



AUTUMN TERM 2024

Curriculum Newsletter

St Mary's Catholic School



Quality of
education is
outstanding

OFSTED 2024

Autumn Term 2024 Highlights

- Art
- Business
- Computing
- Design Technology
- DT Food and Nutrition
- Drama
- English
- Geography
- Health and Social Care
- History
- Maths
- Modern Foreign Languages
- Music
- Physical Education
- Politics
- Psychology
- Religious Education
- Science
- New members of staff

Dear Parents

As our Autumn term 2024 draws to a close, in this bumper edition you will find a page from every department showcasing the teaching and learning and enrichment opportunities that the students enjoyed and benefited from.

I am also exceptionally proud to share with you a selection of photographs from our Advent Service in our Parish church on Wednesday evening. The service was incredibly prayerful and a spectacular blessing of the gifts and talents of our musicians, soloists, readers and choirs who led us so beautifully in the carols.

May I wish you all a very happy and holy Christmas and blessings for the New Year. The spring term for students begins on Tuesday 7th January

May our homes and hearts be filled this Christmas with the gifts of Hope, Peace, Joy and Love.

God Bless,

Deirdre McHugh



LOVE - RESPECT - FLOURISH

ADVENT SERVICE



ADVENT SERVICE



ART



Key Stage Three students have shown great progress in challenging circumstances this term. Some lovely work has been produced by all year groups.

We very much look forward to our new Art teacher, Mrs Reece, joining us in January. Year 9 will have a workshop with artist Sarah Graham in March which will be a welcome enrichment opportunity for any student interested in pursuing Art next year!

Well done Year 7, 8 and 9.



Key Stage Four

GCSE Art students have made the most fantastic start to their Art course. All students visited the Museum of Zoology in October to draw on location and the resulting sketchbook pages are breath taking. Students are currently studying the topic of 'Flora and Fauna' as the inspiration for their GCSE course and a selection of work is shown here.



Artwork by Mia T, Sophie S and Annabel M (Year 10).



Year 11 have been finishing their coursework submissions ready to begin their final exam unit in January.

A sample of stunning student work can be seen here by Year 11 artist Ilaria B.



BUSINESS

GCSE Business

Year 10 students have been completing work on some of the core fundamentals of any Business course.

Our brilliant students have demonstrated an excellent knowledge of revenue, costs, profit and break even.

Real business examples such as Homebase and Ted Baker have been used to ensure students are able to apply their knowledge and make lessons engaging.

Year 12 Economics Writing Competition

Over the course of November, the Year 12 Economics class conducted a writing competition: taking contemporary global issues, researching them and suggesting considered solutions to these concerns.

The topics students could choose from was varied, ranging from the taxing of unhealthy products to reduce obesity to government subsidies to encourage the purchasing of electric vehicles. The competition was tightly fought, as all of the teams were well researched and presented compelling arguments.

The winning team of Aurora, Sophia and Giuliana (right) considered the taxing of unhealthy goods, reflected on influences from behavioural economics and pondered over personal freedoms, the regressive nature of taxation and lessons that could be learned from action taken in Mexico.

The esteemed judge, department leader Mr McElhinney, was complementary of all entrants, however the depth of research and eloquence of conclusions was a deciding factor in declaring the winning team.



A Level Business

Year 12 students have completed an in-depth investigation on different pricing strategies. They have studied inspirational woman and men who they believe have shown innovation, embraced risk and often helped others in their communities.

Our Year 12 Business students are a credit to the school and are well placed for a successful Year 13.

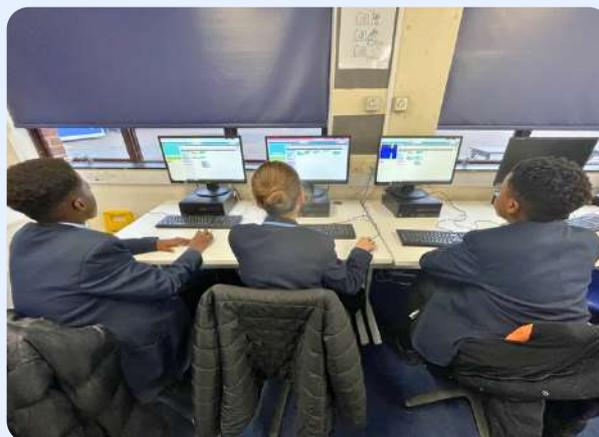
Diploma in Finance

Year 13 Finance are busy putting together the final preparations for their external January exams.

Students will be completing questions on a pre-released case study in which a single 33 year-old is saving to try to purchase their first home. Students have to recommend the most suitable option. This will hopefully lead to exam success but also vital life skills. They are well prepared and we couldn't be prouder of their ongoing efforts!

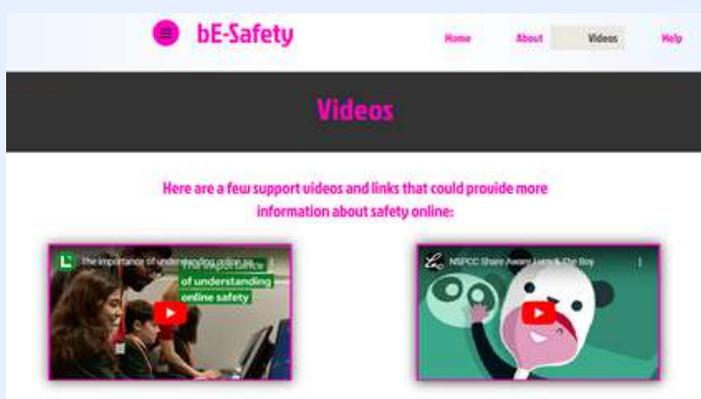
COMPUTING

Computer Science Education Week ran between 9th - 15th December and, to participate in this, our Year 7, 8 and 9 students completed coding activities on the Hour Of Code website. This was an excellent chance for students to engage their problem solving skills using fun and easy to access activities.



Year 8 Computing students have been working hard to develop a website highlighting e-safety advice.

Students have learnt about issues such as cyber-bullying and online grooming. Here are some examples of excellent websites developed by our students.



Year 10 GCSE Computer Science students have been developing their programming skills to an excellent standard and have started to learn how to create lists using the programming language Python.

