



Our Lady of Walsingham Catholic Trust

NEWSLETTER

Issue 17 - October 2025

An Update From Across Our Trust Community

I am delighted to have the opportunity to welcome pupils, families, and staff to the first Trust newsletter of the new school year. A particularly warm welcome to those who are joining our Trust family of schools for the first time—whether in Reception, Year 7, or as new staff members. We look forward to the many ways you will each contribute to our faith filled learning community.

I am particularly pleased to welcome St Mark's Catholic Primary School, Ipswich, which will officially academise and join the Trust on 1st November. The inclusion of St Mark's is a significant milestone in our journey to fulfilling the Bishop Peter's vision that all Catholic schools within the Diocese benefit from being part of a strong Catholic multi academy trust. I know that St Mark's pupils, staff, and families will bring fresh gifts and energy to our Trust community as we work together.

I am very proud of the continued high standards of academic achievement across the Trust. Examination outcomes in Summer 2025 confirmed that, as a group, Trust pupils' attainment remains above national at all primary and secondary assessment points. This is testament to the tremendous skill and dedication of staff, the hard work of pupils and the support of parents. We

are so blessed in our staff for their unwavering commitment to nurturing not only academic excellence but also moral and spiritual growth. Their vocation as educators makes a lasting difference to the lives of our children and young people.



I am so grateful for the support of parents and extended families. Catholic education is always a partnership between home, school and parish. We continue to work to further develop this successful partnership by inviting you to join us at a rich variety of events throughout the year. Your presence at liturgies, celebrations, school events, volunteering your time or supporting our charitable initiatives strengthens our mission.

CAFOD

Catholic Agency for
Overseas Development

This term brings to a close the Church's Jubilee Year calling us to be "Pilgrims of Hope." With schools across the country, we will be celebrating the CAFOD Jubilee

Christ at the Centre,

Children at the Heart



www.ourladyofwalsingham.co.uk

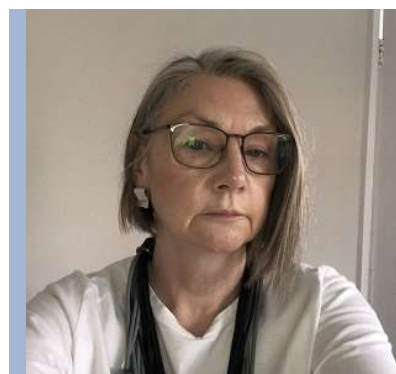
Celebration Day on 21st November and reflecting on the impact of the year. Pope Francis invited the global church to journey together in faith, and it is in this spirit that we began the new school year.

With every blessing for the year ahead

Clare Clark
Chief Executive Officer (Interim)

Christine Quinn, Interim Chair of Governors

I write this as schools approach the October half term holiday. I hope the academic year has started well for you all, and that you enjoy what I am sure is a well-deserved break.



Paul Bergin, who has been Chair since 2020 and Director since the inception of the Trust in 2013, has decided to step away from the role. He can be confident that as a founding director he is leaving the MAT in a strong place. His fellow directors will miss his wise counsel and commitment to supporting the pupils, students and staff in our schools. We wish him and his family well.

As the vice chair I will be interim Chair, for the time being. The directors, working with the diocese, are in the process of identifying a new chair and hope to be able to let you know about the arrangements shortly. Please be assured that all the work to which the MAT is committed will continue as planned.

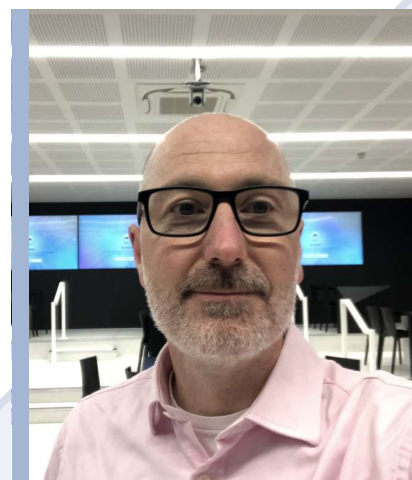
I wish you a restful half term break.

An Update from the DCEO - Richard Stevenson

We're pleased to share a few exciting developments across the Trust so far, this term. It has been a busy first half term.

During the summer works were completed at a number of the schools both to the physical estate and less visible to the digital infrastructure.

