

St Margaret's
Academy

ST MARGARETS ACADEMY

Autumn Newsletter #19
13th February 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we come to the end of a very busy and productive first Spring term, we want to thank all our families for their continued support. The children have thrown themselves into their learning and wider school life with enthusiasm, and we are incredibly proud of all they have achieved so far.

After the half-term break, we kindly ask for your support in ensuring that children come to school fully equipped for the day. Please can all pupils bring:

- **A coat** suitable for changeable weather
- **A water bottle**
- **A healthy snack** (KS2 only as EYFS/KS1 have snacks provided)

We have noticed that some children are arriving without these essentials, which can make it harder for them to stay comfortable, hydrated, and ready for learning throughout the school day.

We also ask that children continue to wear **appropriate school uniform**, as this helps promote a strong sense of pride, belonging and readiness to learn within our school community. If you are struggling with school uniform availability or concerns please do not hesitate to speak with your child's class teacher or a member of staff in the front office.

At St Margaret's, we strongly encourage all children to enjoy playtimes, lunchtimes, Outdoor PE and Forest School sessions - even when the weather is a little wet! Being outdoors supports wellbeing, resilience and full participation in the school experience. Having the right clothing and equipment ensures children can access these opportunities with ease.

Thank you for helping us make the second half of the Spring term just as successful and enjoyable for everyone.



Safer Internet Day

This week, pupils have been taking part in a series of activities exploring the role of artificial intelligence in our daily lives. They have been learning about:

- How AI tools and technologies are used in the world around them
- The benefits and potential risks of emerging digital tools
- How to make safe, informed choices when using smart technology
- Who they can talk to if something feels worrying, confusing, or unclear online

Our aim is to equip children with the confidence, knowledge, and critical thinking skills they need to navigate the digital world in positive and empowered ways.

Take a look at this [video](#) from Cherry Class, where pupils share their thoughts and ideas!

Maple Class Explore Shackleton's Epic Antarctic Adventure

Maple Class have been busy this week completing their fantastic writing pieces inspired by Ernest Shackleton's epic expedition to the Antarctic. The children have been fully immersed in the drama, danger and determination of the journey, crafting vivid descriptions, powerful dialogue, and thoughtful reflections. Their enthusiasm has been wonderful to see, and the quality of their writing shows just how much effort they have put in. Well done, Maple Class!



Occupational Therapy Advice Line—Now Live

Child Family Health Devon (CFHD) have launched a new **Occupational Therapy Telephone Advice Line** to support parents, carers and professionals with queries relating to children's functional skills and daily living needs. You can find full details on how to access the service [here](#).



Children's Mental Health Week



Thank you to everyone for your support and engagement during this year's Children's Mental Health Week. Our theme, "This Is My Place", focused on helping children feel a strong sense of belonging within their school, families and wider communities.

Throughout the week, the children explored this theme through a range of activities and discussions designed to promote connection, wellbeing and an understanding of what belonging truly means to them.

We ended the week with an optional non-uniform day to celebrate—and we are really pleased to announce what we raised in the first newsletter after half term.

ACTIVE THINKING



RESILIENCE



MOTIVATION



YOUNG MINDS

Support for Parents and Carers—Children’s Mental Health Week

Parents and carers are often the first place children and young people turn when they’re struggling – whether that’s with friendships, school, or their mental health.

No matter how much experience you have, it can be difficult to know what to say when someone you love is hurting, or what steps to take next.

Here are some of the most common concerns parents talk to Young Minds about:

- **School avoidance**
- **Talking to your child**
- **Anxiety**
- **Low mood**

Nobody should feel alone when someone they love is struggling.

This Children’s Mental Health Week, we want parents and carers to know that support is available.

Our [Parents Helpline](#) advisors are just a click or phone call away, offering free, expert, confidential, one-to-one advice. We also have a wide range of [online guides](#) and [real stories](#) from parents who truly understand what you're going through.

You’re not alone – help is here when you need it.

NSPCC Number Day

Thank you so much to all the children and families for supporting the NSPCC Number Day on Friday 6th February 2026.

We enjoyed seeing the children coming into school in their number and maths themed items of clothing and having a fun day of maths activities. Thank you so much for your generosity as a school we raised £224.15, for this wonderful cause.

NSPCC



Don't Forget!

We have two fantastic art opportunities that you may be interested in completing over the half-term holiday. Please refer to the previous newsletter for full details.

Closing dates are straight after the half-term break, so be sure to get your entries ready!

ACTIVE THINKING



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Veg Power—Eat Them to Defeat Them is Back

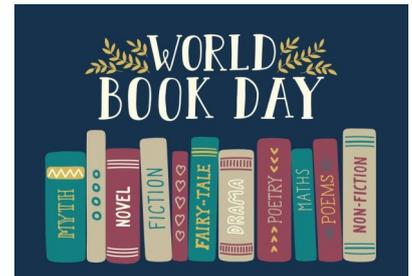
We're excited to share that Eat Them to Defeat Them, Veg Power's fun, national campaign designed to encourage children to eat more vegetables and develop healthier eating habits, is returning to school!

Healthier eating habits are shown to support children's concentration, wellbeing, and learning, and this year schools can run the campaign completely free of charge. Last year, our participating classes gave fantastic feedback, with many children—including those who are usually a little reluctant—getting stuck in and enjoying their veggies.

We'll be launching the campaign straight after half term, and we can't wait to see the children taking on the vegetable villains once again!

