

# ST.AIDAN'S CATHOLIC ACADEMY



July 17 2025



*"I lift up my eyes to the mountains—where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord" Psalm 121*

As we reach the end of another academic year, I want to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt thanks for your continued support, partnership, and trust in St. Aidan's Catholic Academy.

This year has brought with it moments of immense pride and moments of deep sorrow. Most notably, we were honoured to receive an Outstanding judgment from Ofsted – a recognition of the hard work, dedication, and shared belief in excellence that runs throughout our school community. This achievement is not just a reflection of our staff or pupils alone, but of every parent and carer who has stood beside us, championed our work, and contributed to our shared vision.

Yet alongside this celebration, we have faced moments of tragedy that have touched us all. As a school family, we have come together in grief and solidarity, showing compassion, strength, and care when it was most needed. We hold in our hearts Miss Gordon, and our thoughts remain with the families and friends affected. The resilience and kindness shown by our community during these difficult times have reminded me what a privilege it is to serve this community.

In the face of both joy and hardship, our pupils have continued to inspire us. They have shown maturity beyond their years, a commitment to learning, and a spirit that gives us hope for the future. I am incredibly proud of all they have achieved – academically, personally, and emotionally – and I know you are too.

As we now look to the summer break, I hope it offers you and your family some peace, rest, and the chance to be together. When we return in September, we will do so with both pride in how far we have come and determination to continue building a school where every child can flourish.

I am aware that for some, the summer weeks can be very challenging financially. If you need access to our foodbank during this time please contact: [foodbank@staca.co.uk](mailto:foodbank@staca.co.uk)

Thank you again for all that you do. I wish you and your families a safe and enjoyable summer.

Mrs Whitten, Headteacher

>>> ACHIEVEMENT POINTS TO DATE: 47685 (AVERAGE OF 56.1 PER PUPIL)





## >>> PUPILS OF THE WEEK

**Week 11:**

**Year 7 Buddies for Transition**

Thank you to all Year 7 pupils who supported by being a buddy last week. You were all incredible.

**Week 12:**

**Head boys and one voice members.**

Thank you for delivering a wonderful session to our incoming Year 7 pupils. Your leadership and passion shone through. Amazing, well done.

## >>> WORD OF THE WEEK

**Cycle 3 Week 11: Equanimity - E/qua/ni/mi/ty**

- **Definition:** Mental calmness, composure, and evenness of temper, especially in a difficult situation.
- In *I am Malala*, Malala's equanimity in the face of danger demonstrates her strength and resolve in advocating for education.

**Cycle 3 Week 12: Subjugation - Sub/ju/ga/tion**

- **Definition:** The act of bringing someone or something under domination or control.
- In *Animal Farm*, the subjugation of the animals by the pigs serves as a powerful allegory for totalitarian regimes.

**Thank You, Year 6 – A Fantastic Transition!**

From 30th June to 2nd July, we had the absolute pleasure of welcoming 205 Year 6 pupils from 34 different primary schools for a fun-filled and action-packed transition experience.

Over the three days, our future Year 7s threw themselves into every opportunity with enthusiasm, curiosity, and confidence. Whether it was team-building activities, meeting new classmates, exploring the school, or getting stuck into exciting lessons, the energy and positivity they brought was truly inspiring.

A huge thank you to every single pupil for making the transition such a success – you've already made a brilliant impression, and we can't wait to see you again!

We look forward to welcoming you back on Tuesday 2nd September as you begin your exciting journey with us. See you soon!



## Legacy Head boys

We would like to say a huge thank you to our Head boys and House Captains of 2024-2025. The boys were exemplary role models for all pupils and worked hard to make changes in our school community.

**Riley Jackson Year 9**  
**Head boy Key Stage 3**



**Gabriel Biju Year 10**  
**Head boy Key Stage 4**



The boys lobbied the senior leadership team to make the following changes:

- ✓ • Year 11 Revision spaces with ICT access before school - this will be available from September 2026
- ✓ • Social time entertainment - pupils can now play card games in our dining space during free breakfast, break and lunch. If you don't have your own cards - speak to pupil support.
- ✓ • Cover lessons - when a cover lesson is in an ICT room, pupils will be able access sparx to complete Maths work
- ✓ • Year 11 celebrations - the boys have shared some ideas for making our Year 11 celebration even bigger next year.

