



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL



Last Sunday marked the start of the season of Advent, a word which means 'important arrival'. Advent is a time of preparation, a time to prepare to celebrate Christ's birth. Advent, is the time to think about the way we live our lives to make any necessary changes. Advent reminds us that God loves us so much that he sent his only Son, Jesus, into our world. On Sunday, the first candle was lit on the

Advent Wreath, the candle of HOPE. Hope is not just a wish for good things to come in the future. It also changes the way that we feel and think and act. When things are hard, if we have hope that they will get better in the future, that helps us to keep trying and working to change things. And this then often leads to the difficult situation getting better. We can share hope with others, by being with them in difficult times, by giving them a smile or a hug, or by helping them with something that is hard. Our Faith Friends will lead an Advent service which you are warmly invited to at **2:30pm on Monday 11 December** where we can all reflect on this beautiful season of the Church's year and how we can make our hearts ready to welcome Jesus and our brothers at Christmas.

Congratulations to Year 3 who represented the school at the Stockport Festival of Carols at St George's church, Stockport on Tuesday evening. They joined ten other schools from across the town. The children sang and read beautifully and helped everyone prepare for the coming Christmas season. Special congratulations to Elena and Leo who demonstrated great courage in confidently reading the 'Christmas Blessing' to a full congregation. Well done Year 3!

The children preparing for Holy Communion received the Sacrament of Reconciliation (confession) on Monday and made their first steps in preparing to receive Jesus in Holy Communion in the summer. The children have prepared very well over the past month. We keep these children and the children who will be preparing in the New Year from St Mary's parish in our prayers as they continue their Sacramental preparations.

WEDNESDAY WORD The latest version of the Wednesday Word can be accessed [here](#). Please enjoy spending some time sharing the Word of God with your children.

FR BILL

Please keep Fr Bill in your prayers. He was taken into hospital yesterday with significant heart problems and will undergo surgery next week. I have requested a Mass to be offered for him on behalf of the whole school family by Fr Peter from St Peter's in Hazel Grove.



EYFS NATIVITY



Our Nursery and Reception children look forward to welcoming you to their 'Starry Night in Bethlehem' Nativity on **Wednesday 13 December** at either 10:00am or 2:00pm. We ask that only **two adults per child** come to watch each performance due to fire restrictions and the capacity of our hall. Older siblings in school will have the opportunity to watch their sister or brother perform in the dress rehearsal.



CHRISTMAS CARDS



Our post box is out! We will do ONE delivery in the last week of term and ask all cards to be posted by Monday 18 December. Please remember: each card must have the **child's name and class** clearly written on the envelope to ensure correct delivery.

CHRISTMAS LUNCH: 14 December

Christmas jumpers may be worn on this day. If your child does not have a Christmas jumper, do not fear: you are not expected to buy one. You can let your child wear a favourite jumper instead.



OUTDOOR PE KITS

Winter has arrived with vengeance, but the children will continue to do PE outdoors. Please can you ensure that your child has tracksuits bottoms and a warm long sleeve jumper.

TERM DATES 2024 – 2025



The term dates (holiday list) for 2024 - 2025 has now been published on our school website – [please follow this link](#).

CHRISTMAS MUSIC CONCERT

Some of the children who have received individual/group music tuition will be performing for the school on Thursday 21 December at 9:30am. If you are free, you are more than welcome to join us for a few festive renditions and to celebrate the children's hard work in music. The concert will last approximately 40 minutes.



IT'S PANTO SEASON... OH NO IT'S NOT! OH YES IT IS!



Our fantastic PTA are generously funding an in-house pantomime which will be performed for the children in the school hall on **Monday 11 December**. The children will watch a production of Dick Whittington to help with their festive preparations. Thank you to our PTA for your amazing work and support.

RECEPTION PLACES FOR SEPTEMBER 2024

If you are applying for a school (Reception) place for next September, applications should be made by the **15 January 2024** via the [Stockport Admissions website](#). Please note: *if you child attends St Mary's Nursery, this does not guarantee your child a place in the school*. You will need to complete the application form using the link above by the closing date.



WHAT ARE SOCIAL MEDIA SCAMS?



With online scams on the rise worldwide, particularly at this time of year, it's important we are all aware of what scams are, the common types of scams and helpful tips. Internet Matters have a great information page for parents with lots of useful information. This is also covered in our Computing and PSHE curriculum too. You can find further information [here](#).

CROSS COUNTRY NEWS

Our intrepid cross country runners were not put off by the crisp, frosty and cold weather we've been having recently. Well done to Lucy, Lydia, Florence, Lucia, Harry, George, Isaac, Lucy, Ella, Emily, Buster, Isaac, Caleb and especially Tadhg on his first cross country event at Woodbank Park. Keep running over the holidays until the next race which is on **Saturday 20th January 2024**.



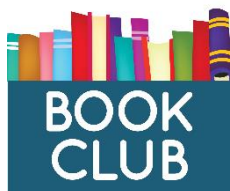
ESSENTIAL PARENT – FOR STOCKPORT PARENT AND CARERS

Essential Parent is an online digital library of videos, articles and information to support you in your parenting journey from pregnancy through to parenting teens. The aim of Essential Parent



is to help expectant and new parents and carers bond with their children during the early years and help those children grow into resilient, healthy and independent teenagers and adults. To sign up to Essential Parent for free, please register here: <https://forms.office.com/e/DgmFDYhs4y>

ST MARY'S BOOK CLUB



Our November book club recommendations were a huge success with lots of children being keen to read the suggested texts. Copies were shared around school and some pupil's bought or borrowed their own copy of the books to read at home. This week, we shared new Christmas recommendations for the month ahead, please find attached our December Book Club.

OFSTED INSPECTION

As you are aware, St Mary's received a graded inspection by Ofsted this week conducted by Frith Murphy HMI (His Majesty's Inspector) and Ian Cooper OI (Ofsted Inspector). Until the final report is published, which can take approximately 30 working days, we are not allowed to share the inspection judgements publicly. This is stipulated by Ofsted as quality assurance processes must be completed before publication, which could result in grade changes. It is anticipated that the final report will be published mid-late January, given the Christmas holiday period. I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank the children, staff, parents and governors for your amazing work, not just during the inspection, but each and every day. We have an amazing school and I am very proud of all of our achievements. Thank you for completing the Ofsted parent survey, for your very kind words of encouragement during the inspection and of course the biscuits and chocolates which were greatly appreciated by us all. Thank you for your continued support.



THE MONTH (OR SO) AHEAD...KEY DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Date	Event
	<i>Please note the dates and times detailed below are provisional and may be changed if necessary. (New events added in bold.)</i>
8 December	PTA Christmas Fair. 3:30pm – 5:30pm. All welcome.
11 December	Dick Whittington Pantomime in school (funded by the PTA).
11 December	Advent Service – 2:30pm in the school hall. All welcome.
13 December	EYFS Nativity 10:00am and 2:00pm. All welcome.
14 December	Christmas Lunch.
17 December	Carols at Holy Spirit Catholic Church (4:00pm). All welcome.
20 December	Y1 and Y2 Nativity. 10:00am and 2:00pm. All welcome.
21 December	Christmas Music Concert at 9:30am in the school hall.
22 December	Carol Concert. 1:30pm. All welcome.
22 December	School closes for the Christmas break.
4 January 2024	School reopens following the Christmas break.
15 January	Closing date for Reception place admissions. Stockport Admissions website
20 January	Cross Country at Woodbank Park.
31 January	Rookie Rockstars Concert (surnames A-L) 6:00-7:00pm in the hall.
1 February	Rookie Rockstars Concert (surnames M-Z) 6:00-7:00pm in the hall.

**Thank you for your generous Christmas Fair donations.
Wishing you all a restful weekend. Mr John Nish and Miss Alice Poole.**