



Mr. Hall writes ...

March 2026

As I write this newsletter piece the sun is streaming in through my window. Easter is nearly upon us and, with the clocks going back this weekend, the promise of lighter days is just around the corner. We are lucky in this part of the world that Easter and spring always coincide - perhaps it is providential that the joy and hope of Christ's resurrection also comes with that light that has been missing through the darkness of Lent and the winter months.

Light is something that we have been speaking about lots since half term. As a staff, we spent our recent INSET Day thinking about our School Mission, Vision and Values.

MISSION STATEMENT:

This was something that we worked on last year and was shared at our Parent Partnership Meetings in the Autumn term:

*At St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, we are committed to **Welcoming All** into a **loving** community, **Nurturing Belief** through **faith** and learning, and **Inspiring Futures** filled with **hope** for every child.*

VISION:

In any Catholic School the vision statement should align with the vision of the Father for a just and peaceful world. This is the 'big picture' statement, the bold prophetic affirmation of a Christian vision of reality, a "civilization of love." The starting point for this has to be scripture. Choosing a quote from the Bible is no mean feat - so as a staff we used creative prayer stations to help us to select a piece of scripture (see previous newsletter). We have adapted the text from Matthew 5:16 to create our vision statement:

Let our lights shine before others, that they may see our good deeds and glorify our Father in heaven.

VALUES:

During the INSET Day, staff then had the task of choosing values which linked to both our vision and were also connected to Catholic Social Teaching Principles (the 'so what' of being a Catholic School). Mr Aldridge has written more in this newsletter about our final six values - safe to say it was not an easy choice and generated lots of animated and healthy debate. Some may wonder why Faith, Hope and Love don't feature; these are all captured in our Mission Statement and underpin all the values.

This was all launched in style on St Joseph's Feast Day. Fittingly, the sun was shining for us as we took to the astroturf for a liturgy at the end of the day which was planned and led by our Year 6 children. They had worked that morning on coming up with ways in which they expect to see our school values lived out each day and these formed the basis of our bidding prayers. It was wonderful to see our whole school community together - we were joined by our Governors too. The children waved the palms that they had made in the morning, and our time together culminated with a rendition of *City on a Hill* - which has the entirely appropriate lyrics of 'Let my light shine' repeated numerous times. It was a wonderful way to end a fantastic day - oh and the ice lollies helped too!

The end of our feast day was the perfect moment to recognise the wonderful work of Mrs Barnes, who has worked at St Joseph's for just over 20 years as both a Learning Support Assistant and, in recent years, our Chaplain. When I first looked round St Joseph's I was delighted to hear that the school had a Chaplain and Mrs Barnes does a tremendous job of ensuring that the children grow in their faith and helping them to understand how to plan and lead beautiful class collective worship. Mrs Barnes is looking forward to spending more time with her grandchildren and we thank her for her service to St Joseph's.

Another person who has worn two different hats as part of the St Joseph's community is Mrs Butler, who has been here for 14 years as a Learning Support Assistant. As is often the case with LSAs Mrs Butler was a parent of St Joseph's pupils first. She has supported numerous children in her time at the school and has helped so many to make great strides in their phonics in particular. We wish Mrs Butler every success in her new role at Godstone Farm Nursery.

Our Feast Day is always a highlight for me during the spring term, but there was one particular Monday morning which also stood out for me - when I arrived at school, I found a parcel which contained a letter, a delicious cupcake, a couple of photos and some money. The letter from Gabriel (pictured below) explained that he had raised the money (an impressive amount) by baking and selling cakes at his church that Sunday. He had been encouraged to do so by the £20.26 challenge organised by the SJA this term. I'm mentioning this not just because I benefited from one of the cakes, but because this encapsulates the spirit of what the children at St Joseph's are encouraged to do - acts of service which bring joy and help build community.



