

# St Mary's

Church of England Junior School

No: 10  
17<sup>th</sup> January 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

A belated Happy New Year to you all. I hope that you all had a good break and enjoyed some time with family and friends over the festive period.

All the children came back brilliantly last week and they have worked hard over the last two weeks. Year 3 are enjoying learning about the works of Roald Dahl in their topic 'Dahl-The Play and Me' and I know they are looking forward to their production later this half term.

In Year 4, they have started their new geography led topic 'The Who, the What and the Where of Old Basing'. Ancient Greece is the theme for Year 5 and Year 6 are enjoying starting to learn about entertainment throughout the ages in their history; they are looking forward to a trip to Shakespeare's Globe theatre next week as well as seeing some sites in the capital!

I would like to thank you all for your support in ensuring good attendance at school. At the end of this week our overall attendance stands at 97.8%, ranking St Mary's 19<sup>th</sup> out of 420 schools in the county and putting us in the top 10% of schools nationally. Research shows that regular school attenders make better progress, both socially and academically and that regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with.

Please do let us know if events happen in your child's life that may have an impact on their well-being. This may be a family bereavement, moving house, changes in family circumstances, the loss of a pet or the serious illness of a family member. However as much we try to protect our children from adult conversations, they pick up on the emotions and worries of those around them. We are here to support them, as well as yourselves, if needed. Any information shared is always treated in confidence. We are One Family and here for everyone.

## Holocaust Memorial Day

On Monday 27<sup>th</sup> January we will be marking Holocaust Memorial Day. We focus on the rights that were taken away from people and the lack of respect that was shown for people's rights. This is centred on the Bible quote from Genesis: 'God created human beings in his own image.'

This year we will again be joining schools across the dioceses of Winchester and Portsmouth in marking this important day in a way that is age appropriate. In each year group will also share an age appropriate picture book and encourage pupils to think about the theme of this year's Holocaust Memorial Day – 'For a Better Future'

## Courtyard Project

We would like to take this opportunity to thank members of our school community who have donated plants and bulbs for the courtyard area. We would like to say a massive thank you to B&Q in Basingstoke for their very generous donation of plants. The courtyard is beginning to take shape, we have had some new signage installed and once the final planting is done and stones are laid it will be complete! It is lovely to see this area being used more and looking more loved. It is now a really lovely area for reflection, quiet break time activities and learning opportunities. Thank you to our school council for reaching out to local business - your letters worked well!



## **Sporting Success**

Huge congratulations to Sophie in Year 6 who took part in the county final individual table tennis competition in Southampton this week. After representing the school and winning the Basingstoke and Deane area competition in the Autumn term, she travelled to Southampton where she faced some strong opponents. We are delighted to say that she won after a long day of matches and she will now progress to the National Finals in Wolverhampton in April. Well done Sophie!

## **Safeguarding**

### **Staying Safe with new devices.**

Over Christmas, I'm sure some lucky children will have excitedly torn off the wrapping for a new mobile phone, tablet or games console! For some, it will be the first time they have owned a device that connects them to the online world. Even for older children, a new device can mean new risks to be aware of.

- Keep numbers and devices private. Make sure your child understands that they should never share their phone number with someone they don't know or accept a friend request from them. They should also appreciate that it's a good idea to mainly keep their device out of sight, never lend it to a stranger and never put it down somewhere that other people could steal it or take it to use without asking.
- Pay attention to age ratings One of the first things children want to do with any device is play games and explore apps. Before they download or install a new console game, check its age rating. Many popular games and apps have content that is not suitable for younger ages. The safest long-term solution is to adjust the device's settings so they can only download and use games appropriate for their age.
- Have 'the money conversation' before your children start using their new device in earnest, talk to them about in-app purchases and other ways that money might be spent through their device. Once they understand, you might want to agree on a spending limit and reassure them that they can come to you if they're uncertain or have made a purchase by accident.

## **Make a Difference at St. Mary's: Join Our Board of Governors!**

St. Mary's thrives because of passionate people like you! We are looking for enthusiastic individuals to join our Board of Governors and help shape the future of our school.

Be a champion for our children's education. As a Board Governor, you'll gain valuable leadership experience, collaborate with inspiring colleagues, and directly contribute to the success of St. Mary's. Please contact the school office for further information.

