



St Mary's R.C. First School Newsletter

Attendance Information: Our target for attendance is 98%

**Please strive to make every effort to ensure your child gets to school every day to help us achieve
our target.**

	Wilfred	Aidan	Cuthbert	Oswald	Bede
31.01.2022	75.0%	91.5%	95.8%	96.9%	95.7%
7.02.2022	100%	98.2%	96.7%	92.8%	94.6%

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Today marks the end of the first half of the Lenten Term. So far we have had some extreme challenges as a school, mainly related to the Omicron variant of the COVID virus. After an excellent Advent Term we have struggled with high levels of pupil and staff absence which has been unsettling for everyone. The positive news is that we are currently COVID free in school and much of this is down to you as parents ensuring that children don't come to school with COVID related symptoms. From March, our current restrictions are due to end.

The weather has not been great this week with snow clouds surrounding Hexham this morning. With this in mind, please can children return to school with a warm coat and hat if possible. We try to get the children out at playtime as much as possible.

In this afternoon's assembly, the children were given an NSPCC presentation around the PANTS rules. This included body parts and knowing which parts should be private, to know the difference between appropriate and inappropriate touch, understand that they have the right to say "no" to unwanted touch and start thinking about who they trust and who they can ask for help. This will be followed up after half term with a PANTS competition.

With the beginning of Lent not far away, Fr Luke has been visiting school on a regular basis to meet with pupils. During Lent, we aim to help others less fortunate than ourselves on a more regular basis.

Our Y3 Mini Vinnies are asking everyone to bring in any loose coins you may have around the house to add to our form class Penny Challenge buckets. At the end of term, each class will complete a Penny Challenge in our school hall for The Belauni Street School in Zambia. Last year we raised over £250.00 in pennies. On 11th March, we will be holding our class sponsored silence for CAFOD. We are asking if parents can contribute a £2.00 donation on ParentMail+pay. A Payment item will be set up after half term. A sponsored silence in a first school is a difficult thing to do but the children are up for the challenge.

Finally, thank you for your support with this half term, I am, as always, very grateful for your continued and fantastic support. Please take care and be safe and we will see you all on Monday 28th February.

Ash Wednesday

On Wednesday 2nd March, all of St. Mary's RC First School pupils will take part in the Ash Wednesday Mass at St. Mary's RC Church at 9.30am. Parents are welcome to attend but space will be limited. Our children will be sitting on the right side of the church.

Staffing News:

Today we say farewell to Miss Armstrong.

Miss Armstrong has been a wonderful teaching assistant at St Mary's First school for the last 5 years, was instrumental in helping set up our successful Kidz Zone and contributed to last year's Summer Sports Camp. She will be missed by all and we wish her well as she leaves to be an HLTA at a Durham Catholic School.

Swimming:

Just to confirm that swimming will be on as usual on Monday 28th February, can Y3 and Y4 pupil please remember their swimming and PE kit.

Parents' Evenings:

Can I thank those parents who joined us this week on our digital parent consultation platform where we held successful Spring Parent Consultation Evenings. Both evenings seemed to go without any major problems. The feedback was extremely positive and it is something we may continue to do at certain times of the year. As a parent it is nice to see books and celebrate what your child has done so I will be looking at something that combines both the consultation and chance to discuss work with your child in the future. Any parents who missed appointments can call the school office and we can arrange a call back.

Puffin's Books Virtual Visits

Our school is taking part in Puffin's Virtual Visits. Authors will be beaming directly into classrooms across the UK via live Zoom sessions, and we're excited to be taking part and tuning in.

Year 4 attended a Puffin Virtual Visit from Adam Hills author of Rock Star Detectives on Friday 11th February at 10.30am. The author shared their creative writing secrets.

