

Weekly Newsletter

Safe
Valued
Loved



Friday 23rd January 2026 Edition 18

I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.

John 1:34

Dear Parents and Carers,

In this week's gospel we heard about John the Baptist understanding Jesus' true identity. We reflected on how, with the help of the Holy Spirit, we too can recognise Jesus as God and be witnesses for Him in the world.

We considered how as witnesses, we are called to share His message through our words, actions and the way we live. By showing kindness, forgiveness and faith, we help others see Jesus in the world today.



Cross Country

On Tuesday evening our Year 5 and 6 children competed in the Cross Country event at Eaton Bank.

Despite it being very chilly, the children performed exceptionally well and some didn't even seem to be out of breath! Quite an achievement considering the distance they covered.

The children demonstrated resilience and determination and excellent team spirit.

A big 'Well Done' to all the children involved!



Well done Mrs McDonald

For Mrs McDonald's annual kitchen health and hygiene inspection, she received another 5 star rating —for the 10th year in a row!

Mrs McDonald and Mrs McGeady work incredibly hard to provide our children (and staff) with nutritious and delicious meals.

We are so grateful for all of their hard work. Their tasty meals keep us going through the busy day.



Photography Challenge

Congleton Rotary are inviting children to take part in a photography challenge named 'The Wonders of Water'.

Any digital camera or smartphone can be used. The digital photograph should be a minimum of 1500 pixels on the long side. The file size should be no more than 5MB.

We need entries by **Friday 23rd February** so we can send them on to the Rotary. After the success of our Saint Mary's Photography Challenge why not give this one a go too!

The photos from our last challenge are being displayed in school.

The Big Clothes Movement

If you having a clear out of pre loved ladies or children's clothes, please bring these in.

The Big Clothes Movement are always after

pre loved items, so please bag and add to the blue wheelie bin located outside the office door.



Nursery

We have Nursery places available—children are able to start Nursery the term after they are 3. If you are interested in registering a place for your child please call in to the office.

Dojo winners

Reception



Parking safely

As previously mentioned, please do not park on the zig zag lines or in any other unsafe places outside of school. For the sake of a couple of moments spared, upset and disruption is caused for other people.

Why not take advantage of Tesco's offer in allowing our families to park on their car park and walk to school to ease congestion.

Our Lady Help of Christians Catholic Academy Trust

Understanding Attendance

The School Day Consists of 2 Sessions
AM – Morning PM – Afternoon

Arriving after the AM register means you will miss your morning mark!

Why Do Sessions Matter?

Attendance is not counted by hours, but by sessions

Attendance is based on sessions, just one day off school is 2 missed sessions!

For further information, contact Natalie McNulty – Education Welfare Officer & DSL
E-Mail: N.McNulty@olhoc.org.uk Tel: 07642427273

Attendance

We strive for excellent attendance at Saint Mary's.

If your child is unwell and they need to rest and recover at home we completely understand, but the table below shows the impact of a lower attendance.

Children will miss valuable learning time and typically will not make as much progress as their peers who are in school every day.

Attendance during one school year	Equivalent Days	Equivalent Sessions	Equivalent Weeks	Equivalent Lessons Missed
95%	9 Days	18 Sessions	1.4 Weeks	45 Lessons
90%	19 Days	38 Sessions	3.4 Weeks	95 Lessons
85%	29 Days	58 Sessions	5.4 Weeks	145 Lessons
80%	36 Days	72 Sessions	7.1 Weeks	180 Lessons
75%	48 Days	96 Sessions	9.3 Weeks	240 Lessons

Attendance

Nursery	79.84%	Year 4	95.65%
Reception	96.41%	Year 5	95%
Year 1	99%	Year 6	96.92%
Year 2	98.52%	Whole School	95.9%
Year 3	98.21%		



Talking point

Democracy – Your Voice Matters!

In school, we practise **democracy** by letting children share their ideas and take part in decisions, like voting for class representatives or choosing school activities.

At home, you can ask your child what they think about everyday choices and encourage them to explain their ideas. This helps them understand that **everyone's voice matters** and can make a difference.



Stay and Play

We warmly invite all Nursery and Reception parents to 'Stay and Play' with us next Friday 30th January.



This is a wonderful opportunity to experience your child's class setting with them.

Come and explore our outdoor area, read a book, get creative or build with your child.

We know you will thoroughly enjoy it!

Disco

It is time for the children to get their dancing shoes on as it's Disco time again on Friday 6th February 3.15pm—5pm.

We will have a non uniform day so that children come ready in their party clothes (appropriate clothes only please)

Please make £4 payment via your Arbor account under Shop.

Thank you to our wonderful PTA for organising!



Stars of the Week and Gospel Values

Nursery	Elijah	For always being kind and a good listener
	Jacob	For sharing kindly with others
Reception	Rhea	For good listening and effort in phonic lessons
	Bella	For good contribution to lessons
Year 1	Kiano	For making great progress in his phonics
	Isabelle	For always being a great friend
Year 2	Indi	For always being ready to learn
	Violet	For her kindness to nature
Year 3	Khushi	For being a fantastic ambassador of our school
	Brooke	For fantastic resilience and determination with reading and writing
Year 4	Zara	For making excellent progress in all areas of her learning
	Phatyma	For being a pro-active anti-bullying ambassador and making a real difference!
Year 5	Otis	For super effort, presentation and content in writing—well done!
	Timothy	For caring for the Ocean
Year 6	Solomon	For fantastic independent reading this week
	Alby	For wonderful manners and attitude to learning

Penalties for unauthorised absence

Timeline	One child	Two children
Paid within 21 days	£80 per parent	£80 per child = £160 per parent
After 21 days and before 28 days	£160 per parent	£160 per child = £320 per parent
After 28 days	You will be summonsed to appear before the Magistrates' Court on the grounds you have failed to secure your child's regular attendance	You will be summonsed to appear before the Magistrates' Court on the grounds you have failed to secure your children's regular attendance

This weekend is the RSPB's annual Big Garden Birdwatch 2026

Here at Saint Mary's, we have been out birdwatching for over a decade and will be out again in the school grounds over the next few weeks.

If your family does any birdwatching this weekend, please submit to the RSPB and bring your results to school on Monday so we can see what species you've seen in gardens and parks this weekend. We can compare your details with what we see in our school grounds (Big schools Birdwatch).

Up until half term the Eco team are running a competition all about 'Birds of Prey'. Children can create any piece of work they chose about their class bird. e.g. a poem, sketch, painting, story, fact file, history, habitat or collage.

**EYFS Owl, Y1 Kestrel, Y2 Kite,
Y3 Harrier, Y4 Eagle, Y5 Buzzard, Y6 Hawk.**

We are really looking forward to judging their submissions after half term.

Prayer

Dear God, help us to be kind and fair.

To listen to others and respect their ideas, to celebrate differences and care for one another.

Guide us to make good choices and share your love every day.

Amen

