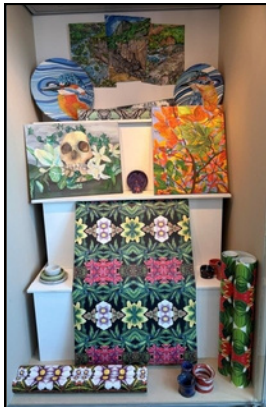




SUMMER TERM 2026

Curriculum Newsletter

St Mary's Catholic School



Dear Parents, Students and Families,

In this Summer Term edition of our Headlines you will see the range of excellence in teaching and learning in all our subject areas and celebrations of success for our students. I hope you enjoy reading!

What a truly magnificent time we have had celebrating our wonderful school community over these past week. I am filled with such joy and pride as I reflect on the exceptional events that have brought us all together.

Our Sports Day on Tuesday was a fantastic celebration of teamwork, determination and school spirit. It was wonderful to see so many students participating with enthusiasm, whether competing on the track and field or cheering on their peers. The resilience, encouragement and sportsmanship shown throughout the day reflected the very best of St Mary's. My sincere thanks go to our PE Department, support staff and student leaders who worked tirelessly to organise such a successful event, and to all the families who came along to support our students.

On Wednesday's Activities Day, our students enjoyed a wide range of exciting experiences both in school and on educational visits. Days such as these are an important part of school life, providing opportunities for students to develop new skills, strengthen friendships and create lasting memories beyond the classroom. I would like to thank all of our staff for the time, care and commitment they invested in planning and leading these activities, ensuring that every student had the opportunity to enjoy a rewarding and memorable day.

Today, our End of Year Presentation Assemblies provided a fitting conclusion to another successful academic year. It was a privilege to celebrate the achievements, progress and personal growth of so many of our students, recognising not only academic success but also commitment, resilience, service to others and living out our school values each day.

Congratulations to every award recipient and thank you to all our students for the positive contribution they have made to our school community throughout the year. As we look ahead to September, we do so with great pride in all that has been achieved together.

As we come to the end of another academic year, we also say farewell to a number of valued colleagues who are moving on to new opportunities and the next chapter of their careers. On behalf of the entire St Mary's community, I would like to thank each of them for their dedication, professionalism and the care they have shown to our students throughout their time with us. They have each made a lasting contribution to the life of our school, and their commitment has helped shape the positive experiences of so many young people. We wish them every happiness and success for the future, and we hope they will always look back on their time at St Mary's with great affection. They will always be welcome as part of the St Mary's family.

May I take this opportunity in wishing you and your families every happiness and blessing this summer.

God Bless,
Miss D McHugh

Summer Term 2026 Highlights

- Art
- Business & Economics
- Computing
- Design Technology
- Drama
- English
- Geography
- History & Politics
- Maths
- Modern Foreign Languages
- Music
- Physical Education
- Psychology & Health and Social Care
- Religious Education
- Science
- Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award

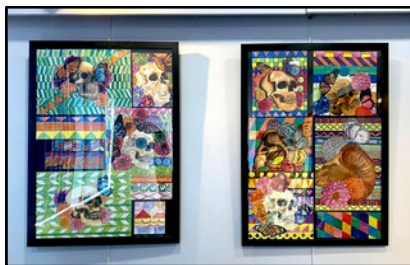
SPORTS DAY



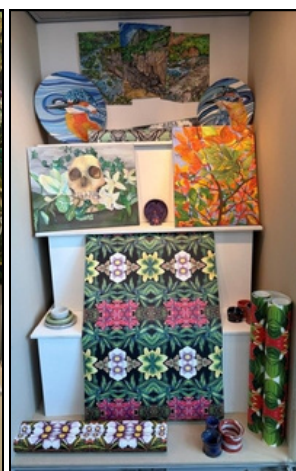
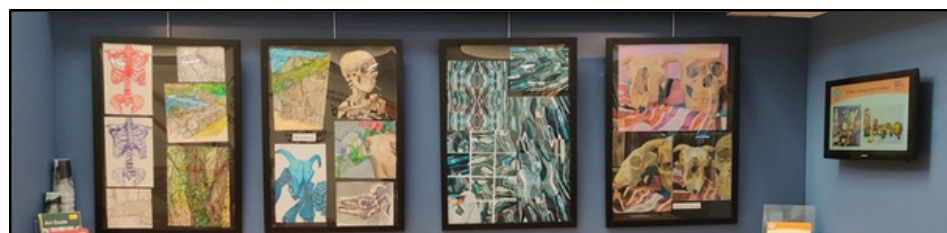
ART

Fantastic Double Show at South Mill Arts Centre

We are so proud of our amazing Art students from Year 7 all the way up to Year 13 whose artwork is being exhibited at South Mill Arts Centre over the months of June, July and August. South Mill had such good feedback about the students' work last year that they offered St Mary's their beautiful mezzanine space for an additional month! This meant that we were able to showcase more of our students' talents by displaying a selection of GCSE and Key Stage 3 course artwork, alongside those for A Level.



On July 3rd, Mrs Reece and Miss Nairn were joined by the current Year 13 students to curate their own exhibition. Students put together an incredible show of work which can be viewed at South Mill until August 11th.



Year 10 Art trip to Cambridge University Botanic Gardens.

On a beautiful hot sunny day in June, the Art Department took Year 10 to the stunning Cambridge University Botanic Gardens. A beautiful green space perfect for drawing and picnics. We were so proud of their attitude to the day and exemplary behaviour.

Subsequent work produced for their mock exam was breathtaking and we are so proud of their creative journeys so far and excited to see what comes next in Year 11!



Photography A Level goes from strength to strength.

Mrs Reece and I are so excited to see the culmination of students' hard work with our new course – Photography A level! All students on the course are now tackling large and very complex final pieces which are testing their creative and technical skills with photographic mediums. These final pieces promise to be breath-taking, and we are incredibly proud of the resilience and perseverance of every student on the course.

If you are interested in any of our creative A level courses, please do come and speak to Mrs Reece or Miss Nairn in the Art Department.



BUSINESS & ECONOMICS

As we reach the end of another busy and successful Summer Term at St Mary's, it is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the fantastic achievements, enthusiasm and commitment shown by our Business and Economics students. Across Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5, students have continued to embrace new challenges, deepen their understanding and make excellent progress, all while demonstrating the resilience and determination that are such important qualities for future success.

While we wish our Year 11 and Year 13 students a restful summer after external exams, our **Year 10 GCSE Business students** have continued to build on the knowledge and skills developed throughout their first GCSE year on the Edexcel course. Mr Gitau, Mr Palmer and Mr McElhinney are so proud of their efforts. This term, they have explored key areas such as external influences on businesses, continuing to apply their learning to real-world examples such as buying a home, inflation and exchange rates. It has been particularly rewarding to see students becoming increasingly confident when analysing business decisions and justifying their opinions using past paper questions. They now have an excellent platform as they prepare to enter Year 11.

Our **Year 12 Economics students** have also had an excellent Summer Term as they continue their studies on the Edexcel A Level course. Students have tackled increasingly challenging economic concepts with maturity and determination, developing their understanding of both national and global economic issues. One of the highlights has been the quality of discussion in lessons, with students confidently debating current affairs and applying economic theory to events making headlines around the world. They have also been looking at how the turmoil in the middle east have been affecting interest rates in the UK. It has been wonderful to watch their confidence grow as they refine their analytical and evaluative writing skills in preparation for the demands of Year 13.

Similarly, our **Year 12 Business students** have continued to thrive on the Edexcel A Level course. Throughout the term, they have explored how businesses respond to changing markets, competition and economic conditions, while developing the critical thinking and decision-making skills that are essential for success in both examinations and the workplace. Students have impressed with their ability to apply business theory to familiar organisations and contemporary business issues, demonstrating increasing independence and confidence in their written responses. Learning extends far beyond the classroom at St Mary's, and this term students have embraced a range of enrichment opportunities that have brought their studies to life. From investigating well-known and inspiring male and female entrepreneurs to imagining they are the Chancellor of the Exchequer. They have also been looking at how the turmoil in the middle east have been affecting interest rates in the UK. These experiences continue to develop not only subject knowledge but also teamwork, communication, leadership and problem-solving skills that will benefit them in higher education and future careers.

