

**H**opefully you all enjoyed the half term break. As we move into the final half term of this academic year, which is clearly going to be very busy, I will update you on news since our last Newsletter.

### CONGRATULATIONS

I was privileged to be at Miss Kelsall's wedding at the beginning of half term and we extend our good wishes to Sharron and her husband, Julian, for a long and happy married life. As they honeymoon in The Dominican Republic we perhaps have the odd "wish we were there" thought! Miss Kelsall returns to us next week as Mrs Shakespeare, maybe a little confusing to our Nursery children but I am sure they will soon get the hang of Shakespeare!

### STAFFING MATTERS

They say the "best laid plans". I have, therefore, to inform parents of some late staff changes due to changes in personal circumstances. Miss Stephanie Hughes (R2) is relocating to the Bristol area and Miss Michelle Cleary (4.2) is moving down to Kent so both have reluctantly had to tender their resignations and will not be returning to St James the Great in September. We extend our good wishes to both for the future and extend very sincere thanks to them for their year of service to the school.

### WELCOME

Following the above two departures I am pleased to be able to advise parents of two new appointments to the staff for September. We will be welcoming Miss Elizabeth Pedder to our KS1 staff. She is undertaking a placement here at St James the Great and has already made her mark with children in Reception and Year 1.

In addition Miss Brigitte Beignet will be joining our KS2 staff. Miss Beignet originates from France but comes to us with a wealth of teaching experience having worked in France, America and the UK. Whilst fairly new to this part of London she may be known to St Bartholomew's parishioners where she too worships. We look forward to both of these staff members joining our team.

### APOLOGIES

I must acknowledge a "sin of omission" in the last Newsletter. In thanking the staff who supported the Easter residential visit Miss Cleary's name was omitted. I would redress this by extending my thanks to her for supporting this trip.

### **FINANCE**

My thanks to those of you who have maintained both an interest in and pressure on the authorities in regard to the financial difficulties facing Croydon schools this year. Our school Governors are meeting this week to confirm our budget for the year in the light of our external auditors' report that sees a very small surplus of £88 being carried forward from the last financial year into this year. This very small surplus on a budget of over £1,000,000 reflects past financial prudence and the need to continue a prudent approach. It is hoped that line by line pruning of the budget will enable us to manage a level budget for the forthcoming year. We have little flexibility in regard to teaching staff levels but are committed to maintaining permanent staff levels by paring all other budget headings to a minimum. In the current situation it is not possible to predict beyond this point.

### **ADMISSIONS AND LEAVERS**

We are currently facing a significant demand for places in all year groups. We request notification as soon as possible from any families who may be moving during the Summer break to enable us to inform pending applicants regarding the availability of places. Thank you.

### **THANK YOU**

We are grateful to the parents who responded to our request not to use the Library area by the ICT Room inappropriately at the start and end of the school day. Now that the finer weather has arrived we would not anticipate a need for this area to be used at these times as a waiting area.

### **GENTLE REMINDER**

No direct supervision of children is provided prior to 9.15 am, i.e. the start of the school day. Children are not expected to be on the school site before 9 am other than those participating in organised pre-school activities as the availability of staff to deal with any incidents or accidents that may occur cannot be guaranteed before this time. We would not expect Infant children to be left without adult supervision before the start of the school day.

### **BUILDING WORKS**

Parents will have noted the works around the bin store to create a store room for cleaning materials and redesigned bin store area. These are largely Health and Safety works that have been funded from specific building funding supported by previous capital work project underspends. This is not part of the general school budget referred to above.

Likewise the erection of a school flagpole in the waiting circle to the front of the school has been installed as a result of sponsorship and I would record my thanks to Bensham Manor Bowls Club for their support. It is intended to fly both a school flag and other flags once these are obtained on appropriate occasions in which we will involve the children accordingly.

### **OTHER PROJECTS**

I am grateful to the Friends Association for their support in refitting both the bar area and the tea bar area off the main hall. The partition to close off and separate these two areas should be completed this week.

### **INFANT PLAYGROUND SURFACE**

This area has been a very high priority and we are hoping that funding may be available to carry out resurfacing and lining works soon. We are also looking at the external painting of our building to maintain the premises to an acceptable standard and I will keep parents advised accordingly.

**UNDERWAY:** We are currently upgrading the junior changing rooms with a view to providing a locker area for year six pupils. We have also moved the previous stage lighting gantry from the library area (old hall) to the new hall in order to make use of these resources and enhance the main school stage lighting for performances.

