



Our Lady Catholic Primary School

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Dear Parents and Carers,

Happy Holidays:

On behalf of the staff and governors at Our Lady Catholic Primary School, I would like to wish all pupils and parents a very happy and holy Christmas and every blessing for the New Year. As we approach the end of what has been a very busy but productive autumn term, the whole school community is looking forward to a well-earned rest. As we approach the fourth Sunday of Advent, it is inevitable that our minds may start to drift away from the hard work of our day to day school business, to the festive period itself. The prospect of Christmas cheers us and lifts our spirits away from the cold, dark and depressing seasonal weather. I do hope that as parents you will encourage your child to attend the Sacrament of Reconciliation and Mass during the Christmas holidays. It is our duty to proclaim and celebrate the birth of Christ and to ensure that the real message of Christmas is at the forefront of our hearts.

Reasons to be Thankful:

Being prepared to think of others, of course, is a particular strength of Our Lady Catholic Primary School. Raising money for charity is something that our children and staff do readily and willingly. This sense of community is something very special about our school; and it was incredibly pleasing to see the £384.95 that the school raised for CAFOD this month. The community also drew together to raise a fantastic £238.18 for Children In Need, £473.50 for Mary's Meals and a further £82.17 for Save the Children throughout December.



It was such a pleasure to also see our team of Mini Vinnies in Year 5 leading the way in our support for the homeless community at the YMCA last week. The children, who were instrumental in arranging for the various donations that were generously provided by our families, packed the bags for the homeless visitors to the local YMCA centre. This project is such a wonderful opportunity for the children in our school to

live out their faith and by providing them with 'real life' experiences of following the teachings of Christ. I cannot express my gratitude to the people who run the YMCA for allowing our children to shine.

I would also like to mention our fantastic Year 6 children, who visited Oak View Lodge (our local residential home for the elderly) to sing Christmas Carols to the residents. This small act helped to not only spread a little cheer and good will in this festive period - but also helped to promote the role of our school within our local community. The small act by our Year 6 children made a very big difference to the lives of the people at Oak View Lodge. Thank you children! You are wonderful ambassadors for the school!



I would like to thank all our wonderful children for their hard work throughout this term and for being so welcoming to me as the new Headteacher in September. It has been a privilege to see the pupils of our school adapting to their new classroom environments in September, learning new concepts from an ever challenging curriculum and making progress throughout the term. Each and every child has contributed to the school's improvement journey and they should feel very proud of their fine achievements.

We are also very grateful to our wonderful PTA for working so hard to raise much-needed funds for the school. In this autumn term alone, the PTA have organised a Movie Night, Christmas party, Christmas raffle and personalised Christmas cards and have raised an astonishing £2606.45 for the school. I would like to thank the PTA for their continued commitment, hard work and careful organisation in arranging these wonderful events. We are also incredibly grateful to the PTA for contributing a huge amount of money to many of the new display boards that you may have seen around the school (including our new welcome sign in the reception area and the House Team signs in the hall). We are also incredibly grateful to Mr. Lochmuller and Mr Dabrowski for helping us to put all of the signs up around the school. It was is very kind of these two parents to give up their time freely to help out at the school and we are very thankful to them.



The PTA has planned more exciting events in the spring term and we look forward to these with great zeal! Watch this space!

I am sure that you would like to join with me in thanking all of the staff and governors for their continued tremendous hard work and commitment to the children of the school during

the term. Our dedicated team have put so much into making this school what it is – and for providing the very best education for each and every child in the school community. Thank you.

We are delighted to announce that Mrs Sherwood and Mrs Gilfrin will be staying with us at Our Lady as our Year 5 class teachers for the spring term. Mrs Sherwood will be teaching the children on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays and Mrs Gilfrin will be teaching on Tuesdays and Fridays. Both Mrs Sherwood and Mrs Gilfrin have provided such a wonderfully informative, enjoyable and inspiring curriculum to the Year 5 children this term and we are delighted that they will continue to do this in January 2019.

I would like to thank Fr. Norbert for his continued support, guidance and dedication to providing our children with some much needed spiritual nourishment. Fr. Norbert has continued to come into school to work with the children of Our Lady, supporting them in lessons and developing their spirituality. He has also continued to meet with me on a regular basis to plan ahead for how we can further strengthen the quality of the Catholic teaching and the Catholic life of the school, which have been invaluable. His commitment to embedding the Catholic ethos and identity of our school is such a strength and an essential component of our Faith journey.

Finally, I would also like to thank our fantastically supportive parents and carers. We are so lucky at Our Lady to have such a richly diverse community and I have really enjoyed seeing the school's partnership with parents and carers in action over the past term, which has helped to ensure the very best outcomes for our children. By working together, we can ensure that our children enjoy their time at our school, make good progress and leave us as responsible, well-qualified, mature young people, ready to make a valued contribution to society. We have received so many positive comments about the children's behaviour and attitude from a range of visitors to the school and you should all feel very proud of them!

Farewell to Mrs Gilles:



It is with great sadness that we are saying goodbye to our caretaker, Mrs Ellen Gilles, who will be leaving our school after an astonishing 41 years of service. On behalf of the whole school community, I would like to express our most sincere thanks to Mrs Gilles for her continued service at Our Lady Catholic Primary school. To have worked for 41 years as our caretaker is a remarkable achievement. We are all so very grateful to Mrs Gilles for her commitment and professionalism. We hope that the years ahead are full of promise and joy with fond memories of how much you made a difference to our school. Thank you, goodbye and good luck, Mrs Gilles.

Welcome to the Smith family:



We are delighted to welcome Hannah Smith to our Year 5 class and extend our warm wishes to her family, who have recently moved over from South Africa. We look forward to helping Hannah and her family settle into life at Our Lady as quickly as possible. I am sure you will join me in helping to make all of our new families feel very welcome and part of the school community.

Christmas Reflection:

To finish, we should reflect on the true magnitude of Christ's birth. Let us remind ourselves that this is the one time of year when it is commonplace to find the spirit of human kindness alive and well. Let us embrace this by ensuring that we enjoy ourselves safely but also take time to look out for those nearest and dearest to us and those less fortunate than ourselves. We hope that in all the preparations you are able to take time to remember the true meaning of Christmas and are able to join each other in fellowship over the Christmas period to rejoice and give praise on the birth of our Lord and Saviour.

Please remember that our new term begins on **Monday 7th January** and we look forward to seeing all of our children return refreshed and eager to learn in the new calendar year.

Merry Christmas to you all!

With very best wishes for the festive period,

Richard Curry

