



BC NEWS





Message from Dr Coug

Dear Parent/Carer,

It has been a wonderful autumn term at Bishop Challoner Catholic College filled with hard work and incredibly enriching experiences outside the classroom. The newsletter that follows will provide you with just a snapshot of some of the brilliant work across the school this term and I hope you enjoy reading it.

On November 21st the city fell silent to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Birmingham Pub Bombings. A special service took place at New Street Station and our students performed at the event in front of HRH the Duchess of Edinburgh, His Grace Archbishop Bernard, the Irish Ambassador Martin Fraser, Andy Street, MP Jess Phillips, The Lord Mayor, the CEO of the Birmingham Irish Association and many other dignitaries. The event was broadcast live on all major media outlets.

Prior to the service at New Street Station a group of students worked closely with musicians Katie Stevens and Marian Dwyer over several weeks to compose a piece of music entitled "A Song for Hope". The students wrote the lyrics and helped to compose the music with tremendous support from Marian and Katie. They also wrote an Irish jig which was performed at the service and used as part of a Soundscape written for the BBC and produced by our A-level media students – it is a remarkable piece of work and deeply humbling to listen to. The soundscape includes interviews students carried with people that were impacted by the bombings including some of their own family members.

As part of the project, we had the great pleasure of welcoming presenter Nick Owen to the school. Nick was a reporter on that fateful night and students had the opportunity to interview him and gain a deeper understanding of how events unfolded and the wider impact of this tragic loss of lives. In December, students had the opportunity to visit the Midlands Today recording studio and watch a live episode of the news programme.

The students involved in this work have been an absolute credit to our school community and they have handled an extremely sensitive and emotional event with the upmost dignity and great maturity. A big thank you to Mr O'Connor who coordinated this project for the school and gave a superb interview on Radio WM.

We remember in our prayers all who lost their lives that evening and we continue to think of their families and friends who have carried this grief for many years.

We have designated this year as our Year of Hope as we look forward to the Jubilee Year in 2025 under the banner of Pilgrims of Hope. Our students continue to bring hope to our local community. Once again, we have been working with the Birmingham Irish Association to purchase toys to give out to those in need; Irish TV have been in this week to film the handover of the toys. Students and staff have been fundraising for Fr Hudson's Caritas this year and there have been a variety of cake sales and other charitable events taking place across the school.

We are extremely proud of our sixth form. Alongside their studies they have supported the local Dementia Café, hosted a fortnightly tea party for local parishioners and in December they led a Rudolph run which raised over £2,000 for the Birmingham Hospice – an incredible effort.



hlan, Principal

All of these wonderful acts of kindness, and the many other unseen acts of kindness, give us great pride in our young people. In November we celebrated World Kindness day and asked staff to look out and praise students who displayed a kind attitude.

Following on from our Platinum Jubilee, which took place last year to commemorate 70 years of Challoner, I had the pleasure of meeting John Welford and Cath Corrigan the son and daughter of the first headteacher of the school in November. Their father, also called John Welford, was headteacher from 1953-1973. They shared some wonderful memories of the early days of the school and presented us with a picture of John Welford painted in 1958 by the first art teacher in the school. It was a pleasure to show them around the school and to hear about those early days including how John (junior) learnt to drive on the front playground at the tender age of 13!

Catholic life continues to thrive in the school and we are absolutely blessed to have the support of Fr John, Fr Toby our Chaplain and Mrs Thompson our new lay chaplain. Groups of students attend Mass each Thursday, each year group have had their own Mass, over 40 students have been on retreat to Alton Castle and students have been attending reconciliation services across advent. Last week our year 7 students hosted an outstanding carol concert for parents and carers in the church – it was lovely to see all the students taking part and getting into the festive spirit.

Students and staff were delighted to attend a special Mass to celebrate all the vocations from the parish of St Dunstan's. Bishop Timothy Menezes celebrated the Mass and our students were exceptional representatives of our school community.

In November, we took part in Red Wednesday in solidarity with persecuted Christians across the world and in the process supported Aid to the Church in Need. Students and staff attended Mass at St Chad's Cathedral.

Our examination groups have been working extremely hard this term. The commitment shown to their studies is hugely impressive. Year 11 have just completed their mock examinations and Year 13 will commence their mocks in the New Year. I am confident that our students will achieve their full potential next summer and they should be congratulated on their exemplary work.

The season of advent is a time of great joy and preparation as we prepare for the birth of the Christ child. Over the Christmas period we particularly remember in our prayers all those caught up in conflict, those persecuted for their beliefs, those that have recently lost loved ones and those for whom Christmas will be a lonely time this year.

We look forward to 2025 with great hope and I certainly hope that come next May, we will be celebrating another league title for Liverpool.

Wishing you and your families a very happy and Holy Christmas,

J Coughlan
Principal



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Lord Jesus,

Master of both the light and the darkness, send your Holy Spirit upon our preparations for Christmas.

We who have so much to do and seek quiet spaces to hear your voice each day,

We who are anxious over many things look forward to your coming among us.

We who are blessed in so many ways long for the complete joy of your kingdom.

We whose hearts are heavy seek the joy of your presence.

We are your people, walking in darkness, yet seeking the light.

To you we say, "Come Lord Jesus!"

Catholic Life

Year 7 Mass

We have been delighted to welcome our Year 7 students into our school community with the celebration of two Masses this term. In our second Mass we were delighted to invite parents and members of the community to join us and to have the opportunity to hear our students sing so beautifully and enthusiastically. Students have been busy preparing hymns in assemblies and we look forward to more celebrations across the year.



Weekly Mass

It has been lovely to see our students continue to attend the weekly parish Mass and to support leading the worship through their writing of prayers and leading the readings. We look forward to continuing the development of bringing our students regularly to Mass and continuing to explore opportunities for them to lead worship and support the Parish at these Masses.



Chaplaincy Commissioning Mass

We were able to provide a wonderful day for members of our chaplaincy team, who attended Oscott for a chaplaincy commissioning Mass alongside a talk on blessed Carlo Acutis. Our students found the day extremely interesting and we hope that the experience continues to inspire our students to serve our community through their work in the chaplaincy team.



Mini Vinnies Mass

We were pleased to see our students attend and lead music at our parish SVP Mass. Looking forward to seeing the work of our Mini Vinnies going forward. These students will be integral in leading and creating ideas for how we can support Mini Vinnies across the year.



CAFOD Family Fast Day

This term we were delighted to re-launch our support for CAFOD family fast day. During the day we had students from ks3 and ks4 pop into the chapel to experience a poor meal for a small donation. Our chaplaincy students did a fantastic job in organising the event and our students were very generous in their support, which provided a wonderful buzz in the school.



Rosary

During the month of October, we were delighted to see students taking time at lunchtime to say a decade of The Rosary. Students across all key stages participated at various points and it was wonderful to see students having the confidence to lead The Rosary with each other and to see their commitment to faith as they committed to this act of worship.

We are also delighted to see our weekly Rosary sessions, led by Fr John, Continue to be celebrated with our students. Year 7 and 8 have all participated in weekly prayer sessions this term and we look forward to sharing this sacred time with our year 11 students in the New Year.



Red Wednesday

For the second consecutive year, students attended The Red Wednesday Mass celebrated at St Chads Cathedral. Red Wednesday is an annual event which highlights the persecution of Christians around the world and it was lovely to see students wearing red across our school in solidarity with Christians worldwide, whilst also learning more about this in their Religious Education lessons.



Reconciliation Services

Across Advent we have been able to offer all students the opportunity to attend the Sacrament of Reconciliation with Fr and Fr John. We were overwhelmed with the dedication and commitment of the students to receive Reconciliation during this season and we are extremely grateful for the many hours Fr John and Fr Toby dedicated to ensure all students had the opportunity to do this as part of their Advent preparations.

Carol Concert

Huge congratulations to our students who participated in such a beautiful carol concert to help us and our community enter into the Christmas spirit.

It was wonderful to see so many members of our community attend the concert and to share the celebration of the wonderful talents of our students.

To see our students celebrate with such joy and hope was a beautiful way to share the meaning of Advent together.



RE

Pupils across all Key Stages have made an impressive start to RE this year, demonstrating a willingness to explore and deepen their faith while embodying the core values of faith, integrity, compassion, community, and excellence in their learning and growth.

TO HOPE AND ACT WITH CREATION
SEASON OF CREATION 2019

Pope Francis calls us to join in prayer to mark the Season of Creation from 1 September to 4 October starting with the Feast of Saint Francis of Assisi.

Creation teaches us that to have hope is to hold fast to expectations for a better future. Hope involves putting our trust in God, but we must also act.

Living Faith:
We thank you for the gift of Earth. We hope and pray for strength and passion to responsibly value, protect and nurture the planet so that future generations enjoy Your Sacred Creation. (Luther King Jr) Love the world as if you have it, but use it as if you don't. (Luther King Jr) Love the world as if you have it, but use it as if you don't. (Luther King Jr)

We began the year by highlighting Pope Francis' call to reflect on the Season of Creation, emphasising our responsibility to care for our common home. The Season teaches us to trust in God with hope for a better future while taking meaningful action to restore the Earth. Through prayer and unity, we encouraged students to address environmental challenges and embrace their role as stewards of creation.

Interfaith Forum

Inspired by Pope Francis' call for interreligious dialogue as a path to peace, Miss Reynolds founded the 'Interfaith Club.' The club offers a space for students to connect across faiths, fostering mutual understanding, shared learning, and spiritual growth. Activities include games, discussion circles, religious art, trivia, and celebrations of diverse festivals.

RE Creative Challenges

This year, pupils are being invited to create creative works, outside of lessons, inspired by events celebrated in school. Students have already produced beautiful pieces reflecting St. Francis of Assisi's Prayer for Peace and Black Saints studied during Black History Month.



Red Wednesday

Pupils participated in the global #RedWednesday event, focusing on raising awareness about the persecution of Christians worldwide. Pupils fully engaged with the lesson, reflecting on how they can take personal action to show solidarity and unity—not only with fellow Christians but also with people of all faiths who face persecution. Discussions highlighted the belief that all humans are made in the image of God, giving everyone inalienable dignity. Pupils also explored Scripture, including Jesus' teachings on persecution and the passage from Corinthians: 'If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honoured, every part rejoices with it.'



Black History Month – Reclaiming Narratives

Each year group engaged with the theme of Reclaiming Narratives during Black History Month in meaningful ways:

Year 7: Students studied the lives and legacies of Black Saints—Saint Josephine Bakhita, Saint Martin de Porres, Venerable Pierre Toussaint, and Saint Benedict the Moor. They reflected on the lessons we can learn from these figures and considered how Scripture teaches us about equality.

Years 8 and 9: Students explored how figures in Black history, such as Fr. Augustus Tolton and Sr. Thea Bowman, acted according to their conscience to resist injustice. They reflected on how their own conscience calls them to stand against injustice today.

Years 10 and 11: Students delved into the concept of Black theology, examining how dignity, justice, and equality are central to it. They also discussed the importance of recognising Saint Augustine's African identity and its significance in reclaiming historical narratives.



Year 7

Studied Prophecy and Promise, focusing on the Bible's inspiration, historical development, translation, and use today, alongside illuminated manuscripts (e.g., Lindisfarne Gospels) and have completed KAP1 assessments.

Year 8

Completed Creation and Covenant, examining freedom, responsibility, sin, conscience, and baptism. Now studying Prophecy and Promise, linking Old Testament prophecies to Advent themes in services and piety.

Alton Castle

Mr Rowan, Miss Watson, Mr Knowles and Miss Thomas took 42 Year 7 and 8 pupils to Alton Castle at the end of November. Pupils had the space and time to deepen their faith, reflect on their relationship with God, and build a sense of community in a peaceful and inspiring setting. They engaged in activities such as team-building exercises, outdoor challenges, and creative workshops that integrate Catholic values. The retreat provides a unique blend of faith, fun, and reflection, helping pupils see how their beliefs can guide their daily lives.



Year 9

This group have studied Creation and Covenant, addressing Genesis, human dignity, pro-life perspectives, and matrimony. Currently studying Prophecy and Promise, with a focus on women's roles in Salvation history, particularly Mary.

Year 13

The focus is on course review and mock exam preparation, refining skills in investigating and analysing philosophical and ethical questions and their interconnections.

