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The Good Shepherd Catholic
Primary School**

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PARENTS' NEWSLETTER

January 2011

Lenten Term

Dear Parents,
I would like to begin by wishing you all a happy and healthy 2011. The coming months will be challenging for all of us. With the threat of unemployment for some and food and petrol prices rising, it is not easy for anyone. There are major cuts in services to schools and we await our final budgets.



Snowdrops photographed in our own 'Secret Garden'.

What better way to celebrate the coming of spring and New Life at Easter?



As we approach Lent let us all be mindful of how lucky we are, living in this wonderful world that God created for us. During Lent can we all try and offer the hand of friendship to everyone we meet. Sometimes a smile is all it takes to brighten up someone's day. This can begin in the playground when we are chatting before school. The children are a wonderful example for us all.



Raising Attainment

As you all know, the staff and I have been working hard to raise standards and have introduced the many initiatives that have been driven by both the Government and Local Authority i.e. ECAT (Every Child a Talker), ECAW (Every Child a Writer) One to One Tuition etc. However, despite the quality of Teaching and Learning improving and our site and resources being second to none we still struggle to meet some of our ambitious targets because of issues and demands beyond our control.

I have been working with my staff to look closely at how we use our time during the school day. This has resulted in a new timetable that we have been trialling since the beginning of January 2011. (See attached copy). Each school day begins with a Spiritual Reflection / Prayers from our school Prayer Book which I designed. All of our Joint Acts of Worship / Assemblies now take place in the afternoons. This is proving to be very effective for the following reasons:

- Less children are arriving late
- There is a **SMART** beginning to the school day – begin lessons at 9 a.m. prompt
- 2 clear hours undisturbed teaching until morning break at 11 a.m. (**Nursery and Reception can have their snacks / visit the toilet at any time**)



- All children have access to water and toilet facilities in both KS1 and KS2 whenever they wish.
- Another clear hour undisturbed teaching until lunchtime to once again consolidate teaching and learning
- 1.5 hrs teaching time every afternoon with an addition of Assemblies / Joint Acts of Worship (This also means when

Parents are invited to Class Assemblies / Celebrations it will be easier for more parents to attend at 2.45 p.m. collecting their children afterwards instead of having to take time off work during the day.

- This does mean that your children will need to be quicker at the end of the school day when they need to collect their belongings to be able to be out on the playground for you to collect them at 3.15 p.m.

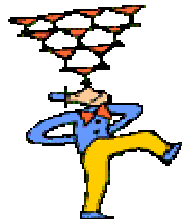
We have also launched into a more '**Creative Curriculum**' to engage more of the children in more exciting learning experiences. You may have children that have already begun a special topic which can last for a day, a week, a month or even half a term.

We have many exciting topics being planned:

- A visit from a team from Santa Pod Raceway (February 2nd) with a Drag Racing Car.
- A Helicopter visit during National Science Week (March)
- A day of 'Risk Taking' in the Secret Garden for our older G+T children (February 10th).

The 'Creative Curriculum' topics that are currently underway include:

Yr.4 '**Rope Walkers, Ring Masters and Rounds of Applause**'



What did the children say?

Monet Myrie 'I like the whole thing'.

Vaughan Wooldridge 'I liked designing and making the chairs for the different people in the Circus'.

Dalius Cesnakivicius: 'I loved writing play scripts. I have now started joined up writing. My handwriting has really improved'.

What did the Teacher say?

Mrs. Holcombe: 'The children are so full of ideas and they are participating a lot more in the lessons. We are all having a great time!'

Yr 5 '**Welcome to Wonderland**'



What did the children say?

Patrick Casey: 'I liked getting to know the characters in the story'.

Ethan Bonner: 'I have really enjoyed the Drama for Writing and making the Mad Hatter's hat'.

Lucy Reynold's 'I am really enjoying it and I am looking forward to the Mad Hatter's Tea Party'.

