The Venerable Bede News

Welcome from the Executive Headteacher

Welcome to the latest edition of "Venerable Bede News". Since our last edition, we have been honoured with a visit from the Archbishop of York, the Most Reverend John Sentamu, who came to talk to us about our Prayer Spaces and their impact on the well-being of our Year 7 pupils. He has since written to us and commented on how very articulate our pupils were and how important prayer was to them.

Pupil Voice remains a key focus for us and there are many ways for our pupils to share their views. Pupils are involved in all of our interviews, lesson observations and walkthroughs, sharing their opinion on everything from the curriculum to school meals! Please look out for our whole-school parental survey that will be sent out just after Easter. It is now 2 years since our last one and we are keen to know your views too.

In addition, our RE Ambassadors will be leading some of the prayer stations this year at the Year 6 Durham Cathedral Leavers' Services. In light of this, we would like to say a huge welcome to our future pupils who have just learned that they are joining our Venerable Bede family in September. We look forward to meeting the Year 6 pupils in the summer term and getting to know them.

Wishing you all a peaceful Easter and wonderful Spring with your family and friends

Best regards

GABooth.

Welcome from the Head of School

Welcome to our summer edition. We are delighted to welcome two new members to our Senior Team: Mrs Burgess joins the academy as Deputy Headteacher and Mrs Richardson joins us as an Assistant Headteacher (SENDCo). I know that we will all make them welcome as they join our school community.

I would like to thank all parents / carers who have attended our numerous Parent Evenings and Curriculum Evenings at the academy this year. Feedback from these events has been excellent, and really help us to cement positive working relationships as we move forward together in what are trying times in education currently.

Our Y11 pupils are working hard in preparation for their forthcoming GCSE exams this summer. I would like to wish each of them good luck. Hopefully, all of their hard work will have paid off when they receive their GCSE results on Thursday 24th August. I would also like to say good luck to our Year 10 pupils who will be sitting their mock exams after they return from the Easter Break. Developing perseverance is one of our key Christian values and it enables our pupils to cope with the pressures that an exam season brings.

As we enter our summer term, it is hard to believe that our Year 7 pupils have only been with us since September as they have settled in really well, and are very much a part of the fabric of the academy now. I know that I can rely on them to be outstanding ambassadors and work with the Y6 pupils who will joining our Venerable Bede family in September. Together, we can make the transition to secondary school a positive experience for all.

In this season of new beginnings, I hope that everyone is able to find some time to relax over the Easter break.

Best Wishes

David Airey.

ARCHBISHOP OF YORK VISIT

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 6)

The Archbishop of York, the Most Reverend John Sentamu visits Venerable Bede.

Picture by: Keith Blundy

FANTASTIC FAIRTRADE NEWS

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 7)

AN UPDATE FROM OUR SENIOR PREFECTS

When we first learnt about the responsibilities of becoming a senior prefect, it felt a little daunting. However, after a few weeks it became obvious to us we had absolutely nothing to worry about.

We feel very privileged to hold our positions, as not only did we met the King and Queen of Lesotho last year, more recently we were honoured to meet the Archbishop of York. Although we felt nervous, these experiences helped enormously with our confidence. Our social and public speaking skills have also greatly improved. We are looking forward to helping the younger pupils from our feeder primary schools when they arrive for their transition days in the summer term.

Overall, we feel the best thing about being a senior prefect is knowing we are here to help and support other pupils if they need us. We feel extremely proud of what we have achieved so far.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

ONLINE SAFETY

Year 8 pupils have been learning more about e-safety in their Personal Development lessons.

E-safety specialist, Mark Lloyd, visited school to speak to pupils about the legal implications and restrictions surrounding social media. He also shared real life case studies of people who have fallen victim to cyber bullying, identity theft, blackmail and radicalisation via the internet, to demonstrate how scary the digital world can be if you aren't aware of the pitfalls.

Pupils also covered safe social networking, grooming, sexting, the impact of their digital tattoo, and how to be a good digital citizen.

One Year 8 pupil said, "I am much more aware of the dangers online, and how important it is to keep my password private and not to share any personal information. Anything I am unsure or feel uncomfortable about, I will check with my parents first."

DRAMA WORKSHOPS

Local company, Little Big Butterfly, were invited to Venerable Bede to work with our Year 10 pupils, delivering a bespoke drama workshop aimed at raising pupils' aspirations.

