

St Mary's

NEWSLETTER



Lourdes Pilgrimage 2026

This summer, a fantastic group of current and former St Mary's students volunteered as part of the Lourdes Youth section, making a real difference to the lives of others throughout the pilgrimage. Throughout the week, they supported elderly and disabled pilgrims by pushing wheelchairs, offering help where needed and spending time with those who appreciated a friendly face and conversation. Ines, Thomas and Ronica also stepped up to lead music at different points during the week, helping to create a wonderful atmosphere for pilgrims. Everyone involved embraced the opportunity to serve others, pushed themselves out of their comfort zones and grew in confidence as the week progressed. We are incredibly proud of the way they represented St Mary's, showing kindness, compassion and a genuine commitment to helping others.

Executive Headteacher's Welcome

Dear Parents and Carers

Welcome to the first St Mary's Newsletter of the new academic year. It has been lovely to see all our students settling into the autumn term, including our new Year 7 and Year 12 students who have made a great start at St Mary's.

The students' behaviour in lessons and more widely has been superb and they continue to be great ambassadors for St Mary's.

We have had a busy start to the term so far, with trips to Thurston in the Lake District, as well as an upcoming trip to Paris, France. We also had a very well-attended Year 6 Open Evening with over 1,000 visitors to the school. It was wonderful to meet so many prospective parents and students.

Many thanks for your excellent support.

Best wishes, Miss Patterson

Message from the Head of School

Dear Parents and Carers

It is an absolute privilege to share our first newsletter of the year with you all. We continue to be so proud of all of our students as they use their God-given gifts and talents to achieve such amazing things. This newsletter provides a snapshot of some of our students' achievements from September, including sporting success, artistic awards and recognition of students who work so hard in their lessons.

September has certainly been a month filled with opportunities for learning, reflection and celebration. It is lovely to see so many exciting opportunities and events taking place for students both inside and outside of school, allowing them to develop spiritually, socially and academically.

Kindest regards, Miss Largue

Great North Run Success!

A huge congratulations to Esther Icteton in Year 8, who completed the Junior Great North Run in memory of a family member. Esther took on the challenge with great determination and has raised an incredible amount of money for a cause close to her heart. We are incredibly proud of her achievement and the commitment she has shown.



We would also like to congratulate all of our students who took part in the Great North Run events this year. Taking on a challenge of this scale requires dedication, perseverance and hard work, and it is wonderful to see so many young people getting involved and supporting such worthwhile causes.

Gold Arts Award Success

Congratulations to Maurice Anderson in Year 10, who has become the first student at St Mary's to achieve the Gold Arts Award. Over the past year, Maurice has developed exceptional printmaking skills, worked with a professional artist, and showcased his artwork in a number of public exhibitions. He has also demonstrated outstanding leadership by leading transition activities, volunteering at Charles Parsons School and delivering printmaking sessions to younger students. Throughout the award, Maurice has received excellent feedback from professionals and, as a result of his achievement, has earned 16 UCAS points. We are incredibly proud of all he has accomplished.



Musical Announcement

The Drama and Music Departments are delighted to announce our annual school musical, *Oliver!*, which will be performed in the Main Hall from 8th-11th February 2027 at 6:00pm each evening.

Auditions take place next week, and we are looking forward to seeing the talent, enthusiasm and creativity of our students.

Whether performing in a leading role or as part of the ensemble, students will have the opportunity to be involved in what promises to be a fantastic production.

We can't wait to bring the streets of Victorian London to life and share the show with our school community.

ST MARY'S CASTING CALL

BE PART OF SOMETHING EXTRAORDINARY

OLIVER!

COULD YOU BE PART OF THE WORKHOUSE?
A MARKET TRADER?
ONE OF FAGIN'S GANG?
A MEMBER OF OUR INCREDIBLE ENSEMBLE?

THIS IS YOUR CHANCE TO BE PART OF ONE OF THE MOST FAMOUS MUSICALS EVER WRITTEN!

★ PRINCIPAL / ENSEMBLE AUDITIONS ★

ENSEMBLE AUDITIONS

Students auditioning for an Ensemble Role will be seen first.
Ensemble auditions will take place in groups of 10.

PRINCIPAL AUDITIONS

Students auditioning for a Principal Role will audition individually.
Movement must be prepared and lyrics must be memorised.

