

St Margaret's  
Academy

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## Spring Term Newsletter No.5 (8.2.19)

This week we focussed on our mental health in school with our 'Bee Kind to Your Mind' theme. Looking after our mind is as important as looking after our body. To help everybody understand this, we started the week with an assembly to introduce this. Staff shared photos and stories of themselves taking part in mindful relaxing activities that helped demonstrate how we look after our minds. Then each day this week everybody has engaged with a different activity to help keep their mind healthy. On Monday, it was all about **getting active** by dancing away our cares. On Tuesday, it was about being **mindful** by colouring for calmness. On Wednesday, it was **connecting with others** by singing our hearts out. On Thursday, it was **helping others** by a little act of kindness. Today we've been **mindful** again by meditating to rejuvenate. See below to find out about how St Margaret's is developing mental health further.



It has been another engaging and productive week for staff as we have participated in a variety of professional development. On Tuesday after school, teachers took part in training to improve how we encourage children to read for pleasure. The benefits of which are not just about enjoyment but also about making connections with others and expanding on a wide range of other knowledge and skills. See some photos below of classes sharing books—older ones and little ones. Thank you to Miss Palfrey for her expert work in this area. Teachers also explored the impact of training on improving handwriting across the school which has seen real progress; some of which I've seen in children's books when they've brought them to share with me, showing pride in their achievements. Thank you to Miss Pritchard for her lead on this. On Thursday, after school, teachers explored best practice in using hands-on maths resources which are important start points and concrete models to use before exploring the abstract. Thank you to Mrs Rice for her expert work on this. Today, the teaching assistants met to explore the use of questioning in helping children learn. Framing the right sort of questions makes a big difference in supporting children to become effective learners who don't rely on adults.

All staff are currently reviewing the school's values and behaviour systems to ensure we continue to fully meet children's needs to provide them with the very best education for their subjects and personal development. If you have any ideas and would like to contribute suggestions, you are most welcome. In the near future I will be writing to you with more details about this and about how you can contribute.

The PTA met again to plan in more dates for your children. Thank you to them for providing these opportunities and fund-raising for the school.

Have a lovely weekend,  
Tim Hughes

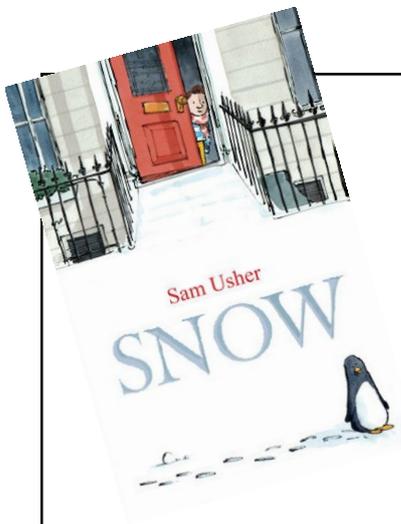
### **Car Parking - Polite Reminder Again**

Please can we ask that consideration is given to local residents when dropping off and collecting children at the start and end of the school day. We have reports of drives being blocked and residents being unable to enter and leave. Thank you for your support.

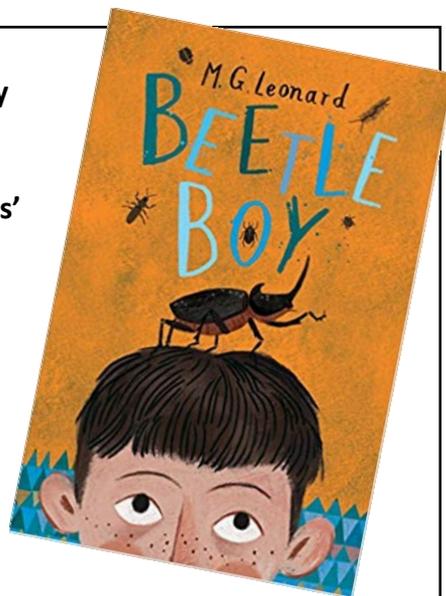
*RESPECT*

*RESPONSIBILITY*

*ASPIRATION*



### Miss Palfrey and the Reading Ambassadors' Book Picks



A favourite for this time of year!

### Weekly Attendance Award

Congratulations to **Rowan Class** again for winning the School Attendance Award with **99.4%** attendance.

School target: 96%  
The whole school achieved **96.8% this week**



### This Week's Star Pupils!

Ash — Jasmin and River - for showing such kindness to their friends this week. You have both made so many of your friends smile with your little acts of kindness!

Elm — Esmae for using her phonic cues to read really well

★ Noah for a lovely act of kindness when he didn't even know he was being watched

Beech — Oliver K- This week Oliver has shown a real commitment to his learning. He has been aspirational in all aspects of his work and made us all very proud. Keep it up Oliver!

Pine — Precious- For working so hard when solving subtraction word problems this week. You cracked it!

Apple — Oska - for making a great start to his new class, smiling all the while and making lots of contributions. Well done!

Oak — Madiha- For always showing great kindness and respect to herself and others. You have an amazing golden heart Madi! Well done.

Birch — Skye - For doing some brilliant home learning this week and having a wonderful, positive attitude every day!

Rowan — Lilly-Ann for a super attitude and great enthusiasm for learning

Cherry — Ashton - for showing determination to learn his multiplication facts and improve his speed of recall.

Maple — No matter what the challenge is, Olivia- Mae is ready and determined to give it a go! Well done for aspiring to do your best!

Holly — Liam - This week, Liam has gone above and beyond in all aspects of his learning. He has been a brilliant learner, showing great aspiration in both maths and writing lessons. Well done Liam keep it up!

