

# THE ABI UPDATE

ISSUE 12 FRIDAY 21ST MARCH 2025

## MESSAGE FROM THE HEADTEACHER - MR CLINTON

As Mr Foley and Mr Koryl often tell me, Catholic means universal. This idea of involving everyone and possessing a shared identity has really been in evidence this week. Archbishop Ilsley is a very multi-cultural school and this is reflected both in our staff body and within the diversity of the children that we serve. 66 different languages are spoken here (or at home, to be specific!) and all the five major religions are represented here.

Over these last five days, I have seen synergy of three religions present: we had a wonderful sung prayer in staff briefing on Friday – my thanks goes to Mr Bhatti – where we learnt all about Sikhism. Then we had Friday prayers at lunchtime led by Imam Mohammed Ahmed – one of the most wonderful experiences I have been involved with in my 26 months at Ilsley. Then we had the almsgiving of a visit to the Catholic charity, St Chad's sanctuary. And on Saturday, Deacon Tim was down at Wembley for the Flame Concert... he just checking everything was ok for when Aston Villa visit there next month.

On Wednesday, we had another great event: our first Grand Iftar. You can read more about it on the pages that follow. There are so many parallels between Catholicism and Islam, in fact Jesus is mentioned in the Quran many times. Both faiths teach love for God and neighbour, humility and the importance of charity. Our acts of charity, whether through Lent or Zakat in Islam, remind us of our duty to care for the poor and vulnerable. Both traditions also emphasise prayer, self-discipline and gratitude to God.

By fostering understanding, this emphasises that Archbishop Ilsley is a community rooted in peace and mutual respect. Let us continue to learn from one another and build a school where all faiths and backgrounds are valued.

### KEY DATES

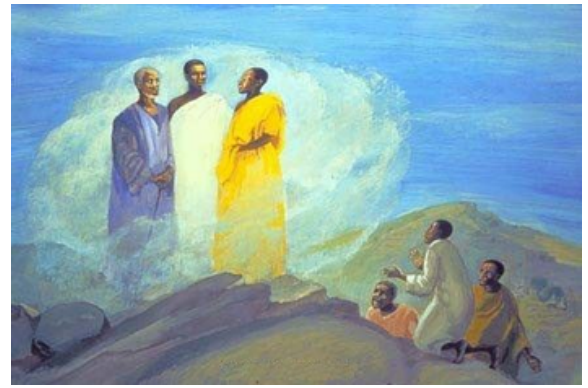
- Thursday 27th March - Year 10 Parents' Evening (3:45 - 6.15pm)
- Thursday 10th April - Year 8 Parents' Evening (3:45pm - 6.15pm)
- Tuesday 6th and Wednesday 7th May - Year 11 'An Inspector Calls'
- Monday 12th May - GCSE and A Level examinations begin



# CATHOLIC LIFE - GOSPEL REFLECTION

## LUKE 9:28-36

Jesus took with him Peter and John and James and went up the mountain to pray. As he prayed, the aspect of his face was changed and his clothing became brilliant as lightning. Suddenly there were two men there talking to him; they were Moses and Elijah appearing in glory, and they were speaking of his passing which he was to accomplish in Jerusalem.



Peter and his companions were heavy with sleep, but they kept awake and saw his glory and the two men standing with him. As these were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, 'Master, it is wonderful for us to be here; so let us make three tents, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah.' – He did not know what he was saying. As he spoke, a cloud came and covered them with shadow; and when they went into the cloud the disciples were afraid.

And a voice came from the cloud saying, 'This is my Son, the Chosen One. Listen to him.' And after the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. The disciples kept silence and, at that time, told no one what they had seen.

What does this mean for us?

Mountains are a common theme in the bible. What are your mountains in life you need to climb?

Jesus' true nature is revealed to his friends. Do you share your true nature with your friends or do you wear a mask for them?

## LENTEN CHARITIES

On Friday 14th March our Catholic Life Representatives in Years 7-12 visited St. Chad's, one of chosen Lenten Charities to drop off our first wave of donations. Many thanks to our students, pupils, staff and parents and carers who have already donated so generously. Thank you Mr Newey and Mrs Portman for taking our pupils and students there.



