

St Mary's

NEWSLETTER



Students Build Community Connections at Friendship Cafe

A group of our students recently represented St Mary's at the Community Friendship Café held at St Charles Parish Centre, Gosforth. The group was invited to join members of the local community to help build connections across generations, and our students embraced the opportunity wholeheartedly.

Throughout the morning, students spent time chatting with guests, playing chess and draughts, and sharing experiences. The event proved to be a rewarding and enriching experience for everyone involved, providing valuable opportunities for conversation, learning and friendship.

A particular highlight was hearing one guest recount her experiences of being evacuated during the Second World War. Our students listened attentively, asked thoughtful and insightful questions, and engaged in meaningful discussions throughout the session. The organisers were extremely grateful for the students' participation and were highly impressed by their maturity, communication skills and enthusiasm. We are incredibly proud of the way our students demonstrated our values within the wider community.

ISSUE 10 - JUNE/JULY 2026

Headteacher's Welcome

Dear Parents and Carers

We have had a busy but enjoyable end to the term.

Over the last week, our students have enjoyed their year group celebration assemblies, as well as Sports Day and Work Experience for Year 10. Year 12 have taken part in Life Skills Day.

This week, we have Work Experience for Year 12, Activity Day for our Years 7-10 students and all students will enjoy St Francis of Assisi Day on Thursday. All students and staff will finish the week with our wonderful End of Year Masses on Friday.

Thank you so much for your tremendous support of our school community throughout this year and may I wish you and your families a wonderful and restful summer.

Best wishes,
Miss Patterson, Headteacher.

Refugee Project

On Wednesday a group of year 12 students visited the Justice and Peace Refugee project. Anna Howell summed up the event." It was so lovely to be able to visit the Refugee Project in Byker today to learn about what our donations and fundraising in school actually goes towards.

Meeting the volunteers and seeing clients at the project felt really important to understand why we need to support them, what difficulties they experience and the importance of connecting with other people personally.

A key bit of the trip that stood out to me was when a volunteer asked a client where they were from, and from that figured out what sort of food items he'd want because of what is usually eaten in his culture, because it reminded me that each asylum seeker has a background and culture that they've had to leave. Thank you so much for the opportunity to visit the project, and working with asylum seekers is definitely something I will consider doing in the future."



The Summer Festival

In July, 47 Year 9 students attended the Diocesan Summer Festival led by the Youth Ministry Team in Consett. Students had a wonderful time exploring the theme of 'Behold' which was based on Isaiah 43:19 which says, "Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?" Students experienced a variety of speakers and musicians. Everyone enjoyed the silent disco, the BBQ and meeting new friends from other schools. We are looking forward to next year's festival.



Primary students take up the Mathematics Challenge

The Maths Department was delighted to host two highly successful events this term for pupils from our feeder primary schools. Both events provided a fantastic opportunity for young mathematicians to develop their problem-solving skills, work collaboratively, and experience the enjoyment that mathematics can offer.

Our first event was the Year 4 First Mathematics Challenge. Pupils took part in two warm-up rounds, answering mathematical questions in pairs with support from our Year 7 and Year 12 students, before completing the formal assessment individually. It was wonderful to see so much enthusiasm, determination and mathematical talent on display. All pupils from our three feeder primary schools performed brilliantly, with James from St Oswald's achieving an exceptional score of 18 out of 19 – a truly outstanding achievement.

The second event was the Year 5 Girls' Team Maths Challenge, which saw teams of four girls competing in a series of exciting rounds designed to test their teamwork, logical reasoning, problem-solving skills and mathematical knowledge. The atmosphere throughout the competition was fantastic, with pupils fully engaged and eager to tackle every challenge. The girls had such an enjoyable experience that many were keen to take the problems back to school for their classmates to attempt. Congratulations to St Teresa's, who were worthy winners on the day.

Both events were a tremendous success and it was a pleasure to welcome so many enthusiastic pupils and staff to our school. We are incredibly proud of all the participants and look forward to continuing to strengthen our links with our feeder primary schools through future mathematics events.

End of Year Mass Workshops

To prepare ourselves for our End of Year Mass, everyone in school attended three workshops. The workshops allowed students to make a gift which will be handed out at the end of Mass. The gift reflects St Francis of Assisi and his love of nature. All students contributed to a larger piece of art which will be used to decorate the Sports Hall for the Mass. The final workshop was a dance workshop where Year 10 students taught the rest of the school a dance to join in with at the end of Mass.



