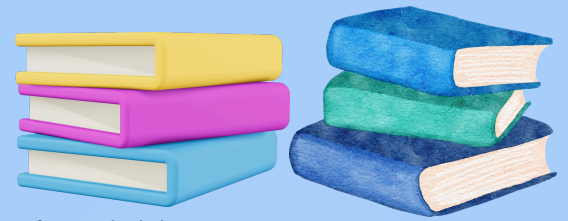




St Mary's

NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 6 - FEBRUARY 2026



Celebrating World Book Day at School

Last Thursday, we marked World Book Day with a range of activities designed to celebrate reading. Across Years 7–10 and Year 12, lessons began a little differently than usual. At the start of each class, teachers read an extract from a short story specially selected by our librarian. As the day went on, students heard the next part of the tale each time they moved to a new lesson. By the end of the school day, every class had enjoyed the full story. This was an exciting shared reading experience that brought the whole school together. In English, classes engaged in a variety of reading-themed activities, encouraging deeper thinking about stories, authors, and the importance of reading for pleasure.

The celebrations continued in Personal Development lessons. These sessions focused on both World Book Day and the National Year of Reading 2026. Students explored their own “reading rivers”: the books that have shaped them through their lives so far. They even had the chance to ‘prescribe’ books to one another. They also designed their ideal book and discussed the national motto for 2026: “Go All In.” The lesson helped raise awareness of the value of reading.

Headteacher's Welcome

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope you and your families are well. As we move through the spring term, our students continue to contribute so much, both within lessons and the wider life of the school.

The full array of enrichment opportunities continue at lunchtimes, after school, as well as many educational visits to museums, universities and art galleries.

Our programme of Lenten activities is also underway, as we lead up to Holy Week before our Easter break.

In more good news, St Mary's, along with some other schools across the country, was recently commended by the Secretary of State for Education for our success in supporting all students, including our disadvantaged students. A letter from Catherine McKinnell MP stated that we are "helping to provide children with the opportunities, support, and high-quality education they deserve." This is a fantastic achievement for our school.

Many thanks for your continued support.

Best wishes, Miss Patterson, Headteacher.

6th Form Boys' Football Team crowned U19 City Cup Champions!

St Mary's 6th Form Boys' Football Team made history on recently at Newcastle Benfield FC, winning the U19 City Cup for the first time with a dominant 6-1 victory.

They started strongly, earning an early penalty that Noel Marcos Monteiro converted. A headed goal from Thomas Crosby made it 2-0 before the opposition pulled one back. St Mary's responded quickly, with Ewan Adijandra restoring the two-goal lead before halftime.

In the second half, Crosby scored again, followed by a composed finish from Alan Mih Achuo. Rory Morgan sealed the win with a brilliant solo goal.

The final whistle confirmed an impressive 6-1 win and a landmark achievement for the squad. Congratulations to the team!



Charlie and the Chocolate Factory

Before half term, our school transformed into a world of pure imagination as students from across the year groups delivered a dazzling and energetic production of Charlie and the Chocolate Factory. The four sold-out performances left us all beaming with pride.

Our talented students brought Roald Dahl's classic tale to life and the audiences were spellbound each night watching Charlie win his golden ticket and enter Willy Wonka's fantastical factory! All of the characters were played with such enthusiasm and we were blown away by the quality of the production. Behind the scenes, a hardworking team ensured the production's success and the musical score, performed by our talented school orchestra, tied the whole performance together beautifully. Each night, a group of dedicated students sold Wonka themed sweets, ice cream and chocolate bars as part of their fundraising efforts. The show was a huge success and testament to the hard work and talent of all involved.



Noughts and Crosses at Northern Stage

Drama students from Years 10, 11, 12, and 13 recently visited Northern Stage to watch the dynamic theatrical production of Noughts & Crosses. The trip offered a valuable opportunity for students to discover Malorie Blackman's celebrated story and see how its themes are interpreted and brought to life on stage.

From the moment the lights went down, students were captivated by the powerful performances, the staging and the direction. Students were busy taking notes throughout, observing how key scenes were adapted from page to performance. Our students represented the school brilliantly during their visit.

