



# 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 5<sup>th</sup> September 2025

Dear parents,

Welcome back to all our returning children, and a huge welcome to those children and families who are starting with us this year. It was such a joy to welcome the children on Thursday – they all look so smart in their school uniforms.

We have had some work done over the holidays replacing lots of the interior doors and upgrading our heating so please bear with us as our workmen finish off tidying the site. The next phase will take place during October half-term (or hopefully sooner).

We will join with the parish to celebrate the feast day of St Ambrose Barlow, our patron, next Wednesday with a whole school Mass at church at 9:30. If you wish to join us, or walk down with us, please do. You are more than welcome!

### **Golden Book**

Each week, a child who stands out for their particular effort or qualities is celebrated by staff. This will return next week, after our first full week.

### **Father Paul**

It was with great sadness that we said goodbye to Father Paul on Wednesday. However, during Thursday's assembly, I also said it was a happy and joyous

occasion: it was fantastic to see so many of Father Paul's brother priests join with his family and the parish to say farewell, and it was heart-warming to see such a full church and parish hall. Father Paul knew he was dearly loved and that love was very much apparent on Wednesday. Below is something I wrote for Father John Collins to share on Tuesday's Mass. I have copied it below in its entirety. May Father Paul rest in peace.

"I have, on more than one occasion, described Father Paul as 'a source of great strength and support' and, while they are nice words, they do not even begin to tell half the story of what Father Paul meant to the school community. Put simply, the school would not be where it is today – with its excellent reports and reputation – without the input and guidance of Father Paul. He returned to the Governing Body in 2021 following my appointment as headteacher and he became our chair of Governors in 2022. He has always been on the end of the phone for any staff member who wanted to ask a question or to welcome the children to church so he could teach them directly about our faith.

More than that, though, is the time and energy Father Paul devoted to our school – to the staff and to the children – but also to me especially, in my role as Headteacher of the school. Once a month, sometimes more, he would come for coffee or lunch and sit in my office, and we would talk to each other about the strategic direction of the school, how we could better the

With **St. Ambrose Barlow** as our guide and **Jesus** at our side,  
we are all **learning to live, love and work together.**

experience for the children, how we could deal with any issues that were current, or anticipate any problems that could arise. Progress was always made.

This progress is clear to see. We agreed for the children to attend Mass more regularly, for the children to be present in the parish, to lead the singing, to reflect more readily on what it meant to follow a vocation. The evidence of Father Paul's impact is clear to see: in the class Masses, in the Carol Service (it was never a concert to Father Paul, and always a service), in the impact the children have in the community, in the way the school curriculum is now shaped totally by Catholic Social teaching.

The legacy of Father Paul lives on in every pupil who has attended St Ambrose Barlow Catholic Primary School, and I can say without hesitation that his memory and example will continue to inspire us. We have recently agreed as a staff to change the name of our prayer garden to "The Father Paul Johnson Memorial Garden" as a permanent reminder to his memory, and have renamed our intervention area for children with additional needs as the Padre Pio Room, named after Father Paul's favourite saint, on whose feast day was Father Paul's birthday.

The communication I shared with staff after the news of his death said, amongst other things, that Father Paul knew he was loved. He knew it because we showed it. That is as true today as it was then, and it will remain true from this day forth."

### **Uniform**

The children all looked so smart upon their return yesterday. Long may this continue! Children can wear either winter uniform (white shirt and tie, grey trousers or dress) or, if the weather is

warm enough, their summer uniform (summer dress or polo shirt). If the weather is cool enough to require a jumper, then winter uniform should be worn. Shoes should be black and socks should be black or grey for boys or black, white or grey for girls. Please ensure all items are labelled with a name – it may or may not surprise you but items naturally get mislaid in school – at least if they are labelled, they can be returned by the end of the day. Without a name, they can be left in lost property indefinitely! All long hair should be totally tied up and any bows or ribbons should be in the school colours and small enough for them not to be a distraction to other children in the classroom.

We will continue to reward children for walking to school, in line with our sustainability and "Live Simply" action plan but ask that children only wear the latest month's badge on their jumper – all previous months badges can go on their bags. I would also ask that we keep keyrings on book bags to a minimum due to storage space in classrooms.

### **Attendance**

Sent out with this newsletter is a separate letter containing information about our approach to attendance. Historically, our attendance has always been healthy and continues to be so, but the letter outlines our procedures moving forward, in line with other schools in the St Teresa of Calcutta Multi-Academy Company.

### **Sacramental preparation**

We have adapted how to prepare children for receiving their sacraments this year. Rather than Saturday morning workshops, parent meeting and children workshops will be merged and take place at the same time on a Thursday evening at 6pm, the dates of which are below.

