



St Benet Biscop Catholic Academy

Prospectus



Mission

To seek wholeness
through *faith*,
quest and *learning*,
to become what
God intends us to be.



Welcome to St Benet Biscop Catholic Academy. It is a great privilege to be the Headteacher in such a wonderful community where we value each individual and strive to ensure everyone fulfils their potential. The dedicated staff show a deep commitment to our students and always go the extra mile to ensure that they feel happy, safe and are challenged academically.

We believe that every child has the potential to achieve high across all areas of our curriculum, both the taught curriculum and the wider curriculum. As a school community, we see it as our responsibility to ensure that everyone is nurtured, and flourishes during their time with us. We ensure that our students have a sense of belonging in our school community: that they feel like they have significance, and value, and that as a student body, they are all equal.

The development of values shapes our student's character, to live out these values in positive daily actions through stewardship and this expands beyond school and the local community. Our RISE values of Respect, Resilience, Integrity, Self-Discipline and Excellence run through all aspects of school life at St Benet Biscop.

This prospectus will provide you with a flavour of St Benet Biscop Catholic Academy.

Suzanne Lewis-Dale

Headteacher



Catholic Ethos

It is important to us that our students have a full and rounded spiritual and educational experience, with many opportunities to experience awe and wonder in the world, and to develop personally and morally on their spiritual journey.

The development of values shapes our student's character; to live a full life responding to God's calling and living out these values in positive daily actions through stewardship. This expands beyond school and the local community. It allows our students to be the person God intended them to be; contributing to the common good and society.

St Benet Biscop aims to provide opportunities for students and staff to come together in community to worship God growing in their understanding of self and the importance of their contribution to the common good. Collective Worship will reflect the traditions of our Church, considering the spiritual and educational needs of all who share in it. We provide regular opportunities for students to experience retreats, building community and belonging. Student Voice has highlighted the positive impact of these events and in response we have increased numbers and developed a range of creative formats both in and out of school.



We do this by:

- Helping to develop the faith of everyone within our community;
- Ensuring that our School is a caring community;
- Giving students understanding and opportunities to reflect on the School RISE and Gospel values;
- Supporting students in lived out understanding of the school and Church's mission;
- Encourage those who form part of the worshipping community in church;
- Include students from other Christian traditions, or none or from other faith backgrounds;
- Provide an educational experience to which all can contribute and from which all can gain spiritual growth.

Whatever your child's faith background, you can be assured that at St Benet Biscop Catholic Academy, your child will have the opportunity to explore and develop their spiritual life, personal responsibility and grow in a secure environment within an atmosphere of wise and appropriate freedom. We strive to be a learning community guided by Gospel values within which all are respected. Parents are also reminded, however, that the school exists to provide a Catholic and Christian education for its students and therefore parents are expected to be in sympathy with its aims and objectives.

Curriculum

At St Benet Biscop our mission is to encourage students to value, achieve and grow in the peace of Christ and this mission underpins our five-year curriculum. Our curriculum embraces students of all ability and encourages challenge and high expectation for all: supporting and stretching all students to be the best they possibly can be.

We understand the need to prepare our students for the challenges of GCSE and so our curriculum, from the outset in Year 7, is tailored to support and develop the necessary skills and knowledge our students will need to be successful in reaching their full potential.

Our Year 7, 8 and 9 curriculum teaches our students the skills, content and dispositions needed to succeed in their GCSEs. Furthermore, it provides additional stretch and challenge for our most able, whilst ensuring that provision is in place to ensure those that need to catch up are enabled to do so.

All GCSE and equivalent subjects are taught from the beginning of Year 10, and our options process takes place when students are in Year 9. Throughout Years 7, 8 and 9 students will continue to study a broad and balanced range of subjects to enable them to select their GCSE options with confidence.



The Taught Curriculum

Year 7, 8 and 9

Students follow a core curriculum and an approach to teaching and learning which develops the skills, knowledge and learning dispositions required in order to succeed in the now more rigorous GCSEs.

Art	Mathematics
Core Studies	Modern Foreign Languages
Design & Technology	Music
Drama	ICT/Computing
English (Language and Literature)	Physical Education
Geography	Science
History	Religious Education



Year 10 and 11

Building upon our more rigorous Year 7, 8 and 9 curriculum, GCSEs and equivalent courses are introduced in Year 10; these cover the core subjects of Religious Education, English Language, English Literature, Mathematics and Science.

Students then choose 3 optional subjects, although at least one subject must be an EBACC subject (Geography, History, French or Spanish).

