



ST. JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

"To Live Love and Learn in a Caring Christian Community"

NEWSLETTER NO.3

DECEMBER 2023

This half term started with the great news that Mr and Mrs McKenna gave birth to a baby girl, Cara Bridget McKenna, during the half term. Mrs McKenna is missing us all and wishes the children a very happy Christmas. She will hopefully be visiting us in the New Year. The end of term saw wonderful nativities in Nursery, Reception and Year 2 and a very special Advent liturgy in Year 1. We were very blessed by the performances, singing and acting of all the children who did so well performing under the lights to parents and other family relations.

School Council – Playground bench

The school council pass on their thanks for supporting their non uniform day to raise money for a new playground bench. A total of £594.11 was raised which will pay for the bench and some additional playground toys as well.

Jackson Square Christmas Card Competition

Well done to the 15 pupils whose designs made the cut for this year's Jackson Square competition. The overall winning design came from our school by Bella Biondic. Congratulations, Bella! Her superb design is currently on display in Jackson Square.

Trust Writing Competition

This term, pupils in KS1 and KS2 took part in the Trust's first writing competition. Our chosen entrants were:

Year 1- Emilia; Year 2 Ayda; Year 3 Oliver; Year 4 Andrew and Nina; Year 5 Gershon and Year 6 Maja and Emilia.

Congratulations to Ayda who won first place in the KS1 Trust Writing Competition.

Primary Admission 2024-2025

A reminder to all our Nursery parents that the closing date to apply for a Reception class place for the academic year 2024/25 is 15th January 2024. You must ensure you complete your Local Authority application (online if you live in Hertfordshire) AND bring your completed School Information Form with all documents to the school by 15th January 2024.

For more information, please see the admissions tab on the school website.

Consultation of our Admissions Policy for 2025/2026

The governing body are currently consulting on our admissions policy for 2025/2026 via Hertfordshire County Council. A copy of this policy is available on our website under the admissions tab. If you have any comments on this policy, please share these in writing to the governing body via the school admin address: admin@stjosephs207.herts.sch.uk by January 31st.

Attendance

Our goal is for attendance to be over 96%- which was our pre-covid levels at the school. Well done to Elm, Pine, Poplar, Sycamore and Willow classes for meeting our goal. The current attendance for each class since September is below:

Ash- 94.49%
Beech- 94.7%
Cedar- 95.02%
Cherry- 95.71%
Elm- 96.44%
Fir- 95.57%
Hazel- 95.55%
Maple 95.67%
Oak- 95.43%

Pine- 96.36%
Poplar- 96.83%
Rowan- 94.52%
Sycamore- 96.05%
Willow- 96.18%

HEADTEACHER AWARDS – December 2023

Cedar	Penelope - for showing a positive attitude towards all of her work and for always being a kind friend. Luca – for living out the mission statement in all that he does: being thoughtful, considerate and always thinking about others.
Cherry	Delilah – for living out our mission statement by always being a caring friend and for displaying a mature approach towards her work. Luca – for following our mission statement by being helpful and for developing a positive attitude towards his work.
Elm	Lily - for showing such enthusiasm for her work and commitment to getting every task completed to the best of her ability. Theo - for always trying his very best. He is also a super role model and good friend to all children in class
Fir	Matthew – for always trying his hardest throughout the day, we are very impressed with Matthew's perseverance and his positive attitude towards learning this year! Keep up the brilliant work! Levi - for settling into Fir Class so well, he tries his very best to follow and live by our mission statement at St Joseph's. Levi's confidence has flourished this half term, it is wonderful to see him contributing more throughout the day.
Hazel	Daphne - for making really good progress in your work this half term, particularly in your writing and using your phonics to write out new words. Keep this up, Daphne! Claire - for your patience and perseverance displayed when you are working. We really have seen progress due to your lovely attitude towards your work, particularly in your writing.
Maple	Jude - for his attitude towards his learning. Jude is always positive and works hard at any task given. Thomas -for his positive attitude towards his work. Thomas always likes to be presented with a challenge and he seeks out further learning opportunities to deepen his understanding.
Oak	Lucy - for being kind, friendly and helpful to everyone in Oak Class. Lucy always tries her hardest in every lesson and lives out the school mission statement every day. Vincent - for making a huge effort in his oracy skills. Vincent is a kind, helpful member of Oak Class who demonstrates the school's values – to live, love and learn in a caring Christian community.
Pine	Noah - for being sensible, considerate, and living by the mission statement; he is a role model to all. Alice - for showing kindness to everyone and being positive and enthusiastic in her learning.
Poplar	Jacob - for his amazing support at the Nursery Christmas show this year. Also, for Confidently rising to meet his everyday challenges in his learning. Talulla - for her voluntary service to others through giving her time to help re-organise the lost property items at school and for her enthusiastic approach to sports, especially netball.

Rowan	<p>James - James has settled into our school seamlessly this year. He consistently demonstrates an enthusiastic and keen approach to learning and takes pride in his work.</p> <p>Rebekah - for being a super hardworking member of the class and for living out the mission statement through treating her peers with respect and kindness.</p>
Sycamore	<p>Giovanna - for her kind, thoughtful and selfless actions which embody our school mission statement. Also, for her fantastic progress across the curriculum, particularly with writing.</p> <p>Max - for his enthusiastic and creative approach to learning. Well done Max for consistently applying yourself this half term and making fantastic progress</p>
Willow	<p>Isla - Isla has grown in confidence significantly since September and it has been lovely to see her shining in all aspects of school life. Isla works incredibly hard and is always polite and courteous to her peers and staff. Very well done Isla!</p> <p>Emilia - Emilia works exceptionally hard across the curriculum; she is logical in her maths work, yet creative in her writing. Her writing is a true joy to read and showcases her natural talent. Well done and keep up the excellent work Emilia!</p>

House Points

Congratulations to all the children who contributed to their house points.

