



SPREADING THE GOOD NEWS IN NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE

JUNE 2021

Introduction from Bishop Paul

From time to time it is good to recognise the blessings in our midst. With this publication we acknowledge not only the provision of Catholic education in Hertfordshire but also its value and its contribution. Our Catholic schools are our heritage, their activity continues the honourable tradition of forming our young people in the present moment and guides them towards the future.

The visual displays which adorn an entrance to our Catholic schools speak of an education which goes beyond the acquisition of knowledge. It is a place where one can mature, expand in knowledge of the faith and know more deeply what it means to be a human being. In Hertfordshire we are blessed by the quality of our Catholic schools where values communicated at home are strengthened in a Christ centred atmosphere. Evident in our schools is the acceptance of the need to

promote the dignity of every person. It is edifying and inspiring to witness these endeavours and the enthusiasm of response. The daily life of the school and the presentation of the curriculum enables even the youngest students understand the positive influence they can have where they live, and in the wider world. In short they prepare citizens for the future. The initiatives of which you will read show that our Catholic schools in many imaginative ways encourage the living out of our faith. I take this opportunity to thank the staff of our Catholic schools. In their formation of our young people, understanding of the universal community is fostered and so they teach the greatest commandments, 'love God and love your neighbour'. I commend our schools in Hertfordshire who serve the Catholic community. It is a privilege to speak to those who attend them. Those in primary



school recount enthusiastically their current project. School leavers departing for their next step in life's journey reveal they carry with them not only memories but a wish to continue growing and contributing positively to wider society.

These students are the greatest witnesses to the value and importance of our Catholic schools. We pray for God's blessing upon our schools, their leaders and staff, those who work within them and the Governing Bodies which oversee and give direction.

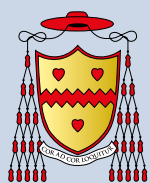


Fr. Norbert Fernandes

I write as Dean of Stevenage where we are proud to have a great link between our schools and parishes, with co-operation and mutual support given by heads, parish priests and governing bodies. We cover a large section of North Hertfordshire; so it is a long journey from the north to the south! During this time of Covid-19 with lockdown, opening, remote learning and the development of a whole host of fresh skills, we have all strived to keep children and young people safe, together with staff, families and parishioners. This has been a traumatic period in history and in our own personal lives as we have carried the burdens and responsibilities of caring for others as well as looking after ourselves. The prospects are more hopeful, though we are still not yet out of the water. We take tentative steps forward but cannot be reckless. As a Catholic Community, we are going to learn once more about what it means to be Church: gathering for the Eucharist, reaching

out to people in need, engaging in sacramental preparation, undertaking adult formation, celebrating well how good it is to be together socially! The partnership which holds us together as a Catholic Community recognises the individuality of each parish and school - a wealth of history, tradition and people. Through this publication, let us give thanks to God for the power of Education to be an instrument in enabling our children and young people to achieve their full potential. Let us remember that our churches are places for us to feel at home in God's presence as we celebrate and pray - reflecting the fact that our homes are to be filled with God's loving and prayerful presence. My prayer is that as we move into a fresh phase and find our way to feeling safe in the new dispensation, our wider Catholic Community will play a tremendous part in giving confidence, vision and inspiration to those around us as well as influencing the heart of each person.

God bless you. You are in my thoughts and prayers. Fr. Norbert Fernandes



21st Century Buildings for our School



Mr Mathew
Headteacher
The Saint John Henry Newman Catholic School

For those of you who know The Saint John Henry Newman Catholic School, you will be aware that it was formed in 1987 by the amalgamation of St Angela's School for girls and St Michael's School for boys. The site the school is located on was first developed in the 1960's and has been in urgent need of a refresh for some time. As part of that, we opened The Pavilion in 2016. This is our music, drama and PE block and it gets its name by being situated on the site of the old pavilion. The main teaching blocks, where reception is located, the portacabins used for teaching History and the Sixth Form accommodation have remained in most urgent need of renewal but, after a five year conversation with the Department for Education, I am

pleased to report that building work to address this will start this summer. The first block will be finished by the summer of 2022, and we will have two new teaching blocks by the summer of 2023. Most of the existing blocks from the 1960's will be demolished to create new accommodation and a new green space, which will be known as Chapel Green - all very exciting! The best element of the planning for this project is that there is no requirement for the students to 'decant' into temporary accommodation. This means that during the two year building period teaching will continue as normal in the existing classrooms. Please keep us in your prayers over the coming months to ensure that everything runs smoothly.



