



# St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School

Loving, serving and growing together with Jesus

Advent Term

## Newsletter October 2017 Issue No.6

Dear Parents and Carers,

It is hard to believe that the end of our first half term is already in sight. I congratulate your children on how well they have settled back into school life following the summer holidays. Thank you to all of you who attended the Meet the Teacher Meetings in September; I hope you found them useful.

Parent Consultation Evenings will take place on 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> November. Please do book a slot to meet with your child's teacher. The signup sheets will be available by 16<sup>th</sup> October. Please bring your child's planner to the meeting.

## Living our Mission in Mind, Body and Spirit

Thank you so very much for your generosity in contributing to the collections to support those suffering from the horrific hurricanes in the Caribbean. From only 4 morning collections, we were able to send £422 to UNICEF to support their disaster relief work. Thank you also for your very kind donations that will be sent to the island of Dominica which has been devastated by the hurricanes. Members of our school community have family links to the island. If you are able to contribute any further, a crowd funding page has been set up: <https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/helpfordominica17>

As part of our new approach to Behaviour Management, members of the Senior Leadership Team have enjoyed special Monday lunchtimes with our Spirits of St Bernadette from each year group. It has been a delight to share this time with the children. The children are nominated by staff for consistently demonstrating our Christian Values and providing an excellent role model to their peers. The names of the Spirits of the each week are displayed in the Main Hall for all to see.

## How Can You Support Our School?

We pride ourselves on being a cohesive community at St Bernadette's but would really love to involve parents and carers more in the life of our school. In order for us to succeed in providing the very best for your children, it is essential that we work together to support one another. I urge you to consider some of the ways detailed below in supporting our school:

**Come to the Wednesday morning coffee morning** - from morning drop-off to 10am in the Main Hall. The first coffee morning raised £24 for Macmillan Cancer Support and the second meeting was extremely well attended. It is a lovely way to get to meet other parents and feel part of the school community. I hear that the cake is delicious too!

**Join our Parents' Association** - as mentioned in previous newsletters, this small group of wonderfully supportive parents really do need more members to make their invaluable work for the school more manageable. I will be collecting names and contact details of anyone interested at the Parent Consultation Evenings. Please come and speak to me!

**Hear readers and support in class** - ask for a volunteer application pack from the school office

**Become a Community Champion** - see Page 3 (before the dates section) of this newsletter

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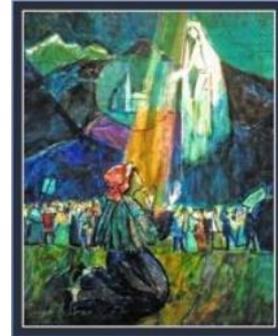


Last week I was delighted to welcome the three new priests of the Milton Keynes Cluster of parishes, Fr Francis, Fr Lijo and Fr Pius. They will be supporting the liturgical life of the school over this academic year. Please do join Y3-Y6 for Mass at 2:00 pm on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> November for the Holy Day of All Saints. It is always lovely for our children to see members of the community at Mass.



Thank you so much for your kind generosity and the enormous amount of tinned and dried food you have donated to the Foodbank this year. So many families in crisis will benefit from your kindness. We will be celebrating the harvest with collective worships on 6<sup>th</sup> October: 9:15 KS1 (Years 1 and 2) and 2:45 KS2 (Years 3-6). Parents and members of the community are welcome to join us.

## Prayer Garden



I am delighted that our Prayer Garden is completed and awaiting an official opening blessing which will take place on 30<sup>th</sup> October 4:45 pm. I do hope that as many as possible can join us for this short yet very special prayer service. There will be refreshments served after the blessing in the small hall. Please let the office staff know if you will be attending.

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The prayer garden is set to become an integral part of the prayer life of our school and, once it has been blessed on 30<sup>th</sup> October, parents are warmly welcomed to use it before and after school for their own moment of quiet prayer and reflection.

# Our Catholic Schools' Week

You have already received information from Mrs Pughe, our RE Leader, regarding Our Catholic Schools' Week.