Three more of our primary schools have now joined the **Sharp IT support service**, aiming to benefit from a more consistent and unified approach to tackling common technical challenges. This move is part of our ongoing commitment to improving operational efficiency and support across our schools.



As a part of this the Trust has formed an **AI working group** to help guide staff, students and hopefully parents and carers to navigate what is quite a daunting topic. We will publish a short guidance note soon.

We've also re-launched the **OLOW Staff Wellbeing Charter**, a key initiative to support our dedicated staff. This charter is backed by our **Employee Assistance Programme**, which is being actively promoted within our schools to ensure staff have access to valuable wellbeing resources.

Looking ahead, we're delighted to welcome **St Mark's in Ipswich** to the Trust from **1st November**. This marks another step in our growth and shared mission to deliver excellent Catholic education.

Finally, there are still **places available at St Felix, St Pancras, St Laurence, and St Louis**. If you know families looking for a nurturing and high-quality school environment, please encourage them to consider joining our community.

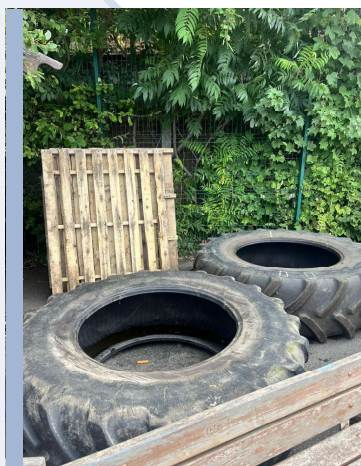
Pupil Wellbeing - OPAL Play at St Pancras

OPAL play is a new initiative that St Pancras are going to be introducing in February 2026. This will rejuvenate playtimes and ensure that children's social, emotional and physical development is a priority during all free time. The reliance on football for certain year groups over the last few years has made playtimes stale and predictable, we well as contributed to behaviour issues.



OPAL are a nationwide company who have revitalised playtimes across the UK, through offering a different approach to play. St Pancras will be using Sports Premium funding to support the initial purchase of the initiative and will also be asking for donations of equipment and resources from the local community.

The school have been initially supported by a local Trust, who have managed to source large materials, such as tractor tyres and wooden pallets, which will be instrumental to the success of OPAL. In addition, they have guaranteed a small fund to support the ongoing purchasing of materials that will be vital to the success of the project.



OPAL play will be driven by Bex Aldous, EYFS Lead, whose vision in Early Years will be fundamental in ensuring its success, but we will also be requiring governors, parents and additional staff to support the early stages of the venture.

Ross McGill and Jo Berry have visited local schools to see the OPAL approach in action and we are incredibly excited to see how this approach can further develop the fantastic learning at St Pancras and extend this into times of creativity and play for all children.

Opportunities for Staff to Develop and Grow in the Trust are as Diverse as our Schools - Accredited National Training Programmes, Local Networking Support, Secondment, Access to Professional Mentoring and Wellbeing Support

Safeguarding Supervision

One element of staff wellbeing promoted across the Trust specifically relates to the specialist support offered to lead safeguarding staff in each school. School leaders and designated safeguarding staff are provided with access to external supervision with specialist education professionals which the Trust considers essential for their welfare.



The role of a Designated Safeguarding Lead in school is demanding; requiring knowledge of complex frameworks and the ability to handle sensitive and emotional situations, making supervision a crucial support system.

According to the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy, supervision is: "A specialised form of mentoring for practitioners responsible for undertaking challenging work with people."

All staff can, typically, access 6 x 30-minute sessions with a qualified supervisor who has both experience of senior leadership in education and specialist qualifications. Discussions can involve any situation that is tricky, stressful, or an area for development. Safeguarding, SEND, or behaviour cases can also be talked over. All of these issues are discussed in a confidential manner, where no identifiable details are shared. The supervisor's role is to listen and understand the situation and offer a confidential space to explore thoughts, feelings, and behaviours.

As external supervisors, their only aim is: "How can we best support the professional in front of us?"

There are many benefits to attending supervision, for both the adults and the children and young people they work with. Feedback from attendees includes:

- Feeling lighter.
- Gaining fresh insight and knowledge.
- Generating new thinking and a clear 'next step' to take.

This leads them to be able to:

- Make improved decisions.
- Prevent issues from escalating.
- Carry out better informed actions.