## School Access Arrangements During Summer Break

During the summer break there will be no access to the main school office. if for any reason you do require access this must be arranged via email or telephone with an appointment time. You will then need to access school via Briery which you will be met at the gates at your appointment time.

Phone lines will be open 9:00am - 14:45 from Monday 4<sup>th</sup> August until Friday 29<sup>th</sup> August.



Wearside fc formerly known as north east skills at their presentation night at Rainton Meadows. Sean Noble, Joshua Batey, Mena Obaro and Abdou John. Well Done Boys!



## Ronan Naughton 8F

In recent months, Ronan won a tournament which allowed him to progress to the next round of tournaments. He played in that second tournament today and became under 14s boys County Final Winner! This means he can progress to the final tournament, the National Final, which will be played at Wimbledon in August. We are aware the standard will be extremely high and, as a Grade 2 tournament, it will be the highest grade tournament he has ever played in. No matter of the result, it will be an incredible honour and achievement just to play at Wimbledon!



## >>> SPORTING SUCCESS



A fantastic sports day had by all! Tug of war was by far the most competitive of the day! The weather was definitely on our side too! Well done to all of the boys taking part, it was a very close call however Ashbrooke House came up top with a massive 1111 points!



We are excited to share that the summer listings for the Wear Here 4 programme are now live! Delivered by Together for Children and funded by the Department for Education, Wear Here 4 is Sunderland's Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme.

Running throughout the school holidays, the programme offers fun, enriching activities and tasty, nutritious meals for eligible families. From sports and dance to crafts, outdoor adventures, and even science sessions, there's something for everyone.

The programme is free for children and young people who:

- Live in Sunderland
- Are aged 4 to 16 and receive means-tested Free School Meals
- Or have a special educational need or disability (up to age 25)

To find out more please visit [Holiday Activities and Food \(HAF\) Programme - Together for Children](#)

We are currently looking to build resources for pupils at lunch time, if you have any Top Trumps, Card Games etc at home that you no longer need/use, please can these be brought into school. Thank you.



Emily Lim, Director of Public Acts for the National Theatre's nationwide community programme, recently contacted school to celebrate the incredible achievements of our Year 7, Sam Fasoyiro.

Sam performed in Public Record at the Fire Station – a spectacular production celebrating Sunderland's past, present and future through music, dance and storytelling. Performing alongside over 100 cast members aged 4 to 94, Sam showed outstanding commitment, enthusiasm and kindness, earning standing ovations from audiences of 500+.

Emily praised Sam for truly embodying the company's values – open, generous and brave. We are extremely proud of him!



A great day at Newcastle University on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> June at the Musical Futures event. Students learnt about building a team, Sound Ecology, High Tech Recording in a professional studio, Professional DJing, how to plan and manage an musical event within a budget. A very useful and informative day which allowed us to see a wide variety of roles in the music business.





### Half-Term Update: CAFOD Young Leaders in Action

This term, our CAFOD Young Leaders have been building on the inspiring story of Daniel, which was shared with the school community during Lent. Daniel, who comes from the Democratic Republic of Congo—a country deeply affected by poverty—helped us reflect on the global issue of debt and its impact on communities around the world.

Motivated by Daniel's story, we focused our efforts on raising awareness about the global debt crisis. Many low-income countries are burdened by enormous debts to financial institutions such as HSBC and BlackRock. As a result, they are often forced to cut essential services like healthcare and education to meet repayment demands.

To support CAFOD's mission and raise funds, we organised a variety of activities, including raffles, cake sales, and donation drives within our school. Thanks to the generosity and enthusiasm of our fellow students, we successfully raised £225. This money will go towards CAFOD's work in helping communities become self-sufficient and resilient in the face of economic challenges.

