



Aston St. Mary's Newsletter

Our value this half term is Courage

www.astonmarys.herts.sch.uk

11th September 2020

How wonderful it has been over the past week and a bit to have our lovely school brought back to life by the return of the children. We have been so very impressed by how quickly the children have settled into their new classes, especially as, for many children, last Thursday meant returning to school full-time after almost six months at home. Having them back with smiles on their faces really does make us all very happy indeed.

We would like to extend an especially warm welcome to the new members of our school community. Our youngest pupils in Shackadell class have already made an amazing start to their school career; we all look forward to getting to know them better over the days and weeks to come.

As well as the new children, we also have seven new adults to welcome onto our staff team. They will introduce themselves later in this newsletter; please look out for them at drop-off and pick-up and introduce yourself if you have a moment.

We would like to take this opportunity to say thank you for all the hard work that you put into supporting your children with their home learning during the period of closure. Already we can see the impact that this has had as the children have returned to school ready to pick up their learning and move forward. We are immensely proud of the success of the home learning provision at Aston; we have proved what we have always known - children make the best progress when teachers, parents and pupils work together.

A lot of work has gone in to preparing for a Covid-safe return to school. Our days are filled with hand washing, regular cleaning of surfaces and new routines. We are happy to say that, despite all the staff being exhausted after day one, everyone is now adjusting to the new normality. The children have been nothing short of brilliant as they take all the new routines in their stride.

We are delighted to have been able to make some improvements to the school building over the summer break. The main toilets (next to Orchard class) have been completely refurbished and are now looking very smart. This refurbishment includes lights and taps which operate automatically – there were lots of excited children when they discovered this! Many thanks to Paris's day, Michael, for completing this work. Haffydown classroom and the school library have new carpets and the room previously used as a staffroom (now known as 'Puddlebridge Room') has been reconfigured as a classroom space. This is to allow the children in Danes class to be taught in smaller teaching groups due to the large class size.

We look forward to working with all our families over the coming academic year and pray that our whole school community is able to stay fit and healthy.

ACADEMIC YEAR 2020/2021

AUTUMN TERM

Thursday 3rd September 2020 to Friday 18th December 2020

HALF TERM Break - Monday 26th October 2020 to Friday 30th October 2020

Occasional Day (SCHOOL CLOSED) - Monday 30th November 2020

SPRING TERM

Tuesday 5th January 2021 to Friday 26th March 2021

HALF TERM Break - Monday 15th February 2021 to 19th February 2021

SUMMER TERM

Tuesday 13th April 2021 to Tuesday 20th July 2021

HALF TERM Break - Monday 31st May 2021 to Friday 4th June 2021

Bank Holiday (School Closed) - Monday 3rd May 2021

A Polite Reminder

Please remember the importance of social distancing whilst on the school playground at drop-off and pick-up. Only one adult per family should enter the school site. Please leave the site as promptly as possible.

Keep safe!

Thank you for your support.

Diary Dates

25th September: Non-uniform Day £1 for Christmas raffle prizes

9th October: Harvest festival (online service to be confirmed)

14th and 15th October: Parents Evening

6th November: Non-uniform Day

11th November: Remembrance Day Service (online service – to be confirmed)

30th November: Occasional day (school closed)

1st December: Christmas Decoration Day (children can wear Christmas jumpers)

14th December: Reward Day

15th December: Christmas Service (possibly online or in church – to be confirmed)

16th December: Christmas Dinner

17th December: Christmas Parties



Merit Certificates were awarded to:

Hettie, Jacob, Harry C



Shining Stars were awarded to:

Ella M-P

A Thought to Share:

*May the grace of Christ uphold us,
May the Father's love enfold us,
May the Holy Spirit guide us,
so that, with the Lord beside us
we may go our way in peace.
Amen (From Reverend Jenny)*

Meet the New Staff



My name is Miss Ella Pear and I teach Year 5 and 6 in Danes class. I started at Aston as a student teacher in 2019 and I am delighted to be back as a fully qualified teacher this year! I have lived in Hertfordshire all my life, apart from the three years I lived in Bath whilst studying my Education Studies degree. I love teaching all subjects, but Art and History are my favourites. In my free time, I enjoy taking photos, watching films and going for walks with my dog, Finley. I am really excited to see what this school year holds for us all.

