



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,

28th November 2025

Our school is thriving, and the joyful season of Advent and Christmas is nearly upon us which will fill the upcoming weeks with busy preparations and wonderful anticipation. It is a truly special time of year, full of faith, celebration, and community spirit – and we have so much to look forward to together. Here are some of our highlights:

#### Parish Fair

I am delighted to share that our Parish Fair on Saturday 23rd November was a tremendous success, bringing together our school, families, and parish in a wonderful celebration of faith and community. It was inspiring to see so many of you attending, supporting, and contributing so generously to our fundraising efforts. Through your kindness, and the incredible dedication of our PTA, an outstanding £2,850 was raised, which will be shared between the parish and the school. This generosity will make a real difference to our school. More information and pictures from the day can be found within this newsletter.

#### Advent – a season of hope

This weekend we enter 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. Families are encouraged to use the prayer and reflection on page 3 of this newsletter to explore this theme together at home. Our Diocesan mission is to '**form Christ-centred pilgrims of hope with kind hearts, questioning minds, a thirst for knowledge, and a hunger for justice**'. We fully embrace this mission as we move into the next liturgical season.

#### School events and celebrations

We are entering a joyful period in school with concerts, discos, and nativity rehearsals, alongside moments of deep prayer and preparation. The newsletter outlines upcoming events so please check the newsletter carefully. Any further details will follow via email.

#### Advent prayer bags

From next week, our Advent prayer bags will begin to go home. We look forward to seeing photos of children praying with their families, sharing faith together in their homes. Please share your photos with us on X or via email; as I can then include pictures in future newsletters, showcasing the partnership between school and families to embed prayer life into daily routines.

## Our work on Catholic Social Action Theme – Dignity of the Human Person

The theme of the dignity of the human person has been central in our learning this term. Children have been taught that every individual is created in the image of God and therefore deserves respect, care, and compassion. Through lessons, prayer, and practical links throughout the curriculum, children have explored key principles such as recognising the worth of each person, standing against injustice, and valuing diversity. Embedded across the curriculum and the terrific texts that we read, children are encouraged to see themselves and others as unique and precious, and to act responsibly in promoting fairness and kindness. In doing so, the school community lives out Catholic Social Teaching, ensuring that pupils not only understand the principle of human dignity but also apply it in their daily lives, both within school and in the wider world. A fantastic display has been created for our school hall to show case this learning.



## Advent Charity Work

Thank you for your generous support of our Christmas charities. We already have a wonderful collection of toys for our Toy Appeal in the foyer; alongside food donations for Fr Hudson's and Birmingham Shelter; and clothing for St. Vincent De Paul. Our children are taking the lead in driving our charity initiatives, choosing to support a number of causes that are close to their hearts. Details of these charities and how you can help are included later in this newsletter. It is inspiring to see our pupils living out their faith through action, showing generosity and compassion to those most in need. Please support the charities linked to the Year group that your child is in.

## Corporal Acts of Mercy

The Corporal Acts of Mercy are practical ways in which we live out the Gospel message by caring for those in need, and this Advent each year group will take responsibility for one act. Reception will focus on feeding the hungry by making Christmas cards and decorating boxes to package donations for Fr Hudson's Care, and families are asked to support by sending in items and boxes. Year 1 and Year 2 will reflect on sheltering the homeless through creating blessing bags and prayer cards to accompany donations for St Catherine of Siena – Birmingham Christmas Shelter. Years 3 and 4 will live out visiting the sick by arranging visits to local care homes – they're also supporting our local toy appeal. And finally, Years 5 and 6 will support St Vincent de Paul by focusing on clothing the naked, organising and sorting clothing donations. Together, these projects allow our pupils to connect their learning with Catholic Social Teaching, showing compassion, responsibility, and faith in action during this season of Advent. Thank you for supporting the children and our charity events.

I wish you a very happy weekend.

Warmest wishes,

Mrs Yorke, **Headteacher**



## 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.



# Catholic Life



**Luke 23:43**

*“Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom.” And He said to him, “Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.”*



Reflecting on this week's Gospel message we learn that:

- Jesus is the King of Kings.
- On the Cross, Jesus revealed Himself as our King and Saviour.
- When we accept Jesus as our King and have faith in Him, we get to share in the Kingdom of God.



**Year 2 Mass - 26.11.25**

**Christ the King**

Thank you Year 2 for your beautiful readings in Mass this week, as we learnt more about what Christ the King can teach us about service and love of others.