The company focused on how to overcome barriers to achieve your dream job. Our pupils worked in small groups to explore the ways in which they could achieve their goals despite the barriers they may face.

One pupil commented, "I have really enjoyed this workshop as it has helped me to improve my self-confidence and believe in myself."

Little Big Butterfly did an amazing job in ensuring the pupils involved were supported and inspired to reach their full potential.

MORE UPDATES IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

INFORMATION

Editorial Team:
Gill Booth - Executive Headteacher
Lynne O'Leary - Executive Business Manager
Trisha Northway - Executive Headteacher's PA
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KEY DATES

Event	Begins	Ends
Easter Holiday	Fri 07/04/2017 3.00pm	Mon 24/04/2017 8.30am
May Bank Holiday	Mon 01/05/2017	Mon 01/05/2017
Summer Half Term	Fri 26/05/2017 3.00pm	Mon 05/06/2017 8.30am
Summer Holiday	Fri 21/07/2017 1.30pm	Wed 06/09/2017 8.30am

PERFORMING ARTS THEATRE TRIP

On Wednesday 29th March, the Music Department took 30 of our young performers to see "Mamma Mia the Musical" at Theatre Royal, Newcastle.

The trip was a reward to thank pupils for their commitment to the department and for their amazing performances at the end of the autumn term.

Staff and pupils thoroughly enjoyed a fantastic evening which featured a wonderful selection of famous ABBA songs!

MAMMA MIA!

"RETURN TO THE FORBIDDEN PLANET"

Following very popular auditions at the start of the spring term, rehearsals are currently underway for our summer production, "Return to the Forbidden Planet."

The musical, which is based on Shakespeare's play 'The Tempest', is a high energy show which features various 1950s and 1960s rock 'n' roll classics.

Join Captain Tempest and his crew for an exciting trip across the galaxy on Tuesday 4th & Wednesday 5th July 2017.

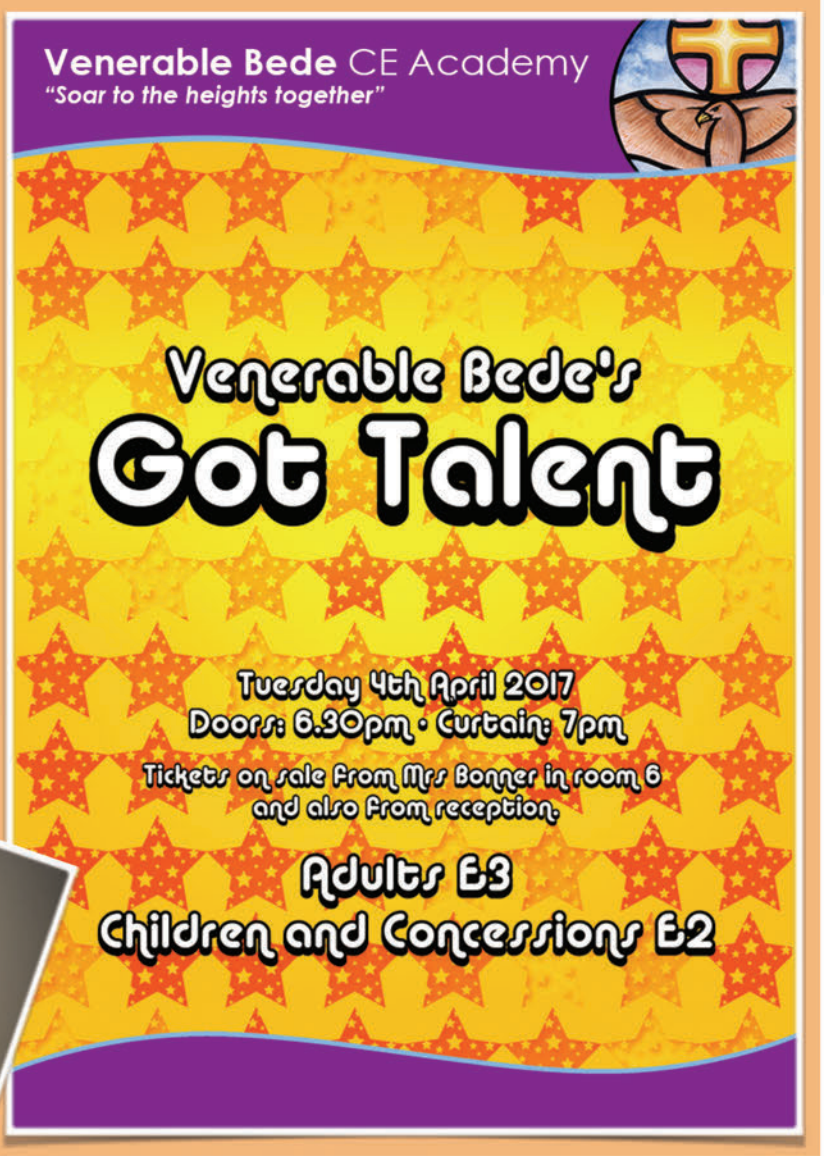
Tickets will go on sale shortly.

