



Archdiocese of Birmingham
**ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

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Headteacher: Mrs L. J. Yorke M.Ed.



St. Mary's mission: To love God above all things by: learning together, loving ourselves, loving each other, loving all people, loving life itself and constantly striving for excellence worthy of our God-given gifts.

December is dedicated to the Immaculate Conception.

Our theme for the Autumn term is: 'Dignity of the Human Person'

Our virtues for this half term are: - 'Learned and Wise'



Dear parents and carers,

5th December 2025

Advent

We have journeyed together through the first week of Advent, preparing our hearts and minds for the nativity. At the centre of our preparations is prayer, and both staff and children have led us beautifully in daily prayer and liturgy as we walk with the Holy Family towards the birth of Jesus.

This week, we also attended a penitential service, reflecting on our conscience and readying ourselves for Christmas. On Sunday, we enter the second week of Advent and light our Bethlehem candle, representing faith. Next week, the children will be reminded of Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem as we deepen our own faith in anticipation of Christmas. On the second page of this newsletter, you will find a family prayer focus and a simple task to complete at home. If your child brings their completed task into school, it will be added to our Advent displays.

PTA events

Our PTA have been busy supporting crucial fundraising for the school this week. The school discos and the wreath-making class for parents were both very well attended and enjoyed. I would like to thank the PTA members, staff, and families for their hard work and generosity in making these events such a success.

Charity appeals

This week, the children took part in the Rudolph Run in aid of Birmingham Hospice. It was wonderful to see the joy and energy they brought to the event, all while raising money for such an important cause. There is still time to donate via Gateway if you wish to support this appeal.

In addition, our other Advent charity collections close on **Friday 12th December**. Please send in any final donations of food, clothing, or toys before this date so that we can pass them on to those in need.

Nativities

Details of our upcoming nativities can be found in this newsletter. If you are attending the LKS2 nativity, please note that space in the hall is limited. We are not ticketing the events, but we kindly ask that only two adults per child attend. For safety reasons, there will not be space for pushchairs or prams inside the hall, so we ask that these are left outside. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation in helping us make these celebrations joyful and safe for all.

Have a lovely weekend, Mrs Yorke.



Second advent candle

The second Sunday of Advent symbolises Faith with the "Bethlehem candle" helping us think about the journey Mary and Joseph took to Bethlehem.

We invite you to continue to join us in this time of reflection and celebration. Let the light of the Bethlehem candle guide us on our journey of faith, this Advent.

scripture

"Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." – Hebrews 11:1

reflection

Embracing Faithful Journeys

In this season of Advent, symbolising faith, let's consider the transformative power of belief. Like Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem, how can we, too, navigate our paths with unwavering faith, trusting in the promises that lie ahead?

open question

In what ways can we infuse the spirit of faith into our daily lives and share it as a beacon of inspiration within our families and in our community?

Task

A Creative Expression –

Families, express your reflections through creativity! This could be a family story, a drawing, or any medium that captures the essence of faith. Share your creations with us, as together, we illuminate the path with the light of faith.





Catholic Life

This week's Gospel and Prayer

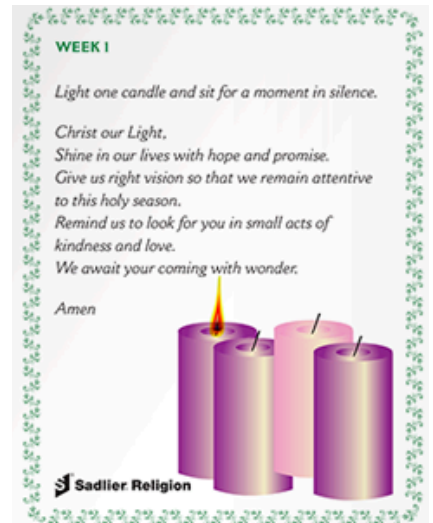


Matthew 24:41

"Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming."

Reflecting on this week's Gospel message, the children learnt:

- Advent is a time of preparation for Jesus' birth at Christmas and looking forward to His Second Coming.
- We have hope because Jesus is coming back.
- As Pilgrims of Hope, we can prepare by knowing our hope is in Jesus, and sharing our hope with others.



Year 5 Mass - 03.12.25

Year 5 led a beautiful Mass this week celebrating 'Hope' in this first week of Advent and the feast of St Francis Xavier. The children took forth Fr Hilary's words from his homily - How can we help God today?

