

St Mary's Catholic Primary School

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Friday 10th October 2025

St Mary's Catholic Primary School Newsletter



Important Safeguarding Notice: Children's "Spy Dog / Spy Pup / Spy Cat" Books

We want to make you aware of a recent issue affecting some popular children's books by Andrew Cope, including the *Spy Dogs*, *Spy Cats*, and *Spy Pups* series.

Some editions of these books include a printed web address at the back. This link used to go to the author's website, but the domain is no longer under his control. It has since been taken over by another party and now leads to inappropriate adult content.







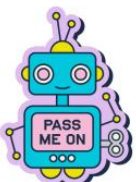


The publisher, Puffin, has paused sales and distribution of the books and is working with schools, libraries, and retailers to remove copies from circulation. They have stressed that the website has no connection to the author or publisher.

What this means for you:

- If your child has any *Spy Dog*, *Spy Cat* or *Spy Pups* books at home, please check the back for website links and make sure they do not try to visit the site.
- It is safe for children to continue reading the stories themselves — the concern is only with the outdated link.
- We recommend talking with your child about the importance of not following web addresses in books without checking with an adult first.

We will continue to share updates from the publisher as more information becomes available.

Should you have any questions or require any further support please do not hesitate to contact us at educationsafeguarding@telford.gov.uk

		
1. Make at least one journey more sustainable <input type="checkbox"/>	2. Go meat-free for a day <input type="checkbox"/>	3. Have a no food-waste weekend <input type="checkbox"/>
		
4. Turn down the heating by 1° for a week <input type="checkbox"/>	5. Design a flight-free holiday <input type="checkbox"/>	6. Say 'no' to a new item <input type="checkbox"/>
		
7. Donate something you no longer need <input type="checkbox"/>	8. Substitute 4 baths for 4 showers and limit them to 4 minutes <input type="checkbox"/>	9. Share carbon-cutting advice <input type="checkbox"/>
COMPLETED BY		

Cut Your Carbon Week – We're Taking Part!

We're excited to share that our school will be taking part in **Cut Your Carbon Week**, a nationwide initiative supported by **Eco-Schools**. This campaign encourages schools, families, and communities to take simple, practical steps to reduce their carbon footprint and make more sustainable choices.

Throughout the week, children will be involved in activities that promote environmental awareness — from

energy-saving challenges to eco-friendly habits they can adopt at home. It's a fantastic opportunity to empower our pupils to become responsible global citizens and to spark meaningful conversations about climate action.

To learn more about the campaign and how you can get involved at home, visit the Eco-Schools Cut Your Carbon page.

We look forward to working together with our families to make a positive impact. Thank you for your continued support!

More information from Mrs Brazier to follow.

YEAR 6 PARENTS

We'd like to bring to your attention an important concern: in one of our classes, **17 children — well over half — are currently unable to swim 20 metres**. This is a key milestone in water safety and physical development, and one that all children should ideally reach by the end of primary school.

Swimming is not only a fantastic form of exercise, but also a **critical life skill**. It builds confidence, coordination, and resilience — and most importantly, it can save lives. Whether at the pool, beach, or on holiday, knowing how to swim gives children the ability to stay safe around water.

We strongly encourage families to consider enrolling their children in swimming lessons. There are often **discounted or even free swimming offers** available locally, and we urge you to take advantage of these opportunities if cost is a concern.

Thank you for your support.



Resilience Day – Building Strength from Within

This Wednesday, our school proudly took part in **Resilience Day**, a special event inspired by recent discussions at the PSHEE Network Leaders meeting. It was highlighted that resilience is one of the

greatest areas of under-performance among children and young people — and a vital skill we, as educators, must help nurture.

The day began with a whole-school assembly led by Liam, where children explored the meaning of resilience and took part in an interactive demonstration to set a positive tone for the day ahead.

Throughout the day, pupils engaged in a variety of activities designed to build emotional strength, self-awareness, and coping strategies:

Resilience Adventure Bingo Each class took part in a fun and active challenge either in the hall or outdoors. Using specially designed bingo cards, children identified peers who matched certain traits or descriptions and completed laps to build confidence and connection.

Writing Challenge Children wrote letters to themselves as if they were their own best friend — celebrating their strengths and offering advice on how to overcome sadness, worry, and challenges. EYFS and Year 1 expressed their thoughts through drawing and writing.

