



Our Lady's Catholic High School



Newsletter No. 14
19th December 2025



End of Term Message from Mr Charnock

Dear Parents, Carers, and Friends of Our Lady's,

As we come to the end of another busy and rewarding term, I would like to take this opportunity to reflect on all that has been achieved within our school community and to thank you for your continued support of Our Lady's.

This term has once again been filled with hard work, commitment and many moments of which we can be rightly proud. I would like to begin by commending our Year 7 pupils, who have settled so confidently into life at Our Lady's. From their very first days, they have embraced the challenges and opportunities of secondary school with enthusiasm, maturity and a real sense of belonging. It has been a joy to see them already becoming such a valued part of our community.

Across the school, pupils have shown dedication not only in their learning but also through their participation in the wide range of extra-curricular activities on offer. From sporting fixtures and performing arts events to clubs, competitions and enrichment opportunities, this term has truly reflected the breadth of experiences available to our young people. The highlights shared in this newsletter are a testament to the energy, talent and generosity of spirit that exists throughout Our Lady's.

The Catholic Life of our school has remained central to all that we do. We began the year by gathering in faith at our INSET Day Mass, joined by colleagues from St Anthony's and Holy Family Catholic Primary Schools. Our Year 7 pupils and their families were welcomed into our community through a beautiful Mass of Welcome, marking the beginning of their five-year journey with us. It was especially meaningful to share this celebration with Headteachers from our family of primary schools, each receiving a candle as a symbol of the faith that unites us all.

As part of their induction, our Year 7 pupils also took part in a retreat at Castlerigg Manor, where they were given the opportunity to reflect, grow spiritually and build strong relationships within their tutor groups. Throughout the term, we have marked key moments in the liturgical calendar with reverence and respect as well as Remembrance Day reflections, when the school community came together in silence to honour those who have sacrificed so much.

Our commitment to serving others has been clearly demonstrated through the outstanding charity work undertaken this term. From the Macmillan Coffee Morning to our annual Salvation Army Food Bank Collection, the generosity shown by pupils, families and staff will make a real difference to those most in need this Christmas.

Staffing Updates – January 2026

There are some important staffing changes that will take place from January 2026.

After 21 years of dedicated service, Mrs McArdle will be leaving her role as Assistant Headteacher at the end of this term. As many of you will know, Mrs McArdle has contributed enormously to the life of Our Lady's and has supported countless pupils and families with care, compassion and unwavering commitment. She has played a significant role in shaping our school and has embodied what it truly means to "Be One of Ours." Mrs McArdle and her family have made the decision to relocate back to Ireland and, while we are very sad to see her leave, we thank her sincerely for all she has given to Our Lady's and wish her every happiness, health and blessing for the future.

Following a rigorous two-day interview process, which followed a national advert and attracted a high number of excellent applications, I am delighted to inform you that Mrs O'Beirne has been appointed by our Governors to the role of Assistant Headteacher, beginning in January 2026. This is a very strong appointment for the school, and we are confident that Mrs O'Beirne will bring great expertise, care and leadership to our senior team.

As a result of this appointment, Mrs O'Beirne will step away from her role as Learning Manager from January. To ensure continuity and stability for Year 11 pupils, I am very pleased to confirm that Mrs Crossley will move from Assistant Learning Manager to Learning Manager. Mrs Crossley already knows the year group well, and with continued support from Mrs O'Beirne during the transition, this will ensure that pupils remain well-supported and known as they move towards their GCSE examinations.

As we prepare to celebrate the Christmas season, I would like to thank all our pupils, staff, parents and carers for your continued commitment to our school and to the spirit of "Being One of Ours." It is your faith, kindness and partnership that make Our Lady's such a special place to learn and grow.

I leave you with these words from Pope Leo, who reminds us of the hope at the heart of our faith:

"Hope is born where love is lived, and it grows wherever hearts are open to God and to one another."

