



ST JAMES'

CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

Summer 2025

Alumni Newsletter

To all of our new and existing alumni, thank you for being part of our network. We hope you enjoy our third annual newsletter.

State Talking Event

Towards the end of June, we hosted an event with State Talking, a company founded by one of our past pupils, Fran Kennedy (nee Breen). State Talking works to raise the aspirations of young people in Greater Manchester by pairing children with relatable role models where they hope to boost their chances of establishing a rewarding career and encourage them to pursue greater opportunities.

We welcomed business and industry professionals into school where children served breakfast before hosting an interview with Coleen Rooney. She shared what success and resilience means to her along with insights about her time in the jungle after her I'm a Celebrity appearance. Everyone in attendance was so complimentary about the St James' children and it was a great opportunity to tell people about the power of alumni networks and giving back to your school.





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St James' Alumni Careers Event

In the Spring term, we once again hosted our Careers Cafe event for Year 9 children. Our speakers all spoke passionately about their careers and it was an opportunity for our children to hear about careers they did not even know existed. Thank you as always to State Talking who helped to organise this fantastic event, if this is something you would like to take part in next year, look out for a email from us in early 2026.



Alumni members featured: Paul Payne (class of 2000), Paul Brookes (class of 1995), David Horton (class of 1998), Francesca Jamieson (class of 2013), Clare Ramsbottom (class of 1993), Molly Gibson (class of 2018), Emma Brereton (class of 2001) and Daniel Rafferty (class of 2011)



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A message from the Headteacher, Anthony Pontifex:

May I start by thanking you for your continued support of our alumni network. We deeply value the input you provide, whether through speaking with our children, offering mentoring, or supporting wellbeing initiatives. The involvement of our alumni plays an important role in shaping the lives of our current children, and we are always proud to celebrate our connection with former students, dating back as far as the class of 1983.

At St James', our core values, Family, Faith, and Excellence, remain the heart of all we do. In May, we once again appointed our Year 10 Prefects, who are now proudly serving in these three value groups, already making a positive contribution to school life through leadership and service.

Our Catholic ethos continues to guide and inspire us. This year, children have supported charitable causes in meaningful ways, including using funds raised to support a village in Borneo that was devastated by flooding, an area visited by our children during their life-changing expedition in Summer 2024. It was a powerful example of global solidarity, rooted in the Gospel values we aim to live out each day. Every child has also taken part in a Retreat, offering them space for reflection and spiritual growth as they continue their faith journey at St James'. If any alumni would like to get involved with our charity work or share their experiences of faith, we would love to hear from you.



Children have also enjoyed a wide range of enrichment opportunities. Highlights this year include theatre visits and an international excursion to Austria to Ski. Many children have worked hard to complete their Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award, and we look forward to them continuing onto Silver next year—a wonderful reflection of their commitment and resilience. We are also looking ahead to an exciting residential in Paris, France this term, alongside our annual reward trips to Blackpool and Alton Towers.

Our sporting successes have continued with great enthusiasm and determination. Children have represented St James' with pride in a variety of sports, including netball, football, and badminton, with strong performances in local and regional competitions. Our athletes continue to make their mark across the Stockport area, demonstrating both talent and teamwork.

We encourage all alumni to stay connected with us. You can follow the latest school news and events on Blue Sky via [@stjamescheadle.bsky.social](https://bsky.app/profile/stjamescheadle.bsky.social), and visit our website www.stjamescheadle.co.uk for further updates and information.

Thank you once again for your continued involvement and support of St James' Catholic High School. To stay updated on all school events, if you don't already, I encourage you to follow us on X (Twitter) [@StJamesCheadle](https://twitter.com/StJamesCheadle) and visit our website www.stjamescheadle.co.uk for useful information and the latest news updates.



Enterprise Advisor Network

As part of our careers provision at St James', we are paired with an Enterprise Advisor whose role is to support us in ensuring children receive quality opportunities and information about their future. We have been incredibly lucky to be paired with former St James' pupil, Clare Ramsbottom who has already put together trips for our children and supported a range of careers events this year. We asked Clare about this role and this was what she said:

"I was interested in becoming an EA after attending a key regulatory body meeting with the British International Freight Association and listened to one of their guest speakers who is an EA at a school in Partington.

Letting young people know about our hidden industry is key in them understanding where all our clothes, food, tech and every item in our home and schools come from. Despite being only a few miles from the airport, people don't know where their goods come from or some of the tricky issues, we might face bringing our imports & exports in and out of the Country.

So, I thought, I like the sound of this and decided to reach out to GMCA and set up a meeting to find out how I can get involved.

By a sheer stroke of luck, they told me of a wonderful school in Cheadle Hume, just around the corner from me called St James'. I jumped at the chance of being able to be involved with my old school and working and helping children know there is so many opportunities out there if you know where to look.



Clare is pictured with our children during a trip to Ligentia learning about global supply chains. A huge thank you to Clare for her continued support.

Support our Careers Programme

Throughout the year, we have taken children on careers-based trips and visits including trips to Mercedes in Stockport, Manchester Metropolitan Degree Art Show and Aquinas College. We have also welcomed speakers into school to hear about careers in sport, armed forces, radio broadcasting and law, to name but a few. If you would like to visit St James' and speak to our children, or your place of work would welcome a visit or offer a work experience placement, please do get in touch.

Share the network

Getting sign-ups to networks like these is done through our personal connections and word of mouth. If you are still in touch with any other former St James' children then please share [this link](#) with



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them and encourage them to sign up.

Let us know what you've been up to

We are really keen to hear stories and testimonials from former students which can help contribute towards our school careers programme. Being able to hear from relatable alumni who also went to St James' about what they've been up to since they left can help to inspire and motivate students. If you are able to do a short write-up (150-200 words) about yourself and your career that we can share in our newsletter then please email it to d.rarity@stjamesheadle.co.uk

Alumni events

While we are not in a position to organise any alumni events or reunions, we would be happy to facilitate this if there was an interest in organising one from some alumni. If this is something you are interested in organising or hearing more about then please email d.rarity@stjamesheadle.co.uk

Thank you once again for signing up to the St James' Alumni Network. If you have any further questions or want to know how you can get more involved in the network in the future please get in touch.