

The Nativity east window at St John the Baptist Cathedral Norwich

Dear friends and colleagues,

As the Autumn term begins to close we approach the magnificent arrival of advent. We hold dear to the long traditions of this most holy time. It starts on the Sunday nearest to 30 November and ends on the fourth Sunday before 25 December. The word 'advent' means 'coming'. It is a time of preparation for the celebration of the birth of Jesus.

Our schools will be preparing for this by celebrating the birth of Jesus with Advent services, Nativity productions and performances through to the end of term. I hope that you will get the opportunity to support and enjoy this very special time of year.

Our Lady of Walsingham Catholic Trust continues to go from strength to strength. We have been informed that we

are the highest achieving Trust across the whole of Suffolk – something we are extremely proud of and one which reflects the hard work and dedication given by our schools and the communities we serve.

I hope you enjoy reading through this edition of the newsletter and seeing the exciting and rewarding work of our schools and Trust.

Wishing you all a peaceful and joyous Christmas!

Flavio



In the meantime, brothers, we wish you happiness; try to grow perfect; help one another. Be united; live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you. - Corinthians 13:11

Christ at the Centre,

Children at the Heart

A Commitment to Development - Richard Stevenson, COO OLOW Trust

As part of our ongoing commitment to developing our school buildings, while enhancing pupil and staff's learning and working environment, a recent focus has been on providing sheltered outdoor spaces for various activities. Let's explore the recent canopy installations at three of our schools: St Albans High, St Marys Primary and St Felix Primary.

At St Albans High School, the installation of a new canopy has transformed the outdoor quad area into a versatile space for both sheltered dining and recreation. The canopy provides much-needed shade during sunny days and shelter during rainy weather, allowing students to use the outdoor areas year-round. The canopy can also serve as an excellent space for extracurricular activities, such as art projects, science experiments, and group discussions. Additionally, they offer a comfortable area for students to relax and socialize during breaks, promoting a sense of community within the school.



St Marys and St Felix Primary School's have both also seen significant improvements with the replacements of their existing canopies. These structures have been strategically placed to cover playgrounds and outdoor learning zones. The canopies at St Marys are designed with vibrant colours and durable materials, making them both aesthetically pleasing and long-lasting. They provide a safe environment for children to play and learn, regardless of the weather conditions.

Both of the primary school projects were managed with the support of the Diocese with funding provided by the SCA (an allocation of capital distributed by the DfE only to Multi Academy Trusts).

The canopy installations at St Albans, St Marys, and St Felix schools have brought numerous benefits, enhancing the educational experience and promoting outdoor activities. These structures provide shelter and comfort, making outdoor spaces usable in various weather conditions. They also contribute to the aesthetic appeal of the school grounds and support operational practices. Overall, the canopies have become valuable assets to these schools, enriching the learning environment and supporting the well-being of students and staff alike.

Jade Goddard - Deputy Headteacher, St Alban's Catholic High School

Starting a new role in a school community is always a significant moment, but beginning my journey as Deputy Headteacher at St Alban's this September has been a truly remarkable experience. From the moment I stepped through the doors, I have been met with warmth, encouragement, and a deep sense of belonging - not only from the staff and students here but also from the wider Trust and Diocese.



As a Catholic educator, I hold a deep belief in the transformative power of education rooted in Faith. I was drawn to this role not only by the opportunity to serve in a leadership capacity but also by the Trust's commitment to nurturing the academic, spiritual, and personal growth of every child in its care. This shared mission has made my transition into the community seamless and inspiring.

One of my most exciting responsibilities has been leading the work on curriculum development and teaching and learning. Together with our staff, we have been refining our curriculum to be well sequenced and coherent, that supports students to become 'knowledge rich' and confident in applying their knowledge across diverse contexts. Our focus on knowledge retention has led to thoughtful curriculum design that emphasises the importance of revisiting and building on prior learning. These initiatives are making a real difference in the classroom, and I am excited about what lies ahead as we continue to refine and enhance our approaches. Our aim is to create a rich, inclusive, and rigorous academic offer that reflects the values of our Catholic Faith while equipping our students to excel in an ever-changing world.

