St Joseph's
Catholic Primary School Otley
a Voluntary Academy

As a family with God in our hearts, we love, laugh and learn.

WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

Friday 16th October 2026

A MESSAGE FROM MR GILHOOLY

Dear Parents, Carers and Friends of St Joseph's,

What an incredible collection of rockstars we have seen in school today! Congratulations to the children on their fantastic outfits, imaginative hairstyles and enthusiastic approach to our rockstar dress-up day. Thank you to our families for helping make the occasion so much fun.

Behind the costumes is an important message about developing confidence in maths. A secure understanding of number, including number bonds and times tables, provides the foundations for so much of children's learning. Knowing these facts helps children tackle calculations, spot patterns and solve increasingly challenging problems.

Short, regular practice makes a real difference. Whether you are exploring number bonds to 10, practising counting or learning multiplication facts, a few enjoyable minutes at home can help build fluency and confidence. Children, remember to challenge Mr G and your teachers on Times Tables Rock Stars! We are ready to put our skills to the test!

We also have some heartfelt news to share. Mrs Kealey will be leaving St Joseph's next Thursday, 22nd October. After working at our school for many years, she has made the difficult decision to move on to the next chapter of her life.

We thank Mrs Kealey for everything she has given to St Joseph's and for the care, kindness and support she has shown our children throughout her time here. She has made a lasting contribution to our school family, and we wish her every happiness in her next step. I know many of you will want to thank her personally for the support she has provided for your children.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support. Wishing all our children, families and friends a wonderful weekend.

Warm wishes,

Mr Gilhooly
Headteacher

"As a family with God in our hearts we love, laugh and learn."

TEACHING ASSISTANT VACANCY

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Otley, is looking for a caring, enthusiastic Teaching Assistant to support children with additional needs and provide classroom assistance.

Interested? Find out more and apply here:

https://mynewterm.com/jobs/139355/EDV-2026-SJCPSO-02410

DATES FOR THE DIARY

October 2026	November 2026
19th - Show Racism the Red Card 22nd - Harvest Mass 23rd - Training Day 31st - Deadline for Y7 applications	5th - FOSJ Break the Rules Day 9th - Parents Evening 11th - Parents Evening 11th - Remembrance Day Mass 16th - Anti-Bullying Week 23rd - Otley Light Switch On

IMPORTANT: EYFS TRAINING DAY

YR staff training day on Friday 4th December. Please note, School Closed to Reception on this day – please make alternative childcare arrangements.

WEEKLY ATTENDANCE

w/c 05.10.26

97.07%

Friends of St Joseph's

BONFIRE NIGHT INSPIRED

BREAK THE RULES DAY!

THURSDAY 5TH NOVEMBER

50P PER RULE BREAK

OR

BREAK ALL RULES FOR **£2**

EXAMPLES OF RULE BREAKS...

- Own clothes
- Crisps or chocolate bar for break time (no nuts)
- Any drink in bottle
- Coloured / glitter in hair
- Make up / face paint
- Wear nail varnish



TTRS ROCKSTAR DAY

On Friday 16th October, St Joseph's rocked to the rhythm of numbers as we celebrated Times Tables Rock Stars Day! We came dressed as rock stars, ready to turn up the volume on their times tables skills.

From rocking maths activities to our Times Tables Challenge, everyone had the chance to practise their multiplication facts, climb the leaderboard and show off their mathematical talent.

The day was full of fun, learning and a little rock 'n' roll! Keep the music playing at home by practising those times tables – with a little practice, everyone can become a Maths Rockstar!










Multiplication Square

×	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
2	2	4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24
3	3	6	9	12	15	18	21	24	27	30	33	36
4	4	8	12	16	20	24	28	32	36	40	44	48
5	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50	55	60
6	6	12	18	24	30	36	42	48	54	60	66	72
7	7	14	21	28	35	42	49	56	63	70	77	84
8	8	16	24	32	40	48	56	64	72	80	88	96
9	9	18	27	36	45	54	63	72	81	90	99	108
10	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100	110	120
11	11	22	33	44	55	66	77	88	99	110	121	132
12	12	24	36	48	60	72	84	96	108	120	132	144

We're challenging our families to help children practise their times tables at home! Just a few minutes each day can make a real difference to children's confidence, speed and fluency with multiplication facts.

Why not turn it into a family challenge? Test each other, see who can answer the quickest, or challenge your child to beat their own best time!

Our challenge:
Can your family fit in five minutes of times tables practice every day this week? Who will become the family times tables champion?

