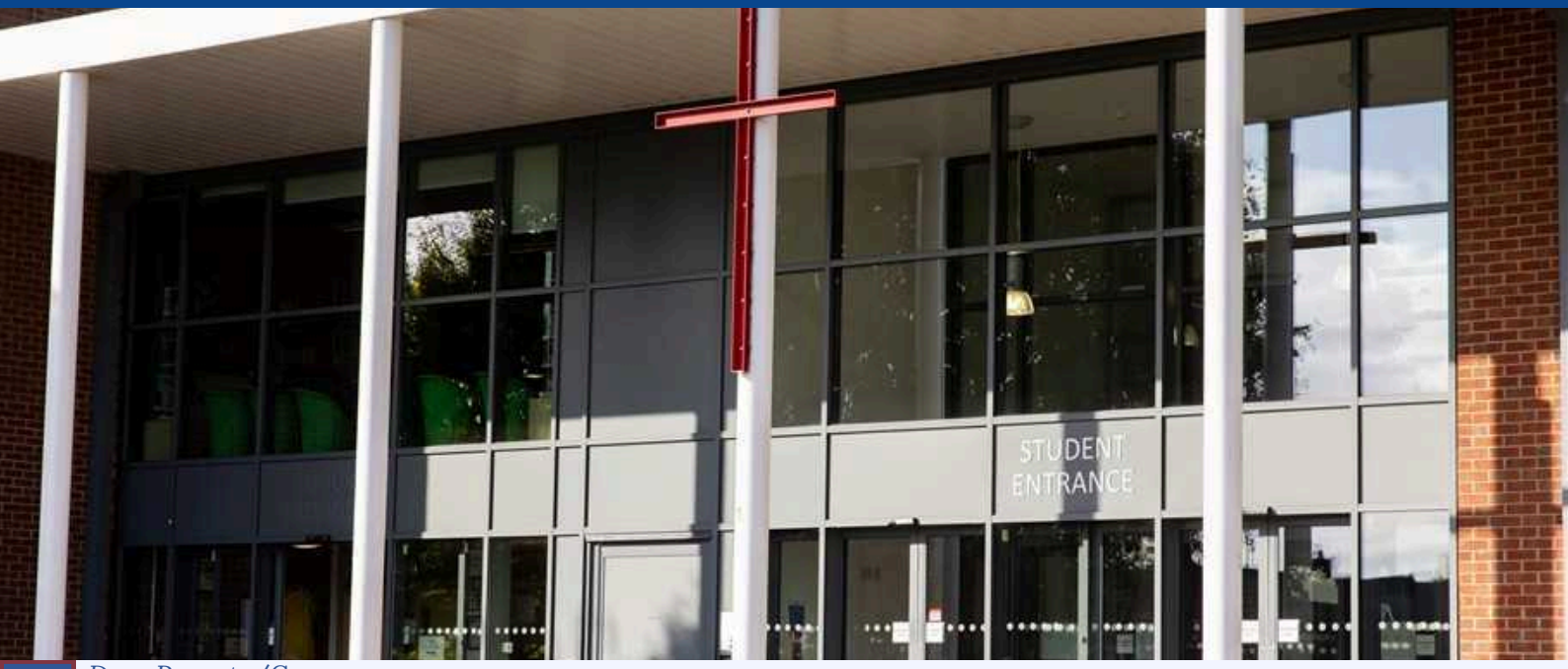
St Thomas More Catholic Academy

Newsletter

Easter 2026



Dear Parents/Carers,

As we reach the end of another busy and productive spring term, I would like to take this opportunity to reflect on the many achievements and successes of our academy community. I am incredibly proud of the hard work, resilience, and commitment shown by our students throughout the term.

For our Year 11 and Year 13 students, the Easter break marks the beginning of the final stage in their journey towards their GCSE and A-Level examinations. They have demonstrated great maturity, determination, and independence in preparing for these important assessments. We will continue to support them in every way possible and keep them in our prayers as they enter this significant period of their education.

This term has also provided a wealth of opportunities beyond the classroom. Students have taken part in a wide range of enrichment activities, educational visits, retreats, leadership events, and personal development programmes. These experiences play an important role in developing confidence, broadening horizons, and fostering a sense of belonging within our academy community. I would like to thank our staff for their dedication in organising and leading these opportunities, many of which are showcased throughout this newsletter.

