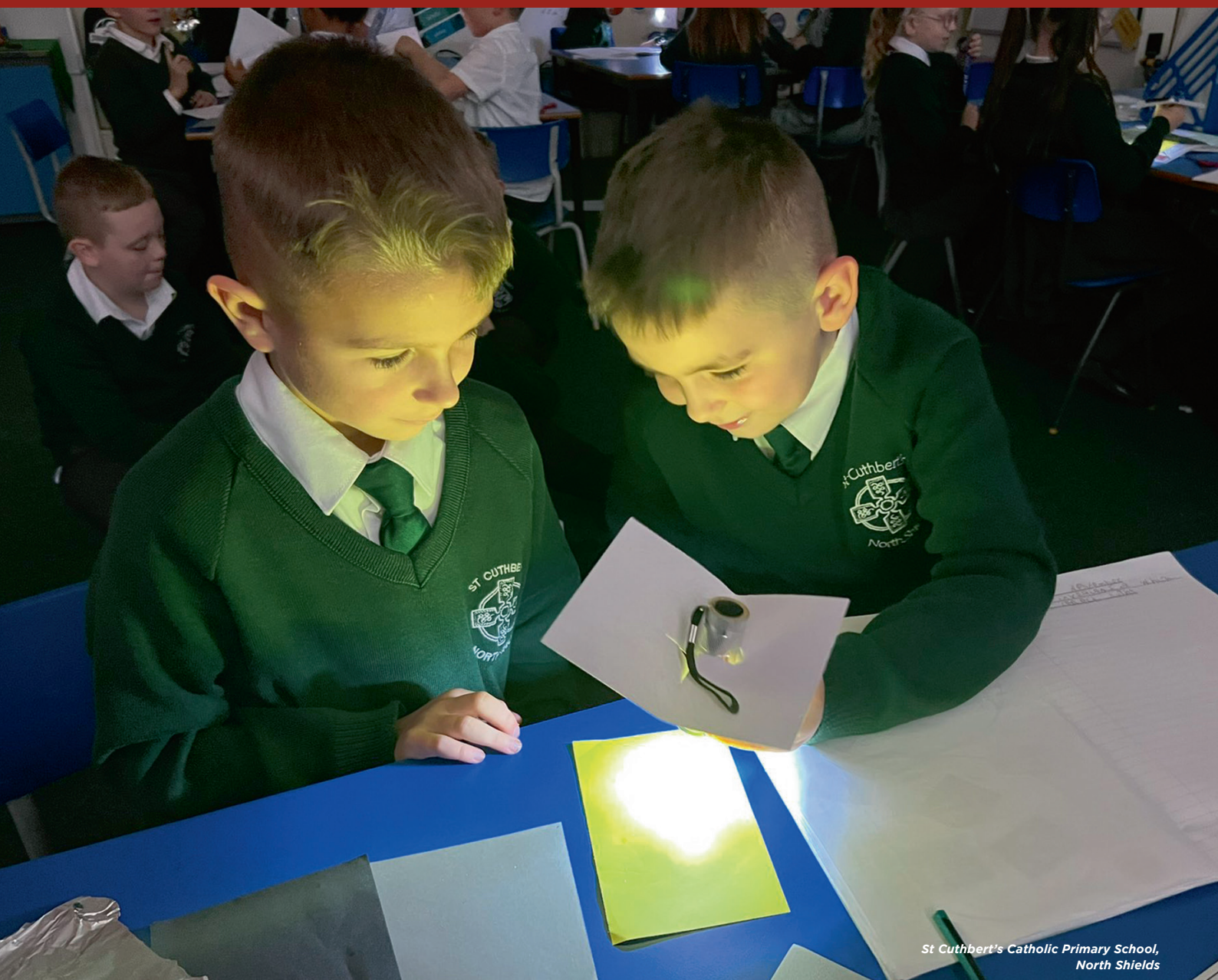




BISHOP BEWICK

CATHOLIC EDUCATION TRUST

SPRING 2023



St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School,
North Shields

One Trust, One Family

A great education has the power to transform lives

A Message from the Chair of Directors



On behalf of the Board may I wish everyone a very successful 2023. This is normally the time when we create a set of personal goals around fitness, travel, money, and the like, as we look forward to the year ahead. We often lose focus of our goals towards Easter, maybe this is because we concentrate solely on the material part of our lives.

Catholic schools aim to form 'the whole person', meaning body, mind and spirit. Our Trust articulates this through its own goal: Aspiration. I was recently invited to a strategy meeting at one of our schools, it was wonderful to hear about how they were collaborating and sharing resources with other schools to develop their curriculum. The huge amount of work taking place across our

schools to develop a quality, broad, balanced and engaging curriculum is key to children finding and discovering their unique talents.

The result of the ongoing hard work and passion from all our staff means that schools offer a bigger picture of education; including faith, intellect, community, social awareness and personal growth. It is in building 'the whole person' that children are capable of developing the skills and resilience to help them reach their full potential. Thank you everyone for your amazing hard efforts and let us work together towards our aspirations in this year ahead.

Dave Harrison

AN UPDATE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

I do hope you enjoy reading our latest newsletter, as so much has been achieved since September 2022. This is clearly to the great credit of all our staff and school communities, who have readily embraced our mission to come together to be **'greater than the sum of our parts'**. As a result, our School Improvement Team has been working very hard to ensure that the excellent practice evident in so many Bishop Bewick Schools is shared and embedded across our community of 39.

Firstly, our Trust Directory of Specialist Support has deployed 30 staff already to support teams and colleagues in other schools. This work is vital to ensuring where help is needed, it can be accessed quickly and with great heart. It is wonderful to see staff so openly sharing their expertise and best resources to support their colleagues in other schools, thereby ensuring that all our children have access to excellent practice. You can read more about this in the article by Louise Banfield who leads on this area of Trust work.

