



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,

8th December 2023

It has been an exceptionally busy and festive week in school. We have been fundraising as part of our Catholic Advent Charity work. Thank you for supporting the children with their 'World Gifts' appeal, toy collection and Rudolph run for 'Birmingham Hospice'. We have also had Santa in school delivering gifts, his elves and reindeers made an appearance today and we have enjoyed Christmas discos. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the PTA who work so hard to fundraise, our Governors and all of you for the support that we receive to put this extra-curricular events on for the children. The children have had a wonderful week.

*We ofcourse keep the true meaning of Advent, the preparation of our hearts and minds for the birth of Christ, at the heart of our school. The staff and children continue to lead us in prayer and liturgy as we walk with the Holy Family, preparing for Jesus' birth. It has been lovely to see so many pictures of you enjoying prayer together at home, using our prayer bags. This Sunday, we enter the second week of Advent and we light our 'Bethlehem' candle representing faith. Next week, the children will be reminded of Mary and Joseph's trip to Bethlehem as we explore deeper our own faith moving towards Christmas. We have set home learning for our display in the hall and look forward to seeing your hard work on Monday. *Remember to wear something purple this Monday for Advent Week 2 Have a lovely weekend,*

Mrs Yorke

This week's Gospel and Prayer

Mark 13:33

"So stay awake, because you do not know when the master of the house is coming".

Reflecting on this week's Gospel message we learn:

- Advent is a time of preparation for celebrating Jesus' birth at Christmas and looking forward to His Second Coming.
- Like Mary, we are called to be faithful, open and listen to God.
- We too can be ready to respond and say "Yes" to God through our words and actions.



Catholic Life in School

Whole School Mass - Immaculate Conception

On Friday, the entire school gathered the Mass of the Immaculate Conception. We reflected that Mary was born full of grace and without sin.



Whole School Mass in Church - 22.12.23 at 10:00am - Christmas -

Our next Mass in Church will be on Friday 22nd December 2023, starting promptly at 10:00am. The whole school will gather to celebrate our Christmas Mass and all parents are welcome to attend. Please sit in old part of the Church.





Catholic *life*

Rudolph Run


£623
raised so far!

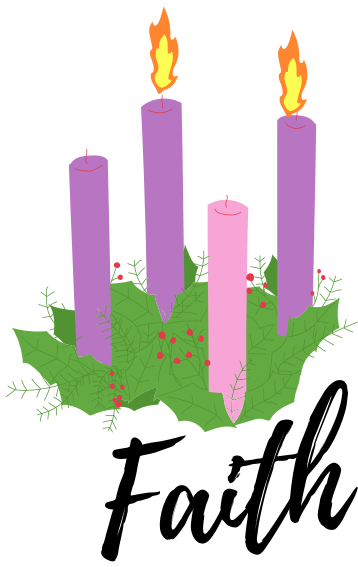


We took part in Rudolph Run, this week, in support of Birmingham Hospice. Birmingham Hospice provides expert palliative and end of life care to people across the city. Your incredible generosity will support ensuring that the best hospice care is available for all patients, families, and carers across our community, wherever and whenever they need it. Thank you so much to everybody who sponsored us and for the children for being so inspirational. I hope they enjoyed supporting this marvellous charity and had some fun too.



As a special treat for everybody's hard work in raising money for Birmingham Hospice by completing their Reindeer Run. Our marvellous PTA organised a special treat this afternoon, where the children got to see, and feed real reindeer. Thank you PTA.





Second advent candle

The second Sunday of Advent symbolises Faith with the "Bethlehem candle" helping us think about the journey Mary and Joseph took to Bethlehem.