Students and pupils also donated to CAFOD'S Family Fast Day on Friday. This Jubilee year, Pope Francis has called on us to be 'Pilgrims of Hope'. This is CAFOD's mission - to bring our love for our neighbour to people suffering around the world, and to give them the support, skills and tools they need to find their hope for the future. Sixth Formers visited lessons collecting donations from our generous pupils, students and staff. Thank you for your donations!





## RAMADHAN

Last Friday 14th March, we were very pleased to welcome Imam Mohammed Fahad Ahmed from our local community to deliver a short talk on the virtues of Ramadhan and to lead pupils, students and staff in the Friday Prayer (Jumu'ah).

This was a lovely period of prayer and we are very grateful to Imam Mohammed Fahad Ahmed for joining us and helping us to continue to foster a positive and inclusive environment for all of our pupils, students and staff.

## GRAND IFTAR

Our school community came together for a remarkable evening as pupils, students and staff celebrated a grand Iftar, fostering a spirit of unity, gratitude and togetherness. The event, held in the school's main hall, was beautifully decorated to create a warm and welcoming atmosphere. It was especially heartwarming to see non-Muslim pupils and staff joining in, showing their support and respect for the occasion, which truly reflected the school's inclusive and diverse spirit.

The evening began with a beautiful Qur'an recitation by Muhammad A (10MB) setting a serene and spiritual tone for the gathering. His heartfelt recitation captivated everyone.

Shortly after, Muhammad performed the call to prayer, and everyone broke their fasts in the traditional way with dates and water.

Pupils, students and staff then enjoyed a delicious meal together, sharing meaningful conversations and enjoying an experience of prayer in congregation.

A heartfelt thank you to all the staff and pupils who attended and supported the event. It was a memorable occasion that left everyone with a sense of belonging and appreciation for the shared experience of Ramadhan.



# PASTORAL UPDATE - MRS BURNHAM



## Behaviour and Standards: High Expectations for All

At Archbishop Ilsey, we are committed to maintaining high standards of behaviour, respect, and responsibility both in and out of school. This week, we would like to remind all pupils and parents of some key expectations:

### Uniform and Equipment

Wearing the correct uniform is an important part of being ready to learn. Please ensure that all pupils arrive at school in full uniform, including appropriate footwear and outerwear. Having the correct equipment, such as pens, pencils, and PE kit, is also essential for a productive school day.

### Respect and Tolerance

Our school community is built on kindness, respect, and tolerance. Everyone deserves to feel safe and valued, regardless of their background, beliefs, or differences. We expect pupils to show empathy towards others and challenge any form of discrimination or unkind behaviour.

### Behaviour to and from School

Pupils represent our school at all times, including on their journey to and from school. We ask that all pupils act responsibly, showing courtesy to members of the public, using appropriate language and respecting local businesses and residents.

### Safe and Appropriate Use of Social Media

Social media can be a great way to connect with friends, but it must be used safely and responsibly. We remind pupils to think before they post, avoid sharing personal information, and report any online concerns to a trusted adult. Any misuse of social media that affects the wellbeing of others will be taken seriously.

By working together, we can ensure that our school remains a safe, respectful, and positive place for everyone. Thank you for your support in upholding these expectations.

Archbishop Ilsey  
Catholic School

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Our School Day

ClassCharts

Term Dates & School Calendar

Year 6 Transition

Uniform

Attendance

Bad Weather and Emergencies

Anti-Bullying

SchoolCloud

### Uniform

Parents and carers must ensure that all pupils follow the uniform standards outlined below. This is a key part of being ready to learn and we appreciate your full support in this matter.

If for whatever reason, there is a uniform issue please contact the school and correct the matter as soon as possible. Pupils who arrive to school in the incorrect uniform will be expected to rectify this before attending period 1. Pupils can collect spare black footwear/ties and other uniform items from the Pupil Services Shop. Ties can be loaned for the day or replacements purchased at a cost of £5.

### Archbishop Ilsey Catholic School Uniform

Uniform (Boys)

- Navy blue blazer with a school badge
- White shirt and house tie
- Medium grey, plain school trousers
- Plain navy blue V-necked pullover (optional)
- Plain black shoes - no logos, boots, trainers, fashion shoes, canvas - business/office footwear only
- Plain grey, black or navy blue socks
- Summer uniform can be worn after the Easter holidays until October half term
- If choosing to have a shaven hair cut you must have a grade 2 - no shorter, no lines, no patterns, no extreme partings
- No artificial nails or nail varnish
- Hair must be of a natural colour and pupils are not permitted to wear brightly coloured or large hair accessories.