Louie Barrett: 'I liked doing all the research about Lewis Carroll'

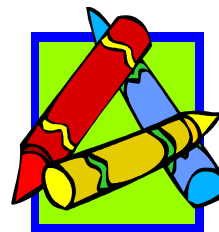
What did the Teacher say?

Mrs. Hare: 'The children have been more co-operative during group work. Their writing has improved with phenomenal results. The creative Art / D.T. skills they have developed have included designing Mad Hatter hats and 3D papier mache Mock Turtles.

The Headteacher says:

'This is a very exciting new challenge for the school. The staff and children are as excited as one another. The National Curriculum time allocation is being adhered to; we are just approaching the teaching and learning in a more exciting way to engage the children. My staff as usual, are working very hard to adapt and change their planning'.

Watch this space for further information!



Dates for the Diary:

Monday 24th January:

'All that I Am' Programme (Personal, Social and Spiritual Education) begins for Yr. 6 led by Mrs. Walker – all week



Tuesday 25th January:
Rainbows for All God's Children: **Wk.1**
3.15 – 4.15 p.m.

Tuesday 25th January:
First Holy Communion Meeting at the Cathedral of Our Lady and St. Thomas.
5 – 6 p.m.



Wednesday 26th January



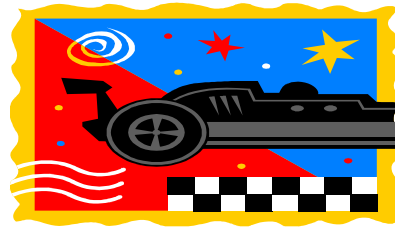
PCSO's Dan Steward and Simon Arthur visit the school to meet with our JRSO's and Miss Howe. They are staying to have lunch with the children.



Tuesday 1st February:
Rainbows for All God's Children: **Wk.2**
3.15 – 4.15 p.m.

Wednesday 2nd February:
Drag Racing car visits from Santa Pod Raceway – whole school Assembly with an opportunity to

view the vehicle as inspiration for Yr 6's Creative Curriculum topic on 'Free Wheeling Vehicles'



Tuesday 8th February:
Rainbows for All God's Children: **Wk.3**
3.15 – 4.15 p.m.



Tuesday 8th February:
First Holy Communion Meeting at The Cathedral of Our Lady and St. Thomas
5 – 6 p.m.



Wednesday 9th February:
Class 6 Assembly at 2.45 p.m. This Assembly is for the school only there will be an Assembly for parents to attend later in the school year.

Wednesday 9th February:
Sacrament of Reconciliation at St. Aidan's
6 p.m.

Friday February 11th
Diocesan Schools' Mass at St. Mary's Church, Dunstable – Mrs. Walker, Mrs. Casey and Mrs. Macadam will attend with our School Council Members. Mass begins at 11 a.m.



Saturday February 12th
Celebrating our Diocesan Schools
'Sharing Our Vision' at NORES R. E. Centre

10 – 1 p.m.

Monday 14th February
St. Valentine's Day



Diocesan INSET Training at The Good Shepherd Catholic Primary School for all Catholic Schools in Northampton - 4 p.m.



Tuesday 15th February
Rainbows for All God's Children: **Wk.4**
3.15 – 4.15 p.m.

Thursday 17th February
School closes to children at 3.15 p.m.

Friday 18th February
AIP (Area Improvement Partnership) Staff Training Day across the town. **School closed to children.**

Uniform Order Week

Wk. beginning Monday 28th February
Payment with all orders please. We ask all parents to measure their own children. We cannot be held responsible for mistakes due to wrong measurements being taken by parents.

School Uniform:

May I remind you that neither trainers nor jelly shoes are acceptable footwear for school. All children must wear sensible flat school shoes. If you are experiencing difficulty in purchasing school uniform please ask to talk to me to see if there is any way we can help.

Please place orders for uniform on Wednesdays.

