



St Mary's C of E Primary School

"Shining Brighter and Brighter"

School Newsletter September 2026

A very warm welcome back to all our families—and a special welcome to those joining St Mary's for the first time.

I hope you had a wonderful summer and are feeling refreshed and ready for the new school year.

Throughout this newsletter, I will highlight important policies, routines and expectations, alongside upcoming events and exciting changes. Our aim is to provide families with clarity so that we can work together positively and consistently. By respecting shared expectations and maintaining clear boundaries, we help everyone feel safe, supported and valued—while modelling responsibility and respect for our children.

There will also be plenty of opportunities for families to become involved in school life. We are proud to belong to a caring community in which every member matters, and we look forward to a happy and successful year together.

Miss Gray
Headteacher



Collective Worship, Assemblies and Values

Our school value this half term is Respect.

This morning, we visited the church for collective worship, led by Jonathan. The children brought objects that support their learning, which Jonathan blessed alongside our school bags.

We have made some changes to our worship and assemblies this year. From Monday to Thursday, Years 4–6 will gather in the morning, while Years 1–3 will gather in the afternoon. Children in EYFS will continue to take part in a daily act of worship in their classrooms. On Fridays, the whole school will come together for our Celebration Assembly.

These smaller gatherings allow us to tailor worship and assemblies to the children's ages, helping everyone to engage, reflect and participate more fully. The children have already begun exploring the theme of respect and developing their own thoughtful 'Big Questions'.

THE BIG QUESTION

Each half term, the children help us explore our school value more deeply by suggesting a 'Big Question'.

This half term's question was suggested by Lottie in Year 4:
"How can respect help us to achieve more?"

This is a particularly thought-provoking question at the beginning of a new school year, when we are setting goals and considering what we hope to achieve.

We have also introduced a Big Question Book to our reflection table. Children can add their thoughts and ideas, which we will explore further during collective worship.

We want children to take increasing ownership of collective worship so that it feels meaningful, relevant and truly belongs to them. We look forward to hearing their reflections!



ALLERGY AWARENESS

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.

RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL AND RESPECTING OUR COMMUNITY

We are fortunate to be part of a supportive local community, and we all have a responsibility to travel to and from school safely and considerately.

Please do not park or stop on the yellow lines outside school, as these restrictions are essential for keeping children and families safe. We also ask that children behave respectfully when passing through the churchyard and near Shaftesbury Court. The churchyard is a shared, peaceful space and should not be used for climbing trees, playing football or other active games.

This is not only about safety; it is about creating a culture of respect and care for our whole community. By parking responsibly and following local rules, adults model to children that rules matter and help protect everyone.

Thank you for helping our pupils to be responsible and respectful ambassadors for St Mary's.

ONLINE LEARNING AND HOMEWORK

We use a range of high-quality online resources to support learning, and homework is shared through Google Classroom. Further information about homework expectations will be sent to families shortly.

Online resources can enhance classroom teaching by providing personalised practice, immediate feedback and assessment opportunities on a scale that would not otherwise be possible. However, we are also mindful of children's screen time. Our expectation is that devices are used purposefully to support and enhance learning, rather than simply increase time spent online.

We have a limited number of reconditioned Samsung tablets available to support families who do not have access to a suitable device for home learning. If your family would benefit from one, please complete the Google form [here](#).



PARENT RESPECTFUL ENGAGEMENT POLICY

Positive relationships between home and school are essential to supporting every child. Our Parent Respectful Engagement Policy sets out how we can work together safely, respectfully and constructively.

It asks all members of our community to:

treat pupils, families and staff with courtesy and respect;
raise concerns calmly and follow the school's communication structure;
use respectful language in person, online and in emails;
bring concerns about another child to school staff rather than intervening directly; and
model the behaviour and values we want our children to develop.

The policy also explains how the school will respond proportionately when these expectations are not met. The full policy can be found on our [website](#).

UNIFORM

Following feedback from families, we updated our Uniform Policy last year. We believe our uniform is practical, smart, accessible and cost-effective, while helping children feel that they belong to our school community.

