



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

St Mary's C of E Primary School

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Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope this newsletter finds you all well. We have had an immensely busy time in school and the summer holidays are definitely a very distant memory...our newsletter is packed with updates and experiences to celebrate and those coming up.

We have achieved an award!

As an outcome of our commitment to providing musical opportunities and in recognition of our high-quality music education, we are the proud recipients of a Barnet Education Arts Trust (BEAT) Bronze School Music Award. Thank you to Mrs Haggan - our music leader, for her dedication and leadership in this area. We are working on reaching our silver award next!



Black History Month: A message from Mrs Georgiou – History leader



Throughout October, we celebrate Black History Month, a valuable opportunity to recognise and honour the achievements, stories and contributions of Black people and communities. This year's theme, 'Honouring Our Communities', invites us to reflect on the people and experiences that help shape and strengthen the world around us.

Please look out for a home learning activity later this month, designed to help children celebrate and engage with this important occasion.

Whilst Black History Month provides a special focus, we would like to remind our children and families that Black history is not confined to one month and is intrinsic in our curriculum. We are immensely proud of our curriculum which features diverse authors, scientists, artists, musicians, history units, and so much more.



Great Athletes fundraiser: A message from Mrs Prados – PE leader

On Tuesday, Team GB Champion Gymnast, Saffron Severn, visited our school! She ran fun fitness circuits for the children, followed by an inspirational assembly in which she shared messages of resilience, determination and bravery. Thank you to all those who have already set up a fundraising page and sponsored their child. If you would like to sponsor your child, you can use [THIS LINK](#) to set up a fundraiser page for them. You have until next Tuesday to donate! The money

raised from the event will help us purchase new sports equipment and improve levels of physical activity in our school. **Just a reminder that all donations must be made online as we are unable to accept cash.**

Chair of Governors – A Change of Leadership: A message from Stephen Edwards, outgoing Chair of Governors

Dear St Mary's families and staff,

After more than six years as Chair of Governors, and ten years serving on the Governing Body, I am stepping down from the role. With both of my children now having moved on from St Mary's, it feels like the right moment to hand over and make way for fresh leadership.

It has been an enormous privilege to serve this school. I took on the Chair role in May 2020, in the middle of the pandemic, and a great deal has changed since then. We have welcomed a new headteacher, and the governing body has been almost entirely renewed, with new governors bringing a wonderful range of skills and experience. Through all of it, what has stayed constant is the heart of St Mary's.

That heart belongs, above all, to our staff. Every member of the team – in the classroom, in the office, around the site and at the school gate – gives so much of themselves to our children, day in and day out. St Mary's is only the wonderful school it is because of them, and I want to thank each of you sincerely.

To our families: thank you for your trust, your support and your extraordinary generosity, whether at Harvest, through Friends of St Mary's, or in the countless small ways you support the school. Governors can set direction, but it is staff and families together who make St Mary's what it is.

A particular thank you to Maria. It has been a real joy to work alongside her, and the school is in the very best hands. My thanks also go to my fellow governors, and to Revd Alec and St Mary's Church for their constant support.

I am delighted to be handing over to Carina, who I know will be an excellent Chair, with Steve Hicks continuing as Vice Chair. St Mary's will always hold a special place in our family's heart, and I look forward to watching it continue to Care, Grow and Flourish in God's Loving Hands.

With heartfelt thanks,

Stephen Edwards

A message from Carina Tillson, newly elected Chair of Governors

Dear St Mary's families and staff,

At our first meeting of the new academic year, I was delighted, and humbled, to be elected Chair of Governors. Before anything else, I want to thank Stephen for everything he has given to St Mary's.

Stephen has been Chair since May 2020, and it is hard to overstate his contribution. He led the governing body through a change of headteacher and oversaw a complete transformation of the governing body itself, bringing in many new faces, talents and skills that will support the longevity of St Mary's for years to come. His support for Maria has been incredible, and his stewardship as Chair has been nothing short of exceptional, always with the children at its heart. On behalf of the whole governing body: thank you, Stephen. You will be sincerely missed.

For those who don't know me, I joined the governing body in 2023 as the Local Authority governor. My background is in the public sector, so I understand well its complexity and the pressures schools face within it. Over the past few years I have been involved in a number of areas of the governing body's work, including health and safety, curriculum, and pay and staffing, and I am looking forward to building on that in this new role.

I am very pleased that Steve Hicks will continue as Vice Chair, and I am grateful for his support as we begin this next chapter together.

Our focus as governors remains clear: to make sure St Mary's continues to be a place where every child can grow and flourish, where staff feel supported, and where the school has a strong and sustainable future. I look forward to getting to know more of you over the coming months. If you would like to contact me, correspondence for the Chair of Governors can be passed on through the school office.

