



Welwyn St Mary's Primary School

Newsletter – December 2025



Our value for this half term is:

Trust

"My god is my strength in whom I trust."

Psalm 18.2



Merry Christmas and a Happy 2026!

Words from Mr Whiteland

Advent and the Christmas season at Welwyn St Mary's is very, very special and it has been lovely to see the excitement building in the children with all the different events, performances and church services over the last three weeks.

Children have decorated our school Christmas tree, which was kindly donated by Vanstone. Our choir performed in St Mary's church at the switching on of the lights in Welwyn. Decorations have made our classrooms and school look very festive, ahead of then being truly 'Christmas-bombed' for our PTFA's extremely successful Christmas Fair, which raised over £4,000 for the school! There was a Christmas dance club performance, with over 75 children performing and many more parents coming to watch and be entertained by their fabulous dance routines they had learned and practised with Vicky.

We have had some very magical and very memorable performances of our Reception Classes' Nativity 'The Sleepy Shepherd' and our Year 2 performances of 'Lights, Camel, Action!'. We've also had numerous carol services and church services to celebrate the musical and spiritual aspects of school life: the choir performed at the Monk's Walk family concert at St John's Church in Welwyn Garden City; the choirs of Welwyn St Mary's (Choir, Chamber Choir, Community Choir and our Alumni Choir) performed at a charity concert at St Mary's Church just this Monday; in addition to our whole school Christmas service and our Year 5/6 carol service at church on Thursday. And of course, there was that togetherness and joyous feeling of our Christmas lunch and Christmas Jumper day, finishing off with a whole school rendition of The Twelve Days of Christmas in our

Upcoming events in January

INSET Day- School closed

Monday 5th January

Term Starts

Tuesday 6th January

Prospective Reception Open Morning

Wednesday 7th January– 9:15am

PTFA School Discos

Year 3 & 4

Tuesday 13th – 5:30pm-7pm

Year 1 & 2

Tuesday 20th – 4:30pm 5:30pm

Year 5 & 6

Tuesday 20th – 6pm-7.30pm

Year 4 PTFA Cake Sale

Friday 16th January

Year 6 SAT's session for parents

Monday 19th January - 2pm

Year 3 Greek Day

Tuesday 20th January

Year 4 Production

Wednesday 28th January

1.30pm and 6pm



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final Celebration Assembly of the year. Christmas in all its glory at Welwyn St Mary's! There may have been one or two performances of 'Sheep' as well – a true tradition at WSM!

As we now approach the end of term, I would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas, a restful break and a Happy New Year. We look forward to welcoming you all back at school on Tuesday 6th January 2026 for the start of the Spring term.



Best wishes,

Mr Whiteland
Headteacher



Staffing Update

We are sadly saying goodbye to Ms Hewitt at Christmas. She has secured a teaching post at another school from January and will finish here at the end of term. We would like to thank her for all that she has done for our children over her time at Welwyn St Mary's and to wish her all the best in her new role. We are really fortunate and are delighted, however, to have recruited Mrs Hadley to join our 2 Cedars team and we look forward to welcoming her to our school.

We are also delighted that Mrs Fry will be joining our teaching staff, and we extend a warm welcome to Mrs Davis and Mrs Umit, who will also be joining the team on a supply basis next term.





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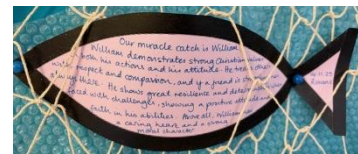
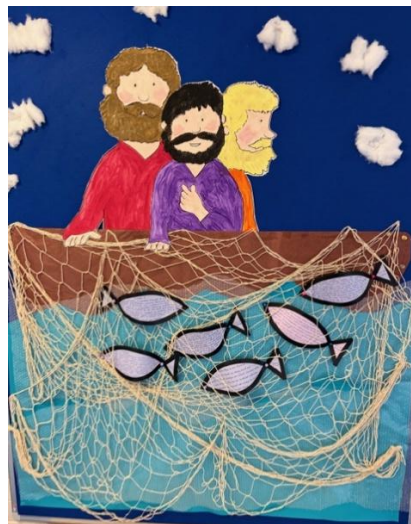


Our Miracle Catch of Fish

Our Miracle Catch award has proven to be extremely successful and a very special moment in our Celebrations Assembly. Children wait excitedly to learn which year group, which class and then which child has gained the award each week and listen intently to the wonderful words said about each child nominated for the award.

