



Monday 21st November 2022

Dear Parents and Carers,

We are in the process of finalising our Christmas arrangements and hope that this newsletter gives you a flavour of what is to come.

Jesse Tree Mass:

After discussions with St. Joseph's Parish and St. Benet's, Ouston, the Jesse Tree Service is due to take place on Monday 5th December, at 5pm and pupils across the infants and juniors have been invited by the parish to lead and attend the service. This annual tradition is not a fully rehearsed or polished performance by the children. However, it is a service, facilitated by the parish, which is interspersed with pupil participation, singing and decorating of the Christmas tree. Final arrangements will be communicated in due course, but all pupils and families are encouraged to attend the celebration.

Reception 'The Nativity':

Our Reception pupils will be performing 'The Nativity', in school, on **Tuesday 13th December, at 10am**. Please purchase your tickets on SchoolGateway for the Reception Christmas Performance. We ask for donations of £1 per ticket, per adult attending.

Key Stage 1:

Our Key Stage 1 performance will be a recount of 'The Christmas Story', with Year 2 pupils predominantly retelling the story while Year 1 pupils support our acting, singing and characterisation. There will be two performances in St. Joseph's RC Church, on Thursday 15th December, at 10am and 2pm. Please purchase tickets for the Key Stage 1 Christmas Performance on SchoolGateway. We ask for donations of £1 per ticket, per adult attending.

Christmas Dinner Day:

Both schools will host Christmas Dinner on **Wednesday 14th December**. As has been tradition in the past, children are able to, but not obliged, to wear a Christmas jumper on the day. We appreciate that there is significant expenditure at this time of year – and if your child would prefer to wear non-uniform without a jumper – then that is equally fine, too.



Key Stage 2 Carol Service:

In a change to tradition, we are hosting a Key Stage 2 Carol Service, where pupils in Years 3-6 will retell the Christmas story through prayer, acting, liturgical dance and song, in St. Joseph's RC Church, at 5pm. Using Luke's Gospel as the basis of the retelling, we invite parents to watch as pupils lead the service from the sanctuary steps. Please purchase your Key Stage 2 Carol Service tickets on SchoolGateway. We ask for donations of £1 per ticket, per adult attending. There will be no set seating, so please arrive early to reserve your seat.

Birtley Rotary Club:

Thank you to the members of the Birtley Rotary Club who have offered to subsidise a Christmas treat for the Birtley schools. A magician will be coming to both schools on the morning of **Wednesday 21st December**.



Toddlers:

This unfortunately means that Toddlers will be cancelled on this morning. The last Toddler session will be Wednesday 14th December and will have a Christmas festive theme – so please feel free to dress-up your little ones in their festive outfits!

Singing Club:

Many thanks to Mrs Nutton and Mrs Prior who have been working with our singing clubs, in both schools. Komatsu have invited both schools to sing for their Christmas festival day on **Wednesday 21st December** – so our junior singers, will watch the magician at the infant school and then travel onwards to Komatsu. Junior Singing Club have also been asked to sing at **Covent House on Thursday 22nd December** – they're very much in demand!

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Christmas Parties:

The last day of term, **Thursday 22nd December, will be Christmas party day**, with each class taking turns to have a little Christmas party treat in the hall playing traditional party games. Pupils can come into school wearing non-uniform.

Staffing Update:

Mrs Thom, HLTA at St. Joseph's Catholic Infant School, will be moving on to pastures new as a phonics consultant for an education company. We wish her every success in her new role.

We also say farewell to Miss Thompson, our School Business Manager, who is taking up a post in Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust at the end of this month, to be closer to home. Mrs Handley will be working full-time to support the junior administration team.

Our infant school caretaker, Mr McKinnon retires at the end of this term. We thank him for his 26 years' service and we wish him a happy and blessed retirement. He tells us that he has been welcoming the second generation of families to school for some time! Mr Waugh, our junior school caretaker will be working across the schools to help and maintain our school sites.

