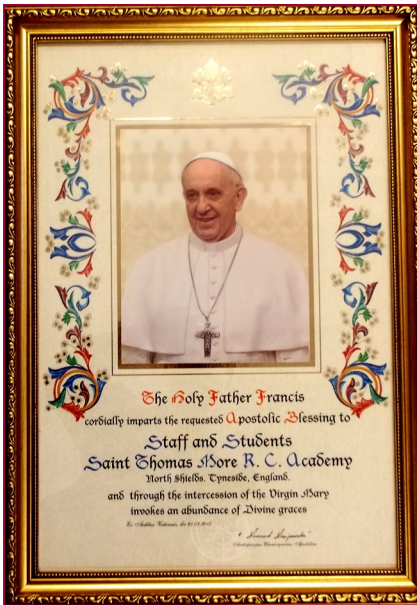




St. Thomas More RC Academy receives Apostolic Blessing



Our school community was humbled to receive an Apostolic Blessing imparted by Pope Francis to the “Staff and Students of St. Thomas More RC Academy North Shields.” The blessing which “through the intervention of Virgin Mary invokes an abundance of divine graces” was granted on the 25th August 2015. A certificate of the Apostolic Blessing is situated in the school entrance, and as such is placed at the heart of our school.

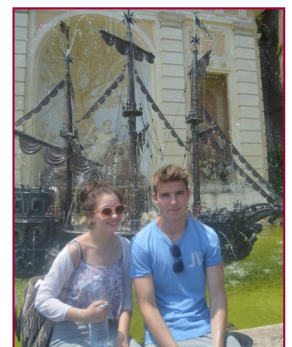
Since 2014 over 50 staff and students from St. Thomas More have journeyed on a Pilgrimage to the Vatican City and Rome. Our group of Year 11 visited most recently in July 2015, just before their summer holidays. Students have developed strong links with a priest called Father Kevin, an Irish confessor who lives and works in the Vatican City. It seems that our students made such an impression on Father Kevin that he was moved to request the Apostolic Blessing for our community. Therefore it was incredibly moving when the certificate arrived, to our great surprise, in late September. We are humbled by this unasked for intervention by Father Kevin.

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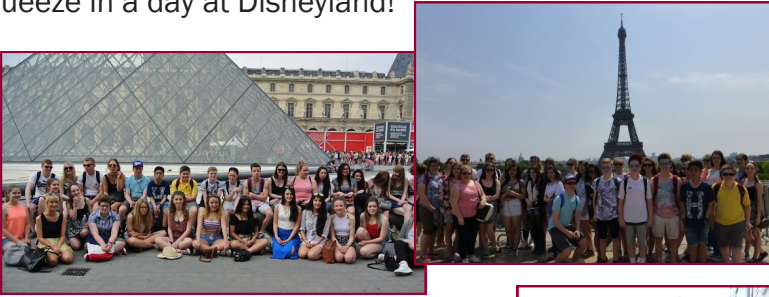
Father Kevin was our guide both physically and spiritually; he led the students in Mass at the Irish Chapel, which is placed within the catacombs below St. Peters Basilica. It was an incredibly powerful and spiritual experience for the students. We also viewed the awe inspiring Sistine Chapel, St. Peters Square, St. Peter’s Basilica, and the Tombs of the Popes. The more adventurous students climbed to the very top of the Vatican Dome. Students were also blessed to visit the place in the Vatican Gardens where Israeli President Shimon Peres and Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas recently joined Pope Francis to pray for peace in the Middle East.

We completed our pilgrimage with a candlelight vigil at the Holy See - little did we know the ‘Blessing’ and joy that would await our return home.



French Trips Galore!

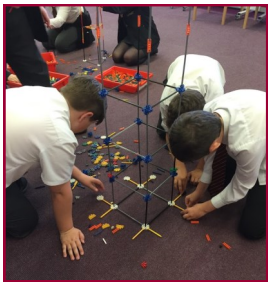
Students in Years 10 and 11 spent five days in Paris at the beginning of July where they visited all of the main sights including the Eiffel Tower, Montmartre and the Louvre. They also managed to squeeze in a day at Disneyland!



Meanwhile, students in Year 12 spent 5 days at Thonon les Bains in the Alps, which is about 45 minutes from Geneva and is where Miss Tra-bichet comes from. The group enjoyed practising their French and eating some amazing cheeses!



Year 7 STEM Day



All students in Year 7 took part in a STEM activity day in the last week of the summer term. STEM stands for Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths. Students participated in a variety of activities throughout the day, such as building and firing rockets, making sherbet, investigating curious mathematical objects and building towers.

STM Successes!

Once again, St Thomas More students enjoyed tremendous success in the summer examinations. At GCSE level, 74% of students achieved 5 or more A* - C grades including English and Maths, making the school continue to be one of the top performing schools in North Tyneside. Students at A-level produced the best set of results with over half of the results, 56%, at grades A*, A or B, which was a tremendous achievement!

