



**ST BENET BISCOP
CATHOLIC ACADEMY**



Newsletter
Winter/Spring
2022-2023



Headteacher's WELCOME



I have great pleasure in introducing you to the latest newsletter from our school. I hope you enjoy reading all about the wide-ranging and wonderful activities, trips, visits and opportunities that our students have taken part in, over the course of the last term or so. We believe that learning is so much more than just what happens in the classroom, and I am immensely grateful to all of those members of teaching and support staff who go above and beyond to plan and prepare such wonderful things for our students.

Among the many achievements in this newsletter, I am particularly proud of the way our Year 7s are really embracing life at St Benet's. Their attendance to such diverse clubs, as Maths Club, Reading Club and Debating Club is really impressive. I have no doubt that the excellent engagement at Maths Club has helped us to become the highest achieving secondary school in the 10ticks.com Mental Maths challenge! What a brilliant accolade.

Equally, we are really pleased to be able to offer students the chance to travel, and I hope you enjoy reading about our Sixth Form visits to CERN and the Lake District. Once again, I must thank the staff who have given their time so freely to support these residential trips. Closer to home, our school musical was a huge success, and I am sure you will agree when you see them, the images in the newsletter capture some of the superb performances from the principals as well as the ensemble. The quality of the production was West End-worthy, and this was down to the incredible commitment of our students and very talented staff. I am already looking forward to next year's production which is going to be Hairspray.

Lastly, I cannot write this introduction without mentioning my immense pride following our Ofsted inspection. In January we were given the opportunity to really show Ofsted what we are about at St Benet's, and I hope this newsletter gives you a flavour of that; we have a distinct ethos and an unwavering commitment to ensuring that all students really develop as maturing young adults, getting ready to take their place in the world, and to contribute to it. This quality of education and commitment to our pupils' development is something Ofsted recognised when they visited. The fact that we were upgraded in all aspects of school life that the inspectors looked at, is testimony to our whole school community. I want to say a thank you to our students, staff, and families for all of the hard work, commitment and support, that makes St Benet's a great place to learn and the unique school that it is.

I hope you enjoy reading our latest news.

K Shepherd
Headteacher

Contents

<i>OFSTED Award</i>	3
<i>Sporting Lunchtimes</i>	4
<i>Year 10 & 11 Enjoy a Night at the Theatre</i>	4
<i>Advent Preparations & Christmas</i>	5
<i>Duke of Edinburgh Awards</i>	5
<i>Cheerleaders Develop Their Skills</i>	5
<i>The Sorcerer's Apprentice</i>	6
<i>Year 11 Get a Taste for Sixth Form Life</i>	6
<i>Footballers Go from Strength to Strength</i>	7
<i>Cross Country Success</i>	7
<i>Year 10 Football Success</i>	7
<i>Sixth Form Reading Programme</i>	8
<i>Years 7,8 & 9 Book Clubs</i>	9
<i>Manga Expert</i>	9
<i>Year 7 Enjoy Debate Club</i>	10
<i>Bronnie Delivers Powerful Mental Health Message</i>	10
<i>Remembrance Day</i>	10
<i>Students get a flavour of Victorianism</i>	11
<i>A busy year so far in Learning Support</i>	12
<i>School Mass</i>	12
<i>Senior Citizens' Outreach Parcels</i>	12
<i>Sixth Form - Back to Cern</i>	13
<i>Year 11 & 13 Learn about Local History</i>	14
<i>Preparing for a Safer Future</i>	14
<i>Lorissa Goes Above and Beyond In Geography</i>	15
<i>Claplaincy Clubs</i>	15
<i>Careers Week Trip to Newcastle University</i>	15
<i>Holocaust Survivor</i>	15
<i>Safer Internet Day</i>	16
<i>Sixth Form Students Prepare for the Next Steps</i>	17
<i>Year 13 Fine Art A Level Exam Project</i>	17
<i>St Benet's Annual Musical Returns</i>	18-21
<i>Air Cadets Recruit Student in Year 8</i>	22
<i>Halloween Storytelling</i>	23
<i>Year 7 Retreat Day</i>	24
<i>Year 12 Personal Development Days with NCS</i>	25
<i>Harvest & Christmas Collection</i>	25
<i>Practically Perfect Chemists</i>	26
<i>Year 7 Conduct Geography Fieldwork</i>	26
<i>Author Visits St Benet Biscop</i>	27
<i>Lessons from Auschwitz</i>	28
<i>Year 7 Enjoy Horrible Histories Club</i>	28
<i>Year 7 Maths Club</i>	29
<i>Year 8 Student Impress with Great History Work</i>	30
<i>Sixth Form Geography Visit to The Lake District</i>	31
<i>Design Engineering - Work Experience at Stage One</i>	32
<i>Year 11 Fine Art GCSE Exam Project - "Lock"</i>	32
<i>10 Ticks.com Mental Maths Competition Winners</i>	33
<i>National Poetry Day</i>	34-35
<i>It's A Wrap</i>	35

Ofsted Grade Us As 'Good'

Not long after our return from the Christmas break, Ofsted called us to say they were going to complete a graded inspection of the school. After a very intense and thorough process, the school was graded as 'good' in all of the key inspection categories which include:

- **The quality of education**
- **Behaviour and attitudes**
- **Personal development**
- **Leadership and management**
- **Sixth-form provision**

We were absolutely thrilled with this judgement because it recognises the high-quality education that students receive at our wonderful school, and it recognises the excellent work of our teaching and support staff and, of course, it recognises the great contributions and attitudes of our students. The inspection framework that Ofsted now use is more challenging than ever before, and so we are particularly pleased with this outcome. An incredible amount of work has gone into improving the school in recent years, and since our previous Ofsted inspections. However, we are not complacent. We have great plans to take the school from strength-to-strength.

Some of the stand out comments from the report can be found throughout this newsletter, and the full report can be found on the school website, and on the Ofsted website.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank parents, carers and families for all of the support you have given to the school. As Ofsted recognised, "there is a strong sense of community at St Benet Biscop Catholic Academy" and together, we look forward to ensuring your child experiences a rich, diverse, holistic and top-quality education.



Sporting Lunchtimes At St Benet Biscop



Lunch sessions

Sports hall – Badminton
Gym – Table Tennis

Week A			Week B		
Day	Year	Timings	Day	Year	Timings
Monday	7	12.30 – 12.50	Monday	8	1.30 – 1.50
	10/11	12.50 – 1.10		9	1.50 – 2.10
Tuesday	7	12.40 – 1.00	Tuesday	8	1.35 – 1.55
	10/11	1.00 – 1.20		9	1.55 – 2.15
Wednesday	7	12.30 – 12.50	Wednesday	7	12.30 – 12.50
	10/11	12.50 – 1.10		10/11	12.50 – 1.10
Thursday	8	1.30 – 1.50	Thursday	8	1.30 – 1.50
	9	1.50 – 2.10		9	1.50 – 2.10
Friday	8	1.30 – 1.50	Friday	7	12.30 – 12.50
	9	1.50 – 2.10		10/11	12.50 – 1.10

Note: Blue arrows in the original image point to 'Only table tennis' for Monday 10/11 in Week A and Friday 10/11 in Week B.

We are now in our second year of sporting lunchtimes at St Benet Biscop. In the autumn term, students in Year 7 to Year 11 had their opportunity to join volleyball clubs. In the spring term, the sports on offer are badminton and table tennis. These sports mirror the curriculum and provide an ideal opportunity for students to gain further practice. Students can play in their school uniform and places are provided on a first-come-first-serve basis. Despite providing this opportunity for 5 year groups to practice, and limited availability of facilities due to teaching clashes, all year groups have this opportunity on 5 out of their 10 lunchtimes over the 2 week timetable. The timetable for the coming term is provided in the table above.



Year 10 & Year 11 Enjoy a Night At The Theatre Royal

In November, sixty Key Stage Four students took the opportunity to visit The Theatre Royal to see J.B Priestley's 'An Inspector Calls'. The performance was well-timed, occurring only two days before the English Literature mock exams. For this reason, students arrived at the theatre, excited to see the performance and keen to learn more about how the play was staged.

The play is based in a fictional British town in 1912, and featured references to The Titanic and the approaching First World War. The play was based on the experiences of the middle-class Birling family and the lessons they were forced to learn about social responsibility as each family member was interrogated by Inspector Goole. Of course, Year 11 students were already familiar with the play, having studied it during the previous summer term. However, our Year 10 students were able to experience the story for the first time as it was performed, providing an engaging first impression.

It was fascinating to witness how the play was staged, based around one large Edwardian house which slowly opened up as the audience learned more about the Birling's secrets. The play ended with a literal bang as the house collapsed on stage... intentionally, of course!

It was a night full of proud moments for English teachers from St Benet Biscop, particularly as students left the theatre and one Year 11 decided to donate the remainder of the money she had brought for the night to a homeless person on Grey Street. It was clear that the play's message on

social responsibility had an impact on the students of St Benet Biscop.