NBS - A Catholic Curriculum...which continues to develop. This year at NBS we have been discerning on the true value of Catholic education. I suppose the main aim is to help with the catholic formation of a child to becoming a young adult. With this in mind NBS wanted to delve deeper into the true purpose, impact and importance of each child's learning journey at our school. As educators we are in a privilege position to educate and transform people who become more confident, competent and help them develop their conscience as they go through each year at school. Obtaining good grades at GCSE and A-Level is important but it should be a by-product to an enriched curriculum which gives our students the opportunity to put their education and faith into action and empower them to use their unique gifts to build a better world. What helps us fulfil the school

Mission is Catholic Social Teaching. It is at the heart of what we do at NBS and is indeed the 'glue' which encourages our students to work for the common good, help build a just society, uphold the dignity of human life and work for justice and the dignity of all especially those in the greatest need. This awareness makes our students stand out and makes a difference to our society. Over the next academic year, we will be working with some of our local catholic primary schools and St John Henry Newman to

develop this programme further which in turn will enhance the formation of a child from the moment they begin Catholic education in reception through to leaving their secondary school with the essential tools to be a transformational leader in today's world. This project will also help with fully appreciate and understand all Key Stages and ultimately truly realise the importance of catholic education and the positive impact it has on our children and their families.



**NICHOLAS BREAKSPEAR
CATHOLIC SCHOOL**

Nurture | Believe | Succeed

Our MISSION

Empowered by the presence of God and each other,
we nurture our unique gifts to build a better world.

**This is our
NBS Community**

NBS 

Quality & Excellence



St Margaret Clitherow

RC Primary School, Stevenage

Science Week

Monday 19th April marked the start of Science Week at St. Margaret Clitherow School. A week full of science and outdoor learning! Year 2 and 3 celebrated Earth Day, thinking about how they can make commitments to make a simple change to their behaviour to show their love for the planet. Nursery carried out some experiments using everyday items; from colour changing milk to dancing raisins! Year 6 extended their forces learning on Newton's laws and their application to everyday life. They mastered every force having an equal and opposite force and enjoyed exploring how parachutes work. Year 1 began the week exploring the outside environment. Using magnifying glasses, the children observed the plants they found closely and used plant identification sheets to help name them. Children in Reception investigated what they needed to successfully grow beans. They planted the beans in recycled pots containing soil, cotton wool or paper towels, watered them and cared for them. Year 4 were busy learning about classification keys. They learnt how to use a key to identify different plants and animals. Our Year 5 children created their own products from recyclable plastic that the Hamro Mahila women's group could create and sell in international markets. What a week!



St Thomas More RC Primary School

in Letchworth have received some fabulous news regarding their History provision.

The school has recently received reaccreditation of a Quality Mark at Gold standard from the Historical Association. The assessor stated that 'History continues to have a high status in the school' and added, 'History skills are integrated across the curriculum to provide meaningful learning opportunities, developing transferrable skills'. Mrs Perry, Headteacher, commented, 'We are incredibly proud of the commitment shown to this subject from our staff, governors, families and, most importantly, our children. Special thanks to Miss Newton, the school's History Lead, for her exemplary leadership in this subject.'

Miss Newton stated, 'We are celebrating this news by sharing our new outdoor timeline, which provides details for each period in History - it even includes the year when our school was opened!'



There are some new and exciting developments here at The Holy Family Catholic Primary School, Welwyn Garden City. We are set in spacious grounds on the edge of Welwyn Garden City, and we are developing our grounds at pace. We have incorporated a forest school area into our school field, and with the support of our parent body

have installed a pond and fire pit. This will be further enhanced over the coming months under the guidance of our newly trained outdoor learning leader with the introduction of a bug hotel, raised beds and shrubbery to attract a range of wildlife. Each class will then have the opportunity to take part in outdoor learning as part of our curriculum offer.



We are also developing our prayer garden to give our children a quiet area for prayer and reflection. We aim to install a water feature and some signs and symbols of our Catholic faith over the coming weeks. Congratulations to the children in our school that have made their Holy Communion over the past few weeks. It has been wonderful to witness them receive this special Sacrament.



Positivity is a big thing at St. Mary's and we have been lucky enough to welcome the ducks which arrived in the aftermath of lockdown. Their names are: Angel, Pearl, Ranger and Ghost. The ducks have had a positive impact on our learning in school and our emotional well-being by putting a smile on our faces; their unique waddling can lift anyone's mood and they make our hearts light up.

Seeing the ducks is a special experience for the younger ones but especially for Year 6 because we are leaving soon. We have the privilege of looking after them. The ducks help us to be more independent by teaching us how to be gentle and to care for them. Ducks spread positivity which leads to us aiming higher and dreaming bigger which is part of our Mission Statement. These wonderful animals have been a pleasure to work with. Year 6 each have a day to see the ducks.



We are role-models for the rest of the school and caring for the ducks furthers our responsibilities. When Mr Pearce, our class teacher, took Early Years to see the ducks, the smiles on their faces were priceless. It teaches Early Years to respect God's creation and know that our world is our responsibility; God's creations have helped everyone learn together that we need to do more to help care for our planet. They help us to reflect on the world and appreciate the wonder of the creation story.



