



Christmas Newsletter 2024

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20.12.24

Dear parents and carers

As we approach the great hope and joy that is brought at Christmas through the birth of Jesus our saviour, we are also reminded of Mary as an example of faith, contemplation and action. Mary was so open to God's will that she became the Mother of our Lord, Jesus. This Christmas, let us all be as open to God's word as Mary, let us ask ourselves 'Who does God want me to be?'

Christmas, of course, is also a time of reflection. Let us take the time to reflect on the many successes that we have experienced at St Mary's throughout this year. Certainly in the short time that I have been here, I have been most impressed with the progress made by the children in their learning, their kind and caring nature towards one another and their resilience when faced with challenges. This week too, we have seen the children showcase their given talents for the benefit of others in the EYFS/KS1 Nativity and the KS2 carols. Both events demonstrated what faith filled and talented children we are blessed to teach at St Mary's!

Thank you to the entire school community for such generous donations towards the reverse Advent calendar. Over 110 items were donated and have been taken to our local collection point (Hagley Catholic High School) and will be distributed to Father Hudson's Caritas - who you will be aware support homeless people across Birmingham. Thank you for your generosity towards this initiative; it is a true example of Catholic Social Teaching and faith in action.

As we approach the end of the autumn term, may I thank you for your understanding, feedback and the great support that you provide to our school, and on behalf of the staff

and local governing body, May I wish you and your families a very happy, restful and holy Christmas and a blessed new year. School will reopen to pupils on Monday 6th January, 2025.

Take care and God bless

Mr Wilkes

Interim Executive Principal

A further reminder of the updated attendance guidance from the local authority that came into force in August. You will be aware that this guidance has updated and increased penalty measures for absences within the school year. Please do read through the guidance from the local authority at this link [School attendance advice | Dudley Council](#) as well as the updated Emmaus Catholic Multi Academy Attendance policy - <https://st-mary-bh.sch.life/Files/Download/bd02f6dc-f985-4637-ab21-70941bc1df39/eea2616d-94ad-4362-95e6-6c97aa4d3211/Emmaus%20MAC%20Attendance%20Policy%20STM.pdf>

[St Mary's RC Primary School Brierley Hill - Calendar](#)

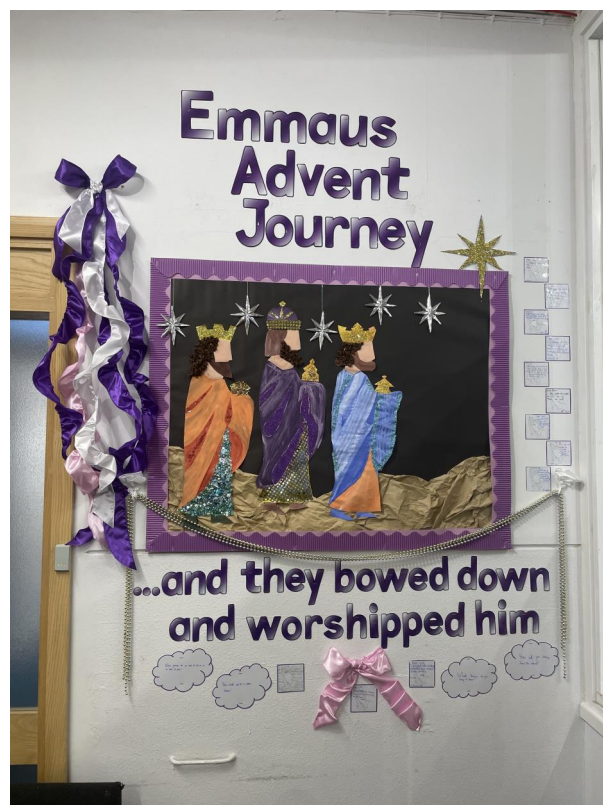
St. Mary's Catholic Primary School

Our Gospel Value and Virtue for Autumn term 2 are **Intentional** and **Prophetic**.



