St Mary's C of E Primary School
"Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another." John 13:34

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Headteacher: Mr Matt Vale –Smith

Newsletter Friday 18th September 2026

We rock!

What an exciting week we have had at school! Our Times Tables Rock Stars Day was a fantastic success, and it was amazing to see the children embracing the day in their brilliant rock-star costumes. Our teachers joined in too, rocking their coolest outfits and helping to create a wonderful atmosphere across the school!

The purpose of the day was not only to have fun and celebrate our children's love of maths, but also to relaunch Times Tables Rock Stars (TTRS) across the school. This year, we will be placing a strong focus on developing our children's maths fluency, times tables knowledge and arithmetic skills. If your child is in Year 3–6, please encourage them to practise regularly on TTRS at home. Each Friday, we will be celebrating and rewarding children with certificates and prizes for effort, attainment and progress in TTRS. We are looking forward to seeing our children grow in confidence, become even more fluent mathematicians and, most importantly, continue to have fun while learning! Thank you to everyone who helped make our TTRS day such a memorable success — our children and staff certainly ROCK!

A huge well done to our Times Tables Rock Stars (TTRS) Grand Finalists! After some fantastic in-class competitions, the excitement culminated in a thrilling final in front of the whole school. All four finalists showed incredible speed, accuracy and determination, and we are incredibly proud of each of them. Congratulations to 4th place – Mitchell, 3rd place – Jacob, 2nd place – Deivy, and a huge ROCK STAR shout-out to our TTRS School Champion – Dylan!

Meet the Teacher evening

Thank you to everyone who attended our Meet the Teacher evening last Thursday. It was lovely to see such a fantastic turnout and to have the opportunity to speak with so many of you face to face. During the evening, teachers were able to share information about the term ahead, as well as clarify important class routines and expectations. We also provided a 'How to Help Your Child' information sheet, which offers useful guidance and ideas to support your child's learning at home. We will be sending home hard copies and will also make the information available on each class page of our school website for you to refer to.

Values: Generosity

Issue No : 1

Friday 18th September 2026

Diary Dates:

30/9—Happy Days Photography

1/10—6/10—Travelling Book Fair

19/10—21/10—Year 6 Residential

W/C 19/10—Learning Conferences

Term Dates—Autumn 2026

26/10—30/10—Half Term

2/11—PD Day—School Closed

18/12—Last day of Term

Weekly Attendance to 11/9/26

Reception	99.7% ↓
Year 1	91.5% ↓
Year 2	95.2 % ↑
Year 3	95.5% ↑
Year 4	96.2% ↓
Year 5	97.2% ↓
Year 6	94.7% ↓

A Reminder About PE Kits and School Uniform

A gentle reminder about PE kits and school uniform. This week, I have been made aware that some children have not brought their PE kits into school. It is essential that all children take part in PE, as it is an integral part of the school curriculum. Please ensure that your child brings their PE kit into school at the beginning of the week/or half term and leaves it in school. This will help to ensure that they do not forget to bring it on their PE days.

Please also ensure that your child wears black school shoes and that all items of clothing, including PE kits, are clearly labelled with their name. This helps us to return any misplaced items quickly and ensures that children have the correct clothing for school each day.

If your child does not have their PE kit in school, a reminder will be sent home from me.

Summary:-

- **PE kits: Please bring your child's PE kit in at the beginning of each half term. It should remain in school throughout the week/half term.**
- **Labelling: Please ensure that all clothing, water bottles and lunch boxes are clearly named.**
- **School shoes: Children should wear black school shoes each day.**

Benedict's Law

Benedict's Law is new legislation that came into effect on 1st September 2026, making comprehensive allergy training, clear safety policies, and emergency adrenaline pens mandatory for all schools in England.

The new law is named in memory of five-year-old Benedict Blythe—who tragically died from an allergic reaction at a school in 2021—this law changes allergy safety from optional guidance into a strict legal requirement.

