

Dear Parents,

Another monthly newsletter I hear you say! Where are the months going? It is just so busy at St. Joseph's and as always there are many things going on - May was indeed a hectic month!

We celebrated Miss V's wedding on Sunday 10th May. We wish her and her husband every happiness and look forward to having her back in school as Mrs Angelides.

We had a number of visitors to St. Joseph's this month. We were delighted to welcome Sir Robert Balchin and his wife Lady Balchin to our school. They had been invited to visit following reports of how well the school was performing. Sir Robert has played a key role in a wide variety of educational reforms/developments in the last 20 years (if you 'Google' him you will see what I mean!) and the fact that he was so impressed with our school and your children is a testament to the hard work that we all put in to make St. Joseph's such a special place.

Following Sir Robert's visit he was kind enough to send us a letter from which I include the following excerpts

"simply to tell you how privileged we were to pay a visit to your marvellous school on Friday. It is by far the best school that I have seen for a long time. If all our primaries were as good, then an incoming government would have nothing to worry about!"

...the atmosphere of the school struck us at once: a superb relationship between adults and children, due, of course to dedicated and expert leadership of staff and Governors.

...I was particularly struck by the standards of handwriting and of understanding amongst your pupils.

...thank you so much for a refreshing day: it is so encouraging to know that real dedication is still going on in good schools like St. Joseph's."

Indeed, Sir Robert was so impressed that he now wants to return in the near future with the Shadow Education Minister!

We sincerely thank Sir Robert for taking time out of his busy schedule to come and visit us and look forward to further visits in the near future.

We were also visited by Fr. Demetriano, a Greek Orthodox Priest, who came to talk to our Year 2 children who were learning about the Greek Orthodox religion in class. Father was very complimentary about our children and the quality of their responses during his talk. It was a very enjoyable visit and all the children enjoyed some of Miss V's mum's special cake!

Year 2 Production

A couple of weeks ago we were treated to a spectacular production by Year 2 based on 'The Wizard of Oz' and a variety of traditional fairy tales. All of the children performed superbly and received a standing ovation at the end...and deservedly so. Thank you to Miss V (or should I say Mrs A?!), Miss Gunn and Mrs Smith for their efforts in preparing the children so well!

Holy Communion

We were happy to see our Year 3 children celebrate their First Holy Communion this month. We keep them in our thoughts and prayers at this time as we know these occasions are very special for both the children and their families.

New Parent Evening (Reception September 09 and January 10 and New to nursery parents)

This will take place on Tuesday 23rd June at 7:00p.m. It will be a chance for new parents to hear about the school, tour the building and see the facilities. They will also have the opportunity to meet our Early Years Team and hopefully any questions they have will be answered!

Year 5 Visit

On Friday 10th July Year 5 will be visiting St. Mary's School, Bishops Stortford for a day focussing on the Performing Arts. This will be a wonderful experience to perform in a theatre with drama specialists and enjoy the opportunity to be in a secondary school setting for the day.

Special Visitor to Year 2

As mentioned earlier, last week, Fr. Demetriano, a Greek Orthodox priest visited the children in Year 2 to teach them a little about the Greek Orthodox faith. Such visitors really enrich the RE curriculum that we offer to the children and provide them with a valuable 'hands-on' insight into another faith/culture.

Sports Update

Unfortunately, the Cheshunt Schools Cross Country Race which was due to take place last week was cancelled due to the threat of rain...and it didn't actually rain in the end...typical! However, this event has been rescheduled to 8th July and those children involved will receive further information closer to the time.

Our cricket team begin their season on Wednesday 3rd June in a tournament at Cheshunt Cricket Club, Albury Ride. I'm sure they will 'bowl the opposition over' with their cricketing skills! They also have several other games in the coming weeks and we will keep you informed of their progress in future newsletters.

Year 6 'Afternoon of Sport'

Those children in Year 6 not involved in the aforementioned cricket tournament will be visiting St. Mary's (Bishops Stortford) for an afternoon of sport (Netball and Football) against other feeder primary schools. This is always a great afternoon and I'm sure that our boys and girls will do us proud on the day!

Isle of Wight Residential Trip

The children in Year 6 are now looking forward to their residential trip to the Isle of Wight (22nd - 26th June 2009) and I'm sure that they will be doing a lot of work in class in the weeks to come on the various places of interest that they will be visiting during their stay. Hopefully, all Year 6 parents were able to attend the meeting concerning the trip and are now fully aware of the various activities/arrangements related to the trip! If anyone was unable to make the meeting, please make sure that you obtain the necessary forms from either Miss Puccio, Mr Gorton or the School Office.

District Sports

As you will know, we have now started training for the District Sports which take place on Wednesday 17th June. It is wonderful to see so many children attending these practices and although only a few can be chosen to make the actual team, we consider all of these children to be members of our 'squad'. Thank you to all of those adults who help with these practices on a weekly basis.

Sun Awareness

Please remember to apply some sun protection cream to your children before they come out to school in the mornings on the days when the weather is likely to be hot. We recommend that children wear baseball caps and that they should be 'school' baseball caps.

