

St. Aidan's Catholic Academy

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To all in our community,

Another fantastic academic year has come to an end and as always, I like to reflect on our journey over the past months. This year, those reflections have been extra poignant as I know they will be my last as Headteacher. It has been the greatest privilege of my life to be associated with this great community and to lead it these past few years has been a thrill. The journey has been wonderful, but it has been made special by the people I have journeyed with. I have made countless, life-long friends and have seen thousands of young people from across the city having enhanced life chances because of what we do as a community. Recently, I have been contacted by many alumni who have lived wonderful, enriching lives because of what St Aidan's gave them. However, I have only been a steward playing a role like many before me and many yet to come. We are all simply custodians of a much bigger entity and I am a firm believer that every member of our community takes this responsibility seriously. I want to take this opportunity to thank you all for your kind words, steady support and love over the past decades. I hope I have left St Aidan's in a better place than when I found it and I will continue to strive for every young person who comes through its doors from my new role within the trust.

Glenn Sanderson



Upcoming Events

Tuesday, September 3, 2024

School Re-opens for Y7

School Re-opens for Years 8-11
on **Wednesday, September 4, 2024**



Father, I ask for your forgiveness for all the ways that I have fallen short in my thoughts, in my words and in my actions. Search my heart O God. Expose the darkness and bring my sin into the light. Help me turn away from my wicked ways that separates me from you, Lord. Create in me a pure heart Father God and help me become more

Chaplaincy

Sunday the 3rd Week of Lent

We end the year with the Celebration of the Word where we reflect upon the reading the prophet Jeremiah,

For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart, I will let you find me, says the Lord, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, says the Lord, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.



Twenty pupils went to the Summer Festival in July, where we were inspired by the words from the movie Queen of Katwe about belonging. We are sharing these in hope they will bring you as much joy and reflection as they did for us whilst at the festival.



Year 7 pupils enjoyed the Pilgrimage from school to Roker Beach via St Mary's and St Peter's churches.

They had the opportunity to visit important local areas, pray, make new friendships and reflect upon the year they've had.

Some even had the opportunity to sit in priest's chair.

Pupils had most prayer filled time at the Cathedral during the Good Shepherd Mass in May.



Pastoral News

Important Dates:

Thursday 18th July 2024 - School closes at 1.55pm.

Friday 19th July 2024 - School closes at 12 noon.

September return

Our new Year 7s return on Tuesday 3rd September 2024. Pupils should arrive to school no later than 8.15am.

Year 8 - 11 return on Wednesday 4th September 2024. Pupils should arrive to school no later than 8.15am.

Summer Savings

Take advantage of summer savings for this summer

[Summer Savings - Sunderland City Council](#)

Please also refer to the information sent home about HAF for Summer School Activities.

Safeguarding

Knife Crime

Northumbria Police's Prevention Through Education Team visited our school over the last few weeks to deliver sessions to year 9 and 10 students on Knife Crime. The session covered why young people carry knives, the impact of knife crime, the consequences of carrying a knife, and how to get help and support.

Information about knife crime and its effects can be found here:

[Knife Crime - Fearless](#)

[Gun and knife crime | Childline](#)

We hope you will support this important messaging at home.

Knife Angel



A group of Year 7 - 10s visited The Knife Angel on 28th June 2024. This incorporated an eye-opening workshop led by Mr and Mrs Brown who founded The Connor Brown Trust following the tragic death of their son Connor in 2019. Our pupils gained so much for the session. They were shocked by the statistics and left with a greater awareness of the dangers of knife crime.



E-cigarettes (vapes)

Information for parents & carers



What does the law say?

While it is not illegal for someone to possess a vape if they are under 16, the police can confiscate it in a public place. It is, however, illegal for shops to sell vapes to those under 18, or for an adult to buy or attempt to buy a vape for someone who is under 18. Those who break the law could face a £50 fixed penalty notice or be fined up to £2,500.

