



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

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.

October is dedicated to the Holy Rosary.

Our theme for the Autumn term is: 'Family and Community'
Our virtues for this half term are: - Compassionate and Loving



23rd October 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we come to the end of a busy and rewarding first half of the autumn term, I wanted to take a moment to celebrate some of the highlights we've shared as a school community. I am so proud of all the children's achievements and am excited to see their further progress through out the year. This week, we have enjoyed a wonderful Reception Mass and prayerful retreat led by our House Captains.

Reception Welcome Mass

We were delighted to welcome our Reception children into the St. Mary's family during their very first school Mass. It was a beautiful and moving occasion, filled with reverence and joy. The whole school gathered to celebrate, and, despite the rain, our guard of honour—a cherished tradition—made the moment even more special for our youngest pupils.

John Paul II Retreat

We ended the week with a reflective retreat dedicated to St. John Paul II, beautifully led by our House Captains. Children in the John Paul II house explored his life and legacy through prayer, discussion, and creative activities, which was an inspiring way to close the half term.

All Saints homework over half-term

As we prepare to celebrate All Saints' Day, we are inviting all children to research a saint of their choice over the half-term break. Children can present their learning in any creative way, such as a drawing, poster, model or short presentation. When we return to school, we would like every child to share something about their chosen saint, helping to develop both their knowledge and oracy skills. For our Year 6 pupils, this is also a wonderful opportunity to begin thinking about a saint who may inspire them as they prepare for Confirmation.

I am also pleased to report that we welcomed a visitor from the Archdiocese into the school on Wednesday and to say that he was pleased with the school would be an understatement. Our children's behaviour was described as 'exceptional' and special mention was made of our efforts towards inclusion and our EYFS provision. I am so proud of all of the efforts of our incredible staff who go 'over and above' to ensure that every child at St Mary's both thrives and succeeds. I know that we will continue to work hard for every child and St Mary's will continue to go from strength to strength with participation and collaboration from our families.

As we head into the half term break, I hope you all find time to rest, recharge, and enjoy some special moments together. Please stay safe during the season, especially with Bonfire Night approaching, and we look forward to welcoming the children back on Monday 2nd November, at the usual school time..

Have a peaceful and joyful half-term break.

Mrs Yorke,

Headteacher



Catholic Life

This week's Gospel and Prayer



Reflecting on this week's Gospel message, God wants us to:

- Know that we belong to Him and that everything we have is a gift from Him.
- Understand that God wants our hearts and our love.
- Choose to put Him first by following Jesus and giving our lives to Him..

Matthew 22:21

'Then He said to them, "Therefore render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."'



Reception Welcome Mass – 21.10.26 – Harvest

Reception were wonderful in their very first Mass at St. Mary's where we welcomed our new children and thanked God for the harvest. Thank you for your kind donations.



Next Mass: – Whole School Mass – All Saints

Our next Mass in Church will be on
Wednesday 4th November 2026,
starting promptly at 9:30am.

This Mass is a whole school Mass
from Year 1 – Year 6

All parents are welcome to attend.



St. John Paul II Feast Day

On Thursday, the House Captains led a reflective retreat dedicated to St. John Paul II. This was a special retreat dedicated to the life and work of St. John Paul II, whose legacy continues to inspire and shape the lives of many.



Half-Term Homework

Discover a Saint!

Research • Learn • Be Inspired



Many
Saints
One Family
in God
♥

Ahead of All Saints' Day

Find out about the life of a saint who inspires you!



Choose a Saint

- It could be a saint you already know or a new one to discover!
- Find out about their life, what they did, and how they showed God's love in the world.



Get Creative!

You can present your information in any way you like:

- a drawing or painting
- a poster or fact file
- a short speech or presentation
- a piece of creative writing
- a model, collage or comic strip
- a video or anything else that shows what you have learned!



Be Ready to Share

- When we return to school we will be celebrating **All Saints' Day**.
- We would love everyone to have something to say about their saint.
- You might like to show a picture you have created and tell us a few key facts – this will also help develop your **oracy skills**!

"The saints show us that holiness is possible for everyone!"
♥

All Saints' Day

A celebration of ordinary people who did extraordinary things for God.

Let your saint inspire you...
What can we learn from their example today?
♥



Year 6...



This is a great opportunity to think about your chosen saint ahead of your Confirmation. How might their life and example inspire your own faith journey?

"Surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses..."

