



St Mary's

ISSUE 2 - OCTOBER 2025

Year 9 Students Visit Thurston

Last month, 48 students in Year 9 visited Thurston Outdoor Education Centre in the Lake District. The students who attended the trip experienced a range of outdoor activities including Canoeing, Kayaking, Ghyll Scrambling, Abseiling, Mountain Climbing, Jetty Jumping and Rock Climbing.

Students thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to explore the outdoors and to take in the stunning Lake District scenery, as well as enjoying the physical challenges posed by the wide range of outdoor experiences on offer, which allowed them to show determination, resilience and teamwork. The students were all a credit to St Mary's and we were delighted to hear all about their time in Thurston when they returned safely to school.

Headteacher's Welcome

Dear Parents and Carers

We enjoyed a great first half-term in school, with students across Years 7-13 settling back into lessons very well and participating brilliantly in the wider life of the school. We also had a very well-attended Year 11 Parents' Evening and we look forward to our Year 7/12 Tutor Evening and Year 13 Parents' Evening later this term.

Our students have also travelled around the north-east, as well as to the Lake District, Edinburgh and France over the last few weeks. Thank you so much to the teachers and support staff who planned and organised these fantastic trips.

We look forward to the half-term ahead, including our Remembrance commemorations and our Advent celebrations.

Best wishes, Miss Patterson,
Headteacher.

Art Exhibitions

The Art Department recently held its first ever external public exhibition at Newcastle Arts Centre on Westgate Road. This lovely collection showcased creative work mainly by our talented Year 12 students.

In addition, our younger students participating in the Silver and Bronze Award are hosting their own exhibition on Thursday 13th November from 4-6pm at Newcastle City Library. Their work will also be on display for one week, offering a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the creativity and dedication of our award participants. We hope you'll join us in enjoying the inspiring work of our students.



Dance Champion!

Deanna Sadi (Year 11) recently competed in a dance competition in London where she finished third place. Deanna even designed the beautiful dresses that she and her partner wore as part of her GCSE Art Coursework. An amazing achievement - well done Deanna!



Drama Club

Drama Club has been buzzing with excitement this term, thanks to the incredible efforts and leadership of our talented Sixth-Form students. They bring a fresh energy to the club, mentoring younger students and fostering a passion for performance. Drama Club meets weekly on a Wednesday lunchtime, offering students of all ages the chance to explore their creativity, develop acting skills, and work together on fun, collaborative projects.



Warhammer Club

Warhammer Club meets once a week on Fridays. Students really enjoy themselves at the group and do many things with Warhammer miniatures, including using them for tabletop games, collecting and painting them for display, trading them for other miniatures, or repurposing them for other projects. The art room is always a real hive of activity, with students chatting away as they work with the figures.



Boccia

We are very excited to have launched our first Boccia club at St Mary's. Boccia is a really inclusive sport which anyone can take part in. Students are really enjoying getting to know this new sport and are looking forward to an upcoming competition where they will get to test their new skills against competitors from across the city.

