



"Growing Together for Life"

The Newman Catholic Collegiate Summer 2023 newsletter



INTRODUCTION FROM OUR CSEL, IAN BEARDMORE



I am delighted to introduce the first of what will become a termly collegiate newsletter. I want to let you know about the great work that is taking place in all our schools. Each of our schools is special and, in this newsletter, you will see some of the great things that happen across the collegiate.

This year St Peter's had their CSI (Catholic Schools Inspectorate) inspection.

They are the first school in our collegiate to have such an inspection. St Peter's has been graded as outstanding in all areas. This is a great tribute to the amazing work that is taking place in the school and the tremendous support of the children and families. As with all schools across the collegiate, Jesus is at the centre of all that they do and we all know we are all, 'Growing together for life.'

I must also congratulate St Wilfrid's who retained their Good status in their latest Ofsted inspection. The inspector was very complementary about the school and can see that the school is moving swiftly to becoming outstanding. It was moving to hear the many positive comments from parents, and it was lovely to hear that, "Leaders have high aspirations for all pupils at St Wilfrid's. The school motto, 'love one another as I have loved you', is at the heart of leaders' work."

Congratulations to Our Lady and St Benedict's who were graded good at CSI. We now look forward to welcoming Ofsted so we can show all the great work that takes place at this school.

It was also great to see the children at St John's finally move into their new school. Many years of planning have finally been realised. This has given the school state of the art facilities that will serve the Catholic community in Kidsgrove,

for years to come. We have also had success at St George and St Martin by securing over £265,000 pounds to create a new playground. We are delighted that we continue to develop our facilities to ensure our children have the very best. Thank you to all for supporting our next project to build a new chapel at St Margaret Ward. Once built this will be at the heart of our collegiate and a place that all will discover more about God.

I am most proud of the wonderful transition work that we have been doing. This year St Margaret Ward has been oversubscribed with first choice applications meaning that, some children, who put St Margaret Ward down as their first choice, have not been allocated a place. I am pleased that all collegiate children that put St Margaret Ward as their first choice and applied on time, have secured their place in Year 7 for September. I am keen to stress the importance of putting St Margaret Ward down as first choice if you wish for your child to continue their outstanding education in the collegiate. The popularity of the school will mean it is becoming more difficult to get in. To support our collegiate families, next year we are trialling a minibus service that means all year 7 children have the option of getting on a minibus from one of our feeder primary schools to travel to St Margaret Ward. If this proves popular, we hope to increase the capacity to all year groups.

Thank you to the vast majority of parents for their support in ensuring that pupils attend school on time and regularly. We have seen an improvement in attendance in all our schools. Special mention to St Margaret Ward who have received an accolade from the DfE for having attendance in the top 25% of similar school nationally. Please continue to ensure that pupils attend school regularly and on time.

This half term I had the privilege of leading an assembly in all our Primary schools. Each school has worked with Mr Corrigan, our senior lay chaplain to produce our collegiate prayer. This prayer can be seen on display in all our schools.

I should like to pass on my sincere thanks to all Directors and Governors across the collegiate. We are blessed to have such committed volunteers who set the vision and values of our collegiate and schools. Special thanks to both Mrs Gill Hodgkinson and Mr Simon Edge. Both have served as Chairs of Governors at St Joseph's, St Mary's and Our Lady of Grace for a number of years. Both have been real servants of our communities and supported their schools to succeed. I wish them well as they retire from

their roles as Governors. I thank all the staff across the collegiate for their work. Special thanks to those who are leaving the collegiate for all their wonderful service securing an excellent catholic education for all our children. We especially think of Mrs Teresa Hollins who retires from her post of Vice Principal at St George and St Martin.

It was with great sadness that we heard about the death of Bishop David McGough. Bishop David held the collegiate very close to his heart and always remembered us in his prayers. He was an inspiration to us all confirming many of our past and present students. The prayers of our collegiate remain with him and his family.

