

From Mr Spens:

We've come to the end of a brilliant Term 3 at St Helen's. Over the last few weeks, I've been dropping into classes across the school and am so proud of the fantastic attitudes and learning behaviours that our children are displaying each day from the youngest to the oldest.

Today we welcomed 13 teachers and teaching assistants from Bowsland Green Primary School who came to spend the morning at St Helen's looking at how we teach Maths, Writing and outdoor learning in Reception class. We asked them for feedback from their perspective on school life at St Helen's and there were some lovely comments including:

"The learning environment across the school is focused and purposeful. No second is wasted and all talk from pupils and staff is motivating and moves learning on. Pupils speak so highly of their school; it was a pleasure to visit."

A big thank-you to all of the parents who completed the parent survey. Over half term, I'll be analysing the results and we'll share them with you as well as outlining the ways that we will take on board your feedback as we continue to strive to make St Helen's the best that we possibly can.

I hope that you and your families have a restful and enjoyable holiday! We look forward to welcoming you all back to school on Monday 25th February for Term 4.

Reading at St Helen's

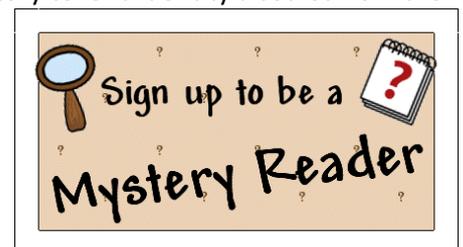
We had a brilliant time at our recent 'Book at Bedtime' evening. Children were able to come to school in their pyjamas and listen to a story, whilst Mr Adams and Mrs Boffin led an extremely well attended session for parents on supporting reading at home. For any parents who couldn't make it along, we have uploaded the reading guide that Mr Adams shared onto our school website. Essentially his key message was to encourage parents to read with their children **little and often** and the reading guide contains some hopefully useful ideas of age specific questions, or areas that you can focus on with them.



Book Week – Monday 4th March to Friday 8th March

We're looking forward to holding a book week to continue to enjoy and profile reading at St Helen's. As part of this week, there will be a number of events and activities taking place which we would like to let you know about:

1. **Book Fair** – Our popular book fair will be running after school each day of this week.
2. **Read-a-long** – We'd love to invite parents to stay and join their children reading in class on **Monday 4th March** from 9:00 until 9:30.
3. **Secret Reader!** – During book week, we'd like to invite parents/grandparents to come into school and read a favourite story to their child's class at **3pm** each day. Our aim is to keep the story teller's identity a secret from the children until the moment when they enter the classroom. If you would like to read a story to your child's class, please could you e-mail the school office at sthelensprimary@sgmail.org.uk telling us which year group you would want to read to and which days of the week you could do. We will then be in touch to confirm arrangements nearer the time. If we are inundated with offers, we'll try to see if we can continue the secret reader idea over the rest of term 4 so everybody gets a slot!

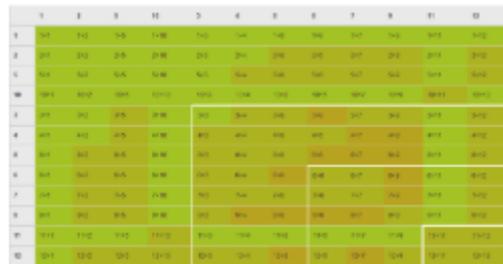


Holiday Reading Challenge!

In the build up to 'Book Week' we will be building up a display containing photographs of children reading over the holidays in weird and wonderful places! Perhaps they might be reading with a pet, up a mountain, at the zoo, on the beach, or in a strange place! We'll be awarding book vouchers to spend at the book fair for the most weird and wonderful places that feature on our display. Please print the photo out, or e-mail the photo into school before **Friday 1st March**.

Times Table Rock Stars

The children have been making considerable progress with their mental recall of times table facts over the last few weeks, it's amazing to see the impact that Times Table Rock Stars has already had. Similar to the messages that Mr Adams has given to parents about reading, we'd love to encourage children to take the chance to regularly practise their times tables both on Times Table Rock Stars and also through mental and oral rehearsal at home. It's easy to quiz children on their tables on car journeys, over the breakfast table, while they're brushing their teeth etc!



As with reading, **little and often** would be our recommendation! To help you to focus on the times table which your child needs to learn, children from Years 3-6 will be bringing home a 'heatmap' showing which tables they need to practice further. The darker orange and red squares will identify the tables which the children are currently slower in answering. Perhaps over half term, parents could choose a small number of these to practise with your children.

New value of the term

Our school value for next term is 'Justice' and your child will be bringing home tonight a 'home-school values' sheet with information all about the new value. For any families wanting a half term challenge, on the information sheet there are two which you could try out. One is for each family member to think of a new law which they'd want the government to pass. If you'd prefer something practical, there's a challenge involving making a 'weighing machine'. As ever, if you take on any of these challenges, please do let us know how you got on!



KS1 Creativity

Year 1 and 2 have been getting creative as they think about their topic 'Extreme Earth'. Children from these classes worked with our 'Artist in Residence', Jo and created some incredible art using hot and cold colours. You can come and see this in the main entrance corridor, outside the Year 1 and 2 classrooms.



In Year 1, children made penguin toys using felt and sewed the pieces together using a running stitch!

'I enjoyed making my penguin because it was really soft. I've put it somewhere safe at home now' – Rory Y1



'We made running stitches using a needle to sew. I've put my penguin in my bed reading a book' – Evie Y1

Parents' Evenings – advance notice of dates

Please note that we will be holding Parents' Evenings on 19th and 21st March, from 4pm to 7pm.

Charity Cake Sale

Thanks to everyone who supported our cake sale last week. We raised £180, so £60 will go to each of the charities:

- Shelter, suggested by Elaina M in Year 4
- Jessie May Trust, suggested by the Taylor family
- Lee's Fight, suggested by the Smith family

Attendance

Congratulations to Beech class who had the best attendance last week with 99.7% and the school total was 98.6%. Congratulations to Beech class who AGAIN had the best attendance this week with 99.3% and the school total was 95.2%.

Congratulations to our certificate winners last week and this week:

Cherry Class – Pixie, Henry SF, Chloe and Henry T
Holly Class – Zack, Charlotte M, Frankie and Rose
Beech Class – Harry, Emily B, Sophia and Emily J
Oak Class – Bede, Logan, and Harry F

Ash Class – Max M, Jonny, Emma C and Kyle
Sycamore Class – Joshua L, Nathanael, Esther and Joe
Elm Class – Lucy, Zack, and Josh



Out of school achievement

Harriet in Oak class achieved merit in her Grade 1 Tap Dance examination.

