

St Mary's Catholic School

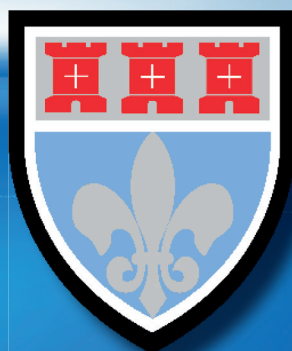
Prospectus



National Teaching School
designated by



National College for
Teaching & Leadership




Ofsted
Outstanding

St Mary's Catholic School



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Headteacher's Welcome

I am delighted to welcome you to St Mary's. Choosing a secondary school is a very important decision for all families. We want to share with you as much as we can about our school, to help you to make an informed choice. We think St Mary's is an excellent choice of secondary school but to help you to determine this for yourselves, I strongly recommend that you talk to families whose children currently attend St Mary's. I am sure that they will speak very positively about their experiences.

I would normally also strongly encourage you to visit the school, however at the time of writing, this unfortunately is not possible due to social distancing and health and safety guidance, therefore I would recommend that you peruse the wealth of information about St Mary's on our school website (<http://www.stmarysnewcastle.co.uk/>), including information that would normally be shared with prospective parents and students at our Year 6 Open Evening. For example, a virtual tour of the school, videos messages from key staff, presentations from our students, information about our subject departments and extra-curricular opportunities in school, as well as an array of other information which will allow you to find out about our outstanding facilities and learn more about the excellent, all-round education that we offer.

You may also like to read inspection reports from Ofsted and the Diocese which judge the school as Outstanding and our most recent Newsletters and Shine Bulletins which highlight many of our students' achievements.

Academy Status, National Support School, National Teaching School

Although our school name remains St Mary's Catholic School, we have been an independent Academy since 2013. In June 2020, we were also delighted to join the Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust, one of four large trusts within the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle. As an Outstanding school, we were also appointed by the government as a National Support School in 2011, with the mandate to share our best practice in academic achievement with other schools nationwide. We were also delighted to be awarded National Teaching School status by the government in June 2017, with the remit of leading teacher training across the north-east of England, as well as providing leadership development and school improvement support to other schools in the region. In 2019, we were ranked 1st, as the leading state school in the north-east, in the Real Schools' Guide to state schools nationally.

St Mary's is one of the most over-subscribed schools in the north-east. Based on exceptional parental demand for places, we were awarded funding for expansion in 2016 and this allowed us to build and open an extension to our fantastic building which has allowed our Admission Number to rise to 225, though current years 7-11 each have around 240 students, due to successful appeals for places.

Outlined in the rest of this introduction are some of the key

reasons why St Mary's remains such a popular choice of school for so many families and students.

St Mary's uniqueness

St Mary's is the only mixed, 11-18 Catholic secondary school in Newcastle but it is not just for Catholics. We welcome equally students from a variety of Faith and ethnic backgrounds. We provide an outstanding, all-round education, in a Catholic/Christian context, aiming to live out the values of the Gospel in every aspect of school life, following the example of Christ. Many of these values are universal and this explains why children from all backgrounds thrive at the school. St Mary's School Aims are included in full towards the back of this Prospectus. Most, but not all, students join St Mary's from our excellent Catholic partner primaries with whom we share the same ethos. Our community is enriched by a growing number of children from other excellent schools in Newcastle and beyond, including from overseas.

Core values

High quality relationships are at the heart of our ethos and explain, more than anything else, why we are such a successful school. Children are extremely well cared for at St Mary's. Staff value and nurture each student as a unique individual, blessed with God-given gifts and talents. We offer students wonderful opportunities for spiritual growth and development, to support them on their journey in this life and to prepare them for the life to come. We encourage our students to develop their gifts and talents to the full, for their own sake and in the service of others.

Striving for excellence

We strive for excellence in all that we do, whether supporting our students towards excellent academic achievement, or providing high quality opportunities for their all-round development. We ensure that outstanding pastoral care, excellent teaching and high quality learning are at the heart of school life. Most importantly, we help our students to develop superbly as well rounded, highly educated individuals, fully prepared to take their place successfully in the wider world, as happy, confident, self-aware young people with a sense of service to their communities.



Top regional ranking for academic excellence

In the 2019 national performance tables, the most recently published, results were again extremely strong at both GCSE and A level and the following pages provide more detail. The 2019 results are among the very highest in the region for raw attainment. For example, the 2019 English & Maths grade 5+ was 65% and this was the 4th highest in the Northeast, with 80% grade 4+ and this was 7th in the Northeast (out of around 150 schools). In 2020, 83% of our students achieved English and Maths Grade 4+ and 68% Grade 5+. Again, this was one of the highest in the region.

Over the last five years, an average of over 80% of our GCSE students have obtained the A*-C (now grades 9-4) benchmark in the core subjects of English and maths. A notable feature of our outstanding results is the exceptional performance of our upper ability pupils. For the past three

of a school's key exam subject entries and measures how far above (or below) national averages students achieve compared to their starting points. Our "value-added" and "progress" has been superb for many years now.

A level results are now among the strongest in the north-east. In 2019, over 30% of academic A level entries were A*-A, 57% A*-B and 79% A*-C. These are well above national averages. In 2020, 47% of academic A level entries were A*-A, 75% A*-B and 93% A*-C. Again, they were well above national averages. The pass rate for vocational subjects was equally impressive, with 100% of grades being Merit or above and an average of 80% Distinction or starred Distinction, in both 2019 and 2020. Each year, students move on to higher education at universities, many going to the very best ones, to study a wide range of degree courses, including medicine, dentistry, sciences, law, architecture, languages, humanities and education. This year, we are delighted that the vast majority of our students have gained places at Russell Group universities, including Oxbridge.



years, over 30% of all GCSE grades have been A*- A (now grades 9-7), despite the increased rigour of the newly reformed GCSEs. This is way above the national average and reflects the excellent teaching and stretching of our most able. It also reflects the changing nature of St Mary's intake over the last few years, with an above average proportion of upper ability pupils in each year group.

Furthermore, in the 2019 national performance tables, St Mary's ranked in the top 12% of schools in the north-east (out of around 150 schools) for overall progress across all subjects. The key subjects of English, maths, sciences, history, geography, religious education and modern foreign languages all performed exceptionally well. From 2017-2019 students gained on average over half a grade above their expected progress across eight GCSE subjects, the DfE's Progress 8 measure. Nationally, in 2019, this ranked the school in the top 20% of secondaries out of over 3000. This is the most accurate measure of gauging a school's overall academic strength, as it covers the largest proportion

Positive climate for learning at St Mary's

St Mary's is an orderly, well-disciplined community where learning flourishes. Excellent behaviour plays a major part in our continued success. Students mix really well together and there is a positive and happy atmosphere here. Ofsted and the Diocese described our students' behaviour as outstanding. We have high expectations of students in this regard. Rules are simple, sensible and consistently applied so that students feel safe and secure and know what is expected of them. We praise students for their efforts and celebrate their achievements in many different ways. We believe that such a positive climate promotes learning and inspires students to fulfil their potential.

Partnership with parents

We place a high value on working closely in partnership with parents to ensure the best for your children. Should you decide to entrust your child into our care, I can assure you that we will give your child an excellent, all-round education. Once again, I encourage you to talk to families whose children currently attend St Mary's, peruse the abundance of information about our school on the website and choose St Mary's for your child's secondary education. Please also do get in touch with Miss Largue, Assistant Headteacher Pastoral, on the school telephone number, if you would like to discuss any aspect of school life or have any questions at all.

I really don't think there has been a better time to join St Mary's and we would be delighted to welcome your children to our school next academic year.

Emma Patterson
Headteacher
September 2020

Academic Achievement

St Mary's - an outstanding school for academic achievement

St Mary's is recognised locally and nationally as an outstanding school for academic achievement. Based on our sustained high academic performance over time, the school was approached by central government to become a National Support School in 2011. We are one of just a handful of National Support Schools in the North East, chosen from the small group of outstanding secondaries across the region. This work entails sharing our best practice to support schools regionally and nationally to raise academic achievement.