Children at St. Mary's are growing to be Intentional in the way we live and use the resources of the earth, guided by conscience, and prophetic in the example we set to others.

Our Catholic Social Teaching (CST) principle for Autumn term 2 is:
Dignity of the Human Person



1 - Our wonderful new display that you can see in our Foyer.

The Headlines for this Newsletter:

- *December: A Season of Reflection, Hope, and Joy*
- *Local Governing Body update*
- *Safeguarding*
- *Class Attendance*
- *Attendance - Raising Standards*
- *SEND - Dudley's Local Offer*
- *Dyslexia support*
- *Black Country CAMHS Parent/Carer Workshops*
- *Dudley Family Information Service*
- *Celebrating our God-given talents*
- *Notices - Dates for the term ahead*
- *Pope Francis' Monthly Intention for December*
- *Contact School*

December - The Advent Journey

As we enter this special time of the year, our school is preparing to celebrate the season of Advent, which begins on Sunday, December 1, 2024. Advent is a season of hope, preparation, and reflection as we eagerly await the celebration of Christmas and the birth of Jesus Christ.

Throughout the coming weeks, our students and staff will engage in meaningful activities to honour this sacred time. From lighting the Advent wreath to prayerful reflections and acts of kindness, we will focus on the themes of hope, peace, joy, and love that define this season.

We invite families to join us in embracing the true spirit of Advent as we prepare our hearts and minds for the coming of Christ. Let's journey together in faith and anticipation during this beautiful time of the year.

As the year winds down and the days grow shorter, December invites us into a season of expectation and preparation. Advent, derived from the Latin word *adventus*, meaning "coming," marks a journey of reflection and anticipation. It's a time to pause, take stock, and prepare our hearts for the celebration of Christmas and the hope it brings.

Each week of Advent carries its own significance:

- **Week 1: Hope** – We light the first candle to remind ourselves of the hope that brightens even the darkest days.
- **Week 2: Peace** – A time to focus on bringing peace into our hearts, homes, and communities.
- **Week 3: Joy** – The pink candle represents joy as we celebrate the blessings in our lives.
- **Week 4: Love** – Finally, we honour the greatest gift of all: love, which unites and sustains us.

Whether you mark this season with traditions like lighting an Advent wreath, singing carols, or acts of service, the journey of Advent is about finding meaning in the moments. Let's use this time to connect with one another, embrace hope, and carry the spirit of Christmas into the new year.

Local Governing Body update



Following the appeal from Mr Tony Guinan, Chair of the LGB, that you received earlier this year in May, I am pleased to announce Mrs Megan Bennett as a parent governor and member of our Local Governing Body. On behalf of the LGB, we thank Mrs Bennett for opting to volunteer her time towards supporting the governance of our school and look forward to welcoming her onto the Local Governing Body.

Safeguarding



If you find you are ever facing something challenging in your family life, please come and see us. We are always here to help you and your child(ren).

Early Help

An Early Help Assessment is a great way of getting your family some support, whether it be with your child's behaviour, their sleeping pattern or social and emotional wellbeing, or something that effects the whole family, housing and finances, for example.

It involves a meeting with professionals from different agencies (dependent on your family's individual needs) and a plan will be put in place to show the different support you will receive and who is responsible for getting this done.

It is not input from Social Services: it is there as a support tool only, for a variety of different reasons.

If you have any questions, or feel you may benefit from this, please contact Ms Mosley on 01384 985 005, or contact the school office to arrange an appointment to see her.

Safeguarding

Please be aware that we have a duty of care to all children at St. Mary's and this may mean we need to contact Social Services/Family Support for advice or to report a situation. We understand that this can be distressing for those involved, but please be assured that we **always** have your child's best interests at heart.

If you have any concern or worry about another member of the St. Mary's School community, please don't hesitate to contact any of our DSLs (Designated Safeguarding

Leads): Mr Lodge, Miss Clewley or Ms Mosley. Our Interim Executive Principal, Mr Wilkes, will also be a member of our DSL team too.

