

St Michael's Newsletter

Dear Parents and Carers,

We can't believe that we are already hurtling towards the end of Term 2! This newsletter will contain lots of information about the upcoming Christmas plans as well as an update on curriculum work that has been going on around school. Thank you to those of you who attended our virtual parent's evenings. We would love to hear your views so please complete the questionnaire:

<https://forms.gle/XeiA8vwht9AgQjoT7> . There were several families in each class who didn't turn up to their meetings. We understand that things can easily drop off the list – we are all human – but please do let the class teacher know if you are unable to attend so that they can manage their time accordingly.

On Wednesday 10th November we had a visit from Sarah Nisbett, our School Improvement Partner. She spent the day in classrooms, looking through books, talking to children and meeting with the Leadership Team. Whilst we are still awaiting her official report, we can say that we are delighted with the outcome. Sarah was very impressed with what she saw and commented on how engaged the children were in their learning. She last visited us in June 2021 and could see rapid improvement, consistently high expectations and progress in the books! This is a huge testament to the hard work of St Michael's staff and children; they are really living our values of Respect, Courage and Perseverance.

Values in Action

This term we have been talking in assemblies about our values in action. How we can live and breathe them, demonstrate them until they are second nature. Monday 15th November saw the start of Anti Bullying week, the theme of which was One Kind Word. We talked in assembly how one kind word, one kind action can change the course of someone's day. Since then, lots of lovely kind messages keep appearing on post it notes around the school! It has made everyone smile.

COVID

We are aware of a couple of cases of COVID-19 in the community. We vigilant in school with handwashing and well-ventilated classrooms. Staff continue to Lateral Flow Test twice a week. Please can we ask you to also remain cautious especially as we near the Christmas period. If your child experiences any symptoms as listed on the NHS website then please keep them at home, book a PCR test and await the results. If the test is negative, your child can come back to school immediately however if it is positive, then your child must stay at home for 10days from when their symptoms began. If your child has been asked to have a PCR as a close contact and are not displaying symptoms, they do not need to stay off school but if their test is returned as positive, they must isolate from the date of the test.

Dates for your diary

1st December – Christmas Art Day

1st December – Non Uniform day

3rd December – SSA Christmas Disco

7th December – Christmas Panto at the Village Hall and Mini Christmas Fair

15th December – Christmas lunch and 2pm Key Stage 1 Nativity Performance

16th December – 2:30pm Acorn Class Christmas singing, 6pm Key Stage 1 Nativity Performance,

17th December – 9:30am Christmas Service at the Church, 1:15pm School closes for Christmas

4th January 2022 – INSET

5th January 2022 – 8:45am School reopens for Term 3

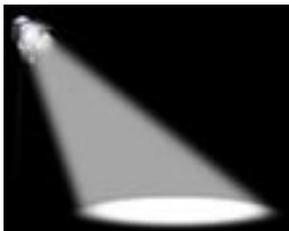
With best wishes,

Hayley Leyshon-Brady and Grant Mottram
Co-Headteachers

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Spotlight On...Christingles!



Christingles is a festive celebration that brings families and communities together and can be held anytime between Advent and Candlemas (December to February). It is named after the Christingles that are lit during the service.

Each element of the Christingle has a significant meaning and helps to tell the Christian story:

- The Orange represents the world
- The red ribbon or tape symbolizes the love and blood of Christ
- The sweets and dried fruits represent all of God's creations
- The lit candle represents Jesus' light in the world, bringing hope to people living in darkness.



The children will be making their own Christingles during our Christmas Art Day on Wednesday 1st December and we ask that each child brings a large orange into school for this. We would also like to invite you to join us at 5:00pm on Sunday 5th December at St. Michael's Church for a Christingle Service. This will be followed by a procession to the North Star for carols and lighting of the village Christmas tree.

Please also find at the end of the newsletter a list of Services being held at St Michael's Church that you and your families may wish to attend as well as information about the Steventon Real Life Advent Calendar!

School Development Priorities

As mentioned above, our recent visit from the School Improvement Partner was very successful. We shared with her the School Development Priorities to ensure she reviewed our progress towards these.

