



December 2023

Mrs Lawlor writes ...

Dear Parents and carers,

This Advent I am sure we have been struck by the need for 'Peace' across the world. The children of St Joseph's have been fulfilling the messages of Advent and actively lived out the true meaning of Advent through the many activities that have taken place over this period. We have very much enjoyed inviting parents and grandparents to the EYFS and KS1 Nativities, they are always heart-warming occasions, the children have once again risen to the challenge and have sung their hearts out! They looked wonderful in their costumes. It is not an easy task ensuring 90 children are included and wish to thank the teaching team for their hard work and encouragement of all the children.

Our KS2 children sung phenomenally well at St Joseph's church on Tuesday and Thursday evening. We are blessed to have Mrs Tackie's expertise and passion in her musical direction of the singing. I appreciate it is a slightly later evening than usual but it is truly wonderful to be able to celebrate an Advent service in the church. Thank you to the families for making it a special occasion. Thank you to Mr. Pullar and Mr. Wright for preparing the church and checking the equipment.

We have seen as always great amounts of generosity from our school community supporting the food banks and donating gifts and items for our own school fayre. We appreciate there is a lot of pressure on families particularly this time of year and we are always overwhelmed with the generosity we see.

"... a thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices". We await the birth of our Lord, who brings the light of hope and salvation into the World.

Lord of light,

We rejoice and celebrate Your birth, a most humble birth in a stable. Help us to become beacons of light, of compassion. Help us to think of those less fortunate than ourselves this Christmas, to be filled with Your faith, Your love and Your humanity.

Amen



We would like to welcome back Mrs Millican after her maternity leave. We will be saying goodbye to Tracey and Emma from the kitchen, both have been part of the St Joseph's community for 11 years and they will be greatly missed from the kitchen staff team. They will be remembered fondly particularly over Covid for the meals they prepared and the great commitment they displayed to ensure everyone was fed!

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

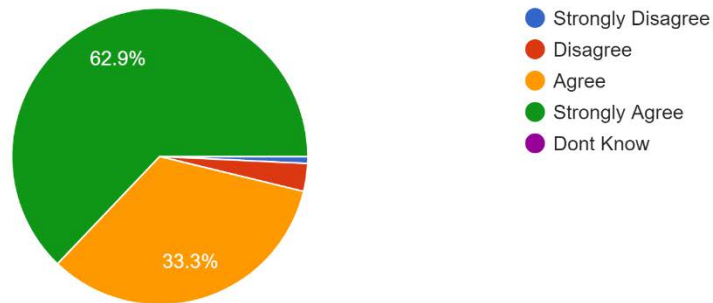
The SJA Christmas Fayre was a great success and I wish to thank all involved for making it such a good community occasion. Thank you again for the donations we received; the tombolas were very well stocked with some great gifts and prizes.

Thank you to the SJA for gifting every child at school a Christmas present. The children all enjoyed receiving a lovely festive book.

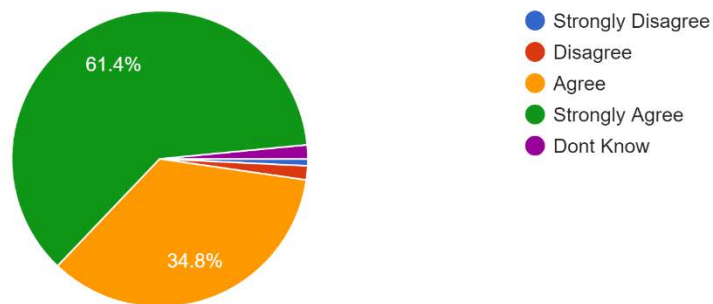
We had a lovely Christmas dinner day celebration with each year group enjoying their Christmas dinner in the hall. We would like to thank the hard-working kitchen staff team and our midday supervisors – Mecca, Maram and Jan for the work that goes into making the occasion a special one.

Thank you to all who participated in our most recent parental survey. We had 132 responses in total (more than this time last year). It is all important to us that our children are happy and safe in school:

My child is happy at school
132 responses



My child feels safe at school
132 responses



The comments received are useful to reflect on ways in which we can continue to improve. Communication is always something that comes up as area for improvement. Information about what the children are learning and how well they are doing is an area that has been identified through response to the questions and written comments. This is something we will reflect upon in the run up to the next parents' evenings in March. We decided on one virtual and one face to face to accommodate working parents and ease of attendance.

