NEWSLETTER

Issue 21 - October 2026

Welcome to the 2026/27 Trust Newsletter

Dear Parents, Carers, Staff and Friends of our Trust,

As we begin a new academic year, I would like to offer a warm welcome to all members of our Trust community. It has been a particularly positive start to the year as St Joseph's Primary, Sudbury and St Edmund's Primary, Bury St Edmunds officially joined the Trust on 1st September, completing the formation of the Our Lady of Walsingham Catholic Multi Academy Trust.

This provides an opportunity for reflection on all that we have achieved since the Trust was originally established in 2016. Standards of education are strong with pupils in Trust schools, as a group, achieving highly in examination outcomes compared to their national peers. Just as importantly, Catholic life in all schools flourishes, with a rich range of opportunities for pupils and staff to live out, as well as learn about, our Catholic faith. All Trust schools are graded as good or outstanding by both Ofsted and the Catholic Schools Inspectorate reflecting the skills, talents and commitment of staff and pupils alike.

However we must now look to the future as we continue to work closely with St John the Baptist Catholic Multi Academy Trust progressing towards the planned formal merger in September 2027. Now fully formed as a Trust, we take this next step with firm foundations, confidence and hope, reflecting the Bishop's vision for a stronger, more sustainable Catholic education system across the Diocese.

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EAST ANGLIA

www.rcdea.org.uk

By bringing both trusts together, we aim to strengthen collaboration, share expertise and resources, and create even greater opportunities for pupils, staff and school communities, whilst preserving the unique identity and character of each school. Throughout the merger process and beyond, we remain committed to ensuring that every individual pupil is known, loved and challenged to become the person God calls them to be.

Christ at the Centre,
Children at the Heart



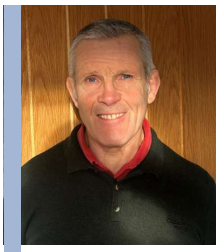
It was a privilege for pupils and colleagues from across our schools to join the recent Diocesan 50th anniversary Schools' Mass at the Cathedral in Norwich and giving thanks for five decades of faith, service and educational excellence across East Anglia. Bishop Peter spoke about the importance of generosity, graciousness and gratitude in our daily lives in following the Diocesan motto of Ministerio Christi Addictus." The celebration reminded us that our schools are such a key part of the wider Catholic community and committed to sharing the Good News of the Gospel.

Pupils representing all Trust schools who contributed to the Mass in many ways including as altar servers, readers and singers in the combined Trust choir all did a wonderful job.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership

Clare Clark, Chief Executive Officer.

Autumn Report



It is quite astonishing how quickly the time flies within the academic environment, The Summer term ended ,the Autumn began and here we are almost on top of half term.

Before the Summer term ended I had the pleasure of visiting a number of our schools, mainly in the West of the trust. I was received warmly at each school and was impressed with the enthusiasm of all school leaders and their staff. I was also struck by how the Catholic Life is so evident in all the schools visited. We are blessed with a rich diversity of cultures among our staff and pupils. It is my intention to visit the remaining schools before the Autumn term ends, an experience I look forward to.

At the beginning of September we welcomed the Federation of St Edmund and St Joseph into the trust. This is quite a significant land mark and signals the completion of the trust and of The Bishop's vision to have all our schools as part of the trust.

With the trusts merger now less than a year away planning is gathering at pace. The "shadow Board" are due to meet in early December for a second time. The shadow trust board is a joint board of both OLOW and St John The Baptists trust board . A Trust Governance Consultation document has been forwarded to LGBs to gather their thoughts on what governance looks like now and how it will look in the future of a merged trust.

Christ at the Centre,

Children at the Heart

Recently I met with LGB chairs during our regular Chairs Forum. I continue to be amazed by their commitment to and passion for the schools they provide governance for. It was particularly pleasing to hear reports of attainment and improvements in facilities.

It seems that no matter who I speak with the trusts merge is always referred to in a positive manner and viewed as a real opportunity. There will of course be challenges along the way and I am confident that our staff and personnel will overcome any challenges to deliver the best outcome.

Andrew Herlihy, OLOW Chair of Directors.

Eucharistic Congress

This September, St Mark's was privileged to play a part in the historic Ipswich Eucharistic Congress, a special celebration of faith held as part of the Diocese of East Anglia's Golden Jubilee Year. Inspired by the theme, Mary, Woman of the Eucharist, our pupils enjoyed a week of prayer, reflection, creativity and worship as they explored what it means to place Christ at the centre of our lives.



Throughout the week, children across the school took part in a range of activities linked to Adoremus and Eucharistic devotion. They created beautiful artwork inspired by adoration and the Real Presence of Jesus, made their own rosary beads and spent time learning about and praying the Rosary together.

