

ST MATTHEW'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

CHRISTMAS NEWSLETTER



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A message from the Headteacher

This term has been an eventful and exciting one at St Matthew's! We've had two television appearances: **BBC Look East** featured us on Remembrance Day, and **ITV Anglia News** showcased our choir's involvement in the Lord Lieutenant's Christmas Carol Service at St. Mary's Parish Church.

We marked **BBC Children In Need Day** with our traditional Fun Run and a non-uniform fundraiser, raising both money and spirits.

Year 4 embraced their creativity during their **Egyptian Day**, with fabulous costumes adding to the excitement.

On the sporting front, our pupils participated in **Football** and **Basketball** Leagues as well as the **Sportability** event, showcasing both teamwork and talent. The choir brought festive cheer as they sang at the **High Town Christmas Lights Switch-On**, a highlight of the season.

Our Reception classes explored the world of art by studying **Wassily Kandinsky** and hosted parents at their very own Kandinsky Gallery – a proud moment for all involved.

We ended the term on a festive note with traditional events, including **Christmas Dinner**, **Christmas Jumper Day**, and our high-energy and much-loved **Festive Singing Assemblies**.

We wish all parents, children, and friends of the school a truly restful and relaxing holiday filled with special moments shared with family and friends. If you celebrate Christmas, may this be a time to unwind, recharge, and create cherished memories together. Enjoy the break everyone, and we look forward to seeing you all refreshed and ready for another exciting term ahead in 2025!

Dane Thomas



YEAR GROUP



Once again, our year group team leaders have picked out a highlight of the past term's activities which they hope will live long in the memories of the children in their classes.

Year 1

Our recent art lessons explored the captivating work of Edward Blitner, a renowned Aboriginal artist celebrated for his intricate style. The children studied Blitner's use of traditional "cross-hatching" techniques and vibrant depictions of Australia's landscapes, flora, and fauna. Inspired by his art, they created their own pieces using patterns, earthy tones, and symbolic imagery, reflecting the beauty of nature and indigenous storytelling. This creative journey not only celebrated Blitner's cultural heritage but also helped the children connect with the expressive power of art.

Year R

The Reception classes proudly showcased their creative talents in a special Kandinsky Art Gallery, inviting parents to explore the world of Wassily Kandinsky, the renowned abstract artist. Inspired by his use of lines, shapes, colors, and feelings, the children experimented with circles and vibrant compositions to express their own feelings and ideas. The gallery displayed a stunning collection of their paintings, each reflecting Kandinsky's influence and the children's unique interpretations.

Year 2

In their recent Design and Technology lessons, our Year 2 classes explored the exciting world of moving pictures. They used a range of materials to design and create purposeful and appealing products. The children carefully selected tools and equipment to perform practical tasks, developing their creativity and problem-solving skills. Inspired by specific design criteria, they engineered functional moving elements, such as levers and sliders, to bring their pictures to life.

Visit www.stmatthewsluton.com for

HEADLINES



Year 3

A highlight of Year 3's term was undoubtedly the Winter Craft Afternoon. More than fifty parents joined us across the five classes, creating a lovely and friendly atmosphere. The event was filled with festive cheer and creative energy, as families worked together on various crafts, making it a special occasion to remember. It was the perfect way to get everyone into the holiday spirit and celebrate the lead-up to the Christmas break. Thank you to all who participated and made it such a memorable event!

Year 4

Luxor came to Luton recently as our Year 4 classes enjoyed an exciting Egyptian Day, immersing themselves in the history and culture of Ancient Egypt. The day was filled with engaging activities, fabulous costumes, and hands-on learning that brought the past to life. Meanwhile, Badger and Elm classes are nearing the end of their swimming lessons. It has been wonderful to see the progress made by all pupils as they developed their skills and confidence in the water. Well done to everyone for their hard work and dedication! Next up - Bluebell and Goldfinch!

Year 5

Kingfisher, Maple, Otter and Snapdragon have been channeling their creativity by designing and carving their own Viking knot patterns into lino. These intricate designs will be printed onto fabric, showcasing the children's artistic skills and their exploration of Viking art. The process has been both challenging and rewarding, as pupils learned about the significance of knot designs in Viking culture while developing their printmaking techniques. The finished products promise to be impressive pieces of art with a touch of historical flair!

