



Archdiocese of Birmingham

## ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Vivian Road, Harborne, Birmingham, B17 0DN

Telephone: 0121 464 2141

Email: [enquiry@stmaryrc.bham.sch.uk](mailto:enquiry@stmaryrc.bham.sch.uk)

[www.stmaryrc.bham.sch.uk](http://www.stmaryrc.bham.sch.uk)

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.

### September is dedicated to Mary.

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

Our virtues for this half term are: - Eloquent and Truthful



Dear Parents and Carers,

19th September 2025

This past Sunday marked Education Sunday, a national day of prayer and celebration for everyone involved in education. Held annually on the second Sunday of September, it's a meaningful moment to reflect on the vital role schools play in shaping lives and communities. This year's theme, "Lost and Found", inspired by Luke's Gospel, invites us to consider how education helps each child discover their unique path and purpose. As we begin this new academic year, our children have been exploring this theme—giving thanks for the dedication of our staff, the friendships they're building, and the shared journey of learning that connects us all.

#### Pupil Leadership in Action

It's been a wonderfully busy week for our pupil leadership teams. Our School Council, Spiritual Council, CAFOD Club, and House Captains have all come together to share ideas for improving our school and supporting charitable efforts. Their enthusiasm and creativity are truly inspiring, and I'll be keeping you updated as their plans take shape. In this newsletter, you'll find photos of our School Council, Spiritual Council, CAFOD club members, and House Captains.

Next week, we'll be photographing our Prefects and Right Respecting School monitors—look out for those in the next edition.

#### Admissions Update

We've had an overwhelming response from prospective families, with 60 new applications across various year groups since the start of term. It's incredibly heartening to see that St. Mary's continues to be a school of choice within our community. We are currently at full capacity, with a growing waiting list. As a Catholic school, applications from Catholic families are prioritised. While we regret not being able to offer places to more children, this interest is a testament to the strength, warmth, and reputation of our school.

#### Important Allergy Reminder

A gentle but important reminder: we have children in school with severe nut allergies. For their safety, no products containing nuts are allowed in school—this includes items such as nutty breakfast bars, almond cakes, and Nutella sandwiches. If your child brings a packed lunch, please ensure it is completely nut-free.

Additionally, children should not bring lip balms, sprays, or creams into school, as these may contain ingredients that pose a risk to those with allergies. Any creams or medications must be handed in via the school office so they can be stored and administered safely. You can find our full medicines policy on the school website.

## Winter Uniform

As the mornings grow chillier and summer begins to feel like a distant memory, we kindly ask that all children now transition into their winter uniform. This includes a gold shirt or blouse, striped tie, royal blue sweatshirt or cardigan, and grey school trousers, skirt, or pinafore. Footwear should be plain black shoes—please note that trainers and boots are not permitted. We are incredibly proud of our school identity, and the winter uniform really helps our children look smart, confident, and ready to learn. If you need any support sourcing uniform items, please don't hesitate to contact the school office—we're here to help. A gentle reminder to ensure all uniform items are clearly labelled with your child's name. With **school photos taking place on Thursday 16th October**, it's important that all children are in full winter uniform by then. Children continue to wear their PE kits (where plain trainers are allowed) on their PE days.



**Winter Uniform – includes tie**



**PE uniform – still in school colours**

## Macmillan Coffee Morning

We're delighted to begin our charity work this term by supporting the Macmillan Coffee Morning in the Parish. We warmly invite parents to join the School Council for a hot drink and slice of cake after drop-off on Thursday. Any remaining cakes will be available for children to purchase on Friday.

To help make this event a success, we're kindly asking for donations of savouries or cakes that are shop-bought or homemade to be brought in to school on Wednesday and Thursday next week. If you're donating a homemade cake, please include a list of ingredients for reference.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support and partnership. It's a joy to begin another school year with such a vibrant and caring community.