Class Attendance - December



Reception: 85%

Year 1: 92%

Year 2: 86%

Year 3: 91%

Year 4: 89%

Year 5: 88%

Year 6: 86%

National Average:95%

Attendance record and lessons missed

- 95% attendance means 50 missed lessons. This means a child missed about 10 days or 2 weeks of lessons in the school year.
- 90% attendance means 100 missed lessons. This means a child misses four weeks of lessons in the school year.
- 85% attendance means 150 missed lessons. This means the child misses almost 6 weeks of lessons in the school year
- 80% attendance means 200 missed lessons. This means the child misses over 7 weeks of lessons in the school year
- 75% attendance means 250 missed lessons. This means the child misses about 9 weeks of lessons in the school year

Punctuality

- Arriving 5 minutes late every day adds up to over 3 days lost each year, that's 20 lessons missed
- Arriving 15 minutes late every day adds up to 2 weeks absence a year, that's 55 lessons missed
- Arriving 30 minutes late every adds up to 19 days absence a year, that's 123 lessons missed

Attendance - Raising standards



This newsletters' attendance is 88.32 %, which needs improvement! We would obviously love to be as close to 100% as we can. The government, rightly so, has a huge focus on

attendance as, ["research found that pupils who performed better both at the end of primary and secondary school missed fewer days than those who didn't perform as well."](#) There is a clear link between attendance and better outcomes so well done to everyone that has focussed on this; by doing so, you are prioritising a brighter future for your child/children.

Attendance is everyone's responsibility just like the safeguarding of every child and young person.

Please understand, that if attendance shows deterioration, you will be contacted - this is to establish a path forward so that we can raise the level of attendance, which is heavily linked to raising the performance of your child in their crucial education. We need to prioritise this so join us and work with us!

Thank you and God bless, Mr Lodge.

[Take a look at what's been happening around School](#)





