



St Swithun's Half Termly News

Week ending 22nd December 2023



Valuing individuals
Aspiring and achieving together in faith

St Swithun's C of E Primary Academy's Vision

Love bears all things

Believes all things

Hopes all things

Endures all things

(1 Corinthians 13:7)



Our Gospel Virtues for the Spring Term are: PERSEVERANCE & JUSTICE

Our Character Traits for Spring 1 are: CREATIVITY & TOLERANCE

Dear Parent/Carer,

Well, we made it! It's been a long Autumn term but we can reflect on so many positives.

While this term has been busy, challenging and long, I can honestly say that I have continued to see growth in all things St Swithun's. The connection between the school and yourselves on a daily and weekly basis has been flourishing. I personally have been able to connect with more of you and feel that events have been well attended. It is our aim to open our doors more often to yourselves and the wider community to ensure the partnership is strong and continues to grow positively. If there is something particular you'd like the school to explore further, please let myself or a member of staff know. I can't promise that we can do everything, but there is no harm in asking a question. Parents and staff involved in the PTA have given a lot of time and energy to supporting the school and for that, we are truly grateful. The school is already benefiting from the funds raised so thank you for your kind donations and contributions.

Our children (the most important part of the St Swithun's puzzle) are flourishing too and what's been great for me is watching individual development not only academically but in confidence and personal growth. We have such wonderful children who want to give so much of themselves to help others. We are never short of volunteers to assist with activities or events and it blows my mind when I see how caring children are when it comes to supporting their peers. We are truly blessed to have such children attend our school, so I guess what I am also trying to say is that you as parents and carers, should be immensely proud of these amazing individuals. It's been an honour for me as the new Head Teacher to get to know them and yourselves over the last year and a bit. Thank you all for your on-going support on all levels.

Dear God,

Thank you for the food we eat. Thank you for the friends we meet. Thank you for the birds that fly.

Thank you for our happy smiles. Amen.

Dixie (Year 1) Just one of the many prayers the children write and share with the class.

***'Inclusion is where you include someone in your game. For example, when someone is upset it might be that they haven't got anyone to play with. Let them join in with you and invite them into your game.'** Florence (Year 4) Thoughts on what inclusion means to her.*

This term has seen multiple visits into our local community which have been fabulous and I know the children have had lovely experiences connecting with various people and places. It's been our aim to get out and about in Retford and by doing so, enhance the children's learning experiences. Activities this term have included, Lantern making at the museum. Some of our children then joined in with the community Lantern Parade. It was also great to see so many of you there! Thank you for supporting your children, the museum and the school. We will continue to build on this term's adventures and seek out new ones as we move through the Spring and Summer.

I would like to personally thank you all for the lovely cards and gifts that have come into school. We live in a time when there are many challenges so I know that giving doesn't always come easily. You should know though that the staff certainly enjoyed your generosity in providing the much needed fuel of chocolates and biscuits to get them through the weeks of December. They have been well received and much appreciated. Thank you.

Another thank you for your generous donations for the Bassetlaw Foodbank Appeal. One of our school Governors collected the food this week and delivered it personally to the Hub. We will continue to support the food hub, so if you are able to contribute in the New Year, that would be amazing.

My final thank you goes out to the staff, Governors and all associated with supporting the school. Our staff team have once again pulled out all stops this term and have not only worked themselves literally to the bone in terms of teaching and learning, but they have also ensured that our community and wider afield visits have taken place. We've once again had a busy sporting calendar as well as museum, Library and whole school events at Retford Oaks. Our school choir have also been very mobile and have entertained members of the Retford community with their festive tunes. These extra-curricular events take time to plan and organise and it's this that I want to acknowledge. The staff go above and beyond each term and this Autumn has honestly seen an increase in this. There is definitely a reason why they are tired and why your biscuits and chocolates were received with open arms! All staff associated with the school, whatever their role, have played their part in ensuring the Autumn Term has been a great one.

The Governing body have been really supportive of the school for many years now and they continue to want the very best for your children. I'd like to thank Reverend Ben for his Thursday Collective Worships and the time given to help grow our Worship Team in school. Thanks also to all the Governors who give up their time to support in all areas of school life.

Thank you also to Reverend Julie and Reverend Macdonald who have worked in partnership with us this term. We look forward to growing this partnership in the coming months.

Please continue to support your children at home through the encouragement of daily reading and helping with any homework tasks or extended activities. We will be looking at planning some more theme days moving forward so please look out for these as we would like you to visit us and be a part of the experiences on offer.

In other news...

Whole School Attendance – Currently 92%



It's the right side of 90 but we'd like it to be better!

95%	=	47 LESSONS MISSED EACH YEAR 8 days in total or 1 week and 3 days
90%	=	95 LESSONS MISSED EACH YEAR 16 days in total or 3 weeks and 1 day
85%	=	142 LESSONS MISSED EACH YEAR 24 days in total or 4 weeks and 4 days
80%	=	190 LESSONS MISSED EACH YEAR 32 days in total or 6 weeks and 2 days

ATTENDANCE MATTERS

**WHAT DO YOUR
ATTENDANCE
FIGURES
ACTUALLY MEAN?**

BE SMART BE THERE!

