



Welwyn St Mary's Primary School

Newsletter – January 2026



Our value for this half term is:

Perseverance

"I can do all things through Him who strengthens me."

Philippians 4.13

Welcome back

It has been lovely to welcome all of our children and families back after the Christmas break. I hope you all had a magical and restful time. It has been wonderful to see the children excited to see their friends and look forward to the new term ahead. Classes have made an excellent start back and seeing some of the learning taking place has been an absolute delight! We've already enjoyed Year 3's Ancient Greek Day, our Governors' Visit Day (see below) and our Year 4's exceptional performance of Peter Pan and we've got a packed and thrilling rest of the term lined up as well! We look forward to seeing what the children will achieve.

There are so many exciting things to look forward to, including: our KS1 Festival of Words and the KS2 Speakers' Cup, a Year 3 music workshop: 'Tamboo Bamboo and Steel Pans', the Year 5 Viking & Saxon Day, British Science Week, Year 6's visit to RAF Hendon and the K'Nex Challenge, Year 2's Great Fire of London Day, Reception Classes' and Year 2's class assemblies, numerous sporting events, the school bookfair and the much-loved World Book Day celebrations. We'll also be holding parent consultations to keep everyone updated on progress at the end of this half term.

Here's to a fantastic term ahead!

Mr Whiteland
Headteacher

Upcoming events in February

PTFA Meeting

Tuesday 10th February

Parent Consultation Evening

Wednesday 11th and Thursday 12th February

KS2 Speaker's Cup

Friday 13th February

Year 3 PTFA Cake Sale

Friday 13th February

School Ends for Half Term

Friday 13th February

Return to School

Monday 23rd February

Year 1 Phonics Parents Meeting

Tuesday 24th February – 9:15am





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Governors' Visit Day

On Wednesday 21st January 2026, we had the pleasure of welcoming our school governors into the classrooms for a special Governors' Visit Day. This was an opportunity for them to see firsthand the incredible work being done across the school and we're proud to share some of the positive feedback they provided.

Governors were impressed by the 'inspirational' teaching and learning taking place in the classrooms. The children were fully engaged in their learning and were supported effectively in their lessons. One of our governors commented that they 'didn't want to leave the lesson' and another was so inspired they said they 'wanted to become a Maths teacher!'

The Governors remarked on the children's enthusiasm to participate and their eagerness to contribute to class discussions and activities. This positive attitude toward learning truly stood out and highlighted the dedication of both our staff and students. Governors focused on the School's Improvement Plan priorities of fulfilling our Christian vision and values in all aspects of school life and on building on pupils' prior learning through well-planned small steps in learning to ensure progress from children's starting points.

It was a wonderful day and we are so grateful for the continued support of our Governors as we strive to create an environment where every child thrives.

Staff Changes

We say goodbye to Mrs Charles who has made the tough decision to retire from Welwyn St Mary's. Although she has only been with us for a short time, we are hugely grateful for all that she has done for our children and our school community and we wish her well in her retirement. For the remainder of this term, we have been extremely fortunate to secure Mrs Thompson to teach 6 Redwoods until Easter and we are very pleased to have recruited Ms Logan to join our staff team from the summer term. We are also delighted that Mrs Oliver will be joining our 1:1 teaching staff.

Termly leaflet

Our Spring term class leaflets are now available on our website. Leaflets contain useful information about topics classes will be studying this term, class routines and upcoming events.

www.welwynst-marys.herts.sch.uk/curriculum/curriculum-overview





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Dance Workshops

On Friday 16th January, our KS1 and KS2 children were delighted to welcome DH Dance Academy into school for a series of energetic and fun-filled dance workshops. The sessions were engaging and thoroughly enjoyed by all the children who participated with great enthusiasm. Thank you to DH Dance Academy for providing a memorable experience.



PTFA School Discos

Thank you to our PTFA for organising the ever-popular school discos. While the main aim of the event was to give back to the children and let them enjoy themselves, the PTFA are delighted to announce that £367 was raised, which is wonderful news.

PTFA Year 4 Cake Sale

Well done to Year 4 for baking and donating cakes for the Year 4 Cake Sale. Thank you to everyone who bought a delicious cake and helped raise a fantastic £289.





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Year 3 Greek Day

On Tuesday 20th January, Year 3 took part in Greek Day. Year 3 did lots of fun activities, like carving soap, making tiles, making medicine and making wax tablets and some clay models. Year 3 had lots of fun. In the afternoon they did small plays and a dance in-between them. Year 3 had drinks, olives and cheese and the cheese was quite salty and slippery. At the end of the day Year 3 got to take home all the things they made.

- Izzy and Bea



The children all looked fantastic in their Greek costumes and engaged very well in this fun, practical learning of history.

January birthdays

Happy Birthday to all who celebrated in January.

Amara, Amelie, Archie, Arlo, Beau, Bo, Cameron, Charlotte, Charlotte, Danny, Darcey, Edward, Ella, Elsie-Mae, Emani, Eva, Florence, Florence, Freya, Gael, Glory, Harriet, Harriet, Joshua, Juno, Kahmari, Kleo, Luna Blu, Matilda, Molly, Nancy, Oli, Orla, Penelope, Pippa, Riaan, Roman, Rueben, Scarlett, Tommaso, Tyler, William, Mrs Pullin, Mrs Jackson, Mrs Soppett-Moss, Mrs Moate and Miss Veasey and Mr Whiteland.





