



SCHOOL UPDATES

DIOCESAN INSPECTION:

Dear Parents/Carers,

As you will be aware, the school underwent Diocesan Inspection on Wednesday and Thursday this week. The school was inspected in three areas: Catholic Life, Religious Education and Collective Worship as part of the process, and a report will be produced to identify the strengths and ongoing targets of the school. I am pleased to report that the two days of inspection were incredibly rewarding and affirming, and though I am not yet at liberties to share with you the final outcome of the inspection, I am confident that the written report will serve as a wonderful celebration of all the amazing aspects of our school and parish family at St Mary's of which we are all – so rightly – proud.

I would like to say a special well done to our pupils who all shone throughout the process with their exemplary behaviour, amazing commitment to learning, maturity in prayer and worship, and confidence and pride in sharing what they were most proud of about their school. I would also like to offer a heart-felt thank you to all those who were called upon to play an active role in the inspection, such as our staff, governors and parents – all of whom embodied the mission and vision of St Mary's for the inspector.

I can't wait to share the final report with you all.

Yours in Christ,

Mr J Wheatley
Headteacher

PENTECOST:

On Sunday we celebrate the Feast of Pentecost: The Birthday of the Church. Through their learning and worship, pupils across school have been preparing for this special celebration in the Church in recent weeks. As a way of bringing to life this wonderful occasion in the liturgical year, and to say a huge well done for the part that all our pupils played in our recent Inspection, pupils across school will be having a 'Pentecost Party' on Friday 14th June. On the day, pupils will take part in range of activities around school designed to bring to life the joy of the feast. Pupils are also invited to come in to school in their own clothes – if possible in bright reds – the liturgical colour for this feast day.

Nb. Pupils in Y6 attending St Thomas More in September will be at their Gibside transition event all day.

ISLAM VISIT:

As part of our pupils' ongoing religious education, we will be receiving a visit from Sadia Shakil from the Durham University Islam Society this week who will be leading workshops on the following topics:

Reception – Sacred Things

Year 1 – The Prophet Muhammed

Year 2 – Prayers

Year 3 – The Mosque

Year 4 – The Holy Book and Attributes of God

Year 5 – Festivals (Ramadan and Pilgrimage)

Year 6 – The 5 Pillars of Islam

This learning forms a significant aspect of our RE curriculum as well as an essential opportunity for pupils to deepen their understanding, empathy and respect for another world faith and community of believers. We will share highlights of the day via our Twitter feed.

BIKE WEEK:

Next week is national 'Bike Week'. We are encouraging as many pupils as possible to make a big effort to – where possible – cycle, scoot or walk to school. As a special incentive, there will be a £10 intu voucher on offer – courtesy of our friend Biking Ben – for one child in each class who makes the biggest effort over the week to show a commitment to 'active travel'.

WHEELIE WEDNESDAYS:

One way in which pupils in KS1 (Reception, Y1 and Y2) can get involved in Bike Week is to bring their bike or scooter to school on Wednesday to ride during their afternoon sporting break. Pupils taking part must have their own bike/scooter and helmet in school. This opportunity will continue each Wednesday until the end of term.

C2C 2019:

And as if that wasn't enough, this week will also see 2019's C2C team taking part in their mammoth 4-day, 135 mile, cross-country cycle ride. The 'Grand Départ' on Tuesday will see the team leaving Whitehaven, heading towards Tynemouth, while taking in stops at Keswick, Alston, Consett and Whickham (of course) en route. This year, the group are raising money for Meningitis Now, a cause close to the hearts of the group; you can play your part by helping them to raise as much as possible for this amazing charity at <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/whickhamstmarysc2c2019> - feel free to share the link with family and friends and be as generous in your giving as you can! We'll keep you informed of the group's progress over the course of the week. Thank you!

WANTED – UNWANTED NEWSPAPERS:

A plea from Mrs Innerdale: we're on the lookout for old newspapers for an activity taking place in school in a couple of weeks' time. Please just send in to school with your child. Many thanks!

REMINDERS

Y6 LEAVERS CAKE STALL:

Y6 pupils and parents will be holding a cake and sweet stall each Friday after school to raise funds for their end of school year book.

UPCOMING EVENTS

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION DAY:

Please pray for the pupils in Year 4 who will be receiving the Sacrament of Holy Communion for the first time on Saturday 15th June. The celebration, which will take place at 10am at St Mary's RC Church, promises to be a wonderful occasion for all involved, and is a culmination of a year's worth of preparation and catechesis. As ever, we would love to encourage as many of these pupils and their families – as with all our families – to come along to play a part in the celebration of the Eucharist each week within our parish. Mass times are as follows:

Saturday 5:30pm at St Philip Neri RC Church (Dunston)

Sunday 9:30am at St Mary's RC Church (Whickham)

Sunday 11am at Immaculate Heart of Mary RC Church (Lobley Hill)

Y3 CLASS LITURGY – CANCELLED:

Unfortunately, the previously advertised Y3 Class Liturgy timetabled for Thursday 13th June has been cancelled. The Liturgy will not be re-arranged this term.

SPORTS DAY:

In a change to proceedings, our school Sports Day will now take place on a Monday (17th June). The KS2 event will begin at 9:30am, and will be finished by approximately 11:30am; KS1 will then begin their event at around 1:15pm, and will be done by around 2:30pm. As with last year's event, we will be asking spectators to leave after the morning events and return in the afternoon (where appropriate) so that we may set up for KS1. Parents/carers may take their child after each session if required. Throughout the day the Friends of St Mary's will have a variety of refreshments for sale with money raised going to support a variety of opportunities for pupils.

FRIENDS COFFEE MORNING:

The Friends of St Mary's will be holding a coffee morning in school on Friday 21st June (9-10am) on behalf of the Alzheimer's Society. Everyone welcome, and all cake contributions will be very gratefully received on the day. Many thanks!

THE WEEK AHEAD (10.6.19 – 14.6.19)

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| MONDAY – | Y6 Health Talk with School Nurse |
| | St Thomas More presentation for Y5 parents (5pm at St Mary's) |
| TUESDAY – | C2C 2019 'Grand Départ' |
| | Reception and Y5 trip to Great North Museum ('Dippy' exhibition) |
| WEDNESDAY – | Islam workshops for all pupils |
| | Y5 Orienteering challenge |
| THURSDAY – | Y5 Surf School trip |
| | Y4 Mini Tennis (pupils involved will receive a letter) |
| FRIDAY – | Pentecost Party for all pupils (own clothes) |
| | Friends meeting (9am in school) |
| | Y6 transition event at Gibside (pupils to be in school for 8:30am) |