We were also designated a Teaching School by central government in summer 2017, with the mandate to develop high-quality teaching across the region, including the training of new teachers for the profession. In each of our last four Ofsted and Diocesan inspections, St Mary's academic achievement has been judged outstanding.

Outstanding academic 'attainment' at St Mary's

For a number of years, our GCSE results have been well above national averages. Over the past three years, 86% of grades in English and Maths have been 9-4 (A*-C equivalent), with 72% of grades 5 or above (A*-B equivalent). Furthermore, 31% of all grades in GCSE English and Maths have been Grades 9-7 (A*/A equivalent) during this period. The proportion of students gaining Grades 9-4 (A*-C) in the separate sciences of Biology, Chemistry and Physics over the past three years has been 99%, with an average of 45% of students achieving Grade 9-7 (A*-A equivalent) across the three separate science subjects. These results in the core subjects are among the very highest in the North-East. In the past three years, 74% of students in RE have gained a Grade 5 or above. Three-year average results in Humanities and Modern Foreign Languages are very impressive too, with 71% of students gaining Grade 9-5 (A*-B equivalent) in History or Geography, and 62% gaining 9-5 in French or Spanish. With an average Level 2 pass rate of 91% over the past three years, vocational subjects are also very successful. In fact, over 35% of all vocational grades have been Distinctions or above during this period.

Outstanding academic 'progress' at St Mary's

Our 'attainment' scores are very impressive, but they are not the most important indicator of our performance. Most important of all is the progress our students make between Year 7 and Year 11. This is a school's 'value added', or 'pupil progress' score and it is something that we advise parents to check when evaluating a school. St Mary's 'pupil progress' has been exceptionally high for 8 years in succession. Our average Progress 8 score over the past three years is 0.51, which is significantly higher than the national average. This means that students achieve, on average, half a grade higher than expected in all their GCSE subjects. You can be confident that your child will be stretched and challenged to fulfil his or her academic potential at St Mary's, whatever their starting point. This outstanding pupil progress can only be achieved when teaching and learning, the curriculum and, most importantly, the ethos and behaviour climate of the school are all outstanding. This is certainly the case here at St Mary's.



Sixth Form achievement

Our results in Sixth Form are excellent too. Our three-year average pass rate is 99% in all A Level courses in the Sixth Form, with 87% of students gaining A*-C grades and over 66% achieving A*-B. Most impressively of all, 40% of grades awarded have been A*-A in the past three years. In vocational subjects, results are equally impressive. Over the past three years, 98% of students have achieved a Merit or above, with 77% gaining a Distinction or above. We confidently predict even stronger A Level performance from future year groups, as the ability profile of students coming through the school now is significantly higher than several years ago (see Key Stage 3, below).

All A-level students progress to degree courses at university

In each of the last 5 years, the vast majority of our A level students selecting Higher Education have progressed successfully to degree courses at their chosen universities. We have successfully prepared our students for entry into leading institutions such as Oxbridge, St Andrews, Durham, Bristol, Edinburgh and other Russell Group universities to study Medicine, Law, Humanities, Languages, Maths and many other challenging degree courses.

An exceptionally strong Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4

As a result of the changing make-up of students joining St Mary's over recent years, we now have very strong academic year groups, among the strongest in the North-East. For example, in Years 8 to 11, more than 77% of students (i.e. over 180 per year group) achieved the 'expected standard' in Reading and Maths in their Standard Attainment Tests at the end of Year 6. In fact, on average, 24% of students in Years 8 to 11 achieved the 'high score' of 110 or above in both areas. Children joining the school in September 2020 will, therefore, be joining a school with vibrant and able year groups ahead of them.

We confidently expect all these year groups to achieve very high levels of performance at GCSE. As they move through to Sixth Form, A Level attainment will build even more on the strong results seen in recent years. It is important, therefore, for parents to have this overall profile of a school's current year groups to help understand the kind of academic environment that their child would be joining.



What others have said about St Mary's

The following two pages summarise what Ofsted, the Diocese, parents, government ministers and others have said about St Mary's over the last few years.

Roger Pope, Chair of the National College for Teaching and Learning said:

"I'd like to congratulate St Mary's Catholic School - they should be very proud of this achievement.

"Teaching schools are at the heart of school improvement. They're supporting other schools, attracting and training the best new teachers and developing the next generation of leaders. At NCTL, we want to do all we can to support their work."

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Ofsted Outstanding

Since our last Ofsted inspection, we have constantly improved in all areas of school life. Below are some comments taken from the last Ofsted report:

- The Catholic ethos shines through everything the school does, placing equality of opportunity at its heart.
- Students' achievements are outstanding as is their personal development and well-being.
- Behaviour, which is excellent, has improved very significantly in the last three years.
- Good quality teaching, combined with students' excellent attitudes to learning, leads to outstanding progress.
- In the best lessons, work is fast-paced and challenging and activities are varied and interesting, so students really enjoy learning and work very hard.
- Teachers check students' learning carefully, explanations are crystal clear and work is made relevant to examination requirements.
- The school has been very successful in developing and extending the curriculum, which is now outstanding.
- An excellent range of residential experiences, visits and extra-curricular activities is offered at the school and well-attended by all learners.

- It is an extremely diverse and harmonious community where all faiths contribute to its spiritual, moral and cultural life.
- Care, guidance and support are outstanding.
- Tutors know the students very well and build very good relationships with them.

RE Inspection

- St Mary's is a beacon of excellence, a light for all to see.
- The highest standards of moral and ethical behaviour are promoted through the clear and consistent communication of the school's expectations and are embodied in the school's aims.
- The outstanding outcomes in Religious Education are only to be expected given the outstanding teaching and assessment evident within the Department.
- There is an outstanding attitude to learning which was evident in all lessons observed.
- The experience of living and working in a praying community has had a profound and visible effect on the development of pupils.
- Pupils are actively encouraged to value themselves as unique individuals with abilities to learn and achieve, and to value everyone else in the community as being of equal worth, with much to contribute to the life of the school.

English Inspection

- The overall effectiveness of English is outstanding.
- GCSE results demonstrated exceptionally strong progress and there are clear indications that Year 11 students are making even better progress this year.
- Students' strong involvement in learning and excellent progress results from teaching which is routinely good and often outstanding.
- Lessons are fun and students say they make you think. Teachers gain students' interest through relevant activities which make good use of resources.
- Whatever their level of attainment, students value the consistently good support they receive to meet their personal targets. Marking corrects errors, gives specific guidance and comments on achievements in reading and speaking as well as writing.
- A good variety of enrichment activities complements classroom work.

Parental survey

Following a recent Year 7 parental survey, the following positive feedback was received from the majority of respondents to each of these statements.



I believe that the school supports my child well on his/her Faith journey.

The transition arrangements for my child to settle in when he/she started St Mary's were excellent.

My child enjoys attending St Mary's and is happy at the school.

My child is making good progress at St Mary's.

St Mary's students are well-behaved and there is an excellent climate for learning.

Staff expect my child to work hard and do his/her best.

I am comfortable approaching the school with questions, problems or complaints.

There is a good range of activities in school that my child finds interesting and enjoyable.

St Mary's is led and managed well.

Other Year 7 parental comments

Our son has thoroughly enjoyed his first year at St Mary's. He feels happy and secure and challenged in his work. We felt that all the teachers really know our child – his strengths and areas to improve. Thank you for taking such good care of him and his education. We are extremely happy with St Mary's. All the staff, from the office to Heads of Year, have been great and so helpful. Thanks.

An excellent first year at St Mary's. Staff have been great and so focused on encouraging my daughter to thrive. I'm looking forward to my other children coming to this outstanding school.

Thank you for all your hard work and for teaching my child who thoroughly enjoys coming to school and has flourished this year.

Our son has really enjoyed his first year at St Mary's. He has been really happy in his form this year and has made lots of friends. Thank you.

Our daughter has fully immersed herself into school life. She seems to have joined every club on offer to her and is full of enthusiasm for school. A great first year.

