



Our Lady & St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School Newsletter - Issue 25 – 24 April 2026

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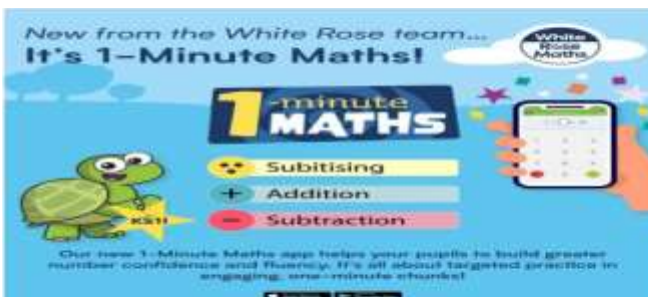
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Dear parents, carers and parishioners,

A warm welcome back to everyone in the school. I hope you have all had a fantastic Easter break and that the children are ready to continue with their learning this term. I can't believe that we are now in the final part of this academic year! It has been wonderful to see the children coming into school smiling, full of energy and enthusiasm. The Summer Term is always a busy time and we have many things planned. Some of the main dates are included in this issue so please do check them and add them to your calendar. Have a great weekend.

David, Joanne and Steph

A free App to help with Maths!



A free app for KS1 children. A great one to stick on your phone for a quick maths minute with your child!

These one minute chunks can really make a difference and help develop greater depth in terms of understanding relationships between numbers!

Click [here](#) to find out more

Important Statutory Assessment Dates



Statutory assessments are not something parents or children should worry about at all. However, it is essential that all children completing statutory assessments are in school during the periods specified below and that no holidays are taken during this time.

- **Year 1 Phonics Screening Check takes place week commencing Monday 8th June. It is essential that all children are in school during this time.**
- **Year 4 Multiplication Tables Check takes place across a 2-week period from Monday 1st June. It is essential that all children are in school during this time.**
- **Year 6 SATs take place Monday 11th May - Thursday 14th May. It is essential that all children are in school during this time.**

If you have any questions, please speak with your child's class teacher who can explain further.

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Perfectly Punctual



We often share the importance of excellent attendance; however, it's also incredibly important that children are punctual by being in school on time, every day. Being on time means that children have a calm, settled start to their day. They can greet friends, be welcomed by their teacher, and begin learning alongside their peers. Our younger children begin phonics lessons at 9:00am - **phonics is arguably the most important lesson of the day, so being late by just a few minutes can have a big impact.** We recently came across some quite shocking statistics that show the impact of being frequently late. We wanted to share the image (left) with you as we think it's really important to note that being just 5 minutes late every day adds up to three whole days of lost learning time over the school year! Can we please remind everyone that the gates close at 8:55am prompt and ALL late arrivals must be signed in at the main office by a parent/ carer. Thank you for supporting your child's learning.

Spotlight Success

Here are our superstars this week. Well done!



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Online Safety Tips

Article 19: The right to be protected from all forms of harm

New government campaign: Is your child influenced by toxic content?



The Government have launched a new campaign providing guidance to parents on safety settings, conversation prompts and advice for tackling misinformation and harmful content. It also includes a quiz to help you and your child spot misleading or unreliable information online. You can find out more [here](#).

Five Nights at Freddy's



Five Nights at Freddy's is a horror game designed to frighten players with jump scares or creepy characters. It can be accessed from several places, for example on an Xbox (PEGI rating of 12) and on the App store (age rating of 13+). There is merchandise available, which may suggest that it is child friendly. We would recommend that you preview the game first to ascertain its suitability for your child. You can view Bark's review [here](#).

YouTube Safety Update: New Parental Controls



YouTube have published their latest update on how parents can support their child on YouTube. YouTube will now allow parents to set the amount of time viewing Shorts – this can even be set to zero. YouTube Shorts are short videos, usually less than 60 seconds long, which when continuously watched, can lead to excessive screentime. Furthermore, parents will also be able to set bedtime and 'take a break' reminders. You can find out more [here](#). If you would like to find out more about supervised accounts on YouTube, then [this article](#) explains the different settings available.

