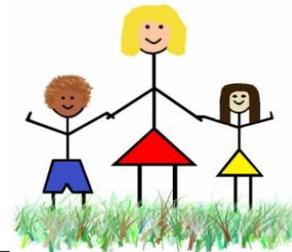




ST MARY'S CATHOLIC NURSERY, INFANT & JUNIOR SCHOOLS NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2016



Sunday 8th May - Seventh Sunday of Easter



This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Designated safeguarding officer in the Nursery & Infants' School is Mrs M Quinn and in the Junior School is Mrs. G Owens, Deputy Safeguarding Officer for both schools is Mrs Hulme and the Governor Safeguarding Officer is Mr. A. Scully. The schools have safeguarding & protection policies which can be viewed at the school office.

Although the sharing of photographs with family and friends is a great thing to do, please be reminded of the schools safeguarding procedures and refrain from taking pictures at school events. Thank you for your support regarding this as we all need to work together to look after our pupils.

Dear Parents/ Carers

Welcome back after Easter to bright weather and a great show of spring. Time to get the summer uniform out. The children always seem as if they have grown up and become more confident after a holiday period. We have started to plan for transition into the next year group but we are hoping to demonstrate this throughout the year as time goes on. This will be done by more staff based in each school to become familiar to all through visits and class swaps.

This term will see activities linked to the Year of Mercy which include Mass being celebrated in each school for the children. This term is also busy when new parent meetings are held and the joint summer fayre allows the whole community to gather together. We are really privileged to have a thriving school family. Thank you all for making this happen.

You may have seen that we are always looking for new staff to support the school especially in the current climate of teacher shortages. Adverts will continue to be placed to recruit more staff in each phase. We said farewell to Mrs Ashdown, who recently left the infant school, we wish her good health and happiness in the future.

Information letters for parents regarding low attendance will shortly be sent out and similar ones will be implemented for ongoing poor punctuality concerns too.

Parking - We have had more neighbours come into both schools again regarding parking.

Inconsiderate parking has to stop. Parents are blocking drives and reducing spaces that need to be kept for emergency vehicle access. We are moving towards publishing number plate details if it continues but don't really want to go down this route. Please model being a considerate parent to your children who will be parents of the future! Thank you.

Safeguarding Further to our previous requests we remind all parents and carers that taking photographs in school is not permitted without prior permission. To ensure this is being observed and to avoid any misunderstanding we ask that **smart phones and other devices should not be used within the school grounds**. For data protection reasons we also request that lists of children's names from school must not be held on any personal devices. If you do have any such list we ask you to delete these with immediate effect. Thank you for your understanding.

Spiritual, Moral, Social & Cultural Development

Preparations for our Year of Mercy celebrations are well underway. In response to Pope Francis's call, the Junior School will be going on pilgrimage to St. George's Cathedral, Southwark on 17th May. In addition, we are planning a whole school Year of Mercy Mass to be held in June at the Junior School, date to be confirmed.

The Chaplaincy Team has been busy preparing an assembly about the Year of Mercy which it will deliver to Years 3-6 next week.

Mass will be celebrated at the Infant's school for the crowning of Mary on Wednesday 11th May at 9.30am.

Many thanks for your generosity in support of the Catholic Children's Society Lenten Appeal. The boxes were collected by Paul from the society and we hope to inform you of the total collected in the next newsletter. We continue to invite parents to our Thursday liturgy at the Infants' and Monday Liturgy at the Junior School each week at 9am for praise and worship and to share the reading of the Sunday Gospel.

Uniform

Please be reminded that all school wear needs to conform to school uniform colours and this includes coats, summer hats and all other accessories.

Thank you to those families who always comply with school uniform as requested.

Health & Safety

Please be reminded that, the roadways within the school grounds are still used by cars and can be a potential risk to your child.

Please remember that dogs are not permitted in the school grounds at any time.

Governors

The next full Governing body meeting is on Wednesday 8th June at the Nursery & Infants' School.

Thank you to all parents who have returned the gift aid forms. This makes a big difference as we are able to claim £7.05 for every £25 donated. Please remember to send these in if you have not done so. All payments for Governors fund can be made on Parentpay at www.parentpay.com

School Office

Please be reminded that only prescribed medicines can be given in school by school staff (if prescribed four times a day). All other medicine will need to be administered by a parent or nominated person. For those with asthma, we have been advised that all children should have a small spacer in school and your child should know how to use the inhaler and spacer. This should be in a sealed clear plastic bag with your child's name on and you are responsible for taking this home half termly to clean.

Both websites for the Junior and Nursery & Infant Schools are now live. The domain addresses are www.stmarysjunior.org.uk and www.stmarysinfchool.org.uk These sites will still be updated over the coming weeks.

Please remember that any absence from school must be reported to the school office on the morning by telephone (**not by email**) followed up in writing. Also, please advise the school office if someone other than your normal contacts is going to collect your child by phoning before 2pm. If later than this we can not guarantee getting the message to your child when calling late in the school day.

Active Kids Vouchers

Please remember to send in your Active Kids Vouchers from Sainsbury's as these are used to purchase equipment in each school.

Woodcote Vouchers

Don't forget to collect the school vouchers from Woodcote Garden centre as we can purchase equipment for the school with these.

Berty Textile Bank

A reminder that there is a shoe and clothing recycling container on the kitchen playground at the infant school. Why don't you have a clear out and help to raise funds for the school. Please put the clothing and shoes into the bags provided and place directly in Berty Bin. The next collection is 19th May.

School Dinners

Please remember to keep up to date with payments on Parentpay ensuring you pay enough money on to your child's account in advance. If you receive an email reminder from the school please ensure you act promptly should a debt have incurred.

Internet Safety

Please find information as suggested by the Parent Forum at the recent meeting Useful websites include -

www.thinkuknow.co.uk - The Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) Centre has set up its own website which has been designed and written specifically for children, young people, teachers, parents and carers.

www.kidsmart.org.uk/ - Kidsmart is an award winning internet safety website for parents and those working with children. It has been developed by the children's internet charity Childnet International and has excellent information on many of the technologies used by children, with guidance on how to 'stay safe' online.

www.saferinternet.org.uk - Here you will find e-safety tips, advice and resources to help children and young people stay safe on the internet.

NURSERY & INFANTS' SCHOOL

News from Nursery

We have had a very busy time in the nursery investigating spiders, frogs and mini-beasts. We went to the school pond to collect some frog spawn and we found a frog which we brought back to the nursery. We are eagerly awaiting the changes to the tadpoles in our tank as they begin to grow back legs. The children recently enjoyed singing the song "There was an old lady who swallowed a fly", this led to the children thinking of their own ideas for which other animals the old lady may have swallowed. We made a large old lady outside and the children also made their own pictures and paintings of the animals that the old lady had eaten. We have been reading stories about witches and making potions and the children suggested different role play areas outside, we now have a potion and wand shop and a fire station in the outdoor area. We look forward to finishing off this term with a joint bug ball with Reception (more details to follow)

Reception

During the first two weeks of this half term Reception were lucky enough to go on a trip to Buckingham Palace Mews. We all had an amazing time and learnt so many new fun facts about the Queen and her carriages. We even had the chance to dress up and hold some artefacts. Thank you very much to all of the adults who came with us and helped supervise throughout the day.

We have now started our new topic 'Why do spiders eat flies?'. The children have thought about the things they want to learn, make and investigate during our topic. We are lucky enough to have tadpoles in each classroom which the children are observing, we can't believe how quickly they are growing! Next week we will start our preparations for the Ugly Bug Ball which will make an exciting end to our topic.

News from Year 1

We have started our new topic of 'Paws, Claws and Whiskers' and the children have created their own fact file posters on different animals. We have been looking at the story 'The Tiger Who Came To Tea' and we have written our own stories about different animals coming for different meals. The children in year 1 have also been preparing themselves for their trip to the Wildlife Centre. In our maths work we have started looking at multiplication and division and building on our doubling and sharing from last year.

News from Year 2

This half term our topic is "Scented Gardens". The children have been busy finding out about flowers and plants. They have also been weeding and clearing the flower beds in preparation for planting and growing of our own vegetables. Do take a look at our work when you are in the top Infant playground. Thank you to Mr Rogers for his time and hard work, coming in to show the children how to plant seeds and how to look after them.

JUNIOR SCHOOL

News from Year 3

Year 3 kicked off this term with a fantastic trip to Butser Farm. We had a day filled with activities to learn all about the Celts and Romans. It was definitely a messy day where everyone got stuck in to clunching! Year 3 also learned how to make Celtic inspired rings and wattle fences. That was hard work. The Celts must have been very strong! In English we have been writing a recount to say exactly what we did and what we thought of the day.

If you would like to learn more or visit Butser Ancient Farm visit www.butserancientfarm.co.uk, children in year 3 can return for FREE by downloading a voucher from Hampshireattractions.co.uk/offers.

Our new science topic is plants. We are looking forward to planting our own plants and watching them grow.

News from Year 4

Continuing with our reflection and spiritual growth during Lent, we participated with the Stations of the Cross in the grounds of St. Philomena's.

We made 3D models of a river; this was a practical experience which enabled the children to apply their geographical knowledge of physical features of the River Usk. Thank you so much for helping with newspapers and boxes - this support was much appreciated.

We hope you are enjoying the creative and unique light up picture frames that the children brought home to share. The children enjoyed designing and making their frames, they used cutting and joining skills (some sawing for the first time!) to make their aesthetic frame design and their structural wooden frame. Finally, they assembled these elements together to form their final frames. Thank you for the ongoing support of parents who came to help on the day.

News from Year 5

Our Year 5 trip to Bough Beech was a huge success with links to our Geography and work this term. Before we embarked on our trip we had a guest speaker visit us to answer any questions we had about Bough Beech. This trip to the water reservoir answered lots of our questions and we hope that our water detectives have been working hard at home giving you tips on how to save water!. Thank you to the Parents who helped out on our fun-filled day! In English we have been studying two poets; Benjamin Zephaniah and Kit Wright. We have been excited to read numerous amounts of poems by both poets and have performed them as well as written poems using their inspiration poems!

News from Year 6

Year 6 have been putting in an incredible amount of work over this past month to get themselves ready for the oncoming SATS exam week. Every spare minute has been devoted to revision and practicing a multitude of different mathematical concepts and difficult grammatical terms that most adults won't know!! (Such as writing subjunctive forms and identifying past and present progressive sentences.)

Luckily, we have had a couple of lessons each week where we can relax and briefly forget about SATS. In PE we have been learning cricket and a range of fitness and small game activities and in music we have finally started work on our Year 6 production adapted from 'Grease'.



Children will be learning about democracy and the impending vote for the United Kingdom to stay as part of the European Union or not. St Mary's will be holding a ballot on election day in June so that the children can learn more about the values of Modern Britain and how to have a democratic expression of opinion. Please support the children's understanding of articles 12 and 13 - freedom of expression and points of view.



Travel Plan

Thank you for your responses to the questionnaire, we hope you found it useful. Car Free Day has been planned for Friday 27th May, Junior Travel Advisors will be launching a sticker design competition and the winners will have their design made into a sticker that children will wear on the day to support safer and more environmentally friendly travel to school. Car free travel is tricky however your support on this one day of the year would be greatly appreciated.

Friends of St Mary's

As you will be aware, Friends of St Mary's have agreed to donate the proceeds from the Sponsored Bounce to fund the whole school pilgrimage to St George's Cathedral on 17th May. This will be an amazing experience for all children in the school and we are delighted that this fundraising event has been able to support this trip.