As a Catholic academy, our faith remains central to everything we do. Throughout Lent, students and staff have engaged in prayer, liturgy, fundraising, and acts of service as we prepared for the celebration of Easter. These opportunities have allowed us to reflect on the meaning of the season, strengthen our faith, and live out our mission as a community rooted in Christ.

As we conclude what has been a successful and rewarding term, I would like to thank all parents and carers for your continued support and partnership. Your encouragement and involvement play a vital role in helping our young people flourish.

I wish you and your families a happy, holy, and peaceful Easter. We look forward to welcoming our students back for the summer term and all the opportunities and successes it will bring.
Yours sincerely,

Mr M Rayner
Headteacher

St Thomas More Catholic Academy
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RE

Lourdes 2026

We are so proud of our students who will be travelling on the Lourdes trip.
This journey has been made possible through the incredible fundraising efforts by our students, using a variety of creative and generous initiatives.
A heartfelt thank you to Fr David, Parish Priest of St Gregory's, for his generous contribution, along with other generous donations, and to the SVP members whose generosity and encouragement have played such an important role in the fundraising for this trip.
Your support has truly made a difference. Thank you for helping make this meaningful experience possible for our students.





A huge thank you to Fr David and the parishioners of St Gregory's RC Church for their generous support of our cake sale this term, raising funds for our Sixth Form students who participated in the Diocesan Lourdes Pilgrimage in May.
The students greatly enjoyed meeting members of the parish and sharing their excitement about the pilgrimage. It was wonderful to see the interest, encouragement, and support shown by parishioners as students prepared for this special faith-filled journey. The fundraiser was a great success, and we are incredibly grateful for the generosity of everyone involved.
Following the pilgrimage, students were delighted to share their experiences with the parish community and reflect on what was a memorable and enriching opportunity.





RE

Soli House





This term, our Year 7 and Year 8 students enjoyed a Wellbeing Retreat at Soli House in Alton, providing them with an opportunity to step away from their usual routines, spend time outdoors, and focus on their personal wellbeing.

Set within beautiful countryside, the retreat offered an exciting programme of activities designed to promote teamwork, resilience, confidence, and reflection. Students made the most of the sunny weather as they explored the grounds on mountain bikes, developing their skills and confidence while taking in the stunning surroundings. They also enjoyed testing their aim and concentration at the archery range, enthusiastically embracing the challenge and encouraging one another throughout.

Beyond the activities themselves, the retreat provided valuable opportunities for students to build new friendships, strengthen existing relationships, and develop a greater sense of independence. It was wonderful to see students supporting one another, stepping outside their comfort zones, and approaching every activity with enthusiasm and positivity.

The retreat was a fantastic experience for all involved, leaving students with lasting memories and valuable skills that will support their wellbeing both in and beyond school. We are incredibly proud of the way our students represented St Thomas More throughout the visit.



RE



The Mars Bar Experiment

Our Year 7 students explored the mystery of the Holy Trinity through the 'Mars Bar Experiment'. As they attempted to separate the chocolate, caramel and nougat, they discovered that, although each element is distinct, they form one whole and cannot truly be separated. This engaging activity helped students deepen their understanding of the Trinity in Catholic Christianity: one God in three Persons – the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.





CAFOD Family Fast Day





To mark CAFOD Family Fast Day, our school community came together on Friday 6th March 2026 to raise money in support of those living in poverty around the world. The day provided an important opportunity for students and staff to reflect on the challenges faced by others and to stand in solidarity with those most in need.

As part of the fundraising effort, a reduced menu was available throughout the school day. At lunchtime, students were able to purchase soup and a bread roll, with all proceeds donated directly to CAFOD. Through their generosity and support, our school community helped contribute to CAFOD's vital work supporting vulnerable communities across the globe.

We would like to thank all students, parents, carers, and staff for their support in making the day a success and for demonstrating our shared commitment to helping those less fortunate than ourselves.

Year 7 Catholic Social Teaching Projects

Year 7 students have been engaging with creating projects specific to the 7 Catholic Social Teachings of:

1. *Dignity*
2. *Solidarity*
3. *Subsidiarity*
4. *Common good*
5. *Peace*
6. *Care for the poor*
7. *Creation and the environment*

This term, students have been focussing on the teaching of Care for the Poor: the teaching that God shows preferential love for the poorest and most vulnerable.
Students have been researching how we as a Catholic community can support the most vulnerable in our society and parish, and put their faith into action.
Here are some past examples of their independent work:

PSHE



Pupils have taken part in PSHE extended form sessions on smoking and vaping prevention. The session will help pupils understand the health risks and the environmental impact of vaping, including issues around plastic waste. Grounded in Catholic Social Teaching, it encourages pupils to value their wellbeing and care for creation through informed, responsible choices. We welcome your support through conversations at home.



