



Care, grow and flourish in  
God's loving hands.

# St Mary's C of E Primary School

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## Newsletter No. 8

Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope this finds you all well as we welcome in the month of February. Our newsletter contains updates as well as some really uplifting work that we have done around 'hope'. We also have some staff news and the very exciting launch of our new school vision statement.

### School Vision:

In the words of Douglas in Y4, '*a vision is something we want to all achieve.*' Underpinned by the [parable of the mustard seed from Matthew's gospel](#), we have drawn out the work that we do as a Church of England School and have decided to sharpen the words of our school vision statement to capture this, as follows:

**'Care, grow and flourish in God's loving hands.'**

Rooted in God's love, our ambition is for our nurturing ethos to enable all members of our school community to thrive and flourish. We tend to the academic, social, moral, physical and spiritual needs of our school family so that we grow into confident, respectful, aspirational and active citizens of our ever-changing modern world. We do all of this in God's trusted and loving hands.

Here are a few of the children's reflections from our discussions about this:

- '*The tree in our school logo and in the mustard seed parable is like life. Life isn't always perfect; it goes in all directions but that's ok, because we are in God's hands.*' Louie in Y5
- '*When we plant a seed, it starts off in the dark and then it grows into the light. It's like us. We grow with the things we need at school too.*' Georgiana in Y4
- '*We grow like the mustard seed – we grow into bigger children but we also grow in knowledge, curiosity, hope, kindness, love*' Comments from Annabelle in Y5, Favour in Y4, Chloe in Y3, George in Y3.
- '*Adults care for us at school... and God is our protection.*' Alex and Zephan Y4
- '*The Kingdom of God started small, just with God and now it's grown and grown and grown!*' Evie Y2
- '*Flourishing means more than growing...It's thriving.*' Lewis and Dan Y6

### Hope-anuary:

I have been **amazed** by all of the wonderful things that the children have done as part of this initiative led by our Y6 Hope Committee. Our ambition was to spread a little hope to others and to remind ourselves to be ambitious, thoughtful and hopeful. As an outcome, we also hoped that we would learn things about ourselves too.

Here are just a few examples of hopeful acts from some of the children:

- Learning about food miles and buying locally produced honey – taking time to read the packaging labels to better understand the reality of buying food that's travelled 1000s of miles.
- Showing signs of peace e.g. shaking hands after a football match, not holding a grudge, and hugging brothers and sisters after a disagreement.

- Taking care of nature e.g. re-using a plastic milk bottle to make a bug hotel and making lots of bird feeders! One child in reception has even made a beautiful bird house for his garden, and another has been feeding garden parakeets with apples 😊
- Growing our own food – cherry tomatoes and peppers!
- Taking toys to a children's ward at Barnet Hospital to make poorly children feel more hopeful, and the recognition that doing kind things for others makes us feel good too.
- Caring for God's world – lots of children are being more mindful about energy and water use. Between us, we have turned off dozens of taps, TVs and light switches. Many children have also committed to picking up litter.
- Taking time to notice and show we care... SO many children have shared examples of listening to/hugging friends when they are sad, helping out at home by tidying bedrooms/washing up/sweeping floors/taking dishes to the sink. There were also plentiful comments about showing gratitude to parents and carers and taking time to say thank you and even breakfast in bed for one lucky mummy!
- Learning new skills – LOTS of experimenting with musical instruments, magic tricks, football skills, new sports, learning to float in a swimming pool, tying shoe laces, joining gymnastics club, roller blading, crochet.
- Learning about other places and cultures – making donuts cakes from Denmark, learning new languages and how to say hello.

