



# Welwyn St Mary's Primary School



## Newsletter – December 2024

### Value

Our value for this half term is: **Compassion**

*"No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted."*  
Aesop

### Merry Christmas and a Happy 2025!

*Words from Mr Whiteland*

Advent and the Christmas season at Welwyn St Mary's is something very special and you can see the excitement building in the children with all the different events, performances and church services.

It was magical (and no mean feat) to take our entire school to the pantomime at the Beam Theatre in Hertford. To see their engagement, enjoyment and wonder at the occasion was truly lovely and it really kickstarted our Christmas countdown.



Since then, we have decorated our school Christmas tree, which was kindly donated by Vanstone. Our choir performed in St Mary's church at the switching on of the lights in Welwyn. Decorations have festooned our classrooms and school, ahead of then being given the complete 'Christmas makeover' for our PTFA's extremely successful Christmas Fair, which raised over £4,400 for the school. A group of Year 6 pupils and I volunteered to decorate the Christmas tree in St Mary's Church, which was a lovely opportunity to support our church and community. There was a Christmas dance club performance, with over 50 children performing and at least that number of parents coming to watch and be entertained by their fabulous dance routines they had learned and practised with Vicky. We have had some very magical and very memorable performances of our Reception Classes' Nativity 'A Present for the Baby' and our Key Stage 1 performances of 'Are we nearly there yet?'. And numerous carol services and church services to nourish the musical and spiritual aspects of school life: the Chamber Choir performed at a concert at St Ethelreda's Church, in Hatfield; the choirs of Welwyn St Mary's (Choir, Chamber Choir, Community Choir and our Alumni Choir) performed at a charity concert at St Mary's Church; in addition to our whole school Christmas service and our Year 5/6 carol service at church. And of course, there was that togetherness and joyous feeling of our Christmas lunch and Christmas Jumper day, finishing off with a whole school rendition of The Twelve Days of Christmas in our final Celebration Assembly of the year. Christmas to the fullest at Welwyn St Mary's! ... and all to the sound of 'Sheep, Sheep, Sheep, Sheep...'

As we now approach the end of term, I would like to wish you all a very forward to welcoming you all back at school on Monday 6th January 2025 for the start of the Spring term.



### Upcoming events in January

#### First Day of Term

We return to school on Monday **6<sup>th</sup> January 2025**.

#### Reception 25 Open Morning

We will be holding our last Prospective Reception Parents open morning on **Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> January** at 9.15am.

#### Year 4 Cake Sale

The PTFA will be holding the Year 4 cake sale after school on **Friday 17<sup>th</sup> January** on the KS1 playground.

#### Year 6 Sats Session

Year 6 parents are invited to school for an information session about KS2 SATs on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> January, at 2pm. Please complete to Parentmail for to let us know if you can attend.

#### Year 3 Ancient Greek Day

Year 3 will take part in an Ancient Greek Day on **Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> January**. Please see Parentmail for more information.

#### Year 3 and 4 Disco

**Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> January**, 17.30-19.00. More details to follow via Parentmail.

#### Year 1 & 2, 5 & 6 Disco

**Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> January**. Year 1 & 2, 16.00-17.30. Year 5 & 6, 18.00-20.00. More details to follow via Parentmail.





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### Welcome

We are delighted to welcome Miss Hawkins to the Welwyn St. Mary's family! Miss Hawkins has joined us as a 1:1 Teaching Assistant, and she is already making a positive impact in supporting our students.

### KS1 Performance

We would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to all the parents and families who came to support the children during their KS1 performances of "Are We Nearly There Yet?". The children were fantastic, and it was wonderful to see them shine on stage with such confidence and enthusiasm.

A special thank you as well for your incredible generosity. Together, we raised an amazing £1,058, which will be split equally between Macmillan Cancer Support and The Samaritans. Your contributions will make a real difference to these important causes.

We would also like to express our gratitude to the PTFA for selling refreshments during the performances. Their hard work raised an additional £259.50, which will go directly towards supporting our school.

### Reception Performance

A huge congratulations to our Reception children for their wonderful performance of "A Present for the Baby". The children were amazing, showcasing fantastic singing, dancing, and word reading. We are so proud of their hard work and confidence on stage—it was a truly memorable performance!

