# Our Lady Catholic Primary School

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*Headteacher:* Mr. R. Curry

## PRAYER FOR THE START OF THE NEW SCHOOL YEAR




*God of wisdom and might,*

*We praise you for the wonder of our being,*
*For mind, body and spirit.*
*Be with our children as they begin a new school year.*
*Bless them and their teachers and staff.*
*Give the strength and grace as their bodies grow;*
*Wisdom and knowledge to their minds as they search for understanding;*
*And peace and zeal to their hearts.*

*We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord.*
*Amen.*

4th September 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope that you all had a peaceful, restful and enjoyable summer break. It was wonderful to welcome the children back to school this week after the long holidays, and to see our school community together once again. There is always something very special about the start of a new academic year, filled with excitement, new opportunities and endless possibilities.

The staff have been incredibly impressed by the children's positive attitude and enthusiasm since returning yesterday. In our first whole-school assembly, we spoke about the importance of always trying our very best, showing kindness to one another and working together as a school family. Every child has unique gifts and talents, and we firmly believe that every one of them is capable of achieving amazing things. Our role is to nurture, encourage and inspire them so that they can fulfil their God-given potential. Together, we

will do everything we can to help each child become the very best version of themselves, and I am excited to work alongside our wonderfully supportive families to make that happen throughout the year ahead.

As parents and carers, you are your child's first and most important educators, and we greatly value the partnership that we share with you. It is important to me that you always feel welcomed, listened to and able to share any questions, concerns or ideas you may have about school life. Open and honest communication is at the heart of a strong school community.

To help strengthen these relationships even further, we will once again be holding half-termly coffee mornings, giving parents and carers the opportunity to meet informally with me, members of the Senior Leadership Team and our Family Support Worker. These sessions are a chance to ask questions, share thoughts and enjoy a cup of coffee together, helping us to continue working in partnership for the benefit of every child.

Our very first coffee morning of the autumn term will take place from **8.50am** on **Wednesday 21st October** in the school hall. It would be a lovely way to welcome many of our new families into our school community and to get to know each other in a more informal way. This will be led by our Family Support Worker, Julie Cain, who will be also talking about the support that she can provide families at our school. We look forward to seeing as many of you there as possible.

**Our School Community:**



We are delighted to welcome Mrs Val Stevenson to Our Lady's as our new Lead Practitioner for Inclusion. Mrs Stevenson brings with her a wealth of experience and expertise, and she will be working closely with Miss McDonald to support children across the school, helping to ensure that every child feels valued, understood and able to thrive. We are very excited about the knowledge, care and experience that Mrs Stevenson will bring to our school community and know that she will make a wonderful contribution to the life of our school. Please join me in giving Mrs Stevenson a very warm welcome to our team. We wish her every happiness and success in her new role.

We have also been delighted to welcome all of our Nursery and Reception children into school this week. It has been wonderful to see their excitement, curiosity and smiles as they begin this very special journey at Our Lady's. Over the coming weeks, we are looking forward to helping all of our youngest children, and their families, settle into school life and feel a strong sense of belonging within our community. Starting school is such an important milestone, and we are committed to making this transition as happy, positive and successful as possible for every child.

I am sure you will join me in making all of our new families feel especially welcome as they become part of the Our Lady's family. We are very fortunate to have such a warm and supportive school community, and we look forward to sharing many special moments together throughout the year ahead.

Parents and carers of our Nursery and Reception children are warmly invited to join us for our special Welcome Service, which will take place in the school hall on **Wednesday 30th September at 9.15am**. We look forward to welcoming you and celebrating the beginning of your child's journey with us.

**Home-School Agreement 2026/27:**



At Our Lady Catholic Primary School, we firmly believe that children achieve their very best when school and home work together in partnership. By supporting one another and sharing the same high expectations, we can help every child to flourish, grow in confidence and reach their full potential, both academically and personally.

As we begin a new academic year, I would be grateful if you could take a few moments to read through our Home-School Agreement for 2026/27, which is attached to this letter. The agreement sets out the shared commitment between the school, parents and carers, and our children, helping us to create a positive, supportive and respectful learning community in which every child can thrive.

Please take some time to read and discuss the agreement with your child so that they understand the important part we all play in making their time at Our Lady's as successful and enjoyable as possible. By working together in a spirit of trust and mutual support, we can continue to provide the very best opportunities for every child.

Once you have read and discussed the agreement, I would appreciate it if you could reply to this email by **Monday 14th September** to confirm that you have done so. For your convenience, a simple confirmation template has been included at the end of this letter for you to copy and paste into your reply. The Home-School Agreement is also available to download from the school website should you wish to refer to it at any time.

**Class Code of Conduct and Behaviour Contracts:**



During this first week back at school, the children have been working alongside their teachers to create a class code of conduct. This has given them the opportunity to reflect on the type of classroom environment they want to create together and the behaviours that will help everyone to feel happy, safe and ready to learn.