Percentages based on 190 academic days

We have had a good start to the year, with many classes having a large number of children in each day. Most classes are at or around the mid 90% mark when we do the weekly checks, so this is really encouraging. Thank you.

Our Governors continue to look closely at the school attendance and whilst they are pleased with many of the things they hear and see, they are concerned about some of our children who have missed a significant amount of school time, not only last year, but in previous years too. The facts above, highlight clearly the negative impact that not regularly attending school can have on a child. I am truly concerned about some of our children who are not where they could or should be in terms of their age and stage. While sometimes, there are other contributing factors that impact learning, many of the case studies explored by the Governors show that it's the persistent absentees who are the furthest behind in terms of academic progress and personal growth.

I connected with many families last year in terms of their child's attendance and while in some cases there has been improvement, I feel that there is still a long way to go. Please ensure that if your child is fit to do so, they attend school each day.

Highlights for the Autumn Term

28 of our children attended school everyday

53 of our children had an attendance of 95% or above

**A huge well done to the 28 children for achieving the milestone of 100%!
They will have their treat after the Christmas break.**

'Events Team' (Formally known as the PTA)

The newly named 'Events Team', have been very busy indeed. We've seen a number of successfully attended gatherings which have included, film nights, themed dinners, school discos and the Christmas raffle. Watch out for up and coming events in the Spring term. I hear plans are already a foot!

Reading Challenge

Our whole school reading challenge continues to prove popular with a great many of our children. Congratulations to Our Autumn term winners who are: **Isaac, Yi and Itovie, (EYFS)** **Jensen and Ivy, (Clumber)** **Jax and Cassie, (Rufford)** and **Scarlett and Kaden (Newstead)**. Well done to all the children who had their names in the class jar. A super effort by everyone!



Reading Mornings

We will look to start our reading mornings again but are waiting to utilise our new Library space. Once it is up and running, we will let you all know.

School Sport

A huge 'Well Done' to all the children who have represented the school during the Autumn term. I hear nothing but positive comments from Mrs Tunnard when she returns from events. Not only do our children try their very best and perform well on the day, but their behaviour is always impeccable and this is definitely something to celebrate. We have been involved in gymnastics, cricket, sports crew and mini medics training, handball, G & T trampolining and whole school trampolining so far this year and have many more planned for next term. Children from EYFS through to Year 6 have participated in events and activities. Thank you, Mrs. Tunnard for ensuring these events happen! Please see Dojo for the photos of our children in action.

Uniform

On the whole, it's really good, however, there are still a small number of children coming to school wearing trainers and hoodies that are not part of the school uniform. Please can you ensure your child wears the correct uniform.



PE kits

Please make sure that your child has a full PE kit in school every Tuesday and on their specific PE days. Overall, I am really pleased with what I am seeing so thank you. At present, there are only a handful of children who do not have the correct kit in school. We are working with parents and carers to remedy this. KS2 children can bring their kit to school on a Monday, leave it in their locker and take it home again on the Friday. As we move into the winter months, children should also bring warmer outer layers such as tracksuit bottoms and a thicker top to put over their white t-shirt.



Jewellery

Earrings - children are permitted to only wear studs and these must be removed for PE and swimming sessions. All other non-essential items of jewellery should remain at home. Watches are permitted but children must understand that they are responsible for their watch so I would urge that they don't wear anything too expensive or something that's deemed to be a family treasure.

Class Dojo

Class Dojo is an effective tool that allows instant communication between school and parents and carers. It's great to see so many of you interacting and using this app to its full. However, could I please ask that you think about the times you send staff messages, thinking mainly about their well-being and personal lives outside of school. I feel that in terms of regular interaction between yourselves and members of staff, the hours of **07:45** and **18:00** are more than acceptable and should allow that free flow of information between both parties. I have also asked all staff to respect your well-being and personal lives too. You should not receive messages after **18:00** or before **07:30** unless there is an emergency.

Staff have fed back that since including the above in our Newsletters, the acknowledging of well-being and personal lives has been evident from the vast majority of parents and carers, so thank you for that. It's much appreciated.

Diary Dates

4th January – All children return to school

5th January – RE Day

12th January – Swimming starts again for Year Rufford children

2nd February – NSPCC Number Day – Save the date as Parents/Carers invited to join us for the morning

‘Events Team’ dates TBC

5th – 11th February – Children’s Mental Health Week

6th February – Safer Internet Day

9th February – Last Day of Term

NB: Whilst we will make every effort to keep to the above dates, sometimes events need to be moved. We will inform everyone through class Dojo should this be the case.

St Swithun’s children, staff and Governors wish each and every one of you a Merry Christmas and prosperous New Year. It’s the season where we reflect on the birth of Jesus and where family and friends come together and spend quality time creating special memories. Enjoy it to the full!

We look forward to welcoming your children back to school on **Thursday January 4th 2024.**

Look after yourselves and each other...

Mr. Charly

