



# NEWSLETTER

*We are growing together on our journey of achievement with Jesus in our hearts, heads and hands.*

[www.stjosephsbracknell.co.uk](http://www.stjosephsbracknell.co.uk)

8<sup>th</sup> November 2021

**REFLECTION** - It can be difficult for us all to make and take time to reflect and consider what is important to us. 'The most important day is today. Whatever is happening in your life, keep these things in mind: Big problems can be solved in small steps. When you are still, the gentle voice from within will guide you.... listen carefully. Remember to pray, and let God take the burden of worry from your heart. Accept that we each learn life's lessons in our own way. A lot of people love you more than words can say.

Dear Parents,

I do hope that you had an enjoyable half term break. It has been good to see the children back this week – they have all been full of stories and tales about their experiences over the half term and it has been lovely to hear from them. I was most enthralled with the efforts with the Polish tradition to celebrate 'All Saints' and 'All Souls' Day and thought you may wish to see how loved ones are remembered:



*Let light perpetual shine upon them. May they rest in peace. Amen.*

**Parents' Survey:** Today, the governors will be sending out a questionnaire about all aspects of school life. They ask that all families complete the questions so that we have a good understanding of the strengths and areas to improve across the school. Thank you in advance for your time in completing this survey.

**Fund ED:** At the end of this newsletter, please find the article about our fundraising for WiFi which was written by Mrs. Philpott.

**Cars & Parking:** Thank you all for the smooth transition to an 8.45am drop off. This change has had a more collective and purposeful start to day's work. Please do remember that school gates will now close at 8.45am. We also understand that Larges Lane and the neighbouring road have now become busier. Please do take care when driving down the road at busy times and be considerate to our many neighbours when leaving your car to drop off and collect your children. We will always keep children safe if you are delayed for a few minutes – we would far rather this than getting an angry e-mail from our neighbours!

A polite reminder that the staff car park is for staff use only. Parents should not drive into the car park from 8.20am to 4.15pm. Thank you for your continued support in this matter

**Morning Club Drop off** – We ask that parents do not use the car parking spaces in front of the school as these spaces are allocated to our teaching staff. Thank you for your co-operation.

**School Lunches** – Can I please remind KS2 parents to ensure their child's Scopay lunch account is always topped up with enough funds to cover any lunches to be ordered for the coming week.

**Admission for Reception Year:** Bracknell Forest residents wishing to apply for a Year Reception school place for their child from September 2022 can do so from 5 November 2021. The process runs until 15 January 2022. Parents can apply using the online portal: [https://oneservices.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/CitizenPortal\\_LIVE/en?ReturnUrl=%2FCi](https://oneservices.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/CitizenPortal_LIVE/en?ReturnUrl=%2FCi)

[tizenPortal LIVE%2F](#)

This is available until midday on 15 January 2022. Parents unable to access the portal can contact School Admissions for an application form. [school.admissions@bracknell-forest.gov.uk](mailto:school.admissions@bracknell-forest.gov.uk) Before parents submit their application, we ask that they read [The Guide to Primary Education 2022 to 2023 \(bracknell-forest.gov.uk\)](#)

St. Joseph's is holding 'Open Mornings' most Monday mornings this term. We held the first session this morning. Many thanks to Nadia and Xavier, who not only helped but shared their experiences of school with the parents. Please contact the school office on 01344 425246 to book your place.

**Poppies** Royal British Legion Poppies will be on sale at school along with wristbands and other poppy merchandise. Prices range from 50p to £1.50 and appropriate donations for paper poppies. Poppy sales will take place in the classroom. If you are sending money into school for this purpose, please put it in a named purse or envelope in case it goes astray!

**Weekly Wednesday Year Group Masses at Bracknell Church:** In light of the pandemic and the school unable to hold a whole school mass, Fr. Danny has kindly agreed that one year group can attend the mid-week mass. These will take place at 10am at Bracknell Church on a Wednesday. We have allocated rough dates for each year group, but as these are likely to change, your class teacher will keep you informed. You are, of course, welcome to attend these masses even if your child is not in the appropriate year group!

**Anti-bullying Week:** The antibullying week begins on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> November. The slogan and theme for this year is 'One Kind Word'. Pupils will be learning about this in their PSHE lesson that week.

To mark this important message, we will be encouraging children to wear odd socks on **Monday 15<sup>th</sup> November**

**E-safety:** On Monday 29<sup>th</sup> November we are having a day with e-safety expert Paul Hays who will take classes for assembly and workshops - there will be changes to timetables to accommodate the sessions and **parents will be invited to attend an evening information session via zoom** - booking details to follow.

