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 23rd October 2026

A MESSAGE FROM MR GILHOOLY

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

As we reach the end of a busy half term, there is so much to celebrate at St Joseph's. The children have worked hard, embraced new opportunities and given us plenty of reasons to smile. I suspect we are all ready for a rest—although some children seem to have enough energy for another seven weeks!

We were delighted to receive a music award from Leeds ArtForms, recognising the wonderful musical opportunities in our school. A huge thank you to Mrs Georghiou and Mr Rickson for their hard work in achieving this award. Music brings joy to our school family, helping children develop confidence and enjoy performing.

Our Catholic Social Teaching mascots are making a positive difference, helping children recognise kindness, fairness, service and care for others. Seeing children celebrate these qualities is particularly special.

Children have settled beautifully into their new classrooms and routines. A special mention goes to Reception, who have taken their first half term in their stride. They already feel part of our St Joseph's family, and we are proud of the confidence, friendships and independence they are developing.

Our pupil leadership groups are gaining momentum too. School Council, Mini-Vinnies, Girls of Tomorrow and Eco Warriors are bringing ideas, enthusiasm and care to school life. Our children have plenty to say about making the world a better place—and they are taking action!

And, to complete this impressive list of achievements, Huddersfield Town are joint top of the league! Some families may not consider this school news, but it has certainly contributed to the headteacher's wellbeing!

My heartfelt thanks go to all our colleagues for their hard work, patience and commitment to supporting every child. Thank you, too, to our families for your encouragement and support throughout the half term.

Have a wonderful half-term break. Enjoy some rest, time together and, hopefully, a little autumn sunshine. We look forward to welcoming everyone back, ready to love, laugh and learn together.

Warm wishes,
Mr Gilhooly
Headteacher

DATES FOR THE DIARY

October 2026	November 2026
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

PARENTPAY

Please can all parents/ carers check their Parent Pay account over the holidays and make any outstanding payments.

WEEKLY ATTENDANCE

w/c 12.10.26

97.13%

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



SHOW RACISM THE RED CARD



On Monday 19th November, St Joseph's proudly took part in Show Racism the Red Card Day, with everyone wearing red to show their support for tackling racism and discrimination. Throughout the day, we reflected on why racism is wrong and the importance of treating everyone with kindness, fairness and respect.



Our Year 6 children also took part in a thought-provoking workshop led by Nicky Wilce from Inspiration Tree. They explored the true meaning of discrimination and learned about the history of racism in football, considering how attitudes have changed and why there is still work to do.

We are proud to stand together against racism and celebrate a world where everyone belongs!

YR/Y6 BUDDY SERVICE

We celebrated a very special milestone as we officially welcomed our Year R children into the St Joseph's family through our Year R and Year 6 Buddy Service. It was a lovely occasion to recognise the wonderful friendships growing between our youngest pupils and their Year 6 buddies.

With candles, certificates and beautiful songs, we celebrated kindness, friendship and belonging. We are so proud of the care and encouragement our older children show their younger buddies, helping them to feel safe, happy and part of our school community. A truly special celebration of friendship at St Joseph's!



POPPY APPEAL

We will be selling poppies and other memorabilia from Monday 2nd November until Friday 6th November. Please give generously. No change can be given.

The *Poppy Appeal* is the Royal British Legion's biggest fundraising campaign held every year in November, during the period of Remembrance.

Poppy 50p	Reflector £1
Bracelet £1	Snap Band £1.50

KS2 ATHLETICS EVENTS

Our KS2 children have been enjoying some fantastic athletics opportunities! Last week, our Year 3 and 4 pupils took part in an athletics event against St Peter's and St Paul's, with our Year 5 and 6 children taking their turn this week.

Led by Mr Wardell, the events have given children the chance to try different elements of athletics, develop their skills, challenge themselves and enjoy some friendly competition!



DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE WITH A CHILD STARTING SCHOOL IN SEPTEMBER 2027?

We would love to welcome prospective families to St Joseph's for a tour of our wonderful school. It's a great opportunity to see our children learning, playing and thriving, experience our friendly school community in action, and ask any questions.

If you know a family who would like to find out more, please encourage them to contact the school office to arrange a visit. We can't wait to show them what makes St Joseph's so special!

TIME TO ORDER YOUR CHRISTMAS CARDS

- Check that your child's name is spelt correctly and, if necessary, amend on form in correct box.
- Place correct money in the envelope **(no change given)** or a cheque made payable to 'Friends of St Josephs'.
- Send order form to school **in an envelope, labelled with child's name and year group.**
- Please keep the sample card. Do not send it with the order.



CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

PRAYER OF THE WEEK

Dear God,
Thank you for the fun and learning we have shared this half term.
Thank you for our everyone who helps us each day.
Help us to be kind, caring and grateful for all our blessings.
As we enjoy our half-term holiday, keep us safe and happy.
Help us to rest, have fun and spend time with our families.
May we return to school ready to learn, grow and shine together.
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

Our Whole-School Harvest Mass

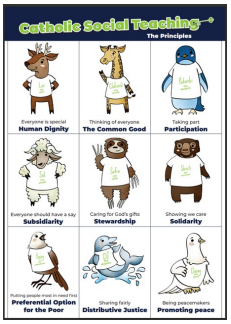
We are incredibly proud of our school community for coming together to celebrate our Harvest Mass. We gave thanks to God, reflected on the importance of sharing and remembered those in need. Our wonderful Mini Vinnies led the Mass with confidence, demonstrating our Catholic virtues of service and citizenship.



The Mass also linked to our new prayer garden, 'The Vineyard', inspired by Jesus' Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard. This reminds us of God's generosity and that His love is freely offered to everyone. Our Mini Vinnies hope the garden will become a peaceful space for prayer and reflection. We are excited to see their ideas taking shape and grateful for their contribution to our school community.

A Blessed Eight-Week Half-Term

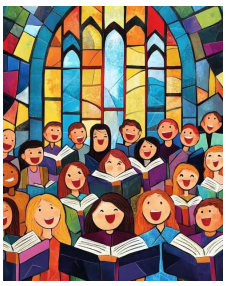
As we reach the end of a busy half-term, we thank God for the many blessings within our school community. We are proud of how enthusiastically the children have embraced our new Catholic Social Teaching mascots, exploring how to care for others, respect everyone's dignity and protect God's creation.



Each day, children vote for a classmate to represent the chosen mascot, encouraging them to put these values into practice. We hope these daily experiences will nurture compassionate hearts and inspire choices rooted in love, fairness and respect. We wish all our families a happy, restful and blessed half-term and look forward to welcoming everyone back.

Our Theme – 'Sing'

Our theme this week is Sing, celebrating the importance of music and joyful praise in our Catholic faith. Throughout the Bible, we are encouraged to sing to God, give thanks for His goodness and celebrate the wonderful things He does in our lives. Singing hymns, prayers and songs helps us unite as a community, express our faith and thank God for His goodness.



We have also reflected on using our voices positively by speaking kindly, encouraging others and sharing hope. As we approach half-term, may we continue to celebrate our blessings and share God's love through kindness, gratitude and joy.

Matthew 22:15–21 – Give to God What Belongs to God

This week, we have explored Matthew's Gospel, where Jesus explains that we should give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God. The coin carries Caesar's image, but each of us is made in God's image and is precious to Him.



We can give to God through our actions: helping others, speaking kindly and using our talents to serve our community. This Gospel connects with Catholic Social Teaching, reminding us that everyone deserves love and respect. During half-term, we encourage our children to put their faith into action, remembering that even the smallest acts of kindness can share God's love.

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)