Year 10

Year 10 students Concluded Origins and Meanings and began Good and Evil, examining the origins of evil, Catholic responses to suffering, and the significance of pilgrimage and piety.

Year 11

Year 11 have been exploring Sin and Forgiveness, focusing on punishment, redemption, salvation, and repentance in Catholic teachings.

Year 12

Year 12 explored situation ethics, utilitarianism, arguments for God's existence, and challenges to religious belief, focusing on outlining and critically evaluating theories and arguments

Maths

Senior Maths Challenge

The senior maths challenge comprises of 25 multiple-choice problems to solve with both year 12 and year 13 participating in this national competition. Our students achieved 28 bronze, 8 silver and 3 gold awards. Those with gold awards have gone on to sit the British Maths Olympiad assessment, a gruelling three-and-a-half-hour paper sat by the best maths students in the country. We also had four students who opted into the Maths Olympiad for Girls, one of which achieved a merit for her work.

Catholic Games

During the first half term of this academic year, we sent two teams from Y7 out to compete in the yearly maths competition at St Edmund Campion. All students had a fantastic time and thoroughly enjoyed the day. Although we didn't secure a top 3 finish this time, both teams performed commendably.



Maths Drop In

We have continued to run the Key Stage 3 homework club every Wednesday. There continues to be a great uptake in the drop in and often we have a full classroom of students utilising the facilities on offer. The drop in provides students with a space to get support from teachers if they are struggling with homework or if they don't have access to the internet at home, a space for them to complete their homework.

Y10 Maths Challenge

On 21st November, Mr Bloxidge and Mr Tanweer took a team of four Year 11 students and a team of four Year 10 students to compete in the Catholic Secondary School Games Maths Challenge at Cardinal Newman School in Coventry.

The competition was hotly contested, with very high scores. The Year 11 team came joint third out of about 18 teams, and the Year 10 team won overall!!! Many congratulations to them!



Primary Outreach and Tolkien Maths Cluster

Mr Mahmood and Mrs Khatun have taken over the running of Maths G&T club on Monday after school. As has been the case for many years, the Bishop Challoner Mathematics department are once again working with several Catholic primary schools in the Tolkien Cluster to provide sessions for Gifted and Talented students. There are five scheduled sessions across the year and the first two have taken place. In the first session, students took part in a cross-number puzzle, working in teams, aiming to finish the cross-number puzzle as quickly, and accurately as possible. This focussed on key skills such as teamwork and communication, the students certainly stepped up to the mark and did themselves proud. The second session had a Christmas twist, students took part in the Great Elf game, using elves to deliver as many Christmas trees as possible. This enabled students to take part in Maths in an engaging and slightly different manner to usual. There is plenty more Maths for students to take part in over the remaining three sessions.



Christmaths Day

Well done to our fabulous Year 9 leaders who helped run and co-ordinate Christmaths Day on Friday 6th December. The day began with the 11 primary schools meeting in the Dojo and completing some maths-based problems in groups, with our Y9s helping support.

The students were then divided into four groups and across the course of the day visited four rooms to participate in different activities. In room M1, students were answering maths questions to gain points to 'buy' parts of a snowman and having to decorate their snowman afterwards. In room M2 students were playing an 'elf' game with teams trying to earn as many points as possible. In room M3 pupils were treated to 'Maths Nevada' where it was a game of chance to try to complete a maths relay game. In room M4 students were playing countdown with incredible powerpoint animation.

3rd place went to: St Anne's

2nd place went to: St Jude's

1st place went to: St John and Monica

A huge well done to our Year 9 leaders:

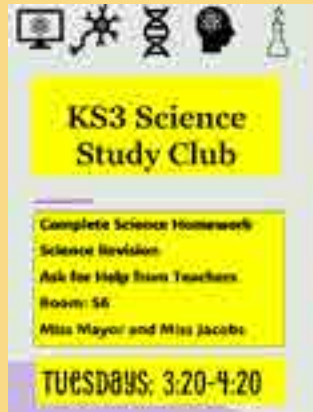
Archie B, Zac C-M, Reece C B, Petro Y, Nigel T, Zach B, Joseph F, Jacob B, Florence B, Jasmine M, Annabelle R, Grace McD, Grace E, Ailish C, Bo S, Mark S A, Samuel M.



Science

Key Stage 3

The department have been introducing the students to the online platform 'Educake'. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support in helping us introduce this resource and we are very pleased how it is enhancing students' learning experiences and academic progress.



This term we have started running a Key Stage 3 Study Club, held every Tuesday in S6. This is a drop-in session available to all Key Stage 3, providing a space for students to receive help with their studies. This has provided students with valuable support with Educake and the curriculum.



London Science Museum

On 11th October, ninety Year 8 students visited the London Science Museum. This was an opportunity to explore various scientific concepts and engage in interactive learning experiences. One of the highlights of the visit was the IMAX theatre, where students watched a film on the International Space Station (ISS). The film provided a captivating insight into the daily lives of astronauts aboard the ISS, their experiments, and the challenges they face in space. Additionally, the students had the chance to interact with the museum's exhibits, further enhancing their understanding of scientific principles.

The museum's exhibits included interactive displays on electricity, magnetism, forces, and motion. Students had the opportunity to generate electricity, manipulate magnetic fields, and observe the effects of different forces. These activities not only reinforced learning, but also provided a practical understanding of scientific concepts. Thank you to all the staff that supported the trip ensuring the trip ran smoothly and was an enriching experience. The staff included Miss Mayor, Mrs Jones, Ms Ghoris, Miss Bibi, Mr Wilson, Mr Wells and Ms McGowen. All the students enjoyed the trip and were an asset to the school. This trip not only complemented the curriculum, but also ignited a passion for science among our students.



Science Club

This term, the KS3 Science Club has been buzzing with activity, enthusiasm, and hands-on discovery. Every week, our dedicated students gather with excitement to dive into the wonders of science through a variety of fascinating practical activities. From conducting flame tests to identify different metals, making stretchy slime, and creating brilliant blue copper sulphate crystals, each session has brought new challenges and insights.

One of the highlights was our egg parachute experiment, where students tested their designs to keep eggs safe during high drops. Additionally, a memorable dissection session allowed students to learn about anatomy in an engaging, hands-on way.

Through these practical experiments, students have not only expanded their scientific knowledge but also developed teamwork, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. We're proud of their dedication and enthusiasm, and they're already looking forward to the exciting experiments lined up for next term. A huge thank you to everyone involved for making this term at Science Club a fantastic success!



Key Stage 5: Year 13 Slapton Sands Field Trip 2024

The Year 13 Biology students visited Slapton Ley Field Centre in South Devon. The area is a National Nature Reserve and a SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest). The students stayed for four days and carried out a range of field techniques and studies. The students visited East Prawle, where we carried out rock pool investigations followed by examining the zones on the beach. The students also compared many different species including limpets on the rocky shoreline in an exposed and sheltered beach. All students demonstrated excellent practical and team building skills throughout the duration. The following day, we completed a succession practical to investigate how different plant species changed from the shoreline to the shingle ridge and beyond. During the evening, we investigated the local bats, where the students were able to use their bat detectors to locate the bats and investigate their behaviour. We also had opportunity to observe the Kingsbridge Estuary on paddleboards, which was an amazing experience for all.

In addition to this students carried out their own investigation into how abiotic factors changed on the Slapton Shingle Ridge. Here, the students were able to use a range of probes and metres to measure how abiotic factors changed. The students further developed their practical skills and were able to complete many of their practical assessments while in Slapton. Year 13 were excellent in their approach and attitude throughout the trip. The students impressed the Slapton Ley staff and excelled in every activity they took part in. They were a pleasure to take on the trip and represented the school as excellent role models. Well done Year 13 Biologists and thank you to the staff that supported the trip. These included Miss Mayor, Dr Jameson, Mr Woodbridge, Mr Brown and Mr Harper.



Catholic Games STEM Competition

Year 10 students from our school recently competed in a STEM competition held at St Peter's School.

Throughout the event, the students were tasked with completing four exciting challenges, including creating a volcano model and constructing a bionic hand.

They demonstrated exemplary behaviour, teamwork, and resilience as they tackled each challenge with determination and enthusiasm. Their hard work paid off, and our school proudly secured third place overall in the competition. A massive well done to the students for their fantastic effort and achievement!



Animal Man Experience – Year 7

This was an interactive experience designed to engage students with a variety of live animals, helping them learn more about animal behaviour, habitats, and conservation in a safe, supervised setting. The Animal Man brought a range of animals including snakes, lizards, an owl, honey bear and a tarantula! This offered the Year 7 a fascinating insight into their lives and environments. This hands-on session allowed students to observe the animals up close, sparking curiosity and deepening their understanding of the natural world. The students really enjoyed the experience and are looking forward to him coming back soon! Watch this space!



Personal Development

PSHE Curriculum

The academic year has exploded to life as pupils explore Health, Wellbeing, Personal Safety and Citizenship. Year 7 have settled into secondary school life and their lessons in PSHE have been designed to complement the transition process and welcome them to our Catholic community. Pupils have enjoyed delving into themes such as resilience, friendships, health and wellbeing and healthy lifestyles, as well as a discrete focus on this year's Anti Bullying Week (more details below). Student voice and pupil feedback has been great – especially the lessons on how to live out a healthy lifestyle! Students are excited to look at healthy eating options and increase physical activity, which also promotes their well-being!



Year 8 started the year by looking at the Criminal Justice System and have been studying age related laws and the process of law enforcement. Highlights have certainly been our re-enactments of a restorative justice scene and a thought-provoking debate on the powers of the police in the UK. We also have a visit booked with our Hall Green Constituency School Police Liaison team who join us next week to run a workshop on 'stop and search' and 'police powers'. We look forward to consolidating this learning throughout the rest of the Autumn term as we continue to study the Human Rights Act and the Equality Act of 2010. I must congratulate Year 8 for the mature way in which they have approached this Citizenship themed scheme of work. To say classes have been keen to ask questions and expand their knowledge, would be an understatement!

The whole of Year 9 have had the most amazing start to PSHE, exploring Health and Well-being through our awareness sessions on drugs, alcohol, smoking and vaping. The lessons have been designed to be informative, educational and offer pupils the opportunity to understand the facts, NHS guidance and the legalities around these sensitive subject areas. Always using case studies as the vehicle to exploration, students have covered a broad scope of learning opportunities within a safe and controlled environment, culminating in an awareness campaign project that they are currently working on. The subject matter was further explored when Aquarius – a Midlands based charity who help people and communities overcome the harms caused by alcohol, drugs and gambling – presented interactive and informative workshops to all of our Year 9 students back in October.



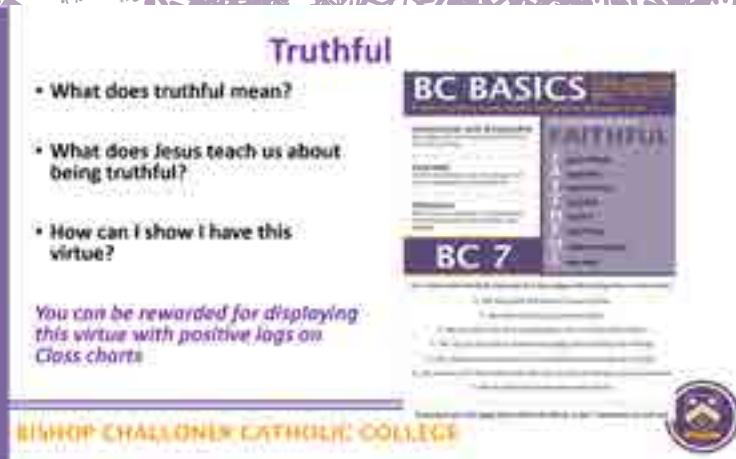
Assemblies and Form Resources

Personal Development continues to thrive through our unique and diverse assembly and form resource programme. This is delivered weekly to all year groups, in each key stage. Assemblies this year have been delivered by Heads of Year and Key Stage Leads and are always relevant to key national and world events and have a strong Catholic ethos, promoting our Faithful Virtues. Starting with collective workshop and ending with a 'Going Forth' message, the assemblies are rooted in biblical stories and share our mission statement and our desire for students to exhibit the Bishop Challoner Faithful Virtues. Examples of topics that have been covered already this year are;



World Mental Health Day, Remembrance and Anti Bullying Week. The theme for this was 'Choose Respect' and we linked this to how we can show respect throughout each day in and outside of school. The theme was further explored using resources from the Anti-Bullying alliance in PSHE lessons. Each assembly also highlights students who have lived out the Faithful Virtues. The Form Resources have been the vehicle for delivering our standards for learning curriculum and our Faithful Virtues. The sequence of presentations covered what the explicit meaning of the virtues are, related them to the Gospels and made them relevant to our actions in school. These are now embedded in lessons and every assembly, reminding our students, daily, of our school values.

