

**ATTENDANCE (%) 2nd September to 10th December 2015 ( National Average = 96.1%)**

Reception	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	TOTAL
96.5	93.2	96.1	98.0	96.8	96.9	96.4	96.3

Above national average	Same as national average	Below national average
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**TERM DATES 2015—2016**

Holiday	Closing Date	Date Re-open For Teaching Purposes
<b>Autumn 2015</b>		
Autumn half-term 2015	Friday 23 October 2015	Monday 2 November 2015
<b>Christmas 2015</b>	Friday 18 December 2015	Tuesday 5 January 2016
Spring half-term 2016	Friday 12 February 2016	Monday 22 February 2016
<b>Easter 2016</b>	Thursday 24 March 2016	Monday 11 April 2016
May Day 2016	Monday 2 May 2016	Tuesday 3 May 2016
Summer half-term 2016	Friday 27 May 2016	Monday 6 June 2016
<b>Summer 2016</b>	<b>Friday 15 July 2016</b>	
<b>Staff Training Days</b>		<b>Please note the day we break up for Summer 2016. It is earlier than most schools, as we have used the 3 days at the end of term as Staff Training Days</b>
Monday 4th January 2016		
Monday 18th—Wednesday 20th July 2016		

Dear Parents/Carers

There is a consultation period for the Admissions Policy 2017-2018. The policy reflects the changes to procedures around Summer Born children. If you have any comments you wish the Governing Body and perhaps the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle to consider please read the policy and download the Consultation Response Form and return it to the school. Consultation closes on 21st January 2016.

<http://www.st-marysrc.schooljotter2.com/parents/admissions>

**Parental Controls**

Many children will be getting new electronic toys and gadgets over Christmas – and it important to help them use them safely.

The best way of protecting children is to play alongside them and help them learn safely, but setting up Parental Controls on new devices will provide additional safety. This website provides guidance on how to set this up on a wide range of devices.



<http://www.internetmatters.org/controls/interactive-guide/>

**ST. MARY'S ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**



Newsletter date: 11th December 2015

WEBSITE: <http://st-marysrc.schooljotter2.com/>

**Events**

**Tuesday 15th December 2015**  
KS1 Christmas Performance (9.30am)

**Wednesday 16th December 2015**  
Toddler Group Christmas Party (9.15am)

**Wednesday 16th December 2015**  
EYFS Nativity (10am)

**Wednesday 16th December 2015**  
KS1 Christmas Performance (1.30pm)

**Thursday 17th December 2015**  
Christmas Lunch  
Christmas Party

**Friday 18th December 2015**  
Christmas Sweater Day

**Friday 18th December 2015**  
Carol Service in church (2pm)

**Friday 18th December 2015**  
Break up for Christmas

**Sunday 20th December 2015**  
Parish Children's Christmas Party (2-4pm) Tickets available from Louise Elgey (£1.50 per child)

**RETURN TO SCHOOL TUESDAY 5TH JANUARY 2016**



Dear Parents & Carers

It will be with the blink of an eye that the end of term will be upon us. This is a long term but the children have worked hard. Our Reception children have settled in fantastically. They never cease to amaze me with their learning. They are doing so well with their reading, phonics, number and their yoga/relaxation sessions. Can I say what a great addition they are to St Mary's School? Thank you children and thank you to your Mams and Dads for all the work they are obviously doing with you at home.

As we move into the last week of term, it is important that you check the calendar for the events. We have the Christmas production of We Three Kings by Y1 & Y2, and Reception are doing a nativity production in school. The Christmas parties and dinner are on the same day - the 17<sup>th</sup> of December. We are repeating last year's successful Christmas Sweater day on 18<sup>th</sup> December, the donations of a £1 helped raise £100 last year.

This term we have been extremely busy trying new things. Y5 and the school hosted Miss Natalia, a Russian teacher and we hope to continue the links. Y2 are in the process of making links with a school in Tampa Florida. Our new interactive TV/Computer screens have made our lessons more interesting and have allowed us to blog with you throughout the day.

The use of the Class Dojos has had a huge impact on the children. Parents being able to access their children's points has provided opportunities to talk with children at home about the real successes they may have had during the day and times when they have not been on their best behaviour or giving of their best. Can I remind parents, the teachers do not respond to comments from you asking why your child has had a negative Class Dojo point? It is for you to talk with your child at home. If we have an issue or a child receives a significant number of negatives then we will be asking to have a conversation with you.

Thank you for all the fantastic support you have given the children this term in raising money and providing items for the charities we had worked with. It never ceases to amaze me how generous people can be. On that note can I say that the trees have or are in the process of being decorated by the children to be 'raffled' next Thursday? Tickets are available for a 50p donation each. Children are allowed to buy as many as they wish. We are hoping to use the money raised to support some of the literacy activities next term such as the Pantomime and author visits.

It would be lovely if you could join us for the Carol Service in church on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> December at 2.15pm. Thank you for the continued support of your children and the school and we will see you back on school on TUESDAY 5<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2016.

*Aunette Sowa*

Mrs. A. Sowden, **Head Teacher**



## RECEPTION NEWS

We welcomed next year's new starters for a Stay and Play session yesterday and we have been practicing very hard for our Nativity on Wednesday 16th December.



## YEAR 1 NEWS

Year 1 have been very creative. We have made beautiful baubles for our class Christmas tree, designed Christmas cards and even created calendars for the New Year. In Literacy, we went on a bear hunt around school. We weren't scared! Last week we planted magic tic tacs, they became little candy canes! We are also practising very hard for our nativity, We Three Kings, and looking forward to performing this next week.



## YEAR 2 NEWS

In Year 2, we have been busy preparing for our nativity. Kings, servants, angels and shepherds are all very excited and raring to go next week! We hope you have bought your tickets!