2 - Reception



3 - Reception



4 - Reception



5 - Reception



6 - Reception



7 - Reception



8 - Reception



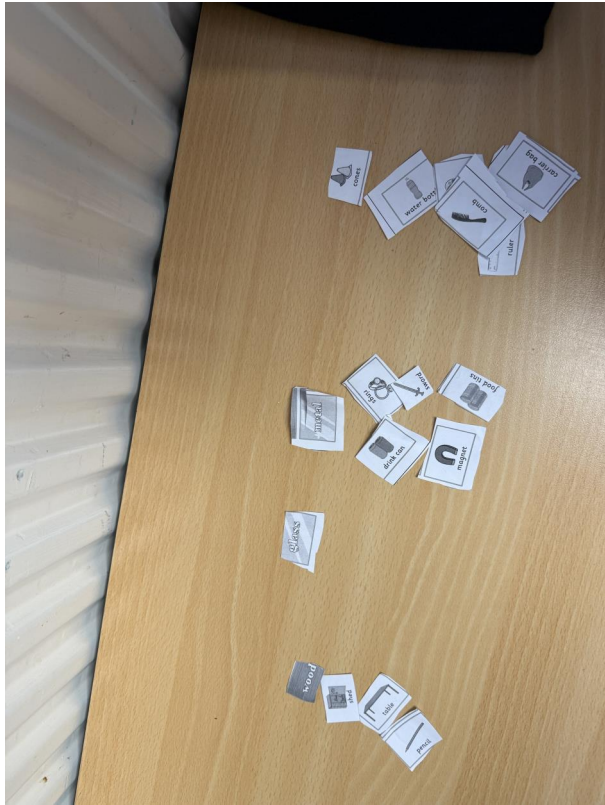
9 - Reception



10 - Reception



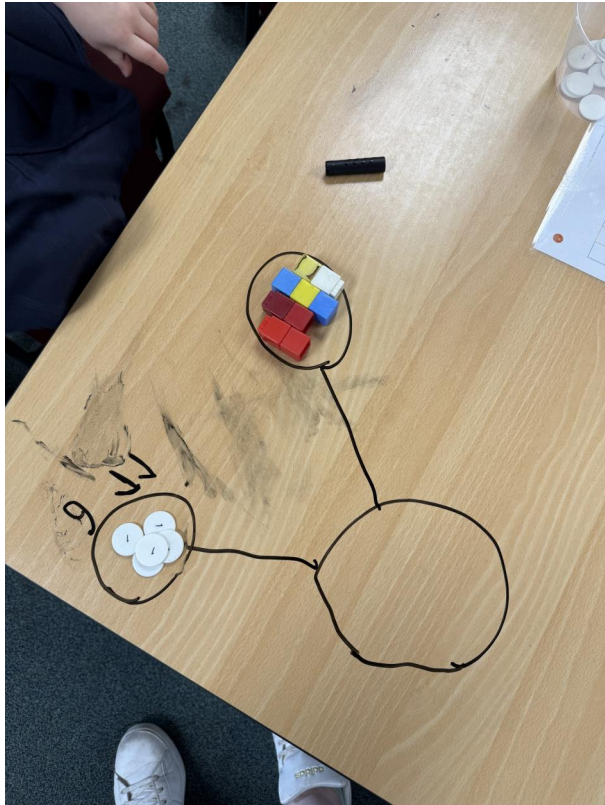
11 - Year 1



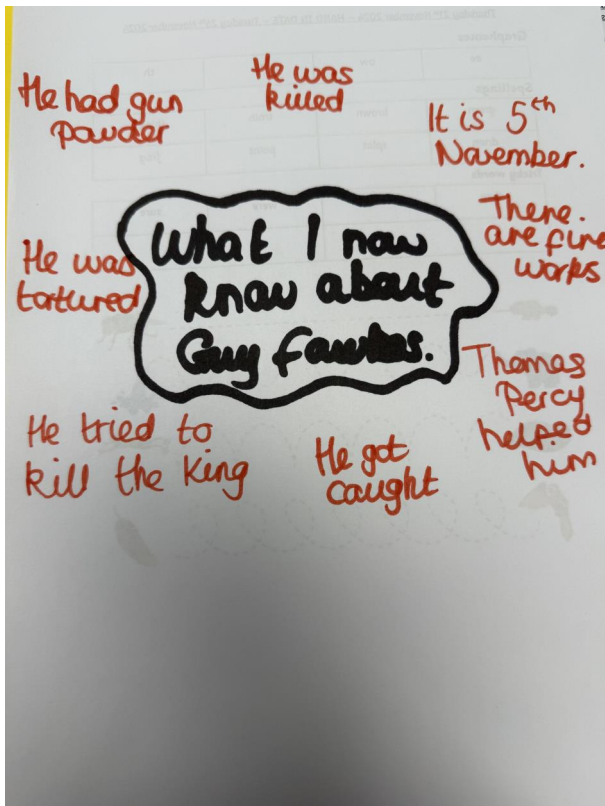
12 - Year 1



13 - Year 1



14 - Year 1



15 - Year 1

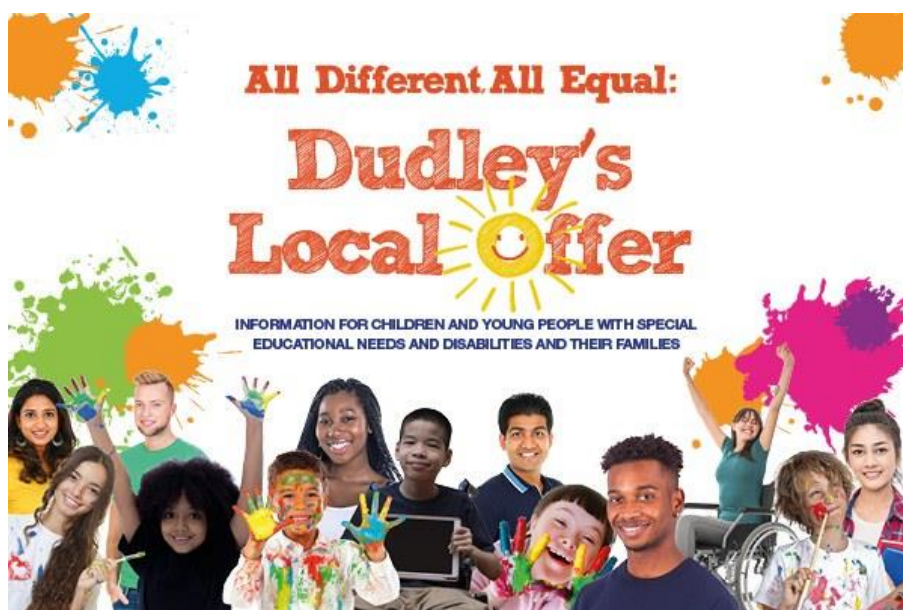


18 - Year 2



19 - Year 2

SEND - Dudley's Local Offer



Dudley's Local Offer

The Local Offer is full of information and advice on things to support you and your child with Special Educational Needs or disabilities. If you need advice on health, education, social care and community support for you and your family visit the Local Offer website:

www.localoffer.dudley.sch.uk

Dudley Parent Carer Forum

Parents and carers from across Dudley borough who have children with disabilities and special needs are being invited to join the Dudley Parent Carer Forum.

Dudley Parent Carer Forum is an independent group of parent carers of children and young people (0-25 years) with disabilities and additional needs. The forum provides a safe environment for parent carers of children with disabilities or additional needs to share their thoughts and concerns and to empower them to have their voices heard in a way that influences change and service design.

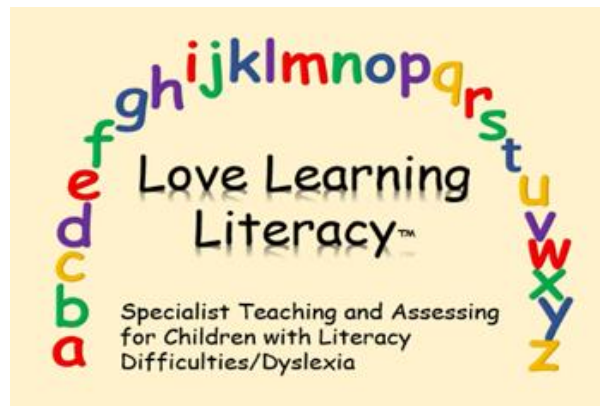
Any parent carer of a child with a disability or additional needs, residing in Dudley borough can become a member.

For more information contact the forum via their Facebook page or by their website: www.dudleyparentcarerforum.co.uk/

