



St Mary's C of E Primary School

"Shining Brighter and Brighter"

School Newsletter July 2026

What a fantastic and incredibly busy term it has been! Over the past few weeks, our pupils have enjoyed so many memorable experiences, from residential trips and SATs to Sports Days, concerts and even our much-loved duck race. It has been wonderful to see the enthusiasm, resilience and achievements of our children, who continue to make us proud every day.

None of this would be possible without the support of our families. On behalf of all the staff, I would like to thank you for your continued encouragement, generosity and partnership throughout the year. Your support makes a real difference to our school community.

We hope you all have a wonderful summer break filled with rest, fun and special family time. We look forward to welcoming everyone back in September, refreshed and ready for another exciting year.

Miss Gray
Head Teacher



Collective Worship & Values

This term, our school value has been Courage. In Collective Worship, we explored examples from the Bible, including the courage shown by the disciples as they followed Jesus, even when others opposed Him. We also reflected on how we can show courage in our own lives by standing up for what is right and making positive choices.

We have continued to reflect on our school vision, "Shining Brighter and Brighter," inspired by a Bible passage about wisdom. Together, we explored the difference between knowledge and wisdom, with the children sharing some wonderfully thoughtful and insightful ideas.

Can you come up with your own example?

Knowledge is knowing that a tomato is a fruit.

Wisdom is knowing not to put it in a fruit salad!

ALLERGY AWARENESS

As we head into the summer holidays, we would like to thank families for continuing to be mindful of ingredients when preparing packed lunches and snacks. This is also a gentle reminder that products containing Nutella or other hazelnut spreads should not be brought into school, as they pose a serious risk to some of our pupils.

The small effort made by each member of our school community can have a huge impact on the safety and wellbeing of children living with allergies. By checking ingredients and choosing suitable alternatives, you help ensure that everyone feels safe, included and able to enjoy school.

Thank you for your continued support in looking after one another and helping us keep our school a safe place for all.

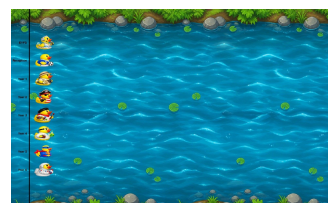
FUNDRAISING 2026

A huge thank you to everyone who supported our School Fair, Treat Friday, the School Lottery and the first-ever St Mary's Duck Race this term. Thanks to your generosity and ongoing support, we have successfully raised the funds needed to purchase a brand-new set of Chromebooks for our pupils.

Every raffle ticket, lottery entry, cake purchase, donation and act of support has helped us reach this fantastic goal, providing valuable new technology that will benefit children across the school for years to come.

We would also like to say a special thank you to our wonderful School Association. Their hard work, enthusiasm and dedication, together with the many hours spent planning and organising fundraising events throughout the year, have made this achievement possible. We are incredibly grateful for everything they do to enrich school life and create opportunities for our children.

Thank you to everyone for supporting our school. Whether you attended an event, bought a lottery ticket, volunteered your time or donated, every contribution has made a real difference.



BEING GOOD NEIGHBOURS

We are very fortunate to be part of such a supportive local community and would like to remind everyone of the importance of being considerate of our neighbours.

Please encourage your children to be respectful when passing through the churchyard and near Shaftesbury Court. We have received reports of children climbing trees, playing football and using the churchyard as a play area, which is not appropriate in this shared and peaceful space.

We are proud of our pupils and want them to be recognised for their excellent behaviour, kindness and respect, both in and out of school. Thank you for supporting us in helping our children be positive ambassadors for St Mary's.



LEARNING AT HOME

We know many families are keen to keep screen time to a minimum, especially over the summer holidays. However, a little time spent on high-quality, purposeful learning games can be a great way to keep key skills fresh and support children's confidence when they return to school in September.

Alongside Times Tables Rock Stars and Numbots, we have also invested in Literacy Gold, an exciting online programme designed to support reading, spelling and literacy skills through engaging activities.

If your child enjoys using these platforms over the summer, even for a short time each week, it can make a real difference while still leaving plenty of time for outdoor play, reading, family adventures and relaxation.