Our child has made great progress this year, academically and socially. He is a quiet boy but has made some good friends and his confidence is growing by the day. It is lovely to see.





St Mary's School Building

We have now been in our new school building for nine years and it continues to provide us with an inspirational resource for students and staff alike. The building is spacious, light, airy and conducive to an outstanding climate for teaching and learning.

On entering the school, you walk in to the impressive atrium, which forms the central space of the school, and it is from here that the main teaching areas radiate outwards. Students soon find their way around as everything leads back to the atrium. The atrium space has developed a life of its own, not only for teaching and learning activities but also as a meeting place for staff and students on a daily basis.

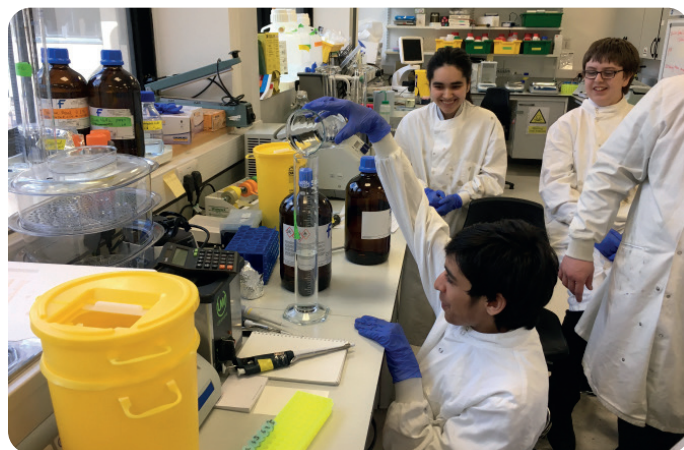


This space has also been the venue for concerts, parents' evenings, staff meetings and, most memorably, for whole school gatherings at different times of the year, including Remembrance Day services, Christmas celebrations and Lenten liturgies. Overlooking the atrium, at the heart of the school, is the school Chapel, a place for reflection and prayer.

Along the front of the school is the spacious main hall together with the attractive dining room to the east and the library and the excellent sports facilities to the west of the main entrance. The sports facilities include a four-court sports hall, a superb activity studio and a modern fitness suite equipped with the latest in fitness machines. The fitness suite has proved to be very popular with students and staff.

The main teaching areas are accessed from the central atrium with classrooms that are bright, spacious and fully equipped with interactive whiteboards and modern furniture and fittings. Each year group has its own set of toilets, landscaped yard area and an entrance where lockers are located. There is also a very large field at the back of the school, which is open to the students in fine weather. This year we have also worked with Newcastle City Council and community groups to open up a cycle access from the school grounds onto the nearby wagon way which will be hugely beneficial once it is officially opened.

There is a dedicated Sixth Form area found on the second level. Two years ago we saw the opening of a significant revamp of the Sixth Form area which included a café-style work area, group study room as well as dedicated learning resource centres with ICT facilities. The new Sixth Form centre is a really impressive addition to our outstanding facilities and it is clear that this area has made an immeasurable



difference to the students. It has provided the opportunity for students to complete their education in an environment with high-quality learning facilities.

Our continued popularity and success, previously involved St Mary's successfully bidding for government funding for a small extension of its building. The extension has now been open for four years and has created additional teaching space for current and future students. It matches the build quality and visual appearance of the existing building and has created more space along the central corridor to enjoy an outstanding education in first class facilities.

Last year, we focussed on improving our dining facilities. This involved some alterations to our main dining facility as well as opening up a doorway and extending into the main hall in order to accommodate our increasing number of students. This allows students to enjoy their social time more fully.

An outstanding education is essential for our students' life chances and this extension will help us to strengthen still further the quality of education that we can give to our young people from our local community.

Transition from Primary School to St Mary's

St Mary's is part of a Family of Schools serving young people of the Catholic faith and of other faiths from all over the city and parts of North Tyneside.

St Mary's Family of Schools consists of:

- St Alban's R.C. Primary School, Walker
- St Catherine's R.C. Primary School, Jesmond
- St Charles' R.C. Primary School, Gosforth
- St Lawrence's R.C. Primary School, Byker
- St Mary's R.C. Primary School, Forest Hall
- St Oswald's R.C. Primary School, Gosforth
- St Stephen's R.C. Primary School, Longbenton
- St Teresa's R.C. Primary School, Heaton
- St Vincent's R.C. Primary School, Walker

Students are also welcomed from many other primary schools across the city and North Tyneside

The Family of Schools work very closely with each other with many projects and activities offered to students from Year 4 to ease the transition to secondary school. We find that most children settle quickly and really enjoy life at St Mary's, their new school. Parents are often surprised at just how easily their children manage the various changes such as the travelling, the larger school, the older students and the many different lessons. However, we work hard to ensure that the transition is as easy as can be.

Strong primary/secondary links

Successful transition starts while the children are still in their primary schools. Regular meetings are held between ourselves and our feeder primary schools which together make up the St Mary's Family of Schools. The schools work together on various initiatives and transition programmes. For example, Year 4 students come to St Mary's for Science sessions and Year 5 attend a topical conference exploring themes such as Climate Change, Fairtrade and Respect, as

well as a day of high school lessons. In the summer term, all Year 6 children who will be starting St Mary's in September attend the school for two full days during which they have a taste of what high school life will be like. These days also provide the children with the opportunity to meet their new form class, make new friends and get to know the teachers and the layout of the school. In addition to this, our teachers visit the primary schools to meet the students and to gather information in order to ensure that the transition process is smooth. We liaise very closely and listen to what our primary colleagues tell us about your children. This in turn helps us to respond effectively to their needs, ensuring that all children will be happy and settle in easily at St Mary's.

Partnership with parents

Our partnership with parents is crucial. Your child's success depends on the quality of our work together. There is no substitute for personal experience so we encourage parents to tour the school during the working day. Simply telephone to make an appointment. In the summer term, there is a further meeting for parents to provide you with lots of information about the transition and to give you the opportunity to meet key staff and to share any new information.



St Mary's Catholic Distinctiveness

Parents choosing to send their child to St Mary's are opting specifically for education within the setting of a Catholic school. We are part of the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle and, as such, we belong to the strong family of Catholic primary and secondary schools throughout the north-east. This is a very supportive network of schools with whom we share the same ethos.

We are proud of our Catholic tradition and take seriously our responsibility to nurture the Faith in our young people and to support them on their spiritual journey through life. We have the huge responsibility of helping to prepare our students for this life and their life to come.

Every day, students have the opportunity to join with their form tutor and fellow students in Morning Prayer, either in the form class, chapel or in assembly. This may be led by tutors but often it is the students themselves who lead prayer or who ask for prayers for particular people or causes. It is a wonderful part of school life and greatly appreciated by many students and staff.

There are also regular opportunities for collective worship throughout the year, in the form of weekly voluntary masses on Friday mornings and special liturgies. The school atrium has been the venue in our new school for whole school gatherings at different times of the year, including a Remembrance Day service, Christmas service and a Maundy Thursday service.

There are also increasing opportunities for reflection away from school. Each year group goes on annual retreat and students are also invited to attend the diocesan schools' summer festival, which is also a very popular event with our students.

In addition to this there is an annual whole school Mass held in July. This is a fantastic event involving all our students, celebrating our year together.

Every few years, we welcome the Diocesan Youth Ministry Team who lead the whole community in a week-long mission. This event helps to further increase links between parishes and the school which continue to grow in strength. We are enriched by children and staff of other faiths and we are proud of our inclusive approach to spiritual development. We actively seek opportunities in RE, form time and as part of the wider school life to explore how the varying faith traditions complement each other and strengthen us in our everyday lives.

The school is proud of the work it does in what we call faith in action, through our support for many good causes throughout the year. We are always so impressed by the generosity of our students in their charitable giving and by the care and concern which they show towards those less fortunate than themselves, at home and abroad.

In recent years, we have collected hampers for the region's homeless and raised money to send Sixth Form students to Zambia to support a school for children. Students really do try to live out the message of the gospel.

