

# THE ABI UPDATE

ISSUE 9 FRIDAY 31ST JANUARY 2025

## MESSAGE FROM THE HEADTEACHER

### - MR CLINTON

Last Friday, we joined schools across the Archdiocese of Birmingham for the launch of the Jubilee. Jubilees in the Catholic Church occur every 25 years and the focus for this special year is being a 'Pilgrim of Hope'. It was a lovely morning to walk around school and see over one thousand pupils join in prayer in seventy different classrooms. If you tuned in yourself, you may have seen Archbishop Ilsley appear twice in the live feed. Thank you to Mr Koryl and Ms Jones for their hard work preparing pupils and staff for this special event.

We often talk about working in a school as being a vocation. Vocation comes from the Latin word for 'calling'. There are so many members of staff who have devoted their career, even their life, to this great school. One of these long serving members of staff is Mrs Rita O'Kane who began work at Archbishop Ilsley in 1989, before many of our staff were even born! Rita has toiled in the Science Department, supporting thousands of children with their Science education, for an incredible 36 years. Rita retires today, on her birthday. We thank her for everything she has done for this school and wish her a very happy and relaxing retirement. I will attempt to make this an interactive message and post this on X (formerly twitter) and ask our readers (and maybe some of you are former pupils?) to name the five longest serving members of staff. Can you name all five of them!?

Finally, today in briefing, Ms Brady told staff about Saint John Bosco, whose saint's day it is today. We can be inspired by his life's work as he was a loving parent and a prudent guide to the young. Rita O'Kane, like so many long serving staff, past and present, has certainly followed in his footsteps.



## KEY DATES

- Monday 3rd February - Food UCB trip, Year 10
- Thursday 6th February - Jekyll and Hyde Performance, Year 11, in school
- Thursday 6th February - Year 9 Parents' Evening 3.45pm-6.15pm
- Friday 7th February - London Trip Year 11/12
- Friday 7th February - Mathematics Target Workshops, Year 11, in school
- Tuesday 11th February - DT trip to Cosford Museum, Year 9
- Wednesday 12th February - Mathematics Target Workshops, Year 11, in school
- Thursday 13th February - DT Silverstone Museum trip, Year 12
- Friday 14th February - INSET Day - school is closed to pupils and students
- Monday 17th February - Friday 21st February - HALF TERM
- Monday 24th February - School reopens to staff, pupils and students

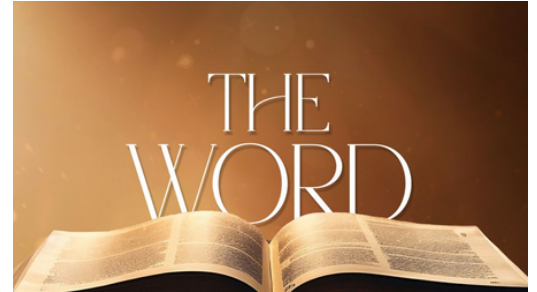
# CATHOLIC LIFE - THE THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME: SUNDAY OF THE WORD OF GOD

Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and a report about him went out through all the surrounding country. And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all.

And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll, and found the place where it was written,

'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
because he has anointed me  
to proclaim good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives  
and recovering of sight to the blind,  
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,  
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.'

And he rolled up the scroll, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say to them, 'Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.'



Reflect - what does this mean for us?

In Sunday's Gospel, Jesus made it clear to everyone in the temple that a key aspect of his mission on this earth was to help all those that need a helping hand. This week marked Holocaust Memorial Week and the 80th anniversary of the liberation of

The Poor

Prisoners

The  
Oppressed



The Lost

The Poorly

The Hated

Auschwitz. We can see how the groups Jesus mentioned, link to the victims of the Holocaust.

## HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY - MONDAY 27TH JANUARY

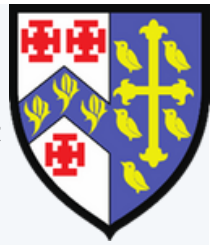
80 years on from the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, antisemitism (anti-Jewish hatred) has increased significantly in the UK and globally following the 7 October attacks in Israel by Hamas and the subsequent war in Gaza. The hope for HMD 2025 is for it to be an opportunity for people to come together, learn both from the past and present and take actions to make a better future for all.

Whilst racism and hatred do not always lead to genocide, all genocides begin with insidious stages including propaganda, 'othering' and dehumanisation. Learning about the Holocaust and more recent genocides can help us all to identify the warning signs in the world around us. Pupils and students learned about Holocaust Memorial Day during tutor time. They were introduced to some of the survivors and their stories.

