



Statement to live by

I can recognise comfortable and uncomfortable feelings.

The results are in...

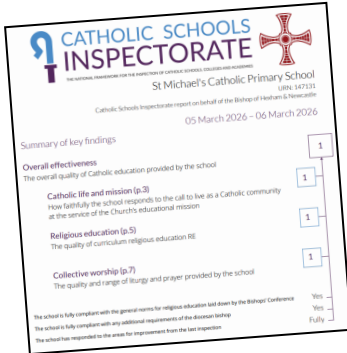
WE ARE OUTSTANDING!



We are delighted to share the wonderful news that St. Michael's Catholic Primary School has been judged *OUTSTANDING* in all areas following our recent Catholic School Inspection.

This exceptional outcome reflects the heartfelt dedication of our pupils, staff, governors, and families who live out our mission, "Learning together in faith and love, we shine as children of God." The inspectors praised our vibrant Catholic life, the enthusiasm and achievement of our children in Religious Education, and the richness of prayer and worship that sits at the heart of our school community. This achievement truly celebrates the strength, unity, and faith-filled spirit of our school community.

Well done St. Michael's!



Click on the image above to view the full report!



NSPCC Speak Out. Stay Safe... This week, Mr Reeson delivered the NSPCC's *Speak Out. Stay Safe* programme to all our pupils, helping them understand the importance of speaking up about worries and keeping themselves safe. Through age-appropriate discussions and engaging activities, children learned that they have the right to feel safe and that there are trusted adults—both in school and at home—who are always ready to listen. The sessions were incredibly well-received, empowering our pupils with confidence and awareness while reinforcing our ongoing commitment to safeguarding and wellbeing across the school community. Some classes will have a follow-up workshop delivered by NSPCC volunteers next week in school. **Let's stay safe!**

New life... It's been a very exciting week in Reception as we welcomed some special new arrivals. As part of the children's topic on *new life*, a batch of eggs arrived on Monday—and we are delighted to share that five fluffy chicks have already hatched! The children have loved watching the eggs carefully and seeing new life begin right in their classroom. **Exciting!**



Year 2 Curriculum Enrichment.. Year 2 had a fantastic visit to Tynemouth Aquarium this week as part of their Science learning. The children loved exploring the different habitats and getting a close look at a wide range of sea creatures.



Comic Relief 2026... Last Thursday, our school was filled with bright smiles and even brighter colours as children came dressed in red to support Comic Relief. It was wonderful to see everyone joining in with such enthusiasm and helping to raise awareness for a fantastic cause. **Thank you to all our families for your support!**



Year 3 Curriculum Enrichment... Year 3 had a fantastic day at the Shipley Art Gallery last week! The children learned all about textiles, created colourful felt artwork, and even practised joining fabric through sewing. They also loved



Parish Links and Enrichment... Year 1 enjoyed a wonderful morning last Friday making Easter crafts with the parishioners at church. The children loved working alongside members of our parish community, sharing creativity, and plenty of smiles. A huge thank you to everyone who came along to support the children and help make the morning so special!



exploring the gallery and discovering all the amazing pieces on display. **A wonderful creative day for everyone!**



Traditional Decorate an Easter Egg Competition...

Children are invited to decorate an egg (*hard boiled please*) and bring it to school on **Tuesday 31st March**. These will be displayed in our Library and judged by our School Councillors. There will be a prize for 1st, 2nd and 3rd from each class and eggs will be sent home on Thursday 2nd April. **Good luck!**



St Cuthbert's Care – Good Shepherd Appeal...

Reception Class will be raffling off the Easter eggs kindly donated by our Reception families on **Thursday 2nd April**. If your child would like to take part and support this wonderful cause, please refer to the information in the letter/ Arbor Messages that has already been sent home. **Charitable works!**



Home-School Links

- Address:** Durham Rd, Houghton le Spring, DH5 8NF
- Email:** smi@smi.bwcet.com
- Telephone:** 0191 584 05 42
- Website:** <https://stmichaelsoughton.bwcet.com/>
- Facebook:** [stmichaelsoughton](https://www.facebook.com/stmichaelsoughton) **Instagram:** [st_michaelcatholicschool](https://www.instagram.com/st_michaelcatholicschool)



Attendance at school for the past two weeks...

