

**St Margaret's
Academy**

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Spring Term Newsletter No.4 (1.2.19)

It has been another exciting and interesting week at school. There's always so much going on. I started the week on Monday with an assembly to introduce National Story Telling Week. We looked at the enduring engagement of stories which have been told and passed down over the years from generation to generation. The Brothers Grimm's fairy tales are a great example of this with stories like Cinderella being enjoyed for over 200 years. There is something very special about reading a good book or listening to a story that captures the imagination. After half term, please come and join us for the 'Stay and Read' sessions in the library (see dates below) as we try hard to promote reading for pleasure.

It has been great to see a lot of parents in school this week. On Tuesday, Foundation Stage ran finger gym workshops with mums and dads working with their little ones to help them develop fine motor skills in preparation for learning to write. Today, we had 20 mums and dads joining Years 1 and 2 as part of our story-telling week.

I've been teaching in Year 2 and Year 4 this week which helps me further get to know the children and to help me appreciate the challenges and share the successes of being a teacher.

A range of professional development happened this week. One of our Higher Level Teaching Assistants (HLTAs), Nicki Scaife, attended training on classroom management systems which she is disseminating to teachers and teaching assistants. St Margaret's is very fortunate to have several very experienced HLTAs who are willing and able to step into class which is invaluable in helping us provide time and space for various professional development needs. For example, Vicky Farmer who is a HLTA was able to support with teaching in Year 2 this week when the teachers, Abbi Rice and Nick Morgan, were practising and applying maths mastery teaching with a specialist Maths teacher from a local Maths Hub.

Today, the Teaching Assistants met to work in action research groups to help with school improvement. One group is researching aspects related to behaviour and values. Another is working on how we can best utilise our outdoor space and another group is working on helping us develop our provision for mental health and well-being for children and adults.

Meal Time Assistants (MTAs) also met today to take part in training with Sam Ward who is the lead for Food and Nutrition. They explored best practice around healthy eating and how best to interact and engage the little ones in our care during lunchtime. MTAs play a crucial part in the life of a school, interacting with children and helping them develop important life skills.

On Wednesday the governor's Finance Committee met to review the school budget and related policies to ensure we fulfil our duties and meet the needs of required school improvements. Thank you to the governors for their time and skills.

On Thursday I attended a conference with other Torbay Headteacher to explore how we best support the most vulnerable pupils in our care. It was a very interesting day with lots of insights provided by an experienced Headteacher who has turned schools round in the London area. It was also really great to meet some of the local Heads who I hope to develop links with in the future.

Enjoy a wonderful sunny wintry weekend.

Tim Hughes

RESPECT

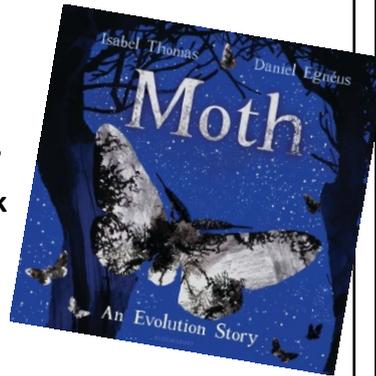
RESPONSIBILITY

ASPIRATION



A clever picture book about the extraordinary way in which animals have evolved, intertwined with the complication of human intervention.

Miss Palfrey and the Reading Ambassadors' Book Picks of the Week



This book series is the Reading Ambassadors' overall favourite!

Weekly Attendance Award

Congratulations to **Rowan Class** for winning the School Attendance Award with **99.7%** attendance. School target: 96% The whole school achieved **97.5%** this week



This Week's Star Pupils!

- Ash — Ryan - super mathematician and solving some tricky number problems by counting on
- Freddie - trying really hard with learning this week - a real stickosaurus even when tricky
- Elm — Freddie B - for being a super Try-atops in all his learning this week, great determination to succeed.
- Ryan G - For being a super Think-adokus when solving his addition problems this week and for explaining how to count on from a number.
- Beech — Sophia H - for showing amazing determination and enthusiasm in maths this week.
- Pine — Mabel - incredible adjectives!
- Apple — Oliver - amazing writing, maths and contributions to class learning
- Oak — Ella B - an amazing attitude towards her learning - great effort
- Birch — Charlie K - For being a fantastic role model to the rest of the class.
- Rowan — Lilly-Ann for making accelerated progress in maths and literacy this term
- Cherry — Ellen - for amazing effort and enthusiasm in maths since Christmas
- Maple — Laci - for showing an improved enthusiasm towards home learning.
- Holly — Jayden - for demonstrating excellent problem solving skills in maths this week.
- Willow — Reuben - for rising to the challenges of starting a new school and working incredibly hard in maths.
- Hawthorn — Alfie C - for great effort in his writing and focus in maths.
- Hazel — Aliyah - for exemplary effort and an aspirational attitude in all aspects of her learning.