I do hope you enjoy reading about our wonderful schools - I am proud of each one of them. I do hope your children will be participating in the many summer schools we have running across the collegiate. I wish you all a wonderful summer and thank you for your ongoing support.

God Bless
Mr Ian Beardmore
Catholic Senior Executive Leader

The Newman Catholic Collegiate Prayer

Loving God in Heaven above,
Guide us all with your kindness and love,
Help us to be a shining light,
With the teachings of Jesus always in sight.

We want to be of service to others
Caring and loving as sisters and brothers.
Help us to grow together, know you better,
In love, life and friendship.

Amen

St John Henry Newman, **pray for us.**

YEAR 4 AT OUR LADY AND SAINT BENEDICT CATHOLIC ACADEMY HAVE A 'FEEL GOOD FIELDTRIP' TO MANCHESTER

OLSB Year 4 class got the chance to travel on a train, a tram and to visit the Lowry Gallery in Manchester.

It was an early start, departing from Stoke station where they were met by a chaperone. The children were so excited to start their adventure and to travel on a train - many of the children have never been on a train before.

As they got closer to Manchester the children were amazed to see a famous football stadium from the train windows.

Leaving the train at Manchester Piccadilly they boarded the Metro link tram. The children found it amusing that the tram ran through the middle of the city past cars and people shopping. They were immersed in the busy hustle and bustle in the city and noticed the tall Deansgate tower which is an actual skyscraper!

The children arrived at Salford Quays a unique waterfront location adjacent to Media City UK, home to the BBC and ITV. The children couldn't believe it was where the news and some of their television programmes were filmed and produced. It is also the home to the Lowry Arts Centre.

Once inside the Centre the children attended a workshop delivered by a professional artist to further explore the work of L S Lowry. During the workshop the artist took the children into the galleries to see the artworks and then they had the opportunity to create a response to what they



had seen. The theme was around the industrial scenes, landscapes and portraits within LS Lowry's work. The children explored perspective, proportions and creative responses.

As it was a sunny day, they ate lunch outside, and had a chance to explore the Manchester Ship Canal and the historic site of the Manchester Docks where they saw canal barges and some ducks!

As the day came to an end, it was back to Manchester Piccadilly station to board the train for the return journey home.

This was all funded and made possible via Avanti Trains and their Feel Good Field Trip programme. It was a fantastic opportunity for the children allowing them to experience a real train and tram journey, to visit an art gallery and see the world beyond their own home location. They have returned to school full of enthusiasm and have

not stopped talking about the 'best day ever!' We'd like to express our gratitude to Avanti Trains and thank them for the fantastic opportunity that they provided for the children.

This is just one of a whole host of trips and enrichment activities provided for the children at OLSB. They try to provide the children with as many opportunities as possible to build cultural capital and to see and experience life beyond the local area of Abbey Hulton.

After the trip they were delighted to receive a message commending the children on their wonderful manners, and polite and courteous attitudes. We're so proud to read that they were wonderful ambassadors of Our Lady and Saint Benedict Catholic Academy.



Here's what Avanti Train Manager, Jack Smith said:

"I work for Avanti West Coast, and I'm based at Manchester Piccadilly. My role is a Train Manager and I'm delighted to let you know that whilst working a service from Manchester to London today, I had the absolute pleasure of conveying some of your year 4 pupils to Stoke-on-Trent."

"Can I please congratulate you and your staff on how well-mannered and pleasant your pupils are. They told me all about their trip to Manchester and I couldn't believe they addressed me as Sir and even raised their hands when waiting to talk to me. Also on arrival into Stoke not one pupil left so much as a sweet wrapper behind. They truly are a credit to yourself and your school."

ST MARGARET WARD STUDENTS VISIT TO LOURDES

A group of Sixth Form students and staff travelled to Lourdes via coach with the purpose of serving sick pilgrims. The week consisted of working in the Accueil, a hospital which accommodated 30 pilgrims of a variety of ages with different needs and abilities and escorting pilgrims to Mass and other sacramental services.

