Dear Parents and Carers,

Season’s Greetings

As this busy Autumn Term comes to an end and we prepare to begin the Christmas break, I am taking a little time to reflect upon the many additional learning experiences your children have undertaken both as a school and with their classmates. You will see in this edition of TopMarks@StMarks, that extra-curricular opportunities have been wide and varied. Children have taken trips both locally and further afield. We have also invited numerous visitors into the school and have all taken part in several fund raising events. All of this would not be possible without the support of you, the parents and carers of our pupils. So thank you for all your support and all you do to make sure children have had (on the right day!); Christmas jumpers, pennies for the Teddy Tombola, packed lunches for trips, PE kits in school for all those extra sports sessions, as well as donations for both the Harvest Festival Service and the fabulous Christmas Raffle. It is no mean feat and I think your children have really benefited from all we have done together this term.

We have welcomed the Very Reverend John Mann into school and he is now leading collective worship for all children during Monday’s Assembly. I would also like to thank him and his team for both the generosity of their time and the warm welcome they give each time we celebrate and worship at St Mark’s Church in Bell Street.

This term’s Praise Point Prize day has been won by, ‘Inspire.’ A day of outdoor fun is planned for this week, but this rather damp weather may mean that we need to move the reward session to after the Christmas break.

We have undertaken a number of surveys with children this term, I will be looking at the feedback and comments made by children about; Attendance, Bullying and their knowledge of E-safety. Once I have collated all the information I will write to you to tell you how we will respond to what we have found out and how we will endeavour to further support families to ensure they are safe both on line and whilst at school.

I would like to take this opportunity to send heartfelt thanks on behalf of all of us here at school, and wish you season’s greetings, hoping that you all have a wonderful break spending time with your loved ones, keeping warm and sharing the joy of Christmas.

Sally Craig

Head Of School

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Top Dates @ St Marks to Remember!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4th January 2018</td>
<td>Back to school</td>
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<tr>
<td>8th January</td>
<td>After school clubs begin</td>
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<tr>
<td>18th January</td>
<td>Pantomime coming to school</td>
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<tr>
<td>9th February</td>
<td>After school clubs finish</td>
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<tr>
<td>12th -16th February</td>
<td>Half term</td>
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All dates are listed on the school website or via the Marvellous Me app

‘Opening the doors to the journey of life’

Love Trust Respect Inspire

Autumn 2017
Praise Points

**Ducklings**: Aiden

**Swallows**: Connor, Frazer and Lacey

**Kingfishers**: Sky, Brooke and Joseph

**Seagulls**: Bethany, Noah, Jack and Emily

**Robins**: Chase, Alexa and Jack

**Skylarks**: Marek, Molly

**Ospreys**: Jayden, Daniel and Bethany
This half term Ducking's topic has been Once Upon A Time and getting in the Christmas spirit. We have enjoyed the books We are going on a bear hunt, Gingerbread man, Little Red Riding hood and Goldilocks.

In our number learning we have explored time and sequencing and Playing What's the time Mr Wolf?

In Phonics we have been writing our lists to Santa and this week we have progressed to writing a letter to Santa giving him hints to what we would like as gifts!
This half term Swallows have been learning all about castles for our topic. We have received some amazing castles for our home learning projects! We went on a school trip to Corfe Castle where we learnt all about Corfe under siege and the battles that took place. We sang lots of songs about life in Corfe Castle on our way around different parts of the castle.

In Science we have been learning all about how to survive on a desert island. We had to decide what type of materials to build our shelters from and what important jobs we should prioritise first.

Swallows have also been visited by the naughty Christmas elf Sleigh, who has been up to all sorts of adventures!
This half term the Kingfishers have been very busy learning their lines and practising the songs for their Christmas play 'Baubles.' Baubles is a story about a caretaker who secretly makes baubles for the Christmas tree that the school has forgotten to decorate in the rush to get ready for Christmas. All of the children joined in with play and every child had lines to say. The children were very proud of what they managed to achieve and the staff were too.