Pro-active engagement with supervision helps identify learning gaps and offers opportunities for ongoing skill development including expert case management advice from specialist safeguarding professionals. In addition to benefiting the wellbeing of individual members of staff, the supervision process builds capacity in the wider Trust community of safeguarding leads further strengthening organisational level practice in this important area of work.

Jenny McGhee Wallace - Executive Headteacher & Designated Safeguarding Leader

Secondment Opportunities

After three rewarding years as Assistant Headteacher at St Mary's Primary in Ipswich, I was offered the opportunity take on a secondment as Acting Deputy Headteacher at Ranelagh Primary, also in Ipswich.



During my time at St Mary's, I have had the privilege of leading across a wide range of subject areas, which strengthened my understanding of the broader primary curriculum. My secondment at Ranelagh provided the opportunity to deepen this further, as I took on the exciting challenge of designing and implementing an English curriculum tailored to the needs of their pupils—a subject I had not previously led.

This experience has been invaluable to my professional development; enabling me to apply and adapt the curriculum development skills I gained at St Mary's, to support another school and its leaders on its own journey. In addition, I have established strong links with colleagues within and beyond St Mary's and the Trust, which has given me greater insight into how schools can be supported effectively at a wider system level.

Since my period of secondment, I have been invited back to provide further support with the implementation of school's spelling and mathematics curriculum. I am excited to continue contributing in this way and look forward to the opportunities that lie ahead.

I am thankful to the Trust for supporting me in taking up this opportunity, which has been invaluable for my development.

Natalie Vale - Assistant Headteacher, St Mary's, Ipswich

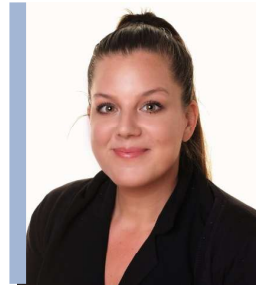
*Christ at the Centre,
Children at the Heart*



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Gaining HLTA Status

We are delighted to share some wonderful news from our St Louis team. Emma Woodhall and Vikki Weston-Mann, two of our dedicated Teaching Assistants, have successfully achieved their Level 3 Teaching Assistant qualification—a fantastic milestone that reflects their hard work, commitment, and passion for supporting pupils across the whole school.



Throughout their training, they both balanced study with their day-to-day roles in the classroom, demonstrating remarkable perseverance and a continued drive to develop their professional skills. Their achievement strengthens not only their own practice, but also the quality of support offered to pupils and teachers alike.

This success has been made possible through the ongoing support of the Trust's professional development programme, which is committed to investing in high-quality training and clear career pathways for all staff. By nurturing talent from within, we continue to build strong teams that make a lasting difference to children's lives.

A heartfelt thank you must also go to their mentors, Miss Kiri Wyatt and Mrs Phoebe Muscionico, whose guidance, encouragement and expertise played a vital role in supporting their journey. Their time, care and professional wisdom ensured that both Teaching Assistants felt confident, supported and empowered to succeed.

Please join us in congratulating Emma and Vikki on their outstanding achievement; we are incredibly proud of them and look forward to seeing the positive impact they will continue to make in our classrooms.

Further Study

Earlier this year I completed the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies (CCRS), where I had the opportunity to study with students from both the UK and overseas. I originally began the eight-module program back in the summer of 2021 with the Margaret Beaufort Institute in Cambridge where I completed the Children's Spirituality module tutored by Dr Sue Price who this year was appointed to our trust's board of directors.



Starting with a module on children's spirituality was beneficial as I was initially apprehensive that I understood what spirituality was. Does spirituality mean the

same to me as my colleagues, family, friends or children that I teach? Is children's spirituality the same or different to adults and if so, why? Was there a correct response? Rebecca Nye begins the first chapter of her book by attempting to explain not answer this question. "Spirituality is not something that likes to be confined in words" but is more "felt-sense" (Nye, 2009*).



In the subsequent modules, I moved forward with the understanding that there are no definitive or correct answers. This gave me the confidence to ask reflective questions and not focus on what I thought I should be writing but more on what I could learn to support my teaching as well as my own personal growth. There have been many opportunities for me to make deeper

connections between scripture, traditional catholic teaching and the Magisterium that have not made me question my previous understanding but made links to strengthen my knowledge and own faith.

