

St. Mary's Church of England Primary School



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Report to PCC April 2018

This has been a year of momentous change at St. Mary's school.

Firstly, I am delighted and honoured to be writing my first report to the PCC as the new Headteacher. I have inherited a fabulous team of staff, who are all pulling together in the best interests of the whole school community. St. Mary's is a terrific school, the caring compassionate atmosphere and well-deserved reputation is second to none. In fact fifteen years ago, when my boss suggested I should look to train to be a headteacher, my wife asked me which school I would fancy if this was the case. The rest is history! But I am not the only change...

Miss Fandrejewski has been appointed to the role of SENCO in the school and is sharing the teaching of Year 4 alongside our Deputy Head Mr Ellis

We have welcomed Mrs Woods back into Year R after her period of maternity leave. But, we have seen Miss Mardle head off for maternity leave instead - Dr Beckett providing cover for her in Year 5.

On the support staff front, Mrs Huisman (TA), has left to pursue a career in tourism, Mrs Chandler (LSA) has accepted a new full-time position at Millais and Mrs Bateman has moved into the world of Special schools – joining the team at Woodlands Mead. Meanwhile we have welcomed Mrs Balint, Mrs Naylor and Mr McGregor to new roles on the staff as their replacements.

Mrs Vind has tendered her resignation from our Midday Meals team, while Mrs O'Flaherty is due to take her place shortly.

Pupil numbers

St. Mary's continues to be a very popular school. Once again we were oversubscribed for places in the reception class. All our places for September have now been allocated and we will soon be welcoming our new parents and children for their first official visits. We currently only have spaces in Year 3 and 5, and have had a few parents look around regarding filling these in the not too distant future.

The School Development Plan

All of our staff have been invited to contribute to the school development plan in some way, either through the process of appreciative enquiry or through simply stating their frustrations and ideas! We now have a more than comprehensive Development Plan in place and are doing our best to tackle those things we see as the most significant priorities, while upholding all that is good about the school. I love the fact that St. Mary's has such a rich and varied curriculum – all about living life to the full (as well as being our best). As such, we shall strive to balance our improvement works in English and Maths, while maintaining a great balance of other activities, including:

Prayer Spaces, Forest School, Country Dance, Horsham Dance Fest @ The Hawth and Year 1 singing in the bandstand. While also developing other areas: launching Understanding Christianity, staging a Year 5 sleepover as well as introducing a new computing curriculum. A great range of trips and visits has included: Blacklands Farm, A Taste of the Countryside, Chesworth Farm, Bockets Farm, The Novium Museum and many more.

Most of the children in Year 6 went on our usual residential visit to France in October and enjoyed visits to the cemetery at Etaples, the markets at Le Touque, a bakery where they made their own croissants and a chocolate factory amongst others.

Children have taken part in a range of activities including sports events, matches and tournaments. We continue to use money from our sports grant to fund different activities, including Forest Schools, Funky Dance and our Alternative Sports Days in which the children have been able to experience some more unusual sports including wheelchair rugby, archery and boccia.

Flower Festival

We will be participating in St Mary's Flower Festival as usual and look forward to performing our Country dances on The Causeway on June 14th.

Worship

We are pleased to welcome different members of the clergy to lead our Worship each Tuesday and welcome parents to join our Worship on Tuesdays and Fridays, as well as for our half-termly Communion Service.

SIAMS

We had our Section 48 (SIAMS) Inspection just before the Easter break, but I am not allowed to tell you anything more than 'it went well' until such time as the report is published (for which we may have to wait until the start of next month).

Prayer Spaces for Schools

We also really enjoyed our fifth Prayer Spaces event just before Easter. The children enjoyed many different activities and time to reflect over the week. We have had very good support with volunteers from several of our churches, but special thanks must be given to Liz New who worked so hard in organising the event.

Raspberry Pi

This year's team made it five finals in a row for St. Mary's – being selected as one of the top three primary school entries in the country yet again. They journeyed to London last week to present their invention to many top industry experts and Maggie Philbin! Sadly, they just missed out on the top prize, but thoroughly enjoyed their experience. Huge thanks to Mr Tyler-Moore and his team of parents who mentored the team to their success.

Fundraising

An awful lot of work has gone into fundraising since I've been here. Many of the children have even come on board making their own crafts to sell and running competitions to this end. The Home School Association have worked tirelessly staging events which have not only been good fundraisers, but have been terrific community events – including the Christmas Shopping Evening, An Audience with Peter James and the Big Quiz. Next, we look forward to St. Mary's Got Talent.

However, our children have also remained outward looking – realising there are many people in the world less fortunate than we are and have been busy helping charities too, including Canine Partners, Crawley Open House and The National Society, Age UK and Fairtrade.

We must thank all of our parents and families for supporting their children in these activities so well.

Church Support

As a Church-Aided School, the School does rely on and receive a great deal of support from members of the Parish churches and the Parish clergy team. The financial support in the form of a Deanery Grant is much appreciated too and I would like to record our thanks for these things.

Thank you also to:

Our teaching and support staff who continue to work very hard to give the children high quality learning opportunities.

Our Home School Association who continue to put on fund raising and social events and offer other support to the school.

Our Governing Body who continue to support the school in many ways.

The school very much values the role the Parish and its churches play in the life of the school and I have really appreciated my warm welcome from one and all!

Best wishes

Alex Bird
Headteacher