

St John's Walworth Primary School

Half Termly Newsletter – Autumn (1) 2019

Dear St John's,

We have had a very busy and productive start to the school year at St John's. Please read on to see some of our news from the first half term and some dates of future events for your diaries.

Parent Teacher Meetings

Meetings with your child's teacher will be held on Monday 11th November and Monday 18th November between 3.30pm and 6.30pm, (except for Year 5 whose appointments will be on 2nd and 9th December – delayed to allow the new teacher to develop their knowledge of the class). Each appointment will last for 10 minutes. Appointments can be booked from Monday 28th October, by calling or visiting the school's office. These will be the first report meetings this year, so we urge you attend so that your partnership with teachers is established and insights about your child's learning are shared from the beginning of the academic year.

New members of Staff

We are pleased to welcome two new members of lunchtime staff to our school, who will be joining us this week, both have a child centred approach and skills which will improve children's experience during lunchtime play: Karl Brown – Lunchtime Play Facilitator; Dean Mitchell – Lunchtime Play Facilitator.

We also welcome Gemma Hannah who is working with children to develop their storytelling skills, a necessary pre-requisite for creative writing. Gemma is volunteering one afternoon each week and is currently working with one LKS2 and one UKS2 group.

Ore Solesi our new after school Drama Tutor started working with our group a few weeks before the half term break.

Individual and Paired Music Lessons

Following numerous requests from parents for individual music lessons I have made contact with 'Link Learning' a company that provides piano and guitar tuition in the afternoons, during the school day. The prices are £7 for an individual lesson (piano/guitar) and £4.50 for paired lessons (guitar only). We will be sending letters out next week so that you can register your interest. We aim to collect all responses and then book lessons to begin from January 2020.

SIAMS Inspection

On Friday 18th October we had our Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS). The previous inspection took place in 2014. The purpose and rigour is similar to an Ofsted inspection in that every aspect of the school is observed against a criteria, however for the SIAMS inspection the criteria is set by the Church of England. We are not yet able to circulate the results, however I am at liberty to share that a very successful inspection took place and the report will be published within the next week.

Maths Mastery Programme

St John's has initiated work with the Maths Mastery Programme. The two to three year programme supports continued professional development for teachers and teaching assistants and will enable us to review and improve styles of teaching in collaboration with partner schools, with the aim being that every child reaches their full potential in mathematics as a result of teaching at St John's.

Reception Outside Classroom Development

Over this next half term the outdoor space around the Reception/Year One classroom will benefit from a new structure being built that will provide a wrap-around covered area. Enabling children to access outside play in all weather conditions will enhance their learning experiences and further support us in creating an outstanding learning environment for children who attend St John's. This is an exciting new opportunity for the school and another sign of the progress that we determined to facilitate at St John's.

New Children Joining St John's

We are delighted to have welcomed nine new children to St John's since September. Many of our new arrivals have joined us following recommendations, a sign that improvements to the school are being recognised and celebrated in the community. If you know someone who is not happy with their child's current school we encourage you to suggest that they visit us as we still have places available and for the school to function at its best we need every place filled. We have been through a period of rapid improvement since September 2018 and we, along with our governors and advisors from the Diocese and the Local Authority are confident that the school is going from strength to strength. With your support and promotion of the school, specifically with recruitment, this process will continue.

IT Suite – Donated by Union Bancaire Privée

We would like to thank at the Swiss Bank 'Union Bancaire Privée' for donating 20 new computers to the school, a new 50" television, engineers who have completed new electrical work, work benches and cupboards which were built over half term and a team of volunteers painted our new music/IT room. This generous investment in our school will provide the children with a computer suite, which will enhance teaching and learning opportunities for all children at St John's. A special thank you to Danny Child, a manager at the bank, who has led the project.

Landlease Community Work

We are very grateful to Landlease, the development company who oversaw the construction Elephant Park, for their voluntary work at St John's over the half term holiday. They have painted a classroom, and the front and back external walls in both playgrounds, re-pointed a wall, installed two new fountains (donated by the Drinking Fountain Association) and replaced the guttering in the rear playground. We are delighted with the changes made possible because of charitable donations of time, labour and materials to our school, helping us to maintain and improve the building. We are especially grateful to Jonty Bier-Allen, Aimee Cornish and Joshua Van Haaren who have been our contacts at Landlease throughout the initiative.

Parents Lunch Invitation

In collaboration with Harrison Catering we are inviting parents to join their children for lunch on Thursday 14th November 2019. The event will provide those of you who are able to attend with an opportunity to experience our improved dining hall furniture and menu and to spend some memorable time with your child in their everyday environment. Each ticket will be £2.50 and will be available from the office from 31st October. Reception and Yr1 sit from 11.45am – 12.00pm, Yr2 from 12.00pm, Yr3 and Yr4 from 12.15pm and Yr5 and Yr6 from 12.30pm. We hope that you can join us.

Improved Punctuality

Thank you to all parents and carers who have brought their children to school on time since September. We have noticed a significant improvement in punctuality. Now that most children are arriving on time the first lesson of the day is less disrupted for all children. However, some children are still arriving late. Please remember that your child/children must arrive at school by 8.55am each day when the bell rings. The gates will be closed promptly at 9am. Children who arrive after this time will be marked as late.

Reporting Absences – Home Visits

If your child is too unwell to attend school, please ensure that you contact the school office **before 9.00am**, on 020 7703 4920. We have a legal duty to identify where your child is on school days so if you do not contact us, and we cannot contact you via the telephone then we are legally obliged to make a home-visit to ensure that your child is safe.

St John's Website Updated

We are in the process of updating our website. Please visit to see the changes, including updated policies.

Bishop Christopher

We were very pleased to welcome the Bishop of Southwark, Bishop Christopher to St John's on the 25th September. He visited each of the classes and spoke to the children who were curious, welcoming and very polite. Bishop Christopher wrote to me after his visit and he congratulated us for, *'the strong sense of common purpose among the staff team and the wonderful enthusiasm, friendliness and confidence of the children.'*



After School Art Club

The Drawing Room studio who provide an after school art club at each week for ten children from St John's have extended their offer until the 16th December. They have been very impressed with the children who attend, who have all gained from the experience.

Thank you for the many applications for our Thursday and Friday Art club which will start this half term. We are waiting for our Art teacher's documentation to be issued, at which point we will announce the start date of the clubs. We are excited about this additional after school club as we continue to develop the experiences available to children at St John's.

ERASMUS Trip to Spain

Six children from Yr5 attended the school's fourth international trip, from the 28th September until the 6th October 2019. They travelled to Quintanar in Spain. The children had wonderful experiences with host families and at the Spanish school where they shared their days with children from Finland, Poland, Czech Republic and Spain. Our children's families and the children themselves were delighted with the experience and grateful, as we all are, to Ms Picazo and Ms Niger who accompanied the children and cared for them so well. The project is funded by the British Council and requires no investment from the families that participate.



Thank you for reading some of our news.

Matthew Velada-Billson

Head Teacher