

St Mary & St John CE Primary School

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Friday 14th March 2025

Dear St Mary & St John Parents and Carers,

There is much to share since the last newsletter! We celebrated World Book Day and...

World Book Day

We had a fantastic day last week celebrating World Book Day! This year, the theme was more accessible to children, encouraging them to 'read their way', exploring the different ways we might enjoy reading. We loved the variety of costumes, and comfy ways the children like to dress when they read! Mrs Stevenson wore a shirt where everyone wrote their book recommendations for her – we can't wait to see if she manages to read them all before next year's World Book Day!



**HAPPY
WORLD
BOOK DAY**



In our morning Celebration, Mrs Stevenson introduced the theme: 'read your way'. The children had to work out which teachers were in the pictures showing how they like to read. Can you guess? Later in the day, all classes enjoyed a book swap where teachers shared extracts from their favourite books, and the children chose which book they wanted to hear. 💙 We ended the day with a good old traditional book swap. It was such a lovely day – thank you for all your support!

#LetGirlsPlay

Last week, we took part in the Biggest Ever Football Session organised by Mr Guy. Anneliese Dodds, our local MP, is very supportive of the [#LetGirlsPlay](#) initiative and dropped in to show her support. The girls had a brilliant afternoon honing their football skills. ⚽ On a side note, our Y6 girls' football team are doing very well in the league at the moment!



Key Stage 2 Mud Lab

The 'Mud Lab' has been installed in the Key Stage 2 playground 🐸 The children have LOVED playing with it this week! As you can see, it started off immaculately pristine...look at the last photos! Please do send wellies if your child enjoys playing in the mud!

A HUGE thank you to Mr Bosley (one of our parents) for putting in the time to make these beautiful benches for our children! 💙



Fire! Fire!

Year 1 looked out to find the shed 'set alight' and transformed into Tom Farriner's bakery on Pudding Lane. Using only syringes and a puddle to represent 1666-era firefighting equipment, they made a valiant attempt to control the 'blaze' and were most aggrieved when the fire kept spreading! We learnt that a more effective way to control the fire was to pull down houses to create a firebreak.



All the way at the other end of the school, Year 6 have spent their Outdoor Learning lessons learning how to safely start a campfire. Now, doesn't that show off the progression of our curriculum at SSMJ!

Red Nose Day

Don't forget it's Red Nose Day on Friday 21st March. Please wear red to support the charity. Anything that is red: red shirt, red socks, red hair! If you have a nose, you can wear those too. Please bring a donation of £1 which will go to Comic Relief. We are selling red noses in the office for £2 each, don't forget to pick one up! Which nose will you get?! Hopefully not one as silly as Miss Stott's...



Boxing

We were very excited to be joined by Sophie and Meena from the Project PT to lead some boxing sessions for our Year 3 and Year 5 children earlier this week. The classes had a fun morning of games and pad-based boxing, focused on health and fitness. The children loved it!

More info about the Project PT can be found here: <https://www.theprojectpt.com/>



Ramadan Mubarak!

Ramadan Mubarak to our Muslim families who are celebrating Ramadan this month. 🌙

Some of our older children have asked for a quiet space to pray during the month of Ramadan. They have been spending the first part of their lunch break praying in the small hall. It is lovely to see their dedication and commitment and is a real testament to their growing faith.

May the blessing of Ramadan bring you and your family health, prosperity, and tranquility.



Dates for your Diary – NEXT WEEK

Monday 17th & Wednesday 19th March: Parents' Evening – Information about sign up has been sent via ParentPay.

Thursday 20th March: Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 – Trip to Farmer Gows.

Friday 21st March: Red Nose Day - Come dressed in red for a £1 donation, noses will be available at the office for £2.

Saturday 22nd March (7:30pm) – Parenthood(Tickets are £15: www.chippingnortontheatre.com/events/parenthood)

We hope you have a lovely weekend. 😊 With best wishes,

Bex Stott

and the St Mary & St John Team

Headteacher



Let all that you do be done in love...

1 Corinthians 16:14



At The National College, our WakeUpWednesday guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. Formerly delivered by National Online Safety, these guides now address wider topics and themes. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit nationalcollege.com.