Often pupils are very inspired to read the author's book after such a visit. If you

would like to get a copy of the book you can purchase from

<https://peters.co.uk/puffin-virtual-visits>

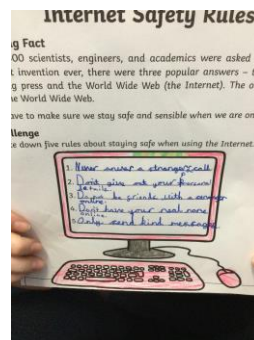
Children's Mental Health Week

Last week was Children's Mental Health Week. We looked at how we have grown emotionally as well as physically in our time at St Mary's so far this school year. Children thought of their own personal examples and wrote them on leaves for our 'Mental Health Vine'. They also planned targets for what they would like to achieve by the end of the year. With the support of each other within the St Mary's family and Jesus by our sides we will grow stronger together.

'I am the the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit' (John 15:5)

Safer Internet Day:

On Tuesday 8th February we also took part in Safer Internet Day to promote the safe and positive use of digital technology for children and young people, and to inspire a national conversation about using technology responsibly, respectfully, critically, and creatively. In school we explored respect and relationships online focusing on gaming and how to protect ourselves online. As parents and guardians we would appreciate it if you could use the information on the school website under 'E-safety' to help and support your children in this area.



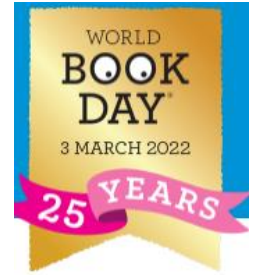
Random Acts of Kindness Day

On Thursday 17th February we marked Random Acts of Kindness Day. Teaching staff have been keeping their eyes peeled for acts of unprompted kindness all week and recording pupils who they have 'caught being kind'. We looked at what it means to be kind-hearted and the positive rewards that it brings to others. In our final celebration assembly we acknowledged the lovely things the different classes have been doing by compiling their 'kindness vouchers'.

'Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.' (Corinthians 9:7)

World Book Day- Thursday 3rd March 2022:

We are celebrating the 25th anniversary of World Book Day on Thursday 3rd March 2022. This year's message is 'you are a reader'! Children can come to school dressed as their favourite character from a book. They are welcome to bring in the books their characters are from too. Cogito Bookshop are kindly coming to visit us in school this year and each class will get a book session where they will hear a story and be able to choose a book with their World Book Day vouchers to take home. We can't wait to see your super outfits and to hear all about your favourite stories!



Cake Sale:

Before the end of this half term years 3 & 4 hosted a cake stall to raise funds for our Art Day resources. Cake sales were held at break time with each cake costing 50p. Many thanks for all the baked goods provided!

Year 4 raised £73 on their class cake sale last week! Great effort.

Year 3 raised £39, well done!

Fairtrade Fortnight

Starting the 21st February is Fairtrade Fortnight. Fairtrade is a way of buying and selling products that allows the farmers to be paid a fair price for their produce, and have better working conditions. Trade is 'unfair' when farmers receive very low income and have poor conditions while the companies that sell their products make lots of money from them. This year we are highlighting again the challenges that climate change brings to farmers in the communities Fairtrade works with.

Kidz Zone

- To book your child into Kidz Zone please call 07763930244 **before 1pm for attendance the following day**
- Bookings for Breakfast Club and After School Club **must be made 24hrs in advance**

If there is an emergency/exceptional circumstance and you need a place at short notice, please call the school office 01434 603791

- **Please do not take your child to Kidz Zone without a prior booking as they will not be admitted.**

Breakfast Club runs from 7.45 - 8.50am and after school club runs from 3.00 - 5.45pm. Breakfast and a hot meal after school are included.



Toddler Group-

Toddler group will be starting again on Friday 11th March, 9am - 10am. Term time only.

We are looking for volunteers to help with the toddler group, this would be on a Friday morning between 9-10am. Please contact the school if you are interested. 01434 603791.



After School Collection-

Just a reminder to parents that school finishes at 3.00pm and all children must be collected promptly. If you are going to be late for any reason, please contact the school office. If your child is not collected by 3.15pm they will be taken into Kidz Zone and this may incur a charge.

