



Friday 12th March 2021

Achievements

This week's Stars & HT's Awards:

EYFS JHN:
Star: Levi.

EYFS Vieira:
Star: Cian
HT Award: Jackson & Natalia.

Year 1 Jacinta:
Stars: Harry & Ella.

Year 2 John Paul II:
Star: Sophie.
HT Award: Mila, Eliza & Jacob.

Year 3 Faustyna:
Star: Joshua M

Year 4 Teresa:
Star: Drew

Year 5 Drexel:
Star: Aiden & Harry K
HT Award: Zofia, Alana, Kourtney & Adrian.

Year 6 Bakhita:
Star: Finley.
HT Award: Temisola, Finley, Abby & Yiqi.

Year 6 Orione:
Star: Adam.
HT Award: Jaiden, Jemaria, Jayden, Adam & Thomas.

Weekly Newsletter:

I cannot adequately express how wonderful it was to welcome all the children back to St Cath's on Monday! The sun was shining and we all felt such joy! I won't lie, like many, I have found lockdown difficult at times. I'm quite open about the fact that, in the past, I have struggled with my own mental health. However, seeing the kids literally skipping into school, with massive smiles on their faces, was more than I could have wished for. It was suddenly like I could see a light at the end of this tunnel. Like the first buds of Spring, there is a sense of hope in the air! I felt quite emotional seeing the reunion of friends and the happiness they clearly felt, just in being able to play together. The staff were also over the moon – many told me how delighted they felt at having everyone together.

It has been an eventful week! Our key focus was on settling the pupils. Whether they were previously at home or in school, it was a real change trying to get back to 'normal'. I heard lots of grumbles about how restrictive clothing felt (we have all relished being able to relax in elasticated tracksuit bottoms!); difficulty concentrating and not wanting to work, just catch up with friends. And that was just the staff!

Jesting aside, I did hear some pupils say that they hadn't done much work, or that they seemed to be having extra break times, Golden Time, CHILL or COOL Time. This was deliberate. I hope that giving pupils lots of free time together has helped ease the transition and supported their socialisation. Next week, we will be continuing our whole-school project on 'What We'll Build' by Oliver Jeffers. Please do look on Twitter to see the amazing cross-curricular work which has been going on. It is all designed to reinforce pupils' wellbeing.

On Tuesday, we were visited by a reporter from the Watford Observer, keen to hear about reopening and our Covid-safety measures. Thank you to those parents who met with him. You absolutely nailed it when you described the 'buzz' at school. That is exactly what we all felt this week! You can read the articles at <https://www.watfordobserver.co.uk/news/19147054.parents-st-catherines-catholic-primary-school-buzzing-return/> and <https://www.watfordobserver.co.uk/news/19150713.covid-watford-primary-school-keepin-g-pupils-staff-safe/>.

Although not naturally superstitious, I am always reluctant to tempt fate. However, in the article I do mention how well we have done as a school in being Covid-secure. I take zero credit for that. Credit goes to every single member of staff who oversees handwashing, sanitising, ventilation, cleaning etc. Most of all though, credit goes to Mrs Stefanska, Miss Atile, Pam and especially Mrs Robinson, who have created and kept to the most rigorous cleaning schedule, all day, every day, which goes on completely behind the scenes. If you see them, please do thank them.

It was lovely to celebrate Ghana's Independence Day. In doing so, we discovered that as well as having pupils from EYFS to Year 6 of Ghanaian heritage, Mrs Seibu is also from Ghana! It was uplifting to see her clothes bringing some Ghanaian colour to the school on Friday. I'm hoping that some of our pupils will also bring items or photos and provide insight into this wonderful country. Next week we will be celebrating the Independence Day of Mauritius. I'm delighted that one member of our school community has already volunteered to be involved. Please contact me if you or/and your family is from Mauritius and would also like to be involved.



Friday 12th March Weekly Newsletter:

Sadly, there aren't appropriate Powerpoints out there for use in school on Independence Days, (which says a lot!), so I am writing the Powerpoints that we use with the children. On Friday I was slightly mortified to find that our Ghanaian teacher was using a Powerpoint written by an Anglo-Irish woman, who has never been to Ghana! Please help me! Support me by sending in information and personal stories to make this a meaningful celebration.

One parent pointed out that we should also be celebrating the background of those whose families hail from Europe. I completely agree! So, we will be adding these to our calendar. However, the key thing is to celebrate the ethnicities and backgrounds of those in our school community – with a focus on those previously ignored. While it is St. Patrick's Day on Wednesday, I do not propose to spend much school time on this. Not because it isn't important to celebrate it (and I speak as someone who is Irish on both sides of her family), but because as a country we have always celebrated it.

The rainbow metaphor is a very powerful one. Used by the LGBTQ+ community and the NHS, it symbolises unity. In our school context, it also represents each individual coming together to make something more beautiful than the sum of its parts. In order to make a true rainbow, each part needs to be able to shine equally, without any one part eclipsing the other. In the past, we have not allowed everyone to shine, because we have not given them the opportunity.

Next Wednesday, many children will come in wearing something green – this has been happening for years. I'm delighted that so many of our children are proud to celebrate their Irish background. Going forward, I want our school year to be punctuated by different colours, as pupils come into school proudly wearing (or bringing in) something to celebrate their own heritage. National food is also always welcome (hint, hint!!). Therefore, next week, if your child has links to Ghana, Mauritius, Hungary, or Ireland, please feel free to send them in with something to mark this.

Much as I would love to celebrate every single country, that is not possible. So, if there are any special cultural or religious days close to your heart, please email me and I will try to include them in our calendar.

On Thursday, our in-school SLT lunch was a bit of a disaster! Our school computers aren't as well set up for this as our home ones are. I'm really sorry if your child missed out. This wasn't deliberate but due to multiple technical issues. I promise that we will try to rectify that this week, so that they get to take part.

Friday was a delightful way to end our return to school. I got to hear about some of the amazing work which was produced this week and give out some HT Awards in person. Much as I love our SLT lunches, there is no substitute for children coming to my office, reading out their work and being given a special sticker.

Despite the Newsletter claiming to be Friday, today is, in fact, Mother's Day. Mrs Wildey, one of our former teachers (and now Governor), used to regularly receive Mother's Day cards from her pupils. This was because (as well as being an amazing teacher), she treated all the children in her care with a mother's love. This Mother's Day, I wish a Happy Mother's Day to every 'mother', in all their guises. To each wonderful mum who works tirelessly behind the scenes; to all the incredible dads, who are being both mum and dad to their child/ren; to those for whom Mother's Day is sad, because they have lost their mum; to those for whom Mother's Day is painful because they are yearning to be a mum; to those who are bringing up children who are not biologically their own, whether a foster mum, adoptive mum or step-mum; to every aunt, sister, grandmother and friend who is part of the village raising a child, and to every single person who gives a mother's love, Happy Mother's Day.

Finally, it was a pleasure and heart-warming this week to see you, our parents. Thank you for your smiles, waves and general positivity. As with any family, there have been ups and downs over the years, but I feel that adversity has made us an even closer school community. Here's to building on that!

Take care and God bless,
Nikki Kane