Year 6

Our eldest pupils have been honing their artistic skills through pencil sketching, focusing on the intricate details of human eyes. Inspired by *Darwin's Dragons* by Lindsay Galvin, they extended their creativity to design imaginative dragon eyes. Using clay moulding techniques, pupils brought their designs to life, crafting 3D dragon eyes that highlight their artistic growth and attention to detail. This cross-curricular project combined literature and art, allowing the children to explore their creativity while producing truly striking pieces.

[more information and photo galleries](#)

HELLOS & GOODBYES

This term, we have been delighted to welcome several new members to our school community.

Mrs Helen Christie joined our front office team; **Mrs Shabnam Ali** and **Miss Afifah Alli** joined Year 1 and 2 respectively in the role of Teaching Assistant; **Mrs Ayesha Sumair**, **Mrs Fathima Makeen** and **Miss Saima Safei** have joined our SEND Teaching Assistant team, and **Miss Madalina Hont** has boosted our premises team.

At the same time, we bid farewell to staff members who are moving on to new opportunities. **Mrs Emily Millett** leaves us to join a middle school in Leighton Buzzard and **Miss Reema Begum** is relocating to London. Their dedication and contribution has been greatly valued, and they will be missed by pupils and colleagues alike. We wish them the very best for the future.

BENEFITS-RELATED FREE SCHOOL MEALS ARE YOU ELIGIBLE?

We can help you to find out if you qualify for **Benefits-Related Free School Meals**.

All you need to do is provide us with the following information:

- **Child's name**
- **Child's date of birth**
- **Parent's full legal name**
- **Parent's date of birth**
- **Parent's National Insurance number**

With this information, it takes just a few seconds for us to search the Government database to find out if you qualify.

Even if your child is in Year R, 1 and 2 and you automatically get Universal Infant Free School Meals, you can still generate income for the school under the Government's Pupil Premium funding.

THANK YOU!

A huge thank you to all our pupils, parents, and staff for your incredible fundraising efforts this term. Your generosity has helped us raise money for school activities as well as being able to support several important causes, making a real difference in our community and beyond. From non-uniform days and merchandise sales, every contribution has been greatly appreciated. Together, we've shown the power of kindness and teamwork. Thank you for your continued support, and we look forward to more successful initiatives in the future!



NON-UNIFORM DAY

Friday 25th October

£850

for playground games

NON-UNIFORM DAY

Friday 15th November

£335

for Children In Need

ASDA CASHPOTS

2nd September -
30th November

£345

for school activities

MERCHANDISE SALE

4 - 11 November

£1,175

for The Royal British
Legion Poppy Appeal



MILO MASTERCLASS

We're thrilled to share that Milo, our beloved School Dog, has now been part of our school family for over a year! Over this time, Milo has worked hard to get used to the school environment and meet and greet all of the classes in school. We're excited to continue Milo's work across the school and expand his role in our school community.

This half term, we've launched a new initiative – **Milo Monitors!**

Four of our fantastic Year 6 pupils, **James, Lena, Sinead, and Kie**, have been selected to take on the special role of supporting Milo and helping pupils connect with him in new ways.

One of the first exciting projects the Milo Monitors are working on is **Milo Mail!** Starting next half term, children will have the opportunity to write messages or draw pictures for Milo, and one of the Milo Monitors will respond. It's a wonderful way for children to interact with our furry friend and to share their thoughts, creativity, and even ask Milo some questions.

And that's just the start! The Milo Monitors have many more fun and heartwarming ideas lined up for next term. Keep an eye out for more updates – there's so much to look forward to!



ATTENDANCE

Good attendance is key to every child's success, and we'd like to say a big well done to all those families who ensure their children are at school on time, every day—unless there's a very good reason. As a school, our attendance figures are improving steadily, showing the fantastic effort of our community. Let's keep this momentum going! For more information about the importance of attendance, including details on the new fining system, please visit the attendance information page on our website. Thank you for your continuing support!

Every day you turn up,
you're investing in your future!

PUNCTUALITY

Well done to all families who ensure their children arrive at school on time each day! Punctuality is so important—not only for a child's learning but for their overall routine. Arriving late disrupts the class and means your child may miss crucial parts of their day, including the register, choosing lunch, and the start of lessons. This can leave them feeling unsettled or confused. Developing good habits like punctuality sets children up for life,



helping them be on time for appointments, buses, or social plans in the future. Let's keep working together! Thank you to our Year 6 monitors who help with ordering the latecomers lunches. and escorting younger pupils safely to their classrooms.



Learning Outside



YEAR 6 recently visited the **Natural History Museum in Tring**, where they explored the galleries of hundreds of preserved animals, gaining an up-close view of how creatures are adapted to their environments.

