



MORELIFE

AUTUMN 2025

St Thomas More
Catholic High School

SCORING SUCCESS CHARLIE JOINS ENGLAND U15 CAMP

I received an e-mail a few weeks ago saying I was selected for England Football's U15 training camp. I was really excited but couldn't say anything until my selection was confirmed a week and a half later. I was really proud when I was finally told I'd made the England training camp.

I travelled down to St George's Park on Thursday with my Mam and Dad, who were especially proud taking photos of me in my strip. I was taken for medicals, got my England kit, and saw a presentation about how well we'd all done to get there. We then spent time playing table tennis and getting to know each other and the coaches. Luckily, all the lads were really nice and we all got on.



Over the four days I played in little tournaments, did sessions with the other midfielders, and joined activities to see how we worked with others. On the last day we were split into two teams for a show game in front of all the coaches, analysts, and scouts. I think I played well, scoring and getting two assists. I'm just happy I held my own and am very proud to represent my country.

– Charlie Scorer, Year 10

Charlie is on a two-year pathway with the squad. There are international tournaments in the coming months, and he will soon find out which ones he is selected for. Please congratulate Charlie if you see him around school!

THRIVING AT STM PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT IN ACTION!

A very warm welcome back to all our students, parents, and carers at St Thomas More Catholic High School! As we begin another exciting school year, we are proud to offer a wide range of opportunities designed to support every young person in their growth - academically, spiritually, emotionally, and socially.

Discover on page 6 what's on offer to help every young person at STM thrive!

Our extra-curricular programme is already in full swing. Our RSE curriculum, with a focus on mental health and wellbeing, continues to support all our students, and our Careers provision aims to support every stage of future planning. We look forward this year to celebrating all that our young people will achieve. - Mr Flynn, Assistant Headteacher

The two sides to
Sixth Form at STM

02

Students meet with
Bridget Phillipson

03

Local university support
for our students

05

Thriving at
St Thomas More

06

How to support your
Year 11 with Post-16

07

THE TWO SIDES OF SIXTH FORM @ STM

EMPLOYABILITY AWARD

At St Thomas More, we're proud to celebrate the success of our Sixth Form Employability Award — a programme designed to support students who choose to enter the world of work after A-Levels. Through weekly one-hour lessons, students develop key skills such as job-search strategies, LinkedIn profile building, CV and cover letter writing, interview techniques, and finding valuable work experience opportunities. Generously supported by Steve Hart, Director of Central Employment Newcastle, the award provides

prize money each year to help two students transition into employment, covering costs such as travel, workwear or a laptop.

This year's winners, Joseph Kilgour (Accelerated Apprenticeship with the Royal Navy) and Libby Davison (Paralegal Apprenticeship with Clifford Chance), impressed with their dedication, maturity, and initiative in securing outstanding apprenticeship roles. - Mr Towns and Mr Clifford, Assistant Heads of Year, Sixth Form

TESTIMONIAL

EMPLOYABILITY



"I managed to secure an accelerated apprenticeship with the Royal Navy. It is a Level 4 apprenticeship offering many opportunities for progression, including achieving degrees and other additional qualifications. My role is as a Probationary Leading Hand, specialising as an Air Engineer. I will start in early September, beginning with a 10-week basic training course in Plymouth.

To secure this apprenticeship, I had to complete a lengthy application process, pass a series of aptitude tests, attend two online interviews, undergo a medical exam, gain security clearance, and take part in a four-day course at a naval base in Scotland. This course tested my leadership and organisational skills, as well as my fitness levels.

The employability group helped me tailor my CV and covering letter to align with the Royal Navy's expectations, enabling me to make a strong first impression with my application. I also received one-to-one support for interview preparation, with a specific focus on how to demonstrate my leadership qualities—an essential aspect of the apprenticeship requirements. Having designated time each week to focus on finding apprenticeship opportunities really helped me secure the position."

