



More News 1st December 2023

[St Thomas More Catholic Primary School Newsletter](#)



Goodbye and Good Luck!

Sadly, Mrs Harrison, who has taught in the afternoon in Nursery for many years will be leaving STM at the end of term. She has given so many children the best start to their time at STM and we wish her the very best of luck!

You will be informed of who will teach in the afternoon in Nursery after Christmas as soon as we are able to give you more information.

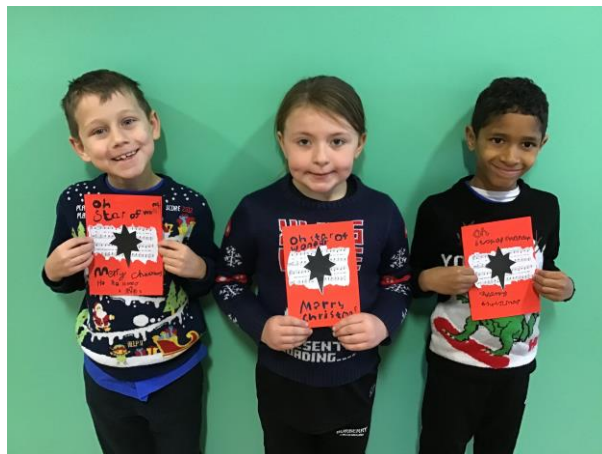
Advent Day



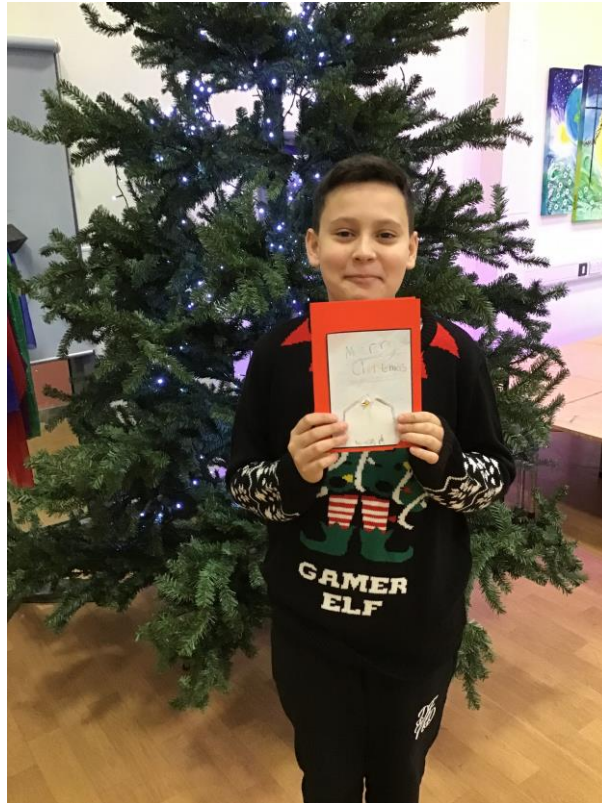
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The children have had a wonderful day today praying, learning about Advent, making wreaths, decorating their classroom and learning carols. They looked very festive in their Christmas jumpers and have had fun all day long! Year 6 even used their knowledge of electricity and D&T skills to create flashing Christmas cards - click on the video above to see one working (it's dark so you can see the flashing light).

Thank you for your generous donations of chocolate and bottles to be used as prizes at the Parish Christmas Bazaar on Friday 8th December.







Advent is always a very thoughtful and prayerful time at Mass, and so is a wonderful opportunity to renew your commitment to attending Mass. Children's Liturgy is at Sunday Mass (9am) and so the

perfect time to attend with children, or, if events like football matches make Sunday Mass difficult to attend, Mass also takes place at 5pm on a Saturday in our church.

Lord God, our light and our salvation,
we praise you for your gifts of life and faith.

We thank you for the desire
that you have planted in our hearts,
our yearning to see your face.

Help us to meet you in prayer,
to walk in your ways,
and to speak to others of our joy
and consolation in your presence.