Our students can access performances of An Inspector Calls and Macbeth by using Digital Theatre+. Every student can access digital performances through this website by using their school username and password.





Advent Preparations & Christmas

Christmas is such a joyful time of year. Everyone seems a little happier, which is probably due to endless supplies of chocolate, and the fact that the Christmas holidays are just around the corner. There is so much delicious food, the joys of Christmas films, the giving and receiving of presents, and precious time with friends and family. But often we get so caught up in the festivities that we forget why we are celebrating. *Therefore, during advent, we decided to focus on the true gifts that Christmas brings: Hope, peace, joy and love.*



Throughout the advent period, we came together as a school community to put together an advent prayer book. Each form class worked together to write a prayer based on hope, peace, joy or love. These prayers were used every week to help us pray for the true gifts of Christmas, alongside a virtual reflection every Monday. Our Year 7 chaplaincy club also worked very hard to make three advent wreaths that we used throughout Advent during various assemblies and reflection times.

We ended the Christmas term with a Christmas Liturgy for each year group. We had lots of wonderful students who

stepped up to read during our liturgy, as well as over 60 students who sang beautifully throughout, as part of our school choir.

Our liturgy explored how on that very first Christmas, God came down to earth in the form of a baby, and on that night, we were blessed with the gifts of hope, peace, joy and love. God gave us all these gifts so we can live a full life and be gifts to other people.

We are certain we have got some (much politer versions of) Gordon Ramsay and Nadiya Hussain in our midst!

Duke of Edinburgh Award at St Benet's



ST BENET BISCOP CATHOLIC ACADEMY



DofE is about helping students along the path to a productive and prosperous future. Achieving an award will give our students skills, confidence and an edge over others when they apply for college, university or a job. We currently offer the opportunity to complete the bronze award in school which means students are required to complete 4 sections independently. These are: volunteering, physical, skills and an expedition.

We currently have 30 students enrolled on the DofE programme, and they are due to complete their bronze award in July. It has allowed students to gain unique experiences in falconry, martial arts and coaching, as well as helping out their local community through cooking for neighbours, litter picking and volunteering to help the elderly on weekends at church

Cheerleaders Develop Their Skills!

Year 10 students have been working hard over the past few terms to develop their cheerleading abilities. Students have been working together as a team to hit various stunt sequences, practice their tumbling and dance routines to create the basis of a school cheerleading routine.

Whilst cheerleading is quite a physically demanding sport, students have persevered to ensure the successful completion of higher level skills, whilst ensuring the safety of all involved in the stunts. Well done Year 10!



THE SORCERER'S APPRENTICE



TERRIFIC TRIP TO THE THEATRE

As a Year 7 at St Benet Biscop, we had an amazing opportunity to visit the Northern Stage theatre in Newcastle, to watch a performance of *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*. The show was exciting, interesting and had many plot twists. Over 90% of Year 7 attended the trip, and everyone really enjoyed it. The actors were excellent, and they interacted with the audience, making it all the more fun to watch. Going to the theatre is always fun, but it was especially enjoyable being able to go with friends and with school.

Dalia Ramzi, Year 7



"School leaders have planned a curriculum which offers a broad range of subjects to give pupils a depth of understanding." (Ofsted, January 2023)

Year 11 Get A Taste Of Sixth Form Life At The Sixth Form Open Evening

The Sixth Form Open Evening that took place on Thursday 2nd February was a great success. It was amazing to witness a real buzz of excitement, as Year 11 students discussed their subject choices with teachers from each department and heard all about life in our Sixth Form. It was lovely to meet so many of our students looking forward to an exciting future and studying in our Sixth Form from September 2023, where they will be challenged to have high aspirations and become the best person they can be.

Our Year 12 and 13 students were excellent ambassadors for their subjects, where they offered advice and guidance and the benefit of their Sixth Form experiences to both parents/carers and students – a huge thank you to those students who gave up their time to volunteer on the evening.

Our Sixth Form Prospectus and Sixth Form Curriculum Booklet are now available to view via Microsoft Teams.

These materials can be located in your child's '2022 Careers and Wellbeing Y11' channel, in a folder called 'Sixth Form Entry September 2023'. This is in the 'Files' section of the channel. Alternatively, you can access the materials via a link in the 'Posts' section of the same channel.

We would encourage parents to spend a good amount of time with your child, reading through these documents so that your child has a good idea of the

subjects they would ideally like to take in Sixth Form. For those of you who were unable to attend the Sixth Form Open Evening, a copy of the presentation from the evening, can also be found on Teams. For prospective students who currently attend other schools, please email Mr Maughan, Head of Sixth Form at maughanp@stbb.org.uk for further information.

Footballers GO FROM Strength To Strength

Our under-14 and under-16 girls' football teams have both been involved in NSFA 7-side leagues. More fixtures are due to be played in March to conclude the leagues.

We look forward to sharing the outcome of these fixtures in our next newsletter.

Our under-13 team have begun their Malcolm Berry Cup fixtures. The girls won their last fixture with an emphatic 11-0 victory, in an away game to Tweedmouth, and the team are now through to the quarter-finals, which is due to be played in March. We look forward to watching them play at home, and sharing the outcome of the match in due course.

Although the under-15 team sadly lost their Merchant

Navy Cup match against St Thomas More, the team played really well and made the school proud, losing by only a close margin!

Selected to represent East Northumberland this year for girls football were the following students: Lily Williamson, Poppy Ruffle, Lucy Whalley, Evie Hall and Emily Bell. A brilliant achievement for all of these students. Well done!

CROSS COUNTRY SUCCESS!

Before Christmas, some of our students represented the school at the East Northumberland District Cross Country, and they all finished within the top 30 for their races! Both Faye Heatley and Freya Johnson finished first in their races, Niamh Adams finished 3rd and Daniel Craig finished 5th in his race.

All 4 students qualified to represent East Northumberland at the Northumberland Cross Country Championships in January. Again, students were successful in this competition and Faye, Niamh and Freya all qualified to represent Northumberland at the Inter-County Cross Country Championships.

Faye Heatley and Niamh Adams both competed in the championships at

the beginning of February and both ran fantastic races. Faye finished 32nd for her age group and Niamh finished 24th, and they have both qualified to represent Northumberland at the English Schools Championships in March, which in itself is a huge achievement! We wish them both all the luck in the world in this competition and cannot wait to hear how they get on.



“There is a climate of respect and tolerance.” (OFSTED, JANUARY 2023)

Y10 Football Success

The Year 10 boys' football team are continuing to have a great season so far in the Northumberland Schools County FA league. The boys have played 5 games and have won 4 (Berwick, KEVI, Duchess and Dukes) and drawn 1 (Cramlington) game. In total they have scored 17 goals and conceded only 3. The league format is split into 2 groups within Northumberland; St Benet Biscop are in group B and have won that group.

Our next game will be the league semi-final play-off against the team who finishes 2nd in group A.

Overall, an outstanding achievement so far, exceptional attitude, commitment and behaviour has been demonstrated from all of the squad. Good luck in the semi-final boys!





Sixth Form Reading Programme

As part of our extra-curricular activities that our Sixth Form can take part in, we have a cohort of Year 12 and 13 students who volunteer in registration time to listen to Year 7 students read aloud. After participating in a training session, the Sixth Form student is paired with a Year 7 student and they take the opportunity to read together, boosting the Year 7's confidence with reading and, hopefully, encouraging a genuine 'love of reading'. The reading takes place over Wednesday, Thursday and Friday registration time. Students find a quiet and comfortable place to read a book that has been selected by the Year 7 student. We recently conducted a survey with our Year 7 students who are participating in our Sixth Form Reading Mentor Programme. We thought we would share with you some of our Year 7 responses:

'I have learnt so many new words by reading my book'

'When I start to read I feel really happy because 1) the book is really good and 2) she [sixth former] always says I've done brilliant so that also gives me confidence and a boost to the start of my day'


'It helps me be more confident with reading out loud'

'I learnt new words. I learnt hard words and still got some wrong but I kept on trying and going'

I'm sure you'll agree with us that we are so proud of both our Sixth Formers who give up their time to support our students so successfully, as well as our Year 7 students who are growing in confidence and resilience as they continue with the reading programme.

**"Leaders
have created
opportunities for
reading to be at
the heart of the
curriculum."**

(Ofsted, January 2023)



Years 7, 8 & 9 Book Clubs

Over the last half term, Year 8 and Year 9 pupils have been immersed in some brilliant literature, exploring storylines and themes in a collection of fiction. The Key Stage 3 Book Club has involved interesting, interactive, and exciting discussions around a range of books and topics. Pupils have shared their love for reading through delving into stories, which have been selected for The North East Teenage Book Award.

The popular fiction books have inspired a discussion of topical issues, challenges and interesting themes and storylines. Pupils have met weekly and conversed about what they have enjoyed about the stories, and taken part in book style quizzes and activities. Moving forward, a vote will be taken for the favorite book out

of the collection, which will then be collated alongside other votes from schools across Newcastle.

