



*"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,

With only a few weeks to Easter, I thought this would be a good time to update you on school life!

### **Catholic Life**

This half term began with a special assembly all about the season of Lent, a time in which we open our hearts and minds to God, encouraging self-discipline, reflection and spiritual growth. Many of the children have shared their Lenten promises and have been taking part in additional opportunities for prayer and reflection as we prepare for the celebration of Easter.

Our spiritual journey will continue next week as the children participate in our Be Spirited Week. During this time, they will take part in a variety of activities designed to deepen their faith and encourage thoughtful reflection. As part of our Catholic, Social, Teaching the children think about 'preferential option for the poor', as part of this we raise money for a local, national and international charities. This term, our Chaplaincy Team will be organising the Easter Raffle with funds raised going to the international charity of their choice. If you would like to support your child's faith journey at home this Lent please visit. [CELEBRATE@Home — CELEBRATE Trust](http://CELEBRATE@Home—CELEBRATETrust)

### **Enrichment**

Enrichment opportunities continue to thrive across the school. Children in Reception, Year 1, Year 3 and Year 6 have taken part in exciting STEM workshops (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths). Year 5 recently participated in a Technology K'Nex competition which challenged their creativity, teamwork and engineering skills.

World Book Day was celebrated enthusiastically across the school, with both children and some staff dressing up as their favourite book characters. The whole school studied the same text, creating a wonderful, shared reading, drama and writing experience. Our libraries remain very popular places within the school, with children regularly borrowing books and enjoying conversations about their favourite genres, characters and authors. We certainly have many budding authors here and I look forward to seeing who publishes their first book in the future!



Music has also been filling the air around school. The whole of Year 5 have been learning the clarinet this half term and they are very excited about sharing their progress with parents before the end of term. Children in Years 3–6 have also begun choir sessions and our whole school hymn practice is a lovely time to come together and finish the week together. It is wonderful to hear how beautifully they sing together. Music lessons are a firm favourite of many of our children and most recently I was invited to listen to a class orchestra, what a treat!

Sporting opportunities have also been plentiful. Year 1 children participated in Commonwealth Games workshops in the hall led by Stevenage Sporting Futures, while Year 3 have been taking part in Fit Kidz circuit sessions which certainly challenged their energy and stamina. The boys' football team have been undefeated this half term winning against Martin's Wood 4-2 and Knebworth 3-2. The girls are training hard for their first match.

Year 5 have started their Mini Police training and will be working weekly to learn about being model citizens and keeping safe.

These enrichment opportunities are incredibly important for our children, and we endeavour to ensure that all pupils experience a wide variety of engaging activities that bring learning to life.

## **Curriculum**

Our curriculum remains busy and exciting. The Early Years outdoor learning area is now fully up and running and the children are enjoying the wide range of experiences it offers.

We are also entering the time of year for statutory assessments. Year 1 are working hard as they prepare for their Phonics Screening Check, Year 6 booster sessions are in full swing for our oldest pupils as they prepare for their SATs and Year 4 are practising their times tables in readiness for the Multiplication Tables Check.

Looking ahead to the Summer Term, pupils will begin their Relationships and Sex Education lessons. These lessons are progressive and build on the knowledge from previous years. As always, the parent portal is available for you to view the materials and lessons your children will be covering, including video clips. The programme used is Ten:Ten, which is recommended by the Westminster Diocese and follows the teaching of the Catholic Faith. All topics are delivered in an age-appropriate way and meet the statutory requirements. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to speak with your child's class teacher. The resources are available on the parent portal should you wish to view them.

To get a weekly update on learning in our school visit our Pupil Posts on our website [PI - News & Letters 2](#)

We are now on Facebook, follow the link on our website here [SVDP Catholic School](#)

## Technology

A few parents have also asked for information about the Smartphone Free Childhood campaign. For those who wish to learn more, you can find further information here:

<https://www.smartphonefreechildhood.org/>

## Staffing

Finally, it is with both sadness and gratitude that we will soon be saying a fond farewell to three very special members of our school community. Our wonderful Site Manager, Mr Hargrave, and our Nursery Teacher, Mrs Humphries, who will both be retiring. They have given so much to our school over the years and will be greatly missed. We wish them both a very happy and well-deserved retirement filled with rest and relaxation.

I would like to welcome some new members of staff to our community: Mr Allen who joins us as Site Manager, Mrs Coleman who will be supporting our SEN pupils as a Teaching Assistant, Miss Mann, our Higher Level Teaching Assistant and Miss Kane who joins us as Nursery Teacher and Early Years Lead. I am sure you will join me in welcoming them warmly to our school.

### ***Prayer for Peace in Lent***

*Lord of mercy and light,*

*In this Lenten season, quiet my restless heart.*

*Where there is conflict, sow seeds of reconciliation.*

*Where there is fear, breathe courage and calm.*

*Where there is division, weave threads of unity.*

*Teach me to walk gently, speak kindly,*

*and listen with compassion.*

*May my life reflect Your peace,*

*so that others may find rest in Your presence.*

*Amen.*

Kindest regards



Alexandra Whitty  
Headteacher

### **Dates:**

March 13 <sup>th</sup>	Year 6 & 5 Mass St Joseph's
March 20 <sup>th</sup>	Year 4 Mass St Joseph's
March 24 <sup>th</sup>	Reception STEM Bubble Workshop
March 27 <sup>th</sup>	Easter Reflection (Children only)
March 27 <sup>th</sup>	<b>End of Term - 2pm</b>
<b>INSET DAY</b>	<b>Monday 13<sup>th</sup> April – No children in school</b>
<b>April 14<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Start of Summer Term</b>

