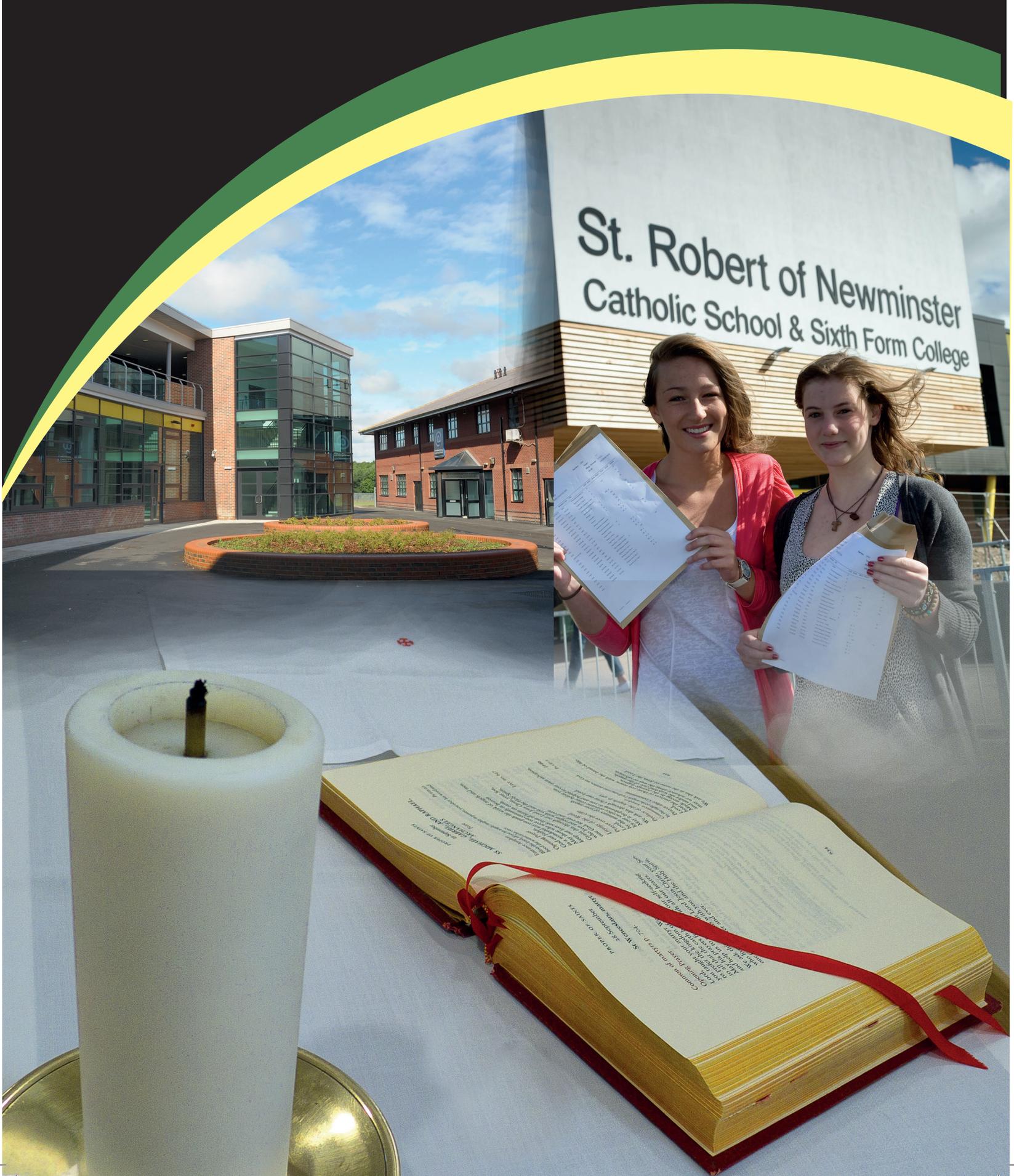




St Robert of Newminster

Catholic School and Sixth Form College Prospectus







Welcome

Welcome to St Robert of Newminster Catholic School and Sixth Form College. We are a voluntary aided 11-18 mixed Catholic comprehensive school with over 1,600 students on roll. The school serves the Catholic parishes in Washington, Birtley, Penshaw, Houghton and Hetton. It is situated in the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle.

