



**Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic Primary School
December 2022**

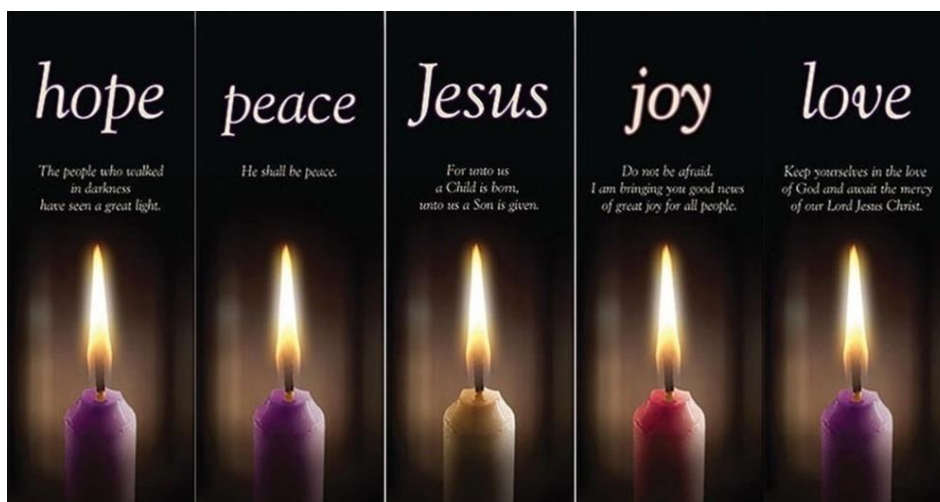
Dear Families of Our Lady's

As we approach the end of term as a staff team we are so pleased that we have been able to welcome parents and families back in to school and to church this term. It has been especially lovely for the Reception Class and KS1 nativity to be seen by all pupils and for families to share in these events.

This afternoon our whole school will celebrate together in church with our Key Stage 2 Carol Service. We look forward to welcoming parents to the event. Following this, parents will be able to have refreshments offered by the PTA.

We hope that these events have warmed your hearts as much as they have ours and the children's.

They have most certainly set the scene for a peaceful and joyful Christmas tide.



PTA School Events Return

It has also been a joy to reopen the events organised by the PTA after such a long time. These add such a sense of community to school life. The Key stage 2 disco was a great success. The key stage 1 film night in pyjamas again was so exciting for the children. Part way through as a group of children trundled off to the toilets and travelled along the empty corridor, I overheard one of them saying, 'this is my best day ever'. We are so thankful to you for arranging for your children to attend the events and to share in them with us.

So many staff and parents have worked to make these events possible so we are very grateful to each person and the part they have played.

Care Kindness Friendship Trust Empathy Compassion	Learn Have a go Aim high Self-belief Resilience Reflection	Respect Listening Understanding Thoughtfulness Responsibility Manners
Love one another as I have loved you		

Care – Learn – Respect

In school this term we have continued to grow our school values and to work to live them. As a whole school it was so joyful to see our harvest tins grow from 1 to over 400. The Blackpool Foodbank were so grateful to us for over 70 Kgs of food which all went to support local families.

We also shared the important message of Remembrance Day through our care and respect values and shared a beautiful Remembrance reflection lead by Year 6.

We have continued this focus of respect and kindness through the rest of the term to encourage children to be peacemakers as a mark of respect for those who, in times of war, work so hard, to bring us the peace that we now have.

Everyone a leader

This term we have brought back Year 5 buddies and play leaders. All of year 6 are prefects with the important role of supporting our school as key role models.

Across the school we have introduced a common language to support positive relationships and to reconcile children when wrong choices are made. Much work is being done to listen and to take positive actions to further develop this by building skills to respond effectively.

With the input of older pupils we have been tracking games they play and considering how rules and rule changing can impact on the success (or not) of games. Next term older children will be sharing their learning with younger children. We have also introduced new equipment into the play grounds and purchased further items of play equipment to continue to manage the full transition from field to play ground for next term (which I am told will be wet and cold – how I am enjoying Blackpool weather!).

Curriculum Work

As you have seen with wider school life the last three years slowed progress and the same has been true for curriculum developments.

Since September there have been changes to the way that reading and writing are taught in key stage 2 to bring them in line with best practice. We have worked with the local English hub and received funding to update teaching approaches, training and to purchase resources to support this.

The school has had a very long standing relationship with the national maths excellence hub with the school maths lead accessing excellent training over time.

We have been building on the knowledge gained to ensure that staff have the knowledge and skills needed and have purchased new resources to support this.

