

ST MARGARET CLITHEROW ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Monkwood Lane (off Monkwood Way) Stevenage Herts SG2 8QJ

Headteacher:

Jonathan W J White (B.Ed Hons, NPQH)



Tel: 01438 352863

Website: www.clitherow.herts.sch.uk

Email: admin@clitherow.herts.sch.uk

Friday, 10th February 2017

Dear Parents and Carers

Let's talk about learning

It has been a busy half term and I'm sure that everyone is ready for a break! The children have worked really hard this term and their learning has been fantastic. Thank you for all that you do support the children in their learning, their friendships and in their spiritual development; it is very much appreciated. Thanks also to the dedication of the staff team – I hope that you, like I, have enjoyed their blogs on www.clitherowspeaks.co.uk which aim to keep you in the learning loop, providing hooks for conversations at home. Talk about learning is so important and, from experience, I know the 'what have you been up to at school today?' conversations are not always easy – the blog is a great way into a meaningful and topical conversation if you are able to use it.

Farewell, good luck and God bless

Farewells are often difficult, particularly when someone has been with us for so long and has made such an impact on so many. In the half term ahead, we prepare to say farewell to Mrs Michelle La Sala, our School Secretary, who has worked in a number of capacities in the school for the past 12 ½ years. Michelle is the friendly face and compassionate voice that you will have often experienced when contacting the school over the years and she will be greatly missed by pupils, parents, staff and governors alike. Michelle has exciting career plans and has secured a position in a Hertfordshire legal firm. We wish her well in this exciting venture and thank her for her commitment to the school over the years. Mrs La Sala's final day in school will be Friday 3rd March. We are currently working on a temporary plan for the school office which will involve Mrs Streeter extending her current role in the office to mornings (don't panic Year 5 – we have a plan!) Our talented office team, Mrs Streeter and Mrs McTait, will remain as the main points of contact for parents in the interim until a permanent appointment is made. I know that you will be patient in your approach as we ensure that all bases are covered!

We love maths

Following on from the success of our open hour during Shine Week in November, the vast majority of parents suggested that committing to an hour was easier than a whole morning. Many parents also expressed that it was difficult to commit to evening events due to childcare. As such, we have decided that we will offer another open hour next half term, this time focusing on mathematical learning. Please do join with your child's class on **Monday 27th February** from after drop off. Refreshments will be available in the school hall from 8.50am; there will be a short presentation about mathematical learning from 9am and classes will be 'open' from 9.15 until 10.15 for you to join with your children in enjoying maths.

Time to save

We are all feeling the financial pinch at the moment and I aware that parents, like school, are under similar pressures in trying to make less money go so much further. Thank you so much for



Jesus lives in us, our families, our school, our Church, our world. Jesus is our guide, let us follow Him
At St Margaret Clitherow School we are committed to Safeguarding Children

your support of the school. Finances are tight, yet it is brilliant to be able to mention that one further interactive screen will be fitted in school during half term, meaning that over the course of this academic year Reception to Year 6 will all have benefitted from the installation of modern interactive screens for learning. Thank you to the PSFA committee and their helpers for ensuring that funds were available for such projects and to each of you for spending at their events. This really is an essential stream of funding for the school and we are all so grateful. Governors recently met with PSFA members to discuss ways that we could strengthen our fundraising links. We hope to hold a joint coffee morning soon to focus on these issues – please do come along. This year already, unplanned expenditure has included expensive repairs to the main school boiler and the nursery boiler, both of which have failed at different points. You will note that the junior play equipment has been out of action since December simply because we are unable to afford the repairs that are required to a number of the rotting uprights. We are currently waiting to hear if we have been successful in applying for a grant to 90% fund a much needed refurbishment to our infant and junior toilets. Even if we are successful in this grant, as a Catholic Voluntary Aided School we will be required to pay at least 10% of the cost from our Governors' School Building Fund. As such we rely on your voluntary funds and gift aid donations. Please do read the Finance and Personnel Committee's Q&As relating to this which have been attached to this newsletter. Thank you for your voluntary donations – governors plan very carefully for their use and are very grateful for whatever you can offer.

