



## Our Lady & St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School Newsletter - Issue 23- 20th March 2026

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Dear Parents, carers and parishioners,

Another fun-filled week in school comes to an end. This week held our cross-country event, which was a roaring success, celebrated St. Joseph's Day, welcomed some of our Lighthouse pupil's parents for 'Learn with Me' and watched Year 4 take part in Bikeability. We strive to bring new and varied experiences to all of the children in school and this week definitely contributed to that goal. Over the next few weeks we invite parents/carers into school for parents evenings and Lenten Celebrations of the Word—find out more below.

Have a lovely weekend,

David, Joanne and Sam

### Parents Evenings—25th and 26th March 2026

We look forward to welcoming you into school next week for Parents Evening. This will be a chance to have a discussion with your child's teacher about their progress so far this year. If you have not yet booked your appointment, please check Arbor or contact the school office.



### Lenten Celebrations of the Word—Week beginning 30th March

You may have noticed Lenten Celebrations of the Word on our upcoming dates page. Parents/Carers and parishioners are more than welcome to join us in Church where the children will lead us through the Easter story.

Monday 30th March—2:30pm—Reception and Year 1/2

Tuesday 31st March— 2:30pm—Year 3 and Year 4

Wednesday 1st April— 2:30pm—Year 5 and Year 6

### St. Cuthbert's Cross Project @ Ushaw

We recently took part in a collaborative art project, where the children in school decorated a St. Cuthbert's Cross. You can see the project at Ushaw in the exhibition corridor.

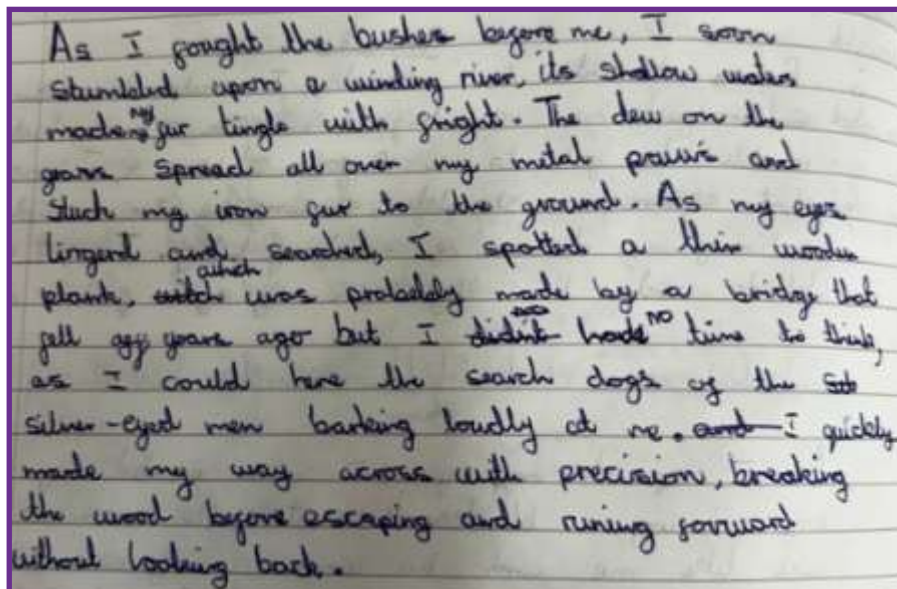


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# Achievements



Alex had the incredible opportunity to walk out as mascot during the Newcastle vs Barcelona game in the Champions League last week. He was even given the match ball by the referee to take out ahead of kick off. What an amazing experience!



Have a look at Judah's amazing writing! The Year 6 class have been captivated by the 'Cogheart' story and their writing has been a joy to read. Judah edited his paragraph to impress us even more. I loved the part that said "I quickly made my way across with precision, breaking the wood before escaping and running forward without looking back."

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## Cross Country Event at OLSJU



We were thrilled to host a Cross Country event on Tuesday, and what an exciting evening it turned out to be! Eight schools joined us, bringing fantastic energy, determination, and a wonderful sense of community.

We are proud to share that Our Lady & St Joseph's finished 4th out of the 8 schools—a brilliant achievement for every one of our runners. Even more impressively, we had the highest number of participants across all the schools, showcasing the enthusiasm, commitment, and team spirit of our pupils.

Every one of our runners performed excellently, demonstrating resilience, sportsmanship, and great pride in representing the school. We couldn't be prouder of them.

A huge thank you goes out to all staff for their organisation, encouragement, and support throughout the event, as well as to all families and supporters who came along to cheer on the children. Your presence helped make the evening truly special.

See the full results table below.

