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.

November is dedicated to the Holy Souls.

Our theme for the Autumn term is: 'Families and Communities'
Our virtues for this half term are: - 'Faith-filled and Hopeful'

6th November 2026

Dear parents and carers,

All Saints

This week, we have celebrated the Feast of All Saints, taking time to reflect on the men and women of faith who inspire us to live with kindness, courage and love. Our whole-school Mass was made especially memorable through a joyful procession, with each class proudly honouring their chosen saint. Today, Year 4 led a beautiful prayer service for parents, celebrating St Martin de Porres with great reverence and pride. These special moments help our children to recognise the importance of positive role models and remind us all that holiness can be found in the everyday choices we make to serve others.

Open Day

We were delighted to welcome prospective Reception families for September 2027 to our recent Open Day. It was a wonderful opportunity to share the many things that make our school such a special place to learn and grow. Our prefects were outstanding ambassadors, confidently guiding visitors around the school, answering questions and speaking so positively about their experiences. I was incredibly proud of the confidence, warmth and maturity they demonstrated, as well as the excellent leadership and oracy skills they displayed throughout the morning. They were a true credit to our school community. We are also grateful to Fr Hilary for taking the time to speak with families and to our PTA members for their warm hospitality, serving tea, coffee and biscuits and helping to ensure that every visitor received a truly welcoming introduction to our school family.

A gentle reminder about dogs on site

We would like to kindly remind families that dogs should not be brought onto the school site at drop-off or collection times, unless they are registered assistance dogs. While we know many of our families are proud pet owners, we have a number of children who are allergic to dogs and others who can feel anxious or frightened around them. By keeping our site dog-free, we can help ensure that all children feel safe, comfortable and able to start and end their day positively. Thank you for your understanding and support in helping us maintain a welcoming environment for everyone.

School uniform reminder

As we move into the winter season, please ensure children attend school in the correct uniform, including black school shoes rather than boots, except in cases of extreme weather such as snow or heavy rain. Boots are not practical for the active playtimes, outdoor learning and Daily Mile activities that take place throughout the school day. We would also like to remind families that hair, including braids and extensions, should be of a natural colour and one consistent shade. In line with our uniform policy, children should not wear jewellery other than a pair of plain stud earrings and a simple watch (not a smart watch). These expectations support the health, safety and inclusion of all pupils and help ensure that everyone can fully participate in school life. Thank you for your continued support.

Bonfire Weekend

As it is Bonfire weekend, many families will be looking forward to enjoying celebrations this weekend. Please remember to take extra care around fireworks and during the darker evenings. Organised displays are often the safest and most enjoyable way for children to experience the excitement of Bonfire Night, and we would encourage families to attend these wherever possible. We hope everyone has a fun, safe and memorable weekend with family and friends and I look forwards to seeing you all on Monday.

Mrs Yorke, **Headteacher**

We pray for those who have died in November

Catholic Life

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

- Love and serve Him now, as we wait for the joy of Heaven.
- Follow the example of the saints, who followed Jesus and encourage us to be faith filled.
- Be holy people of God who follow His way.
- Live the Beatitudes every day, helping to bring the Kingdom of Heaven to Earth.

"Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in Heaven."
Matthew 5:12a



Masses

Whole School Mass – 4.11.26 – All Saints





We celebrated All Saints Mass as a school on Wednesday. We reflected on the lives of these holy men and women and how we can all be saints.

Our next Mass: – 11.11.26 – **Y4 Mass for Remembrance**



Our next Mass in Church will be on **Wednesday 11th November**, starting promptly at 9:15am. Year 4 will be leading our Mass and Year 3 will be in attendance.
All parents are welcome to attend.



