



Newsletter: 26th June 2026

Dear Families,

Year 6 Visit to the Youth Village – “Behold”

Our Year 6 pupils recently enjoyed a truly memorable visit to the Youth Village, joining many other schools from across the diocese for a special day centred on the theme “*Behold*.” It was, without a doubt, an incredibly enjoyable experience—despite the very, very hot weather!

Throughout the day, pupils had the opportunity to listen to the Gospel, spend time in shared prayer and reflect on what it means to live out our faith in the world today. The theme “*Behold*” encouraged everyone to pause and really notice—to look more carefully, not just with our eyes, but with the eyes of faith.

We explored how *to behold* means to recognise God’s presence in the everyday: in the beauty of the world around us and in the people we encounter each day. It also calls us to look with wonder and awe, appreciating the gifts we have been given and the ways God is at work in our lives.

Through uplifting music, engaging storytelling, dance and moments of reflection, the children were inspired to think about how they can truly “behold” in their own lives—seeing others with kindness, recognising goodness and responding with faith and compassion.

It was wonderful to share this experience with so many other young people across the diocese, strengthening our sense of community and belonging. The day was filled with joy, energy and meaningful moments, leaving a lasting impression on everyone who attended.

Well done to all of our Year 6 pupils for their excellent participation and enthusiastic spirit—we are very proud of you!



We hope you have a lovely weekend!
From All at St Patrick's

General News

Non-Uniform Day – Friday 3rd July

Next Friday, we will be holding a non-uniform day in school. We kindly ask that all children taking part bring in a donation of sweets on the day.

These will be used for the tombola at the upcoming Parish Fair, which takes place on Saturday 11th July at St Patrick's Church.
Thank you for your continued support.



General News

New Reception Pupils' Visit

This week, we were delighted to welcome our new Reception pupils for a lovely afternoon in school. It was wonderful to see so many smiling faces as our newest recruits began to familiarise themselves with their new surroundings.

The children had the exciting opportunity to stay for lunch, experiencing our school routines in a relaxed and supportive way. They did a fantastic job, showing great independence and enthusiasm as they joined in.

During the afternoon, the pupils spent time getting to know one another, beginning to form new friendships that we are sure will blossom over the coming year. They also explored their new classroom, becoming familiar with the different learning areas and the wide range of activities on offer.

A particular highlight was time spent in our beautiful outdoor area, where the children could play, explore and learn in a fun and engaging environment. From imaginative play to discovery and exploration, it was wonderful to see their confidence already beginning to grow.

Staff were very impressed with how well the children settled and how eager they were to join in with everything. It was a joy to see their excitement and curiosity shining through.

We are very much looking forward to welcoming them back next week as they continue their introduction to school life here at St Patrick's.

Pupils starting Reception in September 2026

We would like to remind families that it is still possible to submit a late application for a place in our Reception Class for September 2026.

Late applications can still be made and will continue to be processed. If you have not yet applied for a Reception place but wish your child to join us in September, we encourage you to complete an online application as soon as possible via the Durham County Council School Admissions portal.

Submitting a late application ensures your child is included in the next stage of allocations or re-allocation rounds. If you would like any help with the process, please get in touch with our school office — we are always happy to support you.

Nursery Applications

If you have a child, who is three already, and you are looking for Nursery provision, please come and talk to us and meet our staff. Please spread the word to others!

General News

Working Together to Support Our Children

Recently, a very small number of families have approached staff with concerns that their child may be experiencing bullying. We would like to reassure all parents and carers that our staff are more than ready to give their time and attention to listen carefully and investigate these concerns fully. We are a school that would never be afraid to openly and transparently tackle tricky issues.

Whenever any concern about potential bullying is raised, we treat it with the utmost seriousness. We respond promptly, speak to all pupils involved, gather information thoroughly (talking with teaching, support staff and lunchtime staff). This can often give a very different picture to the one originally brought to our attention. We are always prepared to take appropriate action, where necessary. On the occasions brought to our attention recently, we are very pleased to say that our investigations found that bullying was not taking place - agreed by families once all the facts had been established.

For clarity, our Anti-Bullying Policy explains that bullying is **persistent, targeted behaviour intended to hurt, upset, or harm another person, often involving an imbalance of power**. It is important to distinguish this from one-off incidents, disagreements between children or silly (albeit age-appropriate) behaviour.

The situations we have looked into more recently highlight that, at times, silly or unkind behaviour can occur, as it does in any setting where children are learning and growing together. Whilst this behaviour is always addressed and used as an opportunity for learning and reflection, it does not meet the definition of bullying.

