Inspire

Lumen Christi
CATHOLIC MULTI ACADEMY

Let your light shine

December 2024





Welcome to the Lumen Christi Advent Newsletter!

As we embrace the season of Advent—a time of hope, reflection, and preparation—I am immensely proud of the hard work and success demonstrated by all members of our vibrant, Faith-filled school communities throughout this first term. This term has been marked by the joy of welcoming many new children into our primary schools' reception classes, as well as new Year 7 students at St. Thomas Aquinas Secondary School. Notably, this year, 45% of Year 7 students at St. Thomas Aquinas came from Lumen Christi primary schools—a figure that has grown steadily over the past three years.

In the spirit of Advent, our children and young people, guided by our dedicated school staff, have engaged in meaningful activities that reflect the values of compassion, generosity, and togetherness. From community service projects to festive classroom celebrations, it has been truly heartwarming to witness our school communities embodying the true essence of this special season.

Christmas can be a busy time, but I encourage everyone to pause and reflect on the values of love and kindness. Let us continue to support one another, creating a nurturing environment where every member of our caring school communities feels valued and inspired.

As we approach the holiday break, I extend my warmest wishes to you and your families for a peaceful and joyous Advent season. Thank you for your continued support and engagement in our school community.

Best wishes and a very happy Christmas,

Paul Collins-Smith

Inspire

Let your light shine

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Dear Lumen Christi Community,

It is with great pleasure and a sense of shared purpose that I introduce our new Strategic Plan for 2024-2027. This plan reflects the Catholic mission of Lumen Christi: to provide an education that is Christ-centred, nurturing, and rooted in Gospel values, while honouring the unique dignity of every child and family in our community.

At the heart of this Strategic Plan is our commitment to enabling each child to flourish as a child of God. Grounded in the principles of Catholic Social Teaching, it emphasises the importance of academic excellence, spiritual growth, and the formation of compassionate, responsible citizens who contribute positively to their communities.

The plan has been developed through collaboration with leaders, staff, and stakeholders, ensuring that it reflects the needs and aspirations of the families and children we serve. It sets out a vision for strengthening our schools as places of faith, hope, and love, where every family feels welcomed and every child is empowered to achieve their God-given potential. Lumen Christi is an educational faith-based community to which we all belong.

I warmly encourage you to explore the full Strategic Plan, available on our website at www.lumenchristi.org.uk. It provides a framework for the Multi Academy's growth and development over the coming years, aligning with our Catholic mission to build strong communities, support families, and prepare children for their unique roles in the world and God's plan for them.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to this important work. Your dedication to the Catholic mission of Lumen Christi is evident throughout this plan. Together, we will continue to build a bright and Faith-filled future for our children, schools, and families.

God bless.

Peter Vince
Chair of the Board
Lumen Christi Catholic Multi Academy

Outstanding!

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School Celebrates Outstanding Key Stage 4 Performance in 2023/24

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School has achieved a remarkable milestone in the 2023/24 Key Stage 4 performance tables. Their exceptional results place them in the top 10.3% of schools nationally for Progress 8, underscoring their commitment to academic excellence and the Catholic ethos that defines Lumen Christi.

Paul Collins Smith, CEO of Lumen Christi Catholic Multi Academy Company, congratulated the school on their success:

"I am thrilled to congratulate St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic School on this extraordinary achievement. Being ranked in the top 10.3% of schools nationally for Progress 8 reflects the tireless efforts of the staff, the dedication of our students, and the invaluable support of families and Parishes. These results affirm the strength of our shared commitment to nurturing the God-given potential of every child within a Faith-filled community."

This success also highlights Lumen Christi's position as a leader in Catholic education:

- Outstanding Progress 8 Scores placing the school in the top 10.3% nationally
- Top-performing MAC in the Diocese for Progress 8.
- Strong Attainment 8 Results contributing to Lumen Christi's overall ranking as third in the Diocese

These achievements reflect the impact of Lumen Christi's strategic priorities, outlined in its Strategic Plan to 2027, which emphasises high-quality, inclusive education and continuous school improvement.

The remarkable performance of STACS is a testament to Lumen Christi's ethos of putting Christ at the centre of education. The school's holistic approach prioritises both academic and spiritual growth, offering students a safe, nurturing environment in which they are "known and loved as children of God."