Another cornerstone of my role has been supporting staff in their professional development. I believe strongly in the power of collaboration, and it has been inspiring to work alongside such dedicated educators. Through targeted training sessions, coaching opportunities, and the introduction of evidence-informed strategies, we are building a culture of continuous improvement.

What has stood out most during these first few months is the incredible sense of welcome I have received. From the thoughtful prayers during our staff gatherings to the encouraging conversations with students and parents, I have felt embraced by a community that truly lives out its mission. The support of the Trust and Diocese has also been invaluable, offering not only guidance but also a network of like-minded professionals who are equally committed to our shared vision.

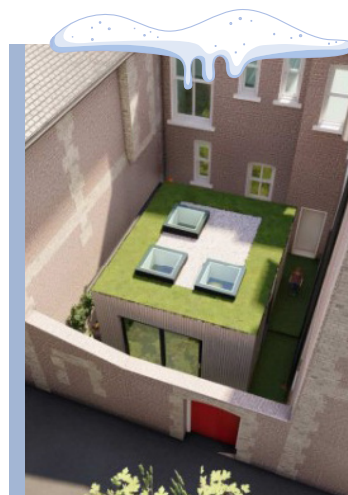
I am eager to collaborate further with colleagues across the Trust and Diocese, sharing ideas and learning from one another to ensure that we continue to provide the very best for our students. As I look ahead to the rest of this academic year, I feel a deep sense of gratitude and excitement. Together, we are building something truly special - an education that not only develops minds but also nurtures hearts, all within the loving embrace of our Catholic Faith.

Thank you for welcoming me into this wonderful community. I look forward to continuing this journey with all of you as we strive to serve our students and fulfill our shared mission.

Sisters of St Louis Wellbeing Hub

The original founders of our wonderful school, the St Louis Sisters, have generously gifted £100,000 to St Louis Catholic Academy in Newmarket for the benefit of children's mental wellbeing. When the Sisters left their Newmarket base, following decades of service to children and the wider community, they wished to contribute to the wellbeing of future generations.

After a period of consultation, and with the support of the Trust and Diocese, Eco Classrooms and Nurseries were selected for the design and build because of their high eco credentials. School wanted a calm and safe space to work with children needing additional wellbeing support and the new Sisters of St Louis Wellbeing Hub is a wonderful place for this. Suitable plans were agreed and work commenced in November. The multi-purpose space will be used for parent outreach and workshops, therapies for children, a sensory space and a place to meet with other wellbeing professionals. Located in a courtyard, the building will have skylight views of the sky, be surrounded by a walkway to sit and be calm within and have wide glazed doors that allow the internal room to open up to the outside.



The Reception children in school are avidly following the build as it progresses! We are very much looking forward to welcoming Sister Blathnaid to visit in Spring from her new home in Dublin and we know that she will be delighted with all that will continue to be achieved in the Sisters' name. We are very grateful to Bishop Peter who has kindly agreed to celebrate Mass with us later in the school year and officially open the hub.

Year 4 at Ipswich Docks

After a busy half term learning all about rivers and our local rivers, the Orwell and the Gipping, Year 4 were lucky to spend a beautifully mild afternoon, exploring the Ipswich dockside with 2 expert tour guides from Ipswich Council. We learnt about the history of the dock and how the port had been dug out by hand and how the Gipping was redirected to join the Orwell.



We also learnt about how the Anglo Saxons had an influence over Ipswich and this provided a great hook into our future topic in History.

We were also fortunate enough to be permitted onboard the Mariners Restaurant boat and have a tour of the engine room and the Captains wheel-house. An amazing trip, and some very tired children once we returned back to school.

Year 6 Banner

In September, Year 6 were part of the Our Lady of Walsingham Choir at the Diocesan School's Mass.

