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Dear friends,

As I write this letter we have just had the Junior School end of term service. As you read this the new term will be starting. But I wanted to share with you some of the developments that have happened during the last school year and the way that our local schools are involved with the church. This is a very significant part of my work and also of our involvement of our churches with the local community.

The Junior School leavers' service was a lovely occasion. On the way to the church I had spoken with people in both Budgens and the Dry Cleaners about the service and they had recalled how they had been to it when their children had left the school. Almost every leaver had someone at the service. They all brought one item back to school to symbolise their main memory of their four years. These were then brought up individually and laid on the altar. This year the majority of items were either sporting or academic. This reflected the fact that this particular group of children have achieved very high performances in inter-school sporting events. They had also achieved the best ever SATs results. This was for the second year running, and is a great credit to Mr. Manterfield and the dedicated staff. It is appropriate that by placing these items on the altar the children are giving thanks to God for their abilities and achievements. Six of the children spoke about the items that they had chosen and then everyone gave thanks for the year.

Also within the service the School's Council gave a cheque for £1200 to the International Children's Trust.

The Schools Council contains elected representatives from each class. This group has a significant role in the school. One of the items they consider is choosing the charity that will be the focus of the schools' fundraising during the year. We can all be justly proud that the children chose an organisation that works with

children in countries where there are great difficulties and many children do not have the privilege of going to school. The amount of money raised shows the amount of work undertaken. A representative from the charity came to receive the cheque.

When I was in the shops the morning of the Leaver's service, people commented that we now give the children Bibles. We give all the leavers a Youth Bible. When we made this decision a few years ago the staff were consulted as to the type of Bible that was suitable. I know from speaking with some previous leavers that they have found these very accessible and useful, containing interesting articles as well as the text. If anyone would like to give towards the cost of these Bibles, I will be delighted to receive a cheque made payable to either Fryerning P.C.C. or Ingatestone P.C.C. If this were placed in a gift aid envelope with the declaration filled in, the donation would be worth 29p in £1 more to the church. As we had 38 leavers this year the cost of the Bible was expensive.

I have been in discussion with the two Head Teachers and the Head of Religious Education at the Anglo European about their proposed new Prayer Room as the project in memory of Bob Read. This really is a splendid and innovative proposal. I look forward to our being of any help that we can with this project.

A recent Towers featured items from the visit made to St. Edmund and St. Mary Parish Church by the top class from the Infant school. These children came to join the Juniors for assembly two weeks before the end of term. It was marvellous that as they walked in they smiled at me and greeted me. Certainly all of our village children know who I am and this must be good for the future of the churches.

At the leavers' service the children sang the song 'Be Bold'. It contains the words, 'Be bold, be strong, for the Lord your God is with you...relax, stay cool, for the Lord your God is with you'. If our children in the village grow up with this knowledge of God's presence with them, this will be a significant strength to go with them in their future.

Yours in Christ, *Patrick*.