THE RETURN OF THE VENERABLE BEDE TALENT SHOW!

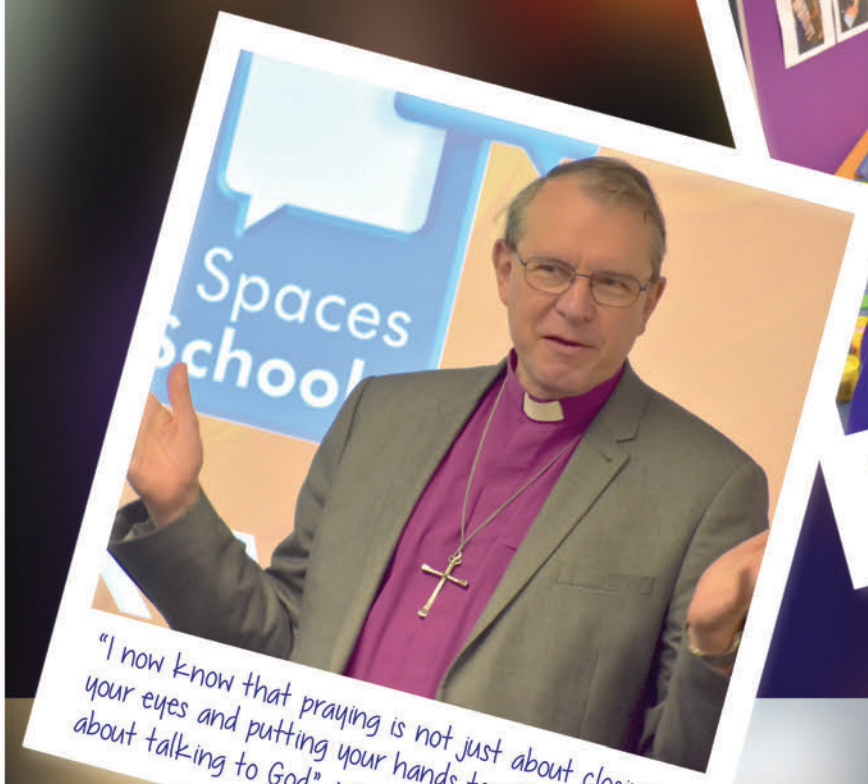
Pupils took a well-earned break from studying to make their way to the annual talent show, Venerable Bede's Got Talent, on 4th April 2017.

This year's show featured a variety of acts which have been selected from pupils in all year groups. Approximately 25 acts showcased their talents, ranging from singing and dancing to comedy and martial arts, as well as performances from the choir, orchestra, soul band and guitar club.

Head of Music, Mrs. Bonner, said, 'We have an incredible amount of talented young people and we are lucky to be able to include them all in the show.'



Prayer Spaces in Schools



"I have learned that you can pray in many different ways; you don't have to be on your own" VB Participant

"I now know that praying is not just about closing your eyes and putting your hands together, it's about talking to God" VB Participant

"Prayer Spaces are not just for religious people who go regularly to church. Everyone can find time to pray" VB Participant

PRAYER SPACES IN SCHOOLS – DIOCESAN PROJECT 2016-2017

How can we alleviate stress and improve the well-being of our young people in an age where evidence proves that young people are far more stressed than they were even 10 years ago? This was the key question discussed by the Headteachers of the 5 CE secondary schools in the Durham Diocese. The result was a joint project, funded by the Hild and Bede Trust, which focused on how prayer spaces can support mental health and develop resilience. We chose Year 7 initially as they also have to contend with the transition from primary to secondary school.

However, many other pupils were involved as the spaces were left open during break and lunch. The feedback was extraordinary with pupils reporting that they felt peaceful and enjoyed exploring their feelings in a place where no-one would judge them: "It's a place where I can be truthful" said one pupil. Another commented, "I was able to get rid of my feelings of anger and I now feel much calmer."