World Book Day—Thursday 5th March

We are excited to announce that St Margaret's will be celebrating *World Book Day* on Thursday 5th March! Children are invited to dress up as their favourite book character *or* come to school in their comfy pyjamas as we enjoy a cosy day of reading together. Throughout the day, we will be taking part in 'Stop Everything and Read', as well as buddy reading across the school to share our love of books.



We are also delighted to be welcoming children's author Clare Welsh into school during the week. This will be a wonderful opportunity for pupils to be inspired by a real writer and deepen their enjoyment of reading.

Celebrations Extravaganza!

This week, the children have been exploring *celebrations* from around the world. We learned about a variety of important traditions, including birthdays, weddings, christenings, Christmas and graduations, and discussed why these special occasions are so meaningful to families and communities everywhere.

To end our week of learning, we enjoyed a wonderful **Chinese New Year Lunar Extravaganza!** The children created vibrant dragon masks, Chinese lanterns, fortune cookies and stick puppets. They also performed their very own dragon dance and shared a Chinese-style high tea, complete with ginger and lemon tea and animal biscuits.

It has been a fantastic week filled with creativity, cultural learning and joyful celebration!



Finally, I would like to end this newsletter with a huge heartfelt thank you to our incredibly supportive PTA and all the volunteers for planning and delivering two fantastic discos this week! Your energy, organisation, and commitment made the events an absolute joy for our children.

We are also extremely grateful for the new layout and furniture in the Year 6 common room area. This thoughtful improvement has already made a positive difference to the space and how our pupils use it.

Your ongoing support is deeply appreciated, as it helps us to raise valuable funds that directly enhance the enrichment opportunities and wider school offer we can provide.

We look forward to sharing with you the exciting plans lined up for after the half-term break!

Take care all and enjoy the special time with loved ones and friends.

Mrs Nikki O'Dwyer
Headteacher



Free Online Introduction to Deaf Awareness and British Sign Language



Join us to learn more about BSL and effective communication with deaf people.

In this one-off session you will be introduced to deaf awareness and British Sign Language (BSL). You will identify the barriers the deaf community face on a daily basis communicating in a hearing world. This session will cover tips on how to communicate more effectively with all deaf people. It will also teach you how to introduce yourself using British Sign Language and show you how you can continue to learn BSL independently after the session.

Online

Tuesday 10th February
9:30-12:30



Online

Tuesday 17th March
9:30-12:30



Use the QR codes above to enrol today!

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Diary Dates

16th February 2026— 22nd February 2026	Half Term
17th February 2026	Pancake Day—Shrove Tuesday
23rd February 2026	First Day Back for Children 15.30—15.40 Y1 Parent Phonics Meeting PSC Focus
27th February 2026	15.30—15.40 Y1 Parent Phonics Meeting PSC Focus
12th March 2026	13.00—14.00 Y3/4 Dodgeball Competition



ACTIVE THINKING



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Ash	Donny	This week our Star of the Week is a wonderful role model in Reception! They are incredibly aspirational , always challenging themselves to try new things and never giving up when learning feels tricky. Whether it's practising their phonics, writing independently, or exploring new activities, they show fantastic determination and resilience.
Elm	Lyra	This week's star of the week in Elm class is Lyra. For being such a kind friend to all - You always make your friends feel welcome and included during choosing time
Beech	Freddie R.C	Well done Freddie R.C for your fantastic listening all week. You've worked really hard, been respectful and responsible, and done a great job with all the adults. We're very proud of you.
Pine	Ahrian	Ahrian is our star for always showing all of our school values. He is extremely respectful and has impressed us recently with his fabulous calculation skills.
Apple	Logan	Logan has amazed us with his hard work and independence this week. He has written a fantastic story and typed it up on the chrome book, he has been organising himself and his belongings and he has pushed himself out of his comfort zone to make a 3D model. You so deserve this Logan, well done!
Oak	Arthur	I can't believe that Arthur has not had the star of the week yet! Arthur always shows the school values and he is incredibly motivated to be the best learner he can be. He has also shone in the music lessons, where he was chosen to lead a group. You are a star Arthur- well done!
Willow	Shaneli	Willow's star of the week is Shaneli. She has consistently shown kindness towards her peers and all staff. She is always willing to help others and brighten their day. I have been so impressed by how she always chooses to try her best in all learning she completes.
Holly	Alara	This week Alara has shown great kindness to others in the classroom and fantastic resilience with her writing work. She has shown such dedication to making her handwriting a priority with her published piece of writing. Keep being a shining star of positivity Alara!
Cherry	Charlie B	Charlie is our star of the week this week for your fantastic Pompeii story. You had all of the mastery keys, fantastic description and super neat handwriting. Well done!
Hazel	Penelope	Penelope is our star in Hazel this week. Penelope has excellently showcased her responsibility value during her learning, producing an amazing piece of writing for our final write. She is focused in lessons, she ensures she has completed all of her work and she strives for a challenge. Well done, Penelope. We are very proud of you!
Rowan	Erin	Erin is the star of the week in Rowan class for her consistent hard work in class. Erin can always be relied upon to complete tasks with concentration and gives maximum effort in all she does. Well done Erin.
Birch	Lexi U	This week Lexi has truly shown what friendship and kindness look like during Mental Health Week. She has been thoughtful, supportive, and caring towards others — checking in on friends, offering help when someone needs it, and spreading positivity throughout the week. Their actions reminded us how important it is to look after not only our own mental health but also each other's.
Hawthorn	Austin	Austin who has been working really hard to listen during lessons and get his work done and his phenomenal progress with his SPaG and maths results
Maple	Elli-Mai	For her fantastic efforts across the whole curriculum this term, working diligently in maths and writing, and also for being our "Grammar Queen!".