Secondly, since October there have been 15 CPD (Continuing Professional Development) sessions, mostly online, carried out by BBCET staff covering a wide range of needs. Staff now have access to additional training on top of what they are offered by their home school. Now they can share in best-practice from colleagues across the 39 schools and as most are recorded, they are accessible at any time through the BBCET website. Many staff have taken advantage of this already with over 500 staff attending the actual sessions and others watching the recordings. We are always looking out for

new input, so if you have something you think could be shared across our schools, please speak to your CPD lead in school who can make recommendations to the School Improvement Team.

One of the major advantages of coming together in a larger Trust is the access to government funding for building work in schools. In this edition, you will see some of the fantastic work that has taken place so far and what is planned for the year ahead. We want all our children to learn in beautiful, smart environments they can be proud of, and over the coming years will work to achieve that aim.

Although September seems a very long time ago, it is worth noting how well our Bishop Bewick students performed in the summer 2022 examinations. Trust performance in KS2 was noticeably stronger than national averages, particularly in the expected standard for reading (+5%), mathematics expected (+5%) and combined reading, writing and mathematics (+5%). Across our five secondary schools, well over 500 students achieved great success in 29 different A level subjects and, in addition, there were over 500 successful entries in nine different vocational A level subjects. Most students study either a traditional '3 A levels' pathway or a '3 vocational A levels' pathway, whilst a sizeable minority combine one traditional A level with two vocational A levels. 90 students across our Trust achieved a very impressive three A*-A grades each. Overall, 36% of all A level grades in Trust schools were A*/A, and almost 2/3rds were A*-B. In vocational A levels, very impressively, over half the grades achieved by students in our Trust schools were at Distinction Star or



Distinction level, the equivalent to A*-A, with an 83% pass rate at D*-Merit, the equivalent of A*-C. Very large numbers of students moved on successfully to university, to apprenticeships and some into the world of work.

In the summer of 2022, there was a lot of media coverage around the poor performance of the northeast compared to London and the South East. This was not the case for our students, who matched the performance at top grades and who left us to pursue some amazing opportunities. A small selection of stories are featured in this newsletter. We wish the very best to all our 2022 leavers of whom we are immensely proud and hope that they are enjoying the next stage of their lives. The success of these students shows how our Bishop Bewick schools are indeed transforming lives through a great education.

Anita Bath

An update from the Trust SEND Lead...Nicola Taylor

The true measure of any society can be found in how it treats its most vulnerable members

Mahatma Gandhi

I am delighted to have taken up my post as the Bishop Bewick Trust SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) Lead in September. The values of the Trust are, in my view, never more relevant than when thinking about children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. For this group and their families, it is more important than ever that our schools deliver a great education which can transform lives, preparing them well for whatever adult life holds, and that each child is celebrated in their uniqueness, valued, and cared for. I have visited many schools over the Autumn term and seen some excellent practice and importantly, strong inclusive approaches.

Nationally, outcomes for children and young people with SEND are widely recognised as not being good enough, and the system is under great pressure. The financial position is unsustainable and overall, parents do not have confidence in the system. The government's vision, as explored within the recent consultation as part of the SEND Review in 2022, is for consistent high-quality mainstream provision characterised by excellent teaching with clear expectations of support.



Nicola Taylor

Alongside, there is recognition of the need for appropriate and affordable specialist provision when it is needed, and funding reform.

As a Trust, we are committed to supporting schools in their delivery of the best possible provision for all children, making best use of resources available to ensure inclusive settings in which children and young people feel that they belong and can make good progress. This term, I have been working with others in the Trust central team and headteachers to ensure we have what we need to do this.

We have:

- Created a Trust SEN (Special Educational Needs) Policy which clearly describes the part that schools and the Trust play in improving outcomes.

- Provided opportunities for in depth reviews of provision in individual schools to support them in improvement.
- Established a network of SENCos (Special Educational Needs Coordinators) within the Specialist Support Directory who are already supporting other schools.
- Established wider networking opportunities to connect our school SENCos and encourage them to share best practice and learn from each other.
- Introduced a system which encourages/ requires our schools to self-evaluate their SEN provision, with each one creating a development plan specific to this area of school life.

What happens next?

- We are gaining an understanding of additional services that schools are having trouble sourcing, and are working towards providing easier access to the specialist support they require to support children and young people.
- We are deploying SENCos to provide peer support where schools request it.
- Our SENCo network meetings commenced in January with a series of meetings set up on a range of topics which have been identified by schools.
- The SEND training and development offer continues, including an opportunity for SEN Link Governors to attend a workshop session. The CPD (Continuing Professional Development) offer is being evaluated on an ongoing basis to ensure that plans for 2023/24 are fit for purpose.

My work centres around strong relationships. This applies to those with and between schools, and importantly those between schools and the children and families they serve. This partnership provides a solid foundation on which to improve outcomes for children and young people with additional needs, and I see a strong commitment to it across our Trust.



An update from *Andrew James*, Senior Director for School Improvement for primary schools

I have been working for Bishop Bewick since September as the Senior Director for School Improvement for primary schools. As the national landscape of school improvement changes, it is an exciting time to be involved in the formation of a new model for school to school support. Whilst my role will be to lead this work, much of the knowledge and expertise that will drive our school improvement systems already exists amongst the skilled teachers and school leaders working within our very successful schools.

As a headteacher, school inspector and school improvement partner, I have had the privilege to visit a broad spectrum of schools and work closely with school leaders to evaluate the quality of curriculum and effectiveness of teaching and learning. Whilst training and quality assurance provide a mechanism for school improvement, the fundamental elements needed for schools to grow and flourish successfully are a genuine love and ambition for each child and knowledgeable and skilled staff that are committed to sharing best practice. These elements may present in different ways in different schools, but they are consistently present in our strongest schools.

Therefore, building school improvement systems across Bishop Bewick will rely on these principles that are articulated in our values of opportunity, love, collaboration, development and aspiration:

Love - Love your neighbour as yourself:

All staff care about the other schools in the Trust, they want them to succeed.

Collaboration - We have to be greater than the sum of our parts:

Schools willingly share their expertise and areas of strength.

Schools willingly share resources for the good of others.