Warm regards,  
Mrs Yorke, Headteacher

# CATHOLIC LIFE

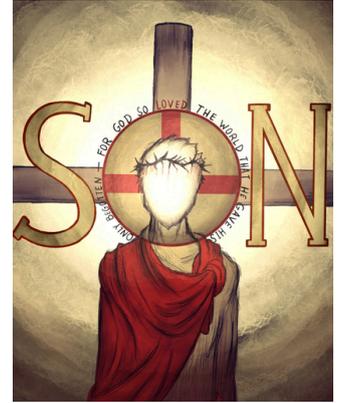
## This week's Reading

John 3:16

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.”

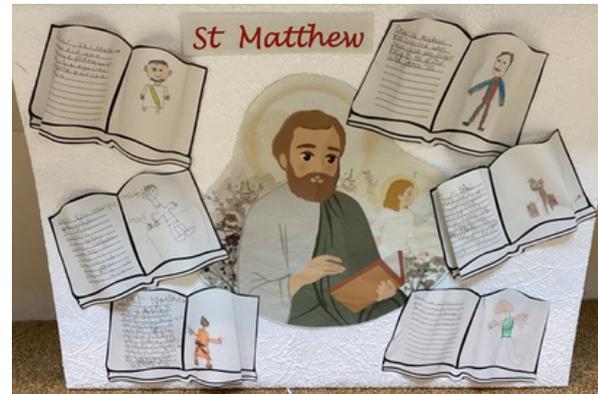
Reflecting on this week's reading, we learn: –

- The Cross is a symbol of love and hope,
- God the Father loves us so much that He sent His Son Jesus to show us His mercy and love.
- We can look to the Cross as a symbol of our faith and be inspired to follow Jesus.



## This week's Mass – Year 2 Mass – Votive of St. Matthew

This week, Year 2 led a beautiful Mass in honour of St. Matthew. With confident voices and thoughtful reflections, they shared his story and reminded us of the power of transformation.



## Our next Mass – Year 6 Mass – Our Lady of Walsingham

Our next Mass in Church will be on Wednesday 24th September 2025, starting promptly at 9:15am. Year 1 children will also be in attendance at this Mass and all parents are welcome to attend.



# Children leading prayer

One of the most meaningful aspects of our school's spiritual life is the growing presence of child-led prayer. Across year groups, pupils are increasingly taking ownership of their spiritual reflections—crafting prayers that speak from the heart, respond to the world around them, and reflect their own experiences and hopes.

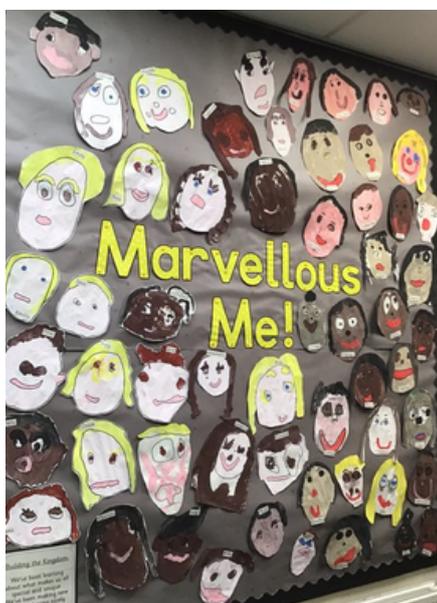


## RE learning

In this season of creation, Year 1 children have been learning about the responsibility humans have to look after God's gift to us 'our one common home'. The children looked at different artwork which showed this, and created their own.



Reception have created beautiful self portraits celebrating their differences, uniqueness and what makes them special!



Year 4 re-enacted Genesis 22. When Abraham was tested by God, he made a promise to sacrifice his only son and was rewarded for his faithfulness by being blessed by God.



# Remarkable RE



Miss Heath was very pleased to be able to present her first Remarkable RE award in her new role as RE Subject Lead. She was very impressed with the children's work and their deep reflections.

