



More News 22nd December 2023

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



Happy Christmas!

This term has been one of the longest in memory, but the children have made so much progress! They deserve a very well-earned break over the Christmas period.

Thank you to all parents, carers and family members who have supported the school so well over the autumn term. Thank you, also, for your kind cards, gifts and Christmas wishes to staff - your generosity is much appreciated!

The staff and children of St Thomas More would like to wish our STM families, Governors, parishioners and wider community a very happy, holy, peaceful and joyful Christmas!

Advent Mass

The school gathered together yesterday morning for a beautiful Advent Mass, prepared by Year 3. It was lovely to finish the term with the whole school worshipping together in our final Advent preparations.

Christmas Mass Times

Mass at Christmas time is always especially faith-filled and welcoming.

The Mass times for this Christmas at St Thomas More are:

Sunday 24th December, Christmas Eve

- 5pm - Vigil Mass with Carols
- Midnight - First Mass of Christmas with Carols

Monday 25th December, Christmas Day

- 9am - Mass of the Dawn with Carols and procession to the Crib

Monday 1st January, Mary, Mother of God

- 11am - Mass with Carols concluding with Benediction

Timings for the other Masses during the Christmas season will be available on the parish [newsletter](#).

Christmas STM Community Spirit

Our thanks go to members of the parish and a generous family who have kindly provided hampers and vouchers for families in our community this Christmas.

Advent message from Bishop Marcus Stock

Bishop Marcus Stock (Chair of the Catholic Education Service and Bishop of Leeds) has written a Christmas message to all Catholics schools and universities. You can find his message [here](#).

Advent Carol Service



Years 2 to 6 shared a truly beautiful Carol service on Tuesday afternoon and again on Tuesday evening. Their singing was full of faith-filled enthusiasm and brought a sense of the joy the coming of Christ brings at Christmas.

Thanks go to the staff who prepared the children to sing with such vigour and, you, our parents, carers and family members for your support in bringing the children back to church in the evening and joining us in worship. Our thanks also go to Fr Simon who wrote the service, rehearsed with the children and gave of his time to play the music. We are very grateful for your generosity in giving so much to our pupils.

We received many kind messages about the Carol Service afterwards and are very grateful for your generosity in our collection for Friends of the Holy Land. You raised £296.50 to be donated to this worthwhile cause. Thank you!



Christmas lunch

Yesterday, the children enjoyed a lovely Christmas lunch provided by the catering staff and kindly paid for by Holy Cross Catholic MAC. The children got into the festive spirit with crackers and their Christmas jumpers. Thank you, Holy Cross Catholic MAC! Children were treated to the full refined dining experience by our talented Year 6 piano player who accompanied lunch with the music of Christmas carols which turned into an impromptu sing-along for some of our children!





Christmas Bazaar Colouring Competition

Well done to Maja T and Maxie who won the Christmas Bazaar colouring competition!



Nursery Staffing

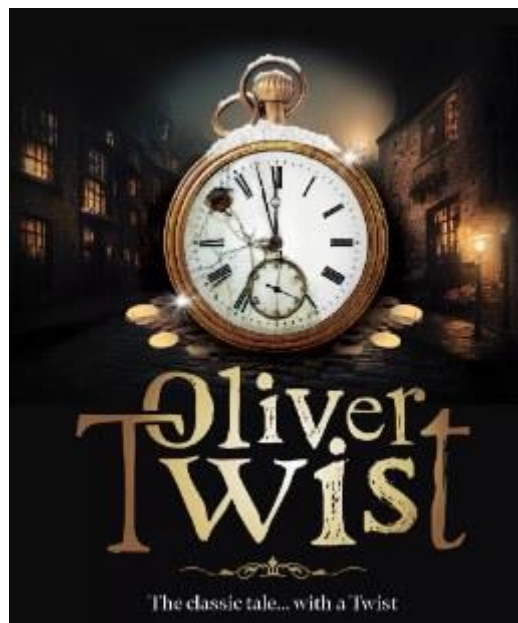
Today we say 'good bye and good luck' to Mrs Harrison, who has given so many children at STM the best start to their time in school. We wish her the very best of luck and would like to express our thanks for all she has done for our Nursery children.

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.

Oliver Twist Theatre Trip

Year 4, 5 and 6 enjoyed soaking up some 'cultural capital' with a visit to the Theatre on Wednesday to see Oliver Twist. The children had a lovely time and were fantastic ambassadors for STM, with excellent behaviour.

Thank you to Mrs Woods for organising the trip.



