



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.

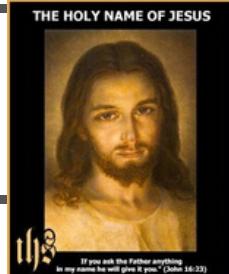


St. Mary's mission: To love God above all things by: learning together, loving ourselves, loving each other, loving all people, loving life itself and constantly striving for excellence worthy of our God-given gifts.

### January is dedicated to the Most Holy Name of Jesus

Our theme for the Spring term is: 'Options for the Poor and Vulnerable'

Our virtues for this half term are: - Curious and active



Dear parents and carers,

23rd January 2026

We've had a wonderful week in school and I wanted to share a few highlights with you.

#### Theme – Jesus 'Lamb of God'

During prayer and reflection time, the children explored the title 'Lamb of God' and what it teaches us about Jesus' sacrifice and love. It has been inspiring to see such thoughtful, child-led prayer, scripture work, and reverence across the school.

#### Wider opportunities – Aladdin

Reception and KS1 enjoyed an exciting performance of Aladdin from M&M Productions, complete with brilliant staging and acting that made the experience truly memorable. KS2 can look forward to their turn with Oliver Twist in February.

#### Workshops for parents

Thank you to all parents who attended our workshops this week. We had excellent engagement from Reception families exploring early writing, and from Year 4 parents learning more about the multiplication check and supporting arithmetic at home. Your partnership makes a real difference to the children's progress.

#### House retreat

Our Year 6 house captains led a thoughtful retreat, today, focused on our Diocesan mission: "Forming Christ-centred pilgrims of hope with kind hearts, questioning minds, a thirst for knowledge and a hunger for justice." Each house explored a different part of the mission and reflected on what it means for us at St Mary's. The children are now preparing a newsletter to share their insights with you.

#### Birthday celebrations

We kindly ask that sweets, cakes, and presents are not brought into school for birthday celebrations, as we must keep things fair, safe, and manageable for all children, including those with allergies or dietary needs. To ensure everyone can join in safely, children are instead welcome to wear their own clothes on their birthday, or the nearest school day if it falls on a weekend or holiday. This approach helps us maintain a healthy and inclusive environment for every child. Thank you for your continued support.

Wishing you all a restful weekend.

**Mrs Yorke**, Headteacher



# Catholic Life

*This week's Gospel and Prayer*

*John 1:29*



*"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"*

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

- **Know** that John the Baptist was a witness to Jesus' true identity;
- **Recognise** that Jesus is the Son of God, the Lamb of God;
- **Understand** that with the help of the Holy Spirit, we too can get to know Jesus;
- **Choose** to be witnesses to Him through our actions, and the way we live our lives.



Year 5 Mass - 21.1.26

A Mass for Refugees

Year 5 led a truly thoughtful and compassionate Mass today, focusing on the theme of welcoming refugees. A wonderful example of faith in action — well done, Year 5.

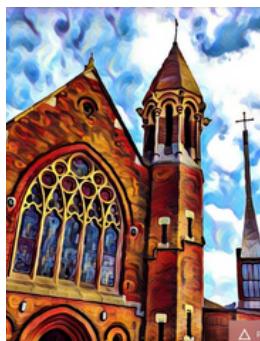


Our next Mass: - Year 2 Mass

**St. Paul the Apostle**

Our next Mass in Church will be on **Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2026**, starting promptly at 9:15am. Year 2 will be leading us in our Mass, and Year 1 will also be in attendance.

All parents are welcome to join us.



# Catholic Life

Look at our wonderful RE learning this week: -



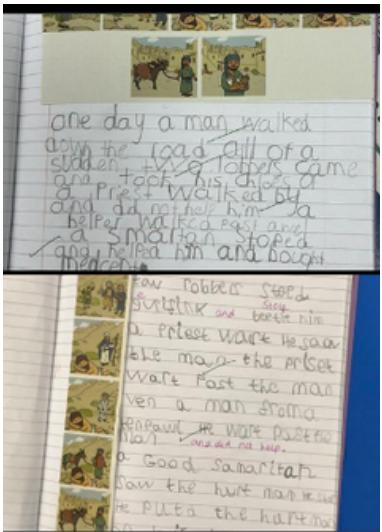
Reception class have been learning about the Holy family.



Year 5 linked their learning about helping refugees to our Catholic teaching principles.