Best wishes,

Carina Tillson



Snacks at School:

Working hard is hungry work, so we understand if the children want to bring a snack in for playtime.

At the moment, the children in YR, Y1 and Y2 qualify for a piece of fresh fruit/veg each day via a government scheme.

If your child in any class wants to bring a snack to school, they are welcome to, **BUT this snack can only be fruit or vegetables.**

No cereal bars, crackers, crisps or other snacks please. And **NEVER** any nuts or nut-based products.

Here is the poster we will share with the children about safe eating in school.

This is very important to keep all children safe from choking and also to reduce the risk of reaction for those with allergies. Please discuss this with your child too.

Reminders from Friends of St. Mary's (FOSM):

- **Y6 Cake and Fruit sale: TODAY – 9th October at home time.**
- **Non-uniform day and YR book sale in the playground at home time: Friday 16th October.**
- **Wednesday 4th November at 6.30pm:** FOSM Annual General Meeting followed by committee meeting. This will be in the school hall – glass of wine and nibbles on offer as well as opportunities to hear about the FOSM's success last year and plans looking ahead. **Everybody is welcome to come along** – this meeting is open to all parents and carers at St. Mary's. There is no expectation to stay to the committee meeting after the AGM.



Thank you for all of the funds raised at FOSM events. Their next big focus is on replacing some of the tablets that the children use everyday in school. Our first 25 new tablets have been ordered – we still need another 35 more!

Just One Tree Day: Friday 23rd October: **Wear Something Green for One Tree Non-Uniform Day**

As part of our commitment to climate change, we will be supporting the organisation Just One Tree again this year. JUST ONE Tree, an official partner in the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, is an award-winning non-profit, removing CO2 from the atmosphere and reversing biodiversity loss through global reforestation.



In the last 3 years, we have planted an amazing 475 trees in Madagascar. This supported local communities, encouraged biodiversity and is contributing toward the reduction of effects caused by climate change.

You can donate £1 or whatever you'd like to give, by clicking our [school fundraising page](#). For **every** pound donated, **one** tree will be planted.

The children can wear their uniform and an extra green item of clothing or an accessory, OR they can wear full green non-uniform if they want to! The important thing is raising the money to plant the trees.

Squishies and toys: Please note that children should not be bringing in toys, squishies or dumplings. **Please encourage your child to leave such items at home.**

We have been alerted that some items on the market may contain harmful substances if the item breaks or leaks; [please check that they carry the British kite mark \(for use at home\).](#)

For those children who need them to support with attention or sensory needs, the school has provided safe resources for them to use purposefully in line with their provision. Thanks for your cooperation.

Year 6 History Trip to Lincolnsfields Centre:

Year 6 enjoyed a visit to Lincolnsfields to bring their learning about the Second World War to life this week. The visit provided a valuable opportunity to deepen their understanding of what life was like during wartime and to explore the experiences of those who lived through this significant period in history. It was a fantastic way to enrich their classroom learning and spark curiosity about the past.

[Take a look at a few more photos here.](#)



Do you work for a company who might be able to donate any tech equipment?



As I'm sure you know, school budgets are incredibly stretched. As explained, we have relied on donations from our wonderful PTA, Friends of St. Mary's, for many of our recent tech upgrades. Many corporate companies are often upgrading laptops, tablets and monitors and will either donate them or dispose of them. If you know of any organisations who might be able to donate any of the above to St. Mary's, please contact us via the office email. We would be particularly interested in laptops and notebooks. Thanks in advance.

Harvest festival

Thank you so very much for all of your generous donations in last week's Harvest festival. All of your kind gifts will go to families in our community who really need them.

We are really looking the school choir performance at St. Albans Cathedral next week, as part of the Diocesan Harvest festival.



Help Us Make School Even More Fun!

Like many schools, we continue to face financial pressures and must carefully prioritise how we spend our funds. However, we know how important play and creativity is for our children's happiness and wellbeing, and we want to keep providing exciting opportunities for them to enjoy their time in school. To help us achieve this, we have created two Amazon Wishlists:

[Playground equipment](#) that would make playtimes even more fun.

[Classroom equipment](#) that would make our curriculum even more creative

If you are able to contribute an item, however small, we would be incredibly grateful.

Summary of key dates:

- Cake and fruit sale – today at home time.
- Friday 16th October: FOSM non-uniform day and YR book sale at home time
- Friday 23rd October: wear something green for Just One Tree Day
- **Monday 26th – Friday 30th October: Half term**
- Monday 2nd November: INSET Day
- Tuesday 3rd November: Children back to school
- Week commencing 9th November: Consultations for all classes. More info to follow.



*From all of us at St Mary's School, stay safe, stay well and our love and prayers are with you as always.
Even with faith as small as a mustard seed, we can do anything!*

Maria Constantinou
Headteacher

