



St Swithun's Half Termly News

Week ending 21st July 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)



Hi Everyone!

The question is simple...Where has the year gone? I have read through my past newsletters and scrolled through our Dojo story and I can't believe what a journey we have had. 190 + days of time in school together, has generate a wealth of fond and amazing memories for us all. All of our children have flourished in their own way. They are a year older and wiser and stronger in so many ways. I am so proud of each and every one of them and I know all of you will be too. Things haven't always been plain sailing and all of us acknowledge that this is life. What's been brilliant, is the way many children have worked really hard to overcome a variety of barriers that have enabled them to flourish, become confident individuals and ultimately, set themselves up for a successful 23/24 year in whatever setting they will be in.

Class Dojo tells our story so I won't list the wonderful experiences our children have been a part of but I do want to acknowledge the recent Year 5/6 production that took place this week. What a way to end the term and the school year! The children put on a spectacle that was fit for any Theatre. For me, this is where the children really stepped up and showcased just how much they have to offer as individuals and as a collective. Those who came to watch, I'm sure will agree with my thoughts about the show being an epic on many levels. Well done to all the children in Newstead. You are all stars! Thank you also, to Mrs Mackellar and Mrs Tunnard for all their efforts not only in bringing this all together but in looking after Newstead this year and supporting and guiding the children on their Journey.

The staff at St Swithun's have been amazing in my short time as Headteacher and I can see why children have flourished in the past. The dedication to the cause from the adults is second to none and I have seen all the adults dig deep and go above and beyond throughout the year. My heartfelt thanks go out to all the staff who have shown dedication, resilience and a support for one another that has enabled the school community to achieve so many positive things this year. I am so proud to be a part of this team and I am excited about what else might be around the corner.

I'd also like to thank the school Governors and the SNMAT team for their support this year. Our Governors have been in school lots this year and have played an active role in the running of and the on-going development of St Swithun's. Our school community is far reaching and it's the culmination of the hard work by each person involved that ensures success.

I have truly enjoyed getting to know each and every one of you guys this year and want to thank you for making me feel so welcome. The morning chats on the playground or a passing hello or smile have really helped in terms of making me feel a part of the community. I said from the outset that this has to be a partnership. If we work together, great things will happen. Well, great things have happened and we have connected on so many levels. Please remember though that this is just the start and next year will bring even more success and provide more opportunities for more of you to flourish. I acknowledge that there have been some challenging times along the way, but I have appreciated those who have reached out and who have taken the time to engage in positive and reflective conversation. My door will continue to remain open if you need to talk and I'd welcome the opportunity to get to know more of you next year. Thank you for supporting your children and connecting with the school. Together as one, ensures great things happen.

There have been some changes in terms of staffing this year and as we leave for the Summer break I'd like to acknowledge the following people: Mrs. Preece, Mrs. Slater, Miss Wilson and Mrs Shaw-Browne. Sadly, no longer working with the team, but the effort and dedication given for the St Swithun's community will never be forgotten. They will all be greatly missed and their positive contribution over the years to the children and community of St Swithun's will always be fondly remembered. They all have an open invite to visit the school so hopefully they won't be strangers.

My final goodbye has to be to our amazing Year 6 children. As they head off onto their next adventure, know that they should all hold their heads high. They will all be missed, but it has to be acknowledged that their journey through St Swithun's has ended positively on many levels. We are proud of each and every one of them!

Well done, Nelly, Tilly-Rose, Lloyd, Crystal-Lee, Olivia, Ruben, Izzie, Riley-Joe, Isabelle, Rhema, Ava-Rose, Sophie, Abbie, Frankie, Demi-Rae, Emrys & Lucy. Without doubt, even greater things await you so embrace every opportunity with both hands. Hopefully you will pop by and update us on how your new journey is evolving. Until then, 'Goodbye and farewell'.

I also have the pleasure of welcoming some new members of staff who will be joining the team from September. Ms Vogt Bell, who will be working in KS2, Miss Jackson, who will be working in EYFS and Miss Spurr, who will be joining our lunchtime team.

For my final staffing announcement, I have the pleasure of sharing with you that Mrs Howlett will be our new Assistant Head Teacher and alongside this, she will be taking on the role of SENCo. I am sure you will join me in wishing her every success with her new St Swithun's chapter and adventure.

