

A happy and blessed new year to all! Welcome back to the Spring term 2018.

Curriculum plans are now in place for the coming half-term and letters for each class are on the website.

LEARNING MULTIPLICATION TABLES feature in a number of class letters and it is essential that children know these by heart on order to use them in a range of problem solving activities in maths. Your support for this and for other aspects of home learning is greatly appreciated. Please look on the website if you would like further information or strategies.

I am delighted to let you know that in keeping with our commitment to maintaining the building and site in good order, we have been awarded a grant to replace our 25 -year -old gas boiler. It has done good service but is giving signs of wear and tear and we are looking forward to having it installed in the summer holidays before the next winter weather 2018-19 sets in!

Thank you to all who have paid the governors contribution, as we always have to find 10% of costs. Your support is gratefully appreciated.

Your views:

We are very grateful to parents for their feedback at different times, either through informal conversations, or in meetings. Over the next 2 weeks we will be sending out a survey so that we can gather views of parents and carers throughout the school.

Staff are always happy to make time to speak with you. If you would like to speak briefly before or after school, or would like to make an appointment, please ask.

Parents and carers of children with special educational needs responded to the annual SEND survey before Christmas. Thank you to all who returned surveys. An anonymised summary of the responses can be found in the SEN section of the school website.

When we have completed the whole school survey, results will similarly be posted on the website.

Staffing

We said an official au revoir to Mrs Beechey at the end of term as she starts her maternity leave. She is still popping into school to do pieces of work ahead of the arrival of new baby Beechey!

It is good to welcome back Mrs Richardson from maternity leave. She has taken up some of Mrs Beechey's responsibilities and teaching timetable, working mainly in years 5 and 6.

Mrs Anita Murray, has told us that she will be retiring at the end of this half term. She has a long association with the school over the past twenty years since her elder son started here in Reception. For the past 15 years, she has worked as a teaching assistant, with classes from Reception to year 6, and also helping to run breakfast club. Mrs Murray is a great colleague, and will be missed by staff, children and parents. We will be saying goodbye to her as a teaching assistant week commencing 29th January.

Rev James Mustard:

You may be aware that just before Christmas, James announced to the congregation at St Mary's church that he will be leaving to take up the position of Canon Precentor of Exeter Cathedral.

James' final Sunday here will be Mothering Sunday, 11 March 2018. He writes, *'I'll be leaving with both a heavy heart and great excitement. But I am also confident that I am leaving the Parish and the school in good shape. I have no doubt that you will have no difficulty in attracting a successor who will take both the church and school, and the relationship between them, into new and exciting directions'*.

As a school we are very grateful to James for his commitment to working together, teaching children to write prayers, leading weekly worship in school or in church, serving as a governor, along with the support he has provided for members of the school community. He will be greatly missed.

We look forward to the opportunity to continue to work with him over the coming term.

As we start the new term, now in the season of Epiphany, we have been thinking as a school of the courage needed by the Magi (or kings, or wise men) as they set out on their unknown journey, with only the star to guide them.

The theme of courage will continue as the focus value over the coming weeks, using it to help to support children and adults to face the challenges of the coming half term.

Attached is a leaflet with ideas and activities to support their understanding. You are welcome to look at it together.

Important dates and reminders:

- *Friday 12th January: 3.30 year 4 cake sale.*
- *Monday 15th January: individual and sibling photographs. We will advise when and how you can purchase these.*
- *Thursday 8th February: 3.30 close for half term break*
- *Friday 9th February: staff training day.*
- *Monday 19th February: 8.55 school open for Spring 2 half term.*
- *Friday 23rd March: written progress reports for years 1-6. Reception reports will be at the end of the summer term when they have completed their first year at St Mary's.*
- *March 27th and 28th before and after school, consultations.*
- *Thursday 29th March 3.00pm close for Easter holiday.*
- *Monday 16th April: staff training day.*
- *Tuesday 17th April: Children return for summer term.*

Staff are happy to speak with you briefly before or after school on the playground. Please remember this should not delay children coming into school at 8.55. They will be happy to make an appointment to see you if you need longer.

- *Children need a coat, it is very cold and they need to wrap up warm for play-times.*
- *Bottles of water continue to be important. Children can fill the up during the day.*

COURAGE

HOME SCHOOL VALUES

This term we will be focussing in school on the value COURAGE. We hope your family will find these ideas helpful as you explore the value and have fun together.

TALK ABOUT COURAGE TOGETHER...

Being **courageous** can mean different things to different people. For example, one person may think it easy to speak in front of a large audience, whilst another would need to find lots of **courage** to do this. Everyone faces challenges from time to time, and we have to find **courage** to overcome them.

Talk together about:

- The different challenges that each family member faces
- Who or what helps us find **courage**?
- Is there someone that we admire because of the **courage** that they have shown?