Hope/Feast of St Francis Xavier

Hope



Our next Mass: - **Whole School Mass**

Feast of the Immaculate Conception

Our next Mass in Church will be on **Monday 8th December 2025**, starting promptly at 9:30am.

This is a whole school Mass to celebrate the Feast of the Immaculate Conception.

All parents are welcome to join us and we ask that you sit in the old part of the Church.



Year 3 Prayer Service - Friday 12th December

Prayer Service



Year 3 Prayer Service for Parents
12.12.25 at 9:00am



Year 3 invite parents, grandparents, family members to join them in a special prayer service in school dedicated to St. Lucy.



Our Charity Appeal

Faith in Action



Please help support our Advent charities

Our Reception classes are collecting for: – Fr Hudson's Caritas



This Advent, the Archdiocese will once again unite as a family of schools in our collaborative social action mission to support Father Hudson's Caritas. St Mary's were fortunate to welcome Kevin from FHC who came to speak to the children on Monday about the Reverse Advent Calendar.

This year, every school has been invited to collect non-perishable food items, including **dried foods (such as pasta and rice), sauces, tinned foods, biscuits, crisps and any suitable Christmas food items.**

The donated food will be used to create hampers for distribution across FHC projects before Christmas.

Collective social action makes a real difference to so many people. This is a wonderful opportunity for us once again to work as part of our diocesan family, demonstrating the impact of our collective hunger for justice.

We need all donations in school by **Friday 12th November.**

Reception are keen to drive this charity appeal – please label any donations/bags with 'FHC' so we can easily identify the items.

Thank you for your support.



Year 1 and Year 2 are collecting for: – **Birmingham Christmas Shelter**



St Catherine of Siena Primary School, in Great Colmore Street B15 2AY, support **Birmingham Christmas shelter** every year. This year, the school will open between 24th-28th December to serve those who need food and clothing. Last year, 400 guests received fresh clothes and toiletries in those four days supported by local Primary Schools.

St Catherine's have asked our schools to support by collecting items for the Birmingham Christmas Shelter - they need: -
toiletries, biscuits, crisps, cordial, and clothing.

Year 1 and Year 2 would like to support this appeal - please help them in their charity efforts by bringing any donations to the school office before **Friday 12th December**, labelled Birmingham Christmas Shelter.

Year 3 and Year 4 are supporting the: – **Christmas Toy Appeal**

We have been asked to support the Birmingham Irish Association Initiative again this year, to provide toys for children in Birmingham who may not receive a Christmas present this year. Our families and staff have always been so generous at supporting this initiative.

Year 3 and Year 4 are asking for toys to support families in Birmingham this Christmas.



We are accepting toys – new and unwrapped – and our final collection time is
Friday 12th December.
Thank you for those who have donated so far.

thank you

Year 5 and Year 6 are collecting for: – St. Vincent De Paul

CHILDREN'S CLOTHING DONATION



CLOTHING, SHOES, COATS, HATS,
SCARVES, GLOVES.

Please bring them in by Wednesday 10th
December 2025

St. Vincent De Paul have put in a request for clothing this Advent – particularly children's clothes. They are requesting pre-loved clothes in a good condition for this appeal.

Year 5 and Year 6 would like to support this appeal – please help them in their charity efforts by bringing any donations to the school office.



Corporal Acts of Mercy

Reception children have been joyfully decorating care boxes.



Year 3 and Year 4 took part in a special Teams call with Bishop Timothy about visiting the sick

Year 2 have created Christmas decorations for the Birmingham Christmas Shelter!

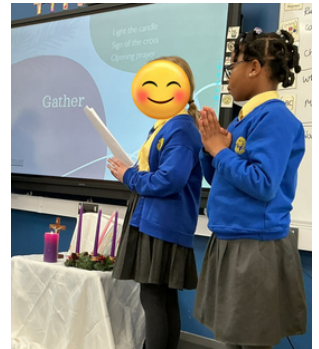


Advent Preparation in School

The Spiritual Council has been busy preparing the Advent Prayer Bags!



