

# St Mary & St John CE Primary School

Headteacher: Elizabeth Burton



Newsletter 7: 16.11.20

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are two weeks into the second half term and also into a second lockdown. This one seems hard going with the dark evenings and mornings, variable weather and lots of mud about! Reading some of the younger children's holiday diaries from half term, however, it seems that many families made the most of half term. I have given out lots of Headteacher's awards to children for their highly entertaining accounts of their holidays, often with photos and drawings too.

We had a year group off in the first week of this half term due to a confirmed case of coronavirus. Most children in the year group engaged with our remote learning platform called Seesaw. We had a feedback session at our staff meeting this week where the teachers were positive about the interactive elements and the ability to connect regularly with their children. The parent/carer WhatsApp group was supportive too with advice to parents and carers who had teething problems with using the platform. It's a learning curve for all of us but we feel more confident of the platform's efficacy after this first experience. There is information about seesaw on our website under the Home Learning tab if you want to find out more.

Parent Consultations. We've had a good response to our invitation to a telephone parent consultation this term. We were planning socially distanced face to face consultations before the lockdown. The staff discussed the various options and preferred telephone as the communication tool over video calls. The technological hitches which can interfere with video conferencing can be highly frustrating and stressful. I do realise the difficulty this may cause for separated parents; our teachers will make two calls for anyone who requests this. We would much prefer to see you face to face but we hope the phone call will give you a good idea of how your child is progressing and how we can work together to support any difficulties they may be encountering.

We had a really useful PTA meeting with a very small number on Wednesday 11 November. It is a real sadness that our wonderful Winter Fair, which raised a magnificent £7000 in 2019, cannot go ahead. The PTA are working hard to make some things digital and have set up a website where you can buy and donate. They will be sending you information in the coming days. Please try and support as much as you can. We will have Christmas cards and calendars, all done by the children, on sale, as well as the famous jam jars filled by our younger children.

There are significant losses at school this year due to the exceptional circumstances of the pandemic. It is such a joy to bring up a young family and to feel part of a school community. Seeing your children in a sharing assembly with a friendly coffee or tea, is such a treat. Having a cuppa while children play at the Friday tea stall, celebrating the end of the week in a safe space, is a real pleasure (well, maybe not for the organisers!!). I know we cannot get these lost months back. We won't be able to have the usual community Christmas events either but we are hoping to do a Christmas lunch, details to follow.

The positive news on the vaccine, however, gives me hope that we will return to everything that we hold dear in our school with our parents and carers amongst us again. I certainly hope so.

Please look after yourselves and your families.

Best wishes, Liz Burton