

THE ABI UPDATE

ISSUE 3 FRIDAY 10TH OCTOBER 2025

MESSAGE FROM THE HEADTEACHER - MR CLINTON

Dear parents, pupils, carers, and friends of Archbishop Ilsley, We are six weeks into the school year and we have now settled into the familiar rhythm of school. One of the privileges of my role is having the pleasure of seeing fantastic lessons taking place on a daily basis. Whether it is a challenging task in Maths, engaging group work in English, thought-provoking content in History, creativity in the arts, hinterland knowledge in Geography or practical skills in DT and Food, I am always so impressed with the broad and balanced curriculum on offer and the subject knowledge and passion of our committed teachers.

This was also very much in evidence at last night's GCSE information evening, led by Mr McDonald, Mr Francioso and Mrs Grant. After an informative and inspiring 30-minute presentation, pupils and parents attended drop-in practical sessions in all the different subjects. Feedback from pupils and parents was overwhelmingly positive. I am so grateful for Ms Kilroy, Heads of Department, all the teachers and our army of Sixth Form helpers who gave up their Thursday evening. Also, special thanks to all the parents, aunts, uncles, grandparents and carers who attended and work with us in partnership to achieve the very best outcomes for our children as they endeavour to 'let their light shine'.

KEY DATES

- Tuesday 14th October - Year 12/13 Morgan Motor Company trip
- Tuesday 21st October - Sixth Form Open Evening & Careers Convention (5:00pm - 6:30pm)
- Wednesday 22nd October - Year 9 Belgium Residential
- Wednesday 22nd - Friday 24th October - Year 12/13 Geography Fieldtrip
- Monday 27th - Friday 31st October - HALF TERM
- Monday 3rd November - Pupils and students begin Autumn term 2
- Thursday 6th November - Year 9 Information Evening
- Wednesday 12th November - Yr 7 & 12 Parent & Tutor Meet - (3.25pm - 4.30pm)



Join us for our Sixth Form Open Evening
and Careers Convention on

Tuesday 21st October 5.00pm - 6.30pm

'We look forward to seeing you there!'



Scan the QR code to the Sixth Form
section on our school website and view
our Prospectus

CATHOLIC LIFE

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION: LUKE 17:5-10

At that time: The apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith!” And the Lord said, “If you had faith like a grain of mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and planted in the sea,’ and it would obey you. “Will any one of you who has a servant plowing or keeping sheep say to him when he has come in from the field, ‘Come at once and recline at table’? Will he not rather say to him, ‘Prepare supper for me, and dress properly, and serve me while I eat and drink, and afterward you will eat and drink’? Does he thank the servant because he did what was commanded? So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, ‘We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty.’



How is this relevant to us today?

In this Gospel, the apostles ask Jesus, “Increase our faith!” Jesus replies that even if their faith were as small as a mustard seed, it could move a mulberry tree into the sea. He then reminds them that a good servant does what is asked of them without expecting praise or reward.

Jesus uses the image of the mustard seed to show that faith doesn’t have to be huge to make a difference. Even a little faith — a quiet prayer, a small act of kindness, a moment of trust — can grow into something powerful. This is a reminder that we do not have to have everything figured out to believe. We can take small steps in faith — like showing respect, helping a friend, or taking time to pray. These acts can change lives, starting with our own.

God can do great things with even the tiniest bit of trust. The second part of the passage is about being a faithful servant. Jesus tells us that when we do what is right — when we work hard, show kindness, or help others — we should not do it just to be praised or noticed. Instead, we should do it because it is the right thing and because it reflects the love of God.

In school, that might mean arriving on time and being ready to learn; giving our best effort even when no one is watching or showing respect to teachers, classmates, and ourselves.

This Gospel encourages us to trust God with the small things and to serve others with a humble heart. We do not need to be perfect to make a difference — just willing to take that small step of faith. “We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty.” This is not about putting ourselves down — it is about remembering that everything we do is part of something bigger: living out our faith through love, service, and trust in God.