Their singing was exemplary and their behaviour was impeccable. A big thank you to Mrs McLeod-Jones and Mrs Dyer for preparing them in their music lessons.



Remembrance



The children wrote some beautiful and very moving bidding prayers for Mass on Remembrance Sunday.



St Pancras Primary, Ipswich

Theatre and Author Visit

Year 5 and Year 6 enjoyed a fantastic visit to the Thomas Wolsey theatre in October to see the author Elle Fountain talk about her new book 'Wild' - a brilliant gripping adventure that deals with contemporary issues in an accessible way - family, loss, protection of the rainforest and conservation. Elle wowed the children with discussions about the inspiration for her novels, and the steps that she takes when she writes. She shared about her travels and how she weaves these facts into her narratives. All children thoroughly enjoyed themselves and they all left with their own copy of Wild.



Year 5 then had an author workshop at school with Ele Fountain, Ele talked more to the children about her process and her inspiration, she performed readings from the book and there was an opportunity for the children to ask questions and have their books signed.

Community Support

A local volunteer, Bill, from the North West Ipswich Big Local Trust, has been generously giving his time to support our school and our children with our front garden. Bill has supported the children in creating a 'nature' area piled with logs for insects to set up home in and also re-planted our front beds with Michaelmas daisies and gladioli. We are very grateful for the time and hard work Bill has put into supporting our school and giving the children an opportunity to live out their value of Stewardship by caring for our school environment and the wildlife visiting it.



Anti-Bullying Ambassadors

Five of our Anti-bullying ambassadors went to County Upper High School in Bury St Edmunds to receive training from the Diana Award Anti-bullying programme. The day covered: Understanding what it means to be an anti-bullying ambassador, exploring what bullying behaviour is and how to support their peers, and how to identify bullying behaviour and practical steps to address it as an Anti-bullying ambassador. Following this training, the five who attended will then support Mrs Martin in training up new Anti-bullying ambassadors for this year and next year.

We are Loving and kind,

We Pray and we Play



Festival of Writing

St Louis held their annual Festival of Writing over two weeks and invited children's author James Campbell to read in school. During the festival, families came into school to write with their child. Younger children read to older children choosing many of their favourite stories. Children used the book 'The Day the Crayons Quit' to inspire their own writing across school. They used postcards, letters, chalk on the playground and in outdoor spaces as inspiration to write. We enjoyed the highest parent participation since starting the festival in Autumn 2022. Mrs White, our English Leader who led the events, was delighted by how successfully children were inspired to write.



A Museum Comes to St Louis

KS1 children delved into their first History topic of the year thinking like historians as they analysed items from the past. Classrooms were transformed into a museum and we carefully looked at a range of items from both the past and the present. By asking questions such as 'What is it?' or 'Who used it?' or 'What was it used for?' we began to form an idea of the use of some of the items. Have a look at the items and see if you can figure out its use!

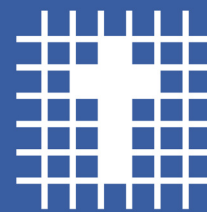


We Will Remember

On 11th November, the school laid poppy wreaths made by each class in the school prayer garden. Mini Vinnies attended a Newmarket led prayer service at the town's Memorial Monument, representing their school praying alongside other schools and representatives from Newmarket organisations.

Back in school, nursery children up to Year 6 gathered in the hall to pray and hold a one minute silence.





Remembrance Day

Remembrance Day, a memorial day observed in Commonwealth member states since the end of the First World War, to honour armed forces members who have died in the line of duty, was marked by the whole school gathering together, at 11 a.m., and the children from YR and Y6 created a human poppy. The children were extremely respectful at this solemn moment, remaining quiet and reflective.



In the first part of the Autumn term, all classes had a Design & Tecnology Day. There were marvellous things being created, across the school.

There was cooking - pizza and healthy dips and snacks, designing and creating cushions and Y6 designed and installed water walls in the Reception garden, for their young buddies to use. The school was alive with the buzz of inspiration and creativity.



