

Dear Parents

Some of you may know that I introduced our House Saints when I first became Headteacher at St Monica's in September 2006. They were chosen to reflect what we felt was important as a school educating young children.

St John Baptist De La Salle is the Patron Saint of Education, which seemed appropriate. St Cecilia is the Patron Saint of Music which has always been a key feature of our school's success. St Theresa of Lisieux or St Theresa of the Little Ways advocated doing small things very well. Finally St Francis of Assisi is the Patron Saint of the Environment and as a school we have strived to ensure we teach the children about conservation issues and how we can truly take care of our God-given planet.

Over the last year or so we have seen great changes in our local area which fit neatly into what we teach the children about the environment.

1. First of all a cycle lane was built from Palmers Green to Enfield Town, amid much moaning about being stuck behind buses and no one ever using the lane (myself included!)
2. Then Cannon Road was designated a School Street which restricted its use by motor vehicles, again with a fair amount of grumbling over the inconvenience of it, whilst others recognised how much safer the road was for children coming to and from school.
3. Local streets were then closed under the Lower Traffic Neighbourhood (LTN) scheme, again with a very mixed response from residents and local people – some loving the quiet streets and others hating the length of their journeys to get anywhere by car. (I do hope that the inaccessibility for emergency vehicles will be resolved as a matter of urgency.)
4. Many parents are now finding themselves working from home and so the need to get to work in a vehicle has perhaps declined.

Whether we like it or not, the combination of these changes has had a marked impact on the way children now travel to school at St Monica's which can only be great for our environment and our own personal health. See below the results of the surveys from September 2019 compared to present day:

Children were asked, how do you usually travel to school? Answers are shown as %									
	walk	cycle	Scoot/ skate	Park & stride	car	bus	taxi	rail	Car share
Sept 2019	23.5	2	5.25	0	56	13	0	0.25	0
October 2020	30	10	15	10	28	5	0.25	0	0
Variance	↑ 6.5%	↑ 8%	↑ 9.75%	↑ 10 %	↓ 28%				

From my own perspective, having owned a car since the age of 25 and with three children and a very busy life style, I have been one of those moaning about the inconvenience of everything! However, having sat in long queues of traffic trying to get home, I finally decided to get on my bike! So far I've managed to cycle to school twice a week. My fitness levels were at an all-time low and the first time it took me 45 minutes to get to school. I've managed to do it now in 30 minutes and hope this will get even quicker (once I manage to cycle up Fox Lane!). I'm lucky in that my children are all now of an age where they can travel more independently and I'm using the cycle lane all the way to Enfield Town so it feels super safe.

I wanted to write to you to give you the latest figures and perhaps you might join me by considering other ways of travelling to school that don't involve your car for your whole journey? By doing little things really well and educating ourselves we can do much for environment! St John, St Theresa and St Francis pray for us and perhaps St Cecilia will inspire us to write a song about it!

Kind regards

Kate Baptiste