As we build our school improvement systems, securing a commitment and loyalty from all staff to our shared values will be essential for the ongoing success of the Trust. In David Carter's book 'Leading Academy Trusts - Why some fail, but most don't' he says, "One of the biggest challenges for multi-academy trusts is that the loyalty which staff feel towards the school they work in each day is often not matched by the same sense of belonging to the trust family."

Through my work visiting schools, it is clear there is already a firm commitment



Andrew James

to our shared values because they are the values that each of our Catholic schools are based on. However, as our school improvement structures continue to develop, it is vital that this work remains centered around these values. Training, quality assurance and school improvement activities will all form part of that process however, they must be delivered through the values of love and collaboration in all that we do.

The Bishop Bewick Specialist Support Directory has got off to a flying start

Louise Banfield, Trust Specialist Support Lead

Following the launch of the Trust's CPD calendar in October, staff in our schools have taken part in a range of professional development opportunities. Delivered by our talented staff, these online sessions cover a wide range of themes such as, planning for challenge across the curriculum, behaviour and relationships in the classroom, tips for being an effective Head of Department and how to conduct primary Geography fieldwork.

Giving colleagues the opportunity to share best practice and collaborate is at the heart of the Bishop Bewick vision. For those unable to attend, recordings are always uploaded to the Trust's YouTube channel and can be accessed at any time via the Bishop Bewick website, www.bishopbewickcet.org. Further suggestions for professional development are always welcome.

September also saw the launch of the Directory of Specialist Support. To date there have been over 30 individual deployments this academic year, where colleagues are supporting each other

to help improve the quality of education for our pupils. In our primaries, support has focused on reviewing standards in Art, expanding the curriculum in History and reviewing provision for pupils with SEND needs.

In our secondary schools, in addition to support for Curriculum Leaders, the focus has been on curriculum reviews in RE and Maths. The benefits of this collaboration are for both the host schools and the Specialist Practitioners.

Feedback from staff across BBCET has been incredibly positive:

"It was great to work alongside such a knowledgeable Art Subject lead. I found it really helpful to talk through our ideas and see examples of how it was done in other settings."

Art Subject Leader

"Being part of the curriculum review has been an invaluable experience. It allowed me to experience best practice in another school, as well as the opportunity to celebrate the outstanding work that Trust colleagues do every day."

Specialist Practitioner

We are excited to see the benefits in our classrooms as connections between staff across BBCET grow ever stronger.

School Collaboration:

Science STEM Day at St Cuthbert's Catholic High School with students from St Mark's Catholic Primary School

St Mark's Year 5 boys enjoyed a taste of secondary school recently with a visit to St Cuthbert's Catholic High School. Their time in the Science Lab was a particular highlight, allowing them to experiment with lighting gas bubbles, which floated and burned, and colourful worms made from saltwater, calcium chloride and sodium alginate.

The boys worked well under the guidance of older students from St Cuthbert's who helped them to program Lego carts in the Computer Suite. This activity really engaged the Year 5 boys' thinking around how they could use programming to make

the carts move direction and turn around and they thoroughly enjoyed it.

Following a large (and excellent!) lunch which gained rave reviews, the boys took part in a fierce competition during PE, where teamwork was the key to success. The day ended with some Art and the children made individual Christmas-themed characters from clay, developing their modelling skills and use of art tools.

Thank you to St Cuthbert's for hosting such a fun and engaging day!

**Kate McKenna,
Headteacher**



Exploring movement at English Martyrs Catholic Primary School

On Wednesday afternoons at English Martyrs, children can be found fighting in slow motion, ice skating and sometimes crawling along the floor pretending to be worms! These are just some of the many ways in which students explore movement with Dance Specialist, Mrs Sinclair, from Sacred Heart Catholic High School.

As part of the PE curriculum students in KS1 and KS2 must create, practice and perform dance to develop their physical and creative skills. In an example of Bishop Bewick Trust collaboration at its finest, Mrs Sinclair has joined English Martyrs to guide students through an exciting and enriching movement journey.

Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 have been lucky enough to be involved so far this academic year. Year 4 have been creating original choreography using Merce Cunningham's Chance Method. In the Autumn term, students in Year 5 were introduced to Matthew Bourne's Nutcracker and used the textures, smells and the taste of sweets to create marvelous movement. Earlier in the year, Year 6 enjoyed using the renowned work of choreographer, Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui to create their own powerful, Martial Arts inspired movement.

"Year 6 found the dance lessons absolutely fantastic. We thought they were inspiring, and it catered for all pupils. The children loved them." Year 6 teacher, English Martyrs Catholic Primary School

One of the many benefits of being a family of 39 schools is that our students have access to Specialist Teachers. Collaborations such as this one, give our primary school children a great

foundation of specialist knowledge so that they are even better equipped for secondary school.

These sessions will continue throughout the rest of this academic year, next up is Labanotation, Aladdin and Lion King!

"Working with the brilliant boys and girls at English Martyrs is so enjoyable. Seeing their confidence, resilience and communication skills develop through dance is inspiring. Being part of the Trust has given me the opportunity to work in different schools, which not only allows me to share my passion for dance, but also helps me to develop as a teacher."

Mrs Sinclair



School Collaboration:

Parent Reading Project with St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School, St Wilfrid's Catholic Primary School and St Bede's Catholic Primary School, Denton Burn

Laura Fallon, Headteacher

'We have to be greater than the sum of our parts'

St Bernadette's, St Wilfrid's, and St Bede's joined forces in exploring effective ways of engaging parents in their child's early learning journey. The three primary schools, with varying socio-economic demographics, worked in collaboration to explore the potential impact of the support parents can provide for their children in phonics and early reading following an intensive and rigorous school-based parental engagement intervention.



The research literature suggests that parental engagement interventions, such as strategic programme of parent classes/workshops over a period of time and aimed at developing parent skills rather than just providing them with abstract theories and knowledge, is the most powerful lever for raising pupil achievement (Hattie et al, 2007). The staff from the schools, which included the Headteacher and Phonics/Reading Lead, worked closely together to plan the intervention and share knowledge and expertise. They met regularly to discuss updates, share good news stories and challenges, develop their understanding and share best practice.