If you know of a retailer who is selling vapes to those under 18, you can report this to the relevant local authority's trading standards department using the methods below:

Via online reporting forms:

[Northumberland County Council](#)
[Newcastle City Council](#)
[South Tyneside Council](#)
[Sunderland City Council](#)

By email to Gateshead Council:

tradingstandards@gateshead.gov.uk

By email to North Tyneside Council:

trading_standards@northtyneside.gov.uk

Counterfeit Vapes

You cannot be sure what is in these products both in terms of the construction of the vape itself (poor quality materials e.g. batteries) and the contents of the liquid. [This article](#) gives information about how to spot fake vapes. Any trader selling these counterfeit items should be reported to Trading Standards as above.

Vapes containing THC and synthetic cannabinoids ('SPICE')

THC is the psychoactive component of cannabis (the part that gives the 'high') and 'Spice' is a synthetic form of cannabis which has a similar but much stronger effect to that of cannabis. It's illegal to produce, possess or supply cannabis (THC) in the UK, and it's illegal to produce or supply Spice (as well as it being illegal to possess Spice in a prison), including in vape form. The use of these illegal vape products is on the rise. Users can experience side effects such as nausea, loss of coordination, seizures and overdose. As with the consumption of any drug no one can be sure how their body will react, and when taking illegal substances you can never be sure what they contain or the strength of those ingredients. [The Talk to Frank website](#) contains lots of information about drugs and their side effects. You can report the supply of illegal substances to [Northumbria Police](#) or to [Crimestoppers](#).

Further information

The following e-leaflet for parents and carers contains tips on how to speak to children and young people about vaping: [Vaping and e-cigarettes - The facts for parents and carers.](#)

If you'd like to know more about vapes and the pressures young people feel to vape or smoke, visit these websites:

[Vapes | FRANK \(talktofrank.com\)](#)

[Smoking | Childline](#)

If you have concerns about your child's use of vapes and their health, please seek advice from a pharmacist or your GP.

NP-287

How you can support your son with their well-being?



1. **ACTIVELY LISTEN.** When asked 'what adults can do?', many young people simply said: 'Listen'. 'To adults when trying to support young kids' well-being, talk to them and let them know you're listening, don't yell at them, ask questions to help understand and get information and just be there for them.'

'We don't necessarily want actions... We might not need that; we just want to talk.'

If a young person approaches you to talk about a worry or concern, the most important thing is to take the time to actively listen to what it is they want to share with you. It is very tempting as an adult to want to jump in with advice or actions, but that may not be what the young person wants. Feeling like you have not been listened to when you have

approached someone with a worry or concern can have a negative impact. Through active listening you can identify the issue(s) together.

2. **ACKNOWLEDGE.** An important part of active listening, and the next stage in providing support, is acknowledging the issue that has been shared. Young people explained that adults being dismissive of their concerns when shared was very unhelpful. To acknowledge and make sure you understand, repeat back to the young person what you have heard. This can help clarify what has been shared and reduce the chance of misunderstanding.

'We just want to let everything out and know that we've been heard.'

In acknowledging the concern or issue that has been shared, you let that young person know that you have heard them. Once the issue has been acknowledged, you should then find out from the young person what support, if any, they are looking for from you.

3. **AFFIRM.** When asked what support the young person wants, they may say that talking about it was enough. It may be that they were looking for the space and opportunity to vent or verbalise their issue. And by being able to talk it through, they feel that they have a handle on the situation. They may be looking to you for affirmation or belief in them and their ability to deal with and overcome the problem.

'When you validate and sympathise with me it feels more supportive.'

In providing positive feedback, you build your relationship with that young person. Let them know that you trust and believe in them. Thank them for sharing with you and say that you are there if they need further support.

4. **ADVISE.** Sometimes the issue that a young person wants to talk about will require specific guidance, or they may ask you for your advice. Young people felt that getting advice from adults was important, but only when they have asked for it. When giving advice think about how you, yourself, would want to receive advice. Perhaps frame it as suggestions or provide multiple options to work through together, if possible, rather than giving as a direction or even an order.

