



We are called to be the hands and face of Jesus as we learn, love and grow together

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Dear parents and carers

It has been quite a spectacular half term and I think that we are all so ready for the half term holidays ahead, before we embrace the final few weeks in school before the summer! Reflecting on this term so much has occurred that we can all be grateful for.

Welcome to Mrs Whitty

Firstly, it has been wonderful to welcome Mrs Whitty to the StVdeP team as Deputy Head. Mrs Whitty has enjoyed getting to know so many of you and chatting before and after school. If you haven't already introduced yourself, please do. Mrs Whitty's role involves many aspects, but at the heart of her varied and busy role is 'leader of learning, teaching and pedagogy'; as such, if you have any feedback on the curriculum, please do email awhitty@stvincent.herts.sch.uk.



Curriculum

This term we have spent much time reviewing the curriculum in KS2 and look forward to sharing our work with you on this soon. In KS1 and EYFS our focus has been on the environment for child-initiated learning as well as the selection of a new Synthetic Phonics Scheme. Very recently, we have invested in Little Wandle Revised Letters and Sounds for this purpose. Having spent almost £10K on this scheme (resources, training and new books), we are convinced that this will transform the teaching of phonics



and reading throughout the school. The scheme will be launched in September and all staff throughout the school will be trained in its very specific pedagogy during our INSET days. We look forward to sharing new resources that will help parents with support for reading in the Autumn term.

Musical developments

This term has seen us returning towards a more normal pattern of events in school post covid. Assemblies have returned in-person and it has been wonderful to sing together again. This week I have met with the Deputy Director of Education in the Diocese to discuss our potential involvement in a partly funded Catholic choral project. This could be a very exciting project and would involve the appointment of a professional choral director for a group of schools. Watch this space for future concerts and a delightful sound!

Early Years to Year 1

A Governors' visit this term explored learning in the Early Years and looked at transition to Year 1. Governors were keen to find out how the Year 1 staff get ready to receive Reception pupils rather than having Reception pupils getting ready for a more formal Year 1. This is quite a distinct pedagogical difference – you may have noticed a very distinct difference to the Year 1 outdoor area that reflects this recently. Significant investments have occurred this term in the outdoor equipment used in both Reception and Year 1 as a result. The children have been very appreciative of it and are fully immersed in their learning as a result.



Parent Consultations

It was wonderful to be able to invite parents into school for a physical parents' consultation and to offer everyone the chance to see their child's books again. Thank you for cooperating with our measures to limit the number of people in school at this time and for helping us all to focus on the wellbeing of staff by being efficient with our time. This was very much appreciated by all – thank you!

First Holy Communion

It has been lovely over the past few weeks to be able to celebrate the First Holy Communion of many pupils in the school. These have been amazing occasions. The children have looked so smart and have been so reverent in their reception of the Eucharist. Congratulations to them all! Later this term we hope to be able to invite the parents of children who have recently made their First Holy Communion to celebrate with communicants from across all of our parishes.

Bishop Paul's Visit

It has also been wonderful to be able to welcome more visitors back into school this term. Recently, Bishop Paul McAleenan, a great friend of the Stevenage parishes, visited to officially open and bless both our St Joseph's Workshop and our Woodland Wellbeing Walk – a collaborative project with a dementia charity that we host on site, The Red Shed. Bishop Paul enjoyed his visit and was impressed



by the response of the children. As well as blessing Year 5's Fairy Model Village (if you haven't seen it you must!), Bishop Paul also helped Year 2 to plant a special oak tree (with its very own special story) to commemorate HM Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee.



May Procession

This week it was wonderful to be able to welcome parents finally to an in-person school event after such an absence. It was wonderful that so many were able to join with us for our traditional May procession. The children were in fine voice with some traditional Marian hymns and were keen to lay their flowers in thanks for Mary looking after their knots. Mary, undoer of knots, pray for us!



Platinum Jubilee

What better culmination to an eventful term than yesterday's amazing Platinum Jubilee celebrations. The children enjoyed preparing for this event with every child making a double-sided triangle for our jubilee bunting. Not only did this decorate the playground for our Platinum Jubilee street party lunch, but will also be used for a local community event over the jubilee weekend. Lunchtime was a busy, noisy and exciting affair – accompanied by a soundtrack that included modern party favourites with big band reggae tunes – the children celebrated in style. Activities in class were creative and innovative and there was an amazing jubilee vibe in school throughout the day. Congratulations to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II on such a momentous occasion.





Food and Allergies

We have many children throughout the school with significant food allergies and intolerances. This means that staff have to be very careful when planning ahead for activities and occasions that involve food. As such, as kind as it is, we are no longer able to distribute food treats or sweets from home to celebrate a child's birthday or other occasion. When treats have been sent in, staff have needed to check all ingredients against the allergies of their class and this causes extra time pressures, often at the last minute. No distribution of any food items from home will be implemented when we return after half term and there will be no exceptions. I'm sure you will fully support and understand the importance of this new precaution.

Looking Ahead

As we plan for the half term ahead, we look forward to being able to invite parents to more events including sports day, a Year 6 Leavers' Mass and Assembly and a post Holy Communion Celebration. I understand that our wonderful PSA are also looking forward to being able to welcome more individuals to events too. However, I have to say that I have been so impressed with their innovation in raising funds in other ways recently. I know that the children really enjoyed paying to express their commitment to daring to be different recently.

I wish you all a wonderful half term full of happy moments, relaxation and excitement.



May God bless you and those most dear to you.

Your sincerely

Jon White (Headteacher)



Dates for your diary:

30 th May – 5 th June	Half term Holidays
Wk beg 6 th June	Yr 1 Phonics Screening
8 th – 10 th June	Y6 residential trip to Cuffley Camp
16 th June	Y5 taster visit to JHN
24 th June	Please return all reading scheme books (no new ones will be issued after this date)
6 th July	Stevenage Dance Festival
8 th July	Y6 to JHN Community Mass & picnic
12 th July	Sports Day (timings to be confirmed)
14 th July	Transition day – children will meet their new teachers (Y6 to secondary schools)
15 th July 9.30am (TBC)	First Holy Communion Celebration
18 th July (date TBC)	Y6 Leavers' Mass
20 th July 9.30am	Y6 Leavers' Assembly
20 th July 2pm	School breaks for Summer Holidays
21 st July	INSET day (no pupils)
22 nd July	INSET day (no pupils)
1 st September	INSET day (no pupils)
2 nd September	INSET day (no pupils)
5 th September	Pupils return to school

