

ST JOHN PAYNE



AVITA PRO FIDE



## NEWSLETTER MAY 2026

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Headteacher: Mr Thomas Coen, BA (Hons), PGCE, MA, NPQH*

# HEADTEACHER REPORT



*Headteacher: Mr Thomas Coen, BA (Hons), PGCE, MA, NPQH*





It is always lovely to give thanks for students' contributions to our community throughout their time with us as they begin their public examinations, and to see groups gather together joining hands in prayer before entering the halls. We continue to pray for them.

We were delighted that many families were able to join us for our Year 13 Leavers' Mass celebrated by Fr Paul, and we look forward to gathering in witness with Year 11 upon conclusion of their exams in June.

Students continue to enjoy their rehearsals for Ernie's Incredible Illucinations under Mrs Nowlan's guidance. The performances in July will be sure to display their gifts in great abundance.

We wish our whole community a restful break, and look forward to welcoming students back to school when we return on 1st June.

Yours in Christ

**Mr T. Coen**  
**Headteacher**



# CHAPLAINCY & FAITH LIFE





# CATHOLIC LAY CHAPLAIN



On Thursday 8th May, we gathered as a community to celebrate the Year 13 Leavers' Mass. It was a truly beautiful and uplifting occasion, filled with joy, reverence, and thanksgiving. We were blessed to welcome so many family members, and the sound of joyful singing echoed through the Merici - a fitting and prayerful way to mark the end of our students' journey at Saint John Payne.

As our Year 13 students now enter their examination period and begin to look towards their next steps, we continue to hold each of them closely in our prayers. They leave us knowing that they will always remain part of our school community, rooted in faith and love. "For I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future full of hope." (Jeremiah 29:11)

We pray that they carry this truth with them as they step confidently into their next chapter, trusting that God walks with them always.

Throughout the month of May, our whole school community has paused each day at the beginning of Period 4 to pray the Angelus. Led by both students and staff, this shared moment of prayer has deepened our understanding of Mary's "yes" to God and its relevance in our own lives. Our students have shown a growing appreciation of both the meaning and importance of this tradition, recognising it as a defining part of our Catholic identity and a powerful reminder of God's presence in the rhythm of our daily lives.

This month, we were also privileged to celebrate a beautiful Ascension Mass with Fr Michael, reminding us of Christ's promise to remain with us always. We were further blessed to honour our Patron with the Feast Day Mass of Saint John Payne - a powerful witness to courage, faith, and steadfast commitment. His example continues to inspire our community to live boldly for Christ, especially in moments that require courage and sacrifice.

Our students were recently filmed by Brentwood Caritas and spoke with great passion and maturity about what it means to belong to a community. They reflected deeply on the meaning of courage and showed a heartfelt understanding of the needs and dignity of the most vulnerable. The Caritas team were incredibly impressed by the authenticity and conviction of our students; something we are immensely proud of as a school community.

Looking ahead, our Year 7 Faith Ambassadors are currently organising a sponsored sleep out to raise money for Caritas. This initiative is a powerful example of Catholic Social Teaching in action, placing care for the most vulnerable at the heart of what we do. It is truly inspiring to see our youngest students already living out the Gospel with such compassion and leadership.

At Saint John Payne, our students are our greatest ambassadors of faith. Through their actions, service, and witness, they bring our mission to life each day.

"May we go forward in faith, serving with courage, loving without limits, and always remembering that we belong to Christ and to one another."

Yours in Christ,

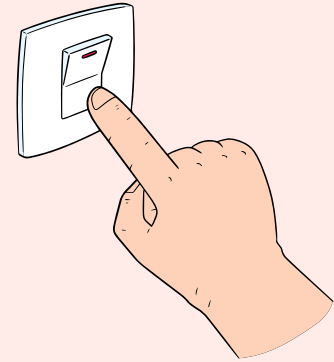
**Katy Adams**  
**Catholic Lay Chaplain**



# NO/LOW TECHNOLOGY DAY



On Thursday 27th March, our school took part in a No/Low Technology Day as part of our journey towards achieving the CAFOD LiveSimply Award. Throughout the day, staff and students were encouraged to reduce their use of technology where possible in order to reflect on how small changes in our everyday lives can help us care for creation and reduce our impact on the environment.



Across the school, classrooms embraced a different pace of learning. Many lessons focused on discussion, collaboration, written work, outdoor activities, and creative tasks without the use of screens, projectors, or unnecessary electricity. The day provided an opportunity for students to step back from constant technology use and think more intentionally about the way we live and consume resources.

