

St John's Walworth Primary School

Monthly Newsletter – March 2019

Dear St John's,

We have had a busy second half of the Spring Term as we continue improving and developing opportunities for the children to learn at school. Please read on to see some of our news for this month and some dates for future events.

Easter Celebration Assembly

Easter commemorates the resurrection of **Jesus Christ**. It is the most important Christian festival, and the one celebrated with the greatest joy. We would like to invite all parents and carers to



attend St John's Church from 1.45pm until 2.30pm. We hope that this will be a wonderful end to the term and an enchanting beginning to the Easter holiday. **Those of you who would like to take your children home directly after the performance are welcome to do so.** We hope to see you there.

Party Bags and Birthday Cakes

In the autumn term, as part of our endeavour to become a healthier school we asked all parents/carers who would like their children to celebrate their birthday at school, to send pieces of fruit for the children to share, instead of cakes and sweets. **Thank you** for your support in this matter, the change has been noticeable and much appreciated.

New Lunchtime Clubs

When the children return from the Easter holiday they will notice that lunchtime is arranged differently. On alternate weeks LKS2 (Yr3 & Yr4) and UKS2 (Yr5 & Yr6) will participate in clubs. The year groups not participating in clubs will use the playground.

This initiative will reduce the number of children in the playground, provide more space to play, and will allow us to facilitate opportunities for children to play and work together peacefully. The clubs will provide enjoyable and productive activities, also designed to encourage peaceful collaboration.

The first clubs that we will offer will be: Lego Club, Board Game Club, iPad Club (with carefully selected Apps) and Film Club, all to be supervised by our Teaching Assistants.

A similar lunchtime system was in place when the school was previously judged to be 'outstanding'. We are sure that, once established, this new arrangement will benefit the children and help us to support their development inside and outside of the classroom.

Lego donations

If you have any unwanted Lego at home then we would welcome any donations, which will be used for our Lego Club and for Breakfast Club activities. If you can help us then please speak to a member of the office staff. Thank you.

Playground Refurbishment

In one of the first steps towards improving the school's playgrounds, the walls in the back playground will be painted over the Easter holiday. This will rejuvenate the space and will complement the further developments that are still in the planning stages, which will include planting, seated areas and physical activities for the children.

ERASMUS Trip to Poland

Five children have been selected to accompany Ms Picazo to Poland from Saturday 4th May until Friday 10th May 2019. The children are very excited and meetings have already taken place to prepare them for their journey. The school's trip to Finland at the end of January 2019 was very successful for all of the adults and children who were involved. We look forward to sharing the details with you next half term.

External Partnerships (Safeguarding Audit)

From the beginning of this academic year, following our Ofsted report, it became clear that the school needed to improve. To enable us to access an external view of our progress we have worked closely with the Local Authority and the Diocese. In those formal half termly meetings and more regular informal meetings the feedback has been very positive. In addition to those meetings we have invited the Local Authority to audit logistical and statutory aspects of the school. Last week the school's safeguarding training and procedures were checked thoroughly and as with the HR audit earlier this year, the school's practices and procedures were viewed to be very good.

After School Club

Earlier this term we advertised for applicants for a St John's After School Club and although we did receive some interest, unfortunately we did not receive enough to make the club financially viable. We will re-advertise at the end of the summer term, with a view to starting a club in September 2019. In the meantime if you do require after school childcare, but didn't apply for a place at St John's we would really appreciate some feedback, so when we next advertise we can, if possible, accommodate your needs. Please email all comments to the school's office.

(Interim) Deputy Head Teacher

Ms Bishop will be joining St John's as (Interim) Deputy Head Teacher for four days-a-week from the beginning of the summer term. Ms Bishop, has been working with us throughout this academic year, for one or two days-a-week as an English consultant, she will continue this work while also supporting the school's rapid improvement in all other areas of the curriculum and with the day-to-day running of the school. We are delighted to welcome her as a more substantial member of our team, I hope that you extend your warm welcome to her also.

New Governors

We are delighted to welcome three new **parent governors** Mrs Temitope Adegbite, Mr Lindon Rankin and Mrs Maria Hamilton and one new **diocesan foundation governor**, Mr Jonathan Daniels to the newly formed governing body. The full governing body meeting will be held this Wednesday 3rd April 2019.

The governing body now has seven members and is led by our Chair of Governors, Ms Usha Singh. We are confident that the new governing body will work closely with the school, challenging and supporting wherever necessary and that these appointments are another valuable step towards the school's development towards the outstanding educational provision that we all want to see.