As always, we are incredibly proud of the positive attitude, resilience and dedication shown by our students. Their willingness to challenge themselves, support one another and strive for continual improvement has been a real highlight of the term. We wish everyone a restful summer break and look forward to welcoming our students back in September for another exciting year of learning and enterprise.



COMPUTING

The summer term has been another busy and exciting one for students across the Computing and IT department, with learners developing their digital literacy, computational thinking and programming skills through a range of engaging and challenging activities.

All **Key Stage 3** students began the term by exploring spreadsheets, an essential digital tool used extensively in education, business and everyday life. In **Year 7**, students were introduced to the key features of spreadsheets, learning how to create simple formulas and use functions such as SUM, MAX, MIN and AVERAGE to analyse data. Building on these foundations, **Year 8** students applied their knowledge in the context of a pocket money tracker, developing their ability to use formulas and functions to model and monitor financial information. **Year 9** students took their spreadsheet skills even further by creating business-themed solutions to track expenditure, while also exploring more advanced features such as data validation to improve the accuracy and reliability of their work.

Date	Item	Cost of Item	Quantity	Total	Overall
15/05/2024	Bag of Flour	£ 2.50	10	£ 25.00	£ 25.00
15/05/2024	Bag of Sugar	£ 3.00	10	£ 30.00	£ 55.00
15/05/2024	Pack of 12 eggs	£ 3.00	10	£ 30.00	£ 85.00
15/05/2024	Cartons of milk	£ 4.00	10	£ 40.00	£ 125.00
15/05/2024	Vanilla	£ 7.00	10	£ 70.00	£ 195.00
15/05/2024	Bag of Fruit	£ 10.00	10	£ 100.00	£ 295.00
15/05/2024	Cartons of coffee	£ 3.00	10	£ 30.00	£ 325.00
15/05/2024	Butter	£ 3.00	10	£ 30.00	£ 355.00
15/05/2024	Pack of 12 eggs	£ 3.00	10	£ 30.00	£ 385.00
15/05/2024	Bag of Flour	£ 2.50	10	£ 25.00	£ 410.00
15/05/2024	Cartons of milk	£ 4.00	10	£ 40.00	£ 450.00
15/05/2024	Vanilla	£ 7.00	10	£ 70.00	£ 520.00
15/05/2024	Bag of Fruit	£ 10.00	10	£ 100.00	£ 620.00
15/05/2024	Cartons of coffee	£ 3.00	10	£ 30.00	£ 650.00
15/05/2024	Butter	£ 3.00	10	£ 30.00	£ 680.00
15/05/2024	Pack of 12 eggs	£ 3.00	10	£ 30.00	£ 710.00
15/05/2024	Cartons of milk	£ 4.00	10	£ 40.00	£ 750.00
15/05/2024	Vanilla	£ 7.00	10	£ 70.00	£ 820.00
15/05/2024	Bag of Fruit	£ 10.00	10	£ 100.00	£ 920.00
15/05/2024	Cartons of coffee	£ 3.00	10	£ 30.00	£ 950.00
15/05/2024	Butter	£ 3.00	10	£ 30.00	£ 980.00
15/05/2024	Pack of 12 eggs	£ 3.00	10	£ 30.00	£ 1010.00
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15/05/2024	Cartons of milk	£ 4.00	10	£ 40.00	£ 1350.00
15/05/2024	Vanilla	£ 7.00	10	£ 70.00	£ 1420.00
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15/05/2024	Butter	£ 3.00	10	£ 30.00	£ 1580.00
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15/05/2024	Bag of Fruit	£ 10.00	10	£ 100.00	£ 2120.00
15/05/2024	Cartons of coffee	£ 3.00	10	£ 30.00	£ 2150.00
15/05/2024	Butter	£ 3.00	10	£ 30.00	£ 2180.00
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15/05/2024	Butter	£ 3.00	10	£ 30.00	£ 6980.00
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15/05/2024	Cartons of milk	£ 4.00	10	£ 40.00	£ 7050.00
15/05/2024	Vanilla	£ 7.00	10	£ 70.00	£ 7120.00
15/05/2024	Bag of Fruit	£ 10.00	10	£ 100.00	£ 7220.00
15/05/2024	Cartons of coffee	£ 3.00	10	£ 30.00	£ 7250.00
15/05/2024	Butter	£ 3.00	10	£ 30.00	£ 7280.00
15/05/2024	Pack of 12 eggs	£ 3.00	10	£ 30.00	£ 731

DESIGN TECHNOLOGY

It has been another exciting and productive year in the Design & Technology department, with students across all key stages demonstrating creativity, resilience, and an impressive range of practical skills. Through designing, making, evaluating, and refining their work, students have continued to develop confidence while producing outcomes of an exceptionally high standard.

Our **Year 10 Food Preparation and Nutrition students** have had an excellent year developing both their practical cooking skills and their understanding of nutrition and food science. During the final term, students have been given the opportunity to explore and refine dishes in preparation for their upcoming practical examination. They experimented with flavour combinations, presentation techniques, and a variety of cooking methods while developing the confidence to adapt and improve their recipes.

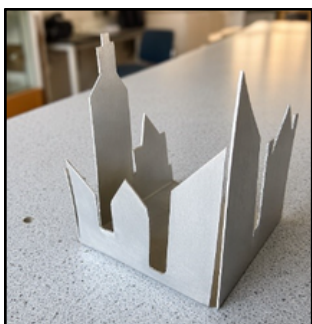
Throughout the year, students have demonstrated increasing independence in the kitchen, applying the skills they have developed to produce dishes that are creative and technically accomplished. Mrs Johnson has praised the class for their commitment, enthusiasm, and attention to detail, with many students producing restaurant-quality dishes that they should be incredibly proud of. We look forward to seeing them build on these successes as they begin their GCSE practical assessments next year.

Key Stage 3 Product Design has continued to flourish this year, with recent curriculum refinements leading to increasingly high-quality student outcomes. Across Years 7 to 9, students have embraced the opportunity to design and manufacture products that combine creativity with practical manufacturing skills. Year 7 students have produced some outstanding Blockhead projects this term. Their thoughtful design decisions, careful selection of materials, and high-quality finishing techniques have resulted in a fantastic range of unique products. It has been particularly pleasing to see students develop confidence in using workshop tools safely while demonstrating excellent attention to detail throughout the manufacturing process.

The **Year 7 Eco Keyring** project has also been a tremendous success. Students have explored sustainability by collecting and recycling plastic bottle caps from home before transforming them into colourful keyrings using specialist equipment. Alongside manufacturing their products, students also designed and created attractive packaging, encouraging them to consider branding, presentation, and environmental responsibility throughout the design process. The creativity shown has been exceptional, with many students producing professional-looking final outcomes.

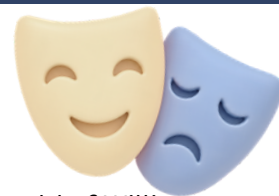
A significant addition to the **Year 9 curriculum** has been the introduction of the Urban Lantern project. Drawing inspiration from architecture, students have designed and manufactured decorative tealight holders using a range of sheet metal shaping, forming, and fabrication techniques. The project encourages students to explore how architectural forms can influence product design while developing greater precision and confidence when working with metal. The finished lanterns have showcased not only excellent practical skills but also thoughtful and imaginative design ideas.

Alongside these practical projects, students across Key Stage 3 have continued to strengthen their understanding of the design process, computer-aided design (CAD), sustainability, materials, manufacturing processes, and the importance of evaluating and refining their work. These experiences provide an excellent foundation for those considering GCSE Design & Technology or Food Preparation and Nutrition in the future.



DRAMA

All the World's a Stage!

