

2pm School Closures

I must thank you in advance for your understanding in this matter. As part of the post-inspection process all staff in school will be participating in 'Quality Learning & Teaching' training from the EA. The dates and times for these training sessions are as follows:

Wednesday 12 October 2pm – 6pm in St. Joseph's

Wednesday 11 January 3pm – 6pm in Alexander Dixon Primary School, Ballygowan

As I outlined in September's letter, it is necessary to close the school at 2pm on these days and Cool Kids or after school activities will not be in operation. We hope that the advance notice given will help ease alternative childcare arrangements.

Active Play

We are delighted to be continuing active play during second lunch (P4 – P7). As all the children are aware, they need a total of 60 minutes of heart raising activity each day to stay healthy. We hope that the children get as much of this during the day at St. Joseph's as possible. To enable this, we have again supplied some traditional play equipment including group and individual skipping ropes, bats and balls and German Jumps. We have also invested heavily in some new Adventure Trail equipment for the grass area in the lower playground and are very excited about this development. Children also have the opportunity to play football in the upper yard once a week with their class and also to go once a week to the boat area and enjoy our park equipment.

We have found that keeping children active at lunchtime has a very positive affect on behaviour both in the playground and in the classroom. Teachers are reporting that children are coming back to class in the afternoon more focussed and ready to learn. Children are also taught to respect the equipment and each other during active play. They learn traditional rhymes, to share, to co-operate and to play fairly; indeed the amount of benefits is endless. We will keep you updated about our new adventure trail equipment.

Mathletics (P2-P7)

All children have now had the opportunity to try the new Mathletics Programme which we purchased in June. This is a remarkable programme which will be co-ordinated by Mrs Gartland. Whilst there are a lot of children currently using Mathletics live, there are fewer using the curriculum content activities which offer more points. Following the PTM (GL Assessment results) which will be available within the next few weeks, Mrs Gartland and the your child's teacher will be able to tailor the Mathletics programme to suit individual needs, for example if PTM tests show that data handling is an area for development, then the child will be tasked to complete this section before moving on. Miss Bush, our numeracy support teacher will also be using Mathletics and tailoring it to support and challenge the children she works with. Mrs Gartland will be providing all parents with information on how to check on your child's progress at home and how you can help get the most out of this programme. It has been proven that if a child uses Mathletics for 40 minutes per week, their numeracy ability improves by 7-9 % annually. The long term aim is that your child will use this programme consistently both in school and at home for a total of 40 minutes per week. To this end, the new I pads which each class will receive will also have the Mathletics App installed on them.

Praying Parents

We are so lucky to have a committed group of parents who gather together monthly to pray for our entire school community. New parents are always most welcome so if you would like to come along, please do. The group meets on the last Monday of each month in the parents' cabin at the side of the canteen just after morning drop off.

Twitter Update Followers: 167

Our twitter feed has been busy in the last few weeks. As a whole school we are using Twitter as another means of communication. We can upload photos of children at work and play etc immediately. Recently we have been uploading photos of pupils problem solving in Maths, taking part in activity based learning as well as using ipads to support the curriculum. The feed can also be seen on the school website. We are delighted that at the time of this newssheet going to print we have.....followers. Please consider opening a Twitter account if you haven't already done so.

Car Park Safety

Mr Gallagher and I take it in turns to go to the back car park or the top of the lane at 8.45 in the morning.



However, we are not always able to be there as we may be on a course or may have a parent meeting. When we are not able to be there Mrs Allen is in the back car park and Brendan is at the top of the lane. We appeal to parents to hold onto their children when walking through the back car park in the mornings and afternoons. A number of parents have reported to me that some children have been allowed to walk to/from their cars unaccompanied. The car park is a very busy place so I would urge all parents/carers to bear this in mind.

Competition Winners

We were absolutely delighted when 4 of our pupils were winners in the CCEA 'Design a Shop Window' competition in aid of Action Cancer. Pupils were invited to design a shop window for Action Cancer's 'Something Different' shop on Belfast's Lisburn Road. The 4 winners were: Ruby Lavery (P3), Adam Gormley (P3), Grace Mulholland (P6) and Elle Campbell(P7). The winners received an afternoon down at the Something Different shop, where they had the chance to sit in a Delorean car, work in the shop and have their faces painted. They were presented with framed copies of their competition entry and they even made last week's Lisburn Star. I was so proud to bring them along to the shop on Thursday 15 September where they were all great ambassadors for our school. Well done!