We invite you to continue to join us in this time of reflection and celebration. Let the light of the Bethlehem candle guide us on our journey of faith, this Advent.

scripture

"Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." - Hebrews 11:1

reflection

Embracing Faithful Journeys

In this season of Advent, symbolising faith, let's consider the transformative power of belief. Like Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem, how can we, too, navigate our paths with unwavering faith, trusting in the promises that lie ahead?

open question

In what ways can we infuse the spirit of faith into our daily lives and share it as a beacon of inspiration within our families and in our community?

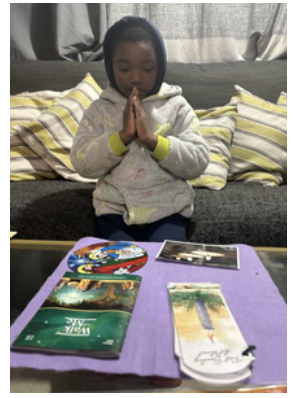
Task

A Creative Expression -

Families, express your reflections through creativity! This could be a family story, a drawing, or any medium that captures the essence of faith. Share your creations with us, as together, we illuminate the path with the light of faith.



Advent prayer... at home

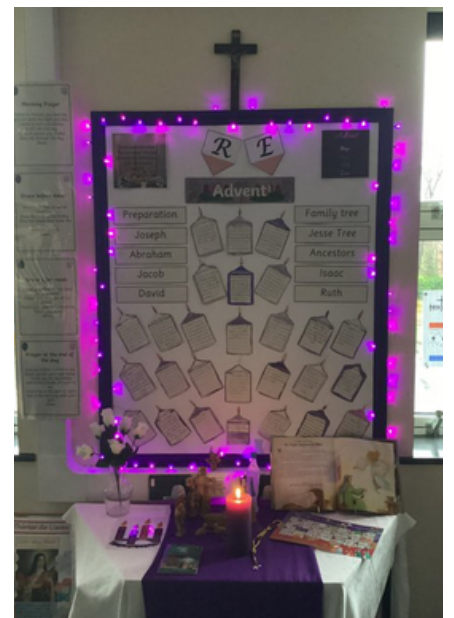


It has been wonderful to see our children using the Prayer Bags with their families at home.

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

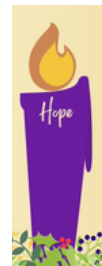


Advent preparation... in school



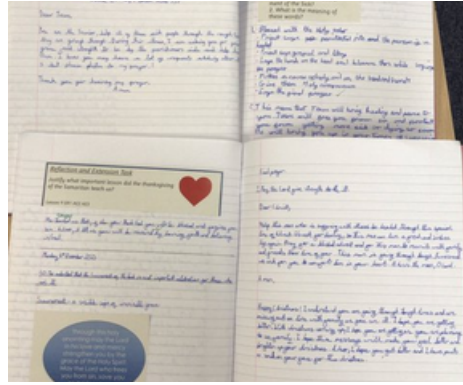
As we lit our first Advent candle, the children came in to school wearing purple as a reminder that this week is about "hope".

"Hope would have us recognise that there is always a way out, that we can always redirect our steps, that we can always do something to solve our problems." Laudato Si. 61





Our lovely Year 5 children have written Christmas cards to our parishioners, who are unwell, with prayers for them and Christmas wishes. They delivered them to Father John to distribute.



Toy Appeal Christmas 2023

Scan to donate

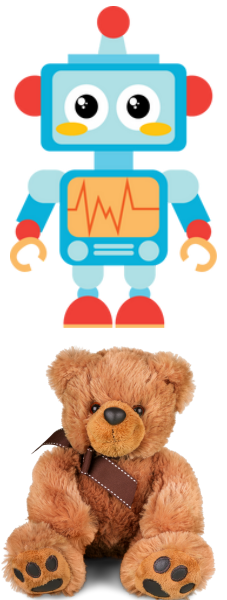
Please give new toys (unwrapped) for our local children in Birmingham for all age groups ranging from 1-15 years

