

NEWSLETTER

COMPASSION – ASPIRATION – RESPECT – EXCELLENCE – DETERMINATION – FAITHFULNESS – OPTIMISM – RECONCILIATION

FROM THE HEADTEACHER



Friday 9th
January 2026

Dear Readers,

Important Dates:

- February Half Term -
Monday 16 – Friday 20
February 2026
- Inset day - Monday 23
February 2026

Welcome back to the latest edition of our Newsletter and a very Happy New Year to you all. I sincerely hope that you were able to enjoy some quality time together as families over the festive period and that you were able to enjoy each other's company.

It has been a difficult week in school with the weather and the disruption it has caused to routines. As we are in the 'crazy weather' season, a reminder that parents and carers should always assume that school is open on any given day. We will always endeavour to notify parents and carers as close to 7am as possible if a school closure is necessary on health and safety grounds. These are always difficult decisions to make and a number of factors are considered.

This does feel an appropriate place to wish all of those going on the skiing trip all the very best and to wish them a safe return after a brilliant time away. They depart tomorrow and return next Saturday.

Finally, we are delighted to announce that Miss Sanderson's baby boy (Jaxon) arrived over the Christmas holidays. We are so happy that mother and baby are both doing well!

More next week... Garde ta Foi! Guard your Faith!
Mr S Brogan, Headteacher

'Inspiring ambition and
excellence,
guided by Christ'

Telephone:
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Nut Allergies:

We have several students within school who have severe nut allergies. We aim to be a nut free school and kindly remind parents/carers and students that nuts and food containing nuts must not be brought into School.



Year 11 photographs – Monday 19 January 2026:

Year 11 will have their individual and year group photographs taken on Monday 19 January 2026, please ensure that students are dressed in their full appropriate school uniform.

2026-2027 inset days:

The inset days for 2026-2027 have now been set, please see last page of newsletter for the confirmed dates.

For Year 11 students:

Do you attend a Modern Foreign Language school to study an additional language e.g. Polish, Chinese? If you would like to sit the GCSE examinations for that subject in summer 2026, please speak to Mrs Morris, Exams Officer to discuss.



Science News:

In the final week before half term Miss Turgoose introduced classes 7T2/Bi and 9T2/Ph to 'I'm A Scientist Get Me Out of Here'. In this, the students were set homework to look into specific current scientists, in readiness for an online chat with them during our lesson.

The year 7 scientists were all based in jobs to do with cells, which is the topic we've been working on this term. This included scientists working on genetics and others on biopsies that help consultants to diagnose patients and manage their conditions.



The Year 9 scientists came from jobs based on different energy sources - there were some really interesting scientists who joined this talk, including one who was a nuclear reactor decommissioner! Students in both groups thoroughly enjoyed their chats with the scientists, and said it gave them a deeper understanding and appreciation of jobs available to them when they leave school based on science.

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Alton Castle Trip:

Just before Christmas the year 7s, Miss Turgoose, Mr Carr, Miss Leverton and Rachel went on their residential to Alton Castle, a new venue for Saint John Houghton.

Whilst there we did sessions about Catholicism, the meaning of Christmas, including learning about the Jesse tree. We also attended a beautiful Mass where our students were involved in various roles including reading of scripture and prayers.

Alongside all of this we also went biking, on the low ropes, climbing, trekking and on nightline in the dark. The students were exhausted by the end of our 3 days, but we all had an absolutely brilliant (and very muddy) time!

Thank you to all of the students for their brilliant behaviour and to the staff who accompanied them on the trip too!

Please see the next few pages for some photos of the fun we had:



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Attendance Matters – A Fresh Start for the New Year:

As we begin a brand-new year, it's the perfect time to reset, refocus, and build positive habits that will help every child thrive. One of the most important foundations for success is *good school attendance*. Each day in school provides valuable learning, social connection, and routine—key ingredients for progress and wellbeing.

After the winter break, returning to consistent attendance helps children settle back into structure, rebuild momentum, and feel confident in their learning. Even small improvements make a big difference over time.