The option subjects currently offered are shown below, however, our curriculum offer is reviewed annually:

BTEC Children's Play, Learning & Development	BTEC Health & Social Care
BTEC Digital Information Technology	GCSE History
GCSE Design & Technology	GCSE Spanish
GCSE Drama	BTEC Sport
GCSE Fine Art	BTEC Tech Award in Business Enterprise
GCSE Food Preparation & Nutrition	GCSE Music
GCSE French	GCSE Triple Science
GCSE Geography	



Sixth Form

In the sixth form at St Benet Biscop we aim to provide our students with an education of the highest standard and one that is enjoyable and fulfilling.

Our aim is to provide a challenging, yet supportive and friendly sixth form environment. We foster a culture which will help each student to reach their full potential whilst enjoying their studies and growing as an individual academically, socially and spiritually.

There is a varied curriculum on offer allowing students to select a combination of subjects that support their future aspirations both vocationally and academically. The subjects currently offered are shown below, however, our curriculum offer is reviewed annually:

A Level Art	A Level Philosophy & Ethics
A Level Biology	A Level Physics
A Level Chemistry	A Level Psychology
A Level Drama & Theatre Studies	A Level Spanish
A Level English Language	Vocational Business Studies
A Level English Literature	Vocational Children's Play Learning & Development
A Level French	
A Level Geography	Vocational Health & Social Care
A Level History	Vocational Sport
A Level Mathematics	Vocational Criminology
A Level Media Studies	Vocational ICT



The Academy – Our Facilities

Our School Site

In recent years, we have undertaken a transformative refurbishment and expansion programme, significantly enhancing the learning environment and delivering outstanding facilities for our students. This ambitious development has seen the complete modernisation of classrooms in the St Aidan's and St Oswald's blocks, as well as a major extension to the St Wilfrid's block, providing six new, contemporary classrooms. In September 2020, the school opened the brand-new St Hilda's block, adding a further six state-of-the-art teaching spaces to support our growing community.

A key highlight of this investment is our innovative new Sixth Form building, purpose-built to provide an exceptional educational experience that supports both academic and personal development. This modern facility features two state-of-the-art classrooms that double as assembly and conference spaces, offering a versatile environment for high-quality teaching, large gatherings, and special events. In addition, the building includes a dedicated study area—ideal for focused revision, research, and collaborative projects—a stylish café space for socialising and relaxation, and pastoral offices to provide personal support and guidance.

We are also proud to offer a newly refurbished Sports Hall, which further enriches our PE curriculum and extensive extra-curricular programme. To meet the needs of our expanding school population, the Dining Hall has been almost doubled in size, creating a bright, welcoming space where students can enjoy meals in comfort. For added peace of mind, a secure perimeter fence has been installed around our extensive site, ensuring a safe and secure environment for all.



Learning Resources and ICT

We are committed to continually reviewing the facilities we have in school to ensure that they match the ever-changing curriculum. Over recent months we have invested heavily in the improvement of specialist equipment such as resources for Art, Music and Drama as well as upgrading the computers within our ICT suites.

School Transport

Free school transport for eligible students is provided by Northumberland County Council and decisions are made in strict accordance with the School Transport Policy.

Eligibility for free school transport to St Benet Biscop Catholic Academy is usually decided by:

- Distance from home to school
- St Benet Biscop being your child's qualifying school by reason of faith
- Other exceptional circumstances (e.g. Medical, SEND, low income)

Northumberland County Council's School Transport has information about applying for free school transport, and the eligibility criteria.

<https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/education-skills/schools/school-transport>



Learning Resource Centre

Our Learning Resource Centre (LRC) is at the heart of the school. It is open every school day between 8am and 4pm and comprises of the Library and a computer suite. The library holds several thousand books, offering a diverse range of Young Adult fiction as well as classic literature and reference books specifically chosen to support the Academy's curriculum.

Students are actively encouraged to use the LRC before and after school, at break and lunchtime for wider research, homework and leisure reading. Students with specific literary interests are able to meet with like minded students through lunch clubs such as 'Manga club'.

As part of our curriculum, students in Years 7, 8 & 9 have weekly reading opportunities during morning registration to support achievement in reading fluency and comprehension. Alongside reading whole-class novels, students engage in a series of reflective activities around them, enabling them to explore their own personal responses.



Caring for your child

St Benet Biscop aims to maintain a community where your child feels safe and supported to enable them to develop holistically as a learner. The welfare of your child is paramount and if there are any concerns, we are committed to dealing with them quickly and effectively.

