

# MORE LIFE

EASTER 2023



Full inspection report

## OUTSTANDING

“STUDENTS FEEL VALUED, SAFE AND LOVED, ENABLING THEM TO FLOURISH ACADEMICALLY AND HOLISTICALLY.”

Over the course of 9th February and 10th February 2023, we welcomed four inspectors from the Catholic Schools Inspectorate for an inspection focusing on Religious Education, Catholic Life & Mission, and Collective Worship.

During the inspection, the inspectors met with several groups of students, a wide range of staff, senior leaders, governors and clergy as well as considering the responses submitted in the parent and staff surveys. They visited lessons in all year groups, looked at samples of students' work and asked students about their learning in RE. The inspectors also attended our weekly Parish Mass, assemblies and form class registration time.

We were humbled by the final report which deemed our school Outstanding in all areas – in Religious Education, Catholic Life & Mission, and Collective Worship. The key findings of the report were as follows:

- Chaplaincy provision is exceptional and inspires students to take leading roles in shaping the Catholic life and mission of the school.
- Religious Education specialists have excellent subject knowledge which allows pupils to make outstanding progress.
- Pastoral care is the bedrock of the school. Students are known by name and cared for deeply. The most vulnerable students are prioritised in a community where all feel valued.
- Leaders and governors have an unwavering commitment to Catholic Social Teaching and have supported pupils ably to challenge injustice through a variety of campaigns.
- Collective worship is authentic and diverse. Most notably the Feast Day Mass is the highlight of the liturgical year, with hundreds of students, staff and parents attending this voluntarily.



“The report recognises the excellent work that our staff do, every day, in supporting our young people to live out our school mission: to strive to follow the example of Jesus Christ in our work, worship and relationships.”  
- Mr Watson, Headteacher



“The report recognises the real stars of St Thomas More, our students.”  
- Mr Merchant, Assistant Headteacher



“It was a real joy to talk with inspectors about what our school community is like and how involved our students are in shaping our Catholic identity. It is a privilege to walk alongside all of our wonderful and inspirational students as their School Chaplain, and I am thrilled the inspection team got a glimpse of how the Chaplaincy exists and runs here at St Thomas More.”  
- Michael Thompson, School Chaplain



# CAMERON WINS AN HISTORIC THIRD MAYORSHIP FOR ST THOMAS MORE



A magnificence of Mayors: Suzie McKenzie (centre), 2020-2022 Young Mayor, flanked by incoming mayor Cameron Quinn (left) and outgoing mayor Max Godfrey (2022-2023)

On Friday 17th February, Cameron Quinn, one of our Year 9 students, was announced as the new Young Mayor of North Tyneside.

We are delighted that Cameron has been elected. We know how passionate Cameron is about improving the lives of young people in North Tyneside and are excited to see what he can achieve in the coming year. In taking on this role Cameron follows in the able footsteps of the last two Young Mayors of North Tyneside, Max Godfrey and Suzie McKenzie, both St Thomas More students.

Cameron has great plans for his mayoral term. 'I hope I can make a profound difference in North Tyneside and I hope to live up to the expectations set by other young people. I've always said that I would be a young mayor who stands and acts in the best interests of young people - this is still the case.'

In particular, Cameron has plans to promote 'the introduction of allotments in schools and encouraging the reduction of food waste', as well as supporting 'the roll out of mental health resources across schools and the development of peer support groups and peer mentoring.'

At St Thomas More, we value involvement by our students in local democracy, whether that's through our own Student Council, North Tyneside Youth Council, campaigns run by 'Tyne & Wear Citizens' or through the Young Mayor and Youth Parliament. While it's one thing educating young people about democracy, it is when students take it upon themselves to get involved, as Cameron has done, that they bring it to life for the whole of the student body.

- Mr Watson, Headteacher

On Saturday 4th March 45 students from our school community took the train to London to attend Wembley Arena for 'Flame' - a pilgrimage event.