Why Attendance Matters

- Every lesson builds on the last—missing days can make learning harder.
- Regular attendance supports friendships and emotional wellbeing.
- Good habits now lead to strong routines for the future.

Wellbeing Tip of the Week: Start small. Encourage your child to choose one simple, positive habit for the new year—such as getting their school bag ready the night before or going to bed 15 minutes earlier. Small steps create big change and help mornings feel calmer for everyone.

Quote of the week: "The secret of getting ahead is getting started." – Mark Twain

Let's work together to make 2026 a year full of growth, resilience, and success. Thank you for your continued support in helping your child attend, engage, and achieve.

Remember the attendance team are here for you attendance@sjh.srscmat.co.uk

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Attendance is vital for academic success, fostering strong social skills, building crucial life skills like responsibility and punctuality, and preparing individuals for better future opportunities in higher education and employment:

At SJH, pupils must arrive in school by **8:45 am** each school day. Coming late is disruptive to the pupil who is late, and other students in the school. For some pupils, this can cause embarrassment and anxiety.



Registration takes place at 08:45am, and is kept open until 9:10am.
The second session is taken at **2:15 pm**.



Leave of absence is only granted by the headteacher in certain circumstances.

TERM TIME ABSENCES:

Circumstances allowed:

- Taking part in a regulated performance
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- Visit to a prospective new school/college
- Bereavement
- Religious observance

Not Considered "Exceptional circumstances":

- Family holidays if families are unable to afford in school time
- To visit family abroad
- To spend time with family visiting from abroad
- Parents/carers unable to get time off work during school holidays
- Family traditions of holidays at a certain time of year
- Going away for birthdays, including the students birthday
- Flight delays unless evidence supplied
- Illness after a school holiday or trip

ILLNESS:

Unauthorised attendance:

All absences will be marked as unauthorised on day 4 and onwards unless medical advice is sought/given. Arriving after the register has closed will affect students attendance. Medical appointments without evidence are also unauthorised.

Reasons that will be unauthorised:

- | | |
|---|---|
| - Period pains / cramps unless under medical care with evidence | - Missed bus |
| - Common colds | - Family or own birthdays |
| - Headaches unless under medical care with evidence | - "Unwell" - you must give an explanation |
| - Headlice | - Oversleeping |
| | - Parent too unwell / unable to bring student to school |

Please try and make medical appointments out of school time, and daily contact is required for absences if more than 1 day is required.

If your child has diarrhoea and/or vomiting they must not attend until they have been free of symptoms for 48 hours (the '48 hour rule') and feel well.

If no contact is made, absences will be marked as unauthorised.

Is my child too ill for school? - NHS (www.nhs.uk)

PLEASE BE AWARE: due to the advice of the local authority we have to send a letter to each person with parental responsibility regarding attendance, and not a joint letter.

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SCHOOL NEWS



Reading Recommendations



January 2026

Welcome to our termly reading newsletter. Each term, we will recommend books from a range of genres and styles.

Don't forget to check out our reading lists aimed at specific year groups. All are available from our website.

The English Department



Roar

Poetry

Family

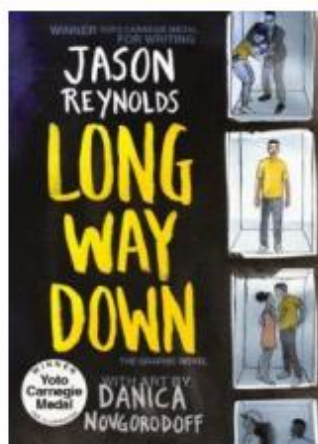
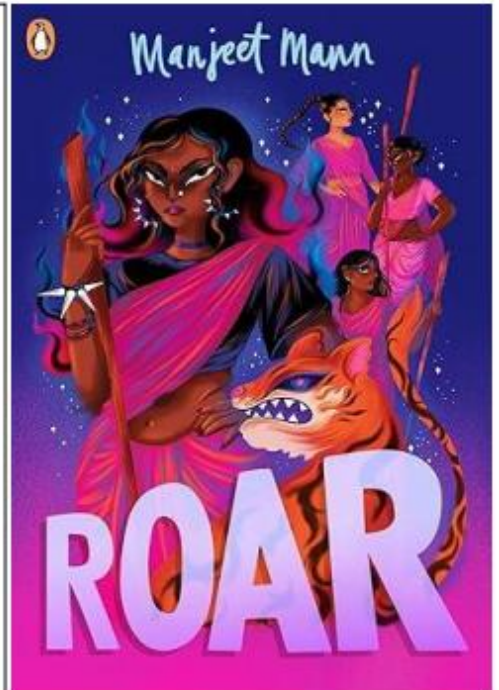
Young Adult (Yr9+)

