



4th March 2022

Dear parents / carers

Lent

During Monday's assembly, children thought about how Lent is a time to prepare for Easter when Jesus died and rose again. We talked about how, on Ash Wednesday, we would roll away our 'Alleluia' sign, knowing that it must not be said during the 40 days and 40 nights of Lent, and thought about why it will be shouted from the rooftops on Easter Sunday. Children began to think about their Lenten promises of fasting, prayer, almsgiving and confession – changes they can make in order to grow in God's love but also so they can show Jesus to others through the choices they make. On Wednesday, we held two Ash Wednesday services so that the whole school were able to participate. Both services were beautiful reflections and the children showed great reverence and respect to the messages that they were hearing. Today, children and I talked further about the Lenten promises they had made. Chaska told me how he was going to offer daily prayers for the people of Ukraine. Others told me how they were giving things up to be more like Jesus, when in the wilderness, and others noted how they would be sharing what they had with others. This led us on to talking about how we can help others in countries experiencing challenge, such as the Ukraine.

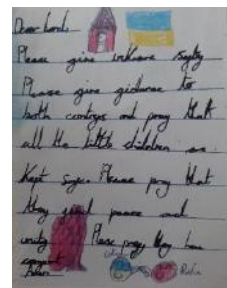


Supporting Ukraine

As we continue to watch the events in the Ukraine unfold, it is clear that the way ahead will be difficult and uncertain. We watch with faith, love and hope that peace and safety will return. Although, as parents and teachers, we often want to protect our children from this awful news, some stories are just too big to avoid. Children will often hear peers talking about things in the playground or at the park, or they may see things on the news or via social media. In school, we have acknowledged that justice isn't prevalent across the world although the children already know this from previous teaching. We have reminded them that, when people in other countries are not able to experience life as we know it, it is important for us to offer prayers and support via whatever ways we can. For example, monetary donations. We also discussed how we must use our voices, to be up-standers, and speak out when things are not right. We haven't discussed what is happening in detail as some children will know more than others and, whilst it is important to build our children to be knowledgeable citizens who can use their voice to help others, we equally don't want to worry them with too much information. The older children have talked about events in more detail as they already knew a range of information. We have reminded children that we have class worry boxes so that any worries can be placed in there plus, as ever, we have staff available to talk to children who may have questions throughout play and lunch time. Our school prayer area is also always open for prayer and talk at lunchtimes. At home, many families may want to limit their child's exposure in order to reduce the impact of what they know, but, as we know, children are always potentially listening. Just like we do at school, setting up a worry box at home and carrying out regular check-ins is always helpful. Asking children about what they are hearing and seeing in general and how they are feeling is always beneficial in case they have heard things that they wish to explore or understand further.



Opportunities for children to ask questions in a safe space. Our Lenten prayer area now has a 'Prayers of peace' book for children to record prayers for Ukrainian people as and when they would like. A child in Year 6 also created mini prayers for peace cards in Ukrainian colours for each classroom. Next Friday, alongside the FCOP (PTA), we are encouraging all children to come to school wearing yellow and blue in order to show solidarity and support for all Ukrainian families. We will be collecting monetary donations that will be passed to charities supporting those who need it most. Mrs Fairbanks will also be giving children A4 posters of peace that can be coloured in the Ukrainian colors and displayed in the windows of your home to again, show love and support for those who need it most. We have one family in our school with Ukrainian relatives and I know you will join me in sending this family all our love and prayers. We have many Polish families and we would like to extend our love and prayers to them and their families still living in Poland as they too will be impacted by what is unfolding. As ever, we invite all to get in touch if there is anything we can do to help in anyway.



Fairtrade Fortnight

Fairtrade Fortnight was launched last week with an assembly introducing this year's theme, "Choose the World You Want". It was super to hear the children's understanding of the Fairtrade message and see them identifying ways in which they can make a difference to the lives of those who produce our food. As part of Fairtrade Fortnight, all children will have a dedicated lesson to explore and discuss the importance of Fairtrade and begin designing posters for our school wide competition. Fairtrade reps from each class will be helping to choose 3 winners who will have their posters professionally printed and displayed across the school. The closing date for this is Monday. This year, the Fairtrade Foundation are hosting a free online Festival. For more information, please follow the link on Seesaw to sign up for informative videos, campaigns, inspiring talks and lots more to share with your child.



Thank you again for your time and support towards our inspection this week. A big thank you to the staff for all they continue to do and for all they did to help us prepare. We are very proud of our school family.

Wishing you all an enjoyable weekend and keeping those experiencing challenge and worry in our prayers.

