

January 24

Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome to the first newsletter of 2024, and I hope it is a happy and healthy one for you all.

The children have settled back well after the festive break and we look forward to lots of exciting learning that the teachers have planned for Term 3.



Please remember to check your child's class page on our website for information on what is being taught this term, and please do support your child with this learning at home. If you haven't already joined the local library, why not make this the year to do it? They offer a wonderful range of resources including books, magazines, DVDs, computing facilities and story sessions. It's a wonderful facility and in these damp and dreary days when it is difficult to get outside, it can be a lovely way to while away an hour or two. <https://www.swindon.gov.uk/libraries>.

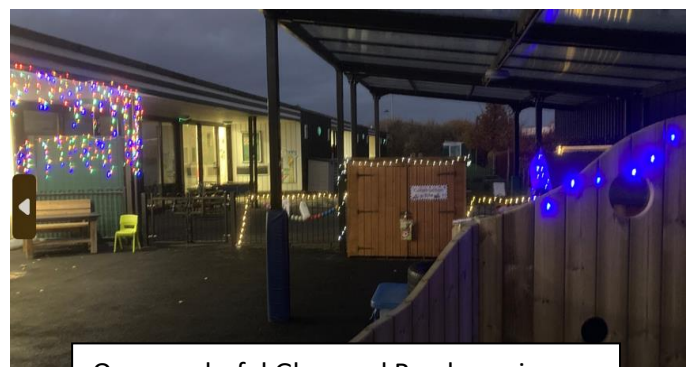
A huge thank you to those parents who came in to visit their child's class during Term 2 to share some of work they had been doing. It was delightful to see the children present their work on electricity, the heart, making pencil cases and sharing stories etc. It makes such a difference to your child and I hope you enjoyed sharing the learning experiences with your son/daughter.

You might remember that many of our pupils wrote letters and drew pictures for 'Sandra' who was living in a house covered with mould. This was a wonderful example of the community coming together to help someone in need and the children of our school were so proud to have been able to help. The lady – whose real name is Pat – is now back in her home and the full story can be found here: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-wiltshire-68041884>.

Although traditionally a time of joy and celebration, I know not everybody had an easy Christmas and for those who have suffered illness, loss or the break-up of a relationship over the festive period, please know that I hold you in my thoughts and prayers. Whilst I know it can be upsetting to come in and speak about such issues, it does mean that we can support your children at a difficult time whilst they are trying to understand changes that are happening within the family home. Please be assured that I am always here for you to speak to and that I am not here to judge – I will simply do all I can to support both yourself and your child(ren).

Thank you as always for your ongoing support – together we can achieve great things!

Mrs Dowdeswell



Our wonderful Glow and Read evening. The children enjoyed a light trail, hot chocolate, shortbread and a story – what a wonderful evening for all! Huge thanks to our EYFS team for all their hard work in organising this event for the children. 😊

Learn, Grow, Love, Live

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RE
Our Catholic Social Teaching principle for this term is Subsidiarity and here is a prayer to share within your family.

Loving God,
We believe that people who make
decisions should listen to everyone.
Help us make sure everyone is
treated fairly and can have a say.

Lord in your mercy
Hear our prayer



Everyone should have a say
Subsidiarity



Our Chaplaincy Team have organised a charity day. On Friday, February 9th the children are invited to come to school in their pyjamas or a onesie and donate £1 for the Night Haven – a local charity that helps the homeless. This donation can be made via ParentPay or in cash on the day. Please support if you are able.



Chaplaincy Team 2023-24

The children from KS2 continue to take turns in attending the 9:15am public Mass on Thursdays at Holy Rood Church in Groundwell Road. The children really enjoy joining with the community for this service and the congregation often comment of the excellent behaviour of the children and say how much they enjoy having them there. If any of our families would like to accompany the children as they walk to church, and then stay to attend the Mass with them, please do speak to your class teacher.

A New Year's Prayer

Lord, You make all things new
You bring hope alive in our hearts
And cause our Spirits to be born again.

