



St. Thomas of Canterbury

CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Dear Parents,

Half term is looming and we have so much to share! The children should be so proud of their first half term this academic year and they are certainly ready for a well-deserved rest!

The month began with our Trust St Francis of Assisi Feast Day. Our new Chaplaincy Team, alongside all the teams across the Trust, attended a special Liturgy at St Joseph's Primary School in Waltham Cross (see page 3). The Chaplaincy Team were officially presented with their badges. They then went on to lead a whole-school Act of Worship to relaunch the Franciscan Values Award.

It was wonderful to see so many parents attend our Early Years Harvest Sharing Morning. Many of the children had only been in school for a few weeks and it was heart-warming to see their enthusiasm (see page 2). We very much hope parents also enjoyed their home-made soup! Thank you for all the kind food donations, which have been gratefully received by the Bishop's Stortford Food Bank.

During the month of October, we have recognised Black History Month through focused discussions, prayer and Liturgy. At St Thomas', Black History and other cultures are embedded in our learning throughout the school and across the year (R.E; History; English and PSHE), celebrating key historical figures who have influenced reading, religion, the arts and the sciences. This week the whole school enjoyed a visit from a steel drum musician, see page 7.

Thank you to the many parents who attended our 'Open Afternoon', we hope you enjoyed the opportunity to visit your child's classroom and for your child to share their books and recent learning. We are aiming to make this a termly event – two further dates for the diary are Tuesday 4th February and Monday 9th June (2:30pm-3:15pm).

Have a safe and relaxing half term. I look forward to welcoming the children back (in winter uniform please) on Monday 4th November.

Best wishes,

Mrs Keating
Executive Headteacher

The Rosary

The month of October is dedicated to the Holy Rosary, one of the best known of all Catholic devotions. October includes the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary (October 7). The best way to celebrate the month is, of course, to pray the Rosary. The Chaplaincy Team have led age appropriate rosary sessions across the school and KS2 have engaged in Mark 10 Mission's 'Rosary Challenge'

House Points:

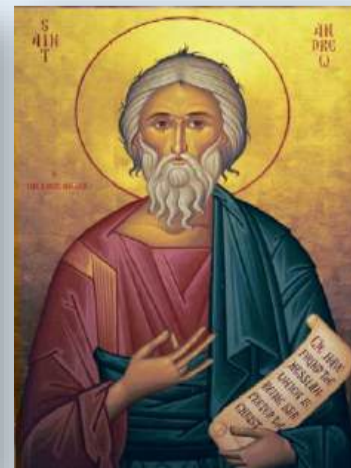
St David
302



St George
521



St Andrew
410



St Patrick
310



Catholic Life of the School

Harvest

Early Years had a wonderful Harvest Sharing morning with their parents, it was a delight to welcome so many! Thank you for your generous donations to the food bank.

Dear God,

Thank you for all the food we have this Harvest.

Thank you for providing us with the food we have to eat. Help us to be grateful each day for what we have and think of others who may not have as much. Help us to be kind and giving this Harvest.

Amen



Chaplaincy Team

The Chaplaincy Team were part of a very special Trust liturgy on Thursday 3rd October where they discussed their aims for the year, worked on plans for our annual Trust Charity week and received their official St Francis of Assisi Chaplaincy Team badges.



The following day, on the feast day of our Trust saint, St Francis, the Chaplaincy Team and Mrs Clark led a special liturgy dedicated to St Francis, and relaunched our Franciscan values.



Congratulations to the winners of our St Francis of Assisi prayer decorating competition:

Penny G, Noah C, Eva-Grace R, Mia T, Mason A and Aoife M

All the wonderful entries will be displayed proudly in the hall!

Franciscan Values

Across the St Francis of Assisi Catholic Academy Trust we work towards a shared set of values, our 'Franciscan Values'. The children are all taught to live out these values in their daily lives and those who demonstrate them well can be nominated for our special Franciscan Values awards. On the feast day of St Francis, the Chaplaincy Team led the whole school in a special liturgy that helped us revisit the values and how we can live them out.



Franciscan Values Award

EYFS & KS1 – Infant Award - KINDNESS

Creating a caring community
To be a kind and loving friend to all.

Sharing compassion for others
To support those in need in my school
and in the world.

Reverence for creation
To take care of God's creations

Peace making
To help and care for others.