St Robert's enjoys an excellent local and regional reputation. Our positive Catholic ethos, integral to all that we do, provides the basis for the highest standards of care, relationships and academic achievement. We are proud of the school's place within the local community and we provide a caring, inclusive, challenging and supportive environment for young people of all abilities so that they may flourish and achieve excellence. A varied curriculum provides academic success and a wide range of activities, including music, art, drama and sport.

We are committed in our drive to achieve the very best for our students in terms of their learning, achievement, enrichment and their spiritual formation.

Our focus on high quality teaching throughout the school provides a stimulating and challenging classroom experience, backed up by a strong pastoral system.

The school has high expectations of behaviour and our calm, purposeful atmosphere of learning allows students to develop the attitudes, skills and knowledge required to be successful independent learners.

The school provides a well considered and highly effective Transition Project to assist students in their move from their primary school setting to our secondary school. Parents are very much part of this process. Indeed, our relationship with parents is vital throughout a student's time at the school, as we seek to work in partnership with home.

In recent years the school has benefitted from a £13 million build and refurbishment programme and this has ensured the whole school is fully integrated and is able to offer well-resourced specialist areas throughout all areas of the school.

Our goal is to help our students develop into well-rounded and well-educated young people with a strong set of values and morals. We aim to provide the highest quality of academic education, alongside the opportunity to grow spiritually, personally and socially. These high ideals have meant that the school is consistently over-subscribed for admissions both at 11+ (Year 7) and 16+ (Sixth Form). If you wish to apply for a place for your son or daughter at St Robert's, please follow the Local Authority Admissions Guidelines. If you would like to visit the school as part of that process, please do not hesitate to contact us. We look forward to welcoming both you and your children.

Mr D Juric
Headteacher



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Our Purpose

St Robert's is a Catholic and Christian community, in which we aim to follow the example of Christ in our daily work and relationships. We recognize that all members of our community are learners and are unique.

Staff and students alike should strive to treat each other with tolerance and respect and to be aware of one another's needs, hopes and aspirations.

The school aims, through a broad and balanced curriculum and an effective programme of personal development to help all students to develop their full potential spiritually, socially and intellectually, within a secure, happy and Christian environment.

We are proud of our traditions, and our purpose is to provide high-quality education for all, suited to each individual student's needs. We strive, through our partnerships with parents/carers and our community, to bring about continuous improvement.

By putting students first in a safe, hard-working and well-ordered environment, we are able to focus on individual achievement.

Our Vision

All individuals are children of God, created equally in his image to share an eternal future. We promise to play our full part in their education and formation.

Our Mission

We strive to meet the academic, moral, physical, social and spiritual needs of all students so that they may take their place as caring, committed, self-aware and self-confident members of society.

Aims of the school

In striving to create the school climate, which will nurture this mission, the school aims to:

Offer to all students a broad, balanced, appropriate, relevant and flexible curriculum;

Develop as an integral part of the local community, particularly the local Catholic community; to develop and maintain the partnership between school and parents, parishes, primary schools and the wider community;

Develop as a worshipping community, in which prayer and liturgy are encouraged as part of faith development;

Encourage all members of our school community, students, staff and governors, to follow the example of Christ in their daily work and relationships; to treat one another with justice, tolerance and respect and to be aware of and respond to each other's needs, hopes and aspirations;

Provide and maintain an attractive, secure, safe and healthy school environment.

Religious Education

The religious observance and instruction in the school is that of the Roman Catholic Church.

The governors are required to remind parents of their right of withdrawal of students from worship and Religious Education. However, parents are also reminded that the school exists to give a Catholic education to its students and that, therefore, they are expected to be in sympathy with its aims and objectives which pervade all areas of school life including the area of religious worship and Religious Education lessons.

Our partnerships

The school has the benefit of a new School Chapel with an established Chaplaincy Team who offer excellent retreat opportunities for all year groups (Year 7 – 13) as well as other liturgical activities and opportunities for reflection.

We also have strong and effective partnership links with our local parishes, the Youth Ministry Team and the Diocese.

In 2009 we were identified by DCSF (DFE) as a "Gaining ground School" to support other schools in raising achievement levels.

This support has enabled St Robert's to be acknowledged by the SSAT as a Consultant School.