JOSEPH KILGOUR
Employability Winner 2025

★★★★★

St Thomas More Sixth Form Employability

TESTIMONIAL

EMPLOYABILITY



"I am delighted to share how the employability programme at St Thomas More Catholic Sixth Form has played an essential role in helping me secure a Paralegal Apprenticeship at Clifford Chance, which I will be starting on the first Tuesday in September. The support I received throughout the entire application process was invaluable.

Early on, I was sent the job opportunity directly by the employability tutors, who made sure I was aware of the apprenticeship opening. Their guidance didn't stop there—they worked closely with me to tailor my CV specifically to the paralegal role, which helped me stand out during the online application stage.

The application process was quite comprehensive, involving two competency assessments, an online interview, and a final interview in person. The employability team assisted me at every stage, offering advice on how to prepare for each assessment and interview, as well as providing feedback on my practice answers and interview techniques.

Thanks to their ongoing support, I felt much more confident and prepared than I would have been on my own. I'm extremely grateful for the practical help, encouragement, and personalised guidance I received. The employability programme made a real difference to my job search, and I would encourage other students to make the most of the opportunities and expert advice that the team offers"

LIBBY DAVISON
Employability Winner 2025

★★★★★

St Thomas More Sixth Form Employability

DASH FOR DANIEL

On Friday 26th September, we held a fundraiser for our friend Daniel, who is currently being treated for leukaemia. His treatment is going well, but we wanted to go the extra mile to support him and show appreciation for the RVI ward helping him through this tough time.

We raised an amazing £925, with half going directly to Dan and the other half to the RVI ward treating him.

It was a brilliant experience for both year groups in Sixth Form. We involved as many people as possible to make it enjoyable for everyone, and the atmosphere was incredible. The huge amount of support from students, parents, and teachers really showed our school's Christian values and community spirit.

- Tom Horsley, Year 13



MEETING WITH EDUCATION SECRETARY BRIDGET PHILLIPSON



In July, several former Year 13 students and I met with the Secretary of State, Bridget Phillipson, in a meeting organised by Tyne and Wear Citizens, part of Citizens UK.

Having previously worked with this group on introducing mental health professionals into schools, I was proud to thank Bridget Phillipson for her support and to ask that this continues. Engaging young people in creating change for young people is vital, and Citizens UK allows us to do

this without political bias and encouraging independent thought.

Students from Houghton raised concerns about community safety, and Phillipson promised to act. Other discussions included racism and misogyny in schools, with Mr Joyce from our school stressing that while the curriculum is improving, mindsets still need to change. After speaking about this, the Education Secretary did say that she would consider it.

The structured format of the meeting kept it focused and approachable. Overall, the experience deepened my understanding of local issues and the importance of youth involvement in shaping solutions.

- Lily Clephane, Year 13

YEAR 11 AMBASSADORS



As a Year 11 ambassador I have: completed peer-mentor training to support new students, helped Year 7 pupils settle in, been placed with a Year 8 form class, worked in the Stationery Shed, and welcomed Year 6s at Open Evening. The ambassador training taught me various coping strategies to support students through different challenges. Having also been a Year 9 ambassador, I see it as a great way to show commitment to the school and help new pupils feel welcome. The events and trips offered make it an experience I highly recommend. - Milo Frankham



Being an ambassador is a great experience for me, as it gives me many opportunities in school. For example, I often work in the Stationery Shed, which allows me to use skills I haven't used before. I also have the chance to support Year 7 and Year 8 forms, which I really enjoy. These experiences are helping me prepare for my future career. - Tyler Dobson



My journey as an STM ambassador has been very fulfilling. I began with peer mentor training, which helped me understand how to support younger students. Since the start of the year, I have been assigned to a form class, assisting students as they begin their day. At Year 6 Open Evening, I helped give tours and answered questions from potential students and their parents. It was a great experience and a highlight of my ambassador role. - Finley Smith



