ST MARY STAR OF THE SEA

CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF ARUNDEL & BRIGHTON

Friday 27th November 2026 - NEWSLETTER

Give glory and eternal praise to him!

Dear Parents and Carers,

The recent weeks have been filled with much to celebrate at St Mary Star of the Sea. We are absolutely delighted to share the wonderful news that, following our recent Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection, our school has been judged Outstanding. This is a tremendous achievement and a reflection of the dedication of our staff, pupils, governors and families who work together to make our school such a special community. The full inspection report was shared with parents earlier this week, and I would strongly encourage everyone to take the time to read it and celebrate the many strengths it highlights across our school.

As we move towards the Christmas season, preparations are well underway throughout the school. Our EYFS & Key Stage 1 children have been busy rehearsing for their Nativity performances, and there is already much excitement as they learn songs, practise their lines and prepare to share the Christmas story with us all.

We also look forward to welcoming families to our Art Gallery Exhibition next Friday. This is a wonderful opportunity to view and celebrate your children's fantastic Art and Design Technology work, showcasing the creativity, imagination and effort they have demonstrated this term. All are warmly invited to attend, and we hope to see as many families as possible there.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support. As we approach this special season of Advent, we wish all our families a peaceful and joyful time together.

Mrs O'Rourke
Headteacher



Gospel Worship

Jesus is the King of the Universe but He is different from all other kings — He reigns with the power of love and service. From His Heavenly throne, Jesus the King unites, cares for, defends and leads His people.

Jesus the King unites us…
God sent His Son to live among us, to show us the way and bring us together in His name.
Jesus the King heals and cares for us…
Jesus came to love and care for the sick, poor and needy. He performed healing miracles and He still does this today from His throne in Heaven.
Jesus the King defends and protects us…
Kings and leaders defeat armies, but Jesus defeated the real enemy of sin and death when He died on the Cross to save us. Jesus defends and protects us by forgiving our sins and giving us His Holy Spirit to inspire us to make good choices.
Jesus the King leads us…
Jesus leads us through His example on Earth and when we follow Him, He leads us to Heaven. We can always trust in Jesus to guide our thoughts, words and actions.

Almighty ever-living God,
who restores all things
in your beloved Son,
the King of the Universe,
we pray that the whole creation,
may give service to your majesty
and always proclaim your praise.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever.

Week beginning 16th November 2026		
Attendance target for 2025-2026 is 96%		
Year Group	Attendance	Punctuality
Reception	88.28%	98.83%
Year 1	85.22%	100%
Year 2	94.14%	99.66%
Year 3	98.1%	98.41%
Year 4	91.38%	98.28%
Year 5	96%	99.67%
Year 6	90.32%	99.66%
Whole School Average	92.27%	

*Well done to **Year 3** for the highest attendance this week.*
*Excellent effort from **Year 1** for outstanding punctuality.*

Week beginning 23rd November 2026		
Attendance target for 2025-2026 is 96%		
Year Group	Attendance	Punctuality
Reception	97.7%	98.85%
Year 1	97.39%	98.7%
Year 2	98.28%	98.62%
Year 3	97.76%	99.68%
Year 4	97.24%	100%
Year 5	97.33%	99%
Year 6	96.45%	99.35%
Whole School Average	97.44%	

*Well done to **Year 2** for the highest attendance this week.*
*Excellent effort from **Year 4** for outstanding punctuality.*

Safeguarding
Designated Safeguarding Lead: Mrs O'Rourke
Deputy Designated Safeguarding : Mr Beaney & Miss Basson

St Mary Star of the Sea Catholic Primary School
Magdalen Road, St Leonards on Sea, TN37 6EU
Tel: 01424 427801
www.st-mary-star.e-sussex.sch.uk

Learning from across the school

In **Reception** Class, we have been listening to the story Owl Babies. We made owl masks using real feathers. We have been finding out about nocturnal animals and have started making them out of junk boxes. In PE, we have been learning to move our bodies and to balance a bean bag. In RE, we have been talking about Jesus being born in a manger. We worked in teams to make a picture of who was in the stable. We also talked about when the shepherds found out about Jesus' birth. A choir of angels appeared in the sky. We are looking forward to being the choir of angels in our Nativity and we have been practicing our Christmas songs.





