



Our Lady of Walsingham Catholic Trust

NEWSLETTER

Issue 20 - July 2026

A Year Blessed, A Future Bright

As we reach the end of the school year, I just want to take a moment to say thank you.

It's been another extremely busy year, with its fair share of challenges but more than balanced by many positive moments and achievements. When I've visited our schools, I've been struck again and again by the warmth, care, and the sense of Catholic community that runs through everything we do.

To all our staff – thank you for the energy and commitment you bring each day. I know how much you give, often going above and beyond, in a multitude of different ways. The difference you make to pupil's lives is huge, even if it doesn't always feel that way as we come towards the end of the school year.

To our pupils – you're the reason we do this. It's been a privilege to see you grow this year, not just in your learning, but in the way you look out for each other and live out the values we talk about so often. You give us so much to be proud of; whether that's getting ready to move from Nursery to Reception year or from 6th Form to university, an apprenticeship or the wider world of work.

And to our families and wider community – thank you for walking alongside

us. Your support, encouragement, and trust is essential to our work. We are looking forward to celebrating the importance of Catholic education and everyone involved in schools in any capacity across the Diocese, in the first of a special 'Service in Education' Mass with Bishop Peter at Lady Immaculate and St Etheldreda Catholic Church, 14 Exeter Road, Newmarket, Suffolk, CB8 8LT, Wednesday 8th July at 6.30pm.



As we head into the summer break what stands out to me this year isn't just what we have achieved, but how we've done it – together, with a shared sense of purpose, and with our faith at its heart. That is something very special, and which I am sure we will never take for granted.

I hope you all get the chance to rest and spend time with the people who matter to you most over the summer break. Thank you again for everything you've done this year.

With every good wish,

Clare Clark
Chief Executive Officer (Interim)

*Christ at the Centre,
Children at the Heart*



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OLOW at the Heart of the Ipswich Eucharistic Congress 2026 - Father Luke Goymor

As the Diocese of East Anglia celebrate its Golden Jubilee this year, the town of Ipswich is preparing for something truly extraordinary. From 6 to 13 September 2026, our parishes and schools will host a Eucharistic Congress, a major moment of grace centred on the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. It is rare for a town to host an event of this scale. Many Catholics will never experience a Eucharistic Congress in their lifetime, and we are blessed that this Jubilee year offers such a moment to our own community.

The schools of the Our Lady of Walsingham Catholic Trust will play a central role, especially in the early part of the week. From Monday to Wednesday, the focus will fall on the faith, creativity, and joyful witness of our pupils. The Ignite Team will visit several of our primary schools, helping children to explore the theme Mary, Woman of the Eucharist. Their sessions will support pupils in deepening their understanding of the Mass and the loving presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament.

Throughout the week, pupils will also be invited to express their reflections through art and poetry. Plans are already underway to gather Eucharist inspired artwork from across our Ipswich schools into a single commemorative book. It is hoped that this shared project will allow the children of St Mark's, St Mary's, St Pancras, and St Alban's to contribute something beautiful and lasting to the Jubilee celebrations.

A major highlight will be the Schools' Mass on Wednesday at St Alban's. Representatives from our three primary schools will join clergy from across the deanery, Trust staff, and chaplaincy teams for a joyful celebration of faith and unity. Alongside this, there are plans for our schools to offer times of Eucharistic Adoration, giving pupils the chance to encounter the quiet presence of the Lord and to pray for their families, their schools, and the wider community.

The week will reach its climax on Sunday 13th September at the Ipswich Corn Exchange, where Bishop Peter Collins and Bishop Alan Hopes will join the Deanery clergy and the faithful of Ipswich for the closing Mass. It is hoped that pupils from each of our Trust schools will take part in the Blessed Sacrament procession, carrying symbols of their school communities and representing the young Church with beauty and reverence.

This Congress is a once in a generation opportunity for our town. We warmly invite families, parishioners, and friends to be part of it. Admission to the closing Mass is free, but places must be reserved due to limited capacity at the Cornhill Exchange. All details, including booking information, can be found at <https://www.eucharisticcongressipswich.org>.

Christ at the Centre,

Children at the Heart



Diocese of East Anglia celebrates its 50th Anniversary - Chaplain, Paul Gilbert

On Friday 26th June, the Diocese of East Anglia marked its Golden Jubilee since it was established in 1976. This monumental event brought together, clergy, parishioners, educational and religious communities from Norfolk, Suffolk, and Cambridgeshire to the Cathedral of St John the Baptist in Norwich for this special event. Among the guests were civic and leaders from different Christian communities from across the Diocese.



