

Saint Mary's Catholic Primary School



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RE: Midweek Update for all parents

Dear Parents



CAFOD LiveSimply Prayer:

Compassionate and loving God, you created the world for us all to share, a world of beauty and plenty. Create in us a desire to live simply, so that our lives may reflect your generosity.

Creator God, you gave us responsibility for the earth, a world of riches and delight. Create in us a desire to live sustainably, so that those who follow after us may enjoy the fruits of your creation.

God of peace and justice, you give us the capacity to change, to bring about a world that mirrors your wisdom. Create in us a desire to act in solidarity, so that the pillars of injustice crumble and those now crushed are set free. Amen.

With Christ in our hearts we grow in love to help others.

Welcoming All the Children Back on 8th March!

Great news! All the children are coming back in from 8th March. We are looking through the new guidance but at the moment we anticipate running as we did in the Autumn term with the same staggered drop off and pick ups in the same places. We'll maintain social distance COVID19 safe procedures too with the children in bubbles. Children will be in school uniform (can be summer or winter) and PE kits on Fridays please. More in the update on Friday. A message went out via the school app earlier this week. If you don't have the app please download it by following the instructions here: www.bit.ly/SMIAPP.

Virtual Parents' Evenings

These will be on Tuesday 23rd and Wednesday 24th March – more information next week. We are still investigating the best platform to use and the most efficient way of setting them up.

Maths No Problem! parent resources and answers

A reminder that you should now access the answers to the MNP! Work yourself. Please follow the instructions below to set up a parent account.

Sign up for Parent Guides by following this link and entering the appropriate access code for your child's year group.

<https://hub.mathsnoproblem.com/self-signup/OLLK75B>

Y1: WG8MRLL

Y2: THQMX4F

Y3: DVQAWQ8

Y4: WQGWEQ9

Y5: BH4OM65

Y6: VLSYGO3

Once you're signed in, you'll be able to access maths content for your child's year group, along with help guides and lesson support.

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Please **only sign up** to the appropriate year group(s) as there will be a limit to the number of active accounts; this is based on the number of children we have in each year group.

CAFOD's LiveSimply

St Mary's Isleworth has been awarded CAFOD's LiveSimply award. Fantastic news for the start of Lent which recognises all the school has done (and will continue to do) in response to Pope Francis' call that we care more for the earth and for those less fortunate than us. Pope Francis issued this challenge to all of us in his encyclical '*Laudato Si'*'. Here's the article about us and our journey which CAFOD have published:

St Mary's Catholic Primary School in Isleworth, West London, received its LiveSimply award last week after a two-hour online assessment organised by CAFOD. For more than two years the school of 38 staff and 424 pupils has put into action a plan to move towards living simply, sustainably and in solidarity with the poor. The award is the 85th to be given and St Mary's is the second school in Westminster Diocese.

The assessors - Ellen Teague (Columban JPIC) and Maggie Beirne (West London Justice and Peace Network) - met with the school contacts for the award, Reception Teacher Emma Dawson, Angela Scott RE lead and Headmaster Farley Marsh. Their enthusiasm and dedication to their pupils and to the award's values was inspiring.

They worked through the report presented by the school. For living simply, the school has regularly promoted 100 Live Simply ideas on the school website. A 'LiveSimply' banner is displayed at the entrance to the school, made from recycled materials and there is encouragement of individual and class initiatives to promote living simply. Children's liturgies and collective worship mark particular significant days such as the UN's World Water Day. To reduce the carbon footprint of school meals, the school has a weekly meat-free day, highlighting that being kinder to the environment means being kinder to poor communities globally. Fish is always on Friday's menu. There is a lot of interaction with pupils around the menus and catering staff are engaged in planning a LiveSimply approach.

On living sustainably, significant efforts have been made to improve energy efficiency. The school is part of ReFit programme - London Schools Energy Reduction Programme - allowing major changes to lighting, boilers, electrical devices - and improving the environmental footprint. It also made a bid for further Council funding to allow for improvements to heating, getting more solar panels and developing ground-source heating. Points are given to children who are 'eco warriors' to reward recycling and reusing materials in classrooms, and picking up litter. There is a 'paper free' approach to communications with parents. Single use plastic cutlery and polystyrene packaging are no longer used

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in the school. The school has a cycling scheme with training for pupils and even supporting staff to obtain bikes for transport to work.

A prayer garden has been developed in the school grounds allowing children space for reflection and prayer; this is situated alongside a wildlife-friendly garden which contains plants such as Buddleia to attract butterflies. Caring for Creation is a component of Catholic Social Teaching woven into all areas of the school's work. The Religious Education course offers a whole unit on the encyclical 'Laudato Si' and emphasises that faith is a key motivation for responding to the needs of 'our common home'.

The commitment to 'Solidarity with the poor' has involved recruiting children to be 'mini-vinnies' - a project of St Vincent de Paul - as ambassadors' of the Live Simply theme. The school supports a Mary's Meals backpack project; a local foodbank; and CAFOD world gifts - both for staff donations in lieu of Christmas cards to each other, and to promote on the website. Biblical stories are used to raise awareness of poverty and motivate children to feel able to respond. The assessors met one of the older children who spoke about knitting blankets for people who are homeless and making cakes for fundraising events. She said she felt "special" and "important" for being able to help people in need. Compassion is certainly nurtured at St Mary's. Links with the local parish are strong, although opportunities have been more limited during Covid. Regular use is made of CAFOD website materials for children's liturgies.

The assessors were very impressed by the commitment of the staff team and its close working with the children and parents on all the projects. The Live Simply programme is regarded as a "whole school" effort. The children are fully involved in choosing the projects, and it was impressive to see how much was getting done, despite all the problems created by Covid-19. The school does much to incorporate protection of the environment with other issues of justice and the thinking about how to do this has been very creative.

For the future, the school has clear targets: recruiting more 'Mini-Vinnies' (linked to the SVP), moving the school buildings even further towards sustainability, and creating a new website which they will use to promote 'Laudato Si' and their Live Simply initiatives. They hope to 'up' the profile of their work across the school community and beyond.

The school was told it was a 'beacon' school, and that it should be proud of all it has achieved, particularly over a year when the pandemic has been so disruptive of normal activities.

LINKS

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St Mary's Catholic Primary School - www.smi.hounslow.sch.uk/

CAFOD Livesimply award - <https://cafod.org.uk/Campaign/Livesimply-award>

Press release St Mary's: <https://www.indcatholicnews.com/news/41547>

We are really proud of the way in which we've changed the way we run the school so that our footprints are lighter and we are grateful too for your help and suggestions in all of these areas – please keep them coming in! Thank you everyone!

Take care everyone and stay safe! See you all on the 8th March!

F Marsh

Headteacher

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