#### **Year Three Sacrament Preparation 2025-26**

**Thurs 18th Sept:** Parents and children at 6pm in the school hall

**Sun 21<sup>st</sup> Sept:** 'Belonging' Mass 10am

**Sun 9th Nov:** Children to lead Sunday Mass 10am

**Thurs 13<sup>th</sup> Nov:** Confessions 6pm

**Sun 1st March:** Children to lead Sunday Mass 10am

**Tues 24<sup>th</sup> March:** INSPIRE workshop 9am (parents and children)

**Sun 29<sup>th</sup> March:** Year Three children to lead Palm Sunday Procession

**Sat 9th May:** First Communion 10am and 11:30am

**Sun 7<sup>th</sup> June:** Going Forth Mass – Year Three children to lead Corpus Christi Procession to school for Communion breakfast

#### **Year Six Sacrament Preparation 2025-26**

**Thurs 25th Sept:** Parent and children at 6pm in the school hall

**Sun 28<sup>th</sup> Sept:** Enrolment Mass / blessing of Reception children 10am

**Sun 23rd Nov:** Year Six children to lead Sunday Mass 10am – Christ the King

**Thurs 15<sup>th</sup> Jan:** Parent and children at 6pm in the school hall

**Sun 18<sup>th</sup> Jan:** Year Six children to lead Sunday Mass 10am

**Fri 23rd Jan:** 2pm Sponsor Workshop

**Fri 23rd Jan:** Confirmation 7pm

### **Charges for Before and After School Club**

The cost for attending each morning session has risen to £3 per morning, which includes toast. The cost for the evening session is £5-50 for the first hour and £5-50 for the second, which makes £11 for the afternoon. This still represents remarkable value at £14 for what is equivalent to three hours of additional care for your child, in an environment that they know and staff who care for them. Again, the school makes no profit from the club and we aim to cover our costs only – last year, we ran the club at a considerable loss, hence the slight increase in price from September. Please aim to pay and book on in advance via MCAS (My Child at School), but you will never be charged for non-attendance.

### **Christmas trips.**

I know: the C-word already. We have booked our Christmas trips for both Key Stages. Reception and Key Stage One will attend the Mac in Cannon Hill Park on Tuesday 9th December for the morning show. The cost for this is £23.50. Key Stage Two children will attend 'Sherlock Holmes and The Twelve Days of Christmas' on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> December at the 10:30 showing. The price for this is £26.50. Again, both trips have been subsidised by the school but this still represents great value for a theatre trip and a lovely Christmas treat for the children!

### **Birthdays this week**

Happy birthday to Phoebe in Year Four who celebrated her



ninth birthday on Tuesday! Happy birthday also to Mrs Nazir, one of our wonderful lunchtime supervisors, who is 60 this weekend. She doesn't want a fuss made so hopefully we can keep this secret from the children and they won't mention it when they see her on Monday.

### **September dates for your diary**

**Wed 10<sup>th</sup> Sept:** Whole School Mass for feast day of St Ambrose Barlow

**Thurs 18<sup>th</sup> Sept:** Year Three Sacramental preparation meeting

**Sun 21<sup>st</sup> Sept:** Year Three children 'Belonging' Mass

**Thurs 25<sup>th</sup> Sept:** Year Six Sacrament preparation meeting

**Sun 28<sup>th</sup> Sept:** Year Six and Reception 'Enrolment; Mass

### **October dates for your diary**

**Thurs 2<sup>nd</sup> Oct:** Poetry day

**Fri 3<sup>rd</sup> Oct:** Year Two Class Mass 2:30pm

**Mon 13<sup>th</sup> Oct:** Harvest Mass, 2pm; Parent Consultations 3:40 – 6:20

**Fri 17<sup>th</sup> Oct:** Year Six Class Assembly

**Fri 24<sup>th</sup> Oct:** Break up for half-term

### **November dates for your diary**

**Fri 7<sup>th</sup> Nov:** Year Four Class Mass 2:30pm

**Sun 9<sup>th</sup> Nov:** Year Three 'Forgiveness' Mass

**Thurs 13<sup>th</sup> Nov:** Year Three First Confessions 6pm

**Fri 21<sup>st</sup> Nov:** Year Five Class Assembly

**Sun 23<sup>rd</sup> Nov:** Year Six to lead parish Mass 10am

### **December dates for your diary**

**Thurs 4<sup>th</sup> Dec:** KS2 Advent Reconciliation Service

**Fri 5<sup>th</sup> Dec:** Reception Nativity 2pm

**Mon 8<sup>th</sup> Dec:** Whole School Mass for the Feast of the Immaculate Conception

**Tues 9<sup>th</sup> Dec:** KS1 @ Mac: 'The Owl Who Came For Christmas'

**Wed 10<sup>th</sup> Dec:** KS2 @ Rep: 'Sherlock Holmes'

**Thurs 11<sup>th</sup> Dec:** KS1 Nativity Year One parents

**Fri 12<sup>th</sup> Dec:** KS1 Nativity Year Two parents

**Thurs 16<sup>th</sup> Dec:** KS2 Carol Service 7pm

**Wed 17<sup>th</sup> Dec:** Christmas Dinner and Christmas jumpers

**Thurs 18<sup>th</sup> Dec:** KS1/2 Christmas parties (pm)

**Fri 19<sup>th</sup> Dec:** Whole School Mass 9:30am; Break up at 2pm: no after-school club

I hope the children have had a wonderful two days this week. I am already looking forward to welcoming them back next week, for their first full week. Have a lovely weekend. A reminder that children's liturgy runs every week on Sunday during 10am Mass. It is run by parents and teachers in the parish and is hugely beneficial for our children's understanding on their faith. Please make full use of it!

God bless,

Mr Clinton