The Knife Angel Visits Haverhill

The Knife Angel, created by artist Alfie Bradley and the British Ironworks Centre, is made from over 100,000 seized blades. The sculpture was created to highlight the negative effects of violent behaviour of all types including knife crime, domestic assault, sexual abuse and county lines. Not only does the statue act as a catalyst for turning the tide on violent and aggressive behaviour, it also acts as a memorial designed to commemorate the lives lost through violent and thoughtless actions. The installation in Haverhill was the first time that the Knife Angel statute had appeared in either Suffolk, Cambridgeshire or Norfolk.



Year 6 pupils from St Felix went to visit the Knife Angel at the start of this term, in September, when the statue came to Haverhill. Following the fatal stabbing of a pupil at a local high school in January 2023, it has been important to be open with our older pupils about the danger of carrying knives. Last summer they attended It's No Joke at the Haverhill Arts Centre and understood the important message that carrying a knife is more likely to arm your attacker against you than protect you.

When we visited the statute, Y6 were quite amazed that those knives could have been carried by people in the street. One pupil remarked about the inhumanity of one person towards another leading to more hate.

The pupils had the opportunity in school, prior to the visit, to write a pledge about their own decisions regarding carrying a knife in future. These were serious intentions and they took pride in placing these around the Angel as it stood in the Market Square. We took a moment to pray for all those who have lost their lives through knife crime.

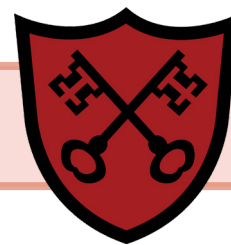
The intention has not ended with leaving their pledges. The Peer Mentors in Y6 heard some younger children talking about the Knife Angel and missing the point about its intended message of peace. They put together an age-appropriate assembly about knives as tools we eat with and the ways we can use knives safely. In this way they redirected the conversation to the importance of safeguarding being at the heart of all that we do and everyone's responsibility. We are really proud of their maturity.

Followers of Jesus

Learning Together



St Alban's Primary, Cambridge



Year 5 - New development in Cambridge

The Year 5 children were invited to give their thoughts and opinions on a new development in Cherry Hinton Cambridge. In order to do this they had a series of talks from; engineers, developers, landscapers and people from the City Council. It was an invaluable experience as they were asked to contribute to the design of the buildings and landscape. They had two days on this project, visiting the site and recording their views. The whole experience culminated in the children being awarded certificates and prizes for their contributions, and they will have their St Alban's bench designed and installed in the new development. We are also looking forward to a copy of the bench coming to the school.



Educational Trips



St Alban's is in a very fortunate place as we have so much exciting opportunities on our door step. An example of a wonderful trip was Year 1 who visited the Sedgwick museum. They had a great time learning about dinosaurs. Year 1 also went to the Whipple Museum to learn about bones and organs and about seeing and hearing.



Live Theatre at St Alban's

We are very grateful to our parents who paid for all the children to see this excellent performance of Cinderella. Whilst the children watched the fantastic and highly entertaining performance, our parents were invited in to talk to the teachers about the learning happening in school.



Believe, Achieve, Succeed



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

i-Belong Computing Experience

"On Saturday 16th November, Mr Robinson and Mrs McLean (parent volunteer - thank you!) took nine Year 9 girls on the train to Cambridge for the i-belong Computing Experience run in collaboration between Cambridge University Maths school and the National Centre for Computing Education (NCCE). This



was a whole-day event where students got on the train at 7am and we arrived back at 8pm! There were girls from 17 schools in the East of England and they worked in groups with Women who work in companies such as Zeiss, Microsoft, ARM and Siemens.

The girls enjoyed the day and hopefully will lead to more girls in the future considering Computing as an option moving forwards.

At St Alban's, staff within the department have already gained their i-belong badge from the NCCE and we get involved with many units of learning recommended in the i-belong guidebook which have been identified as ones which girls enjoy such as app development, 3D modelling, spreadsheets, programming in scratch/python and image editing to name a few."

