



Established in 1856

St Peter's Church of England (VC) Primary School

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Welcome

It has been sad to say goodbye to Miss Newby but we obviously wish her every happiness as she grasps an amazing opportunity to work abroad in a totally different environment. I am sure that she will keep in touch with the school to let us know how she is settling in to her new life.

In her stead, it is a pleasure to welcome Mrs Dunckley and Mrs Beacher to the school staff. They will be working in Year R where they will take over the roles which were filled by Miss Newby in the morning and by Mrs Kalaichakis in the afternoon. Mrs Kalaichakis will now be in Year 1 full time. It is a pleasure to have Mrs Dunckley and Mrs Beacher join us and I hope they will both be very happy here.

Ypres Trip

Years 3-6 had a very long but wonderful day trip to Ypres on November 9th. After stipulating that we leave promptly at 5am, the coach company then experienced problems which meant we didn't leave until 6am; but we caught the ferry by the skin of our teeth. From then on, the trip and the children were superb. They behaved impeccably and I was extremely proud of how such young children were able to understand the need to moderate their behaviour as we visited first Railway Dugouts and then Tyne Cot Cemeteries.

It was very moving to visit during the Centenary commemorations and I am sure that as they grow older, the children will realise how significant it was for them to be at the largest Commonwealth War Cemetery in the world on the eve of the 100th anniversary of the armistice. As our youngest girl, it was Jessica from Year 3 who laid a wreath for us at Tyne Cot, whilst Amelie in Year 4 laid one for her relative at Railway Dugouts. Thanks to Edward in Year 4, who had completed research at home, we also found the name of John Poole on the Menin Gate memorial. Mr Poole came from Aylesford and as far as we are aware is the only resident of our village named on the memorial. I would like to thank all of the parents and governors who helped to supervise the children and ensure that they enjoyed such a memorable experience.

Erasmus

Last week Miss Cavender and I accompanied six of our children as we visited Kortrijk in Belgium in the inaugural part of the school's first ever Erasmus project. Our children mixed with those from the Sint Paulus school in Kortrijk, as well as 8 from each of our partner schools in Munich and Nantes. The children spent time working together in Sint Paulus as well as visiting Brugge—eating chocolate—ice skating and visiting a dolphinarium—and eating chocolate—and enjoying meals out as a group—one of which involved a restaurant with a help yourself chocolate fountain. I think the children approved of Belgium.

We also visited a British war cemetery which adjoined the hospital complex where John McCrae worked for a period. Lieutenant Colonel McCrae wrote the poem In Flanders Fields. We then visited Langemark cemetery which contains the remains of over 40,000 German soldiers. In the evening, a German, French and British child joined the Belgian Headteacher and laid a wreath at the Menin Gate as part of the last post service which is held there every night. Megan from Year



5 represented our school as our youngest girl. It was an extremely moving experience to see her do so. Can I compliment our six children on their superb behaviour. They were a credit to themselves and their parents, and it was a pleasure being with them.

I appreciate that before I joined St Peter's, the school hadn't been part of an Erasmus project and indeed there had been no foreign trips. I entirely understand why so many parents recoiled in anxiety when I tried to implement trips like this last year. You didn't really know anything about me and yet I was suggesting taking your children overseas at a time of heightened unrest in the world.

But I hope that as we can continue with these trips—and we will—you will begin to see them as an important part of our children's education. I fear that since I became a teacher, the government's unrelenting focus on SATs test results has led far too many schools to narrow their curriculum and focus almost solely on teaching to test; and that is not education.

When Miss Cavender and I walked into the playground at Sint Paulus last week, with our six children, you could see them struggle with the overwhelming nature of what they faced—and when we sent into the classrooms, there were a couple of our children who were extremely anxious. After school, when I asked them whether they would have pushed a magic button at lunchtime and magicked themselves home, five of the six said they would have. And when I asked them whether they would still magic themselves home at 4pm, none of them wanted to leave. They had grown from the experience as had all the children involved.

After just one day together they had made such friendships that three German boys came down to our floor of the hotel that evening and knocked for our boys to go outside and play football with them. I am even happier to say that we won 5-3 on penalties.

Parish News

I am extremely pleased to let you know that a new vicar has been appointed to our church. Ruth Peet, who is currently curate at St Mary's Bromley, will be inducted into her new post at Aylesford on Tuesday 12th February. It will be lovely to have a vicar serving our community again and I look forward to re-establishing strong links between the school and the church, once she is in post. In the meantime, I thank the church wardens who have helped us in every way possible during the interregnum.

Thought for the Week

In the light of our first forays abroad and our first international school links, it may be worthwhile to reflect on the school ethos which we drew up last year.

The education we aspire to provide to our children, is one which will allow them to become the adults we aspire for them to be.

It is imperative that our children receive a robust academic education, which will allow them to succeed in their chosen fields. However, it is equally important that their education also develops in them the values and character traits which will allow them to succeed as people.

We want to so educate our children that they are able to flourish both whilst at our school and in the years to come. We want to provide them with an education which will prepare them for their future. Jesus said; 'I have come that they may have life and have it to the full' John 10:10. We want to educate our children that they may enjoy life in all its fullness.