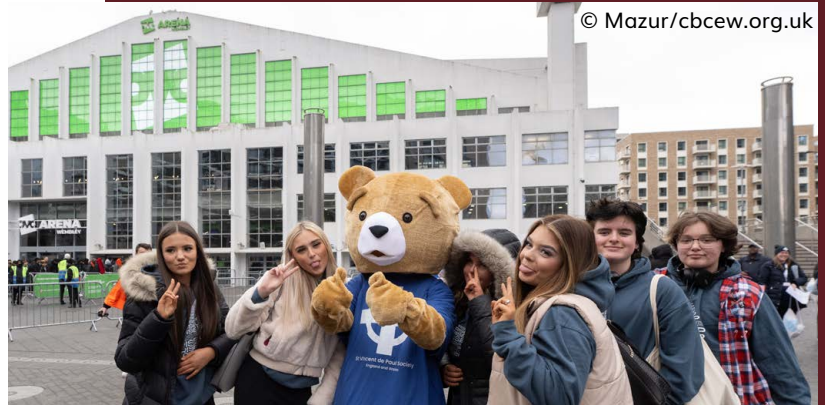
Throughout the day we heard a range of different speakers and music, such as Faith Child, One Hope Project and Guvna B which were all amazing.

We heard from Robert Bilott, an American lawyer who fought for over 20 years to stop 'forever chemicals' contaminating local communities; Jenny Garzon Saavedra from Columbia who works with CAFOD in the Amazon and who shared the importance of community and collaboration; and Archbishop Costelloe from Australia who encouraged young people to rise up and shape the future of the church.

- Rachel Bennett and Eve Keys, Year 11



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The Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) is an A-level standard qualification offered as an enrichment option in Year 12, an independent project which allows students to develop a project based on their own interests. Students can either write a 5000-word essay or create an artefact. Examples of recent artefacts include artworks, creative writing, films and scientific instruments! Finally, students present their projects to fellow students and teachers.

- Dr Paradis

## ANGELA DEMAIN

I spent some time researching the recent discovery of CRISPR technology and how it can be harnessed into a gene-editing tool to support existing cancer treatments.

I enjoyed critically evaluating sources as well as acquiring new skills such as referencing and organisation. A particularly exciting aspect of my research was correspondence with Professor of Genetics Sir John Burns from Newcastle University. Overall, EPQ was an incredibly valuable experience in terms of learning skills as well as getting an extra qualification.



## ALISINA HASSANI

What makes doing an EPQ great is that you can study anything you want. I study Maths and Physics but want to study Law at University, so I based my EPQ on the socio-economic management of the British Raj in India, evaluating its successes and failures.

Through reading many journals about the statistics and personal accounts of the Raj, it has allowed me to see through media bias online and form my own balanced view of the Empire. It has also strengthened the skills necessary for Law, such as critical reading/writing.



## JAMES CURRY

For my EPQ I created a 23-minute film titled 'What do I do now you're gone?' This involved personally writing, filming and editing the film which starred my friends and was made over the course of ten months.

My EPQ developed skills in camera-work, screenplay writing, and editing. What I most enjoyed about making my film was finally being able to film scenes I'd spent months writing and planning.



## AARYN McDONALD-BROWN

My EPQ allowed me to continue to explore subjects I was still passionate about but which I wasn't studying anymore, like Literature and parts of Science not covered by the A-Level specification. My EPQ was entitled "Is there a relationship between 19th century science fiction and scientific advancement?"

I used Frankenstein as a focal piece of literature. It has links to several areas of medicine and biochemistry, including the concept of galvanism from the 19th century to genetic engineering today.

Through investigating ongoing medical research, I learned how to navigate scientific journals and reference them correctly, which helped me to enter subsequent essay competitions, and will undoubtedly be beneficial at university.



## KIRBY ESCORBA

What is the future of malware and how will it develop? I chose this topic because I am interested in the subject of malware and how it can be used to interfere with our personal devices or devices used by businesses or governments. Through my EPQ project, I strengthened my research skills, which has allowed me to gain better

judgement on the validity and reliability of sources. The project was also instrumental in the development of my writing skills - which has helped me tremendously.



## WILLIAM BEATTIE



My EPQ investigated the impacts of climate change for the current Russian government and gas industry.

All the impacts will have dire environmental effects, in Russia and globally. Therefore, nations around the world must call out and resist the environmental and political abuses of the Putin regime.

I only used the most relevant research in my final essay, using advice from my supervisor. I particularly enjoyed the day we spent at Newcastle University's Robinson Library as I was able to access many fascinating academic articles.