# Phonics Parent Workshop

It was fabulous to see so many of our parents (66% of Reception cohort) attend our phonics workshop in the week. Parental involvement in our phonics workshops plays a vital role in supporting early reading development. As parents, joining us in learning how phonics is taught at school, helps us to create a consistent and encouraging approach towards teaching your child to read. Thank you for your support this week, and joining us in school.



# Gold Quality Mark for Geography

## Celebrating Our Primary Geography Quality Mark GOLD Achievement!

We are absolutely delighted to announce that our school has been awarded the Primary Geography Quality Mark—a prestigious recognition of excellence in Geography Education. This award reflects the hard work, creativity, and commitment of our staff and pupils in making Geography a vibrant and meaningful part of our curriculum; and dedicated leadership of Miss Preedy, curriculum lead, AHT.

The assessors praised our application as “superbly laid out” and “a pleasure to read,” noting the thoughtful planning and rich evidence that showcased Geography as a dynamic subject across all year groups. Pupils were recognised not only for their enjoyment of the subject but for their genuine enthusiasm and curiosity about the world around them.

### What Made Our Geography Stand Out?

**Creative Curriculum Design:** We use a wide variety of sources to tailor our Geography topics to the specific needs of our school community.

**Staff Development:** A staff survey helped us gauge confidence and knowledge, allowing us to provide targeted support and professional development.

**Strong Conceptual Foundations:** Key Geographical concept, such as: – *time, scale, diversity, interconnection, and interpretation*, are embedded throughout our units and linked to disciplinary skills, vocabulary, and enquiry questions.

**Clear Progression Structures:** Our use of entry and exit profiles, knowledge organisers, and “I can” statements help track pupil progress and celebrate individual achievements.

### Highlights from Across the School

- Year 6 pupils demonstrated a deep understanding of global trade through analysis of local economic data and fieldwork on national trends.
- Year 1 explored weather patterns and presented their findings, which beautifully connected to rainforest studies in Year 3.
- Year 5 compared populations across the Americas, critically evaluating sources and their reliability.
- Fieldwork is a cornerstone of our approach—from sketching local features in Year 1 to investigating tributaries and ecosystems in Year 5.

### Special Thanks

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to our Assistant Headteacher and Broader Curriculum lead, Miss. Preedy, whose dedication and meticulous work in compiling the evidence base were instrumental in securing this award. Her leadership and passion for geography have truly elevated the subject across our school.

This recognition is not just a badge of honour—it’s a celebration of how our pupils engage with the world, ask thoughtful questions, and develop the skills to become informed global citizens. We’re proud of this achievement and excited to continue our journey of Geographical discovery!





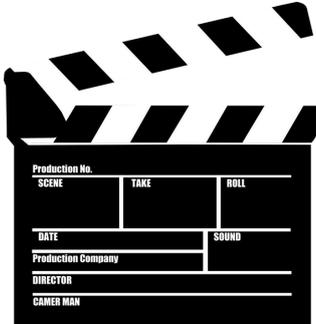
### Year 4 Harborne Library Visit - 23.9.25

Year 4 will be visiting Harborne Library next Tuesday.

4M will leave at 8:45am

4J will leave at 10:15am

If you are a parent who would like to attend and support walking to and from the library, please let the Year 4 staff know.



### Film club for Y4, Y5 and Y6 "Leroy and Stitch"

- 24.9.24 3:30-5:00pm

St. Mary's PTA will be showing "Leroy and Stitch" (Universal rating) after school.

Children will receive a snack of popcorn and fruit as part of their film evening. They must be collected by an adult on our contacts list at 5:00pm from the hall.

## Thursday 25th September

**COME FOR COFFEE AND CAKE**

**WE ARE MACMILLAN. CANCER SUPPORT**

8.45am onwards

**WORLD'S BIGGEST COFFEE MORNING**

Tombola Jumble Sale

St Mary's Parish Centre



### Film club for Y1, Y2 and Y3 "Leroy and Stitch"

- 26.9.24 3:15-5:00pm

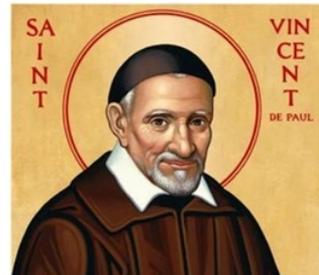
St. Mary's PTA will be showing "Leroy and Stitch" (Universal rating) after school.

