



Our Lady & St Bede
Catholic Academy

READING MATTERS



Hello!

Greetings Dear Readers!

I am delighted to present to you the May edition of our library newsletter. As the days grow warmer and brighter, our library is bustling with exciting events, new book arrivals, and programmes designed to inspire and engage readers of all ages. The GCSEs are underway and Y10 Mocks are coming up, and you will routinely find pupils diligently reviewing, taking notes, and grilling each other.

As I reflect on the vibrant activities of May, it's heartening to see how our library community has come together to celebrate literature, civic engagement, and cultural diversity.

Our students actively participated in the 2025 Carnegie Medal Shadowing Scheme, engaging in thoughtful discussions and reviews of the shortlisted books. This initiative not only fostered a deeper appreciation for literature but also encouraged critical thinking and collaborative learning among our young readers.

We were honoured to host Matt Vickers, MP for Stockton West and Shadow Minister for Crime, Policing and Fire, who visited our library for a special discussion with the Social Justice Club.

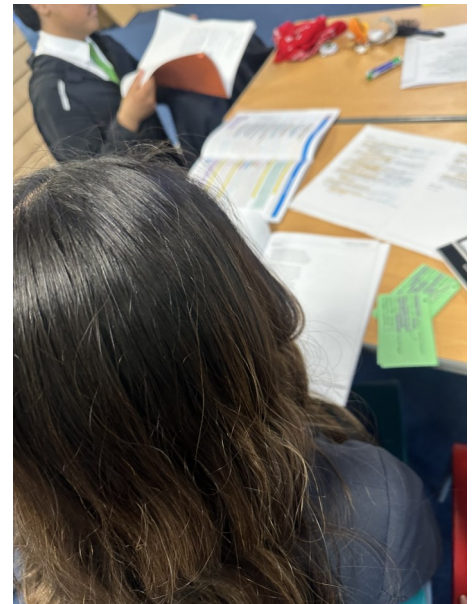
Additionally, our Social Justice Club had the unique opportunity to engage in a Q&A session with Lord Young of Cookham, of the House of Lords. This experience offered our students a firsthand look into the workings of our government and emphasized the significance of active citizenship.

Preparations are underway for our annual Cultural Day. This event is a cherished tradition at OLSB, showcasing the rich tapestry of cultures represented within our school community through dance, art, food, and more. We invite everyone to join us in celebrating the diverse backgrounds that make our community so vibrant.

Thank you for your continued support and enthusiasm. Let's carry the momentum of this enriching month into the future.

Happy reading,

Ms. Jawaid



The Library and Mental Health: The Power of Reading

As May marks Mental Health Awareness Month, it's important to recognise the vital role the library plays in supporting pupils' well-being. Reading offers a wide range of mental health benefits, from stress relief to emotional development.



- **Mental Escape & Stress Reduction**

Reading allows pupils to immerse themselves in different worlds, offering a mental break from daily pressures and helping to lower stress levels.

- **Improved Focus & Calm**

Regular reading strengthens concentration and attention span, which can ease anxiety and create a sense of calm.

- **Emotional Development & Empathy**

Stories featuring diverse characters and experiences help pupils understand and relate to others, fostering empathy and emotional intelligence.

- **Clarity Through Knowledge**

Non-fiction and educational books provide insights into the world, helping pupils make sense of their surroundings and promoting confidence and mental clarity.

- **Better Communication Skills**

A rich vocabulary and the ability to express thoughts clearly support emotional health, reduce frustration, and enhance social relationships.

- **Mindfulness Through Reading**

The act of reading encourages mindfulness by keeping pupils present in the moment, which can help reduce anxiety and improve relaxation.

- **Healthy Escapism**

Fiction and fantasy offer a safe, creative outlet for pupils to explore imaginary scenarios, helping them cope with difficult emotions or life situations.

- **Cognitive Stimulation**

Reading keeps the brain active, preventing boredom and supporting critical thinking and cognitive development.

- **Building Resilience**

Characters who overcome adversity can inspire pupils, teaching valuable coping skills and encouraging perseverance in their own lives.

Encouraging regular reading is a powerful and accessible way to support pupils' mental health and overall well-being. The library is more than just a space for books—it's a hub for growth, healing, and connection.



As part of the Carnegie Shadowing Award, our reading group had the pleasure of diving into this year's powerful shortlist, each pupil selecting a book that resonated with them deeply. Here are their choices for best read::

Sophia – Treacle Town by Brian Conaghan

"The writing truly puts you in the powerful story and fills you with a twinge of hope."

