

Newsletter

Dear Parents

As you know, tomorrow Sunday 3rd December we are holding our annual Advent Fair and we very much hope that you will be able to support this popular event. The Advent Fair is the second biggest fund raising activity in the PTFA calendar and every pound raised will be spent to improve your children's school experience. The PTFA contribute annually to the cost of:

- our wider curriculum trips and workshops
- our fabulous sport enrichment programme and
- membership of the Barnet School Library Service

The support doesn't end there however as the school is constantly turning to the PTFA for help in a wide variety of ways; for example, help with replacing laptops and chromebooks for classroom use; the purchase of interactive teaching boards; playground equipment such as our Adventure Trail and a host of other purchases which without the support of the PTFA we would never be able to buy.

The next project to be funded by the PTFA is to replace our main school playground climbing frame with a basketball court. The climbing frame is around 20 years old and despite repairs is now no longer safe to use. Replacing it with something similar is beyond our financial scope but given the huge enthusiasm the children have for playing basketball, whatever their age, a purpose built basketball court would be a big hit with everyone. Hopefully this project will take place next term.

Further exciting news - our early years climbing frame is also rather old and although not unsafe it will be replaced NEXT WEEK. Our thanks to the Friern Barnet Education Trust for a very generous donation of £8,000 towards

the £12,000 cost of this climbing frame. All being well the work should be completed during the next fortnight and the climbing frame in use before the end of term.



As you know class outings, class and whole school workshops and our sport enrichment activities are a key feature of our curriculum offer. They are funded by the school, the PTFA, Friern Barnet Education Trust and your parent donations. Pre-Covid parent termly donations were running consistently at 97% per term. Since the reopening of schools after Covid, parent donations have dropped dramatically and this term we have received only 45% of anticipated donations from our parent community. We do appreciate that times are hard for everyone and we also know that many payments have been accidentally overlooked. Without your support however, we will have to downscale our trips, workshops and sports enrichment programme. This is something which we are very reluctant to do given how important these experiences are to every child. All school finances are however in a very precarious state and St. John's is not an exception to this. You will probably be very surprised to learn that this financial year almost 50% of Barnet schools set a deficit budget; the expenditure of one in two schools, primary and secondary, exceeded their projected income. These schools will have to set a three-year financial recovery plan, a

disastrous outcome which will have a damaging, negative impact upon those schools with inevitable reductions in staffing and expenditure upon students. We continue to work very hard to balance our books and we remain hopeful that for next year at least we will be able to set a balanced budget. Beyond that the future remains uncertain. This means that we have little 'slack in the system' and our ability to cover lost income is now impossible. So a big thank you to every family that has made your termly voluntary contribution of £15 a child per term. If you haven't and you are able, we would be so grateful if you resume your contributions so that our exciting programme of activities can continue at the current level in 2024. Payments can be made through SchoolMoney. Mrs. Kidd will be in touch soon to explain the process. Thank you so much for your support.



My thanks to Miss Hagan for arranging a visit to the school by Amarachi Pipi. 'Coached by Olympic champion Linford Christie, Ama Pipi made her Olympic debut in Tokyo. She has been working with the 1992 Olympic 100m gold medallist since 2019 and the results are there for all to see. The Londoner was initially a 100m and 200m sprinter and was part of the sprint team at Oklahoma University, where she studied sociology. In 2020, she became British indoor champion at 200m but has focussed on 400m since, reaching the European Indoors semi-finals earlier in 2021 and winning 4x400m silver.

At the Tokyo Tokyo Olympics Ama reached the semi-finals of the women's 400m and was part of the 4x400m squad that finished fifth. Since then, Ama roared onto the World podium with bronze in the women's 4x400m relay at the 2023 Championships in Budapest.'

Ama spent the morning in school meeting all the children in an assembly, spending time running with them on the MUGA and the last part of the visit in class with Y5.



Ama is an inspiring personality we are really excited to announce that Ama and her agent George are very keen to develop a lasting working relationship with St. John's. We have already had two further meetings with George to shape what this partnership might look like and we look forward to sharing more exciting news about this with you next term.



Christmas dates for your diary:

- EYFS Nativity, Wednesday 6th December
- Infant Nativity, Tuesday 12th December@2 pm
- Junior Carol Service, St. John's Church, Wednesday 13th December@7 pm
- Christmas Lunch, Thursday 14th December
- Term Ends, Thursday 21st December@2pm
- Spring Term begins Monday 8th January 2024

Graham Gunn

Head Teacher