10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators USING TECHNOLOGY TO BOOST READING SKILLS

The way we engage with text has changed dramatically over the years. Whether reading captions on social media, instructions in a video game or an e-book on a digital device, technology plays a major role in modern literacy. While traditional books remain invaluable, digital tools can enhance reading skills by making text more accessible, interactive and engaging.

1 CHOOSING THE RIGHT TYPE OF TEXT

Before integrating technology, consider the types of text that a child engages with. If they need help on occasion, digital reading pens can assist by scanning and reciting words or sentences. These tools are especially useful for students with reading difficulties, and can even be used in exams if they're part of their routine learning process. Proper training and practice are required, but they can be a great help when tackling printed text.

2 READING ON SCREEN

Many devices now allow users to customise text for better readability. Adjusting font type, size and background colour can significantly enhance comprehension. For many readers, white text on a black background is the easiest to see, whereas other styles – such as dyslexia-friendly fonts – are designed to help those who are struggling. Teaching children how to personalise text settings on their devices empowers them to read more comfortably and with greater confidence.

3 ACCESSIBILITY TOOLS

Most modern devices include built-in tools designed to support readers. These features can be found in Settings under Accessibility and may include text-to-speech, speech-to-text and screen magnification functions. Enabling these tools can make digital reading more user friendly, especially for children with learning difficulties or visual impairments, who might have an easier time with spoken language than the written word, or who might simply require a closer look at the text.

4 INTERACTIVE READING PROGRAMMES

Many digital reading devices, such as Kindle and other e-readers, offer features like word highlighting, adjustable text speed and built-in dictionaries. These tools help learners to break down complex words and phrases while maintaining an appropriate reading pace. Some programmes even allow users to track their progress, making reading a more structured and motivating experience.

5 VIDEO GAMES AND READING SKILLS

Many video games require players to read instructions, character dialogues and mission objectives, making them an unexpected but effective literacy tool. Games that involve storytelling, puzzles or problem-solving often include large amounts of text – encouraging children to read these texts aloud or discuss them can improve their comprehension and vocabulary in a fun, engaging way.

6 SUBTITLES AND CLOSED CAPTIONS

Watching videos with subtitles or closed captions is an effective way to enhance reading skills. As children watch their favourite shows or online videos, they can follow along with the text, gaining a better understanding of how written words sound when spoken aloud. This is particularly beneficial for reluctant readers, as it exposes them to words in a familiar, engaging context. Repeatedly watching content with subtitles reinforces word recognition and comprehension.

7 USING AUDIOBOOKS

Audiobooks are an excellent way to develop listening and reading skills simultaneously. Children can follow along with the text while listening to a narrator, reinforcing word recognition and fluency. For struggling readers, listening to an audiobook before attempting to read the text independently can boost their confidence and comprehension.

9 TEXT-TO-VOICE TECHNOLOGY

Text-to-voice software reads digital text aloud, making it easier for learners to follow along. Most smartphones, tablets and computers come with this function built in. When enabled, users can highlight a passage or sentence and press Play to hear it read aloud. This tool is particularly helpful for auditory learners and those who struggle with decoding written words.

8 VOICE-TO-TEXT FOR WRITING AND READING

Voice-to-text tools allow users to dictate words, which are then transcribed into text. This feature helps children see the connection between spoken and written language. By using text-to-voice to have their dictated words read back to them, learners can identify mistakes and improve their reading and writing skills simultaneously.

10 SOCIAL MEDIA AND PARENTAL CONTROLS

While social media provides opportunities for reading, most platforms have age restrictions of 13–16 years old, making parental guidance essential. Many social media videos include captions and comments that can encourage reading. However, it's important to use the platform's parental controls (such as time limits and content filters) to create a safe and educational online environment for children. Encouraging responsible social media use can ensure a balanced and productive approach to digital literacy.

Meet Our Expert

Catrina Lowrie is a qualified special needs teacher and experienced SENCO. She recently launched her own site, Neuroteachers, which offers a library of short, 'how-to' and explanation videos for educators. Catrina also writes and delivers online training and events for multi-academy trusts, businesses, schools and training organisations.