Events and workshops for people with SEND

Dudley SENDIAS (special educational needs & disabilities information advice and support) Service is running a range of online activities over the coming months to help parents and

carers or young people with SEND. Find out more at <https://dudleyci.co.uk/workshops-and-events>



20 - Does your child have literacy difficulties/dyslexia? Would you like them to improve their reading and writing in the comfort of their own home?

I create and teach interactive, multisensory Online lessons using Dyslexia Action's highly effective Structured Literacy Programme. After an informal assessment, each lesson is tailored to your child's needs to ensure enjoyable progress. Lessons are for children aged 5-11 years and can be 30/40 minutes or one hour.

For more information, please contact Vee Bird (Specialist Dyslexia Teacher) on 07554 253 703 or write to: //lovelearningliteracy@gmail.com

Thank you,

Vee Bird (MSc, PGCE, Associate of The Dyslexia Guild)

Black Country CAMHS Parent/Carer Workshops



CAMHS Parent/Carer Workshops

Come and join our Parent/Carer Workshops, run by Black Country CAMHS services (on Zoom for 1.5hours) Groups held 12pm - 1.30pm.

We know that suffering from mental health difficulties does not only affect the person struggling, but also the family around them. Parenting a child/young person with mental health difficulties can create additional challenges for parents.

We are running workshops exploring a range of difficulties that children/young people may experience, that can impact their emotional wellbeing.