I particularly enjoyed studying the book of Ruth, part of the Old Testament module. It was fascinating to consider that the life of a woman thousands of years ago can still be relevant in our modern world. Over the subsequent years I completed modules on Catholic social teaching, the Old and New testaments, moral theology, the Church, the Sacraments and finally Christology. I enjoyed studying the final two modules with teachers in the Diocese of Brentwood, who were all very welcoming and supportive. In July, I received my certificate from Bishop Alan Williams sm, Bishop of Brentwood.

I have found that completing the CCRS has given me a far clearer understanding of the content of the new RED planning (2023), because as well as planning and teaching the new curriculum I now have a far more comprehensive knowledge of Catholic teaching that I can continually refer back to. If you have the opportunity to undertake the CCRS or similar programmes of study I would highly recommend it. The rewards are plentiful!

**Nye, R. (2009). Children's Spirituality: What It Is and Why It Matters, Church House Publishing, CPI Group, UK.*

Rachel Chalklin - Head of School, St Laurence, Cambridge

Hop to it!

We were thrilled to be part of Hop to It! Suffolk 2025, St exciting hare sculpture art trail. Our talented KS2 Art Club true Pilgrims of Hope, turning creative ideas into a stunning, brought our hare to life with colour and meaning.

We're proud to support St Elizabeth Hospice, who kindly hare sculpture for our school. The hospice offers invaluable to people in our community, walking alongside patients with compassion, dignity, and hope. A big thank you to our who raised £650 for St Elizabeth Hospice.



Our KS2 children were bursting with excitement and imagination during their workshop at Dance East. Led by a professional choreographer, the sessions took the children on an inspiring journey through a dynamic warm-up, technique exercises, and a collaborative choreography session.



The children embraced the chance to explore new movement styles, working with focus, creativity, and enthusiasm. Their dedication resulted in some truly beautiful and expressive dance pieces.

It was a day that was both physically invigorating and artistically uplifting—leaving everyone feeling energized, empowered, and proud of what they achieved together.

Reception 2025

Our new Reception children visited our Willow Garden this week. The children spent time looking at God's beautiful world. They enjoyed the peace and quiet of the garden and talked about all the wonderful things God has made.





St Pancras Primary, Ipswich

Green School Council

St Pancras have revitalised the Green School Council and new representatives have now been selected from every class. As well as traditional school council duties, the Green council will also have a huge focus on sustainability and health and wellbeing around the school.

Mrs Smith is leading the council and meets weekly with members from every class to discuss approaches and strategies to saving energy, recycling properly and promoting stewardship of the Earth – a core value at St Pancras. Catholic Social Teaching forms a huge aspect of the remit of the Green School Council and will be their focus in each weekly Celebration assembly, where they will share their strategies, tips and requests of the week for all St Pancras staff and children to follow.



In their first meeting, the council unanimously decided that energy saving was a huge focus and that too many lights and laptops were left switched on throughout the school. They were also keen to conduct a litter pick of the playground. We eagerly await their first assembly!

Junior Parkrun



St Pancras have signed up to be a Junior Parkrun school, encouraging all of our children and parents to attend local Parkrun events. We started with a launch assembly, where Mr McGill led the school in a warm-up and explained how easy it is to attend Parkrun at the weekend, with a selection of local events taking place weekly.

Hoping to gain our Platinum Games Mark this year, a vital part of this is promoting local sporting events and forging links within the community. We will commit to promote Junior Parkrun on our website, Instagram and Facebook page, we well as celebrating all children that attend in our weekly Celebration Assemblies.

Junior Parkrun is a weekly 2k event, run for free by volunteers. It takes place every Sunday at 9am and is an incredibly inclusive way for children to get into fitness and running. Events are always growing in size – there will definitely be one near you!

How to register as a parkrun primary

- 1) Register & connect with your local junior parkrun(s).
- 2) Host a junior parkrun school assembly.
- 3) Share information with parents and carers.
- 4) Attend your local junior parkrun together.
- 5) You are now a parkrun primary!



We are Loving and kind,

We Pray and we Play

www.stpancrasschool.co.uk

Harvest Festival

On Friday 3rd October the St Louis school community gathered together to celebrate the Harvest Festival with a joyful liturgy. The children brought in generous offerings for the Newmarket Open Door Food Bank, a wonderful demonstration of their kindness and willingness to support those in need.

