



BISHOP BEWICK

CATHOLIC EDUCATION TRUST

SUMMER 2023



St Thomas More Catholic High School

One Trust, One Family
A great education has the power to transform lives

A Message from the Chair of Directors...



Dave Harrison

One of our Trust's goals, Collaboration, has the sub-heading "We have to be greater than the sum of our parts". This might sound an easy task, but it requires conscious and deliberate participation from each one of us, a commitment to the collective mission, to allow this ambition to fully come to life.

If we examine our own creation story in Genesis, we have a list of God's creations on the sixth day being described as 'very good' rather than just 'good' as with previous days. God expressing a cumulative sense of joy and wonder for the whole project, knowing that once all the pieces are working together, the outcome will be much bigger than all the individual creations by themselves.

We each have our own piece of creation to play out within our Trust, whether we are a

pupil, staff member, governor, volunteer, parent or carer and it is simply by joining in, that our efforts will produce more than expected outcomes for the whole.

We can see from our recent collaborations through our Art Exhibition, SEND review, Curriculum work, Governance meetings, School Improvement, to list a few, that our capacity in harnessing our collective strengths is maturing and amazing things are happening as a result. On behalf of the Board, I'd like to say a huge thank you to every individual across our Trust who is participating in our creation story. Although it's been longer than six days in its formation, we can reflect on our work as we grow and say this is 'very good'.

Dave Harrison

AN UPDATE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE...

The end of an academic year can often be a time of reflection in schools and this summer will also mark the end of our first year as a complete community of 39 schools. It seems appropriate therefore to reflect upon what has been achieved by coming together into one Trust. When we look back over the past 12 months, it is very easy to see how much has been achieved together.

Firstly, our schools have generously shared with each other what makes them unique. We call it 'mining for gold' and across Bishop Bewick there is much to be shared and celebrated. This has allowed other schools and staff to calibrate around this excellence and has led to a rising tide of best practice which ultimately benefits all our children. Sometimes this has been through leaders working across schools and sharing their curriculums or resources with others. It's also occurred through the willingness of schools to allow their staff to support in other schools, for a day, weeks, even a yearlong secondment. All of these things require openness and a generosity of spirit, and I am very grateful to our schools for doing this and for the staff who have participated, for giving of themselves and their expertise for the greater good.

There are many examples that I could cite here, but most recently the strength of coming together can really be found in the situation that occurred mid-June. Two of our primary schools, St Columba's in Wallsend and St John Vianney in West Denton were found to have Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) in parts of their buildings. We had to close both schools with immediate effect until this was further explored and a resolution put in place.

The negative impact on children and families was immediate. Children had to return to home learning, and this caused severe problems for families. Someone told me recently that, 'It is in the darkest night that we can see the brightest stars' and many stars have appeared these past weeks. Everyone came together to help. Within days, other Bishop Bewick schools opened their doors to the pupils and enabled face to face learning to return.

The Trust Estates team have been superb in their support of school leaders and have given their full attention to solving issues as quickly as possible. We were also helped by agencies external to the Trust, I have to thank the DfE team that is supporting us and the excellent Structural Engineers and Builders that have worked constantly to complete their investigations and are now ensuring both schools can reopen before the end of summer. I'd like to say a huge thank you to both companies who responded so quickly to our situation. ARUP who undertook the initial survey work as well as looking for solutions, and Baines Construction NE (Ltd) whose team has worked tirelessly to put in the interim measures to make the buildings safe. Thankfully, both organisations realised how essential it was to get children back into school, and have done everything possible to make this happen. Most of all, I would like to offer my sincere thanks to the leaders and staff from both schools, who have shown such dedication and resilience throughout these recent weeks.

Their detailed planning and problem-solving enabled learning to take place quickly and across a number of locations. They are now preparing to go through it all again as they prepare to move back into their school



Anita Bath

buildings. They are very much the brightest stars of all, and for this I am so very grateful.

At the time of writing this we have just found out that Bishop Bewick CET has been awarded the 2023 Growth and Impact Award at the MAT Excellence Awards. Our thanks to everyone in the Bishop Bewick family, this award is for all of us.

Have a wonderful summer break when it comes. Take the time out to spend with families and loved ones, it's such a precious time and should always be enjoyed.