We ask all families to follow the policy consistently. If your child requires a temporary adjustment for any reason, please contact us so that we can work with you supportively.

Please clearly label every item of clothing. As children wear identical uniform, it is extremely difficult to return unnamed items to their owners.

Our School Association also holds regular pre-loved uniform sales—an option that is equally kind to family budgets and the environment.

Full details can be found on the school [website](#).



VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

There are many ways to become involved in school life. We welcome volunteers to hear children read, support Forest School sessions and help with other activities.

You can also join our School Association, which organises fundraising events. The money raised helps to reduce the cost of school trips, purchase learning resources and fund larger projects, such as our new set of Chromebooks.

We follow strict safeguarding procedures. Anyone volunteering regularly must complete the appropriate DBS checks and attend a safeguarding induction before beginning.

If you would like to volunteer in school, please contact the school office. To become involved with the School Association, please contact the association directly. Further information can be found on our school [website](#).

RELATIONSHIPS AND POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

Our Relationships and Positive Behaviour Policy explains how we create a safe, calm and respectful environment in which every child can learn and thrive.

Our approach is compassionate but clear: we recognise that behaviour communicates a need, while maintaining consistent expectations and appropriate boundaries. We teach and celebrate positive behaviour, help children understand the impact of their choices, and use educational, logical or protective consequences when needed.

Strong partnerships with families are essential to this work. You can read the full policy on our [website](#).

STAFF

Below is our staff team for 2026–2027. We are fortunate to have a dedicated and caring team who nurture our children, support their learning and help every child to thrive.

We have introduced some exciting changes this year. Some of our teaching assistants will lead specific interventions across the school, helping to ensure that children receive consistent, high-quality support. Mrs Evans will also take on a dedicated pastoral and ELSA role, alongside delivering interventions, so that children can access support for their emotional wellbeing and emotional literacy when needed.

Support staff arrangements may change from time to time so that help can be directed where it is most needed. Mrs Dobbs and Ms Bowers will also work across the school, providing leadership and teacher planning cover in different classes.

Class	Teachers	Support Staff
Nursery	Mrs Kirby, Miss Bowers	Ms Davies, Mrs Honey
Reception	Mrs Bishop, Mrs Hawkes	Miss Emery, Mrs Honey, Mrs Fennessy, Ms Davies
Year 1	Mrs Zimet, Mrs Stewart	Mrs O'Dell, Ms Bolwell, Mrs Wootton, Mrs Chamila
Year 2	Ms Lee	Miss Deje, Mrs Chamila, Mrs Wootton
Year 3	Mrs Tavender, Mrs Dobbs	Mrs Draper, Miss Alba, Mrs Green
Year 4	Mr Worth	Mrs Green, Miss Lummis, Miss Sidhu, Ms Bolwell
Year 5	Miss Gill, Ms Forsyth	Ms Denham
Year 6	Mr Raisbeck	Mrs Heck

PARENT VOICE

We did not receive any responses to our most recent Parent Voice survey, so we would like to extend the opportunity for families to share their views.

We are keen to listen to feedback and consider how it can help us continue to improve. We warmly encourage all parents and carers to complete our surveys—the perspectives and experiences of our whole school community are valuable to us.

Our current survey focuses on Inclusion and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Please follow the link below to share your views.

[PARENT VOICE SURVEY HERE](#)



ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY

Regular and punctual attendance is essential. Every lesson missed is learning missed, and absence or lateness can quickly create gaps in knowledge, disrupt routines and make it harder for children to keep pace with their classmates.

Children should arrive at school on time and attend every day unless they are genuinely too unwell to do so. Please ensure that you leave the school site before 8:50 a.m. so that the gates can be locked promptly, keeping the site safe and secure for all our children.

The school will follow up unexplained absences, lateness and any emerging patterns of concern. Where attendance or punctuality falls below expectations, we will contact families and may arrange a meeting to agree the support and action needed.

We understand that some families face genuine challenges, and we are committed to working with you. If anything is affecting your child's attendance or punctuality, please contact us promptly so that we can help. Ensuring children are in school, on time and ready to learn is a shared responsibility—and one of the most important ways we can support their progress and wellbeing.