

Faith in Action

St Teresa of Calcutta Multi Academy Company Newsletter



Winter 2025



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Welcome to Faith in Action - Winter Edition

As we approach the joyful season of Christmas, we want to take a moment to thank every member of our St Teresa of Calcutta MAC family for your dedication, support, and commitment throughout this year. It has truly been a time of growth and blessings for our community.

We are delighted to extend a heartfelt welcome to six new schools joining our MAC family : St Ambrose Barlow, St Teresa, St Vincent, St Francis, St Clare, and St Augustine.

Your presence enriches our mission, and we look forward to working together in faith, learning, and service.

This year has been marked by collaboration and progress, and we are excited about the opportunities ahead as we continue to grow together. Thank you to everyone—directors, governors, staff, students, families, and parish communities—for the incredible work you do every day to make our MAC a place of love, learning, and faith.

As we prepare to celebrate the birth of Christ, may this season bring peace, joy, and hope to you and your loved ones. We look forward to all that 2026 will bring as we journey forward united in our shared mission. Wishing you a blessed Christmas and a happy New Year!

With warmest regards,

Professor Paul Ryan



Welcoming our new schools to the STOC MAC Family



We are delighted to introduce the six wonderful Catholic primary schools that became part of the STOC Multi Academy Company in September. Each school brings its own unique strengths, deep-rooted values, and vibrant communities. We are delighted to welcome them into our growing family and supporting their continued journey of faith, learning and excellence.

St Clare's Catholic Primary School

Located in Handsworth Wood, St Clare's is a welcoming and inclusive school. With a strong ethos of care and respect, it supports every child's spiritual, moral and academic development.

St Teresa's Catholic Primary School

Nestled in Handsworth Wood, St Teresa's is a nurturing school where children are encouraged to grow in faith and knowledge. With a strong sense of community and a rich curriculum, it's a place where every child is supported to flourish.

St Vincent's Catholic Primary School

Located in Vauxhall Grove, St Vincent's is a caring and inclusive school rooted in gospel values. It offers a welcoming environment where every child is celebrated as a unique individual and encouraged to achieve their full potential.

St Ambrose Barlow Catholic Primary School

In Hall Green, St Ambrose Barlow is a close-knit school where faith, love and learning come together. The school provides a safe and happy space where children are nurtured to reach their full potential.

St Augustine's Catholic Primary School

With over 100 years of history, St Augustine's in Handsworth is a joyful and diverse school community. It fosters a love of learning and encourages every child to "be the best you can be" in a supportive and faith-filled environment.

St Francis Catholic Primary School

Serving the Handsworth community since 1962, St Francis is a vibrant, multicultural school that promotes learning through love and truth. It is a place where children are inspired to grow academically, spiritually and morally.

Celebrating 50 Years of Faith, Community, and Learning at Holy Trinity

This September, we celebrated a truly special milestone—Holy Trinity School’s 50th birthday. As one of STOC MAC’s foundation schools we were proud to be part of a day that was filled with joy, memories, and a deep sense of togetherness. Students, staff, families, and friends all came together to mark half a century of the school’s incredible story.

The celebrations began with a beautiful Mass led by Archbishop Bernard Longley. The school choir sang with such grace, student readers spoke confidently, and the flagbearers carried flags representing the many nations that make up the Holy Trinity family. It was a moving reminder of the diversity and unity we treasure so much within our Foundation Schools network.

Every student received a special gift bag, including a commemorative Holy Trinity badge designed by one of their pupils—a thoughtful keepsake that will be cherished for years to come. Another highlight was the time capsule project which involved the students creating artwork and writing about their experiences. These contributions will be sealed away, ready to be discovered by future generations—a powerful symbol of continuity and hope.

In the evening, we welcomed back former pupils, staff, and friends for a special Mass led by Father Peter Conley. The sense of community was incredible, with so many returning to celebrate the school that shaped their lives. After Mass, the sports hall became an exhibition of Holy Trinity through the decades. Photos and a Memory Book, filled with heartfelt contributions, reminded us how far we’ve come as part of STOC MAC and the wider Foundation Schools family.

