

December 2024



English Martyrs'
Catholic Primary School
Loving Jesus, Loving Learning, Loving Life
Part of the Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust



Autumn Term 1b Newsletter



Message from Miss Elliott

As we approach the holidays, I would like to take a moment to reflect on the term we have shared together and give thanks. It has been a remarkable journey filled with challenges, achievements, and countless moments of joy.

We welcomed diocesan inspectors into school for our Catholic School Inspections were thrilled when the inspection team described English Martyrs as a truly unique school which serves its diverse community generously and inclusively. Where a culture of welcome pervades all aspects of school life, including the Oscar Romero Centre, and pupils and parents feel highly valued.

It has been lovely to welcome new pupils to English Martyrs' when we opened our Additional Resource Provision (ARP) – The Oscar Romero Centre in September and they have become valued members of our school family.

Thank you to our dedicated staff for their unwavering commitment and passion for nurturing all our pupil's potential.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership. Your attendance at our Christmas carol services, concerts and nativities has been greatly appreciated and I'm sure you will agree were all very uplifting; sharing the message of this Christmas season so beautifully.

As we gather with loved ones during this festive season, let us remember the true spirit of Christmas – love, kindness, and gratitude. On behalf of all the staff may I take this opportunity to thank you for all your kind wishes, cards and gifts.

I wish you all a peaceful and joyful Christmas and the very best for the New Year. May this festive season bring you moments of rest, laughter, and happiness. We look forward to welcoming you back in the new year, ready to embrace the exciting opportunities and challenges that lie ahead with renewed energy and enthusiasm!

Happy Christmas , God Bless .

Miss Elliott



Catholic Schools Inspection

We are delighted that our school has been recognised as outstanding in 2 of the 3 key areas:

1. Catholic Life and Mission: The inspectors found our Catholic life and mission to be outstanding. They noted that our school serves its diverse community extremely well and remains deeply rooted in faith. Our school mission, 'loving Jesus, loving learning, loving life,' is profoundly experienced by all members of the English Martyrs' community.

Staff ensure that the Catholic character permeates all aspects of school life. They are excellent role models and create an environment that distinctly reflects the mission of the Church.

2. Collective Worship: The quality and range of our Collective Worship has been graded as outstanding. They noted that prayer is at the heart of English Martyrs,' living out the mission statement and 'Be-attitudes' with passion. It is part of the rhythm of every day and is adapted to reflect the liturgical season. Our pupils confidently articulate how prayer positively influences them; they know that there are different ways to pray, and they are reverent and respectful of one another's beliefs. Prayer is part of the rhythm of every day and is adapted to reflect the liturgical season.

3. Religious Education: The quality of Religious Education has been graded as good. The inspection team noted that from their starting points, most pupils make good progress in religious education and can work independently. They can talk about their learning and how it informs their actions. Pupils, including those with additional needs, make progress because of the adaptations that are made for them to access lessons. The religious education 'curriculum champion' is highly dedicated and her support is greatly valued by colleagues, who consider that she is inspiring in the way that she shares her passion for the subject.

Although our judgement has changed from outstanding in 2017, this is a result of a change in the inspection framework, where Curriculum RE is a limiting judgement.

The areas for improvement were known to school going into the inspection and plans are already in place to address them.

I am so pleased that the inspection team recognised what a truly special place English Martyrs' is and captures the essence of who we are as a school community.

This outcome reflects the dedication of our staff, the support of our parents/carers, and the engagement of our pupils in creating our wonderful Catholic school community. We will continue to strive for excellence in all areas of our Catholic education.

Thank you for your continued support.