Our pupils joined children from the other Catholic primary schools in Ipswich for a special Mass at St Alban's Catholic High School, celebrating our shared faith and the strong links between our schools. We were also delighted to welcome Mugeni Sumba, who spoke to the children about Catholic Social Teaching and our call to serve others. Through photographs and stories from his pilgrimage to El Salvador, he brought the life and witness of Saint Oscar Romero to life, inspiring both pupils and staff.

The week was further enriched by a visit from the Ignite Team, who led prayer, worship and reflection sessions, helping children to explore the Eucharist in engaging and meaningful ways. Inspired by the Gospel story of the Wedding at Cana, pupils wrote and shared their own poetry, reflecting on Mary's example of faith and trust. They also wrote personal letters to Jesus, expressing their prayers, gratitude and hopes with thoughtfulness and sincerity.

The week culminated on Sunday when a number of our pupils and families attended the Principal Mass at the Ipswich Corn Exchange. It was wonderful to gather with Catholics from across the Diocese as Mass was celebrated by Bishop Peter

Collins. Seeing so many people united in faith was a powerful reminder of the strength of our Catholic community.



Following Mass, pupils proudly joined the Eucharistic Procession through the streets of Ipswich with the Blessed Sacrament. Alongside parishioners, clergy and fellow Catholic school pupils, they processed to Lady Lane, where the shrine of Our Lady of Grace once stood, praying the Rosary together on the journey. Our children were excellent ambassadors for St Mark's, looking smart in their uniforms and proudly carrying the school banner.

The Ipswich Eucharistic Congress has been a memorable and faith-filled experience for our school community. We are incredibly proud of the way our pupils embraced every opportunity throughout the week. Through prayer, worship, creativity and service, they have deepened their understanding of the Eucharist and lived out the Congress theme in a meaningful way.

Rosie Birch, Head of School and Jade Block, Executive Principal, St Marks Primary

Ordination to the Diaconate



Saturday, 18 July was a wonderful day of celebration for Paul Gilbert, Chaplain at St Alban's High School, Ipswich, as he was ordained as a deacon at St John the Baptist Cathedral, Norwich.

Paul was joined by his family, friends, parishioners and colleagues from St Alban's High School as he took this important step in his journey of faith. The cathedral was filled with people who have supported and encouraged him over many years, making it a joyful and memorable occasion.

Paul's ordination came after four years of study, prayer and formation at St Mary's University in Twickenham. Alongside his busy role as chaplain, he dedicated many evenings and weekends to learning more about his faith and preparing for this important ministry. Reaching this milestone is a testament to his hard work, commitment and trust in God's call.

The central moment of the ordination then came when Bishop Peter laid his hands on Paul's head. This ancient sign, which has been part of ordinations since the earliest days of the Church, marked Paul's ordination as a deacon and his commitment to serving God's people. It was a powerful and prayerful moment for all gathered. As a deacon, Paul can now baptise, preach the Gospel, bless people and religious items, assist the priest during Mass and lead Eucharistic Adoration. A deacon is

called to serve others, share God's love and help people grow closer to Christ.



For the students and staff of St Alban's, this occasion is especially meaningful because Paul has been able to bring together his work in education with his ministry in the Church. Every day, he supports young people on their faith journey, leads prayer for staff and students, organises retreats and special events, and is a caring presence for anyone who needs encouragement or guidance.

His ordination means that he can now serve the school community in even more ways. Paul sees his role as both chaplain and deacon as an opportunity to help young people discover God's love and understand that faith can be part of everyday life.

Reflecting on the day, Paul spoke about the great joy that comes from serving God and sharing the Gospel with others. For him, becoming a deacon is not simply about taking on new responsibilities. It is about answering God's call and helping to make the face of Christ known through acts of kindness, service, prayer and compassion.

The ordination ceremony was a moving reminder that God continues to call people to serve Him in different ways. It was also a celebration of the many people who have supported Paul throughout his journey.

For the students and staff at St Alban's High School, Paul's journey is a wonderful example of faith in action. His dedication shows the importance of using our gifts to help others and responding generously when God calls us to serve. His story reminds us that with faith, perseverance and support from those around us, great things are possible.

Paul Gilbert, School Chaplain.

Foundation Governor Recruitment

If you are interested in becoming a school governor or would like to find out more about the fantastic impact that you could make within our Trust schools then please visit the Trust website by scanning the following QR code.Please share with anyone who is interested in learning more about the positive impact of good governance on pupils' life chances and might be interested in joining one of our school boards.

https://www.ourladyofwalsingham.co.uk/governorrecruitment

St Alban's Hosts First Joint Mass for Ipswich Catholic Schools



On Wednesday 9th September, St Alban's Catholic High School was privileged to host a special Mass bringing together all the Catholic schools from across Ipswich as part of the week-long celebrations for the Eucharistic Congress taking place in the town.

