ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Weekly Newsletter

Week Ending 17th July 2026

Achieving Ambitions

We guide our pupils on to the path to achieving their ambitions.
On their journey they **Love** *one another,* **Learn** *to achieve excellence,* **Laugh** *through enriching experiences and* **Live** *life to the full.*

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we come to the end of another wonderful school year at St Mary's, it is a perfect opportunity to reflect on all that we have achieved together and to celebrate the many successes of our children, staff and families.

This year has been filled with learning, growth, friendship and faith. Throughout the year, our children have continued to embrace every opportunity with enthusiasm, whether in the classroom, on the sports field, through music and the arts, or by supporting one another in living out our Gospel values each day. We have been particularly proud to see the children grow in confidence, resilience and compassion, demonstrating what it truly means to be part of the St Mary's family.

For those families who joined us this year, we hope you have felt warmly welcomed and that your children have enjoyed a happy, enriching and successful first year at St Mary's. We are delighted that you are now part of our school family.

As always, a successful year would not be possible without our exceptional staff team. Their commitment, professionalism and care for every child shines through in everything that they do. They work tirelessly to create a nurturing environment where children feel safe, valued and inspired to learn, and I would like to thank them sincerely for their dedication throughout the year.

I would also like to extend my heartfelt thanks to all our parents and carers for your ongoing support. Whether it's attending school events, volunteering your time, supporting learning at home, fundraising, accompanying trips or simply encouraging your child each day. Your partnership makes an enormous difference and St Mary's is a strong community, because of the positive relationships we share, and we are grateful for all that you do.

As we begin the summer break, I hope you are able to enjoy some well-deserved time together as a family, making special memories and taking the opportunity to rest and recharge. We look forward to welcoming the children back to school, happy and refreshed, at the start of the new academic year on **Thursday 3rd September 2026.**

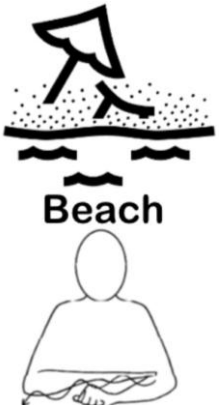
On behalf of everyone at St Mary's, thank you once again for your continued support. Have a wonderful summer break and we look forward to seeing you all in September.

With best wishes,

Sarah Clayton
Headteacher

Star Shout Out!	
Reception	Rory
Year 1	Mrs Hilton
Year 2	Elise, Miss Lucy
Year 3	Mrs Haestier
Year 4	Mr Robertson
Year 5	Ava
Year 6	Summer, Tala
Wow Writers	
1.	
Mathematician in the Making	
Felix, Emily, Monty, Elise	
Reading Certificate	
Ava, Misty, Tia, Roman, Eleni,	
Opal Star	
Ralph	
Bike it Bear	
Attendance	
KS1: Year 1 KS2: Year 3	

Makaton Sign of the week!



Year 6 Leavers Mass

What a beautiful way to start the celebrations for our Year 6! It was wonderful to gather together at our Leavers Mass, last Sunday, which the children helped lead and included a fantastic choir. A joyful event we hope the families will treasure the memory of. Thank you so much to everyone who joined us.

Attendance Update

Our target for school attendance is **96%**
Attendance this week is:

Reception	88.0%
Year 1	94.1%
Year 2	93.6%
Year 3	100.0%
Year 4	91.4%
Year 5	97.0%
Year 6	94.9%
School	**94.1%**

Sunflower Success

On Earth Day, Thomas took home a tiny sunflower seed, with a big responsibility to care for and nurture it. Since then, Thomas has shown fantastic dedication, regularly watering and looking after his plant.

We are delighted to share that his sunflower has grown immensely and is thriving!

Thomas's sunflower is a wonderful example of how patience, care and perseverance can lead to amazing results. Not only has he helped his plant flourish, but he has also demonstrated the importance of looking after our environment and appreciating nature's growth.

Well done, Thomas! We are so proud of your hard work and commitment. We can't wait to see how tall your sunflower grows over the summer!

Eira and Ray have shown the same dedication to growing their sunflower, which marked the celebration of the feast of St Joseph. Ray's sunflower is now being cared for by Mrs Foan, Headteacher of his former school. As you can see from the photograph, Ray's sunflower is currently in friendly competition with another impressive sunflower from Our Lady of Lourdes School in Rottingdean. We look forward to seeing which one grows tallest over the summer!

Primary School Meals – Price Increase from 01 September 2026

The cost of school meals will increase in September 2026. This is due to increased food and labour costs. The cost will be £2.95 per day for pupil paid meals or £14.75 per week from 1st September 2026.

