



# St Albert the Great Catholic Primary School

Acorn Road, Hemel Hempstead, Herts. HP3 8DW



31<sup>st</sup> March, 2017

## Catholic Life of the School

March has been a very busy month with all of our Lenten activities and fund-raising. For our **CAFOD Family Fast Day** collection, where we covered fish scales with coins, you donated **£96.64** in coins which some of our Year 6 girls have helped us count. We will share the total for the Lenten Boxes when they are returned after the Easter break. For **Red Nose Day** when we invited children to come in with crazy hair and also bring a joke, you donated **£131.47**. The total for our **'Wear a Hat' day** in support of Brain Tumour Research was **£155.50**. Thank you to everyone for your generosity and support of all of these charities.



Reception Class 'Red Nose' Day



Whole School 'Wear a Hat' Day

To celebrate **Easter** as a **whole school**, we would like to set a family 'challenge' over the holidays. We would like to ask families to create an **'Easter Garden'** to be returned on the first day back after the Easter holidays on **Wednesday April 19<sup>th</sup>**. The gardens will be displayed in and around the school and we will make sure all of the children have the opportunity to see each other's gardens. We will also invite parents to come and see them. For further ideas/suggestions please have a look at the following website: <http://woodville-inf.derbyshire.sch.uk/easter-garden-competition-2/> Pinterest is also a good site for getting inspiration and ideas.

## RE Curriculum

The RE newsletter for the Summer Term will be published when we return after the Easter break. It will be found under the 'Our School' and the 'Catholic Life' tab.

## Science Week

During Science Week, our children took part in a wide variety of interesting and engaging activities. Thank you to Mrs Ansell, our Science Subject Leader, for her inspirational ideas and suggestions. She also organised staff training with two teachers from Christchurch Primary School in Chorleywood who came to our school and delivered staff CPD on linking Science and Literacy. Many of their suggestions were implemented during our Science Week. Our children had opportunities to learn new scientific facts and to test hypotheses.

The children from Years 1-6 took part in a competition where they had to **create a flower** using just paper and scissors. We had winners across each year group – **Cameron Joseph in Year 1, Vanessa Wloch in Year 2, Ciara O'Brien in Year 3, Mia Butler in Year 4, Beth Irvine in Year 5 and Diya Tanna in Year 6**. The overall winner for KS1 was Cameron and for KS2 was Beth. These two winning flowers have been photographed and they have been sent to **SETPOINT Hertfordshire** (an educational charity whose aim is to inspire young people about Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) where they will be judged against hundreds of other Hertfordshire schools. Congratulations to them and all the children for their creative efforts.



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Create a Flower winners

Nursery: testing materials to see which would make a strong bridge for the 3 Billy Goats Gruff to cross the river; floating and sinking through making a raft for The Troll; volcanoes using bicarbonate of soda and vinegar; exploring what happens to yeast when we make bread and how yeast can also blow up a balloon; paper flowers; fizzy rockets and creating big bubbles.

Reception: testing magnetic forces; floating and sinking; testing resistance with a variety of materials on ramps; paper flowers and creating volcanoes.

Year 1: The children kept a Science Diary every day where they recorded what they had learned. Mrs Thomas made a lava lamp and the children used their observational skills to describe the movements of the coloured water; they made colour spinners and then shone torches on them to create rainbows; and they explored static electricity using balloons.

Year 2: the children made rain gauges (which will be planted in their outside garden area after the Easter break), they tested friction and forces by designing and making a variety of parachutes and then tested how they worked; they created some beautiful art prints using natural and man-made materials.

Year 3: using flowers, they studied the concept of transpiration using coloured water; they cleaned coins using vinegar and also created Diary entries to record their findings.

Year 4: focused on temperature and looked at a variety of temperatures which then led to some creative writing with a letter of complaint about a faulty boiler and they continued their study of the digestive system.

Year 5: created boats inspired by Mr Gibson's visit to Stockholm. They re-created the 17<sup>th</sup> century vessel called Vasa which has been recovered from the silt in Stockholm Harbour. It sank because it was too heavy so they had to explore the concept of design and ballast.

Year 6: used cabbage water to test everyday liquids for their acidity or alkalinity; performed a 'Skittles' experiment looking at the coloured dyes used and then writing a letter of complaint to the manufacturer; were challenged to make square bubbles using pipe cleaners; used filter paper to look at dyes and linked pulse rate to rest and exercise to create graphs for their mathematics lessons.

