

'Be who God wants you to be and so set the world on fire.'

St. Catherine's Newsletter: Autumn 2 Term 2022



A Message From Miss Quiligotti

Dear parents and carers,

Being in school during the season of Advent is always a privilege. Being able to share how great God's love is for us all by showing he sent his only son is truly special. During Advent, we view His life and experience His presence. Christ came to show us what life can and should be. But Jesus knew that the human heart could not live in isolation; he formed the Church around the concept of a people held together by love. Love is our Core Value during the second half of the Autumn Term, linking perfectly to the unconditional love shown to us all through our faith.

Thank you to all of our community who have made this season so special in school and thank you to all of our families who have given their time to join us in our festivities. The children have loved sharing their learning with you and showing off all of their wonderful talents! Thank you to Wheildons Butchers for continuing to provide our school Christmas tree each year too - we really do appreciate your kindness.

As always, thank you to our truly special St. Catherine's staff who have gone above and beyond in making this season so wonderful for our children. From nativities to carol concerts, and reindeer visits to Christmas crafts, it's been a joyous few weeks!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank some of our fantastic staff members who are leaving St. Catherine's at the end of this term to move onto new endeavours and adventures. Thank you to Ms Ortiz, Mr Steiner, Mrs James and Mrs Stabb for the dedication and love they have shown to everyone in our school and for having such a positive impact on the lives of our children. We are truly grateful and we wish them a lifetime of happiness in their new endeavours.

I hope you all have a restful, enjoyable and blessed Christmas and we look forward to welcoming everyone back into school on Wednesday 4th January.

Miss Quiligotti

Advent



This month, we have been reflecting on the importance of the season of Advent and how, during Advent, we prepare for the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. During our worship time, we have looked at three key points that help us to remember the true meaning of this time of year:

- listening to and remembering what Jesus has taught us
- reaching out to help others
- welcoming Jesus into our hearts through prayer

Each class's altar is themed around Advent, including with purple liturgical colour cloths, and each class has their own Advent wreath and candles. We also have a special Advent display next to the hall where we have a different Advent theme each week to reflect on. Children can choose to write down their response to the reflection and put them on our Advent tree.

During Advent, we always sing our special song, 'Stay Awake, Be Ready' to remind us to prepare for the coming of the Lord and to always be ready



Love

Faith

Respect

Perseverance

Compassion

Inspiration

Whole School



This Half-Term...

As always, it's been a busy half-term! Our children have been up to many great things including Year 6 spending three days on their Robin Wood residential, EYFS Stay and Play sessions, Reception Christmas Crafts, nativities, carol concerts, Remembrance Day, celebrating All Saints Day and more!

We have loved reflecting on the true meaning of Advent this month and singing 'Stay Awake, Be Ready' during each of our worships to remind us to prepare for the coming of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

So many of our children have continued to be activists for change by attending our local Pupil Parliament, joining in with #heartheycry campaign about our climate crisis, creating posters about anti-bullying week and the importance of reaching out, and more. They have also worked hard collecting for local food banks to help those most in need. We are so proud of all of our children for everything they do to help others.



Remembrance

We celebrated Remembrance Day by gathering in the playground to pay our respects and reflect for a moment of silence. Valentine played The Last Post beautifully on the flute as part of our service. Families were then invited into the hall at the end of the school day to light a candle, reflect and pray for those for have lost their lives in service.



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Nursery



This Half-Term...

We have enjoyed welcoming parents into Nursery this half term for our first 'Stay & Play' sessions of the year. The children enjoyed showing their grown-ups around their learning environment!

We have been so busy practising for our first Nativity! The children were all wonderful sheep and learnt so many different songs, which I am sure they have been singing at home for you! In addition to this, the children have been learning all about the story of Christmas and went to visit Father John in church.

All of the children in Nursery now have a name card and have been working hard to practise writing the letters in their name. Well done, everyone!

In maths, we have been consolidating our knowledge of numbers to 5, as well as learning all about shapes. The children enjoyed going on a shape hunt around school, looking for all of the shapes we have been learning about.