Alongside the Year 8 and Year 9 Book Club, there has been a Year 7 Book Club. This club has enjoyed reading the moving Patrick Ness novel 'A Monster Calls'. They have read the novel together, and independently.

This club has explored the themes, the genre, as well as the film adaptations to explore the multi-modal version of the story. Year 7 have thoroughly enjoyed this friendly and welcoming space, and they have formed friendships through their love for reading



MANGA EXPERT

Visits St Benet's

Earlier this term, we were delighted to welcome Paul Gravett, a journalist and world leading authority on the Japanese comics, into school to deliver a presentation on the origins of Manga. The talk was open to students of all year groups who attend our weekly manga club, as well as Year 12 Media Studies students.



Paul offered a fascinating insight into how literature can be influenced and shaped by seemingly unassuming, external factors. Afterwards, students were then given the opportunity to have lunch with Paul and ask him any questions that they had about his inspirations, research processes or the genre of comics. Student feedback suggests that they found his visit incredibly interesting and informative, leaving them with a more detailed knowledge, love and understanding of a genre for which they were already passionate about.



YEAR 7 ENJOY DEBATE CLUB

During the past two terms, Year 7 have had the opportunity to participate in Debate Club. This has been an exciting opportunity for Year 7 to expand their listening and speaking skills and practise developing their ability to form arguments, an integral part of English lessons as they move up the school.

Last term, we practised our ability to build arguments about topics that year 7 were passionate about, such as "This house believes that aliens exist" and "Has Christmas become too commercialised?" Students were excited to practise British parliamentary debating skills, even if it was challenging at first to stay quiet and listen to someone who was arguing against you when they were speaking!

During the spring term, we have been acting out court cases with a judge and jury, exploring both fictional murder mysteries and real-life crime cases. Year 7 have loved playing lawyers and getting to be witnesses in the cases.

Daniel Ball, 7S, said that, "Debate Club is really enjoyable because we debate whether an innocent person is actually guilty and we find out who the imposter is in crime scenarios." Moving forward, we are exploring the possibility of taking part in debating competitions and Year 7 are excited to work towards this.



BRONNIE DELIVERS POWERFUL MENTAL HEALTH MESSAGE

Last term, we invited Bronnie to visit us. Bronnie is a pop rock artist from the north west. She has gained extensive touring experience around the UK, Europe and the USA supporting a number of high-profile acts such as Avril Lavigne and Little Mix.

Bronnie engaged with Key Stage 3 and 4 beginning with a performance, presentation and finally a question and answer session. Bronnie's presentation and Q&A session discussed mental health, and she shared her own mental health challenges, and her coping mechanisms. Bronnie discussed the importance of speaking up, and reminded our students of the various people they can reach out to, if they need to.

Bronnie talked about the stresses during the pandemic, she about loss, and about how we can better handle things that are unpredictable and hard to manage. Bronnie linked mental health to body image and discussed how this has become a real issue for the younger generations because of pressures that can be caused by social media. Bronnie expressed the importance of treating each other fairly, why diversity should be celebrated and what to do if you're being discriminated against. This was a high energy day and the main hall at times resembled a pop concert!

We are grateful to Bronnie for her work with our students, and we hope to welcome her back to St Benet's again soon.

"Pupils say that they feel safe in school and they know who to approach if they need help or support. The curriculum that pupils learn helps them to understand risks and how to stay safe." (Ofsted, January 2023)

REMEMBRANCE DAY

In the days leading up to Remembrance Day, all students at St Benet Biscop spent time with their tutor group, where they created paper poppies and wrote beautiful prayers for all those impacted by war. These poppies were used to create wreaths that were placed nearly every door in school. The colour red flowed up and down every corridor, helping us remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

On the 11th of November a remembrance service was held in the school chapel, where two representatives from every form respectfully placed a prayer poppy on the tree. This tree was flooded with red poppies and prayers for the fallen. Michael Elliot, a Year 10 student, played the last post for our service.

The rest of the school watched a virtual reflection about the importance of Remembrance Day, and the selfless sacrifices that were made during WW1 and WW2. The assembly also included a powerful recording of Michael Elliot playing the last post. This then led into a two-minute silence that fell across the school at 11am, to honour and remember those who fought for us.





Bah Humbug!

Students Get A Flavour Of Victorianism

On Wednesday 21 December, sixty of our Year 10 students spent the day at Beamish trying to convince Victorian teachers, solicitors and shopkeepers to donate money to the poor and what a challenge it was!

As part of an immersive experience Bah Humbug!, based on Charles Dickens's Christmas classic, A Christmas Carol, students (in the role of the Charity Workers) were sent on a mission to persuade five local businesses to donate money. As part of the experience, it was reported that a poor, homeless man had been found frozen to death at the Beamish bandstand after being forced to spend the night out in the cold, rather than going to a local workhouse.

Our students had to build their contextual knowledge of the Victorian Poor in order to put forward an argument for supporting the poor in their time of need. They used their current reading of A Christmas Carol, alongside the historical context they had been taught in English lessons to full effect: the solicitor (in the guise of a certain Scrooge) was a particular tough nut to crack – even one groups attempts at persuading with Christmas carols was to no avail.

All of the Beamish staff commented on our students' determination, persistence and persuasive powers – all wrapped up in impeccable behaviour. Some of our Year 10 students even delighted crowds with a chorus of Away in a Manger, accompanying the Salvation Army Brass Band on the bandstand. Of course, there was also a little time left to enjoy the sweetshop, bakery, chip shop and merry-go-round too!



A Busy Year So Far In **LEARNING SUPPORT**

It has been a busy time in learning support as we have welcomed new staff to our team, started moving forward with our developments of the learning support area within school and begun delivering a range of new interventions within the department

SPOTLIGHT ON INTERVENTION

One of the new interventions that we have introduced this year in learning support is academic mentoring for some of our SEN Year 11 students. The weekly small group interventions are run by two members of the learning support team and are focused on successful preparation for adulthood. So far this year students have considered their future selves, effective revision strategies, preparation for the world of work and CV writing, and students are now focused on core subject intervention ahead of the upcoming mock exams. One Year 11 student said "I am really pleased with my interventions. They have helped me go in the right direction with my core subjects and I feel like they will ultimately help me pass my exams."

A NEW LOOK LEARNING SUPPORT AREA

A revamp of the current learning support area in St Aidan's is underway and should be completed over the next term. The learning support area will be a multi-purpose space for students to access personalised interventions, small group sessions, therapy, supported study and homework sessions as well as our existing lunch club. We will also be building a sensory area for students to access. We look forward to sharing some updated images in the next newsletter with parents.

NEW STAFF

We have welcomed two new members of staff to our learning support team in the last term.

Miss Morgan and Miss Gray have joined us providing support to students in lessons and also in small group and 1:1 interventions. Miss Morgan shared:

"Hello I'm Miss Morgan. I'm new to the learning support team here at St Benet Biscop's. I've really enjoyed my time here so far, becoming part of such an important team within our school and getting to know our great community of staff and children has felt like a privilege. Contributing to the support for our SEN children, getting to know them as individuals and knowing it's making a difference to their future is really rewarding."

Dr Watts and Miss Hamilton.

"There is a strong sense of community at St Benet Biscop Catholic Academy." (Ofsted, January 2023)

SCHOOL MASS

This term we have been inviting the local clergy into school to celebrate mass for our Year 7 form classes in the Chapel.

This has been a wonderful opportunity for our students to spend time with God and receive his Grace through the Body and Blood of Christ.

In time we hope to invite parents/guardians and parishioners to mass as well.

SENIOR CITIZENS' OUTREACH PARCELS

Following some wonderful feedback from the recipients of our Senior Citizens' Christmas and Easter outreach parcels last year, once again we sent out Christmas outreach parcels.

These parcels included the advent prayer book written by our students, a letter written by many different students, a Christmas card (designed by Year 10 student, Lily Miller), which was a beautiful depiction of the holy family: Mary, Joseph and Jesus.

Theses things were sent out to over 120 senior citizens, alongside other Christmas surprises.

SIXTH FORM

BACK TO CERN

Our annual(ish) trip to CERN got off to an inauspicious start in December when, having all been woken up by alarms at about 3.00 in the morning for our early flights, before we'd even left Newcastle we found out that our onward flight from Heathrow to Geneva had been cancelled and we were facing rather a long day in the country's biggest airport! Eventually arriving in Geneva in the early evening, we had unfortunately missed our visits to both the home of the United Nations and to watch Geneva play ice hockey. A little silver lining was a delicious meal at the Holy Cow Burger Company and a moonlit stroll around Lake Geneva.



The following morning we visited the History of Science museum, which is full of artefacts and trinkets from the last few hundred years of science experimentation which is absolutely fascinating, but the highlight for most people is the two giant parabolic mirrors that overlook the lake and allow you to whisper quietly by one of them and talk to someone else by the other one forty metres away. We then took the ferry across the lake caught the tram out to CERN for an afternoon of cutting edge science.