The celebration marked a significant moment for Catholic education in Ipswich as pupils from St Mary's Primary School, St Pancras Primary School, and St Mark's Primary School joined students from Year 7 and Year 12 at St Alban's for a shared act of worship. It was the first time that all the Catholic schools in Ipswich had gathered for one Mass, making the occasion a powerful expression of faith, unity and community.

The Mass also formed part of the celebrations marking the 50th Jubilee of the Diocese of East Anglia, which is taking place alongside this year's Eucharistic Congress. As the Diocese gives thanks for fifty years of faith, mission and service, the gathering of young people from across Ipswich's Catholic schools provided a fitting sign of the vibrancy of the Church today and the important role that Catholic education continues to play in forming future generations.

Mass was celebrated by Fr Luke Goymour, the principal celebrant, with Fr Michael Smith of Felixstowe concelebrating. Students participated prayerfully throughout the liturgy, joining together in hymns, readings and prayers that reflected the central role of the Eucharist in Catholic life.

In his homily, Fr Luke spoke about the importance of the Eucharist and why it remains at the heart of the Catholic faith. Addressing the young people gathered before him, he encouraged them to recognise the gift they receive in the Mass.

"The Eucharist is where we meet Jesus in a unique and personal way," Fr Luke said. "Every time we come to Mass, we are invited to draw closer to Him and to be strengthened by His love."

Reflecting on the significance of the Eucharistic Congress, he reminded students that the Eucharist is not simply a tradition of the Church but the foundation of Christian life.

"The Eucharist is central to who we are as Catholics. It is the source of our strength, our unity and our mission. Through the Eucharist, Christ gathers us together and sends us out to be His presence in the world."

Fr Luke also highlighted the significance of seeing pupils from different schools worshipping together.

"Today is a wonderful sign of what the Church is meant to be. Although you come from different schools and parishes, you are united by the same faith and by the same Lord whom we receive in the Eucharist."

His message resonated strongly with the theme of the Congress, which seeks to deepen understanding and devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. The sight of children and young people from across Ipswich praying side by side offered a visible witness to the unity that the Eucharist creates within the Church.

The Mass formed an important part of the wider programme of events taking place throughout the week. Across Ipswich, schools, parishes and parishioners have been participating in celebrations, prayer gatherings and opportunities for reflection centred on the gift of the Eucharist. The gathering at St Alban's ensured that young people played a central role in these celebrations.

For many students, the occasion provided a valuable opportunity to experience being part of the wider Catholic community beyond their own school. The event highlighted the strong relationships that exist between Catholic schools across Ipswich and demonstrated the shared commitment to nurturing faith in young people.

The success of the celebration was made possible through the efforts of clergy, staff and students who worked together to prepare the liturgy and welcome visitors from across the town. Their dedication helped create a joyful and prayerful atmosphere fitting for such a historic occasion.

As the first Mass to bring together all of Ipswich's Catholic schools, the celebration will be remembered as an important milestone. It was a fitting contribution to the Eucharistic Congress and a powerful reminder that the Eucharist remains the source and summit of Catholic life. Above all, it was a joyful witness to the unity, faith and hope shared by the Catholic school communities of Ipswich.

500 Words Writing Challenge

This year, the Trust held its 500 Words Writing Challenge, a creative writing competition open to Year 6 and Year 7 pupils across our schools. Inspired by the intriguing prompt, “It Appeared Overnight,” pupils produced an impressive range of imaginative and engaging stories, showcasing creativity, originality and a love of writing.

The competition aimed to celebrate pupil voice, encourage creativity and support a smooth transition in writing expectations between primary and secondary education. We were delighted by the quality of entries received, with pupils interpreting the prompt in wonderfully in a range of diverse ways.

Primary Winners

First Place - Evie (St Alban’s Catholic Primary School)

Evie’s story captivated readers with its imaginative opening, suspenseful atmosphere and compelling narrative. The mysterious appearance of a door in her bedroom leads the reader into a magical world filled with danger and intrigue.

Second Place -Matthew (St Mark’s Catholic Primary School)

Matthew impressed the readers with an ambitious and original story about a mysterious vine infection that overtakes the world. His imaginative world-building, strong sense of tension and action-packed plot created a gripping read.

Third Place -Norah (St Pancras Catholic Primary School)

Norah’s poetic interpretation of the prompt stood out for its creativity and effective use of repetition. She captured the mystery and uncertainty surrounding a mysterious book that appeared overnight.