PSHEE Advice Sort Using mini flashcards, pupils sorted advice into categories: helpful, harmful, or useless. Younger children explored this through discussion and role play, while older pupils worked in groups or individually to reflect on the impact of different types of advice.

Art Therapy Activity Children created artwork to express recent emotions, learning how creativity can be a powerful tool for resilience. Older pupils used limited colour palettes and added meaningful words or slogans, while younger children explored a range of feelings through drawing.

We're incredibly proud of how our pupils embraced the day and hope it inspires ongoing reflection and growth. Thank you for your continued support in helping our children build resilience and thrive.

A PRAYER FOR STRENGTH AND RESILIENCE

DEAR GOD,

SOMETIMES THINGS FEEL HARD. SOMETIMES I FEEL WORRIED, SAD, OR TIRED.

BUT I KNOW YOU ARE ALWAYS WITH ME.

PLEASE HELP ME TO BE BRAVE WHEN I FEEL SCARED,

TO KEEP TRYING WHEN I WANT TO GIVE UP,

AND TO REMEMBER THAT YOU MADE ME STRONG INSIDE.

THANK YOU FOR LOVING ME JUST AS I AM.

THANK YOU FOR MY FAMILY, MY FRIENDS, AND MY TEACHERS

WHO HELP ME GROW AND LEARN EACH DAY.

HELP ME TO BE KIND TO MYSELF,

TO TRUST IN YOU,

AND TO FIND JOY EVEN WHEN THINGS ARE TOUGH.

AMEN.

Important Reminder: Food Items from Home

We'd like to remind all families that **no cakes, treats, or other food items brought from home can be distributed in school without a full ingredients list.** This is a vital part of our safeguarding and allergy management procedures.

Please note that **items containing peanuts are strictly not allowed** under any circumstances. We have children in school with severe allergies, and even trace amounts can pose serious health risks.

We appreciate your support in keeping all our pupils safe. If you're ever unsure about whether a treat is suitable to bring in, please speak to a member of staff in advance.



Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

Catholic Prayer Packs – A Beautiful Blessing at Home

We are delighted to share how warmly our **Catholic Prayer Packs** have been received by families across our school community. It has been truly uplifting to hear how these simple resources have opened doors to meaningful moments of prayer, reflection, and connection within our children's homes.



Many families have told us how the packs have encouraged them to come together in prayer — whether at the start of the day, before meals, or during quiet moments in the evening. Children have taken the lead in guiding their families through the prayers, and parents have shared how special it has been to pause and reflect as a household.

One of the most beautiful outcomes has been the way children have expressed **gratitude** — for their families, their friends, their teachers, and the small blessings in










everyday life. These moments of thankfulness have sparked heartfelt conversations and helped children develop a deeper sense of appreciation and spiritual awareness.

We've also heard stories of families using the packs to pray for others in need, to find comfort during times of worry, and to celebrate joyful occasions with faith at the centre. It's a powerful reminder that prayer is not just something we do in school — it's a living part of our homes and hearts.

Thank you to all the families who have embraced the prayer packs with such openness and love. Your feedback has been incredibly encouraging, and we're so pleased to see our Catholic mission flourishing beyond the classroom.

To help continue this beautiful tradition at home, we'd love to encourage families to create their own **prayer pack** or **prayer table** — a dedicated space for reflection, prayer, and peace. It doesn't need to be elaborate; just a few meaningful items can make a big difference.

Here are some ideas of Catholic items you might collect at home:

 **A candle** – Symbolising the light of Christ. You can light it during prayer time to create a calm and sacred atmosphere.  **A children's Bible or prayer book** – Perfect for reading together or choosing a passage to reflect on.  **A crucifix or cross** – A central symbol of our faith, reminding us of Jesus' love and sacrifice.  **Rosary beads** – A beautiful tool for prayer and meditation, especially during quiet moments.  **Holy images or prayer cards** – Pictures of saints, Mary, or Jesus can help children feel connected to their faith.  **A small vase of flowers or natural items** – A sign of life and beauty, honouring God's creation.  **A gratitude journal or notebook** – Children can write or draw what they're thankful for, or record their prayers.  **Artwork made by your child** – Something personal that reflects their feelings, faith, or hopes.  **A prayer intention box or jar** – A place to write down people or things you'd like to pray for as a family.

Creating a prayer space at home is a wonderful way to bring faith into everyday life and to help children feel that God is present not just in school, but in their homes and hearts too.

