

# St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Oxford

*"Let us protect with love all that God has given us"*  
(Pope Francis 19.03.2013)



Headley Way, Headington, Oxford, OX3 7SX

Telephone: 01865 763357

Email: [office.3838@st-josephs-pri.oxon.sch.uk](mailto:office.3838@st-josephs-pri.oxon.sch.uk)

Website: [www.st-josephs-pri.oxon.sch.uk](http://www.st-josephs-pri.oxon.sch.uk)

20<sup>th</sup> December 2023



*O Come, O Come Emmanuel*

Dear Families,

We had a lovely end of term Mass last Friday when the children's 'Bambinelli' were blessed by Fr Mervyn. The Mass focused on peace, hope, love and joy.

It has been a very long term! As you know, we have worked hard on our curriculum to offer a programme of academic excellence, celebrating our diversity and encouraging our community to take action. This edition of the newsletter is to celebrate all that has happened this term and the wonderful things our children have achieved. We hope you can see our curriculum intention shining through.

You will see reference to how the pupils are actively involved in all that we do – including our Eco Council, our Social Justice group, our Liturgy group and our Learning Champions. In additions, pupils have come to me to set up two new groups who will be reporting to you next term in the newsletter. What amazing children we have!

Can I take the opportunity to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and we all look forward to welcoming the children back on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> January.

Warm wishes

Jess Tweedie  
Headteacher

## Catholic Life of Our School

The Catholic ethos underpins all that we do and we are proudly Catholic and inclusive. Over the year we aim to invite in visitors and speakers who can support and develop our ethos. We also hold special weeks to focus on our social teaching (See a video explanation from CAFOD of [Catholic Social Teaching](#)), weeks to support keeping children safe as well as special days to celebrate the liturgical year.

Alongside this, we focus on building an understanding of the values and virtues in our **pupil profile**. We started the year inviting in 'Doodle Bug' to talk to the children about how their brains work and the developing a growth mindset and positive attitude to learning.



We also had a whole school sticker chart to celebrate good learning behaviours in the school. This was our Mighty River sticker chart! This is now full and we have a whole school treat in the Spring term!



Behaviour in our school is very good. We know this, but it is nice to hear it from visitors. Here is an email from someone who came to our school this term:

*I'd like to mention what a positive impression St Joseph's made on me, the vibe I got whilst I was walking around was fantastic, it really made my visit a pleasurable one. Everybody I encountered during my visit, from staff to young pupils was courteous and polite.*

*As a design engineer, I visit over 100 schools a year and it's very rare to come across a school that's such a nice place to be at, with such well-mannered pupils.*



At Harvest, the pupils in the **Social Justice Group** arranged for a food bank collection for the local foodbank and we were delighted to welcome Jane Benyon, a founder of the foodbank, to come in and talk to the children about what it was and what inspired her to start the foodbank.



*Dear Families,*

*Thank you for the money for the Poppy Appeal – we raised £189.*

*Thank you for the food that you brought. It has made a very big difference for those who are in need of it.*

*There is a Sobell House appeal for those in the hospice. So far we have raised £150!*

*Thank you for the differences you made.*

***From the Social Justice Group***

### **Keeping our Common Home healthy**

Pope Francis wrote a second [encyclical letter](#) this term, following on from 'Laudato Si'. We explored this and 'Stewardship', particularly with regards to looking after our Common Home and UN COP 28 which took place in early December. As a response to this, the **Eco Council** sent out a checklist this week to challenge families to think about ways they can help cut their carbon at home. As a school, we are working towards being awarded the **CAFOD [Live Simply Award](#)** (click on the link to see what this entails).

### **Keeping Ourselves Safe**

This term, we installed a barrier to the staff carpark, which has made it much safer. We also took part in Road Safety Week. This was both an effort to teach children how to be safe on the roads, but also to try to address drop off and pick up times outside of our school. Chevron gave us cones which we decorated and we held a sign competition – winner to be announced next term!



