

Newsletter 5th December 2025

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School



Work hard, love tenderly, walk humbly: trusting in God

Dear parents, grandparents and parishioners,

We have now entered the beautiful season of **Advent** – a time of preparation and joyful anticipation. We lit the first candle on our Advent wreath – the candle of Hope. Hope reminds us to look forward with faith and joy as we prepare for the coming of Jesus at Christmas.

Advent is all about getting ready for Jesus' birthday at Christmas and also waiting with expectant hope for when Jesus will come again. As Scripture reminds us:

"Therefore, stay awake, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming." (Matthew 24:41)

This week has been wonderfully busy and full of magic:

- **Advent Promises** – Our children have made thoughtful promises to be kind, caring, and to live in hope with patience.

- **Autism Workshop (Tuesday)** – A huge thank you to Bethany and Louise from Investing in Children for leading such an insightful session.
- **Advent Mass & Coffee Afternoon (Thursday)** – Thank you to all who joined us for Mass and came for our coffee afternoon focused on supporting parents with strategies around **anxiety and resilience**.
- **Christmas Drive-In Movie Night** – What an amazing evening full of festive fun! Events like this remind us what the season is truly about - joy and togetherness.
- **Christmas Fair Success!**- Last week's Christmas Fair was a fantastic evening full of festive cheer and community spirit. We are thrilled to share that we raised an amazing **£700!** A huge thank you to our incredible PTA for organising such a wonderful event and to everyone who came along to support. What a super evening – it truly showed the strength of our school family!

Looking Ahead to Next Week

We have a very exciting week coming up as we celebrate the joy of Christmas together:

- **Tuesday 9th – EYFS Nativity at 9:30am and 1:30pm (bring the tissues)**
- **Wednesday 10th – Christmas Jumper Day and Christmas Dinner**
- **Thursday 11th – Key Stage 1 Nativity at 9:30am and 1:30pm**
- **Friday 12th – Key Stage 2 Nativity at 9:30am and 1:30pm**

Please note:

- **No photos** during performances – teachers will take plenty of pictures and share them with you afterwards.
- **No hot drinks** in the hall or church for safety reasons.

Good Luck to Our Wonderful Choir! This evening, our amazing school choir will be performing at the Stanley Christmas Market from 5pm. We are so proud of their hard work and talent – they've been rehearsing beautifully and are ready to spread festive cheer! If you can, come along and support them – it promises to be a magical start to the Christmas season! 🎵🌟

We can't wait to see you at these special events as our children share the true meaning of Christmas through their performances. Thank you for your continued support in making this such a magical time for our school community! As we continue through Advent, let's keep our hearts open to hope, kindness, and faith. Thank you for your continued support in making our school such a special place.

Mass continues Sunday at 11am.

Best wishes,

Mrs Urwin

Reminders

Reception class intake 2026/27

A reminder If your child is due to start Reception class in September 2026 you need to apply for a school place via Durham County Council School Admissions, even if your child currently attends our nursery unit. The closing date to apply for a primary school place is midnight on Thursday 15 January 2026. <https://www.durham.gov.uk/schooladmissions>

Outstanding Payments

Any outstanding payments on ARBOR (school meals/ breakfast club/ wrap around care) **must be cleared and kept in credit**. If anyone has any problems with making payments, please contact the school office to discuss further. The Trust are looking very closely at all outstanding payments and non-payment of outstanding debt may result in your child having to bring a packed lunch to school and being unable to access breakfast club/wraparound care.



As you know, attendance is hugely important, and we report attendance on a weekly/ monthly/ termly basis. We monitor attendance/lateness very closely in school and will raise any concerns with parents/carers on an individual basis. If you have any concerns with regards to your child's attendance/lateness, please contact us as soon as possible so we can work together to resolve any issues.

This week's attendance is 97.18%. Our target is 97%

Nursery: 99%

Reception: 95.42%

Year 1: 97.93%

Year 2: 99.67%

Year 3: 98.28%

Year 4: 97.27%

Year 5: 94.81%

Year 6: 95.71

Well done to Year 2 who won this week's attendance award!

Head Teachers Award

The following children have received a Head Teachers Award this week:

Nursery: Isabella for being so nice to her friends.

Reception: Faith for amazing descriptions in English.

Year 1: Rita for always being so polite to Mrs Urwin

Year 4: Olivia-Kate for always following the St Joseph's Way.

Year 6: Layla for being an outstanding buddy.

