



Aston St. Mary's Newsletter

Our value this half term is **Wisdom**

www.astonmarys.herts.sch.uk

19th July 2023

Every child is a treasure - small in size, growing in God's love.

As we reach the end of another school year, it is the perfect time to reflect upon all that has been achieved since September. Last week, you received your child's **Annual Report** – these really do highlight the fantastic progress which our children make. At Aston St. Mary's, we are very proud of the **rich and engaging curriculum** that we are able to offer to our children. We hope that our **newsletters** and **school website** provide an insight into the many exciting learning opportunities on offer. Learning in the classroom is greatly enhanced by the many **offsite visits** which take place throughout the year. This year, these have included: **A residential trip to Marchants Hill PGL Centre, The British Museum, Bayfordbury Observatory, West Stow Anglo Saxon Village, Hertford Museum, Paradise Wildlife Park, Stanwick Lakes, Wicksteed Park** and the **Campus West Cinema**. Our curriculum is further enriched by the many **extra-curricular clubs** on offer as well as opportunities such as: **First aid training, Bikeability, a Falconry display, a Victorian workshop, K'nex challenge, visits to church** and **whole school celebrations** such as the **Coronation, World Book Day** and many more. We hope that you enjoyed our recent whole school performance of **'The Wizard of Oz'**; there are some lovely photos of the cast later on in this newsletter.

Our recent SIAMs report describes the school as an **'excellent Church school'** which **'lives out its deeply rooted Christian vision, shining like a beacon within the community.'** On the day of the inspection, many children from across the school spoke to the inspector – all of whom spoke with passion and enthusiasm about their school. We are immensely proud of the report which you will have received last week - it is now published on the school website.

Last week, we said goodbye to **Mr Nash** who has been teaching PE lessons across the school for many years; he will be greatly missed at Aston St. Mary's and we hope that he will be very happy in his new job. Today, we have said goodbye to **Miss Preston** who has taught Haffydown Class this year; she too will be missed by us all. We wish her every success and happiness as she takes the next step in her career at Heath Mount School from September onwards.

Today we are also saying goodbye to our **Year Six** children and to **Ademidun** in Year Four. We wish them every success and happiness as they embark upon the next stage of their education at their new schools. Whilst it is always sad to say goodbye, we know that Aston children are always well-prepared and ready to take this big and important step. We are sure that you would wish to join us in sending them off with our love and prayers. **Alfie, Archie, Betsy, Blake, Finley, Harrison, Isla, Jack, Jessica, Joel, LJ, Max, Muctarr, Phoebe, Ray, Sebastian** and **Ademidun**, we will miss you greatly. You will always be an important part of our Aston family and we hope that you will keep in touch.

We wish everyone a great summer break.

We look forward to welcoming the children back to school on **Monday 4th September**.

ACADEMIC YEAR 2023/2024

AUTUMN TERM

Monday 4th September 2023 to Tuesday 19th December 2023

HALF TERM Break – Monday 23rd October 2023–Friday 27th October 2023

Occasional Day: Monday 27th November 2023 – SCHOOL CLOSED

SPRING TERM

Thursday 4th January 2024 to Thursday 28th March 2024

HALF TERM BREAK - Monday 19th February 2024– Friday 23rd February 2024

SUMMER TERM

Tuesday 16th April 2024 to Friday 19th July 2024

Bank Holiday – Monday 6th May 2024 – SCHOOL CLOSED

HALF TERM Break – Monday 27th May 2024 – Friday 31st May 2024

School Meals

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

DINNER MONEY FEES

£3.25 per meal



Shining Stars were
awarded to:

LJ, Ray

House Point Winners

**Well done to Canterbury House for
earning the most house points this half
term!**



House Points

Canterbury



714

St. Paul's



588

St. Albans



553

Coventry



664

A Thought from Reverend Jenny:

‘Help us, dear Lord, to hold fast in truth... holding fast in truth means accepting Jesus is ‘the Way, the Truth and the Life’, (John 14:6) and following his teaching and example.

“You are a King then!” said Pilate. Jesus answered, “You are right in saying I am a King. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me. ‘What is truth?’ Pilate asked (John 18:37-38).

Pilate’s question, ‘*what is truth?*’ echoes down the ages. Was it a real desire to know? a cynical insult? or an irritated response to Jesus?...

The Postmodern world denies truth can be known. Relativism says there’s no such thing as absolute truth – what’s true for one situation is not necessarily true for others – truth is relative to the circumstances.

Pluralism says that all truth claims are equally valid. But truth is not whatever works – that’s pragmatism. Not what makes people feel good - bad news can be true. Not what the majority says is true – a lie believed is still a lie.

The Greek word for “truth” means “hiding nothing.” The Hebrew word for “truth” means “firmness,” “constancy” and “durable.” The word ‘truth is found more than 200 times in scripture - truth is the way things really are, what we see in Jesus, ‘the Way, the Truth and the Life’ (John 14:6)

“The truth is incontrovertible. Malice may attack it, ignorance may deride it, but in the end there it is”. (Winston Churchill)

Congratulations Hayden



We would like to congratulate Hayden in Haffydown Class who represented Hertfordshire in the East of UK Inter County Cup Tennis recently in Cambridge. The top six boys and top six girls from each county competed in the under-8 division. Hertfordshire won, beating Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire, Essex and Norfolk to the title.

Well done Hayden – an amazing achievement!

Congratulations

Darcie, Daniel and Jayden

Congratulations to some of our talented musicians. Darcie has recently passed her Grade 1 Piano exam with merit.

Daniel has also passed his Grade 1 Piano and Jayden has passed his Grade 1 Clarinet with merit.

We are so proud of you all!



School Council



Thank you to our school council for all of their effort in gaining pupil voice for our school this year. They have achieved an input in new school playground equipment, the whole school cinema trip was requested by them, planting a tree to mark the late Queens Platinum Jubilee and much more. To recognise their efforts, they enjoyed a cake and received a certificate. Thank you also to Miss O'Brien for all her hard work in organising and running School Council meetings.

Notices

Changes to Times of the School Day

Just a reminder that, from September, we are extending the length of our school day in order to meet government guidelines.

This affects **morning registration** only. The new drop-off times are as follows:

8:35 Doors open

8:45 Registration and gates close

08:45



The children would like to say a BIG THANK YOU to the anonymous donor whose very generous donation enabled the whole school to enjoy a trip to the cinema in Welwyn Garden City yesterday. Everyone had a fantastic time watching **Matilda the Musical**. This really was a very special way to end to our school year.

THANK YOU!

Summer Reading Challenge



Last week, the children enjoyed a visit from a librarian from Stevenage library. They were very excited to hear all about this year's summer reading challenge –

Ready, Set, Read!

It is vitally important that children maintain a reading habit over the summer break; this challenge encourages children to read six books over the holidays. On completion of the challenge, they will receive a certificate and a medal (we would love to see these in school).

For further information, please visit:

<https://summerreadingchallenge.org.uk/>

Or, just pop down to your local library!

Attendance



Attendance continues to be a key priority across the school – This year attendance has been 95.9%. Peartree Class deserve a special mention for having the highest score - with Puddlebridge and Danes Classes close behind.

Peartree: 97.2%
Puddlebridge: 96.4%
Danes: 96.1%
Shackadell: 95.3%
Haffydown: 94.7%

'Attend Today and Achieve

Shackadell Class Fundraising to Support Paradise Wildlife Park

After Shackadell's recent trip to Paradise Wildlife Park, and alongside our curriculum ambition of organising a fundraising event, the children chose to raise money for the animals. The children took part in a sponsored animal run to raise funds for the conservation projects and to buy particular equipment for the park. During this, the children climbed on the trim trail like white cheeked gibbons; crawled and stood like the meercats; waddled like the African penguins; slithered like the green anaconda; walked on all fours like a sun bear; flapped and swooped like barn owls; jumped like a red-necked wallaby and sprinted like the jaguar. Afterwards, they were very tired and played sleeping lions! Their hard work paid off as they were able to raise **£102.50**. They spent time choosing items from the Paradise Park Amazon 'wish list' such as foraging toys for the monkeys and sugar cane for the sun bears. They were really proud of themselves, and we are proud of them too!



Peartree and Haffydown Classes visit Stanwick Lakes

Peartree and Haffydown classes recently enjoyed a visit to Stanwick Lakes. The children were all very excited and we had lovely weather for spending the day outside. We all had fun playing in the amazing adventure playground (Mrs Baker even joined in as well!). Haffydown loved playing 'Imposter' in the playground. We looked at different styles of art using nature including works by Andrew Goldsworthy, some cave style art and sculptures. We were then put into groups and given the challenge to create our own nature in art masterpiece. We went on a treasure hunt to collect natural objects which we could use for our creations. Everyone got to walk around the nature 'art gallery' and see the exhibits. The children couldn't wait for lunchtime and were excited to enjoy their picnics on the deck overlooking one of the big lakes.



Everyone had a great outdoor adventure and were quite tired on the journey back to school.

Puddlebridge and Danes Classes visit Wicksteed Park

Danes and Puddlebridge Classes really did have a fantastic day out to Wicksteed Park near Kettering. We began our day in the 'Heritage Zone' where the Sway Rider, Carousel and Garden Wheel were all firm favourites.



Next, we moved onto the 'Adventure Zone'; here the Astroslide was so much fun. There was lots else to do too – including the Clown Coaster, Rockin' Tug, a Tree Top Walk and we could even visit the meercats in Meercat Manor.



After a picnic lunch, we enjoyed a train ride around the park before ending our day in the 'Splash Zone' and, finally, the 'Thrill Zone'. It really was wonderful to enjoy the day with such a happy and well-behaved group of children.



Aston St. Mary's are Intervillage Athletics Champions!



On Tuesday 4th July, we were excited to host the first Intervillage athletics competition since Covid. We wanted to get it going again, so invited six other small schools, who were very happy to accept our invitation - Ardley, Benington, Graveley, Walkern, Datchworth and Weston.

Two children from each year group took part in sprint, throwing event and long jump. To finish, the children from Key Stage Two ran relay races. Despite the rainy weather, we were joined by lots of parents from all the different schools and the rest of Aston St. Mary's School came to watch and cheer on our team.

To finish off a wonderful afternoon, Aston won overall for the first time since 2006 - well done to our super team! We are extremely proud of all our children. They should all be so proud of the way they represented Aston St Mary's School, always displaying our Christian values.

A big thank you to Mr Nash and Mrs Holmes for organising and to all the staff who helped set up the event.



Goodbye Year Six



Today, we say goodbye and good luck to our wonderful Year Six children. They are heading off to eight different schools in September; whilst we are very sad to see them go, we know that they all have exciting times ahead. They really have been a wonderful cohort throughout their time at Aston St. Mary's and we are immensely proud of them for everything that they have achieved and, most of all, for being the respectful, responsible, and caring young people that they are. Please keep in touch Year Six! In true Aston tradition, they enjoyed a leavers' treat last week. This included crazy golf, a meal at Prezzo and even a McFlurry!



**THE
WIZARD
OF OZ**

Wow! What a show!

We are so proud of the children for their fantastic performances – we might be a small school, but we certainly have plenty of talent! Thank you for providing your child with a costume, for helping them to learn their lines, practice the songs and ensuring they were there in the evenings. Thank you also to everyone who attended any of the performances and for your very generous donations. In total, we raised an incredible £526. This money will be used to fund our next performance and to further enhance music and arts provision within the school. We hope that you enjoy the wonderful photos of the cast on the next page.





THE
WIZARD
OF OZ

July

2023



Family learning opportunities this summer with Step2Skills

Step2Skills have got the Crystal Challenge Family Workshop coming to Stevenage and Waltham Cross this summer - are you ready to take on the challenge?

In teams you will navigate through 5 Global Zones solving number, shape and logic puzzles to win crystals. The more crystals you have, the more time you have in the Orb Pond at the end to win the biggest crystal of them all. Adults and children will work together to develop their maths and thinking skills. Success will depend on a growth mindset and good teamwork.

Come and join us on this FREE family workshop, for children aged 5 and over and their parent/carer.

Dates and times:

Tuesday 25th July at 10am OR 1.30pm at Bedwell Community Centre in Stevenage

Thursday 27th July at 10am OR 1.30pm at St Joseph's Church in Waltham Cross

Both venues are well-served by public transport and also have on-site free parking.

Book your free space on our website: www.step2skills.org.uk

Parenting When Separated Programme

The Parenting When Separated Programme is a practical and positive evidence-based course for parents who are preparing for, going through, or have gone through a separation or divorce.

It is a six-week course that highlights practical steps parents can take to help their children cope and thrive, as well as coping successfully themselves.

Topics include:

- Solving co-parenting problems in a positive way that focus on the needs of children.
- Coping with the emotional impact of separation and learning stress management techniques.
- Helping your children cope with the impact of the separation both emotionally and practically.
- Enhancing communication with their children and with their children's other parent.

The course is free to attend and is open to separated parents from all backgrounds. Both mothers and fathers, resident and non-resident parents. Both parents of the same children are welcome to attend though we recommend you attend separate groups.

How to register

You can be referred by a professional or parents can self-refer here

(<https://surveys.hertfordshire.gov.uk/s/5SHI7N/>)