Walton on the Naze Geography Trip

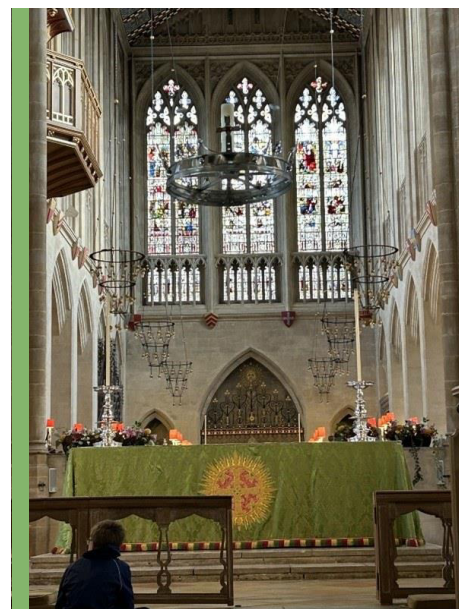
On Wednesday 9th October we took out our Year 10 geographers to complete their first day of GCSE fieldwork. The focus for the trip was on collecting qualitative data while studying coastal erosion. They collected lots of data in their field booklets and even climbed the Naze tower. We also had a superb talk delivered by one the Naze experts.

The students worked hard and enjoyed their day. The weather was kind to us, and we were able to enjoy our lunch outside on the picnic benches.



Year 7 Visit Cathedral

Students in 7C and 7S visited Bury Cathedral on Monday this week, to gather drawings for their Architecture project that they are studying with Mrs Peasey in Art. 58 students were able to make studies from the beautiful structures in the interior of the building, applying their skills in perspective drawing. The other year 7 classes will be exploring architecture next term and will also get to build on their observational drawing skills. We look forward to seeing these illustrations develop into three dimensional designs for clay facades later in the year. A great start to the project year 7 and thank you for being such excellent representatives of the school!



BAE Systems Electric Roadshow

On Tuesday 19th November, we welcomed the BAE Systems STEM Roadshow back to St Benedict's to enlighten (!) our Year 7 and Year 8 students on the subject of Electricity. The Roadshow, which is delivered in partnership with the RAF and Royal Navy has been an annual fixture in the Careers calendar for several years now, and students are introduced to a new STEM theme each time. The aim is to present a different, inspiring and inclusive perspective on STEM careers. Presenters Lauren, Mike and Zoe did an amazing job of entertaining each of our cohorts - and staff members - and teaching us all something new and exciting about the nature and uses of Electricity. There was no shortage of volunteers for testing the scientific theory and the Van der Graaf generator and cycling teacher were definite highlights!



I wonder what the theme will be for 2025...?

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



Sixth Form Christmas Trips

On Friday 29th November 135 sixth form students went to London for their Christmas trip. It was a remarkably mild morning for November when the coaches left Bennies at 9:15. The year was spilt into three groups according to their museum choice and each group was taken directly to either the National Gallery with Mr Richmond and Mrs Slater, The British Museum with Mrs Senior or the Natural History Museum with Mr Spiller and Mrs Nicholls. After a couple of hours soaking up the history and culture the groups reconvened in Covent Garden where they dispersed with their friends to enjoy the twinkly lights and do a spot of Christmas shopping.



Christmas Cards at Primary Schools

A big thank you to everyone who supported the year 12 Chaplaincy team who visited four local primary schools this week, they worked with Class 4 to create some fantastic Christmas cards which they plan to distribute amongst the elderly in local nursing homes. It was a fantastic experience and lots of fun was had!

Year 12 organised this project with skill and enthusiasm; we look forward to the next steps of this and future projects!



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



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.

www.ourladyofwalsingham.co.uk/governorrecruitment

*Wishing you and your family a happy and
holy Christmas,*

*From all at the Our Lady of Walsingham
Catholic Multi Academy Trust*



*Christ at the Centre,
Children at the Heart*



www.ourladyofwalsingham.co.uk