



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.



November is dedicated to the Holy Souls.

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,

14th November 2025

It has been a busy and thought-provoking week at St. Mary's, filled with opportunities for prayer, reflection, and learning together as a community. Here are some of our highlights: -

Other Faiths Week

This week, our learning has focused on celebrating Other Faiths. As Catholics, it is important for us to understand and respect the beliefs of others, recognising how different faiths can work alongside each other as we live out our Catholic virtues and mission statement. The children have enjoyed exploring traditions and practices from other religions, helping them to grow in respect, empathy, and appreciation for the diverse world we live in.

Remembrance

November is a time of remembrance, and we have reflected on why it is important to remember those who have died and to pray for peace. This week, the children have taken part in a whole-school remembrance service and 2-minute silence; and we have celebrated a Remembrance Mass and child-led prayer services throughout the week too. Our curriculum work has also helped children understand the sacrifices made by others. Through wearing poppies, observing silence, and offering prayers, our pupils have shown great reverence and maturity in honouring those who gave their lives for our freedom.

Advent

As Advent approaches, we begin to prepare our hearts and minds for this special season. St. Mary's works alongside a group of primary schools and Bishop Challoner Secondary School, collectively known as the Tolkien group of schools. Together, we aim to make a difference for families across Birmingham:-

We are supporting two initiatives this year:

1. **Toy Appeal** – We are asking for donations of new, unwrapped toys to support families in Birmingham this Christmas. Donations can be sent into school over the next month.
2. **Birmingham Christmas Shelter** – St Catherine of Siena Primary School supports Birmingham shelter each year, providing food and clothing for those in need. Last year, over 400 guests received fresh clothes and toiletries. This year, they have asked for our help in collecting toiletries, biscuits, crisps, cordial, and clothing. Donations can be brought to the school office in the coming weeks.

We know times are challenging, and there is no obligation to give if you need to prioritise your own family. However, we are always humbled by the generosity of St. Mary's families, and we thank you in advance if you are able to support these important initiatives.

Collection for Parish Fair– Saturday 22nd November

Our PTA are supporting the Parish Fair next Saturday 22nd November and have asked for donations. Children may wear non-school uniform on **Monday 17th November** and should bring in an item for the Fair. The items that children need to bring in can be found under the dates section of this newsletter. Thank you.

Have a lovely weekend,
Mrs Yorke, **Headteacher**

**We pray for those who
have died in November**

Catholic Life



Remembrance and Holy Souls



We will remember them...

John 15 : 13

"There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends."

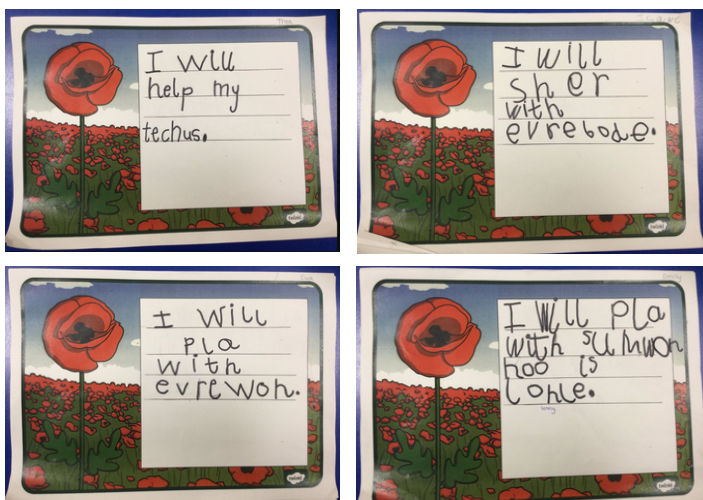
We remember before God, and commend to Him, those who have died for their country in war; those whom we knew; and whose memory we treasure; and all those names of people who we do not know; who lived and died in service and faith of the Lord.

We pray for peace in our World. Amen.