Highly Commended

Elisheba (St Laurence Catholic Primary School) created an exciting fantasy adventure featuring a magical door, unicorns and a quest to save a hidden world.

Millie (St Edmund’s Catholic Primary School) produced a suspenseful story filled with mystery and intrigue, drawing readers into an unexpected adventure that began with the appearance of a mysterious van.

Patrick (St Alban’s Catholic Primary School) demonstrated excellent suspense and atmosphere in his chilling tale centred around an ancient legend and a terrifying recurring nightmare.

Secondary Winners

We were equally impressed by the outstanding entries submitted by pupils from St Benedict's Catholic School, whose stories demonstrated imagination, ambition and excellent storytelling skills.

First Place -Barnaby

Barnaby impressed the judges with a thrilling adventure story that followed a farmer's pursuit of a mysterious creature whose gigantic footprints appeared overnight. Full of humour, suspense and imaginative detail, the story kept readers engaged throughout.

Second Place - Elijah

Elijah captivated readers with a powerful narrative exploring survival, sacrifice and hope in a world overrun by the undead.

Third Place-Bobby

Bobby delighted readers with a festive adventure in which Father Christmas recruits a young helper to recover stolen fairy dust and save Christmas. His story combined originality, humour and warmth, making it a memorable and entertaining read.

The panel was particularly impressed by the quality of writing across both phases. From magical worlds and mysterious doors to epic adventures, creativity, imagination and a real love of storytelling was demonstrated.

We would like to congratulate all of our winners, highly commended pupils and every young writer who entered the competition. The standard of entries has been truly exceptional and reflects the talent and enthusiasm for writing that exists across our Trust schools.

We look forward to celebrating more outstanding creative writing in the future and continuing to nurture the next generation of authors across our Trust.

Jo Berry, OLOW Primary Improvement Lead.



Misogyny and the Manosphere, What do Parents Need to Know?



With releases such as Netflix's Louis Theroux- Inside the Manosphere and Adolescence bringing further attention and discussion to the increase in misogyny and its prevalence online in the 'Manosphere', we take a look at what exactly parents and carers need to be aware of, and how to have important conversations with children at home.

What is the Manosphere?

The Manosphere is an umbrella term for online communities that promote harmful advice and attitudes centred around men's struggles, but with an underlying current of misogyny. These communities convey narrow and rigid ideas about what it means to be a 'real man'; often portraying stereotypes of material wealth, physical appearance and dominance over women. Another key belief is the false narrative that feminism and gender equality have come at the expense of men's rights.

The Manosphere targets young male audiences on social media, podcasts and gaming communities. Many young boys start out researching relatable topics such as fitness or self-improvement but are drawn to content from the Manosphere due to its appealing nature and seemingly relatable content. Outrage and engagement with Manosphere content often fuels its amplification and attracts more attention, causing a vicious cycle seeping into algorithms.

Whilst most boys and young men are resilient, curious and sensible when navigating the online world, harmful content creators appeal to those who often feel lonely, or who are searching for a sense of belonging, so it is important to know the signs to look out for, and how to have important conversations with your child.

Key terminology to look out for:

Red Pill - The idea that men need to 'wake up' and see that women have created an unfair system which is working against them.

Men Going Their Own Way (MGTOW) - Suggests that society is rigged against men and that men should avoid all women and mainstream society all together.

Pick-Up Artists - Glamourises a lifestyle of wealth and coercion to attract women and exert dominance over them.

Femoids (female humanoid organisms) - A derogatory term used to suggest that women are both less than men, and less than human.

What can parents and carers do?

You do not need to know every acronym to look out for. Instead, find opportunities for connection and conversation with your child.

Find time for conversation- Young people who feel grounded in society are less likely to look for online validation. Find time for regular, low-pressure conversations where you show an interest in their interests, what they do online and how they feel.

Build critical thinking- encourage your child to consider different points of view without judgement or opinion. Help them to apply this knowledge to what they see online.

Don't shut them down- When young people present with harmful views, it can be easy to want to shut them down quickly, or be angry at them for what they are saying. This actually further reinforces the perception that society does not want to listen to them, making them feel more isolated and pushes them further into harmful communities where they feel validation rather than isolation. Instead, listen to your young person and encourage them to find alternative, healthy role models. Reassure them that asking for support is courageous.

All OLOW schools cover aspects of toxic masculinity, healthy relationships, equality and consent as part of our PSHE programme. More support for parents and carers can be found here:

https://www.esafety.gov.au/newsroom/blogs/the-manosphere-what-it-is-and-what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know

https://www.highspeedtraining.co.uk/hub/what-is-the-manosphere/

https://www.esafety.gov.au/newsroom/blogs/the-manosphere-what-it-is-and-what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know

Aliyah Harries, Designated Safeguarding Lead, St Alban's, High School.

