



Our Lady of Walsingham Catholic Trust

NEWSLETTER

Issue 11 - December 2023

We have now entered a most special and precious time of the year. Advent marks the beginning of the spiritual year for our church, and it is observed in the four Sundays before Christmas Day. Spiritually, it is a celebration of the earthly birth of Jesus over 2000 years ago, but it is also a preparation and anticipation of the second coming of Christ our Lord.



In *Christus Vivit*, *Writing to Young People and to the Entire People of God*, Pope Francis starts by saying that:

“Christ is alive! He is our hope, and in a wonderful way he brings youth to our world, and everything he touches becomes youth, new, full of life. The very first words, then, that I would like to say to every-young Christian are these: Christ is alive and he wants you to be alive!”

Christus Vivit is a wonderful exploration of youth, energy and wisdom. The writings are full of the excitement and opportunities that our youth have in front of them. We also hear of the importance that our surroundings and environment have on young people, “the community has an important role in the accompaniment of young people; it should feel collectively responsible for accepting, motivating, encouraging and challenging them. All should regard young people with understanding, appreciation and affection, and avoid constantly judging them or demanding of them a perfection beyond their years. When intergenerational relationships exist, a collective memory is present in communities, as each generation takes up the teachings of its predecessors and in turn bequeaths a legacy to its successors. In this way, they provide frames of reference for firmly establishing a new society. As the old saying goes: “If the young had knowledge and the old strength, there would be nothing they could not accomplish”.



Christ at the Centre,

Children at the Heart



www.ourladyofwalsingham.co.uk



Our Catholic schools must continue to be rooted in Gospel values and centred at the heart of the communities we serve. This is something we cannot do in isolation, but in a genuine partnership with family, friends and the wider community.

The Directors of the Trust and I wish you all a very peaceful and enjoyable Christmas.

Flavio Vettese

Richard Stevenson - OLOW Chief Operating Officer

As the new Chief Operating Officer for the Trust I can't believe how quickly my first few weeks have gone and indeed how rapidly the end of term is approaching; the festive season will be upon us before we know it.



I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all the members of staff I've interacted with so far for the warm welcome they have given me.

I've now visited every school in the Trust and indeed the proposed next addition to our family. At each school it's clear to see the common thread running through the organisation but at the same time the individuality that gives each a distinct personality.

As the Trust continues to grow my aim is to develop the central services to further support the teaching and learning activities, whilst protecting the character and culture of our local schools.

In any organisational journey there are bumps in the road, I'm confident having met a number of staff and Governors that we have the skills, knowledge and desire to overcome these and by working together can navigate what is proving to be a challenging environment.

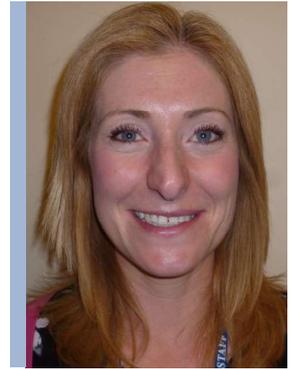
I hope you all have a great Christmas and a relaxing break, I'll see you in the New Year.



Jo Berry - Headteacher St Mary's, Ipswich & OLOW Primary Teaching & Learning Lead



This year I have been given the opportunity to work for the central Trust team as a Primary Teaching and Learning lead; one of the projects I am working on is focused on further developing the cross Trust Teaching and Learning Networks. At the moment there are curriculum groups for English, Maths, RE, Computing, Special Educational Needs and Early Years. In the Spring term this will be expanded to include a new network for Phonics and Early Reading. All groups have had their initial, termly meeting and participants agree that these are extremely beneficial for sharing good practice and supporting the important role of subject leaders across our partnership schools.



OLOWMAT Teaching and Learning Networks facilitate professional dialogue and collaborative working resulting in improved educational opportunities for all our pupils. The networks draw staff from both schools across the Trust and those in the wider Diocese who are still to join us. A key priority for this year is the advancement of subject leadership, to support subject leaders to feel more confident and be able to demonstrate the impact of their role on improving standards of teaching and learning in their own schools.