An example of bad advice – 'go get a glass of water, have a time out, you'll feel better in the morning.'

5. **ACT.** The final stage of providing support is acting on what has been shared. It may be that the young person has come to you specifically seeking action on their behalf. Other times, as adults we have responsibilities to act on the things that are shared with us. In either case, it is important that you communicate clearly and transparently with the young person about why

you need to act, what you plan to do and check with the young person on what their expectations are.

'Not do anything after telling you my problems.'

'They're very good at listening, but not acting on it.'

Advice and support for parents If you are a parent or carer looking for advice for support you can contact the YoungMinds parent helpline: www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/parents-helpline-and-webchat/ or call the helpline for free on 0808 802 5544

Our pastoral team can be connected on the following emails.

Ashbrooke House – Mrs McKenna – kmckenna@staca.co.uk – Ext: 201

Corby House – Mr Gray – agray@staca.co.uk – Ext: 223

Brookfield House – Mrs Halliday – mhalliday@staca.co.uk - Ext: 216

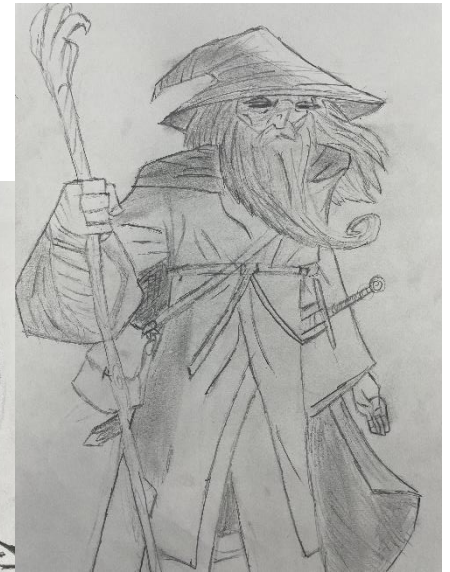
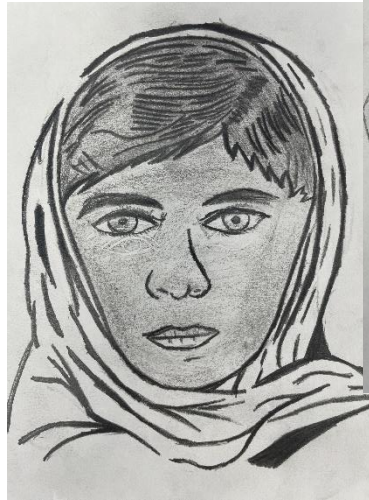
Departmental News

Art and Design

The students who participated in our Ready Steady Cook challenge were tasked with putting their own twist on a classic spaghetti bolognese as well as producing cupcakes and a side salad. We had some fantastic displays of teamwork, creativity and organisation from the boys and all produced dishes they should be really proud of. Mrs Nipper and Mrs Swales taste tested their efforts and crowned Brookfield the overall winner of the competition. A fantastic effort by all involved, move over Gordon Ramsay and Jamie Oliver... Our St Aidan's chefs have got some real talent in the kitchen!



Students participated in an illustration challenge, looking at characters from their favourite books and bringing them to life. We had some fantastic outcomes, particularly from Yaseen, Joel, Sebastian, Jaber and Prince. Great job boys!



Geography

During Enrichment Week, some Year 8 and Year 9 Geography students had the fantastic opportunity to work closely with the Sunderland Smart City team, from the council. They received a presentation from the council about the regeneration and 5G advancements happening in Sunderland. Working in small groups, students designed and developed their own proposal ideas to include on the Sunderland City App. They then developed their public speaking skills by pitching their ideas to the council. The Smart City team were impressed by the range and quality of ideas. This included strategies around mental health, transport and a digital loyalty card, as well as many more. They have taken all of these ideas back to the council to be discussed.

