



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,

12th December 2025

### **Advent**

As we enter the third week of Advent, we light our Shepherds' candle, reminding us of the joy we experience in the coming birth of Jesus. The pink candle is lit on Gaudete Sunday, a moment of rejoicing as we reach the halfway point in our Advent preparations.

This week has been filled with wonderful opportunities to prepare our hearts and minds for Christmas. The children loved the pantomime performance of 'Rick Whittingham', enjoyed sharing a festive Christmas lunch together, and continued their support for our charity appeals. We were also blessed to watch the Reception Nativity, which was a truly special celebration of the Christmas story, and even welcomed a surprise visit from Santa!

### **Nativities**

Next week, our celebrations continue with the KS1 and KS2 nativities. These are always highlights of the school year, and we look forward to welcoming families to share in the children's performances.

If you are attending the LKS2 nativity, please be aware that space in the hall is limited. We kindly ask that only two adults per child attend. For safety reasons, pushchairs and prams cannot be accommodated inside the hall and will need to be left outside.

We also invite you to bring any spare change with you, as the children will be collecting donations in buckets at the end of each performance. All money raised will go towards school fund projects, including an exciting redesign of our outdoor area.

### **Charity work**

Our Advent charity appeals continue to be a wonderful expression of the children's compassion and generosity. Thank you to all families who have already contributed food, clothing, toys, or donations. These donations were collected today and your support makes a real difference to those in need at this time of year.

### **End of term arrangements**

We look forward to finishing the term slightly earlier at 2pm on Friday 20th December, ready to begin our Christmas break. Please note that all staff will be off site by 2:30pm on this day. If you require childcare beyond this time, please speak with Kidz.comm.

As we continue our Advent journey, may this season of joy and hope bring peace to your homes and families. Thank you for your ongoing support and partnership with the school. Together, we are helping the children to prepare not only for Christmas celebrations, but also for living out the values of kindness, generosity, and faith. Have a lovely weekend, Mrs Yorke.



## Third advent candle

As we approach the third week of Advent, let's unite in joy and celebration. The "Shepherd's Candle" lights our path, reminding us of the joy the world experienced at the coming birth of Jesus.

As we bask in the glow of the 'Shepherd's Candle', may joy illuminate our hearts and unite us in the spirit of celebration.

## scripture

*"Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs." – Psalm 100:1-2*

## reflection

### Cultivating Joyful Hearts

In this season of Advent, symbolising joy, let's reflect on the infectious and transformative nature of joy. When we give generously, we bring joy to ourselves and others. What brings you joy? What are the things that are priceless to you? How can we infuse joy into our lives, celebrating the blessings that surround us, much like the world celebrated the birth of Jesus?

## open question

How can we foster and spread joy within our school community, bringing light to each other's lives?

## Task

### A Creative Outpouring –

Families, channel your reflections into a creative expression of joy! It could be a poem, a dance, or any form of artistic expression that radiates joy. Share your creations with us, and let the joy within our community shine even brighter.







# Catholic Life

*This week's Gospel and Prayer*

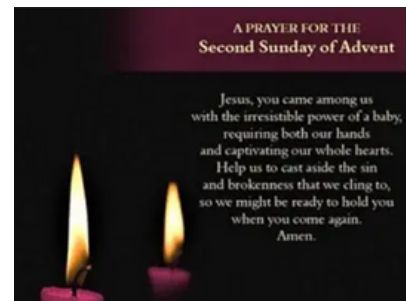


*Matthew 3:11*

*"I baptise you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire."*

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

- We can listen to John's message to prepare our hearts for Jesus by saying sorry to God.
- As Pilgrims of Hope, we can live in hope by making good decisions about how we live and love others today, so we can follow God's way into the future.



## School Masses

Our next school Mass will be on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> January (details to follow). This year, there will not be a whole school Christmas Mass. We would encourage you to attend one of the Christmas Masses (and Masses over the festive period) at St Mary's – please the flyer for details.



<u>Christmas Masses</u>
<b>Christmas Eve - Wednesday 24 December</b>
Morning Mass – 8.30am
"Midnight" Masses – 6.00pm & *8.30pm
<b>Christmas Day - Thursday 25 December</b>
Christmas Masses – 9.30am & *11.30am, <u>No evening Mass</u>
<u>All Other Masses over the Festive Period</u>
Friday 26 December – *Mid-day ( <u>No 8.30am Mass</u> )
Saturday 27 December – *Mid-day & 6.00pm, <u>No Confessions</u>
Sunday 28 December – Solemnity of the Holy Family – 9.30am, *11.00am & 5.00pm
Monday 29-Wednesday 31 December – *Mid-day ( <u>No 8.30am Mass</u> )
Thursday 1 January 2026 – Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God – *Mid-day ( <u>No 8.30am Mass</u> )
Friday 2 January – *8.30am
Saturday 3 January – *Mid-day & 6.00pm
Sunday 4 January – The Epiphany of the Lord – 9.30am, *11.00am & 5.00pm

## Year 3 Prayer Service – Friday 12<sup>th</sup> December



Year 3 led a beautiful Prayer Service today celebrating St Lucy – 3L's Class Saint.