New Octagonal Tables

Our new dining room tables will arrive this week care of Harrison Catering. The tables will encourage the children to speak to one another in smaller groups, improving their social skills and supporting the creation of a calmer and more pleasurable dining experience for the children at St John's. The children have been appreciating the new menu and larger portions, as have the staff.

We will be selling a limited number of tickets next term to enable parents to visit the school at lunchtime and sample the new menu and dining arrangements. Dates will be sent to you at the beginning of next term once they are confirmed.

New Books, Comprehension and Mathematics Activities

New library books will be arriving at the beginning of next term. The lengthy process of applying for funding, selecting and ordering the new books is now complete.

To compliment the new library we will be introducing 'Accelerated Reader', a well trialled and tested software package that will enable children to complete quizzes online, which test and assess their comprehension of each book that they read. The programme guides each child towards books that are suitably challenging for them and all books in our library will be graded according to reading age and entirely compatible with this system.

We will also be introducing 'Junior Librarian' another complimentary system, which the children will use to register borrowed books from the library. This will allow us to monitor most popular titles, reading habits of every individual child and to keep a track of borrowed books.

'My Maths' is a new programme which we are launching at St John's next term. Mathematics homework will be completed online, which is set and monitored by the teacher. The application provides tuition, is linked to the maths topics being taught in class and provides maths games which support the development of specific maths skills. This will be one of the applications we use in the iPad Club run through lunchtimes.

Ms Russell – Maternity Leave

This Tuesday Ms Russell will teach the children music and lead the school's choir for the last time before beginning her maternity leave. Ms Russell will return in September to continue her role at St John's. We wish Ms Russell every happiness and we hope that she experiences all of the joy that a new child brings.

For the duration of the summer term Ms Russell and I have arranged for Mr Moriarty to cover her teaching responsibilities. Mr Moriarty's strengths are in composition, which will become the focus of the children's learning. He will also continue leading the choir and will support our year six children with their end of year six performance. We look forward to working with him.

SEND Progress

This week Mr Wren (SENDCo) has been holding meetings with parents, teachers, TAs and children to establish best practice

models in the classroom to support SEND children. New training, referral forms, numerous observations and collaborations with professionals who we've invited to the school have enabled us to better identify children who need additional support in class. We have received positive feedback from parents who had been waiting for effective support to be established for their child, a process that we are committed to continue.

Goodbye to Ms Gillespie

Ms Gillespie (Deputy Head Teacher at St Francis Primary School) has been working with us at St John's since November last year. She has been supporting the improvement of teaching and learning and has more recently been working with Mrs Ward-Anderson to develop the Christian ethos and vision for the school. Her part-time secondment was arranged through the local authority. She has made a valued impact and her support and guidance will be missed. Thank you!

Ms Oben – Year Five

Unfortunately, due to a knee injury Ms Oben has been absent for the majority of this half term. She is recovering and will be returning full time to Year Five throughout the summer term. Ms Bashford has been covering the class for the past week and will continue until Friday 5th April, while Ms Oben has continued to plan for the class, to maintain continuity.

Assessment Weeks

Last week and this week all of the children from Year 1 to Year 6 have been completing assessments. Last week assessments for reading, maths, spelling and grammar took place. This week the children's writing will be assessed. The assessments will help the teachers to see what the children have learnt so far this year and what still needs to be taught. Throughout this year assessments will happen at the end of every half term so that we can track every child's progress accurately.

Shobana Jeyasingh Dance Performance

On the 20th March Year 3 and Year 5 performed their dance to parents and adults who work in the school. The children were very excited and performed well. The dancers were impressed with the children's skill and commitment to the process. This was a wonderful opportunity for the children to express themselves through dance, we hope to invite the company back to St John's again next year.

Steve McQueen – Tate Modern Year 3 Photo Project

On 1st March professional photographers came to St John's as part of a project to take a photograph of every Year 3 class across the capital, as part of the largest group portrait ever made. The class photograph will be displayed among thousands of others in a vast exhibition at the prestigious Tate Britain in central London later this year. We will also receive a copy of the class photograph to display in the school.

KidZania

Last week and the week before Year 1 and Year 3 children visited KidZania. *'Designed for children aged 4-14, KidZania blends learning and reality with entertainment. During your 4-hour experience, children can independently choose from a number of real-life activities and test their skills in a variety of professions.'* The children had a wonderful time at the venue and behaved very well. Both Mrs Thomas and Mr Isaac returned very proud of their respective classes and both felt that the children had benefitted from the experience.

We hope that you have an enjoyable Easter Break and we look forward to seeing the children return on Wednesday 24th April 2019 to begin our summer term.

Matthew Velada-Billson
(Head Teacher)