Contact us: 0121 706 4200 @ABIlsley www.ilsley.bham.sch.uk

THE ABI UPDATE

ISSUE 4 FRIDAY 23RD OCTOBER 2026

MESSAGE FROM INTERIM PRINCIPAL - MR HEARNDEN

Dear Parents, Carers and Students,

As we reach the end of our first half term, I want to take this opportunity to say thank you to our parents and carers, staff, governors and, most importantly, our students for their hard work, commitment and support over the past seven weeks.

When we returned in September, we made it absolutely clear that Archbishop Ilsley was entering a new chapter. We were unapologetic about our expectations, determined to raise standards and committed to delivering the education and school experience that every one of our students deserves.

Following the publication of our Ofsted report from May 2026, we knew that significant areas of school life required urgent attention. We have not shied away from those findings, we acknowledged them, accepted responsibility and got straight to work.

The pace of improvement has been rapid, the changes have been significant, and the impact is already being felt across our school community, and this is how we know.

In just seven weeks, we have:

- Strengthened leadership and governance, including the introduction of our School Improvement Assurance Board (SIAB), providing additional scrutiny, challenge and support. Our governors are regular visitors to the school, seeing improvement first-hand and holding leaders to account.
- Significantly reduced internal truancy, ensuring more students are where they should be, in lessons, learning.
- Transformed expectations around uniform and appearance, with the majority of students now meeting our standards every single day.
- Established a clear culture around mobile phones. Phones are no longer a visible feature of school life, allowing students to focus on learning and positive relationships.
- Introduced clear, consistent sanctions, with high levels of attendance at detentions and students increasingly understanding that actions have consequences.
- Created calmer, more orderly classrooms, where lessons are typically purposeful and teachers can teach without unnecessary disruption.
- Implemented robust attendance and punctuality systems, with improved monitoring, earlier intervention and attendance beginning to move in the right direction.
- Established our new Lead Teacher team, driving improvements in teaching, learning and curriculum so that our students receive the very best educational offer.

“...just and firm of purpose.”

- Invested in a high-quality professional development programme for staff, strengthening classroom practice and expertise because better teaching means better outcomes for your children.
- The Pope Leo Centre, formally the LRC, has been restructured as a purposeful Inclusion base with cvlam and purposeful intervention and regulation spaces.
- Positive systems are emerging through the creation of Student Support Coordinator roles and strengthened multi-agency working
- We have shared SEND Pupil Passports with parents/carers. These contain diagnostic information and impact on learning and detail adaptive teaching strategies that will be used by teaching staff to support individual students in overcoming barriers to learning
- We have welcomed families into school to meet our new SEND team, strengthening relationships and ensuring that the needs of our students are identified as early as possible and remain central to our work.
- Become an official partner with the Little Sutton Trust who will be supporting the school as we drive improvements in reading and literacy.
- Listened directly to our students through Student Voice panels, giving them the opportunity to share their experiences, challenge us and help shape the school they deserve.
- We have a comprehensive extra-curricular offer being enjoyed by lots of our students.

These are not simply changes written into policies or improvement plans. They are changes that can be seen and felt in the daily life of Archbishop Ilsley.

There is a growing sense of pride, purpose and ambition across our school. Students are responding positively, staff are working relentlessly, and families are playing an increasingly important part in our improvement journey- we have talked about a 'one team' approach and we are seeing this in action.

Of course, we are not where we want to be yet. There is much more to do, and we will never pretend otherwise. But we should recognise and celebrate just how far we have come in such a short period of time.

Next half term, we are likely to receive our first Ofsted monitoring visit since the publication of the report. We will welcome that visit. We will be ready to demonstrate the progress made, celebrate the outstanding work taking place and showcase the determination of our entire school community. We have every reason to be proud of the direction in which we are travelling.

As we move forward, one message remains absolutely clear: we will continue to hold the line.

We will not lower expectations because they are challenging. We will not compromise on behaviour, uniform, attendance or the quality of education. We will remain unapologetic about the high standards we have set because our students deserve nothing less.

Our school motto calls us to be "Just and Firm of Purpose." Those words have never been more relevant. We will lead with fairness, act with consistency and remain relentless in our pursuit of excellence.

This is the Year of Ilsley, and we are determined that it will be remembered as the year our school truly began to rise again.

Thank you once again for your continued support, we wish all our students, families and staff a safe, restful, enjoyable and well-deserved half-term break.

Mr D Hearnden
Interim Principal

“...just and firm of purpose.”

CATHOLIC LIFE • SCRIPTURE REFLECTION
MATTHEW 22:34-40



When the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they got together. One of them, an expert in the Jewish law, tried to test him with a question. "Teacher," he asked, "which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"

Jesus answered, "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'
All of the Law and the teaching of the prophets depend on these two commandments."

How is this relevant today?

In this week's Gospel, Jesus is asked which is the greatest commandment. His response is simple but powerful: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind." He then adds a second commandment: "Love your neighbour as yourself." These words remind us that our faith calls us to recognise the dignity, worth and value of every person, regardless of their background, ethnicity or culture.

As we celebrate Black History Month and continue our whole-school focus on being safe and tackling racism, this Gospel carries a particularly important message. Black History Month is an opportunity to celebrate the achievements and contributions of Black people, recognise those who have courageously challenged injustice, and reflect on our responsibility to create a fairer and more inclusive society.

Jesus reminds us that loving our neighbour is not simply about being kind to those we know or those who are similar to us. It means showing respect, challenging prejudice and standing alongside those who experience discrimination.