**Susan Pollack OBE** - Born in 1930, Susan is a Hungarian-born British Holocaust survivor. In late May 1944, Susan and her family were sent by cattle truck to Auschwitz-Birkenau. Susan was selected to work, and remained in the camp for around 10 weeks before being sent to Guben in Germany to work as a slave labourer in an armaments factory. With the Allies advancing, the prisoners were forced on a death march to Bergen-Belsen. On 15th April 1945, Susan was liberated by the British army. After she was hospitalised for tuberculosis, typhoid and severe malnutrition, she was sent to Sweden to recover.

After liberation, Susan found that she and her brother were the only members of her family to have survived: more than 50 of her relatives had been killed during the Holocaust. She has made it her mission to share her Holocaust testimony and she has spoken to thousands of young people and adults to ensure the memory of her family and what happened to them is never forgotten. In the 2023 New Year Honours, she was appointed OBE for services to Holocaust Education and Awareness.

# PASTORAL UPDATE - MRS BURNHAM



At Archbishop Ilsey, we are committed to fostering a positive and respectful learning environment where every pupil and student can thrive. As part of this commitment, we want to remind pupils and families of the key expectations that help our school community flourish.

## Respect for Each Other and Our School Environment

Respect is the foundation of any successful community. We encourage all pupils to treat their peers, teachers, and school property with kindness and care. This includes being mindful of how we speak to one another, helping to keep our school tidy, and taking pride in our shared spaces. Together, we can create an environment where everyone feels valued and supported.

## Uniform and Standards

Uniform plays a vital role in creating a sense of belonging and setting a standard for success. In the coming weeks, there will be uniform checks to ensure all pupils are adhering to our dress code. A few reminders:

- No trainers should be worn during the school day
- Blazers should be worn as a key part of our uniform
- Leggings are not part of the uniform for girls and should not be worn

If there are any concerns regarding uniform, please speak to the school, as we have a fully stocked uniform facility in our Refocus Centre to support families.

## Safe Use of Mobile Phones and Social Media

We urge pupils to use mobile phones and social media responsibly and safely. Misuse of these platforms can have serious consequences, not only in school but also in wider life. We encourage families to monitor online activity regularly and discuss the importance of treating others with respect, both online and offline.

## The Importance of Punctuality

Arriving on time to school and lessons is crucial to making the most of the learning opportunities available. Being late disrupts lessons and hinders progress—not only for the latecomer but for their classmates as well. Please ensure your child arrives at school on time every day and transitions promptly to each lesson.

Thank you for your ongoing support in upholding the high standards we set at Archbishop Ilsey. Together, we can ensure a positive and productive environment for everyone.

The screenshot shows the website for Archbishop Ilsey Catholic School. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the school's name and logo, and a 'Student portal' link. Below the navigation bar, there is a dropdown menu with the following items: Safeguarding, Pastoral, Policies, GDPR, Results, OFSTED, SEND Information, Pupil Premium, and EAL. The main content area features a banner for 'Sixth Form - Apply now!' with the text 'Applications for our September 2025 Year 12 intake are now open! to apply today!' and a button that says 'Find out more about our Sixth Form'. There are also links for 'Click here to report a' and 'Please click here for inf'.

# HEAD OF YEAR UPDATES

## YEAR 7 - MRS WAFI

During these colder months, it is essential to maintain high standards in ensuring that pupils adhere to the school uniform policy. Black school shoes are a required part of the uniform and should be worn at all times; black trainers or other footwear are not permitted. Additionally, pupils must wear their school blazers daily. Hoodies, leggings and other non-uniform items are not acceptable and should not be brought to school. These expectations help us foster a sense of pride, discipline and unity within our school community.



To reward and recognise positive behaviour, three pupils from each year group will be selected every week to receive a 'Jump the Queue' pass. This pass allows them to skip the lunch line for the week and if they choose, can also be exchanged for a cookie from Mrs Copage. This initiative aims to celebrate pupils who consistently demonstrate responsibility, respect and dedication to their studies and the school environment.

Looking forward to 2025, we are thrilled to embrace the Jubilee Year; a sacred tradition observed every 25 years as a time of renewal, reflection and grace. The theme for this Jubilee, 'Pilgrims of Hope,' calls Catholics across the globe to embark on a collective journey of faith, transformation and deeper connection to God and each other. This significant year provides an opportunity to reflect on our spiritual paths, renew our commitment to our values and embrace the hope that comes through faith.