Each child has also signed a class behaviour agreement, making a personal commitment to follow the expectations and guidelines they have helped to establish. These agreements will be proudly displayed in each classroom as a reminder that we all have an important role to play in creating a respectful, positive and caring learning environment. By involving the children in this process, we hope they feel a real sense of ownership and responsibility for the wonderful school community we are continuing to build together.

**Beginning of Term Mass:**




Our mass to celebrate the start of the new school year will take place on **Monday 14th September at 2.15pm**. The mass will take place in the school hall and it would be wonderful to see as many of you as possible there to celebrate the start of this new term with us.

**Curriculum Information:**



Curriculum overviews outlining the topics and areas of learning that your child will be studying this year will be emailed to parents next week and will also be available to view on the school website. These overviews provide a helpful insight into your child's learning journey and the exciting opportunities that lie ahead throughout the year.

Over the summer break, we have continued to work hard as a staff team to further develop and strengthen our curriculum, ensuring that every child receives a rich, ambitious and high-quality education.

We remain committed to providing the very best learning experiences for our children, helping them to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence they need to succeed both now and in the future.

As always, there will also be an opportunity for you to meet your child's class teacher and find out more about the year ahead. These meetings are a valuable opportunity to hear about the expectations for your child's year group, how learning will be organised and how you can support your child at home.

To enable parents and carers with children in different year groups to attend all relevant meetings, we have arranged these sessions on different days. The meetings will take place at the following times:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Year 6** | Tuesday 15th September | 3.00pm – 3.15pm |
| **Year 5** | Wednesday 16th September | 3.00pm – 3.15pm |
| **Year 2** | Thursday 17th September | 3.00pm – 3.15pm |
| **Year 3** | Friday 18th September | 3.00pm – 3.15pm |
| **Year 4** | Tuesday 22nd September | 3.00pm – 3.15pm |
| **Year 1** | Wednesday 23rd September | 3.00pm – 3.15pm |

**Secondary Transfer Meeting:**




We have arranged a Secondary Transfer Information Meeting for Year 6 parents and carers, which will take place on **Tuesday 22nd September** at **9.00am** in the school hall. The meeting will be led by Mr Mel Green, the newly appointed Headteacher of Nicholas Breakspear Catholic School, who will provide important information about the secondary school application process and answer any questions you may have as your child prepares for this important next step in their education.

In addition, on **Wednesday 30th September**, we are delighted to welcome Mr David Carrasco-Morley, Headteacher of John Henry Newman School, to Our Lady's. Mr Carrasco-Morley will be spending time with our Year 6 children, talking to them about life at secondary school and helping them to begin thinking positively about the transition ahead.

Although it may seem early in the academic year to be looking ahead to secondary school, we feel that opportunities such as these are extremely valuable in helping our children feel confident, informed and excited about the next stage of their journey. We are committed to supporting both children and families throughout this process, ensuring that the transition from Year 6 to Year 7 is as smooth and successful as possible.




Please remember that the deadline for Year 6 parents and carers to submit their secondary school applications is **31st October 2026**. We would encourage all families to ensure that applications are completed in good time and to speak with the school if you have any questions or require any support with the process.

**Library Visits:**



As part of the National Year of Reading, we have arranged a series of special visits to Woodhall Library for our children at our school. These visits will provide a wonderful opportunity for pupils to explore their local library, develop their love of reading and enjoy a range of engaging activities led by library staff and their teachers. The children will take part in a carousel of activities and we are particularly excited that these visits will help bring reading to life and encourage our children to discover new books, authors and stories beyond the classroom.

The visits will take place at 9.30am on the following days:

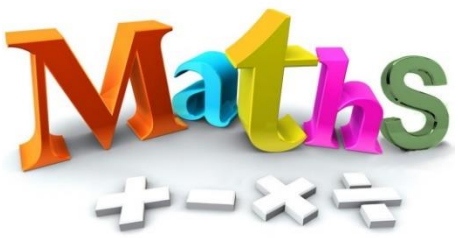
- Tuesday 8th September - Year 5
- Wednesday 9th September - Year 6
- Wednesday 16th September - Year 4
- Tuesday 22nd September - Year 3
- Tuesday 3rd November - Year 2
- Tuesday 10th November - Year 1
- Tuesday 17th November - EYFS

We are very grateful to Woodhall Library for supporting us with this exciting initiative and look forward to sharing some photographs of the children enjoying their visits.

**Parent Workshops:**




We are delighted to announce that we will be running a Phonics Café for parents and carers of children in EYFS, Year 1 and Year 2, which will take place on **Tuesday 10th November at 9am.** During this informal and interactive session, Miss Pearce will explain how phonics is taught at our school and share some practical strategies to help support your child's reading and phonics development at home. The session will also provide an opportunity to learn more about the progression of phonics, how children develop into confident readers, and how we assess their learning.