- Embedding the Vision and Values
 - o The introduction of the Prayer tree, Curiosity cube and Values stickers have raised the visibility of Vision and Values in our school
- Raising expectations of all children across the curriculum
 - o The work undertaken so far around raising expectations is evident
 - o Mrs. Satchwell and Mrs. LB continue to work on an English project with two other small local schools around ensuring the English curriculum and opportunities for writing in all subjects has high expectations and is challenging.
- Implementing Restorative approaches ethos and approaches
 - o Behaviour incidents in Term 1 2021 are lower than Term 1 2020. The use of Restorative approaches to work on the root of the behaviour is beginning to have a visible impact.

Christmas Plans

As always, December is a very busy time of year. Please find below all the information you should need.



Christmas Art Day – Wednesday 1st December

It is wonderful to be able to bring back this St Michael's tradition after last year. Children will take part in a variety of different art activities in various classrooms in the school. Children will be grouped vertically so there is the opportunity to work with children from Willow through to Oak. We will also be making Christingles in the hall during this day too with some lovely volunteers from the community.

If you are available on Wednesday and would like to help, please let Mrs Scaysbrook and the Office team know. The children are invited to come into school in non uniform and a Christmas jumper in return for a donation of chocolate...not for the staffroom but for the Chocolate Tombola at the SSA Mini Christmas Fair (info to follow)

Christmas Pantomime – Tuesday 7th December

Instead of the usual visit to the pantomime, we have made the decision to take a trip to the village hall where we will watch TIMT Theatre Touring perform The Snow Queen. The children will leave school at 1:30. Children should be collected from the village hall. If your child usually attends After School Club or another Extra Curricular club, they will be walked back to school by staff.

Key Stage 1 Nativity – 15th and 16th December

Another lovely tradition we are pleased to reinstate is the Key Stage 1 Nativity. Each child will have an allocation of two tickets for either the afternoon OR the evening performance. To maintain as safe an environment as possible, we do ask that adults attending the evening performance in particular, wear a face covering. We will also ensure adequate ventilation so some extra layers might be a good idea too! If there are any spare tickets available these will only be offered if it is safe to do so. We must remember that COVID hasn't gone away and given the proximity to Christmas we must do all we can to reduce transmission. The performance will be videoed and photographs of the children in their costumes will also be available.

Christmas Jumpers

We would like to invite the children to wear their Christmas jumpers to school during the last week of term. As such we are asking that if you have any you would like to donate, we will be recycling them to other parents for a small donation to the school. Please bring washed jumpers into the office no later than Monday 29th November.

Christmas Service

As well as the School Christingle Service on Sunday 5th December, we will be holding out annual Christmas Service at the church on the last day of term. As with Harvest, parents are very welcome but please do follow the COVID precautions of mask wearing in the Church. The service will start at 9:30am.

Christmas Cards

If children wish to send Christmas Cards then they are more than welcome to do so. Please ensure that any envelopes are clearly labelled with the child's name and class so that we can make sure they get to the right people. Please also be aware that school staff will be unable to provide printed or written lists of children's names in each class for GDPR reasons.

If you would like to send in a prayer for classes or indeed the whole school in lieu of Christmas cards then please collect a printed leaf from the school office to write it on. It would be lovely to have some on their to share in our Christmas services.



Around and About in School!



First of all, a huge thank you to those parents who were able to give up their time to help with the library and for incredibly generous donations of beanbag chairs and books. It was an enormous task, but the difference is incredible. We must also thank the SSA for their contribution to the new furniture. We will send more photos when it arrives! We are really grateful to have such an inviting area for reading once again.

We have been able to recreate our library by changing the way our



reading scheme works. Historically the Accelerated Reader scheme was in place and children completed a multiple-choice quiz at the end of each book which assessed their comprehension and allocated them a band of books to read from. One of the major challenges with this was that it not linked to our phonics phases, so it was not suited to our earliest readers. We have now adopted a much better approach that is inclusive of our youngest children and enables our fluent readers to access a much wider, much more diverse catalogue of books. The children will also now have a lovely space to spend some dedicated time each week reading both fiction and non fiction books.



Another plus side of re-establishing our library is that we have created a spacious front entrance hall. This is a really good space for small groups to come and work and has made the school feel much more welcoming.