Our children say...

"We made baubles and I am going to put it on my tree."

"I like playing in the water with the ice. It melted."

"I like the Wiggly Nativity song. We did a show."



Reception



This Half-Term...

Thank you to the parents who were able to attend this term's 'Stay & Play' sessions or the Reception Christmas Crafts afternoon. It was a wonderful opportunity to share our learning with you and the children had a wonderful time!

We have been learning all about the story of the first Christmas. In the creative area, we worked carefully to build a nativity scene picture. In the small world area, we have been roleplaying and pretending to be the different characters. In the writing area, we independently wrote lists of things we would like for Christmas. The teachers were so impressed with our application of new sounds from phonics and with our beautiful letter formation.

In mathematics this term, we have focused on building repeating patterns, sequencing objects from heaviest to lightest, as well as exploring the numbers 6 and 7.

Our children say...

"I love making Christmas cards. I can write my name!"

"The Nativity area is so fun! I was the donkey."

"I do numbers every day. I can use the weighing scales."



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Year 1



This Half-Term...

Thank you to all of our families for their support towards our annual Christmas carol concert. It was lovely to see all of the children show so much confidence when performing.

In Music this term with Mrs Dewsnap, we have been learning all about percussion instruments and rhythms. We have had the opportunity to play various instruments and have begun learning songs.

In English, we have been nibbling our way to Christmas. We have loved reading all about Nibbles the Book Monster and writing diary entries as if we are him. If you see him in this newsletter please let us know so we can catch him!

This term in Maths, we have been learning about addition and subtraction. We have been looking at how to use number lines, number sentences and deepening our understanding answering reasoning questions.

Our children say...

"I loved singing Rudolf the Red Nose Reindeer and playing my air guitar!"

"Bringing one of my toys in and sharing them with my friends was really, really fun."

"Watching Mr Westbrook and Miss Ryan throw water at us in Science when testing materials for how waterproof they were made me laugh so much!"



Year 2



This Half-Term...

Christmas Nativity: The children did a fab job and delivered the most amazing production of 'Little Angel gets her Wings'. They sang with enthusiasm and acted their hearts out – watch out, X-factor here we come!

In Topic, we have been learning all about The Great Fire of London, how and why it started and how London changed for the better after it occurred. We even looked at the Plague, where it originated and how it impacted life in the UK. We had a fantastic day bringing our topic to life during our Great Fire of London day.

In Maths, we have been working on addition and subtraction using the partitioning, number line and column method. Through true perseverance, we have learnt lots of strategies to ensure we are mathmagicians.

In English, we have been learning all about owls to write our own owl fact file. We used the internet to research lots of information to help us create our final piece of writing. Should you fancy reading the BEST owl fact files in Didsbury, head on down to Year 2!

Our children say...

"I loved doing the Christmas play and I'm so proud of my performance. I think our show has definitely got the X-Factor!"

"I had so much fun during our Great Fire of London day. I loved making the 17th century biscuits. They were delicious!"

"I loved learning about owls and the most interesting fact I learnt was that owls can move their heads in almost any direction. "



Love

Faith

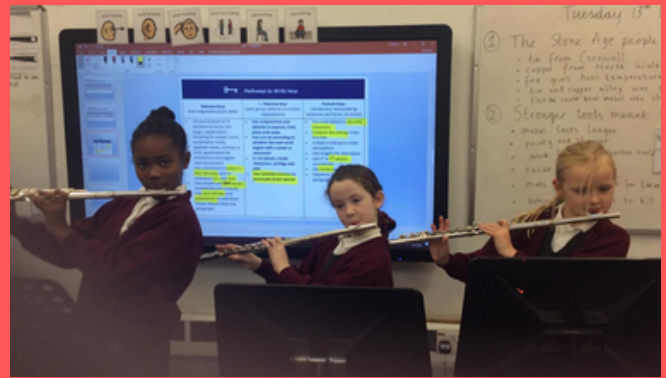
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Year 3



This Half-Term...