Years 5 and 6 also took part in the **Knex Challenge**. They had to work in pairs and create a bridge that would also hold a specific load without collapsing. It also had to include moving parts. The winning team in **Year 5 was Liam Hayward and Rhys Brevern, and in Year 6 was Freya Goad and Faye Lawrence**. These winning models have been entered into a county wide competition so well done to both pairs.



It was a very busy and exciting week and the children all demonstrated excellent behaviours for learning. I hope that they shared some of the activities they did, and if they did not, please ask them to share what they learned. We will look at how we can use this concept of a 'themed week' in addition to our theme days to continue to engage our children with purposeful, relevant learning experiences.

This week, 8 of our **Year 5** children took part in a **Science workshop at George Street Primary School**. The focus for the workshop was on how animals have changed over the years. They were accompanied by Mr Gibson and had the opportunity to handle insects and other creatures. I will include a report from the children in the April Newsletter.

### **BLP Awards**

Congratulations to the children who have received awards for the following Learning Powers and Values:



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**Questioning:** Jimmy Donald, Cian Brown, Lola Buzzle, Rufus Morse, Rhys Brevern, Brodie Steel

**Imagining:** Emilia Radzimirska, Salvador Gee, Cade Bennison, Polly Body, Patrick McDonagh, Gwen Sear

**Sacrifice:** Gracie Nash, Melanie Brookarsh, Katherine Brason, Harry McIntosh, Holly Sells, Ashley Gachuhi

### Sporting News

It has been brought to my attention that we have a **skating star** at St Albert's. **Grace Taylor** first stepped onto the ice in April 2015, when she entered a competition called 'Skating Stars'. This took her from 70 participants to 5 finalists, which came to a head in a gala evening, where she had to perform a solo programme after just 6 months of learning to skate. She did so well that she won and went on to perform a solo in front of 1,000 people at the Milton Keynes rink. Since then, Grace has been training 5-6 days per week and has already started competing in national NISA competitions, beating her personal best scores each time. This is amazing considering she has been skating for less than 2 years. Grace has an amazing amount of love for her sport and no matter how many falls she has, she always gets back up. Grace is a super example of how determination makes a difference. Persevering and practicing over and over again in order to improve. Well done Grace.

Congratulations to our children in **Years 5 and 6** who took part in **the Dacorum Dance Competition**. The theme this year was 'Cartoons' and they danced to a selection of music from Cartoon TV shows. There were 16 Primary entries and they came 2<sup>nd</sup>. We have a lovely new trophy in our cabinet. Well done team!

The Year 5 and 6 boys and girls and the Year 3 and 4 girls also took part in football tournaments this week. They worked well as a team and were great ambassadors for our school.

Huge congratulations to our **Year 4 boys** who played in a **football tournament** yesterday – **Ollie Atkins, Khyan Frazer, Nnamdi Adigwe, Ashley Gachuhi, Harry McIntosh, Kian Cox, Mateo Woltynski and Elwood Owen**. The team worked so well together that not only did they win the competition, which was against 15 other schools, but Elwood, who was the goalkeeper, kept a clean sheet. Well done boys, fabulous team work using determination and co-operation.



### Summer Term Dinner Money

Dinner money for the 1<sup>st</sup> half term is £63.45 and the 2<sup>nd</sup> half term is £82.25. Total for the term is £145.70. Dinner money must be paid in advance, preferably using Schoolcomms. Alternatively, cheques can be made payable to 'Hertfordshire Catering Ltd'. Your Child's school meal account **must** be kept in credit as we are not allowed to accumulate debt on these school meals. If you do not pay for these meals, you will be asked to provide a packed lunch. Thank you for your support.

### Sainsbury's Active Kids Vouchers

Last year we collected a significant number of vouchers which enabled us to replenish our stock of small PE equipment – particularly balls and bean bags. The scheme is now underway. Please ask friends and family to collect vouchers for the school as there is a collection box – they can be handed in to the school office, or the children can put them in the collection box.

### Parent Consultation Evening

Thank you to the parents who came to the parent consultations on Tuesday of this week. I received many positive comments about the impressive **homework** that was on display in the entrance hall and it was lovely to see people looking at the photographs in the '**Good News**' folder. There were a few specific comments/questions that I would like to address.



