



SAINT CHRISTINA'S BULLETIN

Friday 16th January 2026





SAINT CHRISTINA'S BULLETIN

Dear Parents,

Over the past year, a number of you have spoken to me about our digital strategy. Questions about screen use, AI, and how schools should respond to a changing digital landscape come up often, and rightly so. This is an area where families want clarity, and I want to share how we are approaching it as part of our longer-term thinking.

As part of our Approaching 2030 strategic plan, and our work to strengthen governance, oversight, and leadership, we have added a new subcommittee of the governing body focused on wellbeing and safeguarding. Both areas already sit within our existing structures, but the pace and complexity of current research around digital use in childhood convinced us that this work needed more time, focus, and clearer accountability. One of the committee's early priorities will be to develop clear terms of reference around screen use, digital habits, and AI.

Many of you will remember me saying that we have no intention of introducing child-facing AI at Saint Christina's. That position has not changed. You may also recall, that of the senior schools I visited last year, almost all operate one-to-one device models. In many prep schools, children are issued with their own device in the upper years and take it home daily. We have chosen not to follow that path. Homework, as far as it is practical, will continue to be completed using a pen and paper.

During the autumn term, I asked colleagues for an appraisal of how technology is currently used in lessons. I wanted to know what genuinely supported learning and what made it more challenging. The feedback was remarkably consistent. Technology can help teachers explain ideas clearly, gives children time to practise and revisit learning, and enables them to work together productively but it can also affect attention. When devices appear too frequently, focus drops and learning has the potential to become thinner. Colleagues were also clear about a limit we all recognise: what we can monitor in school, we cannot monitor at home.

Just before Christmas, a parent shared a fascinating article from The Economist regarding AI. For me, the most compelling point it made was not about things going wrong with AI, but about what happens when AI works exactly as designed. Modern AI systems personalise, learn preferences, anticipate responses, and remove friction. They aim to make tasks quicker and easier.

For adults, that efficiency is useful for obvious reasons but for children it can have different consequences. When technology continually adapts to a child, it reduces the need for the child to adapt themselves. The answers come faster, yes, but challenge is filtered out, and exposure to unfamiliar ideas becomes narrow. Over time, this can limit the very habits schools are trying to develop. Think about our 6C's, our work on critical thinking and metacognition.

Schools exist to widen a child's world, not shrink it. It is the very nature of education to introduce ideas and concepts children would not choose for themselves. We ask them to sit with uncertainty, to work through confusion, and to learn alongside others who think differently. These experiences build concentration, judgement, resilience, and depth of understanding. Essentially, they rely on friction, not its removal.



SAINT CHRISTINA'S BULLETIN

Our position is therefore deliberate. We will not introduce one-to-one devices. We will continue to value pen and paper. We will use technology where it strengthens teaching and learning and be mindful of its use where it weakens attention, depth, or relationships.

I am also conscious that in an area like this, no single approach will please everyone. Families hold different views, and those views matter. At the same time, a school cannot set its direction merely by collecting opinions. Our responsibility is to make careful, professional judgements in the best interests of children, grounded in research, experience, and educational expertise, even where that does not align perfectly with every preference.

The new subcommittee will meet later this term to begin shaping its work, including how we offer clearer guidance to families around screen use and overexposure. This will be evidence-led work, and we will keep you informed as it develops.

I hope this gives you a sense of our thinking and I thank you for your continued engagement and trust.

Have a good weekend when it comes.

Best,

Damien Walshe
Headteacher

Reminder: Parent Workshop: *The Alchemy of Self-Compassion*

As part of our wish to introduce more talks for our parents, before the holidays, we shared details about a possible parent workshop exploring The Alchemy of Self-Compassion, led by Caroline Hanson. As we continue to gauge interest, we wanted to share this again in case any parents missed it or would like to register their interest.

The session would explore how the way we speak to ourselves shapes how we show up for our children, offering gentle reflection, practical tools and simple self-compassion practices to support calmer, more connected parenting.

At this stage, we are simply gauging interest. If this is something you would be keen to attend, please let me know at dburke@saintchristinas.org.uk.

Mr Burke - Assistant Head (Pastoral)



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REMINDER: International and Heritage Next Week



We are very much looking forward to our International & Heritage Week, which will take place from **Monday 19th to Friday 23rd January**.

