



Newsletter February 2026

Dear Parents, Carers, Staff and Governors,

Sometimes it feels like it is taking forever to get to the warmer, drier and lighter days but it's always worth me getting out and about into classrooms to see lots of green shoots (physically and metaphorically!) Children in Nursery have been spotting some of the signs of Spring (daffodils have started to bloom in their garden) and they have been making bird feeders and doing some bird watching with their own, hand-made binoculars. **Step 1** children (Reception and Year 1) are busily preparing for their **Dinosaur Afternoon - to which parents have been invited at 2pm on Friday 6th February**. I don't want to give too many spoilers but the work on volcanoes, fossils, habitats and dinosaur fact files is most impressive.

Step 2 (Year 2 and Year 3) have been working on their potion making skills and have been making really rapid progress in their Monster Phonics. Monster Phonics is a new scheme for us, it is a sequential scheme that builds from one letters and sounds concept to another. The children in Step 2 have made more than a whole year's progress in just 4 months, many of them much more than this - a huge well done to the children and teaching staff in Step 2, that's quite a feat! Step 2 children have been working with [The Bumbles of Honeywood](#) - they have been given a pot of honey and asked to make some money from it - they will be **making things to sell at the end of this half term**.

Step 3 (Year 4, Year 5 and Year 6) have been extremely persuasive in their letter writing about rain forests, and so thoughtful in their poetry linked to dreams. All 3 classes have also led worship activities for the whole school this half term. They have led the school in reflections about St Dwynwen (Welsh saint linked to love and animals), friendship, emotional health and wellbeing and Candlemas (presentation of Jesus as a baby to the temple and blessing of the candles). There are some trips coming up next week - the **Longtown Residential** and **Barry Island by train**. Details are on Parent Pay.

It has been my huge pleasure to award the first sets of fountain pens to children who are able to show joined writing, in their own consistent style, at all times. All children write in pencil in the school, this is until the time comes when we feel they may be able to consistently move on to writing in ink pen. There are many children we are 'keeping our eyes on' who are very close to being ready to write in ink. **Any child, from any Step, may be awarded a pen** if they are able to consistently and neatly join their writing.

With my kindest regards, Abi Cuthbert (Head Teacher)

Mornings and Wet Days

Just a little update - Mr Hagan (Estates Manager) will be on the school gate welcoming the children to Breakfast Club and ensuring they sign the register. Mrs Belay will be helping Mr Hagan to begin with as he gets used to everyone's names. Please do not let your child come in without their name being recorded. The pupil gate for **Breakfast Club opens at 8.10am**, we ask parents to fill out the [Breakfast Club Google Form](#) for every child who needs a place, you only need to do this once. The **pupil gate closes at 8.40am**.

Any child arriving after 8.40am must be supervised by parents until the bell rings at 8.55am. If the weather is so bad that sheltering under the canopy doesn't afford enough protection a member of the Senior Leadership Team (Mrs Cuthbert, Mr Thomas, Mrs Meakins or Mrs O'Gorman) will ask children to come into the school hall and will supervise them there.

School Collaboration Partner Visit

We have a very positive relationship with our School Collaboration Partner - Claire Skidmore. Claire works for the Cardiff Council Education Department and meets regularly with me (Mrs Cuthbert) and other staff in the school. Last week she accompanied Mr Thomas (Mr T) and I as we did a Learning Walk, Listening to Learners and Work Scrutiny across the school. We saw children as they were being taught, as well as discussed with children and teachers what, how and how well they had been learning. I'd like to share some of the outcomes with you.

Overall strengths

- Overall, interactions across the school are consistently warm and supportive, both between pupils and between pupils and adults. These positive relationships contribute effectively to an environment where pupils feel safe, valued and ready to learn.
- Additional adults use highly skilled and well-judged strategies to support pupils' learning. Their sensitive interventions help pupils remain focused, while also minimising any potential disruption to others.
- Pupils speak confidently about their learning and demonstrate a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve. This reflects the consistent and effective implementation of the school's marking and feedback policy, which helps pupils know their next steps and take increasing responsibility for their progress.
- There is strong evidence of developing metacognitive skills, with pupils able to explain the importance of effort, persistence and resilience in achieving success. This shows that the school's work on metacognition is having a positive impact on pupils' attitudes and approaches to learning.

Every school has things they would like to improve upon, [this link will take you to our Curriculum Pages and are some of the priorities](#) we currently have.

Ways Forward

- We will be exploring a wider range of pedagogical approaches to secure greater pupil engagement during teacher-led introductions. In particular, strategies such as effective use of talk partners and structured peer dialogue to provide more opportunities for pupils to actively process ideas, rehearse vocabulary and develop deeper understanding. This would help reduce passive listening time and promote more consistent engagement across the class.
- While we have correctly identified the need to strengthen Welsh language provision within the School Improvement Plan and are taking initial steps, such as engaging with the e-Eisteddfod, this remains an area requiring further development. Current provision does not yet enable pupils to use Welsh with confidence or independence across contexts.

