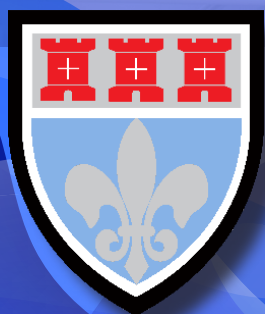


St Mary's Catholic School

Prospectus




Ofsted
Outstanding

St Mary's Catholic School

Miss Patterson
Headteacher

Mr McGhee
Chair of Governors

Benton Park Road
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE7 7PE
0191 2153260

admin@st-marys.newcastle.sch.uk
www.stmarysnewcastle.co.uk



Photograph taken by Giulia Caruso, A Level Student

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Headteacher's Welcome

I am delighted to welcome you to St Mary's Catholic School. 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 encourage you to come along to our Year 6 Open Evening, meet the staff team and students, view our outstanding facilities and learn more about the excellent, all-round education that we offer.

I would also encourage you to peruse our school website and talk to families whose children currently attend St Mary's. I am sure that they will speak very positively about their experiences. Our school website also includes information such as our most recent St Mary's Newsletters and Shine Bulletins, which highlight many of our students' achievements. **You may also like to read our most recent inspection reports from Ofsted (September 2023) and the Catholic Schools Inspectorate (January 2024) which both judged the school as 'Outstanding'**, as well as an array of other information about our fantastic students and school (www.stmarysnewcastle.co.uk).

Leading school improvement across the region

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, St Mary's plays a leading role within the Trust, leading significant school improvement, teaching and learning and leadership training and development across other Trust schools, as well as sharing good practice more widely with other schools in the north-east. We also play a leading role in teacher training across the region.

St Mary's is also 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. Academic achievement in the school has been significantly above average national standards for many years now, for both academic attainment and progress. Our average Progress 8 score over the last 3 years has been +0.55 and our average Attainment 8 has been 58 (it was 59 in summer 2025). Both of these measures place St Mary's amongst the very highest achieving secondary schools in the north-east and nationally.

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 unique and welcoming ethos

St Mary's is the only mixed, 11-18 Catholic secondary school in Newcastle but it is not just a school for Catholics. We welcome equally students from a variety of Faith and ethnic backgrounds and we are very proud of the wonderful diversity of our school. 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. 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 further enriched by a growing number of children from other excellent schools in Newcastle and beyond, including from overseas.

High quality, supportive and respectful 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 at St Mary's and to prepare them for their future lives. We encourage our students to develop their gifts and talents to the full, and to be respectful and compassionate young people, regularly giving service to others and taking part in charitable fundraising. Above all, our priority is to ensure that all students at St Mary's are exceptionally well-supported and feel happy and safe.



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 students' all-round development. We ensure that outstanding personal development, pastoral care, excellent teaching and high quality learning are the foundation stones of school life.

At the very heart of our mission, we provide students with the highest standard of holistic education to prepare them fully for their future lives. We support our students to develop superbly as well rounded, highly educated individuals, fully prepared to take their place successfully in the wider world, as happy, thoughtful and respectful young people with a sense of service to their communities.

Academic excellence

We continue to be among the very highest in the region for raw attainment, with St Mary's attainment significantly higher than the national average since 2010.

In the 2025 summer results, attainment was again very strong at GCSE and A level, and among the very highest in the region. For example, our GCSE English and Maths grade 5+ was 68% and our GCSE English and Maths grade 4+ was 84%, both are significantly above the national averages of 45% and 65% respectively. **These results place St Mary's amongst the very highest achieving schools in the country.**



Our 2025 Attainment 8 score is 59 and this is also significantly higher than the national average of 46.2.

This score measures the achievement of all students across their 8 best government approved qualifications such as English, Maths and EBacc subjects like Science, History, Geography and Modern Foreign Languages. **A notable feature of our outstanding results is the exceptional performance of our upper ability students at the very highest grades. In 2025, 42% of all GCSE entries for all subjects at St Mary's were graded 9-7 (GCSE A*/A previously), compared with 23% nationally and 19% in the North-east.** This reflects the excellent teaching and stretching of our most able.

In 2025 at St Mary's, 86% of GCSE entries were graded as 9-4 (GCSE A*-C previously) compared with 71% nationally and 69% in the North-east. Again, this reflects the excellent teaching and high aspirations we have for all students, whatever their academic ability. All students at St Mary's achieve exceptional academic results.