In our school community, this means ensuring that racism, stereotypes and discriminatory language are never accepted or dismissed as harmless jokes. It means having the courage to speak up when something is wrong, supporting those who feel excluded and ensuring that everyone feels safe, respected and valued.

Our Catholic faith teaches us that every person is created in the image and likeness of God. Our differences should be celebrated, never used to divide us.

As we reflect on this Gospel, perhaps we can ask ourselves: Do my words and actions make others feel that they belong? Do I have the courage to challenge racism when I encounter it? Am I truly living out Jesus' commandment to love my neighbour?

Black History Month reminds us that celebrating diversity and challenging injustice are responsibilities we share throughout the year, not just during October. May we continue to build a school community where everyone belongs, everyone feels safe, and every individual is treated with the dignity, love and respect they deserve.

Loving our neighbour means not only standing alongside them, but also standing up for them.

**"... Love the Lord your God.
Love your neighbour as yourself..."**

ATTENDANCE MATTERS AT ABI - MRS BURNHAM

Let's Finish Strong and Start Even Stronger!

As we reach the end of our first half term, we want to say a huge well done to all our students who have achieved 100% attendance! What a fantastic achievement! We also want to recognise those students who have made improvements in their attendance. Every extra day in school is a step in the right direction, and your efforts have not gone unnoticed.

The half-term break is a great opportunity to rest, recharge and enjoy some well-deserved time with family and friends, ready to return for another successful half term.

Get Ready for Monday 2nd November!

A little preparation can make a big difference! A few days before returning to school, we encourage families to:

- Get back into a routine – gradually return to normal bedtimes and wake-up times so Monday morning isn't a shock!
- Check your uniform – make sure everything is clean, ready and fits correctly, including school shoes.
- Pack your school bag – check you have your equipment, PE kit and everything needed for your lessons.
- Plan your journey – check bus times, travel arrangements and allow extra time for traffic.
- Set your alarm – make sure there is plenty of time to get up, have breakfast and arrive at school before 8:45am.
- Talk positively about returning to school – discuss what your child is looking forward to, whether that's seeing friends, favourite subjects or getting involved in school activities.
- Address any worries early – if your child is anxious about returning, please contact their tutor or pastoral team so we can offer support.

Why Does Every Day Matter?

Regular attendance is about so much more than being in a classroom. Every day in school is an opportunity to learn something new, build friendships, develop confidence and feel part of our school community. Missing just one day means missing five lessons, valuable learning experiences and opportunities to connect with others. Over time, these missed days add up and can make it harder to keep up with learning.

We know that sometimes there are genuine barriers to attendance, and we are here to listen, understand and work with families to overcome them. Every student matters, every improvement counts and every day is a fresh opportunity to succeed. Let's return on Monday 2nd November refreshed, prepared and ready to make the second half term even better than the first! Every Day Counts. Every Lesson Matters.

Supporting Our Families – Free Adult Counselling Service

At Archbishop Ilsley Catholic School, we recognise that supporting our students also means supporting their families. Life can sometimes present challenges, and we understand that stress, anxiety and changes in family circumstances can affect everyone's wellbeing. We are pleased to share information about the BCU Adult Counselling Service, offered in collaboration with the South Area Network Schools. This service provides free, confidential counselling for adults who may be experiencing stress, anxiety, bereavement, significant life changes or simply feeling overwhelmed.

The service offers:

- Free and confidential counselling.
- Support with emotional wellbeing.
- A welcoming and inclusive environment.
- A service supervised by qualified Birmingham City University (BCU) professionals.

We know that family wellbeing plays an important role in helping children feel happy, secure and ready to attend school. Seeking support is a positive step, and no one should feel they have to manage life's challenges alone.

If you feel that you or someone in your family could benefit from this service, please refer to the attached leaflet for further information.

BCU Adult Counselling Service

In collaboration with the South Area Network Schools

Life can feel challenging at times.

We can provide you support whether you're experiencing stress, anxiety, loss, life changes, or simply feeling overwhelmed.



Our Service Offers:

- ✅ Free confidential counselling
- ✅ Support with emotional wellbeing
- ✅ A welcoming and inclusive service
- ✅ Supervised by qualified BCU professionals

Get in touch with us:

📧 sanadultcounselling@bcu.ac.uk

📞 0121 331 6615

SEND AND INCLUSION - MRS GRANT

Following a successful Parent Coffee morning where we were joined by all our our external agencies, please see below a useful introduction to SEND Advisory and Inclusion Services and a simple guide to how you can access support both inside and outside of school. Scan the QR codes to take you to the relevant websites.

Birmingham Local Offer
Information about SEND services, education, health, support and resources.
Scan the QR code or visit the website. https://www.localofferbirmingham.co.uk/

Parent and carer guidance (OAG)
Ordinarily Available Guidance explains the support families can expect from Birmingham schools. The website includes parent guides on ten topics, including adaptive teaching and transitions. https://www.localofferbirmingham.co.uk/online-ordinarily-available-guidance/#accordion-item-parent-carers

Where do I start?

- Talk to your child's teachers or contact the SEND Team at send.info@ilsley.bham.sch.uk about their strengths, needs and any barriers to learning.
- Ask what support is already in place and whether changes or additional strategies could help.
- Discuss whether advice from a specialist SEND service would be useful. Some support is delivered through the school; referral routes vary by service.
- Use the Local Offer and OAG guides to prepare questions and understand the support available.