**CHRISTMAS EVENTS:** I am also writing to you today with some updates about decisions the staff here at St Joseph's have made about some of the school year

events in our calendar in light of the ongoing Covid pandemic and the local surge in cases.

**Christmas Performances:** In light of the ever increasing number of cases of Covid we have looked carefully and considered the way in which we share Christmas between school and home. Our staff have discussed at some length, our plans for Christmas performances. Whilst there is not a member of staff amongst us who does not recognise the importance and benefit of performance for children, we do not feel that it is appropriate, in the current climate, to be planning nativity or carol performances that will involve lots of children continually mixing for rehearsals and then lots of parents mixing indoors for performances – no one would thank us if everyone was forced to isolate over the festive period. We would also hate to be in the position of spending precious curriculum time rehearsing only to be possibly told nearer the time that we are unable to have an audience attend to watch. We have therefore decided that we will pare back our plans once again for this season. We will organise an online Carol Service. Each year group will be allocated a part of the carol service to rehearse - carols and readings. We will prepare the children during school time and then collate each classes performance and share the finished piece with all parents.

Footsteps and our Reception Year will also film a Nativity Service which will be shared with parents of these year groups.

**Christmas raffle:** We are planning a Christmas raffle to raise money for Black history books and RE artefacts. We will be asking each class/parents to donate a prize (could be cash so £1 per child will be a £30 prize, gift voucher or a hamper etc) . Class reps will be in touch to organise this. Staff will donate a luxury food hamper.

We already have a £50 cash prize and a family ticket to Odds Farm up for grabs!

**Christmas Jumpers:** The school council are planning a Christmas jumper swap - each year 1 in 4 jumpers are thrown away so we would like to encourage staff and pupils to bring in a jumper to swap rather than buy a new one. Details to follow.

**South Hill Park Panto – Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> December:** We are taking the whole school to the South Hill Park Panto (Cinderella) - Something for us all to look forward to. We are very much hoping that the whole school will still be able to go to the Panto at the end of term. Coaches will take the children to the venue and we ask that parents will then collect their children from South

Hill Park in the afternoon. Those children who attend the ASC will be taken back to school in a minibus.

This week you will receive the request for payment on ParentMail. Whilst this is a voluntary contribution, it will not be possible for us to undertake events such as this without parental support. If you have any difficulty in making payment, please do contact Mrs. Dunlop or Mrs. Philpott to discuss. Please ensure that all payments are made by **Friday 3rd December**

**Christmas Lunch:** The children can wear something 'Christmassy' to our Christmas Dinner on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> December.

#### **Children's Charity Netball Fun Morning:**

**When?** Sunday 19th December 10am-12

**Where?** Indoors Wellington Health and Fitness Club Crowthorne

**Who's it for?** Boys and girls from year 2 to year 6. No netball experience necessary.

**What is it?** Fun netball activities, and modified games

**What charity?** Helping to raise money for a local boy who suffered a life changing brain injury. 100 per cent of the profits from this event will go towards helping to get George home (see below).

**What will you tell the children?** We will leave it down to you to talk to your children about George and raising money to help his family, as we realise this may cause upset and anxiety in some children.

**Who will run the event?** Experienced level 1 and level 2 netball coaches. DBS checked, first aid trained and have attended safeguarding courses.

**How much?** £15 per child

**How do I book?** Via the S7evens website (click 'book now') [https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/getgeorgehome?utm\\_id=66&utm\\_term=MKDeJYbVk](https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/getgeorgehome?utm_id=66&utm_term=MKDeJYbVk)

#### **The Lexicon's Annual Christmas Art Competition**



With Christmas fast approaching, The Lexicon has today launched its annual Christmas art competition! The competition offers local children aged 3-12 years a unique chance to be part of the town centre's Christmas activity.

Children can get involved by creating a Christmas star design using crayons, felt-tip pens, paints or even a