The project was very much pupil-led. Older pupils volunteered to lead the activities with the project culminating in an exhibition: presentations and videos showed how each school's prayer space had improved well-being, whether pupils believed in God or not. Activities varied from school to school and all pupils were able to visit each other's stands at the exhibition and try out new things.

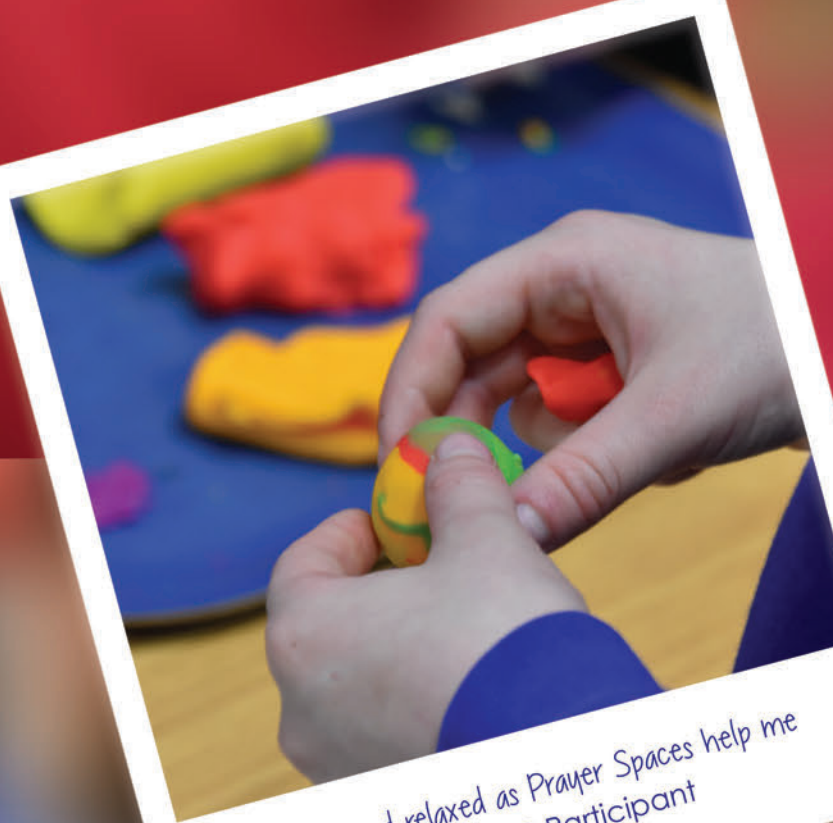
No project that we have used in school has had a bigger impact on pupil well-being than this one and it is something that many of our pupils would like to see as an annual event.

After a lot of planning and hard work creating their prayer spaces, eight RE Ambassadors from Venerable Bede showcased three of their creations at the Prayer Space Exhibition which took place at Cuthbert House in Durham in January.

The event which was funded by the Hild & Bede Trust included four other Church of England Schools and was a huge success.

RE Department

"Prayer Spaces allow me to learn and explore different religions" VB Participant



"I feel calm and relaxed as Prayer Spaces help me reflect on my own life" VB Participant

Amongst the displays were 'fizzy forgiveness'- a firm favourite of all of the pupils who took part in the exhibition. This particular activity involves dissolving a fizzy glucose tablet in a glass of water whilst reflecting on an unkind act you have undertaken or thought you may have had. Whilst the tablet gradually dissolves, you think about how you want to act in future and forgiveness is given.

"You don't have to be in a quiet place to pray. You can pray with your friends" VB Participant

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

Pictures 1,2,3,5,6 & 7 by: Keith Blundy

ARCHBISHOP OF YORK VISITS VENERABLE BEDE

The Archbishop of York, Dr John Sentamu, visited The Venerable Bede Church of England Academy on Friday 3rd March as part of 'Talking Jesus' a four-day mission to the Diocese of Durham.

The Archbishop met with pupils and teachers at the Tunstall Bank, Sunderland Academy, part of the Dayspring Multi Academy Trust along with Ian Ramsey Church of England Academy in Stockton. During the visit, the Archbishop was shown a number of prayer stations, set up and run by pupils, which were designed to focus on exploring personal well-being, taking time to reflect on their own thoughts and feelings, and as a place to explore prayer.