The Form Resource programme continues to develop successfully, each academic year. Utilising our very important student voice feedback, the presentations, which vary from a cultural literacy focus to essential safety and other national days and celebrations, now incorporate an interactive activity for pupils to engage with. Lived examples of this are when we looked at Knife Crime. Pupils were presented with factual; age appropriate material and the focus then turned to the message of our virtues. Pupils engaged in a quiz which relayed important facts and information related to the laws of the country. Students also looked at the meaning behind the Year of Hope and created wonderful 3 dimensional doves with Bible quotes referencing 'Hope' for our display tree in the foyer.



Black History Month

October welcomed the celebration of Black History Month and this year it was a key focus across every curriculum area of the school. Launching with a wonderful assembly for all year groups, the emphasis this year was 'Reclaiming Narratives' and paid honour to some of the lost narratives of our history books, from over the centuries. We brought to the forefront stories from as old as the Tudors and The Stuarts, saluting some of the less known black heroes of the time. This theme continued with a Black History Month trail across the school building, where pupils were asked key questions about 8 historical periods in the UK. Every subject focused on an aspect of Black History Month, examples from Science, where there were quizzes centred around influential black scientists and students had to gather information. In RE, students explored the impact of black Saints and religious figures. We also had an amazing display of African textiles and fabric printing which was then displayed, proudly, in our foyer, next to our display tree which had images of key black heroes from across the centuries, hung upon it.



Year 11 Personal Development Day

Every year, the Personal Development days receive such positive feedback and praise from our students. The day for Year 11 in October, was a huge success and enabled our GCSE cohort to take a day away from their academic studies and touch base with exploring issues in the world around them. Commencing with the most powerful presentation from Augustus Stewart in association with Precious Lives, we listened intently to his story as he shared with us his autobiography of a life growing up in crime. The talk was captivating for our students and spoke volumes about personal safety and making the right choices in life. The rest of the day was spent in classrooms exploring money matters, impact of drugs and vaping, culminating in a well-being session that explored ways to cope with stress. The varied nature of the day exposed the pupils to so many societal issues, and feedback on the workshops was fantastic from both staff and pupils, alike. We very much look forward to hosting Personal Development days for the rest of the school!



World Kindness Day

World Kindness Day was on November 13th which tied in wonderfully with Anti Bullying Week. Pupils engaged in a form activity in the previous week that looked at the concept of kindness and how this complements our faithful virtues; especially being intentional and understanding. Students were told that teachers would be looking and listening out for acts of kindness, no matter how small. Throughout the week, nominations came flooding in for pupils from across the school. From tidying up classrooms without being asked, to helping others with classwork and lending out equipment, all nominated pupils received a 'kindness slip', and one amazingly kind student was also rewarded with a kind gesture from staff. Well done to Grace McNamara in Year 11 who was nominated by her Head of Year for always offering to help student in her class, in particular some new students who are also new to living in the UK. Grace has shown the faithful virtue of being intentional by supporting with getting to know the school.



School Council

School council is an imperative part of our student voice programme and pupils have already had a year council meeting with their Head of Year and a whole school council meeting with Dr Coughlan. Students are mature and professional in these meetings, offering thought through suggestions on important matters that concern safety, school charity and day to day life at Bishop Challoner. The Year 7 representative, Jamie Concannon-Banner, even produced an Ofsted related hand out on why we should have a school dog! It was wonderful to see the inspiration from the council members and their feedback to peers. This has manifested in a real drive for our school's focus on the Year of Hope and charity events for Father Hudson's Caritas.

Pupils are keen to work together, hold charity events and live out our mission statement by giving service to others. We now also have over 30 Faithful Ambassadors across the school who are coming together to lead forms and assemblies in collective worship and charity events. The Key Stage 4 ambassadors are preparing Advent and Christmas themed assemblies to deliver to Year 7 and 8, whilst our Key Stage 3 ambassadors have been busy getting the staff toiletries collection for Father Hudson's Tabor House – supporting homeless people in Birmingham – ready for delivery next week! We are excited for our next meeting to see what impact the students can make on our wonderful school.



Kare Adenegan

Kare Adenegan, six times Paralympian medal winner, joined us back in October to talk to Year 7 and 10. This was part of our Black History Month celebration and also part of our disability awareness and promotion of equality across the school. Kare was an absolute inspiration as she wowed her audience with the challenges in life she has overcome, through sheer hard work and determination. Training for the Paralympics before her 14th birthday, has meant she has travelled the globe to compete for the UK, alongside successfully completing her GCSEs, ALEVELs and Honours Degree. Kare talked about striving to be better, never giving up and having her faith to guide her. Our students were so impressed by her accolade and her resilience that they were queuing up for autographs at the end of her presentation.



Forthcoming Projects

As we move forward, it is wonderful to announce that our Fox Hollies project will commence very soon and 10, Year 9 students will take part in the most enlightening exchange programme with our Fox Hollies friends. This project has run for many years and this year promises to be just as special as it always has been. We start with disability awareness and look forward to our visits to Fox Hollies in the New Year to take part in a PE project this year!

We also embrace the next stage of the Mode Shift Active Travel award scheme, in search for transport and traffic solutions in our school's locality. This was a huge success last year and we can't wait to start it again.

Geography

Year 7

As an introduction to Geography, Year 7 began the term focusing on local Geography within Birmingham and then will broaden their learning to look at the United Kingdom. This unit of work integrates an introduction to Geographical skills such as grid references, compass direction and scale whilst also developing a sense of place for the country in which we live. The Year 7 Geographers enjoyed using maps of the local area to demonstrate the skills they have developed and engaged with in paired and group competitions. Students have explored important geographical concepts such as river systems, coastal erosion, migration and glaciation. The unit of work enables the students to demonstrate their knowledge in a range of ways including creative writing, describing and explaining patterns and group debate. Year 7 have also had an opportunity to 'become the teacher' using a flipped learning approach with students teaching each other about waterfall formation. Subsequently, Year 7 will be moving on to investigate the global superpower and the world's fastest growing country, China. Students will be exploring China's rapidly changing human environments and also learning about China's rich physical environments. This place of study has proven to be thoroughly engaging for the students and sparks curiosity and discussion.

Year 9

Year 9 students are currently learning about the world's leading superpower the United States of America. Students have been investigating a range of Geographical concepts throughout the unit of work including Physical factors such as the formation of the Rocky Mountains, the risk of volcanic activity in Yellowstone National Park and the formation of hurricanes. They have also investigated the USA's interesting and continually changing human environments, from mega cities like New York to urban regeneration in areas like Detroit. This unit has really helped develop students' Geographical understanding of a variety of key concepts and has enabled them to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding in a range of ways such as a report style writing, raps and poems, letter writing and extending Point Evidence Explain Paragraphs.

Over the past few weeks, Year 9 have shown their dedication to revision and have been trialling a range of revision strategies for their KAP4 such as blurting, mind maps and flashcards. We are very proud of the hard work students have shown in their preparation for these assessments and are looking forward to sharing their achievements with them.

Year 8

Year 8 will shortly have completed the first country study of Russia. Throughout the term they have studied the vast diversity in the physical landscape of the country and have used this to explain patterns in population density. They have also demonstrated their ability to evaluate topical issues such as pollution through extended writing as well as participating in class debates over Russia extracting oil in the Arctic. Subsequently, Year 8 will be moving on to explore the fascinating Newly Emerging Economy, Brazil. From learning about the Brazil's amazing physical features like the Amazon River and rainforest, to analysing why people are moving from rural areas to major cities such as Rio de Janeiro, the Brazil topic of work is always a popular choice with our students. Students will also be shortly learning about the impacts of Brazil hosting the Olympic Games, and consider the many social, economic and environmental influences that events like these may bring to a nation.

Year 10

Year 10 have made a positive start to the year and are currently working on the first topic 'The Living World'. Within this unit of work, they will be studying important global issues such as deforestation of the Malaysian rainforests and desertification in the Thar desert. Students are currently preparing for a mid-unit assessment and are demonstrating a range of revision skills such as summarising knowledge, practicing perfect paragraphs reviewing past exam papers. All Year 10 students have been provided with a BCCC Geography revision guide, we hope that they find this to be a beneficial resource to support their revision

Year 11

Year 11 are now working hard on covering the content for the final exams and are preparing well for the up and coming mock exams in December. Pupil Premium students have been issued a revision guide to help support their studies at home. Revision grids, revision checklists and practice exam questions have also been issued to students to ensure they have all the required resources to give them every chance of success in their final exams. A number of our students have also expressed a desire to study Geography at A level which is pleasing to see.

The current topic of which Year 11 are studying is entitled: The Changing Economic World. As part of this unit students investigate aid as a strategy to reduce the development gap. An example of sustainable aid that we evaluate with the students is Goat Aid. Students learn how a goat can improve farming practices and support families with paying for education and health care. The students were inspired by this and raised enough money to donate 5 goats to developing countries. Fantastic generosity displayed by our students.

Key Stage 5

Year 12 have made a positive start to their A Level Geography and have been demonstrating their independent learning skills to support what they are learning in the classroom. The students are currently exploring the topic of 'Natural Hazards' for their physical component and 'Changing Places' for the human component of the course.

The department continues to be very impressed with the dedication shown by Year 13 to their NEA investigations. The students have used the available resources to independently complete significant sections of their NEA and have shown great resilience in meeting the deadlines. We have enjoyed reading the sections they have submitted so far.

Eco Club

We have started our work as Active Travel Ambassadors, we hope to encourage cycling and other forms of active travel to school. We have also started our Eco School application and we're hoping to achieve the Silver or Gold level of the award in summer 2025.

History

The history of Father Christmas...

The earliest evidence for a personified Christmas can be found in a 15th-century carol, in which a character called 'Sir Christēmas' shares the news of Christ's birth. He tells his audience to 'Make good cheer and be right merry.'

Another precursor to Father Christmas could be found in York, where a festival called the 'Yule Ridings' took place on the 21 December. A man disguised as Yule carried cakes and meat through the streets and threw nuts into the crowd. In 1572 the procession was banned after complaints of 'verie rude and barbarouse' behaviour.

Elsewhere in Tudor and Stuart times, specially appointed 'Lords of Misrule' oversaw Christmas celebrations in aristocratic houses, and were sometimes given names like 'Captain Christmas', 'The Christmas Lord' or 'Prince Christmas'.

But none of these early personifications of Christmas make him out to be a 'father' or an old man.

Christmas was changing. With the Victorian focus on family life and children, it would no longer be just a time for drinking, feasting and making merry. And this new kind of

Christmas needed a new kind of old man to represent it.

Long before the symbol of Father Christmas emerged in England, the separate legend of Sinterklaas was gaining ground in Europe.

In one tale, Sinterklaas met a poor man who was on the brink of selling his own daughters into slavery. Under the cover of darkness, the saint anonymously threw three bags of gold down the chimney to provide dowries for the girls. The gold landed in their stockings, which were drying by the fire.

Over time, tales of his gold-giving exploits gave rise to a tradition of leaving gifts for children on the night before 6 December - which was St Nicholas's Day.

Historians think that Santa Claus first stepped foot in England in 1864 in a story by the American author Susanna Warner.

The Oxford Dictionary of English Folklore notes that a French visitor to England in 1883 said it was a matter of common knowledge that Father Christmas came down chimneys to put toys and sweets in stockings.

History Bishop's Got Talent

Early November saw the History Department host the school's BGT event in which students played History Bingo in the library. The event was very lively and students enjoyed learning about key figures from history as well as being rewarded for this by earning themselves some sweets in the process!

We were helped by four of our delightful 6th form students who diligently researched the individuals and took a lead role in running the event in the library. Thank you to Ruby Fox, Hannah Fothergill, Molly O'Kane and Saoirse Nijjar. Student feedback was very positive and excitement was audible.



