St Mary's

Church of England Junior School

No: 6
20th November 2026

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 led by Rev Andrew Falconer. St Mary's will remember them.





This week we have had our annual Friendship Week, which coincided with National Anti-Bullying Week. We enjoyed a joint playtime with the infant school on Wednesday. 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 older pupils playing so sensibly with the younger children. We look forward to doing the same later in the year! In classes and assemblies this week, we have thought about this year's theme for Anti-Bullying Week: Break the Silence. This year's theme encourages children, young people, and adults to start conversations about bullying, speak up, listen, and take action together. We have thought about stories in the bible that teach us to be good friends and treat others how we wish to be treated.

On Monday Year 3 enjoyed a visit from 'Iron Age Matt', who helped us travel back in time to the Iron Age! Matt brought history to life by sharing real artefacts and fascinating stories about how people lived thousands of years ago. He showed the children everyday objects made from stone, bone and metal, and explained how Iron Age people used them for cooking, hunting, farming and making clothes.

It was lovely to see many of you in school on Tuesday morning to watch Year 5 on the ukulele; they have worked hard this term learning how to play them. Well done, Year 5!

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 £418, well done St Mary's. Donations can still be made by following this link:
St Mary's CE Junior School Old Basing is fundraising for BBC Children in Need

Last Thursday White class 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 Gill was very proud of how they worked so well as a team to plan and rehearse their sharing assembly!

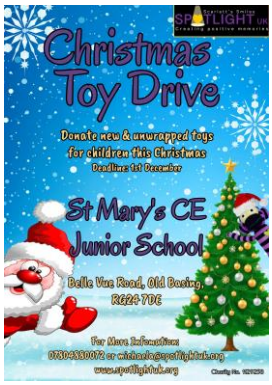
We are really looking forward to the F.O.O.B.S Christmas Market next Monday and the fun of present wrapping after! Thank you for your donations for this. Year 5 are looking forward to visiting church next week, remember that you are welcome to join your child for this.

As you will know, Mrs Baldwin retired last half term after nearly 20 years working at the school. In that time, she has given so much to the children and families at St Mary's, and we will miss her very much. We are delighted to welcome Mrs Farrell to the office team; many of you will have seen her already, and we know you will make her feel welcome.

Music Mark Recognition

We are thrilled that the school has been recognised again this year 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!

By accepting the Music Mark of Recognition, 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- Still time to donate!

Thank you to everyone who has already made a donation. We are collecting donations up until Monday 30th November. 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 this week.

Safeguarding update - The build up to Christmas.

The excitement and anticipation of Christmas can be wonderful for children, but for some it can also bring feelings of worry, anxiety or overwhelm. Changes to routines, busy social events, heightened expectations and concerns about gifts can all contribute to increased stress.
You can help by keeping regular routines where possible, making time to talk and listen to your child's feelings, and reassuring them that Christmas is about being together rather than having the "perfect" day. If your child seems particularly anxious, encourage plenty of sleep, exercise and opportunities to relax away from screens. If you have concerns about your child's emotional wellbeing, please do speak to your GP or contact the school, where we will be happy to offer support and signpost appropriate services. Together, we can help ensure that Christmas remains a happy and positive time for all children!

Talk Homework!

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

Which character from a book would you invite to dinner and why?

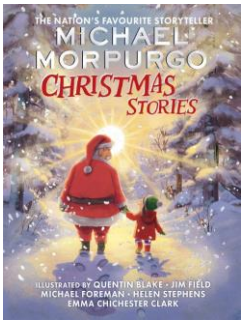
This question will help your child/children to:

- Develop comprehension skills, by recalling information about a character's personality, actions and role in the story.
- Justify opinions by explaining *why* they have chosen that character.
- Practise speaking in full sentences and giving reasons using words such as *because*, *for example* and *I think*.
- Strengthen listening skills as they hear and respond to other family members' choices and reasons. Encourage a love of reading by making books and characters a natural part of family conversation.

Health and Safety

Please can you ensure that nuts or items containing nuts are not brought into school in packed lunches or as snacks. 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.

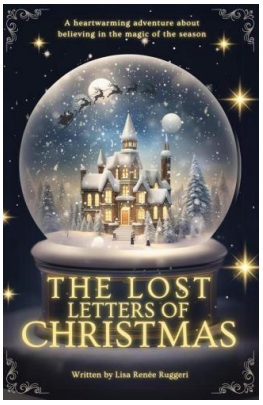
Festive Book Recommendations!



7+ Readers

Christmas Stories By Michael Morpurgo

Curl up by the fireside with an enchanting collection of Christmas stories from Britain's best-loved children's author, Michael Morpurgo. Lose yourself in faraway lands and unexpected adventures with five festive tales from the author who gave us *War Horse*. The perfect Christmas storytime experience for children aged 4 and up**.** A bestselling festive collection!



9+ Readers

The Lost Letters of Christmas. By Lisa Renée Ruggeri

Step into an enchanting holiday chapter book full of mystery, magic, and festive cheer — ideal for tweens and Key Stage Two readers.

When 12-year-old Sadie moves to the snowy village of Bramblewood and discovers a forgotten bundle of letters in her new home, she unravels a mystery that could change her town forever. With the help of Noel, a mischievous little elf, Sadie sets off on a magical journey to restore the lost spirit of Christmas. Filled with festive fun, heart-warming surprises, and the true magic of giving.