Sixth Form Life Skills Day

Our Sixth Form students recently took part in a Life Skills Day, completing a wide range of practical workshops designed to prepare them for adult life beyond school. Throughout the day, students developed valuable skills in areas such as cooking, domestic tasks, personal finance and budgeting, communication and resilience. The workshops gave students the opportunity to learn through practical activities, discussions and real-life scenarios, helping them build greater confidence and independence. It was fantastic to see students engaging so positively and enjoying the chance to develop skills that are not always covered within the traditional curriculum. The day was a great success and provided an important opportunity to support students as they prepare for university, employment and independent living.



Tunes and Treats – Music Workshop

Students in Years 7 and 8 came together for a morning of singing and treats. The students were learning some new pieces of music in preparation of the Summer Concert as well as learning how to sing in harmonies. New pieces of music include *'Bohemian Rhapsody'* by Queen and *'This is Me'* from The Greatest Showman. Students had a fantastic morning and we are very much looking forward to hearing them sing live at the Summer Music Concert.



BBCET Applying to Medicine and Dentistry Conference

Students from six schools recently came together for the BBCET Applying to Medicine and Dentistry Conference. The programme gave students a clear understanding of the application process and the preparation needed to make a strong application. Throughout the day, students took part in practical UCAT workshops and Multiple Mini Interview (MMI) workshops. They also attended an information session covering course choices, entry requirements and the wider application journey.

We were delighted to welcome several excellent guest speakers, including former students Luca and Kate, who are now studying Medicine, and Alex Rushworth, Clinical Trainer in Child Dental Health at Newcastle University. The keynote address was delivered by Judit Llevadias, Lead Paediatric Cardiac Consultant at the Freeman Hospital, who shared valuable insight into her career and work. It was an inspiring and informative day that helped students understand both the demands and rewards of pursuing Medicine or Dentistry.



Students impress at Athletics Event

On Thursday 11th June, our Year 7 & 8 students proudly represented the school at the annual Newcastle Schools Minor City Athletics Championships, held at Gateshead Stadium.

The students were outstanding throughout the day and were a real credit to the school, demonstrating excellent effort, determination, and sportsmanship in all events. They competed across a range of track and field disciplines, including the 100m, 200m, 300m, 800m, and 1500m races, as well as the long jump. Every student performed brilliantly and should be very proud of their achievements.

A special congratulations goes to Finlay Harwood (Year 7) and Isobel McCann (Year 8), who both delivered exceptional performances to win their respective 1500m events against very strong competition.

We are delighted to announce that both athletes have qualified to represent Newcastle Schools at the County Championships, which will take place at Gateshead Stadium on Saturday 20th June. Well done to all students who competed!





Year 9 Students complete Bronze DofE expedition

In early June, our Year 9 DofE students successfully completed their Bronze Award expedition, taking on the challenge with enthusiasm and resilience. Over two days, students worked collaboratively to navigate across the countryside, putting their orienteering skills into practice as they travelled from Housesteads to Greencarts Campsite. The experience included an overnight stay, where students camped and prepared their own meals, demonstrating independence and teamwork.

On the second day, the groups continued their journey along Hadrian's Wall towards Errington, before returning safely to school. Throughout the expedition, students were assessed by an external DofE accredited assessor and showed excellent levels of self-discipline, endurance, and cooperation. This rewarding experience allowed students to develop valuable life skills while contributing towards their Bronze DofE Award. We are extremely proud of their efforts and achievements.



Year 13 Prom

Our Year 13 students recently celebrated the end of their time at St Mary's with a fantastic Prom at the Vermont Hotel. The evening provided a wonderful opportunity to recognise and celebrate the 7 years many of our students have spent together at St Mary's, as well as the friendships, achievements and memories they have made along the way. Students enjoyed a three-course meal before taking to the dance floor for the disco.



The shimmer wall also proved extremely popular and provided the perfect backdrop for photographs throughout the evening. It was a thoroughly enjoyable occasion and a fitting celebration of a brilliant group of students as they prepare to begin the next stage of their lives.

Sixth Form Transition Day

Our Year 11 students recently took part in Sixth Form Transition Day, giving them an excellent opportunity to experience what life in the Sixth Form will be like. Throughout the day, students attended subject-specific taster lessons, helping them understand the expectations of Key Stage 5 study and make informed choices about their future courses.

Students also visited a student-led Activity Fair, where current Sixth Form students shared information about the wide range of subjects, enrichment opportunities, leadership roles and activities available. It was fantastic to see Year 11 engaging so positively, asking thoughtful questions and beginning to build their confidence ahead of September. The day provided a valuable introduction to both the academic demands and the wider life of our Sixth Form.



