



ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

www.stjosephs207.herts.sch.uk

JANUARY/
FEBRUARY 2016

"TO LIVE LOVE AND LEARN IN A CARING CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY"



HEAD TEACHER MISSION AWARDS

At the whole school assembly this morning we presented the Headteacher Mission award certificate to the following pupils who have been actively living out our school mission statement:

Ash – Ava & Filip
Beech – Olivia & Lewis
Cedar – Francesca & Evan
Elm – Lena & Luke
Fir – Mia & Grace
Hazel – Sienna & Arthur
Maple – Anastasia & Lucas
Oak – Sophie & Charlie
Pine – Jacob & Edward
Sycamore- Harrison & Jessica
Willow – Euan & Jack

DINNER MONEY FOR JUNIORS

Please note: Dinner money must be paid for either weekly or half-termly IN ADVANCE. School meals are currently priced at £2.30 per day, £11.50 per week. If you wish to pay for next half-term in advance, the cost of school meals up to Easter will be £52.90. If you prefer, you can pay any amount of your choice to keep your balance in credit. Please pay online using the School Gateway system or by cash or cheque, making any cheques payable to Hertfordshire Catering Ltd.

IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM THE CATERING MANAGER : Two weeks' notice in writing to Mrs Thompson is required for any changes to the children's dietary pattern.

MILK ORDER

Don't forget that milk is now available to all age groups through the school. If you would like your child to receive mid-morning milk please just visit www.coolmilk.com to register and place your order.



NURSERY ADMISSIONS 2016-2017

If your child was born between 1st September 2012 and 31st August 2013 you will now be able to apply for a Nursery place. Our forms are available at the above school website address.

VISITING SPEAKER

On Thursday 14th January KS1 and KS2 pupils at St Joseph's were fortunate enough to have a visiting speaker called Ibrar Ali talk with the school.

Ibrar (Ibi) served in the British Army as an Infantry Officer in The Yorkshire Regiment for almost 12 years. He was injured by a roadside bomb in 2007 resulting in his right arm being amputated below the elbow. He counts himself as being lucky as he was able to remain in service and return on frontline duty to Iraq and Afghanistan. Ibi was awarded the Military Cross for gallantry during the 2006-07 tour of Iraq but then retired the following year in order to pursue his passion for charity work. This passion extended to helping his fellow injured servicemen and women and has led to him being a part of a number of Walking With The Wounded's (WWTW) expeditions. These include skiing to the South Pole which was the subject of the ITV documentary "Harry's South Pole Heroes" and completing the 'toughest footrace on Earth', the Marathon des Sables in 2015. In 2015 you may have seen Ibi, along with other WWTW campaigners, on 'Pride of Britain' receiving the prestigious honour for the invaluable work that they do.

The children listened intently to all that Ibi said and felt inspired by his achievements. The questions that were asked showed great maturity and Ibi was impressed by the ethos that the children demonstrated.



KEY STAGE 1

All the KS1 classes were fortunate enough to have class masses this half term. Each mass carried a different theme. Father Fortunato led the masses with the children saying their bits with great enthusiasm. Miss Roper kindly carried out the musical accompaniment. Thank you to the many parents and family members who shared our masses with us - it can be tricky taking this time out in the middle of a Friday. We would also like to thank Brenda O'Carroll, our RE governor for attending all 3 masses.

FOUNDATION STAGE

Reception and Morning Nursery children took part in a road safety workshop run by Hertfordshire Safe and Sustainable journeys team. The children were taught about crossing a road safely; remembering to 'Stop! Look, and listen' and hold a grown-ups hand. The afternoon Nursery children learnt the same skills in class and showed great understanding of how to keep themselves safe.

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE

To mark the beginning of Lent, Fr. Fortunato led a service at the school on Ash Wednesday. Staff and pupils were asked to consider how they could make an even greater difference to others by giving something up or taking something up during the Lenten period. Fr Fortunato also reminded us all of the importance of prayer and using prayer to strengthen our relationship with God.

COLLEGE CAR PARK DROP OFF

Thank you to the small dedicated group of parents who have been running the drop off. Pupils in Year 3 to Year 6 can be dropped within the coned area any time between 8.40am and 8.55am where they will be seen through the gate to make their own way to class. Please consider using the drop off and volunteering. It will only take 20 minutes of your time once a week/fortnight. The rota for next half term is now available at: www.signupgenius.com/go/20F0E4BA-AA62EA1F49-drop Please note that the drop off will not be open on days when we do not have two volunteers and unfortunately we may have to review whether it continues if we are unable to get enough volunteers each week.


