

ST GREGORY'S CATHOLIC MIDDLE SCHOOL

Living, learning and growing together with Jesus

NEWSLETTER – FEBRUARY 2011



MESSAGE FROM THE HEADTEACHER

Dear Parents/Carers

It is with great pleasure that I write to you having completed my first half term at St Gregory's school. The staff, pupils and parents have been very welcoming and I feel blessed to be leading such a vibrant community. The mission to deliver a high quality education built on Gospel Values is lived out here on a daily basis.

There have been a number of significant events this term, not least the Christmas Carol topic days which saw all of our pupils working collaboratively across the curriculum, focussing actively on their literacy. The visit to the theatre at Wavendon to see the masked performance of A Christmas Carol was certainly a highlight.

Our pupils have gained recognition for their sporting prowess with Sarah Kerr winning a series of medals for her Cross Country running. Despite fierce competition Sarah has emerged as the District Champion and she will be competing in the prestigious English Schools Cross Country Championships in March. Mr Millie and Mrs Belcher have great hopes for Sarah's future sporting success.

The highly talented Under 12 Basketball team are now the District Champions and they will be competing in the County Finals after half term.

There are many opportunities for pupils to get involved in sporting activities both in and outside of the school curriculum. This term, Taekwondo, Street Dance and Gym Club have proved to be extremely popular with the pupils. There will be more activities on offer after half term.

There was an extremely successful evening held for parents in preparation for the Key Stage 2 SATs. We were taken through the requirements for each paper and undertook a series of exercises to show that we had consolidated our learning. It was marvellous to see so many parents in attendance and the pupils certainly enjoyed showing their knowledge. SATs week is the 9 May and Mrs Langley will be sending more information out after half term.

St Gregory's has been an active partner in the Federation, with pupils from St Joseph's accompanying us to the theatre at the start of the year. In addition, we were involved in the Festival of Culture at St John Rigby where our parents kindly donated samples of delicious Polish food for everyone to taste. It was a tremendous success and I was very proud of our pupils who were also involved in the traditional dancing. Miss Hounsome and Mrs Cmoch did a terrific job in organising our part of the event.

Our school was also the venue for the highly successful Irish evening hosted on behalf of the St Thomas More PTA. The Life of Riley is a very popular local band with strong connections to St Gregory's and St Thomas More. I hope that we will have more events such as these which bring our communities together.

Mrs Armitage organised the St Gregory's contingent who attended the Diocesan Mass which was celebrated by Bishop Peter. The pupils were excellent ambassadors and they had the wonderful opportunity of being with representatives from each of the schools in the Diocese. Miss Duggan also coordinated the Diocesan R.E. training for Key Stage 2 teachers in the Catholic Federation.

I would like to offer my congratulations to Mrs Langley who has been promoted to Assistant Head teacher with responsibility for Key Stage 2 and to Mrs Collins who takes up the position of Office Manager.

My thanks to the staff and pupils for their hard work and endeavour and I wish you all a restful half term holiday.

Frances Topa
Headteacher

ICT NEWS



Did you know that KS3 students have homework reminders emailed to them by their teachers? Last term a group of

teachers got together to suggest ways to help students to remember to do their homework. All year 7 and year 8 students have now got a school email account which they can access from home. Teachers email them a reminder of what to do for their homework and the deadline. Why don't you ask your child to show you their email account - they need to go to the school website, select Students from the left hand menu, and then Email outside school. To log on they need to type nsnet/ followed by their user name (the same one they use for the school network) and their password is the same as they use at school.

On the school website there is now a section for letters from school. Select Parents/Visitors from the right hand menu and a list of recent letters will be there. This facility has only just been added and more letters will be posted over time.

Year 8 students have just finished their yearbook project - they've been writing business letters, creating surveys and putting together a marketing campaign for their yearbook. More about that later in the term.

Year 7 are busy making Podcasts at the moment. When they're finished we should be able to post them on the website so you can hear what they've achieved. It would be extremely helpful for them if they had a small set of headphones to use in their lessons.

Year 5 are busy learning how to use a spreadsheet. So far they've used a spreadsheet to answer questions and learnt how to enter a formula. Next they are going to learn all about how to create graphs before they do their assessed work. They are going to be coming home and asking some questions about the use of different technologies - please help them as this will allow them to get a higher grade on their assessment.

SAINSBURY'S ACTIVE KIDS VOUCHERS

Please start collecting your Sainsbury's vouchers for the school. This promotion will run from 9 February to 31 May 2011.

REMINDER OF START TIMES

Please remember that no children should be on site before 8.30am. There are an increasing amount of children arriving at school at 8.00, which is far too early. Students are only supervised on the playground from 8.30am. Parents are responsible for their child's safety before this time.

PE NEWS

Year 7 Boys - qualified from District finals and gained 3rd place in County Finals for Indoor Athletics.

Team: Muza Mugala, Dominic Price, Didi Sambu, Jack Palmer, Keith Ghunda and La-Marr Morgan

Year 7 Boys - District Basketball Champions

Team: Jacob Buck, Didi Sambu, Dominic Price, Muza Mugala, Jack Palmer, Fabio Paris, Aaron Brown, Dario Mongiardi, Jason Grewal (Captain). These boys now qualify for the County Finals after half term.

Year 7 Boys will face Cardinal Newman in the Football County Cup Semi Finals after half term.

There have been some fantastic performances in Cross Country - *Connor Archer, Mia Charles and Hakeem Hussain* - have all put in personal best scores this half term. However, one person has really stood out from the rest - *Sarah Kerr* (Bedford Borough's new 'Rising Star of the Year'!)