Black History Month

We began October by promoting a competition for Black History Month across Key Stage Three. We received hundreds of entries with some making use of video game Minecraft, Lego pieces and poetry to showcase their tributes to Black History Month.

The theme this year was 'Reclaiming Narratives'

Students produced outstanding work which were celebrated, and the winners were awarded a voucher by Dr Coughlan. There is also a display in school of a number of stand-out pieces.

Congratulations to the winners: Miley P, Ryan H, Idris C, Taedon W



Upcoming event: Horrible Histories Live!

Ms Thomas is running a trip for Year 7 students to watch 'Horrible Histories' live at the Alexandra Theatre in April 2025. If you are interested, please ask Ms Thomas for a letter.



Physical Education

As we approach the festive season, we are excited to share the highlights and achievements of the PE Department from this term. It has been a highly productive period, filled with dynamic activities and initiatives that have engaged students across all year groups.

Competitive Sports

Netball: Our girls' netball teams from Years 7 to 10 have shown great skill and teamwork in local school leagues and the prestigious School Games.

Football: Boys' football teams have competed in local leagues, the Birmingham Cup, and the West Midlands Cup, participating in all School Games competitions from Year 7 to 11.

Touch Rugby: Thanks to our partnership with the RFU School Games Programme, girls' rugby teams have regularly competed in league games.

Table Tennis: Key Stage 3 students represented our school with enthusiasm and resilience in the School Games.

Upcoming Sports

We are looking forward to the start of cricket and basketball after half-term, providing more opportunities for student participation and competitive success

Extra-Curricular

Our thriving extra-curricular programme offers a club every morning and afternoon, ensuring all students have access to sport and physical activity. Additionally, we have established a PE School Council, giving students a platform to voice their opinions and influence decisions in the department.

New Initiatives

PE Student of the Month: This initiative has been highly successful in recognising and celebrating outstanding contributions and achievements in PE.

Faithful Virtues: The integration of the FAITHFUL virtues into our curriculum has been a cornerstone of our approach, shaping both lessons and wider department initiatives.

Foundry Gym Partnership: Our new partnership with the Foundry Gym provides Year 12 students with free weekly access as part of their enrichment activities, promoting physical fitness and well-being.

Curriculum & Professional Development

We are proud to have introduced Parkour into our curriculum, engaging students in developing strength, agility, and spatial awareness. Our staff have also participated in dedicated training to ensure high-quality delivery of this exciting activity. We continue to work closely with Birmingham Newman University on the SHARP principles to enhance our curriculum delivery.

Facilities and Funding

We have secured funding to upgrade the sports facilities at our Moor Green Lane site, including new goals and the creation of a 9-a-side pitch. This development will benefit all year groups and support our involvement in the School Games and local competitions.

Looking Ahead

Our goals for the coming term include:

Continuing to embed the FAITHFUL virtues across all activities.

Strengthening partnerships with local organisations to provide enriching opportunities for students.

Developing student leadership further through the PE School Council and extra-curricular programmes.

This term has been a testament to the hard work and dedication of both staff and students in the PE Department. Through competitive success, innovative initiatives, and strong community links, we continue to provide outstanding opportunities for all. With your ongoing support, we aim to build on these successes and further enrich the physical and personal development of every student.

Computer Science & ICT

As we approach the festive season, we reflect on the exciting achievements and activities of the Computing and ICT Department since September. It has been a remarkable term filled with innovation, teamwork, and success. Here's a look back at what we've accomplished.

Bletchley Park Trip

In the same month, our Year 8 and Year 9 students had the privilege of visiting Bletchley Park. The trip included participating in cyber security workshops and delving into the fascinating history of WWII codebreaking. Students left with a greater appreciation of the pivotal role Bletchley Park played in shaping modern computing and its significance as an iconic UK landmark.



Open Evening

In September, we welcomed Year 6 prospective students to Bishop Challoner for an immersive experience in computing. Students explored virtual reality (VR) headsets, wrote code to control Sphero RVR Robots, and programmed Microbits. It was an engaging evening that provided a glimpse into our dynamic computing curriculum and inspired many future computing enthusiasts.

CyberFirst Year 8 Girls Competition

For the fourth consecutive year, Bishop Challoner's Year 8 students registered for the prestigious National Cyber Security Centre's CyberFirst competition. Four teams worked tirelessly over eight days—including weekends—collaborating to solve complex challenges. Their dedication paid off, earning Bishop Challoner a spot in the top ten finalists for the West Midlands 2024. Congratulations to Angel, Maisie, Jessica, Grace, Tajah, Martha, Aoife, Layla, Faye, Brook, Florence, Elise, Mary, and Amy for their incredible achievement!



STEM House Tech Day

Year 8 students participated in Tech Day at Birmingham City University's STEM House. The event offered hands-on workshops in AI and cyber security, alongside inspiring talks from leading figures in the tech industry. It was an excellent opportunity for students to gain insight into cutting-edge technologies and the possibilities of a future in STEM fields.



Looking Ahead

As we conclude this term, we look forward to even more exciting opportunities in the new year, including upcoming drone workshops, robotics, tech competitions, and curriculum innovations. Thank you to all students, staff, and parents for your continued support in making this term a success.

GCHQ Christmas Challenge

Our A-Level Computer Science students took on this year's GCHQ Christmas Challenge, breaking the code in under 30 minutes—an impressive accomplishment! Meanwhile, our Year 10 Computing students also rose to the challenge, delivering excellent results. Well done to all participants for showcasing their problem-solving and critical-thinking skills.



Art and Design

This month has been bustling with activity and creativity in the art department. Year 11 and Year 13 students have been hard at work preparing for their mock exams, producing a variety of interesting and impressive outcomes. Their dedication and artistic exploration have been fantastic.

Meanwhile, our Year 12 students enjoyed an enriching trip to the Barber Institute of Fine Arts. This visit provided them with a wonderful opportunity to engage with world-class art and gain new perspectives that will undoubtedly influence their own creative journeys.

KS3 students have been embracing the festive spirit by transforming the library into into a creative hub filled with coloured paper, stencils and glitter! The students have enjoyed expressing their creativity and sharing the joy of the season through their handmade cards. It's been wonderful to see their enthusiasm and the beautiful cards they've created.

Our Year 13 students have been diligently preparing for their upcoming mock exams. Recently, they experimented with plaster casting with Mr Fowles, using moulds of Michelangelo's iconic statue, 'David'. This has provided them with a fascinating insight into classical art techniques and the intricate details of one of the world's most famous sculptures.



Arts Hub

Collaborative Street Art Project with Birmingham

based Arts organisation Hi-Vis

Bishop Challoner School has been proud to collaborate with the local arts organisation Hi-Vis on an exciting community street art project. This collaboration has not only given students the chance to showcase their artistic talents but has also made a lasting impact on the local community.

The project was an opportunity for students at Bishop Challoner to work with renowned illustrators and artists to recreate their graphic art pieces for a community street art project. Students' artwork was featured alongside that of established professionals, bringing their designs to life on a much grander scale. This partnership allowed students to witness firsthand the power of collaborative art and its ability to transform public spaces. One of the key outcomes of the project was the transformation of a previously drab building façade on Institute Road. What was once an uninspiring brick wall is now a vibrant canvas, showcasing stunning graphic art pieces that have become a significant feature of the local landscape. The artwork, created by illustrators and graphic artists has breathed new life into the area, attracting attention and sparking conversations among the community.

The project also encouraged active participation from the local community. During the festival weekend, the community, both young and old, gathered to view the artwork, attend workshops, and engage with the artists. This event highlighted the power of the arts to bring people together, fostering a sense of pride and connection within the local area.



A-Level Art Students Showcase at Nook Gallery: A Successful Collaboration

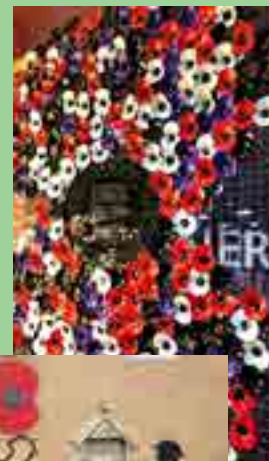
Our year 13 A-Level art students have recently had the exciting opportunity to display a series of their works at the local independent gallery, Nook. This collaboration not only highlights the incredible talents of our students but also supports and promotes a newly established independent gallery. It allows students to experience what it's like to be part of the art world outside of the classroom, gaining exposure and recognition for their hard work. Bishop Challoner staff, parents, students, and members of the local community came together to celebrate the students' work at the private view. The event was not only an exhibition of student talent but also an opportunity to purchase art and crafts from local designer-makers, supporting the creative economy and fostering a sense of connection among local artists, makers, and community.

Looking ahead, we are excited about the potential for this relationship to grow, allowing for even more opportunities for our students to showcase their talents and for Nook Gallery to continue its important role in promoting local creativity. We hope this partnership will serve as a foundation for future collaborations between Bishop Challoner School, Nook Gallery, and the wider community, fostering a strong and supportive creative network.



Remembrance Memorial Art Projects

Arts Hub continue to work on memorial art projects throughout the month of November, complementing our existing Remembrance installations with a piece to reflect the Remembrance theme in 2024. Our students have been actively engaged in memorial projects, art exhibitions and installations that honour the sacrifices made by those who served. These creative expressions not only showcase our students' talents but also serve as a poignant reminder of the values of peace and remembrance that we hold dear. This year, we are remembering several pivotal battles of 1944 as we approach their 80th anniversaries. We are reflecting on the significant sacrifices made during these events in our internal and external installations across the school site. Our 'tree of hope' is centre stage in the foyer, displaying hand formed poppies in red, purple, black and white acrylic with each colour representing peace and sacrifice of human and animal life. The memorial wall installation of 320 poppies is made up of 80 poppies of each colour to honour the 80th Anniversary of the battles that marked a turning point in World War II. Our exterior art exhibition includes 11 sub-printed photographs on metal of 'The Magnificent 11' by Photographer, Robert Capa (1913 – 1954). The Magnificent Eleven are a group of photos of D-Day (6 June 1944) taken by war photographer, Robert Capa. Capa was with one of the earliest waves of troops landing on Omaha Beach. Capa stated that while under fire, he took 106 pictures, all but eleven of which were destroyed in a processing accident. The surviving photos have since been called the Magnificent Eleven.



BC Arts Hub projects, in partnership with local art organisations and businesses are a prime example of how arts initiatives can have a transformative effect on both the individual and the community. By blending the creativity of students with the expertise of established artists and local businesses, the projects have successfully enriched the local environment, while fostering a sense of pride, connection, and involvement within the community. It's a testament to the power of the arts in making a real difference and we are eager to continue building on this success in the future.

STEM

On 8th November, sixty year 8 students took part in a HS2 themed full day workshop. Led by engineers from the SmallPeice Trust, an education charity providing STEM enrichment to schools, the students worked on a range of challenges in teams of four. Firstly, teams engaged in a 'Stations of the future' activity; a design-and-present exercise where students generated their concept for a futuristic train station considering future trends and the needs of all customers. Following this, teams were challenged with designing, constructing, and testing a supporting structure for a cut and cover tunnel. The structure had to meet a given specification which included a minimum span, a requirement to withstand 'ground pressure' simulated through a weighted testing bag being put on top of it and had to be large enough for a model train to pass through.



Throughout the session, there were many opportunities for students to learn about the STEM careers available in transport infrastructure and were advised of the skills required. They were also provided with an insight into how railway infrastructure is developed. Some students remained behind at the end of the session to ask further questions relating to careers and routes into employment in this sector. It was very encouraging to see that the day had ignited interest and could be the catalyst that marks the beginning of some students' journey into the rail industry.

Design Technology

Key Stage Three Curriculum

Students in key stage three have had a very busy term with many lessons having a practical element to them. Year 7 students are now skilled when using knives and have made, fruit salads, wraps, crumble, using seasonal apples, and blueberry muffins. They are beginning to work more independently as they become more competent and confident in the food room. As we reach the end of the term the year 7's have opportunity to improve their weighing and measuring skills before they complete a Christmas themed practical. Year 8 have been putting theory into practice where they have been working with high-risk foods such as meat and chicken and have made bolognese where some student's opted for meat free stir-fry. They are now competent when using knives and are able to make parts of dishes without instruction. Working in pairs many have mastered the meaning of quality control and are able to make two identical products. Many year 9 students are becoming skilled, confident and competent practitioners when using equipment and ingredients in the food room. They have made chilli- con – carne, pizza and a spice savoury rice dish. Students are always given the opportunity to do a vegetarian or vegan option when meat or poultry is used.



