

St Mary's



NEWSLETTER

St Mary's Christmas Music Concert

On 17th December, a range of students across all year groups took part in our Christmas Music Concert. Our students demonstrated how talented they are and the choirs, orchestra and students leading solo pieces were absolutely exceptional. The students performed an array of different festive pieces including traditional Christmas carols and some more modern songs too. Parents, staff, governors and visitors thoroughly enjoyed the evening and left feeling full of festive cheer and joy.



ISSUE 4 - DECEMBER 2024

Headteacher's Welcome

Dear Parents and Carers

A belated Happy New Year! I hope you had a wonderful and restful Christmas with your families and friends.

The start to the spring term is going very well, with much to look forward to across the term, including several educational visits and trips.

On Wednesday 22nd January, we are also hosting the Diocesan Interfaith 'Holocaust Memorial Evening' at 7.00pm in school. Parents and Carers are very welcome to attend.

Very best wishes,
Miss Patterson
Headteacher

Christmas Dinner

A huge thank you to our wonderful kitchen staff team for cooking us all a beautiful Christmas dinner on Wednesday 17th December. You definitely made us all feel very festive and spread some Christmas cheer around school. The Christmas biscuits were a huge hit with students and staff and you all looked amazing in your Christmas outfits.



Year 7 Geography

Year 7 students have been learning about tectonic plates, the surfaces of rock that make up the earth's crust and the forces that produce movement. In one lesson recently, we explored the concept of resilience and how some places have better resistance against tectonic movement than others. The students were challenged to show their learning through planning a settlement which would withstand a natural disaster. The students produced some excellent work. Well done!



Designing a resilient settlement in a tectonic area

Watch the video...
What do you see? A ruined land, buildings smashed, areas destroyed, things broken.
Why do you think this happened?
An earthquake happened.

How does this make you feel? Why?
This makes me feel sad because these buildings were some people's home, and other special buildings. People probably tried really hard to make the house they have just for it to be destroyed.

What is resilience?
I think resilience is (have a go on your own) - Resilience is when something is hard but you never give up and never back down.
In geography, resilience is (class answer) - resilience is the ability of an area or structure to withstand and recover from natural disasters like earthquakes and volcanic eruptions.

Places can become more resilient by:
* Have an evacuation assembly point
* build buildings stronger
* sirens to tell you about it
* Have some knowledge about it

Key:
- fertile soil
- natural water source
- fault line (possibility of earthquake)
- active volcano

You must design a resilient settlement in this space. You must include:
- A school
- At least 3 other businesses (you can decide what these are)
- Any other additional things you can think to add to make it as safe as possible for the people that live there!

Explain the settlement that you have designed. In your explanation you must explain why you have placed things where you have, what businesses you have added and why and what things you have included to make the settlement more resilient/resilient:
I like where I placed the fence because it can protect people and I like where I placed the houses because there is a volcano. I've added a school, a farm, a hospital and a school because I think these things are vital to a happy life. I've added a siren because in the case of an earthquake or volcano, people know when and where it's coming from. I've added a meeting point so if there is an earthquake or volcano, people know where to meet and wait for further notice.

Employer Experience

Our Employer Experience Programme in the Sixth Form goes from strength to strength. Each week, local employers come into the Sixth Form to speak to the students about their experiences in the workplace and what skills they would need to succeed in the future. Over the past few weeks, we have been visited by a charity worker, paralegal and an occupational therapist.



MMI Practice Workshop

As our prospective medics and dentists in Year 13 prepare for their upcoming interviews with universities, a special MMI (multiple mini interviews) workshop took in school. Students were quizzed by teachers and medical professionals to simulate the real experience taking place in a couple of weeks.



Art Sale for CAFOD

Students have been using their time at Art Club to prepare for the Christmas art stall. They sold prints and cards of their original artwork in aid of CAFOD and made over £100. Students come to the club at lunchtimes and after school on a Thursday where they have fun exploring and developing their own ideas just for fun, as well as adding work to their Arts Award portfolio.



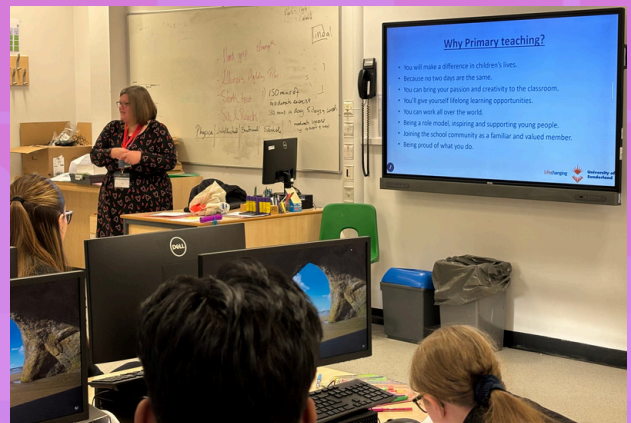
University Outreach

Over the past few weeks, we have been able to work with the University of Oxford, University of Cambridge, Northumbria University and Northumbria University to hold sessions with our Year 12 students about why they may wish to study at each of these institutions.