Virtual Private Networks



A Virtual Private Network (VPN) helps make your connection between a device and the internet more secure and can help protect personal information and add privacy. However, whilst a VPN has benefits, it is important that you are aware that if your child is using a VPN, they may be able to get round Wi-Fi restrictions, access blocked or restricted websites and bypass parental controls. It may also mean that their browsing history is hidden. The NSPCC provides a helpful overview of VPNs, plus top tips and conversation starters [here](#).

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	97.1%
Year 3	100%
Year 4	100%
Year 5	96.93
Year 6	95.6
Lighthouse	100%
Weekly overall attendance: 97.83%	
Year to date attendance: 95%	

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. However, we have noticed that the number of children arriving at school after the gates have closed at **8:55am** has increased in recent weeks.

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


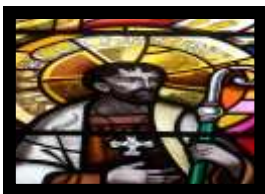


Our expectations on attendance must remain strong and, as the parent community know, we take this part of our job very seriously indeed. We will be contacting parents/carers of those children who are persistently absent, this means any child with an attendance percentage of 90% or less. Please understand 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.



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Stars of the week

Everyone	Year R	For being shining stars and making our classroom a lovely place to learn and play.
Mia H	Year 1/2	For fantastic work in Maths with her 5 times tables!
Adam S		For working hard to improve his handwriting this week!
George W	Year 3	For amazing effort in handwriting this week.
Stephen O F		For fantastic reasoning and problem solving in Maths.
Bella-Rose B	Year 4	For excellent focus and effort with your handwriting this week.
Lucas S		For super effort with your sentence writing this week.
Bridgette T	Year 5	For a wonderful first week - you are already part of our family!
Penny		For wonderful progress with reading; beautiful fluency!
Miles H	Year 6	For excellent handwriting and presentation in his English work.
Lukas M		For super application to all areas of work in class. Keep it up Lukas.
Isabelle	Lighthouse	For being so kind, hardworking and conscientious in all lessons.

HOUSE POINTS				
Feast Days:	St. Bede	St. Cuthbert	St. Hilda	St. Aidan
25th May 20th March 17th November 31st August				
Weekly total				
Running total				

<u>Rainbow Rewards</u>		
Red	Is for the blood he gave (Be Kind)	Oliver P: For always being thoughtful to others, especially his classmates. Jessica W: For always being kind and helpful in the classroom.
Green	Is for the world he made (Be a steward)	Charlie S: For looking after a friend who was feeling sad.
Yellow	Is for the light so bright (Be humble)	
Orange	Is strong and full of might (Be courageous)	
Purple	Is for his hour of sorrow (Be compassionate and say sorry)	
Pink	Is for a new tomorrow (Be just and fair)	Emmie B and Charlie S: For playing fairly at breaktimes.
Blue	Is for the sky he made so we can aim high.	

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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

Reception	How can we make 6?
Year 1/2	Why was Doggerland a land-bridge?
Year 3	How did the Athenian democracy work?
Year 4	Why might people visit Matterhorn?
Year 5	How did people live, work and survive in the Viking Jorvik?
Year 6	Why is the Holy Trinity so important?
Lighthouse	What animals are in the treasures?

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

The Gospel in Church - Sunday 26th April 2026



Jesus said, "I tell you most solemnly, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold through the gate, but gets in some other way is a thief and a brigand. The one who enters through the gate is the shepherd of the flock. When the shepherd has brought out his flock, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow because they know his voice. They never follow a stranger, but run away from him: they do not recognise the voice of strangers." The disciples failed to understand what Jesus meant. So Jesus spoke to them again: "I tell you most solemnly, I am the gate of the sheepfold. All others who have come are thieves and brigands; but the sheep took no notice of them. I am the gate. Anyone who enters through me will be safe: they will go freely in and out and be sure of finding pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. But I have come so that they may have life and have it to the full."

Adapted from John 10:1-10

Spiritual Reflection

This Sunday is traditionally known as 'Good Shepherd Sunday'. Jesus is the Good Shepherd who leads us into the joys of eternal life. Part of a shepherd's job is to look after the sheep and help them to stay safe. When we let Jesus lead us, just as a shepherd leads his sheep, he helps us to make the right choices and fills our lives with goodness and holiness.