An empowering novel of resistance inspired by Sampat Pal and the Pink Sari Gang from the multi-award-winning author of *Run, Rebel and The Crossing*

Rizu lives a comfortable life in the gated middle class suburbs of Delhi; her biggest worries are getting her homework done and keeping up with the mean girls at school. That is, until she's accused of being a witch and the hysteria that follows triggers a chain reaction that ends in tragedy and life as she knew it changes forever.

Alone and fearing for her life, Rizu runs away and joins a group of pink sari wearing, stick wielding women, known for their revenge vigilantism. Together they can help Rizu take back her life and seek justice against those who wronged her.

Because sometimes you have to run through the streets and ROAR.



Fancy a novel in verse?
Why not try one of these books

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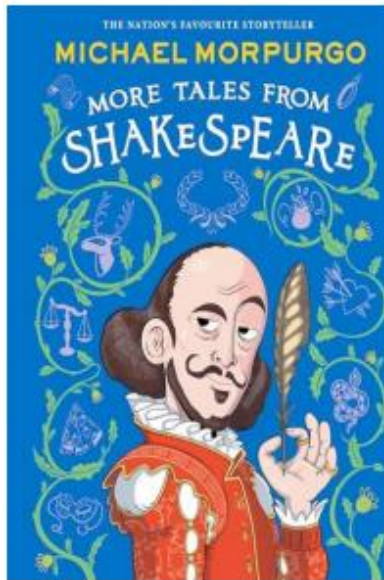
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Reading Recommendations



January 2026



Featuring re-tellings of a further eight of Shakespeare's plays, and beautifully written with Michael Morpurgo's warm, accessible and inimitable style, this is the much-anticipated follow up to Michael Morpurgo's highly-acclaimed *Tales from Shakespeare*, with a brand new collection of re-tellings with stunning artwork from eight different illustrators.

This wonderful collection offers a new generation of readers the chance to discover even more of the magic of Shakespeare – the perfect introduction to the Bard and an unmissable book for children.



More Tales from Shakespeare

Comedy

Tragedy

History



The Enemy

Thriller

Zombies

Young Adult (Yr9+)

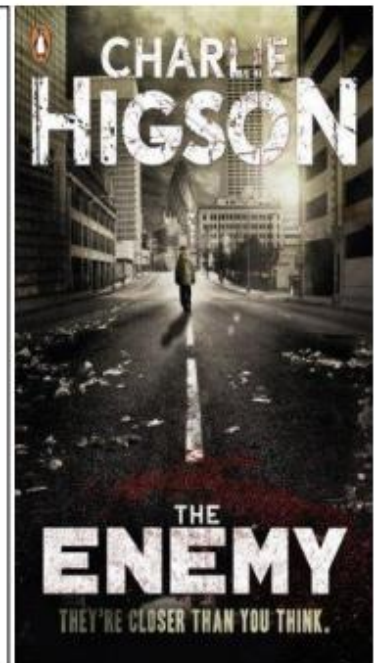
Charlie Higson's *The Enemy* is the first in a jaw-dropping zombie horror series for teens. Everyone over the age of fourteen has succumbed to a deadly zombie virus and now the kids must keep themselves alive.

When the sickness came, every parent, police officer, politician - every adult fell ill. The lucky ones died. The others are crazed, confused and hungry.

Only children under fourteen remain, and they're fighting to survive.

Now there are rumours of a safe place to hide. And so a gang of children begin their quest across London, where all through the city - down alleyways, in deserted houses, underground - the grown-ups lie in wait.