Being an ambassador has really helped develop skills such as timeliness, communication and leadership. It was great helping the year 7s settle in on their first day of school, giving advice and hopefully making their first day less nerve-wracking! I've really enjoyed being an ambassador so far, as it is helping me to improve my organisational skills in a year when it's important to plan my time well. - Katy Otterson



YEAR 7 QUAYSIDE

Our Geography trip to the Quayside was both fun and educational, and a great way to end a busy term. After a short coach journey, we explored the Ouseburn and learned about how the area has changed over time. A highlight was visiting Ouseburn Farm, where we got to see lots of different animals.

We were lucky enough to see the Millennium Bridge tilt for a passing boat before walking across the Swing Bridge to Gateshead. There, we enjoyed some free time to buy our lunch.

After visiting the Glass House and taking plenty of photos - including a big class one - we crossed back over the Millennium Bridge and returned to school. We're all really grateful to the teachers for organising such an amazing trip, and we hope future Year 7s enjoy it as much as we did! Mia Howe, Eve Holland and Emily Stead, Year 8



YEAR 9 HOLY ISLAND



When we set off for Holy Island back in July, everyone arrived in summer clothes and full of excitement - Mr Murray even wore his Holy Island shirt! After a short journey to Seahouses, we met our boat captain and enjoyed some lunch before setting sail for the Farne Islands. The weather was perfect, with clear skies and calm seas. We spotted seals and puffins along the way before arriving at Holy Island, where sunshine and stunning scenery greeted us.

After a long walk, we reached camp and enjoyed fun races, a football game, and a lovely meal with the volunteers. The next day 48 hours was packed with adventures - singing, sand dunes, and lots of laughter and lovely meals cooked by the volunteers! Holy Island was truly unforgettable! - Isaac Laidlaw, Year 10

OUT AND ABOUT WITH GEOGRAPHY



YEAR 13 LAKE DISTRICT

We travelled over to Ambleside in the Lake District on 29th September with the whole of A Level Geography, and we had an absolutely fantastic time. We went straight to Grizedale forest, where we started our trip off with Go Ape, high in the trees doing many obstacles and ziplines. After Go Ape, we travelled back into Ambleside, where we chilled out in the sunshine, looking onto the

picturesque view of Lake Windemere while we did some revision games. It could quite possibly be the best place to study, with stunning 360 degree views.

The following day, we travelled to another Lake, Ullswater, and hopped on a delightful journey on the Ullswater steamer, going from Glenridding to Howtown. Mr Murray then led the walk back from Howtown to Glenridding, which is 6.7 miles, which gave us some beautiful and scenic views of Ullswater, although a few snack breaks were definitely needed along the way to do some more speed-dating revision. It was an absolutely amazing trip to the Murray District.

- Ellie Armstrong, Year 13

NEWS AND EVENTS

A LEVEL BIOLOGISTS SURVEY LOCAL ECOSYSTEMS



On July 10th and 11th, Year 12 biology students undertook fieldwork to study biodiversity in different habitats. At Brown's Bay, we surveyed seaweed coverage and measured limpet height on rocks to see if it varied by their position. The next day, at Plessey Woods, we took freshwater samples, measuring factors like pH, temperature, stream width, and speed. We also did kick sampling to collect and identify stream organisms. Afterwards, we analysed the data with T tests and chi-squared tests to compare biodiversity between sites. - Annabelle Office and Sophia Cattan, Year 13

BRILLIANT CLUB STUDENTS SHINE BRIGHT

For the second year, 14 Year 8 students completed The Scholars Programme with The Brilliant Club, studying literary theory through university-style tutorials and assignments marked by a PhD tutor. The programme ended with a graduation trip to Durham University, featuring a ceremony, campus tour, and advice sessions. Helena Cameron said, "The Brilliant Club was an amazing experience, especially the graduation. It helped me make an informed decision about university." Willow Elliot-Jackson added, "The trip gave great insight into university life, from courses to societies, and strengthened my thoughts on attending university." Well done to all students involved. - Mrs Nelson