With the refresh of the values the entrance area has been reorganised so that our values can be made visible. We have a working wall of messages and posters that have been used this term to reinforce our Gospel values that each one of us is loved. As well as prefects, buddies and play leaders we also have school council and librarians nominated with work planned for next term. We also plan to introduce school chaplains who will work on growing our faith activities and links.

Across all areas of the curriculum we are reviewing plans and resources and how we can provide purposeful visits and visitors to strengthen learning of knowledge and skills gained in class.

Our work as the Lead Associate school for the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) continues and this term we welcomed professionals from the RSC who worked directly with pupils. We also continue to work with The Blackpool Sports Partnership, accessing quality lessons and opportunities in and out of school.

Most recently our school choir attended the Blackpool Catholic Schools Advent Service with 40 members of our school choir taking part.

We continue to build and develop children's skills and knowledge by seeking opportunities that will further develop children's experiences in and out of school.

Before and After School Club

After a phase without a manager it has been decided that school will take over the management of this provision. I have been working with the local authority, governors and the current staff team on this transition. We are following the legal steps to transfer this, which should be finalised by Easter. On a day to day basis those accessing this very popular provision should not experience any changes. We will keep you updated.

WiFi System Upgrade - Blackpool Connect

We have had a Government Grant bid confirmed which will pay for a full upgrade of the school WiFi system which will significantly improve connectivity. Currently there are some areas of school that have low connectivity and across the school we do have regular internet interruptions. We are very pleased that this significant funding has been made available to us via a grant rather than coming from school funds.

Communication Links – Home to School

Earlier in the term we set up an email system so that all parents/ carers and school class groups could be contacted directly through email rather than relying on a hard copy letter via a child's book bag. Feedback from parents suggests that this is going well.

Teachers continue to communicate directly and to update parents via their weekly information which they then post to the website. Again we hope that these single lines of communication are more effective in ensuring that you are kept informed of school life and future dates and events.

We also try to provide information in advance and then offer reminders closer to key dates to ensure that key information is not missed. Again feedback suggests that this is working for you.

We are working hard to improve many aspects of school life. We are always working to build, to improve and to develop. Please know that you are always able to come in to school/ or mail if you have concerns, questions or ideas.

Parent Pay for lunch ordering

We had hoped to set this up during this term so that parents/ carers could select what they wished their child to eat each day.

We apologise that this has not happened this term as we hoped. The local authority have ended their contract with the IT company that manages the app for this system and have notified us that it will now be next term before they are set up to make this switch. We will keep you informed of this.

Attendance Matters

Over time it has been recognised that for the vast majority of children school success is directly linked to good attendance. National studies support this. Where attendance falls below 95% and 90 % it is expected that children's learning will be significantly affected.

As a school we appreciate the many steps you take to support us with the monitoring of attendance. Parents / carers are prompt in reporting absence and the reasons which saves much admin time as we must know each day where every child is and the reason for any absence.

You are also aware of the need to complete an absence request from for planned absence. As a school we follow national best practice and can authorise the attendance of a wedding or funeral of direct family member as well as any offsite education. If the planned absence is for any other reason it is still important that you let us know in advance so that where possible we can support you in keeping up school learning.

Our attendance registers are closely monitored by the local authority to support you and us. I meet fortnightly with the pupil welfare officer. This work by the local authority is to support us all to achieve the best attendance possible for each child.

If you have any questions or concerns about your child's attendance then please do not hesitate to contact me or admin with your query.

Ice tragedy

Following the heart breaking news of the children who lost their lives last weekend when they fell through ice all schools will be reminding parents and families to consider local areas of open water that might be frozen and to ensure children are not accessing these.

As a school community we have chosen not to raise this directly with the children as we appreciate that it could cause children distress. Individual children have raised it with us so please be aware that if you have not shared it with them your child may know about this from other children in school. Children may have questions and concerns about this.

We know that at this time you will join us in holding the children and their families in our thoughts and prayers.

Non Uniform Day Tuesday 20th Dec 2022

Our last day of term will be a non-uniform day with contributions going to PTA funds. We have not called it a Christmas jumper day as we don't want children and families to feel pressured to purchase a jumper at this time. Children can wear home clothes that are Christmassy or not.

We are all aware of the challenges everyone is facing at this time with so many rises in costs for essential items. Heat and light and basic food should not have to be at risk but we know that these rising costs are adding pressure in ways we have not experienced before. If you are in a position to help support charities at this time please consider this but also please know that we have access to support agencies for members of our school family who may need support at this time

We are teaching the children that asking for help when it is actually needed is the action of an assertive person. Problem solving and seeking solutions are positive actions.

Wishing you a very safe and happy Christmas season.

A reminder that we return to school on Tuesday 3rd January 2023

