



# NEWSLETTER

Autumn Term 2024

  
**Merry  
Christmas!**

**From all the Staff, Governors  
and Pupils. We wish you the  
very best for a happy and  
prosperous 2025**

## MESSAGE FROM MR THOMPSON

Welcome to this festive edition of the St Mary's newsletter. As you'll be able to see, this term has delivered many fabulous opportunities for the pupils, both in school and beyond. From poetry slams to career's fairs and from climate action to musical performances, there has been something for everyone. We hope that the many activities provided inspire the youngsters to strive to do their very best and let their light shine!

As we journey through Advent, we take time to prepare for the celebration of Christmas and the birth of Jesus Christ. We hope that the Christmas holidays are an enjoyable time for you all, and look forward with renewed energy to the year ahead. On behalf of all of us at St Mary's, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Mr Thompson  
Headteacher

## PRESENTATION EVENING 2024

On Thursday 21st November, we had a wonderful evening celebrating the fantastic achievements of both current pupils and our Year 11 pupils who left in the summer. The support and encouragement from parents attending this evening adds value to this celebration of achievement and dedication in their academic journey.

We extend our gratitude to our Guest Speaker, Joan McCarthy, Director of Education, Archdiocese of Liverpool. Mrs McCarthy presented all our pupils with their certificates and special awards.

Any Year 11 leavers who were unable to attend the evening are encouraged to collect their certificates from school as soon as possible.



**LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE**



## SO...WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING THIS TERM?



### OPEN EVENING

WOW! With record attendees and incredible feedback we were overwhelmed with the record numbers who attended our Open Evening in September!

A special well done to Kian who attends St Anne's Catholic Primary school who won our Open Evening Passport Prize - A Samsung Galaxy Tablet!

### IET FARADAY CHALLENGE

In October St Mary's hosted the IET (Institution of Engineering and Technology) Faraday Challenge.

Two teams of our Year 8 pupils competed against other local high schools in developing their own innovative design ideas and prototypes for a given problem.

Pupils worked through a real life scenarios and demonstrated excellent team work, creativity, budgeting, technical skills and project management. Teams had to pitch their ideas to a panel of judges from industry, selling their ideas in terms of purpose and sustainability.

A huge well done to all pupils involved. Some great ideas and superb behaviour from all.



### CLIMATE ACTION PLAN

Our Eco Team are continuing their fantastic work around climate change. In October we had a fantastic session held by Students Organising for Sustainability UK for pupils across all year groups, giving them a real insight into the Climate Action Plan for St Mary's.

Pupils have had a huge input into how the school moves forward with sustainability



### TEACHING ASSISTANT APPRECIATION

In September we gave a little thank you to our fantastic Educational Support Team.

This wonderful team support our pupils and staff tirelessly and they received the acknowledgment they deserved!

We are sure both past and current pupils will agree, these fantastic team players are worth their weight in gold!





## FRIENDS OF ASTLEY PARK

The Friends of Astley Park recently asked St Mary's for help in building boxes for the wildlife around the park.

Each box will be monitored on an ongoing basis by the their team, to see how the wildlife use it and thrive.

Our pupils jumped at the chance to provide a safe habitat for the birds giving them somewhere to nest in the spring, whilst having some fun improving their DT skills.



The boxes have since been coated in a bird friendly paint and they are now up and ready for the birds in the spring. Each box still shows its number on the base so that our pupils can find their own build.



## REMEMBRANCE DAY PARADE

Our Head Boy and Deputy Head Girl, Harry and Lily were invited to take part in this years Remembrance Day Parade. During the service, they placed a Poppy Wreath at the cenotaph in remembrance of those who served in WW1 and WW2.



Pictured is Harry and Lily with Fr Joe, our Parish Priest and Shaun Bradbury, Chairman of Farington Parish Council and also ex-pupil of St Mary's Leyland.

## POETRY SLAM

On Monday 21st November our Y7, 18 finalists battled it out for coveted prizes in the annual Poetry Slam competition.

Pupils were chosen by their classes to represent our school 'Houses' in the final; 3 per house. All 18 finalists excelled in overcoming their nerves, building their confidence and delivering their performances.

A special thank you to published poet, Nathan Parker, who joined the judging panel and supported our Slam!



## EDUCATIONAL VISITS CONTINUE

This term we have continued to run trips to broaden our pupils knowledge of different subject areas. Already this term we have ran the following trips (and more!):

- Liverpool Synagogue & Cathedral
- Visit to a local school to watch Aladdin
- Visit to Bridgewater Hall
- Blackpool Pleasure Beach & Illuminations
- Theatre trip to watch An Inspector Calls
- Preston Mosque
- Manchester Museum for Science & Industry







## SPOT LIGHT ON: CAREERS

### LUNCHTIME DROP INS

Throughout the Autumn term we have hosted several lunchtime college drop ins. These have been open to all our pupils in Years 9 - 11 to support them with their post 16 options.

