



St. Ambrose Barlow Catholic Primary School

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St. Ambrose Barlow Catholic Primary School, 841 Shirley Road, Hall Green, Birmingham, B28 9JJ
Friday 14th October 2022

Dear Parents,

You will be aware that the parish and the school are now both supporting the parents as first educators in their child's sacramental preparation. It was wonderful, therefore, to welcome the parents of our Year Six children into school to join in with their class liturgy this morning, focusing on the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit. I always love class assemblies – the humour of the children (and the class teacher) really shines through and we see a theatrical side to individuals that we need to celebrate. I always say to the children that, ultimately, all good things come from God and this includes their jokes and their sense of humour.

It has been a busy week with assemblies, parent consultations and other parent meetings, but I cannot emphasise enough how large a role parents play in the education and formation of their child. To this end, we have arranged more parent meetings to fully brief parents on how we do things here at St Ambrose Barlow. Some of these are in the evenings so it does not interfere with work, and some take place in the day. I know that this can be difficult to arrange sometimes but, because they take place in the day, see it as an opportunity to a) work with your child and b) see how things really work day to day in a school. Believe me, you will find the experience (not to mention the content) invaluable.



Golden Book

Reception: Ella Mynett for trying so hard in everything that she does. Ella always listens and puts her hand up to share her fantastic ideas with the rest of the class. She is confident when participating in phonics lessons and has such a positive attitude towards her work. Well done, Ella!

Year One: Odhran Kelly is a star! He is working so hard to use his phonics in his writing and work on his pre-cursive handwriting. He is also taking the role of School Councillor very seriously and cannot wait to share his ideas at the next meeting. He demonstrates our values and virtues every day and is a kind and caring boy. Well done for all of your work, Odhran.

Year Two: Ambrose Griffin for always listening so well and having his hand up at all times ready to contribute to the lesson with his ideas. He is showing what a good mathematician he is, explaining how he has got to an answer in order to help others in the class.

Year Three: Maeve Henvey is flourishing in Year Three, showing off her gifts and talents, especially her writing skills. She has taken her learning home and completed a biography. Maeve brightens up each day, always smiling and is willing to help others. Keep up the superb work, Maeve!

Year Four: Noah Parkes-Brown for being a fantastic role model in Year Four. Noah puts 100% effort into everything he does and strives to push himself further in all lessons. Noah comes into the classroom with a smile on his face and greets everyone he sees. Keep up the good work, Noah!

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Year Five: Mikey Timms has been putting in a lot of effort into his learning this week - in particular his Maths. He has been presenting his column addition and subtraction beautifully and has been taking time to ensure that the place value is correct. Keep up the hard work, Mikey. Well done!

Year Six: Ava-Leigh Newton for being an absolutely incredible writer. She uses a wide range of sentence tricks and powerful vocabulary to add interest to her writing. She gets into role as a character, drawing out their emotions and feelings. Her writing is always a pleasure to read!

A sad farewell...

As a school community, we bid a sad farewell to Mrs Frances Friel, who has handed in her



notice of retirement. She will loathe the praise I am about to lavish upon her but it would not be right for a such a devoted employee of the school to retire without drawing attention to her many years of service. Mrs Friel was here at St Ambrose Barlow during the tenure of Mr Greg Jones and has continued to attentively support the school since then. Mrs Friel was a huge help during the transition when I started in September 2021 and I will miss her insight and humour dearly. Although she was only working one day a week by this stage, her financial acumen and knowledge of school processes proved invaluable.

Please join me in wishing her and her husband all the best for their retirement and, if you see her at Mass, please do show your appreciation also. She has devoted over thirty years of her life to Catholic education and I do not think that anyone could deny that she has been a wonderful

help and source of support to the school over those years.

Frances, I wish you all the very best for the future. Enjoy your retirement but don't ever think I won't be calling on you in times of great need – nobody escapes that easily!

Important Parent Meetings

Thank you for your feedback during Parent Consultations. To further involve yourself in your child's education, please attend the following focused parent meetings, if possible.

Reception Phonics Workshop: Wednesday 2nd November 5:30pm

The focus of this workshop is on Phase Two sounds and how we teach children to blend sounds together, as well as the terminology we use in school. This workshop will be presented by Mrs Hunt and Miss Hodgkins.

Year One Phonics and Reading Workshop: Thursday 10th November 5:30pm

The focus of this workshop is on how we teach phonics and reading in Year One. As you know, we have a huge focus on Early Reading in school and, at the end of Year One, children take a Phonics Screening test, the results of which are submitted to the DfE. Your support and attendance at this meeting will be hugely appreciated.

