

Chaplaincy News

The theme this week was Giving Thanks, and we have had prayers and assemblies about thanking people for what they do for us. It's a very appropriate way to follow a week in which we focussed on Remembrance. Miss Barrett, the History Department and lots of pupil volunteers worked incredibly hard all week, with a wonderful Remembrance assembly, poppy sales, a bake sale and a moving Remembrance Service on Friday 10th November with school representatives, members of the Royal British Legion and cadet forces. Many thanks to all the pupils who were involved in some way, especially to the very many who wore a poppy.



This week we have started our yearly series of Masses at St Ambrose Barlow, with half of Year 8 going to the church on a Wednesday morning to practise hymns and responses and then on the following Wednesday to attend Mass. They were interested and respectful throughout, and many really seemed to enjoy the chance to sing!

Lots of St Mary's pupils are preparing for the sacrament of confirmation this month and in January. Parish priests have sent out emails, but if anyone thinks they have been missed, please contact your parish directly or Deacon Paul via school. Please also keep all those to be confirmed in your prayers.

Deacon Paul



Key Stage 3 News

Key Stage 3 led the way with anti-bullying week, beginning the week with 'Wear Odd Socks Day' which raised awareness and brought the school community together. The Fisher forms have delivered poignant assemblies on giving thanks and reminded us all of the importance of being grateful for one another. We are already thinking ahead to Advent and as a key stage what we can do to give back to our local community as well as continuing to be our best selves which is reflected in the week on week increase in achievement points.

Key Stage 4 News

Our Year 11's have had a fantastic week in their mocks. They have worked so hard and their observance of the exam regulations has been excellent. We are really proud of how they have set themselves up for their summer exam series.

Across Key Stage 4 we continue to work on our Belonging and making others feel as though they belong; we continue to be pleasant to one another, to say thank you and to celebrate all of our achievements. Please don't hesitate to contact your Head of Year with any achievements that we can celebrate.

Last night we celebrated our Class of 2023 and all of their achievements in our Presentation Evening. It was a delight to see so many smiley faces and congratulate them on all of their amazing work over their 5 years of Key Stage 3 and 4.

Key Stage 5 News

Sixth Form Open Evening

It was lovely to welcome students and parents from Year 11 to the Sixth Form Open Evening on 2nd November. Despite the weather, it was an opportunity for students to find out about the wide range of subjects we have to offer at St. Mary's and what future options these can lead to beyond college. Applications are now live and can be submitted via the Sixth Form area of the website. These will be followed by interviews for students with parents in February. Our Year 11 students will also have the opportunity to sample subject lessons and take advantage of the sixth form facilities when they take part in the Taster Day on Friday 2nd February. If students have any questions regarding Sixth Form please encourage them to ask Mr Rayner or the Key Stage 5 team.

“ I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me to be a safe, happy, proud, loving person who flourishes in life. ”



Spanish Trip

The MFL department were delighted to recommence our annual trip to Spain for our Key stage 4 pupils, for the first time since before Covid! We took 48 pupils to Málaga for a 5-day trip to experience some local culture and cuisine! As you can see below, our pupils immersed themselves and behaved impeccably across the trip, creating lifelong memories! A highlight was the fancy-dress night, in which we saw an array of different outfits, including some famous visitors; from Ronaldo to Alvin and the chipmunks! We look forward to completing the trip again for our next cohort of GCSE class in the near future!



Bookbuzz is here!

Year 7 students recently received a free book. Our school is taking part in Book Trust's Bookbuzz reading programme which aims to get children and young people excited about reading. We gave them the opportunity to choose their own book to keep because we believe reading for pleasure is important. After waiting patiently since they chose which book they would like, they were all delivered this week. The students have eagerly got stuck into their new reads, and have already been sharing their favourite bits with friends and staff.

If your child is in Year 7, the easiest way to get involved is to talk to your child about books and reading. Their Bookbuzz book is a great place to start. Why did they choose their book? Are they enjoying it? Talking about books together shows them the value of reading and will encourage them to form and share their opinions on what they read.



Confucius Classroom

St Mary's is extremely proud and privileged to promote the learning of Mandarin focussing on enhancing culture capital in our school community. St Mary's is host to the only independent Confucius classroom in England- enriching the lives of our students and providing students with invaluable experiences on their school journey. Students engage with knowledge and practice of Tai Chi, Chinese calligraphy, travel and tourism and film. The culture rich curriculum content is delivered by our enthusiastic, native practitioners building positive diverse culture both in our school and in the wider community.

More information can be found on our website at

<https://stmaryschs.org.uk/Confucius-Classroom/>



Co-Curricular Events

There has been lots of activity over the past few weeks. In Drama Club students have been putting together a Drama Club performance. The students are creating this themselves, it is based on the title 'The Fairy-Fales', where they are going to tell stories about the fairy tales that go wrong.