Specialist teams and how they can help:		
Communication and Autism Team (CAT)	Advice and strategies relating to communication and autism.	
Language, Learning and Strategic Support (LL&SS)	Advice and strategies to support learning and access to education	
Speech and Language Therapy (SaLT)	Supports speech, language and communication; link therapists work with schools at universal, targeted and specialist levels.	
Occupational Therapy (OT)	Supports participation in everyday activities and routines for children with physical, learning or mental health needs.	
Educational Psychology Service (EP)	Uses psychology to support learning, development and wellbeing; contributes to Education, Health and Care needs assessments.	
Sensory and Physical Support	Hearing, vision and physical support teams help schools meet sensory and physical needs.	

STANDARDS FOR LEARNING - MR FOLEY

Smart, Ready, On Time: our students are setting the standard

This half term our students have shown just how high the Ilsley Standard can be. Every day staff recognise students who arrive on time, in full uniform, with their equipment and phones away, and who work hard in lessons. The numbers speak for themselves.

In the week beginning 12 October alone:

- 13,050 Ilsley Standard Awards were given across the school
- 1,044 pupils received at least one award
- 10,332 positives were logged by teachers in lessons
- 773 award-winners had no consequences at all that week

Year 7 have made an outstanding start to secondary school, earning the most awards per students of any year group, and 7THE were the top tutor group in the whole school with 485 awards.

Congratulations also to our top tutor groups 8CAR, 9JHN, 10BER, 11BAK, 12BAK and 13BAK, and to our star students Ivy B. and Khaleesi S. (Year 7), Fajar-Imaan F. (Year 8), Amelia K. and Lilly T. (Year 9), Amelia P. (Year 10), Emilia M. (Year 11), Mary M. (Year 12), and Ruo Xin C. and Reeni-Mai M. (Year 13).

Thank you to all families for supporting the routines that make this possible: correct uniform, being on time and keeping phones away. Small habits, done well every day, are making a real difference to learning across the school.

LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOUR: NO ROOM FOR RACISM

Listening to student voice through our SAINT programme

Our SAINT tutor-time programme has made this a whole-school focus under the theme 'Love Your Neighbour'. Every year group is working through:

Scripture: Jesus' great commandment to love our neighbour as ourselves (Matthew 22:34–40), and the reminder that God welcomes every voice and every accent.

Newsround, "Racism Isn't Banter": how football and wider society are tackling casual racism, linked to Show Racism the Red Card's Wear Red Day on 16th October.

Ilsley Spirit, "Every Accent Matters": saying everyone's name properly, never mocking an accent, heritage, food or culture, and refusing to laugh along.

Assemblies, "Standing Up to Racism": what it means to be an upstander, not a bystander. Students are learning that racism can target skin colour, heritage, nationality or accent, and that calling it a joke never makes it harmless.

Zero tolerance of discriminatory language is one of our three focus habits this year: racist language will always be challenged and recorded. We ask every student to say "That's not OK" and tell a member of staff, and we would be grateful if families could continue these conversations at home.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

More Than Lessons: opportunities inside and beyond the classroom

Our extra-curricular programme gives every student the chance to discover, develop, belong and make a difference. There is something for everyone: football, netball, badminton, basketball and dance; art, choir, coding, chess, maths and science clubs; film, book, board game, craft and journaling clubs; debate club; and a daily Catholic Life offer in the Chapel at lunchtime, including Lectio Divina, the Rosary and Adoration.

Engagement is growing. In the week beginning 12 October we recorded:

- 184 club attendances, our highest weekly total this term
- Year 7 participation more than doubled, with 58 students (almost a third of the year group) taking part
- 30 students attending two or more different clubs in a single week
- Boys Football as our most popular club (38 students), with Chess, Film, Art and Crafting Clubs all in double figures, and new Board Game and Book Clubs up and running

If your child has not yet joined a club, please encourage them to try something new after half term. See the Extracurricular timetabe at the end of this issue.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Our students have been fantastic this October, leading prayer and liturgies in tutor time and assemblies with real confidence and faith. Student-led assemblies, organised house by house (St Teresa of Lisieux, St Carlo Acutis and St John Henry Newman), have celebrated heroes from our own Birmingham community: the poet Benjamin Zephaniah, Professor Dame Elizabeth Anionwu, sickle cell specialist nurse and campaigner, and the photographer Vanley Burke. Thank you to every student who has led, read and prayed for our community this month: you have shown courage, dignity and mutual respect, and made us very proud.







CATHOLIC LIFE - LIVE SIMPLY AWARD CERTIFICATE

We are delighted to announce that Archbishop Ilsley has been awarded the CAFOD Live Simply Award. The award recognises Catholic schools that respond to Pope Francis' call in Laudato Si' to live simply, sustainably and in solidarity with the poor, through actions rooted in prayer and Catholic Social Teaching at a global, local and school level. In the words of our assessor: "I am delighted to formally report that Archbishop Ilsley is very much a Live Simply School." The assessor recognised a school community that is "confronting very severe levels of deprivation, ensuring that refugees within its four walls are welcomed, feel at home and secure." In particular, the report highlighted:



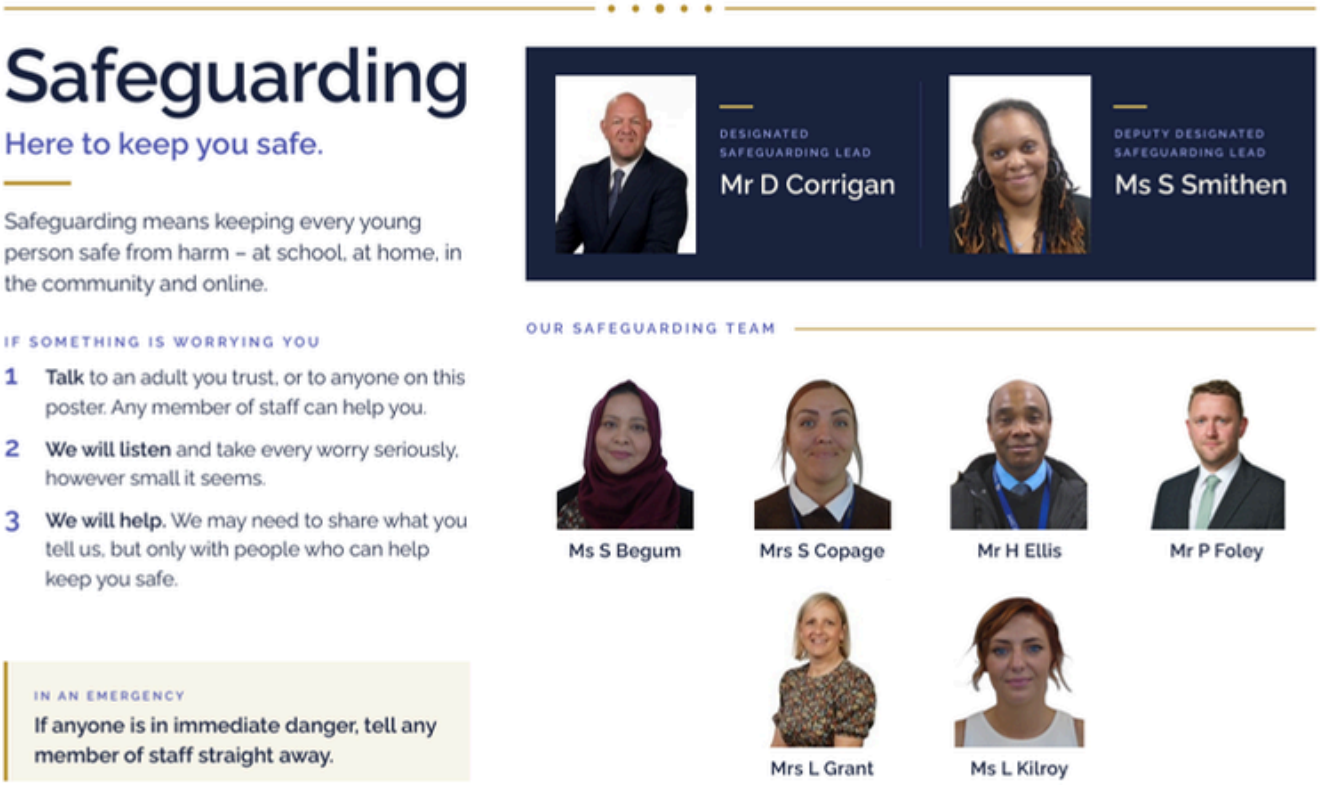
- Celebrating Creation. Our whole-school art competition was "a delightful celebration of the wonders of Creation". Our new prayer garden, created with the Stewardship Club and SEND pupils and blessed by Bishop David Evans, was described as "a beautiful oasis… a place of peace and tranquillity in the midst of the bustle of the school."
- Refugee Week and Culture Day. Every subject contributed, and the week was "very affirming for the children for whom this is their direct life experience", as well as celebrating "the richness of the diversity of cultures in the school."
- St Chad's Sanctuary. Our Catholic Life reps visited the Sanctuary, then led the Lenten donation appeal in their tutor groups, filling two minibuses. The assessor wrote that this approach "really sows the seeds for their future."
- Looking outwards. Sixth formers lobbied Parliament with CAFOD's "Act Now, Change Forever" campaign, and 28 Year 12 students travelled to Peru and Nepal on our Global Links expeditions, described as "an extraordinary achievement for everyone involved."
- Rooted in prayer. Every class litter pick began with a short lesson and a prayer, "completely transforming what the students then set out to do."
- Reflecting on our school values of Wisdom, Courage, Dignity and Integrity, the assessor concluded: "offering Dignity to people who the world has robbed of it is at the very heart of the work of CAFOD and therefore in the vision of how to live simply."

Thank you to all the students and staff whose work was recognised in this award, and to every family who donated to our hampers, appeals and fundraisers. Your generosity, prayer and commitment have shown what it means to live simply, sustainably and in solidarity.

SAFEGUARDING: KEEPING OUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY SAFE

The safety and wellbeing of every student remains at the heart of everything we do at Archbishop Ilsley Catholic School. Our dedicated Safeguarding Team plays a vital role in ensuring that all students feel safe, supported and listened to, both in school and beyond.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and we value the important partnership between school and home. We encourage parents and carers to contact our Safeguarding Team if they have any concerns about their child's safety, wellbeing or circumstances that may affect them. No concern is ever too small to share, and early communication enables us to provide the right support at the right time. Together, we can ensure that every young person feels safe, valued and able to flourish.



DETENTIONS AND KEEPING SAFE AFTER SCHOOL

We would like to remind parents and carers of the importance of supporting the school's behaviour expectations, including attendance at detentions when these are issued. Detentions provide an opportunity for students to reflect on their choices, take responsibility for their actions and understand the importance of meeting our high expectations. We ask parents and carers to reinforce the importance of attending detentions promptly and completing them appropriately.