The LiveSimply Award encourages schools not only to make changes within the classroom, but also to inspire habits that can continue beyond the school gates. As a community, we would love to encourage families to reflect on whether some simple changes could also be explored at home. This does not mean avoiding technology completely, but perhaps finding small opportunities to unplug where possible — whether that is spending more time outdoors together, choosing a family board game or conversation over screens for an evening, switching off lights and devices when they are not needed, or simply taking a moment to slow down in an increasingly busy and digital world.

Often it is the small, consistent actions that make the greatest difference. By making more mindful choices together, we can continue to support our shared responsibility to care for our common home and live out the values of Catholic Social Teaching in practical and meaningful ways.

Thank you to all students, staff, and families for the enthusiasm and support shown towards this initiative.

**Mrs A Schluter**



# JACK PETCHEY AWARD



## Manogyna K - 11S

Manogyna K has been selected as a Jack Petchey Achievement Award winner, an honour that recognises the effort, commitment, and character of our students across the school community.

Mano has been recognised not only for his continued dedication to his studies, but for the strength of character he shows each day. Following the deeply personal loss of his father, Mano has demonstrated remarkable resilience, continuing to strive for academic success with quiet determination

It is, however, his humble and caring nature that truly stands out. Mano is consistently polite, hardworking, and respectful to both staff and peers. He supports others with genuine kindness and generosity, often without seeking recognition, and embodies the core values of Saint John Payne in a deeply authentic way.

He will receive a certificate as well as £300 to support a project that will benefit our wider school community, and will be invited to attend the Jack Petchey Foundation Celebration Event later this year.

I'm sure you will join me in celebrating this well-deserved recognition. Mano is a real example to our community, and we are very proud of him.

## Heidi C - 12A

Heidi C is an exceptional young person who displays empathy, and commitment to the wellbeing of others. She is extremely emotionally aware and always considers the greater good, often putting the needs of others before her own without hesitation.

Heidi plays a vital role in supporting younger students, particularly those who may be struggling socially or feeling on the outside of friendship groups. She goes out of her way to make others feel included, valued, and supported, helping them to gain confidence and a sense of belonging within school life.

In addition to her peer support, Heidi is deeply committed to charity and service. She volunteers at Lourdes, shows dedication through her role as a chaplaincy leader, and actively supports charitable initiatives in all aspects of school life.

Heidi's compassion, leadership, and tireless support for others truly embody the spirit of the Jack Petchey Award, making her a thoroughly deserving recipient.



# STUDENT LEADERSHIP





## STUDENT LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE 2026

Our Senior Student Leadership Team serves our school community with humility, compassion, integrity, and faith. They play an important role in supporting students, staff, and the wider life of St John Payne, and in setting a positive example for others through their commitment and sense of responsibility. We are grateful for their ongoing contribution to the school.

### YEAR 12 STUDENT LEADERSHIP TEAM

**HEAD GIRL**

Grace T

**DEPUTY HEAD GIRL**

Rebecca D

**HEAD BOY**

Joe T

**DEPUTY HEAD BOY**

Jonathan S

**ADDITIONAL LEADERSHIP**

Megan, Luc, Ryan and Olivia

### HOUSE CAPTAINS

**HOUSE A** Niamh M & Evie M

**HOUSE D** Caelyn T & Ash S

**HOUSE B** Victoria O & Izzy C

**HOUSE F** Cohen B & Jeremy K

**HOUSE C** Irven L & Joumana A

**HOUSE S** Leah G & Ellen V C

### CHAPLAINCY & FAITH LEADERSHIP

**HEAD OF CHAPLAINCY:**

Heidi C

**SENIOR LITURGY COORDINATORS**

Dorien J & David W

**CHAPLAINCY & PASTORAL LEADERS**

Francesca , Khorvash S, Cohen B, Amelia G, Scarlett C, Abibat A, Timi A, Vanessa E, Jose U, Jess S & Amy B

# STUDENT AWARDS





# STUDENT AWARDS



	<b>Total Year Group Achievement Points</b>	<b>Highest Form Achievement points</b>	<b>Highest Achievement Points In the Year</b>
<b>Year 7</b>	<b>61,680</b>	<b>7S</b> 13,274 Achievement points	<b>Noah F 7C</b> <b>510 Achievement Points</b>
<b>Year 8</b>	<b>60,473</b>	<b>8B</b> 12,746 Achievement points	<b>Ahana B 8B</b> <b>585 Achievement Points</b>
<b>Year 9</b>	<b>63,172</b>	<b>9C</b> 13,012 Achievement points	<b>Annalise W-W 9D</b> <b>635 Achievement Points</b>
<b>Year 10</b>	<b>32,508</b>	<b>10D</b> 6716 Achievement points	<b>William B 10D</b> <b>430 Achievement Points</b>
<b>Year 11</b>	<b>18,769</b>	<b>11S</b> 4490 Achievement points	<b>Freddie G 11S</b> <b>336 Achievement Points</b>





# STUDENT AWARDS



## 🌟 Celebrating Outstanding Attendance! 🌟

A huge congratulations to our amazing students for their dedication and commitment this year!