## EMILY COATES

My EPQ answers the question 'Will the future of heart disease treatment be reshaped by stem cell therapies?' Stem cells therapies have the potential to not only treat cardiovascular disease but to also reverse the effects. In addition, I also researched and wrote about the challenges that stem cell therapies face - both scientific and ethical.



Researching and writing this essay brought me to the conclusion that stem cell therapies are a viable treatment however developments need to be made in order to overcome the dilemmas that they face. My EPQ provided me with valuable skills which I believe will help me not only in university but also in any future career.

## VICTORIA PELEVA



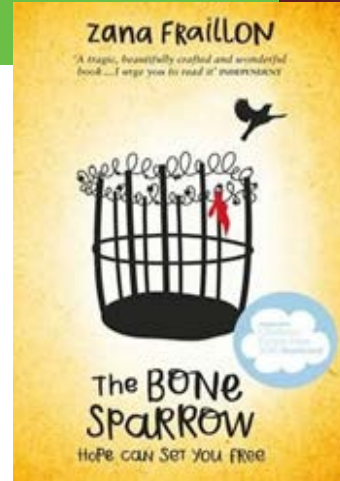
My EPQ question was 'Can you regrow a human tooth?' My question focused on the use of stem cells as a revolutionary technique that could replace fillings or dental implants as a personalised therapy to treat tooth loss. I discussed the practicalities of scaling up from a laboratory product, to use in dental clinics around the world.

It was fascinating to research this cutting-edge dental technique as articles detailing major breakthroughs were being published as I was writing my essay.

While producing my EPQ, I had freedom to explore areas of interest at a high level while learning skills to prepare me for university. My EPQ has been a personal highlight of Sixth Form.

## THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDS...

The English department have been having a root around their bookcase, and have recommended the following excellent books:



### **BONE SPARROW** by ZANA FRAILLON (11+)

Subhi lives in a refugee camp, and has done so all his life. But this doesn't stop him dreaming and hoping for more; especially powerful dreams of the ocean reaching across the desert to release him and his family. Things change when he meets Jimmie, a young girl who lives near the camp and Subhi finds himself having to save more than himself.



### **BOOKED** by KWAME ALEXANDER (14+)

Twelve-year-old Nick learns the power of words as he wrestles with problems at home, stands up to a bully, and tries to impress the girl of his dreams. Helping him along are his best friend and sometimes teammate Coby, and The Mac, a rapping librarian who gives Nick inspiring books to read. A verse novel that romps along and tackles many relevant issues for today's teens.



### **WE RUN THE TIDES** by VENDELA VIDA (16+)

Set in pre-tech boom San Francisco, this coming of age story is told through the eyes of a forthright and sarcastic teenage girl, Eulabee. We see the complicated and intense relationships she has with her best friend, Maria Fabiola, and the shocking impact of an event they witness.

- Mrs Wilson, English



Prior to the Christmas holidays, a survey was conducted among our students to determine their interest in purchasing gently used items for their Sixth Form Prom. The response was overwhelming and so the STM Prom Shop 2023 was born.

# PROM SHOP 2023

**MAKE MEMORIES, NOT WASTE. PROM-WEAR WITH A SUSTAINABLE TASTE!**

The Prom Shop offers a unique opportunity for students to acquire affordable, pre-owned items such as bags, ties, accessories, dresses, and suits. Not only is this a cost-effective solution, it is also a great way to promote environmental sustainability.

We are delighted that DressMeZee, a well-known North East brand with over half a million followers on Instagram, have made a significant donation of new dresses to our Prom Shop after learning about our initiative. We are extremely grateful to the company; the students are particularly excited to have support from such a well-known brand!

The shop will be open on Friday 31st March in C4 for students to try on and purchase items. We are still accepting donations, and are in particular need of men's items, which can be dropped off at reception for Mrs Anderson. If you have any formalwear from previous events such as weddings or balls, this is a great opportunity to clear your closet for a good cause.

