



Monday 9th February 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

We were delighted last week to receive a letter from Bridget Phillipson, Secretary of State for Education, congratulating our staff team on our excellent outcomes for disadvantaged pupils at the end of the last academic year. We are incredibly proud to have been recognised as being 'among the very best nationally, and this is a significant achievement.' A copy of the letter can be found at the end of this newsletter for you to read.

Many of you will have noticed the exciting changes taking place in our school playground. While there are still a few more updates planned, the children were thrilled to try out the new play facilities last week whenever the weather allowed—although the rain didn't make it easy! We're keeping our fingers crossed for a much drier week ahead so they can enjoy the space even more. These playground improvements were inspired by suggestions from our School Council, who have worked hard to represent the ideas and voices of their classmates.



A huge thank you to the many parents who attended their child's Maths lesson over the last few weeks, we hope you found the experience useful. Please take a few minutes to complete the follow up online questionnaire emailed out today- your feedback is important as it helps us to plan future parent events.

We also hope your children enjoyed taking part in Number Day last Friday. A huge thank you to Mrs Cornes, our Maths leader for organising such a brilliant day, Mrs Rasool for decorating the school in readiness for the day and to all our staff and pupils who took part with such enthusiasm.



CATHOLIC LIFE

Catholic Schools Pupil Profile: This half term, we will be focussing on the virtues Children are growing to be: **Curious & Active.**

Pupils are growing to be **curious** about everything; and **active** in their engagement with the world, changing what they can for the better

We look forward to inviting parents into school each Friday to celebrate the achievements of the children chosen by their teachers for demonstrating these virtues.



Next School & Parish Mass - On Saturday 21st March, we would love as many families as possible to attend Mass at St Joseph's Church, Darlaston **at 4pm**. Please let the school office know if your child will be attending and would like to be involved in leading an aspect of the liturgy- we need children to read and take up the offertory gifts. Children who attend will be given an extra golden stamp for supporting the Catholic life of the school. Please note, everyone is welcome - Catholic or not!

Year of St. Francis - Pope Leo has announced that 2026 is a special **Jubilee Year of St Francis**, and throughout this time we will be exploring the life and teachings of St Francis in school. Children will learn more about his message of simplicity, kindness, and care for creation, and we will be seeking his intercession as we pray for peace in our world. This special year offers a wonderful opportunity for our whole school community to reflect on how we can follow St Francis' example in our daily lives.

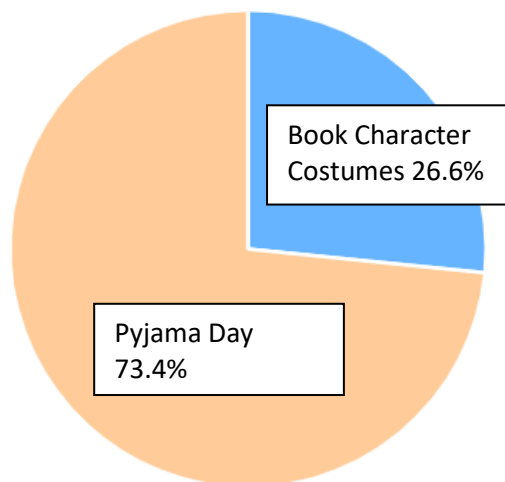




World Book Day 2026

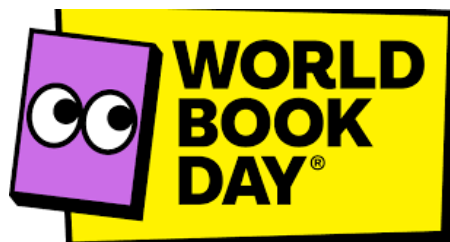
Last week we surveyed parents to help us with the planning of World Book Day on Thursday 5th March. We had 128 parents complete our survey - thank you to everyone who took the time to respond. The results are in ...

World Book Day Dress-Up Survey Results



We will, therefore, go with the majority decision and host a Pyjama Day for World Book Day on Thursday 5th March.