As CAFOD Young Leaders, we are passionate about social justice and committed to making a difference. We encourage everyone to join the Church's campaign during this Jubilee Year to call for the cancellation of unjust global debts. Together, we can help create a fairer world where every country has the opportunity to thrive.





After having a clear out in the DT department we have been able to donate a large amount of unused tools and machinery to TWAM.

TWAM is a Christian charity that collects unwanted usable tools, refurbishes them and sends them to the developing world to be used for livelihood creation.

We are over the moon that our unused equipment will be given a new lease of life, offering a way out of poverty to individuals who are in desperate need of help and support.

Thank you Arthur for supporting with our donation!

#TWAM #Toolswithamission

Stories of livelihood creation | Tools with a Mission



Congratulation to Val, our longest serving member of staff over 45 years of service. On Friday she won the Achievement award at the BCCET Awards, recognising the amazing contribution she has made to the students and wider community at St Aidan's. Well done from all of us at St Aidan's, you really are a little diamond!





## >>> Community

### Inspiring Futures at Jesus College, Cambridge

Last week, a group of our Year 10 pupils had the incredible opportunity to take part in a residential trip to Jesus College, Cambridge, alongside pupils from schools across the North East. The day was packed with enriching academic experiences, cultural exploration and fun, giving our pupils a true taste of university life. The aim of the residential is to raise pupils' aspirations and encourage them to realise their potential ahead of starting their GCSE year in Year 11.

Jesus College is one of the 31 colleges that make up the University of Cambridge. While all pupils attend their lectures in academic departments across the university, each college acts as a mini campus, a home from home, offering University pupils accommodation, meals, kitchens, cafes and bars, sports and music facilities, libraries, and both welfare and academic support throughout their undergraduate studies. To help ensure fair access to Cambridge, every college is linked with a specific region of the UK for outreach and recruitment. This relationship is focused on increasing the number of applicants from areas with little or no previous experience of Oxford or Cambridge and often limited access to higher education more broadly.

The visit began with a warm welcome as pupils arrived at Jesus College ready for an inspiring afternoon. Pupils were introduced to the college with a welcome session held in the Frankopan Room. This engaging session helped set the tone for the rest of the visit, providing an overview of what to expect and what life at Cambridge is really like.

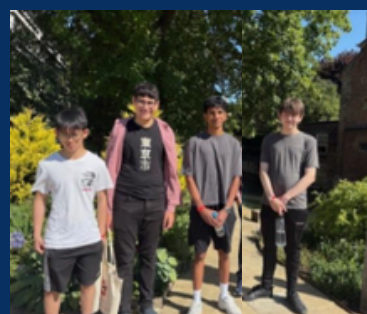
Pupils were then taken on a tour of the college in small groups, led by current university pupil ambassadors. This gave them the chance to explore the stunning college grounds and ask questions about pupil life from those living it first-hand.

One of the highlights of the day was the academic taster sessions, where pupils could choose from a range of lecture style sessions including Squatters' Rights: The Law of Adverse Possession, Metabolism, Extreme Adaptations and Healthy Ageing or Archimedes and Hydrostatics. These sessions were not only intellectually stimulating but also encouraged pupils to think beyond the curriculum and explore subjects they might not encounter at school.

After the sessions, pupils checked into their rooms before heading to the college dining hall for dinner and continued with a fun and competitive round of University Games. This was a great opportunity for pupils to bond with peers from other schools while also enjoying the social side of university life.

The following morning, we set off on a guided tour of the city, visiting Queens College, deepening their appreciation of Cambridge's rich history and academic environment.

Before left for home pupils took part in a Q&A session with university ambassadors, providing an invaluable opportunity to ask questions and gain insight into pupil life, study choices, and future pathways. The visit concluded with a session focused on next steps, helping pupils think about how to apply what they had learned and plan their future academic journey before returning home inspired and motivated to pursue their goals. A huge thank you to Jesus College, the pupil ambassadors, and everyone who made this experience possible!