Cookery Club

Cookery club this year have been making Mug Cakes using only the microwave. Students have made chocolatey treats using their weighing and measuring skills, which they develop during their food studies lessons, and have also explored vegan cakes only using the microwave to cook with.

During Black History Month students were given the opportunity to explore different chefs and their influences in the food industry. They investigated chefs like Andi Oliver and Riaz Phillips and created profiles to explore their ethos as chefs. They then took one of their recipes and explored the techniques and ingredients used.

Kings Heath, Mosely and Stirchley offer a vast number of independent businesses, especially within the hospitality sector. This year the businesses in the local vicinity will be catalogued, showing the students what they offer and what they bring to the community. As part of this, we will foster links and connections with these businesses, giving the students an opportunity to ask questions and speak to them directly.

Key Stage Four –year 10

Students at key stage 4 are doing a vocational course; NCFE Food and Cookery. Year 10 are working on content area one and have successfully completed their first assessment. The students will develop knowledge and understanding of issues relating to food safety, the environment in which food handlers operates, how they meet health and safety requirements and how food can cause ill health. Early signs are promising as most students have achieved excellent test results thus far, in their assessments. This term the students have developed their practical skills further and built on their strong foundation from year 9. They have made cottage pie, chicken tikka and learnt how to make shortcrust pastry to make jam tarts. They have worked with high-risk foods and made burgers of their own choosing.



Key Stage Four – year 11

Year 11 have begun their controlled assessment journey and completed their first practical exam. They have been working hard to amend and cook a recipe provided by the exam board for spaghetti and meat balls. They have annotated their evidence and begun to evaluate their final outcomes. The students have also explored the relevant theory needed to ensure their amended recipes are successful and put into practice their knowledge of different preparation and cooking skills.

KS3 D&T

Black History Month

As part of Black History Month, pupils had the opportunity to design task that celebrated the contributions of Black designers design. The focus was on the renowned American graphic designer Gail Anderson, known for her vibrant, bold, and inclusive design work. Anderson's typography, illustration, and visual storytelling served as inspiration for the pupils, who were tasked with creating their own illustrative book covers or advertisements for films, theatre productions, and television shows.

Pupils developed important skills in visual communication and effective graphic work. They combined typography, illustration, and convey messages related to their chosen topics. By studying Gail Anderson's work, pupils gained a deeper understanding of the importance of diversity and representation in design. They also learned how design can tell stories and drive social change. This project was a meaningful way to celebrate Black History Month, while inspiring students to see themselves as designers who can shape the future.

Other students embraced the creativity and diversity of African arts and crafts by producing mixed material pieces of body adornment which they designed and made in one single lesson. Combining paper bead making with weaving, they crafted a range of stunning outcomes inspired by some of the traditional hand skills used by African women and children who make items of sustainable jewellery which are sold across the world. Students learnt about Fair Trade and how enterprise projects are helping lift many African artisans out of poverty.

In textiles students have studied African wax prints and looked at repeating patterns. In groups they were given pre tie dyed fabric strips and used a range of items including Lino blocks and fruit to create a repeat pattern. These strips have been stitched together and are now on display in the foyer.



engage in a creative graphic design project inspired by the field of visual art and design. Gail Anderson, known for her vibrant, bold, and inclusive design work, served as inspiration for the pupils, who were tasked with creating their own illustrative book covers or advertisements for films, theatre productions, and television shows. Pupils developed important skills in visual communication and effective graphic work. They combined typography, illustration, and convey messages related to their chosen topics. By studying Gail Anderson's work, pupils gained a deeper understanding of the importance of diversity and representation in design. They also learned how design can tell stories and drive social change. This project was a meaningful way to celebrate Black History Month, while inspiring students to see themselves as designers who can shape the future.



KS3 Textiles

Year 8 students have been exploring how they can be a part of the global fashion evolution by working sustainably with recycled fabrics and materials. We started the year discussing how fabric is produced, through knitted or woven processes, which led to students creating their own woven fabrics out of different woollen fibres. They have explored how Japanese Sashiko embroidery has been used to upcycle clothes and give them a longer lifespan for hundreds of years, practicing their hand embroidery skills with lots of running stitch! They've also explored appliqué techniques, creating logos and motifs. We even explored printmaking with African wax print inspired lino prints and working with vegetables and other household items to make printed fabrics. Students have worked to a client profile to design a drawstring or tote bag which they have just begun making. Students have learnt how to work from a pattern piece, to measure twice and cut once, and to work with a range of donated, recycled fabrics to create new pieces.



Industry Links

Howells

We are in the process of planning an exciting opportunity for Year 9 pupils studying architecture this term. They will have the chance to take part in a hands-on model-making workshop with Howell's Architects, subject to final arrangements. The workshop will provide students with the opportunity to learn from industry professionals and gain practical experience in the architectural design process. Pupils will explore techniques for creating detailed architectural models to enhance their train station project outcomes. From initial concept sketches to the assembly of materials, and with expert guidance from the architects, they will develop a deeper understanding of scale, structure, and the importance of precision in design.

Year 7

Year 7 students have begun their Textiles journey at Bishop Challoner by exploring a range of sewing techniques, working both by hand and on the sewing machines. Students were introduced to the history of embroidery and its importance across all societies and cultures

across time. They have experimented with a range of stitches, which they then embedded into small appliqué samples. They have explored repeat pattern and composition when working with colour, pattern and texture, inspired by African wax prints for Black History Month, working collaboratively as groups. Students have been given a brief to create a page each for a child's 'Quiet Book', where students have to consolidate all of their new knowledge into one piece: appliqué, machine and hand embroidery, texture, colour and design. They have each chosen a letter from the alphabet and have designed an interactive page that can teach the young user words surrounding that letter.

MFL

We welcome our new MFL teachers
In September, we welcomed 3 new members in the MFL department: Mrs Souakri, Mrs Thomas and Mrs Badrane. We feel very blessed to have welcomed them in our community.

Year 7

Teaching notes for Vif 1

Unit 1 Moi, et mon trucs à moi!	15
Unit 2 Ma vie active	35
Unit 3 Les couleurs du monde	55

The Year 7 French course is based on the textbook "Vif 1". Each chapter introduces vocabulary and structures for the Year 7 topics (identity, introducing yourself, describing yourself and others, friends, family, animals and describing your neighbourhood). We also introduce the present tense of -ER verbs. By the end of the year, all students will be able to infer language from listening and reading extracts and be able to give simple and some developed responses to questions in general conversation and in writing in relation to Year 7 set topics. Also, through learning a modern foreign language, students gain insights into the way of life and the cultural traditions of people in other countries. In MFL lessons, students have frequent opportunities to learn about aspects of culture in French-speaking countries; for example, how people greet each other and leisure interests. Students are able to develop an understanding and appreciation of foreign cultures.

Year 8 French Lessons

Year 8 Lessons this year have been focussed around the topic of School. Students have learnt some interesting facts about schools in France and other French speaking countries. There are some significant differences between schools here and in Francophone countries. Did you know that most school children do not wear school uniform? This is not the case in all Francophone countries though as you can see from this picture of a school girl in Guadeloupe.



The topic of school also facilitates the teaching of some rather complex grammatical structures which are really beneficial for the students when they are at GCSE level. The teaching of Grammar in French can sometimes be tricky, but there are ways to make it more fun. In some classes we have been practising grammar rules by playing Battleships games. The students find this fun and perhaps don't even realise that they are doing a great amount of French speaking and practising a quite difficult grammar point at the same time. Mrs McGowan's 8W1 class certainly made great progress with this activity.



Year 9

Year 9 have made an encouraging start of the year. They seem to be buying in the specifications offered in the new scheme of work. This new approach focuses on vocabulary, grammar and phonics therefore the MFL team works hard to provide accessible yet challenging lessons to all groups.

One aspect that emerged is the introduction of cultural elements throughout the curriculum. For example, students have read a poem from Maurice Carême entitled 'Les mains de ma mère' while learning about family.

More recently year 9 students have discovered Stromae's Papaoutai where the topics of family relationships and the absence of a parent are brought up.

Here is the link to the video: https://youtu.be/oiKjOZ_Xnjc?si=gDoy4S88yIHjIO_I

Finally, we are looking forward to move on the next topic: school, rules, education and future plans using Les Choristes as our cultural input in the background.



Year 10

This term Year 10 French students began the GCSE theme of "Popular Culture". They have been focusing specifically on the topic of Free Time Activities, learning and practising a range of vocabulary relating to hobbies and pastimes. As well as acquiring key topic-specific vocabulary, they have been developing the language to talk about the topic using four different tenses: present tense (e.g. In my spare time I normally watch television); imperfect tense (e.g. when I was little, I used to watch television); perfect tense (e.g. Last weekend I watched television) and the near future tense (e.g. Next weekend I am going to watch television). Next, they will be applying their understanding of the different tenses to the topic of past, present and future holidays.

Year 11

Getting ready for your GCSE examinations

Photo of year 11 students practising for their speaking examination.



What should you do?

Learn vocabulary

Try to spend a lot of your French revision on www.quizlet.com, revisiting all the 12 topics that you have covered between this year and last year. (see topics below). Here is a link to the GCSE folder with all the vocabulary lists.

Practice listening and reading exam type questions

You can find lots of listening and reading practise on www.kerboodle.com (login needed), www.revisionworld.com, <https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/languages/gcse/french-8658/assessment-resources> and on BBC Bitesize (free)

Know your verbs and tense

Please make sure that you are confident with your verbs and tenses for the writing paper. If you need more help/ practice go to www.languagesonline.com.
Tip: AVOID making up phrases that you have never learnt before.

Range of vocabulary

Revise WOW phrases that you have learnt in class to help you with expanding your range of structures and vocabulary in the writing paper.

Revision guides

We sell 3 types of revision guides at discounted prices per guide. Please go to SchoolComms to purchase them.



Topics for GCSE June 2025

Theme 1 - Identity & Culture

Relationship with family & friends (marriage/ partnership)
Technology in everyday life (mobile/social media)
Free time activities (sport, TV/Cinema/music/ eating out)
Customs & festivals in French speaking countries & communities

Theme 2 - Local, national, international and global areas of interest

Home town, neighbourhood, region
Social issues(charity work/ healthy lifestyle)
Global issues (environment/poverty & homelessness)
Travel & tourism

Theme 3 - Current & future study & employment

School life
School rules and improvements
Education post 16
Career Choice



Home, Heritage and community languages at GCSE

We are very proud to have 15 year 11 students who have come forward to sit the GCSE of their home language. This year we have Polish, Spanish, Chinese, Russian and Arabic. All students will get the opportunity to sit a mock paper in their language during the mock period, this should help them to receive some feedback about their performance, especially in the writing paper.

Performing Arts

The autumn term has flown by and it is difficult to believe we are already enjoying the Christmas celebrations here in the Music and Performing Arts departments. This academic year began in a typically musical fashion, with performances and musical opportunities in and out of school, including a Year 7 musical showcase and a performance at the Ceili in October. We were thrilled to see so many Year 7 students sign up for musical tuition and expressing an interest in extra-curricular activities, alongside many older and more experienced students.

Year 11

Year 11 have made a positive start to the year in Performing Arts and have already recorded two performances for their GCSE exam. They keenly took on the roles of Matilda, Ensemble and Mrs Trunchbull to create a performance piece based on the hit West End musical Matilda, which was full of characterisation through the three art forms which musical theatre encapsulates: drama, dance, and singing. We are proud of their performance journey in the last year are all looking forward to starting their 3rd and final unit of work in January.

Instrumental lessons

There has been a pleasing uptake in instrumental lessons in Year 7 and the total of students now receiving weekly instrumental tuition is close to 100, with many instruments having a long waiting list due to popular demand. We are always thrilled to see students from primary schools continuing with their musical lessons and already our Year 7 instrumentalists have been involved with musical performances and rehearsals. Our instrumental teachers from the Music Service are supporting our students in preparing for their GCSE Music performances, taking their graded exams, and providing opportunities for performing at external venues. We currently offer woodwind, brass, strings, keyboard/piano, guitar, drum kit and steel pan lessons for our students.

