



# St. Mary of the Angels Catholic Primary School

*Following Jesus in all we think, do and say*

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Headteacher: Mrs Mary Wilson

Newsletter: 12<sup>th</sup> January 2024

Dear Parents and Carers,

### Welcome back & Happy New Year!

It was lovely to welcome the children back to school after the Christmas holidays earlier this week. Our whole school assembly on the first day of the new term helped the children move from thinking about Jesus’ birth to His Baptism, which marked the start of His public ministry. We reflected on our identity as God’s children and learnt that we are all invited to become a special part of His family.



### Attendance: Moments Matter, Attendance Counts

Earlier this week the government launched a new national campaign called Moments Matter, Attendance Counts to remind parents and carers of the importance of school attendance. We regularly remind you of the importance of good punctuality and attendance and the negative impact poor attendance may have on a child’s educational attainment and social and emotional development. However, we welcome the campaign which we hope will enable us to continue in our support first approach in discussing

attendance concerns with parents and carers and improving attendance for those pupils identified as being persistently absent, which is defined as attendance of below 90%.

The main message of the campaign is that from the first day of term to the last, the small moments in a school day make a real difference to your child and we will be sharing some of the campaign resources over the weeks ahead starting with information to support you in deciding if your child too unwell to attend school.

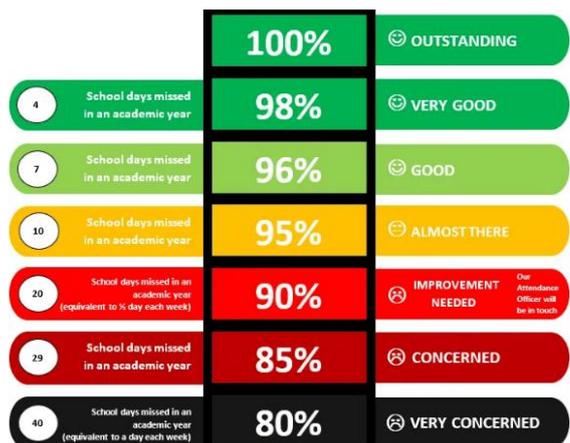


### Is my child too ill school?

It can be tricky deciding whether or not to keep your child off school when they're unwell. There are government guidelines for schools about [managing specific infectious diseases at GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/managing-specific-infectious-diseases). These say when children should be kept off school and when they shouldn't. The guidance states that it is usually appropriate for parents and carers to send their children to school with mild respiratory illnesses, including general cold symptoms like a minor cough, runny nose or sore throat. When deciding whether to keep your child off school you may find the ['Is my child too ill for school'](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/when-to-keep-your-child-off-school/) publication from the NHS useful. If you decide your child is not well enough to attend school you must contact the school office on their first day of absence before 9.30am to let us know that your child won't be in and the reason for their absence. If your child is well enough to go to school but has an infection that could be passed on, such as a cold sore or head lice, let the school office know.

### Persistent Absence: Spring Term – Fresh Start!

We will be writing to parents of children whose attendance has fallen below 90% early next week to share our concerns with the hope that the spring term can be the opportunity for a fresh start. Where attendance has fallen below 85%, the letter will include an invite to a meeting with one of us to discuss possible barriers to attending school regularly and what the school can do to support the family in improving attendance. Please be assured that we recognise that some of the absences will be related to illness but we will be looking at patterns of absence and those odd days of absence which may be preventable. The Attendance Ladder on your right is a useful visual aid that identifies how each day missed affects overall attendance.



## Applications for Reception and Nursery 2024

A reminder that the closing date for applications for a place in our Reception class in September 2024 is Monday 15<sup>th</sup> January. More detailed information re how to apply can be found in the [Admissions](#) section of the school website. Applications for our Nursery class for children who have their third birthday between 1<sup>st</sup> September 2023 and August 31<sup>st</sup> 2024 close on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2024.