We have successful partnerships with the Universities of Sunderland, Newcastle, Northumbria, Durham and the Graduate Teacher Programme. This university partnership also offers our students link programmes including subject-specific enrichment and training.

We have also been involved in research with Yale University and have been recognised as a nationally accredited Thinking School (Exeter University) where we became the first comprehensive secondary school to achieve this Award.

We also have a number of external partnerships to support vocational learning pathways as well as a range of local and national enterprise and business links.

We have strong links with our partner-primary schools and every year in June we have a Transition Week for all Year 6 students. The week enables all Year 6 students who will be joining us in September to engage fully with a range of learning opportunities and they are given a chance to learn about St Robert's and also meet a wide range of students before they start with us in September.

Students attend from our partner-primary schools of:

- Our Lady Queen of Peace RC Primary School, Penshaw
- St Bede's RC Primary School, Washington
- St John Boste RC Primary School
- St Joseph's RC Primary School, Washington
- St Michael's RC Primary School, Houghton

We also accept boys and girls who match the criteria as detailed in our admissions policy.



Care and Guidance

The pastoral care of students is a real strength and we have extremely high expectations of all students in terms of their behaviour, their learning and their achievement.

The Form Tutor is the first point of contact and they play an extremely important role in the life of their tutor group as they monitor the overall progress of students and offers support and guidance on a day-to-day basis as well as at crucial stages in their school careers. Form Tutors stay with their forms for five years (Years 7 – 11); in this way, close links can be built up between student and tutor, and tutor and parents/carers.

The work of the form tutors is co-ordinated by the Head of House who has overall responsibility for the students in their year group and who remains with the year group for five years until students enter Sixth Form. Sixth Form tutors remain with their tutor groups for two years, throughout Year 12 and 13.

We hope parents/carers will contact the Form Tutor or the Head of House if they are at all concerned about any aspect of their child's life at school. The parents/carers of students in each year group are invited to an annual consultation session and receive a report on their child's progress.

Healthy School

We are a health promoting school through our PSHE provision and curriculum links in other departments, through our healthy eating and physical activity programmes, and through the support for emotional health and well being of students and staff. We are accredited with the National Healthy School status. A wide range of food is available through our café-style outlets. All of the food provided meets with our Healthy Schools status. Students eligible for free school meals are able to access the full range of eating options.

Sex and Relationship Education

The school is committed to the provision of appropriate sex and relationship education to all students. The governors have approved a whole-school sex and relationship education policy, which outlines the teaching of sex education within the moral

teachings of the Catholic Church and as a central part of Education for Personal Relationships. Such teaching will take place in certain subject areas (e.g. Religious Education and Biology) and also in tutorial lessons. Special time will also be set aside when specialist staff and external agencies will be involved through the School Health Education programme.

Statement of Policy on Substance Use and Misuse

The school does not accept the misuse of drugs or alcohol by members of the school, nor the illegal supply of substances. The school is committed to the health and safety of its members and will take action to safe-guard their well-being. The school acknowledges the importance of its pastoral role in the welfare of young people, and through the general ethos of the school will seek to persuade students in need of support to come forward.

In response to our shared concerns at a local and national level, we wish to state that as part of its care for the welfare of its students, the school believes it has a duty to inform and educate young people on the consequences of drug use and mis-use. The school takes a pro-active stance on this matter, believing that health education is a vital part of the Personal and Social education of every student.

Learning Support

Learning Support focuses on a range of specific learning needs, and is delivered by a very experienced team of Teachers and Teaching Assistants, who work in the classroom. An area for small group and individual work is also available. Our pastoral support team works closely with parents/carers and other professionals, including the Connexions Service and our Extended Services and Home-School Liaison Team.

Students who experience problems with basic learning skills and who require more individualized programmes of work are catered for by withdrawal or classroom support. Progress is continually reviewed. Should further and more specialised assistance be required, reference can be made to the Local Authority's Education Psychology Service.

Counselling support is also available through the work of Mrs Hughes, our School-based Social Worker.

Student Responsibilities

We believe that our students have responsibilities both to themselves and to all other people who work in the school. We want them to get on well with others and to recognise that they must work co-operatively. We emphasise respect and consideration for others: for fellow students, for all members of staff and for parents/carers.

We aim to treat students as responsible young adults in the expectation that they will respond in the same way. We expect them to be reliable, for example in completing homework and bringing equipment as well as turning up as promised for music rehearsals or team practices. We also expect them to be honest in their dealings with other people.

