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July 2021 Newsletter

Dear Parents, Carers and friends of St Mary's,

As we approach the end of yet another school year, I would like to take the opportunity to thank you all for your help, support and interest this year. This year seems to have flown by in one sense but not in others. We are very conscious that it is the partnership between families and school that makes St Mary's such a special place and we are all looking forward to reengaging with you next year. Thank you never seems enough. I want you to know how proud I am of all the children and staff who have just kept going. Sadly however staff have witnessed an increasing trend of parents who have not been respectful in all their correspondence this year – either by email or in person, or in remote meetings. Staff here act with dignity and respect at all times and we ask that parents do the same.

Whilst the situation for easing lockdown still remains uncertain, we are making plans here for September to look different. We are happy to share some details with you, however please bear in mind that plans could change between now and then.

1. We do not intend to operate a 'bubble' system in September. This will mean that we can resume whole school assemblies and allow children to mix at break and lunch times. 'Bubbles' will only be reintroduced in response to a local outbreak. Any future decision to reintroduce 'bubbles' will not be taken lightly.
2. From July 19th school will no longer be responsible for contact tracing. This will be done via NHS Test and Trace. Children will only be contacted by Test and Trace if they have been identified as a close contact of a positive case. They will then be advised to get a PCR test.
3. Facemasks will no longer be needed on site. Again, facemasks will only be reintroduced in response to a local outbreak.
4. If travelling abroad this summer, please bear in mind that a period of quarantine may be needed upon your return. Please inform school if this is the case.
5. Children must continue to stay home if they display any Covid symptoms.
6. We will be able to end the staggering start and end times to school. All classroom doors will be open at 8.50 am and will close at 9am. All children will be able to be picked up at 3pm.
7. Children should wear school uniform every day (including school shoes and not trainers). PE kits can be brought into school and children can change into them as needed.

All of the above is subject to there being no change in restrictions being imposed on schools either nationally or regionally. The situation will be monitored over the coming weeks and we will of course notify you if anything does change.

Parking

Police have recognised that parking outside is an issue and dangerous at times. A reminder that the school car park is only for staff and disabled parents. The police have given us a Police Commissioners Grant to prevent parking outside school by placing our "Parking Buddies" on the road. Unbelievably parents have still been parking illegally. Please know these measures are for the safety of your children.



I have asked each teacher to share some highlights of the past year with you – please enjoy reading them.

Nursery

Nursery Memories 2020-2021

- September- Sponsored Welly Walk to Phoenix Park
- October and November- learning about Autumn
- November- Poppy pictures for Remembrance Day
- December- Christmas celebrations, concert and party
- March- St David's Day and St Patrick's Day, World Book Day and Science Week
- April- Easter preparations and celebration. Making our own pond for the front garden and celebrating St George's Day
- April to May busy planting vegetables and flowers
- May- Summer Walk to Phoenix Park
- June- hearing baby Bluetits in our Nesting Box



Reception

Our first year in St Mary's Primary is over and what a fantastic year we have had. We even spent time learning with our families at home during our period of remote education. We have met many new people and made some great friends. Learning through play, we have developed lots of new skills to prepare us for our journey through school. When a topic sparked our interest, we ran with it and embraced all that was inspiring, exciting and magical about it. Our love of animals and nature inspired many of our adventures and we met lots of 'characters' along the way; Herbert the 'Log Dog' and Hearty the angle shades moth to name but a few. We enjoyed learning sign language, designing Super Heroes, making booby traps for the teachers and planning and creating obstacle courses. We performed a Christmas Nativity production, took part in our first Sports Day and showcased our amazing talents in our class talent show. Our Reception year has been filled to the brim with fun, laughter, loving and learning and we are more than ready for our next adventure in Year 1.

Year 1

What a fantastic year for Year 1! The Year 1 team are really proud of you all and have loved watching you grow and flourish in what has been a challenging year. You all have achieved so much. It has been amazing watching you all be team players in Mr R's P.E. lessons. You all encourage each other and demonstrate our school values. We had a great design and technology day where you learned new skills like how to use a bench hook and saw and how to use different materials to make a boat. Our local walk was a great success and we visited the Old School, St. Mary's Church and Halton Castle and learned some interesting facts. Sports day was filled with fun and laughter. We had some great jumping beans in the sack race, some amazing sprinters in the relay race and some determination in the egg and spoon race. You all shouted, cheered and encouraged each other.

