



As we approach Holy Week, this is a time to pause, reflect, and steady ourselves for the journey ahead. It reminds us that even in busy seasons, we are invited to return to what truly anchors us. St Augustine reminds us, "Our hearts are restless until they rest in You."

These words speak simply yet powerfully to the hope Holy Week offers, an invitation to rest in God's love.

I want to thank our staff for their hard work, and steady support of our students. I also want to commend our Year 11 and Year 13 pupils for the focus and resilience they are showing as they prepare for their summer exams. We are proud of the determination they bring to each day. May this Holy Week bring calm, strength, and a renewed sense of purpose to us all.

Wishing every family a blessed and hopeful week ahead

Mrs Whitten

»» PUPILS OF THE WEEK

Cycle 2 Week 12

Kavin Sasikumar (7D)

Kavin's work in History is exceptional. Not only is the presentation of the highest standard, his writing style has developed significantly. He is an excellent role model to his peers. Kavin keep this up!

Ronnie Laidler (8R)

Nominated for being outstanding in OAA this week, securing first place in the individual OAA PE challenge.

Sonny Bate (9A)

Nominated for his continued hard work in RE. He has shown progress since the beginning of the year and is always actively engaged in the lesson. He is very resilient and does not give up when he finds a concept hard to understand. Instead, he asks questions, to take control of his learning and ensure he understands the concept.

Joel Coundon (9C)

Fantastic creative writing produced surrounding the Blitz. Joel's Cornell notes are also efficient, clear and prove to be an incredible example to anyone in regards to St Aidan's Standards.



>>> PUPILS OF THE WEEK



CATHOLIC LIFE

Cycle 2 Week 13

Byron Goode (8M)

Nominated for being a good role model and supporting new pupils in school. Bryron has taken time to show new pupils our routines and supporting them at lunch time. Such a lovely thing to do, very much encompassing those trust and fairness core values - well done.

Orin Gibson (7R)

Nominated for his outstanding effort and contribution in PE and PDE lessons this week.

ACHIEVEMENT POINTS TO DATE: 52502 (AV: 57 PER PUPIL)

>>> WORD OF THE WEEK

Cycle 2 Week 12:

Vulnerability (noun). Vul/ne/ra/bi/li/ty

Etymology: From Latin *vulnerare* meaning “to wound.”

Definition: The quality of being exposed to harm or emotional hurt.

Example: ‘Boys Don’t Cry’ explores vulnerability in the face of societal expectations.

Cycle 2 Week 13:

Aspiration (noun). A/spi/ra/tion

Etymology: From Latin *aspirare* meaning “to breathe upon.”

Definition: A hope or ambition of achieving something.

Example: Gatsby’s aspiration for the American Dream drives his tragic pursuit in ‘The Great Gatsby’.

>>> YEAR 11 GCSE EXAMINATIONS COUNTDOWN

SCHOOL DAYS
UNTIL GCSEs BEGIN

19





Cycle 2 Week 12

Build on new ideas by thinking 'yes' and 'I can'.

Cycle 2 Week 13

Look at an issue through someone else's perspective, work on developing your empathy and think about why it's important

>>> WALK TO SCHOOL CAMPAIGN ASSEMBLY

This week, pupils took part in an assembly launching our Walk to School Campaign, encouraging healthier, more reliable, and more environmentally friendly journeys to school. The session began with a reflection and a focus on how small daily habits can make a big difference to wellbeing, learning, and our wider community.

Pupils explored why walking is such a positive choice. Walking helps improve physical fitness, boosts mood, reduces stress, and supports better concentration in lessons. It also plays an important role in protecting our environment by reducing traffic and air pollution around the school gates. Many pupils live within a 10–20 minute walk of school, meaning walking is not only achievable but often quicker and more dependable than waiting for a delayed bus or sitting in traffic.

The assembly also introduced the exciting Beat the Street challenge, part of Sunderland's Active Sunderland programme. This fun, free initiative encourages pupils and families to walk, wheel, cycle, or run around their local area, tapping 'Beat Boxes' to collect points and take part in friendly competition.