Clubs After School

We are able to offer places for clubs after school. Each club runs from 3.20 - 4.20pm. There are some age restrictions on some clubs. Please request a space using the Google Forms link. If a club is oversubscribed, a waiting list will be in operation. **If you need help to access any of these links, please ask in the School Office.**

Mondays

(starting on Monday 12th January)

Football (Years 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6)

Sports Xtra - 16 spaces - **there is a fee** for this club as it is run by an outside provider.

[ACTIVE | Sports Xtra - South Wales](#)

Tuesdays

Crochet Club (Years 4, 5 & 6) Mrs Cuthbert - all materials provided - many thanks to Mrs Selby (parent to Anna and Micah) and Mrs Parr (Foundation Governor) for helping support this club, we have some more spaces available!

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeYiyp6h0J2BE2mumio8tz06aWb4shRxIOSqHQTHW GJkonrew/viewform?usp=header>

Book Club (Years 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6) Mrs Irwin - you are welcome to join the waiting list for this club

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSetctberbY863ohDc-LRPBCY NwR97vmat-EEe8r8Z40 C63xw/viewform?usp=sharing&oid=100416810986271662961>

Tabletop Games Club (Years 4, 5 & 6) Mr Wycherley

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScXJvCLWy36fRInOi6Hs4ULwtV6YWGiskYqAT1mCCOr h2YEzA/viewform?usp=sharing&oid=100416810986271662961>

Thursdays

Earth Science (Years 4, 5 & 6) Mr T - you are welcome to join the waiting list for this club

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfB9IhHA1A9a6 WZJa wsDRGaCPou916Gd7PCej4Sh eCcZErw/viewform?usp=publish-editor>

Film Club (Years 1, 2 & 3) Mr Thomas

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfD6wccetvEC t5mRYs4h-NcTzwIPkzGK8ZwJV-nYZ3Y vlwcw/viewform?usp=publish-editor>

Dance (Years 1, 2 & 3) Mrs Meakins + Mrs Vaughan

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd2aPoWaXN2X69bJbIy1Am8sg2OoS Q_1EOjHQpan wh2Q4PEw/viewform?usp=publish-editor

Step Web Pages and Home Learning Tasks

The Step web pages are updated frequently, please take a look (and keep checking back) as specific home learning tasks and ways you can support your child are signposted on there. These are open access pages and can also be found on the school website www.stmonicasschool.co.uk

[Nursery Web Pages](#)

[Step 1 Web Pages](#)

[Step 2 Web Pages](#)

[Step 3 Web Pages](#)



As a little incentive for completing home learning tasks - children who successfully complete tasks to a high standard are invited to join me (Mrs Cuthbert) for hot chocolate (or similar) in my office on a Friday for a catch up and cosy chat, it is genuinely the best part of my week!

Parent Pay Success

Thank you for your support with ensuring all meals are booked using Parent Pay. The benefits we have already seen include:

- We have an additional hour to teach across the week in every class, over the course of an academic year this equates to us having an **additional 7 full teaching days**
- Reducing food waste, our food bill is less and waste bin is much lighter and this is saving us money on two fronts (**fun fact: we are billed for the weight of waste we produce each week**)
- Parents being able to access and pay for fruit snack much more easily (fruit snack costs £1 per child per week)

Financial Support for Families

Some parents may be entitled to School Essentials Grants from the Welsh Government. Please click in the box below for more information:

School Essentials Grants

Eligible families can apply for a grant of £125 per child per year. Families with children entering year 7 can apply for £200 to help with increased costs associated with starting secondary school. All looked after children qualify for the grant. Schools also receive additional funding as a result of claiming this grant.

Staff Contacts

Head - Abi Cuthbert abigail.cuthbert@cardiff.gov.uk

Deputy Head - Richard Thomas (Mr T) thomasr293@hwbcymru.net

Additional Learning Needs Co-Ordinator - Kelly O’Gorman ogormank@hwbcymru.net

Wellbeing Lead - Tanya Meakins meakinst@Hwbcymru.net

Acting Office Manager - Jozefina Fedorova jozefina.fedorova@cardiff.gov.uk

If you have any concerns about the welfare of a child, please contact either Mrs Cuthbert, Mrs O’Gorman or Mrs Meakins. We are the Designated Safeguarding People for the school.

Dates for your diary

I am not able to authorise any absence for term time holiday or any extended time away from school. Please do not be tempted to take your child out of school during term time.