Ruff & Ruby

Uth City Talk: Students in Key stages 3 and 4 all enjoyed an assembly ran by Ruff and Ruby to introduce them to the new Uth City App which is launching in Stoke-on-Trent to offer a one-stop-shop for young people, offering a wide range of support on topics such as mental health, community cohesion and careers. Students enjoyed watching a performance and hearing all about the new app!
Feedback from Ruff and Ruby was fantastic, praising our students and thanking us for having a "great school!" – we look forward to welcoming the team back soon.





Parental Coffee Morning

In February, our Coffee Morning brought together so many wonderful parents, carers, and staff for a relaxed catch up, plenty of smiles, and a chance to strengthen our school community. It was great to see everyone connecting, sharing ideas, and simply enjoying a moment of calm together.

A huge thank you to everyone who joined us and helped make the morning feel so welcoming. We love creating these opportunities for families to come together, and we're already looking forward to the next one.







Fundraising for Fr Hudson's Caritas

As we continued our Lenten journey, we invited our community to support those in need through our charitable fundraising efforts.

Students enjoyed a non-uniform day and donated £1 to support Father Hudson's Caritas, raising valuable funds for those facing hardship and vulnerability. Through this act of generosity, our school community lived out the principles of Catholic Social Teaching, standing in solidarity with others and supporting those most in need.

Thank you to everyone who contributed and helped make this initiative such a success. The kindness and compassion shown by our students and families reflected the values at the heart of our Catholic community.



British Science Week Poster Competition



Year 7 were invited to participate in the British Science Week poster competition. They were challenged to help a team of researchers at University College London (UCL) to come up with a new idea or invention to improve the health of the air in our buildings.

We had some wonderful ideas and entries which were narrowed down to the winning 5 entries and six runner up entries. All 11 students received a prize for their entry and the winning 5 entries have been submitted to the national competition

Winning Entries:
Abdul, Ellie-Mai, Jonathan, Jacob, Lyla-Rai

Runners Up:
Aderiyike, Denna, Deona, Evvy, Sophia, Younas









Healthy Living Workshop







This term, we had the pleasure of running our annual healthy living workshops with some of our wonderful KS3 students. Mrs Champion led and worked with the students who cooked and prepared a delicious two course meal that students then ate with family and friends. The atmosphere was fantastic and as you can see in the pictures it was a huge success. We are so proud of all the students! Thank you to Mrs Champion for all her work on this annual event and to Mrs Sloan, Mrs Carroll-Wright and Miss Kilford, they were great hosts during both evenings in ensuring everything ran smoothly.







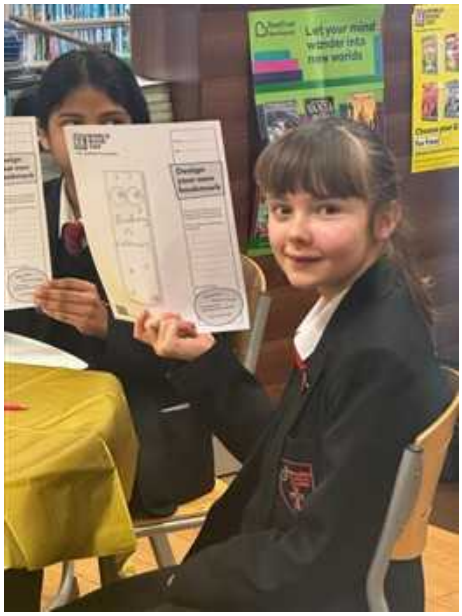




English

World Book Day





This term, we celebrated World Book Day with a variety of exciting activities that gave students the opportunity to get creative, explore new texts, and share their love of reading. Throughout the day, students took part in engaging tasks designed to inspire a passion for books and encourage them to discover different authors, genres, and literary worlds.

Students enjoyed a range of activities that celebrated the joy of reading while also highlighting the importance of literacy and the many benefits that reading can bring, both inside and outside the classroom. The enthusiasm shown by students was fantastic, with many embracing the opportunity to discuss their favourite books, recommend titles to their peers, and reflect on the stories that had inspired them.

