

St. Aidan's Catholic Academy

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To all in our community,

As we approach a school term break, it is clear to me that the pace of study and the diligence of our young people is growing all of the time. Soon, the second planned round of mock exams will begin and I really hope that this diligent attitude manifests itself in a good set of outcomes for all pupils. I wish them all the luck in the world. We are continuing apace with our drive for improved numeracy and literacy across the academy. These are not only everyday life skills but essential if our young men are going to access fully all assessment and their final examinations in the future. Our holistic approach to a pupil's educational journey is very simple and has been proven to be highly effective. Earlier in the week, the government published the validated data of all schools across the country from the 2023 examination series. Our progress 8 score is +0.28 which compares very favourably to the city-wide average which is -0.50. In reality this means that, on average, pupils at our school make about three quarters of a grade's better progress than other pupils across the city. I am immensely proud that the young men who come through our doors at the start of their journey, leave with outcomes which allow an almost limitless choice of post-16 options allowing them to start climbing their next mountain whatever that may be. Our school community will now briefly pause for a break before we return to continue our vocation; to improve the life chances of every pupil.

Take care and God bless

Glenn Sanderson

Upcoming Events

Monday, February 19, 2024

Y7 Parent's Evening



Lord God, you are my strength.
Hold my hand in my weakness
and teach my heart to fly.
With you, there's nothing to
fear, nothing to worry about.
Hold me tight in your
embrace, so that I can be
stronger than the challenges
in my life.

Amen.

Chaplaincy

Sunday Gospel

Mark 1:40-45

Jesus Cleanses a Leper

A leper came to him begging him, and kneeling he said to him, "If you choose, you can make me clean." Moved with pity, Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, and said to him, "I do choose. Be made clean!" Immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean. After sternly warning him he sent him away at once, saying to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, as a testimony to them." But he went out and began to proclaim it freely, and to spread the word, so that Jesus could no longer go into a town openly, but stayed out in the country; and people came to him from every quarter.

The Year of Prayer

The year 2024 is the Year of prayer, as a preparatory year for the Jubilee. This is in preparation for the 2025 Jubilee Year 'Pilgrims of Hope'. Please see the link below for the diocesan page about the year of prayer.

<https://diocesehn.org.uk/living-the-faith/the-year-of-prayer-2024/>

To those of you who would want some inspiration with prayer I've found the link for Pilgrims of Prayer Booklet.

[Pilgrims-of-Prayer-A5-BOOKLET-School-of-Prayer.pdf \(cbcew.org.uk\)](#)

This year Lent begins on the 14th of February with Ash Wednesday. Lent lasts for 40 days, echoing the period of time Jesus spent in the desert. It is a time of preparation for the greatest feast in the Church year, Easter, when Jesus rose from the dead. During Lent, Christians devote more time to prayer, charity and sacrifice. During Lent we see the Church using the colour purple again and the priest wears purple



vestments. Lenten them is Imago Dei, created in the imago of God. We are asking pupils to take time and think about their talents and gifts.

We will be taking time to reflect about the nature of God, the Trinity: Father, Son and the Holy Spirit, community of love, and the message Jesus left us about the community he wants us to be.

Our Food Bank is still going strong. We ask the boys to make donations on a Friday. The Food Bank door is open from 8am giving them the opportunity to put the food away by themselves.



Pastoral News

Important Dates:

To accommodate our parent evenings this academic year, school will close at 1.55pm for all pupils on the following dates:

Monday 19th February 2024

Wednesday 6th March 2024

Tuesday 30th April 2024

February Half term is Monday 12th until Friday 16th February 2024. All pupils break up at normal time on Friday 9th February and return to school on Monday 19th February 2024.

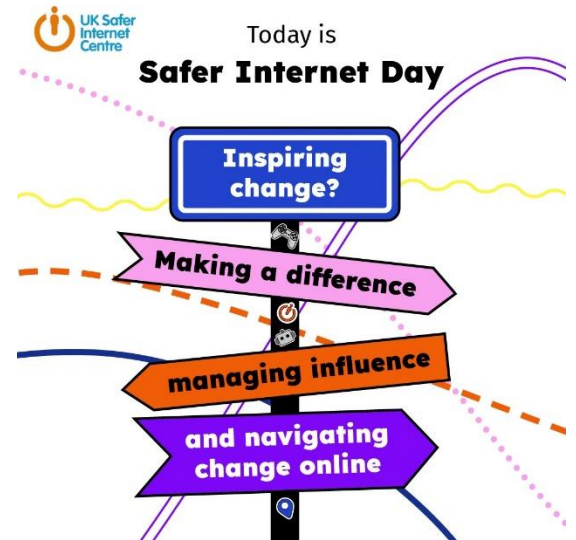
Safer Internet Day

Safer Internet Day! On Tuesday 6th February 2004, all pupils spent time thinking about this years theme - Inspiring change.