These skills have been put to good use and to bring some Christmas cheer, we developed programs that allowed the students to create an electronic Christmas list. Here is an example:

```
<> main.py
2- while True:
3   userChoice = str(input("Would you like to add an item(1) or remove the last item(2), or check the amount of
4   print("")
5   match userChoice:
6     case '1':
7       userValue = 1
8     case '2':
9       userValue = 2
10-    case '3':
11-     userValue = 3
12-    case '4':
13-     userValue = 4
14-    case _:
15-     userValue = 5
16-    if userValue == 1:
17-     addItem = str(input("Enter the item: "))
18-     christmasList.append(addItem)
19-     print("Your list is as follows: ")
20-     for x in range(len(christmasList)):
21-      print(christmasList[x])
22-    elif userValue == 2:
23-     if len(christmasList) != 0:
24-      christmasList.pop()
25-     for y in range(len(christmasList)):
26-      print(christmasList[y])
27-    else:
28-     print("Program Closing...")
29-     break
30-    elif userValue == 3:
31-     print("There are ", len(christmasList), " values in the christmas list")
32-     print("")
33-    elif userValue == 4:
34-     userChosenValue = str(input("Enter the value you want to find: "))
35-     correctIndex = christmasList.index(userChosenValue)
36-     if correctIndex:
37-      print("The index of your value is ", correctIndex)
38-    else:
39-     print("That value does not exist")
```

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Key Stage 3

Design and Technology Project Snap Shot: Rosary Bracelet and Pouch

In Year 7, students have been working on a creative project in Design and Technology, where they assemble a rosary bracelet and create a hand-embroidered pouch to hold it.

Throughout this project, students learn a variety of stitching techniques, including running stitch, backstitch, and blanket stitch, to add a personal touch to their pouches. This hands-on project encourages creativity and practical skills, as students develop their abilities in design, sewing, and attention to detail.



Key Stage 4

Year 10 DT Trip to Kesslers London

On Tuesday, 26th November, Year 10 GCSE Design and Technology pupils visited Kesslers London, a creative design company specialising in retail point-of-sale displays. Kesslers create captivating in-store experiences with an emphasis on eye-catching and sustainable designs.

Our Year 10 students toured the manufacturing facilities and were given talks on the workshop floor about prototyping, finishing, computer-aided manufacturing (CAM), and product assembly. A highlight for the students was observing manufacturing processes first-hand. As they walked through the factory, they discussed the efficiency of its layout and interacted with staff involved in clay sculpting for mannequins, spray painting in the paint shop, and stitching fabric to cover mannequins.

The students also enjoyed engaging with presentations from various departments, including the sales, creative, and technical teams. These conversations gave them valuable insights into potential careers within Design & Technology. Students learned about the employees' roles, how they worked individually, and how they collaborated as part of a team.

Students observed machinery in action, watched how CAD software is used to create prototypes, and explored CAM equipment like laser cutters. They saw the use of fiberglass moulds for mannequin manufacture and the production of point-of-sale displays in both one-off and batch production. Discussions covered the costs of different processes, logistical considerations, lead times, and the complexities of working with international clients and suppliers.

The trip to Kesslers London provided our students with a valuable opportunity to connect classroom learning with real-world applications, deepening their understanding of design and manufacturing processes. It also allowed them to explore potential career opportunities within this exciting sector.

This experience directly relates to the GCSE Design and Technology curriculum, particularly in understanding manufacturing processes and material properties. By observing techniques such as moulding, CAD/CAM, prototyping, and the use of different materials, students gained practical insights into topics covered in theory lessons. The visit also highlighted the importance of efficient factory layouts and quality control, aligning with the curriculum's focus on production techniques and systems.

The school would like to extend their thanks to Kesslers London for providing our students with this valuable enrichment experience.



Key Stage 5

A-Level Textile Design- Lucy's fabric manipulation work

A-Level student Lucy Jarrett has been working diligently to bring her fashion design aspirations to life. Her current project features a dress with a smocked side panel, created using reverse applique.

To ensure a high-quality finish, Lucy has carefully trialled the techniques before incorporating laser cutting to achieve precise fabric cuts. She then completes the design with machine sewing and intricate fabric manipulation stitches, creating a beautiful smocking effect.

Through her attention to detail and commitment to refining her skills, Lucy is producing a truly impressive piece of work.

DT FOOD AND NUTRITION

Year 10 Food Preparation and Nutrition Practical Work

In Year 10, students have been honing their presentation skills while preparing a variety of dishes from different cuisines.

They have explored making sushi, swiss rolls with various toppings, curry with chapati, and matcha strawberry vanilla cake. Through these hands-on experiences, students have not only developed their cooking techniques but also gained an understanding of how presentation enhances the overall appeal of a dish.

This project encourages creativity, attention to detail, and a deeper appreciation for global culinary traditions. We are proud of the progress they have made and look forward to seeing their continued growth in the kitchen.



DRAMA

Our **Year 7** students have made fantastic progress in their drama lessons. During their first term, they worked on building essential teamwork and theatre skills, laying the foundation for high-quality performances.

In recent weeks, the students have put their learning into practice by reimagining a selection of well-known fairy tales. They showcased their creativity and skill through techniques such as freeze frames, thought-tracking, narration, and a special focus on effective scene staging.

It has been wonderful to see their confidence and abilities grow, and we look forward to seeing their continued development in the coming term!



Our **Year 8 and 9** students have been focusing on the art of building tension and developing drama from a stimulus. Through a series of creative exercises, they have worked on interpreting various stimuli, such as images, stories, and themes, to create dynamic and engaging performances.

Students have explored techniques to enhance dramatic tension, including controlling pace, atmosphere, and character relationships. These exercises have allowed them to experiment with different forms of expression and storytelling, fostering both individual creativity and teamwork.

It has been a rewarding term, and we are excited to see how their skills continue to develop in the coming months. We look forward to their future performances and continued progress in drama!



KS4 Drama Performance of The IT

Our KS4 Drama students have been hard at work rehearsing the set text play *The IT* since mid-September. The play explores the story of Grace, a teenage girl grappling with something uncontrollable growing inside her. To fully engage with the material, students performed the entire text, allowing them to deepen their understanding and interpretation of the play.