It was truly inspiring to see our Catholic schools join together in celebration to mark the launch of the Year of Hope Jubilee. The sense of community and shared purpose was palpable as pupils and staff united in prayer, reflection and celebration. Moments like these remind us of the strength and beauty of our shared faith, as well as the importance of coming together to inspire and uplift one another.

We look forward to witnessing how the Jubilee Year will encourage acts of kindness, deeper spiritual exploration, and a renewed sense of hope within our school and wider community.

## YEAR 8 - MRS LYNCH

Well done Year 8 on the great effort you are putting into your work, especially the dedication and effort you've put into completing your recent tests. Your hard work will truly pay off in the grades you will receive.



As we enter this Jubilee year, let us commit to showing our community what faithful stewards we can be. As Pope Francis has invited us, let us pray and prepare throughout this year, so that this Jubilee may 'strengthen us in our faith, helping us to recognize the Risen Christ in the midst of our lives, transforming us into pilgrims of Christian hope.

**Uniform:** It's essential that we wear it correctly at all times. Blazers should be worn throughout the school day, ties must be worn at all times and shirts should always be tucked in. Some of us have slipped in maintaining these standards and I'd like us to refocus and get back on track. Additionally, all detentions must be attended as scheduled.

We also had a fantastic time on our recent trip to the pantomime, where we watched Peter Pan. The performance was not only fun and engaging, but it also brought plenty of laughter and excitement for everyone. It was a wonderful opportunity for the pupils to enjoy a bit of magic and adventure outside the classroom. This trip, being the second of our two school outings, was a memorable and lively way to spend an afternoon together, and it was clear that everyone had a great time.

Let's keep pushing forward, work together, and make this Year 8 our best yet! We've got what it takes to make incredible progress and achieve great things.

## YEAR 9 - MR BRUTON

The last couple of weeks have been busy for Year 9. On Wednesday, Year 9 attended Mass, demonstrating excellent behaviour and great reverence. A huge congratulations to them for their outstanding conduct.



Last Friday marked the launch of the Year of the Jubilee, with pupils and students across the school attending a special assembly.

Last Wednesday, many pupils also enjoyed a fantastic trip to see Peter Pan. Additionally, a group of 11 Year 9 pupils were winners in the Envision Project, where they presented their ideas for improving mental well-being to other schools and business leaders. Mr Morris and I were truly blown away by their creativity, enthusiasm and professionalism, as were the business leaders and pupils from other schools. A huge well done to them for this incredible achievement!

On Thursday 6th February, Year 9 have Parents' Evening, please use School Cloud to make appointments; appointments are in person at school. Your support for your son/ daughter will make a massive difference to the outcomes they achieve in their GCSEs. Pupils will also have an opportunity to discuss suitable options with their subject teachers.

Choosing GCSE options is an important decision that can shape future opportunities. Here are some key factors to consider:

### 1. Core Subjects

Some subjects are compulsory, including:

- English Language & Literature
- Maths
- Science (Combined or Separate Sciences)
- RS - as we are a Catholic School

### 2. Interests & Strengths

Choose subjects you enjoy and excel in.

If you're passionate about a subject, you're more likely to stay motivated and do well.

### 3. Future Career & A-Level Plans

If you have a career or university course in mind, check which subjects are required.

Some A-Levels and degrees require specific GCSEs and grades (e.g., Science for Medicine, History for Law).

### 4. Balance & Variety

A mix of subjects can keep future options open.

Consider:

Humanities: History or Geography

Languages: French, Spanish, or another language

Creative & Practical Subjects: Art, Drama, Music, PE, Design Technology, Computer Science

### 5. Assessment Style

Think about whether you prefer coursework or exams. Some subjects (e.g., Art, Drama) have a large coursework component, while others (e.g., Maths, Science) are mostly exam-based.

### 6. Talk to Teachers & Parents

Teachers can advise on suitability based on your strengths.

Parents can offer support and guidance based on what they know about you.

### 7. Avoid Choosing Based on Friends

Don't pick a subject just because your friends are taking it. Focus on what's right for you.

# HEAD OF YEAR UPDATES

## YEAR 10 - MR FRANCIOSO

Celebrating Our Top Ten Year 10s!