The
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Mindful March: Wellbeing Segment

For more information, please visit <https://actionforhappiness.org/calendar> where you can click on each day for more activities and ideas! Today’s suggestion is to take three calm breaths at regular intervals during your day – a great idea to ground yourself.

Mindful March 2025

SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
1 Set an intention to live with awareness and kindness	2 Notice three things you find beautiful in the outside world	3 Start today by appreciating your body and that you're alive	4 Notice how you speak to yourself and choose to use kind words	5 Bring to mind people you care about and send love to them	6 If you find yourself rushing, make an effort to slow down	7 Take three calm breaths at regular intervals during your day
8 Eat mindfully. Appreciate the taste, texture and smell of your food	9 Take a full breath in and out before you reply to others	10 Get outside and notice how the weather feels on your face	11 Stay fully present while drinking your cup of tea or coffee	12 Listen deeply to someone and really hear what they are saying	13 Pause to watch the sky or clouds for a few minutes today	14 Find ways to enjoy any chores or tasks that you do
15 Stop. Breathe. Notice. Repeat regularly	16 Get really absorbed with an interesting or creative activity	17 Look around and spot three things you find unusual or pleasant	18 Have a 'no plans' day and notice how that feels	19 Cultivate a feeling of loving-kindness towards others today	20 Focus on what makes you and others happy today	21 Listen to a piece of music without doing anything else
22 Notice something that is going well, even if today feels difficult	23 Tune into your feelings, without judging or trying to change them	24 Appreciate your hands and all the things they enable you to do	25 Focus your attention on the good things you take for granted	26 Choose to spend less time looking at screens today	27 Appreciate nature around you, wherever you are	28 Notice when you're tired and take a break as soon as possible
29 Choose a different route today and see what you notice	30 Mentally scan your body and notice what it is feeling	31 Discover the joy in the simple things of life				

