



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL



ADVENT

WEEK 3 – JOY: SHEPHERD'S CANDLE

As we reach the final day of the Advent term, in the third week of Advent, it is a joy to reflect on what has truly been a week, and a term, filled with hope, celebration and community spirit. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our children, staff, parents and governors for your continued hard work, commitment and support throughout the term. It has been an exceptionally busy time, rich with high-quality learning experiences for our children. From energetic classrooms to a bustling school hall, our teachers, teaching assistants, office staff, premises team and all those working behind the scenes

give tirelessly of themselves to ensure our school remains a warm, nurturing and aspirational place where every child can flourish.

Across our Christmas performances, we were treated to an impressive array of talent, confidence and joy. I hope you enjoyed these celebrations as much as we did, and I know you will appreciate the dedication, rehearsal and teamwork required to produce performances of such a high standard. In our final Advent worship today, we reflected on the crib and the figures who form the heart of the Christmas story. Through prayer and carols, we considered how each of us is called to bring the message of hope, peace, joy and love into our families and wider communities during this Christmas season and beyond. Perhaps this is a time for us all to offer a welcoming hand of friendship to those in need and to continue our Advent Promises in our everyday lives.

As always, the work we do in school is strengthened immeasurably by the support of our parents, carers and grandparents. We are truly blessed with such a caring and engaged community, and I extend my heartfelt thanks to each and every one of you for your partnership and encouragement throughout the term. Finally, on behalf of all the staff, thank you for the many kind cards, good wishes, staffroom treats and generous gifts we have received; they are greatly appreciated. I hope the Christmas holiday offers you time for rest, renewal and joyful moments with family and friends. With every good wish for a happy and holy Christmas, and peace and hope for the New Year, I look forward to welcoming everyone back to school on Monday 5 January 2026.

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.

CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES 2025

ST MARY'S PARISH, MARPLE BRIDGE	HOLY SPIRIT PARISH, MARPLE
Wednesday Christmas Eve 7:30pm Carols 8:00pm Vigil Mass of Christmas	Wednesday Christmas Eve 8.00pm Sung Vigil Mass of Christmas
Thursday Christmas Day 11:30am Christmas Day Mass	Thursday Christmas Day 9:30am Children's Christmas Day Mass



DIOCESE OF
NOTTINGHAM

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Company No 7937154



St Ralph
Sherwin
Catholic Multi Academy Trust

KEY STAGE 1 NATIVITY 2025

We are incredibly proud of our Key Stage 1 children for their joyful performance of the *Knock Knock Nativity* on Wednesday. Through beautiful singing, confident speaking and thoughtful storytelling, the children shared the true meaning of Christmas and reminded us that Jesus comes to everyone, knocking at the door of our hearts. Our sincere thanks go to the staff who worked so hard to prepare the children, and to parents and carers for their continued support. It was a wonderful celebration of faith, community and the joy of Christmas. More Nativity photographs in the Class Newsletters.



CHRISTMAS DINNER DAY



We enjoyed a truly wonderful Christmas dinner on Thursday, thanks to the hard work and dedication of Mrs Woodward and Mrs Deane, who prepared around 200 delicious meals for our school community. The festive atmosphere was enhanced by carols, Christmas jumpers, cheerful placemats and efficient, friendly service, with excellent-quality food made using locally produced ingredients. Our

sincere thanks go to all the staff who supported and served at this special event, helping to make it such an enjoyable and memorable occasion for the children.

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.



REACHING OUT



The children have been writing to some of our local care homes, shops and residents this week. Some of the pupils have walked to deliver the letters and Christmas cards. This is a brilliant opportunity for our children to connect with members of the local community and to spread a little Christmas joy.

CAROLS AT MARPLE LODGE CARE HOME

We warmly congratulate our Year 3 pupils for their wonderful Carol Singing visit to Marple Lodge Care Home on Tuesday. The children sang with joy, confidence and a very high standard of quality, bringing great happiness to the residents and staff alike. This special visit was a beautiful expression of our SANCTA values, particularly *Service*, *Compassion* and *Togetherness*, as well as Catholic Social Teaching through dignity of the human person and care for the elderly. By sharing their gifts so generously, the children truly lived out our call to love our neighbours and to be a sign of hope and joy within our wider community.



