



St James' Church of England Primary School, Haslingden



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21st March 2018



Dear Parents

It has been a very busy term here in St James' with lots of opportunities for the children to engage with their learning and experience a variety of activities to enhance their understanding. We are now approaching our Easter break and with that in mind, I wanted to update you on some things and give you advance notice of future events.

Firstly, thank you to all our parents who joined us for our very delayed World Book Day yesterday. The children (and staff!) looked wonderful in their costumes and enjoyed talking about books and their favourite characters. The theme continued with our easter egg competition – the eggs are so creative it is going to be difficult to choose a winner! Thank you, too, to parents of Y2 and Y6 who attended the SATS meetings today. It is wonderful to work in partnership with you to ensure our children do their very best. Thanks also go to Mr Robinson and Mr Mason who led the meetings.

STAFFING

We will have a slight change in the staffing team for summer term – no new staff, just a little change around. Nursery and EYFS will be a team led by our EYFS and KS1 Leader, Mrs Molloy with Mrs Parkinson and Miss Khan in EYFS and Miss Musa will be the lead teacher in Nursery with Miss Crilly and Mrs Begum. There will be little change to how things are run, simply a team approach.

We will also be having a team approach in Y4-5 with Mr Simister and Mrs Pilkington teaching together after Easter with Mr Gray joining them from end of April. Again, a staffing team approach with tailored learning to ensure children make good progress. All Y3 children will be taught by Miss Cooper for the full timetable.

EXTENDED HOLIDAYS

At our Governors' meeting last night, the issue of extended holidays in term time was discussed. We are very concerned regarding the level, and length, of extended holiday requests we are now receiving. Any absence from school is disruptive. However, an extended holiday has a larger impact on our children than initially imagined by parents. Several issues disrupt not only learning but social issues too:

- Children come to school to learn from their teacher. While work can be provided for our children, this can only be revision work as direct teacher input is necessary for children to learn and be supported. Often work is not completed while away which also has an impact and children return to school further behind than when they went away.
- Gaps in learning as a result of absences cannot always be rapidly fully closed. It takes considerable time for children to make up their learning. They also feel frustrated as their peers are further ahead and understand the missed concepts. This can cause the children to become disheartened and often influences their efforts as a result.
- Friendship groups shift while children are absent for any length of time. Children learn – quite rightly – to join others and share their time with a different set of children. Therefore, when a child returns it can be upsetting for them to adjust to this fact. Friendship problems can occur and again it takes time for this to settle down following an extended absence.
- School is routine. Children thrive within this routine and feel secure. Upon returning from extended holiday, children take some time to adjust as their routine has been missing while away. Again, this takes time and therefore impacts on their ability to be fully ready to learn.

- Children often return to school tired following an extended holiday and sometimes become poorly as a result. Further absences then occur and again this impacts on learning.

THE LONGER THE ABSENCE THE BIGGER THE IMPACT.

In order for our children to achieve their best, while we understand the financial reasons for doing so, we ask that our parents fully consider the impact extended holidays in term time have on their children.

Parents have chosen to take their children away for a few days which lessens the impact dramatically.

When extended holidays are for weeks at a time – or even months – this has a dramatic and long lasting impact on children’s ability to catch up on missed learning – sometimes it can take more than a year for the gaps to be closed.

Governors have therefore asked me to reinforce the considerable disruption to education that extended holidays have on children. Our children in Y2 and Y6 will be taking their tests soon – absences at this time have a particularly long lasting impact on children’s education.

Please do think before booking an extended holiday, consider the timing of the holiday, its length and the year group your child is in. Also do please fully take into account the impact described above.

TRIPS

Teachers are busy booking exciting learning experiences for our children for the summer term. Do watch out for the letters notifying you of this. We always endeavour to give parents plenty of time to make voluntary contributions.

Please come along at 9.00am for celebration assembly this Friday. Don’t forget – we close at 1.30pm! Have a wonderful Easter break – a happy and holy time to you all and to your families.

Best wishes

Miss F Brady

Headteacher

FUTURE EVENTS – DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

9 th April	School opens after Easter holidays from 8.45am
19 th April	Whole school church 9.00am – all welcome
23 rd and 24 th April	Life Education Bus
1 st May	KS1 SATS begin
2 nd May	Coffee morning for parents
3 rd May	Nursery closed due to elections
7 th May	School closed for May Day bank holiday
14 th May	KS2 SATS Week
25 th May	School closes for half term usual time 3.10pm for KS2/3.15pm for KS1
4 th June	School opens after half term from 8.45am
11 th June	Year 1 Phonics Test Week
11 th June	Sports Week with Sports Day on 12 th June
14 th June	Y5 Haslingden High School Taster Morning
15 th June	School closed for INSET (may be subject to change due to Eid)
18 th June	Diversity Week
19 th June	Sale Sharks in school for Diversity Week learning
21 st June	KS2 Church 9.00am – all welcome
22 nd June	Graham Jones MP to visit school to celebrate Diversity Week
3 rd July	The Railway Children performance for whole school with workshops for Y4-5
3 rd July	Y6 Day at Haslingden High School for children going there in September
5 th July	KS1 Church 9.00am – all welcome
6 th July	End of year reports out to parents
9 th July	3.30pm Drop in session for parents to discuss reports with class teachers
12 th July	Summer Fair
16 th July	Bastille Day Celebration – Super Learning Day in school
18 th July	Leavers Assembly Y6 – parents welcome
19 th July	Leavers Service Y6 in Church – parents welcome
20 th July	School closes for summer holidays at 1.30pm