Both the Maths and SEND Networks are working with Trust commissioned educational consultants this year who know our schools well from previous joint working projects. We are pleased to be able to benefit from their specialist experience in learning, teaching and curriculum development.

Working across Primary and High Schools enables us to develop a deeper understanding of our student's curriculum journey from 5 to 18. In the Maths Network there was rich discussion and debate from Primary and High School subject leads around the teaching of times tables, mathematical vocabulary and assessment.

While most of our network meetings are held online to minimise travel time, the Early Years group gathered together in person at St Pancras Catholic Primary. We were able to find out about their recent successful Ofsted and hear more about how they give their children a positive start in Reception. Meeting in person gives our Early Years colleagues an opportunity to share practical resources and explore each school's indoor and outdoor learning environments. They began collaborating to develop a Trust promise for indoor and outdoor provision across our schools.

I am looking forward to building on the great start we have made this year and we look forward to developing further curriculum focused links across our schools in 2024.

Clare Clark - OLOW Primary Improvement Lead



Teaching and learning in Religious Education is the fundamental core curriculum area in Trust schools: underpinned by ring-fenced allocated teaching time and prioritisation of allocation of resources. Since the start of this academic year, schools have been transitioning to the curriculum outlined in the newly published national RE Directory 'To Know You More Clearly'. (<https://catholiceducation.org.uk/schools/religious-education>)



The curriculum directory sets out the purpose of RE education for our youngest learners in Early Years Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) to Year 9 and features a programme of study with a model curriculum, corresponding roughly to the six half-terms of the school year. The objective of the curriculum is to develop all our pupils to be religiously literate and engaged, with the knowledge, understanding and skills to reflect spiritually, think ethically and theologically, and recognise the demands of religious commitment in their everyday lives.

In his preface to the Directory, Rt Rev Marcus Stock, Bishop of Leeds and Chairman of the Catholic Education Service (CES) writes *"As well as seeking to assist parents with the education and religious formation of their children, Catholic schools strive also to be of service to society. Religious education plays its part in this endeavour by enabling all pupils to be confident and secure in their religious faith and knowledgeable and respectful of other religions, and so play a crucial role in building a cohesive society. This new edition of the Religious Education Directory strives to embody these inspiring objectives."*

Primaries have approached the challenge of the successful introduction of the new curriculum by working closely with our partner Catholic MAT, St John the Baptist and the RC Diocese of East Anglia to establish an RE Directory working party. This group, along with the well-established Trust RE Teaching and Learning Network group, has developed a detailed curriculum implementation plan to support schools in a phased and gradual transition to this significant project.

Feedback from Early Years staff, who began to trial the new model in September 2023, is that they have welcomed the guidance given in developing new materials for delivery of the curriculum's expectations. This has included opportunities to work collaboratively to plan units of work, share resources, evaluate learning and, as non-specialist teachers of RE, continue to be supported in developing the required explicit subject knowledge. As a Trust we are able to work closely together to ensure the successful delivery of the curriculum in order to further enrich RE teaching, prayer and liturgy and the wider Catholic life of our schools.



St Mary's Primary, Ipswich

Mini Vinnies

Mini Vinnies are a fundraising committee who work together to help those in need within their school and local community. Mini Vinnies introduces children to social justice issues and to living faith through action as part of the St Vincent de Paul Society.

To help spread some Christmas cheer, St Mary's are supporting the Lighthouse charity by collecting Christmas gifts/Christmas boxes for children who may experience a different Christmas this year. Here are some of the donations we have received already!



Solar Panels

We were very lucky to find out more about the solar panels that we have at school. James Veness from Solar for Schools spoke to us about the amount of energy our school is creating from the solar panels. As well as a whole school assembly James also ran a workshop for Year 4 and 6 where he showed us how solar panels could even make small toys work! Can you believe that in the Summer we make more energy than what we use!