**Year 6 also went to Rewley Fire Station for a Junior Citizens course – learning difference ways to keep themselves safe and much fun had was had by all!**



The **diversity in our school** is something we celebrate – both with our international day and our PTA international evening. Both incredibly successful events recognising our connections all over the world! This was built on a few weeks later in anti-bully week and odd socks day – again recognising that we are all unique and special.



Odd Socks Day and Our Map showing the numerous connections we have with the world!



PTA International Evening was a huge, delicious success!



### **Celebrating Advent!**

We did a variety of things this Advent, including our Advent Service at St Anthony of Padua Church – Year 6 were amazing, clear and read beautifully. We also had an advent calendar in each class to step our way to Christmas. We had our end of year Mass which celebrated peace, love, hope and joy.



**Advent Service in St Anthony's celebrating diversity, peace, love, hope and joy!**



**End of Term Mass with Fr Mervyn, our Chair of Governors**

Each child made a 'Bambinelli' a figure of the infant Christ child. These were blessed by Father Mervyn at our end-of-term Mass. The tradition of Bambinelli began in Rome and is celebrated on the third Sunday of Advent. The figure can be placed under a Christmas tree to be 'unwrapped' on Christmas Day.

We are the St Joseph's **Liturgy Group**. We are a group of children from Year 3 to 6. A child is chosen from each class. We meet every other Tuesday, where we discuss what is happening during our RE lessons and Prayer and Liturgy sessions. We evaluate what is going well and what we can do to improve. We also help the teachers by reminding them about changing the cloths during the Liturgical Year and create displays for our prayer corners. We wear badges so that people know who we are. We hope to keep showing everybody that this is a Catholic school and to increase our belief in God.

**The Liturgy Group**



## Festive Fun - Christmas Lunch

We had our Christmas Lunch on Monday. The children all made their own crackers, complete with jokes and hats. Thank you to the PTA for providing these.



## Reception Crafternoon.

Our Reception families enjoyed a wonderful afternoon of Christmas crafts, along with a very special visitor for a story-time session!



And this week Year 4 visited our Reception classrooms to read more stories with the Reception children





## Residential Trips

As you will know, we have a rolling programme of residential trips in KS2. This starts with Year 3 camping on our field and builds up to a week away for Year 6. This term, we hosted two of our residential trips. Year 6 spent a week in Devon at Stone Farm. This is a lovely place where children were able to go on day trips, but also spend time looking after the animals on the Farm.



Year 4 went on a two-day residential to **Youlbury Scout Camp** on Boars Hill where they engaged in team building and exciting activities!





## Class Trips, Visits and Visitors!

We aim to use class trips to enhance our curriculum. This term it has included local walks to enrich our exploration of the local area and a trip to Oxford Castle.

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Science Visitors to Year 3 and Year 5!

We received lovely feedback from the visiting Scientist:

*I had a wonderful time – your students were an absolute delight and I really appreciated their enthusiasm, energy and involvement’.*

Year 6 were invited to a special Science of Christmas event at St Edwards School, with lectures in Biology, Chemistry and Physics, all with a Christmas theme!

### Chess at St Joseph's

We have a very strong tradition of chess in our school - started by Sue Tomkys, a previous Headteacher and we have continued with this, with pupils in Years 3 and 4 doing Chess on a Wednesday afternoon. Our chess squad continue to be very competitive in Oxford matches, taking on local schools, both private and state and producing some fantastic results.

CSC have written a report on the impact of Chess in Schools, pointing to the educational benefits – click on the link: <https://www.chessinschools.co.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=5e6f2bc1-e788-4af9-aa20-3815524520ea>

### Mapping out our Curriculum School Website/Curriculum

#### Subject progression documents showing the progression of each subject through the school

Click this link for our [Maths progression documents](#)

**Short videos for families to support our Maths philosophy and teaching fundamentals**

Click this link for our [Science progression document](#)

Click this link for our [English progressions and documents \(including Writing, Reading and Handwriting\)](#)

Click this link for our [Phonics progression](#)

#### Foundation Subject Progression Documents

(we are still working on vocabulary progressions in subject areas)

[History Progression Document](#)

[Music Progression Document](#)