Music in Year 1





Congratulations to the staff at St. Margaret's that have just completed their final assessment for the Level 1 qualification in British Sign Language (BSL). The group of teachers and teaching assistants have given up their own time on a weekly basis over the past 9 months to achieve the qualification. At St. Margaret's we have children that use BSL as their first language. Staff and pupils are encouraged to learn BSL in order to communicate with them. Well done to all!

Bee Kind to your Mind Mental Health Week 4-8.2.19

Next week is 'Children's Mental Health Week' and we are teaching the children about what our 'mind' is and raising their awareness about how to keep it healthy. Each day we will take time out of our busy timetable to stop and do something to be kind to our mind. On the attached leaflet from the charity 'Place2Be' you will find some ideas of how to encourage your child to look after their body and mind at home. We would like each child to bring in a photo to show something they have done at home to look after their mind e.g. playing football, reading a book, craft, baking etc.



Diary Date Reminders

Mon 4.2.19-Fri 8.2.19	Mental Health Week
Monday 4.2.19 2.00pm	PTA Meeting—all welcome. Tea and coffee provided. Just one hour before you pick up your little ones.
Wed 13.2.19 4.00-5.00pm	KS1 PTA Valentines Disco in the school hall
Wed 13.2.19 5.30- 6.30pm	KS2 PTA Valentines Disco in the school hall
Friday 15.2.19	Last day of the half term then school closed until 25.2.19
Monday 25.2.19	First day back 3.05-3.30 KS1 'Stay and Read' (choose a book and stay and read with your little one) in the library for family and children in Y1 and Y2 (the PTA are putting on hot drinks for the adults)
Thursday 28.1.19	3.05-3.30 KS2 'Stay and Read' (choose and book and stay and read with your little one) in the library for family and children in Y3, Y4, Y5 and Y6 (the PTA are putting on hot drinks for the adults)
Monday 4.3.19	World Book Day—advance notice—more very exciting news to follow (<i>please that this is not the official national day because we are doing something different in school</i>)
Thur 14.3.19 2.00-3.00pm	CAP (Child Assault Prevention) UK team parent workshop. A very worth-while event to attend. More details to follow.
Weeks beginning 18.3.19 and 25.3.19	CAP UK team will be in school delivering workshops to all the children. More details to follow.

The BETT Show – The World’s Largest Educational Technology Event!

Last Friday, I attended the BETT Show hosted in the Excel Centre, Canning Town, London. The BETT Show, (formerly known as the British Educational Training and Technology Show) is completely unique: an annual event where leading technology firms gather and try to tempt, essentially teachers, to buy their educational wares.

Something which was particularly interesting to see this year is how practical coding packages have really taken off. The range of programmable devices, linked via Bluetooth, to either a tablet or laptop have really gained momentum and become much more affordable. We are already very fortunate to have programmable Lego WeDo sets for KS2 coding lessons and I would certainly like to continue to increase our capacity in this area.

Another benefit of attending the show is being able ‘to play with’ new hardware. Companies manufacturing interactive whiteboards, laptops and Chromebooks attend, enabling the visitor to ‘try before you buy’. One thing I am yet to be totally convinced by is VR (virtual reality) in the classroom – it still isn’t quite there yet in my opinion, although has come a very long way over the past 5 years.

Google and Microsoft have a major presence at the show, demonstrating their rival education packages. I’ve felt, for a number of years, that Google Classroom has the edge over Microsoft 365. Sharing resources and working collaboratively is something which Google have really thought carefully about. Not to mention the lack of a subscription fee! Last academic year, we moved to using Google Drive for sharing curriculum resources, enabling the teaching staff to access timetables, planning and resources remotely, which I feel has been a huge success. The next step is to develop how we use Google Classroom effectively at St. Margaret’s with the children.

As a school, we are incredibly fortunate to have a lot of equipment. The next part of our journey is to develop the digital classroom, hopefully inspiring the next generation of potential Bill Gates, Tom Cooks and James Dysons!



Mr Rogers



PTA Events—Polite Notice

As you might be aware, there are several PTA events planned. Please can we remind you that any deadlines for permission slips will need to be adhered to and late slips will not be accepted. This is because a lot of planning / organising / buying goes on and late slips make it very difficult for the team. Thank you for your consideration and understanding.