

ST MARGARET CLITHEROW ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Monkswood Lane (off Monkswood Way) Stevenage Herts SG2 8QJ

Headteacher:
Carmela Puccio BA (Hons)



Tel: 01438 352863
Website: www.clitherow.herts.sch.uk
Email: admin@clitherow.herts.sch.uk

Tuesday 20th December 2022

Dear Parents

I cannot tell you how wonderful it has been to bring back the Christmas performances this year. The sound of Christmas songs and carols have greeted us in the corridors this month! We enjoyed two fantastic plays in school – the classic Nativity by the children in Nursery and Reception and the Christmas story with the aliens in Year 1 and 2! We were also treated to a stunning carol concert by Year 5 and 6. It's a shame we couldn't perform at St. Hilda's; next year will be our year! I am incredibly proud of our talented children and dedicated staff! It was wonderful to see so many of you join with us to celebrate our children's wonderful talents over the last few weeks – the hall has been packed! Thank you for your support in helping the children to learn their lines and for organising their costumes. A huge thank you to the staff for the extra effort that they go to ensuring our children put on a fantastic performance.



Jesus lives in us, our families, our school, our Church, our world. Jesus is our guide, let us follow Him
At St Margaret Clitherow School we are committed to Safeguarding Children



School Closure

As a child I always looked forward to the snow falling and enjoyed the fun it brought. As a headteacher I no longer enjoy when it snows during term time! It is always a difficult decision to close school and not one we make lightly but the safety of our whole school community is paramount. I hope you and your child/children enjoyed the bonus time in the snow.

Catholic Life

This half term started with our first whole school Mass for 3 years with our Harvest Mass. Our children led the readings and prayers beautifully – I was a very proud Headteacher! Last month, our school community took part in an Act of Remembrance, thinking of those who have lost their lives in battle. The children were also given an opportunity to add names to our Book of Remembrance. We started the journey towards Advent with our Advent Mass a few weeks ago. After Mass, the children in Year 4-6 were able to attend confession with Father Michael or Father Nigel.

Our Year 2 class visited St. Hugh and St. John’s Church to take part in Bridgebuilder’s Christmas Journey. They met various characters from the Christmas story and a great time was had by all! Year 6 travelled further afield and represented our school in The Catholic Children’s Society Advent Service at Westminster Cathedral. A beautiful service that included live actors retelling the Christmas story and real-life animals as well! For many children this was the first time that they had visited the Cathedral; a memorable day!

Parent Partnership

During parent consultations earlier this term we asked you to complete the Ofsted style parent questionnaire. The responses were then looked at by our Governing Body at a curriculum committee meeting. We were incredibly pleased with the results! 99% of parents state that their child is happy at school, 96% of parents say that the school has high expectations for their child and 100% of parents would recommend our school to another family. The parent partnership plays an integral role within school life, and we will continue to work together with our community to make it even stronger. Your children have been given an opportunity to complete our pupil questionnaire and the results will be shared with our Governing Body and actions set following this scrutiny.



Attendance

In the new year, some families will be receiving letters from school regarding their child's attendance. I wholeheartedly appreciate that there have been a variety of illnesses working their way through our school this term, however, school has a duty to ensure attendance does not fall below the County's required figure. If you receive a letter and would like to discuss your child's attendance further, please do not hesitate to contact me. Parents have been requesting time off school to attend Christmas planned events or holidays during school time, please be reminded that this kind of absence is not permitted and will not be authorised.

Can I also request that families are honest with the school regarding absences as sometimes, when the children return to school following an 'illness' they soon tell their friends and school staff where they have been. It puts the children in a very difficult position. Our Governing Body review the school's attendance and persistent absence figure in committee meetings every half term. As a school we follow the County Council's attendance policy which includes issuing fixed penalty notices. I meet with our attendance officer each term and the message about fixed penalty notices is reminded to me each time we meet.



PSFA – thank you!

An enormous thank you to our PSFA committee - Chiara, Hayley, Kebby, Jasmine, Antonella and Andrea. All of the team have put in so much effort this term (with a lot of work behind the scenes too) raising much needed funds for the school that make a real difference to your children's education. The Winter Discos were well attended, our first discos for 3 years! The Christmas Fair was a fantastic success this year. Thank you to everyone who helped in any way and to everyone who turned up on the day. You also helped us to raise further funds by purchasing your children's Christmas card designs – thank you once again!