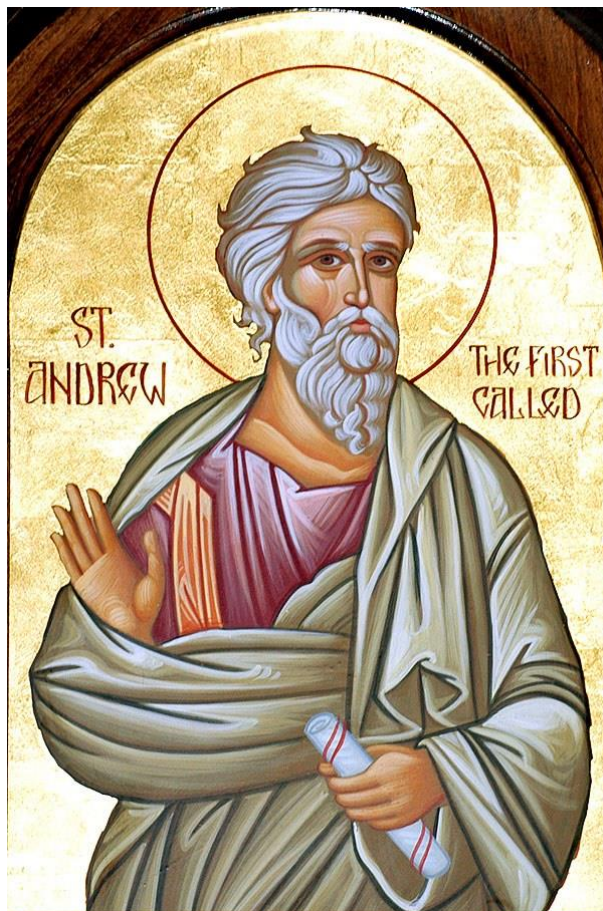
Give us faithfulness in this present life
so that we may come to know
and praise your beauty,
with all our brothers and sister,
in the life to come.

We make the prayer through
Christ our Lord.
Amen

St Andrew's Day



Yesterday was St Andrew's Day.



St Andrew was one of the first disciples chosen by Jesus and is credited with being one of the first people to spread the Good News across the world. He is the patron saint of fishermen and singers and also of several countries including Scotland.

To mark the day, children wore something tartan.



Training our Pupil Leaders

On Wednesday, our House Captains took part in the first session of some fantastic two-part training on being solution-focused leaders. They learned about the solution-focused approach and thought about ways to re-frame their - and others - thinking to a more solution-focused approach. They have learned to think of being chatty as being keen communicators or being fidgety as having lots of energy or being fussy as having high expectations and standards. They will use their new-found solution-focused approach in helping others in their houses to make the best of their different characteristics and to see the best in others.

The House Captains are looking forward to their next training session next week.

Our thanks go to the Educational Psychology Service who have delivered the training and are working with us to really embed these ideas across the school.



Christmas Bazaar

Santa will be visiting! We know we have lots of good girls and boys at STM, so he'll definitely be busy! There are limited slots available left to book. If the booking will not let you continue, this means the time slot is no longer available.



Christmas is fast approaching!

The Parish/School Christmas Bazaar will be held on Friday 8th December in the school hall. Plans are already underway to make this year's Bazaar as much fun as last year's was. If you would like to buy a stall for the evening, please contact Mary at mandjhulme1@gmail.com

Christmas bazaar raffle tickets have been sent home with your child (1 booklet per family). Please return counterfoils, payment and unsold tickets to school by Friday 8th December. No **tickets** to be sold to or by anyone under the age of 18. The name on the ticket must be the adult's name!



Coventry City Centre Blessing of the Crib

The Season of Advent will soon be upon us, and the annual [Blessing of the Crib](#) in the city centre will be at **4pm** on **Sunday 3rd December**.



