

Newsletter: March 2019

Dear Parents

The St. John's family continues to grow and it's even gone continental! **Congratulations to Gemma and Louis Woolley** on the birth of their second child Charlie last month, and to **Carly Bennet (nee Patejdl)** whose first child Rowan Emilia was born only last week. Carly moved back to her native America to continue her teaching career and to support her husband Colin who is a flight engineer with Virgin Galactic (he may make his first sub-orbital flight very soon!)

March has been a fantastic month packed with lots of exciting events! I thought that you would like to know more about them:

- My thanks to Ed Newman for organising our successful **sponsored 'Danceathon'** on the 1st March to raise funds for the refurbishment of our playground activity trail. We raised around £3500 which will be added to the £5000 generously donated by the Friern Barnet Educational Trust and £2500 donated yesterday by the SPAN Trust (an application made by Anna Michael, PTFA chair)! We intend to complete this project next term in readiness for the children's return to school in September with the possibility of yet further funding from our fabulous PTFA. A massive thank you to every child, family member and friend who supported this lovely event.



- The 7th March was **'World Book Day'**. Organised by Rosaria Attanasio, this was a wonderful event for the children (and the adults as well, who entered fully into the spirit of the occasion by dressing up too). Lots of fun was had by everyone. **Please visit the new 'Special Events' page** (under the 'Information' tab) on our website to find out more. **Don't forget to check out the world book day power point.** Further power points about the 'danceathon' and science day will be uploaded soon. Check it out when you can as there will be lots of pictures of your children enjoying themselves at school. New material is added regularly to the website to inform you about the initiatives introduced by our fantastic and dedicated staff team and to showcase the great attitudes of our pupils and their commitment to learning and school life generally. Three additional new pages which **I hope you will enjoy exploring include 'The Wider Curriculum,' 'Sport Enrichment' and 'Sports Grant and Sport' sections.** Each contains new information and provides insight into the provision we make and the activities which the children all have the chance to enjoy! *nb. You may need to reduce the size of the web page to access the full menu from the drop-down bar within the information tab.*
- Friday 15th March was **'Science Day.'** This was the brainchild of our resident science

expert, Claire Horne. Mrs. Horne's passion for science is infectious and the whole school had a marvellous day of experimentation and learning. **Many of the workshops were led by our newly elected science monitors drawn from both Y5 and Y6 classes!**



- Monday 25th March saw the start of **'The Big Pedal.'** This important event is run by the **'Pupil Voice' group** – pupils elected from across the school and skilfully and cleverly led by Y5 Teacher Rebecca Mundy. Children and parents are invited to ride to school on their bikes or scooters. This is a national event and we very much hope that we will match last year's successful outcome which saw us as **the top 2019 Barnet school** in this event **promoting healthy lifestyles and a green mind set.** More about the Big Pedal and promoting healthy, environmentally friendly habits a little later.
- Talking of mind sets, pupils are constantly reminded of how important it is to have a positive 'can do' outlook on life and learning.** Following a successful introduction to this principle earlier in the school year, teachers never miss an opportunity to remind children of how easy it is, with a positive mind set, to overcome setbacks in learning and life with a determined 'can do' attitude. As a Y5 child said only last week after being challenged by adults to improve his behaviour and learning, *'It really wasn't so difficult after all to make the changes I needed to work harder and behave better!'* Wow! I cannot tell you how thrilled we were to hear him say that unprompted. His achievements were recognised and celebrated in Friday's 'Brilliant Book' Assembly. My thanks to Macci Dobie for introducing and leading this initiative across the school.
- Bishop Rob joined us for Ash Wednesday** and it was good to welcome him back to school following the service. This term the classes have worked closely with Fr. Paul to present their ideas and share their learning on the subject of caring for our environment. My thanks to Fr. Paul, the children and class teachers for the thought provoking and challenging ideas they presented.
- Please look out too for class assemblies as advertised on the school calendar (found within the 'News' tab of the school website). Class assemblies are usually scheduled for Wednesday afternoons at 2.50pm. Assemblies reflect the learning focus of the classroom. Teachers work so hard to produce high quality assemblies. None have been more successful than our most recent assemblies presented by Y4 and Y5. Y4'S assembly was all about the Romans, it was instructive, reflected the learning which had taken place in the classroom and was hugely entertaining and funny! Y5's assembly was all about the exciting, rich and rewarding learning experiences enjoyed by the class this school year. How timely!
- On Friday the 29th March we hosted **the third Local School Partnership Sports'**