The following have been awarded:

Saint Oscar Romero:	2,711
Saint Margaret Clitherow:	3,902
Saint Pope John Paul 11:	3,133
Saint Anthony:	3,613
Saint Bernadette:	2,112

Remembrance Day

To commemorate Remembrance Day this year, every child in our school made a poppy stick. They were collected by the Chaplaincy Team, House Captains, Sports Captains and Year 5/6 School Councillors, who then planted almost 450 poppy sticks in the Memorial Garden and around the nearby wooded area.

The display created a beautiful backdrop to our whole school gathering on the playground on Friday 10th November at 11am, for a two-minute silence.

All the children, and adults, clearly felt a sense of pride and respect during this important commemoration.





In addition to the above, the House Captains and the Year Six School Councillors went to lay a wreath at the memorial.

Mrs T Duhig
History Subject Lead



Franciscan Values Awards:

Congratulations to the following pupils who received the St Franics of Assisi Franciscan Values awards this half term:

KS1 Kindness Award – Fred (Year 1)

KS2 Gratitude Award- Ziva (Year 5)

Sport at St Joseph's

The Autumn term has been a busy one for sport at St Joseph's. By the time we end this term, 88 KS2 children will have taken part in inter-school competitions in cricket, rugby, basketball, dodgeball as well as football league matches. We are very lucky to have specialist sport coaches to help teach and develop the skills required for upcoming competitions. In all events the children have been fantastic representatives of St. Joseph's; demonstrating great sportsmanship, teamwork and determination. We are looking forward to offering more opportunities to participate in sporting competitions in 2024, with athletics and gymnastics coming up in January.



Singing Club

Our singing club took part again in the Stortford Schools Carol concert at St Michael's church on 5th December. The pupils performed really well and shared our faith with the other schools in attendance. Many thanks to Miss Roper for her efforts getting the children ready. On to the O2 concert next!

SEND Parent café.

We recently held our half termly café for the parents of our pupils with SEND. It was a wonderful turn out and it was so lovely to see so many parents there. We enjoyed networking, sharing experiences and discovering what support was available for families outside of school through the Hertfordshire Local Offer. All this whilst enjoying some delicious mince pies.

I would like to thank all the parents for attending such a fantastic morning. Also, thanks, as always, to Suzie Carpenter, our SEND Governor, for running the session with me.

We will be running the next café for the parents of our pupils with SEND on Monday 5th February 2024 at 9.05am. Please do come and join us!

Have a wonderful Christmas break and thank you for all your continued support.

Mrs Rogers - SENCO

Our Advent Preparations:

We started our Advent preparations with a liturgy celebrated by Fr Marco for the children in KS1 and KS2. Fr Marco reminded us that we need to prepare for Jesus's coming in the way that we would prepare for a visitor to our homes. He reminded us that Advent is a time for waiting and preparing with hope and joy in our hearts.



Reconciliation:

Fr Marco came to school to offer the children who have previously made their First Reconciliation the opportunity to receive the Sacrament as part of their preparations during Advent. Fr Marco was so pleased that over 100 children chose to receive Reconciliation.

PREPARING THE WAY: RECONCILIATION IN ADVENT

Do not fear.
Is 41:10



"There are people who are afraid to go to confession, forgetting that they will not encounter a severe judge there, but the immensely merciful Father"

POPE FRANCIS

News from the Chaplaincy Team:

The last few weeks have been very busy for us! We have continued to share the Word of God through the Monday Mission; we really enjoy going to all the classes to lead a reflection and prayer with the younger children. In the last few weeks, we have been focusing on the prophet Isaiah and how Jesus was the light that generations had waited and prayed for.

We enjoyed organising the collection for the foodbank for our 'Advent Giving'.

Thank you to everyone who supported by bringing in donations. The people from the foodbank were overwhelmed with the number of donations and were very grateful. Thank you for helping to bring a smile to someone's face through your generosity.



Prayerful preparations:

The children have all been learning about Lectio Divina in their RE lessons over the last few weeks. This is an ancient form of prayer which involves contemplating a short section of Sacred Scripture. Comments that the children made following these sessions included: "I feel so calm because I could talk to God about my worries;" "I felt that the Holy Spirit was surrounding me;" and "It is important to stop rushing and take time to reflect on what God wants me to do." Please ask your child to tell you a little more about Lectio Divina, especially the translation of these Latin words:



Prayer

This Sunday sees the fourth Sunday of Advent also being Christmas Eve, so in preparation for this weekend, I thought I would celebrate this prayer.

A Christmas Eve prayer

Loving Father, help us remember the birth of Jesus,
That we may share in the song of the angels,
The gladness of the shepherds,
And worship of the wise men.

Close the door of hate and open the door of love all over the world.

Let kindness come with every gift and good desires with every greeting.

Deliver us from evil by the blessing which Christ

Brings and teach us to be merry with clear hearts.

May the Christmas morning make us happy to be thy

Children and Christmas evening bring us to our beds

With grateful thoughts, forgiving and forgiven,
for Jesus' sake.

Amen

I wish you and your family a safe and peaceful Christmas break and we look forward to the pupils returning to school on Thursday 4th January 2024.