We also ask for your support in ensuring that students go directly home once they have been escorted off the school site at the end of the day. Students should not wait outside school for friends who may still be attending detentions or participating in other activities. This is an important safeguarding measure, helping us to ensure that students leave the school site safely and that unnecessary gatherings do not develop outside the school gates. Thank you for working in partnership with us to maintain a safe, respectful and orderly school community.

DATES FOR THE DIARY

- Monday 26th - Friday 30th October - HALF TERM
- Monday 2nd November - Staff and students return for Autumn Term 2
- Tuesday 3rd November - Sporting Ambassadors
- Thursday 5th November - Year 7 Football Match at Ark
- Friday 6th November - Maths Catholic Partnership Event
- Wednesday 11th November - Year 7 MAD Museum

CELEBRATING OUR STAFF AND COMMUNITY



At Archbishop Ilsley, our commitment to serving others extends far beyond the classroom. We are incredibly proud of the contributions our staff and students make to the wider community. A wonderful example of this was Mr Hillen's recent performance for the BIA Dementia Group. Giving his time and sharing his talents to bring enjoyment to others is a fantastic example of our Catholic ethos in action, reflecting our school values of Dignity, Courage, Integrity and Wisdom.

We would love to celebrate more of the wonderful things our staff and students achieve outside school, whether through volunteering, charity work, music, sport, community projects or personal accomplishments. We know that so many members of our school community are doing extraordinary things beyond the school gates, and we want to hear about them!

We encourage parents, carers, students and staff to share their achievements with us so that we can recognise and celebrate the many ways our school community makes a positive difference.

SCIENCE: A FANTASTIC START TO THE YEAR!

It has been a fantastic start to the academic year for our Science Department, with students across all key stages embracing new challenges and opportunities.

We were delighted to welcome our new Year 7 students into the laboratories, where they have been developing essential practical skills and working towards their Bunsen Burner Licence. This is always an exciting milestone, marking the beginning of their journey as young scientists.

Our Year 10 students have also made an excellent start to their GCSE Science courses, settling into new classes and approaching this important stage of their education with enthusiasm and determination.

Beyond the classroom, two groups of Year 10 students attended an inspiring STEM event hosted by St Peter's, where they explored future careers and exciting developments in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. Opportunities such as these help students appreciate how their learning connects to the wider world and the possibilities available to them.

Finally, our ever-popular Science Club continues to go from strength to strength! Open to all Year 7 and Year 8 students every Thursday, the club offers opportunities to investigate, experiment and discover more about the fascinating world around us. We look forward to another exciting year of scientific discovery, curiosity and achievement!

BELGIUM RESIDENTIAL OPPORTUNITY

Our staff and students are having a fantastic time in Belgium. Please see some of the photos here. To follow their progress, make sure the you are following us on X.
A huge thank you to Mr Jones and the team of staff for accompanying our students and giving them this brilliant opportunity.









YEAR 7 - MR FRANCIOSO

As we reach the end of our first half-term, I want to take a moment to reflect on what has been a really positive start to life at Archbishop Ilsley for our Year 7 students. The transition to secondary school is a significant step, and I have been incredibly pleased with how well the majority of our students have adapted to their new surroundings and risen to the expectations we set. So many students are consistently doing the right things, time and time again. They arrive ready to learn, show respect to staff and their peers, work hard in lessons and demonstrate kindness towards others. These everyday actions are exactly what we want to see, and students should be proud of the positive habits they are developing.

Of course, settling into secondary school is a journey, and there is always room for improvement. We will continue to support and guide those who need it, while ensuring that the high standards we expect are maintained by everyone.

The Hard Work Continues

Although we are approaching a well-deserved break, it is important to remember that the hard work does not stop here. The habits students develop now will help shape their success throughout Year 7 and beyond. Our expectations remain the same: Be Ready, Be Safe, Be Respectful and Kind. We want every student to take responsibility for their actions, make positive choices and contribute to making Archbishop Ilsley a school in which everyone can flourish. Please continue to support your child with the essentials: correct uniform, the right equipment, punctuality, attendance and a positive attitude towards learning. These may seem like small things, but consistency in these areas makes a significant difference.

The Ilsley Standard Award

It has been fantastic to see so many students working towards their Ilsley Standard Awards. The system is designed to recognise those who demonstrate the right attitudes and behaviours consistently, day after day. Whether students are working towards Bronze, Silver, Gold or Platinum, the message remains the same: success comes from consistently doing the right things, even when nobody is watching. The award is about more than earning points or collecting badges. It celebrates commitment, resilience, effort and a willingness to meet the standards expected of every student at Archbishop Ilsley. Many students are already showing that they have the determination to work towards the highest awards. I would encourage them to keep going, while reminding everyone that every lesson and every school day brings another opportunity to make the right choices. The opportunities for additional incentives, including vocational visits and other rewards, will continue to provide further motivation. Keep striving, keep improving and, most importantly, keep being consistent.

Year 7 Early Review Evening – 5th November

A reminder that our Year 7 Early Review Evening will take place on Thursday 5th November, from 4:00pm to 5:00pm. An opportunity to listen and understand key information about what is happening and how the start of term has gone.

A Well-Deserved Half-Term Break

This has been a long and busy half-term. Our students have had lots to learn, new routines to master and new friendships to develop. They have made great progress in adapting to secondary school life, and I hope they can look back on these first weeks with a sense of achievement. I would encourage all students pupils to enjoy a restful and reflective half-term break. It is an opportunity to spend time with family and friends, recharge their batteries and reflect on the progress they have made so far. They might also consider what they are proud of and what they would like to improve when they return.