Anti-Bullying Week

On Monday 13th November, all members of St. Joseph's donned their 'odd socks' with pride to celebrate the start of Anti-Bullying Week – this is an important event in our school year, where we join together to show that it's okay to be different and to stand up against bullying and discrimination. This year's focus was 'Make A Noise About Bullying', where we revisited the importance of speaking up and sharing kindness; KS1 read the story 'Have You Filled A Bucket Today?' and explored ways of 'filling our own and others' buckets' by sharing compliments, offering support and being kind to each other. In KS2, we took part in the BBC Schools live lesson, where we explored the different ways that we can stand up to bullying, as well as discussing the difference between 'Banter' and 'Bullying'.



Road Safety Week

During this half term, it was Road Safety Week. Children across the school took part in Road Safety activities, created posters for a competition and most importantly, raised awareness about the importance of being safe on the roads. We were lucky enough to have a visitor from the Brain Injury Group who spoke to us about Road Safety, and presented the winners of the poster competition with special prizes!



Football

The Boys and Girls Football Team played matches away against Meath Green school. Both games were very competitive, on a tricky pitch in tough conditions. Both the boy's and girl's teams played really well. The boy's match was won with a last-minute own goal, along with a long-range free kick being scored by Aidan G. The girls lost the match but made Meath Green work very hard for their goals.

Well done, to both the Boy's and Girl's teams this year and we look forward to more matches in the new year. The boys go into the new year top of the league, with two wins out of 2 games played. The girls have played two games also, drawing one and losing one game so all to play for still. Have a lovely Christmas! - Mr. Kavanagh

Remembrance Assembly

On Friday 10th November, Year 6 led us in a moving and poignant Remembrance assembly. Through sharing personal anecdotes of family members' experiences during World War I and II and explaining the importance of the occasion, they ensured that the school community was able to pay their respects by observing a two-minute silence to those who have fought and are still involved in conflict around the world today.



Eco-Warriors and Sustainability Update

Since our launch at the end of September, we've been busy laying the groundwork for change at St Joseph's. Every year has been busy learning about Catholic Social Teaching - especially Stewardship, which is covered through our new RE scheme - 'To Know You More Clearly'. Year 1 especially have adored this branch, and have even made you a video telling you all about their learning throughout Autumn 1. Click here to watch with your St. Joseph's login!

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1EqPJelHi4rM39NKmbL4-IH5IPEwx-a3L/view?usp=sharing>



In addition to learning about stewardship and sustainability in class, we've also appointed our Eco-Warriors! A massive thank you to all who applied and congratulations to:

Tilly, Rayhaan, Honey,
Ruby, Olivia, Krishiv, Yssabelle, Mollie and
Andre!

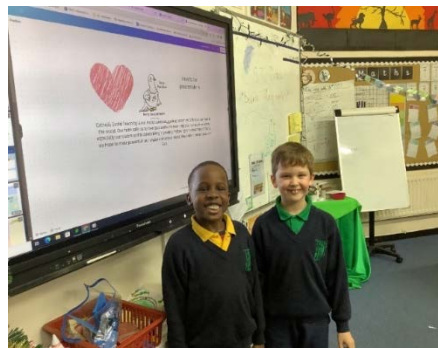
Catholic Social Teaching Day

On Monday 4th December the whole school took part in Catholic Social Teaching Day. Each year group focused on one of the CST principles, and looked at how it linked to a gospel story and the work of CAFOD. The whole theme of the day was finding ways of doing kind things for others. We were delighted to welcome back Jan Beaumont from CAFOD. She visited each class and was so impressed with the children's knowledge and their commitment to CST. The Faith Leaders ran 6 interactive workshops during the day around the parable of The Good Samaritan. They challenged everybody to think about how this parable is still relevant to our lives today. The Faith Leaders continue to be excellent role models. Well done Faith Leaders!

The day ended with a cake sale. Some of the delights on offer included biscuits decorated by Year 1 and Year 5 pupils as part of their CST activities that day. Together with the proceeds from the Brighter World Day donations we have raised an incredible £605.94 for CAFOD. Well done and thank you everybody!



Year 1 focused on the principle of caring for God's gifts and they iced biscuits to give to the school cleaning staff while Year 3 looked at the principle of promoting Peace.



Year 6 focused on the principle of Solidarity. They supported the charity PACT by making Christmas cards and prayer cards which have already been donated to the charity.

Marie Norbury from PACT met with the faith leaders and led a workshop with them. The children then decided how they would like to show their support for prisoners and their families. The children made Christmas cards and prayer cards that will be given to prisoners and their families.