But can they make it there - alive?



Our summaries are taken from the Goodreads website:

<https://www.goodreads.com/>

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Reading Recommendations



January 2026



From award winning author Lucy Strange comes a thrilling story of six sisters who must fight against circumstance and fate, gorgeously told and steeped in history and legend.

On a poor farm surrounded by marshlands, six sisters -- Grace, Willa, Freya, and triplets Deedee, Darcy, and Dolly -- live in fear of their father and the superstition that haunts The Curse of the Six Daughters. Their beloved grandmother tries to protect them, but the future seems bleak. When the Full Moon Fayre makes a rare visit to Hollow-in-the-Marsh, the girls slip out to see the famous Shadow Man, an enigmatic puppeteer. Afterwards, oldest sister Grace is missing. Following the Full Moor Fayre into the Lost Marsh, Willa will have to battle her inner doubts and the legends that have haunted her family.

Can she save her sister from one fate, and outrun her own?



Sisters of the Lost Marsh

Family

Relationships

Adventure



We love hearing about books you have read so let us know what book you think everyone should read!



A student who reads is a student who succeeds.

SAINT JOHN HOUGHTON CATHOLIC ACADEMY

NEWSLETTER

CHAPLAINCY

Friends of SJH Coffee Morning:

On behalf of our Saint John Houghton Family may I take this opportunity to wish all who support our Friends of SJH coffee mornings a Happy New Year! We opened our doors to our local community when we were asked to make a SYNOD promise to be more of an outreaching church and with thanks for the support given by you all we are still going strong, We are making time to share dreams and making time to see old friends and to meet new ones.

Year 7 students led a fabulous Coffee Morning in December sharing their Chairty support, the latest Retreat to Alton Castle and we even had a few carols! Date for your diary: Our next Coffee Morning will be on 24th April 2026 here in SJH at 11.30am - 12.30pm.



CAFOD Club:

Wanted: Raffle prizes for SJH CAFOD raffle.

Please leave donations in SJH Reception or in Church with Mrs Leivers labelled "For Rachel CAFOD".

Unwanted Christmas presents will be perfect!

SJH CAFOD Club will be leading the Raffle for CAFOD.

Tickets go on sale on January 12th at £1.00 cash for 5 tickets (one strip) and a virtue point.

You can buy your tickets from Rachel at break times and the CAFOD Club will be selling tickets in the Hall and in Tutor Time.

The CAFOD Raffle draw will take place at 9.00am on Friday 23rd January 2026.



Saint Anne's Knitting Group:

Come along and meet the gang! We will open our doors for you to meet us and enjoy a chat over knitting needles and a cup of tea at our usual meeting time and place: Monday 7.00pm January 19th in Ilkeston Church house meeting room. Why not make it a New Year Resolution to learn a new skill, make a new friend and pick up those knitting needles! Crochet, Diamond Art, Sewing also welcome. Contact rrose@sjh.srscmat.co.uk for more details. Under 16 must be accompanied by an adult. No charge for this gathering.

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Epiphany:

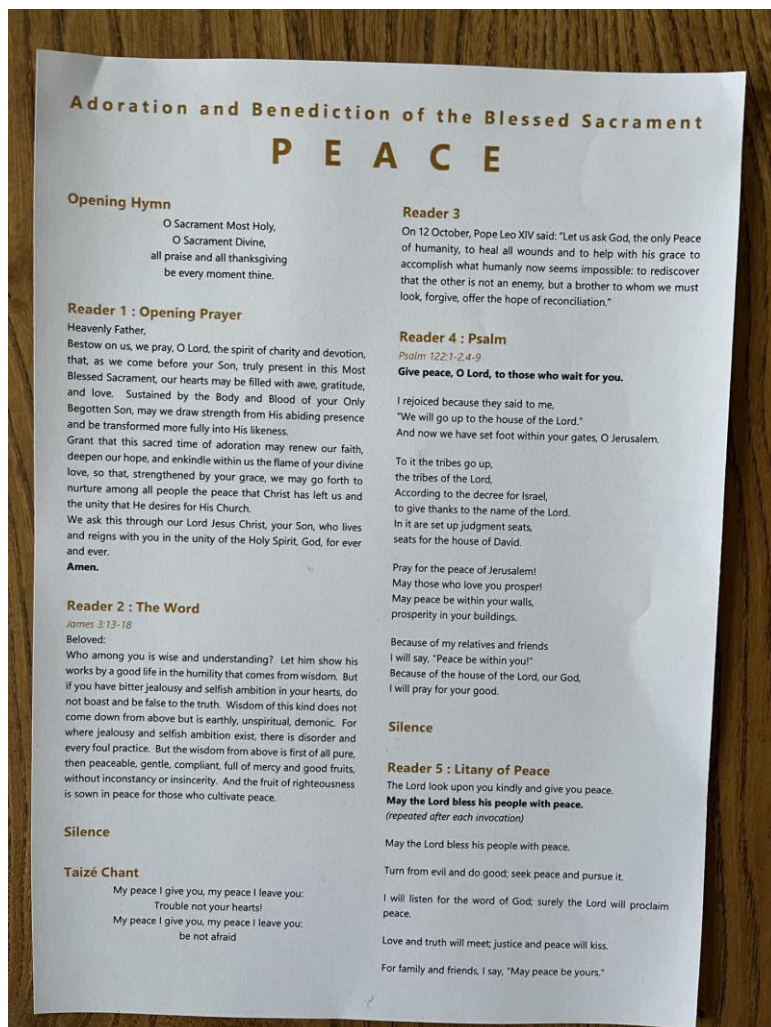
Thank you to all involved for the wonderful holy Mass in St Thomas School on Tuesday. SJH School Captains were delighted to represent our school community and did a wonderful job for us.



Chaplain Retreat:

Thank you to all involved for making the Chaplain Retreat at Briars a great success.

You and your families were prayed for and we are all encouraged to make space for God in our souls.



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Faith in Action:

Session 2 reminder

12.01.26

SJH meeting 3.15pm - 4.15pm Monday

Parish Meeting 5.00pm - 6.30pm

Contact rose@sjh.srscmat.co.uk for more information.



First Holy Communion Preparation:

14th January 2026

6.00pm - 7.15pm

SJH.

Mind to be Merciful Café:

Friday 16th January 2026. Rachel, our School Chaplain, will be in SJH Reception from 9.20am - 3.00pm to meet and greet, to offer conversation and support. Light refreshments will be available. Please pop for a chat, to put a face to the name. No appointment necessary.



Rosary for Peace:

Date: 23.1.26

Location: SJH Chapel

Time: 8.20am and 8.45am

For: Staff, students, parents and carers, parishioners. You do not need to be Catholic or understand or know this prayer to attend. All Welcome.

NEWSLETTER

CHAPLAINCY

**Friends of Saint John Houghton Catholic
Academy**

"Be still and know that I am God."

Psalm 46:10

We would love for you to join us for coffee and
conversation on:

~~Date: 19.09.25 Time: 11.30am-12.30pm~~

~~Date: 21.11.25 Time: 11.30am-12.30pm~~

~~Date: 18.12.25 Time: 11.30am-12.30pm~~

Date: 24.04.26 Time: 11.30am-12.30pm

Date: 25.06.26 Time: 11.30am-12.30pm

This is taking place at **Saint John Houghton
Catholic Academy, Abbot Road, Kirk Hallam,
Ilkeston DE7 4HX**

Contact – schooloffice@sjh.srscmat.co.uk



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CHAPLAINCY

Friends of Saint John Houghton Catholic Academy

"Be still and know that I am God."

Psalm 46:10

Mass in SJH for staff and students.