Sarah has:

- won the Lincroft Invitational (1st out of approximately 200)
- Won the District (1st out of approx 200)
- Won the County Qualifiers (1st out of 100)
- Come second in the County (racing against Year 9s)

This all means that Sarah now qualifies for the English Schools National Finals to be held in Nottingham in March.

We wish you all the very best and huge congratulations Sarah!!

YEAR 6 MATHS

Year 6 children have been working very hard as they prepare for National tests in May and there are many ways that parents can help them with this. We will be sending home mental tests and suggested websites that children can work on and we hope that you will encourage and support them in this.

PARKING ON SCHOOL SITE



There is no parking on the school premises for parents bringing or collecting their children at the beginning and end of the school day. Please use the spaces at Biddenham Upper School.

MORE PE NEWS

During this half term, there have been different activities set up within the school.

- Year 7 have accessed Taekwondo as part of their PE curriculum
- Both lunchtime and after school activities have increased with dodgeball, girls' football, street dance, taekwondo and gym
- Year 5 have had the opportunity to swim at Robinson pool, and have improved during the six week block of lessons. This will continue for the rest of this academic year.

The cross country events have been very successful and we will look to run a club at lunchtimes for this activity

After the February half term there will be Years 6, 7 and 8 boys' football, Years 5 and 6 netball, gym club and, possibly, boxercise.

Following the successful cross country events, a club will be set up at lunchtimes both for athletes and for keeping fit and healthy.

As part of their PE curriculum, Year 8 will complete the Young Sports Leaders' award.

Year 8 pupils will be chosen to run a Key Stage 1 multi sport festival for the Lower schools, and also be trained to run an intra competition, and sports day at St James, St John Rigby and St Josephs.

Winter sports day will be on Wednesday 23 March for the whole school.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

The whole school plus KS2 from St Joseph's saw the masked performance of *A Christmas Carol* on Thursday the 6 and Friday 7 January. It was thoroughly enjoyed by teachers and pupils and helped to develop some lively written work in the form of monologues, letters and reports. All pupils had the opportunity to develop their speaking and listening skills through various drama activities and pupils in KS2 also learned brand new skills when they were taught to 'fence'.

HEALTHY EATING

As we are a healthy school, can you please ensure that your children only bring a piece of fruit to eat for snacking and that lunches are healthy.

Lunchboxes should not contain too many fatty or sugary foods.



UP AND COMING CHAPLAINCY EVENTS

On Shrove Tuesday, 8 March, it is planned to hold a 'pancake assembly' to ready ourselves for Lent.

On Ash Wednesday, 9 March, there will be Mass with Fr Tony.

Lentern soup lunches will begin again on Thursday, 10 March. The lunches will be held in the Food Tech room at 12.40pm. Soup and a roll will cost £1, with all proceeds going towards AVOCA.



Thursday, 24 March is Oscar Romero Day, with Mass at 11.30am. The afternoon will be a Charity Day to raise money for AVOCA. Each class or year group will be running an activity (the more imaginative the better).

Budding actors/readers will be taking part in our Passion Play as we look towards Holy week.

VICTORIAN DAY

On Friday, 18 February Year 5 pupils will be coming to school dressed as Victorian children and will experience what a school day would have been like in those days. They will be using slates and chalks to practice handwriting. Boys and girls will be split in the afternoon to do lessons in Needlework and technical drawing.

The timetable for the day will be as follows:

<p>Check hands and repeat 'Cleanliness is next to Godliness' a few times. Recite the Lord's Prayer Bible stories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation - Genesis 1-3 • The Good Samaritan- Luke 14.15-24 • The Parable of the Gold coins - Luke 19. 11 <p>Explain the moral of each parable</p>			
5A Drill (AW)	5B Handwriting/Poetry (KB)	5C Arithmetic (x tables) (TH)	
5C Handwriting/Poetry	5A Arithmetic (x tables)	5B Drill	
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<p>Girls - Needlework (KB/KB/MA) Boys - Technical drawing (TH/ AW) - produce a plan of a Victorian classroom.</p>			
<p>Assembly - Hall Sing Hymns - read Victorian stories (The Signalman by Charles Dickens)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God Save the Queen • Abide with me • Onward Christian Soldiers • There is a green hill. • Guide me o great redeemer • For those in peril on the sea 			

SCHOOL DISCO

Friday, 25 March is the new date for the re-arranged school disco. Please be aware this day is not a mufti day, so children should attend school in their normal uniform.



CHANGE OF ADDRESS OR CONTACT NUMBERS

Please inform the school office if you have moved home or changed telephone numbers. In the event of an emergency, it is imperative that we have up to date work, mobile and home telephone numbers for all children.



SCIENCE TRIP QUIZ NIGHT

A Quiz Night will be held on **Friday, 18 March (7.00-9.00pm)** to raise funds for the forthcoming trip to the Euro Space Centre, in Belgium. Tickets will be available from the school office at a cost of £5 for adults and £3 for children.

Refreshments will be available and we hope you will support us in our quest to raise extra money to support our students on this adventure.

As a school, we are very conscious of the amount of paper we use and for this reason we would appreciate you emailing enquiries@st-gregorys.beds.sch.uk to supply us with your email address so we can provide electronic copies of newsletters etc in the future.

REMAINING INSET DAYS

There is one remaining INSET day this academic year on **Tuesday, 26 April.**

Please remember, children are due back in school on **Monday, 28 February.**