Sophia was drawn to Treacle Town for its immersive storytelling. The emotional depth of the narrative, combined with its powerful themes, left a lasting impression.

Lauretta – Treacle Town by Brian Conaghan

"It has a great plot and is very accessible to new readers."

Loretta appreciated how Treacle Town combined a strong storyline with accessibility, making it a great read for everyone, especially those newer to reading.

Lauren – The Things We Leave Behind by Clare Furniss

"Beautifully written, it fills you with compassion and inspires you."

Lauren found this book to be moving and inspiring. Its message of empathy and impact left her feeling empowered and hopeful.

Ellie – The Final Year

"It really gives a different perspective and I even saw a little bit of myself. Beautiful book and a poetic masterpiece."

For Ellie, The Final Year stood out for its personal resonance and poetic language. She saw herself reflected in its pages, a mark of truly powerful storytelling.

Izzy – Glasgow Boys by Andrew O'Hagan

"Two people who are complete strangers come together with nothing in the way. I liked reading this because it's a good book that you are determined to finish at the end of the night in bed—when your mum has already said go to bed... five times!"

Izzy was captivated by the compelling bond between the characters. The gripping nature of Glasgow Boys made it impossible to put down.

Annie – Glasgow Boys by Andrew O'Hagan

"A heartfelt book that tells the story of two boys who find each other after a long time."

Annie was touched by the emotional journey in Glasgow Boys, highlighting its themes of reconnection and understanding.

Ariana – King of Nothing by Nathanael Lessor

"It was impactful on me. It was a wonderful read, and I enjoyed the protagonist's journey."

Ariana found King of Nothing to be both meaningful and enjoyable, particularly appreciating the depth of the main character.

It's been an inspiring experience exploring these incredible books together. Each story sparked different emotions and thoughts, and through reading and sharing, we've grown as readers and thinkers.

Library Events

Multi Culture Club

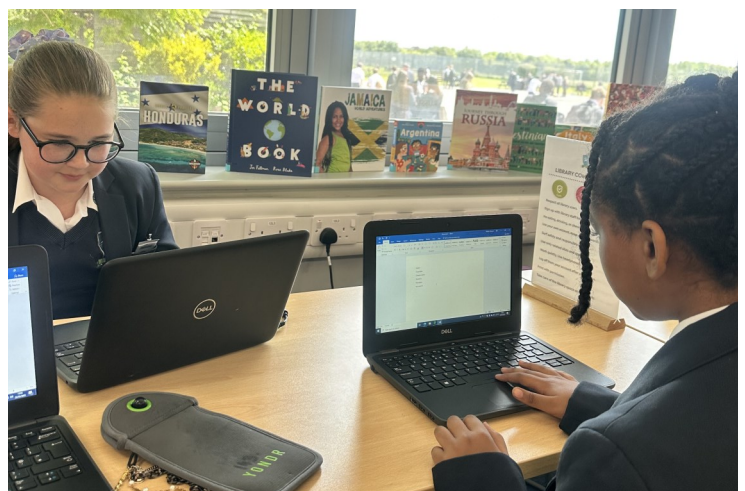
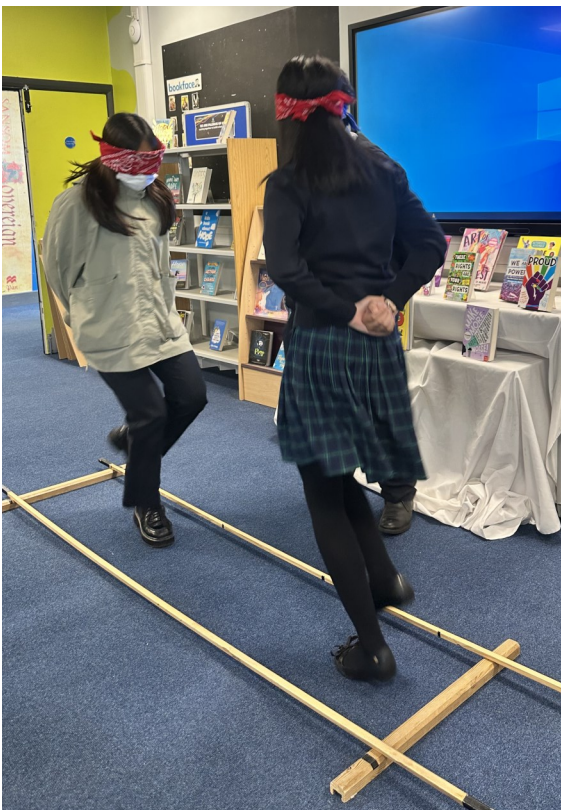
The Multi Culture Club presents: 'Around the World' – A Multicultural Festival

Join us on the 30th of June for a vibrant celebration of global cultures! With over 15 countries represented, pupils will have the chance to explore the world through interactive stalls, taste international cuisine, and enjoy traditional dance performances.