During the week, each class will be learning about a different country as part of their classwork. Alongside this, we are excited to continue our much-loved home heritage project, which has evolved each year with the last two themes:

- Who am I? – exploring personal heritage
- Influential people from our heritage

This Year's Home Project: Living Heritage – Traditions, Stories & Celebrations

For this year's (optional) project, we invite the children to create something at home that celebrates a living tradition or aspect of culture from their heritage. This might be something that is still practised or celebrated today and has meaning for their family. The project links closely to our 6Cs, particularly creativity and communication.

Children can choose one of the following:

- A family tradition (e.g. food, holiday, ritual, weekly practice)
- A cultural celebration or festival
- A traditional story, legend, or myth
- A traditional craft, dance, song, or game
- A food with cultural meaning (focusing on why it matters, rather than just the recipe)

To help guide the children, they may wish to consider:

- What is it?
- Where does it come from?
- Why is it important to your family or culture?
- How is it celebrated or shared today?
- What would you like others to know about it?



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Projects can be presented in any creative way, for example, a poster, model, scrapbook, digital presentation, or artefact display. We encourage children to focus on meaning and storytelling, rather than size or complexity. The children will share their projects with the class during the week.

On Friday 23rd January the children are **invited to wear national dress or the colours of their country's flag**, and we will celebrate during our International Mass in the afternoon, which you are welcome to attend.

If you have any questions or would like guidance on supporting your child with their project, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support. We are really looking forward to celebrating the rich diversity of our school community together.

Mrs Ellisdon & Ms Sephton - Assistant Head (Academic) & Head of Humanities

Art Update

We are excited to share that the Art Department has two inspiring projects planned for the coming weeks.

Our first project is to participate once again in the Show Racism the Red Card competition. After the absolute success of last year, we are thrilled to be involved again in this fantastic cause. Not only is it wonderful to take part in the competition for a second year, but it is also incredibly meaningful to know that our children are contributing to making our world a fairer and kinder place. As part of this project, children will be designing t-shirts and football boots, and there will also be a free artwork section where children can create art and write messages to stand up against racism in England.

The second focus in the Art Department is Heritage Week. We are very keen to link art with this celebration, allowing our children to explore the culture of their chosen countries through characteristic art forms. Year 1, Year 2 and Year 5 will be taking part in this project:

- **Year 1** will be learning about Celtic knots (Ireland)
- **Year 2** will explore the work of Vincent van Gogh (Netherlands)
- **Year 6** will focus on Damascus mosaics (Syria)

We are really looking forward to seeing the creativity, learning and thoughtful discussions that these projects will inspire across the school.

Ms Bretones - Head of Art & DT



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Nursery turned junk into robots!

This week, Nursery became completely absorbed in making robots through junk modelling. What started as a small group exploring the junk modelling box quickly grew into a whole class project as more children joined in. There was lots of rich talk about different buttons and what they might do, alongside thoughtful decisions about adding mouths, tongues, beepers, sprayers and even wheels. We can't wait to continue this next week and see where it leads us.

Ms Randle - Head of EYFS





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Sustainable Thinking in Reception

This week, Reception has been learning how paper is recycled and why it is important to look after our trees. After watching a video about the recycling process, the children were surprised to learn that paper can only be recycled up to seven times and that trees, which are home to many animals, are often cut down to make it. Inspired to take action, the class made their own recycled paper using scraps from the classroom. They tore it, soaked it, mashed it into pulp, and spread it onto a frame to dry. It was a lot of work for one piece of paper, and the children were amazed. They thoroughly enjoyed the process and are already excited to try it again. On Friday, our Thinking Moves question was "If trees could talk, what would they say?" which led to thoughtful discussions about caring for nature and making more sustainable choices. The children are becoming more aware of their impact and are keen to reuse paper and recycle whenever they can.