History

During activities week, groups of pupils analysed different pieces of evidence relating to the assassination of President John F Kennedy. Pupils made links between the President and other organisations to help create their own arguments over who they believed was guilty for his assassination in November 1963. Pupils looked into potential involvement from the CIA, The Democrat Party, The FBI, The Republican Party, The Gangster underworld and the Communist threat. It was a fun filled week of investigation with some interesting conclusions from pupils.



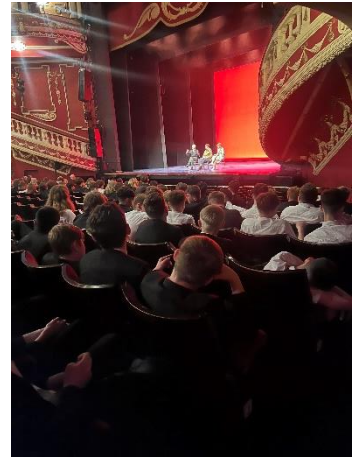
English

We have had a very successful and busy year in English. From performing arts enrichment to reading champions, there is never a dull moment. Year 10 had the exciting opportunity to see Shakespeare's Macbeth live at the Empire Theatre. The boys agreed, this unique performance really helped clarify their understanding of the GCSE play. Reading has continued to be



at the heart of the department, with boys attending reading club on a daily basis and many Year 7s developing their confidence and oracy through passionate readings of Shakespeare's Julius Caesar.

This focus clearly pays off and our outstanding reading data evidences this. Pupils who have taken the opportunity to progress through our rigorous English Intervention program have really thrived, identifying gaps and closing them quickly and efficiently. We have implemented more opportunities for oracy into the English curriculum, enabling our pupils to share their thoughts and opinions on topics they are interested in, debating moral and philosophical issues raised by literature and creating a real buzz around the department.



Mathematics

This year has been St Aidan's most successful to date with the UKMT Junior Maths Challenge. All 60 pupils who took part in the competition showed amazing determination when tackling some complex maths problems independently. The results reflected the amazing efforts of the boys:

Gold Awards – Adam S, Flynn M and James W.

Silver Awards – Oliver H, Sebastian B, Mason J, Charlie N, Seyshan R, Jamie S, Arsalan T, Shay C, Grants I, Daniel M, Chimidi O, Thomas T, Jack W, Jack Y.

Bronze Awards – Ayodele A, John-Paul A, Quade C, Dolan F, Archie H, Ryan R, Leon R, Arvin S, Tico X, Carter B, Isaac C, Wil D, Gabriel D, Emmanuel F, Brydon G, Louis H, Samuel L, Ethan S and Jacob Y.



A huge well done to James W and Adam S who were in the top 3% across the UK and were invited to take part in the Kangaroo Challenge.

Pupil Leadership at St Aidan's

We have elected a KS3 and a KS4 head boy and house captains to serve as leaders and to represent the entire student body. The position of head boy holds a significant level of responsibility and plays a key role in shaping the school environment and fostering a sense of community amongst our pupils.

First and foremost, the head boy and house captains serve as role models for the rest of the student body, embodying the values of our school and demonstrating strong leadership qualities. This not only helps to maintain a positive school culture but also encourages other pupils to strive for excellence in their own academic and personal endeavours.

Additionally, the head boy acts as a liaison between the pupils and staff, representing the concerns and interests of his fellow pupils. This open line of communication helps to foster a sense of trust and collaboration within our school community, ultimately leading to a more positive and inclusive environment for all.

Meet our Head Boys (2024-25)

KS3

I am delighted to introduce myself as the new KS3 Head Boy of St. Aidan's Catholic Academy. I bring a passion for learning and a dedication to our school community that I hope will inspire my peers.

My love for sports is just as impressive. I enjoy playing and watching sports such as Formula One, basketball, and football. As a dedicated supporter of Sunderland, I attend their games every week and also captain a local Saturday morning football team. I am proud of our city and its community spirit, I am committed to bringing our communities together.



