



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: 'The Dignity of the Human Person'

Our virtues for this half term are: - 'Attentive and Discerning'



Dear parents and carers,

1st December 2023

Fr. John has asked me to pass on a huge thank you to the many parents, children, relatives, teachers and especially to the ever-active, PTA for their support last weekend with the Christmas Fair. It couldn't have happened like that without you all. Thank you so much.

This weekend, we enter in to the season of Advent, a time of spiritual preparation before Christmas. The first candle on our advent wreath - the "prophet's candle", represents 'hope', reminding us that Jesus is coming. Let us take time this weekend to explore this and to think about what we hope for as we prepare for Christmas - I am sure that you will join us in praying for peace and hope for resolution in our world soon. We are entering a really exciting time in school, with school concerts, discos and nativity rehearsals, but also deep prayer and preparation. Within this newsletter, I have outlined the events taking place in school over the next few weeks. Any further information will be shared with letters and through e-schools. Our advent prayer bags will now begin to go home and we look forward to seeing photos of children praying with their families at home. Please remember that the children are dressing up in Advent colours every Monday - this Monday, they will need to wear something purple - we also need their home learning for our displays. Thank you for your support for our Christmas Charities too - we're still in need of toys for our toy appeal.

God bless you all,

Mrs Yorke

This week's Gospel and Prayer

Matthew 25:31

"Jesus said to His disciples: "When the Son of Man comes in His glory, escorted by all the angels, then He will take His seat on His throne of glory".

Jesus,

You are the King of the Universe. We praise you for bringing us together in your name. Bring Your healing to our world. Help me to follow your example in our words and actions today.

Amen

Reflecting on this week's Gospel message we learn:

- Jesus will come back and take his seat on His throne.
- Jesus unites us, heals us, protects us and leads us like a true King.
- By following Jesus we glorify Him.

Catholic Life in School

There was no Mass this week. Our next Mass will be: - Whole School Mass in Church - 8.12.23 at 9:30am - Feast of Immaculate Conception

Our next Mass in Church will be on Friday 8th December 2023, starting promptly at 9:30am. **All children** will be attending our Mass and all parents are welcome to attend. Please sit in the old part of the church for this Mass.



Our Community Work

A massive thank you to our families who support our fundraising. We received so many donations for the Parish Fair on Saturday 25th November. Your kind donations go a long way for our Charity work and we're so grateful.



St. Mary's PTA, along with the Parish put on a marvellous Fayre!



Our wonderful teaching staff were a massive support - Thank you Mrs Noone, Miss Preedy, Miss Busby and Mrs Nguyen for all of your help supporting the stalls and selling tickets to help raise funds for our Church.





First advent candle

The first Sunday of Advent symbolises Hope with the "prophet's candle" reminding us that Jesus is coming.

As we embark on this special first week of Advent, we invite you to join in reflection and connection as a school family. During this season of hope, we come together to ponder the promise of better times ahead.

scripture

"For I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." - Jeremiah 29:11

reflection

Hope Amidst Challenges In light of the world situation, particularly in Palestine and Ukraine, where conflict and uncertainty persist, we reflect on the theme of 'hope.' As a school community, let us contemplate the profound impact of hope in navigating through challenging times and fostering a collective vision for a better future.

open question

In what ways can we, as a school community, contribute to fostering hope and building a better world for all in the face of global challenges?

Task

A Creative Reflection We invite families to express their thoughts and aspirations in creative ways. This could be through artwork, poetry, prayer, a short video, or any form that resonates with your family (see ideas). Share your creations with us, and let's collectively illuminate the spirit of hope that binds us together. All collective work will be displayed in the school hall.



In preparation for our first week of Advent, all staff gathered in prayer to think about how we can lead prayer and liturgy over the upcoming weeks.