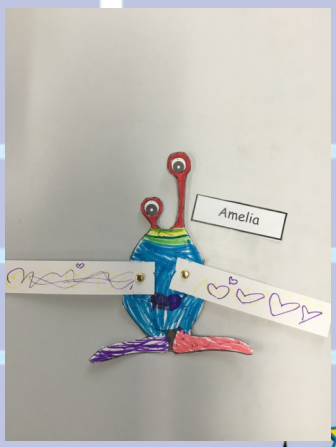






In Design and Technology, **Year 1** have been exploring moving mechanisms and creating our own interactive pictures. The children carefully designed their ideas before bringing them to life using a range of mechanisms. In RE, we have been learning about the Birth of Jesus and the journey Mary and Joseph made to Bethlehem. As part of our Advent celebrations, we created special "Welcome Baby Jesus" cards, reflecting on how we can welcome Jesus into our hearts and lives. In Maths, we have continued developing our understanding of number bonds to 10 and have been exploring addition as a way of combining groups together. We have also begun writing addition number sentences to represent our calculations. In PE, we have been enjoying our gymnastics lessons and developing our skills by learning and performing a range of gymnastic shapes, including tuck, pike, dish and straddle. We are growing in confidence as we practise linking these shapes together in different sequences.











This week, in **Year 2**, we continued 'George's Marvellous Medicine' and enjoyed discovering the ending of our story. We developed our writing skills by retelling key events and learning new techniques such as alliteration and similes to make our work more exciting. In Maths, we continued to develop our understanding of addition, subtraction and place value through a range of activities involving both larger and smaller numbers. In Science, our learning focused on materials, where we explored their properties and considered their suitability for different purposes. In RE, we learned about the prophet Isaiah and explored the story of the Annunciation of John the Baptist. We thought about why it is important to us. In Art, we have been exploring the artist Wassily Kandinsky. We explored colour, shape and pattern to produce our own vibrant abstract artwork. We have also been very busy preparing for our Nativity performance. We look forward to sharing their efforts with you in the coming weeks.





Year 3 have been extremely productive these past two weeks. In English, we have been writing diaries and planning our own story based upon Charlie and the Chocolate Factory. We have started multiplication and division in Maths and have been making groups and sharing based upon the 2, 5 and 10 times tables. In RE, we recreated the Mass using paper, plasticine and small world figures before writing a letter to a friend telling them all about it. Our science work has focussed on diet and we have classified animals according to whether they are herbivores, omnivores or carnivores. In PE, we have been learning forward rolls and different stretches as well as continuing to improve our swimming skills. As the art exhibition is approaching fast, we have been investigating and designing and pneumatics in order to make our own monsters. We have also created self-portraits in the style of Basquiat!











In Maths, **Year 4** have been calculating the area of 2D shapes, using their multiplication skills to ensure accuracy. In English, we have begun our new text, 'Coming to England' by Floella Benjamin. This inspiring true story explores courage, determination and belonging as Floella recounts her journey from Trinidad to England. This links closely with our learning about the Windrush generation. As part of this topic, the children created posters inviting people from Britain's colonies to come to England to help rebuild the country after World War II. In Gymnastics, we have been practising jumps with turns, both on the mat and from apparatus of varying heights. We have been focusing on how to keep ourselves and others safe when using equipment. In RE, we celebrated the Feast of Christ the King by exploring modern artwork depicting this special solemnity. We have also begun our Advent journey with daily reflections on the Jesse Tree. Over the last few weeks, we have been working hard to develop our sewing skills. We have diligently practised threading needles, tying knots, and sewing using running stitch and even blanket stitch. We are now ready to display our fantastic Faith Ringgold-inspired story quilts. We are very proud of the focus, perseverance and creativity the children have put into every stitch.








Over the last two weeks, **Year 5** have been busy completing their clock projects for the Art Exhibition. We have shaped, painted and assembled our clocks, developing our skills in intricate brushwork, colour mixing and the careful positioning of numbers. The project has been both challenging and enjoyable, and we are very proud of the finished results. We have also been exploring still-life artwork by drawing skulls with charcoal before transferring our designs onto canvas using acrylic paints. Next, we will be evaluating both our Art and Design Technology projects, reflecting on the changes we made during the process, what worked well, what we would do differently next time, and how our final pieces could be improved. In English, we have been focusing on editing and improving our writing. We have been learning to identify missing elements, consider changes that would strengthen our work, and enhance our writing through the addition of ambitious vocabulary and more effective sentence structures. In Maths, we have been developing our understanding of multiplying and dividing by 10, 100 and 1,000. Through exploring place value, children have learned how digits move left and right within a number when multiplying or dividing by powers of ten.