Message from Marie Norbury- *'Once again, thank you for the opportunity to speak to Year 6. The Christmas cards have been given to our Family Services team at HMP Downview (women) so they will be written by the mums and given to their children at the Christmas family days. I will be at HMP High Down and HMP Downview for Mass on Christmas Day so I'll give the prayer cards out then. Bishop Richard is celebrating both Masses.'*

RE Update Autumn 2023

Autumn term has been an incredibly busy term at St Joseph's. We celebrated Harvest as a school and your very kind donations were shared between St Matthew's foodbank and Sutton food store.



Year 6 faith leaders are doing an amazing job and leading collective worships and assemblies whilst also supporting younger children across the school.

We have celebrated the feast days of St Matthew, St Andrew, St Cecilia, St Francis. Children across the school marked All Saints Day with two liturgies at school.

Fr Tony and Fr Binoy have visited the school children in Years 5 and 6 and staff had the opportunity to attend reconciliation or just have a chat should they wish.

Key stage one have shared with us their Nativity productions at school. Key stage 2 led Nativity concerts at the Church - reminding us of the true message of Christmas. This year our chosen charities for our retiring collection are The Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes Fund at the request of our Bishop and East Surrey Hospital Children's Appeal, which the faith leaders discussed and decided was the charity they wished for us to support.

We celebrated Harvest as a school and your very kind donations were shared between St Matthew's foodbank and Sutton food store. Again, many thanks to you all when things are hard for us-for your continued support and generosity with our Christmas foodbank appeal.

Wintershall

We were incredibly lucky with the weather and everyone had an incredible day attending the Wintershall workshops. The children moved from station to station and were given an item to recall the part of the Nativity story. Children have been using these bags in the class collective worship sessions



Victorian Day

On Friday 8th December, we had our Victorian day. This term, year 6 were learning about the Victorians during our Topic of Revolution. All of the children and Year 6 staff made a huge effort to dress up like we were back in the Victorian times! We played various games and made some amazing Wassail punch and traditional Christmas decorations! It was a fab day and all of the children had fun!



A Christmas Carol Production

A huge thank you to the SJA for paying for this year's pantomime, A Christmas Carol. The children thoroughly enjoyed watching it and had them all laughing along to the classic Christmas tale.



Thank You

I would like to record my thanks to the staff, senior leadership team, Fr Tony and governing body of St Joseph's. Life in schools comes with its challenges and I would like to commend the entire staff's professionalism and dedication in putting the families of St Joseph's first.

In the new year we are expecting a visit from Surrey Alliance for Excellence on behalf of Surrey CC to audit the performance of the school (29.1.24). We are also expecting our CSI (Catholic School Inspection) conducted in line with the Bishop's Conference national framework at the beginning of the spring term. We shall naturally keep you posted with regard to the outcomes.

On behalf of the school - Thank you for the good wishes, cards and gifts we have received, we are hugely appreciative of the kindness and generosity extended to us all.

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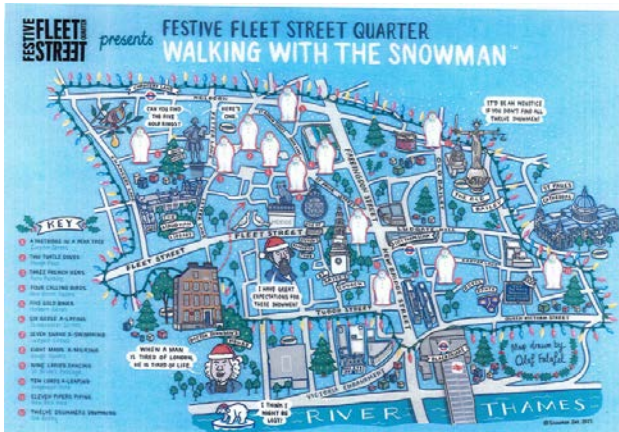
Christmas Mass time at the Parish of the Nativity of the Lord



Christmas Masses 2023

4th Sunday of Advent
Sat 23rd 5.30pm St Joseph's
Sun 24th 9.00am Holy Family
Sun 24th 11.00am St Joseph's

Christmas Masses
Sun 24th 6.00pm St Joseph's (Vigil Mass)
Sun 24th Midnight Holy Family (Midnight Mass)
Mon 25th 9.00am St Joseph's (Dawn Mass)
Mon 25th 11.00am St Teresa's (Day Mass)



London Christmas Activity: Enjoy a Christmas Walk with The Festive Fleet Street Quarter

<https://walkingwiththesnowman.co.uk/event/fleet-street-quarter/>

We extend to you all warm wishes for the Christmas season and hope that the New Year brings health and happiness. Merry Christmas from us all and a very Happy New Year.



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