Changes to the Household Support Fund(HSF)

This applies only to those eligible for free school meals: Coventry received an allocation of a government grant called the Household Support Fund (HSF), to cover this financial year (1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024). This fund is designed to be used to support households in the most need due to financial hardship, particularly those who may not qualify for other types of government support. The City Council has used this to support residents with fuel, food, clothing and bedding, household appliances, household furniture and vouchers for children and young people entitled to free school meals during school holiday periods. Unfortunately, the grant received for this financial year has not been sufficient to meet the level of demand and has already been nearly totally allocated. As a result, Coventry City Council has had to make difficult decisions as there is insufficient funding for everything it would like to support. This means that we will be unable to provide funding to schools to pay for food vouchers for pupils eligible for free school meals in the Christmas 23 and February 24 school holidays. If you need to access food support, this continues to be available through application to the Household Support Fund: www.coventry.gov.uk/householdsupportfund. This includes the provision of three emergency food parcels to support households in the short term and work with the Coventry Food Network to support residents in exploring longer term options through engagement with a Community Supermarket. Children and young people eligible for universal-benefits Free School Meals can also access our Coventry Holiday Activities and Food Programme offer. This includes free holiday activities all with nutritional food provided for the child. For more details please go to: <https://www.coventry.gov.uk/haf>

Coventry Food Bank Says Thank You



We received a lovely thank you email from Coventry Foodbank this week for the food items donated by our STM community for harvest:

Thank you to all your pupils, staff and parents for all the donations given. We are incredibly grateful for all your support this year especially during this cost of living crisis.

From 1st December please follow us on Facebook and Instagram to see our Foodbank Fairies and see what has been going on this year.



Rally for Hallie

You may have seen the very sad news in the press that Hallie, who we worked to support to get potentially life saving treatment, died recently. We express our heartfelt sympathy to Hallie's family and keep them in our prayers.

We have been assured that the funds raised by communities across Coventry will be put to good use in supporting the medical needs of other children.

SEND Newsletter

Mrs Webster has emailed her new termly newsletter to all parents/carers of children who are on the SEND register.

If you would also like to read the newsletter, you can find it on our website [here](#).

Understanding and Supporting Your Child with Autism and Sensory Processing Difference

In partnership with SEND Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS), Coventry Complex Communication Team (CCT) SENDIASS will be running a **FREE ONLINE session** for parents/carers on 'Understanding and Supporting your Child with Autism and Sensory Processing Difference'

The aims of this sessions are:

- This training session supports parents and carers in gaining a better understanding and insight into some of the sensory differences experienced by children and young people on the Autism spectrum.
- To explore the eight sensory systems and how your child might process, interpret, and organise this information
- To build a bank of strategies to support your child in managing their sensory differences and needs
- It provides support in developing a bank of strategies and how to implement and monitor a sensory diet.

Your child does not need an Autism diagnosis to attend this session.

When: Tuesday 5th December 2023, 9.30am-12pm

Where: Online (this session will be delivered 'live' online over Microsoft Teams - session links will be sent out via email 2-3 days prior to the date of the session, booking confirmations are sent within 5 days of booking)

To book your place please email SENDIASS: iass@coventry.gov.uk or TEL: 024 7669 4307. *Please quote 'CCT' along with your name and email address when booking your place.

In partnership with SENDIASS, Coventry Complex Communication Team (CCT) are running a **FREE Virtual Session** for Parents and Carers

'Understanding and Supporting your Child with Autism and Sensory Processing Difference'

Tuesday 5th December 2023 (9.30am - 12pm)

This session aims to:

- Provide an understanding of sensory differences experienced by children with ASC.
- Explore the eight sensory systems and how your child might process, interpret, and organise this information.
- Provide strategies to support your child in managing their sensory differences and needs.
- To look at strategies on how to implement and monitor a sensory diet.

 **COMPLEX COMMUNICATION TEAM**

To book a place (and get your link) please contact SENDIASS
Tel: 024 7669 4307 or email: iass@coventry.gov.uk
*Please QUOTE: 'CCT' when booking



COVENTRY PARENT CARER FORUM
IS PLEASED TO BRING YOU

'ASK THE EXPERT' ABOUT TRAVEL ASSISTANCE



JOIN US VIRTUALLY AT 6-7PM WEDNESDAY
22ND NOVEMBER 2023

Jeanette Essex and her team will be on hand
to answer your questions.

Email Helen Britton @
covpf@entrustcarepartnership.org.uk
for more info



Do you have a query about
Special Educational Needs?



New to the service? Have a 'quick' question or query?