[Computing and Internet Safety Progression Document](#)

[Physical Education Y3-Y6 \(including swimming at key stage 2\) Progression Doc.](#)

[Physical Education Rec-Y2 Progression Document](#)

[Art & Design Progression Document](#)

[Design & Technology Progression Document](#)

[Geography Progression Document](#)

Relationships and Sex Education Progression can be found through [this link](#)

#### Non- National Curriculum Subjects taught in school to add breath to our Curriculum

[Forest School Progression Document](#)

[Public Speaking Overview](#)

#### Term by Term overview documents for each year group

Autumn Term	Spring Term	Summer Term
Year Group Curriculum Overview	Year Group Curriculum Overview	Year Group Curriculum Overview
Reception Overview	Reception Overview	Reception Overview
Year 1 Overview	Year 1 Overview	Year 1 Overview
Year 2 Overview	Year 2 Overview	Year 2 Overview
Year 3 Overview	Year 3 Overview	Year 3 Overview
Year 4 Overview	Year 4 Overview	Year 4 Overview
Year 5 Overview	Year 5 Overview	Year 5 Overview
Year 6 Overview	Year 6 Overview	Year 6 Overview

We have a tab on our website dedicated to mapping out the curriculum so that families can see what is happening in each year group (with termly overviews) as well as progression documents for each subject area. The overviews are updated each term (as we are constantly refining what we do! It has been a huge piece of work and we are rightly proud of what we are doing.



## Forest School



### Activities in the Autumn Term 2023 have included:

<b>EYFS</b>	Autumn Sensory Walk, making leave pictures/leaf printing. Collecting acorns, conkers, pinecones to make creatures/autumn garland. Planting acorns to grow oak trees.
<b>Year 1</b>	Autumn site maintenance jobs (woodchip laying on paths) Exploring the autumn woodland Seasonal changes in the forest (Autumn spotting) Autumn collage / Nature weaving Harvesting from the school garden and the polytunnel
<b>Year 2</b>	Autumn jobs in the School Garden (harvesting, planting) Mark making using nature Investigating Micro and macro habitats in the forest (link to Science)
<b>Year 3</b>	Autumn maintenance work on the site (woodchips laying onto paths, opening old pathways) Making cave paintings with handmade dye (crushed berries, grass, leaves, charcoal etc.) on tree trunks Exploring the autumn woodland Investigating rocks, soil types and fossils
<b>Year 4</b>	Site mapping. Learning about states of matters
<b>Year 5</b>	Working with microscopes Team building activities Shelter making Mayan floating garden
<b>Year 6</b>	Team building /Problem-solving activities Investigating with microscopes





Design and Technology this term.

Since the summer we have been very busy indeed!

Year 6 have been designing and baking delicious bread to eat at a celebration. 6H have also made moving electric vehicles.



Year 2 have been learning about wheels and axles and have designed new vehicles for the emergency vehicles in Oxford.

Year 1 have designed clothes for a teddy to wear on a polar expedition and bridges for the Billy Goats Gruff!



Years 3 and 4 have harvested, tasted and cooked with fruit and vegetables from the school garden, including peppers, parsley, apples, tomatoes and even melons!

Year 5 have designed strong playground shelter structures, using construction skills and 3D computer drawings.



#### **Philosophy 4 Children (P4C)**

Philosophy for Children promotes a forum for open dialogue in which participants are encouraged to ask questions, sift arguments and explore alternatives. Above all, they try to understand each other.

During this term, Y5 used Socratic enquiry to explore the themes of **Identity and Belonging** as an introduction to P4C while observing the rules of being **Creative, Critical, Collaborative** and above all **Caring**. Year 6 have discussed the themes of Bravery and Remembrance during their enquiries to enhance the connections to their topics using Sapere's ten step process. Click on the link to see the benefits of P4C:

<https://www.sapere.org.uk/why-sapere-p4c/research-evidence/>



## **Public Speaking**

We are very proud to run a public speaking programme from Y1 to Year 6. If you click on the link, there is a pdf of what the programme looks like. We notice such a difference in pupil confidence and eloquence when speaking in assembly, in performance and at Mass. Miss Gowers teaches these lessons. Here is the link to the pdf, which is also on our website.