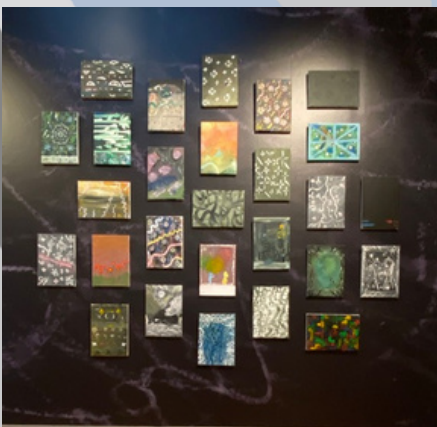


Hatton Gallery Exhibition

St Mary's Art students are currently exhibiting in the Hatton Gallery. It is a very abstract exhibition, and the students coped brilliantly with the brief they were given before they started to create their work. Year 9 were invited to respond to The Jerwood Collection, creating work that celebrates young artists at different stages of their creative development. This exhibition pays homage to Victor Pasmore's 1957 Art Education Exhibition, originally held at the Hatton Gallery.

Students really had to work outside their comfort zone for this project, but they have shown so much enthusiasm and talent that the gallery and organisers have already requested to work with us again on future projects!

Their abstract paintings and drawings are now on display in the gallery, which is located within the Newcastle University grounds. The students' artwork will remain on display until 9th May, and entry to the gallery is free for all visitors.



Trip to The Discovery Museum

Our Year 12 History students recently visited the Discovery Museum, where they had the opportunity to explore the archives and engage with original source material.

They also enjoyed a fascinating lecture from the museum's local historian, giving them a deeper insight into the stories and evidence that shape our understanding of the past.



Trip to The Spanish Gallery, Bishop Auckland

A group of enthusiastic Year 10 students had the exciting opportunity to take part in an inter-school competition hosted at The Spanish Gallery in Bishop Auckland. Our students represented the school brilliantly in an event that brought together 11 schools from across the region.

The competition, inspired by The Apprentice, challenged students to think creatively, work collaboratively, and pitch their ideas in Spanish. Each team was tasked with developing an original concept and presenting it confidently to an audience made up of peers, teachers, and judges.

Our students rose to the challenge with energy and professionalism, showcasing not only their language skills but also their teamwork, imagination, and public-speaking ability. Their hard work paid off and our team achieved an impressive second place!



National Careers Week

As part of our National Careers Week programme, students took part in our very first Experience the Workplace Day. The activities, discussions and problem-solving tasks offered students a genuine insight into the world of work. Students had opportunities to connect with employers, trying out real workplace challenges and discovering how their school subjects link to future careers. It was an inspiring start to the week and a brilliant opportunity for students to build confidence and curiosity about life beyond school. Students also explored Labour Market Information for the North East, including growing industries, new opportunities in the region and the skills most in demand.



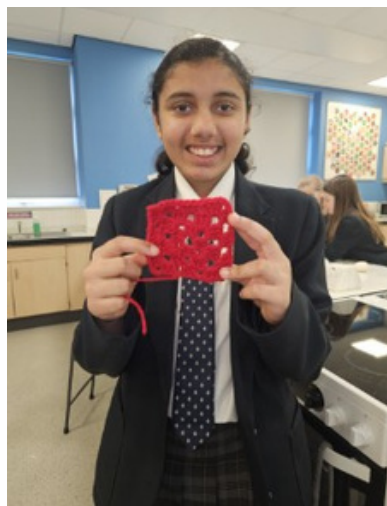
Year 8 Girls' Football

On Friday 6 March, the Year 8 girls football team, along with teams from five other local schools, took part in a mini-tournament at Walker Dome. The girls won four of the five matches played, losing narrowly 0-1 to Gosforth East Middle School. In total, the team scored eight goals and conceded only one. The eight goals were also spread among seven players, making this a genuine whole-team effort. This was an excellent achievement. Well done to then entire team!



Crochet Club

Crochet Club has been running since the start of the school year. Several students have attended each session with fail. They have learnt new skills, developed their understanding of this traditional craft and gained a tangible sense of achievement and purpose. The pictures feature a so-called 'granny square' and an example of amigurumi, which is the Japanese art of knitting small stuffed yarn creatures, typically with oversized heads. In this case, the creature is an octopus. Keep up the good work!