We will also be running a Maths Workshop for parents and carers of children in all year groups, which will take place on **Friday 27th November at 9am**. During this informative and interactive session, Mrs Avery will explain how mathematics is taught across our school and share the approaches and strategies that we use to develop children's confidence, fluency and reasoning skills. The workshop will also demonstrate how mathematical knowledge and skills progress from the Early Years through to Year 6, helping parents and carers to gain a clear understanding of the methods and vocabulary used at each stage of their child's education.

We are committed to providing opportunities for parents and carers to become actively involved in their children's learning and hope that these sessions will further strengthen the positive partnership between home and school. By working together, we can ensure that every child develops the confidence, skills and love of reading needed to flourish throughout their education.

**Attendance:**

Regular attendance at school is essential to ensure that children can make the most of their education, develop positive relationships and routines, and achieve their full potential. The Department for Education's statutory guidance, Working Together to Improve School Attendance, makes clear that attendance is **everyone's responsibility** and that parents and carers have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and punctually.

At Our Lady's, we expect children to attend school every day and on time, unless they are genuinely too unwell to attend or there is another authorised reason for absence. Parents should contact the school on the first day of any absence and provide an explanation for the absence.

**Please be aware that term-time holidays will not be authorised**. The DfE is explicit that a holiday for leisure or recreation is not normally an exceptional circumstance, and parents should not take their children out of school during term time for this purpose. Any unauthorised absence, including term-time holidays, may result in a **Penalty Notice being requested from the Local Authority**, in accordance with the National Framework for Penalty Notices.

We recognise that there may occasionally be exceptional circumstances requiring absence and these will always be considered individually. Our approach will continue to be supportive and understanding where families experience genuine barriers to attendance, but we are equally clear that **high attendance is a priority and every school day matters.**

A copy of our Attendance Policy is available on the school website, and further information regarding Hertfordshire County Council's Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Absence guidance can also be found on their website or by clicking on the link below:
https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/schools-and-education/at-school/penalty-notices-for-unauthorised-absence/penalty-notices-for-unauthorised-absence.aspx#:~:text=The%20pupil%20must%20have%20at,could%20stop%20any%20more%20absences

Thank you for your continued support in helping us to give every child the best possible start and ensure they can thrive at Our Lady's.

**Uniform:**

Just a reminder that our school uniform can be purchased from 'Smarty Schoolwear' - either in store (in Hatfield or Potters Bar) or on-line on the following website: https://www.smartyschoolwear.co.uk/

Please ensure that your child's school uniform consists of the following:

- Navy sweatshirt or cardigan with school logo on.
- Sky blue polo shirt with school logo on.
- Grey trousers/skirt/or pinafore dress.
- Light blue and white checked dress (summer)
- Tights/socks should be navy or grey.
- Black school shoes; no trainers, boots, high heels, sandals.

Ideally there should be no jewellery worn at school. If jewellery is worn, please take note of the following guidelines:

- Small plain studs, one in each ear.
- Small watches (at your own risk).
- No logos or shapes in boys' hair.
- All girls with hair below the shoulders must be tied back.
- Hair bands; light blue or navy scrunchies or elastic bands.
- No make-up or nail varnish.

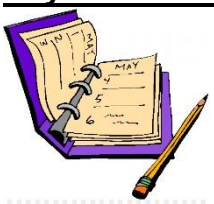


**PE Kits:**
We ask children to arrive at school in their PE kits on the days that they have PE. PE kits should be as follows:

- Navy t-shirt with our school logo.
- Navy shorts (navy jogging trousers for the colder months).
- Black plimsolls/trainers.

Thank you for your support in helping us to maintain high standards.

**Key Dates for the Calendar:**



A list of key dates for the autumn term has been included in this letter for your reference. Further information about the school will also be uploaded onto our school website and in our newsletters throughout the term. I have also attached a copy of our term dates for the academic year ahead for your reference. I hope you find these useful.

Please note that the first day back after the Christmas holidays will be **Tuesday 5th January 2027.**

As we begin this new academic year, I know that I speak on behalf of the entire staff team when I say how much we are looking forward to the year ahead. It is a privilege to work alongside such wonderful children and such supportive families, and we are excited to continue our partnership with you as we help every child to grow, learn and flourish.

Our Lady's is a very special community, and one of its greatest strengths is the way we work together. When children, parents, carers and staff share the same aspirations and support one another, amazing things can happen. Building on the many successes of last year, we will continue to inspire a love of learning, nurture every child's unique gifts and talents, and encourage our children to live out the Gospel values in all that they do. Together, we can ensure that every child flourishes academically, spiritually, morally and personally, becoming the very best person that God created them to be.

I look forward to seeing you all each morning on the school gate.

Kind regards,

Richard Curry
*Headteacher*

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**TEMPLATE FOR HOME-SCHOOL AGREEMENT RESPONSE**

*Please cut and paste and complete the sections in red in the following paragraph in your response to this email.*

**I** *<insert name of parent>* **have read the Home-School Agreement with my child(ren)** *<insert name and class(es) of child(ren)>* **and we agree to adhere to the bullet points in the 'Pupil' and 'Parent/Carer' sections.**

**Date:** *<insert date>*