

St Paulinus Primary Catholic Voluntary Academy



Love one another

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Head Teacher Mr S Geaves



as I have loved you

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Dear Parents,

It is so brilliant to have the children back in school and I have been amazed by the enthusiasm and maturity with which they have returned. I have loved hearing from your children all about how they spent the holidays and how they coped with lockdown and home learning. As it seems unlikely that we will be having the usual Welcome Meetings this year, please be assured that this newsletter contains the main points which would be covered.

I would like to take this opportunity to explain a little of what your children would normally be able to expect from their final year of primary education, but understandably, so much of what was once taken for granted is now subject to change. One certainty is that Year Six remains different to any other year group: in many ways it is the most challenging, but at the same time it can be the most rewarding. I am certain that in July 2021 your children will leave our school with many life-long memories to treasure.

I feel that it is only fair, since I find out so much about your children and their loved ones, that I tell you a little bit about me. I was born and raised in York and now live in Yarm with my son Bertie. In my free time I love to run, read and have adventures with Bertie!

My teaching career began with three years in Early Years, after which I enjoyed five years in Key Stage One, before two years in a mixed Y3 / 4 class. This is my sixth year as the Year 6 teacher at St Paulinus. I have held many additional responsibilities in school, and I am currently Curriculum Leader for PE and the school's SENDCo.

FAQs

Which adults will my child be working with? I am delighted to say that **Mrs Hopkinson** remains very much the other half of the Year 6 teaching team. I have been teamed with Mrs Hopkinson for most of my time at St Paulinus. She has a wealth of experience supporting this age group and knows your children very well from her time with them in Year 5. My out-of-class PPA and leadership time will be covered by **Mrs Eschoe**, who will deliver a range of subjects for which she is very much an expert including RE and Music.

What will my child be learning? As a school, we are committed to support every child in their return to formal schooling through a curriculum which meets all of their needs. The children's happiness and well-being are at the heart of all we do. This term we will have a recovery curriculum, which focuses on PSHE as well as key skills in reading, writing and maths. Our RE Units are *Loving, Vocation & Commitment* and *Expectations* and we are hopeful that in the near future we will be able to learn about The Vikings and subsequently South America. Traditionally, children would read twice a week as part of a Year 6 Guided Reading group, where they are taught to develop their abilities to question, clarify, predict and summarise. At the time of writing, alternative measures are in place to support reading skills, including 1:1 reading and whole class shared reading. It is vital that reading for pleasure continues outside of school. I will set and assess spellings every week based on rules taken from the National Curriculum English Appendix 1. The first spelling sheet has been sent home and the children will be assessed on Wednesdays.

What are arrangements for PE? PE will take place on a Monday and Tuesday. PE kits should come into school at the beginning of every week. Please ensure names are written in all items of clothing. We also recommend jogging bottoms and sweatshirts during the winter months as we try to do as much outdoor sport as possible.

What do I need to know about SATs? SATs quizzes are scheduled for the **week beginning 10th May 2021**. Mrs Hopkinson and I will run a number of after-school 'booster' classes in the lead up to SATs week. In some cases these sessions will focus specific areas of learning for a target group of children, but many sessions will be open to all. I will provide more details in the Spring Term of the booster classes and I will also offer a SATs information meeting for parents.

What do I need to know about the residential visit? Sadly, at this point, we are unable to organise any educational visits. A provisional booking was made for Peat Rigg Outdoor Centre for **March 8th - 12th 2021**, however it is not yet known whether or not we will be able to go. As soon as we have any further information I will let you know and should the need arise, I will organise an information meeting early on in the Spring Term to try to tell you everything that you may want to know.

Is there a process of transition between primary school and secondary school?

Most of our children move onto Sacred Heart or Laurence Jackson. Dates of Open Evenings or other opportunities to find out more will be shared with you as we receive them as will details of any transitional experiences, which they may be able to provide towards the end of the school year. I am sure you will appreciate that their usual methods have become unviable of late.

What homework will be set? In addition to the familiar expectations that children will read, practise spellings and learn their times tables, I provide children with a homework menu, which has already been given out. They will have a choice of activities to complete and a significant period of time in which to do so. This approach to homework has proved popular with children and promotes independence and personal responsibility - which are vital skills for secondary school. I encourage children to complete as much as they can on their iPad / home computer and email it for feedback directly from myself. If the task cannot be completed this way, then often a photo can be taken and emailed to me instead. Please encourage children - as I do - to choose a variety of different types of tasks and to adopt a 'little-but-often' approach to completing their homework menu.

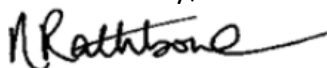
Although I avoid setting large-scale 'project' homework, there is the opportunity - for those who wish - to produce one or two bigger pieces of homework. Children can easily complete their menu by doing a selection of small tasks. Please use your own judgement as to how to best support your children with their homework.

I will occasionally set Maths homework using quick-fire games from ActiveLearn for children to complete on their ipads / home computers (provided they can access the internet, they should be able to complete these tasks on any device). If for any reason children are unable to access this outside of school, they will be able to use a playtime to complete it in school.

I value the relationships I establish with parents and invite you to contact me if you feel that there is anything which you think may help me to better understand your child and do my job as well as possible. Having already spent a cracking first couple of weeks with your children I am excited and confident that we will enjoy a very successful year together.

Please contact me if you have any questions or queries.

Yours faithfully,



Nick Rathbone.

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