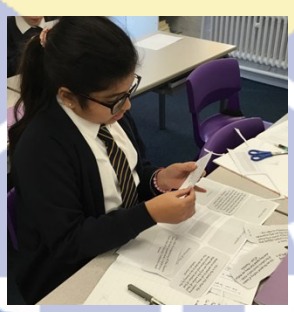





It has been a wonderfully busy two weeks in **Year 6!** In English, we explored the features of newspaper reports and used these skills to write our own articles based on the real-life theft of Leonardo da Vinci's Mona Lisa. In Maths, the children have been working hard on multiplying and dividing fractions and have shown great perseverance as they tackled increasingly challenging concepts. In RE, we explored Luke's and Matthew's accounts of the Annunciation. The children noticed how Luke gives special attention to Mary's story, helping us to understand her importance as a woman of deep faith and trust in God. We also studied iconography, discussing its symbolism and theology, particularly in relation to Mary. In Art, we have been learning about influential artists and art movements, and the children completed their artist profile pages. While in DT, we assembled and painted our light boxes, preparing them for the installation of electrical circuits. In PE, we began developing our gymnastics skills, focusing on creating and holding a range of body shapes and improving the quality and control of our forward and backward rolls. As part of our enrichment curriculum, we visited the beach, where the children enjoyed sketching the local environment and observing the natural world around them. We also completed Assessment Week, during which the children worked hard to demonstrate the progress they have made since the beginning of the year. We are very proud of the effort, resilience and determination they have shown. Well done, Year 6!











Dates for your Diary!

Monday 30th November - SCHOOL CLOSED for children

Tuesday 1st December - New Reception Open Evening - 4pm - 5pm

Friday 4th December - SMSS Art Exhibition - 3:20pm - 4pm - All Welcome

Tuesday 8th December - EYFS/KS1 Nativity to Reception parents @ 2:30pm

Wednesday 9th December - EYFS/KS1 Nativity to Year 1 & 2 parents @ 2:30pm

Thursday 10th December - KS2 Carol Concert at St Thomas' @ 5pm

Wednesday 16th December - Whole School Panto at the White Rock - 1:30pm - 4pm (aprox)

Thursday 17th December - Whole School Christmas Jumper day and Christmas Dinner

Friday 18th December - Last Day of Term 2 - SCHOOL CLOSES AT 1:30PM

Monday 4th January 2027 - First day of Term 3 - All children to attend school

Thursday 7th January - Year 2 trip to Hastings Fire Station

Thursday 21st January - Year 6 trip to Hastings Museum

Thursday 28th January - Year 5 trip to Bexhill Museum

Friday 12th February - Last day of Term 3

Monday 22nd February - INSET DAY - School closed for Children

Tuesday 23rd February - First day of Term 4 - All children to attend school

Mr Beaney's Book Corner

My recommendation this week is:

A Christmas Carol

by Charles Dickens & Chris Mould

Not so much a book review, but a book that is on my Christmas List this year. I love the original story but this version has been re written for a younger audience and, I expect, brilliantly illustrated by Chris Mould. A book to share and read with your children this Christmas!



Certificates of Achievement

Well done to the following children for receiving achievement certificates for either fantastic work effort or demonstrating our Gospel Values.

Worker of the Week		
CLASS	**Week 3**	**Week 4**
Reception	***Atticus***	***River***
Year 1	***Freya***	***Romey***
Year 2	***Ezra***	***Jacob***
Year 3	***Aysha***	***Maten***
Year 4	***Arlo***	***Kuba***
Year 5	***Aiden***	***Adrija***
Year 6	***Jessica***	***Libby***
Letting your Light Shine		
CLASS	**Week 3**	**Week 4**
Reception	***Nebiyu***	***Christabel***
Year 1	***Louis***	***Jessica***
Year 2	***Ryan***	***Albie***
Year 3	***Michelle***	***Ian***
Year 4	***Emily***	***Suzana***
Year 5	***Akanya***	***Alice***
Year 6	***Jomiloju, Syan & Adhidev***	***Savio***

Week 3 House Winner

ST PATRICK'S



Week 4 House Winner

ST GEORGE'S



Spiritual & School Council Visit to Hastings Food Bank

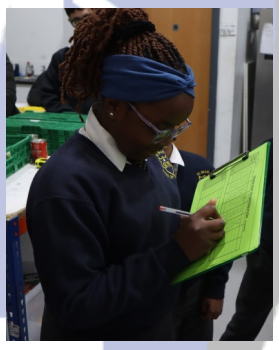
On Wednesday, members of our Year 6 Spiritual Council and School Council visited Hastings Foodbank for an insightful and inspiring trip. They were warmly welcomed by Phil, who gave them a tour of the impressive building and explained how the foodbank operates, from receiving donations to distributing food and essential items to local families in need.

The children were fascinated to learn about the journey donations take before reaching those who need them most. They especially enjoyed helping to fill baskets for food parcels and seeing first-hand the generosity of our local community.