Mass was celebrated by Bishop Peter Collins, with Bishop Emeritus Alan Hopes attending along with several visiting Bishops from England and Wales. The Pope's UK representative was also in attendance and conveyed a special message from Pope Leo to the diocese for this occasion. In the message, the Papal Nuncio conveyed the Pope's sentiments to Bishop Peter and to the Diocese as it marks this special occasion.



The Papal Nuncio said it was an immense joy and blessing to be here for the occasion and recalled his pastoral visit that took place two years ago and is very much looking to visiting the diocese again if he has the opportunity again.

During the homily, Bishop Peter offered a heartfelt tribute to the four former bishops of the diocese, acknowledge their roles in supporting parishes and schools across the diocese. The Bishop also noted how the diocese has grown in the 50 years and continues to develop. The Bishop also acknowledged that the church is very much a living Church in which everyone has a role to play in order to make the face of Christ known in words and deeds through acts of charity.

Bishop Peter also paid tribute to the first priest ordained for the Diocese of East Anglia in July 1976, Fr David Bagstaff who has served in many parishes across the diocese and will be celebrating his own golden jubilee and is the senior Vicar General and currently the chaplain to the Catholic Headteachers across the diocese.



As the Diocese of East Anglia begins its next chapter, the Golden Jubilee stands as both a celebration of the past and an invitation to look forward to the future with hope. Bishop Peter encouraged the faithful to continue building up the life of the Church, supporting one another in faith, and sharing the Gospel with confidence and generosity in the years ahead.

Christ at the Centre,

Children at the Heart



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Diocesan 50th Celebration - Pupil Writing Competition

This year, the Trust has held a 500 Words Writing Challenge, a creative writing competition open to Year 6 and Year 7 pupils across our schools. Inspired by the intriguing prompt, "It appeared overnight," pupils have produced an impressive range of imaginative and engaging stories.

The competition aims to celebrate pupil voice, encourage creativity and support a smooth transition in writing expectations between primary and secondary education. Pupils were challenged to write an original piece of up to 500 words, showcasing their imagination, vocabulary and ability to captivate the reader.

So far, we have been incredibly proud of the standard of entries received. The stories demonstrate originality, thoughtful structure and powerful use of language, with pupils interpreting the prompt in wonderfully diverse and creative ways. Each school has submitted a small number of entries to be judged by a cross-phase panel of primary and secondary staff. Winners and highly commended pupils will be announced in July, and their work will be shared more widely across the Trust.

We are extremely proud of all the pupils who have taken part and look forward to celebrating their achievements very soon. Their creativity and enthusiasm for writing have been a real joy to see.

Below are just a couple of the entries received so far.

The Tale of the Wolves

Ben stared out the window into the usually empty driveway of the house next door. He's seen many families come and go so its no surprise to him.

"Mum, looks like someone's bought the Koggers' house...again!" he shouts down to his mum, who's meant to be cooking dinner but is probably some how just burning the beans.

"Oh that would be lovely sweetie," calls back mum, "I wonder if there's someone your age?"

She had put on that fake, happy tone that she always had when something was bad, but she didn't want anyone to know she thought it was bad.

It was the next day and mum had been outside for 30 minutes before she called into the house for Ben to come down. As soon as he stepped outside, he almost fell back with shock. The new family looked like...wolves; they had sharp claws, matted brown fur everywhere, a snout and huge, sharp, bloodcurdling teeth.

Mum introduced them to each other and the wolf dad suggested them coming to their cabin on the moors. The wolf mum explained how it was a cosy place with two spare rooms for Ben and his mum to stay in. However, mum had to work so it was just Ben going...alone...with a family...that he just met!

They set off that night and about two hours in, Ben fell asleep. After around 5 hours in the car, they arrived. It was dark and misty. Once the door creaked open, dust filled Ben's lungs in a second. The boys went upstairs to the wolf boys bedroom. He sat on the bed; he noticed out of the corner of his eye the dad sprinting back with a full deer on his shoulders. his heart was racing.

The wolf boy slowly turned to look at him. He made his way over to the bed. "I'm tired," he said yawning, ushering him the other way, but before he got out the door wolf boy screamed and bones seemed to be cracking and breaking. When Ben turned back he saw ... just an ordinary boy.