Schools Join East Anglian Diocese Celebrations

Schools across Our Lady of Walsingham (OLOW) Catholic Multi-Academy Trust are proud to be taking part in celebrations marking this significant occasion within the Diocese of East Anglia.

Students, staff and local communities from across the Trust have come together in prayer, worship and a range of celebratory activities that reflect the strong Catholic identity and shared mission of our schools. These celebrations provide an opportunity to give thanks for the invaluable contribution of Catholic education across the Diocese, while recognising the faith, achievements and community spirit that unite our schools.



As part of the diocesan celebrations, schools across the OLOW Trust worked collaboratively to create a commemorative book showcasing the unique character, history and achievements of each school, whilst highlighting their strong connection to the Diocese of East Anglia. The publication celebrates the rich diversity of our school communities and the common values, shared faith and collective sense of belonging that bind us together as one Catholic family. We will be presenting a copy to Bishop Peter Collins on behalf of the OLOW Trust.

The spirit of collaboration was further demonstrated on Wednesday 9 September, when St Alban's Catholic High School hosted a Mass as part of the Eucharistic Congress celebrations. The Mass brought together pupils and staff from St Mark's, St Mary's and St Pancras Catholic primary schools, providing an opportunity for the school communities to gather in faith and fellowship. The celebration was led by Fr Luke Goymour as principal celebrant and served as a powerful expression of the unity, shared purpose and Catholic mission that connect our family of schools.

Through these celebrations, OLOW Trust schools continue to strengthen their commitment to nurturing faith, excellence and service, ensuring that every child is supported to flourish academically, spiritually and personally. Together, we celebrate not only our individual school communities, but also our collective contribution to the mission of Catholic education within the Diocese of East Anglia.

Simon Corless, Headteacher, St Alban's High School.

Trip to Walsingham



Our Year 6 children recently visited Walsingham, where they took part in a shared religious and spiritual experience. While they were there, the children received a sprinkling, visited the Slipper Chapel and walked the Holy Mile. Each part of the visit gave them an opportunity to engage with Walsingham as a holy place.

Together, these experiences made the visit a very holy experience for our children.

The sprinkling, the time spent in the Slipper Chapel and the walk along the Holy Mile formed a meaningful part of their spiritual development and helped them to take part in religious practice as a group. It was a special experience for Year 6 and one that the St Mary's community can celebrate with them.

Ignite Team Visit St Mary's



The Ignite team visited St Mary's, giving our school community an opportunity to listen to Scripture together. We then learnt some new songs, complete with fun actions, creating a lively and accessible way for everyone to participate through music and movement.

Alongside the singing and actions, we reflected on the Eucharistic Congress and considered why it is important to the Church. The visit brought together listening, learning, singing and thoughtful reflection, offering our school community a shared opportunity to engage with Scripture and the life of the Church.



St Mark's Primary, Ipswich

Residentials, Partnerships and Wellbeing

It has been a very exciting and enriching start to the new term, with the children already enjoying a wide range of opportunities to learn, grow and challenge themselves.



Our Year 6 pupils began the year with an unforgettable residential visit to PGL at Bawdsey Manor. Blessed with wonderful weather throughout the week, the children embraced every challenge with enthusiasm and determination. From adventurous activities to team-building experiences, they stepped outside their comfort zones, developed resilience and created lasting memories, with many asking if they could stay an extra week! Although they returned understandably tired, they gained so much from the experience, and the residential also provided a fantastic opportunity for Mrs Reid to get to know her new class in a fun and supportive environment.



We have also strengthened our partnership with St Alban's High School through the continuation of Sports Leader sessions with Mr Deacon and his the PE department. St Alban's sports leaders have been working with our pupils to develop their sporting skills, build confidence and encourage participation in physical activity. The programme is an excellent way for pupils from both schools to learn and develop and it's a joy to continue to provide such enriching opportunities across different key stages.

Supporting pupils' wellbeing remains a key priority, and we were delighted to welcome Suffolk MIND back for their final pupil session. Through engaging activities and discussions, pupils have developed a greater understanding of mental wellbeing and learned practical strategies to help look after their own emotional health. The programme has provided valuable tools that will continue to support our children both in and beyond the classroom.

The term has certainly begun with energy, enthusiasm and a wealth of opportunities, and we look forward to all that the rest of the year will bring.

St Pancras Primary, Ipswich

Digital Trail Maker Project



During the summer term, Year 4 had an incredible opportunity to take part in the Digital Trail Maker Project!

