



**THE GOOD SHEPHERD CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**  
The Catholic Diocese of Northampton  
*"Following Jesus, The Good Shepherd, in all we say and do"*

Tuesday, 15 December 2020

Dear parents and carers,

I would like to take this opportunity to share with you that on Friday, we say goodbye to two extremely valuable members of staff, both of whom have decided that the time is right for them to take early retirement. Firstly, we say goodbye to Mr Smith, our Site Supervisor who has been with us for five years. During this time Mr Smith has had the responsibility of maintaining our site and keeping it safe for all our children. We also say goodbye to Mrs Butler after nineteen years of service to The Good Shepherd. In my discussions with Mrs Butler, we identified that she has worked alongside numerous Head Teachers and worked through transitions from being a local authority school, to part of a federation, to moving into a small Multi Academy Trust and then a larger Trust. Mrs Butler has been front of house throughout this time and has indeed been invaluable to supporting us all through the required changes. Mrs Butler, we thank you for your service and we look forward to hearing about your adventures.

As I was contemplating what to write to you at the end of a rather challenging year I stumbled across a letter to parents from Michael Tidd who is a Head Teacher in another school. Some of you may have already read Michael's letter. I feel that this letter is reflective of every school in the country including The Good Shepherd.

*"As we approach the end of the calendar year, tradition would have it that heads write a letter thanking parents for their support in general, and also for any generous gifts given to staff to celebrate Christmas.*

*This year, we owe you our thanks considerably more than ever, so please let me offer it now.*

*We always recognise that, in sending your children to our school, you are putting great trust in us, both to care for and to educate them. This year, this couldn't be more true. So, thank you for continuing to trust in us through this tumultuous time, particularly when there must have been times of real worry for you, as there have been for all of us.*

***Coronavirus: Thank you for your tolerance***

*Thank you for your patience at the start of this whole business, when we all found out that schools would be closing just days later. We had a challenge on our hands working out what school closure would look like,*



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*but we were also very aware that every delay in us sharing information with you was adding to the challenges you faced in changing work plans and arranging childcare.*

*Thank you to those of you who continued to serve in frontline roles, while entrusting your children to our care. You must have worried that you were putting them at risk to allow you to go to work; know that we were grateful both for your faith and your contribution to tackling the pandemic in its most worrying phase.*

*Thank you, too, to those of you who, with little warning, made arrangements to keep your children at home. Very few school teachers would opt to home-educate their own children: we know what a challenge that is. Thank you for your tolerance while we sorted out remote learning, tried to balance the needs of everyone, whether enthusiastic for more work or struggling to access any.*

*Thank you for listening to our messages, reading our emails, and watching our videos, while all around us was contradictory information in the press and on social media.*

*Often, we found out about big announcements at the same time as you, watching the Prime Minister and his experts on the evening broadcasts. Too often we then had to wait on detail to help us – and you – to understand what it meant in practice.*

### ***'I'm sorry you were disappointed'***

*To those who were confused by too much communication, or disappointed with the decisions we took, we apologise. As always with schools – and any organisation – sometimes we get things wrong. On this occasion, the urgency with which we had to make decisions meant that sometimes we had to go back and change decisions. Hopefully, each change improved things for you and your children, but it was another adaptation to have to make, all the same.*

*Thank you for all your support in returning the children to school in September. Every Head Teacher in the land worried in late August as we prepared classrooms, corridors, playgrounds and dining halls for the return of the pupils, but we also relied on your support to make it all work.*

*And, lastly, thank you for working with us through these straitened months, without traditional events like welcome meetings, parents' evenings or even the school nativity.*

*In some ways, it's felt harder than ever to be together as a school community but, in other ways, this period of change has highlighted the importance of working together as we do.*

*Hopefully, you'll agree that, throughout 2020, we've worked with you to provide your children with the safest, most enjoyable and most effective education possible. And we look forward to doing the same in 2021. “*

**Michael Tidd is Head Teacher at East Preston Junior School in West Sussex. He tweets [@MichaelT1979](#)**

I could not have put it better myself. Thank you to all of you for your support this year I am extremely proud to be the Head teacher of such a wonderful school supported by a fantastic community!



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Thank you to Theresa at The Swan and Helmet, Anne and Chris at St Aidans SVP, the food bank at The Cathedral and St. Gregory's, our Trust Chaplain Mrs Darwin, our School Governors and to Thomas Becket for loaning transport in such challenging times.

And as always, a big thank you to our trust, Our Lady Immaculate Catholic Academies Trust (OLICAT) for their continued guidance and support.

From all of us at The Good Shepherd, we wish you a very merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

We look forward to a brighter 2021.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs C Dodds  
Head Teacher



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