Advent prayer... at home

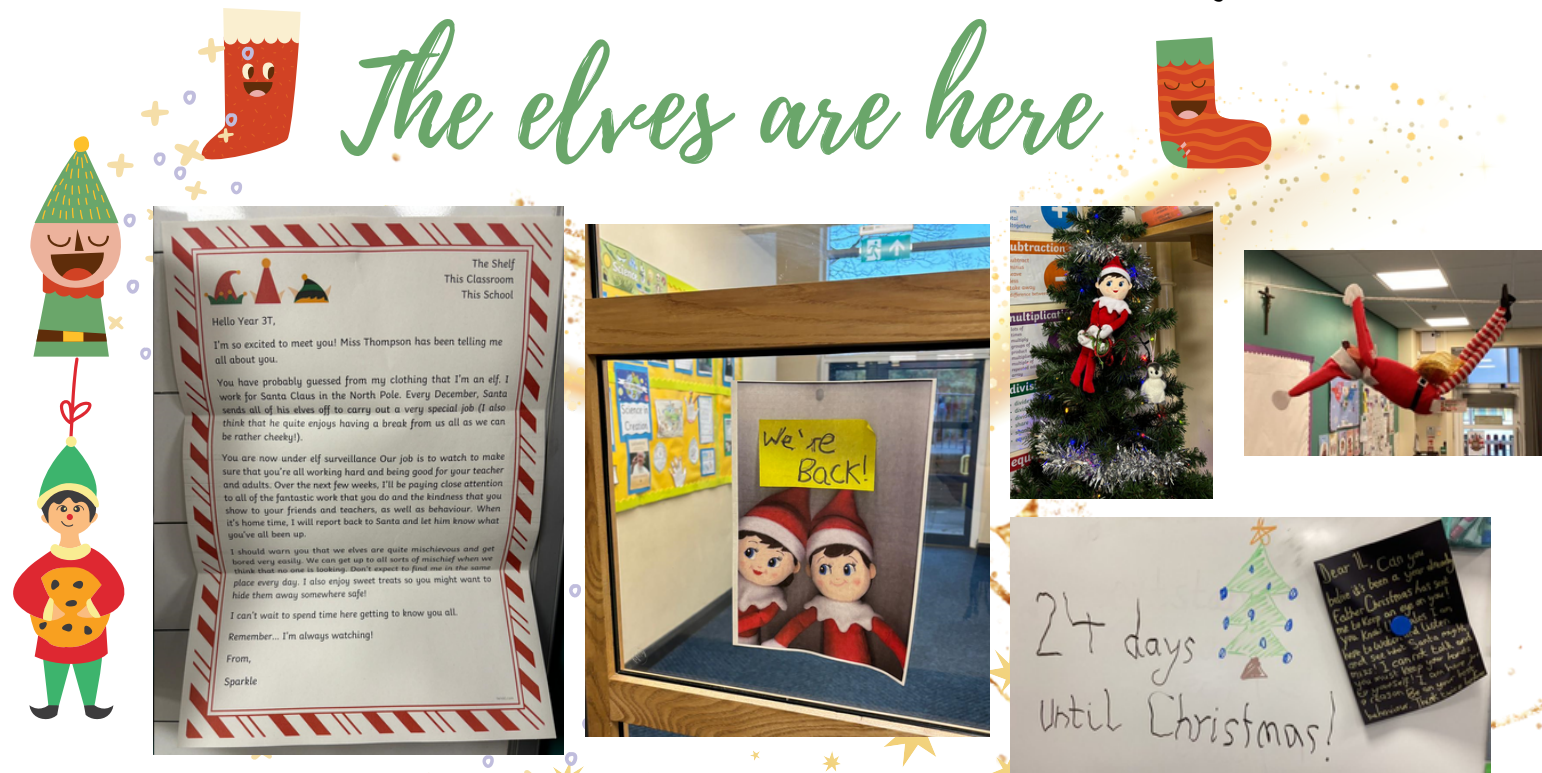


The Spiritual Council have prepared the Advent Prayer Bags ready to start coming home this weekend.