### 🏆 Silver Award Winners

Achieving an incredible 100% attendance for the entire school year. What a fantastic accomplishment!

### 🏆 Bronze Award Winner

Earning 100% attendance for the spring term. A brilliant effort—well done!

Your hard work, resilience, and positivity truly shine. Keep it up—we are so proud of you all!

Bronze Award Winners (Year 7)



Silver Award Winners (Year 7)



Bronze Award Winners (Year 8)



Silver Award Winners (Year 8)



Bronze Award Winners (Year 9)



Bronze Award Winners (Year 10)



Silver Award Winners (Year 10)





**From 7,  
now 11!**

## The last Year 11 celebrations before study leave begins

Thursday 7th May was our last Year assembly before the whole year group exams started and I wanted to celebrate some of their amazing successes. This year we had 18 students who have achieved 100% attendance. Well done to **Robert 11A, Samara 11A, Anthony 11A, Dean 11B, Joanna 11C, Josh 11F, Mirabel 11F, Kaitlyn 11F, Julia 11F, Connie 11S, Aoife 11S, Eva 11S** and **Evan 11S**.

Amazingly, out of that 18 we had 4 who have achieved 100% since they started at our school. This is an amazing achievement! Well done to **Sharon 11C, Freddie 11S, Olivia 11S** and **Nathan 11S**. As well as their gold 100% badge they also received a little something extra as a special gift for a special achievement.



We have also got a number of the year group who have never gained a behaviour point since they started! Their effort and commitment to school and their studies is to be admired. Well done to **Phoebe 11A, Abigail 11B, Ruby 11B, Poppy 11C, Angel 11C, Freya 11F, Jamila 11F, Sophia 11F, Freddie 11S** and **Olivia 11S**!

Well done to these amazing students.

The students have been incredibly mature facing the prospect of their exams and have been making the most of the intervention sessions staff have put on since the start of the Year. I am sure their hard work will come to fruition in the Summer and I am looking forward to celebrating the end of our 5 years together as a year group on their last day in June and Prom in July.

**Mrs Coleman**

# STUDENT SPOTLIGHT





# DofE BRONZE AWARD



## Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Practice Expedition Success

Our Year 9 students successfully completed their Bronze Duke of Edinburgh practice expedition – an important and compulsory step as they work towards their award.

Over the course of two days, students demonstrated impressive resilience, teamwork and independence as they navigated their routes, carried their own equipment and worked together to set up camp at Skreens Park. From cooking their evening meals in groups to managing their time and supporting one another along the route, students fully embraced the challenges of expedition life.

Saturday saw students setting out independently on their circular routes, putting into practice the navigation and teamwork skills they have been developing. Staff were delighted with the maturity and determination shown by all groups throughout the weekend.

We are incredibly proud of their efforts and the positive attitude they displayed. This experience has provided a strong foundation as they prepare for their qualifying expedition later this year.



Please enjoy the accompanying video, which captures some of the highlights from the weekend.





# MY PILGRIMAGE TO ROME



## My Pilgrimage to Rome – Joseph A

Our Catholic school pilgrimage to Rome was an experience I will never forget. It was not just a trip-it was a journey that deepened my faith, strengthened friendships, and helped me to feel truly connected to the Church I was baptised into at 6 weeks old.

One of the most powerful moments for me was climbing the Scala Sancta (the Holy Stairs) on my knees. Knowing that these were the steps Jesus walked during His Passion made it incredibly meaningful. Praying as I climbed helped me to reflect deeply on His sacrifice, and I felt a real sense of closeness to Him. Similarly, praying before the relics of the One True Cross was a moment of awe - I was standing before something directly connected to Christ's suffering and love for us. It was made even more special to be able to enjoy this moment with my best friends and our teacher Mr Farrugia.



Another unforgettable highlight was being just an arm's length away from Pope Leo. It felt surreal to be so close to the Holy Father, and it reminded me that I am part of a global Church, united through faith.

What made the pilgrimage even more special was experiencing it alongside my best friends. Sharing these moments together helped to cement our faith, and we supported each other in growing closer to God. A huge part of this was down to Fr Michael, who led us so brilliantly. He made our faith feel relevant and alive, and he created a space where we felt heard, valued, and represented. His impact on me, and on so many of my friends will stay with us long after the trip.



Continued...



