

Newsletter

DECEMBER 2025

A Moment of Reflection



As we come to the end of this first term, I want to say how proud I am of everything we've achieved together. From the very start, the sense of community and positivity has been incredible. Walking through the Christmas Market in the final week and seeing students and staff enjoying the festive spirit was

a real reminder of what makes Derby Cathedral School so special. It's been a privilege to lead such a vibrant and caring school.

This term has been packed with memorable moments. Our Remembrance Day tribute was a powerful and respectful occasion, showing the depth of character in our students. We've celebrated success in so many ways - from the attendance awards that recognise commitment and resilience, to the simple joys of ice cream and hot chocolate rewards for students who go above and beyond. These moments matter because they reflect our shared values and the culture we are building together.

As Christmas approaches, let's take time to celebrate these achievements and look forward to the new year with hope and ambition. Thank you to every student, parent, and member of staff for your hard work and support. I wish you all a joyful Christmas and a peaceful New Year. I can't wait to welcome everyone back in January, ready for another term of growth, learning, and success.

Mr A. Brown
Headteacher

Faith in Action: Reverse Advent

In the run-up to Christmas, students and staff took part in a Reverse Advent Calendar initiative led by Mr Saunders, Head of PSHE, in support of Derby City Mission. Tutor groups worked together to collect food and essential items for those in need, demonstrating generosity, teamwork and a strong sense of social responsibility. Thanks to the enthusiasm of our students, donations were delivered ahead of Christmas to support local families, reflecting our FAITH values in action and the compassion at the heart of DCS.



DCS Christmas Festive-al

The DCS Christmas Festive-al was a vibrant, music-filled celebration of talent, creativity and confidence, showcasing the incredible abilities of our students. Throughout the event, students took to the stage to perform a wide range of musical pieces, from singing to instrumental performances, and in many cases a combination of both.

The Festive-al created a supportive and joyful atmosphere, with students cheering one another on and celebrating the courage it takes to perform in front of an audience. It was wonderful to see performers of all year groups stepping forward, sharing their talents and growing in confidence as musicians and performers.

More than a concert, the Festive-al was a celebration of community and expression. It reflected our FAITH values in action, particularly fellowship and tenacity, as students supported one another and embraced the challenge of performing live. The event was a powerful reminder of the creativity within our school and a joyful way to end the term together.



FAITH values in Action



Cycle Recycle: Back and Thriving!



The Cycle Recycle Club has roared back into action this half term and continues to be a huge success with students across the school. Building on the brilliant foundations of the original project, pupils are once again learning practical, hands-on skills such as fixing brakes, adjusting gears and restoring bikes, developing confidence, independence and real-world problem-solving along the way.

Mr Turner, who originally launched the initiative, and Mr Rolph have both been on hand to guide and support students, striking a careful balance between expert instruction and encouraging pupils to work independently and learn from one another. The club remains a powerful example of learning beyond the classroom, bringing together students from different year groups and giving them skills they can take with them for life.

The Cycle Recycle team are always grateful for donations of old or unwanted bicycles that need a new home. They can be given a new lease of life through the club and help our students to develop practical skills. Anyone interested in donating can contact the school for further details.



Poppy Appeal at DCS



In November, our wonderful students raised an incredible £197.06 for the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal. This is a fantastic achievement and a real testament to their generosity and commitment to remembering those who have served. Huge thanks go to Rio, Nadia, and the team of Sixth Form students who led and supported this initiative so brilliantly.

Sharing Kindness Beyond Our School

We are incredibly proud of the generosity shown by our staff this Christmas. Led and organised brilliantly by Mr Simpson, teams from across the school worked together, with each department creating a "Christmas Dinner in a Box." Thanks to everyone's kindness, we were able to provide full Christmas dinners for 13 families who would otherwise have gone without this festive season. On top of that, many extra items were donated and passed directly on to support the Oscari Food Bank in Riddings — a community-driven food project that provides affordable, fresh and nutritious food to local families and residents in need, helping people stretch their budgets and access healthy food throughout the year.



This initiative has made a genuine difference to families in the community and to the food bank's work, especially at this time of year. It's a powerful reflection of the kindness, compassion and community spirit shared by our staff. Thank you again to everyone who contributed.

For families who would like more information about local food banks, whether to donate, volunteer, or simply to understand what support is available in our wider community — **Derby City Life Links** provides a clear and up-to-date overview of food banks and food support services across Derby and the surrounding area.

DCS School: KS3 and KS4

Oliver Twist-ed Our Expectations!



On Tuesday 9th December Y10 GCSE drama and music students and Post 16 music students, went to Derby Theatre to watch an original production of Oliver Twist.