### A Window into the World of Work Work Experience Week

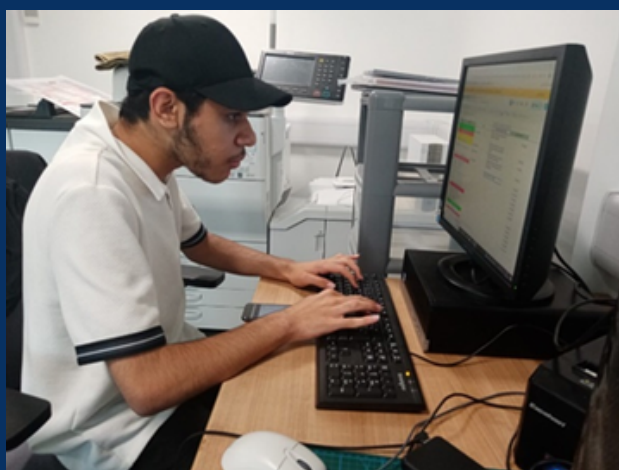
This week, our Year 10 and Year 12 pupils are stepping beyond the walls of the classroom and into the workplace as part of their work experience placements. Across Sunderland, the wider North East, and even further afield across the country, our pupils are engaging in a wide range of industries and sectors.

From engineering firms to primary schools, law offices to construction sites, our pupils are gaining invaluable first-hand experience of the working world. These placements are more than just a glimpse into potential careers they are an opportunity to develop essential skills such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and initiative that will serve them well in both work and life.

We are incredibly proud of the maturity and ambition our pupils have shown in securing and attending their placements. Their experiences this week will no doubt inspire future aspirations and shape the paths they choose moving forward.

Thank you to all of the employers, local businesses, organisations and alumni who have welcomed our pupils and supported this important stage in their personal and professional development.

We look forward to hearing more about their work experience journey when they return to school, full of stories, insights, and perhaps a clearer sense of what the future might hold.





## YEAR 9 CONQUER SCAFELL PIKE!

### An unforgettable adventure in the Lake District!

The three-day adventure began on Wednesday, when the group set off for Keswick. The journey over was great with bus music choices eclectic - Kendrick Lamar to Fleetwood Mac to songs that we won't repeat again (what happens in Keswick, stays in Keswick). A quick stop at scotch corner ensured the boys were stocked up on extra sweet treats and a toilet break. Spirits were high as the boys arrived and stretched their legs with a scenic afternoon walk/jog up Latrigg Fell, enjoying the lovely scenery and spending time with Nemo, by playing fetch with the ball. The fell offered amazing views of the surrounding mountains. After a dinner at the YHA, students explored Keswick town and treated themselves to sweet treats and even takeaways, sampled a second evening meal and enjoyed a kickabout in the park, making new friends. The eventful switch up of room scenarios led to late nights and eventually they tried to get to sleep — although most managed just about two hours...

On Thursday, despite the lack of sleep, Year 9 were up early and rearing to go. With backpacks full of sweet treats and Miss Gordon's collection of mascots (the Hulk and the Grinch, keeping her with us the entire way up), the team began their ascent of Scafell Pike. It was a tough climb (less of a jog this time but more of a vertical crawl!!), but every single student made it to the top — a massive achievement! On the way back down, there was time for a much-needed "plodge" in a cold mountain tarn — freezing but refreshing! A well earned treat that was very much deserved after the climb up the highest mountain in England.

The final day, Friday, was more relaxed, met with beautiful views of Derwent water from Friar's Crag, despite the fact they couldn't dive in, which some were intended to do due to the hot weather. The group treated themselves to ice cream (a perfect way to end an amazing 3 day trip), soaking in the last views of Derwent water before heading home, tired but immensely proud.

A huge well done to everyone involved — especially for keeping up the energy (and good humor) with little to no sleep! A special thanks to the staff who made it possible — oh, and apologies from Mr. Herbertson to the wheelie bin 🗑️ and from Mr. Morris to the Keswick Parking attendant. A massive thanks to the YHA instructors (Cam, Sam, Phil, Luke, and Nemo). 🏔️🌲🏠

By Zac Divens and Jacob Cottam