School term dates

<https://www.cardiff.gov.uk/ENG/resident/Schools-and-learning/Schools/School-term-dates/Pages/default.aspx>

Monday 2nd February Year 4 leading worship	Tuesday 3rd February RWCMD workshops - Y4	Wednesday 4th February Rev. Caroline (St Michael's) - worship	Thursday 5th February Step 1 and Year 2 to National Museum of Wales RWCMD workshops - Y5	Friday 6th February Year 4 Superhumans workshop 2pm Step 1 Dinosaur Afternoon - all welcome
Monday 9th February Longtown Residential Trip	Tuesday 10th February Longtown Residential Trip Step 3 Barry Island by Train trip	Wednesday 11th February Longtown Residential Trip Rev. Caroline (St Michael's) - worship	Thursday 12th February Longtown Residential Trip	Friday 13th February Longtown Residential Trip 2.30pm Praise & Celebration Assembly - all welcome to join us

Half Term Break - no school for 1 week

Monday 23rd February Children return to school - Breakfast Club doors open at 8.10am Closing date for Nursery applications (Sept 2026 start) Year 3 leading worship	Tuesday 24th February RWCMD workshops - Y6	Wednesday 25th February Rev. Caroline (St Michael's) - worship	Thursday 26th February Step 3 - visit St Mark's Church	Friday 27th February Eisteddfod - celebrating all things Welsh - children wear red or dress up in Welsh costume 2.30pm Praise & Celebration Assembly - all welcome to join us
Monday 2nd March	Tuesday 3rd March	Wednesday 4th March Rev. Marcus (St Mark's) - worship	Thursday 5th March Dwr Cymru - whole school assembly and workshops for Y5&6	Friday 6th March Cardiff Fire Station to visit Y2 and Y5
Monday 9th March Year 2 leading worship	Tuesday 10th March	Wednesday 11th March Rev. Marcus (St Mark's) - worship	Thursday 12th March Hearing screening for Reception	Friday 13th March 2.30pm Praise & Celebration Assembly - all welcome to join us
Monday 16th March Spectrum workshops for Year 2 & Year 5	Tuesday 17th March	Wednesday 18th March Rev. Marcus (St Mark's) - worship Y4 + Y5 - Llandaff Cathedral all day	Thursday 19th March Becky Harris - worship 4pm Premises, Finance + H&S GB meeting	Friday 20th March
Monday 23rd March Reception and Year 1 leading worship	Tuesday 24th March Jo Deeley (Highfields Church) - worship	Wednesday 25th March Rev. Caroline (St Michael's) - worship	Thursday 26th March Step 3 - visit St Mark's Church 4pm Full GB meeting	Friday 27th March 9am Rock Steady Music Concert - all welcome 2.30pm Praise & Celebration Assembly - all welcome to join us

Easter Break - no school for 2 weeks

Monday 13th April Children return to school - Breakfast Club doors open at 8.10am	Tuesday 14th April Nursery Summer intake start	Wednesday 15th April Rev. Marcus (St Mark's) - worship	Thursday 16th April	Friday 17th April
Monday 20th April Y6 Cycling	Tuesday 21st April Y6 Cycling	Wednesday 22nd April Y6 Cycling Rev. Marcus (St Mark's) - worship	Thursday 23rd April Y6 Cycling 4pm Full GB meeting	Friday 24th April 2.30pm Praise & Celebration Assembly - all welcome to join us
Monday 27th April	Tuesday 28th April	Wednesday 29th April	Thursday 30th April	Friday 1st May

			Step 3 - visit St Mark's Church	
Monday 4th May Bank Holiday - no school	Tuesday 5th May Go Beyond trip	Wednesday 6th May Go Beyond trip	Thursday 7th May Go Beyond trip	Friday 8th May Go Beyond trip 2.30pm Praise & Celebration Assembly - all welcome to join us
Monday 11th May	Tuesday 12th May	Wednesday 13th May	Thursday 14th May	Friday 15th May
Monday 18th May	Tuesday 19th May	Wednesday 20th May	Thursday 21st May 4pm Premises, Finance + H&S GB meeting	Friday 22nd May INSET Day - no school for children

Half Term Break - no school for 1 week

Monday 1st June Children return to school - Breakfast Club doors open at 8.10am	Tuesday 2nd June	Wednesday 3rd June	Thursday 4th June	Friday 5th June 2.30pm Praise & Celebration Assembly - all welcome to join us
Monday 8th June	Tuesday 9th June	Wednesday 10th June	Thursday 11th June	Friday 12th June
Monday 15th June	Tuesday 16th June	Wednesday 17th June	Thursday 18th June 11am Vision & Values GB meeting	Friday 19th June 2.30pm Praise & Celebration Assembly - all welcome to join us
Monday 22nd June	Tuesday 23rd June	Wednesday 24th June	Thursday 25th June 4pm Standards GB meeting	Friday 26th June
Monday 29th June Closing date for Nursery (Spring/Summer 2027 applications)	Tuesday 30th June	Wednesday 1st July	Thursday 2nd July	Friday 3rd July 2.30pm Praise & Celebration Assembly - all welcome to join us
Monday 6th July	Tuesday 7th July	Wednesday 8th July Y6 Leaver's Service in Llandaff Cathedral	Thursday 9th July	Friday 10th July
Monday 13th July	Tuesday 14th July	Wednesday 15th July Y6 Leaver's Treat 6pm Y6 Leaver's Celebration Evening - all welcome	Thursday 16th July	Friday 17th July Last day of term for children

Summer Break - no school for 6 weeks
Children return to school on Wednesday 3rd September 2026

Our remaining INSET days (training days where children are not in school) this academic year

- 22nd May = INSET day 5, training linked to the School Development Plan
- 20th July = INSET day 6, training linked to the School Development Plan