**The apostles said to the Lord,
“Increase our faith!”**



As we move further into the Autumn Term, we want to take a moment to celebrate the positive attitudes and commitment we are seeing from so many of our pupils. Their effort, kindness and dedication to high standards make our school a place where everyone can succeed.

Attendance and Punctuality

We are delighted to see the majority of pupils arriving on time to school and to lessons every day—thank you for supporting them in this. Every lesson really does matter, and being punctual ensures pupils get the very best from their learning. Consistency here helps pupils build good habits for life.

Uniform and Winter Weather

It has been wonderful to see pupils wearing their uniform with pride. With the colder weather arriving, we remind pupils that coats should be worn over their blazer, not instead of it. This small detail makes a big difference in keeping our standards high and our pupils warm.

Respect and Tolerance

We continue to be impressed by the way pupils show kindness and respect to one another. Our ethos of tolerance and care is clear to see during lessons and social times. These qualities not only help create a calm and happy school but also prepare pupils to thrive beyond the classroom.

Behaviour Beyond the School Gates

Many members of the community regularly comment on the excellent behaviour of our pupils on their journeys to and from school. We are proud of how they represent us and encourage everyone to keep setting that example of courtesy, safety, and respect.

Thank you, as always, for your ongoing support. Together, we can continue to make our school a safe, respectful, and aspirational place for every child to learn and grow.





Firstly, last Friday's Year 7 assembly on anti-bullying was a great success. The pupils were engaged and thoughtful and it provided a valuable opportunity for them to reflect on the importance of being kind and respectful towards one another.

In addition, our Maths Club and Book Club have been up and running this week, and it has been wonderful to see so many pupils getting involved and eager to learn. These extracurricular activities are a fantastic way for pupils to further develop their skills and interests outside of the classroom. In English, the pupils are studying 'A Christmas Carol' and I have been impressed with their creativity and dedication. It is truly a pleasure to see them growing and thriving in their studies.

Catholic Social Teaching reminds us that we are all created in the image of God, and that together we form one family, where each person has dignity, worth, and something important to contribute. We will be encouraging our pupils to live out this teaching in their daily school life by:

- Being ready – coming prepared for learning, bringing the right equipment, and being on time to school and lessons.
- Being safe – looking after themselves and others as members of one caring family.
- Being respectful and kind – recognising the dignity and value of every person.

Year 7 have also begun leading collective worship with their peers; leading their peers in prayer and encouraging them to think more deeply about our shared values and our year group saints. This morning was an excellent example of pupils letting their light shine. Well done; we are very proud of you all!



As part of being ready, we also emphasise the importance of excellent attendance. Research shows that good attendance is directly linked to strong GCSE outcomes: pupils who attend regularly make better progress, while those who miss school frequently find it much harder to achieve the grades they are capable of. Every day in school counts, and we ask for your support in ensuring your child attends consistently and punctually. We also remind pupils of the importance of taking pride in their school uniform, which reflects our shared identity and unity. Please support us by ensuring that blazers are worn every day as part of the full school uniform. Together, as a school family, we want to build a community where every child feels valued, safe, and ready to succeed.

Overall, Year 7 has had an excellent week, and I am proud of all that they have accomplished. Thank you for your continued support in their education. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out.



As the autumn days grow shorter and the air turns crisp, there has been a warm and joyful atmosphere in the canteen as our Year 8 pupils continue to enjoy their welcome breakfasts. These gatherings are a wonderful opportunity for pupils to reconnect, build friendships and feel a greater sense of belonging within our school community.

In the coming weeks, pupils from Years 7 to 11 will also take part in House Saint Breakfasts—a special time where tutor groups from the same house come together. This initiative not only strengthens house spirit but also encourages cross-year friendships, mentorship, and a shared sense of faith and purpose.