During the liturgy, the children sang beautifully and our school chaplains played a special role, leading the prayers and readings with reverence and enthusiasm.

It was a wonderful opportunity to give thanks for the blessings of the harvest, while also remembering to share with others. A heartfelt thank you to all families for your thoughtful contributions, which will make a real difference to our local community.

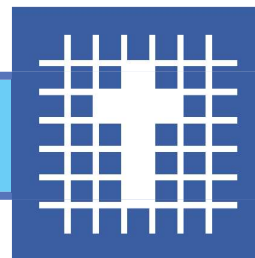


National First Aid Day

On Friday 12th September, Key Stage One celebrated National First Aid Day with a talk from some of our parents who are nurses and doctors. During the session, the children learned valuable life skills such as how to treat a bump, burn or what to do if someone is choking. The children also learned about the many dangers within our homes and gardens along with the important number to call in an emergency.



St Laurence Primary, Cambridge

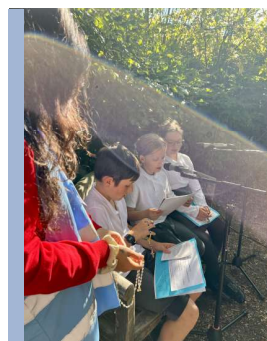


St Laurence Catholic Primary School Leads Special Live Rosary Broadcast

St Laurence Catholic Primary School Leads Special Live Rosary Broadcast on Radio Maria England

Radio Maria England was delighted to host a special live Rosary broadcast on Monday, 6th October, featuring Year 6 students from St Laurence's Catholic Primary School in Cambridge. The students joined Radio Maria listeners across the country at 2pm to pray the Rosary live from their school chapel.

The broadcast formed part of Mark 10 Mission's Rosary Challenge for October and reflects Radio Maria's ongoing mission to inspire a deeper devotion to the Rosary among young people and families across the nation. The Rosary Challenge is to pray a decade of the Holy Rosary each weekday in October. With the help of Archbishop John Wilson, Archdiocese of Southwark, Mark 10 Mission has created videos to guide young people through all twenty Mysteries of the Holy Rosary.



Mrs. Veronica Harvey, Inclusion Manager and SENCo at St Laurence's Catholic Primary School, shared: "In the midst of busy school life, taking the time to say the Rosary with the community of Radio Maria was an opportunity to put faith into practice together. It helped the children grow closer to God through prayer, reflection, and meditation on the life of Jesus and Mary. It increased our sense of unity and community with everyone coming together in one voice for peace, hope, and gratitude."

Praying the Rosary connects the school to the wider Catholic tradition, reminding children that they are part of a global faith family that has prayed these same words for centuries."

Fr. Alex Vadasseril CRM, assistant priest at St Laurence Catholic Church, helped lead the rosary and offered a blessing on the students and on the rosaries they were given by the school.

Helena Judd, Promotions, Fundraising, and Events Manager for Radio Maria England, said: "We find there's a special excitement for children when they realise how meaningful it is for our listeners – especially those who may not have a community to pray with. Many listeners have told us that hearing students pray brings them great hope, particularly grandparents whose own grandchildren may not be growing up in the faith."

Fr Toby Lees OP, Priest Director of Radio Maria England, added: "This was so beautiful to listen to."

Radio Maria England continues to invite schools, parishes, and community groups to take part in its live Rosary broadcasts throughout the year.



RADIO MARIA
ENGLAND



*Through God's grace,
a community growing in
knowledge and understanding*

www.stlaurence.cambs.sch.uk

Pentecost for the Jubilee of Hope

As we embark on a new term at St. Felix School, I would like to share some wonderful moments and achievements from our school community. We began the term with a commissioning Mass in church, where Father John inspired our children to use their talents to help others and to continue working on their Jubilee pledges. It was a heartfelt gathering where the children sang hymns chosen by our junior chaplains, creating a warm and uplifting atmosphere.



Each class has had the opportunity to celebrate a Mass in their classrooms, contributing prayers and readings fostering a sense of responsibility and involvement in our faith community.

Our Year 6 children demonstrated their commitment to our school by applying for the role of House Captains and participating in the interview process. They truly understand the importance of serving others and working collaboratively to maintain a harmonious school environment.