We hope that the STM Prom Shop 2023 is just the beginning of something special and that it will not only benefit our students but also contribute to a healthier environment.  
- Mrs Anderson, Sixth Form



## CAREERS UPDATE



### NUFC FOUNDATION SPEAK TO YEAR 9 & 10

Last week two ex-pupils, David Hall (class of 2012) and Lewis Richardson (class of 2008) came to speak to a group of Year 9 and 10 students about the NUFC Foundation, which they both now work for. Students were fascinated to hear their stories about how they got to where they are now, and were inspired to pursue opportunities in sports coaching. - Mrs Merchant, Careers

Tyneside Cross Country championships, with many students qualifying to represent North Tyneside in the upcoming Northumberland Championships at Temple Park. The Championships were on a wet, windy and icy day, but it was still very enjoyable. It was a challenging course, however the support from Mrs Plummer and Mr Hitchcock was outstanding for all students competing. - Elliot Moore and Hugh Fenwick, Year 11

### CROSS COUNTRY

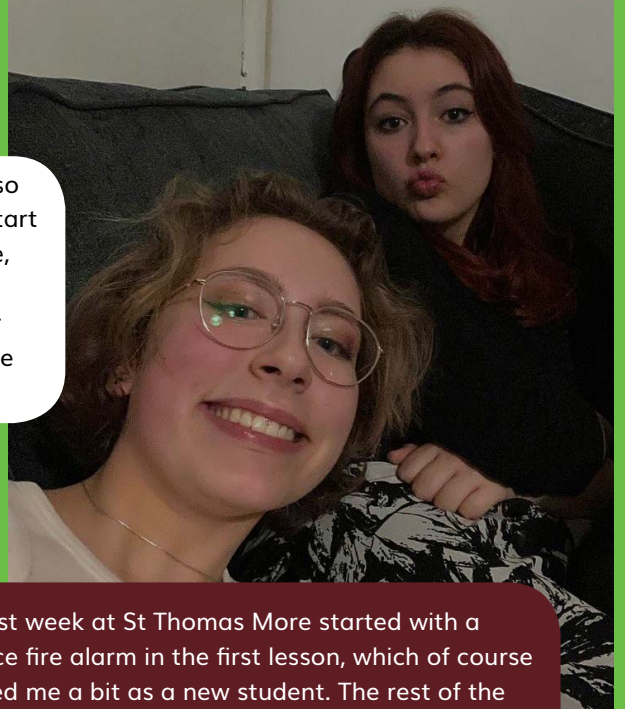
Back in November, a group of tough students travelled to Monkseaton to represent St Thomas More in the North



## SUZIE KEEPS THE GERMAN CONNECTION ALIVE...

Despite the official school German Exchange not taking place this year Suzie McKenzie in Year 13 still arranged an exchange, and has thoroughly enjoyed the process. She has written about her experiences below, alongside the reflections of her exchange partner, Anna:

'The day we arrived we went straight to Bonn; I love History and so visiting the former capital of west Germany was a great way to start the week. While we were there, we visited Beethoven's birth place, a museum honouring him and "Haus der Geschichte", a museum all about Germany's history since 1945. These were all perfect for my History course on the Weimar Republic and my German course covering the reunification of East and West Germany.' - Suzie



'Of course you look at the area beforehand and think about what things you would like to see, but once you are there you just enjoy your time. I was picked up from the airport by my host family and when we arrived home afterwards, of course, how could it be otherwise, I was first offered tea with biscuits.' - Anna

'During the car ride to the house, I understood very little at first because of the "Geordie accent", but you get used to it.'

'When I boarded the plane back to Germany on Saturday 18 February, I knew I had made friends there that I would see again someday. And my English? Well, I guess it kind of got used to the "Geordie accent" now, too, if my friends back home are to be believed.'

'My first week at St Thomas More started with a practice fire alarm in the first lesson, which of course irritated me a bit as a new student. The rest of the week went by, from funny Psychology teachers to the excellent resources in the Art rooms. My classmates (Suzie's friends) are now friends of mine too.'

'From Wednesday onwards I was in school, which was very different to school here. All together my experience of the German exchange was undeniably one of the best opportunities I've had in my time at STM and I thoroughly recommend it!'