We would also like to thank all the parents and families who attended and for your generous donations. Together, we raised £441 which will be split equally between Macmillan Cancer Support and The Samaritans.

### PTFA Round up

We've had a fantastic start to the new school year and, as always, we are so grateful for your incredible support. A huge thank you goes out to our class reps for their hard work and to all the parents and carers who have generously donated or volunteered their time to support our events. Since September, we've raised an impressive **£6,760** – an amazing achievement! A big well done to everyone involved.

A special mention to Chloe Murphy, our Secretary, who will be stepping down in the new year to embark on a new adventure. We wish you all the luck. We welcome Hannah Gregory as newly appointed secretary. Thank you Hannah!

Finally, we will be looking forward to kicking off the new year with more fun events, starting with the ever-popular school discos.

Wishing you all a wonderful Christmas and a very Happy New Year!

Best wishes,  
The PTFA team

### Music Lessons

In school, music lessons are offered via the Mid Herts Music Service. They currently offer guitar, woodwind, brass, violin and piano.

If your child would like to sign up to lessons in school, please register here:

<https://ukhertfordshire.speedadmin.dk/registration>





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### Choir concerts

Christmas is always a busy time for choirs, but this year our school choirs have been especially busy. Christmas singing season started early on 28<sup>th</sup> November when the school choir sang at the Welwyn Christmas lights switch on. We had a record 55 children singing, and they really got Christmas off to a swinging start with their renditions of "Sheep" and "Sleepsong". On 7<sup>th</sup> December, the choir sang at the Christmas Fair and their music added greatly to the festivities.

On 14<sup>th</sup> December, we were honoured that our Chamber Choir was invited to join the Hertfordshire County Youth Choir and Hertfordshire County Youth Brass Band in a joint concert at Hatfield House. We were one of only two primary schools from across Hertfordshire selected to take part in this prestigious concert and our Chamber Choir certainly did us proud with their renditions of "Sheep" and John Rutter's "Colours of Christmas". The children then took part in a massed choir's piece where they sang in Latin, accompanied by the Brass Band and County Youth Choir. We were hugely proud of them and feedback from VIPs in the audience was that the quality of their singing was amazingly good for such young children. A massive well done Chamber Choir.



On 17<sup>th</sup> December, our Chamber Choir and School Choir sang at our annual Charity concert to raise money for MacMillian Cancer Care and the Samaritans. They were joined by our Community Choir and our wonderful Alumni choir, made up of children who used to attend Welwyn St Mary's who started singing at school and continue to sing now. It was a wonderful celebration of Christmas music and a lovely way to round off a very busy term for the choir.

Thank you to Mrs Harrison and Mrs Dunstan for giving up their time to run our choirs to such a high standard and to all our parents for bringing children to our concerts and supporting them at such a busy time of year.

### Reception September 2025

The window for applications closes on 15th January 2025. Please be aware that we require our own Supplementary Information Form to be completed and returned to the school office as well as the online application to county.

Our last open day for prospective Reception families will be held on Wednesday 8th January at 9.15am. The open morning will start with a talk from Mr Whiteland, Headteacher, followed by a chance to tour the school with Year 6 guides and ask any questions. To reserve a space please email [admin@welwynst-marys.herts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@welwynst-marys.herts.sch.uk)

### Clubs

The club timetable for the Spring Term has now been confirmed and is available on our [website](#)! You can check out all the fantastic activities on offer for the new term, including both in-house and external clubs.

For external clubs, please refer to the ParentMail sent on 4th December for booking details and deadlines. Make sure to secure your child's spot before the available spaces fill up! Invitations for in-house clubs have been sent via Parentmail forms.

We're looking forward to another term of fun and engaging activities for all our students. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact the school office.



Telephone 01438 714169 E-mail: [admin@welwynst-marys.herts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@welwynst-marys.herts.sch.uk) Website: [www.welwynst-marys.herts.sch.uk](http://www.welwynst-marys.herts.sch.uk)



# Welwyn St Mary's Primary School



## Newsletter – December 2024

### Book recommendations

#### This month's book recommendations:

As we enter a new year, here are some recommended stories that explore fresh starts, tales of resolutions and new beginnings and challenges.