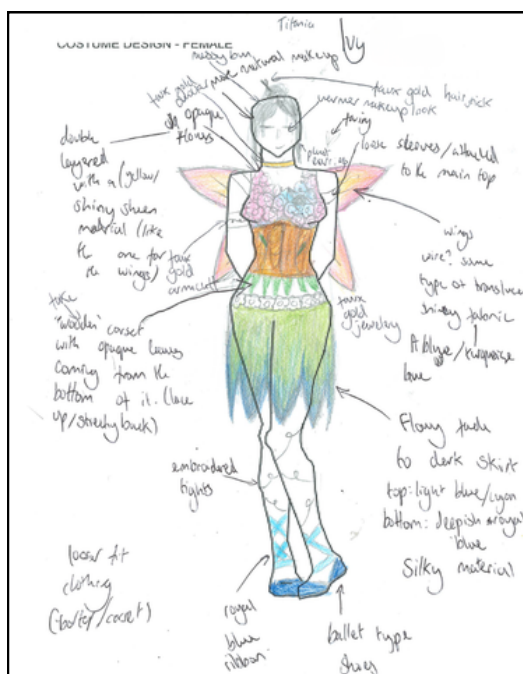
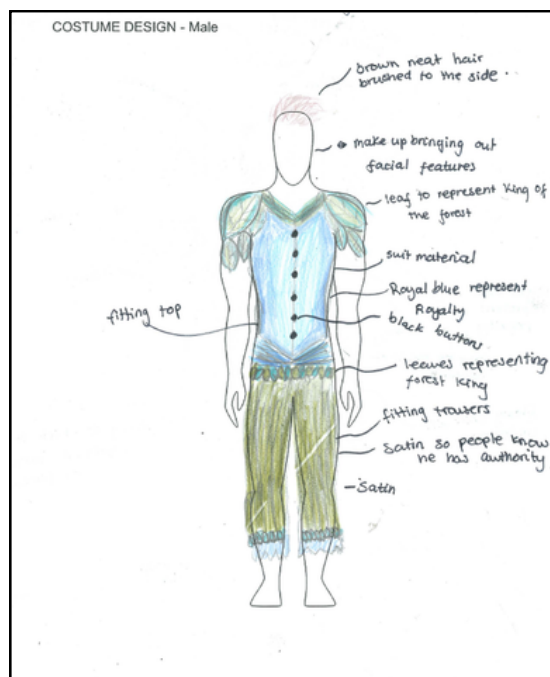


This summer term in Drama, Key Stage 3 students have been exploring the wonderful world of William Shakespeare.

Year 7 have been looking at extracts from several of the Bard's best known plays, including Macbeth, A Midsummer Night's Dream and Hamlet.

Year 8 have been looking more closely at A Midsummer Night's Dream learning about the plot, themes and characters through practical exploration of key scenes. Students have also been learning about Design for Theatre, creating mood-boards, set designs and costumes designs for the play, a selection of these can be seen below.

Year 9 explored Romeo and Juliet, developing performance skills and thinking about life as a 'player' in Elizabethan England by recreating the Globe Theatre right here in The Hume Theatre. More recently, Year 9 have been learning about Radio commercials. Working in 'production teams', they have developed new products or services and then written 30 second radio commercials for them using key marketing and voice techniques.



ENGLISH

St Francis of Assisi Trust Writing Competition

This term saw the launch of the second annual writing competition, in which Year 7 students were charged with the task of firing up their creative minds and letting it run riot on the page! The competition also ran in our partner primary schools across the Trust, with the following task prompts:



The Door that was not there Yesterday



A mysterious door has appeared somewhere unexpected, such as in a playground, library, tree trunk, school hall or even a desert!



Write a narrative about discovering the door and where it leads to.



This could be done as the opening chapter of a longer story, or a short narrative piece.

We received many wonderful entries, all full of exciting and fantastical characters. From children lost in the woods to mysterious voices emanating from cupboards, our Year 7s showed off their imaginations and made it very difficult for us to choose winners! However, choose winners we did and so special congratulations must be extended to Lisa N-D (7A), Patryk L (7C), Sophie A (7D) and Leon K (7F). You can read some of their fantastic work below!

In the quiet little town of Crookicks lived a girl called Mary Curley. She'd always loved nature. The second the school bell rang each afternoon, she'd grab her scuffed green bike and vanish into the woods behind her house. She lived for the sound of birds, the river glinting as it wound through the trees, and that soft, cool breeze that seemed to follow her everywhere. Her best friend Lennie Steinbeck always came along. Unlike Mary, who stopped to notice every flower and feather, Lennie was obsessed with riddles. Every ride started with a new puzzle — and Mary almost never guessed the right answer. "Ready?" Lennie grinned as they cycled under the tall oaks. "Only if it's easier than yesterday's," Mary laughed. "Can't promise anything." They rode on, tyres crunching over twigs and leaves, following the same path they'd taken hundreds of times before. Then Mary slammed on her brakes so suddenly Lennie nearly crashed into her. "What's up?" Mary just pointed. Between the trees, a faint emerald glow shimmered.

The door that was not there yesterday

The boy was there yesterday and yet there was nothing.

The deciduous forest hid many secrets and riddles, but one thing odd, a maroon door in the size of a giant stood concealed between tall trees and berry bushes.

A boy with many thoughts, but a single dream. Every time he ventured into the forest, he contemplated wondrous wildlife and pendulous plants. He was extremely exceptional in sports as well as schoolwork. He had one dream. One. To transform the forest into to a vibrant habitat for animals. Where did this stem from? Well, this happy ending, did not come from happy beginnings. This burning passion came from. . .

Visit of DCI Hogg to St Mary's English Department

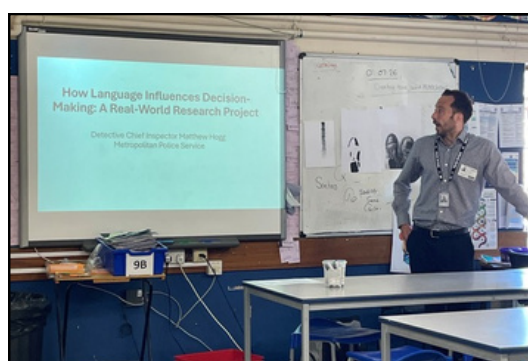
On Thursday 9th July, seven other students and I had the opportunity to learn about how important communication is within the police force and the way it influences priority for missing persons investigations. Detective Chief Inspector Matthew Hogg came in and delivered an insightful presentation on his ongoing PhD investigation into the effect of written communication within the Metropolitan Police Force. He conveyed clearly how important and unconsciously impactful written communication can be when detective officers must decide what cases take priority when handling 15–20 at the same time.

Through his two years of research so far, it was clear that he had a deep understanding of the consequences of inaccurate, insouciant grading/risk assessments, and how they influenced the handling missing persons reports. We saw multiple examples of how the smallest language differences in these assessments can have a massive impact on how seriously the case is taken, and the priority it holds among other cases. For instance, language that dismisses a youth as a habitual runaway can unintentionally lower their risk level, delaying critical resources.

Ultimately, the session highlighted how precise terminology is vital to ensuring that vulnerable individuals receive the urgent attention they require, proving that effective writing directly correlates with public safety.

Overall, the talk was a deeply enriching experience and we thank DCI Hogg wholeheartedly for the generous giving of his time.

Marlow W (Year 12 English Student)



GEOGRAPHY



Our Year 13 Geography A-Level students submitted their final NEA coursework assignments and sat their final exams.

We were delighted to attend Prom with them to celebrate the formal ending of their 7-year journey with us at St Mary's. Huge congratulations and the very best of luck for their final results to Max, Patricia, Connor and Charlie. They have all worked incredibly hard over the last two years and we will be sorry to see them go.

Our Year 7 and Year 8 students have recently completed a classwork and extended homework assignment called, 'My Autobiographical Island'. Here are some examples of students' work that was used in the display:



Our Year 9 students completed their studies of Brazil's Tropical Rainforests by creating an interactive wall display.

