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20th July 2016

Dear Parents and Children,

It doesn't seem that long since I wrote a welcome letter for 2015/16 in September and now it's the final letter of the year. We have tried to become more *paperless* so lots of information is on the website and distributed via text. It has been a year with lots to celebrate and be proud of in each and every class and I trust the class newsletter will reflect this.

1: A busy term – Thank you Parents for your support.

As a Federation which includes the Field of Dreams Nursery we do work tirelessly to ensure we provide the best we can for our children, parents and staff. To this end we “externally” test ourselves and have assessors who are invited in to judge us. All this this year, and especially this term, we have been successful at the highest level. Earlier in the year we maintained our Investors in People Award – Gold status – we scored even higher than previously which shows the assessor that we don't stand still. This is a coveted national award sort after by all sorts of different institutions and is a sign of QUALITY.

2: RE monitoring visit at St Cuthbert's June 2016:

a very successful visit from the Christian Education Department which followed Ofsted guidelines for this inspection. Here a few quotes from the assessor which say more than I could.

“The generosity of spirit throughout enabling the school to go on improving and to BECOME even more outstanding than at the last inspection.”

“The vibrant Catholic life of all the school”

“The confidence of the children”

“Lively and energetic teaching”

“The celebration of diversity (to demonstrate the equality of all God's created world)”

“The involvement of governors who support and challenge” Rev. D. Melly June 2016

3: Liverpool Reading Quality Mark: June 2016 Level achieved – GOLD

The Federation gained the *highest award* possible which demonstrates the importance school, parents, children, staff and governors give to READING. We believe it “opens up the world to all of us.” Again some quotes from the assessor:

“Reading is central to the school”

“Progress in reading is carefully tracked and shows pupils make great progress.”

“The Governors and all staff play an active role in embedding *Reading for Pleasure*”

“Every classroom promotes a strong reading ethos”

“Reading BUDDIES receive appropriate training to improve outcomes for pupils.”

“Educational Outcomes National Awards: Both schools are at the top nationally for progress and in SATs locally places St Sebastian's 1st with St Cuthbert's 5th.” (Last published SATs 2015).

“Reading Ambassadors bring their enthusiasm back into classes and children, enthralling each other”

There is a consistent approach to using reading and sharing a love of it with their colleagues and children.”

Use of drama in classes and productions like Panto and Shakespeare Project highlighted as the school creating a “Living Book” to enjoy and share with others.

Assessor: Meryl Sangone. Liverpool School Improvement.

4: The Workplace Wellbeing Charter National Award July 2016-a great achievement.

This was about how we feel and how we work hard on their wellbeing to enable them to achieve the BEST possible results with the children in their care.

“Many strengths and areas of good practice arose during the course of this accreditation”.

“All those interviewed expressed how much they appreciate their job and role. They spoke highly of the school and how well supported they are; but more importantly how valued they felt. This indicates that the federation respect their employees and understand that the employees are the biggest asset of the organisation”.

“The attitude of all employees needs to be commended. Their appreciation of the support given to them by the organisation is evident and the support offered by managers shows their commitment to ensure the federation remains a success”.

Julie Duffy Health at Work (National Organisation).

5: School of Sanctuary: Successful in achieving this status

This award which we were invited to apply for, is for schools that show a ‘big welcome’, nurture and assist families who may be vulnerable either their children or the family. It was such a privilege to know we have been doing much of what is required for MANY many years.

To continue this section, we have had many visitors both locally, nationally and internationally from school teachers and leaders of schools as far away as China and we have made links with. In fact, several staff will be going to China paid for by the British Council in the Autumn Term. We also have had several visits off other Education Professionals such as nurses, social services, psychologists all very complimentary about our schools and children. I have picked one person who’s actually only visited once but was so impressed wrote to Mrs Hilton

“I have enjoyed observing the sensitive and insightful attitude of staff, but also of the other children and their interaction, patience and affection towards the child I was observing. I was moved to see that your school has succeeded in supporting emphatic and caring attitudes between children in the classroom I observed. Best wishes”.

Psychological Therapist PSS

6: Other success:

There are probably too many to list in this newsletter but the ‘Quality of the Children’s Work’ that is seen through internal assessment and external exams remains at the HIGHEST of levels that we do compare ourselves not just locally but nationally. The way our children represent our schools in terms of performance such as plays, panto and Shakespeare as well as other forms of the Arts, singing and artistic work commented on in local exhibition.