# MY PILGRIMAGE TO ROME



Outside of Rome, we were blessed with incredible experiences. Climbing Mount Vesuvius was breath-taking and the views were unforgettable, and standing on such a historic site felt surreal. Walking through Pompeii brought history to life and made us reflect on human fragility and the importance of faith.

In Amalfi, praying at the Basilica of St Andrew was a beautiful and peaceful moment, surrounded by stunning architecture and deep spiritual significance. Capri made me want to return due to the beauty of the island, and it felt like a glimpse of the best of human and God's creation at its finest.

One of the most meaningful parts of the pilgrimage was celebrating Palm Sunday together. Joining brothers and sisters in Christ in the town centre of Capri as the sun shone was such a powerful reminder of our shared faith. Palm Sunday Mass in the harbour church, led by Fr Michael, was especially faith-building. Entering with our palms, just as Jesus entered Jerusalem, made the Gospel come alive in a new and personal way.

Back in Rome, we visited so many incredible places—the Pantheon, the Venerable English College, and countless churches filled with beauty, history, and the richness of Catholic tradition. Everywhere we went, I was struck by how alive and universal our faith truly is.

This pilgrimage has strengthened my faith in ways I didn't expect. It has helped me to see the beauty of Catholicism, the importance of community, and the presence of God in every moment. It is an experience I will carry with me for the rest of my life.

Joseph A - 13S



# KEY SCHOOL EVENTS





## Secondary School Boccia Panathlon

On Friday 1st May, two teams represented St John Payne in the Secondary School Boccia Panathlon competition. Our year 7 team walked away with 2nd place and 4th for our year 8s. Well done to all involved. A big thank you to our Year 10 GCSE PE students who officiated and helped lead the event.

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## Leadership opportunities at St John Payne

Our Year 9 sports captains were chosen to assist with the Primary School Panathlon at Melbourne Athletics Centre. It was a great opportunity for all and some great performances from our local schools.

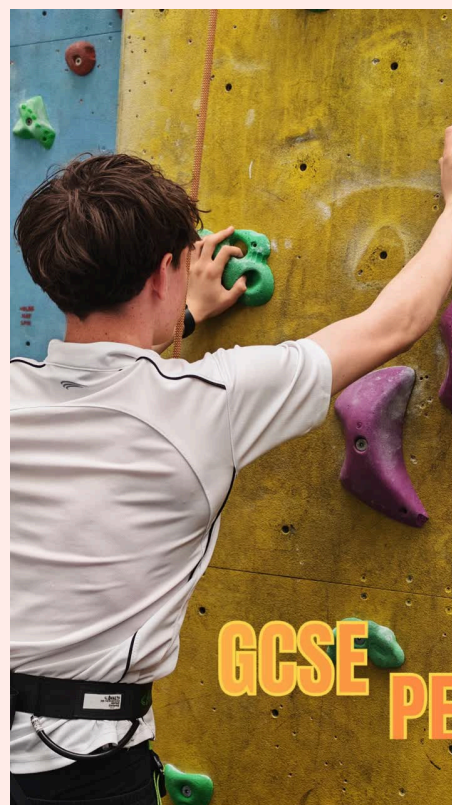
Our Year 8 sports captains have engaged with training from Active Essex for the Invincible inclusive games due to take place in June in Basildon.

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## Y10 GCSE PE Rock climbing

Our Y10 GCSE PE cohort took the opportunity to engage in rock climbing as one of their examined sports. Students worked really hard and were a credit to the school. Rockhub at Basildon sporting village were incredible and I would recommend to any beginners looking to take up the sport.





# SPORTS DAY - 4 JUNE



## St John Payne Catholic School Sports Day - Thursday 4th June 2026

Our annual Sports Day is on Thursday 4th June at the Chelmsford Sports and Athletics Centre at Salerno Way, Chelmsford, CM1 2EH. This is a wonderful opportunity to affirm students' successes in the sporting life of the school.

Spectators are welcome at the event, but will be sat in the opposite stand to students. Please see the schedule of the day. Further information has been shared with your child via form tutors and on Show My Homework.

At the end of the event, all students will depart from Melbourne Athletics Track from 2.30pm, unless you inform us that your child is to return to school with staff.

If you would like your child to return to school, please complete this form:

[Sports day - Thursday 4th June 2026 - Return to SJP 2.30-3.15pm – Fill in form  
https://forms.cloud.microsoft/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?  
id= kYSpV6EIkSWTUFwqH4Y8dnaavNlwyFBoGgH\\_yX0pcNUQk44TEg5SkxaUkwzVjVNOzk3  
REE3NEJIRi4u](https://forms.cloud.microsoft/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=kYSpV6EIkSWTUFwqH4Y8dnaavNlwyFBoGgH_yX0pcNUQk44TEg5SkxaUkwzVjVNOzk3REE3NEJIRi4u)

Thank you for your support and if you require any further clarification, please contact Mrs Watson, Head of PE.

