



St. Columbas Catholic Primary School

Church Lane, Walney Island, Barrow-in-Furness Cumbria LA14 3AD

Head Teacher: Mrs C O'Donnell

Tel: 01229-471522 Email: admin@stcolumbas.cumbria.sch.uk

"I have come that they may have life and have it to the full" (John 10 : 10)



September 4th 2019

Dear Parents,

Welcome back to another school year, I hope you all enjoyed the holidays!

An extra special welcome to our new Nursery and Reception children and their families, we know that your children will be very happy here at St Columba's School. If you feel you have any concerns or worries then please do not hesitate to call into school and see myself, Mrs Polkinghorn or Mrs Lewis.

We also welcome our new secretary Mrs Doughty who will be working in the office in a morning and Miss Cheetham in Y4. I am sure everyone will make them feel very welcome.

This year we hope to continue the excellent education of the whole child so that our children are recognised for all their achievements not just academic. We hope to help our children develop spiritually and realise God's presence in their lives. We aim to continue to provide children with a variety of opportunities to prepare them for life in a future world. Parents are crucially important and are always needed to support children in their learning. We fully appreciate the time you give to support your children in their education.

There will be a special Mass on Sunday, Sep 22nd at 9.30am to welcome our new children and families into our school community. Our Y6 and Y5 children have been asked to come along to look after and support our reception and nursery class. Our choir have been asked to share their beautiful singing with us. Everyone is welcome and invited so please come along.

Our Y6 children will be hosting a McMillan Coffee Afternoon on Wednesday, September 25th at 2pm and Y6 will be making some cakes for this (hopefully!!) All classes will provide entertainment during this event.

Our start of term Mass will take place this Tuesday, September 10th at 9.15am, everyone is welcome to come along to celebrate the beginning of a new term. We don't normally bring nursery and reception children to this Mass as they are just finding their feet in class and need time to settle but parents are welcome to come along if they wish.

Our AFTERSCHOOL clubs begin next week.

Please see attached our curriculum letter which has details of class meetings and changes to the curriculum.

Finally, I hope you have had a peaceful start to the new term and wish you well for the new school year. If you have any problems or queries, then please do not hesitate to let me know.

Thank you

Yours sincerely

Mrs C M O'Donnell

Curriculum Information

Over the past few years the school curriculum has become restricted and extremely focused on certain core subjects. This has been hard and intense for our children and has given us limited time to teach all subjects at a level they deserve.

The good news is that this year we have been told by Ofsted that we can finally make changes to what we do in school.

In light of this news, this year we have made changes to our curriculum to make it more relevant to St Columba's and also more fun and exciting. We have looked at what our children need to help them become the best they can be and the future of society. We have also looked at ways to ensure that we are fitting in the 13 curriculum subjects we are required to teach.

RE, Literacy, Maths, Science, PE, Music, Art, DT, PSHE/HRSE, Computing, History, Geography and French

Staff are really excited as we have changed what we teach in each year group and transformed the way we teach key areas. It means we get to give our children a broader view of life and further opportunities to prepare them for the world in which we live.

We hope to take our children on more trips and visits throughout the year and are also going to be working with BAE to provide opportunities.

We have identified some key areas such as 'Emotional Resilience, Parent Partnership, Speaking and Language, PSHE and Skills' that will underpin our curriculum and allow our children to grow fully.

We have a new PSHE scheme which we are keen to share with parents too. This educates our children in many areas of their personal, social and health education and has lots about keeping safe on the internet which I am sure you will appreciate in this changing world.

We are very keen to share our ideas with parents and also look at ways to improve parent partnerships along the way. We have decided to hold a class meeting in each year groups where parents can learn about life in their child's new class but also hear and learn more about our new curriculum.

The class meetings are for parents and are as follows:-

Nursery: Mon Sep 16th 3.30pm

Rec: Tues Sep 17th: 3.30pm

Y1: Tues Sep 10th: 3.30pm

Y2: Fri Sep 13th: 3.30pm

Y3: Tues Sep 10th: 3.30pm

Y4: Thurs Sep 12th: 3.30pm

Y5: Wed Sep 11th: 4pm

Y6: Wed Sep 11th: 3.30pm

To give our children the full broad and balanced curriculum and to fit in all the subjects we are required to teach we have had to make some changes:

- Juniors will no longer have an afternoon playtime which means we have 1hour 15min per week extra teaching time. This means better PE and more opportunities for Art and DT projects.
- Changes to swimming: It currently takes a class all Tuesday afternoon to go swimming and they have approximately 20 min in the water. Many children are already confident swimmers and don't really learn anything while they are at the baths. They are spending all afternoon at the baths and hardly doing any exercise which is a waste of their time.

In light of this we have decided to only take the less confident children swimming and give them longer in the water to develop. We will keep the confident swimmers at school to do another type of PE where they will be able to do more exercise and make progress.

We need to find out which children in the juniors cannot swim or need to build confidence in the water so please fill in the slip below if you feel your child would benefit from an afternoon swimming (Y6,Y5,Y4 this term).

I look forward to seeing you all at our class meetings and sharing our vision with you. Our parents are the main educators of our children and we look forward to walking with you on this journey.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely

Mrs C M O'Donnell
Headteacher