These moments of gathering and fellowship reflect our core values and echo the words of Psalm 133:1: “How good and pleasant it is when God’s people live together in unity.” Our shared breakfasts remind us that community is built through simple acts of connection—breaking bread together, listening, and encouraging one another.

As we settle into the term, we kindly remind all pupils that blazers must be worn every day as part of our school uniform policy. Additionally, coats should be removed when entering the classroom, helping to maintain a respectful and focused learning environment. We look forward to continuing this season of togetherness and thank all our pupils and staff for making these mornings so special.

ART COMPETITION NEWS

It’s been a busy and exciting time in the Arts! We’re thrilled to share the wonderful results of our recent Art Competition, which celebrated the theme “God’s Creation.”

Our recent Art Competition beautifully captured the theme “God’s Creation.” Pupils and students across the school showcased their creativity by expressing the beauty of the world through their artwork. Each piece offered a heartfelt interpretation of nature, faith, and gratitude for the wonders of creation. The event not only celebrated artistic talent but also encouraged spiritual reflection, reminding us that creativity itself is a precious gift from God.

As Psalm 19:1 reminds us, “The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.” We are proud to announce this terms’s winners:

1st Place (Year 10): Sarah B

2nd Place (Year 10): Yumiko

3rd Place (Year 11): Imrana



Congratulations to all our talented artists for their inspiring contributions! Your work truly reflects the beauty and wonder of God’s creation.



Year 9 Update – A Strong Start to the Year

As we move well into the first term of Year 9, it's a great time to recognise and congratulate those pupils who are already standing out as hardworking, focused, and engaged learners. Your commitment to your studies is laying the groundwork for a successful year and beyond – well done!

This week, we are especially excited as we prepare for our first form assemblies of the year. It's always a proud moment to see our pupils take the lead, share their ideas, and represent their forms with confidence and creativity. We look forward to seeing what each group brings to the stage.

Last week, we also had the pleasure of celebrating our Saints Day breakfast. It was a lovely way to come together as a form group and reflect on the values that guide us. Thank you to everyone who participated and helped make it a memorable occasion.

A gentle reminder: punctuality matters. Being on time to lessons is not just about routine – it's about respect for your learning and for others. Year 9 is a pivotal year where we begin building the solid academic foundations that will support your success at GCSE level. Every minute in the classroom counts.

At this point in the school year, we want to take a moment to remind everyone just how important excellent attendance is. Every day in school counts. Every lesson missed is a step away from progress, growth, and achievement.

We are working really hard to support all of our students to be in school every day, on time, and fully ready to learn. Good attendance is not just about showing up—it's about building routines, being responsible, and showing commitment to your own success.

We are asking for your continued support to help improve attendance across Year 9. Whether that means encouraging each other to get to school on time, talking at home about the importance of daily attendance, or reaching out when support is needed—we are in this together.

We've also launched our Envisage programme with a selected group of students. It's fantastic to see the energy and enthusiasm already flowing. This is a brilliant opportunity for teamwork, creativity, and leadership – and we can't wait to see the amazing work you'll produce.

As we approach the final two weeks of this half term, let's keep the momentum going. These next two weeks are your opportunity to show resilience, stay focused, and finish strong. Keep striving to be the best version of yourself, both in and outside the classroom.

“Pope Leo urges us to ‘learn how to listen ... as Jesus did’ – and in listening, we grow, we understand more deeply, and we become more open to learning.” Let's keep working hard, supporting one another, and making Year 9 a year to remember.

As we come to the last two weeks of this half term, we would like to take this opportunity to remind all Year 10 pupils of some key expectations to help them make the most of their learning and school experience.



Punctuality and Preparation

It is important that pupils attend all lessons on time and are fully prepared for the day ahead. Before leaving their form each morning, they should have checked their timetable and know which lessons and rooms they will be attending. They should also have the correct equipment. It is therefore important that all pupils attend form on time each day so they are prepared for the day and do not miss important messages. Failure to attend could result in your son/daughter not being registered and a message being sent home.

