



ST GREGORY'S CATHOLIC MIDDLE SCHOOL

Living, learning and growing together with Jesus



NEWSLETTER – OCTOBER 2011

MESSAGE FROM THE HEADTEACHER

Dear Parents and Carers

We have had an excellent start to the new academic year with pupils eager to engage in their learning and staff striving for excellence both in and out of the classroom.

We celebrated Mass at the start of term where we were able to welcome Fr Jonathan Hill to our school community. We were also very proud to be part of the Federation Mass which was celebrated at St Philip and St James. It was wonderful to see the full age range represented and it was an opportunity for our four schools to meet up with each other.

Leadership is an essential strand here at St Gregory's and I am delighted that the School Council is up and running under the guidance of Mrs Bassett and Mrs Harris. Pupil voice is an integral part of the learning process and there are already a number of suggestions which we will be acting upon in the near future.

Year 8 pupils have been actively seeking the opportunity to take up positions of responsibility across a range of leadership roles. We had a strong field of applicants for the Head Boy and Head Girl positions and our congratulations go to the successful candidates will no doubt serve us well in the year to come. In addition we have appointed Prefects, Maths Leaders and Mentors who will be supporting Year 5.

We welcome the involvement of parents in support of our school and I would like to extend my thanks to Mrs Spencer, the newly elected Chair of the PTA. Our first meeting earlier this term was full of ideas and we have many plans for the year ahead.

There is always an opportunity for pupils to get involved at St Gregory's with the full range of extra-curricular activities and I encourage all pupils to join in as much as possible. In addition to the very popular PE activities we are fortunate in offering Dance Club this term. Miss Bremner has also started an ECO club which is proving very popular and help with homework can be accessed each lunchtime in Miss Smyth's room. Budding chefs from Years 7 and 8 can join the Cooking club after half term.

Finally I would like to thank everyone who was involved in my Induction Mass which was celebrated by Mgr. Kevin McGinnell. It was a joyful occasion made even more special by the support from governors, staff, parents, family and friends. As Headteacher, I will do everything in my power to ensure that the values of the gospel of Christ are demonstrated here at St Gregory's school.

Together we will grow in faith, hope and love.

I wish you all a restful half term.

Yours sincerely
Frances Topa

Head Boy/Girl and Deputy Head Boy/Girl



We are very pleased to introduce you to our newly appointed Head Boy/Girl and Deputy Head Boy/Girl.

Akugbe Obazuaye (*Head Girl*)

Hakeem Hussain (*Head Boy*)

Keith Gunda (*Deputy Head Boy*)

Jillian Bernado (*Deputy Head Girl*)

We were very impressed with the quality of leadership displayed by these young people and also their desire to give something back to the community. Well done!

National Young Mathematicians' Award

On Tuesday, 1 November four Year 6 pupils will be taking part in the [National Young Mathematicians' Award event at the Explore Learning Centre in Bedford](#). During the event the children will complete a series of multi-layered problems and be given guidelines from the Explore Learning Managers.

100% Attendance Awards

Congratulations to the following pupils who received their award for 100% attendance for the academic year 2010-2011:

Ronan Cook	Sofia Picciano
Monique Gay-Maphosa	Anna Santosh
Yasmin Gill	Mansha Sarup
Alessia Ives	Elisa Sirchia
Rosie Logue	Frank Touko
Holly McKoy	Amber Tull
Caitlin Mc Loughlin	Lorena Vara
Aaron Mante	Melissa Williams
Riccardo Mazzeo	Tomas Wren



Kingswood Trip to France

In July 2012, we shall once again be running our very successful French trip to the Chateau de Chantereine, near Dieppe, in Northern France. It is a wonderful opportunity for Year 6 and 7 pupils to spend a long weekend in France in the company of their friends and teachers, visiting sites of cultural and historical interest and, of course, practising a little French.

Eco Club



St Gregory's has a new and thriving Eco Club, which is working towards the Eco Schools Provision Award, which we hope to gain by the end of term.

The students have been working tirelessly and have carried out a very in-depth environmental review. Through this we have decided on the areas of school which most need attention. The students have already been involved in lunchtime litter picks and weekly meetings.



Science News

The Science Department has been working closely with staff and students from other departments and the new School Eco Club.