We very much look forward to welcoming you to join your children at a collective worship at 1:45pm on 9<sup>th</sup> October. KS1 (Years 1 and 2) will be in the Small Hall, KS2 (Years 3, 4, 5 and 6) will be in the Main Hall. Following the collective worship, we hope that you can join the children in their classes or in the chapel for a range of RE or prayer-focussed sessions.

Thank you so much to those of you who have replied to the invite to join us for Education Sunday on 15<sup>th</sup> October for 11:30 Mass at Christ the King Church. This is a lovely opportunity to join together in song and praise. Those of all or no faith are also warmly welcomed and we hope that you will be able to join us for refreshments following Mass. We ask that all pupils who attend come to Mass in school uniform and join us to sit together in the left hand section of the church.

## Could You Become A Community Champion?

Many families join St Bernadette's from other parts of England, or indeed from other countries. Being new to Milton Keynes can feel lonely and isolating, particularly if you do not speak English as your first language.

I would like us to start a Community Champions Programme made up of parents or members of the community who know Milton Keynes well and have the time available to provide a friendly welcome to new families. Perhaps you know where the nearest swimming pool, dentists, GP, Children's Centre are or can recommend places to go for a family day out? Perhaps you have time for a coffee and a chat with a new parent? Perhaps you could help me to prepare a welcome to our area booklet for new parents? Perhaps you could help translate the booklet into another language? I am very interested in hearing other suggestions and would very much appreciate any support in setting this programme in motion.

Please chat to me at the school gate in the mornings or contact me via the school office email.



## Parking

I know that drop-off and pick up time can be stressful for everyone. The carpark becomes overcrowded and many who are in a hurry to get to work find themselves blocked in and unable to leave the carpark.

I appreciate how difficult it can be for everyone but I ask you to show courtesy for one another by **NOT**:

- parking in front of the gates, on the roundabout or other areas with yellow lines
- stopping in the middle of the road to drop your children off, even for a few seconds
- parking on the pavement, grass verges, across dropped kerbs or residents' driveways
- entering the staff parking area
- parking on yellow lines, zig zags or zebra crossing
- leaving your vehicle if your engine is still running
- parking in a disabled bay without an appropriate badge
- parking in a way that blocks in other drivers

Hopefully you have all signed the Considerate Parking Code in your child's planner. Please do adhere to it to ensure all of our children are safe and that they are provided with the best possible role models from within our own community.

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## Events for Advent Term 2017

<i>Friday 6th October</i>	9:15 KS1 and 2:45 KS2 Harvest Collective Worship - parents and community are welcome
<i>Monday 9th October</i>	1:45 pm. Join us for a collective worship then join your child's RE lesson to see what they are learning about
<i>Week commencing 9th October</i>	Our Catholic Schools Week, culminating in a special Mass 11:30am Sunday 15th October at Christ the King Church. Remember come in school uniform.
<i>Thursday 12th October</i>	Year 2 Local Area Walk
<i>Friday 13th October</i>	Individual and Family photographs - <b>note date change</b>
<i>Wednesday 11th October</i>	2:50 Y5 Falcon Class Collective Worship in the Small Hall/Chapel
<i>Wednesday 18th October</i>	2:50 Y4 Lion Class Collective Worship in the Small Hall/Chapel
<i>Friday 20th October</i>	Last day of this half term
<i>Monday 23rd - Sunday 29th October - Half Term Break</i>	
<i>Monday 30th October</i>	4:45 pm - Please join us for the Opening Blessing of our School Prayer Garden. Join us afterwards for refreshments in the Small Hall
<i>Wednesday 1st November</i>	Join Y3-Y6 for a Mass for All Souls and All Saints 2:00 pm
<i>Thursday 2nd November</i>	6pm Join us for a fabulous International Evening - come in your national dress and bring traditional food to share. Aim to have fun!
<i>w/c 6th November</i>	Poppies on sale all week before and after school
<i>Tuesday 7th and Thursday 9th November</i>	Parent Consultations from 3:30 pm - 6:00 pm
<i>Wednesday 8th November</i>	Y3 Kangaroo Class collective worship in the school chapel - families welcome
<i>w/c 13th November</i>	Focus Week - Anti Bullying
<i>15th November to 21st Nov</i>	Book Fair in Small Hall after school
<i>Wednesday 15th November</i>	2:30 Dolphin Class Collective Worship in Small Hall
<i>Tuesday 28th November</i>	School Nurse Clinic - please book a slot via the office staff to talk about any health concerns you have regarding your child
<i>Thursday 30th November</i>	2pm Join Y3-6 for an Advent Wreath Building Mass
<i>Friday 1st December</i>	Christmas Fair run by Parents' Association
<i>Tuesday 5th December and each Tuesday in Advent</i>	8:15am join us for quiet prayer and reflection each Tuesday of Advent in the chapel
<i>Tuesday 5th December</i>	9:30 Foundation Stage Nativity
<i>Thursday 7th December</i>	6:00 pm Maths information evening. How to promote an understanding of fractions at home.
<i>Wednesday 13th December</i>	2:15 Seahorse and Dolphin Class Nativity
<i>Friday 15th December</i>	2:15 Starfish and Turtle Class Nativity
<i>Friday 15th December</i>	Christmas Shop run by Parents' Association
<i>Monday 18th December</i>	9:15 am and 6:00 pm Y5 and Y6 Carols and Readings