Written by Laurie Hart

Where Gaming Meets Gambling - Jenny Mcghee Wallace & Aliyah Harris

Where Gaming Meets Gambling: What This Means for Children

Video games are a normal and often positive part of childhood. They can support learning, creativity, teamwork and problem solving. However, in recent years, concerns have grown about the increasing overlap between gaming and gambling, particularly in relation to children and young people. This article explores where that line is blurring, why it matters, and what adults need to understand. As a Trust, we share those concerns and recently attended CPD with Ygam, a charitable organisation set up to provide schools, parents and carers with the knowledge and resources to safeguard their families.



The Blurring Line Between Gaming and Gambling

Traditionally, gambling involves staking money on an uncertain outcome with the chance of winning a prize. Many modern video games now include gambling like mechanics that mirror these features, even though they are not legally classified as gambling under current UK law.

The most well known example is the loot box. Loot boxes are in game items that players buy with real money (or virtual currency purchased with real money) to receive a random reward. The player does not know what they will receive until the box is opened. These rewards might include character "skins", weapons, upgrades or abilities.

Researchers and regulators have highlighted that loot boxes share structural and psychological similarities with traditional gambling, particularly the use of chance, suspense, near misses and reward anticipation.

Why Loot Boxes Are a Particular Concern for Children

Children are more vulnerable than adults to gambling related harm due to:

- Less developed impulse control
- Limited understanding of probability and value
- Increased susceptibility to rewards, excitement and peer influence

Studies show that children often struggle to track how much money they spend in games and may not recognise virtual currency as “real” money, leading to frequent and escalating purchases.

Research commissioned by universities in the UK found that loot boxes can cause financial distress, emotional upset and behavioural difficulties in children as young as five.

Links to Gambling Harm and Mental Health

A growing body of international research has demonstrated a consistent association between loot box purchasing and problem gambling behaviours, including among young people.

Systematic reviews show that players who spend more money on loot boxes are more likely to display:

- Symptoms of gambling disorder
- Problematic gaming behaviours
- Anxiety, stress and impulsivity

While research does not claim that loot boxes directly cause gambling addiction, the evidence shows a strong overlap in risk factors and behavioural patterns.

Legal and Regulatory Context in the UK

Under the Gambling Act 2005, an activity is only classified as gambling if the reward can be converted into real world money. Because most loot box items cannot formally be “cashed out,” they fall outside gambling regulation, even though they may feel like gambling to players.

In multiple reviews, the UK Government has acknowledged a “stable and consistent association” between loot boxes and gambling related harm but has chosen to rely on industry self regulation rather than legislation.

However, independent research published in 2025 found that many popular games failed to comply with these self regulatory rules, including not seeking parental consent for under 18s before enabling loot box purchases.

The Children's Commissioner for England has repeatedly stated that voluntary measures do not sufficiently protect children and has called for loot boxes to be restricted to adults only.

Beyond Loot Boxes: Other Gambling Like Features

Loot boxes are not the only concern. Some games include:

- “Gacha” mechanics (repeated paid attempts to obtain rare items)
- Limited time offers designed to create urgency
- Progress systems that encourage spending to avoid loss or falling behind peers

These features are designed using behavioural psychology techniques similar to those used in gambling products.

What This Means for Schools and Families

From a safeguarding perspective, the gaming gambling crossover raises important questions about financial harm, emotional wellbeing, addiction like behaviours and online safety.

Children themselves report that loot boxes “feel like gambling” and express concerns about compulsive spending and pressure to keep buying.

Schools and families play an important role in:

- Discussing money and spending openly
- Helping children understand probability and risk
- Teaching critical thinking about game design
- Supporting children to recognise when games are designed to encourage spending

As a Trust, we will continue to support our children by teaching them about healthy habits around online activities to support the work that is done at home by parents.

Further Information:

Children's Commissioner for England – Loot Boxes and Gambling

<https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/blog/loot-boxes-and-gambling>

GambleAware – Gaming and Gambling Research

<https://www.gambleaware.org/our-research>

Parent Zone – Gaming and Online Spending

<https://parentzone.org.uk/article/pressure-to-spend>

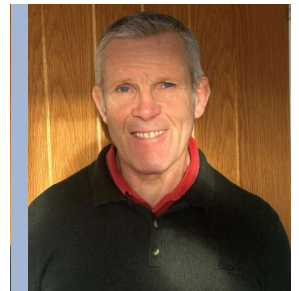
Ygam

<https://ygam.org/family-hub>

Summer Report - Andy Herlihy, Chair of the OLOW Board

It seems that in the blink of an eye the Autumn, Spring and Summer terms have come and gone.