STACS continues to uphold its commitment to holistic education by fostering spiritual growth, academic rigour, and a vibrant community of Faith. The school's partnership with families and Parishes is central to ensuring that every student thrives, both academically and spiritually.

Paul Collins Smith added, "These results are not only a reflection of our Faith and values but also an inspiration for the future. As the top-performing MAC in the Diocese for Progress 8, we are committed to sustaining this excellence and sharing our expertise across Lumen Christi and beyond. Together, we will continue to provide exceptional, Faith-filled education for every child."

St Brigid's Catholic Primary School

We educate our children in a Catholic community with Christ at the centre.



Team Effort

A sudden flash flood in the autumn term caused significant disruption at St. Brigid's, with water leaking into the front office, hall dining room, and nursery. However, the response from the local Fire Service, school staff, and the Bright Brigid's team was nothing short of heroic.

Drains were cleared, water was removed, and children were safely sent home, with remote learning quickly arranged. Despite the challenges, the school found a silver lining, with Principal Martin Breslin sporting a unique "flood fashion statement" that brought a moment of levity to a tough situation.

Force for Good

Over the autumn term, St. Brigid's Parent and Friends Association (PFA) have made an impressive impact on school life through their tireless efforts and creative initiatives. Highlights include:

- Organising uniform donations and sales.
- Supporting school events with refreshments and decorations.
- Hosting events like an EYFS BBQ, movie nights, discos, and the memorable Christmas Bazaar.

The PFA also brought the school community together by arranging a Christmas meal for PFA, SSC, and staff members, strengthening relationships and fostering a spirit of collaboration and gratitude.



Compassion and Solidarity

Year 4 pupils at St. Brigid's Catholic Primary have been raising awareness and funds for causes close to their hearts. Ethan, a pupil with alopecia, joined forces with Mrs. Perry to educate the class about this auto-immune condition. Ethan's positive message, "It's good to be different," inspired his classmates, including Caleb, who undertook an 8-mile walking challenge to raise funds for Alopecia UK. Caleb's efforts have nearly doubled his fundraising target, demonstrating the power of friendship and community spirit.

Year 5 also took action by supporting the Brunt family's "Walk with Clay" initiative. Pupils raised an impressive £800 for "Young at Heart," a charity aiding families of children undergoing open-heart surgery at Birmingham Children's Hospital. This incredible achievement reflects the compassion and generosity of the school community.



Mini Vinnies

In October, the St. Brigid's Mini Vinnies group demonstrated the true spirit of service by helping to pack donations at the Church of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour. Working alongside volunteers from the parish, the children collected, packed, and loaded essential items into a van, ready for distribution to those in need.

Thanks to Mr. Ingram, Principal of St. James', for lending his minibus and supporting this meaningful initiative. The Mini Vinnies' dedication to helping others reflects the school's commitment to living out its Catholic values.

St Columba's Catholic Primary School

We are a school with Christ's teachings or love, peace, and justice at the heart of all we do.

Weddings and Families



In Reception, the children have been learning about weddings through role play. They explored the idea that many people marry to express their care for one another and their future families. The children enjoyed dressing up and walking down the 'aisle' to wedding music, creating a memorable and joyful experience. This activity highlighted the importance of love, care, and the bonds that unite families, laying a foundation for understanding relationships and community.

A Faith-Filled Journey

During summer term we embarked Year 5 and Year 6 students continued their Confirmation preparations with a visit from Bishop David. The Bishop engaged the children in discussions about their chosen saints and the significance of the Sacrament of Confirmation. The Confirmation service that followed was a beautiful celebration of faith. The children represented St. Columba's with reverence and pride, marking this important milestone in their spiritual journey.





God through Art

Year 3 students have been reflecting on the theme of "The Family of God," linking their learning about belonging to the Catholic Social Teaching principle of Family and Community.

Through discussions, they explored what it means to be part of the worldwide family of God. These reflections were brought to life in creative and meaningful artwork, showcasing their understanding of the interconnectedness of all people in God's creation.

Season of Creation

Year 4 held a special outdoor prayer service to honor the Season of Creation. Gathering in the school's outdoor prayer space, the children reflected on the beauty of the natural world, surrounded by trees, plants, and the soothing sounds of birds.

