



St James the Great

Newsletter

@STJGreat

19th May 2017

Issue 29

May

23rd whole school photo

June

Reminder – the INSED initially planned for June 5th has been already used and so children should be in school on that date.

20/27th New Reception Parents visits

8th / 9th Sports Day

11th Car Boot Sale

12th Book Week

13th New Nursery Parent Meetings

16th Father's Day Breakfast 8.15am

Week beginning 12th Y1 Phonics Screening Check

19th - 21st Croydon Schools Sports Days

22nd /23rd Y5 to France

28th & 29th CCS Sports

29th Mass Ss Peter & Paul

July

2nd Summer Fair

3rd Festival of Triangles (Maths)

The building work is progressing well, despite the weather. Hopefully they can remain on track and you will see rapid progress over the next few weeks.

Well done to Miss Ortega's class for their lovely assembly this week.

Year 2 children have worked particularly hard this week, they have completed their KS1 SATs, but we kept this very low key. They all tried their very best and looked quite comfortable as they worked through the tests and teacher assessments.

Class photographs were completed – many thanks to Mrs Mowbray for what is always a challenging task of organising the day. The Whole school photograph will be next Tuesday – please keep your fingers crossed for a dry day!

On Monday I visited a potential site for next year's Year 6 residential trip <http://www.manoradventure.com/norfolk-lakes.php> - it was very good with excellent accommodation for the children and the staff were extremely well trained, I have one other option that I am considering in Somerset <https://www.millonthebrue.co.uk/schools-youth/school-trips/> then we will confirm the booking at either one for October and schedule a meeting for the current Year 5 parents to discuss the trip and meet one of the reps. There will be a letter going out on Monday regarding the France trip and a meeting set for Tuesday 6th June at 8.45am

The Reception classes went to Mass on Thursday. Next week as a contrast they have a visitor in talking about habitats!

Our Swimming team did phenomenally well at St Joseph's College on Wednesday at the Croydon Catholic School's Gala. They looked great in their new team t-shirts, and achieved our highest ever position...2nd overall. I was incredibly impressed with all of the children and their behaviour and their attitude was exemplary. Congratulations to Margaret Roper School for their win, but we're after the trophy next year...

You may notice some of the teaching staff leaving early next week – we are linking with the other umbrella trust schools to do some year group moderation work in order to build up a portfolio of work as evidence of what constitutes the expected level of writing in each year group. There has been little or no guidance of worth from the DFE regarding this, so this is a valuable use of time and sharing of expertise. [Here](#) is an article published in the TES today which highlights the key issues.

11th Y6 Concert 7pm

13th/14th Emma Wallace Memorial Trophy at BTG

14th Y6 BBQ & Disco
Team Points

	Overall	Week
St George	4095	329
St Patrick	3529	308
St David	3206	286
St Andrew	2902	335

Please could I remind parents that Book Club is ongoing and if your child wishes to buy a book, please send them in with the money.

In previous letters I have highlighted issues regarding the election and funding. Whilst I am very much aware that there are lots of issues, it is important that we keep Education in a prominent position. Not just funding, but recruitment and retention of staff; 60% of new teachers leave within 5 years – we need to be looking more closely at why this is and what we can do as a school community to retain staff, but what education policies are being implemented that are detrimental to this. There is also a shortage of Headteachers and this is predicted to become a critical issue within the next 5 years. We need politicians to be more aware of the impact of their decisions and not just dismissing our concerns; I have never heard of Governors going on strike before (they are volunteers!) but that is what is happening, the NAHT has only voted for strike action once in the time I have been teaching and that was over pensions, but they are considering balloting members over the funding cuts. As a school we have largely been protected from these cuts – our budget is down a manageable amount and I had planned for this, however if these continue the school will lose approximately £120000 over the next three years. That is not sustainable.

So please ask your candidates of all parties where they stand on this issue and keep the discussion at the forefront of the election. One way that you can do this is by attending the event advertised below. Please challenge any candidate saying that school funding is at its highest level ever – we also have more children than ever, real time costs have added between 10 & 14% to the cuts alongside rises to employer NI and pension contributions. Unfortunately, I am unable to attend as I am at a meeting in London – although I was told that it was really for parents rather than Headteachers...

The image shows two posters for an event titled 'Croydon Education Question Time'. The left poster lists several questions: 'Is it correct that school funding is being cut?', 'Why have class sizes risen in the last two years?', 'Are teachers overworked?', 'Are standards falling in our schools?', 'Why are some schools removing subjects like Arts and Drama?', 'Should schools be run as businesses?', 'Do we need Free Schools?', and 'Will opening grammar schools raise standards and increase social mobility?'. It also provides an email address: croydonnut@hotmail.com. The right poster provides the event details: 'Chair: Philippa Harvey (local teacher and NUT National President 2016)', 'PANEL: Gavin Barwell (Tory MP for Croydon Central 2010-17), Sarah Jones (Labour candidate for Croydon Central), Local Headteacher, Local Parent, Local Student'. The date and time are 'WED. 24th MAY 2017 7pm (doors open 6.30pm)'. The venue is 'St Andrews High School, Waynflete Avenue, CR0 4BH (parking on playground)'. It also mentions 'Tea, coffee and light refreshments'.

If you are able to go, please let me know what was said and how the candidates responded.