All we need to do is to follow him. Jesus can lead us and our children through the Church, through prayer and through the lives of people who show us how to live in a way that pleases God. He is the patient shepherd who never gives up on us.

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SUMMER Diary Dates

Date	Event	Time	Parents Invited
Monday 20th April	Return to school for Summer Term 1	8:45am	-
Friday 1st May	Parent Coffee Morning—Neurodiversity	9:00am 10:00am	Yes
Monday 4th May	Bank Holiday	All Day	No
Wednesday 6th May	Year 5 Mass (St. Joseph's Church)	10:30am	Yes
w/b 11th May	KS2 SATs Week	All week	No
Monday 18th May	World Day for Cultural Diversity	All Day	No
Tuesday 19th May	Show Racism the Red Card Y5/6	AM	No
Wednesday 19th May	Year 4 Mass (St. Joseph's Church)	10:30am	Yes
Tuesday 19th May	New Reception Parent Welcome Meeting	4:00pm	Yes
Wednesday 20th May	Year 1/2 and Year 3 Visit to Centre of Life	All day	No
Wednesday 20th May	Parental Meeting - Y5 Visit to London	3:30pm	Yes
Friday 22nd May	Non-Uniform Day (Toys and Books)	All day	No
Friday 22nd May	Break up for half-term holiday	3:30pm	—
Monday 1st June	Return to school for Summer Term 2	8:45am	—
w/b Monday 1st June	Year 4 Multiplication Tables Check	—	No
Wednesday 3rd June	Year Mass 1/2 (St. Joseph's Church)	10:30am	Yes
Thursday 4th & 11th June	Year 3 Road Safety	PM	No
Friday 5th June	Ushaw Pilgrimage Day	All Day	No
w/b 8th June	Phonics Screening Check	All day	No
Friday 12th June	Non-Uniform Day (Chocolates)	All day	No
Thursday 4th June	New to Reception - Stay and Play	1:30pm	Yes
Thursday 11th June	New to Reception - Stay and Play	1:30pm	Yes
Wednesday 17th June	Year 6 Transition Event STMB	All day	No
Thursday 18th June	Fathers Day / Someone Special Breakfast	8:30am - 9:00am	Yes
Friday 19th June	Year 5 Visit to London (Parliament)	All day	No
Tuesday 23rd June	'New to Year 1' - Transition Meeting	3:35pm	Yes
Wednesday 24th June	Sports Day	PM	Yes
Thursday 25th June	Year 6 Youth Ministry Festival	All day	No
Friday 26th June	Non-Uniform Day (Bottles)	All day	No
w/b 29th June	Art Week	All Week	No
Wednesday 1st July	Year 3 Mass (St. Joseph's Church)	10:30am	Yes
Friday 3rd July	St. Leonard's and Durham Academy Year 6 (Transition Day)	All Day	No
Friday 3rd July	Transition Day in School	All Day	No
6th—8th July	Year 6 Robinwood Residential	3 Days	No
Wednesday 8th July	Reception Graduation Mass (In school)	10:30am	Yes
Wednesday 9th July	Year 6 Leavers Production	2:00pm	Yes
Monday 13th July	Annual Reports sent out to parents	3:30pm	—
Tuesday 14th July	Summer Fayre	1:30am	Yes
Wednesday 15th July	Year 6 Leavers Mass (St. Joseph's Church)	10:30pm	Yes
Thursday 16th July	END of TERM	3:30pm	—

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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. Wrapping 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 Authorly 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 Polyana 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 'do 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.



See full references list on our website

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With reading for pleasure in decline, this practical guide offers ten thoughtful ways to reignite children's enthusiasm for books. From valuing all forms of reading to broadening access to diverse materials, it explores how adults can nurture positive reading habits both at home and in school. Digital tools, audiobooks and augmented reality are also considered as engaging ways to support today's readers.

It also highlights the power of social connection – recommending books, reading together and meeting authors – alongside the importance of modelling reading ourselves. With expert insight from literacy specialist Carl Pattison, this edition provides supportive, achievable ideas to help young people reconnect with reading and see it as a meaningful part of everyday life.

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