



"We are called to be the hands and face of Jesus as we learn, love and grow together"

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Dear parents and carers

It doesn't seem possible that we are in the run up to the end of our first term and Advent preparations already! The children have worked hard and will deserve their break when it arrives as will the staff! Your children have been a credit to you this term; I hope that you have enjoyed seeing what they are up to via the Twitter feed (@svdp_school). You can either follow us directly using your own Twitter app (free to download) or simply access the Twitter feed via the front page of the school website. Our aim is to give you a taste of what is happening in school, enabling a further conversation at home.

Christmas Fayre

It was wonderful to see so many of you enjoying the festive atmosphere of the Christmas Fayre last week. Thank you to Theresa Taylor Brookes, her dedicated committee members and everyone who helped out. In just two hours, the event drew in an amazing profit totalling £1224.15 – this will pay for learning materials that will directly help each child in every class. At such times of austere funding, every penny raised makes a significant difference to us. Thank you for supporting such events so generously.



Join the PSA?

The PSA are always keen to invite new members to their committee. Please do join if you can. The committee work hard but also enjoy spending time together, getting to know each other. The more people that join in, the lighter the load for all to share! In particular, the committee will soon be looking for a new Chairperson as Theresa Taylor Brookes will be stepping down soon. Theresa has been an inspirational chair of the PSA and I would like to take this opportunity to thank her for her amazing commitment to the school. Theresa would be happy to pass on her knowledge to any interested party!



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Maths workshops

The PSA funded two full days of maths workshops during November, enabling our children to develop their mathematical skills in new creative contexts. Professor Brainwave from <https://primaryschoolmaths.co.uk/> provided challenging but fun workshops for every class from Nursery up to Year 6. One child in Year 3 said “the best bit of the workshop was making the huge shapes. I loved the Minecraft Maths in class too.” Another in Year 1 commented “it was funny when the Professor Brainwave had the giant ball.”



Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) project

You may have noted that changes have been afoot in the EYFS outdoor learning area. This is part of a long term project to ensure that our youngest children have the very best start to their learning journey and to ensure that our whole environment, indoors and outdoors, enables careful skills development, a thirst for learning and resilience in approach. The EYFS team have worked incredibly hard to implement the exciting changes and the children have really enjoyed making use of the re-invigorated areas. May I take this opportunity to thank each member of the team for their input. It has been wonderful to see the children engrossed in their learning whilst carefully measuring and mixing ingredients in the mud kitchen. On Tuesday morning the children invited me into Santa’s Workshop to see their expert parcel wrapping skills. We also have a number of budding builders (male and female) in the EYFS who have been keen to make sense of plans whilst getting to grips with how to use a spirit level! Today representatives of the Governing Body will be visiting to work with Senior Leaders and Staff to see how the changes to the environment are already impacting positively on learning for the children in Nursery and Reception.



Safeguarding & gates

The electronic security gates are now fully operational – it is a relief for the office staff to be able to directly control who enters the school site. Similarly, thank you for cooperating with the new collection arrangements at the end of the school day. As the nights draw in, our children become more vulnerable at the end of the day; the new arrangements minimise the risk and keep our children safe. Please do remember to keep us updated of any changes to collection arrangements, including any decisions to allow Year 5 or 6 children to walk home alone – this must be notified in writing to the school. Some parents have asked whether a Year 5 or 6 child can accompany a younger sibling home after school. This is not something that we permit. Children in Year 5 and 6 who do walk home should travel straight home rather than remaining in the school grounds or outside of the school gates where they are left particularly vulnerable. Please remember that we have breakfast and after school child minding facilities available should you require them – details are available from the school office. Please note that there is no supervision on the school playground before school and as such even older children should not be left unattended before 8.35am. These measures are not intended to inconvenience anyone, but merely to keep our children safe at all times. I am, of course, always open to feedback and as such any ideas or comments that you have would be most welcome. Please email head@stvincent.herts.sch.uk.

Packed lunches

Please note that we have a number of pupils and staff with potentially serious nut allergies in school. As such the school is '**nut free**'. Please do remember this when making packed lunches for your children where there should be no traces of nuts at all. I understand that some children may well be 'fussy eaters' and providing a balanced packed lunch can be difficult. However, packed lunches should not contain sweets or chocolate bars. In the New Year I will be looking for a small group of parents to assist the school in putting together some 'Healthy Packed Lunches Information'. If you are interested in being a part of this group, please do contact admin@stvincent.herts.sch.uk. I can whole heartedly recommend cook's school dinner option – I eat it most days. Herts Catering's menus are designed to meet the highest nutritional standards and represent great value for money. Worth a try?

School uniform reminder

It is great to see our children turned out so well and looking so smart. Thank you for supporting the uniform policy. Recently, we have noticed that some of the older children are arriving at school with hair dyed, coloured extensions or with shaved lines / patterns. This becomes a distraction in school and does not adhere to the uniform policy. Please save such hairstyles for the holiday periods, allowing sufficient time for them to grow out. This is in keeping with the policy as our children move on to secondary schools.