# Our Charity Appeal

## Faith in Action

Please help support our Advent charities

Our Reception classes collected for: – Fr Hudson's Caritas



This Advent, the Archdiocese have once again united 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 about the Reverse Advent Calendar.



All your kind donations were carefully packed up by Reception (assisted by their Year 6 Buddies!) and delivered to The Sanctuary by Mrs Noone today.

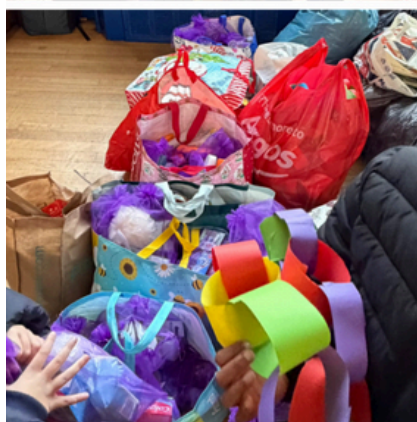




## Year 1 and Year 2 collected for : - Birmingham Christmas Shelter



St Catherine of Siena Catholic 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. Today, two children from Year 1 and Year 2 dropped off their 'blessing bags' and festive decorations at St Catherine of Siena.



## Year 3 and Year 4 collected for :- Christmas Toy Appeal

We have supported the Birmingham Irish Association Initiative again this year, to provide toys for children in Birmingham who may not receive a Christmas present this year. We were overwhelmed with your generosity thank you. The donations were collected yesterday by Santa!





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

## CHILDREN'S CLOTHING DONATION



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

Please bring them in by Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup>  
December 2025

We have had a huge number of clothing donations – thank you! In preparation for collection, the Prefects have sorted and organised all the clothing into sizes.



## Reception Nativity – Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> December



Well done, Reception on an incredible Nativity this week! You were fantastic!





# Advent Preparation in School



Year 1 made baubles and reflected how they're going to prepare their hearts for Jesus this Advent.



Reception made Advent promises to God and used their own words to share prayers during our RE lesson today. They had a special prayer service led by the children. Their hearts are ready Christmas!



Year 3 created Advent wreaths to explore the meaning of each candle- hope, peace, joy, and faith.



Year 5 wrote some beautiful poems about Advent this week.



Year 6 reflected on the second week of Advent this week. They had some quiet meditation time to strengthen and refocus their faith.



It's wonderful to see photos of our Advent Prayer Bags being used at home - please do post your photos on X!



# PANTOMIME



The children loved watching 'Rick Whittington' in school this week. The pantomime was filled with music, comedy and all the usual audience participation. Many thanks to West Midlands Children's Theatre for their energetic and entertaining performances!

## Christmas Dinner!



We had a fantastic Christmas Dinner on Wednesday in our festive clothing. A big thank you to Mrs Brown and the Canteen staff for a wonderful lunch!



*yum!*



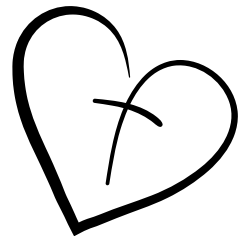


## Music Concert

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!



# TEACHER GIFT!



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).

## HOMEWORK

There is no expectation for children to do homework over the Christmas holidays – we want you all to enjoy the festive period, spend time with family and friends and 'recharge your batteries' ready for the Spring Term.

However, some families may wish their child to continue with some learning activities while they are away from school. Here are some suggestions:

- Read stories together (classic tales or modern books) – ask questions like "What do you think will happen next?" or "Why do you think the character did that?".
- Bake or cook together – measuring ingredients is a great Maths skills and let your children calculate ingredient quantities if doubling or halving recipes.
- Make paper snowflakes or decorations – this helps develop fine motor and cutting skills as well as encouraging creativity.
- Play board games – games improve strategic thinking, problem-solving, turn taking etc.
- [www.topmarks.co.uk](http://www.topmarks.co.uk) is also a fantastic website full of free educational games for all ages.



