

Newsletter— Thursday 8th December 2017



Message from CEO

I am very pleased to be able to report that the visit on Tuesday of Christine Quinn our RSC, her colleagues from the South West RSC's office, and ESFA officers went well. They have accepted our Business Plan and our Recovery Plan but have commented that it will be very hard to meet the target dates that we have had to set, but we knew that already. I'm very grateful to Paul Cotter and Shelley England who hosted their visits to schools. It was clear, when they returned to St Boniface House that they had enjoyed them and plan to have a similar programme when they visit again. They were also pleased that Bishop Mark managed to meet them in between his visits to a homeless project in Bodmin and Channings Wood Prison; they clearly valued the opportunity to discuss our issues with him and hear directly his support for our future plans.

Having heard from OFSTED that Plymouth CAST would be mentioned in the Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills I was relieved to see that although she comments on the weaknesses identified in MATs that were not doing well, Plymouth CAST is only mentioned in the list of MATs that were reviewed during the year in question. Nevertheless her general comments about the MATs visited reflect the issues we are already addressing. I was also encouraged to read –

*“We have learned over the past 10 years that increases in test scores do not necessarily reflect a real improvement in education standards. While tests are important and useful, they do not, and can never, reflect the entirety of what pupils need to learn. Exams should exist in the service of **the curriculum** rather than the other way round.”*

This is a lovely time of year for the children and I know how much hard work goes into the all the special activities you arrange for them, at the same time as having to manage the day to day life of the school. It is lovely to have so many positive contributions to this newsletter - please pass on my thanks to all your staff.

Special congratulations to the school choir from Sacred Heart Primary School in Paignton for their recent success winning BBC Radio Devon's 'Star for Christmas' singing competition. This is a fantastic achievement against very stiff competition, well done to all concerned.

I'm very grateful to all of you who contributed to the selection process earlier this week – I shall write again as soon as I can.

May I take this opportunity to wish you all a joyful Christmas and many blessings for 2018.





News from our Schools



St Nicholas Catholic Primary School, Exeter

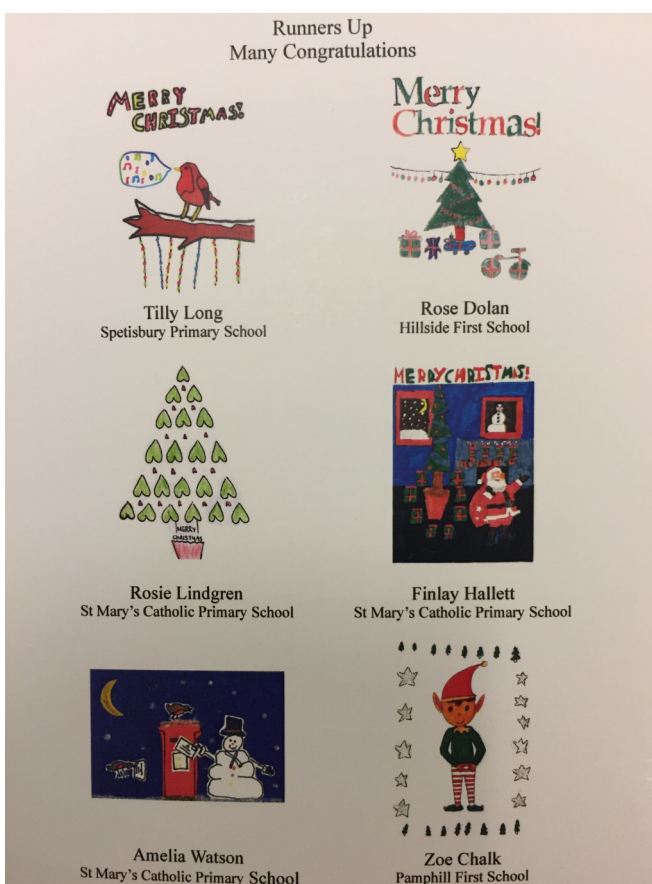
St Nicholas Catholic Primary School had a wonderful morning on 6th December celebrating their 10th anniversary on the Ringswell Avenue site and also the feast day of St Nicholas. We were delighted that our Bishop Mark O'Toole, along with Fr Harry Doyle from Holy Cross church in Topsham and Fr Jonathan Stewart from Blessed Sacrament church in Heavitree, celebrated mass for the whole school, staff, parents, governors old and new and parishioners.



