



St John Rigby Catholic Primary School
'God's will be done through work and play, as we follow Jesus day by day'

NEWSLETTER

July 2017



Message from the Head Teacher

Can it really be true that the academic year is nearly over? Where did the time go? As we approach the end of the year and look towards a time of reflection and relaxation over the summer period, we can look back with great joy on what the children have achieved and how much they developed. As teachers, report writing can be a time-consuming task and teachers would not be human if they weren't allowed to breathe a sigh of relief once the process is finished. Nevertheless, there is a feeling of great satisfaction as we recall those special moments that each child has brought us ranging from the first time a child finished an independent piece of writing to success on the sporting field or the performance of a dance which a child had choreographed with his/her friendship group.

Whilst enjoying these moments, we may think of the wider world and the increasing challenges it brings. We cannot help but ask ourselves how we best guide our precious youngsters in such a way that they can live and breathe our Gospel values when the wider world puts them to the test.

Matthew's gospel from Sunday 9th July, perhaps reminds us all as to how best to approach this:

At that time Jesus exclaimed, 'I bless you, Father, Lord of heaven and of earth, for hiding these things from the learned and the clever and revealing them to little children.'

Throughout this year in our liturgies, our children have reminded us the importance of seeing the world through a child's lens. This involves trust, tolerance and seeing the best in each and every person they meet. It never involves suspicion or underhandedness.

We see this in the ease in which children take each other's hand or the hand of an adult? Is there a more beautiful symbol than two hands joined together? As a parent, there comes a time when a child perhaps does not do that as readily and do we not yearn for those days? I know I do! As adults, do we sometimes yearn to hold a hand? It's such a simple instinctive symbol of the fact that we mean something special to somebody else. If we don't get that feeling, do we sometimes look to replace it with other things such as the pursuit of success, money, alcohol or other vices? It is in those moments, that Jesus will be there for us if like children, we acknowledge our fragility, we thank Him for what we have and we pray that we can make Him proud.

I pray that you will have a wonderful summer break full of joy and peace. If you are travelling, have a safe journey

Mr. A. Palmer

Staffing Changes

It is with a heavy heart that we say goodbye to Miss Bancroft. She is embarking upon new adventures and we keep her in our thoughts and prayers. We will miss her unique and lovely manner with the children, her wonderful sense of humour and the time she has taken with each child in her care to nurture and instil such great self-belief.

We welcome two new members of staff. The first is Mr. Dell who joins Year 4. Mr. Dell is an ex St. John Rigby pupil who has worked in Central Beds for a number of years. He has already been in to school to meet the new 4D who are clearly very excited for September.

We also welcome Mr. Gristock who has been appointed as our Lead PE Teacher. Mr. Gristock is already well known to many pupils as he has been part of the Friday enrichment team and has volunteered his services in coaching many of our upper primary boys' and girls' football teams. We are delighted that he now joins us in this new role.

Leadership at St John Rigby

Over the past two years, the school has truly benefited from being part of the Trust of Bedford Catholic Schools which also includes a Teaching School. The Teaching School is active across Bedford in the training of new teachers as well as training and supporting our next generation of leaders.

We are delighted to announce that we have a new leadership team at St. John Rigby from September. This leadership team is made up of existing members of staff who have grown and developed with the school and the Trust.

The team consists of Mrs. McGettigan who becomes our Senior Assistant Head. Mrs. Webster and Ms. Vecchio have been appointed as Assistant Heads. Mrs. Woodworth is our E Years and KS1 leader of learning.

It is with great excitement that our new team looks forward to securing further improvements to the school and to serving the school community. We are grateful for your continued support, encouragement and prayers.

Fencing and Other Works

The fencing is well underway as you will have seen. At the time of writing, it is unfinished but we can already see a clear difference. Many children, staff and parents have commented on how it sends out a clear message around site security.

Works are also in hand on kitchen upgrades for which we also received academies funding. All being well, these will be completed in time for the new academic year.

