



ST. AIDAN'S CATHOLIC ACADEMY

This week pupils have been learning about Holocaust Memorial day in assembly. As we mark Holocaust Memorial Day, we pause to remember the six million Jewish people and the many others who suffered and died. It is a moment that invites us, as a Catholic school community, to reflect on the sacred dignity of every human person—each created in the image and likeness of God.

This day reminds us of the consequences of prejudice, hatred, and indifference. It challenges us to help our children grow as people of compassion, courage, and justice. By teaching them to stand up for what is right, to notice when someone is left out, and to value the differences in others, we honour the memory of those whose voices were silenced.

May this day inspire us to be instruments of peace in our homes, our school, and our wider community. And may we work together to build a world where love triumphs over hatred and hope lights the way forward. **Mrs Whitten, Headteacher**

>>> PUPILS OF THE WEEK

Cycle 2 Week 4

Olly Carr (9A)

Olly's standard of work in History has improved tremendously this week, as has his attitude for learning. His work this week is a prime example of how St Aidan's promotes high standards both in presentation and quality. Keep this up!

Cycle 2 Week 5

Oliver Cottam (8F)

Excellent presentation delivered confidently to 11 of his peers at Classics Club. The presentation was not only informative but delivered with real confidence and enthusiasm. Oliver should be really proud of himself, both for his oracy skills and ability to answer a range of complex questions to peers. Excellent demonstration of independent learning. Well done Oliver!

Aidan Mason (10A).

For his leadership skills at the end of the school day supporting at the bus stop and ensuring members of the public accessed the bus first! The lady was really impressed with his conduct - she was very impressed with how the boys had conducted themselves - especially Aidan. Well done Aidan.

ACHIEVEMENT POINTS TO DATE: 36525 (AV: 39.83 PER PERSON)



>>> WORD OF THE WEEK

Cycle 2 Week 4:

Vanity. Va/ni/ty

Etymology: From Latin “*vanitas*” meaning “emptiness.”

Definition: Excessive pride in or admiration of one’s own appearance or achievements.

Example: Dorian Gray’s vanity in ‘*A Picture of Dorian Gray*’ leads to his downfall.



CATHOLIC LIFE

Cycle 2 Week 5:

Decadence (noun). De/ca/dence

Etymology: From Latin “*decadentia*” meaning “falling away.”

Definition: Moral or cultural decline characterized by indulgence in pleasure or luxury.

Example: ‘*The Great Gatsby*’ portrays the decadence of the Jazz Age through lavish parties and hollow dreams.

>>> YEAR 11 AND YEAR 13 MOCK EXAMS

Year 11 and Year 13 have worked incredibly hard over the past two weeks as they completed their mock examinations, demonstrating focus, resilience, and maturity throughout the process.

This period has provided pupils with a valuable opportunity to experience the structure and pace of formal exams while identifying their strengths and areas for development ahead of the summer. Their determination during this busy time has been impressive, and the completion of the mocks marks a significant milestone as we now begin the countdown to the real exams.

As pupils continue to revise and build on what they’ve learned, we encourage them to keep giving their best effort—every bit of hard work at this stage will make a real difference when they reach the summer exams. Pupils will receive their mock results on Tuesday, February 10th.





Cycle 2 Week 4

Join a friend doing an enrichment club they do and find out why they like it.

Cycle 2 Week 5

Find a new way to show someone you appreciate them.

>>> CHADWICK CELEBRATION AWARDS

Chadwick Celebration Awards 2026

Pupil Nomination Information

**Nominate staff from your school for our
Inspirational Staff Award**

One of Bishop Chadwick Catholic Education Trusts values is **Celebration** and we want to celebrate all our staff across the Trust who go that extra mile. There are fourteen categories in our awards and only pupils can nominate in the **Inspirational Staff Award** category.

We would like you to think about all the staff at your school the Headteacher and teachers, the teaching assistants, the office staff, the kitchen staff, caretaking team etc. If there is someone that you think has done a really good job then you can nominate them for this award.

For younger pupils you may need to ask an adult for some help to make your nomination. Nominations need to be a minimum of 50 words and a maximum of 200 words, you can use the link below to access the nomination form. **Nominations will close on Friday 20 March 2026.**

This award is to celebrate someone who is positive and full of enthusiasm, who has gone above and beyond to support pupils.

