

St Joseph's Journal

Faith
Learning
Respect



Head's Message

Seasons greetings,

As we approach the Christmas holidays it is a nice opportunity to reflect on what has been a very busy and eventful term. The issues which have been affecting our water supply have been a huge frustration for us all, and recurring bouts of seasonal illness have also taken their toll on the whole community. Despite these challenges, the term has had many more positives than negatives. The school has demonstrated its excellent FLAME values with huge amounts of charity work, strong attendance at extracurricular clubs and significantly in demonstrating positive behaviours which are being modelled on a day-to-day basis by almost all students.

It has been a very special first term and I have been humbled by the warm welcome I have received from parents and students. Our academic progress has been strong with some excellent assessment results coming through from the first assessment cycle of the year. The support of the local parishes has helped to make opportunities for Faith development a major strength of the school, with opportunities for retreat, weekly class mass and larger year group masses being well attended. I have been amazed at the levels of student participation in events and the desire to help develop our school for the better. I am looking forward to seeing how we continue to grow as a community over the rest of the academic year.

In January there will be a number of new faces joining us in key positions in school, These are Mr Bretell (Senior Assistant Headteacher), Mr Bell (Assistant Headteacher) and Mr Wiecek (Assistant Headteacher). They will be joined by Mrs Bollardo (Attendance Manager and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead). While we are all excited at their joining, there is also some sadness as we say goodbye to Miss Knox, and I would like to thank her for her service over the years and wish her luck as she embarks upon a new challenge within our Trust.

I wish you all a joyful and holy Christmas, please take this opportunity to enjoy time with loved ones and we look forward to seeing you all in the new year.

Mr Crowe

PE corner

Girls Football:

The first round of the Year 7 Football CVL was a great success. Both teams performed really well, coming away with several wins between them. A highlight being a 10-0 win against Boldon School. The girls also showed determination and sportsmanship when playing one another- resulting in a close 3-1 win to the A team. Fantastic effort all round- bring on the next stages!

Year 9/10 Athletics:

All students that we took to the indoor athletics put out a great performance. A lot of resilience was shown when injuries meant for changing of events. A highlight was the boys' performance in the relay, gaining 1st place in a close race! No medals this time around but lots of fun had by all.

Netball:

The St Joseph's netball teams have got off to a flying start this year. The first game of the season saw the year 10 team win 12-8 and the year 9 draw 5 all against Jarrow. Players of the match were Gracie Murray and Scarlett Reid for their fantastic performances. A big shout out to Scarlett who managed this achievement whilst playing on an older team! Well done all- keep up the hard work!

Our netball teams have been working hard this term and playing well in the South Tyneside League. The year 7s played their first fixture against Harton and although we lost, the girls loved playing in a competitive setting, and gave it their all. The year 8s have had a great start, winning 2 matches against Jarrow and Harton and only slightly missing out on a win against Boldon. Looking forward to seeing both teams developing their confidence and match play in the new year

Cross Country Championships:

Back at the start of November we took 90 students to the South Tyneside X-Country Championships with students competing across Year 7 to 11. We managed 5 podium finished and 26 students qualified for the Durham schools event. There were also 2 team wins on the day, a second place in the combined schools competition and lots of happy faces on what was a very cold day!



Celebrate success

Year 9 football update:

A great end to 2024 for the year 9 school football team. After 5 wins out of 5 in the league since September, the boys have also managed to make it to the semi finals of the county cup thanks to a very close 4-3 win after extra time against Monkwearmouth. Well done boys and good luck for 2025!



Year 7 Students Bring History Mysteries to Life with Creative Projects

This year, our Year 7 students embarked on a captivating journey into the past as they developed their historical enquiry skills through the study of “history mysteries.” The topic allowed students to explore some of history’s most intriguing and puzzling stories, encouraging them to think critically and ask big questions about the past.

To complement their in-class studies, students were given an exciting homework challenge: to research their own history mystery and present their findings through an interactive and creative “lapbook.” The result was a spectacular array of projects that showcased not only the students’ research skills but also their imagination and dedication.

From colorful, interactive booklets to detailed sculptures, the creativity on display was inspiring. Topics ranged from the legendary Loch Ness Monster and the enigma of the Bermuda Triangle to fascinating local mysteries that brought history closer to home.