Student Participation

All students have the opportunity to participate in extra-curricular activities and the wider life of the school.

Students can raise issues at the year councils and the School Council. Some students will be involved in the reading support; others are trained to contribute to staff recruitment by interviewing candidates or are involved in giving their views about general school life (e.g. giving their views about food menus). Sixth-formers are expected to participate fully in the life of the school e.g. assisting in classrooms or in lunchtime activities.

Behaviour Policy

The school has a clear policy that is designed to promote and encourage respect and good behaviour. All staff and students are made aware of the standards of behaviour required to enable us to have an orderly and happy working environment.

Rewards

Staff use a range of strategies to encourage and support positive work and behaviour, including verbal or written comments, achievement points, year or department commendations, attendance certificates, an annual award ceremony or praise in assemblies.

Our Curriculum

We have extremely high expectations of our students and we have a strong commitment to a curriculum that is broad, balanced yet also personalised to the needs of our students.

Years 7 - 9

Our curriculum is designed to stretch and challenge our students, while also enabling them to develop skills and knowledge in a wide range of subject areas. In Years 7 - 9 students follow courses in PSHE, Religious Education, English, Mathematics, Science, Geography, History, Design and Technology, Computing, Art, Music and Physical Education. All of our students follow a Foreign Language course throughout Key Stage 3. Students in Year 8 and 9 also study Drama.

Years 10 and 11

The KS4 curriculum allows our students to follow a number of different pathways with differentiated courses within both core and optional subjects.

All students follow a core programme that includes RE, English, Mathematics, Science and PE. Those with a particular ability in Science will have the opportunity to study three separate sciences. The vast majority of students are also strongly encouraged to study a Foreign Language and a Humanities subject.

A range of option courses are also available.

Sixth Form

The Sixth Form curriculum is more specialised and more intense, allowing students the opportunity to develop their preferred interests and skills. The majority of students study four subjects at AS level and three subjects at A level.

In addition to their academic studies, great emphasis is also placed on independent learning skills, which play a major part in preparing students for higher education and employment.



ICT and e-learning

ICT facilities are available in every department in the school and used to support teaching and learning in all subjects.

Almost all classrooms have digital projectors and most also have electronic, interactive whiteboards. Many departments are served with computer suites within their own areas. Our school library has ICT facilities and there are numerous learning resources available through our computer network and intranet, as well as from the internet. Students can access many of these resources from home through our virtual learning environment or by directly logging into the school network.

Students can attend extra-curricular clubs both at lunchtime and after school to learn new Computing skills or catch up with class work.

Homework

We believe in homework: it reinforces the work done in class and is one of the best ways in which students can learn to study by themselves. We expect homework to be done properly.

Student Diary/Planner

All students are issued with a student diary/planner. This consists of several sections including: school prayers, timetable and homework; information specific to particular terms, for example educational choices, study support; details of extra-curricular activities; and a day-by-day diary. One of its main uses is the recording of homework, and if used properly, the diary/planner can be an invaluable way of helping students develop the planning and organisational skills necessary for realising their full potential. Parents/carers are asked to support us by checking and signing the planner/diary on a weekly basis. There is also a space for parents/carers to comment.

Careers Education & Guidance

We have a team of staff with specific responsibilities for work-related learning and Information, Advice and Guidance. In addition, the form tutors, the PSHE team and Heads of House play an important part in the continuing process of careers education, information, advice and guidance. We also have the full support of the Connexions Service.

Throughout Years 7 - 11, our careers staff and whenever possible, a Connexions Advisers are available for consultation. Our external partnerships also allow us to offer a range of vocational and work-related courses in Years 10 to 13. We have a clear commitment to enable all students to access vocational study options, alongside those traditionally offered.

The Careers Programme from 11 to 19

We guide Year 9 students through self-assessment and action planning, towards a realistic choice of courses for Years 10 and 11. Parents/carers and students are involved in full consultations with staff. In Years 10 and 11, careers education aims to help students to know themselves, to understand the place of work in the community, and appreciate the range of educational and training pathways open to them at the end of Year 11.

In the sixth form, we run a programme of careers education that covers further and higher education, apprenticeships and opportunities in a wide range of professions. Students visit universities and other institutions, attend a higher education conference and other events. Those students who do not wish to apply for universities can attend lunchtime workshops which support them in making their applications for employment.