## Global Links Enrichment Programme

Our Global Links programme, 32 Year 12s will be travelling to Peru and India to promote Global Citizenship. The



# HEAD OF YEAR UPDATES

## YEAR 7 - MRS WAFI



The much-anticipated Year 7 interform competitions began last week with great enthusiasm. We kicked things off with an action-packed 5-a-side football tournament, where teams showcased their skills, teamwork and sportsmanship. The finals, held on Thursday, saw an intense and closely contested match. A huge congratulations to the winning team! Whether playing on the field or cheering from the sidelines, pupils thoroughly enjoyed the experience, making it a fantastic start to this year's competitions. It was lovely to have the help of a number of our Year 12 students who took the time to volunteer to referee the games. Our Sixth Formers are such an important part of our school community and are excellent role models for our pupils.

Looking ahead, we have a range of exciting competitions lined up for the rest of this half-term, including photography, attendance and academic challenges. These events provide pupils with the opportunity to showcase their talents across different areas, encouraging creativity, perseverance and excellence. At the end of the half-term, the year group with the best overall performance will be recognised and rewarded for their achievements. We encourage all pupils to participate and make the most of these opportunities.

As we enter the season of Lent, we take this time to reflect on gratitude, kindness and the importance of helping those in need. This year, we are proud to support two meaningful causes: St Chad's Sanctuary and Father Hudson's Caritas, both of which provide vital assistance to vulnerable individuals and families. We encourage our pupils and their families to contribute to these charities by donating essential items such as toiletries, non-perishable food, and other necessities. Every small contribution makes a difference, and through these acts of generosity, we can have a positive impact on the lives of those less fortunate. We thank everyone in advance for their kindness and support.

In addition to our competitions and charitable efforts, we also had a wonderful World Book Day celebration. This special day gave pupils the opportunity to explore and appreciate the power of storytelling, imagination and knowledge. Each pupil had the chance to select a book of their own to take home, helping to foster a lifelong love for reading.

We hope that the books they chose will inspire them, spark their creativity and encourage them to develop a habit of reading for pleasure. A huge thank you to everyone who contributed to making this event such a success.

With so many exciting events and initiatives taking place, we are looking forward to an engaging and rewarding half-term. Whether through sports, academics, creative expression, or charitable giving, our pupils continue to demonstrate enthusiasm, dedication, and a strong sense of community.

Thank you to all pupils, staff, and families for your ongoing support and participation. Let's make the rest of this half-term just as memorable!

### Photography Competition

- **Before & After Editing Challenge** – Submit an original photo before and after editing
- Theme: **Nature**
- One entry per student
- Most votes by teachers
- Winner = 5 points
- Second place = 3 points
- Third place = 1 point

Tell your form tutor if you wish to enter



### 100% Attendance

- 2 points for every student that receives 100% attendance
- 100% attendance for the term (24 Feb - 4 April)

### Attitude towards Learning in School

- 3 points for each awarded student
- Year 7 Maths Award
- Year 7 English Award
- Year 7 Science Award

# HEAD OF YEAR UPDATES

## YEAR 8 - MRS LYNCH



As we enter the season of Lent, it is a time for deep reflection, renewal and growth. Traditionally, Lent calls us to examine our hearts and our actions, encouraging a focus on gratitude, kindness, and compassion. During this sacred season, we are reminded of the importance of living a life that is not only centred on spiritual practices but also grounded in acts of love and service to others. This year, we are particularly inspired by the opportunity to support two incredible organisations that embody these values: St Chad's Sanctuary and Father Hudson's Caritas. St Chad's Sanctuary is a charitable organisation that works tirelessly to support refugees, asylum seekers and vulnerable individuals who are facing displacement and hardship. Their work provides a safe, welcoming environment for those who are often marginalised, offering not just physical assistance such as food and shelter, but also a sense of community and hope. Similarly, Father Hudson's Caritas is an organisation dedicated to serving vulnerable children, families and adults through a variety of services that promote well-being and dignity. Their programmes focus on fostering inclusion and support for people in need, ranging from providing care for the elderly, helping children with disabilities, to offering support for families in crisis. The work of Father Hudson's Caritas is deeply rooted in the Christian values of charity, justice, and compassion, helping to ensure that everyone, regardless of their circumstances, is treated with the respect and care they deserve.

