



Mr. Hall writes ...

February 2026

Last Friday marked the last time that the sun would set before 5pm until October. As we emerge from the cold and wet of January, it feels like spring is not so far away. This year we will be on our half term break when the season of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday. Participation in the Church's year means to participate in the life of Jesus; although the dust has only just settled on Christmas, we find ourselves preparing for Jesus' death and resurrection. Once again Lent coincides with Ramadan; many members of our school community will therefore be entering a period of prayer, fasting and practical generosity. When we return, the children will be encouraged to consider what small sacrifices they might be able to make over the next 40 days as we journey towards Easter.

In addition to the usual diet of daily lessons, this first half of the Spring Term has seen some notable events. 50 of our Year 5 and 6 students have been rehearsing throughout the Autumn Term in preparation for their trip to the O2 for this year's Young Voices Concert. The event boasts the largest children's choir concerts in the world, bringing together primary schools from across the UK. It is an opportunity for children to discover their voices, grow in confidence, and feel part of something extraordinary – all while inspiring a lifelong love of music. Thank you to Mrs Tackie for organising the trip and preparing the children so well, and of course to the staff and parents who accompanied the children on the day.

Recently Year 5 and 6 pupils took part in the Sportshall Athletics competition against other local primary schools. We narrowly missed out on first place and so have not automatically qualified for the County Final - there is still a chance that we might go through as one of the best second place teams once all the Surrey events have been completed - watch this space! Thank you to Mr Willicombe and Miss Moore for organising the event and taking the children.

We were very pleased to see the new library system up and running this term. KS2 children now have their Accelerated Reader reading levels and can borrow books from the library to take home. Once they've read their book, they can complete a quiz on Accelerated Reader to gauge their understanding and log how much reading they've done. We have been at pains to remind children that they need to look after the school books - especially when they are stored in a school bag next to a leaky water bottle!

Speaking of school bags, we have seen an increase in the number of miscellaneous items which children bring into school - particularly Pokemon and Football cards. Please make

sure that these stay at home. Since stationery is provided by school, all your child needs to bring with them is listed below:

- Water bottle
- Snack
- Any homework
- Book
- Packed lunch

And finally - attendance, attendance, attendance! I speak regularly about the importance of ensuring that your children attend school as regularly as possible. If your child's attendance is 90% or lower, then they are classed as a persistent absentee. Have a look on Arbor to see how close your child is to that 90% figure. Research has shown that children fall behind when their attendance dips - please continue to do all you can to ensure regular attendance for your child and do speak to their class teacher if you need any support.

If you are fortunate enough to have a break from your own work commitments next week, I do hope you are able to enjoy some time with your children. I know that many of the children are excited about taking part in this year's Science Fair - do talk to them about what they'd like to do, and perhaps even offer (just a little) assistance.

Catholic Life – Our Catholic Culture

This year, we've found ourselves settling more and more into our new position as a Xavier school and, like anyone finding themselves in a new role, we've been reflecting on what our school is as an individual in the light of something bigger. For this reason, we've been working in the background to reflect on our school values and what it is that makes St Joseph's such a special place to be. To do this, we've taken the time to pray as a community, reflecting on the Word as a starting point for this journey.

After looking to the Word, our staff have voted for a line of scripture that they feel sits at the heart of our school identity – something that they felt encapsulates our mission as a Catholic school. Our top three were:

1. *Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven. – Matthew 5:16*
2. *I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. – John 13:34*
3. *...let love make you serve one another. – Galatians 5:13*

As we move forward, the next step will be to look at our school values in the light of the Word. What are the good works we are called to do? How do we better bring people to Christ? And how can we better kindle the light that exists in each and every member of our community? More details will follow in the next newsletter.

Feast of St John – House Saint

St John's is the third of our four houses to celebrate their feast day – and with great joy and energy too! Pupils from KS2 worked together in the afternoon to plan out their liturgy and lead one another in a time of meaningful prayer. This fun way of approaching our Liturgies



of the word puts prayer in the hands of our children, and while it may not be as shiny or as polished as it would have been if planned by our wonderful Chaplain, Mrs Barnes, it is what true prayer should be – authentically ours.

Feast of St Angela Merici – Year 4

Year four enjoyed celebrating our Feast Day this half term. We learnt all about St Angela and her life missions. We explored the quote 'Little acts, done with love, change the world.' And created a kindness chain for our RE displays with small acts of kindness we will complete for the remainder of the year. We also had a fantastic time engaging with our buddy classes in year two when we had a class swap and got to share our work with each other! We finished the day by playing with our friends on the astro. We made fantastic memories!



Epiphany Tea

Children from St Joseph's school were once again given the opportunity to entertain at the parish Epiphany Tea on Thursday 8th January. A large group of year 5 students volunteered to go with Mrs Tackie, Mrs Barnes and Miss Hassan to walk to the church (on a very wet and soggy afternoon) and sing some of the songs they had been learning in school. The event was attended by a number of usually housebound parishioners who were being treated to the social event by the St Vincent de Paul parish group. Mrs Tackie led the children in a beautiful selection of 7 songs which lifted everyone's mood and provided a really enjoyable event for all. The children then enjoyed some time chatting with those they had been entertaining, some of whom had connections with St Joseph's school over the years.



Community Prayer Group

Our St Joseph's Community Prayer Group has continued to meet each month. We look at, and reflect on, the gospel reading for the following Sunday and pray for any personal or community intentions that lead from that sharing of the word of God together. We pray for the children of the school, the staff and our own families asking God to bless us and that the Holy Spirit leads us as individuals and as a community. We of course included Fr Tony in our prayers this month for his wellbeing and recovery - we miss seeing him in school! The next session will take place the week we return to school on Wednesday 25th February. We meet at 8.50am until approximately 9.30am. All are welcome to come along and there is no obligation to come each time, just as and when you can.