The following meetings have been organised during school time:

Year Four Writing workshop:
Thursday 17th November 9am

Year Six Writing workshop:
Tuesday 22nd November 9am

Year Five Writing workshop:
Tuesday 29th November 9am

Year Three Writing workshop:
Thursday 5th January 9am

Year Two Writing workshop:
Tuesday 10th Jan 9am

Year One Writing workshop:
Tuesday 17th January 9am

Each writing workshop will follow a similar format. The class teacher will present to parents any curriculum information (homework, spelling rules, punctuation non-negotiables, etc) before the children join for a 40-minute modelled teaching session on sentence types and then undertaking and enjoying some shared writing: don't worry, the children be will doing all the heavy lifting. Please come along and support your child or, if you cannot attend, send another adult in your place if possible. Please see me if there are any problems.

Caught Being KiVa

Miss Atkins was not present when Cody Davies, Year Five, was caught being KiVA the first time. She remarked to me this week how helpful he is at lunchtime with the younger pupils so it is only fair to mention him once more. Miss Newman has also commented on Sadie Kelly, Year Six, and how she so kindly and selflessly supports other members of the class.



Book Fayre

Thank you to Mrs Fayaz and her team of helpers who have taken delivery of the Book Fayre today, ready to host it every morning and evening next week. The children will be timetabled a visit during the school day to explore the stock and parents are welcome to visit and purchase books every morning from 8:30 until 9am and every afternoon from 3:30 until 4pm

Mini-Vinnies

Thank you to all those who submitted application letters to hold an annual position on the board of our newly formed Mini-Vinnies committee. The make-up of the committee is as follows:

President: Carys Henvey

Vice Presidents Yr 6: Ellie Gresty-Helliwell and Maeve Cunningham

Vice Presidents Yr 5: Noah Young and Erin Quinn

Treasurer: Rory Goddard and Sami Thafiq

Secretary Yr 6: Anthony Mano

Secretary Yr 5: Helena Nadolna

Communication Officers Yr 6: Aileen Leech and Sadie Kelly

Communication Officers Yr 5: Bianca Hammondson and Patrisha Arulprasad

Executive Members: Caitlyn Ansermoz, Lainey-Mae Neal, Lauren Dewell, Daisy-May Edginton, Annie Stephenson, Caoimhe Kerr, Naomi Cunnane, Charlie Burke, Erin Fegan and Macy Melland.

This gives us a strong committee of twenty or so children. We met as a group this morning and have already discussed the plight of the homeless and how we can a) raise awareness and b) raise funds to support charities that help such people.

On Friday 18th November, the Mini-Vinnies are inviting all children from Year Five and Six to seek sponsorship to spend the night here in school. The committee, under the direction of the president, will produce sponsorship forms, permission slips, and be responsible for researching and contacting charities that may need our help. I am hoping they will also work with Fr Paul in the Parish with the adult SVP group: in my experience, it is always the children with the ideas and the enthusiasm that put adults to shame!

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Message from Fr Paul

If you are thinking about becoming Catholic, Fr Paul is running informal classes on Wednesday evenings at 6pm. Session last for about 45 minutes. If you'd like to join the group with a view to being baptised or received into the Church next Easter, then come along to find out more. Email stambrose.bham@rcaob.org.uk or message 07939137205.

Friends of St Ambrose Barlow (FoSABS)

AGM

Please come along to our Friends of St Ambrose Barlow (FoSABS) Annual General Meeting (AGM) on Tuesday 1st November at the parish hall at 5:30pm. It is open to anyone: new parents with children in Reception, existing parents or grandparents of a child in school, members of the parish or someone with an interest in fundraising and supporting the school. Please remember that EVERY penny and pound raised is for your children.

The more parents that attend the easier it is to plan events. At this meeting, we will elect a chair and vice-chair to share agendas in advance and keep meetings swift, a secretary to take minutes and a treasurer to sign cheques and make payments. Once events are planned, we have a wonderful parent body who are happy to step in and volunteer. Come along and hear our plans! Possible events for this year include Film Clubs for KS1 and KS2, a quiz, a 50/50 club and raffles at Christmas and Easter. We could get a Christmas disco organised if we move quickly...

CAFOD 'Live Simply'



You will soon be able to see a copy of our action plan on the school website underneath Catholic life. As you may be aware, we are tasked with undertaking nine actions: three in school, three in the local community, and three with a global impact (though, of course, there is some overlap). These are outlined here:

#1 Support schools in Rwanda with fundraising and/or material needs, including asking if they desire pen pals!

#2 Become a School of Sanctuary to highlight the plight of refugees in Birmingham and look for ways to actively support them

#3 Visit St Chad's Sanctuary to find how we, as a school, can best support asylum seekers in our local community.

#4 Litter picking in the local area on a rota basis.

#5 Attending the Friday Dementia Café in the parish hall on a rolling rota basis.

#6 Raising money for the homeless and supporting St Basil's charity.

#7 Reducing our electricity usage by turning off lights when we leave the room and having a morning without using an electricity at all to experience what life is like for others less fortunate.

#8 Recycling more, wasting less: re-using and reducing. We also aim to use less sheets in school and photocopy materials far less frequently.