What the Law Means for St Mary's CE Primary School

- Training for All Staff: Every single person working at the school—from teachers and learning support assistants to catering and lunchtime staff—must now be trained to spot the signs of an allergic reaction.
- Spare Emergency Pens: Schools are required to keep in-date emergency adrenaline auto-injectors (AAIs, or "epi-pens") on the premises in case a child's own device fails or is not nearby.
- Individual Healthcare Plans: If your child has a diagnosed allergy, the school must maintain a clear, up to-date medical plan detailing their specific triggers and emergency steps.
- Published School Policy: Every primary school must have a clear, written allergy policy that is accessible to parents.

Within Benedict's Law, parents / carers also have responsibility to support their child's school. It is the parent/carer's responsibility to:

- Inform the school of any allergies. This information should include their medical needs, any dietary requirements, history of anaphylaxis and previous severe allergic reactions and details of all prescribed medication.
- If required, provide their child with 2 in-date adrenaline auto-injectors and any other medication, including inhalers, an histamine etc., and making sure these are in date and replaced in a timely manner.
- Supply a copy of their child's Allergy Action Plan (BSACI plans preferred) to school. If they do not currently have an Allergy Action Plan this should be developed as soon as possible in collaboration with a healthcare professional.
- Updating the school on any changes to their child's condition

All parents/carers, including those without allergies are responsible for:

- Being aware of the school's allergy policy
- Being aware of allergens and the risk they may pose to other children
- Carefully considering the food they provide to their child as packed lunches and snacks, and trying to limit the number of allergens in-cluded
- Following the school's guidance on food brought in to be shared
- Updating the school on any changes to their child's condition

The School's Allergy Policy can be found on the school's website.

If your child has an allergy, please make sure that you have spoken to Mrs Ferguson and have completed paperwork for us.

The school has an Allergy Menu. If your child has an allergy (excluding a Nut Allergy), please speak to Mrs Ferguson regarding the Allergy Menu.

Free School Meals

Free School Meals have changed from 1st September. From the beginning of this school year, all children from households in receipt of Universal Credit will be entitled to receive a free school meal.

From September, there are two categories of benefits-based Free School Meals:

- Targeted Free School Meals

These continue to be based on the existing threshold, covering pupils who are in households in

receipt of Universal Credit with annual household earnings of £7,400 or less.

- Expanded Free School Meals

A new category covering pupils who do not qualify for targeted free school meals, but who are in households receiving Universal Credit.

Since 1st April 2018, any pupil who has been eligible for free school meals under the benefits-based criteria have retained their entitlement, even if their household circumstances have changed. Their free school meal eligibility has been protected. This protection ended at the end of July 2026.

From the start of the Autumn Term (September 2026), households must meet the free school meal eligibility criteria from the start to the end of the school year, ie. September 2026 to August 2027.

We know that a number of people have had checks undertaken over the Summer and that the Free School Meals team at Suffolk are swamped and have yet to let school know all the information. We should get another update soon, but, please be assured that if you have already paid for a school dinner this term and we then get notified of your eligibility for free school meals, back-dated to 1st September, we will refund what you have paid.

Attendance

Attending school every day can help children to achieve their full potential. Research suggests that being in school regularly reduces stress and anxiety and boosts confidence. Therefore, our aim is for all children to be in school every day. We recognise that this isn't always possible, but we ask parents to help us to do everything we can together to ensure children attend school.

This year, the Government are once again instructing local authorities to look closely at, and monitor, children's attendance. The Government's expectation is that children should be at school for at least 95% of the school year. If children's attendance falls below 90%, a child is in a group called 'Persistently Absent'. If the child's attendance does not improve, the local authority may decide to take action which can include home visits or fines.

Suffolk Education Welfare Officers visit schools regularly to monitor attendance. When you are trying to get your child into school we will always support you whenever we can.