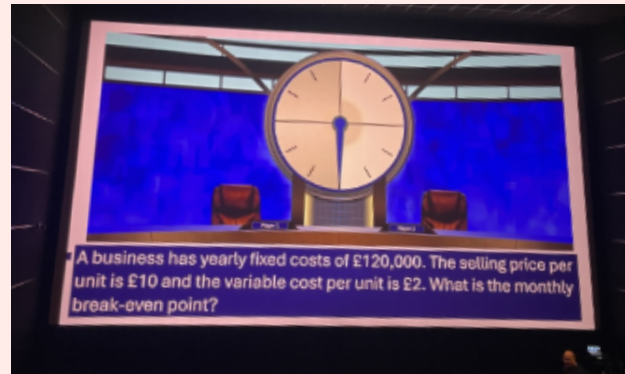
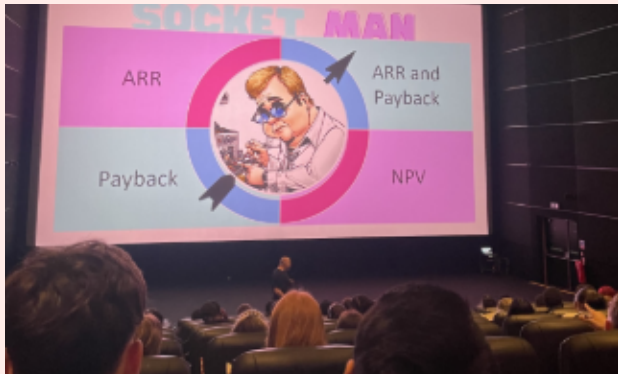
Chelmsford Sport and Athletics Centre  
Salerno Way  
Chelmsford  
Essex  
CM1 2EH





## A-Level Edexcel Tutor2u Grade Booster Workshop

The Tutor2u event was a really helpful and enjoyable experience which strengthened my understanding of the course. During the session, we worked through a revision booklet filled with planning questions, key definitions, and exam-style activities. The event felt very interactive, as we were regularly encouraged to discuss ideas, answer questions, and apply business concepts in a supportive and engaging environment.



One of the most useful parts of the event was the focus on areas of the specification that are often not answered well in the exam. The tutors explained difficult topics in a much simpler and more relatable way, which made them easier to understand and remember. They also shared advice on how to structure high-mark answers and improve exam technique. The planning questions were especially useful because they encouraged me to practise applying analysis and evaluation from case studies.

I personally thought the event was extremely effective for revision because it combined clear explanations with active participation and exam-focused guidance. It boosted my confidence in the subject and helped me feel more prepared for my A-Level Business exams by reinforcing important theories, definitions, and evaluation skills.

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## NatWest Work Experience Opportunity for Year 12 Economics Students

Five of our Year 12 Economics students were recently selected to participate in a week placement at NatWest. The work experience will enable students to gain real life experience of the inner workings of a bank and understand what goes on day to day in the office. Some of the team members from NatWest delivered a fully interactive session with the students ahead of the work experience in July. This focused on what roles they currently hold within the bank, a renewable energy project financing and explored the key risks associated with such a project. Within the session, the students worked on real life scenarios and challenges that they would face on a day-to-day basis.

We wish our students all the best of luck and are very proud of their achievements.





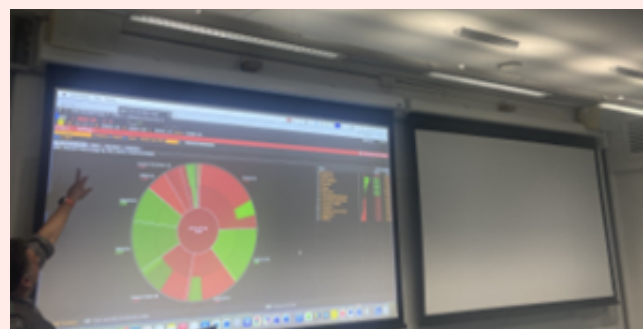
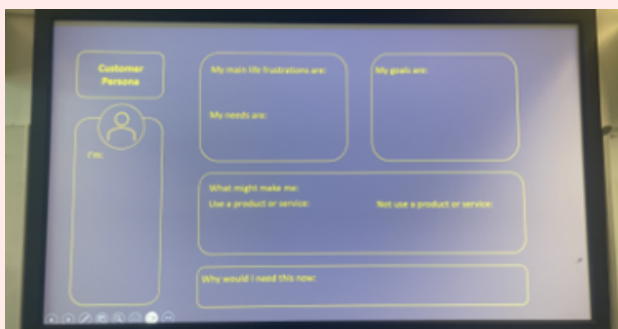
## Year 12 Business Students Explore University Life at Anglia Ruskin

During the Year 12 Business A-level trip to Anglia Ruskin University, we were given the opportunity to learn more about university life and what studying economics and business at university would involve. Throughout the day, we attended talks about choosing the correct course and the different topic areas each subject would cover. As an A-level Business and Economics student, this was very insightful and will help me make a more informed decision when applying to university.

