



Marlborough St Mary's CE Primary School

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May Newsletter

Dear Parents and Families,

It has been such a pleasure to be back at school following my cancer treatment. During my phased return, it has been lovely to see so many of you on the gate and around school again.

I am very pleased to say that my recovery continues to progress well, thanks in no small part to the kindness, encouragement and support shown by the wonderful Marlborough St Mary's community. I anticipate returning full time a few weeks into next term and I am incredibly grateful for the care shown to both me and my family over recent months.

During my absence, the school has continued to flourish under the excellent leadership of Mr Goodman and the wider staff team. I have been enormously proud to see Marlborough St Mary's continuing to thrive as one of the very best primary schools around, with children continuing to enjoy the rich, nurturing and ambitious education that makes our school so special.

Staffing Updates

As we approach the end of the academic year, I would also like to share some staffing news with you.

Firstly, we will be saying goodbye to some familiar and much-loved members of our team.

Mrs Pawlaczek will be leaving us to begin new adventures beyond teaching. Sharon has been a huge part of Marlborough St Mary's for many years and has touched the lives of countless children and families during her time here. She will be greatly missed by staff, pupils and parents alike.

Mrs More has decided that the time is right to retire. Kath has dedicated many years of tireless service to the school in a variety of roles, but it is her compassionate pastoral support for children and families that many will remember most fondly. We are hugely grateful for everything she has given to our community and wish her every success as she pursues her next ambition... winning the Pickleball World Championships in 2027!

Finally, Mrs Hewitt will also be leaving us as she and her family make an exciting move to the Isle of Wight. Carly has been a valued member of our wonderful Orchard Team, and we will miss her warmth, care and commitment enormously.

We thank all three members of staff for the tremendous contribution they have made to Marlborough St Mary's and wish them every happiness and success for the future.



Mixed-age classes in September

Looking ahead to September, some of our class structures will look a little different.

Like many schools across the country, we are seeing the impact of falling birth rates, meaning there are fewer primary-aged children entering schools than in previous years. As a result, we will have slightly lower pupil numbers in the future and therefore need fewer classes than we have previously had.

After careful planning, we have created a structure that will include several mixed-age classes, from September onwards. Mixed-age teaching is something that many excellent primary schools use very successfully and can bring a number of benefits including increased independence, confidence and collaboration. It also helps children consolidate previous learning while gaining early exposure to concepts from the year ahead, and the opportunity to support each other in the process. We believe that this model will make the best possible use of our talented staff team and resources while also prioritising high quality teaching and a broad, exciting curriculum. This move has required careful preparation, and we have taken our time to ensure we are fully ready for September. Over recent months, subject leaders have led training and curriculum development sessions with staff to adapt and refine our curriculum for mixed-age teaching.

We are also fortunate to have such a highly skilled, experienced and reflective team of teachers and subject leaders to lead this work successfully. The challenge of falling pupil numbers is something affecting schools across the country. Fewer children entering education inevitably means reduced funding and many schools are currently having to make difficult decisions about staffing and class organisation.

Thankfully, Marlborough St Mary's remains in a strong position. The reputation of our school, the quality of education we provide, and the strength of our community continue to make the school highly attractive to families. The recent amalgamation with the nursery will also help strengthen our provision for the future.

Family Centre

Hopefully you will have seen updates in the press and on Dojo about our plans for the Family Centre, which will bring the Under 5s nursery under the Marlborough St Mary's umbrella. You can find out more about the exciting project via our website-

<https://www.marlboroughstmarys.wilts.sch.uk/page/?title=Nursery+Consultation&pid=114>

Some families may understandably wonder how we are able to continue developing exciting projects like this at a time when schools nationally are facing financial pressures. I would like to reassure parents that funding for the Family Centre is entirely separate from the school's day-to-day operational budget and has been secured through a combination of Department for Education grants and generous private donations.

Our plan is to transform the nursery building into a state-of-the-art nursery and family centre, ready for September 2027. Until then, starting this September, the nursery children will be based in Hedgehog and Squirrel classrooms, which are ideally suited for our youngest children. They will also enjoy regular time in our Outdoor Learning area, learning and playing alongside their new friends in Reception and Acorn.

Our class structure for September will be:

Classroom	Year Group	Teacher/s
Hedgehog	Nursery	Mrs Palmer / Mrs Crossman
Squirrel	Nursery	Mrs Palmer / Mrs Crossman
Robin	EYFS	Mrs Palmer / Mrs Crossman
Wren	EYFS	Miss Hues
Badger	Year 1/2	Mr O'Reilly / Mrs Smith
Fox	Year 1/2	Mrs Stevens / Mrs Rigby
Dragonfly	Year 1/2	Mrs Gisbourne / Mrs Haines
Mallard	Year 3/4	Mr Lawrence
Teal	Year 3/4	Ms Ambrosini / Mrs Bathurst
Swallowtail	Year 3/4	Mrs Webb / Mrs Swankie
Otter	Year 5	Mr West
Water Vole	Year 5	Miss Lawton
Heron	Year 6	Miss Derbyshire
Kingfisher	Year 6	Mrs Angell
Acorn	Orchard	Mrs Webb / Mrs Groom
Oak	Orchard	Mrs Stewart / Mrs Venn

As always, class organisation has been carefully considered to ensure children are placed where they will thrive both academically and socially. We know transitions are important and staff will work closely with children over the coming weeks to ensure they feel confident and excited about the year ahead.

Children and families will be told their new classes on Friday 19th June.

Open Evening and Transition

On Tuesday 14th July from 3:30pm until 5:30pm, we will be holding an Open Evening where parents and families will have the opportunity to meet their child's new teacher(s), explore classrooms and ask any questions about the year ahead. Members of the Senior Leadership Team, including myself, will also be available throughout the evening and we look forward to welcoming you all.

I hope the information in this letter has been helpful and reassuring. We have recently run a parent survey to allow you to give us your feedback on the school (the results will be shared with you soon). I appreciate so many of you taking a few minutes out of your day to share your thoughts with us.

Thank you, once again, for your continued support of Marlborough St Mary's. It is the strength, warmth and togetherness of this community that makes our school such a special place.

I would also like to take this opportunity to wish all our families a restful and enjoyable half term... let's hope the sunshine finally arrives and the temperature warms up a little too!

With best wishes,

Dan Crossman

Headteacher