Culinary delights which weren't quite as enjoyable were experienced at the Science Fair (I endured a blindfolded taste test). We were blown away by the effort that had gone into all of the different projects that the children brought in. I know parents will have really enjoyed seeing and helping (to varying degrees) with these projects and experiments and there was a lot of learning that went on in the process. Thank you to Miss Dogansoy who organised it all and took our finalists to the Xavier Final this week.

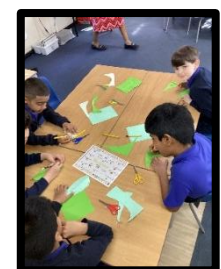
This week I've also enjoyed having hot chocolate with some lucky Golden Ticket winners from the SJA's World Book Day chocolate bar stall. I also visited the classes of some other winning ticket holders where I read them a story - 4S heard *The Book With No Pictures* and if you have a copy of that literary gem then you'll know how much they'll have enjoyed me reading it to them!

It's been lovely to see so many parents around the school for Parents' Evening meetings this week. It's a great opportunity to discuss your children's progress and to hear about ways that you can help to support us with their learning. This term parents will all have received letters about the importance of regular school attendance. We can only get the best out of your children if we see them here as often as possible. If your child is classed as a persistent absentee (90% attendance or lower) please ensure that you are doing everything that you can to ensure that they are in school regularly to improve their attendance. Please do speak to your child's class teacher or the office if you would like to speak to us about any support that we might be able to offer to improve your child's attendance.

One final plea is around parking and vehicles onsite. The school gates are closed between 8.30am and 9am each day - there are a lot of people arriving on foot or using scooters or bicycles at this time. The only vehicle that regularly comes through the gate at this time is the Scouts Minibus - please do not follow the bus in as you are endangering children and pedestrians. Park legally, safely and courteously in the local area - never on the curb or road on Linkfield Lane. It is particularly unsafe to stop on this road and allow your children to get out. We promote safe travel at school through Bikeability courses and Year 3 have this week completed walking training. Please help us to reinforce these messages around safe travel - even if you are running late.

St Joseph's Day

St Joseph's Day is the biggest event in our school calendar and this year was bigger and better than ever. Riding on the coattails of the Jubilee Year of Hope, we made the choice to explore the theme of 'journeys,' thinking especially of the many journeys that we are undertaking together as a community. In order to do this, pupils spent the morning on the move, travelling around the school to visit various teachers who lead them in reflection on journeys such as Spiritual Journeys, the school's new values, and our family backgrounds. Sessions such as these focused our minds on the



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broad backgrounds that make up our community, drawing us into a better understanding of one another's experiences and bringing us closer.

The culmination of these activities was our Big Lent Walk – an activity started by CAFOD in order to help us to raise money for those in need. Pupils travelled with members of their buddy class, and had an incredible time journeying together. Over all the distance we travelled equated to walking from our school gates all the way to Edinburgh – just going to show what is possible when we come together. Moreover, the fundraising that you kindly supported us in raised a whopping £858! This money will be able to train 24 people to run floating gardens and support their families. Thank you for all your support.

As a final part to our day, we gathered in prayer outside in perfect weather. Following the success of our pupil lead house assemblies, we looked to our Year Sixes, who planned, resourced and lead their peers in a Celebration of the Word centred around our school values and vision. This served as a highlight to many of us staff members – we are truly blessed to have pupils who are bold, faith-filled leaders, capable of leading not only their peers, but us staff, governors, Xavier Leaders and CAFOD Representatives in prayer.



A final thank you must go to the SJA for kindly providing everyone with ice-lollies! These are always a



highlight for the children, and show them that St. Joseph's Day truly is a day of celebration! The smiles speak for themselves!

School Values

As you may recall from our previous newsletter, we have been on a journey of self-reflection, thinking carefully about the values our school holds at its centre. Previously, our staff had taken a time of prayer to reflect on scripture: discerning how God is calling us to serve here at St. Joseph's. The scripture we chose was:

'Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.' – **Matthew 5:16**

From here we reflected: What values within us serve as a light to others?

