



ST GREGORY'S CATHOLIC MIDDLE SCHOOL

Living, learning and growing together with Jesus

NEWSLETTER - APRIL 2011



MESSAGE FROM THE HEADTEACHER

Dear Parents and Carers

As my first full term at St Gregory's draws to a close I would like to thank staff, pupils, parents and governors for making St Gregory's school such a special place.

It was with great sadness that we learnt of the death of one of our Year 6 pupils who passed away last month following a long illness. We have prayed together as a community and we intend to create a memorial as a lasting reminder of his time at St Gregory's. We mourn his passing and will continue to keep his family in our prayers.

Our Lenten preparations have focussed on helping others and the response to the fundraising on Oscar Romero day was truly amazing. Staff and pupils showed real entrepreneurial skills and over £1,700 was raised for the Avoca charity. We thank Mrs Armitage our Chaplain for the work that she has done during Lent, particularly in organising the regular soup kitchen and for directing the Passion Play which was performed this week.

Leadership has been very much in evidence this term with 30 Year 8 pupils completing the Student Mentoring Course. They are engaged in supporting Year 5 pupils on a weekly basis which is proving very beneficial. In addition, our Sports Leaders helped Mrs Belcher to run a highly successful Sports Festival for local lower schools including St Joseph's and St John Rigby.

I am also delighted to announce the appointments of Head boy, Head girl and their respective deputies. They are our pupil ambassadors and they have completed their first duty in representing the school at St Joseph's Feast day Mass. It was a lovely occasion and they were treated to a tour of the school by Miss Sumpter.

Sporting achievements in school terms don't come much bigger than the County Cup. I was privileged to watch St Gregory's Under 12 team emerge the victors in a closely contested final. The team was an absolute credit to the school and they were all commended by the Chairman of the County League for their skills and sportsmanship. Our thanks go to Mr Millie for the time he has spent with the pupils in preparing them for the big occasion. We wish him well on his trip to El Salvador where he will be running a football coaching school for the young people of Soyapango.

I look forward to meeting you at the Parents' Evenings planned for the start of the Summer Term and wish you a happy and holy Easter

Frances Topa
Headteacher

YEAR 8 YEARBOOKS

After the fantastic success of the yearbook last year, the current Year 8 students have been busy putting together material using the 'AllYearbooks.com' website. It's nearly ready for everyone to enter their thoughts about their time at St Gregory's.

Letters have been sent home to Year 8s to ask for permission for photos to be included in the yearbook - if you haven't replied yet, please write a note giving your permission and ask your child to give it to their class yearbook rep. Until we have this, we can't let students enter their details into the book.

Just after Easter there will be a further letter sent home to ask if you'd like to buy a copy of the yearbook. It is a properly bound, full colour book with photos, information and space for students to write comments to each other - a real keepsake to remember us all by. Once the order has been placed with the company we cannot order further copies. In order to avoid disappointment it's important that the reply slip is returned by the deadline date.

I'm looking forward to seeing the finished product and am sure the students will enjoy them as much as our leavers did last year.

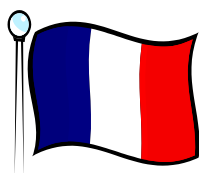
Partner School in France



We have just received our first e-mails from our partner school in France: Collège Guy Môquet in Le Havre in

Normandy. Pupils in Year 8 will be emailing them back before Easter.

We hope to have a video link at some point and meet the pupils when they come to England next December.



2011 Times Spelling Bee



St Gregory's has a team of Super Spellers! A team of 7 pupils had spent 3 lunchtimes a week over 3 weeks practising their spelling techniques, challenging each other and building up their expertise.

On Monday 21 March 2011 the team travelled to Cineworld in Northampton to take part in the local heats of The Times Spelling Bee, a national competition. Our team of 4 came a close second with 42 points to Northampton Boys School and Holywell Middle School on 44 points in joint 1st place. A nail biting tie breaker round put NBS through and St Gregory's into 3rd place.

The pupils had a fantastic experience, thoroughly enjoyed the event and above all were a credit to the school. Well done to you all.

Young Writers' Competition

Congratulations to some of our Year 7 & 8 pupils who were entered into the Young writers' creative writing competition, 'Mini Sagas'.

Twenty eight of our pupils had work selected for publication based on imagination, perception, expression and creative use of language - a great achievement for the pupils to be proud of. Their work will be published in Mini Sagas – Creative Capers Fiction from Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire. A complimentary copy will be sent to school and further copies will be kept in The British Library and further libraries across the UK.

The editorial team will now go on to select school winners and award prizes. Congratulations to all our winners they are now published writers!

Science News

We have been very busy in the Science department this term. The students have been working very hard to achieve their goals. The Science Club was opened to Year 5 and 6 students, with a group of Year 8 students taking responsibility for the running of the club. Congratulations to these students on their fantastic effort to promote the enjoyment of Science to Years 5 and 6. Years 7 and 8 booster sessions have been very successful in the past half term. These sessions have proved to be both enjoyable and beneficial to the students involved. The Space Camp will take place from 30 May-3 June and the students have proved to be very committed to raising funds for their trip. We raised £377 by holding a quiz night on Friday, 18 March and great fun was had by all. The second St Gregory's Science Fair will take place on Tuesday, 24 May, from 6.30-8.30pm. This is open to all Year 7 and 8 students to enter individually or as part of a team.