Our topic this half term was ‘Explorers’ and the children have been learning about Scott of the Antarctic, Neil Armstrong and Christopher Columbus. They have also completed work based on the books ‘Claude in the City’ and ‘Lost and Found’.
This Term, we have learning all about the Stone Age to the Bronze Age. Our text has been Ug - the Genius Stone Age Boy. Have a read of your reviews:

**Why did you enjoy this story?**

I enjoyed it because there were parts it made us laugh and we had some good questions for Mr Stoner (Jake). It was really funny and it had some interesting information about the Stone Age (Cerys). It was really funny and it had a lot of information about the Stone Age, teaching us about what they did and didn’t do (Emily).

**What was your favourite part?**

Where the Dugs was telling Ug to get out and play with rocks (Patrick). Ug was upset because he didn’t like cold food (Archie). It was very funny when Dugs got out of bed and had forgotten her trousers (Sean). When Dugs got really angry at Ug because Ug was using good language, such as ‘nice’, ‘terrific’ and ‘hot’ (Helen). I liked the part where Dugs shouted at Ug for his used of good language (Sophie). Ug said ‘Why couldn’t these stones be softer’ (Kodi). When Dug was shouting at Ug to say ‘Why are you saying Nice?’ (Amy). My favourite part was when Dugs forgot her trousers (Morgan, Noah & Brandon).

**What would you improve in the story?**

Better adjectives and exciting language (Emily). Perhaps more writing (Sophie). Maybe they could improve some of the pictures (Ruby).

**What did you not like about the story?**

That Dugs kept shouting at Ug when Ug was saying good words (Ella-Mai & Ellie). When Dug was in bed and he was talking to Dugs and he was using the same nice words as Ug (Jack). I didn’t like when everyone was being mean to Ug when they were playing foot-rock (Bethany). I didn’t like it when Ug had to eat cold food (Kodi).
Year 4 have been studying the book Here I am! By Patti Kim

This text tells the story of a newly arrived family from their faraway homeland. A boy and his family enter into the lights, noise, and traffic of a busy American city in this dazzling wordless picture book. The language is unfamiliar. Food, habits, games, and gestures are puzzling. They boy clings tightly to his special keepsake from home and wonders how he will find his way. How will he once again become the happy, confident kid he used to be? Walk in his shoes as he takes the first tentative steps toward discovering joy in his new world.

The book is beautifully illustrated and gave all of Year 4 pupils the opportunity to draw on the feelings of the boy and how they would feel in the situation.

Year 4 had a visit from Wessex Water who came in to teach us more on how the sewers work and gave us the opportunity to have hands on science experiments and watch some demonstrations.

We learnt that many people in poorer countries need to walk at least 3 miles to get clean water, with this in mind we decided that we too should demonstrate how far some walk for clean water and raise money for Water Aid.

In order to fundraise for Water Aid our pupils filled up small drinks bottles with odd coins from home. Well done Year 4.
Thank you to all who donated teddies for our Teddy Tombola,
We raised a huge £75 for the Lexi May Trust, which supports children in Dorset with terminal illness or life limiting conditions.

Our text this half term was Varjak Paw. We used this for our Literacy work, writing an additional chapter and finding a phrase and drawing it! In our Art lesson we also drew chalk pictures of what we though Varjak would look like before we read the text.

On Tuesday 12th December Year 5 went off to Lulworth to Create at the Cove. We had a great time creating ... photos to follow!
Year Six have been learning about the circulatory system and the respiratory system. We can name parts of the human circulatory system and we can describe the functions of the heart, blood vessels and blood.

When talking about exercise, we can recognise the impact of diet, exercise, drugs and lifestyle on the way our bodies function.