As I come to the end of my final Newsletter of this academic year, I'd like to once again thank you all for connecting with St Swithun's. There are many things for us to look back on with fondness and pride. You should all be super proud of your children. They are all amazing and have such a variety of talents and gifts. Children have gone above and beyond this year in terms of looking out for others within school and the wider community. They are great ambassadors for the here and now, and for the future. We will pick up our journey again in September, where we will strive even harder as a collective, to ensure all children, staff, parents, carers and the wider community flourish. I wish you all a great summer. Enjoy the special family time that's to come. Stay safe, look after one another. I'm really looking forward to re-connecting with you all on Wednesday September 6th.



Key Messages



Whole School Attendance – Currently 88%

School Target is 95%

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

Our Governors have been looking closely at the school attendance and while 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 this 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 have connected with many families this 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. We can only do our job, if the children attend. It's as simple as that.

The Governing Body in response to their concerns have appointed a link Governor to support with attendance issues. Also, with the backing of the Governors, the school will be considering following the penalty notice route from September. This hasn't happened this year and will not impact the majority of our families as unauthorised absences are not an issue with so many of you. However, where we have real concerns in terms of persistence absenteeism, this may well need to be one of the areas we need to explore.

New Start to the school day for KS1 & KS2 children

*Gates will be open at **08:40**.*

Children will then come straight into school on arrival rather than lining up. (Just as it is when it rains)

A member of staff will be in class to greet the children.

There will be a task/activity ready for the children on arrival.

*All **KS1 and Lower KS2 children** must have an adult with them until they have entered the school building.*

Class teachers will be available for a chat between 08:40 & 08:50.

*Gates will be closed at **08:55**.*

Children who are late will need to come in through the main reception.

Uniform

It is important that children are dressed appropriately. Please do not send your child to school in hoodies or trainers. We have seen a number of children wearing incorrect uniform to school recently. The correct school uniform is black formal school shoes – no trainers or hoodies. Trainers are to be worn only for PE.

The link below takes you to the online store for school uniform:

<https://logoleisurewear.com/product-category/schools/schools-st-swithuns-c-of-e-primary/>



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. However, there are a still a small number of children who are still not coming to school with kit or if they do have kit, it's not necessarily the correct kit. KS2 children can bring their kit to school on a Monday, leave it in their locker and take it home again on the Friday.

P.E Kit consists of:

White t-shirt
Black or grey sports shorts (trousers in the winter)
Black or grey sweatshirt
Trainers for indoor and outdoor activities

Jewellery

I have noticed that some children have come to school wearing hooped earrings, bracelets and other non-uniform items. In terms of earrings, children are permitted to only wear studs and these must be removed for PE 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.

PTA

Our PTA have been fantastic this year and have organized endless events for both our children and the parents and carers. Again, Dojo tells the story of how the PTA has been proactive in ensuring our children and community benefit from these planned events. I particularly enjoyed our Mother's and Father's day breakfasts, where it was great to see so many parents & grandparents coming together. The PTA serves our school community with a simple aim of bringing people together through amazing events and of course, raising funds for the school. A recent contribution from the PTA has been for our new school library so we are really grateful for that. This year has seen a resurgence of the PTA. However, while the current small group do a brilliant job, they could really do with more members. **If you feel this is something you'd like to get involved with, please leave your details at the school office. There will also be a coffee morning during Autumn 1 where you can come and meet current members and perhaps explore joining yourself.**

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.

In addition to the above, it's unlikely that teachers and staff in KS1 and KS2 will respond to Dojo messages during the day as they are involved with supporting and teaching your children. If you have a message for the teacher or teaching assistant, could you please call the school office, and staff there will get the message to the teacher or teaching assistant. It's slightly different in EYFS and Mrs. Howlett has said she does check Dojo occasionally due to the timings of the children coming and going to and from the unit



4th September 2023 - Inset Day for Staff

5th September 2023 - Inset Day for Staff

6th September 2023 – Reception, Year 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, & 6 children return to school

11th September 2023 – Nursery children start school

19th October 2023 – Children break up for half term

20th October 2023 – Inset Day for staff

6th November 2023 – Children return to school

22nd December 2023 – Last day of term of the Autumn term

3rd June 2024 – Inset day for staff

4th June 2024 – Children return to school after the half term break

5th July 2024 – Inset day for staff

26th July 2024 – Final day of 23/24 Academic Year. Children finish for the Summer

Other key dates will be added to the school diary so please keep an eye out for Dojo messages

See you next year!

Mr. Charly

School Sport Photos



KS1 Gardening Club delivering their flowers to St Saviour's Care home

