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## From Mr Spens:

It's been a very busy first week back at St Helen's, with plenty going on. One significant change has been at lunchtimes, with our new provider 'Eden' taking over in the kitchen and us also taking the chance to remodel the lunchtime arrangements for the children. It's hard to believe, but children spend over 5 hours on the playground each week, which is the equivalent teaching time of a day in class! We have been looking at ways of improving the lunchtime experience for the children and have been listening to their thoughts and feelings as we make the changes.

Some highlights from the children of the first week:

The new salad bar, which is already proving a popular option

The 'Boules' or 'Petanque' games that have been going on in one of our new lunchtime 'zones' on the playground and field.

Football at lunchtimes, as each class now has a day when they use a ball

New plates and cups!

Every move like this also brings teething problems and we are very grateful for the way that the parents have supported the move to Eden by activating their accounts and ordering meals online. The children have been getting used to the new systems and particularly the challenge of remembering where to line up and what they have ordered. Over the next few weeks, we'll continue to look at and review the systems we have in place to ensure that it works as smoothly as possible. Thank-you again for your ongoing support with this.

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## Mrs Boffin – exciting news!

Following on from Mrs Boffin's 'Teacher of the Year' award, she has some even more exciting news to share! Mrs Boffin is expecting her first baby, which will be due in May 2017. Over the next few months, we will be putting a plan together for recruitment to cover Mrs Boffin's maternity leave and also to ensure that we have a good transition plan in place for the children. We will communicate more to Reception parents over the next few months.



## Parents' Evenings – Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> and Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> November

A reminder that parents' evenings will be taking place next Tuesday and Wednesday. If any parents haven't booked an appointment yet, please visit the school website and under the 'school life' menu, you will find the parents' evening booking information.

This year, we will be making a change to our KS2 (Years 3-6) parents' evening arrangements. As a school, we're working hard to ensure that all that we do is child-centred and so we are inviting parents to bring their children with them to the KS2 parents' evening meeting. In school, children are increasingly involved in reflecting on their own learning, progress and next steps and we see this as a continuation of this development. As part of the meeting, the children will have completed an A4 sheet where they have reflected on what has gone well and where they feel they need to go next. This will be the starting point of the meeting and then teachers, parents and the child will continue that discussion together.

Parents of KS2 children are clearly free however to decide whether or not they would like their children to be present on the evening. After the parents' evening, we would welcome your feedback on how this approach went.

# Fundraising update:

## MUGA:

As you know, we have been fundraising for around a year now to transform the former swimming pool site into an all weather pitch (or MUGA) to continue to develop the sporting provision at St Helen's. It was an idea which came originally from the school council and we are well on our way to reaching the total. Currently, we stand around £10,000 away from a £70,000 total, a considerable achievement! Planning permission has been fully granted and we would love to see the site developed during this academic year if possible!

Next week, we will be re-launching our 'Buy a Brick' campaign, giving families, friends, local people, former pupils and businesses the chance to 'Buy a Brick' which will be laid in a path on the entrance to the MUGA. Leaflets will be coming home to all children next week, but there are plenty more leaflets available in the school office for people to distribute to their road, their colleagues, family members and others who would be interested in supporting our exciting project.

The fundraising committee recently organised a really successful Film Night, which raised over £500 and the team are continuing to explore other fundraising opportunities and small grants to help us get over the finish line! If you work for a company who you think might be happy to contribute, or have other fundraising ideas, do get in touch with the committee via the school office.

## Woodland Development and Forest School Status

One grant opportunity that the MUGA committee became aware of was the Tesco 'Bags of Help' scheme. The MUGA didn't meet the criteria for this grant, but the SLT and governing body have been keen to develop the amazing woodland space that we have in school and we were successful in applying for a grant from Tesco of £8,000, £10,000 or £12,000.

The public get to decide which of 3 local projects will be awarded the different amounts and this is done by a vote in their local stores. When you make a purchase at Tesco, you are given a green coin which you can then use to vote in store.

