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November Newsletter- Welcome back!

Dear Parents/Carers,

If you're anything like me then I'm sure you've just had a fantastic half term break! I can't believe we've already completed our first term of this year and have had so many things to be proud of. Our Conker championships, first Saturday 'Open Morning', Enrichment day, circus visit and parents' evenings were just a few of the highlights!

Term 2 is always extremely busy with the lead-up to the festive period. It's one of my favourite times of the year as the children start to prepare their nativity performances and church services as well as our brilliant Christmas market. But before all that can begin, we have lots of important events taking place and I've tried to include them all in the 'diary dates' at the end of this newsletter.

Remembrance Service at St. Peter's Church (Monday 12th November at 9.30am)

Father Malcolm will be holding a Remembrance service for all our pupils at St. Peter's church on Monday 12th November. We will meet in the hall at 9.30am and then walk over to church. If you are available and would like to join us, we'd love to have you accompany the children to church. Visiting St. Peter's for special occasions is an important part of our school curriculum and we can only do this if we have enough 'walkers'. If you are able to walk with us, please let Nic or Pollyanna in the school office know as your assistance will be gratefully received!

Expectations Evening- Tuesday 13th November 3.30-5pm

On **Tuesday 13th November**, there will be a series of meetings for parents to enable you to find out about the national Age Related Expectations for your child this year. These are the standards against which your child is assessed through the school year. I am sure this will provide you with useful information, give you the opportunity to ask questions and gain a better understanding of how you can support your child's learning. Each phase team will hold a meeting after school, which will then be repeated throughout the evening. Reception parents will have several workshops during the year and will therefore not be invited to attend. The meetings are as follows:

Year 1 in Class 3;

Year 2 in Class 5;

Year 3 in Class 6;

Year 4 in Class 7;

Year 5 in Class 10 and

Year 6 in Class 11.

Each session will start 3.30pm and then will be repeated at 4pm and 4.30pm in order for parents to attend different year groups. There will also be opportunities to meet the Head (me!) and ask him any questions.

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In order to make child care easier our Early Years team have kindly volunteered to run a 'film evening' during the event so parents can walk around freely and concentrate on the information at hand. If you would like your child to attend then please let the office know and they will go straight to Class 2 after school rather than be picked up. You can then collect your child after you have attended all the relevant meetings.

Attendance at FCCE

Thank you to everyone for your hard work and support in getting your children to school last year. Our overall attendance rose by 0.4% to 97% for 2017-18. This is a great achievement and puts us in the top 10% of schools in South Glos. I'm pleased to say our 'broken weeks' has also dropped compared with the previous year which means less children are having more than 7 weeks per year where they haven't attended every day of school that week.

Our excellent academic results certainly pay testament to all your hard work as parents in making sure your children are fit, healthy and ready to learn when they get to school. We wouldn't be the successful school we are without your overwhelming support. This includes how most of you take the 'financial hit' of booking holidays outside of term time. This is very much appreciated by all the staff at our school.

I'm never one to 'sit back and relax' when it comes to school improvement so I'm aiming for our school to have the best attendance in South Glos by the end of this academic year! Our number one school development priority this year is to become the happiest school in the county and having great attendance levels is just one small way of evidencing this (if you'd like to know more about our school priorities then please feel free to ask me about them).

Christmas Market- Friday 30th November at 5pm

It won't be long before December is upon us and luckily our Christmas Market takes place on the final day in November! After the great success of last year's event, our FRIENDS will be continuing with a street market theme which starts at 5pm. It is a very important fundraising event for the school and we appreciate all the help and support we receive for it every year. Please look out for future correspondence closer to the date.

Sporting Triumphs!

We've had some brilliant individual and team performances from children representing our school last term and I just wanted to say a big 'well done' to everyone who has played for one of our FCCE teams over the past two months. Miss Whittock was incredibly proud of the tag rugby team who came very close to getting into the final of the South Glos. Championships. Mrs. Summers has been very impressed with a number of performances from both her netball teams and I have been extremely pleased with the application and skill shown by the girls and boys football team who have been led in exemplary fashion by Baylee and Lukas.

We had three children represent our school in the County Cross-Country trials last month. Romilly finished a very creditable 15th in a very fast girls' event whereas Josh T won silver in the Year 6 boys' category. Not to be outdone by his regular running partner, Harry won gold in the Year 5 boys' race and both Josh and Harry have now qualified to run for the County.

We also have a County champion in the form of Alice who is not only the under 10s but also the under 11s Avon tennis champion!

Healthy Options for Snacks and Drinks

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Thank you to everyone who have supported the school in providing the children with healthy eating options on a daily basis. Having two boys at home I know how much these little ones eat and how difficult it can be to always provide a healthy option! I've had a couple of parents ask me about water bottles recently so I just wanted to say, unless there is a medical reason, we'd prefer all children to have water in their water bottles. Staying hydrated is really important in order for the children to do their best on a daily basis and we will encourage them to refill their bottles if they manage to drink it all.

New Parent Tours

I am currently having the great pleasure of showing round prospective 2019 Reception parents. I love 'showing off' our children and school and if you know anyone who might want to arrange a visit then please feel free to pass on our school email address or phone number.