The school held its annual awards evening where students and their friends and family, along with members of staff, celebrated their achievement. As well as students who performed exceptionally well overall, individual subject prizes were awarded for Mathematics and RE. The John Bassett Award for Achievement in Mathematics was presented to Sean Lowery who only dropped 41 marks out of a possible 1200 in his A-level Mathematics exams, and Owen Miles gained 100% in a Philosophy paper and was awarded the St Oswin Prize for Religious Education.



Alton Towers

A group of students in Year 9 recently spent two days at Alton Towers where they looked at how computing and business are used in theme parks and enjoyed the rides.

Super Sew-ers!

Fifteen students from Years 10, 11 and 13 recently took part in a Textiles workshop at the Bowes Museum. As well as a guided tour of the Yves Saint Laurent exhibition the girls had a full day looking at manipulating fabric following some of the techniques shown in the exhibition. This was followed by an 'Alteration Challenge' where students from different year groups worked together following the

format of the 'Great British Sewing Bee'.



All of the students thoroughly enjoyed the day and learnt valuable skills that will help their coursework.

John Paul II Award

Twelve sixth form students attended the launch event for the John Paul II Award at Newcastle Cathedral. Students will be volunteering within their parishes, so look out for their adventures in future newsletters!



Physics is Fun!

Twenty eight Physics A-level students in Years 12 and 13, accompanied by Mr Johnson, Mr Coulson and Miss Lewis, spent 4 days in Geneva in July. They visited CERN where they attended a series of lectures and saw data streamed directly from the International Space Station. They also visited the cryogenic plant where the giant Hadron Collider was built. Whilst CERN was the main focus for the visit, they also managed to cheer on the 700 British athletes taking part in the European triathlete event.



Battlefields Trip

Thirty eight students in Years 10 and 11 visited the first World War battlefields back in July. They spent time visiting cemeteries and monuments in both France and Belgium including the Vimy Ridge memorial pictured below. This is dedicated to Canadian forces who lost their lives during World War 1. Eleanor McCabe and Joseph Weir represented the school when they laid a wreath during the Last Post Ceremony at the Menin Gate in Ypres. This is held at 8.00pm every single day and is very moving.



Musical siblings

Congratulations go to Year 13 student Declan Pang, winner of North Tyneside Young Musician of the Year Award 2015. Declan won by beating his sister Caitlin, who is in Year 9, in the final.

The youngest member of STM

Students taking Health & Social Care in the sixth form have been finding out what it's like to be the parent of a new baby. The electronic baby is programmed to cry and needs to be fed, changed, and kept at the correct temperature. This includes night time as well as during the day. The students have each taken the baby home for a week-end and the quality of their care is assessed when they return to school on a Monday when their results are downloaded onto a computer. Sophie Henderson is currently the champion, although she admitted that she had found the experience stressful and very tiring! Students all agreed that they had found it difficult not having any time to switch off, and were horribly surprised at how difficult the night time feeds were. Beth McCoy had a family celebration interrupted when her baby started crying in the restaurant and had to be fed. Head of Health & Social Care, Mr Jackson, says that it has been an incredibly powerful learning experience for the students, and a second baby will be arriving in school soon. Many of the girls think a real baby would be easier, but in fact this is only on the medium setting!



Sporting Round Up



Thirty-eight students took part in the junior Great North Run on a very wet Saturday in September. They were all raising money for St Oswald's Hospice, and despite the pouring rain a good time was had by all!



Students in Years 10 and 11 have enjoyed orienteering as part of their GCSE PE course.



Our Year 9 Boys football team started their County Cup campaign with a 4-0 win over Walker.

Perhaps inspired by the World Cup, boys in Years 7, 8 and 9 had a fantastic time at the RFU rugby festival with the Year 8 team winning 4 games out of 4.




Not to be outdone, our U13 girls football team beat Wellfield Middle School by 2 goals to 1.

Students in Years 10 and 13 spent a week-end at High Adventure in Skipton, Yorkshire on an outdoor adventure trip and were, in the words of Mr Towns, amazing!



And it isn't only the students who are active. Seven members of staff took part in a mini triathlon recently which involved swimming 500m, cycling 20km, and walking 5km. They raised over £480 for Macmillan Palliative Care nurses.

 Remember that you can see all the latest PE news on Twitter: @STM_PE

The German Exchange



The school recently hosted 22 students from Oer-Erkenschwick in Germany who were here on an exchange visit. Our students are in Year 9 and will make a return trip to Germany next September as they begin Year 10. Incredibly, this is the twenty fourth time an exchange visit has taken place.

Trips included Hadrian's Wall, Alnwick Castle and Beamish, as well as spending time in school. The Council chairman held a reception and buffet lunch at the cobalt business park and many friendships between the students continue after the exchange has ended.

School Council

School Council elections have been held this term with candidates preparing posters to let their fellow students know what they feel are the important issues, and speeches to read out in assembly. A total of 70 students put themselves forward and two students in each year group were elected to the council which will meet once each half term.



School council members and Class representatives all have special badges to wear on their blazers.

In the next issue:

As we go to press our School Council members are about to have a lunchtime session with local MP Mary Glendon. Mary, whose constituency is North Tyneside, will speak to the students about democracy and the work she does as a Member of Parliament. Also, Yr11 student Liam Banks has been chosen to represent GB in Judo at an international event. We wish him luck and will let you know how he gets on!