



Newsletter

The Newsletter of St Alban's Catholic High School

Spring Term 2025
Edition No. 1

Comments from the Headteacher

Jade Goddard

I am delighted to introduce the relaunch of our St Alban's Half Termly Newsletter, a regular communication designed to keep you informed and connected with the life of our school community.

As a Catholic school, we are guided by our Gospel values, striving to nurture not only the academic growth of our students but also their moral and spiritual development. This newsletter will serve as a way to celebrate the achievements of our young people, share key events and highlight the many ways in which we live out our mission as a faith-filled learning community.

In each edition, you will find:

- ✓ Reflections on our school's Catholic ethos in action
- ✓ Celebrations of student achievements and activities
- ✓ Updates on school events and initiatives
- ✓ Key dates and important reminders

We hope this newsletter strengthens our partnership with you, keeping you well-informed and engaged with your child's journey at St Alban's Catholic High School. Thank you for your ongoing support and for being a valued part of our school community.

Staff Update:

I would like to take the opportunity during this edition of the newsletter to express our heartfelt thanks to Mr Donohue, who will be leaving his role as Assistant Headteacher for Behaviour at Easter. Throughout his time here, Mr Donohue has been a dedicated and compassionate leader, supporting our students in developing positive behaviour and fostering a culture of respect and responsibility. We are incredibly grateful for his commitment and the positive impact he has made, and we wish him every success in his next chapter away from education.



At the same time, we are pleased to announce that Mr Millington has been appointed to this important role from Easter. Mr Millington brings a wealth of experience and a strong commitment to maintaining high expectations while ensuring that every student feels supported and valued. We are excited to welcome him to the leadership team and look forward to his contributions to our school community.

Following the announcement of Mr Baker's absence, I would like to take this opportunity to share with you the faces to the names of our Senior Leadership Team with their current responsibilities, following the recent changes.



Mrs J Goddard
Acting Headteacher
(Deputy Headteacher)



Mr M Mirshemirani
Acting Deputy Headteacher
(Assistant Headteacher –
Head of 6th Form)



Mrs S Morris
Acting Deputy Headteacher (3
days)
(Assistant Headteacher)



Mrs A Harries
Acting Deputy
Headteacher (2 days)
(Associate Senior Leader -
Safeguarding
Headteacher)



Mr M Donohue
Assistant Headteacher -
Behaviour



Mrs E Barber
Acting Assistant Headteacher
– Teaching and Learning and
Pupil Premium
(Associate Senior Leader)



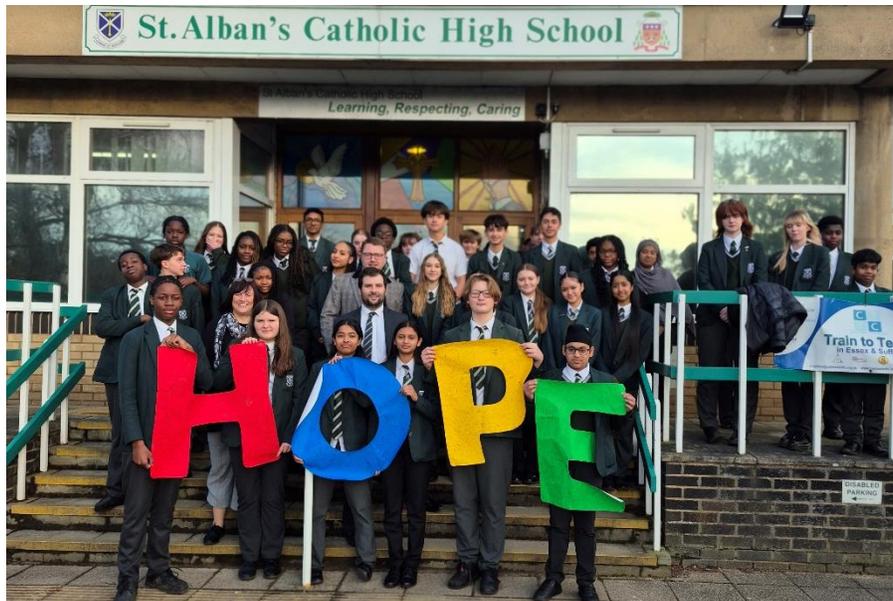
Mrs C Pickard
Associate Senior Leader -
SENDCo



Mr N Berry
Senior Leader



St Alban's Catholic High School marks the opening of the Jubilee Year of Hope



On Friday 24th January, the Jubilee year of Hope was launched in Catholic Schools across the country. As part of this national celebration, St Alban's Catholic High School in Ipswich produced a novel way of marking this event – 'Words of Hope.'