Key Stage 3

Key Stage 3 music lessons continue to provide students with the chance to compose, improvise, perform and discover a range of musical genres. Our Year 7 students have spent time learning about the many instruments of the orchestra and beyond, and are now beginning to learn and use musical terminology with confidence as they begin their first Binary Form composition on keyboards. Year 8 students have recently learned to perform in a Blues style, playing the 12 Bar Blues in time with a beat following an extensive investigation into the story of Blues and its social and historical roots.

Year 11

Our GCSE cohort at Y11 are busy working on their coursework in and out of school time; they are working on composing a piece of music in a style of their choice, writing lyrics, recording backing tracks, notating their melodies. Additionally, they are rehearsing at home towards their ensemble performance coursework which will be recorded as soon as they are ready. This year we have had performances on piano and drum kit, playing a repertoire from Billy Joel, Stevie Wonder, and more! We are pleased to see them working independently to prepare their coursework, whilst in lessons the Year 11s are now studying two challenging pieces of Instrumental music from the Classical and Baroque periods.

Year 10

Year 10 have also begun their journey of exploring the musical theatre genre. This started with a trip to the Birmingham Hippodrome where we took 30 students from across the school to see the professional touring production of Hairspray. It was wonderful to see the delighted faces of our students, some of whom for which it was their first time seeing a musical on stage. An unforgettable evening for all but for our Year 10 Performing Arts cohort, it was the beginning of a detailed study into the musical which will continue well into the spring term, learning choreography and songs from the musicals, as well as completing an extensive written exploration into the creation and production of the musical. This really brings the learning to life and we are all thoroughly enjoying the process so far!

Year 9

The Year 9 students have enthusiastically embraced the topic of Pop and Protest Music, creating their own meaningful songs about a particular topic they feel strongly about, writing their own lyrics and finally recording their work in the recording studio. It's a popular topic among the KS3 students and the teachers love learning about what issues get our students motivated to make a change – and then stepping up to the mic to present their song.

Year 10

The Year 10 class have explored an overview of the principal musical terms which are needed at GCSE level, such as harmony, texture and melody, and each week they learn about and define these terms with musical examples, practical tasks, and listening activities. They are also learning the fundamentals of music theory to support them in their analysis of the set works. They have made a positive start to the course and look forward to hearing more of their performance and composition skills as well as their analysis skills.

Traditional Irish Music

In October a Ceili fundraising event was held to raise money for BICA. The Birmingham Irish Cycle Appeal is a charity which commits to a challenge each summer of cycling a certain distance to raise much needed money for local charities. This summer Mr Rowan in the RE Department had the pleasure of joining BICA in cycling 660 miles around the 32 counties of Ireland to raise money for the chosen 2024 charities. As part of the fundraising event, our students took part in a musical performance and some Irish dancing. This was a huge event for the Irish and Birmingham community and it was amazing to see so many staff, friends, families and students joining in the celebrations (and the dancing!) Mr Sullivan's traditional Irish music group played a fantastic set list and some of our students bravely played solos; it was evident that everyone was truly enjoying the celebrations, and raising money for a good cause.



Birmingham Pub Bombings

21st November 2024 marks 50 years since the Birmingham pub bombings, a tragic event in which 21 people lost their lives. The impact on the community was huge, and a number of our students were invited to work in collaboration with the BBC on a remarkable project to commemorate the event. In a preliminary visit from Marian Dwyer and songwriter Katie Stephens, a group of musicians from all key stages got together to brainstorm key words and thoughts which reflected the message of hope, looking forward from the events of the night of 21st November and seeking reconciliation, community and togetherness. Students input their ideas to create lyrics, and in further workshops added a melody, chords, and in a short time had created a full length song with vocals and instrumentals called A Song of Hope.

On 21st November a prestigious event was held in the city centre, attended by members of the families of the victims, HRH Duchess of Edinburgh, the Archbishop, Mayor of Birmingham, Jess Philips MP and others. The musical ensemble performed their new song in front of a large crowd, and Year 13 singer Skyla sang a beautiful rendition of A Million Dreams from The Greatest Showman, accompanied by Finn in Y10 on piano. There was also a beautiful instrumental performance from Zac, Cormac and Nigel, who played a special arrangement of Allegretto from Beethoven's 7th Symphony and Largo from Dvorak's New World Symphony. We are all very proud to



see our young people playing at such a high profile and moving event, which was covered by many major news sources, and streamed via radio worldwide. Hafsa in Y7 presented the Duchess with a bouquet, and we were honoured that HRH took her time to talk to our students and ask about their musical experiences.

We were so impressed with this collaboration that the students were invited to reprise their performance, this time in front of the School Governors at a meeting on 5th December. Once again, staff and governors were moved by the potency of the lyrics and the talent of the students, marking this important moment in the city's history.

BGT

The music department hosted the first BGT of the academic year with our popular annual 'New Kidz on the Block' event, showcasing the new musical talent in Year 7. Tom performed Thriller and Great Balls of Fire on the piano, which energised the crowd, and Astrid, Jochebed, Rosie and Verity played guitar – both solos and ensembles. Some of our musicians who performed had already played at Challoner, when they were in Year 5 and took part in our Primary Showcase! We look forward to hearing more from them over the coming terms.

Benjamin Zephaniah

On Saturday 12th October, we once again joined forces with the Birmingham Irish Association to take part in an event celebrating the life of the famous poet, Benjamin Zephaniah. This was held at St Anne's Parish Centre in Digbeth and a cohort of our most talented musicians and performers provided 30-minutes of entertainment, dedicated to this wonderful man; this included our steel pans groups and the performance of a song especially written for the event, as well as the reciting of some of Zephaniah's most well-known poems. His brother, who was the compere at the event, was moved to tears by the song and, as usual, our students represented the school brilliantly in a public community forum and are to be highly commended for this.



Remembrance

Bishop Challoner Catholic College becomes a work of art during the week of Remembrance in November, and alongside art installations of poppies and soldiers outside in the school grounds, music and performing arts played their part. Attracting visitors from the local community, projections of poignant instrumental and dance performances were projected on to the wall of our building, and many local residents dropped by to take a moment to remember members of their community and family lost to war. To mark the moment during the school day, we observed the silence throughout the school and students respectfully watched a video recording of Morgan, an ex-student, performing The Last Post on tuba.

Christmas BGT

Our second, more festive BGT was held in the last week of term where the library was ringing with the sound of Christmas melodies and harmonies. Members of the choir performed one of the songs from the Advent carol service, Tom in Y7 played Christmas tunes on the piano, and our woodwind ensemble played a multitude of pieces, from Ding Dong Merrily on High to Carol of the Bells.

Year 7 Assemblies

This year, with two of the Performing Arts staff in the Year 7 team, our aim was to encourage the students to sing more in mass. In the masses leading up to Christmas the students selected songs they had sung at primary school and we practiced them during our assemblies. The students were incredible, with many of them leading the actions in front of the whole year group. For these reasons, alongside other factors, we decided this year to host a Year 7 Carol Service for parents, carers, and the local community.

Year 7 Carol Service

The Year 7 Carol Service on 12th December truly showed the true spirit of Christmas. We have spent a term rehearsing hymns in assembly, practising carols for the Service, and students have led with singing, reading, and even dance moves to prepare for this Advent event. We were delighted to see so many students volunteer to do readings, perform solos, to teach dance moves during form times, showing confidence and enthusiasm in rehearsals. Families, staff, friends, carers and local residents were all invited to the Service and heard a combination of traditional prayers and readings, well known Carols and festive songs. We would like to thank Father John and Father Toby for letting us use the Church and for his wonderful blessing. We also thank the Year 7s and their families and carers for supporting this event and encouraging this year group to engage with music, their faith, and the community at such an important time. They have made a very positive start to their time at Bishop Challoner and we are confident their enthusiasm will inspire the other year groups.

Following this busy term, we sincerely hope our students have a happy, healthy and well-earned rest and look forward to welcoming them back in 2025.

BC Band

This year we have resurrected our BC Band – a place for any instrumentalists of any key stage and at any point in their musical journey. Led by Mr Masterson before school on Thursdays, the band are working on their ensemble and sight reading skills and have been preparing some festive pieces ready for Christmas performances at the Tea Party and the Christmas BGT.

Tea Parties

The tea parties which are led by our Sixth Formers are wonderful examples of our school serving and helping the wider community. Each year, a team of students and staff lay on a wonderful Christmas get-together for local elderly residents where they sing songs, play bingo, enjoy some food and some tea as well as have a chat to our students, and each other. The music department always enjoy providing some festive entertainment at the Christmas tea party and the students who played at our Christmas BGT event all went along and played beautifully to the visitors. This is such a lovely opportunity to see how confidently and compassionately our students bring music, company and joy to the lives of the community.

We Sing

Our choir, We Sing, has welcomed a number of new Year 7 students to the group, who have been to each rehearsal consistently since the beginning of term. Their levels of enthusiasm are unparalleled and, along with our longer-serving members, have enjoyed learning and performing material ranging from Wrecking Ball by Miley Cyrus to Hallelujah by Leonard Cohen. The choir performed beautifully at our special Christmas service, filling St Dunstan's church with glorious singing and welcoming members of the community, family and friends to our Advent celebration.



Media Studies

There is never a quiet time in the Media Studies department, but the weeks in the run up to the Christmas break are especially busy. Our Year 10 and Year 12 groups have now completed introductory units and are embarking on the study of set texts. Meanwhile, Year 11 and Year 13 groups are balancing coursework deadlines and finishing the final pieces of course content. In addition, the department has been involved in a number of exciting projects (detailed below) that showcase the place of media skills in the world beyond school.

Advertising Unlocked - November

What is creativity? According to Vince McSweeney, Chief Creative Officer at advertising agency McCann, the answer can be distilled to three words: 'Originality with purpose'. It was this mantra that was to guide students through their activities at the recent 'Advertising Unlocked' event. A group of A Level Media Studies students from Bishop Challoner made the journey from school to McCann's Midlands headquarters in Solihull to participate in a day designed to 'open up' the world of the creative industries to school groups. Having learnt about the work of an advertising agency, students were then given a mock brief to work on throughout the day. A soft-drinks company 'Pop Fizz' wanted to enter the kombucha market with a new beverage. Students, working in small groups, were to be responsible for the research, strategy, creative ideation and roll-out for this new concept. Groups moved around a carousel of experts from McCann's departments before the day culminated in a 'Dragons' Den' style competitive pitch. Each of the Bishop Challoner groups devised original and targeted concepts to bring a new kombucha drink to market. Our Year 13 team placed a brilliant second overall with their 'RedAlert' brand: a kombucha energy drink without the associated anxiety of highly-caffeinated competitors.

I'd like to thank Miss Lloyd for all her efforts in coordinating the trip, and praise the Challoner students for their excellent engagement on the day.

BBC Pub Bombings Project

As part of the school's involvement in the BBC's programming to mark the 50th anniversary of the Birmingham Pub Bombings, Year 12 students worked with radio producers from BBC West Midlands in the editing of a 'soundscape' that aims to tell the story of the bombings and the consequences for the city's community.

Sixth Form

Year 12

Year 12 have made a great start to their Post 16 studies. With the first term now under their belts, students have demonstrated full commitment to the 6th form community here at Bishop Challoner.

Dementia Café

A number of our year 12 students have participated in supporting the BIA Dementia café visits. Students have been great at supporting this worthwhile cause, and have been great at organising a number of activities with the clients, such as craft projects and games of bingo. The cafés clients always appreciate the time that the young people give to them and our students also really benefit from these positive experiences.



Year 13 Mock Exams

Year 13 Mock exams will take place between Monday 6th January and Friday 17th January 2025.

Please find a link here to some top tips around revision

<https://bishopchalloner.org.uk/sixth-form/welcome/external-examinations>

Please find a link here to the Year 13 mock exam timetable and topic guidance for these assessments

<https://bishopchalloner.org.uk/sixth-form/welcome/year-13-mocks>

Year 12 visit to Keble College Oxford University

In November, 30 Year 12 students visited Keble College in Oxford. They were involved in a session which explained the application process for Oxbridge courses. Many students were pleased to learn that the application process is not really any more difficult than applying for other University places. They were given a tour of the college before having lunch in the very grand dining hall. The afternoon gave our students the opportunity to understand what sort of questions would be asked at a typical interview for a place at Oxford. This will not only benefit any students thinking of applying to Oxford or Cambridge next year, but also great advice and suggestions for those applying to any Higher Education establishment.