Enrichment Day (Year 1-6) Friday 14th December

Please look out for Enrichment Day choices for our second event of the year. The children (and adults) always have a brilliant day and if you'd like to join us and 'muck in' then please feel free to let Nic in the office know. We love organising these days and it is extra special when parents can come and help as well. I wouldn't be able to run the 'Globe Trot' without all our kind parent volunteers!

Children in Need- Friday 16th November

This year, to support the charity, we will be having a mufti day where you can donate £1 if you wish. As the Children in Need day also falls on our school disco date, we thought it would be appropriate to raise money in this way so our pupils wouldn't have to then get changed into their 'glad rags' at the end of the day as they'd already be in them!

Governors Annual Report to Parents

Attached with this newsletter is our annual Governors' report to parents. We are incredibly lucky to have such a skilled and dedicated set of Governors working on behalf of everyone at our school and I'm sure you'll enjoy reading the report. We have recently welcomed Andrea Thomas to our Governing body and will shortly be filling the two other vacancies. Once we have done this, I will report back to parents in our December newsletter.

Funding Information for Schools in South Glos.

You might be thinking this is an odd thing to put on a newsletter but I really feel it is time to let all of our school community know about the potential budgeting crisis facing South Glos. schools. As you may be aware, South Glos. currently has an overspend on its SEN (Special Educational Needs) budget of £6.3 million and it is projected to rise further over the next 18 months. South Glos are officially the lowest funded authority in England and, alongside the debt in its SEN overspend, schools are finding it incredibly difficult to continue to provide the best quality education for its children.

We are extremely lucky to have a wonderful business manager in Lucy Gale who is continually looking at ways of saving the school money. Equally, we have the overwhelming support of our FRIENDS committee who work selflessly to raise much needed funds for our children. However, it is now getting to a point where future cuts will begin to have an impact on the education of every single pupil in South Glos. We have recently been asked to vote on 3 different

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budgeting options where it is projected we could lose either £9,000, £17,000 or £26,000 from the budget we were given last year. You may have seen in the news about how each school will get £10,000 for the 'little extras' which schools need however this is incredibly misleading and does not highlight the current budgeting crisis our schools face.

The following response to the budget options has been recommended by teaching unions and the South Glos. Heads Executive board:

'We approve none of the three options and request that the serious under-funding of South Gloucestershire schools is raised with the Secretary of State for Education, as a matter of urgency.'

This is the option we have chosen and we have been asked to make parents aware of the current situation. We will continue to do the best we possibly can for our pupils and truly appreciate any support you can give to us in this matter.

Dates for your diary

Monday 5th November - Term 2 begins

Thursday 8th November - Class 1 balance bike training

Friday 9th November - Class 2 balance bike training

Monday 12th November - Remembrance Service at St. Peter's Church (9.30am and walkers needed please!)

Tuesday 13th November - Expectations Evening Presentations from 3.30-5pm

Thursday 15th November - Class 1 and 2 (EYFS) maths workshops in classes (from 8.40am-9.30am).

Thursday 15th November - Full Governors Meeting

Friday 16th November - Mufti-day for Children in Need

Friday 16th November - School discos after school

Monday 19th November – Flu Vaccination (Reception-Year 5)

Tuesday 20th November- Buddhism Faith Day in School

Friday 30th November - Christmas Market (from 5-7pm)

Sunday 2nd December - Christingle service at St. Peter's Church (4pm with both KS1 and KS2 choirs performing)

Tuesday 4th December - Rock Steady Christmas performance to parents (2.30pm)

Tuesday 4th December - Big Sing Choir Concert at St. Saviours Church (7pm)

Wednesday 5th December – Reception children visit to Crossbow Preschool for their Nativity

Thursday 6th December – Year 5 and 6 Trip to Steam in Swindon

Tuesday 11th December - Year 1 and 2 Nativity performance to parents (1.45pm)

Wednesday 12th December - Year 1 and 2 Nativity performance to parents (9.45am)

Friday 14th December - Christmas Jumper day (£1 donation for charity)

Friday 14th December - Enrichment Day for Years 1-6

Monday 17th December - Year 1, 2 & 3 Drama club Christmas performance (3.45pm-4:15pm)

Tuesday 18th December - Class 1 and 2 (Reception) Nativity performance to parents (9.10am)

Tuesday 18th December - Key Stage 2 Christmas Carol Service at St. Peter's Church (6pm)

Wednesday 19th December - Class 1 and 2 (Reception) Nativity performance to parents (2pm)

Wednesday 19th December – Year 4, 5 & 6 Drama club Christmas performance (3.45pm-4:15pm)

Thursday 20th December – Christmas Lunch

Friday 21st December- Last day of term

Monday 7th January- INSET day

Tuesday 8th January- First day of term 3

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Congratulations

I have been privileged to have seen lots of fabulous learning going on during the past few weeks. Special mentions need to go to:

Logan for making amazing progress with his reading;

Callum, Elsa and Ava for their brilliant writing about what they did in the half term holidays;

Ruby for her beautiful handwriting;

Flynn for his great maths learning;

Vinnie for his superb hedgehog knowledge and

Oliver for the fantastic improvement in his writing.

I feel truly blessed to be in the company of such wonderful children on a daily basis!

Thank you for your continued support,

Pete Barnard

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