



St Benedict's Newsletter 317

30 January 2026



Catholic Social Teaching

This week our focus within Catholic Social Teaching has been **Solidarity**. Solidarity reminds us that none of us exists in isolation. Our lives are woven together by shared experiences, responsibilities, and hopes. What happens to one person affects others, and we are called by God to recognise this deep connection in the way we think, speak, and act. It challenges us

to move beyond seeing people as “us” and “them” and instead recognise that each person’s life, dignity, and story are bound up with our own.

In assemblies this week, we reflected on what it means to recognise our deep interconnectedness. We were challenged to think about who we speak to, listen to, and spend time with. Solidarity calls us not only to engage with people we agree with or feel comfortable around, but to remain open to those who think differently from us. Choosing not to speak to someone simply because they are different is not the way of solidarity.

Our reflection was grounded in Jesus’ powerful teaching from the Gospel of Matthew: *“Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”* Matthew 25:31-40. This passage reminds us that our relationship with God is inseparable from our relationships with others. How we treat people, especially those who are overlooked, excluded, or different from us, is how we treat Christ himself.

Pope Francis echoed this call to solidarity in *Fratelli Tutti*, reminding us that we are shaped by relationships far wider than our immediate circles: *“Nor can I reduce my life to relationships with a small group, even my own family: I cannot know myself apart from a broader network of relationships, including those that have preceded me and shaped my entire life.”* This challenges us to resist closing ourselves off. Solidarity invites us to listen, to learn, and to grow through encounter, even when conversations feel uncomfortable or opinions differ.

Solidarity becomes real when it shapes how we act each day in our school community:

- **Wisdom:** Recognising that no one has the full picture. Wisdom helps us understand that listening to different voices deepens our understanding and helps us grow.
- **Compassion:** Choosing to see the person before the opinion. Compassion allows us to treat others with kindness and respect, even when we disagree.
- **Resilience:** Staying open to dialogue when it feels challenging. Resilience gives us the courage to keep building bridges rather than walls, and to remain connected rather than withdrawing.

As we move through the week, let us reflect: Who do I naturally listen to, and who do I avoid? How can I remain respectful and open when I disagree? In what ways can I recognise Christ in those who are different from me? When we choose solidarity, we help build a community rooted in understanding, dignity, and peace. We were challenged in our assemblies to go through this week and try to positively engage with someone we differ with, to not answer back but take time to explain why opinion differs and to aim to understand the root of their view and above all to be happy to disagree while not being dismissive of them as a person of worth.

Loving God,

You created us as one human family,
each person connected and valued.
Open our hearts to recognise Christ in one another,
especially in those who are different from us.
Teach us to listen with wisdom,
to respond with compassion,
and to persevere with resilience
as we build bridges of understanding.
May our school community reflect your love
and grow in unity and peace.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Careers Update

Year 10 Next Steps

Following their Careers assembly on Post-16 choices last week, we - Head of Year 10, Mr Harrison, and I - are planning to offer a dedicated Q&A session to our Year 10 cohort to answer any questions or concerns that have emerged about this next step.

You can support us in our preparations for this session by researching the main options with your child(ren):

- [A Levels](#)
- [T Levels](#)
- [Vocational \(job/career-related\) courses](#) and
- [Apprenticeships](#)

Please feel free to submit your own questions to me directly by email too:

AHahn@st-benedicts.suffolk.sch.uk



Year 7

Today, I began my round of visits to our Year 7 students who are studying Careers and the World of Work in their PSHE lessons. My aim is to introduce myself as the school's Head of Careers, and outline my role as a source of information, advice and guidance (IAG) for students throughout their career journey at St. Benedict's. I also wanted to gather information about students' passions and interests that will help guide my planning for the Careers Programme!

My first stop was Mr. Richmond's class with 7P and, as hoped, I was not disappointed by the level of enthusiasm, engagement and knowledge in the room! Students shared their passions for creative, scientific, sporting and design careers, including aspirations to pursue pathways in space, medicine, animal care and photography. I can't wait to see what the rest of our Year 7s have to share!

