

St Mary's

Church of England Junior School

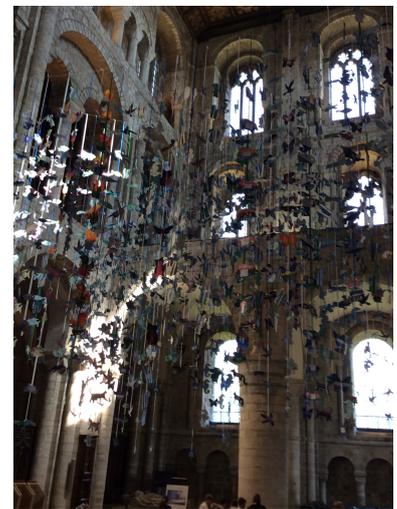
No: 19
27th June 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope that you have all been enjoying the sunshine! Please do make sure your child applies sun cream at the start of the day and please make sure they have a water bottle every day.

Last week it was a privilege to help at and watch the Basingstoke Primacy Schools Music concert at the Anvil. Our orchestra joined with orchestras and choirs from around the area to put on an amazing evening of music and dance! I am always blown away by the talent of the young people in our town. On the Wednesday evening I chaperoned Luke Murphy MP and he was so impressed by the performance and the efforts and enthusiasm of the children and of all the adults in the BPSM organising group, A HUGE thank you to Mrs Malone for chairing this group and thank you to all of our staff who helped with rehearsals and on performance nights.

I had a lovely day last Thursday at Winchester Cathedral with our year 6 pupils for their leavers service. They represented the school brilliantly and had a lovely day with hundreds of other pupils from church schools across the diocese. It was lovely to see their contributions to the large installation hanging from the ceiling of the North Transept. There were more than 2000 creatures hung, each had a prayer written on them encouraging us to think about looking after God's creations.



Staffing Update

We are sad to share that Mrs Beeney will be retiring at the end of the year. She has brought so much experience and enthusiasm to the team and she will be very much missed. However, we know that she will enjoy time with her family exploring new places in her camper van! I am sure we will see her back at St Mary's doing supply sometime.

As you are aware from our last newsletter, Miss Catherine Fogarty and Miss Ellie McCluskey will be joining our teaching team here at St Mary's in September, both bringing much experience and talent to our teaching team.

End of year family picnic, joint with OB infant school – 18th July 12:45pm-2:00pm

We are pleased to share plans for an end of term family picnic to mark the end of the academic year! We have enjoyed several joint events this year and these activities and links are really important for our school community and relations.

On Friday 18th July you are invited to join your child/children for lunch at the junior school.

Details will be confirmed nearer the time, but infant parents will be asked to join their infant school child/children at school at 12:30pm in order to then walk over to the junior school with their class at 12:45pm.

Junior children will meet their family on the junior school field.

Any child who does not have a parent/relative in attendance will enjoy their picnic with their class.

At the end of the picnic, children will be able to leave with their parents/carers. For safeguarding reasons pupils will only be able to leave after the picnic with their own family – children will not be allowed to leave with any friends. There will be no exceptions to this for pupils at either school.
We will send out further details nearer the time.
Mrs Lillywhite and Mrs Denning

Safeguarding – Beach Safety

With the beautiful weather lots of children have talked about exciting trips to the beach. Have a lovely time if you go! Please do read and share the following safety tips with all of your family.

Beach safety tips:

Tip 1

Choose a lifeguarded beach

Check in advance if the beach you're visiting has a lifeguard

Tip 3

Know your location

If you're not familiar with the area make sure you note down the beach name and address. Other details such as landmarks are also useful to help us find you

Tip 5

Look after each other

Keep a close eye on children and never let them swim alone. Go with others when exploring

Tip 2

Check local signs and flags for risks

Be aware of dangers and sea conditions

Tip 4

Remember Float to Live

If you find yourself in trouble in the water, relax and float with your head back and your ears submerged

If you get in trouble at the beach call 999 and ask for the Coastguard



Summer Reading Challenge

Hampshire Libraries Summer Reading Challenge 2025!

It would be great to see lots of our pupils signing up for this summer's Hampshire Libraries reading challenge. Sign up at your library or online from Saturday 12 July to Saturday 13 September.

Story Garden will inspire children to tap into a world of imagination through reading, exploring the magical connection between storytelling and nature!

[Kids Zone](#) | [Leisure and culture](#) | [Hampshire County Council](#)

Do you know anyone with a child due to start Year R in September 2026?

Old Basing Infant School will be holding open mornings on the following dates.

September 25th

15th October 9:15am

7th November 9:15am

24th November 9:15am

For more information, please contact Old Basing Infant school: adminoffice@oldbasing.hants.sch.uk

Attendance

As of today, the school's overall attendance is 97%. In recent weeks we have seen fewer pupils arriving late in the mornings, thank you for your support with this.

