

ISSUE 4 - DECEMBER 2025



St Mary's

NEWSLETTER

A Festive Celebration of Music and Creativity

This year's Christmas Concert was a truly magical way to welcome the festive season. The evening featured timeless classics such as Fairytale of New York and Carol of the Bells, performed with energy and enthusiasm.

A highlight of the night was the debut of The Red Castles, a newly formed group made up of students, some of whom had never played an instrument before. Their performance was a wonderful example of talent and teamwork coming together. Another exciting addition was Blue Arc, who impressed the audience with their original song Paper Moon Girl. The concert concluded on a high note with a lively rendition of Last Christmas by Wham!, performed by the Choir and accompanied by the school Orchestra.

After the music, the Art Department showcased beautifully designed student cards, raising an impressive £75 for CAFOD.

Thank you to everyone who supported this special event. We look forward to welcoming you back to St Mary's for our Summer Concert, which promises to be another unforgettable evening.

Headteacher's welcome

Dear Parents and Carers

Happy New Year and I hope you had a peaceful and happy Christmas with your families.

During December, we enjoyed many different events in school to celebrate Advent, including our Celebrations of the Word, our Advent Fayres, Christmas Services and our Christmas Music Concert. There was a lovely festive spirit across all year groups and, as always, the students participated in all these events respectfully and enthusiastically.

We look forward to the spring term ahead. Very best wishes,

Miss Patterson, Headteacher.

Stable for the Atrium

Every year, our Atrium stage proudly features a traditional stable as part of our festive celebrations. This year, we were delighted to showcase a truly special creation, handmade by Mia-Rose Puthen.


Mia-Rose dedicated weeks of hard work to design and build the stable, demonstrating incredible creativity and perseverance. Along the way, she mastered new skills, including the art of soaking willow to make it more pliable, a technique that added authenticity and strength to her design.


The result was a stunning piece that reflected both craftsmanship and commitment. Mia-Rose's effort reminded us of the beauty of learning through hands-on experiences and the joy of contributing something meaningful to our community.

Well done, Mia-Rose! Your work was admired and appreciated by everyone who visited the Atrium this season.

Charlie and the Chocolate Factory – Coming Soon!

This year's school musical, Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, is well underway and shaping up to be a spectacular performance!

 JUL 17 Performance Dates: Monday, 9th February to Thursday, 12th February

 Tickets: On sale this week for cast members, with general sale opening soon



Alumni Visits

We were delighted to welcome two former students back to Sixth Form this term. Angelin, now a second-year medical student at Hull York Medical School, visited to speak with our prospective medics and dentists. She shared an honest and highly practical overview of life on a healthcare degree, from managing workload and placements to staying organised, looking after wellbeing, and making the most of opportunities outside the lecture theatre.



We were also pleased to welcome Mert, who is in his final year reading Law at the University of Oxford. Mert ran a session for our prospective Oxbridge applicants in Year 12, offering a clear picture of academic life at Oxford, what tutorials are really like, and how students can prepare themselves now through wider reading, discussion and super-curricular engagement. His advice on mindset, curiosity and resilience was especially helpful for students beginning their Oxbridge journey.



Sixth Form and Staff Christmas Jumper Day

Sixth Form and staff brought plenty of festive cheer to school this term by taking part in our Christmas Jumper Day. Students and staff were invited to wear their best (or worst!) Christmas jumper for the day, and they certainly delivered. We saw a brilliant range of efforts, from subtle seasonal knits to truly spectacular statement jumpers, and it was great to see that the vast majority of our Sixth Form students got involved. Thanks to everyone's generosity, we raised over £250 for Save the Children.