Reception: 97% Year 1: 98.6% Year 2: 99% Year 3: 98% Year 4: 97.5% Year 5: 99% Year 6: 99%
WELL DONE TO YEAR 2, 5 AND 6!

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about ONLINE TRENDS ENCOURAGING VIOLENCE

7 out of 10 teens report seeing violent content on social media, with over half of that content featuring fights involving young people. Most don't 'seek' it but are shown it through social media feeds or messaging groups. 91% of young people involved in violence have seen violent social media content. Viral trends, challenges, or 'wars' that are spread online risk encouraging violence offline, while real-world incidents may also be recorded and promoted online.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

ALGORITHMIC EXPOSURE

Social media platforms are designed to keep users engaged, meaning dramatic or extreme content can spread widely and quickly. Algorithms often recommend content that reflects users' past interactions. As a result, young people may see more violent material if they have viewed, commented on, or shared it before. Repeated exposure can make violent content appear frequently in their feeds without them fully understanding why.

WEAPONS AND CRIMINAL RISK

Teens exposed to high levels of real-world violence on social media sometimes report feeling an increased need to carry a weapon for 'self-protection'; however, carrying a weapon increases the risk of victimisation (harm and injury by others) for young people. In addition, carrying a weapon is a serious offence that can lead to police arrest and a criminal record.

SHARING VIOLENT CONTENT

Encouraging or assisting an offence is a crime in the UK, including via social media, and can lead to arrest. This means sharing, forwarding, or reposting violent content carries a risk for young people too. Showing examples of content to a trusted adult is appropriate, but young people should take care not to further spread violent material by posting it online or sharing it within large messaging groups.

FEAR, ANXIETY, AND MARGINALISATION

Research shows young people's emotional wellbeing can be negatively impacted by repeated exposure to violent online content, especially when it depicts 'real-world' violence (as opposed to fictional depictions in games or films). Posts featuring weapons, threats, attacks, and fights – or content that appears to glamorise gang activity – can increase feelings of anxiety or fear among young people. Material that encourages violence targeting people because of their identity, such as their nationality or religion, can also create disproportionate harm for children belonging to those groups.

AVOIDANCE AND ISOLATION

Real-world violence on social media can increase young people's belief that their local communities – or the 'outside world' more generally – are unsafe places. This can result in avoidant and isolating behaviours, which may negatively affect their wellbeing. As well as feeling fearful of others, teens also report feeling judged for spending time together in large groups, which may affect their social interactions and leisure time.

Advice for Parents & Educators

STAY INFORMED

Stay alert for updates from police, schools, or local authorities, and follow the advice provided. Be cautious about unofficial accounts, fake content, and misinformation, which can spread quickly online or in chat groups. Ensure you get accurate information from trusted sources and encourage young people to do the same. Remind them never to share violent content online and to speak to a trusted adult instead.

DISCUSS SOCIAL MEDIA

Encourage young people to talk about the content they see online and the effect it can have. This can be an opportunity to discuss topics such as misinformation, AI-generated material, the attention economy, and algorithms, helping them understand how and why extreme content can spread online. Explore tools available to block, report, and remove harmful content, and signpost where to get support and advice, such as reportharmfulcontent.com.

TALK CRIME AND SAFETY

In most of the UK, the age of criminal responsibility is 10 (12 in Scotland). This means there can be serious criminal consequences for carrying a weapon, taking part in violence, or filming or sharing violent content. Discuss the law with young people alongside practical safety strategies. Ask questions such as: "What could you do if you feel unsafe?" Work together on action plans and remind them they can contact a trusted adult or the police if they witness or experience violence.