Safer Internet Day is a great opportunity to focus on online safety. This year's theme is all about change and influence online and we have included a range of pages to help you talk about these issues and ideas with your children, no matter how much time you have and in an age-appropriate way.

[Parents and carers - UK Safer Internet Centre](#)

The resources will give you helpful advice and guidance on conversation starters, dealing with difficult topics and useful links to support you if your son has an issue online.



Attendance

While we place great importance on the health and wellbeing of all of our pupils we also need to, where possible, minimise absence to ensure pupils are provided with a first-class education.

The importance of school attendance cannot be overstated – a pupil with attendance of below 91% is statistically likely to drop on average one GCSE grade per subject. If your attendance is between 96% and 100% you are twice as likely to achieve 5 or more GCSE at Grade 5 and above.

The statistics above provide stark evidence as to why we set all of our pupils an attendance target of 97%, as we know this provides them with the greatest possible chance to achieve their best possible outcomes; this is a habit born in lower year groups and embedded in the culture and ethos of our school.



Attendance Stars

Week 19 – WB 29th January 2024



7F – 98.1%



Weeks attendance – 93.3%

Whole school attendance from Sept – 93.4%





Annual House Competition



Week 19 – WB 29th January 2024

House	Overall Points	Points awarded this week
Ashbrooke	7375	625
Corby	6875	275
Brookfield	6400	150



Arbor

A reminder that all communications are now made through Arbor.

The School Gateway continues to be used for payments, including the topping up of lunch accounts.

Parent Communication

We are currently reviewing how we communicate with parents. To support with this, we need parent views on methods of communication and frequency of communication. Please complete the following survey by Friday 16th February so that we can review and make any necessary changes moving forward.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/QFRYJPL>

Our pastoral team can be connected on the following emails.

Ashbrooke House – Mrs McKenna – kmckenna@staca.co.uk – Ext: 201

Corby House – Mr Gray – agray@staca.co.uk – Ext: 223

Brookfield House – Mrs Halliday – mhalliday@staca.co.uk - Ext: 216

Community News

Our St Aidan's Robotics club competed at Nissan on January 16th. The event was well attended with fifteen schools taking part. This was the first time the pupils had been to a robotics competition and there were a few nerves, however they did incredibly well, holding first place in the skills challenge for over an hour. Their programming and driving skills were put to the test and the highlight was teaming up with other schools where they made friends and swapped strategies before competing in team challenges. They had a successful and enjoyable day coming away with new ideas to take the robotics club onward and upwards, very well done.



Careers

National Apprenticeship Week 2024

This week (5-11 February) is the 17th National Apprenticeship Week (NAW), with a returning theme of 'Skills for Life'. The annual celebration of apprenticeships is a great opportunity for employers and organisations to encourage more people to explore the benefits of apprenticeships and showcase rewarding careers. An apprenticeship is a paid job that includes classroom-based training, leading to a nationally recognised qualification as well as practical on-the-job training. Apprenticeships are available to people over the age of 16, with no upper age limit, including those early in their career and career-changers. They are offered at qualification levels from Level 2 (GCSE) to Level 7, equivalent to a master's degree. Read the following profiles of two engineers and how they pursued their careers in Engineering.



Euan MacLean IEng MIMechE, a Project Engineer at Wood plc developed an interest in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) extracurricular activities at school. His “questioning attitude about how and why things work” led him to pursue a career in engineering. “During my apprenticeship, my welding lecturer drummed professional registration into us at every opportunity he could. After being exposed to some high responsibility roles throughout my apprenticeship, I read up on the criteria for registration with The Welding Institute and my experience at that time. I was a registered Engineering Technician (EngTech) at the age of 19.”

