



# 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.

It is also a privilege for us to work closely with you to provide your children with an excellent secondary education where they can thrive; we pride ourselves on the quality of partnerships that exist between all parents and carers and the school.

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

**Kevin Shepherd**

Headteacher



# Catholic Ethos

Parents choosing to send their child to St Benet Biscop Catholic Academy are opting specifically for an education within the setting of a Catholic school. We are part of the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle and, as such we belong to the strong family of Catholic primary and secondary schools throughout the North-East.

We are proud of our Catholic tradition and take seriously our responsibility to nurture the faith in our young people and to support them on their spiritual journey through life.

Our dedicated teachers, proactive staff and passionate chaplaincy team strive to provide an outstanding education, in a Catholic / Christian context. The Gospel values taught to us by Jesus Christ pervade everything we do, and these values enable students to leave our school with a strong academic, moral and spiritual education.

The spiritual dimension is of fundamental importance to the life of our school. In addition to timetabled religious education lessons, morning registration includes an act of collective worship.

There are also regular opportunities for collective worship throughout the year in the form of special liturgies marking various points of the church year, including Advent, Lent and Easter, as well as important national days like Remembrance Day. We also celebrate and reflect upon our Christian values through our student led liturgies and assemblies.

Throughout the academic year students are invited to attend retreats. Annually, we attend the celebrated 'God Camp' at the Youth Village, an event that is booked out very quickly. The school is proud of the work it does to support many good causes throughout the school year. We promote a sense of social justice - a social awareness that impels our community to action so that each of us is ready to give, not merely receive.

We are impressed by the generosity of our students and their families in their charitable giving and by the care and concern they show towards those less fortunate than themselves, at home and abroad.

Within school, we have several flourishing Chaplaincy teams. Over the course of a week, there is a Justice and Peace club available for every year group to access. We have lots of passionate students who want to make a positive change in our world. We

primarily focus on how we can raise awareness in school about charities close to our heart, as well as planning lots of exciting fundraisers for those charities. We regularly run fundraisers for the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD), in addition to many other charities.

Catholic parents, and parents from other faith traditions alike choose to send their children to St Benet Biscop Catholic Academy and our numbers are increasing because parents and carers want their children to attend a school with an authentic spiritual and moral value system. Our school is a community of learners where the structures are known, understood and respected. Our ethos promotes Christian values in students and staff, promoting a learning environment where students feel safe and have respect for authority.

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.

*'In your Catholic schools, there is always a bigger picture over and above the individual subjects you study, the different skills you learn. All the work you do is placed in the context of growing in friendship with God and all that flows from that friendship. So you learn not just to be good students, but good citizens, good people... Always remember that every subject is part of a bigger picture... A good school provides a rounded education for the whole person. And a good Catholic school over and above this, should help all its students to become saints.'*

Pope Benedict XVI 2010

# 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.

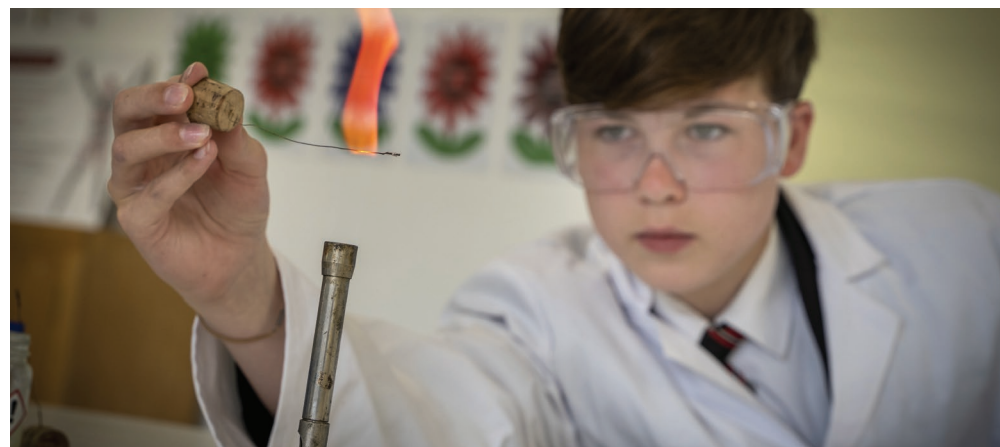


# The Taught Curriculum

## 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	BTEC Tech Award in Music Practice
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 Mathematics
A Level Biology	A Level Media Studies
A Level Business Studies	A Level Philosophy & Ethics
A Level Chemistry	A Level Physics
A Level Drama & Theatre Studies	A Level Product Design
A Level English Language	A Level Psychology
A Level English Literature	A Level Spanish
A Level French	Vocational Business Studies
A Level Further Maths	Vocational Children's Play Learning & Development
A Level Geography	
A Level History	Vocational Health & Social Care
	Vocational Sport