#9 Underpinning what we teach in the National Curriculum with Catholic Social Teaching: we are all called to holiness and asked to build God's kingdom here on Earth.

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Currently reading...

Year Two are devouring books. They are currently reading *Wiggles Bottom Primary: The*



Toilet Ghost by Becka Moor. Their previous class readers so far this year include *The Chocolate Monster* by Jan Page, *The Wizard and Me: More misadventures of Bubbles the Guinea Pig* by Simon Farnaby and *The Finger-Eater* by Dick King-Smith. In a pleasing example of progression, Year Two have just finished *The Hodgeheg* by Dick King-Smith

Year Five have finished *Beowulf* by Michael Morpurgo and are now reading a different version of *Beowulf* – they are enjoying comparing the two different texts and seeing how different authors and illustrators have adapted the original *Beowulf* poem.

Year Three have enjoyed reading *The Owl Who Was Afraid Of The Dark* and now they are continuing the Roald Dahl theme started in Year Two by reading *George's Marvellous Medicine*. They are reading them in both whole-class Guided Reading sessions and also their class reader slots.

Year Six have just finished *War Horse* and have just started *Pig Heart Boy*. They tell me that also have *Farm Boy* (the sequel to *War Horse*) lined up as a 'must-read'.

Mr Clinton is reading *One More Croissant for the Road*, a culinary trip around France on two wheels written by Felicity Cloake. Three of my favourite things rolled into one book: France, cycling and eating!

Staff INSET – school closed to children on Friday 21st October

We are closed to children next Friday, so the last day of term will be Thursday 20th October. We finish at 3:30pm as normal. On Friday, the staff will take part of a form of spiritual retreat, where they will aim to find themselves by losing themselves in the service of others. Our Catholic Life and Mission underpins all we do here at St Ambrose Barlow Catholic Primary School; we also believe (in the words of St James) that faith without action is meaningless so some staff are using their time to help in the setting up of an SVP site in Druids Heath, while other help in our own parish, before attending Mass together as a staff.

Birthdays this week...

Happy birthday to Elora in Year Three who was eight on Monday. Happy birthday to Bertie in Reception who is five tomorrow and happy birthday also to Henry in Year Three who is eight on Sunday.

Next week, I will try to include those with birthdays that occur during half-term. Give me a nudge if this applies to you!

October Dates for your diary

Mon 17th Oct: BOOK FAYRE WEEK

Thurs 20th Oct: School closes for half term

Fri 21st Oct: School closed for INSET

Mon 31st Oct: School re-opens for all children

November dates for your diary

Tuesday 1st Nov: Whole School Mass for All Saints' Day 9:30

Tues 1st Nov: FoSABS AGM 5:30pm @ Parish Hall

Wed 2nd Nov: Reception Phonics workshop 5:30pm

Thurs 3rd Nov: FHC parents @ Parish Hall 6pm

Fri 4th Nov: Year Six @ St Chad's Cathedral

Sat 5th Nov: FHC Children @ Parish Hall 10am-12pm

Sun 6th Nov: FHC children @ Sunday Mass 10am

Thurs 10th Nov: Year One Phonics and Reading workshop 5:30pm

Fri 11th Nov: Year One Class Mass 2:30pm

Thurs 17th Nov: Year Four writing workshop 9am

Thurs 17th Nov: Confirmation Parent meeting @ Parish Hall 6pm

Fri 18th Nov: Year Three Assembly 9am

Fri 18th Nov: Year 5/6 Sleepover organised by the Mini-Vinnies

Tues 22nd Nov: Year Six writing workshop 9am

Fri 25th Nov: Non-uniform day in exchange for a bottle donation (Parish Christmas Fayre)

Sat 26th Nov: Confirmation children @ Parish Hall 10am-12pm

Sun 27th Nov: Confirmation children @ Sunday Mass 10am

Tues 29th Nov: Influenza vaccinations (am)

Tues 29th Nov: Year Five writing workshop 9am

Tues 29th Nov: KS1 Theatre trip (pm) to Mac for 'Pins and Needles'

December dates for your diary

Thurs 1st Dec: Year Three Reconciliation Service 6pm

Fri 2nd Dec: Reception Nativity 2pm

Mon 5th Dec: Year One Nativity 2pm

Tues 6th Dec: Year Two Nativity 2pm

Wed 7th Dec: KS2 theatre trip 'Nativity Two' @ B'ham Rep

Thurs 8th Dec: Whole School Mass of the Immaculate Conception 9:30

Thurs 8th Dec: Staff and children Christmas dinner

Wed 14th Dec: KS2 Carol Concert 7pm

Fri 16th Dec: Whole School Mass 9:30am

Fri 16th Dec: Break up at 2pm

Have a good weekend and I will see you all next week for the final four days of the half-term next week.

God bless,



Mr Clinton