



SHINFIELD ST MARY'S CE (VA) JUNIOR SCHOOL AUTUMN TERM 2018 NEWSLETTER NO. 1 7th September 2018



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Dear Parents,

The school year has started really well here at Shinfield St Mary's: I am really proud of the way in which all our children have shown an eagerness to learn, and an excitement and curiosity about their new class and new school. In assembly this morning the Year Three children behaved as though they have always been here – and many of the older children have expressed their happiness at being back. The teachers, too, seem refreshed – and we have several new members of the team in the form of five new Teaching Assistants, who are full of enthusiasm and energy. Our school is a joyful place to be.



Church School Status

Some parents – some children, too – worry about our Church of England status, for a variety of reasons that I am quick to put to rest. The population of our school is wonderfully mixed, in terms of culture, faith and race – and we welcome and celebrate diversity. Indeed, we are very interested in it, to the extent that this year's immersion in learning, over the first three weeks, is 'Our World of Belief'. We will be opening up our children's minds to the world and many of its faiths, appreciating its diversity with curious and open minds.

The Church of England was responsible for the beginnings of education in our country, and made it clear that its schools were for **every** child, from all backgrounds – all our children are precious to us, and loved by us. At the end of our assemblies, there are prayers or reflections – and all children are taught that the word 'Amen' simply means 'I agree with the sentiments and ideas you have just mentioned'. I explained this to the children on Tuesday in assembly, as well as this morning. Some of our teachers choose to reflect rather than to pray; likewise, some children.

The candle that we light, representing for the Christians in our school the Light of the World, Jesus, represents a life well-lived, an example to us all. All children can think of the best examples they can of lives well lived, like His, and follow their example.

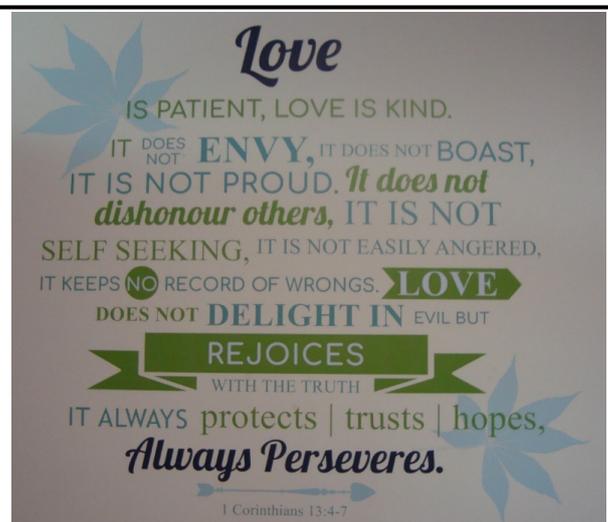
I hope this gives clarity to those of you who may have concerns – there is no need. Above all else, our values – all of which are in the children's planners – are the values that guide all good humans, whatever their beliefs or traditions.



Thank you for entrusting your children to us – we will love and nurture them, and teach them well.

Reception Area

Those of you who have visited the school since Tuesday this week will have noticed in our school reception area the words of Corinthians about Love. I am delighted that these words are the first to be seen by all our visitors, as they represent so clearly our vision and values.



Attendance for the week: 97.5%

Theme for the Week: Our values

Lunch and Snacks

Children can expect good quality food from us, from our chef, Sophie, and her assistants. There have been one or two issues this week which I have been grateful to be informed of by parents – please make sure you tell us if there is anything you are not happy with in all aspects of school life for your child, so that we can do something about it.

Lunches should be paid for in advance. If you think your child might be eligible for free school meals, please make sure our office ladies give you a form to complete so that we can make sure this happens for your child. Similarly, you should provide your child with a healthy snack each day – or with 30p for a warm piece of bread or a roll, to buy at break time.

Children who are eligible for free school meals will be given a pre-paid ticket for this by their teacher, so again, it is important that we know about them!



Clubs

You will have received a letter about the after-school clubs this week; they will start in Week Three (week beginning 17th September) with the exception of Church Club, which will start on Tuesday 25th September. This is not done on a ‘first come, first served’ basis – as of course with twelve classes, this would be difficult to determine – but on a ‘names out of a hat’ basis. It is important however that you send your slips in by the end of Thursday next week, as places will be allocated on Friday.

PTA

We have a strong PTA with a small core of parents that is going from strength to strength and starting to grow. We are very happy about this, and look forward to our PTA AGM next week, to which you are all invited, as automatic members of our PTA as soon as your child has started with us. Meetings happen every half term, with more meetings if necessary around the time of our fund-raising events. Our main events are the Christmas and Summer Fairs, which we run with our sister school, Shinfield Infant School – but we also run discos and other events every year. All this raises funds for the school to make sure our provision for the children can be enhanced beyond the abilities of the school budget, and makes an important contribution to school life. Be a part of it, and come and join in the fun – we are a very friendly group.

The AGM will be held in school at 7pm on Thursday 13th September – next Thursday. I look forward to seeing old friends of our school, and making new ones.



Fund Raising

We are considering an enormous project at the moment, that we are all very excited about – and we are looking at many different ways of raising money, not simply through the PTA but through other local and national grants and funding opportunities. If you know of any that we might not be aware of, please let me know, so that we can make as many applications as we need to, in order to make a really outstanding addition to our provision.

Weekly Newsletters

Our newsletter will usually come to you on a Wednesday unless circumstances prevent me from writing it; this week being the first, I had to wait for some news!

Happy new academic year, everyone.

Best wishes,

Sue Runciman