



21st March 2024

Dear Parents,

On Monday, I am sure you will have seen in the media some reporting on the effects of lockdown on children 5 years on. Research shared with the BBC indicates that the poorest children are missing more school and falling further behind their classmates. The Education Policy Institute (EPI) found that children from the lowest income families are now up to 19 months behind their peers by age 16, a gap exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. Education Secretary Bridget Phillipson highlighted that the pandemic has significantly impacted attendance, with 15% of primary children in England missing at least one in ten school days this year, compared to 8% before Covid. Although efforts had previously narrowed the gap between the poorest students and their peers, the report suggests it is widening again. The gap, measured using GCSE results, could reduce from 19 months to 15 months if school attendance were equal for all pupils.

The reason I'm sharing this with you is just to highlight the importance of the children's attendance. It is probably the strongest evidence in education. The link between children, their attendance and their future life-chances are stark. We are lucky at Our Lady's to have such great attendance and I'm over the moon that, after 5 years, our attendance is now back to where it was before the pandemic. But it is something we could all be mindful of because every day matters.

Unusually, school has been quite quiet this week. Just good solid learning taking place everywhere I look. There were still a couple of things outside the normal routine with Year 4 taking part in a very enjoyable benchball festival on Tuesday morning. And then Lenten Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament on Tuesday afternoon. As we journey nearer to the Beatification of Carlo Acutis, I can't think of anything more special than spending time with Jesus something which Carlo was a real advocate of.

Have a lovely weekend. God Bless

M. Howarth



Year 1 Religious Education

This week Year 1 have been learning all about the last supper and reconstructed the painting by Leonardo Davinci.

Thursday 20th March

LO: At the Last Supper, Jesus told his disciples to remember him through bread and wine.



Doodlemaths

Just to let the Key Stage 1 parents know that our subscription for doodlemaths comes to an end at the end of March. It is quite expensive and Numbots and Timestable Rockstars are not only better for the children's fluency but also a lot more reasonable. You can carry on using Doodlemaths at the moment, but we will send out the information again about Numbots to you in the next few weeks. Once the children complete Numbots, they can move onto Timetable Rockstars. If you really liked doodlemaths, there are options for parents to purchase it themselves. Unfortunately, the current usage in school didn't justify the £750 a year for the school.

Attendance

Why is it so important that my child's attendance is as close to 100% as possible?

A school the size of Our Lady's cost about £1.2 million a year to run. That equates to approximately:

£6,315	Per day
£5,770	Per child per year
£30	Per child per day

The overall school attendance is 97.4% at the moment which is great and massively above the national average. But it is still £28,800 worth of direct education missed.

The national average is 94.7% which, in a school like Our Lady's, equates to £63,600. Imagine that across every school in the country.

I know that not every child in school will go the whole year without being too sick to come to school at all. But when you are thinking about whether you need to keep your child at home, please remember that somebody else is paying for it. I have 4 children, and I know there is no way my income tax covers my 4 children's education.

Parking and Dropping Off

Just a quick reminder to park sensibly in the local area. Please be aware of people's driveways so that they can get to and from their houses.

Also, I've been monitoring the car park a few times this week. There are a few groups of people using the car park:

- People, often elderly, with mobility issues who have permission from me.
- People with blue badges.
- Two people who have won the PTA raffle for the term.
- A very small group of selfish people.

Please keep our children safe by refraining from using the car park and walk the extra 50 metres.

If your child is in Key Stage 2 and you wish to drop them, I would suggest you drop them in Chiltern Rd between 8.35 and 8.50. At this time, there are plenty of people around. It is much safer to do that than drop them in a car park full of cars.

Thank you

CAFOD Reading Challenge

I hope your children are doing lots of reading, getting plenty of sponsorship and keeping a record of what they are reading and how many words in each book.

If anyone would like to donate electronically, we have a JustGiving page where relatives can leave messages etc for the children. Feel free to share it. Thank you

[Fundraising for The Catholic Agency for Overseas Development \(CAFOD\)](#)



Name	Amount per number of words	Up to a maximum of	Money collected
Harry Potter	5p/100 words	£20	✓

Accelerated Reader

Well done to the following children who are reading above their reading target (the lower end of their **ZPD**) and are scoring above 80% in the quizzes.

Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Jessica Reuben Alexander Rex Romeo Grace Maksim Oliver Rory Charlie Ayla Sofia Noelia Antonio	Sofia Arthur Rory Amelia Ruby Josephine Ann Juno Elena Megan Francesca Thomas Roberto Zoe Zachary Arthur Ralph Niamh Caolan Eugenie Martha Peregrine Daisy Alex Nathan Mason	Keera Alyssa James Michael C Malwina Aoife Renske Michael F Joseph Mason Misha Victoria Hansini Julia Elise Sharvil Annie Klara Hannah Nikolay	Tamsin Sienna-Rose Evie Giovanni Donnie Dominik Elizabeth Grace Eleanor Jude Arthur Jacob Shanaya Hansika Thomas Florence Erin Hugo Emilio	Leo Mark Mia Ivor Ralph Spike Wanda Rebecca Lola Parth Finley H Charlie K Michael L Michael M Finn O Evelyn Dominik Robert Joseph Adam Curtis Zuzanna
Year 1				
Aariv Freddie Gaia				

Gratitude Assembly Certificates



Last week's Gratitude Assembly Certificates:

Year 2	Eoin, Jessie
Year 3	Elena, Roberto, Zach, Emily
Year 4	Alvin, Xavier
Year 5	Jaeda, Stash, Rory, Olive
Year 6	Archie, Finn

News From The Parishes



ST COLUMBA'S (Chesham):

New Parish Priest: Fr Eustace Durugbo

email: freustace.durugbo@northamptondiocese.org

Sunday Masses @ 9am (traditional choir) & 6pm (Youth Band/ Choir)

Polish Mass @ 12 noon (1st & 3rd Sunday of the month)

IHM – Great Missenden

New Parish Priest: Fr Eustace Durugbo

email: freustace.durugbo@northamptondiocese.org

Saturday Mass @ 6pm

Sunday Mass @ 11am (with children's liturgy), followed by refreshments in the hall.

Polish Mass @ 12.15pm (2nd & 4th Sunday of the month)

Our Lady's and St Aidan's parishes

Priest: Father Roy

Sunday Mass times:

Our Lady's - Saturday 5 pm; Sunday 9 am (with children's liturgy and a choir for children in Year 3 and above - all welcome to come and sing, and there's a brief practice after Mass)

St Aidan's - Saturday 6:15 pm; Sunday 9 am (Polish Mass) and 11 am

As part of our commitment to the Jubilee Year 'Pilgrims of Hope' we are supporting Youth Masses across the parishes. It would be great to get as many children to the following Masses as possible.

St Columba's: on Sunday 23rd March at 6pm

St Aidan's: on Saturday 29th March at 6.15pm

IHM: on Sunday 30th March at 11am.

Thank you

Mr Holdsworth

A poster for the Ramadan Soup Kitchen. The background is a warm yellow with faint illustrations of hanging lanterns and watermelon slices. The title 'Ramadan Soup Kitchen' is in large, bold, dark blue letters. Below it, 'Starting Saturday 8 March 2025' is written in a smaller, dark blue font. A dark blue rectangular box contains the text 'Open to friends of all faiths and none!' in white. Below this, the text 'This Ramadan, free hot meals are available for anyone in need.' is in bold dark blue. A paragraph of smaller text follows: 'If you use the foodbank or are in need for any reason please contact us on the details below to reserve your meal. If you can't reserve then just turn up & collect. If you can't collect we will deliver. (Chesham only)'. At the bottom left, a quote in bold dark blue reads: '“He is not a believer whose stomach is filled while his neighbour goes hungry.”'. On the right side, there are two circular images: the top one shows hands serving soup from a pot, and the bottom one shows a bowl of orange soup with a green garnish.

Ramadan Soup Kitchen

Starting Saturday 8 March 2025

Open to friends of all faiths and none!

This Ramadan, free hot meals are available for anyone in need.

If you use the **foodbank** or **are in need for any reason** please contact us on the details below to reserve your meal. If you can't reserve then just turn up & collect. If you can't collect we will deliver. (Chesham only)

“He is not a believer whose stomach is filled while his neighbour goes hungry.”

I am really pleased to be promoting the Ramadan Soup Kitchen. I know Mr Qasam – Aliza and Ayla’s dad – is involved in this and is running through Ramadan to raise money for a great initiative. Ramadan Runners are running while fasting between dawn and dusk to raise money for the Ramadan Soup Kitchen so that they can help those in need. Every £5 you donate pays for a nutritious meal for one person. 100% of your donations goes directly to Mosque Ramadan soup Kitchen Fund.

