



SCHOOL UPDATES

STEM WEEK:

The pupils in school have enjoyed a fantastic week exploring Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths in new and exciting ways. Reception and Year 1 were tasked with a challenge to design the strongest bridge they could out of plastic straws, and Year 2 were building tall towers out of marshmallows and spaghetti, with both classes having to think about the strongest shapes to use their structures; Year 3 and 4 were thinking about sustainable energy, building their own water turbines and solar-powered ovens; Year 5 produced a magnificent Viking longboat and shields, and Year 6 designed their own zoetropes – all made out of recycled materials. Check out our website and twitter feed to see some of the learning that has been taking place!

MEDICAL INFORMATION:

We have been informed that a small number of children at school who have been diagnosed with suspected/confirmed scarlet fever/Scarlatina.

Although scarlet fever is usually a mild illness, it should be treated with antibiotics to minimise the risk of complications and reduce the spread to others. The symptoms of scarlet fever include a sore throat, headache, fever, nausea and vomiting. This is followed by a fine red rash which typically first appears on the chest and stomach, rapidly spreading to other parts of the body. On more darkly-pigmented skin, the scarlet rash may be harder to spot, but it should feel like 'sandpaper'. The face can be flushed red but pale around the mouth.

If you think you, or your child, have scarlet fever:

- See your GP or contact NHS 111 as soon as possible
- Make sure that you/your child takes the full course of any antibiotics prescribed by the doctor.
- Stay at home, away from nursery, school or work for at least 24 hours after starting the antibiotic treatment, to avoid spreading the infection

If your child has an underlying condition which affects their immune system, you should contact your GP or hospital doctor to discuss whether any additional measures are needed.

YOUTH SUNDAY

Thank you to all the children and families involved in celebrating the feast of Christ the King on Sunday. It is wonderful to have so many of our pupils and extended school community participating in Mass on a Sunday.

ADVENT

As we move into the season of Advent an open invitation is there for all to prepare for Christ's coming on Christmas Day by attending Mass at 9.30 a.m. on Sunday morning (St. Mary's RC Church). Alternatively, Mass is also celebrated at 5.30 p.m. Saturday evening (St. Philip's, Dunston) and 11.00 a.m. Sunday morning (Immaculate Heart, Lobley Hill). The three parishes will also be coming together for special services over the four weeks of Advent. The pupils of St Mary's will be helping to lead one of the Advent Liturgies, in church, on Wednesday 7th December (2:15pm) – all welcome to attend.

TRAVELLING CRIBS:

Next week, we will begin our annual Travelling Cribs project in school. Advent is a season of preparation for the coming of Jesus; as such, we celebrate this in school by sending 'Travelling Cribs' home with every family to share in the true joy of Christmas, the Nativity story, one day during Advent. Each family will receive a 'Travelling Crib', which will include a crib, and all the objects needed to share a short liturgy – or opportunity for prayer – reflecting on the story of Jesus' birth. There is a letter in the Travelling Crib to explain the contents, and how the objects can be used with your child/children. We would ask that you ensure the crib is returned to school the very next school day, so that all families may have the opportunity to take part in the project.

CHRISTMAS CARDS:

Children may wish to bring Christmas cards in to school, in the coming weeks, to share among friends and staff. We would ask that pupils in KS1 have the cards in their blue bag, to be sorted out during the week, and that pupils in KS2 keep them in their tray until the class teacher instructs them of an appropriate time to hand them out. If you wish to donate money in lieu of sending Christmas cards, St Mary's staff will be making a donation to the St Mary's Gift for Life (Kenya) project – so you would be more than welcome to contribute to this. Please just send in a cheque made payable to 'St Mary's Gift for Life' – even better, if you wish to Gift Aid your donation, please come in to the school office to pick up a labelled envelope.

GRASSROOTS AFTER-SCHOOL SPORTS CLUB:

We are trialing an after-school club run by Grassroots for 6 weeks after the Christmas holidays. The club will focus on various sports and games, and will be open to Years 1 – 3 (in the first instance). There will be 30 places, available on a first-come-first-served basis; please return the reply slip on the attached letter.

200 CLUB:

Please see below the winners of the Friends of St Mary's 200 Club draw.

September 2016:

Prize	Number	Winner
£50	22	W. Alder Y1
£25	145	E. Mitchell Y5
£15	98	Mrs McMillan
£10	5	S. Soan

October 2016:

Prize	Number	Winner
£50	76	D. King
£25	12	S. Armaghan
£15	29	O. Mulholland
£10	162	C. Booth

REMINDERS

FRIENDS CHRISTMAS RAFFLE:

Thank you to all those friends and family of the school who have supported the Friends of St Mary's in providing some wonderful special prizes for our Christmas raffle. The Friends of St Mary's are now on the look-out for some appropriate small gifts to be made in to hampers also to be raffled off following our whole school Mass on the last day of term.