Free Swimming in Telford

We wanted to share an important reminder about the value of swimming in your child's development. Worrying, just half of our Year 6 pupils last year could swim by the time they turned 11. This is a concern, not just for meeting national curriculum expectations, but for their safety and confidence too.



Swimming is more than just a sport or a fun activity. It's a life-saving skill and a powerful tool for physical and mental wellbeing. Here are just a few of the benefits:

- **Safety:** Knowing how to swim can prevent drowning and help children stay safe around water.
- **Fitness:** Swimming builds strength, stamina, and coordination in a low-impact way.
- **Mental health:** It reduces stress, boosts mood, and improves sleep.
- **Confidence:** Learning to swim helps children feel proud, independent, and capable.
- **Achievement:** Swimming is part of the national curriculum, children are expected to swim 25 metres by the end of Year 6.

We strongly encourage you to take your child swimming regularly. Whether it's a weekend splash or structured lessons, every bit helps. Children and young people under 25 who live in Telford & Wrekin can enjoy free swimming at local leisure centres. This offer is available at venues like:

- Wellington Civic & Leisure Centre
- Stirchley Sports & Leisure Centre
- The Circle at Hadley Learning Community
- To qualify, you'll need to register for a Telford Loyalty Card (TLC) at any participating centre

Reading Expectations

If your child isn't yet able to read the following paragraphs independently by the end of the school year, and they don't have a specific learning need that affects this, there's a wonderful opportunity to help them grow with some extra reading at home. Just a little regular practice can make a big difference in their confidence and enjoyment of reading. We truly appreciate your support in nurturing a lifelong love of books and learning in your child.

Age 4-5 (Reception)

Sam has a red hat. He likes to run and jump. Mum said, "Let's go to the park." Sam saw a big dog. "Woof!" said the dog. Sam smiled.

Focus: simple phonics, short sentences, common exception words.

Age 5-6 (Year 1)

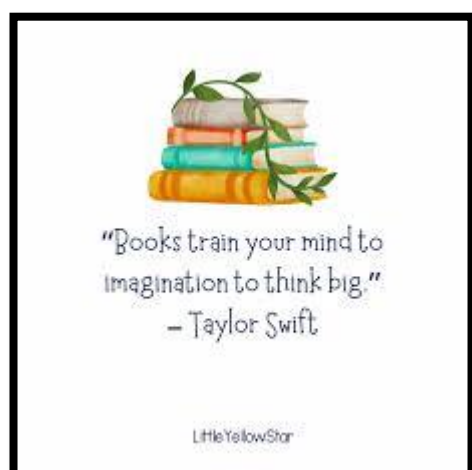
It was a sunny day. Ben and Mia went to the farm. They saw cows, pigs, and hens. "Look at the baby lambs!" said Mia. Ben fed the hens with corn. They clucked and pecked happily.

Focus: phonics-based decoding, common exception words, basic punctuation.

Age 6-7 (Year 2)

The sun was shining and the sky was blue. Tom and Lily ran to the park with their dog, Max. Max barked happily and chased a red ball across the grass. "Let's play hide and seek!" said Lily. Tom counted to ten while Lily hid behind a big tree. They laughed and played until it was time to go home.

Focus: fluency, expression, story structure, basic inference.



Age 7-8 (Year 3)

Ella loved reading books about space. One day, she found a shiny rock in the garden. "It looks like a meteor!" she said. She took it to school and showed her teacher. They looked it up in a science book and learned it was a piece of quartz. Ella was proud of her discovery.

Focus: varied sentence structure, subject-specific vocabulary, basic explanation.

Age 8-9 (Year 4)

Josh and his friends built a den in the woods using sticks, leaves, and rope. They made a roof to keep out the rain and even added a flag. "This is our secret base," said Josh. They spent the afternoon telling stories and planning adventures. When it got dark, they packed up and promised to return the next day.

Focus: descriptive language, narrative detail, sequencing.

Year 5 (Age 9–10)

The ancient castle loomed above the misty valley, its stone walls weathered by centuries of wind and rain. Inside, Leo tiptoed through the echoing halls, clutching a flickering lantern. He had read about the hidden chamber in an old journal, and now he was determined to find it. Shadows danced across the walls as he descended the spiral staircase, heart pounding with anticipation.

Focus: atmospheric description, historical setting, suspense, advanced vocabulary (e.g., loomed, flickering, anticipation).