Key Stage 1 Graduation

On Tuesday we celebrated a very special milestone as our wonderful Year 2 children graduated from Key Stage 1.

What a journey it has been! Over the past three years they have grown in confidence, curiosity and independence, developing a love of learning and creating memories that will stay with them for years to come.

We are so proud of everything they have achieved and of the kind, resilient and caring young people they have become. As they look ahead to Key Stage 2, we know they will continue to shine, embrace new challenges and achieve their ambitions.

Congratulations, Year 2! We can't wait to see all that the future holds for you.

End of year Report

As we approach the end of the academic year, we have written a report that highlights the successes of this year. This has been emailed alongside this newsletter. Please do take the time to read this.

St Mary's
Catholic Primary School
WE LOVE | WE LEARN | WE LAUGH | WE LIVE
End of year report July 2026

A Year of Growing Together

As we come to the close of another busy and rewarding school year, we reflect with great pride and gratitude on all that has been achieved across our school community. This year has been marked by a wonderful breadth of opportunities for our children, enabling them to grow not only academically, but socially, physically, and spiritually.

In a recent report, it was noted that at St Mary's "the whole child is nurtured and developed, with their God-given talents recognised and celebrated. St Mary's stands as a powerful example of Catholic education at its very best." These words truly reflect all that we strive to achieve each day.

We have been delighted by the wide range of sporting events and activities made possible through the dedication and hard work of our subject leads. These experiences have allowed so many of our pupils to represent the school, discover new talents, and develop confidence, teamwork, and resilience. We are also incredibly grateful to you, our families, for your continued support. We know that attending events and fixtures often requires careful organisation, transport arrangements, and flexibility in an already busy weekly timetable, and your commitment ensures that our children can fully benefit from these valuable opportunities - an essential part of what makes St Mary's such a special place.

The Eco Council successfully secured a £5,000 Royal Horticultural Society grant to increase biodiversity across the school playground. Since work began in May, the project has transformed outdoor spaces through the creation of wildlife habitats, including wildflower areas, a Nature Nook with bug hotels and a mini pond and an edible Garden. Fruit trees and climbing plants have also been introduced, with a living wall and bamboo forest planned for the next phase. The grant has also funded fieldwork and gardening resources, enabling all pupils to engage in hands-on outdoor learning.

This has also been a year of successful events and fundraising initiatives, with fantastic involvement from our wonderful PTA, anonymous donations, parents, grandparents, and the wider community. It speaks volumes about the strength and reach of our school family. After this recent spell of very warm weather, we may even need to consider adding "fundraising for more air conditioning" to next year's priorities!

Thank you, as always, for your continued support and partnership. Wishing you all a peaceful and joyful summer break.

Sarah Clayton

Summer Home Learning

You should have received a document that gives you some ideas of things you could be doing with your child over the summer holidays. Please do take the time to look at these activities and enjoy them together where you can.

If you only have time to do one thing this summer, please make it reading. Reading together for just 10–15 minutes each day can make an enormous difference to your child's confidence, vocabulary and love of learning.

School councils final meeting!

School council held their final meeting this week where they shared highlights and successes from the year, as well as enjoying a cake baked by Mrs Parsons.

Their final decision was to bring in the rule that all children at St Mary's can wear their own clothes on their birthday. If a birthday falls on a weekend or school holiday, they can wear their own clothes on the closest day of their choice. Don't forget to do this from September onwards!

KS1 Sports Day

Despite the heat, we successfully completed our KS1 Sports Day! ☀️🎖️

All of the children showed incredible resilience, determination, and fantastic skill in every event. We are so proud of the effort, enthusiasm, and sportsmanship they displayed throughout the morning.

Thank you parents, carers, and family members who came along to support and cheer the children on!

Reminder: KS2 Sports Day will take place on **Monday 20th**, from **9:15am to 11:30am**. We look forward to seeing you there!

Meet the Teacher Dates

At the start of each academic year, there is a brief meet the teacher meeting. This is an opportunity for you to meet the teacher and hear about the expectations for your child's new year group. The meetings are straight after school and last about 15 minutes. We will have another classroom where the children and any sibling can wait in. The dates are as follows:

Reception	10th September
Year 1	8th September
Year 2	9th September
Year 3	14th September
Year 4	15th September
Year 5	11th September
Year 6	17th September

Smartphone Free School

This is a reminder that from September 2026, St Mary's Catholic Primary School will operate as a smartphone-free school.

Pupils are therefore not permitted to bring smartphones or internet-enabled devices onto the school site.

If you would like your child to have a phone for walking home, this must be a brick phone.