The children are particularly excited to play the Advent game at home! We hope all our families enjoy their prayer time together this Advent

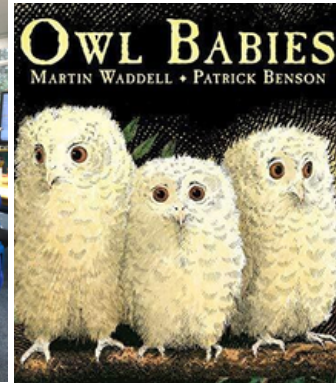
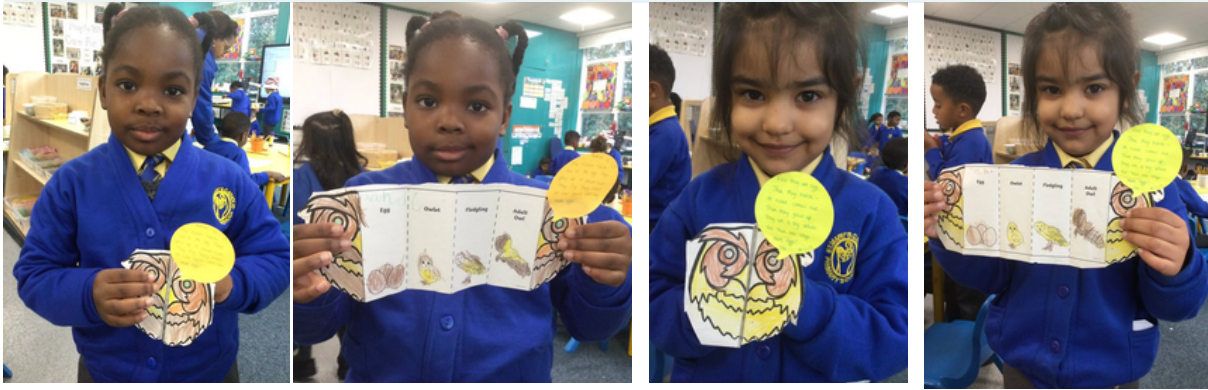
Please post photos of your children using the prayer bags and we will include them in upcoming newsletters.

The elves are here



Reception news: -

Reception class have been learning about the life cycle of an owl. They made their own owl information books and talked about their learning



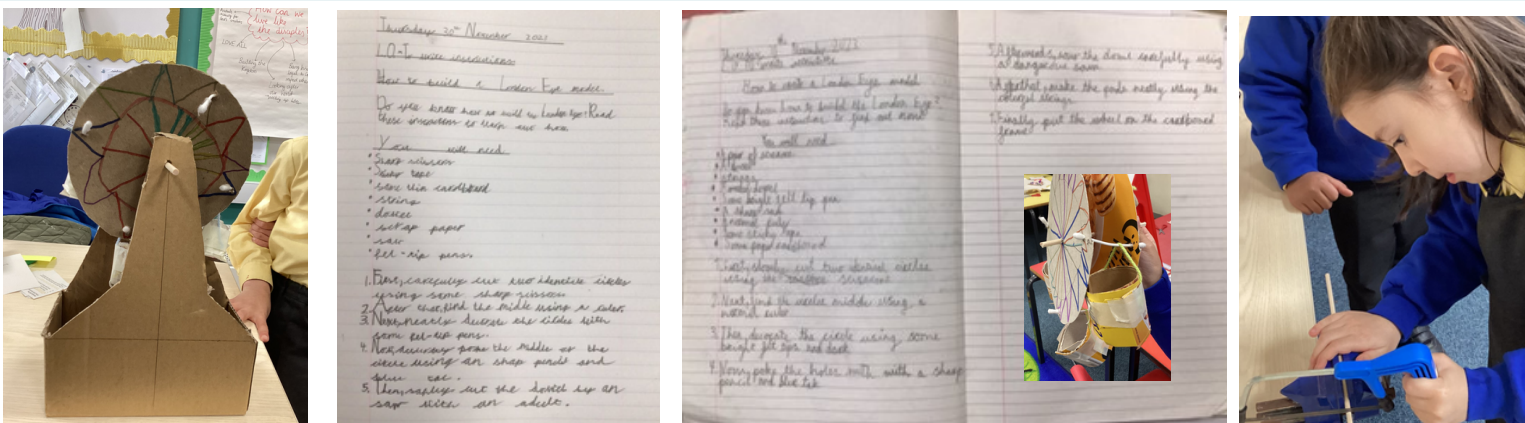
Year 1 news: -

In Art, Year 1 have completed their playground sculptures.



Year 2 news: -

Year 2 made models of the London Eye and wrote up instructions of how they did it.



