

Our Lady's Catholic High School



Newsletter No. 12
5th December 2025



The Theme Next Week: Prepare the Way (Matthew 3:1-12)

'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.'

In this week's Gospel, John the Baptist reminds us that Advent is a season of readiness. As our school community approaches Christmas, we are invited to clear space in our hearts for Christ by allowing God to come into our lives; to seek forgiveness, to forgive and to help us bear good fruit through our words and actions. May we welcome the coming Christ with openness and joy.

Lord, prepare my heart for your arrival.

Renew me by your Spirit.

Help me bear good fruit for your kingdom.

Amen.

BOOO Virtues

Congratulations go to:

Year 7: Jack Pickthall - intentional and prophetic

Year 8: Kayleigh Cooper - intentional and prophetic

Year 9: Silene Piotrowicz - intentional and prophetic

Year 10: Tommy Butler - intentional and prophetic

Year 11: Mary Hughes - learned and wise



Being One of Ours

Year 7 Science

To conclude the Year 7 Cells topic, students were challenged to create a model cell of their choice. The Science department was so impressed by the creativity demonstrated, with models ranging from baked cakes to elaborate polystyrene and foam creations. Three top entries were chosen from each Science class and from those, the **overall winners** were **Alan B, Maja N, Billy Q** and **Hannah F**.

Congratulations to all Year 7 and keep your eyes open for further Science competitions across different Year Groups during the year.



Duke of Edinburgh Awards Evening

Celebrating Resilience and Growth

We were proud to celebrate the achievements of our Duke of Edinburgh Award students in a special presentation evening attended by families, staff and guests.

This year, 55 students completed their Bronze Award and 13 achieved Silver, showing real commitment across volunteering, skill development, physical challenges and expedition work.

Their expeditions tested both resilience and teamwork. Students faced the full British outdoors experience with blistering heat, clouds of midges and heavy rain. Despite the conditions, they showed determination, cooperation and humour throughout. These challenges perfectly captured the spirit of what is often called Type 2 fun, the kind of experience that feels tough in the moment but later becomes a story you laugh about and learn from.

The Duke of Edinburgh Award is not just about completing tasks or walking long distances. It is about what happens along the way. Students learn to persevere when things get uncomfortable, solve problems under pressure, support each other and realise they can push beyond what they thought they were capable of.

As part of the evening, we were also joined by guest speaker Elise, an adventurer, runner and author, who shared her inspiring story of running 5000 miles around the coast of Great Britain carrying everything she needed on her back. Her talk encouraged students to step outside their comfort zone, take on new challenges and believe in their own potential.

A special thank you goes to our dedicated staff who volunteered their time to support and lead the expeditions. They brought not only their experience and organisation, but also their humour and morale boosting encouragement when students needed it most.

Well done to all of our Duke of Edinburgh participants. Your commitment, resilience and teamwork truly reflect the values of our school community, and we are incredibly proud of you.

Pupils hear from adventurer and motivational speaker Elise ...

[LEARN MORE >>](#)

CyberFirst Girls Competition

Year 8 Teams Are Working Hard!

The CyberFirst Girls Competition began on 1st December and we are excited to have several teams taking part this year. Run by the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC), the competition challenges girls to explore cybersecurity through a range of online puzzles involving cryptography, logic, forensics and problem-solving. The online round continues until **10th December**.

Our Year 8 girls have shown exceptional commitment since day one. They have been giving up their lunchtimes to work together and have continued tackling challenges at home, eager to progress and support their teammates. Their dedication has been inspiring, and their enthusiasm for the competition is clear. This positive, team-focused approach has created an exciting atmosphere and helped them build confidence in new skills.

We are incredibly proud of the effort they have shown already and look forward to seeing what they achieve by the time the competition ends on 10th December. Well done to all our teams – keep it up and good luck.

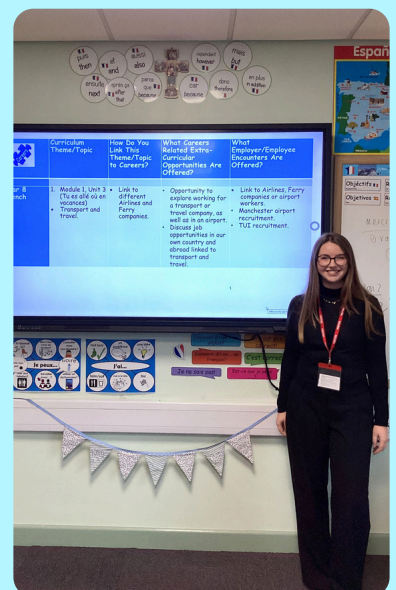
The Computer Science Department



Year 8 French have been looking at **Careers** related jobs and skills linked to Travel and Tourism, as part of their module of work on travel that they are currently studying.