Hello everyone! My name is Mrs Merry and I have really enjoyed meeting the children and lots of parents out on the playground this week. I am the teacher for Orchard class this year, and it has been wonderful getting to know the children over this past week. This is my seventh year of teaching and I can easily say that I love teaching just as much (if not more!) than when I first started. I have lived in Hertfordshire my whole life and it is lovely to be teaching at Aston, as I completed some of my teacher training here and also came here myself when I was a child! In my spare time I enjoy going to my weekly running club, and to add a bit of balance to that I also love to bake (and eat!) cakes and cookies. I am very much looking forward to the year ahead at Aston St Mary's.



Hello, my name is Miss Lucy Branagan and I am so excited to be commencing my teacher training at Aston St Mary's. I am working alongside Mrs Merry in Orchard Class! I graduated from the University of Reading this summer, where I studied Law. This is, perhaps, a rather unusual route into teaching but it was working with the children at Aston St Mary's a couple of years ago which made me realise teaching was what I wanted to do! It isn't just coincidence that my surname is Branagan, Mrs Branagan (Danes Class Teacher) is my mum, hopefully she enjoys my company enough to be able to work with me, as well as live with me! I have absolutely loved my first week at Aston St Mary's and am really excited for the year ahead 😊

Hello, my name is Miss Katerina Georgiou. I will be commencing my teacher training with Aston St Mary's school this September and look forward to meeting all the children and assisting Mrs Holmes and Mrs Lale in reception! I have recently completed a Bachelors degree in photography and look forward to sharing my creativity and skills with the children as well as learning and developing on my PGCE course!



Hello! I'm Mrs Goodfellow and I am a student teacher based in Peartree class this year. For the last 9 years I have been working for a national youth charity, helping to create fun, adventurous activities for children and young adults. When I'm not in the classroom you can normally find me outdoors; either hiking, climbing, camping or pottering in the garden. I also love baking cakes and I'm a Guide Leader too.

Hi, my name is Helen Avis. I am mum to Jake and Max and Jake is a pupil in Danes class. I enjoy listening to music and love to have a sing-along. I also enjoy baking and tend to bake cakes to feed the five thousand! I have lived in the village for 15 years now and feel very lucky to live in such a beautiful village. My background is nursing and health visiting, working with families for over 18 years. I already know a few children at the school from being a parent at the school and spending time volunteering. I am excited to start as a teaching assistant and to get to know everyone at Aston St Mary's.



Hi, my name is Miss Houlding and I'm joining Aston after working as a health play specialist at Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital in London. I have a six-year-old daughter, Cali, and we spend lots of our time exploring the woods near our house. I can't wait to get to know everyone so please come and say hi if you see me at the gate!

Notices

For those new to the school, please meet Miss Nellie, our school pet. We have Miss Nellie, because last year's School Council said the children were sad as we no longer had our pet guinea pigs. They took their request for a new puppy to the governing body and the governors agreed a new puppy would be good for the school. The children all voted on her name. The School Council took on the very important role of counting the votes and Miss Nellie was the winning name. We are hoping Miss Nellie will be in school two days a week at the moment. All children will be invited to help care for Nellie and will be invited to Nellie's Caring Club. The children will be bringing home a letter of consent. Please ensure you return the letter if your child wants to be involved in caring for Miss Nellie.



School Meals

To order school meals, please log onto your School Gateway account via the website or the app.

DINNER MONEY FEES £2.70 per meal



Clothing and Footwear



As we head into autumn, please ensure that your child comes to school with suitable clothing. Classroom windows need to be kept open for ventilation – so it is important that children have their school jumpers. Also, break times and lunch times will be spent on the field so a change of footwear is advisable as the field can get quite muddy.

Do you know anyone who could help us?

We would love to get the old village phone box back to its former glory! It was relocated onto the edge of our school car park a few years ago and given a new coat of paint. We would love to give it a full refurbishment as well as a new role!

We have:

- The phone box
- A complete kit of new windows etc to restore it as well as the paint.

We need:

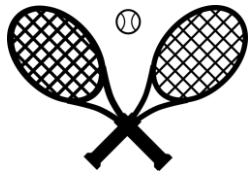
- A volunteer with some time to spare and plenty of enthusiasm who is willing to give the restoration a go in order to help the school and wider community.