As we reach this point in the school year, it is time to recognise and celebrate some of the incredible pupils who have stood out for their dedication, hard work, and achievements. Whether through academic excellence, leadership, creativity, sports, or contributions to the school community, these ten pupils have consistently gone above and beyond, setting an outstanding example for their peers.

Their commitment, resilience and enthusiasm has not gone unnoticed and today, we take a moment to applaud their efforts. Congratulations to our Top Ten Year 10s, you are truly making a difference and we cannot wait to see what more you will accomplish! Well done to: Adam K; Mohammadreza R; Hamza S; Poppie D; Freya L; Fabiano P; Keira K; Lawrence A; Elishba C; Eliel T



## YEAR 11 - MISS BRADY

45 school days left until exams start. We have been on a countdown in school over the past few weeks. I have taken out school holidays and two weeks for mock exams. Please join in the countdown with us!

Recently, I have been overwhelmed with the wonderful positive comments myself and Mr McDonald are continuously receiving from staff, regarding how well Year 11 are doing. So many of them are working hard in lessons, asking questions, working with their teachers and managing their time exceptionally well. As we know though, they must work hard at home; revision is the key component. At this stage, we would expect at least 90 minutes each evening. We recommend changing the subject every 30 minutes. Therefore, within one evening they should work on at least two if not three subjects. Many of you have purchased revision guides for a variety of subjects, these must be collected from Heads of Department within that subjects. Year 11 have been advised of this by their form tutors, so please remind them to collect them.

I communicated a save the date for Prom with you last week. Prom will be on Wednesday 25th June at The Village Hotel Solihull. We want all pupils to attend Prom; it is a privilege. In order to attend, pupils need to sit all scheduled Mock exams and all scheduled GCSE examinations. I want to make it clear that attendance will be looked at from Monday 27th January only. From this date, pupils need to achieve 95% attendance (exceptional circumstances will be taken into consideration) in order to attend Prom.

We have two weeks left in school until Mock examinations which start on Monday 24th February and will run for two weeks. Pupils will receive their timetables for these exams next week. Please can I ask that you continue to monitor revision at home and throughout the half term. It's really important that your child remains in a good routine so that they are ready, fully prepared and confident in approaching their last Mocks before the real thing! Thank you for your continued support.

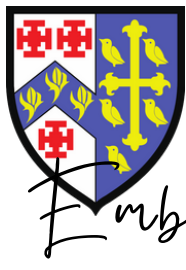


## OUR TRIP TO HARRY POTTER STUDIOS, BY EVIE F

I had the opportunity to go to the Warner Bros. Harry Potter studios with other pupils from my year, as well as Year 10 and Year 9. We experienced the inside magic of Hogwarts as we walked around the studios, looking at the behind-the-scenes at what happened during the making of the films. There were interactive buttons as we walked around the real-life sets, which showed us the magic of some of the objects that moved by themselves. We also listened to some of the workers tell us all about the inside secrets used in the films to bring the magic to life and how the point of view changed to make objects look bigger or smaller than they actually are. We got to see the real clothes and props that were used in the films, as well as having a go at riding a broomstick with the green screen behind us to demonstrate the movie's magic coming to life. During the tour, there were many places to get souvenirs and buy food and drinks like the famous 'Butterbeer.' Overall, the day we spent at the studios was an amazing and memorable experience that won't be forgotten.

Evie F; Year 11 Creative iMedia student





**Archbishop  
Ilsley Catholic  
Sixth Form**

*Embrace your future*

Follow us on @ABilsley6thform to see all of our pictures and our latest news!

Have a look at all things Sixth Form using the following link:  
<https://www.ilsley.bham.sch.uk/sixth-form/>

**YEAR 12 AND 13 PARENTS' EVENING - THURSDAY 13TH FEBRUARY 3.45PM - 6.15PM**

## REVISION STRATEGIES

Year 13 sat their second set of Mock Examinations week beginning Monday 20th January. Their attendance, attitude and conduct throughout the exam period was exemplary; well done all. This is an excellent foundation upon which to build as external examinations begin on Monday 12th May! Students should now be well into their revision, with revisions timetables and planned revision strategies that work for them. They might prefer to use Cornell Notes, Flash Cards, Mind Maps or other Graphic Organisers. Whichever methods students use, they must be active rather than passive. Please ask your child about their revision plans and the strategies that they are using.

Passive learning is simply exposing yourself to information in the hopes of absorbing it. It involves activities such as reading notes, copying materials, highlighting & underlining. These strategies can be useful (if used effectively) as a foundation to revision, but they are unlikely to lead to long-term deeper learning.