In PE, we have been learning the skills of cricket. We have learnt how to bowl and bat. We definitely have some future cricket stars in Year 3!

In Art, we have been exploring different textures and choosing the correct pencil to help us achieve different effects. We've had to observe objects carefully to achieve the desired effect.

In Maths, we have been learning all about column addition and subtraction and applying these new skills to challenging questions. We are really proud of our problem-solving skills and also our resilience when learning new concepts.

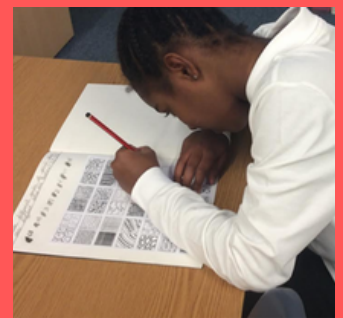
In Music, Mrs Dewsnap has been teaching us many songs and also how to play Ukulele. Our favourite song that we have learnt this half term is 'Creepy Castle.'

Our children say...

"I like my flute lessons because you get to learn about different parts of the flute and you get to learn different songs- like jingle bells!"

"I have liked learning new things that help to make our writing better such as time adverbials, similes and expanded noun phrases."

"I enjoyed using the different grades of pencil and exploring different patterns and designs."



Year 4



This Half-Term...

In Design Technology, we researched the chef Raffaele Esposito. He created the original margarita pizza using the colours of the Italian flag. We used his idea to design, make and evaluate our own pizzas using only red (pepperoni, tomatoes, red peppers), green (basil, olives, peppers) and white (mozzarella cheese) ingredients. They were delicious!

In Science, we have been busy learning all about the water cycle. We had lots of fun creating our own version of the water cycle using sandwich bags and water. We stuck these onto the windows and observed the different stages such as evaporation, condensation and precipitation.

Our Topic this term is the Vikings, which has been great! We really enjoyed the Launch Day, where we learned all about Viking long boats. During a research lesson, we used the iPads to learn all about Lindisfarne which was invaded by Vikings in the 8th Century.

During PSHE this term, a focus has been managing dares. This has involved interesting discussions about 'risk' and 'challenges' and how to resist peer pressure to participate in risky behaviour.

Our children say...

"I loved making our own pizzas – I was even brave enough to try a jalapeno pepper!"

"Our Viking topic has been really interesting – they were a brutal bunch! I loved making a Viking long boat for homework!"

"The Science experiment was really fun as we got to melt chocolate and sugar!"



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Year 5



This Half-Term...

In Science, we have been learning about properties of everyday materials. We have conducted scientific enquiries to discover which materials work best for specific purposes. We've investigated which materials work best as insulators, which materials are best for conducting electricity and which are best suited for food preparation and cleaning.

In English, we have been working on writing our own traditional tales based on Carol Ann Duffy's book, 'The Lost Happy Endings'. We've also explored Neil Gaiman's version of 'Hansel and Gretel', using it as inspiration for our setting and character descriptions. In Spanish, we have made cards introducing ourselves to our pen friends in Spain and using our Spanish vocabulary words to describe likes and interests. These have been posted to our pen friends and we can't wait to hear back from them. We also learned a Spanish traditional 'villancico' (Christmas carol) and sang for the Spanish children during our video call this week!

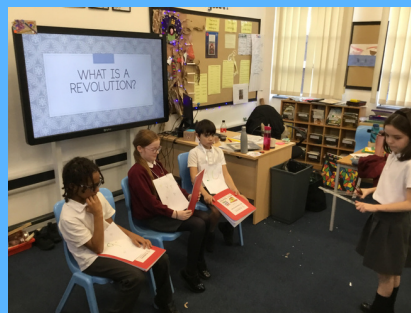
Anti-Bullying Week provided an excellent opportunity to discuss how we can 'REACH OUT' to others and make our school a kind and caring environment. We have also discussed empathy, peer pressure and showing respect in our friendships.

