



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

Lighting the Way for Joy



As we reach the final day of the Advent term, during this third week of Advent, I must say it has truly been a week, and indeed a term, filled with joy and accomplishment.

I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank our staff, children, parents, and governors for

your hard work and support throughout this busy and rewarding term. It has been a term brimming with fantastic learning experiences for our children. From the lively energy in classrooms to the bustling atmosphere in the hall, every member of our school community—teachers, teaching assistants, office staff, premises staff, and all those working behind the scenes—has played a vital role in creating the warm and nurturing environment where our children continue to thrive.

This week, our Christmas performances have truly showcased the incredible talent within our school. We hope you enjoyed the performances as much as we did, and I am sure you join me in appreciating the immense effort and dedication that went into delivering such high-quality productions.

Today, during our final Advent worship, we reflected on the Nativity scene and the figures who bring the Christmas story to life. Through prayers and carols, we also reflected on how we can bring the messages of **hope, peace, joy, and love** to our families and communities in 2024. This Christmas, may we all strive to extend a welcoming hand of friendship to those in need around us and continue our Advent Acts of Kindness.

As always, the support of parents and carers is invaluable to our school. Your partnership and encouragement make all the difference, and we are truly grateful to have such a wonderfully supportive community. Thank you for all you do to support your children and St Mary's.

Finally, on behalf of all the staff, I would like to thank you for the kind cards, thoughtful gifts, treats for the staffroom, and warm wishes we have received this festive season. Your generosity and kindness mean so much to us. I hope this Christmas season brings you and your families time for rest, relaxation, joy, and hope. Wishing you all a very happy Christmas and peace in the New Year. I look forward to welcoming everyone back on **Monday, 6 January 2025**.

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.

KEY STAGE 1 NATIVITY 2024

This year's Key Stage 1 Nativity, *Don't Be Afraid*, was a truly magical production that left the audience inspired and uplifted. The children's incredible singing, including some stunning solo performances, brought the gospel story to life, while their confident acting and ability to learn and deliver so many lines showcased their impressive talents. The Nativity reminded us all of the true meaning of Christmas – a message of hope, love, and joy. A huge thank you to all the Key Stage 1 staff for their hard work and dedication in producing such an outstanding and memorable performance. It was a special moment for our school family to cherish!



TRAVELLING CRIBS

If you have one of the Travelling Crib sets, please take care of it during the holidays and return it on the first day back in January. Thank you.

2024 CHRISTMAS MUSIC CONCERT THANKS

On Monday, some of our children who have received individual or group music tuition had the opportunity to perform for their parents and families. They were truly amazing, showcasing not only their talent but also their courage, perseverance, and resilience in performing before such a large audience. The progress they have made is remarkable - especially considering that, for some, this is only their first term learning to play an instrument, or in some cases, two instruments. A heartfelt thank you goes to Mrs Felstead and Mr Collins for their expertise, dedication, and encouragement in nurturing our young musicians. For those children who didn't perform this time, there will be further opportunities to share their talents later in the school year.



CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES 2024

ST MARY'S PARISH	HOLY SPIRIT PARISH
Tuesday Christmas Eve NM 5:30pm Carol Service and Candlelit procession by Children followed by Family Mass at 6.00pm MB 8:00pm Vigil Mass of Christmas Wednesday Christmas Day NM 9:30am Christmas Day Mass MB 11:30am Christmas Day Mass	Tuesday Christmas Eve 8.00pm Sung Vigil Mass of Christmas Wednesday Christmas Day 9:30am Children's Christmas Day Mass

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

This week, our children have been reaching out to members of the local community by writing letters and Christmas cards to local care homes, shops, and residents. Some of our pupils even delivered these heartfelt messages in person, bringing an extra special touch to the gesture. This initiative has been a wonderful opportunity for our children to connect with the wider community and share the spirit of Christmas joy and kindness.

CHRISTMAS 2024 ONLINE SAFETY



Attached to this newsletter is a 10 Top Tips for Online Safety over the Christmas Holidays 2024. Please take the time to share these tips with your children, especially if they are receiving new devices as Christmas presents. The Jed Foundation have put together a great guide for parents regarding emotional safety/wellbeing on Roblox, which many of our children report that they use regularly in our online safety lessons. Although the guide refers to teenagers,

I would say this guide is appropriate for all children, not just teens. It covers cyberbullying, signs a child might be struggling online and what parents can do. You can find the guide [here](#).