Hebrews 12:1

Different lives.
The same message:
**Faith, Hope
and Love.**
♥

We can all be saints in our everyday lives!
— ♥ —

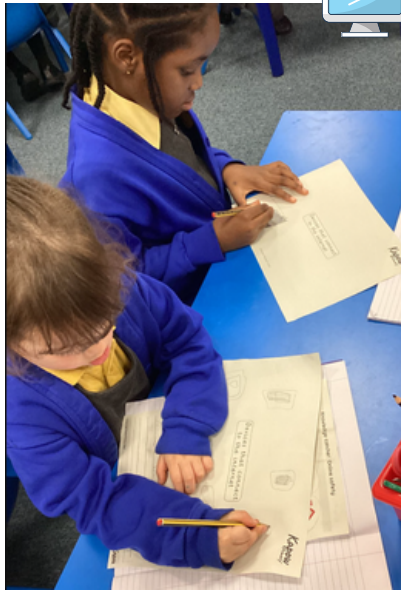


Curriculum Learning

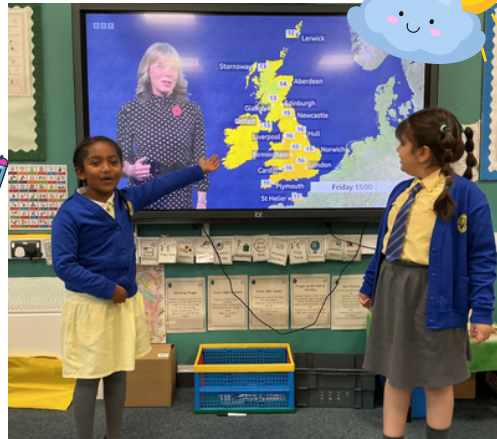
A snippet of all our wonderful learning this week...



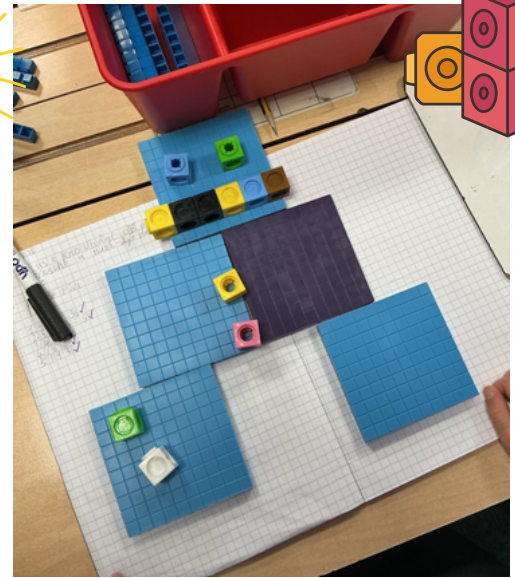
Year 1 learnt about online safety in Computing this week. They discussed who they could speak to if something online worried them and identified lots of devices that connect to the Internet.



Year 2 had fun completing their UK unit in Geography and presenting their own weather reports in front of the class



In Maths, Year 3 used place value to find different representations of numbers.



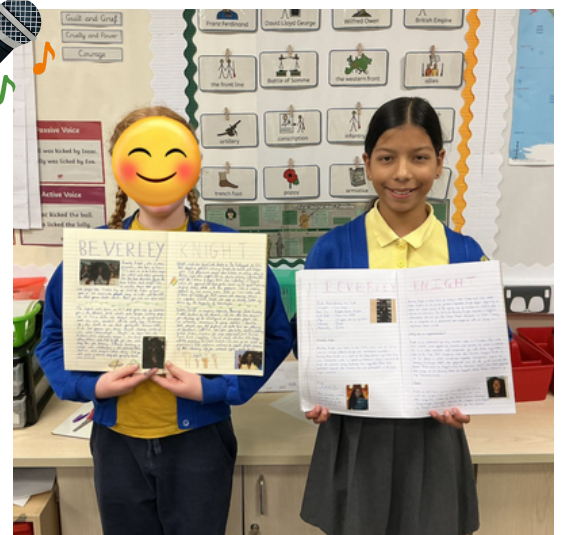
Year 4 enjoyed comparing the city states of Athens and Sparta from Ancient Greece in History this week.



Year 5 used repeated subtraction and same difference to calculate the change in their 'shop' in Maths!



Year 6 wrote some incredible biographies about a very talented local hero, Beverley Knight!