World Book Day was a truly special celebration at our school this year, filled with excitement, creativity, and a deep appreciation for the joy of reading. As part of the festivities, every pupil in our year group was given a book to take home, creating a sense of anticipation and joy as we received our own personal copy. These books, carefully selected, not only encouraged us to read but also sparked a sense of excitement about the stories we were about to explore. In class, we came together as a community of readers to celebrate this day. Instead of just a typical lesson, we took part in a shared reading experience that brought us all closer together.

This collaborative approach made the experience more engaging, as we could share our thoughts and ideas with one another, discussing characters, plot twists and even making predictions about what might come next. By the end of the day, we had completed the entire story, a story we all felt personally connected to because we had each contributed a part of the journey. This World Book Day celebration reminded us of the importance of reading and how stories have the unique ability to unite us, no matter how different our backgrounds may be.

Over the next few weeks, our year group is adding an exciting twist to form time by organising a series of fun and engaging competitions within each form group. The aim is to bring an extra level of excitement and energy to the school day, giving pupils the chance to bond with their classmates, showcase their talents, and most importantly, enjoy some friendly competition! These competitions will vary, ensuring there's something for everyone. For those who enjoy testing their knowledge, there will be quiz-based challenges. These quizzes will cover a range of subjects—from general knowledge and current events to topics we've been studying in class. It's a great way to bring learning into a fun context, and maybe even spark some healthy rivalry between form groups. Plus, it's an opportunity for everyone to shine in areas where they may have hidden talents. In addition to quizzes, we'll also have competitions focused on sports, where pupils can show off their athletic skills. It's a chance for pupils to step outside the classroom, stretch their legs, and get their adrenaline pumping in a positive, supportive environment.

Let's make the rest of this term very positive and thank you to everyone who has supported Year 8, parents staff and pupils alike, as we try to be the best we can be.

# HEAD OF YEAR UPDATES

## YEAR 9 - MR BRUTON



### Lenten Charities: Giving Back to Those in Need

As we continue through the season of Lent, we encourage all pupils and families to take part in our charity initiatives. We are collecting essential items for St. Chad's Sanctuary, a charity that supports refugees and asylum seekers. Any donations of food, toiletries, or clothing would be greatly appreciated.

Additionally, we are raising money for Father Hudson's Care, a charity that supports vulnerable individuals and families. Every contribution, big or small, will help make a difference in someone's life. Thank you to all who have already donated—we are incredibly grateful for your generosity!

### Assemblies on Charity and Faith

Over the past few weeks, pupils have had the opportunity to learn more about the importance of charity and faith through assemblies. They have received insightful presentations about the work of St. Chad's Sanctuary and Father Hudson's Care, inspiring many to get involved.

We also want to acknowledge the fantastic work of two of our Year 12 students, who delivered an assembly on Ramadhan. They spoke about its significance in the Muslim faith. Well done to both students for their informative and engaging presentation!

### A Special Reminder for Year 9 pupils

A gentle reminder to all Year 9 pupils — Mother's Day is just around the corner! This is a wonderful opportunity to show appreciation for the special women in your life, whether it's through a thoughtful card, a kind gesture, or simply spending quality time together. Let's take this moment to express gratitude and love!

### School Expectations: A Reminder for All Pupils

We would like to remind all pupils of our three simple yet essential school rules:

- Be Safe – Look after yourself and those around you.
- Be Ready – Arrive on time, prepared for learning.
- Be Respectful and Kind – Treat everyone with kindness and respect.

Following these values helps to create a positive and supportive school environment for everyone. Thank you for your continued support and engagement in school life. Let's keep working together to make a difference!

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# HEAD OF YEAR UPDATES

## YEAR 10 - MR FRANCIOSO



## YEAR 10 APPRENTICESHIP & STEM EVENT WITH EQUANS

On the 19th March our Year 10 pupils had the fantastic opportunity to take part in an engaging Apprenticeship and STEM event in the school hall, delivered by EQUANS. The session provided valuable insights into career pathways, particularly in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, while also highlighting the benefits of apprenticeships.

The event featured an exciting hands-on STEM building activity, where pupils worked together to solve engineering challenges. The energy in the hall was incredible as pupils collaborated, problem-solved, and demonstrated their creativity. It was inspiring to see their enthusiasm and teamwork in action. Both pupils and staff thoroughly enjoyed the experience, and we extend our gratitude to EQUANS for their informative and interactive presentation. A special thank you to Mr Francioso, Head of Year 10, for supporting the event, and to all staff involved in making it a success.