A Level attainment is also strong and in 2025, we achieved 26% A*-A grades at A Level, 52% A*-B, 78% A*-C grades and 98% A level pass rate. In Vocational A Levels, we achieved 88% merit or above and 99% pass rate. Our A Level achievement at every grade was significantly higher than North-east averages and in line with national averages, with higher than national average performance at A*-C and A*-E grades.

Our academic progress is equally strong. For over a decade at St Mary's, students have gained on average over half a grade above their expected progress across eight GCSE subjects (+0.5), the DfE's Progress 8 measure. Our Progress 8 had averaged at +0.55 for the last 3 years.

This is the most accurate measure of gauging a school's overall academic strength, as it covers the largest proportion 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. In 2025 and 2026, there is no national progress data for KS4, given that progress data is worked out from students' performance in their KS2 SATs in Year 6 to their GCSE results in Year 11, and for two years during COVID-19 there were no KS2 SATs.** Nevertheless, if progress data been published in 2025, we have no doubt that St Mary's progress would have continued to be exceptional, given the outstanding attainment enjoyed by our students of all academic abilities in the summer 2025 examinations.

Positive learning climate

St Mary's is an orderly, purposeful and well-disciplined school community where learning flourishes. Excellent behaviour plays a major part in our continued success and underpins the very high standards in every other area of school life. Students mix really well together and there is a very positive and happy atmosphere here. Ofsted and the Diocese described our students' behaviour as outstanding. We have high expectations of students in this regard. Expectations 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. Our culture of celebrating success is another real strength of the school. We believe that such a positive climate promotes learning and inspires students to fulfil their potential.

Partnership with parents and carers

We place a high value on working closely in partnership with parents and carers 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 on our website and come along to our Year 6 Open Evening to meet our staff team and students. We very much hope that you choose St Mary's for your child's secondary education and we would be delighted to welcome your child to our school next academic year.



Emma Patterson
Headteacher
September 2025

Academic Achievement

Outstanding academic 'attainment' at St Mary's

For many years, our GCSE results have been well above national averages. This year, 86% of all GCSE grades were 4 or above, compared to 71% nationally. At St Mary's, 75% of all grades were 5 or above, compared to an average of 52% across all schools in England. In the top-grade categories, 42% of all GCSE grades this year were year 7 or above, as opposed to 22% nationally. Results in English Language and Maths were outstanding this year too and well above national averages. In English Language, 72% of students at St Mary's achieved grade 5 or above, compared to 44% nationally. 33% of our students achieved grade 7 or above in English Language, as opposed to an average of 16% across all schools in the country. In Maths, results were equally impressive, with 71% of students securing grade 5 or above, compared to 42% nationally. Added to that, 41% of St Mary's students scored Grade 7 or above in Maths, as opposed to a national average of 17%. The proportion of students gaining grades 9-4 in the separate sciences of Biology, Chemistry and Physics was extremely high. This year, 100% of these students gained Grade 5+ and an average of 72% achieved Grade 7 or above across the 3 subjects. In RE, 76% of all grades were 5 or above and 46% were Grade 7 or above. Results in Modern Foreign Languages and Humanities were also very high, with 80% of students taking French or Spanish achieving Grade 5 or above, and 75% of students taking History or Geography achieving Grade 5 or above. With a Level 2 pass rate of 77% this year, vocational subjects were also very successful. In fact, 37% of all vocational grades were at Merit or above.



Outstanding academic 'progress' at St Mary's

Our 'attainment' scores are very high, 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. It is something that we advise parents to check when evaluating a school. St Mary's 'pupil progress' has been exceptionally high for many years. Our average Progress 8 score in the last 3 years has been over +0.55, which is significantly higher than national averages. In effect, this means that students achieve, on average, over half a grade higher than expected in all their GCSE subjects. This year, there are no national figures for progress. However, our estimated Progress 8 score is +0.8. You can be confident that your child will be stretched and challenged to fulfil their 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.

Student Support

Key to our success at St Mary's is the excellent pastoral and academic support that we offer students. For external exam year groups, we provide additional high-quality academic support. We have a very supportive mentoring programme for those Year 11 and Year 13 students who require more guidance and direction as they complete their GCSE and A level courses. We also run a range of programmes, including additional support in Maths, English and Science for all Year 11 students during the spring and summer terms, as well as a system of targeted after-school study support in all subject areas in the final 12 weeks of GCSE courses. This high-quality support gives students the best possible opportunity to reach their academic potential and achieve highly.



