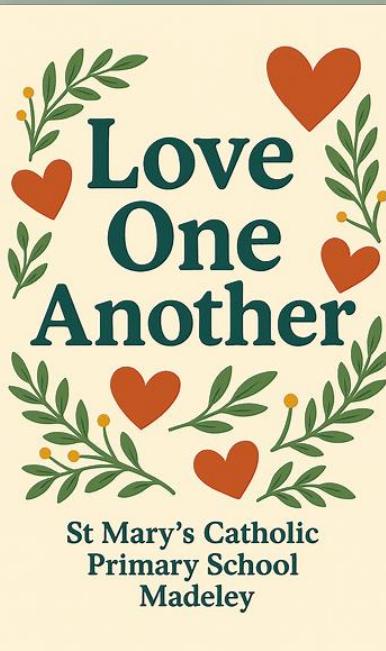


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St Mary's Catholic Primary School Newsletter

Dear Parents and Carers,

This week has reminded us how deeply people care for one another. When the car accident occurred near school on Wednesday, so many of you responded with compassion, calmness, and sincere concern for those involved. Your steady presence helped reassure the children and provided comfort during what was a very distressing moment.

We are extremely grateful that nobody was seriously hurt, and as a Catholic community, we give thanks to God for His protection and loving presence. Moments like this remind us of how closely God walks with us and how important it is to support one another with kindness and empathy.

✿ A Wonderful Start to the Term

Despite the awful weather this term — snow, ice and heavy rain — and the many occasions when the children have had to remain indoors for break times, the term has got off to a truly excellent start.

Our children have shown:

- A strong eagerness to learn
- Excellent behaviour, even during disrupted routines
- Real pride in the quality of their work, especially in writing and topic learning

It has been uplifting to see their resilience, positivity and enthusiasm shining through whatever the weather has brought.

After-School Clubs

Our after-school clubs are also off to a fantastic start. The children are fully participating and it has been wonderful to see so many happy, smiling faces enjoying the range of activities on offer.

We have been especially pleased with the high take-up of the free places we provide, ensuring that all children who wish to be involved can do so. Their joy, energy and cooperation have been a lovely part of our school week.

Year 6 Leading 'Wednesday Word'

We would like to celebrate the beautiful work of our Year 6 children, who each week plan, prepare and lead our Wednesday Word assembly. They choose Scripture readings, develop thoughtful reflections, write prayers, and guide the whole school in worship.

They do this supremely well, showing reverence, maturity and confidence. Their leadership continues to inspire our younger pupils and enrich our school's spiritual life.

Mr Morgan Update

We are very pleased to share the wonderful news that Mr Morgan will soon be returning to Year 3. We know the children, parents, and staff will be delighted to welcome him back into the classroom and into the heart of school life once again.

During his absence, Mr Hotchkiss has done a truly outstanding job stepping in. His dedication has been exceptional — arriving early each morning and working late into the evening to ensure that:

- the children have been taught well,
- lessons have been thoughtfully prepared,
- the class has been cared for and supported, and
- parents have been fully informed and communicated with at every stage.

His calm presence, commitment to the children's wellbeing, and genuine care for the class have made a real difference. We are incredibly grateful for all his hard work, professionalism, and the positive spirit he has brought to Year 3.

As we look forward to welcoming Mr Morgan back, we also offer our heartfelt thanks to Mr Hotchkiss, who has served the children and our school community with such generosity and devotion.

Class Liturgies Across the School

Every class, from Reception to Year 6, takes an active part in preparing their class liturgy. The children:

- Set the scene for a peaceful, reflective atmosphere
- Pause to become closer to God
- Offer prayers of thanks
- Read from Scripture
- Participate with growing confidence

These liturgies have become one of the most treasured moments of our week. It is a privilege to gather together in faith, stillness and unity...a moment all staff and pupils truly value.

The Importance of Good School Attendance

As we move through the term, we would like to take a moment to highlight the importance of good attendance for every child. Being in school every day makes a significant difference to a child's learning, confidence, and overall wellbeing. When children attend regularly, they:

- Keep up with their learning more easily
- Build strong friendships and social confidence
- Develop positive routines and good learning habits
- Take full advantage of the rich experiences school offers
- Feel more secure, settled, and connected to their class

Even small amounts of missed time can add up, making it harder for children to stay on track. The earlier we build strong attendance habits, the more successful children will feel — both academically and emotionally.