The experience gave them a better appreciation of the sizes and features of various animals, from a massive giant whale suspended above their heads to the tiniest creatures, like insects. Everyone was surprised and amused to see a collection of fleas dressed as Mexicans!

Back in class, this trip inspired their artwork, as they drew human and animal eyes before designing and sculpting their own imaginative dragon eyes using clay. It was an engaging and inspiring visit!



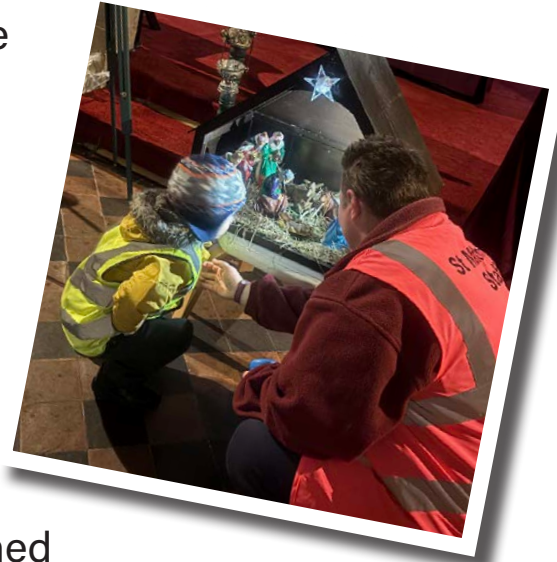
le the Classroom



St. Matthew's Church provided a memorable setting for our **YEAR R** children to experience the Nativity story.

Surrounded by the soft glow of candlelight and the aroma of frankincense, the church atmosphere brought the story to life.

The children identified key figures in the Nativity scene and retold the story, deepening their understanding of this cherished Christmas tradition.



Sometimes, learning takes us beyond the classroom for pure enjoyment and entertainment.

Recently, **YEAR 5** had the chance to visit **Stopsley High School** to watch their festive Christmas performance. The production showcased a wide range of performing arts, including dance, drama, music, and singing, highlighting the incredible talents of the SHS students. Among the cast, some familiar faces of former St. Matthew's pupils were proudly spotted.

The visit provided an exciting opportunity to appreciate the creativity and hard work of the performers while getting into the Christmas spirit!

Christmas Giveaway

As the cost of living continues to challenge many families, we were incredibly grateful for the generosity of our friends at **Aldwickbury School** in Harpenden and the volunteers at the **Luton Hygiene Bank**.

Their thoughtful donations of games, toys, art and craft kits, books, clothes, and hygiene products helped us support **more than 250 children from more than 100 families**. Parents visited the school to

choose presents for their children, while the children enjoyed festive activities in our Common Room. A big thank you to everyone involved in spreading joy and kindness during this season!



"HUGE THANKS TO THE STAFF MEMBERS WHO GAVE UP THEIR SATURDAY TO WELCOME US THROUGH THE DAY."

"THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO DONATED."

"THANK YOU TO YOUR FAMILY WORKER FOR CONSIDERING OUR FAMILY."

"A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL THE GOOD WORKS YOU DO."

"THIS IS GREATLY APPRECIATED BY THE PEOPLE THAT ARE STRUGGLING WITH THE COST OF LIVING."

"WE CANNOT BEGIN TO EXPRESS OUR SINCERE GRATITUDE FOR THE GIFTS YOU HAVE GIVEN MY SON."

SING-ULAR SENSATIONS

Choir in High Demand

Our choir is fast becoming the go-to choice for musical entertainment at events across Luton. Following their celebrated royal performance for King Charles III during his first official engagement as monarch in 2022, the choir was once again in the spotlight. The King's representative, the Lord Lieutenant of Bedfordshire, invited them to perform at the Community Christmas Carol Service at St Mary's Parish Church. This special event, part of a national initiative inspired by The Princess of Wales's Together at Christmas service at Westminster Abbey, showcased their exceptional talent and growing reputation.



A week earlier, the choir performed beautifully at the High Town Christmas Lights Switch-On in Burr Street Square. Under the soft glow of the Christmas tree's festive lights, they entertained the local community with a repertoire of cheerful carols and seasonal songs. Their rousing performance brought warmth and joy to the

event, marking the start of the Christmas season and creating a magical atmosphere for everyone celebrating together.