We have also become aware that some concerns are being discussed by parents and carers through WhatsApp and other messaging groups, including references to individual pupils. This is unfair and inappropriate. We would respectfully ask that any worries or questions are brought directly to school. This allows us to respond quickly, fairly and sensitively, ensuring the wellbeing and privacy of all children involved.

As always, we are committed to working in partnership with our families. Open communication between home and school is the most effective way to support every child and to maintain the caring, respectful community we value so highly.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support.

General News

Autism Awareness Assembly – STAR Initiative

This week, we were delighted to welcome Chloe Dickinson from *Investing in Children*, who delivered a very informative and child-centred assembly on autism.

This forms part of our continued commitment to the STAR initiative (*Support Targeted for Anxiety and Resilience*), helping us to nurture understanding, empathy and resilience across our school community.

We appreciate that our pupils will have many different starting points in their understanding of autism, so this was a valuable opportunity to build a shared awareness in an engaging and accessible way. Chloe helped the children to understand that autism is a natural difference in how some people experience the world, communicate and interact with others.

Through clear explanations and relatable examples, pupils were encouraged to think about how everyone is unique, with their own strengths, challenges, and ways of seeing things. The assembly also highlighted the importance of kindness, patience and acceptance, reminding us all that small actions can make a big difference in helping others feel included and understood.

Pupils were particularly engaged as they explored how some individuals with autism may experience sensory differences or find certain situations overwhelming. This helped to develop greater empathy and encouraged pupils to reflect on how they can support their peers in a thoughtful and respectful way.

The session linked beautifully with our wider school values and our mission to create a caring and inclusive environment where everyone feels valued and supported. It also reinforced the importance of recognising and celebrating diversity within our school community.

We would like to thank Chloe for delivering such a meaningful and impactful assembly. It provided our pupils with important insights and practical understanding that will help them to continue growing as compassionate and respectful individuals.

Year Three/Four Tennis Festival

Our Year Three and Year Four pupils thoroughly enjoyed taking part in the tennis festival at Shotley Bridge. They showed great enthusiasm as they developed new skills, worked as a team and took part in a range of fun activities.

It was wonderful to see such positive attitudes and excellent behaviour throughout the day. We are very proud of how well they represented our school!

General News

Disconnect to Reconnect Week

We are excited to announce our upcoming **Disconnect to Connect Week** where we encourage everyone to reduce screen time and focus on meaningful connections. Taking a break from devices helps children reconnect with family, friends, learning and their wellbeing. Throughout the week, pupils will take part in activities that promote outdoor learning and creativity. Please support at home by:

- Creating some device-free time each day
- Encouraging outdoor play or family games
- Talking with your child about the importance of finding a healthy balance.

Please don't forget to share photos with us!

Thank you for your continued support in helping our children build healthy habits and stronger connections.

Mini Police Project

We are pleased to share that our involvement in the Mini Police project is now underway with our Year 5 pupils. This exciting initiative provides children with a valuable opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of what it means to be responsible citizens within their community. Through the programme, pupils will explore important themes such as respect, community safety and making positive choices. They will take part in a range of engaging activities designed to build confidence, teamwork, and a sense of responsibility.

Already, our Year 5 pupils have shown great enthusiasm and maturity in their approach, reflecting thoughtfully on how they can contribute positively both in school and beyond. We look forward to seeing how they grow in their roles and continue to act as excellent ambassadors for our school.

Online safety

We will give regular updates throughout the year regarding the need for vigilance with online safety. Please alert us to any concerns you may have.

Please see the following guidance and advice from National Online Safety.



10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators

HELPING NEURODIVERGENT CHILDREN NAVIGATE THE ONLINE WORLD

Neurodivergent people tend to be early adopters of technology, and many influential innovators in this space are neurodivergent themselves. It's therefore likely that a neurodivergent child or young person may be drawn to the online world from an early age. This isn't a concern in itself, but understanding both the benefits and potential risks is essential. Here are ten key considerations to support safe and positive online experiences for neurodivergent children.

