



Head-lines

I've been thinking this for a couple of years now, but I'm going to go ahead and say it - the Autumn term is my favourite! Don't get me wrong, I like summer - balmy evenings, BBQ, Wimbledon and Pimms, but there is just something about the Autumn season - the crisp air, the changing colours, cosy evenings, and of course the countdown to Christmas! I have already met with the PTA and asked them to fulfil my wishes with Christmas - last year was big; let's go bigger!!! As always, I am sure they are up to the challenge! I also enjoy this term as it is a new start, full of opportunity and promise. It always reminds me of how lucky we are to work in a school, welcoming new children and seeing the progress they make as the year unfolds. I hope the academic year has got off to a good start for you, and I wish you a lovely half term.

Mr Turner

Behaviour

There are lots of things I am proud of in this school, and I must say that behaviour is up there. We honestly are privileged to have such wonderful, amazing, polite and kind children. I have an email file of feedback from visitors to our school, who always praise the children for their high levels of conduct, manners, politeness and good behaviour. I really do think it is a strong point of ours.

However..... like everything, there is always room for improvement. I would say this is especially true with something like behaviour which is potentially very subjective - if your child comes home with accounts of

poor behaviour etc, that is potentially the lens through which you would view the whole school. I want to stress that I place a great deal of value in good levels of behaviour, manners, politeness and conduct, and I want to make one thing absolutely crystal clear - I will not tolerate bullying in this school. However, again, definitions of bullying can sometimes become blurred and there is always a question of when do 'expected playground' issues cross the line and become bullying? We are working with young children who need support in understanding consequences and right from wrong.

So this year, I would like to undertake some work to look at behaviour at St Joseph's

and review our systems, actions and structures. We have already begun by completing some initial surveys with the children to establish their view of the school. Over the coming months I will be asking you, as parents, for feedback and conducting some additional research.

We are a school; we are professional educators. However, we - staff and parents are all on the same 'team' - we all have the same moral purpose; to help educate, shape and develop the children in our care in order to help them be the best they can be and to make the future world a better place. I am sure you will support me with this mission and work together in partnership.

Parent Voice

Thank you for your ballots for the vacant Parent Governor position. Results will be shared after half term. And thank you for your response to the survey regarding morning drop off systems. I will keep the survey open until Friday, and then go through your feedback. Thank you for taking the time to share your views.

Attendance

As I mentioned last year, our overall attendance for the year dropped to below 96%. We want to aim for as close to 100% as possible, as every school day really matters. From September to date, our attendance stands at 95%. Please work with us to ensure your child is in school and on time every day. Thank you

Firbobs

I am sure you are aware that from September, we welcomed our new before and after school care provider - Firbobs. I have visited a few of the sessions and the children have been having a great time - lots of activities, range of food snacks and I know there are some more exciting things coming. If you are thinking about making use of the service or would like to find out more, please contact Carrie on 07709807400 or by registering at www.firbobs.com

Parent Sessions

Thank you to parents who joined us for the workshop 'Keeping up with the kids' all about protecting your child in an online world.

Also thanks to the parents who joined us for the Dyslexia Support session.

We hope you found both sessions useful, informative and have helped you support your children.

Support for Gambia project

I was absolutely delighted to be approached by some of our Year 6 girls who asked if they could coordinate a fundraising event to help children in Gambia. They told me that just £30 would help send a child to school in some of the poorest parts of Gambia. They wanted to hold a school raffle to raise funds. The girls put together a powerpoint, led a whole school assembly and wrote a letter to parents to share information about their project. To date they have raised more than £100! A huge thanks to Scarlett, Ines, Aliyah, Caitin and Charlotte for your care, compassion and organising!



PTA logo competition

Congratulations to Hannah who received the most votes for her design for the PTA logo. There was tough competition with many great designs, but Hannah's was chosen overall winner and will be used on all PTA letters and advertising.

Congratulations Hannah and hope you enjoy continuing to develop your art skills with the 1st prize of an art set!

Coming up - Curriculum!!

One of the big school action targets for this year is to look at our curriculum design. We want our curriculum to be engaging, inspiring, challenging and appropriate so that it meets the needs of St Joseph's children and gives them the skills, knowledge and understanding they need to make a positive difference to a 21st Century World (so no small task!) Staff are looking at each subject and looking at ways to develop them. Coming up in Term 2, staff are implementing a new English scheme called 'Pathways to Writing' - this puts quality texts at the heart of the lessons and all English work comes from there. A lot of the texts are 'picture books' as research has found that this allows children to access with a 'low entry, high ceiling' approach. We are sure the Pathways work will have a dramatic impact on the teaching of English.

Then later on in the term, staff are receiving training on Teaching Maths to Mastery. This will be driven by a scheme called 'Maths No Problem' which takes its approach from Singapore methods of teaching Mathematics (Singapore always comes out top in international studies of school performance). As the year progresses, we will be further implementing this approach. We will keep you informed of the process and hope to be able to offer some parent sessions to explain this quite different approach to the teaching of mathematics.

Thought for the term

As we are not too far off November, the month of Remembrance, we offer our thoughts and prayers to all those loved ones we have lost. May they sleep safely in the Father's arms. Eternal Rest, Grant unto them O Lord and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace, Amen.