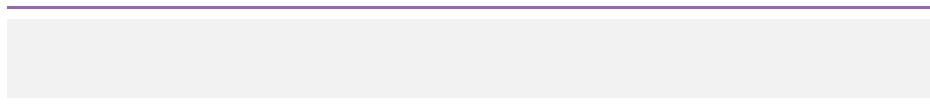
Rebecca Fasham BEng IEng MPWI is a Senior Engineer at Network Rail and began her profession in an apprenticeship and knew that it was an opportunity to have a life-long career in engineering. As the proud recipient of two engineering apprenticeship awards early on in her career, the recognition for someone with limited experience made a positive impact. In her current role, she engages with a wide range of people within the business. “I've been introduced to teams and parts of the organisation that I didn't know existed, and I've been with Network Rail for eight years!”

Personal Development Education

The students are currently studying Relationships and Sex Education in their PDE lessons this cycle, up until Easter. Each year group focuses on age-appropriate topics that allow them to know how to be safe and healthy, and how to manage their academic, personal and social lives in a positive way. Over the next fortnight each year group has been learning:

Year 7	Family and Friends - What is family and what qualities make a good friend.
Year 8	Before I was born - the stages of pregnancy and pre-natal care
Year 9	Fertility and contraception - types of contraception.
Year 10	Parenthood - The rights of a child.
Year 11	Birth control - types of contraception and natural planning.

Parents and carers can access the resources for Relationship and Sex Education via the parental portal, using the information below.



Website <https://www.tentenresources.co.uk/parent-portal/>

User Name: st-aidan-sr2

Password: island-458

ChildLine: www.childline.org.uk Phone: 0800 1111

Young Minds: www.youngminds.org.uk

Samaritans: www.samaritans.org Phone: 116 123

MIND: www.mind.org.uk/ or Phone 0300 123 3393

TALK TO FRANK [Honest information about drugs | FRANK \(talktofrank.com\)](http://Honest information about drugs | FRANK (talktofrank.com))

Sporting Success

This week the Year 8 rugby team played in a small sided competition at Park View school. IT was

great to see some new boys playing their first ever games. The boys beat St Johns 15-10 with tries from Connor, Will and James, who danced through half of their team to score. The boys drew and narrowly lost two games against Boldon and Park View. There were some stand out performances from Will S, who scored four tries in four games along with a number of try saving tackles. Well done to all the boys who played, and it is great to see the boys having the opportunity to



play rugby more regularly. The popularity of St Aidan's rugby continues to rise with more than 30 students now signed up to the enrichment sessions and with more opportunities to compete than ever before. The year 10 side played the next round of their competition, traveling to Durham Johnston hoping to reverse the defeat from a few weeks ago. After starting strongly and taking the lead with a S. Hopper try and a try from T. Suggitt to pull level, two contentious passes allowed Durham to score and take the win 20-10. A huge well done to the boys taking on a side far more experienced and almost getting the win.



The return of the Jr.NBA competition saw the year 7 team take to the court for the 1st time. They faced off against Castle View and Argyle House and were victorious in both games. A 10-6 victory over Castle View was followed by a 18-2 success over Argyle House with A. Clemente top points scorer followed by L. Johnson and E. Crespo.

The year 8's began their journey hoping to go further than the conference quarter final when in year 7 and again

started brightly. An 8-3 win over Castle View was followed by a 7-4 victory over Lord Lawson. The last game saw St Aidan's face Boldon, who were conference finalists last year. Despite a strong showing, St Aidan's narrowly lost 8-11 with one Boldon player scoring all 11 points. Top point scorers for St Aidan's were E. Farong-ey and A. Clemente. A fantastic effort all around and it demonstrates the commitment of our students to not only take part but also strive for success. We now look forward to the U14s and U16s Tyne and Wear finals in February and March at Newcastle's Vertu Arena.



Music

A massive thank you to Nathan for the wet break entertainment today. The songs went down a treat especially when the whole hall joined in with "Sweet Caroline"! Well done!



