

Weekly Newsletter
Friday 15th September 2023

St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Glenore Road, Eltham. SE9 1UF
020 8850 7835

governors@stmarys-catholic-primary.org
office@stmary-rc.greenwich.sch.uk

Twitter: @stmaryseltham

Visit us online at www.stmaryrc.org.uk



**WEEK BEGINNING 18th
SEPTEMBER**

Tuesday 19th

Secondary school transition &
Kingswood meeting for Y6 parents

Wednesday 20th

Class I Mass - Convent

Friday 22nd

Harvest Festival and we celebrate
International Sisters of Mercy Day

HEADTEACHER'S MESSAGE

I want to focus my message this week on the importance of reading.

Reading is fundamental to the children's learning as it opens the gateway to all other areas of learning. It has many benefits for children including exposing them to new words and ways of using language. It also helps them learn information about the world and other cultures.

Some teachers are reporting to me that parents are not listening to their children read. As a household with two full-time working parents, I appreciate that modern life can be busy. However, it is essential that reading is prioritised and must be put into daily routines.

New guidance released from the Department for Education on reading states that parents who engage their children in books, prepare them to become committed and enthusiastic readers.

Making sure that they become engaged with reading from the beginning is one of the most important ways to make a difference to their life. Parents can transform a child's attitudes to reading. Book related talk introduces children to language that they might not hear in ordinary conversations.

Extensive international research also shows that being a frequent reader is associated with a range of academic, social and emotional benefits.

Do you know how many words children would have heard by the time they were 5 years old?

- Never read to, 4,662 words;
- 1–2 times per week, 63,570 words;
- 3–5 times per week, 169,520 words;
- Daily, 296,660 words; and five books a day, 1,483,300 words.

In short – please read with your child every day as it has such a huge impact on their development.

Have a nice weekend

Mr Sims
Headteacher

**INTERNATIONAL SISTERS OF MERCY
DAY AND HARVEST FESTIVAL**

On Friday 22nd September we are celebrating both International Sisters of Mercy Day and Harvest Festival, with a Mass in Christchurch (2pm) and refreshments afterwards at St Mary's (3.30pm). Y5 children will lead the Mass. Parents and family members are invited to attend.

Due to space restrictions, KS2 children only will attend the Mass. Children in KS1 will remain at school taking part in activities here.

As part of Harvest Festival every year, St Mary's collects food items for a charity and this year we are supporting a charity supported by the Sisters of Mercy.

Please try to donate, even just one item. Food must be non-perishable, sealed and in date e.g., tinned foods, rice, pasta tea, coffee, herbs and spices. These items can be dropped in the main office from Monday 18th September or brought straight to class.

SCHOOL VALUES: FAITH, MERCY, TRUTH, RESPECT, RESILIENCE, LOVE

READING WITH YOUR CHILD AND BOOK SHOP

Please listen to your Infant children read their book **every day** and write a comment in their reading record. Reading every day makes a huge difference in their progression.

Junior children should also be reading to their parents. Their reading record need to be signed regularly. It is so important that Junior children can read for at least 20 minutes in one stretch. Preferably, this needs to be extended as they get older. Unless they can read for longer periods and build up their understanding through questioning, they will find it increasingly difficult to successfully manage their comprehension exercises in class.

Bookshop for Infant children will resume on Wednesday 20th September. Please encourage your children to buy the books. The children are taken by their teachers/teaching assistants to the bookshop in the afternoon and they are always very enthusiastic about it. They get a lot of pleasure from picking out a book of their choice and saving up each week to buy it.

Savings cards will be given to all new Infant children so look out for it in your child's bookbag.

HEADBOY/HEADGIRL

The election for our new Head Boy/Head Girl and Deputy Head Boy/Head Girl took place this week, reminding children of how they represented in the democratic process. After final nominations the school elected:

Head Girl – Grace Masterson
Head Boy – Evan Loynton

Deputy Head Boy – Austin Brewster
Deputy Head Girl – Betty Quinn.



Well done to all the children who put themselves forward for the roles.

CHILDREN'S CORNER

This week....

Jessica Little, 3G, passed one of her ballet exams. She can now move from the pink to purple uniform of grade 1!



Pedro Gouveria, RB, was awarded the best player award on his football team.