**ARTSMARK SILVER**

I am pleased to be able to report to you the school's further success following notification of an Artsmark Silver Award to St James the Great by the Arts Council England who state that the award demonstrates that the school:-

- Offers its students opportunities to participate in art, music, dance and drama.
- Has an overarching policy for the arts.
- Provides opportunities for students to participate in the arts in curriculum time.
- Provides out of hours arts opportunities for students.
- Provides teachers with continuing professional development.
- Shares its arts achievements within the school, with parents and with the community.
- Has partnerships with arts organisations and arts practitioners.

Well done to all the staff on this accolade and thanks to Mrs Scott Cree, Miss Kelsall and Miss R Hughes for their work in co-ordinating the submission.

Further good news has seen:-

- **Community Use Kitemark** – confirmation has been received that we have retained this mark of recognition for a fourth year. This acknowledges the excellent use made of our school facilities by a large number of people and groups.
- **Beacon Status** – following a recent submission by the school the DfES have advised me that: “We are very pleased to be able to write on behalf of the Secretary of State for Education and Skills to offer to renew Beacon school status to St James the Great RC (VA) Primary and Nursery School with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2003 to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2004”. In the light of Government policy to phase out Beacon Schools this extension by a full year is indeed an accolade. Well done to all the staff and pupils.

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**MRS MASCARENHAS – TESTIMONIAL FUND**

Thank you for your generosity. If you still plan to contribute please send in contributions as soon as possible.

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**FRIENDS ASSOCIATION**

The Friends Association goes from strength to strength. Well done to the Committee on an excellent Summer Ball. A good night was had by all present, who ate (very good food), drank (very pleasant wine) and were certainly “merry”. My thanks to the staff who were able to join the evening thereby boosting the numbers to a viable 60. I am aware that Confirmation celebrations etc. prevented some from attending who would have wished to do so. Hopefully “next time” we will make 100 – Valentine’s 2004?

**THEATRE COACH TRIPS**

The Association’s plans to run an evening trip to see Chitty Chitty Bang Bang in London clearly under-estimated the demand. It has been necessary to add two further dates. The first two are now fully sold out (coach and minibus) with a few seats remaining on September 22<sup>nd</sup>. This will be our last

date for this show so if you would like any of the remaining tickets (£19.50 each) let the school office know.

Watch this space next term for the next Theatre visit.

### SEASIDE VISITS

Details of our traditional visits to the coast during the summer break have been circulated – Monday 21<sup>st</sup> July to Hastings and Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> August to Margate.

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### BROWNIE HANDBOOK

I have recently seen a copy of the National Brownie Handbook. Well done to the St James the Great “models” who are featured throughout the handbook – clearly a good choice; you all look great: Cassiopeia Berkeley-Agyepong, Kimberley Burgess, Hannah Cobb, Joanna D’Cruz, Nicola Goldsmith, Nicole Mascarenhas, Michaela Newsome and Caitlin Turner.

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### CYCLING PROFICIENCY

Congratulation to our Cycling Proficiency candidates who passed their test at the end of their week’s training. For the first time for a long time we had a group gain 100% pass rate. Well done to:-

Special congratulations to Cristina who gained the Mayor’s Award for achieving full marks in her test.

Diarmuid Collins	Megan Humphreys	Helen McManamon
Elizabeth Cotzias	Emilie Jones	Chloe Payen
Amilia Csepregi	Peter Jones	Nyangi Pindi
Rebecca Desa	Sean Kelly	Robert Pollock
Sam Elliott	Adrian Lemince	Aaron Robertson
Roseanna Flavin	Jordan Liard	James Rogers
James Fownes	Alexander Love	Daniel Wright
Tashinga Garwe	Sierah Mansaray	Cristina Zenao (Mayor’s Award)
Micheal Gater	Sharaine McCallum	

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### SPORTS DAY

Sports Day arrangements on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> July will be as in previous years with the option to purchase a school lunch and picnic with your children. Further details will be issued separately.

### CATHOLIC SCHOOLS’ SPORTS DAY

We are again hosting the Croydon Catholic Sports which will take place on the morning of Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> June, 9.30-12 noon. Spectators welcome.

### FEAST OF CORPUS CHRISTI – THURSDAY 19<sup>TH</sup> JUNE

Years 2 to 6 will be attending the 10 am Mass at St Bartholomew’s Church, Norbury. Parents willing to assist with walking the children to Church are asked to assemble in the school hall at 9.15 am from where they will be allocated to a class. Nursery PM, Reception and Year 1 will be celebrating this Feast through a non-Eucharistic service in the main school hall at 2.45 pm. Parents are welcome.

### ST JOSEPH’S INFANT AND JUNIOR SCHOOLS

I have been asked by these schools to advise parents that they will be holding their School Fete on the Woodend site, Upper Norwood, on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> June from 1-3 pm. All welcome.