

Apologies, the delayed issue of this Newsletter means a bumper edition. Life for all of us consists of ongoing change. Last term saw us say farewell to Fr John O'Toole, parish priest of St Andrew's, whose time at St Andrew's, albeit relatively short, will be fondly remembered. It has been a great pleasure to welcome back Fr Francis Moran (previously at St Bartholomew's) as his replacement and we look forward to working with him. He has already made a couple of visits to the school and has met the staff at a recent staff meeting. He joins the school's Governing Body in the new school year and we would take this opportunity to wish him a long and happy association with both St Andrew's and St James the Great. The school attended the 10 am Mass at St Andrew's on the Feast of Corpus Christi and will be attending (Years 2 to 6) the 10 am Mass at St Bartholomew's on the Feast of Ss Peter and Paul on Tuesday 29th June. Parents willing to assist with walking the children to Church are asked to assemble in the Hall at 9.15 am when they will be allocated to classes. Nursery, Reception and Year 1 children will attend an afternoon service in school on this day.

This term is one that always signals change as the end of the academic year approaches and existing staff review their position. We are pleased to welcome Mrs Scott Cree back to school following maternity leave. You will appreciate that with three staff soon to be taking maternity leave, we need to secure our staffing position for September. After nine years at St James the Great Miss Sally Nichols, our Nursery Nurse in R2, has decided to extend her experience with a move to a school nearer her home and will, therefore, be leaving us at the end of the term. We wish her well in her new post. I will be in a position to confirm class allocations later this term but am pleased to confirm that in September 2004:-

Mr Johan Allen has confirmed his agreement to continue at St James the Great.
Miss Alison Walne and Mrs Margaret Minnards will be joining the teaching staff.
Miss Natasha Campbell, Nursery Nurse, will be joining the Nursery staff.

We look forward to welcoming them, not least because of the clear strength they will bring to our staff team. Once a further maternity cover appointment and Nursery Nurse appointment have been made we will have our full complement of staff for the new year and I will be in a position to agree class allocations accordingly.

Since the last Newsletter we have seen both the Easter break and first half of the Summer term pass, these break periods being used to undertake some major works. Some of these will continue into the Summer break as we work through our programmed maintenance and improvement works. It has only been

possible to continue these due to the generosity you have shown in signing up to the Gift Aid programme commencing in September. I would again thank the 118 families who have made pledges and would ask the remaining 199 families to consider making a contribution. It really will help significantly in securing St James the Great School financially. Please contact the school office should you require a further copy of the letter and forms relating to the scheme.

Parents of Foundation and Key Stage 1 children will have seen the improvements and extensions to the infant playground area. There were some problems with the initial works which have been addressed by the contractor over half term. The next stage will involve the laying of long overdue playground markings and hopefully a netball court on this surface. It is hoped the tarring of the pathway round the music room building will prove to be more durable than the previous paving slabs. Likewise the area that provides occasional vehicular access to the small field has now been surfaced with tarmac, which should prove both safer and less muddy!

In addition to regular servicing of equipment the electrician has been in school undertaking work to ensure the building's electrical certification. Minor works have commenced in the school kitchen area in readiness for major refurbishment works hopefully in the summer break. More details later in the year. These works have been made possible through a DfES grant and the fact that our take up for school meals remains consistently high. Please continue this support as much as you are able. We are currently looking into refurbishment of the Key Stage 2 toilet areas, further classroom redecoration, and external redecoration.

I trust the above is of interest to you and that it will serve to confirm our endeavours to maintain a good school environment for all.

CHARTER MARK ASSESSMENT

Our submission for recognition by the Cabinet Office for Charter Mark status has been submitted and the assessor, Mrs Jo Strong, will be visiting the school on Wednesday 7th July to conduct her formal assessment. Part of the assessment involves an analysis of the school's approach to all enquiries made through the school office. As part of this process we are required to have a published policy detailing office procedures. This policy has been through internal consultation and is attached to this Newsletter for your information. We would welcome any views you may have in regard to the policy for incorporation in future policy reviews. Parents may be approached on the assessment day in regard to these and other issues and we would hope you will feel able to comment favourably?

SCHOOL UNIFORM

Whilst clearly we do not always get everything right first time, I am inclined to the view that the re-introduction of our school blazer is a good example of gauging parental views successfully. Comments have been very favourable and pre-order levels across the school are good. Following requests for some clarification as to how the blazers will operate I would advise you that:-

1. Blazers, when taken off, will be hung up on pegs to be provided in the cloakroom.
2. Coats, blazers and jumpers will all remain part of the core school uniform.
3. Pupils may opt to wear:-
 - a) a coat and a blazer;
 - b) a blazer and a jumper;
 - c) a coat and a jumper (Years 1 to 6 until the blazer is fully phased in);
 - d) a coat, blazer and jumper.
 - e) a blazer.

I would anticipate the wearing of coats to be governed by weather conditions and that the blazer and jumper will form the mainstay of our school uniform. There will be a settling in period but we are confident that ultimately the new arrangements will prove both practical and enhance our pupils' appearance. Our school council members fully supported this development when they were consulted. Liaison with other schools whose uniform includes a blazer have reassured us that they are a positive addition. We can confirm that blazer orders placed before the end of term will be available for the start of the new term.

Thank you for your co-operation in regard to our boys' trouser requirements. Only one exception has been approved.

PLEASE PASS THE WORD

As you have already been informed we are planning a music evening on Tuesday 20th July 2004 to mark Mrs Bell's retirement at the end of term. We would very much like to encourage musical performances from past pupils/families so please spread the word, twist a few arms and get them to contact Mrs Marchant in the school office by letter, fax, telephone or email to mariam@stjamesthegreat.org.