Pupils considered jobs available in airports, as well as with holiday company TUI. As part of this they watched videos about a day in the life of a TUI employee, and have been lucky enough to hear the experience of Madeleine Baker who has worked for TUI, and who is currently working with the languages Curriculum Area. At TUI her job mainly involved working remotely to solve issues experienced by customers when on holiday, liaising with hotels to overcome these issues, or to support travel arrangements for customers.

Pupils enjoyed asking her questions and considering whether a career in travel and tourism is for them!



DRAMA News

SHOW
TIME



Christmas VARIETY SHOW 2025

*Join us for an unforgettable evening of
music, dance, and festive cheer.*

THURSDAY 18TH DECEMBER | 18:00

TICKETS AVAILABLE VIA
TICKETSOURCE

**CLICK
HERE**

Being One of Ours

Information

ONE STOP SHOP

Monthly Drop In - Families can access free this is open to everyone advice & support No appointments needed just turn up!

The Barnardo's MyTime to Thrive Service offers short-term therapy for children and young people struggling with their mental health and wellbeing.
We support ages 5-18 and up to the age of 25 for those with additional needs.

Pathway Navigator-ASD Autism Pathway Navigator

Learn about the School Age Autism pathway processes, ask for advice about referrals and other mechanisms of support. Receive signposting support from someone with lived experience of a child/ young person with autism.

ADHD North West Learn ADHD Northwest is committed to providing a free, unique support service to empower and improve the wellbeing of individuals and families affected by an attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and associated conditions.

Talking Therapies

We are a psychological therapy service offering a range of free talking therapies to people aged 16 and over in Lancashire and 18 and over in South Cumbria.

Talking Therapies offer a range of brief psychological interventions to support people's differing emotional needs (such as generalised anxiety, panic, depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), this includes online, telephone and face-to-face treatment and therapy options.

Work Well Coach—Through the WorkWell project we can help you take positive steps forward.

School Nurse - Bed wetting Sleep Hygiene & More

Compass Bloom YP Mental Health support

Housing - Preston City Council - Gateway

Citizen Advice

Benefit Advice - DWP

Debt Advice/Support

Employment advice - DWP

Home safety - Lancs Fire & Rescue

Free Funded Nursery Places

Runshaw College Apprenticeships

Lancashire Women Support for ladies

Domestic Abuse Support

Community Education Sexual Health

Youth Worker EmPower - Contextual Safeguarding Team

Front Door, Assessment & Adolescent Services

Lancashire County Council

Parenting Worker EmPower - Contextual Safeguarding Team

Front Door, Assessment & Adolescent Services

Lancashire County Council

Private
meeting rooms
available

No need to
book,
just turn up

Last
Tuesday of
the month
2pm - 4pm

RIBBLETON
FAMILY
HUB
PRESTON

Ribbleton Family Hub,
Ribbleton Hall Drive,
Ribbleton,
Preston,
PR2 6EE

At The National College, our WakeUpWednesday guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. Formerly delivered by National Online Safety, these guides now address wider topics and themes. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit www.thenationalcollege.com.

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about TIKTOK

Online videos are often associated with apps such as YouTube, but among teens, TikTok is king. The app provides a potentially addictive, never-ending stream of short clips tailored to users' interests based on their viewing habits. Around half of British children use TikTok, and while most content is benign, Ofcom considers it the app where young people are 'most likely to encounter a potential harm'.

AGE-INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT
TikTok's following feed shows videos from creators, while the default 'For You' feed serves videos clips based on viewing history. Most are harmless, but unsuitable content can still appear, and watching for long enough signals interest to the algorithm. Although TikTok bans illegal or inappropriate uploads, the volume of posts means some slip through, increasing the chance that children encounter age-inappropriate material before it is detected or removed.

CONTACT WITH STRANGERS
Between 18 and 19 billion people use TikTok, meaning there's a high risk of unwanted attention from strangers. Accounts created by over-18s for young people using a fake date of birth) are set to public view by default. This means that not only is someone's profile visible to everyone else on the app, it also suggests their videos to others and allows anyone to download or comment on them.

MISINFORMATION AND RADICALISATION
TikTok's short videos may appear lightweight, but they can expose young people to harmful ideas. Misinformation is common, and Ofcom reports that nearly one third of 12-15-year-olds use TikTok as a news source, increasing the chance of seeing racist, misogynistic, extremist or conspiracy material. Even brief clips can influence impressionable users and shape their worldview, making discussions about critical thinking, propaganda and online influence especially important for parents and educators.

ADDICTIVE DESIGN
TikTok's fast-paced stream of eye-catching videos can be potentially addictive for young users. In 2024, UK children spent an average of 127 minutes per day on the platform, double the time recorded in 2020. Excessive use can disrupt sleep, increase irritability, and distract from health-related activities. Constantly skipping between videos may also affect attention span, making it harder to focus on longer tasks such as homework or reading.