It was the first time the Y10 GCSE music and drama students had been on a visit to the theatre together, and it was the perfect opportunity for them to see the 2 performing arts disciplines working in perfect harmony together, and to see the affect they each have on one another.

This magical adaptation of the Dicken's tale had original music, which although may seem like a disappointment to fans of the musical Oliver! Let's remember that that is one version inspired by the original novel, and this too, offers a fresh take with the music, focusing on the storyline from the original book.

The talent on stage was certainly inspiring for our students, as all performers could play instruments and transformed themselves into playing multiple characters. They were a great ensemble who also made transitions seamless and part of the action.

The staging, lighting, props and costume all worked to enhance the great job the cast were doing of bringing the story to life.

What a great first joint experience for our Y10 students, and an inspiring, enriching and enjoyable experience for all who went!

Opening Doors: Year 10 Explore Future Pathways

On 28 November, Year 10 students took part in a collective worship session focused on raising aspirations and exploring future pathways. The session welcomed two external speakers who introduced students to both Higher Education and potential careers beyond school. Representatives from Loughborough University delivered an engaging introduction to Higher Education, helping students to understand what university is, how it differs from school and college, and the opportunities it can offer after GCSEs. The session encouraged students to think ambitiously about their future options and to see university as an achievable goal.

Students also heard from a practising psychologist, who gave an insight into careers in psychology. The talk explored what psychology involves, the range of areas it covers, and how psychologists work with individuals and communities to understand behaviour and support wellbeing. This helped students to see how subjects studied in school can link directly to future careers and real-world impact.

Together, the session supported Year 10 students in reflecting on their aspirations, broadening their understanding of post-16 and post-18 pathways, and considering how their interests and strengths could shape their future choices.



DCS Sixth Form

We are incredibly proud of Nadia, one of our Sixth Form students, who has been selected for AQA's national Student Advisory Group — a highly competitive role placing students at the heart of national education decision-making.

Nadia studies RE, Business, Politics and Core Maths at DCS Sixth Form and is an active member of the Debating Society and the International Youth Bar. These experiences have developed the critical thinking, ethical awareness and clear communication skills central to this role.

As part of the Group, Nadia will work with students from across the country to advise AQA and report to its Board of Trustees, ensuring student voice informs policy and practice. She will attend three formal meetings in 2026 at AQA's London and Manchester headquarters. Her selection reflects her maturity, credibility and readiness to contribute at a national level, making her an excellent ambassador for DCS Sixth Form.



On Nov 25th Mrs Eaton took A-Level music students to a performance at Nottingham Royal Concert Hall. This performance included performances by Prokofiev, Mozart with the evening concluding with a performance of Mendelssohn's 4th Symphony (The Italian) which was performed from memory! This final piece is one of our A-Level set works. Students (and staff) were blown away by the performance standard, energy and musicality from the orchestra and the live performance from memory brought a completely fresh perspective and energy to the performance of Symphony No.4. This inspired some students in their compositions for their A-Level music too!



Our Year 12 History students enjoyed an inspiring visit to the University of Leicester, where they spent the day immersed in what studying History at university can really look like. Led by the university's History Department, students were introduced to undergraduate life and the History and Archaeology BA (Hons) courses, took part in a fascinating mini-lecture on Ancient Roman history, and experienced a hands-on laboratory session learning how historians date Roman coins. The highlight for many was putting academic theory into practice: every student successfully dated their coin to within 100 years. More importantly, the visit helped demystify university study, raise aspirations, and build confidence, with many students leaving feeling more positive about the possibility of higher education in their future.

DCS Sixth Form

We are incredibly proud of the students pictured, all of whom achieved excellent results in their LAMDA examinations this year, with each qualification carrying UCAS tariff points. LAMDA exams are accredited by the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art, and at DCS we offer both Acting and Public Speaking pathways.

This photograph celebrates not only their success, but the confidence, clear communication and resilience they have developed through LAMDA. These students represented themselves and the school with maturity and assurance, and this image captures that growth as much as their achievement.



Shrewsbury Prison:

On 21st November, our Social Sciences students stepped into history with a visit to Shrewsbury Prison—and what an experience it was! The day kicked off with a coach ride from school at 8:00am, and by mid-morning, we were exploring the cold, atmospheric corridors of one of England's most famous prisons. Students took part in activities that sparked lively debates about crime, punishment, and rehabilitation, and even how the media influences our views on justice. The guided tour gave everyone a real sense of what life behind bars was like, and the self-guided exploration meant students could dig deeper into areas that fascinated them most. This trip was hugely beneficial for Criminology, Sociology, and Psychology students, helping them connect theory to real-world contexts.