We are also celebrating sporting achievements! Our football team triumphed in their match against Linton Primary School, showcasing excellent teamwork and determination to secure their lead. The pride displayed by our players in representing St. Felix and the joy at winning showed how committed they are to our school community.

On the same day, an enthusiastic group of fifteen children participated in the local cross-country competition at County Upper Secondary School. They displayed determination and effort throughout the course, making us all proud of their perseverance and sportsmanship.

In honour of the season of creation, our children have tapped into their creativity to celebrate God's beautiful world. Year 5 and Year 6 children experimented with clay, while Year 3 children interpreted the creation story and produced their own pieces of art work. Their artistic expressions reflecting the children's interpretations of the creation story.



We have had a fantastic start to the term; the energy and joy of our children is truly inspiring. The staff are using the RED to engage our children in learning and reflection. The children have considered how to look after their environment and are reminded to give back to those in need, especially during this season of harvest.

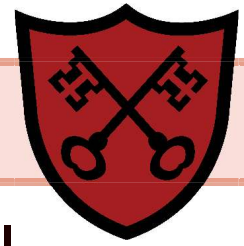
We are looking forward to the diocesan Mass in Norwich and having the CAFOD icon in school as part of our harvest celebration and collecting food for our local foodbank.

Followers of Jesus

Learning Together



www.stfelixhaverhill.com



St Alban's Primary, Cambridge

St Alban's Primary School welcome Daniel Zeichner, Labour MP for Cambridge

On Friday 5th September, St. Alban's Primary School was delighted to host a visit from their local Labour MP, Daniel Zeichner. The visit provided a valuable opportunity for our pupils to learn about the work of Parliament and engage directly with their local representative.



During the visit, Mr Zeichner met with pupils from the whole school to discuss a range of topics, including local community issues, the importance of having a voice, collaboration and what it is like to be an MP. The children had prepared insightful questions about the MP's role, their daily responsibilities, and how they represent the needs of their constituents in Westminster.

The visit reinforced our pupils' understanding of their role as active citizens in a democracy, and how they can use their voices to bring about positive change. The discussion provided a practical example of how our Catholic social teaching principles, such as participation and the common good, are put into practice in public life.



We would like to extend our sincere thanks to Mr Zeichner for taking the time to visit our school and engage so positively with our pupils.



Believe, Achieve, Succeed



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



Headteacher Welcome

As the newly appointed Headteacher at St Alban's Catholic High School, I am delighted to join this vibrant community. Having been a serving head at Christ the King Catholic School (Lancaster diocese) for the last three years and living back in my native city of Liverpool, it has been wonderful to come back to St Alban's where I was deputy headteacher for five years. It was lovely to meet students who still remembered me and it also reminds me of how special the school is. I have high expectations for both our students and staff, and I am committed to fostering an environment where everyone is encouraged to achieve their very best.



At St Alban's, we have a strong sense of community where every individual is recognised, valued, and supported to flourish. We are committed to meeting the unique needs of each student, nurturing their academic, spiritual, and personal growth. As we prepare for our upcoming CSI visit, our collective aim is to achieve 'Outstanding' status in 2027 through a culture of excellence, aspiration, and effective pastoral care.

To quote the late Pontiff:

"Teaching is a beautiful job; as it allows you to see the growth day by day of people entrusted to your care."

(Pope Francis, 2015)

There are challenges ahead, but I want to ensure that we employ skilled and dedicated professionals who inspire our students to achieve their full potential. I firmly believe that our place within the Our Lady of Walsingham CMAT family of schools means we strive to create an environment where every member of our community can thrive, contribute, and succeed. As an inclusive school community at St Alban's, I am confident that together we will thrive and continue to drive up standards and outcomes for the young people we serve through faith, hope, and ambition.

Simon Corless

A New Term Round Up at St Alban's Sixth Form

We were incredibly pleased to see our A-Level grade average go from a C- to a C+ from 2024 to 2025. This improvement is testament to the hard work of students and staff. 25.3% of our A-Level grades were A*-A – that puts us third in Suffolk and highest in the town of Ipswich. With 66% of students receiving at least one grade B, we are immensely proud to see the aspirations of our staff and students paying off.



