



Friday 12th April 2019

Dear Parents / Carers

The mixed weather is a clear indication that it is time for the Easter break and time for me to write to you once more. Well, the second half of the spring term has been as busy as ever. As well as the exciting curriculum topics covered in each year group, the children have enjoyed themed learning days/weeks and sporting events and I will share a little about some of them with you now.

At St Edward's, we know and value the importance of reading as a skill that unlocks a world of knowledge and imagination from childhood and in adulthood. The children thoroughly enjoyed their day of learning based around the book 'Socks' by Nick Sharratt and Elizabeth Lindsay on **World Book Day** in March. The character socks that they made were amazing. The children were really proud to showcase their entries, talk about their favourite books and to see their friends' entries too. Thank you to everyone for making the day special for your children, and to Miss Bills for leading the event across the school.

Another day was enjoyed by all whilst raising money on '**Red Nose Day**'. The role reversal of teachers and children made for a fun day concluding in a celebration assembly led by the 'teachers' from the School Council. They presented all staff with an award and explained why they were deserving of them. Their comments about their learning, safety and care were excellent examples of pupil voice and opinion about the culture, values and ethos of our school. On the serious side of this fund raising event, the children were able to explain why they were raising money and give examples of who it could help and how. This learning is a fundamental part of character education and Christian principles that are pivotal to us at St Edward's. Thank-you to you all for helping us to raise £203.50 for this cause and thank you to Mrs Blairs and Mr Warrington for their vital roles in organising the day.

I was, once again, so proud of our choir who sang at St Andrew's Methodist Church to celebrate 150 years of **Action for Children**. It was another example of our global education opportunities and, though I wasn't able to attend myself, I had fantastic reports from Mrs Huckfield, parents and members of the community. Community partners from St Andrew's are also supporting us with assemblies, Godly Play in Key Stage 1 and Art Club in Key Stage 2 and we thank them for their strong community links with us. It was a pleasure to showcase some of the children's learning from **Science Week** with you in March. Active investigating, exploring and observing was of the essence with the children engaging in many exciting learning activities including very smelly socks that, to the children's amazement, grew some very interesting plants! Thank-you Mr Carter for leading this and bringing science to life throughout the week!

Thank you for the overwhelmingly positive feedback from our **'Watch me Learn'** sessions. The significant development point was to have more of them in the future! You found them useful in showcasing what and how your children learn in school, including GPaS (Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling) and CPA (Concrete, Pictorial, Abstract) strategies in maths. As these are priorities on our Academy Development Plan, it is pleasing that we are working on elements together as we continually improve provision and experiences for our children. Thank-you to Mrs Hordern for enthusiastically organising the sessions and for inspiring the parents and staff to want more!

We have celebrated yet more sporting achievements this term at St Edward's! It was a pleasure for me to watch our Hockey Teams play during the Local Schools **Hockey** Tournament. They represented the school impeccably with their team spirit and sportsmanship. This, along with their dedication to practice and improve their skills, resulted in us winning the overall competition and really credible places for ALL of our teams. The children really were a credit to us all. Well done to Mr Carter, staff and the children for your commendable achievements!

Our Year 4's have had an amazing time on their **Standon Bowers** Residential experience. I visited for the day on Tuesday and experienced caving, bouldering, archery, bridge building and an evening walk with the children. It was wonderful to see their teamwork, support for each other and independence developing in front of my eyes. I know that you will want to join me in thanking the staff that accompanied them (Mr Carter, Mr Warrington, Mrs Clifford and Mrs Sigley) and their families, for giving their 'round the clock' time so that this experience could happen. One complimentary email received would like to nominate a member of staff for an award for going above and beyond the 'call of duty' as a teacher; what greater appreciation could there be? Our staff also want to share how fantastic the Standon Bowers staff team were throughout their stay. They nurture bravery and risk taking through building excellent relationships, trust and teamwork. I know that many of you have seen this in action on our Twitter page updates!

On the subject of **Twitter**....we are looking to update and modernise ways in which we share school life and experiences with you at home. You can view our trialled Twitter page @StedwardsC We will be looking to update your permissions and will then be sharing learning experiences for all classes from in school and out of school adventures too. We will be reviewing our website in the summer term with the intention that events, news and updates will be communicated as routine and promptly – watch this space!

Our **Easter Church service** on Thursday was a time to focus, remember and reflect on our Christian beliefs. Thank you to Reverend Diane and Mrs Huckfield who skilfully correlate history with modern day contexts so that the children truly access the teachings and lessons of Jesus. Lessons in church and in school focus on Jesus' sacrifice and what that did, and continues to do for us today. Well done to the children that spoke, read prayers and passages from the Bible and sang during the service. It was also a privilege to present Mr Mike Worthington, from The Parish Council, with a remembrance wreath made from poppies. The poppies were made in church and in school as part of the centenary remembrance. The petals include the names of local servicemen that gave their lives for their country and us all so many years ago. Mr Worthington and The British Legion, will lay the wreath at the Menin Gate on behalf of the Cheddleton Community – what a fantastic honour! A community calendar for 2020 is also underway with our children and wreath featuring as the month of May – how exciting!