	Y1/2	Y3/4	Y5/6	Overall
1 <sup>st</sup>	St Godric's	St Godric's	St Godric's	St Godric's
2 <sup>nd</sup>	St Thomas More	Brandon Academy	St Michael's Esh	Brandon Academy
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Brandon Academy	St Michael's Esh	St Bede's Sacriston	St Michael's Esh
4 <sup>th</sup>	Our Lady & St Joseph's	Our Lady & St Joseph's	Brandon Academy	Our Lady & St Joseph's
5 <sup>th</sup>	St Bede's Sacriston	St Bede's Sacriston	Our Lady & St Joseph's	St Bede's Sacriston
6 <sup>th</sup>	St Patrick's Langley	St Thomas More	St Patrick's Langley	St Thomas More
7 <sup>th</sup>	St Michael's Esh	St Joseph's Gilesgate	St Thomas More	St Patrick's Langley
8 <sup>th</sup>	St Joseph's Gilesgate	St Patrick's Langley	St Joseph's Gilesgate	St Joseph's Gilesgate

# attendance MATTERS

## Procedures for appointments during school hours

If you have to take your child out of school for any reason, including a medical, dental, school visit appointment, please could you inform the school office prior to the appointment along with any supporting evidence of the appointment. This is so that we can authorise the absence where we can and your child is not marked as unauthorised in our register.

Please see below guidance from the government regarding school attendance. <https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence>

Children should aim to arrive in school by 8:55 am at the latest. **Persistent lateness causes disruption to your child's education.**

Year	Attendance this week:
Reception	100%
Year 1/2	96.43%
Year 3	100%
Year 4	95.83%
Year 5	97.47%
Year 6	94.67%
Lighthouse	95.83%
<b>Weekly Overall Attendance: 96.83%</b>	

## Late arrivals

We understand that mornings can be hectic and that, on occasion events beyond parents' control can cause delays on the journey to school.

Class registers are taken at **9:00am** prompt as we don't want to miss any learning opportunities. **All children should be in class and sat down by 9:00am.**


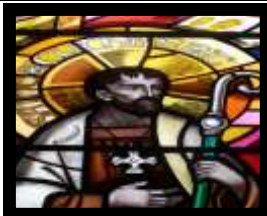


## Standards at Our Lady & St. Joseph's

Our expectations on attendance must remain strong and, as the parent community know, we take this part of our job very seriously indeed. We will be contacting parents/carers of those children who are persistently absent, this means any child with an attendance percentage of 90% or less. Please understand that this is a supportive measure and that we are working hard to leave no stone unturned to help your child achieve the very best possible outcomes.



## Stars of the week

Sadie	<b>Year R</b>	For excellent number work this week.
Lily-Mae	<b>Year 1/2</b>	For a fantastic improvement with her presentation and handwriting!
Joel		For having an amazing attitude towards his learning.
Isla	<b>Year 3</b>	For having a positive attitude and being a true role model.
George P		For fantastic effort and enthusiasm when reading.
Kenzi	<b>Year 4</b>	For being brave and persistent with things you find difficult.
Emmie		For improved focus and effort in your maths this week.
Annabell	<b>Year 5</b>	Wonderful progress in maths.
Lucy L		Good progress with handwriting
Annie	<b>Year 6</b>	For excellent effort and resilience in her maths.
Judah		For super diary work based on Malkin's journey to find Lily
Oliver	<b>Lighthouse</b>	For fantastic effort in maths.
Gracie	<b>PE</b>	For finishing 3rd overall in her race at cross country.
Lucy M		For helping others at swimming.

HOUSE POINTS				
Captains	St. Bede	St. Cuthbert	St. Hilda	St. Aidan
Eva				
Kingsley				
Daisy				
Esme				
<b>Weekly total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>284</b>
<b>Running total</b>	<b>3580</b>	<b>3106</b>	<b>3115</b>	<b>3588</b>

<u>Rainbow Rewards</u>		
<b>Red</b>	Is for the blood he gave (Be Kind)	<b>Anya:</b> For being kind and playing with the younger children. <b>Gracie:</b> For being polite and helpful in class this week .
<b>Green</b>	Is for the world he made (Be a steward)	<b>Ivy:</b> For looking after a friend who was feeling poorly.
<b>Yellow</b>	Is for the light so bright (Be humble)	
<b>Orange</b>	Is strong and full of might (Be courageous)	<b>Lyla:</b> For being courageous and joining in with school activities.
<b>Purple</b>	Is for his hour of sorrow (Be compassionate and say sorry)	
<b>Pink</b>	Is for a new tomorrow (Be just and fair)	
<b>Blue</b>	Is for the sky he made so we can aim high (Never give up or take the easy option)	