DATE: THURSDAY 8 OCTOBER

TIME: 3:10PM

VENUE: G25

"FOOD, GLORIOUS FOOD!" **"CONSIDER YOURSELF!"** **"YOU'VE GOT TO PICK A POCKET OR TWO!"**

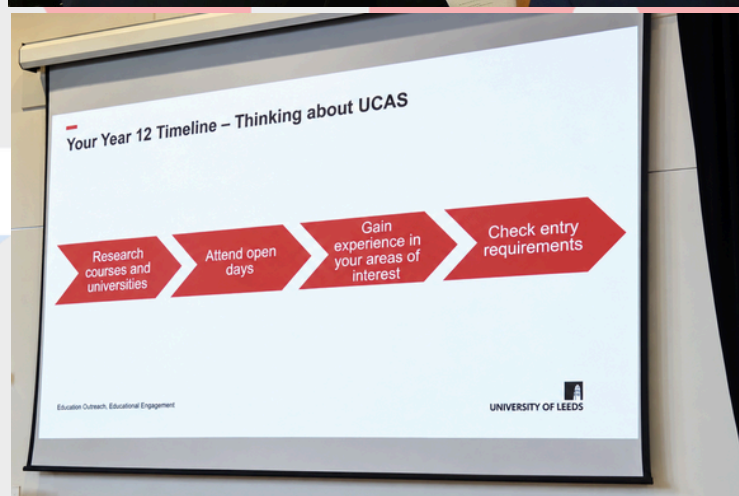
JOIN THE STREETS OF VICTORIAN LONDON AND HELP BRING THIS SPECTACULAR MUSICAL TO LIFE.

SING ★ ACT ★ DANCE ★ PERFORM

Year 12 Enrichment Launch

At the start of this academic year, we launched our Year 12 enrichment programme, designed to help students develop key skills and prepare for their future pathways. The programme began with our very own "Driving Test" careers activity, which encouraged students to reflect on their strengths, identify areas for development and consider their goals for the future.

This was followed by an informative session delivered by the University of Leeds, focusing on how students can make the most of Year 12 and begin building strong foundations for university applications, apprenticeships and future careers. It has been an excellent start to the programme, and we look forward to offering many more valuable enrichment opportunities throughout the year.



Former Student Returns

We were delighted to welcome former student Sophie Milliken MBE back to St Mary's to speak with our Sixth Form students. Sophie shared her career journey, the challenges she has overcome and the importance of making the most of every opportunity that comes your way.

Her talk was both engaging and inspiring, encouraging students to step outside their comfort zones, believe in themselves and embrace new experiences. We are grateful to Sophie for taking the time to visit and provide such valuable advice and inspiration to our students.

Thurston Outdoor Education Centre

A group of Year 9 students have enjoyed an action-packed residential at Thurston Outdoor Education Centre in the Lake District.

Surrounded by some of the country's most spectacular scenery, students have taken part in a wide range of outdoor activities. These have included hiking, lake swimming, cave exploration, paddleboarding, ghyll scrambling, kayaking and jetty jumping.

The activities have given students opportunities to challenge themselves, try new experiences and work together. From exploring caves to balancing as a team on a giant paddleboard, they have shown courage, enthusiasm and determination throughout the visit.

Most importantly, the students have been magnificent throughout the residential and have represented St Mary's exceptionally well. Their conduct, maturity and support for one another have been a credit to the school.

The visit has provided an exciting opportunity for students to build their confidence, strengthen friendships and create some wonderful memories in the Lake District.



Youth Open Call Exhibition

Congratulations to Emily Wemyss in Year 8, whose artwork has been selected for display at the Baltic as part of its Youth Open Call exhibition. The project invited young people aged 11-17 to submit artwork inspired by local places, stories and perspectives, with just 44 pieces chosen for the exhibition. Emily's stunning butterfly sculpture, created from recycled materials, was selected and will be on display at the Baltic until 4th April 2027. This is a fantastic achievement and a wonderful recognition of Emily's creativity and talent. Well done, Emily!



Year 11 Careers Interviews Underway

This month, we have started our Year 11 one-to-one careers interviews with our external careers adviser, Alex Coyle. As a Level 6 qualified careers professional, Alex is meeting with students individually to discuss their aspirations, explore post-16 options and help them make informed decisions about their next steps.

These personalised guidance interviews are an important part of our careers programme and provide valuable support as students begin preparing for life after Year 11.

Independent and impartial career guidance from CareerWave

YEAR 11 CAREER MEETINGS 2026/27

PLANNING FOR POST-16

Name: _____ Date: _____

CareerWave, independent and impartial Personal Guidance at St. Mary's Catholic School

One to one Personal Guidance meetings support your career development and help you make the right decisions now and in the future.

In these meetings we explore your ideas, interests and strengths, and reflect on experiences to date. We encourage you to see the big picture and become more knowledgeable about the world of work and learning.

You will identify your actions as a result of this meeting and record them below.

Your actions

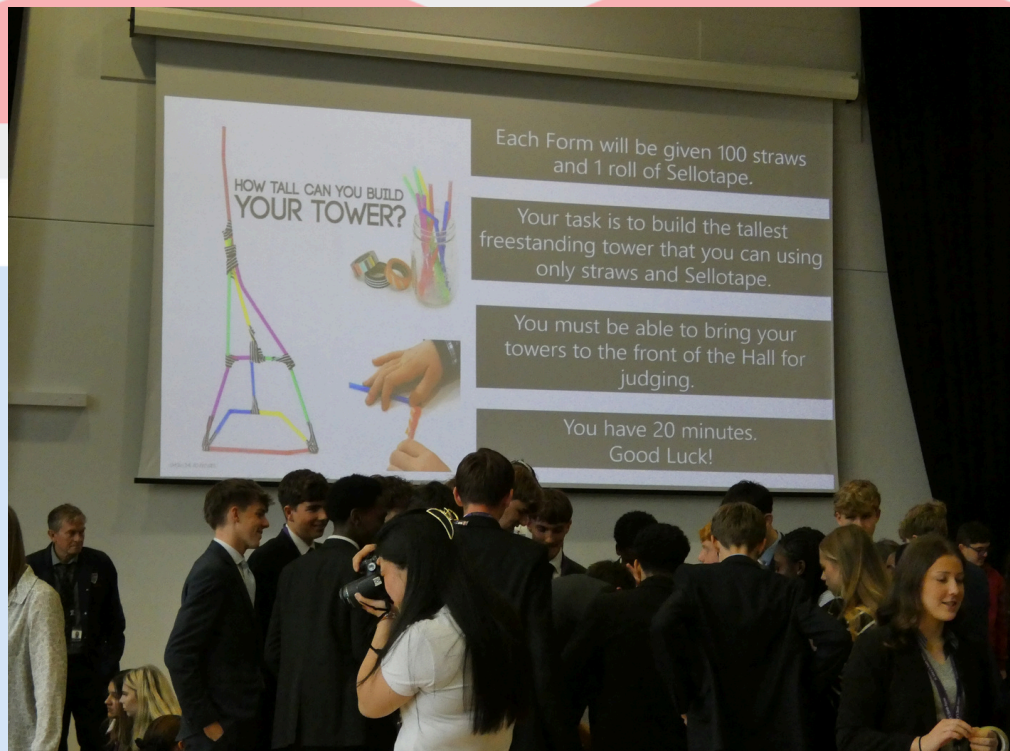
What is 'independence' and 'impartiality'?

- Independence.** we are an independent organisation. This means that we only represent ourselves and do the job we are asked to do i.e. provide quality career guidance. You will meet with many people who are not independent - some represent one of our many local education providers. For example, a recruiter from a local college will give you great advice, but they want you to study with them.
- Impartiality.** CareerWave is an impartial voice. This means that we are not biased. We do not favour one kind of learning over another. For example, we genuinely believe that A-levels, technical courses and apprenticeships are the equal of each other. The pathway you choose to take should be your own decision.

www.careerwave.co.uk/insights

Year 12 Day of Aspiration

Year 12 students recently took part in a retreat day, providing an opportunity to reflect on their aspirations, values and future goals. Throughout the day, students engaged in a range of activities designed to explore these themes, including collaborative Lego challenges and discussions about the people who influence them and the impact they have on their lives. They also considered their place in the wider world and how they can make a positive difference to others. As part of the day, students wrote a letter to their future selves, which will be returned to them at the end of Year 13. The retreat concluded with a student led Celebration of the Word, offering the year group a chance to come together in reflection and prayer.



Our New Library is Now Open!

We are delighted to announce that our new school library is now officially open. The library provides a welcoming and inspiring space for students to read, study and explore new interests, with a wide range of fiction, non-fiction and revision resources available. The library is home to more than 7,000 printed materials, including books, journals, magazines and newspapers, giving students access to a wealth of information and reading opportunities.