Water Bottles



With warmer weather on the way after the Easter holidays (hopefully) please ensure your child brings a plastic water bottle to school each day that they can refill as necessary.

Price of School Meals

We have been advised that the price of school meals will be increasing to £2 from 1 April. I am sure you will agree that this still represents excellent value for money.

PGL Trip

A letter has gone out to current Year 6 and 7 offering them the opportunity to go on a fantastic water activity trip to the South of France in June 2012. If you would like your child to go, the reply slip and deposit needs to be returned by **Tuesday, 3 May 2011**.

SATS

Year 6 will be sitting their KS2 tests in the week commencing 9 May. Please keep them in your prayers.



School Uniform

After Easter, pupils may wear the maroon polo shirts. These are available from the school office at a cost of £7. If pupils wish to continue to wear white shirts, they must also wear a tie.

Dates for the Calendar

Friday, 8 April	Last Day of Term
(Tuesday, 26 April	Staff Training Day)
Wednesday, 27 April	Summer Term begins
Friday, 29 April	Royal Wedding (school closed)
9-13 May	KS2 SATs week
30 May - 3 June	Half Term Week
Wed 6 July	Transfer Day
Friday, 8 July	Summer Sports Day
Friday, 22 July	Last Day of Term

PTA

The disco was a great success, with £600 being collected. The Easter raffle raised £110 and was won by Nadia Fatima in Yr 5. The PTA dates for next term are:
Planning Meeting 5 May at 6pm in the Library (not June as previously printed in the PTA newsletter)
Summer disco Friday, 17 June
The intention is to buy playground equipment for the children to play with at lunchtimes.

Reminder

Please do give the children all your Tesco and Sainsbury's vouchers. Over the years we have been fortunate to purchase lots of useful items with this initiative.



Parking on St Gregory's Site

Once again can we remind parents to drop off and pick up from Biddenham site. Our access road is only wide enough for one way traffic and the car park area can get very congested at the beginning and end of the day. For your children's safety please do abide by this request.

PE NEWS



For the first time in the school's history Year 7s won the Football County Cup yesterday afternoon. We have previously won Rugby and Basketball County Cups but never the Football. This is a huge achievement for the players and the school. In a close match the boys beat Arnold Middle 4-3.

The boys are now looking forward to taking part in the Luton Town 7-a-side Invitational tournament, which takes place in May, and also to the Nationals when they are in Yr 8.

Goal scorers were **La-Marr Morgan (2)**, **Emersson Mututala-Sambu** and **Dylan Asonganyi**.

Team: Dominic Price, Jamie Tilsley, Ethan Tanti, Tomas Wren, Angelo Moscaritolo, Hakeem Hussain, Alex Endress, Muza Mugalu, Emersson Mututala-Sambu, La-Marr Morgan, Dylan Asonganyi, Jacob Buck, Przemyslaw Mazowski, Stefano Verdura and Frank Touko.

The Yr 6 boys won their league and they have qualified for the County play off finals which will be played after Easter.

It has been a very busy term with lots of extra-curricular clubs, including Street Dance, Taekwondo, Boxercise, Gymnastics, Netball and, of course, lots of Football!

ST GREGORY'S CHARITY DAY IN AID OF AVOCA – ARTICLE IN TIMES & CITIZEN

RUNNING through custard, teachers in stocks and a soccer skills school with football freestyler Mark Harlow were just some of the ways in which students helped raise money for charity on Oscar Romero Day.

The pupils at St Gregory's Middle School in Biddenham were fundraising for The Avoca Trust, a small family-run charity which promotes social and environmental projects in Central America.

PE teacher, Graham Millie is involved in the work and fundraising of the charity. He is travelling to Soyapango in El Salvador for the third year running with Peter Bull, (nephew of Fr O'Neill) and four other coaches to teach football to groups of disadvantaged young people.



St Gregory's have adopted Avoca as their school charity in memory of Oscar Romero the Archbishop of San Salvador who was assassinated after he campaigned against government repression.

Mr Millie said: "The whole day was dedicated to El Salvador and Avoca, and to celebrating Oscar Romero's life and his works. Mass was celebrated by Fr Tony and we were pleased to welcome the family of Fr Peter O'Neill who dedicated his life to the people of El Salvador."

Mary Armitage, the School Chaplaincy Coordinator, was the key organiser of the afternoon's fundraising events. Over £1,700 will be donated to AVOCA as a result of the efforts of both staff and pupils.

Frances Topa, Headteacher, commented: "I am very proud of the St Gregory's School Community. All are committed to helping those in need. Every year group took part in a range of different events, coming up with many enterprising ideas.

In addition, pupils and staff had been taking part in a soup kitchen every Thursday throughout Lent, having only a roll and soup for lunch to show their solidarity with people who are less fortunate than themselves. Significant funds have been raised from the donations made.

We wish Mr Millie every success in his time in El Salvador, secure in the knowledge that St Gregory's fundraising will allow the young people to have the benefit of exciting sporting opportunities."

The aim of the project is to give young people an alternative other than engaging in the gang culture which is prevalent in that area. Older teenagers are being trained as coaches so the good work can continue across the year. I am sure that we will have an update early next term.