Pupils were encouraged to walk all or part of the way to school, travel with friends, and build positive daily routines that support punctuality, independence, and wellbeing. We look forward to seeing our school community embrace the challenge and enjoy the benefits of a more active start to the day.



➤➤➤ BEACON OF LIGHT - EASTER HOLIDAY COURSES



CATHOLIC LIFE

The following courses are running over the Easter Holidays. Please contact the Beacon of Light for further information.

EASTER HOLIDAY COURSES
7-17 APRIL

FOUNDATION OF LIGHT
THE WORLD AT YOUR FEET

- FOOTBALL** 7-9 APRIL / 13-15 APRIL
- TRAIN LIKE A PRO** 10 APRIL
- 1.1 COACHING** 13-14, 15 APRIL
- TODDLER TALES** 7 APRIL / 14 APRIL
- MINI BAKERS** 8 APRIL / 15 APRIL
- JUNIOR BAKERS** 9 APRIL / 16 APRIL
- BEAUTY AT THE BEACON** 8 APRIL / 15 APRIL
- HOLIDAY CLUB** 10 APRIL / 15-16, 17 APRIL
- SEND FOOTBALL** 10, 16, 17 APRIL

WEEK ONE	WEEK TWO
Tues 7-Thurs 9 April 3 Day Football Beacon of Light 9.30am-3pm £50	Mon 13-Wed 15 April 3 Day Football Beacon of Light 9.30am-3pm £50
Tues 7-Thurs 9 April 3 Day Football Wellfield School 9.30am-3pm £45	Mon 13-Wed 15 April 3 Day Football Beamish Football Centre 9.30am-3pm £45
Tues 7-Thurs 9 April 3 Day Football Beamish Football Centre 9.30am-3pm £45	Mon 13-Wed 15 April 3 Day Football Seaham High School 9.30am-3pm £45
Tues 7-Thurs 9 April 3 Day Holiday Club Beacon of Light 9.30am-3pm £45	Mon 13-Wed 15 April 3 Day Holiday Club Beacon of Light 9.30am-3pm £45
Tues 7 April Toddler Tales Beacon of Light 10am-12pm £5	Tues 14 April Toddler Tales Beacon of Light 10am-12pm £5
Wed 8 April Mini Bakers Beacon of Light 10am-12pm £15	Wed 15 April Mini Bakers Beacon of Light 10am-12pm £15
Wed 8 April Beauty at the Beacon Beacon of Light 10am-1pm £15	Wed 15 April Beauty at the Beacon Beacon of Light 10am-1pm £15
Thurs 9 April 1 Day Football Chester le Street 9.30am-3pm £20	Thurs 16 April 1 Day Football Chester le Street 9.30am-3pm £20
Thurs 9 April Junior Bakers Beacon of Light 10am-12pm £15	Thurs 16 April Junior Bakers Beacon of Light 10am-12pm £15
Thurs 9 April SEND Football Beacon of Light 9.30am-3pm Free	Thurs 16 April SEND Football Beacon of Light 9.30am-3pm Free
Fri 10 April SEND Football Beacon of Light 9.30am-3pm Free	Fri 17 April SEND Football Beacon of Light 9.30am-3pm Free
Fri 10 April Train like a Pro Ford Hub 10am-3pm £30	

Registered Charity No. 1069333

SCAN QR TO BOOK

➤➤➤ YEAR 7 BASKETBALL TEAM

On Monday 16th March the year 7 basketball side took part in their 1st competitive fixtures of the year as St Aidans hosted a mini tournament with Southmoor, Argyle House and Durham Johnston. It was fantastic to see so many new players to the sport and to compete to the level that they did.

St Aidans ended up winning 1 of the 3 games, which was a good achievement given the other schools have a number of club players in their sides. St Aidans points came from Sean Oke and Austin Forster but everyone deserves recognition for their effort throughout.



YEAR 8 FOOTBALL



CATHOLIC LIFE

St Aidan's Y8 boys Football A Team pulled off a great Cup win at home to Monkwearmouth with quite a few regular players on the Y8 Mountain Trip or injured.