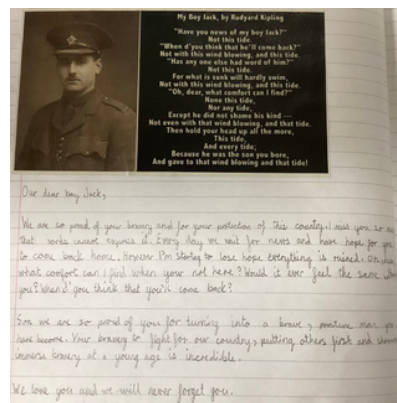


During our whole-class gathering and 2-minute silence, we reflected on: -

- why it is important to remember;
- why those who protect us are special;
- that we must never lose hope;
- we should pray for peace in our world.



Reception created signs to put in our remembrance garden about how we will live peacefully.



Year 5 created remembrance posters and analysed the meaning behind the poem "My Boy Jack" by Rudyard Kipling.



Examples of some of our home learning.



Year 4 organised wrote prayers on poppies offering to God those who died in armed conflicts.



Year 4 Mass - 13.10.25

Remembrance

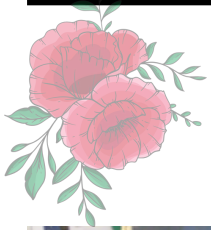
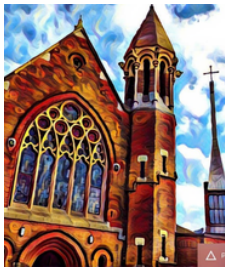
Year 4 led a beautiful Mass on Wednesday in remembrance of those who have lost their lives in conflict.



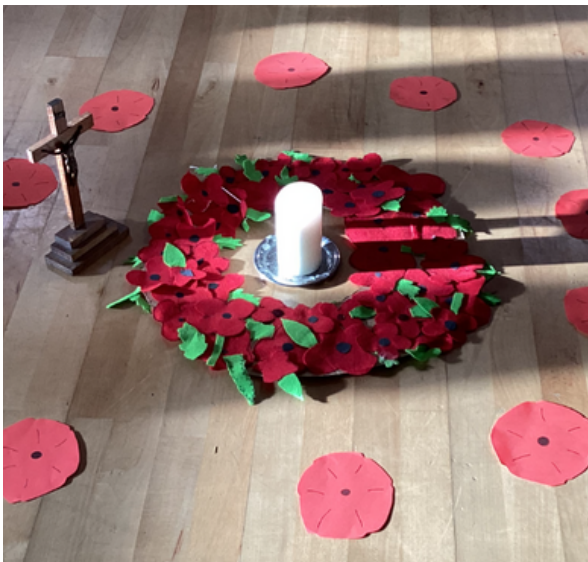
Next week's Mass: - Year 6 Mass - St Rose of Lima

Our next Mass in Church will be on **Wednesday 19th November 2025**, starting promptly at 9:15am.

Year 6 will be leading a special Mass dedicated to 6R's class Saint - St. Rose of Lima. Year 5 will also be in attendance. All parents are very welcome to attend.



Child-led prayer and prayer assemblies focused on the theme of remembrance this week. The children led and participated in their prayers with reverence, dignity and grace.



CURRICULUM

Other Faiths Week

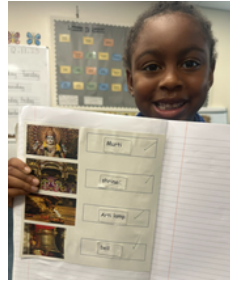
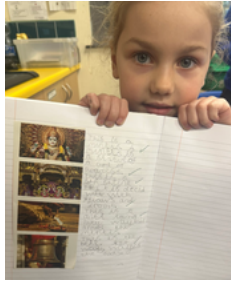


Reception learnt about Sikhism and the festival of Vaisakhi.