Work Experience

The Key Stage 4 and 5 (Years 10 and 12) work experience scheme gives all students the opportunity to work for a week with a variety of employers and organisations. Some students are selected to undertake programmes of extended work experience or personalised learning programmes. They continue to work towards achieving in the core subjects and retain those options that relate to their future career choices. Integrated into the school week are blocks of work experience and time within small groups, with extensive support to ensure continuing progress in their school subjects.

Home-school communication

We are keen to work as closely as possible with you during your child's time at St Robert's.

There are four main ways in which we seek to maintain these links:

- Text messaging.
- The school planner issued at the start of each year.
- Through personal contact with members of the teaching staff, Form Tutors and Heads of House.
- By written communication – especially reports and newsletters.
- By our school website:
www.strobertofnewminster.co.uk

Availability of Documents

A variety of documents is produced by the school and sent to parents/carers at appropriate times. There is also a procedure for formal complaints, details of which are available from the Headteacher. It is hoped that such procedures will rarely be necessary, and that parents/carers will always feel able to contact the school whenever they have cause for concern.

Sports

St Robert's is justly proud of its strong reputation for sport in the region. Staff provide a variety of lunchtime, evening and weekend activities which cater for a wide range of competitive and recreational activities including:

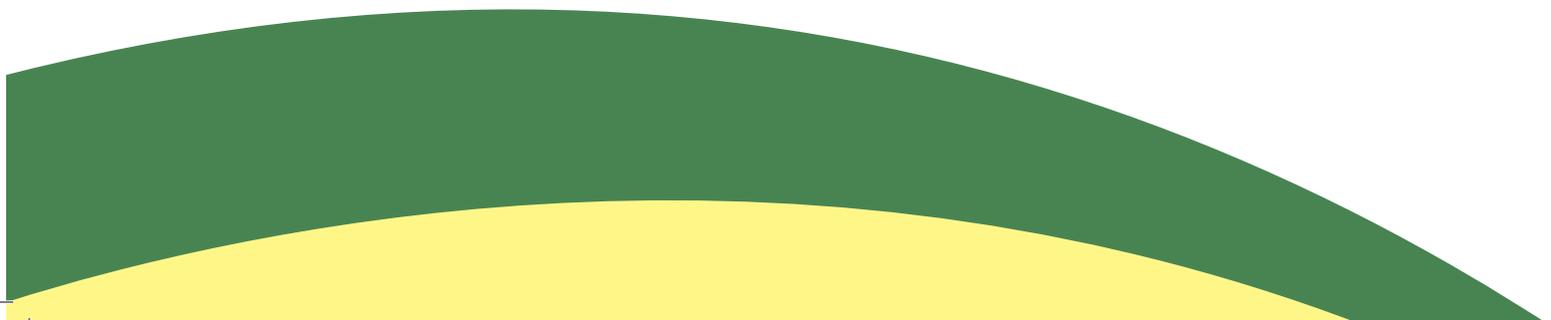
Athletics	Climbing
Cross-country	Cycling
Football	Golf
Gymnastics	Hockey
Netball	Orienteering
Rugby	Skiing
Swimming	Tennis
Trampolining	

Our teams enjoy success in local leagues and in county competitions. The high standard of our students' achievements is reflected in the considerable number of county players we provide and there is an increasing number of students who perform at national level in sports such as football, karate, swimming and trampolining.

Clubs and Societies

Many staff and students give freely of their time and expertise to run lunchtime and after-school clubs, catering for many interests e.g.

- Art club
- Athletics
- Badminton
- Book club
- CAFOD group
- Choir
- Computing
- Creative writing workshops
- Duke of Edinburgh
- Award training (Sixth Form)
- Film club
- First aid
- Football
- Gymnastics
- Hockey
- Reading activist group
- Chaplaincy
- Keep-fit
- Library
- Liturgy group
- Music/ drama club
- Netball
- Orchestra
- Outdoor activities
- Photography
- Public speaking
- Prayer groups
- Rosary group
- Trampoline club
- SVP group
- Young engineers club
- Young enterprise club



Performing Arts

We offer various performance opportunities during the academic year, both on and off the curriculum.

We have taken part in the Shakespeare for Schools Festival over a number of years.