Read the full story and see photos >>
Lourdes 2023 | St Margaret Ward



OPENING THE DOORS FOR PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS

After just four months of preparation, in April almost 50 students at St Margaret Ward Catholic Academy put on three performances of Alice in Wonderland.

The after-school drama team, comprised of 41 students and guided by Miss O'Neill, had been practicing and preparing for the performances in their own time.

Included in the production team were two technicians who specialised in the lighting and sound and an aspiring makeup artist who did the make up for the cast.

Take a look at the photos and read more >> Opening our doors for prospective students | St Margaret Ward

ST MARGARET WARD CATHOLIC ACADEMY STOKE READS VIP EVENT

Mrs Mills and Mrs Holdcroft from St. Margaret Ward Catholic Academy were invited to attend a VIP Stoke Reads event to speak about the work that the school have been doing to promote reading.

They had the opportunity to talk at length with Jonathan Douglas CBE Chief Executive of The National Literacy Trust and Darren Henley Chief Executive of the Arts Council.

Find out more >> Stoke Reads VIP event - 6 June 2023 | St Margaret Ward

ST MARGARET WARD TAKE PART IN FIRST TECH CHALLENGE WEST MIDLANDS

In March 2023, St Margaret Ward's brand new 'First Tech Challenge' team attended RAF Cosford for the West Midlands Regional Tournament. Together they built a robot, but more importantly they built a diverse community of friends across years 7 to 11. At the event they made the semi-finals and were runners up for the Motivate Award. Half of the awards at the event were enthusiastically presented by volunteers from St Margaret Ward, and the group were publicly commended from the very start of the event for their enthusiasm and engagement.

Since then, the group found out that they have made it to the First Tech Challenge National Championship at the University of Cambridge and the school has applied for and been given the award of joint 'FIRST Champion Organisation' for the West Midlands. Together, the school and the team will be promoting a love of STEM across not just the school but also their feeder schools and the wider community within Stoke-on-Trent. They expect to host First Tech Challenge competitions at the school in the new school year and are excited to support new teams in beginning their journey into the competition.

The team, rebranded as 'VNATION', have been hard at work every day preparing for the national competition on 23rd June. The mottos of the competition are 'More than Robots' and 'Gracious Professionalism', which the group have truly embraced. They have communicated with teams across the country to share advice with them, have held Teams meetings with technology companies to practice their interview, wrote letters to companies within Stoke-on-Trent and have attended enrichment sessions to support teachers and younger students. They have also begun to run their very own STEM sessions for the primary feeder schools, beginning with St Wilfrid's on 14th June. Together the group planned and created resources for two robotics sessions and delivered these to Year 5 without any adult input.

They have also written to FIRST to volunteer to be student ambassadors to VIP guests at the event in Cambridge.

The St Margaret Ward Way aims to inspire students to become good people at their core, and it is a delight to see these students fully embrace this philosophy. In the First Tech Challenge, VNATION have shown that they are not just excellent students, but exceptional members of their community overall.

Congratulations and thank you to:

Y11 – Misbah, Momina, Amina, Khadija, Zumar

Y10 – Angela, Oscar, Michael

Y9 – Talya

Y7 – Farhan, Sumaiyah, Isabelle, Acacia, Grace, Sophie

Onto the awards ceremony:

The team won the runners up award for the **Motivate Award**, which celebrates students who support each other, work well as a team, and promote STEM to their local communities and those around them!

And then they won the **Design Award MAIN PRIZE!** They were commended for having a huge age range but still managing to utilise everyone's skills in the best possible way, for considering effective branding and design for their team, for producing an excellent engineering portfolio to explain this rationale, creating a themed 3D printed beacon, continuing their theme through the pit and for coming up with an unusual design idea for the aesthetic of the robot, with a circuit pattern.

They are excited for everyone to get to see their awards and are very happy, hyperactive and proud of themselves. Their season finishes here, and they are now planning how they're going to win the biggest award (the Inspire Award) next year!

