



English Martyrs Catholic Primary School

"where everyone is special"

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The Year of the Lord

'celebrating, living and sharing God's word'



Sunday 1st December 2019 is the first Sunday of Advent. The God who speaks campaign will be launched on this Sunday as part of the The Year of the Lord. The Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales have designated 2020 as **'The God Who Speaks': A Year of the Word** to celebrate the 10th anniversary of *Verbum Domini* - Pope Benedict XVI's Apostolic Exhortation on 'The Word of the Lord', and the 1600th anniversary of death of St Jerome, who translated the Bible into Latin.

Therefore, 2020 will be a year of **celebrating, living** and **sharing** God's word, through a range of events, activities and resources.

We are invited to listen afresh to the word of God as did Our Blessed Lady at the Annunciation, to encounter anew the presence of that word, and to proclaim it afresh in the Church and the World



A new Reading Incentive Scheme

The school has highlighted over the years how important it is for children to read at home. There will always be some children who are more enthusiastic readers than others. If children are not reading fluently this creates additional barriers to learning as they move through the educational system. Reading fluently is achieved through practice. Nationally there has been a significant reduction in pupils reading at home. At English Martyrs we have introduced a new incentive scheme which we hope will engage more reluctant readers and will get children to read a lot more books at their reading ability level. This scheme has been in place for two weeks and we have seen a significant increase in pupils reading books at home, either through Bug Club (the online reading system that all pupils have access to at home) or home school readers. For example one pupil had read no online books since September and had read 30 in two weeks. The incentive scheme works by adding up the number of Bug Club books read with the number of School home school readers. The pupils must read at least one home school reader every week to continue through the incentive scheme. The school has also invested in new home school

readers which will replace the current outdated system, the PTFA are kindly going to fund this, which we are very grateful for.

Bronze Award

25 books (certificate and pencil)

Silver Award

50 books (certificate and pin badge)

Gold Award

75 books (Raffle ticket to be entered into the grand prize draw at the end of the year)

At the end of the academic year there will be two prizes to be won. Both are children's tablets. Every time a pupil achieves the Gold Award their name is entered into the prize draw. The prize draw will take place at the end of the year presentations in the Church.



School Building Fund

English Martyrs is a Catholic voluntary aided school. This means that while most of our income is derived from local Government funds as a Catholic school, we must contribute 10% of the cost for capital projects and for the maintenance of our school buildings. Without the school having the money to contribute the 10% we are unable to access these funds through LCVAP (capital funding from government) or DFC (devolved formulae capital) to enhance the school and maintain the site.

Over the last five years the school has been successful in bidding for funds to improve the buildings and its services. For example, new boilers and heating systems were installed on both sites; radiators were also updated in the Ark Building. Both of the boilers were replaced at the end of their life and failure in getting them fixed would have led to school closure until the situation could be remedied. The corridor in the main building was remodelled with a new fire system. Asbestos was removed from around the outside of the

building. The Ark building had new flooring in the activating area. Through the DFC money new class laptops were purchased. To gain access to the DFC and LCVAP funding the school has to pay from its budget 10% of the total cost. For example, for one of the boilers to be installed the school had to find the 10% which was £13,000. The school did not have the money within its own budget to do this and on this occasion, due to the severity of the problem (if your boiler is not working a school would have to be closed), the diocese allowed the school to borrow the 10% from them and repay the £13,000 over the next three years which we were very grateful for.

Governors and staff are committed to providing a high standard of learning environment and there is still a lot that we would like to achieve but we do need to continue to finance additional projects and essential maintenance works. There is an ever continuing need to refurbish our existing facilities to meet the requirements of today's education standards and improve the learning environment of the school for the benefit of all the children, staff and parents. As such schools are depending more on the generous voluntary contributions of parents.

