

Mr Hall writes ...

October 2025

As I write, the school is a sea of different coloured clothing; today the children have flocked to school, not in their usual uniform but in outfits which represent the many different countries of their heritage. So much of what we hear in the news is dominated by conflict and disagreements; in recent days there is hope of peace in some corners of the world. Cultural Celebration week has been a joy - the children have learned how to greet each other in many different languages as well as songs from different languages and cultures. We are a diverse community here at St Joseph's; we are so fortunate that the children in our care have the opportunity to celebrate the many different cultures that gather together each week under one roof.

The great thing about working in a school is the roller coaster of different interactions that come your way each and every day. One of the highlights of this first half of the Autumn Term was being able to attend part of the St Luke's House Assembly which was held to celebrate his Feast Day. Children spent time in the afternoon planning their Celebration of the Word with children from other year groups - I was fortunate enough to overhear some of these preparations. "Let's put a jetpack on that prayer so that it gets there quicker." Said one Year 3 boy as they designed a poster to display their prayers. Of course, this is something you're more likely to hear when you work in a Catholic school, but it's a snapshot of the joy there is to be had from working with your wonderful children.

It was lovely to see so many parents at our Parent Partnership meetings at the start of term. Previously these meetings have been held in the evening and this was an experiment to see if we could increase attendance from parents and we were pleased with the outcome. I enjoyed the opportunity to share our vision for the school and talk about some important matters like attendance. As I said in the meetings, we really need children to be in school as often as possible (ideally over 95% of the time) in order to have the greatest impact and for them to make the most progress. We work really hard to ensure that St Joseph's is a place that children want to be. Our goal is to improve attendance, so please take a look at the message in this newsletter. We work with families whose children's attendance is a cause for concern, so please don't be too surprised if you receive a phone call, a letter or an invitation for a face-to-face meeting.

I have written before about school uniform. Uniform is a great leveller for children - there's no agonising in the morning about what to wear and whether you've got the latest trainers or jumper. It minimises distractions in class and also helps to establish that sense of belonging to your school. Please see the letter that has gone out today about school uniform - if we can

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get the little things like what to wear right then the bigger things usually follow. Please encourage your child to ensure that their shirt is tucked in before coming into school each morning - thank you for your support with this.

With the new academic year there have been a couple of changes to note. Innovate are our new caterers and I have heard lots of positive comments about the food that our children are eating. There have been a few teething problems for parents and we thank you for your patience. Please do continue to look at the menu with your child and talk to them about which meals they like so that you order something that will ensure that they have a full tummy for the afternoon! Our in-house wraparound care was also launched at the beginning of September. Donna and her team have done a fantastic job so far and with the caterers providing the (very hearty) afternoon snack this frees up the staff to play with the children and engage in the activities. At the moment we are considering a name for the club - 'The Lighthouse Club' seems to be the front runner at the moment.

This morning was the first day this term when I've had to scrape ice from my windscreen. This weekend the clocks go back and as the evenings draw in it will feel like winter is fast approaching. All the more reason to ensure that your children use the next week to rest a little ahead of the busy second half of the autumn term.

God bless  
Mr Hall

## Catholic Life at St. Joseph's

This new school year has brought fresh beginnings and a renewed sense of purpose across our community. Our pupils have embraced new challenges with confidence and kindness — stepping into classrooms, friendships, and responsibilities that help them grow both in learning and in faith.

We are delighted to introduce our newly appointed Deputy Head Boy, Head Girl, and their deputies, along with our dedicated House Captains. Each one has shown compassion, commitment, and a willingness to serve — leading not by status, but by example, just as Christ reminds us that “whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant”



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(Matthew 20:26). Their leadership already reflects the heart of our school values: respect, service, and faith in action.

Vieira - Head Boy

Lucy P - Head Girl

Matthew P - Deputy Head Boy

Swara R - Deputy Head Girl

### Our new House Captains

<u>St Matthews (Yellow)</u>	Henry B	Sienna R	
<u>St Luke (Red)</u>	Chidera A	Sofia N	
<u>St John (Green)</u>	Shivani K	Aldria M	Eliza B
<u>St Marks (Blue)</u>	Jake C	Alice E	



## Faith Leaders at St. Joseph's

Our newly appointed Faith Leaders have begun their ministry with joy and enthusiasm, helping to guide collective worship and prayer across the school. Through their thoughtful leadership, they are helping others to reflect, pray, and live out their faith with confidence.



As Saint Paul writes, “We are many, but we form one body” (1 Corinthians 12:12). Our Faith Leaders remind us that every prayer, every act of kindness, and every word of encouragement contributes to the life of our school family.

## The Feasts of St Matthew and St Luke

As you will know, our four houses — Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John — form a big part of our school life. This year, we wanted to increase the profile of the saints themselves and have changed our approach to feast days by dedicating an entire afternoon to celebrating. Our KS2 pupils from each house worked together to prepare a liturgy from scratch – *YES, that's 90 children all forming a liturgy* – before leading their creation to our KS1 pupils. This of course is no small feat – it takes a lot of co-ordination from House staff, the Heads of Houses, as well as our newly appointed house captains, but the results speak for themselves.