Our exciting journey began with a series of workshops exploring maps of Victorian Ipswich, discovering notable historical figures born in our town and learning all about blue plaques. From there, the class voted on our top three historical figures, holding a debate to choose the most important person: George Henry Alexander Clowes.

George Henry Alexander Clowes was chosen because of his vital role in the mass production of insulin, which helped diabetes management worldwide.

Working hard as a class, we wrote a script imagining what George would have said about his groundbreaking work. Then, we used AI tools to help generate and recreate what we imagined he looked like.



All our hard work is now featured in a brand-new digital trail around central Ipswich!

In September, Mrs Crowther and two Year 5 pupils were invited to the official press launch of the trail. The children spoke brilliantly with the Mayor, a local MP and community members, explaining why we chose George and showcasing a sneak preview of the trail.

Try the Trail Yourself!

There are 8 points to visit around central Ipswich. Simply head to a location, scan the QR code, and a historical figure will pop up on your device to explain who they are and what they achieved!



It is a completely free and educational experience. If you haven't already, we highly recommend heading out into town to try the trail and see if you can spot George Henry Alexander Clowes.

Harvest Festival Liturgy



On Friday 2nd October, we held our annual Harvest Festival Liturgy led by Fr John Morrill. The generosity shown by our school community in supporting this year's Harvest Festival food donations has been truly heart-warming. This year, we filled well over two shopping trolleys of donations. The donations and proceeds were collected for the Open the Door food bank and they will make a genuine difference to families within our local community who may need extra support.

It was also wonderful to welcome so many parents, carers and family members to our Harvest liturgy, we had quadruple the amount in attendance this year than we had last year. Their presence and support made the occasion even more meaningful for the children, and we are grateful for the part they played in helping them reflect on the values of gratitude, kindness and generosity.

Cross-Country Success



On the 29th September, our cross-country runners took part in a fantastic event at The Links Golf Club, Newmarket. Competing against 53 teams, our children demonstrated tremendous determination, resilience and sporting spirit as they tackled the challenging 1.5-mile course.

We are incredibly proud to announce that our A Team finished in 1st place, an outstanding achievement against such strong competition. Our B Team also performed brilliantly, securing 10th place overall.

The event was a wonderful opportunity for our pupils to showcase their endurance, teamwork and commitment. Every runner represented the school exceptionally well, supporting one another throughout the race and displaying excellent sportsmanship.

Parish Day



On Education Sunday St Laurence Catholic primary school hosted our parish day. The afternoon was filled with social events including a BBQ, shared food hall, games and a talent show. We were joined by Bishop Peter and other members of the clergy who have a long association with both the parish and school for a very special open-air mass. Bishop Peter gave the final blessing as the sun was setting on a glorious day.

Reception Welcome Liturgy



Our new Reception class has been formally welcomed into our school community with their own Welcome Liturgy, each of the children were joined by their Year 6 buddy and received a blessing from Father Robin, our parish priest. The children created their own portraits to adorn the back drop to the altar and added their names and handprints to a special altar cloth that will next be used for their leavers mass at the end of Year 6.

National Poetry Day

On 1st October the whole school celebrated National Poetry Day with an opportunity for children to dress up and recite their favourite poems as well as creating their own poetry during the day. Our Year 4 class, Doves, took the opportunity to visit our school forest and use the environment to inspire their own poetry. Shared below is a poem from that autumnal morning in the forest.

I never noticed that tree over there
I never noticed the autumn bush
I never noticed those bugs
I never noticed the fox den
I never noticed how wonderful the world is. M M (age 8)

Formula 1 Comes to St Joseph's

Mr Webb, our caretaker, was busy over the holidays building our very own St Joseph's racing car. It has been a popular addition to the play facilities and it has been lovely to see the children using it co-operatively and creatively. There has been lots of discussion about where they are going and the adventures they are having on their way. Thank you to Mr Webb for his hard work and the personalised number plates which really make it special.



Year 6 Orchestra Workshop

Year 6 were visited by the Prometheus Orchestra, a professional orchestra based in East Anglia that give workshops alongside their performances. After being introduced to the different families of the orchestra by clarinet, oboe, cello, and French horn players, the musicians helped the children to come up with some of their own rhythms, and they composed melodies inspired by Bach who would use the letters of his name as note patterns, including a beautiful rendition on cello of 'cabbage'! The musicians also performed over a dozen pieces of music including plenty of favourites from films and the classical world. The workshop was fully funded by grants the orchestra receive, and we are very grateful for their wonderful visit.



Diocesan Mass



The Year 6 children joined pupils from primary and secondary schools across the Diocese for a special Mass to mark the beginning of the new school year. It was a wonderful celebration of faith and community, bringing together young people from many different schools. This year, our children were honoured to be chosen as part of the choir, giving them front-row seats for this special occasion. They sang beautifully and represented our school with great pride and reverence. The Mass reminded us that we belong to one large family of faith and that we are all brothers and sisters in Christ.