The library is open every school day from 8.00am to 4.00pm, and students are actively encouraged to make use of the space outside of lessons for private study, research, homework and leisure reading. Students can also take part in our highly successful library chess club, which offers opportunities to compete in regional and national tournaments, as well as visit the library's stationery store to purchase essential school equipment.



We look forward to seeing the library become a hub of learning, reading and curiosity for all members of our school community.

National Art Competition

We are delighted to celebrate the success of Enya Maule, who was awarded a Runner-Up Prize in the Arts and Minds Competition. The competition attracted entries from secondary schools across the region, and the judges commented on the exceptionally high standard of work submitted.

Enya's artwork, which explored the theme of ageing, was recognised for being "heartfelt and thought-provoking", with judges praising the creativity and insight behind her piece.

In July, Enya attended a special awards event at the Radisson Blu Hotel in Durham. This is a fantastic accomplishment and a testament to Enya's artistic talent, dedication and creativity. We are incredibly proud of her success!



Why Business?

Year 12 Business students recently attended an insightful talk delivered by representatives from Northumbria University, exploring the many opportunities that studying Business can offer. Students gained a valuable understanding of the wide range of career pathways available within the business sector, as well as the skills and qualities needed to succeed. The session provided an excellent opportunity for students to learn more about higher education and future progression routes, helping them to make informed decisions about their next steps.



Extra-Curricular Timetable

We are delighted to launch our new Extra-Curricular Timetable, which has now been shared with all students. With over 60 clubs and activities on offer, there is something for everyone, including sports, performing arts and a variety of enrichment opportunities. We encourage all students to get involved, try something new and make the most of the wide range of experiences available beyond the classroom.

MORE INFO



Year 12 Take Part in Learning to Succeed

Year 12 students recently took part in the Learning to Succeed programme delivered in partnership with Northumbria University. The session encouraged students to reflect on their strengths, develop effective study skills and explore strategies for achieving their academic and personal goals. It provided valuable guidance as students begin their Sixth Form journey and prepare for future success.



European Day of Languages

The whole school was invited to celebrate European Day of Languages on Friday 25th September. All students were asked to take part in various activities in form time and in some of their MFL lessons. Years 7–9 took part in a football treasure hunt, finding out which languages many famous footballers speak. They were also asked to collect different translations of the word 'smile'!

Y7 really enjoyed this task and many of them received small prizes from the MFL department. Later that afternoon, students heard about language learning from Jude Bellingham (via Bitesize video!) and they worked on displays to include translations of the words 'hello' and 'goodbye'. You can see Mrs Connolly's Y7 Spanish class in the photo! Older students watched a podcast about the importance of learning a foreign language. Every year, this day really highlights different cultures, diversity and equality – something that here in St Mary's we celebrate every day!



Success for Emily and Eden

During the summer holidays, Emily George and Eden Brogden represented Northumberland County Schools U14 girls at the Youth World Cup in Sweden. There were 57 teams in this age group from 10 different nations. The girls and their teammates were outstanding and made it all the way to the final, but were defeated by a team from Sweden. What an amazing achievement for the girls who represented their school, county and country on the world stage.

Year 13 Geography Trip to Newcastle

Our Year 13 Geography students recently enjoyed a fantastic field trip to Newcastle, where they explored the impact of urban regeneration and investigated how the city has evolved over time. Visiting key locations across the city, students examined how former industrial areas have been transformed into thriving spaces for business, leisure and culture, while considering the social, economic and environmental impacts of redevelopment.



What Went Well Wednesday

This week, the RE Department held its first What Went Well Wednesday, celebrating the fantastic work students are producing across all year groups. Students were invited to bring a piece of work they were particularly proud of to G15, where they had the opportunity to share their achievements and receive recognition for their efforts. It was wonderful to see so many examples of excellent work!



Key dates and events...

Monday 12th Oct 2.45pm-6.00pm-
Year 11 Parents' Evening (in person
and an early finish for all students)

Mon 26th Oct - Fri 30th Oct-
Half-term break

Wed 11th Nov 3.30pm-5.30pm-
Year 7 and 12 Tutor Evening (in
person)

Thurs 26th Nov 5.00pm-7.00pm-
Sixth Form Open Evening (in
person and early finish for all
students)

Mon 30th Nov 2.45pm-5.15pm-
Year 13 Parents' Evening (in person
and early finish for all students)