Miss Hahn

Languages Day

On **Wednesday 28th January**, St Benedict's proudly celebrated **International Languages Day**, recognising and celebrating the rich cultural diversity within our school community. Students marked the occasion by wearing traditional cultural dress and taking part in a variety of activities, including a bake sale, tutor quiz, and a flags quiz.

Year 8 and 9 students also enjoyed language taster sessions, giving them the opportunity to explore new languages and cultures.

A huge thank you to everyone who contributed to the day, with special thanks to the **sixth form cake sale team** and all those who baked cakes and helped raise funds for **EACH (East Anglian Children's Hospice)**. Your generosity and teamwork helped make the event such a success.

Special recognition goes to the students who delivered foreign language sessions in **Hungarian, German, Polish, Russian and Filipino**. Their incredible presentations and enthusiasm were an amazing contribution to the day.

Carl Conway year13 Adam O'Flynn year 13 Jessica Dive year 13 Natasha Dive year 11

Ara Anacleto year 12 Raf Calumpiano year 12 Franek Saladra year 9 Nadia Kroszkiewicz year 10

Patrycja Golonka year 9 Amelia Zabojsz year 10

The day was a powerful reminder that learning a language is more than words — it builds understanding, respect and connection across cultures. As we celebrated together, we were reminded that *“it’s never too late to learn a language,”* and every language learned brings us one step closer to understanding the world and each other.

MFL team



Toiling in Textiles

This week in GCSE Textiles the Yr 10's have been learning how to Toile on the stand; the starting point to designing a garment. They have all demonstrated a great level of knowledge and understanding of fabric manipulation techniques and shown their growing skillsets and creativity. Great fun was had by all, producing incredible final pieces and embedding some valuable learning.

Ms Edge-Bovair







U15 Football

St Benedict's 1 - 0 Northgate High School

On Wednesday 28 January, the U15 girls faced Northgate High School in their County Cup quarter final—a tough fixture against a team who had already shown strong form in the competition. We knew from the outset that this would be one of our most challenging games of the season.

Bennies started brightly, pressing high and showing real intensity in the opening 10 minutes. Their early pressure paid off with a brilliant counter-attacking move. Amelia Smith drove forward on the break before sliding a perfectly weighted pass into the right channel for Polly Saade. Polly delivered a driven cross into the area, where Imogen Grove was waiting to calmly tap home and give Bennies a deserved 1–0 lead.

Throughout the match, Bennies displayed tremendous work rate, strength in the duels, and determination across the pitch. The defensive partnership of Patrycja Golonka and Lily Nathusius stood firm, organising the back line superbly. Behind them, goalkeeper Evelyn Scott produced several crucial one-on-one saves, keeping Bennies ahead during spells when Northgate dominated possession. Despite their time on the ball, Northgate struggled to break through our resilient defence—and when they did, Evelyn was there to deny them.

After a hard-fought performance from every player, the full-time whistle confirmed Bennies' place in the County Cup semi-final, where they will face Kesgrave. An outstanding display full of grit, determination, and teamwork—well done to all involved!

Player of the Match: Imogen Grove

Mr Bates



Economics Olympiad Challenge Success

Thursday morning, a group of our Year 12 and Year 13 students took on the *Economics Olympiad Challenge*, putting their economic knowledge and problem-solving skills to the test. The challenge presented some particularly obscure and demanding questions, requiring students to think carefully, apply theory confidently, and remain resilient under pressure.

The group rose to the occasion, achieving some excellent results overall and demonstrating both strong subject knowledge and resilience.

A special mention goes to **Kuba Kluczynski (Year 13)**, who achieved an outstanding **84%**, and **Alex Walton (Year 12)**, who secured a fantastic **76%** - both exceptional performances in a highly challenging competition.

Congratulations to all students involved for their commitment, wisdom and ambition. Results like these reflect not only academic ability, but a genuine enthusiasm for economics beyond the classroom.

Mr Adams





Young Photographers Skills Celebrated

The work of a talented and creative group of local Young Photographers was celebrated at the Tudor Kitchen at the Guildhall on Saturday morning, at the prizegiving for the Rotary Young Photographer Competition, run by Bury Abbey Rotary Club.