The day ended with a spectacular fireworks display—a magical finale to a celebration of our shared heritage and faith. Holy Trinity’s 50th anniversary was a testament to the countless individuals who have helped shape the school. Here’s to the next 50 years of faith, friendship, and learning together within STOC MAC and our family of schools and communities.





Year 6 Take on Whitemoor Lakes!

What an unforgettable experience for our Year 6 pupils from The Rosary, St Chad's, Holy Souls, and St Joseph's! Their residential trip to Whitemoor Lakes was packed with excitement, laughter, and plenty of challenges.

From archery and orienteering to climbing, abseiling, fencing, and team-building activities, the pupils showed incredible determination and teamwork. One of the biggest highlights were the brave souls who conquered 'The Leap of Faith'—a true test of courage that had everyone cheering!

The fun didn't stop there. Pupils enjoyed the Elf Olympics, a surprise visit from Santa, and even a special appearance by our CEO, Prof. Paul Ryan, who joined in the festive spirit.

The trip was full of adventure, friendship, and festive cheer—and we're already counting down the days until next year's adventure!



A Joyful Celebration: Our 5th Annual STOC MAC Carol Service

On Monday, 8th December, the Sacred Heart and Holy Souls Church was filled with the sound of beautiful voices as we gathered for our 5th Annual MAC Carol Service.

Each of our schools sang with such grace and harmony, creating a truly uplifting atmosphere that captured the spirit of Advent.



Our readers also did a fantastic job, delivering their readings with confidence and reverence. Their contributions helped make the service a meaningful and prayerful occasion for all.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to every pupil for their hard work and dedication, and to the staff who supported them throughout the preparations. A special thank you goes to those who worked tirelessly behind the scenes to organise this wonderful event. Your efforts ensured that the afternoon was a memorable celebration of faith, music, and community.





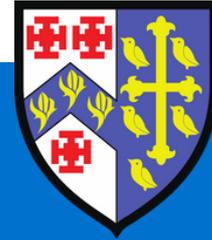
St Augustine's

Pupil-Led Prayer: Growing in Faith and Confidence

We are delighted to share how proud we are of the pupil-led prayer sessions observed throughout this term. Our children have shown wonderful reverence, focus, and respect during these moments of reflection.

It has been inspiring to see them grow in confidence and independence, taking ownership of their prayer time and leading with maturity.

Well done to all our pupils for their thoughtful participation and leadership—they truly are becoming travellers for God, with kind hearts, questioning minds, a thirst for knowledge, and a hunger for justice.



Archbishop Ilsley

Year 9 Battlefields Tour

At the end of October, Year 9 journeyed to France and Belgium for the annual Battlefields Tour. The students had an early start, visiting pivotal sites like the Tyne Cot Cemetery and the Brothers in Arms Memorial. The highlight was participating in the moving Last Post Ceremony at the Menin Gate in Ypres, where our students laid wreaths in solemn tribute.

They also toured the Cloth Hall and the Passchendaele Museum before enjoying a quick stop at a Belgian chocolate shop on their way home!



Despite facing some challenging weather conditions, our pupils were absolutely fantastic! They showed maturity, excellent behavior, and great engagement throughout the entire four-day trip.



Culture Day Celebration

Earlier this term, our students celebrated Culture Day as a vibrant culmination of our focus on Black History Month.

The common room was "awash with colour" as we embraced the theme of standing firm in power and pride and celebrating diverse cultures.





Holy Souls

Remembering Their Sacrifice: School Commemorates Remembrance Day

On Remembrance Day, we gathered to remember those who gave their lives for us during war. Year 5 and Year 6 led the school in the Flanders Field poem by John McCrae. All pupils fell silent in the playground for 2 minutes and Mrs McLoughlin played The Last Post on her cornet which was very moving and we thank her for sharing her wonderful talent with us.



Mrs Girling, Mrs Kielstra and our Year 6 Head Girls and Boys attended the annual Churches Together Remembrance Service at the War Memorial in Acocks Green. It was wonderful to see so many people from our local community gather together to pay their respects.