Whatever your child's faith background, you can be assured that at St Mary's your child will have the opportunity to explore and develop their spiritual life in a secure and supportive environment, where tolerance, mutual respect and learning from each other are some of our guiding principles.



A Caring School

We pride ourselves on being a caring school. St Mary's is a happy place, where order and respect for others underpin all of our dealings with one another. Our aim is to create an environment where every child feels safe and where everyone can succeed. The welfare of our students is vitally important and if there are any concerns we are committed to dealing with them effectively and swiftly.

The role of the Tutor

Students are put into tutor groups when they arrive at St Mary's. This group is a mixed-ability group made up of students from different primary schools but please be assured that we keep friends together, to ensure a confident start.



Within this group they will attend some lessons together and stay together as a form group each morning, guided by a teacher who acts as their Tutor throughout their time at St Mary's.

This teacher will know your child really well and be the person to whom they can turn with any problem or query. The Tutor is also your first point of contact and will be there to help you with any aspect of your child's education at St Mary's.

Head of Year

The Head of Year's principal role is to ensure the welfare of the children within their year group. They will guide the academic, social and spiritual progress of all the students in their care. The Head of Year is on hand to help you with any concerns that you may have.

Keeping you informed

The support of parents is essential to our work and key to your child's success. You are the prime educators of your children and we operate in close partnership with you.

There are two Parents' Evenings during Year 7. Early in the autumn term you will have the opportunity to discuss your child's transition from primary to secondary school with their Tutor. Later in the year, you will be invited to a second evening with all of your child's teachers to review their



progress in each subject area.

Twice a year, you will receive an interim report to let you know how your child is progressing by informing you of their present attainment and their target for each subject studied. You will also receive a detailed pastoral report written by your child's Form Tutor towards the end of the year. However, if at any time you have a query or concern, we urge you to contact the school immediately and we will be happy to respond.

Special Needs

The school has a Special Educational Needs co-ordinator, who leads a Learning Intervention Team. The team works tirelessly to support any child with special educational needs and is hugely influential in ensuring the happiness and success of any child with a particular learning need.

The SEN team liaises regularly and effectively with the primary schools to collect all the relevant information on children to enable us to meet their needs immediately and so ensure a smooth transition to St Mary's. They are also in regular contact with parents and welcome them to visit the school to see the resources and programmes used to meet the needs of each child.



Support for students with English as an Additional Language (EAL)

Another strength of St Mary's is the provision, guidance and support for those children whose first language is not English. Our overseas students settle very quickly into life at St Mary's and the majority of them learn English very quickly and to a very impressive level.

Please feel free to contact the school if you have any queries in this area.

The Library

The library at St Mary's is based at the front of the school and provides students with an excellent and supportive learning resource. The facility can comfortably accommodate up to forty students at a time, holds several thousand printed materials (books, journals, magazines and newspapers) and a bank of computers. It is staffed by a full-time, qualified librarian who is helped by a team of library monitors.

The library is open every school day between 8.00am and 4.00pm. Students are actively encouraged to use the library outside of lessons for private research, homework and leisure reading. They can also take part in a library-run chess club as well as buy school equipment from its stationery store.

Through- out the year, the library gives all students at St Mary's a range of opportunities to join reading groups, take part as judges in local and national book awards, and to attend author events. These are designed to develop students' literacy skills and to encourage reading for pleasure.



The Taught Curriculum

At St Mary's we believe that all children are unique, with their own God-given gifts and talents. We know that different children have different strengths and, for this reason, the children are placed into mixed-ability form groups and then set according to their ability in each subject. In over 50% of the lessons during the first year, the students are taught in their mixed-ability form classes, just as they were in Year 6. In subjects such as Maths, English, Science, and Modern Foreign Languages, the setting will be done according to ability. For Year 7, Maths and Science are grouped together and English and Modern Foreign Languages are grouped together. This means, for example, your child may be in Set 1 for English and Languages and Set 2 for Maths and Science. This is flexible and movement between sets will happen regularly as learning progresses. Increasing use is made of grouping by ability as students move through Key Stage 3. Students are also taught in slightly smaller mixed ability groups for Technology in order to ensure that all children are safe in the practical classroom. We firmly believe that this system is the fairest for all students and ensures that children are happy and achieve their best. This system has led to record levels of achievement at each Key Stage over the last five years.

Key Stage 3

Throughout Key Stage 3 (Years 7 to 9) all students study a broad range of subjects which include the following:

Art	Health & Social Care
Business (optional in Year 9)	(optional in Year 9)
Computer Science (optional in Year 9)	History
Design and Technology	Mathematics
Drama	Music
English	Pastoral Programme
French	Physical Education
Geography	Religious Education
	Science
	Spanish

Pastoral Programme: Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education (PSHCE)

This is an innovative and exciting programme which focusses on the holistic development of students and includes the following themes:

- **Spiritual development:** This theme provides students with an opportunity to help develop a real and lasting relationship with God. Core topics include: prayer, religious experiences, spirituality in art, music, architecture and nature as well as spirituality expressed

through other religions.

- **Relationship development:** This theme will consider the dignity and intrinsic worth of each individual person. This area will explore what is understood as authentic human love between people made in the image and likeness of God.
- **Social development:** This theme will develop in our students' social skills, self-awareness and personal well-being. We will also attempt to create an awareness in students of the interdependence of individuals, groups and nations by looking at the social, economic and political dimensions of life.
- **Cultural development:** This theme celebrates and acknowledges the rich cultural diversity we have in our world, country and school. Students will be able to explore the varied traditions, faiths and cultural practices associated with a multi-cultural society.
- **Learning development:** This theme aims to develop in our students the skills of an effective learner. These skills will be relevant both in school and in the wider context

Key Stage 4

In Key Stage 4 (Years 10 and 11) all students study the following subjects:

Religious Education	Chemistry
English Language	Biology
English Literature	Physical Education
Mathematics	Pastoral Programme
Physics	

In addition, students can choose up to three options, with guidance, from the following courses:

GCSE courses

Art
Computer Science
Drama
Design and Technology
French
Geography
History
Music
Physical Education
Spanish

Vocational courses

BTEC Health and Social Care
BTEC ICT
BTEC Sports Studies
National Certificate in Business

Students are given appropriate guidance before final choices are made in Year 9.

Sixth Form Curriculum

Students in the Sixth Form are offered a broad and balanced curriculum including the following courses:

Applied Science	French
Art	Further Maths
Biology	Geography
Business Studies	Health & Social Studies
Chemistry	History
Child Play, Learning and Development	ICT
Computer Science	Maths
3D Design	Music
Drama & Theatre Studies	Psychology
Economics	Physics
English Language	Sociology
English Literature	Spanish
Ethics and Philosophy	Sports Studies
Film Studies	Textiles
	Thinking Skills

The courses we offer cater for the needs of the vast majority of our students and provide an excellent start to the most competitive university courses.

This curriculum is complemented by three additional elements:

Religious Education

This programme is very popular and looks at current ethical and philosophical issues. As part of a Catholic Sixth Form, students are encouraged to study and reflect upon these key areas. Both universities and employers are very impressed with the analytical skills that students acquire as part of their studies in this area.

Physical Education

Students are provided with the opportunity to take part in a variety of activities to unwind from their academic studies and keep fit at the same time. Activities include: football, gymnastics, netball, table tennis, aerobics, badminton, rowing, archery and trampolining. All students have free access to the Fitness Suite. Sixth Form students are also given the opportunity to work alongside the staff in the department as PE Leaders. They gain a Gym Instructor's qualification and manage the Fitness Suite, completing professional inductions for all new members, and supervise younger students in the facility at lunchtime and after school.

Pastoral Programme

All students take part in the pastoral programme. This is delivered in tutor groups and allows for discussion,

collaboration and reflection on key issues in the modern world. The pastoral programme allows students to explore and develop their understanding of a wide range of topics including learning and independent study skills, social and cultural developments from local, national and international perspectives and political awareness. These topics are set within the Catholic social teaching and allow students the opportunity to enhance their spiritual development. Preparation for university applications, employment and apprenticeships are delivered through the pastoral programme. Students are guided and supported to make a successful transition to their next stage whether this is further studies or the world of work.