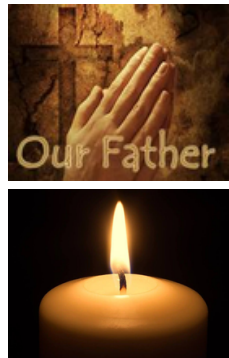
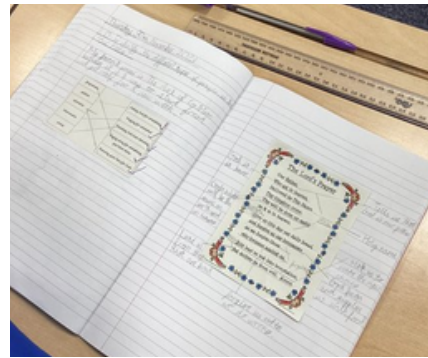
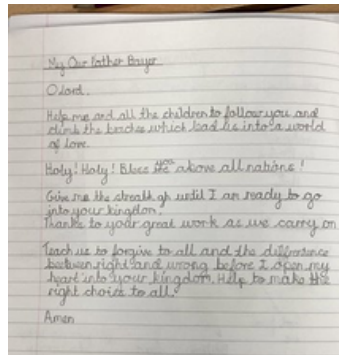
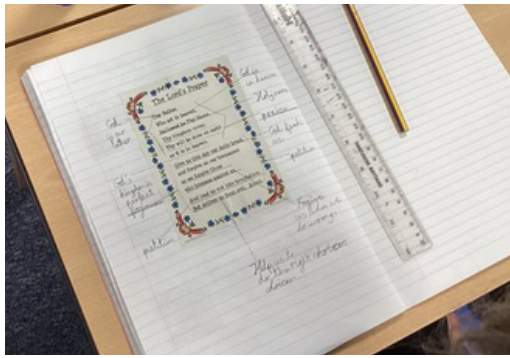
Year 3 news: -

In Science, Year 3 planned and conducted a pattern seeking investigation to find out if people with longer legs can jump further or people with longer arms can throw further.



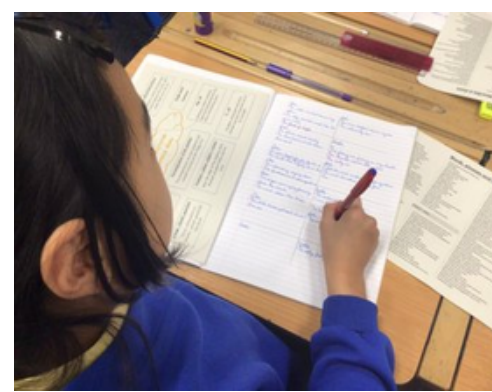
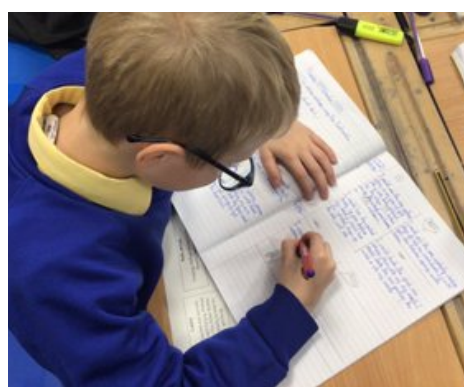
Year 4 news: -

Year 4 have been discussing the Our Father prayer and writing their own version of it.



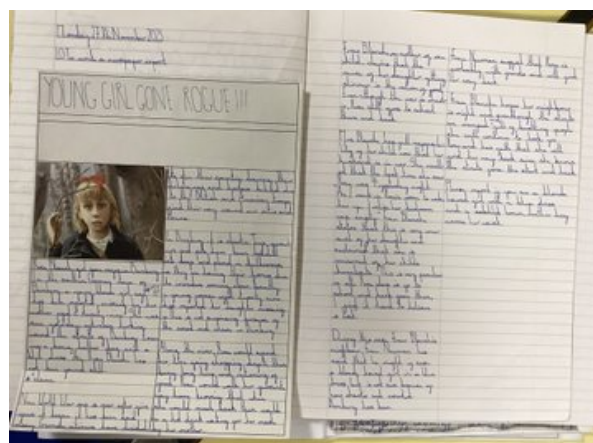
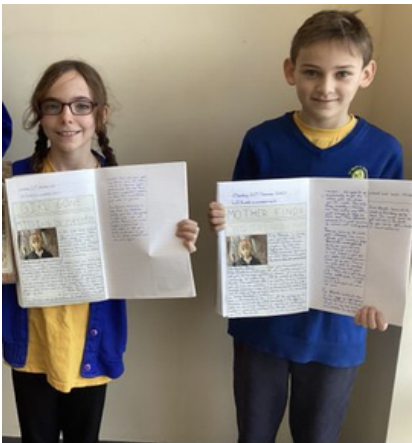
Year 5 news: -