As ever, our guide was brilliant, taking the students through the world of particles, accelerators and colliders in equal measurements of explanation and humour. I was delighted with the number of questions our students asked as they were all, even the non-physicists, enthused by everything they saw. The visit finished with a short video about the Big Bang and the first few seconds of the universe.

That evening we went out to Restaurant Les Armures, one of the best restaurants in the old town in Geneva, for our traditional Swiss meal - fondue. And what a meal, giant pots of cheese and an endless supply of bread to dip, and giant pots of stock with an endless supply of meat. Don't tell anyone, but I think this trumps the Physics as my favourite part of the trip... On the way home, we were treated to the celebrations of Switzerland qualifying for the last 16 of the World Cup. This was quite a joy to behold as every car that passed us had people hanging out of the

window with flags, horns blaring and lots of singing. Not a hint of unrest anywhere, just everyone enjoying the moment.

Saturday came around and we went to visit the Jet d'Eau which launches a jet (unsurprisingly) of water 140 m into the air at a maximum speed of 200 km/h. We then visited the St Pierre Cathedral in the old town which is almost 900 years old and gives amazing views across Geneva and its surroundings from the top of its towers. We also got to enjoy the Fete de l'Escalade that weekend where, a local told us, "The Swiss beat the French at everything!" An Italian meal and an evening of ten pin bowling completed our Saturday entertainment.

On Sunday we visited the History of the Red Cross museum which is a fascinating, and heart-wrenching, look back through the history of human rights and humanitarian crises. We then walked up to the

observation point of where the rivers Rhone and Arve meet to see how the different speeds of the rivers manifests itself as them being different colours as they flow side by side as one river. A visit to the Museum of Ethnographie, which tracks world culture through the ages finished off our trip, although there was time for a late lunch in the Christmas Market by Lake Geneva, where one of the offerings was a fondue baguette, have I mentioned that I like fondue?

Unbelievably, we still had time for one more delayed flight as this time someone checked in at Heathrow with their bag but then decided not to get on the plane so then we had to wait for the case to be removed. When we finally said goodbye at Newcastle Airport, we'd been together for 92 hours out of the maximum possible 96 for a four-day trip. Definitely Swiss efficiency.

Mr Maccoy



YEAR 11 & YEAR 13 LEARN ABOUT LOCAL INDUSTRY

In January, Year 11 and Year 13 met with a range of visitors from our local renewables industries when they visited our school. This included a welcome and industry insight from Paul Parry, from Port Training Service. Paul explained about the development and exponential growth of the renewable energy off the coast of south east Northumberland. Paul explained the variety of routes students can follow within STEM careers and also the supporting professional services that will underpin the growth of the renewables industry in our local area.

Paul was joined by Steve Rutland from Energy Central. Steve shared with students the exciting developments of Energy Central. Energy Central, situated in Blyth, Northumberland, is the UK's unique port-based service, investment and growth cluster for companies operating in the offshore energy, subsea, decommissioning, battery manufacturing and renewable energy markets. This is an area of our local labour market which can offer our students a wealth of career opportunities in a variety of industries.

Energy Central is a partnership between Advance Northumberland, Port of Blyth, Northumberland County Council and the Offshore Renewable Energy (ORE) Catapult. Following on from this insightful talk, students explored routes into industry including the local T-levels offer.



PREPARING FOR A SAFER FUTURE

Throughout this academic year, Northumbria Police Violence Reduction Unit have worked with students in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. During their session, Year 7 students explored the topic of malicious communications whilst online.

Within this session students were encouraged to consider the impact and consequences of sending and receiving messages, texts and posts on social media. Year 7 were encouraged to discuss how unkind, inappropriate and offensive messages can impact on both the sender and the recipient. In addition, they considered the laws in relation to online behaviours and they explored some real-life examples, where these laws have been applied. Year 7 were made aware of the potential impact a criminal record can have on a person's life and their future. The session explored the issue of sexting and intimate image abuse, coercion of young people into sending or distributing nude or semi-nude

photos and the repercussions of this.

The Year 8 session made students consider the impact and consequences of knife crime. Their session included discussion around the law of joint enterprise and the effect of knife crime on perpetrators, families and communities. Year 8 had the opportunity to ask questions and dispel myths around the subject of knife crime.

Our Year 9 classes engaged in three specific workshops exploring drugs, alcohol and vulnerability. Year 9 explored the effect of substance use, they gained knowledge of the law around substance abuse, and drugs. During the alcohol session,

Year 9 explored why young people drink alcohol, the law regarding alcohol and the risks of binge drinking. The final session of three with Year 9, considered safety and vulnerability, and how a person can be vulnerable, as well as where we may see a vulnerable person.

Year 10 worked with the VRU to explore child criminal exploitation by organised crime groups, and this included county lines. The session encouraged Year 10 to discuss how young people might be exploited. Students learnt about how to recognise signs of being exploited, and what they should do if they felt they – or their anyone they knew – was being exploited.

Lorissa Goes Above And Beyond In Geography

As part of the homework tasks set for students in Year 7 Geography, one of the tasks was to create a 3D model to show how relief can be shown on maps as contour lines and spot heights. Lorissa Louis created this fabulous model to show a coastal landscape. Excellent work Lorissa!



Chaplaincy **CLUBS**

On a Monday and Tuesday lunch time, we have a flourishing Chaplaincy club, where we have about 35 Year 7 and Y11 students, and on Wednesday lunchtime we have about 20 Year 8 and 9 students. The aim of this club is to help to build the Kingdom of God on Earth. The club is in place to encourage young people to serve others in school and their local parish, and to take that service into their wider community.

These students also take pride in raising awareness in school about charities close to our heart, as well as planning lots of exciting fundraisers for those charities. We raised over £200 for CAFOD, before Christmas. This term our Year 7 and Year 11 chaplaincy team baked lots of delicious cakes that were sold in a cake sale that raised about £150 for Cancer Research and CAFOD.

CAREERS WEEK TRIP TO NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY

Sixty of our Year 12 students took a trip into Newcastle University in January to attend an on-campus visit day.

Students were welcomed to the university by Ollie, who entertained them with a Future Options presentation to get them thinking about their post-18 options, with an overview of various pathways, including apprenticeships, university, employment and gap years. Students were then taken on a campus tour led by the university's Student Ambassadors. This was followed by a presentation in the afternoon on 'Careers After Uni', which explored the wide range of careers that their students embark upon after completing their degrees, and they were introduced to some graduate case studies.

The day ended with a presentation on the Partners Scheme which a lot of our students have benefited from in the past when applying to Newcastle University. The students were a credit to the school and the organisers from the university commented on how well they engaged with the activities. When surveyed after the visit, over 70% of the students said they were more inclined to apply to university after attending the university!

HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR

In October we were lucky to have a Holocaust survivor come to school to talk to year 9 students who had been learning about the persecution of the Jews in their political factor's unit focusing on Dictators. Gabriele Keenaghan's father disappeared after Kristallnacht and is believed to have perished in the camps. Here, one of our year 9 students, Ruby Reavill talks about the meeting.

'We had the wonderful opportunity to listen to the experiences of Holocaust survivor, Gabrielle Weiss. Gabrielle was 12 when the Nazis marched into and occupied Austria. She was lucky enough to be one of the 10,000 children able to go on the Kindertransport to Britain. There she became a teacher after the war and is now sharing her interesting stories with us.

From Gabrielle's first-hand experiences I truly realised how important it was that this history should never be repeated and that we are truly fortunate to be living in a time where we are free from oppression in our day to day lives.

I feel so grateful that Gabrielle was lucky enough to survive so that she could share her personal experience with us. I enjoyed listening to her speak and having to hear everything that she had to say as it was interesting listening to someone who had actually been through it before and not just through information.

I'm genuinely still overjoyed to have been welcomed to join in this once in a lifetime opportunity which taught me many important lessons. I hope everyone gets to talk to Gabrielle at least once. Truly an incredible person.'

Safer Internet Day

Tuesday 7th February was Safer Internet Day. Throughout the week all KS3 students were reminded how to keep safe online. This year the strap line was 'Together for a Better Internet'.

Students learnt about online risks, the dangers of sexting, fake friends, cyberbullying and how to seek support if they felt affected by any of these.

A great website for parents and carers is The UK Safer Internet Centre.



Top Tips for Parents and Carers:

These top tips have been written for parents and carers to help you support your child to stay safe and happy online

- **Make space for regular conversations about life online**
Talk openly and frequently about what you are doing online and encourage your child to do the same. Talk about the positive experiences you can have online, share what you have done when you have come across content you did not want to, and how you dealt with the situation.
- **Make space for enjoying and exploring the online world together!**
Play games, watch videos, and express an interest in your child's online life. Celebrate all the opportunities that technology has to offer, and show them what a great space the internet can be when used responsibly.
- **Make space for working as a family to agree expectations for going online**
Talk to your family about the role technology plays in your lives. Establish rules and expectations that encourage meaningful use of technology, in the same way you set boundaries in other areas of your children's lives. It's important to review these regularly and adapt them for each member of your family.
- **Make space for learning about the apps, games and websites your child is using**
There are lots of tools and guides to support you with keeping your child safe on whatever apps, games and websites they are using. Research age ratings, privacy settings, and safety features (like the block and report button) so that you are best placed to help your child should anything go wrong.
- **Make space for supporting and reassuring your child if things go wrong**
Remind your child they can talk to you about anything. If something goes wrong, listen and respond with reassurance and kindness and stay calm. Work with your child to find solutions to the problem, perhaps by using the block and report tools or seeking advice from your child's school.