- 1 TREAT ONLINE LIKE THE REAL WORLD**
You wouldn't allow a child to cross a road without guidance – you'd hold their hand, use a pedestrian crossing, and model safe behaviour. In the same way, a neurodivergent child's first experiences online should be supported by an adult who can guide and explain safe and responsible digital behaviour to them from the outset.
- 2 MODEL RESPONSIBLE USE**
Children learn from what they see. Show all children, regardless of neurotype, what responsible internet use looks like. Reflect on your own use of social media and AI. Consider how often you use them and your own understanding of these platforms. Talk openly about when and why you use these tools, helping all children develop a balanced and informed approach.
- 3 KNOW YOUR LIMITS**
Current government guidance suggests no solo screen use below the age of two, with a maximum of one hour per day for two- to five-year-olds. Screen time can support communication and connection when shared with an adult. However, passive watching can affect neurodivergent children's attention and language skills. Focus on the type of content they watch, encouraging slower-paced and meaningful material rather than fast-paced, overstimulating content.
- 4 CONSIDER AGES AND STAGES**
For older children and teenagers, agreed limits are important. Screen time can be beneficial, but it should form part of a balanced lifestyle. Neurodivergent children may find online communication easier than real-world conversation, supporting their social interaction. However, it shouldn't be their only option. Encourage a range of activities, including creative play, physical exercise, and opportunities for real-world connections.
- 5 KEEP CONVERSATIONS OPEN**
Discussions about online safety should begin early and continue as children grow. However, neurodivergent children may worry about getting things wrong or being misunderstood, meaning these kinds of conversations should feel open and fair, rather than like a lecture. If a child encounters a problem – such as a scam or inappropriate content – they need to feel able to speak to a trusted adult without fear of judgement or embarrassment.
- 6 BUILD YOUR KNOWLEDGE**
You aren't expected to be an expert, but it's important to stay informed about the platforms, games, or apps neurodivergent children use in order to provide practical support. Social media platforms have age limits, and many apps and games offer parental settings that can control access. Schools and families should work together to understand these tools, helping neurodivergent children use them safely while keeping up to date with new features and changes.
- 7 SET CLEAR BOUNDARIES**
Children and young people often know more about current technology than adults, meaning it's important to recognise that controls may be bypassed. Clear, predictable boundaries should be used, based on trust and consistency. Involving children in discussions that affect them helps them feel heard. This is particularly important for neurodivergent children, who may respond strongly to perceived unfairness.
- 8 UNDERSTAND AI CONTENT**
The internet now includes large amounts of AI-generated content, including images, videos, and stories. These can be difficult to identify. Children should be encouraged to question what they see and check the information using trusted sources. Neurodivergent children may interpret content literally, meaning adult guidance is important in helping them recognise what's real and reliable – and what isn't.
- 9 EXPLAIN AI LIMITATIONS**
AI isn't the same as a search engine. It generates responses based on prompts and patterns, and its accuracy depends on how it's used. Sometimes, it produces incorrect or unrealistic information, known as 'hallucinations'. Both adults and children need to understand this and learn how to check information carefully using reliable and trusted sources.
- 10 CLARIFY AI RELATIONSHIPS**
AI can feel conversational and personal, but it's not capable of real relationships. It learns from patterns in user input rather than human understanding. Some neurodivergent children may experience a sense of connection with AI chatbots, particularly if they find social situations challenging. It's therefore important to explain that these are simulated conversations and aren't a substitute for real, human relationships.

June Wellbeing Activities

Positive Affirmations June Calendar

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday

3
I am helpful.

4
I can do hard things.

5
I can make a difference.

6
I am free to be myself.

7
I am confident.

1
I am unique.

2
I am curious.

10
I am kind.

11
I ask for help.

12
I like challenges.

13
I am a good friend.

14
I believe in myself and my abilities.

15
I am honest.

16
I make good choices.

17
I learn from my challenges.

18
I am a good listener.

19
It is ok if I make mistakes.

20
I stand up for what I believe in.

21
I am patient and calm.

22
I can try again.

23
I am generous.

24
I see the good in myself and others.

25
I am open and ready to learn.

26
I believe in my dreams and goals.

27
I am loved.

28
Today is going to be a great day!

29
I am worthy.

30
I am creative.

Try your
best today as
that is always
good enough.

It's okay to
make mistakes.
They are just
stepping stones
to success.



Strawberry Scones

Ingredients

225g self-raising flour (plus extra for work surface)

50g cold butter, cubed (plus extra for greasing and serving)

25g caster sugar

50g sultanas (optional)

pinch of salt

120ml milk, plus extra for brushing

strawberry jam for serving
strawberries to garnish

Equipment

mixing bowl

knife

round cutter

wooden spoon

baking tray

rolling pin

ruler

pastry brush

cooling rack



Method

1. Preheat your oven to 200°C-200°C fan/gas mark 7.
2. Grease a baking tray with butter.
3. Put the flour and salt into a mixing bowl and add the cubed butter.
4. Gently, rub the mixture together with your fingertips until it looks like breadcrumbs.
5. Carefully, stir in the sugar and sultanas (optional).
6. Gradually, add the milk to the mixture and stir well.
7. Coat the work surface with a light dusting of flour. Pour the mixture out onto the floured surface and knead it with your hands until the dough is quite stiff.
8. Roll out the dough until it is roughly 2cm thick. Press the cutter into the dough to cut out individual circles. Repeat with any remaining dough.
9. Gently, spread out the scones on the greased baking tray, allowing a gap between them. Then, brush them with milk.
10. Bake in a hot oven for 12-15 minutes. Leave to cool on the cooling rack.
11. Carefully, cut the cooled scones in half and add a layer of butter and strawberry jam to each half.
12. Wash the strawberries and chop off the green stems. Cut the strawberries into slices and add them to the top as an extra garnish.
13. Enjoy!

