



St Benedict's Newsletter 310

21 November 2025



Catholic Social Teaching

Thursday of this week was the anniversary of the death of St Edmund the Martyr, so let us take a little time to reflect on the life of the saint whose name shapes our town, Bury St Edmunds.

St Edmund, King of East Anglia, is remembered for his courage, his deep Christian faith, and his commitment to justice and the wellbeing of his people. His witness speaks strongly to several strands of Catholic Social Teaching, especially the call to defend human dignity, stand for justice, and work for the common good.

Scripture reminds us of the kind of leadership Edmund is likely to have showed: *"The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep."* – John 10:11 St Edmund lived these words with remarkable faithfulness.

St Edmund died on 20th November 869 during a Viking invasion. According to tradition, he was captured and ordered to renounce his Christian faith. Edmund refused. He chose loyalty to Christ and to his people over his own safety. Because of this, he was tortured, shot with arrows, and finally beheaded.

The legend tells that when his followers searched for his body, they found his head in the forest, guarded by a great wolf who protected it until it could be safely recovered. This became a powerful sign of God's care and Edmund's holiness, and it remains one of the most famous parts of his story here in Bury St Edmunds.

For those of us who live, study, or work in this town, St Edmund reminds us of the Christian roots of our community: courage, faith, hospitality, justice, and care for others.

St Mother Teresa reminds us of the impact of small but loving actions *"None of us, including me, ever do great things. But we can all do small things, with great love."*

St Edmund's great sacrifice was built on a lifetime of choosing to serve his people with faith and love. St Edmund's life speaks to several important strands of Catholic Social Teaching. He stood up for what was right, protected the vulnerable, and placed the wellbeing of others before his own comfort or safety.

This week, inspired by his example, we can reflect on:

- **Wisdom:** Recognising how our choices affect others and seeking to act with fairness, courage, and integrity.
- **Compassion:** Caring for those around us who feel overlooked or burdened.
- **Resilience:** Holding firm to our values, even when it is difficult.

As we think about St Edmund's life and death, we are invited to reflect on his bravery and his devotion to the common good. We can ask ourselves, do my actions help those around me feel supported and valued? Am I willing to stand up for what is right, even when it is not easy? And how can I help create justice, peace, and unity in our school and community?

True leadership is rooted in service, courage, and love. We can challenge ourselves to do something each day that strengthens the community, help a classmate, greet someone with kindness, include someone who seems left out, or speak up gently when you see something unfair. Small acts build a strong, caring community.

Prayer

Loving God,

We thank you for the example of St Edmund,
who remained faithful to you.

Help us to follow his example by seeking justice,
showing compassion, and working for the common good.

Give us wisdom to make loving choices,
resilience in standing up for what is right,

and a heart that reflects your love.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.



Careers Update

On Tuesday 18th November, all students in Years 7 and 8 participated in the annual BAE Systems STEM Roadshow, in partnership with the RAF and Royal Navy. This year's topical theme was Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Few of us anticipated the impact of this workshop, either in terms of our increased awareness of the amazing advances in technology currently with us, or the slightly unnerving potential of its remit in the future. That said, Matt, Sophie and Layla who delivered the workshop in an exceptionally engaging and inspiring way, ensured we never lost sight of the importance of human creativity, innovation and problem-solving in the process.

During the roadshow, we met an actual cobot - *Fluffy*, the collaborative robot dog - who not only obeyed commands such as "Walk like a human!" (on two legs) but was able to observe

the entire auditorium and *vocally* share a detailed description of this space and the students in it!

Both Year groups were invited to create original song lyrics, compose music and produce an accompanying music video using AI at each stage of the process. The resulting offerings were amazing, crazy and brilliantly funny (I am sure Year 8s "*Mushrooms and Cheese*" song stayed with many after the event!).

The BAE Systems STEM team were keen to highlight the wide array of career pathways in engineering and AI that our students could aspire to, noting that the current shortage of digital skills meant these would be particularly valued by employers in the future.

The Roadshow continues to be a highlight in our annual Careers Programme for Key Stage 3 students. We will certainly be looking forward to our next encounter with the BAE Systems team, although we are pondering how they will top this one!

Miss Hahn



Little Princess Trust



Mrs Senior's Big Haircut for the Little Princess Trust

The Little Princess Trust is a charity that provides wigs to young people who are experiencing hairloss due to cancer treatment or through conditions that cause hairloss. The charity accepts donations of hair over 30cm. Since 2011, Mrs Senior has donated 1.3M of hair. (Her hair grows very quickly!)