Ms Williams - Reception Class Teacher





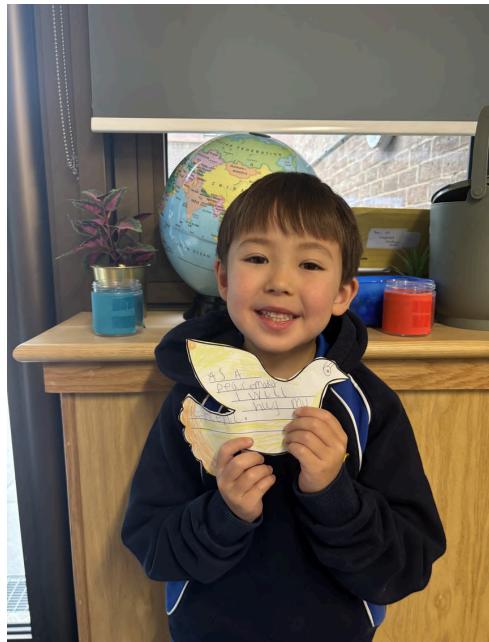
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Year 1 RE: Catholic Social Teaching - Solidarity and Peace

This week, Year 1 continued learning about the Catholic Social Teaching topic of Solidarity and Peace. We talked about what peace means and how Jesus teaches us to be peacemakers through our words and actions. We listened to Bible words such as "Blessed are the peacemakers" and learned that peacemakers help make the world kinder and calmer by sharing, forgiving, using gentle words and helping others.

The children reflected on how small choices can make a big difference and discussed how they can help create peace in their classroom, at school and at home. We each created Peacemaker Promises on doves, a symbol of peace. Each promise shared one way the children will try to help others feel safe, included and happy. We learned that peace begins with us and that our kind choices help us live as Jesus teaches us.

Ms Higgins and Ms Khalique - Year 1 Class Teachers





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Year 2

This week in Year 2, we have started a brilliant new class book, *The Creakers*, and the children have loved diving into its strange and mysterious world. Some children have enjoyed it so much that they have been keen to read ahead during independent reading time!

In Maths, we have begun our learning on multiplication, using repeated addition to help us understand what multiplication means. The children have approached this new learning with confidence and enthusiasm.

In PSHE, we took part in a Votes for Schools session, exploring the question, "Are you interested in news from other countries?" At the end of the lesson, we voted and compared our results with the national data. Nationally, 68.2% said they were interested, while 31.8% said they were not. Our Year 2 class showed even greater interest than the national average!

Mr Burke - Year 2 Class Teacher





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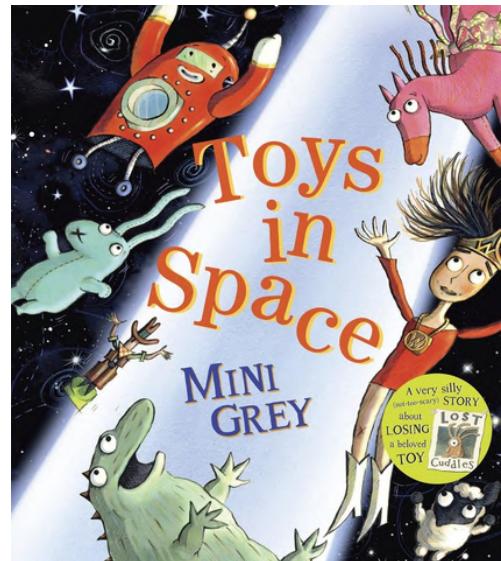
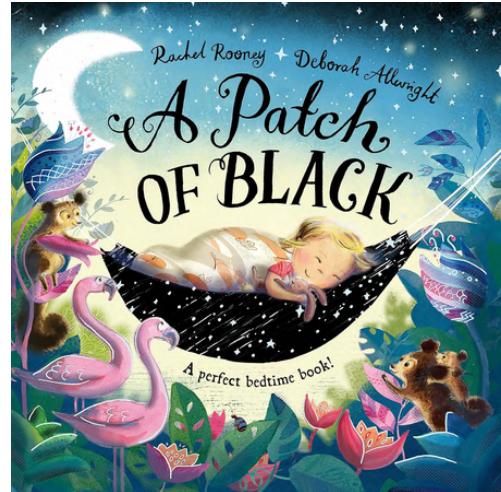
KS1 Story Club

Story Club got off to a great start this week, with lots of excitement and a shared love of stories. The children listened carefully, joined in with discussions and enjoyed spending time together exploring new books. We are really looking forward to a wonderful term of reading, talking about stories and sharing favourite books!