ENCOURAGE POSITIVE ACTION

Focus on strengthening young people's positive experiences both online and within their local communities. Discuss strategies to reduce negative social media effects, such as time limits, unfollowing certain accounts, or taking breaks from apps. Encourage offline activities such as spending time with friends, visiting local places, and taking part in hobbies that bring them joy, purpose, and connection. Remind them they can seek support with any concerns at any time via childline.org.uk.

Meet Our Expert

Dr. Holly Powell-Jones is the founder of Online Media Law UK and a leading UK expert in media law, online safety, and young people. Her PhD investigates youth understandings of criminal and legal risks in a digital context. She works in schools to provide award-winning education on the criminal, legal, and ethical considerations of rapidly advancing technologies.



#WakeUpWednesday

The National College

Use of Social Media outside of school... A gentle reminder that most popular social media platforms (e.g. WhatsApp, Snapchat, Messenger etc.) are for pupils 13 years and over and therefore our children should not be using them. However, if your child does access Social Media, we ask for your utmost vigilance. Just like their interactions in person, online interactions require supervision and support. What is right will vary from family to family but some strategies that are known to be successful include...

- Monitoring their phones for the apps that are downloaded
- Enacting parental controls on phones and consoles
- Reviewing the messages they send on platforms and apps – making monitoring part of a daily or weekly routine
- Setting expectations about what space (preferably communal) and times they have access to devices
- Encouraging them to share or discuss with you what they are doing.



Stay alert and vigilant!

***New* School Social Media Platforms..** On Monday 2nd February 2026, our school stopped using X as our official school social media platform and moved to Facebook and Instagram. As with X, families can sign up for free Facebook and Instagram accounts if you are not already using these platforms.

Please follow us by searching..

Facebook: stmichaelsoughton

Instagram: st_michaelcatholicsschool



Please join us on this journey!