Anita Bath

An update from our Senior Director of School Improvement for Secondary Schools...John Foster

Good in every category at St Benet Biscop Catholic Academy

This time last year, we reported on the great strides being made at St Benet Biscop Catholic Academy in Bedlington. Since then, the school has had a very successful, full Ofsted inspection, carried out in January 2023. We are delighted to share with you that the "Overall Effectiveness" of the school has been judged as Good. Every area of the school has also been judged as Good:-

- Quality of Education
- Behaviour and Attitudes
- Personal Development
- Leadership and Management
- Sixth Form Provision

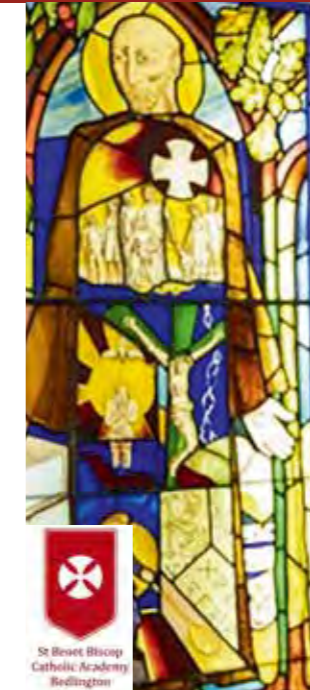
Five inspectors spent two days at the school, inspecting all of the above areas, observing lessons, interviewing students from across the age range about their learning and their wider experience of the school, interviewing teachers and support staff, middle and senior leaders, as well as the headteacher, Mr Shepherd, governors and representatives from our Trust. It was a thorough review of the school, carried out professionally and effectively.

Inspectors found that "there is a strong sense of community" at the school, where students "get along well with each other and the staff". Students told inspectors that they "feel safe at the school" and that "there is climate of respect and tolerance."

Inspectors praised school leaders for planning a broad curriculum that gives students "a rich experience" and a "depth of understanding", across the full range of subjects. They noted that the curriculum, including in Sixth Form, "allows pupils to build on what they have learned previously". They reported that students "can clearly explain how teachers support them to recall and apply what they have learnt."

Inspectors also highlighted how the school has effectively developed its support for students with special needs or disabilities, commenting that "this work has had a noticeable impact". They praised leaders for placing opportunities for reading "at the heart of the curriculum" for all students and for planning a programme to help weaker readers catch up, which is having "positive results".

Inspectors found good behaviour in the school, stating that "lessons proceed calmly and pupils engage well with their learning".



Kevin Shepherd, Headteacher

They found that "leaders have thought carefully about the personal development curriculum", with a strong focus on teaching about healthy relationships, democracy, individual liberty, the rule of law and mutual respect and tolerance. The inspectors praised the school's careers programme, noting that "very few pupils leave the school without a plan for the next phase of their education, employment or training". They also noted that safeguarding arrangements at the school are effective and that "staff have a good understanding of safeguarding because they are well trained".

Finally, the inspectors concluded that leaders and governors "have a very well-developed understanding of the strengths and areas for development of the school" and that, along with all staff, "they know this community very well". The inspectors noted that "the improvement in the quality of education in the school reflects the ambition that governors have for the students".

As a Trust, we offer heartfelt congratulations to everyone at the school – to students, teachers, support staff, leaders and governors, as well as to parents, carers and the wider community for your support of the school.

The school has been on a great journey of improvement over the last few years, under the strong leadership of Mr Shepherd. It has been a pleasure for us at the Trust to work in partnership with the school and see the great strides that the school has made and continues to make. The improvement in the school is clearly due to the great work from everyone at the school. It is also a good example of how Trust partnership working with one of its schools can be effective. St

Benet Biscop has, quite rightly, retained its autonomy over recent years but has also been able to draw on support from across the Trust, whenever needed, whether in the form of seconded staff, access to training and professional development, support for governance or simply for general advice and encouragement. Thanks to everyone from other Trust schools and from our central team who have all provided great support whenever called upon. We are in no doubt at all that the school will continue to go from strength to strength and, in the future, we know that we will be able to call on St Benet Biscop's leaders and wider staff, to offer their support to others within the Trust, whenever the need arises.

Congratulations to everyone!



John Foster

Greater than the sum of our parts – SEN across Bishop Bewick

It is really important for our Trust that we meet the needs of all children and young people in the best possible ways, so that together we support great education and ensure that everyone makes the best possible progress from their starting points.

Over this academic year, alongside SENCos from within our Specialist Support Directory, I have been looking for ways to identify and share best practice across our schools. As part of this, at the request of headteachers, we have undertaken a number of supported SEN reviews.

During these reviews, we spend time looking at school provision and systems and talk to parents, students, governors, teachers, teaching assistants and leaders to build a picture of what it is like to be a child with additional needs in the school. Some of our schools and reviewers share their experiences below:

“As a new SENCo, I found the review process incredibly useful as a means of measuring the impact of the provision we offer our pupils with additional needs. The trust reviewers were supportive, positive and complimentary about many of our practices, offering achievable next steps to further enhance our offer. The way it ran allowed us to maximise the usefulness of the review process and get a clear picture of how well we cater for our students. The review was a very supportive, reflective process and brought myself, teachers and teaching assistants together to celebrate the achievements of our pupils.”