It truly is a wonderful moment seeing each child hear the words written about them, hearing how they demonstrate our school's Christian vision and values, and seeing them brimming with pride. Not only does their 'fish' appear on our Miracle Catch display, but they receive a Miracle Catch badge, which they can choose to wear on their school uniform, if they wish.

Well done to our first six winners! Here are their fish on display:



Charity Collections

A special thank you for your incredible generosity at our Year 2 and Reception performances. Together, we raised an incredible **£1,112**, which will go towards our chosen charity, Young Minds. Your contributions will make a real difference to this important cause.

Thank you also for your donations to Children in Need and Save the Children, it is very much appreciated. There is still time to donate towards Save the Children for Christmas Jumper Day for anyone who wishes to do so.





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Year 2 Performance – 'Lights, Camel, Action'

We began our festive performances with Year 2's production of *Lights, Camel, Action*. The children were absolutely fantastic, performing with great confidence, enthusiasm and big smiles throughout. It was a real joy to see how much effort they had put into the performance.

We would like to thank all the parents and families who came along to support the children. A special thank you also goes to our Year 2 teaching team for organising such an enjoyable production.

Year 1 Class Assembly 'A Sprinkle of Christmas'

Year 1 celebrated their class assembly last Thursday. The children were great and sang so beautifully. Thank you to the parents and families who came along to support and thank you to the Year 1 teachers for organising a wonderful assembly.



Reception Performance 'The Sleepy Shepherd'



A big well done to our Reception children for their wonderful performance of *The Sleepy Shepherd*. The children sang beautifully and we are incredibly proud of all the hard work they put into learning the songs and lines, and of the confidence they showed on stage. What a fantastic achievement from our young performers.





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Choir Performances

Our school choir has been incredibly busy over the past few weeks, delivering a series of wonderful performances. From singing at the Welwyn Christmas lights switch-on and the PTFA Christmas Fair, to the Monk's Walk Family Christmas Concert and the Charity Choral Concert at Welwyn St Mary's Church, we have truly been spoilt by their beautiful voices.

The choir should be extremely proud of themselves for learning new songs and performing with such confidence to entertain both the school and the wider village community.

Well done to all involved! A huge thank you also goes to Mrs Harrison, Mrs Dunstan and Miss Dunstan for their hard work, dedication and commitment to making each performance such a great success.



December birthdays

Happy Birthday to all who celebrated in December: James, Evan, Rosie, Laiton, Chester, Ava, Lottie, Sophia, Tobias, Nicole, Maya, Johnny, Charles, Robyn, Jago, Bradley, Enzo, Ebony, Tireni, Evelyn, Elsie, Leo, Agastya, Evan, Esme, Amber, Evelyn, Ben, Rocco, Tommi, Fenn, Jacob, Kaya, Kason, Umar, Daisy, Harper, Mrs Hall, Mrs Jackson, Mrs Rogers, Miss Kinsella and Mrs Southall.





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PTFA Round up and calendar of events

We've had a fantastic start to the new school year and, as always, we are so grateful for your incredible support. Thank you to everyone who came together to make our PTFA Christmas Fair a huge success. It was a fun-filled day that was enjoyed by everyone. We raised an amazing £4,381.



On Wednesday, the PTFA also treated the children to an online panto and popcorn! After all their hard work this term, the children deserved it!

A huge thank you goes out to our class reps for their hard work and to all the parents and carers who have generously donated or volunteered their time to support our events. Since September, we've raised an impressive **£7,431** – an amazing achievement! A big well done to everyone involved.

We will be looking forward to kicking off the new year with more fun events, starting with the ever-popular school discos in January- tickets will go live soon.

Wishing you all a wonderful Christmas and a very Happy New Year!

Best wishes,
The PTFA team





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PTFA CALENDAR			
YR 3 & 4 SCHOOL DISCOS TUES 13 JAN '26	FROM 5:30PM TO 7PM	SPRING TERM	KS1 MOVIE NIGHT TUES 21 APRIL
YR 1 & 2 SCHOOL DISCOS TUES 20 JAN '26	FROM 4:30PM TO 5:30PM		KS2 MOVIE NIGHT TUES 28 APRIL
YR 5 & 6 SCHOOL DISCOS TUES 20 JAN '26	FROM 6PM TO 7:30PM		KS2 FATHER'S DAY GIFT SHOP MON 15 JUNE '26
KS1 MOTHER'S DAY GIFT SHOP MON 9 MARCH '26			KS1 FATHER'S DAY GIFT SHOP TUE 16 JUNE '26
KS2 MOTHER'S DAY GIFT SHOP TUES 10 MARCH '26			SUMMER BBQ SAT 4 JULY '26
EASTER EGG HUNT WED 25 MARCH '26			BREAK THE RULES DAY FRI 10 JULY '26
			SUMMER TERM

Sporting Events



Year 6 Archery

Team: Milan, Chloe, Chelsea, Chloe H, Orla, Oliver, Oli and Ben.

