

St Mary's C of E Primary School

Whole School Newsletter Friday 24th January 2025

Dear families,

We have got off to a busy start at St Mary's and have already had a school trip and a visitor come into school. Last week, the staff spent some time thinking about resources available to the children in their classrooms in order to support their learning. It was wonderful to hear all the things they are doing to make sure learning is accessible to all. As the colder weather continues, please make sure that your child comes in each day with a warm coat. These, as well as hats, scarves and gloves, need to be labelled in order to stop clothing getting lost.

Below are some upcoming dates for your diaries.

Key dates:

Monday 20th January - Year 2 cake sale

Thursday 23rd January - Year 6 at Southborough school for "Well Fest"

Monday 3rd February - Year 2 class assembly (2:45 -3:15pm)

Week beginning 3rd February - Children's Mental Health Awareness Week

Wednesday 5th February - Choir at Young Voices

Friday 7th Feb - NSPCC national number day (more information to follow)

Friday 7th Feb - Year 3 trip to the Natural History Museum

Monday 10th February - Year 1 cake sale

Senco/Assistant Head



For those of you who aren't aware, Mrs Davies and Mrs Sage (who work as a job share) officially started as Senco/Assistant Head at the beginning of this term. Mrs Davies works on a Monday and Tuesday and Mrs Sage on a Wednesday and Thursday. They are your point of contact for anything related to special needs, so please do get in touch if there is anything you would like to discuss.

Year 6 trip

Last week, Year 6 Trip enjoyed a terrific trip to the Horniman Museum in South East London, to introduce their new Geography topic on the Amazon region. The children explored the butterfly house, world gallery and aquarium before taking part in a terrific, interactive workshop, examining how the Wai-wai tribe live and how their way of life is changing.



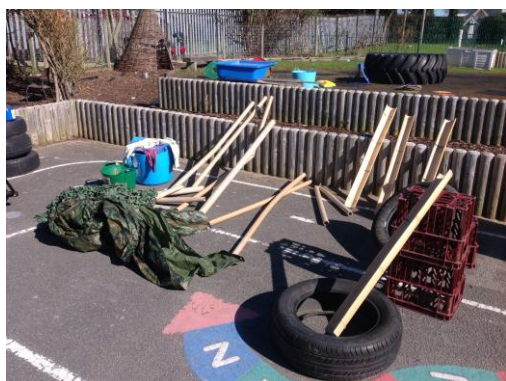
Big schools' birdwatch



This year, St Mary's, led by the wonderful Mrs Hadley, are taking part in the Big schools' birdwatch. This activity gives the children the opportunity to record the highest number of each species of bird in our school grounds. They will be using identification sheets and surveys to record their findings. If your child is interested

in birdwatching, why don't you carry out the same activity in your garden or the local park? You can find the survey sheets here: [Birdwatch survey](#).

Positive play project



In our last newsletter, we introduced the work we have been doing around making sure our play times are a positive and purposeful time for our children. You will hopefully have received a Weduc with a list of items we are looking for. If you, or anyone you know, are able to donate these to us, we would be very grateful. If you work for a company which you think might be able to source some items to us, please do get in touch.

Faith reps



We are very excited to introduce to you our first St Mary's "Faith Reps". As we build upon our priorities as a church school, these wonderful helpers will be working alongside us. They will help give us the children's perspective of what it means to be in a church school. Together, we will work on shaping our collective worship, links with St Mary's church, festivals and school prayers. We can't wait to get their insight and are delighted to be working together.

Our new Faith reps are:

Year 6 - Reece

Year 5 - Catherine

Year 4 - Arthur

Year 3 - Muhammed

Year 2 - Lillie Marie

Year 1 - Vlad

Reception - Fleur



Lunar New Year



At St Mary's, we love welcoming children from all over the world. Celebrations that are important to our families are also important to us. You may have seen a Weduc sent last week about Lunar New Year. We would love to welcome any families into our school that celebrate the Lunar New Year. Each class we are doing some learning about the festival, but it could be enriched further by having guest speakers. If you, or any of your family or friends celebrate, please do get in touch.

You can find out more about the Lunar New Year here [Lunar New Year](#).