Thank you for this new year
For all the potential it holds.
Come and kindle in us
A mighty flame
So that in our time, many will see the wonders of God
And live forever to praise Your glorious name.

Amen

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Mini Police

Mini Police is a fantastic opportunity provided by our local police force for children to learn more about the excellent job the police do within our communities. Some of the students of Holy Cross Catholic Primary School recently enjoyed a mini police session with the PCSOs where they learnt about police equipment, vehicles, the phonetic alphabet and practised radio use. The next visit will include the police dogs so that children can see what an amazing support the animals are to their humans!



On 22nd January 2024, the school celebrated Maths Week and this concluded with the children supporting the NSPCC by taking part in Dress up for Digits day on Friday 26th January 2024. The children had lots of fun engaging in practical maths activities including: escape rooms – where the children had to crack the mathematical code to ‘escape’, problem-solving using area and perimeter, and going on a shape hunt. Well done to the teaching staff for the lovely creative ideas shared with the children.

Year 4 Swimming Lessons

How exciting that swimming lessons have started for the children in Year 4! Swimming is an essential life skill and we are delighted to be able to offer these lessons to our pupils.

Hazel Class

Wednesday 17th January 2024 until Wednesday 21st February 2024

Larch Class

Wednesday 28th February 2024 until Wednesday 27th March 2024

All children in year 4 will be included in these lessons and will need to bring a small plastic bag containing:

- swimming kit (one-piece swimming costume for girls please);
- towel;
- hairbrush;
- swim hat.

All children with long hair must have their hair tied back and it is advisable for girls not to wear tights on the swimming days as these can slow down dressing/undressing.



Christmas Tree



A huge thank you to Needle Fresh for the kind donation of a Christmas tree last term. It was a beautiful tree and it was so kind of them to donate it to the school. Thank you Needle Fresh – we were truly grateful 🎄

[Real Christmas Trees for Sale | Needlefresh UK](https://www.needlefresh.co.uk/)

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Creative Learning

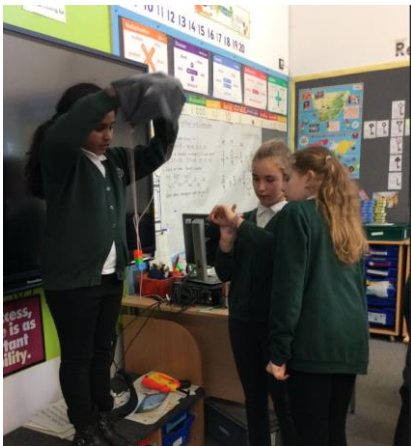
The Holy Cross Curriculum is designed to make learning fun and engaging and here are a few examples of what this looks like in action – I hope you enjoy seeing them as much as the children enjoyed experiencing them 😊



History: Ancient Egypt - discovering a tomb



Geography: coasts – how beaches are formed



Science: air resistance– parachutes



Science: friction- hovercrafts



English: drama to understand a character



Science: healthy eating – making soup



History: WWII – taking on the role of a museum curator

Please do have a look on our website to see more examples of learning experiences and the written work completed.

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Goodbyes

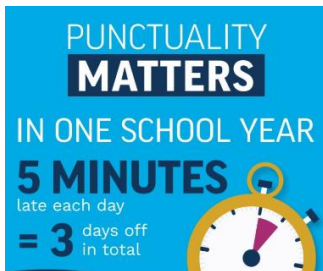
It is always sad to say goodbye, but we wish all the very best to those members of our staff who left us at Christmas. We wish Julie Lynch a long and happy retirement after working for the school as a teaching assistant for many years. Julie will be very much missed, especially among the EYFS team where Julie has worked for the last few years.

Kerry, our catering manager, has also left to pursue new challenges and we thank her for all of the thousands of lovely meals she has made for our pupils and staff.

Thank you both for the many years of service and commitment to the children of our school.



