



RE Monitoring Visit

This week St Mary's welcomed the Diocesan Schools' Commissioner, Sarah Barreto and the RE Adviser for the Diocese, Helen Brown. They attended our Ash Wednesday service, which was led by the pupils and Father Francis. Our visitors also watched class RE lessons, spoke to pupils and worked with our Pupil Chaplains. I am pleased to say that they went away with a very positive opinion of St Mary's and produced a report with the following comments:

- *'The Pupil Chaplains spoke eloquently about the school and its Catholic Life.'*
- *'Delightful classroom and whole school environments.'*
- *'Behaviour for learning was very strong.'*
- *'Appropriate range of activities seen in lessons with innovative and imaginative resources. Staff communicated high expectations with enthusiasm and passion for RE.'*
- *'I think that this school has the potential to be one of our outstanding schools in the new framework.'*

Safeguarding

Coronavirus Covid-19

As you will be aware, schools are receiving regular updates from Public Health England and the government about the current outbreak of coronavirus. As a group, coronaviruses are common across the world. Typical symptoms include fever and a cough that may progress to a severe pneumonia causing shortness of breath and breathing difficulties.

Generally, coronavirus can cause more severe symptoms in people with weakened immune systems, older people, and those with long-term conditions like diabetes, cancer and chronic lung disease.

The advice from the government includes information about travel and the action to be taken if you have visited certain countries recently. The full advice can be found here:-

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-information-for-the-public>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/common-questions/>

In school we are reminding children of good hand hygiene and to wash their hands after going to the toilet and before eating.

Prayer focus

The Wednesday Word booklet that you received before half term has the Gospel reading for this week. The word chosen is 'Lent' as this is the liturgical season which the Church has entered and marks the time leading up to Easter. (The word Liturgy literally means work of the people, within the Catholic Church it is used to describe all the public acts of worship that take place, as it draws the people into the work of God.) Hopefully the children can tell you all about this special time and why it is important as they have been learning about it in class this week.

The Gospel on Sunday reminds us of the time that Jesus spent in the desert where he had to rely on God's word to resist temptation. In the same way, Lent is a time for Christians to make an effort to listen carefully to God's word and to try and make a change for the better in our own lives.

Reminders and Dates

Just a reminder that next week, on **Tuesday 3rd March** and **Wednesday 4th March** from 3.50pm until 6pm, we will be holding our Parent Pupil Progress meetings. If you haven't already done so, please return the reply slip to school so that we can arrange an appointment for you. This is an important opportunity to discuss with your child's teacher how your child is progressing in school.

Friday 6th March – St Mary's World Book Day

Thursday 12th March – Reception and Year 6 Weighing and Measuring

Monday 16th March – Meldon Learning afternoon

Monday 16th March – Fernworthy Escot Trip

Tuesday 17th March – Venford Stover Park Trip

Thursday 26th March – Burrator Evacuee Trip

Friday 27th March – Easter Bonnet Parade – 9.15am

Friday 27th March – Last day of term

Tuesday 14th April – Pupils return

Friday 8th May – Bank Holiday

Monday 25th May – Half term starts

Tuesday 2nd June – Pupils return

Tuesday 21st July – Last day of term

Monday 7th September – Pupils return

School Trips and Visits

There are a number of school trips which have been arranged for classes over the next few weeks. Please could you return the reply slip to school and a voluntary contribution as soon as possible (thank you if you have done so already) so that we can plan for the forthcoming events. Please could you also ensure that your child has a packed lunch on the day of their trip:

Monday 16th March – Fernworthy - Escot

Tuesday 17th March – Venford - Stover Park

Thursday 26th March – Burrator Evacuee trip

We are also very grateful to the Abbey's Education Department, who have arranged workshops for our pupils which are linked to the Easter story. These are only half day visits so a packed lunch is not required and will take place on these days:

Friday 13th March – Meldon

Monday 16th March – Venford

Friday 20th March – Fernworthy

Wednesday 25th March – Burrator

World Book Day

Our theme at St Mary's for this year is 'The Day the Crayons Quit' which is written by Drew Daywalt and illustrated by Oliver Jeffers. However, we will be celebrating World Book Day on **Friday 6th March**, a day later than the official date. On this day, we are asking that children dress in one particular colour, of their choice (e.g. all in orange or all in brown and so on), to represent the different coloured crayons in the book.

To mark the actual World Book Day, on the Thursday, the Abbey Education Department are running book related craft activities for pupils in each class.

Choristers

Our thanks go to Mr Searles, Miss Deasey and Mr Arkwright for their presentation to children yesterday about the Chorister Programme that Buckfast Abbey Music Department run for pupils from Year 3-6 at St Mary's.

This is a fantastic opportunity for pupils to receive free singing, theory and piano tuition as part of a scholarship, awarded to pupils who join the choir. Children in Years 2 and above should have brought home information about this opportunity already but please feel free to contact Miss Slack or Mr Searles, the Chorister Director, if you would like to know more about the programme.

Attendance Figures

This year's target - 96%

14th – 27th February 2020

Meldon	98.64%
Venford	97.41%
Fernworthy	100.0%
Burrator	98.82%
Whole school	
This week	98.68%
Year to date	96.14%

Achievement for All

St Mary's has been taking part in the Achievement for All project over the past two years. The project has the aim of ensuring that all pupils make good progress in school and has involved working closely with families to help make sure that this happens. The school is being assessed on Tuesday 10th March to review the work that has taken place. This will include talking to staff, pupils and parents / carers about their experiences of the project – which hopefully will have been positive. Families involved with the project will receive a separate letter asking for individual feedback – it would be very much appreciated if you could complete this and return to school to help the school with their forthcoming review.

Parental Questionnaires

Today your child will be bringing home a parental questionnaire which is sent out annually to gather parent / carer views about the school. It is similar to the type of information requested from parents / carers by OFSTED when they carry out school inspections.

Achievement Assembly

Today we had a briefer than usual Achievement assembly as we were visited by Mark Jefferys, from "ShareShed" who talked to the children about the "library of things" based in Totnes. However, we still had time to congratulate **Libby** on her dance successes over the half term holiday. Libby showed the other children a number of medals and trophies from competitions in Cornwall and Exeter.