At the mass Bishop Mark commissioned a sculpture of St Nicholas for the school which will be unveiled at a later date. We also said our new St Nicholas school prayer for the first time which was written by the children. After the mass we all celebrated with a very special cake. We were delighted to have so many friends celebrate this very special occasion with us and look forward to the next 10 years.

St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Marnhull

We are very proud of all of the children at St Mary's Primary, Marnhull. Many of the children entered North Dorset MP, Simon Hoare's, Christmas card competition to design his official, annual card. The lucky winner had their design printed and all children that entered received a letter of thanks. Despite not winning the competition, three out of the six runners up came from St Mary's and had their designs printed on the back of the card! Watch out Banksy, there are some new artists on the block!





News from our Schools



Our Lady and St Patrick's RC Primary School, Teignmouth marks 50th Anniversary

Our Lady and St Patrick's RC Primary School in Teignmouth has celebrated the 50th anniversary of the opening of its Fourth Avenue site.

Pupils, staff, parents, governors, members of the clergy and representatives of the local Parish, educational establishments and community past and present were part of the Golden Anniversary celebrations, which took place at the end of November.



His Lordship the Bishop of Plymouth, the Right Reverend Mark O'Toole led a Mass and blessing of the school on Thursday 23rd November 2017. Guests including the Mayor of Teignmouth Councillor Paul Burgess, members of the school Friends Association, representatives of the Parish, former head teachers, staff and pupils were then able to tour the school before enjoying a cream tea served by current pupils.

Our Lady's Catholic Primary School, Barnstaple

The school choir visited a Day Care Centre residential home in Barnstaple to share the Christmas joy through song.



The Pre-School, Reception and Year 1 classes have been very busy rehearsing for their Nativity next week, picture here in their dress rehearsal.



News from our Schools



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Newton Abbot

The Travelling Crib at St Joseph's

To help us remember the Christmas Story, the children at St Joseph's, Newton Abbot, have a special project called "The Travelling Crib".

This helps us remember the journey Mary and Joseph made to Bethlehem, and as a family take time to stop and think about the true meaning of Christmas.

Each night a different family offers Mary and Joseph a room for the night. The children set the crib up, light a candle, sing a song and say a prayer.



Oak and Willow classes welcomed residents from Southlands Residential Care Home to their 'Wriggly Nativity'.

Everyone enjoyed the wonderful acting and singing which reminded us how excited we are about the birth of Jesus at Christmas.



Our Lady of the Angels Catholic Primary School, Torquay

Torquay United Football Club invited the school to a half time Penalty School Out at a recent match.

The competition got off to a great start with all five children scoring their first penalty against the keeper, who tried to keep out some thunderous shots. By round three, three children had scored the same amount and the competition got serious with a sudden death shoot out. The competition ended on a draw, with two children having the same score, so it will have to be played out at the school to see who goes through to the final.

Torquay United community Sport Trust thanked Head Teacher, Mrs Jane Fraser, for organising the children to come to the club to take part and a visit will be made in the future to see who goes through to the final Watch this space!





News and Events



Training Dates

Head Teacher Briefings:

West Area	-	9th January 2018	St Austell Conference Centre
Central Area	-	10th January 2018	St Nicholas School, Exeter
East Area	-	11th January 2018	St Mary's School, Dorchester

Heads & Deputies Conference

22nd to 23rd February 2018 at Mercure Exeter Southgate Hotel, Exeter

God Matters Writers Group

18th to 19th January 2018 at the Langstone Cliff Hotel, Dawlish

Safeguarding Training for all DSL's

2nd February 2018 at Exeter Court Hotel, Kennford

Please book your place via the Website calendar <http://www.plymouthcast.org.uk/web/calendar/273068>

Date of Next Newsletter – Wednesday 10th January 2018

Please remember to email in items for inclusive in the newsletter so that we can share the Good News stories across the Trust.

Articles for inclusion in newsletters should be emailed to Helen Moram at helen.moram@plymouthcast.org.uk