CLAVINOVA THANK YOU



We would like to offer our sincere thanks to Miriam, Father Carvill's housekeeper, for her incredibly generous donation of a new Clavinova to our school. This wonderful gift will make a lasting difference to our children's musical education, enriching classroom learning, collective worship and performances for many years to come. We are deeply grateful to Miriam for her kindness, thoughtfulness and support of our school community, which reflects the strong partnership we value with our parish.

TERM DATES 2026 – 2027

The term dates (holiday list) for 2026 - 2027 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 2026



If you are applying for a school (Reception) place for next September, applications should be made by the **15 January 2026** 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.

SWIMMING – LENT TERM Y5

Swimming lessons will begin for Year 5 from **Thursday 8 January** until the end of the Lent (Spring) term.

STOCKPORT SWIMMING GALA SUCCESS

We would like to congratulate all of the children in Years 4 and 5 who represented our school so brilliantly at the Stockport Swimming Gala held at Grand Central on Wednesday. Every child showed determination, teamwork and excellent sportsmanship, and we are immensely proud of them all. A special congratulations goes to the boys' team, who achieved an outstanding first place in Stockport after competing against 14 other schools. We also extend our sincere thanks to Mrs Ashton and Mr Walker, whose Olympian knowledge, encouragement and expert coaching from poolside played a significant part in this fantastic success.



HOUSE POINTS

Below are the house point totals for December.

St Patrick	692
St George	778
St Peter	743
St Mary	736

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	4761
St George	5194
St Peter	5021
St Mary	5029

This term, over 20,000 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](#).

CAFOD FESTIVE FUN RUN

Shake off the Christmas cobwebs and join CAFOD for their much-loved Christmas Fun Run in Bollington on **27 December at 10:00am!** Dig out your best festive fancy dress, Santa hats, tinsel, elf ears or even a full Christmas jumper, and take part in this joyful event that helps communities around the world lift themselves out of poverty. It's a wonderful way to enjoy the fresh winter air with family and friends during the Christmas break, all while supporting a truly worthy cause. There are entry options for adults, children and families, and the route is perfect whether you prefer to walk, jog or run—every step you take brings hope to others. Use the QR code to sign up or visit the CAFOD website to find out more: www.cafod.org.uk/Bollington.



CHRISTMAS PAUSE FOR THOUGHT AND PRAYER



The Mystery's Wonder by Fr Mark Skelton

The infant breathes and draws in air witnessed by cattle, straw and shed. Its mother, tired and drained of strength, enfolds the child, cradles its head. This powerless child, this babe who could not live one hour without her grace, will flourish through the gentle love, reflected in this mother's face.

Yet can you see, within this child, the Word who spoke and worlds became? The Power who moulded land and sea; who sang the Universe its Name?

This is the mystery of God, the wonder that this moment shows. The King who puts His strength aside; trusts us with life, His Life bestows.

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>	
19 December	School closes for the Christmas holidays.
5 January	School reopens following the Christmas holidays.
6 January	Mad Science after school club starts 3:20-4:20pm.
19 January	Year 2 celebration of the word at 2:30pm. All welcome.
19-23 January	Year 5 (and Y6 mop up) Bikeability.
29 January	Great Athletes Workshop.
30 January	PTA Family Quiz. 6:00-7:30pm.
4 February	PTA AGM 6:00pm in the school hall.
5 February	Coffee and Cake Social Time. All welcome. 1:30-3:00pm in the school hall.
6 February	Young Voices at the Co-Op Live Arena. Concert at 7:00pm.
9 February	Year 1 celebration of the word at 2:30pm. All welcome.
13 February	End of half term Celebration Assembly. 2:15pm. All welcome.
13 February	School closes for half term.
23 February	INSET Day. School closed to pupils.
24 February	School reopens to pupils.



Wishing you all a holy and peaceful Christmas and a happy New Year 2026.
Mr John Nish.