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During our staff inset, the teachers again took time to pray together, thinking about our school and the light we see in one another. From here, rooted in Catholic Social Teaching and scripture, we came up with our six new values:

- **Gratitude**
- **Courage**
- **Joy**
- **Service**
- **Forgiveness**
- **Inclusion**



From Easter, we will begin to roll out these values and prepare for a full implementation next academic year. Watch this space!

Lent Retreat at Wintershall

12 of our Year 6 pupils took part in a Lent Retreat Day at Wintershall. The event was organised alongside St Bede's School and they were able to travel with the Year 7 pupils by coach to the beautiful venue in Bramley and there was the added blessing of sunshine on the day! Everyone arrived in time for the coach to leave St Bede's at 8.45am and with everything they needed for the day. The Wintershall Education Team started the day with a drama looking at the person of Judas Iscariot and how he might have felt about what he did. They then led a reflection on the Stations of the Cross as each group walked up the hill and focused on the different types of sculptures depicting the 15 stations. At each station the children took turns to read the prayers. In addition, at some of the stops, the children were given a small item relating to that station which they put into their



pilgrim bags to take home as a reminder of the day. As they got to the top of the hill there was an area with picnic benches where they could eat their packed lunch and enjoy the amazing views. After lunch there were two workshops focusing on the role of the roman soldiers and the events of the Last Supper. It was a great reminder of what Lent means and why we use it as a time of preparation.

Reconciliation

As is typical in this penitential season of Lent, pupils from Years 4-6 were offered the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation at school. This year, 88 pupils took up this offering and made the choice to seek God's forgiveness and make peace within themselves. This is only possible with the great support of our local clergy; many thanks to Fr Jimmy and Fr Chris for helping us to take this step.

The Feast of St Oscar Romero

On the 24th of March, pupils in Year 6 celebrated the feast of their year group saint, Oscar Romero. This was led by Mr Aldridge who, as a teenager, went on a project to El Salvador and worked with the local people; he even visited the Church in which St Oscar served and was martyred. This meant he was able to show pictures of the country, people, even the very clothes Romero wore when he was assassinated. The children were fascinated to see and hear about the real lives of the El Salvadorian people and the legacy left by St Oscar, even today.

"After listening to St Oscar Romero's story, I could see that he would always stand up for what is right." - James

"I really enjoyed learning about who he was, what he did and where he was from" - Maria Teresa

Science Fair

During the 3rd, 10th and 17th of March, our whole school took part in a very special Science Fair. I had the pleasure of seeing the incredible range of projects our pupils created. We enjoyed exploring everything from solar system models and representations of DNA, to detailed digestive and respiratory system models, life cycle displays, taste bud investigations, and even inspiring posters celebrating famous scientists. The creativity on show felt endless!

It was truly wonderful to see the time, care, and effort that had gone into each project. Choosing our "Scientist of the Year" was an extremely difficult task for Mr Hall, Mr O'Callaghan, and myself. However, we thoroughly enjoyed speaking with the children about their learning and hearing them explain their ideas with such enthusiasm.

Below are the children and runners up for Scientist of the Year for KS2. We are yet to choose winners from KS1 and EYFS; these will be announced after Easter.

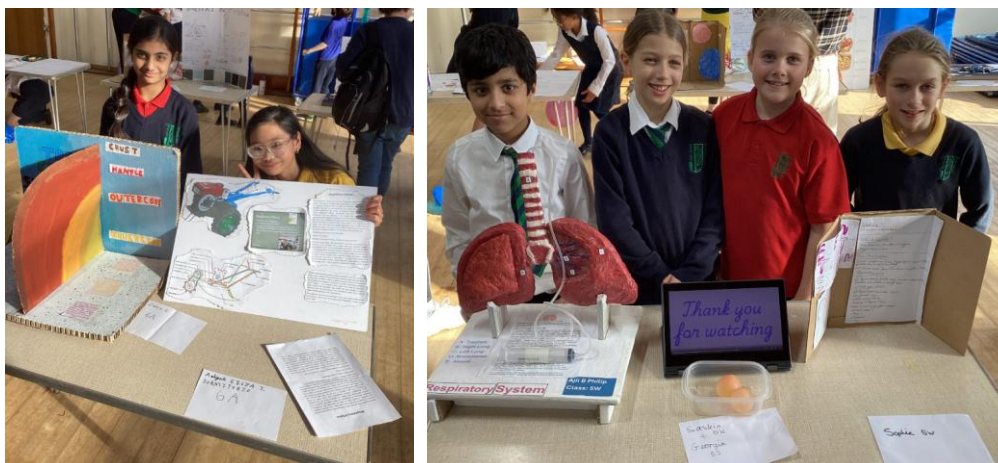
Year 6 – Lucy P (Winner) Sofia, Esme, Lucy C, Alice, Evelyn, Sienna and Annabelle (Runner up)

