

Well here we are gathered once more to celebrate the end of yet another academic year. A hearty welcome to you all - I hope that everybody enjoyed the hog roast as much as I did. The idea was to give Mrs Lynch a rest this year but in her usual style she has excelled herself to make the simple fare a banquet.

2010/11 has brought with it a plethora of Our Lady's babies; at times we seem to have had more staff on maternity leave than at work. Gemma was the first to produce and I am proud to say that Alice Giffin joins us here at Our Lady's on Monday. The staff Christmas do was a lot dryer than others I have known with some not imbibing because they were new mums and others because they were expectant mums. As I had neither reason I toasted them all. Robyn, Simona and Phillippa are all now proud mothers of Bluebell, Sofia and Alfie respectively – well done to them all. All three of them pop in and out to see us but are in no rush to get back to work.

The children have had a very busy year, yet another activity was introduced to the children from 0 to 2 years of age. Debutots, a pre school dram activity is now enjoyed by these children on a Tuesday afternoon. The Nativity performance was impressive Mary stayed on the stage, there were no fights and it has been some years since I have seen the hall quite so full of parents. Once again we stayed open despite the snow and of course the forest fires. January 2011 brought with it the delight of an Ofsted inspection and I must say not the pleasant week I have ever spent at work but there we go we survived. I must at this point thanks Angela and Sam for their unending support as this was a most unpleasant week for them also – but like the troopers they are they just knuckled down and produced the reams of paperwork required by the inspectors.

The spring term was filled with many celebrations Chinese New Year saw noodles flying around the hall as the children tried their hands with

chopsticks. Valentines Day was marked with dressing in red and white, I am never sure who enjoys these days the most the children of the staff. The beginning of Lent brought with it Pancake Day Races here at Our Lady's – we even made the local press. I still maintain Sam's team cheated but I never was a good loser!

The late Easter this year meant that the short summer term was always going to be full. One day back into school and we closed the Avenue for a street party to celebrate the Royal Wedding. This excitement was closely followed by an alternative take on an age old story with the performance of Humpty Dumpty – Mrs O'Reilly's blood pressure suffered during the run up to the day but all her efforts were worth it in the end. Charlie and Nathaniel did a sterling job of the narration and Gus made a most impressive king with a delightful queen by his side. Old Macdonald and his wife ran an orderly farmyard, incey wincey spider controlled her large family effortlessly and the kings men were mighty fine soldiers. Lauren made an impressive Humpty Dumpty and deserves a medal for the time spent hidden under the table.

A journey to the Cathedral in Portsmouth was closely followed by sports day which turned into a game of two halves. The younger children had a lovely morning and enjoyed the best of the weather. Lunchtime brought with it the rain and after much deliberation and with true English grit we decided not to be put off. Most of the events got finished but a sudden deluge meant running for cover. As Vicky and Hollie would be delighted to tell you my hair style did not stand up to the rain very well – I have never seen them laugh so much. Sam was not just wet but soaked through to the skin and Mrs O'Reilly was worried that her sweater would shrink – who wears cashmere to sports day! Needless to say the children found this all very exciting. The final event of the term saw a large coach of children make their way to Milestones Living Museum in Basingstoke – they returned tired but excited to tell

me they had seen a man on the toilet, one of the exhibits I must hasten to add.

This year the school and the 3 to 5's have benefited greatly from the interactive whiteboards fitted in September. The increase in numbers has seen part of the hall turned into a larger play area for the very youngest children and a project has almost been completed in the Nursery playground providing a staged, multi level area to aid the agility of the younger mobile children. And I must say our cosy coupes are going to be the best garaged cars in the area once this work is finished. Following recommendations from the inspection in January more sinks were fitted throughout the school and children as young as one can now independently wash their hands after messy play and before eating without traipsing half way around the building. Our next improvement mission has just started at the office end of the school – this, whilst providing some smarter staff cloakrooms will more importantly make available three children's toilets just inside the back door which will lead to more independence for the pre-school children whilst playing outside.

At their last meeting the Trustees agreed that we could start an ongoing programme of re-decoration. My intention is to concentrate on one room at a time and have this refurbished as necessary. This may lead to some disruption for short periods but I am sure you will agree the benefits will outweigh the disadvantages. When looking at each area procedures will be put into place to minimise the effect on the children and their happiness. I will endeavour to give as much warning as possible so that you can talk to your child about any work carried out in their particular rooms but, as I am sure you are all aware, workmen do not always work to a predictable timetable. As a point of reassurance, the contractor in question is well known to the school and the parish and is in fact a past pupil – which of course makes him a school mate of mine, just a little younger!!