Year 2

What a fabulous year we have had and even though it has been a challenging one, we could not have picked a more wonderful class to have shared it with. As teachers, we are so proud of the achievements of each and every child and we bid them a fond farewell as they move into the juniors. We LOVE coming to school every day (and secretly we think that they do!), so it is hard to narrow down our favourite bits. Therefore we decided to ask the children and this is what they told us!

"I really enjoyed doing the Race for Life because we raised money for Cancer Research."

"Making clay pinch pots and clay figures was brilliant, we got to take our work home to show our families."

"Sports day was so much fun, the sack race was hilarious and we laughed lots."

"Come on England! Day was awesome. Our teachers sang and danced as we arrived, we learned facts about The Euros and we did football related English and Maths."

"Vicar Tony came into school and did a pretend Baptism with us. We baptised baby Mia Victoria and learned about the role of Godparents and the church community."

I have loved maths the most, especially learning new methods and problem solving."

"English lessons have been my favourite. The books I have enjoyed writing about most have been Troll Swap, Major Glad and Major Dizzy."

"We have enjoyed listening to our teachers read The BFG to us. The story is funny and I like the different voices that the teachers use."

Year 3

Year 3 certainly has been eventful this year, we were the first bubble to burst. The children have worked brilliantly online and we are so proud of them. Some of our highlights this year include our wonderful cave art which replicated Stone Age paintings and the different roundhouses that the children constructed. Our work on Islam has been fascinating and the children have learnt a lot about a different religion. Sports Day was another highlight, the children cheered each other on and we saw some great athleticism. Lastly in Year 3 we were lucky enough to have Mrs Marquis-Davies (a school governor) come into school to teach all the children sign language – just wonderful.



Year 4

This year has been an unprecedented one for everyone. After an enforced absence from school, Year 4 came back with smiles on their faces, ready to learn and meet up with their friends. Settling into a routine quickly, we focussed, not on what they had missed, but what they had learned throughout the summer. Our Literacy texts enriched their vocabulary and developed their love of reading. Maths built on previous learning. In Science the children learned about Water Cycle, investigated what causes tooth decay and how sounds are made. In History, whilst 'embalming a child' they were fascinated to learn about the mummification process and made their own Canopic jars. During another lockdown, the children used resources available at home to make Viking shields, cook a European meal and some constructed volcanoes that erupted. IT skills were developed as the children learned online and chose how to present their work. Our Sports day this year, whilst also a little different, gave the children a chance to show their sporting skills on the track and on the games field, supporting and cheering on their 'house mates'. So, all in all, Year 4 had an action packed year.

Year 5

Year 5 have had an excellent year. In the core curriculum they have all really matured with their reading comprehension, improved their variety of sentence structure and language in writing, and have mastered many aspects of Maths, especially fractions and decimals. They have loved artwork and DT with Mrs. R. such as Victorian Cam Toys, Greek Pots and water landscapes. They remember lots of Science investigation such as testing air-resistance (with Miss Evans who was on placement with us) and simulating the movements of the Earth, Sun and Moon out on the field. They loved one off events where they were able to get outside, such as the Race for Life and outdoor learning about the environment with Mrs. Curtis in the woods and park. They were very sensible and had lots of questions during our discussions on sex and relationships. Obviously lockdown learning was a challenge this year, but they adapted fantastically at this time and then when they returned to school. Fancy Dress Friday and jokes of the day were highlights of our online gatherings! Mr. Hilton and Mrs. Ramanouski (changed from Miss Reese after her rearranged Covid- hit wedding in September!) have loved working with this class for how well they work together and get on with each other. This was really highlighted on the days when we did our Sports Day and Team competitions with Mr. R. They were so supportive of each other. They should be so proud of themselves.

Year 6

What a year 2020-2021 was?! It's certainly been an adventure and one that will live long in the memory. In year 6 we have had our ups and downs but, thankfully, there were more ups than downs. In the Autumn term we were all excited to get back into school and be together as a class after the first lockdown. It was lovely to see the children take it all in their stride whilst learning new routines and regulations around social distancing; they really were outstanding. It was inspiring to see some of the Year 6 children get enthused in our work on endangered animals and pollution in the environment...I'm sure we have some future climate activists in our midst!

Spring term saw us all return to online learning at home again but Year 6 really excelled with their positive attitude and interaction to all the work we set. We had some particularly creative children making Brazilian food and drink at home and it was lovely to see the videos and pictures that were sent in daily. We have a great display in the classroom to celebrate this.