Look out for your child bringing home their **World Book Day voucher** this week! The voucher will allow them to choose one of the special World Book Day books that have been released, available in supermarkets and book shops, giving them the chance to enjoy some wonderful reading during the half-term break next week. We hope this helps spark even more excitement for reading at home!





National
Year of
Reading
2026

The Year of Reading continues to flourish at St Joseph's, with a wonderful range of activities bringing stories and books to life for our pupils. We recently enjoyed a fabulous whole-school poetry workshop with *Pep the Poet*, which filled the building with laughter and excitement as children discovered the joy of playing with words. Each Wednesday, Chester our Reading Dog continues to visit, offering calm encouragement and boosting children's reading confidence. We have also begun an exciting new collaboration with St Thomas More School: each week a group of their Sixth Form students visit our Year 4 pupils to listen to them read and support their developing skills. Across Years 2-6, pupils continue to make excellent progress through the Accelerated Reader programme, and on Friday we proudly presented our first **Word Millionaire** badge of the academic year to one of our Year 5 pupils!

On Friday 13th February, we look forward to presenting gold coins to the children in who have impressed their teachers with their phonics progress this half term and those who have met their half- termly reading target on Accelerated Reader. Our book vending machine is filled with a fabulous selection of books for the children to choose from.

To help strengthen our reading culture even further, we are inviting families to get involved in two exciting challenges. Firstly, we would love parents to **send in a photograph of the unusual, cosy, or favourite places where their child enjoys reading**—these will be added to a special school display celebrating the many ways we experience books.

Secondly, children are invited to take part in our **Book in a Box Challenge**: using a shoebox, they can create a scene from their favourite book and bring it to life through creativity and imagination. All entries must be in school by **Thursday 5th March**, with the winners announced during assembly on **Friday 6th March**.



Together, these activities continue to promote a love of reading across the school, celebrating every child's journey into the world of books.



What's been going on in school recently?

It has been a wonderfully busy and exciting few weeks in school!

Reception class have been learning all about *People Who Help Us*. They enjoyed a visit from the police, who talked to them about their important work in keeping everyone safe. The children even tried on parts of the police uniform and were delighted by the flashing lights of the police car as it left! The school nurse also spent time with Reception, explaining her role and teaching the children about good hand hygiene and how to look after their teeth. To enrich their RE learning, Reception visited church where Fr Craig helped them learn about Baptism, and they had great fun role-playing the sacrament together.

Members of our school choir took part in the **Wicked Young Voices** sing-along, joining thousands of other schools in a spectacular musical celebration.

Year 4 and Year 2 also showcased their hard work in their wonderful class assemblies, proudly sharing their learning with parents and carers.

Across the school, classes have been enjoying their special **curriculum art days**, developing skills and exploring new creative techniques.

Several pupils represented St Joseph's in a swimming gala at Walsall Gala Baths—a fantastic event where they demonstrated great effort and team spirit.

Year 6 spent an enriching day at **Blists Hill Victorian Town**, deepening their history learning. Year 2 visited the **Black Country Museum** as part of their D&T topic on structures, they later took part in a follow-up workshop led by museum staff here in school. Both classes were highly praised by staff and members of the public for their exemplary behaviour—well done, everyone!

Finally, pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 took part in a **food-tasting workshop** thanks to Aspens, our catering provider. Children bravely tried a range of new foods, including sweet potato, beetroot, celery, and even cocoa-and-beetroot brownies!

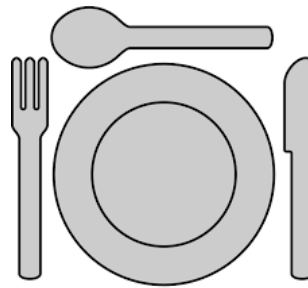
It has been a fantastic few weeks of learning, exploration, and new experiences across the school.