One activity we took part in was "Creating a Winning Business Strategy", where we worked in groups to consider how businesses make effective decisions and target their customers. This helped develop our teamwork skills and showed how business theory can be applied in real situations.



We also visited the Bloomberg Lab, where we saw how stock trading computers and financial software are used in economics and finance. This gave us a deeper understanding of how markets operate and the role of technology in the financial sector.



I also enjoyed speaking to current ARU students, which gave us a realistic insight into university life and the transition from sixth form. Overall, the trip was valuable and made me feel more confident and excited about applying to university.



Congratulations to parents and students who use  
the French and German Knowledge Organisers

[www.sentencebuilders.com](http://www.sentencebuilders.com) and [www.linguascope.com](http://www.linguascope.com) and [activehub.pearson.com](http://activehub.pearson.com)

**Term 3a 2025-26**

**There is nothing complicated about learning languages, but it takes hard work.**

These students have showed particular grit, resilience, curiosity and effort in embedding French/German knowledge into their long-term memory. They will have a very strong start to the start of 2026 in French and German because they have not given up and have continued to ask questions and check their memory week in, week out.

Year 7 French	Year 8 French	Year 8 German	Year 9 French	Year 9 German
Angelin EB (7A)	Roisins S ( 8A)	Roisin S (8A)	Aurana I (9B)	Annmiya D (9B)
Rozafa S (7B)	Isha T-H (8D)	Frankie R (8D)	Robbie R (9D)	Ralph J (9C)
Ethan H (7C)	Eamon M-B (8A)	Henry R (8B)	Kayla C (9S)	Ieva J (9S)
Michael S (7D)	George B (8D)	Ella K (8C)	Laura R (9B)	Naomi O (9B)
Flynn S (7F)	Hannah M (8S)	Joshua R (8S)	Lily S (9D)	Lily S (9D)

**Moreover, SJP Top Linguastars are chosen amongst all others for their excellence.**

**Gershon J (7S)** always puts in the maximum effort in everything he does in class or with his homework.

**Lydia B (8S)** is an exceptionally talented linguist thanks to her listening, in lessons, great effort at home and enjoyment of learning languages. GCSE French/German candidate!

**Elizabeth J (8S)** made a lot of progress this last term. She consistently puts a lot of effort in all her German work. Keep working hard! A GCSE German candidate!

**Chinedum C-O (9F)** has made outstanding progress in French. She consistently works hard and puts great effort into all classwork and homework. GCSE French candidate!

**Dolcie S (9F)** has made outstanding progress in German, improving by three levels in one term. She consistently works hard and puts great effort into all classwork and homework. GCSE German candidate!

**Xavier G (10F)** has achieved an excellent result in his most recent assessment. This reflects not only his consistently positive attitude towards learning French, but also his strong and dedicated work ethic. A-Level French candidate!

**Eddie C (10S)** demonstrates impressive calm engagement in lessons and resilience in homework showing grit and determination in vocabulary retrieval. A-Level German candidate?

**Michael G (10B)** has worked extremely hard this term and is making great progress. A-Level German candidate?

**Jacob D (11F)** 100% effort in lessons/homework. A-Level French candidate!

**Freya P (11D)** Highest grades in the class due to his committed approach to GCSE French vocabulary learning and grammar application in her writing and speaking. 100% effort in lessons/homework. A-Level French candidate!

**Connie W (11S)** is a very talented linguist. She has pushed herself to excel in all four skills this term.

**Lionel H-F (12A)** Developing resilience in grappling with tenses and good application to translation and listening tasks. A degree module in French?



## EXTERNAL WRITING COMPETITIONS

We are pleased to highlight two inspiring external writing opportunities shared by our librarian in this edition of the Newsletter. Students are invited to take part in the **Earth4All “Stories of the Future” Creative Challenge**, which encourages young people to imagine and write about the future of our world, and the prestigious **Foyle Young Poets of the Year Award 2026**, a national poetry competition open to 11–17 year olds.