If your child is unwell, we can give prescribed medicine if you have completed a permission form.

We can also monitor your child and send them home if they are unwell. I have a well-being team who will work with you and your child to support them in coming into school.

If you are concerned about your child's attendance and would like to discuss it with me, please contact the School Office and make an appointment to see me.

Have a lovely weekend, everyone, and thank you for your continued support.

Mr Matt Vale-Smith,

Headteacher

Office News

Outstanding Debt—Please review your child's account in MCAS to check for any outstanding balances and ensure that all debts, including nursery provisions and other services provided, are settled promptly. If you need assistance with verifying the balance or making a payment, please contact the school's administrative office.

Year 6 Residential Trip—October 2026: We still have 5 payments to be received for the Hoodies please —MCAS/ Trips

Main Reception Gate: Please could we ask when entering or leaving the school via the main gate that it is closed behind you.

School Dinners—We hope the children are enjoying the new Autumn Menu from our Caterers, Miquill. Please ensure your child's meal is pre-booked in advance, including if they are having a packed lunch. The cost of a meal is £2.75 for children in Nursery, Years 3—6, unless in receipt of Free School Meals.

Additionally, attached at the end of this newsletter are details of professional services provided by All Things Autism.

School PTA

Reminder of our school PTA meeting on Tuesday 22nd September 2026 at 3.20pm in the Year 5 classroom.

All are very welcome

Community News

Applying for a secondary School Place—Year 7

Applications must be made between 12th September and 31st October 2026. All of the information you need to help you make your decision is available on the website at www.suffolk.gov.uk/admissions from 12 September 2026.

National Child Measurement Programme—Year 6

Following details sent out to Year 6 parents on 6th September, this is a reminder of your 14 day window if you wish your child to be opted out of the programme.

School Council

Our School Council have already had 2 meetings this school year. During our meeting we discussed St Mary's Primary School Rules, and decided that we needed a revamp of the rules so that all of our school community know what they are and what they mean.

These are our new school rules:

Work Hard Be Safe Be Respectful

I think the school council have done a brilliant job of finding relevant and easy to remember rules





Beatrix Potter—Nursery & Reception

This week in Potter Class the children have been listening to the story The Colour Monster. We have explored our emotions through large movement drawing on the playground with Mrs Rose , Created our own characters in Drawing Club and worked collectively to create Emotions Jars thinking about when we feeling certain emotions and why?

Well Done Potter Class

Ed Sheeran—Years 1 & 2

This week Sheeran Class have been working really hard on our English work all about the story of Puffin Peter. In maths, the children are working on representing numbers to 20 and learning how all the different equipment we have can help with this. Our science focused on the human body talking about different parts and their uses. All of the children showed amazing resilience early this week in completing their reading assessments which guides us as to what their reading level is. They are quite long, but the children got stuck in and did very well.





Little Beethoven's

In Little Beethoven's this week our theme has been hey diddle diddle. We have been learning to blend the words “cat” and “dog” with great success.

We have also continued with our “Under the Sea Wall” - we have made jelly fish to put up on our display. The children enjoyed the texture of the paint and glue

It's been such a fun week with some fantastic learning.

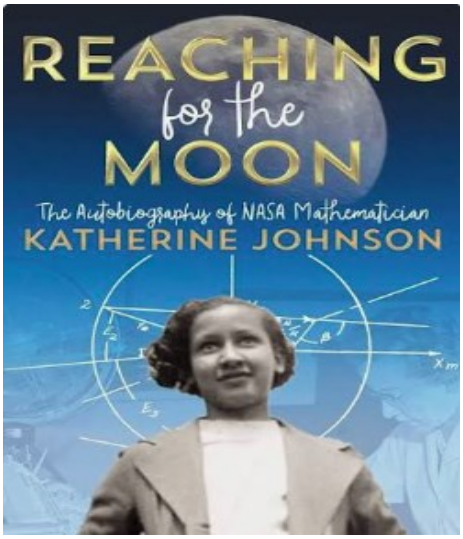
Chris Packham —Years 3 & 4



In RE, we have been learning about The Good Samaritan and thinking about the importance of kindness and helping others. In Maths, we have been working hard on place value, and the children particularly enjoyed putting their learning into practice with a place value game on Thursday.