Through prayers and readings, the children expressed gratitude for the gifts of nature and considered their responsibilities in caring for God's creation. It was a peaceful and inspiring moment for all involved.



St James' Catholic Primary School

In the loving peace, justice and joy of Jesus, we achieve.



No to bullying

This year's Anti-Bullying Week centered on the theme of Respect, exploring how we treat one another both in person and online.

The week began with children and staff wearing odd socks to symbolize and celebrate individuality. The School Council led a powerful assembly on what respect means and shared advice on handling bullying. Their confident delivery left a lasting impression, reinforcing the importance of kindness and empathy in the school community.

School of Sanctuary

Over the past two years, St. James' Catholic Primary has worked diligently toward becoming a School of Sanctuary – a welcoming, inclusive place for all, especially refugees and asylum seekers.

In September, the school received its certification during a special assembly. This achievement reflects St. James' dedication to fostering an environment of compassion and hospitatlity.





A Celebration of Faith

On Saturday, 23rd November, Year 6 pupils from St. James' Catholic Primary received the Sacrament of Confirmation at Our Lady of Perpetual Succour Church, presided over by Bishop David.

The children spent time with Bishop David on the Friday before the ceremony, leading a prayer service and sharing insights about their chosen saints and confirmation names. Bishop David was deeply impressed by their preparation, guided by Ms. Fallon's dedication.

During the Confirmation Mass, Bishop David reminded the children in his homily that the gifts of the Holy Spirit would continue to guide them throughout their lives. It was a moving testament to the children's faith and commitment as they completed their Sacraments of Initiation.

Creativity in Action

On Tuesday, 12th November, Years 5 and 6 participated in an exciting Slam Poetry Day led by local poet Spoz. The workshop focused on themes like chocolate and friendship, encouraging students to explore their creativity and express themselves through poetry.

Working in groups, the children crafted imaginative and heartfelt poems centered around the phrase "count on me." Each group had the chance to perform their work, showcasing their talent and confidence in front of their peers.

The winning poem has been selected to be performed at the Hippodrome in Birmingham as part of the Verve Poetry Festival. A big thank you to Spoz for inspiring our students and creating such a memorable experience.



St John Fisher Catholic Primary School

Together in Christ; we love, learn and pray as one family.



Nativity

The Nativity is always a special highlight of the autumn term at St. John Fisher. This year, the children shared the story of Jesus Christ's birth through heartfelt songs, prayers, and performances for their families and the community. The celebration beautifully captured the true meaning of Christmas, reminding everyone of the love and joy that Christ brings. It was a memorable and moving event for all involved.

Wreath Making

St. John Fisher pupils continued their cherished visits to the local care home this term, strengthening bonds between the youngest and oldest members of the community. During their latest visit, children and residents collaborated to create Christmas wreaths, enjoying conversation and shared creativity. These visits are a highlight for both pupils and residents, reflecting the importance of kindness, connection, and community spirit throughout the year.





Living in Faith and Solidarity

St. John Fisher is proud to have earned the CAFOD Live Simply award this term, recognising the school's commitment to living simply, sustainably, and in solidarity with those in need.

As part of this initiative, pupils spoke to the St. John Fisher Parish during Sunday Mass, sharing the school's achievements and encouraging the community to make pledges towards simpler and more sustainable living.

This recognition is a testament to the school's dedication to caring for creation and supporting those living in poverty.

More information about the school's Live Simply projects can be found on the website https://www.stjonfsh.bham.sch.uk/catholic-life-of-our-school/ or scan the QR code.

Bringing Learning to Life



This term, St. John Fisher Catholic Primary has taken an exciting step forward in education by integrating Virtual Reality (VR) into the curriculum. Pupils have explored diverse environments such as rainforests, deserts, Viking settlements, and Ancient Egypt.

Through VR and Augmented Reality (AR), children have been able to interact with and examine objects like the human heart in Science and Egyptian masks in History, gaining deeper insights and enhancing their learning experience. These innovative tools not only support learning retention but also make lessons more engaging and immersive for all pupils.

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

To live and learn together through our Faith in Christ.