During the visit, they explored the large warehouse where volunteers carefully sort donations into different categories. As well as food, the foodbank also collects gifts and toys, particularly in the lead-up to Christmas, ensuring families receive extra support during the festive season.

Overall, the children thoroughly enjoyed the experience and gained a much deeper understanding of the vital role the foodbank plays in supporting people in our community. It was a valuable opportunity to learn about kindness, service, and how small acts of generosity can make a big difference in the lives of others.














IMPORTANT LUNCHTIME REMINDER

BOOK YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL MEAL VIA PARENTPAY

BOOK BEFORE 8:00AM

Unless your child is bringing a packed lunch from home, a school meal must be booked through ParentPay before 8:00am each day.

PARENTPAY BOOKING

- Book meals via ParentPay before 8:00am each day.
- Book daily, weekly, monthly or for the whole term.
- Booking ahead helps avoid missed meal orders.



IF NO MEAL HAS BEEN BOOKED

If your child arrives without a meal booking and is not bringing a packed lunch:

- We will contact you to confirm lunchtime arrangements.
- You may be asked to provide a packed lunch for your child that day.



THIS APPLIES TO ALL CHILDREN

- Universal Free School Meals (Reception, Year 1 & Year 2)
- Free School Meals (FSM)
- Key Stage 2 pupils



Even if your child receives a free meal, it must still be booked via ParentPay.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Booking meals helps our catering team prepare the correct number of meals and keeps lunchtime running smoothly.



ST MARY STAR OF THE SEA

CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

BOOK ON PARENTPAY • BEFORE 8:00AM



At The National College, our WakeUpWednesday guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. Formerly delivered by National Online Safety, these guides now address wider topics and themes. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit nationalcollege.com.

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about

TECHNOLOGY ATTACHMENT

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

In today's digital age, children are increasingly forming emotional and habitual attachments to their devices. With 96% regularly accessing the internet and nearly half engaging in live streaming or content sharing, their online presence is greater than ever. This guide explores the phenomenon of technology attachment in young people and offers expert advice on fostering healthier digital habits.

WIRED FOR REWARD

Children's brains are particularly sensitive to reward-based stimulation, and some digital platforms, especially those offering quick-hit content like short-form videos, are designed to exploit this. The instant gratification of likes, comments, and rapid scene changes triggers dopamine releases, making these interactions highly addictive. Over time, this may contribute to changes in attention patterns and a reduced inclination towards activities that involve prolonged focus or delayed gratification, such as reading, problem-solving, or creative play.

NIGHT-TIME TECH HABITS

Screen use late into the evening can disrupt natural sleep patterns by suppressing melatonin, the hormone that regulates sleep. Children engaging with stimulating content may experience delayed bedtimes, lower sleep quality, and increased fatigue during the day. Additionally, fear of missing out (FOMO) on online interactions can cause anxiety and resistance to logging off, creating a cycle of late-night engagement and tired mornings.

SHAPED BY SCREENS

For many children, digital spaces have become a key arena for identity exploration and expression. Social media encourages them to curate their image carefully, with likes, comments, and shares serving as social validation. This environment can tie self-esteem to online feedback, making children vulnerable to comparison, self-doubt, and pressure to present a perfect version of themselves, even when it doesn't reflect reality.



DIGITAL WORLD DANGERS

The internet can expose children to unfiltered content, some of which may be inappropriate, misleading, or harmful. Cyberbullying, exposure to idealised lifestyles, and online predators are all risks children face, often without fully understanding the consequences. Misinformation can shape distorted worldviews, while constant comparison to others can erode self-confidence. Without guidance, children may internalise these digital dangers, impacting their emotional and mental health.

DIGITAL DEPENDENCY BUILDS

Devices often become digital comfort blankets. In moments of boredom, anxiety, or loneliness, children may instinctively reach for screens to self-soothe. This reliance on digital distraction limits their ability to develop healthy coping mechanisms, such as mindfulness, conversation or physical activity. As the habit builds, their dependency may displace real-world experiences and emotional resilience.

FRIENDSHIPS & FILTERS

Technology transforms how young people socialise, often replacing face-to-face interaction with text-based or image-based communication. While messaging apps and social media enable connection, they may also limit emotional expression and the development of essential interpersonal skills, such as tone recognition, empathy, and reading body language. As a result, some children may become less confident with exchanges in person and more reliant on digital personas to navigate friendships.