Insight



Insight are a Christian schools trust who work in both primary and secondary schools in Kingston Upon Thames. The team are all fully qualified teachers who come in to teach RE lessons, deliver assemblies and run Bible clubs. This week, Keren, came in to lead a whole school Collective Worship about hope, using the Bible

story of Elijah and King Ahab. She also kick started the new RE units in Year 3 and 6. Each Thursday lunchtime, Suzi comes in to run a fun, interactive Bible club. The club is so popular, we have had to issue a waiting list! Below you will find some photos on Insight "in action" in our school.



Bible Passage	Characteristics
Luke 6:35	Loves enemies, is kind to undeserving.
Luke 6:37	forgiving
Luke 18:16	nice Welcomed everyone
Luke 22:24-26	Servant
Luke 22:27	humble
Luke 24:47	for every body body

Collective worship



Our theme for collective worship this term is called 'Songs from the heart'. This involves finding out about one of the most famous song-writers of all time, a man called David, who wrote much of the book called Psalms in the Bible. As well as these songs being really special for Jewish and Christian people (who share them in their holy books), the words David wrote are also very human, often a response to what was happening in his life at the time. So, there will be ideas and emotions that we can all identify with!

Some of us love to sing, others may not. Whatever we feel personally, songs and singing are, in many cultures, a way of expressing the deepest thoughts and emotions that we experience as human beings. We are all human beings with things that we just don't understand, challenging lives, different (and sometimes difficult) emotions and really big questions, just like David. This term we get the chance to express the things that lie within our hearts, to wonder together, and if we want to, to bring it all to God.

Instagram



Please remember, you can keep up to date on all things St Mary's by following our two instagram accounts. Miss Eustace and Mr Charlton have taken over the running of the main account and are brilliant at ensuring you get an insight into each class (Yr 1-6).

[@stmaryschess](#) - whole school

[@stmaryseyfs](#) - Reception

Staying well in winter

Many illnesses are more common in the winter, including colds, the flu, and earaches. Preventing illness where possible is always better than treating it. To keep children healthy in the winter, you can:

- **Practice good hygiene:** Wash hands regularly with soap and water, and teach children to avoid touching their face
- **Vaccinate:** Make sure your child is up to date on all recommended vaccinations, including the flu vaccine
- **Eat a healthy diet:** Provide a balanced diet with lots of fruits and vegetables to help boost the immune system
- **Dress warmly:** Dress children in layers to protect them from the cold
- **Hydrate:** Offer plenty of water, warm drinks, and soup
- **Get enough sleep:** Make sure children get 8-12 hours of sleep per night

Even with these preventative measures, some children will still become ill and it can be tricky to decide whether or not to keep your child off school. The NHS has produced some [helpful advice](#) to follow on when to keep your child home.

Mental Health Support Team

The mental health support team in schools initiative is part of the emotional health service in Kingston and Richmond. At St Mary's we work closely with our Education Welfare Practitioner, Cherry Forrest, who is in school each week. This term we will also be working with Najma Khan who will be in school on Tuesday afternoons and introduces herself below.

MHST

Hello, my name is Najma Khan

I am a Counsellor and Psychotherapist. I am part of the Mental Health Support Team (MHST) that works across primary, and secondary schools, in Kingston.

The MHST deliver **short term, evidence-based interventions** for children and young people experiencing **mild to moderate mental health difficulties**, such as anxiety, low mood and behaviour difficulties.

What is Mental Health?

We all have mental health and it's just as **important as our physical health** this also includes emotional health or wellbeing so it is important to look after it in order to make the most of your potential and cope with everyday life.

Mental health **affects us all** and we all have periods of time when we feel **stressed, frightened or down**. Sometimes these feelings pass but in some cases they develop into a more serious problem. Mental health changes according to varying circumstances and as you move through different stages of life.

Behaviour to look out for:

- Becoming **irritable, tearful or clingy**
- **Physical symptoms** such as stomach aches and headaches
- **Lacking confidence** to try new things or seeming unable to face simple, everyday challenges
- Find it hard to **concentrate**
- Have problems and change to **sleeping or eating patterns**
- Have **angry outbursts or being argumentative**
- Have a lot of **negative thoughts**, or keep worrying that bad things are going to happen
- Start **avoiding everyday activities**, such as seeing friends, going out in public or going to school

achieving for children

MILD TO MODERATE Mental Health Difficulties:

According to the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines, mild mental health problems are when a person has a **small number of symptoms** that have a limited effect on their daily life.

A moderate mental health problem is when a person has more symptoms that can make their **daily life much more difficult** than usual. A person may experience different levels at different times.