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## Ask your child



We're sure you all ask your children what they have learned at school every day. We're also sure that the depth of answers that you receive will also vary, with some children saying, 'nothing'. To help aid your discussions, each week in the newsletter we will include a starter question that will help your child to talk about what they what they have been learning that week in school. Try it tonight


<b>Reception</b>	In our story, Handa's Hen, what animals did Handa and Akeyo find when they were looking for Mondri?
<b>Year 1/2</b>	What is the difference between the Sahara desert and the Amazon Rainforest? What jobs did children have in Victorian mines?
<b>Year 3</b>	Why do you think it is important to love and respect one another?
<b>Year 4</b>	How did Christianity become the official religion of Rome?
<b>Year 5</b>	Who was Beowulf? What are favelas?
<b>Year 6</b>	How many worlds are around Yggdrasil? Can you name them all?
<b>Lighthouse</b>	Who are the borrowers?

### Article 14: The right of freedom of thought, belief and religion



### THE GOSPEL IN CHURCH

#### Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2026



There was a friend of Jesus named Lazarus who lived in the village of Bethany with his two sisters, Mary and Martha, and he was very ill. The sisters sent a message to Jesus. But, by the time Jesus had arrived at their home, Lazarus had died. As soon as Lazarus' sister, Mary, saw Jesus she threw herself at his feet, crying. At the sight of her tears, Jesus said in great distress, with a sigh that came straight from the heart, "Where have you put him?" So they took Jesus to Lazarus' tomb. Jesus wept. "Roll the stone away," he said. Then he cried out in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" Then Lazarus, who had been dead, came out with his feet, hands and face wrapped in strips of burial cloth. Jesus said, "Unbind him: let him go free." Many of the people there saw what Jesus had done and believed in him.

Adapted from John 11:1-45  
The 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent, Year A

Getting to know Jesus makes life joyful.  
Learn more about this Sunday's Gospel in your local Parish Church: all are very warmly invited.

✧ Dear Lord Jesus, thank you for the gift of everlasting life. Please help us to be more **compassionate** as we journey through Lent together. Amen. ✧

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# 10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators

## CREATIVE WAYS TO ENCOURAGE READING

Reading regularly has a life-long impact, yet recent data from the National Literacy Trust shows a decline in reading for pleasure among 8- to 18-year-olds, with just 32.7% enjoying it in 2025. Despite growing distractions, there are practical ways adults can spark a love of reading. This guide offers strategies and resources to help inspire young readers.

### 1 VALUE ALL READING

When we think about reading, it's very easy to picture a young person reading a fictional novel; however, reading is so much more than this. To help them understand, why not show them how to create a 24-hour reading diary? Jot down all reading and then discuss this with them. By doing this, you can demonstrate the many ways we turn to reading.

### 2 WIDEN THE SELECTION

Once we know reading can be varied, we need to think about the selection of reading material they can access. Visit a shop selling magazines, the library and a bookshop, and consider the range of material that is available within them. Then consider how you might broaden their reading choices, so all young people have access to a wide and varied selection.

### 3 GIFT A BOOK

One simple way to encourage reading is to make books feel special. Gifting a book adds value and shows it's something to be treasured. Whether it's as a reward or for a celebration like a birthday, let the young person choose a title or pick one you know they will enjoy. You could also include a personal note inside.

### 4 CONNECT WITH AUTHORS

Meeting authors can certainly spark an interest in their reading material. This might be through a live event in a school/bookshop or by using the wealth of online material that is now available. Encourage young people to look at ways to connect with authors using free resources such as Authority and Just Imagine's Children's Authors Live.

### 5 BUILD YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Access training about reading for pleasure to widen your understanding of this topic and, more importantly, how to develop it. Explore a wide range of free resources that can be found online. The more you know, the better placed you are to inspire a love of reading in others.

### 6 TALK BOOKS

There are times when we need silence to read and focus on our book; however, we know that reading is a social experience, so we must also factor in discussion time. Reading the same book gives two people a connection and the opportunity to voice their thoughts and questions about it. Why not buy two copies of a book and read it together? Start the connection.

### 7 RECOMMENDATIONS

As well as talking about the content of books, we can share what we are reading or have read recently. This can often act as a trigger for someone else to explore it. How often have you watched a film or series because someone else has recommended it? It's the same with books. If you know the young person well, you can tailor your recommendations and share why you think they'll enjoy it.

### 8 GO DIGITAL

With the rise in online digital material, we can easily focus on the negatives; however, it also brings a wealth of opportunities. Resources can aid and enhance the reading experience for young people. They can read along with audiobooks, translate, and track their reading goals with resources like Polyfina and apps like Goodreads for older children. Augmented reality books also bring books to life and offer a great way for engagement.