Year 4 and Year 5 children planned their prayer for this week about Jesus who takes away the sins of the world.

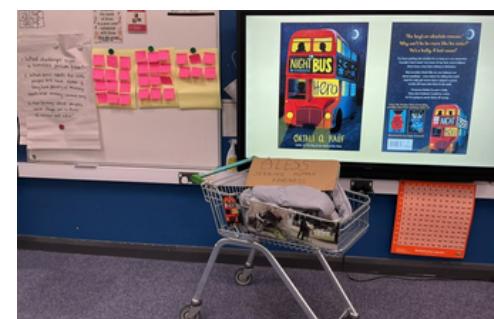


Year 1 have been re-telling the story of the Good Samaritan. They then reflected on what this parable teaches us.

Year 4 have also contemplated the needs of the homeless and how we can use this term's virtues of curious and active to help.



Year 6 have been learning about the Holy Trinity.



## Remarkable RE

The children, whom really stood out this week - received a Remarkable RE award from Miss Heath.

# Whole School House Retreat



Today, the children led a special retreat in school to explore the Birmingham Diocese Mission, which guides all our Catholic schools.

This Mission invites every child to grow as a Christ-centred pilgrim of hope — someone with a kind heart, a curious mind, a love of learning, and a desire to make the world fairer. The Diocese teaches that every person is created by God and called to flourish. During the retreat, the children reflected on what this looks like in daily school life and how we can all grow together in faith and character.

## The Mission encourages us to nurture:

**Kind hearts** — showing love and compassion.

**Questioning minds** — being curious and thoughtful.

**A thirst for knowledge** — enjoying learning and seeking understanding.

**A hunger for justice** — standing up for what is right.

The retreat gave pupils the chance to think deeply about these values and how they can live them out in school and beyond.

## St. Alphonsa



**Christ-centred pilgrims of hope**

## St. Teresa



**Questioning Minds**

## St. Gianna



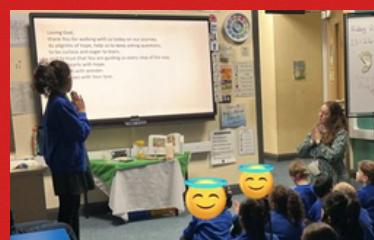
**Hunger for Justice**

## St. Vincent



**Kind hearts**

## St. John Paul II



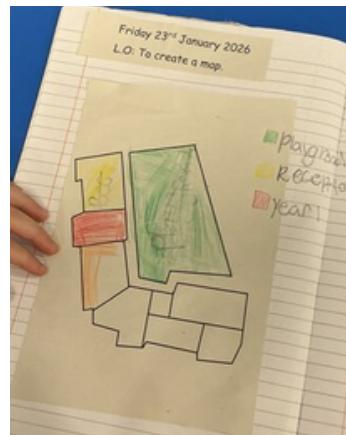
**Thirst for knowledge**

# CURRICULUM

## St. Mary's **Broader Curriculum!**



Year 4 have started learning about the Roman Empire. They learnt new vocabulary and revised using the timeline with dates BC and AD.



Year 1 have been learning all about maps, following a tour of the school.



Year 3 have been showing their skills in hockey. Focusing on controlling the ball and passing the ball to each other.

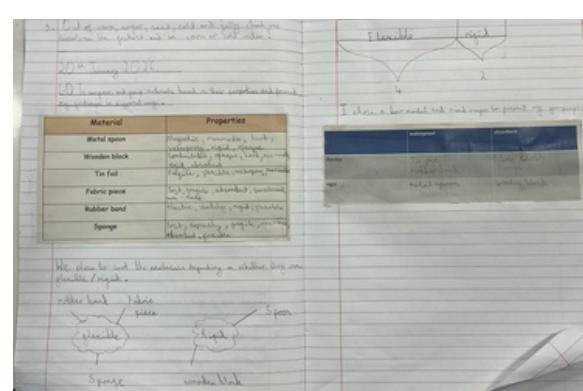
## St. Mary's **Scientists** love their practical Science lessons!



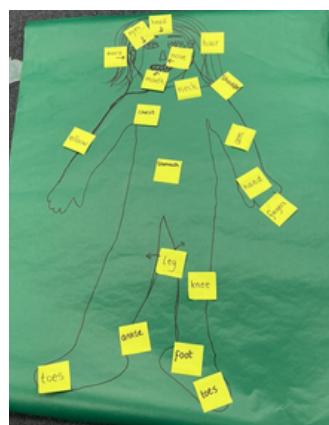
Year 4 have been exploring which materials are reflective and which are not.