All Saints and All Souls Mass – 4.11.26 at 9:30am

Years 1 to 6 will gather on Wednesday for the solemnity of All Saints and remembrance of All Souls on Wednesday 4th November at 9:30am. Parents and carers are warmly welcome to attend.



Reception Open Day – 5.11.26 at 10:30am and 1:45pm

We're looking forward to welcoming both existing families and potentially new families to the school on Thursday 5th November. We have two sessions running (am and pm) and both are proving to be very popular. The sessions will consist of a short talk by Mrs Yorke and school tours led by the Head Boy, Head Girl and Prefect Team.

It's a great opportunity to find out more about our wonderful EYFS and see the 'school in action'!



Year 4 Prayer Service – St. Martin de Porres 6.11.26 at 9am

Years 4 parents and carers are warmly welcomed to attend the Year 4 Prayer Service on Wednesday 6th November at 9am. The children will lead prayer and reflect on 4M's Class Saint – St. Martin de Porres.

Upcoming Dates

OneLife Whole School Retreat – Tuesday 10th November

The children will enjoy a whole school retreat on Tuesday 10th November led by the wonderful Dan and Emily from OneLife Music. The day is a celebration of Jesus the Good Shepherd. Reflecting on Psalm 23 and will comprise of music, reflection and joy that will leave the children both inspired and renewed in faith.



Non-uniform day/PTA bottle collection – Monday 16th November

Families are invited to donate full bottles (alcoholic or non-alcoholic) for the Parish/PTA Christmas Fair in exchange for children wearing their own clothes to school on Monday 16th November. Bottles will be collected at the top of the school drive before school on 16.11.26 also.



Reception cohort - September 2027



Reception 2027

ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL OPEN DAY

Thursday 5th November 2026

- Morning Tour: 10:30 - 11:30
- Afternoon Tour: 13:45 - 14:45

Email: enquiry@stmaryrc.bham.sch.uk
to book your place

OUR 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.

For more information call our school
office on: 0121 464 2141 or visit our
website:
https://www.stmaryrc.bham.sch.uk/web/september_2027_reception_class/720099

Have you a child who is
Reception age next year –
September 2027?

We'd love to extend our
welcome to you, to come and
look around our fantastic school.



**Contact the school office
to book your place!**

Request for assistance with research project

A member of staff within the Archdiocese is undertaking research as part of a PhD and is keen to hear the views and experiences of parents and carers whose children attend Catholic primary schools.

The research is a survey which should take no longer than 5 minutes.

The findings from this research will be used to help enhance and support Catholic education, so we would be very grateful for your participation. Parents and carers of all faiths, and those of no faith, are warmly encouraged to take part – your views and experiences are important.

Participation is entirely voluntary, and consent can be withdrawn at any time.

To find out more and take part, please visit:

<https://forms.cloud.microsoft/e/YcKE9XC8vC>

Thank you for supporting this valuable research.

St Mary's Church / PTA

Christmas Fair

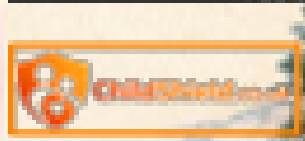
Parish Centre, Vivian Road, Harborne

Saturday 21 November

12.00–3.00pm

With Live Carol Singers

- Santa's Grotto
- Bottle Tombola
- Chocolate Tombola
- Christmas Stockings
- Mulled Wine & Minced Pies
- Festive Sandwiches & Drinks
- Stalls, including:

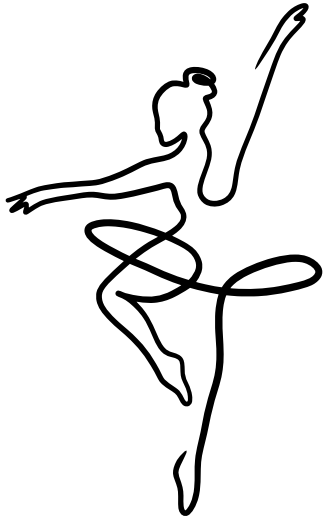


SANTA'S
GROTTO

FREE ENTRY

(£4 for Santa's Grotto)

Elmhurst Ballet School Open Day 2026



Whole School Open Day Thursday 5th November

Curious about life at Elmhurst? Come and see it for yourself.

Our **Whole School Open Day** is your chance to step inside a world-leading vocational dance school and experience a day in the life of our students.

