



NEWSLETTER

St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Buckfast
Monday 21st October 2024

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WELCOME!

Dear St. Mary's Family,

As we enter our eighth week back at school, I'm incredibly proud of the children's hard work and dedication. They are a true credit to you, a sentiment echoed by our governor, Rachel Ellacott, during her curriculum monitoring visit last week. Rachel, who brings thirty-three years of experience teaching Year 6, was impressed by the calm, focused atmosphere across all our classrooms. She particularly noted the children's excellent listening skills, their willingness to share, and the high-quality writing on display—especially in our Year 3 class. A big well-done to all our children and staff for their efforts!

This week, it's been wonderful to welcome many of you into school for our 'Gather and Grow' sessions. We hope these visits helped you feel more connected with your child's learning, and we encourage you to keep coming in, engaging with us, and exploring how your children are growing in their education. That sense of partnership between home and school is at the heart of what we're striving to build. As a gentle reminder, please note that we are not insured for children to play on school equipment after hours, so we appreciate your cooperation in ensuring their safety.

We've also taken on board your feedback about wraparound childcare. On Wednesday, 16th October, our Senior Leadership Team attended training to help launch a 'Before and After School Club' (BASC). After distributing a survey, we were delighted to receive a wave of positive responses on the first day, giving us the green light to move forward with our plans. If you haven't yet returned your questionnaire, please do so by Friday, so we can collate the data and share it with Devon County as part of the next steps.

With half-term fast approaching, I hope the children get some well-deserved rest. If you can, take the opportunity to enjoy some fresh air and outdoor family time—whether it's a walk in the park, a day out on Dartmoor, or a trip to the coast. We're so fortunate to live in beautiful Devon, and it's a wonderful time to make the most of our natural surroundings. I've also included details about some local events happening over half-term in this newsletter.

As always, my door is open. Whether you have a concern or a new idea, I'm always happy to listen.

Warm regards, Sophie Kerswell
Interim-Headteacher

Prayer Focus

A Word from
Pope Francis

"Let's try to be open to God's word, and open to the Lord's surprises when he speaks to us."

<https://www.paperturn-view.com/wednesday-word/openness?pid=MTA101634&v=150.3>

For parents / carers new to St Mary's this term, each week we invite families to look at a publication called 'The Wednesday Word' which can be accessed from the link.

Each week it considers the Gospel reading for Sunday and picks out a key word for that week, based on the message of the Gospel. This week, the word that has been chosen is '**COURAGE**'.

"To have courage for whatever comes in life - everything lies in that." St Teresa of Avila

1 Enjoy reading this Sunday's Gospel

As Jesus left Jericho with his disciples and a large crowd, there was a blind man, called Bartimaeus, sitting at the roadside begging. When Bartimaeus heard that it was Jesus who was walking by, he began to shout, "Jesus, Son of David, have pity on me! Help me!" Some of the people in the crowd told him to be quiet, but he began to shout louder until Jesus heard him. Then Jesus stopped and said, "Call him here." So they said to the blind man, "Have courage! Get up! Jesus is calling you." The man threw off his cloak, jumped up and went to Jesus. Then Jesus said, "What do you want me to do for you?" The blind man said, "Master, let me see again." Then Jesus said to him, "Go! Your faith has saved you." And at once the man's sight returned and he followed Jesus along the road.



Taken from the Gospel of Sunday 27th October Cf. Mark 10:46-52 (30th Sunday in Ordinary Time)

What did the blind man do when the people told him to stop calling for Jesus? In this Sunday's Gospel, by continuing to call on Jesus, the blind man showed courage. Ask your child what the word 'courage' means to them. When was the last time they needed courage? Have they ever needed the courage to: go somewhere new or try something new; tell the truth; admit a mistake; stand up for someone; speak up for something that was right; resist peer pressure or go against the crowd and say that something was wrong? Is there anything they are afraid of right now? Who do they know who has shown or shows 'courage'?

Mass times:

Saturday:

12:05pm - [St. Mary's Abbey Church, Buckfastleigh](#)
5:00pm - [St. Benedict's Church, Buckfastleigh](#)

Sunday:

9:00am - [St Dunstan Church, Devon](#)
9:00am - [Blessed Sacrament Chapel, Buckfastleigh](#)
9:30am - [St. Benedict's Church, Buckfastleigh](#)
10:30am - [Our Lady of Lourdes and St. Petroc Church, Ashburton](#)
11:00am - [St. Mary's Abbey Church, Buckfastleigh](#)



St. Mary's Teaching Team

At St Mary's we have a large team of adults working throughout the school and each week we will explain who is who, and their roles at St. Mary's.

This week, we introduce our teaching team. These are Mrs Donna Waiters -Meldon 0.3 & Fernworthy 0.1. Miss Rebecca Blackhall- Avon Year 2, Mrs Kerry Manley-Roadford Year 3, Mrs Coralie Cherrett Fernworthy Year 4 & 5, Miss Josephine Keir Burrator Year 5 & 6.