These celebrations remind us that each of us has a part to play in the story of faith. Though our gifts are many and varied, we are united in purpose and strengthened by one another's presence.



## Community Prayer Group

This year, we were delighted to launch our new monthly **Community Prayer Group** — a space for parents, grandparents, and friends of St. Joseph's to gather in prayer and reflection. We have so far met in September and October, and both sessions have been a beautiful opportunity to pause together in faith, offering prayers for our pupils, staff, and wider community.

Each gathering has been filled with warmth and gratitude, reminding us of the quiet strength found in shared prayer. As our prayer community continues to grow, we look forward to welcoming more members to join us in the months ahead.



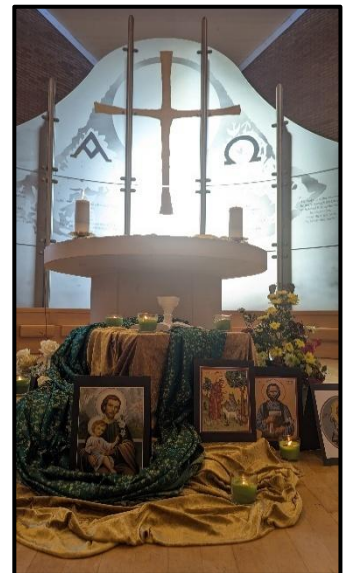
## Rosary Club

This October the tradition of children from our KS2 classes meeting to pray the rosary at lunchtime has continued. Some of the children bring in their own rosaries from home to pray with and show to others but there is always a good supply of 'spares' so that everyone can join in! Many of them are looking forward to continuing in May when the lunchtime club will resume.

## Deanery Mass

Earlier this term, members of staff were blessed to join with teachers from across our deanery for the annual **Deanery Mass**, celebrating our shared mission in Catholic education. It was a wonderful occasion that brought together so many schools united in faith and purpose.

Representatives from St. Joseph's — Mr. O'Callaghan, Mrs. Tackie, Mr. Simons, Mrs. Wigley, Miss. Silva, and Mr. Aldridge, — led the intercessions, offering prayers on behalf of all gathered. It was a powerful reminder of our vocation as educators to nurture both hearts and minds, helping children grow in knowledge, compassion, and faith.



## Cultural Week

Cultural Week was one of the highlights of the term — a joyful celebration of the many backgrounds, languages, and traditions that make up our St. Joseph's family.



On Monday (20<sup>th</sup> Oct) pupils from the school who celebrate Diwali at home bravely shared their experiences in front of their peers, speaking about how they live out their faith – and the faiths of their families. We were also lucky enough to be visited by Mr Manzoor, a member of the local mosque who spoke about his faith and traditions. The children showed great curiosity, reverence, and respect, embracing each opportunity to learn more about the world around them.

Tuesday turned our focus to celebrating our community's linguistic diversity, with parents, teachers, and pupils leading sessions in Yoruba, Portuguese, Malayalam, Korean, Arabic, and Tagalog. This was taken on incredibly well, with many of the children thirst to learn more from our new teachers.



Wednesday saw a return to the religious diversity of our school, and welcomed Shahbaz from the local mosque to speak about Islam and how his faith influences how he lives his life. His talk gave all of us something to think about, and invited us all to reflect on our own personal beliefs and the dedication we show towards it. We were blown away by the quality of questions that pupils asked Shahbaz, including why Muslims take their shoes off in the Masjid (Year 1), how he feels and responds to people who are unkind to him (Year 3), and what part of his faith he treasures most of all (Year 4). The cherry on the top of this wonderful experience was that, with the learning that took place on Tuesday, our pupils were able to greet and introduce themselves in Arabic!

Music played a special part in our celebrations too. Pupils learned hymns in different languages, celebrating our faith in Spanish and Zulu. The pupils adored this, and learnt the words remarkably well. Later in the week, classes explored the meaning of national flags and even designed their own, symbolising unity, faith, and friendship across our school. These will be collected and looked through – so keep an eye out in the next newsletter for what becomes of them!

Cultural Week was a wonderful reflection of who we are as a community — rooted in faith, enriched by diversity, and strengthened by love. It reminded us that when we share our gifts and stories, we truly become one family, celebrating the world that God has created in all its beauty.



## Catholic Social Teaching Deanery Day

Our Faith Leaders from year 5 also joined with year 5 pupils from our other six Deanery Schools for a Catholic Social Teaching Retreat Day at St Clement's Catholic Primary School in Ewell. The day started with a prayer service led by Fr Chris Bergin then the children took part in 7 separate workshops at various locations around the school looking at each of the CST values. They came together at lunchtime where some of them recognised children from other schools and were able to chat with them and enjoy a short playtime. The day finished with a summary, a time of reflection on how we live out the values and a closing prayer time before they set off on the minibus to return to school.



## St Francis of Assisi's Feast Day

Year Three enjoyed celebrating our Feast Day this half term. We enjoyed colouring pictures of our year group saint: St Francis of Assisi. We learnt the quote 'We should make a dwelling-place within ourselves where he can stay, he who is the Lord God almighty, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.' We also had a fantastic time engaging with our buddy classes in year six when we had a class swap and got to share our work with each other! We finished the day by playing with our friends on the astro. We made fantastic memories!