Your nomination should include what the person's role or roles are in your school. It should give some examples of what they have done, how that impacted on pupils, and why they deserve to receive this award. This could be by providing additional support, a consistent friendly face, leading on new opportunities or championing student causes in school.

Previous Winners



2025 Inspirational Staff Award Winner
Mr Johnson, Librarian
St. Joseph's Catholic Academy, Hebburn



2024 Inspirational Staff Award winner
Mrs Pearn, Headteacher
St. John Bosco Catholic Primary, Sunderland

Link to nominate: bccet.org.uk/pupil2026

Link to category guide: bccet.org.uk/work-for-us/chadwick-celebration-awards



 Better Schools Better Communities **†** Better Futures in Christ



>>> READING IN 2026



CATHOLIC LIFE

Our pupils have made a strong start to reading in 2026!

In Mr Rathore's class, students have started Malorie Blackman's 'Boys Don't Cry' – a powerful and thought-provoking novel that explores themes of responsibility, family, and resilience. The story follows Dante, a teenager whose life takes an unexpected turn. It's a gripping read that sparks important conversations about growing up and facing challenges head-on.



Meanwhile, our Sixth Form mentors have been sharing their love of reading with our new Year 7s. A huge thank you to Ethan and Layla for finding time in your busy schedules to inspire our younger readers – your support makes a real difference!



>>> MUSICAL WORKSHOP



CATHOLIC LIFE

This week has been a particularly musical one!

A group of Year 10 students visited St Anthony's to take part in a classical singing workshop, delivered by the Samling Institute for Young Artists. The session offered students a valuable insight into the world of professional vocal performance and training.

The workshop began with students watching live masterclasses featuring current students from the Samling Institute, giving them a clear sense of the high standards and dedication involved in classical singing. They then learned about correct breathing techniques for singers, focusing on posture, breath control and vocal support. This was followed by energetic vocal warm-ups and the chance to sing together in a three-part round, encouraging teamwork, listening skills and confidence.

To conclude the session, students were treated to two professional operatic performances: a beautifully expressive Irish folk song and a powerful aria from *La Bohème*. The performances brought the techniques discussed earlier in the workshop to life and demonstrated the emotional impact of classical singing.

The students thoroughly enjoyed the experience and left the workshop feeling motivated and inspired to continue developing their singing in the future.

“Singing is not about perfection, it is about expression.” (Anonymous)

“The voice is the most expressive instrument there is.” (Renée Fleming)





>>> PANATHLON CHALLENGE

On 20th January a group of Y7 and Y8 pupils represented the school in the Panathlon Challenge at the Beacon of Light.

The day consisted of a series of physical challenges which tested a wide range of skills. Working as a team, the boys engaged brilliantly with every activity and collected hundreds of points throughout the day.

At the end of the competition St Aidan's received a brilliant bronze medal for finishing third in the entire competition!

Well done to all the boys who competed and represented the school fantastically well.



>>> ANTI-BULLYING TEAM AT ST AIDAN'S CATHOLIC ACADEMY

At St Aidan's Catholic Academy, we are committed to creating a safe, supportive environment where every pupil feels valued and respected. Our Anti-Bullying Team works hard to promote kindness, tackle bullying, and ensure that all pupils can thrive.

We believe that working together with parents is key to making a real difference. If you would like to be part of this important team and help us continue building a positive school community, we'd love to hear from you!

Interested?

Please email: contactus@staca.co.uk
FAO: Anti-Bullying Team
by **Friday 6th February 2026.**