8.45 a.m. – 9.15 a.m.
3.00 p.m. – 3.30 p.m.

Please try to avoid asking for uniform at other times unless it is an emergency – Thank you! N. B. We now have a supplier for our blue and white striped summer dresses. Please place your order in the usual way. Kindly note that blue and white checked dresses may not be worn.

We have a stock of second hand school uniform that you are able to purchase. All we ask is a donation to one of our charities. Please ask at the Office on a Wednesday if you would like to look at it.

Governors / Parent helpers:

I would like to thank our Governors who give up so much of their time on a voluntary basis for the good of the school.

Thanks too to all our regular Parent helpers. They have completed a training session and they have been List 99 cleared. We appreciate the help that parents provide for both the children and Class teacher.



Police

We have formed a really good relationship with our **Community Beat Officers**, Dan Steward and Simon Arthur. They spend time in school with the children and often have lunch with us. The focus for this term is their involvement with our JRSO's (Junior Road Safety Officer's) and Miss Howe. They are going to be monitoring the parking / road safety around our school and the St. David's area.

We regularly have Police presence on our site as we welcome the officers to park their vehicles in our car park both during the day and at night. This has been a tremendous aid to maintaining the security of the school. I would like to express my thanks to all of the officers. Perhaps we could help our local police by being more considerate with the way we park outside school.

Please do not park your car on the roundabout or park causing an obstruction. REMEMBER if we needed a Fire Engine or an Ambulance in an emergency, selfish parking would place your children at RISK.

Thank you for your co-operation

Please Can You Help Us?

We are looking for items that some of your older children may have grown out of to make some 'Small World' displays as a stimulus to encourage writing. The following items would be very useful:

Plastic dinosaurs
Plastic insects / bugs
Cars, boats, cement mixers etc.
Small figures i.e. workmen, spacemen, farmers, doctors / nurses, policemen, pirates, small dolls etc. multi cultural figures, figures with different disabilities
Farm animals, Zoo animals, birds, pets.
In addition we are looking for pieces of unusual **fabric, including fur fabric, shiny materials, velvet, silk, net etc.**
Shiny beads, pebbles, sea shells, artificial greenery, flowers etc.
If you would like to off load any of the items above to a good cause, please hand them in to the Main Office.
Thank you!

Can you help?

Does anyone have a desk that they no longer require that would suit a child 9 / 10 yrs old?
If you can help please ring the school. (714399)
Thank you!

Friends Of The Good Shepherd

Thanks go to Mrs. Tania Lane who has chaired our Parents' Association for many years. She has done a great job. Mrs. Lane has successfully qualified as a Higher Level Teaching Assistant therefore her role in school has changed. She is still remaining on the committee and is happy to support events.

I am delighted to tell you that **Mrs. Joanne Bateman** has been appointed as Chair and now is taking over from Mrs. Lane. We wish her every success. Other members of the committee are still remaining. They too have done a fine job and I would like to personally thank them all for all their time and commitment to the school. **Mrs. Bateman** would like to recruit additional new members to be able to tap into your many talents. If you think you would like to help please contact her via the main office. Mums, Dads and Grandparents would be most welcome to join. Mrs. Bateman is working on an action plan for future fund raising events, if you have any ideas please share them with her. A Newsletter from her will be winging its way to you soon.

I would like to say a **great big thank you** to our Parents' Association who have agreed to fund an ICT based programme called '**Clicker 5**' which will benefit all children across the school.

Punctuality

May I extend our thanks to those of you who are making an effort to ensure your children arrive and are collected on time each day. Please keep up the good work. The Education Welfare Officer is monitoring absence and late arrival of children.
Please help your school.

Many thanks for your friendship and continued support.

Best wishes,

Anne Walker (Mrs)

(Headteacher)

Our Mission Statement



Jesus is our

Shepherd and our friend.

With his help we will

show **respect** as we

learn,

love,

play and

pray

together.