Come and talk informally to the SENDIASS team
FREE Tea and Coffee available. No appointment required.

My child keeps
getting sent home

I'm 18, what are my
educational rights?

Can my son get an
EHC plan?

My child is struggling at
school, what can I do?

SENDIASS Drop-in Session Moat Family Hub

Moat House Primary School, Deedmore Road, Coventry CV2 1EQ

Wednesday 22nd November 2023
Drop in between 1pm and 3pm

*For more complex queries or questions we may need to
arrange a more detailed discussion with you,
or you can call us directly.

For further information or telephone
queries please contact us on:

Tel: 024 7669 4307

or e-mail: iass@coventry.gov.uk

Lost Property

We have amassed quite a collection of lost belongings! The lost property will be available for parents/carers to check through from 2.45-3.30pm in the Community Room on Monday 11th and Tuesday 12th December. After this time all lost property will either be donated to the PTFA pre-loved uniform stock or thrown away.



PTFA

The PTFA are requesting **good quality, clean school uniform** donations for ages 6-10. Please bring any donations to the school office.

Click and collect pre-loved uniform

To order pre-loved uniform you must:

- complete and return the order form to admin@st-thomasmore.coventry.sch.uk
- you will be alerted when the order is ready for collection from the school office (if it is available)
- make payment (the correct cash) when you pick up your order from the school office

The PTFA are also hoping to be able to set up a Pre-Loved Holy Communion clothing loan facility to run alongside our Pre-Loved uniform sales. Please bring any donations to the school office.

ST Thomas More Preloved First Holy Communion dresses and suits



Please donate your preloved First Holy Communion dresses, suits, accessories, smart shoes, etc

So they can be worn again by other families in our School and Parish family when celebrating the Sacrament. Please drop off at the School Office or any School disco.

The PTFA will make them available to buy or loan at preloved uniform sales and discos.



Online safety parent/carers information - the Online Safety Act

Taken from [National Online Safety](#):

- Protecting children.
- Blocking illegal material.
- Removing harmful content on major platforms.

Those are the three main goals of the Online Safety Act, which entered UK law in October. While demanding more accountability from social media companies in particular, the act revises – rather than replaces – the current digital safeguarding duties placed on schools.

With changes including the creation of new criminal offences and greater options when raising an issue with a platform, there's plenty to take on board. Our **#WakeUpWednesday** guide this week provides a bite-size introduction to the Online Safety Act – and highlights some of the key points to be familiar with in the short term.



What does this mean for online safety in school?

- Staff regularly receive online-safety training and have received up-to-date information about the Online Safety Bill.
- Children learn about online safety throughout their time in school. We talk to children regularly to check their understanding and to confirm that what we are doing is right for them.
- We review incidents of online safety concerns half-termly and look for patterns that show us how we can improve our online safety provision.
- We have a filtering and monitoring system that generates alerts seen by the Safeguarding Team. These are followed up immediately.
- We keep you (parents and carers) updated with the latest online safety information through our weekly online-safety notices on this newsletter.

Tissues

Thank you to those parents and carers who donated tissues earlier in the term - these really help us to stop the spread of germs around the school.

We are still running low on tissues (little noses run more in the cold weather!) and would be really grateful of any more donations of tissues that parents/carers feel they can offer.

Early Help - Virtual Family Hub

Early Help is a partnership of organisations that provide help, advice and support to children, young people and families.

The aim of Early Help is to help you as soon as possible and prevent problems from getting worse by providing you support, as early as possible. Early Help services can help families, children and young people - pre-birth to 19 years old and 25 years old where there are special educational needs or disabilities

You can find lots of helpful information in different areas of life at the [Virtual Family Hub](#).