**Our next Mass:** Year 5 Mass – Advent

Our next Mass in Church will be on **Wednesday 3rd December 2025**, starting promptly at 9:15am. This will be a Year 5 Mass reflecting upon Hope in this first week of Advent. Year 6 will be attending also and all parents are welcome to join us – we ask that you sit in the old part of the Church.



**Serenity prayer**

*God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change;  
courage to change the things I can; and wisdom to know the difference*

**Amen**

# Our Charity Appeal

## Faith in Action

Please help support our Advent charities



Our Reception classes are collecting for: – Fr Hudson's Caritas



This Advent, the Archdiocese will once again unite as a family of schools in our collaborative social action mission to support Father Hudson's Caritas. St Mary's were fortunate to welcome Kevin from FHC who came to speak to the children on Monday about the Reverse Advent Calendar.

This year, every school has been invited to collect non-perishable food items, including **dried foods (such as pasta and rice), sauces, tinned foods, biscuits, crisps and any suitable Christmas food items.**

The donated food will be used to create hampers for distribution across FHC projects before Christmas.

Collective social action makes a real difference to so many people. This is a wonderful opportunity for us once again to work as part of our diocesan family, demonstrating the impact of our collective hunger for justice.

We need all donations in school by **Friday 12th November.**

Reception are keen to drive this charity appeal – please label any donations/bags with 'FHC' so we can easily identify the items.

Thank you for your support.



Year 1 and Year 2 are collecting for: – **Birmingham Christmas Shelter**



St Catherine of Siena Primary School, in Great Colmore Street B15 2AY, support **Birmingham Christmas shelter** every year. This year, the school will open between 24th-28th December to serve those who need food and clothing. Last year, 400 guests received fresh clothes and toiletries in those four days supported by local Primary Schools.

St Catherine's have asked our schools to support by collecting items for the Birmingham Christmas Shelter - they need: -  
**toiletries, biscuits, crisps, cordial, and clothing.**

Year 1 and Year 2 would like to support this appeal - please help them in their charity efforts by bringing any donations to the school office before **Fri 12<sup>th</sup> December**, labelled Birmingham Christmas Shelter.

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Year 3 and Year 4 are supporting the: – **Christmas Toy Appeal**

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

Year 3 and Year 4 are asking for toys to support families in Birmingham this Christmas.

We are accepting toys – new and unwrapped – and our final collection time is **Friday 12th December**. Thank you for those who have donated so far.



## Year 5 and Year 6 are collecting for: – St. Vincent De Paul

### CHILDREN'S CLOTHING DONATION



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

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

St. Vincent De Paul have put in a request for clothing this Advent – particularly children's clothes. They are requesting pre-loved clothes in a good condition for this appeal.

Year 5 and Year 6 would like to support this appeal – please help them in their charity efforts by bringing any donations to the school office.



## Our Community Work

### External agencies - coffee morning for parents



Thank you to the professionals and parents who attended this morning's "Meet the SEND Support Agencies" coffee morning. It was a fantastic event and we received very positive feedback from attendees. Thank you to Mrs Birchenall for organising the event!



# Our Community Work

## Parish Fair

We are delighted to share that our Parish Fair on Saturday 23rd November was a wonderful success.

It was heartening to see so many families attending, supporting, and contributing so generously to our fundraising efforts. Your kind donations and presence made the day truly special, and we are deeply grateful for the way our community comes together in faith and fellowship. Thanks to your generosity, an incredible **£2,850 was raised**, which will be shared between the parish and the school. These funds go a long way in supporting our charity work and strengthening the mission we live out together.

Here are a few photos from last weekend: -







## ***Penitential Service for Years 4-6 - 1.12.25***

In order to prepare our hearts and minds during the season of Advent, children in Years 4-6 will be attending Confession on Monday 1st December. This is a special opportunity for our pupils to reflect on their actions, seek forgiveness, and renew their commitment to living out the values of kindness, faith, and hope as we journey towards Christmas. .

## ***Christmas Discos***

The Christmas Discos are next week and will be held in the school hall for an hour straight after school.

**2.12.25 (3:15-4:15) - KS1**

**3.12.25 (3:15-4:15) - Reception class**

**4.12.25 (3:30-4:30) - KS2**

Tickets are priced at £3 and parents can pay for this via School Gateway. The PTA will be supporting the event by providing drinks and a snack for the pupils. The cost of the disco includes wearing non-school Christmas clothing on the day that your child is attending their disco. If your child is not attending the disco, they can still wear Christmas non-school uniform on that day and we ask for £1 donation (via School Gateway), which will go towards our fundraising. Thank you.

## **WREATH MAKING 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!**

### ***Wednesday 3rd December 2025***

This is always a popular event each year run by our PTA in the Parish Hall.