Joseph Offer debuted in goal & never let us down and David Ucheka-Solomon also had a great debut game at Centre of the defence.

Despite leading 2-0 St Aidan's were pegged back to 3-3 but finished strongly to win 6-3 with goals from Ayeyemi, Chigoze, Hasso and a tremendous hat-trick from O'Brien.

St Aidan's will play Seaham in the Semi-final of the Town Cup.

ART BYTES COMPETITION

Voting is now open to decide on which student will have their work displayed in the virtual gallery with all of the other winners from across the country in this year's Art Bytes competition.

An independent panel of judges have selected the top 3 pieces from each school and now it's your job to vote for your favourite. Simply follow the link below to cast your vote

[St Aidan's Catholic Academy | Schools | Art Bytes](https://www.artbytes.co.uk/schools/)

VOTE NOW

art bytes FOR YOUR FAVOURITE ARTWORK ONLINE FROM FRI 20 MARCH – SUN 19 APRIL 2026

[ARTBYTES.CO.UK/BROWSE-SCHOOLS](https://www.artbytes.co.uk/browse-schools)

The artwork from each school with the most votes wins a place in the Art Bytes Virtual Gallery. The school with the most votes cast wins the Community Engagement Award.

Facebook: ArtBytesUK, YouTube: artbytes2595, Instagram: artbytes, Website: artbytes.co.uk

UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL School of the Arts



»» INNOVARE FACTORY VISIT



CATHOLIC LIFE

On 17th March 2026, six Year 10 pupils visited the Innovare Factory in Coventry, where the modular panels currently being installed in our new school building are manufactured.

During the visit, the pupils observed the diverse range of roles involved in modern construction, from Computer-Aided Design (CAD) designers and engineers to specialist technicians. Seeing the production line in action provided a unique insight into the 'off-site' industry, highlighting how technology and traditional craftsmanship now work hand-in-hand.

Innovare specialises in off-site production, where components are built in a modular fashion in Coventry to streamline transport and to allow for seamless installation on-site. The use of their patented design practices is a key part of the process; the inclusion of sustainably sourced timber alongside non-combustible panelling creates a future-proof carbon store to significantly reduce the impact of local carbon emissions.

It was an inspiring look at the career paths available within an industry that is shaping the future of our school and the local community!



CHARLIE REDMOND - LORD LIEUTENANT CADET



CATHOLIC LIFE

Congratulations to Charlie Redmond who is now officially a Lord Lieutenant Cadet.

Charlie is part of Durham ACF cadets at Seaburn detachment and was put forward by his detachment commander to become the Lord Lieutenants Cadet, a prestigious role. He was successful and we could not be more proud - a fantastic achievement - good luck in your new role Charlie!



SCHOOL EQUIPMENT PRICE INCREASE

As of 20th April 2026 there will be a slight increase to the purchase price of school equipment. Please see the poster below for further details.

EQUIPMENT PRICE LIST

EFFECTIVE FROM MONDAY 20TH APRIL 2026


Water Bottle	£1.60
Planner	£5.00
Pencil Case	£2.00
Calculator	£7.50
House Badge	£1.50
Pen (Green & Black)	0.20p
Pencil	0.20p
Rubber	0.20p
Ruler	0.20p
Tie	£6.00
Lunch Card	£1.00
100% File	£5.50







There will be a slight increase to all school meal prices. This will be applicable from 20th April 2026.

Please see poster below for further details.




CHADWICK'S KITCHEN





Update - March 2026



School Meal Prices

As you are aware committed to keeping our school meal prices as low as we can, however we will be making a small increase to all school meal prices after Easter. This increase is part of our annual price review and the increase is driven by inflation. Our meals are still cheaper than other providers in the Northeast region, where the average meal price is £2.91.

The increase will allow us to continue to use the **same quality products** and ingredients, offer the **same number of choices** and **keep our portion sizes the same**.

- A primary school meal will be £2.60
- A secondary school meal will be £2.75

This covers the cost of a main meal and a dessert, with water available in all our schools. Don't forget currently all Key Stage 1 (Reception, Year 1 & Year 2) pupils are entitled to a Free School Meal. To find out more contact your school office.