Guided by the young dancers who know Elmhurst best, you'll explore our studios and facilities, see our Artistic and Academic classes in action, and meet the people shaping the future of dance training.

Timetable

Session 1- 10:30am - 12:10pm

10:30am - Registration and refreshments

10:50am - Presentation in our Theatre

11:10am - Student lead tour of the school

12:10pm - End of session

Session 2- 11:10am - 12:50pm

11:15am - Registration and refreshments

11:35am - Presentation in our theatre

11:55am - Student lead tour of the school

12:55pm - End of session



To book a place, please visit: <https://www.trybooking.com/uk/event/120757>



A Letter to Parents/Carers from West Midlands Police

Dear parents and carers,

This is a message from West Midlands Police about Halloween and Bonfire Night.

We want everyone to have an enjoyable Halloween and Bonfire Night this October half term. This letter is to provide you with useful advice to keep you, your child, and your community safe.

On the run up to half term, your child might get a visit from one of our local officers visiting their school to deliver important messages about how to stay safe around fireworks and keep themselves safe in the darker nights.

To help start that conversation with your child about personal safety, stranger danger, and antisocial behaviour School Officer PC Smith has created a short video for you to watch with your child. Watch here: <https://youtu.be/hyIRME0G9hU>

Trick-or-treating safety tips:

- Accompany young children while trick-or-treating and talk to your child about staying with their friends. Tell them never to enter a property they do not know.
- Plan a safe route in familiar neighbourhoods, use pelican and zebra crossings, and stick to well-lit streets.
- Add reflective tape to costumes and carry flashlights or glow sticks.
- Make sure phones are charged, have location apps turned on, and keep it out of sight when they are not using it.
- Keep a light on in your home to help welcome your children home and prevent burglars.
- We ask that children do not visit homes that display a 'no trick-or-treating' sign as this time of year can be unsettling for many.

It is always best to check any sweets, gifts, or toys children have been given while trick-or-treating.

Fireworks and Bonfire Safety Tips:

- Attend a public firework display rather than handling fireworks at home. Never allow children to handle fireworks or sparklers without supervision.
- Talk to your children about the danger of pointing fireworks at people or buildings. Police can prosecute for dangerous use of fireworks.
- Wear high-vis jackets, glow sticks, or give a torch to your children.
- Before visiting a bonfire or firework display talk to your child about a safe meeting place or a time to regroup after the event.
- Never create a bonfire, or start a fire, in a public space, against a building, or next to vehicles. Call the fire service on 999 if you see any fires in public spaces or in public bins.

Always ask: What are your child's plans? How are they going to enjoy fireworks and bonfire night safely?

Throughout half term, local officers will be patrolling your town centres, visiting community hubs and policing large events. Stop by and say 'hello' if you see us out and about.

In an emergency, you can report misuse of fireworks or dangerous behaviour to us on 999. To report non-life-threatening incidents or antisocial behaviour please contact us online by searching 'WMP report' or calling us on 101.

You can report 100% anonymously to Crimestoppers by calling 0800 555 111.

Thank you,

West Midlands Police

KEEPING SAFE

At The National College, our WakeUpWednesday guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit thenationalcollege.com.

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about DEEPFAKES

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

A deepfake is a piece of artificial intelligence (AI) trickery designed to make you believe that a person has said or done something they haven't. AI models are able to use audio, video and photos of a subject to produce misleading mimics. Initially unsophisticated and easy to spot, deepfakes are improving every day. And with the spread of user-friendly AI, it's easier than ever for children to make their own, or be the unsuspecting target of them.

A BULLYING RISK

AI has got easier to use and more widespread, making it a "gift" to bullies. Children can generate fake audio of peers saying damaging things, or pictures of them doing something embarrassing. More disturbingly, Metra recently highlighted cases where fake sexualised images of teens are spread through social media. Mainstream apps don't allow this usage, but with AI becoming widespread, easy-to-use sites without guardrails keep emerging for darker uses.

FAKE FAMILY SCAMS

With a few seconds of audio — from an Instagram reel or TikTok — scammers can clone a person's voice. They can then use this to scam relatives with phone calls asking for money or assistance. This is a widespread tactic for scammers, with the FBI reporting 22,000 such cases in 2023, defrauding victims out of \$893 million that year alone.