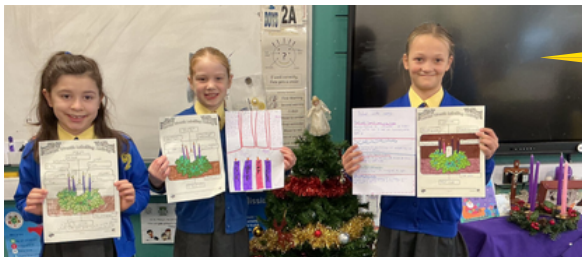
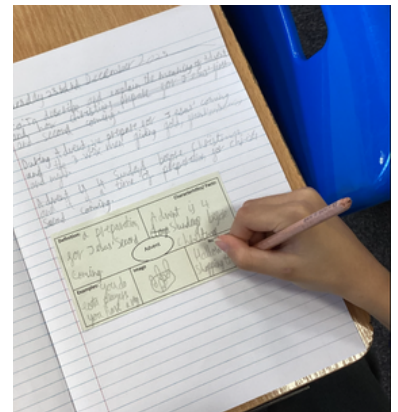
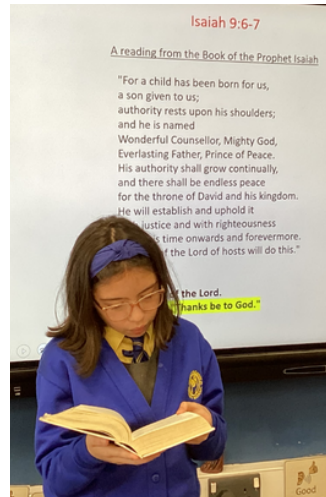
Year 4 led beautiful a prayer service where they lit the first candle on our Christmas wreath, Hope, and we left all their hopes and dreams with Jesus.



Year 5 started their learning in RE by focusing on the importance of Advent.



Year 5 prepared their prayer table for Advent beautifully.



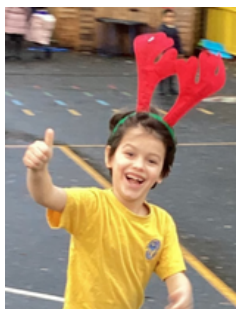
The children have undertaken some fantastic Advent projects and home learning!



Year 4 started their Advent by reading a scripture passage about Jesus' ancestors and adding a picture to their Jesse tree!



Please do share photos of your children with our Advent Prayer Bags. We'd love to see how your family are using them!



Rudolph Run

The children had a wonderful time participating in the Rudolph Run this week while raising money for Birmingham Hospice.

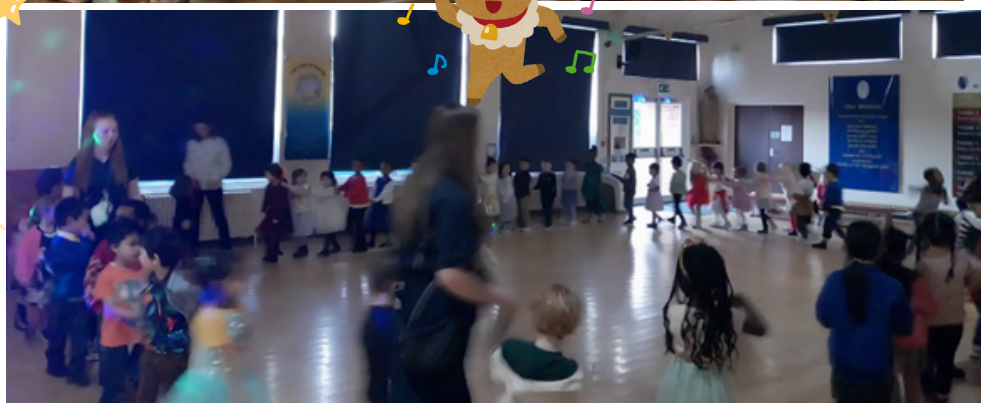


There is still time to contribute to this worthwhile cause – log onto School Gateway to make a donation.



CHRISTMAS DISCOS

The children really enjoyed their Christmas discos this week. Thank you to the PTA and all the staff for supporting them.



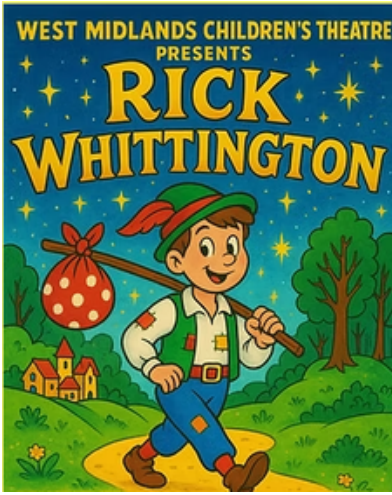
Pantomime - Tuesday 9th December

The children will be watching 'Rick Whittington', a pantomime written and designed for children, on Tuesday 9th December. This traditional panto is packed full of comedy, music, excitement and audience participation aplenty! The performances will take place in the school hall and will be within the school day:

Reception and KS1 at 9:15am

KS2 at 11am

There is no charge to families for the pantomime.