Pantomime Visit

Yesterday, Years 1, 2 and 3 enjoyed the pantomime visiting school. The story of Jack and the Beanstalk was told in full flourish and the children had a wonderful time!



Creating Orators of the Future!

Research shows that supporting children in developing good oracy skills opens doors and enables them to make accelerated progress in all areas of school life and beyond. As a school, we have made developing oracy a focus for the year. This half term we have been working on the physical aspects of oracy: @ using an appropriate tone, volume and speed when talking in different situations and making sure our bodies help us to deliver the messages we are sharing. Every class has prepared a presentation which they have delivered to their peers.

This week year 3 presented their learning about Extreme Earth to the children in their group. They used their developing oracy skills to share what they had found out and what was most interesting to them. The children really enjoyed sharing their knowledge and listening to the ideas of their friends, as you can see.





Online safety parent/carers information - Top Tips for Setting Up Parental Controls on New Devices

Taken from [National Online Safety](#):

Seven out of ten parents use technical controls on their child's devices to manage access to content. Such safeguards can be an enormous asset: helping parents and carers to manage what their child might encounter online while allowing young people to happily start using their new gizmo to explore the digital world.

Though extremely useful once in place, such parental controls vary from device to device and can often be confusing or difficult to set up. This week's **#WakeUpWednesday** guide outlines what defences are available on some of the most popular devices around: advice that will probably come in particularly handy at this time of year!

Help and Safeguarding During the Christmas Holidays

Anyone worried about the welfare of a child during the Christmas holidays, should contact Coventry [Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub](#) (click on the link or ring 02476 788 555).

If you are worried that a child is in immediate danger, phone 999.

Other numbers you might find useful:

- [Childline](#) 0800 11 11
- [Samaritans](#) 116 123
- [NHS Urgent Mental Health Helpline](#)
- [Mind](#) 0300 123 3393
- [Coventry Haven](#) / SafeToTalk Helpline on 08001114998 (support for women experiencing domestic abuse)
- [Refuge](#) 0808 2000 247
- [Respect](#) Advice Line 0808 801 0327 (support for men experiencing domestic abuse)

Information about how to receive support from **Coventry Foodbank** can be found [here](#).

Enjoying Christmas with Children with Additional Needs

Whilst many children will enjoy the Christmas season with glee, your child might benefit from a little extra help or preparation to make the most of the Christmas fun.

[Action for Children](#) have useful strategies for parents/carers of children with a neurodiversity.

The [National Autistic Society](#) has resources to support children with autism.

[Mind](#) has specific information for supporting mental health at Christmas.

[YoungMinds](#) also has information on how to look after mental health at Christmas

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.

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.



Reception Admissions for September 24

Applications for admission to Reception in September 24 are open. They can be made via the Coventry LA Admissions [page](#) or by phoning **02476975445**.

The closing date is **15th January 2024**

More information about the LA admissions process can be found [here](#) and information about admission to St Thomas More can be found [here](#).

If your child is Catholic and you wish that to be taken into consideration in any application of the over-subscription criteria, you **must** ensure the school has received a copy of your child's Baptism certificate.

The closing date for Nursery applications for September 24 is also **15th January**. Application forms can be obtained from the [school office](#).

Protect Your Child Against Measles

There has been an increase in measles cases across the country including recent cases in Birmingham, Coventry and Solihull.

Measles is highly infectious and spreads easily from person to person. While most people recover completely within a couple of weeks, measles can cause serious illness and in rare cases can be fatal. Vaccination with two doses of MMR is the only way to provide maximum protection.

The Local Authority is encouraging people to check that they and their children have had two doses of the MMR vaccine - which is the safest and most effective way of protecting against measles.

This week you received a copy of a letter from the Local Authority advising parents of how to keep their child safe from measles with the MMR vaccine. For your ease, a copy of the letter can be found at the end of the newsletter.

Christmas Family Events in Coventry

50 Things App

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope this letter finds you well as we approach the festive season. As we look forward to the Christmas break, we're excited to share a details of an app that we believe will add joy and enrichment to your family time.

The '50 Things to Do' app is a fantastic resource offering a variety of free, engaging activities designed for children. These activities aim to not only entertain but also promote positive learning experiences and contribute to your child's overall well-being.

We understand the holiday season can be a busy time, and finding activities to keep your children entertained can be a challenge. That's why we wanted to bring this app to your attention. It provides a range of ideas for activities that you can enjoy together as a family, creating lasting memories during the Christmas break.