Star of the Week

The following children have received a Star of the Week certificate this week:

Nursery: Tillie for super enthusiastic singing when singing our Christmas songs

Reception: Efetobore for lots of lovely answers during our RE lesson.

Year 1: Ollie for some excellent writing about his favourite part of the Nativity in RE.

Year 2: Sienna for a wonderful first week at St Joseph's.

Year 3: Jacob for excellent writing in history about ancient civilisations

Year 4: Clementine for consistently following the St Josephs way.

Year 5: Isla for an excellent attitude towards reading.

Year 6: Kacie-Leigh for some excellent arithmetic work this week

Awards of the week

Captain's Table: Ella, Cora, Romee, Seb, Tejiri, Hayden, Thomas, Ellen

Mission Statement: Lily, Alfie D, Ada, Frankie, Cleo, Charlotte, Harriet, Natalia

British Values: Lewi, Taylor, Livi, Daisy, Frank, Harley-Kate, Emily R, Poppy

Writer of the week: Alfie S, Kaliah, Grace W, Arabella, Izzy R, Rose, Ivy

Please see below what our children have been getting up to this week in school

On Tuesday, EYFS had a lovely visit to Church, where Fr Shaun told us all about Baptism. We chose parents and Godparents then off we went to have their baby baptised! The children listened so carefully and loved watching Fr Shaun baptise the baby at the font. It was a wonderful experience to build on the learning we had already done in school and the children all made us very proud!





We've had a wonderful and busy week in **Year 1!** Here's what we've been learning: The children have been getting creative by designing and making their own Christmas cards. They explored different moving mechanisms to make their cards unique and festive. It was lovely to see their imagination shine through! In RE, we have been talking about the Nativity story. The children shared their favourite parts of the Nativity, and we discussed why these moments are special. This helped us think about the meaning of Christmas and the joy it brings. Our history lessons focused on the recent past and changes in fashion. The children compared clothes from today with those worn by their parents and grandparents. They enjoyed looking at pictures and noticing how styles have changed over time. Thank you for

your continued support. We are looking forward to more exciting learning as we approach the festive season!





This week, **Year 2** have been working hard in maths, focusing on subtracting two-digit numbers. They also made their Advent promises and discussed the importance of this special time of year. In English, the children were introduced to their new poem, 'The Twelve Days of Christmas', and began thinking of creative ideas to write their own poem next week. In geography, they looked at trains as a mode of transport. They thought about some of the dangers that are found near train tracks and created a set of rules to stay safe. A highlight of the week was joining EYFS and Year 1 for a visit to church, where Father Shaun showed us what happens during a baptism. Well done, Year 2 – what a fantastic week of learning!

This week, we marked the beginning of Advent by creating our own Advent promises, where the children reflected on ways that they can show kindness and care to others during this special time of year. We also enjoyed coming together as a school community to celebrate a beautiful Advent Mass. In English, the class finished their work on *Charlotte's Web* and they have begun exploring the poem '*'Twas the Night Before Christmas*'. They have discussed the vivid imagery in the poem and shared how it makes them feel as readers. The festivities are

well and truly underway and we have been incredibly proud of the effort and enthusiasm shown during rehearsals for our Christmas play next week. Well done, Year 3. We are looking forward to sharing their wonderful performance with you next week!

In **Year 4** this week, we have been learning about the Roman emperor Julius Ceasar. In Geography we have looked at London and its population. We have continued to practise rapid recall of our 7 times tables in Maths and applied this to problem solving. In English we have read about some of the tricks Matilda played on her family and how Roald Dahl shows how the characters are feeling through his writing.





Sewing, singing and Saxons - **Year 5** have had a very productive week. They are rehearsing their Nativity songs and parts, and are doing really well. In English, we have been writing complex sentences with a range of clauses. In Maths, we continue to work on fractions - converting mixed numbers to improper fractions. Our sewing skills have developed so much, and they really enjoyed the sessions (even if some used glue to achieve the final design!) We have been learning about Anglo Saxon kingdoms in History - exploring how rulers achieved power. A great week!



Year 6 have embraced this week with smiles on their faces. They've juggled practice SATS tests, Christmas nativity practices and all the other subjects in between. They have worked hard on their arithmetic and reasoning papers in maths and their grammar and reading papers too. In history, they have studied how Mercia changed over time in Anglo Saxon Britain and the kings and queens who ruled it. They were perfect role models to their Reception buddies at church on Thursday and loved celebrating mass with them.