



St Swithun's Half Termly News

Week ending 9th February 2024



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 2 are: EMPATHY & RESILIENCE

Dear Parent/Carer,

Our thoughts and prayers continue to be with Emily's children and family at this difficult time. Your comments, thoughts and offer of further support have truly shown community spirit and an acknowledgement of what Emily meant to her family and friends.

The term has been a short one in terms of days in school, but it has as ever, been none stop and packed full of wonderful experiences for our children. It never ceases to amaze me what can be achieved in such a short time but your children have been superstars on many levels and hopefully you will be able to see how well your child is progressing when you come to our sharing of children's work and achievements in March.

Early in January we kicked things off with a very successful and enlightening themed day focused around RE. Our main focus area was around other world religions and faiths. Our children were able to explore the Hindu, Jewish and Islamic faiths as well as Christianity. The day was planned with practical activities at the centre and included, painting, making crowns, exploring new foods and listening to guest speakers. The children presented elements of their learning in a wonderful whole school assembly at the end of the day. Exploring different religions and faiths in this way proved a hit with all the children and hopefully was a successful way for them to learn and understand about the wider world. Thank you to Mrs. Oxborough for the hard work put in to planning and organising the day and to all the staff for being creative and enthusiastic when facilitating the activities.

We have also had a themed day focused around a jelly bean. Yes, you read it correctly, a Jelly Bean! It was our NSPCC Number Day where all the math's sessions were planned around jelly beans. I have to be honest that when Mrs. Snowden first approached me with the theme, I was at a loss to see how it would work or achieve the intended outcome of engaging children for a whole day. Well, I was well and truly shown that it was possible and more to the point, shown that from small things, amazing things can happen.

Children and adults were engaged throughout the day in a variety of different activities that culminated in a shared project between our older and younger children who were tasked with building a strong and stable structure out of cocktail sticks, and yes, more jelly beans. The thing that stood out for me personally, was the way in which the different age groups worked so well together. Staff were commenting on how we've possibly got some teachers in the making! Thank you to all of you who attended our morning session. I know that the children really enjoyed having you share the experiences with them in their classrooms. An awesome day and one to remember. Thank you to Mrs. Snowden for all the hard work in organising and facilitating the day and to all the staff for ensuring the children had such a great time!

Congratulations to our Autumn Term '**Golden Award**' winners. Such wonderful things were said about each of the children who looked really happy to receive their well-deserved 'Wonderland' book token and certificate. Well done to **Yi, Noah, Nellie, Mason, Emily, Scarlet and Lara!**

I'm sure you will join me in saying a **big** thank you to all the staff who once again have gone above and beyond to serve the community in so many ways. I say it each term and while it may seem repetitive, I make no apology for continually highlighting what an outstanding job they do. Nothing is straight forward in Education and the daily challenges are ever changing which ultimately means all our staff, whatever their role, are continually having to evolve and adapt to meet the needs of all associated with the school and its wider community. I can't thank them enough for all that they do. Their holiday is more than deserved and on behalf of the Governors, SNMAT and myself, here's to well-earned rest and quality time spent with family and friends! A cracking crew, who continue to shine even when things are challenging and tough.

Please continue to support your children at home through the encouragement of daily reading and helping with any homework tasks or extended activities. Please encourage your child if in KS2 to engage with Times Table Rock Stars. There's already a competitive buzz in Newstead class. Let's see if we can get more 'Rock Legends' at SWI. There will be a Science themed day next half term so please look out for it as hopefully you will be able to take part during the first session again.

In other news...

Whole School Attendance – Currently 89%



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 had a good start to the year, with many classes having a large number of children in each day. Most classes were at or around the mid 90% mark when we did the weekly checks, so that was really encouraging. However, we have been hit by a few illnesses this term and attendance has dropped. While I am aware the drop is mainly due to unavoidable circumstances, there are still too many children who have worrying attendance and this is ultimately affecting their academic and social and emotional development. Unless your child is ill, please ensure they attend school. We are here to help if we can, so if there are challenges that we can support with then please contact the school office or talk with your child's class teacher. I am truly worried about some of our children as they have already missed a huge chunk of school life brought about by the pandemic. More missed school will ultimately lead to extra future challenges that can be avoided with regular attendance and engagement with school. Thank you for your on-going support and partnership. Together, we can make the future brighter for all children.

Reading Mornings

We will start our reading mornings again next term for KS1 children and their parents/carers. Please come and join us at 08:30 each Wednesday morning. Children must be accompanied by an adult and entrance will be through the side gate to the playground. Older siblings are welcome if that helps to ensure you can come. We will utilise our new Library space. Hopefully see some of you there on the 21st February.

School Sport

A huge 'Well Done' to all the children who have represented the school this term. Once again, we've been great role models when out and about and have done St Swithun's proud. We have been involved in Sports Hall Athletics (Year 5/6) and Dance (KS1) during spring 1 and I've already seen that there are 4 different events already on the calendar for Spring 2. 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.

'Events Team' (Formally known as the PTA)

The newly named 'Events Team', have been very busy indeed. We've had a Chinese New Year lunch for Parents and Carers and children have been able to buy a Valentine's Day 'Candy Gram' for someone special. Watch out for up and coming events next term. There's plenty to come! A **huge** thank you to the team for all the hard work that goes into planning, organising and running these events.



19th February - All children return to school

4th March – Marie Curie Coffee Morning

6th March – SEN Reviews

7th March – World Book Day & Parent/Carer lunch

8th March – Mother's Day Breakfast

9th March – Swimathon

11th March – Start of British Science Week

13th March – SEN Reviews

15th March – Science Day / Comic Relief

19th March – Parents' Evening

20th March – Coffee Morning (Mrs. Howlett and Mrs. Furmage)

21st March – Parents' Evening

28th March – Easter Service

28th March – 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 happy half term. Enjoy it to the max!

We look forward to welcoming your children back to school on
Monday 19th February 2024.

Look after yourselves and each other...

Mr. Charly