*Sefton Lucas, Chair of Governors*

## **Governors' Corner**

This week I joined a year group Act of Worship in St. Mary's Church, this time with Year 6. I noticed that the new values are being explored in Acts of Worship, and elsewhere, and currently Courage is the focus. Year 6 have been considering people who inspire them, both current and historical figures. Several children shared who had inspired them (there were several footballers included!) and why. There was a discussion of how these people had to overcome barriers or expectations to do the right thing and achieve their goal, which required courage and determination. The Act of Worship was engaging and encouraged the children to think deeper in their work on inspirational people, and to consider how they themselves will have to be courageous at times to stand up for what is right when it might seem easier to follow a different path.

*Paul Skinner, Foundation Governors*

## **F.O.O.B.S. news**

Hello and Happy New Year from F.O.O.B.S! We hope the Year 5s have fun at their disco tonight! The Year 6 Movie Night will be held on Friday 31st January. A Parent Mail with further details will be sent out soon. We will be running our ever popular Dare to be Different day again this year on 14th February. Please keep an eye out for more details.

## **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!) Miss Bunkle (our SENCo), Mrs Alvarez (our ELSA) and Mrs Squire (Behaviour Support LSA) are also on hand to chat about issues.

Meet us 9am to 10.30am on:

Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> February

Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> April

Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> May

Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> 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**

Monday 24th Feb 2025

Friday 23rd May 2025

### **Dates for your Diary**

17<sup>th</sup> Jan – F.O.O.B.S Year 5 Disco, 5:00-6:30pm

21<sup>st</sup> Jan – Year 6 SATs information evening 6pm

22<sup>nd</sup> Jan – Year 6 visit to the Globe Theatre & Tate Modern Art Gallery

23<sup>rd</sup> Jan – Mitchell class sharing assembly 2:45pm, parents/carers welcome

23<sup>rd</sup> Jan – Southampton Art Gallery in to visit Year 5

28<sup>th</sup> Jan – Year 4 Church visit 1:30pm, parents/carers welcome

30<sup>th</sup> Jan – Paulet class sharing assembly 2:45pm, parents/carers welcome

31<sup>st</sup> Jan – F.O.O.B.S Year 6 movie night, details to follow

4<sup>th</sup> Feb – Parent & Carer coffee morning 09:00-10:30am

5<sup>th</sup> Feb – Year 5 Swimming starts (to be confirmed)

w/c 10<sup>th</sup> Feb – No after school clubs this week

w/c 10<sup>th</sup> Feb – Year 3 show week, details to follow

10<sup>th</sup> Feb – Year 4 QMC visit

11<sup>th</sup> Feb – Year 4 QMC visit

12<sup>th</sup> Feb – Year 5 Swimming

14<sup>th</sup> Feb – F.O.O.B.S Dare to be Different Day

### **w/c 17<sup>th</sup> Feb – Half term**

### **24<sup>th</sup> Feb – Inset Day**

25<sup>th</sup> Feb – First day back (after school clubs start back this week)

10<sup>th</sup> Mar – Year 5 QMC visit

11<sup>th</sup> Mar – Year 5 QMC visit

11<sup>th</sup> Mar – Year 3 Church visit 1:30pm, parents/carers welcome

12<sup>th</sup> Mar – Year 4 French café

13<sup>th</sup> Mar – Austen class sharing assembly 2:45pm, parents/carers welcome

w/c 17<sup>th</sup> Mar – No after school clubs this week

18<sup>th</sup> Mar – Year 5 Church visit 1:30pm, parents/carers welcome

19<sup>th</sup> Mar – Parents Evening, details to follow

10<sup>th</sup> Mar – Parents Evening, details to follow

20<sup>th</sup> Mar – Davies class sharing assembly 2:45pm, parents/carers welcome

27<sup>th</sup> Mar – Wellington Class sharing assembly 2:45pm, parents/carers welcome

29<sup>th</sup> Mar – Easter Fair, details to follow

4<sup>th</sup> Apr – End of term Church visits (am) timings to follow

1<sup>st</sup> Apr – Parent & Carer coffee morning 09:00-10:30

4<sup>th</sup> Apr – Last Day of term

7<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> Apr – Easter Holidays

22<sup>nd</sup> Apr – First day of new term