The competition was launched at a photography workshop at the Guildhall in October Half Term 2025, run by local photographer Carol Street, and was also supported by the Interact Club of St Benedicts School.

The theme of the competition was "Happiness in Nature" and this was interpreted in a variety of ways by the enthusiastic youngsters.

The winners of the competition came to celebrate their success on Saturday at the prizegiving at the Guildhall the children's families attended to enjoy coffee and cookies and support their loved ones as they received their prizes and certificates from the Rotary President Melanie Lesser

Phoebe (7) won the Junior age group with her photo of her mischievous puppy enjoying the outdoors.

Winners of the Intermediate age group were Christopher(11) with his grasshopper photo and Patrycja (13) who had taken a photo of a stunning scene in the mountains.

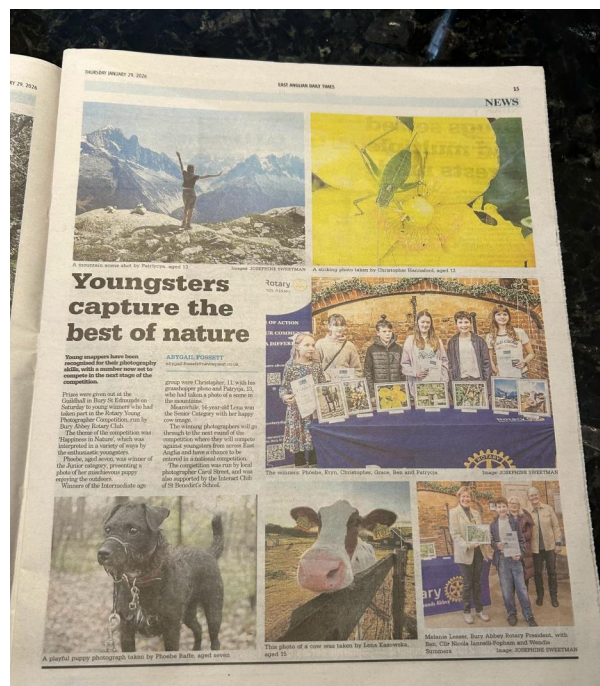
Lena (14) won the Senior Category with her happy cow image.

All winners and runners up were awarded framed prints of their work as well as certificates and prizes from the Rotary Club.

The winning photographers will go through to the next round of the competition where they will compete against youngsters from across East Anglia and have a chance to be entered in a national competition.

The competition was judged by a team including Jo Sweetman Chair of Bury St Edmunds photographic society, local professional photographer Carol Street, and Jamie Dalrymple of the photographic Society Jo Sweetman commented that working with these young people, both at the workshop and in the competition has been inspiring and "a joy". The competition and preceding workshop were generously supported by the Town Council through Abbeygate Ward Councillors Annabelle Mackenzie, and Nicola Iannelli-Popham.

Mrs Hamilton





Year 11 Revision Book Sale

Year 11 Revision Book Sale

At break on Thursday 5 February we will be holding a sale of pre-used revision books which have been kindly donated by Year 12 students.

The sale will take place in the new Sixth Form Common Room and the books will be priced at £1 each. Year 11 students are encouraged to bring cash in on the day, but we will also be using the school card machine.

Mr Murphy

Exam Invigilators Needed

Exam Invigilators

£12.77 per hour plus holiday allowance

No guaranteed hours

Casual

Please see the school website for more information: [Vacancies](#) or contact Ms Buchan: sbuchan@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



2 -5 February - Year 11 Language Speaking Mocks

5 February - Year 9 Options Evening

9 - 13 February - Optional Year 11 In class mocks

9 - 15 February - National Apprenticeship Week (NAW2026)

10 February - Alumni Careers Talk with Dan Bourne, My Mace Consult/Sizewell-C Project Manager Graduate Scheme Experience

7 February - Year 10 Rome Trip Departs

12 February - Year 9 Parents' Evening

13 February - Break up

[Term Dates](#)

Contact Us



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