Schools Remembrance Service

On Friday 11th November Year 6 took part in the School's Remembrance Service at Ipswich Cemetery. We joined our local schools to reflect on war and remember the fallen soldiers. Reverend Tom Mumford spoke to us about the importance of going forward as people of peace. We heard from The Mayor who reflected on memories of the war from her grandfather. We laid wreaths and crosses and the service was closed with a blessing. Year 6 were wonderful ambassadors for our school.



St Pancras Primary, Ipswich

Treetops Room

This half term, we have developed a nurture room which is called the 'Treetops' room - a calming, tranquil space, themed around nature. We felt passionately that children needed a space for emotional regulation and an environment where they could best access the therapies that we offer in school such, as trauma-informed based interventions, drawing and talking and Lego therapy. This room is the product of a team effort, created and designed with input from children, parents and staff. We hope that the transformation of this little space will have a big impact on our school community.



Diocesan Singing Programme

We have been participating in the Diocesan Singing programme, and Naomi Macleod-Jones has been working with a number of classes in both Key Stage One and Key Stage Two on a Thursday morning. Naomi has been helping prepare the Key Stage One children for their Nativity performance. This year we are performing 'Born this night' which includes Makaton signing. The children are thoroughly enjoying and gaining a great deal from these sessions.



Here are some of the children's thoughts about their singing sessions:

"I enjoy singing songs with each other, which bonds us together to make a beautiful sound or song. Mrs MJ has really helped me with my singing." Norah

"I like all the fun warm up games and the lessons have helped me because I feel braver about people hearing me sing now." Mila

"The sessions make me want to practise singing at home and get better and better." Evie

"I like playing the singing games with a partner, the sessions are really fun."
Adomas

We are Loving and kind,

We Pray and we Play



St Louis Academy, Newmarket

Artsmark Silver Award

St Louis are extremely proud to achieve a prestigious Artsmark Silver Award after two years of commitment to developing art and drama in school that supports improved writing skills. Children have experienced live theatre, working with playwrights and seen their scripts performed live by professional actors, had theatre workshops in school, worked with professional artists and immersed themselves in arts experiences opened up to school over the two years of committed focus. School is especially grateful to Mrs Baldwin, Phase Leader for EYFS, for her commitment and drive in helping us to achieve this award.

Advent Preparations

St Louis Advent preparations have seen much community support this year. Our PTA kindly gifted all classes with battery operated Advent candles for their wreaths to safely remind children of the weeks leading up to Christmas.

St Louis Mini Vinnies have relaunched with the support of parishioners Kathleen Das and Ann Sague. They are making fifty six Christmas cards for elderly residents in the nearby Brampton Lodge Care home and some of them



are members of the church choir who

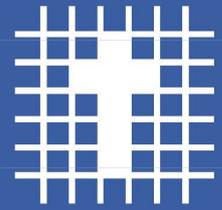


sang for residents of the home on 4th December 2023. Mini Vinnies are supporting Cafod fundraising by serving midweek milkshakes and hot chocolates during Advent.

St Louis and All Saints Church of England School in Newmarket are beginning a programme of joint Advent prayers. Our Year 6 school chaplains are visiting All Saints School to lead an Advent Assembly and their Year 6 prayer leaders are coming to St Louis to lead an assembly for us. We recognise our shared ambitions to live out the Gospel Values in our schools, serving the local and wider world community. We are also beginning joint fundraising with All Saints to sponsor a Ugandan child through school, paying for their education, boarding and food.

Finally, St Louis School Choir joined Paddocks School at Tattershalls in Newmarket on the 13th December to sing Carols in support of the town's Racing Welfare Charity. Racing Welfare offers professional guidance and practical help to all the racing community – including stud, stable, and racecourse staff, alongside those working in associated professions – whose dedication is vital for the wellbeing of racing. Many parents of children in our school have connections with racing in our town.

Loving to Learn



The Season of Advent

Advent has begun, at St Laurence and there are lots of things happening to celebrate this special season of the church.