School News!

Catholic Life and Mission:



Pupil Chaplain Blessing:

We were delighted to welcome our new Pupil Chaplains for 2024-2025. They will be officially brought into their role with a special blessing which will be held at the beautiful Blessed Sacrament Chapel in Buckfast Abbey on Friday 25th October and led by Father Francis.

A pupil chaplain in a primary school helps to promote a community of faith and encourage students to live out their faith in their daily lives. Their responsibilities can include:

- Prayer and worship: Leading prayer and worship in assemblies, liturgical events, and across the school
 - Fundraising: Supporting local charities through fundraising events
 - Community outreach: Reaching out into the community, for example by visiting a foodbank or leading an environment project
 - Role model: Being a good role model for younger pupils
- Supporting the school's mission statement: Supporting the school's mission statement and developing strong links with the parish
- Encouraging faith: Visiting classes to encourage children to develop their faith
- Awarding certificates: Awarding certificates for acts of kindness

We wish our Pupil Chaplains all the very best as they begin their mission in 2024-2025.



Harvest Mass

We are excited to invite you to our Harvest Mass on Friday, 25th October, at 9:30 am in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel, Buckfast Abbey. The Mass will be celebrated by Father Francis, and our children from Years 1 to 6 will be attending, along with our guests Rosalind Booth and Claire Carter from our Plymouth Cast Central Team, as well as members of our Plymouth Diocese.

We would love for you to join us! Please remember to be mindful of the Church's routines and rituals during the Mass. Our children will walk to and from the Abbey with their teachers, and afterward, we warmly invite you back to the School Hall for some warm drinks and cakes.

We'll also be collecting donations for the Catholic Children's Society South-West, and it would be wonderful if you could bring along a cake to share or sell. As always, we'll be accepting donations for our local food bank as well. We encourage children to bring a small donation to go towards their snack.

We look forward to celebrating with you!

Secondary School Applications closing soon!

If your child is currently in Year 6, then you will need to apply for a place for their secondary school by the 31st of October 2024. Here is the link to do this.

If you wish to discuss options for secondary schooling, then please email Mrs Ania Walker at admin@st-marysrc.devon.sch.uk and ask to speak to Miss Josephine Keir (Burrator Year 5 & 6) or myself – Mrs Sophie Kerswell and we will do our best to share what we know.

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/educationandfamilies/school-information/apply-for-a-school-place/apply-for-a-secondary-school-place/>

South Dartmoor Community College
Ofsted Inspection 2024

We are 'Good' in all areas!

“
Adults in school quickly identify the individual needs of pupils. These are clearly communicated with all staff so that they can make the adaptations for pupils.
Ofsted

“
Staff share leaders' vision to provide a high-quality education to all pupils.
Ofsted

“
Parents have great confidence in the school and overwhelmingly recommend it to others.
Ofsted

“
Pupils and staff have positive and respectful relationships which mean that pupils feel safe. As a result, the school is calm and pupils can focus on their learning.
Ofsted

“
Pupils are proud that their school is inclusive and know that bullying is not tolerated.
Ofsted

“
SDCC is ambitious that all pupils are well prepared for their future studies.
Ofsted

 

Great news from one of our feeder secondary schools. Congratulations South Dartmoor Community College on their recent Ofsted inspection.

Half Term Cinema Fun-Holne!

FAMILY TEA-TIME CINEMA
PRESENTS
MY NEIGHBOUR TOTORO

ST MARY'S CHURCH
HOLNE

Bring your own bean-bag!!

MONDAY 28TH OCTOBER ~ 4PM
£1 PER PERSON
info: deniserobinson111@gmail.com

HALF-TERM CINEMA

POP CORN

Apple Harvest

Our orchard apple trees continue to produce bountiful fruit for us. Thank you to Logan, our fantastic caretaker, who every morning collects the windfall for us to share with our St. Mary's Family. Daisy enjoyed making a delicious apple crumble and has sent a photo in to share with us all.



Reminders and information:



Grapes, cherry tomatoes, cherries:

We are delighted that so many of our children are choosing to eat such healthy snacks for their break and in their lunch boxes.

Just to make you aware that children can easily choke on these smaller fruits when left 'whole' and so the advice is that the adults chop the fruits for the children at home prior to them being packed as a snack for school.

Cut small round fruits like grapes, cherries, berries, strawberries and cherry tomatoes, into small pieces: **cut lengthways NOT widthways** and then again cut them in halves (quarters). 'If' cutting large fruits and firm fruits. Cut large fruits like melon and firm fruits like apple into slices instead of small chunks. This cutting, changes the shape of the fruit and helps to prevent the fruit from **COMPLETELY BLOCKING** the child's airways.

Here are two short videos to show what to do if you notice a child choking. We have taught our Key Stage Two children what to do, using a more child friendly video.

