



NEWSLETTER



13/2/19

Half Term Holiday

The last day in school for the children will be this Thursday (14th) February. Teachers have a training day on the Friday then we have the half term holiday so children will not return to school until Monday 25th February. The next two days (26th & 27th) are our parents' evening dates. If you have not signed up for an appointment time please see, or call, Mrs Way and she will book you in. Mrs Burke (SENDCO) will be available on the Wednesday evening.

Staffing News

Mrs Maroney

Unfortunately Mrs Maroney has decided that she will not be returning to teach at St Joseph's. We are sad that the hopes that she, and we, had for her career with us will not be realised. In her short time with us she established good relationships with children, staff and parents. She will be missed by us all. Please remember her in your prayers. Fortunately we are expecting that Mrs Nicholls will be able to continue teaching in Class 4 for the remainder of the year.

Mr Owens

Mr Owens will be joining us after half term. He will be teaching in Year 6 for the majority of his time but will also be supporting children, and staff, in the rest of the school to make the most of his expertise as a maths specialist.

Mrs Packer

For the last few weeks Mrs Packer, who is the senior administrator at The Cathedral School, has been providing support in our office. We are delighted that this temporary measure is now going to be made permanent. Mrs Packer will be based at St Joseph's for two days of the week.

Meal- Time Assistants

We are again looking to recruit Meal-Time Assistants. The application pack is available on the school website. Closing date is March 1st.

Family Liaison Officer

We are also advertising for a new Family Liaison Officer and hope to be able to appoint a new person to the role soon after half term.

Attendance

There has been an awful lot of illness suffered by pupils and staff alike this term. It seems contradictory to be promoting high attendance while advising you to keep children away from school, however we do ask that children are not brought back to school until 48 hours after they have suffered from a sickness and diarrhoea bug. This means that they are less likely to suffer a recurrence and other children are less likely to catch the bug.

Many of the children who have been ill recently already had low attendance and it has brought them into the 'Persistent Absentees' category for children with attendance below 90%. Statistically children who are 'persistent absentees' achieve much poorer standards academically than their peers with higher attendance. Nationally the percentage of children whose attendance is below 90% is 8.3%. At present we are nearly double that at 15%. At parents' evening all parents will be given a copy of their child's attendance record so far this year. If your child is in (or near) the below 90% group please do what you can to achieve above 90% attendance by the end of the year.

Our overall attendance figure has dropped significantly to 94.88% which is now well short of our 96% target. This target is not too aspirational as it is the average attendance figure for primary schools nationally.

Individual classes averages are:

Foundation	94.87 %	Class 1	94 %	Class 2	93.5 %	Class 3	96.6 %
Class 4	95.04%	Class 5	95.95 %	Class 6	94.07%		

Mass on Wednesdays

The Parish Mass has recently moved from Thursdays to Wednesdays. At least one class joins the parish for the Mass each week at 11.00am. Parents and friends are more than welcome to come along and join us on any Wednesday. We will also have two whole school Masses next term, one for Ash Wednesday (6th March) and one just after St Joseph's Day (20th March).

Reading at Home

The importance of reading at home cannot be emphasised enough. During half term please encourage your child to read each day. If you are not a member of the library yet this half term would be a great time to join and open up an endless supply of free books for you and your child to read.

Research has shown that children who live in homes where they see adults reading are far more likely to spend time reading themselves and consequently achieve better standards in school. We would like to try to promote reading not just for children but for adults too. We have a collection of books for adults which have accumulated after book swaps for staff. Rather than let these books sit in a box we would like to make them available for other adults connected to the school to take home and read themselves. The books will be available on the table tennis table outside Class 1 after school today and tomorrow. Please feel free to take a book home to read. When you finish it you can just return it to Mrs Way. If the scheme seems to be successful we will continue it. If you have books at home that you would like to donate for others to read they would be welcome. We have not pored through the books for their suitability so, although we may not distribute copies of *Fifty Shades of Grey* if they come in, I cannot guarantee that other books are free of content which is only appropriate for adults.

You might appreciate a bit of prior warning for an impending 'dress up day'. Thursday March 7th is World Book Day. Children will be encouraged to dress up as a book character for the day.

Topics for next half term

Our 'Learning Challenge' curriculum topics are based on questions. The questions children will be exploring next half term can be seen below.

Class	Topic Question
F	What happened to Jack's beans ?
1	What toys did our grandparents play with ?
2	Why would you NOT keep a dinosaur as a pet ?
3	How did the Victorian period shape the Plymouth of today ?
4	Where would you choose to build a city ?
5	How did World War 2 affect the lives of children in Britain ?
6	Are we 'fearfully and wonderfully' made ?

Have a safe and happy half term with your children. See you on February 25th.