

16 July, 2021



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DATES NEXT YEAR

SEPTEMBER

Thur 2nd : Inset Day
Fri 3rd : School restarts
27-1 Oct: Y6 Camp

OCTOBER

Mon 25 - Fri 30 HALF TERM

NOVEMBER

Mon 1st : Term 2 starts
Fri 26 Inset Day
Fri 17th December: Term 2 ends

As 3 classes missed out this week, there will be an extra Rainbow day on TUESDAY 20th! Wear something colourful again (all classes)!

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Newsletter 9



Inflatables on the field for our end-of-year treat

Dear parents,

Welcome to the final newsletter of this school year – and my last ever newsletter! (There will be one more letter from me next week to reflect on the final few days, as well as a message from Miss Bracken).

It has been a difficult few weeks, with cases of Covid 19 increasing in our local community, resulting in four classes so far having to isolate, as well as quite a number of staff. Cases outside school have also affected us, with some staff having to look after their own children who have been unable to attend school. Once September comes this will no longer be the case, as bubble isolation will end. However, let us hope there are no more cases in the next few days. Fortunately, all classes currently absent will be back before the end of term.

This has been the second year that has been significantly affected by Covid19, and it is good news that, with the vaccine rollout, restrictions are set to largely end next week. We will maintain most of our current procedures until the end of term. The main exception is that, from Monday, we will no longer expect parents to wear masks outside the school (although please continue to respect others who wish to wear a mask, and avoid close prolonged close contact). SEE ATTACHED LETTER FROM S. GLOS.

I am so proud of the way our whole community has kept going throughout the pandemic. The challenges we have all faced have been immense, but we have got through them by working together and supporting each other. None of us has been trained for what has happened, and the good news is that, for all of the disruption of the past 18 months, our children have shown great overall resilience. Our recent assessments show that most have not been significantly affected in their learning.

Some of our children, however, and their families, have seen a greater negative impact, both on their mental health and wellbeing, as well as on children's progress and behaviour in school. We have put in place a large amount of additional support, which is slowly but surely having an impact. Some of this support will continue into next year, targeted towards where it is most needed. We are able to increase staffing levels across the school due to our good financial position, which will benefit all children.

Best wishes to everyone for the last few days, and for a well-deserved summer break for us all when it comes.

Mark Freeman, Headteacher

Summer Ideas

The Library service are once again running their holiday reading project: it's free, fun and there are rewards for all participants! The theme is Wild World Heroes:

<https://summerreadingchallenge.org.uk/>

Or why not just get on your bikes and explore all of the lovely parks and open spaces in the local area?

If you need some indoors ideas: reading is the best way to make the time pass; you can also keep practising your times tables with TT Rock Stars.

Farewell to Year 6

It's always sad to say goodbye to each Year 6 group of children. Our current Year 6 have lost out in quite a few ways this year, with fewer opportunities than usual to show off their many talents. However, we are making sure they have lots of memorable experiences to end their time here.

This week St Michael's Church Centre hosted them for an end-of year activity session which was greatly enjoyed by everyone. They will have turns on the inflatables this week, with their Leavers' Party on the field on Friday evening. Next week they will all go to Cattle Country for a last day out together, and on Tuesday they will have a special Leavers' Service on the field with the rest of the school. They will be presented with their Yearbooks (funded by the PTFA), and put together by Mrs Wilson. What a great job she has done!

Finally, they have made a video to share with parents, which will go out next week.

Well done and very best wishes to you all for the future. If you can get through the last 18 months I'm sure you will get through anything! Keep shining!

Looking Back over the year

As we know, the year has been dominated by Covid 19, and how we have responded to the challenge. We had a very positive start to the year in September following the initial long lockdown period. The changes we made – to lunchtimes; the start and end to the day; maintaining bubbles and so on – were generally very effective, and throughout the whole period we have had relatively few cases given the size of the school.

We all adapted to a life on zoom, to social distancing and to living with a great many restrictions. Saddest of all, in a Primary School, has been the loss of music, especially singing, as well as the many extra sporting opportunities which children love so much.

