

St Michael's

Church of England Infant School

Newsletter 3 19th December 2024

'A special place to learn and grow'



Our value this half term has been

Peace

Next half term, will be



Trust

All things Christmas!

Thank you to all the children and families who joined us for the Christingle workshop and church service afterwards. An event that was enjoyed by all. Thank you to Mrs Bevan and the community members who helped organise and take part in the workshop.

Our recent school pantomime, Lazy John, performed by 'The Cat's Grin', was a fantastic success and brought joy to our children! The performance, filled with laughter, singing, and delightful storytelling, captivated the children's imagination.

We are delighted to share that both our children and staff had a wonderful time enjoying the Christmas lunch together! There was a festive spirit in the air!

We were incredibly proud on the children in the Christmas Nativity Play. They shone out and certainly exemplified our Christian vision with how you can 'do a lot with a little'! We may be small in school size but that means we work even harder so we can be the best we can be. Well done St Michael's school!

Singing at the church

This term, the children sang to the parishioners at our local church and a fun time was had by all. The children felt proud of themselves by giving something back to the community and the parishioners were delighted with this added addition to their annual lunch.

Christianity as a global world faith

Over the last few weeks, the children have learnt that Christianity is a global world faith and have taken part in a morning or learning about Christianity in other countries at Christmas, to bring this to life. We purposefully chose countries that would mean something to the children so this year, we chose Poland and Lithuania. The children really enjoyed learning about the different traditions, customs and religious practices from those countries. Please ask your children all about it!

Thank you!

We would like to thank all of the parents who came to help at our Grounds tidy morning in the half term break. We had a good turn out and everyone worked incredibly hard to make the school look tidy for the Open morning. A special thank you to Mr Archer-Hurst who has given up his Saturday recently to help a member of the local community with the tidying up of the lime trees.

A thank you to Sandra Faccini and the Church for their continued support and for the financial support for the school and our families in need.

A huge thank you to those parents who generously gave us additional funds so that the pantomime could go ahead this year.

We would also like to extend our heartfelt gratitude for the invaluable time and effort that Ben Tatham and Tony Butler have devoted to supporting our school. They give so much of their time supporting the functioning of the premises and we very much appreciate how much you give to the school. You will have noticed the new car park gates, leading to the playground and the replacement of the fences with metal fencing, this has all been managed by Ben and Tony.

We truly appreciate your dedication and commitment. Thank you for being an integral part of our community!

We would like to thank Phil Boswell for helping with our hall sound system.

A huge thank you to the Governors, the FRIENDS and all the St Michael's staff for their continued support and hard work this term. We wish you all a very peaceful and restful Christmas.

Spring term changes

There will be some changes to the timetable for our children from January. As we are now a smaller school group, we feel we can use this to allow the children to spend more enrichment time together as a whole school. For this reason, we will be moving our Forest School afternoon to a Friday for Dragonfly class and will open this to all the children so they can enjoy their session together. Ladybird class will still have their usual Thursday afternoon class session. Clothing for Ladybirds for this, can be for both.

Miss Chapman very generously offered to extend her working hours in the autumn term, to support the children with the change from two classes, to a mixed year group. As you are aware, in addition to this, she has also taken on new leadership responsibilities. Now that we are entering the spring term, she will be looking to step back and return to her working week of four days.

Miss Chapman will remain teaching on Monday to Wednesday, Miss Fox will continue to teach Dragonfly on a Thursday and we have our new whole school Forest school session on a Friday afternoon. We are currently in the process of recruiting but rest assured, little will change. We will keep you posted as and when we have more information but in the interim, Mrs Moore will be using some of her leadership time to cover Friday's. We have created a bespoke timetable so that she will be teaching, assessing and monitoring stand-alone subjects.

Attendance

You will know from my previous newsletters that looking closely at attendance and punctuality is very much a priority for all schools. The government has released updated guidance for parents regarding school attendance, emphasizing the importance of consistent attendance for students' academic progress and social development. Parents are encouraged to ensure their children attend school regularly, as absences can significantly impact learning outcomes. The guidance outlines the responsibilities of both parents and schools in addressing attendance issues, including the need for open communication with teachers and support staff when challenges arise. Furthermore, the government highlights available resources for families who might struggle with attendance due to illness, mental health concerns, or other factors, urging parents to seek help and support early to promote a positive educational experience for their children. We have previously sent links in relation to this. I also mentioned that I would send you our updated attendance policy. This is attached to the newsletter and provides important information so please do take the time to read this.



Dates for your Diaries

Back to School – Monday 6th January 2025

Church Service (At Church at 9.30am) – Tuesday 14th January 2025

Year 1 Sutton Synagogue Trip – Wednesday 22nd January 2025

Lunar New Year (Chinese New Year) – Wednesday 29th January 2025

Odd Sock Day – Tuesday 12th November 2024

Year 1 Phonics Workshop – Tuesday 4th February 2025 (TBC)

Church Service (At Church at 9.30am) – Tuesday 11th February 2025

Curriculum Café/Open Book – Thursday 13th February 2025 (TBC)

INSET Day – Friday 14th February 2025

Half Term – Week commencing Monday 17th February 2025

Back to School – Monday 24th February 2025

Pancake Café – Tuesday 4th March 2025 (TBC)

Church Service (At Church at 9.30am) – Tuesday 4th March 2025

World Book Day – Thursday 6th March 2025

Year 2 Redhill Mosque Trip – Monday 10th March 2025 at 10am

Parent's Evening – Tuesday 11th March 2025 (Timings TBC)