In English, we have been planning our own versions of the adventure story *Mini Rabbit*, thinking carefully about characters, settings and exciting events.

Science has been particularly exciting this week! We carried out another experiment using force meters (Newton meters) to investigate forces. The children were incredibly engaged and enthusiastic — I think we may have some future scientists in our midst!



Katherine Johnson—Year 5

Johnson Class have been working so hard this week in Maths thinking about place value in numbers to 1 million; writing huge numbers in digits and words. We have written a draft biography on Mary Anning and learned the features needed to make a biography informative, formal and cohesive for the reader. We will now begin our research of our class namesake Katherine Johnson and will publish our biographies for Year 1 & 2 children – to inform them about the inspirational Mathematician. We are looking forward to taking part in the Hadleigh High School Dodgeball event on Friday We will compete as a class team working together with determination to represent "Team St Mary's"

Aaron Fotheringham —Year 6



In Fotheringham class this week, we have looked at relative clauses and subordinating clauses in our writing. We have experimented with moving clauses around in a sentence to make our writing more interesting.

In maths we rounded numbers to the nearest 10, 100 and 1000. The children were brilliant at this and drew number lines on their desks to help support them.

Another brilliant week of learning in year 6!

Friends of St Marys School



PARENTS AND CARERS:

Come and join us for a cuppa and biscuit to hear about what it means to be apart of the PTA, what we are hoping to achieve and how you can help us.

SEPTEMBER

TUESDAY 22 3.20PM

LOCATION: YEAR 5 CLASSROOM

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN JOINING, PLEASE EMAIL US AT
FOSM@STMARYSHAD.CO.UK

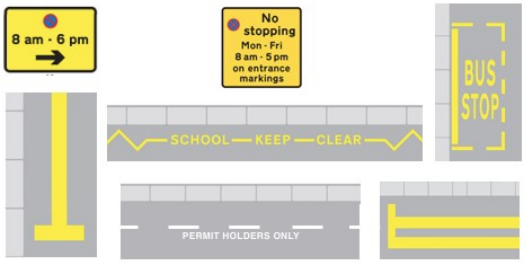
ST MARYS PRIMARY SCHOOL



Think before you park

POOR AND INCONSIDERATE PARKING CLOSE TO SCHOOLS CAN PLACE CHILDREN AT RISK

DO NOT PARK ON THE FOLLOWING



Failure to follow these rules may result in a Penalty Charge Notice being issued.

Please park safely and be considerate of others.

IPSWICH BOROUGH COUNCIL

#thinkb4upark

COME AND MEET

BLUEY THE DOG

SUNDAY 27TH SEPTEMBER
KINGFISHER LEISURE CENTRE, SUDBURY

A fun, family-friendly 3-mile trail, with a prize for every child!

In partnership with:

Abbeycroft · EXPLORE OUTDOOR



PART OF THE HOME START HIKE

HOME START HIKE

KINGFISHER LEISURE CENTRE, SUDBURY
SUNDAY 27TH SEPTEMBER 2026

OPEN TO FAMILIES, INDIVIDUALS & TEAMS

FOUR ROUTES TO CHOOSE FROM

3 MILES	6 MILES	13 MILES*	26 MILES*

Child Ticket from £10
Adult Ticket from £15
Family Ticket from £45
Team Ticket - £120

*Age restrictions apply
Family ticket includes 2 adults and up to 3 children



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DOGS ALSO WELCOME FOR 2026

SIGN UP TODAY

For more information please visit:
homestartinsuffolk.org

Registered Charity No. 1105081