



St John Rigby Catholic Primary School

'God's will be done through work and play, as we follow Jesus day by day'

NEWSLETTER

May 2018



Message from the Headteacher

During the month of May, and as part of the Year of Prayer and Vocation, Bishop Peter asks us to think about our thirst for God which is planted deep within us. We are like a 'dry weary land without water' (Ps 63). In assembly, we have talked about the Atacama Desert, in Chile, the driest place on earth.

Some of the weather stations in the area have reported no rainfall for over hundred years. Plants do grow from time to time as they receive some moisture from the clouds of fog that form above the Pacific ocean and then move inland. The Atacama Desert, like Europe, is not alone in experiencing freak weather conditions in recent years. As well as torrential thunderstorms, snow fell on the desert floor in 2015. This weather led to the growth of a sea of purple and white flowers (a phenomenon known as *Desierto Florido*, flowering desert) whereby seeds under the ground that had laid dormant for hundreds of years, germinated and produced a shiny sea of colour and life.

As we celebrate this season of Pentecost and reflect on the start of the apostolic mission, we recognise that these apostles, guided by the Holy Spirit went out into a desert, a place of thirst. The message they gave satisfied the thirst of people for faith (an encounter with Christ) and this faith thrived in the unlikeliest of places. Roman leaders, who had previously put apostles to death, converted to Christianity.

As I approach my departure, I find myself asking the question, how do I know if the Holy Spirit is still at work? Do I see her at work in our children? My goodness, yes!

Our children come into school with a readiness to embrace every learning experience. They bring that sense of awe and wonder about every aspect of God's creation, they bring an admirable willingness to form new relationships recognising, with great wisdom, that relationships have highs and lows. When relationships go wrong, our children take the lead in putting them right without fear of rejection, and, if there is rejection, they don't give up. What an example.

The best schools are able to model the values that will ensure that society thrives in the future. I would challenge any societal leader from an American President to local politicians to come and spend a typical day with our children. What they should be striving for is plain to see here, and for me as Head, it has been truly inspirational.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the support that you have given me during my time as Headteacher. I have felt a genuine sense of love, affection, and friendship from so many families, something that has been genuinely moving. Many of you have been kind enough to stop and wish me well in my new venture. I have also been asked about my most memorable moments here. Perhaps the most memorable are those where smiles feature prominently. A little trawl through our website and social media feeds reveals a constant stream of memories: wonderful liturgies, inspirational charity work and fundraising, sporting prowess and great costumes! These moments should make us smile because they are all united by one key thing: children being allowed to be children.

When pupils leave us, we always say farewell in assemblies by praying that they will take something of the spirit of St John Rigby with them and hold this dear in their hearts. I can safely say that the spirit of St John Rigby will always be with me and hopefully help me in my quest to continue to learn and serve our Catholic schools.

Finally, I leave St John Rigby in great hands. Mrs McGettigan and all who lead our school bring a relentless drive to secure further improvement.

The community of SJR will never be far from my thoughts and prayers. God bless.

Adam Palmer
Headteacher



Mobile phones

Please could we remind you that mobile phones should not be visible on any part of the school site. For reasons of child protection could all parents make sure that phones are put away from the moment we enter the grounds.

In addition to no smoking, there is also no vaping allowed within the grounds.

New member of staff

Following a recent recruitment and interview process, we are delighted to welcome Mr Matthew Kumar who will join us as class teacher in preparation for the new academic year. Mr Kumar is already well known to many of our older pupils as he and Mr Gristock have a good track record of success as coaches of our football teams over the past two years.

Website and communications

Please do check out our new website at www.stjohnrigby.org "Latest news" articles are being added all of the time and these are linked to our social media feeds.

Key term Dates for the Summer Term (updates are placed on the website calendar)

Monday 4th June: Pupils return after half term break

Monday 18th June: Year 2 Liturgy to parents (time TBC)

Wed 20th June: Year 6 sports day hosted by St Thomas More

Thursday 21st June: Feast of SJR (Picnic and liturgical celebrations in school)

Tuesday 26th June: Early Years to Year One Transition morning (9.15am)

Friday 29th June: SJR Sports Day

Tuesday 3rd July: Year 6 Production (6pm)

Wed 4th July: New Early Years Transition morning (9.15am)/Year 6 Transition Day at STM

Wed 4th July: Year 2 trip to Holodenby House

Thursday 5th July: Holy Communion Celebration Mass (10.30am)

Friday 6th July: PTA MUFTI Day and Disco for Early Years to Year 5

Monday 9th July: Year One liturgy to parents (time TBC)

Monday 9th July: Wednesday 11th July: Year 6 Outdoor Residential to Hilltop Centre

Tuesday 10th July: Year 5 Sulgrave Manor

Thursday 12th July: In-year transition morning (Year 1 to Year 5)

Friday 13th July: All Reports go home/ PTA Summer Fair (3.30pm – 6pm)

Wed 18th July: Early Years – end of year assembly to parents followed by family picnic (10.45am)

Post Report Parent Drop-in (3.30pm – 4.30pm)

Thursday 19th July: Year 6 Leavers Mass (2pm)/6pm – Year 6 Graduation and Disco

Friday 20th July: End of Term

Look out for a brand new professional looking format in our next newsletter.