>>> ART EXHIBITION

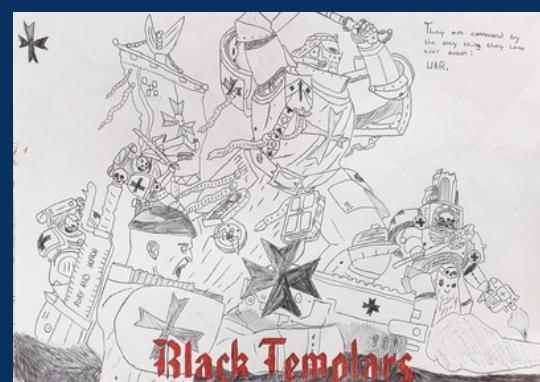
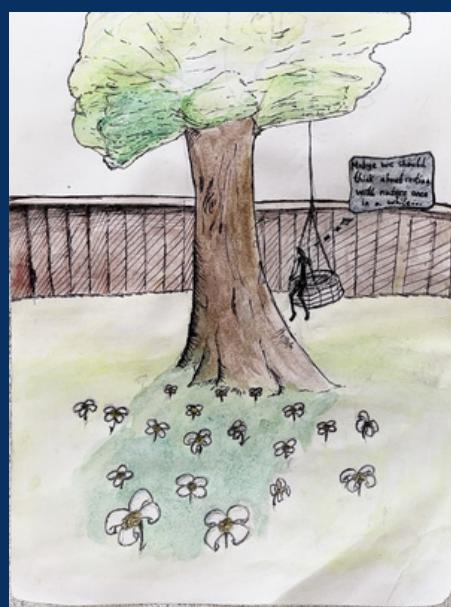
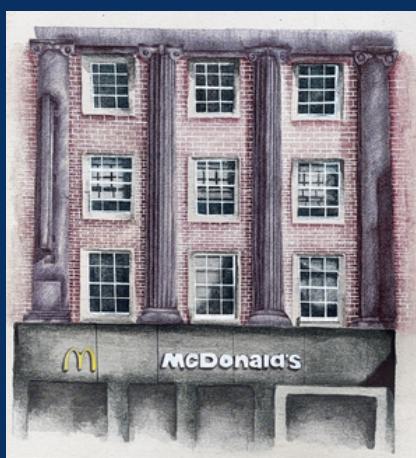
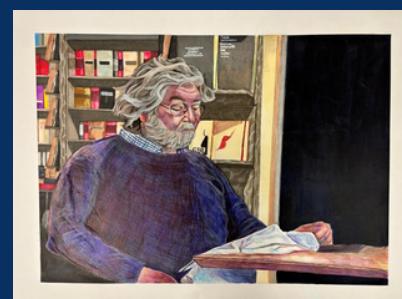
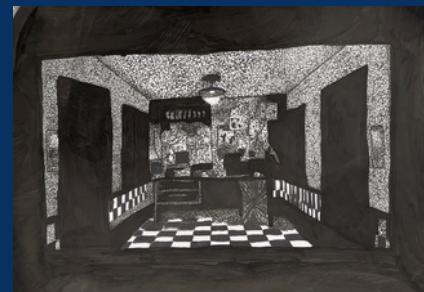
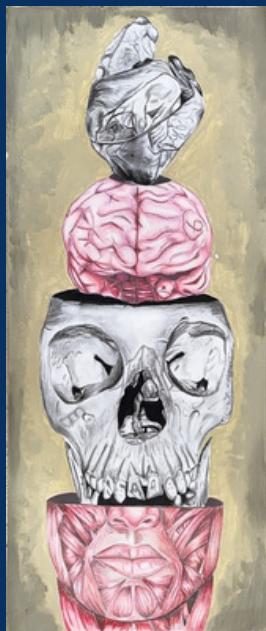


CATHOLIC LIFE

We are thrilled that several of our students have been selected to have their work displayed in this years Bright Lights Youth Art Exhibition at Washington Arts Centre.

The work will be on display from 7th February to 14th March 2026 so get yourself along and view some of the amazing talent on display.

Well done Joseph, Rowan, Yasin, George, Dami, Allen, Kristof, William and Ritchlaine!





Three Days of Inspiration at Newcastle University

Last week, pupils from Ashbrooke House, Corby House and Brookfield House had the incredible opportunity to spend three days immersed in university life at Newcastle University, hosted by Dr Kelsey and the School of Arts and Culture. Each group explored a different strand of the creative and communications industries, coming away inspired, curious, and more confident about their futures.

Across the three days, pupils experienced a wide range of lectures and activities. Ashbrooke House began with campus exploration and academic sessions, including a lecture delivered by a St Aidan's alumnus. A standout moment was visiting King's Hall, the historic venue where Martin Luther King Jr received his honorary doctorate, a powerful reminder of the global significance of education. Corby House continued the experience with an engaging lecture on storytelling, full of lively interactions and idea-sharing. This was followed by a session on influencer culture, where pupils examined how influence shapes modern society and even created their own influencers with plenty of creativity and humour.