“I have had the privilege of working as a reviewer in two schools in Bishop Bewick Trust. I love my role as SENCo. It is demanding, challenging and of course very busy, however, there is little time to reflect. As a reviewer, it has allowed me the opportunity to discuss challenges and different situations with other eager and enthusiastic SENCos. I have had the chance to offer advice but have also learnt a vast amount about how to improve or adapt provision for children with SEND at my school. The BBCET vision of together “we have to be greater than the sum of our parts,” is working, and I feel lucky to have had chance to see beyond my own school and to develop relationships with other SENCos who are passionate about what they do”.

“Following some recent changes to the



SEN department in our school, we were keen to invite in the SEN review team, early in the school year. We wanted to get an independent review of our SEN provision and get feedback on the areas of strength and areas for development. The feedback from the review was very insightful; it highlighted areas of practice that had already improved following the previous review and crucially it provided the SEN leaders with a clear strategic direction to improve the provisions for students with SEN. The whole experience was very positive and exceptionally valuable in constructing an action plan, to guide the steps we would take throughout the year. It has had a positive impact on the provision for students with SEN, our relationships with parents/carers and ensured that students with SEN continue to be a priority across the whole school”.

“Our SEN review was a great experience. It enabled us to work in collaboration with colleagues across the Trust to celebrate and improve SEN provision for our children. Through discussions with children, parents, staff and governors, the assisted review gave a thorough picture of what was happening at our school. The support and guidance before, during and most importantly continuing after, makes us feel that not only as a school, but as a Trust we are able to provide the best opportunities and support for all children with SEN which in turn, benefits all”.

“Being part of the Trust SEND Reviews is extremely beneficial for all schools involved whether you are the reviewer or are being reviewed. It allows schools to work in partnership to identify and share good practice in a supportive and open way. As a reviewer, I have developed a

wider base of skills and understanding of different approaches to meeting our most vulnerable students’ needs. Feedback from colleagues involved in the process has been overwhelmingly positive and I look forward to making more links with wonderful colleagues across Bishop Bewick Trust”.

“The review was very beneficial for our school. Over the two days the staff were put at ease by the reviewers. There was good communication before the review so staff had a clear understanding of what the review would entail. We were regularly updated throughout the time on their findings. Overall, the staff found the review very positive. It highlighted the areas that are working well and areas that needed to be developed. We were given an action plan with clear time scaled actions to work. Also, the follow up support has been invaluable for our SENCo”.



Nicola Taylor

I am looking forward to continuing this work next year, with the support of SENCos from our schools.



Andrew James

Our team of Directors for Primary Support have continued to build close working relationships with schools across Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust. The team of five Directors of Primary Support are all practicing headteachers and have been appointed from within our Trust. Their experiences as headteachers, inspectors or school improvement partners ensure that they are knowledgeable in leading school

improvement and skilled in working collaboratively with schools on the journey of continual improvement.

Regular school visits by Primary Directors involve meeting senior leaders, teachers, teaching assistants and, most enjoyably, with pupils. These school and classroom visits have enabled Primary Directors to identify excellent practice within our schools and to share this work more widely across our Trust. For example, schools introducing new approaches to phonics or writing have been teamed up with schools that have already introduced such approaches successfully. This has ensured that schools could benefit from colleagues’ experiences in rolling out these new approaches to teaching, so that they were introduced as efficiently and effectively as possible to benefit our children.

However, what has been most successful is the way that schools have been open and confident in engaging with their Director of Primary Support and trusting that these working relationships are a collaborative venture in securing even better outcomes for all our pupils.

“St Paul’s has been on a journey and has made immense improvement over the last two years. This can be attributed to a St Paul’s team effort under the expert and invaluable leadership of our Director of Primary Support. As a new school leadership team, we requested support and our Director of Support committed additional time to listen, challenge, share

expertise and work closely with us to identify key priorities and devise short term intensive support plans to improve teaching and learning. He led CPD sessions and whole school INSET which afforded teachers and support staff the opportunity to work with his school staff, sharing good practice and improving the quality of curriculum delivery.

Our Director of Primary Support is always available to give advice and offers to share successful practice which will contribute to the ongoing development at St Paul’s. His calm, friendly and humble personality meant that he was welcomed into the family of St Paul’s and is an integral part of our school improvement journey”.

Headteacher, St Paul’s, Alnwick

“I have found working with our Director of Primary Support an extremely valuable and supportive experience in continuing to improve and develop further our practice at St Mary’s. The Director of Primary Support has worked with myself, other leaders and most importantly the pupils, in looking at a range of different aspects of our school, including: curriculum development and implementation, leadership, well-being, behaviour and positive relationships as well as the catholic life and mission of the school. The focus is always on what’s happening, what is working well and what can we do to build upon this to make things even better for pupils and staff.”