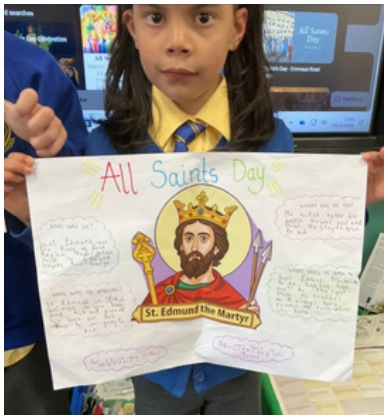
Catholic Life

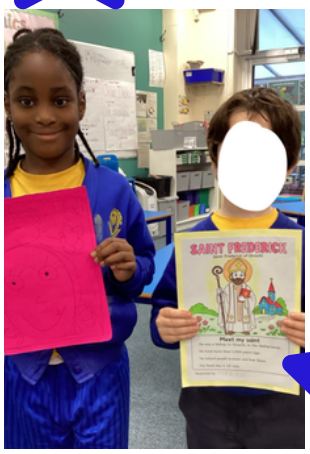
Celebrating the Saints

The children have brought in some incredible home learning about their chosen saint, well done! Their learning about the saints has also continued this week in school!



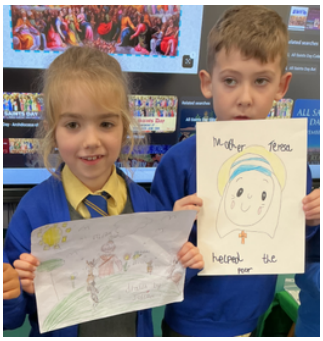
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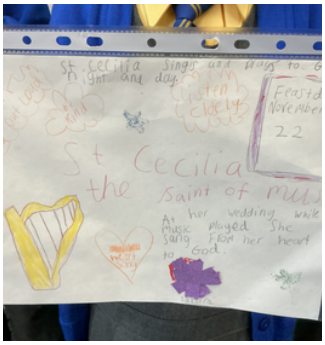