We look forward to hosting more events like this in the future, inspiring our pupils to explore new career possibilities in STEM! - Mr Meredith, Head of Careers





# HEAD OF YEAR UPDATES

## YEAR 11 - MISS BRADY



The final countdown is well and truly underway for Year 11. They now have 24 school days left. It is so important in these final weeks that pupils are in school every day, on time and organised. In the last newsletter, I mentioned things that you can do to help; thank you for your support with this.

To aide Year 11 English studies, over 50 pupils went to London on Wednesday to see a performance of Shakespeare's play 'Macbeth' at the renowned Globe Theatre. The play was fantastic, pupils thoroughly enjoyed the experience and will take a lot away from it. We were blessed with glorious sunshine and wanted to stay in London for the evening. If your child attended, please congratulate them on their exceptional behaviour; they were a credit to you and our school. Thank you to the English department for giving pupils this wonderful experience.



Over the past two weeks, our Sixth Form team have held over 70 interviews of Year 11 pupils hoping to stay on at Archbishop Ilsley; there are a further 20 interviews next week! The team have been so impressed by how pupils have approached the interviews; they have prepared, researched and conducted themselves in a professional manner. We are so proud of them and we hope to welcome them all back in September!

I wrote to you on Tuesday to advise of the criteria set in order for pupils to attend Prom. We want Prom to be a memorable and enjoyable experience for all. If you have any questions regarding this please do not hesitate to contact me. Prom will be on Wednesday 25th June at The Village Hotel Solihull.

Finally, ensure your child is still maintaining standards with their uniform. Blazer, school bag, tie and school shoes are still essential. Should anyone have any concerns around this please contact me and we can work together to find a solution.

Thank you for your continued support.

Year 13 are now on the countdown to their final external examinations - the first A Level examination begins on Monday 12th May. It is therefore imperative that all Year 13 students are in school on time every single day in order to ensure that they can fully access the guidance and expertise of their subject teachers. Students are also fully aware of the need to be working outside of the classroom revising content and using past questions.

It is also important that students are mentally prepared for their examinations. Ensuring that they have sensible sleeping patterns, are eating healthily and engaging in exercise is all good preparation for exam success. I would also urge parents and carers to monitor the number of hours that students are working if they have a part time job. We advise that students undertake no more than ten hours of employment.

In their Aspire session on Wednesday, students were encouraged to reflect on what positive mental health and well being looks like in order to recognise and understand how to address signs of stress or anxiety. It is natural at this time, that our students may experience increased feelings of stress and anxiety. Tutors, teachers and the Sixth Form team are always available to support students. Please see below the following advice regarding how you might be able to further support your child before their exams:

#### THE IMPORTANCE OF LEARNING ABOUT WELLBEING AND MENTAL HEALTH BEFORE EXTERNAL EXAMINATIONS

For students preparing for external exams, understanding wellbeing and mental health is crucial. Exams can be a significant source of stress, and learning how to manage mental health effectively can improve both academic performance and overall well-being.

1. **Managing Stress and Anxiety** - External exams often bring pressure to perform well, which can lead to high levels of stress and anxiety. Learning stress-management techniques, such as mindfulness, time management, and relaxation exercises, helps students stay calm and focused.
2. **Building Resilience** - Resilience allows students to cope with setbacks, such as difficult exam questions or lower-than-expected results. Understanding mental health encourages a growth mindset, helping students see challenges as opportunities for learning rather than failures.
3. **Enhancing Concentration and Productivity** - A healthy mind leads to better focus and productivity. Learning about mental well-being encourages students to get enough sleep, exercise, and maintain a balanced diet—factors that improve concentration and cognitive function during revision and exams.
4. **Encouraging Healthy Coping Mechanisms** - Without awareness, students may turn to unhealthy coping strategies like excessive caffeine, poor sleep habits, or avoidance. Education on mental health promotes positive coping mechanisms such as deep breathing, physical activity, and seeking support when needed.
5. **Reducing Burnout** - Constant studying without breaks can lead to burnout, reducing motivation and effectiveness. Understanding wellbeing helps students recognise signs of burnout and implement self-care strategies to maintain a sustainable study routine.
6. **Promoting a Balanced Approach to Success** - Exams are important, but they do not define a person's worth. Learning about mental health encourages students to adopt a balanced approach, recognising that success also includes personal growth, relationships, and well-being.
7. **By prioritising mental health education before exams**, students can develop the emotional resilience and self-care strategies needed to perform their best while maintaining a positive mindset.