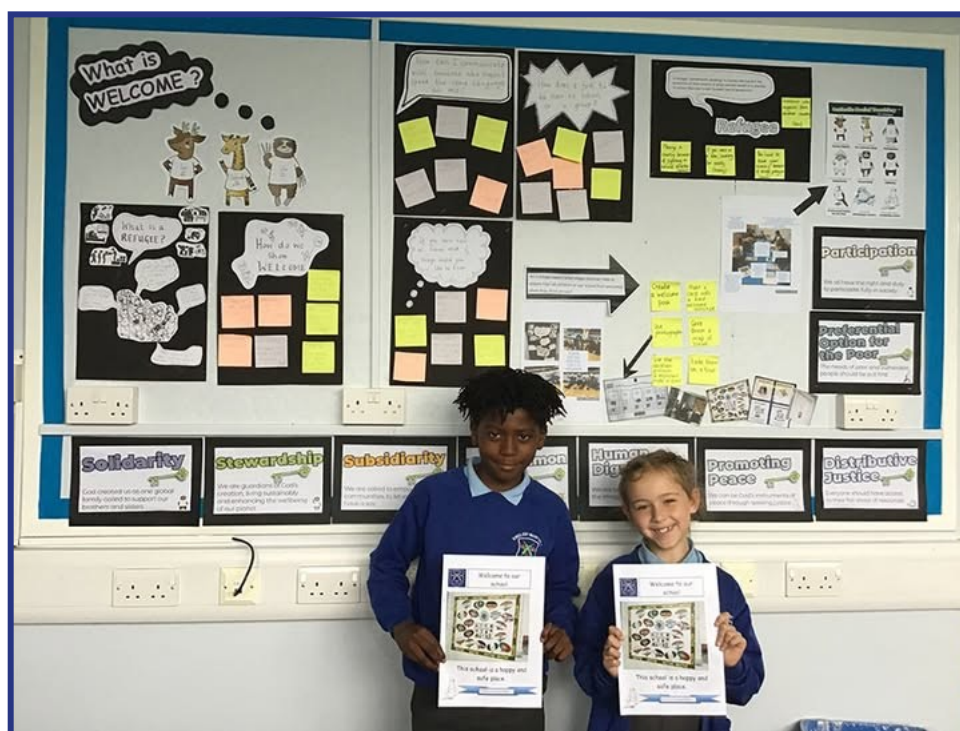
Sincerely,
Miss Elliott

School of Sanctuary Award

We were delighted to be recognised as a School of Sanctuary for our welcoming ethos and diversity. As a school we worked together to find out what being a School of Sanctuary means, including being a place of sanctuary for all. The School Council focused on how we can make school a place of sanctuary and made booklets to share with new pupils seeking sanctuary who may start at our school in the future.

At English Martyrs' there are more than 30 languages spoken, and we celebrate this with displays of languages in our school, as well as having books of dual language available for all pupils.

We feel it is very important to reflect our diverse community in school. As a Catholic school, being a place of sanctuary in the community is important to us and links with our Catholic Social Teaching ethos which is incorporated into our curriculum.



Christmas Mass in Church



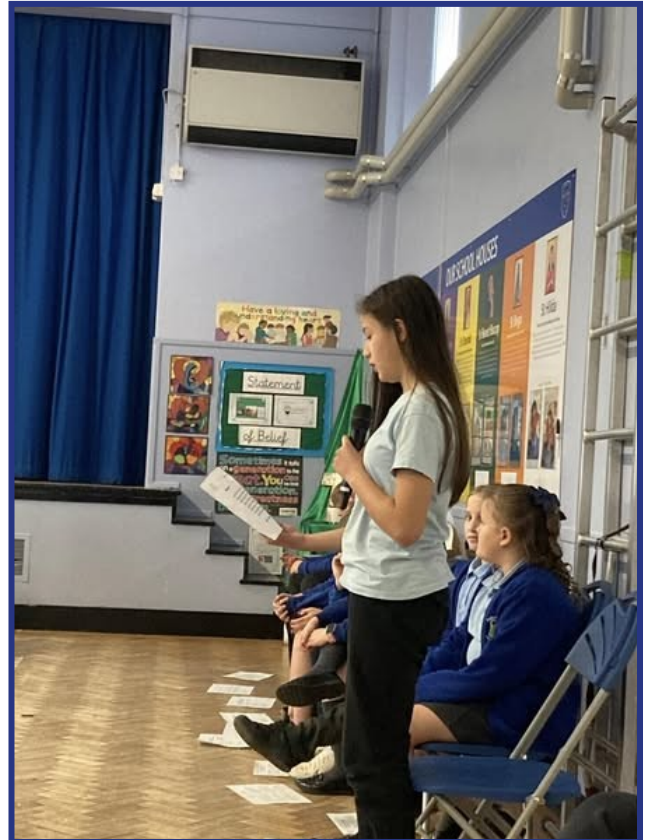
A beautiful Christmas Mass at English Martyrs' Church. A lovely celebration of the true meaning of Christmas and a chance to reflect on the past few weeks of Festive events and Nativities in school - sharing the Christmas Story.