Willow — Charlie Pemberton - Charlie has shown a great mindset and has gone above and beyond to prepare for his presentation about the Amazon.

Hawthorn — Layton- for his energy and enthusiasm for all he does! His effort in writing has been fantastic!

Hazel — Beth - for such a mature, committed, responsible attitude towards her learning and making some fantastic progress in maths!

### Reading for Pleasure - Mrs Chivers reports...

Hazel (Y6) and Pine (Y1) classes enjoyed their first shared reading session on Wednesday afternoon. This is to encourage the children to show and develop their reading skills, talk about the books they read and enjoy spending time with children in the school from a different year group. The children enjoyed themselves and can now look forward to weekly shared reading sessions.



## Mental Health and Well-being Update - Mrs Pike reports...

At the end of Children's Mental Health Week, we thought it might a good moment to share with you some of the excellent pastoral work taking place in school.

### 1. Our Thrive Space - The Nest

We are a Thrive school and Mrs Wills, our Thrive lead practitioner, works in the Nest (our purple bus). Mrs Wills works with identified children who for various reasons may be struggling to engage in learning. She supports them through art and craft, reading stories, or by simply providing an empathetic listening ear in a calm and relaxed atmosphere. The support can be short term (e.g. one or two sessions) or may be longer term to help the child re-engage in learning. The emphasis is on emotional support and development where children can talk about their emotions and unwind if anxious. Our Thrive work always takes place in discussion with parents and carers. If you have any questions about Thrive or your child's emotional development, please speak to Mrs Pike or Mrs Wills.



### 2. Therapeutic Play

Mrs Pike is currently training to become a certified practitioner in therapeutic play skills. This training is done through Play Therapy UK. Therapeutic play is a vehicle through which children can work through strong emotions in an undirected, child-led way. Children's natural language of communication is through play and during a therapeutic play session they can express their emotions through the medium of their choice - painting, drawing, clay, dressing up, sand tray work, puppets or music. Children have a minimum of 12 sessions (but often more), so this is a longer term intervention, often lasting 2 terms. If you have any questions about therapeutic play, please speak to Mrs Pike.



### 3. Mental Health and Wellbeing Award

We are excited to share with you that we are working towards gaining an accredited Mental Health in Schools Award (accredited through the Carnegie School of Education at Leeds Beckett University). The award represents a framework for whole school mental health development. By working on the award we are demonstrating a commitment to placing the mental health and wellbeing of pupils and staff at the core of the school, enabling all members of our school community to thrive.

This week the mental health and wellbeing team (Sara Pike, Susannah Tandy, Jo Watkinson, Leanna Russell and Sophie Essam) took part in an online coaching session with Dr Pooky Knightsmith, where we discussed the award and our next steps. One of our first tasks is to create a policy for mental health and wellbeing. If any parents/carers would like to work more closely with us on the award, please contact Sara Pike by phone or email, we would welcome your input!

We look forward to sharing how we are developing our practice in relation to mental health and wellbeing over the coming months. Further information about the award can be found on the Leeds Beckett University website : [www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/schoolmh](http://www.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/schoolmh)





### British Sign Language Champions! - Mrs Saunders reports...

The following staff should be congratulated on achieving a BSL Level 1 qualification: Nic Scaife, Nicole Turner, Jo Watkinson, Mel Hart, Jenny Price. Additionally the following were assessed on one or more of the 3 units or attended some lessons but were not assessed: Ewa Sosnowski, Susannah Tandy, Lorraine Wills, Emma Pritchard

The staff have given up their own time to study for an hour a week over the past 9 months in order to develop their BSL skills. The HSC at St. Margaret's supports hearing impaired children some of whom use BSL as their first language. The development of BSL is encouraged as a whole school approach in order to make deaf children feel included and able to communicate within the school. In order to maintain skills staff will continue with a monthly conversation class. The class will be open to all members of St. Margaret's staff.

Additionally Becky Seal, one of the Deaf Inclusion Workers in the HSC has just achieved her BSL qualification at Level 3. This means the HSC now has three members of staff at Level 3, two at Level 2 and one member of staff is about to embark on BSL at Level 6.

### Using Manipulatives in Year 5 - Mr Rogers reports...

This week, Year 5 have been learning how to identify a fraction of a number. We used a range of manipulatives to help build concrete understanding and linked this to the Bar Model.



### Diary Date Reminders

Wed 13.2.19 4.00-5.00pm	KS1 PTA Valentines Disco in the school hall
Wed 13.2.19 5.30- 6.30pm	KS2 PTA Valentines Disco in the school hall
Friday 15.2.19	Last day of the half term then school closed until 25.2.19
Monday 25.2.19	First day back 3.05-3.30 KS1 'Stay and Read' (choose a book and stay and read with your little one) in the library for family and children in Y1 and Y2 (the PTA are putting on hot drinks for the adults)
Thursday 28.2.19	3.05-3.30 KS2 'Stay and Read' (choose and book and stay and read with your little one) in the library for family and children in Y3, Y4, Y5 and Y6 (the PTA are putting on hot drinks for the adults)
Monday 4.3.19	World Book Day—advance notice—more very exciting news to follow ( <i>please that this is not the official national day because we are doing something different in school</i> )
Week beginning Monday 11.3.19	Parents Evening Week. Monday and Tuesday will be the main days. More information and booking times to follow.
Thur 14.3.19 2.00-3.00pm	CAP (Child Assault Prevention) UK team parent workshop. A very worth-while event to attend. More details to follow.
Weeks beginning 18.3.19 and 25.3.19	CAP UK team will be in school delivering workshops to all the children. More details to follow.