Every runner will donate £5 towards the cause for every run they complete.

We meet up every afternoon in the park at around 16:15 and run an easy 5km. So come join us in the challenge and complete a run with us!

<https://www.gofundme.com/f/ramadan-runners-fundraising-for-the-ramadan-soup-kitchen>

#OLScheshambois

Here is a quick snapshot of our learning this week:



 olscheshambois

 olscheshambois Year 4 had a great time today at the bench ball festival #OLS

2 d

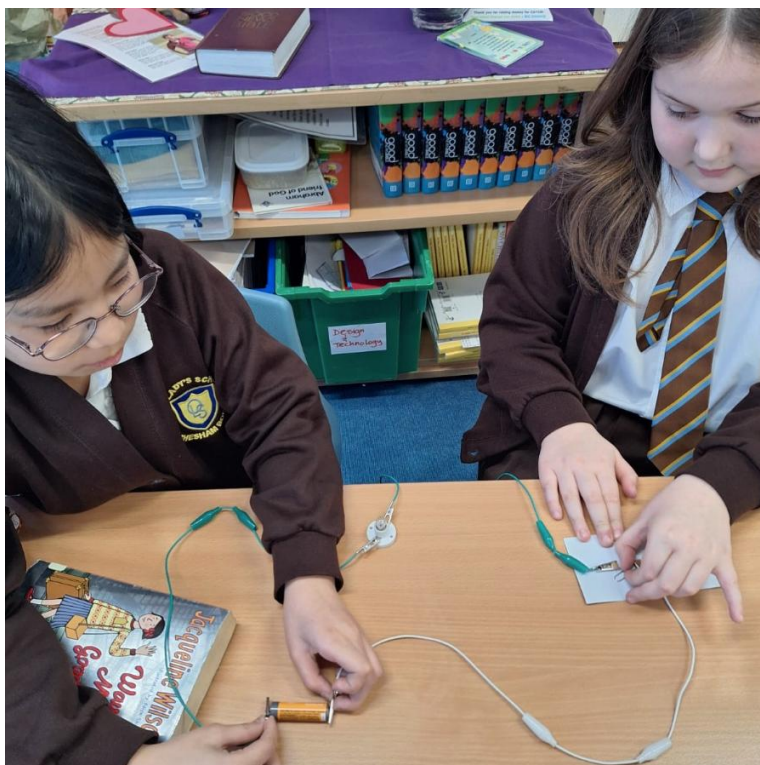
[View Insights](#) [Boost Post](#)

 Liked by hawridgeandcholesburyce and 14 others

2 days ago

 Add a comment... [Post](#)



 olscheshambois

 olscheshambois Year4 Science. How does a switch work? #OLSYear4 #OLSScience

1 d

[View Insights](#) [Boost Post](#)

 Liked by hawridgeandcholesburyce and 11 others

1 day ago

 Add a comment... [Post](#)



 **olscheshambois** ...

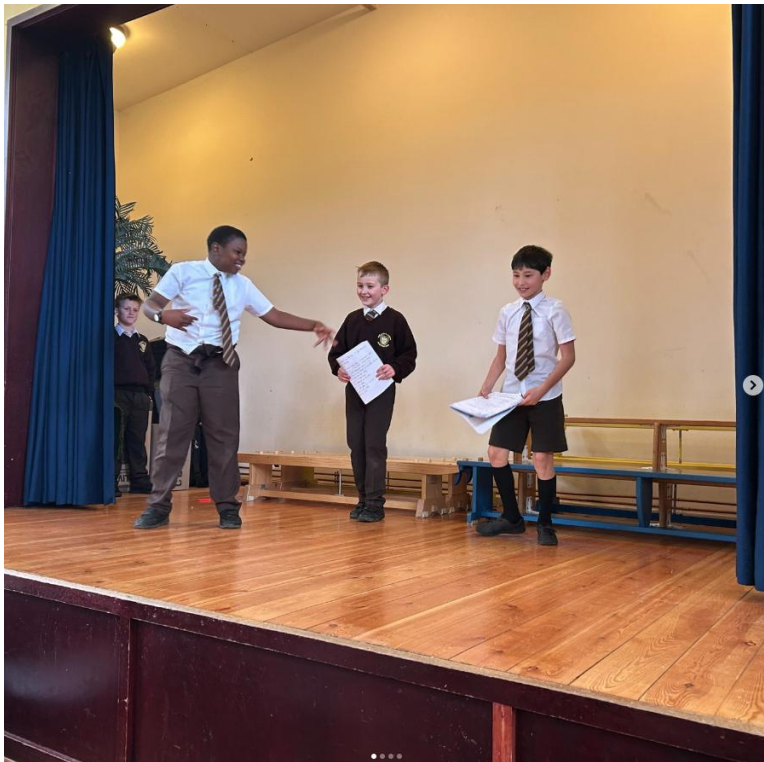
 **olscheshambois** Rejoicing at lunchtime #OLSchaplaincy
1 d