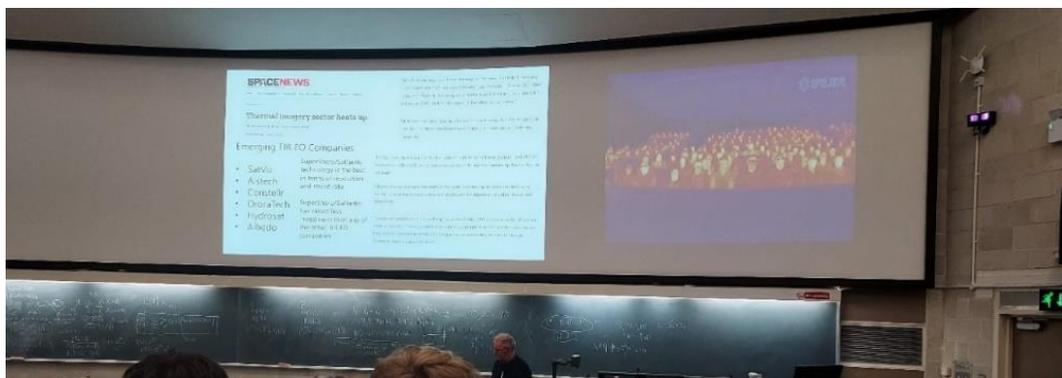
Throughout the day, over 900 entries were made by staff and students on their hopes and aspirations for the Jubilee Year on the letters that would form hope. Mr Jon Hicks, Head of RE organised this with the support of the school chaplain and the Art department.

Mr Hicks commented "It was a fantastic way to get the students involved with the opening of the Jubilee in schools. It worked very well as this was the first time we have tried something like this. It was great seeing the student's reactions to comments on affecting the world and to reflect on they see as being important both on a local, national and international level".

It was a cross-community event that brought everyone together for reflecting on the need of Hope and reflecting on how the face of Christ can be made known through thoughts, words and actions which can truly form a community of hope.



Cambridge University lectures for St Alban's students



This year we have been lucky enough to attend a series of Physics lectures at the Cavendish Laboratories which is part of the University of Cambridge. The lectures start at 6pm which gives us plenty of time to drive up in the school minibus after school. Beginning in October and running until March the talks are aimed at enthusiastic science students. The topics covered this year have been wonderfully varied: the biomechanics of the foot, the formation of planets around other stars, the use of AI in medicine, the Higgs boson, room acoustics and satellite imaging. We have tended to arrive with a bit of time to spare and students have been able to explore the Cavendish museum, try their hand at some Isaac Physics problems or simply eat biscuits and drink squash. There is always something in each talk to stretch young minds and enthuse students with the application of science to the real world.



Mr Arthur, Science teacher and Deputy Head of Sixth Form.



FRANCE TRIP TO LILLE FOR YEAR 10-13 – STUDENT ACCOUNT



My trip to Lille was the best experience of my school years. It was a 2-day trip during Christmas time so everything was very beautiful. We arrived at school for 4 am to leave and we arrived back at home for 10pm. It really helped with my French. All of the locals were very welcoming and appreciated everyone trying their hardest to speak their language. The market was full of food from their culture, and it was all very tasty, especially the tartiflette which we and my friend tried to recreate at home. However, it wasn't as good as the original one. The accommodation was very lovely and inviting and the activities were so fun.



It was a very good bonding experience for everyone and it brought us closer together as a class. I would most definitely go on this trip again.

Poppy Year 11



GEOGRAPHY DEPARTMENT 'Seeding Hope Greener Ventures'

On Thursday ^{23rd} January representatives from the student chaplaincy team visited Elm Tree Primary School in Lowestoft. St Alban's Catholic High School raised the funds through 'Discover the World' to plant 1000 new trees. The conditions were that these new tree saplings needed to be planted in Suffolk. After much discussion it was decided the trees would be planted at Elm Tree Primary school due to their land availability. The school is just shy of having 15 acres of field space! Our students had a fantastic day, and they proudly planted approximately 50 trees. The day was in partnership with 'Seeding Hope Greener Ventures'.



We were also invited into the school to enjoy a hot chocolate and learn more about the company and greener futures. The local mayor and a team of local press were there on the day and captured the brilliant work that was taking place. It was a special day that raised awareness of the importance of afforestation and supports the work of Pope Francis, caring for our environment and our planet.

The students can be seen captured above with the mayor of Lowestoft.

The students were accompanied on the day by Mrs Williamson (Head of Geography) and Mr Gilbert (School Chaplain).



Walton on the Naze Geography Trip



On Wednesday 9th October we took out our Year 10 geographers to complete their first day of GCSE fieldwork. The focus for the trip was on collecting qualitative data while studying coastal erosion. They collected lots of data in their field booklets and even climbed the Naze Tower. We also had a superb talk delivered by one the Naze experts.

