Cottesmore St Mary Catholic Primary School

Headteacher: Mrs Rachel Breen

13th November 2026

Dear parents / carers



All Saints / All Souls

Last week, children thought about All Souls' Day, which was on November 2nd. This day reminds us of people who are in Heaven. We talked about those people in Heaven that each one of us may like to remember. Some Mini Vinnies set up a prayer station where children could write prayers for those in Heaven. Thinking and praying for all those who have loved ones who are no longer here.

Remembrance Day



We have also been talking about Remembrance Day. Our Tree of Remembrance has been added to our prayer area and children have been hanging up the names of people they want to remember. Children thought about how, on 11th November, every year, we stop, think and take time out of our lives to think about those people who are in Heaven as a result of working to protect their own, and others', countries. At eleven o'clock on Remembrance Day, we stopped for a two-minute silence. Children talked about how silence is good for remembering as it helps us to stop thinking about what is going on right now or what we are going to do next but gives us time to reflect. Children thought about how they can honour and respect all those we want to remember as well as spend time thinking about all people who are in Heaven. We offer our prayers for all those in Heaven and support for those left behind.



A Prayer of Remembrance

God, thank you for the people in our lives whom we are remembering in a special way during the month of November. We thank you for being a compassionate God who walks with us in our dark moments. We are thankful for all who continue to love and support us through our grief. Lord, continue to be a light for us, giving us hope and courage.

We remember those whom you have gathered from the storm of war into the peace of your presence; may that same peace calm our fears, bring justice to all peoples, and establish harmony among the nations.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Good to be Me

This week, children have enjoyed a series of RSHE lessons based on the topic, "Good To be Me". These lessons have been created by Anti-Racist lead teachers in Brighton and Hove, along with the PSHE team and are informed by the Brighton and Hove City Council's Primary Racial Literacy Curriculum Framework.

The topic explores five key themes:

- Physical features (skin colour, hair texture and other physical characteristics)
- Identity, community, culture, ethnic heritage & religion
- Stereotypes, stereotyping and assumptions
- Prejudice and discrimination
- Historical context and structural issues.

Anti-racist education, like all our equalities education, is always appropriate to pupils' ages and stages of development and is an essential part of safeguarding. Staff are trained in Racial Literacy and have had further training on how to deal with questions around race and racism. If you have any questions, would like some more information or feel there is something you would like to inform your child's class teacher about, please get in touch.



Children in Need

Thank you so much for your kind donations for Children in Need. If you would still like to donate online, please follow the link to our JustGiving page. We have already surpassed our target and, thanks to online donations, currently at £639, as well as cash donations of £137.92. We have raised £776.92. How super. The Just Giving page will remain live over the weekend for any further contributions.

https://www.justgiving.com/page/cottesmore-st-mary-hove-10?utm_medium=FA&utm_source=CL





Praying for all families who have lost people they love. Thank you for your kind CIN donations. Wishing you am enjoyable weekend. Rachel Breen, Headteacher.

Targeted free school meals – HAF Free Clubs

Brighton & Hove's Winter HAF programme

Funded by the Department for Education, the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme provides fully funded activities over the school Christmas holidays for those in Reception to Year 11 who receive Targeted free school meals. All participants are also provided with a meal.

Winter HAF childcare and activity listings will be available to view over October half-term, to give families the opportunity to register interest and ask providers questions. **Bookings will go live at 10am on Tuesday 11th November.**

Everything available will be listed on Brighton & Hove's HAF online booking.

Dates available:

Week 1: Monday 21st, Tuesday 22nd, Wednesday 23rd and Thursday 24th December 2026

Week 2: Tuesday 29th, Wednesday 30th and Thursday 31st December 2026

Winter HAF is offering a little bit of everything. Choose from sport camps to playschemes, from art and drama activities, to family cookery workshops and Christmas celebrations, to theatre trips.

Each eligible participant can be booked on up to four HAF places over the school Christmas holidays, with one activity per day.