Rounders Club

The Rounders Club meets once a week after school during the summer months. It is a great opportunity for students from different year groups to meet up and have fun playing sport. The group is so keen to do a sporting activity after school that even poor weather is no obstacle. On those days when it has rained this summer, the group has set up the table tennis equipment in the atrium and played ping pong for an hour. It is great to see these students enjoying sport so much.

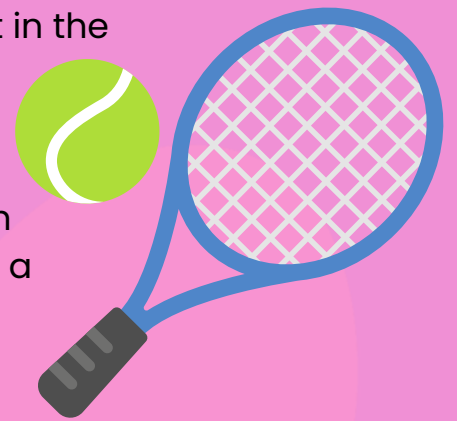


Year 9 and Year 10 Tennis

Recently our, Year 9 and Year 10 Boys' Tennis Team took part in the Division Final.

During the event, they won every match on their way to the final against Ponteland High School. This proved to be an incredibly close contest, with the match going all the way to a tie-break shootout. With the score finely poised at 6-6, the next point would decide the tie. Special mention goes to Sam Walker, who held his nerve to secure the decisive point and seal a dramatic 7-6 tie-break victory for St Mary's.

Congratulations to Sam Walker, Adrian Coman, Thomas Butler, and Hayden Riley, who represented the team in the final. All four boys performed exceptionally well and were a credit to the school with their determination, teamwork, and sportsmanship. Further congratulations go to Rory Stamp and Henry Herron, who played a vital role in helping the team reach the final with their outstanding performances. Well done to the entire squad on a fantastic achievement!



Sir Charles Parson's Sports Afternoon

Over the past few months, our Year 12 Vocational Business and Sports students have been planning and organising a special Games Afternoon for students at Sir Charles Parsons School. As part of their preparations, they met online with SCP students to learn about their interests, fundraised to provide a gift bag for every participant, and designed personalised certificates to celebrate their achievements.



On the day, the students ran a carousel of five engaging games that proved to be a huge success, bringing plenty of laughter, enjoyment and enthusiasm. The afternoon was a wonderful experience for everyone involved, creating lasting memories while helping students from both schools build connections, share experiences and develop a greater understanding of one another.

STEM Enrichment Morning

Our Year 12 students recently took part in a STEM Enrichment Morning, designed to broaden their understanding of the range of careers and experiences available across the sector. Students attended workshops on medical physics and careers within the Environment Agency, gaining valuable insight into how STEM subjects are applied in the workplace.

We were also delighted to welcome back former student Matthew, who spoke about his experience completing a degree apprenticeship with Dyson. His first-hand account helped students understand the benefits of combining university study with practical employment experience. The morning was a valuable opportunity for students to explore future pathways and hear directly from professionals working in STEM.





Silver Duke of Edinburgh's Award Expedition Success

Following the success of the Y9 expedition, congratulations are also in order for our Year 10 Silver Duke of Edinburgh's Award participants, who successfully completed their qualifying expedition from 1st to 3rd July 2026.

The three-day expedition began at Langdon Beck in Upper Teesdale, where students set off on foot and demonstrated excellent navigation, teamwork and resilience as they travelled through the beautiful countryside. Students enjoyed exploring High and Low Force as well as the stunning Gibson's Cave. After camping at Low Way Farm Campsite on the first night, students continued their journey to Dale View Caravan Park for their second overnight stay. On the final day, the groups completed their trek to Barnard Castle.

A key part of the expedition involved students planning and purchasing their own meals, ensuring they had nutritious, high-carbohydrate food to sustain them throughout the challenge. Along the way, participants developed valuable life skills including leadership, independence, decision-making and problem-solving. Despite the demands of carrying their equipment and walking long distances over three days, all students showed determination and a positive attitude.



Year 7 Shine at Translation Bee

Recently a group of our Year 7 students proudly represented the school at the Trust's Translation Bee, hosted at St Thomas More Catholic School in North Shields.