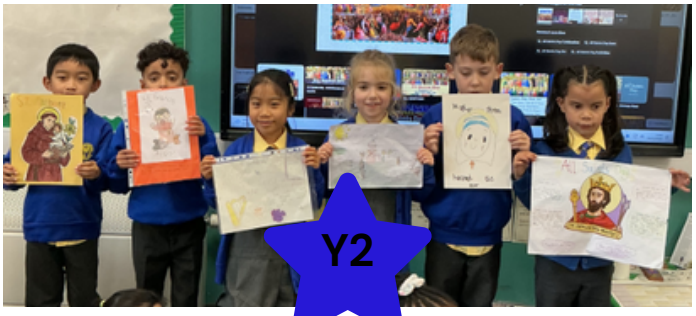




Y1







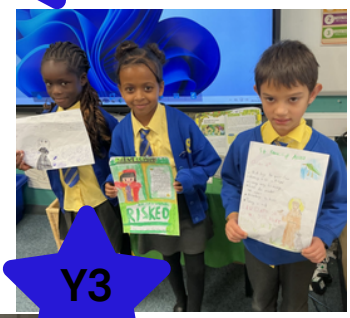
Y2





Y4



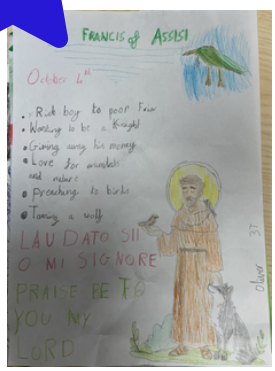


Y3



Y5











Y6

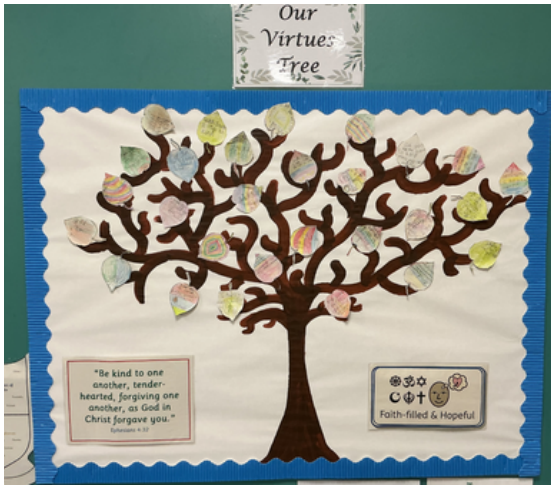


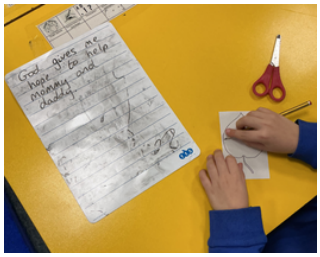
Catholic Life



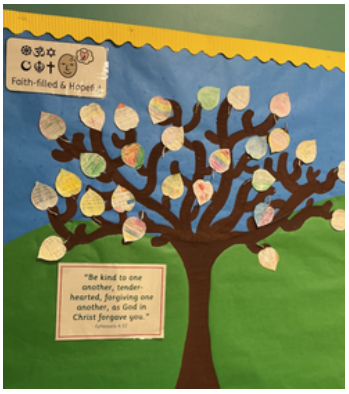
Reflecting on this half-term's virtues

This half-term, our focus virtues are 'faith-filled and hopeful'. Across the school, children have begun reflecting on what these virtues mean - how we can share and inspire others to have both faith and hope in God's plan for us on this Earth. Each class has a virtues tree, which will be filled with leaves showing examples of how pupils are living out these virtues in their daily lives, celebrating thoughtful choices, and learning.

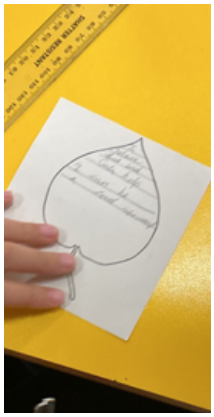
















Prayer Service for Parents

4M Feast Day - St Martin De Porres

On Friday 6th November, 4M celebrated their class Saint's feast day and it began with a lovely prayer service that Year 4 children put together for their parents.





CURRICULUM







Reception have enjoyed representing numbers up to 5 in different ways and counting how many they have 'altogether'

Year 1 have been exploring the world this week, learning about the Equator and discovering the differences between hot and cold countries!



This week, Year 2 used Now Press Play for an immersive geographical learning experience about the countries that make up the UK



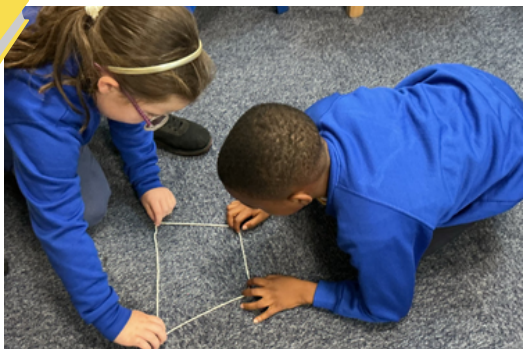




In Maths this week, Year 4 learned about perimeter and we whether two different shapes could have the same perimeter

Year 3 were palaeontologists this week! They investigated fossils, looked at dinosaurs and predicted what fossils would be made from their bones - they even created their own fossils!

In Maths, Year 6 have worked on converting fractions to their simplest form













In DT this week, Year 5 prepared and cooked a chillis from scratch (both meat and vegetarian). They also tested the finished product and designed labels for their gourmet creation!

Open Day 2026

This Thursday, we opened our doors to welcome potential Reception parents.
We offered tours of the school and an opportunity to ask questions about life at St Mary's.
Both sessions were very well attended and we are blessed to have such interest in our school.
The parents were led around by our prefects and I must say they did an incredible job!
We received so much positive feedback about our fantastic tour guides and our beautiful school. Thank you children and to everyone involved!





