



St. Jérôme Church of England Bilingual Primary School

Executive Headteacher: Revd. Daniel Norris MBA NPQH
120 – 138 Station Road Harrow Middlesex HA1 2DJ
www.stjeromebilingual.org
Tel: 020 3019 6363 e-mail: office@stjeromebilingual.org



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Dear Parents and Carers

As we approach Christmas, we hope that the whole school community will have an opportunity to pause and reflect on the unprecedented year we have lived through. It would have been very difficult to imagine any of what has happened over the past twelve months. We took so much for granted back in January.

We all long for the time when we will be able to meet face to face with vulnerable friends and family, sing in our acts of worship and not wear face coverings. The resilience and adaptability of our pupils is evident in how they have taken it all in their stride thanks the calm guidance of caring staff and parents

We are, however, well aware that these restrictions are only the tip of the iceberg for many in our extended community and we encourage all those facing particular challenges to continue to liaise with our school leaders to ensure the best support is available.

Despite the disruptions, pupils have been able to enjoy a semblance of normality and consistency - a first-rate education in a safe and nurturing learning environment. It has been wonderful to see children eagerly running into the school. Our attendance rate across year groups of over 96% is significantly higher than most other schools in Harrow. In November, Revd Norris announced yet another top accolade in the British Council's International School Award. As a governing body we are incredibly proud to be served by such a strong staff team. To their credit, the unique bilingual curriculum and our inclusive Christian ethos are strongly intertwined and have found many avenues of expression, such as recording the Key Stage 1 pupils singing Silent Night in their home languages. None of these achievements are taken lightly but have been made possible through incredible patience and perseverance of parents and staff.

The pandemic forced the school, in only a matter of days, to radically alter operational routines. The governors are extremely grateful to staff and senior leaders for their response for which the school was awarded an accredited Certificate of Compliance for Covid procedures – the first school to have achieved this. Everything the school has achieved this year is even more impressive when seen in the context that St Jérôme continues to grow in size and stature year-on-year, which presents its own unique challenges as well as an immense privilege.

The message of Christmas is a timely reminder that life can so often be incredibly challenging. Our children have been learning recently about Advent – about this time of mental and emotional preparation. The final reading of the traditional 'Nine Lessons and Carols' leaves us to reflect that Jesus brought light that "shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." *[John 1]*

May the whole school community receive a time of peace and rest this Christmas.

Ian Fernandes and Christian Penhale
Chair and Vice Chair of Governors
St Jerome Church of England Bilingual Primary School