

St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School

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Headteacher: Mrs D McLeary

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Dear Parents

We write to you at the end of another year where our whole school community has once again risen wonderfully to both the challenges and opportunities we have encountered.

We returned in September with the hopes of a much more stable school year and got off to an excellent start by winning the Lichfield Summer 2021 Reading Challenge (a title we hope to defend this summer!). However, we also recognised that there was much to do after so much disruption and indeed Covid continued to cause challenges, particularly in the Autumn term. Nonetheless, our children and staff quickly settled into the task of both closing the learning gaps and having a more 'normal' and hopefully fun school experience.

As we pursued these goals, we welcomed Ofsted to the school in January for a formal inspection. We retained our 'Good' rating at a time of significant pressure across the whole education sector, but this rating tells only part of the story. The Governors were delighted to hear the Ofsted inspector talk in glowing terms about our children, their behaviour and values and the overall culture of our school.

Reflecting this praise, as the year progressed it was a joy to see our whole school community working hard to reintroduce the activities that help our children grow and develop as young people. In addition to simple but vital activities such as 'normal' play times, other highlights included:

- World Book Day including workshops with Poet Laureate - Mel Wardle-Woodend.
- Sports day, where the weather was kind to us.
- A day of activities and fun to celebrate the Queen's jubilee including the official opening of our library.
- Our annual music assembly.
- The Y5/Y6 performance of Olivia.

In many of these activities we continued to receive fantastic support from our PTFA, for example funding the inflatables at our Jubilee fun day and the Y6 Leavers' Celebration. We thank our previous Chair, Mary Strong, and look forward to working with our new committee Co-Chairs, Emma Cochrane and Christina Mulenga.

Sports and other extra-curricular activities were also back on the agenda including the introduction of new ones such as cricket and dance classes. All our sports teams represented the school brilliantly but a special mention to our Y3/Y4 mixed cricket team who, in their inaugural year, won their local competition and then performed with distinction at the County cricket finals.

Growing with Jesus'

Most importantly, our school is built on the foundation of our faith and Catholic life and 'Growing with Jesus' remained at the heart of school activity throughout the year. The sacraments of First Holy Communion and Confirmation were celebrated and at the latter we were blessed with the presence of Archbishop Bernard to confirm our children. There were activities such as the Walk against Hunger for CAFOD and the Father Hudson's Good Shepherd appeal. In recent weeks the children enjoyed a One Life music retreat day with the ever-popular Dan Callow and Emily Smith.

The last two years have been a challenging time for the church, punctuated by closures and difficulties in collectively celebrating our faith. Through this difficult time the school has provided unwavering and faithful witness to Christ, maintaining collective worship, and setting an example to us all. In difficult times St Joseph's has truly been a beacon for our faith community and we thank our staff and the children enormously for this.

As we come to the end of this school year, we say goodbye to our Y6 children and wish them the very best as they move on to secondary school. They have been great ambassadors for St Joseph's in many ways, not least of which is their fantastic levels of attainment at the end of KS2 despite having suffered two years of disruption. A recent newsletter detailed their SATS results which were excellent at any time, but in the circumstances were exceptional. Everyone can be justifiably proud of their efforts, and it is important to recognise this was only possible because of our whole school community working together. We particularly thank parents and carers for their support and efforts during home schooling, it has paid such dividends and powerfully illustrates what we can achieve in partnership.

In addition to the successful ongoing relationship with our partnership schools in Lichfield, Tamworth and Burton, we continue to strengthen our links with St Francis of Assisi our local catholic secondary school. This term St Francis welcomed pupils from Years 4 and 5 for a variety of enrichment activities ranging from science experiments to cookie making! Pupils from St Francis, along with their Chaplaincy Coordinator, have also joined us here at St Joseph's to participate in and support a lesson on vocations and prayer. We look forward to working with the great team and pupils from St Francis even more next year.

Looking forward to the next academic year, we expect further progress to take place in the implementation of the Diocesan academisation directive. We have much to be proud of and thankful for within the St Joseph's school community. As we move towards becoming part of a wider school community the Governors will be working hard to maintain and secure the kind of school all our children deserve both now and into the future.

For now, our children, staff, parents, carers, and friends can look back on our many successes this year and hopefully have a well-deserved rest (not forgetting the reading challenge!).

With best wishes to the whole St Joseph's family for a happy and blessed summer.

The St Joseph's Governing Board