This also gave Year 9 pupils an opportunity to find out more information for their future to support them with their GCSE option choices.

What a fantastic for our pupils to ask excellent questions to aid them with their future!



### CAREERS FAIR 2024!

In November we hosted a wonderful careers fair with a variety of exhibitors from colleges to local businesses alongside information about apprenticeships.

Local colleges included Runshaw, Cardinal Newman, Wigan & Leigh, Preston College and a wide range of local businesses including Lloyds Bowker BMW, Aspens Caterers and DWP.



It was great to see so many of pupils discussing their next steps when they leave St Mary's. We are already planning more careers events in the spring term for our Year 11 pupils!

If you would be interested in supporting our schools Careers Education through careers fairs, mock interviews or even short presentations about your job/business, please contact Mrs McVey at the school on [careers@ismchs.com](mailto:careers@ismchs.com)



## CAREERS AT ST MARY'S

Via our school careers programme, we offer providers numerous opportunities throughout the school year to speak to pupils and/or their parents. Within our Personal Development curriculum we have bespoke careers units of study running from Year 7 through to Year 11 targeting key age appropriate content. All pupils have the opportunity to discuss their career prospects with our careers advisor Mrs McVey who can be found in the office opposite the library.







## CHAPLAINCY

### EVE OF ALL SAINTS

On the Eve of All Saints' Day, pupils and staff gathered in the Chapel at lunchtime to learn about the history of this special day and to take a moment to pray for those who have passed. We concluded the service by having donuts, a sweet reminder of God's eternal love and the importance of reflecting that love through our words and actions.



### DEMENTIA CAFE

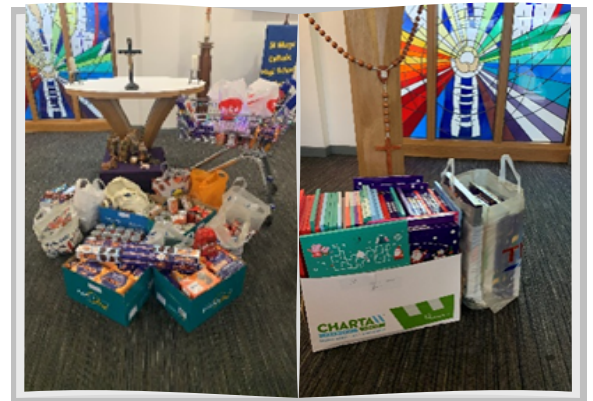
On Tuesday 3rd December we were delighted to welcome all our guests to the last Dementia Cafe of the year, including The Mayor and Mayoress of South Ribble, Councillor Peter Mullineaux and Mrs Margaret McManus.

The event was filled with lively conversations, British Sign Language interactions, shared laughter and captivating magic tricks. Guests also enjoyed traditional mince pies and a variety of delicious cakes.

### FOODBANK SUPPORT

The build up to Christmas is always very exciting and equally very busy. However, with the ongoing economical crisis, there are many families within our local area who will struggle this Christmas time.

As a school family, we wanted to support our local Foodbank at St Mary's Community Centre. Pictured are many bags and boxes containing Christmas treats for the receiver to enjoy. Special thanks to pupils and staff who donated food items, along with the Chaplaincy team for organising the food items



### CEMETERY CLEAN

The Faith in Action team recently dedicated an evening after school to clearing leaves from the headstones at St Mary's Cemetery. The pupils found the experience so rewarding that we've committed to making this a monthly activity. Thank you to everyone involved!



## IN OTHER NEWS...

### BBC BITESIZE CAREERS TOUR

In late October KS3 pupils were lucky enough to receive a visit from the BBC's Bitesize Careers Tour! This fantastic experience gave pupils the chance to explore different career paths, hear directly from professionals in various industries and engage in a Q&A session.

We were incredibly lucky to hear from the host (Jasmine Takhar from BBC Asian Network), interviewing Ray Gillies (TV Casting Researcher), Jake Sanders (Senior Player Administration Officer for the EFL) and Lucy Hickey (Social Media Executive).

It perfectly complemented our Careers Curriculum at St Mary's by broadening our pupils horizons and inspiring future ambitions.

A massive thank you to BBC Bitesize for such an engaging and thought provoking event.



### ANNUAL CHRISTMAS CONCERT

'Tis the season to spread joy and cheer! On Wednesday 11th December, led by Mrs Watson & Miss Gannon, our wonderful pupils in Years 7 to 11 provided a symphony of carols, dance, festive tunes and poetry to parents, governors and the local community. It was fantastic to celebrate the spirit of Christmas and support the amazing talents of our pupils.



