

From Mr Chappell

Another incredibly busy couple of weeks has passed since the last newsletter and once again our children have demonstrated our value Flying High in so many different ways! On Monday 23rd September the children had a fabulous day meeting and working with the children's author Nicola Davies. The children were truly enthused by Nicola, who shared her own thoughts about reading and writing. Indeed one parent responded on our Twitter page by replying directly to Nicola by saying: *'Thank you so much! You've really inspired my Year 3 daughter and we enjoyed your nature book after school.'*



Inspiring our children is something that books and reading has the power to do and something that we try to instil in our children daily. There is something very magical about sharing books with children and reading daily with your children is something that is so important for their development. With this in mind we are aiming for all our children across school in every class to be reading as much as possible at home during the week. Please can we remind you that writing in your children's reading record books is so important to help our staff. Indeed we are going to be looking to surprise those children who are reading every day, so please make sure you are supporting your child by recording a comment in their reading record book. As I said to a Year 1 child today, **Reading is the Key!**



Hot Chocolate Friday!

We know that all our children try their best every day to be Flying High. However, we want to recognise those children who go 'above and beyond, soaring on Eagle's wings!' With this in mind, we have introduced 'Hot Chocolate Friday', a chance to recognise those children who have impressed staff throughout the school. These children are invited to have a cup of hot chocolate with Mr Chappell to recognise their amazing attitude to all areas of school life. Well done to those children!



Harvest

Our harvest service will be on Monday 14th October. We would appreciate donations of non-perishable food items for the 'Loaves and Fishes Project' organised by The Community of the Sisters of the Church who distribute food to those in need in Bristol.

Contributions of tins (in date please!) of tuna, meat, rice pudding, fruit, custard, baked beans, soup and vegetables and also cereals, pasta, rice, biscuits, tea bags and jars of coffee would be most welcome. Donations can be sent into school any time until the 14th, when we will be taking the goods into church. Unfortunately, due to space restraints, we are unable to invite parents along to this service.



Samaritan's Purse – Operation Christmas Child

We are pleased to be supporting 'Operation Christmas Child' again this year. This is an initiative of the Christian relief agency, Samaritan's Purse. Gift-filled shoeboxes are wrapped and packed in the UK and sent to under privileged children around the world. The children receive a box based on need, regardless of their background or religion. We want to fill as many shoeboxes as we can and will be collecting donations **until 11th November**. Your donation of gifts to go in a box would be really appreciated. Gift suggestions (new items please) include small toys (eg yoyo, skipping rope), stationery, toothbrush, soap, hat, gloves, hair accessories. For more information about the work of this charity and a full list of items requested (and those that can't be accepted) for the shoeboxes, please visit www.samaritans-purse.org.uk



School Photographs – Monday 14th October

The photographer will be in school on Monday 14th October to take individual photographs of all the children and sibling groups. You may bring along your pre-school child for a family group photograph from 8.30am to 9.00am.

Open Classrooms – Thursday 24th October, 3:30pm

We would like to invite parents, carers and family members to come into school on 24th October to see your child(ren)'s amazing work before visiting the rest of the school and having a look in other classrooms. It really is a chance to see all the great work that is going on in school.

Parents in Partnership: Coffee Morning

We pride ourselves on an 'open door' policy whereby if you have any questions, worries or concerns please feel free to talk to your child's class teacher. In order to develop this further we are looking at holding a termly 'Parents in Partnership' meeting. Look out for the date of our first meeting with Mr Chappell in the next newsletter.

Parents' Evenings – Tuesday 19th & Thursday 21st November, 4pm to 7pm

Please note the dates of our parents' evenings. Information on how to book via the school website will be available at the beginning of next term.

INSET Day

Reminder! Our next INSET day is Monday 25th November.

From Mr Spens

It was great to see many parents at the recent 'Back to School' night. On that evening, the leadership team shared some highlights from 2018/19 and then outlined some of our key plans for this academic year. Last week, we had a Local Authority review of the school to support us as we continue to look to develop the school and make it the best we can for our children. We are due to be inspected by OFSTED this academic year and so the visit helped us to review the progress we've made since the last inspection and to identify further areas for development. We've just received the report from the LA and we wanted to share a quote with you:

"The governors, Executive Head and senior leaders have a clear vision for the school and there is evidence that this vision is impacting successfully on pupil outcomes. Perhaps more importantly, this vision is equipping pupils well for life, they are happy, engaged and confident and these are measures that promote skills for life alongside the academic metrics where we know the school is already successful."

There were a number of 'next steps' identified to support our journey of ongoing improvement and as a leadership team we have already started to action these. I'd like to say a huge thank-you to the staff and children for their ongoing enthusiasm, hard work and commitment to all we hope to achieve at St Helen's.