Fussy Eating workshop for Parents

Is your child a fussy eater? Are you concerned about their eating habits, struggling to encourage them to try fruit and vegetables, or finding that they will only accept foods of the same colour or texture? If mealtimes feel challenging or you're unsure how best to support your child's eating, the School Nursing Team will be in school on **Thursday 5th March** to run a **parent workshop at 9am in the school hall**. Come along to learn practical strategies, explore helpful approaches, and find out what support is available for families. All parents and carers are warmly invited.



Nursery Phonics Parent Workshop

We warmly invite all Nursery parents to join us on **Wednesday 11th February** for a phonics workshop at **9am or 3pm** in the school hall. Come along to find out how we teach phonics in Nursery and learn simple, fun ways you can support your child's early reading skills at home. We look forward to seeing you there!



Breakfast Club

We are pleased to share an update on the government's roll-out of free breakfast clubs. St Joseph's will be offering this provision from **September 2026**. Over the coming months, we will be surveying parents so we can plan effectively and ensure the new breakfast club meets the needs of all our families. Our **current breakfast club provision will continue as normal** until the new scheme begins. For further information, please contact the school office or visit our school website.



Dates for your diary...

DATE	EVENT
Monday 9 th February - Friday 13 th February	Children's Mental Health Week - 'This is my place'
Tuesday 10 th February	Safer Internet Day
Tuesday 10 th February	Year 5 visit to watch the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra at Symphony Hall
Tuesday 10 th February	Year 2 to Mass at St Joseph's Church at 10am. Parents & Carers are welcome
Wednesday 11 th February	Year 1 visit to Dudley Zoo
Wednesday 11th February	Nursery Parent Phonics Meetings at 9am OR 3pm.
Thursday 12 th February	Year 3 & 4 Workshops with Severn Trent Water
Thursday 12 th February	Harmony Big Sing-Along for Children's Mental Health Week
Friday 13 th February	Break up for half term
Monday 16 th February - Friday 20 th February	School closed for half term
Monday 23 rd February	School re-opens.
Wednesday 25 th February	Baptism Information Coffee Morning - 9am in the school hall
Friday 27 th February	Year 2 City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra Visit
Wednesday 4 th March	One Life Music Whole School Lent Retreat Day
Thursday 5th March	World Book Day! Children come to school wearing pyjamas!
Thursday 5th March	School Nurses Parent workshop at 9am - Fussy Eating
Monday 9th March	'Lent Stay & Pray' for Parents / Carers of Nursery & Reception at 2.45pm
Tuesday 10th March	Parents Evening - Appointments with class teachers from 2pm - 6pm. Bookings will be available later this week.
Wednesday 11 th March	'The Animal Man' will be in school
Thursday 12th March	'Lent Stay & Pray' for Parents / Carers of Year 3 & Year 4 at 2.45pm
Thursday 12 th March	Year 2 Farm Visit
Thursday 12 th March	Year 5 Tudors Visit to Oak House
Thursday 12 th March	Year 3 Sacrament of Reconciliation, 6pm at St Joseph's Church, Wolverhampton
Monday 16th March	'Lent Stay & Pray' for Parents / Carers of Year 5 & Year 6 at 2.45pm
Wednesday 18th March	'Lent Stay & Pray' for Parents / Carers of Year 1 & 2 at 2.45pm
Thursday 19 th March	St Joseph's Feast Day celebrations
Thursday 19 th March	Year 6 Farm Visit
Thursday 19th March	School Nurses Parent workshop at 9am - Toileting support
Saturday 21 st March	Family Mass at St Joseph's, Darlaston at 4pm - All welcome
Monday 23 rd March	Reception Class eye tests
Friday 27 th March	Easter Culture Day in school - dress in cultural clothes to celebrate your heritage or identity.
Friday 27 th March	Stations of the Cross for KS2 children, led by Year 4 at 2.45pm
Friday 27th March	Break up for Easter
Monday 30th March - Friday 10th April	School Closed for Easter Holidays
Monday 13 th April	School re-opens for the Summer Term