A Prayer for the End of Term

Loving God,

As we pause at the end of this term,
We thank You for the gifts of learning, friendship and faith
That have been shared within our school community.
Bless our pupils and their families with rest and joy,
And grant strength and peace to all who serve others.
May the light of Christ guide us through the days ahead
And bring hope, kindness and renewal to every home.
Keep us safe until we meet again.
Amen.



On behalf of all the staff and Governors at Our Lady's Catholic High School, I wish you a happy, holy and blessed Christmas. We look forward to welcoming pupils back in January 2026, refreshed and ready for the term ahead.

With every blessing,

Mr Charnock

Headteacher

News



ADVENT *Liturgies*

As a Catholic school community, our Advent liturgies this week have focused on the theme ***Believe***. Through the Christmas story, pupils have reflected on the faith of Mary, Joseph and all who trusted in God's plan, and how this call to believe should inspire us to live as Christ calls us to as we prepare our hearts for Christmas.



Care Home Show

Pupils from Our Lady's this week performed a variety show for residents of the local community care home. It was a delightful afternoon, filled with joy and lots of singing.

Students in Miss Deady's textiles club have spent the last 5 weeks creating handmade festive decorations using scrap felt. This week they enjoyed a sweet treat of hot chocolate and some Christmas music while they worked, and many have now finished their work to take home! A new club will start up after the break, this time with an Easter theme.



Being One of Ours

Christmas TEA PARTY

Last Friday at Our Lady's, we had our Christmas Party for members of our local community. We had a wonderful array of sandwiches and mince pies and delightful entertainment from our Drama department and choir. There was also a great deal of impromptu singing to our favourite Christmas songs.

Thank you to our wonderful team of pupils who helped and to everyone who came along.



Being One of Ours



IAN MURPHY

ART

WORKSHOP

This week in school, our 77 Year 10 GCSE Art students took part in an inspiring workshop with renowned artist Ian Murphy. Originally from Wigan, Ian travels the world recording the places and spaces he visits, producing textural, large-scale drawings and paintings detailing the sights and places he visits, which he sells as a practising artist.

During the workshop, Ian shared a fantastic range of his paintings, drawings and sketchbooks, explaining how he records his ideas and develops them into finished pieces. He then demonstrated a variety of techniques used within his own practice, which Year 10 students had the opportunity to explore for themselves. The outcomes were extremely impressive.

The work produced during the day will contribute towards the pupils' GCSE coursework, with the skills and ideas developed continuing to be refined as they progress through the course. The workshop was thoroughly enjoyed by all and will, we hope, remain a lasting and positive memory for our pupils long after they have completed their Art GCSE at Our Lady's.



COMPUTER SCIENCE EDUCATION WEEK



Last week we celebrated Computer Science Education Week. Each day on Padlet, pupils were introduced to or reminded of some of the key pioneers within Computer Science. On Monday, pupils were introduced to Grace Hopper, a pioneering computer scientist and U.S. Navy rear admiral, best known for her work on early programming languages and for helping to develop COBOL. Her work helped make programming more accessible and laid important foundations for modern computing. This is why the week beginning 9th December is chosen, as it marks her birthday.

Other pioneers included Katherine Johnson, who worked at NASA and played a critical role in the Apollo 11 Moon landing mission; Alan Turing, who helped crack enemy codes during World War II; Tim Berners-Lee, who developed the World Wide Web; and Ada Lovelace, widely regarded as the world's first computer programmer.

During this week, pupils were also invited to take part in a Cyber Security task, where codes had to be cracked to stop the "school system" from being breached. Well done to Ajit S (10O), who successfully stopped the cyber-attack. Prizes will be on their way to you!

News



GCHQ

Christmas Challenge 2025

On Wednesday 10th December, classes in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 Computer Science took part in the annual GCHQ Christmas Challenge.

Pupils were set seven puzzles, each designed to test a wide range of skills, including:

- Code-breaking
- Mathematical reasoning
- Analytical thinking
- Lateral thinking and creativity
- Logic and problem solving

These challenges reflect the types of thinking used in real intelligence and cybersecurity work at GCHQ.