FAKED CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENTS

With the technology getting easier to use and public figures having lots of clips for training, celebrities are a frequent target. According to McAfee, the most deep faked celebrities are Taylor Swift, Scarlett Johansson, Jenna Ortega, Sydney Sweeney and Sabrina Carpenter, and their AI deepfakes are usually pushing scams. Even YouTuber MrBeast has been deepfaked by scammers on TikTok. It can be used for propaganda too, making politicians appear to do or say things to improve or harm their reputation.

EXTORTION RISK

You might not be the one being tricked by a deepfake — you could also be the star of it. Blackmail videos are as old as film itself, but with deepfake technology you don't have to have done anything wrong to be a target. A deepfake video showing a person in an uncompromising position could make the victim pay up, even when the content never happened.

Advice for Parents & Educators

KEEP PROFILES PRIVATE

To make a convincing deepfake, you need a supply of images, audio or video of the subject. That means that most non-celebrity victims are targeted via social media where there's a ready-made repository of media to train a deepfake from. Most social media companies have privacy settings to prevent unauthorised access. Enable these to keep strangers and bullies away.

USE RESEARCH AND COMMON SENSE

Even perfect deep fakes rely on trust, so think critically. If it's someone you know claiming to need help, then ask them to prove they're who they say they are with an inside joke. For public figures, try Googling the person along with a bit of the contentious speech in quotation marks. Also question why you're seeing the video. If it's a paid promotion, then ask yourself who's paying and why. If someone is sharing the clip, do they dislike the target?

KNOW WHAT TO LOOK FOR

While deepfakes are getting harder to spot, there are still telltale signs to look out for. Deepfake creation can leave blurry edges and flickering textures, especially around hair and teeth. It can also look too sleek, with models often trained on professional video. Make sure the mouth shapes match the spoken words, too. As for audio, listen out for mispronounced phrases and a slightly unusual, robotic rhythm of speech.

TALK TO YOUR CHILDREN

As well as emphasising the need for privacy and to not trust everything they see online, it's important to ensure children realise why deepfakes are problematic in the first place. With deepfake technology getting more accessible and easy to use, children can start using the technology to make deepfakes of schoolmates, teachers or other adults. Ensure they're aware of the serious trouble the technology can cause, and the ethical problems of manipulating someone's image without consent.

Meet Our Expert

Alan Martin is an experienced technology journalist who has written for the likes of The Guardian, The Telegraph, The i, Wired, Tech Radar, Tom's Guide, The Evening Standard and The New Statesman.



#WakeUpWednesday

The National College

We are an operation encompass school. Therefore school is working alongside the police to ensure support for any child who has been involved in or witness to domestic abuse. Please find more information about this on our website or contact the school office.

Pastoral Team

If you require any support from school please speak to a member of our pastoral team

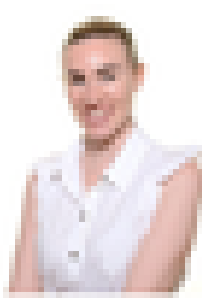
If you have a concern that a child is being harmed, is at risk of harm, or you receive a disclosure (intentionally or unintentionally) you must contact one of the following staff members as quickly as possible:



Laura Noone
Lead DSL
DHT



Louise Yorke
Headteacher



Jade Preedy
AHT



Rachel Jones
Senior Teacher



Sharon Tame
School Counsellor



Rachel Richards
EYFS Lead



Shania Birchenall
SENDCo

Good attendance, continues to be a school and government priority.

Good attendance is 96% and above

Remember below 95% is a concern and below 90% is classed as persistent absence. If you have any problems with regards to getting your child to school or you are struggling to improve your child's attendance, please speak to Mrs. Yorke or a member of the SLT team. We will announce the attendance for the previous week in this section of the newsletter each week.

Attendance and Punctuality: -

Our attendance for last week was -

Week 19/10/26-23/10/26

Class	YRB	YRT	Y1L	Y1F	Y2E	Y2G	Y3L	Y3T	Y4J	Y4M	Y5M	Y5F	Y6R	Y6O
%	94	94	86	97	85	93	93	96	95	89	96	99	95	93
Lates	2	3	3	1	1	1	2	6	8	2	1	3	1	1
Whole School Attendance so far this year						97.3%		School Target					97%	

Well done 5F: - Our attendance champions!