Last week, the students had the opportunity to showcase their efforts in a live performance to an invited audience of 60 Year 9 and 10 students. This experience was invaluable, helping them refine their practical skills and offering insights they can apply to their upcoming exam work.

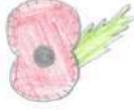
We are incredibly proud of their dedication and the growth they have shown throughout this process.



ENGLISH

war

haiku



The grieving soldier,
Felt no more purpose in life,
It was all his fault?

Silent fields of grey,
Echoes of lost battles cry,
Memory in dust.

Steel clashed in the night,
Ghosts of heroes linger on,
Stars weep overhead.

Marching, breath held tight,
In the fog of night and fear,
Life hangs by a thread.



Year 9 composed war poems for Remembrance Day, following the traditional 5-7-5 syllable format of haikus. The students wrote emotive verses which captured the sacrifice and grief of this tragic time.

War Haiku

The enemy stalks
Our brothers graves wishing that
Soon we will be next

As we prepare to
End our foe we wonder why
We must kill our own

Frosted statues in
War-torn landscapes filled with grief
Yet nature forgives



A storm of bullets
Bombards our place of refuge
So, we fight back

Men gasping for breath,
A cloud of deadly poison.
"Quick boys, masks on now".

The air filled with death
Men screaming in agony
When will this war end?



In the muddy fields
Silent whispers of the past
Echo through the night.

Broken dreams abound,
Young men with their futures lost
Hope fades in the fog

Stars above watch close,
Whilst the cannons roar and wail.
Peace feels far away

Letters left unsent
Promises of love and home
Lost in battles fought -



"I am the Duchess of Malfi Still!"

On 5th December 2024, our Year 12 English Literature students attended a live performance of The Duchess of Malfi at London's Trafalgar Theatre, bringing their classroom study to life.

Starring Jodie Whittaker, the production was an extraordinary experience. Whittaker's performance was powerful, capturing the resilience and tragedy of the Duchess with captivating emotion.

The students were immersed in the play's dark, gothic world thanks to the striking set design and clever use of lighting and sound. The students really enjoyed their experience of this exciting production and I hope it will continue to inspire and inform their literary studies throughout their A-Level course.



GEOGRAPHY

It has been a very busy and successful Autumn term for the Geography department at St Mary's. The team this year, led by Mr O'Leary, consists of Mrs McGrath, Mr Hadley, Mr D'Cruz, Mr Dolman and Mrs Wilkinson, who we welcomed back to the school after a year away. So we have an experienced team of staff who have come together to plan and deliver our exciting new curriculum for the 2024-2025 academic year.



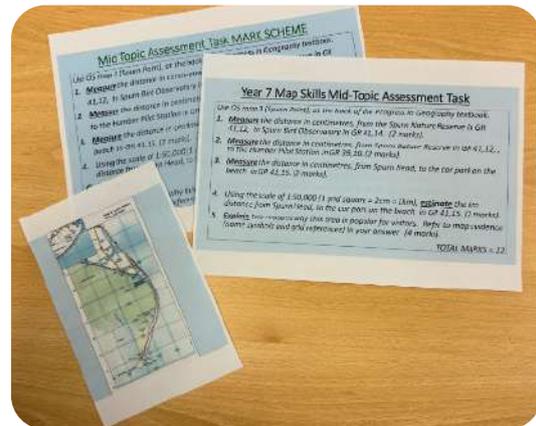
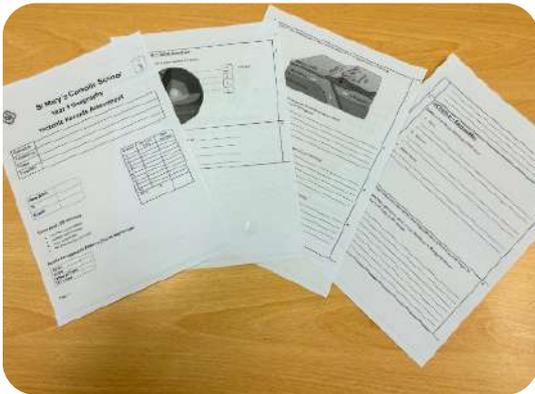
- In October, we attended a subject curriculum meeting with our primary school partners in the St Francis of Assisi Trust, at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School. One of the key outcomes of this meeting was for us to support them to plan an outdoor fieldwork orienteering treasure hunt activity on their school site in the Spring or Summer term of 2025.
- In November we also launched our Y7 Laudato Si prayer design competition. The winning design for the background to Pope Francis' prayer for caring for our common home, planet earth, will be announce shortly. Some outstanding examples of the entries can be seen above.
- In early December, our Y12 and Y13 students participated in field trip to Cambridge city centre, where they carried out a range of primary data collection techniques in a number of locations. This will help them to complete their own independent investigations (coursework), which is worth 20% of the final overall grade for their final A-Level examinations.

Curriculum updates

We have introduced a range of new mid-topic assessment tasks for all schemes of learning in Y7, 8 and 9. They will allow students to demonstrate knowledge, understanding and skills and provide opportunities for improved feedback that supports students to edit and improve their work.

All end of topic exam assessments are being further refined to allow students to write in standardised printed booklets that include gap-fill, multiple-choice, geographical skills and higher level challenge tasks.

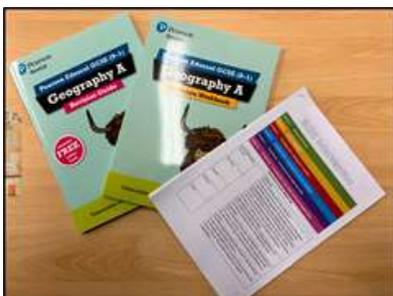
Examples of both these can be seen here:



Year 11 Booster Sessions

Mr O'Leary and Mrs McGrath have been running Booster Support sessions for targeted students on Mondays and Wednesdays after school.

Key students have been identified but ALL GCSE Geography students are welcome and encouraged to attend. These sessions will continue throughout the Spring term and focus on geographical skills and helping student to break down practice exam questions.



Next term

We will be hosting an information evening in February, for the parents of the Y10 and Y11 students who will be going on the trip to Iceland in April.

At this event we will provide lots of essential information for both parents and students.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

This has been an exciting and busy term for Y12 and Y13 Health & Social Care students.