ST MARY'S STUDENT REIGNS SUPREME IN MP'S CORONATION CARD CONTEST!

Ready for the King's coronation, local Member of Parliament, Jonathan Gullis, organised an exciting event that captured the imagination of primary aged children throughout the local area. The King's coronation card competition invited all schools in the community to take part. The prospect of creating cards fit for a king ignited the creativity of the students in the school, and they received a number of fabulous entries. Each submission had the potential to be a wonderful card worthy of being sent to the King himself, making the selection process an incredibly challenging task.

After careful consideration, Jonathan took the responsibility of choosing the submissions that would be shared for a vote. The anticipation grew as the public voting phase began. Jonathan shared his favourite entries, received from across his constituency, on a social media platform, inviting the public to cast their votes. The atmosphere was filled with excitement and tension as we waited to see which designs would emerge as the winners.

Following several weeks of intense voting, the results became clear, and we're proud to announce that one of St Mary's very own year 4 pupils, Max Page, was among the two winners. Jonathan was going to send Max's card to King Charles as a token of congratulations on his coronation. This achievement is truly exceptional, and it has brought immense pride to the school community.

To celebrate Max's wonderful accomplishment, Jonathan visited St Mary's on Monday 5th June, to personally present him with an award. It was a great moment, highlighting Max's talent and hard work. We are so proud of Max and his achievement!

The King's coronation card competition not only sparked a wave of creativity within the school but also brought together the wider community

in a spirit of celebration. The event reminded us of the power of art and imagination, and the ability of young minds to create something truly special. Max's success serves as an inspiration to all students, showing them that their talent and hard work can lead to remarkable achievements.



Max, Year 4, St Mary's Catholic Academy, Norton-le-Moors



OUR LADY OF GRACE TAKES ON THE CAPITAL: THE SCHOOL COUNCIL EXPLORES FROM PARLIAMENT TO PANORAMIC VIEWS

On Tuesday 6th June, the School Council representatives from Our Lady of Grace School embarked on an exciting journey to London. This special trip included children from year 2 to 6, along with other members of year 6.

The adventure began bright and early, departing from Stoke station to ensure they arrived at Parliament in time. The children eagerly awaiting the opportunity to explore and learn about the history of democracy and the functioning of the House of Lords and the House of Commons. The tour provided an immersive experience, captivating the students and igniting their curiosity about the inner workings of British government.

Following the visit to Parliament, they continued to explore by boarding the iconic London Eye. As they ascended, the breath taking views unfolded, offering a panoramic perspective of the city. The children were mesmerised by the landmarks that dotted the skyline.

Then they embarked on a cruise down the River Thames. The scenic journey provided a unique vantage point for the children to learn about the rich history of the landmarks found along the riverbanks. The children were amazed by the ancient buildings steeped in stories and the modern architectural marvels.

As the day drew to a close, they finished their London adventure with a trip to McDonald's, indulging in a well-deserved meal before making their way back to the underground and then train station - bidding farewell to London's bustling streets.



"Do whatever He tells you."

Throughout the day, the children of Our Lady of Grace showcased their exemplary behaviour and enthusiasm, making the experience even more memorable and enjoyable. Their genuine delight and engagement were evident, and it was a pleasure to witness their excitement as they explored the city!



HOW ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC ACADEMY USE SPORT TO ENGAGE WITH THEIR COMMUNITY

The schools in North Stoke Excel Academy SGO area have really embraced the School Games Mark award since it first started. From one application in 2011-12, to 46 in 2018-19 out of a total of 54 schools.

St Joseph's Catholic Academy have been a beacon of good practice since they first applied, aiming for a Silver in the year after the award launched. Their plan was to put together a solid application with an aim to see where they needed to make progress towards Gold. Since their first Gold, they have aimed to maintain and develop those high standards and achieved Platinum in 2019.