Year 6 (Age 10–11)

As the debate began, Amira stood tall, her notes trembling slightly in her hands. She was arguing for cleaner oceans, and her research was thorough. “Plastic pollution is not just unsightly—it’s deadly,” she declared, scanning the room for reactions. Her opponent countered with statistics, but Amira responded with passion and clarity. By the end, the room was silent, thoughtful. She hadn’t just spoken—she’d made people care.


Focus: persuasive language, emotional nuance, complex sentence structure, abstract themes (e.g., environmental activism, public speaking).





Catholic Social Teaching in Our School – Living Out Our Faith Together


At the heart of our school’s mission is the belief that every child is made in the image of God and deserves to be treated with dignity, compassion, and respect. This belief is rooted in **Catholic Social Teaching (CST)** - a set of principles that guide how we live out our faith in everyday life, especially in how we care for others and our world.


Catholic Social Teaching helps children understand how their actions can reflect Gospel values and make a positive difference. Through our curriculum, assemblies, and daily interactions, we encourage pupils to live out these key principles:


 **Dignity of the Human Person** Every person is precious. We teach children to value themselves and others, recognising that everyone deserves kindness and respect.

 **Solidarity and the Common Good** We are one family. Children learn to support one another, work together, and think about how their choices affect others — locally and globally.

 **Rights and Responsibilities** We all have rights, but we also have responsibilities. Pupils are encouraged to take care of their school, their community, and the wider world.

 **Care for Creation** God calls us to protect the Earth. Through eco-projects and environmental awareness, children learn to be stewards of creation.

 **Option for the Poor and Vulnerable** We look out for those in need. Whether through charity work, prayer, or classroom discussions, children are taught to show compassion and take action for others.

 **Dignity of Work and Rights of Workers** We value everyone's contributions. Children explore the importance of fairness, teamwork, and appreciating the work others do.

These teachings are woven into the fabric of our school life — from how we treat one another to how we respond to injustice or care for the environment. We also encourage families to reflect on these values at home, helping children grow into thoughtful, faith-filled citizens.

PODS Parent Carer Forum

ADHD and Autism Experience Project

"Tell us about Autism/ADHD services and help to shape the future of how they are delivered"



Please share your experiences of the following stages:
Referrals
Assessment
Diagnosis
Support



Who is session for:
Parent Carers of Children and Young People

What experiences do we need:
Past / Present
Future Ideas

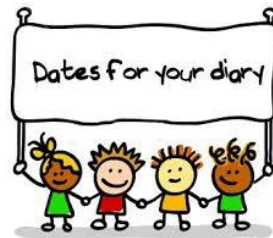
Dates for drop-in workshops:
Mondays 9.30–12.30pm
6 October /13 October
20 October



Book Here or drop a text to Jayne
0777 534 2092



One to one slots:
Wednesday 15 October
Friday 24 October.



Dates for the Diary

Date	Event
October	
Tue 14 Oct	Year 2 Trip to Kingswood
Mon 20 Oct	Wear it Pink Day
Tue 21 Oct	Year 6 Trip to National Memorial Arboretum
Wed 22 Oct	Harvest Festival 9:00–10:00am. Non-perishable food donations please.
Thu 23 Oct	Year 1 Trip to Blists Hill
Fri 24 Oct	Staff Training Day – School closed to pupils
November	
Mon 3 Nov	Staff Training Day – School closed to pupils
Wed 5 Nov	Year 5 Trip to Cadbury World
Week of 10 Nov	Anti-Bullying Week – <i>Power for Good</i> theme
Tue 11 Nov	Remembrance Day – One-minute silence observed
Thu 13 Nov	International Kindness Day – Special Assembly and Class Activities
Fri 21 Nov	Pilgrims of Hope – Jubilee Celebration
December	
Wed 3 Dec	Advent Afternoon Tea – Parish invited to school hall
Thu 11 Dec	Family Christmas Carols Celebration– All welcome
Fri 12 Dec	Year 1 & 2 Christmas Party – Afternoon in the hall. Children to wear something they feel special in.
Mon 15 Dec	Year 5 & 6 Christmas Party – Afternoon in the hall. Children to wear something they feel special in.
Tue 16 Dec	Year 3 & 4 Christmas Party – Afternoon in the hall. Children to wear something they feel special in.
Wed 17 Dec	Walk to Church Service Christmas Dinner. Children to wear something Christmassy
Thu 18 Dec	Last Day of Term

Date	Event
Fri 19 Dec	Staff Training Day – School closed to pupils