We also held a special celebration event in the library, where our top Bedrock Learning and Mapper students were invited to attend during breaktime and lunchtime in recognition of their outstanding commitment to reading and literacy. The event provided an opportunity to celebrate their achievements, enjoy refreshments, and take part in book themed activities. Students also had the chance to win a variety of book prizes and discover new titles to add to their reading lists.

World Book Day served as an important reminder of the power of reading to educate, entertain, and inspire. We hope that the books discovered and shared during the day will allow students to explore new worlds, expand their imaginations, develop empathy, and continue to foster a lifelong love of reading. The event was a wonderful success and a fitting celebration of the rich reading culture we continue to nurture at St Thomas More.



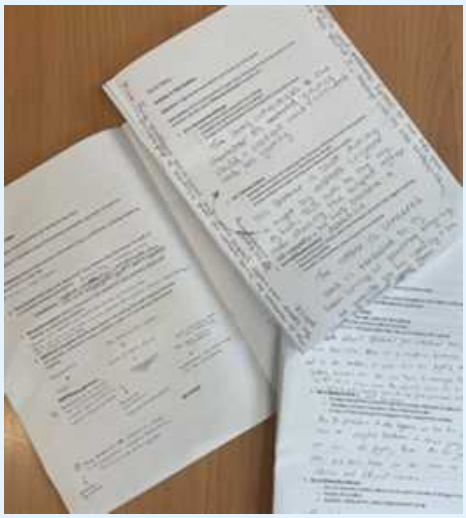


Creative Writing Club

This half term, our KS3 Creative Writing Club members have been diving into exciting weekly activities, working through their activity workbooks to develop their creative writing projects.



Students have the choice to either craft a short story (1000-1200 words) or compile a collection of 8-10 poems. The goal is to complete these workbook activities so that after Easter, we'll be ready to start writing up our stories using the library laptops. It's been a fantastic journey of imagination and creativity, and we can't wait to see the finished pieces come to life!



GCSEPod Success: Outstanding Engagement from Year 9, 10, and 11!

We are delighted to celebrate the fantastic engagement with GCSEPod Our Year 9, Year 10, and Year 11 students have collectively completed an impressive 1,521 assignments on the platform, demonstrating their commitment to independent learning and academic success.
GCSEPod has been an invaluable tool in supporting our students' learning, offering high-quality content that consolidates key knowledge and reinforces classroom teaching.

Year 11 students have been using GCSEPod to strengthen their revision in preparation for their GCSE exams, while Year 10 students have been preparing for their upcoming mock exams at the end of the academic year. Year 9 students have been building strong foundations as they embark on their GCSE journey. Their dedication to completing these assignments highlights their proactive approach and determination to succeed.

We encourage all students to continue engaging with GCSEPod regularly to enhance their understanding and boost their confidence. Well done to Year 9, 10, and 11 for their outstanding efforts – let's keep up this incredible momentum!

gcsepod
education on demand

Blood Brothers



There were 50 Year 9 students that had the excellent opportunity to go to see a production of 'Blood Brothers' at the Liverpool Empire Theatre. Students have studied the text as part of their KS3 curriculum and therefore watching a stage adaptation not only enhanced their understanding of the plot, but also helped to bring the plot to life. Students were visibly moved by the performance, describing it as mesmerising and breath taking.

History

This term, our Year 10 Historians enjoyed an educational visit to Shrewsbury Prison, bringing their GCSE Crime and Punishment studies to life in a fascinating and memorable way. Throughout the day, students explored the historic prison and gained valuable insight into the changing nature of crime, law enforcement, and punishment across different periods of British history.

By examining prison cells, learning about the lives of prisoners, and hearing about the realities of incarceration, students were able to make direct links between their classroom learning and historical evidence. The visit provided a unique opportunity to deepen their understanding of how attitudes towards crime and punishment have evolved over time, from harsh public punishments to the modern prison system.

Students were fully engaged throughout the day, asking thoughtful questions and demonstrating an excellent understanding of the topics studied. The experience not only enhanced their GCSE knowledge but also provided a valuable context for their future studies. We were extremely proud of the maturity, curiosity, and enthusiasm shown by all students during the visit.











Outward Bound







Two groups of Year 8 and Year 9 students visited the Outward Bound Centre in Aberdovey, Wales, this term for a week of adventure and personal development. Students embraced challenges including hiking, gorge scrambling, an overnight expedition, and even a sea swim in the cold January waters. They were a credit to St Thomas More throughout, demonstrating resilience, teamwork, and enthusiasm, and we are incredibly proud of how they rose to every challenge.