Advice for Parents & Educators

READ THE ROOM

Pay attention to behavioural changes that may signal unhealthy tech attachment. This includes mood swings, increased secrecy about online activity, withdrawal from family time or hobbies, and visible distress when separated from devices. These cues can indicate deeper emotional reliance or even exposure to distressing content. Early recognition allows for proactive support and meaningful conversation.

DON'T WAIT, REACH OUT EARLY

If a child's relationship with technology starts affecting their emotional wellbeing, school performance, or social connections, don't hesitate to seek help. Open up discussions with teachers, pastoral staff, or digital wellbeing professionals. Early intervention is key, and a supportive network can provide tools, resources, and reassurance for both children and adults navigating this evolving digital landscape.

SHAPE DIGITAL BOUNDARIES

Create a balanced digital environment with clear guidelines on when and how devices can be used. This includes screen-free zones (e.g. bedrooms, dining tables), app restrictions, and time limits. More importantly, involve children in these decisions and explain the reasoning behind them, even reflecting upon your own digital use so they can see it's something we all have to manage. Turning boundaries into a dialogue, not just directives, helps build trust and encourages self-regulation.

SET THE STANDARD

Children often model the behaviour they see. When adults demonstrate healthy digital habits, such as prioritising face-to-face conversation, balancing screen time with other activities, and using devices with purpose, children are more likely to follow suit. Share your own positive uses of technology and invite children to do the same. This collaborative approach helps demystify tech use and encourages responsible engagement.

Meet Our Expert

Philippa Wraithmell is an award-winning educator, author of The Digital Ecosystem, and founder of EdRuption and Digital Bridge. Digital Bridge supports the relationship between families and technology, empowering everyone to be balanced and digitally well. With over 15 years in digital education and wellbeing, she supports families, schools, and governments to build balanced and safe digital cultures.



#WakeUpWednesday®

The National College®

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St Mary Star of the Sea

Primary School

COULD YOUR CHILD BE ELIGIBLE FOR FREE SCHOOL MEALS?

Apply Today and Unlock Additional Support for Your Child

From September 2026, the eligibility criteria for Free School Meals (FSM) have changed in East. Some families who were not previously eligible may now qualify.

Why apply?

If your child qualifies for **Targeted Free School Meals**, they may also be eligible for:

- ✅ Free school meals every day
- ✅ Additional educational support through Pupil Premium funding
- ✅ Support with school trips, activities and other enrichment opportunities
- ✅ Access to Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programmes
- ✅ Additional support to help your child thrive at school

Important Information

📢 **An application must be made for EACH child.**
Even if one child in your family is already receiving Free School Meals, **siblings are not automatically registered or eligible**. A separate application is required for every child you wish to be assessed.

If your child received Pupil Premium FSM before September 2026, you will need to **reapply** to keep their **Targeted FSM status.**

Who may qualify?

You may be eligible if you receive **Universal Credit** or certain other qualifying benefits. Eligibility is checked by East Sussex County Council.

SCAN THE QR CODE OR CLICK HERE TO APPLY, AND ENSURE YOUR ELIGIBILITY IS IN PLACE.

APPLICATIONS ARE QUICK, EASY AND TAKE 5-10 MINUTES TO COMPLETE

BOSCO

St Mary Star of the Sea Catholic Primary School

ART EXHIBITION



Friday 4th December @ 3:20pm

For one night only, we will be transforming our school into a celebration of Art and Design!

This is a fantastic opportunity to take an artistic journey through the school. The exhibits that the children have designed, drawn and made themselves showcases all they have been learning in Art and Design Technology.



Parents and special guests are invited to come along to view the children's work from Reception through to Year 6.

Doors open at 3:20pm. Please collect your children as normal, then make your way to the start point at the Reception classroom,where your artistic journey will begin.

Last entry at 3:45pm

Live, Love & Learn in God's Name

East Sussex School Health

NHS
Kent Community Health
NHS Foundation Trust

Fussy eating workshop for parents and carers

Are mealtimes a struggle?

Join our friendly workshop for parents and carers to learn practical ways to make mealtimes less stressful and more enjoyable.



What is the workshop?

This is a free, one-off session held at your child's school by the East Sussex School Health Team. It provides simple, trusted NHS advice to help you understand why your child might be selective with food and what you can do to support them.

What you will learn:

- Reasons children become fussy eaters.
- Practical strategies to try at home.
- Ways to reduce mealtime stress.
- How to build your child's confidence around food.
- Tips to support healthy eating habits.



This session is for:

- Parents and carers of children who are fussy or selective with food.
- Parents and carers of children who avoid certain foods or textures.
- Anyone looking for support to improve family mealtimes.

The session will be held in school at 1:30pm on Wednesday 17th March 2027

Book your place by contacting the school office.