Star player: Milan



We went up against 7 schools, and we came second out of all the schools. We showed honesty, teamwork, respect and determination. Milan got the most points on the team and showed the most passion in the game. We played three different games. We began with a warm-up then we played a normal match and then the last match we played odd numbers only. For the normal match we scored approximately 361 points. A big thank you to Mrs Southall for taking us!

Milan and Chloe



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Chess Festival Monday 8th December

Star Player: Emily South

On the 8th of December 2 people in year 5, 1 from year 3 and 1 from year 4 went to a chess tournament. The people were Chantelle and Emily from year 5, Agastya from year 3 and Tireni from year 4. Our star player was Emily. Chantelle won 3 out of 4 games. Tireni won 2 out of 4 games. Agastya won 3 out of 4 games and Emily won 4 out of 4 games. We were playing against Green Lanes, Oaklands, Templewood and Applecroft. We would like to thank Mrs Phillips for taking us and Mrs Southall for arranging it.

Chantelle and Emily



Year 6 Football League Match against Woolmer Green- 11th December

Team: Teddy, Burt, Ted, Lucas, Zara, Mia, Jacob, Finley W, Kyle and Freddie.

Star Player: Lucas and Teddy.

On the 11th of December some year 6 went to a football event. In the first game we won 5-0. Lucas scored 2, Teddy scored 2 and Freddie scored 1. In the second game we won 1-0 and Teddy scored. Our star players were Teddy and Lucas. We would like to thank Mrs Southall and Lorenc our coach for supporting us.

Lucas and Jacob

Book recommendations from the Diversity Group

December has been a very busy time around school looking forward to Christmas celebrations. December is the perfect month to snuggle up with a good book, and diversity group have been thinking about stories that make this time of year feel extra special. Some of our favourites are about the Nativity, which tell the story of Mary, Joseph and baby Jesus. These books remind us why Christmas is celebrated and help us imagine what it might have been like in Bethlehem all those years ago.

We also love adventure stories where characters go on long journeys, sometimes through snow or across mountains, and they show us how brave people can be when they have to travel far from home. Another type of book we recommend is non-fiction, because it teaches us about Christmas traditions in different countries. We have enjoyed exploring the Christmas story through the Posadas travelling crib (a tradition from Mexico).





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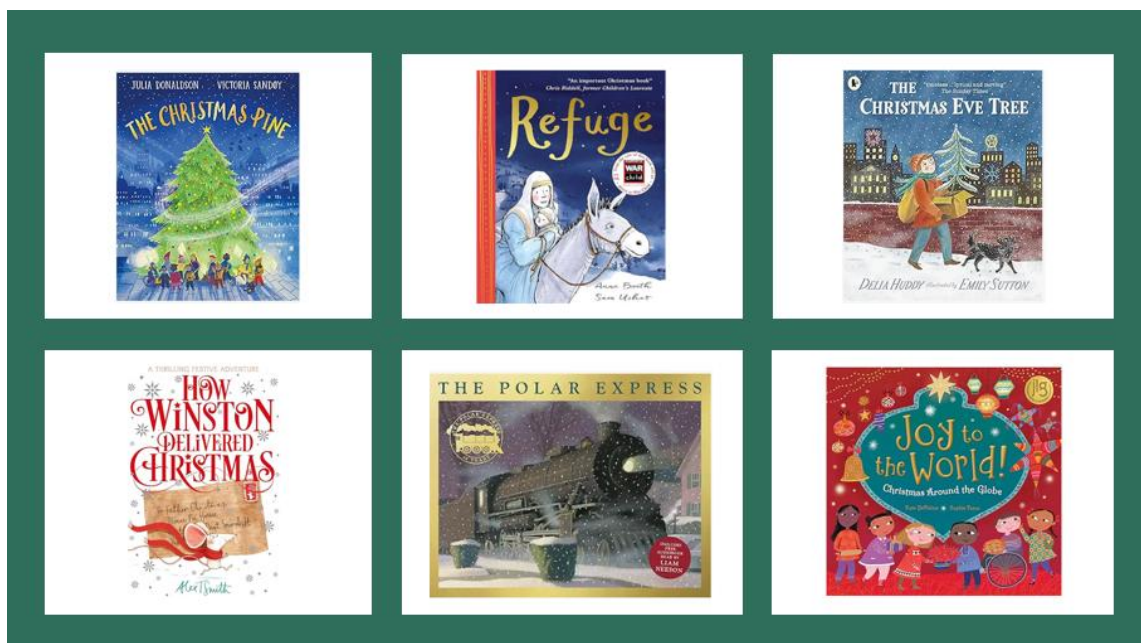
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Reading about these customs makes us realise how exciting and diverse the world is. Whether you enjoy magical journeys, learning about history, or discovering new traditions, there's a book for everyone this December. So, grab a blanket, pour some hot chocolate, and dive into a festive read.