Please note that to enable arrangements to be made for this function school will close at 2 pm on the 20th and we would ask you to arrange for your children to be collected promptly. There will be no Nursery pm session on this day.

SPECIAL ASSEMBLY

I would like to extend an invitation to all families to attend a special assembly to be held on Tuesday 20th July at 9.45 am. This assembly has been arranged to mark the commissioning of our solar panels soon to be installed on the school roof. We are hoping some local dignitaries will attend and further details will be issued at a later date. Please mark this date in your diary. The assembly will be followed by light refreshments and it is anticipated that the function will conclude by 11 am.

VANDALISM

We appreciated the concern expressed by a number of parents in connection with the recent vandalism that occurred on the school site resulting in the breakage of 21 windows. Sadly this is the second such incident in a short space of time which I know you appreciate has cost implications for the school. I can confirm that the order for replacement of the windows has now been raised and we would hope to have them reinstated by early next week. It appears likely that we have now reached a point where it would be cost effective to install CCTV on the site and this is being actively explored. I will keep parents informed accordingly.

FRIDAY AFTER SCHOOL FRENCH CLASS

As Miss Pedder is on the Year 6 residential visit this week there will be no French class tomorrow.

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 require their place in September.

THANK YOU

Both for the support given to this term's Book Fair and to the tremendous support given by Year 6 to our farewell book donation request. These will be displayed at the Leavers' Assembly.

ST ANDREW'S CHURCH SUMMER FAYRE

Please note St Andrew's Parish will be holding their first ever Summer Fayre at St Andrew's Church Hall on Saturday 3rd July between 12 noon and 3 pm. There will be over 17 stalls; crafts, face painting, tombola's, teas/coffees, cream teas. Adults 50p and under 12's free.

YO-YO ASSEMBLY

Tomorrow, Friday 25th June, we will be welcoming some American Yo-Yo experts who will give a demonstration to our children at 2.30 pm. Parents are welcome to attend this assembly. I would give advance warning that a range of Yo-Yo's will be available for purchase from the school office until Friday 16th July.

FASHION SHOW

It was good to see how much fun the children got on this evening. Many thanks for your support for this Friends Association function and I hope you feel value for money was achieved. My thanks to the committee members who organised this evening. I appreciate how much time this takes.

ICE CREAMS

I would record appreciation to both Mrs Goldsmith and Mrs Gumley for co-ordinating the ice cream sales at the end of the school day. Whilst appreciating the ice cream vendor at the front of the school may not be too happy, these sales have generated a good income for the Friends Association, which is clearly a better home for the proceeds! Thanks also to the team of helpers who assist them with these sales.

ICT CLASS FOR PARENTS

ICT classes for parents will be starting in September. They will take place on Friday mornings and if you are interested in taking part in these lessons please let Mrs Cefai know in writing as soon as possible.

MILK ORDERS

A significant number of parents have not yet placed milk orders for their children for the Autumn Term. This is a time-consuming administrative task that is greatly assisted if the deadline for orders is adhered to, so please ensure your order is received by Friday 2nd July.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Only a few photograph payments/returns are outstanding and we would thank parents for dealing with this so promptly. We would ask for the outstanding returns to be in by the end of next week.

FOOTBALL PRESENTATION

Our annual football presentation evening for the Saturday morning footballers and our school football team will take place on the evening of Friday 9th July. Please mark this date in your diary, further details will be issued separately.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Croydon leaflet on childcare.
2. **Croydon Children's After School Club/Holiday Scheme**
The organisers of this club have visited the school and are keen to provide a high quality service to our families. I was impressed with their organisation and am confident in recommending this group to you. Children participating in the group will be based at the Endeavour Hall in Melfort Road and will be collected/dropped off at school in the same way the other clubs operate. Please telephone 07950 603655 for further information.
3. **Croydon Council Survey of Parental Views**
Children in Nursery, Reception and Year 6 have had a questionnaire from Croydon Council attached

to their Newsletter. The school has been provided with a return envelope to return completed questionnaires by 7th July. If you are willing to participate in this survey please return them to school by the 7th for onward transmission. (Questionnaires for Year 5 are yet to be received and will be distributed separately.)

4. **Holiday Date List**

Please find new Holiday Date list attached

5. **End of Term Date List**

Friday 25 th June:	Yo-Yo assembly – 2.30 pm
Monday 28 th June:	Reception Parents’ Meeting am and pm and pupil visits
Tuesday 29 th June:	Feast of Ss Peter and Paul – St Bartholomew’s
Thursday 1 st July:	Open Evening
Friday 2 nd July:	Basic Skills Quality Mark re-assessment
Monday 5 th July:	Croydon Catholic Schools’ Sports Day at St James the Great – 9.30 am – 12.30 pm approximately
Tuesday 6 th July:	Thanksgiving Mass and Reception for Fr John O’Toole at St Andrew’s Church at 7.30 pm
Wednesday 7 th July:	Assessment day for Charter Mark
Thursday 8 th July:	Open Evening
Friday 9 th July:	Football Presentation Evening
Monday 12 th July:	School Concert – 2 pm (open toddlers welcome)
Tuesday 13 th July:	School Concert – 7.30 pm (by ticket only)
Wednesday 14 th July:	School Concert – 7.30 pm (by ticket only)
Thursday 15 th July:	Field Events for Sports Day - pm Leavers’ Mass – St Andrew’s – 7.30 pm
Monday 19 th July:	Sports Day – All day
Tuesday 20 th July:	Special Assembly – Solar Panels – 9.45 am Musical Evening in honour of Mrs Bell’s retirement – 7.30 pm
Wednesday 21 st July:	Leavers’ Assembly – 9.45 am Leavers’ Barbeque (Year 6 only) 4-6 pm
Thursday 22 nd July:	Final Assembly of Term – 9.45 am School closes for Summer break at 2 pm