YEAR 8 - MR SMITH

As we come to the end of our first half term, I want to say how incredibly proud I am of our Year 8 students. They have had a fantastic start to the year and have truly embraced our Year 8 mantra of GRIT: Greatness, Resilience, Integrity and Try. Throughout the term, I have seen these values demonstrated in classrooms, around school and during extracurricular activities.

This week's assembly focused on Integrity and why it is so important that others know us as people who do the right thing, even when nobody is watching. We reflected on the story of Daniel from the Bible and how he remained faithful to what he knew was right and true despite facing difficult circumstances. I have been so impressed by the number of students who have clearly taken this message on board.

A fantastic example of this has been the students involved in the Year 8 boys' football training and mini-tournament. They showed real integrity, sportsmanship and respect towards one another throughout. Mrs Harley has also spoken highly of the girls' football team, who have displayed the same positive attitude and behaviour. This week we were also able to celebrate a number of students who have been exceptional. During assembly, we recognised students for their achievements, effort and commitment to our school values. On Wednesday, a further 25 students were invited to enjoy cakes and hot chocolate with their Head of Year after demonstrating outstanding behaviour and academic excellence throughout this long half term. I have to say this was one of the highlights of the fortnight and it was wonderful to celebrate so many deserving students.

I would like to thank all Year 8 students and parents for the fantastic support you continue to provide. As I often say, the greatest success comes when the student, parents and school work together to support and nurture each young person.

I have also been incredibly impressed by our form groups this term. A special mention goes to 8THE, whose attendance has been the strongest in the year group, averaging an impressive 96%. They rounded off the half term by delivering an outstanding assembly to launch our Black History Month celebrations. The assembly focused on the power of words and celebrated the life of Birmingham's own Benjamin Zephaniah. Thank you to all students involved. It takes real courage to stand in front of your peers and speak publicly, and they did so brilliantly.

Speaking of effort, I am delighted that Year 8 achieved the highest number of House Points across the school. This is a tremendous achievement and reflects the hard work, positive attitudes and commitment shown by our students every day. I am certain that next half term we will see many students achieving their Ilsley Standard Awards.

Another huge well done to Year 8 as they won the End of Term Rockathon - lead by heroic performances by Hamdaan, Vanessa and Jennifer. Year 8 got a total of 120,000 questions correct in the process. All participants will be receiving certificates from the Maths department so please look out for these.

As we look ahead to next half term, we must continue to maintain our high standards in uniform, equipment and attitude to learning. One area we must continue to improve is attendance. Whilst there have been some excellent individual and form successes, we need to work together to reach our year group target of 95% attendance. I would like to congratulate Lena for winning the Cineworld Voucher for the schools don't break the spell competition.

Please also look out next half term for information regarding tickets for our Peter Pan theatre trip and updates on the Year 8 boys' football fixtures.

Finally, I would like to wish all Year 8 families a peaceful and enjoyable half-term break. I hope our students have the opportunity to rest, stay safe and spend quality time with family and friends before returning refreshed and ready to be inspired. Thank you once again for your continued support. Galatians 6:9 – "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up." May we continue to support one another, act with integrity and use our gifts to serve those around us.

God bless you and your family.

YEAR 9 - MRS WAFI

As we approach the end of our first half term, I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to all the students, parents and carers who have continued to support our school in maintaining high standards and ensuring that our expectations are consistently met. Your commitment and cooperation play a vital role in creating a positive learning environment in which every student can thrive, achieve their potential and take pride in being part of our school community.

As a reminder, our uniform and appearance expectations must be followed consistently. Eyelashes should look as natural as possible, and nails must also remain natural looking, short, neat and tidy. These expectations are in place to ensure that all students maintain a smart, professional and appropriate appearance in line with our school policy. We ask parents and carers to continue supporting us by checking that these standards are met, particularly as we return after the half term break.

I would also like to commend the students who have recently attended the Geography field trip and the Envision trip. Their excellent behaviour, positive attitudes and exemplary conduct were a credit to themselves, their families and our school. They represented our community exceptionally well, demonstrating the respect, maturity and responsibility that we expect from all our students. Opportunities beyond the classroom are an important part of learning, and it is wonderful to see our students making the most of these experiences while serving as positive ambassadors for our school. In addition, a number of our Year 9 students have travelled to Belgium to take part in what we hope will be a memorable and enriching experience. We wish them a safe journey, an enjoyable visit and every success throughout their time away. We hope they embrace the opportunity to learn about a different culture, develop their independence, strengthen friendships and create lasting memories. We look forward to hearing about their experiences when they return.

As we reflect on the first half term, let us remember that the success of our school is built on the collective efforts of our students, staff, parents and carers. Every act of encouragement, every demonstration of respect and every commitment to doing the right thing contributes to the strong and positive community we continue to build together. The Bible reminds us in Galatians 6:9 (NIV): “Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.”

YEAR 10 - MR KENYON

As we reach the end of the first half term, I am pleased with the progress that Year 10 have made. They have responded well to the new expectations we have set them, and it has been encouraging to see students taking increased responsibility for their learning and conduct in school.

Standards of behaviour across the year group have been high, and I continue to receive encouraging feedback from teachers about students’ attitude to their new GCSE courses. Many are demonstrating a strong work ethic and a genuine willingness to do well. Going forward, I want to see this maintained consistently across every subject and lesson.

I have also been pleased to see vast improvements to their school uniform. Wearing the correct uniform, including the school blazer and badge, is an important part of taking pride in our school and demonstrating a sense of belonging to our shared community. Maintaining these standards reflects the same care and responsibility that we expect students to show in their learning and behaviour.

