St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Newsletter

'We Work, We Care, We Pray, We Share'

Web: www.st-josephs-withnell.lancs.sch.uk

11th September 2026

"Let all that you do be done in love." – 1 Corinthians 16:14

A very warm welcome back to all our children and families! We hope you had a wonderful summer and enjoyed some special time together. It has been lovely to welcome everyone back into school and see our classrooms filled once again with happy faces, enthusiasm and excitement for the year ahead. We also extend a particularly warm welcome to our new children and families joining the St Joseph's family – we are delighted to have you with us.

As we begin this new school year, St Paul's words remind us to put love at the heart of everything we do. Through our learning, friendships, prayer and service to others, we will continue to live out our mission:

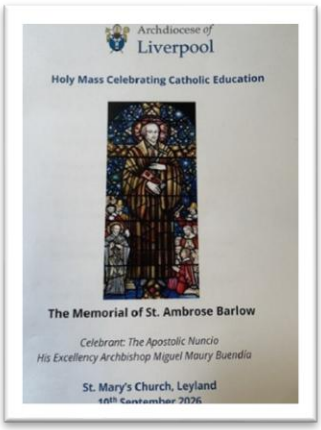
St Joseph's family,
Learn together,
With love and faith in Jesus,
To become the people
God calls us to be.

We are looking forward to another wonderful year of learning, faith, friendship and flourishing together.

Year 5 Education Mass – Thursday 10th September

On Thursday, our Year 5 children had the privilege of representing St Joseph's at a special Education Mass at St Mary's Church, Leyland, as part of the Apostolic Visitation of His Excellency Archbishop Miguel Maury Buendía, Apostolic Nuncio to Great Britain, to the Archdiocese of Liverpool. It was a lovely and very special Mass, bringing together schools from across Lancashire to celebrate the strength, joy and shared mission of Catholic education.

Our Year 5 children represented St Joseph's beautifully and were an absolute credit to our school. We were incredibly proud of their reverence, respect and enthusiasm throughout the celebration. A wonderful opportunity to come together in faith and to remember that we are part of a much wider Catholic family.





SAFEGUARDING UPDATE: MOBILE PHONES, INC SMART WATCHES



National safeguarding guidance has changed significantly. The Department for Education's Mobile Phones in Schools guidance became statutory on 29 June 2026, with schools expected to begin implementing it from 1 September 2026. The guidance states:

"All schools should be mobile phone-free environments by default (including smart watches); anything other than this should be by exception only."

This is straightforward for us at St Chad's, where mobile phones have never been permitted. However, we recognise that phones may be needed in certain circumstances, such as when a child is moving between households or walking home independently. In these cases, phones should be handed in at the school office on arrival and will be returned to the child at the end of the school day. We strongly encourage children to enjoy a phone-free childhood, whilst recognising that there are occasions when a mobile phone may be necessary. National safeguarding guidance also requires schools to treat smart watches in the same way as mobile phones. Last year, some smart watches worn in school were capable of taking photographs, recording audio and accessing the internet, which is neither appropriate nor necessary during the school day. It is difficult and time-consuming for staff to verify the functions available on different models of watch, so our policy must be clear and consistent. **Children should therefore only wear watches that tell the time.** All classrooms have clocks, and children are supported to be in the right place at the right time throughout the day, so watches are not essential in school. Thank you for your support in helping us maintain a safe and secure environment for all children.

Family Mass – Sunday 13th September at 9:30am - St Joseph's Catholic Church

Everyone is very welcome – whether you attend Mass regularly or haven't been for a while. It would be wonderful to see lots of our St Joseph's families coming together to celebrate as one community. 💚

There will also be colouring activities available at the back of church for the children during Mass.





CODING DAY LUNCH

We will be offering a "Coding Day" themed lunch on **Tuesday 22nd September**.
The menu will be:

Glitching Chicken Goujons with Data Stream Dips, Micro-Chip Fries, Server Sweetcorn & Processor Peas or
Pizza Pocket Programmes, Micro-Chip Fries, Server Sweetcorn & Processor Peas (v)
or
Binary Baked Jacket Potato with a choice of filling
Followed by
Waffle Grid & Cache Chocolate Sauce or Java Jelly pots with Ctrl+Alt+Del-icious Fruit Wedges

SPACE DAY LUNCH



We will be offering a "Space Day" themed lunch on **Thursday 1st October.**
The menu will be:

Meteor Meatball Marinara & Solar Spaghetti with Galactic Garlic Bread
Or
Cosmic Cheese & Onion Roll with Planet Potato Wedges & Lunar Peas (v)
Or
Jupiter Jacket Potato with choice of filling

Followed by Sonic Boom Rocket Ice Lolly or Super Moon Cookies with Frontier Fruit Wedges
This menu will be available to the whole school. If your child does not normally have a school lunch on this day but wishes to take part, please ask for your child to be added to the list by emailing Mrs Bryce bursar@st-josephs-withnell.lancs.sch.uk. Children who normally have a school lunch on this day do not need to reply. Payment for this lunch should be made via the Pupil School Meal payment item on Scopay for children who are in KS2 (unless entitled to Free School Meals).