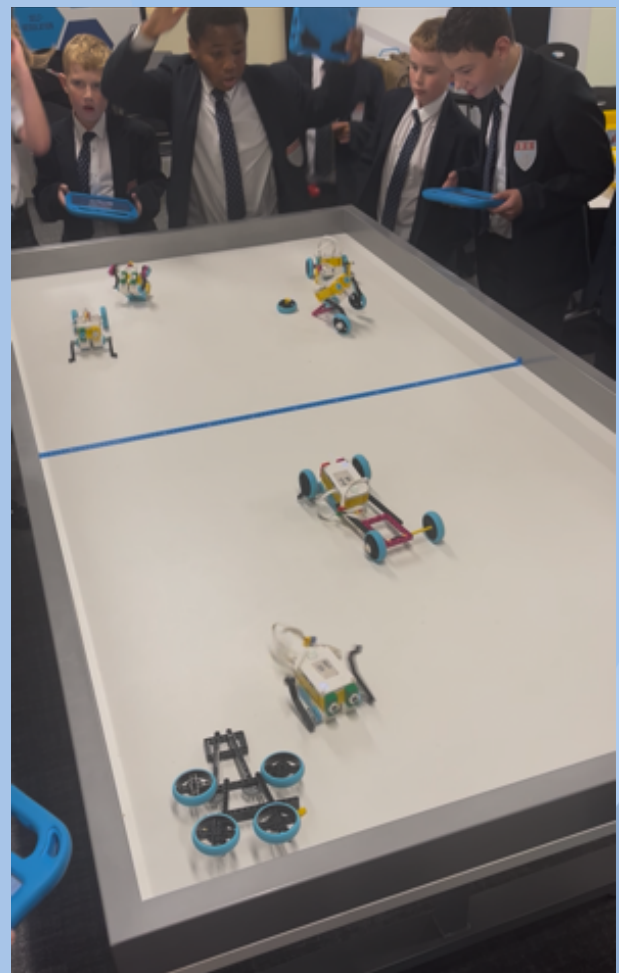
Sixth Form Higher Education Fair

Sixth Form students attended a Higher Education Fair this half-term, with over 15 universities represented, including Cambridge, Durham, and Newcastle. The event gave students the chance to explore a wide range of courses, ask questions, and gather advice on applications and student life. It was a valuable opportunity to start thinking about future pathways and the next steps in their education journey.



Visit to NUCASTLE

On Tuesday 21st October, a group of Year 7 students took part in a visit to NUCASTLE, an initiative which is funded by the Newcastle United Foundation. Students were invited to take part in some STEM activities in this purpose built venue. Students designed, created and raced their very own Lego robots, all aiming to create the perfect feat of engineering that would cross the finish line first and remain on course throughout the race. At times, this sounded a lot easier than it was in practice, but our students demonstrated excellent resilience skills, refusing to give up until they had created the ultimate robots.



Year 9 Basketball

Recently, our Year 9 basketball team went to the Royal Grammar School, playing a match against Walker Technology College. In a fiercely-contested game, the St Mary's team pulled out all stops and, in the end, ran out clear winners. What is more, they were excellent ambassadors for the school. Well done to all the players!



Annual Visit from Het Schoter School

On Wednesday 15 and Thursday 16 October, over 100 students and 8 teachers from the Het Schoter School in Haarlem, the Netherlands, visited us. This was the fourth year in succession that students and teachers from the Dutch school have been to St Mary's.

Over the course of the two days, our Dutch visitors teamed up with students in Year 8, doing lessons in Maths, Design and Technology and PE. As always, the visit was a huge success, with students from both schools working together, chatting, and forging friendships. A real highlight of the visit was seeing over 160 students playing round robin games of bench ball on the tennis court.

We are already looking forward to the visit next year.



CAFOD Young Leaders

Some of our Year 13 Student Leaders were recently commissioned as CAFOD Young Leaders. The students explored what it means to listen, understand and share. Working in groups, they explored the work of CAFOD and the have planned how they can raise awareness in school.



Year 13 Outreach Trip to Edinburgh

In October 2025, fifty Sixth Form students travelled to Edinburgh for a community outreach visit rooted in service and social action. During the trip, students worked alongside local partners to clean and restore a community park, and they supported a local Catholic parish in its projects strengthening their teamwork, communication, and leadership skills. Through meetings with parish teams and community organisations, students explored how the Catholic community supports vulnerable people—both historically and today—through initiatives such as outreach, hospitality, and practical assistance. Alongside their volunteering, students enriched their cultural capital by engaging with the city's heritage and everyday life, visiting key sites around the city, and reflecting on how Edinburgh's history and diversity inform contemporary approaches to community support.



Year 8 Army Careers Talk

All of Year 8 took part in an Army careers talk this half-term. Students explored the wide range of roles within the armed forces, from leadership and teamwork to specialist careers. The session encouraged them to think about future pathways and how the skills gained in the Army can be applied to many different jobs.



Japanese Club

Japanese club takes place every Tuesday at lunchtime. Students do a variety of activities; They practise their Japanese language skills, read Manga and Anime comic books, produce amazing pieces of art work inspired by Japanese themes and watch Studio Ghibli films.

It has been wonderful to see students from across the school interacting with each other and sharing their passion for Japanese culture.

The group has gone from strength to strength due to the enthusiasm of these students and their positive attitude towards school life in general.

Learning about Diwali

With Diwali taking place recently, 9A3 spent time learning about the festival and its significance in an RE lesson. One of our students, Rida Jain kindly volunteered to share her personal experiences of Diwali and explain what the celebration means to her. Following her insightful talk, the class engaged in a variety of activities, including exploring intricate rangoli patterns and completing short quizzes with Rida, our resident expert, patiently supporting her classmates throughout these activities. Well done Rida!