This week, we enjoyed Toys in Space by Mini Grey, which sparked lots of imagination and laughter, and A Patch of Black by Deborah Allwright, a thoughtful story that led to some lovely conversations.

We are excited for the weeks ahead. Stay tuned for our weekly story recommendations!

Ms Higgins - Year 1 Class Teacher



KS1 STEM

This week in STEM Club, our young engineers were inspired by Harold the Helicopter! After listening to Harold's story, the children explored how helicopters fly and then designed and created their very own paper helicopters. They tested their creations by dropping them from different heights and observed how they spun as they fell. It was a fantastic way to learn about air resistance, gravity, and design, and everyone had fun experimenting with ways to make their helicopters spin even better!

Ms Farquhar - Year 4 Class Teacher

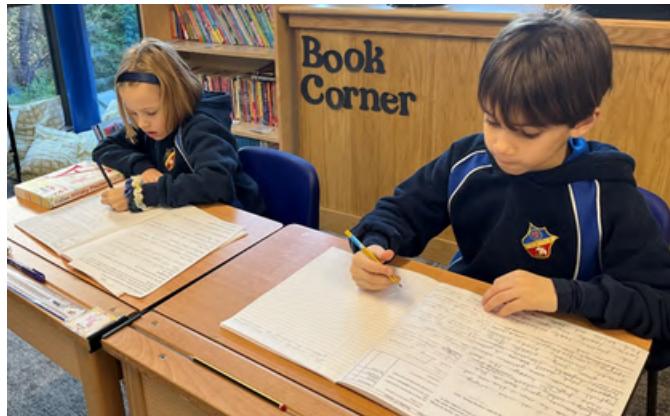


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Year 3

In Year 3, the children have been exploring poetry this term by reading and analysing a range of poems, focusing on structure, rhyming patterns and themes. They discussed different poem structures together as a class and worked in groups to share ideas. This week the children planned and wrote their own list poems based on the theme of colours, suggesting objects, feelings and ideas linked to each colour. They set out each verse correctly, using punctuation such as commas, full stops and apostrophes. They worked hard to make their writing more descriptive by adding adjectives to create expanded noun phrases. They also included imagery in their poems, using similes, metaphors or personification, and used a thesaurus to improve and extend their vocabulary.

Ms Sephton - Year 3 Class Teacher



Black is the beady eagle's eye supervising the world.
It is the starry sky singing a lullaby.
It is a wizened black cat meowing in the night.
Black is the feeling of fear.

The colours poem

Blue is the colour of the dancing dolphins swimming in the sea.
It is a whirlpool as angry as a bothered lion.
It is a peaceful flowing river.
Blue is the feeling of mystery.

Yellow is the star as bright as the sun.
It is the buttercups dancing in the fields.
It is the buzzing bees, eagerness and Yellow is the feeling of excitement.

Green is nature singing songs.
It is green cabbages.
It is green fresh leaves.
Green is the feeling of calmness.

Brown are the horses running galloping rapidly.
It is a tree stump from the park.
It is the hot chocolate you drink.
Brown is the feeling of alarm.

My colours poem

Yellow is the daffodils watching the bees make honey.
It is the hot sun joyfully smiling.
It is the buttercups eating bananas cheerfully in the summer.
Yellow is the feeling of happiness.

Green is the wavy grass under a green fog.
It is the leaves rustling in the trees.
It is the moss on the ground asleep.
Green is the feeling of calmness.

Blue is the excited dolphin dancing in the colossal blue sea.
It is the blue tits singing in the rainy sky.
It is the cold, peaceful river flowing in the winter.
Blue is the feeling of sadness.

White is a graceful swan paddling in the lake.
It is a blanket of snow crunching under your feet.
It is the blank pages of a book waiting to be used.
White is the feeling of peace.