The intervention involved a deep investment in promoting parental engagement. This was done through a programme of Phonics and Reading lesson observations in classes, theory-based learning, 1:1 observations of reading and focussed group interviews over a period of one term. The aim was to promote and facilitate a deep social construction of knowledge within the group of parents as opposed to information sharing from school

to parent which is often the more traditional route. Very early into the study, similar patterns emerged across our parent bodies. The shift from reading for pleasure in the home to the pressure they felt to 'teach' their children how to read new school books was great and in some cases, was having a negative impact on relationships in the home. Some parents felt their children were, 'winding them up on purpose and pretending they couldn't read the books' whilst one reported that it was so difficult at times 'the book just ends up across the room.' The participating parents were extremely open and honest about their experiences citing their own struggles at school as a barrier to helping their children. Those parents did not want their children to face the struggles they had and therefore being part of this study was a huge step for them too.

As the intervention progressed, parents observed live lessons across school, participated in theory-based learning led by school staff and engaged in 'homework tasks' with their children. This is when the power of the programme design really began to reveal itself. The parents began to build relationships with each other offering each other advice and support about what had worked well for them that week. The more knowledge they acquired, the more they observed, the more they talked about early reading and developed their knowledge and understanding, the more their confidence grew. So much so that several of the parents are now reading volunteers at St Wilfrid's.

At the start of the study parents thought they 'had to force [them] to read and that this was the only way to make [them] read.' They 'had this impression that this is how I had to make him read with me holding the book and pointing at the words for him - me being in control of the reading and that's what stressed me and him out.' Parents reported that 'coming here [school] has opened this massive door and now I can make the whole world a reading experience for him' whilst others reported the impact it had had on them personally.

"This experience has taken the frustration and fear out of reading, it has actually made it a pleasurable and happy experience for us all...it has made me feel so much more confident. It has given me the tools to understand that taking a step back and not putting the pressure on me or her when we are reading."

Perhaps one comment which helped us to consider the real impact of the study was



the following: 'I feel like I am part of his little school. I know so much now about what goes on and I feel like it has just made us so much closer.' Most schools might consider they involve their parents well in school life through a variety of initiatives including, fairs, parents' evenings, liturgies, curriculum events and we do. Such events are very much part of our schools and play an important part of our school's provision. However, 'involvement' of this nature is considered to have no direct impact on learning and therefore little impact on pupil achievement (Hattie et al, 2007). The staff involved in designing and delivering the intervention developed a better understanding of the difference between 'involvement' and 'engagement' following the study.

All three schools will monitor the progress of the children involved in this study but feel we gathered enough evidence to consider that parent classes and workshops aimed at developing parent skills rather than just providing them with abstract theories and knowledge is the most powerful lever for raising pupil achievement (Hattie et al, 2007).

The programme was designed to explore the potential impact of support parents can provide for their children in phonics and early reading. It was intended that data collected would not be on reading scores or phonics checks but more on parental perceptions on the role they had to play in supporting their child on this crucial journey. Across all three schools, the impact was great!

"By the end of the project the parents felt more confident in reading with their children and reported that the experience was much more positive. Several of the group are now reading volunteers in school."

Mrs Johnstone, Headteacher, St Wilfrid's Catholic Primary School

"The biggest difference for me is that I'm not scared anymore. I know what I am doing and I know how I can help."

Parent

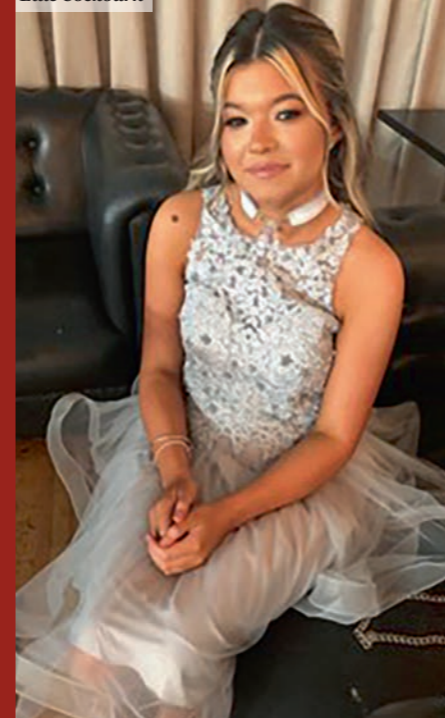
School Success Stories:

St Mary's Catholic School

Read about the successes of three students with additional needs who have left St Mary's and moved on to pastures new.

"At St Mary's, the thing that helped me the most was the help from my support worker, especially in looking for courses I could do after Sixth form. I wasn't sure about what I wanted to do or even what options I had, but my support worker helped by looking into a lot of different

Ellie Cockburn



Ellie Cockburn, Year 13 Leaver in 2022

students to organise social events such as bowling.

I am looking forward to doing other placements so that I can have different experiences and learn new skills, and this will help me to decide what job I would like to have at the end of the course. The tutors will also be there to offer support at the end of the two years when I am in my first proper job and will follow me for another year. This will be helpful and make my transition to employment as easy as possible."

"I am currently doing a Sports degree at Northumbria University. I am really enjoying it so far, I have moved into university halls, made loads of friends from my course and my accommodation. I love my new independence.

Although I am not 100% sure what I want to do when I graduate, the course is four years long, so I have plenty of time to decide and experience the modules on offer. I am studying Sport Coaching, Management and Sport Science and interested in exploring Physiotherapy, but

Lily Urwin



options for me. They helped me to fill in application forms, to send emails and arrange to have taster days or attend open evenings. It was really useful to be able to have the chance to go and see places for myself, meet other students and ask any questions that I had as this made it much easier to make my final decision and I definitely made the right one! I am currently doing a supported internship with Project Choice and on a placement within the RVI hospital doing admin work such as, sorting files and photocopying.