Sports Day Dates

Sports day will take place on Thursday 2nd July. The Nursery and Infant children will have their events in the morning and the Junior children in the afternoon. We hope you are able to attend and support all the children in their efforts. I am sure it will be a super day.

Walk to School Week -18th - 22nd May 2009

We hope the children at school are joining over two million other pupils throughout the country this week by taking part in Walk to School Week from 18th - 22nd May. The theme of this years project is 'Walk and Talk'...now that is what I call multi-tasking!! Leaving the car at home and walking or cycling to and from school is not only healthier and helps prevent congestion around school gates - it's also so much fun!! So get walking and keep talking....but do pay attention to the traffic!

Summer Craft Fayre - Saturday 11th July

Can you believe it...our Summer Fete is almost here once again!!! This is always a marvellous event and this year promises to be no different! It is a wonderful opportunity for us all to show our support for the PFA and all of the hard work that they do during the course of the year to raise money for the benefit of our children and I know that they are currently working harder than ever to make the Fete even more successful than usual this year. It is wonderful to have such a supportive parent body who give so freely of their time to raise funds for all of the children at St. Joseph's and I know that you will show your appreciation for their sterling work by turning up in droves on the day...come rain or shine!! We look forward to seeing you there...in the sunshine...or in your waterproofs!

Use of School Field and Garden

Could I take this opportunity to remind parents that children are not permitted in the school garden or on the school field after school has ended unless they are taking part in practices. Your children are not supervised during this time and we ask parents to make sure they remain with you at all times. Please remember that the garden and field are strictly out of bounds at this time.

New Seasonal Nature Walk

As I am sure you have noticed, we are currently developing a new addition to our school grounds in the form of a 'Seasonal Nature Walk'. This will provide those children who would like to enjoy a 'quieter' break-time with the opportunity to relax with friends and avoid flying footballs etc! In addition to this, it will also provide some welcome shade during those hot summer months.....we can but hope!!

Year 4 Visit to 'The Loft'

Last week, the majority of children in Year 4 enjoyed a marvellous residential visit to 'The Loft' at the All Saints Pastoral Centre, London Colney. They had a fabulous time and were full of stories about their adventures on their return. Not only was this a great opportunity for the group to reflect on a variety of issues, it also provided them with the chance to show how much they are maturing and developing their independence. Thank you to Mrs Reynolds, Miss Spence and Miss Aherne for accompanying the children on the trip...they had a great (but tiring!) time too!!

Year 4 Allotment Visits

Year 4 are certainly getting 'out and about' recently! Last week, as part of their 'Gardening Club' venture they went to some local allotments to see how to tend and maintain an allotment. This was a splendid way for the children to see the work that they are currently doing at school in a different context in the 'real' world. Thank you to Mrs McPadden for helping to organise this trip and help the children discover a little more about their local area.

Reception Charity Flower Sale

Last Friday, the children in Reception organised a wonderful charity flower sale to support the 'Children's Blind Society'....and I think Mrs Reynolds helped a little bit as well! Thank you to all of those Reception parents who donated plants for the event and to all of those parents who bought plants on the day. It is fabulous that our children get the opportunity to undertake these events to support those children who are less fortunate than themselves. Over £100 was raised and this cheque will be sent to the 'Children's Blind society'. Well done everyone!

INSET Day

May I remind you that school is closed for an INSET day on Friday 22nd May and will re-open after half-term on Monday 1st June 2009.

Summer Term 2009

Friday 22nd May - School closed for INSET Day

Half Term - Monday 26th May - Friday 30th May

Return - Monday 2nd June 2008

Friday 18th July - Last day of Summer Term - School closes at
2pm

Monday 21st July - School closed for INSET Day

Tuesday 22nd July - School closed for Occasional Day

Music Assembly

At the beginning of this month, the children (and a fair smattering of parents too!) enjoyed a marvellous Music Assembly in which those children who play in the orchestra had the opportunity to perform several pieces of folk music in front of the whole school....quite a daunting thought!! In addition to this, several of the children had also conducted some research into the origins of folk music and their informative introduction certainly 'set the scene' perfectly! The 'audience' thoroughly enjoyed the assembly and it was wonderful to see the children displaying their musical (and oral!) talents so confidently. Many thanks to Miss Gunn and Mr Kinton for preparing the children so well for the assembly and for all that they do in maintaining the high standards of music that St. Joseph's is immensely proud of.

Gardening Matters

The children in Years 4 and 5 are currently very busy with their various gardening ventures. Year 4 are tending their vegetable plots on a daily basis whilst Year 5 are nurturing a variety of plants which will be planted in the school garden and sold to parents in the near future. Both of these groups of children are truly benefiting from taking their learning to another dimension outside the classroom and we thank those adults who give of their time so selflessly to help and encourage our children to develop a deeper understanding of such environmentally worthwhile projects. Thank you also to Mrs Bonsignore for her continued support with our 'Finance Committee' - watch out Alan Sugar!!