Mass in School

Father John and members of the parish joined pupils for the celebration of Holy Mass in school.

Mass is celebrated every 2nd Friday of the month in school. All are welcome to join us. Refreshments are available after mass.



Key Stage 2 Carols

Thank you to all of our school family who joined our Upper and Lower Key Stage Two Carol services. Your support is very much appreciated and we hope you enjoyed listening to the beautiful singing and the readings of the Christmas Story.



Year 5/6 Northern Stage



Pupils in Years 5 and 6 thoroughly enjoyed their visit to the Northern Stage Theatre for a performance of 'A Christmas Carol'.



Family Breakfast

Thank you to all those who joined us for our Family Breakfast in December. There was even a special guest appearance from Santa!



First Reconciliation



First Reconciliation 13/12/24

PIC•COLLAGE

Congratulations to some of our pupils who celebrated the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Fr. John guided the children through their first confession, following Mass. The pupils are currently on a journey to making their First Holy Communion, later in the year.

KS1 Nativity



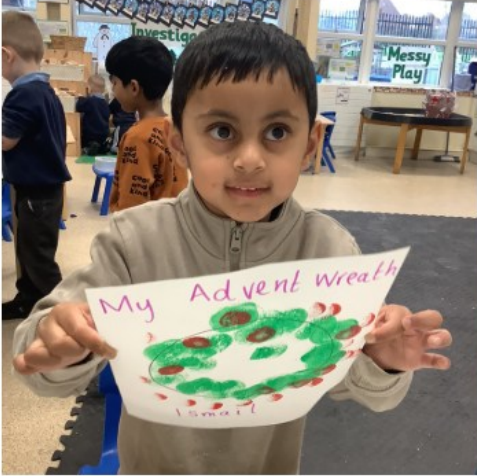
Our Key Stage 1 continued the cherished tradition of celebrating their Christmas performance of 'The Nativity' by Niki Davies. They sang beautifully and shared the Christmas story with all their families focusing our hearts and minds on the true meaning of Christmas.

Reception



Our Reception children took part in their Nativity play which was shared with their families. They gave a charming, heartwarming performance that truly captured the innocence and enthusiasm of our youngest children.

Nursery



GB Paralympian Visit

We were delighted to welcome Antony Cotterill, former GB tennis player and Paralympian. He put the children through their paces in the fitness circuits before sharing his story and answering questions during a whole school assembly.

Antony's motto of 'Don't give up!' can be a reminder for us all to follow our dreams, even when it seems things are too difficult.

Thank you to our families who raised an amazing amount of over £4,000 through sponsorship.



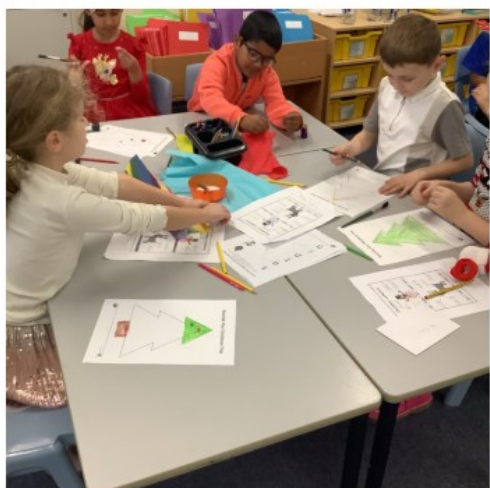
Romero Centre Parents Christmas Craft



Christmas Jumper and Lunch



EYFS/KS1 Party Day



KS2 Party Day



Romero Centre Party Day



Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Visit

Year 4 learnt about the fire triangle and the risks you can find around the house, the importance of having working smoke alarms that are tested regularly and what to do if you find a fire.

The children learnt about what happens when you call 999, and saw how fire can spread quickly and cause damage through some pictures and video footage of the dangers caused by electrical items in the house.



Attendance

Due to an increasing number of absent children from school we would like to share the NHS advice around whether your child is well enough to attend school.

[NHS - Is my child too ill for school?](#)

If you are unsure whether your child's illness means they cannot attend school, please contact the school office for advice.

In the event that your child is not well enough to attend, it is important that you report the absence by calling the absence line (option 1) before 8:30am to tell us the reason why, on the FIRST DAY of absence.

