



St. Mary's Church of England Primary School

Newsletter

Autumn Term 2017

8th December

Dear Parents/Carers

I have thoroughly enjoyed our two evening performances of the Nativity this week. I am sure all who attended couldn't have failed to be impressed by the performances of one and all who participated. The singing, acting, 'recording', reading, etc. were fabulous. I was really impressed with the courage so many of the children mustered to carry on their performances despite their stage fright and the sheer bravery of those who took on the solos too, but most of all I was delighted to see the love and concern of the older children who really took their young counterparts under their wings and led them through the evening – they were an absolute delight.

It seems amazing that Christmas is upon us! Thank you to all those of you who've mailed in with heartfelt thanks to the staff and I for all of their hard work this term. I am incredibly grateful to them all too.

School Budget

I am saddened to be including such news in my newsletter, but do believe that it is important for the whole of our school community to know.

Our budget forecast is a lot less than encouraging. In fact, having had a money 'guru' in from WSCC to discuss our finances, it appears that we will have a significant shortfall if we continue to run the school as we currently do.

Frustratingly our shortfall could in fact be far worse. WSCC are currently undertaking a funding consultation with schools in order to decide how they can best cut up the 'pie' that is the education budget for the county. There are a good number of options which schools are voting on, but sadly the 'pie' being cut up simply isn't big enough to support us as we are. There could be a swing of tens of thousands of pounds depending how the consultation goes, but we are likely to still be in a deficit situation regardless. We hope to find out the results of this in February.

My whole team here at St. Mary's are tremendous and are of course rallying to do all they can for our children with the resources we have got. I am also indebted to our support staff team, many of whom agreed to a cut in hours prior to this academic year, but obviously such cuts are not conducive to supporting the school improvement work that we would love to be carrying out.

I shall keep you posted on developments, and we are of course looking at ways to cut spending on every front imaginable (that isn't detrimental to our wonderful

school), but in the meantime, thank you whole-heartedly for every contribution made.

Fundraising Update

Talking of contributions – the HSA has been doing fabulous work in fundraising for us throughout the term and I am delighted to announce the results of their labours.

We have a grand total of just over £5,600 winging its way into school as a result of their autumn events. These successes have included:

An Audience with Peter James raised £1,400.

The Infant and Junior Discos combined fetched £334

The very civilized Christmas Shopping evening achieved an additional £1,111.

While the sugar filled excitement of the Christmas Fayre brought in a further £2,608 added to which the HSA have also made £168 out of Christmas Pudding sales.

If you'd like to get involved with the HSA please contact them at: stmaryshsa@hotmail.co.uk

Inter-House Football

I enjoyed the privilege of refereeing our 5-a-side Inter-House Football Tournament on the 24th November. Each house was represented by its members from Years 5 & 6. The standard of play was incredibly varied, but the determination and gumption shown by all was terrific and most importantly of all I was delighted with the sense of sportsmanship exhibited too. Mark House ran out as eventual champions, though they only edged it – beating John by a single point overall (having been held to a two-all draw when these teams met in the first match of the afternoon). The quality of Mark House's passing was certainly the outstanding feature of the day, with deft touches and control being demonstrated in midfield, allowing the whole team to contribute to their success. Congratulations!

Christmas Parties

On Christmas Party Day (Tuesday 19th December) the children may bring in a special packed lunch. The staff assure me that the children have coped well in the past with being allowed to bring a fizzy drink and even the odd chocolate bar on this one special occasion. I shall, therefore, be allowing this tradition to continue and trust that I will be equally impressed with your offspring too.

Evidently, plastic bottles are far more preferable to cans in terms of left over liquids being managed well.

Christmas Jumper Day

I have been asked whether the Christmas Jumper Day (Wednesday 13th December) is a non-uniform day. The answer is that I am expecting the children to wear their normal uniform, but am simply allowing them to wear a Christmas Jumper and/or festive headwear as stated in my previous newsletter.

Coding Success

Congratulations must also go to Ethan Isherwood on his success in representing the school in a National Coding Competition to design a Christmas e-Card.

The judges loved his joke and the way that the sprites in the project suited the different parts of the joke. He was highly commended (having beaten off competition from entries from over 500 other schools). His card appears on the Code Club blog: <https://blog.codeclub.org.uk/>

Parents of Children with ASD

FYI: Trafalgar Road Baptist Church is hosting a drop-in for parents of children with Autism entitled 'Coping with Christmas'. This is scheduled for 12th December from 9.30am to 11.00am. All are welcome to just turn up on the day or email Jcross@qe2.co.uk if you would like further details of Horsham Parent SEND Support Group.

Visitor Badge Amnesty

I would be most grateful for the return of any visitor badges that you may inadvertently have forgotten to hand in when leaving the school. As cool as they may be as 'street-wear', I am afraid our stock has clearly dwindled!

Janet Green

Following my plea for help in my last newsletter, I am disappointed to report that no-one has approached the office with offers of help in getting her son to school. So, I am repeating my plea – to ask if anyone could possibly help with waking or transport into school from the Depot Road and Highlands Road area of town as she is really incapacitated following an unsuccessful operation. Please do come and talk to us if you can assist at all.

Interest in Governance

I am indebted to those kind folk who give up their time to support the school on the Governing Body. And am delighted to have two applicants in the pipeline looking to join our Board.

I am, however, aware that our Governing Body Skills Audit shows that we could really use some other help too. Currently we are in need of Governors with some expertise or a background in the world of finances or property and estate management. Therefore, I am asking those who may indeed be interested in giving of their time and wisdom on a voluntary basis to let me know or to contact Claire Swarbrick (Chair of Governors) directly. We would be most grateful for any interest expressed and may be able to appoint the right candidate as an Associate Governor. If you have no background in finance, but are still willing to lend a hand, please do make contact, as it is useful to know who is willing and able and what skillset they may offer, even if this is just for future reference.

Farewell to Rev. Young

It is with very mixed feelings that we say cheerio to the Rev. Young at the end of our Autumn Term. We wish him every success as he moves on to Crawley to be part of the new team plant taking place at St. John's Church, to whom we know he will be a huge blessing.

Jimmy has worked hard to bless St. Mary's: working as a Governor with a special interest in our Christian Ethos as well as being responsible for Safeguarding too. But, most of all Jimmy will be missed in our clergy led worship assemblies: he has involved the children so well in his addresses thanks to his most engaging personality and way with words, as well as through his well-chosen props and stories. We have all learnt a great deal from him.

The return of Mrs Woods to YR

The EYFS team have welcomed Mrs Woods back into their fold on return from her maternity cover. I am sure she will soon feel like she's never been away! Mrs McKay has kindly agreed to provide cover for the YR teachers this year and is therefore chuffed to be able to stay in touch with the delightful class she has nurtured to date. I am most grateful for all of her care and hard work for those precious children in her care.

Scrap Paper

If any of you have spare scrap paper that you would be happy to donate, we would be delighted to receive this so that the children are able to use this during their wet playtimes.

With all good wishes to you for a happy Christmas
Mr Bird

Other Diary Dates

Please do make a note of these dates as reminders will not necessarily be sent.

December

12 The Pantomime
14 Christingle Service 7:00pm
20 Communion Service 2pm at St. Mary's Church
20 School breaks up

January

4 Children return to school
9 Prayer Group (Leslie Room in St. Mary's Church 9am)
11 Year 3 Swimming Starts
15 Closing Date for Starting School September 2018

February

12-16 Half Term
19 Inset Day

March

28 School breaks-up for the children
29 Inset Day