Our vision:

- We would love the phone box to become a community book swap box. This would enable members of the school or wider community to donate books they have finished with and select free books to enjoy.



Notices



Junior Tennis Coaching

Open to all 6 to 10-year-olds, held every Wednesday at 4pm at The Aston Courts in Dene Lane.

Just £7.50 per child per session (subsidised by the club).

Dan, a professional tennis coach, is fully LTA approved and authorised.

If you are interested in a place for your child please either call or email Graham Ellis:

Email: celebrantgrahamellis@gmail.com

Mobile: 07487 759 490

Parent Teacher Consultations

It is our intention that parent teacher consultations will take place over the phone this term (unless guidance changes before then). We

are planning for these to be scheduled calls on either Wednesday 14th October or Thursday 15th October. Further information to follow nearer the time.



Our New Timeline of World History



We are delighted to have an impressive new timeline in the school hall. This has been made especially for Aston St. Mary's and includes all key historical events, periods and figures relevant to our own curriculum and locality. It even includes when our school opened and the Covid-19 pandemic. This will be a fantastic resource to support the children's learning in history throughout the school. Our timeline was funded by a very generous donation to the school for which we are very grateful.

A Message from the Library...

Stevenage Central library has re-opened. We are open Monday-Saturday 10-4pm.

Dear all

I'm delighted to let you know that Stevenage Central Library has reopened. Things will be a little different, and some services won't be available initially

Visitors will be able enter the library for up to 15 minutes to browse the bookshelves and to use the self-service kiosks for borrowing and returning items. Social distancing measures will be in place including queue management, screens on enquiry desks, hand sanitiser stations and quarantine areas for returned books. Customers will also be expected to wear face coverings during their visit.

In addition, the People's Network computers will be available in one-hour slots for customers who have made a booking in advance. There will be 15 minutes between bookings to allow for cleaning.

During lockdown, many local residents have been making full use of our library resources online, including e-books, e-audio books, digital newspapers and magazines, online courses and the Online Reference Library, however I am sure you will agree that re-opening Stevenage library is an important step for our local community. Until we are able to offer events again in the library, our weekly virtual LEGO club will continue on our Facebook page, along with other activities for families to participate in.

And although the summer maybe coming to an end, we still have some Summer Reading Challenge at home packs available in the library. Pop in to pick up a pack.

You can find the latest information about [Hertfordshire libraries re-opening plans](#) and our online services on our [website](#).

Yours sincerely

Michelle Lloyd
Library Manager
Stevenage Central Library

Libraries & Heritage Services
Hertfordshire County Council

Stevenage Central Library
Southgate
Stevenage
Herts
SG1 1HD

Class News

Shackadell Class

Shackadell class have had a fantastic first week! We are all so impressed with how well they have adapted and settled into school life and how excited they are about everything we do. Every single child has been an absolute pleasure this week and we cannot wait to get to know them even more, watch them grow and help them to learn so many new things this year! Well done Shackadell, we are so proud of you all!



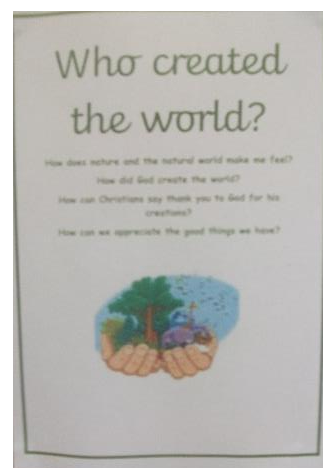
Peartree Class



Welcome back to a new school year. I hope everyone had a lovely summer and is ready for lots of lovely learning in Peartree class.

We started last week with some PSHE based work on 'wellbeing' where we looked at what makes us special and unique and our star qualities. We then spent time saying what we liked about home, school and friends and what we are good at doing. We also discovered that it made us feel good to compliment others as well as receiving compliments.

These are some of the exciting topics we will be learning about this half term.