Both year groups are working hard in preparation for their January exams and attended the Tutor2U Health & Social Care Grade Booster Workshop held at Vue Cinema, Westfield, Stratford. They did St Mary's proud and returned with stickers, pens and badges for the excellent contributions they volunteered during the sessions.

It was a very proud teacher moment to listen to our fantastic students showcasing their knowledge with confidence.



AIR POLLUTION

Air Pollution is the presence of harmful or excessive qualities of substance in the air that can have adverse effects on human health, the environment.

Lung conditions are the third biggest killer in the UK. Toxic air contributes to up to **43,000** of these deaths every year.

The Majority of this pollution comes from vehicle emissions, especially older diesel engines.

Toxic air is having a devastating impact on **1,000** people's lungs. It can stunt the growth of children's lungs so that they don't develop properly, worsen existing lung conditions, for example, asthma.

What can we do
There are lots of Campaigns that will help influence policy to make these changes, and achieve a future with cleaner air for all.

Short term effects

- inflammation and irritation of the lining of your airways, which can cause symptoms
- asthma attacks, heart attacks or COPD

Long term effects

- increased chance of early death, lung cancer
- damage to developing lungs
- likely to cause new cases of asthma

! STOP POLLUTION!

To make **Cleaner Air**, you can join a campaign and help everyone breathe cleaner air

- using public transport instead of driving
- walk or cycling if possible, particularly for short trips

Kiera H (Y13) impressed the judges at Tutor2U earlier in the term and was rewarded with a range of prizes after winning a public health campaign poster competition. Her work was published in the Autumn/Winter Health & Social Care Update magazine published by Tutor2U.

Kiera has put her prize to good use and is using the flashcards to help her shine in her upcoming Unit 2 exam.

Well done, Kiera!



HISTORY

Year 7 have been learning about the Roman Empire this term, including topics such as the Roman invasion of Britain in 43A.D., how the Romans treated their slaves and how they controlled their Empire! They have been developing their skills in using sources.

Here, you can see some lovely homework by Adrianna about Hadrian's Wall.



Year 8 have been learning all about the Tudors. They started the year by studying the reasons why Henry VIII broke with the Roman Catholic Church, before studying the reigns of Edward VI, Mary I and a detailed study of Elizabeth I: how she changed the Church of England, why she never married, how she led England to victory over the Spanish Armada and how she used propaganda to strengthen her rule.

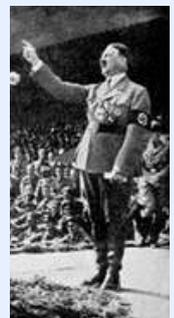


Year 9 have spent this term learning about the First World War. They started by studying its complex set of causes, before looking at the war itself, including how the trenches worked, the horrendous Battle of the Somme and the reasons why the Allies won in 1918.



They have completed a detailed study of Douglas Haig, focusing on how his role has been interpreted and why opinions of him have changed over time.

Year 11 have continued their GCSE studies with the topic of Weimar and Nazi Germany, 1918-1939. They have looked at the problems in Germany after the First World War, the strengths and weaknesses of the Weimar Republic and the important question of why a group like the Nazis were able to take over in an educated, advanced society like Germany.



35 of our Year 11 students are looking forward to the trip to Berlin in January, which will enrich their understanding of the Germany topic, as well as their later study of the Cold War.

Year 10 have begun their study of GCSE History with the topic Medicine in Britain, c1250-the present day. They have learned about the key features of Medieval, Renaissance and Early Modern Medicine, including what was believed about the causes of disease and how it has been treated and prevented. The students have been considering the reasons for change and continuity in these areas, including the role of new technology such as the printing press, and the role of key individuals such as Florence Nightingale.



Year 12 have begun their A Levels with studies of Russia and its Rulers, 1855-1964 and Britain, 1930-1997. So far in the Russia topic, the students have learned about the similarities and differences between all the different governments of Russia during the period, and their effects on the economy and society of Russia.



In the Britain topic, the students have been learning about the key figure of Winston Churchill, who was voted the 'Greatest Ever Briton' back in 2002. As we approach the 150th anniversary of Churchill's birth, his undoubtedly important, but also controversial, legacy is under more focus than ever.

Broadening Horizons

All years at Key Stage Three have been using the brilliant book *Black and British* by David Olusoga in lessons to go alongside the topics they have studied. This has allowed them to engage with an aspect of History which had been downplayed or ignored entirely in History curriculums of the past.

They have also been completing 'Meanwhile, elsewhere...' tasks for homework, which allow the students to learn about major events, individuals and developments which occurred at the same time as the events they have studied in class, but in other parts of the world.



Year 13 have been learning about the French Revolution this term. Almost two hundred years after it occurred, the Chinese politician Zhou Enlai observed that it was still "too early to say" what the French Revolution's legacy was. Arguably, this is still the case, as Year 13 have found by getting to grips with this messy, bloody and momentous period in History. A certain Corsican general by the name of Napoleon Bonaparte has made some small cameos in the topic so far, and the students are preparing to learn about his rise to power.

MATHS

The Mathematical Olympiad for Girls (MOG) is aimed at girls and young women across the UK and consists of five challenging problems. We had four entries and our girls represented our school remarkably, by winning two Merit awards for Amelia P and Marie S., and a Distinction Awards for Vivian I.

In the Senior Maths Challenge, 29 St Mary's students took part winning 12 bronze and 6 silver. Our team was made up of three Year 12 students, with the rest from Year 11, so these are great achievements, as our students were among the youngest competitors.

Sumdog South East England Competition

Our Year 7, 8 and 9 students took part in the South East England Maths Contest in October.