~~Date: 05.09.25 Yr 7 - 2.15pm~~

~~Date: 25.09.25 All welcome - 8.45am~~

~~Date: 01.10.25 Yr 8 - 9.10am~~

~~Date: 24.10.25 Whole School 8.45am~~

~~Date: 14.11.25 Bereavement, all
welcome - 8.45am~~

~~Mass in Advent - SJH will join St
Thomas CVA~~

~~Date: 09.12.25 Yr 11. Reconciliation~~

~~Date: 06.01.26 School Captains to St
Thomas CVA~~

Date: 27.02.26 Mass in Lent, all
welcome - 8.45am

Date: 18.03.26 Yr 9 - 9.10am

Date: 22.04.26 All welcome - 8.45am

Date: 8.05.26 Yr 11 - 9.10am

Date: 17.06.26 Yr 10 - 9.10am

Blessing

Blessing of the Eco Garden 25.06.26

This is taking place at **Saint John
Houghton Catholic Academy**, Abbot
Road, Kirk Hallam, Ilkeston DE7 4HX

Contact –
schooloffice@sjh.srscmat.co.uk



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CHAPLAINCY

CAFOD

Catholic Agency for Overseas Development

CAFOD is a whole school Charity.

CAFOD Club meet each Monday lunchtime.

~~4th October 2025 CAFOD National Activity Day – SJH
Chaplain leading.~~

~~10th October 2025 CAFOD Harvest Fast~~

~~19th December 2025 CAFOD national Christmas
Video with SJH family~~

**23rd January 2026 CAFOD and vocations with
CAFOD raffle**

**27th February 2026 Mass for CAFOD & Family Fast
in SJH**

**7th March 2026 SJH lead the Diocese in The Big Lent
Walk**



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CHAPLAINCY

Saint John Houghton Catholic Academy

“Love means doing what God has commanded...2 John 1:6...and He has commanded us to love one another.

Missio Charity Work

~~—Date: 18.09.25 Collecting small—
—change.~~

~~—Date: 07.10.25 Yr 7 Cake Sale—~~

~~—Date: 28.11.25 Yr 8 Sponsored silence—~~

Date: 16.04.26 Whole School Bake Off

Date: 12.05.26 Yr 9 Rosary for missio

Date: 02.06.26 Yr 10 Sweet sale for missio

This is taking place at **Saint John Houghton Catholic Academy, Abbot Road, Kirk Hallam, Ilkeston DE7 4HX**

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USEFUL LINKS

Safeguarding concerns please email safeguarding@sjh.srscmat.co.uk

Homework :

<https://www.stjohnhoughtonilkeston.srscmat.co.uk/curriculum/homework/>

School lunch menus:

<https://www.stjohnhoughtonilkeston.srscmat.co.uk/students/school-meals/>

Free School Meals: Derbyshire -

<https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/education/schools/your-child-atschool/meals/school-meals/free-school-meals.aspx>

Link to School Calendar:

<https://www.stjohnhoughtonilkeston.srscmat.co.uk/news/calendar>

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DATES FOR THE DIARY

2025-2026 School holidays and Inset days:

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| February half term | Monday 16 – Friday 20 February 2026 |
| Inset Day (Trust) 4 | Monday 23 February 2026 |
| Easter holidays | Monday 30 March – Friday 10 April 2026 |
| May half term | Monday 25 – Friday 29 May 2026 |
| Inset Day 5 | Friday 3 July 2026 |
| Last day of term | Thursday 23 July 2026 |

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DATES FOR THE DIARY

2026-2027 School holidays and Inset Days:

| | |
|--|--|
| Inset day 1 | Friday 4 September 2026 |
| Inset day 2 | Monday 7 September 2026 |
| Years 7 & 11 return to school | Tuesday 8 September 2026 |
| All years return to school | Wednesday 9 September 2026 |
| October half term | Monday 26 - Friday 30 October 2026 |
| Inset day 3 | Friday 27 November 2026 |
| Christmas holidays | Monday 21 December 2026 – Friday 1 January 2027 |
| February half term | Monday 15 – Friday 19 February 2027 |
| Inset Day 4 (Trust) | Monday 22 February 2027 |
| Easter holidays | Friday 26 March – Friday 9 April 2027 |
| May half term | Monday 31 May – Friday 4 June 2027 |
| All years finish school | Friday 23 July 2027 |
| Inset Day 5 | Monday 26 July 2027 |