Each lapbook offered a unique perspective on the mysteries of the past, blending historical analysis with visual storytelling. The effort and enthusiasm of the students were evident in every project, making it a memorable and educational experience for everyone involved.

Congratulations to all our Year 7 students for their fantastic work! You’ve shown how history can come alive through curiosity, creativity, and a passion for learning.

Today in History



John F. Kennedy, the 35th president of the United States, was assassinated on 22nd November 1962.

JFK was visiting Dallas, Texas as part of his election campaign and as crowds lined the streets to welcome him shots rang out. After being shot in the neck and head, Kennedy was pronounced dead at 1 p.m.



His accused killer was Lee Harvey Oswald, a former US Marine who had embraced communism and defected for a time to the Soviet Union. Oswald never stood trial for murder, because, while being transferred from custody, he was shot and killed on live TV by Jack Ruby, a Texas nightclub owner.

Despite official investigations into his death concluding Lee Harvey Oswald was the killer and that he acted alone many Americans believe JFK's death was the result of a conspiracy. And the circumstances surrounding the assassination remain the subject of widespread speculation.

FLAME

BIMA DIGITAL DAY 2024

Sponsored by



On Wednesday 13th November, 30 Year 9 students took part in the **2024 BIMA Digital Day**.

BIMA Day aims to give students an insight into a world of digital careers by working with digital experts and competing in a sponsored, nationwide digital challenge, with a chance to win £500 cash for their school!



Read what the students got up to below!

My team designed a new app called Microsoft Teach! We made this to help people with learning difficulties, like dyslexia. An AI Voice will read out questions, you can also gain things called micro-coins to acquire outfits and different voices for your AI Teacher! I think BIMA was a very fun experience overall and it was great to have fun with friends!



I took part in BIMA day and it was a very fun and outgoing day learning about new things and experiencing things. We worked in groups and created things before presenting them and showing your creativity.



Dragons' Den Club: KS3 Entrepreneurs

Ignite Their Business Ideas

In the business department, creativity and entrepreneurial spirit is alive and well, thanks to the newly launched Key Stage 3 Dragon's Den Club. Inspired by the popular TV show, this club gives students a platform to develop their own business ideas and pitch them to a panel of "dragons" later in the year.

The Dragon's Den Club is a space where aspiring young entrepreneurs can come together to explore their innovative ideas, refine their pitching skills, and learn the fundamentals of running a business. Every two weeks our 7 teams meet to brainstorm, work on their pitches, and collaborate with like-minded individuals.

One of the standout features of the Dragon's Den Club is how it encourages students to think outside the box. The ideas being pitched are as diverse as the students themselves. From eco-friendly products and tech innovations to community-focused services and arts-based businesses, the range of ideas shows just how inventive our students can be.

As part of the club's activities, students are given the chance to practice their presentation skills and work through the challenges of bringing an idea to life. Whether it's creating a business plan, designing a prototype, or figuring out how to market a product, the process teaches vital skills that will serve them well in the future.

At the heart of the Dragon's Den Club is the pitching process. Once students have developed their business ideas, they face the nerve-wracking but exciting task of presenting them



Amazing causes

Community Spirit Shines at Charity Football Match for Sunderland Community Soup Kitchen

Despite the awful weather, a special charity football match took place yesterday to raise funds for the Sunderland Community Soup Kitchen. The event brought together players of all ages, with Joe Wallace, the youngest participant, standing out for his incredible effort and determination.

Joe, who gave 100% on the pitch, demonstrated the passion and spirit that the day was all about. His performance was a proud moment for his family and the wider community, showing that age is no barrier when it comes to making a difference.

The match also highlighted the involvement of TJ Coaching, a local coaching company, and its founder Thomas, who shares a deep connection with the community. As a former student of St. Joseph's, Thomas has continued to support the school by sponsoring the Year 8 football kits—a gesture that strengthens ties between local organizations and the youth they inspire.

Adding to the day's significance, representatives from the Sunderland Community Soup Kitchen joined the event, capturing moments from the match in photos. Their presence served as a reminder of the vital work they do in supporting those in need across the city.

The event was a resounding success, showcasing the power of sport to bring people together and Everyone involved can be proud of their contribution to a great cause that benefits the heart of the Sunderland community.