[View Insights](#) [Boost Post](#)

 Liked by **hawridgeandcholesburyce** and 17 others
1 day ago

 Add a comment... [Post](#)



 **olscheshambois** ...

 **olscheshambois** Year 5 wrote, rehearsed and performed scripts this week, based on their book, Freedom bird, in which they reimagined a scene where two enslaved children escaped to freedom using the Underground Railroad. #OlsLiteracy #OlsBuildingTheKingdom #OlsHistory #OlsYear5
1 d

[View Insights](#) [Boost Post](#)

 Liked by **hawridgeandcholesburyce** and 37 others
1 day ago

 Add a comment... [Post](#)



olscheshambois...

olscheshambois

Our last home game of the season. And we keep getting better. Can't wait for the tournament next week
#OLSport

20 h

[View Insights](#)

[Boost Post](#)



 Liked by [maria_holds](#) and 14 others

20 hours ago

 Add a comment...

[Post](#)



March 2025

March marks the beginning of Lent, a time in the Church that focuses on prayer, fasting and almsgiving (charitable giving). This year also brings the added invitation to explore and grow our friendship with God through the celebrations of the [Year of Jubilee](#).

The season brings an exciting opportunity to slow down, put the most important things first and experience the joy that God offers each one of us.

This newsletter shares some of the content children will experience in school throughout March, and suggests ways for you to engage with them about it. We hope it is a useful resource for your family prayer time.

JUBILEE JOY: FREEDOM

Our Lent series of Celebration of the Word Assemblies begins by exploring the Year of Jubilee theme of slavery and freedom. Inspired by Jesus' temptation in the desert, children will explore how we can all be 'slaves' to things that distract or stop us from following in God's way. Children learn about the true freedom that God offers all people and that when we put God first, we can experience the freedom that only God can give.

With your child/ren, you might like to...

- *Read the account of Jesus' 40 days in the desert together ([Luke 4:1-13](#)), and notice how Jesus found the strength to say 'no' to temptation.*
- *Discuss the habits, thoughts or temptations that you would like to be freed from and how you might support one another in achieving this.*
- *Research the Jubilee themes shared in March: forgiveness, managing debt, care for creation and restoration of the family.*
- *Listen to our prayer reflection song for the Year of Jubilee - 'Song of Hope' by One Life Music that has been made available in the [Parent Portal](#). You might like to talk about how experiencing freedom, hope and joy helps you to grow your friendship with God before you listen.*

MORE TO THE STORY

Jesus knows that we need help to understand God's way, so He taught using parables. During the week beginning the 3rd of March, in the Celebration of the Word Assembly, children will discover how Jesus' stories give us clues on how to live holy lives and love others like God loves.

You might like to take this opportunity with your child/ren to ...

- *Play a game of charades, acting out different fairytale stories and then talk about the moral or lesson that the story teaches.*
- *Use the Prayer for Peace in your family prayer time to invite God to help you love others, even when it is difficult.*

**Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.
Amen**

JESUS, SHINE YOUR LIGHT

The prayers for the week beginning the 17th March use religious artwork to reflect on aspects of Jesus' nature. Inspired by the Transfiguration, where some of the disciples witnessed Jesus' face shining, children will consider how artists have expressed Jesus' divine, Godly nature through their work, to help others know Him.

Through exploration of the images, children ask Jesus - the King, our teacher and friend - to shine His light and enlighten our minds so we can understand more about Him.

You might like to use this prayer as you pray together:

**Jesus,
you are with me as I pray.
Shine your light on me today.
Amen**