Event. This was an idea we introduced last summer involving our local partner schools Holly Park, All Saints, Coppetts Wood, Hollickwood and St. Paul's. We ran a Triathlon with a team from each school taking part in swimming, cycling and running events. It was a great day and we received positive feedback from staff and pupils from visiting schools. The partnership has become hugely successful. Heads meet twice each term and every head's meeting is followed by a meeting for subject leaders to share good practice and offer curriculum support to each other. The last two meetings for subject leads have focussed upon science and computing. The next will be geography. Staff also get together each term to moderate children's work and share ideas. End of phase meetings for EYFS, KS1 and KS2 and writing moderation take place each year.

- On the 26th we took a group of children to Redbridge to take part in a **badminton training day organised by London Youth Games**. This was an invitation event with St. John's representing Barnet. As you can see from the photos, our children had a good time mixing and playing with pupils from other London boroughs.



- Not every month is quite as busy as this March has been but the month is not unique in the breadth of activities on offer. And I haven't even mentioned all

the other things which happen as a matter of course – the sports matches and tournaments, the community cohesion programme (Y5 weekly visits to Oakleigh Special School, Y6's fortnightly attendance at the parish lunch Y3's cooking for the homeless. Then too, there is our fabulous sport enrichment programme (Y5's bowls at Glebelands Indoor Bowls Club and Y4's weekly tennis coaching at Finchley Tennis Club). Additionally there's the after school activities we run, the class outings and the wonderful lessons which occur daily in every classroom! And we mustn't forget the ten early morning consolidation classes which are run each week by teaching assistants and teachers before the start of each school day each term of the busy school year.



Our offer is not 'main stream.' Schools have one thing in common which is the National Curriculum. The way schools deliver the National Curriculum and the philosophy of that method of delivery will vary enormously

between schools. We want to offer a school experience which excites the imagination, has something for everyone, is fun, rewarding and encourages commitment and therefore high standards. We think our offer is rare and valuable. We hope that you agree too!

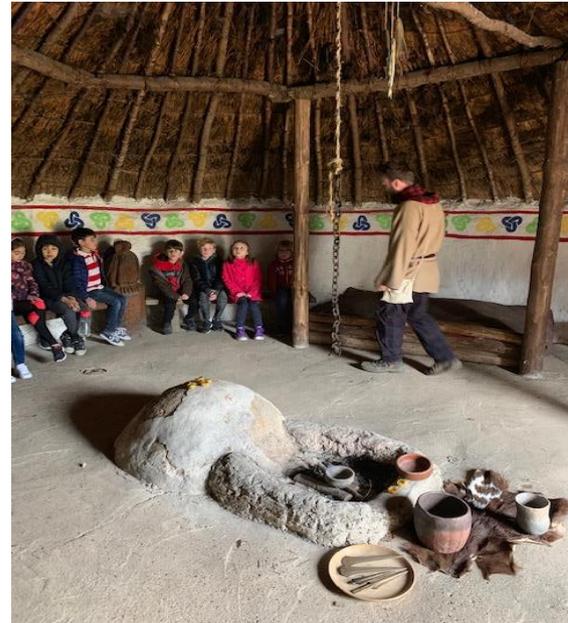
And so, back to **the Big Pedal**. We have four more days left of this event. Please keep 'cycling and scooting' as each day our Pupil Voice team record and submit the number of children and adults who ride to school. But we don't want to encourage healthy lifestyle options which are good for you and the environment just until the end of term. We hope that you will continue to walk, cycle and scoot to school throughout the summer term and beyond! To make this possible we will order scooter racks and, if we can find the space, another cycle rack to accommodate the fantastic number of bikes and scooters coming to school each day. Funding for this is courtesy of the **School Travel Plan**, a wonderful initiative of Transport for London which encourages sustainable living and transport.

Our children are very 'switched on' about all environmental issues – something which I know many of you encourage and a topic that talk about with your children too. Thank you for working in partnership with us to put green thinking to the front of all our minds.

Further to this please also help us by switching off your car engines when parked close to the school as 'idling' creates huge and unnecessary pollution which impacts immediately and over time upon all of our health. And please don't forget that there is plenty of space to park at the end of the road in the Bethune Park car park. Park up and enjoy a gentle five minute stroll to school.

Thank you for your support and for your patience as I write about a theme which I have discussed with everyone before!

Graham Gunn
Head Teacher
March 2019



Y3 outing to Celtic Village



