

ST MARGARET CLITHEROW ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Headteacher:
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20th December 2016

Dear Parents and Carers

How is it possible that we have reached the final days of the Autumn term edging towards Christmas? This has been a busy term in school and the children are enjoying the Advent festivities. It was lovely to see so many of you at the Christmas plays. I always feel that the Christmas season has begun when we hear our children retelling the beautiful nativity – and didn't they do it so well in fine voice and with brilliant stage presence! Thank you for your help in helping the children to learn their lines. It is so lovely for our community to come together and celebrate with the children.



Advent charity

Thank you for buying raffle tickets at the Christmas performances: we have raised £230 for SCIMP (Stevenage Churches Interdenominational Missionary Project) this year which I know will be gratefully received. The children, through paying to sign their class Christmas Card, have raised in the region of £200. This will be used to purchase CAFOD World Gifts (eg a pig for a community) and will practically support real and sustainable development projects in places of real need.



Jesus lives in us, our families, our school, our Church, our world. Jesus is our guide, let us follow Him
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Christmas Dinner

The children enjoyed a fantastic Christmas Dinner last week – thank you to cook and her team who provided 200 hot, delicious traditional meals on this day. Thanks also to the staff (teachers, TAs and Admin staff) who provided silver service to the children! The pictures below show how much the children enjoyed being treated.



Farewell and good luck

Mrs Howard, teaching assistant in Year 1, will be leaving to take up a new role in a secondary school at the end of this term. We wish her well and thank her for her contribution to the school community over the past three years. Mrs Wan, a cleaner at our school for over 10 years, retired at the end of November. We send Mrs Wan our congratulations and best wishes on her retirement and thank her for her service to the school over many years. This term we have welcomed Mr Kilbey (Yr 6) and Miss Jones (Nursery) to our Teaching Assistant team and after January, following appointments, we hope to introduce one new member to our team.

Thank you

May I take this opportunity to thank parents for their support in collecting children so quickly last Friday when we had to close the school due to the water leak? It is only at such times that you are able to test the emergency contact systems that are in place. We now know that we need to shorten our message to ensure that you all receive only one text in future! Keeping the office updated with new telephone numbers is essential in such circumstances. Please note that even in an emergency, we are unable to allow children to be collected by another adult unless we have been notified; this is, of course, to ensure effective safeguarding of your children. It is amazing the impact of water damage – we are currently working with our insurers and the Diocesan property consultants to manage the repairs which will be fairly substantial; thank goodness for insurance!

PSFA

A huge thank you to the PSFA committee and especially to Alex, Paul, Neil & Kebe all of whom put in so much effort (much behind the scenes work too) to put on the events that we have been accustomed to. This essential fundraising ensures that we are able to invest in projects that make a real difference to your children's education. The Christmas Fayre made a profit of £2,214 which will be used towards the cost of interactive screens in the EYFS to complete our school-wide project. Thank you to everyone who helped in any way and to everyone who turned up on the day. Well done and thank you!



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Attendance and punctuality

Thank you for supporting our drive to ensure that children are in school on time each morning. The doors open at 8.45 for an 8.50 start and the register is open between 8.55 and 9.00. Arrivals between 8.55 and 9.00 are recorded as 'late before the register is closed' and a digital record of minutes late is recorded; arrivals after 9am are recorded as 'late after the register has closed' and are marked as an unauthorised absence in accordance with policy. This will impact upon attendance measures reported to the Local Attendance Officer when she visits and will be reflected in end of year reports. Being just 10 minutes later per day has a significant impact. As well as providing an unsettled start to the day (children do not like being late), much essential learning time is lost: **10 minutes per day becomes 50 minutes per week ... 10 hours per term ... 30 hours per year (that's the equivalent of 5 days)!** There are many children, however, who are on time every day – well done! Thanks also to families who are making a concerted effort to park elsewhere or who are able to walk to school – this really helps to make the car park a safer place.

Keeping Warm

You will be aware that there have been some problems with our heating system in school recently. Repairs are almost complete now but have cost in the region of £5,500. Such repairs are difficult to budget for and as such, this is an example of how we can use your voluntary but essential donations to the School Building Fund to make ends meet. Without these donations we would struggle to keep the building in good repair. Thank you for your donations and thank you also for Gift Aiding them where you are able to. Future projects which will impact on the School Building Fund involve a complete refurbishment of toilets throughout the schools; replacement of some decaying wooden doors; and redesign of the vehicular entrance in order to separate pedestrians and vehicles as well as potentially creating a safe drop and go point for parents of older children.

Using your skills

There are always smaller scale projects that we could do with a hand with. Currently you will notice that the junior play equipment is out of use. This is because three of the supporting uprights are beginning to decay at a low level. Repair of these is extremely costly and due to other commitments is not a number one priority at the moment (hence it being out of action). I wonder if anyone on our parent body has the skillset and time available to repair these for us.

We are always looking for volunteers in school – do you have a skill and some time that might be helpful to us? Again please email with details and we will get back to you.

Currently we are looking for someone with 'green fingers' to provide some TLC for our green house and allotment area. Once organised, it would be great if someone could come into school on a regular basis during a lunch time and work with a small group of children to make better use of this area. If we had a team of volunteers for this the commitment would be lessened.

If you might be able to help with any of these projects, please email head@clitherow.herts.sch.uk.

Dates and end of term timings

Please find attached our school dates for 2017/18. Please be aware of these when making plans for holidays. Please also be aware that there may be some difference in dates between our school and others (including JHN) although we have tried to minimise this as far as possible. Following feedback from parents, **Governors have decided that as from Easter 2017, our end of term finishing time will be at 1.45pm.** This is to allow families an opportunity to make an early start to a holiday, aligning our practice with that of the John Henry Newman School.

Finally

Finally, may I take this opportunity to thank all of our families for their support throughout 2016. May I also thank our talented staff team and governors for their commitment and enthusiasm throughout the year. We are certainly blessed with a fantastic community that we can all be so very proud of. As the holidays beckon, I wish you all a very happy and holy season with much fun, laughter and family times. For the children, I have just one message ... be good, help your parents (Father Christmas sees all) and enjoy your Christmas.



Have a wonderful Christmas and a fantastic start to 2017!



#beautiful #unique #diverse #SHINE

God's blessing on you and those most dear to you during this festive season. Your families remain in my prayers at this time.

Yours sincerely

Jonathan W J White
Headteacher

Important dates

Thursday, 5 th January 2017	8.45am	Return to school
Tuesday, 10 th January 2017	3.30pm-4.30pm	Rising Stars Football Club Years 1-3
Wednesday, 11 th January 2017	3.30pm-4.30pm	Rising Stars Adventure Club Years 2-6
Friday, 13 th January 2017	3.30pm-4.30pm	Rising Stars Dodgeball Club Years 2-6
Monday, 6 th February 2017		Nursery Applications 17/18 open
Friday, 10 th February 2017	3.30pm	Break up for half term

Monday, 13th– Friday, 17th February 2017

Half term

Monday, 20 th February 2017	8.45am	Return to school
Wednesday, 1st March 2017	2pm	Ash Wednesday Mass – all welcome
Friday, 17 th March 2017		Nursery Applications 17/18 close
Wednesday, 29 th March 2017	7pm	Year 5 Easter Performance
Friday, 31 st March 2017	1.45pm	Break up for Easter Holidays

Monday, 3rd – Monday, 17th April 2017
Tuesday, 18th April 2017

Easter Holidays
INSET DAY

Wednesday, 19 th April 2017	8.45am	Return to school
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