You may remember from the last newsletter that I mentioned that *Relish* are taking over as our new catering management team. We have had assemblies on this and have started to get the children involved in what they can offer. We believe that *Relish* can really engage children with healthy, tasty food and we have asked the children to consider trying the new meals if they don't currently take up school meals. If you would like to know more about what Relish is offering go to: <http://www.relishschoolfood.co.uk/> (note that logins and parent access will be issued in the new term).

Attendance and Term Dates

Just a gentle reminder that the first day back in school for all children in Years 1 – 6 is **Tuesday September 5th**.

I would also like to draw your attention to the last day of term which is **Friday December 15th**. Many schools in Bedford are not breaking up until the Borough-specified date of Tuesday December 18th. In discussion with our partner schools we made the decision to go with the Friday so that there is an extra weekend available particularly for those families that travel and need to book flights etc. This is also designed to discourage term time holidays.

With this in mind, I would like to take this opportunity to remind all parents that term-time holidays can't be authorised and will lead to penalty notice. We are seeing an increase in requests.

All schools are expected to take action when children are in danger of becoming persistent absentees. A persistent absentee is an individual whose attendance is 90% or less. Schools in Bedford work closely with an EWO (Educational Welfare Officer) to monitor patterns of attendance and punctuality over time and to alert parents if these need to improve.

To put 90% into context, this means less than 20 days or 120 hours. Recent statistics suggest that 17 days missed means that on average, a child drops a grade or level. For example, this could be the difference between achieving the expected year group standard or "working towards".

Our new website:

We are delighted to be launching a new website (will be live by the end of term) which has a great deal more information which is more accessible. It has been designed to give a greater insight into the culture of our school and is compatible on all devices. It also has our Twitter feeds. We would be grateful if you could take time to "favourite" it. The address remains the same at www.stjohnrigby.org

Outdoor developments and Sporting achievements

Sport continues to develop at a pace at SJR. We are delighted that we have now achieved the Sainsbury's Silver Sports Mark and are well on course for Gold next year.

Congratulations to all who have been involved in achieving a "Green Trees Schools" Gold award. Years 3 and 4 have been heavily involved in tree planting around the school. We have another delivery of trees in October so anyone parents who would like to come in and join the planting, feel free to contact Mr. Woodward. Volunteers most welcome.

PTA: Thanks

Many thanks to all who supported our Summer Fair. The move to Friday night seems to have been well received. Initial figures suggest that we have raised close to £1700 on the day. We are grateful to many parents who arranged time off work to come into school during the afternoon (or earlier in some cases) to work with our children and staff in setting up. As ever, PTA members have given so much over this year in raising money for projects that can have a real impact on the children's learning experience. These range from "kindle corner" in the library through to E Years play equipment and our new KS1 garden which is taking shape.

If you would like to get involved with the PTA, there is a facebook page or email pta@stjohnrigby.org. No long-term commitment is required. There are so many great events that are organised by the PTA from fun running to discos and fairs. Not only do they raise funds but they provide us with many of our most memorable moments!

Fiver Challenge

Well done to year 6 on their enterprising work. The article below featured in the local "Bedford Bulletin" recently:



St John Rigby and the 'Fiver Challenge'

WITH the SATs over, St. John Rigby Year 6 children and staff have got together to develop their creativity and enterprise as they enjoy their final weeks at the school before moving onto pastures new. All Year 6 children are involved in the 'fiver challenge', a national young enterprise scheme.

Children arrange themselves into teams of no more than six. Each team is given a shiny new plastic five-pound note and is challenged to make as much profit as possible using as many fundraising initiatives as they can. This year, the children have focused their attention on leading and coaching younger children in sport.

"Our Year 6 children organise everything," said the Year 6 teaching team. "For example, the football training is professionally planned with sessions on passing, shooting... everything!"

"The main purpose is for children to be enterprising and to have fun," said Mr. Palmer, Headteacher. "There are some future 'Apprentice' contestants in our ranks, without a doubt!"

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VLE

Also available to access is the VLE. Perhaps you could go on and see if there are any fun educational games/activities to do!

www.bb.itslearning.com