Working in small teams, pupils combined their different strengths and approaches to crack each puzzle – just like real codebreakers. Once they had solved the questions, they used their answers to uncover a **secret festive message**.

Well done to everyone who took part.

If you'd like to try the challenge yourself, click here:

[CLICK HERE TO PLAY](#)

CyberFirst Girls Competition

News

Over a 10-day period, five teams of Year 8 girls took part in the National Cyber Security Centre's CyberFirst Girls Competition. Each team, made up of up to four students, dedicated their lunchtimes and personal time to tackling a series of challenging cyber-security tasks.

Leading the Our Lady's leaderboard were **The Quirky Discoverers**, who achieved an impressive 2,221 challenge points. The team consisted of Aleena M (8U), Phoebe M (8U), Ella M (8O) and Laura P (8U).

Second place went to **Teckers**, made up of Bree-Anna (8O), Ayona T (8L), Priscilla A (8A) and Neva T (8L).

Close behind in third place were **Trustworthy Achievers**: Zofia P (8D), Anna S (8D), Lyla M (8D) and Fearne B (8D). **Fierce Rangers**, represented by Anna A (8A) and Khadija M (8R), also put in a strong effort throughout the competition.

Although the teams did not place in the national rankings, the event was an excellent experience for all involved, and plenty of fun was had along the way.

Well done to all the girls for their commitment and teamwork.

News & Information



BOOO Virtues

Congratulations go to:

Year 7: Isaac Hogarth - generous and grateful

Year 8: Ruby Connor - generous and loving

Year 9: Amy Shuttleworth-Evans - intentional and prophetic

Year 10: Ella Gardner - intentional and prophetic

Year 11: Karley Roscoe - compassionate and loving

loving
hopeful
curious
wise
grateful
discerning
compassionate
active
eloquent
learned
prophetic
intentional
truthful

IMPORTANT

IntraHealth are in school on **21st January 2026** to administer the Diphtheria /Tetanus / Polio and MeningitisACWY vaccination to **Year 9 pupils**. This is their final vaccination that completes their childhood vaccinations.



Please follow the link to **complete the online consent form by Sunday 11th January**. If you would like to decline, please complete a no consent form on the attached link:

<https://nhsimmss.azurewebsites.net/session/e0d8e5ae>

If you have any queries regarding this, please contact IntraHealth directly on 0333 3583 397 option 2 option 1.

USEFUL RESOURCES

Staying Safe Online - OLCHS

Community Support Information

The Golden Guinea Pig Celebrating Gratitude

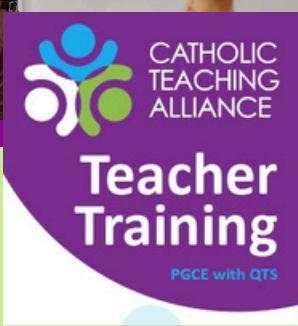


We are delighted to share the success of our Golden Guinea Pig Thank You initiative!

READ MORE

Being One of Ours

Information



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.

Inspire others
Transform lives
Teach

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

Friday 19 December

End of term. School closes at 12.35pm

Monday 5 January 2026

Pupils back to school

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

Sporting News

FOOTBALL YEAR 8 BOYS

The Year 8 football team have made it into the 3rd round of the Lancashire Schools' Football Association cup competition after a magnificent 13-3 victory over Tauheedul Islamic Boys School. The game was played on Monday 8th December and began with both teams having periods of good possession and opportunities to attack. Our Lady's soon took control and had scored 3 goals within the first 15 minutes. However, an excellent strike from distance by the opposition captain kept the scores a little closer at 3-1. By half time the score was 4-1 to Our Lady's.



Our Lady's made substitutions at half time and this gave the team even more energy and they began to pass the ball around, making runs behind the defensive line. Soon enough more goals were scored in quick succession from all over the field. The score finished 13-3 to Our Lady's with goals coming from Cai D, PJ D, Max O, Will A, James S, Elliott C and Ethan R. The team now face an away trip to St Michael's, Chorley, in the 3rd round.

