

We hope you all had a good Easter break. Certainly the Year 4 and 5 children who went on the residential visit in the last week of last term got their break off to an exciting start. They proved an excellent group and threw themselves into the range of activities on offer as witnessed by the quantity of muddy washing parents faced on their return. They have returned much more aware of just how much "mum" does for them and are hopefully better timekeepers having had to manage to be in places at set times. The best kept chalet challenge also proved unattainable for some but congratulations to Melissa D'Sa, Catherine Humphries, Jodie Parry and Hannah Smith who proved to be the best housekeepers of the week. I must also record sincere thanks to staff members: Claire Murphy, Debbie Lawless, Geraldine Grabiec and Kathy McGuire for serving 24 hours on duty and making the trip possible. Current Year 3 and 4 parents will have received the opportunity to register for next year's visit, details of which have been advised separately. The venue has yet to be confirmed but we are likely to use one of the providers we have previously used. I am sure this year's participants will be recommending the week to their friends. Likewise Year 5's parents have been given the opportunity to register for a UKSA trip next year. Please register as soon as possible to enable us to gauge the viability of the visits and gain early booking discounts.

SUNDAY 15TH MAY 2005

SCHOOL FETE DAY

CAN YOU HELP? PLEASE WILL YOU HELP?

CONTACT: BRIDIE WILLIS ON 020 8764 7668

The Fete is the school's major fund-raising event occurring only every other year. Please encourage as many family members and friends as you can to attend on the day - which always turns out to be a good fun day with lots of various activities to watch and take part in. If you are willing to lend some support with organisation etc. before or on the day please let Mrs Willis know by contacting her directly or by dropping a note into school. **Success of the Fete depends on your support.** In order to boost donations we will be holding two non-uniform days on which children may come to school out of uniform on receipt of a donation for the following stalls. **Friday 29TH April - Groceries, Friday 6th May - Bottles**

SPECIALIST SCHOOLS TRUST

I am pleased to follow up the item in last month's Newsletter on the Trust by confirming that St James the Great School has been admitted to membership of the Specialist Schools Trust. We look forward to working in partnership with other Trust schools.

STAFFING ISSUES

Mrs Vassallo has asked me to extend her thanks for all the goodwill messages and very kind gifts received from parents to mark her move to St Mary's School, Beckenham, at the end of last term. We wish her well.

The Governors have commenced the process of appointing her successor who will hopefully be appointed for September 2005. In the meantime I would extend congratulations to Mrs Claire Murphy and Mrs Mary Berkeley-Agyepong on their internal appointments to the posts of Phase Co-ordinators, lower and upper Key Stage 2 respectively for the Summer Term. This puts in place key personnel as points of contact for parents as appropriate:-

Nursery, Reception, Years 1 & 2:	Mrs Sue Forward
Years 3 & 4:	Mrs Claire Murphy
Years 5 & 6:	Mrs Mary Berkeley-Agyepong

We continue to be fortunate in having a strong staff team at St James the Great and I would acknowledge my appreciation to the above staff for taking on these additional responsibilities.

REMINDER

We have detailed below an up to date list covering major events scheduled for this term – please note these and the commitments they may place on your child.

Thursday 5 May:	Feast of the Ascension -	1.45 pm Non-Eucharistic Service for KS1 and Nursery 2.30 pm Mass in school for KS2
Saturday 7 May:	Croydon Catholic Schools Football and Netball Tournaments at Margaret Roper School	
9-13 May:	Year 6 SATs	
Sunday 15 May:	Friends Association Summer Fete	
23027 May:	UKSA – Year 6 residential visit	
Thursday 26 May:	Feast of Corpus Christi:	10 am Mass for KS2 at St Bartholomew's 2.15 pm Non-Eucharistic Service for KS1
	School closes for half term	
Monday 6 June:	School re-opens	
Thursday 9 June:	School sports – field events	
Monday 13 June:	School Sports Day – track events	
Thursday 23 June:	Croydon Catholic Schools' Sports Day at St James the Great	
Wednesday 29 June:	Feast of Ss Peter and Paul:	10 am Mass for KS2 at St Andrew's 2.15 pm Non-Eucharistic Service for KS1 and Nursery
	Open Evening	
Sunday 3 July:	St Andrew's Open Air Centenary Mass and family picnic at St James the Great	
Thursday 7 July:	Open Evening	
Monday 11 July:	School Concert: 2 pm	
Tuesday 12 July:	School Concert: 7.30 pm	
Wednesday 13 July:	School Concert: 7.30 pm	
Monday 18 July:	Leavers' Mass at 7.30 pm at St Bartholomew's	
Thursday 21 July:	Leavers' Assembly: 9.45 am Nursery closes for Summer Break	
Friday 22 July:	Final Assembly: 9.45 am School closes for Summer Break at 2.00 pm	

UNIFORM

Children should now be in full summer uniform. Please advise if this presents any difficulties. I would advise parents that the girls' summer uniform is white knee or ankle length socks, not tights.

GIRLS' HAIR

Please ensure your children's hair conforms to the school dress code. Recently hair extensions, some of various colours have been worn. These **ARE NOT** acceptable and you are asked to ensure that these are kept for holidays only.

BOYS' HAIR

I would remind parents that the dress code in regard to boys' haircuts remains the same throughout the school year and it is expected that haircuts will meet the requirements throughout the Summer Term. There have already been three incidents of hair being cut too short leading to angst between families and the school which can be easily avoided. Thank you for your attention to this issue.