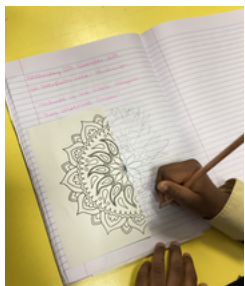
V from Year 1 told his friends all about his beliefs as a Hindu and answered questions about his faith.

Year 4 expanded their knowledge about Judaism with a visit to Singers Hill Synagogue.

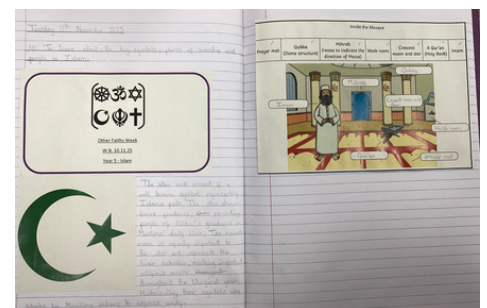
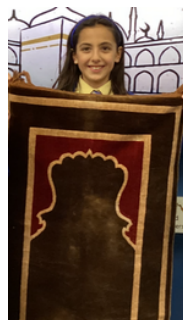


Year 2 had a special visitor who shared insights about Hinduism with the children.

They loved creating their own fact files and had fun drawing Rangoli patterns to celebrate the culture.

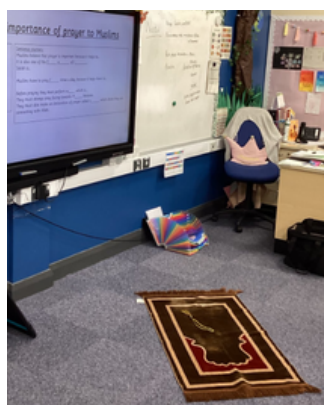


Year 5 learned about the signs and symbols in Islam.



Year 3 learned about Judaism and the Jewish celebration of Hanukkah.

Year 6 learned about prayer in Islam and had the opportunity to examine a prayer mat and prayer beads.





Monday 17th November – Non School Uniform Day

On Monday 17th November, St Mary's School and PTA are asking for donations for the Christmas Fayre. The children can come to school wearing non-uniform and bring in the following items...

Reception



Chocolate or sweets for the tombola.

Years 1, 2, 3



Christmas Stockings – filled with sweets / little treats. Take a new pair of socks, roll one sock up and put into the other, fill the sock with treats, sweets, hair accessories etc... Secure with an elastic, tie or ribbon.

Years 4, 5, 6



A bottled drink – alcoholic or non-alcoholic for the Tombola (Unopened and in date please).

How to make a Christmas Stocking For the Christmas Fair Stall



1. Buy a new pair of festive socks, roll one sock up and put it inside the other (so that they can be worn afterwards).

2. Fill with things children might like ie sweets, chocolates, small toys, hair bobbles, etc, (NO NUTS) and tie with a Christmas bow or ribbon.



Thank you...
Ho Ho Ho!!



Finally, if you are doing a clear out before Christmas and have any pre-loved items that you would like to donate, they would be greatly received (toys, books, gift sets, jewellery, crockery etc). You can deliver any of your donations into school or the Priory between 8-4 Monday-Friday.



Year 5 Harborne Library Visit - 18.11.25

Year 5 will be visiting Harborne Library next Tuesday.

5M will leave at 8:45am

5L 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 5 staff know.



Wednesday 19th November 2025

Red Wednesday - wear red to stand up for solidarity

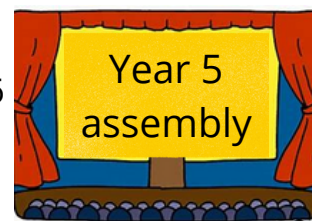


Next week, children are invited to wear red on Red Wednesday as a symbol of solidarity with those around the world who suffer persecution for their faith. This powerful gesture reminds us of the importance of religious freedom, compassion, and standing up for justice. Through prayer, reflection, and discussion, we will help our pupils understand why it's important to speak out for those who cannot.