## YEAR 3 NEWS

We are still having fun learning about life in the Stone Age. We explored a range of different objects and had to guess what they might have been used for. This week we have been investigating how life changed as they moved into the Bronze Age. The last part of our work will involve us examining what life was like in the Iron Age. We have enjoyed reading the story of Stone Age Boy; in fact we have started to create our own version. Mrs Brown cannot wait to read them!

Our preparations for Advent got off to a great start with our Class assembly last Friday. We have made an Advent promise on a star on our class tree. We are also enjoying sharing Advent with our families at home by using our Travelling Cribs.

On Tuesday a strange object appeared in our classroom- a mysterious egg. We are using this as a focus to write a story. This is part of a whole school writing task.



## YEAR 4 NEWS

In Year 4 we have finally come to the end of our class novel, Treasure Island. We have really enjoyed creating our own ending to the text and comparing some similar novels. The children have worked very hard for their homework this week, creating characters for Treasure Island using Top Trump cards. We have also enjoyed learning some new languages from various European countries as part of our Geography topic this half term.

## YEAR 5 NEWS

It has been a busy couple of weeks in Year 5, lots of lovely assessment, making cards and messages of good will to our new friends in Russia, a trip to the theatre to see The Wizard of Oz and a robotics session, Mission to Mars – Christmas style. In amongst all of this, we have created our class Christmas tree on the theme 'Spreading Christmas peace around the world'. Instead of tinsel we have created some bunting depicting flags from different countries of the world and a message/prayer of peace, love, harmony and goodwill to others. We were inspired by the lyrics from Pipes of Peace written by Sir Paul McCartney and decided to change them to suggest that children can spread the message of peace, as they know and show how to do it. A lesson some of us as adults sometimes find difficult at times. Thank you Y5 for sharing with us this very important message.



## YEAR 6 NEWS

We went "Off to see the Wizard, the wonderful Wizard of Oz" yesterday with Y5. Everyone enjoyed the production and the children were good ambassadors for our school. As theatre critics, their work will be sent to the director to be shared with the cast. Some of the amazing costumes will be on show in class after Christmas.

Don't forget to buy a raffle ticket for our amazing Christmas tree complete with lights, star and handcrafted decorations. Take a look at photo on the class blog. The draw will take place on Thursday for collection the next day - Friday the last day of term.

## Year of Mercy

Pope Francis has announced a Jubilee Year of Mercy and invited us to enter a year in which the whole Church can seek out and show mercy. Mrs Hargreaves took three children from Upper Key Stage 2 to St. Mary's Cathedral Newcastle on Tuesday to represent the school at the mass at the start of the Year of Mercy. The school will be taking part in a number of activities throughout the year following this theme.

EXTRAORDINARY JUBILEE OF MERCY  
DEC. 8, 2015 - NOV. 20, 2016



"IT WILL BE A HOLY YEAR OF MERCY."  
POPE FRANCIS

## Christmas Trees

If you wish to be included in the draw for the trees, a 50p donation should be given to the class teacher (in an envelope with child's name on). You can be entered into the draw as many times as you wish at 50p each time. The draw will take place on Thursday 17th December.



## Parking

Please can we ask that parents or visitors to park only where they are allowed, either on school premises or outside of school premises. This will stop people being upset when they are asked to move their vehicles. If cars are parked where they are not supposed to be, this means emergency vehicles would not be able to get on site in an emergency, which could risk the life of a child.



## After School Clubs

Letters have gone today to book places on the After School Clubs starting in January. The clubs start back week commencing **Monday 11th January 2015**. Craft Club, Science Club, Cookery Club, Mini Olympics and Football all require payments. All payments must be made at the first session to cover up to half term. For Craft, Science and Cookery this will be £5 each child, each club (cheques to be made payable to Durham County Council). Mini Olympics and Football is £15 (cheques to be made payable to D Anderson). No refunds can be made for missed weeks as materials will already have been purchased.

## Charity Donations

We are still collecting toiletry donations in school, which are being sent to refugees in the region. We are also collecting for the St Cuthbert's Care 5p Bus—all donations of hats, gloves and scarves will be greatly appreciated.

## A Prayer for Diocesan Schools for the Year of Mercy



Loving Jesus You taught us to show mercy through the story of the Good Samaritan. You ask us to go and do the same, to be good Samaritans to others. May we be your hands and feet of mercy, helping those in need through our actions. May we be your eyes of mercy, looking with compassion on the world. May our schools be a community of mercy, showing love to others in your name.

Amen

## Contact Details

If you get a new telephone number over the festive period, don't forget to give the new number to school. It is important that we can contact someone in an emergency, or if your child is unwell. Also, if you move house or your personal circumstances change, please let us know.

## Wellbeing for Life

Wellbeing for Life is a FREE service supporting people who live in County Durham. It provides support with: healthy eating, stopping smoking, physical activity, practical cooking, weight loss and mental wellbeing. Contact the service on 0800 8766887, email: [cdda-tr.WBFL@nhs.net](mailto:cdda-tr.WBFL@nhs.net) or website: [www.wellbeingforlife.net](http://www.wellbeingforlife.net).



## Admissions to Reception—September 2016

Do you have a child who will be 5 on or between 1st September 2016 and 31st August 2017? If yes, please read the following. The deadline for applications for children to start school in September 2016 is midnight on 15th January 2016. We have been asked by Durham County Council to remind parents of this deadline as there are still around 2000 families who have not submitted their application. If you would like more information please contact the School Admissions and Transport Team on 03000 265896 or apply online by [visiting www.durham.gov.uk/schooladmissions](http://visiting.durham.gov.uk/schooladmissions)