

St Ursula's Catholic Primary School

Headteacher's Newsletter

November 2024



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Major Works update

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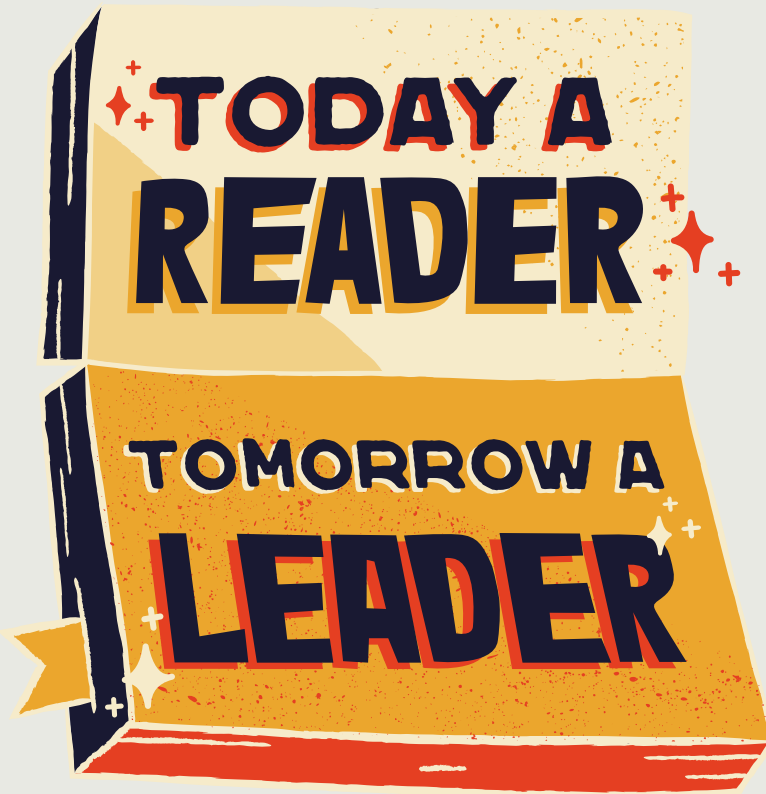
A busy October

As we return from our Autumn Half term break, I trust that you have all enjoyed a wonderful and restful period. The crisp autumn air and changing colours of the season often provide an opportunity for reflection, and I find myself looking back on an eventful October with a sense of pride and gratitude for our school community.

Our Parent Coffee Morning on Friday 4th October was a resounding success. It was heartening to see a blend of familiar and new faces, creating a warm and welcoming atmosphere. These gatherings serve as invaluable opportunities for open dialogue, and I was pleased to see parents raising important issues, particularly regarding the school Gateway App. Concerns about the calendar and the process of ordering dinners were addressed, and we appreciate your feedback as we continually strive to improve our communication channels.

"With God at the heart of our St Ursula's family, we welcome all as we learn and grow together."

Phonics follow-up



In our ongoing commitment to supporting our youngest learners, the phonics meetings led by Mrs Stone were exceptionally well-received. I would like to thank our Reception and Key Stage 1 parents who attended. Your engagement in these sessions is crucial, and we hope you found them informative and useful.

For those who were unable to attend or wish to revisit the information shared, I encourage you to access the resources available on our school website at <https://stursulascatholicprimary.co.uk/learning/phonics-meeting-reception>.

These workshops and repository of information serves as a valuable tool in supporting your child's phonics journey.

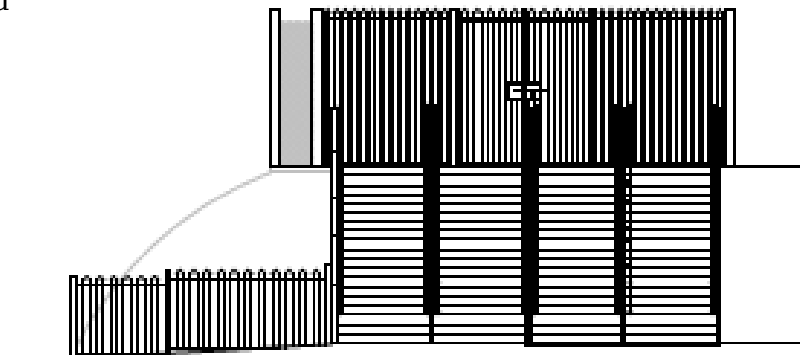
I am pleased to report that Phase 2 of our major works is progressing well. The fencing is nearing completion, enhancing our school's perimeter security. Additionally, the new Key Stage 2 steps are expected to be finished in the coming weeks.

