

Aston St. Mary's Newsletter

Our value this half term is forgiveness

www.astonmarys.herts.sch.uk

8th March 2024

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

Diary Dates

Friday 15th March – Non uniform for PTFA Easter Rainbow Hamper Raffle Monday 18th March – Parent Teacher consultations Thursday 21st March – Parent Teacher consultations Monday 25th March – Reward Day Tuesday 26th March – Easter breakfast Thursday 28th March – Easter Service, Ceramic egg rolling and decoration. Last day of Spring Term Tuesday 16th April – Summer Term begins Monday 13th May – Thursday 16th May – Year Six SATs Assessments Thursday 23rd May – Open Morning Friday 24th May – Sports Day (weather dependent) Monday 3rd June – Friday 7th June – Year Six **Bikeability Training Thursday 13th June** – Puddlebridge and Danes Theatre Trip Tuesday 2nd July – Intervillage Sports Wednesday 3rd July – Year Six to Hazard Alley **Thursday 11th July** – Class changeover day and Year Six at secondary schools Friday 12th July – Reward Day Monday 15th July – Dress Rehearsal Year Six Leavers' Trip Tuesday 16th July – Whole school production 1:30pm and 6pm Wednesday 17th July - Whole school production 6pm Friday 19th July – Last day of term Leavers' Service at church 9:30am

Our value this half term is **forgiveness**, and it always makes us proud to see our children demonstrating our values in school. Our children's depth of thought really does shine through each and every day - particularly during class and school worship - when they reflect upon our value through stories, music, prayer and discussion. After the class pages, you will find some ideas about how you might like to explore the value of forgiveness at home.

During the half term break, **new carpets** were fitted in Haffydown and Danes classes and a new floor in Peartree. The teachers worked hard before and during the break to first of all empty and then set up their classrooms again. It really is great to see the rooms looking so smart.

Over the past couple of weeks, Haffydown Class have had a fantastic offsite visit to **St. Christopher's School**, **Letchworth** and Danes and Puddlebridge Classes have had an exciting day at **Tower Bridge**. Further information and photos can be found on the class pages. Visits such as these really do enrich and enhance our curriculum.

We are looking forward to our **consultation evenings** the week after next; these provide a wonderful opportunity to share with you your child's achievements as well as discuss how we can work together to maximise your child's progress going forward.

It really was lovely that so many families and friends were able to join us in church today for our **Mother's Day service**. We hope that all our children's mums and grandmas are well looked after this weekend in particular.

In the meantime, we hope you have a happy and relaxing weekend and are able to enjoy some important family time.

ACADEMIC YEAR 2023/2024

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

AUTUMN 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

Please be reminded that, should you need to contact us outside the usual school day, you can do so via email on:

closed@astonmarys.herts.sch.uk



Shining Stars were awarded to:

Mia, Nyah, Poppy-Belle, Baya, Cecila and Seth

House Points			
Canterbury	St. Paul's		
	Jan Bart		
265	24 I		
St. Albans	Coventry		
226	253		

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



A Thought from Reverend Jenny:

Parents often name their baby after a much-loved family member, a dear friend or someone they admire in the media or in history. In the bible, names are often chosen for their meaning, to reflect the child's anticipated character or mission e.g. the name 'Jesus' means 'God saves'.

'Saves' in the bible, means 'delivers', 'makes whole', 'heals' the mission Jesus he invites all who believe and follow him to share, through our prayer and action:

'I just want to speak the name of Jesus Over every heart and every mind 'Cause I know there is peace within Your presence I speak Jesus I just want to speak the name of Jesus 'Til every dark addiction starts to break Declaring there is hope and there is freedom I speak Jesus... I just want to speak the name of Jesus Over fear and all anxiety To every soul held captive by depression I speak Jesus Shout Jesus from the mountains Jesus in the streets Jesus in the darkness over every enemy Jesus for my family I speak the holy name Jesus ... (I Speak Jesus lyrics © Capitol CMG Publishing)

"Salvation is the entire universe being brought back into harmony with its maker." (Rev Rob Bell, 'Repainting the Christian)

Notices

Year Four Fit Kids

Year 4 had a very exciting PE lesson last week with Chris Bull from Fit Kids. They had the opportunity to use lots of different sports equipment like ropes, trampolines and kettles bells. They certainly had lots of fun - especially using the vipers and battling like gladiators! It was a lot harder work than they thought but they are looking forward to next week's session.



