Friday 12th December 2025

HEADLINES

St Mary's Catholic School



DATES FOR THE DIARY

Tuesday 16th December
Christmas Dinner and Christmas Jumper Day

Wednesday 17th December
Carol Service, 7pm, St Joseph's and the English Martyrs

Friday 19th December
End of term, 1pm

Monday 5th January 2026
INSET Day (pupils not in school)

Tuesday 6th January 2026
Spring Term begins

GO 4 Schools

Click here to access your child's academic achievement and progress data.

Dear St Mary's Community,

What a wonderful week we have had celebrating our faith and school community! On Monday 8th December, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, we were blessed to have Bishop Paul celebrate our whole School Mass. We held two separate Masses - one for Key Stage 3 students and another for Key Stage 4 and 5, with Fr Marco also joining us. I want to extend special commendation to our incredible Altar Servers, readers, Choir, and musicians who made these Masses exceptionally prayerful and reverent. This academic year marks a momentous milestone for us - our school's 130th anniversary. We pay tribute to the founding sisters of St Mary of Nemur and their wonderful legacy that has woven such a rich tapestry of our school community. Photographs capturing this special occasion can be found on the next page of our newsletter.

Yesterday, our Trust Advent Carol service at St Augustine's Hoddesdon was a vibrant celebration of music and prayer. It was truly heart-warming to see so many of our Trust primary children singing and praying so beautifully. We are immensely proud of our team of 45 talented musicians and choir members.

I have a few important notices for parents to note. Our whole school Christmas dinner will be served on **Tuesday 16th December** - ticket sales are now closed. If your child has not purchased a ticket, please ensure they bring a packed lunch, as no alternative food will be available. Over 775 students and staff will be celebrating together, with 30 of our wonderful Sixth Form students serving as Santa's elves for the day.

Tuesday 16th December is also **Christmas Jumper day**! Students should wear full school uniform with an optional Christmas jumper. We'll be awarding prizes per year group for the best Christmas Jumper, so get creative!



I warmly invite all families to our Advent Service on **Wednesday 17th December** at 7:00pm in our Parish. This is a beautiful and special service where we will pray together during this advent season. So please join us at St Joseph and the English Martyrs, Windhill, for the service, followed by refreshments in the Parish Centre.

I would also like to draw your attention to our FOSM Winter's Christmas Raffle. The raffle will be drawn in the evening, and we have some wonderful prizes. Further information can be found at the end of this newsletter. Additionally, we are offering families the opportunity to purchase a family candle that will be named, placed on the Altar, and lit during the Advent Service, keeping your family in our prayers this Christmas. These can be purchased via ParentPay (please click here).

Wishing you all a blessed and joyful Christmas season.

God Bless,
Miss Deirdre McHugh

Feast Day Mass























Feast Day Mass

At the beginning of Advent, and as we marked the Feast of the Immaculate Conception on Monday 8 December, we invited each student to donate £2 to Mary's Meals—a remarkable charity that provides life-changing school meals to children in some of the world's poorest communities. The promise of a nutritious daily meal encourages children to attend school, giving them the opportunity to learn and build a brighter future. Remarkably, just £19.15 is enough to feed a child for an entire school year.

We are delighted to announce that on Feast Day we raised **£1155** for Mary's Meals. This will feed **120 children** for a whole year.

Thank you so much for your generous contributions to this worthwhile charity.

THANK YOU!

mary's meals | a simple solution to world hunger

Anti-Bullying Week

Our school community came together to mark Anti-Bullying Week recently, a powerful reminder of the importance of kindness, respect, and standing up for one another.

Our Anti-Bullying Ambassadors, representing every year group, met together to prepare and deliver thoughtful and engaging assemblies to their peers. Their confidence and teamwork were truly amazing, and their message of compassion and courage was heard across the school.

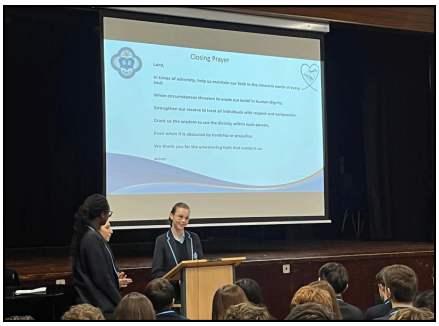
All the form groups have also completed the Anti-Bullying Pledge, committing themselves to promoting a safe and inclusive environment where every student is valued.

As a Catholic community, we are guided by the teachings of Christ, who calls us to treat one another with love. We are reminded of His words:

"Do to others as you would have them do to you." – Luke 6:31











LOST PROPERTY

There is a large amount of unlabelled and unnamed items in Lost Property. If your child has lost any items, please ask them to visit the Student Hub to check whether they have been handed in.

All lost property must be removed from the Student Hub by Friday 19th December.

Any items that are unnamed and left unclaimed will be disposed of at the end of term.

Mock Interview Day

I would like to express my sincere appreciation for the opportunity to be interviewed, giving us an insight to what the real world would be like. As a positive reflection I really enjoyed my conversation and found the interview quite engaging and eye-opening.

