



Becket Keys Church of England School

18th December 2025

WISHING YOU ALL A WONDERFUL CHRITMAS BREAK!

IN THIS ISSUE

Mr Scott-Evans writes.....

Dear Parents,

As we reach the close of the autumn term and journey once again through the season of Advent, I would like to thank you for your continued support for us at Becket Keys Church of England School. December is a special time in the life of a Christian community: a season of reflection, anticipation and hope. It offers us a natural opportunity to pause, give thanks, and rejoice in all that God has been doing in and through our school over the past year.

Celebrating Our Achievements

It is with gratitude and humility that we share some exceptional achievements from across our school community. Becket Keys has been ranked as the second

best mixed comprehensive school in the whole of East Anglia (Essex, Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, Peterborough and Southend) in the *Sunday Times Parent Power Guide 2026*. This recognition reflects not only strong academic outcomes, but our shared commitment to nurturing young people of character, responsibility and trustworthiness, rooted in Christian teaching.

We were also delighted to celebrate the achievements of our most successful Year 13 cohort to date at our recent alumni and A Level awards evening. Over 35% of the 2025 cohort achieved an A or A* grade in at least one A Level, with eighteen students securing AAB or better. The cohort

.....contd. on page 2



BECKET KEYS
Church of England School

A Level Presentation Evening

We were delighted to welcome back Louis Stephens a previous Head Boy.
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Jack Petchey Awards

The latest awards winners were recently celebrated.

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Year 11 English Trip

A wonderful weekend in Stratford-upon-Avon with the English Department.

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Friends of Becket Keys

Did you know you can help fundraise for the school just by shopping?

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.....contd from page 1

achieved our strongest ever value-added score, with more students making greater progress than ever before.

The average grade this year was a B-, with 236 of the 417 grades awarded at A*, A or B, alongside a further 120 grades at C. We are equally proud that over 90% of students secured offers from their first-choice universities. These outcomes speak of diligence, perseverance and ambition, supported by excellent teaching and strong partnerships between home and school.



Advent, Christmas and Our Christian Vision

During Advent, we intentionally slow our pace and focus our hearts on preparation: preparation for the coming of Christ and preparation for the calling God places on each life. Advent invites us to wait with hope and to live with expectation, themes that sit at the heart of our Christian vision for Becket Keys.

In Luke's Gospel, those who encountered the early life of John the Baptist asked the searching question: "What then will this child be?" (Luke 1:66).

Best secondary schools in the east

Comprehensive schools achieving the highest A-level and GCSE results

Key ● Boys ● Girls ● Mixed

State Comprehensive Private

Rank		School	Location
1	●	Saffron Walden County High School	Saffron Walden
2	●	Becket Keys CofE School	Brentwood
3	●	Davenant Foundation School	Loughton
4	●	St Benedict's RC School	Bury St Edmunds
5	●	Harris Academy Chafford Hundred	Grays

This question lies at the centre of our vocation as educators. Each young person in our care is a unique gift from God, entrusted to us for a time, with potential still unfolding.

The Christmas story reminds us that God enters the world not through power, but through the vulnerability of a child. Isaiah 9:6 speaks of the hope revealed through Christ's birth:

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful

Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

As a Church of England school, we believe education is about far more than qualifications alone. Advent calls us to formation rather than performance, character rather than comparison, and service rather than self-interest. We seek to nurture young people who will live respectfully, love generously and act fairly, carrying the light of Christ into the world around them.

This week, we were blessed to welcome Revd Witchalls, a parent and local church leader, who led our times of Collective Worship. He reflected on *The Gift of Christmas*, using the gold, frankincense and myrrh offered by the Magi to point students beyond the busyness of the season to the greatest gift of all: God's love made known in Jesus.

At our A Level awards evening, we were also privileged to hear from a former Head Boy, now a Law graduate of Cambridge University. He spoke movingly about how the lessons learned at Becket Keys; particularly those around Christian character and faith, continue to shape his life. His story reminded us that our calling is not only to ask what our students will achieve, but who they will become. You can read his speech on pp 4-7.

As this term draws to a close, I am deeply thankful for our students, staff, governors, parents and wider community. Together, we continue to place Christ at the centre of our school, trusting that He who came as light in the darkness continues to guide and sustain us.

May this Christmas bring you the peace of Christ, the joy of His presence, and the hope found in Emmanuel - God with us. May God's blessing be upon you and your families, now and in the year ahead.

With every blessing,
Mr Scott-Evans -Headteacher



Many thanks to all those who have generously donated books for the library!

If you get some books for Christmas and wish to make room on your shelves, then please donated those that you have finished with or outgrown.

We would be delighted to get some more!

thank you

A-Level Certificate Presentation and Awards

We were delighted to welcome back to Becket Keys, Louis Stephens who was our guest speaker for the event. Louis was Head Boy during his time at the school, and he shared some of his experiences since he left.