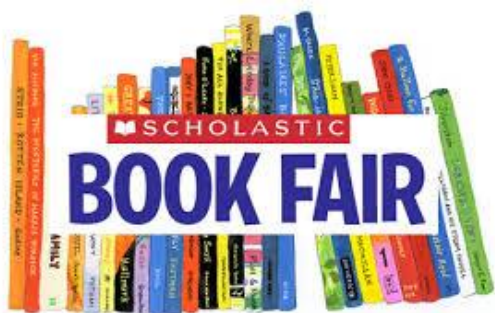
And finally, Mrs Thomson, our Year 6 teacher, leaves us for a position in NCTEM.

We thank the staff for their service and commitment to the schools and wish them well in their new roles.

As ever, with change, comes new faces and new experience and we are in the process of recruiting. We will communicate staffing arrangements for the spring term, in due course.

Re: Careers' Week

Click the link, or scan the QR code, to complete the Microsoft Form to help us to deliver an exciting and diverse careers' week in January 2023. <https://forms.office.com/r/sQp6eXZJ8E>.
Thank you for your time and support.



Book Fair:

We are counting down to our exciting Scholastic Book Fair.

Books will be available to browse and purchase straight after school in the Juniors (Year 5 classroom) on Tuesday 22nd and Wednesday 23rd November, and the Infants (Year 2 classroom) on Thursday 24th and Friday 25th.

Don't forget that school receive a small amount of commission for the fayre - so please remember that every purchase helps us to buy more books for the children. We look forward to seeing you there!

Year 2 and Year 5 Reading Buddies: On the afternoon of Friday 2nd December, Year 2 will join Year 5 at St Joseph's Catholic Junior School and share a wonderful reading opportunity. Children from Year 5 will 'buddy up' with a Year 2 child and read together. The children in Year 2 will share their school reading book and Year 5 will share a chosen book from the school library. The children will enjoy juice and biscuits together, before Year 2 return to school for 3:15pm. Reading Buddies will take place once a term and aids in promoting a love of reading and developing transitional links between schools.



Dates for the Diary (Please note that dates are subject to change):

Tuesday 22nd and Wednesday 23rd November - Scholastic Book Fair at Juniors (after-school – Year 5 classroom)

Thursday 24th and Friday 25th November – Scholastic Book Fair at Infants (after-school – Year 2 classroom)

Thursday 1st December – Gymnastics Club Gymnastics Festival

Friday 2nd December – Year 2 and Year 5 Reading Buddies – PM session

Monday 5th December – Jesse Tree Service in St. Joseph's Catholic Church – 5pm

Tuesday 13th December – Reception Performance - 10am – at St. Joseph's Infants

Thursday 15th December – KSI Performances - 10am and 2pm – at St. Joseph's RC Church

Tuesday 20th December – KS2 Carol Service – 5pm at St. Joseph's RC Church, Birtley (arrive 4:45pm)

Wednesday 21st December – Singing Clubs to sing at Komatsu, Magician at both schools

Thursday 22nd December – Christmas party day (non-uniform)

Tuesday 24th January – Reception Rocket Phonics Workshop – 8:45am for a 9am start

Friday 3rd February – Year 1 Mathematics Workshop - 8:45am for a 9am start

Friday 3rd March – Reception Mathematics Workshop - 8:45am for a 9am start

Sunday 15th January 2023 – Admission portal closes for Reception and Year 3 admissions – parents need to apply for places for infant pupils transferring to junior school

Please note that St. Joseph's Catholic Church, Saturday Night Vigil Mass commences at 5:00pm on Saturday evenings – you would be most welcome to attend.

Weekday Masses occur at Church, on most Tuesdays (7pm), Thursdays (12 noon) and Fridays (10am).

Visit: [St Joseph's Birtley Bulletins \(stjosephsbirtley.co.uk\)](http://stjosephsbirtley.co.uk) for more information