



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School  
Regents Gate  
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Devon  
EX8 1TA

Head Teacher: Mrs J Stephens

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SEND NEWSLETTER 2023

19th July 2023

Dear Parents / Carers,

### **Overview**

As the academic year draws to an end, I would like to take this opportunity to update you with news of what has been happening for SEND at St Joseph's. A key focus has been on developing our universal provision in every class enabling all children to thrive academically. We have worked closely with Devon SEND advisory teams to consider ways to break down barriers for learning. As part of our professional development as staff we received training on aim to become a fully Trauma Informed school. We have begun to embed relational support and co-regulation plans into our classroom practice to support our learners. We have focused on inclusive and adaptive in the moment scaffolding for our SEND children to ensure they can reach their full potential. We have seen some fantastic achievements from our SEND children who have completed the Little Wandle reading catch up programmes and we are proud of the success of all children in their SATS and phonics screen. The staff at St Joseph's have provided a rich and varied curriculum this year which has been enjoyed by all children and it has been a pleasure to watch the children flourish.

### **Wider School Opportunities**

It has been a delight to see so many children this year thrive in our extra-curricular offer and develop their interests. It has given me great pleasure to see our children performing in choir and taking part of our newly developed sports teams. These opportunities have given children a new passion and sense of belonging for school and watching them grow and develop has been a joy. Children have enjoyed a number of trips this year to support their learning. Favourites have been the Eden Project and our link with Exmouth House Care Home. Our forest school sessions have provided sensory experiences for our learners.

### **Well Being**

To support the well-being of our children, we have launched a new policy of promoting mental health through recruiting and training Pupil Mental Health Ambassadors who look out for children in school. It has been our aim to raise awareness by openly discussing mental health in assemblies and through our PSHE curriculum. We have been extremely fortunate to have the following interventions running to support well-being.

## **HEADS UP**

- Individual counselling and in groups to deliver sports through well-being.
- Young Carers Rise Up Group for children supporting someone in the home
- Football Teams and sports teams at KS1 and KS2 to promote self esteem

## **Time to Talk**

- Intervention following the growth mindset model to help children with strategies for resilience, anxiety and positive mindset.

We continue to be very grateful to Mrs Walsh who has dedicated her time to come to school and see children one to one to support with reading. Parents have been invited to meet Mrs Monks and Mrs Walsh on two occasions this year to discuss progress. Mrs Walsh will be in one morning a week from September.

Alongside this, we have assigned a small group of our families to EARLY HELP “Right for Children.” We have been then able to engage with other agencies to support these families where needed. We are very proud of our families who have engaged in these meetings and services and have seen positive outcomes for both the children and parents.

## **Community Links**

This year we have worked closely with Esteem Team to provide our children with sessions that specialise in supporting alternative ways to learning. In the Autumn term some of our children visited Esteem to complete a program of STEM sessions which were fully enjoyed by all. We also hosted a session about Sensory Needs for parents and professionals.

## **SEND Support**

Our borough is underfunded and in deficit for SEND and 0-25 team have failed their inspection to satisfactorily meet requirements for SEND. The wait for EHCP assessments continues to be months above twenty weeks. 0-25 TEAM make all our funding decisions and we have built a good relationship with our assigned workers. They have very few caseworkers for the number of cases they deal with and we know this has felt very challenging for parents at times. We have many successes on all EHCPs applied for, despite the process being slow. We empathise with parents awaiting decisions and would like you to be aware that you are not alone. If you feel you need support as a parent outside what we can offer, please contact DIAS. <https://devonias.org.uk/>

We understand that supporting a child with SEND needs can be a challenge as a parent, as well as communicating with us at school, we would like to signpost parents to Esteem Team catch sessions. Please see the website or facebook page for events happening over the summer. We are also hosting a more personal event at 9am Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> September for parents to meet Esteem. Please email [admin@stjo.uk](mailto:admin@stjo.uk) if you would like to meet Cara on this morning with a cup of tea and meet other SEND parents. They can help and advise you as parents on the EHCP process, referring for diagnosis for your child and general support.

## **SEND Practice**

Despite these challenges, we have built excellent relationships with the Devon SEND advisory teams and have invited them to school to help staff break down barriers to learning. We have worked closely with the Communication and Interaction and Social Emotional Mental Health Teams on a “think words” project where we trained staff on how to identify language barriers and use tools and strategies to improve learning behaviours.

Staff at St Joseph's continue to strive to support SEND through training and research. As a school we pride ourselves on a needs based approach to our children. At St Joseph's a child does not require a diagnosis or EHCP to receive support. I have been into classes this year, working alongside subject leaders and teachers to support SEND. As a school we believe in pupil voice and we have developed a SEND action group to help us understand how the children feel in class and understand how we can further support them. Like all schools we have experienced financial cuts and hardships but we been creative and used our talents and skills within to boost our SEND offer and help our children thrive.

We hope you have been able to attend your child's support meetings where we put together a support plan with specific targets individual to your child. We would like to stress the value in working as a team and it is important to us that you feel part of the process. All information and pupil passports will be shared with the new teachers for September. We are aware that transition can be a worrying time and hope to make children feel at ease. A reminder that our window for SEND meetings is November, March and June annually. In addition if you have any concerns please see your class teacher.

### **MA SENDCO Award**

Behind the scenes this year, I have been studying my SENDCO MA at Plymouth university. I hope to graduate in February 2024!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the families for our shared partnership this year and for supporting your children. It has been a pleasure working alongside you. I would also like to thank all our volunteers, especially Mrs Walsh and Mrs Cook who go above and beyond to support the children. We are so fortunate to have a dedicated team who genuinely care. Finally our teaching assistants who are the foundations of the school. Their energy, enthusiasm and passion for the children is outstanding. They often give up their own time to support our children. We are extremely lucky to have such a wonderful team.

I wish you all a happy, restful and healthy summer and we look forward to seeing you on September 6<sup>th</sup>.

Kind Regards

Emily Monks  
SENCO