Rachel Breen, Headteacher

Composting Club

Update on the Year 1 composting project, started in October 2021. The latest news is that the school kitchens are supporting the project and saving all their vegetable peelings for our compost bins, using a green compost bin with compostable liners. We also released 1000 tiger worms into the outdoor compost bins to help with the breaking down process. Year 1, regularly check the bins to see how the process is progressing. Cottesmore children will be part of a county-wide school film to promote household composting.



Parent Consultation Meetings

3.20pm – 6.00pm Tuesday 8th March and Thursday 10th March 2022. These will continue to be offered in the form of a Zoom meeting or telephone consultation. If you would like to meet face to face with the teacher in order to see your child's work, please contact the office. As per usual, each consultation will last up to 10 minutes. Should the 10 minute meeting identify a matter that needs further discussion, please liaise with the class teacher so that a further meeting can be scheduled.

For families choosing to use Zoom, teachers will send the same Zoom link to all in their class. You will need to click on the given link at your allocated time. If you would prefer a phone consultation, there is an option to request this at time of booking. When booking, please use the comments box and note that you require a call instead of a Zoom and please note the best number to contact you on. If using the phone for your meeting, please note that teachers will call from private numbers so please do answer any such calls at your designated time. In addition to the Zoom meeting (or call), you have the option of also receiving and Interim Report which will identify your child's level of attainment, whilst also noting progress and future targets for core subjects. The contents of these will always be discussed verbally regardless of if a hard copy has been requested or not. Should you require a hard copy, we ask that you email your child's class teacher so that it can be emailed to you in advance of the meeting. Mrs Mullans will continue to provide extra meetings for parents of children with additional needs. Please email Mrs Mullans directly to book your appointment with her annamullans@cottesmore.brighton-hove.sch.uk.

Charitable links – some useful information

One link for donations for Ukraine is the DEC appeal, which involves 15 charities such as Cafod, British Red Cross, Save the Children etc all of whom are all doing vital work around the situation in Ukraine:

<https://www.dec.org.uk/appeal/ukraine-humanitarian-appeal>

An article quoting Sussex Aid for Refugees, and the Government advice on it

<https://www.sussexlive.co.uk/news/sussex-news/best-ways-sussex-can-help-6734713>



Vacancy for Admin Assistant / Front of House (NJC Role B) full time role

Cottesmore St Mary wish to appoint an enthusiastic, motivated, flexible and committed member of the Office Team to work in our busy school office three days a week. The successful applicant will be responsible for overseeing the Front of House, in addition to communication with parents - face to face, email, text and phone. The successful applicant will use their own initiative, as well as their experience and knowledge to deal with differing queries and make decisions to carry out tasks effectively. The successful applicant will have good communication skills and a friendly disposition in order to liaise with colleagues, pupils, visitors and others both face to face and over the phone. The successful applicant will support the Catholic vision of our school.

Applicants must have good inter-personal skills in addition to good numerical, literacy and computer skills.

Hours will be: 8am – 3.30pm

Closing Date: 9am 18th Friday March 2022 (only successful candidates will be contacted)

Interview Dates: Week commencing 21st March 2022

The application pack is obtainable from the school website <http://www.cottesmore.brighton-hove.sch.uk/page/job-vacancies/> Please contact Natasha

Camilleri natashacamilleri@cottesmore.brighton-hove.sch.uk via email or via phone on 01273 555811 for more information.

Section 48 inspection

As you know, we had our RE inspection (Section 48) this week. Thank you so much for taking the time to complete parent questionnaires. Your feedback was overwhelmingly positive so a big thank you. Thank you also to parents who spoke to the inspectors and said such wonderful words about the school. Whilst we have received verbal feedback, we are unable to tell the wider school community the full result of the inspection until the final report is written and published. We are told that this will take 15 working days. In the meantime, with regards to the forthcoming report, we have been told that we can say, 'we are very happy with the outcome and recognise the school within it.'. Wednesday's inspection was an opportunity for us to share and celebrate all the wonderful things that we do, and have done, relating to the outstanding Catholic education that we offer within our wonderful school family. The whole day went well and we were very proud of the children.

Calling all garden landscapers.

We are very excited to announce the redevelopment of the pond area in the KS2 playground into a Psalm Garden. This idea was a winning exhibit at RHS Chelsea in 2021 and is based on the calm words of Psalm 23. You may remember that children completed designs for these last term, during Grandparents Day. We would love a parent, or local business, to volunteer to get involved to help us create our own spectacular space.

Psalm 23

*The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want;
he makes me lie down in green pastures.*

He leads me beside still waters;

he restores my soul.

*He leads me in paths of righteousness
for his name's sake.*



The words of Psalm 23 lend themselves to a garden offering contentment and peace, somewhere to appreciate the beauty of God's creations. We have a dry pond that needs a new lease of life and some creative ideas for seating. Please get in touch if this sounds like a project you could help us with

jomccartney@cottesmore.brighton-hove.sch.uk