A Celebration of Unity

St. Joseph's recently celebrated Multicultural Week, a special time to honor the rich diversity of cultures and faiths within the community. The week concluded with a beautiful Multicultural Mass led by the school's Pupil Mission Team. Students embraced the opportunity to learn about and celebrate the traditions, foods, and beliefs of cultures around the world, enriching their understanding of the global community.

Giving Back Globally

As part of St. Joseph's commitment to the CAFOD Live Simply pledge, the school community has been collecting coins to support international aid efforts. With the funds raised, meaningful gifts have been purchased to help others across the globe.

This initiative reflects the school's dedication to living out the Gospel values of generosity and service.



Lord Mayor Visit

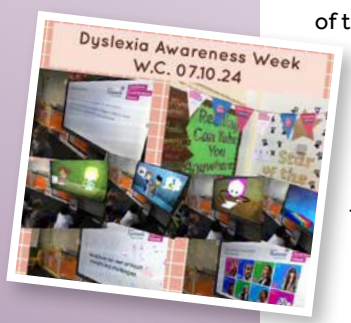
St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School was honoured to welcome the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress of Birmingham during UK Parliamentary Week. They met with every child in the school, held a special meeting with our outgoing school councillors, and proudly announced the newly elected council representatives.

This visit was an invaluable opportunity for students to learn about democracy, leadership, and British Values in action. The children were inspired by their discussions with the Lord Mayor, and the experience will remain a highlight of the term.

Dyslexia Awareness Week

St. Joseph's proudly took part in Dyslexia Awareness Week, promoting understanding and inclusion. Children engaged in activities that taught them how to support peers with dyslexia and overcome challenges together.

The week was a wonderful reminder of the school's commitment to fostering a supportive and empathetic environment for all learners.



RSPCA Workshops

St. Joseph's welcomed the RSPCA into school this term for assemblies and workshops. The sessions highlighted the importance of protecting the environment and habitats of local wildlife while also celebrating the impactful work of the RSPCA.

Students were inspired to think critically about how they can contribute to the wellbeing of animals and the natural world.

St Paul's Catholic Primary School

In the family of St Paul's, we live and learn with Jesus' loving arms around us.



A Celebration of Diversity

St. Paul's celebrated the richness of its diverse community with an incredible Asia Day this term. The event was a joyful tribute to the families within the school who have Asian heritage.

The day included traditional dance performances, displays of cultural clothing and artefacts, and multilingual books for pupils to explore. Activities like making fruit cups and mastering chopsticks added a fun, hands-on element to the celebration.

The school extends heartfelt thanks to the parents and families who made this day a success by sharing their traditions and experiences. Events like Asia Day enrich the community and emphasise the importance of belonging at St. Paul's Catholic Primary School.



Football Fun and Learning

This term, St. Paul's pupils benefited from a partnership with Birmingham City Football Club (BCFC), welcoming first- and second-year scholars to the school every Monday afternoon. These scholars listened to children read and led engaging training sessions that helped pupils develop their football skills.

On 25th November, pupils had the exciting opportunity to attend a UEFA training course at the BCFC training ground, where they competed with other schools and practised their techniques. The experience was both inspiring and enjoyable, and pupils look forward to more training sessions and competitions in the spring term.

Red Wednesday

St. Paul's joined the global effort to raise awareness of Christian persecution by commemorating Red Wednesday. This special day began with Senior Prayer Leaders attending Mass at St. Chad's Cathedral and concluded with a moving prayer service at the school. Pupils reflected on the Gospel and prayed for their persecuted brothers and sisters in Christ around the world. Red Wednesday served as a poignant reminder of the power of prayer and solidarity in the face of global challenges.



Catholic School Inspection – Celebrating Excellence

St. Paul's Catholic Primary School was proud to receive its Catholic Schools Inspection (CSI) report this October, which was overwhelmingly positive. The school achieved an overall grade of "Good," with an OUTSTANDING grade in seven out of nine areas inspected.

Inspectors commended the school's Catholic Life and Mission, Collective Worship, and Religious Education (RE), recognising the exceptional pastoral care and the family-like atmosphere within the community. One highlight from the report noted:

'[St Paul's] school is a family where pastoral care is of the highest priority for pupils, staff, and parents.'