Both competitions provide an excellent platform for students to develop their creativity, express their ideas, and engage with real-world themes. Whether crafting imaginative future scenarios or experimenting with poetry on a theme of their choice, these opportunities allow students to build confidence in their writing and gain recognition beyond the classroom.

We strongly encourage students to consider entering one (or both) of these competitions. Taking part is a fantastic way to challenge yourself, explore your voice as a writer, and enhance skills that are valuable across all subjects. We look forward to seeing our students embrace these opportunities and wish all entrants the very best of luck.

**THE POETRY SOCIETY**

# FOYLE YOUNG POETS of the Year Award 2026

**Deadline: 31st July 2026**

Free poetry competition for 11-17 year olds

Winners receive amazing prizes, including books, mentoring and publication by The Poetry Society.

Send your poems on any theme to [foyleyoungpoets.org](http://foyleyoungpoets.org)

**Judges**  
John McAuliffe & Rachel Long

Enter

**Earth 4All**

### Stories of the Future creative challenge: tell new stories about the future and win!

What does the future hold for children growing up around the world?

The Earth4All Stories of the Future challenge invites young people to share their visions.

Open to youth around the world under 21

Read our interactive storybook about four girls growing up in the Earth4All future scenarios.

Imagine a future for a character in your country.

Write, draw, paint or film your future story to win book vouchers, a book and publication in our digital magazine!

Full details at [earth4all.life/creative-challenge](http://earth4all.life/creative-challenge)

FOYLE FOUNDATION | ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND



## Volunteering Opportunities for Students

Students aged 14+ can now apply to volunteer with the Summer Reading Challenge in Essex libraries. Volunteers help encourage children to enjoy reading, talk about books, and give out rewards – while gaining valuable skills and confidence.

Apply online by Monday 22 June to be part of this rewarding summer opportunity.

More information about Summer Reading Challenge volunteering:

<https://libraries.essex.gov.uk/news/summer-reading-challenge-volunteering>

Essex County Council  
Libraries

This is a digital poster, please do not print

# Volunteer

for the  
**Summer Reading  
Challenge 2026!**

**Make friends!**

**Boost your CV!**

**Help your local community!**

**Closing date 22 June**

Apply online at [libraries.essex.gov.uk](https://libraries.essex.gov.uk)  
**Open to age 14+**



Below is Freddie's thoughtful and beautifully written reflection on his volunteering experience at Braintree Library during the Summer Reading Challenge 2025.

## Lending A Hand at My Local Library - Freddie G 11S

Your local library needs you!

For just one week in this year's Summer Holidays, my friend Christian and I dedicated ourselves to volunteering at Braintree Library for the annual Summer Reading Challenge; this is a national project that inspires many thousands of children around the country to keep reading during the long, sometimes unacademic Summer Break, something that I loved joining in with every year in primary school. Over the course of 20 hours of volunteering (which seemed to go by in a flash), we helped lead this excellent programme that combines not only imagination and learning, but also our communities in a heart-warming way.

From the first day, the library was alive with energy – the quiet rustle of turning pages mixing blissfully with bursts of laughter and heartfelt, excited chatter – and I felt really privileged to be a part of that. Children seemed so delighted to talk to us, to participate in this amazing yearly event, streamed in clutching their books, eager to share the stories they had read, and our job was very simply to talk with them about their books, encourage them to keep going, and celebrate each step of their unique reading journeys with stickers. What might sound like a small task became something deeply meaningful: we were not just making sure they had read their books but were helping to shape a generation of readers and thinkers!

During this confidence boosting, interactive week, I came to realise that offering up my time in this out-of-the-ordinary way was not just an act of charity; in fact, it was an act of love and respect, as I gave back to those who helped me learn to read when I was younger. By listening with patience, showing interest, and celebrating the varied progress of each child, I was living out Christ's message to "let your light shine before others." It reminded me that even the smallest acts of kindness (from a smile, to a word of encouragement) can really make a difference, as I saw the confidence of the children grow whilst talking to me. There was a particular joy in seeing how books could unite people: some of the children were a bit shy and uncertain at first, whilst others were boundlessly talkative and full of imagination and genuine excitement about books; but above all, each had a story to tell, and each deserved to be heard. This unity in the gift of reading and story-telling captures everything this challenge stands for, for the children involved and for Christian and I as volunteers: growth in determination and the power of encouragement.

In many ways, the library felt like a community of its own; a place where people of all backgrounds and stories of their own gathered to learn, relax, and connect. Seeing that community in action reminded me of the Catholic principle of solidarity: the idea that we are all part of one human family, responsible for lifting one another up. Whether through reading, listening, or simply showing up, I believe I became a building block, helping to support that sense of solidarity with one another.

