



Newsletter – May 2016

Sats - National Tests

I am sure all of you will be aware of the heightened news coverage of the Sats recently. I know there are also many divided opinions about these tests and I am sure you will all have your opinions about them. As head teacher of the school I have a legal duty to ensure that the children sit these tests. I also obviously have my own opinions, professional and personal about them. Exams and tests are part of school life. However, the frequency, the age at which they are carried out and the reason for them is something we should all consider carefully.

The children in Year 2 and Year 6 have sat new tests this year and without any doubt they are harder than ever before. This is because the new curriculum, which was introduced by the government last academic year, is tougher than ever before.

It is too early to say how the results will look this year as to put it simply: we haven't even been told what the 'pass mark' is for the tests.

What I will say about the tests is that we have to remember we are a school and our primary purpose is to educate children so they are prepared for the next stage in their education. Whether we like it or not, exams give you a purpose and something to aim for and also something to look back on so you know how well you did. When I taught in Year 6 I liked the challenge of the tests and seeing children grit their teeth and do their best. In fact I miss it and I am going to try to make sure that next year, some of my time is given up to returning to the classroom to teach. I'm not sure whether the children will be thrilled by that thought! I believe that it is important that as a head teacher, I should be an active part in the school life – going into lessons and being with the staff and the children. I do have a nice office now – but I definitely don't want to be sat in it all day!

Never has there been a time when opportunities for young people depend so much on their education. Whether these children grow up to be lawyers, welders, doctors, teachers..., they will only be able to do so with an education behind them. Children can gain a tremendous feeling of self-worth and pride when they know they have tried their best for something and that they have given 100%. Likewise they also need to realise when they don't try hard and when they don't try to come to school regularly or listen carefully the feeling of disappointment should be an important lesson for them to learn for life. It is far too easy for all of us to say: "it's hard and I can't do it." What we need to teach children is resilience, perseverance and determination. I have witnessed many children, over the years, achieve amazing things and overcoming many difficulties through sheer hard work and determination.

The school is in a fantastic position: excellent staff, strong and supportive governors, we are financially secure, strong and emerging leaders exist across the staff, we have a proven track record and more importantly a true and authentic Catholic ethos is richly evident in this school. The Senior Leadership Team of the school: myself, Mr Conwell, Miss Hobson, Mr O'Donnell and Mrs Kennedy have exciting plans for this school and I know they are shared by the rest of the staff. This could not be achieved without the children and the parents we are privileged to serve.

I apologise for my long rant, but I feel that it is important as a parent you know what the school stands for and the views of the people who lead the school.

Feedback from Questionnaires:

Holidays – Two weeks at Easter or May/June?

This was closer than I expected and I know that many parents find it difficult for child care when the school does not follow all the other school's holidays. Next year we will be having two weeks at Easter in line with all of the other schools. I know lots of parents like the extra week at the start of June as it is cheaper for holidays. To try to help with this we will be taking 2 Professional Development days (training days) at the start of June to help you with this. This means you can have a holiday but the staff can't I will publish the school holidays very shortly.





Marvellous Me

Parents felt that this was really useful, they would just like it to be used more. The staff agree, but sometimes they find it hard to fit it in to their lessons as they are busy teaching, They are trying to use it more to help you see what your child is doing in school. If you don't know what this is or you can't log on please see Mr Scott.

EPraise (Electronic House Point System for home access).

Again this was very popular with a few parents saying they can't log on. Please see Mr Conwell if you want to know more or you can't log in.

Text Messaging

Very popular indeed! Sadly, we can only offer this to one parent as it becomes very costly. If you don't receive texts then please call in to the office so we can update the system.



Free after school Clubs

Very well thought of. This is something we try to offer, but it is becoming increasingly difficult with pressure on budgets. We are the only school I know who offers so many free clubs to children. The pressure for the school is of course paying to have professionals come in to take these clubs and for us not to pass the cost on to parents. I do think we should look to offer more clubs to the younger children in the future.

Future Building Work

I am delighted to tell you that we are building an outdoor sheltered learning area for Foundation Stage over the summer holidays. This will provide shelter and a place for the younger children to play and learn all year round. Details to follow.

School Twitter Account

The number of followers is really growing and the feedback from parents is really positive. Many have said to me that they really enjoy getting the tweets (messages) as they keep them informed about what is going on in school. It is completely free and parents get regular updates about school and everything that is happening. We even send tweets to keep you updated about how the Boro are doing! Please call in to school if you want to know more – we are happy to help.

Maths National Finalists

Some of the Year 6 children have worked hard all year in a national competition called Maths in Motion. They basically have to use their maths skills to build a Formula 1 car and set the car up to win races against other schools. After a long process of regional competitions leading to national semi-finals; their car has managed to fly around the track and they are now in the Maths in Motion National finals in Stratford. Congratulations!!!

May Procession

Our May Procession will take place in church on Sunday 22nd May at 3pm. This is an important event where we give thanks to Mary, Our Lady. Can I thank you in advance for supporting this special event with our parish.



Catholic Cup



We will be taking our footballers to the annual Catholic Cup in Middlesbrough. My thanks to the many parents, who I know will be attending, and as always supporting the teams in the correct manner. Good luck to the teams and thank you to all the teachers who will be going, especially Mrs Holtby for organising the teams all year.

Thank you for all of your support.

Mark Ryan

Head teacher

