

1st November 2024

Dear Parents/ Carers,

“Keep giving Jesus to the people not by words but by your example, by being in love with Jesus, by radiating holiness and spreading His fragrance of love everywhere you go Just keep the joy of Jesus as your strength, be happy and at peace.”

St. Teresa of Calcutta

I thought I would begin this week by sharing this quote from St. Teresa and by considering what it means to follow and action the example of Christ. Often, we can interpret that in our own lives but it is certainly something that tests us especially as the night close in and the mornings are dark. This is long term and sustaining the actions of compassion, honesty and love can be more difficult and vary on our mood. This week we had a visit from a diocesan representative and on our walk around together we had the opportunity to talk to a number of your children. They were clear and open about their faith and living a life with Christ. They actively talked about charity and compassion without prompt and I was reminded that we must receive the kingdom of heaven like a child and not like adults in a more cynical way. They served a credit to you and were uplifting in their response.

Y11 mock examinations

The mock examinations are in full swing and the conduct of the pupils has been excellent. It was also uplifting that these examinations started with prayer led by Mrs Middleton and this sets a calm tone. The challenge and pressure to have success is one we understand but as we move rapidly through the year and on the public examinations, these mock examinations are a vital preparation in that journey to success and require that strength.

Staff Training

As staff we had a wonderfully reflective training day led by an external speaker David Wells. We were challenged to consider our purpose and mission and staff and governors actively engaged in the session. It is important that we remain focussed on what it means to be a catholic school, in canon law it states that it must be at least good as local schools. This is why the support from the Trust with experts coming into school to work with our curriculum leaders is so valuable in sustaining that mission.

Attendance

Attendance continues to be an area of strong improvement. Attendance is significantly improved from last year and this was highlighted this week with the “golden tickets”, this was well received by those pupils who had success with 100% attendance in the last half term and increasingly we are looking at rewards to motivate and sustain the excellent start to the year.

The big listen- pupil voice

Prior to half term and each upcoming half term we are seeking feedback from pupils relating to school life through pupil voice activities. Students truly gave us food for thought. We will be feeding back through a ‘You said – We did’ report over the course of this half term. To share some highlights as a start; the vast majority stated clearly that they knew and understood the school behaviour systems, they felt they had a trusted adult and felt safe in school and stated they were happy in school. We discussed further matters

around curriculum, achievement, and Catholic social teachings linked to Catholic life and mission. Once again, they did you proud with their open and honest candour which enables school to continue to self-reflect and evaluate as a community. I will share feedback with you as necessary moving forward. These teachings are summarised as Dignity, Solidarity, The common good, The option for the poor, Peace, Creation and Environment, The dignity of work and Participation. I was pleased to note that on my walk round with the diocese our pupils shared a deep understanding of stewardship which has been a focus for us as a school.

In terms of the listening I will also state the partnership between Parish, School and Home is essential for flourishing children. I attach a link to a survey for parents/carers as we want to capture your views and act accordingly. Please may I urge you take the time to complete the survey to enable us to continue to grow as a community. We will feedback accordingly using the model of 'You said – We did'.

<https://forms.office.com/e/Kq4jWJ8BCa>

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'S Braithwaite', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mr S Braithwaite
Interim Headteacher