Our sporting excellence is acknowledged not just locally but nationally in the AFPE Award with Distinction. When other parents and teachers from other schools, point to St Cuthbert’s or St Sebastian’s and say “THEY ARE THE ONES TO BEAT”, indeed a compliment and something that isn’t just this year BUT is a long standing tradition. Lots of people even our own parents forget that we are more often than not competing against much bigger schools some of which are FOUR times our size and have that much more choice. We are often one of the smallest BUT our children still win competitions and individual events and come away with medals.

I do thank all the staff across the federation for their generosity in ‘giving freely’ this means ‘unpaid’ to train and support our children. Hence the HUGE SUCCESS we have in the Graduation Ceremony of the Children’s University. What aspirational standards we want for all our children and families. Please continue to give your support and gratitude that your children benefit from.

7: So disappointing-Our children miss out.

We have to work to a school year and parents consider taking holidays or taking children out of school in term time. I am gutted for some of these children. WHY??

- 1) The opportunities they will miss WILL never be presented again. So Leavers Assembly, Transition Work, Reports and speaking to teachers, missing out on activities such as sports, trips in the year that are essential for their overall development. Year 6 saying goodbye, a huge emotional time leaving your school and friends.
- 2) We try to talk about ‘Responsibility’ and ‘Not letting each other down’. Recently children being absent has resulted in football competitions being lost, athletic competitions lost being named as City Champions school children not there, Relay team not being City Champions missing vital people. THESE are all opportunities. Children NOT being there affects other children and staff who have trained for many hours. BE CONSIDERATE TO ALL WE ARE TRYING TO DO not only for your own child but for other children as well.

I recently have felt for staff, children and other children alike. They want to follow the school mottos “Be the best I can” “Only my best will do” and “Be kind (and considerate) to one another”.

8 Saying Goodbye:

There are certain members of staff who will be leaving us this year and I do want to say a HUGE thank you for their contribution to our federation. Some have been newly qualified teachers who have been so keen and busy with our

children as their 'first' class NEVER to be forgotten. I can still remember my first class over 40 years ago. I am sure these teachers will have brilliant memories of you all. They have learnt so much and always did their best. I am delighted that those who wanted a permanent job have got one for September. I thank them all most sincerely and wish them the very best in their future careers, please continue in our wonderful profession we do need outstanding young teachers to give as generously as you have to support children.

Keshia Broughton-St Anne's Stanley.
Nadia Kamal-Supply
Carlos Caceres Hernandez-Returning to Spain.
Rosie Moore-Dubai.
Sam Bryan-Red Court.

9: A special goodbye to Mrs Angela Denson.

It is hard to believe that Angela has been at St Sebastian's for over 30 years. She has been a fantastic nursery Nurse and Teaching Assistant as well as First Aider. Your children have always known she is a person they could go to for help, support and a cuddle. Children are very clever and 'know' who a kind person is and they will always help them. Angela has been such a person to children and staff alike. Some people are irreplaceable she is one who will be sadly missed but must know the way the children, staff, parents, governors and myself are so grateful for what she has given to the school. Always a keen supporter of the PTA, "so what is going to happen with the cake stall? All is forgiven come back Angela". I actually smile to myself as I remember interviewing her AND nearly not offering her a job, OUR school would have been a lesser place without her. During her time here we have had at St Sebastian's 4 Outstanding Ofsted Reports with glowing reports about the love and care that is shown to all but particularly our children. Angela was a 'leading light' in this department. Fiercely loyal to St Sebastian's as an ex pupil herself she will be remembered with love and affection. Please enjoy your new life ahead.

School finishes tomorrow at 2.30 for the summer break and Foundation 2 to Year 6 children return to school Wednesday 7th September for the new term as there are 2 Inset days on the 5th and 6th for Staff Training. Foundation 1 return on 12th September.

Some reminders, children return in September in their winter uniform, no jewellery is allowed, if stud earrings cannot be taken out they need to be covered with plasters. PE kits need to be in school every day. Long hair needs to be tied back and no 'extreme' hair styles are allowed such as razor strips or colour in the hair.

Have a lovely summer break.

Dennis Hardiman
Executive Headteacher.