Happy practising, everyone!

SCHOOL GAMES CROSS COUNTRY

On Tuesday, 35 KS2 children proudly represented St Joseph's at the School Games Cross Country event at Wharfemeadows.

Our children showed fantastic athleticism, determination and sportsmanship throughout the event, encouraging one another and giving their very best.

We were incredibly proud to see them represent our school so positively, demonstrating teamwork, resilience and a brilliant attitude!



Y3 UKELELE CONCERT

Our Year 3 children put on a fantastic ukulele concert for their families, showcasing all the hard work they have been doing with Front Row Music. Led by Billy, the children proudly demonstrated their developing musical skills, performing the songs they have been practising and entertaining their audience. We are incredibly proud of their confidence, enthusiasm and musical achievements.





REMINDER—SHOW RACISM THE RED CARD

On Monday 19th October, we are asking children and staff to wear red to raise awareness about racism within society - this could be as simple as red socks/headband, or you can dress in all red clothes.

The important message is about acceptance and celebrating diversity. Everyone deserves respect and the chance to thrive without fear or prejudice. Let's keep the red card raised high until racism is kicked out.



CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

PRAYER OF THE WEEK

Loving God,
We pray for Pope Leo as he recovers from his operation.
Please give him strength, comfort and patience as he heals.
Surround him with Your love and guide those caring for him.
May he soon feel better and continue to lead
Your Church with faith and hope.
Help him to feel Your presence beside him each day. May Mary, our Mother, watch over him and keep him safe in her loving care.
Amen.

OUR LADY & ALL SAINTS CHURCH



MASS TIMES



Saturday Morning: 10am
Saturday Evening Vigil: 6:30pm
Sunday Morning: 9:30am & 11:15am

For updates, please check the weekly bulletin for up-to-date Mass times.

http://www.olasotley.org/bulletin.html

Reception's WWF Charity Day – Celebrating St Francis

We are incredibly proud of our Reception children, who raised a wonderful £75.00 for the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) during their animal-themed charity day! The children had great fun dressing up as their favourite animals while learning about the importance of caring for God's wonderful creation. This special day linked beautifully to our class saint, St Francis of Assisi, who is remembered for his deep love of animals and the natural world. St Francis recognised that all creation is a gift from God and encouraged people to treat it with kindness and respect. By raising money for WWF, they have helped support the important work of protecting wildlife and their habitats. We would like to say a huge thank you to all our Reception families for their generosity and support.

Matthew 22:1–14 – The Parable of the Wedding Banquet

This week, we have been reflecting on Jesus' parable of the wedding banquet from Matthew 22:1–14. In this story, a king prepares a special wedding feast and invites guests to come and celebrate, but some choose not to accept his invitation. The king then opens the invitation to others so that more people can join the celebration. Through this parable, Jesus reminds us that God invites everyone to be part of His family and to share in His love. However, we are also called to respond to God's invitation by the way we live our lives. It is not enough simply to hear God's Word; we must try to put it into practice by showing kindness, forgiveness, generosity and love. We have been encouraged to think about how we respond to God's invitation each day, whether by helping someone who needs us, including others in our games or making choices that reflect Jesus' teachings. God welcomes us into His family, and we can show our gratitude by living out our faith through our words and actions.



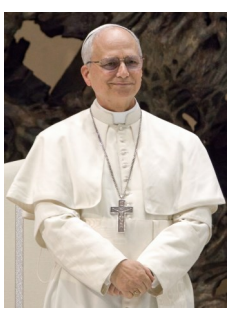
Our Theme – 'Strength'

Our theme this week is 'Strength', and we have been thinking about the different ways in which we can show strength in our everyday lives. Strength is not just about being physically strong; it can also mean having the courage to do what is right, persevering when something feels difficult and standing up for someone who needs support. Sometimes, it takes real strength to say sorry, forgive someone, ask for help or keep trying when we make a mistake. As Christians, we know that we do not have to face every challenge alone because God is always there to guide and support us. Through prayer, we can ask Him to give us the strength we need to make good choices, show kindness and face difficult moments with hope. We have been encouraged to remember that even the smallest acts of courage can make a big difference. When we choose to be patient, help others or keep going when learning feels challenging, we are showing strength in a way that reflects God's love.