Holy Trinity

On 19th November, 30 of our Year 9 and Year 10 pupils visited HSBC UK in Birmingham for an exciting day of learning and discovery.

They took part in interactive workshops on career pathways, digital skills, cyber security, and entrepreneurship, gaining valuable insights into the world of work. It was a truly inspiring experience, filled with encouragement, ambition, and opportunity for our future leaders!



Supporting Mental Health Together

In October, we marked World Mental Health Day—a reminder to check in on ourselves and those around us. Caring for our mental health is just as important as caring for our physical health, and together we can break the stigma. Staff showed their support by wearing yellow, highlighting their commitment to young people’s wellbeing. We reminded our pupils, if you’re ever struggling or feeling low, you can always speak to your teacher. We’re here for you.



St Ambrose Barlow

Honouring Father Paul: A Lasting Tribute

Following the tragic and untimely loss of their much-loved parish priest, the student leadership councils at St Ambrose Barlow—including the Eco-Council, School Council, Gardening Club, and Mini Vinnies—came together to decide how best to honour Father Paul's memory.



The pupils have chosen to rename the school's prayer garden as the Father Paul Memorial Garden. Plans are already underway to refresh the space with a new pond liner, a pathway, and a summer entrance for children to enjoy.



The PTA has pledged support for this heartfelt project, and after a recent Year 3 sacramental preparation Mass, the children hosted a cake sale raising an incredible £460. Every penny will go towards creating a beautiful garden that reflects Father Paul's spirit of faith and community.



St Chad's

Rocket Science hits St Chads!

Pupils at St Chad's are loving the "Road to RIAT" program, a brilliant educational initiative focused on STEM and sustainable aircraft design!

Year 6 crushed their rocket-making challenge! There was so much energy and imagination on display. They had great fun testing their incredible designs to see who's design achieved the longest flight.

This program is designed to make science exciting and hands-on. Get ready for blast-off!



Year 4 Meets Our Safety Heroes!!

In October, Year 4 had a visit from West Midlands Fire Service Ladywood.

The children had a brilliant session learning essential safety knowledge, including:

- What to do in a fire emergency.
- How to stay safe if they get into difficulty in water.

The visit was a huge success, and it looks like we already have two students planning their future careers as firefighters! We appreciate WMFS Ladywood for sharing these vital life skills.





St Clare's

Bringing History to Life

Our Year 5/6 and Year 6 students recently enjoyed a memorable educational visit to the Birmingham Library and Museum, bringing history to life outside the classroom.

The highlight of the trip was a moving and engaging talk delivered by Donald Campbell, a respected veteran of the Royal Air Force (RAF).

Mr. Campbell shared powerful, first-hand accounts of his time serving in the RAF.



His personal stories provided students with an authentic, human connection to historical events, particularly focusing on how these moments impacted the local community of Birmingham.

This immersive experience was a tremendous success in fostering historical respect and inspiring reflection.



St Francis

Generosity in Action for Our Local Community

The Advent season beautifully reminds us of the power of generosity—the ultimate gift of Christ's arrival. Here at St Francis School, our staff have demonstrated this giving spirit in a wonderful way!

Our team has collected and donated essential comforts and festive cheer to a local Women's Refuge, which is currently home to five of our students. The donations were made up of 60 Advent Calendars for the children and a selection of socks, toiletries, and chocolates specifically for the mothers, offering them a small, personal gift during the holiday season.

We are proud of our staff for leading by example.



Saniyah Shines in Rainbows

We're thrilled to celebrate Yr 2 student, Saniyah, who is doing incredibly well in her Rainbows unit (part of Girlguiding).

Rainbows offers all girls a safe, creative place to have fun.

Saniyah's outstanding work and effort have earned her many well-deserved badges. A big well done from us all!





St Joseph's

Pilgrims of Hope in Action at St Joseph's!