[Public-speaking-23-24.pdf](#)

## **Performance**

It is so important for children's confidence to be given opportunities to perform! This term has seen performances by our choir and our handbells at the Christmas Fair, School Rock performed to their parents and Reception and KS1 all had the opportunity to take part in our Christmas Nativity performances.



In addition to the performances by Reception and KS1 we also had musical performances by the handbells, the choir and iRock!



**iRock Performance Families**





**Choir Performance for Families**

### Staff Performance at the Sparkle Assembly



Our wonderfully creative staff performed 'The Gruffalo' and 'Feliz Navidad' in a Christmas Sparkle assembly extravaganza!

### Our Wonderful PTA!



On Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> November, the PTA organised a wonderful Christmas Fair! There were tombola, a raffle, craft tables, face painting, biscuit decorating, delicious goodies at the café and a special visitor in a beautifully decorated grotto! The event made **£2,085** profit which is a phenomenal amount. Thank you so much to all the PTA, parent and staff volunteers who made this event possible.



### **Lunch and Snack Reminders**

The Local Authority asks us to remind parents that depending on size, parents should halve or quarter cherry tomatoes, strawberries and grapes and raw carrots and cucumber must be cut into batons and not rounds.

Children who bring a packed lunch are encouraged to have healthy food including energy food (e.g. sandwiches or pasta), some body-building food (e.g. meat, fish, eggs or cheese), a portion of dairy food (e.g. cheese or yogurt) and some fresh fruit or vegetable. Please bring it in a named lunch box. Cans, glass bottles, fizzy drinks, chocolate and sweets are not permitted. **We are a 'nut free' school.** Snacks to eat at breaktime should be fruit or vegetable only.

We will be having a renewed focus on healthy lunch and snack choices in January...

### **Practical Help and Signposting**

Sadly, things at the moment are difficult for many of our families. Bills all seem to be rising, and everything is getting more expensive. We want to make sure that all our families have support in place if it is needed. Even if your child is not eligible for Free School Meals, we may be able to help with uniform from our vast stock of good-quality second-hand items, we are able to refer to local Food Banks and signpost families to other sources of help, advice and support.

If you are struggling, please contact our home/school link worker, Mrs Kate Stratford. Her contact details are below. Mrs Stratford will be happy to talk to you in confidence to see what support we can offer.

If you need help towards paying for school trips, please contact the office to arrange a confidential conversation with Ms Tweedie.

Mrs Kate Stratford

Home/School Link Worker and Deputy DSL

Tel: 01865 763357      Mobile: 07500 802732

Email: [kstr3838@st-josephs-pri.oxon.sch.uk](mailto:kstr3838@st-josephs-pri.oxon.sch.uk)

### **Dairy Dates**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Year Group/Class</b>	<b>Event</b>
Monday 8 <sup>th</sup> January	All year groups	All pupils return to school
Thursday 11 <sup>th</sup> January	Year 3	Story Museum visits
Thursday 18 <sup>th</sup> January	Year 3	Story Museum visits
Thursday 25 <sup>th</sup> January	Year 5	Visit to Oxford Synagogue
Thursday 1 <sup>st</sup> Feb – Friday 2 <sup>nd</sup> February	All year groups	Mighty River treat experience
Tuesday 6 <sup>th</sup> February	All year groups	Safer Internet Day
Thursday 8 <sup>th</sup> February	Year 1	Science Oxford trip
Monday 12 <sup>th</sup> February – Friday 16 <sup>th</sup> February	All year groups	Half Term break

## Flyers and Information

# CHRISTMAS TECH CAMP





3D FESTIVE DECORATIONS



VIRTUAL REALITY



ELF ENGINEERING



ROCKING ROBOTS




**SEE REVERSE FOR MORE ACTIVITIES**

**AGES 5-11 | ONLY £49 PER DAY**  
9AM - 4PM DAILY

Find your nearest location on our website:  
[www.nextthing.education](http://www.nextthing.education)

## CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS 2023

*What else is on?*



Festive Filming



Cosmic Crackers



Ingenius Inventions



Magical Minecraft



Light-Up Cards

Different activity theme each day, please check website for your camp activities

### WHAT TO BRING...



Packed Lunch and Snacks  
(NUT-FREE)



Water Bottle



Medication If Required



Weather Appropriate Clothing

### HOW TO BOOK

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

[www.nextthing.education](http://www.nextthing.education)

FIND YOUR LOCATION



GET £5 OFF! USE CODE  
AT CHECKOUT

CF5

 **The BEST camp around!**

My daughter is fully inspired and will not stop talking about the amazing time she had. The Staff were experienced, welcoming and encouraging."

- Happy Parent 😊



[www.nextthing.education](http://www.nextthing.education) E: [info@nextthing.education](mailto:info@nextthing.education)  
T: 01442873150



## SIGN UP THIS HOLIDAY

AGES: 8-16  
£30 PER DAY



## OXFORD QUINS RFC RUGBY CAMP: CHRISTMAS HALF TERM

TUESDAY 2<sup>ND</sup> JANUARY TO THURSDAY 4<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2024

We are excited to invite you to join us for our upcoming January rugby camp, designed specifically for aspiring rugby players between the ages of 8 and 16.

This immersive experience will take place over 3 exciting and action-packed days at Oxford Quins RFC. Participants will have the opportunity to develop their skills, learn from experienced coaches, and engage in a variety of drills and activities aimed at enhancing their rugby abilities. Whether you are a novice eager to learn the fundamentals of the game or more experienced, our camp promises to provide a supportive and dynamic environment for all participants to grow and excel in the sport of rugby.

Don't miss out on this fantastic opportunity to be a part of an exhilarating rugby experience at Oxford Quins RFC.




Any enquiries please contact  
[community@oxfordharlequins.org](mailto:community@oxfordharlequins.org)





**OXFORDQUINSRFC**  
Location: Horspath Sports Ground, Oxford Road,  
Horspath, Oxford, OX4 2RR

## WOULD YOUR CHILD LIKE TO JOIN THEIR OWN ROCK BAND?



Book now online  
Visit [www.irockschool.com/enrol](http://www.irockschool.com/enrol)

Dear Parent / Guardian,

Bookings are now open for your child to join their own rock and pop band at school! Enrolling is straightforward, and iRock offers a **first lesson money-back guarantee!**

Discover the benefits of band lessons: not only are they fun, but they also play a significant role in enhancing children's life skills. Lessons focus on boosting confidence, supporting well-being, developing social skills, and even improving academic performance.

### How it works:

- Children don't need music experience to join, and all of the instruments are provided by iRock.
- Your child can choose from drums, keyboard, electric guitar, or vocals (subject to availability). They'll play the same instrument every week and join their bandmates in 30-minute weekly lessons.
- Lessons are held during the school day and are led by one of our experienced band coaches, who will guide your child through every session. *Some sessions may take place straight after school.*
- Lessons are available from Reception to Year 6, with children grouped by age. Children can choose their band name and learn their favourite songs.
- Band sessions build towards a concert at the end of each term, providing a great way to showcase just how far they have come.
- Children in Years 2, 4, and 6 will be enrolled in a Group Performance qualification by RSL.
- Access the iRock parent portal to view your child's band memories, song choices, manage your subscription and much more!


You can subscribe to iRock through our monthly subscription plan, which spans 11 months with no payment required in August. We offer full flexibility, allowing parents to cancel their subscription at any time. By subscribing, you're guaranteed a minimum of 33 lessons throughout a full academic year.

For availability and cost please visit: [www.irockschool.com/enrol](http://www.irockschool.com/enrol) and search for your school. For any helps please call 0330 174 2655

Kind regards,

Joshua Franklin  
Founder  
**iRock School of Music**

**Proudly supporting**



The Cambodian Children's Charity

“ My daughter is so excited when it's iRock day at school! She loves playing in the band ”

**Google Review**