The full report is available on the school website, showcasing the dedication and Faith-filled environment that make St. Paul's such a special place.

St Thomas Aquinas Catholic School

Christ is the centre of our School community, where we live, love, and learn together.



Celebrating Faith Together

Students and families of St. Thomas Aquinas gathered for a heartfelt Family Mass, with contributions from readers, offertory carriers, and altar servers. Fr. Stefan led the celebration with his energetic and engaging style, while the choir delivered beautiful hymns.
Year 7 students reflected, "The Mass brought our school community closer together, and we look forward to preparing for the upcoming carol service."

Faith, Fun, and Reflection

Year 10 students from St. Thomas Aquinas recently enjoyed a retreat at Soli in Staffordshire, where they participated in activities such as biking, archery, and a scenic trek with a stop for cakes and milkshakes. This experience fostered teamwork and reflection on faith in smaller groups, complemented by a beautiful Mass at Alton.

One student shared, "The trip brought us closer to each other and helped us learn more about ourselves and our faith."

The retreat concluded with a thrilling day at Alton Towers, leaving students with memories to cherish.



A Day of Adventure

On Friday, 6th September, Year 11 students from St. Thomas Aquinas embarked on their first Aquinas Experience of the year at Aztec Adventure, Upton Warren. With a glorious 25-degree day, students enjoyed a range of activities including kayaking, crate stacking, rifle and archery shooting, climbing, and orienteering. The day provided a fantastic opportunity for team building and bonding with their new form tutors. Huge thanks to Mr. Saunderson, Mr. Eburah, Mrs. Hughes, and the Year 11 tutor team for making the day memorable.

Mr. Stephenson, Head of Year, remarked, "The energy and enthusiasm displayed by the students made the day truly special."



Honoring Heroes

The St. Thomas Aquinas community came together on Monday to commemorate Remembrance Day. Beautiful readings were delivered by students, while cadets marched with pride, and Rhys from Year 9 played the Last Post with great skill.
Mrs. O'Driscoll, Lay Chaplain, said, "It was a moving tribute to those who sacrificed so much for our freedom."

St Thomas Aquinas Catholic School

Christ is the centre of our school community, where we live, love, and learn together.

Well-Deserved Fun



Following weeks of intense trial exams, Year 11 students at St. Thomas Aquinas had the chance to relax and enjoy a day filled with inflatables and laughter.

Mr. Stephenson, Head of Year, shared, "It's wonderful to see the students having fun after working so hard. Now, back to the grind next week!"



Standing Up for Justice

On 20th November, St. Thomas Aquinas united for Red Wednesday, wearing red accessories alongside uniforms to highlight the plight of persecuted Christians. Activities throughout the day culminated in a live-streamed service from St. Chad's Cathedral.

The school is fundraising to support Aid to the Church in Need and invites everyone to join by visiting their JustGiving page to make a difference.

Peru prep

Sixth Form students marked the Church's Year of Jubilee with a day at Bishop Challoner Catholic College. The day was inspiring, with stories of hope from asylum seekers and insights into Peruvian life from Fr. John, a missionary priest. These students will soon travel to Peru to support local communities in need, embodying the values of service and compassion.

A Sense of Belonging

Year 7 Retreat Day focused on the theme "Belonging to the Family of God." Students participated in team-building activities like Lego creations, a play dough talent showcase, and a lively icebreaker called 'Shabang Shabang.' A favorite activity was Bingo, which encouraged students to learn more about their peers. This day exemplified the importance of community and helped the newest students feel at home in their school family.

Leading the way

A group of Year 12 students has been raising awareness about breast cancer in collaboration with Coppafeel. Through assemblies and presentations, they highlighted the importance of self-checking and reminded everyone that breast cancer can affect all genders.

Scan the QR code shared in their sessions to learn more about self-checking and join the movement.

St Thomas More Catholic Primary School

Christ is the centre of our school community, where we live, love, and learn together.

Growing Talent and Inclusivity

Football at St. Thomas More has flourished this year, with exciting new opportunities for pupils to engage with the sport. A mixed Year 3/4 football team has been launched to promote inclusivity and encourage a love for the game among younger pupils. Additionally, the Year 5/6 girls' football team has greatly benefited from weekly coaching sessions led by an FA-trained coach. These sessions, held every Friday lunchtime, have significantly improved the team's skills, confidence, and teamwork.