Young Voices at The O2

Last month, 48 children from Years 5 and 6 travelled to London to perform at the O2 Arena as part of the Young Voices choir.

This year marked the 30th anniversary of this very special annual event, which brings together thousands of children from across the country to perform alongside professional singers, musicians and dancers in a truly spectacular concert.

Our children were thrilled to take part and, once again, did the school proud as they sang in this world-famous venue. After months of rehearsals, it was wonderful to see their hard work, enthusiasm and dedication come together in such an unforgettable performance. Their behaviour throughout the day was great and their wonderful voices filled the arena with confidence and joy.

Thank you to our parents and carers for supporting the children in learning their songs at home; your encouragement played an important part in their success.

As their choir leader, I felt incredibly proud to stand alongside them and share in this amazing experience - Mrs Tackie



Learning and laughing together in the light of God's love.

Sports at St. Joseph's

Surrey Cricket skills festival

Well done to our Year 1 and year 2 children who took part in the Surrey Cricket Skills Festival. Throughout the event, the children showed fantastic enthusiasm, excellent listening skills, and amazing behaviour, making it a really enjoyable day for everyone involved. They had the opportunity to take part in a wide range of fun, cricket-inspired activities that helped them develop their skills and confidence. The festival concluded with an exciting final game, giving the children a chance to put everything they had learned into practice. All of the children represented the school brilliantly and should be extremely proud of themselves for their effort and positive attitude.



Netball match against Meath Green

Well done to our St Joseph's netball team on delivering an outstanding performance in their recent match, demonstrating excellent teamwork, determination, and sportsmanship from start to finish. The children supported one another beautifully on and off the court, showing great communication and respect for their opponents. Their hard work and commitment

were rewarded with an impressive 13–1 victory. We are incredibly proud of the way they represented the school — well done to all players involved – Ms Moore.

“Our last match, was, the best one yet! My favourite thing about it was all of the chances we created and goals we scored. When I was goal attack (the position where you try to score) I had so many shots, but unfortunately didn’t score from any of them, but gave 3 assists which I am very proud of!

Although I didn’t score, we all had a really good time. All together, our team were brilliant, we passed the ball around and defended really well” – Eliza.

“A netball match is fun, but can also be scary on the court. We worked together as a team which helped us win. I played centre and goal defence and they were fun, because I got to do lots of running and I also got to watch all the amazing interceptions and goals we made from the sidelines. I was nervous for the match, but I had lots of fun and was amazed at how good we had become” – Ava.

“First of all, I was proud to say “Well done” to the other team because when we were winning by a mile, no one even shed a tear and that made me feel so sorry for the other team. Also, well done to my team for giving their best play I have ever seen and am so proud of you guys. And lastly, all of us have trained very hard for this match, even the other team (Meath Green). I am proud of us. Well done!” – Elna.

Safe Computing Spring 2026

I hope you enjoyed reading my post in the last newsletter!

This time, and to coincide with Safer Internet Day (10th February), I have recorded 2 PowerPoints, one for parents and carers of children in KS1, and one for KS2.

The contents of the KS1 presentation are as follows:

- KS1 internet use across the UK
- What we teach at school
- Screen time
- Tips for keeping devices safe for young children (especially YouTube)

And for KS2:

- Online Safety and Social Media
- Online Safety and Gaming
- Roblox Safety Checklist

The presentations can be downloaded from the school website on the Computing page:

<https://www.stjosephs-redhill.surrey.sch.uk/page/?title=Foundation+Subjects&pid=36>

The audio I have recorded for each slide should pop up, but please contact me if you find this is not working and we'll see how we can get it on your device.

I hope you find these presentations useful, especially the practical tips included to support internet safety at home – Mr Simons (Online Safety Officer)

Young Carers

If you believe your child is a 'Young Carer', please kindly let the office know.



Young Carers: Who are they? What do they do?



Who are young carers?

A young carer is someone **under 18** who helps look after someone in their family, or a friend, who is ill, disabled or misuses drugs or alcohol.

How many young carers are there?

- There are about **700,000 young carers in the UK**. (BBC 2010)*
- That's about **1 in 12 secondary aged pupils**.
- There are likely to be young carers in every school and college.

*The Carers Trust identified over 200,000 young carers, but many remain hidden.



Which one is the young carer?



Young carers are just young people – with caring responsibilities! They look the same as everyone else but they can lead very different lives!

Who do young carers care for?

Young carers care for someone:

- With an illness or disability.
- With a mental health condition.
- Who misuses drugs or alcohol.

Being a young carer can have a big impact on the things that are important to growing up

- It can affect a young person's health, social life and self-confidence.
- Many young carers struggle to juggle their education and caring, which can cause pressure and stress.
- In a survey, 39% said that nobody in their school was aware of their caring role.
- 26% have been bullied at school because of their caring role.
- 1 in 20 miss school because of their caring role.



But young people can learn lots of useful skills by being a young carer.

The average age of a young carer

= 13

There are young carers as young as five.

A survey of 350 young carers found 48% were stressed because of their role.

What might a young carer do?

- Practical tasks, such as cooking, housework and shopping.
- Physical care, such as helping someone out of bed.
- Emotional support, such as talking to someone who is distressed.
- Personal care, such as helping someone dress.
- Managing the family budget and collecting prescriptions.
- Helping to give medicine.
- Helping someone communicate.
- Looking after brothers and sisters.

1 in 3 young carers spend between 11–20 hours each week caring.



Young carers should have:

- The time to be a young person.
- The same opportunities as their friends.
- Good support for the person they help look after.
- Their rights acknowledged so that they can discuss their needs for support.

Information
Carers.org