Our children say...

"I loved Spanish because we got to spend time on video calls with our penfriends and we also got to sing for them!"

"I liked learning about conductors and insulators because we get to do experiments and learn outside our books!"

"Anti-Bullying Week was inspiring and fun - we got to design a poster, we had Odd Socks Day and we thought of ways to reach out to others!"



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Year 6



This Half-Term...

In Computing, we have been working with MGL to code crumbles, which we then used as part of our DT project to create prototypes of festive garden lights. We used our coding knowledge to sequence how the lights worked in our designs and the colours that they were as well. The children were so focused in these lessons and this resulted in amazing work that was produced.

In Topic, the children have looked at the discrimination that Jewish people faced under the Nazi regime. To help us to understand this, we studied extracts from Anne Frank's diary, Kristallnacht and the anti-Jewish laws. After this, we looked at the Battle of Britain and how this led to the Blitz. The children have really enjoyed this unit of work and are looking forward to their new unit in January.

In English, we have continued to expand our knowledge of how to write a variety of genres by understanding the key features of these. The children have now become more familiar with the different tenses that are needed and how to apply these in the different genres. More recently, we have focused on non-chronological reports and explanation texts.

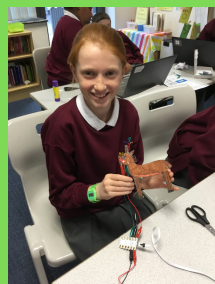
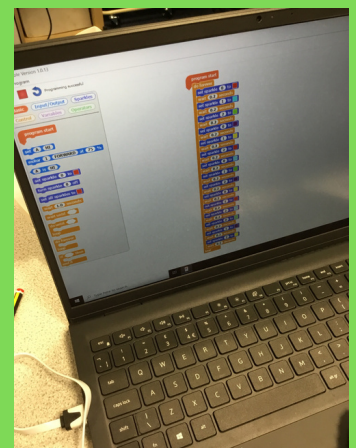
In PE, we have been working with City in the Community on their Christmas Social Action Project, to help those in the local area. This has been achieved by donating food items and creating Christmas cards to be shared with them. Year 6 have really enjoyed their time with Mr Heath, working on strike & field games and invasion games too.

Our children say...

"I loved coding the lights to be all different colours and getting them to flash as well. It was a lot of fun and it made my design come to life."

"Learning about Anne Frank and what happened to the Jewish people has taught me that we should never let history repeat itself and we must learn from it."

"I like changing my writing 'cap,' depending on which genre that I am writing."



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Sporting Achievements



The Year 5/6 boys' football team have played their first two matches of the year, winning 16 – 0 against Chapel Street and 5 – 2 against Beaver Road. The children represented the school impeccably and showed great team spirit to produce two outstanding performances. Well done boys! We thank Barlow RC High School for hosting these matches.

On a sad note, Mr Steiner will be leaving us at Christmas. Thank you for your dedication to providing so many sporting opportunities to the children of St Catherine's. Your meticulous preparation & organisation for all events and enthusiasm will be a big loss. Good luck!

Upcoming: Premier League Primary Stars

In January, the qualifying rounds for the Premier League Primary Stars tournament will begin. These are hosted by the City in the Community Foundation and the Manchester United Foundation and are a chance to represent Manchester City or Manchester United at a Premier League stadium.

Last year, girls from Year 5 and Year 6 managed to qualify for the national finals, getting the opportunity to play at Watford's Vicarage Road Stadium.

Could it be you this year?



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Student Leadership



Laudato Si' Council

At the beginning of December, four members of our Laudato Si' Committee attended a Pupil Parliament event at MEA in Wythenshawe. They met with other Rights Respecting schools across Manchester to focus on children's health. They collaborated on a range of activities, looking at how health is linked to Children's Rights, the different milestones in health care, and how health services look different across the world. They were fantastic ambassadors for St Catherine's and are already now thinking of ways to continue improving children's health within our own school!