Like many students and staff have done before, Mrs Senior will be donating her hair to the Little Princess Trust on 29th November. If you would like to sponsor Mrs Senior's donation and help the Little Princess Trust turn the donation into wigs, this is now an option on ParentPay.

Little Princess Trust

St Benedict's Catholic School
Developing Wisdom, Compassion and Resilience through Prayer and Work
Our Values

Computer Science Competition

This month in Computer Science, pupils from Year 7 all the way up to Year 13 took part in the annual Bebras Computational Thinking Challenge, joining hundreds of thousands of students worldwide in tackling a set of fiendishly clever logic and problem-solving tasks.

Across the school, our pupils approached the challenge with real enthusiasm — some with quiet determination, others with the sort of competitive sparkle that only a timed puzzle can bring! What stood out above everything else was their willingness to persevere, think creatively, and apply the computational reasoning skills we nurture in lessons every day.

The Bebras Challenge is designed to stretch thinking, encourage curiosity, and reward logical problem-solving rather than specific technical knowledge. It's been brilliant to see so many of our students rise to that challenge, often surprising themselves with just how far their reasoning skills can take them.

We look forward to receiving the official results later this month, but for now, we want to congratulate every participant from Years 7–13 for representing the school so positively. Their effort, focus and open-minded approach to problem-solving make us incredibly proud.

Well done to all who took part!

Mr Foreman

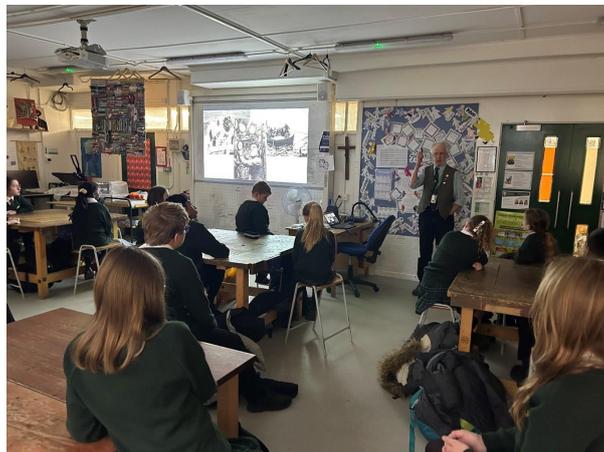
Art Exhibition and Remembrance Assembly

The work of students who entered the RBL competition is currently on public display at St Mary's Church, Bury St Edmunds, where it will remain until the end of November. The exhibition presents a diverse range of artistic interpretations exploring the themes of remembrance and honour.

In addition, the Year 7 collaborative art project is on display. Each student produced a clay poppy, inscribing it with words of hope and gratitude dedicated to those who are serving or have served.

This week, Year 7 also attended a remembrance assembly delivered by Mr Gregory on the theme of *The Battle of the Atlantic*. The presentation offered a compelling selection of historical insights accompanied by impactful imagery

Mrs Peasey





Poetry

A huge well done to Alexis Rose Josy in year 10 who took part in a Cambridge University literary competition. She submitted a poem for the Peterhouse JCR Arts competition run by Peterhouse College. Her submission was shortlisted in the final 10 nationally based on the interpretation of the theme, originality, and creativity. She was invited to a special celebration event at Peterhouse, Cambridge on 30th October where she had the opportunity to present her work to Peterhouse JCR members and staff. Although, she was not the winner she had a wonderful experience of spending a day at the campus, feeling what it is like to be a student there and was awarded with a certificate.

Well done Alexis!

The Looking Glass

The sunrays filter on the sleepy world

Catching up with the transformations

It has had over the last decades

From surplus inventions

To shocking discoveries

In medical science, Earth and everything else

Tis only one thing that has only remained

Sorrowfully the same

In the perspective of Mother Nature

And wandering spirits from centuries ago

Man's devastating violence

To the world and itself

Climate change and global warming

Where seas crash, creeping higher and higher

Like a cunning vine to overwhelm its victim

Summers have hit rocket high

Leaving citizens gasping for water

Parched throats are plenty galore

Winter's blissful cool after the stifling summer

Is stolen as our damage to the world

Leaves the seasons and temperatures in tatters

Paper is mercilessly teared and trees, nature alike

Destroyed for humankind's selfish purpose

Comfortable book pages with its

Mesmerising new-book smell
Which kids in the past yearned for
Have been shoved aside
For blaring white screens
Pure white glares harshly into
The young eyes of children
Now obsessed with looking
“Cool”, “Sporty” or “Popular”
For social credit for 2 more likes
Than Person X on Insta
Or able to have more views on TikTok
Than Person Y