The tiered structure of the criteria has been really helpful on their journey. At the start it gave them targets to aim for and provided a pathway to develop their provision to meet Gold. As new questions were added, they used the guidance to ensure their Gold level offer was maintained each year and resulted in a successful Platinum application.

The school recognise how important the PE and Sport Premium funding has been in their development, turning PE into the most heavily funded subject in the school. This funding has been used to ensure the students can access a wide range of opportunities and also ensure that there is a residual benefit to the school. The funding allows the school, as part of a local network of schools, to employ specialist staff to come in once a week to do CPD with their staff which means there is a year-round approach to training. At the start of each year the school conduct a PE skills audit to identify training gaps, and then plan out their CPD requirements for the year based on this information.

The specialists lead the CPD, assist with team teaching, and help to develop high standards with demonstrations / observations / assessments etc. and it has really benefitted the whole staff. There is a much stronger delivery for PE

across the whole school, and wider options for extra-curricular activities. Staff from Port Vale Foundation also come in and do additional CPD. The school make sure they target and use their funding wisely!

Although the school understand that their School Games activity is not the key to solve all the issues they face, there are strong examples of how PE and school sport has had a positive impact across the school community. For some parents over the last 10 years, their only involvement in their child's school life is through sport. For some others, their first involvement with the school was through sport, such is the importance placed on it. The school have found that sport can break down some of the barriers between school and home. Once parents come into school for a sporting event, many become more comfortable in building relationships with the staff. Once those relationships start, it has really helped staff to signpost parents to other aspects of school such as reading at home etc. The staff have used sport to create, improve and maintain stronger parent-school relationships through sport.

The school promote their sport/PE activity on social media which is really popular with parents, and the school try to involve families as much as possible in school life, with sport and PE a great way to engage local families. Parents and carers can come in and participate in events alongside the children, particularly the fitness and fun based events. The school ran an 'active family' event with the specialist PE staff running it, and they invited families to come into school and be part of it. It is about teaching families about activities and games they can play at home, to provide information on food, and nutrition e.g. what is a healthy lunchbox.

Local clubs have been great too, and the school has developed lots of new relationships with local clubs over the last few years. For example, Sandyford Cricket Club came into school to help

in the lead up to the Inter-School competition, and young people from the school are now going to their club to play. It has been really good to see those active club links working again, as re-establishing links with local clubs has been one of the main challenges the school faced in 2021-22. They found some links had broken or became disjointed as some clubs folded / changed personnel, and it is great they are re-emerging. The school also facilitate some local clubs on-site, e.g. table tennis and tennis, as the school has facilities they can use.



ST PETER'S CATHOLIC ACADEMY JUDGED OUTSTANDING!

In March 2023 St Peter's Catholic Academy welcomed two inspectors from the diocese who carried out the Catholic School Inspection. The school was judged Outstanding, in all 3 areas inspected.

Inspectors stated that:

The academy's high-impact mission, 'Together, one family, one community in Christ', is universally understood, cherished, and lived out by the entire community. Consequently, all pupils speak about how they are creations of God, deserving of equal treatment and love.

This sincere belief results in pupils who are exceptionally happy and confident. Because of a prevalent, joyous culture of welcome that embraces this diverse community, pupils show the deepest levels of respect towards one another, speaking of 'differences that don't matter'. The subsequent behaviour of pupils is excellent. God's word is the heartbeat of life at St Peter's. Because of its prominence, pupils are confident in discussing what they learn from Jesus in the Gospels. They aspire to be like Him and emulate His values in their own lives. They especially relish the many opportunities to enact their responsibility to live out the principles of Catholic Social Teaching, for example, by

contributing to the parish foodbank, donating clothes to a local clothing bank, and installing recycling points around the site. Pupils clearly articulate the theology that underpins their actions in assemblies they lead - St Peter's is a vibrant and inclusive culture of welcome extends to families, parishioners, and the wider community.

Governors and leaders clearly articulate the Church's educational mission passionately and zealously. It is fundamental to their work and fuels every aspect; they inspire and energise everybody.