The last academic year has been an incredibly busy and industrious one for the Trust. At Autumn mid-term St Marks joined the Trust, that signaled the beginning of an operationally and strategically non-stop roller coaster ride culminating in the journey towards a merged Trust.



I have been incredibly impressed with not only the amount of work delivered by the schools within the Trust but also the positive approach by all the senior leaders in ensuring that the best possible teaching and learning is delivered by our teachers to all of our students. The eternal optimism demonstrated throughout our schools by all staff has ensured continued and improved outcomes for all of our students. I have been fortunate to visit a number of schools, always being impressed. My experience has always been one of enjoying the atmosphere inherent in the schools and the true feeling of Catholicity running throughout. We are also blessed with a rich diversity of staff and students.

There have been some extremely difficult operational circumstances that include the staffing restructure at St Alban's High School. However the central team have worked exceptionally hard in ensuring any impact has been minimal and has delivered efficiencies accordingly.

Christ at the Centre,

Children at the Heart



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We look forwards in the new academic year to The Federation of St Edmund's and St Joseph's joining the Trust and this will complete the OLOW Trust.

I mentioned earlier the merger with St John the Baptist trust. Whilst this will no doubt present challenges in its own way, I have yet to meet anyone who does not support the merger. On the contrary; from my experience it is viewed as an exciting opportunity. Since Bishop Peter delivered his vision for Catholic education in the diocese the wheels of motion have begun.

In the last few weeks a small working group has met primarily to identify the structure of the central team. I and my counterpart in SJB ,Mary Sparrow have put together a “Trust Shadow Board”. We held the first meeting on 1 st July and this will be central in providing strategic oversight and governance.

I am truly grateful to the Trust central team for their tireless work throughout the year. I greatly appreciate the work delivered by all of our staff in all of our schools. It seems we are always expected to do more for less. There will be challenging times ahead, the new Ofsted framework and the most recent government announcement in respect of pay awards.

Lastly I would like to thank the willing volunteers that make up the Local Governing Bodies, your time and commitment often exceed what could normally be expected. I have been fortunate to begin to get to know you all a little better through The Chairs Forums.

I wish everyone a happy and relaxing Summer holiday and hope you all get some well-deserved rest.

Foundation Governor Recruitment

If you are interested in becoming a school governor or would like to find out more about the fantastic impact that you could make within our Trust schools then please visit the Trust website by scanning the following QR code.

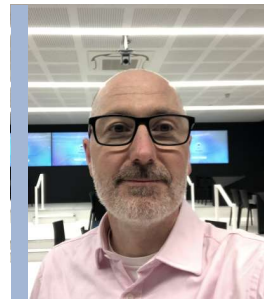


Please share with anyone who is interested in learning more about the positive impact of good governance on pupils' life chances and might be interested in joining one of our school boards.

<https://www.ourladyofwalsingham.co.uk/governorrecruitment>

Developing Systems to Support Our Schools - DCEO, Richard Stevenson

The OLOW Trust is currently working with its provision partners for HR, Finance, Payroll, and Management Information Systems (MIS) to unlock efficiency, scalability, and data-driven decision-making. By further using the capabilities of these systems, the Trust aims to streamline workflows, reduce manual processes, and enhance collaboration across departments.



HR: Streamlining Workforce Management

By automating a number of activities combined with manager and employee self-service portals the Trust is aiming reducing administrative burdens and paperwork.

Finance and Procurement

The Finance team are working with payroll (see next item) and procurement to expand the use of the inbuilt functionality in the accounting system, this will help reduce repetition and admin for repeat purchases in particular.

Payroll: Accuracy and Efficiency

The new cloud-native system integrates seamlessly with HR. These platforms ensure timely, error-free salary payments, tax calculations, and pension contributions while adapting to regulatory changes. Employees benefit from transparent pay slips and mobile access, while the Trust minimises compliance risks and administrative overhead.