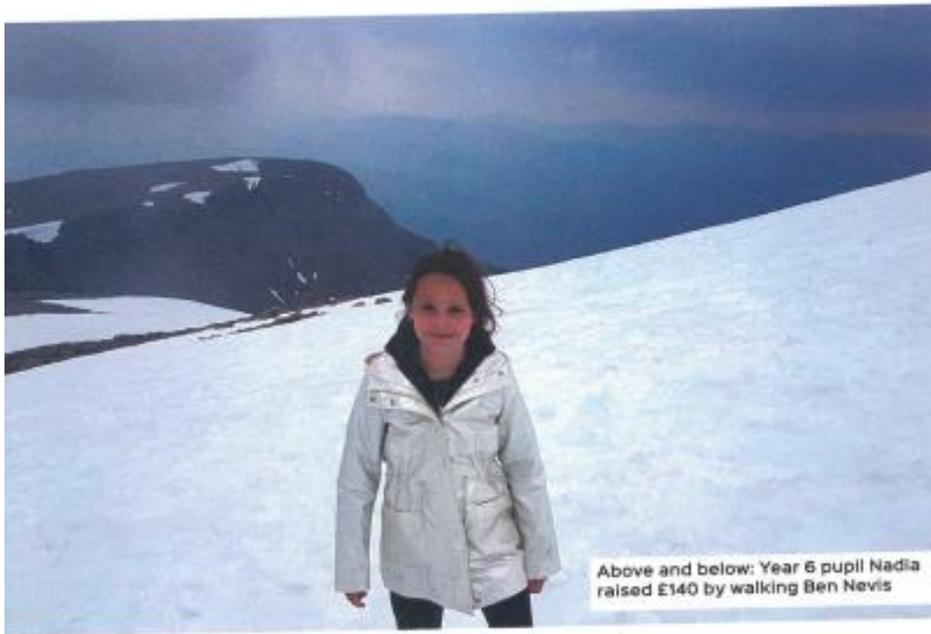
computer, using the template provided. The design must be the child's own work and should be something that will appeal to all age groups.

The winning designs will all form part of a Christmas Star Trail, located in retailer windows in the town centre. The overall winner will also receive a gift voucher the value of £50 and the second placed runner-up, a £25 voucher. In addition, both winners will also receive a fabulous pack of Giotto art products worth £200 for their school. Eight other shortlisted winners will also receive a gift voucher worth £10 each.

The entry form and templates can be found on The Lexicon's website [www.thelexiconbracknell.com](http://www.thelexiconbracknell.com) The closing date for entries is Sunday, November 14 2021.

Mrs. J. Dunlop

Headteacher



Above and below: Year 6 pupil Nadia raised £140 by walking Ben Nevis

## 'WE WALKED FOR WIFI – AND RAISED MORE THAN £10,000 FOR A NEW NETWORK!'

'St Joseph's is an inclusive one-form entry primary school, with nursery and wraparound care. In order to give each pupil the best learning experience, we need up-to-date technology. However, our old WiFi network was struggling to handle recent increases in demand and usage. This meant slow log-on speeds, dropped connections, poor device performance and limited WiFi access in some parts of the school. Plus, our experience of remote learning was more challenging than it should have been.

We needed a completely new network to modernise our school and enable staff and students to work more efficiently. The cost – which would include wireless access points, wired switches, new equipment and inter-switch cabling – was £10,000.

We are so small that raising this amount of money was a mammoth task. So we decided to organise a sponsored Walk for WiFi, using the InvestMyCommunity fundraising platform.

Our aim was for everyone in the school community to take part, so that we would walk a total of 10,000 miles as a school. Our message was

that if each pupil raised £50, we would easily reach our target. Following the national lockdowns, we noticed our families taking daily walks, so thought it would be attractive to them.

We launched our campaign in May 2021, just before half term, so that parents could fully engage over the break. Julie Beale at IMC helped us create a timeline of communication and this really helped build momentum. We sent 'teasers' in the hope that families would be interested in hearing more. We also tweeted about the event and sent weekly flyers in the lead up to the launch. We asked parents to share our IMC page and help raise funds. We posted photos of pupils using laptops and outlined our plans in a downloadable leaflet.

As we are a Church school, we extended the fundraiser into the Parish, including the Church newsletter. We held a school assembly to share the idea, which created much excitement and encouraged many children to commit to helping.

The IMC platform was very straightforward for those taking part in the walk to use. They simply tapped a 'getting started' button and

selected the 'Raise Funds for Us!' online sponsor form. The social media buttons made it easy for pupils to invite friends and family to support them on the Walk for WiFi. Several added their own photos of the walking challenge (pictured).

We encouraged individuals to set up their own sponsorship page and compete against one another. The leaderboard showed the top three fundraisers, and this was never static as it really did encourage competition – after all, what granny would not want to see their grandchild in the number one spot!

Pupils and their families rose to the challenge, many creating their own pages. Lots of people posted messages of encouragement and congratulations on the supporters' section, which was lovely. We also created certificates so that pupils would feel proud of their achievements.

One further initiative was to contact local businesses asking if they could donate anything or sponsor the event. A local estate agent paid £250 to have a logo on the home page and many other smaller businesses followed suit.

In total, we raised £10,425, and we also received £1,020 in Gift Aid. The new system was installed over the summer holiday and we are all reaping the benefits!

**Nicola Philpott, deputy headteacher, St Joseph's Catholic School (210 pupils), Bracknell, Berkshire**