The
Brilliant
Club

NEWCASTLE UNITED FOUNDATION

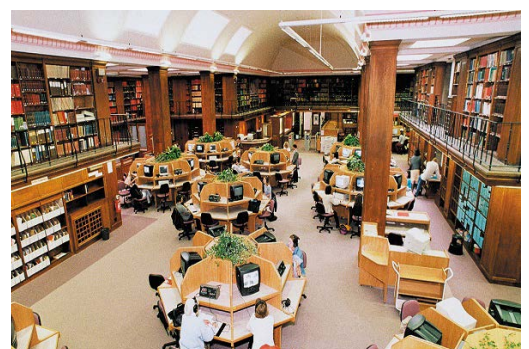


We recently took part in day 4 of a 5-day programme with three local schools. We left school at 9am, picked up others, and arrived at the NUF building in Newcastle for a day of activities. We started with a VR game called HADO, played football on the rooftop pitch, then built and raced robots in a STEM activity. After lunch, we did more sports before heading back at 2:30 pm. We learned a lot about teamwork, patience, and resilience, especially when the robots didn't work at first. We loved the STEM activity and even won! We're excited for the final 'Graduation' day to celebrate with our families. - Lucie Widdows and Daria Kurosz, Year 10

ENGLISH STUDENTS EXPLORE NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY

Recently, our A-Level English Literature class had the chance to explore a remarkable collection of vintage books and resources relevant to our studies. Led by expert preservationists, we toured carefully conserved artifacts, which gave us a glimpse into the rich history behind the literature we study. The atmosphere was welcoming, and the receptionists' enthusiasm made the experience even more enjoyable.

We explored hundreds of books in the literature section, from Shakespeare to Dickens, which helped us improve our research skills. This included learning to use the Dewey Decimal System to find books more easily and gaining access to 'open access' digital books for a limited time. These resources will support us in our NEA work and exam preparation. Overall, the trip broadened our understanding of the course and gave us valuable tools for our studies. We are very grateful for this opportunity.



- Razyeh Hassani and Mikayla Smiles, Year 13



MORE NEWS AND EVENTS

CONFIRMATIONS

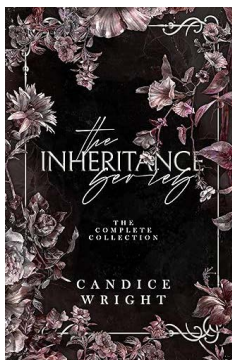
Back on 16th July, 42 of our Year 9 students received the Sacrament of Confirmation from Bishop Stephen at St Cuthbert's in North Shields. Leading up to this, students had attended sessions after school to prepare, as well as an away-day to Holy Island. As always, they were an absolute credit to our school and of course the wider Tynemouth Priory Parish communities. Please wish them all well and keep them in your prayers!
- Mr O'Connor, Head of RE



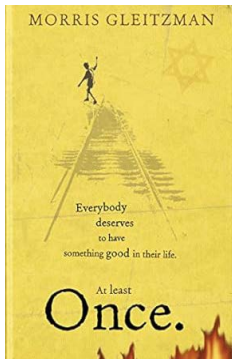
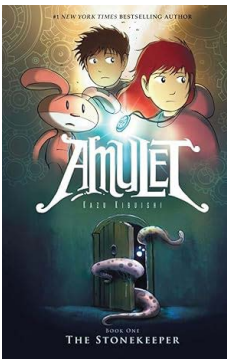
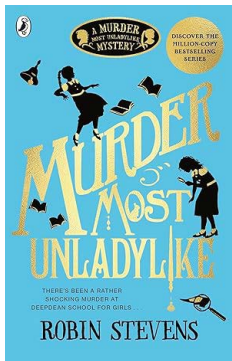
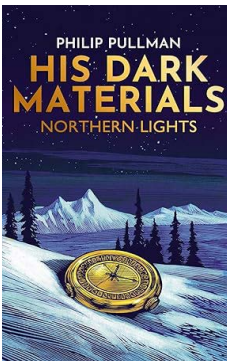
WORD MILLIONAIRES