We have our Prayer Tree and Parable Curiosity Cube here as well as a celebration of children's work from around the school. Our lost property box has been relocated to outside the office, just underneath the window so please do pop in and have a look if you are missing anything.

We must also think those of you who were able to give some time for the Love Your School Day. The work that was done in the Willow Garden has made a huge difference and the children are really enjoying playing in the Mud Kitchen. We would really like to run these much more frequently but do need parents to be able to attend in larger groups to make it worthwhile. We will send around an expression of interest form in the new year and hopefully find a time that lots of people can make. As a small school without a caretaker, it really is the support of the community that can help to keep our premises looking really smart. Mr. Mottram can often be found after school wielding a screwdriver repairing things, but it would be good to get some of the bigger jobs done as a team.

On Monday 29th November, we are fortunate to be receiving our school Christmas Tree, donated by the Binnings Family. This is a really lovely addition to our front entrance and the children really enjoy coming together to help decorate it. We look forward to sharing some photographs of the finished tree once the children have worked their magic!



Wantage Silver Band



Wantage Silver band joined us for assembly on Monday 22nd November. They played some festive music, talked about the different instruments and even took some requests! It was a wonderful way to start our week. Wantage Silver Band are playing in several locations throughout December and will be playing at the lighting of the Steventon Christmas Tree on Sunday 5th December following the school Christingle Service.

Advent to Remember

With our value of Respect in mind, we would like to invite our community to take part in an Advent to Remember. This is where families create a list of activities to do during advent to help them remember a loved one, remind us how fortunate we are to spend time with people who care for us and to spread a little happiness. These activities don't have to cost any money and can be simple as arranging a family movie night or making Christmas cards for friends and family right the way through to random acts of kindness, donations to the charity shop or foodbank or even just putting up the Christmas tree together. We would love you to share some of the activities you do as family to add to our display in the front entrance.

Communication

To report your child's absence then please call the office on 01235 831298 or email office@st-michaels-pri.oxon.sch.uk

If you receive a positive COVID test result at any point, please email Mrs. Leyshon-Brady and Mr. Mottram on head.3241@st-michaels-pri.oxon.sch.uk directly.

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 their school Gmail email address. Please do not message any staff on personal emails or phone numbers, social media or catch them in public (eg the park) as their personal time and boundaries must be respected. If your child's class teacher is unable to resolve your issue, please contact the relevant Phase leader Mrs Satchwell for Acorn, Willow, Maple and Sycamore and Dr Paynter for Elm, Ash and Oak.



Community Notices

Steventon – St Michael's and All Angels

Sunday 28 November

9.45 Holy Communion for Advent Sunday

Sunday 5th December

9:45 Holy Communion

5.00pm School Christingle Service

*Followed by procession to the North Star for carols
and lighting of the village Christmas tree*

6.00 BCP evening prayer for Advent

Weekend of 10-12th December

Carols around the Crib

At Harding Vale, Miller Place, Joyce Way & Village Green

Look out for further notices in your area.





Sunday 12th December

9:45 Family Service

During this service donations of gift cards for the Oxford Women's Refuge are offered

Sunday 19th December

9.45 Holy Communion

18:00 Traditional Service of Carols and Readings

CHRISTMAS EVE

16:00 Crib Service

23:30 Midnight Communion

CHRISTMAS DAY

8:00 Holy Communion BCP

11:00 Christmas Family Service



Collections in aid of the Bateman's Trust will be taken at our Midnight & Christmas Day Services

Sunday 26th December

10:30 Parish Communion at All Saints, Sutton Courtenay



Wantage Silver Band

Sunday 28th November . Wantage Christmas Market . In the square 1.30 to 3pm

Friday 3rd December Dickensian Evening
Wantage Square 6 to 8pm

Saturday 4th Dec Didcot Railway Centre 10.30 to 12.30 .
Sunday 5th Dec Didcot Railway Centre . 2.30 to 4.30.
Saturday 18th Dec Didcot Railway Centre 10.30 to 12.30
Wednesday 22nd Dec Didcot Railway Centre 10.30 to 12.30

Sunday 5th Dec 6pm . North Star . Switching on the Christmas Lights. Steventon

Saturday 11th and 12th Dec . The Snowman Wantage Beacon 2pm and 4pm.
Tickets from www.ticketsource.co.uk/wantage-snowman