Extended Project Qualification (EPQ)

A key development in the Sixth Form in recent years has been the introduction of the Extended Project Qualification (EPQ).

The EPQ is a qualification that carries the same UCAS points as an AS-Level, and it offers students the opportunity to research a topic of their own choice and to produce a 5,000-word-long dissertation.

The EPQ is welcomed and valued by many universities, including members of the Russell Group. It is held in very high regard by admissions tutors because it demonstrates that an individual student is able to manage a project, conduct a serious investigation, write a lengthy report, compile a substantial bibliography, and incorporate a recognised referencing system. All the skills that a student develops during the completion of an EPQ are transferable and prepare them for life as an undergraduate.

The EPQ encourages independence. Students are responsible for choosing, designing, and developing their own projects. They do not attend regular lessons, but are instead allocated a supervisor who guides them through the process from start to finish. Students meet their mentors regularly to ensure that their project is developing to the expected standard.

The EPQ is divided into three separate parts:

- A project, which normally takes the form of a 5,000 word essay;
- A production log, in which students record and chart their progress;
- A presentation, which is delivered to a small audience.

All three parts are taken into consideration during the assessment process, and the EPQ is marked holistically against four clear assessment objectives.

The students appreciate and respond well to the flexibility that the qualification provides because there are very few limits to the subject area that can be researched. However, it does entail a significant amount of work and requires students to commit to a minimum of 120 hours of study.

The EPQ is going from strength to strength at St Mary's. This summer, 53% of all EPQ students gained an A*/A and 77% of students gained A*-B. The pass rate was 100%. These statistics are significantly ahead of the national averages.

The Wider Curriculum

We encourage all students at St Mary's to get involved in the wider curriculum, as there is so much more to gain from school life besides exam success. We want all our students to develop into confident, happy, responsible, well-rounded individuals, armed with a wealth of experience to help them achieve and enjoy success in life.

At St Mary's, there are many opportunities for participating in extracurricular activities. The PE department runs a variety of lunchtime and after-school sporting activities, such as table tennis, trampolining, basketball, badminton, netball and cricket, which are open to all students irrespective of ability. In addition, we have a number of well-established clubs, offering a wide range of enriching activities, including drama, dance, chess, music, art, science, foreign languages, history and computing. The chaplaincy at St Mary's is very active too, offering many opportunities for students to develop their spirituality and contribute fully to the Catholic ethos of the school. We have biannual music concerts, one in winter and one in summer, in which students have the chance to demonstrate their musical gifts and talents. Moreover, there is an annual school musical production, which always brings together staff and students from all parts of our school community.

many of these now becoming annual or biannual fixtures on our calendar. The Modern Foreign Languages department, for example, organizes annual trips to Spain and France. The department has also developed a link with a school in northern France. In recent years, there have been two highly successful exchange visits with our partnership school. There is also an annual ski trip to the Alps.



In the last few years, Year 12 students have embarked on long-haul expeditions to Zambia, Peru and the Philippines, where they have helped local communities by working on charity projects. The Sixth Form students who went to Zambia in July 2018 and 2019 were primarily engaged in teaching and community work, where they were able to forge positive relationships with pupils at a local school and the wider community, participating in many sporting and cultural activities. Our students have benefited hugely from these overseas visits. Above all, they have gained an invaluable insight into the lives of those far less fortunate than themselves. These life-changing visits have been made possible through the tremendous fundraising efforts of the students and their parents. This culture of expedition is now firmly embedded into the fabric of the school.

More recently, we have also developed links with a school in China. In 2018 and 2019, students and staff from a school in Hebei province visited St Mary's, attending lessons and going on local excursions. This has enabled our students to build friendships, acts as ambassadors and learn about life at school in another part of the world.

At St Mary's, we recognize the value of having a broad and diverse wider curriculum. Fully aware of the enormous benefits to holistic development of extracurricular participation, we want all our students to take full advantage of the fantastic opportunities on offer here at the school.



International links

St Mary's is a diverse, inclusive community that welcomes students from all faiths, nationalities and backgrounds. Our Catholic ethos has encouraged us to expand our international dimension and our aim is to develop more exciting and successful links with many different overseas communities and organizations.

We run regular overseas educational visits and excursions,

Performing Arts

Our Performing Arts department is one of the most vibrant and popular areas of the school. As one of our specialist subjects, it leads the way with outstanding teaching, learning and achievement, as well as exceptional enrichment opportunities both within and outside the classroom.

All lower school students participate in Drama lessons within the curriculum and many opt to take Drama at GCSE and A-level in Drama and Theatre.

As part of their examinations, students perform shows that always receive glowing reviews. There are very popular dance and drama clubs with the opportunity to perform to teachers, friends and peers.

Our trips have included, and continue to include, visits to London, regional theatres, allowing students to experience a range of musical, dance and drama events.



One of the highlights of last year was the challenging production, *Mary Poppins*, involving over 90 students, which played to a packed house on four consecutive nights. This year, we have already started preparing for our production, and auditions and rehearsals will soon be underway. All students are invited to share in the experience where they can choose from a number of different roles including performing, technical/backstage work or administrative roles.



A typical year would feature many different activities and shows within the department. These include Key Stage 3 lunchtime clubs, a dance show, a whole school musical and many trips to local theatres. There are a lot of exciting projects in the next academic year and we look forward to a whole spectrum of students taking part.

Trips and excursions

Most departments organise trips for various year groups to enable them to put their learning into action and to enjoy learning beyond the classroom. Examples of some of our trips are:

- Year 10, 11 and Sixth Form go to Oxford and Cambridge and to other universities, which enables students to gain experience of higher education.
- The Languages department takes lower school students to a Spanish tapas restaurant and organises educational visits to Spain and France so students can practise their languages and experience another culture. These trips together can accommodate up to 100 students in total and are thoroughly enjoyed by all.
- An expedition to Zambia, which has a charitable purpose and is a unique experience for our Sixth Form students.
- Students have the chance to experience a residential retreat at the Youth Village and also to attend the annual Diocesan Summer Festival. These are all very well-attended.
- The Performing Arts department organises trips to the Theatre Royal and has visited London, where the students took part in workshops relating to West End shows.
- Fieldwork plays an integral part in the study of Geography with various local trips to complement the course. Sixth Form Geography students also have a residential visit to support their A-level work and develop their skills further.
- The Art department visits the Biscuit Factory and also the Laing Art Gallery with its students, to study contemporary art and also works produced over the centuries.
- St Mary's students can also enhance their love of outdoor sports by taking part in Thurston outdoor adventure trips or the annual ski course to the French Alps.
- Members of the School Council visit London where they meet local MPs and experience Prime Minister's Question Time. They also visit Mansion House and other sites.
- The History department organises a trip to the Battlefields so that students can experience these historical sites at first hand.
- A visit to a farm in Treginnis, Wales, which allows children in Year 7 to experience farm life and work.

In addition to the activities mentioned above, there are many more extra-curricular opportunities on offer at St Mary's for students to enjoy such as Art, ICT, Photography, Dance, Rock Challenge, Film, Enterprise, Chess, Debating, Science, Games, "Just. Is" group, History, Leavers' Proms, Synagogue visits, Sports, the School Council and much more.

The Music Department

The Music Department is a vibrant and thriving area of school life.

The Music department's mission at St Mary's is to give our students a positive, practical experience of music. The curriculum is broad and offers students the opportunity to learn about music from different times, places and world traditions, as well as the more formal aspects of music such as learning about stave notation. We believe firmly in a holistic approach to music education and all music lessons offer our students the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and skills through practical participation.



The department itself comprises two large classrooms which are well-resourced with a range of electronic keyboards and percussion instruments and a suite of computers which include the latest version of computer software to enable our students to compose successfully. We also have a selection of acoustic and electric guitars, two electric drum kits and three acoustic drum kits.