The Translation Bee consisted of a variety of activities, including introducing yourself in French, matching up the masculine and feminine adjectives, and practising a read-aloud task to be assessed for pronunciation.. The team performed exceptionally well, securing an impressive second place overall. Each team member received a gift bag with sweets and a notebook inside. Students also enjoyed a Polish taster session led by two Polish speaking students.

Throughout the competition, our students demonstrated excellent language skills, confidence, and teamwork, making us all very proud. Their enthusiasm and determination were evident in every round, and they were fantastic ambassadors for the school. Well done to everyone involved!



Prison Chaplain Talk

Felicity Penny spoke to Year 12 Core RE students about her work as a Prison Chaplain in County Durham. Having 20 years experience as a Magistrate, Felicity gave great insight into the Criminal Justice System and how it works in the UK. Felicity emphasised the role of the Chaplain to be a non-judgemental figure who walks with someone on their faith journey. A Chaplain needs to be the "face of Christ for all" and Felicity talked about some of the challenges of this within the prison system in the UK. We hope to welcome Felicity back to St Mary's in future to inspire our 6th Formers on their faith journeys as well as their future careers!



Work Experience

Our Year 10 and Year 12 students recently completed work experience, giving them valuable insight into the workplace and helping them develop important employability skills.

Opportunities included both in-person placements and virtual work experience, ensuring students could explore a wide range of careers and future pathways.



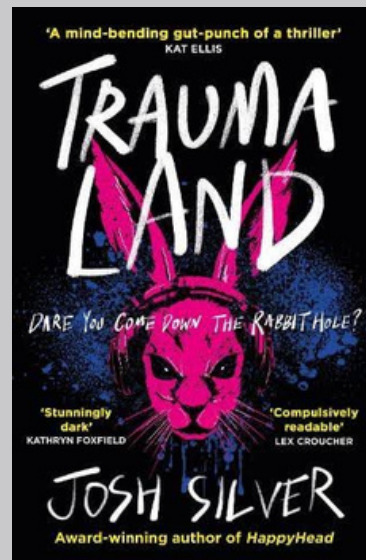
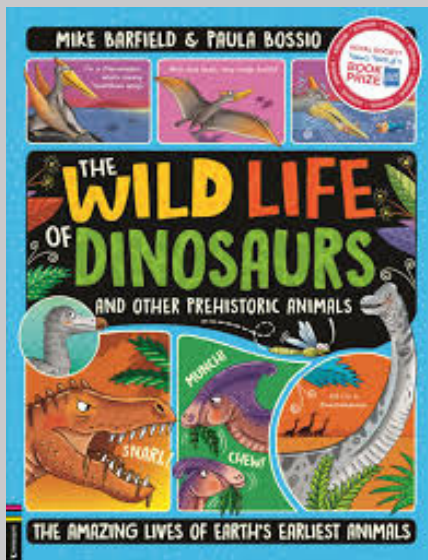
Students Judge Four Major Book Awards

The Library has been a hive of activity this year and, among other things, has marked the National Year of Reading by leading the school's involvement in the judging of four major book awards.

Between November and April, students in Years 7, 8 and 9 played an important role in determining the winner of the Royal Society's Young People's Book Prize, a prestigious competition that recognises the best new science books for junior readers. In line with the decision of the St Mary's panel, the winning title was *The Wild Life of Dinosaurs and Other Prehistoric Animals* by Mike Barfield.

Separate judging groups (involving students from Years 7 to 11) were created earlier this year for both the North East Book Award and the North East Teenage Book Award. These were respectively won by Jack Mackay for *Gloom* and Josh Silver for *Traumaland*.

Many of the students throughout the whole school who enjoy reading the huge range of graphic novels and manga titles that the Library stocks read through the shortlists for the Excelsior Award. The winner of this prize will be announced before the end of July.



Sports Day Success!

Students in Years 7, 8 and 9 enjoyed a fantastic Sports Day in the penultimate week of term filled with energy, teamwork and fun. Throughout the day, pupils took part in a wide range of activities including rounders, football, Swedish long ball, handball, Pilates, benchball, cricket, relays, table tennis and dodgeball. The enthusiasm and sportsmanship shown by all participants made the event a great success.

There was also plenty happening away from the sports fields. Students enjoyed face painting and a variety of stalls selling sweet treats, creating a fun festival atmosphere for everyone involved. A special mention goes to some of our Year 11 students, who despite having recently left school, worked hard running fundraising activities to support their upcoming trip to Lourdes.

Well done to all the students and staff who helped make Sports Day such an enjoyable and memorable occasion. We look forward to another fantastic event next year!

