



Church of England Junior School

No: 11

9th February 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

Please let me start by wishing you all a happy and restful half term, we look forward to seeing the children back in school on Tuesday 20th February. Please note the school office will be closed on Monday 19th February as all staff are involved in training.

This week we have enjoyed watching Year 3 perform 'Jack and the Beanstalk'. It has been lovely to see how much some of them have grown in confidence since starting with us in September. Year 2 from Old Basing Infant School, and all the children here enjoyed watching the dress rehearsal and it was then lovely to welcome so many parents and relatives in to watch the performances on Wednesday afternoon and Thursday evening. Thank you parents and carers for helping with learning lines and providing costumes. Thank you also to the staff involved and of course a huge thank you and well done to all of Year 3! You are amazing!

Over the last half term we have introduced a new reading curriculum across the school taking advice from advisors from HIAS (Hampshire Inspection and Advisory Service.) This has been well received by pupils and we have already seen an improvement in reading skills across the school.

Last half term the following books were used as stimulus and focus for reading lessons, hopefully your children will have talked about them, I know many have been out and brought the books, or books by the same author themselves which is lovely to see.

Year 3 – 'Charlie and the Chocolate Factory' by Roald Dahl.

Year 4 – 'The Last Bear' by Hannah Gold and 'What a Waste' by Jess French.

Year 5 - 'Who Let the Gods Out' by Maz Evans and 'The Orchard Book of Greek Myths' by Geraldine McCaughrean.

Year 6 – 'Wonder' by R. J. Palacio and 'The Highwayman' by Alfred Noyes.

Today we have seen many of our school rules broken with the F.O.O.B.S 'Dare to be Different Day!' There was a lot of juice being drunk, long hair left down and odd bits of clothing worn! Thank you to F.O.O.B.s for organising today and thank you parents for your support.

When we return from the half term break, we will be in Lent. Our Act of Worships next half term will focus on the period of Lent and the significance of this for Christians as we prepare for Holy Week and Easter. I am sure many of you will enjoy a few pancakes next Tuesday to mark the start of Lent.

Sporting News

The last few weeks have seen many successful sporting events with wins in both girls' and boys' football matches. This week saw lots of pupils from across the school take part in the Basingstoke District Cross Country competitions; well done in particular to Roma, Year 4, who finished 4th in her age group and Coco, Year 6, who will now go onto represent the district at the county finals. Well done to all involved.

After School Clubs

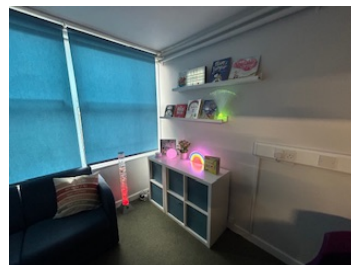
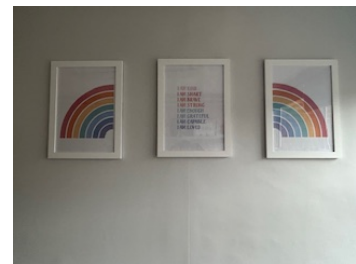
After school clubs will resume after half term during the w/c 19th February and will then run until week beginning 18th March. Please note there will be no clubs w/c 11th March due to Parents Evening. We are currently working on putting the summer term clubs list together. Please look out for a parent mail later today in relation to changes to the booking system for summer term clubs.

Attendance

As of today the school's overall attendance stands at 96.6%. Congratulations to Davies Class with the highest attendance of 97.8 %.

Thank You Village Cafe

As mentioned previously we were lucky to receive funding from The Village Cafe to redecorate and furnish the Rainbow Room. This morning we welcomed Deb and Lesley, two of the members of the cafe committee, to see the room, thank you once again to them all for their continued hard work in our local community. Our next project will be looking at playtime playground equipment and storage which I hope to have in place for the start of the summer term!



Back to Basics

Empowering parents and carers to support their child's emotional wellbeing within the home.

Looking after your family's wellbeing is very important. Families all need some help from time to time due to life changes or events. As a parent or carer, you can take small steps to help your child's wellbeing as well as your own. You can do this by starting with the basics. We are delighted to offer you the opportunity to attend a meeting held at Great Binfields Primary School on Thursday 29th February, 9:30-10:30 led by Shelly Aldridge from Back to Basic, Hampshire County Council.

Members of staff from St Mary's will be present and this parent meeting is open to parents/carers from Great Binfields, St Mary's CE Junior School and Old Basing Infant school.

Details and a link to the booking form can be found on the letter sent out via Parent Mail on Monday 22nd January.

Comic Relief 2024

Comic Relief is approaching!

On Friday 15th 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!

Governors' Corner

Governing Board Champions Continuous Improvement: Self-Evaluation in Action.