## Attendance & Absence

At St Joseph's we expect and promote **100%** attendance for all children.

We expect that all pupils, will:

- Attend school regularly
- Attend school punctually
- Attend school appropriately prepared for the school day

### Absence

For each day your child is absent from school for any reason you must telephone the school office on 01737765373 to explain the absence and send a note on their return to school.

### Authorised absence

In exceptional circumstances when leave in term time is unavoidable, a leave of absence request form must be completed as soon as possible once the dates of the proposed period of absence are known. The Leave of Absence Request Form can be obtained from the school office.

This is when the school agrees that the child is absent for a valid reason:

- Illness
- A special day set aside for religious observance
- Domestic circumstances such as the death of a close relative
- Medical/dental appointments Please note that whilst the school will grant requests for absence for dental and medical treatments, parents/carers are encouraged, whenever possible, to book dental and medical appointments outside the school day. When appointments during the school hours are unavoidable, the school office should be notified in advance in writing. Evidence of the appointment may be requested.

Parents/Carers are asked to remove the child only for the duration of the appointment.

- Closure of the school, e.g. snow or strikes
- Exclusions

### **Unauthorised absence**

The following are not considered valid reasons for children missing school:

1. Holidays
2. Going shopping
3. Visiting relatives
4. Birthday treat
5. A day out
6. Parent or sibling unwell (except in exceptional circumstances)

### **Holidays during term time**

The Government has issued guidelines that schools have to follow with regard to authorising leave of absence from schools. These changes became law on 1st September 2013 and the school has to follow these procedures. As parents or legal guardians, you have a legal responsibility to ensure your child's attendance at school. During the academic year, pupils are at school for 190 days and at home for 175 days.

- Headteachers may no longer grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances (ie not holiday).
- This became law 1st September 2013 and is a government directive which the school is legally bound to follow.
- The school will consider requests for leave of absence sympathetically, but only in exceptional circumstances can they be approved. Requests in relation to certain personal circumstances including bereavement, medical reasons etc., will be considered as exceptional circumstances.
- The regulations state that parents who take their child out of school for five days or more during term time, without the authority of the Headteacher will be liable to receive a Penalty Notice issued by the Local Authority.

The school is subject to regular inspections by the Education Welfare Officer and we frequently have to produce evidence relating to approved absence from school and this will continue. It is vitally important, therefore, that any absences from school in relation to sickness, visits to the doctor etc., are advised to the school office on the day of absence, or in advance if it relates to a medical appointment, to ensure that the correct reason for absence is recorded.

## EVERYDAY COUNTS

School and future success starts with good school attendance!



## The 'Day by Day' Curriculum Creation and Covenant.

As of this academic year, we have fully moved fully into our scheme, 'Day by Day' which forms the religious learning of all classes across the school and has received full canonical approval. Our focus has been on the Branch Creation and Covenant, where pupils have explored the beauty of God's creation and what it means to live in a loving relationship with Him and with one another. Through Scripture, discussion, and prayer, the children have reflected on how we are each part of God's promise — called to care for the world and to remain faithful to the covenant of love that binds us together as His people. It has been wonderful to see their growing understanding of how faith, responsibility, and gratitude shape the way we live each day.

### Update from EYFS

We'd like to extend a heartfelt thank you to the St Joseph's Association for generously funding the new equipment for our EYFS outdoor area. The children have absolutely loved exploring the mud kitchen, especially making their famous hot chocolates, and getting creative in the construction pit as budding builders. Your support has made a real difference to their play and learning. The SJA also kindly funded our wooden table and chairs, storage tuff trays, multiple accessories for the mud kitchen and soft play-grade wood making our construction pit even safer. We hope you agree that our new area looks amazing.

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### **Update from Year 6**

Year 6 conducted interviews to finish their Geography topic on population. Parents and family members were invited to come on to the astroturf last Friday to be interviewed about their views on air pollution, traffic and living in Redhill. Children in Year 6 were confident and excited to interview these adults and collect data for their surveys. It was a great end to the geography topic and we would like to say a big thank you to all the adults who came to be interviewed.

### **Request for toys & games**

Firstly, I would like to say thank you for donations that were brought in before the summer holidays. We are very grateful for your generosity and I am excited to say that lunch time play equipment will be launching after half term with our wonderful Year 5 and 6 Play Leaders. They have been trained and are ready to support the rest of the school in enjoying all the wonderful play equipment that we have!

However, we are still looking to increase our offer to the children and so I am looking for more donations, if possible, of the following items.

Magnetic Construction

Duplo

Happy Land Toys

Small Toy cars

Dinosaurs

Toy musical instruments

Adult Clothing (especially 'work wear')

Farm animals

Dolly Accessories

Wooden building blocks

If anyone is sorting through their toys and games, Mrs McRae our Pastoral Support Worker is also looking for Top Trumps cards, playdough tools, puzzles (50 pieces and under), turn taking games such as snakes and ladders, frustration etc. and any 'Brainbox' games.