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Year 4

Year 4 had a fantastic week! On Friday, they proudly hosted Mass for the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. Well done to everyone who practised so hard and represented us so beautifully. In Religion, we explored why Jesus was given the title Christ and studied an artwork of John the Baptist pointing to the coming Messiah. Geography lessons focused on latitude and longitude, including key lines like the Equator, Tropics, Arctic, Antarctic Circles and the Prime Meridian, which runs through London! In Maths, we completed our topic on length and perimeter, solving problems with rectilinear shapes and missing lengths. In English, we enjoyed a poem comprehension, learned about fronted adverbials, answered questions on Journey to the River Sea, and wrote diary entries from Maia's perspective as she heads to the Amazon. In Art, we finished our vibrant toucan drawings using oil pastels - aren't they amazing? Finally, in PSHE, we completed our Spring 1 pupil voice survey and took part in Vote for Schools.

Ms Farquhar - Year 4 Class Teacher





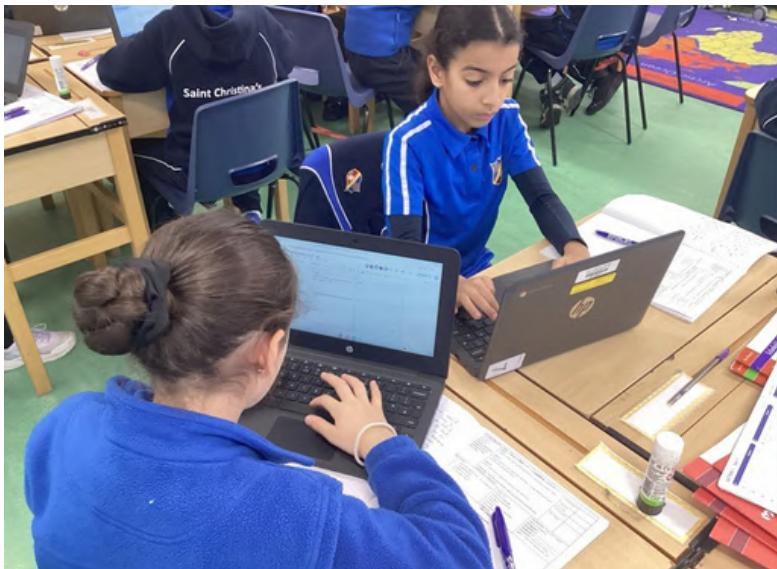
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Year 5 English – Debate Writing

In English this week, Year 5 took part in a lively debate based on the statement: "Children should be allowed to go on holiday during term time." Children used their Chromebooks to collaborate on a shared live document, working together to generate ideas, reasons and counter-arguments.

This debate was inspired by our class novel *Kensuke's Kingdom*, where the protagonist, Michael, goes on a world tour on a sailboat with his parents, leaving school behind. Year 5 made thoughtful links between Michael's experiences and real-life learning, discussing whether valuable learning can happen outside the classroom. The lesson helped the children develop their speaking, listening, teamwork and persuasive writing skills, while learning how to respectfully agree and disagree with others.

Ms O'Leary - Year 5 Class Teacher





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Year 6 Passion Projects in Full Swing!

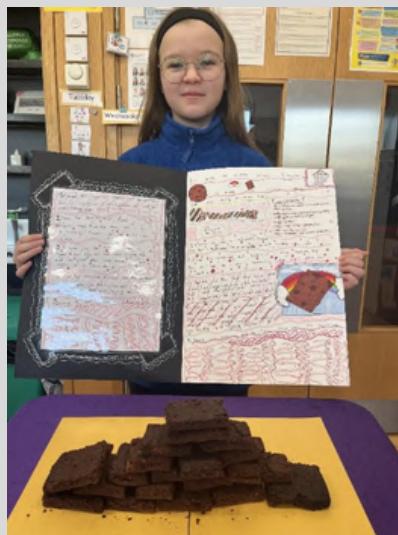
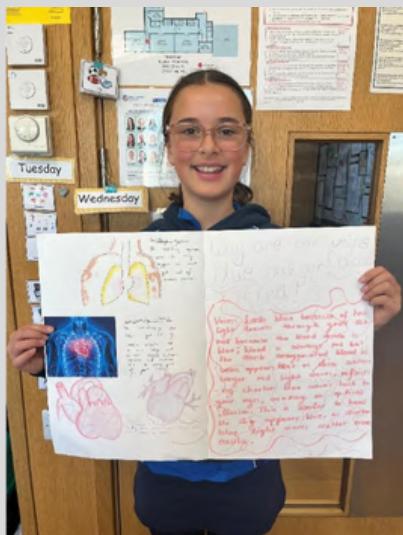
The children in Year 6 have enthusiastically embraced their independent passion projects, each choosing an area of personal interest to explore in depth. The initiative has really taken off, with the children being so engaged that they are choosing to work on their projects during lunchtimes and even at home.

