



More News 15th December 2023

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



Nursery Staffing

On Friday, we will say 'good bye and good luck' to Mrs Harrison, who has given so many children at STM the best start to their time in school. We wish her the very best of luck and would like to express our thanks for all she has done for our Nursery children.

I am very pleased to share that Mrs Swan will be teaching Nursery in the afternoon from January. Mrs Swan already knows the children well and will be able to provide consistency as well as wonderful provision.

EYFS and Year 1 Nativity

Congratulations to our Early Years and Year 1 who performed a stunning nativity this week for parents and carers. You were wonderful and retold the special story with such charm and prayerfulness. We definitely have some budding stars of the stage on our school!.





Bambinelli Sunday

On the Third Sunday of Advent, we celebrate Gaudete Sunday. If you are at Mass on Sunday, you will notice that the Priest and Deacon wear vestments of rose colour. It helps us to remember that the season of Advent is coming to a close and Christmas will soon be here. Many years ago, St John Paul II (the Pope who celebrated Mass in this very parish back in 1982) began a tradition, which we now call Bambinelli Sunday. On this Sunday, everyone is invited to bring the baby Jesus (Bambinelli) from their own Nativity sets to church, so that they can be blessed. This lovely tradition is a way for us all to connect our Nativity scene at home to the celebration of Christmas at Church. This blessing will take place at all Masses (Saturday at 5.00pm; Sunday at 9.00am and also at 10.45am in St Joseph's).

Carol Service

We're looking forward to the Carol Service on Tuesday 19th December. There will be two services in the church: one at 2pm and one at 6pm. All are welcome!

The church will be open from 5.45pm. Please can all children arrive at the church at this time in their school uniform and with a coat to join their class for the service. If you are not staying for the service, please ensure there is an appropriate adult to collect your child from the church at 7.05-7.10pm.

Christmas lunch

On Thursday, the children will be enjoying a Christmas lunch provided by the catering staff and kindly paid for by Holy Cross Catholic MAC. To help the day feel really festive, we are inviting children to wear their Christmas jumpers to school again. Again, please don't feel the need to buy a jumper - a brightly coloured jumper with tinsel is fine. This time, we do ask that children wear their school uniform under their jumper. There is no need to bring anything in - this is just for fun and festive cheer! Your child can still wear their Christmas jumper even if they haven't chosen to have a Christmas lunch.

Christmas Bazaar

Thank you to all who helped at or came to the Christmas Bazaar. The evening went well and everyone, including Santa, enjoyed themselves!

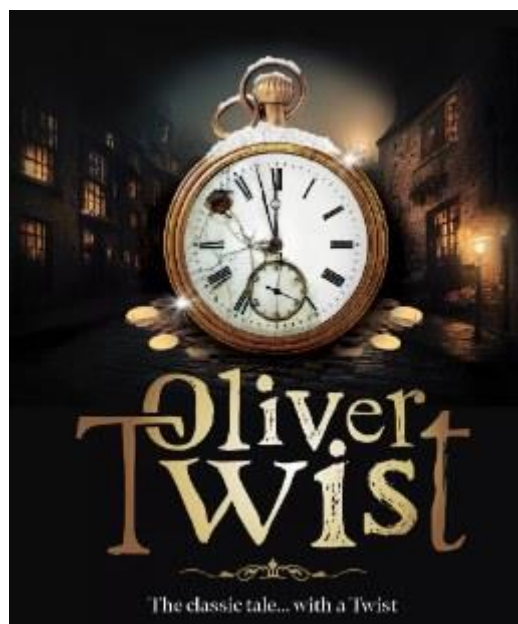






Oliver Twist Theatre Trip

Year 4, 5 and 6 will be visiting the theatre to watch 'Oliver Twist' on Wednesday 20th December. Children must wear their school uniform and bring along their school water bottle and a small nut free snack e.g a piece of fruit or small pack of sweets. Children will eat their lunch on their return to school and must bring a packed lunch on this day.



Pantomime Visit

Years 1, 2 and 3 will be enjoying the pantomime after their Christmas lunch on Thursday.

Oh no they won't...

Oh yes they will!

A note about school visits

In the parent survey last year, one of the aspects of feedback that came back strongly from parents and carers was that you would like us to provide more visits, trips and experiences beyond the curriculum for children. This is something we wish to be able to do, but requires the voluntary contributions to be forthcoming as the school budget is simply not large enough to cover these additional experiences without the contributions from parents and carers being paid.

However, the school is extremely conscious of the situations that many families currently find themselves in, with very large demands on family budgets and financial hardship being experienced by families in our community. We are trying to strike a balance between offering additional experiences through visits and trips without causing additional stress and worry for the families who are experiencing financial hardship.