Headteacher, St Mary’s, Forest Hall

Director of Specialist Support update...*Louise Banfield*

Reflections on a year of school collaboration

As we near the end of this academic year, it is a privilege to share the successes of our school support work this year. One emerging theme from work this year has been the power of collaboration. Staff in our schools are overwhelmingly positive about the benefits of working with colleagues in different schools, and this sentiment is echoed across the different strands of school support.

Since the launch of the Directory of Specialist support last June, specialist practitioners have completed over 40 individual deployments in our schools. This work has been in a wide range of areas of school life such as phonics, Maths, curriculum leadership, SEND and EYFS provision just to name a few. The impacts of this work are wide reaching and focus on curriculum developments and improved teacher confidence.

The Bishop Bewick professional development offer continues to grow and this year over 500 people have attended one of our CPD events. Nearly 30 different events have been delivered by our talented staff and I would like to thank them for their willingness to share their experience. Many of these sessions have been recorded and are available on the Trust’s YouTube account, visit the BBCET website to search and view past events. Next year’s calendar of events looks to be as varied and interesting as this year’s and will be made available for staff to sign up for.

Finally, the network of curriculum leader groups continues to grow, and we now have 19 networks up and running in our primary and secondary schools. Curriculum leaders have been working on a wide range of subject specific themes such as the standardisation of assessments, progression of skills in key stage 1 and 2 and disciplinary literacy. There are plans for further networks to be established in September to ensure that all curriculum leaders can collaborate.

Bishop Bewick pupils triumph again at this year's Catenian Public Speaking Contest

Paul Marley, Headteacher, St Oswald's Catholic Primary School

The art of public speaking is something that schools in the Bishop Bewick Trust are very keen to embrace and the annual competition organised by the Catenians, has proved to be an excellent forum to showcase our pupils' talents.

Following on from our success at the competition in 2022, a record number of primary schools from across the Trust submitted entries, spanning a broad range of self-chosen topics.

The first challenge for the judges in the preliminary round was to reduce the twenty three presentations down to just six. The competition was fierce, and after much deliberation, the finalists were chosen.

The six finalists took part in the next round at Sacred Heart Catholic High School, where they presented in front of pupils, the headteacher and head girls, as well as representatives from the Trust.

It was from these six pupils that our winner, Andreas, from St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School in Wallsend, was selected to represent the Bishop Bewick Trust in the finals at English Martyrs Catholic School in Hartlepool. His fabulous delivery on his chosen topic, 'What is passion?', resulted in him narrowly beating the two runners-up,



L-R: Julia from St Vincent's, Sophia from Star of the Sea, Andreas from St Bernadette's, Olivia from Sacred Heart, Clement from St Teresa's, Evangeline from English Martyrs.



Olivia from Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School and Sophia from Star of the Sea Catholic Primary School.

Finalists were judged on clarity, coherence, structure, diction, presence and rapport. Andreas was able to impress in all areas, delivering his speech with great passion and confidence. Despite the competition in the finals being of an incredibly high standard, Andreas retained the Year 6 title for the Bishop Bewick Trust following the success of our entrant from St Michael's in 2022.

Andreas has written the following in response to being part of the Catenian speaking competition: "This has been an experience to remember! I would encourage anyone, even if you doubt yourself, to give it a go because I have learnt so much. I have had the privilege of representing my school and our Trust and met so many extremely skilled public speakers. It was an honour to listen to so many great speeches too. I would also like to thank my family, my teachers and my fellow students for the constant support and encouragement. I couldn't have achieved this without you all."

Laura Fallon, Headteacher at St Bernadette's said: "We are all incredibly proud of Andreas and would echo his sentiments of 'having a go'. Not only did Andreas benefit greatly from being part of the competition, the other pupils did too. They were inspired and motivated by having the opportunity to listen to Andreas' speech. They were his biggest supporters throughout and were privileged to have Mr Dawson and Mr James from the Catenian Association come to our school and talk to the children about the competition and the opportunities it can present as well as present Andreas with his trophy. We are certainly looking forward to being part of the competition next year."



Denise Tepace



Sophie Ritson

We also celebrated success once again in the Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4 and Post 16 contest where pupils from Sacred Heart Catholic High School dominated. Sophie Ritson won the Bishop Ambrose Griffiths Trophy with her speech relating to the relevance of the monarchy in modern-day society.

Sophie said she "was very pleased to receive the first-place prize; this was an amazing opportunity which I am extremely grateful for, and an experience I thoroughly enjoyed!"

Davida Ngaujah won the Thomas Clifford Trophy with her speech which spoke about the reality of what it is like for girls in developing countries and their struggles in comparison to us.

