



## **Holy Family Catholic Primary School**

**Advent Term**

**Newsletter No.14**

**Friday 20<sup>th</sup> December 2024**

Dear Parents

We close this term having had two fabulous event-filled weeks. Last week's nativities and gymnastics shows were all joyful celebrations showcasing how confident and talented our children are.

This week began with Year 2 arriving at school dressed as Explorers for an exciting DT focused day in which they made vehicles for their explorers. Also on Monday, our youngest children enjoyed the magician who entertained them at their Christmas party. On Tuesday, teachers of children in Years 1-6 organised party games and everyone had fun at the disco with ex-parent (Anthony Beauchamp) playing floor-filler music in the hall. Thank you for fantastic party hats which we know some parents enjoy making more than others!

Wednesday was 'all-hands-on-deck' to serve 450 Christmas lunches, which went incredibly smoothly. My thanks to our hardworking kitchen assistants and every member of staff who helped the service.

Our final Christmas event last night saw Year 6 welcome their parents to a spectacular World War 2 Christmas performance. Narrators told a story of enduring friendship; the audience experienced the sights and sounds of family trying to celebrate Christmas in the 1940s whilst being interrupted by air raid sirens and wardens directing them to a bunker. The energy children brought to the performance was incredible. Year 6 sang with enthusiasm, Riley and Veer were expert stage hands controlling the lights while other children created a nativity tableau. Well done to all our Year 6 children and staff team.

Term concluded with an especially joyful and celebratory assembly this morning. We celebrated sporting achievements, the excellent contribution our Faith Ambassadors make to school, children who always meet behaviour expectations, the 99 children who have attended every day since September and much more.

At the end of our first term as part of St Thomas Academy Trust we have worked with many new strategic leaders, systems and procedures. There has been little change for children and teaching staff other than increased visitors walking around school assessing how well they teach and learn. We said a fond farewell to our business manager last week as we adapt to working with an Account Manager who oversees three Trust schools and is based at Holy Family every Tuesday. One less person in our administration team has led to a change in gate duty. From January there will only be one member of staff outside at the end of the day to ensure no one is cycling or scooting on site, and to supervise our older children who leave school unaccompanied. Gates will no longer be monitored in the afternoon as the vast majority of children are collected from the classroom door by their adults. Please remind all children if they are separated from parents at pick up or on the way home they must return to the main office at school and we respectfully request increased vigilance from parents.

On behalf of all staff, I thank you for your generosity with kind and encouraging words and gifts for staff. It is absolutely not necessary but is always very much appreciated by all. Your words are impactful and cherished as they make staff feel valued.

Also on behalf of all staff, governors and the leaders of St Thomas Academies Trust, we wish you a wonderful blessed Christmas with family and friends. Through God's grace we hope you experience joy and peace in equal measure.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year,

Mrs Benn and the team at HFCS

### **A Christmas 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.

### **DIARY DATES**

**Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> December**

Fourth Sunday of Advent

**Christmas Holidays: Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2024 to Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2025**

**Monday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2025**

Lent Term Starts for Nursery – Year 6 / The Feast of the Epiphany

**Monday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2025**

SCHOOL CLOSED – STAFF INSET DAY

### **Term Dates 2025/2026**

Please see a copy of the 2025/2026 Term Dates attached. A printed copy was sent home with children this week.

### **Extra-Curricular Activities**

A printed version of the extra-curricular activities schedule for the Lent term 2025 was sent home with children this week. When you have selected the activity you wish your child to participate in, please complete the relevant booking process. HFCS slips should be completed for Wake Up and Shake Up, Badminton and Street Dance only. Please do not include any payment for Street Dance: this amount will be added to the relevant children's Parent Pay once places have been confirmed. If you have not yet returned a HFCS slip to Mrs Gonoud at Reception but would like to, please do so as soon as possible after the Christmas holiday as activities start again from Monday 13<sup>th</sup> January.

### **Celebrate Success!**

To link in with our Vision statement, 'To value, inspire and challenge all', we invite parents/carers to notify us of special achievements (outside of school e.g. music, sports, positive contribution) your child has achieved so they can be recorded on their school record and shared with children and staff. Please email [bethany.chandler@hfcs.org.uk](mailto:bethany.chandler@hfcs.org.uk) for notification. Your child will receive recognition for their achievement from their class teacher, who will award them a marble for the class jar, and Mrs Benn, who will issue a 'Head teacher's Award' certificate. If you send a photo of your child's achievement it will be posted on Mrs Chandler's 'Wall of Fame.'

### **Amazing Achievements**

Congratulations to Nathan Fernando for progressing to the next grade in his martial arts, from Yellow Stripe Belt to Orange Stripe. After only attending for one year in Free Style Martial Arts, this is Nathan's second belt. Well done Nathan.

### **Book of the Week**

Each week, I will recommend a lovely new book, which will hopefully inspire our children to broaden their reading tastes.



**Author:** Ann Fine

A story about a year 7 class centring on a boy who is always content and calm which totally perplexes his teachers. Full of ground-breaking philosophical ideas. (Age 10+). Mrs Doyle.