Orchard Class

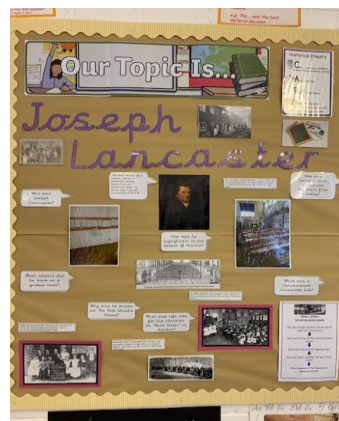
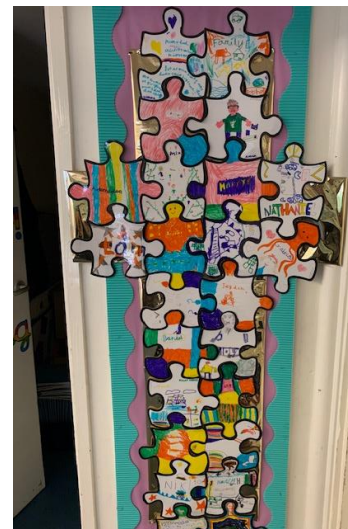
In Orchard class, we have had lots of fun learning and getting to know each other this week. We are taught by Mrs Merry and supported by Mrs Davies and our student teacher, Miss Branagan. We have settled very well into class and have been enjoying our learning. We have been very happy to be back in school.

We have been painting pebbles as fish after listening to the story "Only One You" by Linda Kranz. We thought about kindness and how we are all different. We have added these to the display outside the hall door, each of our painted pebbles are all unique, just like us! We also made our own puzzle pieces for our class cross as we thought about how, even though we are all unique, we all fit together as part of Orchard class.

We have been getting familiar with our classroom and our different topics. We have been enjoying using our role-play area for our new History topic about Joseph Lancaster. This week we have been finding out about who Joseph Lancaster was and why he was important in education.

In RE, we have started to think about what it means to have a sense of 'belonging'. We have been thinking about the different groups and clubs we belong to, as well as how we belong to our school community and church. Over the half term, we will be learning about Diwali and how that might give Hindus a sense of belonging.

We are looking forward to learning lots more over this half term!

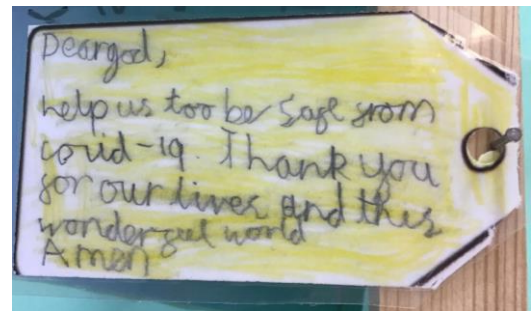
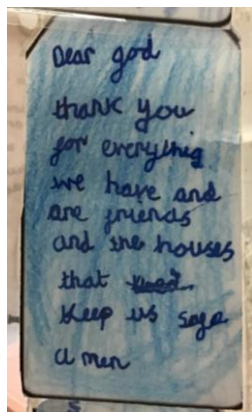


Haffydown Class

It has been so wonderful to welcome the children back to school. In Haffydown, we spent the first few days getting to know each other and settling back into our new routine. The children were so excited to be back and take part in our wellbeing activities.

We made "Dream Jars" to express our hopes and dreams for the year and for the future. Another key focus was about positive mindsets and how to be resilient learners like Tommy the Tortoise with his hard shell. The children all wrote a prayer or reflection for our class cross. It was lovely to see what thoughtful and caring children we have here in Haffydown.

Now we are all ready to begin our learning and exciting new topics.



Danes Class

Danes class have made a fantastic start to the new school year; it is so lovely to have them all back in school. We are a large class this year, so we have two teaching spaces (Danes classroom and the Puddlebridge Room) and two teachers. It is wonderful to welcome Miss Pear back to Aston as a qualified teacher. We spent our first two days settling in with a focus on wellbeing. The children thought about their feelings on return to school as well as establishing their own class charter. They created an eye-catching cross for our class reflection zone and also wrote prayers. The children are very excited about becoming buddies with our youngest pupils in Shackadell class; they waved at each other on the playground and are looking forward to getting to know them better.

This week in English, Danes have enjoyed reading 'Marcy and the Riddle of the Sphinx' which links to our historical focus for the term – The Ancient Egyptians. In maths, we have been reactivating our previous learning (including playing a fun card game called 'Multiplication Duel') in order that we can build upon our skills and understanding over the coming year.