A great day for a great cause, indeed!



Auschwitz project

Mrs. McEwen

Lessons from Auschwitz is a project run by the Holocaust Educational Trust, a registered charity which works to ensure that people from every background are educated about the Holocaust and the important lessons to be learned for today. The Holocaust was the murder of approximately six million Jewish men, women and children by Nazi Germany and its collaborators during the Second World War. The *Lessons from Auschwitz* project has allowed tens of thousands of young people to have the opportunity to visit the site of the former Nazi concentration and death camp Auschwitz-Birkenau. Its intention is that they return inspired and passionate about ensuring that the legacy of the Holocaust continues for generations to come, and having seen where antisemitism can lead, they are committed to calling it out wherever it is found.

In November this year, six students from our year 12 participated in the project with over a hundred other students from the North East region, learning about the background to the Holocaust and, more poignantly, about some of the specific victims who suffered at the hands of the Nazi regime. These case studies gave a far more human face to what can be inconceivable to imagine and made us all appreciate that each one of the victims had a life, a family and a future before it was cruelly snatched away.

The main part of the project was the visit to Auschwitz-Birkenau, which took place on Tuesday 12th November. After a very early start, we flew from Newcastle to Krakow in Poland, from where we were taken by coach to the camp, which is about 30 minutes away from the city next to the village of Oświęcim. On arrival, we passed through the infamous gate with its *Arbeit macht frei* ('Work makes you free') sign and visited various blocks in Auschwitz I which have been converted into museums to commemorate different aspects of the Holocaust. From the piles of suitcases and personal possessions taken from those transported to the camp, to the contemporary photographs which were displayed around the site, it is difficult to say which artefact had the most profound effect on all of us. Everyone was silent and lost in thought as we left at the end of the morning. The afternoon visit to Auschwitz II – otherwise known as Birkenau – was an even more sombre occasion. The sight of the notorious gate, with its twin railway track, was a chilling reminder of the more than 1.1 million peo-

Olivia Beavis:

My visit to Auschwitz-Birkenau has profoundly impacted my understanding of the history and humanity around the topic. As the first step of the project, I attended a Zoom seminar which involved multiple students from the region and we discussed a range of topics and stories about the Holocaust. It was great to hear other people's opinions. We were also prepared for the trip by discussing what to expect and warned that we may find it upsetting or emotional at times.

The first part of the trip was to the Auschwitz I museum. Walking through the exhibits you couldn't help but feel a heavy weight in the air, a sombre reminder of the millions of lives lost and the atrocities that occurred. Each photograph and artefact tells a story of resilience, suffering and the indomitable spirit of those who endured unimaginable horrors. It was hard to imagine that such events happened where I stood. Walking through each Personal stories were told about the people, the families torn apart and the individuals that were stripped of their dignity. It was difficult to reconcile life with the darkness humanity can inflict upon itself.

Seeing the actual death camp site, Birkenau, had an even greater impact and listening to the rabbi explaining his grandfather's tragic fate in the Holocaust was significant. He also talked about his own struggles with being Jewish in the contemporary world, which was extremely eye opening. He reminded us of why it is important to call out any prejudice we see, whether towards Jewish people or anyone else.

The journey overall deepened my understanding of the Holocaust and had a huge effect on me as a person.

Auschwitz project

George Santayana:

It's hard to put into words how moving this trip was. It's even harder still to imagine living through a time of hate and behaviour so inhumane that a group believed the best solution was genocide. It's also scary that the concentration camp we visited reminded me of issues of persecution which still go on today. Just because we can't see it doesn't mean that it's not happening. Six million Jews had their lives ripped from them when much of the world stayed in ignorance. We must not let history repeat itself and visiting Auschwitz-Birkenau is a reminder of the horrors which men perpetrated against other men.

On the day of the visit, we entered Birkenau at around 3pm and left at 5.30pm. Eighty years ago, that would have been enough time for Jews to arrive on trains, go through the selection process and then be sent either to forced labour or death. These were innocent women and children, the elderly, the sick and anyone who didn't fit the bill for those who had power over them. If they survived this process, they entered a living hell of starvation, disease and despair, evidence of which could be seen in the bleakness of the surroundings and the remains of the huge gas chambers. But what will stay with me the most from my visit is the knowledge that despite the Nazis' best efforts, they did not eradicate the Jewish religion. Even in this, the darkest of places, people celebrated their faith, carrying in their hearts the belief carried down through the generations and it was this which remained after the liberation in January 1945.

