

St John's Upper Holloway

March Newsletter 2022

Welcome to the March newsletter. It feels as though Spring is in the air and we have lots to celebrate and share.

Kelly Smith Visit

Arsenal and England footballer, Kelly Smith, came to visit our school this week. As well as having a football session with our Year 5 and 6 girls, she led an inspiring, whole school assembly linked to our school values of perseverance, friendship and courage. She was amazing!



Reading for Pleasure Week

Nothing beats a good book and we had a wonderful week with the children enjoying some wonderful stories and texts. As well as dressing as their favourite book character for World Book day, we had a visit from a local author, buddy reading across classes, a 'reading picnic' in the hall and some daring 'extreme reading'!



Pupil questionnaires

Following our parent questionnaires, we recently asked all the children for their views on our school. We asked slightly different questions to Early Years and Year 1.

Here are the results.

Early Years and Year 1

| | Main responses from Reception and Year 1 |
|---|--|
| I enjoy school | 'I like it when I play with my friends', 'I like Forest School', 'I like it when you get to play with EVERYBODY!' |
| I feel safe in school – If I am worried about something I can speak with a grown up. | 'You talk to the teachers - Miss Barbara, Miss Merley, Miss Carol, Miss Georgina'. 'We can talk to our grown-ups when we are worried' |
| School helps me understand how to stay safe online (Y1?) | 'You stay safe with a grown up'. 'We learned how to be safe on the computer' |
| I like learning in school. I can talk to a grown up about what I am learning. | 'We've been learning about Chinese New Year', 'We've been learning about Elliot and the story machine- it was a type writer but we are all story machines!'. We are learning lots about materials. |
| My teacher and other adults help me with my learning | 'Yes, Miss Merley, Miss Kathryn and Miss Barbara help us to learn' 'Miss Ross Goobey and Miss Margaret help us when we get stuck' |
| I enjoy reading in school and at home. The books we have help me to be a better reader. | The children named all the adults who read with them and also said their mums and dads help them read at home. |
| Our Golden Rules and our grown-ups help us to behave well. | Rec - children weren't sure on this one! Y1— We have the Golden Rules in our classroom and the playground. |
| I mostly like school lunches. | Rec – quite a lot of children said they don't like the lunches. Y1— Sometimes they are nice but I don't like everything. |

The highlights of school for our youngest children were:

- ⇒ Friendships and time to play with their friends
- ⇒ Forest school
- ⇒ Going on trips
- ⇒ Reading



Some of the areas they would like to improve were

- ⇒ School lunches (although some children really liked them, others didn't!)

Years 2– 6

| (Please tick) | Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|
| I enjoy school | 22 | 50 | 13 | 4 |
| I think our School Vision ('Love each other as I have loved you') gives an important message about how we live our lives | 33 | 51 | 5 | 1 |
| I feel safe in school - I can name 2 adults I can go to if I need help | 44 | 40 | 5 | 1 |
| I know who to talk to if I am worried about something outside school. | 33 | 43 | 8 | 2 |
| School helps me understand how to stay safe online (e-safety) | 47 | 34 | 5 | 0 |
| My teacher gives me work that is right for me - not too easy and not too hard | 32 | 42 | 11 | 1 |
| My teacher makes my lessons interesting and enjoyable (including going on trips) | 43 | 38 | 3 | 2 |
| I know about what progress I am making (my teacher talks to me, I can see progress in my books and in any test results) | 33 | 49 | 3 | 1 |
| My teacher helps me to improve my work (clear LO & steps to success, marking prompts and talking with me when I get stuck) | 50 | 34 | 3 | 0 |
| I think I can talk confidently about what I am learning in each subject | 27 | 50 | 8 | 0 |
| I get homework every Friday and I understand what I need to do to complete it successfully at home | 53 | 30 | 3 | 0 |
| I enjoy reading in school and at home. The books we have help me to be a better reader | 32 | 42 | 9 | 2 |
| School helps me to know how to have a healthy lifestyle – I know how to have a healthy body and a healthy mind | 40 | 39 | 7 | 0 |
| School has a range of school clubs that I can join if I want to (Buzz, breakfast, sports clubs, gardening, film making, art, mentoring etc) | 47 | 35 | 4 | 1 |
| School helps me to get ready for the next year group/secondary school | 42 | 39 | 6 | 0 |
| I think my school deals with behaviour fairly – we have Golden rules. Good behaviour is rewarded (merits, brilliant book, heads awards etc) and poor behaviour is sanctioned (time out etc) | 35 | 29 | 7 | 1 |
| I mostly like school lunches | 17 | 26 | 20 | 21 |
| The school listens to my ideas and suggestions - circle time, school council, suggestion/worry box | 33 | 41 | 10 | 0 |

We asked the children to think carefully and tell us about what parts of school life they like best and why.