Sixth Form achievement

Our results in Sixth Form are excellent too. This year, 78% of A level grades were A*-C. In the higher categories, 52% of all grades at St Mary's were A*-B and 26% were A*-A. The average A Level grade this year was B. These figures are all above national averages and significantly higher than averages for schools in the North-East. In vocational subjects, results are equally impressive, with 46% of students achieving a Distinction grade. 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.



A Level students progress to degree courses at university

In each of the last 5 years, the 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, Veterinary Science, Law, Maths, Humanities, Languages and many other challenging degree courses.



An exceptionally strong Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4

It is always important for parents to have a good understanding of a school's academic profile, so that they are aware of the kind of environment that their child would be joining. As a consequence of the changing profile of students at St Mary's over recent years, we now have very strong academic year groups, among the strongest in the North-East. For example, in the current Year 7, 84% of all scores in Reading and Maths were at or above the 'expected standard' in Standard Attainment Tests at the end of Year 6. In fact, 38% of all scores were at or above the higher standard of 110. On average, students scored just over 107 in Reading and Maths, well above national averages. Any child coming to St Mary's will be joining a vibrant and able school community. We confidently expect all year groups to achieve very high levels of performance at GCSE. As students move through to Sixth Form, they can build on this academic success and achieve highly at A level too.



What others have said about St Mary's

The following two pages summarise what Ofsted, the Catholic School Inspectorate and parents/carers have said about St Mary's over the last few years.

Ofsted: Outstanding

In September 2023, Ofsted inspected all areas of school life here at St Mary's. They judged all areas as Outstanding.

Below are some comments taken from this Ofsted report:

- St Mary's is an ambitious and nurturing school where students thrive.
- Students are taught how to live out the school's Christian values in all that they do.
- Students feel "happy and safe" in an "exceptionally supportive atmosphere".
- Students benefit from a high quality and expansive curriculum.
- Student conduct and behaviour are exceptional.
- The school has extremely high expectations for student conduct and achievement.
- Respect lies at the heart of student relationships with staff and one another.
- Students have many opportunities within the wider curriculum and wider life of the school. As such, student development both holistically and spirituality, is excellent.
- Student outcomes, both academic and holistic, are exceptional.
- Within the Sixth Form, student progress, opportunities and support are exceptional.
- Leaders have designed a highly effective curriculum, with clear end points within all topic areas.
- Learning within the classroom is sequenced and broken down, ensuring all students can reach "highly ambitious goals".
- Teaching staff use a "wide range of effective strategies and high quality resources" to help students learn "exceptionally well".
- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge.
- Teaching staff and support staff ensure that students with SEND are provided with excellent support and "extremely deep knowledge".
- As a result, students make "rapid and secure progress" through the curriculum.
- In lessons, work is fast-paced and challenging and activities are varied and interesting, so students really enjoy learning and work very hard.
- The school places significant focus on reading, ensuring that students make significant progress in this area.
- Student attendance and punctuality are exceptional.
- Pastoral support for all students is excellent.
- Students with SEND are fully supported.
- Students receive outstanding Personal Development and the support for their next steps and career aspirations is extremely strong.
- Strong leadership is seen at all levels with leaders being

highly committed and relentlessly focused on continued, sustained development.

- Students and staff are extremely well supported.
- St Mary's acts as a "beacon" across the Trust and beyond.

Catholic Schools Inspection: Outstanding

In January 2024, the Catholic Schools Inspectorate, visited St Mary's to carry out a full inspection. St Mary's was judged Outstanding in all areas. The report commented:

- The school's Catholic life and mission are "vibrant", with all staff serving as "outstanding role models" to ensure Christ is at the centre of all that the school does.
- Students benefit hugely from the commitment shown by all staff in their mission to provide a holistic, Christ-centred experience.
- Students talk eloquently about the impact of the school's mission statement and its values on their everyday lives.
- The school is wholly inclusive towards all faiths and backgrounds, with a particular focus on supporting the most vulnerable.
- All members of the school community are enthusiastic in their support for charities.
- All staff play an active part promoting the Catholic life and mission of the school.
- Pastoral care is "second to none" with the school placing a particular focus on supporting the most vulnerable.
- The RE Department's effective and thoughtful planning ensures that all groups of students experience outstanding teaching and, as a result, achieve outstanding outcomes.
- Within RE lessons, student engagement is exceptional, with students enjoying excellent relationships with one another and their teacher. Consequently, behaviour and attitudes with RE lessons are outstanding.
- Collective worship is a real focal point of school life, with prayer and liturgy playing a central part in students' spiritual development.
- Students 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.



