“I feel happier and more settled than I ever expected and that’s had a big impact on how I approach school each day.”*

*“Everything just feels easier now, like I know what I’m doing.”*

*“I like school more than I thought I would.”*

*“The change has been amazing to see – it’s like a weight has been lifted and there’s a real sense of confidence now.”*

### **Summer Uniform**

Summer uniform can be worn after the Easter holidays. This consists of green checked dresses, grey shorts and white polo shirts or short sleeved shirts. Pupils can still wear winter uniform of a shirt and tie, if they prefer. PE uniform remains the same.

### **Safeguarding**

Some families can feel quite alone over school holidays without the regular contact with school professionals. If you need any support or have any concerns over the next two weeks, please do seek advice from Hampshire Children’s Services. Contact details can be found on the Hampshire County Council Website:

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/childrenandfamilies/safeguardingchildren>

### **Attendance**

As of today, whole school attendance stands at 97.4%.

As the summer term approaches, I would remind parents that holidays should be taken during school holiday periods. Only absences for very exceptional circumstances will be authorised.

Please make sure you have read and understood the attached advice for parents from Hampshire County Council in regards to school attendance.

[Attendance guidance for parents/carers | Education and learning | Hampshire County Council](#)

### **INSET Days for 2026/2027 Academic Year**

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

Tuesday September 1<sup>st</sup> 2026

Monday November 2<sup>nd</sup> 2026

Friday December 18<sup>th</sup> 2026

Monday February 22<sup>nd</sup> 2026

Friday May 28<sup>th</sup> 2027

### **Talk Point!**

What will you come up with this week when you chat over dinner or in the car on your way out! Regular conversations with adults and siblings, for example during meals, exposes children to varied vocabulary and discussions about current events or worldly issues at the table improve children's knowledge and self-esteem!

***‘Should animals be allowed to go to school? Why or why not?’***

Follow up questions to spark fun discussion:

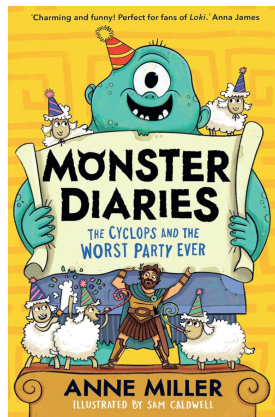
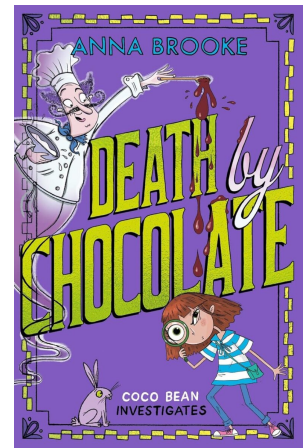
- Which animal would make the best student?
- Which animal might cause the most chaos?
- Would animals need uniforms?
- What lessons would animals be good at?
- How could schools keep everyone safe?
- Should animals have their own school instead?

## New book recommendations

### **Death by Chocolate by Anna Brooke**

**Reading Age: 7-12yrs**

Packed full of humour and chocolate, this mystery is the perfect gift for middle-grade readers this Easter! Coco's parents have poured everything into a struggling French hotel. But the hotel is haunted by a bitter old ghost, Monsieur Framboise, a chocolatier who met a sticky end. He agrees to share his legendary skills with Coco and her new friend Louis in exchange for their help in uncovering the truth behind his murder. Can Coco and Louis save the family hotel and solve the mystery by Easter? The Great Chocoplot meets Chocolat, with a dash of Murder Most Unladylike. Humour, mystery and chocolate – just in time for Easter! An older middle-grade debut from the hilarious author Anna Brooke.



### **Monster Diaries: The Cyclops and the Worst Party Ever by Anne Miller & Sam Caldwell**

**Reading age 7+**

Monsters from mythology finally get to tell their side of the story, in this hilarious illustrated series for fans of Loki, Horrible Histories and Pamela Butchart. When people hear Polyphemus is a cyclops, they always assume he's a big scary MONSTER with one huge eye who EATS PEOPLE. The truth is, YES, he is big, and he does have one huge eye, and ok he does OCCASIONALLY eat people... but THAT'S NOT THE WHOLE STORY! All he ever wanted was to throw THE GREATEST PARTY OF ALL TIME! But then Odysseus arrived, and it all went very, VERY, wrong...

## News from our Junior Road Safety Officers.

Please see our poster at the bottom of this newsletter!