COLLECTION DATES:
Monday 6th November - Thursday 14th December

Irish TV are visiting St Anne's Parish Centre. B12 OPA on Thursday 14th December

Birmingham Irish Association

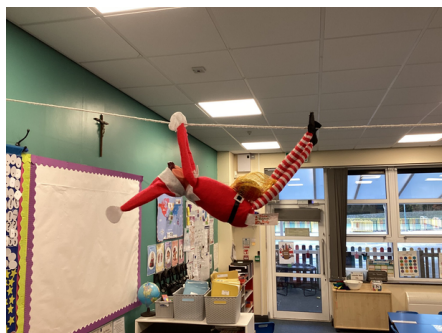
Toy Appeal



Thank you to our families who have donated to our toy appeal. There's still time to give if you can help children in Birmingham this Christmas.



The elves causing havoc



Christmas JUMPER DAY

The children really enjoyed Christmas jumper day and meeting Santa.



Reception news: -

Reception class were inspired by the 'Three Kings' in our Nativity and made their own crowns.



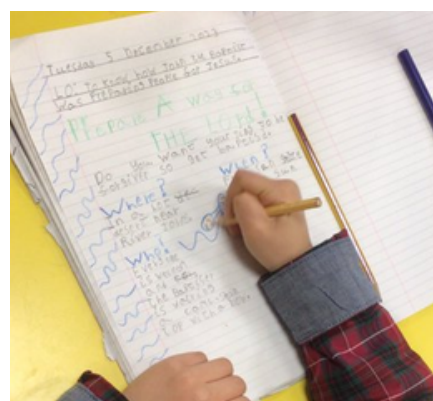
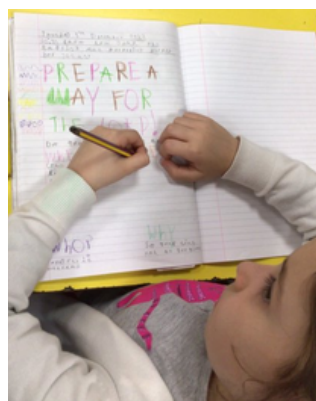
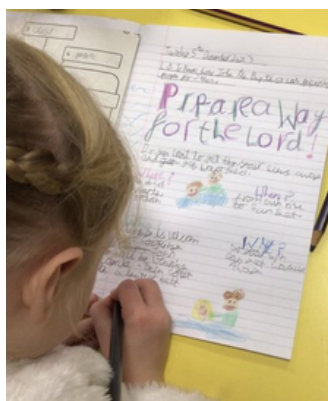
Year 1 news: -

Year 1 held a beautiful prayer service to celebrate the feast of the Immaculate Conception. The children made their own special art frames. Their 'Go Forth' activity... to create a beautiful prayer space at home, dedicated to Our Lady on this special feast day!



Year 2 news: -

Year 2 explored how John the Baptist wanted to get people ready for the Messiah to come.



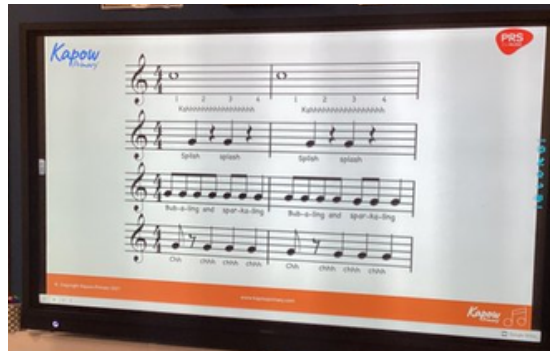
Year 3 news: -

Year 3 have enjoyed their visits to Harborne Library this term.



