



North Nibley Church of England  
Primary School, The Street,  
North Nibley, Glos. GL11 6DL  
Tel: 01453 542600

[www.northnibley.gloucs.sch.uk](http://www.northnibley.gloucs.sch.uk)  
[admin@northnibley.gloucs.sch.uk](mailto:admin@northnibley.gloucs.sch.uk)  
[finance@northnibley.gloucs.sch.uk](mailto:finance@northnibley.gloucs.sch.uk)  
Twitter: @NibleySchool  
Head Teacher: Paul Batchelor

Learning, Achievement, Faith & Fun!

# NEWSLETTER 400

Friday 16<sup>th</sup> December 2022

## RESPECT IS THIS TERM'S CHRISTIAN VALUE IN FOCUS.

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. 35 By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

The Gospel of John, Chapter 13 verses 34 & 35

## MY TOP TWENTY MEMORIES

A full copy of my submission to On The Edge – the village magazine.



"I have been looking back over my 12 and a half years as Head Teacher at this remarkable school. Without a doubt these have been the most wonderful, challenging, fulfilling, sometimes petrifying, fun and professionally rewarding years of my career. What

memories will I treasure? I attempted a 'top ten'. And failed. Instead, here is a 'top twenty'! (The order is somewhat arbitrary, to start with!)

**20. The Stroud Association of Schools.** I was an initial, founding member, 13-ish years ago, and have actively supported around 60 schools a year over that time. That work brought additional income to the school.

**19. The best 'untold' story ever!** Mrs Todhunter, the black sack, the delivery man and the missing Father Christmas. You had to be there!

**18. Our Website!** One of the first requests I received when I started here was to build a website. I've built and maintained it ever since, saving the school around £800 a year! As I write we have had just over 190,000 website visitors, so the site is clearly of interest to a lot of people.

**17. SuperStars!** Our wrap-around child care service was the school's third attempt to provide extended care for working parents. Over half the school's 70+ families are now signed up as either occasional or regular users and adding it to our portfolio has helped to keep the school popular and vibrant.

**16. The South Cerney water sports day.** Taking Year 6 to their water sports day, along with the other Year 6 pupils from the Cluster schools, is fabulous – especially if the sun is shining!

**15. The Tyndale Cluster.** I joined our cluster of six schools (as Deputy Head at Slimbridge, then Head at Coaley Primary) in September 2000. The support Cluster Heads have given to me personally has been invaluable. It's exciting to see the 5 other (relatively new) Head Teachers pick up the baton and run with it.

**14. The Covid lockdowns.** How could we be 'school' together, without being at school, together? I am so proud of what we achieved. As I hear from colleague head teachers still dealing with the fallout, I know we were magnificent.

**13. FONNS.** The committee has changed over the years, but their commitment to the school has been unwavering. The people have been good fun too. I have enjoyed serving Sunday Breakfast at the Music Festival and the annual pantomime is a real treat. Oh yes, it is!

**12. The School Newsletter.** All 400 editions! I've taken copies of each one. They are as precious a record of my own life as they are a record of the school's.

**11. The School's Prayer and the School Vision.** I worked with Governors and children to develop these in 2013 and 2014 respectively. As a result, we are sure of our identity and our moral purpose. Together, they embody all that I believe Primary School education to be about. Learning, Achievement, Faith and Fun!

**10. Our Welcome service** (and the 'stones'). This was another of my innovations at school. A visible symbol of our community and a sign of the love and respect we hold for every joiner. "Thank you that at North Nibley School, we have a place to which we can belong...".

**9. The London Trip is SIMPLY THE BEST** and worth every penny. The culture, the sights, the laughs and the midnight feasts – there's a reason these trips are the 'memories of choice' at our Leaver's Service. They are the stuff of legend that every child will remember, probably for life.

**8. Sport.** The children benefit massively from the regular diet of high-quality P.E. and Sports teaching, thanks to Mrs Dixon supported by Mrs Dickson. I've lost count of the awards and championships won over the years, but I consider it a jewel in the school's crown and deserving of every adulation that comes our way.

**7. The Summer Production and the Christmas Nativity.** These events are VERY special to me. Both were a part of the school's offer before I joined and I hope they continue long after I'm forgotten. Magical parts of childhood. The shows MUST go on! Sometimes I've laughed so much I've cried! Being at the back of the hall, and watching the staff work their magic is a real privilege. Thanks go to Ms Surridge, Miss Parker, Miss Allen and Miss Robinson and their amazing team of teaching assistants. I'm taking those unclaimed DVDs with me too!

**6. Our SIAMS Inspection, 2019.** This inspection looks specifically at the school's character as a Church of England school and the pupil's personal and spiritual development, as well as their academic development. As we concluded, the inspector told me "Under the previous framework, you'd have been Outstanding." I don't work for grades, for adulation or praise, but at that moment I felt it had all been worthwhile. "North Nibley is a loving, caring and deeply supportive community. All stakeholders have a deep commitment to inclusion and welcome all as 'God's children'". I don't mind sharing that I shed a few tears at that moment.