Personal Development

This half-term, students have explored Celebrating Diversity in their Personal Development lessons. They have reflected on the richness of different backgrounds, cultures, and experiences, while focusing on respect, inclusion, and kindness. Lessons encouraged them to challenge stereotypes, consider equality, and celebrate what makes each person unique. Further information about our Personal Development curriculum can be found on our website:

<https://stmarysnewcastle.co.uk/personal-development/>

Career of the Month

This half-term's Career of the Month has focused on careers linked to History. In tutor time, students have explored the wide range of opportunities that studying History can lead to, including law, politics, journalism, heritage, and research. They also considered the valuable skills History develops, such as critical thinking, analysis, and communication.

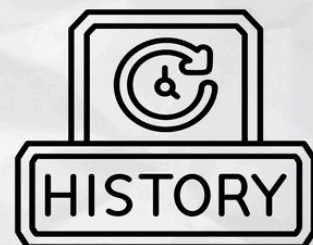
Careers & History Discussion Task

Scenario:

A new local museum is being planned to showcase the history of your town/city. The organisers need a team of people to make it happen.

Discussion Questions:

1. Which jobs would be needed to make the museum a success? (e.g. historian, curator, archaeologist, teacher, marketing officer, tour guide, archivist, conservator).
2. Which of these roles do you think would be the most important - and why?
3. How could the skills you learn in History lessons (research, analysing sources, writing arguments, understanding different viewpoints) be useful in these jobs?



Words Across the Water

We continue to work with colleagues from Seven Stories, the National Centre for Children's books in Ouseburn, and with staff and students from schools in Little Rock, Arkansas on the Words Across the Water project, developing a children's book telling the stories of Newcastle and Little Rock.

Students have met online on a number of occasions and have shared some great ideas about characters, themes, illustration and motifs. Author, publisher and storyteller Ricard O'Neill is weaving these together into a coherent narrative. It has been a fascinating and creative process to be involved in so far and we can't wait for the final outcome. We have compared the rivers in both cities, as well as the local wildlife and food associated with both locations.



Year 9 student Matylda Czubinska was inspired by professional illustrator Michelle to do some of her own sketches related to key items from both Newcastle and Little Rock!

Father Hancock Talk

On Tuesday November the 4th Father Chris Hancock made his now annual visit to St Mary's to give a talk to all of Year 13. He shared his experiences as a Priest in Cameroon and shared about the nature of vocation based on his extensive experiences of both education and travel. Students were enthralled as Father Chris talked of his Indiana Jones-style life in Cameroon, living outside his comfort zone in terms



of how he lived, what he ate, and his interactions with others. Students asked pertinent and insightful questions and the visit lit a real fire in students about the joy of experiencing cultures different to their own and the exciting opportunities which lie ahead in their lives. Father Chris talked of them "casting out into the deep" in their lives, much as Jesus' disciples were encouraged to do in their sense of mission. I'm sure Father Chris will remain a permanent fixture in the speaking calendar at St Mary's in the future!

Youth Climate Summit

Our Sixth Form Student Leaders represented St Mary's at Newcastle City Council's Youth Summit, joining peers from across the city to explore practical ways to make Newcastle more sustainable. Workshops looked at greener transport, reducing waste, and improving energy use in public buildings.

Students contributed ideas on active travel routes to schools, community recycling initiatives, and how young people can influence local policy.



Employer Experience Sessions

Our Year 12 students took part in a series of Employer Experience sessions this month with IBM, FSNE Medical, Oases (green careers), and Oliver Wyman.

The programme showcased routes into technology, healthcare, sustainability, and consulting—spanning degrees, apprenticeships, and early-careers pathways. Former St Mary's students returned to share honest insights about applications, interviews, and day-to-day roles, helping pupils link subjects to real careers.

Workshops covered CV tips, problem-solving tasks, and how to build meaningful super-curricular experiences.



Study Skills

Our Year 12 students took part in study-skills workshops led by Newcastle University, designed to sharpen the habits that underpin Sixth Form success. Sessions focused on time management, planning longer projects, effective academic reading and note-taking, and strategies for staying productive during busy assessment periods. Students practised breaking tasks into milestones, using evidence grids to read critically, and reflecting on which approaches work best for them. They left with practical tools—weekly study planners, a “read-review-recall” routine, and tips for balancing super-curricular commitments.



Key dates and events ...

Wed 12th November
3.30pm–5.30pm– Year 7/12 Tutor evening

Thurs 27th November
5.00pm–7.00pm– Sixth Form Open Evening

Mon 8th December
2.45pm–5.15pm– Year 13 Parents' Evening

Friday 19th December– final day of term before the Christmas break (early finish for all students)