SIXTH FORM STUDENTS PREPARE FOR NEXT STEPS

"Staff encourage students in the sixth form to be mature and independent learners"
(Ofsted, January 2023)

Students in Year 12 and 13 are midway through an incredibly busy year and many of our Year 11 students are looking forward to study in our Sixth Form from September 2023.

YEAR 13 are preparing themselves for the final approach to their A-level exams in May and have a series of mock exams at the start of March to help prepare them for those final exams.

A significant number of students have already received excellent offers from some of the top universities in the UK, including Oxford, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Newcastle, York, Birmingham, Leeds, Bristol, Manchester, Kings College, London and Queen's University, Belfast. Applications continue to cover a wide range of courses including Medicine, Biochemistry, Sports Science, Business Management, Economics, Mathematics, Accountancy, Acting, Film, Radiography, Psychology and Optometry to name but a few. For those students who are thinking of applying for apprenticeships and degree apprenticeships, National Apprenticeship Week, gave them a real insight into the application process and the range of opportunities that are available to them. On Thursday 16th February, Sam Richardson spoke to all Year 13 students about apprenticeships and degree apprenticeships and in particular those that are available through Nexus, the company that he is currently completing a degree apprenticeship with. The very best of luck to our Year 13 students in their final preparations for their mock exams and their final exams in the summer.

YEAR 12 have been heavily involved in planning their next steps for life after Sixth Form, visiting Northumbria University and attending workshops dedicated to careers and personal development. In the summer term Year 12 students will have the opportunity to attend university open days, the UCAS Discovery Exhibition at the Utilita Arena and the UK University and Apprenticeship Careers Fair at St. James' Park. Students will have the opportunity to discuss university courses and apprenticeships with a variety of institutions and apprenticeship providers, as well as having experience of workshops including 'Writing Personal Statements', 'Student Accommodation' and 'Student Finance'. A selection of our highest performing students will be engaged in an Oxbridge Programme, where over the coming months they will have the opportunity to find out more information about what it would be like to study at Oxford or Cambridge University.

YEAR 13 FINE ART A LEVEL EXAM PROJECT: *'Simple and/or Complex'*

'Our Year 13 Fine Art students were introduced to the exam project on 3rd February 2023. They work through a similar 'Creative Process' as our Year 11 students, but they work at a more intense pace, as they work in a shorter time period, yet spend more time on the project and produce more work, which is more in depth and larger in scale than at GCSE.

They have also made a great start to researching and investigating their A level Art Exam project. The title for the exam project is 'Simple and/or Complex', and it was set by the Edexcel exam board. During the exam project students work to demonstrate the depth and breadth of their knowledge, understanding and skills in drawing, observation, artist analysis, design, the visual elements, the principles of design, materials, techniques and processes, and the Creative Process. They must work in 'drawing' but may choose one of the following disciplines to focus on for the exam project – painting, printmaking or sculpture.

At A level students work in a more independent manner and are expected to take more ownership over the development of their own work and to drive their project forward with determination and motivation. In response to the exam theme, each student decided what the theme of 'Simple and/or Complex' meant to them and used their own understanding of the project theme to inspire their project ideas. They are currently working on 'preparatory work', exploring the exam theme through the following 'Research and Investigation' tasks:

VISUAL RESEARCH:

- **Mind maps,**
- **Observational drawings, paintings, mono prints and photographs**
- **Secondary source montages**
- **Artist Analysis and Colour Studies.**

After half term they will progress onto 'Experimentation, Exploration and Imagination' tasks by designing and creating images and compositions from their visual research, we call this 'Compositional Developments'. They will experiment with the images and compositions they create from their Visual Research, working in their chosen materials, techniques, colour schemes and the visual elements, whilst also exploring the style in which their chosen artist works.

They are working towards the final 15-hour exam, which is run over 3 days at the start of May, in which they will produce a final piece or pieces for their exam project. This will be the culmination of their project ideas and will, alongside their preparatory exam work, demonstrate the depth and breath of their knowledge, understanding and skills at A level in Fine Art.

St Benet's Annual Musical Returns!

After an absence of 3 years, the annual St Benet Biscop school production has returned with a bang!

Auditions began in September for the production of *The Addams Family* with an unprecedented amount of enthusiasm and excitement which led to our largest cast ever of over 70 students, including our stage hands who work backstage.

The last 6 months have really shown the commitment of our fantastic cast. Students have rehearsed at least 3 times a week since September and more recently every day including weekends. We even had Kacie Burke in Year 10 shave all of her hair off to play the role of Uncle Fester. Mrs Anderson possibly has a new budding career in hairdressing!

The show was performed in front of a packed house each and every night and received rave reviews from audiences. Local Primary schools were lucky enough to be the first to see the show during our matinee performance and thoroughly enjoyed it. With a full 9-piece professional band and one of the best sound and lighting companies in the North East operating the sound and lighting, it really was spectacular. The set was built by our new DT technician Mr Phillips who is exceptionally talented, he even made our prosthetic hand for the character 'Thing'.

*The cast, crew and staff all deserve a massive thank you for making *The Addams Family* our best production yet!*









AIR CADETS Recruit Students IN YEAR 8

In October, air cadets from the RAF 2522 Bedlington Squadron visited school to promote and engage Year 8 in the air cadet experience. Not only did these past and present St Benet Biscop air cadet students deliver an assembly on being an air cadet, they also helped deliver Year 8 PE lessons! During these lessons Flight Sergeant Adam Elliott explained in brief the principles of air experience flying, and during this demonstration Flight Sergeant Elliott got students to try on equipment and engage in a question and answer session on flying. Corporal Leah Clouth took students through physical activities that demonstrated the levels of discipline required by cadets whilst on parade. Whilst Leah had Year 8 on parade, she used various forms of humour in attempt to distract students from their duties!

Following this, cadet Chakris Hills explained the equipment needed for a Duke of Edinburgh expedition and a field craft kitchen. During this session students were given the opportunity to handle the kit, setting the equipment up as if they would do, on an expedition. Cadet Gracie Stubbs demonstrated the basics of CPR and first aid, allowing Year 8 the opportunity to try CPR on a demonstration doll.

Finally, Corporal James Thompson led Year 8 students in an exercise that tested their ability to work as a team towards a common goal, with an aim to improve both confidence and teamwork. We were so impressed by the leadership skills of our local squadron air cadets that we will be inviting the squadron to carry out



the same sessions with Year 8 in the next academic year. The event not only developed students' understanding of local opportunities available to them, but has also

generated more air cadets from St Benet Biscop Catholic Academy, who may even be leading other sessions next year!



Halloween *Storytelling*

Some of our top readers in Year 7 were treated to a 'spooktacular' experience for Halloween. After pizza and cake at lunchtime, they were told fireside haunting stories by a troupe of ghoulish teachers and sixth form students. The Drama studio was transformed into a dark and sinister setting to add to the experience (luckily a bag of sweets was also at hand to calm the nerves)! Our students thoroughly enjoyed themselves as you can see from their comments below:

"I enjoyed the stories thank you for giving up your time to entertain us"

"It was fantastic! I loved listening to the scary stories"

"The creepy stories were all very good and I have enjoyed it very much"

"I liked listening to the stories and especially when the sixth form crept around us"

"I enjoyed the suspense and screams, scares and thuds of the stories"

"I loved the stories and enjoyed the whole thing"



YEAR 7 RETREAT DAY

On the last day of the October half term, we decided to give our Year 7 students the opportunity to step back from every day school life, and have the chance to bond with their form class, while reflecting on their faith.

The retreat theme was guided by the Gospel account of the risen Jesus meeting the disciples on the "Road to Emmaus". We explored how Jesus meets us in the midst of our lives and desires to walk and talk alongside us. We might sometimes struggle to see Christ alive in our world, but we can recognise God's love through the love of others, through creation, through stories of people around

the world and through prayer. Jesus sees us for all that we are and loves us completely. He has equipped us with gifts and talents and sends us to share hope, light and love in our communities and with all we meet.

There were workshops throughout the day that helped delve deeper into the theme of the retreat in fun and exciting ways. There were opportunities for arts and

crafts, music, quizzes, sports, team building and reflection time.

This was a really fun day, but an important one too as our Year 7 students were adjusting to their new school. It was a day that helped them to consider their beliefs, but also to forge new friendships, and it allowed them the opportunity to get to know their new teachers.



YEAR 12 PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT DAYS WITH NCS



In January, the National Citizenship Service came in to school to work with Year 12. NCS programmes are designed especially for 16 and 17 year olds. The NCS experience exists to engage, unite and empower young people, building confidence so young people can go into the world and achieve their dreams.