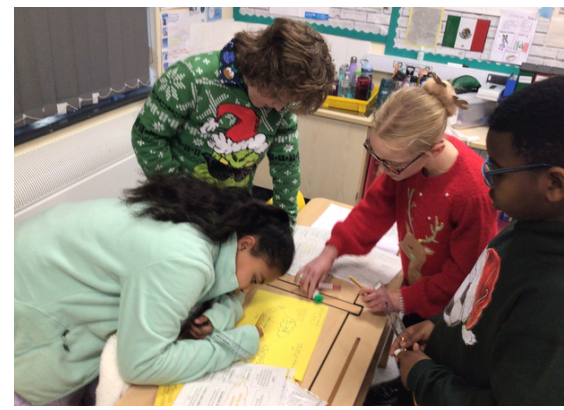
Year 4 news: -

Year 4 have been enjoying their music lessons. They have been repeating rhythms.



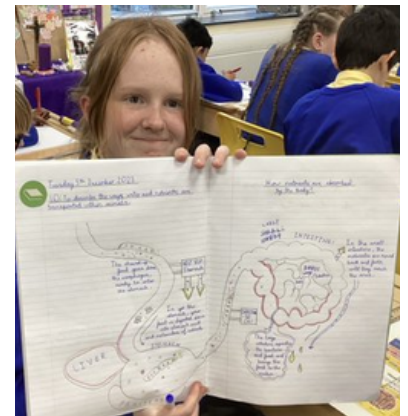
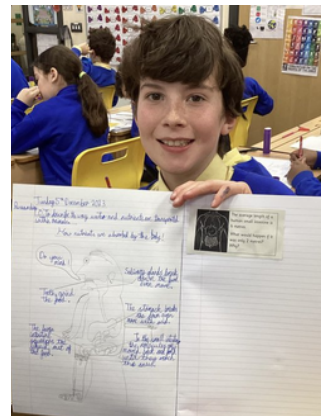
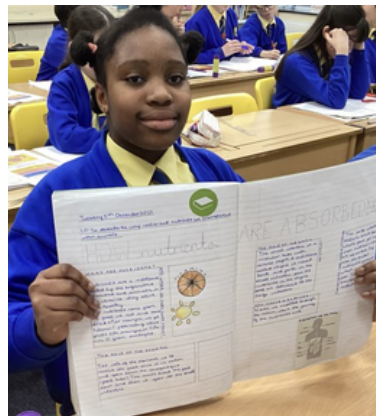
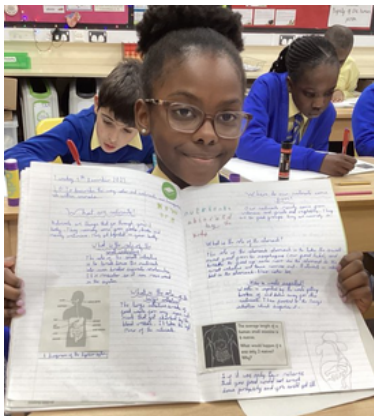
Year 5 news: -

Year 5 have been exploring sentence structures using Alan Peat examples. We came up with some fantastic sentences to use next week in our exciting writing!



Year 6 news: -

In Science, Year 6 have been learning about how nutrients are absorbed by the body. They have created fabulous non-fiction pages to show their learning.



Mrs Jones led the school in whole school Prayer and Liturgy at the beginning of our week, focusing on Mary's role as a special witness to God's love. We too should be like Mary and be willing to respond and open our hearts to God this Advent.


Pupil Voice

Our governors found out more about our RE learning from the children this week. The children were able to talk eloquently about what RE learning looks like at St. Mary's, what is going well and how it can be even better.



The children really enjoyed their Christmas discos this week. Thank you PTA and all the staff for supporting them.

Christmaths Challenge at Bishop Challoner

Big congratulations to children from Year 5 who came second  at the Christmaths challenge out of 11 schools. We are really proud of you. Thank you to Bishop Challoner Maths Department and Year 9 pupils for organising the day!



Tea and Talk - 10:30-11:30

Each half term - parents are invited in to have tea and cake with one another and the staff. A chance to get to know each other a little better and hear your voice. The children joined us today to sell their recipe book.