Post-Inspection Update

Post-Inspection Action Planning

We have been working closely with Robert Thompson, our EA designated officer writing post-inspection action plans for submission to DENI. Mr Gallagher and I have completed the Action Plan for Leadership, Management and Governance and Mathematics and Numeracy. Mrs Gould and I completed the Action Plan for ICT on Tuesday 27 September. Mrs Hanna and Miss McAnerney will be working with EA Officer AnneMarie Flynn on Wednesday 5 October to complete the Literacy Action plan and the Action Plan for Special Needs will be completed on Friday 7 October. As each Action Plan is completed and ratified they will be shared with you via

the school website. The completed action plans are sent to DENI at the end of October.

School Improvement Success Criteria

As part of the post-inspection process we have written 'Success Criteria' for Literacy, Numeracy and ICT. These criteria are taken from the ETI Inspection report and will form the basis of monitoring and evaluation across the year.

Success Criteria:

Literacy

- The children will experience a **wide range of good quality** free writing opportunities across the curriculum.
- The children will use shared texts **effectively** to explore and understand grammar and punctuation well.
- The children's writing experiences will be **consistently of high quality** across all year groups.

ICT

- The children will be exposed to a wider range of **high quality** ICT experiences.
- The children will **use ICT effectively** and when appropriate, **independently**, across the curriculum.
- The children's achievements in ICT will be **tracked effectively** in order to identify progression.

Mathematics

- The children will engage in a wider range of **independent and directed high quality** problem solving and investigative activities.
- The children's experiences in maths will be **differentiated effectively using success criteria** and matched to their ability.
- The children's practical maths experiences will be **consistently of high quality and frequent** across all year groups.

In order to ensure that these success criteria are being met in each of these learning areas we will be collecting first hand evidence in a number of ways: Collegiate Book Discussion (CBD, Trusted Colleague Networking (TCN), The Voice (Pupil, staff, parent questionnaires) and analysis of data. This is both quantitative and Qualitative data from a range of sources.

As well as this we will carry out 'classroom observations' and 'book scoops' a number of times per year. Reports of this first hand evidence will be presented to the Board of Governors regularly and we will be reporting it to you as parents through the newsheet as well.

We will use all of the above monitoring methods to ensure that school improvement is taking place across all classes and year groups.

Roles and Responsibilities

This year the roles and responsibilities of each teaching member of staff will be reviewed and agreed. When this is complete I will be sharing it with all stakeholders, including yourselves. However I would like to clarify the roles and responsibilities as they currently stand within the school:

Literacy Coordinator Mrs Anne Hanna supported by Miss Catherine McAnerney

Numeracy Coordinator Mr Gavin Gallagher
ICT Coordinator Mrs Brenda Gould
Assessment Coordinator Mrs Pauline Fleming
Special Educational Needs Coordinator Mrs Michelle Connolly
The World Around Us Coordinator Mrs Nuala O'Hare
The Arts Coordinator Mrs Nuala O'Hare
Promoting the Catholic School Coordinator Miss Sinead Clarke
PE and Active Lifestyles Coordinator Mrs Suzanne Gartland
Personal Development and Mutual Understanding Coordinator Mrs Sinead Crilly
Newcomer Children Coordinator Mrs Charlene Kitt
Foundation Stage Coordinator Mrs Ciara McManus
Key Stage 1 Coordinator Mrs Michelle Connolly
Key Stage 2 Coordinator Mr Gavin Gallagher

House System Update

The new 'Hose System' for St. Joseph's is well underway with all of the pupils in P4 to P7 very enthused about it. House meetings are scheduled to take place 1 or 2 Wednesdays per month at 1.35pm until 2.15pm. This allows each house to come together with their house teacher and discuss the way forward. Each house has already created their own house motto as follows:

Gailhac	- 'Green is great make no mistake'
Beziers	- 'Be the greatest; Be a team; Be the best you've ever seen'
Vincent	- 'With one we are strong; with a team we are stronger'
Pierre	- 'We put ourselves to the test to be the test'
Denise	- 'Do it for Denise'
Hennessey	- 'There is no 'T' in team'

House Captains and Vice-House Captains have also been appointed as follows:

Gailhac	- Captain: Holly Rafferty - Vice-Captain: Emma Duffy
Beziers	- Captain: Ryan Heyes - Vice-Captain: Jack McMahon
Vincent	- Captain: Elle Campbell - Vice-Captain: Ronald Mathew
Pierre	- Captain: Conor Broderick - Vice-Captain: Alannah Harris
Denise	- Captain: Tyler Hillier - Vice-Captain: Conn Rush
Hennessey	- Captain: Sian Rooney - Vice-Captain: Mia Law

Mindfulness for Primary 7

Primary 7 pupils experienced their 'Mindfulness' session with Vivienne Bannon on Wednesday 21 September. The pupils really enjoyed the session as you can see from their comments:

'Mindfulness makes you feel better and energised' (Cormac)

'It will make me feel positive when I am doing tests' (Maebh)

Their next session will take place on Wednesday 19 October.

Go Media Academy

WOW!! What a success this has been! First of all our school had the fastest registration ever in the history of Go Media offering after schools and then they send me an email which makes me so proud of the children in our school. This is what they said:

“So far we have not been to a school like St Joseph's Primary. WOW!

Thank you to the school and the parents for the most amazing students we have ever come across. We are overcome with excitement due to the enthusiasm and knowledge the students showed today. To be honest, there are no words to describe what fantastic students we have.”

We are so proud of those students. They are exemplary ambassadors for our school.

Whole School Art Exhibition



Every year we hold an art exhibition where every child is invited to submit art work. Last year we made over £700 with the children getting to keep half that amount for themselves. WOW! This is a great opportunity to showcase your child's talents and make them feel really good about themselves. We will be exhibiting all the entries in the hall during the book fair at the end of November/start of December. So please come along to see all our talented artists and maybe even buy an early 'arty' Christmas present. All welcome.

National Poetry Day

We are looking forward to celebrating National Poetry Day on Thursday 6th October. Leading up to and during this week we will be reading, writing as well as performing our favourite poems! P4 - P7 are taking part in a National Poetry Competition and we are excited about the quality of poetry which will be entered. The pupils have been enjoying opportunities to Free Write in school so hopefully they will be inspired on National Poetry Day to let their imaginations run wild!

Halloween fun!



Once again our PTA is supporting this year's Halloween dress up day. Children will be asked to make a £2 donation to come to school dressed up and experience a spooky parade, some traditional Halloween games as well as receiving a Halloween treat.

Freddie Fitness

Freddie has been a friend of St Joseph's for a long time now and yes he's back...Wednesday 26 October is the Freddie Fitness day. Children come to school in their fitness gear ready to participate in a fun filled session with Freddie. This is our annual fundraising effort to support activities and resources throughout the year. Freddie Fitness has left sponsor forms into the school and these will be sent home shortly so that children can collect sponsor money. For anyone not collecting sponsor money the cost of the day is £3.

School Banking

We are delighted to be able to introduce School Banking here in St. Joseph's. This will be operated by our own school bank, First Trust. Very shortly you will receive an information pack with an application form. If you would like to open a bank account for your child(ren) simply fill in the form. First Trust are very kindly coming along to school on **Tuesday 25 October between 1.40pm and 3.30pm**. You can come along then and provide all the relevant documents and they will open the account for you. After that children can bring in their book and money every Wednesday and someone from the First trust will come down to collect the book to mark up etc.

It is really important that children can see the value of saving, be it for something in the short term for example a new bike or for the long term for college/ university. If children start to save from an early age then they are more likely to become lifelong savers too

Roots of Empathy

We are so pleased that this project will be continuing this year being led by our classroom assistant Miss Alice Gallagher. Roots of Empathy can reduce levels of aggression and raise levels of empathy among pupils. Alice will be working with Mrs Gartland's P5 class. We must say thank you to Mrs Deirdre Southwell who will be bring along baby Anna Rose to the sessions.