

St. Joseph's School
October 2008

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Dear Parents,

The school year continues to move with such pace as we make our way towards the Autumn half term already! Where is the year going? It is super to see all our children settled well into their new classes and new members of staff bringing great enthusiasm and excitement into our school environment.

I was reading an article recently about a speech given by the former American president Bill Clinton at a conference in Alberta, Canada. He stated in his speech that in our world there are 130 million children who never go to school. I was really taken aback by this statistic—incredible! This number is truly startling and jolted me into thinking of our 230 boys and girls who walk through the doors of St. Joseph's every day. Comparatively to the 130 million, the 230 come to us in privilege and comfort. Their opportunities are rich and limitless.

We continue our new academic year and new term in the knowledge that we are providing the very best for all our children here. We are thankful for the new facilities that enhance their learning and the staff who work tirelessly to deliver a rich and varied curriculum to each child. As I walk around the school it is super to see our children on the computers in the ICT suite, cyber café or indeed using the laptops around the school, seeing our nursery children cleaning, chopping and boiling their vegetables into the tastiest 'harvest stew,' Year 6 librarians enticing our younger children with alternative fairy tale stories.....what wonderful experiences they have....precious moments of learning, exploring and finding out about our world.

May we never forget how fortunate we are to have such blessings, especially when you think of those children who have very different experiences of learning.

Year 6 Autumn Production

Last night we were treated to a lovely production by Year 6 on the themes of Autumn and Harvest. The children in Year 6 have been working very hard preparing this production during the last 4-5 weeks and they certainly reaped the rewards of their efforts during this time. Many thanks to Miss Gunn, Miss Puccio and Mrs Byrne for their guidance and support in preparing the children for their production.

School Car Park

As you will have all noticed I'm sure, our new car park is now fully operational. We now have available spaces for visitors to the school (of whom there are many on a daily basis!) and we feel that we utilised the space available to us to maximum effect as well as making the car park safer for all users. Can I please make it clear to you that on no account should parents use the car park unless they have been authorised to do so. Thank you for your co-operation in this matter.

Tesco Presentation

Two weeks ago we were invited to attend a special presentation at the Tesco Metro store in Cheshunt in recognition of the superb number of *Computers For Schools* vouchers that we (you!) collected last year. It was a lovely occasion and on the morning we were presented with a digital camera (one of the many ICT resources that your superb collecting enabled us to acquire!) by Charles Walker MP...truly, a day to remember!

School Photographer

The school photographer will be coming in the morning of Thursday 8th November to take individual and family group photographs. We ask that your child/children come to school looking very smart on that day as they usually do.

Website

As you know, our new website is now up and running and we are finally happy with its 'look' and how it is structured! This is our third website in as many years but we now feel that this one will be with us for the foreseeable future! If you haven't yet visited the site please take a look and let us know your opinion on its layout and accessibility. The URL for the website is as follows:

www.stjosephsherts.org.uk

Now that we are happy with the design and structure of our website we intend to keep it regularly updated and we look forward to hearing your comments and suggestions.

Garden update

The Gardening Committee are planning to meet this Sunday 19th October from 9a.m. until 12 noon to tidy up the garden and plan some new and exciting things for the coming year. As always, new recruits are more than welcome...as the old adage goes, 'Many hands make light work!' If you would like to come along and help on the morning, please feel free to do so...even if you can only spare an hour it would be greatly appreciated!

Parent Governor

As you know, we have a vacancy on the Governing Body for a Parent Governor. Any parent wishing to apply should forward us a passport style photo (head and shoulders) along with a paragraph of no more than 90 words outlining your support for the school and what you feel you would have to offer as a Parent Governor.

All applications should be submitted to the School Office by Friday 31st October 2008. Parents will receive the ballot paper in early November for the election.

Please arrange at the school office for an appointment to meet with one of the school governors to give a further insight into the role and there will be some material available for you to read through regarding the role.

Sports Update

Our Football and Netball teams are currently preparing for the new season ahead and both have their first league matches next week, with the football team visiting Millbrook School and the netballers jetting off to Burleigh School! In fact, our footballers have already begun their season with a tournament at Bonneygrove School last week. Despite losing their first game, the boys battled through to the quarter finals with a splendid 3-2 victory over Burleigh School, despite being 2-0 down with just 5 minutes remaining! Unfortunately, we lost 3-1 in the quarter final, although this score does not do us justice since we apparently had more of the possession and more attempts at goal. We look forward to an exciting season and we will keep you informed of results in subsequent newsletters.

Gaelic Football

We have been fortunate enough to secure some funding for Gaelic Football coaching in school and the children in years 3 and 4 are currently enjoying a 6 week block of training after school. This will be followed by a further 6 week block during school time for the children in Year 4 which will lead up to them receiving an award dependent on their achievements. Hopefully, if other schools in the area take this initiative on board, we could well see some competitive fixtures in the coming months!

Year 4 Trip

Year 4 are looking forward to a trip to the Wetlands Centre next week to support their work in their current science topic on habitats. Such trips are an invaluable experience for our children and provide them with an opportunity to take their learning outside the classroom and into the real world.

Sponsored Bounce

Many thanks to you all for supporting this year's Sponsored bounce so wholeheartedly. The children certainly enjoyed their bouncing and were making money for the school into the bargain...what a bonus! As you know, all of the events organised by the PFA raise money for your children so whatever you give should be seen as a real investment in your child's education. On behalf of the PFA, thank you for your continued support.

Walk To School Week

Well done to all of those children who participated in some way in *Walk To School Week* recently. The children enjoyed collecting their stickers on their class charts and I'm sure that they enjoyed the exercise!!

Year 6 Residential Trip

After the success of last year's trip to the Isle of Wight, we have decided to take the children to the same location for their residential visit. Preparations are already well underway and it will be time to start packing those cases before we know it!! We will keep Year 6 parents informed of all developments and thank them for their prompt payments.

Uniform

Our children continue to take a great pride in their uniform and always appear smartly dressed. We thank you very much for your cooperation with this. We ask that the children return from the half-term break in winter uniform as the weather is much colder and play-times can be a little chilly! Many of you have taken advantage of ordering the new winter coat with fleece for your child/children. These come at a cost of £14 and have the school badge on them. If you are interested in obtaining one then please contact the school office. It is important that all items of uniform are named to avoid items being lost or misplaced. I would like to take this opportunity to remind parents that boots are not a part of school uniform.