TERM DATES 2025 – 2026

The term dates (holiday list) for 2025 - 2026 are published on our school website – [please follow this link](#). Please remember that holidays requested during term time cannot be authorised and, if subsequently taken, may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued by Stockport Local Authority to each parent. Further details of Fixed Penalty Notices can be found on the [Stockport Council website](#).



RECEPTION PLACES FOR SEPTEMBER 2025 – APPLICATION DEADLINE APPROACHING



If you are applying for a school (Reception) place for next September, applications should be made by the **15 January 2025** via the [Stockport Admissions website](#). Please note: *if your 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.

SWIMMING – LENT TERM YEAR 5

Swimming lessons will begin for Year 5 from **Thursday 9 January** until the end of the Lent (Spring) term.

STOCKPORT SWIMMING GALA SUCCESS

On Tuesday, seven talented children from Key Stage 2 represented our school at the Stockport Swimming Gala, and we couldn't be prouder of their efforts and achievements. Our children: Annabelle, Margot, Leo, Harry, Annelle, Jacob and Jack showed their swimming skills and gave their best performance. They enjoyed the atmosphere, the swimming, the experience and the fun of the swimming gala. Competing against schools from across the borough, they demonstrated outstanding teamwork, determination, and sportsmanship. Whether swimming in relays or individual races, their energy and enthusiasm shone through. Congratulations to all of them for their hard work and for being such fantastic ambassadors for our school!



HOUSE POINTS

Below are the house point totals for December.

St Patrick	478
St George	493
St Peter	454
St Mary	451

This means that the totals for this term are as follows and **St George's** house group are this term's winners. They attended a treat afternoon with Christmas music and games, colouring, biscuits and juice in the hall on Thursday afternoon.

St Patrick	4404
St George	4407
St Peter	3972
St Mary	4020

This term, over 16,000 dojos have been awarded! Well done children!

PE KITS

As it is the end of term this week, teachers shall be sending PE kits home when the children have finished with them in school. Please give kits a wash during the holidays and then keep them at home until we return in January. Further information about what is needed for PE uniform is available [here](#).

FAREWELL MISS POOLE



Today we say farewell to Miss Poole as she begins her maternity leave. We wish Miss Poole and her husband every happiness as they begin a new exciting stage in their lives. We will of course keep you updated with any baby news and look forward to seeing Miss Poole again soon! As you are aware, Mrs Thompson will be acting Deputy Headteacher and Mrs Bramhall will be acting Key Stage 1 Leader during Miss Poole's maternity leave.

CHRISTMAS PAUSE FOR THOUGHT AND PRAYER

Light looked down and saw the darkness. 'I will go there', said light.
Peace looked down and saw war. 'I will go there', said peace.
Love looked down and saw hatred. 'I will go there', said love.
So, He, the Lord of Light,
The Prince of Peace,
The King of Love
Came down and crept in beside us.
Loving God, help us remember the birth of Jesus, that we may share
in the song of the angels, the gladness of the shepherds, and
worship of the wise men. Amen.



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 dates in bold.</i>
20 December	School closes for the Christmas holidays.
24 & 25 December	Christmas Eve and Christmas Day Masses – see above for details.
27 December	CAFOD Fun Run (Bollington) Bollington Fun Run .
6 January 2025	School reopens following the Christmas holidays.
9 January	Year 5 swimming lessons start.
13 January	Druhm workshops for each class. welcome to the DRUHM academy .
18 January	Cross Country at Woodbank Park. 10:00am.
20 January	Year 2 celebration of the word. 2:30pm. All welcome.
21 January	PTA Bags2School. What We Collect Bag2School
22 January	Year 6 SATs meeting for parents. 6:00-7:00pm.
31 January	PTA Family Quiz Night. 6:00pm – 8:00pm.
7 February	Choir to sing at Young Voices 7:00pm Co-Op Live arena, Manchester.
14 February	Coffee and cake with Mrs Bradbury and Mrs Norburn 1:15pm -2:15pm.
14 February	School closes for the February half term break.
23 February	INSET day – school closed to pupils.
24 February	School reopens to pupils following the half term break.
25 February	Year 1 parents phonics meeting 5:00pm – 5:30pm.



Wishing you all a holy and peaceful Christmas and a happy New Year 2025.
Mr John Nish and Miss Alice Poole.