## Friends of Old Basing Schools

Thank you to everyone who joined us at our Easter Fair last weekend. This year's event was lots of fun, filled with some very creative crafts and games for the children. And thanks for all the donations - both for the ever popular chocolate tombola as well as the cake stall.

Please note a date for your diary- Friday 17th April will be our next HappySchoolBag charity clothing collection. See separate email for more details.

Wishing you all a wonderful Easter break.

## Governors' Corner

I recently spent a pleasant morning in school, along with fellow-governor Philip Hiorns, observing the school values in action. We were given free rein to wander into classrooms, where we were able to ask children what they understood about the values. It was satisfying that they were consistently able to name our values of Love, Courage and Creativity. They could talk confidently about what each value meant to them and how they had demonstrated that or seen others demonstrate it recently. It was particularly good to see the children on the playground during break, when a great variety of games, activities on apparatus and quieter pursuits could be observed, seemingly without any organisation but all getting along well. This was a great example of being 'One Family'!

## 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:

20<sup>th</sup> May

8<sup>th</sup> July



**Gemma Lillywhite**  
**Headteacher**

## Dates for your Diary

30<sup>th</sup> March – 10<sup>th</sup> April – Easter Holidays

13<sup>th</sup> April – First Day Back – start of Summer term

w/c 13<sup>th</sup> April – Summer term after school clubs start this week

16<sup>th</sup> April – Mitchell class sharing assembly 2:45pm

20<sup>th</sup> April – Austen Class to Gilbert White House & Gardens

22<sup>nd</sup> April – Conan Doyle and Dickens Class to Gilbert White House & Gardens

23<sup>rd</sup> April - Nelson class sharing assembly 2:45pm

24<sup>th</sup> April – F.O.O.B.S Year 4 Disco 5:00-6:30pm

30<sup>th</sup> April - Conan Doyle class sharing assembly 2:45pm

4<sup>th</sup> May – Bank Holiday Monday

11<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> May 2026 Year 6 SATs tests

12<sup>th</sup> May - Year 4 Church visit (parents welcome) 1:30pm

18<sup>th</sup> May-22<sup>nd</sup> May – Walk to School Week

20<sup>th</sup> May – Parent & Carer coffee morning 09:00-10:30

**22<sup>nd</sup> May – INSET Day (School closed to pupils)**

25<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> May – Half Term

1<sup>st</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> June 2026 Year 4 Multiplication Tests

4<sup>th</sup> June – Sports Day

5<sup>th</sup> June – White Class to Gordon Brown Centre

8<sup>th</sup> June – Mitchell Class to Gordon Brown Centre

8<sup>th</sup> June – Year 3 to QMC (Class TBC)

9<sup>th</sup> June - Year 3 to QMC (Class TBC)

10<sup>th</sup> June – Brunel class to Gordon Brown Centre

12<sup>th</sup> June – Reserve Sports Day

16<sup>th</sup> June – Class Photos (whole Y6 photo on 18<sup>th</sup> June)

16<sup>th</sup> June - Year 3 Church visit (parents welcome) 1:30pm

18<sup>th</sup> June – Whole Year 6 Photo

18<sup>th</sup> June – Year 4 trip to Ufton Court

24<sup>th</sup> June – Year 5 trip to Costello

24<sup>th</sup> June – Year 6 Diocese Leavers Service – Winchester Cathedral

30<sup>th</sup> June - Year 5 Church visit (parents welcome) 1:30pm

8<sup>th</sup> July – Parent & Carer coffee morning 09:00-10:30

5<sup>th</sup> July – F.O.O.B.S Summer Fair

13<sup>th</sup> -16<sup>th</sup> July – Year 6 Show Week

17<sup>th</sup> July – Family Picnic, joint with Old Basing Infants

20<sup>th</sup> July – Year 6 Leavers Service - St Mary's Church

21<sup>st</sup> July – Year 6 Leavers Party

22<sup>nd</sup> July – End of term Church Visits – times TBC

22<sup>nd</sup> July – Last Day of term

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# JUNIOR ROAD SAFETY OFFICERS

DURING EASTER TIME, ROADS ARE MUCH BUSIER AS PEOPLE LIKE TO GO OUT WITH THEIR FAMILY, SO IT IS EVEN MORE IMPORTANT TO BE SAFE AND FOLLOW THESE RULES:

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- 1) Remember to look both ways when crossing the road.
- 2) Please do not look on your phone when crossing the road.
- 3) Do your seatbelt up when you are in the car EVEN if it is 'just a short ride'.
- 4) Wear reflective clothes if you out when it is dark.



We hope that you have lots of fun during your Easter break, but you must also **stay safe!**

**Michael, Evie, Elsie, Elliot**