MIS: Data-Driven Decision Making

OLOW Trust's MIS platform is being reviewed to consolidate data reporting enabling leaders to track KPIs, forecast trends, and allocate resources more effectively. This integration eliminates the need for data duplication, improves visibility of results and trends which in turn supports strategic planning and actions.

The Cloud Advantage

By migrating these systems to the cloud, OLOW Trust gains scalability, security, and remote accessibility. Cloud infrastructure will support business continuity plans, ultimately reduces IT maintenance costs and enables seamless collaboration whether teams are in the schools, a Trust office or working remotely.

With the upcoming merger of the two Trusts in East Anglia it is the intention of OLOW to work on these improvements keeping cost and benefit short, medium and longer term in sharp focus.



Mary Fest Day

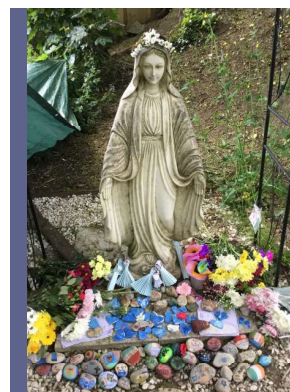
During May, pupils across the school came together to celebrate the Feast Day of Mary in a prayerful and joyful way. Children from all year groups took part in a range of meaningful activities to honour Mary and reflect on her love, faith, and example.



Classes visited the Willow Garden, where a beautiful Mary shrine became the focus for prayer and reflection. Pupils created a variety of offerings, including painted pebbles, floral crowns, salt dough hearts, paper flowers, and handmade rosaries. Many children also wrote their own prayers, sharing words of thanksgiving and praise.

Creative work in classrooms further deepened pupils' understanding. This included stained glass artwork, murals, and explorations of different artistic representations of Mary.

Parents were warmly welcomed to join in with the celebrations, adding to the sense of community and shared faith. Across the school, pupils spoke enthusiastically about the experience, describing it as a special and memorable day.



Careers Fair

On Wednesday 3rd June, St Mary's held an exciting Careers Day, giving children the opportunity to think about their future ambitions and explore a wide range of career paths. Throughout the day, pupils discussed different jobs and the skills needed to achieve their goals.

In the afternoon, we hosted a Careers Fair where children met professionals from a variety of industries, including hairdressing, farming, publishing, dock work, personal training, nursing, data consultancy, pharmaceuticals, and care work. The children thoroughly enjoyed the experience, asking thoughtful questions and learning about the many opportunities available to them.



It was a fantastic day, and we hope we have inspired the next generation to dream big and pursue their ambitions with confidence.



St Mark's Primary, Ipswich

A Term of Faith, Growth and Community

It has been another joyful and enriching term at St Mark's, where our pupils have continued to grow in faith, learning and service, living out the Gospel values in all that they do.

A particular highlight was the opportunity for our families, staff and parishioners to participate in the Rosary Rally in honour of Our Lady of Ipswich during the half term break. Gathering together in prayer and devotion, the celebration concluded with a procession from the St Marks Church to St Pancras Church. It was a powerful public witness to our Catholic faith and a reminder that our relationship with Christ is something we are called to live each day. We are grateful to our parish for bringing our community together in this joyful celebration of faith.

This term has also been filled with opportunities that have supported the development of the whole child. Pupils successfully completed Bikeability, gaining valuable cycling proficiency and road safety skills. Our annual Healthy Living Week was once again a great success, with children enjoying a range of activities including dance, drama, circus skills and Dragonball. These experiences encouraged pupils to develop resilience, confidence, teamwork and an appreciation of healthy living as part of caring for the gifts God has entrusted to us.



Healthy Living Week began with an engaging circus skills workshop where children developed balance, coordination and perseverance while embracing new challenges with enthusiasm and joy. We were also delighted to welcome PC Cousins, who spoke to the children about staying safe and making positive choices, helping them to understand their responsibilities as caring members of both the school and wider community.



At St Mark's, we are proud to nurture the whole child through faith, learning and service. We thank our families and parish for their continued support as we work together to ensure that every child is known, loved and inspired to become the person God created them to be.

Nurturing Hearts,

Inspiring Minds,

Building Futures



www.stmarkscatholicprimary.co.uk



St Pancras Primary, Ipswich

Pergola opening

St Pancras' new pergola is officially open and being used during our lunch-time OPAL play sessions. The school had a fantastic afternoon during the beginning of May when it was officially opened by George Burley, former Ipswich and Scotland football star.

