



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

As I write to you this afternoon, our teaching assistant team are finishing their phonics training and the teachers are putting the finishing touches to learning environments, ready for the return of your children on Monday. Your children may like to check the appended 'I Spy' images to see if they can spot any aspects of their new classrooms upon return. I would like to thank the staff team for their diligent and creative preparations for the new school year.

We look forward to welcoming everyone back and we especially look forward to welcoming new joiners to our school in Nursery, Reception and various other year groups. Mrs Whitty and I hope to be able to meet all new families over the weeks ahead – we are usually available on the playground before and after school should you wish to introduce yourself.

We also welcome two new members of staff to the team: Mrs Chowdhury who will be teaching in Year 1 and Mr Richardson who will be teaching in Year 6. It has been great for our new team to work closely together over the past few days and we all look forward to the excitement of a new year ahead!

Back to school information

By now you should have received a welcome back letter from your child's new teacher. Autumn term curriculum information will be shared within the next two weeks, and we will also arrange a 'meet the new teacher' opportunity for parents very soon where you will be able to learn more about the year ahead. We will soon be ready to publish the calendar of events for the year as well as the School Development Plan so that you are able to see where our aspirations are taking us this year.

Site projects

Summer is often a time when many bigger projects are planned for on site. This summer both Year 3 classrooms have been redecorated and carpeted. All 'high level' display space has been removed, as has been the precedent in other classroom refurbishment projects across the school in the last few years. This is a deliberate strategy to reduce visual overload in the learning environment.. It will be lovely for our Year 3 children to return to their newly refreshed learning environment on Monday. You will also notice across the site improvements to the internal security fencing.



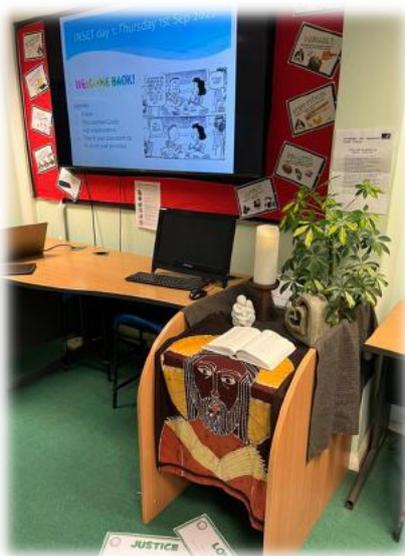
This has been made higher around areas where our youngest children regularly learn and play outdoors, and the number of access gates has been reduced to keep areas as safe as they can be. The top field also now has its own fence to separate it from the service road which leads to the kitchen area. Access to the Year 4 end of the KS2 building and the junior playground has been made more secure too. You will also notice, as you come through the main entrance an extra internal gate. This is self-closing and aims to protect the site whilst the main gate automatically closes on its timer. This will be pinned open during busy times, but please ensure that it closes behind you during the rest of the day. These improvements provide extra peace of mind when thinking about the security of our large, busy site. Fortunately, this project was 90% grant funded, with the school needing to find just £6K towards the total cost. Thank you for your contributions to the school building fund which allow this type of work to go ahead. A particular thank you is due to Mrs Lorimer, School Business Manager, for leading these projects across the Summer.

Our roof replacement project (both buildings) has been delayed but we expect it to start soon. Our 10% contribution towards this project will be in the region of £60K so please keep your building contribution funds coming if possible. We appreciate, however, that many will be feeling the financial pinch.

Staff Training

The staff team have experienced three busy days of INSET training since the children broke for the Summer and have explored, amongst many other aspects:

- Catholic Social Teaching
- A 'heart that sees' initiative (watch this space!)
- Concrete, pictorial and abstract approaches to maths
- Handwriting & presentation
- Learning Behaviours
- A rich and purposeful learning environment
- High standards in phonics through the implementation of our new phonics scheme, 'Little Wandle'
- Safeguarding & Child Protection



Staff took a break from the training this morning to join with Father Nigel in the celebration of a beautiful Mass at St Joseph's. We prayed for all our families and the whole school community.