Please note that children are expected in school before and after a GP appointment if they are well enough to attend. We request that you provide us with medical evidence of appointments, which have your child's name on. This can include text messages, prescriptions, or use of the NHS app.

If your child has low attendance, the absence will not be authorised without medical evidence. This includes absence due to illness.

Where possible, appointments should be arranged for out of school hours.

School attendance is everybody's responsibility - it is important that children are in school regularly.

Thank you for your continued support.

Y5/6 Football

Congratulations to our Y5/6 football team who excelled at Cochrane Park. After winning the Newcastle schools round, they are now the Northumberland Schools FA County champions. They will represent Northumberland in the regional finals. A huge achievement!!



Sporting Events

A group of Y3 and Y4 pupils had an amazing time representing school at a bowling festival at the Gutterball, North Shields. They performed brilliantly and as a team were awarded with a medal and a certificate.



Some of our Year 5 and 6 pupils attended an indoor athletics competition at the Lakeside Centre. They were all fantastic as they completed a range of events including obstacle races, indoor javelin and jumping field activities.



Safety over the Festive Season

At The National College, our WakeUpWednesday guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. Formerly delivered by National Online Safety, these guides now address wider topics and themes. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit nationalcollege.com.

10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators SAFETY OVER THE FESTIVE SEASON

The holiday season, marked by Christmas and New Year, brings joy and togetherness but also presents unique safety challenges for children, families and educators. From busy holiday shopping, traveling and family gatherings to managing digital activity during school breaks, staying safe during this period requires heightened awareness. This guide offers practical tips to help families and educators maintain a more secure and fulfilling festive period.

1 MONITOR DIGITAL ACTIVITY

Children spend more time online during school holidays, increasing exposure to potential dangers such as cyberbullying, inappropriate content and online predators. Balancing screen time, avoiding harmful websites and ensuring children engage positively online can be difficult without proper monitoring tools. Set clear boundaries, encourage open discussions about online safety and use parental controls to manage content exposure and screen time effectively. Regular check-ins and positive reinforcement around digital habits encourage safe online behaviour.

2 PRACTICE FIRE SAFETY PROTOCOLS

The incidence of house fires increases during Christmas due to greater use of candles, cookers and electrical decorations. Open flames, electrical overloads and the need for quick response plans can make fire safety challenging. Ensure smoke detectors are operational, keep fire extinguishers on hand and teach children how to respond in case of a fire emergency. Avoid leaving cooking unattended and use fire-safe candles to prevent mishaps.

3 CREATE TRAVEL SAFETY PLANS

More families tend to travel during the holidays, resulting in busier roads, increased traffic accidents and weather-related hazards. Weather conditions, road rage, fatigue and busy airports can all compromise travel safety. Pack emergency kits and adhere to seatbelt laws. Plan routes in advance and allow extra travel time to avoid rushing and mitigate risks on busy roads.

4 BEWARE OF ALLERGIES

Holiday meals often involve many foods that may contain allergens. Cross contamination, unclear labelling and lack of allergy-friendly options can lead to severe reactions. Communicate any allergy needs to hosts, provide safe food alternatives and carry necessary medications like antihistamines or EpiPens. Teaching children how to advocate for themselves and recognise dangerous foods also contributes to safer celebrations.

5 PREVENT THE SPREAD OF ILLNESS

Cold weather and seasonal socialising can increase the spread of viruses like flu and COVID-19. Crowded gatherings, schools out of session and frequent travel can lead to higher infection risks. Emphasise hygiene, encourage vaccination, disinfect surfaces and isolate symptomatic individuals. Communication with children about proper hygiene practices is essential to reduce the spread of illness.

6 STAY VIGILANT ON THE ROAD

Increased holiday traffic heightens the risk of accidents for both drivers and pedestrians. Distracted driving, pedestrian safety and inclement weather can complicate road safety. Encourage pedestrian safety practices, avoid distracted driving and never drive under the influence.

7 MAINTAIN SAFE DECORATIONS

Festive decorations such as Christmas lights and candles can pose electrical, fire and choking hazards if mishandled. Frayed wires, toppling Christmas trees, small ornaments and open flames can be difficult to control, especially in busy households with children. Inspect and maintain decorations, secure Christmas trees, place fragile or small items out of reach and ensure candles are never left unattended. Testing smoke alarms and using flame-retardant decorations can significantly reduce risks.