Children will receive a snack of popcorn and fruit as part of their film evening. They must be collected by an adult on our contacts list at 5:00pm from the hall.



On **Friday 27th September**, we will be celebrating Saint Vincent de Paul, the French, 17th century priest known as the patron of Catholic charities for his apostolic work among the poor.

**Children who are in St. Vincent De Paul House Group - can come in to school wearing white on this day!**



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

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

The above people are DSLs (Designated Safeguarding Lead)s in school.

If you ever see anything happen to a child that makes you feel uncomfortable, please let a safeguarding lead know. You're not causing problems – you could save a child from unnecessary harm

## What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding ensures that every child, regardless of their age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation, has a right to equal protection from harm. It's the steps that people take to protect children and vulnerable people from harm.



### Examples of safeguarding concerns to look out for:



Physical



Emotional



Sexual



Neglect

# ATTENDANCE



Did you know that missing just 10 days of school a year (equivalent to one day every two weeks) can reduce a child's chances of meeting expected standards in reading, writing, and maths by 30%?

Every day at school counts!

Regular attendance and punctuality are essential for a child's success in primary school. Being present and on time each day helps children build strong learning habits, stay on track with lessons, and develop a sense of responsibility. It also supports social development, as children form friendships and learn teamwork through consistent classroom interaction. Missing school or arriving late can lead to gaps in learning and make it harder for children to catch up. Encouraging good attendance and punctuality from an early age sets the foundation for lifelong learning and success. If you need any support with attendance or punctuality, please speak to Mrs Noone.

## 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 a member of the SLT team. 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 15/09/25-19/09/25**

Class	YRB	YRT	Y1L	Y1F	Y2E	Y2G	Y3L	Y3T	Y4J	Y4M	Y5M	Y5F	Y6R	Y6O
%	100	96	98	98	98	99	97	100	96	96	99	96	99	95
Lates	2	0	1	0	3	2	2	10	0	0	2	0	2	3
Whole School Attendance so far this year						97.8%			School Target				97%	

Well done RB and 3T: - Our attendance champions!

*Autumn theme -*

*Autumn | Virtues*

*23rd September 2025 (am)*

*23<sup>rd</sup> September 2025 - 3:45pm*

*24th September 2025 - 9:15am*

*25th September 2025 - 9:00am*

*25th September 2025 - 3:30pm*

*26th September 2025 - all day*

*29th September 2025 - 8am*

*October 2025 - all month*

**October 2025 - all month**

*October 2025 - all month*

*1st October 2025 - 9:15am*

*2nd October 2025 - lunch time*

*3rd October 2025 - 9:00am*

*7th October 2025 (am)*

*7th October 2025 - 2:30pm*

*8th October 2025 - 9:15am*

*8th October 2025 - 2:30pm*

*10th October 2025 - 9:15am*

*14th October 2025 (am)*

*15th October 2025 - 9:15am*

**16th October 2025 - all day**

*17th October 2025 - all day*

*17th October 2025 - 6pm*

*WB 20.10.25*

*21st October 2025 - all day*

*21st October 2025 - 3:30-6:00*

*22nd October 2025 - 9:15am*

*23rd October 2025 - all day*

*23rd October 2025 - 3:30-6:00*

*23rd October 2025 - normal time*

*24th October 2025 - all day*

*Dignity of the Human Person*

*Eloquent and truthful*

*Year 4 library visit - 4M (8:45) and 4J (10:15)*

*PTA event - Film Club for Years 4, 5 and 6*

*Y6 Mass in Church (Y5 to attend) - Parents welcome*

*Macmillan Coffee Morning in Parish supported by School Council*

*PTA event - Film Club for Years 1, 2 and 3*

*Children in **St. Vincent de Paul House** - wear **white** non-school uniform*

*PTA Annual General Meeting in school hall*

**Pray the Rosary**

**Black History Month**

*Collection for Harvest - please send food and self-care items in for our harvest*