The students worked hard and enjoyed their day. The weather was kind to us, and we were able to enjoy our lunch outside on the picnic benches.

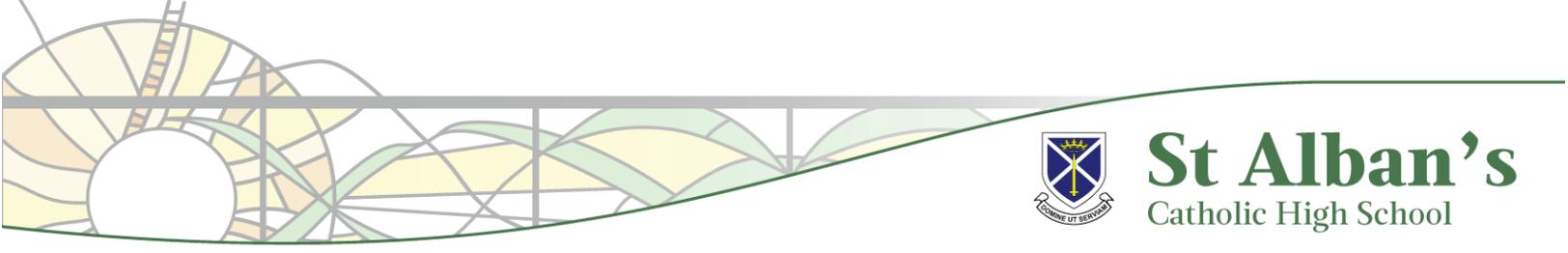
VINEYARD – Year 12 GEOGRAPHY TRIP

Geography Students Visit Shawsgate Vineyard, Framlingham

By Obinna

The small town of Framlingham is mostly known for the castle built in the 11th century. But this town is also home to Shawsgate Vineyard, one of the finest wines in the UK. As the vineyard produces a range of wine from red wine to even sparkling wine since 1973 with “Bacchus” being the top selling wine.

In summary of the wine making process, the wine is made by squeezing the grapes in a controlled chamber environment and then adding yeast to ferment the wine, storing the wine in temperature controlled a wine chamber for approximately 3 weeks at 17 degrees Celsius



The demand for wine has fluctuated over time due to mostly COVID and tax being the main factor, due to Les Garrett's experience in not only wine but tea brewing, this gave his company an advantage over the others. The team comprises of roughly 15 people, 2 of which are full time workers which assist Les in all phases of the winemaking process



The different seasons affect the harvest of wine and grapes especially with Shawsgate, due to their topography of land the farm usually gets earlier harvests as opposed to the north side of England but due to climate change, the times of the harvest have been brought forward to combat the unpredictability of climate change

The soil is mostly clay-like and chalky, this allows the water to flow through easily because its porous and this helps water better to penetrate the soil and it also makes it easier for the roots to absorb nutrients especially in the south, it's the main factor along with sun direction that most vineyards are located towards the south than the north of England

The carbon footprint is low as all processes from wine picking, to making and storing of wine all happen at the same site, as minimum transportation is needed



In conclusion, Shawsgate Framlingham is living proof that there is a way of maximizing output through vine pruning and growing techniques and also reducing carbon footprint by keeping distances between processes by keeping transportation at a minimum.

A great trip, thank you to the Geography department for organising!



A few highlights from Careers

It has been a busy term with trips, experiences, workshops and Year 12 mock interviews. We thank all the employers and apprenticeship providers who have supported us, to help inform and inspire our students about the amazing possibilities for the future.



BAE/RAF Stem Roadshow Year 7 and Year 8

GREEN SKILLS, CAREERS IN RENEWABLES and SOLAR PANEL WORKSHOP





The solar program was a great experience. I learned how solar panels work and why renewable energy is important. The hands-on activities were fun, and visiting real-life solar projects was inspiring. It was sometimes challenging to control the drone, but I gained new skills and a better understanding of clean energy. I'm glad I got to be part of it!

Mehrin, Year 10

Suffolk Skills Show – Year 9



I would like to talk about the Suffolk Careers show trip and all the incredible experiences that happened.

It was held at Suffolk New College and the whole of Year 9 were invited to attend.

It was a great trip because the employers that were showing us all the exciting careers kept us engaged with games and prizes. All the stalls gave us loads of information about possible jobs and goody bags. I got to learn about the Ports and how things mostly come by ship rather than planes. I was interested in a diagram of a woman giving birth and what the midwife's would have to do, and it got me more interested in all the possible jobs that I did not know about. The Hair Tech area was also interesting to me with the mannequins. I would like to thank all the industries that set up exhibitions, they were welcoming and gave us more ideas about our future and where to go. I would also like to thank the Careers teams at St Alban's for making it possible for us to be there. Eden (Year 9)



Intermediate Maths Challenge 2025

In February, 35 students from Years 9, 10, and 11 took part in the **Intermediate Maths Challenge**, showcasing their problem-solving skills and mathematical talent.