The students have all completed their first units and are working well at achieving their goals in Science.

It is intended to run a six week block booster session for Year 8 students in the next half term. If you are invited, you are encouraged to attend.

PTA News

Introduction by New Chair:

'My name is Katharine Spencer and I am the new Chair for St Gregory's School PTA. I have been an active member of the PTA since my daughter started at the school last year. I look forward to helping the PTA continue to raise money for the school, and I thank you for your continued support.'

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Ann Peace for her hard work and commitment as the previous Chair.'

Mufti/Discos

Friday, 4 November will be a PTA Mufti day but please note there will **not be a disco that evening.**

There will be a further **PTA Mufti day and a disco on Friday, 2 December.**

£3 200 was raised last year, which was used in the following ways:

- Purchase of four gazebos
- £500 contribution to the Science Week
- £250 contribution towards the end of year trips
- £250 contribution towards Yr 8 leavers' party
- Purchase of playground equipment and a new PTA storage cupboard
- It has been agreed to purchase footballs for play time and contribute towards the Yr 7 History Day

The PTA Annual General Meeting was well attended, by both new parents and staff.

Thanks also to the parents and staff who recently gave up their time on a Sunday to dig over an area of land for the Yr 7s to do some planting.

Biddenham Show

Congratulations to Simran Kaur 8C. Simran won 2nd Prize in the Biddenham Show in the 'Young Biddenham' category. Simran copied out and illustrated a poem called 'If it wasn't for Mum'.



Cyberbullying - we are all part of the solution

There has been a lot of talk in the press and on the TV over the last couple of months about the good and inappropriate use of mobile technologies and social networking sites. At least one person has received a custodial sentence as a result of illegal activity but the use of technology to provide accurate information to the public and to mobilise community groups was impressive.

In school we use ICT as a key tool to support learning but take the potential risks seriously, in particular cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying is the use of information and communication technology (ICT) particularly mobile phones and the Internet to deliberately upset someone else. Anyone can become a victim so we must work together to support those who have experienced cyberbullying and to help prevent it from happening.

In school we talk about this issue in lessons, particularly in year 8 where it is a focus of the first unit of work in ICT. At home you can help by making sure you know what software and websites your child accesses. If they have a mobile phone or Facebook account, do you know what kinds of messages they send or receive? Are they getting upset, quiet or angry when they read messages? Do they have appropriate privacy settings on their accounts? Do they know you'll check their sites occasionally?

If a child reports an incident of cyberbullying to us at school we will take it seriously - we will investigate, work with other agencies where necessary, including the police, and take any actions we can to prevent a reoccurrence. In line with Government advice, we have an acceptable use policy which your child will have brought home recently for signing. Students are supervised when they use computer equipment and personal devices such as mobile phones are handed into the office for safekeeping - in part to help prevent the misuse of equipment during the school day.

Of the few instances of cyberbullying which we've investigated over the last couple of years, most have happened when a group of youngsters are together, egging each other on. In these cases, most of the people involved have said they didn't mean any harm or they were just 'having a laugh'. Clearly this lack of consideration for the consequences of their actions is, at the very least, unfortunate.

In other cases, the child is reacting to something that has been done or said earlier in the day - quite often something completely innocent which has been misunderstood or something relatively minor. Once on-line, some children lose their inhibitions and say things they would not say face to face. Sometimes children will set up email accounts or Facebook pages under false names and use these to send threatening messages to others. This can include setting up accounts in the name of another member of the class which leads to further misunderstanding. That is why an element of supervision, or the knowledge that a child may be supervised, is important - it just helps youngsters to moderate their behaviour a little and to prevent them from doing something inappropriate.

If you have a concern about cyberbullying you can find advice at www.digizen.org/cyberbullying. If your child is a victim please encourage them to speak out so we can help them. If your child is concerned about doing so they can put a message in the box in the library or email worrybox@stgregorys.beds.sch.uk

Year 7 Geography Fieldwork Day

On 7 July Year 7 pupils experienced a day of fieldwork led by pupils and staff from St Thomas More. In the morning they studied different aspects of crime and how it affects the environment we live in. They also looked at crime statistics and then linked this to our local environment. During the afternoon pupils prepared presentations of their findings to answer the question 'Is the area around our school a safe environment?' Various groups then presented their work to the Year group.