£8,000 will pay for the school woodland to be re-fenced, access improved, storage for resources put in place and some staff to be 'Forest School' trained.

£10,000 will pay for the above, but also renovating our pond area and bringing it back into life.

£12,000 will pay for the above and also a new raised-bed area for gardening and growing at St Helen's.

We'd be very grateful for parent support with this and for you to encourage your friends and family to vote in store as well!



## 'Operation Christmas Child' - Shoebox Project

A reminder that we can accept donations of gifts for a shoebox until Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> November, when we will be delivering our boxes to the local depot, St Chad's Church in Patchway.



## Children in Need – Friday 18<sup>th</sup> November



Friday 18<sup>th</sup> November is Children in Need day! We will be celebrating this and raising money for Children in Need by holding a 'Spotacular' dressing up day' **For a donation of £1, children can come to school dressed up** – the only thing they need to make sure they've included in their outfit is 'spots'. Spotty dresses, spotty ties, even spotty faces – they'll all make a massive difference to the lives of disadvantaged children across the UK.



## Year 1 and 2 'WOW' Day

On Tuesday, Year 1 and 2 held a really successful Kings and Queens 'Wow' Day. Here are some quotes from the children:

'I really liked it when we got into school and we did the register on the castle. Miss Beech was waving like a Queen and I got to go up too' – Josh

'It was really fun because we made crowns and we learnt about how England was made. It used to be called Angl-land. Now we call it England because our accents have changed. King Alfred told all the kings to stop arguing and then they worked together and defeated the Vikings' – Emma C

'I liked making medieval flapjacks. It was fun being able to cook and they tasted really nice' – Katie H

## Dates for your diary

Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> November & Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> November – Parents' Evenings

Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> November & Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> November – Open day tours for prospective parents, 9.30am & 10.45am

Friday 11<sup>th</sup> November – Trip to Imperial War Museum, London (Year 5 & Year 6) – leaving school at 6.30am

Monday 14<sup>th</sup> November – Trip to Bristol Museum (Year 3 & Year 4)

Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> November – last date for 'Operation Christmas Child' shoebox donations

Friday 25<sup>th</sup> November – PTA Christmas Fair, 3.30pm to 5pm

Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> November – Dr Tom Robson running a Parent Workshop – 'Helping your child make even better progress in their learning'. More info to follow – 6-7pm

Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> December – Reception and KS1 Nativity, 6pm

Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> December – Reception and KS1 Nativity, 2pm

Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> December – Christmas Carols with Year 3 & Year 4, 7pm

Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> December – Christmas Lunch

Friday 16<sup>th</sup> December – end of Term 2

## Congratulations to our certificate winners last week and this week:



Reception – Harry and Charlotte  
Year 1 – Finley and Bouthayna  
Year 2 – Emma C and Charlie H  
Year 3 – Jack and Matthew  
Year 4 – Evelyn and Tommy  
Year 5 – Amelia and Alexis  
Year 6 – Alex CJ and Cheyenne



## Out of school achievements:

Congratulations to Ollie (YR) who was voted the 'Player of the week' by North Bristol Rugby Club!

Katlyn (YR) has completed Stage 1 swimming and is now moving onto Stage 2. Well done!

Jake (Y6) has been successful in his football trials with the South Glos Football representative side



# **PTA CHRISTMAS FAIR**

**Friday 25<sup>th</sup> November - 3.30pm – 5.00pm**

Please come along – do some Christmas shopping and get into the Christmas spirit!

Contributions to the stalls will be welcome  
wine, soft toys, books and toys ...

All types of cakes welcome for the cake stall too!

## **Rainbow tombola**

Any item acceptable ... please use your imagination!

Reception class – Pink or Blue

Class 1 – Red

Class 2 – Yellow or Gold

Class 3 – Green

Class 4 – Orange

Class 5 – White or Silver

Class 6 – Purple

## **Decorated Sweet Jars**

The children are asked to decorate a jar (with a Christmas theme) and fill it with sweets! Prizes will be awarded for the best – so make sure your child's name and year group is on the jar.

The jars will then be sold in a tombola at the Fair.