**Christmas Dinner will be served on Thursday 11th December!**

We will be serving a delicious Christmas Dinner at school on Thursday 11th December. If your child normally brings in a packed lunch on a Thursday and would like to opt in for Christmas Dinner, please confirm this with the school office.

**Christmas Jumper Day - 11th December 2025**

Thursday 11th December is also Christmas Jumper Day and children may come to school in festive clothing which may include a Christmas jumper/t-shirt or Christmas colours / head gear. Please ensure the children are dressed appropriately for the weather and wear shoes and a coat suitable for outdoor play. There is no charge.



On Friday 12th December, a special event is being hosted in St Mary's Parish Hall

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Carols by Candlelight featuring St. Mary's School Choir.

Doors open at 7:00pm with carols from 7:30pm until 9:00pm.

Tickets are available from St. Mary's Parish Office during the week and Piety Stall at weekends. Tickets include a glass of mulled wine and a mince pie.

Come and join us to raise funds for St Basil's and St Mary's School PTA.

Music Concerts

Ukulele (Year 5 Only) – 10.12.25 at 2.30pm

Guitar (All Years) and Piano (Year 4, 5 and 6) – 16.12.25 at 3.45pm
We have some very talented musicians in school who are learning to play a variety of instruments. Come and show your support!



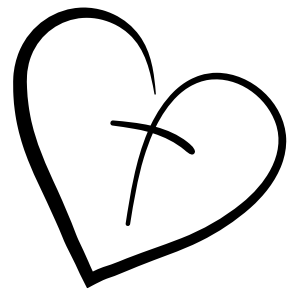
Christmas Mass

Friday 19th December 2025 – 9:30am

On the final day of the term, all children and staff will go to Church for Christmas Mass before we break up.

What a wonderful end to the term!

Parents are welcome to attend – please sit in the old church.



The cost of living continues to affect us all. Rather than buying gifts for each other this year, the staff have chosen to support Father Hudson's Caritas and will be collecting festive biscuits/chocolates for their residents in care homes and domiciliary care.

We have so many families who buy gifts for staff and we are so thankful for your generosity, but this year we would like to ease any pressure families may feel and ask for your prayers as our Christmas gift instead (and support for our charity work).



Nativities

RECEPTION A NURSERY RHYME NATIVITY

**11.12.25 at 9.30am
in the Church**

Blending classic rhymes with the traditional Christmas story, Reception are ready to celebrate the birth of Jesus



YEARS 1 AND 2 A STARRY NIGHT IN BETHLEHEM

**16.12.25 at 2:15pm
in the Church**

A Starry Night in Bethlehem, tells the story of the very first Christmas. KS1 will share how Mary and Joseph travelled to Bethlehem, how Jesus was born in a humble stable, and how the shepherds and wise men came to visit.

YEARS 3 AND 4 WHO TOOK THE MARY OUT OF CHRISTMAS?

**17.12.25 at 2:15pm in
School**

At Christmas time, who do we think of? Jesus, the shepherds, the wise men, even the innkeeper. But the most important woman at the heart of the Christmas story, and central to it, is Mary. Join us, as we explore the Christmas story, through the eyes of Our Lady.

YEARS 5 AND 6 A LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

**18.12.25 at 2pm in
the Church**

Come and join us for modern and traditional carols that recount the story of Jesus' birth.



The children are very excited to share their nativities with you. Due to space in the hall, we ask for you to limit how many adults attend them. We have space for 2-3 adults per child in the school hall. There is more room in the Church – the more the merrier in the Church for Reception (11.12.25), Y1 and Y2 (16.12.25) and Y5 and Y6 (18.12.25). We have limited room in school hall – toddlers are welcome but please limit prams and pushchairs coming in to school. Thank you.



We are an operation encompass school. Therefore school is working alongside the police to ensure support for any child who has been involved in or witness to domestic abuse. Please find more information about this on our website or contact the school office.

Pastoral Team

If you require any support from school please speak to a member of our pastoral team

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If you have a concern that a child is being harmed, is at risk of harm, or you receive a disclosure (intentionally or unintentionally) you must contact one of the following staff members as quickly as possible:



Laura Noone
Lead DSL
DHT



Louise Yorke
Headteacher



Jade Preedy
AHT



Rachel Jones
Senior Teacher



Sharon Tame
School Counsellor



Rachel Richards
EYFS Lead



Shania Birchenall
SENDCo

Do not book holidays during term time

This is a reminder that holidays during term time are unauthorised. If you intend to take your child out of school during term time, we ask that you complete a holiday request form at least 2 weeks prior to the leave date where possible. Parents may be fined by the Local Authority for taking unauthorised leave of absence. Children need to be in school every day so please ensure holidays are only booked during school holiday time.