ACTION FOR HAPPINESS

Happier · Kinder · Together

2024					2025						
August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	July
1 Th	1 Su	1 Tu	1 Fr	1 Su	1 We New Year's Day	1 Sa	1 Sa	1 Tu	1 Th	1 Su	1 Tu
2 Fr	2 Mo INSET	2 We	2 Sa	2 Mo	2 Th	2 Su	2 Su	2 We	2 Fr Y5 Learning Exhibition	2 Mo INSET	2 We
3 Sa	3 Tu INSET	3 Th Y6 Steam Y5 I.F.	3 Su	3 Tu	3 Fr	3 Mo	3 Mo	3 Th	3 Sa	3 Tu Term 6 starts	3 Th
4 Su	4 We Term 1 Starts	4 Fr INSET	4 Mo Term 2 starts Assessment week	4 We	4 Sa	4 Tu	4 Tu	4 Fr Term 4 Ends	4 Su	4 We	4 Fr
5 Mo	5 Th	5 Sa	5 Tu	5 Th	5 Su	5 We	5 We	5 Sa	5 Mo Early May	5 Th	5 Sa
6 Tu	6 Fr	6 Su	6 We	6 Fr Y2 SA Panto	6 Mo INSET	6 Th	6 Th WORLD BOOK DAY	6 Su	6 Tu	6 Fr	6 Su
7 We	7 Sa	7 Mo	7 Th	7 Sa	7 Term 3 starts	7 Fr	7 F	7 Mo	7 We	7 Sa	7 Mo
8 Th	8 Su	8 Tu	8 Fr	8 Su	8 We	8 Sa	8 Sa	8 Tu	8 Th	8 Su	8 Tu
9 Fr	9 Mo	9 Mental Health Awareness day	9 Sa	9 Mo	9 Th	9 Su	9 Su	9 We	9 Fr	9 Mo	9 We
10 Sa	10 Tu	10 Y5 Viking Day	10 Su	10 Nat Dress rehearsal Panto YR Nativity	10 Fr	10 Mo	10 Mo	10 Th	10 Sa	10 Tu	10 Th
11 Su	11 We	11 Fr	11 Mo	11 Panto YR Nativity	11 Sa	11 Tu	11 Tu	11 Fr	11 Su	11 We	11 Fr Y3 Learning exhibition
12 Mo	12 Th	12 Sa	12 Tu	12 Th Panto 1/2	12 Su	12 We	12 We	12 Sa	12 Mo Y6 SATS	12 Th	12 Sa
13 Tu	13 Fr	13 Su	13 We	13 Fr Church Nativity	13 Mo	13 Th	13 Th	13 Su	13 Tu	13 Fr Y1 Sharing Assembly	13 Su
14 We	14 Sa	14 Mo Parent consulta	14 Th	14 Sa	14 Tu	14 Fr Term 3 ends	14 Fr Y2 Sharing Assembly	14 Mo	14 We	14 Sa	14 Mo
15 Th	15 Su	15 Tu	15 Fr	15 Su	15 We	15 Sa	15 Sa	15 Tu	15 Th Y5 Hill End Residential	15 Su	15 Tu
16 Fr	16 Mo	16 We Parent consultation	16 Sa	16 Mo	16 Th	16 Su	16 Su	16 We	16 Fr Y4 Learning Exhibition	16 Mo	16 We
17 Sa	17 Tu	17 Th	17 Su	17 Tu	17 Y6 Learning Exhibition	17 Mo	17 Mo Parent Consults	17 Th	17 Sa	17 Tu	17 Th
18 Su	18 We	18 Fr Y4 Learning Exhibition	18 Mo	18 We	18 Sa	18 Tu	18 Tu	18 Fr Good Friday	18 Su	18 We	18 Fr
19 Mo	19 Th	19 Sa	19 Tu	19 Th	19 Su	19 We	19 We Parent Consults	19 Sa	19 Su Y6 WOODLANDS	19 Th	19 Sa
20 Tu	20 Fr Y6 Learning Exhibition	20 Su	20 We	20 Fr Term 2 ends	20 Mo	20 Th	20 Th YR/KS1 Farmer Gows	20 Su	20 Tu	20 Fr	20 Su
21 We	21 Sa	21 Mo Assessment	21 Th	21 Sa	21 Tu	21 Fr	21 Fr RED NOSE DAY	21 Mo Easter Monday	21 We	21 Sa	21 Mo Y6 Leavers Assembly
22 Th	22 Su	22 Tu Y5 Bikeability	22 Fr Y3 Learning Exhibition	22 Su	22 We	22 Sa	22 Sa PARENTHOOD	22 Tu Term 5 Starts	22 Th	22 Su	22 Tu Term 6 ends
23 Fr	23 Mo	23 We Individual photos	23 Sa	23 Mo	23 Th	23 Su	23 Su	23 We	23 Fr Term 5 Ends	23 Mo	23 We
24 Sa	24 Tu	24 Th	24 Su	24 Tu	24 Y1 Sharing Assembly	24 Mo	24 Mo	24 Th	24 Sa	24 Tu	24 Th
25 Su	25 We	25 Fr Term 1 ends	25 Mo	25 Christmas Day	25 Sa	25 Tu Assessment Week	25 Tu	25 Fr	25 Su	25 We	25 Fr
26 Mo August Bk Hol	26 Y3 Stone Age Day	26 Sa	26 Tu	26 Boxing Day	26 Su	26 We	26 We Y3 Learning Exhibition	26 Sa	26 Mo Spring Bk Hol	26 Th	26 Sa
27 Tu	27 Fr	27 Su	27 We	27 Fr	27 Mo	27 Th	27 Th	27 Su	27 Tu	27 Fr Y2 Sharing Assembly	27 Su
28 We	28 Sa	28 Mo	28 Th	28 Sa	28 Tu	28 Fr	28 Fr	28 Mo	28 We	28 Sa	28 Mo
29 Th	29 Su	29 Tu	29 Fr	29 Su	29 We		29 Sa	29 Tu	29 Th	29 Su	29 Tu
30 Fr	30 Mo	30 We	30 Sa	30 Mo	30 Th		30 Su	30 We	30 Fr	30 Mo	30 We
31 Sa		31 Th		31 Tu	31 Fr Y5 Learning Exhibition		31 Mo		31 Sa		31 Th



St Mary and St John
Church of England Primary School
'Let all that you do be done in love'
1 Corinthians 16:14

Calendar 24-25