Active learning is more closely linked with the concept of metacognition. It involves actively engaging with the material using activities such as personal learning checklists, summarising and self-quizzing/look, cover, write, check. These strategies require you to plan, monitor and evaluate - strengthening your memory and comprehension.

In order to further support our students with their revision and with independent learning, subject teachers are creating a series of bespoke 'Independent Study Guides' for students to use in their study periods and beyond the classroom at home. These will be available to students as paper copies but they will also be accessible via the Sixth Form section of our school website. They provide guidance for how students can adopt a proactive approach to seeking, consolidating and extending new knowledge. These valuable resources will give specific links to what they can read, watch or access online in order to supplement classroom teaching both after class, at home and throughout the term. Independent Study Guides can be accessed for Criminology and Politics using the following link: <https://www.ilsley.bham.sch.uk/sixth-form/advice-for-parents-copy/>

Once their exam papers are marked, teachers will be discussing students' progress and actions with them; giving them specific targets to help them improve and further boost grades.

Students studying Criminology in Year 12 and 13 are also to be congratulated having completed 8 hours of Controlled Assessment in Units 1 and 3 respectively. Students were thoroughly prepared for their assessment and conducted themselves superbly over what were two demanding days of intense work.

## ACADEMIC MENTORING

Following their first set of Mock Examinations and their first Assessment Report 1, tutors are now engaging in mentoring conversations with our Year 12 students over the next two weeks in order to celebrate success and also identify areas for development or potential barriers to success. This is a very student led process; they will be encouraged to reflect on their time in Sixth Form so far and set targets. Subject teachers will also be talking to students about success and area for development during lesson time.

As a routine, your child should be engaging in work at home. Please ask them about their studies and discuss their targets with them.

## SIXTH FORM SUBJECT ENRICHMENT

On Tuesday 28th January our Year 12 English students and the English Department staff had a lovely evening at the Alexandra Theatre watching, Agatha Christie's 'Murder on the Orient Express.' Staff and students had a fabulous evening and really enjoyed the production, commenting on the entertaining cast and really imaginative staging. Thank you so much to our English Department for making this happen and accompanying our students on the evening. It really is fantastic when the pages of a play come alive so that students can fully immerse themselves in the characters and plot.



## YEAR 11 INTO 12 SUBJECT INFORMATION

Following the government's 'Pause and Review' of Level 3 vocational qualifications, we are excited to announce two new subjects that our Year 11 pupils can choose to study in our Sixth Form. In addition to the numerous other subjects available, pupils can choose to study:

- Pearson Level 3 Alternative Academic Qualification BTEC National in Health and Social Care (Extended Certificate). This qualification is for pupils who are interested in learning about the health and social care sector alongside other fields of study, with a view to progressing to a wide range of higher education courses, not necessarily in health and social care-related subjects. It is designed to be taken as part of a programme of study that includes A Levels including Biology, Psychology, Sociology and English. This qualification can allow entry to degree programmes when taken with other A Levels. Popular pathways include BSC Nursing; BSC Social Work; BSC Subjects Allied to Health
- OCR Level 3 Alternative Academic Qualification Cambridge Advanced National in Computing: Application Development (Extended Certificate). This qualification is for learners 16 years old or over who want to develop applied knowledge and skills in application development and for learners who want to progress onto other related study, such as higher education courses in Computer Science, Computing and User Experience Design. It is designed to be taken as part of a programme of study that includes A Levels including Media Studies, Business, Art and Design, Product Design and Mathematics

Over the next two weeks, Year 11 pupils have been invited up to the Sixth Form Common Room during tutor time for tea and toast. This is a second opportunity for pupils to meet the Sixth Form Team and discuss their choices with both staff and students in Year 12 and 13. If your child is yet to apply or requires further information or guidance about choices please encourage them to speak to a member of the Sixth Form Team. Application forms are available from their tutor and all of the information that you need about subjects, enrichment and life in our thriving Sixth form can be found on our website using this link: <https://www.ilsley.bham.sch.uk/sixth-form/>

## KEY DATES

- Week beginning Monday 3rd February - Year 12 PAR assessment in class
- Friday 7th February - Year 12 London Trip
- Thursday 13th February - Sixth Form Parents' Evening (3:45 - 6.15pm)
- Friday 14th February - INSET DAY
- Friday 14th February - Year 13 Assessment Report 2 issued
- Monday 17th February - Friday 21st February - HALF TERM. School is closed to pupils, students and staff

