

Frome families pay tribute to a glittering teacher



The sudden and untimely death of a Frome teacher has united a school community in grief this Christmas.

Mrs L'Esteve, who taught a combined Reception–Year 1 class at Christ Church C of E First School and Nursery in Frome, died on Wednesday 16th December 2020 as she was driving through Bath city centre. S-J (as she was affectionately known by her colleagues) was 48 years old. She leaves a son, Oscar, aged 13.

Since the tragic news broke, dozens of floral tributes and messages of condolence have flowed into the school from families and former pupils and staff.

Mr John Price, Chair of Governors, said: “Mrs L'Esteve began work at Christ Church in September 2008. Over the following 12 years, she taught hundreds of Frome children. Some of her former pupils are now the uncles, aunties and parents of children in her precious Diamond Class. Her tragic death will be felt by the whole community. Mrs L'Esteve will be greatly missed.”

Mr Kaye, Christ Church Headteacher, added: “Our hearts go out to Mrs L'Esteve's family at this time. We feel that Christ Church is part of her family and Mrs L'Esteve's family are part of Christ Church. The world has lost a much-loved daughter and mother. Christ Church will grieve the loss of a passionate teacher; a gifted early years practitioner; an enthusiastic Science Subject Leader; a colleague and a friend.”

Mr Kaye said that governors are taking steps to find a teacher for Diamond Class ready for the new term in January 2021. He stressed, however, that at the moment everyone's efforts were concentrated on supporting the pupils and their families before Christmas.

On the morning of Thursday 17th December, Mr Kaye spoke to each class in school in turn. He lit three candles and talked to the children about how candles are for times of celebration – on a birthday cake or a Christingle orange – and for times of sad remembering. Mr Kaye told the children that Mrs L’Esteve had died and would not be coming back to school. Then each class was encouraged to talk about their happy memories of Mrs L’Esteve.



One child said: “I love Mrs L’Esteve and will miss her. She was sweet and kind and funny. Her Phonics lessons were the best!” Other children remembered her love of glitter; her cheerful Phonics songs and memorable ‘ditties’; and her love of science and technology. Staff remembered her impeccable taste in shoes and her preference for listening to George Michael as she marked work or planned the next day’s lesson.

Mr Kaye said: “All of our staff and governors are thankful for the support we have received from the Somerset Educational Psychology Service. We have also received kind messages of prayer and encouragement from our friends at Christ Church parish church, the Diocese of Bath and Wells, other schools in Frome, Fair Frome and the wider community.”