A couple of standout examples this week, one child has combined two of her passions, photography and baking, into the start of a wonderfully creative project. This week, she arrived at school armed with her camera and a batch of delicious homemade brownies, ready to photograph her creations. Taking her project one step further, she invited her classmates to take part in a taste-testing session so she could gather feedback. Unsurprisingly, the class were only too happy to help!

Another child was deeply engrossed in her project during a lunchtime this week. Having chosen biology as her focus, she was working independently when she suddenly asked, "Why do your veins look blue when blood is red?" This thoughtful question sparked a lively discussion among those in the classroom. She then paused her original work and decided to explore this question further, researching the science behind it and deepening her understanding.

Another project is on baking, and the child wants to work on developing some delicious bakes which those with allergies can also enjoy. To kick start, she made a Victoria sponge cake to gain feedback from her peers. She is then going to tweak her recipe and make one for those who are gluten free or dairy free.

Moments like these are truly wonderful. The children are generating their own curiosity, asking meaningful questions, and delving deeper to extend and develop their learning in a purposeful and self-motivated way. It has been a joy to see such motivation, creativity and independence from the children as they take real ownership of their learning.



Mrs Ellisdon - Year 6 Class Teacher



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Sport Update

It has been a fantastic start to the term in PE, with children showing great energy, enthusiasm, and effort in every lesson. It has been lovely to see their commitment and enjoyment across all year groups. Clubs are back in full swing, and the children have shown great enthusiasm despite the wet weather.

A reminder to parents and carers to please ensure that children come to school prepared for PE with a waterproof coat. Lessons may take place outdoors in light rain to make the most of available space and facilities.

This term, children across the school will be developing a wide range of physical skills. EYFS children will be focusing on ball skills and gymnastics, building confidence and coordination. In Key Stage 1, children will develop their teamwork and movement skills through tag rugby, ball skills, and gymnastics. Key Stage 2 children will take part in football, netball, and gymnastics, further developing their tactical awareness, fitness, and cooperation.

There are also many exciting sporting events planned for the coming weeks. Year 5 and 6 children will compete in the Inter-House Netball Competition, while all Key Stage 2 classes will take part in the Inter-House Cross Country Competition. Year 4 children will participate in a two-week intensive swimming program, and several football and netball fixtures will begin next week. It promises to be a busy and active term, and we are very proud of the enthusiasm and effort being shown by all our children.

Date	Against	Team/YR	Venue	Time
Monday 19 th January	St Mary's	YR 5A & B Netball Girls	Away	16.00-17.00
Tuesday 20 th January	Channing	YR 5 Netball	Home	15.15-15.45
Monday 26 th January	Trevor Roberts	YR 3/4 Mixed Football	Home	15.45-16.45
Monday 2 nd February	Trevor Roberts	YR 5/6 Mixed Football	Home	15.45-16.45
Monday 9 th February	Ivy House	YR 3/4 Netball	Home	15.40-16.30
Tuesday 10 th February	Ivy House	YR 5A and 6A Netball	Home	15.00-16.00

Mr Raveney - Director of Sport



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Music Update

Music Assemblies

I am organising some music assemblies this term. This is normally an opportunity for children who have lessons in school to perform to an audience, but this time it will also be open to children who have lessons outside school. If your child has music lessons outside school and would like to perform, please complete the form [here](#) to register your interest, and I will get in touch once we have dates confirmed. Please note that the final date for completing the form is **Monday 19th January**.

Music Lessons

We have spaces for flute, violin, guitar, trumpet and trombone lessons at the moment. If you are interested in lessons for your child, you can find information and the application form [here](#). If you have any questions, please contact me via email - ebryant@saintchristinas.org.uk

Mrs Bryant - Director of Music

News of past pupil's academic success

The International Youth Math Challenge (IYMC) is a Mathematics competition aimed at pupils in high schools, and predominantly children in Years 10 and above.