Mooncat  
by Lydia Corry



After the Fall  
by Dan Santat



Anita and the Dragons  
by Hannah Carmona  
and Anna Cunha



The Couch Potato  
by Jory John and  
Pete Oswald



The Comet  
by Joe Todd-Stanton

### Winter Reading Challenge

#### Why not take part in the Hertfordshire Libraries Winter Reads Challenge?

Winter Reads is a series of exciting reading challenges and events for all ages, taking place across Hertfordshire libraries until the end of January.

Here's how it works:

1. Pick up your challenge materials from [your local library](#). Adults will get a Winter Reads bookmark and children receive a Winter Reads challenge card.
2. Complete and record your challenges on your bookmark or challenge card.
3. Return to your local library to get a stamp for each completed challenge.



Once you've finished 6 challenges you'll be entered into our prize draw to win an iPad (plus other fantastic runners-up prizes).

As well as being a great way to explore new books, authors and genres, Winter Reads is a brilliant opportunity to read together as a family or with friends.





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### Year 4 Indoor Athletics – 8<sup>th</sup> November

**Team names:** Arlo, Riaan, George, Harry, Jacob, Finley B, Adam, Finley F, Johnny, Jack, Oscar, Ethan, Finn, Millie, Penny, Liliane, Harriet, Everly, Izzy, Amelia, Olive, Violet, Olivia, Amelie, Orla, Eleanor, Lily, Eli, James

**Star Players:** Violet

On the 8<sup>th</sup> November, some Year 4s went to an athletics event in Stanborough School. The events were javelin, chest push, long jump, over under relay, vertical jump, 2-2 relay and 1-1 relay. The star player was Violet. We had lots of fun and overall we came 1<sup>st</sup>. We would like to thank Miss Veasey, Ms Webb, Mrs Southall and Mrs Bryant for taking us, We would like to have the opportunity to go back again.

- Izzy, Harriet, Ethan, Arlo

### Year 4 Curling – 20<sup>th</sup> November

**Team names:** Lily, Geogaina, Beau, Danny, Lucas, Finley, Elsie, Florence

On the 20<sup>th</sup> November, some Year 4s challenged other schools in a curling competition. The other teams were very good and we fought hard. The girls and boys teams were split and we had to use our skills of blocking and knocking stones to be able to win. We played different games against schools from around Welwyn. It was a really fun event and we would like to thank Mrs Southall and Mrs Hanley.

- Lucas & Elsie

### Year 6 District Tag Rugby – 28<sup>th</sup> November

**Team names:** Amelie, Orla, Scarlett, Isla, Camilla, Nyla, Tami, Betsy, Maisie, Fred, Edward, Charlie B, Charlet W, Billy, Sam, Bailey, Freddie, Jake, Jack

A warm and dry afternoon at Monk's Walk was accompanied by the chatter and calls of the children participating in a tag rugby festival. The event was a perfect rehearsal for the upcoming District event in the spring term. The afternoon was a huge learning curve for some of our players who started with their usual football tactics and soon had to switch to rugby. Fast speed and change of direction were our best skills. The girls were particularly good at moving the ball between them and manoeuvring around the opposition. All children were able to highlight things the teams need to now focus on ready for the main event in spring.

- Mrs Southall



### Year 5 Indoor Athletics – 29<sup>th</sup> November

**Team names:** Harper, Mia, Poppy W, Omari, Alice, Chloe H, Nancy, Zara, Harriet, Juliet, Alba, Nicole, Chloe G, Finley, Ronnie, Freddie, Monty, Luca, Jasper, Ted, Teddy, Orest, Lucas, Burt, Alex, Jacob, Marcus

On the 29<sup>th</sup> November, a group of Year 5 children went to an indoor athletics event in Stanborough. Indoor athletics is very popular and many schools complete. We did well in the track and field events. Quick baton passes helped us win relays. We showed great teamwork. We won 13 events and came second in 8 events. Overall, we scored 210 points with is amazing. We would like to thank Mrs des Forges, Mrs Tucker and Miss Veasy for supporting us and our parents for taking us.