The Form Tutor

The form tutor is a key person in the life of your child while attending school and your first point of contact to help you with any aspect of your child's learning and welfare. The form tutor will guide your child throughout their time in our school. Students are placed in tutor groups when they come to St Benet Biscop. In Year 7, this group is a mixed ability learning group made up of students from our feeder schools. The Welcome Day in the summer term is an opportunity for the students to get to know other members of their form and their form tutor, prior to enrolling in September.

The Head of Progress

The Head of Progress ensures that all students in the year group progress spiritually, morally, academically and socially. Heads of Progress work closely with form tutors and subject teachers to ensure that your child has the opportunity to flourish. Heads of Progress are available to help with any additional concerns that you might have.

The Student Support Team

Our Student Support Team consists of Student Support Managers and Attendance Officers who work closely with the Heads of Progress, Form Tutors and Parents. The team complement the work of the teaching staff to support your child. The Attendance Officers have a key role in the management of absence and work closely with the Education Welfare Team, Heads of Progress and the Assistant Headteacher responsible for school attendance. The team work with students who need extra support to overcome barriers to learning so that they can fulfil their potential.

Special Educational Needs

The school has a Special Educational Needs Co-Ordinator, who leads a team who support those with special educational needs. The SENCO liaises with feeder schools to collect the relevant information to ensure a smooth transition to St Benet Biscop. The SENCO also fosters a close working relationship with parents in order to fully meet the needs of the individual students.



Enrichment

We believe that learning encompasses both academic achievement and holistic development. It is important for students to have a wide range of enriching educational experiences to support their spiritual growth and foster a moral purpose.

Student Leadership

Student leadership opportunities are offered across all year groups, starting with year 7 'buddies' and Wellbeing ambassadors. We have an active Student Council and form reps, and student ambassador roles ranging from peer support to mental health and subject areas.



School Shows

We pride ourselves in providing students with the chance to showcase their talents in performing arts and regularly deliver school shows that are not only extremely entertaining but performed to a professional standard. Recent shows have included Grease, Billy Elliott, Legally Blonde, The Addams Family and Rock of Ages.



School Trips

Subject areas complement their course delivery by a variety of trips to enhance their curriculum including geography, biology and history field trips, business trips to industry, sports trips which have included training at premier league football grounds, as well as highly successful Spanish and French language immersion educational visits, to name but a few subject experiences that are available.

Extra Curricular Trips

At St Benet Biscop Catholic Academy we also aim to develop students' spirituality with year group retreats and an invitation to join the Youth Mission Team's annual God Camp. We are also proud of our international experiences which include trips to New York, Cambodia, the Battlefields of Northern Europe, European ski trips and a physics residential to CERN.



School Clubs

Students are encouraged to attend clubs which take place at lunchtimes and are organised and delivered by school teaching and support staff. The programme is reviewed each year to suit the interests of the students, current clubs include; badminton, rugby, table tennis, football, netball, basketball, Lego, chess, film, Numeracy Ninjas, Duke of Edinburgh, trampolining, Craft Club, Horrible Science, Chinese, Latin, manga, singing, Just Dance and drama.



Primary to Secondary Transition



At St Benet Biscop Catholic Academy, we recognise how important a smooth and supportive transition from primary to secondary school is for every child. We understand that for some students this change can feel seamless, while for others it may bring greater challenges. That's why we are committed to working closely with families, primary schools, and all stakeholders to ensure that every student feels welcomed, supported, and feels a true sense of belonging from the moment they join our school community. To help foster this connection, we invite parents into school in September for a 'Welcome to Secondary' evening, with similar welcome evenings taking place throughout each key stage as students progress through the school. We place a strong emphasis on building effective home-school communication through in-person communication on site or by phone, the school planner, Arbor, our school blog and parent newsletter amongst other means.

We know that successful transition starts while the children are still in their primary schools. Regular meetings are held between ourselves and our feeder primary schools and we work together on various initiatives and transition programmes.

In the summer term, all Year 6 children who will be starting at St Benet Biscop in September attend the school for a full day during which they have a taste of what secondary school life will be like. This day also provides the children with the opportunity to meet their new form class, make new friends and get to know the teachers and the layout of the school. In addition to this, our Assistant Headteacher responsible for transition visits the primary schools to meet staff and students and to gather information in order to ensure that the transition process is smooth.

Transition at St Benet Biscop is not just a one-off event when students join us in Year 7; it is a carefully planned and ongoing process that supports each student throughout their journey with us, helping them grow in confidence, character, and community. We firmly believe that smooth transitions are significant for all learners to flourish—spiritually, socially, emotionally, and academically—so they can thrive to be the best that they can be.