Year 5 – Manu (Winner) Seraphine and Janetta (Runner up)

Year 4 – Nila (Winner) Lucy and Jos (runners up)

Year 3 – Hamdan (Winner) Zai (runners up)

Once again, a big thank you to every individual child for taking part. Your participation, effort and time didn't go unnoticed. Thank you! You were all superstars!



Xavier Science Grand Final

The children who were selected as winners and runners-up were given the exciting opportunity to attend the Xavier Science Grand Final at ACS Cobham International School on Tuesday 24th March. They went with high hopes of one of our pupils being named the Xavier Primary Scientist of the Year 2026. The event brought together pupils from many Xavier schools—around 200 children in total—making it a wonderful celebration of science across the trust.

The morning was filled with hands-on science activities. Children had the chance to examine insects under microscopes, give instructions to a robot, create marble runs, explore science projects created by pupils from other schools, and even handle fossilised dinosaur poo! The activities were varied, engaging, and sparked lots of curiosity.

After lunch, it was time for our young scientists to present their projects to the judges. They showed great confidence and enthusiasm as they shared their learning and explained the ideas behind their work. Thank you for being such great ambassadors for our school!



Year 6 World Book Day



Year 5 Tudor Dress Up Day

Year 5 brought history to life as they swapped their school uniforms for wonderful Tudor costumes and spent the afternoon fully immersed in the past, taking part in creative activities such as crafting their own Tudor roses, practising elegant handwriting with feather quills and ink, and enjoying a range of hands-on experiences that helped them imagine what life was like over 500 years ago, making the entire celebration a memorable blend of curiosity, teamwork and historical discovery.



EYFS Manor Farm Visit

Reception enjoyed a delightful visit from Manor Farm this term, meeting an array of friendly animals, including sheep, goats, rabbits, snakes, chicks and more. It was a wonderfully wild learning experience that brought the classroom to life!



EYFS Dentist Visit

Reception were delighted to welcome Lowcroft Dental Surgery from Redhill this week. The team taught the children about the importance of brushing their teeth, how bacteria affect oral health, and even demonstrated the correct way to brush. Each child received an oral-health goody bag to take home. Lowcroft Dental currently have NHS spaces available, and we strongly encourage all families to register their children with a dentist to help keep those smiles healthy and bright!



Sports at St. Joseph's

Netball

A huge well done to the St Joseph's netball team, who represented the school brilliantly at the annual district tournament hosted by Reigate Grammar School. Competing against 13 other schools, the team achieved an outstanding 2nd place — the best result we've seen in many years. They powered through their first six matches undefeated, earning a well-deserved spot in the final, where they were narrowly beaten 3–1. Every player showed exceptional determination, skill, and sportsmanship throughout the day, and the whole school is incredibly proud of their achievement -- Thank you Jess xx



Parish Reconciliation Service St Joseph's - 27th March from 6.30pm

The Easter Triduum
Holy Thursday 2nd April 8pm - St Joseph's Church
Good Friday 3rd April 3pm - St Joseph's Church
Easter Vigil 4th April 8.30pm - St Joseph's Church

Easter Sunday
5th April 9am - Holy Family Church
5th April 11am - St Joseph's Church
5th April 5.30pm - St Teresa's Church

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