Denise Tepace also claimed a Runner Up place in the Post 16 contest with her speech on the topic of ambition and how childhood dreams should not be lost as we grow up, despite the pressures from society.

"It was a great experience to be a part of and it gives you confidence to share something you've worked very hard on. I hope that others will get the chance to partake in something like this".

Davida Ngaujah

"I fully enjoyed the whole process, from performing my own speech to listening to everyone else's. It was a wonderful experience and I hope to do it again someday!"

Denise Tepace

We would like to thank the Catenians and all of the schools who took part in the public speaking competition – by nurturing and celebrating this fantastic life skill, it helps prepare our children for the rest of their school years and beyond.



Davida Ngaujah

Durham Union Society Sixth Form Essay Writing Competition

'Why is Freedom of Speech important in Higher Education?'

In our Spring newsletter we shared with you that Year 12 pupils from Bishop Bewick Trust were given the opportunity to enter the inaugural Durham Union Society Sixth Form Essay Writing Competition. To deliver the competition, Durham partnered with The Pinsker Centre, a London-based think tank focusing on promoting freedom of speech and combatting intolerance through discussion.

There was a 500 word word limit with an essay prompt 'Why is Freedom of Speech Important in Higher Education?' It was open to any Year 12 students in the North East of England and it was not essential that they were studying politics to enter.

This was an excellent opportunity for students to showcase their interest in politics and current affairs. We are pleased to share with you that Bishop Bewick pupils claimed all three winning places with Jazell Qasim from Sacred Heart Catholic High School claiming first place, Alanis Robertson from St Mary's Catholic School taking second place and Frank Kwekam, St Cuthbert's Catholic High School claiming third place. Durham Union Sixth Form Society said that they received "over 20,000 words to judge, and it was an

extremely close call to decide who won".

Jazell said: "I wanted to submit my entry as a way to increase confidence in my own work; my friends and some teachers had encouraged me to submit but ultimately I decided to do it so that I could practise my writing skills in a competitive setting, as well as furthering my understanding in an area as crucial to society as the freedom of speech".

Congratulations to the winners and well done to all who submitted entries.



Jazell Qasim

BBCET Essay Writing Competition



Sonny Hastie

Recognising the value of the Durham Union Society Sixth Form Essay Competition for pupils, we also held a separate competition using the same essay prompt that pupils could enter as well as, or, as an alternative to the Durham Union Competition. We received entries from all five secondary schools and the quality of the arguments presented was very high. Judges were really impressed with the range of ideas presented and how the essays were structured, all within the 500 word limit. Sonny Hastie from St Mary's Catholic School claimed first place and Lucy Wilkinson from St Benet Biscop Catholic Academy, and Maisha Charag from Sacred Heart Catholic High School, were joint runners up.

Sonny said: "I took great pleasure in composing this essay that was centred around such an interesting and pertinent topic and I was overjoyed to have been recognised and rewarded for the hard work I put into it! I am very grateful to the Trust for providing me with this opportunity and I would strongly encourage other Sixth Form students to participate in future essay competitions".

Well done to everyone who submitted essays. You can view the winning essays here www.bishopbewickcet.org/essay-competition. We plan to run a similar competition next year and hope to receive even more entries.

School Collaboration: Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School buddy up with Sacred Heart Catholic High School for story time... Hannah Rutledge

At Sacred Heart, we love reading and sharing our passion of reading with others. This year we have paired Year 3 up with Sixth Form students from Sacred Heart Catholic High School to create our Reading Buddies project. The girls come down to school once a week and work with the children on developing their love and enthusiasm for reading. They started by sharing their favourite books and characters with one another and designing posters linked to this. This was a great opportunity for the buddies to get to know each other.

Before the project started, the high school students received training from the Reading Lead on how best to support younger readers; equipping them with questions and themes to discuss when



reading with younger children. This ensured that all children could get the best out of this opportunity, as well as supporting the High School's girls who may be considering teaching in the future.

Year 3 often ask when the 6th Form are coming in and look forward to telling them what has happened in their book since the previous week.

"I love Thursdays because I get to read to my buddy and talk about what books I might read next" **Pupil, Year 3.**



School Collaboration: Art Exhibition, Stronger Together



In June, to celebrate our first anniversary of being a complete Trust, we held a Primary Art Exhibition in the beautiful Great Hall at the Discovery Museum.



Children from across our primary schools were invited to get creative and produce artwork linked to the theme of 'Stronger Together' which celebrates one of our key values that 'we have to be greater than the sum of our parts'. Hundreds of children, ranging from nursery age to Year 6, were involved in creating wonderful pieces of art. Schools could choose how to respond to the theme which resulted in a large and unique range of artwork from collages, paintings, drawings, digital art and sculptures being displayed. The quality and creativity of work was incredible. Alice Butler, Art Lead, who organised the exhibition said, "Schools have been really creative and it is fantastic to see the range of brilliant work the children have produced".