Celebrating our God-given gifts



Well done to Maya who recently completed the Hyrox Young Stars race. Maya trained really hard for the race - we are very proud of you!



Well done also to our Head Girl, Adadike, also. She recently won a netball trophty for the most improved player and her team won the intermediate league. Keep up the great work!

Remembrance Week - WB 9.11.26



Next week, we will be observing Remembrance Week as a school community. Children will take in a Remembrance Mass and war poetry activities throughout the week. On Wednesday, the entire school with gather for the two minute silence at 11am. These moments help our pupils reflect on the sacrifices made by others and understand the importance of peace, gratitude, and remembrance. It's a meaningful opportunity to connect history with values we hold today. Through prayer, poetry, and reflection, we hope to foster empathy and respect in every child. We look forward to sharing this important week together.

One life 'Good Shepherd' retreat - 10.11.26



We are looking forward to welcoming the One Life Retreat Team into school on Tuesday for a special day of prayer, reflection and music centred on the theme of Jesus the Good Shepherd. Throughout the day, children will take part in a range of engaging activities, worship and classroom reflection times, exploring what we can learn from Jesus as our Good Shepherd. They will be encouraged to consider how Jesus guides, protects and cares for us, the times when He carries us through difficulties, and how we can follow Him in our daily lives through our words, actions and choices. We look forward to this valuable opportunity to deepen our faith and grow closer to Christ together.



Flu immunisation day:
Friday 13th November 2026

NHS nurses will be in school on Friday to administer the flu vaccine.

New After School Spanish Club Starting!



Miss Toro will be leading a new After School Spanish Club for KS2 on Tuesdays from 3:30pm to 4:30pm.

There will be a link on School Gateway to sign up from Monday and we hope to get the club up and running as soon as possible.

As this is a trial, there will be no charge for the club this half term but a small charge will apply once the club is up and running in the New Year.



St Mary's Green School Challenge

WALK, CYCLE OR SCOOT TO SCHOOL!

This important initiative, led jointly by the School Council and the CAFOD Club, aims to promote more sustainable methods of transport and reduce traffic around the school site while raising money to help improve the school!

Our Green School Challenge!
Can you travel to school actively for ONE WHOLE WEEK?
We are raising money to buy plants and flowers for our school and make our school a greener, brighter and happier place!

Your challenge: Walk • Cycle • Scoot to school for 5 days!



Our challenge week: Monday 9th November 2026



Paper sponsor forms have been sent home. Please return the completed form and all sponsor money (in cash) by Friday 20th November 2026

Monday 16th November - Non School Uniform Day

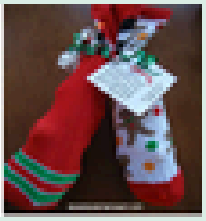
On Monday 16th November, St Mary's School and PTA are asking for donations for the Christmas Fayre.
The children can come to school wearing non-uniform and bring in the following items...

Reception



Chocolate for the tombola (please no nuts).

Years 1, 2, 3





Christmas Stockings - filled with sweets / little treats. Take a new pair of socks, roll one sock up and put into the other, fill the sock with treats, sweets, hair accessories etc...
Secure with an elastic, tie or ribbon (please no nuts).

Years 4, 5, 6



A bottled drink - alcoholic or non-alcoholic for the Tombola (Unopened and in date please).

Finally, if you are doing a clear out before Christmas and have any pre-loved items that you would like to donate, they would be greatly received (toys, books, gift sets, jewellery, crockery etc) You can deliver any of your donations into school or the Priory between 8-4 Mon-Fri over the next 2 weeks.



Year 5 Harborne Library Visit - 17.11.26

Year 3 will be visiting Harborne Library next Tuesday.
3L will leave at 8:45am
3T will leave at 10:15am
If you are a parent who would like to attend and support walking to and from the library, please let the Year 3 staff know.