The school day begins promptly at 8:40am, so arriving on time and ready to learn is essential.

Kindness and Respect

We are very proud of the positive atmosphere within our school community. We ask all pupils to continue being polite and kind to everyone they meet—whether in lessons, at break or lunch, or around the school site. Respect and consideration go a long way in creating a supportive environment for all.

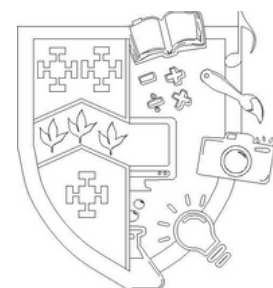
Duke of Edinburgh Award

We are delighted with the number of pupils who have already applied to take part in the Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) Silver Award this year. There is still time to apply, so if your child is interested in developing new skills, volunteering, and taking on new challenges, we encourage them to submit their application soon!

Thank you for your continued support in helping your child make a positive start to Year 10 and their GCSEs.

Year 10 and 12 Work Experience Update

Over the past few weeks, our Year 10 pupils and Year 12 students have been busy preparing for their upcoming work experience placements, which will take place during the week beginning Monday 29th June 2026. It's been fantastic to see so many pupils and students already securing placements and reaching out to local employers to gain valuable insight into the world of work.



CAREERS

A big thank you to parents and carers who have supported pupils and students in finding placements and completing the necessary paperwork so far. As a reminder, consent forms should be returned by Friday 24th October. Details of the employer's Public Liability Insurance and Health & Safety Risk Assessment, can be emailed directly to careers@ilsley.bham.sch.uk for the attention of Mr Meredith once a placement has been found; there is a letter at the back of the booklet that can be cut out and handed to the employer.

For those pupils and students still searching for placements, we encourage them to continue contacting local businesses and organisations — every conversation is a chance to build confidence and communication skills. The Careers Team is also available to offer guidance and advice on the Careers google Classroom. I have and will continue to post opportunities on the Year 10 and 12 Careers Google Classroom so do have your child check it out.

We are looking forward to another successful work experience programme that gives our pupils and students the opportunity to explore future careers, develop employability skills, and gain real-life experience beyond the classroom.

It has been another positive and purposeful few weeks for our Year 11 pupils. The focus and maturity they are beginning to show is exactly what we hoped for at this stage of the year. As the weeks progress, we can see pupils beginning to take real ownership of their learning – and this will be the key to success as we move closer to the exam season.



A huge thank you to all those who attended our GCSE Information Evening. It was fantastic to see so many parents and carers taking the time to engage with staff and find out more about how best to support their children in the months ahead. Your presence sent a strong message to our pupils – that their education matters, and that they have a network of people cheering them on every step of the way. We hope the evening helped to clarify the journey towards GCSEs and gave you practical ways to support study and revision at home.

We are also excited to introduce Study Plus, a new initiative designed to strengthen our pupils' preparation and confidence. This programme adds an extra timetabled lesson every day, providing focused support in key subjects and giving pupils the space to review, practise, and refine their understanding. It's another opportunity to bridge any small gaps before exams and to build the consistent study habits that make all the difference.

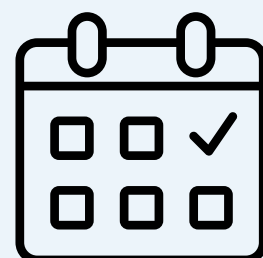
Another important message we have been reinforcing with pupil is the clear link between attendance, punctuality, and achievement. Research consistently shows that even a small drop in attendance can have a significant impact on GCSE outcomes. Every lesson missed is valuable learning time that cannot be easily replaced. Equally, being on time to school – and especially to form time – is vital. Form tutors share key messages each morning, and pupils often receive invitations for careers interviews, study sessions, and additional English or maths support during this time. Arriving punctually ensures that no opportunity is missed.