THE OUTWARD BOUND TRUST









Careers

Congratulations to Jordan, who achieved success at the Big Apprenticeship Expo held at Stoke City Football Club, winning a £50 Amazon voucher in recognition of his excellent networking skills and professionally presented CV.

Alongside 30 fellow Year 11 students from St Thomas More, Jordan attended the event and engaged with over 50 apprenticeship providers from a wide range of sectors. Employers and training organisations in attendance included Arnold Clark, Axia Solutions, the British Army, the NHS, Keele University, DJH Accountants, and NSCG, who kindly sponsored the prize. Jordan impressed employers with his confidence, preparation, and professionalism.



Reflecting on his experience, he shared his top tip for future applicants: “Be prepared and take a printed copy of your CV when meeting employers.” Having a CV readily available not only leaves a positive impression but also helps to facilitate meaningful conversations with potential employers and apprenticeship providers.

The event provided a valuable opportunity for students to explore future career pathways, develop their networking skills, and gain a deeper understanding of the exciting apprenticeship opportunities available to them. We are incredibly proud of Jordan's achievement and the way all of our Year 11 students represented the school throughout the event.

We wish all students applying for apprenticeships this year the very best of luck and look forward to celebrating their successes in the coming months.

Year 10 and 12 Work Experience

A reminder to all Year 10 and 12 students that they need to source their work experience and log this on Unifrog as soon as possible. All information needed is on the school website.
https://www.stmca.org.uk/key-information/career-information-guidance/

There are support sessions each Monday evening in the LRC for any student who needs further support.

If any of our parents are able to offer a work experience placement please could you let me know at careers@stmca.org.uk and I’ll advertise opportunities to our Year 10 and 12 students. Thank you.

We are happy to organise a family careers meeting for you and your child. Please contact the school office if you would like to take up this opportunity and we will be in touch to arrange a suitable time.

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Transition

This term, our students were delighted to welcome Year 3 pupils from our partner primary schools for a spectacular and entertaining Circus Show. The event showcased the incredible talent, confidence, and dedication of our performers, who worked hard to deliver a memorable experience for their young audience.

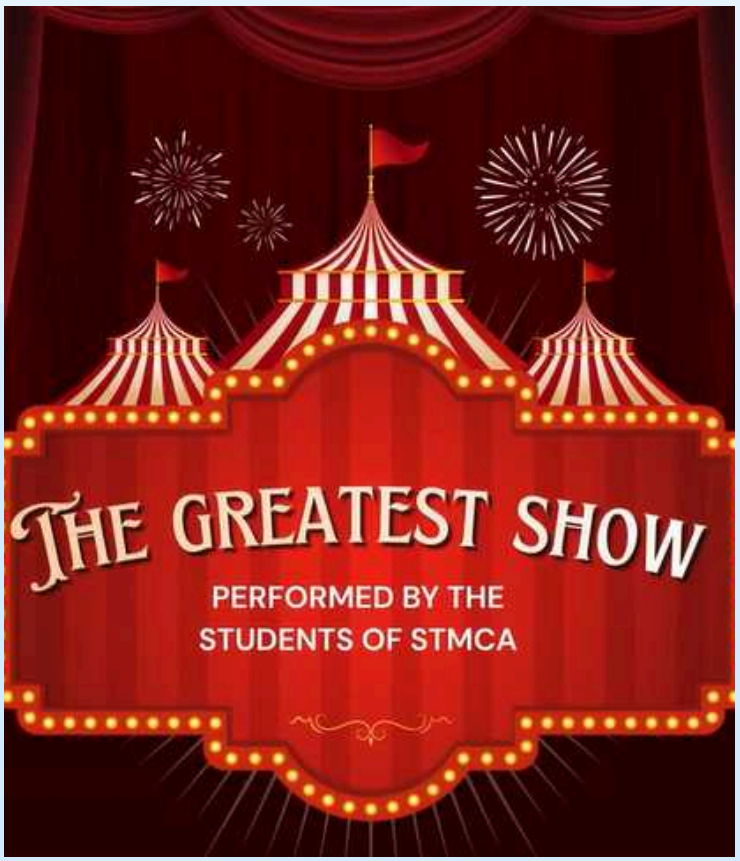
From the moment the show began, the audience was captivated by a range of exciting performances, with our students demonstrating excellent teamwork, creativity, and stage presence throughout. The Year 3 pupils thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to visit St Thomas More, engaging enthusiastically with the performance and experiencing first-hand the vibrant school community we are proud to offer.