Caritas Ambassadors

Our Caritas Ambassadors have made a brilliant start to their new roles in school. They have created beautiful Caritas Ambassador shields to display in school to show what it means to be an ambassador and they have also worked hard to write many, many Christmas cards for a local charity to share with some of our elderly community members over the Christmas period.

GIFT Team

This half-term the GIFT team have been very busy! They have supported with readings at Mass; written Christmas cards; helped to decorate the school Christmas tree; sorted food donations for the food bank and helped during worships.

We are currently working on writing a St Catherine's GIFT Team prayer, which will be used within class, in worships, in class worships – the children have some great ideas so watch this space for a new GIFT Team prayer!



Governance



This term, the Governors have been delighted to work with the new Senior Leadership Team in school, with Miss Quiligotti starting her first full school year as our permanent Headteacher and Miss Maguire making a great start to her new role as Deputy Head. Working alongside our Assistant Head Mrs McCormick, we're sure you'll agree the new Leadership Team have made a fantastic start and have already made lots of positive changes to our school.

All schools have a School Development and Improvement Plan to identify areas they are focusing on improving, and this school year, Governors have been assigned roles focusing on specific areas of this plan for St Catherine's. This means that we can support staff in ensuring that as much progress as possible is made in those areas.

The Governors believe that St Catherine's has a powerful and inspiring mission statement: "Be who God wants you to be and so set the world on fire." Over the next term, the Governors would like to develop a Five Year Strategic Plan for the school to help it to deliver on this mission statement, and we would like to ask parents and staff to be involved with this. More information will be sent out after Christmas; however, just as an advance warning, we will ask parents to consider their responses to two key questions:

- What do you want your children to have learned, experienced and become by the time they leave the school?
- What do you want St Catherine's to be known for?

If you do have a spare moment over the busy Christmas period we would love you to give this some thought, and we are excited to work on this together as we look ahead to the future as a whole school community.

Liz Dumbill. Chair of Governors (on behalf of St. Catherine's governors)

Parent and Teacher Association (PTA)



Dear parents and carers,

The PTA wanted to provide a quick update after a really busy term !

Financial Update:

Firstly, we wanted to start by saying a huge thank you for your generosity and support during the Autumn/Winter term. The funds we raise do make a meaningful difference to the children and school community. Thank you also for the food bank donations as part of our Festive appeal. See the photo below.

Highlights included our fantastic fashion show which raised £2,839.10 with 100% of these funds gift matched.

Our Festive disco also raised £1175 excluding gift matching.

Special thanks to all of our parent helpers who helped make both of these events a huge success.

The total raised as of the end of November was £4,664.22, even before our festive calendar of events. £10,000 is being transferred to the school and will help support the ICT developments during 2023.

Upcoming events:

Tuesday 31st January 2023- Bag2School

Friday 17th February Break the Rules Day

Friday 24th March Movie Night (Year 1 upwards)



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Parent and Teacher Association (PTA)



Ongoing events:

As mentioned in previous updates, there are a number of easy fundraising opportunities listed below in which we encourage you to participate. After all, there are pretty big prizes to be won (as in £25k!) and its a case of simply turning your online shopping into donations at no cost to you. Please see below for details:

Your School Lottery

<https://www.yourschoollottery.co.uk/lottery/school/st-catherines-r-c-primary-school>

Easy Fundraising

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/stcatherinesdidsbury/>

AmazonSmile

<https://smile.amazon.co.uk/ch/1165650-0>

Gift Matching

Please check with your employer to see whether you are eligible for Gift Matching as part of the company benefit. Your contributions towards fundraising activities for the PTA can often be matched either in full or in part by your employer.

Few Open Asks

Roles: We have several parents interested in assuming roles on the committee. We were unable to vote in the committee during the November AGM given low attendance.

The next meeting will be Wednesday 25th January at 6:00pm in the school hall and we do ask for more parents to come and support this.

Wishing you a wonderful Christmas and a very Happy New Year. See you in 2023!

The PTA



Raise FREE funds
for us every time you
Shop online



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