



'Together we strive for excellence, inspired by the joy of the Gospel'.

Wear Wellies to School Day

Wear Wellies to School Day was a huge success. The children enjoyed a range of activities around school. We raised a total of **£235.80** for the Winston's Wish Charity to support bereaved young children throughout the country.

Here is just a snippet of what we did as a school, please see the school website for more class blogs.

Thank you, Stella community, for your generous support.



Lent Food bank Campaign

Monday will be week 3 of the food bank donations. We will be collecting 'Long Life Puddings' for example :- tinned rice pudding, tinned custard, sponge puddings, tinned fruit or long life cake. Any of the above food items will be greatly appreciated.

Childrens Mental Health Day

Thank you to all those who donated to this great cause. We raised a fantastic amount of money for Young Minds - **£196.15**. The children's outfits were brilliant.



This week Pope Francis reminds us,

"Dear young people, may you always live in faith with enthusiasm."



Year of Prayer - Wednesday 28th February 2024

We continued this week with our Year of Prayer focus on our school radio station. With a focus on our Mother Mary. A huge thank you to Lily in Year 6 and Nolan in Year 5, Amber in Year 4 for hosting the broadcast along with Miss Wilson. **Please click on the praying hands** to hear it for yourself and take a quiet 5 minutes to reflect.



Building Work

We have been informed that the 'Mi-Ji' Chinese Restaurant will be having extensive building work done during the next few months. Work will commence on Saturday 2nd March. Both car parks will be closed to the public due to construction vehicles coming and going. Parents and carers will need to be extra vigilant when dropping children off in the morning and collection time. You may wish to pass this message on to other family members who do not see this newsletter, so they are aware of the parking situation. As there will be extra traffic during the morning and afternoon opening times, can we please request that parents/carers encourage children to use the footpath at all times, and NOT run ahead unaccompanied. This matter is out of our hands, and we understand the inconvenience it may cause however we hope this is just a temporary issue while work is underway. As always yours and our main priority is the safety of our children. Many thanks.





Year 3 held their music lesson outdoors, in groups the children collected natural things to use as musical instruments and then compose & performed their piece of music. Lots of fun in a very productive lesson.



Year 6 and their special friends from Reception class made kites. Thankfully it was windy for the children to fly them.



Year 4 went to look for things that vibrate for their science lesson.



Year 5 Careers Day

Year 5 have the opportunity to visit the Careers Hub in the metro centre. This is a brand new hub which is sponsored by Newcastle United with it's aims to support young people to learn more about careers. The hub encourages young people to think about turning their own interests into a career! The visit will take place on Wednesday 27th March during school time. Payment of £9 can be made via Arbor.

Safeguarding Reminder

Safeguarding the children in our care is one of the school's main responsibilities, one that St Mary and St Thomas Aquinas take very seriously.

As you are already aware from previous updates, our Designated Safeguarding Lead is Mr Craig. You can speak to him by phone, make an appointment via the school office, or catch him when he's outside greeting/saying goodbye to children, if you ever have a concern. We have three Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads in school these are Miss Hudson (Deputy Headteacher/Year 2 class teacher), Mrs Bennison (Assistant Headteacher, currently on maternity leave) and Mrs Costello (School Business Manager). If you are unable to speak to Mr Craig, you can speak to these members of staff or any other member of staff about your concern(s).

The school has an updated Safeguarding policy, that can be found on the school website, or paper copies can be requested from the school office.

All staff receive annual safeguarding refresher training, as well as other training throughout the year on key areas, including record keeping and reporting. Our school also has a termly visit from our Safeguarding Consultant, who completes an audit of the school's safeguarding and identifies any future improvements or training needs.

Why do parents need to know this information?

- To reassure you that we take keeping our children safe in school very seriously at St. Mary and St. Thomas Aquinas.
- It's good to remind parents/carers of the key members of staff, in case new parents did not know who they were.
- To highlight the continual work that the school puts into keeping our children safe in school.

Additional information can be found on our website:

Please click [here](#) to access the page.

Attendance

During celebration assembly on Friday, we have been celebrating whole class attendance and each week the class with the highest attendance will receive our Attendance Trophy, well done to **Year 1** who won the trophy this week.

Week beginning: 26th February 2024	
Year group	Attendance percentage
<i>Reception</i>	94.81
<i>Year 1</i>	98.96
<i>Year 2</i>	96.30
<i>Year 3</i>	97.41
<i>Year 4</i>	97.04
<i>Year 5</i>	88.53
<i>Year 6</i>	97.32

Reading Books in School Needed

If you have any high-quality reading books you would like to contribute to the school, please feel free to drop them off at the school office at your convenience. Your support would be immensely appreciated.

We would also love any non-fiction books or child friendly magazine or comics.

World Book Day

SAVE THE DATE! World Book Day will take place on 7th March 2024. We would like children to get dressed up as a character from a book which has inspired them.

What a team!