Governors' Corner

Although I have driven past the Gordon Brown Outdoor Education Centre in Rotherwick many times, I had not previously had the opportunity to venture inside. That was until I accompanied year 5, Brunel Class, on their epic adventure day earlier this month! This day brought together curriculum themes relating to environmental science and the natural world as well as personal survival and resilience when tackling previously unknown situations – i.e. how to think on your feet and cope using what is immediately available to you when you have no option – a great life skill I'm sure you'd agree!

The Centre is owned by the London Borough of Brent, purchased in the 1970's, to give London's children access to the outdoor opportunities and now available for anyone to use. The convenient location a short minibus drive away from Old Basing started the day early. The pupils were greeted by the Education Centre Team and given important safety information. The activity leader introduced their exciting day – they were all Amazon Explorers!

A briefing about the context of the Amazon highlighted the need for keeping your own safety in mind. Potentially harmful wildlife, explained with pictures of giant centipedes(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scolopendra_gigantea), Bullet Ants (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paraponera_clavata) Bird Eating Spiders (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scolopendra_gigantea) etc; got the group buzzing. The pupils eagerly joined in the discussion about the need for a safe, waterproof shelter to protect them from dramatically changing weather conditions, the need to catch and cook food to sustain them, and the ability to observe beyond the tree canopy in search of rescue. Then the fun began!

The walk across the fields led the group to an area where, as four teams, they built a wooden shelter using sticks of various sizes and stuffing obvious gaps with grass. They had 10 minutes to achieve their task and really "went for it"! Successful construction was then tested by the instructor - the group crouched inside the shelter whilst the outside was squirted with water – phew - they worked! Moving on they encountered the "catching food" theme. Archery was a firm favourite for several pupils. Even those enjoying their first ever attempt had a real eye for the target! In the downtime they all learnt to weave a rope. A short lunch break under a covered, seated area gave everyone energy for the afternoon. The climbing walls and "Death Drop" beckoned! Safety in this area was crucial. They were all attentive and did well to adhere to instructions. All the pupils "had a go", and even with initial uncertainty in some cases, the instructor was able to encourage them to step off the "Death Drop" to lower to the ground. The afternoon ended with a campfire to "cook their food" on a stick – in this case a marshmallow. A great way to round off a fun-filled day! The photos say it all! <https://www.st-marys-jun.hants.sch.uk/gallery/?pid=7&catid=59&albumid=752>

Many pupils were in their element enjoying the outdoor challenges. It was a pleasure to spend time with them all - seeing the pupils actively and respectfully listen to instruction, enjoying the experience of "feeling the fear and doing it anyway". As well as an excellent "taster" for the 2025 Year 6 Calshot trip, this "Amazon" adventure was an altogether great way to join the dots across the curriculum, whilst building trust amongst the group, individual courage, creativity and resilience for life's adventures ahead! It deserves a big "well done" to all involved in making it happen!

Karen Ashton, Foundation Governor.

F.O.O.B.S. News

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

The Summer Fair is just around the corner now and we are in the process of finalising lots of things! You will see a number of messages come out from us via the schools over the coming days relating to the Summer Fair, including requests for your help, for baked goods for the refreshment stalls and also with information about what to expect on the day. Volunteer sign ups are still open and there are a number of gaps still to be filled - please do sign up as we simply can't run these stalls without your help! If you haven't already, please return your raffle ticket stubs & money to the school offices. And don't forget, sales close for buying your entry tickets in advance on Friday next week. Please purchase them here: [F.O.O.B.S. - Home](#)

Coffee Mornings and Parental Support

Our final parent Coffee Morning, alongside Old Basing Infants will take place here at St Mary's on **Tuesday 8th July**. As usual, Miss Bunkle, Mrs Alvarez and Mrs Squire will be in attendance.



Gemma Lillywhite
Headteacher

Dates for your Diary

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

Inset Days for 2025/26

Weds 3rd September 2025

Mon 3rd November 2025

Fri 19th December 2025

Mon 23rd February 2026

Fri 22nd May 2026

Dates for your Diary

3rd July – Year 5 Taster day to Costello

4th July – Shuffle up morning 11:00-12:00am

6th July – Summer Fair

8th July – Parent & Carer coffee morning 09:00-10:30am

w/c 7th July – No after school clubs this week

w/c 14th July – No after school clubs this week

w/c 14th July – Year 6 Show week (evening performances Tues, Weds, Thurs 6pm)

16th July – Year 6 Leavers Service at Church pm (parents welcome)

18th July – Family Picnic, joint with Old Basing Infant School (details in newsletter)

18th July – Hampshire Music Service inset day (no music lessons)

21st July – Year 6 Beach Party

22nd July – Church visits am (details to follow)

22nd July – Last day of term, normal finish time of 3:25pm

23rd July-2nd September Summer Holidays

3rd September – Inset Day (school closed to pupils)

4th September – First day of new term

11th-14th May 2026 Year 6 SATs tests

1st-12th June 2026 – Year 4 Multiplication Tests