One of our ex-pupils, Giulio, passed the qualification round in this competition and has gone through to the pre-final round, which should take place sometime in the next few weeks or so. He has done very well to pass through to the pre-final round, given that he is in Year 7 and most of the other competitors are at least three years older than he is.

We wish him every success in this competition and for his continued success in Mathematics.

Fr Rudolf - Teacher in charge of Enrichment



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DINY'S SENSORY AND MESSY PLAY (FROM 10 MONTHS - TO 36 MONTHS)

SENSORY AND MESSY PLAY GIVES BABIES AND YOUNG CHILDREN THE FREEDOM TO EXPLORE THE WORLD THROUGH THEIR SENSES-TOUCH,SIGHT,SOUND,SMELL AND MOVEMENT. THROUGH ACTIVITIES AND EXPLORING DIFFERENT TEXTURES, CHILDREN BUILD CONFIDENCE, CURIOSITY, AND ESSENTIAL EARLY SKILLS.

OUR NEXT SESSIONS WILL HAVE A FUN ANIMAL THEME RELATED ACTIVITIES AND VALENTINE DAY TUFF TRAYS.

LED BY EDINA, A QUALIFIED EARLY YEARS EDUCATOR WITH 10+ YEARS EXPERIENCE INCLUDING ROLES AS BABY ROOM LEADER AND DEPUTY MANAGER.

VENUE: THE ART'S HALL. SAINt CHRISTINA'S SCHOOL,
25 ST EDMUND'S TERRACE
NW8 7PY

24TH OF JANUARY/ 7TH OF FEBRUARY-SATURDAY

TIME: 10:30AM - 11:30AM

PRICE: £10 PER CHILD CASH ONLY

PLEASE ENSURE YOU ARE PRESENT WITH YOUR CHILD FOR THE DURATION OF THE SESSION



PLEASE BOOK YOUR SPACE VIA THE EMAIL ADDRESS BELOW:

RETESIE@GMAIL.COM



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NOTICES and REMINDERS

Nut Free School

We have a number of children and staff in the school who have serious nut allergies. Please will you ensure that you do not give your child any nuts or nut products (e.g. Nutella) to bring into school.

Sunday Mass

You are warmly invited to join Sunday Mass, which is held in the Chapel at 10:00am.

Parking

We kindly ask parents and carers to please avoid parking on the zig-zag lines outside the school. Keeping this space clear helps ensure a safe and smooth arrival and departure for all our children. Thank you for your support.



SAINT CHRISTINA'S BULLETIN

Dates for your diary

**Monday 19th
January**

- Heritage/International Week

Tuesday 20th January

- Year 5 Netball (Home)

**Friday 23rd
January**

- Year 2 International Mass (2.45pm)
- **Non-School Uniform**

**Monday 26th
January**

- Year 3/4 Mixed Football (Home)
- **Year 4 Swimming (2 Weeks)**

**Thursday 29th
January**

- Mr Walshe & Mrs Reilly visiting Handmaids School in Dublin

**Friday 30th
January**

- Year 6 Mass (2.45pm)
- **Year 3 & 4 PL Movie Night (Details to Follow)**

**Monday 2nd
February**

- Year 5/6 Mixed Football (Home)

**Wednesday 4th
February**

- Year 5/6 Inter House Football
- **Parent Child Learning Review (Rec - Year 6)**



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**Thursday 5th
February**

- Parent Child Learning Review (Rec - Year 6)
- Mr Walshe attending the CISC Conference (2 Days)

**Friday 6th
February**

- NSPCC Workshop with Years 2, 5 and 6
- Year 5 Mass (2.45pm)
- **Year 5 & 6 PL Movie Night (Details to Follow)**

**Monday 9th
February**

- Year 3/4 Netball (Home)
- Inter House Pancake Challenge (Throughout the week)

**Tuesday 10th
February**

- **6C Challenge Day**
- Year 5A and Year 6A Netball Fixture (Home)

**Thursday 12th
February**

- Inter House Music Competition

Thursday 12th February

SCHOOL CLOSES AT USUAL TIME FOR HALF TERM

Monday 23rd February

CHILDREN RETURN

ABOVE TIMES/DATES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Please note: Policies can be found on the School Website – please click link below:

<https://www.saintchristinas.org.uk/our-school/policies/>