

St Michael's Newsletter

Dear Parents and Carers,

Thank you for all of the positive feedback about the new look newsletter! I can't believe it is time for the next one already.

This isn't the start to term that any of us had planned for but here we are again – remote learning! As a working parent myself, I really do appreciate that this is an incredibly difficult time for families – balancing remote learning, younger children, working from home and keeping a house going. We must say a HUGE thank you for your ongoing support and your commitment to your children's learning.

You will have noticed a difference to the provision this time; live sessions with class teachers, recorded lessons and more much focus on new learning. A huge thank you must go to the teachers for embracing this and for really throwing themselves into this very different way of working.

This change does not mean that the wellbeing aspect from last time is lost. If anything, the dark, cold weather has made it seem even more challenging to balance our mental health along with everything else. Mrs. Hickman, our school ELSA, has an extensive bank of resources to support emotional wellbeing and is always on hand for support. Please speak to your child's teacher if you have any specific concerns. Research conducted by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) has shown that interactions such as the live meets and lessons create a "school connectedness and a sense of belonging" which are key factors in protecting children's social and emotional wellbeing. We know that these cannot replace real life human interaction but we hope that these opportunities to see their peers and their class teacher albeit via a screen help the children to feel that they belong to the St Michael's Family no matter what.

Please remember, that as adults we have a huge number of balls to juggle. Some of these are glass, some of these a plastic. These will change depending on your family and your work; some weeks there will be glass work balls and plastic family ones, other weeks vice versa. Don't put too much pressure on yourself to keep them all in the air – the plastic one's bounce.

Dates for your diary

w/c 15th February – Half Term

Monday 22nd February – Start of Term 4

Thursday 4th March – World Book Day

Wednesday 31st March – End of Term 4

Best Wishes,

Hayley Leyshon-Brady and Grant Mottram

Co-Headteachers



"Being kind to yourself is one of the greatest kindnesses," said the mole.

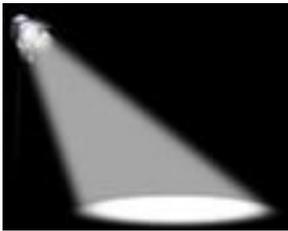
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In This Issue:

- Spotlight on....
- Parent Feedback Update
- RSPB Bird Watch 2021
- The Book Nook

Spotlight On...



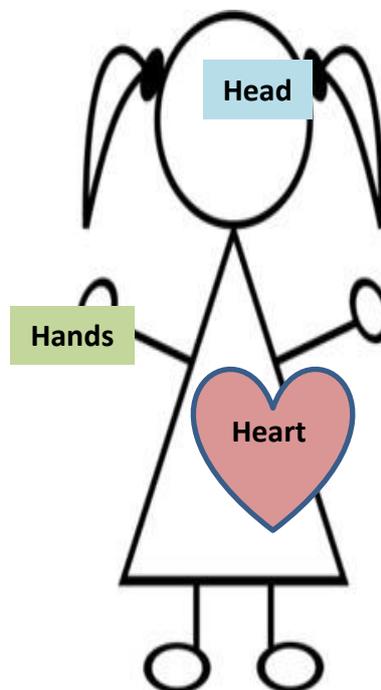
This term the spotlight is on... Forest School

Ms. Jaeger is our resident Level 3 Forest School leader. She takes groups of children from across school to the Copse or to the wild area on the school grounds where they spend an afternoon each week.

Why Forest School?

Forest School is a specialised learning approach that offers all learners regular opportunities to gain confidence and self-esteem through hands-on experiences in an outdoor setting.

Forest School incorporates the marvels and challenges of the natural world through the seasons to fill every Forest School session with discovery and difference. It also caters for the holistic development of children; educating the heart, hands and head.



Intellectual development and cognitive skills are expanded through self-directed learning, problem solving and critical thinking.

Physical development that builds self-esteem and confidence through sensory experiences which promote resilience through supported risk taking and meeting challenges.

Emotional intelligence is increased through the practice and modelling of healthy social relationships. Creative and spiritual potential is realised through regular engagement with the outdoors.

Parent Feedback

Thank you to those of you who contributed to the feedback questionnaire we put out at the end of last week. Your comments are really useful to help us ensure the remote learning provision is purposeful, meaningful and accessible.

You said the following things were working well

- Teachers respond quickly to questions and feedback
- Live meets were enjoyed by the children
- Pre-recorded videos make it easier to fit learning around own work commitments
- Work is broadly taking the required amount of time in each key stage

You said it would be even better if...