Jesmond Dene Sensory Nature Walk

Just before the Christmas break, a group of year 7 students took part in a sensory nature walk in Jesmond Dene and Pets' Corner. The students had a great time engaging in activities which encouraged them to explore their surroundings using their senses. This involved spotting the beautiful colours of the flora in Jesmond Dene and listening to the sounds of different animals, including Max the parrot who greeted us with a 'hello' and a wave of his claw. The students were also able to feel the surfaces of some of the trees and, perhaps less pleasant, smell the odours of the pigs and goats. They were undeterred by the rainy conditions but welcomed the opportunity to take refuge in the Millfield House Café, owned by the family of former student Sofia Risi who has now joined the family business. Here students were kindly treated to a delicious hot chocolate 'on the house' enabling them to complete their sensory experience. It was a thoroughly relaxing and mindful morning for all involved.



Year 12 Law Society Hosts Mock Trial

The Year 12 Law Society recently hosted a mock trial, giving students practical insight into courtroom roles and legal processes. Participants acted as barristers, witnesses, and jurors, gaining experience in presenting arguments and evaluating evidence. The interactive event enhanced understanding of the legal system while developing critical thinking and public speaking skills.



Christmas Dinner

On 18th December, our school enjoyed a wonderful Christmas lunch, made extra special by the hard work and good cheer of our dining hall staff. They prepared and served a delicious festive meal that brought plenty of smiles and created a warm, celebratory atmosphere for everyone. They looked amazing in their Christmas outfits!



Celebrating 'Great Joy' This Christmas

This year, our theme for the Christmas celebrations was 'Great Joy', inspired by the words spoken by the Angels to the shepherds announcing the birth of Jesus. Every student attended a Celebration of the Word, taking time to reflect on the joy shared between Elizabeth and Mary and the example their faith and relationship sets for us today.

As part of the service, students heard a powerful message from Pope Leo, reminding them that we are called to be 'beacons of hope', bringing joy to others through our actions and words. It was a meaningful opportunity for our school community to pause, reflect, and embrace the true spirit of Christmas.



A Joyful Christmas Service to End the Term

The school community came together for a heart-warming Christmas service to celebrate the season. It was a moment filled with music, reflection, and a shared sense of togetherness as we approached the end of term. Students from all year groups lifted their voices in a selection of festive carols, filling the space with warmth and energy. Their enthusiasm was unmistakable, and the joy of singing together created a wonderful atmosphere that staff and pupils alike will remember.



MMI Practice Workshops

Our Year 13 prospective medics and dentists recently took part in a mock MMI (Multiple Mini Interview) workshop led by staff, giving them the chance to practise station-style questions and receive targeted feedback.

This hands-on session was designed to help students build confidence and refine their communication skills ahead of their upcoming university interviews for Medicine and Dentistry. By simulating real interview scenarios, students gained valuable experience and practical tips to perform at their best.



Year 9 Ski Trip – Les Menuires, France

As we write this, our Year 9 students are currently enjoying an incredible experience in Les Menuires, France on the school ski trip! So far, the weather has been brilliant, and they've had a fantastic first day on the slopes.

We hope they continue to have an amazing trip filled with fun, learning, and adventure. We'll share more details and highlights in our next newsletter!



Newcastle College Visit

On Thursday 8th December, a group of Year 11 students visited Newcastle College to explore the courses and options available as they begin planning for life after GCSEs.

The students were very impressed with the college's facilities and specialised equipment, including 3D printing and design software, an electronics training facility, and a mock hospital ward complete with lifelike dummy patients for practical healthcare training.

The tour gave students plenty to think about as they consider their next steps, and they thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

Thank you to Newcastle College for such an informative and inspiring visit!



Year 12 Kick Off the Term with Enrichment Morning

Our Year 12 students made an excellent start to the term with the first Enrichment Morning of the academic year, delivered during Personal Development.

Every student attended a workshop led by a university or employer, ensuring access to high-quality, real-world guidance from external experts.

The theme for this Enrichment Morning was employability skills and degree apprenticeships. Students explored what employers look for, how to develop a strong personal profile, and the different routes available after Sixth Form including the growing opportunities offered through degree apprenticeships.