As part of the internship, I also attend college one day a week and have been learning about health and safety and how to write a CV. I am really enjoying the internship. It has helped me to be more independent, to feel more confident and I have made many friends.

The tutors at Project Choice are very supportive and encouraging and help the

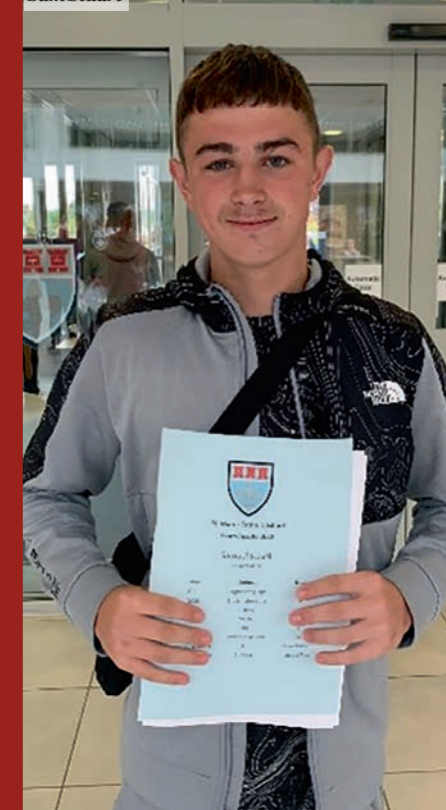
I'm sure the course will spark my interest in lots of different areas. It is teaching me skills which will be transferable which will give me many options. I really enjoyed

my time at St Mary's, my Sixth form teachers and support staff gave me the confidence, support and structure which helped me achieve great A level results which allowed me to gain my place on my course."

Lily Urwin, Year 13 leaver in 2022

"I'm now attending an electric installation course Tynemet College. I'm doing well and have been made workshop supervisor. I do get some support but it's different from school. When I started

Sam Stuart



St Mary's in Year 7 I was given support because I have dyslexia. As I progressed up the school, other difficulties were identified and I was given more support to prepare me for GCSEs. During Covid 19 my family and I received telephone calls and email support.

I always had a great relationship with my key worker, who knew exactly what I needed and other teachers provided that for me too. My granny was always kept in the loop for good reasons and sometimes not so good! This also helped me in making better choices.

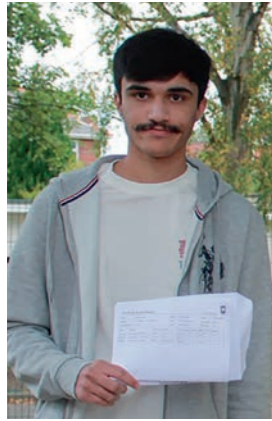
I think that St Mary's did an excellent job in terms of my education, especially with my exams, my results were decent and I surprised myself and family.

I felt better prepared for moving forward onto college, due to support in all areas."

Sam Stuart, Year 11 leaver in 2022

School Results High Achievers: 'Where are they now?'

St Benet Biscop Catholic Academy



Balraj Singh achieved A*A A in Biology, Chemistry and Mathematics and is currently studying Medicine and Surgery at Newcastle University.



Deanna Allison achieved a Distinction* in Child's Play, Learning and Development and Double Distinction* in Health and Social Care. Studying Nursing at University of Salford.



Jazmin Anderson-Smith achieved a Distinction* in Health and Social Care and A A in Drama and Psychology. Jazmin is currently studying Combined Honours at Newcastle University.



Christopher Baxter-Jones achieved A A A in Biology, Chemistry and Mathematics. Christopher is taking a gap year before applying to study Medicine at university from 2023.

School Results High Achievers: 'Where are they now?'

St Cuthbert's Catholic High School



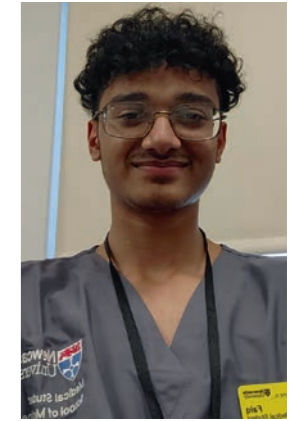
Ciaran Moscrop achieved A*A B in Economics, Mathematics and History and is studying Politics, Philosophy and Economics at the University of Oxford.



Jack McCormack achieved B C D in Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics and is currently training to be a commercial pilot in Shoreham.



Ken Sio achieved A*A B in Psychology, Biology and Chemistry and is currently studying Human Sciences at University College London.



Faiq Ali achieved A*A*A* in Psychology, Biology and Chemistry and is currently studying Medicine at Newcastle University.



Jamie Naughton achieved A A A in Chemistry, Mathematics and Physics and is currently studying Mathematics at Northumbria University.



Kate Herron achieved A*A*A* in English literature, French and English Language. Kate is taking a gap year before applying to university in 2023.

St Mary's Catholic School



Lucas Colley achieved A*A*A*A* in Physics, Mathematics, Further Mathematics and Computer Science and is currently studying Computer Science and Philosophy at Christ Church College, University of Oxford.



Isaac Howell achieved A* A* A* A in Physics, Chemistry, Biology and Mathematics and is currently studying Natural Sciences at St Catherine's College, University of Cambridge.



Jack Adams achieved CTEC Business Distinction* A A in Geography and Economics and has started a Economist degree apprenticeship for the Civil Service.

Sacred Heart Catholic High School



Samiyah Ali achieved A* A B in Biology, Chemistry and Psychology and is now studying Medicine at Newcastle University.



Alice Henman studied Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics and Further Mathematics and also completed an EPQ. Alice achieved A* A* A* A* A* and is currently studying Mathematics at Durham University.



Edmond Kelly achieved A*A*A* in Mathematics, Biology and Chemistry and is currently studying Biochemistry at Newcastle University.



Isabella Dowden achieved A*A*A* in History, Biology and Mathematics and is currently studying Human, Social and Political Sciences at Jesus College, University of Cambridge.