*Year 3 Mass in Church (Y4 to attend) - Parents welcome*

*Themed Lunch in the canteen*

*Year 1 Prayer Service for parents*

*Year 6 library visit - 6R (8:45) and 6O (10:15)*

*RHE talk for parents - KS1*

*Year 5 Mass in Church (Y6 to attend) - Parents welcome*

*RHE talk for parents - KS2*

*Year 6 Year Group Assembly*

*Year 3 library visit - 3T (8:45) and 3L (10:15)*

*Year 1 Mass in Church (Y2 to attend) - parents welcome*

**Photo Day - Children in full winter uniform please**

*Children in **St. Teresa of Avila** House - wear **blue** non-school uniform*

*PTA Fundraising - Children's disco in Parish Centre*

*School Book Fair in school - please support our book fair*

*Flu vaccinations in school*

*Parent Consultation Evening*

*Reception Welcome Mass (with Year 6 buddies) - Parents welcome*

*Children in **St. John Paul II House** - wear **red** non-school uniform*

*Parent Consultation Evening*

*Children finish today for October half-term (normal finish time)*

*INSET day - School closed to children*

Autumn theme -

Autumn 11 Virtues

3rd November 2025 - all day

3rd November 2025 - 9:30am

6th November 2025

7th November 2025 - 9:00am

WB 10th November 2025

WB 10th November 2025

12th November 2025 - 9:15am

17th November 2025 - all day

19th November 2025 - 9:15am

21st November 2025 - 9:15am

22nd November 2025 - 12:00pm

Dignity of the Human Person

Learned and Wise

Children return to school at normal time

Whole School All Saints and Holy Souls Mass in Church (Parents welcome)

St. Mary's Open Day for Reception class 2024 (10:30) or (1:45)

Year 4 Prayer Service for all Year 4 parents

Other faiths Week

Remembrance Week

Year 4 Mass in Church (and Year 3 classes attend) - parents welcome

PTA non-uniform day in support of Parish Fete - bring sweets/bottles

Year 6 Mass in Church (and Year 5 classes attend) - parents welcome

Year 5 Year group Assembly

Parish Fete

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## Striving for Excellence



Congratulations to Florence, who achieved her Bronze level in gymnastics last weekend. What an amazing achievement Florence. We're incredibly proud of you.



# School Representatives 2025-2026

Congratulations to our newly elected: -

## *School Council*



## *House Captains*



# CAFOD Club



# Spiritual Council



# Star of the week

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

Year RB	Andre	For doing excellent sounding out and writing in Literacy!
Year RT	Thea	For consistently doing good listening, good sitting, good looking and fantastic tidying up!
Year 1F	Lilah-Grace	For being a wonderful role model and living out St Mary's mission in everything that he does.
Year 1L	Elias	For beautiful artwork in RE.
Year 2E	Nathan	For super sentences in English and R.E
Year 2G	Edward	For being a wonderful member of year 2!
Year 3L	Cara	For being a fantastic friend to others and always having a positive attitude to learning
Year 3T	Norrie	For consistent amazing behaviour, achieving 'Striving for Excellence' on numerous occasions
Year 4J	Liam	For constantly trying his best in every subject and always having a positive attitude to learning.
Year 4M	Debbie	For being an excellent academic and behaviour role model for her new classmates.
Year 5F	Michael	For being a kind and gentle member of 5F. What a wonderful role model!
Year 5M	Amelia	For always showing patience and kindness to everyone.
Year 6O	Eliza-Rose	Stepping up and becoming a fantastic Year 6 role model.
Year 6R	Noah	For settling into Year 6 so well and showing resilience with everything he does, especially his writing!

