

Newsletter 288 Friday 18th December 2015

This week has been a lovely one as we have got closer and closer to the holidays; there has been real excitement about Christmas from the children and staff with all our traditional activities.

Monday was a very busy day in school – in the morning, Father Eduard took part in an Advent reconciliation service during which all the children behaved impeccably and with great maturity. We are so proud of them on occasions such as these. Father Lee then joined us and gave the opportunity for individual confession for those children who have made their first confession.

In the afternoon, the children enjoyed a wonderful party atmosphere in the hall thanks to the fantastic music provided by Mr Leonardi (parent of Chloe Y1). Thank you also to Mrs Ketterer of the Development Fund for providing refreshments for the children.

On Tuesday afternoon, our Year 6 children went to Parklands Nursing Home to sing carols and Christmas songs for the residents. Thank you Year 6 for bringing joy to others in this season of Advent; thanks too for being excellent ambassadors for the school. I would also like to thank Mrs Barratt, Mr Watson and all the parents who helped with transport. We are grateful for the support we receive from parents of the school.

Wednesday was a very 'Christmassy' day with the children and staff resplendent in their Christmas jumpers and hats. We had a fantastic hat parade assembly followed by a very tasty Christmas dinner with Christmas music to accompany the food. Mrs McNulty and Mrs Saliba prepared over 200 meals for staff and children – their busiest day of the school year. Thank you to both ladies in the kitchen for all their hard work throughout the year.

The Christingle service on Thursday afternoon was a wondrous occasion with a great number of parents and grandparents present. The children get a real sense of "awe and wonder" when the candles are lit and it is a lovely way to convey the true meaning of Jesus as the Light of the World. Thank you for helping your children with their Christingle oranges and to those who came to the service.

On Friday afternoon we held our final Christmas tradition of the week when all the school gathered together to sing carols around the Christmas tree.

We said goodbye to Miss Boyle this week as she returns to Ireland. We thank her for her hard work over her short time with Holy Family but the legacy of her beautiful paintings around the school will remain; we wish her all the best for the future.

On a personal note I would like to thank everyone for their good wishes as I move to St Joseph's to take over the headship. I will always have good memories of Holy Family School both as a pupil and a staff member and am sure that the school will continue to thrive. As a gift for the school I have presented a 'Mercy Shield', that at the end of each school year will go to a child who over the year has demonstrated the 'mercy qualities' of humility, service, forgiveness, truth, tolerance, respect, dignity and faithfulness. I wonder who will be the first recipient?

On behalf of all the staff I would also like to express our sincere thanks for all the gifts and cards that have come into school. I wish you all a happy, holy and peaceful Christmas and we look forward to seeing all the children on **Monday 4th January 2016**.

Christmas Masses and Liturgies Please help the children to give true meaning to their Advent preparations by taking them to Mass at Holy Family Church, Benfleet or St Thomas More, Hadleigh over the Christmas period. Details of Masses and other services may be found on the Church website www.holyfamily-church.org Father Eduard would love to see the children in Church and hear them sing, something he always comments upon when he is in school.

A message for Reception class parents and carers With effect from the beginning of the Spring term (Monday 4th January 2016) we would ask that parents and carers of children in our Reception class say goodbye to their children at the school gate and allow them to walk in to school on their own. Year 6 children will be around should the younger children need any help. Any messages may be passed to the office or a note placed in your child's bookbag. Thank you.

Picking up children If someone other than the usual parent or carer will be picking up your child from school please advise your child's teacher or the office as soon as possible – ideally by letter. Thank you.

Whole school trip to The Pantomime During the first week of next term the children will bring home a letter requesting payment for our annual trip to the Wednesday Players Pantomime at The Palace Theatre. This year they will be performing Sleeping Beauty. If you would like your child to attend, the cost will be £12.50. Thank you.

Piano Lessons Lessons with Mrs Rothwell will commence on Tuesday 12th January 2016.

BCCS Advent Appeal Thank you to those children and families who have returned their Advent appeal boxes already. If you fill your box after the school breaks up for the holidays, please return it to Holy Family Church or St Thomas More, Hadleigh.

Data Collection Sheets Children will bring home data collection sheets and details of last term's attendance in the first week of next term.

Fluenz immunisation There is a catch-up clinic on Canvey Island for any children who missed the immunisation opportunity in school. If you would like to book an appointment, the clinic's number is 01268 366606.

BATIC Family Sports Clubs The Batic Trust will be running a sports club for children and family members/ guardians. The venue is The Deanes Sports Centre every Saturday from 9th January to 19th March 2016 excluding February half-term. Times: 2-3pm KS1 children and family; 3-4pm KS2 children

and family. A maximum of 2 adults to attend per child. To reserve a place via email contact batictrust@thedeanes.essex.sch.uk with the following information: name of student, school, year group, contact mobile number, email, number of children/adults attending.

Primary School Admissions Parents of children born during the period 1 September 2011 to 31 August 2012 can now apply for primary school places up until **15 January 2016**. Apply online at www.essex.gov.uk/admissions. You also need to complete a Supplementary Information Form which you can collect from the school office. Please be aware that the deadline is fast approaching.

Saint of the week In popular culture we refer to 26th December as Boxing Day, but for centuries Christians have known it as St Stephen's Day. Stephen is honoured as the first Christian Martyr. His name means "crown" and he was the first disciple of Jesus to wear the martyr's crown. Stephen was one of the first deacons in the early Christian Church ordained by the apostles as helpers who looked after the widows and the poor. God worked many miracles through Stephen and he spoke with such wisdom and grace that many were converted to Christianity. Stephen was dragged from the city of Jerusalem to its outskirts where he was stoned to death. He prayed to God to forgive his killers as he was dying. He is a true inspiration to us all.

Attendance RW 93.3% 1C 98% 2FL 92.7% 3L 97.9% 4H 98.7% 5B 97.7% 6I 99%. Well done Year 6 for best attendance this week.

Miss J. Walker

Acting Headteacher

Diary Dates

Monday 4 th January 2016	First day of Spring term
Wednesday 6 th January	Traditional Feast of the Epiphany
Wednesday 13 th January	Whole school trip to the Pantomime

There is a CALENDAR section on the school website—www.holyfamily.essex.sch.uk