Max Atsetski, 6M, took part in two gymnastic competitions - the London Regional Qualifiers and the London Novice Pathway Competition for boys. He won gold medal on the rings in under 10's Novice group.



Very well done to all the children!

KEY DATES

Parents have been emailed a copy of the key dates for this term. Please make a note of these dates as you may have to book time off work for some of the events. Dates will be added as the term progresses so look out for changes.

Dates are also added to the school calendar on the website.

RE NEWS

Each Junior class will prepare a Mass in the Convent during the Autumn term. Please see the key dates for your child's Mass. This is a special time every year for the children and their teacher and teaching assistant.

The latest RE newsletter has been emailed to parents. Please read over the section regarding your child's year group so you know how to offer support.

MUSIC

We have had an overwhelming response to instrumental lessons for children in Y3 – Y6. The music tutors try and offer children what they have requested. Children will be informed as soon as the lists have been compiled.

Payment for lessons should be given directly to the tutors. Look out for details in your child's bag. Tutors require half terms notice if your child decides they want to quit. Please ensure this is put in writing to the tutor.

Instruments can be hired from school. The fee is £15 per year. Payment can be made on Wisepay.

Chamber Choir – Mrs McGarry was very impressed with all the children who auditioned for chamber choir this week. Everyone should have been very proud of themselves. Unfortunately, numbers are limited so not everyone is able to have a place. If you did not get a place this time, you will be put on the waiting list as a place may open up during the year.

Once again, a big 'well done' to all children who auditioned.

Orchestra practice takes place every Wednesday in the gym hall from 12.15pm – 12.45pm. Please make sure you bring your instruments to school as it is important to attend every week. If you would like to join the orchestra please speak to Mrs McGarry. The children must be having lessons inside or outside school on their chosen instruments.

Church Choir: Mrs McGarry also runs a church choir in Christchurch. This children's choir leads the singing at the 11.30am Mass on Sunday at Christchurch twice a month. It is open to children from Y3 – Y6. There is no need to audition for this. Please let Mrs McGarry know if you would like to be part of this choir.

SCHOOL FUND

Each year we ask parents for a voluntary contribution (£10 per family) to subsidise extra events. If you would like to contribute, please log onto your child's Wisepay account where you will see "**School Fund 2023/2024**".

This fund helps to subsidise visiting theatre companies, merit awards etc. All children in the school benefit from these special events.

Many thanks for your support.

Y6 SECONDARY TRANSITION EVENING

Y6 parents are invited to a meeting on **Tuesday 19th September at 6pm** to hear all about the application process for secondary school and the residential journey to Kingswood in January 2024.

The meeting will take place in the **gym hall at 6pm**. It is important that you attend to ask any questions you may have about this important process. Mr Sharp, the Headteacher of St Thomas More Comprehensive, will be in attendance to answer any questions you may have about their application process.

If you are interested in a place for your child in St Thomas More Comprehensive, please note their open evenings take place on **10th, 11th and 12th October**. Please visit their website to book a place.

Please note that applications for secondary school must be submitted by Tuesday 31st October.

MESSAGE FROM CHRISTCHURCH

First Holy Communion Preparation

If your child is in year 3 or above and you want them to receive the sacrament of First Communion, please note that the First Holy Communion course commences on Saturday 23rd September at Christchurch.

To enrol your child in this meaningful program, please complete the online application by **Friday 15th September**.

www.christchurcheltham.org.uk/First-Holy-Communion-Course-2023_2024/

CLAIMING FOR FREE SCHOOL MEALS

If you feel your child is entitled to Free School Meals, please ensure you complete the necessary paperwork. Ask the office staff to guide you. **Enquiries will be treated confidentially so please do not hesitate to ask any questions.** It is very important that parents enquire about pupil premium as families can really benefit. Many families may be experiencing financial hardship as the cost of living is rapidly increasing, so please do not hesitate to speak to the office staff (Mrs Jefferys or Mrs Jeffrey).

Although Infants and Juniors are entitled to free meals, they too can apply for pupil premium if their financial situation is below a certain threshold. Every school receives extra funding if parents make successful claims. Parents are encouraged to look into this as children can benefit in so many ways (help with music tuition, subsidising after school clubs/educational visits etc.)