Good attendance, continues to be a school and government priority. Good attendance is 96% and above

Remember below 95% is a concern and below 90% is classed as persistent absence. If you have any problems with regards to getting your child to school or you are struggling to improve your child's attendance, please speak to Mrs. Yorke or Mrs. Noone.

We will announce the attendance for the previous week in this section of the newsletter each week.

Attendance and Punctuality: –

Our attendance for last week was –

Week 01/12/25-05/12/25

Class	YRB	YRT	Y1L	Y1F	Y2E	Y2G	Y3L	Y3T	Y4J	Y4M	Y5M	Y5F	Y6R	Y6O
%	98	98	96	100	94	98	98	99	98	96	96	93	97	94
Lates	1	3	2	0	2	4	6	5	0	2	0	0	0	4
Whole School Attendance so far this year						97.1%			School Target				97%	

Well done 1F: - Our attendance champions!

Dates for this half-term

Autumn theme -

Autumn 11 Virtues

8th December 2025 - 9:30am

9th December 2025 - 9:15am

9th December 2025 - 10:45

11th December 2025 - all day

11th December 2025 - 9:30am

11th December 2025 - lunch

12th December 2025 - 9:00am

12th December 2025 - 6:45pm

12th December 2025 - 7:00pm

16th December 2025 - 2:00pm

17th December 2025 - 2:15pm

18th December 2025 - 2pm

19th December 2025 - 9:30am

19th December 2025 -

Dignity of the Human Person

Learned and Wise

Whole School Mass - Feast of Immaculate Conception

PANTO for EYFS/KS1 in school

PANTO for KS2 in school

Christmas jumper day in school

Reception Nativity in Church (for parents)

Christmas dinner day in school

Year 3 Prayer Service for all Year 3 parents

Choir sing for Carols by Candlelight - meet at school 6:30pm

Carols by Candlelight in St. Mary's Church (all welcome)

Year 1 and Year 2 Nativity in Church (for parents)

Year 3 and Year 4 Christmas Assembly in School Hall (parents welcome)

Year 5 and Year 6 Christmas Carol Service in Church (for parents)

Whole school Christmas Mass for all children, staff and parents

Break up for Christmas holidays

1:40 finish time - Reception classes

1:45 finish time - KS1 classes

1:50 finish time - sibling group

2:00 finish time - KS2 classes

Extra-Curricular

Celebrating successes



Florence competed in her first external competition on Sunday and got silver in her team. Well done Florence on a fantastic achievement.



Another successful weekend of dance for Phoebe, who achieved five 1st place awards. Incredible work Phoebe.



And huge congratulations to our Chess Champions!
Our St. Mary's team has won both the team and individual titles at the 2025–2026 Birmingham Catholic Schools Sports Association Chess Competition! We are so proud of them!

Star of the week

Congratulations to the following children who have shone in school over the last week:

Year RB	Adereni	For being a good role model and always helping her friends!
Year RT	Jack	For trying so hard with all of his learning this week! Keep it up Jack!
Year IF	Kendrick	For the wonderful progress he has made with his writing – focusing on his use of full stops and story language! Great job, Kendrick!
Year IL	Sebastian.F.	For trying his best this week in Maths and for listening and waiting so well during carpet times.
Year 2E	Seb	For a fabulous character description of Brian, The Invisible Boy.
Year 2G	David	For working hard in all areas of his learning!
Year 3L	Esme.M	For always being a kind, helpful member of the class and trying her best in everything she does!
Year 3T	Finn	For his amazing efforts during singing rehearsals this week! Very inspiring!
Year 4J	Georgie	For her fantastic effort in our nativity practice this week!
Year 4M	Grace	For demonstrating outstanding leadership and initiative in preparing and planning our child-led prayer and for actively promoting knowledge of UN CRC rights.
Year 5F	Noah	For being a thoughtful, kind and caring friend to another child who was upset
Year 5M	Lucy.E	For reading so well in Mass, as well as always being so helpful!
Year 6O	Gabriele	Stunning singing that made Mrs Cole cry with joy
Year 6R	Shiza	For always showing determination and resilience across all subjects!