The Archbishop was visiting the Academy as part of a weekend of events called "Talking Jesus" which took place across the Diocese of Durham from 2nd to 5th March 2017. Churches all over the Diocese held events during the weekend which were supported and attended by Bishops from across the North of England. The events took place in a variety of locations with the central theme of talking about Jesus and engaging with the wider community. The mayor of Sunderland also joined us and was very impressed with the conversations he had with our pupils.

Gill Booth, Executive Headteacher for the Dayspring Trust, said: "As a school community, we wanted to explore how our pupils can access prayer in an interactive way and also to see how prayer spaces can impact positively on well-being. We were delighted to welcome the Archbishop to meet with our young people and to be able to talk about the impact of our Prayer Space project with a wider community audience. The outcomes have been incredible with many young people saying that they feel more confident in themselves as a result."

Article courtesy of Kieth Blundy

REPORT FROM OUR PRAYER SPACE AMBASSADORS

Year 9 pupils Noah Dowsett and Lydia Stoker were also delighted to speak to The Archbishop of York about their contribution to the 'Prayer Spaces in Schools' project and the impact it has on their life.

They explained how Prayer Spaces work and how praying can really lift your spirit in school. Praying can be done in many different ways, it can be done alone or it can be a shared experience where pupils come together to pray. Pupils have access to the Prayer Spaces during lunch time and at the end of the school day, as well as during RE lessons.

The Archbishop of York then took the opportunity to experience the Prayer Stations including 'Fizzy Forgiveness', which proved to be a very popular station. Noah explained that this particular station was where pupils think about things they need to say sorry for. They drop a soluble vitamin c tablet into a tall jug of water. As it dissolves, it symbolises the clean start that forgiveness offers. The Archbishop also spent time at the 'Be Still Gazebo' which encourages pupils to pause and be still for a few minutes and to listen and reflect.

When The Most Reverend the Lord Archbishop of York, Dr John Sentamu visited Venerable Bede recently, three of our pupils, Adam Boxall, Katelyn Shaw and Alice Maginn spoke to him about climbing Scafell Pike and the Boxing Day Dip.

The Year 10 and 11 pupils took part in these exciting pursuits to raise funds for their trip to Lesotho, along with little less challenging activities including car washing, weekly cake sales and a very well attended steak night.

The pupils went on to explain how fundraising helped them to prepare for their visit to Lesotho and how working together brought the group closer as a team.

During their visit, they were amazed at how welcoming and generous the Sotho people are. They visited an orphanage and primary and secondary schools, where the children were very happy and worked very hard. A walk in the countryside was also a highlight which helped strengthen bonds with the school children.

Their trip to Lesotho was truly awe-inspiring and they were very grateful to have the opportunity to meet amazing people from such a wonderful nation.

REPORT FROM OUR LESOTHO EXHIBITION AMBASSADORS

FANTASTIC FAIRTRADE NEWS

Venerable Bede has been granted the FairAchiever Award from the Fairtrade Foundation. This award is the most prestigious award for Fairtrade Schools to be awarded. FairAchiever schools are required to demonstrate that Fairtrade is fully embedded into the daily life of their school and also work to raise awareness of it in their local community.

Pupils and staff at Venerable Bede support Fairtrade by buying and selling their products such as snack bars and fruit juices. Pupils learn about Fairtrade across the curriculum and as part of the personal development curriculum, Year 7 have been learning about poverty, sustainability and food production under the Fairtrade banner.

At Venerable Bede we are all in agreement that choosing Fairtrade is an easy and effective way to have a positive impact on the lives of others around the world who are less fortunate than ourselves.

SPACE FOR REFLECTION

We recently used funding to create a fantastic prayer space in the school courtyard.

It is available to all pupils and it aims to provide a quiet space where they can reflect.

Selected Bible verses and a cross are included in the space to help inspire those who use it.

THE CODEX AMIATINUS

Following on from our story in the September edition of The Venerable Bede News, the complete reproduction of the finished illuminated bible, Codex Amiatinus, which is currently on display in Sunderland, made a brief visit to the academy recently.

The two pupils who worked on the restoration project, Faith Evans and Rebekah Mullin, are seen here with the bible, alongside Head of School, Mr Airey and Mr Johnson, Head of RE.

The girls were delighted with their work.

VB SUPPORTS LOCAL FOOD BANK

A change in circumstance, such as a deterioration in health, job loss, or simply getting by on the minimum wage and trying to make ends meet, can be an extremely difficult time for families trying to break the cycle of poverty, and stop their lives from falling apart.