Eleanor Yellowley achieved A*A*A* in Spanish, Mathematics and Chemistry and is currently studying Medicine and Surgery at Newcastle University.



Pico Mingstones achieved A*A* and a Distinction* in Art, Design Technology and Business Studies and is currently studying Fashion Design at the University of the Arts London.



Elizabeth McCabe studied Biology, Chemistry, Geography as well as completing an EPQ. Elizabeth achieved A* A* A* A* and is now studying Medicine at Sunderland University.



Megan Crossman studied Biology, Chemistry and Physics as well as completing an EPQ. She achieved A* A* A* A. Megan is now studying Medicine at Brighton and Sussex University.



Angela Chen studied Computer Science, Mathematics, Chemistry as well as completing an EPQ. She achieved A* A* A* A. Angela is now studying Biochemistry at the University of Oxford.



Alice Sikora achieved A* A* A* in Mathematics, Chemistry and Physics and is currently studying Physics at the University of Edinburgh.

School Results High Achievers: 'Where are they now?'

St Thomas More Catholic High School



Stella Pozzi achieved A*A*A*A* in Geography, Biology, Mathematics and Chemistry. Stella is currently studying Biology at the University of Cambridge.



Aleksandra Szymczak achieved A*A*A*A* in German, Biology, Mathematics and Chemistry. Aleksandra is currently studying Medicine at the University of Cambridge.



Ella Backhouse achieved A* A* A* in Geography, Psychology and English Literature. Ella is currently studying Psychology at Newcastle University.



John Campbell achieved A*A*A* in Psychology, Mathematics and Chemistry. John is currently studying Chemistry at Durham University.



Joshua Tupaz achieved A*A*A* in Mathematics, Business and Further Mathematics. Joshua is currently studying Economics at the University of Manchester.



Patrick Hickey achieved A* A* A* in Physics, Mathematics and English Language. Patrick is currently taking a gap year.

'Gardeners of the Galaxy' stand up for nature. St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, North Shields



Demmi Robinson said: "It's been a pleasure supporting the 'Gardeners of the Galaxy' vision. To see the children so driven and passionate about making a difference to positively influence their community is inspirational. Their next mission is focusing on tackling waste pollution to support the climate crisis which will be very exciting for them."

You can read the full article at www.nwt.org.uk/news/gardeners-galaxy-stand-nature

Claire Hedley, Headteacher at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, was delighted that Northumberland Wildlife Trust published an article featuring the school's 'Gardeners of the Galaxy' after they'd joined forces with the Wildlife Trust to look at rebuilding their community and to protect wildlife.

After receiving a grant from the Ernest Cook Trust, the school were able to work with the wildlife charity's green mentor, Demmi Robinson, to carry out a number of projects. These included, litter picking, recycling events involving the wider community and creating planters which the children use all year round for planting vegetables, fruit and wildflowers.

Ensuring our schools are modern, sustainable and inspirational places to learn...

Anthony Gollings, Head of Finance and Estates

In March 2022 we set ambitious plans to spend £3.3m delivering 52 projects in 29 of our schools with a further 5 schools later added to this list. It's been a tremendous year, with some challenges along the way, but we continue to deliver and develop more plans to enhance our schools.

All of our projects are determined using the four pillars of our Estates Strategy. We want all school buildings to be:

- inspirational places to learn
- safe and secure
- sustainable
- physical representations of our high standards and ethos.

As promised, we used the condition surveys conducted in our schools to help us identify and prioritise need. Our plans were shared with schools throughout the year which we will continue to do.

Reducing our utility consumption is not only part of our social responsibility to the environment, but it is increasingly relevant given financial constraints and recent increases in utility prices. In 2022 we committed to ensuring our estate is 100% LED. In the Autumn of 2022, the Board also recommitted their ambition to energy reduction through the BBCET's Energy Sustainability Strategy Statement.

A total of 24 schools have seen their inefficient dull fluorescent tube lighting changed to LED at a cost of £726k, bringing better light into teaching spaces and reducing energy

consumption. Other energy saving works have included heating projects at St Alban's Catholic Primary School, Star of the Sea Catholic Primary School, St Aidan's Catholic Primary School in Ashington and Sacred Heart Catholic High School.

During 2023 we will:

- Replace single glazing at 5 primary schools with double glazing. By 2024 none of our schools should have single glazing.
- Deliver heating projects at St Bede's Catholic Primary School in Denton Burn and St George's Catholic Primary School.
- Commission surveys at our schools, so we'll know what we need to do next to become more sustainable.

This year will also see major redevelopment at:

- St Benet Biscop Catholic Academy in Cramlington we are working together on a £1m+ scheme to demolish an aged mobile building and replace this with a new Sixth form building. This will also ensure capacity for their increasingly popular Sixth form and better outside spaces for students.
- Ss Peter and Paul's Catholic Primary School in Cramlington, a £735k scheme will see the creation of a new car park, reception, admin offices and corridor spine for the school giving the school new life and a better connection to the community by September 2023.
- St George's Catholic Primary School where we are investing nearly £500k into, remodeling the school's reception and Early Years provision, improving fencing, completing double glazing and replacing heating systems throughout the school.

These are exciting times!



Design plans for Ss Peter and Paul's Catholic Primary School



Design plans for Ss Peter and Paul's Catholic Primary School



Awards Season at Star of the Sea Catholic Primary School

Clare Taylor, English Lead

2022 was quite a year for Star of the Sea! With a focus on Science and English we have held the moon in our hands, gained a prestigious accreditation, built a new school library and have won over £1000 in book tokens for our school.

Earlier last year meteorites landed at Star of the Sea as part of a very special Science Week. Every member of our school got their hands on rare samples of moon rocks and meteorites which were truly out of this world. The pack, provided by the UK's Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC), included a 1.2-billion-year-old piece of Martian rock and 4.3-billion-year-old nickel meteorite. The lunar samples that we received were collected in the late 1960s and early 1970s during some of NASA's first manned space missions to the moon. This amazing week formed part

of our school's very successful Primary Science Quality Mark (PSQM) submission which we were also awarded which celebrates a commitment to excellence in Science teaching and learning.

