

No: 13
7th March 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

The start of this half term has started well, children came back after the half term break eager to learn.

Book week this week has been a great success with some lovely work being produced across the school. Each year group chose a picture book to lead their learning through the week; I hope that your children have talked about the books they studied.

Year 6 looked at 'The Rabbits' by Shaun Tan - *a thought-provoking allegorical fable about colonisation and the effect of man on the environment. Told from the perspective of the colonised, an unseen narrator describes the coming of the 'rabbits'. An encounter that is at first friendly and curious, but later darkens... Sparse, strange and stunningly beautiful, The Rabbits is a truly unique picture book.*

In Year 5, pupils enjoyed sharing the book 'Ride the Wind' by Nicola Davies and Salvatore Rubbino - *A heartfelt story from the author of King of the Sky, The Day War Came and The Promise, with an important point to make about male mental health.*

Year 4 looked at 'Granny Came Here on the Empire Windrush' by Patrice Lawrence and Camilla Sucre - *This heart-warming and heartfelt debut picture book from multi-award-winning author, Patrice Lawrence, will help ensure that the struggles and achievements of the Windrush generation are never forgotten.*

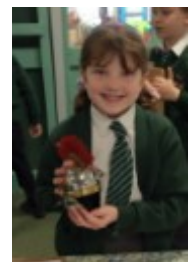
Finally, the Year 3 classes all looked at 'Valentine's Guest House' by Sam Sharland- *When a tiger comes to stay at Valentine's guest house, the human visitors all check out in a rush. Luckily, the hotel soon starts to fill again - but with a very different collection of residents, all with new and differing needs. Elsie and Valentine make lots of changes to accommodate the new guests, and a very popular, accessible and unusual guest house results!*

As you can see all of the books chosen this year were selected to show diversity and inclusion, something we believe passionately about here at St Mary's and all of the children responded really well to the themes raised in the books.

As part of Book week, our Year 6 pupils headed to the infant school to read their favourite picture book to pupils in Reception, thank you Old Basing Infants for having us!

We have all enjoyed our guess the teacher game! Some of them were so hard! We hope you have enjoyed playing along at home, how many did your children correctly identify? Well done to the following classes who all got 35/36 correct, White, Nightingale and Russell, some teachers have been very competitive over this game!

Last week Year 3 began their new History topic with a trip to the Roman Museum! (The year 3 teachers did a very good job of creating our museum!) They enjoyed looking at many different artefacts and asked many questions which they will hopefully answer over the next few weeks they also enjoyed their Roman Day, there were some very frightening gladiators around!



We are looking forward to the year 4 French Café next week and look forward to finding out more about the Christian festival of Lent in our Act of Worship's. Year 5 are off to QMC and Austen class will entertain us with their sharing assembly, it will be another busy week!

Attendance

As of today the school's overall attendance stands at 97.1%.

Parents Evenings

These will be held on Wednesday 19th March and Thursday 20th March. You can book your appointment easily and electronically through SCOPAY. Please see the parent mail that was sent out last week for details of how to book if you haven't already.

Comic Relief 2024

Comic Relief is approaching!

On **Friday 21st March** we will be joining many others around the country to mark this day of fundraising. We will be raising money for Comic Relief by having a 'red dress-down day'. Please can everyone come to school wearing as much red as possible, but please no permanent hair dye – wash out spray is ok, in return for a donation to this great charity. A link to the Comic Relief/Red Nose Day just giving donation page will be sent out nearer the time.

Poppy Appeal

We were pleased to hear last week that we raised an amazing £417.47 for the 2024 Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal. Thank you all for your generous donations.

Sporting Success

There have been lots of sporting fixtures over the last few weeks.

Our Year 5 /6 Athletics team have made it through to the county finals in Portsmouth where they will represent Basingstoke and Deane – this is a fantastic achievement, well done to them all.

On Thursday the year 5/6 Boys Football team had a great game at Rucstall, they won their game but we were more impressed with the attitude they showed and how they played as team. This afternoon this same team take on Chalk Ridge at home, good luck boys!

After qualifying at the recent District cross country competition Nora, in year 6, represented Basingstoke and Deane at the county finals at Down Grange where she finished an amazing 20th out of a large field. Please can I take this opportunity to thank parents who help transport children to these additional sporting events.

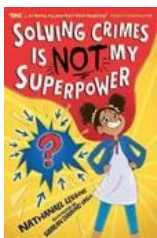
Safeguarding

As the evenings are getting lighter we know that many of our older pupils will be going out to play at local parks etc. with their friends.