Subject Taster Sessions

To give our Sixth Form students an experience of different university courses we regularly hold different taster sessions. Recently, our Health and Social Care students were able to receive a sample lecture from the primary education course at Sunderland University.



Success in Year 12

As part of our Personal Development Programme in the Sixth Form, we have been holding enrichment workshops with all students in Year 12 about how to work independently and succeed when studying their Key Stage 5 courses.

Mr McCrory, Head of Personal Development, has been looking with students on how they can manage their time effectively during the working day.



Year 7 Boys After-School Football Club

On Thursdays after school, Year 7 boys meet up to have a game of football. Whilst the matches are competitive, the emphasis is definitely on enjoyment, participation and making new friends. For the boys who go along regularly on a Thursday evening, it is certainly one of the highlights of the school week.

Staff and Sixth Form Christmas Jumper Day

We were delighted to hold our annual Staff and Sixth Form Christmas Jumper Day on Wednesday December 18th. Lots of students participated by wearing their best (or worst) Christmas jumper, and raised money for the Save the Children charity. We broke our fundraising total from last year with over £250 raised.



Year 9 Badminton

Forming two teams, nine students from Year 9 represented St Mary's at the Newcastle Qualifying Round of the national Badminton Games Tournament for Schools. All the matches were fiercely contested and incredibly close, winning some games by one point and losing others by a similar margin. The girls did exceptionally well and were a credit to the themselves and the school.

Years 7 & 8 Athletics

Year 7 and Year 8 girls recently competed in the Schools Games Indoor Athletics tournament. Taking part in a range of different events, such as the standing long-jump, the vertical jump, the triple jump and relay races, the girls gave an excellent account of themselves, as well as having lots of fun along the way.



Year 7 Christmas Songs in French and Spanish

In the run-up to the end of term, all classes in Year 7 performed a Christmas song in either French or Spanish. There were some fantastic performances and the students had great time using their foreign language skills in such a creative way. All the songs were filmed, so that each class got the chance to see what everyone had done. There was lots of smiles and laughter as the students watched and listened to each other's song. It was lovely way to the the term and get into the festive spirit.



Sixth Form Advent Fayres

Our Sixth Form students got into the festive spirit by participating in the annual Advent Fayres recently. Students run many different activities such as ring toss, selling hot chocolate, a planking competition and skittles. We even had a Santa's Grotto set up. The students raised money for CAFOD as well spreading some festive cheer around St Mary's.



Sir Charles Parsons Christmas Party

Written by Leo Gray (Year 12)

It's been a long tradition that the Year 12 students put on a Christmas Party at St Mary's for the Year 7 students from Sir Charles Parsons School, a school for young people with a range of additional needs. But this year we were very excited to be invited to hold the party at SCP as logistically, this would be much easier for the pupils at the school. It was wonderful to see over 60 Year 12 students signed up to help with the party but we were only able to take 30. The Year 12 students have spent weeks choosing and wrapping gifts, organising food, games and decorations and very importantly choosing the right tunes! A few of our students met online with four SCP students at the beginning of December to find out what food, music etc they like. The party itself was great fun with lots of dancing and games – it was a real opportunity to make new friends for life.



Christmas Afternoon Tea

Students from the Just.Is group were delighted to welcome guests from Conaty House and Assisi House in St Anthony's, as well as the grandparents of some students. We all spent time together over a cup of tea and cake. There was also a quiz and a raffle. Some of our musicians treated us to some wonderful live music too. The students in Just.Is organized the event because they wanted to do something to bring different generations together. It was a wonderful idea and a tremendous success.



Spanish Penpal Project

The Modern Foreign Languages Department has linked up with a secondary school in Zaragoza, Spain, and is in the process of setting up a penpal project. The students in the photograph are the trailblazers, meeting at lunchtime to write a short letter to students in Spain. The idea is that students from both school will improve their language skills, learn a little bit about life in different country and, of course, make new friends . We are really looking forward to seeing how this exciting project develops over the next few months.



EPQ Drop Down Day

As our Year 12 students progress their Extended Project Qualification we hold regular Drop Down Days for the students to gain guidance on completing this.

Our latest day in December allowed students to complete their planning and research for their EPQ.



Upcoming dates and events ...

Wednesday 22nd January:

Diocesan Holocaust Memorial Evening, 7.00pm

Monday 27th January:

Year 9 Parents' Evening, 2.45pm-6.00pm (in school)

Monday 17th March:

Year 10 Parents' Evening, 2.45pm-6.00pm (online)



Table Tennis Club

Every Thursday, table tennis club takes place in the Activity Studio. The club is always very popular. The great thing about the club is that you can play a game of table tennis and socialise in a friendly environment at the same time. The students really enjoy this aspect of the activity. Added to that, table tennis is such an inclusive sport. Anyone can give it a go, no matter what your level you play at! All are welcome.