For children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND):

All HAF providers are expected to be inclusive and where reasonably possible accommodate individual's additional needs.The following providers have HAF specific tickets with 1:4 support in place for those with SEND where higher staff ratios might be beneficial:

- Activ8 for Kids at Bevendean and Mile Oak Primary Schools
- Artpod at High Street, Rottingdean
- House of Culture at Orange Row, Central Brighton

Brighton & Hove City Council's Childcare Inclusion Fund is available to support those with an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) or Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for children, to make additional funding available where additional staff (one-to-one) or resources would make any HAF provision more accessible.

Please visit www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/HAF to learn more about HAF, or contact HAF@brighton-hove.gov.uk with any questions.

To subscribe to the HAF mailing list for direct updates, please email HAF@brighton-hove.gov.uk with either **Subscribe to the HAF mailing list** in the subject title.



Reception September 2027 – please encourage new families to visit our school in November



If you are currently a member of our school family and have a younger child due to start school in September 2027, don't forget that, in addition to completing the online Brighton and Hove admissions form, you must also complete the school Supplementary Information Form (SIF). This can be found on the school website and is required to be delivered to the school office. **We encourage you to complete the SIF form sooner rather than later. A reminder that the deadline for Reception applications is 15th January.**

Please encourage families who are new to our school to visit one of our open days. The dates and times of these are:

- **9am - 10.15am Monday 16th November 2026**
- **9am – 10.15am Wednesday 18th November 2026**
- **9am – 10.15am Monday 23rd November 2026**
- **9am – 10.15am Wednesday 25th November 2026**

Please spread the word about Cottesmore and encourage friends and families to get in touch. We look forward to hearing from all prospective parents and are here to help in anyway. If schools don't fill, they loose vital funds so getting as many applications as possible is vital**.**

Advent Fair and Donations



Our Advent Fair will take place on **Friday 4th December 3.10pm – 4.30pm**

To help make the event a great success, we will be taking donations over the coming weeks.

We kindly invite families to drop off their donations at the **KS2 shelter** over the following two Friday's:

Friday 20th November - Wine and Chocolates

Friday 27th November - Teddies

If are unable to bring your donated item on the specified date, we would warmly welcome you to bring it to the school office at your convenience by **Thursday 3rd December.** Thank you, as always, for your generous support. We look forward to celebrating together.



Pelican Parcels

Pelican Parcels is Brighton & Hove's Baby Bank, providing essential items for babies and children aged 0 to 16 to families who need support. Their vision is a community where every family has the essentials their children need to grow, play and thrive. Pelican Parcels are encouraging people to be Secret Santa for a local child this Christmas. For many families, Christmas can be an incredibly difficult time. The expectation of 'Santa' can bring additional worry and stress when household budgets are already stretched to breaking point. They aim to help make Christmas special for local children while easing some of the stress their families face. They hope to ensure more children experience the excitement of Christmas morning and more parents start the new year without taking on additional debt.

In 2025, 1,748 children received Christmas gifts and stocking fillers through Pelican Parcels and 766 parents and carers received a gift of their own. 15,000+ gifts and stocking fillers were donated by supporters. In 2026, they're aiming to reach even more families through additional donation drop-off points and extended opening hours at their warehouse in Hove. This year they're also taking part in the Big Give Christmas Challenge 2026. From 1st to 8th December, donations to Pelican Parcels through the Big Give will be doubled. You can donate brand-new toys, books, craft kits, games and toiletry gift sets at their warehouse or at one of their donation drop-off points across Brighton & Hove. To help keep Christmas affordable for families, they particularly welcome gifts that don't require batteries or additional purchases to be enjoyed. To ensure donations are suitable for as many children and families as possible, they ask that gifts are not overly personalised. They also ask that donations avoid clothing, jewellery, make-up and perfume. The exceptions are pyjamas, hat-and-scarf sets and socks although we'd ask that these don't have Christmas-themed designs. Financial donations are also welcome and can help cover the costs of running their Christmas campaign and enable them to support even more families. Every contribution, no matter the size, helps bring the magic of Christmas to local children. For more information gift ideas as well as Amazon wish list, please follow the link.

https://www.pelicanparcels.org.uk/our-services/christmas-campaign/?fbclid=PAdGRzdgVF9E5leHRuA2FlbQIxMQBwZG9mAnNydGMGYXBwX2lkDzU2NzA2NzM0MzM1MjQyNwABp_VD58wrKYFL1SNjb3PfQbWEgH0J4JEMDOVGfGsfCiGJ3JZJ7QMO0GZXDBRp_aem_6qP0KpkScrl-xhP-O0DLlQ



Year 5 and 6 Film Show – 20th November

.To book tickets, please use the following link.

https://www.ticketsource.com/focpevents/t-yzpdlrl

If your child would like to attend this event and is in receipt of targeted FSM or if you have financial challenges at the moment, please reach out to the school as we would like to be able to help so that as many children who would like to attend this fun evening can do so.