Here are our recommendations.

- Joy To the World: Christmas around the Globe by Kate DePalma
- Refuge by Anne Booth
- Christmas pine by Julia Donaldson
- The Polar Express by Chris Van Allberg
- How Winston Delivered Christmas by Alex T. Smith
- The Christmas Eve Tree by Delia Huddy



Raising money for school

If you shop online you could be raising funds for our lovely school – at no extra cost to you!

- **LoveReading4kids.co.uk** sell a range of children's books at competitive prices, and the good news for us is that, if you nominate Welwyn St Mary's, 25% of the cover price will be given to us to spend with them on new books for our school library.
- **Easyfundraising.org.uk** – by going through this website to then purchase at other retailers, you can nominate Welwyn St Mary's to receive a percentage of the cost of your items (e.g. 4% at Argos, 2% at John Lewis, 9% at M&S).





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Foodbanks help

We have links with local foodbanks so, if you are struggling financially at the moment, please contact the school office in confidence and we can refer you.

Absence Reporting

Please call or email by 9am on each day of your child's absence. Please can we ask that you advise us of the symptoms of any illness rather than just "feeling unwell" so that we can accurately record and monitor this.

Term Time Absence and Penalty Notices

A new National Framework for Penalty Notices for school absence, including unauthorised holiday absence, has now been introduced following changes to the law.

Per Parent, Per Child

Penalty Notice Fines are issued to each parent, for each child that was absent. For example: 3 siblings absent for term time leave, would result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines. Parent refers to anyone with parental responsibility and may include carers, step-parents, grandparents or any other adult with parental responsibility.

National Threshold

There is a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period. These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence. The 10-school week period can span different terms or school years.

[Click here](#) for further information.

So that parents are aware of the risk of receiving a Fixed Penalty Notice, Welwyn St Mary's will issue warning letters to all parents who request term time holiday, regardless of the length of holiday.

First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for term time leave of absence or unauthorised absence the amount will be:

- £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days
- Reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.





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Second Offence (within 3 years)

The Second time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence the amount will be:

- £160 per parent, per child within 28 days

Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)

The third time an offence is committed a Penalty Notice will not be issued and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrate's Court.

- Prosecution can result in criminal records and fines up to £2,500
- Cases found guilty in Magistrates' Court can show on the parent's future DBS certificate due to 'failure to safeguard a child's education.'

Diary Dates

Diary dates are regularly updated on the school website:

www.welwynst-marys.herts.sch.uk/news-dates/diary-dates

2026 Spring Term	
Mon 5th January 2026	INSET day – school closed
Tue 6th January 2026	Term starts
Wed 7th January 2026	Prospective Reception Parents Open Morning 9.30am
Tue 20th January 2026	Year 3 Greek Day
Wed 28th January 2026	Year 4 Performance – 1.30pm & 6.00pm
Mon 16th to Fri 20th February 2026	Half term
Fri 27th March 2026	Last day of school – Rec & KS1 1.15pm, KS2 1.20pm
2026 Summer Term	
Mon 13th April 2026	INSET day – school closed
Tue 14th April 2026	Term starts
Mon 4th May 2026	Bank holiday – school closed
Fri 22nd May 2026	INSET day – school closed
Mon 25th to Fri 29th May 2026	Half term
Saturday 4th July 2026	PTFA Summer BBQ
Friday 10 th July 2026	PTFA Break the rules day
Wed 22nd July 2026	Last day of school – Rec & KS1 1.15pm, KS2 1.20pm



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