We're excited to share some fantastic book recommendations from our Year 7 Word Millionaires, students who read over one million words during the last academic year. These avid readers have enjoyed a wide range of stories and can't wait to inspire you with their top picks! Their top picks are as follows:



- 1) Anything by Rick Riordan (especially the 'Percy Jackson' series) - Perfect for fans of mythology and adventure.
- 2) 'The Inheritance Games' by Jennifer Lynn Barnes - A thrilling mystery and puzzle-filled series.
- 3) 'His Dark Materials' series by Philip Pullman - A classic fantasy series full of adventure and deep themes.
- 4) 'Murder Most Unladylike' by Robin Stevens - A fun, cozy mystery series featuring young detectives.
- 5) The 'Amulet' Series by Kazu Kibuishi - A graphic novel series with fantasy and adventure.
- 6) The 'Once' Series by Morris Gleitzman - A heartfelt and engaging story.



THRIVING AT STM

Our extra-curricular programme is already in full swing, with a wide range of clubs and activities in sport, performing arts, STEM, debate, and more. There's something for everyone! Students are encouraged to get involved, try something new and discover their passions.

To see the extra curricular offer at STM you can use this link - <https://stmacademy.org.uk/personal-development/extracurricular-opportunities/>

We continue to support all our students to build healthy relationships, explore their identity, and make positive life choices, all within a Catholic framework through the 'Life to the Full' RSE programme from Ten Ten Resources.

To see what our students study you can follow this link - <https://www.tentenresources.co.uk/parent-portal/>

Username: thomas-more-NE29

Password: jump-down

- Mr Flynn, Assistant Headteacher

CAREERS

7S ON THEIR AI WORKSHOP



This term, BAE Systems, the Royal Air Force, and the Royal Navy visited our school to deliver an engaging theatre roadshow celebrating STEM and future careers. The 2025 theme was Artificial Intelligence (AI).

The presentation showed how AI is transforming the world, highlighting its potential as an exciting tool. It explored real-world applications, the importance of human skills, as well as how to spot deepfakes and recognise risks.

Students discovered how AI can support learning for both teachers and pupils, with Lexi the robotic dog as a clear highlight. Year 7 enjoyed the interactive demonstrations promoting the safe, positive use of AI.

Here's what students from 7S said:

"I found the robot dog really cool and didn't realise how many engineering jobs link to AI."

"It was fun and interesting. The dog and the song were great, and I was surprised by how much AI can do."

The roadshow inspired Year 7 to think about the exciting opportunities AI could bring to their future careers.

SUPPORTING YEAR 11 STUDENTS WITH POST-16 PATHWAYS

As Year 11 students approach their GCSEs, many are starting to think seriously about their next steps. This can be both exciting and overwhelming, with a wide range of routes available after Year 11. Parents, carers, and school play an important role in helping young people make informed choices.

Main options after Year 11:

- **SIXTH FORM** - Staying on at school or moving to another sixth form allows students to continue academic study, often taking A levels or equivalent qualifications. It's ideal for those who enjoy academic subjects and may consider university.
- **COLLEGE** - Further Education Colleges offer A levels, T Levels, and vocational courses in a more independent environment, helping students prepare for higher education or employment.
- **APPRENTICESHIPS** - These combine paid work with study, allowing students to gain qualifications and real-world experience across many industries.
- **TRAINEESHIPS** - Short programmes that build skills and confidence, for those aiming to progress into apprenticeships or employment, especially useful for improving English, Maths, or work-readiness.