New Chaplaincy Team



Pictured are some members of our new Chaplaincy Team, who confidently shared readings, psalms and prayers during the Harvest Mass. Throughout the year, they will play an important role in leading prayers within their classes and across the school. The Harvest Mass was led by Father John, and he reminded us that we all have a part to play in reducing waste and caring for the environment. The children listened attentively, responded thoughtfully and sang beautifully. We collected food for REACH our local foodbank and money for CAFOD, which was collected by Jane Crone our local CAFOD representative when she came into school this week to do an assembly.

The St Felix Way

This autumn term, we relaunched our behaviour expectations through The St Felix Way, which is built around three key principles: showing respect, building our community and recognising our potential. This renewed focus has encouraged pupils to take on enhanced leadership roles, so they are actively participating in school life and contributing positively to our community.

New Extra Curricular Clubs

St Alban's Primary School has launched three exciting new after-school clubs for children this term.



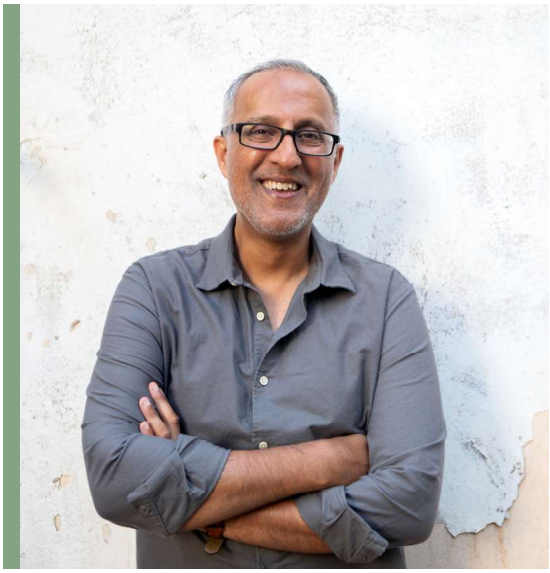
To help develop strategy, focus, and logical thinking, the school has introduced a brand-new Chess Club led by Mr Daniel Orwin, taking place every Tuesday from 3:30 to 4:30. The children are enjoying the extra opportunities to learn different skills and use their problem-solving skills. The children that have attended the new club have said that they are "improving their game play", week by week and "really enjoying playing against peers and friends". In the initial weeks, Mr Orwin will be revisiting the basic chess rules and skills necessary for all players to understand. As the term progresses, the group will be moving onto learning and refining tactical ideas.

In addition to mastering the chessboard, pupils can look forward to active ends to their weeks with a newly established Cricket Club led by Mr Steve Farrukh running every Friday. Mr Farrukh is a very experienced cricket coach who has made contacts with lots of cricket networks within Cambridge. This offers a fantastic opportunity to build teamwork skills, coordination, and a love for the game. Both clubs have already seen a wonderful turnout from enthusiastic young participants eager to learn new skills. The children have explained how they "enjoy being active on a Friday afternoon" following the end of a "busy week at school".

Finally, the school has started work with an external art leader, Yu-Ching Chiu, to provide additional opportunities for children to develop their art skills. This club is run on a Monday and offers provision for both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 children.

Everyone at St Alban's are looking forward to seeing how these clubs evolve and the seeing the children enjoy the new extra curricular provision provided.

Year 7 Author Visit of Iqbal Hussain



We were delighted to welcome the author of The Night I Borrowed Time, Iqbal Hussain, as part of the Ipswich Schools Festival of Books, for an engaging and inspiring visit. He shared fascinating insights into the writing process, the origins of the novel's time-travelling adventure, and the challenges of bringing characters and stories to life. Year 7 students gained a deeper appreciation of the creative process and proved themselves to be highly imaginative themselves. The interactive session encouraged thoughtful questions and left many feeling motivated and inspired. It was a memorable and enjoyable experience that sparked imaginations across the year group.

A big thank you to Dial Lane Books and the Ipswich Book Festival (2-4 October) for enabling this author visit to take place.

Diocesan Schools Mass



We were invited to attend the Diocese of East Anglia Schools Mass on Friday 25 September. It was also an opportunity to celebrate the 50th Anniversary since the diocese was formed back in 1976. Bishop Peter was our celebrant and our representatives from St Alban's did us all proud!

Deacon Paul and our Year 11 students, Noah and Eden were also involved in the Mass.