The school were also joined by a Mr Bean lookalike who was very well received. Both stars signed autographs for a significant period of time and provided a very memorable experience for all of the children and staff. This opening was featured both online and in the Ipswich Star.



Mrs Iannelli, staff member and Chair of the PTA was instrumental in coordinating the efforts, as were the entire PTA for making it possible. Mrs Marsh, parent, was the inspiration behind the grand unveiling and our visitors.



The pergola is now being used daily as a quiet space for children to play games and read, when not enjoying other aspects of our OPAL provision. It was also valuable during our Outdoor Classroom Day in which all classes took lessons outside.

Olympian visit

Our sponsored circuit session and inspiring assembly with Olympian Alice Sharpe was an incredible event. All classes had a personalised session with her and she led a wonderful assembly to all of the children. Well done and thank you to all children, who together have raised almost £2000. The school will be able to spend some of this on new sporting equipment!



To celebrate the 100th birthday of the legendary naturalist and broadcaster Sir David Attenborough, our school PTA brought our school community together for a very special Grounds Day that truly reflected his passion for protecting and nurturing the natural world.

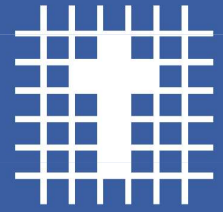


The highlight of the project was the addition of beautiful new plants and flowers, helping to create an even more welcoming environment for our children to enjoy and learn in. The sense of teamwork and community spirit was wonderful to see, with everyone working side by side to make a lasting difference.

The event was a tremendous success, and we would like to extend our sincere thanks to everyone who gave their time, energy and expertise. Thanks to their hard work, our grounds are looking beautiful and will continue to be enjoyed by children, staff and visitors. We also hope to make this day an annual event or even bi-annual so we can plant some bulbs in the autumn.

"No one will protect what they don't care about; and no one will care about what they have never experienced."

Loving to Learn



St John's College

Year 3 children were invited back for a second year to sing at Evensong at St John's College chapel in Cambridge. Miss MJ wrote "the pupils continued to be brilliant to work with in the class sessions and the children who attended (Evensong) gave so much; they surpassed all expectations and were truly wonderful! The behaviour and respect shown by them was impeccable, and it was a real joy to see them enjoying the experience and singing their hearts out!"



Bread Project

This year, starting with chapatis in EYFS in the autumn term and finishing with Polish rye bread in Year 5 and 6, the whole school has participated in our new DT bread project. After considering the wide ethnic diversity of our school community we selected a range of bread recipes that encompass the traditions, religion and national origins of our school community. Throughout the project we have linked our learning to Jesus, the bread of life (John 6:35).



It has been wonderful to draw on the knowledge and skills of our parents and staff who have helped the children learn about bread recipes from their home countries.



Democracy and Government

In our Early Years class whilst learning about democracy the children enjoyed their own class election, teddy promised extended playtimes, whilst puppy thought things can stay as they are. Needless to say, teddy was elected by a unanimous majority!



St Felix Primary, Haverhill

Lent at St Felix

The Year 6 children recently attended a weekday Mass and coffee morning at our parish church, St Felix. It was a lovely opportunity for us all to come together in prayer, giving thanks for the positive and team-spirited SATs week they had enjoyed in school. Their attendance at Mass also allowed the children to express their gratitude to the parishioners for their care, and all the prayers they had said during SATs test week.



Pictured are a group of Year 6 pupils exploring the parish display, which highlights the rich history of the parish and the building of St Felix Church. The children were pleased to be part of the parish's 50th Jubilee celebrations and enjoyed the cake and squash!

Diocese 50th Anniversary Celebrations

We enjoyed a 70s-themed celebration day to mark the formation of the Diocese of East Anglia in 1976. The day began with Mass, followed by a delicious 70s-inspired lunch provided by Lunchtime Co, featuring vol-au-vents, fish pie, and Black Forest gateaux muffins.

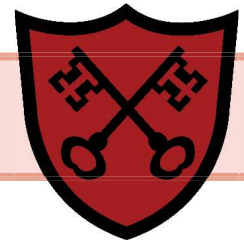
In the afternoon, the children learned about the history of the diocese and its significance. The day concluded with class performances to entertain the parents bringing the spirit of the 70s to life. It was a truly memorable occasion celebrating this important milestone for our diocese.

This term, we were delighted to receive a new 'Book Nook' from the Home-School Association. Situated in a quiet area of the playground, it provides all children with access to reading and drawing activities during lunchtimes and playtimes, encouraging creativity and a love of reading.



Followers of Jesus

Learning Together



St Alban's Primary, Cambridge

St Alban's Primary Science club

June marked six months since the start of the St Alban's Primary Science club, which was a first for the school.

The Science STEM club currently runs two days per week, one afternoon for KS1 and one afternoon for KS2, transforming the standard classrooms into a dynamic innovation labs. Pupils from various year groups gather to collaborate, experiment, and solve complex problems.



Rather than relying on passive learning, the club focuses on interactive, project-based challenges. Our initial sessions have already seen our children building bridge prototypes, coding basic algorithms, and exploring the chemistry of everyday reactions. These activities are carefully designed to develop critical thinking, resilience, and teamwork for the St Alban's children. So far, the clubs have provided a positive extra-curriculum enrichment for pupils and the content of the club has been shared below:

Mission to Mars sessions: During these activities, pupils explored topics related to physics. The children learned about forces, including Newton's Third Law, as well as moon phases and constellations. They took part in practical activities to help them understand these concepts in a fun and engaging way. At the end of the programme, the children earned a CREST Award certificate in recognition of their hard work and participation.



Crime Scene Investigation sessions: These activities related to chemistry and biology. The children learned about fingerprints, ink analysis and fibres, using lenses and digital microscopes to make detailed observations. They also investigated mystery powders and carried out simple tests to identify different substances. As in the other area, at the end of the programme, the children earned a CREST Award certificate in recognition of their effort and enthusiasm.

A special thank you to our Science club leader, Emilia Angelillo, for bringing her exceptional expertise to St Alban's, and to St Alban's staff who supported the launch of this project. We look forward to seeing how our young scientists continue to innovate, question, and inspire our entire school trust.

Believe, Achieve, Succeed



www.st-albans.suffolk.sch.uk/sixthform

Afternoon Tea Celebration

In June, students from Years 7 and 8 were invited to a special Afternoon Tea event held to celebrate their achievements and commitment to school life. Students were nominated by their Form Tutors and Heads of Year.

The event provided an opportunity to recognise students who have demonstrated excellent effort, commitment, positive attitudes to learning and valuable contributions to school life.



The atmosphere was warm and welcoming, with students sharing the occasion with their peers and teachers. It was a wonderful way to acknowledge the achievements of our young people and encourage them to continue striving for excellence.

Congratulations to all the students who were recognised for their positive contribution to school life. We are proud of your success and look forward to seeing all that you achieve in the future.

Young Carers at St Alban's

Young carers face a wide range of challenges as a result of their caring responsibilities. One of the ways we support them is through activity sessions held at the end of each half term.

This month, a group of students had the opportunity to attend a bowling trip. These activity sessions are designed to give young carers a chance to relax, build friendships and share experiences with others who understand the unique responsibilities they carry. Opportunities such as these are incredibly valuable in helping young carers feel supported, recognised and part of a wider community.



Inductions and Goodbyes

In June we have our Sixth Form Induction Day on 30th June for internal and external applicants to the Sixth Form. On the day, students will have an opportunity to learn more about their chosen subjects, hear about the key aspects of Sixth Form life and build new relationships with staff and students. In addition, we are excited to announce that we will be running an activity session with Wise Up in the afternoon, designed to get students working together and create lasting memories in school.

This month we wish a final good luck to our Year 13 students embarking on their A-Level exams. The year group has been such an asset to our school since joining us in 2019 and the students have grown into fine young adults in our Sixth Form. With university offers now finalised and apprenticeship interviews completed, the next month represents a challenge that students in Year 13 are well prepared for. We know they will do us all proud.

We also wish good luck to Year 12 students sitting early Maths A-Levels, as well as examinations in Core Maths and Criminology.

Last month we were lucky to be visited by Emily as part of Cambridge University outreach, discussing the benefits of university, the Oxbridge experience and the ingredients to a successful application. Thanks to all parents and carers who also joined us for our UCAS information evening. This month we will begin with Year 12 the process of selecting and applying to university courses, as well as attending the UCAS Discover event at the University of Suffolk.

Our two fabulous head students, Gertrude and Oliver, joined parents at our recent Year 10 Information Evening, for the final time speaking to parents in their formal capacity. We are excited to announce their Year 12 successors in these roles, the fabulous Tammy Akinbile and Boban Kappen!