As Head Boy, I will work closely with students from various backgrounds, supporting new friendships, and exploring shared interests. I am eager to work with local charities, schools, and community groups, believing strongly in the importance of giving back and caring for our environment. My leadership is guided by the core values of Hard Work, Trust, and Fairness, principles I follow diligently and encourage others to uphold.

At St. Aidan's, I strive to embody these values daily, challenging myself, and always aiming to be the best version of myself. I look forward to the positive impact I will have on our school community.

KS4

I am very proud to be the new Head Boy for KS4 this academic year and I am keen to represent St. Aidan's in the best possible way.

I strive to do well in every subject and this is seen through my grades and my engagement to school life and this enables me to be the best version of myself. I want to encourage all pupils to take advantage of the various activities and initiatives so that they can thrive. Whether it's in academics, sports, or community service, I want us to continue to be the best possible school in Sunderland.



As Head Boy, I will try to make students more involved with the school, striving to give better opportunities and encourage all pupils to develop their skills to be the best version of themselves. I want to continue making education of my peers a priority and I will achieve this by striving for excellence, letting the core values of Hard Work, Trust and Fairness be shown through my actions and decisions every day.

Careers

Work Experience

Yr10 and Yr12 pupils have been out in the work place for their work experience offer, navigating their way through new and challenging experiences, whilst developing those all-important essential skills needed for the workplace. The resilience, determination and reflection shown by our boys has been amazing. Some have definitely found their vocation, sharing with us their new-found passions and hopes for the future. Well done!



Young Citizens Work Experience Festival

Some of our Yr10 pupils spent the week at the innovation festival hosted by Northumbrian Water. The festival brought together a diverse range of employers, offering them hands-on practical work experience.

Pupils participated in workshops where they tackled real-world challenges and contributed their fresh perspectives to critical issues. Additionally, they also had the opportunity to journal their experiences and began to craft their own CVs. Pupils developed essential skills such as Teamwork, Leadership, Creativity, Communication, Critical Thinking, Resilience, and Positivity. These skills will provide our young citizens with a strong foundation for any future career!



Meet the Employer

Jack Deverson MBE and enterprise advisor at St Aidan's delivered an inspiring assembly to the younger members of our community. Jack is Co-founder and CEO of Evidence Based Education, an organisation that supports schools and teachers with professional development. Jack shared insights into his career journey with some enlightening examples of what being an entrepreneur is all about. Jack describes managing a business like a rollercoaster, with massive highs and big lows and how he uses the skills he has developed over time to problem solve and develop his business. Jack had some really strong messages for our boys and we are lucky to have him support the careers work at St Aidan's.



Schools Alumni Week – ‘You can’t be what you can’t see’

This cycle we celebrated our amazing Alumni, former pupils of St Aidan's that have given their time to inspire our future professionals! Our Alumni have shared their stories during assembly time and character development sessions; relatable role models that went to the same school as our pupils and have lived and worked in their local area. Pupils heard from former head boys in anticipation of our head boy elections, messages of hope, encouragement and success. We heard from student nurses, trainee pilots and consultancy firms – all sharing powerful messages to each and everyone of our pupils.



Pathway to Success

Some of our Yr7 and Yr8 pupils engaged with the new Pathways to Success programme at St. Aidan's. This pathway prepares our younger pupils for the ever-changing landscape of the future. The 'Pathway to Success' programme was tailored to enhance confidence levels and cultivate essential skills such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and critical thinking through a series of interactive workshops and hands-on activities. Pupils had the opportunity to explore various career paths, develop self-awareness, and gain valuable insights into the world of work. Pupils enjoyed exploring their personalities and discovering their animal when using the Buzz quiz, a great way to focus on our strengths and areas of improvement. I'm sure the boys will continue to use these tools as they navigate their career journey here at St Aidan's.