In Year 12, their Aspire session focused on the importance of healthy friendships. By understanding the importance of friendships, our students can build positive relationships that enhance their academic, personal and professional lives. In their sessions they explored the following ideas:

1. **Emotional Well-being** - Friendships provide emotional support, helping students navigate the stresses of A-levels, university applications and future career decisions. Positive friendships can boost self-esteem and reduce anxiety.
2. **Social Skills and Communication** - At this stage, students refine their interpersonal skills, including conflict resolution, empathy and active listening—key attributes for personal and professional success.
3. **Personal Growth & Identity** - Friendships help shape a student's identity, values, and decision-making. By interacting with diverse groups, they develop a broader perspective and a stronger sense of self.
4. **Academic and Career Benefits** - Strong peer networks can provide academic motivation, study support, and future career opportunities. Learning to build and maintain healthy relationships is vital in both educational and professional settings.
5. **Healthy vs. Toxic Friendships** - Students need to recognise the difference between supportive friendships and toxic ones, ensuring they set boundaries and prioritise mental health.
6. **Independence and Responsibility** - As they prepare for adulthood, students learn to manage friendships alongside increasing responsibilities, helping them develop balance and independence.

## SUBJECT ENRICHMENT: EXTENDED PROJECT AND CORE MATHEMATICS

In Year 12 students undertake an enrichment subject, either the Extended Project Qualification or Core Mathematics. These subjects are equivalent to an AS Level and so carry all important UCAS points. When students are considering their university options, they will see that all courses have an entry criteria; either universities are looking for a particular set of grades or they will require students to have a particular amount of UCAS tariff points. All grades awarded at Level 3 carry UCAS points - Grade A\*, 56 UCAS points; Grade A, 48 UCAS points; Grade C, 32 UCAS points; Grade D, 24 UCAS points; Grade E, 16 UCAS points.

Therefore, securing a good grade in their enrichment subject is very important. University's also welcome the skills that each qualification teaches. The Core Mathematics Exam is on Thursday 15th May; students have completed their course and are now working through practice papers. The EPQ deadline is Monday 24th March. Students must submit their first draft to their teachers. Please discuss this with your child; thank you in advance for your support.

## FLAME 2025

On Saturday 15th March, Deacon Tim and Father Marco along with a number of Sixth Formers attended the annual Flame youth event at Wembley Arena. Flame is the largest Catholic Youth event in the United Kingdom. Picking up on the theme for the Jubilee Year, "Pilgrims of Hope" the Flame theme for this year was "Unstoppable" – Fan the Flame of Hope. It was a wonderful occasion attended by over 10,000 Catholics from across the country. It is very true to say that teachings of Jesus Christ help every one of us spread hope, joy and peace throughout our school, local, national and international community.



Sixth Formers are already looking forward to Flame 2026 which will know will be as great a success as this year's event.

# NEWSLETTER

March 2025 World Book Day Edition



## WORLD BOOK DAY 2025

What a wonderful day World Book Day proved to be this year. Fun, laughter and plenty of giggles and that was just the staff!

### Bookface Competition *Winners*



This year we decided not to dress up as our favourite book characters but to take part in Bookface, the craze of having someone take a photo of you behind a book posing as part of the front cover. Trust me, it's harder than it looks! Both staff and students joined in and these are both the winning entries. Any idea who is behind each book?



Crafting activities included making origami bookmarks!



**Free books** *For everyone!*

All key Stage 3 students celebrated their day by owning their own copy of a World Book Day read by visiting the library and our very own pop-up bookshop! **The Fart That broke World Book Day** seemed to be the most popular book with the boys while the girls preferred the title **This Story is a Lie**. We even had enough book tokens to give out to staff members so nobody went without.

*What an exhausting day!  
See you all for the next one!*

### Shelfie Competition *Winner*

Wow we had some impressive entries. The creativity was mind blowing! But alas! there can be but only one winner and it really was a beauty. It was a multiple shelfie creation depicting the epic tale of The Lord of the Rings by JRR Tolkien. All the other entries were too good to ignore so it was decided there were no losers, only runners up.