The areas that came up most regularly were:

- ⇒ Art and music as they provide opportunities for being creative
- ⇒ Playtimes, including having a quiet area
- ⇒ Their friends
- ⇒ The teachers
- ⇒ Maths
- ⇒ Assemblies, particularly class assemblies

We also asked children, if we could improve something, what would it be and why?

The areas that came up most often were:

- ◇ School lunches (although staff who have school lunch report they like them!)
- ◇ Better friendships (in a couple of classes)
- ◇ More trips
- ◇ The opportunity to have a school or class pet
- ◇ More regular daily mile (in some classes)

What next?

School lunches — we have contacted Caterlink who provide our school lunches and have raised a few areas we would like them to address. We are due to meet with the local manager soon and will keep you updated.

Friendships and behaviour came up from a few children in a couple of classes —each situation is different so we will be working with those children involved to ensure our school continues to be a safe and happy place for all. It is encouraging to know that friendships came out as a strength across the school.

More trips — Covid had a huge impact on our ability to take children on trips. However, as we try to return to normal, we should see a return to regular trips linked to their learning. London is an amazing city to live in so we want to make the most of the opportunities we have!

School or class pets—although it's a lovely idea, there are lots of things to consider before taking on such a responsibility. ***We do have plans to have some chickens in the near future*** but need to think carefully about how we can look after them during the weekends and holidays. We will be asking parents to sign up for a weekend or week during the summer when they could come and look after the chickens and if we have enough responses to cover all of those times when school is closed, we will set everything up. A parentmail will go out soon about a sign up sheet.

Regular Daily Mile - we have asked teachers to prioritise this, even when they are busy with other lessons. We know that regular exercise helps blood and oxygen flow to the brain so The Daily Mile should help our children be even more successful than they are currently!

Designing our new quiet space

We recently asked the children to think of some ideas for how we can transform the area near the side entrance where the sheds used to be. Children said they would like a quiet space where they can go during playtimes to relax, chat with their friends or pray.

We had some wonderful designs ideas including nice seating, planting, water features and wind chimes. We hope to start redeveloping the area just after the Easter break.



Increasing Covid cases

You will no doubt be aware of increasing Covid cases in school, both amongst staff and pupils. Although the latest strain appears to cause less severe symptoms, it is extremely transmissible and can still be a threat to anyone who has underlying health issues. Symptoms for this new strain often appear similar to a sore throat and cold. If your child seems to be unwell, can I please ask that you test them for Covid and continue to do so until they test negative. If they have Covid, please keep them at home to prevent further outbreaks in school.

Attendance

Our attendance continues to be affected to Covid and other illnesses but we hope will be heading back in the right direction soon. The attendance and punctuality data for the year to date is below. Well done to Years 2 and 3 who have managed to remain above 94% and Year 4 for great punctuality.

| | Nursery | Reception | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 | Year 6 |
|--------------|---------|-----------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Attendance % | 88.8 | 91.4 | 91.4 | 94.0 | 94.2 | 93.9 | 93.7 | 91.3 |
| Lates (%) | 1.5 | 1.4 | 3.2 | 1.5 | 1.9 | 0.7 | 1.3 | 2.4 |

Ash Wednesday Service

It was wonderful to have so many parents join us for the Ash Wednesday service at church. Ash Wednesday is the start of Lent and for many Christians this is a period of fasting and reflection. Children were able to choose whether they wanted to receive the ash cross and many did.



Sports event at Sobell centre

A selection of children represented St John's at an inter-school sports event at the Sobell Centre earlier this month. The main focus was participation and team work and our staff who were there said they were incredibly proud of our children.



Parents' evenings

We have parents' evenings next Tuesday and Wednesday after school. These are really important to help you get a sense of how your child is progressing in school as well as providing you with an opportunity to ask your child's teacher any questions you may have. Please sign up for a time via parentmail or contact the school office if you have trouble booking via parentmail.

Upcoming dates and events

- Tuesday 22nd March—music assembly at 9:30. Parents welcome.
- Wednesday 23rd March—Year 4 visit St Mary's Church for a prayer day with other local church schools
- Tuesday 29th March (3:40-6:30) and Wednesday 30th March (3:40-5:30) - parents evenings.**
- Friday 1st April—Easter service in Church at 10am. Parents welcome.
- Friday 1st April— break up at 2:00pm for the Easter holidays. Pupils return to school on Wednesday 20th April**

Please do come and speak with me if you have any concerns or suggestions and have a wonderful, restful and safe Easter break when it arrives.

Mr Welsh and the St John's staff team.