Dates for next half term

Autumn theme -

Autumn 2 Virtues

Monday 2nd November 2026

4th November 2026 - 9:30am

5th November 2026 - am/pm

6th November 2026 - 9am

WB 9th November 2026

10th November 2026 - all day

11th November 2026 - 9:15am

16th November 2026 - am

18th November 2026 - 9:15am

20th November 2026 - 9:15am

21st November 2026 - Midday

25th November 2026 - 9:15am

WB 30th November 2026

30th November 2026 - 1:30pm

1st December 2026 - 3:30pm

2nd December 2026 - 3:15pm

2nd December 2026 - 7pm

3rd December 2026 - 3:30pm

4th December 2026 - 7pm

WB 7th December 2026

8th December 2026 - 9:30am

9th December 2026 - 1:30pm

10th December 2026 - all day

10th December 2026 - 9:30am

11th December 2026 - 9am

WB 14th December 2026

15th December 2026 - 2:15pm

16th December 2026 - 2:15pm

17th December 2026 - 2pm

18th December 2026 - 9:30am

18th December 2026

Families and Communities

Faith-filled and Hopeful

Children bring in their homework about their chosen Saint

Y1-Y6 Mass (All Saints) - Parents/Carers welcome

Reception Open Day (10.30am and 1:45pm)

Year 4 Prayer Service in Hall - Parents/Carers welcome

British Values Week

Whole School Retreat

Year 4 Mass in Church (Y3 attending) - Parents/Carers welcome

Non-uniform day and collection of bottles for Parish/PTA Christmas Fair

Year 6 Mass in Church (Y5 attending) - Parents/Carers welcome

Year 5 Assembly for parents

Parish / PTA Christmas Fair

Year 2 Mass in Church (Y1 attending) - Parents/Carers welcome

Advent Week 1 - Hope

Years 4, 5 and 6 Penitential Service in Church

KS1 Christmas Disco

Reception Christmas Disco

PTA Wreath Making Workshop

KS2 Christmas Disco

Carols by Candlelight in Parish Centre

Advent Week 2 - Faith

Whole School Mass (Feast of the Immaculate Conception) - Parents/Carers welcome

Year 5 ukulele concert in Hall - Year 5 Parents/Carers welcome

Christmas jumper day and Christmas dinner for children

Reception Nativity in Church for Parents/Carers

Year 3 Prayer Service in Hall - Parents/Carers welcome

Advent Week 3 - Joy

Year 1 and Year 2 Nativity in Church for Parents/Carers

Year 3 and Year 4 Christmas Assembly in Hall for Parents/Carers

Year 5 and Year 6 Carol Service in Church for Parents/Carers

Whole School Christmas Mass - Parents/Carers welcome

Last day of term - early finish as follows:

- 1:40pm - Reception
- 1:45pm - Siblings
- 1:50pm - Key Stage 1
- 2pm - Key Stage 2

Term Dates for this year

Autumn Term	Wednesday 2 nd September - Friday 23 rd October
	<i>Half-term</i>
	Monday 2 nd November - Friday 18 th December
Spring Term	Monday 4 th January - Thursday 11 th February
	<i>Half-term</i>
	Monday 22 nd February - Thursday 25 th March
Summer Term	Monday 12 th April - Friday 28 th May
	<i>Half-term</i>
	Monday 7 th June - Tuesday 20 th July

School Closed:

- Monday 3rd May 2027 - May Bank Holiday

INSET DAYS

- Tuesday 1st September 2026
 - Friday 2nd October 2026
 - Friday 12th February 2027
 - Monday 28th June 2027
 - Wednesday 21st July 2027
- 1 more INSET day to be confirmed

Star of the week

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

Year RB	Oscar	For engaging well and taking part in Now Press Play!
Year RT	Felicity	For being a model St Mary's pupil, striving for excellence in all that she does!
Year IF	Ben	For joining in during class discussions and using great oracy!
Year IL	Mia	For her best in all her learning!
Year 2E	William	For trying really hard with your Exciting Writing! Well Done!
Year 2G	Mary	Participating wonderfully during discussions across all subjects this week!
Year 3L	Luka	For an improvement in work and attitude to work. Keep it up Luka.
Year 3T	Rogan	Showing resilience and determination in all areas of learning. He is working hard, trying his best and trying to make positive choices every day
Year 4J	Nalan	For striving for excellence during lessons. Well Done!
Year 4M	Joshua	Excellent group work
Year 5F	Raika	Good work and participation across the subjects this week
Year 5M	Willow	For her thoughtful contributions to class discussions. Well done!
Year 6O	Savannah	For her fantastic participation in class and always striving for excellence- well done!
Year 6R	Adadike	For being a fantasti role model and always striving fir excellence