THINK TOGETHER ABOUT WORDS OF WISDOM

"**Courage** is not the absence of fear, but the willingness to overcome that fear."
Nelson Mandela



READ TOGETHER...

The Courage of David the Shepherd Boy

One day as David the shepherd boy was carrying lunch to his older brothers in the Israelite army he heard an angry booming voice thunder across the fields. "I am Goliath, and I dare you to pick someone to fight me."

The voice was coming from the Philistine ranks and went on taunting the Israelites and their God. As David grew closer he could see the giant Goliath strutting up and down. He could also see the terrified faces of King Saul and his soldiers. This made David very angry and more than a little ashamed. He decided he must go and see the king.

"I will fight that bully Goliath!" David announced.

It was all that King Saul could do not to laugh out loud. "You are just a boy David, a small boy. Goliath has been a mighty soldier all his life."

"But when the wild animals attack my father's sheep," protested David, "I fight them off with my sling and staff. I have killed many lions and bears and I will do the same to this wicked Philistine. Do not fear for God is on our side."

King Saul was taken aback. "Well, I suppose you should be given a chance. At least let me lend you some armour and a sword." But the armour was heavy and David was not used to it. He returned the armour to Saul and instead picked up five smooth stones from the stream and marched out **courageously** to face Goliath.

The giant laughed scornfully at the small boy and shouted curses at him. David did not flinch. "This very day you will be defeated and everyone here will see that the Lord does not need swords or spears to save his people."

As Goliath lowered his shield and aimed his spear at the boy, quick as a flash, David loaded a stone into his sling, spun it around above his head and sent it spinning through the air towards Goliath. The stone struck the giant on his forehead and he crumpled to the ground. Goliath was dead. There was a moment of stunned silence before the whoops and cheers from the Israelite army echoed around the hillsides. This was a day no-one would forget, when the **courage** of a shepherd boy saved a nation.



Bible story based on 1 Samuel 17

QUIZ Wordsearch

Find the words from the story in the grid on Goliath's shield.

- | | | |
|------------|----------|-----------|
| ARMOUR | BOY | DAVID |
| COURAGE | FOREHEAD | GIANT |
| GOLIATH | GOD | ISRAELITE |
| PHILISTINE | SHIELD | SLING |
| SOLDIER | STONE | STRUCK |





FAMILY FOCUS & HOME-SCHOOL CHALLENGE



Children of Courage

Each year awards are presented to children throughout the country who have shown outstanding bravery and **courage** in overcoming huge challenges in their lives. (Google 'UK children of **courage** awards' to see some examples.)

Design a nomination for a child that you know and believe should be recognised for their **courage**. Remember, there are different kinds of **courage** and different ways of showing bravery.

The nominations will be displayed in the Challenge Gallery at school.



Example Nomination sheet



Name of child who has shown **courage**

.....

Has shown **courage** by

.....

This bravery should be recognised because

.....

.....



HALL OF FAME

Bravery v. Slavery



Harriet Tubman was born nearly 200 years ago in Maryland, USA. Her family were slaves which means that they had to work for the people who 'owned' them. Slaves had no pay and no rights and they could be bought or sold like property. As Harriet grew older she was afraid that she would be sold and sent far away from her family to work for strangers. She decided to try to escape. This needed great **courage** because Harriet knew that if she was caught she would be cruelly punished. After many adventures and with the help of kind people along the way, Harriet managed to escape to Canada, where slavery was banned.

It would have been safest for Harriet to stay in Canada and make for herself a comfortable and easier life, but she was determined not to forget her family and friends who still suffered as slaves in America. She made her way back and forth to Maryland not once, but *nineteen times*, facing great danger and showing amazing bravery as she helped slaves to escape to freedom. By the end of her life Harriet had helped to free around 300 slaves!

After her death Harriet received many honours for her bravery. A ship was named after her, and in 1995 the US government issued a postage stamp to celebrate her **courageous** life.



FASCINATING FACTS

In case of emergency – Dial 999

"Help...my house is on fire!"

"Help....there's been an accident!"

"Help.... burglars are breaking into the house over the road!"

- The emergency number, 999, was introduced in London in 1937.
- In an emergency, phoning 999 will connect you quickly to an 'emergency control centre'. An operator will ask which service you need, fire, ambulance or police. The operator will be able to track your call to discover where you are and soon help will be on its way.
- Firefighters, police and ambulance crew all risk their own lives on occasions to help other people who are in danger.
- Additional emergency services operate in some places such as mountain and cave rescue, coast guards, air sea rescue.
- Over 30 million 999 calls are made each year.
- About half of all calls are hoaxes. Not only do hoax callers break the law, they put people's lives in danger as it takes longer for real emergencies to be dealt with.