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## Parental Questionnaire Responses

I sent out a Parental Questionnaire at the end of the summer term. I thank those of you who responded. The results are generally positive and the additional comments that were made are extremely helpful in informing school improvement. Where appropriate, I have added a response to the comments raised.

<b>St. Bernadette's Catholic Primary School July 2017 Parent Questionnaire Results (to nearest whole percent) 61 responses. 1 response = 1.6%</b>						
<b>Percentages</b>	1 Strongly agree	2 Agree	2017 (2016 response agree/strongly agree)	3 Disagree	4 Strongly Disagree	No Answer
<b>The values curriculum has helped my child understand Christian values.</b>	43	52	95 (92)	0	0	5
<b>St. Bernadette's provides my child with a good spiritual and religious foundation.</b>	51	46	97 (97)	0	0	3
<b>My child is encouraged to develop a strong prayer life.</b>	48	41	89 (84)	0	2	10
<b>My child feels safe at St. Bernadette's.</b>	62	33	95 (94)	0	3	2
<b>St. Bernadette's Staff respond to my child's particular needs.</b>	43	48	91 (91)	0	5	5
<b>The School Gateway is a useful communication service.</b>	40	48	88 (84)	0	8	3
<b>My child is taught well at St. Bernadette's.</b>	43	51	94 (92)	0	3	3
<b>There is a good standard of behaviour at our school.</b>	30	61	91 (92)	0	7	3
<b>The school keeps me well informed.</b>	38	55	93 (91)	0	3	3

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Parental Comment	Response
<p>It would be great if there could just be one teacher per class, but I understand the issues around teachers working part time and taking maternity leave.</p> <p>Poor this year was the leaving of head mistress and year 3 teacher at the same time. Turmoil for all children in this class. Unfair for them to have to deal with that. I hope in future this does not happen again.</p> <p>Thanks for everything you do for our children. Only area of concern is around the constant staffing changes and how this will affect the long term development</p>	<p>We do aim to provide as much continuity and stability as possible for all of our pupils but cannot avoid maternity leave and staff moving away. I acknowledge that this can more disruptive for pupils when changes happen mid-year. Wherever possible, we use our own staff or known, trusted supply teachers where staff absences occur to avoid disrupting the pupils' learning and wellbeing.</p> <p>2016-17 was a difficult year with a number of staff leaving but we do have excellent succession planning and processes in place to support staff development. This ensures that staff are continually developing their teaching skills in addition to leadership and management skills to enable us to continue to move forward when experienced staff move on.</p>
<p>Help the children develop friendships. Look after their mental health more.</p>	<p>We have an excellent team of Y5 and Y6 "Buddies" who support play and friendships on the playground and they, along with our Minni Vinnies team are working with staff to look at further ways of supporting friendship development.</p> <p>Our entire team of over 60 staff are now working collaboratively within four main teams to support our school mission. (Academic Mind, Healthy Mind, Healthy Body, Healthy Spirit). The Healthy Mind team have positive mental health as an area for focused development. We also have the wonderful support of our Inclusion Team, led by Mrs Romans and Mr Penny, our Learning Mentor who spends much of his schedule providing individual and small group support in this area.</p>
<p>Thank you for the safety of my kids throughout the year. God bless you all</p>	<p>Thank you.</p>
<p>Better communication between office staff and parents , specially when after school classes are cancelled</p> <p>sort out the date/day mistakes in letters that go out</p>	<p>We take on board this comment, although the office staff often receive news of cancellations at the last moment and work as quickly as they can to inform parents.</p> <p>I can only apologise for errors in information that goes out and will do my utmost to avoid future errors.</p> <p>The school gateway is a means of communication to parents and,</p>