Governors' Building Fund and Gift Aid

As an Aided school, we are required to provide 10% of any money received for capital on maintenance works.

At present, all parents are asked to make a minimum voluntary contribution of £10 per term, or £30 a year, PER PUPIL (not family) into a ring-fenced fund so that we are able to meet these financial commitments. Some families are in a position to pay more, for which we are extremely grateful. The 10% is required because Cottesmore St Mary is a Catholic Aided school. A Catholic Aided school is owned by the Diocese. However, an Aided school is funded by the Local Authority for day to day running costs. For example, the salaries of the staff, utilities and resources. Annually, Aided schools are able to bid for maintenance money, via the Diocese, who in turn are provided with money by the Department of Education. If bids are successful, an Aided school has to then fund 10% of the overall amount offered. Aided schools generate this 10% via annual or termly parental Gift Aid donations. **As an Aided school, if we are unable to provide 10% towards successful bids, the money is lost and any essential capital or maintenance spend has to come out of money that is provided by the Local Authority for the children. This year we were able to have brand new heating throughout the whole school as, thanks to the donations, we could pay the 10% needed to win the bid.** We ask that families create an annual or termly standing order for their contributions for each child that attends Cottesmore. Please don't forget to set an end date, for all standing orders, to be the summer that your child leaves Year 6 as we can't offer refunds once your child has left the school. Payments can be arranged either via online banking or your mobile banking app for ease. It is also helpful if you complete the Gift Aid declaration form if you are a UK tax payer. Gift Aid is a Government backed scheme that allows the school to reclaim an additional 25p of tax for every £1.00 that you donate at no additional cost to you. This also goes towards releasing more money for our building fund. This extra money is also vital so please do contact the office if you need the form to be resent. Thank you so much.

Christmas at Cottesmore – Nativity Liturgies

- **Year 6 Monday 14th December at 2.30 pm**
- **Reception Tuesday 15th December at 9.15 am**
- **Year 5 Tuesday 15th December at 2.30 pm**
- **Year 2 Wednesday 16th December at 9.15 am**
- **Year 4 Wednesday 16th December at 2.30 pm**
- **Year 1 Thursday 17th December at 9.15 am**
- **Year 3 Thursday 17th December at 2.30 pm**

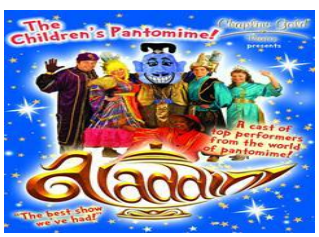
Please can all children dress in school uniform unless directed otherwise by their class teacher (no PE kits). Some children will dress up and the school will provide these costumes. If your child has a nativity play at 9.15am, once you have dropped your child off with the class teachers at the usual start time, you can head straight to the hall. We will reopen Radinden Manor gates at 9.05am but they will close 9.15am. If your child has a nativity play at 2.30pm, Radinden Manor gates will open at 2.20pm and they will close at 2.30pm. The office won't have capacity to escort latecomers through the building. We look forward to celebrating with you all.

Aladdin Pantomime for KS2 – 25th November

Chaplin's Christmas Panto are coming to school to perform Aladdin to KS2 (Years 3 – 6). *'Packed solid with comedy, excitement and adventure, the children will love to cheer their hero ALADDIN and boo the evil ABANAZAR. They will roar with laughter at the antics of WISHEE WASHEE & WIDOW TWANKY and gasp with amazement when the GENIE appears'* . The voluntary contribution required, in order for the theatre show to go ahead is **£4.10.** Please pay via ParentPay by **13th November.**

Dick Whittington Pantomime for KS1 – 10th December.