Literacy Gold

RESIDENTIAL ADVENTURES

Our Year 4 and Year 6 pupils had an incredible time on their residential trips, creating memories that will last a lifetime.

Year 4 enjoyed an action-packed stay at Woodrow, taking on challenges such as crate stacking, team-building activities and the legendary Drop It, Pop It. Meanwhile, Year 6 travelled to Overstrand Hall in Norfolk, where they conquered Jacob's Ladder and the Leap of Faith, tackled problem-solving challenges and showed off their competitive spirit in laser tag.

Residentials are such a valuable part of school life, helping children to build confidence, resilience, independence and friendships. A huge thank you to the staff who gave up their time to make these experiences possible. Their enthusiasm, care and commitment, often well beyond the school day, are greatly appreciated.



SUMMER SUPPORT

We know that, for some families, the summer holidays can bring additional challenges. Although school is closed over the break, we want to reassure you that support is still available if you need it.

During term time, we usually ask that emails are sent to our main admin inbox or class emails. However, over the summer holidays, if you require support, please contact the Headteacher directly at head@stmarys916.herts.sch.uk. Emails will be checked regularly throughout the holidays, and we will respond as soon as possible.

You are not alone!

POLICE VISIT

We were delighted to welcome our friends from the Met Police to school. The officers brought along a range of equipment and explained how it is used in their work. The children thoroughly enjoyed asking questions, trying on parts of the uniform and sitting in the police car.

Visits like these help children develop an understanding of the people in our community who help and protect us, as well as the important role the police play in keeping everyone safe.

We have a feeling the visit may even have inspired a few future police officers — and if so, the community will certainly be in safe hands!



Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance (EBSNA)

Our friends at DSPL8 have created some helpful advice for supporting families with EBSNA.

INFORMATION AND ADVICE ABOUT EMOTIONALLY BASED SCHOOL NON-ATTENDANCE (EBSNA) FOR FAMILIES

EBSNA can affect children and young people of any school age. It can happen as a result of a wide range of different factors – home, wider family, community, school, friendships – often a combination of some or all of these.

WHY COULD MY CHILD BE ANXIOUS?

Anxieties can stem from a number of things such as:

- An unmet special educational need such as autism, ADHD, dyslexia or dyspraxia
- Friendship issues, not 'fitting in', or bullying
- Finding schoolwork confusing and overwhelming
- Separation anxiety
- Trauma
- Bereavement
- Low self-esteem
- The environment itself - especially for those who are autistic and/or neurodivergent



A child might become anxious about school at any stage. It can occur when children start school or transition into secondary school, or it might be related to puberty or hormonal changes. Read more on the [Local Offer website](#).

WHAT ARE THE WARNING SIGNS

- ? Can you spot patterns in your child's absence from school, e.g. certain days/activities?
- ? Does your child regularly say they don't want to go to school, or reluctant/delaying going to school?
- ? Does your child struggle with changes to environment, routine or stimulus?
- ? Are there physical symptoms on school days e.g. tummy aches, feeling sick, headaches?

(NB please always check with a GP to rule out any medical cause or illness).



WHAT TO DO

- 👍 Ask for a meeting with your child's school involving someone who knows your child e.g. class teacher, pastoral lead, SENCo. Be prepared by taking along any notes about the things your child finds difficult.
- 👍 Work together with school to build a child centred plan that understands the underlying problems which are making your child feel anxious about going to school. This could include adjustments to help your child access their education. There are tools which can help such as [Hertfordshire's EBSNA Framework](#).
- 👍 Include your child's voice in any plan as they are more likely to be able to stick to it. Check in after a while and review it with your school to see what is working well and what is not.
- 👍 Do advocate for your child's needs but also understand the limitations as to what your school might be able to do.
- 👍 If the agreed strategies are not working, speak again with your school to identify other services and professionals that might be able to support your child. The [Herts Hub](#) has a wealth of mental health signposting and ideas for early help.



REMEMBER...

- 👁️ With the right plan in place, being in school supports your child's academic progress, social development and mental wellbeing.
- 👁️ Small steps are often big wins.
- 👁️ ...also ensure that you find ways to support your own wellbeing in the process.