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The school gateway is only for orders and trips; I don't feel it is for communicating though.	as we aim to be a paperless school, it our main means of sharing information, newsletters etc.
There is too much focus on getting ready for SAT's and then doing nothing after them	With the exception of "Mock SATs tests" which take place for Y6 pupils in Spring Term in order for them to understand the formal process, we do not focus place a great focus on SAT, other than ensuring that we deliver the contents of the National Curriculum. Following the tests, we continue to teach the Y6 curriculum through more investigative, group work and more creative aspects of the curriculum.
I am much more appreciative of my child's behaviour and their values	We place a great deal of emphasis on our values curriculum and have introduced a new Behaviour Policy. I am delighted that you feel the benefits of the approach to learning.
I'm really happy with my choice of school	Thank you for the positive feedback
Staff are very supportive. Children should be tested at least yearly to help them develop skills and techniques for writing formal examination at their level in main subjects such as mathematics, grammar, reading and writing.  Sometimes is not enough communication about the activities children have in school and the progress they making towards their learning.	Teachers carry out ongoing assessments throughout the year to inform their teaching with termly tests/activities to support summative assessment judgements. Formal tests take place in the summer term.  In many cases, the tests take place in a less formal environment to ensure as little pressure or stress as possible. As the children get older, the tests do become more formal so that they are prepared for the Year 6 statutory tests.  Parents receive progress reports and pupil targets through the year.  If you wish to know more about your child's progress, please do not hesitate to contact the class teacher for more information.
This is an amazing school and I have loved seeing and reading about what they are doing on eyLog (I know it is only for the little ones, but would be nice if there could be something similar used as they grow up through the school so you can see some of the things they do)	It is very difficult to provide the detail of EyLog further up the school due to the demands on active teaching but we do provide half termly curriculum newsletters (via Learning Page of website). We also provide Meet the Teacher sessions and two further Parent Consultation Evenings and a number of parent information evenings and workshops during the year. Please do come to join your children at worship then in their classrooms on 9 <sup>th</sup> October.  I will discuss with staff further ways of sharing what our children are doing at school with their families.
I hope and pray that the school performance will improve.	The school has a Development Plan, drawn up with staff and governors which focuses on improving pupil outcomes. 2016 data showed that our pupils performed higher than pupils

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	<p>nationally in Reading, writing, grammar and maths. In 2017, our pupils' performance remained high in English but mathematics was highlighted as an area for development. I have detailed this and the actions we are taking in the September newsletter and anticipate 2018 data will demonstrate the impact of the changes put in place.</p> <p>A programme of staff development is also in place to ensure constant development to ensure the best possible outcomes for our children.</p> <p>Our latest Ofsted inspection and RE inspection both judged the school to be outstanding in all areas, however, we are consistently striving to improve to provide the best for our school community.</p>
<p>I think that the cuisine could be healthier. More fresh fruit &amp; vegetables should be available. I was disappointed to hear that the Afterschool club was providing pizza and chips, sausage and chips. Whilst ok as a treat, if your child attends every day this is not healthy.</p>	<p>All FS and KS1 pupils have access to free fruit at playtime every day.</p> <p>Fresh fruit is always a desert option with the hot school meals and a range of vegetables and /or salad is always available.</p> <p>I am monitoring the choice of meals at lunchtimes and I have liaised with Essence Catering regarding the afterschool club meals. I believe that there is now a healthier, more varied provision. I will continue to monitor this.</p>

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