Get creative and come and make your own Christmas wreath to be hung on the door or used as a festive centre piece.

The event costs £25 (which is a bargain for a real wreath) and all your materials will be provided. Mulled wine and a mince pie is included in the price too.



# Rudolph Run

**wb 1st December 2025**

All children will be taking part in the Rudolph Run, throughout next week and we ask for your sponsorship –

Next week – **wb 1st December** children will take part in a sponsored event and they will receive antlers to wear (and keep), 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.

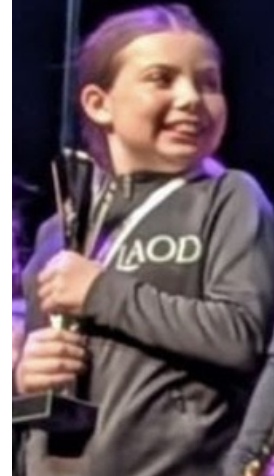


As we are a cashless school, we have set up a School Gateway page for sponsorship – please ask for support for your children from family members and friends and make a donation to sponsor your child/children.

**All progress can be followed on X  
The Run will finish on Friday.**

## Extra-Curricular

Abi in Year 6 competed in 'so you think you can dance' with her dance school L'apelle last weekend. Her group's dances came second and third. Well done Abi – we're really proud of how you are using your God-given gifts. Thank you for sharing.



# Thank you

Thank you for OPAL donations. Your kindness will help us replenish our Outdoor Play provision.

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 24/11/25-28/11/25**

Class	YRB	YRT	Y1L	Y1F	Y2E	Y2G	Y3L	Y3T	Y4J	Y4M	Y5M	Y5F	Y6R	Y6O
%	95	98	94	92	96	92	90	98	94	95	96	99	95	98
Lates	1	1	4	2	2	2	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	4
Whole School Attendance so far this year						97.1%		School Target				97%		

Well done 5F: - Our attendance champions!

# Dates for this half-term

Autumn theme -

Autumn 11 Virtues

WB 1<sup>st</sup> December 2025

1<sup>st</sup> December 2025 - 1:45pm

2<sup>nd</sup> December 2025 - am

2<sup>nd</sup> December 2025 - 3:15-4:15

3<sup>rd</sup> December 2025 - 9:15am

3<sup>rd</sup> December 2025 - 3:15-4:15

3<sup>rd</sup> December 2025 - 7:00pm

4<sup>th</sup> December 2025 - 3.30-4:30

8<sup>th</sup> December 2025 - 9:30am

9<sup>th</sup> December 2025 - 9:15am

9<sup>th</sup> December 2025 - 10:45

**11<sup>th</sup> December 2025 - all day**

**11<sup>th</sup> December 2025 - 9:30am**

**11<sup>th</sup> December 2025 - lunch**

12<sup>th</sup> December 2025 - 9:00am

12<sup>th</sup> December 2025 - 6:45pm

**12<sup>th</sup> December 2025 - 7:00pm**

**16<sup>th</sup> December 2025 - 2:00pm**

**17<sup>th</sup> December 2025 - 2:15pm**

**18<sup>th</sup> December 2025 - 2pm**

19<sup>th</sup> December 2025 - 9:30am

19<sup>th</sup> December 2025 -

Dignity of the Human Person

Learned and Wise

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 5 Mass in Church (and Year 6 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 Christmas holidays

1:40 finish time - Reception classes

1:45 finish time - KS1 classes

1:50 finish time - sibling group

2:00 finish time - KS2 classes

# Star of the week

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

- Year RB Kelven For doing good listening and trying his best in his learning!*
- Year RT Khadija For always trying her best in reading and phonics !*
- Year IF William For trying really hard in lessons and showing wonderful behaviour this week. Well done, William!*
- Year IL Lamysah For trying hard in maths and phonics*
- Year 2E Lucas For trying hard to improve the presentation of his work.*
- Year 2G Ava For her wonderful maths work!*
- Year 3L Ava For always being a fantastic role model for others and always trying her best in everything she does*
- Year 3T Florence For showing kindness to everyone in class this week, getting onto our kindness board often*
- Year 4J Nathan For his fantastic work in lessons and being kind to others!*
- Year 4M Aaron For his diligence and willingness to help others. Your efforts reflect true service and kindness!*
- Year 5F Amalie For being a perfect role model and always striving for excellence*
- Year 5M Henry For working really hard in his lessons, especially in Maths.*
- Year 6O Giorgia Constant determination in all things and a role model to others. Your kindness always shines through as well!*
- Year 6R Pariza For creating a fantastic double page spread about animal adaptations.*