Christmas Cards

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

IF EVERY CHILD IN A CLASS OF 30 WROTE A CARD FOR ALL THEIR CLASSMATES, THERE WOULD BE 870 CARDS WRITTEN IN JUST ONE CLASS!
WHAT WOULD BE THE TOTAL FOR YOUR ENTIRE SCHOOL?

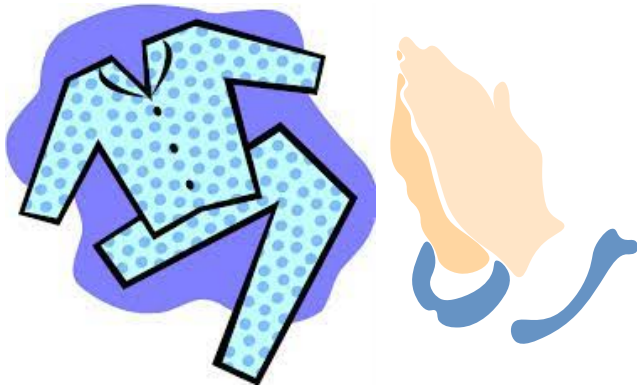


SO WHAT ARE THE ALTERNATIVES?

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: - **£335.50**

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 **Wednesday 13th December**.

Thank you for those who have donated so far.

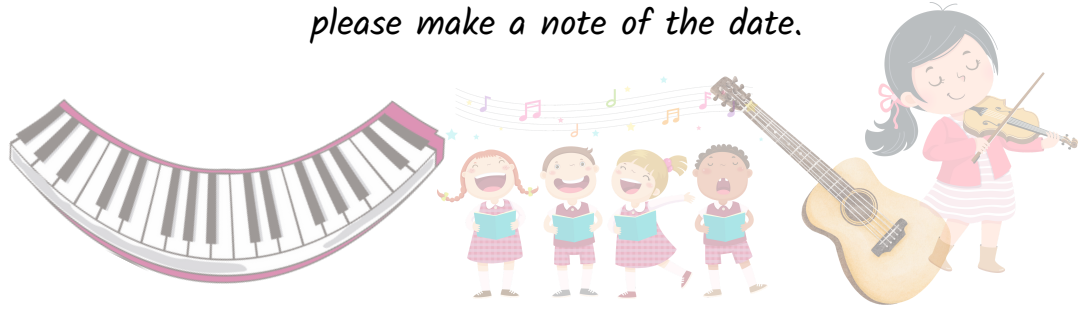




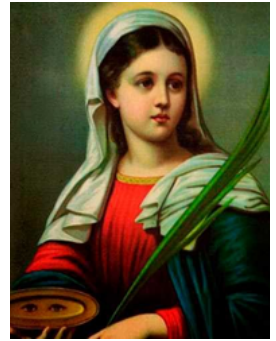
Music Concert

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.



3L non-school uniform day - 13.12.23
Class 3L will be celebrating the life of their class saint - St. Lucy - with a non-school uniform day and a special day in school on Wednesday 13th December 2023.



Prayer Service

Year 3 prayer service for parents - 13.12.23 9:00am

Year 3 are inviting parents, grandparents, family members to join them in a special prayer service in school, dedicated to St. Lucy.



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. The children can wear festive headwear or tinsel on this day...



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.

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.

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.

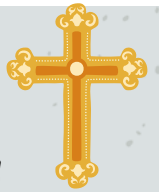
What a wonderful end to the term!

Parents are welcome to attend - please sit in the old church.





St Mary's Parish Penitential Service and Christmas Mass times:



Penitential Service - Tuesday 19th December at 7:30pm, where two or three visiting priests together with the various Friars will be seated around the Church and will be ready to offer you the peace and forgiveness of Christ in your preparation for Christmas

Christmas Eve Sunday 24th: 6.00pm and 8.30pm - both these are 'Midnight' Masses;

Christmas Day 25th: 8.00am; 9.30am and 11.30am (no evening Mass)



In the Church on Monday 10th at 1.30, Years 4, 5 and 6, together with their teachers will have their opportunity to confess and receive the forgiveness of Jesus at the School Penitential/Reconciliation as part of their preparation for the Birth of Christ.