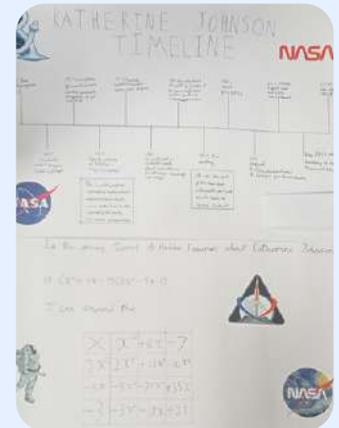
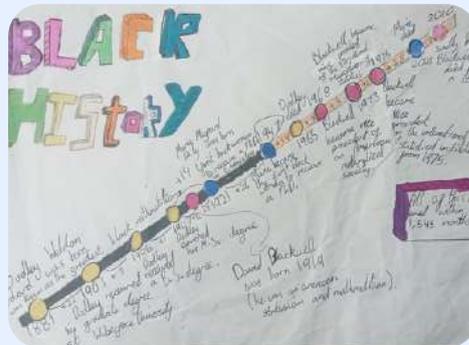
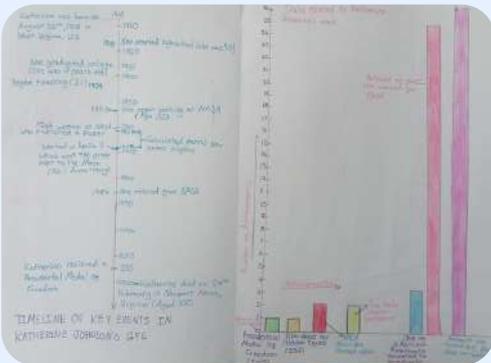
They competed against more than 4100 students from 15 schools. Our top performers were Celeste S. (16th Place), Luca A. (18th place), Effah B. (25th place), Filip S. (27th place) and Harrison V. (31st place).

Congratulations!



Our Year 7, 8, and 9 students demonstrated fantastic engagement in this year's Black History Month maths project. Each student researched influential Black mathematicians and their ground-breaking contributions, showcasing their findings through creative and informative posters.

The work reflected both a deep appreciation for the impact of mathematics on history and an enthusiasm for learning. Well done to everyone who participated!



So far this year we have watched 'The Story of One' and 'Hidden Figures' in our Maths film club. These have both been interesting watches.

We hope you can join us for our next ones 'Queen of Katwe' and 'The Man Who Knew Infinity'.



MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

It's been a busy term in MFL! Ofsted conducted a deep dive into the Language Department and their comments were very positive.

Year 10 French and Spanish students are enjoying the challenges of the new GCSE specification, which includes a focus on phonics and grammar, and students are rising to the challenge brilliantly.

Our MFL Film club started off with a showing of the French classic "Sac de Billes" and we round off the term with an Italian Pixar film, "Luca." We are delighted to see so many students engaging with this club. It will hopefully inspire our MFL students to watch more French, Spanish or Italian films at home. Similarly, they can choose to watch English films in French, Spanish or Italian with English subtitles – just change the setting!

One of our Spanish students created a fabulous 5 minute video tracking their daily routine, linked to an activity on our super-curricular document. Do please encourage students to engage with super-curricular enrichment activities at home. They can be very rewarding. The super-curricular document can be found on the St Mary's website.

Here's a lovely piece of homework from Holly H (8B) on her holidays (Mes Vacances) using the past tense.

Date:	Title:	Lesson Plan:
	Devoirs	Homework
	Mes Vacances	
	L'année dernière, chez ma copine je suis allée en France pour rendre visite à ma copine. J'ai voyagé en avion et en train. Le voyage a duré trois heures mais c'était amusant parce que j'ai vu un bon film pendant le vol.	
	Je suis restée chez ma copine qui habite à Menton. Sa maison est grande et confortable. J'y suis restée pendant deux semaines. J'étais contente car il y avait du soleil et il faisait très chaud.	
	Pendant les vacances, j'ai fait acheter des choses. J'ai nagé dans la mer, j'ai joué au volley à la plage et j'ai fait du vélo. J'ai aussi visité des musées et des sites historiques - c'était intéressant.	
	De plus, je suis allée au centre-ville où j'ai écrit des cartes postales pour mes amis en Angleterre et j'ai acheté des cadeaux pour ma famille. J'ai acheté du parfum pour ma mère, un livre pour mon père et un joli bracelet pour ma sœur.	
	J'ai bien aimé les vacances parce que la nourriture était bonne. et il faisait beau. Cependant je n'ai pas aimé le shopping car les magasins étaient petits. ✓ Excellent travail	

MUSIC

Year 7

This term our Year 7s have been developing their keyboard skills by learning how to play the 'Wallace and Gromit' theme tune. They are becoming more familiar with the notes on the piano and have also started to add in their left hand part as well.

They have been practising two Christmas carols 'Saw Three Ships' and 'Away in a Manger' ready for the school Carol Service on 18th December.



Year 8

This term Year 8 have been listening to a piece called 'In the Hall of the Mountain King' and then learning how to play it on the keyboard.

They have learnt how to find the sharps and flats on the keyboards and have also been doing some whole class performances adding in drums and guitar and experiencing playing live music as a group.

Year 9

Year 9 have now started their Battle of the Bands project (called Musical Futures). They started this half term by all learning how to play 'Word Up' by Cameo in their bands. They are currently being assessed on this. This is the first chance they have had to pick their own bands, work with their friends and also add in drums, guitars and vocals.

After Christmas they will be starting stage 2 of Musical Futures where they get to choose the song they would like to learn and perform, for their assessment.



PHYSICAL EDUCATION

As Term 1 draws to a close, we are excited to share the fantastic progress your children have made in Physical Education (PE) this term. Across all key stages, students have engaged in activities that not only enhance their physical fitness but also foster teamwork, resilience, and a lifelong love for sport and physical activity. Here is an overview of what we have accomplished so far.

Key Stage 3

Key Stage 3 students have enjoyed a varied and dynamic curriculum tailored to develop fundamental skills and promote enjoyment through sport.

Boys focused on rugby, cross-country, basketball, and fitness activities. Through these sports, they have learned the importance of strategic thinking in team games, improved cardiovascular endurance, and built confidence in both individual and group settings.

Girls participated in football, cross-country, rugby, and fitness sessions. These lessons emphasised skill development, collaboration, and perseverance.



Key Stage 4

Building on their foundational skills, Key Stage 4 students explored a wider range of sports and specialised fitness training.

Boys completed units in cross-country, rugby, fitness, table tennis, and football. They refined advanced techniques in these sports, developed tactical awareness, and enhanced their overall fitness levels through structured programs.

Girls concentrated on football, cross-country, fitness, and netball. These activities have strengthened their understanding of game strategies, honed their technical skills, and encouraged teamwork in competitive and cooperative environments.