Sessions were delivered by a fantastic range of partners, including Clifford Chance, ESH, Northumbria University, and Lancaster University. Each workshop offered practical advice, honest insights, and clear next steps, helping students to think ambitiously about their future plans.

A huge thank you to our partners and well done to Year 12 for making the most of this valuable opportunity!



Wellbeing Ambassadors



We are proud to share that members of our Sixth Form Student Leadership Team on the Mental Health Committee, Billy, Ruby, and Lily successfully completed their training to become Wellbeing Ambassadors as part of the Wellbeing Hub.

Throughout the programme, they developed important skills to support their peers and promote positive mental health across our school community. Their commitment and enthusiasm have been inspiring, and this achievement marks an important step in strengthening our wellbeing initiatives. Now fully trained, Billy, Ruby, and Lily are looking forward to sharing what they have learned with the wider school community and working together to help plan Children's Mental Health Week in February.

Congratulations to our new Wellbeing Ambassadors!

A Reflective Year 7 Retreat at the Youth Village

Our Y7 students recently enjoyed a wonderful retreat at the Youth Village, where time away from the classroom gave them space not only for fun in the wintry weather but also for meaningful reflection and prayer. Throughout the retreat, students took part in activities designed to help them think about their faith, their relationships, and the values they want to carry with them. Quiet moments of prayer and guided reflection offered a chance to pause, listen, and connect more deeply with God and with one another. The snowy surroundings added a special atmosphere to the experience, making the retreat both memorable and spiritually enriching. We're proud of how thoughtfully our Y7 students engaged with the retreat, embracing both the reflective moments and the joy of being together in such a peaceful setting.



A Remarkable Advent of Giving

This Advent season has been filled with generosity, creativity, and community spirit across the whole school. Each Year Group had the chance to lead its own Advent Fayre, raising money for their chosen charity. Held over lunchtime, the Fayres were full of energy and fun, with stalls ranging from sending Christmas cards to hooking rings on reindeer antlers, trying out a cornhole challenge, and even competing in the Plank. Alongside the Fayres, our wider Advent fundraising efforts, including Bake Sales, Bingo, Art Sales, the Raffle, and Christmas Jumper Day, helped us raise an impressive £1761.34 for charity. In addition to this, our students and staff worked together to prepare and deliver 150 Christmas Hampers, offering support and kindness to families in our community. A heartfelt thank you to everyone who contributed. The generosity of spirit shown throughout Advent has made a real difference and reflects the very best of our school community.



Exploring German Language and Culture in German Club

Students have been having a great time in German Club, where they've been discovering both the language and the rich culture that comes with it. From learning useful phrases to exploring traditions, food, music, and everyday life in Germany, the club has offered a fun and engaging way to broaden horizons.

The sessions have sparked plenty of enthusiasm, with students enjoying the chance to try something new and deepen their understanding of another part of the world. It's been a lively and rewarding experience for everyone involved.



A Brilliant Term for Drama Club

Drama Club has gone from strength to strength last term, with fantastic levels of enthusiasm and creativity from everyone involved. Our dedicated student leaders have been working on a rota to deliver engaging, skills-based sessions each week, helping students grow in confidence and performance technique. It's been wonderful to see so many students taking part regularly and throwing themselves into every activity. Their energy has made Drama Club a real highlight of the term.

With such a strong foundation, there's a real buzz about what 2026 will bring for Drama Club, and we can't wait to see it unfold.



Celebrating Success at the Newcastle Schools City Cross Country Event

The recent Newcastle Schools City Cross Country event at Walbottle Academy brought together young athletes from across the city for a day of determination, teamwork, and impressive sporting spirit. Our students rose to the challenge with enthusiasm, representing the school with pride from start to finish.



Upcoming dates and events ...

Monday 19th January:
Year 9 Parents' Evening, 2:45pm - 6.00pm

Tuesday 27th January:
Diocesan Holocaust Memorial Evening, 7.00pm

Monday 2nd March:
Year 10 Parents' Evening
2:45pm - 6.00pm