To learn more about the '50 Things to Do' app, please download the app using the links below:

Apple: <https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/50-things-to-do/id1386729093>

Google: https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.fiftythings.bradford&hl=en_US

We appreciate your commitment to your child's development, and we believe this app aligns with our shared goal of creating positive and memorable experiences for our families.

Thank you for your time, and we wish you a joyful and restful festive season.

Coventry Local Authority



[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.



Talking Teens: Your Guid to Understanding Teenagers (for parents of children aged 10-25!)

If you would like to know more about how best to support your teenager/young person aged 10-25, [book a place](#) on the 4 week programme delivered by trained practitioners.

The newest research shows that the period of adolescence can begin around 10 years and may continue up to 25 years! So, if you think your 10-year-old already acts like a teenager that's probably because the changes in the brain that take place during adolescence may have already started!

It also tells us that this is the 2nd most complex period of development in our child's life. If you would like to know more about this and how to best support your teenager book a place on the new 4-week programme delivered by trained practitioners by completing the request form on our website:

<https://www.coventry.gov.uk/parenting>

THE TEENAGE BRAIN

COMMUNICATION

Talking Teens
your Guide to
Understanding
Teenagers

MAINTAINING
RELATIONSHIPS



MANAGING CONFLICT



FAMILY
LINKS

DIFFICULT ISSUES

New 4-week programme available for ALL parents and carers of teenagers in Coventry

Beginning Wednesday 10th January 2023

Weekly 9:30-11:30

Aspire Family Hub

Humber Avenue, Coventry

To book visit: <https://www.coventry.gov.uk/parenting>

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.



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 95.3%

Year R	94.8%
Year 01	93.5%
Year 02	97.0%
Year 03	94.7%
Year 04	95.8%
Year 05	94.9%
Year 06	95.6%

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

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



Measles and the Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccine



Public Health, Education Services, December 2023

Dear Parent / Carer,

There has been an increase in measles cases in Coventry. Most of the measles cases are children who have not had the measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccine.

This letter is to give you information about measles and encourage you and your family to have the MMR vaccine.

About measles

Measles is a disease which spreads very quickly and easily in communities such as schools and nurseries where people have not had two doses of the MMR vaccine. Measles can cause serious

illness and can be fatal. People in certain at-risk groups, including babies and small children, pregnant women, and people with weak immunity (immunosuppressed) are at **increased risk** of complications if they catch measles.

Vaccination with **two doses of MMR** is the only way to give people maximum protection from this serious disease.

The **first signs of measles** are:

- High temperature (fever)
 - Cold like symptoms such as runny or blocked nose, coughing, sneezing
 - Red, sore, watery eyes
 - A non-itchy, blotchy red brown rash. This usually appears a few days after cold-like symptoms (sometimes starts around the ears before spreading to the rest of the body). The rash can be harder to see on darker skin tones.
- Small white spots appearing inside the cheeks and on the back of lips (for a few days)

A measles case is infectious for four days before any rash appears and for at least four days after the start of the rash.

Anyone with measles symptoms is advised to stay at home and phone their GP practice or NHS 111 for advice. After contacting the GP or NHS111, you should try to rest and stay at home.

If you do need to visit a GP or hospital, you must call ahead to let them know that it could be measles. The staff will make special arrangements to see you and/or your child so that, if they have measles, they won't pass it to others.

If your child has measles, they cannot attend nursery/school or group activities for 4 days after the start of the rash.

Important information about the MMR vaccine

The MMR vaccine can be given to anyone who missed their MMR vaccinations when they were younger. People can 'catch-up' by booking in for MMR vaccination at their GP practice free of charge.

The first dose of MMR vaccination is offered to children soon after their first birthday. The second dose is normally given before your child starts school.

- If your child has not received **two doses of MMR vaccination** as part of their childhood immunisation programme, you should take up the offer of the MMR vaccine for your child.
- If you are not sure if your child needs an MMR vaccine, you can check their Red Book (personal child health record) or you can contact your GP to check.

It is never too late to get vaccinated. MMR vaccination is very important when there are cases of measles in the community – as we have in Coventry now. This is because any child or adult that has not had **at least one dose of MMR and comes into contact with a person with measles cannot attend nursery/school or group activities for 21 days** after contact with the infected person. This is the time it can take for measles to develop.

Did you know?

- One person with measles can infect 9 out of 10 unvaccinated close contacts.

More information about measles and MMR vaccination can be found on the NHS website at www.nhs.uk/conditions/measles/.

Thanks for your support.

Best wishes,



Allison Duggal

Director of Public Health

Coventry City Council

Kirston Nelson

Chief Partnerships Officer

Coventry City Council