**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 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



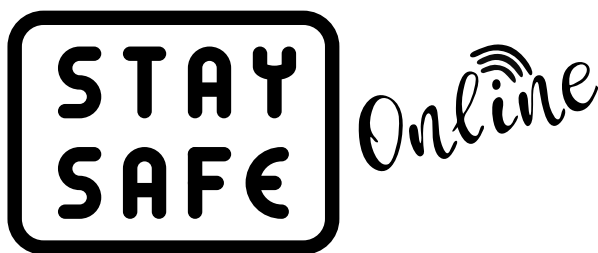
Sharon Tame  
School  
Counsellor



Rachel Richards  
EYFS Lead



Shania  
Birchenall  
SENDCo



Safety Net have produced a very useful poster sign-posting all of their online safety resources for parents. There are a number of guides available including guides to social media, gaming, influencers, privacy settings etc.

It's Christmas Time – Parents guide to help keep children safe online

## It's Christmas Time!

**It's always best to be prepared**

Many parents may be planning to give electronic gadgets to their children this festive period. Our guide is designed to help parents take a realistic approach to help keep their children safe when using the internet, social media and playing online games.

Scan the QR code to find out more.

**A Parent's Guide to Social Media**

**A Parent's Guide to Sharing Pictures**

**A Parent's Guide to Gaming**

**A Parent's Guide to Online Grooming**

scan the QR code with your phone's camera to see the guides on our website

**A Parent's Guide to Live Streaming**

**A Parent's Guide to Online Influencers**

**A Parent's Guide to Fake News**

**A Parent's Guide to Privacy Settings**

**Online safety is when young people know who they can tell if they feel upset by something that has happened online.**

Parents please contact your school to enquire attending their next e-safety workshop or have any concerns.

Working with Home Office 'PREVENT', The Police and Crime Commissioner and Children's Safeguarding Partnerships to help keep children safe online.

Skips Educational Email: info@skipssed.com Tel: +44 121 227 1941

Developed in partnership with

Home Office  
BUILDING A SAFE, JUST AND TOLERANT SOCIETY

West Midlands  
Violence Reduction Unit

west midlands  
police and crime commissioner

**Skips** [www.skipssafetynet.org](http://www.skipssafetynet.org)

## 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 08/12/25-12/12/25**

Class	YRB	YRT	Y1L	Y1F	Y2E	Y2G	Y3L	Y3T	Y4J	Y4M	Y5M	Y5F	Y6R	Y6O
%	99	96	88	99	99	98	99	98	98	100	99	100	97	95
Lates	4	2	2	1	1	4	4	2	2	0	1	0	1	6
Whole School Attendance so far this year						97.1%		School Target				97%		

**Well done 4M and 5F: - Our attendance champions!**

## Dates for this half-term

**16th December 2025 – 2:00pm**

**17th December 2025 – 2:15pm**

**18th December 2025 – 2pm**

**19th December 2025 –**

**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)**

**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**



Well done to Phoebe in Year 5 who has qualified with her dance team to represent England in the 2026 Dance World Cup in Dublin!

We're so proud of you and we'll be cheering for you!





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

Year RB	Whole Class	<i>For doing a wonderful Nativity performance!</i>
Year RT	Whole Class	<i>For their amazing performance in their first Nativity!</i>
Year IF	Aris	<i>For being such a wonderful role model and always striving for excellence.</i>
Year IL	Jude	<i>For trying hard in English innovating a character and writing lovely sentences to describe it.</i>
Year 2E	Zoe	<i>For learning and performing her lines wonderfully for the nativity performance!</i>
Year 2G	Sia	<i>For her wonderful oracy in the Nativity performance!</i>
Year 3L	Zikora	<i>For always being a happy, enthusiastic member of the class and doing his best!</i>
Year 3T	Eliab	<i>For always making the right choices and being a role model to others</i>
Year 4J	Danaya	<i>For putting 100 percent of effort into everything she does, well done!</i>
Year 4M	Alvin	<i>For being amazing during the care home visit and for volunteering to read Nativity lines! Showing confidence, kindness and festive spirit- what a wonderful example!</i>
Year 5F	Lucia	<i>For always saying yes when asked to help, and for a positive enthusiasm to her learning</i>
Year 5M	Issak	<i>For his increase in confidence, to contribute to class discussions</i>
Year 6O	Alicia	<i>Showing great maturity and choosing to do the right thing even when others close to her do not. I am really proud of you!</i>
Year 6R	Mussie	<i>For reading so beautifully during the carol concert rehearsals, showing reverence and maturity.</i>