Changes to Maths delivery from January

From January we will be making some changes to the delivery of mathematics throughout the school. You may be aware that from year 4 to year 6 we currently set in mathematics. This will no longer be the case from January when we will revert to class teaching of maths for all year groups. This is to ensure that there is no ceiling on attainment for any child. Each class will operate a fully differentiated curriculum that will enable all children to perform to the best of their ability and to be challenged and supported according to their need. Reverting to class rather than set maths will provide teachers with the flexibility to extend



lessons where the learning is going well and to revisit topics later in the day where reinforcement might be needed. This should maximise learning and progress throughout the school. We will also be making use of new planning materials that will help us to organise the curriculum in such a way that pupils are able to master key mathematical skills at a broader and deeper level, applying them in a range of contexts.

Protecting our Catholic Schools

Bishops in England and Wales have launched a petition urging the Education Secretary to lift the so-called "faith cap" that prevents the Catholic Church from opening new religious schools. Please do make your views known – write to your MP, the Secretary of State for Education or anyone else that might have some influence. A formal petition and further information is available here: <http://cbcew.org.uk/education-cap>.

Christmas dinner

We are all looking forward to joining together for our school Christmas dinner day on Thursday 14th December. Opening this to all children has gone down very well and cook and her team have many extras to cater for. This will be a real celebration and staff will be eating with the children. The tables will be decorated for all children (school dinners and packed lunches) and there will be Christmas crackers for all. In the morning, we are currently planning for children to make Christmas hats to wear whilst they eat their dinner and there will be an opportunity for the older children to work with the younger children to facilitate this. Some have asked whether this will be a Christmas Jumper day and after much thought, we have decided this year that it will not be. I am aware that over this term we have already asked much of parents and I do not want parents to feel under any unnecessary pressure from children to buy a special jumper for the day. I know that this will disappoint some, but for others it will be a great relief at an expensive time of the year.

Advent 1 – Prepare ... "Awake!"

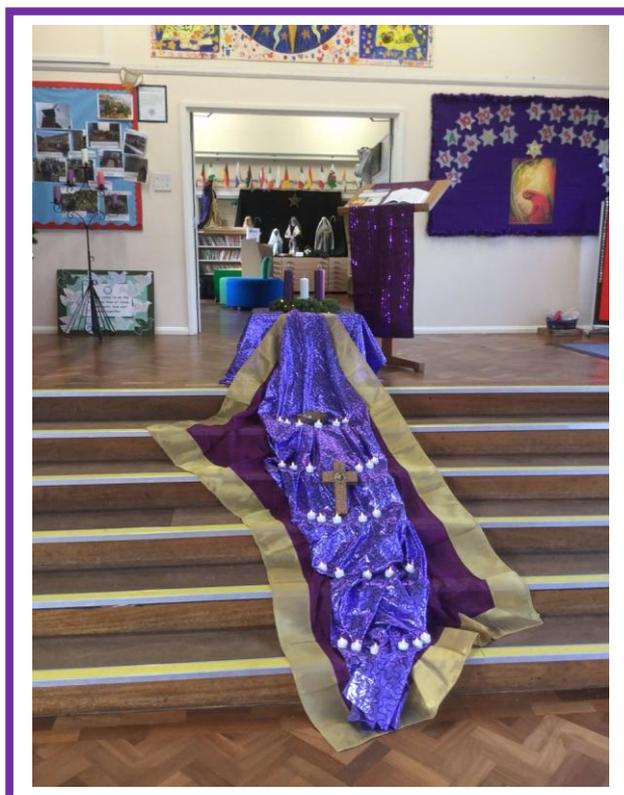
It was lovely joining together as a community on Monday and lighting the first candle on our Advent wreath.

The children were full of ideas of how they could be "awake" or alert to Jesus in their lives as they prepare for Christmas. Their Advent promises will be very fruitful, I'm sure.

For us, as adults, it is just as important that we give some time over during this busy season to prepare ourselves.

I have found the following reflection helpful in focusing me on what I might need to do to be ready for Christmas.

Maybe you will find it useful too?



This
Christmas
end a quarrel.
Seek out a forgotten
friend. Dismiss suspicion,
and replace it with trust.
Write a love letter. Share some
treasure. Give a soft answer. Keep
a promise. Find the time. Forgo a grudge.
Forgive an enemy. Listen. Apologize if you
were wrong. Try to understand. Examine your
demands on others. Think first of someone else.
Be kind; be gentle. Appreciate. Laugh a little. Laugh a
little more. Express your gratitude. Gladden the heart of a
child. Welcome a stranger. Take pleasure in the beauty and the
wonder of Earth.
Speak your love.
Speak it again.
Speak it yet
Once again.

On Tuesday the children of Year One visited **London Zoo** where they participated in a **living nativity** & visited **Father Christmas**. It was great to hear of their adventures and particularly of their fantastic behaviour and manners. Well done Year 1!



Over the next two weeks we look forward to many exciting festive events, throughout the school.

Wishing you all the joy of the season and every blessing as we make our way on the path of Advent towards the stable.

Yours sincerely

Mr Jon White
Headteacher



Please note the following diary dates:

December 2017

Fri 8th	3.15pm	Reception Cake Sale
Tues 12th	2.00pm	Nativity Play
Wed 13th	10.45am	Nativity Play
Thurs 14th	11.30-1.00pm	Christmas dinner
	2.00pm	Nativity Play (sorry, no toddlers)
Fri 15th	3.15pm	Film Night
Mon 18th	7pm	Story of Christmas in Song
Tues 19th	2pm	Term finishes (Please note the early finish)

January 2018

Wed 3rd	INSET DAY	No children in school
Thurs 4th		Children return to school