Keeping Pope Leo XIV in Our Prayers

We ask our school community to keep Pope Leo XIV in our prayers following reports that he has undergone surgery. We pray that God will watch over him, guide those caring for him and grant him the strength, comfort and healing he needs. As Catholics, we remember that prayer connects us as one family of faith, allowing us to support others even when we cannot be physically beside them. We pray that Pope Leo feels surrounded by the love and prayers of people throughout the world and that he will be strengthened as he continues his important ministry of leading the Church. We also remember everyone who is unwell or recovering from an operation, asking God to bring them peace, hope and healing. Lord, please watch over Pope Leo and all those who are poorly, and help them to feel Your loving presence each day.



CLASS PAGES

YEAR R NEWS

In English, we have been exploring our new story, 'Room on the Broom'. The children enjoyed creating their own witches' wands before using their phonics knowledge to describe them. They practised identifying initial sounds and sounding out words to write simple descriptions. It has been wonderful to see their creativity and growing confidence in their early writing skills!

In Maths, we have been comparing numbers to 5. The children used practical resources, such as counters and cubes, to represent different amounts and explore which numbers were greater than, less than or equal to others. These hands-on activities helped them to develop their number recognition, counting skills and mathematical understanding.

In RE, we have been learning about the Sacrament of Baptism. The children enjoyed re-enacting a baptism and exploring the different roles, actions and special objects involved in the celebration. This practical activity helped them to develop their understanding of why Baptism is important to Christians and how it welcomes someone into the Christian family.

YEAR 1 NEWS

In English, we have had a lovely time making our own personalised books all about ourselves! We shared photographs of ourselves as babies, toddlers and children, talking about how we have grown and changed. We loved looking at our photographs and sharing special memories with our friends. This links perfectly to our new History topic, 'Childhood', where we will be exploring how we grow and how childhood has changed over time.

This week in Maths, we began our new unit on addition and subtraction. We explored part-whole models for the first time, learning how a whole number can be split into two or more parts. We have been practising using important mathematical vocabulary to explain our thinking and describe the relationship between the parts and the whole.

In RE, we thought about ways we can show love to God by showing love to others. We drew our ideas of things we can do in school and at home that shows care for other people like welcoming people with a smile, helping people with their work and being kind to help people up if they fall over.

On Friday our classroom was full of lots of super cool rockstars! We loved showing our amazing costumes, singing lots of songs and exploring number bonds to 10. We completed lots of activities to help us learn our number bonds and we need lots of practice of these at home too! We ended the day by unleashing our inner rockstar and enjoying a party!

YEAR 2 NEWS

In Maths, we have continued developing our understanding of place value by comparing and ordering numbers to 100. We have been using the greater than (>) and less than (<) symbols to compare numbers, looking carefully at the tens and ones to help us decide which numbers are larger or smaller. We have also been practising putting numbers in order from smallest to largest and largest to smallest.

In English, we have been busy writing letters about ourselves, inspired by our class text, 'This Is Our World'. We have been using all the information we gathered about our lives, families and favourite things to write letters to our Year 5 friends. We have been thinking about how to organise our ideas and include details to help our readers get to know us better.

In Science, we have been learning about food chains and how living things depend on one another for food. We discovered that food chains often begin with a plant and show how energy is passed from one living thing to another. We have been exploring simple food chains and learning how to use arrows to show which living things are eaten by others.

In RE, we have been learning about Baptism and why it is such an important celebration for Christian families. We discovered that Baptism is a special sacrament which welcomes a person into God's family and the Church. We have been exploring some of the important signs and symbols used during Baptism, including water, the candle and the white garment, and thinking about what they represent.



YEAR 3 NEWS

What a wonderful week we've had in Year 3! We kicked off the week with a fantastic ukulele performance in front of a very proud audience. The children truly shone, and the progress they have made in just a few short weeks has been amazing. They should all feel incredibly proud of themselves!

In Maths, we have started our new unit on addition and subtraction and have continued to rock our times tables. The children are showing great confidence and enthusiasm in their learning.

In Geography, we have been developing our atlas skills by locating capital cities and learning about longitude and latitude. The children have enjoyed discovering how these lines help us identify places around the world.

In our learning about healthy lifestyles, we have been exploring the different food groups and discussing how they help our bodies to grow, stay healthy and have energy for learning and play. The children showed a great understanding of how making balanced choices can help us look after ourselves.

YEAR 4 NEWS

In Year 4 this week, we have had an exciting time with our visitors: our School-To-School review and our Skipping Competition Coach. We have shown good working and determination: updating our personal targets and doing our best.

In English, we have re-written "The Promise" from a different character's perspective and shown a lot of focused sentence skills; like openers, speech and simile.