The Reindeer Run

On Wednesday 6th December, the whole of Year 12 devoted their enrichment hour to taking part in the Reindeer Run in Kings Heath Park. This year we continued to raise money for the brilliant Birmingham Hospice but also in memory of our dear colleague, Kevin Cheshire, who unfortunately passed away on the 16th August 2024. Kevin was a loyal and devoted staff member at Bishop Challoner, loved by everyone and now very much missed. Birmingham Hospice took great care of Kevin towards the end of his life. The Year 12 students really got into the spirit of things by wearing antlers and even dressing up as Santa Claus (Aidan Winhall) and Pigs in Blankets (Oscar Kokocinski and Liam Brennan), although the pigs did have to shed their suits as they we became too hot to run in! We were delighted with the enthusiasm of the Year 12 students and even more delighted to raise very close to £2,000 which was even more than last year's grand total.



Reader Leader Training

Earlier this term, some of our Year 12 students took part in Reader Leader training. This amazing programme, which is co-ordinated by our wonderful librarian Mrs Newton, allows sixth form students to support our younger students with their literacy. A special thank you to the group of Year 7 students who were glad to volunteer for our trainees. The Yr12 students who volunteered to take part in this whole day of training were amazing.

Our Year 7 test subjects loved it and asked when they can do it again. They were thrilled to be able to share their reading skills with some of the older students. Well done to the Year 12s who took part - it was a long day for them with a lot of information to take in but they were fantastic. What a great day!

The paired reading programme is now up and running on Tuesday afternoon form time thanks to our well trained Year 12 students.



Soli House Retreat

Recently, Mrs McGowan took some of our Year 12 students to join students from Archbishop Illsley 6th Form on a 3 day retreat to Soli House in Staffordshire. Great fun was had alongside workshops exploring Catholic Social Teachings and the plight of Refugees. The student engaged with the other Sixth Form students and threw them self into the planned activities

Student congratulations

A big well done to 12BER who were the Form who raised the most money for the Christmas Toy Appeal. The group raised £58.00 for the brilliant cause.

A special mention also goes out to Jack Keen in Year 12 who was selected to represent Team GB U17's American Football team in an international match in Spain. What a fantastic achievement. Well done Jack!

Finally, Year 13 students have also been busy serving the wider community, visiting the Dementia Café and we were immensely proud of Laura-Mae, Erin and Skyla who performed in the recent Birmingham pub bombings memorial service in Birmingham in front of a huge audience which included royalty!

Getting the Grades

This year we have introduced a new mini curriculum on a Tuesday afternoon form time called 'Getting the Grades'. Here students engage every week with their academic form tutors with resources focused on supporting them to get the very best academic outcomes in college.

An example of the Year 13 scheme of work for this term is below:

- Developing good habits around revision
- What the evidence says about the best approaches to revision
- Developing a growth mind-set and using feedback effectively
- The importance of putting in the hours
- Staying motivated with revision
- Managing workload
- Avoiding distraction
- Deepening your subject knowledge

Students are now developing good habits around studying and have been introduced to the latest evidence and guidance on what it takes to get the very best grades. Year 13 are now preparing well for their mock examinations that will take place in January.

Year 13

Year 13 have made a wonderful start to their final year in College!

They have been busy in recent weeks completing their UCAS or apprenticeship applications and all students are well on the way to finalising their plans for next year with the wonderful support of Miss Darby and Mrs Colgan. A number of students made early applications for medicine, dentistry, or applications to Oxford or Cambridge and we are delighted to have a number of students who have now been invited to interview, including 4 students at Oxford!

We have been very proud of the contribution Year 13 continue to make to our school community too. We have a number of students who participate in the school council meetings representing the sixth form and also students who have contributed to the two Open Evenings held this year. For the recent sixth form open evening, Year 13 acted as guides, taking potential students around college and talking about their experiences of sixth form life. We also had a number of students supporting teachers in departments. The feedback received from parents and staff alike was wonderful and their contribution to the success of the evening was invaluable.

For the last term, 15 students have been supporting Year 11 with their English and Maths revision as part of a weekly mentoring programme. The students have done a brilliant job of passing on their knowledge and experiences of the GCSE examinations to support Year 11, again taking leadership of the sessions and being wonderful ambassadors for the sixth form.



Sixth Form Open Evening

There was a great atmosphere around the school during our recent Sixth Form Open Evening.

Subjects showcased their areas around the school site and information in the Sixth Form block was displayed and hosted by our brilliant student ambassadors and student services team for key areas of our college such as the extra-curricular provisions, careers guidance, work experience and Special Educational Needs support on offer in our Sixth Form. Two students from the school leadership team Oscar K and Sunali B gave fantastic talks and accounts of their time to date in our Sixth form. Year 13 students acted as guides and were a real credit to the college with lots of wonderful feedback from staff and parents on our students' contributions.



If you are in Year 11 and would like to apply to our Sixth Form or if you would like to find out more about our Sixth Form please click the link: <https://bishopchalloner.org.uk/sixth-form/applying>

Enrichments

This half term year 12 pupils have taken part in a range of enrichment activities during their Wednesday period 5 lessons.

Students have been preparing themselves for their expedition for their Silver Awards in the Duke of Edinburgh. Training has included cooking skills, navigation skills, first aid and weather awareness in recent weeks.

Students have also been involved in a range of sporting activities including football, basketball, dodgeball and badminton. The Sixth Form football team is currently unbeaten and games have been scheduled for a Sixth Form basketball team later this term.



Miss Thomas has been running a popular Film club which this term have been looking at movies by black directors during Black History month.

Mrs Newton and Mr Welch have been running chess club and board games in the library.

Mr Noone has been taking students to a local gym to support their health and wellbeing.

Pilgrims of Hope

2025 is the Year of Jubilee. To begin our preparations for next year, we recently invited a number of students from a variety of local Catholic Sixth Forms to come together and listen to a talk by the Columban Missionaries. The day was very thought provoking and included students listening to the stories told by our visitors who included people aiming to obtain asylum in the UK. Their stories and the work of the Columban Missionaries really helped students consider the challenges faced by people in other parts of the world and helped us reflect on the role we all play in the future as global citizens.

Peru 2025

The International Student Committee

We are delighted to announce the launch of an international trip opportunity to Peru that we are offering to students in Year 12 this academic year. This builds on the fantastic work carried out by students who went to Cambodia. This is a unique opportunity where students will be spending two weeks carrying out community development work in Cusco in the foothills of the Andes mountains in Peru. A significant part of the trip will be spent supporting a local primary school community where students will be delivering lessons to help children learn basic English, supporting student enrichment and supporting community development initiatives such as planting trees and supporting local wildlife conservation efforts. Whilst on the trip students will also have the opportunity to visit some of the amazing sites Peru has to offer such as carrying out an expedition to Machu Picchu, one of the wonders of the world.



We see this trip as an opportunity for students to develop transferrable skills, engage with new cultures and communities and transform their outlook on the world. We want students to really understand what global citizenship means and the role they may play in the future.

Careers

The careers team has been busy providing face to face careers information, advice and guidance meetings for Year 11 and 13 students this term.

While Year 11 contemplate their next steps carefully, many year 13 students have already secured a number of exciting university offers.

Four of our Year 13 students have had interviews with Oxford University recently, two to study Biochemistry and two to study Mathematics. Regardless of the outcome, we are extremely proud of how they have risen to the challenge of additional tests and online interviews - wish them all the very best!

Alongside UCAS applications, Year 13 are also applying for some very competitive degree apprenticeships in a variety of industries including Real Estate, Audit, Quantity Surveying and Engineering to name a few.

Finally, we wish Mrs Colgan, our Careers Adviser, a very happy maternity leave as she awaits the arrival of her little girl. The Year 11 careers meetings are being conducted by Angela Fawke, an independent Careers adviser in her absence. Miss Darby will continue to support Year 13 as normal. For any concerns about your son/daughter's next steps in either of these year groups, please contact Miss Darby.

School Games and PE & Sports Premium Programmes

School Games events

It has been another busy term with over 1500 young people from Y2-11 in 27 different schools taking part in our School Games (SG) events. So far, we have organised events, including competitions and festivals, in boys and girls primary and secondary football, Y3-4 girls' gymnastics, Y3-4 boys and Y3-4 girls multi sports, Y7-8 and Y9-10 netball, Y7-9 girls' basketball and U16 boys table tennis.



Taking part in your local inter-school activities this year



Secondary schools within the cluster continue to host these events and offer use of their sports facilities free of charge and we are extremely grateful for this.

One of our events was a Y3-4 'This Girl Can' festival, targeting inactive girls with the aim to inspire them to be more active within and beyond school. The event was supported by sports leaders from Bishop Challoner, Moseley School and South and City College. The event gave 70 pupils from 7 primary schools the opportunity to be active through skipping, using hula hoops and bean bags, playing Kin-Ball and we finished with a UV/'Glow in the Dark' disco, which proved to be very popular.

We continue to adapt our School Games events to make them more inclusive and follow a model which clearly explains who our target audience is for each event. This has been shared with schools, so they are all aware which pupils the event is aimed at, and this helps to ensure those attending have a positive experience.



THEMES

All our activities will be designed around the following activity themes. These will help schools understand the focus of each individual event and help to meet its objectives.

- ENGAGE** These activities are non-competitive and help build self-esteem through more physical activity.
- INSPIRE** These events are for pupils who enjoy taking part in activities but are not usually keen on training and being fit.
- COMPETE** These events are for pupils who do competitive activities and enjoy achieving and competing against others.
- DEVELOP** These events support the personal development of young people through building self-esteem.

Physical Literacy

We have continued our work with sharing the new Physical Literacy (PL) consensus statement developed by Sport England with all of our partner schools. PL is our relationship with movement and physical activity throughout life and reflects our connection and commitment to movement and physical activity. How we 'Move', 'Connect', 'Think' and 'Feel' during movement and physical activity shapes our physical literacy, allowing us to find meaning, enjoyment and value to deepen our connection. This was an agenda item on both our primary and secondary network meetings this term and we discussed how we can provide opportunities for pupils to move, think, feel and connect within and beyond the curriculum as well as during SG events.

Examples of how we are integrating these themes within our SG events include giving lots of opportunities for pupils to be physically active and get out of breath ('move') and by mixing pupils up into different teams, so they can 'connect' with pupils from other schools. At our recent Y5-6 girls gymnastics festival, which was attended by 70 pupils, they were all paired with a pupil from another school and created a simple sequence including traveling, jumping rolls and a partner balance.

Primary and Secondary Sports Leadership

In September and October, we trained over 300 pupils and 50 staff from primary schools to organise simple, fun playground games that will help get more young people active in schools.



All schools attended 1 day of training where they were shown a range of games and given instructions on how to make sure games are safe, fun and inclusive. We also taught the play leaders some fun games using rugby balls as I managed to negotiate getting 60 rugby balls from The RFU which meant that every school who attended the training received 2 rugby balls. All pupils that attended the training have been awarded certificates and a new silver 'Primary Play Leader' badge and they will be awarded a gold badge in the summer term if they keep on volunteering.

We have also recruited, trained and deployed sports leaders from Bishop Challoner, Christ Church and Moseley Schools and these students have officiated at a range of events including boys' and girls' football and our Y3-4 multi sports event. We have also recruited and deployed students from South and City College to officiate at events, such as at our football festivals.

School Rugby

In association with The RFU and YST, we have been awarded funding for 3 years to continue to grow the game of rugby within and beyond schools. Our aim for the next 3 years is quite simple – 'to get more rugby balls into the hands of young people to help them be physically active'. This involves influencing more PE staff and SLT in schools to offer some form of rugby within curriculum lessons, encouraging schools to offer extra-curricular opportunities, hosting teacher training courses and student leadership opportunities and organising inter school events at Moseley RFC and Camp Hill RFC (CHRFC).

Between MRC and ourselves, we have also distributed 20 bags of rugby equipment (balls, bibs, cones) to schools to use within and beyond the curriculum. In October, we organised a KS3 girls 'Love Rugby' event at CHRFC which saw girls taking part in a range of fun activities, including relay races, passing and moving and culminating in games of 'T1' rugby (T1 is a new format of rugby which has been developed and is a move away from contact rugby and includes multi directional games).