Our Year 10 GCSE students have been studying the plants and animals of a range of UK ecosystems, including deciduous woodlands, wetlands, moorlands and heathlands. They have created a fantastic display to help with their revision



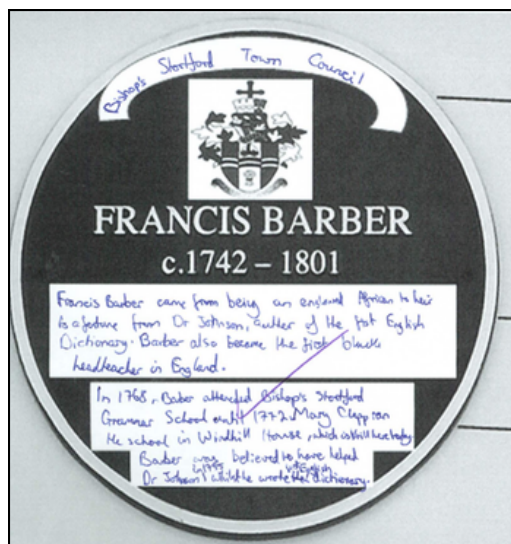
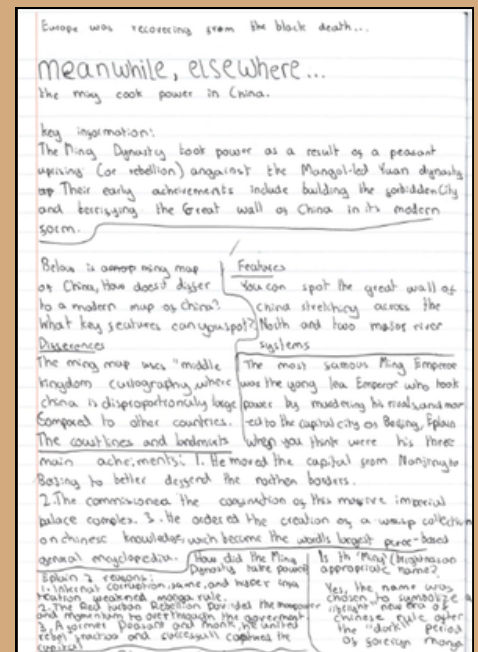
Miss Duffy created an imaginative large scale 'Coasts' wall display in her classroom, with the help of her Year 9 students, which shows coastal erosional and depositional landforms that are studied in Year 10 for GCSE.

HISTORY & POLITICS



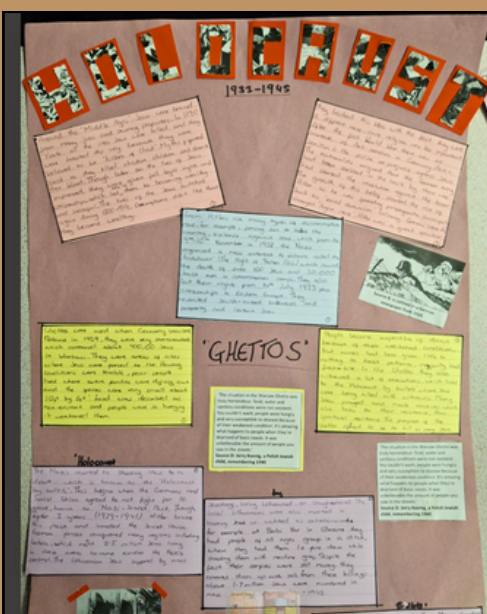
Year 7: The Black Death and Peasants' Revolt – Plague and Protest. Our Year 7 historians have journeyed through one of the most dramatic periods of medieval history.

They've explored the terrifying arrival of the Black Death in 1348, uncovering medieval beliefs, treatments, and the devastating consequences of the plague. They then turned to the Peasants' Revolt of 1381, investigating how ordinary people rose up against injustice and demanded change – a powerful story of resistance in the Middle Ages.

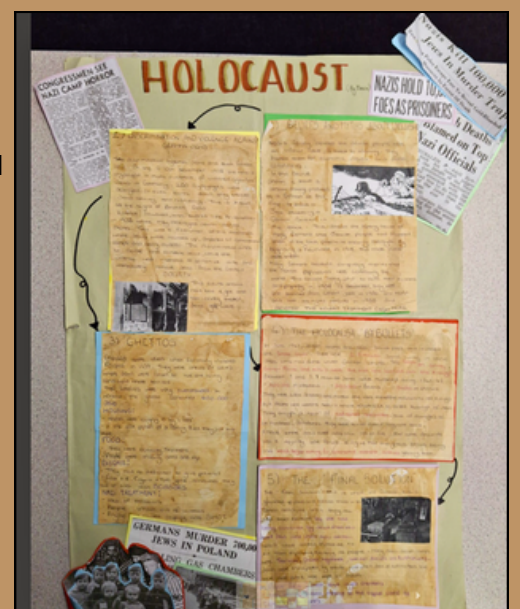


Year 8: The Transatlantic Slave Trade – Human Cost and Historical Legacy. This term, Year 8 have explored the history of the transatlantic slave trade and its profound impact on Africa, the Americas, and Britain.

They have investigated how the trade developed, the experiences of enslaved Africans, and the role that slavery played in the growth of the British Empire. Students have also examined resistance to enslavement, the campaign for abolition, and the lasting legacy of the slave trade, encouraging them to reflect on questions of justice, equality, and historical responsibility.



Year 9: The Holocaust – Memory and Meaning. Year 9 have taken on one of the most important and difficult topics in modern history – the Holocaust. They've investigated how Nazi antisemitism escalated into genocide, learning about the persecution of Jewish people and other targeted groups. Through survivor testimonies and detailed case studies, students have reflected on the human impact of the Holocaust and why remembering it remains vital today. They have been working on a museum exhibit telling people all about the different aspects of this period.



HISTORY & POLITICS



Year 10: Elizabethan England – Power, Plots and Progress.

Our GCSE students have been exploring the dramatic world of Elizabeth I. From deadly plots and religious divisions to dazzling court culture and daring voyages of exploration, Year 10 have investigated the challenges Elizabeth faced and how she ruled a nation on the edge of change. They've gained insight into one of the most iconic periods in English history – a time of both tension and triumph.



Year 12: The Fall of Napoleon and Thatcher's Britain.

This term, Year 12 students have explored the dramatic final years of Napoleon's rule, examining the challenges posed by the Peninsular War, the disastrous invasion of Russia, the Sixth Coalition, and the Hundred Days.

They have considered the reasons for Napoleon's eventual defeat and evaluated the relative importance of military, political, and economic factors in the collapse of his empire. Alongside this, students have examined Margaret Thatcher's premiership, analysing how she rose to power, reshaped the British economy, and divided public opinion. From the Falklands War to the miners' strike, this has been an engaging and thought-provoking term.



In A-Level Politics, Year 12 students have been exploring the core ideologies that shape our world. They've examined conservatism, from traditional values to New Right thinking, considering how ideas about order, authority and change influence political decision-making.

They've also studied feminism, analysing key thinkers and movements that have challenged patriarchy and fought for equality. Students have debated competing visions of society, developing their understanding of political theory and real-world impact.

