

St Patrick's Catholic Voluntary Academy in the Advent term 2024

What a great start to a new academic year here at St Patrick's Catholic Voluntary Academy.

PE lessons, Wake and Shake and after-school sports have always been a popular activity at our school. We wished Nathan all the best at the end of last term as he moved on to other exciting opportunities and this term, we welcomed our new Sports Coach Mr Ali who works alongside Mr Glaze. These sessions have continued to be a favourite part of the day for many of our pupils. This year, our sports team now choose a child from every class to be 'Star of the Week' for PE; this is awarded along with our usual 'Stars of the Week' at our Friday celebratory assembly.

We continue to offer our Family Learning Sessions for parents and carers and our Reading Café where adults can come to read alongside their children; our parent maths sessions have also returned where parents and carers are invited in to their child's classroom to take part in a maths lesson. It is always wonderful to be able to see not just our pupils in school, but also their families.

This term, Mrs Birtwisle has begun a Friday lunchtime library club where many of our year groups are welcome to choose a book and settle down for extra reading time. This has proved to be so popular that we now have a rota system in place. Our Year 6 librarians are supporting Mrs Birtwisle in organising this weekly opportunity.

As always, we enjoyed finding out more about other faiths. As well as inviting our pupils to dress in traditional clothing or bright colours to celebrate Diwali, Years 1 to 6 were able to visit a local temple and learn more about the Hindu religion. This visit was so informative and both pupils and staff found it to be a thoroughly enjoyable morning. Within school, a number of our Teaching Assistants: Miss Bindu, Miss Rimple and Mr Patel planned a number of workshops and we invited pupils from another of our Trust schools to visit us to learn more about Diwali and join in our activities.



We again celebrated Black History month with every class focusing on a different person who had achieved amazing things and even made a difference to our lives today. Year 4 learnt all about the first African-American woman to travel into space: Mae C. Jemison.



Fundraising to support and remember soldiers and their families is a yearly tradition here at St Patrick's. The children bought badges and wristbands, zip pulls and poppies throughout early November until taking part in a two-minute silence to mark Remembrance Day and to honour armed forces members who have died in the line of duty since the end of the First World War.

Father David led our fortnightly masses with his usual child-friendly approach making everyone present feel welcome and included. It was lovely to also meet Father Paul who has joined the parish of St Patrick's.

As we moved through the season of Advent, we had some wonderful lessons and activities to mark this special time in the liturgical calendar and to help us to celebrate Christmas. Our Year 6 children auditioned for a place in our Menphys Choir; 17 of them represented us at De Montfort Hall under the watchful eye of Miss Stanley who again did an amazing job of preparing them for this prestigious occasion. Year 5 pupils again took part in the recording of the Musical Advent Calendar; our Sunshine Room, Nursery and Reception classes performed a fantastic nativity play



and our Year 1 and 2 children performed an equally impressive nativity of their own. Years 3 and 4 told us the Christmas story through a beautifully prepared carol concert.

To truly immerse themselves into the season of giving, Year 6 learnt about the work of The British Red Cross. They then held a non-uniform day to raise money so they could create 'bags of kindness'. These bags, filled with homemade cards, handwritten letters, a Christmas decoration and a chocolate treat, were delivered to a local care home on the final Thursday of the term. As well as handing over the bags, Year 6 entertained both the residents and the staff by playing Christmas songs on their recorders. The children were delighted to be able to visit and meet the residents and they are hoping to return later in the school year.



On the final school day of this term, we gathered in the hall where Mrs Lynch led our final 'Star of the Week' assembly and celebration of the word for not just this term but for 2024. After birthdays were announced and certificates were given out, we congratulated all of the children who had achieved full attendance this term and we then listened to Year 6 pupils as they played a number of Christmas songs which they had been learning to play on the recorder. We then took part in a whole school Christmas sing-along.

Our last day of the Advent Term of course ended with a gathering for our Christingle service. Led by our school chaplain, Miss Kearns and our dedicated Year 6 chaplaincy team, we remembered the true meaning of Christmas. As always, this candle-lit event was an appropriate way to end our term and to wish our school family - governors, teachers, support staff, office manager, lunch time team, cleaning staff, premises officer, children and parents - a happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.