IN-APP SPENDING
TikTok is free, but children can still spend money. TikTok coins, costing £0.99 to £24.99, let users buy gifts for creators. TikTok Shop adds risk by allowing purchases from influencers and companies, sometimes leading to poor-quality items driven by persuasive marketing. A Consumer Investigation found TikTok collected personal data from many children for targeting and advertising despite age limits, meaning young users may lose control over their personal information.

Body Image and Dangerous Challenges
Ofcom reports that most online harms for girls involve body image, while boys more often see dangerous stunts. Both types appear frequently on TikTok and spread quickly through its engagement-driven algorithm. Harmful challenges have included the 'blackout' trend, where users held their breath until passing out. Families faced trouble after children died linked to the trend, showing how extreme or risky content can quickly reach young people and negatively influence them.

Advice for Parents & Educators

ENABLE FAMILY PAIRING
Family Pairing allows parents to link their TikTok account to their child's in order to manage settings remotely. Parents can then turn on Restricted Mode (reducing the chances of a child seeing inappropriate content), set screen time limits, make accounts private and manage whether their child can send messages - and if they can, to whom. Children cannot alter these settings without parental approval.

BLOCK IN-APP SPENDING
Parents can restrict in-app purchases on iPhone and Android devices to prevent accidental or impulsive TikTok spending. Young people can easily spend large amounts on TikTok coins or low-quality products promoted through TikTok Shop. If a disappointing purchase occurs, turn it into a discussion about influencer marketing and how online promotions can be misleading.

DISCUSS THE DANGERS
If a child wants to use TikTok and you're happy for them to do so, it's good practice to discuss the potential risks. Ensure they don't share any identifying personal information or respond to dangerous trends, and that they know to talk to a trusted adult if they're worried by interactions on the app. With more teens using TikTok for news, it's important to talk about misinformation and propaganda.

READ THE SIGNS
If you're concerned that a child is spending too much time on TikTok, or that they've been emotionally affected by something they've seen, it's important to know how to spot the signs. Increased irritability and a lack of concentration are potential red flags, as is failing to complete homework or skipping meals. Remember, the parental controls are there for a reason, and it's never too late to introduce limits.

Meet Our Expert
Alan Martin is an experienced technology journalist who has written for the likes of Wired, TechRadar, Tom's Guide, The Evening Standard and The New Statesman.

www.thenationalcollege.com
@wake_up_weds @wake.up.wednesday
Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into. Release date: 25.11.2024

CLICK HERE!

....to read

USEFUL RESOURCES

November Online Safety
Newsletter

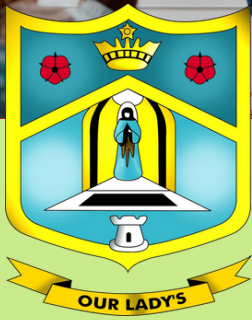
Community Support
Information

**WE ARE
HIRING**
join our team

**CLICK
HERE!**

Being One of Ours

Information



Inspire others
Transform lives
Teach

Are you a former pupil of Our Lady's considering a career in teaching?

The Catholic Teaching Alliance has over 10 years of delivering successful teacher training courses based at Our Lady's Catholic High School.

- Begin your teaching journey in local schools.
- Train to become a primary (3-7 or 5-11 years), secondary (11-16 years) or sixth form (14-19 years) teacher.

We are recruiting now for courses starting in **September 2026**.

View all our teacher training (PGCE with QTS) courses [here](#).

For further information please contact us.

Call 01772 326931 or
email CTAPGCE@olchs.lancs.sch.uk

Website: <https://www.catholic-teaching-alliance.org/>



2025 Diary Dates

Monday 8 December
PSHE Day 2

Thursday 18 December
Christmas Variety Show

Friday 19 December
End of term. School closes at 12.35pm

SCHOOL TIMES

Arrive at school / Go to waiting areas	8.40- 8.45
Pupils go to Form rooms / Locker time	8.45- 8.55
Form Time	8.55-9.15
School finishes	3pm

Except Tuesdays (ONLY)
Pupils finish at 2.30pm

OLCHS SOCIAL MEDIA



Being One of Ours

FOOTBALL

Huge congratulations to the U14 Girls who beat St Georges of Blackpool 7-0 and now progress into the next round of the Lancashire Cup to face Archbishop Temple.

OLCHS struggled with the size of the pitch initially but we soon found our flow, passing and shooting range. Goals came from Charlotte B, Rio A and Coco S-V.

Fantastic defensive work from Eden P and Izzy W, as every goal kick St Georges took was a strike on goal.

Fantastic clean sheet for Georgia S too, complemented by lovely attacking and defending by Fearne B, Ruby C and Bella F.