"We were thrilled that so many children and schools participated in our very first Art Exhibition and that it took place in such a beautiful setting within The Discovery Museum. The skill and creativity behind these exhibits is astounding and highlights the way art enables children to unleash their imagination and talent. A huge amount of work has gone into organising this event, so a massive thank you to all the teachers who worked with the children and a special thank you to Mrs Alice Butler for putting the whole exhibition together. Hopefully, this will be the first of many such exhibitions" **Anita Bath, CEO.**

Many of our children were able to visit the exhibition which was also open to friends and family. For those who could not attend, a video is now available to share with friends and family. This can be accessed on the Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust website www.bishopbewickcet.org or via our YouTube channel [youtu.be/Vvf6QKy64JQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vvf6QKy64JQ). You can also read more about the exhibition and see more photos of the artwork at diocesehn.org.uk/news/budding-young-artists-exhibit-at-the-discovery-museum.



Reading for pleasure Andrew James

Sharing a love of books and reading is one of the greatest gifts a parent can give their child. As a parent, it is a great joy to cuddle up on the sofa and share a well-loved picture book or story; but we cannot underestimate the long-term impact of reading for enjoyment from an early age.

Regularly reading to a child for the love of it provides a connection between parent and child from the very early days and helps build strong family ties. Families who enjoy reading together have more opportunities for discussion, developing empathy and attachment.

By starting the journey of building a lifelong love of reading for pleasure, parents are giving their child the opportunity to be the best they can be. Research shows that reading for pleasure is one of the biggest single indicators of a child's future success, both in terms of academic achievement (Reading for change, OECD 2002) and mental wellbeing (Literacy changes Lives, NLT 2014).

Reading for pleasure opens up new worlds for children. It gives them the opportunity to use their imagination to explore new ideas, visit new places and meet new characters. It also helps them to understand their own identity, and gives them an insight into the world and the views of others.

However, reading for pleasure also has significant benefits for children's mental health and wellbeing. It can provide comfort and reassurance, confidence and security, relaxation, happiness and fun. Giving a child time and full attention when reading them a story tells them they matter. It builds self-esteem, vocabulary, feeds imagination and even improves their sleeping patterns.

Unfortunately, the relationship between parents, children and reading can sometimes change when a child starts to learn to read at school. It is important that practising reading at home does not replace the time that you spend reading for pleasure, sharing stories and engaging in meaningful discussions with your child. It is such a valuable gift that will remain with you both for a lifetime.

How to build positive reading for pleasure routines:

- **The earlier you start, the better!** It allows the maximum time for your child to grow up with reading and for the love to take root, grow and become part of their life.
- **Black and white books are perfect for babies.** As their young eyes are developing and learning to focus on the world around them, black and white books with simple lines and bold patterns are easier for babies to see. A black and white book gives a baby a chance to see clearly and experience part of the wider world.
- **Join your local library.** Libraries are full of great advice and recommendations, and you will have a new supply of books to enjoy. Your library may also host Rhyme-times and other sessions for

little ones – you'll be able to have fun and meet other families, too.

- **If you can, turn off the TV, radio and computer.** It's easier for both of you to enjoy the story without any other distractions.
- **Have fun!** There's no right or wrong way to share a story – as long as you and your child are having fun. Don't be afraid to act out situations or use funny voices...your little ones will love it!
- **Value the books they choose to read** – all reading is valuable for a child's development. Some of us prefer non-fiction; some of us prefer comics. One child might like superhero books; another might like a book of football statistics.
- **Set aside a special time** – just a few minutes a day is enough to create a reading habit.



Ss Peter and Paul's Catholic Primary School...

Just make your mark and see where it takes you!

As part of a new aspirational campaign, pupils at Ss Peter and Paul's Catholic Primary School, Cramlington have been studying a book called, 'The Dot'. The book, by Peter H Reynolds, tells the story of a young girl called Vashti who lacks self-belief when drawing. Her teacher knows that there's creative spirit in everyone and encourages Vashti to sign the angry dot she makes in frustration on a piece of paper. This act makes Vashti look at herself differently and helps her discover that everyone has potential to achieve their dreams.

In school, all children have enjoyed creating their very own artistic masterpiece, based on a simple dot. The book has inspired pupils to look at their own unique gifts and talents, considering how they can develop them further in order to be successful and share their gifts with others.

