

**St Margaret's  
Academy**

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## Spring Term Newsletter No.3 (25.1.19)

It has been another enjoyable week for me at St Margaret's. I've been visiting more classes again this week with members of the Senior Leadership Team to look at teaching and learning. It has been great to see more excellent teaching and to see how well your children respond to the learning. Children enjoy their lessons and work hard to make improvements. I've shown various visitors round the school and they too always comment on the positive culture of behaviour and learning.

Staff also enjoy learning. In discussions about teaching, they are reflective and forward thinking. This week teachers have attended two training meetings after school: one to look at how to challenge the more able writers and one to look at Maths (how to support the mathematicians who need to catch up and how best to teach times tables). On Wednesday evening we had a Senior Leadership Team meeting to look at future school improvements which was joined by the Chair of Governors, Jonathan Dickson.

There is an amazing group of teaching assistants who are all committed to the school and children. In the modern culture of education so much more is expected of our support staff. Without the advantage of teacher training, they are expected to teach and make sure children make progress. Long gone are the days of only putting up displays and sharpening pencils. We have a talented group at St Margaret's. Thank you to them for their commitment and skills.

I've realised that the children benefit from a range of clubs. For the younger ones, there is a Yoga Club and Loomband Club with others already planned. For the older ones there is Girls Football, Spanish, Healthy 60, Netball, Gymnastics, Lego, Alternative Sports, Boys Football, Tag Rugby, Tri-Golf, Choir and Combined Football. These clubs are all free and almost all run by members of staff who volunteer their time. Thank you very much to the staff who go the extra mile to provide these opportunities.

I've spent some time this week getting to know the educational landscape of Torbay which is different in many ways to Devon. It's interesting to see how individual schools are used as areas of expertise and support for others, like St Margaret's does with our Hearing Support Centre. There are some exciting plans to use this model to help support schools with challenges around behaviour. I had a short tour of Children's Services today which helped me understand how different services connect to each other. It has been good to meet some other Heads and people from Torbay who offer support to schools. I look forward to finding out more and navigating my way around these new systems.

Enjoy the weekend,  
Tim Hughes

### **Bikeability isn't Just for Children!**

Torbay Council and Paignton Academy are now running **FREE** cycle training for parents and school staff. If you would like to know what we teach your children and how to ride safely with them, this is for you

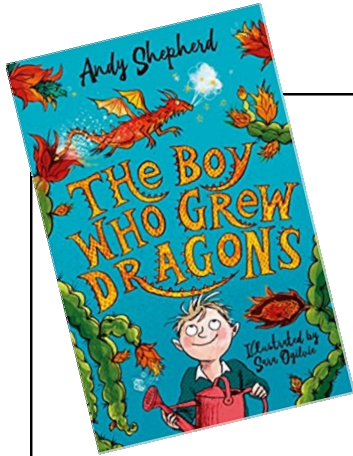
We will also be running women-only courses under our forthcoming 'Pedal' for Women programme.

For more details please contact [highways@torbay.gov.uk](mailto:highways@torbay.gov.uk)

*RESPECT*

*RESPONSIBILITY*

*ASPIRATION*



*A beautiful picture book about a young bear who stumbles upon something he has never seen before.*

**Miss Palfrey and the Children's Book Picks of the Week**

*This book is sure to fire up the imagination and a love of reading, which some of the Year 4 children are about to discover. An enjoyable dragon delight; guaranteed to make you and your parents wish for your own dragon after reading this.*



**Weekly Attendance Award**

Congratulations to **Pine Class** for winning the School Attendance Award with **99.7%** attendance. School target: 96% The whole school achieved **97.5% this week**



**This Week's Star Pupils!**

Ash — Isla: for showing such kindness!

★ Lily P: a super *thinkodocus* in her writing and listening carefully to advice given to improve

Elm — Arlo: for showing wonderful kindness and always being ready to help friends and teachers

★ Zoe: for developing super confidence in her learning - she has tried particularly hard to use her sounds for writing

Beech — Thomas: an amazing improvement in his listening and attention!

Pine — Summer: always being an enthusiastic learner and participating

Apple — Holly: a positive attitude to learning!

Oak — Ruby-Lee: great participation in lessons and kindness to others

Birch — Zain: fantastic independent motivation and wonderful setting description!

Rowan — Frankie: the learning champion for progress in Maths and Literacy!

Cherry — Serina: excellent learning attitude in class and improvement in homework

Maple — Finley: outstanding attitude to learning!

Holly — Noah: excellent attitude towards his learning!

Willow — Aliyah S: a fantastic attitude to her learning and is a pleasure to have in the class

Hawthorn — Charlotte: superb effort in everything she does!

Hazel — Phoebe: excellent effort, participation and progress in Maths

**National StoryTelling Week**

Next week is National Storytelling Week and in Key Stage 1 we will be reading and sharing our favourite books from a range of authors throughout the week. To help us celebrate this, on Friday 1st February it is National Read Aloud Day and we would like to welcome you to come and share a book with your child. The session will run from 2:30pm and you can share a book from home or one from our library. Look out for the note in your child's bookbag!

**Cat Protection Visit**

On Tuesday 22nd January Year 1 and 2 were visited by Kirsten from Cats Protection. She went to each class to talk about how to care for our pet cats. She showed us some posters and we explored the items in her bag that may or may not have been good for a pet cat and discussed the reasons why. The children loved it and learnt a lot. It was particularly interesting to hear about all of the children's pets!!



## Sportstastic!

*(Huge thanks to Mr Mayling for providing these amazing opportunities!)*

### Sports Hall Athletics Final – Level 3

Having already achieved second place in our schools cluster competition before Christmas, we also qualified for the next round at South Devon College, which was a level 3 Torbay wide competition. What a fantastic achievement! 5 top schools from all over the bay competed with the top 2 schools qualifying for the School Games Devon Finals. All the children took part in a range of track and field events. They all worked really hard and they managed to better their performance from their first competition. We amassed many points in the field events and some of the children are the best in the bay for their event. We missed out by one place to going to the Devon County Finals and overall we achieved a very strong third, St Marychurch came second and Sherwell Valley won. What an achievement! Third Best in the Bay!!!



### The 'A' Games

On Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> January a group of Year 5 children went to St Cuthbert Mayne and took part in the 'A' Games. The 'A' Games is an annual alternative event which is organised by the Young Sports Ambassadors at St Cuthbert Mayne. The aim of the event is to increase participation, encourage healthy lifestyles and inspire all young people to benefit from the positive values of physical activity and sport.

The children took part in a fun morning of alternative activities including Bounce Fitness, Boxercise, Orienteering and Wave boarding with an emphasis on enjoyment and discovery and not competition.

All the children received a certificate, fruit and drink from the event and hopefully they left with an understanding that physical activity doesn't have to mean the usual team ball games like football and netball and can be found in other enjoyable forms.

Children's comments:

"We enjoyed the music and the orienteering, they were both fantastic! I loved the A Games, it was amazing and I hope I get to go again next year!"

"I loved the A Games because it was fun!"



## Shanghai Maths!

*Mr Rogers reports...*

*I'm not very good at maths. I prefer reading and writing, but I'm useless at mathematics! It's alright, don't worry.*

I'm sure this is a conversation (or parts of) that many of us have had with either our children, or other adults, over the years. Indeed, if I had a pound for every time I've heard this during my career, I would be a moderately wealthy man! Personally, I've always found this quite odd. Seldom would one admit to being poor at reading or writing, but for some reason it is acceptable to be poor at maths. In some circumstances, it is even considered 'cool'.

On Monday, Mrs Rice and I were privileged to observe a pair of teachers from Shanghai teach two lessons. We observed a Year 4 & Year 6 class of approximately 30 children at Shiphay Learning Academy. This observation was part of the 2 Year NCETM (National Centre for Excellence in Maths Teaching) Programme, which we joined in September 2018.

The teaching of mathematics in Shanghai is quite different to what we would consider 'typical' teaching in the UK. First of all, most Shanghai schools have upwards of 40 children in a class – in some cases 50 is the norm. The children all work on the same problem, exploring the process of achieving the answer, rather than just jumping straight to the answer itself. The correct use of an appropriate manipulative (Unifix cubes, Cuisenaire Rods, number line etc.) is also a huge part of the lesson, geared towards helping to build concrete understanding of a problem. Each element builds on the previous and there is always a reason behind it, even down to where the teacher records a method or part of the problem on their white board. Our own teaching works on small steps, but it was certainly interesting to see the differences.

There are elements of this style that we have already embedded in our classroom practice; however, on the whole, it is a very different approach to what we do in the UK. Lessons at St. Margaret's have varying levels of challenge, pitched for a range of abilities and greater opportunities to develop mathematical thinking through reasoning skills, something which didn't take as high a precedent in the two lessons we observed.

One thing we did take away was the need to continue to adapt and develop rapid fluency knowledge of multiplication and linked division facts, number bonds and quick recall of mental and written methods for all four operations (addition, subtraction, multiplication and division) with the children across the school.

In China, children are expected, on entry to school, to know multiplication facts up to  $9 \times 9$  and a raft of number bonds. We already have introduced a number of key ways to address this in school, the first being the adoption of KIRFs (Key Instant Recall Facts), which are not only taught in school, but issued as home learning and both Club 54 in KS1 and 108 Club for our KS2 children.

Over the coming school year, we look forwards to taking the best elements of Shanghai practice and implementing it at St. Margaret's. We are launching a brand new initiative for learning multiplication and division facts at home very shortly, with further information to follow!

Mr Rogers

### **Year 6 Leavers Celebration**

Some parents would like to organise a special event for the Year 6 Leavers on 19th July. If you would like to get involved, please speak to Portia Lear or Jodie Herbert.

### Diary Date Reminders

Week beginning 28.1.19	National Story Telling Week
Wed 30.1.19 3.05—3.30pm	Year 6 Skern Lodge residential meeting for parents and children in Hazel Class. Parental consent forms and a kit list will be distributed and opportunities given for any questions.
Monday 4.2.19 2.00pm	PTA Meeting—all welcome. Tea and coffee provided. Just one hour before you pick up your little ones.
Wed 13.2.19 4.00-5.00pm	KS1 PTA Valentines Disco in the school hall
Wed 13.2.19 5.15-6.30pm	KS2 PTA Valentines Disco in the school hall
Friday 15.2.19	Last day of the half term then school closed until 25.2.19
Monday 25.2.19	First day back 3.05-3.30 KS1 'Stay and Read' (choose a book and stay and read with your little one) in the library for family and children in Y1 and Y2 (the PTA are putting on hot drinks for the adults)
Thursday 28.1.19	3.05-3.30 KS2 'Stay and Read' (choose and book and stay and read with your little one) in the library for family and children in Y3, Y4, Y5 and Y6 (the PTA are putting on hot drinks for the adults)
Thur 14.3.19 2.00-3.00pm	CAP (Child Assault Prevention) UK team parent workshop. A very worth-while event to attend. More details to follow.
Weeks beginning 18.3.19 and 25.3.19	CAP UK team will be in school delivering workshops to all the children. More details to follow.