The festival will feature arts and crafts, music, cultural talks, heritage displays, and live performances – all aimed at celebrating and sharing our diverse roots.

Over 40 pupils are actively involved in planning and running the event, working hard to bring this exciting celebration to life. From designing and decorating country-themed stalls to coordinating performances, planning menus, and managing logistics, students have been working hard behind the scenes to bring this multicultural experience to life. Their creativity, teamwork, and dedication are at the heart of the festival's success.

All proceeds will go to charity.



Library Events

British Values in Action: Rule of Law, Democracy, Mutual Tolerance, and Respect

Our exceptional Social Justice Club led a profound and inspiring Q&A session with The Rt Hon. Lord Young of Cookham CH, a distinguished member of the House of Lords.

Joined by pupil leaders and students passionate about politics and law, they presented their initiatives on social justice, articulating their commitment to addressing pressing issues within our community and beyond.

Their engagement exemplified the principles of British values—demonstrating a profound understanding of the rule of law, active participation in democratic processes, and a deep-seated respect for diverse perspectives. Such interactions not only enrich our students' educational experiences but also empower them to become thoughtful, informed citizens poised to make meaningful contributions to society.

Lord Young commended the students for their well-thought-out and challenging questions, acknowledging their depth of understanding and genuine concern for societal issues. He remarked on the students' ability to engage thoughtfully with complex topics, reflecting the high standards of discourse and inquiry fostered within our school community.

Moments like these underscore the transformative power of education and the pivotal role our library plays in fostering critical thinking, civic responsibility, and a commitment to social equity. I am immensely proud of our students' achievements and look forward to supporting their continued growth as leaders and changemakers.



Lord George Samuel Knatchbull Young, Baron Young of Cookham, has had a distinguished political career, serving as a Member of Parliament from 1974 to 2015 and holding various significant positions, including Secretary of State for Transport and Leader of the House of Commons. He was elevated to the House of Lords in 2015, where he continues to contribute to public service.

Library Events

Engaging with Democracy: Social Justice Club Hosts MP Matt Vickers

In a remarkable demonstration of civic engagement and intellectual curiosity, our Social Justice Club recently welcomed Matt Vickers, MP for Stockton West and Shadow Minister for Crime, Policing and Fire, to our school library. This visit formed a pivotal part of the club's journey towards achieving the CAFOD Live Simply Award, underscoring our commitment to social justice and active citizenship.



The session commenced with a compelling presentation by the Social Justice Club, highlighting their initiatives and the values driving their pursuit of the Live Simply Award. Their articulate delivery and thoughtful content reflected a deep understanding of the social issues at hand.



What followed was a dynamic Q&A session, where our pupils engaged Mr. Vickers in discussions that were both respectful and incisive. Drawing upon his public speeches and social media posts, students posed challenging questions on topics ranging from local community concerns to national policy decisions. This approach not only demonstrated their analytical skills but also their ability to engage in meaningful political discourse.

The pupils truly impressed with their well-prepared and thought-provoking questions, noting the maturity and depth of their inquiries. He expressed appreciation for the opportunity to engage with such informed and passionate young individuals.

This event exemplified the integration of British values—democracy, the rule of law, mutual respect, and tolerance—with our Catholic ethos of compassion and social responsibility.



The pupils' engagement showcased their development as informed citizens, ready to contribute thoughtfully to society.

The efforts of our Social Justice Club continue to inspire our school community and reinforce the importance of active participation in democratic processes.

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS[®] CLUB

**EVERY TUESDAY
IN THE LIBRARY**

SECOND HALF OF LUNCH

SIGN UP REQUIRED.



Gotta catch 'em all!™

POKÉMON Club



EVERY WEDNESDAY
DURING LUNCH in the Library
12:55-1:20 pm

Please see Ms. Jawaid for more information.



Multi Culture Club

Mondays

in the library

12:55 - 1:10 PM



SOCIAL JUSTICE CLUB

FRIDAYS IN THE LIBRARY

12:55 – 1:00 PM