Violence amongst man and man
Has reached a raging crescendo
Palestine and Israel
Ukraine and Russia
Countries flags tainted by
Innocents blood
Like an unwanted and unneeded
Sacrifice for not even an atonement of sins
Generations have not learnt the ancient mistakes
Committed by our elders
For the graveness of war and its impacts
Still contaminate this so called “modern” world
Which yet still repeat mistakes that were supposed
To be eradicated by now

As I look into the looking glass
I see a reflection of future generations
Questioning the decisions made by us homosapiens
A species with a hubris
That's repeating mistakes for decades
For this warning foreshadows
A tale that is yet to come
If we repeat these mistakes in what is supposed to be A changing world ...

I wanted to take a different approach to this theme of "A Changing World" because even though there are brilliant discoveries such as scientific or medicinal breakthroughs and improvements in society now; there is the *unchanging* fact that man has remained the exact same in his actions and decisions even from the start of time. Others mainly take "A Changing World" positively because of major inventions such as the internet which we hadn't had before the 1960s and massive alterations to things back in the past which has led to an easier everyday life. However, there is a pessimistic note which isn't targeted enough in my opinion that ironically is something that *hasn't* changed in this world of improvements and new products invented every second. This is us, mankind, humans. A line from my poem which says "Generations have not learnt the ancient mistakes" clearly highlights the flaw which is that humans have not adapted to these failures committed in the past lives of our ancestors and choose to continue these grave faults. This contrasts largely to the theme given for this competition, but I think is essential for the youth and future descendants to understand, if they want to contribute to this already changing world in terms of environment, daily life and technology but in the sense of morality and mental health acknowledgement that humans are lacking to change in this modern world. This is how I think my poem relates to the theme "A Changing World."

Netball

On Tuesday 18th November the year 8 girls played a Netball fixture at Thurston Community College. The year 8s were unstoppable and won 11:0 against Thurston and drew 6:6 with Stowmarket High School. They have shown amazing teamwork, character, and resilience! Congratulations for their amazing performance!!! Well done!!

Ms Szczech



A Level Sociology - Visiting Speaker

On Thursday 20 November, A Level Sociology students welcomed another guest speaker to their lesson. Dr Butler shared his experiences as a pediatrician with the group, discussing his everyday experiences as well as the challenges and rewards of his role. It was fascinating to hear about the varied nature of his work. Dr Butler was also able to share insights with us about the social aspects of illness and health, something which we especially study in Sociology. We also enjoyed hearing about the teaching and research aspect of Dr Butler's career and we were particularly interested to learn about AI developments in medicine and healthcare. It was great to hear his story and experiences.

His talk has helped the class to understand the role of doctors more and allowed them to see how some of the theories they have studied apply in the real world of medicine.

Thank you to Dr Butler for giving up his time to share with us.

Mrs Eden

Sixth Form Applications

Applications for St Benedict's Sixth Form are open and even if you're undecided about where you want to go, we encourage you to apply so you keep your options open.

[Application Form](#)

We understand there have been some problems with submitting the form and are working to fix this, if you are struggling to submit your application, please email Mrs Slater directly: aslater@st-benedicts.suffolk.sch.uk



St Benedict's Catholic School Sixth Form

What makes St Benedict's Exceptional?

A Level Results 2025

- 24% of grades awarded were A - A*
- 55% of grades awarded were A* - B
- 98% of grades awarded were A* - E

Named Top Performing state school in Suffolk in 2021, 2022 and 2023 in the Sunday Times Good School Guide

- Small class sizes
- 10 hours teaching per subject over two weeks
- Expert team of advisers to guide students through the UCAS procedure
- Over 85% of our students achieve their first choice university
- A high proportion of our students go to Russell Group Universities, including Oxbridge



Wisdom Compassion Resilience

LEAVERS 2025

A SELECTION OF DESTINATIONS AND SUBJECTS

Anglia Ruskin University	Biomedical Science
Durham University	Engineering (aeronautical)
Hartpury University	Agriculture with Crop Science
Loughborough University	Industrial Design
Newcastle University	Philosophy
Norwich University of the Arts	Fine Art
University of Bath	Computer Science (with placement)
University of Birmingham	Computer Science
University of Bristol	Geography
University of Cambridge	Natural Sciences, Law and Mathematics
University of East Anglia (UEA)	Medicine
University of Exeter	Modern Languages
University of Kent	Ancient History with Archaeology
University of Leeds	Sustainability and Environmental Management
University of Lincoln	Economics
University of Liverpool	Law
University of Nottingham	Electrical and Electronic Engineering
University of Reading	Agriculture
University of Sheffield	Speech and Language Therapy
University of Southampton	Marine Biology
University of Suffolk	Diagnostic Radiography
University of the Arts London	Fashion Public Relations and Communication
University of York	Actuarial Science



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www.st-benedicts.suffolk.sch.uk

School Christmas Lunch - 18 December



St Benedict's Christmas Dinner
Thursday 18th December

Lisa, Heidi, Tina, Elaine, Kayleigh and Sally from the kitchen team invite you to a traditional Christmas Dinner.