WELCOME BACK

We are pleased to welcome back Mrs Berkeley-Agyepong from maternity leave and appreciate the fact that she has been able to take over Mrs Vassallo's role of class teacher for Class 3.1.

We also look forward to welcoming Mrs Lawlor back from her period of maternity leave in June. Mrs Shakespeare is currently on extended sick leave but we are optimistic that she will be back with us in September on a part-time basis. We have been exceptionally lucky to have had Miss Church to stand in over this academic year and I would like to recognise the excellent work she has done in ensuring that Nursery runs as effectively as ever.

MUSIC

Parents who have attended recent celebrations will have appreciated the piano playing skills of Mr Andrew Brown, who has now worked at the school on a supply basis for some time one day per week. I am grateful he has agreed, at least in the short term, to offer piano accompaniment for such occasions and for the regular Friday choir practices led by Miss Balzan. He will be with us for two days per week throughout the Summer Term.

CETS COURSE – UPDATE

If you have been offered a place on the 11 week course, please could we ask you to accept or decline the place so that we can offer spare places to people on the waiting list.

There will be six week course for parents starting on 15th June which will be offered, in the first instance, to the Year 1 and 2 parents who attended the taster session. Details will be issued separately.

Please find attached details about a course being run at Thornton Heath Library for Key Stage 2 parents.

CONGRATULATIONS to Sheila Williams and her staff who, following a spot visit from Environmental Health, were immediately awarded Croydon's Good Hygiene Award for the excellent hygiene standards witnessed.

SCHOOL PHOTOGRAPHS

The photographer will be in school on Wednesday 27th April to take the annual class photographs and team photographs (Years 5 and 6). I would ask you to ensure, if your child is in our football or netball teams, that they have their kit with them on that day. Apart from Year 6 we will not be taking individual photographs and this is not the session at which we offer family groups as this is carried out in the Autumn Term. As always there will be no obligation to purchase photographs but we would ask that if you do not wish to purchase that you return them promptly. Please ensure that your child is in full school summer uniform.

SPARE CLOTHES

The Infants are in short supply of spare clothes for use in the event of accidents etc. If you have any unwanted school uniform, socks or underwear we would be very grateful if you would hand these in to the school office as soon as possible.

KEEP FIT WITH LIZZIE

Want to keep fit and enjoy yourself? Join Lizzie's exercise to music class for an all over body workout to improve your flexibility and co-ordination as well as tone your body and feel great!! Held Monday evenings during term time from 7.00-8.00 pm in the school hall. Only £3.00 per class – suitable for beginners-intermediate.

HOPE FOR CHILDREN CHARITY

As stated in the last Newsletter one of the parents from this school, Brandon Dias, ran the Marathon on Sunday. Unfortunately, the wrong web address was given for sponsorship of Mr Dias but if you would still like to sponsor him for the above charity the correct address is www.justgiving.com/brandond.

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

Parents will be aware that schools have been required to monitor levels of pupil attendance and punctuality. Our school has a good record in both of these areas with the return recently submitted to the DfES showing an overall absence percentage of 5.4%. This figure does, however, mask one or two cases of poor attendance falling to 80% reflecting absence on holiday during term time. I would accordingly urge parents to avoid holiday absences in term time except for very extreme reasons.

The school is less secure in regard to punctuality as there are a number of children who regularly “stroll into school” five to ten minutes late. This is disruptive in addition to being poor training and again I would ask parents to reinforce with their children the importance of good punctuality and ensure they arrive promptly to school to secure a smooth start to their school day.

ARCHITECT

We have been approached by a parent who is looking for an architect to undertake some drawing of plans. She would welcome recommendations from anyone who has made use of an architect or who may be able to undertake this work. Please pass any information to the school office to enable the parent concerned to make direct contact in order to discuss the project, fees etc.

REMINDER – BENSAM MANOR BOWLS CLUB

A reminder about the item in our last Newsletter. If you would like to give Bowls a try why not come along on Sunday 24th April between 2.00 and 4.00 pm with no obligation. The Club is situated at the Carew Road end of Thornton Heath Recreation Ground.

PERSIL STARS

Thanks to Oliver Cole, Savannah John, Elizabeth Wentworth and Rohan Nedd for representing the school so well at the recent Awards ceremony held at The Natural History Museum in London. Mrs Scott Cree and I were both approached by members of the judging panel who expressed regret that they were unable to award a whole school prize in recognition of the work undertaken by all year groups towards this competition. Parents may be interested to look at the display board outside the staff room showing the art work from all year groups. We look forward to welcoming the artist in residence who will be undertaking some animation work with pupils as part of the prize we received.

ST JOHN AMBULANCE FIRST AID COMPETITION

Many thanks to Mrs Lawless for training and taking our team for this competition. They did extremely well and special congratulations to the girls’ team who were runners up in their regional heat. Well done to Cassi Berkeley-Agyepong, Helen Brooker, Rachel Desa, Ellen Lands, Oliver Cole, Timothy Dalgado, Joshua Madine and Ashley Sullivan.

A number of children have expressed an interest in learning more about First Aid and Mrs Lawless is considering running a lunchtime club for this purpose. This would also prepare a group for next year’s competition. Details will be advised to the children.

HOLIDAY DATE LIST

We are now in receipt of the Croydon holiday dates for schools for 2006-2007. It has been indicated that they have adopted the six term year which is now being called the Standard School Year Pattern. It appears to suggest very little change.

GENERAL ELECTION

Churches Together have organised a “Hustings” (public meeting to meet local candidates) on Sunday 24th April (this Sunday) at 4 pm in Parchmore Methodist’s Church. Everyone welcome.