Wednesday 18th November 2026

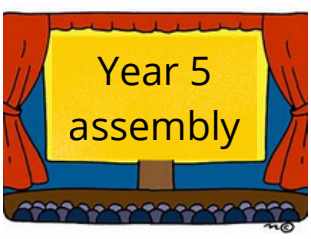
Red Wednesday - wear red to stand up for solidarity

Children are invited to wear an item of red on Red Wednesday as a symbol of solidarity with those around the world who suffer persecution for their faith. This powerful gesture reminds us of the importance of religious freedom, compassion, and standing up for justice. Through prayer, reflection, and discussion, we will help our pupils understand why it's important to speak out for those who cannot.



Year 5 Assembly - 20th November 2026

We are looking forward to welcoming parents of all Year 5 children into school next Friday 20th November, for their year group assembly based on Christ the King.



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:



FREE ENTRY

(£4 for Santa's Grotto)

KEEPING SAFE

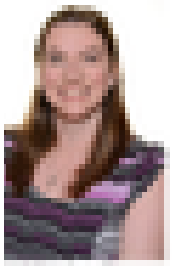
Pastoral Team

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

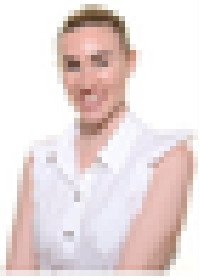
If you have a concern that a child is being harmed, is at risk of harm, or you receive a disclosure (intentionally or unintentionally) you must contact one of the following staff members as quickly as possible:



Laura Noone
Lead DSL
DHT



Louise Yorke
Headteacher



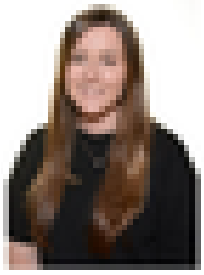
Jade Preedy
AHT



Rachel Jones
Senior Teacher



Sharon Tame
School Counsellor



Rachel Richards
EYFS Lead



Shania Birchenall
SENDCo

SAFEGUARDING:

ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance is essential for your child's academic success and personal development. Consistent attendance helps children build strong foundations in not only the academic subjects but also helps them to develop social skills, and form positive relationships with peers and teachers. Missing school can lead to gaps in learning, lower achievement, and reduced confidence, making it harder for children to reach their full potential. Good attendance sets the stage for lifelong learning and future opportunities.

Attendance %	Missed Education Equivalent Days	Impact Equivalent Weeks	Attendance %
96 – 100% **Green**		Your child is taking full advantage of his/her learning!	
85 – 95.9 % **Amber**	9 – 19 days	2 – 4 weeks	Satisfactory. Your child will need to spend time catching up with their work.
	19 – 29 days	4 – 6 weeks	Your child is in danger of underachieving and will need your help and support to keep up with his/her learning.
	29 – 38 days	6 – 8 weeks	Your child's poor attendance will be having a significant impact on his/her learning.
Below 85% **Red**	38 days plus	8 weeks plus	Your child is not getting a wide and varied education. You are in danger of being prosecuted.

Good attendance, continues to be a school and government priority.
Good attendance is 96% and above.
95.9% and below is a concern.
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 Noone or a member of the SLT team.

Attendance and Punctuality: -

Our attendance for last week was -

Week 02/11/26-06/11/26

Class	YRB	YRT	Y1L	Y1F	Y2E	Y2G	Y3L	Y3T	Y4J	Y4M	Y5M	Y5F	Y6R	Y6O
%	99	93	97	95	96	98	98	96	98	92	98	96	94	96
Lates	1	3	5	2	1	0	1	3	4	5	1	0	1	1
Whole School Attendance so far this year						96.9%		School Target					97%	

Well done RB: - Our attendance champions!