Main course:
Roast turkey, pig in blankets, stuffing, roast potatoes, carrots, peas, gravy and optional brussels sprouts, roast parsnips.

Dessert:
Dusted Christmas Chocolate Brownie.

Gluten free, vegetarian, vegan option available.

Price £3 which must be pre booked via parent pay by 11am on 8th December 2025.

The kitchen will not be able to produce any other food on this day.



More information about the Interact crocus planting event

The planting was supported by the Rotary Club and it is to raise awareness of Polio - the flowers represent the purple mark that is used in some countries to show who has been vaccinated. Funds raised through Rotary arranging the bulbs also goes towards supporting the eradication of polio. This fits in with one of the objectives of Interact which is to work towards charitable goals globally-both to raise awareness and funds!

In other [news](#):

Interact will be providing refreshments at the upcoming Year 13 Parents Evening with voluntary cash donations going towards CAFOD.

5 December marks the deadline for our first internally launched competition! (Reminder of photography competition, all entries to be emailed to dhamilton@st-beneficts.suffolk.sch.uk). Theme - Happiness in Nature

Mrs Hamilton

Photography competition

Deadline: Friday 5th of December



Theme: happiness in nature

email entries to: dhamilton@st-benedicts.suffolk.sch.uk

Include your full name, Form group, and age. You may submit up to 3 photographs. Two age categories 11-13 and 14-17. Prizes available for both categories!!! Winners will be submitted to a further Rotary Club competition!

COMPETITION run by Student club - Interact
Images should be at least 1500pixels on longest edge but not exceed 15Mb in size.







Non-Taught Languages

We have a tradition at St Benedict's of students who have taken GCSEs and occasionally A levels in subjects that have not been taught at school. In most cases this has been because the language has been spoken at home and there has also been an emphasis on reading and writing in the home language. We regularly have a cohort of students who take Polish GCSE and have also entered students for French, Spanish, German, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, Arabic and Chinese. We recommend that non-taught languages options are taken in year 10.

For those students who do have a second language, the school is willing to fund the cost of the examination entry and plan for the listening and speaking elements of the exam. It is entirely the responsibility of the student and parents to ensure that the pupil is adequately prepared for the relevant exam.

Examination entries need to be made early in the Spring term so if you would like to be entered for an exam in a non-taught language in summer 2026 then please complete the following form by Monday January 12th 2026.

[Non - Taught Language Qualification](#)

Caroline Edwards

Exams Officer

cedwards@st-benedicts.suffolk.sch.uk

December Non-Uniform Days

As in previous years, and shared at the start of the year, each Friday in December is offered as a non-uniform day in aid of charity.

We ask that students donate a minimum of £1 through parent pay or by bringing in cash to hand in on the gate.

Whilst there are themes for each Friday we do urge families not to consider any theme as an expectation for additional cost- i.e please do not feel that you need to buy a Christmas jumper, but we hope that students can enter into the spirit of the days, perhaps by adding some festive cheer (tinsel?) to an existing outfit.

The themes and causes this year are:

Friday 5 December- Christmas jumpers/ Festive - Donations in aid of St Nicholas Hospice

Friday 12 December- PJs/ Onesies- Donations in aid of Cafod

Friday 19 December- Sparkly/ Festive- Donations in aid of Children and Families in Need in Zimbabwe.

We hope that these planned days give an opportunity as a community to raise funds for good causes. We ask that students dress appropriately for a school environment and leave this to parents' good judgement. Any item worn to school should be inoffensive in terms of images and slogans and mindful of the variety of experience and diversity of our school community.

ST BENEDICT'S
Non-Uniform Fridays

FRIDAY 5 DECEMBER ★
CHRISTMAS/FESTIVE JUMPER DAY
IN AID OF ST NICHOLAS HOSPICE

FRIDAY 12 DECEMBER ★
PYJAMA/ONESIE DAY IN AID OF CAFOD

FRIDAY 19 DECEMBER
SPARKLY/FESTIVE DAY IN AID OF
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN NEED IN
ZIMBABWE ★

SUGGESTED £1 DONATION WHICH CAN BE PAID IN CASH OR ON PARENTPAY

Get ready to get festive!