Reception scientists have explored what happens to ice when it melts!



Year 5 enjoyed comparing and sorting materials based on their properties and presenting their findings in different ways.



Year 1 identified and labelled the body parts of the human body.



Year 6 began their brand new science topic! We are exploring light ready to begin our new learning!

# Workshops for parents



It was fantastic to see so many parents engaging with how school teaches early writing in Reception; and multiplication and arithmetic in Year 4. We hope that the strategies shown to you will help you to support your children at home.



# Aladdin



Our children were treated to a truly magical performance of Aladdin this week, and it was an absolute delight from start to finish. The vibrant costumes, brilliant acting, and lively staging had the whole hall buzzing with excitement. It was a wonderful opportunity for the children to experience live theatre in school, and their smiles said it all. A huge thank-you to M&M Productions for giving our pupils such a memorable treat.



### **PTA meeting - 8:00am on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> January 2026**

Any parent can join us for a coffee and biscuit on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> January just before school begins - we will bring your children in early. This meeting will be to help plan future PTA events. Our PTA is instrumental in raising vital funds for school and we're always looking for new ideas and volunteers to join our exceptional team.



### **Reception eye screening check in school**

**Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2026**

Our Reception children will be taking part in their routine eye-screening check in school. This is a quick and simple assessment carried out by the NHS screening team to identify any early vision difficulties that may affect learning or development.



### **Year 5 Harborne Library Visit - 27.1.26**

Year 5 will be visiting Harborne Library next Tuesday.

5M will leave at 8:45am

5F 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.



### **Film evenings**

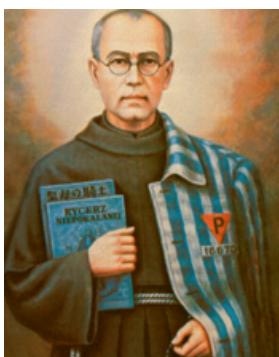
**KS2 - Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> January till 5:15pm**

**Rec/KS1 - Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> January till 5:00pm**

Our PTA film evening is this week - sign up for £3.50 and pay through SHOCAL.

Give your consent on Gateway.

This is a great opportunity for the children to have a cosy afternoon with their friends with a drink and popcorn, whilst raising important funds for school.



### **Year 5 Prayer Service for parents - Friday 30<sup>th</sup> January 2026**

Year 5 parents are invited to join us for a beautiful Prayer Service in school on Friday 30<sup>th</sup> January at 9am, with a focus on 5M's patron - St Maximilian Kolbe. His witness to Christ's Resurrection inspires us to live with hope and courage, even in the face of adversity.

We look forward to welcoming you in to school.

## Mental Health Week – WB 2.2.26

Children's Mental Health Week is coming up.

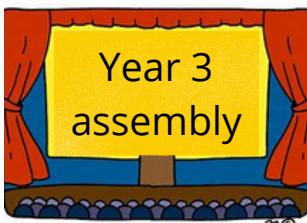
The theme is: – This is My Place.

It explores the idea of belonging and what it means for children and young people to feel part of something – whether that is their family, their school or their friendships.



## NSPCC Number Day – 6.2.26

On Friday 6th February, we are taking part in the NSPCC Number Day! During the day, children will be taking part in exciting maths activities. We are inviting children to 'Dress up for digits.' This can be an item of clothing with a number on it! Or you could get creative and design your own! We are asking for a donation for NSPCC of £1, which can be paid on school gateway. Thank you



### Year 3 Assembly – Friday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2026 –

We are looking forward to welcoming parents of all Year 3 children into school on Friday 6th February, for their year group assembly.



### Year 1 visit to Grove Park – 5th February 2026

On the afternoon of Wednesday 5th February, Year 1 will be completing their field work and data collection as part of their geography learning based on 'My local area'. They will do this by observing the human and physical features in Grove Park.



## Online SAFETY WEEK

WB 9.2.26

### Year 4 trip to Bosworth Battlefield – 9th February

This trip has been carefully planned to complement the children's ongoing studies of the Romans in Britain within their History curriculum. Throughout the day, the children will engage in three immersive teaching sessions: Boudica, Roman Walk, and Roman Archaeology. Children should wear school outdoor PE kit and trainers; and dress suitably for the weather. They will return before the end of the school 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

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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. Davis.