When children go out to play on their own, it's important for parents to ensure their safety while encouraging their independence. Start by setting clear boundaries on where they can go and establish a specific time for them to return home. Make sure they understand the importance of staying in well-lit, familiar areas and avoiding secluded places. If possible equip them with a way to contact you, such as a mobile phone, and teach them how to respond in case of an emergency. Remind them never to talk to strangers or accept anything from people they don't know. Regularly check in with them to ensure they feel safe and confident. By taking these precautions, you can help your children enjoy their playtime while keeping them safe.

I know myself that going out to play on their own for the first time is very exciting for the children – but it can be nerve wracking of us!

New book recommendations



Solving Crimes is NOT My Superpower, By Nathanael Lessore

In a town full of people with powers, will Sara ever find her superpower? Solving the mystery of the stolen football trophy might help. The first in a hilarious series for young readers. (6-8yrs)

Wildlands, by Brogen Murphy

Set in a utopian landscape and addressing big questions about humanity's relationship with the environment, this is a gripping and refreshingly original story of survival against the odds.



Governors' Corner

Each Learning and Ethos committee meeting begins with a presentation from one of the teachers about the subject that they lead within the school. This includes an overview of the curriculum in each year group, an update of progress and attainment in each year group, what the teacher's action plan is going forward and importantly the chance for governors in this committee to ask questions around all of this.

The latest meeting included a presentation from Miss Candy about Geography and from the images of lessons and trips, as well as comments from children taken during pupil conferencing, you could really get a sense of how much the children enjoyed their geography learning. The Geography curriculum has a good mix of practical outdoors experience through trips and visits as well as innovative and interesting ways of making this relevant and engaging in a classroom setting. When the focus within primary education can so often Focus on maths and English, it is reassuring that at St Mary's such importance and passion is still placed in all subjects across the curriculum.

Andy Grayson, Parent Governor

F.O.O.B.S. News

Hello from F.O.O.B.S.!

Preparations for the Easter Fair are well underway. Tickets are on sale until 19th March while stocks last. They are selling well so book early to avoid disappointment. There will be no tickets available on the day. We would be very grateful for donations of chocolate for the chocolate tombola, particularly Easter eggs although any kind of chocolate would be much appreciated. Please bring them into either school by 14th March.

We are very short on stock of school jumpers and cardigans in our second hand uniform store. If you have any outgrown ones (in resaleable condition e.g. no rips or stains) please get in touch with us on friendsofoldbasingschools@gmail.com . Thank you.

Coffee Mornings and Parental Support

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 1st April

Tuesday 20th May

Tuesday 8th July



Gemma Lillywhite
Headteacher

Dates for your Diary

10th Mar – Year 5 QMC visit (Brunel)
11th Mar – Year 5 QMC visit (am White, pm Mitchell)
11th Mar – Year 3 Church visit 1:30pm, parents/carers welcome
12th Mar – Year 5 Swimming
12th Mar – Year 4 French café
13th Mar – Austen class sharing assembly 2:45pm, parents/carers welcome
w/c 17th Mar – No after school clubs this week
18th Mar – Year 5 Church visit 1:30pm, parents/carers welcome
19th Mar – Year 3 trip to Anvil Orchestra Unwrapped
19th Mar – Year 5 Swimming
19th Mar – Parents Evening
20th Mar – Parents Evening
20th Mar – Davies class sharing assembly 2:45pm, parents/carers welcome
21st Mar – Science Day
21st Mar – Comic Relief (red dress down day)
27th Mar – Wellington Class sharing assembly 2:45pm, parents/carers welcome
29th Mar – Easter Fair 1-2:30pm, 3-4:30pm OB infant school
1st Apr – Parent & Carer coffee morning 09:00-10:30
1st Apr – Year 6 parents SRE information evening 3:30pm, details to follow
4th Apr – End of term Church visits (am) timings to follow
4th Apr – Last Day of term

7th-21st Apr – Easter Holidays

22nd Apr – First day of new term (summer term after school clubs start this week)
25th Apr – F.O.O.B.S Year 4 Disco 5:00-6:30pm
1st May – Conan Doyle class sharing assembly, 2:45pm, parents/carers welcome
7th May – Eucharist Years 5/6 10:00am – parents/carers welcome
8th May – Brunel class sharing assembly, 2:45pm, parents/carers welcome
w/c 12th May Year 6 SAT's week
13th May – Year 4 Church visit, 1:30pm, parents/carers welcome
20th May – Parent & Carer coffee morning 09:00-10:30am
20th May – Year 6 Church visit 1:30pm, parents/carers welcome
23rd May – Inset Day

26th – 30th May – Half term

2nd June – First day back (after school clubs start back this week)
5th June – Sports Day
12th June – Reserve Sports Day
19th June – Whole Year 6 & Class Photos
6th July – Summer Fair
w/c 14th July – Year 6 Show week