This is an **Operation Encompass School**

KEEPING SAFE

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



Do not block our yellow barrier!!!!

These cars blocked our barrier this week - your children and our staff are left in a vulnerable position when this happens - it also sets a bad example for your children. Please stop!!!



Our staff member couldn't get out! We have families to go home to and support too!

It's Christmas Time – Parents guide to help keep children safe online

It's Christmas Time!

A Parent's Guide to Social Media

A Parent's Guide to Sharing Pictures

A Parent's Guide to Gaming

A Parent's Guide to Online Grooming

scan the QR code with your phone's camera to see the guides on our website

A Parent's Guide to Live Streaming

A Parent's Guide to Online Influencers

A Parent's Guide to Fake News

A Parent's Guide to Privacy Settings

It's always best to be prepared

Many parents may be planning to give electronic gadgets to their children this festive period. Our guide is designed to help parents take a realistic approach to help keep their children safe when using the internet, social media and playing online games.

Scan the QR code to find out more.

Online safety is when young people know who they can tell if they feel upset by something that has happened online.

Parents please contact your school to enquire attending their next e-safety workshop or have any concerns.

Working with Home Office 'PREVENT', The Police and Crime Commissioner and Children's Safeguarding Partnerships to help keep children safe online.

Skips Educational Email: info@skipsed.com Tel: +44 121 227 1941

Developed in partnership with

Skips www.skipsafety.net.org

If buying electronic gifts and new technology for your children this Christmas, please make sure that you speak to your children about keeping safe when using it...

Mobile phones, tablets and laptops can open up a world of exploration, learning and fun and children should be encouraged to make the most of the benefits. But there are also risks and dangers to being online - safety measures can be put in place - read this website to find out more.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/keep-children-safe-online-this-christmas-top-tips>

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 04/12-08/12 2023

Class	YRB	YRT	Y1L	Y1F	Y2E	Y2G	Y3L	Y3T	Y4J	Y4M	Y5M	Y5F	Y6R	Y6O
%	96.3	98.3	97	91.3	93.6	100	97.6	99.3	96	97	93.6	98.6	91.9	97.9
Lates	14	11	8	5	5	8	6	3	9	6	8	9	7	5
Whole School Attendance so far this year						96.69%			School Target				97%	

Well done Year 2G : - our Attendance Champions

Autumn theme -

Autumn 11 Virtues

11th December 2023 - 3:45-4:45

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

Music concert in school for those learning piano and guitar

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 - KSI classes

1:50 finish time - sibling group

2:00 finish time - KS2 classes

Dates for this term



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

Year RB	Cayshen	For trying really hard in his learning about Advent.
Year RT	Shindara	For brilliant singing in our Nativity rehearsals!
Year IF	Liam	For trying really hard with his learning.
Year IL	Ava	For being a fantastic role model and always trying her best!
Year 2E	Anya	For always trying her best.
Year 2G	Janelle	For always being attentive and trying her best in all areas of learning.
Year 3L	Eleanor	For always being enthusiastic and hard-working in all learning!
Year 3T	Darren	For being an excellent listener and living out the school virtues daily.
Year 4J	Emily	For being an excellent role model and living out the virtues every day.
Year 4M	Rohan	For his hard-working attitude in lessons.
Year 5F	Brigid	For being consistently attentive, helpful and working hard in lessons.
Year 5M	Thomas	For an amazing attitude across all his learning!
Year 6O	Anna	For being consistently polite and helpful.
Year 6R	Katherine	For writing an excellent introduction to her story with a flashback.