Molly Hope:

When we were offered the opportunity to go to Auschwitz-Birkenau as part of the *Lessons* project, I immediately knew that I should apply to go. However, I could never have been prepared for how it would feel and what I would see. What shocked me about Auschwitz was how unchanged it was from when it was originally liberated in 1945. I think that seeing this in person was extremely important to help to gain some understanding of how life really was for the 1.1 million innocent Jewish people whose lives were taken at this horrific place.

On returning to school the day after the visit, I was asked by several teachers and classmates if I'd enjoyed my trip or had fun. Although I felt very privileged to have experienced it, this was definitely not the right way of describing it. I found it difficult to explain to people that only by visiting could you even begin to imagine the kind of place it is.

It was dark. It was eerie. It was still and unsettling. When leaving Auschwitz, despite having learned a lot from the exhibits and from our fantastic guide, seeing the concentration camp and museum in person made me ask more questions than I ever would have before visiting, questions to which there may never be answers.

The main message I took away from this project is the importance of society today still educating people, especially of my generation, about the atrocities to ensure nothing like this will ever happen again.



The Magpies View

Crystal Palace vs Newcastle United 30 November

After counting down the days to midweek, it was finally gameday. Today was an away day for Newcastle United—my third of the season. It was 3:15 am when my alarm sounded, and five minutes later, I was ready and raring to embark on my 18-hour round trip to the capital city.

After a short drive to Berwick Street, Newcastle, I joined about 60 fellow Geordies to await the bus, which was our transport for the day since all trains to King's Cross had been cancelled. When the bus arrived, I was pleasantly surprised—it was quite well-equipped, with chargers and tables, a luxury not often granted when traveling but greatly appreciated.

We were on the road for about nine hours when the floodlights finally emerged from Croydon's skyline. Selhurst Park was today's venue, and after completing a walk around, I wasn't too impressed with the stadium's condition.

Before the match, I met up with other Newcastle fans at The Prince George, a Greene King pub just a five-minute walk from the ground. The pub was pleasant and catered to the massive number of fans gathered there. While sipping my Coke Zero, I decided to socialize and struck up a conversation with a Welsh couple next to me., they supported Newcastle, and we had a great chat. I introduced them to my TikTok page and asked if they'd like to share a score prediction for my video. They happily agreed, and before long, it was time for the five-minute march to Selhurst Park.

The area around the ground wasn't the best, with many parts feeling rough around the edges, though I didn't find it as bad as some had described. Once back at the stadium, I bought a programme for my collection and scanned my digital away ticket into what I can only describe as the worst sports venue I've ever visited. The toilets were underground, half the away concourse was outside, and the remaining part was far too cramped. It took 25 minutes just to get my food, and while waiting in line, a metal beam dripped corroded liquid onto my new jacket.

Despite these issues, I was happy with my seat—a front-row spot with no restricted views, a rarity for Palace away games. After a three-minute rendition of *"Glad All Over,"* the game began. Unfortunately, the first half was dreadful. Both teams struggled to get out of their halves, and Joe Linton picked up an early injury.

The second half started brilliantly, with Newcastle taking the lead thanks to a lucky deflection goal. The away end erupted, and my section ran to the front to celebrate with the players, accidentally knocking over the advertising boards. However, with about 10 minutes left, it looked like, despite not having a single shot on target, we might take all three points. Sadly, it wasn't meant to be. In the fourth minute of additional time, Munoz equalized for Palace.

Newcastle fans were understandably furious with the team's performance. At the time, Palace were near the relegation zone, and we hadn't managed a single shot on target all match.

After leaving the ground and boarding the bus, I posted my matchday rant on Tik two hours editing footage for my YouTube vlog. The drive home was long—around 10 hours—and we finally got back at around 2 am. It was a very long, disappointing day.

If I were to rate the away day, I'd give it a 3/10. Click the QR code below to watch the matchday vlog

By Joe McKenzie-Howorth