Well done to our swimmers Alice, Lily, Emily, Claudia, Joe, Niamh, Luke and Blake. Between them they achieved 2 gold medals, 1 silver medal and 1 bronze medal. Fantastic result.



Spotlight Celebration



Olivia entered an Irish dancing competition, and won 2nd, 4th, 5th 6th place medals, she also won a trophy.



Sophie, Martha and Penny from Year 3 all were amazing in their tap and freestyle exams and passed with flying colours. They were so happy receiving their trophies and certificates during a class presentation - Elaine Pygall School of Dancing



Owen Wylie (Reception) achieving his 1st swimming level recently.



Harry and Alfie burns with their cricket award. Alfie with an extra special batting award



Amari has massively progressed with her riding recently. After a few knocks to her confidence she was afraid to come off the lead rein, but this past two weeks there's no stopping her and she's cantering alone around the arena and she's preparing to enter a show on her pony Rosie. She's shown dedication, courage and real strength of character to get where she is!



Dixie and Casper on ski team at Silksworth ski slope



Dates for your diary

Thursday 7th March
Thursday 14th March
Friday 15th March

Reception Assembly 9.10 a.m. in the school hall
Year 1 Assembly 9.10 a.m. in the school hall
Year 3 Liturgy 2.30 p.m. in School
Year 3 coffee and chat in school
Year 1 at the Dance Festival
Reception Liturgy 2.30 p.m. in School
Reception coffee and chat in school

Wednesday 20th March
Friday 22nd March

Thursday 28th March - Children will break up at 3.15 p.m. for the Easter Holidays

Friday 19th April

Year 6 Liturgy 2.30 p.m. in the school hall
Year 6 coffee and chat in school

Thursday 25th April
Friday 26th April

Year 3 Assembly 9.10 a.m. in the school hall
Reception Liturgy 2.30 p.m. in the school hall
Reception coffee and chat in school

Thursday 2nd May
Thursday 9th May
Friday 10th May

School will be closed to children for the local Elections
Year 4 Assembly 9.10 a.m. in the school hall
Year 1 Liturgy 2.30 p.m. in the school hall
Year 1 coffee and chat in school

13th-16th May

Year 6 SATs week

Thursday 16th May
Thursday 23rd May
Friday 24th May

Year 5 Assembly 9.10 a.m. in the school hall
Year 2 Assembly 9.10 a.m. in the school hall
Year 4 Fun Run at Saltwell Park

Friday 24th May - Children will break up at 3.15 p.m. for the half term break

Saturday 8th June
Wednesday 12th June
Thursday 13th June
Friday 14th June

First Holy Communions
Whole school class photographs
Year 1 Assembly 9.10 a.m. in the school hall
Year 4 Liturgy 2.30 p.m. in the school hall
Year 4 coffee and chat in school

19th-21st June
26th-28th June
Thursday 20th June
Friday 21st June

Year 6 visiting SVP camp on Holy Island
Year 6 visiting Newburn Activity Centre
Year 6 Assembly 9.10 a.m. in the school hall
Year 3 Liturgy 2.30 p.m. in the school hall
Year 3 coffee and chat in school

Thursday 27th June
Friday 5th July

Reception Assembly 9.10 a.m. in the school hall
Year 2 Liturgy 2.30 p.m. in the school hall
Year 2 coffee and chat in school

Friday 12th July

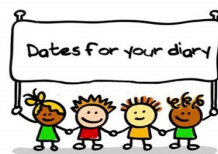
Year 5 Liturgy 2.30 p.m. in the school hall
Year 5 coffee and chat in school

Friday 19th July

Year 6 Liturgy 2.30 p.m. in the school hall
Year 6 coffee and chat in school

Friday 19th July - Children will break up at 3.15 p.m. for the summer break

Monday 22nd & Tuesday 23rd will be staff INSETT days



Please note that any changes of DATES and TIMES will be highlighted in red

Attendance in School

100% - 97%
Less than 7
days absent
per year

- Regular reminders about the importance of attendance from all staff.
- Rewards and recognition for strong attendance.
- Routine attendance monitoring.

94% - 96.9%
Between 7.5
and 12.5
days absent
per year

- Stage 1 letter sent. This lets parents/carers know that a pupil's attendance is below our Trust and school target of 97%. Parents/carers informed who to contact if they require any support.
- Continued monitoring of attendance.
- Recognition for pupils who improve their attendance.

90% - 93.9%
Between 13
and 19 days
absent per
year

- Scrutiny of attendance data to identify any trends or patterns in absence.
- If no improvement seen, Stage 2 letter is sent, inviting parents to send information in about any attendance barriers.
- Action taken where necessary, including referrals to external agencies if needed.
- Recognition for pupils who improve their attendance.

Below 90%
More than 19
days absent
per year

- The pupil is now considered 'persistently absent'. This is very concerning.
- Stage 3 letter sent. Parents invited in for a meeting to discuss barriers to attendance.
- Attendance action plan drawn up with a review meeting scheduled.
- Medical evidence may be required for every absence.