We ask for your continued support in encouraging your child to maintain excellent attendance and punctuality. Together, we can help them make the most of every day, every lesson, and every opportunity.

Finally, we want to remind students that while Year 11 can be challenging, they are not alone. Staff are here to help, and every day brings a chance to take another positive step forward. With the support of home and school working hand in hand, there is no limit to what this year group can achieve. Thank you, as always, for your ongoing encouragement and partnership.

What Next... important dates ahead for Year 11 pupils

- Year 11 meet the Sixth Form Events following pupils' Mock Exams
- Year 11 interviews
- Tuesday 21st October - Sixth Form Open Evening and Careers Convention
- Tuesday 21st October - Applications open for Sixth Form
- Mock Exams 1: 3rd November – 14th November. Report 1 Issued: 3rd December
- Parents' Evening: 4th December
- Mock Exams 2: 23rd February – 6th March. Report 2 Issued: 26th March
- GCSEs commence: 11th May
- 29th and 30th June 2065 – Year 11 into 12 Step Up Days
- All GCSEs concluded on 24th June
- Results Day and Sixth Form Enrolment: Thursday 20th August



GCSE INFORMATION EVENING - THURSDAY 9TH OCTOBER

We would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to all parents and carers who attended our GCSE Information Evening this week. It was wonderful to see so many of you supporting your children as they begin this important stage of their education.

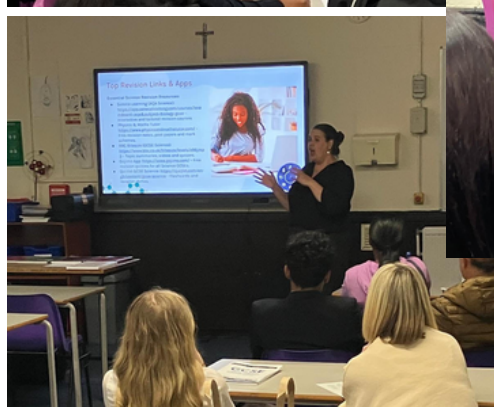
The evening was designed to help pupils and their families understand the importance of the GCSE year — a time to work hard, stay motivated, and make the most of every opportunity. Together, we can ensure that every student works to the best of their ability and achieves their full potential.

As part of the evening, we also discussed the exciting opportunities available in our Sixth Form. Thinking ahead about the subjects pupils may wish to continue studying, and the grades required to pursue those pathways, can be an excellent motivator throughout the year. Having clear goals and a vision helps pupils stay focused and purposeful in their studies.

Parents and carers also took part in subject carousels, where departments shared practical advice on effective revision strategies and offered valuable insights on how families can best support learning at home. The feedback from both parents and pupils has been extremely positive.

We are very grateful for your ongoing partnership with the school. By working together, we can make this a successful and rewarding year for all our pupils as they take the next steps toward embracing their futures.

Please see below for our GCSE subject 'Top Tips' for revision.



English

- Create flashcards to help you learn key quotations from 'An Inspector Calls' and 'Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde'
- Explode quotes by analysing language techniques and the writer's big ideas



Modern Foreign Languages

- 15 minutes of revision ideally everyday but realistically 3 times a week will significantly enhance knowledge
- Kerboodle – reading and listening questions, vocabulary lists
- Watch programmes in French / Spanish with English subtitles (visa-versa)
- Listen to music in the target language
- Record speaking answers on your phone and listen to them on the bus

Mathematics

- Your child must be working on maths outside of lessons on their own every week (2 homeworks)
- Your child must seek a personal dialogue with their maths teacher regularly – period 6 but also Friday after school by arrangement for most staff
- Your child must attend after school maths revision every week from March onwards

Science

- Use flash cards and test little and often
- Space out your revision and do it in small manageable chunks
- Complete lots of past papers on physics and maths tutor and then mark them.