Year Six Rowing

Just before the half term break, Year Six really enjoyed a rowing lesson. It was certainly good exercise – everyone was exhausted by the end! During the session, they learnt how to improve their rowing technique whilst competing in various fun challenges. There are lots more photos and even a video to enjoy on our class page of the school website.



Notices

Our New Trim Trail

We were very excited to return after the half term break to find our new trim trail had been installed. A huge thank you to the PTFA for organising this and to our whole school community for helping to raise the funds. On Monday last week, our house winners – St. Paul's House – enjoyed an extra playtime to be the first to enjoy the new equipment.







Notices



Aria Sings at the O₂

 $\begin{array}{c} Please \mbox{ scan the QR code above to enjoy an} \\ amazing \mbox{ performance by Aria and her mum} \\ at \mbox{ The O2.} \end{array}$

Congratulations Aria – we are so very proud of you.

<u> A Polite Request – Local Gardens</u>

We have been asked by a neighbour to remind parents to please keep their children off local gardens before and after school. Some gardens do not have fencing and there have been occasions when children have been running around residents' gardens and even looking in their windows.

We are lucky to have a playground adjacent to our school – this is an ideal place for the children to have a run around at the end of the school day.

Thank you for your co-operation; we really do value the support of our local community and it is important that we maintain good relationships.



Mr Falder's Assembly



In worship last week, we enjoyed hearing from Mr Falder about an historic artefact which has recently been relocated to our school grounds. You may have noticed the plough from a local farm to the left of the school driveway as you enter the carpark. We learnt about how it was once used to plough potatoes – helped by some volunteers who acted out the process during our assembly. We are delighted to be providing a safe home to preserve the plough for many years to come.

Shackadell Class

Shackadell class have enjoyed reading lots of versions of the traditional tale 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff'.

We took part in our own bridge building workshop where we used a variety of our construction materials to build different types of bridges, just like the one that the goats had to cross.







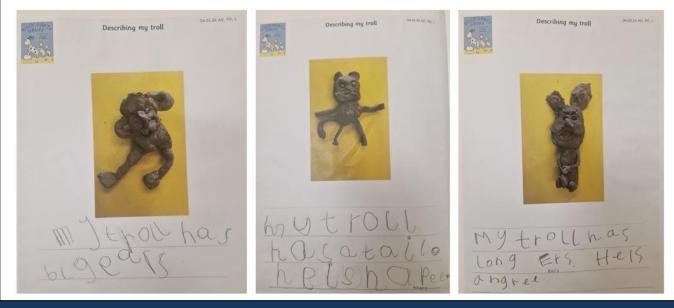


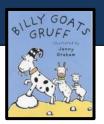


We also used a malleable material that we haven't used before - clay. We made our own tremendous trolls!



Afterwards we wrote descriptions of our trolls. We are proud to be able to use our phonics knowledge to write simple sentences.





Peartree Class

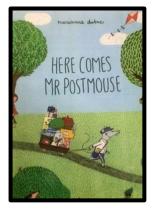
In our geography lessons, we are learning about **our local area and the United Kingdom**. Stevenage was chosen as the first of eight 'new towns' in and around the greater London area. We will be going on our school trip to Stevenage Museum to find out more about the history of our town.

In English, we have been learning about the journey of a letter, from start to finish. We have enjoyed reading **'Here Comes Mr Postmouse'** by Marianne Dubuc. We have learned how to write letters and have produced another class book.

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In PSHE, we are thinking about **'aiming high'** and our goals and aspirations. We acted out and 'freeze-framed' some of the things that we want to achieve when we are older. Everyone had to try and guess what they were. Can you?





Haffydown Class

Yesterday, it was our school typ. I was really excited as elled in minibuses across the spotted buildings on the many trees ano there information about them. We in a room and we saw three burnies with fur as soft as silk. M A Rocco who was the cutest and he re was just so gun! A ger that the hinchillas als that surprised me a lot. To my It to my astoni rever the chinchillas pounce t tiny Then, we n't believe my eyes They e and et the Finall very friendly. We ged them have toff At the very end of our typ, we had back to school arrived tived tired but

Wow! We came back into Haffydown, refreshed from the half term break, and got straight into exciting learning. For our trip, Haffydown visited the animal centre at **St Christopher's School in Letchworth** and met some adorable bunnies, alpacas, chinchillas and sugar gliders. We were able to feed and hold all the animals while James, the animal keeper, answered our (many) questions about their care.



In English, we created our own **'Monster Guides for New Owners'** as we explored explanation texts. Haffydown designed their own front covers and wrote manuals to help owners avoid the pit falls of owning a wild monster, such as having your family pets eaten or homes destroyed!