In role play, we found out some really effective ways to respond to our peers, when put under pressure to participate in an activity. We talked about how we felt when we played the different roles and the difference it made, to how we might respond if we were faced with this situation in real life.
The symbolism of Christingle

Each piece of the Christingle holds special symbolism to help children understand the importance of Jesus and the Gospel, and its relevance at Christmas time.

- The orange represents the world
- The red ribbon (or tape) symbolises the love and blood of Christ
- The sweets and dried fruit represent all of God's creations
- The lit candle represents Jesus's light in the world, bringing hope to people living in darkness

At St Marks we all made our Christingle oranges and took them to our KS1 assembly and the KS2 Christingle service at St Marks Church on Tuesday 5th December.
Our amazing school council have been discussing topics such as playground games and the litter caused with the milk cartons and toast crusts. They have come up with some really good ideas and will be holding an assembly to the rest of the school to introduce themselves and their roles within the school.

Library News

Our new nominated Librarians are:
Year 2: Tilly and Jacob
Year 3: Grace and Harry
Year 4: Olivia and Grant
Year 5: Megan and Chloe
Year 6: George and Josh

Praise Group

St Marks Praise group meet weekly and together they present an assembly on a Tuesday morning to the whole school. Our Praise group pupils are Year 6: Angel and Jamie, Year 5: Ben, Mega and Chloe Year 4: Ben and Rhys and finally Year 3: Wilson and Bethany.

In our recent assemblies St Marks Praise Group been talking to the whole school about compassion, acting out scenarios and explaining how we can be compassionate to each other. You do an amazing job! Well done.
Fantastic Football

On Thursday 5th October the Purbeck School hosted the Purbeck Football Tournament. Nine schools took part in the competition which was open to pupils from years 5 and 6. Although the competition was open to both boys and girls all but two schools entered teams of boys only.

Our sole girl held her own in the goal and played with great confidence. 5 of our team had played the previous year and so knew what to expect. Most of the schools taking part had pupils in their teams who play for community sports teams so the competition was challenging. St Marks won four of their matches beating Swanage Primary, St Georges, Wool & Lulworth & Winfrith. In each of these matches our team did not concede a goal. We lost to St Marys, Stoborough, Wareham & Bovington, eventually finishing in 4th place.

The team are playing in the Purbeck League this year and will continue to train on a Wednesday lunchtime. Our first match is currently scheduled for November 16th at home against Stoborough. The players will be hoping to turn around the 0-1 defeat from the tournament.

Well done to Jayden who received the Star of the Week award for his dazzling defensive skills.
Terrific Tournament

On Thursday 12th October, it was the turn of our girl’s football team to compete in the Purbeck Tournament.

Due to illness some of the girls had to play out of position and the team were very grateful to Martha who stepped up to play on the day.

The girls grew in confidence after each game, and the smiles when a goal was scored were fantastic to see. Our team won their matches against St Georges & Swanage Primary, they drew with St Marys Swanage & Wareham St Marys; their only loss of the afternoon came against Stoborough the eventual tournament winners. The Star of the Week award was awarded to Georgia Samways who did not miss one tackle in the whole tournament.

A big thank you to Miss Travers who has done a magnificent job with both our school football teams this half term.
Indoor Athletics

The atmosphere was electric at the Purbeck Athletics Competition on Thursday 23rd November. This event was a Dorset Games Qualifier so we knew that the competition would be tough. Our team of 18 children were well prepared for the event having been offered 4 weeks of after school training with Miss Travers.

Talking part were teams from Swanage Primary, St Marys (Wool, Stoborough & Lulworth & Winfrith. The pupils took part in obstacle, 2 laps and 6 lap relays and a range of field events including vertical jump, standing long jump, triple jump, chest push, javelin & speed bouncing. Our team won a number of events during the competition and we were delighted with their performances.
Sports Leaders Training

Nine of our Year 5 pupils applied to take part in the leadership training course which was held on Friday 3rd November at the Purbeck School. On arrival the children were given their sport’s leaders tee-shirts which they were very keen to wear.