Education



Hopefully, this newsletter shows you how hard the staff of this school work to provide your children with a quality education. To fully benefit from this, your child needs to be in school and arrive on time. We are still seeing far too many children arriving late and the most common reasons for this are: 'traffic', 'we woke up late' or 'the bus was late'. Unfortunately, some children are late A LOT – and whilst I understand there might be the odd day where this cannot be helped – this should definitely be the exception and not the rule. As previously explained, the effect of your child arriving late not only affects your child, but it also

disrupts the learning of the other children in class who have already started their learning for the day and that is neither fair nor acceptable.

If you are late due to traffic – please start your journey 10 minutes earlier. If you wake up late – please set an alarm and prepare the schoolbag etc. the night before so that you can leave in plenty of time and have a relaxed start to the day. If the bus is persistently late – please catch an earlier bus.

In line with the national government campaign to improve attendance, we are working with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) at Swindon Borough Council to support those families who are repeatedly late.



Junior Dance Festival – Wyvern, 5th February.

Our dance club is hugely popular and Mrs D'Costa will be taking the children to perform in the JDF at the Wyvern. Separate details will be sent shortly, along with information on how families can purchase tickets to watch the performance.

Junior Voice Festival – Wyvern, 13th March.

Mr Forrester is taking some of the children from the choir to perform at the JVF at the Wyvern. Separate details will be sent shortly, along with information on how families can purchase tickets to watch the performance.

Sport

A huge well done to all those children who have participated in the many sports tournaments organised by Mr Pidgeon. We have had several inter-school matches during this term and last, and through these the children learn invaluable skills of teamwork, fair competition and sportsmanship. Thank you to Mr Pidgeon and the staff who accompany the teams to allow these matches to take place. It is an important part of school life and we hope it will lead to a lifelong love of sport and exercise.



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Cultural Capital

Definition of cultural capital:

- The values, knowledge or ideas that parents can pass on to their children, which can then influence their success at school and later in life.

In school, we work hard to give the children as many first-hand experiences as we can; however, we would love for the children to experience more. The term 'cultural capital' refers to the real-life experiences children have with their families, and these experiences have been proved time and again to have a huge impact on a child's learning. Here are some ideas of places to visit in and around Swindon which you might enjoy with your child(ren):

Lydiard Park



Lydiard Park is a wonderful place to spend a few hours and provides lots of space for children to run around, play football or walk amongst the trees. There is a play park that will help the children burn off their energy and a couple of cafes where you can buy drinks and snacks. Other than the cost of parking, Lydiard Park is free. More information can be found here: <https://www.lydiardpark.org.uk/>



Ashmolean Museum, Oxford



An amazing museum that is free to visit – we are incredibly lucky to have this so close to Swindon. Oxford can be easily reached by car, bus or train and the museum is right in the centre and so easy to find. The museum is extremely popular and



can get very busy; therefore, they recommend you book tickets in advance to guarantee entry. Their One World Family Festival is on over half term. Well worth a visit at any time of the year. <https://www.ashmolean.org/>.

Lechlade



Lechlade is a short drive outside Swindon and is a very picturesque place to visit. You can walk along the Thames Path to St John's Lock and watch the boats go through one of the shallowest locks on the river. The Lock Keeper is often there and will happily explain how the lock works whilst you watch the water levels rise and fall. The lock is named after a priory dedicated to St John the Baptist and is home to 'Father Thames',



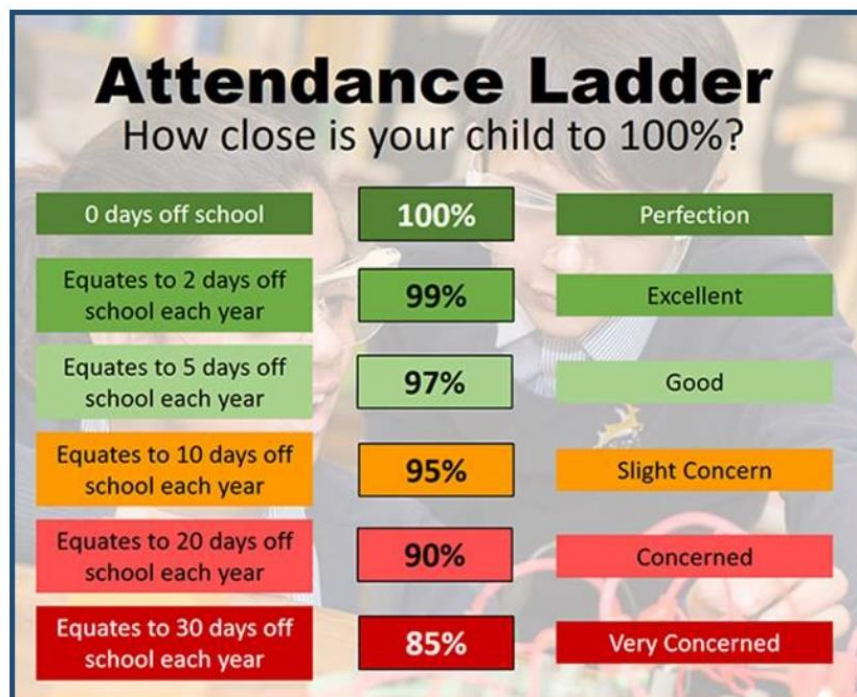
the famous statue made in 1851 for the Great Exhibition in the Crystal Palace at Hyde Park. If it has been raining, it can often be a little muddy and so wellington boots are a good idea.

I hope you manage to visit one or more of these places as a family 😊

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Monday, 29 th January	National Storytelling Week: our theme is stories from around the world.
Monday, 5 th February	Mental Health Week: how we can keep ourselves mentally well.
Monday, 5 th February	Junior Dance Festival – Wyvern
6 th and 9 th February	Scholastic book fair in school
Wednesday, 7 th February	Stay and Play sessions – Ash and Oak
Friday, 9 th February	Pyjamas Day – charity event for the Night Haven
12 th – 16 th February	HALF TERM
Thursday, 22 nd February	Year 1 Steam Museum Trip
Friday, 23 rd February	Wind Roadshow
Monday, 26 th February	Year 1 Trip to Queen’s Park
Wednesday 28 th February	School disco
Tuesday, 5 th March	NSPCC workshops
Thursday, 7 th March	World Book Day – every child will receive a free book
Wednesday 13 th March	Junior Music Festival, Wyvern
19 th and 21 st March	Parents’ Evening
Friday, 22 nd March	Y2 trip to Westonbirt Arboretum
Friday, 22 nd March	Y4 trip to Living Rainforest, Newbury
Thursday, 28 th March	Rock Pop Roadshow
Friday, 29 th March – 12 th April	HALF TERM



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If you know of anyone who would like a space at our wonderful school for their child, please ask them to contact the school office to arrange a visit. We look forward to meeting them.

Holy Cross Catholic Primary School



Queen's Drive, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN3 1AR
Tel: 01793 527679
www.holycross.swindon.sch.uk
✉: admin@holycross.swindon.sch.uk

At Holy Cross we are committed to ensuring that your child's time at school is inspiring and productive so they move confidently through each stage of their education. We are a happy and inclusive school with a friendly, loving and caring community. We work closely with parents, children, governors, staff and the church community to ensure that each child is given the best possible start on their educational journey.

We provide amazing facilities:

- *An exciting Early Years environment to stimulate curiosity and excitement to learn
- *Fresh healthy hot meals cooked on site daily
- *Wrap around care with an early morning Breakfast Club and After School Club
- *Many after school clubs – chess, football, Lego, sewing, art, dance, Chaplaincy
- *Outdoor climbing frames
- *Large and small school hall for sports and gatherings
- *Two well-resourced libraries
- *Large school field
- *Swimming lessons
- *Specialist sports coaching
- *Private music lessons – piano, guitar, drums and violin
- *Opportunities for children to lead through our Chaplaincy and School Council teams
- *Learning bays attached to each class to support group and independent study outside the classroom



Visits to our school are warmly welcomed. Please contact the school office to arrange.



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