

# St Lawrence's RC Primary School



11 March 2016

Dear parents,

**Last year, we managed to raise an incredible £1600 in our Race for Life run. This year, I'd like to give you details of the two projects that we will be supporting. I'd love to hear of any fundraising ideas that parents or children may have.**

**MARY'S MEALS:** On Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> February we had a lovely assembly to tell us all about a great charity called Mary's Meals. Jim came from Carlisle to give us the information. The charity aims to get children to school in Malawi (the world's poorest country) and to give them a meal every day. We are going to help by taking part in The Back Pack project. We are collecting old, but useable back packs and filling them with essential items like, soap, toothbrush, pencils, notepad, towel and some small item of clothing. We have already got a big box full of donations. It is a great way to put our Lenten promises into action in the Year of Mercy. When we have enough back packs, a lorry will arrive at school, ready to take our donations on their long journey to Africa. It is a wonderful charity and a great way for our children to understand their mission in the world to help the poor and those less fortunate than ourselves.

**MUHORONI WATER APPEAL:** On Tuesday, Mr Duffy the Head Teacher from St John Vianney visited our school along with Father David Smith, who is the Parish Priest from St John Vianney. They are co-ordinating an appeal for a new bore hole to keep the only hospital in Muhoroni, Kenya open.

The hospital is run by a missionary sister from the UK. St Vincent's hospital and the two schools are totally dependent on water butts for their water supply. They collect rain water in the wet season. When empty, the only choice is to go to the river, which is fraught with dangers and provides poor quality of water. Recently, the plastic water butts that have been installed have started to show signs of deterioration. As the plastic ages in the sun, some water butts have split and failed. Replacement costs are extremely high and it will be most cost effective, in the long term, to sink a deep bore hole to provide clean, fresh water.

This project has never been tackled because of the considerable costs involved. Geological reports highlight that a 150m deep bore hole will provide a good yield of water. The cost of drilling the bore hole is approximately £15,000 - £25,000. This project sits well within Pope Francis' call to the world wide Roman Catholic Community during this forthcoming 'Jubilee of Mercy' to show God's love in action. All of the city's 18 Catholic primary schools are combining fundraising efforts to make this possible for the people of Muhoroni. Raising this money will genuinely save lives and make a huge difference to the community in Kenya. The missionaries there are truly doing God's work.

**LEXIA:** We have recently invested in the Lexia programme to help the children with their reading. The Governors have agreed to invest over £11,000 in the programme over a three year period so that each of our children have licenses. Lexia is proven to significantly increase reading progress as long as it is used correctly. At least one hour per week (3 x 20 minutes is ideal) while being supervised by an adult.

It is a programme that adapts itself to the children's ability depending on how well they are able to answer the questions given to them. Lexia will be timetabled in school but must also be used at home. School can monitor usage from both home and school. All that is needed is an internet connection! It doesn't work on a phone (it is too big) but works on tablets, laptops and PCs. I have even witnessed a child doing his 20 minute session in the car due to his Dad's Bluetooth connection. How times change!

We will look to launch Lexia straight after Easter. Miss Kimmitt will be running workshops to introduce the programme to each class with parents invited. She will also do an after school catch up session for those who can't make it. The timetable is as follows:

Reception	Thursday 17 March 1.15pm
Y1	Thursday 17 March 1.45pm
Y2	Thursday 17 March 2.15pm
Y3	Friday 18 March 9.05am
Y4	Friday 18 March 1.15pm
Y5	Friday 18 March 1.45pm
Y6	Friday 18 March 2.15pm
Catch Up Session (All welcome)	Monday 11 April 3.30pm

**ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY:** After being decimated through illness after Christmas we certainly got back on track in the last three weeks. This week has been good, but the two weeks prior to that have been our best ever regarding attendance. So well done everybody! We need to make a huge effort to get to school to make the progress needed. 95% is the target for each of our children. Anyone under 90% will be contacted by the attendance officer at the Local Authority as a matter of policy.

We have a small number of children who are regularly late. In future, this will also be monitored as we are finding that the same children are missing the same lessons each day which creates gaps in their learning. Please make every effort to have the children ready to start by 8.55am so that they can access a full education. Also, children should only leave school early if there is an exceptional circumstance.

**DINNER MONEY:** Please make an effort to keep up with payments for dinner money. Debts can quickly build up. We would love to give free dinners to all of our children but sadly this is not possible. If debts are not paid after reminders we have no choice but to hand the matter over to the Local Authority to recover the money owed.

**PE KIT AND UNIFORM:** Please make sure that the children are always equipped with the correct uniform and PE kit including appropriate footwear. PE in Key Stage 1 is always on a Monday. In Key Stage 2 it is always a Thursday.

**BEHAVIOUR:** As Head Teacher, I take great pride in the behaviour displayed by our children. OFSTED commented on their courteous behaviour and conscientious attitudes. As I mentioned above, Mr Duffy praised them to the hilt during his visit on Tuesday. Year 5 were fantastic on their trip to the Just Is conference and were praised by the Head Teacher of another school. Nothing gives me greater pleasure than hearing how well our children have represented our school and yourselves as parents. Of course, they will occasionally bicker and make a wrong choice but it is vital that we work together as teachers and parents to correct our children gently when they do wrong. We all have the very best interests of the children at heart.

**STANDARDS:** The Government have recently published exemplification materials detailing their expectations for the children with regard to writing. Needless to say, expectations have never been higher. Work that may have been previously expected in Year 4 is now expected in Year 2. Our Year 6 children are now expected to produce work (particularly writing) of an incredibly advanced nature. As a result, you will notice that homework and spellings are becoming more difficult. It is incredibly important that we continue to support the children both at home and in school.

I am determined that standards are high for the children and that they are pushed to their maximum in school by their teachers. However, I am also aware that they are children and deserve a wide range of experiences and visits that will help them grow not just academically, but spiritually, morally and physically as well. Together, we can achieve this.

Yours faithfully

**Mr Paul Brown**  
Head Teacher