FOOTBALL U13 GIRLS

Congratulations to the OLCHS U13 girls who beat Wilmslow High School 10-2 to qualify for the next round of the English Schools' Cup. Nine goals from Coco SV and one goal from Fearne B. What a great result.

A huge thank you to Christian from the Steven Gerrard Academy for the loan of the pitch at Bamber Bridge.



Congratulations to OLCHS pupils Kayah and Filip who both secured gold medals at the 19th Wrestling Helsinki Open 2025 international competition this month. Over 800 wrestlers took part from 24 countries, with Filip securing gold in the U13 category and Kayah winning gold in the U14 category.



Well done to OLCHS pupil Betsy L, who recently scored 5 tries for Lancashire Rugby U16s in a game which Lancashire dominated. Betsy played some outstanding rugby.

NETBALL

YEAR 7 & 8



On Tuesday, Year 7 and Year 8 played netball against Ashton at home. Both teams dominated throughout, settling into their stride quickly. Year 7 won 6-4 and Year 8 won 10-0.

Our Year 7B team then had their first game of the season against Ashton's A team. The pupils have been working hard in training and this paid off as they secured a 4-2 win.

BASKETBALL TRIP

On Wednesday, 30 OLCHS pupils went to watch the Manchester Giants basketball team take on European side BK Opava at the National Basketball Performance Centre in Manchester. Our pupils watched an exceptionally fast paced game which Manchester won convincingly. Three of our pupils also got selected to do a kit dash at the end of the first quarter where it was a race against time to get basketball shorts and t-shirt on and then score a goal.



Careers

PE CAREERS TALK

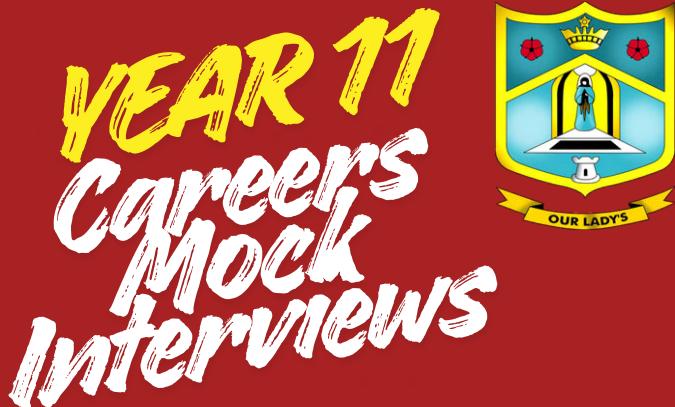
In the final week of term, the PE department welcomed Christian from the **Steven Gerrard Academy** into school to speak with our GCSE PE and Sport Studies pathway students about careers in the sports industry and how they can be shaped through further education choices.

Christian spoke about his own career path and how he's now, through the various education and coaching jobs he has held, helped other young people find their way in life and help them secure a career path in the sports sector.

The Steven Gerrard Academy (SGA) is a football and education program for 16–19-year olds, blending elite player development with career-focused academics, offering UEFA coaching, sports science, and pathways to university, scholarships (including in the USA), or careers in the football industry, with locations across the UK. They provide qualifications (like Level 2/3 Diplomas), real-world work experience, and opportunities to play competitively, helping young athletes develop both on and off the pitch.



STEVEN GERRARD
Academy



On Thursday 22nd January 2026, Our Lady's Catholic High School annual Mock Interviews will take place for Year 11's in school from 2pm until approximately 5.30pm. This involves the pupils being asked a series of questions in an interview setting to prepare them for the future. We are looking for volunteers to conduct the interviews and aim to match pupils to a sector they may be interested in. If you feel this is something you could help with, please email careers@olchs.lancs.sch.uk with your name and include your role within the organisation where you work