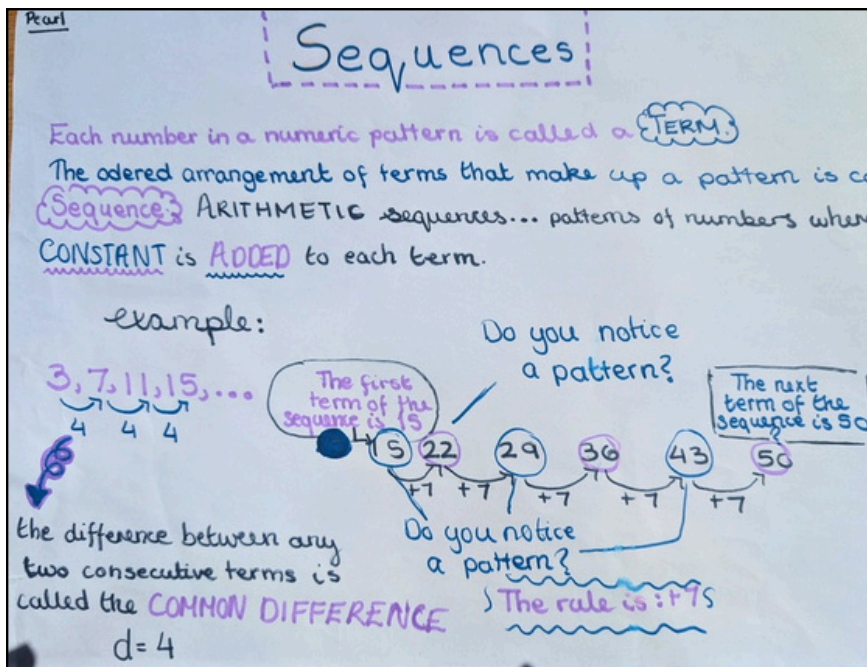


MATHS

At St Mary's, every student's mathematical journey is one of growth, challenge, and discovering new skills. From the moment they join us in Year 7, students begin building the confidence and competence that will underpin their success throughout their education. They explore fundamental concepts such as number, algebra, geometry, and sequences, developing fluency while learning to think logically, solve problems, and explain their reasoning with increasing confidence. As they progress through Key Stage 3 and into GCSE, students are encouraged to embrace challenge, make connections across different areas of mathematics, and apply their knowledge to unfamiliar situations. Along the way, they develop the belief that everyone can succeed in mathematics through effort and determination.

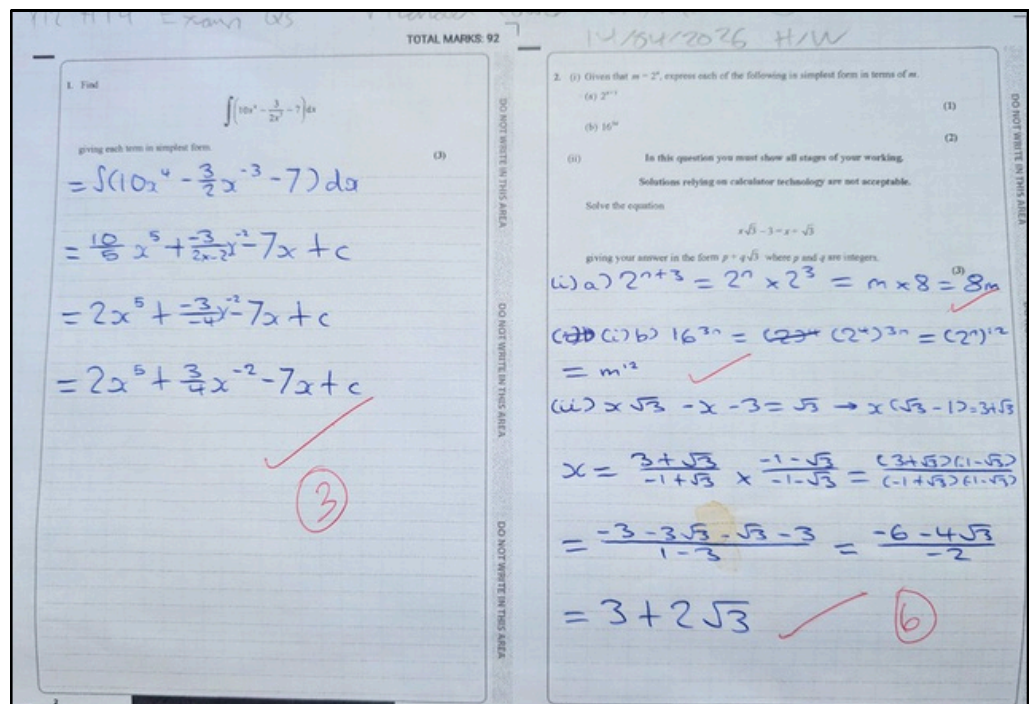
For students who continue their studies in the Sixth Form, the journey becomes even more exciting. A Level Mathematics, Further Mathematics, and Core Maths provide opportunities to explore problems including calculus, statistics, mechanics, mathematical modelling, and decision mathematics. Students deepen their understanding while developing the analytical and problem-solving skills that are essential for university courses and a wide range of careers. Core Maths also equips students with practical mathematical techniques for interpreting data, evaluating risk, and making informed decisions in an increasingly data-driven world.

At St Mary's, mathematics is more than a qualification—it is a journey that nurtures confidence, and ambition to take all students to their chosen career. By the end of Year 13, our students leave with not only excellent mathematical knowledge but also lifelong skills that will enable them to thrive at university and beyond.



The Maths journey at St Mary's from Year 7 to Year 12.

$$a^2 + b^2 = c^2$$

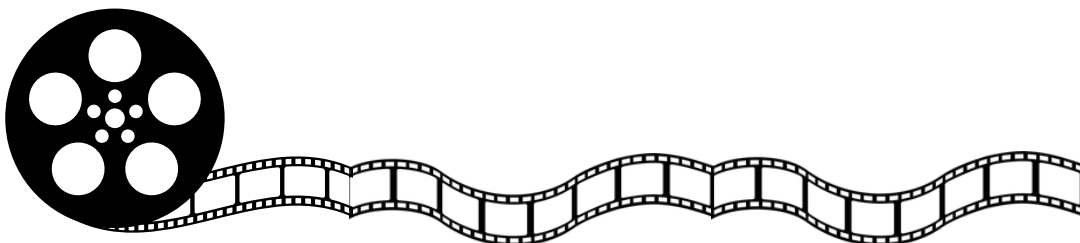


MEDIA & FILM STUDIES

It's been another creative, curious, and collaborative academic year in the Media and Film department. We have completed some great production work in the new Media suite in the Sixth Form block, and the students have been inspired using the industry standard Adobe Creative Suite software, specifically Photoshop for magazine production and Premier Pro for editing short films. This has inspired many to opt for marketing, film and media production Higher Education courses too.

Our media and film visits have continued; we recently visited a production studio where the students gained a behind the scenes insight in how technology is used to create visual effects in advertising and were able to get hand on experience in a demo by an industry professional. We also had an exciting opportunity to attend a tour and production workshop at Sky Studios in Elstree, kindly arranged by the careers department.

Students will continue their hard work and creativity over the summer, shooting footage for their short films and stills for their magazine productions. I look forward to updating you on the next generation of publishers, editors and cinematographers in the class of 2027.

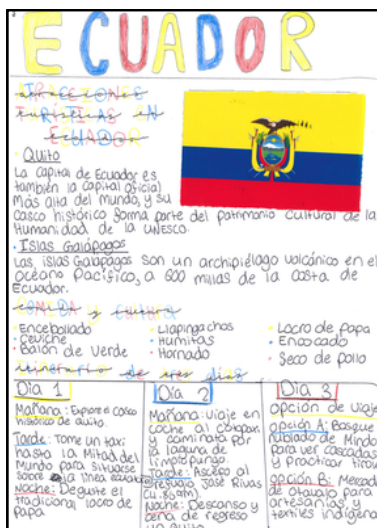
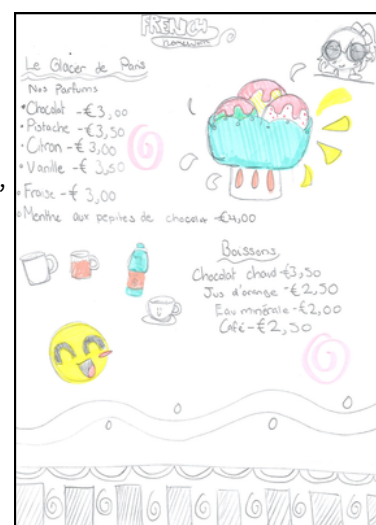


MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

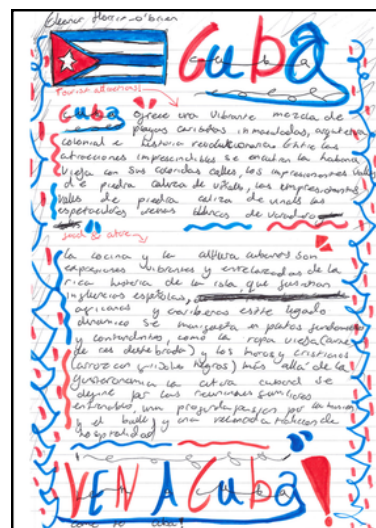
Bonnes Vacances! Buenas vacaciones! Buona vacanza! to all our French, Spanish and Italian students. We look forward to seeing you after the summer holidays! Have a fun and relaxing time.



