

## From Mr Spens:

Welcome back to a new academic year at St Helen's! The children have come back to school in such a positive way and there has been a real buzz of learning right across the school.

We'd like to say a big welcome to four new children; Logan, Sam, Joshua and Summer and we're looking forward to our class of 30 new Reception children, who will be starting their learning adventure next week!

We're also excited to welcome Mrs Jenkins to the school, teaching alongside Mr Adams in Year 4. She is covering for Miss Pearce who is on maternity's leave, following the birth of her baby daughter!



Opening the door to new learning adventures this year!

## Back to school night – Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> September

There's a lot of information to communicate at the beginning of the school year and so we would like to invite all parents and carers to our 'Back to school' evening on **Wednesday 27th September** from 6.00pm until 7.00pm. We will be talking about some of our plans for the new academic year and launching our new whole-school approach to home learning. There will then be an opportunity for you to visit your child(ren)'s new classroom to have a look around and meet their teacher. Unfortunately we do not have space to allow children to attend with their parents.

## Volunteers' Meeting

We're really grateful for all of the volunteers that we have in school. They carry out all sorts of different roles and support the learning of many children across the school. This year, Mr Spens will be leading a 'volunteers' briefing' on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> October at 9.15am and all those on our register of DBS checked volunteers are asked to come along. If any volunteers are not able to make this date, please contact the school and we will arrange an extra session. The briefing will contain important information about volunteering at St Helen's as well as other important safeguarding up-dates. If you are interested in becoming a regular volunteer, please contact Mrs Madle who will arrange for your DBS check.

## Year 6 Trip to Deanfield

Next week, our Year 6's head to the Forest of Dean for the annual camp. They will be doing all sorts of exciting activities while they are away from canoeing to orienteering, to caving. We all hope that they have a really fantastic time away as a class!

Technology permitting, we'll be sharing photos and updates from the trip on twitter. Twitter users can follow us @sthelenspri, or you can visit [www.twitter.com/sthelenspri](http://www.twitter.com/sthelenspri).



## Attendance of the week!

Well done to all the whole school this week! Our attendance was 97.7 % which is a fantastic achievement.

The class with the highest attendance of the week was **Ash Class with 99.6%**. Well done!

## Our target for school attendance in 2017/18

As with all areas of school life, including pupil achievement, we want to set ambitious targets for the year ahead. This year, we have set an attendance target of **97%** for the school. This represents an increase of **1.3%** on 2016/17 or, if Mr Spens' calculations are correct, 519 days less absence over the school year!



In each newsletter, we'll be sharing the class with the highest attendance and letting you know how we are getting on against our target.

Research shows that great attendance makes a real impact on learning and so I'd like to thank-you in advance for your support with this. We got off to a flying start this week!

### Reminder: Term Time Holidays

Last academic year our whole school pupil attendance was 95.7%, which is slightly below the Local Authority's average attendance figures for primary schools. Your children's reports will have also included their individual attendance, for your information.

You will be aware that Headteachers have very little discretion in authorising term time absence from school, especially for family holidays, and that the school's response to such holiday requests has been to issue an 'unauthorised absence' letter.

I attach a copy of the letter from our cluster of schools, originally sent in July 2017, reaffirming our joint approach to pupil attendance and reminding everyone of the possibility of a Penalty Notice if a "holiday in term time" request would mean that your child will have had more than 10 sessions\* of unauthorised absence in any 7 week period in the school year. (\*A session is either a full morning or afternoon in school.)

### Term dates for 2017/18

The published term dates for South Gloucestershire schools for next year are:

Term	Starts	Ends
Term 1	Friday 1 September 2017	Friday 20 October 2017
Term 2	Monday 30 October 2017	Monday 18 December 2017
Term 3	Tuesday 2 January 2018	Friday 9 February 2018
Term 4	Monday 19 February 2018	Friday 23 March 2018
Term 5	Monday 9 April 2018	Friday 25 May 2018
Term 6	Monday 4 June 2018	Friday 20 July 2018

In addition to these term dates, our **INSET** days for the 2017/18 academic year will be:

Friday 1st September 2017  
Friday 20th October 2017  
Monday 18th December 2017  
Monday 19th February 2018  
Monday 4th June 2018

Congratulations to our certificate winners last week:

Holly Class – Seth and Isabel  
Beech Class – Jake and Sehyun  
Oak Class – Katie and Alex W

Ash Class – Josh D and Bea  
Sycamore Class – Lily-Rose and Jack  
Elm Class – Ellis and Jessy



### Out of School Achievements:

Hudson, in Beech Class, has achieved his Level 1 swimming award.

The value of the term is **Generosity**.

Each newsletter, we'll be sharing our 'Reflection Question' with you. Why not have a think about it as a family at home too? Next week, we'll be asking: "When were you most generous to someone else?"