Year 10 GCSE PE students delved into both theoretical and practical aspects of PE. Theory covered topics such as anatomy and physiology, commercialisation, and ethics in sport. They have gained a deeper understanding of how the human body functions during physical activity and how external factors impact sports.

On the practical side, they developed skills in badminton and table tennis, applying theoretical knowledge to real-world scenarios. This integration of theory and practice has helped solidify their learning and improve performance.



Key Stage 5 (Year 12)

Our Year 12 students have made impressive progress in OCR A-Level PE, diving deeper into core topics such as:

- Anatomy and physiology
- Exercise physiology
- Skill acquisition
- Socio-cultural aspects of sport

They have applied these concepts to practical and exam-focused scenarios, laying a strong foundation for their academic and athletic futures.

Extra-Curricular Activities

This term, we offered a range of exciting extra-curricular opportunities for all year groups. Students showcased their talents in basketball, cross-country, netball, football, and rugby fixtures, representing our school with pride and excellent sportsmanship. Additionally, several Key Stage 4 and 5 students achieved rugby refereeing qualifications, demonstrating leadership and a deeper understanding of the sport.



As we look forward to Term 2, there are many exciting activities and challenges on the horizon. New sports, fitness opportunities, and deeper dives into PE theory will keep students engaged and motivated. We encourage you to discuss your children's PE lessons with them and support their active lifestyles outside of school.

Thank you for your continued support of our PE program.

POLITICS

This term, our Year 12 Politics students have embarked on an exciting journey through UK politics, tackling fundamental topics such as the Constitution, the Executive, the Legislature, the Judiciary, Democracy and Political Participation, and Elections.

These themes have been enriched by examining the newly elected Labour government and the febrile nature of current UK politics, which has provided a wealth of fast-moving, real-life case studies. From debates over constitutional reform to pressing discussions on democratic participation, students have had ample opportunities to see the relevance of political theory in the world around them.

This dynamic approach ensures that students not only grasp the academic content but also critically engage with the politics shaping their daily lives and society as a whole.



This term, our Year 13 Politics students have delved into the fascinating world of U.S. politics, exploring key topics such as the Constitution, Congress, the Supreme Court, the Executive, and Elections.

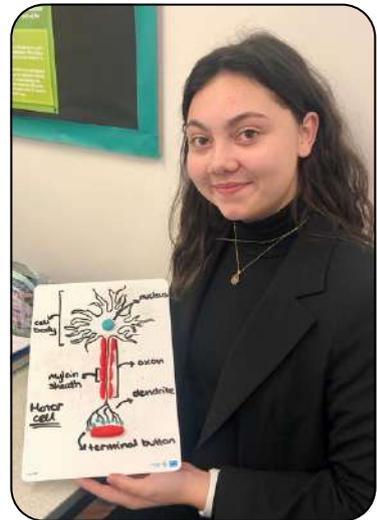
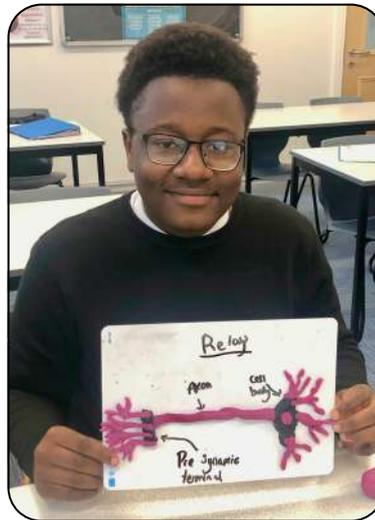
These foundational themes have been brought vividly to life with real-world case studies, including the recent November U.S. elections, which provided an excellent lens for analysing concepts like federalism, checks and balances, and electoral processes in action.

Engaging discussions have ranged from the significance of constitutional amendments to the dynamics of modern political campaigns, ensuring students not only understand the theory but also its relevance in shaping the world's leading democracy today.

PSYCHOLOGY

It has been a creative half term in Psychology, with Year 13 working on the biopsychology topic.

They have been explaining human behaviour through localisation of brain function and neural activity. To help with this, they were let loose on the Play-Doh to make neurons and created some brain hats, mapping the lobes and hemispheres of the brain.



Students have also been studying social influence, where they've explored conformity, obedience, social change and looked at famous studies such as Zimbardo's Stanford Prison Experiment.

Year 13 are photographed in a line of continuum to represent their own locus of control. According to the theory, those on the left have an internal locus of control and are most likely to attribute their outcomes to things within their control, taking responsibility for their own actions while those on the right are the externals, taking less personal responsibility and attributing outcomes to factors beyond their control.

Those on the right are most likely to be obedient - there was some dispute amongst the class about this theory!



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

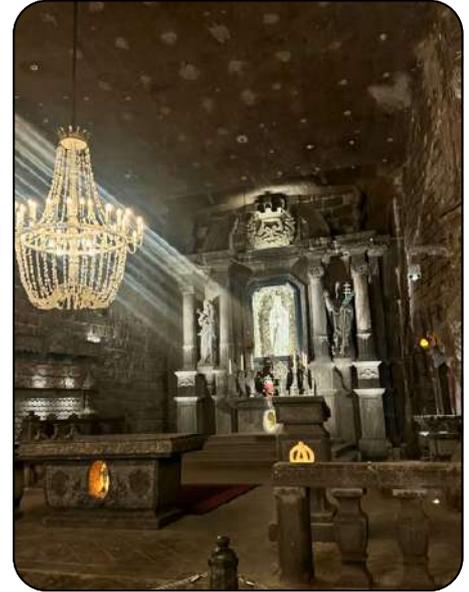
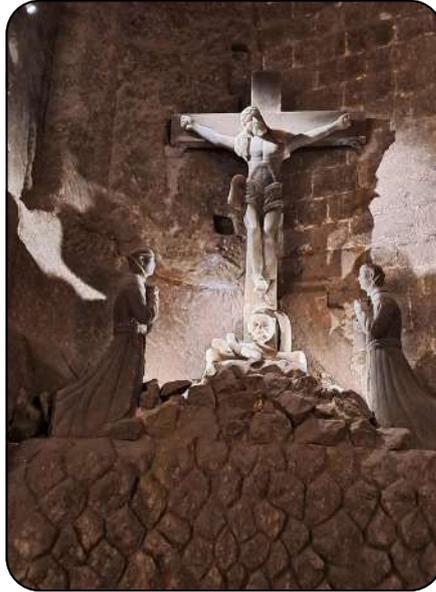
Our trip to Poland was a unique experience that deepened our understanding of faith. Two key moments stood out: visiting the Wieliczka Salt Mines and reflecting at Auschwitz.