MINI-VINNIES CHRISTMAS APPEAL:

The Mini-Vinnies is a group of pupils in Year 5, linked to the St Vincent De Paul society, who meet regularly in school to plan and undertake acts of charity, good will and prayer in our local community. This year, the Mini-Vinnies are planning an afternoon tea (with performances from our school choir and musicians) for elderly parishioners and members of our local community on Friday 16th December (1:30pm in school). If you know of anybody who would be keen to be involved in the event, please could you get in contact with school and let us know; we would also be keen to hear if there are any individuals who would require transport to the event, as this could be arranged. We would love this to be an opportunity for the pupils at St Mary's to do something special for the more senior members of our community, so please ask around and see who would be interested.

SMALL SAINTS OUT OF SCHOOL CLUB:

Small Saints will be open during the February Half term and we are currently taking bookings as places are limited.

We will be open 7:45 till 6 Monday to Friday at the cost of £24.00 per child, however if you do need all five days a discount will be offered and this will be a charge of only £100.00 for the week. The children will have 3 meals per day as well as snacks and there will be specific activities each day for the children to take part in along with our normal day to day play.

If this is something you would like to book please contact me to secure your child's place.

Thank you very much

Leanne Sanderson - 07882421973

WINTER UNIFORM:

With Autumn well and truly upon us, we've been experiencing some colder days this week. As such, please could we ask that all children have their winter coats in school each day. Hats, gloves and scarves are also a good idea, but please ensure that each item of clothing is clearly labelled with your child's name. It is permissible for pupils to have a change of footwear (e.g. Winter boots) before/after school and at playtimes, but pupils must bring school shoes to change in to when in school.

UPCOMING EVENTS

FIRST RECONCILIATION:

On Tuesday 29th November, pupils in Y4 will be receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation for the first time, in a celebration at St Mary's RC Church (6pm). We would ask that pupils arrive in full school uniform, by 5:45pm; pupils will sit with their teachers and catechists in reserved seating – families are encouraged to find seating elsewhere in the church (there will be no reserved seating for families). Pupils not receiving the sacrament on the night, and families who wish to come and support our pupils, are more than welcome to attend the celebration, and there will be an open invitation for all members of the congregation to receive the Sacrament – even if it's been a number of years since your last confession.

FILMING FOR CHRISTMAS DVD:

On Monday, all pupils will be involved in the filming of a festively-themed song, which will go on sale in the lead up to Christmas in order to raise funds for the school. We would ask that all pupils are smartly turned-out (as ever!), and ready to perform as the little stars they are! Though we have prior parental consent for this, I would urge any concerned parents/carers to get in contact with school before Monday if deemed necessary.

WHICKHAM CHRISTMAS LIGHTS SWITCH-ON:

On Tuesday 29th November, after school, the choir will be taking part in the Whickham Christmas Lights switch on, starting at Rose Villa Nursery at 3:30pm Please come along if you wish to sing some carols and be part of the festivities. Parents of children in the choir should pick up their child at 4:15pm at Church Green.

BLING-YA BIKE:

Biking Ben will be in school once again on Monday 5th December to award prizes for the most 'blinged-out' bikes and scooters. Any pupils wishing to take part are encouraged to bring their festively decorated – the gaudier the better – in to school on Monday morning; there will then be a parade and prize-giving ceremony for the best entries.

FOREST SCHOOL Y2 AND 6:

All pupils in Y2 and 6 will be taking part in their half-termly Forest School session with Mrs Recchia on Friday 2nd December. All pupils will need to come in school in appropriate warm clothing (loads of layers!), with wellies and waterproof jackets and trousers, and a change of shoes/clothing in a clearly labelled bag – the session will run whatever the weather, and it can be fairly grim for the children if they are not sufficiently-well wrapped up!! Any issues, please get in touch with Mrs Recchia or Mr Wheatley.

PARISH CHRISTMAS FAYRE:

The Parish Christmas Fayre will be held on Saturday 26th November at 1 pm in Immaculate Heart church. Volunteers to help on stalls will be most welcome. Donation of prizes for raffle, cake and other stalls will be gratefully accepted. Come along and enjoy the afternoon and spend for a good cause, our parish funds. As in previous years, EMPTY bottle bags will be handed out at Immaculate Heart after Sunday mass to be returned full any time before the Fayre. Many thanks.

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PARTY:

The parish Christmas Party for children will take place at Immaculate Heart Church is on Sunday 4th December 3-5pm for children attending Immaculate Heart and St Philip Neri Churches. All ages welcome. Please add your child/children's name/names to the list at the back of church if you wish your child to attend.

THE WEEK AHEAD W/C : 21/11/16

First Week of Advent

MONDAY – Filming day for the St Mary's Christmas DVD

TUESDAY – 3:30 Lighting up Whickham

6:00 1st Reconciliation at St. Mary's R C Church (Y4 pupils)

THURSDAY – 9:30 Whole School Advent Mass

FRIDAY – Y2 and Y6 Forest School