In **Year 7**, MFL students have been learning to use irregular verbs in the present tense and to use the near future. In French we've focused on ordering food and drink in the café, understanding prices in French and describing what you do/are going to do at the weekend, including a visit to Paris. In Italian, students have been learning how to describe sports, free-time activities, TV and films. In Spanish, students have been learning to describe their town or village, telling the time, order in a café. Here are some examples of menus created by Y7 French and Y8 Italian students.



In **Year 8**, MFL students have continued to build on their knowledge of the present, past perfect and future tenses. In French, students have been learning to talking about sports, give directions and talk about injuries and illnesses. This half-term, students have been learning about French singers from the 1950s to the present day, including the cultural and political background to their music. In Italian, students have been learning to describe jobs and duties at work and possible jobs for the future. In Spanish, students have been learning to describing holiday activities, ask for directions and talk about summer camps. This half term, students have been doing a project on Hispanic countries, nationalities and culture.



In **Year 9**, MFL students have continued to build on their knowledge of the present, future, perfect and imperfect tenses. In French, students have been learning about Francophone countries, discussing young French speakers they would like to meet and learning about Francophone footballers. This half-term, students have been learning about French singers from the 1950s to the present day, including the cultural and political background to their music. In Italian, students have been learning to describe free-time activities (music, cinema and TV, Food and Eating out and Sport). In Spanish, students have been learning to discuss travel plans and Hispanic Festivals.



Year 10 French and Spanish students are coping very well with the rigours of a new GCSE specification where the focus is on mastering grammar in order to be able to manipulate the language. Students have also been learning phonics in order to ensure that they can pronounce the language accurately to achieve good results in the new read aloud section of the oral exam and in the dictation. Year 10 Italian students have been making excellent progress with the old specification. All students completed a mock speaking exam and sat a full end of Year 10 listening, reading and writing paper.

Over the Summer holidays, please do encourage your children to dabble in the activities outlined on the supercurricular documents for French, Spanish and Italian which can be found on the school website (under curriculum) and on Teams.

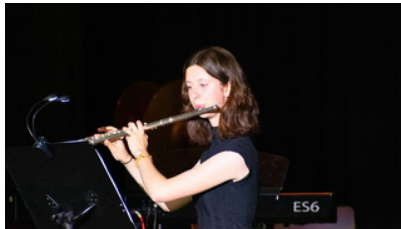
MUSIC

Our **Summer Concert** was a wonderful celebration of the talent, dedication and hard work of our students, who performed to a packed and enthusiastic audience. The programme took listeners on a musical journey from Tchaikovsky to Blur, The Jungle Book to Star Wars, showcasing an impressive variety of styles and genres.

Every performer should be immensely proud. Weeks of rehearsals were reflected in the confidence, musicianship and professionalism displayed on stage, highlighting the strength of our vibrant musical community.

A standout performance came from our 65-strong Pop Choir, whose energetic ABBA medley, complete with choreography, delighted the audience. This year's Battle of the Bands winners gave a superb rendition of I Will Survive, while the Worship Band's moving performance of Holy Forever provided a powerful and emotional moment. Outstanding soloists, five rock bands and three instrumental ensembles further demonstrated the depth of talent within our music department.

Our thanks go to Alda and Aaron for their excellent work as comperes, and to Ms Wojcik, Mrs Russell, Dr Bentley and Miss Matthews for their dedication in making the evening run so smoothly. Congratulations to every performer for making this year's Summer Concert such a memorable success. Your passion, commitment and hard work shone through in every performance, and we are incredibly proud of all you achieved.



St Mary's Bronze Arts Award Trip

Since November 2025, twelve students from Year 8 have been studying for a Bronze Arts Award qualification with Mrs Russel. This course involves learning new artistic skills and then teaching these new skills to someone else, as well as researching an artist, and reviewing a live performance. The course has followed a military music theme, with four students learning to play the trumpet and eight students learning to play military snare drum. On Tuesday 7th July, the students performed a specially composed fanfare in front of a small audience of parents and friends. Then, on Thursday 9th July, they were taken to Horse Guards Parade in London to watch 'A



Military Musical Spectacular'. This was a wonderful experience for the Arts Award group as they witnessed performances by the Bands of the Household Cavalry, Grenadier, Scots, Irish and Welsh Guards, as well as the Pipes and Drums of the Scots Guards and The London Scottish Regiment. The students also enjoyed performances by The Band of The Brigade of Gurkhas and The Top Secret Drum Corps who had flown in from Switzerland for the event. It was a fantastic trip which the Arts Award students will now review as part of their qualification portfolio. We wish the students well in completing their qualification in October 2026.



Ware Brass Band Workshop

On Tuesday 7th July, Ware Brass Band visited St Mary's to deliver a workshop for Year 7. They were joined by Years 4 and 5 from St Joseph's, Bishop's Stortford. It was a fun and engaging workshop featuring performances by the band as well as demonstrations of each instrument. The students clapped and stamped in time to 'We Will Rock You', 'buzzed' along with 'Sweet Caroline' and three students successfully managed to play some notes on the trombones and trumpets with just a few minutes of tuition. Ware Brass were delighted by how supportive and encouraging their audience were and we hope that some of the students will have been inspired to take up instrument lessons from September. We are so grateful to the band for giving up their time for free to inspire a new generation of musicians.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

As we reach the end of another successful academic year, the PE Department is delighted to reflect on an outstanding Summer Term. Across all year groups, our students have continued to demonstrate enthusiasm, resilience and a genuine passion for physical activity, both within lessons and through our extensive extra-curricular programme.

Key Stage 3

Throughout the summer term, students in Years 7, 8 and 9 have enjoyed participating in a range of seasonal activities including athletics, cricket, tennis and rounders. Lessons have focused on developing technical skills, tactical awareness, teamwork and leadership, while encouraging students to challenge themselves and demonstrate excellent sportsmanship.

Many students have proudly represented the school in district cricket, rounders and athletics competitions, competing with determination against strong opposition. We are particularly proud of the exceptional performances that resulted in several new district, county and school records.

Congratulations to:

Bella K (Year 7), who set new district records in both the 800m (2:19) and 1500m (4:58).
Isla K (Year 9), who set a new district record in the 1500m with an outstanding time of 5:00.

Oluwagbemisola M (Year 10), who achieved a new school record at the County Championships with a high jump of 1.64m and a long jump of 5.01m.

Key Stage 4

Year 10 GCSE PE students have continued to develop both their practical performance and theoretical understanding in preparation for Year 11. This term they completed their mock examinations alongside practical moderation assessments. The quality of both their practical performances and written work reflects the effort they have invested throughout the course, placing them in a strong position for the year ahead. Our Year 11 students have now completed their GCSE PE examinations. We are incredibly proud of determination they displayed throughout the course. We wish them every success with their results and look forward to welcoming many back to continue their studies in A-Level Physical Education.

A-Level Physical Education

Our Year 13 students have now completed their A-Level examinations, marking the end of their journey with us. Throughout the course, they have demonstrated outstanding commitment and enthusiasm. We would like to thank them for the positive contribution they have made to the department and wish them every success for their future.