Message from the Governors

It has been a busy term for the governing body with our committees working on the following –

Admissions committee – *As our own admissions authority, we have ranked applications, according to our over subscription criteria, and allocated places for our September 2023 intake to Nursery. After Christmas we will be looking to rank applications and allocate places for our Reception class. The closing date for applications is Sunday 15th January. We encourage any parents still needing to complete an application form to do so.*

Curriculum committee – *Our curriculum committee have continued to look at how our high-quality curriculum is delivered. We have focused on our new reading scheme - Little Wandle Letters and Sounds. It was wonderful to see so many parents attend the information evening earlier in the year. We would also like to thank parents for completing the questionnaire at parent consultation evening in October; we were delighted with such a positive set of results.*



Finance and Personnel – As costs increase, our budget has tightened. The finance committee have looked to ensure that delivery of the curriculum has not been impacted on by increased costs. We would like to remind parents to contact Miss Puccio if there is anything we can do to help families who may be struggling at this time. We would also like to encourage parents whose circumstances may have changed to contact the school office if you feel your child is eligible for a free school meal. Any information is treated confidentially.

Health and Safety – The health and safety committee continues to ensure the whole school environment is a safe place for both children and adults.

It has been a pleasure for governors to be back in school this term, watching our talented children perform in their Christmas Nativity plays and the carol concert; they were a highlight for governors this term. A special thank you to all staff for their work in putting on these events.

Finally, we would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your families a wonderful Christmas break.



Highlights from this half term include:

- Poppy Appeal raising £96.96 for the Royal British Legion
- Whole school English learning based on 'The Invisible'
- Fit Kidz Go in Year 3
- Harvest Mass – first Mass in 3 years!
- Football league matches – 2 wins and a loss
- Saracens Rugby club started for Years 3-6
- Stone Age Day in Year 3
- Year 2 Remembrance Workshop with Stevenage Museum
- St. Joseph's Drama Group production of 'Chitty Chitty Bang Bang' starring many of our talented children
- Anti-bullying week
- HSBC workshops for Years 3-6
- Non-uniform day for Children in Need - £306 raised
- Mental Health workshop for Year 4
- Pudsey PE session for Nursery and Reception
- Christmas dinner and jumper day

Reception Admissions 2023-2024

Applications for our Reception class for September 2023, for children whose dates of birth fall between 1st September 2018 and 31st August 2019 opened earlier this half term. Applications close on Sunday 15th January.



Free School Meals

If your situation has changed, or you think you may be eligible for free school meals, please visit <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/schools-and-education/at-school/free-school-meals/free-school-meals.aspx> The application only takes a couple of minutes to complete. Please do notify the school if you are eligible. Even if your child is in a class (Reception – Year 2) that receives a Government funded free school meal, it is still worth making an application as the school receives additional funding.

Please visit <https://helpforhouseholds.campaign.gov.uk/> to find out about Government help for households. See what cost of living support you could be eligible for. You can also visit <https://helpforhouseholds.campaign.gov.uk/discounts-and-offers/> to find out what offers are available from businesses to help with the cost of living.

Please follow us on twitter (@StMClitherow) to gain an insight into school life. Our twitter feed can also be accessed via our school website.

Finally, may I take this opportunity to thank all our families for their support throughout 2022. May I also thank our dedicated staff team and governors for their commitment and enthusiasm. We are certainly blessed with a beautiful community that we can all be so very proud of. I wish you all a very happy and holy season with much fun, celebration, laughter and family times. Merry Christmas!

Carmela Puccio

Carmela Puccio
Headteacher

KEY DATES

Please check the school website for any changes to dates

Wednesday, 21st December 2022

Finish for Christmas break: **1:20pm**

Christmas Break: Thursday, 22nd December to Wednesday, 4th January 2023

Thursday, 5th January 2023

Tuesday, 24th January 2023

Thursday, 26th January 2023

Thursday, 2nd February 2023

Friday, 3rd February 2023

Return to school: 8.45am

Year 3, 4 and 5 STEM Day

Year 5 walking to Stevenage Museum for workshop

Year 6 walking to Stevenage Museum for workshop

NSPCC Number Day



Jesus lives in us, our families, our school, our Church, our world. Jesus is our guide, let us follow Him
At St Margaret Clitherow School we are committed to Safeguarding Children