As well as the two main teaching areas, there are two large practice rooms. The department's facilities are available before school, and during break times and lunchtimes for students to continue to develop and hone their musical skills. We operate a booking system

to ensure all who wish to use the facilities have an equal opportunity to do so.

The extra-curricular programme offers students from across the school the opportunity to come together and enjoy creating music in a range of ensembles. These include The School Orchestra, the Jazz Orchestra, Key Stage 3 Ensemble, Chamber Choir, School Choir, folk ensemble and string ensemble. There are many other opportunities for individuals, groups and ensembles to perform.

There are two showcase events organised by the department: one at Christmas and one nearing the end of the summer term. We hold Carol Services at the end of the autumn term and have recently begun presenting a Carols by Candlelight service for local



parishes. There are further opportunities for singers and instrumentalists to perform at liturgies and awards evenings, as well as throughout the Diocese at venues such as St Mary's Cathedral. Record numbers of students are now involved in these ensembles. To aid us in our work, we are supported by an excellent team of highly qualified visiting instrumental tutors, all of whom are practising musicians, performing on the national and international stage. Tuition is available in all orchestral instruments plus piano, keyboard, guitar, drum kit and voice.



Sport at St Mary's

St Mary's Physical Education department aims to provide an inclusive physical education programme through a wide variety of fun, structured and enjoyable activities. The learning environment provides the best opportunity for students to achieve their full potential and this is achieved through a positive and calm atmosphere which promotes healthy competition in a respectful and safe manner. The subject is delivered by knowledgeable and enthusiastic professionals, who promote sport and physical education in a caring and supportive manner. Staff have a wide range of expertise and are committed to ensuring the highest possible standards for all students in their care.

All students are encouraged to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding of physical, social and leadership concepts by participating in a broad curriculum. In year 7, students will experience sports such as rugby, netball, badminton, orienteering, cricket, athletics, rounders and gymnastics to name but a few.

These new sporting opportunities are aimed at developing their understanding and application of skills, strategies and tactics associated with physical education. This allows all students the opportunity to develop their personal skills and to fulfil their potential by improving self-confidence and self-esteem. Students are encouraged to be progress-orientated and to work effectively as a team.

We aim to provide a lively and vibrant club scene to



and all students are always welcome. This year, large numbers of students have enjoyed a range of activities including badminton, table tennis, tennis, athletics, basketball, 5-a-side football, netball and bodytone. As well as recreational clubs there is also a large emphasis on competitive sport at St Mary's. The department runs teams for football and rugby (girls and boys), netball, rounders, swimming, cross-country, basketball, athletics, cricket, tennis, rowing, table tennis and badminton. Students in competitive sports will be given the opportunity to compete at city, county and national levels in a range of competitions over the course of the school year. A house system is also operated by the PE department and students will enjoy regular inter-house tournaments during the course of the academic year.

Over the last few years, our students have enjoyed high levels of sporting success, winning various leagues and competitions in sports such as football, netball, swimming and a range of athletics tournaments. A comprehensive list of clubs and activities can be



capture the attention of students and to encourage continued participation outside school hours. This has led to a large increase in both recreational and competitive sporting opportunities for students in the school. Children joining the school will be encouraged to be actively involved in the sporting side of school life.

Recreational clubs are run by PE staff and volunteers





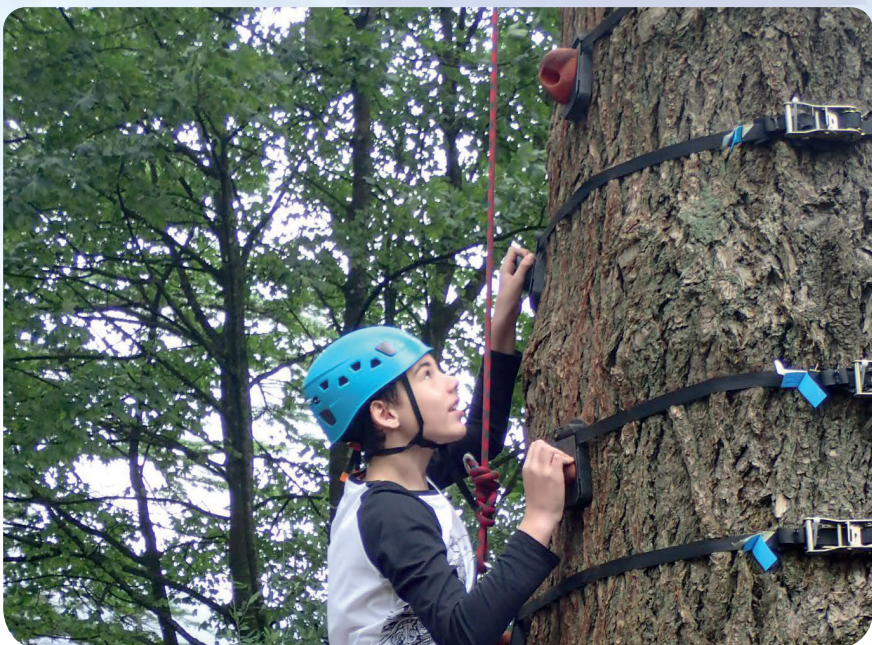
found on our website. The new school offers top-class sports facilities which include a large sports hall with a sprung wooden floor, activity studio, fitness suite, outdoor tennis, basketball and netball courts, and a large field area for all our outdoor sports.

Outdoor education

We believe that an outdoor adventure environment and residential experience provide a most powerful framework for developing children. The aim of each course is not only to introduce students to new skills through a variety of activities but also to develop the whole child. Experiences focus on the development of new interests, encouraging a sense of adventure, self-reliance and team-building. Courses also allow students to develop the concepts of responsibility, self-awareness, trust, co-operation and an understanding of health and safety.



St Mary's successfully provides a range of residential experiences for students. In recent years, we have visited Kielder Water, the Lake District, Southern France and the Alps where students gained great experience in outdoor adventure sports. During these and other visits, students have experienced a variety of activities such as kayaking, climbing, abseiling, skiing, mountain-biking, hill-walking, orienteering and sailing, to name but a few. Students this year have had the chance to row on the Tyne, coached by professional rowers.



During the next academic year, over 30 students will visit Thurston Outdoor Education Centre in the Lake District for a residential week of adventure activities.

Code of Conduct

Students have the following rights:

- The right to learn
- The right to enjoy their education
- The right to achieve their very best

Every student is part of St Mary's community and so has the following responsibilities:

- To value and look after themselves
- To support and help other learners and to treat everyone with respect and kindness
- To look after the school and treat the environment and equipment with care

This is simply expressed as:

- Respect for self
- Respect for others
- Respect for the environment

The staff are committed to achieving excellence in their teaching and wish to work closely with parents/carers – the child's first educators. The Code of Conduct is a clear statement of expectations of behaviour for young people to achieve their best. The Governors therefore expect that parents/carers will actively support this Code.



Respect for Self

The school actively encourages students to value themselves as unique individuals with abilities to learn and achieve; to respect their own health, both physical and mental and to take a pride in their personal appearance.

It does this through expecting students:

- To be prepared to learn by having the right disposition, correct equipment and kit in order to participate fully in all aspects of the curriculum

- To wear the full school uniform and follow the dress guidelines of the school
- Not to bring on to the premises any harmful or illegal substance

Respect for Others

The school actively encourages students to value everyone else in the community as being of equal worth with much to contribute to the life of the school.

It does this through expecting others:

- To refrain from all forms of intimidation – verbal, physical and psychological – and all forms of racial and sexual harassment
- To ensure that all students can learn without disruption of their lessons and to respect other people's belongings
- To respect all safety systems and procedures and not to bring on to the premises any item which can damage others
- To refrain from any action which puts the safety of others at risk

Respect for the Environment

The school actively encourages students to value the environment and the equipment that is used in school.