Newcastle Street Pastors

Newcastle Street Pastors work on weekends providing essential items as well as a friendly face to those who might be having trouble. The organisation's co-ordinator Paul Waugh came to St Mary's to talk to Year 12 about the work that he does to help vulnerable people in the city centre. Paul talked of the need for everyone to think and be prepared when out and about in Newcastle city centre as well as the work the Street Pastors do to assist anyone who needs it.



There were several thoughtful and insightful questions asked, and students were really engaged by the messages Paul shared. Students left the talk with a real sense of the vocation of the Street Pastors and their commitment to keeping people safe so they can enjoy nights out with their friends. Their vocation drives them in their ongoing work, particularly during the cold winter months, to offer care and support wherever needed.

Year 9 Lenten Fundraising

Year 9 have started their fundraising this Lent with a Penalty Shootout. Students lined up to take a shot with Mr Thompson in goal to see if they could score against him. Year 9 have also been raising money by joining together to play computer games over lunchtime. There are more fundraising events to take place in the coming weeks. All funds raised will go to the Year Group charity which is St Anthony's Community Association.



KS5 STEM Club

Our KS5 STEM Club has recently enjoyed a brilliant run of sessions exploring important real-world scientific issues, from the environment to human health.

Students have taken part in workshops focused on rewilding and conservation, considering how ecosystems can be restored, the role of biodiversity, and the challenges of balancing environmental priorities with land use.

Alongside this, the club has also explored genetics, including how genetic information is inherited and the impact that genetic diseases can have on individuals and families.

Year 10 Lenten Fundraising

To raise money for their Year Group charity of St Cuthbert's Care, Year 10 came together for a Simple Lunch. This consisted of having a bowl of soup and some bread and sitting together in the Atrium as a community. This was also a visible sign of faith in action.



Polish Club

Polish Club meets once a week on Mondays during lunchtime. Students really enjoying finding out about Poland, its customs and traditions, including mask-making as part of carnival season, which is known as Karnawal.

This started the day after Three Kings' Day on 6th January, and ran until until the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday.

The Polish carnival is traditionally a time for social gathering, dancing, and eating rich foods before the restrictions of Lent. The students also enjoy learning some basic phrases in Polish.



Year 9 Boys' Football

In late February, the two Year 8 Boys' football teams played in a mini-round of matches against Gosforth High School and against each other. The matches against Gosforth ended in a victory and a defeat.

The final match of the evening was the highly-anticipated clash between the two St Mary's teams. The light blues ran out narrow winners 3-2 against the dark blues. to dark blues in a highly-contested game played in the right spirit. All the students acquitted themselves brilliantly. Special mention goes to Eddie Embleton, John Komba, Isaac Conway, Josh Murray, Joseph Dunbar, Seth Lyall and Jamie Zarraga for their outstanding contributions.



Year 12 Career Sessions

Year 12 students have recently taken part in a series of enrichment sessions exploring a range of careers and pathways beyond Sixth Form. We were pleased to welcome speakers who shared insights into working in nursing and careers within the police, helping students understand the skills, training routes and day-to-day realities of each profession.

Students also enjoyed hearing from former student Christianne, who spoke about her journey into a STEM career in London and the opportunities available in the sector. These sessions have encouraged students to think ambitiously, ask thoughtful questions, and reflect on how their subjects and interests can shape their future.



Physics Trip to Northumbria University

Our Year 12 Physics students recently visited the engineering laboratories at Northumbria University for an exciting, hands-on enrichment experience. During the session, students were introduced to practical work at degree level and explored how engineers test, refine and evaluate designs using specialist equipment.

A highlight of the visit was building their own loudspeakers from first principles, applying their understanding of electromagnetism to create a working device. Students were highly engaged throughout and asked thoughtful questions about both the science and the university experience. The trip was an excellent opportunity to broaden horizons and bring classroom learning to life.



Key dates and events ...

Thursday 2nd April- Last school day for all students before the Easter break.

Monday 20th April- All students return to school following the Easter break.