As ever, our amazing **PTFA** have excelled in their recent events. Thank you to them for your **Special Ladies Day afternoon tea** and the opportunity for your children to buy their own gifts. I think you will agree that Mrs Johnson also did an amazing job of sharing your special photographs too. Feedback evidences that the events were thoroughly enjoyed by adults and children and whispers on how to make it even better next year were buzzing around before we had even finished sweeping the floors! Some of us also joined PTFA members and enjoyed a fundraising 'Curry Night' on Monday at Rajah Tandoori Restaurant. What a treat to be out on a school night! At their meeting in early March, the PTFA agreed to fund playground equipment (at the children's request) and a cordless microphone. They have also paid for an Easter treat for every child that will be coming home with them tonight! Thank-you again PTFA for all that they do for our school community!

Another successful event held was St Edward's annual **charity plant sale**. Once again, our Local Academy Council member, Rob Gee, organised and led the event with precision. Thank you to Rob, members of the church community, Cancer Research fundraisers and staff for giving so generously of their time to make a staggering £514.92 for each of the charities and school fund.

May I thank you for the many comments and compliments that you share with us to let us know what we do well and how much you appreciate all that we do to make school experiences the very best that they can be for our children. Your feedback sheets, emails and kind words make a difference and impact positively on staff wellbeing; a high profile area in the media arena and in relation to teacher retention. I often update you (and sometimes grumble) on **Health and Safety** issues. We had our Health and Safety Audit recently and I am happy to inform you that the report recognises us as a 'Continually Improving Health & Safety Organisation'. Thank you Mrs Fryer and Hope from SUAT for their leadership resulting in us achieving the highest overall rating achievable with particular strengths recognised in communication, employee health and wellbeing, accident and Incident management and emergency preparedness. Thank-you for respecting the need to lock the gates to our driveway and please remember that parking on the zig-zag lines is strictly prohibited at all times.

I am also pleased to share that our continually improving provision and practice has been recognised during a recent leadership learning walk where the impact of the leadership team and improving teaching and learning was recognised. Our Education Improvement Partner was impressed with the recently updated displays that, 'Celebrate children's work' and 'showcase the broad and balanced curriculum at St Edward's' during his spring term visit. It was also lovely for us all to see Mrs Ward, in her role as Director of Learning and School Improvement for our Multi-Academy Trust and to showcase what we have been up to this year and to see data and documents presented to our trust in reality. Mr Hollins, the Chief Executive Officer of SUAT attended our recent Local Academy Council meeting and also thanked the LAC members and school leaders for their roles and impact at St Edward's. Largely positive feedback from parents' evening, and much appreciated compliments received indicate that communication is improving and that your voices are valued and heard. However, I am aware that I am later than usual in sharing recent staffing changes and apologise for this. As nursery parents are now aware, following a period of absence, Mrs Millington has resigned from her position as a Teaching Assistant at St Edward's. Mrs Best is now leading the Early Year Foundation Stage and Mrs Blairs is working across both Nursery and Reception. Mrs Mellor, an experienced Early Years professional, who joined our SEAC staff team this term, is working in nursery as well as in year 4. Mrs Higgins is in the nursery (she can't keep away 😊) covering Mrs Walker's current absence. Improvements in the Early Years have been recognised in recent weeks and our priorities are for this to continue and for stability to be maintained for our children.

Mrs Grannon has left for pastures new but continues to be a much valued mum of St Edward's and friend to us all. We wish her well with her 'new pursuits'! Mrs Shepherd keeps trying to get away but is still with us for now before she finally escapes to family in Sheffield. We are hanging on to her for as long as possible but know it won't be forever!

We are really lucky that Mrs Manifold, an outstanding Teaching Assistant, also joined our staff team this term. She shares our values and ethos and has settled in as if she has been here forever! On another good note...we are delighted to welcome back Mrs Gee. As you all know, she is an excellent practitioner with many years of valuable experience and is a valuable and much appreciated asset to our team of Children's Champions!

I must end now as I am conscious that you have been reading for some time! A letter and our uniform policy will be coming out to you in addition to this letter in case we have any eager beavers that want to purchase early 😊. There are some minor changes so please take note before you spend!

I am really looking forward to seeing entries for our Community Art Project and proudly displaying them at Westwood College, SUAT Headquarters and around school – be as creative and as large as you like! Let's hope the sun shines so that the children can enjoy being inspired and creative outside in the fresh air!

With very best wishes for a safe and Happy Easter with your families and friends

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Mrs Machin
Principal

