

Dear Parents

It just seems like yesterday that we were celebrating 2016 and making New Year resolutions. As we commemorated the beginning of the Christian season of Lent yesterday on Ash Wednesday we again made resolutions to help us in our life journey.

Half Term Report:

- 1) The children and staff have worked really hard this half term and I do thank all those parents and families who have supported the school to live its Mission Statement "Only my best will do: Be kind to one another".
- 2) We have only just received information from the Government about how they intend to test/assess our children. Which is why we haven't settled on an Open Occasion as we wanted to give you the most up to date information of how your child is performing in the New Curriculum and Assessment. You will be given a date after half term but it will be in the first part of March.
- 3) Lent is a time of "Alms" giving and Good Shepherd Fund (Nugent Care Society) is the Archdiocese designated charity. Last year we raised £400. We will try to do equally as well this year and I am sure with your customary generosity this will be possible.
- 4) Despite the bad weather our children have been involved in a variety of sporting events. They have proudly represented their school at water polo as a Federated team for the first time in deep water as well as shallow water. Year 3 and year 4 Indoor Athletics where both Federated schools made the City Final, what a fabulous achievement and we were recently involved in the city wide gymnastic competitions for year 3 and year 4.
- 5) We have arranged visits to local libraries and had one of the city librarians visit our schools to talk to classes and teachers about how to use libraries, the beautiful world of books and ideas how to support our schools. I am delighted that nearly 100 children with their parent's permission have signed up to getting a Library card so they can "lend" books and other enjoyable learning materials.
- 6) I am delighted that so many children have enjoyed the extensive extra –curriculum clubs on offer, before, during and after school every night except Monday which is a staff training night. The benefits have been seen in the activities our children can compete in often at a high level very successfully. My thanks to the generosity of the staff who freely give their time for our children. All these are not only beneficial and support the children's self- esteem and achievement in and out of class but help their physical and personal well- being.

What to look forward to after half term in our school:

There are so many I will just list them in no particular order. Some of these will be in normal school time and part of the curriculum others will be outside the normal school day. Art demonstrations/competitions, football games for boys and girls, cross-country runs and competitions, Shakespearian days (400th Anniversary), music at the Philharmonic Hall, Netball for boys and girls, residential trips to Colomendy in North Wales, Hucklow in Derbyshire and skiing in France. Reports and Open Evenings as well as Speech and Choir Festivals and Internet safety talks. World Book Day and visit to Storytellers and Authors. This is not an exhaustive list. To benefit from all that is offered by school FULL attendance and BEING ON TIME is essential.

"Safety Internet Day" and Correct use of the Internet: How will you play your part?

This was the National focus and theme across the country:

Sadly, an ever increasing problem for both school and parents and a real worry for the Governors and myself.

Children: We have dealt with several cases of "misuse" of the internet. Either children using inappropriate language, thinking they can make inappropriate comments about other children that are not only hurtful to the children and their parents, BUT also viewed by other children and it seems like a "show". We feel this is not acceptable within our behaviour code of practice AND where it does affect our school and children it is a school matter and we will take appropriate action. We are also aware that many of these abuses we do not even see. BUT having taken legal advice and asked the Local Authority, it is not legal that ANY of our children should be on Social Media sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter. On line Gaming etc. They have to be at least 13 years old to sign up AND they leave themselves vulnerable to being "groomed" or chatted to by a person or persons who trawl the internet looking for "vulnerable" young children. We are scared for our children AND strongly advise parents to NOT allow this practice which ALL experts say is NOT safe and certainly has led to tragic events.

