



IMPORTANT DATES/TASKS THIS WEEK:

- Please be reminded that next week is the February half term break. All pupils will return to school on Monday 19th February.
- LENT 2024: The season of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday (14.2.24). Mass will be celebrated in our parish at 9:30am (St Mary's RC Church, Whickham) and 6:30pm (Immaculate Heart of Mary Church, Lobley Hill).
- REMINDER – If your child is taking part in the Gateshead Schools Dance Festival on 19.3.24, please purchase your tickets here: <https://theglasshouseicm.org/whats-on/gateshead-schools-dance-festival-2024/>.
- The postponed *Muddy Monsters* session for Reception and Year 1 pupils has been rearranged for Friday 23rd February 2024.

SCHOOL UPDATES & REMINDERS

EXPLORE THE CURRICULUM:

Thank you for your attendance at our Spring Term 'Explore the Curriculum' sessions. Turnout across the week was fantastic and the children loved sharing their work with their families.

You can find the presentation from the event here: <https://www.whickhamstmarys.org.uk/explore-the-curriculum.html> and the materials shared at the event are attached to this week's News Bulletin.

AUTUMN TERM PARENT/CARER SURVEY:

As we shared with you this week, feedback from parents and carers received in our Autumn Term parent/carer survey was overwhelmingly positive.

Of the 45 responses received:

- 94% parents/carers say their child has 'Good' or better experience of school at St Mary's.
- 98% parents/carers say their child is happy at St Mary's.
- 97% parents/carers say their child does well at St Mary's.
- 100% parents/carers say their child feels safe at St Mary's.
- 100% of parents/carers who have raised concerns agree that the incidents have been properly dealt with.
- 96% of parents/carers say their child enjoys most of their lessons.

We received lots of incredibly positive and affirming comments, such as:

- "Caring and supportive environment- every child is celebrated and made to feel like a valid member of the school family."
- "Offer a range of sporting events. Lots of opportunities for parents to come into school. Consistency with homework, spellings and reading."
- "Provide a happy learning environment for the children."
- "Educating the children to a high standard."
- "Responding to parent voice feedback - curriculum days following feedback for example."
- "Wonderful staff who care so much about our children."
- "Inclusive and family atmosphere."
- "Instill a sense of community."

- “Very friendly and supportive. I feel the culture is very warm and caring, with a focus on religious and British values instilled to all aspects of learning.”
- “My child has flourished at St. Mary’s. As a parent, I couldn’t be happier watching them continue to grow and thrive. Thank you for all you do.”
- “My child is very happy at school and is enjoying learning about history and geography. My child talks enthusiastically about what he is learning.”
- “Can you let the dinner staff know that my child absolutely loves school dinners. She tells me that she loves salad now.”

The themes we identified and will be working hard to ensure that we these are continued areas for focus are as follows:

- Doing all we can to ensure that parents/carers know how well their child is doing academically and personally.
- Communicating as clearly as possible our intentions for pupils’ wider personal development.
- Exploring and providing new extra-curricular opportunities for pupils.

SPRING TERM PARENT/CARER SURVEY:

Thank you for sharing your views with us regarding ‘Communication’ in our recent survey.

We will analyse the responses and share our findings in the Summer Term once these have been reviewed by our Local Governing Committee.

SPORTS UPDATE:

A huge well done to our Year 6 ‘Bee Netball’ champions, who represented the school at the Gateshead Finals this week. The team competed marvelously at the event, narrowly missing out on qualification to the county finals after suffering a heartbreaking last-minute basket in a hotly contested match against one of our neighbouring schools. In spite of the obvious disappointment – especially given the amazing netball skills on display – the pupils maintained their fantastic attitudes to the very end and were rightly proud to bring home their bronze medals. Another wonderful sporting achievement from our St Mary’s pupils!