# The Academy – Our Facilities

## Our School Site

Over the past few years an extensive refurbishment programme has been undertaken to vastly improve the quality of school facilities. These upgrades include the refurbishment of existing classrooms in the St Aidan's and St Oswald's blocks as well as a major extension being added to the St Wilfrid's block, which provides 6 additional classrooms. The new St Hilda's block was opened in September 2020 which also provides 6 additional classrooms. A new Sports Hall has been built, which will support and enable our sports and extra-curricular programmes. An extension to the school's Dining Hall which almost doubled the size of the original Dining Hall has been completed providing better facilities for students to use at lunchtimes. A perimeter fence encompassing the vast site has been installed to ensure the safety of the students on site.

## 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)

If you think your child may be eligible, please apply online at:

[www.northumberland.gov.uk/Education/Schools/School-transport-1/Transport.aspx](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Education/Schools/School-transport-1/Transport.aspx)

## Concessionary places

In some cases it may be possible to purchase available seats once all eligible seats have been allocated. However, these are not available on school buses from Ashington, Blyth, Cramlington or Seaton Delaval. Please contact Northumberland County Council for further information. Parents are advised that the purchase of available seats will not be considered until all free and Post 16 applications have been processed. Parents are further advised that the seat can be withdrawn should the seat be required for an entitled child.



## 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.

# Caring for your Child

Our Student Support Team consists of Student Support Managers, an Attendance Officer and a Pastoral Administrative Assistant 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 Officer has a key role in the management of absence and works 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.

# Extra Curricular Life

We encourage all students at St Benet Biscop Catholic Academy to become involved in the wider curriculum as we believe there is more to gain from our school community than just exam success.

## Student Leadership

Student leadership opportunities are offered throughout the year groups from becoming a Youth Ambassador, to being a Student Council Representative at form class level or on the whole school council. A range of leadership openings also arise in the Sixth Form, including becoming Head Boy or Head Girl, a community sports leader or the chaplaincy and charity representative: the opportunities are many.



## 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 Billy Elliott, Legally Blonde, Ghost the Musical and The Addams Family'.



## 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 a highly successful Spanish language immersion educational visit, 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, 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, girls rugby, boys rugby, table tennis, football, netball, basketball, Lego, chess, film, Numeracy Ninjas, Duke of Edinburgh, trampolining, Chinese, manga, singing and drama.



# Primary to Secondary Transition



St Benet Biscop Catholic Academy is the only Catholic secondary school serving young people of the Catholic faith and of other faiths in Northumberland. Although we are a Catholic School our student body consists of a diverse range of faiths and cultures.

At St Benet Biscop Catholic Academy we work closely with our feeder schools to ensure that transition into Year 7 is as easy as possible for our young people. We find that most children settle very quickly and thoroughly enjoy life in our school. Parents are often surprised at just how easily their children manage the new challenges such as the travelling to and from school, the larger school site, the older students and the many different lessons.

We work hard to ensure that the transition process for our new students is as smooth as possible and 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. For example, the results of our Northern Saints Project run between ourselves and all of our

feeder schools are proudly displayed in our chapel together with our 'Let's Connect' Elmer, featuring all the designs of every student who took part in our current Year 10. We also liaise with Leading Link ([www.leadinglink.co.uk](http://www.leadinglink.co.uk)) to deliver transition summer schools which take place on our school site over the 6-week school holiday. These help new students gain confidence and prepare them for the changes they will encounter in September.

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.

Our partnership with parents is crucial. Your child's success depends on the quality of our work together. We encourage all parents and prospective Year 7 students to watch our Transition Video and the Parent Presentation which can be found in the Transition section of our school website at <https://www.st-benetbiscop.org.uk/transition>

In the summer term, you will be provided with further details about the transition process.