These infrastructural changes are not merely cosmetic; they are integral to our commitment to providing a safe and secure environment for our pupils.

The redesigned Key Stage 2 steps, with four distinct rows, will facilitate a more organised dismissal process. Each year group will have its own designated area, making it easier for parents to locate their children and for teachers to oversee the end-of-day procedures efficiently.

Thank you for your understanding and patience as we navigate through these necessary improvements.

Major Works: Site Security and Safeguarding



St Ursula's Feast Day

October 21st marked a significant day in our school calendar as we celebrated the Feast Day of our patron saint, St Ursula. The entire school community came together for Mass at St Dominic's, a beautiful occasion that allowed us to reflect on the life and virtues of St Ursula. We remembered her as an intelligent, outgoing, and friendly girl, whose deep spirituality led her to dedicate herself to God at an early age. As we consider her unwavering dedication to her faith, we are inspired to nurture similar qualities in our own pupils.

St Ursula's life serves as a powerful example of courage and conviction. Living in a time when young girls had little say in their future, St Ursula, guided by a divine dream, stood firm in her beliefs. Her bravery in standing up for her faith and her commitment to sharing it with others, particularly young people, make her an ideal role model for our school community. In times of uncertainty or challenge, we look to St Ursula to lead us in the way of Christ, embodying the values of faith, courage, and perseverance.



Pupil Chaplains 2024-2025

The celebration of our patron saint coincided with another important occasion - the commissioning of our new Pupil Chaplains. At the beginning of this academic year, our Year 6 classes were presented with the opportunity to apply for this esteemed role. The response was overwhelming, with an unprecedented 27 children submitting letters of application. Miss Gilligan and I had the privilege of reading through each application, marvelling at the depth of thought and sincerity expressed by our eldest pupils.

To ensure that every applicant had the chance to fully articulate their aspirations, we invited all 27 children to speak with us personally. These conversations were truly inspiring, with pupils drawing from a variety of experiences - from active participation in their parishes to sharing moments of faith with their families at home. The selection process was challenging, given the high calibre of applicants, but we ultimately appointed 12 Pupil Chaplains who were commissioned on this special day.

It was a profound experience to hear our Year 6 applicants reflect on the impact of faith in their lives. The depth of their insights and the sincerity of their commitment were truly moving. It is with immense pride and honour that we welcomed our newly appointed Pupil Chaplains, commissioning them in front of the entire St Ursula's family. These young leaders will play a crucial role in nurturing the spiritual life of our school community, and I have no doubt that they will rise to the challenges and responsibilities of their new roles with grace and dedication.



Year 4's visit to Weald Park

Our Year 4 pupils recently embarked on an enriching excursion to Weald Country Park on Wednesday 16th October. This trip, closely aligned with their CLC topic on British Wildlife, provided an excellent opportunity for our young learners to apply their geographical knowledge in a practical, real-world setting.

The success of such outings is often dependent on the support we receive from our parent community, and I would like to express my sincere appreciation to our parent volunteers who generously gave their time to accompany our staff and pupils on this educational adventure.



Parents' Evenings & Open Evening

As we moved towards the end of the first half of the Autumn Term, our focus shifted to the vital parent-teacher meetings. I am delighted to report that our Autumn Term parents' evenings were an unequivocal success, with over 93% of parents booking and attending appointments.

These evenings provide an invaluable opportunity for open dialogue between home and school, and I was heartened by the positive feedback I received while greeting parents at the front door over the three evenings. The overwhelming sentiment was one of appreciation for the dedicated support provided by our class teachers, teaching assistants, and other members of staff. Such collaborative relationships between parents and educators are fundamental to ensuring the best possible outcomes for our pupils.

As we look to the future of our school community, I am pleased to report that our Open Evening for potential Nursery and Reception parents was well-attended and positively received. These evenings are crucial in showcasing the warm, nurturing environment we offer at St Ursula's, and I am confident that the impressions made will translate into a vibrant new cohort of pupils in the coming academic year.

Congratulations!

THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO ATTENDED OUR SCHOLASTIC BOOK FAIR.

Together we have raised **£481.42...**
for our school to spend on **FREE BOOKS**

International Day - 25th October 2024

Our first half-term culminated in a vibrant celebration of culture, spearheaded by our Year 6 pupils. The annual International Day, a cherished tradition at St Ursula's, saw our eldest pupils hosting an international food market, welcoming the entire school community to partake in this feast of global cuisines and cultures. This event, which has been a part of St Ursula's calendar for many years, embodies our commitment to fostering cultural awareness, respect, and inclusivity. Rest assured, this wonderful tradition will continue to be hosted and celebrated in the years to come, enriching our school community with its diversity and global perspective.



The International Day was more than just a feast for the senses, it was a powerful demonstration of our school's commitment to fostering global awareness and celebrating the diverse heritage of our community. Through this immersive experience, our pupils gained invaluable insights into different cultures, promoting understanding and respect for the rich tapestry of human experience.

The success of this event would not have been possible without the efforts of our Year 6 parents. Their dedication in working alongside their children to prepare the delicious food, set up the stalls, and assist with the clean-up was truly fantastic. This level of parental engagement is fantastic, and I extend my heartfelt thanks to each and every parent who contributed their time, energy, and culinary expertise.



Important Dates and Events

As we look ahead to the second half of the Autumn Term, I would like to draw your attention to several important dates and events:

12th November - ODD SOCKS DAY: We will be participating in Anti-Bullying Week, kicking off with Odd Socks Day. This is a wonderful opportunity for our pupils to express their individuality while promoting a message of acceptance and kindness.

19th November - Year 2 Great Fire Of London Theatre workshop. Year 2 pupils will be transported back in time with a visit from Trunk Theatre on 19th November, bringing the Great Fire of London topic to life.

20th November - Year 6 Cinema Trip: Year 6 will embark on a cinematic journey, watching an animation of their topic book, Kensuke's Kingdom.

21st November - Rock Steady concert: Our budding musicians will soon take centre stage in the Rock Steady concert, showcasing their remarkable talents.

22nd November - Be bright Be Seen Day: As the days get shorter, it's more important than ever to make sure children are visible on the roads, whether walking, cycling, or being driven. On this day We're raising awareness about road safety and asking children to attend school in brightly coloured clothing.

26th November - Year Year 3 visit to Thames Estuary Nature Reserve: Children will be participating in a Stone Age Day where they will learn about life in the Stone Age through practical, immersive experiences.

28th November - Advent Penitential Mass: Our Year 6 and Year 2 pupils will participate in the Advent penitential Mass at 9:30am. Parents are welcome to join us for this reflective service.

3rd December - Year 3 Advent Assembly: Our Year 3 pupils will be leading an Advent Assembly. Parents are warmly invited to attend this special event.

4th December - Christmas Pantomime: The festive spirit will truly begin with a pantomime performance in school, promising laughter and entertainment for all our pupils.

6th December - Christmas Crafting Coffee Morning: We invite parents to join us for a Christmas-themed Parent Coffee Morning.

6th December - Christmas Disco: Our much-anticipated Christmas Disco will be taking place on 6th December, throughout the school day.

11th December - Christmas Dinner and Jumper Day: We encourage all pupils to wear their favourite Christmas jumpers to school, adding a touch of festive cheer to our corridors. Christmas Dinner will also be served on this day.

EYFS Christmas Concerts: Our EYFS Christmas Concerts will take place on 12th December (Nursery parents) and 13th December (Reception parents) at 9:30am in the KS1 Hall.

Key Stage 1 & 2 Christmas Concerts: The Key Stage 1 concert will be held on 13th December at 10:30am at St Dominic's, followed by the Key Stage 2 Christmas Concert at 1:45pm on the same day and location. We look forward to welcoming parents to these joyous celebrations of the season.

Reports: End of Term Reports for Years 1 to 6 will be sent out on 20th December.

Finally, please note that we will have an **early closure at 1:00pm on 20th December** to mark the end of Autumn term.