



SCHOOL UPDATES

END OF TERM:

On Wednesday, we celebrated a wonderfully reflective and prayerful whole school Liturgy at St Mary's Church: a culmination of our Lenten journey in school and a fitting segue in to Holy Week. Over the past six weeks, we have come together as a school community in prayer, reflection and positive action; our pupils have been involved in: various creative prayer opportunities, an incredibly successful Mission Week, sponsored activities raising money for two very special charities (St Cuthbert's Care and The Ukweli Home for Hope) and a food appeal for a local shelter for the homeless. It has been a thoroughly invigorating time to be in school, and I'm so proud of the efforts of our pupils and wider community this Lenten season.

The theme we have been following this Lent, taking inspiration from Blessed Oscar Romero, is 'Be God's Microphone'. As well as shouting out about our faith in action, we've also had plenty of other things to make noise about. Pupils have been working incredibly hard in class, and some wonderful progress has been seen across school, from our youngest pupils in Reception Class – who now act as though they've been here forever – to our most senior pupils in Year 6, who have been applying themselves admirably in preparation for their SATs assessments in May.

As well as our in-class exploits, pupils have also benefitted from a vast array of extended learning and extra-curricular opportunities. Sport has again been high on the agenda, with Badminton and Rugby League being offered in Years 4 and 6 to augment the Physical Education already on offer at school. Pupils have competed in a number of sporting events, from the Gateshead Skipping and Dance Festivals, to Quick-sticks hockey and Multi-skills, and a number of our sporting teams have celebrated great success this term: notably, the school football team who have qualified locally for finals of the Blaydon and District League, and (quite impressively) for the finals of the National League Schools Cup which will take place at Wembley Stadium in May, as well as the Hi-5 Netball squad who recently competed in the county finals. Our Coast to Coast team in Year 5 have also stepped up their training in earnest, completing rides of up to 20km (and lots of hills!) in preparation for their ride in June – quite some feat I'm sure you'll agree – and all pupils have again benefitted from outdoor learning opportunities, working on various projects including the planting of our school allotment (which is coming on marvelously).

Further to this, Music and the Arts have once more been a highlight; we have enjoyed the first performance of our Year 4 String Orchestra, and our school choir continues to go from strength to strength. We have a budding team of Arts Ambassadors in school who are working towards receiving 'Arts Award' recognition, and there have been numerous class trips and visitors to school to enthuse learners and make learning real for our pupils.

All in all, it's been an almost breathless Spring Term, and we don't anticipate that there will be any let-up in the Summer. As a school staff, we've loved being part of such a successful start to 2017, and we look forward to sharing continued successes and celebrations with you in the term to come. Have a restful and holy Easter, and I look forward to seeing you all back at school on Monday 24th April.

Warmest Regards,

Mr J Wheatley
Headteacher

HOLY WEEK:

Holy Week gets under way with Palm Sunday this weekend; at St Mary's RC Church, the Children's Liturgy group and young people of the parish will be leading our Sunday worship which will begin with a procession from our very own prayer and reflection garden in to church for Mass at 9:30am (parishioners to gather in the prayer garden for approx. 9:20am). Service/Masses for Holy Week and Easter Weekend will be celebrated in our three churches and are listed below. Please come along and make this Easter a real time to for renewal and celebration.

HOLY WEEK/EASTER TRIDUUM MASS TIMES:

Holy Thursday at St. Mary's R C Church 6:30pm

Good Friday at Immaculate Heart Church 3:00pm

Holy Saturday at St. Philip Neri Church 8:00pm

Easter Sunday at St. Mary's R C Church 9:30am and Immaculate Heart at 11:00am

The Good Friday 'Walk of Witness' will take place this year on Friday 14th April from 11:00am to 12 noon beginning at Fellside Methodist Church. All welcome.

DANCE FESTIVAL:

Well done to our team of Happy Feet dancers who represented the school at the Gateshead Dance Festival this week. The pupils performed an amazing dance to 'A Town Called Malice' by the Jam, which got many a toe-tapping and a bottom wiggling in the aisles of the Sage. The boys and girls represented the school with great enthusiasm and talent, as well as supporting children from a number of other Gateshead schools at the event. Well done!

HI-5 NETBALL:

Well done to the pupils who participated in the County Finals for Hi-5 netball last week. On the day, the team faced some stiff competition, but came through demonstrating great skill and sportsmanship, picking up a couple of victories along the way. We're all incredibly proud of their achievements.

Y3 SKIPPING FESTIVAL:

Last Thursday, Year 3 took part in the Gateshead Primary Skipping Festival. The pupils, who have been mastering skipping techniques over the past term, performed wonderfully, and even won Gold for their whole class skip routine! Mrs Gardner and Mrs Dobson were incredibly impressed with the attitude of the pupils on the day, and a thoroughly enjoyable time was had by all.

REMINDERS

TERM DATES:

A reminder that the last day in school for pupils before the Easter Holidays is **Friday 7th April**. All pupils will return to school on **Monday 24th April**.

SUMMER UNIFORM:

As we hopefully move towards lighter and brighter days, pupils may now come to school in summer uniform (i.e. summer dresses and shorts). Please be reminded that sandals/open toe shoes should not be worn for school.

ACTIVE KIDS VOUCHERS:

As a school we are currently collecting Active Kids vouchers (available from Sainsbury's) in order to purchase sporting resources for school. If you – or someone you know – shops at Sainsbury's, we would be very grateful if you could collect and send the vouchers in to school; they will be greatly received, and will go towards continuing to provide excellent sporting opportunities for all at St Mary's. Thank you!

SMALL SAINTS:

Small Saints out of school club will be open during May Half Term except the bank holiday Monday (29th). We are currently taking bookings as places are limited. We will be open 7:45-6:00 Monday to Friday at the cost of £24.00 per child, per day, with a discounted charge of £100 for the full five days. The children will have 3 meals per day as well as snacks, and there will be specific activities each day for the children to take part in along with our normal day to day play. If this is something you would like to book or discuss, please contact me to secure your child's place as we have already started to take bookings.

We are also open on 5th June the Monday after the half term when school is closed to pupils. If you would like to secure your place for that day at the same price as holiday club, please just let me know as we are taking bookings now. Thank you, Leanne Sanderson.

UPCOMING EVENTS

SUMMER TERM CALENDAR:

Diary dates for the Summer Term will be sent home the first week back after the Easter holidays.

C2C RIDES:

Whole-day ride on Monday 24th April 9am-3pm.

FRIENDS OF ST MARY'S:

The next meeting for the Friends of St Mary's will be Thursday 4th May, 9am at school. All welcome!

THE WEEK AHEAD W/C : 24/04/17

MONDAY –	C2C All day bike ride 1 st Tennis session of the term
TUESDAY –	Y5 Cycling Proficiency 1 of 5 sessions (all pupils involved – please come to school in appropriate attire for an outdoor bike ride)
WEDNESDAY –	Y1 & Y2 Indoor Athletics (pupils involved will receive an individual letter)
THURSDAY –	Y3 Mini Tennis at Blaydon Tennis club (pupils involved will receive an individual letter)
FRIDAY –	Y4 Rugby 1 st Gymnastics session of the term