Year 5 emerged themselves in a stormy atmosphere to encapsulate what it would be like to be stranded at sea. They then used their ideas in their writing.



Year 6 news: -

In English, Year 6 wrote a newspaper article based on the WW2 story, 'Rose Blanche' by Ian McEwan



Mrs Davis and a group of children led us in our Prayer and Liturgy about Christ the King



Year 6 writing moderation

It was fabulous to welcome Year 6 teachers from across the Tolkien schools at St. Mary's. The teachers shared good work and practice. – everybody came away with lovely ideas going forward.



Advent calendars

We are using Missio digital advent calendar to guide us in prayer throughout December. We will also be sharing 'walk with me' reflections as a staff.



WREATH MAKING WORKSHOP



Thankyou PTA

The PTA put on a wonderful evening and everybody had a marvellous time making wreaths.

Staff training

On our INSET, all staff received vital first-aid training including updates to procedures and record-keeping and CPR and defibrillator training.

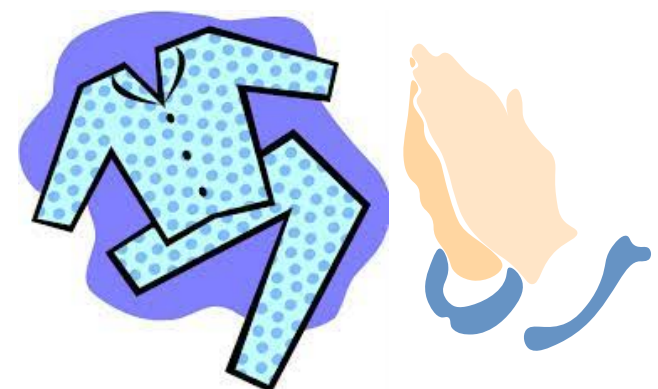




As an alternative to Christmas cards this year, our CAFOD club children have chosen to support the 'World Gifts' charity appeal.

They have designed posters and written to parents. By following this more sustainable approach instead, we hope to reduce our imprint on the environment and any money saved can be donated on School Gateway for our charity appeal. So far we have made: -

TEACHER GIFT!



The cost of living is affecting us all.

Rather than buying gifts for each other this year, the staff have chosen to purchase pyjamas which will be distributed between

Local baby banks, food banks, The Community Hub (Faraday Road) and City Mission

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).

Christmas Charity

For our advent charity donations this year, we will have charity buckets at our Nativities and Carol Services.



All children will be taking part in the Rudolph Run, week beginning 4th December. This is a sponsored event where children will receive antlers to wear, complete a sponsored run, and raise money for Birmingham Hospice (formerly Birmingham St Mary's and John Taylor Hospices) - a charity that has helped support our families with loss.



As we are a cashless school, we have set up a Go Fund Me page for sponsorship - please follow the link to sponsor your child/children.

https://www.justgiving.com/page/sharon-tame-1700650634223?utm_term=VWZSYDxjE

All progress can be followed on our twitter feed. The Run will finish on Friday, where the PTA will mark the children's hard work with a special treat.



Supporting our local Birmingham children this Christmas

We need more toys to support families in Birmingham this Christmas.

We are accepting toys - new and unwrapped - and our final collection time is **Thursday 14th December.**

Thank you for those who have donated so far.





Set your timers for **Friday 1 December**.

We're teaming up with Youth Sport Trust once more and the superstar team are back for another awesome reading challenge.

If you took part in Summer Reading Challenge, welcome back! Keep up your amazing work by adding another reading badge to your belt.