Governors' Corner

Passing the Baton: Welcome to Our New Chair!

Hello everyone,

A quick update from the Governing Board to let you know that I am officially passing the baton as Chair. Thank you to all of our wonderful parents and carers for your support during my time in the role. Together we have achieved so much for our children and I am proud of everything that our One Family has accomplished.

I am thrilled to welcome Andy Grayson as our incoming Chair. Andy is already a familiar face to many of you and I have no doubt that he will do a brilliant job leading us forward.

Here's to an exciting new chapter!

Best wishes,

Sefton Lucas, Outgoing Chair of Governors

Coffee Morning

Please see information below for upcoming parents' coffee mornings held with Old Basing Infant School. The first on of this is will be at the infant school on 9th December.

Attendance

Our attendance policy has been updated and is available on our website. This has been updated to reflect Hampshire's 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.

We closely monitor school attendance and look for patterns in absence. We continue to monitor 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

A huge thank you to everyone who has donated to our Happy School Bags collection yesterday. Your generosity is greatly appreciated and we collected a massive 703kg which has raised £316 which is

fantastic.

Our Christmas markets are taking place next week at both schools. Juniors is on Monday 23rd of November and Infants is on Friday 27th of November
A little reminder that Junior Tinsel Token sales have now closed, so please remember to send your child in with cash to spend at the market. Infant Tinsel Token orders remain open until Wednesday, so there is still time to get yours.
It's nearly time to send those all-important Christmas letters! Our Letter to Santa kits will be sent home with children over the next week, ready for some festive magic.
Thank you, as always, for your continued support. We hope everyone enjoys getting into the Christmas spirit.

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 2026/2027

Friday 18th December 2026
Monday 22nd February 2027
Friday 28th May 2027

Dates for your Diary

23rd Nov – F.O.O.B.S Christmas Market
24th Nov - Year 5 Church Visit 1:30pm (Parents of Yr 5 welcome to attend)
3rd Dec – Russell Sharing Assembly 2:45pm (Parents of Russell Class welcome to attend)
5th and 6th Dec – St Mary's Church tree festival Junior Choir to sing on 5th
w/c 7th Dec – No after school clubs this week
9th Dec – Coffee Morning at OBI (details below)
10th Dec – Dickens Sharing Assembly 2:45pm (Parents of Dickens Class welcome to attend)
10th Dec – School Concert (eve) – pupils involved have had information
11th Dec – Yr 6 Christmas Carol at the Haymarket
w/c 14th Dec – No after school clubs this week
15th Dec – Carol Concert at St Mary's Church 6:00pm
16th Dec – Class Christmas Parties
17th Dec – End of term church visits (see times in newsletter)
17th Dec – Christmas lunch
18th Dec – INSET DAY School Closed to Pupils

21st Dec – 1st Jan – Christmas Holidays

4th Jan – Start of Spring term
6th Jan – Yr 5 Swimming Starts (details will be sent out next half term)
11th Jan – Southampton Art gallery working with Yr 5
12th Jan - Year 6 Church Visit 1:30pm (Parents of Yr 6 welcome to attend)
14th Jan - Mitchell Class Sharing Assembly 2:45pm (Parents of Mitchell Class welcome to attend)
15th Jan – Year 5 F.O.O.B.S Disco
26th Jan - Year 4 Church Visit 1:30pm (Parents of Yr 4 welcome to attend)
28th Jan - Nightingale Class Sharing Assembly 2:45pm (Parents of Nightingale Class welcome to attend)
29th Jan – Yr 6 F.O.O.B.S Movie Night
3rd and 4th Feb – Parents' Evening
8th and 9th Feb – Year 4 to QMC
10th – Year 3 afternoon Show performance
11th – Year 3 evening Show performance
12th – F.O.O.B.S Dare to be Different Day

15th – 19th Feb – Half Term
22nd Feb – INSET Day (school closed to pupils)

10th -13th May 2027 Key Stage 2 (KS2) SATs (Year 6)
7th – 18th June 2027 Year 4 Multiplication Tables Check (MTC)
4th July – F.O.O.B.S Summer Fair
10th June – Sports Day (Yrs. 3 and 4 AM Yrs. 5 and 6 PM)

For all Hampshire term dates please follow this link:
School holiday dates | Education and learning | Hampshire County Council

Christmas Events 2026

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 23rd November**, information has already come out about this from F.O.O.B.S. Thank you for all the donations made for this event.

St Mary's Church Tree Festival

Our Junior choirs will be singing at this year's festival on Saturday **5th December at 11:30 am**. Do come along to hear them, look at all of the decorated trees and browse some festive stalls.



Carol Concert

We are putting together plans for our annual Christmas Carol Concert which will be held in the church on **Tuesday 15th 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 30th November**, from which date 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 16th 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 17th 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 and children will leave school 10-15 minutes before these times.



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

Christmas Dinner

Following the information that came out about our annual Christmas dinner on **Thursday 17th December**, please ensure that you order either a Christmas lunch or confirm a packed lunch (S) by Thursday 26th November.



OBIS AND ST. MARY'S JUNIOR INVITE YOU TO

OLD BASING SCHOOLS COFFEE MORNINGS

Meet with Mrs Thompson and Mrs Medlin.



Wednesday 9th December
Old Basing Infant School

Wednesday 24th March
St. Mary's

Wednesday 26th May
St. Mary's

9am- 10.30am

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

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