Music Enrichment:

Drum Fun	Tuesday	Music Room
St Aidan's Singers	Wednesday	Music Room
Rock Band	Thursday	The Bunker (4-6pm)
KS4 Music Club	Friday	Music Room

Instrumental lessons:

Monday	Bass	Mr Harland
Tuesday	Violin, Piano	Mr Nyberg, Mr Shepherd
Wednesday	Drums, Guitar, Brass	Mr Wake, Mr Smith, Miss Brierley
Thursday	Guitar	Mr Smith
Friday	Woodwind, Cello	Mr Toomey, Miss Pearson

All lessons are now after school between 3-6pm.

If you wish your child to sign up to/continue instrument lessons please email me at musiclessons@staca.co.uk stating your son's name, form and desired instrument. For further information please see our [Instrumental Music Policy here](#).

Our "Live Music Friday" breaktime slots is continuing this half term - it's an excellent opportunity to practise your live performing skills in front of a low pressure and friendly audience. Please see Mr Payne for further details.

Enrichment

St. Aidan's Catholic Academy Enrichment Cycle 2 2023-2024						
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	
MORNING	Breakfast Canteen	Breakfast Canteen	Breakfast Canteen	Breakfast Canteen	Breakfast Canteen	
	Reading Club Reading Room Mrs Naile	Reading Club Reading Room Mrs Naile	Reading Club Reading Room Mrs Naile	Reading Club Reading Room Mrs Naile	Reading Club Reading Room Mrs Naile	
AFTER SCHOOL	Art Club 162 - Mrs Nipper	Bass Guitar Lessons Music Room Mr Harland (£72 per term)	Piano Lessons Music room Mr Shepherd (£72 per term)	Badminton Sports Hall - Mr Jones	1st Lego League – Super Power 166 - Mrs Swales	Basketball Sports Hall - Mr Adey & Lampton Coach (£1)
	British Sign Language 301 - Mrs Gardner	Bronze IDEA Award Digital Enterprise (ICT) 312 - Miss Cain	Violin Lessons Music room Mr Nyberg (£72 per term)	Book to film club 304 Mrs Wheeler	Brass Lessons Music room (£72 per term)	Careers Champion 103 - Mrs Osmialowski
	Chess Club 209 - Mr Herbertson	Sherlock's Mystery Solving 306 - Miss Sansom	Homework Club Room 313, 314	Crisp Packet Appeal 205 - Mrs Priest	Football (Year 7) Ashbrooke with Mr Hutton	Football (Year 9) Ashbrooke with Mr Flounders
	Dodgeball Sports Hall Mr Hutton	Debate Club 108 - Mrs Jopling	Football with Mo Year 7&8 (£4 per session) Sports Hall	Dungeons and Dragons Reading Room Mr Richardson	Weight Lifting Club School gym Mr Watts	Guitar Lessons Music room Mr Smith (£72 per term)
	Football (Year 10&11) Ashbrooke 3G Mr Watts	Fitness School Gym – Mr Gray	Drum Fun Music Room – Mr Wallace	Drum Lessons Music Room –Mr Wake (£72 per term)	GCSE History booster 108 - Mr Nunn	Homework Club 313, 314
	GCSE Spanish Club Year 10 & 11 104 – Mrs McKenna	Further Maths (Y11) 210 - Mrs Hudson		Fitness School gym Mr Flounders	Lego Fun Club Mrs Whitten	Maths Enrichment 212 - Mr Mann
	Indoor Cricket Sports Hall Mr Hutton	Homework Club 313, 314		Football (Year 8) Ashbrooke 3G Mr Gray	Performing Arts Mrs Moorhead/Mr Payne	Rock Band @ The Bunker 4-6pm Mr Payne
	Keyboard Ninja Club (ICT) 312 - Mrs Cain	Justice and Peace (KS5) Briery Miss Gordon/ Mrs Priest		Gardening Club Briery Mrs Armstrong	Robotics Club 164 - Mr Wallace	Table Tennis Mobiles Mr Hamilton (Week 8 Only)
	Running Club Mobile Changing Rooms- Mr Coon	Orienteering Ashbrooke Mr Watts		Guitar Lessons Music room Mr Smith (£72 per term)	STEM Activities 121 – Science Staff	
		Sparx Maths Club 312 – Mrs Smith		Homework Club 313, 314		

Here at **St. Aidan's Catholic Academy** we believe in a curriculum that the mind, enriches the community and advances the future of our students. Our enrichment programme is integral to this broad and rich curriculum. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact:
0191 520 0333

"St. Aidan's Catholic Academy, where excellence is a habit!"