On the 28th November, our Psychologists, Biologists and Health and Social Care students in year 13 had an incredible opportunity for our students to dive into the mysteries of the mind during Brain Day with Dr Guy Sutton, a leading expert in neuroscience. The day started with an introduction to how the brain works, covering everything from nerve cells to EEG scans and even what happens at the end of life. Students learned about neuroplasticity and how everyday habits like smartphone use, diet, and vaping can actually change the brain. After a quick break, things got hands-on with a sheep brain dissection—a highlight for many! The final session explored the fascinating links between brain function and criminal behaviour, touching on mental health, genetics, and even the neuroscience behind climate change. It was a jam-packed day full of “wow” moments that made psychology, health & social care and biology come alive.

DCS Christmas Week



Christmas week at DCS was a joyful celebration of community, reflection and togetherness. Despite challenging weather, our planned visit to Derby Cathedral on **Monday** was brought to life in school, with Dean Peter joining us in the hall for a meaningful Christmas service that allowed students to pause, reflect and mark the season together.

On **Tuesday**, year group achievement assemblies gave us the opportunity to celebrate the many ways our students shine every day. From academic success to kindness, resilience and service, students were recognised for living out the FAITH values in our classrooms and wider school community.

Wednesday brought festive cheer with Christmas Jumper Day alongside our much-anticipated Christmas dinner, creating a wonderful sense of togetherness across the school. The week continued to be filled with festive cheer on **Thursday** with the Christmas Fayre, which filled the school with excitement as students enjoyed a wide range of stalls, games, food and drink, all supported by our brilliant staff and community.

Together, the week captured the spirit of Christmas at DCS: joyful, reflective and rooted in our shared values.



Notices and Reminders

Spring Term

- Monday 5th January 2026 to Friday 13th February 2026
- Monday 23rd February 2026 to Friday 27th March 2026

INSET Days

- Monday 2nd February 2026

Social Media: Follow Us!



@DerbyCathSchool



Derby Cathedral School



@Derby_Cathedral_School

24/7 & Late Night Helplines

For young people

YoungMinds

Are you a young person in crisis?

Text the YoungMinds Crisis Messenger for free 24/7 support if you are experiencing a mental health crisis.

text YM to 85258

YOUNGMINDS

The Mix

Do you need help now?

Crisis messenger text service provides free, 24/7 crisis support

text THEMIX to 85258

THE MIX

Papyrus

If you are having thoughts of suicide or are concerned for a young person who might be you can contact HOPELINEUK for confidential support and advice.

Call 0800 068 4141

9am – midnight every day of the year

CALM

A helpline for people in the UK who are down or have hit a wall for any reason, who need to talk or find information and support.

Call 0800 58 58 58

5pm – midnight every day of the year

YOUTH
INSPIRED



Samaritans

Whatever you're going through, you can call anytime from any phone for FREE.

Call 116 123



STAY SAFE WITH TECH THIS CHRISTMAS!

IPADS



Be careful what you download
Play games appropriate for your age
Ask to set up agreed parental controls with you to help

CONSOLES



Take close care who you play with online!
Try to play games that are suitable for your age.
Make sure to take it in turns playing games with others

PHONES



Ask permission before taking a photo or video
Do not show off your phone in public
Make sure you keep enough credit to make calls

LAPTOPS



Make sure to take care with what information you share!
Be careful about online games - are they appropriate?
Make sure you know who you are talking with

SOCIAL MEDIA



Use social media appropriate to your age
Use a safe profile picture
If you are pressured into sharing something you aren't comfortable with ask an adult

FAKE NEWS



Don't believe everything you read online, including email
If unsure, ask a trusted friend or adult
Don't share stories that aren't true

Safeguarding

Staying Safe This Christmas

The Christmas period can be a wonderful time, but it's also important to look after yourself. If you're spending time online, remember to keep your personal information private and think carefully before sharing photos or meeting anyone you've only spoken to online. If you're out with friends, let someone know where you're going and stay in groups when possible. Try to get enough sleep and take breaks from screens – your wellbeing matters.

If you're feeling worried, anxious, or overwhelmed during the holidays, please remember that you're not alone and there are people who want to help. You can talk to a trusted adult like a parent, teacher, or school counsellor. If you're having thoughts about harming yourself or just need someone to talk to, you can contact **Childline anytime on 0800 1111** or chat online at **childline.org.uk** – they're available 24/7 and all conversations are confidential. You can also text **SHOUT to 85258** for free, confidential support by text.

Your life is valuable, and reaching out for help is a sign of strength, not weakness.

Have a safe and peaceful Christmas period, and remember – if something doesn't feel right, speak to someone you trust.