Careers in Sport

Yr10 have attended the Sports Experience Day, with the Foundation of Light at Sunderland College. The day was aimed at inspiring pupils and raising their career aspirations. Pupils had the opportunity to learn about various careers within the sports industry. They had the chance to hear from industry experts and gain first-hand experience of what it is like to work in this exciting field. Pupils had the chance to choose three workshops to attend including Physiotherapy, Coaching, Performance Analysis, Strength & Conditioning Coaching, Sports Science, Sports Journalism, and Sports Psychology. The boys had a great morning exploring their future career options and forging links with the foundation of light.



Sunderland University Schools and Colleges Open Day

Yr12 to attend Sunderland University's Schools and Colleges Open Day this cycle. The Open Day is designed to provide our pupils with a comprehensive understanding of Sunderland University's higher education offer. It was an immersive experience that allowed pupils to explore both campuses using the hop on and off coach service and discover the range of facilities and opportunities available to them when considering their next steps. Pupils also took part social activities, with Sports Sunderland and Students' Union representatives, who provided valuable insights into the exciting opportunities available at the university.

Music

Another fantastically successful year in the Music Department.

We started off the year with our very capable musicians Jacob, Harry and Alex performing at the Macmillan Coffee Morning in September. The St Aidan's Singers are going from strength to strength



and sang at the inaugural performance of the BCCET commissioned Gaudete Mass setting by Will Todd in Newcastle Cathedral in November.



We collaborated with the Performing Arts Club for the very successful Christmas Fair in December. We generously received an abundance of food for the food bank.

Prospective KS4 students had a fantastic experience of careers in music and performing arts at the Futures in Music Event at Newcastle University in April. We now have a new Y10 cohort starting in September and are looking forward to the start of an exciting year ahead.



Sunderland have pledged to become a "Music City" and St Aidan's Singers and Rock Band amalgamated to perform at the launch day of Music City Roots in June. The students were brilliant and had the experience of performing on a professional stage and working with professional stage staff.

Furthermore, the joint St Aidan's Singers/Rock Band played at The Bunker in June – another of the city's busy venues and recording studios.



We ended the year on a high playing to an enthusiastic audience in St Mary's Primary School in July. Again, with the Singers and Rock band combo, the St Mary's students had a great time and hopefully be seeing some of them in our Music Department in the near future.

Jude, our talented brass player, is once again taking up his role as mentor in the National Children's Band of Great Britain over the summer.



Well done to Harry, our very talented guitarist and pianist, who completed a course in vocal arranging with the Ora Singers this year.



We say goodbye to Callum who has been a fantastic advocate of music throughout his time at St Aidan's. He started playing the piano from scratch in year 7 and his aim was to attain grade 8 by the time he left school which he did and with distinction. He has also helped out in the music department with choirs, concerts and musical performances as well as running the Sunderland Youth Choir. All astonishing accolades for any student. We wish you all the best for the future Callum.



Live Music Fridays

Live Music Fridays are continuing to be a great success with more and more students coming forward to volunteer to perform. I feel passionate that we are all enriched by the bravery of students putting themselves on the line and performing on stage. Special shout out to Nathan, who sadly leaves us this term, he has been a massive support to the live music this year and without whom Live Music Fridays would have been much less enjoyable.



Exam passes

We've had amazing success in instrumental exams this year with the following boy achieving fantastic results on their instruments.

