



Dear Parents,

It has been lovely to see the pupils returning to school after the summer break with bright smiles and happy faces. I extend a warm welcome to our new Nursery and Year One children and their parents who are settling well into St Bride's school community. To celebrate the beginning of the new school year, you are invited to join the staff and children from Years 4 to 7 to a **School Mass** being held in St Brigid's Church on **Thursday 20th September at 11.00am**. I hope many of you will be able to attend.

I hope you find the information in this newsletter useful. Should you have any queries please visit the school website www.stbridesps.uk.org where you will find further information regarding school policies, learning zones, calendar of events, as well as articles & photos of activities enjoyed by the children throughout the year. The website is up-dated frequently with activities the children have been involved in and is worth re-visiting. The children will let you know when there is something specific to their class/year group posted during the year.

The Education Training Inspectorate (ETI) carried out an Inspection of the school, including the Nursery Unit, in May 2017. The full report can be viewed on the ETI website but I have included some of the comments made by the ETI Team throughout this newsletter.

I wish everyone a successful and happy year.

Mary Rose Quinn

Communication & Links with Parents

A Strategic Goal on the School Development Plan is 'To Improve Communication with Parents'. We have begun to make considerable improvements over the last years and will continue to make further improvements in this area.

ETI comments:

"A range of initiatives have been put in place to improve the communication between the school and parents; these were acknowledged positively within a number of the parental responses to the ETI questionnaire"

Below are some of the means by which communication & links with parents are being developed.

Class Assemblies & Prayer Services

Each year, classes from Years 4 to 7 present two assemblies to the children during the year. To further develop links between school and home, parents and family members will be invited to one of these class assemblies. Class teachers will send a note home to parents inviting you to one of their assemblies. It is hoped that family members will be able to attend.

All children are now following the new RE programme called 'Grow in Love'. In Years 1 - 2 the new programme includes class Prayer Services to which parents will be invited. Some of these will take place in your child's classroom, as opposed to the Assembly Hall, as has been the case in previous years.

The class teachers will send home letters of invitation to relevant Prayer Services. Year 3 classes will have a Prayer Service to enrol them for the Sacraments of Reconciliation & Holy Communion.

Parent Meetings

Formal Parent Meetings will be arranged on Monday 19th November and throughout that week, if necessary. In June, in addition to the Annual School Report, parents of children in Years 3 - 7 were sent a summary of their child's Standardised Test scores in English & Mathematics. These will be discussed at the meeting, in addition to general progress, strengths, emotional well-being and areas for development. Details will be sent home closer to the time and staff will endeavour to arrange times suitable for siblings. Teachers will also arrange meetings to discuss concerns or issues they may see arising, in an effort to address any concerns at an early stage, with the support of parents. Other meetings are arranged for sharing of Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and Target Setting where appropriate.

If you have a concern about your child's progress, self-esteem or friendship issues, please make an appointment to discuss your concern with your child's teacher. If you wish to discuss your concern further, please make an appointment to discuss your concerns with a Key Stage Coordinator, (Mrs O' Prey FS/ KS1 (Years 1-4) or Mrs Granleese KS2 (Years 5-7)). At any point you may speak with Mrs Quinn by making an appointment through the Office.

Text Service

The school will continue to communicate information/reminders via the 'Text Messaging Service'. **Please ensure you inform the office if you change your mobile phone number to ensure you receive these texts.** It is also vital we have up-to-date contact numbers in case of illness and emergencies.

Follow us on Twitter **@StBridesPS1** in order to receive reminders about important events in addition to updates of school life. Parents of children joining Gaelic after-school clubs run by school staff are asked to follow us on Twitter in order to be kept up to date with cancellation, changes to venue etc.

Parental involvement

In previous years, parents have been asked to visit Foundation/Key Stage 1 & Key Stage 2 classes to tell the children about their job (fireman, vet, and musician, for example). It is intended to widen this initiative to vary the types of careers/jobs/voluntary work to be shared with pupils. There will be strong links to the curriculum in each case, which you will be informed about through a Curriculum Newsletter provided by each year group at the beginning and middle of each term. If you feel you would be able to offer your time to take part in such an initiative, please let your child's class teacher know and indicate which career/voluntary work you would like to give a short talk about.

The Pastoral Care and Positive Behaviour

Recent ETI comments:

"Based on the evidence available at the time of the inspection, the school's approach to the care and welfare of the children impacts positively on learning, teaching and outcomes. The inclusive ethos supports the children's learning and develops well their personal and social skills"

Our Policy was reviewed and updated last year and is available to download from the school website. Alternatively, you may request a copy from the school office.

Parents will receive copies of Consent Forms at the Curriculum meetings, which give consent for their child/ren's images to be used for a variety of reasons. This is in line with GDPR and our safeguarding procedures and we ask for your cooperation in returning these forms as a matter of urgency. Copies will be sent home with children for those parents who are unable to attend the Curriculum meeting.

Safeguarding

St Bride's **Safeguarding Team** consists of Mrs Flanagan (Chair of BOG), Mrs Agnew (Child Protection Link Governor), Mrs Quinn, Miss Joyce, Mrs Granleese & Ms Ward.