STRATEGIES TO TRY AT HOME

- ✓ Develop a plan for the evenings, which can include calming activities before bedtime e.g. gentle music, bath, story or reading.
- ✓ Also plan for the morning, and where possible get things ready for the next day the night before (school bag, lunch box etc).
- ✓ Make a diary which includes your child's worries and also identifies positives and what works well.
- ✓ Respond with empathy whilst encouraging small, manageable steps.
- ✓ Visual timetables at home and school might also help.



PARENT VOICE

Thank you to everyone who completed our recent Parent Voice questionnaire on Attendance and Behaviour. We are pleased to share a snapshot of the feedback.

Parents agreed that:

- We set clear expectations for attendance and behaviour.
- We support children to understand and regulate their emotions.
- Low-level disruption is usually dealt with quickly and effectively.
- Children feel safe at school and treat each other with respect.

We also received some helpful suggestions about communication with parents and ensuring children have a clear understanding of our rules and routines. We value this constructive feedback and will use it to continue improving our practice.

Our next Parent Voice survey will focus on Inclusion and Special Educational Needs (SEND). Thank you, as always, for your continued support.

[PARENT VOICE SURVEY HERE](#)



ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY

As we look ahead to September, please ensure your child is in school from the very first day of term – Wednesday 2nd September. Missing the start of term can make it harder for children to settle into new routines, reconnect with friends and get off to a positive start.

We understand that illness is sometimes unavoidable, but we ask families to make every effort to avoid unnecessary absence. If there are challenges affecting your child's attendance, please speak to your child's class teacher—we are here to help and support you.

GOVERNOR NEWS

Governors have thoroughly enjoyed being part of school life this term and seeing first-hand the many opportunities, achievements and experiences that make St Mary's such a special place. Above all, this term has highlighted the incredible strength of our school community. Time and again, pupils, families, staff and governors have come together to support one another, truly living out our vision of 'Shining Brighter and Brighter'.

This community spirit has been especially evident during a number of unexpected events. Governors were deeply moved by the extraordinary support shown for Chamila and her family. The campaign brought together the whole school community, and our local MP, Victoria Collins, commented on the overwhelming care and compassion shown by everyone at St Mary's. We very much hope the awareness raised will make a positive difference.

The recent heatwave provided another opportunity to see the school's values in action. We would like to thank all staff, who worked tirelessly to keep the school open while adapting lessons and routines to ensure children remained safe, comfortable and able to learn despite the challenging conditions.

Community was also at the heart of the annual Big Tidy, where governors, parents, staff and volunteers worked side by side to care for the school grounds (with the school scarecrow receiving a well-deserved makeover too!). Our thanks also go to the fantastic SMSA for another successful Summer Fair and for their thoughtful kindness in providing ice pops for pupils and staff during the hottest days of term. Their fundraising and support continue to make a huge difference to school life.

As always, the term has been packed with memorable events, from Sports Day and sponsored walks to KS2 music concerts, talent shows and sharing assemblies. Governors particularly enjoyed attending the Year 1 sharing assembly and were delighted by the children's confidence, creativity and enthusiasm.

Alongside these celebrations, governors have continued their strategic role through health and safety visits, policy reviews, monitoring school improvement and supporting the wider work of the governing board. Several governors also supported Year 6 SATs week with invigilation and were impressed by the calm atmosphere and the resilience shown by the children.

We are delighted to welcome two new governors, Kathy Jenkins and Mary Ann-Mountford, and look forward to working with them in the coming year.

Finally, governors would like to thank every member of staff for their professionalism, dedication and care, and to thank our parents, carers, volunteers and the wider community for their continued support. Together, you make St Mary's a place where children feel valued, inspired and able to flourish.

We wish all of our families a happy, restful and well-deserved summer break.

DIARY DATES

A detailed list of dates will be shared with parents via email alongside the newsletter. For safety and security reasons, these dates will not appear on the website version.

Date	Time	Event
1.9.26	All Day	Staff Inset
2.9.26	8:40 am	Autumn Term Begins!



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@stmarys916

Information available on our [website](#).