



St. Helen's Church of England School

Abbotsham, Bideford, North Devon, EX39 5AP

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Headteacher: Mrs C. S. Lewis BSc (Hons) / PGCE / QTS / NPQH



**At St. Helen's we learn to LOVE, love to LEARN and aspire to SERVE
so that we become Inspiring Change Makers**

'Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.' Hebrews 10:24

Friday 10th September 2021

Dear families of Reception and Year 1,

We warmly welcome you all to the start of our new school year!

It has been wonderful to see how much the new Reception children have enjoyed their 'transition' sessions this week, exploring their new learning areas as well as the whole school environment and we are really looking forward to the first full week of school next week!

I would like to thank all Reception class families very much for your support during our condensed transition week, it is so important to give all of the children the very best start and I feel that they have really benefited from the gentle introduction, together with enjoying sharing all of their special toys, pets and providing you with the opportunity to ask questions and share valuable information during our home visits.

It has also been wonderful to see that following their fantastic start in Reception last year, our new Year Ones have returned ready to embrace all of the changes that their new class will provide. It is lovely that they have Mrs Harding with them again, and I know that she is really pleased to be moving up with them. Their character development since starting at St. Helen's last year is wonderful and they are already diving into their learning with enthusiasm!

Within our mini school we have a large team of qualified and experienced staff supporting the two classes and we are all looking forward to working with all of the children and all of you.

We have an exciting term ahead planned with our Curriculum 'C360'. Our whole school focus for this term is 'Social Justice'. More information about the children's learning can be seen on this term's Curriculum Overview for each class, which will be sent separately.



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This year Reception and Year One will be working closely together to provide children with a wide range of activities and opportunities. In a few weeks' time, when the Reception children are settled, we would like to invite you all to a 'Welcome Event' where you will be able to come and see the children's learning environment, take part in some fun activities whilst meeting the staff team and other parents. More details about this will follow shortly.

We will be celebrating the end of the Autumn term, with a Nativity performance.

Our PE day is on a Monday. We would like the children to come into school wearing their PE kit. (Reception parents - please do not worry if you haven't managed to sort this for the first week). We would like Reception to bring their school uniform in their bag to change into afterwards as this is a great skill to practise developing their coordination and independence. Year One will have their PE session at the end of the day, so they can come into school in their PE kit and keep their PE kit on all day.

Every Tuesday afternoon we will be going out into the Wilderness to do our Wild Tribe sessions. During these sessions we will be developing a whole range of skills including the use of tools, den building and fire building. Your child will need a change of clothes for these sessions, please make sure they have their arms and legs covered otherwise they may not be able to take part in particular activities. As we like to spend as much time as we can learning outside, please provide a pair of named wellies for your child that can be left in school.

With this in mind we also ask that children come to school dressed appropriately for the weather, including waterproof shoes and a coat and that they bring a water bottle with them daily.

We will continue to use Seesaw as a home/school communication tool and age appropriate activities will be set weekly for the children to practise their learning from in the classroom at home. On Monday Reception children will bring their Seesaw login details home along with information about how to download the App.

As educators we want to give all of your children the very best start to the first years of their learning journey and firmly believe that parents' engagement with their children's learning and the children seeing us work together as a team around them really does raise their aspirations and increase their motivation.

We are also excited to be able to welcome volunteers back into school this year so if you feel able to, please get in touch so we can discuss ways in which you can support our mini-school.

I am very much looking forward to the term ahead, working with you all to see your amazing children's characters continue to grow and develop!

If you have any questions or concerns please do let me know.

Best wishes,

Mrs Samantha Drew - School Improvement Lead
and the First Years Mini School Staff Team - Mrs Dan Harding, Miss Sophie Furseman, Mrs Janine Marlow and Miss Kloe Jennings