- Jacob and Nancy





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### December birthdays

Happy Birthday to all who celebrated in December:

Jacob, Tamilore, Kaya, Leo, Jake, Umar, Daisy, Ivy, Harper, James, Evan, Araz, Rosie, Laiton, Ava, Lottie, Sophia, Nicole, Ashley, Johnny, Tiffany, Robyn, Thomas, William, Enzo, Ebony, Tireni, Elsie, Leo, Izzy, Evan, Amber, Evelyn, Benjamin, Rocco, Tommi, Fenn, Mrs Stanley, Mrs Hall, Mrs Jackson, Mrs Rogers, Mrs Kinsella, Madame Farrington and Mrs Southall.

### Foodbanks help

We have links with local foodbanks so, if you are struggling financially at the moment, please contact the school office in confidence and we can refer you.

### Term Time Absence and Penalty Notices

A new National Framework for Penalty Notices for school absence, including unauthorised holiday absence, has now been introduced following changes to the law.

#### Per Parent, Per Child

Penalty Notice Fines are issued to each parent, for each child that was absent. For example: 3 siblings absent for term time leave, would result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines. Parent refers to anyone with parental responsibility and may include carers, step-parents, grandparents or any other adult with parental responsibility.

#### National Threshold

There will be a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period. These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence. The 10-school week period can span different terms or school years.

#### **First Offence**

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for term time leave of absence or unauthorised absence the amount will be:

- £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days
- Reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days

#### **Second Offence (within 3 years)**

The Second time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence the amount will be:

- £160 per parent, per child within 28 days

#### **Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)**

The third time an offence is committed a Penalty Notice will not be issued and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrate's Court.

- Prosecution can result in criminal records and fines up to £2,500
- Cases found guilty in Magistrates' Court can show on the parent's future DBS certificate due to 'failure to safeguard a child's education'

[Click here](#) for further information.

So that parents are aware of the risk of receiving a Fixed Penalty Notice, Welwyn St Mary's will issue warning letters to all parents who request term time holiday, regardless of the length of holiday.





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### Diary Dates

Diary dates are regularly updated on the school website:

[www.welwynst-marys.herts.sch.uk/news-dates/diary-dates](http://www.welwynst-marys.herts.sch.uk/news-dates/diary-dates)

| Spring Term 2025                                |   |
|---|---|
| Mon 6th January 2025                            | Term commences                                    |
| Wed 8th January 2025                            | Prospective Reception Parents Open Morning 9.30am |
| Fri 17th January 2025                           | Year 4 Cake Sale                                  |
| Mon 20th January 2025                           | KS2 SATs meeting                                  |
| Tue 21st January 2025                           | Year 3 Ancient Greece Day                         |
| Tue 21st January 2025, 5:30pm - 7:00pm          | Year 3 & 4 Disco                                  |
| Thu 23rd January 2025                           | PTFA Meeting                                      |
| Tue 28th January 2025, 4:00pm - 5:30pm          | Year 1 & 2 Disco                                  |
| Tue 28th January 2025, 6:00pm - 8:00pm          | Year 5 & 6 Disco                                  |
| Wed 5th February 2025                           | Yr 3 & 4 production                               |
| Thu 6th February 2025                           | Yr 3 & 4 production                               |
| Fri 7th February 2025                           | Year 3 Cake Sale                                  |
| Mon 17th February 2025 - Fri 21st February 2025 | Half term   |
| Mon 3rd March 2025                              | Year 5 Viking Workshop                            |
| Tue 4th March 2025                              | Year 4 Faith Tour                                 |
| Thu 6th March 2025                              | World Book Day                                    |
| Tue 11th March 2025                             | Year 6 Go Construct Knex Challenge                |
| Fri 14th March 2025                             | Year 2 Cake Sale                                  |
| Thu 20th March 2025                             | Book Fair – Next Page books                       |
| Mon 24th March 2025 - Fri 28th March 2025       | PTFA Mother's Day Gift Shop                       |
| Wed 2nd April 2025                              | PTFA Easter Egg Scavenger Hunt                    |
| Thu 3rd April 2025                              | Easter Service [St Mary's Church]                 |
| Fri 4th April 2025                              | Terms ends – Rec & KS1 1.15pm, KS2 1.20pm         |