All of Year 12 took the time out from lessons to explore their potential employability, engaging in a session based on CV writing, and helping preparation for future applications. This was followed by exploring public speaking skills, and when students might need their public speaking skills, including speaking

at a wedding! During this session students considered their posture, hand gestures, eye contact, tone of voice, pitch and facial expressions.

Students spent time with NCS learning about finances, and money management. Students learnt about financial terms, their meanings and they looked at budgeting skills

including ways in which they can better manage your money.

During the days Year 12 completed team building sessions and intense physical workouts using cycles of hi intensity interval training. The whole of Year 12 were amazing, engaging in all activities with great enthusiasm and commitment.



"... the curriculum at key stage 3 gives pupils a rich experience..."
(Ofsted, January 2023)

Harvest & Christmas Collection

Like previous years, during harvest time, we were once again bowled over by the generosity of our students and their families, despite living through such an uncertain time. We received huge amounts of food donations for the Matthew Project, which is an organisation that provides emergency food relief to people living in our local communities. Our Chaplaincy young leaders worked tirelessly through their breaktimes, to sort and pack all the donations. The Matthew Project told us that because of our school collection, countless families would now be able to survive during these cold months.



Christmas means lots of things throughout the world. For many, it is a wonderful time of year, filled with joy, hope and love, and where we celebrate the Birth of Jesus. However, for some it can be a time of isolation, loneliness and a financial strain. This is why our school community decided to come together again and collect for those in need. Our Christmas collection is still in progress, but we hope to have a chapel full of food

donations to send to the Matthew Project once again.

better manage your money. During the days Year 12 completed team building sessions and intense physical workouts using cycles of hi intensity interval training. The whole of Year 12 were amazing, engaging in all activities with great enthusiasm and commitment.

Practically Perfect Chemists!



In December, our Year 13 Chemistry students returned to Newcastle University's labs once more to complete their organic chemistry practical work.

The students nitrated methyl benzoate, an ester that has the scent of wintergreen, eucalyptus and mint. The students learned a number of new skills including filtration under reduced pressure and purification of their solid product using recrystallisation.

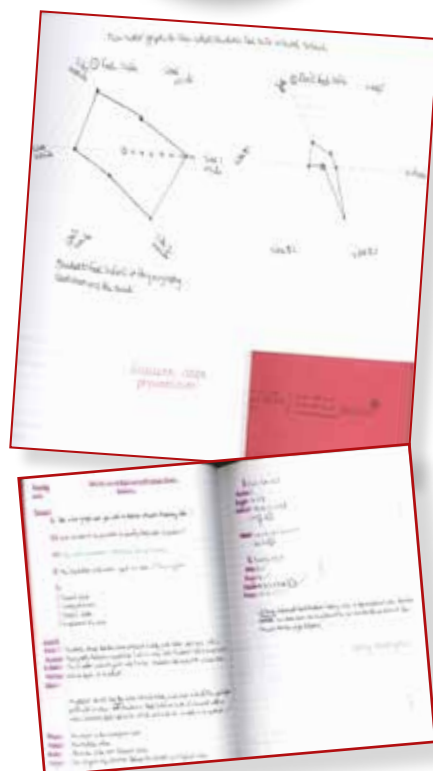
In the afternoon, they were able to run an IR spectrum of their product to analyse what they had made. This was a great opportunity for the students to experience working in an undergraduate lab in the university and using state of the art equipment, not commonly found in schools.

YEAR 7 CONDUCT GEOGRAPHY FIELDWORK

Year 7 Geography students carried out an independent geographical enquiry around the school site recently, whilst studying their 'Sense of Place' curriculum. This fieldwork focused on how students feel in different areas of school, and how this may be directly linked to the different environments they experience.

During this study, Year 7 students planned their investigation and collected results around the school site, which they then later reviewed and discussed. This fieldwork involved students writing hypotheses to either prove or disprove within their investigation. They carried out risk assessments, created methods, conducted the field research, created results tables, completed data analysis and wrote an overall conclusion.

This work was a rather demanding geographical topic, and our students embraced this opportunity, and rose to the challenge brilliantly. Students were able to confidently explore the sense of place they experience around school, making suggestions about to how better the school environment for future students. This fieldwork opportunity has provided year 7 students with invaluable knowledge and skills, that will not only benefit them in future geographical study, but also their wider studies.



AUTHOR VISITS

St Benet Biscop

On Friday 4th November, we welcomed author Dan Smith into school for the second time, to work with our Year 7 and 8 students on specific aspects of writing and storytelling, as well as sharing his own stories and inspirations.

Dan has written and published several novels including 'My Friend the Enemy', 'My Brother's Secret', 'Big Game' (the screenplay of which became a film starring Samuel L Jackson) and the multi-award winning 'Boy X'.



During the year 8 workshops, Dan encouraged our students to produce their own pieces of creative writing based on a stimulus of a haunted house. Dan worked with our students during the group planning process, sharing his methods that he uses when writing his own stories to generate ideas. Our students were then given ten minutes to write their own opening to a gothic fiction story.

The standard of work produced was absolutely brilliant and it was an immensely difficult task to choose just three of

the best pieces to receive awards for literature. However, after much deliberation, we were thrilled to award prizes of a signed Dan Smith novel to Grace Broad (8S), Joshua Lawson (8H) and Eleanor Kew (8B).

After reading through the entries, Mr McKeating had this to say:

"These pieces of creative writing are fantastic examples of the gothic genre. The use of traditional gothic elements, like the isolated settings, the first-person narrator, and the eerie backdrop of the stormy,

misty weather, are really, really effective. Some of the language choices also really capture brilliantly the feelings of tension and unease.

I love reading our students' creative work, like this. It shows what powerful and creative minds they have and, as an English teacher, it fills me with hope that one day the names Broad, Kew and Lawson might adorn the shelves at Waterstones. To have produced such brilliant pieces in such a short time, is nothing short of remarkable."



LESSONS FROM AUSCHWITZ

In July 2022, myself and Lucy were selected by Mr. Shepherd to participate in the Lessons From Auschwitz project, which is run by the Holocaust Memorial Trust. In this project, we first attended online seminars, giving us extra knowledge on the Holocaust, and looking at individual lives of people affected by the Holocaust.

Then, in November 2022, we went to Krakow, Poland. We visited a town in Poland that had been inhabited by a Jewish community at the time of the Holocaust. We learned more about the Jewish culture through a museum about Jewish life and a Rabbi who told us about the Jewish faith, which allowed us to appreciate the culture that had been lost due to the Holocaust.

We then visited Auschwitz 1 and Auschwitz-Birkenau, two concentration camps involved in the Holocaust. Our visits allowed us to learn about the role of these two camps in the Holocaust. One main aim of the Trust is to teach about the individual stories. So, throughout the guided tour, our guide read passages from first hand experiences of individuals that experienced the camps. We then took part in a ceremony for all the people affected by the Holocaust, where I read a poem from a Jewish boy that had died in the Holocaust.

In the seminar afterwards, we learnt more about the individual stories of the Holocaust survivors, from hearing a Holocaust survivor talk about his experience as a boy in a concentration camp. We then were able to ask questions about his experience in the Holocaust, which was insightful into different experiences of the people affected by the Holocaust.

As part of the project, we had the opportunity to educate people about the Holocaust. To do this we taught a year 9 history class about our experience in the project, and taught them about individual stories of the Holocaust. We also educated them on why it is important to teach about the Holocaust today. We then asked them to do research on an individual story and make a fact file, which will be displayed in school to educate others about the Holocaust.

The Lessons From Auschwitz project was a memorable experience that influenced the way that we think about the Holocaust. It has made us think more about the individual lives of those affected. We now have an understanding of the events of the Holocaust that we hadn't had before. We now also understand the effects of the Holocaust as losing the Jewish culture, and from this understand why it is so important to educate about it today.

Eloise Marcon, Sixth Form Student

YEAR 7 ENJOY Horrible Histories Club

The Year 7 Horrible Histories Club has been running since September and we have been looking at History in a different lens, taking part in different activities. These have included so far:

- SONGS • PUZZLES • GAMES • BOOKS • TV SPECIALS

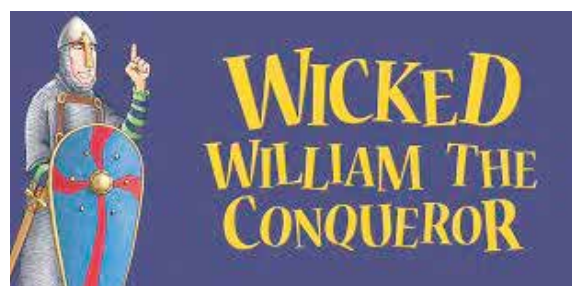
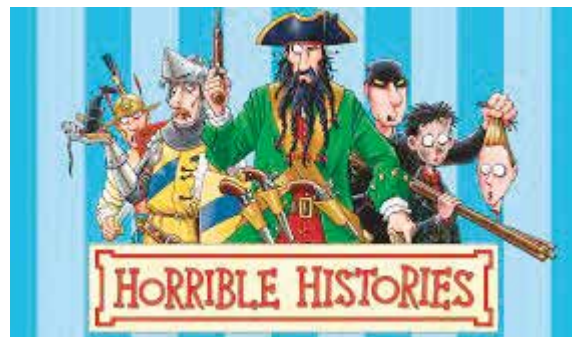
In the first week we ran 'Who has the H Factor'. We watched a selection of songs and voted on the greatest one. Unfortunately, Mr Hatcher's favourite of the RAF Fighter Pilots was voted out but the winner was ...