St Mary's Violin Lessons

We are now able to offer violin lessons at St Marys. Julia Jansinski is currently teaching violin at St Joseph's middle school and has agreed to also start lessons at St Mary's first school. She is a well sought after teacher who has led string tuition in the junior school at the Royal College of music in London so we are delighted to engage her services in both schools.

Lessons will take part in pairs at a cost of £8 per lesson. We will also be able to provide your pupil with a violin. If you would like your child to receive violin tuition could you please complete the form that has been sent home via ParentMail. The deadline to submit your request is Monday 28th February.

Vacancies:

We currently have a vacancy for a Wrap Around Care Assistant to work in the Kidz Zone Breakfast Club and Afterschool Club at St Mary's Catholic First School and also a Cover Supervisor. All vacancies for both schools are now advertised on the Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust website (<https://www.bwcet.com/vacancies/>)

For full information regarding the vacancies and details of how to apply please visit the BWCET website <https://www.bwcet.com/vacancies/>

Covid-19 Isolation Work

Any children that are isolating will have a learning pack made available on Purple Mash. The expectation is that children attempt at least one page of English and mathematics each day if they are well enough to work. The workbooks can either be marked at home or they can be brought into school when the child returns and marked by the class teacher.

Amazon Smile

Help us fundraise from the comfort of your sofa! Friends of St Mary's Hexham (PTA) is now a registered charity with Amazon Smile, an Amazon fundraising initiative. It costs you absolutely nothing, but Amazon donate 0.5% of the cost of your Amazon purchases to the PTA. It only requires setting up once and then every time you shop Amazon donates money to the PTA for us to spend on the school.

So please consider changing your Amazon charity to Friends of St Mary's Hexham (PTA). It is easy to set up:

- Amazon App: go to the bottom right corner and click Menu (3 lines) -> Settings -> Amazon smile -> Change Charity
- Web browser: follow this link <https://smile.amazon.co.uk/ch/1047746-0> and click on your account name -> Your Amazon smile -> Change your charity

Headteacher Awards: Well done to the following children:

11th February	18th February
Reception - Daniel for making a fantastic effort to get to school on time, with a smile on his face!	Reception - Ollie for fantastic reading with Mrs Erving.
Y1 - Oliver for consistently working hard in lessons.	Y1 - Ava for working hard and being quick with her writing.
Y2 - Freddie H for an amazing attitude towards learning.	Y2 - Kaylin for being a kind and helpful friend.
Y3 - Delilah for great attitude to learning	Y3 - Tommy for random acts of kindness
Y4 -Amelia for acting on advice and improving pace in lessons.	Y4 - Joe for striving to improve his work in all subject areas.

Good Work:

11th February	18th February
Reception - Kaciey for a fantastic effort to learn her letter sounds.	Reception - Heidi for trying so hard to write independently.
Y1 - Archie for fantastic handwriting and spelling tricky words.	Y1 - Juliette for good independent writing.
Y2 - Jack B for a fantastic effort in English.	Y2 - Freddie S for super writing stamina and effort this week, well done!
Y3 - Lily for working hard on handwriting	Y3 - Eliza for working hard to improve writing
Y4 - Max for amazing presentation of work across subjects.	Y4 -Seamus for using a variety of literary features in his extended writing.

Golden Chair: Congratulations to the following pupils:

11th February	18th February
Reception - Zach for trying hard to write CVC words in phonics this week.	Reception - Esmee for being a kind and helpful member of our class.
Y1 - Jessica for trying hard and beautiful handwriting.	Y1 - Scarlett for working hard with her work.
Y2 - Ollie for amazing effort and resilience this week.	Y2 - Jack H for amazing effort in English, well done!
Y3 -James for always giving 100%	Y3 -Charlie for great work in history
Y4 -Jason for fantastic work ethic and organisational skills.	Y4- Leila S for making a concerted effort to improve her handwriting this term.