The Rainbow Theatre are coming to school to perform an interactive Pantomime for all children in KS1 (Reception, Year 1 and Year 2). All children will enjoy watching the show and some will even have the opportunity to be part of the show, which will retell the story of Dick Whittington (those wanting to take part will be randomly chosen on the day by the theatre company). h As this show will form part of an immersive day for Reception children, they are invited come to school either dressed up as a Fairy Tale / Pantomime character or they can wear any other home clothes should they prefer. Children in Year 1 and Year 2 are to wear school uniform / PE kits as usual. The voluntary contribution required, in order for the theatre show to go ahead is **£3.30.** Please pay via Parent Pay by **27th November** at the latest, though as soon as possible is appreciated.





Christmas Dinner

KS2 Christmas Dinner - Wednesday 16th December.

If your child chooses to have lunch on their Christmas dinner day, you will be debited the usual amount of £2.65 from your Parent Pay account. Children can, of course, still bring in a packed lunch if they do not want a Christmas lunch and you will not be charged. On this day, children are invited to wear colourful party clothes / Christmas jumpers to help with the festivities. On Thursday 17th December, children in Reception, Years 1 and 2 will have their Christmas Dinner. Due to the popularity of this, there will be no school dinners available on this day for your KS2 child. We ask that you provide a packed lunch from home on Thursday 17th December. If your child is registered for free school meals (Pupil Premium) and you will require a school packed lunch to be provided for them, please email the office by 10th December.

KS1 Christmas Dinner - Thursday 17th December.

All KS1 children will automatically be offered a FREE Christmas lunch on this day. On this day, children are invited to wear colourful party clothes / Christmas jumpers to help with the festivities. On Wednesday 16th December, there will be no school dinners available for KS1 children due to it being the Christmas dinner day for those in KS2. We ask that you provide a packed lunch, for KS1 children, from home on Wednesday 16th December. If your child is registered for free school meals (Pupil Premium) and you will require a school packed lunch to be provided for them, please email the office by 10th December.



Friends of Cottesmore Primary

Newsletter

November 2026

Welcome

Thanks to everyone who came to the AGM on Wednesday 7th October. It was great to see so many and a special welcome to the reception parents. It was lovely to hear so many offers of help.

*We wanted to say a big thank you to **Helen** who has stepped down as Vice Chair. Helen will continue with second hand uniform, and Quiz Night.*

*And thank you **Melis** for the incredible PTA support you've given us..*

Thank you to Anita and Ligia for taking responsibility for Vice Chair – welcome to the role.

Our fundraising

Over the past year we've raised a total of more than £17,000 which has paid for lovely things for our children including:

- Forest school improvements
- New djembe drums
- New speakers
- Reception, year 3 and 6 discos
- Year 6 leavers books
- Sponsorship of the Smartphone Free Childhood event
- Supporting the children's parade iPads

Every penny raised goes directly to support school and we couldn't have achieved this without you.

Dates for your diary

Thursday 19th November Quiz Night

Friday 20th November Year 5 and 6 film night

4th December Advent fair, 3.10-4.30pm

See Ping to book your tickets!

Join in the fundraising!

Please join our event WhatsApp groups to help out with specific fundraising. Ask your class rep to add you.

We are looking for people to help with dedicated roles:

- Reception and year 3 disco lead
- Raffle lead

Can you help? Speak to your class rep.

FOCP Committee

Chair	Dawn Aquino
Vice chairs	Anita Sword, Ligia Coelho
Treasurer	Katie Head
Secretary	David Owen
Social media, newsletter	Louise Head

Thanks to **Liz** for leading on the Easter event, **Jodie** on cake sales, **Colette** on movie nights, **Helen** for organising Quiz Night, uniform and our graphics, and **Jeremy** for being our teacher lead.

Let's make it a great year of fundraising!

Ways to help fundraise

Do you work for Amex?

You can fundraise as part of their **Global Giving Program.** Here's how:

- Any money an Amex employee donates to FOCP through the program is matched by Amex - therefore doubled!
- They support employees volunteering to support FOCP. When you volunteer your time, Amex pays the PTA £20 an hour for each person. So if 5 employees spend 10 hours helping, Amex would pay FOCP £1,000. How amazing!

If you could help in this way, please get in touch for more information.







Next event



Do you have an idea? Keen to sponsor?