The Summer term saw us return to something like normal and Mrs. Whittaker and I are very proud of the many children who learned to skip this term. They showed great determination and resilience to improve on a personal level. It was sad that we weren't able to have an audience for our sports day but again, the children pushed themselves which led to some great personal achievements. It has also been good to see children actively trying to get fitter and beat their own levels on the bleep test.

We are so very proud of the way in which Year 6 have reacted to the many disappointments this year, trips and activities being cancelled or altered. All the staff at St Mary's will miss this group of children and we all look forward to hearing about their successes in the future.

Family Support Worker

This has been my second academic year working at St Mary's who have become my second family. Despite the challenges of the pandemic, bubbles closing, self-isolations and social distancing guidelines to follow there has been so many fantastic activities, work and events that have been had by all. I have managed to support our amazing families with the help of The Community Shop and Onward Housing who offered each one of our families a voucher to spend in their store. Morrison's in Frodsham who loaded my car full of food and toiletries to allow me to put together food hampers for many weeks. Also in recent weeks Morrison's have also helped our school by donating garden items towards our memorial garden which is currently being created. We will be forever grateful.

Runcorn Police with the help from PC Ian Hampson has supplied some families with Manchester United clothing and in the past few weeks linked with Adidas and we were lucky enough to receive several pairs of football boots and footballs to share.

At Christmas we linked with the Polar Bear Project who created their charity in memory of a loved one and hoped to share love by providing families with toys for children up to the age of 16. Again our children received so many presents we were overwhelmed.

In school there has been so many 1:1 sessions held with children and group sessions supporting our children's mental health and worries. Utilising my counselling skills in many sessions to ensure our children receive the best support. Finally we held 2 mental health days this year. Hello Yellow at the start of the year where everyone came to school dressed in something yellow and completed positive activities in lessons to support their mental health in the classroom and away from school. Then during Mental Health Awareness Week in May our Year 2 and Year 5 classes completed a ballot to decide who our new Mental Health Ambassadors will be in school. Ava Shaw Lamin and Lucas Whittaker were chosen from Year 5 and Zac Davies and Orlah Fleming from Year 2. Myself and the mental health ambassadors will be supporting our staff and children together next academic year. Well done Zac, Orlah, Ava and Lucas.

Holiday Dates



Next year's holiday dates can be found on our website. Note a slight alteration to the dates first published. Due to the celebration of the Queen's 70th (Platinum) Jubilee this means we have an extra bank holiday and therefore an extra day of holiday that has been given. In lieu of this we will take the extra day on Tuesday 4th January and return to school on Wednesday 5th January.

School Uniform

Black shoes have always been part of the St Mary's school uniform and we politely ask that all children return to school wearing school shoes and not trainers. Trainers are needed for PE or for children to change into a break times if they want to go on the grass. Children will no longer be allowed to wear their PE kit into school - they will need to change on their PE day in school, and their PE kit must be kept in school and brought home each half term for a wash.

Memorial Garden

Hopefully over the holidays work will start on a little memorial garden. Each child's name will form part of a path as a permanent reminder that we have lived through a pandemic. This area can be used by any adult or child that just needs some time or space to sit quietly and reflect.

Reading

We hope to run some parent meetings at the beginning of next term. These will be to explain a shift in focus with Early Reading. We have been working hard to revamp our phonics and this will have an impact upon how reading is taught and reading books used. More information will follow.

Breakfast Club

After running a trial of the breakfast club, it has been concluded that sadly there has been insufficient take up to make it viable to continue in the Autumn term. We will therefore finish breakfast club at the end of this week. Please make alternative arrangements for next year if you have been using the club.

Goodbye to YEAR 6

The end of a school year is always bitter sweet and this year is no exception. The children have been exceptional in their attitude to work and their achievements have been substantial. Their unfaltering commitment to their school community is an inspiration to us all. To flourish despite being in a pandemic is testament to their determination and strength of character. We are truly proud of every single child.

We wish them every blessing as they leave St Mary's and begin a new journey. They have had a fantastic start to their school life and we have every confidence that they will go from strength to strength.



A reminder that school closes for the summer holidays on Friday 23rd July. There will be a staggered early finish:

Reception - 1.50 p.m.
Year 1 - 1.45 p.m.
Year 2 - 2.00 p.m.
Year 3 - 1.50 p.m.
Year 4 - 1.40 p.m.
Year 5 - 2.00 p.m.
Year 6 - 1.30 p.m.

School will reopen for children on Thursday 2nd September



Staff would just like to wish all children a very happy summer. We look forward to working with you again next year.