A simple bag of food can make a big difference, and giving emergency food and support to people in crisis in our local area is what staff and pupils at Venerable Bede have been doing for over four years now.

All the food donated is collected by Bethany City Church in Ashbrooke. It is then sorted by volunteers, ensuring the food is in date, and packed into grocery bags, ready to be distributed to those in need.

GPs and the local council identify people in need and refer them to Bethany City Church, not only for food, but for advice and support on how to get their life back on track.

The Prince's Trust group would like to thank everyone who contributed to the food collection for our Harvest Festival. We would also like to say a very big thank you to Michael, the manager of our local Lidl store, who very kindly donated much needed toiletries.

If you would like to help, or make a food donation go to:

http://www.bethanycitychurch.org/

DIVERSITY CONCERT

Musician Rich Cottell visited Venerable Bede in October to perform and speak to our Year 7 and 8 pupils about Diversity and British Values.

Rich, who recently recorded his LP, 'More than Just a Geek,' opened the show by performing a few of his catchy songs and invited pupils to sing along to the chorus. Some were even brave enough to do their own solo!

Rich impressed our younger pupils with his social media and gaming knowledge, before discussing the importance of treating each other fairly and celebrating Diversity. He used personal stories which engaged the pupils and helped them to understand the four British Values: The Rule of Law, Democracy, Individual Liberty and Respect and Tolerance.

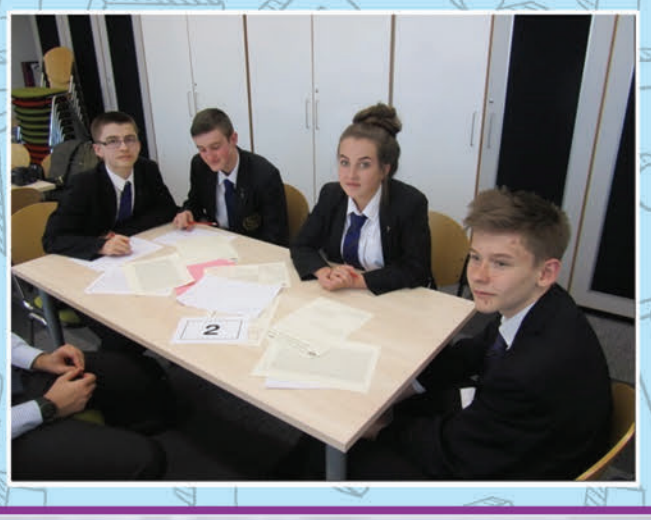
Everyone had a fantastic morning, full of laughter and singing. Many left with signed CD's and posters, and we were all sad to see Rich leave!

AMAZING MATHS PERFORMANCE

On Wednesday 1st March, Katelyn Shaw, Luke Briggs, Adam Bresnen and Ben Knowlson took part in this year's Year 10 Maths Feast Competition. The competition is organised by the Further Mathematics Support Programme and was held at The Sjovoll centre in Durham. The event is a team competition testing mathematical team-work and communication skills.

Throughout the afternoon, the pupils took part in a range of high level mathematical problems, including both recreational mathematics and some of a more traditional nature. They were competing along with 10 other teams from a range of schools within the North East.

After an intense series of rounds, Venerable Bede came a very close second with 70 points! The team received badges and a certificate for their consistently high achievement throughout the afternoon!



HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY

Pupils took part in a live webcast in commemoration of Holocaust Memorial Day in History and RE lessons. The webcast was presented by Mala Tribich and included the live testimony of her experience when she was imprisoned in Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. Pupils found the experience incredibly thought-provoking and enriching, and it led to some excellent discussions and questioning. Pupils were then asked to think about what they had heard and write down their thoughts and feelings. Below are some of the responses:

"The video that I watched made me feel really lucky that I wasn't alive during the Holocaust." - Lewis Thompson

"When I was watching, I was feeling sad and I am glad that there is nothing like the Holocaust these days." – Abigail Gartland

"What I learned is that it was very scary and very sad especially if you lost your family." - Ryan Pearson

"The Holocaust Memorial Day testimony made me feel sad, disappointed and furious because of what happened to adults and children in the Holocaust." - Naomi Carney

"I felt sorry for Mala because she went through so much pain and lost half of her family. They had everything taken away from them: their possessions, clothes and even their hair. I also felt lucky when I listened to the lady that I haven't had to go through something like that. They were starving because there wasn't enough food. Sometimes people would steal from each other because they were so desperate and didn't want to die." - Abby Towers

STAYING SAFE ON THE STREETS

Recently our Year 9 pupils were visited by David Burn from the 'Be Safe' organisation, where they learned about the dangers of carrying weapons.