Year 5 Assembly - 21st November 2025

We are looking forward to welcoming parents of all Year 5 children into school next Friday 21st November, for their year group assembly based on Christ the King.



Parish Fair - 22nd November 2025

Come along on Saturday 22nd November between 12pm and 3pm to support our annual Parish Fair. With lots of stalls, bargains and entertainment - this is a great opportunity to support the school and parish in essential fundraising. We look forward to seeing you there.



PROJECT PLAYGROUND

We are pleased to announce a new initiative – Project Playground!

Alongside our OPAL offering, we are launching a campaign to raise money for a new activity trail in our playground. Unfortunately, our current activity trail is no longer in use as it cannot be maintained but the children LOVE to hang, swing, climb, traverse and balance on this type of equipment. Activity trails help children develop gross motor skills, balance and coordination, strength and dexterity, sharing and turn-taking skills, self confidence and much more.

Members of our School Council have already met with one supplier (Pentagon Play) to discuss ideas for a new activity trail.



We are investigating different sources of funding for this campaign and more details will follow – **if you are a local business owner and/or would like to sponsor our project, please speak to Mrs Noone!**



Own Clothes Day (Y1 to Y6) for OPAL on Friday 28th November



We are also running low on play resources for OPAL and we will be having an own clothes day for Year 1 to Year 6 on **Friday 28th November** in exchange for donations.

If you wish to wear your own clothes on this day, please bring in a donation of any of the following from our Bingo card below:



We are also collecting large loose parts such as:

- Wooden pallets
- Tyres
- Cable drums
- Plastic guttering / piping
- Crates

If you have any of these items that you are able to donate, please email enquiry@stmaryrc.bham.sch.uk to arrange drop off.

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

Details can be found below: -

Toy Appeal

Christmas 2025

Please give **NEW** toys (unwrapped) for our local children in Birmingham for all age groups ranging from 1-15 years.

Irish TV will be at Bishop Challoner on Friday 28th November.

COLLECTION DATES:

Monday 3rd November - Friday 12th December

ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL



St Mary's PTA Wreathmaking Workshop



Wednesday 3 December
7 – 9pm

St Mary's Parish Hall, Vivian Road, Harborne

All materials provided
£25 per person, including mulled wine & mince pies



Get creative this Christmas!



Carols by Candlelight

*St Mary's Parish Hall,
Vivian Road, Harborne*

Friday 12 December

*Open with bar – 7.00 till 9.30pm
Carols from 7.30pm, Close 9.00pm*

Raffle



Entry:

Family (2 adults/up to 3 children) - £12

Adults - £6, Seniors - £5

Includes 1 glass mulled wine & mince pie

Squash & biscuits for children

More mulled wine available to buy

*Alcoholic and non-alcoholic hot mulled fruit punch or tea/coffee also
available*

All proceeds to:



**St Basil's for
homeless teenagers
& St Mary's School PTA**



**Tickets available at Parish Office during the
week and Piety Stall at weekends**

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

SAFEGUARDING

Bullying in school is a serious issue that can have a lasting effect on children's emotional well-being, academic performance, and social development. St Mary's are legally required to have an anti-bullying policy (this is contained within our Behaviour and Relationship Policy and can be found on our website), but effective prevention goes beyond policy—it involves fostering a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment where all children feel valued. By promoting positive behaviour, teaching empathy, and encouraging open communication, we play a vital role in preventing bullying and supporting children in developing healthy relationships.

How can I help my child if I think they're being bullied?

- Open up a conversation. ...
- Listen to their experience. ...
- Give them time before talking if they need it. ...
- Check in with them. ...
- Keep a log of the bullying. ...
- Help them build up their self-esteem. ...
- Encourage them to spend time with peers who treat them well.



**Let a member
of staff know**

Is my child too ill for school?