Partnership update:

There has been some exciting work going on between St Mary's and St Helen's as we look to ensure that the children and staff really benefit from our partnership together. I wanted just to outline two key highlights from the last couple of weeks.

1) Joint Curriculum Development Project underway

Last Monday 23rd September, we launched a 'Curriculum working party' made up of teachers from both schools, working with a teaching and learning consultant to develop a new approach to teaching topics/themes at both schools. Mr Adams and Miss Hurd represented the St Helen's staff and they spent the day looking at our aims, vision and intent for the curriculum. They want the themes that children explore at both schools to be real, relevant and meaningful to them in 2019, ensuring the National Curriculum is covered but also giving children the knowledge, skills and attitudes to become 'Brave Change Makers', making a difference in the communities that they are growing up in.

They're also looking at how we can work together as schools to combine our skills and expertise to enrich the curriculum opportunities for children at both schools. Over the next couple of months, the team will spend 5 days working together, developing a new curriculum plan which we hope to have in place for January 2020. We'll share more information about this over the next few months. On Friday 27th, a group from the working party visited a school in London with a really innovative approach to curriculum development and learning from this trip will help to shape the direction we take forward.

2) 'Growing Great Teachers' - a new approach to staff development

On Wednesday this week, staff from both schools met to kick off a new and innovative approach to what has traditionally been known as 'Performance Management', which we're calling 'Growing Great Teachers'. Chris Moyse, Head of Staff Development at Bridgewater College Trust, came to lead a joint staff meeting helping teachers to identify a focussed but significant area of teaching and learning that they want to really grow in over the year. The approach is based on teachers then supporting each other through a culture of peer feedback and teachers will then share their experiences, what has worked and what hasn't worked with each other at the end of the year. Chris shared with us this quote from the All Blacks: "The challenge is to always improve, always get better - even when you are the best." We look forward to seeing the impact in each and every classroom across the partnership over the year.



Flying High at St Helen's!

Some photos from the last few weeks ...



Congratulations to our certificate winners last week and this week:

Holly Class – James, Lily, Cole and Peaches
Beech Class – Bonnie, Zack, Fred and Charlotte O
Oak Class – Liam, Olly T, Oliver H and Huw

Ash Class – Maddie, Harry C and Aliona
Sycamore Class – Elena C, Niyumi, Emma C and Lola
Elm Class – Jack, Alice H and Libby

Attendance

Congratulations to Cherry class who had 99% attendance last week. The school total was 97.1%.

Congratulations to Holly class with 100% attendance this week. The school total was 97.8%

Friends of St Helen's

Annual General Meeting – Monday 7th October

Our AGM is on 7th October at 7pm at The Ship, Alveston, so please come along and find out a little more about what we do and meet the team. Everyone is very welcome! We are looking to introduce two new parent/carer representatives from each year group. If you are interested in joining and becoming a representative for your child's year, please contact our chair, Rebecca Meredith: 07827 585058 / rebeccameredith68@yahoo.com

Out of school achievements

- Yasmin in Sycamore class got a bronze medal in the 9-year old girls 100m backstroke at the recent Bristol North swimming, with a time of 1:45.
- Niyumi in Sycamore class has reached Stage 7 in swimming and has also achieved the 50 metre and 100 metre distance swimming awards.
- Charlotte O in Beech class has completed Stage 4 in swimming.
- Oliver in Cherry class has completed stage 1 and stage 2 duckling swimming awards.
- Harrison in Holly class has achieved the 10 metre distance swimming award.
- Harriet in Ash class and Charlotte O in Beech class both completed the Madness 5k family fun run last weekend for St Peter's Hospice.
- Cole in Holly class has completed the swimming Duckling Award 1.

Upcoming events

Monday 7th October – FoSH AGM, 7pm, The Ship, Alveston

Monday 7th October – Trip to Sevington Victorian School (Year 5)

Thursday 10th October – Trip to Sevington Victorian School (Year 6)

Monday 14th October – Photographer

Monday 14th October – Harvest Service

Friday 25th October – end of Term 1

Monday 4th November – start of Term 2

w/c 11th November - Book Fair

Tuesday 19th and Thursday 21st November - Parents' Evenings

Thursday 21st November – Flu vaccinations in school

Monday 25th November – INSET day

Friday 29th November – Christmas Fair – 3.30pm



ALDI STICKERS

Please help us collect stickers to complete our poster and claim a sports kit!

We also have a chance to win £20,000!

Autumn Fair

Saturday 19th October – 10am to 12.30pm

St Helen's School



CANCER
RESEARCH
UK

Entry £3 includes
coffee/tea & cake

Home made produce, stationery, books,
craft items and lots more ... !

Thornbury & District Cancer Research UK Committee