Whilst discussing key concepts of the book, pupils were able to identify the importance of resilience in achieving one's dreams. We discussed, in classes, how important it is to be flexible and adaptable. These qualities are at the heart of our school's core values and pupils are rewarded for displaying them in school through our rewards system. We encourage all stakeholders in school to be lifelong learners, promoting the importance of having clear goals and a plan to achieve them.



In order to boost our pupils' aspirations further, we will be holding a 'Careers Week' later this term, where pupils will learn about potential career paths. We are inviting visitors from a range of professions into school to inspire our pupils – seeing real-life examples of people who have reached their goals and fulfilled their potential, something we wish for each and every one of our students.

The Big Lent Walk at St Charles' Catholic Primary School

Our school mission is to follow in Jesus' footsteps in our living and learning. It is times in the church's year, such as Lent, that help prepare our children to be stewards of Gods world and care for others. This year, our Laudato Leaders thought about how they could help others and decided that school should take part in CAFOD's The Big Lent Walk as part of almsgiving.

We want the children to know and understand that they can have moral responsibility to help others, no matter how big or small the gesture. As well as educating the children to understand the importance of global poverty and the impact they can have to make a difference, The Big Lent Walk was a way of showing them that they are part of a wider global community, working together to fight poverty and sharing their Christian values of helping others. The children were moved by the recent earthquake in Turkey-Syria and wanted to do something to help the people affected by it. As CAFOD is a member of the Disaster Emergency Committee (DEC), which responded to the earthquake, The Big Lent Walk was the perfect opportunity for our school community to help others.



At the beginning of the challenge, a representative from CAFOD led our launch assembly to engage and excite the children. We then started our Big Lent Walk by taking the whole school outside and spent time altogether: walking, skipping, running, hopscotching, you name it! It was lovely to see all of the children so excited about making a difference from our youngest to oldest children. Following this, each class spent time each week outdoors; either on the field or on the playground increasing their distance with each step. We thought 200km per child may be quite challenging so opted for 200km per class, but most classes exceeded this distance!

Each class achieved their goal of 200km in forty days and as a school we raised a total of £385.

"It was great fun as everyone was involved and came together to meet the challenge."

"We got to do it with our friends which was great fun!"

"It was really enjoyable to be outdoor with my friends and help CAFOD at the same time."

Sporting Success at St Cuthbert's Catholic High School

Ryan Proud, Year 12 Pupil

Triumph through Teamwork - a Story of Sporting Success at St Cuthbert's

2022/23 Season Preview

The 2022/23 season for sport was an enthralling experience for all involved at St Cuthbert's. From the lower school right up to Year 11, there have been successes across the board. A whole host of silverware was realistically achievable this season, with a lot of potential behind the 'boys in burgundy', including a football 'Invincibles' team carrying on from their success in Year 10 ('pushing for glory' in the words of school football coach Mr Cheema.) This was alongside a young Year 7 team, taking their first steps into secondary school football at St Cuthbert's with great success. As well as our footballing achievements, we are proud to witness the growth of sport more widely throughout the school, and the major success of the co-curricular programme to enrich pupils with an education within and beyond the classroom.

Co-Curricular at St Cuthbert's

In the words of PE teacher Mr Hogg, the lunchtime co-curricular programme has "once again been a major success for the school" and "has provided a range of different sporting opportunities". This drive for co-curricular opportunity expresses the desire to equip pupils at St Cuthbert's with skills separate from the school curriculum, instilling our school's four key values of competence, conscience, compassion and commitment.

Key clubs include the highly successful dodgeball team, with our Year 7-8 team being established as part of the Newcastle City Schools League in the 2023-24 academic year. 2023 also saw the return of the fitness suite for our Year 10 and 11 students at



lunchtimes, which saw this club turn from a humble twice-a-week event to four days a week with 10-15 students attending and inventing their own programmes and workouts on self-researched knowledge.

The "Cuthbert's Galacticos" Year 11 story

The 2022/23 season saw the return of one of our most promising footballing sides in St Cuthbert's history, heading into the 2022/23 season on the back of an incredible invincible season in Year 10. The sights were subsequently set on the U16 ESFA National Cup by the team and coach Mr Adams, one of the most coveted prizes in school football.



The Year 11 team beat schools from North Tyneside, County Durham, Redcar and all across the North East and saw them gain their place in the sixth round of the cup, the furthest a St Cuthbert's team has gone in the past 10 years. This was an incredible achievement and history was made for this extremely talented group. A convincing 3-0 win against Beckett School of Nottingham would see the boys secure their place in the semi-final.