In Design Technology, Haffydown worked so carefully to produce their own **money containers** using blanket stitch. We have also enjoyed **World Book Day** and are making excellent progress on our **Bookworm Club**, with some children reaching 50 reads at home since January. A huge well done to all the recent efforts at home with reading and **Times Table Rocks Stars**!

Danes and Puddlebridge Classes

What a fantastic day Years Four, Five and Six had visiting **Tower Bridge**! This visit supported our learning in Geography and DT. In Geography, our focus is **Rivers** so it was wonderful to see the lower course of the River Thames for ourselves. We were lucky that the sun shone so we were even able to enjoy our lunch outside whilst watching the boats on the river.



As part of our day, we took part in a **bridge building workshop**. We learnt that Tower Bridge is three types of bridge in one: it is a bascule bridge, a suspension bridge and a beam bridge. It was built about 130 years ago and took eight years to build. During our workshop, we had to work as a team using Meccano to build a bridge – it had to be tall enough to let a boat through and stable enough to stand on its own. We learnt that we could make our bridge stronger by including triangles within our designs.



Danes and Puddlebridge Classes

We also had a guided tour of the bridge – from the high walkways to the dark engine rooms. From the walkways, we had a fantastic view of the London skyline and also of the river below. Both walkways have a glass floor which were quite scary to walk on!

As usual, it was an absolute pleasure to take the children out for the day; their behaviour was exemplary, their enthusiasm was infectious and their manners impeccable.



Bridge Building on Tower Bridge

FORGIVENESS

This term we will be focussing in school on the value FORGIVENESS. We hope your family will find these ideas helpful as you explore the value and have fun together.

TALK TOGETHER about Forgiveness

Everyone makes mistakes, it's part of being human. Sometimes our mistakes hurt others and then we need to say sorry. Sometimes mistakes made by other people hurt us. When this happens we need to be able to **forgive**. **Forgiveness** can be difficult and costly but without it a new start is impossible. Talk together about:

- A time when you needed to say sorry
- A time you didn't say sorry but wish you had
- A time when you had to **forgive** someone who had hurt or upset you
- How it feels when you are given a new start because someone has forgiven you

THINK TOGETHER Words of Wisdom

"Without **forgiveness** there is no future.... If you can **forgive**, then you can move on and even help the person you are forgiving to become a better person" Desmond Tutu



HOME-SCHOOL CHALLENGE

Maze

Design your own version of the maze tree in the story of Zacchaeus.

You can either draw it on paper or use other materials to create it. It's up to you! Take it to school to display in the Challenge Gallery.

READ TOGETHER... Zacchaeus the Tax Collector

Zacchaeus was a little man. He was a tax collector and had become rich by making others pay lots of money in taxes to the Romans and to him. He didn't have many friends.

When Zacchaeus heard Jesus was in town, he wanted to see him. But Zacchaeus was short and Jesus was always surrounded by a crowd. So Zacchaeus decided to run ahead of the crowd and climb a sycamore tree. From there he could watch for Jesus. As Jesus drew closer, he held his breath excitedly until Jesus stopped right beneath his tree. Jesus looked straight up at him! "Zacchaeus," said Jesus with a smile, "come on down. I want to stay at your house today!"

Zacchaeus hopped down. "You are welcome at my house, Jesus," he said with a huge grin.

But others grumbled, muttering to each other. "Why does Jesus want to go home with the rich, cheating tax collector? He isn't good enough for Jesus to come and stay at his house."

Zacchaeus heard what the people were saying about him and he wanted to put things right. He turned to Jesus and said, "Master, here and now, I promise to give half of my money to the poor. If I have cheated anyone in taxes, I will pay them back four times that amount."

Zacchaeus wanted to turn over a new leaf because Jesus believed that everyone deserved a new start and now Zacchaeus belived it too!

Tree Maze

Help Zacchaeus find his way down from the top of the tree, to meet Jesus.

QUIZ



Desmond Tutu

Desmond Tutu was Archbishop of Capetown from 1986 to 1996. Throughout his life Desmond Tutu worked tirelessly against apartheid in South Africa. Apartheid was a system that treated people differently because of the colour of their skin. People who were non-white were not given the same rights in the country as white citizens. For example they had to live where the government told them to, they were not allowed to vote, had to use separate transport, go to different beaches and use separate sports facilities.



There was much violence and oppression in South Africa during the years of apartheid, and when it finally ended in 1992 some people were left feeling bitter and angry and wanting revenge. In order to give everyone a chance to talk about the things that had happened to them Desmond Tutu set up the 'Truth and Reconciliation Commission'. Many people who had behaved badly could hear from those they had hurt. There was the chance to say sorry and sometimes receive **forgiveness**. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission helped to provide an opportunity for a new beginning for South Africa, a chance to build what Desmond Tutu called a 'Rainbow Nation' in which everyone had the same chance in life no matter what the colour of their skin.



Crosses across the world

The cross is a very special symbol for Christians it reminds them of Jesus' death on the cross whch brought **forgiveness** for the world.

Different shapes and designs of crosses reflect different traditions and communities across the world.

Maria Gomez was a Christian Primary School teacher in El Salvador. She angered the authorities in her country because she campaigned for the rights of poor people. Eventually she was murdered. Later a local artist was commissioned to paint a wooden cross with scenes showing her life and her work among the poor women in the rural villages of El Salvador.



The Celtic cross originates from Ireland. St Patrick described the circle on the cross as symbolising the endless love shown by Jesus. The cross is decorated with natural shapes and animals to remind us of God's creation.

The Black and White cross comes from South Africa and was designed during the time of apartheid. The Bible teaches that people are equal in God's eyes, no matter what their background or the colour of their skin.

The Jewish New Year Tradition

New Year for Jews normally falls during September. On the first afternoon of the new year, the festival of Rosh Hashanah is celebrated. Families visit a nearby stream, river or even the sea for the ritual of Tashlich (in Hebrew, the language in which the Jews' holy book the Torah was written, Tashlich means throw away).

After a celebration meal Jewish families gather left over breadcrumbs. These crumbs represent the words or deeds that each family member feels sorry about. When the crumbs have been thrown into the water, fish eat them or they are washed away. This symbolises the way that God **forgives** the bad things that people have done and washes them away so that there can be a fresh start for the New Year. During the ceremony the following words from the Torah are read aloud, "You (God) will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our transgressions into the depths of the sea." Micah 7: 19

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TALKING ADDITIONA NEEDS



Groups are open to parents, carers,

grandparents and guardians living, or

with a child in school, in Hertfordshire.

Booking essential

Please quote the course ID

To check eligibility and book a place, contact

Supporting Links on:

07512 709556

bookings@supportinglinks.co.uk

www.supportinglinks.co.uk

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Thursdays 9.45-11.15am course: ID 651 18th April - 23rd May 2024

Tuesdays 8.00 - 9.30pm Course: ID 652

4th June - 9th July 2024

Our online support sessions are delivered weekly via Zoom.

A 6-week group for parents and carers of children with any additional need from 2-25. Your child does not need a diagnosis to join.

- Understand your child's behaviour.
- Develop strategies that really work.
- Reduce conflict, anger and arguments.
- Improve Emotional Regulation
- Explore sensory needs.
- Motivate, encourage and support your child.
- Increase your child's resilience.
- Manage the different needs within your www.support family.
 These courses are provided free to parents by Hertfordshire

County Council's Targeted Parenting Fund

Information you share with us is used to process your booking. This will be held securely and only shared in accordance with our GDPR Policy.

TALKING ANGER in FAMILIES



Wednesdays 9.45-11.30pm Online Course: ID 654 17th April - 22nd May 2024

Our online support sessions are delivered weekly via Zoom.

6, weekly sessions for parents and carers of children aged 0-12, supporting you to:

- Understand why children, young people and adults get angry.
- Develop strategies to handle anger in yourself and others within your family.
- Recognise the early signs of anger and be able to avoid escalation.
- Reduce conflicts and arguments.
- Encourage positive behaviour and strengthen relationships in the family.

Groups are open to parents, carers, grandparents and guardians living, or with a child in school, in Hertfordshire.

'Their anger used to scare me. I now feel able to cope with it, and even help.'

Booking essential

Please quote the course ID To check eligibility and book a place, contact Supporting Links on:

07512 709556

bookings@supportinglinks.co.uk

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Tuesdays 7.45-9.30pm Online Course: ID 655

4th June - 9th July 2024

Our online support sessions are delivered weekly via Zoom.

6, weekly sessions for parents and carers of 12-19 year olds, supporting you to:

- Understand why young people and adults get anxious.
- **Develop strategies to handle anxiety** in yourself and others within your family.
- Recognise the early signs of anxiety and be able to avoid escalation.
- **Reduce stress and tension.**
- Encourage resilient behaviour and strengthen relationships in the family.