The choir's final performance of the season took place at London Luton Airport, where they brought festive cheer to travellers. Performing both for passengers using the Luton DART rail link and jet-setters heading off to foreign destinations for an early Christmas break, the choir's joyful repertoire created a warm and uplifting atmosphere. Their beautiful voices and festive tunes provided a special seasonal send-off, ensuring travellers started their journeys with smiles and holiday spirit.



MAKING THE HEADLINES

We were overwhelmed to have been featured as the main item in both of the **BBC Look East** news programmes on Remembrance Day, Monday 11th November, as well as taking part in an interview with Andy Collins during the **BBC Three Counties Radio Breakfast Show**. BBC reporter, **Mousumi Bakshi**, visited to see our outdoor assemblies, led by pupils, and to find out about our own representation of Flanders Fields - the plastic bottle poppy garden created by pupils from Year 6. The lunchtime Look East bulletin led with Remembrance commemorations around the region, with St Matthew's being the main focus of the report. Later in the day, an extended version of the report was included in the evening news programme which included contributions from pupils on their reflections around what Remembrance means to them today.



Our poppy garden remained in place for about three weeks after Remembrance Day; sadly, it looked a little windswept after **Storm Bert** had passed through the region. We thought it was appropriate to remove all of the poppies and the Remembrance roundels just before the school was transformed with tinsel and glitter at the beginning of December.

The poppies have now been placed into small vases and relocated around the school as a reminder, partly of our inclusion in the local news programmes, but mainly as a constant reminder that Remembrance should be all year round and not just on one day of the year.



If you missed the BBC news bulletins, they are still available to watch on our school website here:

<https://smps.info/poppies>



ESSENTIAL PARKING RULES

No Parking in Restricted Zones: Avoid parking in areas marked with zig-zag lines or “No Parking” signs.

Respect Driveways: Do not block residents’ driveways or access points.

Use Designated Parking Areas: Park only in approved parking spots or nearby designated zones.

No Pavement Parking: Keep pavements clear for pedestrians and pushchairs.

Be Respectful: Avoid aggressive behaviour or conflicts with neighbours and other drivers.

Promote Safety: Ensure your parking choices do not endanger pedestrians, especially children.

Consider Active Travel: Walk, cycle, or scoot to school to reduce congestion.

These rules help maintain safety and goodwill in the school community.

UPDATE: Contacting our SENDCo

Parents who wish to speak to the school's SENDCo, Mr. Harper, should contact the school office.

Our receptionists will take some basic details about the nature of the enquiry and pass on the request to Mr Harper.

Based on this information, Mr. Harper will return the call at an appropriate time, prioritising urgent concerns.

This updated process aims to ensure efficient communication and support for SEND-related matters.

Thank you for your understanding.

Disability Living Allowance Applications

We are happy to assist parents by providing the necessary information for Disability Living Allowance (DLA) applications.

However, we kindly ask for a minimum of five working days to process and prepare this information.

This allows us to ensure accuracy and provide comprehensive support.

Looking to save on school uniform costs? Our pre-loved uniform service offers a fantastic selection of good-quality items completely free of charge. It's a great way to recycle, reduce waste, and support other families in our school community.

If you have uniform your child has outgrown, we gladly accept donations to keep the service running. Visit the school office or check our website for details. Let's work together to make uniform shopping more sustainable!



SUPPORTING OTHER SCHOOLS

At St. Matthew's, collaboration and support are key values in all areas of learning and development. While our children and teachers work together to share best practices, we also extend this ethos to other schools.

Recently, our deputy headteacher, Mrs. Rayner, has been assisting a nearby infant school as they prepare for an anticipated Ofsted inspection. Her expertise in Early Years education, phonics teaching, and leadership support has been instrumental.

We're proud that Mrs. Rayner's work reflects positively on St. Matthew's, showcasing our ability to uplift and collaborate with others.

Dates for your Diary

December 20th	Last day of term
January 6th	Staff Training Day
January 7th	School re-opens - Spring Term 1
January 10th	Kingfisher Class Assembly
January 17th	Maple Class Assembly
January 24th	Cherry Class Assembly
January 28th/29th	Year 1 visit to Wardown Museum
January 31st	Wren Class Assembly
February 3rd/4th	Year 1 Toy Making Workshops
February 6th	Rabbit Class Assembly <i>(Please note that this is a Thursday, not a Friday)</i>
February 11th	Choir at Young Voices, Wembley
February 12th/13th	Parent Consultation Evenings
February 14th	Non-Uniform Day
February 14th	Snowdrop Class Assembly
February 14th	Spring Term 1 ends
February 17th-21st	School closed - Half Term break

Happy
Holidays