For clarity:

- **Smartphones**: A phone that can access the internet, social media and take photos and videos.
- **Mobile phones ("brick phones")**: devices limited to calls and texts only

What will happen if your child does bring a smartphone into school?

- Their device will be confiscated and retained by a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- The device will only be returned to a parent or carer.

St Mary's New Fish!

This morning we went to Breakfast club to find out that we now have school fishes!

The new Fish tank is in the Enrichment room with 6,7,8,9 FISHES! What a surprise. No one was expecting this. A new fish tank with 4 shiny brown fishes and 5 blue and red fishes!

I personally think that looking after fishes and just watching them is calming not just for people with anxiety, but also everybody else.

By Tala
Year 4

PARENTS' GUIDE TO THE NEW UK SOCIAL MEDIA RULES

Helping Children Stay Safe Online

1 SOCIAL MEDIA BAN FOR UNDER-16s

From Spring 2027, children under 16 will no longer be able to access major social media platforms, including:

- Instagram
- Facebook
- TikTok
- X (Twitter)
- Snapchat
- YouTube*

*Subject to final regulations.

2 WHAT CAN CHILDREN STILL USE?

Children will still be able to:

- Access educational content and learning platforms
- Read news and information online
- Play games online
- Stay in touch with family and friends through messaging apps

WhatsApp and Signal are not expected to be included in the ban.

3 NEW ONLINE SAFETY PROTECTIONS

To help protect children from online harm:

- Livestreaming features will be restricted
- Strangers will not be able to contact children through many online services and games
- Stronger age checks will be introduced

4 WHAT ABOUT 16 & 17 YEAR OLDS?

They can still access social media, but:

- Livestreaming will be OFF by default
- Contact from strangers will be OFF by default

This includes many gaming and social platforms.

5 WHY IS THIS HAPPENING?

The Government says the changes aim to:

- Reduce exposure to harmful content
- Improve mental health and wellbeing
- Create safer online experiences
- Give young people more time for a healthier childhood

6 WHEN DOES IT START?

- Regulations expected by the end of 2026
- Changes planned to take effect in Spring 2027

7 WHAT DO PARENTS NEED TO DO NOW?

Nothing right now!

The Government will provide further information and guidance to families before the changes come into effect.

8 STRONGER AGE CHECKS ARE COMING

Platforms will be required to introduce more effective age verification measures.

For adults, age verification may be straightforward and could include:

- Existing account information
- Credit card verification
- Previously verified email addresses
- Facial age estimation checks

9 EDUCATION COMES FIRST

Children will continue to have access to educational content and learning.

We're not looking to bring dedicated educational platforms, which support schoolwork and learning, under these new rules.

Our focus is on protecting children from harmful content and features on social media services used by under-16s.

THE BOTTOM LINE

SAFE • CONNECTED • PROTECTED

Children will still be able to learn, play, communicate and explore online – but with stronger safeguards designed to reduce online harm and support healthier digital habits.

The goal is not to stop children being online – it's to make being online safer.

MONEY RAISED AT SUMMER FAIR

WE RAISED

£1829.57

THANK YOU

TO EVERYONE WHO DONATED,
HELPED AND SUPPORTED!

You made it a fantastic day!

July 2026		
Friday 17.07.26	Year 6 Production of Beauty and the Beast	19:00
Monday 20.07.26	KS2 Sports Day	9:15 – 11.30
Tuesday 21.07.26	Leavers Assembly	9:15
Wednesday 22.07.26	INSET DAY	All day
Thursday 23.07.26	Summer Holidays	Inclusive
September 2026		
Tuesday 01.09.26	INSET DAY	All day
Wednesday 02.09.26	INSET DAY	All day
Tuesday 08.09.26	Year 1 Meet the Teacher	15:10 – 15:25
Wednesday 09.09.26	Year 2 Meet the Teacher	15:10 – 15:25
Thursday 10.09.26	Reception Meet the Teacher	15:10 – 15:25
Friday 11.09.26	Year 5 Meet the Teacher	15:10 – 15:25
Monday 14.09.26	Year 3 Meet the Teacher	15:10 – 15:25
Tuesday 15.09.26	Year 4 Meet the Teacher	15:10 – 15:25
Thursday 17.09.26	Year 6 Meet the Teacher	15:10 – 15:25
October 2026		
Monday 05.10.26	Year of St Francis Celebration Day	All day
Friday 09.10.26	Flu Vaccinations	9:00
November 2026		
Friday 20.11.26	Individual Photographs	9:00
Friday 27.11.26	INSET DAY	All day
	December 2026	
January 2027		
Monday 4.01.27	INSET DAY	All day