



BEDFORD CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

ST JOSEPH'S & ST GREGORY'S PRIMARY

Dear Parents and Carers

January 2020 welcomed the start of a new decade, as well as the beginning of my 10th year as Headteacher of St Joseph's and St Gregory's Primary School (and formerly St Joseph's Lower School). There have been many challenges and achievements in that time which have drawn on my resourcefulness and resilience. Recently, I asked the school directors for a sabbatical (unpaid leave); a period of time to reflect-on, refresh and renew my professional development.

I looked widely for an opportunity to extend my leadership knowledge whilst also gaining new skills and life experience. I also wanted to inspire the children and achieve a lifelong ambition of sailing across an ocean. I applied for and gained a place as a crew member in the Clipper Round the World Yacht Race 2019-2020. I have undertaken four weeks training (during my holidays); learning to sail and live on an ocean racing yacht. I have been allocated a place as a crew member on Qingdao, a yacht sponsored by the Chinese city of Qingdao. I set off at the end of the month to compete in Leg 6 and Leg 7 of the race. Starting at Zhuhai in southern China I will race with my team to Qingdao and from there across the Pacific Ocean to Seattle in the USA. After a short stay, the race will continue down the west coast of the United States to Panama, through the Panama Canal and up the Eastern seaboard of the US, arriving in New York where Leg 7 finishes. I will then fly back to the UK for the end of the Summer Term.

Meanwhile, the school will be well led by Mrs Symonds (Interim Headteacher), Mrs Otter (Interim Deputy Headteacher) and the senior leadership team. The children will follow my boat, Qingdao, as it continues to race around the world.

I have led several assemblies in school explaining my adventure to the children. They know about the 'Dragon Boat' and have heard tales of the yacht's journey so far. The race started in London at the beginning of the school year and we have tracked its progress around the world so far. As part of a racing team, my aim is to learn more about being led as well as leading, reflect upon the impact of relationships in setting and achieving aims and hopefully about creating winning teams – wish us luck and fair winds! I hope to inspire our children to have a goal, teach them that anything is possible and to take advantage of every opportunity given to them.

UNICEF is the Charity Partner of the Clipper Race for the third edition in a row. The Clipper Race has once again gifted the team yacht to UNICEF to help raise awareness of the issues impacting children across the globe. It is hoped that during the upcoming Clipper 2019-20 Race, the total amount of money raised will pass the £1 million mark. As a school we have adopted UNICEF as our Lenten charity and hope you will help us raise money for this deserving cause.

I look forward to staff and children finding inspiration in the challenge I've taken on and enjoying sharing my experiences of the countries, cultures and characters I engage with on my journey.

I invite you to follow the race online at the following addresses:

You can discover all about the race, boats and teams at: <https://www.clipperroundtheworld.com/>

Track how each boat is doing in the race (live!) at: <https://www.clipperroundtheworld.com/race/standings>

Mine is the red dragon boat, Qingdao.

Find my profile at: <https://www.clipperroundtheworld.com/team/qingdao/race-crew>

Lisa Sumpter
Headteacher



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