HOW CAN MHST HELP:

For primary aged children, I offer eight counselling sessions. I work directly with the children in the relaxing, and comfortable space at school. The sessions are aimed at empowering the child to use strategies, and skills, to overcome challenges which are impacting their mental health. I provide a safe and confidential space for them to explore their feelings and emotions using words, or creative means, to understand their feelings. My interventions are mainly based on **Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) principles**. These help manage challenges by **changing thoughts and behaviours**. CBT has a strong and growing evidence base for anxiety and behavioural difficulties. For more information on these interventions, please visit www.nice.org.uk.

HOW DO I REFER MY CHILD/GET HELP:

If you have concerns about your child and would like a referral to made for assessment and intervention, then please speak your child's teacher, or email **The Mental Health Lead (MHL) at school**

"Alternatively, if you would prefer a brief chat with me for help or advice, where I can signpost you to further support, please ask the school to book an appointment for a **DROP-IN** session, either by phone or in person. This will be a one-off slot to discuss brief issues and **with your consent** will be shared with the MHL. Please note, this may not lead to a referral being made to us, but is a space to explore any concerns you might have for your child. I am available for half a day each week at your school.

Please ask the school or the MHL to arrange a time on the day that I am at the school.

Further support available at:

Young Minds Parents helpline: Free on 0808 802 5544 from 9.30am to 4pm (Monday to Friday)

For advice, emotional support and signposting about a child or young person up to the age of 25.

Wellfest

Year 6 attended 'WellFest' at Southborough High School this week. The event has two main objectives:

1. To signpost young people and parents/carers towards support for people suffering with ill mental health (e.g. Samaritans, etc.)
2. To promote local organisations that carry out activities that promote good mental health e.g., sports teams/scouts/music or arts services/youth club (Scouts, yoga, marching bands and art clubs)


The experience was in a 'university fair-style' gathering, where local organisations advertised the kind of activities that may promote good mental health and wellbeing. The school also showcased many of the extra curricular clubs and activities they run to ensure their pupils are happy and healthy.

It was also a good opportunity for the children to experience being at a senior school as part of their transition and for our 'Mental Health Ambassadors' to get some ideas about pupil wellbeing to bring back to our school. Our pupils were very well behaved as usual and the Headteacher at Southborough, commented on more than one occasion that we should be very proud of our children who had been lovely, both in the canteen and around the event, speaking well, displaying confidence and good manners.














Safeguarding

A reminder to all St Mary's parents and carers, if you have a concern about a child in our school, please make sure you speak to Mrs Quinn, our designated safeguarding lead, or Mrs Davies/Mrs Sage, our deputy designated safeguarding leads. Keeping our children safe and well is the highest priority at St Mary's.



Keeping Children Safe at St Mary's



At St Mary's Primary School, all of the adults think that your health, safety and wellbeing are very important.

- We respect you and want to keep you safe.
- We do our best to help you make good progress in your learning and to be happy.
- We teach you how to recognise risks and how to stay safe.
- We take a Rights Respecting approach and we work to ensure that every child can have access to their rights.

How will we keep you safe?


- We will take care of our school building and equipment to provide a safe environment for you to learn in
- We will make sure that there are people in school who know how to take care of you if you are ill or if you hurt yourself
- We will check that the grown-ups who work in our school or come to visit are safe adults
- We will teach you how to recognise risks and take steps to manage them
- We will make sure that you know how to get help if you need it
- If you need to talk, we will listen.

Tell someone if someone is:

- Bullying you
- Saying things that upset you or make you feel uncomfortable
- Touching you without your consent
- Hitting you or hurting you
- Taking your things
- Sending unkind messages on the internet or to your phone

Who can you talk to?

If you are worried about something you can talk to a trusted adult. This could be your teacher, another adult in school or a member of our safeguarding team.



You could also write it down and put it in the Worry Box or contact these helplines at any time:

What will happen if I talk to someone?

You have a right to be safe. If you talk to an adult in school, the following things will happen:

- We will listen to you carefully and take what you tell us seriously
- We might ask you to tell us more about what is happening or explain in more detail
- Sometimes, we might have to tell Mrs Quinn or Mrs Lawlor
- We will support you
- We will do everything in our power to keep you safe

As always, thanks for your ongoing support.

Kind regards,
The St Mary's Team

“Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.” Joshua ch 1 v 9