- Work for the week could be set on a Monday so that parents can plan it around their own work commitments
 - We are unable to provide a whole week's worth of learning in one go. This is because the learning is planned for based on how the children have done on the previous day. It is also assigned on a child by child basis depending on their needs and any misconceptions they may have.
- There could be more opportunities for play built into the week for the younger year groups
 - Teachers have listened to the feedback in all year groups and will be setting a weekly creative/play based challenge for the children in their class.
- Google Meets recorded for longer than 10mins at a time
 - Because we upload Willow Class videos to Tapestry, we are restricted to 10mins. As we are trying to keep to using one platform, we are currently unable to make this any longer but are currently looking into work arounds!

Updates!

Testing for Staff

Monday 25th January saw the start of bi-weekly asymptomatic rapid testing for all in school staff. We will not be testing any children. Each member of the team in school will carry out a lateral flow test on their first working day and a second one 3-4 days later. If a member of staff receives a positive test result, they will be required to isolate until they receive the results of a PCR test from a drive through centre. The impact of this will be that the Rainbow bubble they have been working in may need to close. The nature and timing of the tests mean that should we need to close a bubble, the notice will be very short. We will endeavour to let you know as soon as possible.

Reading Challenge

Over the next week please keep an eye on Google Classroom for a reading challenge for the whole family to take part in! It would be great to see photographs of you all taking part!

World Book Day and Comic Relief

This year World Book Day and Comic Relief will look a little different. In the event that we are still under tight COVID restrictions, we will take part in these events virtually. They are such highlights of the school calendar that it would be such a shame to let them pass by. Once we know the plans for after half term, we will crack on with the planning – watch this space!

Support for Families

As we mentioned in the start of the newsletter, this is a difficult time for everyone. We are all in the same storm, but we are not all in the same boat. If you would like some support in the form of an ear to listen, some support with groceries or anything in between, Rev, Phil Sutton is available.

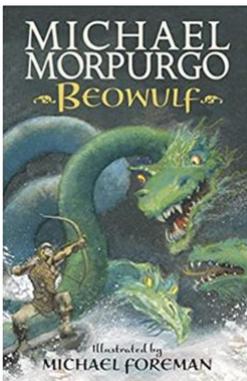
You can contact him on: 01235 526114 / 07507378737

Or via his email is revphil@damascusparis.org.uk

Alongside Phil, Katheryn Mendus and the Children's Ministry Team are putting together some mindfulness resources for families. These will be shared on Google Classroom so do look out for them.

The Book Nook!

In each newsletter we will be sharing some of the books we are reading in school or books that we love. If you or your child would like to recommend a book they have recently read then please email the office with the title, author and a short synopsis and we will include it in the next newsletter.

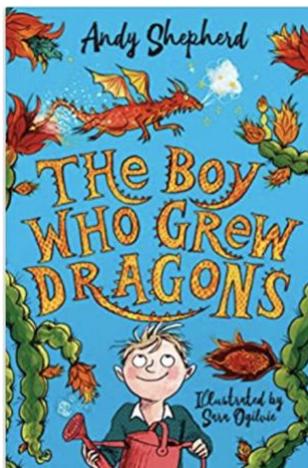
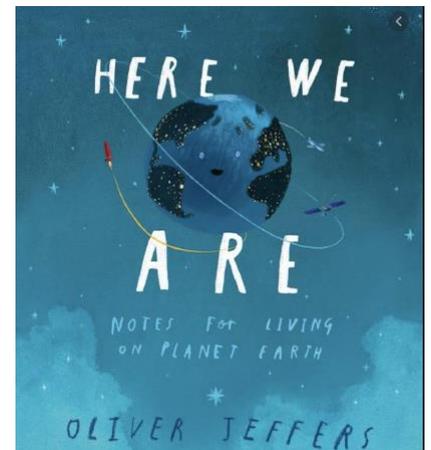


Year 5 are reading... Beowulf

In fifth-century Denmark, a murderous monster stalks the night, and only the great prince of the Geats has the strength and courage to defeat him. Beowulf's terrifying quest to destroy Grendel, the foul fiend, a hideous sea-hag and a monstrous fire-dragon is the oldest surviving epic in British literature.

Year 1 are reading... Here We Are by Oliver Jeffers

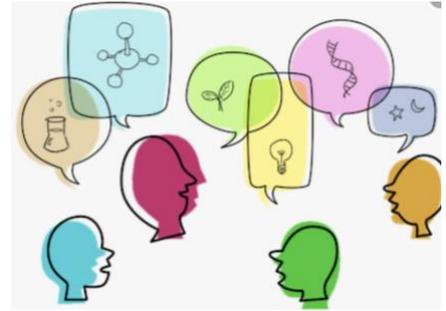
This beautiful book was written by Oliver Jeffers as a "manual to life" for his new born son. It is a stunning journey from our place in the solar system right the way through to the importance of kindness, tolerance and environmental responsibility!