In assembly this week, we celebrated the students who are always getting it right. Each tutor chose two students from their form to receive the Tenax award. The Tenax Award comes straight from our school motto: Justus et Tenax Propositi. Tenax means holding firm - it is where we get the word tenacious. The Tenax award is for the students who endeavour every day to be the best version of themselves and hold firm to that purpose. So many of our students are a credit to themselves and to you. Indeed, over seventy students in the year group have not received a single negative point on Class Charts since the start of September. I decided to show their names in assembly because they have set the standard that I want every other student to emulate.

As we look ahead to the next half term, I want students to continue building on the progress they have made. The high standards we have put in place are intended to get the best out of them. In the long-term we aim to build up their character and help them to achieve the strongest GCSE results that they can. I hope Year 10 take pride in what they have achieved this half term. I would like to thank parents and carers for your ongoing support. I wish all of you a great half-term break.

YEAR 11 - MS RUCK

As we reach the end of a successful first half term, I would like to congratulate our Year 11 students, alongside their parents and carers, for their continued commitment, support and hard work. There has been so much to celebrate, and we are incredibly proud of the progress our students are making.

It has been wonderful to see such positive standards of uniform, attendance and punctuality, alongside students' attitudes to learning and effort in lessons. We have celebrated many achievements through praise postcards, certificates and even a well-deserved takeaway pizza treat!

Period 6 is now firmly embedded as part of the school day and has been a great success, with students making the most of these additional learning opportunities. The attitude, determination and effort shown by those attending 6 o'clock club have also been brilliant. We are equally excited that some students have signed up for the PGL Big Revision Weekend, demonstrating a real commitment to their preparation. Our Sixth Form Open Evening last night was a huge success and it was lovely to welcome so many parents and carers.

Looking Ahead: Mocks Begin!

After half term, our Year 11 students will return straight into their mock examinations. Students will have their individual exam timetables, so please ensure these are checked carefully. Half term is an important opportunity to revise, prepare and build confidence. Preparation is key, and the time invested now can make a real difference.

We strongly encourage all students to:

- Create a realistic revision timetable, prioritising subjects and topics that need the most attention.
- Use the Subject Guidance Summary sheets, which will be printed and provided to pupils.
- Refer to the GCSE Subject-Specific Revision Guidance booklet issued back in September. Additional copies are available on the school website.
- Build in regular breaks, rest and fresh air to maintain focus and wellbeing.
- Make revision active through practice questions, retrieval practice and revisiting key knowledge.

Mock examinations are vital. They provide an opportunity to practise exam conditions, identify strengths and areas for development, and help students understand what they need to do next to achieve their potential. We encourage parents and carers to support students in establishing a calm, positive and purposeful revision routine at home.

Remember, success is built through consistent effort, preparation and perseverance. You do not need to do everything at once; small, focused steps each day can make a significant difference. Believe in yourselves, make the most of the support available, and approach your mocks with confidence and determination.

Thank you once again to our students, parents and carers for all your hard work and support this half term. We are proud of what Year 11 have achieved so far and look forward to seeing them return refreshed, focused and ready for the challenge ahead.

As the weather gets colder after half term, a reminder that our uniform policy and reference videos are available on the website. Please ensure students return in line with standards and expectations.

Thank you to all of our Year 11 students and parents and carers who joined us on Thursday evening for our Sixth Form Opening Evening. Students were able to speak to teachers and Year 12 and 13 students to get a real flavour of life in Sixth Form. A reminder that our applications are now open and that you can view the Sixth Form section on our website for more detailed course information. More information will follow about our 'Meet the Sixth Form' events.



Have a restful, productive and blessed half term. Keep believing, keep working hard, and remember that every effort you make now is an investment in your future.

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/

SIXTH FORM - MRS MCMAHON

Sixth Form Open Evening Thursday 22nd October

Thank you to all the parents and students who joined us for Sixth Form Open Evening. It was wonderful to welcome so many of you into our school community and to see such enthusiasm and interest in the opportunities available. Your support and engagement play an important part in helping our Year 11 students make informed decisions about their next steps and shape a bright future.

Rooted in our Catholic ethos, our Sixth Form provides a welcoming, inclusive environment where every student is known, supported and encouraged to flourish academically and personally, ready to embrace their future. Our broad range of A-level and vocational courses caters for students' diverse interests, strengths and aspirations.

Our Sixth Form offers:

- Academic Excellence: High standards, independent learning and critical thinking.
- Pastoral Support: Personalised guidance and a commitment that every student is known, supported and valued.
- Enrichment opportunities to develop
- Careers Education and Guidance
- UCAS Support: Help with university applications, personal statements and interview preparation.

For further information, please visit the Sixth Form section of our school website. Applications are now open. We look forward to working with you to support your child's success and well-being. For enquiries, email enquiry@ilsley.bham.sch.uk, using 'Sixth Form applications' as the subject line.

Year 12 and 13 Recognition Assemblies

"We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us." Romans 12:6. Students were reminded this week that God has created each of us with unique gifts and talents. By developing these with confidence, humility and generosity, we honour God and make a positive difference to the lives of others.

Celebrating this theme, our Year 12 and 13 Recognition Assemblies recognised students' achievements through four awards:

- Vision Award: Recognising commitment, perseverance and a positive attitude to learning.
- Tutee of the Term: Celebrating an excellent start, engagement and contribution to Sixth Form life.
- Form Mini Hero: Recognising students who go above and beyond to support others.
- Rising Star Award: Celebrating personal growth and improvements in areas such as attendance, punctuality and engagement.