Head Teacher's Awards

The following children have received a head teacher's certificate this week:

Reception/ Nursery	Georgia	Being Respectful	For always being polite to adults and her peers.
Year 1	Joseph W	Being Respectful	For always having an excellent attitude towards work and listening carefully to his teacher.
Year 2	Jenny	Being Ready to Learn	For excellent teamwork within her group when creating a poster.
Year 3	Robin	Being Responsible	For keeping his workspace and classroom tidy.
Year 4	Safiia	Being Ready to Learn	For an excellent attitude to learning in all lessons, always giving 100%.
Year 5	Harriet	Being Ready to Learn	For achieving 100% in all spelling test this year.
Year 6	Daniella	Being Respectful	For such consistently beautiful manners.

Class Teacher Special Mention Awards

The following children have received a Class Teacher Special Mention certificate this week:

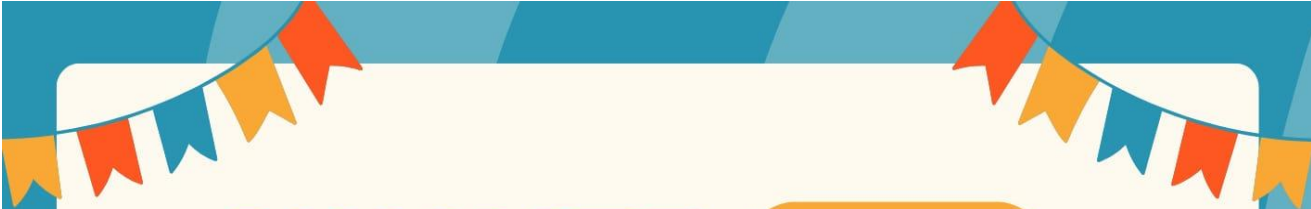
Reception/ Nursery	Ashton	For being a good friend to others.
Year 1	Rogan	For his fantastic work in writing and how much progress he has made.
Year 2	Oscar	For polite manners and contributing to our R.E lesson.
Year 3	Charlie	For always completing all classwork and homework to a high standard.
Year 4	Theo	For working hard on creating interesting sentence structures and using ambitious vocabulary.
Year 5	James	For excellent spelling results this week.
Year 6	Olivia	For putting her all into practising the Y6 leavers' songs.



Summary of upcoming events

Monday 29 th - Friday 3 rd	Disconnect to Reconnect Week (CAFOD)
Wednesday 1 st	Whole School Moving Up Afternoon
Wednesday 1 st - Thursday 2 nd	Y6 Transition Days at St Bede's
Wednesday 1 st	New Reception Classroom Visit (pupils only) 1.30pm-2.45pm
Thursday 2 nd	Y4 Life Science Centre Trip
Thursday 2 nd	Y5 BWCET Sport Event at Gateshead Stadium
Friday 3 rd	Non-Uniform Day
Friday 3 rd	Mission Team led assembly for CAFOD (Pupils only)
Friday 3 rd	Annual school reports issued (date may be delayed for Y6 as we will need to wait for SATs results to be returned)
Sunday 5 th	St Patrick's families join parish for Mass 9am. All welcome.

[Please click here to view our Diary of Events for the rest of the Academic year](#)



SUMMER 2026 CRAFT FAIR

Hosted by
Stanley Family of Catholic Churches



OVER 20 CRAFT STALLS



**SATURDAY
11TH JULY**



**12:30pm-
3:30pm**



**ST. PATRICK'S
CHURCH
DIPTON**

Raffle, Tombola, Children's area, Tea Room, Face Painter,
Highland Cows and 1961 Fordson Dexter Tractor
Children's Cup Cake Competition

**STANLEY FAMILY OF
CATHOLIC CHURCHES**



CUP CAKE COMPETITION

**SATURDAY
JULY 11**

**AT ST. PATRICK'S CHURCH,
DIPTON**



**FREE
ENTRY**

**Open to children
aged 4 to 11**

**BRING TWO CUPCAKES
OF ANY FLAVOUR
AND ANY DECORATION**



**PRIZE FOR BEST DECORATION
AND BEST FLAVOUR**

**REGISTRATION OPEN FROM
12:30PM - 1PM**