Dates for this Half Term

Autumn theme -	Families and Communities
Autumn 2 Virtues	Faith-filled and Hopeful
WB 9th November 2026	Remembrance Week
10th November 2026 - all day	Whole School One Life Retreat 'Good Shepherd'
11th November 2026 - 9:15am	Year 4 Mass in Church (Y3 attending) - Parents/Carers welcome
13th November 2026 - am	Flu immunisation in school
16th November 2026 - am	Non-uniform day and collection of bottles for Parish/PTA Christmas Fair
17th November 2026 - am	Year 3 library visit - 3L (8:45) and 3T (10:15)
18th November 2026 - all day	Red Wednesday - wear an item of red clothing in solidarity of persecuted Christians
18th November 2026 - 9:15am	Year 6 Mass in Church (Y5 attending) - Parents/Carers welcome
20th November 2026 - 9:15am	Year 5 Assembly for parents
21st November 2026 - Midday	**Parish / PTA Christmas Fair**
24th November 2026 - am	Year 5 library visit - 5F (8:45) and 5M (10:15)
25th November 2026 - 9:15am	Year 2 Mass in Church (Y1 attending) - Parents/Carers welcome
WB 30th November 2026	Advent Week 1 - Hope
30th November 2026 - 1:30pm	Years 4, 5 and 6 Penitential Service in Church
1st December 2026 - am	Year 4 library visit - 4M (8:45) and 4J (10:15)
1st December 2026 - 3:30pm	KS1 Christmas Disco
2nd December 2026 - 3:15pm	Reception Christmas Disco
2nd December 2026 - 7pm	PTA Wreath Making Workshop
3rd December 2026 - 3:30pm	KS2 Christmas Disco
4th December 2026 - 7pm	Carols by Candlight in Parish Centre
WB 7th December 2026	Advent Week 2 - Faith
8th December 2026 - 9:30am	Whole School Mass (Feast of the Immaculate Conception) - Parents/Carers welcome
9th December 2026 - 1:30pm	Year 5 ukulele concert in Hall - Year 5 Parents/Carers welcome
10th December 2026 - all day	Christmas jumper day and Christmas dinner for children
10th December 2026 - 9:30am	**Reception Nativity in Church for Parents/Carers**
11th December 2026 - 9am	Year 3 Prayer Service in Hall - Parents/Carers welcome
WB 14th December 2026	Advent Week 3 - Joy
15th December 2026 - 2:15pm	**Year 1 and Year 2 Nativity in Church for Parents/Carers**
16th December 2026 - 2:15pm	**Year 3 and Year 4 Christmas Assembly in Hall for Parents/Carers**
17th December 2026 - 2pm	**Year 5 and Year 6 Carol Service in Church for Parents/Carers**
18th December 2026 - 9:30am	Whole School Christmas Mass - Parents/Carers welcome
18th December 2026	**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 2nd September – Friday 23rd October
	Half-term
	Monday 2nd November - Friday 18th December
Spring Term	Monday 4th January - Thursday 11th February
	Half-term
	Monday 22nd February – Thursday 25th March
Summer Term	Monday 12th April - Friday 28th May
	Half-term
	Monday 7th June - Tuesday 20th 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	Faya	For her wonderful poster all about staying safe around fireworks!
Year RT	Sunwhite	For super effort with blending in reading and phonics this week!
Year IF	Bowo	For always trying her best and always striving for excellence.
Year IL	Sapphire	For her fabulous, exciting writing!
Year 2E	Isobel	For coming up with some lovely rhyme in English. Well Done Isobel!
Year 2G	Jun	Settling into to school well and working super hard in all subjects!
Year 3L	Sophia	For super maths skills. Well done Sophia.
Year 3T	Evan	For always contributing to class discussions and demonstrating positive behaviours.
Year 4J	Rakeb	For always being an excellent role model to others!
Year 4M	Matti	For showing resilience on his return to school
Year 5F	Sophia	For great practical work during our DT cooking session and an excellent label.
Year 5M	Harper	For always being so enthusiastic about her learning. Keep it up!
Year 6O	Naveen	For always striving for excellence and being a fantastic role model! Keep it up!
Year 6R	Sebastian	For returning to school as a role model for behaviour and effort. Well done!

