

What a wonderful first day back at St Anselm's! It has been such a joy to welcome the children through the gates this morning. Everyone seems to have grown over the summer, and the children have returned looking incredibly smart, refreshed and ready for the year ahead.

A particularly warm welcome goes to our new Reception children and their families, as well as to all the children and families joining us in other year groups. We also extend a very warm welcome to Mrs Fellows. We hope that you will all quickly feel very much at home and part of our St Anselm's school family.

While the children have been enjoying the final days of their summer holiday, staff have spent our INSET days preparing carefully for the year ahead. We have revisited our school Mission Statement and undertaken our annual school self-evaluation, considering what we do well and agreeing the priorities within our School Improvement Plan. Staff have also completed their annual safeguarding update and reviewed our Behaviour Policy.

Our expectations for behaviour remain as high as ever, but we have made some changes to the way we respond when children make the wrong choices. In particular, we will no longer publicly display the names of children who move down the behaviour chart. Instead, concerns will be addressed privately with the child and recorded discreetly by staff. As has always been the case, children will be supported to reflect on their choices, understand how they can put things right and make better choices next time. We believe this approach maintains high expectations while ensuring that every child is treated with dignity and respect.

We began our school year together this morning with a special Celebration of the Word centred on Jesus' words: "Let your light shine before others." At the centre of our worship was a whole-school candle containing the name of every child at St Anselm's. It will remain an important symbol for us throughout this year. Jesus is the Light of the World but each one of us is also called to shine: to recognise the gifts God has given us and to use them to bring light, kindness, hope and love to others. Our hope for this year is that every one of our children will discover more about the unique light they have to offer and have the confidence to let that light shine.

One of the great strengths of St Anselm's is the partnership that exists between home and school. We are incredibly grateful for the support our families give us, and this year we want to strengthen those relationships even further. Our first Meet the Teacher session will take place on Wednesday 30 September, with further details to follow in our weekly newsletter.

Our relationship with St Vincent's Parish also remains an important part of who we are. Tomorrow, the whole school will attend the 9.00am Mass at St Vincent's to mark the beginning of our new school year. Parents and families are very welcome to join us if you are able.

Finally, please remember that our doors are always open. If your child comes home and tells you something about school that concerns or worries you, please come directly to us to ask us questions, seek clarification or find a resolution to a problem. Please avoid discussing concerns with other parents or attempting to resolve issues directly between families. We will always do our very best to listen, support and work in partnership with you.

There is so much to look forward to. Here's to a happy, successful and exciting year at St Anselm's – a year in which every child is encouraged to grow, to thrive and to let their light shine. With every good wish for the year ahead,

Mrs White
Headteacher



In a special Celebration of the Word, centred on Jesus' words from Matthew's Gospel: "*Let your light shine before others,*" we reflected on how God has made every one of us unique, with our own gifts, talents and qualities and that we all shine in different ways. The mission for us this year is simple: discover your light, be proud of your light, help someone else's light to shine and use your light to make a difference. We reflected on what our school can be when all our different lights shine together – not competing to be the brightest, but creating a school filled with kindness, courage, faith, joy and love.



Loving God,
Thank you for bringing us together at the start of this new school year.
You have made each one of us unique and given us our own special gifts and talents.
Help us to discover the light within us and to use it to bring kindness, joy and love to others.
When things are difficult, give us courage.
When someone else is struggling, help us to notice their light and encourage them to shine.
May the light of Jesus guide us and help everyone at St Anselm's to grow, thrive and shine. **Amen.**