While the contributions are voluntary, **we ask that those families who can pay their child's voluntary contribution, do pay** as this gives us more chance of covering any shortfall without the potential need for cancelling planned activities. We will only ever cancel activities as a last resort, but we do ask that parents and carers remember this is a possibility when we plan activities. To reduce the risk of this happening, we

- send out a letter to gauge interest and commitment to pay the contribution before booking the visit
- give lots of time for money to be forwarded
- offer the option of paying contributions in smaller instalments

Thank you for your help and understanding.

Courses to Support Families

There are a number of free courses coming up to support families in different ways, from doing easy activities to promote development of young children to creating positive family foundations (running in different areas of the city).

Please see below for more information.

Family Learning

Coventry Adult Education Service

'Positive Family Foundations' at Coffee Tots @The Wave

A free Family Learning course for parents

These free sessions are for any parent / carer who has a child in a Coventry Nursery / Primary School.

Where: Coffee Tots @ The Wave, Coventry, CV1 2GY, England, United Kingdom
<https://www.coffeetots.co.uk/>

When: 12.30 -2.30pm every Wednesday from January 17th for 8 weeks
To join: Just come to the venue at the time of the course, or you can enrol by searching for 'Family Learning' on <https://www.coventry.gov.uk/adulted>

We can offer a crèche for pre-school children – please email to reserve a creche place.

To find out more contact: steve.withers@coventry.gov.uk or kate.steventon@coventry.gov.uk

We will:

- Learn about and reflect on, our own and other family units
- Look at practical examples focused on raising well-behaved, happy, safe and secure children
- Investigate general theory on parenting styles and family groups
- Consider how we as parents/ carers use rewards, consequences, rules and expectations
- Give out plenty of free resources and suggestions of activities to do with your children

The sessions are focused on practical information, activities, and resources for you to use at home with your family – encouraging a Positive Family Foundation!

If you can't make this course look out for our online courses on [coventry.gov.uk/adulted](https://www.coventry.gov.uk/adulted)

Family Learning – programmes that promote strong positive relationships within families; enabling parents and carers to support their children's learning and development.



Family Learning

Coventry Adult Education Service

'Positive Family Foundations – Secondary'

at Ernesford Grange Secondary School

This free course is for any parent / carer who has a child in a Coventry Secondary School.

We will:

- Learn about brain development in the adolescent years
- Look at practical ideas for helping children to develop and become happy and resilient young adults
- Investigate general theory on parenting styles and family groups
- Consider how we as parents/ carers use rewards, consequences, rules and expectations
- Give out plenty of free resources and suggestions of activities to do with your children
- Consider how we can use and role-model self-care strategies in our own lives
- Discuss the things which motivate ourselves and our children

The sessions are focused on practical information, activities, and resources for you to use at home with your family – encouraging a Positive Family Foundation!

Where: Ernesford Grange Secondary School, Princethorpe Way, Coventry, CV3 2QD

When: 9.00 -11.00am every Wednesday from January 17th for 8 weeks

To join: Just come to the venue at the time of the course, or you can enrol by searching for 'Family Learning' on <https://www.coventry.gov.uk/adulted>

To find out more contact: steve.withers@coventry.gov.uk or kate.steventon@coventry.gov.uk

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Family Learning

Coventry Adult Education Service

'Positive Family Foundations' at Hearsall Academy

These free sessions are for any parent / carer who has a child in a Coventry Nursery / Primary School.

We will:

- Learn about and reflect on, our own and other family units
- Look at practical examples focused on raising well-behaved, happy, safe and secure children
- Investigate general theory on parenting styles and family groups
- Consider how we as parents/ carers use rewards, consequences, rules and expectations
- Give out plenty of free resources and suggestions of activities to do with your children
- Give you a biscuit and a cuppa
- Provide a free crèche for any pre-school children

The sessions are focused on practical information, activities, and resources for you to use at home with your family – encouraging a Positive Family Foundation!

Where: Hearsall Community Academy, Kingston Rd, Earlsdon, Coventry CV5 6LR

When: 12.30 - 2.30pm every Tuesday from January 16th for 8 weeks

To join: Just come to the venue at the time of the course, or you can enrol by searching for 'Family Learning' on <https://www.coventry.gov.uk/adulted>

We can offer a crèche for pre-school children – **please email to reserve a creche place.**

To find out more contact: steve.withers@coventry.gov.uk or kate.steventon@coventry.gov.uk

If you can't make this course look out for our online courses on [coventry.gov.uk/adulted](https://www.coventry.gov.uk/adulted)

Family Learning - programmes that promote strong positive relationships within families; enabling parents and carers to support their children's learning and development.



Family Learning

Coventry Adult Education Service

Free, downloadable, pre-recorded online courses for parents/carers with children in Coventry Primary Schools or Nursery Settings.

Family Learning is part of Coventry City Council, and we provide workshops and courses for Coventry parents/carers.

These are our three online pre-recorded courses for the spring term:

- 'English in the Primary School' - recorded online sessions course code F123555
- 'Maths in the Primary School' - recorded online sessions course code F123554

These two courses tell you more about what our children learn at school and how you can help at home.