Reminder re start and end times

Classroom doors open at 8.45 am (please do not arrive before 8.40am unless you are attending Breakfast Club). We operate a soft start to the day and, to alleviate parking issues on locally, children may arrive over a ten-minute period from 8.45am. Class doors and the front gate close at 9.00am after which all visitors must report directly to the main office as the register will be closed at this point. Children must be accompanied to the office after 9am by an adult. Please note that there is no longer a soft end to the day.



School finishes at 3.15pm and we ask that all children are collected promptly. The main gate will open at 3.10pm ready for parents to meet their children at 3.15pm. Staff regularly have meetings and training after school and late collection can hold up the whole staff team who are ready to meet. If you anticipate a one-off difficulty with collection, please advise the school office via phone as soon as you can. Later collection on a regular basis is available through making use of the Cool After School Club linked to the school. The government have recently set some minimum statutory hours that schools must be open for, and I will be reviewing the impact of this on our scheduled day later this term. I will keep you informed of any necessary developments in relation to this.

Changes to next year's INSET day plans

As advised last term, we have needed to change one of our INSET days this year to accommodate plans to use the Church and school facilities for the visit of the relics of St Bernadette of Lourdes in October. As such the INSET day designated for 20th July 2023 will now be a school day (final day of the school year for pupils) and the **INSET day will move to Monday 17th October 2022.**

Due to the movement of the relics from St Joseph's on the morning of Tuesday 18th October 2022, the school will start at the later time of 10am. Breakfast Club will not be available on this day either.

As well as using our facilities for this exciting visit, much traffic is expected as coaches will be visiting St Joseph's for a full programme of events. This could make access to the school tricky.



We will of course have a focus on St Bernadette as we return in the Autumn Term so that the children understand about the importance of this visit. A small group of children will be selected to be present at the arrival of the relics on the first day, despite this being an INSET day, and we do hope that families will be able to engage with part of this exciting programme of events. Details of the Relic Tour are available via <https://stbernadette.org.uk/>

Little Wandle Phonics

We are now ready to introduce our new phonics teaching scheme, Little Wandle, and families with children in EYFS and KS1 will notice that reading practice will be rather different from September. The scheme is excellent and will refresh and rejuvenate the way we teach and support reading throughout the school.

Some information for parents is available via the following link which I encourage you to explore: <https://www.littlewandlelettersandsounds.org.uk/resources/for-parents/>. Further information will be shared with you in the weeks ahead as staff begin to make their way through the early teaching elements of the scheme. We are all learning, so please bear with us as we implement this new way of working!

Current economic climate

I am only too aware of the impact of the current economic climate on so many families and appreciate how this will impact on many of us over the year ahead. One of the great strengths of our community is our ability to come together and support those most in need. Please be aware that should you need to, the school does have access to some practical support options for families who may need help from time to time. Please do not be proud in coming forward and asking for help when things are difficult, as hard as this may be.



Our whole ethos is rooted in our Vincentian charism; acting with compassion and responding practically is a core part of our mission at St Vincent de Paul School. Thank you for helping us to live this out.

Today the staff reflected on the words of St Theresa of Avila:

*Christ has no body now but yours.
No hands, no feet on earth but yours.
Yours are the eyes through which
He looks compassion on this world.
Yours are the feet
With which He walks to do good.
Yours are the hands
through which He blesses all the world.
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, yours are the eyes,
You are His body.
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.*

As we begin a new year together, I pray that these words inspire us all to act with a heart that sees.

May God bless you and those most dear to you.



Jon White
Headteacher

Important dates for your diary:

Thurs 1 st – Fri 2 nd Sep 22:	INSET Day (teachers only)
Mon 5 th Sep:	School starts for children
Mon 17 th Oct	INSET (teachers only)
Tues 18 th Oct	Late start – 10am
Mon 24 th – Fri 28 th Oct:	HALF TERM HOLIDAYS
Wed 21 st Dec 2pm:	Break for Christmas
Thurs 22 nd Dec – Wed 4 th Jan 23:	Christmas Holidays
Thurs 5 th Jan:	Occasional Day (no school)
Fri 6 th Jan:	INSET Day (teachers only)

Spring Term 2023:

Mon 9 th Jan:	School starts for children
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Can you spot something familiar in your new EYFS or KS1 class?



Can you spot something familiar in your new KS2 class?