A huge congratulations to **Malcolm**, who has qualified for the prestigious **Maths Olympiad**—an incredible achievement! Malcolm is the first student in several years to reach this level, impressively answering every question he attempted correctly.

Well done also to **Chloe , Bartosz, and Douglas** , who all earned the **Gold award** and secured a place in the next round of the competition, the **Maths Kangaroo**, taking place in March.

In total, **24 students** achieved a **Bronze, Silver, or Gold award**, a fantastic result for our school. Congratulations to all who participated!

COMPUTING – i-belong Computing experience

"On Saturday 16th November, Mr Robinson and Mrs McLean (parent volunteer- thankyou!) took 9 x Y9 girls on the train to Cambridge for the i-belong Computing Experience run in collaboration between Cambridge University Maths school and the National Centre for Computing Education (NCCE). This was a whole-day event where students got on the train at 7am and we arrived back at 8pm! There were girls from 17 schools in the East of England and they worked in groups with Women who work in companies such as Zeiss, Microsoft, ARM and Siemens.



The girls enjoyed the day and hopefully will lead to more girls in the future considering Computing as an option moving forwards.

At St Alban's, staff within the department have already gained their i-belong badge from the NCCE and we get involved with many units of learning recommended in the i-belong guidebook which have been identified as ones which girls enjoy such as app development, 3D modelling, spreadsheets, programming in scratch/python and image editing to name a few."



Sixth Form Delves into Democracy at Westminster Conference

Our Sixth Form students recently embarked on an enriching trip to the heart of British politics, attending a prestigious politics conference held within the historic walls of Westminster Hall. The day was a whirlwind of insightful talks, lively debate, and a firsthand glimpse into the workings of our government.

The conference boasted an impressive lineup of speakers, representing a diverse spectrum of political viewpoints. Students had the unique opportunity to hear from prominent figures such as Sir Jacob Rees-Mogg, offering insights into conservative perspectives, and Lord Dubs, who shared his powerful experiences and advocacy on refugee rights. Daisy Cooper MP provided a perspective from the Liberal Democrats, and Alastair Campbell gave a fascinating look into the world of political communication and strategy.

The real highlight of the day was the interactive Q&A sessions. Our students were encouraged to engage directly with the speakers, posing thoughtful and challenging questions. We were particularly thrilled to see our very own Abinaya make her mark, as her question for Sir Jacob Rees-Mogg was selected and read out first! This was a testament to the students' preparation and their keen interest in political discourse.

Beyond the conference itself, the trip provided invaluable context through guided walks around the iconic buildings associated with UK politics. Students explored the grandeur of the Houses of Parliament, witnessing the very chambers where laws are made and debated. A stroll past Downing Street offered a tangible connection to the seat of government, bringing the political landscape to life.



This trip was more than just a day out; it was a chance for our students to witness democracy in action, to hear from those shaping our political landscape, and to develop their own critical thinking skills. The experience has undoubtedly sparked a deeper understanding of the complexities of politics and inspired a new generation of engaged citizens. We are incredibly proud of our Sixth Form for their enthusiastic participation and insightful contributions.



Sister Act

Sister Act – February 2025

Our 4th school show Sister Act has been a huge success thanks to the committed team of staff and students in the CPA faculty. It truly has been a joyous occasion to present such a fun, lively show where singing and acting are at the heart of our production.

It is a real pleasure to see our cast growing each year and more students being involved in all aspects of the show. This year we had over 60 students taking part across all creative disciplines in Music, Drama and Art. It's the perfect showcase of the talent we have here at St Albans.



The final show night on Thursday 13th February really demonstrated the passion our students have for performing. Emotions were running high, but you could not fail to see the pride and gratitude on the stage. Students across all school years have collaborated and truly enjoyed working together and learning from one another.

Mr Silburn (Head of Drama) and Mrs Robinson (Head of

Music) have driven this show, committing to rehearsals every week and continuing to inspire our students beyond the curriculum. There are also many staff involved behind the scenes too. Making costumes, organising props, designing and making scenery, constructing the scenery on stage, organising refreshments and supporting both students and staff along the way. A school production would not go ahead without the dedication of both staff, students and the wider school community.



There is now a very healthy buzz around A Block as Music and Drama prepare for the next summer show 'Annie' offered to year 7 and 8. Auditions start this week with the next show due in July. We look forward to welcoming to watch our next performance.

Mrs Wright
Head of CPA faculty