- Important Dates -

	Date	Class	Event
Spring 2	Tuesday 31 st March 2026.	Year 2.	Curriculum Celebration Assembly 9am in the School Hall. All are welcome to join us.
	Tuesday 31 st March 2026.	Whole School.	Whole School Easter Mass Celebration at St. Michael's Catholic Church
	Tuesday 31 st March 2026.	Whole School.	Decorate an Easter Egg Competition (see above)
	Thursday 2 nd April 2026.	Whole School.	Reception Class Easter Egg Tombola.
	Thursday 2nd April 2026.	Whole School.	School breaks up for Easter Holidays at 3.15pm.
	Friday 3rd April 2026.	Whole School.	Good Friday. Bank Holiday, School closed to pupils on this day.
Summer 1	Monday 20th April 2026.	Whole School.	Back to School – 8:45am.
	Monday 20th April 2026.	Whole School.	Back to School.
	Tuesday 21 st April 2026.	Year 4.	First Holy Communion Preparation.
	Monday 27 th April 2026.	Whole School.	Parent Consultations.
	Tuesday 28 th April 2026.	Whole School.	Parent Consultations.
	Monday 4th May 2026.	Whole School.	Bank Holiday. School closed to pupils on this day.
	Wednesday 6 th May 2026.	Year 3.	Educational Visit to the Synagogue.
	Thursday 7 th May 2026.	Year 4.	First Holy Communion Preparation.
	Thursday 7 th May 2026.	Year 4.	Parent Meeting for Residential at Youth Village at 4:30pm.
	Friday 8 th May 2026.	Whole School.	Whole School Individual Photographs.
	Monday 11 th May 2026 – Thursday 14 th May 2026.	Year 6.	SATs
	Friday 15 th May 2026.	Year 6.	Trip to the Cinema.
	Saturday 16 th May 2026.	Year 4.	Sacrament of First Holy Communion - 10am in St Michael's Church. All are welcome.
	Tuesday 19 th May 2026.	Reception.	Reception Reading Cafe 9am in the School Hall. All are welcome to join us.
	Thursday 21 st May 2026.	Year 1.	Celebration of the Word at 3pm in the School Hall. All are welcome to join us.
	HALF TERM		
Monday 25th May – Friday 29th May 2026			
Summer 2	Monday 1 st June 2026.	Whole School.	Back to School.
	Monday 1 st June 2026 – Friday 12 th June 2026.	Year 4.	Multiplication Tables Check.
	Wednesday 3 rd June 2026.	Year 6.	Nexus Bus Induction as part of transition to Secondary School.
	Thursday 4 th June 2026.	Reception.	Celebration of the Word at 3pm in the School Hall. All are welcome to join us.
	Monday 8 th June 2026 – Thursday 11 th June 2026.	Year 6.	Bikeability – Cycling proficiency.
	Monday 8 th June 2026 – Friday 19 th June 2026.	Year 1.	Phonics Screening Tests.
	Thursday 11 th June 2026.	Reception.	Educational Visit to Beamish Museum.
	Monday 15 th June – Wednesday 17 th June 2026.	Year 4.	Residential at Youth Village.
	Tuesday 16 th June 2026.	Year 1.	Curriculum celebration assembly 9am in the School Hall. All are welcome to join us.
	Thursday 18 th June 2026.	Year 4.	Celebration of the Word at 3pm in the School Hall. All are welcome to join us.
	Friday 19 th June 2026.	Whole School.	Careers / Enterprise Day (Date may change due to availability of volunteers)
	Monday 22 nd June – Thursday 25 th June 2026.	Year 6.	Residential to Derwent Hill.
	Tuesday 23 rd June 2026.	Reception.	Curriculum celebration assembly 9am in the School Hall. All are welcome to join us.
	Friday 26th June 2026.	Whole School.	Inset Day. School closed to pupils on this day.
	Monday 29 th June 2026	Year 6.	Primary Festival at the Youth Village.
	Tuesday 30 th June 2026 – Thursday 2 nd July 2026.	Year 6.	Transition days at St Roberts.
	Wednesday 1 st July 2026.	Reception.	Litter Pick at the Beach.
	Thursday 2 nd July 2026.	Year 5.	Celebration of Sport at Gateshead Stadium.
	Monday 6 th July 2026 – Friday 10 th July 2026.	Whole School.	Healthy Week.
	Friday 10 th July 2026.	Whole School.	Sports Day at 1pm on the School Field.
Thursday 16 th July 2026.	Year 6.	Leavers Assembly at 2pm. All are welcome to join us.	
Friday 17th July 2026.	Whole School.	School breaks up for Summer Holidays at 3:15pm.	
Wednesday 2nd September 2026.	Whole School.	Back to School.	

Assemblies and Collective Worship – Parents Invited

Class	Curriculum Celebration Assemblies		Celebration of the Word	
Reception	Tues 23 rd June 26	9.00am	Thurs 4 th June 26	3.00pm
Year 1	Tues 16 th June 26	9.00am	Thurs 21 st May 26	3.00pm
Year 2	Tues 31 st March 26	9.00am	Thurs 22 nd Jan 26	3.00pm
Year 3	Tues 10 th March 26	9.00am	Thurs 13 th Nov 25	3.00pm
Year 4	Tues 17 th Feb 26	9.00am	Thurs 18 th June 26	3.00pm
Year 5	Tues 10 th Feb 26	9.00am	Thurs 27 th Nov 25	3.00pm
Year 6	Tues 27 th Jan 26	9.00am	Thurs 6 th Nov 25	3.00pm
Year 6 Leavers Assembly	Thursday 16 th July 2026		2.00pm	

Important Information: From time to time, due to unforeseen circumstances, the dates/events mentioned in the Fortnightly may have to be changed /cancelled. If a change/cancellation does occur, you will be notified as early as possible.

Thank you in advance for your understanding.

Proud to be apart of...



Bishop Wilkinson
Catholic Education Trust
Through Christ, in Partnership