Their first activity was to grade the qualities that are required to make a successful sports leader. The pupils completed this task quickly demonstrating many of the qualities required for example communicating, cooperating and listening.

Next the children met the School Sports Coordinator for Christchurch, Dan Moody, who welcomed the fourteen schools and introduced the star guest for the day, Kate Gray, a Paralympic swimmer. Kate represented Britain for ten years competing in European & World Championships as well as the Olympics in Beijing. She has now retired from competing and works as a mentor to young people promoting the power of sport. She is also a reporter for the BBC.

Meeting Kate Gray

The pupils spent the day focusing on the elements required when organising activities e.g. the space required and ensuring the task is relevant for the age group being taught. They learnt a range of games which they can play back at school, all of which used basic equipment. In addition to this, they also produced a plan of action for us to develop on our return to school.

The pupil’s enthusiasm and outstanding behaviour throughout the day was a pleasure to see and we are looking forward to seeing our new group of Bronze Ambassadors developing their skills throughout the next two years.
At a school, somewhere not so far from you, excitement levels are reaching fever pitch with thoughts of the plentiful presents and parties that the Christmas season will bring.

It’s clear to Mr Potts, the caretaker, that something may have been overlooked. With the assistance of some helpful mice, he sets to work to create some beautiful baubles for the bare, forgotten Christmas tree and helps the children to rediscover the true meaning of Christmas.

What a brilliant show! Thank you to everyone involved, staff, pupils and of course to the family and friends that came to watch.
We raised the grand total of £146 by wearing something spotty! Well done everyone.

By wearing blue on Thursday 23rd November we raised £131.14. Not only did we wear blue but got involved that got you all thinking about the food you eat and getting the exercise you need.
Our Christmas lunch was served on Wednesday 6th December. Turkey and all the trimming for pupils ordering a hot lunch and EVERYONE had a cracker to pull!
Brilliant work by all the pupils and staff with our Christmas Fair on Friday 8th December.

We had everything from Reindeer Food, Christmas candles, hot chocolate mix to decorated pine cones.
Christmas Fair

Thank you to everyone who came along to our Christmas fair. We raised £180.10 from all the stalls:

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<tr>
<th>Reception</th>
<th>£20.50</th>
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<tr>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>£13.15</td>
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<td>Year 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year 3</td>
<td>£15.85</td>
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The Friends have raised approximately £500 from raffle, Christmas jumper day and selling refreshments.

Friends Updates

Friends of St Mark’s

Thank you to all that have supported the Friends of St Marks. We all worked really hard on the Christmas celebrations and with the help of Swanage Rotary Club we got Father Christmas to school on time and delivered a decorated lolly to every child in the school. Monies raised are in the region of £500 but we are still counting!

With money we have raised we have been able to provide the following for the Children of St Mark’s over the Christmas period:

- Crackers for each child at the Christmas lunch
- National Trust leader for the Year 1 Trip to Corfe Castle
- Part paid for Year 5 Trip to Create at the Cove
- In January we have fully funded the Pantomime coming to school at a cost of £475
- We have given every Class £100 to spend on any extras the Teacher thinks fit (not resources). These will be given as a New Year present!

Thank you all so much for your contributions and for the small band of parents that help out. If you have any fundraising ideas or would like to come along to join us on the 25th January 7.00pm at the school, then you would be very welcome.

Thank you again for your support and we wish all of you a very Happy Christmas.

Friends of St Mark’s
On Wednesday 13th December a group of KS2 pupils went along to the Swanage Day Centre to sing Christmas carols.

We were greeted by the day centre staff and we then ordered ourselves and sang ‘Away In a Manger’, Jingle Bells, Silent Night and Deck the Halls as well as another classics!

Well done to everyone involved.
The office is collecting used stamps for the Dorset Air Ambulance this year so please bring any you may have into the office, please also tell all your friends and family.