We welcome fundraising ideas and new sponsors! Please get in touch with your class rep or the committee to let us know.

MONDAY 9th	• 9am - 10am School Tours for Reception 2027
TUESDAY 10th	• World Science Day – Science for and with society • 9am - 10am School Tours for Reception 2027
WEDNESDAY 11th	9am - 10am School Tours for Reception 2027 Remembrance Day (Remembrance Sunday is Sunday 8th) Year 3 St Cecilia Forest School am Nurture group 2 Forest Scchool Year 1 St George Forest School pm
THURSDAY 12th	Year 6 Height & Weight check am KS1 Michael Rosen Day – Huge Poetry Party
FRIDAY 13th	• Year 5 Swimming • World Kindness Day • Children in Need - non school uniform in exchange for money towards collection
MONDAY 16th	• Anti-Bullying Week – Break the silence • 9am - 10am School Tours for Reception 2027
TUESDAY 17th	• 9am - 10am School Tours for Reception 2027 • School trip to Glyndebourne – year TBC
WEDNESDAY 18th	• 9am - 10am School Tours for Reception 2027 • Year 2 St Monica Forest School am • Nurture group 1 Forest Scchool • Year 1 St Teresa Forest School pm
THURSDAY 19th	• PTA Quiz Night 6pm – 10pm.
FRIDAY 20th	Year 5 swimming Connor Saunders Foundation to talk with Years 5 and 6 Year 5 and 6 Film Show 3.15pm – 5pm (school hall).
MONDAY 23rd	
TUESDAY 24th	Year 6 Connor Saunders First Aid course
WEDNESDAY 25th	• Year 2 St Patrick Forest School am • Nurture group 2 Forest School • Year 1 St George Forest School pm • Years 3 – 6 Aladdin Pantomine in school hall for children
THURSDAY 26th	
FRIDAY 27th	Year 5 swimming
DECEMBER	
MONDAY 30th	
TUESDAY 1st	Advent begins School Nurse drop-in session
WEDNESDAY 2nd	• Choir to Brighton Centre for One Voice Singing Festival (rehearsal in day and show in evening) • Nurture group 1 Forest School • Year 1 St Teresa Forest School pm
THURSDAY 3rd	
FRIDAY 4th	Reception and Year 1 parent / carers Phonics workshop. School hall. 8.50am PTA Advent Fair, school hall and outside, 3.15pm – 4.30pm. Please bring donations of cakes and sweet treats
MONDAY 7th	
TUESDAY 8th	
WEDNESDAY 9th	Forest School Free Session Nurture group 2 Forest School Year 1 St George Forest School pm PTA uniform sale after school – items between £1 and £2
THURSDAY 10th	Interactive Fairy Tale Show for Reception - Year 2. Dick Whittington. Fairytale costumes or party clothes for children in Reception only. Year 1 and 2 school uniform.
FRIDAY 11th	
MONDAY 14th	Year 6 Nativity - 2.30pm
TUESDAY 15th	Reception Nativity - 9.15am Year 5 Nativity - 2.30pm
WEDNESDAY 16th	• Year 2 Nativity - 9.15am • Year 4 Nativity - 2.30pm • Christmas Dinners: KS2 (these year groups wear Christmas jumper / colourful clothes). All children in KS1 to bring a packed lunch this day.
THURSDAY 17th	Year 1 Nativity - 9.15am Christmas Dinners: KS1 (these year groups wear Christmas jumpers / colourful clothes). All children in KS2 to bring a packed lunch this day. Y3 Nativity - 2.30pm
FRIDAY 18th	Class parties for all school and Father Christmas to visit Reception – Year 3. • School finishes for Christmas holidays
	CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY **Monday 21st December – Friday 1st January**
JANUARY 2027	
MONDAY 4th	• **INSET DAY – school closed to pupils**
TUESDAY 5th	
WEDNESDAY 6th	
THURSDAY 7th	
FRIDAY 8th	
MONDAY 11th	
TUESDAY 12th	
WEDNESDAY 13th	• Year 6 St Maximillian Forest School am • Year 1 St George Forest School pm
THURSDAY 14th	
FRIDAY 15th	Closing Date for Local Authorities applications 2026/2027