On Friday 30th April, the children and staff at Our Lady Catholic Primary school, took part in 'England Does the Daily Mile' to commemorate what would have been Sir Captain Tom's 101st birthday. The Daily Mile has been something that we have been looking at establishing at our school for some time - so we thought that this was the perfect opportunity to launch it! With the smell of the paint from the line markings of our brand new 'Daily Mile Track' fresh in our nostrils, each bubble played their part and took on the challenge of running a mile (or their age-appropriate equivalent) in honour of Captain Tom, who, of course, inspired millions of us last year with his own phenomenal challenge and feats of endurance! The Herts Sports Partnership have been coordinating the Daily Mile across the county for the last few years and were fully supportive of the Daily Mile Foundation with their first national Daily Mile event. As part of the celebrations, the Partnership worked alongside a number of athlete mentors to create a pre-recorded virtual assembly for our children, which was delivered by the former professional tennis player, Jade Windley. This helped to further inspire us to go the 'extra mile' as we took part in the whole school event.



Once restrictions have eased and the risks of Covid-19 have been eliminated, we are keen to develop this daily ritual into a community wide event, in which friends and family can join their children each morning to take part in the Daily Mile.



The Chaplaincy Team at Our Lady School led a fundraising project during the season of Lent to support the Kanyike Project. The whole school was invited to take part in a purple dress down day, and pay a donation towards the fundraising. It was a great success and they raised £212.50 which will help Fr. Kakbuba and the Kanyike Project. Charity work is very important to the Our Lady community and we were delighted to be able to support the amazing work Fr. Kakuba and the team do. We enjoy supporting this charity especially after Fr. Kakuba visited us to talk about the success of the project.





Gospel Values Retreat Day

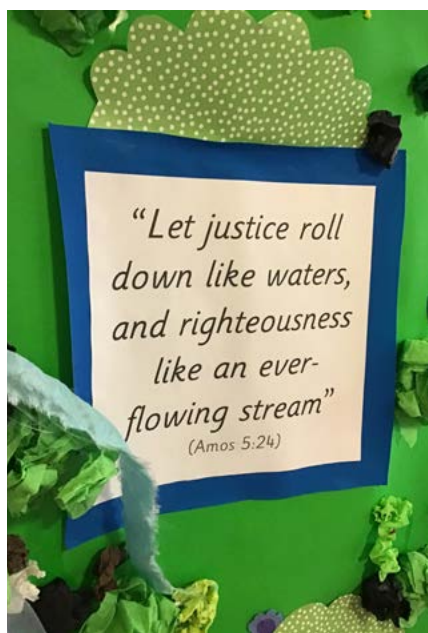
The Gospel Values are what Jesus said, what Jesus did and what Jesus told us to do. At St. John's we try to make these Gospel Values central to everything that we do.

To remind us of this important mission, we began our summer term with a Retreat Day. Each class was given one of the Gospel Values to explore in more depth throughout the day and the children were engaged in a variety of activities and mindfulness exercises.

There was a wonderful atmosphere around the school as the children created beautiful art work, planted up spring flowers in boxes they had painted, performed songs outside, sprinkled biscuits with kindness and prayed and reflected on what the Gospel Values mean to them.

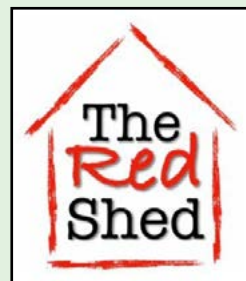
The day began with Father Denis praying with us and culminated in a whole school virtual assembly where each class shared what they had been doing.

At St John's, our school motto is 'Let the Light of Christ Shine In Us'. Our Retreat Day helped us to see lots of ways in which we can do this, by loving one another as God loves us and following in Jesus' footsteps.



St Vincent de Paul

Lockdown presented our schools with many challenges, not least how to continue vital community projects at a time when sharing facilities became rather challenging.



For some time now, St Vincent de Paul School has been host to an amazing project with The Red Shed. Su Harvey, a local horticultural therapist and her amazing team, have become great friends of the school and have brought to life an unused area of the school grounds in a vibrant gardening project. Each week local people living with dementia and their carers visit our school to engage in gardening activities. During lockdown, our youngest Key Worker children maintained the garden whilst Su focused on delivering engaging home gardening activities for users. As folk have returned to The Red Shed Project, some of our older KS2 gardeners have enjoyed carrying out weekly tasks in the garden. We hope that over the course of the year ahead, our children will work alongside Red Shed users in gardening activities, developing empathy, friendship, and other valuable skills. Most recently the school has been working with Sue to develop another shared project - a woodland wellbeing walk, which will encourage '5 ways to wellbeing' (connect, be active, learn, notice, & give) at stopping points along the way. The walk will make use of an overgrown area of woodland on our top field. The plan is for Red Shed users and pupils to make use of this facility in 'accompaniment' walks where they can walk and talk, walk and listen or simply walk and be. Bids are currently in for funding and we all look forward to seeing the realisation of stage two of this powerful project.

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