10.07.24- Trauma and Attachment

11.09.24 - Autistic Spectrum Conditions

23.10.24 – Speech and Language

20.11.24- Depression / Low Mood

18.12.24 – Anxiety / OCD

15.01.25 – Self-harm

12.02.25– Anger / Conduct difficulties

12.03.25 – Anxiety

To register your interest telephone **Andrea Ehgartner** on **01922 607400**



Dudley Family Information Service



Please click on the following link to access the latest bulletin from Dudley's Family Information Service:

[Family Information Summer Newsletter \(govdelivery.com\)](http://govdelivery.com)

Celebrating our God-given gifts



Each week, during our in-school assembly, we celebrate the ways in which pupils have been using their talents and gifts given by God. This Newsletter our stars are; Well done everyone!

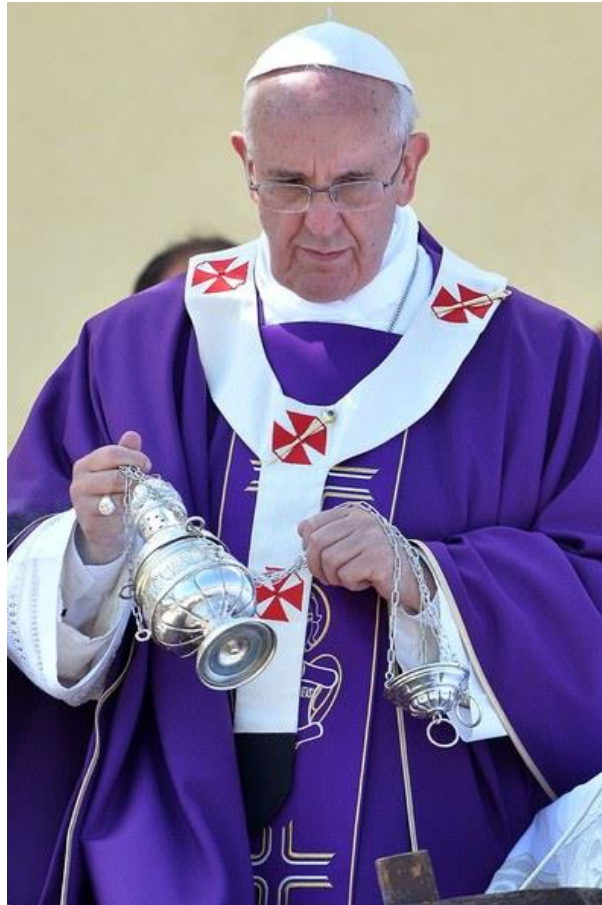
Notices



Dates for the new school year:

Further dates for the term ahead are available on our website. If you require support accessing these, please contact our friendly office administrator, Mrs Bate, for additional help

Pope Francis' prayer intention for December



For Pilgrims of Hope:

Pope Francis releases his prayer intention for the month of December, and invites Christians to pray that each of us may become pilgrims of hope as a result of the 2025 Jubilee.

In December, we pray with Pope Francis that the forthcoming Jubilee may strengthen us in our faith, helping us to recognise the Risen Christ in the midst of our lives, transforming us into pilgrims of Christian hope.

‘We must fan the flame of hope that has been given to us and help everyone to gain new strength and certainty by looking to the future with an open spirit, a trusting heart, and far-sighted vision.’ – Pope Francis.

Please join Pope Francis and the whole Church in praying these monthly intentions, particularly on Fridays at 12.30pm.

For a shared mission: We pray that the Church continue to sustain in all ways a Synodal lifestyle, as a sign of co-responsibility, promoting the participation, the communion and the mission shared among priests, religious and lay people.

Contact Us



Polite reminder - teachers can be contacted using the class email address or through making a telephone appointment through the Main Office. Teachers will reply as soon as possible, during normal working hours. Out of school hours, in an emergency, you can contact us by completing this form here: <https://st-mary-bh.sch.life/page/detail/contact-school-1>

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Visit us on the web at [St. Mary's Website](#)