Christmas Card Competition

CHRISTMAS CARD HOUSE COMPETITION

WE WANT TO SEE YOUR BEST CARD DESIGNS!



ENTRIES CAN BE IN ANY MEDIA, BUT MUST REPRESENT THE SCHOOLS CATHOLIC VALUES TO THOSE RECEIVING IT. WE ASK THAT ALL ENTRIES DISPLAY RELIGIOUS IMAGERY REPRESENTING PART OF A CATHOLIC CHRISTMAS.

HOUSE COMPETITION PRIZES

THERE WILL BE A FIRST, SECOND & THIRD PLACE FOR EACH YEAR GROUP !

- ★ **WINNER: 100 HOUSE POINTS & ART PACK PRIZE**
- **SECOND: 60 HOUSE POINTS & MINI ART PACK PRIZE**
- **THIRD: 40 HOUSE POINTS & MINI ART PACK PRIZE**

HOUSE POINTS ARE ADDED TO WHOLE HOUSE TOTAL ACROSS EACH YEAR GROUP (7, 8 AND 9).

WHAT MAKES A GOOD ENTRY?

- Imagery reflecting a Catholic Christmas (choose part of the Christmas story to represent).
- Care taken with your chosen materials and presentation & name written clearly on back.

WINNING SUBMISSION NEEDS TO BE EASILY SCANNED OR PHOTOGRAPHED FOR PRINTING

LAST YEAR'S WINNER!



Casper's beautiful scene was created using oil pastel and collage. The outcome is magical and showcases precision, skill and imagination.

Casper Greenaert

SECOND PLACE



Alexis Rose Joss

THIRD PLACE



Sophie Nolan

FOURTH PLACE



Fenny Newcombe

YOU CAN ENTER OUTCOMES MADE ON A5 OR A4 MATERIAL

Collage

Oil Painting

Paper cutting

Watercolour

Colour Pencil

Acrylic Painting

November 2025

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

DEADLINE 24TH NOVEMBER!

- Deliver completed entry to the Art Department
- Or
- Email: CToms@st-benedicts.suffolk.sch.uk

Data Collection Sheet Updates

It is important that the information we hold about your child is kept up-to-date.

Please remember that as a parent/guardian/carer, you can check, amend and update most of your child's information on Arbor, including changing your mobile number and address or adding information such as religion, family contacts, medical information and transport method.

If you are struggling to do this please email Arbor@st-benedicts.suffolk.sch.uk where we will be able to help you.

Thanks

Mrs Defew

Reporting Absences

Reporting your child's absence

If your child is unwell or has an appointment e.g. dentist/doctor could you please leave a message by 9.00am including the reason for the absence via:

Phone: 01284 753512 and Choose option 1:

And then choose option 1 for students in year 7-11 and option 2 for students in the sixth form

OR

Email: attendance@st-benedicts.suffolk.sch.uk

For information on what to do if your child has COVID-like symptoms please see the following link for NHS guidance:

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>

Just a reminder that if you do not inform us by 9.00am or use the above phone/email address, you will receive an email requesting the reason for your child's absence. All unexplained absences will be marked as unauthorised and there will be a follow-up phone call from the Attendance Officer. Please note the school operates a first-day response to absences.

If, in exceptional circumstances, you need to request permission for your child to be absent from school during term time, you should complete a **leave of absence application form (please see link below)**, at least three weeks in advance, stating the reason why the absence must be taken in term time. Please note that the Fixed Penalty Fine is now £80 per legal guardian for unauthorised absences of 10 sessions (5 days) or more.

<https://www.st-benedicts.suffolk.sch.uk/attachments/download.asp?file=74&type=pdf>

Thank you very much.

Mrs Wesley - Attendance Officer

Dates for your Diary



26 November - Year 13 Parents Evening

27 November - Lunchtime Careers Talk: "A journey in Nursing" All welcome

27 November - Sixth Form Trip to London

27 November - Lunchtime Careers Talk in A1: "The Call to Care Beyond Borders" with international Nurse, Rea Realino

28 November - PD Day

5 December - Non-Uniform, Christmas Jumper Day in aid of St Nicholas Hospice

12 December - Non-Uniform, Pyjama Day in aid of Cafod

19 December - Non-Uniform, Sparkly/Festive Day in aid of Children and Families in Need in Zimbabwe

[Term Dates](#)

[Contact Us](#)



St Benedict's Catholic School

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[Instagram](#)