Our teachers began by creating their class Advent wreaths with foliage donated by our school community. There was so much lovely material that our R.E. Lead, Mrs. Harvey, was able to create a wreath for our altar and one for the front of school.



EYFS and KS1 have begun their rehearsals for this year's nativity play, 'The Inn Crowd' and they are sounding glorious. The stage has been set, by the EYFS and KS1 staff team and we can't wait for the performances, later this month.

Our Mini Vinnies are conducting a campaign based on the Reverse Advent Calendar. They have asked our school community to donate something instead of receiving something, during this time. We have had many, generous donations which we will send to our parish St. Vincent de Paul group. They will use our donations to create hampers for those experiencing hard times, this winter.

St. Laurence Y3/4 choir have been learning Christmas carols with Mrs. McLeod-Jones as part of the Diocesan Singing Programme as have the rest of the school. They will perform these carols during our carol service, scheduled for the last day of term.

*The entire team at St Laurence wishes
all of you the most holy and happy
Christmas.*



St Felix Ministry Team Pilgrimage to Clare Priory

In November the Ministry team accompanied by Mrs Dodds and Father John visited Clare Priory for a frosty pilgrimage. We had the opportunity to find out all about the history of the Augustinians and Clare Priory from Father George who is a friar and the parish priest. Founded in 1248, Clare Priory was the first house of the Augustinian Friars in England and is now a parish and retreat centre run by the Friars and the Priory community.



The ministry team had a chance to explore their mission and create living reminders. The day finished with a prayer service led by Father John and with live music from Chris Gent. Our governor, Frances Massey, joined us in her role as a parishioner at Clare.

The children said they had thoroughly enjoyed the experience: Sophia liked finding out about the old church and how the new church was created from it; Daniel enjoyed the ghost story; Kuba found the old altar in the ruins fascinating and Beatrice's favourite part was the prayer service together.

James summed up the spiritual experience of the day when he said, "I liked the old church because it made me feel like I was in the presence of the Holy Spirit."

Reverse Advent Calendar

During Advent, three of our pupil leader groups have come together to organise a reverse Advent Calendar. Their aim is to give some joy to others to recognise the joy they experience opening their advent calendars in the run up to Christmas.

Florence in Year 5 has been a keen gatherer of the donations.

"I wanted to do it because some people don't have enough to eat and this way they can have a family celebration at Christmas. The food bank is more important than my playtime."

Savannah, house captain for St Francis said,

"Seeing the donations makes me feel that what we're doing is meaningful."

Remembrance

On Saturday 11th November 3 students in Year 7 represented the school in laying a wreath on Angel Hill before attending a Remembrance Exhibition at St Mary's Church, Bury St Edmunds.

Lisa Marie Ferino, Adam Herd and Sadie Nolan were selected by members of the Royal British Legion after submitting their work as part of a Remembrance Day project in school. They made some thoughtful pieces that remember those who died in war and conflict, with a particular focus on those who served in the air force. They were awarded certificates in recognition of their work by serving members of the Royal Airforce. I would like to thank them for their work but also the brilliant job they did in representing the school.



KS3 & The BAE Systems Roadshow

On Monday 13th November, students in Year 7 and 8 were inspired, informed and challenged by the BAE Systems STEM Roadshow. Representing BAE Systems, The RAF and The Royal Navy, Matt, Fran and Ele took students on an educational journey from the Depth of the Oceans to



Outer Space, revealing the latest engineering technology in these areas and testing selected students' communication skills.

The latter included the assembly of a satellite on a tripod by one student wearing a space helmet and gloves, whilst following the instructions given on the opposite side of the room by a second student! We all learned something (or rather, a great deal) from the Roadshow team and have invited them back next year with a new and exciting theme (to be revealed!).