In addition to this, a third of our university applicants gained places at Russell Group universities, with around three quarters starting courses at top 30 ranked higher education providers. This year group was a truly aspirational cohort, and we are excited to guide the new Year 13s through their final school year. We know they will be equally if not more successful. Good luck to our ten Year 13 students who have just gone through early application to Oxford and Cambridge, as well as Medicine courses.

This term we are excited about our student-led events. The Year 13 Wellbeing Team have coordinated a Wear It Yellow Day for Young Minds and a visit from 4YP mental health services, our Sports Captain has organised the Y12 vs Y13 football match for October, while our student leadership team have helped prepare our 6th Form Open Evening, Taster Day and Outreach Evenings. Year 12 have been quick to involve themselves in enrichment activities and we now have a Politics Club and Warhammer Society running every Tuesday as a result of their commitment.

In the second half of the Autumn term we draw inspiration from the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats and make a focus on community work. Year 12 students will focus on our key value of participation and support learning in the lower school, either as mentors, classroom assistants or homework club supervisors. A big thank you also to our Sixth Form School Council who presented last week on the impact of student voice in term 1.

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





Year 10 Art Trip to Cambridge

Our 45, Year 10 Art and Textiles Students visited Cambridge Museums' this week to make studies for their first project of the year on the theme of 'Structures'. We started the trip well in the sunshine with a visit to the Botanical Gardens making drawings of tropical plants, cacti, alliums and even pomegranates.



We took a short walk to the Zoology Museum to capture studs of butterflies, stick insects, dodo skeleton's and even a circular saw shell that had travelled to the UK on Darwin's famous 'Beagle' Voyage. The students focus in the gallery was inspiring, and their mature approach is to be commended. We finished the day with a short trip to the Fitzwilliam Museum to gather photos of classical sculptures and armour suits especially to inspire the textile students.

We will use these studies and images to develop 3D structures, paintings and prints over the coming months.

Homeless Sleepout

In September, twenty Year 8 students took part in a powerful and meaningful event, the Youth SVP Sleep Out, to show solidarity with those experiencing homelessness.

Sleeping under the stars on the school field in Duke of Edinburgh tents, the students aimed to raise awareness and funds for the St Vincent de Paul Society, which supports individuals and families facing housing insecurity. The evening began at 6:30pm as students arrived and set up their tents. With the sun setting, they spent time playing games on the field before participating in a lively and fun-filled game of glow stick capture the flag once night fell. Afterwards, the group gathered in K6 to warm up with hot chocolate and popcorn, followed by a reflective prayer, offering a moment of thoughtfulness and gratitude. By 9:30pm, the students settled into their tents, chatting quietly and enjoying each other's company before lights out. In the morning, they were welcomed with croissants and fruit juice before heading home at 9:00am, tired but proud of their experience, compassion, maturity, and resilience shown by all the participants.



They were an absolute credit to the school, and it was a pleasure to share this experience with them. So far, the group has raised an impressive £570 in sponsorship for the St Vincent de Paul Society—and the total is still growing! If you would like to help increase this amount, donations can still be made via Parent-Pay. A heartfelt thank you goes to Mrs Berry, Mr Adams, and Mrs Wray for generously giving up their Friday evening to supervise and support the students, making this event possible.

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

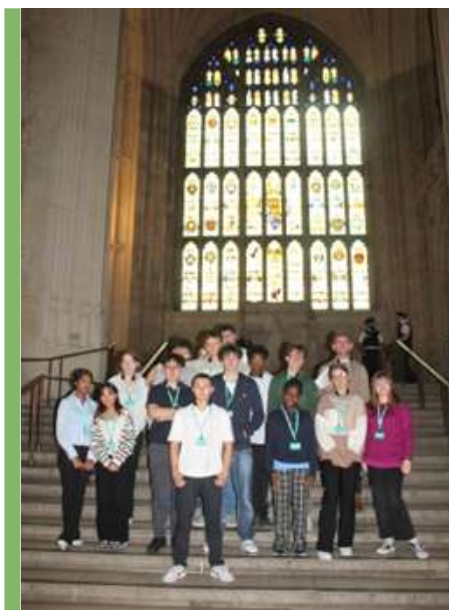


Year 12 Trip to Parliament

On Wednesday 17th September the Y12 Politics class, and other students interested in the subject, travelled to London to visit the Houses of Parliament.