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Sporting Events



Netball Festival – Monday 19th January

Team: Alex, Omari, Mia, Kiara, Grace S, Daisy, Orla, Violet, Evie, Poppy, Juliet, Nicole, Alba, Elin, Harper, Harriet, Annabel and Zara.

We worked together as a team. There were two teams and we won almost all our games. We shook hands at the end of every match to show compassion. We rotated around so the person that was off could play next.

- *Alex and Omari*



Year 6 Football Match against Swallow Dell- Monday 26th January

Team: Annabel, Alexander, Callum, Danny, Kiara, Marcus, Nancy and Orest
Star Players: Orest and Nancy



On the 26th January some Year 6 went to a football match. Unfortunately, the other team scored first, but we came back and Orest scored from the half-way line, making it 1-1. With lots of teamwork, we managed to get another goal, scored by Marcus, making it 2-1 to us. Then it was half time. Swallow Dell scored, but we were determined and scored two goals making it 4-2 to us. Unfortunately, they scored two more goals which made the final score 4-4. We would like to thank Mrs Southall for supporting us.

- *Annabel, Alexander and Orest*





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Diversity Group Poster Competition and Book recommendations

This month the Diversity group have invited entries for a Poster Competition for Online Safety. Entries should be A4 size, eye-catching and flat, handmade only. Avoid using glitter, buttons or anything 3D as the selected designs will win prizes and will be copied and displayed around school.

Please clearly label with your child's name and class. Deadline is **Friday 6th February.**

Themes are:

- Key stage 1 (Year 1 and 2) "How to keep your personal information safe online."
- Lower Key stage 2 (Year 3 and 4) "How to get help if things go wrong online."
- Upper Key stage 2 (Year 5 and 6) Choose between two themes:
 1. "Playing appropriate games at the suitable age limit."
 2. "Believe it or not – Can you trust everything you see or hear online?"

We are looking forward to receiving your entries.

To help you get started with your research here are some book recommendations:



- Usborne Staying Safe online- Louise Stowell
- Staying Safe online- Steffi Covell-Clarke
- Old Macdonald had a Phone - Jeanne Willis and Tony Ross
- Troll Stinks - Jeanne Willis and Tony Ross
- Chicken Clicking - Jeanne Willis and Tony Ross





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Vote Welwyn St Mary's - Tesco Stronger Starts

We are delighted to share that our school has been accepted onto the Tesco Stronger Starts scheme!

We are raising funds to renovate the pond in our nature reserve, helping to encourage wildlife and enhance our curriculum. The improved pond will be a valuable resource for our children, providing hands-on experiences and outdoor learning.

Voting is open now and will continue until the end of March 2026. The project with the most votes will receive up to £1,500 to bring their plans to life.

Voting is open in the following stores:

- Welwyn Express, AL6 9EQ
- Welwyn Garden City Express, Panshanger, AL7 2BQ
- Hatfield Extra, AL9 5JY
- Hatfield Rise Express, AL10 8FH
- Shire Park Express, AL7 1TW

Please support us by placing your blue token in our project box when shopping at participating Tesco stores — and don't forget to encourage friends and family to vote too. Every token counts, and your support can make a real difference.

Uniform Policy

Thank you very much to the majority of our parents who are sending children into school wearing correct, smart uniform. Our school uniform is simple and practical to keep the children looking smart and contribute to the feeling of belonging to the school. The full uniform policy is available on the school website www.welwynst-marys.herts.sch.uk/parents/school-uniform.

Please ensure that all items of clothing are labelled with your child's name. This includes coats which are often taken off in the playground during break times and are very difficult to reunite with their owners without a name. Thank you.

Raising money for school

If you shop online you could be raising funds for our lovely school – at no extra cost to you!

- **Lovereading4kids.co.uk** sell a range of children's books at competitive prices, and the good news for us is that, if you nominate Welwyn St Mary's, 25% of the cover price will be given to us to spend with them on new books for our school library.





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- **Easyfundraising.org.uk** – by going through this website to then purchase at other retailers, you can nominate Welwyn St Mary's to receive a percentage of the cost of your items (e.g. 4% at Argos, 2% at John Lewis, 9% at M&S).

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.

Absence Reporting

Please call or email by 9am on each day of your child's absence. Please can we ask that you advise us of the symptoms of any illness rather than just "feeling unwell" so that we can accurately record and monitor this.

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 is 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.

[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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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.'

Diary Dates

Diary dates are regularly updated on the school website:
www.welwynst-marys.herts.sch.uk/news-dates/diary-dates

2026 Spring Term	
Mon 16th to Fri 20th February 2026	Half term
Fri 27th March 2026	Last day of school – Rec & KS1 1.15pm, KS2 1.20pm
2026 Summer Term	
Mon 13th April 2026	INSET day – school closed
Tue 14th April 2026	Term starts
Mon 4th May 2026	Bank holiday – school closed
Fri 22nd May 2026	INSET day – school closed
Mon 25th to Fri 29th May 2026	Half term
Saturday 4th July 2026	PTFA Summer BBQ
Friday 10 th July 2026	PTFA Break the rules day
Wed 22nd July 2026	Last day of school – Rec & KS1 1.15pm, KS2 1.20pm

