



Autumn/Winter Term 25

Welcome to St Mary's Catholic Primary School Newsletter November 2025

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we move further into the term, I would like to take this opportunity to say a heartfelt thank you for the incredibly warm welcome I have received since joining St. Mary's RC Primary School. It has been a true pleasure to get to know our wonderful pupils, dedicated staff, and supportive families. The sense of community and care that runs through the school is clear to see, and I feel very proud to now be part of it.

This term has already been filled with enthusiasm, learning, and laughter, and I am continually impressed by the children's curiosity and kindness. It has been particularly inspiring to see the way our pupils are engaging with the principles of Catholic Social Teaching — showing respect for others, caring for creation, and living out our shared values in their everyday actions. As we look ahead to the Christmas season, there is so much to look forward to — from festive celebrations and performances to moments of reflection and gratitude. You'll find many of the dates in this newsletter.

Thank you once again for your support and encouragement and I look forward to continuing to work together over the next half term.

Best wishes,
Mr Moran
Headteacher





Autumn/Winter Term 25

Attendance

Good attendance means...

Being in school at least 95% of the time or 180 to 190 days



Gates close at 8.45am – don't be late !

Regular attendance at school ensures that children get the best possible start in life. Good attendance supports learning, the development of social skills and friendships, as well as building good habits that are essential for adult life.

If your child's level of absence concerns us or attendance falls below 95%, you may be contacted by the school to look at what support can be offered to improve your child's attendance. We want to work with you to ensure we give your child the best opportunities to grow and succeed. Attendance that falls below 90% is categorised as persistent absence.

If your child is persistently absent, a number of things may happen depending upon the reasons for absence and your child's previous attendance record. You may receive a letter, a telephone call or an invitation to an attendance meeting. We monitor all children's attendance may be closely. You may be asked to provide medical proof of absence, especially if the absence is longer than 3 days.

If your child is finding it tricky to attend school then please let us know – we want to help ! Mrs Cox is available every day during term time to support. We want to know what the barriers are to coming into school and then we can put in place a plan to overcome these – we want every child to feel safe, valued and important.

Whole
School
Attendance
94.2%

Reception – 94.1%
Year 1 – 91%
Year 2 – 95.8%
Year 3 – 96.3%
Year 4 – 93.4%
Year 5 – 94.4%
Year 6 – 94%

The Government expect that pupils attend school for at least 96% of the school year. We strive to achieve at least 97% attendance across all our classes

Don't forget – a fine will be issued for all holidays of 5 days or more during term time!



Autumn/Winter Term 25

Pastoral and SEND

The Upstairs / Downstairs Brain

Have you ever noticed how your child can go from calm to explosive in seconds?
Dan Siegel's Upstairs / Downstairs Brain is a simple way to understand why.

Dan Siegel's concept of the 'upstairs and downstairs brain' is a metaphorical way of understanding the different parts of our brain and how they function.

The downstairs brain refers to the lower regions of the brain, specifically the brainstem and limbic system. It is responsible for fundamental survival functions, such as regulating breathing, heart rate, and basic emotions like fear and anger. The downstairs brain operates primarily on instinct and reacts without conscious thought.

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Downstairs Brain



The amygdala dwells on the lookout for threats, and when it becomes overwhelmed it will do its best to keep you safe.

The brain stem activates the fight, flight, freeze or faint survival mode.

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The 'downstairs brain' is in charge of big emotions, survival instincts and staying safe. It reacts quickly – think fight, flight, freeze.

The 'upstairs brain' is where problem-solving, empathy, and reasoning live. It helps children make good choices, manage feelings, and connect with others.

On the other hand, the upstairs brain refers to the prefrontal cortex, which is the most evolved part of the brain. It is responsible for higher-order thinking: reasoning, decision-making, emotional regulation, empathy, and self-awareness. The upstairs brain allows us to think critically, plan, reflect, and make conscious choices.

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Sometimes too much emotional information (stress, anxiety, frustration) comes into our brain and it disconnects. This is called 'flipping your lid'. It is now your downstairs brain that is in control. The downstairs brain will be trying to keep you safe - because it thinks you are in danger - even if you are not!

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Upstairs Brain

Pre-Frontal Cortex



The pre-frontal cortex is where you can make healthy decisions.

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According to Siegel, the development of the downstairs and upstairs brain is significant for emotional well-being and social interactions.

In early childhood, the upstairs brain is not yet fully developed, and children tend to primarily rely on their downstairs brain. However, as children grow and learn, their upstairs brain gradually matures, allowing them to regulate emotions, make better decisions, and develop more complex social skills.