The Trustees have always encouraged me to invest gradually in improvement projects taking each month as it comes and trying to achieve small steps. This advice has proved sound and as I look around each small step has benefited your child in some way or another. Sometimes with a setting as large as this it appears that no sooner one thing is done than another needs doing. It is at moments when this all seems unmanageable that I get the most support from the board. At this point I would like to thank the Trustees who each bring their own individual expertise to Our Lady's. What they all bring is support and encouragement in times of need – thank you to Fr Kevin, Mike, Chris and Yvonne. I am sure I will forgive whichever one of you suggested the extended opening hours soon! It must be understood that the Trustees time is given freely and willing to ensure the integrity and success of Our Lady's. Please put your hands together and help me express my appreciation to the board.

This family could not function without the staff. I am delighted to announce that Sam has agreed to take up the role of manager on a permanent basis and Sarah Morphey had been appointed deputy. As you all know, Sam is one of those invaluable people who gives over and above on all fronts. She is devoted to the children no matter what their age and is dedicated to the progression and improvement of the Nursery. Thank you Sam for your support and for being one of lives givers – you have listened, soothed and laughed and more importantly shared the odd after work drink. As you are all aware Gemma is taking up a new role of Development Officer, back to work Monday Gemma! She will be working on projects to improve the nursery and sustain the business and I am certain she will make a difference. The senior Nursery Nurses take their responsibilities seriously; the growing numbers of staff require positive role models and large amounts of direction. Thank you Vicky, Hollie, Claire and Rachel – keep up the hard work and keep smiling.

At Christmas we waved a sad goodbye to Mrs Burrows and January 2011 brought with it Mrs Roberts. The similarity of our names has confused the children but I don't argue with them anymore just answer to whatever they call me!! Mrs Roberts has not stayed at Our Lady's for long but her stay has been eventful. The expansion of the 3 to 5's into yet another classroom has meant that we now boast both foundation stage 1 and foundation stage 2 areas. I am sure that Erin will agree it has been a large learning curve for both her and Our Lady's and this has led to many tears but also much laughter. Goodbye Erin and good luck keep in touch and enjoy your future teaching career. I am pleased to inform you that from September 2011 Mrs Wendy Wessendorff will be the Early Years Teacher here at Our Lady's – Wendy is an experienced Early Years Practitioner and brings with her lots of ideas, we are looking forward to working with her. Welcome Wendy.

Mrs Chamberlain has worked hard over the year to prepare many of her class for their new schools whilst investing her time and expertise in those staying with us here at Our Lady's. The children in her class benefit from her calm and relaxed method of teaching, they thrive and learn to love learning. Although there have been changes over the year these children have formed a close knit bond and have enjoyed working as part of a team. Thank you Rachel.

Mrs O'Reilly, as ever, works tirelessly and methodically to prepare her class for entry into secondary school, she is a motivating teacher who truly inspires her pupils in their learning. As well as being responsible for all things academic here at Our Lady's she is beyond doubt a rock and support to me on a daily basis. Her listening skills must be tested to the limits when things do not go quite as I expect them to. I find talking things over with Angela will usually throw a new light onto problems and offer a practical solution on most occasions. Thank you Angela, I really could not do this job alone.

The catering team have a very testing job in quite a modest kitchen and Mrs Lynch leads this team with the minimum of fuss and maximum results. She copes with various and varied dietary requirements and produces increasing amounts of food for tow hearty meals a day along with snacks for the children and treats for the staff. Mary is a catering manager in the true sense of the word she maintains her own budgets, manages her staff and organises her suppliers. All that is required of me is to get the relevant bills paid on time and everything else just happens. Thank you Mary I know it is not always as easy as you make it look.

Finally, I would like to express my thanks to the Governors who have acted as efficient fund raisers this year. Although this is not the prime function of the committee, this year we have purchased two Wellington boot racks courtesy of funds raised at the quiz night and have £650 ready to spend on items on the staff's wish list thanks to a bumper school fete. Thank you for your time and considerable efforts. The Governors were set up to promote the best interests of the school and Nursery and to use their varying skills and experiences to bring new ideas to the running of the business. We are currently looking for new Governors and if any of you feel you can offer some of your spare time to help mastermind plans please make yourself known to me, Mrs O'Reilly or one of the Trustees.

Well I am sure you have heard enough of my voice and I would now like to invite father Kevin to step forward and present a small gift to each child in recognition of their achievements this year.