Learning... Respecting... Caring...



Rotary Club Debate

This Wednesday our Year 9 team went to County High School to participate in the annual Rotary Club public speaking competition. Their topic was a fascinating and humorous hypothesis that British Olympic athletes are more skilled in sports where they are either seated or lying down rather than upright. Our Year 9s missed first place by only a mark and a half, and second place by a mere half mark; their presentation was persuasive, original and entertaining and all three should be very proud of their enterprising approach, and continue to take part in oratorical events in the future.

Many congratulations and thanks to all of the students who took part, as well as those who auditioned, making such an impressive job of embodying the St Benedict's ethos of wisdom, compassion and resilience.

Rugby Successes

St Benedict's rounded off the season with two outstanding rugby performances from both the U16 girls and boys teams, each showing determination, teamwork and real Benedictine spirit.

The girls opened the day with a thrilling 19–17 victory. After falling behind 0–12, the team showed remarkable resilience, sparked by turnovers from Sophie Rankin and converted tries from Audrey Harvey and Agnes Paul. Despite injuries and pressure from County, the girls fought back, with Flora Bromley-Martin scoring the decisive try in the final moments. Standout defensive efforts—such as Molly Murphy's 80-metre chase—helped secure a memorable win, supported by an energised crowd.



The boys followed with an equally impressive performance, defeating County 35–12. Early dominance saw St Benedict's race to a 21–0 lead through powerful carries and accurate kicking from captain Seamus Gallagher. County rallied after half-time, but tries from Noah Wilkinson and Jake McConnell sealed the victory. Frederick Scott earned Man of the Match for his relentless work rate and commitment to the team's values. The squad, coaches, and the ever-loud "green army" in the stands all played a vital role in a commanding display.

Both teams demonstrated exceptional heart, skill and unity—an inspiring end to the academic year for St Benedict's rugby.

*I have come that they may have life,
and have it to the full*





Rotary Club Debate Continued...

The Year 12 team, who also took part in the debate argued that the UK should relaunch its nuclear energy programme now that there are developments in production and waste management, from alternative sources to recycling up to 96% of materials. It was a compelling argument, presented with erudition by Naomhan Walker as Chair, Joseph Marris as Main Speaker and Melisa Simsek as Voter of Thanks.



A huge congratulations to the team as they won the Sixth Form competition and have brought the shield back to St Benedict's.

Services Above Self

The lovely Ellen Baldock (Year 13) was presented with the Services Above Self Award on Tuesday evening at St Edmundsbury Cathedral Refectory. The event was organised by the Rotary Club of Bury St Edmunds aiming to recognise and encourage inspiring young people who contribute generously through some form of outstanding service to their community.

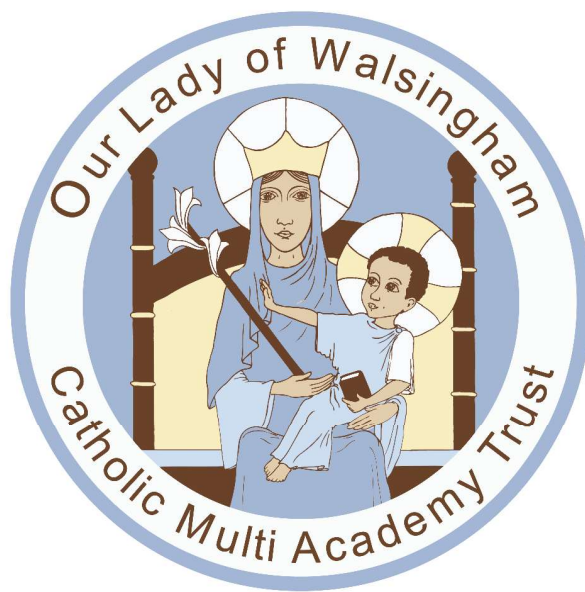


Each school within the area is able to nominate just one student for the award and this year, Ellen was our nominee. An exceptional role-model, who has volunteered countless hours of dance tuition, peer-peer support, as well as making an impact in Cambodia, Ellen's unwavering kindness and generosity of time and spirit is what made her stand out for this award.

Well done Ellen and all the very best for your future plans!

*I have come that they may have life,
and have it to the full*





*Christ at the Centre,
Children at the Heart*



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