Congratulations to all our students recognised this week! We are incredibly proud of your hard work, achievements and positive contributions to our Sixth Form community. Keep developing your gifts, believing in yourselves and inspiring others!

Supporting Students with Mock Exams

Year 13 mocks begin on Monday 16th November and Year 12 mocks on Monday 30th November. We encourage students to start revising early and thank parents and carers for supporting them in building confidence and developing good study habits. All students have received their exam timetable. We wish all our students the very best of luck in their exams!

UCAS Applications – Half Term Focus

As our Year 13 students continue with their UCAS applications, we encourage them to use the upcoming half term to make progress with their personal statements and research their chosen universities and courses using UCAS Hub. Key Internal UCAS Deadlines:

- Friday 6th November: Personal statements shared with tutors for review.
- Tuesday 10th November: Subject references and predicted grades completed.
- Tuesday 24th November: Completed applications submitted to the Sixth Form Team for review.

We would really appreciate parents and carers encouraging students to use this time well and stay on track with these deadlines. A little progress over half term can make a real difference in helping students feel confident and prepared.

Students who do not wish to apply to university must bring a signed letter from a parent or carer confirming their decision. Letters can be collected from Mrs McMahon. Thank you, as always, for your continued support in helping our students make informed decisions about their future.

ARCHBISHOP ILSLEY CATHOLIC SCHOOL

WISDOM • COURAGE • DIGNITY • INTEGRITY

More Than Lessons

DISCOVER
DEVELOP
BELONG
MAKE A DIFFERENCE

EXTRA-CURRICULAR CLUBS

BE INVOLVED | MAKE FRIENDS | TRY SOMETHING NEW

ART

Club	Year Group	Day	Time	Venue
Art Club	KS4	Tuesday	Lunchtime	A1
Art Club	KS4	Wednesday	Lunchtime	A2
Art Club	KS4	Thursday	Lunchtime	A3

MUSIC

Club	Year Group	Day	Time	Venue
Choir Practice	All Years	Mon - Fri	Form Time	PA1

COMPUTER SCIENCE

Club	Year Group	Day	Time	Venue
Coding Club	All Years	Monday	Afterschool	CS04

GEOGRAPHY

Club	Year Group	Day	Time	Venue
KS3 Homework Club	Years 7, 8 & 9	Monday (Week 2)	Afterschool	HU5

MATHS

Club	Year Group	Day	Time	Venue
Maths Club	All Years	Tuesday	Afterschool	S10
Chess Club	KS3	Tuesday	Afterschool	2.1

FILM CLUB

Club	Year Group	Day	Time	Venue
Film Club	All Years	Friday	Afterschool	1.10

MEET NEW PEOPLE

DEVELOP YOUR SKILLS

TRY SOMETHING NEW

BE PART OF OUR COMMUNITY

A Brighter You Starts Here

FAITH | OPPORTUNITY | EXCELLENCE | FOR A BRIGHTER FUTURE

PE

Club	Year Group	Day	Time	Venue
Mindful Movement	All Years	Monday	Afterschool	Fitness Suite
Netball	Years 8 & 9	Monday	Afterschool	Sportshall
Netball	Years 7	Monday	Afterschool	Sportshall
Year 8 Football	Year 8	Monday	Afterschool	Astro
Year 9 Football	Year 9	Tuesday	Afterschool	Astro
Dance	KS3	Wednesday	Lunchtime	Hall
OCR Intervention	Yr 11	Wednesday (Week 2)	Afterschool	TBC
GCSE PE Intervention	Yr 10	Wednesday (Week 1)	Afterschool	TBC
Badminton	All Years	Wednesday	Afterschool	Sportshall
Girls Football	KS3	Wednesday	Afterschool	Astro
Badminton	All Years	Thursday	Before school	Sportshall
Basketball	All Years	Thursday	Afterschool	Sportshall
Year 7 Football	Year 7	Thursday	Afterschool	Astro

RS & CATHOLIC LIFE

Club	Year Group	Day	Time	Venue
Debate Club	All Years	Thursday	Afterschool	V2
Catholic Life				
Quiet Colouring: Find time to quieten the mind and let God speak to you.	All Years	Monday	Lunchtime	Chapel
Sayings of the Saints: Take some time to reflect on the wisdom of those who have gone before us to heaven.	All Years	Tuesday	Lunchtime	Chapel
Lectio Divina: Learn to pray with the Scriptures and see what they mean for us today.	All Years	Wednesday	Lunchtime	Chapel
Rosary: Reflect on the life and teaching of Jesus Christ with this meditative prayer to Our Lady.	All Years	Thursday	Lunchtime	Chapel
Adoration: Spend some quiet time with the Lord in Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament.	All Years	Friday	Lunchtime	Chapel

LIBRARY

Club	Year Group	Day	Time	Venue
Book Club	All Years	Monday	Afterschool	Library
Craft Club	All Years	Tuesday	Afterschool	Library
Board Game Club	All Years	Wednesday	Afterschool	Library
Homework Club	All Years	Thursday	Afterschool	Library

JOURNALING & OTHER CLUBS

Club	Year Group	Day	Time	Venue
Journaling Club	All Years	Friday	Lunchtime	Hub
Hub Club	All Years	Every day	Break and Lunch	Hub
Envision	All Years	Thursday	Period 5	TBC
Science Club	All Years	Thursday	Afterschool	TBC

Opportunities Inside and Beyond the Classroom

LEARN | GROW | BELONG | THRIVE