- 'Positive Family Foundations' - recorded online sessions course code F123553

This course tells you about how children develop, and looks at practical examples around raising well-behaved, happy, safe, and secure children.

Where: A pre-recorded online course to watch wherever and whenever suits you (each video is approx. 30 min long)

When: we will email you the resources each week - beginning 15/1/24, for 8 weeks

How: Enrol by clicking 'Enrol online' and then 'Family Learning' on www.coventry.gov.uk/adulted

To find out more:

kate.steventon@coventry.gov.uk or 024 76978730
steve.withers@coventry.gov.uk or 024 7697 1301

Family Learning - programmes that promote strong positive relationships within families; enabling parents and carers to support their children's learning and development.



Family Learning
Coventry Adult Education Service

50 Things to do Before You're Five
Family Learning stay and play sessions.

These free stay-and-play sessions are for parents/carers and their children aged between 0 and 5 to help parents to support their child's development throughout the early years.
The sessions run in venues across the city each week – just choose the best venue for you.

- Activities and resources for you and your child to enjoy during and after the sessions linked to the "50 Things to do before you're 5" [app](#)
- Share ideas which will help you to support your child's [development](#)
- Address any questions or concerns you may have around child development and family [support](#)

- Park Edge Family Hub (Roseberry Ave, CV2 1NE) Monday, 9.30-11.30am from 15/01/24
 - Woodside Family Hub (Upper Ride CV3 3GL) Tuesday, 9.30-11.30am from 16/01/24
 - Families For All Family Hub (Foleshill Road, CV6 5LB) Tuesday, 1.00-3.00pm from 16/01/24
 - Aspire Family Hub (Humber Avenue, CV1 2SF) Tuesday 1.00-3.00pm from 16/01/24
 - Mosaic Family Hub (Jardine Crescent, CV4 9PL) Wednesday 1.00 – 3.00pm from 17/01/24
 - Harmony Family Hub (Clifton Street, CV1 5GR) Wednesday, 1.00-3.00pm from 17/01/24
 - Moat Family Hub (Deedmore Road, CV2 1EQ) Wednesday, 1.00-3.00pm from 17/01/24
 - Pathways Family Hub (Lawrence Saunders Road, CV6 1HD) Thursday, 1.00- 3.00pm, from 18/04/24

How:
Just come to the venue at the time of the course, or you can enrol [online](#)

Website: <https://www.coventry.gov.uk/adulted>

Phone: Steve Withers – 024 7697 1301

Food Vouchers - 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>

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



Online safety parent/carer information - 12 Top Tips for Children and Young People to Enjoy a Tech-Free Christmas

Taken from [National Online Safety](#):

There's no disputing how integral the digital world has become to modern life. It can prove difficult for many young people to stay off smart phones, tablets and other devices for a single day – even one as special as Christmas. In fact, according to a survey by e-commerce platform Groupon, almost 80% of parents and carers would prefer a festive period that's free from technology.

Going online, of course, is useful for checking in with friends and relations who we can't be with, or for arranging celebrations – but if we allow gadgets to dominate our Yuletide break, that precious time could pass in a flash. This **#WakeUpWednesday**, we've got suggestions for keeping a handle on device use over the holidays, so your family can be truly together this Christmas.



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.

Christmas Family Events in Coventry

[Coventry Rocks](#) have put together a [newsletter](#) sharing lots of exciting family-oriented events that are taking place during December and the Christmas holidays in Coventry. Some of the events require a fee but there are also lots of free events included.



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.

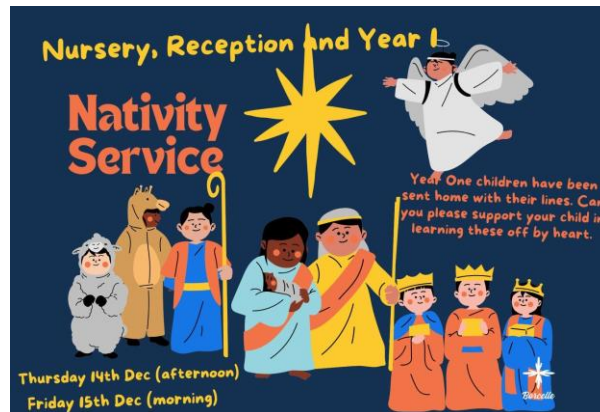
[Kooth](#) is a website that offers advice, forums, strategies and can signpost to other areas of support. Take a look with your children to see if there is anything that will be beneficial to sustain or promote good mental health for them.

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.

- 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 Wear Christmas jumpers!

- School finishes for Christmas, at 3.20pm on Friday 22nd December



Attendance is important!

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 95.5%

Year R	95.7%
Year 01	94.9%
Year 02	97.5%
Year 03	95.0%
Year 04	95.8%
Year 05	95.1%
Year 06	96.0%

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

- 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
- Monday 8th January: school reopens for all pupils
- Monday 19th February: Additional Inset Day - School closed to all pupils