In Maths, we have started our Addition and Subtraction unit. We need to practise and learn our number bonds up to 20 to help us speed us, so please test us on them!

In RE, we have learned about Joseph (and his coat of many colours) and thought how God tests us with challenges but never leaves our side when we really need Him.

YEAR 5 NEWS

In RE, we explored the virtues and the cardinal virtues which help us to live good and happy lives. We were then tasked with presenting our work on our understanding of faith, hope and love, in whatever way we wanted to. Some of us made presentations, artwork and we even had a fantastic drama performance.

In Maths, we practised using inverse operations to check addition and subtraction calculations before applying our knowledge to solve multi-step word problems.

In English, we explored the rich vocabulary used in 'Beowulf: Monster Slayer' and how it is used to create vivid imagery. We discussed conversations between the characters and wrote our own dialogue, focusing particularly on using accurate punctuation.

In Science, we designed and made our own parachutes to investigate the effects of air resistance. We tested our designs and explored how air resistance affects the way objects fall.

YEAR 6 NEWS

In English, we made predictions about a creepy word cloud filled with language from the first chapter, and correctly inferred that it would be a suspense narrative involving a possibly haunted hotel. We were then introduced to the new book, 'Room 13', and the children thought about the sensory language used by the author to create tension and introduce the setting.

In Maths, we have been consolidating written methods of multiplication and division, including short column multiplication, the grid method, the area model and short division (the bus stop method). The class are confident in using these methods, but some children are still struggling with recalling their times tables facts. Please encourage your child to complete TTRS on the app or in the booklets they brought home. If you need extra resources for times tables, please let Mrs Armitage know.

In RE, we looked at the Laudato Si', Pope Francis' encyclical which teaches us about caring for our common home, the Earth. The class had lots of ideas on how to care for the earth and be stewards, and linked Pope Francis' ideas about our relationship with God, our neighbours and the Earth to Bible verses we have read.

REMINDER - WELLBEING AND SAFEGUARDING

A reminder that safeguarding information, including resources, signposting and details of who to talk to if you have any concerns, can always be found at the bottom of this newsletter.

WELLBEING / SAFEGUARDING INFORMATION

Contact Telephone Number for Parents - The school office will be open during normal school hours: 01943 463840. Please ask to speak to **Mr Gilhooly, Mrs Wainwright, Miss Wilkinson or Mrs Monkman.**

If you are outside of school hours or it is a holiday and you have a concern you can ring the local authority social worker team directly.

- Leeds Children's Social Work Services on 0113 222 4403 Further information can be found here.
- Bradford Children's Social Work Services 01274 433999 further information from Bradford local authority can be found here.

NSPCC Helpline

The Department for Education has commissioned the NSPCC to establish a dedicated independent helpline for people who have experienced sexual abuse in educational setting.

The Helpline went live on 1 April, and will provide both children and adults who have experienced sexual abuse in schools with support and advice, including onward action such as contacting the Police if they wish to. The Helpline will also provide support to parents and professionals. Anyone who gets in touch through this dedicated helpline will also be signposted to other relevant support services available, including Childline, which provides ongoing support and counselling to children and young people. The dedicated and confidential NSPCC helpline – Report Abuse in Education can be reached on 0800 136 663 or by email at help@nspcc.org.uk.

NHS ChatHealth (chathealth.nhs.uk)

ChatHealth enables young people to access support and advice regarding various emotional health and wellbeing concerns. To find out more information about ChatHealth and how to access the support please use the above link. ChatHealth also offer a Text Service 07520 619750 (8.30am – 4.30pm Monday to Friday) 11-19 year olds. Mental Health/General Health enquiries.

MindMate: Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health.

Online (https://www.mindmate.org.uk/) and via telephone 0300 555 0324.

Safeguarding Resources/Information

The following resources, highlighted by the Leeds Safeguarding Team, are also available for parents:

NSPCC Keeping Children Safe Online provides a useful guide to social networks, apps and guide.

National Online Safety have produced a series of top tips guides to support remote learning for Parents, Children and Teachers

Thinkuknow is the education programme from NCA-CEOP, a UK organisation which protects children both online and offline for different age groups and parents.

Childnet has produced a Parent and Carer Toolkit which is a collection of three resources designed to help you talk to your child about their online life, manage boundaries around family internet use and point you in the direction of where to get further help and support.

Safer Leeds - Domestic violence and abuse (leeds.gov.uk)