*Community Involvement*

### CHRISTMAS BINGO/MARKETS

WOW! What a turn out we had from our families and members of our local community for our annual Christmas Bingo and our first ever Christmas Markets! These events were hosted by our incredible Hospitality Ambassadors who supported ticket sales, the raffle, refreshments and checking numbers for our lucky winners!







**NAME:** Miss Williams

**SUBJECT:** Art

**HOBBIES:** I have most recently taught myself crochet, as well as a million and one other crafty hobbies I have picked up over time. I also play the guitar, ukulele and I am attempting to teach myself banjo.

**INTERESTING FACT:** I have visited South East Asia after I finished my degree. My favourite part was traveling down Vietnam.

**ADVICE FOR STUDENTS AT ST MARY'S:** Put your all into everything you do, you never know it could end up being your undiscovered talent

**NAME:** Mrs Latiff

**SUBJECT:** Maths

**HOBBIES:** My interests outside of school include gardening and cooking. As well as spending time with my family and friends.

**INTERESTING FACT:** I have a strong passion for traveling around the world, but I have only been to 12 countries. Hiking Scafell Pike in the summer felt like a significant accomplishment for this year

**ADVICE FOR STUDENTS AT ST MARY'S:** Mistakes are acceptable, as long as you learn from them and try again with better results. Failure is not the end.



With so many exciting enrichment opportunities being visited outside the classroom, we must remind all parents that all medical information needs to be updated on a regular basis. As a school we have introduced Edulink One for parents to easily update this whenever they wish. Edulink also allows parents to report absences easily and securely.

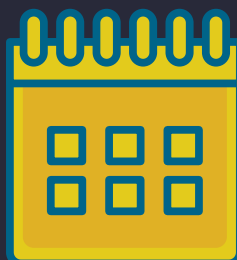
Unfortunately, a number of pupils missed a recent educational visit due to incorrect medical information

It is essential that you sign up for Edulink as soon as possible, if you haven't done so already.

All parents/carers have now received an email with instructions on creating your account and accessing the platform. If you have any questions or difficulties, please do not hesitate to contact [edusadmin@lsmchs.com](mailto:edusadmin@lsmchs.com)



## IMPORTANT DATES



**Tuesday 07/01/25 - School reopens after the Christmas break**

**Wednesday 22/01/25 - Y11 Parents' Evening**

**Monday 03/02/25 - Dementia Cafe**

**Tuesday 11/02/25 - Y10 Mock Interviews**

**Tuesday 25/02/25 - Y9 Options Evening, 6pm**

**Friday 14/02/25 - School breaks up for Spring half term at 3pm**

**Monday 24/02/25 - School reopens after the half term break**

**Wednesday 26/02/25 - Band Night, 6pm**

**Tuesday 04/03/25 - Y11 Runshaw & Preston College Interviews**

**Wednesday 05/03/25 - Y9 Parents' Evening**

**Friday 14/03/25 - Non Uniform - Easter Bingo donations**

**Thursday 27/03/25 - Easter Community Bingo**

**Friday 04/04/25 - Celebration Mass, school closes at 1.30pm**

### **Year 10 Work Experience:**

**Monday 17th March - Friday 21st March 2025**

Pupils should be currently researching their work placement.



## PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT DIARY

BUILDING THE FOUNDATIONS TO LET OUR LIGHT SHINE

We were incredibly lucky to have ex professional football Nick Anderton visit St Mary's to present to Year 11 pupils. He spoke about his career and how he shown incredible resilience throughout his life overcoming cancer in his leg, which caused him to retire from the game.

The pupils (and staff) also engaged with a Q&A with Nick following his presentation. Thank you Nick, it was really inspirational!



As part of our Personal Development programme, we have focused on key concerns that involve our school community whilst also raising awareness of key issues for example disabilities with our school community.

Through assemblies and bespoke activities within our Personal Development lessons, we have been able to promote this important message.

We would like to thank all members of the school, both staff and pupils who have contributed to raising awareness.

As part of the transition from primary school, a bespoke unit has been created named "St Mary's & Me", where pupils begin the unit investigating the History of St Mary's, from 1955 when it was built to the modern day. Within this lesson, pupils write an article which will be used as part of a time capsule in 2027 to celebrate 70 years of St Mary's Catholic High School. Pupils also learn about the different houses, engage in hymn signing practice, discuss sustainability at St Mary's where all pupils engage in activities to protect our environment.



Our Personal Development is constantly evolving and changing to meet the needs of our pupils. As parents/carers, if you believe there is something that we should address in our lessons, please contact Mr Weaver at [PD@lsmchs.com](mailto:PD@lsmchs.com)

## LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE