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No 6

June 2006

We hope everyone had a good half term break. I was privileged during the break to attend the Nuptial Wedding of Miss Hughes on Saturday last. It was a wonderful occasion and weather wise she could not have chosen a better day. I noticed some parents and children from her class who having asked if they may pop in to the church did so. The children appeared very impressed by their teacher on her special day. We wish her and her husband, Gerard, a long, happy and healthy future. Miss Hughes returns to school next week as Mrs Williams, which I am sure her class will soon get used to.

The school was, as usual, used for a range of activities including Gym Club, Craig's holiday football course which is proving increasingly popular and, perhaps more noticeably by the playground lining contractors who returned in a spell of fine weather to complete their work. The infant playground markings had already proved their worth and our Key Stage One children now have a further couple of additions. Nursery pupils and Key Stage Two children also now have some of their own and parents walking around the music block may have noted the "Solar System" markings reflecting the fact that the choice of markings provide both play and learning opportunities. We chose thermoplastic markings for their durability and whilst approximately 30% more expensive are we believe more cost effective carrying a five year guarantee. These enhancements were only made possible thanks to your generosity and support of our Friends Association who met the £8,000 cost of installation, so thanks to everyone.

SCHOOL FUND/GIFT AID

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all of you who responded to our recent letter about school fund and gift aiding. These have become highly valued income streams at a time of tight school budgets. If you are still considering either a school fund contribution or gift aiding please action whatever you can as soon as possible. If you need any further clarification on these schemes please contact me personally. Further copies of forms and details are also available from the school office.

SUMMER CONCERT PROPS

If you can help with loaning any of the following items for this year's summer concert please drop them into the school office or pass them to any Year 4 or 5 teachers.

1. Straw Boaters
2. Long black umbrellas

EXCELLENT NEWS!

1. Following recent interviews I am very pleased to confirm that the Governors have unanimously appointed Mrs Claire Murphy to the permanent post of Deputy Headteacher at St James the Great. We congratulate her on her appointment and wish her every success in her new post.

The Governors are now in the process of making other staffing appointments and I am hopeful of advising teaching staff class allocations next month.

2. The Governors also interviewed for the post of Premises Manager and appointed Mr George Coles to this post. We look forward to welcoming him to the staff next month.

EXCELLENT NEWS 2! ARTSMARK GOLD GAINED

Well done to Mrs Tamryn Scott Cree and her team on the successful gaining of Artsmark Gold for our school. This is a difficult award to achieve as witnessed by our previous silver level. This was great news to hear.

SUMMER TERM PROGRAMME

This is always a busy but enjoyable term of the year. Please note all the dates for the term which have been previously notified but are reproduced below for information.

Thursday 8 June	Pm	School sports – field events
Monday 12 June	10 am	School sports day – track events
Tuesday 13 June	7.30 pm	New Nursery Parents’ Meeting
Thursday 15 June	10 am 2.15 pm	<i>Feast of Corpus Christi</i> Mass for Key Stage 2 at St Bartholomew’s Non-Eucharistic Service for Key Stage 1
Friday 16 June		Catholic Schools’ Swimming Gala
Tuesday 20 June		New Reception Visits
Thursday 22 June	Am	Croydon Catholic Schools’ Sports Day at St James the Great
Tuesday 27 June		Reception Parents’ Meeting am and pm New Reception Visits
Thursday 29 June	10 am 2.15 pm	<i>Feast of Ss Peter and Paul</i> Mass for Key Stage 2 and Year 2 at St Andrew’s Non-Eucharistic Service for Nursery – Year 1
Sunday 2 July	Pm	Friends Association Panto ‘The Magical Land of Oz’
Monday 3 July		Open Evening – Nursery to Year 6
Wednesday 5 July		Open Evening – Nursery to Year 6
Saturday 8 July		Friends Association Family Disco
Monday 10 July	2 pm	School Concert
Tuesday 11 July	7.30 pm	School Concert
Wednesday 12 July	7.30 pm	School Concert
Monday 17 July	7.30 pm	Leavers’ Mass – St Andrew’s
Wednesday 19 July	1.45 pm	Children visiting new classes – including new children
Thursday 20 July	9.45 am	Leavers’ Assembly Nursery closes for Summer Break
Friday 21 July	9.45 am 2 pm	Final Assembly School closes for Summer Break
Monday 24 July		<i>In-Service Training Day – School Closed</i>
Tuesday 25 th July		Friends Association seaside trip to Hastings
Thursday 27 July		Friends Association seaside trip to Littlehampton
Tuesday 1 August		Friends Association seaside trip to Littlehampton
Tuesday 29 August		Friends Association seaside trip to Eastbourne

HOLIDAY DATES

Please find attached a holiday date list confirming term dates until September 2009 as approved by the Governing Body. These dates are largely in line with Croydon's dates leaving just a small number of staff in-service training days to be fixed. We confirm these dates so far in advance to enable parents to avoid seeking leave of absence for pupils during term time as, other than in very exceptional circumstances, I am unable to grant such leave, which if then taken becomes recorded as an unauthorised absence on the files.

ATTENDANCE

We recently received a visit from the Educational Welfare service making a spot check on registration issues including daily attendance records and individual pupil attendance. Well done to Mrs Stock whose management of this area was highly commended. My thanks to all parents also for notifying children's absences and for supporting the school in achieving good levels of attendance overall.

PUNCTUALITY

Not quite so good as witnessed by those rushing in the morning to get to class lines or registering late. Please stress the importance of punctuality to your children and endeavour to ensure they are in the playground in time for the 9.15 am morning whistle.

UKSA 2006

In spite of less than clement weather this group appear to have had a great time in addition to experiencing a range of activities not normally available to them. Due to the value and success of this visit it is proposed to offer it again in 2007 and year five pupils have received information about this recently.

CATHOLIC FOOTBALL AND NETBALL

Unfortunately, the weather was not kind on this day either. Well done, however, to both sets of teams who got through to the quarter and semi finals respectively. I was sorry I was unable to attend this year but thanks to Mrs Murphy for representing me on this occasion (even if she didn't bring you quite as much luck!!!).

LEAVERS

We have been receiving a high level of enquiries seeking places at St James the Great for most age groups. We would ask you, therefore, to inform us as soon as possible if your family are likely to be moving and your children will not, therefore, require their place in September.

FAREWELL TO MISS MELISSA BALZAN

I am very grateful to Miss Balzan for her loyalty to the school and her class by delaying her relocation to Kent mid year in order to complete the full academic year with us. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that she will be leaving us at the end of the year to take up a new post in the Maidstone area of Kent. I would record my thanks to her for the considerable contribution she has made to the life of the school generally and particularly in connection with the school choir. She will be greatly missed and we wish her a happy and successful future.

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR REFLECTION

I am grateful to the group of parents who have organised a regular open reflection period in our school oratory on the first Wednesday of every month at 9.20 am. A decade of the Rosary will be recited during this 15 minute period providing an opportunity for reflection. All are welcome to attend.

FRIENDS ASSOCIATION EVENTS

Details have been issued separately in regard to the range of events shown in the date list above. Please support all those you can.