Everyone at the school is extremely proud to be members of the school family and cherish every moment spent within the school.



St Peter's Catholic Academy

ST PETER'S AND ST. WILFRID'S PUPILS CELEBRATE SUCCESS IN WRITING COMPETITION

The school communities are so proud of its children – Mobeen from St Peter's Catholic Academy and Eris Williams from St Wilfrid's Catholic Academy – who were runners up in the Six Towns Stories' Creative Writing Competition. Their work will be showcased in a public exhibition.

The competition organisers said that both their pieces really stood out for creativity, originality, and overall enjoyment for the reader.

They were invited to a special event at the newly opened Tunstall Library on Tuesday 6th June to

celebrate. Parents and the class teachers were there to celebrate their achievement. The event was also attended by Jonathan Douglas CBE, Chief Executive of the National Literacy Trust and the Chief Executive of the Arts Council, Darren Henley.

What a fantastic personal achievement. Well done and congratulations on winning a collection of books for each school in recognition of their achievement.

HERE'S WHAT THE CHILDREN HAD TO SAY:

"When I write stories, I always show my family and no one else really gets to see them but by taking part in the competition I have been able to share my story with other people. I have been writing stories since I was about 5 and it makes me happy, and I get to write down crazy ideas from my imagination. I enjoyed remembering the places that I have been to visit in Stoke on Trent."

Eris Williams (June 2023)

"I enjoyed celebrating our local area and thought of the amazing journeys I go on in Stoke-on-Trent, especially with my dad. When I was waiting to hear who was a finalist, my heart was pounding! I am so proud, my mum, sister and teacher came to watch me receive my certificate. I know now that if you keep on trying and never give up you will achieve your dreams, and it is possible to achieve anything in this world".

Mobeen (June 2023)



St. Peter's Catholic Academy

ST WILFRID'S CELEBRATE THEIR RECENT OFSTED JUDGEMENT

April 2023 St Wilfrid's received their much awaited OFSTED call.

Everyone in the school community were thrilled with the comments in the final report, where the inspector reported his findings from his two day visit to the school.

"Pupils are proud of their school. They know and understand the school's rules of respect for God, respect for self, respect for others and respect for property." One pupil commented, 'They cover everything.'

"Parents and carers are positive about the school". One parent's comment was typical of many when they said their children 'always come home excited, wanting to tell me about their learning'.

The inspector recognised the hard work and changes made in reading and reported, "Reading is a high priority across the school. Books are central to the curriculum. This starts in early years, where there is a clear focus on children's learning of language communication. Staff read to children regularly and explore a range of vocabulary. Staff have enhanced their expertise in early reading".

Children are extremely excited and proud of their new library and already this is showing in their thirst for reading a variety of high quality text. Personal Development was highlighted as a strength of the school where the inspector commented,

Pupils value the opportunity to take on responsibilities, which develops their understanding of being responsible citizens who contribute to society. These include opportunities to be members of the school council, eco council and Catholic life leaders. They also take part in local litter-picking and have met with a local councillor regarding improvements at a local park. As a result, pupils believe they have an important role to play, saying, 'We are making our school a better place.'

The whole school community are proud of the outcome of this rigorous inspection and leaders are committed and looking forward to journeying on to the next grade in the inspection framework ensuring all children continue to benefit from exceptionally high standards of education.



ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST MOVE INTO THEIR NEW SCHOOL BUILDING!

This term St. John the Evangelist has relocated to a stunning, purpose-built school.

Previously the school was split across two sites, 20 minutes' walk apart. The Early Years and Key Stage One pupils previously attended The Avenue based school and Key Stage Two were at the newer Gloucester Road site giving a sense of two separate schools, rather than one. Leaving behind the older, run down site on The Avenue, St John the Evangelist Catholic Academy's cohort have unified at The Gloucester Road location, creating a sense of unity throughout the school.