Charles II: King of Bling.

This then shaped the sessions to come and what students watched. Mark Walker and Mason Hogg have been working hard on a puzzle over a number of sessions and Arron Wallace and Tyler Coxon have been playing the Horrible Histories board game improving their knowledge while remaining competitive!

Recently students have taken their in-class curriculum further by watching a special on Wicked William the Conqueror, as well as singing the song several times.

Horrible Histories Club is on every 2 weeks, on a Monday Week B lunch time. Anyone in Year 7 is welcome. Come and explore History in a different way!



YEAR 7 MATHS CLUB

Year 7 Maths Club runs every Friday lunch time in St Aidan's computer rooms. This is a popular club which has seen more than 50 Year 7 students attend! During Maths Club students choose an activity from a variety of challenges and games which are all maths related.

Some students tackle extra challenging maths problems in preparation for UKMT maths challenges. Students are also able to use computers to do maths on our online platforms such as Sparx, 10ticks.com and Hegarty Maths. We also have some Year 11 students who come along to help out with Maths Club as it has been so popular.



"There is a climate of respect and tolerance"
(Ofsted, January 2023)



YEAR 8 STUDENTS IMPRESS With Great History Homework

Year 8 History students have impressed their teachers recently with the great effort they have put into their homework. Students have the option of homework tasks in History. Students have recently impressed their History teachers by making sure that their work is carefully created, and historically, factually accurate. Students have recently been learning about slavery, in the Economic theme of the curriculum. Every week, the department display great pieces of homework on the walls in classrooms, to celebrate the great work of our students. Here is a small sample of some great homework from our Year 8 students.

ANTI-SLAVE GROUP SAYS SLAVERY SHOULD STOP NOW!

Many people are now joining the anti-slave group and doing things to do about it but who was one of the first to do so? We spoke to one of the first to do so and he is a member of parliament William Wilberforce and this is what he has to say. "Hi guys, I just wanted to say that everyone should come and support the anti-slave group as slavery is wrong. Come join us as we need all the help that we can get to try and stop slavery." And that was one of the most influential anti-slave people and here is another Olaudah Equiano and let's see what he has to say, he is currently putting on a presentation about how we can stop slavery and is talking about the horrors of the slave ships. Not many people believe that the Americans were treating the slaves like animals and dehumanizing them. Then he shows them his shackles marks and now everybody believes everything he says. After the presentation we manage to look to him and he says to us "Hi, how may I help you? Are you after the anti-slave answers because I can give you them. I am managing to convince people of the horrors of the slave ships and slavery through my book the interesting narrative and my marks on my arms and legs to prove what they did to me and many other people like me."

Thomas Wilson

Today's 1833 and more and more people... are joining the anti-slave committee and this is pushing the members of parliament to officially ban slavery in the UK. The plantation owners want something out of it as it is heard that they are going to get £17 million for the loss of slaves across the British Empire.

We can hear the people behind us singing and chanting "WE WANT SLAVERY OUT, WE WANT SLAVERY OUT..."

ANTI-SLAVERY

WE ARE ALL PEOPLE

JUSTICE

Yuen Ming

RIGHTS

Don't be afraid to speak up against the suffered as all have a right to voice their opinions.

SUPPORT THE Abolition!

Julienne Telome

Why you should!

So please support us ending slavery

Chef's special

- Design a poster for the Society for the abolition of the slave trade trying to persuade people to support the abolition (end) of slavery
- Create a timeline of the Transatlantic slave trade. Include Key dates, events and people form the beginning of the trade until the abolition (end).
- Create a newspaper front cover about why the Slave trade should end. It should explain why Slavery should end and include interviews with key people in the anti-slavery movement and former slaves.

"Lessons proceed calmly, and pupils engage well with their learning."
(Ofsted, January 2023)

ABOLITION NEWS

Is That The End Of Slavery individuals (iconic)

Olaudah Equiano... Gained freedom after being a slave since the age of eleven, he and his sister were kidnapped. Now he travels to abolish slavery.

Thomas Clarkson... an English Abolitionist and a leading campaigner

William Wilberforce... A British politician who yearly gave parliament on abolition. All he worked alongside Thomas Clarkson and ended slavery.

Keira Richardson

Many Women and children have been beaten, whipped and ripped away from their families and many working for on plantations and don't have the hygien or nutrition to keep going.

End slavery because no one should have to be tortured because of their skin colour or where they are from.

They are forced to live in a crowded house were they could easily catch diseases.

Julia Bautista

SIXTH FORM Geographers Visit The Lake District

Year 12 and 13 Geography classes enjoyed a great trip to the Lake District at the start of the Spring term. Staying at the scenic FSC Blencathra Centre, Year 12 students took part in a wide range of fieldwork activities whilst also giving help to Year 13 students who were carrying out their NEAs, which is an essential piece of coursework students have to complete for their A-level course.

Students left on Monday and, after a two-hour long journey, arrived at the Blencathra Centre where they were greeted by the welcoming staff at the FCS. After being given time to unpack, Year 12 students were shown a wide-range of fieldwork methods by the FSC staff and were given the chance to carry out their own small investigations, whilst the Year 13s prepared and planned for their NEA studies. Then, after being conquered by harsh winds and rain, the students were given time to relax before enjoying a delicious homecooked dinner by the centre's friendly chefs. Then we had time to settle in to our new rooms, that would be 'home' for the next week.

On the second day we prepared for the weather by layering our waterproofs for the day. The Year 12 students helped Year 13 students with their fieldwork by going out and collecting data using a wide variety of methods. This included measuring trees, collecting soil samples and

measuring the relief of the land. After this was done, the Year 12 students began an introduction to fieldwork, and Year 13s processed their data and completed fieldwork interviews with Geography teachers. Night activities for Tuesday included table tennis and exploring the new environment.

Wednesday included a trip to Keswick for the year 12 students, where they conducted a pilot study on Keswick; a place that is considered the adventure capital of the UK. We carried out various different fieldwork tasks in an urban environment to prepare for future coursework preparation. Students developed their fieldwork knowledge and skills. At lunch time students found a local cafe called The Cornish Bakery to seek shelter from the weather and to enjoy some fresh food. Wednesday night was the start of the games for the Year 12s-sardines was a game played to bring the whole group together... even the teachers joined in!

Thursday was an eventful day for the Year 12s and some Year 13s! Thursday saw our group hike up Easedale Valley in harsh winds, on a three-hour trek. Despite this, the view at the top was worth the walk! On the way back, there was an hour long stop off in Grasmere to sample some of the famous gingerbread. The last supper of the trip was arguably one of the best, as we enjoyed a group quiz and final games night.

The final day was a farewell to the centre, with one last trip up to Keswick to visit the tourist area shops, collecting presents and souvenirs as well as snacks for the journey home. Overall, Blencathra Centre welcomed the whole group, made everyone feel at home, and supported our geographical studies. What a fantastic, productive and worthwhile week away!





DESIGN ENGINEERING

Work Experience at Stage One

By Lilly Fawkes Year 13



For my sixth form work experience I decided to go to a company in the design engineering industry called Stage One, given my interest in pursuing a career in Architecture or Design. Stage One operate globally, creating sets for music tours such as Ed Sheeran's Mathematics Tour and the Brit Awards. They have also worked on famous sporting events such as the 2019 Olympics and Sports Personality of the Year since 2012. Their briefs can include any exhibition/set that requires their help including The Voice and the Serpentine, helping bring architects' visions to life. The company works by being given a design idea, usually only consisting of a brief concept or image and some measurements (overall not a lot to go on!).



Stage One then work with their CAD (computer aided design) team to bring the room/product/sketch to life with a 3D scale drawing using computer software. The CAD team works closely with the manufacturing team to get the design absolutely perfect whilst project managers oversee the whole process. Consistent communication back and forth between clients ensures that their needs and wants are adhered to whilst also managing costs.

Whilst I was at Stage One I had the pleasure of speaking with many of the different team members within

the company. I spent most of my time shadowing the CAD team, observing how they make these unimaginable concepts/dreams become a reality, with only one or two designers per project, depending on the scale. Unfortunately, I am unable to share details of the current projects they are working on at this moment in time due to privacy agreements which made me appreciate the level of professionalism involved in the industry. However, I did get a fascinating insight into past projects, where I got an insight into the huge amount of work involved. I also got to

visit the 'shop floor' to witness some of their new confidential projects being built up by their metal, wood and paint crew. This experience has really helped open my eyes to the wide variety of roles in the design engineering industry and the different opportunities I could take. Ever since I did my first Product Design lesson with Mrs Harding, I have had a love for the process of making, which just really illustrates that the skills we learn from year 7, all the way to year 11, really do help us find our passion and gain knowledge on the paths we could take in later life.