INTERNET SAFETY DAY

An important focus of our Computing work is reminding our pupils how to stay safe when online. On Tuesday 9th February, Internet Safety Day, pupils spent a morning/afternoon thinking about the various ways they can keep safe, including talking to adults at home/in school when they see or read anything that upsets them.

REFUGEE CRISIS

On Friday 5th February, we were delighted to welcome Joe Galloway a representative from CAFOD to the school. Joe came to St Joseph's to learn about the fundraising activities the Chaplaincy Team organised last term in aid of the refugee crisis. In response to Pope Francis' call for a Year of Mercy, the children wanted to do something to support the refugee appeal, and so the Chaplaincy Team organised a day of sporting/fun competitions to raise as much money as possible. We were delighted to be able to present Joe with a cheque for £1000. Thank you to everyone for supporting this appeal.

SPORTING NEWS

The football league continues and the children are doing exceptionally well.  They have won all their matches so far this term! We played some friendly matches too and won these with great conviction.



Keep it up!

The year 5 and 6 children are enjoying their term of tennis with Ali keeping them on their toes outside. She has complimented the group on being the best behaved that she has had. Well done!

Year 1 and 2 pupils continue to have fun on a Friday with their PE sessions being led by the sports leaders from Hockerill.

Janine Peart, from Stortford Gymnastics, has run a breakfast club for year 3 and 4 pupils. They have all come on tremendously and have had fun. She is also inspiring the year 3 and 4 pupils from Oak and Hazel during PE this term. We have taken part in our first BSP competition this year and won our leg.

Just a note to say how very proud we are of all of the children who competed at the Year 6 Indoor Sports hall Athletics Competition.

After all scores had been tallied, we came second overall out of 19 schools. Fantastic! The children represented our school in a polite and respectful manner. Well done to all involved!

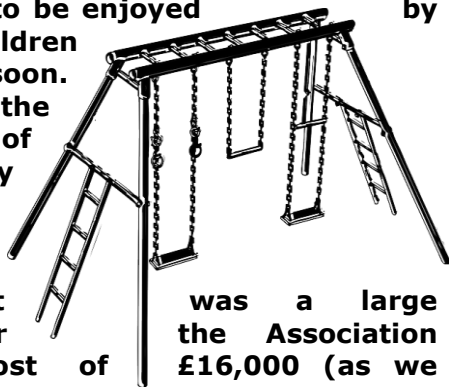
There is the Sports Relief mile on the 20th of March at Grange Paddocks. It would be great to see a sea of St Joe's pupils there as I know you can all run a mile!

SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

It has been a quiet start to 2016 for the School Association, however we do have a number of upcoming things planned for the next few months so please save the dates in your diaries-
Spring Disco- Friday 4th March
Harlow Abseil Saturday 30th April (see below)

May Fayre – Saturday 21st May
Sponsored Bounce Friday 10th June
Summer Disco-Friday 15th July

Thanks to your generosity our quest to help improve the playground facilities has been successful. We are delighted to see the new equipment installed in the playground – it is currently awaiting a final safety check & should be ready to be enjoyed by the children very soon. Whilst the purchase of this play



equipment was a large outlay for the Association at a cost of £16,000 (as we discovered...play equipment is very expensive!) we know that the children will have many hours of fun using it in the years to come!

There are many other smaller initiatives that are funded by the School Association – your time, effort, donations and support really do have an impact on all of our children. Thank you!

Coming up after Easter...

Crazy Parents to Abseil for St Joseph's School Association & The Alzheimer's Society

5 parents (1 of whom is a teacher too!)
- Cathy McLornan, Bob Rooney, Rachel Kelly, Richard Abbott and Kim Foster will be abseiling down the Harlow Water Tower on Saturday 30st April.

The School Association is keen to support other national charities and this year we are proud to be raising money for the Alzheimer's Society. The Alzheimer's Society are leading the fight against dementia and do so much to help those families affected by it.

All money raised from this event will be shared equally between The School Association and The Alzheimer's Society. The School Association has opened a "Virgin Money Giving" account where donations can be made online. Please remember to gift aid if you can. Gift Aid is where the Government will give money for each donation you make (if you are a UK tax-payer) at a rate of £2.50 for every £10 donated. Please do consider sponsoring this brave group!

<http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/fundraiser-web/fundraiser/showFundraiserProfilePage.action?userUrl=stjosfabfiveabseil>

Just a reminder that the 100 club is still being drawn each month & the Christmas Savings Club is also up & running for Christmas 2016! Contact us if you are interested in joining either of these.