We have also reflected on what a hope-filled future might look like. Here are a few thoughts:

- *'A world where there is no war, climate change is halted and or reversed, and serious diseases have a cure or prevention'*
- *'A safe, loving, healthy and family filled future'*
- *'A happy, healthy family and peace on Earth.'*

**Of course, hope isn't just for January. Each class has made a commitment to be responsible for one 'hope focus':**

- YR are going to focus on the target of saving water. They chose this because many children forget to turn off the taps in the YR bathroom. They all think this is something we can work on and stop doing.
- As a class all of Y1's ideas were around doing something for the school garden to help the environment - they want to build a bug house and do something for the birds to give them food.
- Y2 are committed to making and showing signs of peace e.g. shaking hands after an argument.
- Y3 have made a promise to save water by turning off running taps. They are also going to use their outside area to create a bug hotel. Very exciting!
- Y4 promise not to hold a grudge if they disagree with someone, they made a promise to do this wisely. They have made this choice because it will encourage them to think about what is important. They want to make disagreements smaller and learn how to deal with them properly and independently.
- Y5 have decided to focus on giving compliments to people and also continue their 'agents of change' work from Year 4, they will commit to picking up litter.
- Y6 have promised that they will listen to a friend if they are in need of some advice, because they agreed that they should always be available if someone needs help at any time.

*Thank you very much for supporting the children with Hope-anuary!*

#### **Staff news:**

- Mrs. Charalambous who many of you know as a teaching assistant in the Year 1 team, and also as our school librarian, is sadly leaving us at the end of this half term. Nicoletta joined our St. Mary's family in 2007 and after almost 17 years of service, she will be emigrating to Cyprus to be with her daughter and baby grandchild. Whilst we will miss her terribly, Nicoletta goes with our love and prayers as this new (sunny) chapter of her life begins. We thank her for her love, care and commitment; supporting so many pupils and colleagues in her time with us.
- Whilst we cannot replace Mrs. Charalambous and all she does, we are interviewing candidates next week for a teaching assistant position.



*We will miss you!*

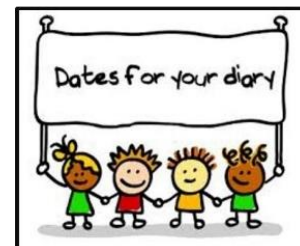
WE WANT  
TO HEAR  
FROM YOU

### Surveys:

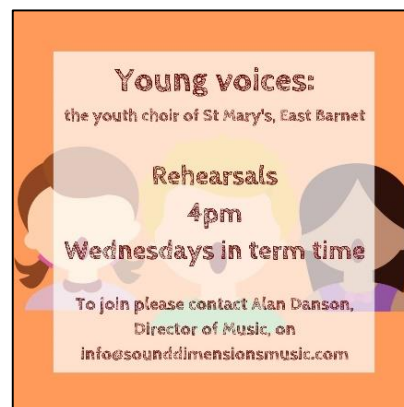
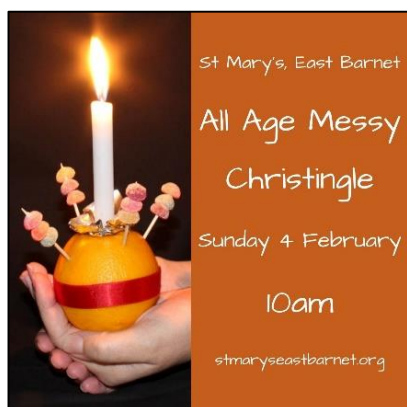
To help us with our evaluations and future plans, we will be taking feedback in the form of surveys. Please complete the parent/carer survey that can be found [in this link](#). We will also send it by text message. Thank you in advance for taking the time to respond.

### Dates for your diaries:

- Staff training day (children not in school): Friday 9<sup>th</sup> February
- Half term: Monday 12<sup>th</sup> – Friday 16<sup>th</sup> February
- Children return to school: Monday 19<sup>th</sup> February
- Friends of St. Mary's AGM: Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> February at 6pm in school
- YR,1,2,3 Disco in school: Friday 1<sup>st</sup> March. More details to follow.



### St. Mary's Church events and dates for your diaries:



- On 4<sup>th</sup> February the main Sunday service is an All Age Messy Christingle. This marks the end of the Christmas season with a celebration of light
- On 9<sup>th</sup> February St. Mary's Church is hosting a children's Mardi Gras disco, just before the start of Lent. Costumes are encouraged!
- Young Voices is the children's choir of St Mary's Church. It offers children from year 3 and up a free musical education, and opportunities to perform. It rehearses on Wednesdays at 4pm.

***Thank you as always for your support.***

***From all of us at St Mary's School, stay safe, stay well and our love and prayers are with you as always.***

***Maria Constantinou***

***Headteacher***