Parental comments



My child absolutely loves attending St Mary's. They feel safe and happy.

Since joining St Mary's, my daughter has developed excellent friendships with many students. She loves school and is so happy that she attends St Mary's.

I believe the pastoral care at St Mary's is excellent. My daughter's Head of Year has been fantastic in supporting my child and they keep me regularly updated.

Teachers at St Mary's are real specialists in their areas; my son loves telling me what he has learnt in each of his lessons and it's clear that staff are experts in their field.

Student behaviour is outstanding. My son tells me all the time how well students behave in lessons and on the yard at break and lunch.

My child has received excellent care at school, and I am so thankful for the many staff members who go the extra mile! I have always felt really comfortable getting in touch with the school if I have any questions or worries. Staff return my phone calls very quickly and they always want to do all they can to help.

There are so many opportunities outside of the classroom for my daughter; she has joined clubs, goes out of school on trips and, later this year, will travel to France.

Leaders at St Mary's have the children's best interests at heart. Communication with leaders is excellent and students thrive in this fantastic school.

I trust the staff of St Mary's to look after and develop my child.

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.

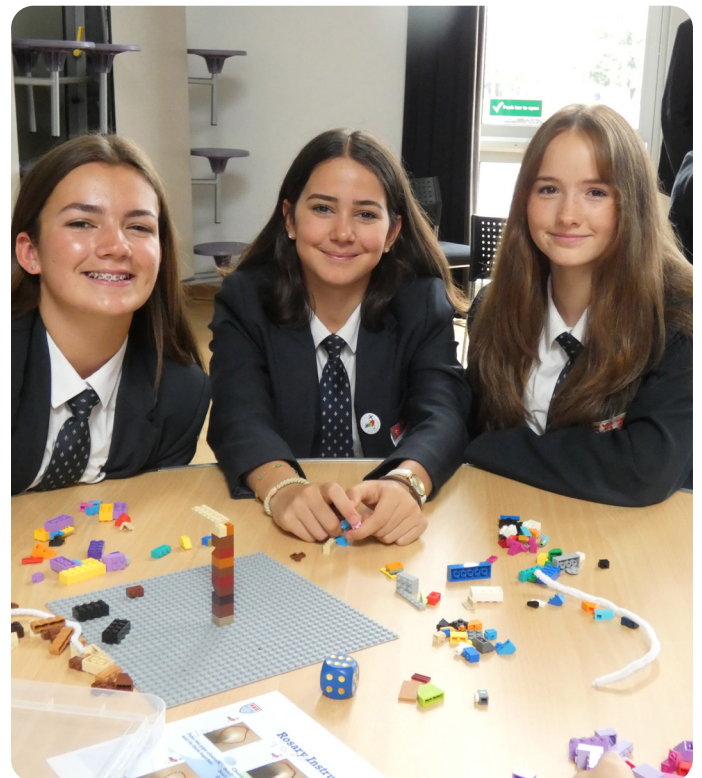
An excellent first year at St Mary's. Staff have been great and so focused on encouraging my daughter to thrive. I'm looking forward to my other children coming to this outstanding school.

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
Catholic School

St Mary's School Building

We have now been in our new school building for over 13 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 into 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 daily.



This space has also been the venue for concerts, parents' evenings, staff meetings and, most memorably, for whole school gatherings at various 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 a selection of fitness machines. The fitness suite has proved to be extremely 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 screens 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 large field at the back of the school, which is open to the students in fine weather. There is a cycle/pedestrian access from the school grounds onto the nearby wagon way, which is hugely beneficial and removes the need for students to use busy roads and footpaths.

There is a dedicated Sixth Form area found on the second level. This area is made up of a café-style work area, group common room, library with ICT facilities and silent study

rooms. The Sixth Form centre adds to our outstanding facilities and 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 a number of 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.