Healthy, balanced choices

We will be launching our summer menus in primary schools after Easter. Sample menu's can be found by visiting the [Chadwick's Kitchen](#) page on the Trust website.

Designing menus for thousands of pupils isn't a quick task. Every dish is carefully planned to meet the **School Food Standards**, the government's benchmark for healthy eating in education. These standards help ensure that what we serve supports pupils' learning, energy levels, and long-term wellbeing. Requirements include:

- A daily serving of vegetables or salad
- Fruit-based desserts (at least 50% fruit) twice a week
- No more than 2 deep-fried, batter-coated, or breadcrumb-coated items a week
- No more than two pastry-based dishes per week
- Protein-rich meals - meat, poultry, or dairy-free alternatives on at least 3 days

Our teams continually review the latest health guidance, and are working to further reduce ultra-processed foods across our menus. Alongside this, they create bespoke menus for pupils with medical diets, continually reviewing ingredients and recipes.

Thanks to this ongoing effort, our pupils enjoy meals that are not only tasty but genuinely nourishing, helping them thrive throughout the school day.

www.bccet.org.uk





St Aidan's Bands ROCK the 'Search for a Star' Competition!

Two talented student bands from St Aidan's Catholic Academy took to the stage on the evening of Tuesday 17th March at Bede Campus for this year's Search for a Star competition, organised by Sunderland Music Hub. The event brought together eight diverse acts from schools across Sunderland and the surrounding areas, featuring everything from solo singers to dancers to full bands.

Introducing... The Sea Monkeys and The Crisp D.C.s!

On the day of the event, the St Aidan's bands were given their stage names by Mrs Matthews - with KS3 proudly becoming 'The Sea Monkeys' and KS4 adopting the unforgettable title 'The Crisp D.C.s' (in honour of their well-known love of crisps and Diet Coke!).

Both groups delivered confident, stylish and highly polished performances.

- The Sea Monkeys (KS3) performed a lively version of George Ezra's Shotgun.
- The Crisp D.C.s (KS4) took on the soul classic Higher and Higher (Your Love Keeps Lifting Me) by Jackie Wilson.

Judges' Praise and Standout Musicianship.

Although neither St Aidan's band took home the overall prize - the evening was won by Super Group from St Robert's School with their atmospheric performance of Bring Me to Life by Evanescence - both St Aidan's acts achieved something remarkable: they were the only performers besides the winners to receive 100% positive feedback from the judging panel.

Judges complimented the bands on:

- their impressive groove,
- tight and cohesive ensemble playing,
- and their strong technical skill on both instruments and vocals.
-



Special recognition was given to the rhythm section - Alex and Jayden on bass, and Isaac, who impressively served as the drummer for both bands. The judges praised them for providing a solid and mature backbone to the performances, and their feedback highlighted just how essential their musicianship was to each group's success.

Pride and Thanks

Mrs Matthews shared how incredibly proud she is of every student involved. She also wished to extend heartfelt thanks to the friends and family members who came along to support the performers and help make the evening such a memorable experience.

With such high praise and two exceptional performances, St Aidan's has certainly made a mark on this year's competition.

Let's bring home that trophy next year!





Over the last couple of weeks, the History Club members (Pupils from Y7, Y8, Y9 and Y10) have been hard at work to share their subject area interests. The pupils have researched a topic of their choice, planned a presentation, and then delivered a short lecture. Some of the wonderful topics we have had are:

- A Brief History of the Philippines
- The Bolshevik Revolution of 1917
- Nationalism throughout American History
- Hippocratic Beliefs
- The Evolution of Weaponry
- Pendle Witch Trials
- Tudor Dynasty Deep Dive
- WW1: Origins, Consequences and Legacy

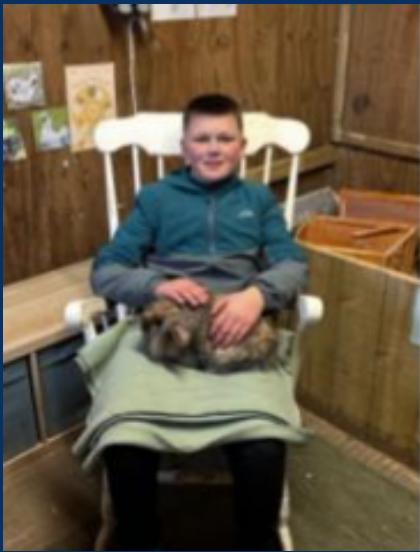
The History Club members have demonstrated a real passion and enthusiasm for not only exploring the past but introducing and guiding their peers through historical lectures. Their oracy skills, alongside their knowledge have really developed over the course of the last cycle.