It was a new experience for all and one we hope to repeat again showing how geography is linked to everyday life and experiences.

Roman Day



Calling all budding Gladiators, soldiers and slaves!

Year 7 pupils will be experiencing a Roman Day on 10 November 10 led by Portals from the Past. This workshop is organised to compliment the History studies this term.

Due to a generous donation by the PTA, the day will only cost £3.50 per pupil and will no doubt be a memorable event. Please start thinking about costumes and what you can wear on the day! (Any weapons must be made from cardboard or they will not be allowed).

Sporting News

Key Stage 3 Rugby

During the first half term our rugby team took part in an emerging schools league and did a fantastic job of representing St Gregory's in all of their fixtures.

The team remained unbeaten in all their matches with impressive wins against both Westfield and Robert Bruce and ended the season as league winners.

For many of the boys this was their first time playing competitive rugby and they showed great commitment in training to learn the basics just in time for their first match of the year. They have continued to improve as a team over the course of this term and we look forward to seeing how they develop further in the future.

Well done to all the boys who represented the team and good luck for the start of the Bedfordshire County Cup competition which kicks off in the first week of next half term.



Cameron James (Captain) with the League Trophy

Football

The Yr 8 Boys are continuing their successful journey in the ESFA National Small Schools' Trophy – they have already beaten Roade School and Manor School convincingly and are now in Round 3 of the trophy. They have also won through to the next round of the U13 County Cup.

Clubs and fixtures will continue after half term with the following on offer:

Monday: Dance Club
Tuesday: Yr 5 Tennis Club
Wednesday: Girls Football Fixtures
Thursday: Gym Club and Rugby Club

Football and Basketball fixtures will begin next term and we are also in the process of starting up a Running Club!

Curriculum Next Term:

Yr 5: Basketball and Boys' Football
Girls Hockey
Yr 6: Basketball and Boys' Rugby
Girls 6B/C Football
Girls 6A Hockey
Yr 7: Gym (Flight) Boys Football Girls
Hockey
Yr 8: Gym/Basketball Boys Football Girls
Hockey

Please be advised that your child should have a pair of shin pads and boots for football and must have shin pads and a gum shield for Hockey.

Girls' Netball, Dance and Gym Clubs

The girls' netball teams have had a very successful start to the year. They have played well as a team, and worked hard to achieve some excellent results.

The Yr 7 and 8 netball teams have won their matches against Newnham, Bedford Girls and Robert Bruce.

Due to the large number of girls attending the netball clubs this year, we have also arranged a B team match against Westfield.

The dance and gymnastics clubs have been very well attended and will continue next half term.

Halloween



We have been asked to pass on the following message from Bedfordshire Police:

'As Halloween approaches, Bedfordshire Police is reminding parents and guardians to keep their children safe.

If possible, parents and guardians should go out trick or treating with their children, sticking to well-lit areas and only knocking on the doors of people they know. Some people may have 'No trick or treat' posters up at their doors and we ask that these are respected.

Bedfordshire Police is also reminding children and parents to be mindful that some of the more vulnerable or elderly members of the community may feel intimidated by people

calling at their doors and appeal to all residents to look out for their neighbours who may feel frightened during this time.

Extra patrols will be on hand over the Halloween and Bonfire Night period to ensure that the evenings can be enjoyed safely. For more advice about Halloween, please visit www.bedfordshire.police.uk

Holdenby House

On the 14 December Year 5 will visit Holdenby House, in Northampton. This links in with their



History topic for this term.

During this visit children will gain an insight into the life and times of the Victorian servant. They will step back in time, in costume, to experience life below stairs!

INDUCTION MASS OF HEADTEACHER



Headteacher, along with members of staff and the Deputy Head Boy, celebrating the Mass!

SATS (Week Commencing 14 May 2012)

Preparations for SATS are already underway. We have had a very successful Years 5 and 6 Parents' Evening, where children in Year 6 were given Revision Guides in English. A letter to Year 6 parents will follow after half term.

PLEASE REMEMBER MONDAY, 31 OCTOBER IS A TRAINING DAY. PUPILS RETURN TO SCHOOL ON TUESDAY, 1 NOVEMBER.