Any concerns of a **Child Protection** nature should be brought to Miss Joyce, the Designated Teacher for Child Protection or Mrs Granleese, the Deputy Designated Teacher for Child Protection or in the case of the Nursery Unit, Ms Ward. Information on how to raise a concern can be found on the school website and will be available at the Curriculum Night. Posters highlighting the procedures are visible around the school.

The school gates are closed from 9.30am each morning until 1.45pm. Should parents need access to the school grounds during this time we ask you to close the gates after entering/exiting. Mobile classrooms are locked after 9.30. Parents should report to the Derryvolgie office if, for any reason, they need access to the classroom during the school day.

Pastoral Care support for pupils & parents

I would like to thank parents who have donated good quality uniforms to the school. These will be available to parents for a small contribution, which will be donated to a charity.

Health & Well-Being

Recent ETI comments:

"In discussion with the inspectors, a group of children from Year 6 reported that they feel safe & secure in school and know what to do if they have any concerns about their wellbeing."

A Strategic Goal on the School Development Plan is 'To Improve the health and wellbeing of the school community'. We made great strides in developing this goal by introducing the '**Walk a Mile a Day**' initiative which has become part of the daily routine in KS2 classes. The children walk or jog around the Ashleigh playground a number of times to the distance of 1 mile. Whilst some of the children initially found this a challenge, the difference in stamina & speed improved greatly by the end of the year. This initiative will continue this year, if not every day, then on a number of days through the week, depending on the safe coordination of this activity.

A "Fitness 8 Programme" was piloted in Year 5 last year and provided a great opportunity to promote fitness and healthy eating among the children. This will run again with children in Year 5 in Term 1 and 6 in Term 2.

The school Relay Marathon is being organised by the PTA and the 'Fitter Faster' team on **Friday 12th October**, with all children from the Nursery to Year 7 taking part. This event is sure to be good fun for the pupils, let's hope the weather is kind. Information & sponsor sheets will be sent home with your child in the near future. Please return sponsorship money to your child's class teacher.

After School Club

The school's After School Club is facilitated by Early Learners and runs daily from 2.00pm - 4.00pm in the school Dining Hall. Booking forms can be requested from Debbie by e mail to info@earlylearnersdaynursery.com (All places have been allocated for the Month of September.) Places are available between 2.00pm - 3.00pm or 2.00pm - 4.00pm or 3.00pm -4.00pm and should be booked on a monthly basis. Further information will be provided by Debbie at Early Learners. This facility has proven to be very popular for parents and pupils alike, who love the creative and physical activities provided.

Please refer to the school website for details of the full After Schools Programme

PTA

St Bride's is very fortunate to have an enthusiastic and active PTA who raise funds for additional resources for the children. In recent years they have purchased the school mini bus, and outdoor play equipment. The focus for this coming year is to raise money to help purchase additional resources for Maths and Literacy, in addition to outdoor play equipment. We are always looking for new volunteers so please get in touch via email stbridespta@gmail.com if you would like to join the committee or become a parent helper.

School Meals/Lunches

Dinners currently cost £2.60 each / £13.00 per week. Parents are asked to send money for dinners into the class teacher **on Monday morning**, in an envelope marked clearly with your child's name and the days on which s/he will be going to dinners. Cheques should be made payable to "E.A. Belfast" and not St Bride's P.S. Please contact Christina in the school office by email cholland260@c2kni.net if you wish to pay for school dinners online. If paying by cash, please send the correct money, as organising change for such large numbers of pupils can be a challenge

Children taking packed lunches should bring their lunches to school in lunch boxes, rather than plastic bags and as we are an Eco School, we encourage 'no waste' lunch boxes by asking parents to use reusable plastic boxes/tubs instead of packaging.

As we have a growing number of children with nut allergies, we ask that foods containing nut products are not included for lunch or break. This should also **include** sesame seed products (e.g. sesame snaps, seeded bread or crackers, and hummus).

We also ask that parents do not send cakes in for the class to share on birthdays, as some of these also contain nuts or nut traces. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Car Parking

Parents are reminded that, with the exception of disabled parking, parking in the school car parks is not permitted. The safety of our children is paramount. This is particularly important on the Ashleigh site, where there have been a number of 'near misses' and because there are a greater number of staff arriving to use the car park.

Up-coming important dates:

18 th September	Parent Curriculum Meetings for Years 1 & 2 7.30pm
19 th September	Parent Curriculum Meetings for Years 3 & 4 7.30pm
20 th September	Parent Curriculum Meetings for Years 5 & 6 7.30pm
20 th September	Opening Mass 11.00am
11 th October	Flu Vaccination (KS2)
29 th October - 2 nd November (inclusive)	Halloween Break (school closes at 2.00pm on 26 th October)
19 th November	School closed (Parent Teacher Meetings)
22 nd November	Flu Vaccination (FS/KS1)
29 th November	Open Day (for prospective Nursery & Year 1) 2.20pm - 3.30pm
5 th December	Year 1 Christmas Concert 1.15pm
6 th December	Year 2 Christmas Concert 1.15pm
11 th December	Year 3 Christmas Concert 1.15pm
19 th December	KS2 Carol Service 11.00am
20 th December	Orchestra Recital 2.15pm
21 st December	School closes at 12.00 noon