If you have an interest in a specific area of History come along to 110 Wednesday after school, to share your passion and knowledge with fellow historians.



Wellbeing Week with Space North East

During Well-Being Week, our accompaniment programme with Space North East offered pupils a thoughtful and restorative experience through a visit to the Little Barn of Calm. The visit provided a peaceful setting where pupils were encouraged to pause, reflect, and develop a deeper understanding of their own emotional wellbeing. Guided by the team from Space North East, the boys explored what wellbeing truly means and considered the many factors that can influence how they feel, from daily routines and relationships to stress, sleep, and personal habits. This experience is an important part of our wider work to help our young men build confidence, self-awareness, and healthy coping habits that will serve them well throughout their lives.





Oxford University North East Schools Tour

Our Year 10 pupils recently had the exciting opportunity to take part in the University of Oxford’s North East Schools Tour, which brought representatives from the university directly into local schools to raise aspirations and widen access.

We were delighted to welcome Dom from St Anne’s College, who delivered an engaging and informative session on Oxbridge and other competitive universities. He helped pupils understand what makes these institutions unique, what they look for in successful applicants, and how pupils can begin preparing early by developing strong academic habits, curiosity, and a commitment to learning beyond the classroom.

Dom also worked to demystify the application process, reassuring pupils that Oxford and other top universities are not only for those from certain backgrounds—ambition, effort, and resilience play a crucial role. The session encouraged our young men to think boldly about their futures, ask insightful questions, and recognise that high-aspiration pathways are well within their reach.

This visit forms an important part of our wider work to expand horizons and ensure every pupil feels confident exploring the full range of post-16 and post-18 opportunities available to them.



»»» EXPLORE CAREERS TOGETHER WITH CICI – OUR NEW CAREERS CHATBOT

We are pleased to share that St Aidan’s now has access to CiCi, an interactive careers chatbot designed to help pupils explore future pathways in a simple, engaging and age-appropriate way. CiCi is available to all families, and we strongly encourage parents and carers to try it at home with their son. Our Year 10 pupils recently had the exciting opportunity to take part in the University of Oxford’s North East Schools Tour, which brought representatives from the university directly into local schools to raise aspirations and widen access.

By scanning the QR code or using the school link, you and your son can access a wide range of careers information instantly. CiCi can support pupils to discover different job roles, explore T Levels, apprenticeships and courses, check live vacancies, and learn more about volunteering, CV building, and university options. It also offers clear guidance around decision-making and UCAS, making it a helpful tool for boys at every stage of their journey.



>>> CAREERS (CONTINUED)



CATHOLIC LIFE

Using CiCi together is a great way to start meaningful conversations about ambitions, strengths, and next steps. It gives pupils the chance to explore ideas at their own pace while benefiting from parental support and encouragement.

We hope you will take a few minutes to try CiCi at home and see how it can help your son feel more confident, informed and motivated about his future.

Have you tried *CiCi* the careers chat bot?

Scan the QR code or visit:
[LINK to CiCi for St Aidan's Catholic Academy](#)

Features include:

- Engaging activities for jobs discovery
- Courses, T Levels & Apprenticeships
- Job information and vacancies
- Career insights
- Decision making
- Volunteering
- CV Support
- Self-employment
- UCAS & exam results

NE North East Combined Authority
Empowering Careers

CiCi

UPCOMING MUSICAL EVENT



We have been contacted by a former St Aidan's student, who wished to share details of an upcoming musical event that may be of interest to our school community.

