

St Nicholas Catholic Primary School

'Love one another as I have loved you'



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Final Newsletter of the Year

Issue 19 • Monday 13 July

Dear Parents and Carers

What a year it has been at St Nicholas. As we reach the end of another school year, I find myself pausing to reflect on just how much has happened since that first September morning — and how very much there is to be grateful for. It has been a year of faith, friendship, courage, laughter and remarkable learning, and none of it would have been possible without the extraordinary support and partnership of our whole school family. Thank you, from the bottom of my heart.

A Year Rooted in Faith

We began the year in the very best way — with a beautiful whole-school Mass celebrated by Father Saji, setting a prayerful and purposeful tone for everything that followed. That spirit of faith has been visible throughout the year in so many ways. In October, our Harvest assembly celebrated the generosity of our community, with donations going to St George's Crypt, the Franciscan Sisters' Food Bank and the SVP parish group. Advent brought our Christingle Service, led so reverently by Miss Hayden's class, followed by a wonderful Carol Concert and Feast of St Nicholas — a truly joyful start to the Christmas season. Our Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 children then brought the Christmas story to life through their Nativity performances, filling the church with warmth, wonder and more than a few happy tears.

Lent was marked with real depth and commitment. The CAFOD Big Lent Walk launched a season of prayer and fundraising, and our children walked the Stations of the Cross together around the school grounds in a moment of quiet reflection that was genuinely moving. The whole school contributed to our Lenten Good Shepherd appeal, and the generosity shown — in bun sales, juice and biscuit stalls, raffle tickets and food bank collections — was a beautiful example of Catholic Social Teaching in action.

Among the most significant moments of the year were the Sacraments. In February, nineteen of our Year 6 pupils received the Sacrament of Confirmation from Bishop Marcus — a deeply moving occasion for pupils, families and staff alike. In June, our Year 4 children celebrated their First Holy Communion at St Nicholas Church, having prepared with such care and seriousness over many months and our wonderful Year 3 children who made the sacrament of Reconciliation. These occasions reminded us of what lies at the very heart of our school. The Marian Service in May, led by Miss Kavanagh's class, was another highlight. Throughout it all, our Mini Vinnies and Chaplaincy Team have been simply outstanding, culminating this term in our Can Appeal, to which families responded with extraordinary generosity.

Learning, Trips & Enrichment

Alongside our deep commitment to faith, this has been a year filled with wonderful learning both inside and outside the classroom. Our annual Science Fair was a highlight of the spring term — the number and quality of projects from across the school was genuinely impressive, and it was a delight to see so many children excited about investigating, experimenting and explaining their ideas. National Storytelling Week, Book Week and our Scholastic Book Fair all added richness to the year, and our Reading Cafés have been a lovely feature of school life, helping to nurture that lifelong love of books that we so value at St Nicholas.

Our KS2 children had the wonderful opportunity to use VR headsets to explore the Stone Age and World War II — stepping back in time in a way that sparked real curiosity and a flood of questions afterwards. Northern Ballet visited and delivered an inspiring workshop, with the remarkable bonus that one of our Year 6 pupils was talent-spotted and went on to perform in *The Nutcracker*. Careers Week this summer term was a particular joy: from

Reception's Little City, where children explored the world of work through play, to Takeover Day, when Year 6 pupils stepped into the shoes of headteachers, office administrators and grounds staff with impressive confidence. The many parents and community members who gave their time to come in and talk about their careers made it truly memorable.

Residential visits and day trips have enriched every year group. Our Year 6 children had an adventurous time on PGL, and this term they also enjoyed a Rail Safety Trip to Leeds — complete with a train driver simulator that was rather popular. Year 5 had a fantastic residential at Nell Bank in Ilkley, including the celebrated walk up to the Cow and Calf rocks. Year 4 began the year at Herd Farm, throwing themselves into outdoor activities. KS1 explored nature and the environment at Skelton Grange, Year 3 had an action-packed adventure at Mission Out, and Reception have enjoyed visits to Lotherton Hall along with the magical experience of watching chicks and ducklings hatch in the classroom. Pro Ride cycling sessions, skateboarding at Fearnville, skipping competitions, football, Panathlon and our cross-country runners all added to a wonderfully active and adventurous year.

Sport — Heart, Determination and Sportsmanship

Sport has been a real thread of joy running through the whole year. Our football team showed tremendous determination, making it all the way to the Quarter Finals of their competition — a wonderful achievement that we celebrated together in assembly. At the Catenian Cup, hosted by St Theresa's and featuring Catholic schools from across the Diocese, our team played some brilliant football in glorious sunshine and represented St Nicholas with exactly the sportsmanship and spirit we would wish for. Our cross-country runners took on their very first competition with great courage and resilience, and our Year 4 skippers competed at Corpus Christi. And then, of course, there was Sports Day — after a postponement and a great deal of hopeful weather-watching — which finally arrived with the sunshine it deserved. Seeing so many of you lining the field, picnic blankets out, cheering on every race, was one of the loveliest sights of the whole year.

A Special Farewell to Our Year 6 Leavers

To our wonderful Year 6 children and their families — this section is for you. It is hard to believe that the children who walked through our gates as wide-eyed Reception pupils are now ready to take their next great step. Over these seven years, we have watched you grow into thoughtful, capable, faithful young people of real character, and we could not be more proud of every one of you.

This final year has asked a great deal of you. You prepared for and sat your SATs with impressive resilience and maturity. You took part in Little Lifesavers, learning first aid and CPR. You received the Sacrament of Confirmation. You led assemblies, visited the railway, and have been rehearsing your end of year production with all the dedication and enthusiasm we have come to expect from you. And throughout it all, you have served as Buddies to our Reception children — one of the most important roles in the whole school. The Buddy Assembly, when Reception expressed their heartfelt thanks for your kindness and care throughout the year, was a truly heart-warming reminder of the impact you have had.

We will miss you enormously. Go out into the world, carry your St Nicholas values with you, and shine — just as you have shone for us. You will always be part of our family.

Thank You

To every parent and carer who has supported us this year — thank you. Thank you for every conversation at the gate, every permission slip returned, every reading session at home, every donation to a food bank or raffle, every morning you sent your child in ready to learn. Thank you to those who gave up time to come in for Careers Week, who attended assemblies and performances and parents' evenings, and who completed our questionnaires and shared your views. Your partnership truly makes St Nicholas what it is.

I also want to take this opportunity to pay tribute to our staff, who give so much of themselves every single day. Their dedication, creativity, warmth and love for your children have been evident in everything they do, and I am enormously proud and grateful to work alongside them. We received the very welcome news this year that our Safeguarding Audit by the Leeds Safeguarding Team was judged outstanding, with many areas described as 'exemplary' — a fitting reflection of the care and commitment of every member of our team.

I am very proud of our school, and very grateful for every one of you. Have a wonderful summer.

Wishing all our families a wonderful, happy and safe summer holiday.

School reopens on Thursday 3rd September 2026.

With every blessing and warmest wishes,

Mrs Burns

Headteacher

Congratulations to Mrs Roberts and her family on the birth of her beautiful baby girl, Isla. We can't wait to meet her!