We understand that children sometimes need to be absent due to illness, and of course we always want them to rest and recover properly. But wherever possible, we ask for full attendance to ensure that every child receives the very best start each day.

Your support in getting children to school on time, every day is greatly appreciated. Together, we can help our pupils thrive, grow in confidence, and make the most of every learning opportunity God has placed before them.

Family Time for Staff

Just as the children benefit from moments of prayer and reflection, our staff also gather regularly for what we call Family Time. This is a special opportunity for teachers and support staff to:

- Share Scripture
- Pray together and for our children in school and their families
- Reflect on things they are grateful for
- Support one another with kindness and openness

This time strengthens our ethos and deepens our relationships. We see ourselves as a family, and you, our parents and carers, are an important part of that family.

Like every family, we experience ups and downs, but we support one another through thick and thin, living out God's Word and striving to show the care, love, and compassion that Jesus calls us to share.

🌟 Formation of the Child – Growing in Faith Together

One of the most important parts of our mission as a Catholic school is the formation of the whole child. This means helping every child grow spiritually, morally, emotionally, and socially so they can become the person God is calling them to be.

Across the school, children experience daily moments that deepen their relationship with God. Through prayer, reflection, class liturgies, Scripture, and the celebration of the liturgical year, they are developing confidence as young people of faith who can pray, reflect, and talk about their beliefs with growing assurance.

Our approach also nurtures children's moral development. They learn about kindness, dignity, respect, forgiveness, and the importance of caring for others, living out Gospel values in their friendships, play, and everyday choices. Through leadership roles such as Faith Council, Mini Vinnies, Eco-Team, and playground guardians (buddies), they grow in service, empathy and responsibility.

We also place great importance on emotional and social formation. Children are supported to express gratitude, explore their feelings, and show compassion to others. Our pastoral approach ensures they feel safe, valued, and loved. They are encouraged to recognise the gifts God has given them and to use these gifts to make a positive difference.

Through our curriculum, acts of charity, and wider school life, children learn to connect their faith with the world around them - showing care for creation, promoting justice, and understanding the dignity of every person.

All of these experiences help our pupils become thoughtful, confident, faith-filled individuals who bring joy to our school community. It is a privilege to walk alongside them as they grow in faith, character, and the knowledge that they are deeply loved by God.

🌟 Opportunity to Meet Mark Mountcastle

We would also like to remind parents that Mark Mountcastle from the Diocese will be visiting school next week.

-  Tuesday
-  3:30pm (straight after school)
-  School Hall

This is an open and friendly opportunity to:

- Ask questions
- Share ideas
- Raise any concerns
- Learn more about our movement toward becoming an Academy

Thank you once again for the kindness, support, and faith you bring to our school community. We keep in our prayers all who were affected by Wednesday's incident and give thanks for their safety. May we continue to grow together in love, unity and the peace of Christ.

With every blessing,

Mrs Griffiths

Key Dates at St Mary's Catholic Church

Link to the Parish of the Good Shepherd website:

<https://www.goodshepherd.org.uk/>

11 th January		THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD		Psalter Week I
Sat	10 th	5:00pm	Jos Voppen	<i>St Mary's</i>
Sun	11 th	9:00am	Shelagh Scott	<i>St. Paul's</i>
		11:00am	Kwan Yin	<i>St Mary's</i>
		3-4pm	<i>Holy Hour for Peace</i>	<i>St Mary's</i>
Mon	12 th	Ferial		<i>St. Mary's</i>
		9.30am	Word & Communion	
Tues	13 th	Ferial		<i>St. Mary's</i>
		7.00pm	Oliver Family	
Wed	14 th	Ferial		<i>St. Paul's</i>
		12.00pm	Word & Communion	
Thurs	15 th	Ferial		<i>St. Mary's</i>
		9.30am	Margaret Coyle	
Fri	16 th	Ferial		<i>St. Mary's</i>
		9.30am	Anne Cole	
		3.00pm	Divine Mercy Devotion.	
18 th Jan		SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME		Psalter Week II
Sat	17 th	5:00pm	Brian Hyde	<i>St Mary's</i>
Sun	18 th	9:00am	Mary & Michael Meredith	<i>St Paul's</i>
		11.00am	Mary Connor	<i>St Mary's</i>
		12.30	Baptism: David Ward	