If you are new, hip hip hooray! It's great to see you here. We hope you have fun reading. Remember, there's a reading champion in all of us!

The Challenge starts on Friday 1 December 2023 and ends on 19 February 2024.

Read **three or more books** to complete the Winter Mini Challenge!

Rate and review your books on this website while the Challenge is on and you'll unlock a **limited-edition virtual badge** for your profile AND a **special certificate** that you can print out and keep.

If you don't have a profile yet, click the **Join** button top left to sign up.

Keep an eye on our News to keep up with the latest Mini Challenge news, including activities, book recommendations, and competitions to enter.

Is your library or school going to take part in the Winter Mini Challenge? Grown-ups can find resources on our [Resource Bank](#).



Competition Time



A stunningly illustrated gift book of ancient Indian fables, retold by bestselling poet Nikita Gill.

The stories of the Panchatantra have been read aloud and shared for thousands of years, kept alive by generation after generation of storytellers. In this captivating collection of ten animal tales, reimagined with warmth and wit by Nikita Gill, you'll meet mighty elephants and courageous mice, cunning crocodiles and clever monkeys, talkative tortoises and little lapwing birds. Discover a world of wonder, wisdom and friendship, of helping others, speaking out and finding courage.

With vibrant, irresistible colour artwork by Chaaya Prabhat on every page, and sumptuous high-end finishes, including a jacket, foiled cloth binding and a ribbon marker, this is a timeless gift book for every child to enjoy and treasure.

Book Trust have five copies of this beautiful book to give away. Simply answer the question on their website to be in with a chance of winning!

www.booktrust.org.uk

Good luck!



Harborne Library are starting a brand new Saturday Storytime this weekend from 12:00 to 12:30pm





Rudolph Run

All children will be taking part in the Rudolph Run next week to raise money for Birmingham Hospices. If you would like to sponsor the children please follow our Go Fund Me page link below: -

https://www.justgiving.com/page/sharon-tame-1700650634223?utm_term=VW2SYDxjE



Year 4 Harborne Library Visit - 28.11.23

Year 4 will be visiting Harborne Library next Tuesday.

4J will leave at 9:00am

4M will leave at 10:45am

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.

Christmas Discos

The Christmas Discos are this week:-

5.12.23 (3:30-4:30) - KS1

6.12.23 (3:30-4:30) - Reception class

7.12.23 (3:45-4:45) - KS2

Cost for disco and non-school uniform is £3.00

If you are just taking part in non-school uniform, the cost is £1.00



Christmas Jumper Day

Next Thursday 7th December 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.



Friday 8th December 10:30-11:30

after Mass in school hall (for all parents)

We would like to welcome parents and preschoolers to the school hall on Friday 8th December from 10:30-11:30. This follows our whole school Mass for the feast of the Immaculate Conception and we hope families will be able to attend Mass and join us in the school hall afterwards for some much needed socialising. 'Tea and Talk' is a place where parents, grandparents and younger siblings can come and have a chat over a cup of tea/coffee with other parents and pastoral staff every half term.

There will be games and toys for pre-schoolers too!

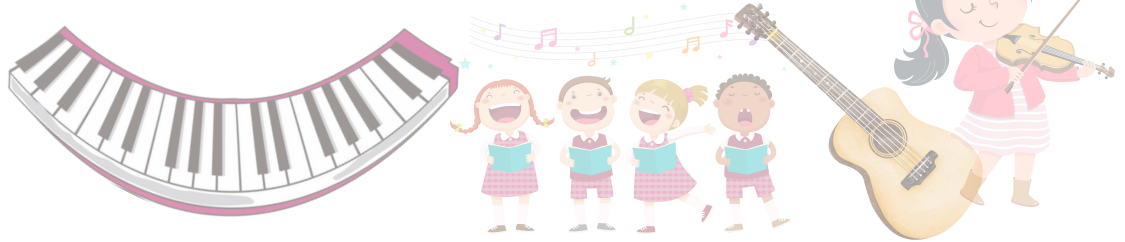




Music Concert

Monday 11th December 3:45-4:45

We have some very talented musicians in school who are learning to play an instrument. We have our after-school concert lined up so please make a note of the date.