**5. The Church and the wider community.** The craziness of Rev. Peter (his obscure animal noises, in a wet suit and playing the electric guitar), the faithfulness and creativity of Sue Devine and the OTB team, these people are good friends of the school and have made learning here both rich and relevant. Perhaps I will sneak back for the wonder of Christmas inside St Martins... and our Leaver's Service...

**4. The Governors.** They are often the 'unsung heroes' of the school – toiling away on some item or other as required by law. They act as a sounding board for the ideas we have, guiding and advising us as we go. The buildings have seen a massive improvement in recent years, thanks to their efforts. As volunteers they have read thousands of policies on your behalf and – this needs to be understood – they do it all for the benefit of the children. I thank them all, past and present.

**3. The staff.** Those who don't work in schools might not 'get' this, but the role is a constant challenge. Anything could happen at any point (and often does!) The job is demanding. Anyone mentioning the longer holidays usually goes quiet when we suggest they train for the job! When I was logging my hours a few years back. I worked for 64 consecutive days without a whole day off, and my average break in school was 8 minutes per day. So please treat the staff with some kindness. To the current 16, administered by the multi-talented Mrs Kirby, and the 16 previous with whom I have worked at North Nibley, I wish I had space to name you all. It has been a privilege to lead you (often leading from the back!)

**2. Worship** (especially the singing). I think I will miss this most keenly. Worship at the school is a joy. We share deep thoughts and questions, it is a 'safe' place where everyone is welcomed and valued. Over the years we have grown opportunities for Year 6 to lead and work the tech desk. They do a wonderful job. Friday assemblies initially were quite daunting for me – being open to the public – but I wouldn't have it any differently now. It is one of the characteristics that set us apart from other schools and is usually great fun. St Martin's gift of two iSingPop concerts has given us memorable songs which remain pupil's favourites. I will also take with me copies of the children singing those. I will miss "Good morning, everybody." "Good morning, Mr Batchelor!"

**1. The children.** Of course. I have now taught 325 of them here, celebrated 1568 birthdays, and said goodbye to 215 of them, most at our various (infamous) Leaver's Services. I know I'm sentimental, but I've never gotten used to saying goodbye. Every July they break my heart. But I'm SO PROUD of them. They are ready to move on, time to go, and excited for the futures they will be building. We play a MASSIVE part in their development, but they outgrow us and it's right they go. It is a thrill to hear news from time to time, and an in-person visit is really special. We invest 7 years of our lives in theirs. There is no magic 'off' switch for care and compassion.

OK, yes they challenge us, and yes, some run down the corridor from time to time, or say an unkind thing, but they smile, they laugh, they agree to try and do better, and they are LEARNING. Learning to be better humans. My constant hope – and I tell them this often – is that

they will find the solutions to the various problems which have eluded us older and 'wiser' folk. On the whole, the behaviour at North Nibley is remarkably good. They care for one another and even when there is friction, in time they sort it out. They have been, and are, FANTASTIC. I will miss them.

I thank God for each one of you and for your part in the life of the school. I finish my career knowing that there has never been a day when I haven't wanted to be in school. Because of the children. I will miss being a teacher (15 years) and head teacher (18 years), and I will always, always remember with pleasure, satisfaction and pride, that I was the head teacher of North Nibley School. Mr B."

### **NIBLEY GREEN**

Our regular series on the actions we can take to ensure that our children - and their children - enjoy a better world. Here are some practical tips and ideas you may want to think about at home.

Discuss these with your children too!

#### **RECYCLE YOUR...**

Natural Christmas trees and non-glittery Christmas cards. Can you find a friendly place for these?



#### **RECYCLE YOUR...**

Soft, flexible plastic. Many superstores, including the Wotton Co-op, have recycling containers for all soft plastics. They'll take pet food pouches, biscuit wrappers, film wrap etc. Anything bar "hard" plastic.

So if you have any of those Christmas chocolates left, I can help remove the wrappers for you!

Send me your tips for this regular item -

[newsletter@northnibley.gloucs.sch.uk](mailto:newsletter@northnibley.gloucs.sch.uk)

### **THE FUTURE**

Several parents have asked if children can keep in touch. I will always be interested in their achievements, but safeguarding guidance strongly advises against me (and all staff) from sharing phone, email and social media contact details. However, Mrs Kirby has said she will be willing, from time-to-time, to forward the latest news. I will remain an avid reader of the newsletter!

Mr Hodgkinson has so much to look forward to, and much to learn, but he is keen and ready. With your support and encouragement, I am sure you are all in for an exciting time. Look after each other.

I wish you all a peaceful Christmas and happy lives ahead.

Thank you again.

Paul.

Bill, the Story Traveller, with Harriet the dancing hippo!

14/12/2022.