Our Week in School:

Reception

I am so proud of reception this half term! Their reading and writing ability has greatly improved and it is so nice to see so many of the children having a try at independent writing during their play. As always, I greatly appreciate the support parents offer at home and I ask that you continue to read with your child as much as possible throughout the school week. In English this week we received an invitation from the Queen, inviting us to a Royal tea party. On Friday we were lucky enough to attend the party and eat yummy cakes. The children have enjoyed writing their own invitations for a party of their choice. In maths this week we have been exploring the composition of 6, 7 and 8. The children have enjoyed playing games of bingo to identify different representations of these numbers and have used dominoes to support their addition calculations. I hope everyone has a well-deserved rest during the half term holidays and comes back to school ready and eager to learn as they always are!

Year 1

Last week, Year 1 were very busy as usual. We talked about ways to keep our minds healthy and happy, just like we eat healthy foods and exercise to look after our bodies. On Tuesday, we talked all about how to keep safe while using the internet. We talked about how to never give your personal information or talk to strangers, and also that it is important to remember that some information and pictures on the internet are fake. We also finished our art project for a local competition to represent Hexham high street in the past and future. It was great fun to imagine what sort of tech we will be using in a few years' time! This week, we have been learning all about London in our geography and have been recognising important landmarks like Buckingham Palace and the London Eye. We also had great fun doing a taste test, and could identify the bitter, sweet, salty and sour flavours in some food. A great week as always, well done Year 1 and enjoy your half term holiday!

Year 2

Last week, Year 2 took part in Wellbeing Week and thought of ways to support themselves and each other. It was lovely to hear so many thoughtful and caring ideas. In English, we have started to read the story 'The Minpins' by Roald Dahl. We have found out who the Minpins are and have been using lots of expanded noun phrases to describe what they look like. We have even used lots of suffixes in our writing to explain how characters are feeling. In maths, we have been learning about 2D and 3D shapes. We had a useful recap of the names and properties of these shapes and we enjoyed learning how to draw these shapes too. In science, we have been learning about our bodies and how to keep clean and stay healthy. We loved taking part in a science experiment to see how germs spread. It was so much fun! In history, we have been comparing hospitals from the past and present. Cuthbert class was able to remember lots of super facts about the nurses we have learnt about this term. In R.E, we have been giving thanks and wrote beautiful prayers to show thanks.

Year 3

Last week was Mental Health Week. We looked at how we can keep growing emotionally and how far we have come from being scared and nervous at the beginning of Year 3. We are enjoying the story 'Escape from Pompeii' and discovered some Roman relics buried in sand to whet our appetites for this book. We have been learning about the Emperor Hadrian and why he built the legendary Hadrian's Wall. In science, we predicted and tested which muscles we would use in a number of exercises including running and reading a book (see pictures below). This week, we celebrated random acts of kindness day by always looking out for ways to help and cheer up others. In RE, we looked at the gifts of the offertory and what they represent and practised some hymns ready for Ash Wednesday when we return to school.



Year 4

Last week, year 4 took part in Children's Wellbeing Week discussing how we can grow emotionally, how we can help each other to grow emotionally and how this supports our mental health. We listened to an S Club 7 track called 'Reach for the Stars' before decorating our own emotional aspiration stars. On Tuesday 8th February we created our own Internet Safety code of conduct and discussed how to keep ourselves safe and how to respect others when online. We discussed antonyms in English and finished our topic on 'Area' in maths. This week, we have started our work on fractions in mathematics and in English we have been completing our own narratives based on the story 'The Selfish Giant'. Mrs. Oakes has been on the lookout for random acts of kindness all week and has been extremely impressed with the caring behaviour witnessed in Bede class.

Gospel

When Jesus and his disciples came down from the mountain, a great crowd came from all over to hear him teach and to be cured. Jesus fixed his eyes on his friends, the disciples, and said, "Blessed are you who are poor now, God's kingdom belongs to you. Blessed are you who are hungry now, because later you will have all the food you need. Blessed are you who are sad now, because later you will laugh. Blessed are you if people hate you and ignore you, and insult and attack you just because you follow me. Be glad and rejoice, because your reward will be great in heaven."

God Bless,

Mr P Naughton