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 19/01/26-23/1/26

Class	YRB	YRT	Y1L	Y1F	Y2E	Y2G	Y3L	Y3T	Y4J	Y4M	Y5M	Y5F	Y6R	Y6O
%	98	97	97	97	98	98	98	98	99	97	95	97	99	95
Lates	1	1	1	4	1	5	7	6	0	2	0	1	0	7
Whole School Attendance so far this year					97.02%			School Target					97%	

Well done 4J and 6R: - Our attendance champions!

# ONLINE SAFETY

## Whatsapp!

WhatsApp is a chat application which can be used on a mobile phone or tablet. It lets you send messages, images and videos to friends. You can have one to one and group conversations.

**Did you know that the minimum age for WhatsApp is 16 or over?**

Children often view or send images that can be harmful or without appropriate consent – particularly if they are taking photos of other children.

We ask that you carefully monitor what your child is viewing online, and that they are reminded that they must tell you if they receive anything inappropriate from any application.

**What Parents & Carers Need to Know about WHATSAPP**

**...MSG ME...**

**WHAT ARE THE RISKS?**

With more than two billion active users exchanging texts, photos, videos and documents, as well as making voice and video calls, WhatsApp is the world's most popular messaging service. Its end-to-end encryption only allows messages to be viewed by the sender and any recipients: not even WhatsApp itself can read them. This privacy issue has been in the spotlight recently, as the UK's Online Safety Bill proposes to end such encryption on private messaging; WhatsApp is unwilling to do so and has reportedly considered withdrawing its service in the UK should this legislation go ahead.

**EVOLVING SCAMS**

WhatsApp's popularity makes it a lucrative hunting ground for scammers. Recent examples include posing as the target's child, requesting a money transfer because of a spurious 'emergency'. Plus a scam where fraudsters trigger a verification message by attempting to log in to your account, then (posing as WhatsApp) call or text to ask you to repeat the code back to them, giving them access.

**CONTACT FROM STRANGERS**

To start a chat, someone only needs the mobile number of the WhatsApp user that they want to message. If your child has ever given their number out to someone they don't know, that person could then contact them via WhatsApp. It's also possible that your child might be added to a group chat (by one of their friends, for example) containing other people that they don't know.

**FAKE NEWS**

WhatsApp's connectivity and ease of use allows news to be shared rapidly – whether it's true or not. To combat the spread of misinformation, messages forwarded more than five times on the app now display a "Forwarded many times" label and a double arrow icon. This makes users aware that the message they've just received is far from an original ... and might not be entirely factual, either.

**ONLINE**

**VIEW ONCE CONTENT**

The facility to send images or messages that can only be viewed once has led to some WhatsApp users sharing inappropriate images or abusive texts, knowing that the recipient can't re-open them later to use as evidence of misconduct. People used to be able to screenshot this 'disappearing' content – but a recently added WhatsApp feature now blocks this, citing increased privacy.

**CHAT LOCK**

Another new option allows users to store certain messages or chats in a separate 'locked chats' folder, saved behind a passcode, fingerprint or face ID authentication. The risk here is that this function creates the potential for young people to hide conversations and content that they suspect their parents wouldn't approve of (such as age-inappropriate material).

**VISIBLE LOCATION**

WhatsApp's 'live location' feature lets users share their current whereabouts, which can be helpful for friends meeting up or parents checking that their child's safely on the way home, for example. However, anyone in your child's contacts list or in a mutual group chat can also track their location – potentially letting strangers identify a child's home address or journeys that they make regularly.