Bibs and badges

We recently placed an order for 140 new playleader bibs and 2500 badges. The bibs have been distributed to 10 schools who have issued them to the play leaders to wear when they are leading games on the playground for other pupils.

The SG values (Passion, Teamwork, Respect, Honesty, Determination and Self-Belief) badges have also been distributed to schools who give them to pupils who demonstrate the values within and beyond PE lessons etc.



Social Media

You can follow all our work on 'X' @BCSGO where we now have nearly 1400 followers. Some examples are below.

St Dunstan's Primary @OurSchoolPrimary · Dec 24
 Our Y3 and 4 boys took part in a football festival earlier in the week, organised by @BCSGO. Mrs Harper was very impressed with their teamwork!



SS John & Monica's @StJohnsAmerican · Oct 24
 A huge huge thank you to Dan from @BMSchoolsUK for delivering some amazing equipment for us to use during our Rugby sessions this year! #BCSGO @BMSchoolsUK



Billesley Primary @Billesley · Oct 20
 @BCSGO year 3/4 boys really enjoyed their football experience at @CCSecondary. Thanks to @BCSGO for organising and to all the schools that took part. It was a lovely evening of sport. #GetItSchools



Positive PE @PositivePE · Nov 14
 We always have a great time at @BCSGO gymnastics events. Mr McD, the pupils & teachers bring lots of enthusiasm! Approx 60 girls at today's festival, all collaborating to create & perform a big routine to music! It's a treat to be part of this! #BMSchoolsUK #PrimaryPE

Woodthorpe J&J @woodthorpej · Nov 14
 Our Year 3/4 Gymnastics team travelled across to @BishopChalloner this afternoon to take part in a @BCSGO festival. The girls performed their routine - as well as worked with children from other schools. They were all amazing! Many thanks to Catherine Curran @PositivePE. [Show this thread](#)



Holy Family Year 6 @ywholy · Oct 23
 Exciting times ahead! Our Y6 Play Leaders are gearing up to invite KS1 students! They'll help build confidence, encourage teamwork, and enhance physical literacy through fun games. Let's support our young leaders as they connect and move together! #PlayLeaders #PEPPIC



ourladyofourdes @ourladyofourdes · Nov 15
 A huge congratulations to the girls in year 4 who attended a Gymnastics event last night at Bishop Challoner. Your behaviour was exceptional. They are all very happy with their badge. Thank you to @BCSGO for organising. #WOLLEYPS



Teaching School (BCTSA)

Did you know you can train to be a teacher in Catholic schools in our area, through the teacher training programme offered by Bishop Challoner Training School Alliance. There are teacher training places available in primary and secondary, with 18 different secondary subjects covered, and 5 primary specialisms (Early Years, SEND, Maths, and PE, as well as general primary). BCTSA offer QTS only, or QTS + PGCE routes, as well as full time and part time roles. All information can be found on the website www.bctsa.org. Call 0121 441 6175 for a 121 call about how we can support you to apply and join our family of teachers.

To find the courses on the Department of Education Application site, visit <https://www.gov.uk/find-postgraduate-teacher-training-courses> and search for code 1K2.

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Merry
Christmas

Other BC News

Standards and Uniform

Students are required to wear the standard uniform of blazer, tie, white/blue shirt with black straight leg school trousers (not skinny or boot cut) or girls can wear a knee length black pleated school skirt. Girls are also reminded that if they choose to wear a skirt, then they should wear plain, black, opaque tights. Students are reminded that black leather school shoes should be worn and that trainers/trainer shoes are forbidden.

Please note that school shoes must be kept completely black and boots of any kind are not allowed.

Our uniform requirements are complemented by a smart appearance and as such, hair styles that should not have a distinct contrast in length. Hair that is dyed must be of a natural hair colour and may not contain more than one colour. To avoid a health and safety risk, long hair must not impede vision or cover the face, except for a fringe which must not cover the eyes. Long hair must be tied up for practical lessons. Religious head coverings must be black and securely tied for practical lessons. Hair bands or accessories must be for functional use to secure the hair. Where hairbands are worn they must be black. Headwear that has religious or cultural purpose should be black. The final decision as to whether a particular haircut/style is appropriate is at the discretion of senior staff.

Make up, nail varnish and jewellery are not permitted with the exception of one pair of plain stud earrings which may be worn.

Students found to be wearing an inappropriate item of uniform may be asked to change this or in some cases parents/carers will be contacted and requested to bring replacement uniform to school.

We appreciate your support in ensuring that standards of uniform and appearance are maintained.

First Aid Reminders

Medication; All medication should be handed into first aid and not carried by the students. Exception EpiPen, Asthma inhalers, insulin. Tranexamic acid in special circumstances.

Please make sure we have the correct medical information and emergency contact details, if you have changed your phone number or there is any change in medical conditions or concerns, please contact first aid using the enquiries email or the main school phone number.

Please send children into school with a water bottle they can re-fill, it is important children stay hydrated.

Students with Asthma must carry with them their own personal inhalers. This includes offsite activities and school trips to ensure they can participate safely.

Attendance and Punctuality

All students are required to attend school/college on time every day. If for any reason your child is unable to attend, please ensure that the school attendance policy is followed, and their absence is reported before the START of the school day (8.40am) and on each day of absence. Please provide a reason for their absence and the likely length of absence, if known.

The student entrance gate closes at 8.35am.

If your child is in Year 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 please call 0121 444 4161 and select OPTION 1.

If your child is in Year 12 please call 0121 441 6113.

If your child is in Year 13 please call 0121 441 6144

If you receive a text message or phone call from school/college because you have not reported your child's absence, please contact us on the most appropriate number as detailed above as soon as you can. Thank you for your co-operation.

The school attendance target is 96%.

Year 7- 94%
Year 8- 94%
Year 9- 91%
Year 10- 89%
Year 11- 91%
Whole School- 92%

Liquid Paracetamol

We do not provide liquid paracetamol such as Calpol please provide this to school if your child can not take tablets and you wish for them to take paracetamol. This will be kept safe in first aid for your child only.

Mobile Phones

Students must not be contacting parents/carers when they feel unwell and requesting to be collected from school. In the event that a student is unwell they MUST go to the First Aider who will deal with them. In the event that a student is not well enough to stay in school, the First Aider will contact parents/carers to arrange collection.

Students who contact their parents/carer directly and do not follow the procedures in place will be sanctioned, this may result in their mobile phone having to be handed in to the Pastoral office each day. The use of anyone else's mobile phone risks that person being sanctioned also.

Please do not arrive at school to collect your child unless school have contacted you to do so. We do not have school staff readily available to collect children. Thank you for your support and co-operation.

School Reminders

Contacting School

Communication between home and school is very important, in the event that you need to contact school please be reminded of the following procedures.

School telephone number- 0121 444 4161

Option 1- To report an absence

Option 2- Head of Year/Pastoral concerns/enquiries

Option 3- Sixth Form enquiries

Head of Year Contact

All Heads of Year and Assistant Heads of Year have teaching commitments; therefore any Head of Year/Pastoral enquiries should be directed through Option 2 for students in Year 7-11 or option 3 for students in Year 12 or 13.

If student services staff are not available to answer your call in person, please leave a message with the nature of your enquiry/concern and you will get a call back from the most appropriate member of staff at their earliest convenience. We aim to respond to all contact by the end of the next working day.

Senior Staff Contact

Contact with Head of Year and/or Head of Department is expected to have been made before issues are escalated to Senior staff. Should you need to speak to a Senior member of staff, please contact school by phone and select Option 2 or 3, depending on the year group of your child and request a call and the most appropriate Senior member of staff will contact you at their earliest convenience.

Meeting Staff

Any requests for a face to face meeting with staff should be made using the same contact details as above. Please ensure that the purpose of any meeting request is made clear. A member of staff may contact you before a meeting is arranged if more information is required.

Please do not attend school without an appointment unless there is a safeguarding emergency.

Safeguarding Concerns

If you have any safeguarding concerns please contact school and ask to speak to a DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead). Mrs Peckover is the Senior DSL.

Reporting Student Absence

All students are required to attend school/college on time every day. If for any reason your child is unable to attend, please ensure that the school attendance policy is followed, and their absence is reported before the START of the school day (8.40am) and on each day of absence. Please provide a reason for their absence and the likely length of absence, if known.

To report an absence please call the main school number 0121 444 4161 and select the correct option for your child's year group.

If you receive a text message or phone call from school/college because you have not reported your child's absence, please contact us on the most appropriate number as detailed above as soon as you can.

Thank you for your co-operation.

2024-2025 Term Dates

Spring Term 2025

Term Starts: Monday 6 January 2025

Half-term: Monday 17 February 2025 to

Friday 21 February 25

Term ends: Friday 11 April 2025

Summer Term 2025

Term Starts: Monday 28 April 2025

Half-term: Monday 26 May 2025 to

Friday 30 May 2025

Term ends: Friday 18th July 2024

INSET Days

Friday 20th December 2024

Wednesday 5th February 2025

Monday 24th February 2025

Monday 21st July 2025

Easy Fundraising

A reminder that we are registered with easyfundraising, an amazing platform that partners with over 7,000 brands to help raise funds for good causes – and it costs you absolutely nothing!

Here's how it works:

Sign up for free at the link below or QR code

Shop online as you normally would through easyfundraising.

The brands you shop with will donate a percentage of your purchase to our school – no extra cost to you!



It's simple, free, and those little donations really add up to make a big difference for our school community.

https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/bishopchallonecatholiccollege/?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=pmc&utm_content=email-1

Drinks

Fizzy drinks and energy drinks are not allowed in school, if they are seen they will be taken and disposed of. Please encourage your child to bring in a clear bottle of water, there are 2 water stations in school where they can re-fill.

Spring Term 1 Dates

Every Tuesday	Rosary
Every Thursday	Community Mass
Monday 6th January	School open
Monday 6th January - Friday 17th January	Year 13 Mock Examinations
Friday 10th January	Cake Sale
Tuesday 14th January	Bishop's Got Talent
Thursday 16th January	Year 9 visit to Lamma Farming Show
Wednesday 22nd January	Tea Party
Thursday 23rd January	Year 10 UoB Chemistry Outreach
Tuesday 28th January	Bishop's Got Talent Year 10 Mass Year 9 Emerging Careers
Wednesday 29th January	Year 10 Intermediate Maths Challenge UCAS Applications External Deadline
Thursday 30th January	Catholic Games Y10 UoB Chemistry Outreach
Wednesday 5th February	School Closed Staff INSET
Thursday 6th February	Canteen - Caribbean Day Year 11 Parent/Carer Consultation Evening Year 12 Auschwitz Visit Year 7 PD Day
w/c Monday 10th February	National Apprenticeship Week
Tuesday 11th February	Bishop's Got Talent Year 7 Disco Year 9 Emerging Careers
Wednesday 12th February	Tea Party
Friday 14th February	Last day before half term Dementia Ambrose Valentine's Day Hamper Year 9 National Space Centre Trip
Monday 17th February - Friday 21st February	Half Term

Keep in Touch

Official School Twitter
@BishopChalloner

Careers
@BCCareersSmart

Chaplaincy
@BC_Chaplaincy

Computing
@BishopChalComp

English Dept
@BC_EnglishDept

Green Group
@educating_eco

History
@bchistory_

Music Department
@BCPAmusic

PE Department
@BCPEDepartment

Teaching and Learning
@BcTeaching

Makes
@bc_makes

Wellbeing
@BCCCWellbeing

Chess
@bccchess

Performing Arts
@BCPAPA4

Social Sciences
@BCSocSciDept

Biology
@BCCbio

Sixth Form
@BCCCSix

Art Dept
@BCChallonerArt

BFood Department
@BishopFood

Judo Club
@BCJudoClub

MFL
@BishopMfl

OLC
@BC_OLC

SGO
@BCSGO

Sports Centre
@BishopCentre

TSA
@bctsa_training

1-1 Maths
@BC11M1maths

Central Maths Hub
@centralmathshub

Central Midlands SLP
@CentralMidSLP

Geography
@BCGeogDept

Maths
@BCMathsDept

Friends of BC
@bc_friends

STEM
@STEMBC

Teach Computing Central
Midlands
@BCComputingHub

Tolkien Cluster Schools
@PrimaryTolkien

**HAPPY NEW YEAR
FROM
BISHOP CHALLONER
CATHOLIC COLLEGE**