Primary Science Quality Mark is a one-year school improvement programme for primary science, which provides professional development for new and experienced subject leaders each year. PSQM enables confident, knowledgeable, reflective leadership which results in an improvement in the way in which science is planned and taught across the whole school.

Claire Byrne, Science Lead at Star of the Sea said: *"This has been a very rewarding year for us. Staff have worked hard to improve the teaching and learning of Science and everyone has pulled together*

to gain this brilliant accreditation. Our 'Moon Week' was a fantastic highlight that has given our school community amazing memories for years to come."

English has also been in the spotlight as our school has a newly established and fully stocked library. Lots of work took place to develop a cosy and inviting space which inspires a love of reading. This project saw the whole of our school family getting involved. Parents and children generously donated books to the new space which is now open and being enjoyed by our children.

To further boost high quality resources in English, we were fortunate to win £1000 worth of book tokens from National Book Tokens after one of our Teaching Assistants entered a competition on social media. This has been shared between all year groups and is helping to foster a genuine love of reading in our children. Our reading areas are filled with interesting and engaging new titles to excite and enthuse pupils. In addition, we also won a further £100 which has been spent on books for mental wellbeing.

"The children have really loved the new books we have bought. Our children always love reading but this has reignited their enthusiasm for discovering new texts. The discussions that the new books have created have provided opportunities for our children to explore their cultural diversity and debate sustainability."



Our Lady and St Anne's Catholic Primary School becomes a School of Sanctuary

At Our Lady and St Anne's, we pride ourselves on how we embrace and celebrate the many cultures and religions our school community share. Within school, our children and parents speak thirty-seven different languages and we have children from many different faiths. In school, the children's individualities have always been celebrated. Our children are not only respectful and tolerant of other faiths and cultures but are naturally curious about their community and the wider world around them.

When the opportunity arose to apply to be a 'School of Sanctuary', we jumped at the chance to applaud the amazing efforts of our children and staff. It is an initiative which celebrates the good practice of schools who adopt a culture of welcome and inclusion for all, especially asylum-seeking and refugee families. It offers a way to educate the whole school community about the human right to sanctuary and engage with sanctuary seekers and families in their local communities.

The aim is to create a safe environment that includes everybody in a school, regardless of background, ethnicity, faith or gender.

At the beginning of September, we found out that our application was successful. Our whole school community were thrilled at this achievement, as the feedback from the panel was extremely gratifying.

As part of our application, we merged both our Junior Leadership Team and our Mini Vinnie's to create an SOS team. During group meetings, these children were able to identify the ways



in which our school promotes individuality, but also identify any areas for development. The group efforts of these children were instrumental in ensuring that our application was successful. The panel of judges agreed stating, "There is a lot of inspirational evidence in the application with a strong emphasis on pupil voice and children's involvement in developing the work around sanctuary in school. The panel were really impressed with the ideas that the SOS team have come up with, with everything from how the school can welcome new students, what the school community can do to support asylum seekers and refugees, as well as helping with welcome pamphlets, a welcome board in the school entrance and providing a buddy system to new children – this is really impressive!"

It was therefore only fair that two representatives from the SOS team were personally presented with our award at the Schools of Sanctuary event held at The Great North Museum. The children had a fantastic day celebrating their achievements with 11 other schools and representatives from Newcastle City Council.

This accolade has not only celebrated the school's efforts, but has reignited our dedication to ensuring that Our Lady and St Anne's Catholic Primary School remains the friendly, safe and welcoming place that we promise to our students and families.

Kerry Milligan
EAL Lead



An interview with our Ukrainian friends

St Thomas More Catholic High School

Starting a new school can be tough, we all know that. When that school is in a new country, with a new language and you have been forced to leave your home due to war, it can be overwhelming. Yet the four Ukrainian students who currently attend St Thomas More have been through exactly this. We caught up with Valeria, Maks, Ksenia and Nazar to ask them how they have adapted to their new surroundings.

We started by asking about school. "It's actually better than my school in Ukraine, I like that the timetable is only five lessons. In Ukraine we have eight lessons" said Maks. The schools are different as well. "This school is very large. Our school in Ukraine is just one big building" Nazar reported. Valeria added that in terms of students "It's maybe half of your school, maybe smaller." Ksenia added "When I first came into this school, I was very nervous because it's very big. I thought I would get lost. But I feel ok, my friends help me, they come with me to every lesson and tell me where to sit and what to do."

When it comes to lessons, they have found the teaching style and range of subjects different from back home. They like the range of lessons including, Food Technology, Textiles and Business. In Ukraine the only practical subject is Art. Valeria, arriving at the interview straight from basketball practice, likes that we have opportunities to do sport before and after school. She also likes the opportunity for school trips: "In this school we have more excursions, like Holy Island. It's very cool." The teaching is also different commenting on the use of interactive boards and videos

to demonstrate learning. In Maths, they agreed that the work here revolved more around problem solving compared to the straight calculations they do in Ukraine. Ksenia added the main difference was that "In Ukraine they spent more time writing, no computer, no TV, just books and writing. Five, six...seven books in your bag and go to school."

When asked about the teachers, the students laughed. "Are they stricter here or in Ukraine?" asked Ms Bell. "I think in Ukraine there are more strict teachers, but I don't think strict is a better characteristic of a person. Here teachers help students who are working hard, here teachers are kinder" was Maks' answer. Valeria backed this up, saying that "all teachers here try to help you, they try to understand. For us it's very important because sometimes we don't understand everything, so they come to translate for us. In the first months when we arrived, more teachers translated and printed presentations for us."

We ended by talking about their experiences of living in Newcastle. "It's big," said Valeria, "in Ukraine, in my town we don't have a metro. We have a metro only in big towns." "Not even in big towns," added Maks, "Mykolaiv, where I live, it's big, but we don't have a metro. It's Kyiv and Kharkiv who have them."