The Salt Mines were impressive. The chapels carved from salt, especially the Chapel of St. Kinga, showcased remarkable craftsmanship. Celebrating Mass there highlighted how faith can be present in all places. It was inspiring to see how miners created sacred spaces underground.

Auschwitz was a sobering experience. Walking through the site and seeing the barracks gave a profound sense of the events that occurred there. We took time to pray for those who suffered and to reflect on the importance of compassion and justice.

This trip reinforced our Catholic faith, encouraging us to see God in all aspects of life, respect history, and work towards a just and peaceful future.

Mateusz N (Y13)



The Poland trip in November 2024 was an insightful journey packed with spiritual and inspiring activities, with elements both touching and shocking. Each day our teachers provided us with a different itinerary full of features related to our faith. For example, the church service over a thousand feet below the ground in the Wieliczka Salt Mines, the 'Choices' workshop in a museum dedicated to the Holocaust and finally the emotional and simply moving tour of Auschwitz I and II.

This trip was an opportunity for us as Year 11s and 13s to bond and spend quality time with each other, in approach to the upcoming stress of exams, alongside educating ourselves on life-changing history for the suffering Jews. Being face to face with the thousands of shoes belonging to the Jews that passed away, allowed us to grasp the heart-breaking reality of what those innocent people experienced, rather than seeing movies or pictures on the events that took place back at home.

We didn't know what to expect when signing up to this trip, but returned home with an inner understanding and deeper sympathy, combined with new connections and friendships formed. Our teachers worked tirelessly to ensure we had a balance throughout, learning and investigating different aspects of the holocaust, but having time to wind down and release our built-up emotions, like the bowling, ice skating and the waterpark. As a Year 13 in my final, 7th year at St Marys, this trip was in two words special and unforgettable, and I hope other students in the coming years will be able to experience an opportunity like this.

Chiara L (Y13)

The recent school trip to Poland provided many opportunities to deepen my faith. From reflecting on the tragic events of the German occupation, to learning about the life of Saint John Paul II. Perhaps the most important and moving moment for me was when we prayed at the monument to Polish victims of the Holocaust at Plaszow Concentration Camp. Coming from a Polish background, with several relatives who did suffer under the Germans during the war, this resonated. It proved to be a very sobering experience, and I found it comforting that we took the time to remember these people, who are so often overlooked by popular history.

On a more positive note, the trip to the Wieliczka Salt Mines was a very inspiring experience. We visited several underground chapels dug out by the miners, and learnt about the dangers that they faced underground. I found this inspiring as the faith of the miners motivated them to overcome these dangers, and build beautiful works of art to honour God.

Stefan W (Y13)

SCIENCE



Year 13 students visited the Young Science Centre at the Royal Institute, London, and took part in various practical techniques that allowed them to extract their own DNA and assess their biological liking for a chemical that is found in broccoli.



New members of staff

Gemma Wilkinson

My name is Gemma Wilkinson and I am very pleased to be returning to St Mary's this year. Many of you may remember me as a PE teacher, and whilst I will still be teaching A level PE I am very happy to be moving to new departments. I have always loved working at St Mary's, even as a non-Catholic the sense of community and respect throughout makes it a great place to teach. There has been a large amount of change over the past few years and I am excited to be part of a great team.



During my time at St Mary's I have taught a wide range of subjects and it is through this I have developed my passion for Design Technology. I have always enjoyed Textiles and have made many items over the years for my own home. I am very pleased to be able to share this enthusiasm with our students. I can also be found teaching both Geography and Science this year so will get to see students from all year groups.

Outside of school my main love is still sport. I will try anything having recently taken up cricket and would also encourage my students to have a go until they find something they are passionate about. Sports have helped me to develop many important skills such as leadership, team work and communication. These are all key skills that our students need to develop in order to reach their full potential.

Rob Davis



Hello, I'm Rob Davis, and I'm thrilled to have joined St Mary's Catholic School as the Subject Leader of Computer Science and IT. This is my 11th year in education, and I originally started my career in software development before moving into teaching. I have a real passion for programming, especially in Python, which I'm excited to share with our students here.

I'm especially pleased to see that St Mary's offers Computer Science across all key stages, giving students the chance to develop and build on their skills throughout their school journey. It's fantastic to be part of a school that is committed to such a comprehensive approach to digital education.

Outside of work, I'm an aviation enthusiast. I love attending air shows, and I volunteer as a member of staff with the Royal Air Force Air Cadets. I'm looking forward to getting to know everyone and helping our students explore and enjoy the world of computing.

Graham Sargent

I'm Graham Sargent and am delighted to have joined the wonderful community that is St Mary's Catholic School. Joining the school's Mathematics Department, I found it to be both dedicated and passionate and we were thrilled with Ofsted's decision to give us a so-called deep dive and by the conclusions they drew from it. I've always been passionate about maths, having been lucky enough to study it at undergraduate level at the University of Cambridge and I believe a competent mathematician resides in every one of us!

It was during a number of years working and travelling overseas that I discovered a love for teaching, returning home to complete my training. I've since worked at schools across London, Hertfordshire and in Indonesia, teaching all levels and abilities including A Level Further Maths and Higher Level International Baccalaureate courses.

I'm pleased to be able to return to Catholic education as the love and care that is shown for our student is such an important part of what we do, as we strive to develop the whole child socially and spiritually as well as academically.

Outside of work, my spare time used to be taken up with running, cooking, travel and learning & using foreign languages. Now that we have two young daughters I do absolutely none of that (unless panfuls of plain pasta constitute 'cooking') but do do my best to appreciate all the time I get to spend with them.



GO 4 SCHOOLS PARENTAL GUIDE



A Parental Guide to Go 4 Schools

GO 4 Schools is an on-line package that allows you to access your child's academic achievement and progress data in real time in addition to other information the school holds about your child.

Logging on to GO 4 Schools

In order to log onto GO 4 Schools you need to visit www.go4schools.com and click on the 'Parents' icon in the top right-hand side.

Enter your email address into the 'First-time User' section and click 'send me a password'. This must be the email address that you have registered with the school.

GO 4 Schools will then send you a password directly to the inbox of your registered email address.

Upon receipt of the password enter your email and new password into the top two boxes of the log in page to gain access to the system.

You will then be taken to a page where you click on your child's name. If you have more than one child at the school, you will be able to view all of their names and select the one you wish to view.

Student Profiles

When logging onto a student profile you are able to see timetable and attendance data; in addition there is a menu down the left side of the screen (shown below).



Progress: A record of all the assessed work and the grades awarded. This section will also show target grades allowing you to gauge progress.

Reports: This tab will show summary reports and attitude to learning reports.



Student Progress

In year 6, students take KS2 SATs; the results of these are used to set targets for our students. The targets set give an indication of what “good progress” would look like for all students; as starting points change, so do target grades. The target grades are not a ceiling to student achievement.

The table below shows how the target grades are planned.

KS2 SATs AVG	Key Stage Three Levels			Key Stage Four Grades	
	YEAR 7	YEAR 8	YEAR 9	YEAR 10	YEAR 11
114 - 120	6+	7+	8+	7	8
110 - 113	6-	7-	8-	6	7
106 - 109	5+	6+	7+	5	6
100 - 105	5-	6-	7-	4	5
96 - 99	4+	5+	6+	3	4
91 - 95	3+	4+	5+	2	3
59 - 90	2+	3+	4+	1	2

Key Stage 3

On the progress tab, it is possible to see a summary of the Current Working Grades for all subjects. Each of the current working grades above is colour coded to show the current position against the target grades. Every time an assessment is added to Go 4 Schools, the Current Working Grade will change.

Readin...	Geogr...	Comp...	Art	English	Design...	Science	Drama	Mathe...	Music	Physic...	History
15:02	7	6+	6	6	6-	5+	5	5	5	5-	4+

Key Stage 4

The progress tab shows a summary of all of the current working grades throughout the year.

Summary - Current Working Grade									
<input type="radio"/> Subject name <input checked="" type="radio"/> Grade value <input type="radio"/> Progress									
Chemistry	Art	Biology	Mathema...	Religious ...	English	Geography	Physics	English Li...	French
8+	8	8	7+	7+	7-	7-	5+	5	5
Residual legend									
Autumn St Mary's Scheme 5 Bands									
Well Below Target		Below Target		On Target		Above Target		Well Above Target	



At Key Stage 4 there is additional information that signifies how much progress is being made.

Progress				
Attainment 8 and Progress 8				
Measure	Target Grade	CWG	Predicted Grade	Progress Exam
Progress 8 score (2024 est.)	1.1	1.3	1.6	1.5
Attainment 8 score	6.9	7.1	7.4	7.3

When students complete year 11 they should have a positive progress score. The table above shows two types of measurement; Progress 8 and Attainment 8. Progress 8 is a measure of the progress made from Key Stage 2 and Attainment 8 is a measure of the average grade. All students should aim for a Progress 8 score of above 0; preferably students should target a score of between 0.3 and 0.6

Target Grade: The scores above represent the P8 and A8 scores that would be achieved if the Target Grades are all met.

CWG: The P8 and A8 scores that are currently being achieved by the standard of work graded in class.

Predicted Grade: The P8 and A8 scores that would be achieved if the predicted grades are achieved.

Progress Exam: The P8 and A8 scores achieved from the internal Progress Exams.

Assessment Records

All key stages display the summary of the assessments completed by students.

Subject	Target Grade	CWG	Sheet summary
Economics, Mr C Palmer, Mr J Gitau	A	C+	Micro Theme 1 C+ Macro Theme 2 - Micro Theme 3 - Macro Theme 4 - Progress Examination - A2L 1 1
Enrichment, Mr D Neosam	-	-	
General RE, Miss A Creus	-	-	
Mathematic, Mrs C Wilkin, Mr J Mason		A	A2L 1 0 Baseline A- HT1 Exam Style Questions/40 A- Chapters 1-2 A Chapters 1-4 B- Coordinate Geometry B Chapters 3/4 A Vectors A

Current Working Grade is an aggregation of the assessments completed

Assessment titles and grades achieved for each assessment.



Frequently Asked Questions

What should I do if I am concerned about my son's/daughter's progress in a particular subject?

Talk to your son/daughter to check that they are aware of what they need to do to make progress in the subject. Are they following the guidance from their teacher on how they need to improve? Have they spoken to the teacher to help them set a realistic target to improve? Look in their books; assessed work should generate targets to work towards, has this advice been responded to?

Discussing your concerns with appropriate staff members is also important; tutors are the first port of call and they can help address any concerns.

What is the Target Grade?

This is the target grade a student should be aiming to achieve or exceed by the end of each academic year. If this grade is achieved then good progress will have been made. As the year progresses, assessment outcomes should improve towards the end of year target.

What is the Predicted Grade?

This grade is based on a combination of a students' CWG, progress exam and the teacher's professional judgement as to what a student is likely to achieve at the end of the year 11. Predicted grades are primarily produced to support successful transition to year 12.

Why do the number of assessments vary in different subjects?

The number of assessments will vary from subject to subject due to the different nature of the subjects and how they are best assessed.

How do I receive reports?

Reports will be issued via GO 4 Schools. When your child's report becomes live on GO 4 Schools you will receive an email informing you that a new report is now available. You can then view the report and print it if you require a hard copy.

I have lost my password - what do I do?

Go to the GO 4 Schools website, click the 'parents' icon and follow the 'Forgotten your password' instructions.

My email address is not recognised - why is this?

Only email addresses registered with the school are recognised by GO 4 Schools. If your email address is not recognised it means that the school does not hold your email address information. Please contact the school with your new email address.

Who can access my child's data?

You, as the registered email and school staff are the only people who can access your child's data.

When, and how often should I access GO 4 Schools?

The information is always available so that you can access it when you wish. Student achievement data is updated at least every half term, so as the school year progresses more academic information will become available. You will also be prompted throughout the year to remind you to access Go 4 Schools.

I am worried by the data I am seeing - what should I do?

Contact the school at info@stmarys.net in the first instance to contact the form tutor.