Franciscan Values Award

KS2 – Junior Award – GRATITUDE

Creating a caring community
To create opportunities for all to respect, love
and show kindness to all. To pray.

Sharing compassion for others
To pray and to take responsible action to
support those in need within my school,
home, Parish and my understanding of
charity.

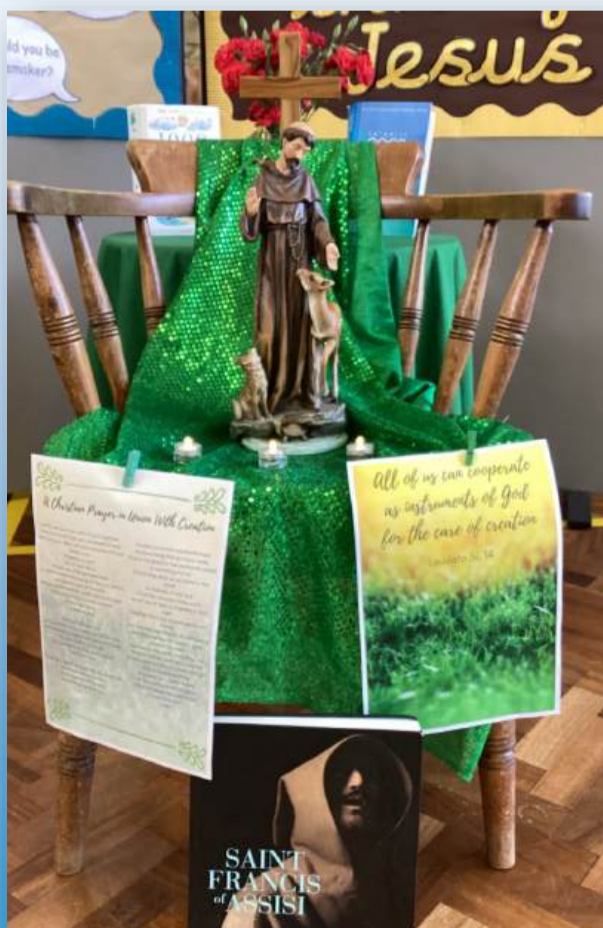
Reverence for creation
To understand with compassion and share
concern while protecting God's creation.

Peace making
To support reconciliation and forgiveness in
my own life and others.

Autumn 1 Winner

Amari

Being a kind and loving member of Early Years!



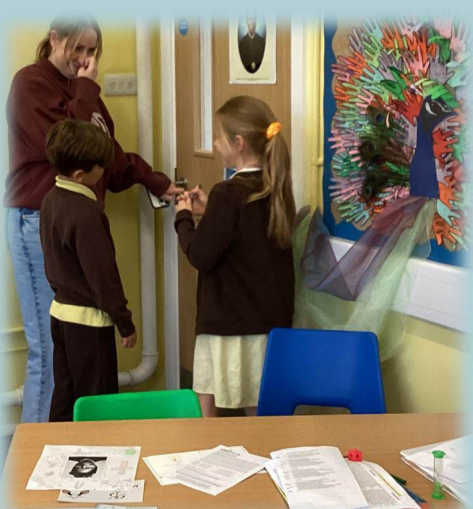
Autumn 1 Winner

Mia

Showing love, kindness and respect to all

Parent Sharing Session

Thank you for attending our Parent Sharing Afternoon on Monday. This was hugely successful, it was really wonderful to welcome such a large number of parents and for the children to be able to share their work and achievements!



Catholic Social Teaching



Dear God,

Please help everybody to be treated equally. Let us share and be kind to all. It shouldn't matter what someone's skin colour is, we should all have the same rights in this world. It is our responsibility to show love and respect and to teach others to do the same. Amen

Oscar, Year 5

Ensuring our school is anti-racist is a continuous process and therefore Black History Month should not be a token gesture. However, it can be an opportunity to remind our school community of this crucial work. Black History Month can promote the values of equality, justice, and solidarity, which are integral to Catholic teaching. By observing Black History Month, it has given us the opportunity to honour the contributions of black individuals, address racism, and celebrate the rich diversity within the Church and broader society.

During this month we have researched the lives of key black figures, celebrated saints from other cultures, explored the different faces of Mary and we welcomed Paul Cherrie of Solid Steel to present wonderful performance of the traditional Trinidadian 'Steel Pan' (see page 7 for photos). Racial justice has also been at the heart of our prayer time, with Y5/6 pupils writing their own dedicated prayers.