It does this through expecting students:

- To keep the premises clean and free from litter
- To treat all equipment with care and as directed
- To treat all areas with respect so that all can use and enjoy them
- Not to damage or misuse any equipment
- Not to abuse in any way any equipment that is for the safety and care of the St Mary's community

The Governors value the good name of the school and will view any action which damages this within the community very seriously. The Governors realise that, with the vast majority of students, encouragement from parents/carers is sufficient. At other times, outside agencies may be involved in order to assist in helping the student to improve. There will be times when sanctions are necessary and the full range will be used. These include detentions, a variety of appropriate tasks and exclusion. Wilful damage must be paid for. Serious offences against this code, or persistent poor behaviour, particularly that which impedes the progress and happiness of others, will be dealt with firmly and may entail permanent exclusion from the school.

Uniform

Uniform is a very important part of our school. It promotes a sense of identity, avoids divisiveness, and helps create and foster in every student a sense of personal pride and pride in the school. Uniform provides practical clothing for the very many different tasks to be done during a busy day. It also prepares students for the reality of work where uniform of one sort or another is often expected. The uniform at St Mary's is outstanding and we would like this excellent standard to continue and appreciate parental support in ensuring that this is the case. Most of the uniform must be purchased through the school.

Main Uniform — to be purchased through Michael Sehgal & Sons Ltd

- Navy blazer with embroidered St Mary's badge.
- School tie.
- Navy V-neck jumper with St Mary's logo.
- Standard fit, charcoal grey school trousers.
- Custom made pleated school skirt for Year 7 and 8. Please ensure that the skirt is the correct waist and length measurement. Once bought, it should not be altered in any way and should be worn at an appropriate length. (For your information, the majority of girls wear the school skirt but the standard fit school trousers can also be worn).



Main Uniform — may be purchased from any store

- Standard white shirt, large enough at the neck to allow the top button to be comfortably fastened at all times. No fitted shirts to be worn.
- Plain black standard school shoes, which are able to be polished. Trainers, trainer style shoes, canvas shoes, suede shoes or shoes with any logos, colours, buckles or accessories are not allowed (see enclosed pictures for examples of suitable footwear). No knee boots or ankle boots are to be worn.
- Plain white or black ankle socks or plain black or natural coloured tights. No leggings or patterned socks are to be worn.

- A student who for religious reasons wears a head covering must ensure it is plain black or navy blue.

P.E. Uniform — to be purchased through Michael Sehgal & Sons Ltd

- Navy embroidered top.
- Navy shorts and/or navy tracksuit bottoms for the girls.
- White shorts for the boys.
- Navy tracksuit bottoms (optional) for the boys.
- Navy PE sweatshirt and/or waterproof jacket.

P.E. Uniform — may be purchased from any store

- Sturdy training shoes (not boots, plimsolls or fashion/leisure shoes)
- White sports socks

Hairstyles, jewellery and make-up

- Hair must be a natural colour only and hairstyles are not to follow extremes of fashion such as shaved heads, tramlines, patterns or dyed hair. Boys' hair should be cut no shorter than grade 2.
- Only simple, plain black or navy headbands or hairclips are allowed for girls.
- No make up or nail varnish is to be worn or carried in school. False nails are not allowed.
- The only jewellery allowed to be worn is a watch and a pair of plain gold or silver studs. However, all jewellery must be removed for PE lessons.
- Badges are not allowed to be worn on the school uniform.
- Wristbands and bracelets are not allowed to be worn.

Outdoor Coats

- Sensible outdoor coats may be worn on the journey to school. However, outdoor coats must not be worn in the school building.

Equipment

For all our students to enjoy success at school and reach their full potential, they need to be fully equipped for lessons and avoid any distractions. In order to achieve this, the following guidelines must be adhered to.

- All students must have a plain dark coloured (Black or Navy) practical school bag large enough for school files (A4). The bag should not be a fashion item (i.e. no handbags) and should be able to be carried on the back or over the shoulder with a long strap.
- Mobile phones must be switched off and out of sight during the school day at all times.
- No headphones are allowed in school.
- All students must have 2 pens, a pencil, rubber, ruler, protractor and a calculator.
- All students must carry their planner and fill this in every lesson.

St Mary's Aims

To develop in our students an understanding of the Catholic faith and a love of the values of the Gospel, in order to support all students, from whatever Faith background, on their spiritual journey and so help them live life to the full.

To nurture in our students a sense of gratitude for their God-given gifts, talents and opportunities, and to encourage them to develop a lifelong commitment to serving others, by using their gifts and talents well, whether in school, in the home, the parish, the workplace, the local community or in the wider world.

To ensure that relationships in school are rooted firmly in Gospel values, with students living out those values and demonstrating respect for themselves and others, through their excellent behaviour and conduct, their good manners and their acts of kindness and compassion.

To inspire in our students a love of learning and a real appreciation of the joys and benefits which learning can bring to others and to themselves.

To help our students develop into self-confident young adults, at ease with themselves and others, with lively, enquiring minds, the ability to think deeply and to question and argue rationally.

To provide our students with the knowledge, concepts, skills and attitudes necessary for further learning and for adult life generally, whether at home, in the workplace or in the wider community.

To help our students communicate by using language and number effectively.

To help our students understand the physical world in which we live.

To help our students appreciate the interdependence of individuals, groups and nations and provide them with good social, economic and political awareness.

To provide our students with knowledge and experiences to keep them fit and healthy.

To help our students develop their aesthetic appreciation, by introducing them to a wide variety of experiences, both in school and beyond.

To develop and sustain high academic standards in all curriculum areas and ensure that students gain excellent academic qualifications commensurate with their ability.

To provide a positive, happy and fulfilling school experience for our students, where they feel safe and secure and are regularly praised and encouraged for their efforts and achievements in all aspects of school life.

Admissions Policy

2020-21

St. Mary's Catholic Secondary School was founded by the Catholic Church to provide education for children of Catholic families. Whenever there are more applications than places available, priority will be given to Catholic children in accordance with the oversubscription criteria listed below. The school is conducted by its governing body as part of the Catholic Church in accordance with its trust deed and articles of association, and seeks at all times to be a witness to Our Lord Jesus Christ.

As a Catholic school, we aim to provide a Catholic education for all our pupils. At a Catholic school, Catholic doctrine and practice permeate every aspect of the school's activity. It is essential that the Catholic character of the school's education be fully supported by all families in the school. We therefore hope that all parents will give their full, unreserved and positive support for the aims and ethos of the school. This does not affect the right of an applicant who is not Catholic to apply for and be admitted to a place at the school in accordance with the admission arrangements.

The admission policy criteria will be dealt with on an equal preference basis.

The governing body is the admissions authority and has responsibility for admissions to this school. The local authority undertakes the coordination of admission arrangements.

Parishes served by the school

The school serves the parishes of

Holy Name	Jesmond
Sacred Heart	Gosforth
St Aidan's	Benton
Ss Anthony's & Francis	Walker & Walkergate
St Charles'	Gosforth
St Dominic's	Shieldfield
St Lawrence's	Byker
St Mary's	Forest Hall
Ss Peter and Paul	Longbenton
St Teresa's	Heaton
St Vincent's	Walker

Feeder Primary Schools

The feeder primary schools are

St Alban's	Walker
St Catherine's	Shieldfield
St Charles'	Gosforth
St Lawrence's	Byker
St Mary's	Forest Hall
St Oswald's	Gosforth
St Stephen's	Longbenton
St Teresa's	Heaton
St Vincent's	Walker

Published Admission Number

The governing body has set its published admission number (PAN) at 225 pupils to year seven in the school year which begins in September 2021.

Application Procedures and Timetable

To apply for a place at this school in the normal admission round (not in-year applications), a Common Application Form (CAF) must be completed. This is available from the local authority in which the

child lives.

The parent will be advised of the outcome of the application on 1 March 2021 or the next working day, by the local authority. If the application is unsuccessful (unless the child gained a place at a school the parent ranked higher) the parent will be informed of the decision, related to the oversubscription criteria listed below, and has the right of appeal to an independent appeal panel.