Inductions and Goodbyes



It has been a busy month at St Albans Sixth Form. Year 12 have made a fantastic start to their key stage 5 journey, building on the amazing culture set by our Year 13 cohort. A special shout-out to the Sixth Form tutor team who have been extremely busy conducting one-to-one meetings, completing University references and facilitating our Fun Friday enrichment program.

In this first week of October, we have a workshop with the Royal Literacy Fund, Wear it Yellow Day, our first football fixture of the year against Suffolk New College and a Sixth Form Coffee Morning fundraiser. Thank you to all the year 12 and 13 students who supported us at are well attended sixth form open evening as well as at the post 16 events at other local schools. It was also fantastic to be supported by so many former sixth formers helping to promote our provision.



We are excited to announce our partnership with Sport Sense for 2027, beginning a new chapter in our Sixth Form and reigniting the longstanding tradition of basketball at St Alban's. Our Basketball Academy will aim to bring competitive sport alongside teambuilding and holistic growth to our community.

Well done to all of our Year 13 students who were working hard on their personal statements, and a special shout out to our two Oxbridge applicants and our potential veterinary medicine student. Their hard work and determination will no doubt pay off. Good luck to all of you in your November PPEs.

We have some exciting upcoming events this term, including Culture Day, the Essex University Fair and our Sixth Form reward trip to jump in Ipswich.

International Languages Day

What a brilliant celebration of languages and cultures we had! A huge thank you to all students and staff who contributed to making International Languages Day such a success.
It was wonderful to see so many students proudly wearing their beautiful cultural costumes, showcasing the rich diversity within our school community.

A special well done goes to all our talented bakers. We received 25 amazing cakes, muffins and biscuits, representing a wonderful variety of countries and cultures. Some of the delicious treats included: Gâteau au chocolat (France), Scottish biscuits, Irish Guinness chocolate cake, Dutch apple cake, Swedish chocolate cake, Mézes Krémes (Hungarian honey cram cake), Zimbabwe flag Bannana Bread, Sernik (Polish baked cheesecake) ,Chec cu mere (Romanian apple cake), Cozonac (Romanian sweet bread), Cupcakes, Flags biscuits and many more wonderful creations! The standard was incredibly high, making it very difficult for our judges to choose favourites. Therefore, five names were drawn from a hat to select our final top five cakes.

Year 10 Art - Cambridge Trip



62 Year 10 Art and Textiles Students explored Cambridge Museums this week as part of their GCSE coursework focused on the theme of 'Structures'.

We started the day visiting the Museum of Zoology or the Sedgewick Museum of Earth sciences, where we found ammonites, fossils, amazing crystal formations and an array of skeletons from hippo to bushpig and armadillo. Students worked with care and attention, focusing on making beautiful drawings from the objects they found. A break outside in glorious sunshine for lunch was well received, and students took time amidst the architecture of Cambridge University, to ready themselves for the small walk to the Fitzwilliam Museum where we spent the afternoon.



Here we found treasures from across the ages, amidst beautiful floral paintings, impressionist works and contemporary paintings by renowned artist Frank Bowling.

It was a delight to see the students conduct themselves with such maturity throughout the day. Thank you for being such a wonderful group Year 10!

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

A Day at the Heart of British Democracy



On Tuesday 15 September, twelve Year 12 Humanities students set off bright and early – meeting at school for a 7:00am departure – for an exciting Politics trip to London. Spirits were high from the start, with games on the school minibus helping the journey to Redbridge station fly by. From there, the group hopped on the London Underground, heading straight for Westminster.

The first stop was the Supreme Court, housed in the former Middlesex County Hall. After navigating airport-style security, the students enjoyed a guided tour of the building, including all three courtrooms. In Court 1, they even took the seats of the justices to stage a light-hearted mock trial for a classmate who had arrived two minutes late that morning. Despite a spirited defence, the "accused" was found guilty and sentenced – with much laughter – to six or seven years in the Tower of London.

From there, the group strolled up Whitehall, passing the Cenotaph and several government departments, before peering through the gates of Downing Street in the hope of spotting Andy Burnham. Along the way, they paused at the Banqueting House – the site of King Charles I's execution in 1649 – and admired the mounted guards at Horse Guards Parade. A quick detour to Trafalgar Square was followed by a whistle-stop tour of the Tudor and Stuart gallery in the National Portrait Gallery, before breaking for lunch.

The afternoon was spent exploring the Palace of Westminster. While the House of Lords chamber was closed for the swearing-in of Sadiq Khan as Lord Khan of Tooting, students were able to visit the public gallery of the House of Commons. There, they witnessed a lively debate sparked by an 'Urgent Question' on the definition of "single malt whisky"!

The day concluded with an engaging workshop on elections, leaving students with a deeper understanding of how our democracy functions – and plenty of stories to share.

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