Adam Whiteheart Grade 1 Bass Merit

Alex Hope Grade 3 Bass Merit

Harry Morton Grade 3 Bass Merit

Nathan Johnson Grade 4 Guitar Merit
 Ben Siby Grade 2 Cello Pass
 Harry Deighan Grade 3 Jazz Piano Merit
 Harry Deighan Grade 8 Guitar Distinction
 Callum Kendray Grade 8 Piano Distinction

Music Enrichment:

Drum Fun Tuesday Music Room
 St Aidan's Singers Wednesday Music Room
 Rock Band Thursday The Bunker (4-6pm)

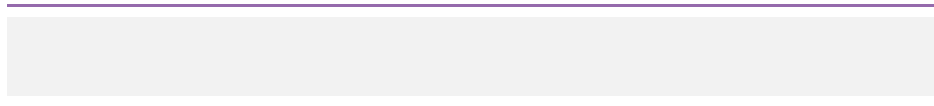
Instrumental lessons:

Monday	Bass	Mr Harland
Tuesday	Violin, Piano	Mr Nyberg, Mr Shepherd
Wednesday	Drums, Guitar, Brass	Mr Wake, Mr Smith, Miss Brierley
Thursday	Guitar	Mr Smith
Friday	Woodwind, Cello	Mr Toomey, Miss Pearson

All lessons are now after school between 3-6pm.

If you wish your child to sign up to instrument lessons please email me at musiclessons@staca.co.uk stating your son's name, form and desired instrument. For further information please see our [Instrumental Music Policy here.](#)

Our "Live Music Friday" is at breacktime in the cold dining hall - it's an excellent opportunity to practise your live performing skills in front of a low pressure and friendly audience. Please see Mr Payne for further details.



Sporting Success

This term, the year 7 & 8 cricket team have reached the semi-final of the county cup after beating Thorp academy, St Leonards and Park view. Well done to all the lads who have played, especially F Wright who scored a sensational 83 runs against Thorp academy in the first round of the competition. The semi-final is due to be played the second week back after the summer holidays. We wish the lads the best of luck in that tie.



The Year 7 A football team won the league cup after beating a very strong Monkwearmouth 2-1 in the final, B Pearce and F Taylor with the goals. In the league they finished 4th, winning 7, drawing 1, and only losing one game. The Year 7 B football also had a good first season, finishing 7th in the league, winning 3, drawing 2 and losing 2 games. Well done to all the lads from both teams on a great first season playing for St Aidan's.



Year 11 Football – Sunderland Schools League and Cup Winners



This season, the Year 11 football team won the Sunderland Schools league and Cup, beating Monkwearmouth Academy 5-0 in the league cup final. Every single player was outstanding in the final, and this was a fitting way to finish the season and for some, their time at St Aidan's. It has been a pleasure to work with these boys over the past 5 years. You can view the highlights of the final on the school's Instagram page: [St Aidan's Catholic Academy \(@sacatholicacademy\) • Instagram photos and videos](#)

Triathlon

On the 5th of March eight students represented the school in Sunderland's Triathlons competition hosted at Silksworth. It was a joint team made up of St Aidan's and St Anthony's pupils. All pupils were a credit to the school and their hard work paid off as they won the overall competition. Special mentions to F. Waterson who came runner up for the individual Y7 competition and S. Hughes who was the overall winner for the Y8 individual competition.

Triathlon boys' team

(BACK) A. Owens, W. Snowball, S. Schindler, F. Waterson

(Front) Q. Charlton, A. Moran, A. Bahrami, S. Hughes



Our Year 8 football team has won the Sunderland Schools League and the League Cup after beating Venerable Bede 5-0 in the final, they have also gone the entire season unbeaten which is an excellent achievement. A huge well done to everyone that attends training each week and has been part of the squad throughout the season, all your hard work has paid off. We look forward to their continued success in the future.



We also have three students from St Aidan's who have been selected to represent the Sunderland District U14's next season, congratulations to Joseph, Rhys and Carter. The boys have been fantastic all year in representing the school and excelled at the recent trials.

Rugby

This year has seen the largest uptake in students into the sport. The school has managed to field full teams in both year 7 and year 8, while the combined year 9 and 10 sides have been very competitive against strong opposition. Both the year 7 and 8 side have been competing in the Emerging School Games, organised through Park View Rugby Academy. Both year groups competed extremely well, achieving a number of excellent victories over strong opponents.