We are all made from God and He loves each one of us. Help us to live together in harmony and stop racism and discrimination towards people with different skin colours. Amen

Olivia, Year 6

Next half term, our Catholic Social Teaching focus will be 'Preferential Option for the Poor'. The Church holds that we should all have a special focus on supporting, walking alongside, and sharing with people who are living in poverty. Pope Francis' much quoted phrase about wanting 'a poor church for the poor' holds the Catholic Social Teaching principle of the preferential option for the poor at its heart. Although it includes the charitable support of the Church, both the institution and individual members, for those living in poverty locally and globally, it is also wider than this. The option for the poor includes talking with, and listening to, those who are living in poverty.





As part of our celebration of Black History Month, the whole school thoroughly enjoyed a wonderful assembly and vibrant performance of the steel pan by Paul Cherrie of 'Solid Steel'. Paul shared the history of the steel pan and its roots in Trinidad, before wowing the children and staff with performances of traditional Trinidadian music, reggae and even a rendition of a Dua Lipa song!

"It was really good, I liked the performance of 3 Little Birds" (Jude HM)



"He showed us all the indentations that give the drum its sound. I like the Dua Lipa performance" (Oscar C)



SPORT

Tag Rugby event:

Year 3 and 4 went to a rugby festival at Herford Rugby Club. They took part in a training session with Saracens and then played 9 different schools in 7 a-side games. They came 2nd!



Year 3 and 4 Development Day at Wodson Park:

The children enjoyed a fantastic morning of sports led by the Hertford and Ware Sports Partnership. They took part in curling, badminton, boxing, skipping and boccia games.



Funds from Puckeridge to Paris

We have continued to spend the money from the fundraising efforts last term. Early Years are now the proud new owners of 3 new balance bikes! A huge thank you to Mr Purser of Stanley Bridge Cycles for securing them at a discounted rate.

St Edmunds Year 2 Football Festival

Year 2 had a wonderful experience of football at a festival hosted by St Edmunds College.



ADMISSION CONSULTATIONS

(INTO RECEPTION 2026/27)

St Thomas of Canterbury School:

St Thomas of Canterbury School is consulting on the proposed admissions arrangements for the school year 2026/27 and is seeking responses from parent/carers, schools and community groups.

The proposed changes are:

1. Alteration of wording where the policy is managed by St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School to the St Francis of Assisi (SFOA) Catholic Academy Trust. This means all Primary Schools within the St Francis of Assisi Catholic Academy Trust will be adopting the same Admissions Policy, using the same over-subscription criteria.
2. The addition within each category of the over-subscription criteria of a third prioritisation point, covering children of members of staff.

The consultation period runs from 28 October– 8 December 2024. Please send your comments regarding the proposals to the school direct at admin@stcanterbury.herts.sch.uk

Herts County Council:

Hertfordshire County Council is also running a consultation on the proposed admissions arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools for the school year 2026/27 and is seeking responses from parent/carers, schools and community groups.

HCC's proposed changes are:

1. To reduce the published admission number (PAN) at four community or voluntary controlled primary schools (**this point is not relevant to the area in which St Thomas of Canterbury School is located**).
2. Retain the remainder of the county council's existing admission arrangements for 2026/27, including PANs, Relevant Areas and schemes of coordination.

The consultation period runs until 8 December 2024. Please visit www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/admissions2026 for more information and to respond

NOTICES

Admissions for September 2025:

- Our **Nursery Applications** opened on 2nd October 2024 (deadline for receipt of application is 13th December 2024). **Reception Applications** open on 1st November 2024 (deadline for receipt of online and paper application is 15th January 2025). Please see our website for details on how to apply for places in Nursery and Reception. We will be holding two Open Mornings for Early Years Applications, both start at 09:15 prompt (Tuesday 12th and 19th November). Please book through the School Office (to note there are very limited places available on the 12th November tour). Years staff and Leadership Team. Please note, St Thomas of Canterbury are consulting on their Admissions Arrangements for 2026/2027 (please see next page for details).

Secondary School Applications:

- A reminder that the deadline for Secondary School Applications is **31st October 2024**. Please ensure your applications are in on time.

Individual and Sibling Photos:

- Photos will be taken on 14th November.

School Uniform:

- A reminder that all children need to be in winter uniform after half term. See [our website for further information](#). Children are also reminded that they need to bring in a waterproof coat to school, every day.

