



Dear SSAS parents and carers,

We have finally reached the end of a very long, but fun and rewarding Autumn Term! One of the key events was the publication of our successful Ofsted report earlier this month. We were delighted to be judged as a good school, with personal development across the school rated as outstanding. This is very important to us, as our key priority is ensuring that our children feel safe and happy at school, developing confidence in every aspect of their lives. The staff would like to say thank you to everyone who supported us during Ofsted. All of the kind and positive words from parents were very much appreciated.

This term, our newly-appointed Pastoral Mentor, Mrs Rees, has made a huge difference in her new role. Key Stage 2 children have enjoyed her lunchtime wellbeing clubs, while many children have also benefitted from the short-term individual and group interventions which Mrs Rees runs, such as Lego Therapy, Draw and Talk, Team-building groups and the Big Life Journal. If your child is feeling anxious, having a difficult time for any reason, or even just needing that bit of extra support to build their confidence, then do let us know. In other staffing news, we send our best wishes to Mrs Grogan, who has been recovering from surgery. Mrs Grogan has been missing all of the children and is looking forward to returning to school in the Spring Term. We have also welcomed Mrs Driver in an advisory role as consultant Head this half-term. Mrs Driver is in school for two days each week, adding extra capacity to our Senior Leadership Team. The children have already enjoyed attending 'Books, Bites and Bingo' with Mrs Driver.

Our P.T.A. Committee members have done a wonderful job this term and have introduced some popular new events. Reception and Key Stage 1 visited the 'SSAS Cinema' for a well-attended film night, while our Key Stage 2 pupils had great fun at their discos the following week. We were very impressed by the great organisational skills demonstrated by the P.T.A., the children's excellent behaviour, and the energy which the children (and staff and parents) showed on the dance-floor! Thanks to the funds raised by the P.T.A., we have been able to pay for an Anti-bullying assembly and workshop during Anti-bullying Week; a visit from a Rabbi during our study of the Jewish faith; our environmental tutor, Miss Sophia; and Peer Mediator training from Herts Mediation for our Squabble Squashers.





Catholic Life

Our beautiful collaborative mosaic was installed in the upper site Prayer Garden this half term. Everyone in school had a chance to work with a local artist to create a part of the mosaic. It was designed on the theme of 'Faith' by Year 5 and represents many of our school values .

Advent is an important time in our school year, and we have prepared for the coming of Christmas with Advent liturgies, carol services, Nativity plays and by lighting a candle on the Advent wreath each week in Assembly. We hope that as you have celebrated these events with us, you have been reminded of the birth of Jesus Christ at Christmas and God's promise to us:

**'For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called
Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.'**

Isaiah 9:6

Father John worked with our Prayer Leaders earlier in the half term to teach them about the Angelus. This Advent, they have prayed the Angelus with pupils across the school. Why not continue to pray the Angelus at home with your family this Advent?

<https://www.thereligionteacher.com/angelus-prayer-for-children/>

Our Catholic Social Teaching theme this half term has been 'Option for the Poor and Vulnerable'. Thank you to all of those parents who have generously donated to the Mini Vinnies' Appeal for the Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, which supports those suffering in humanitarian disasters including the Israel-Gaza war. Thank you also to those who donated to our local Rennie Grove Hospice charity for Christmas Jumper day yesterday. You can still donate via Arbor. We will let you know how much we have raised in the Spring term.



Online Safety

This half term, pupils have continued to learn about how to keep themselves safe online as part of our PSHE and Computing curriculum. However, the majority of the time that children spend online will take place at home. Over the holidays, it is likely that many children will spend more time online and may also receive new devices. Some simple tips to keep your child safe and help them to develop healthy digital habits are:

- ⇒ Set an agreed screen time each day with a set turn-off time at least an hour before bedtime.
- ⇒ Set parental controls on sites that your children access. Make sure that you know the age limits for any social media sites or online games.
- ⇒ Set up any new devices with appropriate parental controls before your child receives them.
- ⇒ Set a rule that children must ask your permission before adding anyone as a 'friend'.
- ⇒ Regularly talk to your child about the sites they visit, the games they use and what they enjoy doing online. Ask them to show you some of their favourite apps, sites or games.

Helpful advice for parents can be found at <https://www.childnet.com/blog/christmas-2022/> and <https://saferinternet.org.uk/guide-and-resource/top-tips-for-staying-safe-online-at-christmas>

Reminders

We look forward to seeing everyone back in school on Monday 8th January at 8.45. Please be in school promptly. Classroom doors open at 8.45 and close at 8.55 a.m..

In the event of snow in the Spring term, we will always try to keep the school open if it is safe to do so. We may need to wait and see how many of our staff who live outside St Albans will be able to travel to work before we can make the decision that it is safe to open the school. If it snows, check the school website for a news post letting you know whether school is open or not, and whether Breakfast and After School Club are on. We will also send an Arbor message.

If you live close to the school and would be willing to shovel snow from the paths, please contact the School Office. We would love to have a list of emergency volunteers who can be called on if it snows!

Finally, thank you all for the generous gifts and lovely cards sent to staff. Mr Jackson, our School Crossing Patrol, has asked us to say a special thank you to parents. He was thrilled with his gifts and told me how much he loves our school, the parents and children.

We wish you a lovely and peaceful Christmas break with your family and friends
and look forward to seeing you in 2024.



With best wishes,

Ms Hackett

&

Mrs Smith