St Joseph's welcomed Sister Eleanor from CAFOD for Jubilee Year 'Pilgrims of Hope' workshops, inspiring pupils to work together for God's kingdom of justice, peace, and love.

Living out this message, the school donated over 186 kg of food to the Aston and Nechells Foodbank, supporting those most in need locally. Even more kindness was shown through donations for families affected by Hurricane Melissa, which Mr Tobias arranged to be shipped to Jamaica.

Faith in action—making a difference near and far!



Hands-on History

This term, pupils have loved diving into exciting historical topics. Years 1 & 2 explored the Great Fire of London through an interactive workshop, while Years 3 & 4 uncovered the wonders of Ancient Egypt.

Meanwhile, Years 5 & 6 visited Whittington Barracks in Staffordshire, experiencing life during WW2—including what it felt like to shelter during the Blitz.



St Teresa's

St Teresa's Chess Team Shines at Birmingham Tournament

On 4th December, St Teresa's Catholic Primary School's Chess team proudly represented our school at the Birmingham Catholic Schools' Sports Association Chess Tournament, held at Abbey Catholic Primary School in Erdington. Eight schools took part in this exciting event, and our team—Adam, Dominik, Aaron, Rayan, Roshan, and Viktor—performed brilliantly, finishing second overall!

A special mention goes to Roshan, who achieved joint second place in the individual competition.

We are so grateful to Mrs Gillam, supported by Miss Gravell and Miss Gold, for running our After School Chess Club for Junior classes. Their dedication has helped our pupils develop fantastic skills and confidence. Well done, team!



Building Compassion: An Overnight Insight

On 19th September, 56 junior pupils took part in an 'Overnight Experience' at St Teresa's School, exploring the theme of Dignity of the Human Person. Year 3 and 4 children slept indoors on mats, while Year 5 and 6 built cardboard shelters outside, reflecting the challenges faced by the homeless. With simple meals of biscuits, hot chocolate, toast, and water, the experience fostered empathy and understanding. The children who participated were amazing. They embraced the opportunity fully and, despite the hardship, behaved wonderfully.

A huge thank you to the staff and parents who made this meaningful event possible.



St Vincent's

This term, St Vincent's were proud to receive our 10 Year School of Sanctuary Award, recognising a decade of being a place of welcome, kindness, and safety for all. We were delighted to take part in the Birmingham City of Sanctuary 10 Years Award Ceremony, which was attended by the Lord Mayor, and once again our children made us incredibly proud.



St Vincent's choir also lived out their Advent mission of making room for Christ as they sang at the Heartlands Hospital light switch-on, where their carols brought comfort, warmth, and the spirit of Advent to everyone who heard them.



Vocations Week was a special time for the children to explore what it means to follow God's unique calling. They were blessed with inspiring visitors—including Bishop Timothy, the police, fire service, Councillor Lee Marsham, and Sister Eleanor—who shared how their vocations allow them to serve others. Their stories encouraged us all to reflect on how we can listen to God's voice and discover the path He invites us to follow. A truly uplifting week for our school community!



The Rosary

What a truly special day it was on Tuesday, November 28th, as we had the privilege of welcoming members of the Irish Welfare community to our school for a shared lunch!

Our children were absolute stars. They sang for our guests with such joy and enthusiasm, beautifully demonstrating their commitment to serving others in our wider community. Sharing a meal together was a wonderful experience for everyone involved. It was a lovely opportunity to connect, build friendships, and put our school's core values of service and community into action. We are incredibly proud of our students for their kindness and warmth.



This Anti-Bullying Week, students embraced the theme "Power for Good!" with a special workshop focused on the transformative power of love and kindness.

We were delighted to welcome parents who joined their children in creating beautiful hearts. These hearts symbolise our personal pledge to spread love and kindness, demonstrating how a small, heartfelt action can start a ripple effect across our school community and the wider world.

Thank you to everyone who participated in this important session!





Wishing you all a Happy and Holy
Christmas, and a safe and
blessed 2026.

Upcoming Events -

STOC MAC Inset Day
- 13th February 2026

STOC MAC Sports
Day - 16th June 2026

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