How parents and carers can help:

- Talk with your child about their interests, strengths, and ambitions.
- Encourage research into different pathways and attend open evenings together.
- Use resources like the National Careers Service and UCAS to explore options.
- Help them plan ahead for applications, deadlines, and interviews.
- Review personal statements or CVs to build confidence.

Most importantly, reassure your child that there are many routes to success. With your encouragement and the school's support, every student can find a pathway that matches their skills, interests, and goals.

- Mrs Merchant, Careers Coordinator

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Mental health and wellbeing remain a key focus at St Thomas More. All students and parents can access expert advice and resources through our partnership with Teen Tips' Wellbeing Hub. This fantastic digital platform offers support on anxiety, friendships, motivation, and more.

To register with The Wellbeing Hub you can use this link -

<https://club.teentips.co.uk/register/parents/?ca=02e5fe2a9fca32fc565d4b7d9bced092>.

For any specific queries about access, please contact the team at hub@teentips.co.uk.

— The —
**Wellbeing
Hub**
— from Teen Tips —



JAMES TAKES AIM FOR THE COUNTY

I've been competing in county archery this year and hold a couple of county titles, so I was chosen to represent the DNAA (Durham and Northumberland Archery Association) at the Northern Counties inter-county tournament on Saturday 4th October in Cheshire. I compete in the under-12 barebow category, meaning my bow has no added technology to help me aim or shoot.

The competition went about as well as you'd expect in the middle of Storm Amy! The round was reduced from 144 arrows to 72, but after just 12 arrows in heavy rain and gale-force winds, it was ended for safety.

I'm sad not to have completed the challenge but proud to represent the county and shoot the 12 arrows I did. I look forward to future opportunities.

– James Patterson-Edwards, Year 7



EX-PUPIL SUCCESSES

We love sharing stories of former pupils who've gone on to do interesting things. If you or someone you know attended STM and would like to be featured, please contact us at alogie@stmacademy.org.uk to share with the school community.

As soon as I joined STM, I was immediately drawn to English and Humanities, especially

Geography. With support from Mr Logie and Mr Murray during my GCSEs and A-Levels, I went on to study Physical Geography

at the University of Leicester. Wanting to make a difference, I completed a PGCE in Secondary Education (Humanities) in Coventry before returning to Newcastle.

I now teach at Emily Wilding Davison School in Ponteland, an SEMH school, based in the autism specialist unit. My work there inspired me to complete a Masters in SEN and Inclusion at Northumbria University, focusing on late-diagnosed autistic females.

I'm so grateful for the support I received at STM and for the teachers who pushed me to succeed, even on tough days. Many times during my five years at EWD, I've thought back to STM - borrowing teaching ideas and hoping to influence my students as my teachers influenced me.

JORDAN ROBINSON 2010 - 2016



COURTNEY CUMMINGS (née THOMAS) 2013 - 2018

Looking back on my time at STM, I'm very grateful for the support I received, especially from teachers like Mr. Joyce and Miss Trabichet, who helped me through my dyslexia diagnosis with patience and encouragement.

After STM, I completed my A-levels and worked in roles including Tech Recruitment and Traffic Management. More recently, I took the leap into starting my own traffic management agency, focused on providing opportunities for those facing challenges, such as the unemployed, ex-military personnel, ex-offenders, and people with disabilities.

STM's support continues even now, and the strong sense of community I experienced as a student has never faded. Despite the challenges I may have posed in the classroom, I still keep in touch with many of my teachers, which speaks volumes about the kind of school STM is.

NEXT ISSUE CHRISTMAS 2025

Address: Lynn Rd, North Shields, Tyne and Wear, NE29 8LF

Phone: 0191 258 8340

Email: info@stmacademy.org.uk

Newsletter: alogie@stmacademy.org.uk

If your circumstances change and you need support: familysupport@stmacademy.org.uk

stmacademy.org.uk