Follow Us on Social Media!

Don't forget to take a look at our **Facebook** and **Instagram** pages to see what has been happening in school. We regularly share photographs, celebrate our pupils' achievements, highlight special events, and keep you up to date with the exciting learning taking place across the school.

Be sure to follow us so you don't miss any of the wonderful moments from school life!

https://www.facebook.com/StJosephsWithnell?locale=en_GB

https://www.instagram.com/stjosephswithnell/

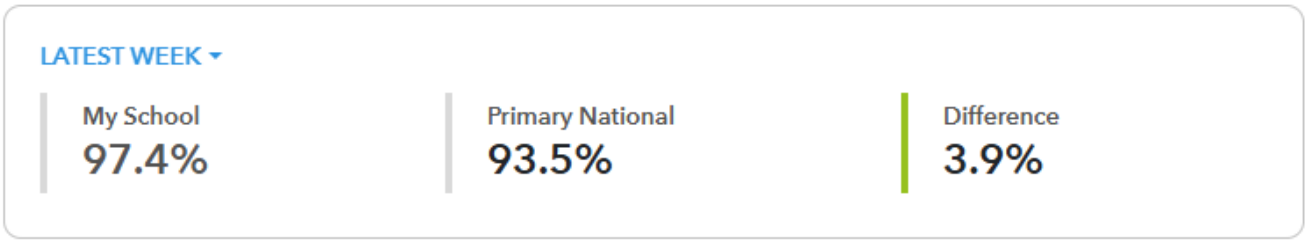
🎃🌾It's Nearly Scarecrow Time!🌾🎃

It's nearly time to get creative and get your scarecrows ready for our Annual St. Joseph's Scarecrow Festival! 🤩

🎉 The Scarecrow Festival - Saturday 26th September🌾



Attendance Matters



Thank you for your continued support in ensuring your children attend school regularly and on time. Last week, our attendance was 97.4%, which is slightly above the national average.

Regular attendance is essential for children to achieve their full potential. Every school day provides valuable learning opportunities, and even a few days of absence can have an impact on a child's progress, confidence and friendships.

Attendance is also a key area that schools are judged on by Ofsted. It is assessed as a separate area of school performance, with inspectors carefully considering attendance figures, persistent absence and the actions schools take to ensure pupils attend regularly.

We understand that family holidays are important, but we ask all parents and carers to support us by booking holidays during the school holidays wherever possible. By working together, we can improve our attendance figures and ensure that every child has the best opportunity to succeed.

Thank you for your continued support in making attendance a priority.



Free School Meals – Eligibility has Changed

The Department for Education has confirmed significant changes to Free School Meal (FSM) eligibility which came into effect from September 2026.

Please note that these "Benefit related Free School Meals" is separate to the free meals which children currently receive in the infants under the Universal Free School Meals scheme".

What has changed?

Eligibility has broadened significantly, meaning more families will qualify, even if they have not previously been eligible. There are now 2 different types of Benefits related Free School Meals; Targeted and Expanded

• Expanded Free School meals - All pupils in households receiving Universal Credit will be entitled to free school meals, regardless of household income.

• Targeted Free School meals – available for pupils in households receiving Universal Credit with an annual net earned income of £7,400 or less, or other certain benefits. Unlike the newly introduced Expanded FSM ,**Targeted FSM** unlocks broader disadvantage support such as Pupil Premium Funding for schools to support their learning and grants access to free holiday clubs and meals during school holidays under the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) program.

• End of transitional protections Transitional protections, which have ensured continued entitlement for some pupils since 2018, ended at the close of the 2025/26 academic year.

If you think your child may now be eligible, or if your circumstances have changed, we encourage you to check as soon as possible using the Free School Meals Eligibility Checker:

https://fsm.lgfl.net/

Reception Starters 2027 – Please spread the word!





Macmillan Coffee Morning – Friday 25th September

We would love you to join us for our Macmillan Coffee Morning on Friday 25th September from 9:15am in school.

Come along after morning drop-off and enjoy a cuppa, a slice of cake and a chat, while helping us raise money for the wonderful work of Macmillan Cancer Support.

🍰 Cake donations would be very gratefully received! Whether homemade or shop-bought, every contribution will help us make our coffee morning a success.

Parents, grandparents, family members and friends are all welcome, so please spread the word and come along if you can.

💚 Coffee + Cake + Community = making a difference toget