# Dates for Spring term 2026

## Spring theme -

### Spring 1 Virtues

26th January 2026 - 8:00am

27th January 2026 - am

27th January 2026 - am

27th January 2026 - 3:30pm

28th January 2026 - all day

28th January 2026 - 10:45am

29th January 2026 - 3:15pm

30th January 2026 - 9:00am

WB 2.2.2026

3rd February 2026 - am

4th February 2026 - 9:15am

6th February 2026 - all day

6th February 2026 - 9:15am

6th February 2026 - 10:45am

WB 9.2.26

9th February 2026 - all day

10th February 2026 - all day

**10th February 2026 - all day**

11th February 2026 - 9:15am

13th February 2026 - end of day

## Options for the Poor and Vulnerable

### Curious and Active

PTA meeting in school hall

Reception eye-screening check in school

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

KS2 film evening

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

SPARKS fire service visit for Year 4

Reception classes and KS1 film evening

Year 5 prayer service for parents

Children's Mental Health Week

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

Reception Mass in Church (with Y6 buddies in attendance) - parents welcome

Number day - wear digits

Year 3 Year group Assembly

Year 1 visit to Grove Park

Online Safety Week

Year 4 school trip to Bosworth Battlefield

Safer Internet Day

**Class photo day - ensure children are in full uniform**

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

**Break up for half-term break - normal time**

## Spring theme -

### Spring II Virtues

**23rd February 2026 - 8:45am**

24th February 2026 - am

25th February 2026 - 9:15am

25th February 2026 - pm

27th February 2026 - 2:30pm

WB 2.3.26

4th March 2026 - 9:15am

5th March 2026 - all day

6th March 2026 - 9:15am

10th March 2026 - am

11th March 2026 - all day

11th March 2026 - 9:15am

13th March 2026 - all day

## Options for the Poor and Vulnerable

### Intentional and Prophetic

**Children return to school at normal time**

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

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

Oliver Twist workshop for Year 6

Reception parent workshop about Maths

Careers Week / Vocations week

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

World book day - dress as your favourite book character

Year 2 Year group assembly

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

Reception school trip to Attwell farm

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

Year 2 trip to Black Country Living Museum

16th March 2026- 9:15am 1:15pm  
 17th March 2026 - am  
 17th March 2026 - pm  
 18th March 2026 - 9:15am  
 19th March 2026 - pm  
 20th March 2026 - all day  
 24th March 2026 - am  
 24th March 2026 - 1:30pm  
 25th March 2026 - 9:30am  
 26th March 2026 - 9:00am  
 27th March 2026 - 6:30-8:30pm  
 WB 30.3.26  
 30th March 2026 - pm  
 1st April 2026 - 1:45pm  
 2nd April 2026 - 11:00am  
 2nd April 2026

Mothers' Day Inspire Event in school  
 Year 6 library visit - 6R (8:45) and 6O (10:15)  
 Parent Consultation Evening  
 Reception Mass in Church (with Year 6 buddies) - parents welcome  
 Parent Consultation Evening  
 Down Syndrome Awareness Day  
 Year 5 library visit - 5F (8:45) and 5M (10:15)  
 Year 6 Confirmation Workshop with parents  
 Whole School Mass - parents welcome  
 Year 6 prayer service for parents  
 PTA event - Spring Disco in Parish  
 Holy Week  
 Reconciliation Service for children in Years 4/5/6  
 Reception class - Easter Bonnet parade  
 Year 6 Stations of the Cross in Church for KS2 and parent  
 Break up for Easter 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

## Term Dates:- Academic Year 2025-2026

<b>Spring Term</b>	<b>Monday 5<sup>th</sup> January - Friday 13<sup>th</sup> February</b>
	<i>Half-term</i>
	<b>Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> February - Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> April</b>
<b>Summer Term</b>	<b>Monday 20<sup>th</sup> April - Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> May</b>
	<i>Half-term</i>
	<b>Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June - Friday 17<sup>th</sup> July</b>

# Star of the week

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

Year RB Marcus For being a kind friend and always helping others!

Year RT Chloe For always trying her best in phonics groups!

Year 1F Lilag-Grace For beautiful writing and effort in her reading

Year 1L Sochika For trying really hard to wait her turn to answer a question and using her voice.

Year 2E Mahin For being a wonderful member of 2E, who works hard in all subjects.

Year 2G Chiamaka For trying really hard with her behaviour!

Year 3L Emerson For trying so hard in all of his learning this week and being a good role model for others!

Year 3T Massimo For his continuing excellent manners

Year 4J Janelle For putting 100% effort into all of her lessons and being an excellent role models to others!

Year 4M Sophia For quiet determination and positive example of good manners and kindness.

Year 5F Theodore For his enthusiastic approach to his learning.

Year 5M Rameen For always having such a positive attitude towards her learning. Keep it up!

Year 6O Peter Persevering with his pronunciations in his interventions. Keep up the hard work Peter!

Year 6R Anaya For always showing fantastic behaviour both inside the classroom and outside. A true role model to all!