## ...WHILE VIRTUAL EXCHANGES REMAIN ACTIVE...

As part of our German A Level, we have been involved in a virtual exchange with a German partner from a school in North Rhine-Westphalia. We regularly connect with our partners to discuss our projects and exchange information and research about our chosen topic, which has allowed us

to practise and improve our German language skills. This experience has given us an insight into what life in Germany is like and how it differs from life in the UK. This exchange programme has definitely had a beneficial impact.

- Jessica Bowkett and Emily Kinsey, Year 13

## ...AND PLENTY FOREIGN NATIONALS TO GO ROUND!

Bonjour! Hallo! We are Josh and Jon, two final year Modern Languages students at Newcastle University who have been on placement at St Thomas More in the languages department. Following Jon's year abroad last year in Berlin, Germany and Granada, Spain and Josh's international placements on the Cote d'Azur, France and in Marbella, Spain, it was about time we started thinking about the world of work; what better way to explore the education sector than to dive into a teaching placement!

It has been lovely to share the experiences from our years abroad and hopefully inspire a new cohort of linguists! Whether it be assisting in small conversational groups to improving fluency with Sixth Form students, this module has been a breath of fresh air compared to usual campus-based modules at university. This experience has been so much of a joy and success that we don't want to leave the wonderful staff and students at St Thomas More!



# NEWS & EVENTS



## LAUDATO 'SI

We are the Laudato si' in action Group! As called upon by Pope Francis to 'take care of our common home', we have formed to help make that possible here at St Thomas More. Our focus will be to achieve the Eco School's Green Flag Award 2023 and lead the way to ensuring a more sustainable and cleaner environment. As Pope Francis teaches in Laudato Si' 'As stewards of God's creation, we are called to make the earth a beautiful garden for the human family'. St Thomas More are taking the lead on this in our local area. - Laudato 'Si Group

## WORLD BOOK DAY IN THE LIBRARY

Congratulations to the winners of the World Book Day Scavenger Hunt, Jules Anderson, Iorwen Robinson, Neve Pringle, Isaac Dunn and Charlie Harrison all from 7M.

They had to find 10 literary character clues hidden around school then match them to 10 members of staff wearing character lanyards. Juliet had to seek out her Romeo, Batman had to match up with Robin and Frodo had a quest to find Samwise. Thanks to all who took part, with a special mention to Mr Rayson who embraced his Piglet character with style!



- Miss Edwards, Librarian

## YEAR 7 FUNDRAISING FOR 'SARAH'S STAR' CHARITY

Throughout Advent, Year 7 were raising money for a local charity "Sarah's star". This is a charity that has been set up by the mother of one of our Year 7 students, who sadly has a palliative diagnosis.

Charlie and his mum wrote a speech, which I read out in assembly. The entire year group were inspired and have worked extremely hard to fundraise in a variety of ways, from organising cake sales to completing individual sponsored runs.

Year 7 students also designed Christmas cards and wrote some beautiful messages, which Mrs Harrison delivered to the Oncology unit. I'm so impressed by their enthusiasm to help and how hardworking they have been.

An outstanding total of £978.08 was raised. Well done to all Year 7 students. - Mrs Martin, Head of Year 7



## YEAR 7 TALENT SHOW

On Friday 17th March, there was the Year 7 Talent Show, which in my eyes was amazing! There were 10 groups which had to battle it out for prizes from third to first, with singing, dancing, bands, music and stand-up comedy. After six weeks preparing it was finally the night. After all the acts had performed the winners were announced. In third place was Sophia Adamson, who played Allegro on violin. Second place went to Layla and Genevieve for their amazing dancing. Finally in first place we had..... Coldside (photo right), who performed Seven Nation Army. The Talent Show was astonishing and I would love to do it again!

- Jules Anderson, Year 7



Who are we? A newly formed student newsletter team, who are interested in reporting on achievements, events, trips and opportunities that take place in and around school.

How do I get involved?

If you are interested in being involved, please contact Natan Wesolowski or Chris Pearce, both Year 9, by e-mail.

set up in memory of John Thornton who was tragically killed in Afghanistan in 2008. The JTYAF provides opportunities for young people to help them to develop as individuals and fulfil their ambitions in life as John was unable to do.

So far Sam has raised almost £2,000 for the charity and has completed over 10,000 pull-ups for the cause.

Please use the QR code on the right to link to Sam's page to support him if you are able to.