Groups are open to parents, carers, grandparents and guardians living, or with a child in school, in Hertfordshire.

> This course has helped us all to cope day to day.'

Booking essential

Please quote the course ID To check eligibility and book a place, contact Supporting Links on:

07512 709556

bookings@supportinglinks.co.uk www.supportinglinks.co.uk

These courses are provided free to parents by Hertfordshire parent County Council's Targeted Parenting Fund Hortf Information you share with us is used to process your booking. This will be held securely and only shared in accordance with our GDPR Policy.



Thursdays 7.45-9.15pm Online Course: ID 659 18th April - 23rd May 2024

Wednesdays 7.45-9.15pm Online Course: ID 660

5th June - 10th July 2024

Our online support sessions are delivered weekly via Zoom.

- 6, weekly sessions for dads & male carers of all ages, sharing information on:
- Increasing confidence in your parenting.
- Developing a healthy dad/child relationship now and for the future.
- Improved listening and communication skills.
- · Effective strategies for dealing with anger and conflict.

clain.

parent

- · How to enforce boundaries.
- · Being the dad you want to be.

Groups are open to male parents, carers, grandparents and guardians living, or with a child in school, in Hertfordshire.

> I can break out of the cycle and make things different for my child.

Booking essential

Please quote the course ID To check eligibility and book a place, contact Supporting Links on:

07512 709556

bookings@supportinglinks.co.uk www.supportinglinks.co.uk

These courses are provided free to parents by Hertfordshire R

County Council's Targeted Parenting Fund

County Council's Targeted Parenting Fund Hertfordshire Information you share with us is used to process your booking. This will be held securely and only shared in accordance with our GDPR Policy.



6, weekly sessions for parents and carers of children aged 0-12 sharing

- Manage challenging behaviour with consistency
- Encourage positive behaviour
- **Build your child's self esteem**
- Set and maintain boundaries
- **Respond to tantrums and** . difficult feelings in children
- Develop a strong parent/child relationship. These courses are provided free to parents by Hertfordshire

Groups are open to parents, carers, grandparents and guardians living, or Every parent should do this course! It has taught me so much about how to deal with family life.'

Booking essential Please quote the course ID To check eligibility and book a place, contact Supporting Links on: 07512 709556

bookings@supportinglinks.co.uk www.supportinglinks.co.uk

Re County Council's Targeted Parenting Fund Hortf Information you share with us is used to process your booking. This will be held securely and only shared in accordance with our GDPR Policy.



Wednesdays 7.45 - 9.15pm Online Course: ID 657

17th April - 22nd May 2024

Our online support sessions are delivered weekly via Zoom.

Wednesdays 7.00 - 9.00pm In Person Course: ID 658

5th June - 10th July 2024 The Reddings Family Centre Harcourt Rd, Bushey WD23 3PE

- 6, weekly sessions for parents and carers of children aged 12-19, covering:
- The Teen Brain: Recognising the physical and emotional changes taking place and why behaviour changes.
- The link between behaviour and communicating difficult feelings.
- Maintaining your relationship with good communication.
- Understanding risk taking behaviour around drugs, alcohol and gang culture.
- How to negotiate during a conflict situation.

Groups are open to parents, carers, grandparents and guardians living, or with a child in school, in Hertfordshire.

'Our home is no longer a battlefield. I am less stressed and my teenager speaks to me more. Thank you!"

Booking essential

Please quote the course ID To check eligibility and book a place, contact Supporting Links on:

07512 709556

bookings@supportinglinks.co.uk www.supportinglinks.co.uk

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These courses are provided free to parents by Hertfordshire parent County Council's Targeted Parenting Fund H

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Learning in the community for Hertfordshire residents aged 19+

Support your Child's Learning

If you're a parent, carer and anyone working with children of Primary School age and want to support child development in Phonics, Maths and Writing, then join our interactive online taster courses in March.

Helping your Child	Helping your Child	Helping your Child			
with Phonics	with Maths	with Writing			
Thursday 7th March	Thursday 14th March	Thursday 21st March			
Duration: 2 hours	Duration: 2 hours	Duration: 2 hours			
Time: 10am-12pm	Time: 10am-12pm	Time: 10am-12pm			
Fee: £5	Fee: £5	Fee: £5			
Venue: Online (Live	Venue: Online (Live	Venue: Online (Live			
Streamed)	Streamed)	Streamed)			
Book your place at: Step2skills.org.uk/courses 01992 556194 Social media: @step2skills Office Office Confident Hertfordshire FOR LIFE					