Year 5 MOTD Report

Two Year 5 football teams finish 2nd and 3rd out of 14 schools across Bedford

On Thursday 26th April St John Rigby footballers proudly represented the school in a Year 5 football tournament; the depth of talent in the year group meant that the school was able to enter two teams in the tournament. The teams showed phenomenal effort throughout the tournament and managed to place 2nd and 3rd out of 14 local schools. Throughout the day our teams shrugged off very capable opponents achieving score lines (that were reminiscent of Liverpool's European ventures but without the defensive frailties!) of 4/5-0. Our teams displayed great resilience and determination within the group stages and met one another in the semifinals, the game was

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end to end and both goalkeepers put in exemplary, "DeGea-like" performances. Unlike DeGea, our goalies had more sensible hair.



The two SJR teams actually played each other for a slot in the final. Having made the final, team B held off the winners until the last couple of minutes of extra time, when a cruel deflected shot unfortunately managed to creep into the bottom corner. It was reminiscent of the kind of heartbreak moment that Gary Mabbutt suffered in 1987 for Spurs in the FA Cup Final against Coventry City. Despite this, for the last 2 minutes of extra time, the boys piled on the pressure, peppering the crossbar and post; they just failed to secure that all-important equaliser. It was a devastating loss but our players showed the characters they are and congratulated the other team. The team's spirit remained optimistic with the boys saying to their coaches, "We will return next year and win". Thanks to all of our teaching assistants who came along and supported. Great fun. (Mr A Gristock)

Car Parking

Please be reminded that unless your child/ren are attending morning club they should **not be coming into school before 8.30am**. When entering school they should **not** walk across the car park but stick to the footpaths. Many thanks.

For safety around the school, we ask that children do not ride bikes or scooters until they have left the school site.

We also have a number of cars that are double parking in the bays outside of the school. We continue to seek advice from the local police who have suggested that we start to record registration plates of vehicles who have repeatedly parked in this way over time. We are not doing this to make things awkward but in response to many parents and members of the public who are extremely concerned that it is only a matter of time before there is a serious accident involving a child.

Recycling

We are currently looking at more innovative ways to promote recycling in our school. This was something that featured heavily in this term's Year 4 liturgy. In the meantime, we will be encouraging children to take yoghurt pots and drink cartons home until we have secured facilities in school.

Multi-Sports Success

Congratulations to all the children who took part in the recent Multisports event at Castle Newnham!

The children took part in rounders, cricket and golf activities. Great fun was had by all in the entire year group, in what was a fantastically organised event. Well done to both the children who participated and to the staff who organised the events!

Our new Sports and Outdoor Blog can be found on the website at:
<https://www.stjohnrigby.org/blog/?pid=3&nid=10&storyid=65>



Gardening Awards



Well done to the girls from our lunch time gardening club!

Almost two years ago our children began planting trees from the Woodland Trust. We are now in our third year of working with the Woodland Trust and have recently received our "Gold Green Tree School Award"! Well done to all those who have contributed - Platinum Award here we come!

Out and About

A new branch to learning! Out and About at Forest School, April – May 2018

Recently the Out and About group attended the Forest School at the University of Bedfordshire to benefit from learning in the outdoors, with a specific focus on enhancement of literacy skills. The pupils were a mix of year groups, ranging from Year 3 through to Year 6 and went to Forest School for 4 sessions in total, building on experiences some of the children had already acquired last year on a previous visit.



This time the four sessions were specifically timed to take place in the summer term, in the hope that the weather would be favourable, thereby allowing the children unrestricted access to the Forest School and learning opportunities it presented them with. The Forest School setting facilitated the writing process through the 'free' exploration of a range of clues and props left scattered in and around the Forest School...but who had left all these awesome things lying around??? The children were particularly intrigued by the positioning of the clues and the fact that each time they came over a four-week period, footprints which, at one point, led from the path up the wall, only to end, mysteriously, in mid-air, re-appeared elsewhere. Most bizarre!

The children were then encouraged to use writing frames to start putting their thoughts down on paper and begin planning an epic adventure story! By the end we had some amazing stories from 'The adventures of the wishing boy,' to 'The Mysterious Astronaut.'

Needless to say the children all benefited enormously from the experience, as evidenced by some of their evaluative comments below.

Alberto - Forest School is a more natural experience where we can learn and explore more.

James - The Forest School helped me with my writing by making me think more to make my writing more descriptive

Sidney - I loved it because it is nice to do something different when making a story. This was the best trip I went on. Thank you!

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General Data Protection and Regulation (GDPR)

This comes into effect from Friday May 25th. You may have noticed that some of our partner services such as Class Dojo have sent updated on GDPR compliance. All staff in school have received initial training on how to ensure that data is secure, that we are clear as to how we are using it and that we are clear as to how long it is kept. The Trust is providing further training for staff after half term.

A new webpage will appear shortly with relevant policies and processes. We will make links widely available shortly.