Okay to Attend (if otherwise well):

- 
- Coughs & colds (no high temperature)
 - Cold sores
 - Conjunctivitis
 - COVID-19 (mild symptoms only)
 - Hand, foot & mouth
 - Head lice
 - Ringworm (after treatment starts)
 - Slapped cheek syndrome
 - Sore throat (no high temperature)
 - Threadworms

Keep Off School:

- 
- High temperature (any cause)
 - Chickenpox – until spots crust over (~5 days)
 - COVID-19 – if high temperature or feeling unwell
 - Ear infection – if high temperature or severe pain
 - Impetigo – until sores crust or 48 hrs after antibiotics
 - Measles – at least 4 days after rash
 - Scarlet fever – 24 hrs after antibiotics
 - Tonsillitis – if high temperature
 - Vomiting/Diarrhoea – 48 hrs after last episode

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 10/11/25-14/11/25

Class	YRB	YRT	Y1L	Y1F	Y2E	Y2G	Y3L	Y3T	Y4J	Y4M	Y5M	Y5F	Y6R	Y6O
%	90	91	99	97	98	99	99	85	98	99	98	100	97	99
Lates	1	2	1	1	3	3	5	3	0	2	0	1	0	2
Whole School Attendance so far this year						97.4%		School Target					97%	

Well done 5F: - Our attendance champions!

Dates for next half-term

Autumn theme -

Autumn 11 Virtues

17th November 2025 - all day

18th November 2025 - am

19th November 2025 - all day

19th November 2025 - 9:15am

21st November 2025 - 9:15am

22nd November 2025 - 12:00pm

25th November 2025 - am

26th November 2025 - 9:15am

27th November 2025 - 9:00am

28th November 2025 - all day

28th November 2025 - all day

WB 1st December 2025

1st December 2025 - 1:45pm

2nd December 2025 - am

2nd December 2025 - 3:15-4:15

3rd December 2025 - 9:15am

3rd December 2025 - 3:15-4:15

3rd December 2025 - 7:00pm

4th December 2025 - 3.30-4:30

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

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

Year 5 library visit - 5M (8:45) and 5L (10:15)

Wear **red** for Red Wednesday

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

Year 5 Year group Assembly

Parish Fete

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

Year 2 Mass in Church (and Year 1 classes attend) - parents welcome

Coffee morning for parents - come in to school and find out more about SEND

Reception bedtime story day - Reception children come in to school in pyjamas

Year 1 - Year 6 non-school uniform for items for OPAL

Corporal Acts of Mercy

Penitential Service for Years 4 - 6 (children and staff only)

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

PTA event - KS1 Christmas Disco in school hall (children only)

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

PTA event - Reception class Christmas Disco in school hall (children only)

Annual Wreath making workshop in Parish Hall

PTA event - KS2 Christmas Disco in school hall (children only)

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 Summer 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

Star of the week

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

- Year RB Peniel For showing good listening and being a good role model!
- Year RT Santiago For trying so hard to use the sound mat when writing a 'Peace Promise' for the Reception garden.
- Year IF Kylie For the outstanding progress she has made across all subjects – particularly with her writing!
Well done Kylie!
- Year IL Raey For trying hard to focus and concentrate during assembly and joining in with more lessons in the classroom.
- Year 2E Daisy For listening carefully and trying hard to complete work to an improved standard
- Year 2G Alex For being a kind, caring and helpful member of the class!
- Year 3L Benji For always being a kind, caring and helpful member of the class!
- Year 3T Nalan For his excellent attitude to his work, and having huge success in his writing and maths work
- Year 4J William For his effort in class, not only with his work but also acting as a role model to others!
- Year 4M Cillian For great ideas in our poetry lessons and working hard on his handwriting.
- Year 5F Jan For his enthusiasm in discussions about Remembrance Day this week
- Year 5M Yadiel For continuously striving for excellence in all aspects of his learning and always wanting to help others.
- Year 6O Emanuel Incredible effort in Maths and Booster group. Always striving for excellence
- Year 6R Sam For having a positive attitude to learning this week and trying his hardest! Well done!