Skills to offer?

I am sure that many of our parents have skills that could be of use to the school and could save us money in key areas. If you have a practical skill (decorating, building, landscaping, plumbing etc) and you would be willing to volunteer your skill and sometime occasionally to a project please do let us know by calling the school office or emailing head@clitherow.herts.sch.uk. We are also still seeking volunteers who might be able to spend time in our school allotment, gardening either on their own or with children during lunchtimes. Please do email if you are willing to help out or if you have an idea of any other skill that you could offer to the school to improve what we do.

Remember – no problem is too big or too small!

We are always keen to work with parents as a problem arises. Please do not let things fester whether it is perceived as a big problem or a minor one – please do make contact and we'll help you to put it into context! Initially a word with the class teacher either in person or on the phone can help to share the worry; if after this point it still remains a worry please do make an appointment to discuss the matter with a member of the Senior Leadership Team (Mr White, Miss Puccio and Mrs Briscoe) via the school office. Remember – if it is a worry for you or child then it is a worry for us! Please do not worry about bothering busy staff – it's what we are all here for.

Academies update

Governors continue to engage with Diocese of Westminster and its Academies programme. Currently both the diocese and schools are working through aspects of due diligence to ensure that proper research has been carried out in relation to the impact on our children and their education. With this in mind, Governors have set up a working party to explore this area. If you have questions or strong opinions about this please do email admin@clitherow.herts.sch.uk with 'academies' marked in the subject line in order that it can be passed on to the sub-group straight away. Our school is hosting a meeting for our 'family of schools' in early May and following this we hope to have more information to share. In the meantime, if you would like to see the Diocesan Academies Policy, it can be viewed here: <http://rcdow.org.uk/education/academies/>



Safeguarding

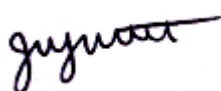
Safeguarding is our number one priority. If you ever have any concerns about the safety of children or in relation to the school environment, please do make immediate contact with the school and ask to talk about a SAFEGUARDING matter. Mr White is the Designated Safeguarding Lead and both Miss Puccio and Mrs Briscoe are the Deputy Safeguarding Leads. Mrs Sally Curtis, Chair of Governors, has the role of Designated Safeguarding Governor. Our Child Protection Policy, Safeguarding Policy and 'Whistleblowing' Policy are all available on the school website. No concern is ever too small and as such we urge you to share with us. As part of our safeguarding measures, each child updates their 'hand network' each half term. Please do talk about this with your children in order that they know who to turn to if they encounter a difficulty. This also includes emergency services numbers and Childline (0800 1111) www.childline.org.uk – this is a fantastic emergency resource for our children which they must all know about. Thank you for working with us to keep our children safe!

Half Term Holidays

I wish you all a fantastic half term with your families; often not a peaceful time I know but one in which we can all focus on those whom we love most and enjoy some time together. Have a fantastic break – I look forward to welcoming you back to the Lenten journey towards Easter which will be with us before we know it. With this in mind, don't forget to begin filling your CAFOD Lenten fundraising boxes. When we return after half term, it will be time to begin raising much needed funds for Father Kakuba and his Kanyike Project in Uganda. Any ideas?

God's blessing on you and those most dear to you,

Yours sincerely



Jon white
Headteacher

Important Dates

Monday, 20 th February 2017	8.45am	Pupils return to school
Wednesday, 22 nd February 2017	6.60pm	PSFA AGM – everyone welcome
Monday, 27 th February 2017	8.50am	Maths Morning – everyone welcome
Wednesday, 1 st March 2017	2pm	Ash Wednesday Mass – everyone welcome
Friday, 17 th March 2017		Nursery Applications Close Online
Wednesday, 22 nd March 2017	2.50pm-6pm	Parents' Evening – information to follow
Thursday, 23 rd March 2017	5pm-8pm	Parents' Evening – information to follow
Friday, 31 st March 2017	1.45pm	Break up for Easter Break

Easter Holidays: Monday, 3rd April – Tuesday, 18th April (inclusive)

Wednesday, 19 th April 2017	8.45am	Pupils return to school
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