It is clear that these four students have formed a bond based on language and their shared experiences, but that they have also become an integral part of our school. For as long as they choose to stay, we hope they continue to feel welcome, and when they return home, we hope they will keep in touch.

Local MP visits St Wilfrid's Catholic Primary School

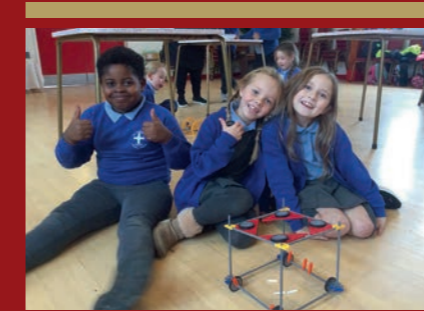
Pauline Johnstone, Headteacher

Warkworth class at St Wilfrid's have been writing persuasive letters on the theme of the environment. They addressed their concerns and ideas to their local MP Mr Ian Levy. Their letters were so persuasive that Mr Levy arranged to visit them to take questions and talk about future plans for Blyth. Mr Levy shared a little of his background and how he became an MP and then held a question and answer session. Pupils asked a range of questions about future job prospects and plans for the local environment and housing. Mr Levy then joined the pupils for lunch in the school hall.



'The Wheely Good Challenge' at Beamish Museum

St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School, Kenton



In November, Year 3 took part in an exciting STEM challenge at Beamish Museum called 'The Wheely Good Challenge'. The children worked in small groups and were given a design brief: the vehicle must have wheels and it must be able to move!

The designs ranged from a motorbike to an amphibious vehicle and a bus! After drawing a labelled design, the next task was to build the vehicle using K'Nex. The children showed resilience and excellent problem-solving skills when things didn't go to plan and many of the designs evolved during the build process.

After testing each vehicle to check they were 'road worthy,' the challenge concluded with each group proudly showing off their designs in a race.

As well as becoming budding engineers for the day, the children explored the many fantastic exhibits at Beamish and a fantastic day was had by all!

St Cuthbert's have worked with Beamish Museum previously in conjunction with The REECE Foundation on 'The Crank It Up' challenge. In a similar way, this project involved using K'Nex to build a moving crane. Our Year 5 children look forward to a different STEM challenge this summer.

Jenny Hacking
Science and Stem Lead

Competition Time: What's happening in the Trust?



Our Trust's first official Christmas card!

In November, we asked all our primary schools to design our first Trust Christmas card. We received some lovely entries from all different year groups from our schools, all envisaging what their idea of Christmas was. Some entries used different materials that were crafted to the card and all of them showed a real understanding of the use of colour. After much deliberation, the winning card's design was eventually chosen, a classic depiction of the Holy family.

Our winner was Emily Lovat, aged 9, from Star of the Sea Catholic Primary School. We went to visit Emily at her school, where she was presented with a copy of her Christmas card in full print and her prize. Her whole class cheered and were very proud of Emily's achievement. Mrs Dimambro, Headteacher, said 'Emily and her family were absolutely delighted that she won the competition'. Due to the high quality of the entries, we also chose two runners-up: Lucy Heatley, aged 9, from St Bede's Catholic Primary School in Bedlington and Phoebe Turner, aged 5, from St Alban's Catholic Primary School in Walker. Well done to all those who took part! Lee Ashton-Thompson, Project Officer, Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust

Primary Art Competition and Exhibition 2023...Coming soon!

An exciting opportunity for all primary schools to be involved in our summer Art Exhibition, celebrating the first year of the Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust of 39 schools.

We will be asking for submissions from schools and exhibiting the most creative responses to the theme:

'Stronger Together'

More details will be available soon, meanwhile start thinking about what you could do as a class or a school - the more imaginative and creative the better!

Year 6 Catenian Public Speaking Contest

Trust schools are once again taking part in this year's Year 6 Catenian Public Speaking Contest. As you will have seen in our last Newsletter, we had great success in the first year of the competition with Isla Tait from St Michael's Catholic Primary School winning first prize in the KS2 category with her speech 'Elswick Cares'. It is a great opportunity for all the children to learn about the important art of public speaking and to push their own personal boundaries. This year's competition will be held on Sunday 12th March. We wish all of our students taking part the best of luck.

Year 12 Essay Competitions

Durham Union Society Essay Competition

This year's DUS essay competition is open to any Year 12 student in the North East of England. The essay prompt is "Why is Freedom of Speech Important in High Education?". There is a 500 word limit and the deadline for submissions is 3rd March. You need to send your essay along with your full name, school and home town to outreach@dus.org.uk with the subject line [Student Name]- DUS Essay Competition Epiphany 2023. There is a £100 prize for 1st place and £50 prize's for 2nd and 3rd place.

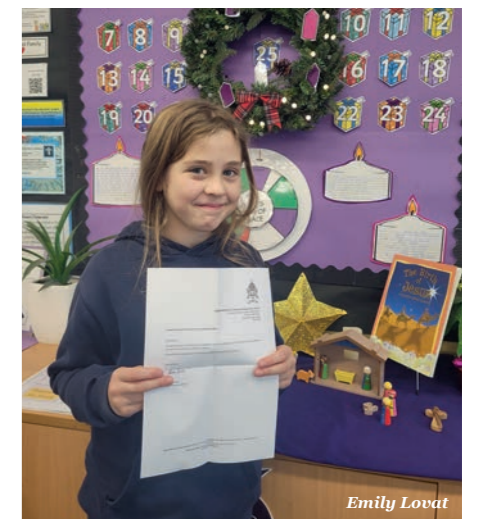
BONUS - BBCET Essay Competition

In addition to the DUS competition, you can also submit your essay to BBCET too!

Please follow the same rules as above but submit your entries to Sarah Shaw, sarah.shaw@bishopbewickcet.org by 3rd March with your name and school.

There will be a prize of £50 for the winning entry and £25 for two runners-up.

If you would like any further information about the essay writing competitions, please contact the Head of Sixth form at your school.





St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School, North Shields



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