In 2019, we focussed on improving our dining facilities. This involved some alterations to our main dining facility, the purchase of new dining furniture as well as opening a doorway and extending into the main hall to accommodate our increasing number of students. This allows students to enjoy their social time more fully.

In 2020, we began a program of ongoing improvements to our existing IT facilities. All classrooms now have state of the art interactive screens and desktops. As well as this, new student desktop computers have been installed in all our dedicated IT classrooms.



St Mary's are actively supporting environmental improvements and we have worked with Newcastle City Council to see the implementation of over six hundred solar panel units. There have also been improvements to our existing heating systems. Such improvements will ensure a reduction of our carbon footprint, for example, it is anticipated that over 25% of our electricity usage will come from our solar panels. Students and staff are also actively playing their part with the green agenda, as they look to support various recycling initiatives that are being introduced into school.

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 the weekly voluntary Mass on Friday mornings and Celebrations of the Word at Advent and Lent. The school atrium has been the venue in our 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.

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 Justice and Peace Refugee Project and have raised money for a variety of charities as well raising funds 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 and to give excellent support to your child.

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 a 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 Educational 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.

love between people made in the image and likeness of God. Within this area, students will explore different types of relationship, what makes a healthy relationship as well as what challenges can be encountered within relationships. Students will also cover age-appropriate sex and health education.

- 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. Students will look at equality and diversity and think about how they can promote this in their own lives.
- Cultural development: This theme celebrates and acknowledges the rich cultural diversity we have in our world, country and school.
- 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 of life-long learning.
- Safeguarding: These lessons aim to explore current safeguarding topics such as the positive and negative aspects social media, e-safety, mental health and self-esteem. Within these lessons, students will be taught the many different ways of keeping safe as well as the risks that are posed to young people within today's modern world.

Key Stage 3

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

Art	Mathematics
Computer Science	Music
Design and Technology	Personal Development Programme
Drama	Physical Education
English	Religious Education
French	Science
Geography	Spanish
History	

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	Personal Development Programme
Physics	Programme

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

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

This is an innovative and exciting programme which focuses 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

GCSE courses

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

Vocational courses

BTEC Health and Social Care
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
English Language	Physics
English Literature	Sociology
Ethics and Philosophy	Spanish
Film Studies	Sports Studies
	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.

Personal Development Programme: All students take part in a Personal Development Programme bespoke to the needs and issues of students aged 16-19. This is delivered in tutor groups and allows for discussion, collaboration and reflection on key issues in the modern world. This 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 of the knowledge, skills and understanding to lead confident, healthy and independent lives. These topics are set within the Catholic social teaching and allow students the opportunity to enhance their spiritual development. This programme ensures students are well versed in issues prevalent in the modern world, have the appropriate skills for employment and further education, understand

the responsibility of adulthood, are well prepared for any academic assessment as well as the next stage in their lives.

There are four key areas to the Sixth Form Personal Development Programme curriculum:

- **Knowing the World:** Modules aimed at preparing students on issues, which they could face in the modern world as they enter adulthood.
- **Entering the World:** Modules focused on preparing the students for ensuring they can access the next step in their education / employment with the appropriate skills.
- **Preparing for the World:** Modules that prepare students for their next step after Sixth Form and ensure they are well informed about how to achieve this successfully
- **Being in the World:** Lessons aimed at equipping students with the skills to independent live and thrive in the modern world as an adult.

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.

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, 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 believe that having a wide variety of experiences at school, taking part in extracurricular activities, plays a vital role in helping our students to develop and become confident, happy, responsible and well-rounded individuals.

At St Mary's, there are many opportunities for participating in extracurricular activities. Last year, we ran over sixty different regular clubs or activities during lunchtime or after-school. The PE department runs a variety of sporting activities, such as table tennis, basketball, football, badminton, netball, running and cricket, which are open to all students irrespective of ability. In addition, we have many well-established clubs, offering a wide range of enriching activities, including art, board games, chess, computing, dance, debating, drama, fashion and textiles, foreign languages, geography, music and science. There are also a number of clubs specifically designed for our Sixth Form students, such as Medicine, Dentistry and Healthcare, and Aspiring to Oxbridge. 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, offering students 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.



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 develop strong links with many different communities and organizations in other parts of the world.