Our Performance Hall is a wonderful space in which to hold professional musicals, talent shows and music evenings.

There is an extensive programme of musical activities to get involved in; anyone and everyone who has a passion for music is welcome. School band, string groups, Orchestra and Choir each rehearse every week and give regular concerts.

In addition to this, we also offer space for choir and band practice, and students are encouraged to create groups according to their own interest. We have a tradition at this school of producing superb musicians from every genre, from classical to pop, with students regularly pursuing further and higher education at music colleges across the UK.

Visual Art, Film & Media

There is a strong tradition of the visual arts, represented by a team of specialist teachers. Students studying art, photography, media and film are actively encouraged to extend their studies in and outside school hours and to take advantage of our facilities.

Students' work is reflected by the facilities, and students often express themselves in a range of media that not only includes painting and drawing, but also clay, film, photography and print-making.

Regular field and exhibition visits are arranged, and a significant number of students go on to study art and media at local colleges and universities.

GCSE and A level art and photography students annually present an exhibition of their work which is open to parents/carers and the general public to recognise and showcase the work from a wide range of genres to students and their friends and families.

Additional Information

School Uniform

We believe in a school uniform and have tried to make it simple, sensible and economic.

Students in Years 7 - 11 all wear school uniform and parents/carers are asked to ensure that their children conform to the school's requirements.

The sixth form have a separate uniform which they are expected to follow. Full details are in the information booklet issued to new parents/carers in the summer term.

Safeguarding

Parents should be aware that the school will take any reasonable action to ensure the safety of its students. In cases where the school has reason to be concerned that a child may be subject to ill-treatment, neglect or other forms of abuse, staff have no alternative but to follow City Of Sunderland safeguarding procedures and inform Children's Services Safeguarding Board of their concern.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is Mrs J. Bowen.

The safeguarding team are:

Mrs J Bowen (DSL)

Miss M Brown (DSL)

Mr A McHale (DSL)

Mrs J Slater (DDSL)

Mrs H Macklon (DDSL)

Mr D Bayne (DDSL)

Mrs R Hurst (DDSL)

Mrs A Nichols is our Safeguarding Governor.

Charges for School Activities

At the present time the school will abide by the Local Authority policy on charging for school activities.

In general terms no student will be charged for any visit or item which is considered an integral part of the school curriculum although voluntary contributions may be requested in certain cases. Copies of the Local Authority Statement of policy on charging are available from the school on request.

Families in receipt of certain benefits, including income support or family credits, may be offered financial support towards board and lodging charges for essential visits. Please contact the school for more information. In addition, the school will assist families in cases of hardship: we do not wish any child to miss out because of a shortage of funds. Please contact your child's Head of House in confidence.

Contacting the school

We are always very willing to see parents/carers at the school, or to answer queries on the telephone. However, whilst it may be possible to make personal contact with a particular member of staff by visiting the school during normal hours, we prefer you to make an appointment in advance by means of a letter or a telephone call. This helps to avoid the risk of an unduly hurried conversation in the course of a very busy, daily routine.

Please contact the school office if you have any queries and one of our receptionists will be pleased to assist you.

Complaints Procedure

Complaints under Section 27 of the Education Reform Act 1988 in respect of the curriculum should be referred to the Headteacher.

Complaints which cannot be resolved on this informal basis should be made in writing to the Chairman of Governors and signed by the complainant.

Requests for the inspection and (where applicable) the obtaining of copies of any documents required to be made available by or under Education Regulations 1989 (school curriculum and relation information) should be made in writing to the Headteacher.

Exam Results 2016

GCSE:

A* - C including English & Maths = 80%
(5A* - C including English & Maths = 78%)

EBACC = 40%

English A* - C = 92%

Expected Progress - English = 87%

Maths A* - C = 84%

Expected Progress - Maths = 79%

Our A Level pass rates for 2016 at all levels continue to be of the highest standard:

A* - A Grade Pass Rate = 20%

A* - B Grade Pass Rate = 50%

A* - C Grade Pass Rate = 75%

A* - E Grade Pass Rate = 99%

Average A Level Pt Score per entry = 223

This measure puts St. Robert's amongst the top 10% Performing Sixth Forms in the country.





St Robert of Newminster
Catholic School and Sixth Form College

Mr D. Juric Headteacher

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Photographs by Mr Clive Smith