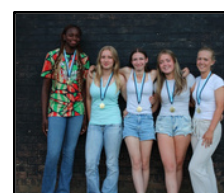
Competitive Sport and Enrichment

The summer term also included two memorable sports tours. Our girls' netball tour to Holland was a tremendous success, providing students with the opportunity to compete against high-quality international and UK schools while experiencing a different sporting culture. The boys' football tour was equally successful, featuring competitive fixtures against local opposition as well as an unforgettable training and playing experience at Wolverhampton Wanderers' training facilities. Both tours provided invaluable opportunities for students to develop their sporting skills, confidence and teamwork beyond the classroom.

Celebrating Success

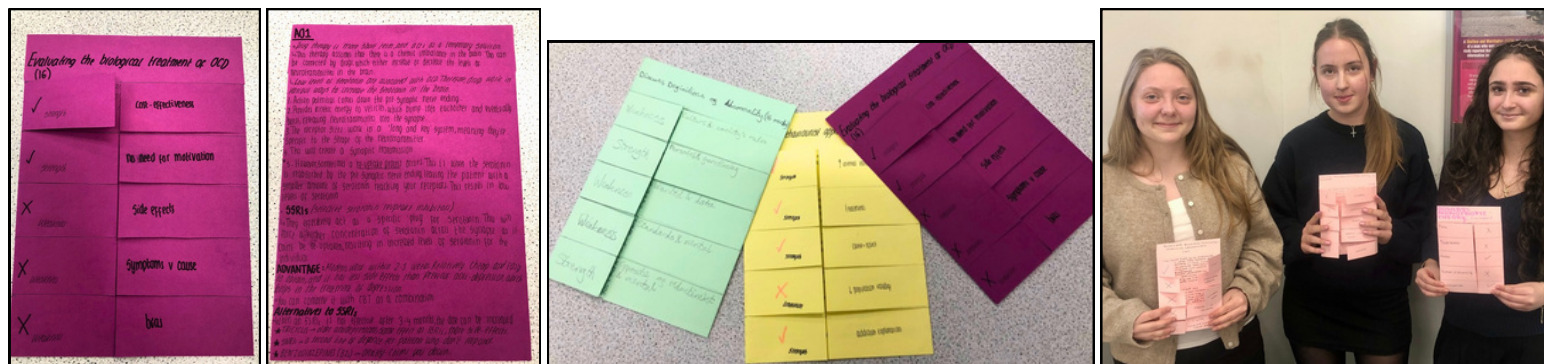
Our annual Sports Presentation Evening held on Friday 3rd July, was a wonderful celebration of the commitment, resilience and achievements of students across all areas of PE and school sport. The event was exceptionally well attended, and we would like to thank all of the students, families, staff and FOSM for making the evening such a memorable occasion.

As we look ahead to the next academic year, we are excited to continue building on this year's successes with an extensive programme of fixtures, competitions and enrichment opportunities. We wish all of our students and families a safe, enjoyable and active summer break, and we look forward to welcoming everyone back in September for another exciting year of sport.



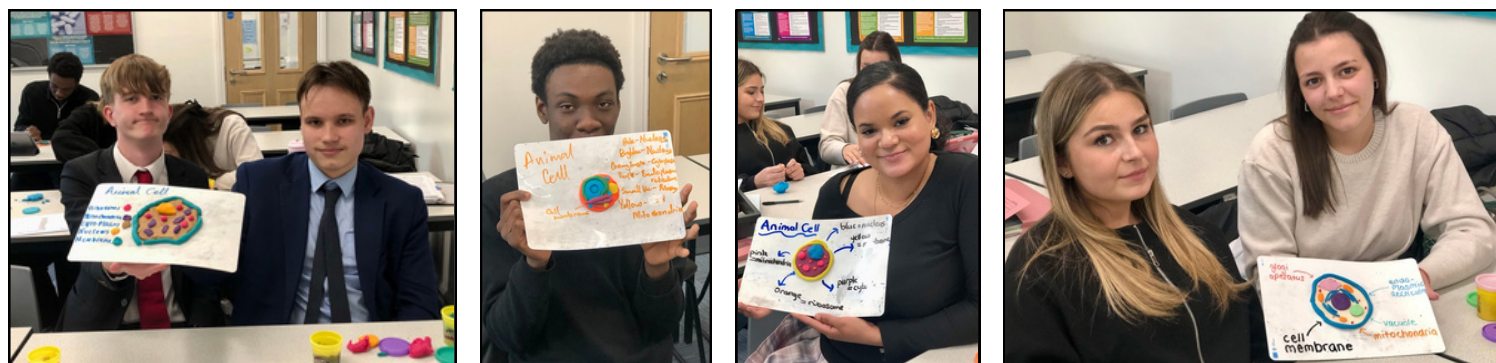
PSYCHOLOGY

Our Year 12 Psychology A-Level students have been developing their essay-writing skills using interactive revision 'foldables' to structure 16-mark exam responses. The foldables provide a simple but highly effective way of planning and organising extended answers, helping students to balance knowledge with evaluation while reinforcing the structure needed for success in A Level Psychology. They also double up as a valuable revision resource that students can return to throughout the year. Strong essay writing is a key factor in achieving the highest grades in Psychology, and this engaging approach helps students build the confidence and exam technique needed to tackle extended-response questions successfully.



HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE

Our Year 12 AAQ Health & Social Care Extended Certificate students have been exploring the fascinating world of Human Biology as part of Unit 2, which accounts for 25% of the qualification. So far, students have investigated cells, tissues, energy and homeostatic mechanisms, developing the scientific knowledge that underpins the study of body systems and the impact that disorders can have on the human body. To bring their learning to life, students swapped textbooks for Play-Doh, creating detailed models of animal cells to identify and explain the function of key cellular structures. The hands-on activity proved to be both engaging and memorable, helping students reinforce their understanding while having plenty of fun along the way. We look forward to seeing our students build on these foundations as they continue exploring the complexity of the human body throughout the course.

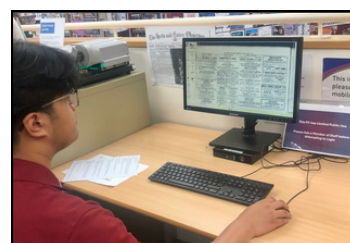


EPQ

Our Year 12 Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) students recently visited Bishop's Stortford Library to develop the research skills that are essential for success in the EPQ. During the visit, students explored a variety of resources, including historical maps, microfilm archives, academic journals and digital databases, discovering how to access reliable sources beyond a simple internet search.

Students are currently in the early research stages of their working project titles, which this year include topics such as Formula One safety, burnout amongst female NHS doctors, the impact of ballet training on physical and mental wellbeing, and the causes of the 1992 Los Angeles riots.

The EPQ provides students with the opportunity to investigate a topic they are passionate about while developing the independent research, critical thinking and analytical skills that are highly valued by universities and employers. We are looking forward to seeing their projects develop over the coming months.



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Our **Year 7** students have been focusing on the role of the Holy Spirit in Christian life, with a particular emphasis on Luke's Gospel and the importance of Pentecost. They have completed the year with a look at different Christian denominations and an in-depth study of Hinduism.

Year 8 students have been considering whether there is life after death. They have had religious and philosophical debates on the existence of the soul, heaven, hell and purgatory. They have completed the year studying some of the teachings of Vatican II, our relationships with the Eastern Catholic Churches and our approach to other non-Christian religions. Students have finished the academic year with a study of the tenets and traditions within Islam.

In **Year 9** students have been learning in depth about the nature of the Catholic Church. This has included the role of the Pope and bishops, saints and angels, and the importance of prayers of intercession, especially for those who have died before us. They have concluded the year by preparing for their GCSE studies. Two of the ten GCSE units require knowledge of Jewish beliefs and practices, so students have been undertaking some essential foundational learning that will make their GCSE course much easier.

Our **Year 10** GCSE students have also been learning about the Jewish faith this term. They have had the opportunity to explore the faith of Our Lord and see how Christianity has many similarities with that of our brothers and sisters in faith. These units have been particularly relevant in the current political climate and with the concerns we have for the safety and well-being of British Jewish community in our society.

We have eight students currently taking A Level Religious Studies in **Year 12**. They have recently been studying religious experience, critiques of religion/belief and the role of art and music in Christianity. There is plenty of lively debate as the class is a confident and eclectic mix of students!