The months prior to the National Cup semi-final saw the team pull off an amazing 7-2 second half turnaround from 2-1 down to retain the City Cup won in the previous invincible season, a hard-fought game where the team showed the determination to carry on under pressure. After this convincing victory, the team looked forward to their next game: the stage was set for an incredible semi-final in the National Cup against southern team Samuel Whitbread Academy. An enthralling, aggressive pressing game saw the St Cuthbert's team fight until the very end and they were very unfortunate to be knocked out of the cup 2-1 by a well organised Samuel Whitbread team. Our very own 'Galacticos' team collected a vast amount of silverware in their time at St Cuthbert's, from Year 7 to 11, including their treble winning Year 10 season and National Cup semi-final. In the words of coach Mr Adams, "We wish the boys all the best in their future and can only hope they continue to play football for many more years to come".

'La Masia' Year 7s 'en' St Cuthbert's

Following in the footsteps of our 'Galacticos' Year 11, the energetic and coordinated Year 7 football team have been moving from strength to strength in recent months throughout the 2022/23 season, under the guidance of coach Mr Ruscoe. The most recent victory for the team was a comfortable 3-1 win against local team Benfield in the County Cup final, usually a close-fought and engaging fixture between the sides for any neutral spectators over previous years. This secured the first piece of silverware for this team with such huge potential. Mr Ruscoe instils teamwork and communication amongst his players, who are a naturally gifted group of individuals when coming together as a team, playing some exciting football. The team has a record of 14 wins and 2 losses over the course of the season, an impeccable record for their first season in secondary school football. As the team moves from strength to strength,



they should be incredibly proud of themselves as they look to make history and win silverware for St Cuthbert's over the coming years.

Rugby & Basketball at St Cuthbert's

This year's rugby team has benefitted from external coaching from Newcastle Falcons and Mr Manfredi, an amazing opportunity for all involved to learn more from professionals of the game. With this help, the Year 11 rugby team managed to progress to the quarter finals of the County Cup, another great achievement for a St Cuthbert's team.

In terms of basketball this year, an external Newcastle Eagles coaching team has been providing high quality coaching which has seen the Year 7-8 team competing in the Junior NBA Playoffs this year, a very exciting prospect for the teams. This year's Year 11 basketball team finished second in the Newcastle City League and this subsequently qualified the team to represent the city in the Newcastle Tyne and Wear Games which was hosted at the Newcastle Eagles Vertu Motors Arena: a great chance for the boys to play on such an amazing court and create some long-lasting memories.

Overall, sport in 2022/23 for St Cuthbert's has been a great success. The triumphs of all our sports teams, as well as the growth of co-curricular clubs, has been a testament to all the staff and students involved.



School makes the local press: Pupils at St Bede's Catholic Primary School in Bedlington have created a Reflection Garden in memory of a former governor

A group of pupils, Mini Vinnies, have helped create a garden affectionately known as the The Reflection Garden within their school grounds. It is a space where children and adults can reflect upon past, present and future. "It can be a prayer space for children, and it can also be a place of growth," said Mrs Worrall, Headteacher.

The idea, which was developed by the father of two pupils, includes areas for each year group to plant and maintain. Designed to be a space for reflection the garden also features a memorial plaque to Joan Riley, who was a governor at the school.

Along with her role as a governor Mrs Riley also taught at St Bede's when her children were young, saw her four grandchildren attend the school and was parishioner of St

Bede's Church. Mrs Worrall said she "was key to the school's development when it first transitioned from a First school to a Primary school in 2010 and she is a huge miss to all who loved her, including the St Bede's community".

Mrs Riley's granddaughter who helped fit the memorial plaque said, it is a place that "helps us remember important people like my Grandma Joan". Mrs Riley sadly passed away in September 2020.



You can read the full article at www.chroniclive.co.uk/news/north-east-news/st-bedes-bedlington-school-garden-27042644. The school is looking forward to a simple blessing service with Fr Peter Stott in the coming weeks.

School makes the local press with their fundraising activities for North East Hearts with Goals



Penelope Jobling, a pupil at St Bede's Catholic Primary School in Denton Burn, who carries a portable defibrillator, raised £2600 with her classmates earlier this year.

Penelope has a serious heart condition, catecholaminergic polymorphic ventricular tachycardia (CPVT), which means that she needs constant access to a defibrillator.

St Bede's have their own defibrillator, but Penelope also carries around a smaller portable defibrillator wherever she goes. The money was raised through a sponsored walk, which involved children walking one mile (equivalent to 20 laps of the KS2 yard) for the older children or walking ½ a mile [equivalent to 10 laps of the KS2 yard] over the course of a week.

The money was donated to North East Hearts with Goals through their programme Heart Save Homes and will be used to purchase a portable defibrillator to give to another family whose child needs one. The defibrillator will have the school's badge displayed on it and it will be a wonderful reminder that the children of St Bede's have yet again put their 'Faith in action'.

You can more about the Penelope and her fundraising here: www.chroniclive.co.uk/news/north-east-news/scotswood-girl-rare-heart-condition-26441090.



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