Should you be able to help or require any further information regarding the work we do, please drop us an email at stjosephsschoolassociation@hotmail.co.uk

NOTE FROM GOVERNORS

The start to 2016 has been a busy one for the Governing Body. The Personnel Committee has now advertised for a new Deputy Headteacher and we hope to receive many applications. We will need to choose who to interview and then obtain references before the interviews start. We will be assisted by an advisor from the Diocese in this process. As a Voluntary Aided Church School, the Governors are the employers of all staff (not the Local Authority as in State Schools). We will hopefully appoint a worthy replacement to Mrs Nicholson in plenty of time, before she leaves us in July 2016.

We pursue our aim to replace our old school building and to increase the number of students that we can take. We are always oversubscribed to the main school and we have to turn away Catholics every year. We have previously informed you that we have succeeded in our bid for funding under the Government's Priority School Building (PSB2) scheme. Sadly, what we still do not know is whether they will agree to a rebuild or a refurbishment. We are now told that there will be a structural survey in the autumn term before a decision is made. We are supported by the Diocese in our attempts to increase student numbers but money is always the challenge. We believe that the time is right to pursue our aims; with the additional thousands of houses about to be built in Bishop's Stortford; but we have to convince the Local Authority to invest in our school. Much work needs to be done to try to achieve our aims.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR SAFE TRAVEL GROUP

As detailed in our parking update letter yesterday, we would welcome parent volunteers to work with our safe travel team to:

- Implement the walking bus routes which have already been risked assessed from three areas in the town but need volunteers to run
- Increase the number of volunteers for our drop off facility in the college gravel car park
- Find and promote areas to park and stride from
- Become involved in the discussions around providing safe and cost effective drop off/parking on the school site
- Support the school in implementing the 'Modeshift STARS' initiatives

If you are in a position to volunteer your time and become a member of the St Joseph's safe travel group, please speak to or e mail Nicola McManus: sbmanager@stjosephs207.herts.sch.uk

SCHOOL BUILDING PROJECT – PSB2 FAQs

Q. Are we getting a new school building in the summer holiday? What are the timescales for any work?

A. No. There is no guarantee that we will get a new school building. The government agency in charge of the PSB2 project have to decide whether the main school building is bad enough to warrant a new building or some form of extensive refurbishment. Our surveyors feel that the building is poor enough to justify a new build, but it will come down to the structure of the building and money. Ultimately that decision is out of our hands.

Surveyors will return back to the school by December 2016 and indications are that the scope of the project will be confirmed by July 2017. Therefore it will be September 2017 before any work commences – if timescales do not change in the meantime!

Q. What is wrong with the current building?

A. School buildings in Hertfordshire built in the early 1960s, like ours, were

not designed to last much more than 40 years. Our building has seen extensive work and investment by the Governing Body over the last decade but a lot of this has been to replace like for like – the school kitchen, the Nursery Class, the Reception classrooms all of which had to be replaced without our choosing in order for the school to remain operational. The boiler and a section of roofing over Oak and Maple classrooms has been replaced, as has the window walling in the hall and a new soak away installed to ensure the hall is not flooded so easily. The disability access works and the new Hazel classroom extension this year have enhanced the buildings – other works have updated and improved the building but as emergency replacement projects. The Governing Body have spent over £1,000,000 in the last decade, with parents generously providing £100,000 via the governors' building fund. Despite all of these works, the fabric of the building is poor and we are desperately short of usable space compared with other schools.

Q. Will Parents get an input into the new building?

A. Very doubtful. It is highly unlikely that the school will have much input into the design of any new building project – there will be set designs used and costed out which will be followed. If the school receives a refurbishment, then the footprint of the building will likely remain as it is.

Q. Where will any new school building go?

A. *If* we were fortunate to get the go ahead for a new building, it would make sense for it to be built around the existing building on the field or at the top of the field. That way the school would be operational and costs reduced in terms of hiring temporary accommodation. However, we are getting ahead of ourselves again!

Q. So what happens now?

A. Governors are working hard with our surveyors to build up our case for justifying a new build rather than a refurbishment. The Governors are committed to do the very best for our families now and for future generations of children attending our school. Over half term, window walling improvements will be made to Pine, Sycamore and Willow classes to improve their heat retention in the winter and reduce the glare of sunlight in the summer months. We are also in dialogue with the LA and the Diocese in terms of increasing our pupil admission number as each year the demand for places is greater than the school places available.