After a rainy drive down to Redbridge Underground Station we caught the tube to Westminster. Our first stop was a visit to the Supreme Court - the highest court in the land. The building in the old Middlesex Guildhall was converted into the Supreme Court after the Constitutional Reform Act 2005 and opened in 2009. Since then it has made several constitutionally important judgements. The students enjoyed learning about the court and sitting in the judges' chairs.

Then we walked up Whitehall to Downing Street, glancing left and right to see the various cabinet offices lining the street. We peered through the gates of Downing Street, but unfortunately we didn't see the prime minister as he was at Windsor Castle meeting Donald Trump! We then continued along Whitehall to Trafalgar Square, stopping to look at the Banqueting House, the site of Charles I's execution in 1649.



After a quick tour of the Tudors and Stuarts room in the National Portrait Gallery, the students had lunch in Trafalgar Square before retracing their steps along Whitehall to the Palace of Westminster.

We had a brilliant tour from our guide Emily, which included the 'Noes' division lobby, the chamber of the House of Commons (where we briefly met MP Graham Leadbitter from the SNP), Central Hall, St Stephen's Hall and Westminster Hall. Unfortunately, on this occasion we weren't able to see the House of Lords as the lords were in session.

After our tour, the students enjoyed an excellent workshop, 'Snap Election', in the Education Centre. However, the highlight of this session was a visit from two of the MP for Bury St Edmunds aides. Unfortunately, Peter Prinsley couldn't be with us in person, but his two assistants did a fantastic job in his absence. It was a lovely surprise that one of them was an alumni of St Benedict's!

Harry Dunn left St Benedict's in 2017 after completing his GCSEs and winning a scholarship to Eton. Since then he has completed a degree in medicine at Cambridge University and is working for Peter Prinsley for a few months before starting a new job in a few months time, with the aim of becoming an MP at some point in the future. He did a great job of inspiring our students to consider a career in Politics themselves. Our walk back to Westminster Station introduced the students to another important element of democracy, the right to peaceful protest as there was a demonstration in full swing in Parliament Square. We think that Jeremy Corby was addressing the crowd as we walked past.

All in all, it was an excellent day, which provided the students with an opportunity to visit the legislature, the executive and the judiciary of the United Kingdom. The students were excellent ambassadors for the school and a pleasure to be with, which made for a very enjoyable visit.

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





SCHOOL ADMISSION APPEALS PANEL MEMBERS

Would you be interested in volunteering to be a member of a school admissions appeals panel?

The Diocese of East Anglia School's Service is looking to recruit and train individuals to sit on appeals for Catholic schools in the Diocese and is currently inviting applications from those who would like to volunteer for this service.

When a child is refused a place at a school, parents have the right of appeal. Each individual appeal hearing takes, on average, between 20 minutes to half an hour, although they can be shorter or longer depending on their complexity. Schools may sometimes only have a single appeal, but often, particularly during the school summer term, schools have multiple appeals lodged so organize full days to hear a number of appeals consecutively. This can sometimes require a panel member to commit to sitting on an appeal for two or, very occasionally, three days in a row. Where there are a number of appeals for one school, the same panel must hear all of the appeals. However, panel members are free to decide on their own availability and it would be entirely your decision whether to agree to sit on a particular panel once you are aware of the time commitment involved. Please be aware however, that appeal hearings take place during the school day so the role is suitable for someone who can be available during school hours. The school decides whether an appeal will be held in person or online via video conferencing, and panel members can indicate whether they have a preference for which panels they sit on.

The role of appeal panel member is voluntary and flexible. Each appeal hearing is different and interesting. Initial training is compulsory, takes approximately three hours and will usually be delivered online.

Appeal panels must consist of a mixture of:

1. Lay members – these are people without personal experience in managing or providing education in schools, although people who have experience as governors or have been involved in education in a voluntary capacity are allowed.
2. Education members – these are people who have experience in managing or providing education, are acquainted with educational conditions in the area or who are currently a parent/carer of a child at a school.

Panel members cannot sit on appeals for schools with which they have a connection, for example, as a governor, parent/carer or member of staff.

If this is a role you are interested in considering, application forms and further information can be obtained from:

Helen Bates
Assistant Director (Schools' Service)
Diocese of East Anglia
21 Ugate
Poringland, Norwich, NR14 7SH

Email: ssc@rcdea.org.uk
Tel: 01508-495509