In sporting news, the Year 11 Football team have had great success and secured wins against Fred Longworth and Westleigh High schools in the league and the North Halifax Grammar School in the cup competition. The Year 10 boys Rugby team secured a victory against St Peter's High School so they will progress in the North West competition. The Year 8 and 10 Netball teams secured respective wins against Hindley High School and Fred Longworth High School and the Year 7 and 8 girls Rugby team took part in a tournament at Robin Park and secured 2 wins, 1 draw and 1 loss. Well done to everyone involved!

The Music department co-curricular clubs are currently working hard towards the Advent Service and the Christmas concert. Both of these events are exciting for the pupils who are preparing hard both at lunchtimes and after school.



Advent
HOPE PEACE JOY LOVE

Advent Service

You are warmly invited to our Advent Service, which will take place on Thursday November 30th at 6pm in the school hall. This will be a time of prayer, accompanied by the wonderful voices of our school choir. A perfect way to have half an hour of quiet before the busyness of Christmas is upon us.

The event is followed by refreshments.

Tickets are free, but it would help our catering if we know you plan to attend. Please order tickets here: <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/whats-on/astley/school-hall-st-marys-catholic-high-school/advent-service/e-vqvrxy>

Reverse Advent Calendar

This year, pupils are invited, through their forms, to take part in a Reverse Advent Calendar. From 4th December onwards, they will be able to bring dried, packeted or tinned food to school to be used to support those in need in our local community.

Pupils will also become involved in this by decorating the collection box in their form room and writing notes to accompany the food boxes.

Thank you for your support.

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Attendance

Good attendance is 97% or more at St. Mary's, if attendance is below 90% the child is classified as 'persistently absent' from school and this will have a negative impact on the child learning.

Every week during tutor time attendance and the importance of punctuality to school and lesson is discussed. Please ensure your child is punctual in the morning so they are not missing out on important messages and the form set up for the day. They should go straight to their form tutor session. This is the best start to the day where any issues they might have can be addressed with their form tutors.

As parents and carers please support this by ensuring good routines and habits so they are getting the most from their education. Edulink view shows from lesson to lesson if your child has been late and their overall attendance to school. If a child is PA (10%) missed learning this will have a significant impact on their grades and well-being.

During the school day, the obvious expectation is that all students are in the right place at the right time. We expect children to be in lessons - any toilet visits (with the exception of a medical pass) should only be in an emergency. If your child is regularly leaving a lesson to go to the toilet they are missing vital learning and this can disrupt the teaching.

Anti-Bullying



Well done to pupils and students for 'Making a Noise about Bullying' by taking part in anti-bullying week this week. All pupils understand the National Bullying Alliance definition which the school has adopted. You can access material used during the form assembly on the website. As a parent or carer, you are a vital piece of the puzzle in tackling bullying. You have a unique role to play in guiding and supporting your child through their school years and there are many positive steps you can take to help keep your child safe from bullying and harm. One of the steps is talking to them and encouraging a 'telling' culture. Please encourage them to tell you and to tell their form tutor if something is wrong. More often than not this can be a friendship issue that can be sorted out quickly if your child tells you early on.

As a parent please be mindful of the impact of mobile phones and safe use. The vast majority of issues are either started or compounded by the use of mobile phones. Please monitor your child's use at home.

Please find a parental pack o support Anti-Bullying published by the ABA.

<https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/attachments/Anti-Bullying%20Week%202023%20-%20Parent%20Pack%20FINAL.pdf>

Interview with Mr Dias Costa

We have several new Teaching Assistants this year, so we would like you to get to know some of our new staff. Here is the interview with Mr Dias Costa to get to know him better.

What does a teaching assistant do?

As a Teacher Assistant I think that my job is to help the students to believe in their potential . I try to help them to understand that putting the effort in now and keep trying hard will bring better result in the future and even though they are struggling now, they will overcome the challenges and rise above it.



Why did you become a teaching assistant?

I've always wanted to work with young people and help them with challenges.

What are you proud of?

My family – my wife has two careers and my kids are very active in sports and studies.

What are your hobbies?

Writing, reading and drawing.

Would you rather have chippy, Italian, Indian or Chinese takeaway?

Italian. Growing up this was more common food in my family's table.

What's your favourite colour?

Blue.

Do you have a lucky number?

No – I don't really believe in luck.

What was your favourite subject in school?

Languages – I love learning new languages and expressions.

Do you speak any other languages?

I speak Portuguese, Spanish and English.

Do you like travelling?

I love travelling, I visited France, Wales, Scotland, lived in Spain and Brazil. I am loving to explore different areas of England.

What's your dream car?

Don't really care much about it.

Do you have any pets?

I don't but my kids have a rabbit.

Where are you originally from?

I am from Sao Paulo – Brazil.

What's your favourite season?

Autumn is my favourite season, not too hot and not too cold.

If you could choose to watch only one thing to watch in you life – movies, theatre or TV – what would it be?

I would choose TV series.