The pupils have an abundance of new amenities to enjoy, ultimately enhancing their educational experience. The pupils are enjoying the big brand new classrooms, a huge new school hall, amazing views in every direction (overlooking Mow Cop Castle and Jodrell Bank) and an abundance of outdoor space!

Within the building, every classroom has been fitted out with brand new furniture, resources and interactive screens as well as their own accessible toilet blocks.

Pupils can now enjoy lunchtimes together thanks to the new cooking kitchen and huge hall space, which is a vast improvement. Previously, meals were cooked at another school and brought to them, as they didn't have the space. By having their own working kitchen they're able to cook fresh meals on site.

The school is enjoying whole school assemblies and Masses for the first time as the whole school fits comfortably in the large new hall. The size of the hall means parents and parishioners are now invited to school events such as weekly celebration assemblies, class led assemblies, Mass and performances.

They have also held Key Stage tea parties for children and their families to celebrate the King's



Coronation and the PTFA have already held their first school discos.

As part of the new build, trees were planted, complementing the natural beauty of the location. The original steps from the prayer garden have also been preserved while the plants and trees have been redistributed around the school.

The children are making full use of the large playground and the field in all of the sunny weather! Year 6 have also enjoyed a Viking experience day (foraging for their own food and cooking it on fires) in the woodland area.

Combining the two sites enables siblings and relatives to see each other throughout the day and helps parents with drop off and pickups. It's great for the Key Stage Two pupils who can now develop their leadership skills and spend time with the younger children.

This is a very exciting time for St. John's, delivering exceptional education in a more fitting setting. Creating a sense of togetherness as they are finally working as one school together on one site.



ST GEORGE & ST MARTIN ECO CLUB

At the beginning of the year and to support their Live Simply action plan, St George & St Martin formed an Eco Club. This was opened up to all children in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. The Eco Club meet once a week after school and the club has grown in numbers, going from 15 to 30 over the year. Many of the children have been a part of Eco Club for the whole year and show a real commitment to improving the environment; they take their role very seriously.

The Eco Club has been responsible for many eco-friendly projects this year including ensuring all classes are saving energy and recycling; developing homes and feeding the wildlife in the school; brightening up the school grounds with plant pots; and developing their prayer garden.

In developing the prayer garden, the Eco Club worked on gardening activities to enhance its appearance. They focused on weeding and planting various types of plants to create an appealing and serene atmosphere. They have created an area to sit and reflect and a 'wishing well' where prayers can be left.

A statue of the Virgin Mary was an important addition to the prayer garden. It serves as a focal point for prayer and devotion; the school often ask Mary to intercede, particularly when they pray for those in their community who have been unwell.

Eco Club understands that plastic takes up to 500 years to decompose and so collected bottle tops with the idea of making a piece of artwork. They thought that making a cross would fit in to the prayer garden and would be a reminder of Jesus' sacrifice of dying on the cross. Reusing bottle tops is a great way to reduce waste going to landfill and provides a colourful addition to their prayer garden.

Father Adrian blessed the prayer garden as part of a procession and so it is a space that they are hoping all families will use. It offers a tranquil space for prayer, contemplation, and an appreciation of nature.

The Eco Club will continue to work to improve

their environment as part of the Catholic Social Teaching Principle, Caring for God's Creation, and following the teaching of Pope Francis in Laudato Si'. In Laudato Si', Pope Francis stresses the importance of taking care of our Common Home for the benefit of all. God entrusted the earth to us; an earth full of beauty and wonder and we are not always doing all we can to protect our beautiful planet.



"Growing Together for Life"

AND FINALLY!

As we come to the end of our school year, we thank God for the good things in our lives, and we praise all who have shared in the work of our schools. And we also wish our year 6s, 11s and 13s all the very best as they start their new adventures next term.

Our secondary school, St Margaret Ward Catholic Academy is holding its Open Evening on Thursday 21st September 2023. Please email office@smwca.org.uk for more information.

All schools re-open on:
Wednesday 6th September 2023