Christmas Dinner will be served on Wednesday 13th December!

If your child normally brings in a packed lunch on a Wednesday and would like to opt in for Christmas Dinner, please confirm this with the school office.

Year Reception

15.12.23 at 9:30am
in the Church

RECEPTION
CHRISTMAS
STORY

Reception class are so excited for Jesus' birthday.

Nativities - beginning 15.12.23

Years 1 and 2

19.12.23 at 2:15pm
in the School hall

THE INN-
SPECTORS

The inn-spectors are in Bethlehem and they are not pleased. A stable is no place for visitors and their newborn baby, and, it really is a health and safety nightmare! Can the inn-spectors be convinced that the stable really is fit for a King?

Years 3 and 4

20.12.23 at 2:15pm
in the School hall

WHO TOOK
THE MARY
OUT OF
CHRISTMAS?

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

21.12.23 at 2:00pm
in the Church

CAROL
SERVICE

Come and join us for traditional and modern 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 (15.12.23) and Y5 and Y6 (21.12.23). We have limited room in school hall - toddlers are welcome but please limit prams and pushchairs coming in to school. Thank you.



SCAROLS
BY
CANDLELIGHT

FRIDAY 15 DECEMBER

ST MARY'S PARISH HALL
Vivian Road
Harborne



Doors open 7pm
Carols 7:30 - 9pm

Family ticket: £12 (2 adults and up to 3 children)
Adult £6 Senior or student £5



On 15th December, a special event is being hosted in our Parish Hall. Carols by candlelight will showcase music by David Fisher and St. Mary's School choir. Tickets from St. Mary's Parish Office in office hours or ring Cynthia on 07702 747 113 to book. Come and join us to raise funds for 'Shelter' winter appeal.

West Midlands Children's Theatre



On 18th December, all children from YR-Y6 will enjoy the action packed pantomime, "Sinbad the Sailor", an adventure loosely based on the tales from 1001 Arabian Nights. The children will join Sinbad as he journeys across the seven seas to find his fame and fortune. To make the experience financially accessible for all this Christmas, we are bringing the theatre to St Mary's! A payment of £1.50 per child has been set up on School Gateway. Payment is due in advance of the performance date by 30th November please. Thank you.



Christmas Mass

Friday 22nd December 2023 - 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.

Parish News

Kenelm Youth Trust



After the Church appeal by the Kenelm Youth Trust last weekend, there is now a solid group of parents and other volunteers committed to training after Christmas to lead a future St Mary's Parish Youth Group for the coming September's Year 7s and 8s, two Sunday evenings a month.

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



WhatsApp 16

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

AGE RESTRICTION 16+

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.

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.

Advice for Parents & Carers ...TYPING...

EMPHASISE CAUTION

Encourage your child to treat unexpected messages with caution: get them to consider, for example, whether the message sounds like something a friend or relative would really send them. Make sure they know never to share personal details over WhatsApp, and to be wary of clicking on any links in messages. Setting up two-step verification adds a further layer of protection to their WhatsApp account.

THINKING BEFORE SHARING

Help your child to understand why it's important to stop and think before posting or forwarding something on WhatsApp. It's easy - and all too common - for content to then be shared more widely (even publicly on social media). Encourage your child to consider how an ill-judged message might damage their reputation or upset a friend who sent something to them in confidence.

ADJUST THE SETTINGS

It's wise to change your child's WhatsApp settings (go to 'Privacy', then 'Groups') to specify which of their contacts can add them to 'My Contacts' or 'My Contacts Except...'. Additionally, if your child needs to use 'live location', emphasise that they should enable this function for only as long as they need - and then turn it off.

CHAT ABOUT PRIVACY

Some parents like to check in with their child about how they're using WhatsApp, explaining that it will help to keep them safe. If you spot a 'Locked Chats' folder, you might want to talk about the sort of chats that are in there, who they're with and why your child wants to keep them hidden. Also, if your child has sent any 'view once' content, you could discuss their reasons for using this feature.

Meet Our Expert

Dr Claire Rutherford is an online safety consultant, educator and researcher who has developed and implemented anti-bullying and cyber safety policies for schools. She has written various academic papers and carried out research for the Australian government comparing internet use and sexting behaviour of young people in the UK, USA and Australia.