∴ Obviously as responsible adults the internet and social media has many benefits. However, we across the Federation and many schools are subjected to many observations by parents. Several of these have come to our attention. This is not the appropriate place to discuss many of these, as people are entitled to opinions

BUT all schools are open to criticism and observation on what parents feel could be done better. I find it strange that many are not prepared to talk to us, we are not perfect but we do try hard because the health and happiness and welfare of your children is important to us all and together every school wants what their parents want. However when inaccurate, libellous untruths or inappropriate language is used, then the Governors will take the necessary action to ensure in law this stops. Our children learn from the “good” habits of their parents, who should applaud what their children do as well as correct what is not right. Let’s help our community to enjoy the benefits of the internet to make the world a better place. We are talking to “outside” experts in this field and intend to hold workshops for children and parents on this “emotive” issue. We hope you will attend them when we have set them up (hopefully shortly after half term).

Opportunities to read especially for pleasure:

Mrs Johnston sent out a letter about reading and FREE events being held at libraries. Children love these. A new one that has just been brought to our attention is at The Storybarn in Calderstones Park: The Wonderful World of Oliver Jeffers held in the white house which is a special reading centre. We actually have a “reading champion” from there who comes to our schools. More information is available on their website thestorybarn.org.uk.

Can I just remind you we are still looking for parents/grandparents/babysitters to send a photo in to school of you reading with your child, please send them to this email address: reading@ssscfederation.co.uk also could I ask you to send in a picture of yourself reading and the title of the book and author, children love to see their loved ones on display. Again the example of adults reading is a very powerful image to children.

Appointment of permanent “Field of Dreams” Nursery Manager:

I am delighted to inform all our parents and children that following interviews last week, the Governors have offered the permanent post of Nursery Manager to Miss Nina Young. It was a rigorous selection process and we feel we have appointed a fabulous practitioner with the added bonus that she has her “heart and soul” dedicated to the needs of our children in the Field of Dreams and the wider Federation.

School uniform – a reminder

At the Federation we have simple rules and regulations we ask and expect all to adhere to as members of our school community.

- a. More and more children are wearing nail varnish – this is not allowed.
- b. Earrings – generally not allowed or need to be covered. All other jewellery is not allowed other than watches. School accepts no responsibility for loss or damage to these items brought in to school
- c. Hair- ALL long hair must be tied back for health and safety reasons. Also – extreme haircuts are not allowed (especially boys following the trends of footballers, shaved or half shaved).

NOTICE FOR PARENTS AND ADULTS AROUND SCHOOL: please be aware of notices around school.

SMOKING – not allowed on school site (includes e cigarettes)

Mobile Phones – The use of mobiles is not allowed on school site (should be switched off). This includes the yard and the car park outside entrance to Foundation Unit. School site starts and ends at the gates
Please inform ALL ADULTS who collect your children of these rules. This is once again about keeping our children safe.

Whole school site “Safety Check”

With a small group of parents who volunteered to give their thoughts and help the school to look at our site safety, especially on the Field of Dreams site. We have completed work on both areas that involve our children from 6 months to 11 years old and are now just waiting for the weather to improve, hopefully we don’t have to wait forever, to put down “high Viz” parent lines.

We invited a consultant with particular expertise in Safeguarding and Safety of School Sites to come in and do a survey and to report to the Head of School, Miss Davies and Manager of the Field of Dreams Nursery about her findings. These we shared with a group of parents, who we do want to thank for their insight and comments about what has been done. They have been brilliant to make us as safe as we can be, so a big thank you. The consultant went around the whole “Educational Site” from the forest school area at the back of the main building, looking at possible entry areas such as gates, walls etc, to the locked gate that belongs to the Convent BUT is a fire escape route out onto the Edge Lane area.

She applauded the improvements: 1) Clear signage to ensure children’s safety is EVERYONE’s responsibility parents and staff alike and that gates should be CLOSED. 2) The open gate onto Holly Road which now has a RETURN ARM which closes automatically and will stop children running straight out onto the pavement. 3) The release button at the “top of the slope” by the Foundation Unit which means it takes an “older” person to push the button and open the gate at the same time. 4) A “Warning” signal in the Field of Dreams, the Foundation Unit and the Breakfast and After School Room to say the gate has been left open.

We finish for Half Term tomorrow at normal time and return to school Monday 22nd February.