It's a known fact knife crime is on the rise and David who works in partnership with the Home Office, spoke to our pupils about the importance of personal safety and not placing themselves in dangerous situations, whilst they are out in the community.

One Year 9 pupil commented, "This workshop has made me much more aware of the dangers out there and how to keep myself safe"

The workshop which focused mainly on knife crime awareness, also covered, mobile phone safety, safe selfies and knowing the area you live in.

STATE OF THE CITY DEBATE

In November, eight Year 10 pupils represented Venerable Bede at the State of the City Debate which was held at Sunderland Civic Centre.

Over 100 pupils from 20 different schools descended on the council chambers to discuss issues that affected children and young adults in the Sunderland area.

Areas for discussion were: The Curriculum for Life, Votes at 16, Tackling Racism and Religious Discrimination, Mental Health and Stop Cuts that affect the NHS.

After lengthy discussion on all the areas, pupils were able to vote for the issue that they felt was most important. The issue voted as priority was "A curriculum to prepare us for life" which will be taught in schools focusing on everyday skills (mortgages, finances, sex education, relationships.) This will now be addressed by Sunderland Youth Parliament over the coming months. Watch this space!

RYHOPE COLLIERY 50TH ANNIVERSARY

Pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 created some wonderful artwork to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the closure of Ryhope Colliery.

The closure of the colliery, on 25th November 1966, had a significant impact on the people of Ryhope as the town lost one of the biggest employers in the area.

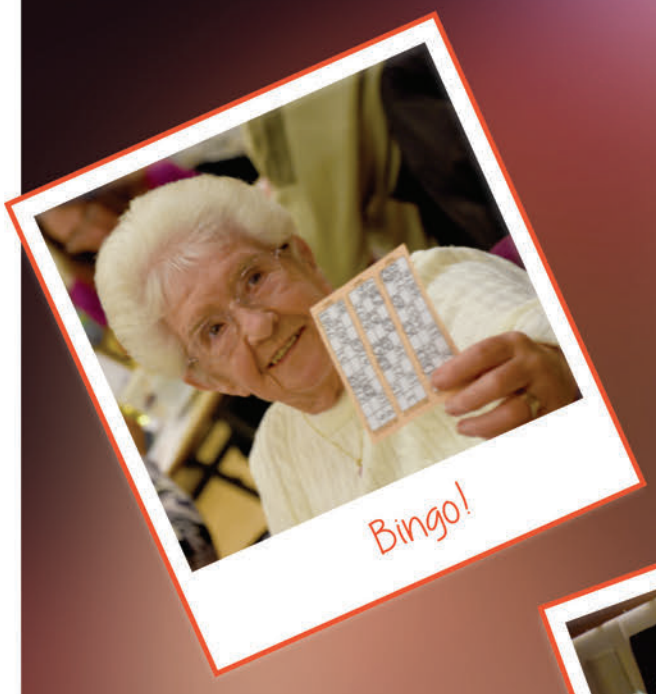
Two of our Year 11 pupils, Adam Boxall and Krista Shaw, along with pupils from neighbouring schools, were involved in readings and bidding prayers during the Service of Remembrance, which took place at St Paul's Church, Ryhope in November.

The commemorative artwork was displayed in Ryhope Community Centre along with work from other schools for the public to view.

Many of the visitors remembered days of old with fondness, and one visitor said:

"The event was particularly poignant being shared with the young people in the community."

COMMUNITY PARTY



One guest commented:

"I look forward to this event every year! It marks the start of my Christmas celebrations."

Residents from our local community, pupils and staff enjoyed a wonderful festive afternoon at our annual Community Christmas Party.

Over 80 guests were entertained at this annual event.

Pupils and staff worked well to ensure everything ran smoothly. Everyone enjoyed the carols and the bingo.

The afternoon concluded with Santa distributing gifts to everyone as they left.

It might seem a long time ago now, but Christmas will soon be here again!

Fundraising has already started!

LESOTHO 2017

Entering Lesotho through the border with South Africa is always exciting. The roads are dustier, the pace slower and more laid back, the people are friendlier. It is my fifth time crossing into Lesotho but the familiarity can't cover the pleasure I take in returning to this nation of smiles.