YR11 FINE ART GCSE EXAM PROJECT: 'LOCK'

Yr11 Fine Art students have made an excellent start to their GCSE Art Exam project which they were introduced to on January 9th 2023. The title for the exam project is 'Lock', and it was set by the Edexcel exam board. During the exam project students work to demonstrate the depth of their knowledge, understanding and skills in drawing, observation, artist analysis, design, the visual elements, materials, techniques and processes, and the Creative Process. They must work in 'drawing' but may choose one of the following disciplines to focus on for the exam project – painting, printmaking or sculpture.

In response to the exam theme each student decided what the theme of 'Lock' meant to them and used their own understanding of the word 'Lock' to form the basis for their project ideas. Since they received the exam paper they have been working on 'preparatory work', exploring the exam theme through the following 'Research and Investigation' tasks:

VISUAL RESEARCH:

- Mind maps,
- Observational drawings, paintings, mono prints and photographs
- Secondary source montages
- Artist Analysis and Colour Studies.

After half term they will progress onto 'Experimentation, Exploration and Imagination' tasks by designing and creating images and compositions from their visual research. We call this 'Compositional Developments'. They will experiment with the images and compositions they create from their Visual Research, working in their chosen materials, techniques, colour schemes and the visual elements, whilst also exploring the style in which their chosen artist works.

They are working towards the final 10 hour exam, which is run over 2 days at the end of April, in which they will produce a final piece for their exam project. This will be the culmination of their project ideas and will, alongside their preparatory exam work, demonstrate the depth of their knowledge, understanding and skills at GCSE level in Fine Art.



10TICKS.COM MENTAL MATHS COMPETITION WINNERS!

Forename	Surname	Score	Year
Sophie	Nicholas	20803	8
Keira	Richardson	8383	8
Freya	Ratsey	7165	8
Dylan	Percy	3508	9
Nathan	Catania	3287	7
Josephine	Forster	2643	8
Arron	Wallace	2583	7
Joe	Halton	2288	7
Joshua	Lawson	2026	8
Manraj	Singh	1978	8
Jamie	Floyd	1908	7
Grace	Broad	1591	8
Sean	Raja	1569	7
Tomasz	Sidzinka	1464	7
Arjun	Narayan	1446	9
Alfie	Barratt	1334	9
Abigail	Ticman	1329	7
Emily	Richardson	1221	7
Suleman	Havid	1221	7
Katy	Walsh	1164	9
Elysha	Gunayon	1135	8
Archie	Woodman	1110	8
Grace	Bewick	1107	7
Faye	Heatley	1089	7
Louie	Wright	1068	9
Mya	Teasdale	1065	7
Joash	Thomas	1052	7
Raphael	Bedrejo	1023	7
Aurora	Hall	966	7
Tyler	Coxon	938	7
Athiena	Keloth	936	7
Dalia	Ramzi	872	7
Kristin	Naces	867	7
Emily	Turpin	852	7
Amy	Bell	835	7
Aimee	Nolan	820	7
Wayne	Guillena	780	8
Marco	Whitelaw	689	9
Liam	McGlen	680	7
Aaron	Coyle	667	9
Jacob	Cook-Syborn	646	7
James	Kain	644	9
Joel	Williamson	636	8
Olivia	Johnbson	608	7
Ruby	Humble	588	8
Isaac	Munnelly	585	7
Jack	Willis	570	8
Daniel	Ball	564	7
Thomas	Wilson	564	8
Cheyenne	Saculigan	563	9
Mason	Hogg	559	7
Riley	Tynemouth	542	9
Daniel	Lyon	530	7
Isaac	Nicholson-Opocensky	523	8
Li	Sergot	523	8
Julia	Bautista	517	8
Jessica	Burton	515	7

In November, students in Year 7, 8 and 9 participated in the UK 10ticks Mental Maths competition. Most of this was done in their own time at home and the efforts of some students was truly remarkable.

St Benet Biscop was the highest scoring secondary school in the UK winning the school £500! All students who scored over 500 points received a medal and certificate, and the school received a trophy. Below is a list of the students who scored the most points for our school.

A special mention must go to Sophie Nicholas with an amazing score of 20803, meaning that she correctly answered 20803 mental maths questions in the two-week competition!



National Poetry Day

At St Benet's, we celebrated National Poetry Day on Thursday 6 October: students and staff enjoyed listening to poetry being performed during registration time (Everything Here is True by Paul Cookson was a particular favourite) and in English classes students created their own poetry based on the theme of Nature. Mrs Elliott ran a lunchtime Poetry Workshop in our LRC on Thursday, where students from all year groups were invited to be inspired by the natural world around them and write a poem in response.



WEASEL

*I am a weasel looking for me scran
I am a small guy but I'll eat anything I can
A bird, a rabbit or even mice
Any food would be nice
My long body slithers like a snake
Any my legs scuttle for as long as it will take
My ears switch as I see a hare
I can try eat it if I dare
But that would be dangerous you see
For I am a small guy looking for my tea*

Written by: Shea M - Year 9

SQUIRREL

*The squirrels jump from tree to tree,
They hide up high with the buzzing bee.
Deep in the wood, with the theme of flight.
Whilst squirrels eat chestnuts with their teeth they bite.*

*You may not believe it. Some squirrels can glide.
They glide through the trees, and claim to have fled.
They're called flying squirrels, believe me its true.
Its true they exist, but not that they flew.*

Written by: Freya R - Year 8



BEAUTIFUL WORLD

*Our beautiful world filled with flowers of many
That's creation did not cost anyone a penny
Something so sunny but unfortunately too late
Shimmering stars that once filled the sky
Suddenly gone in the blink of an eye
Wishing we could turn back just a couple of years
To a time when the earth was regarded 'my dear'
There's no chance for a brand-new clean slate*

Written by Jean B -Year 10



Swan Swimmers

*One swan is swimming
Another swan is swimming
As they swim to the lake,
They fell in love at first sight,
They think of the picture they will make
And the sun shined down like a light.*

Jade M - Year 8

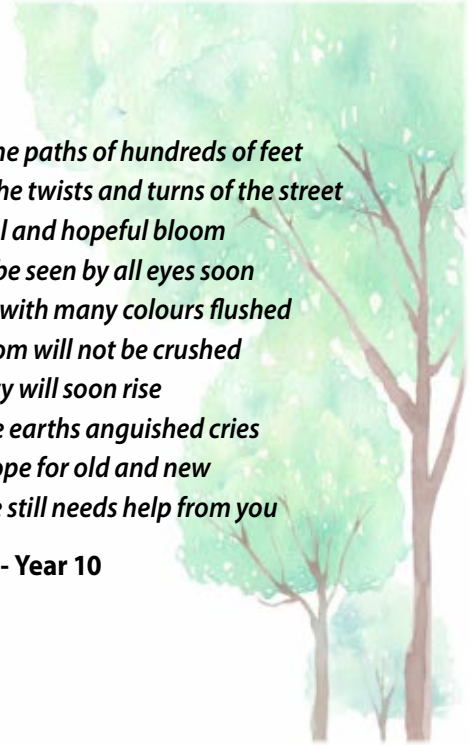
The Biting Cold

*A hurried cold nip at my wet nose,
The sky; a force filled grey.
It's been a while since they disappeared
No food; nowhere to play.
Life is tough for a street mutt.
Relying on the kindness of strangers.
Bin scraps are my gourmet,
Broken glass pierces my paws,
Yet still, I try to find comfort at the end of the day.
Cold hold me in its arms as if I were stuck in the past.
I wonder if this rest will be my last.*

Grace T - Year 8

*Beneath the paths of hundreds of feet
Between the twists and turns of the street
A Beautiful and hopeful bloom
A sight to be seen by all eyes soon
The world with many colours flushed
This blossom will not be crushed
This beauty will soon rise
Amidst the earths anguished cries
There is hope for old and new
But nature still needs help from you*

Megan M - Year 10



THAT'S A WRAP!

Over the course of the Autumn term, the main school hall was given an uplift. To make the school hall a more colourful, bold and interesting place, a wrap was designed to capture some of the local landmarks, from the areas of Northumberland where our students live.

We wanted the wrap to be a collage of all of the areas where our students come from, to make up our school community. More than that, we wanted to capture some of our distinctiveness as a Catholic school, and our ethos and we wanted the wrap to reflect the beauty and wonder in God's natural world. The design is a representation of colourful stained glass, because St Benet Biscop was the first to introduce in England the use of stained glass in churches. The design took about 4 months to come up with, and then the designers created the wrap which was fitted earlier in the term.



St Benet Biscop Catholic Academy
Ridge Terrace, Bedlington, Northumberland NE22 6ED

T 01670 822795 F 01670 829427
www.st-benetbiscop.co.uk