DT and Hospitality and Catering

- Coursework is worth 50% of your final grade, aim to get 75% or above.
- Make flashcards and revise from September-February, then practise exam questions until the final exam.
- Download past papers from the AQA (DT) or WJEC (Food) website.

Media Studies

- Coursework Counts! 30% of the GCSE grade comes from the coursework project, where pupils design their own media product (e.g. magazine). Encourage them to take plenty of original photos, plan layouts carefully, and meet all deadlines; creativity and organisation make all the difference.
- Know the Set Texts - Pupils should revise each key product (like This Girl Can, No Time to Die, Vogue, Fortnite), who made it, who it targets, and what it says about the world. Short summaries or mind maps help consolidate this knowledge.
- Think Like a Media Producer! Whether analysing a poster, advert or film trailer, pupils should always ask: How does this attract the audience? What message or representation is being created?
- Practising this kind of thinking builds strong analysis skills for the exam.

Health and Social Care

- Complete all planning sheets this weekend, ready for the controlled assessment on Thursday 16th and Friday 17th October
- Carry out some self-care on Wednesday and Thursday night to be ready for this assessment - make sure you have a good nights sleep
- Carry out some self-care on Thursday and Friday to help you focus in this assessment - eat breakfast; bring food and snacks for during the day; move around and interact during breaks in the day

IT/Computing

- 📅 Make a revision timetable now
- 🔍 Master the key Pre-Production documents
- 🙋 Ask for support in meeting your coursework deadlines.

Art

- Make full use of the arts facilities by attending scheduled interventions and workshops
- Continue working independently at home to ensure all deadlines are met.

Year 13 Mock Exams Update

Our Year 13 students have now completed their first set of mock exams in the hall – and we are delighted to report that they approached them with focus, maturity and determination. To help calm nerves and ensure a positive start to each day, we offered Year Group Tea and Toast sessions each morning. These provided a welcoming space for students to gather, refocus, and set themselves up for success.



The mock exams provide an important foundation for the rest of the academic year, helping students build confidence, resilience, and effective exam techniques ahead of their final examinations in the summer.



We are incredibly proud of their hard work and commitment so far and encourage them to keep up the momentum as they continue their preparation for the months ahead. The Assessment Report 1

will be sent home to parents and carers on Friday 7th November. I encourage all parents and carers to read the Autumn Update that I shared last week. It includes the upcoming dates for Year 13 students and some important links for UCAS and careers. The letter and all of the links can also be found on our website under 'Communication' and in the Sixth Form section of our website here: <https://www.ilsley.bham.sch.uk/sixth-form/advice-for-parents/>

Year 12 PAR Assessments and the Importance of Punctuality

Year 12 are now six weeks into their Sixth Form journey with us and we are very pleased with their efforts so far. Students are now completing their in class subject Progress, Action, Response (PAR) assessments. These assessments are an important opportunity for both students and teachers to gain a clear picture of academic progress so far. They help identify areas of strength as well as topics that may need further focus, ensuring every student is on track for success this year and beyond.

Alongside academic preparation, we would like to emphasise the importance of punctuality – both to Sixth Form in the morning and to individual lessons throughout the day. Our day begins at 8.40am. Students need to sign in and beep in up in the Common Room - they need to allow themselves time to do this and get to tutor time for 8.45am. This is a non negotiable.

Being punctual is not only essential for learning but also an important life skill that will serve students well beyond school. We expect all students to arrive promptly and ready to learn, as this sets a positive tone for the day and maximises learning time. In tutor time sessions there is a pastoral programme in place to support study skills, organisation and careers. It must be attended punctually each day by all students. Please note that poor punctuality may result in the removal of Relaxed Reg privileges or the ability to go out at lunchtime. Attendance and punctuality are closely monitored by each student's Personal Tutor and the Sixth Form Team.

Finally, I encourage all parents and carers to read the Autumn Update that I shared last week. The letter and all of the links can also be found on our website under our 'Communication' section.