Video 1- Back Blows: <https://youtu.be/GymXjJJ7Ugo>

Video 2- Abdominal Thrusts: <https://youtu.be/KiWn4thXAI8>

Hair and Jewelry:

Please could all children, with hair touching their shoulders or longer, have their hair tied back.

Please could jewelry be left at home. A pair/one single stud may be worn in the ears.

Uniform:

Our children are looking smart, and we just want to remind all that full uniform needs to be worn each non-PE day.

On a child's PE days, they may wear their school PE kit which is a school PE t-shirt, their school jumper and navy or black plain shorts. Plain navy or black leggings or tracksuit bottoms may be worn if cooler. Socks should be school socks – navy, grey, white or black and not football or rugby style socks. Trainers should be worn- not studded or astro boots at all.

Thank you for your help with this.

Brigade Clothing- our current school uniform supplier is offering families a

Halloween Promotion

Friday 25th October to Thursday 31st October inclusive - 10% off all parent online orders with the promotion code **SPOOKY10!**

Promotion is for Parents Online Orders Only. Please see the website for more details.

www.brigade.uk.com

Christmas Events so far- Dates for your diary.

- **Key Stage Two** -Christmas Crib Blessings all 2pm – Monday 2nd December -Roadford Ashburton Catholic Church, Tuesday 3rd December -Fernworthy- South Brent Catholic Church, Wednesday 4th December -Burrator Buckfastleigh Catholic Church.
- **Choir Buckfastleigh Fayre**: Wednesday 4th December- families to take their children from school and meet in St. Luke's Church for 4:15pm. More details to follow.
- **Year 5 and 6 (Burrator & Fernworthy)** – St. Nicholas' Day 9:15 – all day. Thursday 5th December. £4.90. Children only event – details to follow. Children to bring donations for the Trussell Trust.
- **Venford** Abbey Christmas Angel Morning- Tuesday 19th December 9:15 am. Children only event- £3 – details to follow.
- **Roadford** Abbey Christmas Nativity Morning- Wednesday 11th December 9:15am. Children only event - £3- details to follow
- **Avon-** Abbey Christmas Angel Afternoon. Wednesday 11th December 1pm. Children only event - £3- details to follow
- **Fernworthy** Year 4-Abbey Wise Men Morning- Friday 20th December 9:15am. Children only event - £3 – details to follow.
- **KS1 Christmas Nativity**: Wed 11th December 9:30am - & Thurs 12th December 2pm - St Mary's School Hall (2 performances of the same nativity).
- **Disco**: Friday 13th December Meldon, Venford & Avon 4-4:45pm, then Roadford, Fernworthy and Burrator 5-6pm - St Mary's School Hall - tickets sold in advance.
- **KS2 Christmas Concert** -Buckfast Abbey Main Church. Roadford, Fernworthy and Burrator: Wednesday 18th December 2pm
- **Meldon Christmas Nativity**: Monday 16th December 2p.m., Tuesday 17th December 9:30 a.m- St Mary's School Hall (2 performances of the same nativity).

More dates to follow...

Safeguarding

Within schools, staff work in accordance with the government document called "Keeping Children Safe in Education". This document is updated each year and staff take part in refresher training to ensure they are aware of the most current legislation.



If a staff member has concerns about a child, they must report this to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). At St Mary's, the DSL is Mrs Kerswell and the Deputy Designated Leads who are responsible in Mrs Kerswell's absence are Mrs Jessica Hutchinson and Mrs Kayleigh Teeder. We also have a governor, Mr Mark Norman, who takes the lead on safeguarding.



The contact details for all the above personnel are displayed prominently throughout the school. Buckfastleigh Food Bank offer help to local families who may need extra support at this time. Their website is: <https://buckfastleigh.foodbank.org.uk> As well as offering food parcels, the Food Bank can also signpost people for help and support with their finances.

Congratulations!

Each Friday, our school comes together to celebrate the achievements of our children over the past week. "Building Learning Power" (BLP) Certificates are awarded to children who have demonstrated excellent learning behaviours and "Witness of the Week" (WOW) certificates for demonstrating Gospel values in daily life. We also celebrate achievements outside school that our children want to share in assembly.

Well done to the following children who were awarded certificates in today's and last week's Achievement Assembly.

	BLP	WOW
Meldon	Charlie and Anais	Hugo Twice!
Venford	Ivy-Rae and Erin	Toby and Elliot
Avon	Deri and Hugo	Zeke and Zack
Roadford	Lupin and Aisha	Daisy and Adaline
Fernworthy	Adsie and Lexi	Ella and Ted
Burrator	Braxton and Summer	Robun and Evangeline



Times Tables Stars this week and last week!
Elowyn, Adaline, Aisha, Roxus, Kaiyah, Felix and Nevaeh.

Achievements Outside of School: April - Netball Award for excellent listening!
Oakley - Football Trophy
Aubrey - Swimming
Katie - Fun Run