One of the great pleasures in all of this is seeing the pupils' reaction to entering the country; it's a long journey, they are tired and yet, this is it. We are here!

This adventure is a significant life-event for these Y10 pupils. They absorb the sounds, sights and smells. They witness the poverty of the lives of their Basotho peers. They come to terms with living together in a group for two weeks. They also have the dubious pleasure of living out of a suitcase!

When I arrived in Lesotho, I realised that I need not have worried about the language barrier as their English was very good and the people were very welcoming.

Adam

Our trip to Lesotho was truly amazing and we were very grateful to have had the opportunity to meet such inspiring and welcoming people.

Ellie

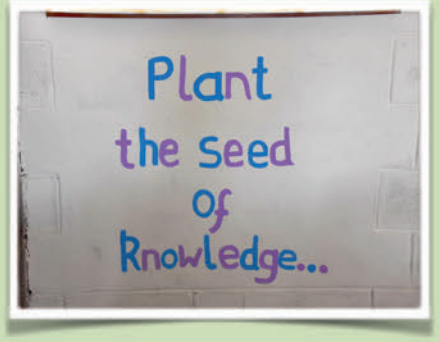
LESOTHO 2017

The most memorable thing that stood out for me during my visit to Lesotho was how kind and generous the people were.

Jack

It became clear to us, as in our school, that faith is a huge part of everybody's lives in Lesotho. We ran Prayer Spaces as we wanted to demonstrate our ways of praying to the Lesotho community. It was an amazing experience.

Katelyn

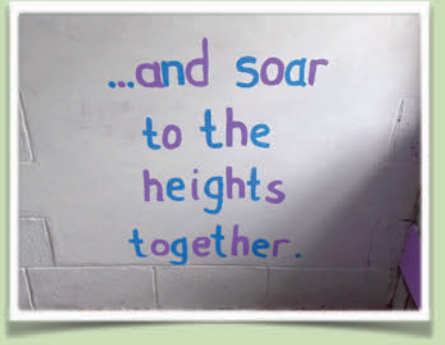


LESOTHO 2018

Having only been back from Lesotho for less than a month, the planning and fundraising for Lesotho 2018 is already well underway. As usual we are going to hold a range of events to support the project. These include bag packs, band nights, car washes, raffles, cake sales and many more fun and exciting activities.

Part of our Lesotho programme is to host a child-headed household weekend which includes lots of enjoyable tasks for the Basotho children to take part in. We also visit St James' Primary School so we hope to raise enough funds to enable us to complete some decorating whilst we are there. "God's Love Orphanage" also benefits from our project. This year we donated some of our funds to help with the upkeep of the building and support some of the older children through their education.

We thank you in advance for your support and encouragement during our fundraising.



FOOTBALL ACHIEVEMENTS

Our year 11 football team recently played in the Sunderland Schools City Cup Final at the Academy of Light. Their opponents were Southmoor and, in a hard fought game, we lost 2-0. The team had beaten Academy 360 and Monkwearmouth on their way to the final and should be very proud of themselves for getting to the last match.

PE teacher Mr Atherton, credited the team, saying, "I would like to congratulate the boys on a fantastic season during which they have been a credit to themselves, their families and the academy. They represented the school with a great sense of pride and we are very proud of them and their achievements."

RUGBY SUCCESS

Two of our year 11 boys, Louie Groark and Matthew Carruthers, have recently represented Durham County Under 15s at rugby. Playing against Northumberland at Kingston Park (home of the Newcastle Falcons), the Durham youngsters played two games, with Louie as captain of the Bishops' side and Matthew at scrum half for the Princes' side. Both boys scored tries in their games and were presented afterwards with their County colours.

They will be competing in further matches with Louie once again captaining the Bishops.

This is a great achievement for them both and we wish them every success in their future rugby careers.

Does your child have a place at Venerable Bede this September? Remember to come to our Intake Evening in June.

YEAR 6 INTAKE EVENING

Thursday 22 June 2017 - 5.00pm to 7.00pm

- **Presentation by Executive Headteacher and Head of School in Main Hall - 5.00pm**
- **Meet your Tutor**
- **Talk directly to pupils, staff and governors**
- **Browse our uniform and order yours!**
- **See our fantastic facilities**
- **An opportunity to return your information pack**

WE LOOK FORWARD TO WELCOMING YOU

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