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But here's the catch: children's upstairs brains are still under construction. That means when emotions overwhelm, their downstairs brain often takes over. This isn't 'bad behaviour' – it's biology. When we see it this way, we can respond with compassion, co-regulation, and strategies that help a young person move from downstairs to upstairs.

When a child is in a regulated state



think before I act
can in control of my body and actions
can feel
can see other's points of view
think before I speak
feel like I can get my work done

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When a child is in a dysregulated state



am not in control of my body or reactions
feel too afraid or threatened to focus
anxious, angry, run away or hide
only see my side of the problem
feel like I cannot get anything done

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Autumn/Winter Term 25



Pastoral and SEND



✿ Come and Meet Your Community Health & Wellbeing Worker ✿

📅 Every Tuesday

🕒 Time: 2-4PM

📍 Location: Kinsman Hub

Come along for friendly advice, guidance & support on:

- ✓ Local services & benefits
 - ✓ Health, wellbeing & mental health
 - ✓ Energy advice & family support
 - ✓ Signposting & referrals
- No appointment needed – just turn up

Office News

Polite Reminders

Please could we ask all Parents/Carers to call into the office every morning before 8.30am to report their child as absent. We are finding that a lot of parents are messaging Class Teachers, you do need to report absences direct to the Office Team. When you call us, please choose **Option 1** and provide a **FULL** reason.

Parents/Carers need to be booking their children's school meals every day before 8am. They can be booked a term in advance for ease, if you wish to do so. We are having a lot of children that are having to book their own in class.

And lastly Breakfast Club and Wraparound does need to be booked in advance as we are getting an increased number of children turning up to these provisions and they are not booked in. It is very important that we have the correct staff to child ratio. And these provisions need to be paid for at the time of booking.



Important Dates



Children in Need - 14.11.25

Height and Weight (Rec and Yr6) – 17.11.25

**Parent Consultations (3.30-6pm) - 25.11.25
and 26.11.25**

KS1 Nativity (2-3pm) - 1.12.25 and 2.12.25

Reception and Nursery Eden trip - 2.12.25

Christmas Jumper Day - 11.12.25

Christmas Fair - 12.12.25

Reception Nativity - 15.12.25 (2pm)

Reception Nativity – 16.12.25 (10am)

**Christmas lunch and Christmas parties -
17.12.25**

Rocksteady Concert - 19.12.25

Last Day Of Term – 19.12.25



Nursery News



Nursery have been learning about people who help us and how to keep safe and healthy. They had special visitors from the fire and ambulance departments.





Reception News



What a fantastic first half term we've had in EYFS! The children have settled in so well and have already grown in confidence, independence, and curiosity. It's been wonderful to see new friendships forming and everyone getting used to our classroom routines with such enthusiasm. Our topics this term have focused on **'All About Me'** and **'People Who Help Us'**. The children have loved learning about the important jobs people do in our community, and we were very lucky to have some special visitors! We had a First Response Nurse visit to show us the equipment used to help people stay safe and well, and the children even got to explore the ambulance car. We also had an exciting visit from the Fire Service, where the children saw a real fire engine up close and learned how firefighters keep us safe. These experiences really brought our learning to life and inspired lots of wonderful role play in our classroom.

We've also been exploring Autumn changes, practising our early Phonics and Number skills, and learning how to be kind and helpful friends. We are so proud of how the children have embraced every new challenge with smiles and excitement.

Thank you for all your support this half term — it makes such a difference. We're looking forward to more exciting learning adventures next half term!



Year 1 News



A super first half term for Year One.

The children have been super busy with all the learning which has taken place. Our writing focus in English was based around the story of 'Meesha Makes Friends'. The children really enjoyed the story and each lesson the children explored different elements of the story and how Meesha may be feeling or making suggestions as to what she could do. Their final piece of writing was a diary entry written as if they were Meesha.



In science, the focus has been the human body learning about body parts and what they do as well as key internal organs and exploring using our senses and what we use each sense for. The children enjoyed an experiment where they had to smell different things and make a prediction about what they thought they were. In geography we have been learning all about Bodmin and what human and physical features make up our town. We also used compasses to complete some field work to explore direction. As well as all the super learning which has taken place, we also were very lucky to go on a school trip to Badger Forest School and take part in a day of outdoor learning. The children made dens, lit fires, drank hot chocolate and enjoyed exploring our natural world. We are looking forward to the upcoming half term with lots of new learning opportunities to be part of.