St. Mary's CE Junior School's governing board believes that continuous improvement is essential for delivering an exceptional education. That's why we actively participate in an annual self-evaluation process, ensuring we're constantly striving to be the best we can be.

To gain a thorough understanding of our strengths and areas for development, we use a two-pronged approach:

- National Governance Association (NGA) Skills Audit: This national tool helps us assess the overall breadth and depth of our collective skills and knowledge, guaranteeing we possess the necessary expertise to guide the school effectively.
- Internal Self-Evaluation Form: Tailored specifically for St. Mary's, this form delves deeper into key areas like strategic leadership, accountability, people management, structures, compliance, and evaluation. It allows for a candid self-reflection on our strengths and weaknesses in each domain.

This combined approach provides a valuable roadmap for improvement.

It helps us:

- Leverage Strengths: We build upon our established areas of excellence to further contribute to the school's success.
- Target Weaknesses: By identifying areas for improvement, we enhance our knowledge, skills, and processes, ensuring continual progress.
- Align with Priorities: We tailor our development efforts to deliver the school's established objectives effectively.

Through this rigorous self-evaluation, the governing board remains at the forefront of school development. We firmly believe that this dedication helps St. Mary's CE Junior School thrive and deliver an exceptional education to all our students.

Look out for future updates on how the governing board's findings translate into concrete actions that benefit the entire school community. We believe in transparency and open communication, and we welcome your feedback to continue our journey of continuous improvement together.

Sefton Lucas, Chair of Governors

F.O.O.B.S. News

Hello from F.O.O.B.S! We hope the children have had a great time on Dare to be Different Day today! Quiz Night tickets are now on sale via the website (www.foobs.weebly.com). It is on Saturday 2nd March at Old Basing Village Hall and costs £15 per person including a hot meal.

SAVE THE DATE! Saturday 23rd March we will be holding the annual Easter Fayre at the infant school. More details to follow by email after half term.

A reminder about the F.O.O.B.S. lotto, a monthly draw you can enter for between £1 and £5 for a chance to win half of the pot with the other half going to F.O.O.B.S. Last month's winner was ticket 234, winning a fantastic £119.50! The winning ticket holder has been contacted by email. Details and an entry form can be found on the website (www.foobs.weebly.com)

Coffee Mornings and Parental Support

Thank you to all the parents who came to Coffee Morning on Tuesday. It was great to meet together and have such honesty and openness. We are all facing so many similar struggles, hearing others share their experiences definitely makes us feel we are not alone. A big thank you to Mrs Thompson and Mrs Mitchell, from the infant school, and the lovely OBI infant parents for joining us. It was great to share experiences from every stage of parenting!

Mrs Alvarez, Mrs Squire and Miss Bunkle will be at the next one which is 9am on Tuesday 12th March. Mrs Alvarez and Miss Bunkle will also be attending the Back to Basics Parenting Workshop at Great Binfields, 9.30 -10.30 on the 29th February. It would be great to see some familiar St. Mary's faces there if you are able to attend.

Meet us 9am to 10.30am on:
Tuesday 12th March
Tuesday 7th May
Tuesday 2nd July



Half Term Activities

Stuck for something to do next week? The following website has some ideas of attractions and events in the local area. Maybe there is somewhere you hadn't thought of.

<https://www.visit-hampshire.co.uk/whats-on/february-half-term-events>

Gemma Lillywhite
Headteacher

2023-24 INSET Days

19th February 2024

24th May 2024

Dates for your Diary

12th-16th February – Half Term

19th February INSET Day

20th February – First day of new half term

21st February – Yr. 5 Swimming (last one)

21st February – Eucharist Yrs. 5 & 6 (parents welcome)

27th February – Yr. 3 Church visit 1:30pm

28th February – Yr. 4 French Café (in hall)

29th February – Davies Class Sharing Assembly 2:45pm

2nd March – F.O.O.B.S Quiz Night (further details to follow)

4th-8th March – Book week

5th March – SRE meeting (Yr. 6 parents) 3:30pm

7th March – Yr. 6 Shakespeare workshop (pm)

8th March – Yr. 5 Disco (F.O.O.B.S) 5-6:30pm

12th March – Coffee morning 9-10:30am

12th March – Yr. 5 Church visit 1:30pm

13th March – Parents Evening (details to follow)

14th March – Parents Evening (details to follow)

15th March – Red Nose Day

21st March – Austen Class Sharing Assembly 2:45pm

23rd March – F.O.O.B.S. Easter Fair (details to follow)

27th March – End of term Church visits (pm) details to follow

28th March – Last day of term (normal finish time of 3:25pm)

29th March-12th April – Easter Holidays

15th April – First day of new term