*I have come that they may have life,
and have it to the full*





St Benedict's Sixth Form, Bury St Edmunds

London Trip

On Friday 1st December 135 sixth form students went to London for their Christmas trip. It was a crisp, cold morning when the coaches left Bennies at 9:15 and luckily the rain held off for the day. The group was dropped at the embankment where they split up and went to either the National Portrait Gallery with Mr Richmond and Mr Murphy, The British Museum with Mrs Senior and Mrs Kennedy or the Faraday Museum with Mr Spiller and Mrs Slater. After a couple of hours soaking up the history and culture the groups reconvened in Covent Garden where they dispersed with their friends to enjoy the twinkly lights and do a spot of Christmas shopping. Everyone reconvened at 5.30pm for the return journey. On behalf of all the staff on the trip I would like to commend the students on their exemplary behaviour which made the day a pleasure to be on.



A Level Religious Studies Trip to Cambridge University

On Tuesday 5th December, both Year 12 and Year 13 religious studies classes embarked on a trip to Cambridge University to experience a variety of lectures relating to Philosophy, Ethics and Religion from different professors and experts. This masterclass consisted of five, fifty-minute lectures including an enticing debate between the ideologies of Immanuel Kant and Jeremy Bentham; the winner being Immanuel Kant whereby Julie Arliss proposed a compelling argument which was able to convince the majority. From ethical theories, liberation theology, and the free will debate, we were able to finish the experience with an insightful lecture from the prestigious Daphne Hampson on a rather controversial topic over the gender of Christ and whether it matters in Christianity. All students, though cautious about arriving late in fear of not being allowed in, thoroughly enjoyed listening to someone so involved and educated in Theology. Will Blewitt summed up the day by saying "the trip was a fantastic opportunity to expand my knowledge of theology while considering the views of different experts at the top of their field." Both year groups highly benefitted from this valuable experience, giving the students a deeper understanding of Religious Studies.



UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

*I have come that they may have life,
and have it to the full*





Year 9 Walsingham Retreat

As part of Our Lady of Walsingham Trust, we were delighted to take 67 of our Year 9 students to a three day residential at the National Shrine at Walsingham, North Norfolk.



Historically, Walsingham was one of the four main Catholic pilgrimage sites around Europe. It was a special residential trip for our young people, who loved being in a totally contrasting setting to Ipswich, focussing their days on reflection and spiritual development. We stayed at the Catholic base of Elham House, and were treated to an amazing stay in the form of wonderful accommodation, food and hospitality. It was such a great opportunity for the young people to be away from home, and have the independence that they all learnt so much from.

The young people had the opportunity to visit the shrines and take part in worship activities. We were joined by the diocese Ignite team who worked with our young people to help them grow and develop their spiritual and theological understanding, as well as take part in evening games, recreation, and quizzes.

Staff and students thoroughly enjoyed the three days, and left renewed (if not a bit tired!). So many students commented that the trip could have been longer!

We look forward to taking Year 8 there in the Summer for the same experience.



Learning... Respecting... Caring...



Open Evening

I'm pleased to say that our annual Sixth Form open evening was a resounding success! We had a huge amount of visitors that were very interested in joining us next September. A massive thank you to all involved in this event.

World Mental Health Day

Well done to all that were involved with raising funds for Young Minds as part of their HelloYellow campaign, together you raised an amazing £50 that will go towards helping the charity continue their important work.

#HelloYellow

YOUNG MINDS



PSHE Day

We had our first PSHE day on Wednesday. A brilliant day exploring important issues to do with relationships and consent, learning metacognitive and revision techniques, and taking care of healthy lifestyles with the sports afternoon.

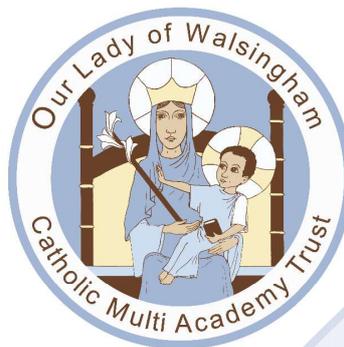
The team at St Alban's Sixth Form wish all of you a merry Christmas.

Learning... Respecting... Caring...





*Merry Christmas
and a
Happy New Year*



*Christ at the Centre,
Children at the Heart*



www.ourladyofwalsingham.co.uk