Year 2 News



Well Autumn Term 1 went by in a bit of a blur!

We started off with a bit of a bang, with the local fire brigade coming into Year 2 to tell us about fire safety, to show us what kit they wear to keep themselves safe. This all fed into our history topic learning on The Great Fire of London, which the children loved! We were able to look at what the fire brigade wore and used during the time of the fire and compare it with what they use and wear today.

We learnt so much about the fire and the circumstances leading up to it and afterwards, the children are fonts of knowledge when it comes to The Great Fire, we rounded this up with them writing an Information Report in English on what they know, how it happened, what actually happened, and how London changed afterwards.

I have loved the Art topic, we have been outside lots, sketched and drawn by looking at what is around us. I can't wait for the topic next term where we should be able to do some printing.

A change to our timetable from last year has been Enrichment on a Friday afternoon, and I think it has been just that, enriching. I have watched Year 2 grow in confidence in going to other teachers and coming back full of beans with an origami jumping frog, a new yoga move or having nailed the bingo game, brilliant!

Here's to looking forward to all the joy and fun that the build up to Christmas brings.



Year 2 News





Year 3 News



What a busy and exciting term it has been in Year 3! In English, we immersed ourselves in the story *The Stone Age Boy*, using it as inspiration to write our own thrilling adventure narratives. The children worked hard to develop detailed descriptions and exciting plots, bringing their Stone Age characters to life. Linking with our History topic, we travelled back in time to learn all about how people lived during the Stone Age, Bronze Age and Iron Age. The class particularly enjoyed stepping into the role of early humans to create their own cave-style artwork using charcoal – things got wonderfully messy! In Science, we became rock detectives, exploring the different types of rocks and investigating their properties through hands-on experiments. We also delved into the fascinating world of fossils, discovering how they are formed and what they can teach us about the past. It has been a fantastic term full of creativity, curiosity and enthusiasm – well done. We also had great fun during Snack-tember, where the children explored the importance of healthy eating and even tried new nutritious snacks.



Year 4 News



This half term, the children have absolutely loved bringing science to life with a hands-on investigation into the digestive system! We recreated the journey food takes through our bodies, from the moment it enters the mouth to when it leaves the body at the end of digestion. Using bananas, plastic bags, vinegar, and even tights, we explored how each part of the digestive system works. The children were fascinated (and slightly disgusted!) as they watched how food is broken down, nutrients absorbed, and waste formed. It was the perfect mix of science and fun – they asked brilliant questions, made thoughtful observations, and will certainly remember how amazing our bodies are!

Music - In music, the children have continued their exciting journey learning to play the cornet. They can now confidently play the notes C, D, E, and F and have even mastered performing *Hot Cross Buns*! Their enthusiasm and teamwork during lessons have been wonderful to see.

Art - In art, we have been exploring tone and texture using charcoal and sketching pencils to create striking black and white illustrations. The children experimented with shading techniques to bring depth and detail to their work.

English - In English, we have been inspired by Anthony Browne's book *Gorilla*. The children wrote their own imaginative stories, changing the animal that came to life and inventing exciting new adventures. They focused on using fronted adverbials and expanded noun phrases to add detail and flair to their writing.

Maths - In maths, we have secured our understanding of place value and learnt how to round four-digit numbers to the nearest 1,000, 100, and 10. We have now moved on to addition and subtraction, focusing on mastering the column method with confidence.





Year 5 News



It's been a busy and exciting half term for Year 5! The children have enjoyed a fantastic range of activities and learning experiences. They started the term with a trip to Bodmin Fire Station for their 'Lifeskills' session, where they learned about safety and how to make sensible choices in different real-life situations. They also took part in 'Bikeability', developing their cycling skills and road awareness.

In the classroom, Year 5 have been exploring the fascinating world of the Mayans in History and learning all about human development in Science. In English, they've been studying Kai and the Monkey King and discovering lots of inspirational women through Good Night Stories for Rebel Girls. To finish the half term, Year 5 led the whole school in a beautiful Harvest Festival Mass, sharing readings, prayers, and songs that reminded everyone of the importance of gratitude and community.

What a wonderful half term of learning, creativity, and leadership – well done, Year 5!





Year 6 News

Year 6 have had a wonderful start to the year.

They have shown great determination to learn and progress, and I have been super impressed by their attitude. One stand out for the term was our science lesson about Charles Darwin's Theory of Evolution. We looked at the finches on the Galapagos Islands and how they adapted over time to their environment. We then investigated why their beaks needed to change according to the food sources available.