Brookfield House rounded off the week with a deep dive into crisis communications, learning how organisations respond when things go wrong and how to communicate clearly under pressure. The day concluded with a fascinating look at film-making, offering insights into how stories are crafted and brought to life on screen.

These three days gave our pupils a valuable taste of university life, opened their eyes to a range of creative pathways, and encouraged them to think ambitiously about their futures. We are incredibly grateful to Dr Kelsey and Newcastle University's School of Arts and Culture for providing such rich, meaningful experiences for our young people.



**Supporting Boys Through the Transition to Secondary School**

At St Aidan's Catholic Academy, we understand that moving from primary to secondary school is a pivotal moment in a young person's life, especially for boys. That is why we are proud to partner with the award-winning organisation Space North East to bring the Accompaniment Project to life. Thanks to funding from the SHINE Trust, this initiative ensures our pupils feel a strong sense of Belonging, discover Purpose, and develop Aspiration as they begin their secondary journey. At its heart, the Accompaniment Project is about building positive relationships with trusted male role models and who better than our very own alumni? These familiar faces bring authenticity and relatability, showing our pupils what's possible when they embrace challenges and strive for success.

James, founder and managing director of Space North East has been involved from the early stages, bringing expertise in men's mental health and project management. His vision and commitment have been instrumental in creating a safe, supportive environment where boys can thrive. James now leads the project alongside Liam, who delivers weekly mentoring sessions and whole school assemblies to provide consistent guidance and encouragement during this important transition. This work reflects key insights from the Centre for Social Justice's Lost Boys report, highlighting the importance of connection and guidance during formative years while nurturing individuality and ambition. It also complements the incredible work Space North East does in our local community, supporting men who face challenges such as depression, loneliness, and anxiety by giving them a space to talk, walk, and move.

Looking ahead to 2026, we are excited to build on these foundations. Our goal is to open doors to new experiences and opportunities for pupils who may benefit most from additional support broadening horizons, nurturing confidence, and helping every boy see what's possible for his future.





St Aidan's now has exclusive access to CiCi, an award-winning careers chatbot designed to provide instant, reliable guidance for students and parents. CiCi makes exploring career pathways easier by answering questions about jobs, qualifications, and progression routes in real time. For parents, it offers reassurance and practical advice to support their child's future choices, while students benefit from personalised, on-demand information that helps them make informed decisions about work experience, post-16 options, and beyond. This innovative tool ensures that high-quality careers support is available anytime, anywhere.



Work Experience

We are delighted to share that 70% of our Year 10 pupils have now secured a work experience placement! A huge thank you to parents and pupils for your ongoing support and effort in finding these opportunities. Work experience is a vital step in preparing students for their future, helping them develop confidence, skills, and insight as they move into their final GCSE year. For those still searching for the right placement, we will continue to offer support. A Future Pathways drop-in session will be available for all Year 10 pupils with Mrs. Osmialowski on Tuesday from 2:50-3:50pm, providing guidance and advice to help every pupil find their ideal opportunity.



**ABSENCE REPORTING**

Parents are required to call the student absence line each day to report any absence. Please dial the main school number and select Option 1.

Please ensure that you provide your child's full name, form group and a reason for the absence.

PASS OUT REQUESTS

Pass Out requests should be emailed to contactus@staca.co.uk. Please include your child's full name, form, date, reason for the Pass Out and collection/leaving time.

Parents will receive an email to confirm that the Pass Out has been completed.

Students need to collect their Pass Out slips from the Student Support office prior to their appointment. They should present the slip to their class teacher at the time stated on the Pass Out and make their way to the Main Reception.

>>> DATES FOR THE DIARY

Friday, 6th February 2026

Deadline to sign up to the Anti-Bullying Team.

Thursday, 12th February 2026

School closes early at 1.55pm to accommodate YR 11 Parent's Evening.

Please note that no enrichment activities will take place on this date. However, peripatetic lessons (individual music or other instrumental lessons) will continue as scheduled for those pupils attending.

Tuesday, 17th February 2026

School closes early at 1.55pm to accommodate YR 13 Parent's Evening

Please note that no enrichment activities will take place on this date. However, peripatetic lessons (individual music or other instrumental lessons) will continue as scheduled for those pupils attending.

Friday, 20th February 2026

School closes for half term holiday.

Monday 23rd February 2026 to Friday 27th February 2026

Half term holiday.

Monday 2nd March 2026

School re opens at usual time.