Over eighteen years ago, The Archdiocese of Birmingham introduced a Building Fund, in which parents contributed money which can be paid weekly, monthly, quarterly or annually. The school can then use this money towards its building projects/capital projects or in the purchase of ICT equipment. English Martyrs has always been part of this scheme and we currently have a small number of families who make regular contributions. Parents can set up direct debits and contributions which can also be Gift Aided, which means that the school can reclaim from HMRC the basic rate tax you have already paid on your contribution. This increases the value of your contribution and at no extra cost to you. For each £100 that we receive we can claim back an additional £25. If parents wish to contribute in cash then we are also happy to receive this. All forms are to be returned to the school office in a sealed envelope, addressed with your child's name and **Building Fund** on the front of the envelope.

The forms were emailed previously and a paper copy was given to each child in the school. If you need a new form please ask Miss Sands in the office. We would ask you to strongly consider making donations to the building fund and we thank you in advance for your continued support. If parents contributed at least £10 a term the school would be very grateful. A big thankyou to the parents who continue to contribute to this much needed fund. The school is wishing to launch a new library for the children and the DFC fund would significantly help towards this project but we need the 10% raised to make it happen.

Inconsiderate Parking & an apology to those who always follow the school rules about parking.

There are still a number of parents/guardians who are parking on the school drive when it is not permitted. There are also parents who are driving up the drive, dropping off the children and then driving back down the drive. There are parents who are stopping at the bottom of the drive whilst their children get out of their cars and drive away, which means other cars have to wait until they can park and the traffic slows down the traffic on the main road which is dangerous. Parents reversing down the drive and reversing around the corner when dropping off at before or after school club is dangerous. I appreciate that we are all extremely busy people and need to go to work or other places but there is never an excuse for putting children at risk by not following the school rules. An apology for parents who reading this type of message again and always follow the school rules to keep children safe, your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Grandparents' Afternoon – Tickets on Sale

Tickets for the Grandparents' Afternoon will be on sale from 9am on **Wednesday 4th December** from the school office. Please note tickets are only for grandparents and not any other family members or friends. The maximum number of tickets is 2 per family. Please return any unused tickets. Each ticket is £2.00.



English Martyrs Christmas Bazaar 2019

A big thankyou to all those who came to the bazaar on Saturday. It was a successful event and there was a lovely atmosphere around the school. Both parish and school are very grateful to all the organisers and helpers at the bazaar as without their support these community fundraising events would not be able to take place. In total **£1,660** was raised which will be shared equally between the school and parish. The schools profits will be spent on books for the new library area.

Traditional Carol Service

On Friday 20th December at 9:30am Key Stage 2 will lead the whole school in a traditional carol service in Church. Everyone is very welcome to attend. After the Carol Service will be the end of term presentations.



Keep the Date – Friday 31st January 10:30am.

English Martyrs School will have been opened for **60 years** on the 6th January 2020. To celebrate this the Archbishop of Birmingham – Archbishop Bernard Longley - has agreed to lead a celebratory mass for the school community in Church. This is a very special occasion for the school and the pupils will continue to have a day of celebration when back in school.



Diary Dates

December

3rd	Y3 Sacrament of Reconciliation 6:30pm
5 th	Mass Y6/Y3
6 th	Y6 Trip to London
9 th	Flu vaccinations FS to Y6
10 th	Altar Server Training
11 th	FS/KS1 Production 2pm
12 th	FS/KS1 Production 2pm
12 th	Mass Y5/Y2
16 th	Grandparents' Afternoon 1:45pm
17 th	Y2 to Y6 Puss in Boots Pantomime at the Belgrade
17 th	R and Y1 Hatton Trip
18 th	Christmas Party: FS & KS1 (Children can come to school dressed in their own clothes).
18 th	School Christmas Lunch (no new orders can be made for this day).
19 th	Christmas Party KS2 (Children can come to school dressed in their own clothes).
19 th	Whole School Mass led by Y4
20 th	9:30am Carol Service/End of term presentations

January

6th Teacher Training Day

June

6th **First Holy Communion 2pm**
29th to 1st Beaumanor Hall Residential for Year

School Improvement Suggestion

As a school we are always striving to improve, a good school listens to suggestions and opinions which can often lead to school improvement and positive change. If you have any suggestions you wish to share with the school, please fill the slip in below and hand it in to the school office or in the white letterbox in reception. Parents can also visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk to complete the parent view questionnaire.

Signed: _____ Name: _____ Date: _____