...HEY OSCAR...

NOS National Online Safety

#WakeUpWednesday

Source: <https://blog.whatsapp.com/on-open-letters> | <https://tq.whatsapp.com/10770889562332> | <https://faq.whatsapp.com/3610056969245/the-preferred-way> | <https://www.whatsapp.com/security> | <https://blog.whatsapp.com/chat-lock-making-your-most-private-conversations-more-private> | <https://www.ecsa.org/levely-whatapp-records>

Keep our children safe – park responsibly
 We must once again remind you of the need to park safely and not on the yellow lines outside of school. Irresponsible parking is worrying many of our parents and children. The School Council continue to campaign and ask parents directly to park safely! This can not continue...

Parents,

Please report any illegal parking to the Council, using the below link:-

https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/20109/parking/1983/report_an_illegally_parked_vehicle



**Do not block
 our yellow barrier!!!!**



This parent blocked our barrier - a staff member needed to leave in a hurry and couldn't get out!!!

Obstructing our yellow barrier blocks access to and from school. Imagine there was an emergency - an ambulance would not be able to get in to school if your car is blocking the barrier! This discourtesy could actually have serious repercussions!

Park up safely and walk - we are reporting all illegal parking and taking photos!

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 27/11/23 – 01/12/23

Class	YRB	YRT	Y1L	Y1F	Y2E	Y2G	Y3L	Y3T	Y4J	Y4M	Y5M	Y5F	Y6R	Y6O
%	88.3%	85%	95%	96.5%	93.7%	97.5%	91.6%	99.1%	96.2%	95.4%	97.9%	100%	93.1%	97.4%
Lates	10	2	13	3	8	1	3	1	7	4	3	2	3	5
Whole School Attendance so far this year						96.7%		School Target				97%		

Well done 5F :- our attendance Champions

Autumn theme -

Autumn 11 Virtues

WB 4.12.23

5th December 2023 - 3:30-4:30

6th December 2023 - 3:30-4:30

7th December 2023 - 3:45-4:45

7th December - all day

8th December 2023 - 9:30am

8th December 2023 - pm

13th December 2023 - all day

13th December 2023 - 9:00am

13th December 2023 - lunch

15th December 2023 - 9:30am

15th December 2023 - 6:45pm

15th December 2023 - 7pm

18th December 2023 - am

19th December 2023 - 2:15pm

20th December 2023 - 2:15pm

21st December 2023 - 2pm

22nd December 2023 - 9:30am

22nd December -

Dignity of the Human Person

Attentive and Discerning

Rudolph run in school

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

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

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

Christmas jumper day

Whole School Mass - Feast of Immaculate Conception in Church (Parents welcome)

Special treat in school for the children, arranged by the PTA

Year 3L non-school uniform day for their class Saint - St. Lucy

Year 3 Prayer Service for all Year 3 parents

Christmas dinner day in school

Reception Nativity in Church (for parents)

Choir sing for Carols by Candlelight - meet at school 6:45pm

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

Theatre Show in school for the children 'Sinbad the Sailor'

Year 1 and Year 2 Nativity in School Hall (parents welcome)

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

Dates for this term

Star of the week

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

Year RB	Daisy	trying really hard with her writing about owls this week
Year RT	Mia	putting lots of effort in to phonics lessons
Year 1F	Asha	always producing excellent work and being an excellent role model to others
Year 1L	Cara	always trying her best in everything that she does
Year 2E	Sophia	trying her hardest with everything. Fabulous effort - keep it up!
Year 2G	William	working really hard in maths lessons
Year 3L	Theo	always working hard and trying his best
Year 3T	Bobby	superb resilience in learning and for being a brilliant friend
Year 4J	Jennifer	always being on task with her learning
Year 4M	Danny	always being hard working and an excellent role model
Year 5F	John	completing his tasks well and making good choices when playing with friends
Year 5M	Amelia	working hard on her writing resulting in her achieving her pen licence
Year 6O	Elizabeth	writing the most thoughtful reflections across the curriculum
Year 6R	Jay	asking lots of thoughtful questions to support his learning across English and the wider curriculum.