In the **Sixth Form** all students have one period of Core RE per week. These lessons are an opportunity to look at religious issues and developments worldwide. Much of the material we cover helps to support students in other areas of learning. This term Year 12 have been looking at Buddhism as this is a world religion that is not looked at lower down the school. They have compared and contrasted The Noble Eightfold Path with Christian teachings, considered whether there can be a religion that has no god and questioned whether suffering is subjective or objective. They have also learnt about the life of the Dalai Lama and the historical events that are still having an impact today.

Our **Year 11 GCSE** students and our **Year 13 A level** students have given us very positive feedback about their exams so we are very hopeful that all our students will get the grades they need and worked so hard for.

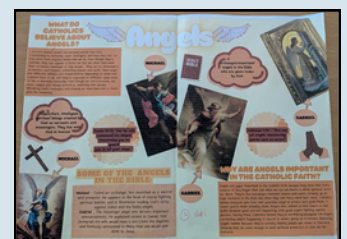
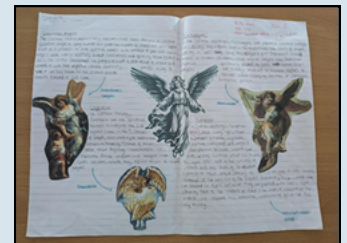
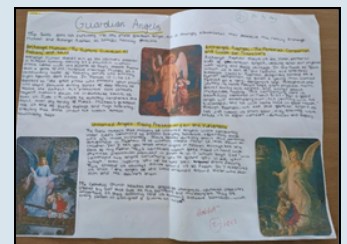
The RE department would like to thank all our students and their families for their hard work and support throughout the year. We are very proud of the work our students do and the contributions they make in lessons with their enthusiasm and willingness to share their faith experiences. We are a Catholic community that seeks to always develop the 'seed of faith and love' which parents have grown and nurtured.

We wish all our students and their families a wonderful summer holiday filled with joy, love, laughter and hopefully some rest. May God Bless you all each day.

Key Stage 3 RE students have produced creative projects for each module they studied this year. We have had wonderful responses to these homework activities from each year group and have enjoyed seeing not only their creative abilities but also the knowledge they have demonstrated in them.

This is a small selection of creative projects from Year 9 on angels (9.5 unit on The Church) and models of Herod's Temple (9.4 unit on Sacrifice).

Well done to all students who have worked hard on these projects every half term. We hope you enjoyed making them as much as we enjoyed seeing your efforts!



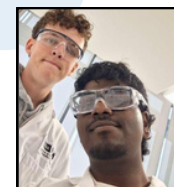
SCIENCE



Year 7 students have been developing their practical chemistry skills by making copper sulfate crystals in the laboratory. During the lesson, they safely reacted copper oxide with dilute sulfuric acid before filtering the mixture and allowing the solution to evaporate, producing bright blue copper sulfate crystals. This investigation helped students develop key scientific techniques, including measuring, heating, filtering and crystallisation, while reinforcing their understanding of chemical reactions, soluble salts and laboratory safety. It was an excellent opportunity for students to experience how chemists produce pure compounds using practical methods.



As part of a Pharmaceutical Sciences taster session at the University of Hertfordshire, Sophie, Kieran, Sam and I had the opportunity to carry out a practical experiment in the Nexus building's largest laboratory. We made a zinc cream, also known as Sudocrem, by measuring purified water using a top-pan balance and then mixing the ingredients in a 200 ml beaker. We were even able to name our own samples. It was exciting to work in a professional laboratory environment and experience what it feels like to be a real scientist.



Rosie M (Y12)



Year 12 Chemistry students recently carried out the synthesis of aspirin, giving them hands-on experience of an important organic chemistry process. Using salicylic acid and ethanoic anhydride with an acid catalyst, students produced aspirin before purifying it by recrystallisation and assessing the quality of their product. Throughout the practical, they developed essential laboratory skills, including accurate weighing, heating, filtration and recrystallisation, while reinforcing their understanding of organic synthesis, reaction mechanisms and purification techniques. The investigation provided valuable experience of the methods used by chemists in both research and the pharmaceutical industry.



Year 10 students investigated the effectiveness of different catalysts by measuring how quickly each one sped up a chemical reaction. Working scientifically, they carefully controlled variables, recorded reaction times and analysed their results to determine which catalyst was the most effective. The practical reinforced key concepts including collision theory, activation energy and the role of catalysts in increasing reaction rates without being used up. As well as developing their understanding of chemical reactions, students strengthened their practical skills in planning investigations, collecting reliable data and evaluating experimental evidence.



During the **Year 12 Chemistry Induction Day**, pupils had the opportunity to experience what studying A Level Chemistry is really like. They completed a titration practical, developing their laboratory skills while carrying out one of the core practical techniques used throughout the course. Pupils also explored folders of work produced by current A Level Chemistry students, giving them an insight into the standard and variety of work they can expect. To finish the session, they spoke with current Year 12 chemists, who shared their experiences, offered advice on succeeding in the subject, and answered questions about life as an A Level Chemistry student in St Marys.



SOCIOLOGY

We have had a very successful year of Sociology. Students have covered a range of interesting topics and learned very valuable essay writing skills. Topics include: culture and identity, youth subculture, research methods and social inequality. The students have worked very hard and risen to the challenge of a new subject. Some of their thoughts are included below:

Why do we queue? Why do we eat with a knife and fork? Why do some eat with chopsticks? These are called norms and they change across societies. Find out more by studying Sociology!

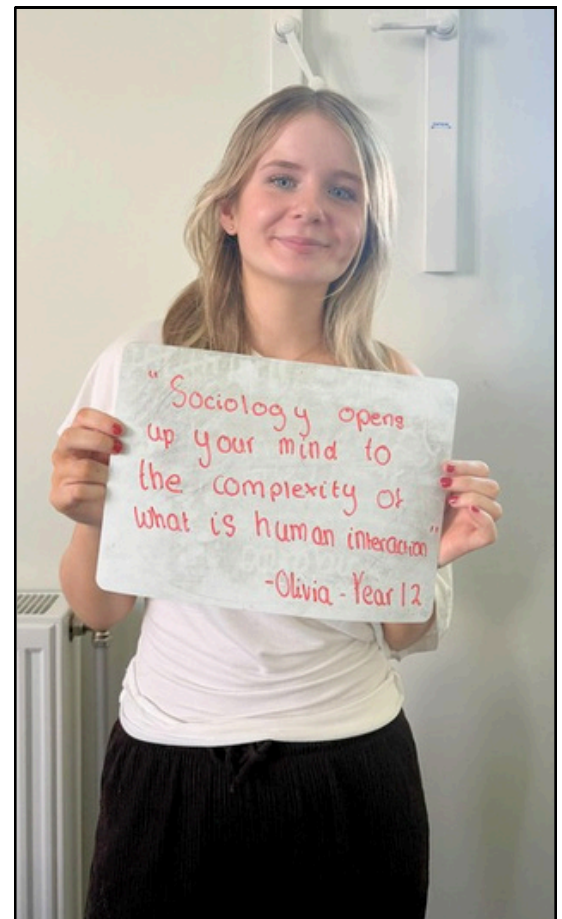
Anonymous, Y12

Develop knowledge, skills and understanding in areas such as inequality in society. It will benefit anyone who takes it and you will never lose an argument again!

Dan, Y12.

I like learning about ethnic inequality as it highlights how ethnic minorities are unfairly treated in society and how it is still significant today.

Henry, Y12



Gold Duke of Edinburgh Expedition



The Year 12 students undertaking the Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award have completed their qualifying expedition, four days and three nights of hiking and camping in the glorious Peak District. Despite a heatwave (and plenty of water refills!) the students had an amazing time and displayed some very impressive skills - navigation, map-reading, camping and cooking. All 18 students have shown excellent initiative and are well on their way to completing their award. Here we have a selection of photographs from both the trial and qualifying expeditions.

