

As the school year progresses it is good to be able to report news reflecting the excellent work done by staff and your children much of which is made possible by your ongoing support. This is frequently commended by external agencies involved with the school.

I have now received the two reports confirming our recognition as a Leading Aspect Award school. We have been granted award status for:-

Physical Education - "enrichment of the whole child and school community through Physical Education".

Music – broad based Music curriculum accessible to all.

My thanks to all staff concerned and particularly Mrs Vassallo and the subject Co-ordinators.

We have also been invited as a National ICT Register school to become Associate members of the "Specialist Schools' Trust". This organisation was established for Secondary Schools gaining specialist status but it has been recognised that Primary Schools have a part to play through Primary/Secondary liaison and we are pleased to have been invited to support this initiative. The Trust has just undertaken an assessment visit which was positive. The assessor indicated she would be recommending St James the Great School for Associate Membership and we await the final decision.

PERSIL HANDS-ON ART COMPETITION

Our school, under the guidance of Mrs Scott Cree in her capacity as Art Co-ordinator, submitted an entry by each class for this national competition. Due to early submission entries from each class netted 4,000 Persil stars per class towards art equipment boosting significantly the collection of tokens you have been sending in. There was, however, even more good news when we were informed that Class 5.2 won outright, by unanimous decision of the judges, their category of entry. They will be represented at a formal presentation in the Easter break and have earned a day's 'Artist in Residence' for the school. Well done to them all – further details will follow after the Award Ceremony.

CETS TASTER SESSIONS AND COURSES

The team from CETs could not speak highly enough of the support shown by parents at the recent taster session and for the forthcoming courses. Those of you who registered will be hearing more details shortly. Thank you to everyone who supported this venture and especially to those who ran the crèche facilities.

KINGS COLLEGE STUDY

Likewise, Sarah from Kings College was grateful to those of you who volunteered to have their blood pressure checked with a view to participating in this study. As a very healthy group of parents overall only a few met the qualifying requirements. This is, however, the nature of such studies and the volume of responses received was nevertheless appreciated. Many thanks.

HEALTHY SCHOOLS' PROGRAMME

We are on target to reach the Advanced Healthy Schools award before the end of the year. The tremendous response received to the Healthy Schools' questionnaire was very helpful and a breakdown of responses will be provided in due course. Both I and Miss Berry record our appreciation for the number of questionnaire responses received.

HOPE FOR CHILDREN CHARITY

One of the parents from this school, Brandon Dias, will be running in the London Marathon this year in aid of the 'Hope for Children Charity'. If you would like to sponsor him please go to the website

www.justgiving.com/brandon.

BILL READ TROPHY

This annual match against St Joseph's Junior School, which due to another commitment I was unable to attend for the first time, saw St James the Great winning this year's match by 4 goals to 2. Well done to the football team.

SUMMER FETE

My thanks to you for the support you are already giving to our Friends Association towards this major event. The various collections are going well with this week being Bric-a-Brac. Please note whilst things are specified week by week and that is the preferred time to send items in no offers will ever be refused at other times.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Thank you for the efforts you made to ensure children were present for this service last Friday night. It was a prayerful occasion and provided a fitting focus in our lead up towards Easter.

BENSHAM MANOR BOWLS CLUB (Club entrance Carew Road end of Thornton Heath Recreation Ground)

You will see from the attached flyer that the above Club, of which I am currently President, is seeking to recruit new members, male and female. If you are looking for a low cost sport that is not too demanding of your time why not give bowls a try? There is no commitment to try out and you are welcome to attend on the Open Day or any Tuesday evening between 5.30 and 7.00 pm between May and September as this is the regular Club night. If you would like any further information please do not hesitate to contact the Club Secretary, Richard Hill, on 020 8764 6108 (evenings and weekends) or Mr Beck on 020 8653 6041 (evenings and weekends).

RESIDENTIAL WEEK – YEARS 4 AND 5

We wish this group an enjoyable trip next week. Parents are reminded that we depart from St James the Great School at 8.30 am on Monday morning and our return time is estimated to be 6 pm on Friday 25th March. Please note you can confirm this return time by telephoning 07745 960676 between 4.15 and 5.00 pm.

Last minute reminders for the group; horse riders need to bring with them either Wellingtons or shoes with a heel for the riding session. Sleeping bags if enclosed in their own bag please make sure this is named, alternatively the sleeping bag should be placed in a bin bag and labelled with your child's name. We have suggested to the children today that they bring a bottle of water with them (sports cap type). PLEASE DON'T FORGET TO GIVE YOUR CHILD A PACKED LUNCH.

MILK ORDERS

Please note milk orders should have been submitted by now. In order to secure milk for your child next term orders must be received urgently.

LAST DAY OF TERM

Reminder school closes on Thursday 24th March at 2 pm. Please ensure your child is collected promptly at the end of the day. Nursery parents are reminded that there are no Nursery sessions on Thursday 24th March as Nursery closes at the end of the afternoon session on the 23rd.

CHILDMINDER WANTED

Childminder required, four days a week to collect from school and look after for approximately 2 hours per evening. Contact Mrs Phillips 020 8765 1083.

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS' CROSS COUNTRY COMPETITION

Well done to our Cross Country runners who gained fourth place overall in this competition with some commendable individual performances.

NETBALL

Congratulations to our A and B Netball teams who not only qualified for the final stages of the recent tournament but made a clean sweep in taking the winners and runners up trophies. Fortunately with both teams reaching the finals they were spared the need to play each other. Well done girls on a superb result.

SWIMMING AND SKATING

Please note that due to the rescheduled Easter Liturgy there will be no swimming or skating programme on Tuesday next.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMME

I am aware that some concern has been expressed over the reduced opportunities for PE for Year 6 pupils during the Autumn and Spring terms of their final year. Our skating and swimming programme forms part of our Physical Education curriculum and where possible an additional session will be undertaken during the week. It should be noted, however, that curriculum areas are mapped over an academic year and for Year 6 this means that a significant part of the PE programme takes place in the Summer term ensuring that national requirements are met. This is, of course, monitored and kept under review.

SCHOOL PROMOTIONS

St James the Great School continues to be grateful for the support given by parents in collecting tokens issued under the various school promotions. We collect them all!, which currently includes Box Tops for Schools, Persil Stars, Tesco Computers for Schools tokens, Sainsburys Active Kids vouchers and Evening Standard Sport for Schools tokens. We also are able to benefit from the recycling of toner cartridges and mobile phones, which can be left in the boxes by the front Reception. Thank you for your continued support.

CHOIR – THANK YOU

The presence of our school choir at the funeral of Alan McGuire was much appreciated by all present. They received numerous congratulations from members of the congregation for both their singing and the great reverence they showed. I would like to record my appreciation to them and to you, the parents, for your co-operation in regard to the half day closure.

FAREWELL TO MRS VASSALLO

Thank you to the parents who have sent in contributions towards a presentation for Mrs Vassallo. I would confirm that the presentation will be made at Wednesday's open assembly at 3 pm – all are welcome.

It is appropriate to conclude this Newsletter with a final farewell and all our good wishes to Mrs Vassallo as she moves on to take up the Headship of St Mary's School in Beckenham at the start of next term. I would record both my personal and the school's thanks to her for the enormous contribution she has made to the development and life of the school over her 10 years with us. She will be sadly missed but I am confident she is close enough in Beckenham to ensure contact is retained.