The school is proud to champion girls' football, fostering equal opportunities and nurturing the talent of its players, both on and off the pitch.

New Learning Environment

This summer, St. Thomas More unveiled a newly refurbished cabin, designed to enhance the learning experience for children with additional needs. Upgrades included new flooring, electrics, and facilities, transforming the space into a bright and welcoming environment. Despite many of these pupils being nonverbal, their excitement was palpable as they skipped, hopped, and jumped their way into their new classroom. The expanded space has allowed for more activities and greater freedom, showcasing the school's commitment to providing exceptional learning opportunities for all children.

Inspiring Innovation



In September, St. Thomas More secured a fully funded STEM workshop, delivered by Hyett Education in partnership with the Royal Air Force and Defence Nuclear Enterprise. Pupils from Years 4, 5, and 6 participated in an inspiring session where they planned, built, and coded moving robots.

The workshop captivated the pupils, who enthusiastically embraced their newfound skills and the chance to explore technology in a hands-on environment.

Additionally, KS2 pupils engaged in a STEAM-based Wild Eco Builders workshop, combining science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics. The sessions encouraged critical thinking, resilience, and creativity as pupils explored sustainable architectural designs inspired by nature. Using recycled materials and Lego, they created 3D models and coded their own designs, reinforcing the importance of innovative thinking for a sustainable future.

A Magical Experience for KS2

On Monday, 2nd December, all Key Stage 2 pupils from St. Thomas More Catholic Primary were treated to a magical performance of Aladdin on Ice at the local ice rink as part of "The STM Experience."

This breathtaking rendition featured talented amateur skaters, including some who were past pupils of the school. The children were captivated by their favourite songs and the dazzling ice-skating displays, with many trying to count the dizzying spins performed by the skaters. St. Thomas More was the largest and most enthusiastic audience there—certainly the nosiest!

The event was such a success that plans are already underway to attend next year's production of Dick Whittington on Ice.

St. Peter's Catholic Primary School

Loved by Jesus, we love, we learn, we live and grow together for Him.

Building Skills and Confidence

Year 3 pupils recently enjoyed an enriching morning at Newman University, strengthening the school's valuable partnership with the institution. The children participated in a series of team-building activities designed to develop their throwing and catching skills, while also encouraging communication and teamwork. The morning was filled with energy and enthusiasm, as the pupils supported and challenged one another to improve their abilities.

The visit provided a memorable opportunity for pupils to grow both individually and as a group, embodying the Lumen Christi's commitment to offering experiences that inspire and empower its learners.

Creativity & Sustainability

Year 6 pupils, together with their parents and carers, recently collaborated on an upcycling project in their Design Technology lessons. The project focused on transforming old T-shirts into wearable art, blending sustainability with creativity. This innovative workshop brought families together in a shared creative experience, encouraging pupils to think critically about environmental responsibility while exploring their artistic potential. The project is an excellent example of Lumen Christi's dedication to combining education with real-world challenges, preparing pupils to think innovatively and responsibly about the future.



Learning in a Winter Wonderland

Year 6 pupils at St. Peter's were treated to a magical Forest School session against the backdrop of a snowy landscape.

The children immersed themselves in outdoor learning, enjoying activities such as cooking hotdogs over an open fire, sipping hot chocolate, and building snowmen. They even made snow angels, adding a touch of wonder to the day.

This session demonstrated the value of outdoor education, allowing pupils to connect with nature and develop teamwork and problem-solving skills while celebrating the beauty of winter.

Creativity and Community in Action

St. Peter's Catholic Primary School recently hosted its much-anticipated Enterprise Afternoon, a celebration of creativity, entrepreneurship, and community spirit. In preparation for the event, pupils worked tirelessly to craft unique gifts for their families and loved ones.

The afternoon was a vibrant success, with families enjoying games such as tombola, a raffle, and "Name the Teddy" alongside browsing the wonderful handmade creations. Parents and carers praised the pupils' hard work and creativity, making it a day to remember.



The event not only highlighted the importance of hands-on learning but also reinforced the community bond that is central to Lumen Christi Multi Academy's mission.