So, why not say yes? Volunteer this summer at your local library; and this is for anyone looking for a way to give back – especially those who value reading, community, and faith in action – as well as being simply perfect for those who find joy in helping others develop, or who might have taken part in the challenge when younger; moreover, it is a great opportunity for anyone who believes that small, seemingly insignificant gestures can have a broader and lasting impact.

To conclude, by the end of this wonderfully soul-nourishing week of service and giving back, I felt not only proud of myself but so grateful: grateful to have shared in the laughter and excitement of young readers; grateful for the truly beautiful blessing of libraries; and grateful to have lived out a little piece of my faith in a practical, joyful way.

Sign up to take part this summer on the following website... you can sign up from around June 2026:

[Join-in | Summer Reading Challenge](#)



## Student - led lunchtime clubs in the library

12:50 - 13:25

EVERY DAY



**PUZZLE  
CLUB**

MONDAY



**Dungeons &  
Dragons RPG**  
by Michael and Kaitlyn

WEDNESDAY



**CRAFT CLUB**

THURSDAY



**MANGA CLUB**  
by Sureya and Gabriel

FRIDAY



**Dungeons &  
Dragons RPG**  
by Michael and Kaitlyn

# PASTORAL CARE, MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING





## The Educational Psychology (EP) Helpline for Parents

We know that you might have questions regarding supporting your child through school.

This helpline is here to give you advice, support and signposting. This is a confidential, private and safe service for parents and carers. You don't need a referral—just book an appointment. We're here to help you support your child's unique needs.

You might want help with:

- Supporting your child at home.
- Understanding their needs in school.
- Finding out what extra help is available.

Our team of qualified educational psychologists are here to listen and guide you. The helpline:

- is confidential and personal details will not be recorded and nor will information be passed onto other sources
- is staffed by qualified educational psychologists who listen to parents' concerns and work with them to find a positive way forward
- consists of a discrete piece of work with no follow up

It does not:

- fast-track a visit for your child in school
- make a referral to the EP or any other LA service
- obtain an EP assessment or to diagnose a condition
- accelerate EP involvement with the child
- substitute for an EP working directly with the child

New Now Easier to Access: The booking is designed to provide an easier and more convenient experience.

- Available on alternating Mondays and Tuesdays
- 1:00pm – 5:00pm
- 25-minute appointments bookable via MS Teams
- No more waiting – instant booking confirmation

For booking details and further information, please visit [EP-Parent-Helpline](#)

Information will also be available on the **Essex County Council Local Offer** Pages

<https://schools.essex.gov.uk/special-educational-needs-and-disabilities-send/send-services-and-support/essex-local-offer-website>



# SOCIAL MEDIA





# SJP SOCIAL MEDIA



We're thrilled to announce the relaunch of our official Facebook and Instagram pages in 2026! These platforms will be your go-to destination for the latest school news, celebrating student achievements, showcasing events and activities, and sharing helpful resources for parents and students.

**Follow us to stay connected and be part of our vibrant school community.**

Let's make 2026 a year of connection, celebration, and community spirit! Find us on Facebook and Instagram and join the conversation today.





## Student Media Team

### **Celebrating Our Student Media Team: Leading the Way in Safe and Responsible Social Media**

At St John Payne Catholic School, we are proud to shine a spotlight on our growing Student Media Team. An enthusiastic group of young creators who are helping to shape the way we share the life of our school with our wider community. This initiative places students at the heart of our storytelling, giving them a real voice while teaching them the importance of responsible and safe engagement online.

Our team is led by a committed group of Year 12 supervisors, who provide guidance, support and creative direction to our newest Student Ambassadors in Year 7. Together, they can be found across the school capturing the daily moments that reflect our vibrant community: learning in action, acts of kindness, extracurricular achievements, and the faith-filled ethos that underpins everything we do.

But this project is about more than just content creation. In a digital age where social media plays an increasingly significant role in young people's lives, we are committed to ensuring our students learn how to navigate online spaces safely and confidently. By involving them directly in the production process, we are equipping them with essential skills such as:

- Understanding online safety and digital footprint awareness
- Recognising the importance of consent and respectful representation
- Developing teamwork, communication and leadership
- Using creativity and technology in a positive, constructive way

Through hands-on experience, our students learn not just what good content looks like, but why responsible digital behaviour matters.

We are incredibly proud of both our Year 12 supervisors for their maturity and leadership, and our Year 7 Ambassadors for their enthusiasm and fresh perspective. Their collaboration embodies the SJP spirit of community, stewardship and growth.

If you would like to join the student media team, please email Miss O'Driscoll.  
[lodriscoll@sjp.essex.sch.uk](mailto:lodriscoll@sjp.essex.sch.uk)

Click the icons to follow along:

