



St Mary's

NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 8 - 19TH JANUARY 2024

Shining together in faith, joy and love

We have recently been reflecting on our St Mary's Mission Statement, which was 'where everyone can succeed'. After lots of thought and discussion, we felt it was time to update this statement and introduce a new Mission Statement, which would better reflect our wonderful school ethos and values.

We are excited to share with you our new Mission Statement of 'Shining together in faith, joy and love'. We think that this really captures all of the things that are important to us here at St Mary's. Our aim is for all students to shine, to flourish and to reach their full potential, both academically and holistically. It was important for us to have a sense of togetherness and family in our mission statement and to reflect our diverse and inclusive community. As you know, our Christian ethos is at the heart of everything we do and we are incredibly proud of our students and staff who live out the Gospel Values every day.

Our ethos is built upon the belief that all students are unique individuals made in God's image and that uniqueness is celebrated here in school. The happiness and joy of our students and staff is central to St Mary's and students enjoy engaging, interesting lessons and a wide range of opportunities outside of the classroom. Finally, the idea of 'loving your neighbour' is paramount to us, encouraging our students to act with kindness, compassion and love not only in school, but by giving service to others in the wider community. We have shared our new Mission Statement with students this week in assemblies and we will continue to explore it further with them throughout the year.

Headteacher's Welcome

Dear Parents and Carers

Happy New Year and welcome to the first St Mary's Newsletter of 2024.

We are delighted to share our new St Mary's Mission Statement with you, 'Shining together in faith, joy and love' and there is more detail about this statement, on the front page of the newsletter.

The students have settled well into the new term and we already have a wide range of enrichment taking place, both in school and more widely, including a Ski trip in France. We would really appreciate if you could continue to encourage your children to make the most of all of the fantastic clubs and activities on offer at St Mary's.

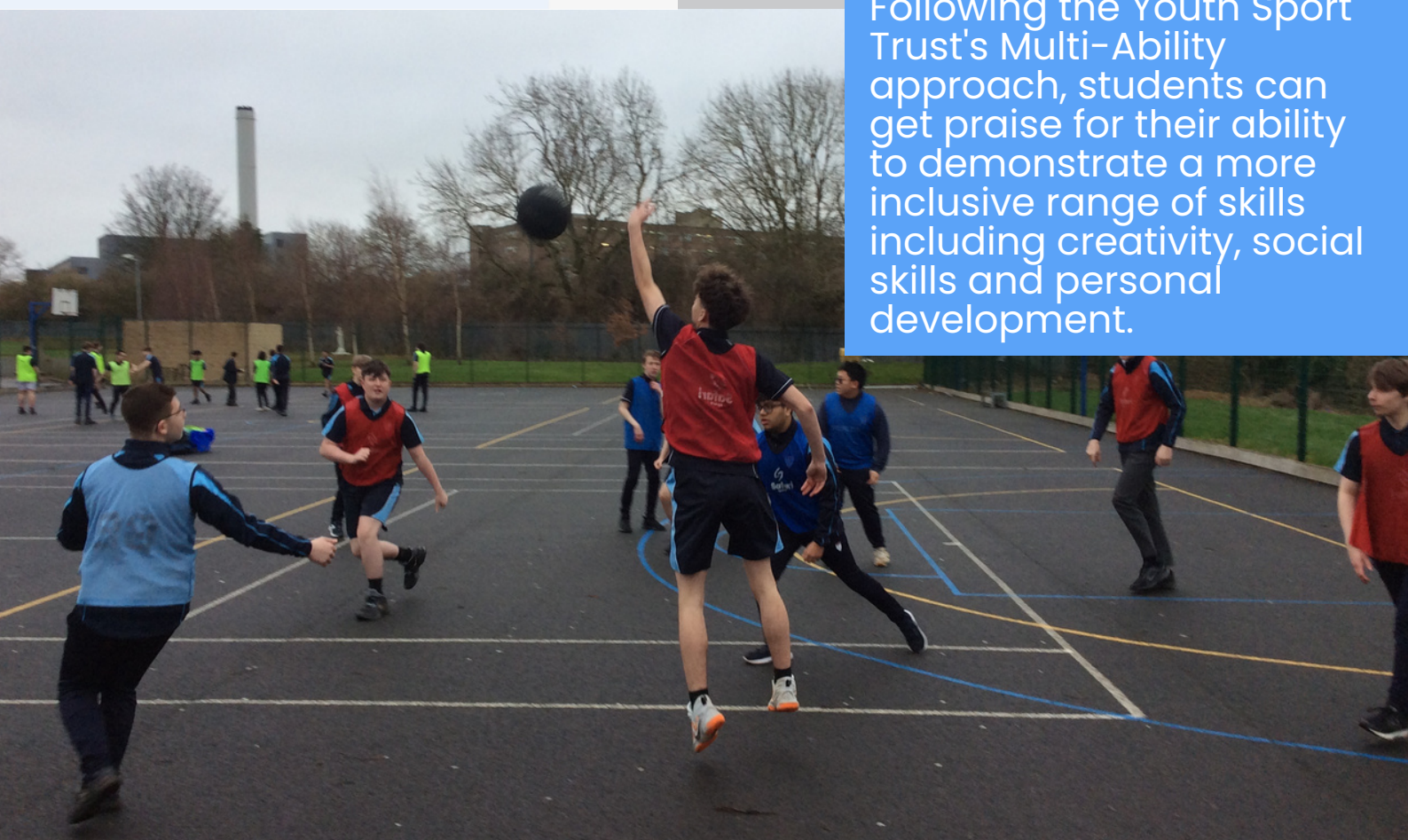
Very best wishes,
Miss Patterson, Headteacher.



Focusing on PE

In PE, new points on Class Charts have been introduced this term.

Following the Youth Sport Trust's Multi-Ability approach, students can get praise for their ability to demonstrate a more inclusive range of skills including creativity, social skills and personal development.





Podcasts Aplenty!

Podcasts are increasingly popular as a form of entertainment. Did you know that here at St Mary's we have not only one but now two podcasting groups up and running?

The main school Podcast Club takes place after school on Tuesdays in G06. The group have released three episodes so far, focusing on PE and sporting achievements, extra curricular opportunities and what students think life will look like in 50 years time. Students put forward topic ideas and vote as a group on which topics to focus on at the start of each term. The next episode will be all about books and reading. English teacher Miss Charlton who leads Podcast club is very passionate about the benefits to the students who attend, saying "The club is an opportunity for students to gain confidence by speaking out loud. They can be creative in their script writing and delivery, and they have recently begun to use software to edit the podcasts themselves!"

In addition to the main school Podcast, the Sixth Form have also started their own Podcast Club, and released their first episode just before Christmas. It features an interview with Y12 student Josh Sorensen about his role as the leader of Christian Union.

Look out for future episodes of both Podcasts being released on our website and via our X(twitter) feed!

Visit from Jesus College, Cambridge

Recently, representatives from Jesus College, University of Cambridge came into the school to run sessions with different students.

For Year 8 students, they looked at why they may wish to apply to university, what university life is like and what makes the University of Cambridge distinctive.

For our potential Oxbridge applicants in Year 12, the ambassadors looked at the application process and gave them some hints and tips on how to make a successful application. All of the students really enjoyed the event and we cannot wait for the next visit later in the academic year.



Subject Taster Sessions

Since returning in the New Year, students in Year 12 have had the opportunity to attend two subject taster sessions from Newcastle University, giving them an understanding of potentially studying these courses at university but also looking at the potential careers the courses lead to. Firstly, students attended a Zoology session looking at the conservation of animals. In the Forensic Psychology session, students examined the criminal mind and how to profile a psychopath.



Life in the Library

There is so much going on at the moment in our Library with a number of competitions, clubs and extra-curricular opportunities taking place.

Thirteen students have signed up to be judges in the 2024 Royal Society Young People's Book Prize – they are currently reading and reviewing six different science books. A Sixth Form reading group meets every fortnight to discuss *Oedipus Rex* by Sophocles and the main Classics Club meets weekly to learn Latin through the Cambridge Latin Course.

Following huge success last year when we reached the national final in London, we will again be entering two teams into the National Literacy Trust's Reading Champions Quiz; the regional qualifier takes place in March. We are also looking forward to the announcement of the shortlist for the North East Teenage Book Award and will be looking for judges in Years 9 and 10 to review the shortlisted books. Likewise, students of all ages are able to judge the best new graphic novels as part of the Excelsior Award.

Finally, chess continues to attract large numbers of students from all year groups. Chess can be played every day at lunchtime and the after-school Chess Club meets every Wednesday with expert tuition provided by a professional coach. All students have opportunities throughout the year to take part in chess competitions both in and out of school.

We encourage all our students to visit the Library and to make the most of everything that it offers, including borrowing from the huge selection of books that it holds.



Work Experience

We are proud to be offering the opportunity for students in Year 10 and Year 12 to be completing work experience in the summer term this year. Recently, Mr McCrory, Head of Personal Development, has been leading assemblies with students giving information on this initiative.



Critical Thinking

Our potential medicine, dentistry and veterinary science applicants in Year 12 had the opportunity to take part in a critical thinking session with Northumbria University. The students enjoyed having to analyse information in a logical manner.



Upcoming dates and events ...

Tuesday 23rd January:
Diocesan Inter-Faith
Holocaust Memorial Evening
at 7.00pm

Thursday 25th January:
Drama Trip to see *The Life of Pi*

Monday 29th January: Year
10 Parents' Evening (online)

Tuesday 30th January: Year
10 County Cup Football
Match

Wednesday 31st January:
Drama Trip to see *Blood
Brothers*

Wednesday 31st January:
UKMT Intermediate Maths
Challenge

Thursday 1st February:
Creative Writing workshop in
English