However, we have made the best of the situation, and it was great to have a performance day (outside) last Friday where we had drumming from Y6, and two songs from the band (Wellerman and 500 Miles) which the children all joined in with (both with singing and body percussion). Finally the children performed a superb version of 'A Million Dreams' just for me!

This was such a powerful reminder of how important song and dance are for all our wellbeing, and we all eagerly wait for these to become part of our daily experience once again.

Thank you so much to everyone: staff, parents, governors and of course, children, for all your perseverance and resilience this year, and we look forward to good times to return.

Farewells, congratulations and welcome backs!

We say a fond farewell to various members of staff. Mrs Rachel Brown (support teacher) leaves us to have more time with her young family. Mrs Sue Dolan is retiring after 22 years at St Michael's (beating me!), for most of that time Sue has been one of the key members of our amazing Teaching Assistant Team, and we wish her a very happy retirement. Mrs Emma McCarthy leaves us after 11 years as a TA for a family support role with Barnados, and we thank her for all her great work in the Early Years and KS1 team.

Mrs Alison Holloway also leaves us after a year supporting Y2, and our caretaker, Dean Beresford, has just left after 2 years here. **If you know of anyone who would be interested in the caretaker job, please let Mrs Perham know.**

We have appointed a number of TA replacements, including Mrs Laura Mortimore in Year 2, Mrs Michelle Trimby in Year 1, and Mr Harry Smith in Year 4. We also welcome back Mrs Sophie West from maternity leave, who will be teaching next year in Year 2. Mrs Fay Carter (Y5/6 teacher support) returns in October.

And finally...

Congratulations to Miss Bracken who gets married in the summer! She will return in September as Mrs Prendergast. We hope she has a fantastic day!

Reminder: Breakfast club charges will increase to £2.10 per session in September. Still 70p for breakfast. School meals will go up to £2.30 per day

What's happening over the summer in school?

As usual a number of improvements are planned for the buildings and grounds over the summer months:

- LED lighting is being installed throughout the school. This will lead to significant savings as well as reducing our carbon footprint.
- A number of rooms are being redecorated, and the main corridors are being repainted and recarpeted.
- Fencing is being installed at the back of the school by the slope
- And most exciting (for the children): two new play areas are being installed

The school will surely look fantastic when the children return in September: hopefully most will be completed before I actually finish on August 31st so I can see it all myself.

Our last few days...

Monday 19th: Y6 visit Cattle Country Extra inflatable Day for 4.3 and 1.3 who were absent last week.

Tue 20th Y6 Leavers' service on the field School picnic (children only, sorry!) Please bring a packed lunch or order a school packed lunch.

DRESS DOWN DAY AGAIN! BE COLOURFUL AGAIN!

4pm Staff Leaving event

Wed 21st LAST DAY

Mr Freeman's Leaving Assembly

(Look out for the video I have put on my website page to say thank you and goodbye)

Y2 enjoyed a super 'Ugly Bug' Day on Friday – alongside the rest of the school wearing colourful clothes for our Rainbow Day. The end of restrictions is in sight!

Looking Forward...

We have been busy planning ahead for next year.

New/Acting Headteacher Pete Barnard takes up post in January 2022, so Miss Bracken (Mrs Prendergast) will be Acting Head in Terms 1 and 2. Mr Barnard will be supporting the school with weekly visits, and will start getting to know you all during that time.

Oracy Our main focus next year will be to continue with the Oracy project which started this year. This aims to improve standards in speaking and listening across the school, giving children more confidence and greater verbal dexterity. Techniques children will learn include: effective questioning; making a verbal presentation; how to be an effective listener – and lots more.

Sport We will be getting back to most of our usual clubs in September, including gym clubs. It's great to see so many children already involved, and we hope this will continue to grow. Mr Barnard is passionate about sport and, like me, gets actively involved running clubs himself.

Music and performance We are looking forward to singing indoors restarting, and this will allow us to restart our live performances, ranging from Reception Nativity to Y6 performance and, hopefully, Seussical the Musical. I am reserving a seat already!

Ofsted It is nearly 5 years since our last inspection: without the lockdown we would almost certainly have had it by now. It is likely that this will happen at some point next year, and it would be great if we are able to show off the full range of our enriched curriculum – and your children's many talents.