- Natan and Chris

### INTERVIEW WITH SAM CRAGGS

We have talked with former Sixth Form student Sam Craggs about his mission for the John Thornton's Young Achievers Foundation. The JTYAF is the charity Sam chose to work with for his Young Leaders Award in the RAF Air Cadets, where he is a Senior Non-Commissioned Officer.

The John Thornton Young Achievers Foundation (JTYAF) was



# DANCE EVENTS

## NORTH TYNESIDE DANCE FESTIVAL

The North Tyneside Dance Festival was hosted by St Thomas More at the Parks on the 6th and 7th March. 16 schools attended, bringing students aged 4 to 18 years old. This was the first time in 3 years the Dance Festival had taken place due to Covid, so it was aptly given the theme of 'New Beginnings'.

The Dance Festival was a perfect opportunity to show the work we have been perfecting in our Performing Arts classes and to watch the younger generation of dancers from Year 1 upwards. There were so many different dance styles and music which we all enjoyed watching, from the Year 7 Dance Club performing a number from Hairspray, choreographed by Year 12, to the Year 12 and 13 Performing Arts students performing a Beyonce Megamix to show female empowerment.

The audience responded well to our routines and we had so much positive feedback. Miss Ronan said "all of the St Thomas More dancers were spectacular." We can't wait for next year!

- Ruby Leddicat Watson, Year 10



## DANCE SHOWCASE

On Thursday 8th December all Dance students performed a Showcase for parents, carers and friends, demonstrating all of the hard work they have been putting into their GCSE and A-level pieces!

The showcase opened with a musical theatre piece called 'One' from the film Chorus Line, performed by Year 12 and 13 Performing Arts. Year 10 performed one dance called "I Believe" which they had been working on since September. This piece was part urban, part jazz and part contemporary and showcased all their skills. Year 11 performed 3 dances, all devised and choreographed by the student groups!

Overall, the showcase was a fantastic experience and it was great to have a live audience back in the upper studio.

- CJ Courtney, Year 10





# ANNA AWARDED FOR HER FUNDRAISING EFFORTS

Many of you will recognise Anna Thirlaway (Year 8) for her regular fundraising efforts in school, always putting other people first with the latest charity scheme. Anna was recently contacted by St Oswald's Hospice to invite her to an event they were hosting, to make a speech about her latest fundraiser, a 100km walk, taking photos of 100 different dogs along the way, raising £650. Anna attended the awards ceremony and made her speech; she was very surprised when she was then handed the St Oswald's Community Spirit Awards. A lovely example of one of our students going over and above for others, keep up the good work Anna! - Mrs Dixon



## EX-PUPIL SUCCESSES

Remember when you left St Thomas More and you said you'd keep in touch with that teacher who had supported you through your GCSEs / A Levels? At St Thomas More, we are always keen to know what our alumni have gone on to achieve, and the entire community love to see faces they recognise on the back cover. If you or someone you know would like to feature, no matter how big or small your success, please contact [alogie@stmacademy.org.uk](mailto:alogie@stmacademy.org.uk).

## DARCY NATHAN 2011 - 2018



As a student in Year 7, I began at STM in 2011 and left Sixth Form in 2018, when I took a gap year in Australia. I backpacked around the East Coast with my best friend, visiting Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane. I also travelled to Mexico, Poland, Ireland and Turkey that same year!

After returning from my travels, I began my undergraduate degree at Newcastle University. In the course of studying A Level English Literature and Language at STM, I developed my passion for writing articles, but I discovered a deeper interest in writing during my studies in BA English Literature. I began my Master's degree in International Multimedia Journalism this academic year. I have been awarded the Jane Constance scholarship at the University because I am committed to publishing on issues affecting women. In addition to reporting for a breast cancer charity, I currently produce a feminist podcast promoting safety for women in technology.

Since 2020 I have worked in the English Department at STM. I currently teach intervention and Functional Skills. It is lovely to be back in the friendly environment of my old school and to work with the familiar faces of the numerous other ex-pupil teachers!

After my MA degree I am hoping to secure an internship in journalism in Europe, and hopefully my career will allow me to travel back to South East Asia and Australia. I will be so sorry to finally say goodbye to STM for good!

## NEXT ISSUE SUMMER 2023

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