Events such as these provide valuable opportunities for our students to develop their confidence, communication, and performance skills, while also strengthening the links between our school and our partner primary schools. We are immensely proud of all the students involved, whose hard work, commitment, and enthusiasm ensured the show was a tremendous success.



A huge well done to everyone who performed and supported the event behind the scenes. We look forward to welcoming our Year 3 visitors back to St Thomas More again soon for more exciting opportunities and memorable experiences.





Sixth Form

This term has been an incredibly busy, rewarding, and successful one for St Thomas More Sixth Form, with students embracing a wide range of opportunities and achieving success across many areas of sixth form life. One of the highlights of the term was attending the Trinity Leadership Day, where students heard from a series of inspiring keynote speakers. Through their honest and personal accounts, speakers shared their journeys, challenges, and successes, encouraging our students to reflect on their own aspirations and the importance of resilience, leadership, and determination. The event was both thought-provoking and motivational, leaving a lasting impression on all who attended.

It has also been a particularly exciting and important period for our Year 13 students as they finalised their UCAS applications and began receiving offers from a range of prestigious universities, including Oxbridge and Russell Group institutions. Alongside those pursuing traditional university routes, a number of students successfully secured places on highly competitive degree apprenticeship programmes, demonstrating the breadth of pathways available to our talented young people.

We are especially proud of one student who secured a sought-after Paramedic Degree Apprenticeship. As part of his commitment to giving back to the school community, he delivered an excellent demonstration to lower school students, showcasing the practical skills required of a first aid responder and providing an inspiring insight into a career in emergency healthcare.

We are also delighted that a number of our Year 12 students secured places on the highly prestigious Oxford Residential Programme. As part of this opportunity, students will spend time at Oriel College, Oxford, exploring degree courses in Mathematics, Philosophy and Economics (PPE) while gaining valuable experience of university life at one of the world's leading academic institutions. This represents a fantastic opportunity for our students to broaden their horizons and raise their aspirations.

Another key event this term was our highly successful Course Discussions Evening, which saw prospective students and their families joining us to learn more about the extensive range of courses and opportunities available within our Sixth Form. The evening provided an excellent opportunity for visitors to meet staff, discuss future aspirations, and explore the pathways that will help them achieve their goals. We are grateful to everyone who attended and contributed to making the event such a success.



We look forward to welcoming our new cohort in the coming months and would encourage any students still considering their post-16 options to contact us for further information. There is still time to discuss courses and secure a place within our thriving Sixth Form community.

These achievements and opportunities reflect the ambition, talent, and dedication of our students, and we are immensely proud of all they have accomplished this term.





Our 6th form David Campbell Soccer School students had an incredible 2 week Football experience in Portugal, packed with unforgettable moments, valuable learning opportunities and memories to last a lifetime! From competitive fixtures against top Portuguese Teams such as Benfica FC to exclusive stadium tours at Sporting Lisbon FC, this trip was truly one-of-a-kind.

Higher Horizons

TRINITY Sixth Form
Succeeding Together

Our Year 13 students have been working incredibly hard, revising for their final exams, and responding to their mock feedback. We have been truly impressed with the commitment and hard work that our students have displayed to ensure they achieve the best outcomes possible. This has included students attending our after school study club in 6th form.

Going to university can be a daunting time, particularly, when it comes to arranging finances. To support our students, we had Higher Horizons come in and give them advice on all things Student Finance, this was excellent for our students as it enabled them to understand the practicalities of making sure they can fund their studies at university.

It won't be long before our Year 12 students start to consider their next pathways, and to support them with this we will be giving them everything they need, including advice navigating UCAS, completing personal statements and applications to university and assisting those students that require early entry.



Our A Level Religious Studies students visited Manchester Metropolitan University for a Religious Studies experience day with Mr Aston.

Students visited the City of Manchester, spent time in a lecture and seminar discussing Natural Moral Law, toured the University campus and heard about the importance of reading at higher education during a visit to the Library (students were also very grateful for the tote bag gift!).

A huge thank you once again to MMU for your hospitality and efforts in putting together this day. This was a great exposure for our Year 12 and 13 students to higher education and supported revision on a crucial part our A level course.