Michael Dunlop, an alumnus of the St Aidan's Music Department (2009–2014), will be performing with his quartet on Saturday 28th March at the Pottery Gallery, Sunderland Museum and Winter Gardens. The concert supports the release of his debut album *Bede* and features original jazz compositions alongside reimagined Northumbrian folk tunes.

Michael was previously involved in the school's folk group and credits this experience as a significant influence on his decision to pursue a career in music. He has kindly offered a discounted ticket rate for any St Aidan's students or families who would like to attend, and has stressed that he would not wish cost to be a barrier.

Further details about the event can be found at the link below:

<https://www.trybooking.com/uk/FWTC>



»»» THE IMPORTANCE OF DAILY READING



CATHOLIC LIFE

Fifteen minutes. That's the threshold at which daily reading stops being tokenistic and starts doing real work.

Renaissance's analysis of more than 2.2 million students found a clear dividing line at this mark. **Children reading fewer than 15 minutes a day made progress below the national average.**

At 15 minutes and above, gains rose sharply and kept rising.

The cumulative impact is staggering:

- A child who averages 30 minutes or more of daily reading over their school career will encounter around 13.7 million words
- A child reading fewer than 15 minutes will meet just **1.5 million.**

That 12-million-word gap shapes vocabulary, comprehension, and confidence, not just reading levels.

»»» PARISH DISCERNMENT QUESTIONNAIRE

FAO ST BENET'S, SACRED HEART & ST JOHN BOSCO, AND ST HILDA'S PARISHIONERS

Parish Meeting on the Mission of St Benet's, Sacred Heart & St John Bosco, Hilda's family of Parishes.

I am writing to you, the parents, staff and Governors of all our Catholic primary and secondary schools within the Sunderland North - Monkwearmouth Partnership to invite you to a discernment meeting at St Benet's Church Hall on Sunday 29th March at 2pm. This discernment process is happening across every parish in the Hexham and Newcastle diocese. It is been led by Bishop Stephen who is keen that everyone has an opportunity to express their views.

Parishioners from all our 3 parishes will come together to discuss the Mission for the Monkwearmouth Partnership going forward into the future. After we establish our Mission, we will meet again in St Benet's Church Hall on Thursday 9th April at 6pm to look at how we can best deliver this Mission. This is referred to as Stewardship. These meetings are very important and we hope will lead to a more spiritual vibrant partnership for the future.

With the reduction in the number of priests, lower numbers of people attending weekend Mass and the age and condition of our church buildings, we anticipate that some difficult decisions will have to be made in the near future. Therefore, it is really important that your views are heard now.

I would love to see you at the meetings as these are about securing an active parish for your children's future. At the meeting you will hear lots more information about the discernment process for our partnership churches. If you cannot attend the meeting, I have enclosed a copy of the some of the questions we will be asking. Please take the time to complete all or some of the questions that are relevant to you and your family and return it to school for our discernment team to add to the views of those attending the meeting.

If you would like an electronic copy of the questions please do not hesitate to contact the parish office catholicnorthsunderland@diocesehn.org.uk

The diocese website has more information on the whole of the discernment process for you to access should you wish.

God Bless
Fr David



»» PARISH DISCERNMENT QUESTIONNAIRE (CONTINUED)



CATHOLIC LIFE

Please see the above letter from Father David, along with the QR code or link to the Parish Discernment Questionnaire.

[Parish discernment feedback – Fill out form](#)

The questionnaire should take around 7 minutes to complete.
The deadline for submissions is 12pm on the 30th of March.

Thank you for taking the time to participate and for supporting the parish community.



»» GENERAL REMINDERS

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



CATHOLIC LIFE

Thursday 2nd April 2026

School closes for Easter holidays - 12pm

Friday 3rd April 2026 to Friday 17th April 2026

Easter Holidays

Monday 20th April 2026

School re-opens.

Monday 4th May 2026

Bank Holiday Monday - school closed

Tuesday 5th May 2026

Year 10 Parents Evening - school closes early at 1.55pm for all pupils to accommodate Y10 Parents 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.

Monday 25th May 2026 to 29th May 2026

Half Term Holiday - school closed