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First, many parents stated in the consultations themselves and in the survey I have asked you to complete, that they found this a valuable time to get information about their child's **progress**. Thank you. It would be really great if the positive feedback I have received through the returned questionnaires could also be reflected on the **Ofsted Parentview** website. If you did not log on during our Inspection, it is an ongoing process so please log on and record your views.

Second, a few parents asked specifically about whether or not the teachers are expected to listen to children read daily and sign the reading record books so I thought I would take some time to explain how we **teach the children to read here at St Albert the Great school**. The teachers teach your children to read in a variety of ways. They teach 'Guided Reading' every week where groups of children read with, talk about and focus on things like vocabulary, inference, authorial intent and comprehension. During every English lesson there is an emphasis on reading and understanding. This is mirrored across all of the other subjects. In the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, there are daily phonics lessons. If there are children who need a little bit of extra support across KS2, they receive this support in addition to their daily English lessons. Children are also given spellings to learn and use within appropriate contexts. Teachers also model good reading when they share books with the children. Daily individual reading with the teacher is an impossible task. Each child would need 5 minutes for a teacher to 'check' their reading which would leave no time for teaching reading. In each of our classes we have 30 children. That would amount to 150 minutes per day just to 'check' the reading. The purpose of having daily reading books and reading records is for the children to practise their reading at home and for parents to sign to say they have helped their child with their reading. Daily reading at home is part of our homework expectations alongside the learning of spellings and maths times tables. When the children are younger/less confident, asking them to read aloud can help develop their confidence and help you see where they may struggle with specific sounds or words and enable you to help them sound them out or discuss what the words mean. As the children grow more confident, it is not as necessary to ask them to read aloud and sometimes just asking them to summarise what they have read or discuss some of the characters is enough for you to see that they are continuing to make progress with their reading. Sometimes it may be helpful to ask them to define some of the vocabulary in their books. I hope this has helped to clarify any questions you may have around the teaching of reading. Thank you for your support and continuing to work in partnership with the teachers to help your child with their reading. If you would like any further information on how you can support your child with reading, please speak to your child's class teacher.

#### **Dates for the Summer Term:**

18.4.17	INSET day – School Closed to Children
19.4.17	Children return to school with their Easter Gardens
25.4.17	Year 1 Forest School begins
28.4.17	Year 1 Sharing Assembly
1.5.17	May Day – School Closed
4.5.17	May Devotion at 2:30 pm
8.5.17	KS2 Test week begins
12.5.17	Year 5 Sharing Assembly
16.5.17	Year 5 Contemporary Dance Lessons begin
22.5.17	Shakespeare Theme Day with Lesley
26.5.17	Year 6 Sharing Assembly
29.5.17	Half Term
5.6.17	Children back to school
8.6.17	Good Shepherd Mass (KS2 School Council)
10.6.17	1 <sup>st</sup> Holy Communion Masses at 11:00 & 2:00
12.6.17	Year 1 Phonics Screening Checks begin
16.6.17	Year 2 Sharing Assembly
23.6.17	Reception Sharing Assembly
26.6.17	Healthy Living Week
30.6.17	Sports Day and Family BBQ
10.7.17	Year 6 Play 7:00 pm
12.7.17	Year 6 Play 7:00 pm
21.7.17	Term Ends 1:30 pm

#### **Ofsted Report**

We have not yet had the final version of our report so I am unable to share the findings with you. I anticipate it will be ready for when we return after the Easter break.



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### ICT Refurbishment

During the Easter holidays we will be replacing a lot of our old IT equipment and we will therefore be selling our 'Netbooks'. If you do not have a computer at home and would like to purchase a Netbook, you will be able to have access to the **Internet** and they will come equipped with **Windows 7**. The cost will be a very reasonable **£30.00**. These will be a great way for your child to access educational resources and games at home. If you would like one, please indicate on the reply slip below. There are 45 available so if demand is higher than this amount we will draw names using a ballot. We will request payment once we confirm the numbers allocated.

### Governors Newsletter

The termly Governor's Newsletter is also being sent out today. Accompanying this is a copy of our new Uniform Policy.

Finally, I would like to wish all families a very happy and holy Easter and look forward to seeing you when we return for the Summer Term on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> April.

Kind regards,

Mrs K Little  
Headteacher

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Reply Slip:

I \_\_\_\_\_, parent of \_\_\_\_\_

would like to purchase a Netbook for £30.00.

Please return to the school office by Friday 21<sup>st</sup> April, 2017.



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