We run regular overseas educational visits and excursions, many of which are now annual or biannual fixtures on our calendar. The Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) department, for example, organizes annual trips to Spain and France. There is also an annual trip to World War I battlefield sites in Belgium and northern France, as well as a yearly ski trip to the Alps. The MFL department has established links with schools in France and in Spain, allowing students to make regular contact with their peers in other European countries.



In recent years, Year 12 students have embarked on long-haul expeditions to Zambia, where they have helped local communities by working on charity projects. The students have been able to forge positive relationships with pupils at local schools and the wider community, participating in many sporting and cultural activities. One of the many benefits for students of these trips is gaining an insight into the lives of those far less fortunate than themselves. These life-changing visits have established a culture of expedition in the school and have been made possible through the tremendous fundraising efforts of the students and their parents.

We have also developed links with a school in Haarlem, Holland. Every October, over 120 Dutch students visit St Mary's. Over the course of two days, the Dutch students attend timetabled lessons, giving students from both countries the opportunity to interact and learn together. On two occasions, we have also hosted students and teachers from Hebei province in China.

Having links with schools in other countries plays an important role, enabling our students to build friendships, act as ambassadors and learn about life 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.

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.



Recently, our students performed the challenging production, *Les Misérables*, involving over 90 students, which they 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

Throughout the school year, 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 the trips we have ran in previous years include:

- Year 10, 11 and Sixth Form go to Oxford and Cambridge and to other universities, allowing students to gain experience of higher education.
- The Languages department organise educational visits to Spain and France, allowing students to practice their languages and experience other cultures.
- An expedition to Zambia, which had a charitable purpose and provided a unique experience for our Sixth Form students.
- Students have the chance to experience a residential retreat at the Youth Village and to attend the annual Diocesan Summer Festival.
- The Performing Arts department have organised many trips to various theatres throughout the country.
- Fieldwork plays an integral part in the study of Geography with various local trips organised to complement courses. Sixth Form Geography students also have a residential visit to support their A level work and to develop their skills further.
- The Art department have various visits to galleries with students, to study contemporary art and works produced over the centuries.
- St Mary's students have enhanced their love of outdoor sports by taking part in our annual Thurston outdoor adventure trip or the annual ski course to the French Alps.
- The History department organises a trip to the Battlefields so that students can experience these historical sites at first hand.

Trips that are in plan for 2025-26 include:

- Our annual outdoor adventure trip to Thurston
- The Performing Arts Department are taking students to see various theatre performances.
- Practical field workdays have been organised by the geography dept.
- Ski trip to the French Alps in January 2026
- Annual trip to Normandy in October 2025 and Barcelona in 2026, allowing students the opportunity to put their language skills into practice.
- The RE department will be taking some year 10 students to Rome for the first time on this educational trip.
- The annual history trip to the Battlefields will involve 40 students in March 2026
- 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, Film, Enterprise, Chess, Debating, Science, Games, "Just. Is" group, History, Leavers' Proms, Synagogue visits, Lego Club, Sports, the School leadership program 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 and graphic 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 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, Chamber Orchestra and String Ensemble. There are many other opportunities for individuals, small 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.



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 and laptops 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.

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 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 and all students are always welcome. Over the years, 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 (girls and boys) and rugby (girls and boys), netball, rounders, swimming, basketball, athletics, cricket, tennis, 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 found on our website. The 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 two large field areas 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.

Here at St Mary's, our students love learning outside of the classroom. We value the essential, additional learning experiences that come from activities in the local area and beyond. As well as students gaining vital knowledge and understanding that links to different curriculum areas, outdoor education also ensures that students develop their awareness of the wider world. Through visiting places of cultural, religious and historical significance, students can draw upon knowledge from across the curriculum when undertaking new, life-changing experiences. We believe that it is our role to support students in developing themselves in the broadest sense, both academically and holistically, therefore outdoor education is a central aspect of the school's teaching, learning and wider-curriculum offer.



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 every-one 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.** 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.
- Standard fit, dark charcoal grey school trousers.
- 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. No knee 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 – Must be purchased through Michael Sehgal & Sons Ltd

- Navy embroidered polo shirt with blue stripe.
- Navy shorts with blue stripe.
- Navy tracksuit bottoms (optional)
- Navy PE mid-layer (optional)

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 2026-27

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 always be given to Catholic children in accordance with the oversubscription criteria listed below. The school is conducted by its academy company 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 these admission arrangements.

Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust is the admission authority and has responsibility for admissions to this school. The local authority undertakes the co-ordination of admission arrangements during the normal admission round excluding admission to year 12. The admission authority has set the school's Published Admissions Number ("PAN") at **225** pupils to year 7 in the school year which begins in September 2026.

The admission authority will, where logistically possible, admit twins and all siblings from multiple births where one of the children is the last child ranked within the school's PAN.

Catholic 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

Pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (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.

Oversubscription Criteria

At any time where there are more applications for places than the number of places available, places will be offered according to the following order of priority:

1. Catholic looked after and previously looked after children. (see notes 2&3)
2. Catholic children who attend a feeder Catholic primary school. (see note 3)
3. Other Catholic children. (see note 3)

4. Other looked after and previously looked after children. (see note 2)

5. Catechumens and members of an Eastern Christian Church. (see notes 4&5)

6. 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 10)

7. Other children who attend a Catholic feeder primary school. (see note 13&14)

8. Children of other Christian denominations and children of other faiths whose membership is evidenced by a minister of religion or other religious leader. (see notes 6&7)

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

10. Any other children.

Within each of the categories listed above, the following provisions will be applied in the following order.

(i) Where evidence is provided at the time of application of an exceptional social, medical or pastoral need of the child which can be most appropriately met at this school, the application will be placed at the top of the category in which the application is made. (see note 10)

(ii) The attendance of a brother or sister at the school at the time of enrolment will increase the priority of an application within each category so that the application will be placed at the top of the category in which the application is made after children in (i) above. (see note 8)

Tie Break

Where there are places available for some, but not all applicants within a particular criterion the school will allocate places using an electronic random allocation process, which will be independently monitored. In the instance of multiple births, and one sibling is chosen by random allocator both or more siblings will also be admitted. If your child is unsuccessful in gaining a place, you may request that your child is placed onto the school's waiting list, which will be maintained according to the schools' admissions criteria. Within each criterion, children will be ranked by computer in random order.

Application Procedures and Timetable

To apply for a place at this school in the normal admission round, you must complete a Common Application Form, excluding admission to year 12, available from the local authority in which you live. If you are 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 admissions authority following the closing date for applications. This information must have been correct at the date of closing for applications. If you do not provide the supplemental evidence, this may affect your child's chance of being offered a place.

You will be advised of the outcome of your application on **1 March 2026** or the next working day, by the local authority on our behalf. If you are unsuccessful (unless your child gained a place at a school you ranked higher) you will be informed of the reasons, related to the oversubscription criteria listed above, and you have the right of appeal to an independent appeal panel.

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 2025**.

Late Applications

Late applications will be administered in accordance with your home Local Authority Secondary Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme. You are encouraged to ensure that your application is received on time.

Admission of Children Outside their Normal Age Group

A request may be made for a child to be admitted outside 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 head teacher of the school at the same time as the admission application is made. The admission authority 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 head teacher, including the head teacher's statutory responsibility for the internal organisation, management and control of the school, the admission authority will take into account the views of the parents and of appropriate medical and education professionals, as appropriate.

Waiting Lists

In addition to their right of appeal, unsuccessful children 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 above and **not** in the order in which applications are received or added to the list. Waiting lists for admission will operate throughout the school year. The waiting list will be held open until the last day of the summer term.

Inclusion in 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. (www.stmarysnewcastle.co.uk) 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.

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 admission authority is empowered to give absolute priority to a child where admission is requested under any locally agreed protocol. The admission authority has this power even where admitting the child would mean exceeding the PAN.

False evidence

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

deception.

Notes (these notes form part of the oversubscription criteria)

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 an 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. Included in this definition are those children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and who ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.

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 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 laws of the Church.

4. 'catechumen' means a member of the catechumenate of a Catholic Church. 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.

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 CYTÜN 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.

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 7 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.

8. 'brother or sister' 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 for whom the school place is sought 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.

9. 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.

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

11. To demonstrate an exceptional social, medical or pastoral need of the child which can be most appropriately met at this school, the admission authority will require compelling written evidence from an appropriate professional, such as a social worker, doctor or priest.

12. 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.

13. Catholic Feeder Primary Schools

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

14. Children who are not Catholic attending a Catholic feeder primary school.

St Mary's Catholic School

Benton Park Road, Longbenton, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE7 7PE
Telephone: 0191 2153260

admin@st-marys.newcastle.sch.uk
www.stmarysnewcastle.co.uk