Parent's Evening – Wednesday 12th March 2025 (Timings TBC)

Guildford Cathedral Easter Workshop – Thursday 27th March 2025

Mother's Day Workshop – Friday 28th March 2025 at 9.30am

Easter Pause Day – Monday 31st March 2025 (TBC)

End of Term Easter Church Service – Friday 4th April at 1.15pm (TBC)

Easter Holidays – Week Commencing Monday 7th April 2025

Back to School – Tuesday 22nd April 2025

Understanding Inclusivity in Church Schools

Creating a Welcoming Environment for All

As parents, the educational environment we choose for our children is crucial not only for their academic growth but also for their social and emotional development. In recent years, many church schools have embraced the principle of inclusivity, aiming to create an environment where every child feels welcomed, valued, and supported. Here are some key points to help you understand what inclusivity means in the context of church schools and why it's important for our children.

What is Inclusivity?

Inclusivity in church schools means recognising and respecting the diverse backgrounds, abilities, and perspectives of all students. This includes students from different ethnicities, cultures, religions, genders, and those with disabilities or special needs. An inclusive approach fosters a sense of belonging, ensuring that every child has the opportunity to participate fully in all aspects of school life.

The Role of Faith in Inclusivity

Church schools often integrate their religious teachings with inclusivity principles. Many faith traditions emphasise love, compassion, and acceptance. By promoting inclusivity, church schools align their educational objectives with these core values, teaching children to embrace diversity and support one another, reflecting the teachings of their faith.

Benefits of an Inclusive Environment

- **Social Development:** Inclusivity helps children develop empathy and understanding toward others, improving their social skills and fostering friendships across differences.
- **Academic Growth:** A diverse learning environment enhances critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Children learn to appreciate various perspectives, which can lead to innovative ideas and approaches.
- **Emotional Well-being:** Inclusive environments help reduce feelings of isolation or bullying. When children feel accepted, they are more likely to thrive emotionally and academically.

Inclusivity is implemented through our curriculum, an inclusive curriculum reflects diverse viewpoints and cultures, allowing all students to see themselves represented in their learning resources.

How can you, as parents, get involved?

- **Open Communication:** Engage in dialogue with teachers about the school's inclusivity policies and practices. Share your thoughts and learn about how you can support these initiatives.
- **Encourage Values at Home:** Reinforce the message of inclusivity by teaching your child the importance of kindness, understanding, and acceptance at home.
- **Participate in School Activities:** Get involved in school events and activities that promote inclusivity, helping to build a stronger, more connected community.

Inclusivity in church schools is about more than just policies; it is about fostering a community where every child can flourish. By understanding and supporting these efforts, parents can play an essential role in helping create a nurturing environment that prepares our children for a diverse world. Together, let's celebrate the uniqueness of every child and work towards a school experience that upholds the values of love and acceptance.

Feel free to share your thoughts and experiences regarding inclusivity in our school community, and let's work together to ensure our school remains a place where everyone feels they belong!



Emotion Coaching

Following on from parent curriculum café and as part of our commitment to supporting your child's emotional development, we're excited to share some additional insights on Emotion Coaching. This technique helps children understand and manage their emotions effectively, fostering resilience and healthy relationships.

What is Emotion Coaching?

Emotion coaching involves guiding your child through their emotional experiences, helping them recognise, understand, and express their feelings in a positive way. It encourages open communication and builds a strong emotional bond between you and your child.

How Can You Practice Emotion Coaching at Home?

Tune into Their Feelings: Pay attention to your child's *emotional cues*. Ask open-ended questions like, "How are you feeling about that?" to encourage them to express themselves.

Validate Their Emotions: Let your child know it's okay to feel what they feel. Use phrases like, "I understand that you're upset. It's completely okay to feel that way."

Teach Emotion Vocabulary: Help your child *identify and label their emotions*. Use a chart of feelings or simply discuss different emotions during everyday activities.

Model Healthy Coping Strategies: Show them how to *handle feelings constructively*. Share your own experiences and coping mechanisms, such as taking deep breaths or talking things out.

Problem Solve Together: Once emotions are acknowledged, *help your child explore solutions*. Ask guiding questions, like, "What do you think we can do about this?"

Encourage Reflection: After a tough situation, revisit it together. Discuss what went well and what could be done differently next time. Emphasise the importance of behaviour and the **consequences** that arise from it. Positive behaviour choices contribute significantly to a healthy school culture, while **negative behaviours can disrupt not only the individual child's learning experience but also that of their peers. We need to help children understand the impact of their actions. It is vital for us all to reinforce these lessons at home, as consistent messaging between school and home creates strong opportunities for growth.** We encourage you to discuss the importance of accountability and the role it plays in personal development and community respect.

Together, we can help our children learn valuable life skills that will benefit them now and in the future. Thank you for your continued support and partnership in your child's education.

A Christmas Blessing

May **love** come alive within your heart
as Christmas time draws near.

May **hope** fill each room you decorate
and bring joy to those you hold dear.

May **peace** be before you at every
meal

and **faith** ring through every song.

For Christ is alive, the light of the world

May he bless you all season long.



**Wishing you a joyful Christmas filled with love,
laughter, and cherished moments together. Merry
Christmas!**

Nicola Cleather
Federation Headteacher