WRESTLING

Two Our Lady's pupils competed recently at an international wrestling competition, coming home victorious.

Kayah competed in the U14 (up to 54kg) category, where she competed against other girl wrestlers from Poland and Germany, defeating a Polish wrestler in the final match. Not a single point was scored against Kayah.

Filip also competed in the U14 (up to 52 kg) classification, winning against a German wrestler in the Final.

Next stop: Helsinki competition in mid-December.

NETBALL

YEAR 7 & 8

Year 7 and Year 8 kicked off the Preston School Netball League on Monday with a strong home performance against Archbishop Temple.

For Year 7, this fixture marked their first competitive outing as a team – and they rose to the occasion brilliantly. Led by captain Emily S, the team settled quickly into the match, controlling possession and demonstrating excellent teamwork. Their efforts were rewarded with a commanding 5–0 lead at half-time. Despite dominating possession again in the second half, neither side was able to add to the scoreline. The match finished 5–0 to Our Lady's, an impressive debut victory. Player of the Match went to Emily S.



Fresh off an undefeated league-winning season, Year 8 continued their strong form with a dominant all-round display. From the first centre pass they controlled the pace, moved the ball confidently, and maintained relentless pressure throughout the match. Their quality showed on the scoreboard, finishing with an emphatic 12–0 victory to start their campaign in style. Player of the Match went to captain Isabel W.



The Year 9 team, captained by Melody B, faced a strong and well-drilled opposition. Despite their determination, they struggled to gain momentum and never fully settled into their rhythm, eventually falling to a 16–6 defeat. The team showed resilience throughout and will look to build on the experience in future fixtures.

YEAR 9 & 10

On Wednesday, the Year 9 and Year 10 squads travelled away to face Archbishop Temple in a competitive afternoon of netball.

The Year 10s, led by Romy L, had a much tighter contest. The first half saw both sides battling for control, with neither side able to secure a convincing lead. However, a composed and disciplined second-half performance saw Year 10 pull ahead, finishing with an impressive 13–8 victory for Our Lady's. Player of the Match was awarded to Dottie A, whose creativity and ability to generate options in attack proved instrumental.

careers trip TO PRESTON COLLEGE

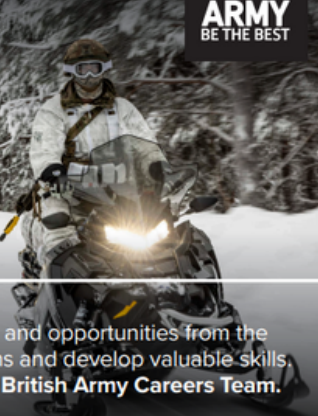

On Wednesday 3rd December, seven pupils from Year 10 participated in a competition organised by the Public Services pupils from Preston College.

Our Lady's pupils participated in a range of activities which included a CPR session, evidence examination, problem solving, fitness testing and a vehicle search for specific items. The pupils conducted themselves wonderfully and finished a fantastic 3rd overall. A special mention to Zuzanna R who won a special award for the way in which she conducted herself throughout the day.

Pupils also learned about the Fire Service, the Police Force and the Armed Services.




DECEMBER 2025



BRITISH ARMY
CAREERS NEWSLETTER
FOR EDUCATORS & CAREERS LEADS

This newsletter brings you the latest updates, resources, and opportunities from the British Army to help students explore diverse career paths and develop valuable skills. We're here to support your work every step of the way. - British Army Careers Team.







BRITISH ARMY INSIGHTS: A GUIDE FOR PARENTS & GUARDIANS

RECRUITING

Event: British Army Insights – A Guide for Parents & Guardians

Date: Tuesday 20 January

Time: 18:00 – 19:00

This online session is designed to give parents clarity and confidence about the opportunities the British Army offers young people.

Why it matters:

Recent research with over 600 parents and guardians revealed:

- Only 27% feel fully confident supporting their child through the application process.
- Nearly half (49%) want to attend an online session and receive resources about Army apprenticeships.

What parents will gain:

- A real look at life in today's Army, including roles, training, and qualifications.
- Inspiring stories from those with lived experience, plus practical advice and Q&A time.
- Insights into how the Army helps young people build confidence, resilience, and valuable life skills — all while earning and learning.

Bonus: Attendees receive a FREE downloadable resource to help support their child's career choices.

**REGISTER
NOW!**

Being One of Ours

BAE SYSTEMS

Apprenticeships

■ APPRENTICESHIPS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

Start something extraordinary.
Find your purpose.



LEARN MORE



OPEN DAY

Course Advice Morning

Saturday 6th

December 2025

10.00 am to 1.00 pm

REGISTER NOW



Course Advice Events

Full details at

www.myerscough.ac.uk/whats-on



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College & University Centre
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Since 1894

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