8 SET BOUNDARIES FOR GIFTS

Some toys and gadgets can present choking, sharp-edge or safety risks, particularly for young children. Ensuring that gifts meet safety standards and are age appropriate can be complex with so many options available. Inspect all toys carefully and ensure any tech devices have parental controls. Setting expectations around safe gift use and discarding packaging that poses a risk also helps to prevent accidents.

9 ADDRESS STRESS & FATIGUE

Holiday pressures can lead to burnout, which affects both physical and mental health. Overpacked schedules and a lack of downtime can cause stress and fatigue, leading to accidents or poor decision making. Incorporate rest, maintain regular routines and seek support to reduce stress. Encourage activities that promote relaxation to create a healthier, happier holiday experience for everyone.

10 DRINK RESPONSIBLY

Alcohol is commonly present at holiday events, raising concerns about safety and supervision. Excessive alcohol consumption can lead to accidents, impaired judgment and lack of supervision for children. Designate responsible adults, limit consumption and provide transportation alternatives for guests. Teaching moderation and modelling responsible behaviour in front of children ensures that celebrations remain positive and secure.

Meet Our Expert

James Whelan is a chartered health and safety consultant with 10 years of experience in promoting family and community safety. Specialising in risk assessment and preventative strategies, he has worked with educational institutions, public health agencies and community groups to deliver safety education and training.



The National College

Source: See full reference list on guide page at: <https://nationalcollege.com/guides/safety-over-the-festive-season>

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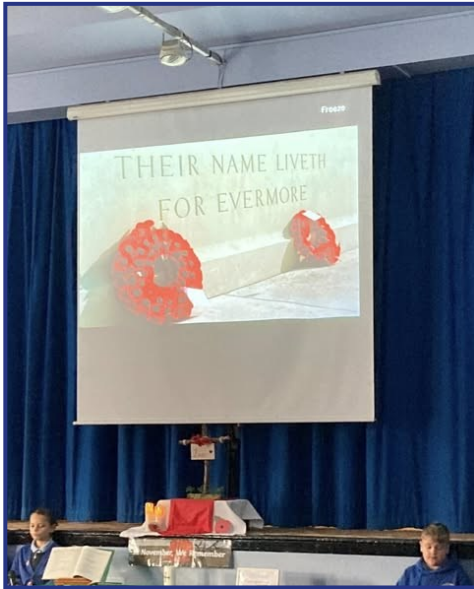
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Remembrance Day

The children and staff gathered together to reflect and remember all those who gave their lives so that we can live in peace.



Year 5 - Carols at the Cathedral



Choir - Fenham Library



Choir - Eldon Square



Choir - Joe's Place



Choir - St Catherine's Care Home



It was lovely to perform to the residents – in particular George Thornton who taught at English Martyrs' during it's opening year as a school.

Hot Chocolate



It's not every day that you get to enjoy a hot chocolate in school!!

Year 3 Bread Making



Year 3 had an exciting half term in DT where they tasted different types of bread from around the world. They then had the task of baking their own bread roll! Their kneading skills were fantastic and they described their bread rolls as tasting 'like heaven' and 'unbelievably delicious'!

Dates for your diary...

Diary Dates 2025 September version continued

January

6 th	Teacher Training Day (school closed)
10 th	Parish Mass (main school hall) 10.00am
14 th	Y4 Bikeability Road Safety (Class 1)
15 th	Y4 Bikeability Road Safety (Class 2)
16 th	Girls Football (Kenton School)
28 th	Y4T Stay and Pray 9.10am Y4D Stay and Pray 2.50pm

February

4 th	Y3MC Stay and Pray 9.10am Y3C Stay and Pray 2.50pm
11 th	Y2W Stay and Pray 9.10am Y2A Stay and Pray 2.50pm
18 th	Y1FM Stay and Pray 9.10am Y1D Stay and Pray 2.50pm
20 th	Y6 Safety Works (am and pm)
21 st	Family Breakfast

Half-term holiday 24th – 28th February 2025

March

18 th	KS2 Parents Night 1
20 th	KS2 Parents Night 2
25 th	KS1 Parents Night 1
27 th	KS1 Parents Night 2

April

Easter Holidays 14th – 25th April
Half-term holiday 26th – 30th May