

St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School

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Headteacher: Mrs D McLeary

20th July 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

July ends another extraordinary and challenging school year for everyone in our school community. Throughout the year, your support and understanding has been extremely important to us, and we thank you for this.

Staff, parents, and children have continued to adapt and show great resilience during these unprecedented times and collectively we have kept the disruption to our children as low as possible. As recently as the last two weeks we had 11 staff out of school but still managed to maintain all year groups, with the exception of one that was self-isolating, in school.

We endured two lockdowns during the year but in the most recent lockdown over 60% of our children remained in school. Nonetheless we were very aware that this still left many parents with the difficult challenge of 'home-schooling', and we sought to implement the lessons learnt as we updated our remote learning approach. During this last term, we have also implemented and will continue to focus on our 'recovery' plans to ensure every single child maximises their potential.

Despite the trying circumstances, between us we have achieved many positive things. Our Year 3 and 4 children were able to receive the sacrament of Holy Communion and our Year 6 children received the sacrament of Confirmation. It was wonderful that so many children now in Year 7 at various secondary schools, came back under the St Joseph and parish umbrella to prepare for and be confirmed in the faith too. The children have also enjoyed participating in the mass virtually with Fr. Peter Weatherby from Cannock.

As parents and carers, you continued to provide generous support to our school building fund; a huge thank you for this. As a result, we have been able to continue improving the learning environment, including completing the upgrade of all classrooms to the latest touchscreen technologies.

We also thank the PTFA for their continued support and fabulous refurbishment of the Library.

We took other positive steps towards normality. Year 6 were able to finish their time at St Joseph's with a different but nonetheless fantastic event at Whitemoor Lakes, where they were blessed with great weather. We were able to hold a sports day albeit with limits on

how many parents and carers could attend. Parents were very understanding of this, and we all look forward to these types of restrictions no longer applying.

Year 3 continued the athletic theme, as well as exemplifying our concern for others less fortunate than ourselves, when they took to their bikes and zoomed around Beacon Park to raise money for CAFOD.

We were hugely encouraged by a conversation that took place with a parishioner at mass only last week. They had walked past the school and were heartened to hear lovely singing coming from the main hall mixing with laughter coming from under the new canopy. A small example that illustrates, despite all the things we cannot control, St Joseph's continues to be a happy place where children can thrive. This is testament to the staff, the parents and most of all the children themselves.

Finally, returning to the sacraments this year we believe they showed us at our best as a community. Many people worked together to ensure they went ahead. Fr Anthony ensured our children were able to receive the sacraments and indeed acted on behalf of the bishop during the confirmations. Many members of staff, both current and retired, along with governors and members of the parish supported children in their preparation and then on the day. Parents, once again, were very supportive and understanding of the constraints within which we were operating. Most importantly, despite the challenges, the children and their families made them reverent and holy occasions.

We all hope and pray for a more normal school year when we return after the break. Whatever challenges do come our way, guided by the Holy Spirit, and with the willingness to care for each other that our school family has shown throughout this year, we will meet them together.

So more than ever, we wish all our families a peaceful and relaxing summer, and we look forward to coming back together as a community in September.

Best wishes,
Your governing board.