It is also an opportunity to thank Mr Terrence Milner and the staff at Constellia for sponsoring the school. This has allowed us to invest in a brand-new rugby kit for the first time. Also, a thank you to coaches from Sunderland RFU who have supported with enrichment throughout the year,

Basketball

This year has not only been one of the most successful years for basketball but also for sport in general. With large numbers of students attending enrichment after school, basketball is the most popular sport after football.

The students competed across two major competitions this year; The Jr.NBA for years 7 and 8 and the Tyne and Wear School Games for U14 and U16. In their inaugural appearance in the Jr. NBA competition the year 7 side managed to qualify from their group and reach the conference semi-final. A fantastic achievement from all of the boys this year.

Also, in the Jr.NBA competition, the year 8 side finished top of their group and after a thrilling semi-final, qualified for the final's day at Durham University. After a tense conference final, the year 8s managed to get the win to become the Eastern Conference Champions. In the final match to determine the Jr.NBA champions, the year 8s gave a battling performance, dominating the 2nd half but were unable to close the deficit. Still to be crowned silver medalists and 2nd best school in the North East is a wonderful achievement for the boys.

The U16 boys dominated the Sunderland qualifiers of the Tyne and Wear competition, qualifying for the final's day at Newcastle's Vertu Arena. After reaching the final in what was another close game the boys came up just short against an exceptional Jesmond Park team. But to finish 2nd in Tyne and Wear is an excellent achievement and will hopefully leave a lasting memory on all of the boys leaving us this year.

Finally, the U14 boys. After finishing runners up in the previous year's Jr.NBA they cruised through qualifying of the Tyne and Wear games to reach the finals day. After going unbeaten in their group, they faced off against a strong Boldon team. Never behind they did have to show a lot of determination and resilience to get the win and become Tyne and Wear School Champions.

This wouldn't be possible without the hard work of all of the students this year. Also, we have had the benefit of linking with Lambton Raptores basketball club. This partnership has meant the boys have received expert coaching and guidance from both Mark and Arnel.

They have supported the school and boys at both enrichment clubs and fixtures and their support has been invaluable and any boys wishing to attend Lambton basketball club please see Mr Adey or contact raptorebe@hotmail.com.

Duke of Edinburgh

This year 61 pupils in Year 9 embarked on their Duke of Edinburgh Award. All attended DofE volunteering club on Monday after school and served our school community in a variety of ways. In addition, all pupils undertook 6 months of a physical activity of their choosing and they completed a series of online training lessons in which they learned vital skills such as first aid, cooking and dynamic risk assessment. The Award culminated this week with all 61 pupils completing an adventurous self-led 2-day expedition in the countryside around Barnard Castle; with pupils walking 20 miles across 2 days, cooking their own food and camping overnight. The hard work and effort that the boys put in shows their strength of character and illustrates the power of our core values in action. We are immensely proud of them, well done!



Mountain Visit – Keswick

Visualize a group of 40 Year 9 boys embarking on a challenging school trip to climb Scafell Pike and Latrigg Mountain in rainy weather. The boys are determined, with rain gear on, including waterproof jackets, pants, and sturdy hiking boots. The sky is overcast with dark clouds, and raindrops can be seen falling steadily.

The boys are scattered along a rugged, muddy trail, some helping each other over slippery rocks and steep inclines, their faces showing a mix of determination and fatigue. Teachers and guides accompany them, offering encouragement and support. Despite the challenging conditions, the boys' perseverance and teamwork shone through.



In the end, they reach the summits of both mountains, standing triumphantly with arms raised, rain-soaked but beaming with pride. The background shows the breath-taking, mist-covered peaks and valleys, emphasizing the magnitude of their achievement. The sense of accomplishment and camaraderie is palpable, making this an unforgettable experience for all involved.

To celebrate in the evening, we all tensely watched the England semi-finals against the Netherlands, and were ecstatic as England reached the finals of the Europeans Football Championship, which just added icing on the cake! I am sure the boys will remember this trip forever, I certainly will!!