### 9 RECONNECT

There can come a time when a love of reading seems to disappear. It does not mean it's gone forever; it generally means they have lost the connection. How do we get it back? Find the next piece of reading material that sparks their current interests. The National Year of Reading focus of 'Go All In' captures this well as it is their key theme. As children grow and change, so do their interests. A visit to the local library is a great way to support the reconnection.

### 10 LEAD BY EXAMPLE

Let them see you reading. If you make time to read, you send a strong message to children: reading matters. Share why you enjoy it. Is it to relax, escape the world, learn something new or to be entertained? When children see reading as a normal and valued part of everyday life, they are more likely to adopt it themselves.

## Meet Our Expert

Carl Pattison is a literacy advisor and early reading expert at The National College. Through his programmes, he supports schools to enhance reading and writing. In addition to his independent work, he also works for a large academy trust in the East Midlands as the strategic lead for their English Hub and Literacy Excellence Centre.



The National College

See full reference list on our website

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Date	Event	Time	Parents Invited
Wednesday 25th and Thursday 26th March	Parents Evenings	3:40pm - 6:00pm	Yes
Monday 30th March	<u>Reception and KS1</u> Lent Celebration of the Word	2:30pm	Yes
Tuesday 31st March	<u>Year 3 and Year 4</u> Lent Celebration of the Word	2:30pm	Yes
Wednesday 1st April	<u>Year 5 and Year 6</u> Lent Celebration of the Word	2:30pm	Yes
Thursday 2nd April	Break up for Easter holiday	3:30pm	Yes
Monday 20th April	Return to school for Summer Term	8:45am	Yes

**Please note—the Year 1/2 Learn with Me event will now take place in the Summer Term. The final date will be communicated soon.**



# Our Lady & St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Holiday and Term Dates: 2025—2026



	August 2025	September 2025	October 2025	November 2025	December 2025	January 2026
Monday	4 11 18 25	1 8 15 22 29	6 13 20 27	3 10 17 24	1 8 15 22 29	5 12 19 26
Tuesday	5 12 19 26	2 9 16 23 30	7 14 21 28	4 11 18 25	2 9 16 23 30	6 13 20 27
Wednesday	6 13 20 27	3 10 17 24	1 8 15 22 29	5 12 19 26	3 10 17 24 31	7 14 21 28
Thursday	7 14 21 28	4 11 18 25	2 9 16 23 30	6 13 20 27	4 11 18 25	1 8 15 22 29
Friday	1 8 15 22 29	5 12 19 26	3 10 17 24 31	7 14 21 28	5 12 19 26	2 9 16 23 30
Saturday	2 9 16 23 30	6 13 20 27	4 11 18 25	1 8 15 22 29	6 13 20 27	3 10 17 24 31
Sunday	3 10 17 24 31	7 14 21 28	5 12 19 26	2 9 16 23 30	7 14 21 28	4 11 18 25

	February 2026	March 2026	April 2026	May 2026	June 2026	July 2026
Monday	2 9 16 23	2 9 16 23 30	6 13 20 27	4 11 18 25	1 8 15 22 29	6 13 20 27
Tuesday	3 10 17 24	3 10 17 24 31	7 14 21 28	5 12 19 26	2 9 16 23 30	7 14 21 28
Wednesday	4 11 18 25	4 11 18 25	1 8 15 22 29	6 13 20 27	3 10 17 24	1 8 15 22 29
Thursday	5 12 19 26	5 12 19 26	2 9 16 23 30	7 14 21 28	4 11 18 25	2 9 16 23 30
Friday	6 13 20 27	6 13 20 27	3 10 17 24	1 8 15 22 29	5 12 19 26	3 10 17 24 31
Saturday	7 14 21 28	7 14 21 28	4 11 18 25	2 9 16 23 30	6 13 20 27	4 11 18 25
Sunday	1 8 15 22	1 8 15 22 29	5 12 19 26	3 10 17 24 31	7 14 21 28	5 12 19 26

<b>AUTUMN TERM:</b> 74 days	<b>SPRING TERM:</b> 58 days	<b>SUMMER TERM:</b> 59 days	School Holidays
<b>TOTAL:</b> 190 days (5 days for in-service training of teachers). Additional training to be taken as twilight sessions.			Training Days
<b>TRAINING DAYS:</b> Monday 1 <sup>st</sup> September 2025, Monday 5 <sup>th</sup> January 2026, Monday 20 <sup>th</sup> July 2026, Tuesday 21 <sup>st</sup> July 2026, Final Training Day TBC			Bank Holidays
<i>The school will be open to pupils for 190 days</i>			Year 6 SATs