Flu Vaccinations:

- These will be provided for children in Reception to Year 6. Please ensure you have provided your consent.

Book of Remembrance:

- Mrs W Clark will be putting together a Book of Remembrance and we would love to have your contributions! Children will be coming home with an "Intention Sheet" for you to fill in as a family and bring back to school for the Remembrance Book. Please bring in money for poppies after half term.

At St Thomas' our core priority is the safety and welfare of our children.



Creating a happy, safe and secure learning environment is key to ensure all of our pupils have a school setting where they can reach their potential and enjoy their learning.

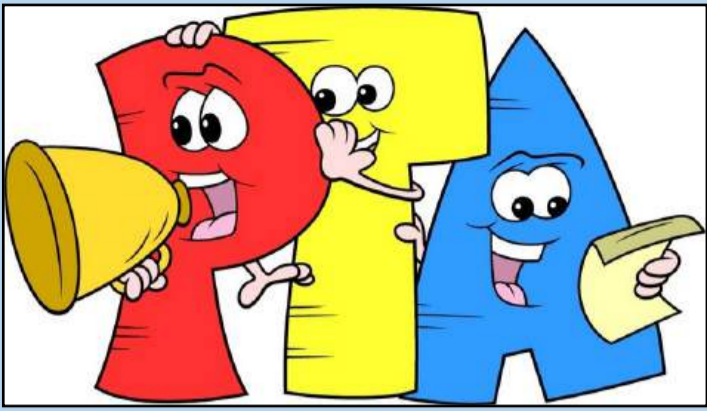
We have many associated policies in place to safeguard our children and these are available [on the school website](#). A reminder that our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) for any Child Protection / Safeguarding concerns is Mrs W Clark.

Deputy Safeguarding Leads are:

Mrs Keating; Mr Booth; Mrs Overett and Mrs Sellers. Our Safeguarding Link Governor is Mr Tim Mills.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility; if your concerns are out of hours and you believe that a child is at risk of significant harm, please call Children's Services Social Care on: 0300 123 4043





With our forthcoming Christmas Bazaar, we will need many volunteers. Please let the PTA know if you can help in any way. We are currently fund raising for carpets in Key Stage Two.

Having an active and enthusiastic PTA is essential to ensure events are well organised and successful, in turn raising much needed funds for the school.

We are delighted to welcome the following members:

Co-Chair: Mrs Amy Chandler

Co-Chair: Mrs Kath Warden

Treasurer: Mrs Faye Andrews

Events / Promotion Liaison: Mrs Anna Di Pasquale

If you are interested in joining the PTA or helping at events, please contact them via their email address: pta@stcanterbury.herts.sch.uk

PTA AUTUMN GLOW DISCO!



GOVERNOR VOICE: A note from the Chair...

The Governors held their first meeting of the academic year on Tuesday 8 October 2024. This meeting was predominantly concerned with planning for the academic year ahead.

At this meeting we were pleased to welcome three new governors - Abi Da-Bell (Parent Governor), Amy Donovan (Foundation Governor) and Francesco Luca (Associate Governor).

Please feel free to contact me through the school office should you wish to discuss any matter.



David Lang,
Chair of Governors



A huge "thank you" to our Year 1 / 2 parents who funded lots of stationery and a wonderful colourful carpet for the children - each child has a circle to sit on! We are very grateful!

FORTHCOMING DATES: (CLICK ON [LINK](#) FOR CALENDAR ON WEBSITE)

28th October to 1st November	Half Term
4th November	Year 3/4 Celtic Harmony Trip
5th November	Reception to Year 6 Flu Vaccinations
8th November	PTA Bring it in Day (Please bring in chocolate - no nuts or coconut). This is a Non-Uniform Day.
11th - 15th November	Anti-Bullying Week
11th November	Year 5/6 Shared Act of Worship - Remembrance
12th November 09:15	Open Morning for Prospective Early Years parents
14th November	Pret a Portrait photos - individual and siblings
15th November	Children in Need - Wear Spots—please donate
18th November	Reception to Year 6 Flu Vaccinations (2nd tranche)
19th November 09:15	Open Morning for Prospective Early Years parents
19th November 15:30	Nursery to Year 5 Parent Consultations
21st November 15:30	Nursery to Year 5 Parent Consultations
26th November 15:30	Year 6 Parent Consultations
27th November 15:15	Lincolnsfield Trip (Year 3/4 Parents & children) Mtg