

Hello, and thank you for Msgr for asking me to speak today and share a little bit about our school. My name is Emma Cashier and I'm the headteacher at St Joseph's which is the parish school for St Thomas A Beckett church. For those of you that don't know where we are based we are just around the corner on Oakhill Road, just before you get to Putney Bridge Road.

We are small one form entry school, and we are a free, non-fee paying school.

Being a small school we pride ourselves on our community feel whereby everyone knows each other and we work together as a school family with the children, parents and staff. The children all know each other and you will often see our youngest children speaking and laughing with our eldest. This family feel supports the ethos of our school. Being a catholic school, we hold Christ at the centre of all we do. We strongly believe in the importance of the children developing their own individual faith journey as they have the opportunity to progressively build their relationship with God. For example, the children will take part in their daily prayers three times a day, with an opportunity for reflection at the end of each day. In addition the children take part in whole school, key stage and class collective worships where they further explore the Sunday Gospel, it's meaning, and how they can live out the gospel message in their daily actions.

Our ethos places a strong emphasis on personal growth and independence. We do not have school rules which can be imposed upon on the children and often come with negative connotations, such as, do not run or do not call out. Instead we have our School Attitudes. These are based on the beatitudes and are presented to the children as the right choices to make. The children are taught to make choices based on their knowledge for what the right thing to do is. This allows the children to have a strong moral compass and a clear understanding of right and wrong as well as a desire to make positive choices.

We recently had our Catholic Schools Inspection, our section 48 Inspection in which we were delighted to achieve the highest level of outstanding. The inspectors commented within the report that 'The school's very strong Catholic identity permeates all aspects of the learning environment of the school.'

They also stated that 'Standards are high, and children are able to articulate their understanding, which at times is impressive.'

This is replicated across the school and we were once again very pleased with our impressive KS2 results this year. The children who had been affected for most of their KS2 curriculum due to the pandemic were able to achieve significantly higher than the national average in all areas and most importantly through the positive progress measures the school can demonstrate the added value which it has had on the children in achieving these great results.

It's important to mention the emphasis that we place on all curriculum areas. We are a diverse school with over 30 languages spoken; this is reflected in our rich language curriculum whereby the children learn Portuguese, Italian and Latin weekly.

We also use an enquiry based approach to our teaching in order to make the learning fun, engaging and exciting for the children. Building on their natural inquisitiveness and facilitating their desire to learn. After all, our school motto is 'Learning to love, Loving to learn'. This forms

the essence of our approach to teaching and learning. For example, our music provision is well placed to support the children in their learning in a variety of means throughout the curriculum and throughout the school day. In addition to their weekly curriculum lessons the children also sing together as a whole school during weekly hymn practice and in our preparations for mass. When the children reach Year 4 they learn to play the trumpet, which they can then continue to learn as an addition during years 5 and 6. The children also have the opportunity to learn further instruments in years 5/6 such as an alternative brass instrument like the trombone, or something completely different such as the violin. Or the children can attend a school music club such as choir or guitar.

We also have singing projects in nearly all year groups which are term long projects taught by music specialists and result in the children performing in venues such as Fairfield Hall and Royal Albert Hall. These are great experiences and memories for the children and their families.

It's these memorable experiences that we want the children to hold onto and think of when they reflect back on their learning journey at St Joseph's.

Past pupils will often visit the school and talk about their favourite memories. They will frequently also share how proud they were of the roles they had and the part they played within the school.

Pupil leadership is an area we have really embraced over the past few years. We strongly believe in our mission to prepare the children for the future and their roles as global citizens that they need to understand the impact they can have. We therefore have a variety of opportunities to represent and lead within the school. We have representative groups from children in Year 2 – Year 6 who run our school council, our ECO club and our CAFOD club who deliver sessions on Catholic Social Teaching to each class. The children run whole school events and work together to decide on each new initiative to make a difference. We also have a number of children in KS2 who are guardian angels (distinctive by the angel badges they wear). These children have the responsibility of helping and supporting the younger children, acting as good role models for them. Then when the children get to year 6 we believe it is very important that every child is given a leadership role which can range from a librarian, to a digital leader to Head boy/Head Girl. But it is important that each child has had the opportunity to role model and be a leader before leaving primary school. Developing leadership skills and raising aspirations.

A final example of this is given to our Head boy/head girl who take visiting families around the school for a school tour each week. The children are able to share the school from a child's perspective to enable families to know what the school would be like for their child, if their child attended.

On that note I will draw to a close but I would encourage anyone who has not been to our school before to come and visit. The tours are held weekly on a Thursday at 11am; they will give you a chance to see our school in action and you can feel the warm, happy buzz as you walk around the school.