Mrs. LB recommends...The Boy Who Grew Dragons by Andy Shepherd

A great book for those Key Stage 2 children who are ready for something a little meatier to read independently. When Tomas discovers a strange old tree at the bottom of his grandad's garden, he doesn't think much of it. But he takes the funny fruit back into the house - and gets the delight of his life when a tiny dragon hatches! Tomas has to learn how to look after Flicker - quickly. And then something extraordinary happens - more dragon fruits appear on the tree. Tomas is officially growing dragons!

Communication



The new school website is now live! Please do go and have a look. This will be your go to place for newsletters, curriculum information and contact details.

Once school fully reopens, please report your child's absence by contacting the office on 01235 831298 or email office@st-michaels-pri.oxon.sch.uk

During the National Lockdown, please email your child's teacher via their Gmail address to let them know if your child is unwell.

If your child is on the SEN register, your first port of call is always your child's class teacher. They are responsible for your child's learning but they may then liaise with the SENCO (Mrs Sipson) to seek advice. Mrs Sipson may need to contact parents from time to time and is always available if, for any reason, your child's teacher is unable to help.

Please remember that for any queries about your child's learning then your first port of call is your child's class teacher. You can contact them on the Gmail email address.

Communicating With You

Communication is the key to our success. Here is how you can expect us to communicate with you.

- Mrs. Leyshon-Brady and Mr. Mottram will also send a whole school update newsletter once a term.
- Additional information throughout the term will come via the office.
- GoogleClassroom will be used to share these class specific letters, photos of things the children have been learning and any class notices.
- Early Years teachers will share children's learning using Tapestry.
- If a teacher needs to contact you directly, this will usually be done via phone or email.

Please ensure that you inform the office of any changes to the contact details of anyone registered to collect your child. This includes mobile numbers, home addresses and email addresses.

Pupil Premium Funding

What is the Pupil Premium?

Introduced in 2011, the pupil premium is a sum of money given to schools each year by the Government to improve the attainment of disadvantaged children. This is based on research showing that children from low income families perform less well at school than their peers.

Often, children who are entitled to pupil premium face challenges such as poor language and communication skills, lack of confidence and issues with attendance and punctuality. The pupil premium is intended to directly benefit the children who are eligible, helping to narrow the gap between them and their classmates.

Is my child eligible?

All children who currently qualify for free school meals based on their family circumstances are entitled to pupil premium. This applies if you receive any of the following benefits:

- Universal credit (provided you have a net income of £7400 or less)
- Income support
- Income-based jobseekers' allowance
- Income-related employment and support allowance
- Support under Part IV of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed element of state pension credit
- Child tax credit, provided that you are not also entitled to working tax credit and have an annual gross income of £16,190 or less

Children who are or have been in care, and children who have a parent who is or was in the armed forces, are also entitled to pupil premium.

In addition, pupils who have qualified for free school meals on the above grounds in the past, but are no longer eligible, continue to receive pupil premium for the next six years.

If your child qualifies for free school meals or has at any point in the past six years, it's important that you let us know – even if they're in Reception or KS1 and receive universal school meals for infant pupils, or are in KS2 and take a packed lunch – as this enables us to claim pupil premium to support your child in school.

I think my child is eligible, what do I need to do now?

Please speak to a member of the office team if you think your child may be eligible for Pupil Premium funding. They will be able to provide you with additional information and let you know of any documents required.

Safeguarding – What you can do



Parents and carers play a vital role in safeguarding children in their community. If you have any worries or concerns about a family or child, no matter how small, you can raise it with the school safeguarding team, contact the office or get advice from the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). This safeguarding hub seeks to enable the sharing of information so that risks to children can be identified at an early stage. It is a link between universal services, such as schools and GPs, and statutory services, such as police and social care. If you have a concern about a child, please call MASH on 0345 050 7666.

This website is a useful place to find out about lots of support and information about a range of issues that may be worrying you:

https://fisd.oxfordshire.gov.uk/kb5/oxfordshire/directory/practitioner_toolkit.page

Online Safety

Please find below some helpful links to information about keeping your children safe online:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/parents/>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-safety-online-a-practical-guide-for-parents-and-carers/child-safety-online-a-practical-guide-for-parents-and-carers-whose-children-are-using-social-media>



We know that keeping in contact with peers is vital for children at the moment and with everyone spending an increasing amount of time online, it felt like the right time to re-share this infographic of the age restrictions for the main social media platforms.

Please remember to talk to your children about these age limits and take the opportunity to review parental controls.

If you are ever unsure whether something is appropriate for your child, Common Sense Media have great reviews about all sorts from books through to computer games and films.

<https://www.commonsensemedia.org>

Ultimately, the most effective parental control is you. For example, following simple steps such as ensuring internet enabled devices are in a public room in the house, talking to your child about what to do if they come across something that makes them feel uncomfortable and set clear, consistent boundaries around usage will help to establish good e-safety habits.