## **Year of Jubilee Starts**

This year has been a year of Prayer leading up to the 2025 **Year of Jubilee** which starts on 24 December 2024. This is a special year of forgiveness and reconciliation, in which people are invited to come back into right relationship with God, with one another, and with all of creation. The theme this jubilee is "Pilgrims of Hope" and Pope Francis has invited us to rediscover a spirituality of God's creation in which we understand ourselves as "pilgrims on the earth" rather than masters of the world. We look forward to marking this in a special way with our children.

## **Chewing Gum**

Due to the danger of ingesting chewing gum and also chewing gum having been found littered outside Year 6, please note that any children found to have chewing gum with them in school in the new term will immediately be given a Step 3. We kindly ask for your support in helping school to enforce this by ensuring your child does not bring chewing gum into school. Thank you for your continued support.

## **Staffing Update**

Thank you to Miss Wilson who completed her teacher training in Mrs Powell's Year 2 class this term. We send our thanks and best wishes to Miss Wilson as she embarks on the next stage of her career.

On the 17<sup>th</sup> January Mrs Forsdick (Nursery TA) will be leaving us to take up a new early years post in Windsor. We thank her for her committed service over the last 9 years and wish her every success and happiness in her new role.

We are advertising for a temporary teaching assistant from January 20<sup>th</sup> to July. Advert can be found on our website and My New Term.

Starting from 6<sup>th</sup> January the roles of Finance Officer and PA to Headteacher have been deleted. Mrs Oakes has been appointed to the role of Office Manager and Mrs Chandler has been appointed to the role of Operations Manager. Please be patient with administrators as we transition the way we work to align with the St Thomas structure.

## **Attendance**

Please be advised that absences just prior to and following a school holiday will be unauthorised if parents do not provide medical evidence on request. This is to prevent absence due to extended holidays. Please see HFCS Attendance For Learning Policy: <https://www.holyfamilycatholicschool.org.uk/assets/HFS-Attendance-for-Learning-Policy-September-2024.pdf>.

In the new term, anyone whose attendance is recorded as less than 90% since September should expect to receive an attendance letter from our attendance officer, Mrs Oakes. Our school target is 95%. Every day of learning missed is five hours of learning and socialising lost that cannot be recouped. Thank you for your support in ensuring children have the highest attendance rate possible

## **Phonics**

If you would like to continue to support your child at home with their phonics over the Christmas holidays, please look back at this half term's newsletters (phonics links are still live) to reinforce the sounds.

## **Nursery and School Admission for September 2025 – Closes 15<sup>th</sup> January 2025**

### **Admission to Reception September 2025**

The above admission round is now open and closes on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2025. You must apply via your local authority website completing a Common Application Form (CAF) for a place in a Reception class to start September 2025.

In addition to completing a CAF, please complete our Supplementary Form (Called 'Reception School Supplementary Form 2025 2026' on our website) and return with the relevant supporting documents to Holy Family Catholic School by 15<sup>th</sup> January 2025. Reception Supplementary Forms can be obtained from the school website or the school office.

### **Admission to Nursery September 2025**

The Nursery 2025 admission round is now open. Nursery application forms can be obtained from the school website or the school office; please complete our Application Form and return with the relevant supporting documents by 15<sup>th</sup> January 2025.

### **OTHER**

#### **Langley Library**

You may already be aware that there is/will be a consultation regarding a possible closure of Langley Library. The consultation will last for 10 weeks with a proposal being made in the Spring. An ePetition has been set up - please see link below. This ePetition runs from 17/12/2024 to 17/03/2025.



#### **Slough Borough Council**

Please see information below from Slough Borough Council:

#### **Children Centres Warm Space**

Penn Road Children's Centre as a warm space for families on 30<sup>th</sup> December between 9am and 4pm. We will be open for families on that day to access any support they may need between the Christmas and New Year period.

#### **Warm Spaces**

Do check out more Warm Spaces here [Warm Spaces – Slough Community Directory](#)

#### **Winter Blues** Information Leaflet – attached

The Slough Coproduction network is keen to promote the range of local services and support that are available for residents, particularly during the winter period as we know this can be a challenging time. To help with this, volunteers coproduced a 'Winter blues' leaflet with useful information (attached). Here is the link to it on our website. [Winter blues advice leaflet – Slough Borough Council](#)

#### **Financial support grants**

The council has joined up with Lightning Reach, a financial support portal where residents can easily find and apply for a range of help. Individuals can complete a profile by answering a simple 10–15-minute questionnaire. Once the profile is complete, they will be able to see the available support they may be eligible for in one place, get updated when more support is added, and apply for multiple sources of support directly through the portal. This can include targeted help with energy bills, home improvements to boost energy efficiency, warm clothing, and essential winter supplies.

Find out more here [Application Portal | Lightning Reach](#)

#### **Household Support Fund**

The HSF scheme has been running for several years and new funding means it can be extended until 31 March 2025.

The grant of £1,177,691.53 is funded by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and it is designed to help low-income households such as families with children, pensioners, unpaid carers, care leavers and disabled people.

Applications can be made if you meet the eligibility criteria and the money is to cover basic living costs such as energy, food, water bills, essential goods and housing costs, as a last resort, only where existing housing support scheme do not meet the needs.

To find out more, and apply, visit the [HSF webpage](#)