I particularly valued the pieces of advice I received as to how to carry myself for the future and to keep displaying the same confidence in the real world as I did in the interview.

The interview reinforced my enthusiasm of expressing myself in a situation where it is needed of me and strive for academic excellence. Therefore when the interviewer in the real world comes to check my CV, I can make an excellent first impression.

I left feeling even more motivated and excited to leave a great impression in the real world.

Franklin O-D, 11K



The mock interviews that my year took part in were very helpful for the future and gave me the preparation that perhaps I wouldn't have had. It gave me the chance to practice real interview skills which will definitely help me in the future when applying for jobs and knowing how to tackle the interviews so that I can present myself in the best way possible.

One piece of feedback I would give, is that it was very lively and some what distracting with the amount of people and conversations going on at the same time, this could have potentially made people loose the their train of thought. However over all I really enjoyed the experience and will definitely remember my feedback for future interviews.

Erin B, 11K

Last week I was given the opportunity to take part in a practice job interview. The environment was very realistic as I had to prepare my own CV as well as answer interview questions under pressure about my strengths, weaknesses and future goals. At first I found it challenging and I was nervous, but as the interview progressed, I benefitted from it as my confidence increased and I learnt the significance of professionalism, communication and preparation.

I found the interview very insightful for my future as it made me learn and understand the characteristics a person needs to be noticed by an employer. At the end I received feedback on what I did good and what still needs to be improved on giving me an opportunity to act on it before my next formal interview. Overall this practice interview makes me feel more prepared for my future life.

Ife I-I, 11T



I enjoyed the day, especially being able to wear business attire, as it helped me to feel more professional and grown up! It really uplifted the experience for me and caused much excitement amongst my friends.

As I walked to my interview, feeling quite nervous of course, I smiled as I saw a small group huddled around a CV in the corridor; evidently, they were taking the interview quite seriously. Most of my friends also heavily supported each other with their CVs and by practising questions. Some practice questions such as "how would your friends describe you?" instigated the sharing of affirmations and beautiful descriptions of others. I also practised questions with my friend on my walk to school, so that, by the time my interview came around, I felt more confident in myself and had a good bank of answers lined up in response to any question that would be thrown at me. However, I was surprised by how conversational and informal my interview turned out to be! It gave me a good experience of presenting myself in front of a professional individual in the working world.

Anna S, 11K

Inter-House Chess

This year's Inter-House Chess Competition, an exciting event that brought together pupils from Years 7–13 in a showcase of strategy, resilience, and sportsmanship. Pupils from each House competed in a knockout-style rapid chess tournament, demonstrating their chess abilities as well as their capacity to think critically under time pressure. The rapid format—where players must make quick and accurate decisions—created an atmosphere of energy and anticipation in every match.

Across the rounds, students impressed staff and fellow pupils with their concentration, creativity, and tactical awareness. Younger students confidently challenged older opponents, and it was encouraging to see senior pupils mentor and support their teammates between games.

Congratulations to all students who took part, and especially to the finalists whose skills and determination saw them through to the closing rounds. The competition has once again demonstrated the enthusiasm for chess within our school, and we look forward to building-on this momentum in future Inter-House events.







Notices







DECEMBER 2025

JOIN OUR ADVENT RAFFLE AND WIN AMAZING PRIZES!

Dear Parents

We are thrilled to announce our festive Advent Raffle, designed to bring some extra holiday cheer while raising funds for FOSM. We have secured a fantastic selection of prizes, and we would love for you to get involved by purchasing your raffle tickets to be in the draw.

Prizes Up for Grabs – to name but a few...

- **A bass guitar from Seventhreeone**
- **A paint supplies hamper from Seventhreeone**
- **Two day passes and two week passes for Nuffield Health**
- **A six week membership to AbFabFit Club (ladies only gym)**
- **£30 voucher for Pircio**
- **£25 voucher for The Dog's Head**
- **Festive hampers from Kaybel Catering**
- **Four competition match tickets for Bishop's Stortford Football Club**
- **Two £20 vouchers for Sabrosa del Fuego**
- **£25 voucher for Yeomans**
- **Carpet clean worth £80 by G J Cleaning**
- **Canvas Club voucher for 1**



How to Purchase Tickets
Raffle tickets are available NOW via ParentPay. Tickets are priced at **£1 per ticket, 10 tickets for £5 or 20 tickets for £10**. Simply log into your ParentPay account and select the "Advent Raffle" option to purchase.

Add a special touch to this year's Carol service by sponsoring a **customised candle**. Each candle will bear your family name and be placed on the altar during the service. **The cost is just £5 per candle.**

Ticket sales close: Monday 15th December 2025.

All funds raised from our annual FOSM Festive Raffle will go directly towards enriching our children's school experience. By taking part, you're not just buying a ticket– you're helping to create opportunities, support our pupils and strengthen the heart of our school. We truly hope you'll join us in making this special yearly tradition a wonderful success.

Your kindness and support mean more than you know... and who knows, you might even be the lucky winner of one of our fabulous prizes!

The Friends of St Mary's