



Newsletter



24/1/18

Regional Schools Commissioner's Officer

We were visited by Jonathan Bishop, a representative of the Department for Education, on Monday of this week. It was part of a series of visits to CAST schools on behalf of the Regional Schools Commissioner. The purpose of his visit was partly to gain an overall view of the performance of CAST schools, and partly to see if he thought St Joseph's in particular was performing well, had the capacity to maintain good performance and to get even better. It was similar to an Ofsted one day inspection but with an increased focus on the quality of teaching and learning, and of leadership. He spoke to all of the Senior Leadership team (Mr Gill, Mr Dyson, Mrs Spry and Mrs Shores), to Mary Cox (our CAST School Improvement Officer), to our chair and vice-chair of governors (Mrs Cussen and Mr Kelly) and to a group of children from years 5 & 6. He also spent time in every classroom observing how well the children learn. As expected the children came up trumps. The focus the children showed towards their learning in every classroom was very impressive. Behaviour around the school was excellent all day. The adults did not do too badly either! The feedback that he gave us at the end of the day was very complimentary. No actual judgement about a school is made at such visits, but where there are concerns a further visit is planned. He did not feel there would be a need for another visit to St Joseph's. It is very gratifying to have an expert, experienced, fresh set of eyes looking at the school in great depth and confirming that we are doing a good job for your children and are on track to make the school even better for them.

Enrichment

Mr Bishop's visit was very much standards driven, particularly in English and Maths, and we did not really get the chance to show how much we try to offer a wide variety of enrichment opportunities for the children. He was impressed by the Foundation Stage children preparing for their 'Castle Ball' this Friday. He wasn't aware, however, of the other events taking place in the rest of the week. On Tuesday the football team took part in a competition at Goals; also on Tuesday all of the Key Stage 2 children took part in table tennis workshops being coached by three boys who are in the top 50 table tennis players in the country; today years 5 & 6 went to Plymouth University to enjoy a range of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) activities; this afternoon Class 5 went to a book launch at Devonport Library making smoothies and biscuits while they were there; on Thursday Class 6 will be invaded by Viking Warriors re-enacting battles; Class 5 are also going to be visiting HMS Bulwark on Thursday.

Next week the whole school will take part in skipping workshops. A separate letter about that will be going out soon.

Witness of the Week

Another even more important aspect of life at St Joseph's that Mr Bishop did not fully see was the emphasis we put on children treating each other in the way Jesus would like us to. This could not have been more evident than during Assembly on Friday where we celebrated the actions of Liliana in Class 1. Liliana noticed that one of her classmates was upset in the library because she could not find a book with a duck as the central character. Liliana put that right by going home and writing and illustrating a 12 page book where a duck went through a series of tough situations before being rescued by a girl who happened to have the same name as the girl who had been upset. She then gave the book to the girl concerned. There were a few tears in the eyes of adults in the hall as the book was read out to the whole school. What a witness Liliana is !

Parents' Evenings

Parents' evenings are in the first week back after half term (20th & 21st February). The booking system on e-schools proved very difficult for a large proportion of parents so we are going back to a paper based system. Parents in the Foundation Stage and Classes 1 , 2 , 3 & 4 **who have children in more than one class** will be able to sign in directly on to time sheets which will be available after school outside each classroom from 3.20pm on Monday 29th January. Other parents of children in those classes will be able to sign up from Tuesday 30th. Some children in years 5 & 6 walk home alone after school. To avoid the parents of those children being at a disadvantage booking forms will be sent home with children in those classes on Wednesday 31st. If children in those classes have younger siblings with times already booked you will get the chance to state that on the booking form and every effort will be made to organise appointment times so that there is not too long a wait between appointments for any parents.

Half Marathon

Details about the half marathon challenge for this year can be found on the back of this newsletter. We have been allocated 36 places but only 5 of those can be for Key Stage 1 children due to staffing ratios at such a busy event. If you would like your child to take part please fill in, and return, the slip below by Wednesday 31st March. If your child is accepted then we will ask for the fee through the School Money payment system.



Plymouth Schools Half Marathon Challenge



I would like to apply for my child Class to take part in the Plymouth Schools Half Marathon Challenge.

If he / she is accepted I will pay the £11 entry fee and be able to drop him/her off in town by 7.20 am on Sunday 20th May.

The shirt size I would like is (please circle) 5-6 7-8 9-10 11+ S adult M adult L adult

Signed (parent / carer)