Mental Health Support

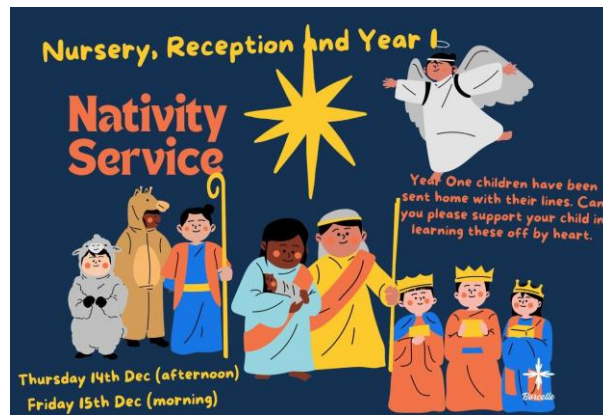
More and more families are being affected by mental health challenges. This is not something that only affects adults: many children are indicating they would like support in managing and promoting improved mental health.

[Kooth](#) is a website that offers advice, forums, strategies and can signpost to other areas of support. Take a look with your children to see if there is anything that will be beneficial to sustain or promote good mental health for them.

Upcoming Christmas Dates

School is always at it's busiest as we prepare for Christmas through Advent, particularly in the last few weeks of term. There will be lots of things going on, so to help parents and carers plan ahead, please see below for the list of events that are planned. Please note, this is to give you advance notice; more information about the different events will be shared by the appropriate members of staff nearer the time.

- Parish Christmas Bazaar, Friday 8th December (Please see below for how you can help.)
- Nursery, Reception and Year1 Nativity , Thursday 14th (afternoon) and Friday 15th (morning) December
- Years 2 to 6, Carol Service, Tuesday 19th December, 6pm
- Theatre trip, Wednesday 20th December Years 4,5 & 6
- Pantomime, Thursday 21st December Years 1,2 & 3
- Christmas lunch, Thursday 21st December
- School finishes for Christmas, at 3.20pm on Friday 22nd December



Attendance is important!

The Department for Education (DfE) has asked headteachers to remind parents of the importance of good attendance.

The DfE say:

It is usually appropriate for parents and carers to send their children to school with mild respiratory illnesses. This would include general cold symptoms: a minor cough, runny nose or sore throat. However, children should not be sent to school if they have a temperature of 38°C or above. If you are unsure whether your child is too ill for school, you can check this NHS guidance: [is my child too ill for school?](#)

They also say:

In addition to respiratory illnesses, we are aware that more children may be absent from school due to symptoms of anxiety than before the pandemic. Worry and mild or moderate anxiety, whilst sometimes difficult emotions, can be a normal part of growing up for many children and young people. Being in school can often help alleviate the underlying issues. A prolonged period of absence is likely to heighten a child's anxiety about attending in the future, rather than reduce it.

If your child is having difficulty in coming to school, please contact us (your child's class teacher should be the first port of call for most communication).

We monitor all pupils' attendance and will contact you (often by letter) if their attendance is getting lower than we'd expect. Please don't be offended if you receive a letter - we have a duty to keep you informed of things that can affect your child's progress and/or wellbeing.

Lastly, please remember that term-time holidays will not be authorised and, in many cases, will result in a Fixed Penalty Notice (fine) being issued.

Whole school attendance so far this year is 95.9%

Year R	100.0%
Year 01	95.2%
Year 02	96.8%
Year 03	94.7%
Year 04	98.7%
Year 05	95.2%
Year 06	94.9%

Help available for children struggling with emotions

Is your child struggling with their emotions and feelings? Compass Shine deliver workshops covering various topics and offer 10 minute consultations for parents and carers to get advice. Please see the flyer below for more information.



Parish facilities

Planning a party/event? Looking for a Venue?

The Margaret Roper Room at Church is available for hire for parties and events. It is in high demand, so enquire early about dates. Excellent kitchen facilities available. Holds approximately 80 guests. Hire charge £25 per hour. Please enquire to: admin.stm.covty@rcaob.org.uk



Important Dates

- Friday 8th December: Parish Bazaar
- Thursday 14th December (pm): Nursery, Reception & Year 1 Nativity
- Friday 15th December (am): Nursery, Reception & Year 1 Nativity
- Tuesday 19th December 6pm: Years 2 to 6 Carol Service
- Wednesday 20th December: Theatre trip Years 4,5 & 6
- Thursday 21st December: Christmas lunch
- Thursday 21st December: Pantomime Years 1,2 & 3
- Friday 22nd December 3.20pm: School closes for Christmas