## Online Safety

January's Online Safety Newsletter can be found by clicking [here](#) or going to the [Online Safety](#) Section of the school website (in Parental Information). This month's newsletter includes information on setting up new devices, LEGO, Fortnite, WhatsApp, YouTube and the Online Safety Bill.



## Winter Mini Reading Challenge 2023-2024

A reminder that the Winter Reading Challenge continues until February 19<sup>th</sup>. Children are asked to read a minimum of three books and add them to their online profile at the [Winter Mini Challenge website](#). Reaching their reading goal will unlock a limited-edition virtual badge and a special Winter Mini Challenge certificate to print off and keep. Well done to all who have already accepted the challenge and earned their virtual badge.

## Save the Date! New Year' Disco

A reminder that the New Years' Disco will take place after school on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> January. There will be two sessions as follows:

**Foundation Stage & Key Stage 1:** 3.30 – 5.00pm

**Key Stage 2:** 5.30 – 7.00pm

More detailed information to follow early next week.

## Mass

We were delighted that children and staff from Reception to Year 6 were able to attend a Mass today for the feast of the Epiphany, celebrated especially for the school by Mgr. Keith Barltrop in our parish church. The attentiveness and reverence the children showed in Mass is a credit to their parents and the school. As a school we recognise that it is important to mark the feast of the Epiphany, which was celebrated during the Christmas holidays (6<sup>th</sup> January), and to spend some time reflecting on the Christmas season before moving too quickly from Advent. The Christmas season is such an important one in the Christian calendar, so it is essential that our pupils understand it and that it is a focus for prayer and liturgy. One way to extend the idea of Christmas is to keep the school crib up until the Presentation of the Lord. The Vatican does this! Therefore, we look forward joining parishioners on **Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> February at St. Mary of the Angels Church at 11am** to celebrate the **Feast of the Presentation of the Lord** which occurs forty days after the birth of Jesus and is also known as **Candlemas Day**. Parents and carers are most welcome to join us.



## Assemblies and Prayer Services

Please click [here](#) for upcoming dates for the Spring term.

## Ten Ten Newsletter

The January newsletter for parents/carers can be viewed by clicking [here](#) and includes an overview of our Gospel assemblies for the term ahead.

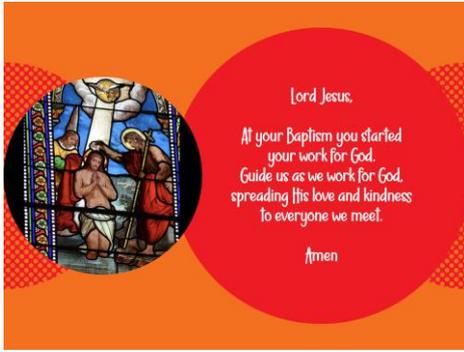
## Rooted in Love

This term, we will continue to learn about Catholic Social Teaching (CST) by using resources from Rooted in Love. Rooted in Love is a new project created by Westminster Diocese in partnership with Caritas Westminster to support schools in their journey with Catholic Social Teaching (CST). As a school, we started our Rooted in Love journey in the summer term of 2023 and we are looking forward to continuing our journey this term, with the theme of *Solidarity and Peace*. The children from Nursery to Year 6 will explore the theme of *Solidarity and Peace* and explore how God calls us to be peacemakers in the world – to stand in solidarity with those in need. We were delighted to share more about Rooted in Love with parents and carers on our school's website [click here](#) for more information.

## Uniform

All parents/carers are reminded that the school expects you to fully support the school's uniform policy by sending your child to school in the correct uniform. Wearing school uniform promotes a sense of pride in the school and engenders a sense of community and belonging, which is a strength of our school. In particular, we would like to remind you that children should wear black school shoes (black plimsolls/trainers on the days where they wear their PE uniform) and a navy blue/dark blue coat.

## Prayer



*Mrs Wilson*  
*Headteacher*

*Mrs Hough*  
*Deputy Headteacher*