If the parent is required to provide supplemental evidence to support the application (e.g. a baptismal certificate), this evidence should be provided at the time of application. If not provided, evidence may be sought by the governing body following the closing date for applications. This information must have been correct at the date of closing for applications.

All applications which are submitted on time will be considered at the same time and after the closing date for admissions which is 31 October 2020.

Pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan or a Statement of Special Educational Needs (see note 1)

The admission of pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan is dealt with by a completely separate procedure. Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan that names the school must be admitted. Where this takes place before the allocation of places under these arrangements this will reduce the number of places available to other children.

Late Applications

Late applications will be administered in accordance with the home local authority coordinated admissions scheme. Parents are advised to ensure that the application is submitted before the closing date.

Admission of Children outside their Normal Age Group

A request may be made for a child to be admitted outside of their normal age group, for example, if the child is gifted and talented or has experienced problems such as ill health.

Any such request should be made in writing to the headteacher of the school. The governing body will make its decision about the request based on the circumstances of each case and in the best interests of the child. In addition to taking into account the views of the headteacher who has statutory responsibility for the internal organisation, management and control of the school, the governing body will take into account the views of the parents and of appropriate medical and education professionals.

Waiting Lists

In addition to their right of appeal, applicants will be offered the opportunity to be placed on a waiting list. This waiting list will be maintained in order of the oversubscription criteria set out below and not in the order in which applications are received or added to the list. A waiting list for admission will operate. The waiting list will be held open until 31st December, 2021. Inclusion on the school's waiting list does not mean that a place will eventually become available.

In-Year Applications

An application can be made for a place for a child at any time outside the admission round and the child will be admitted where there are available places. Applications should be made to the school by contacting Mrs Patterson, Headteacher's PA, In-year Admissions at St. Mary's Catholic School, Benton Park Road, Newcastle upon Tyne. NE7 7PE. Parents will be advised of the

outcome of their application in writing.

Where there are places available but more applications than places, the published oversubscription criteria, as set out below, will be applied.

Right of Appeal

Where a parent has been notified that a place is not available for a child, every effort will be made by the local authority to help the parent to find a place in a suitable alternative school. Parents who are refused a place have a statutory right of appeal. Further details of the appeals process are available by writing to the chair of governors at the school address.

Fair Access Protocol

The school is committed to taking its fair share of children who are vulnerable and/or hard to place, as set out in locally agreed protocols. Accordingly, outside the normal admission round the governing body is empowered to give absolute priority to a child where admission is requested under any local protocol that has been agreed by both the diocese and the governing body for the current school year. The governing body has this power, even when admitting the child would mean exceeding the published admission number.

False evidence

The governing body reserves the right to withdraw the offer of a place or, where a child is already attending the school, the place itself, where it is satisfied that the offer or place was obtained by deception.

Oversubscription Criteria

Where there are more applications for places than the number of places available, places will be offered according to the following order of priority.

First priority in each category will be given to children who will have an older sibling attending the school in September 2021.

1. Catholic looked after and previously looked after children. (see notes 2&3)
2. Catholic children who attend a feeder primary school. (see note 3)
3. Catholic children whose home address is within the boundaries of the parishes served by the schools but do not attend a feeder primary school (see note 3)
4. Other Catholic children. (see note 3)
5. Other looked after and previously looked after children. (see note 2)
6. Catechumens and members of an Eastern Christian Church. (see notes 4&5)
7. Children of a member of school staff who has been employed at the school for two or more years at the time of which application for admission to the school is made (see note 11)
8. Children who attend a feeder primary school not covered by oversubscription criteria 2
9. Children who have a brother or sister in the school not covered by oversubscription criteria 1-8 (see note 9)

10. Children of other Christian denominations whose membership is evidenced by a minister or faith leader. (see note 6)

11. Children of other faiths whose membership is evidenced by a minister or faith leader. (see note 7)

12. Any other children.

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Where there are places available for some, but not all applicants within a particular criterion priority will be given to children living closest to the school determined by the shortest distance. Distance will be measured in a straight line from a single fixed central point at the school to a point in the centre of the home address of the child, using the Local Land and Property Gazetteer and British National Grid Easting and Northing coordinates.

In the event of distances being the same for two or more children where this would determine the last place to be allocated, random allocation will be carried out in a public place and supervised by a person independent of the school.

Notes and definitions

1. An Education, Health and Care Plan is a plan made by the local authority under section 37 of the Children and Families Act 2014, specifying the special educational provision required for a child.

2. A looked after child has the same meaning as in section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989, and means any child who is (a) in the care of a local authority or (b) being provided with accommodation by them in the exercise of their social services functions (e.g. children with foster parents) at the time of making application to the school.

A previously looked after child is a child who was looked after, but ceased to be so because he or she was adopted, or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order.

3. 'Catholic' means a member of a Church in full communion with the See of Rome. This includes the Eastern Catholic Churches. This will normally be evidenced by a certificate of baptism in a Catholic Church or a certificate of reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church. For the purposes of this policy, it includes a looked after child living with a family where at least one of the parents is Catholic.

For a child to be treated as Catholic, evidence of Catholic baptism or reception into the Church will be required. Those who have difficulty obtaining written evidence of baptism should contact their Parish Priest who, after consulting with the Diocese, will decide how the question of baptism is to be resolved and how written evidence is to be produced in accordance with the law of the Church.

4. Catechumen means a member of the catechumenate of a Catholic Church. For the purposes of admissions this refers to the child on whose behalf the application is being made. This will normally be evidenced by a certificate of reception into the order of catechumens.

5. Eastern Christian Church includes Orthodox Churches, and is normally evidenced by a certificate of baptism or reception from the authorities of that Church. Those who have difficulty obtaining written evidence of baptism or reception should contact the Diocese who will decide how the question of baptism or reception is to be resolved and how written evidence is to be produced in accordance with the law of the Church.

6. Children of other Christian denominations means children who belong to other churches and ecclesial communities which, acknowledge God's revelation in Christ, confess the Lord Jesus

Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures, and, in obedience to God's will and in the power of the Holy Spirit commit themselves: to seek a deepening of their communion with Christ and with one another in the Church, which is his body; and to fulfil their mission to proclaim the Gospel by common witness and service in the world to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. An ecclesial community which on principle has no credal statements in its tradition, is included if it manifests faith in Christ as witnessed to in the Scriptures and is committed to working in the spirit of the above.

All members of Churches Together in England and CYTŪN are deemed to be included in the above definition, as are all other churches and ecclesial communities that are in membership of any local Churches Together Group (by whatever title) on the above basis.

Applicants must provide a baptismal certificate or where child baptism is not practised, a letter confirming their church membership from their minister or faith leader.

7. Children of other faiths means children who are members of a religious community that does not fall within the definition of 'other Christian denominations' at 6 above and which falls within the definition of a religion for the purposes of charity law. The Charities Act 2011 defines religion to include:

* A religion which involves belief in more than one God, and

* A religion which does not involve belief in a God.

Case law has identified certain characteristics which describe the meaning of religion for the purposes of charity law, which are characterised by a belief in a supreme being and an expression of belief in that supreme being through worship.

Applicants must provide a letter of support to confirm their faith membership from their minister or faith leader.

8. A child's "home address" refers to the address where the child usually lives with a parent or carer, and will be the address provided in the Common Application Form ("CAF"). Where parents have shared responsibility for a child, and the child lives for part of the week with each parent, the home address will be the address given in the CAF, provided that the child resides at that address for any part of the school week.

9. Sibling includes:

(i) all natural brothers or sisters, half brothers or sisters, adopted brothers or sisters, stepbrothers or sisters, foster brothers or sisters, whether or not they are living at the same address; and

(ii) the child of a parent's partner where that child lives for at least part of the week in the same family unit at the same home address as the child who is the subject of the application.

10. A parent means all natural parents, any person who is not a parent but has parental responsibility for a child, and any person who has care of a child (having care of a child means that the child lives with and is looked after by that person).

11. A member of staff includes all school staff who are under the direct employment of the directors of the school.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the local authority's admission guidance for parents.

St Mary's Catholic School

Benton Park Road, Longbenton, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE7 7PE