Good evening everyone, firstly I wanted to say congratulations to everyone receiving their A level certificates this evening. Though A-levels may feel like a distant memory already, all of you having now gone on to do a vast array of exciting new things and pursue careers, further study... whatever it might be – you should seize moments like this to look back and remember the things you have already achieved. It is easy to get caught up on the journey, but moments like this and the end of the year serve as a good time to acknowledge your achievements.

That is also one reason why I am particularly thankful to have been invited here to speak with you this evening. When writing this speech, I realised the last time I had to stand up on this stage and

do this was 4 years ago at my own A-level awards evening. Now it is a real privilege to be invited back again to speak to you too, again providing an opportunity for me to reflect on my experiences, and everything that has changed since I first sat in this hall when I was in year 7 and very unaware of what my future would hold. Now I have been provided with a bit of a prompt for this task – to ask myself what ‘faith in learning’ meant to me at Becket Keys, and what it has meant to me since I have left.



To be completely honest, I didn't think much about where I wanted to go to secondary school. I was at primary school just over the road at St Thomas' – and, like everyone else, I followed what seemed to be the natural progression onto Becket Keys. I was then a part of what I would consider to be one of the founding year groups at the school – with only 2 years above me, I would say it was definitely a unique experience, but one I am so grateful for. Having such a close-knit community, built on strong character values, formed an amazing environment for us all

to learn and build lasting friendships. I hope and believe, that this small community origin (despite the school having grown to its full capacity now), can still be felt within the culture here at Becket Keys – and this culture is something I will come back to.

Faith was a clear part of Becket Keys, it was a part of our daily routine as I am sure it will have been for many of you. So maybe what faith in learning meant to me, when I was here, was more literal. It could be seen in the end of term eucharists at St Thomas' church, Mr Scott Evans' collective worship and sessions in our tutorials. It was maybe less apparent in moments such as our Year 11 History trip to Berlin – when I'd probably say the teachers on that trip had very little faith in us at all... however, I'd include this in my reflections as one of the highlights of my time here at Becket Keys and something we were all very lucky to be able to do together. Also, something I personally redeemed when I achieved my one and only grade 9 in History a few months later.



I then went on to become a member of the Sixth Form studying Biology, History and PE and was very proud to also become Head Boy, maybe a small success in the grand scheme of things but looking back now, the faith that the school had in me to hold that position really gave me the confidence I needed at that time to go on to do the things I have done since. It was then Covid and we all went home for a long time, I'll skip over that part today – but the last time I did this I talked about how that only strengthened our community (just so you know it wasn't all bad).



But this confidence point is something I want to pick up on. What does faith in learning mean to me now? Something I had never felt or even come across as a concept at Becket Keys, was the idea of imposter syndrome. The feeling that you don't belong in the environment that you find yourself in, feeling like a fraud despite your achievements and ability. Something I quickly became familiar with when embarking on my law degree at Cambridge. For context, I had no ambition to go to Cambridge when doing my GCSEs, it did not even occur to me as an option.



Although, it must have to someone, because in Year 10 I was sent on a 'future potential' trip to Cambridge – which at the time was a nice couple days out of school if I'm honest – I remember looking at the others on that trip and thinking what am I doing here... maybe I take it back and that's where the imposter syndrome started. Anyway, it was a last-minute decision to apply, which I think Mrs Course would definitely agree was apparent from my first few attempts at a personal statement. Anyway – then finding myself unexpectedly in one of the most intense and high performing educational institutions in the world (of course, you'd think I would have grown accustomed to such an environment by then) it did come as a bit of a challenge (to say the least).

Fortunately, I managed to navigate this challenge, I had many fantastic opportunities before me. I was a member of my college first rowing team, which, despite the early morning training, introduced me to so many fantastic people and allowed me to enjoy incredible

training facilities, many fancy dinners and become a part of a historic tradition. I managed to make it to the end and graduate in the famous senate house... and I also recently attended the 675th anniversary celebration of my college, again reiterating what a privilege it is to have been a part of something with such a legacy, maybe just a few years longer than Becket Keys of 2012.



Whilst Becket Keys may not have had its historic legacy, it did give me something equally as important. The confidence, the faith in my learning – to have the self-belief that helped me overcome this 'imposter

syndrome', that whilst I may not have been the most intellectual student in the law faculty, or the most academically gifted or have some peculiar photographic memory that I'm pretty sure some of my fellow students demonstrated – what I had that made me stand out was a pretty decent intellectual capability but also I seemed to have the sort of character that people wanted to be around. My confidence in myself as a person was formed here at Becket Keys – because silently working in the background, we were being taught how to respect others, take responsibility, be kind and caring, trustworthy and most importantly to have faith.



These were all essential ingredients to my success in the following few years. One of the things that many of you will realise in the next few years, or maybe some of you are experiencing already, is just how competitive it is out there to secure opportunities for work. I left university without a graduate offer, I knew I wanted to pursue a career in law but over the last few years had been rejected at the first stage of every application I had made – with most of the processes including more than 6 stages – this was extremely demoralising. I then was unemployed and frantically applying to every job I could find,

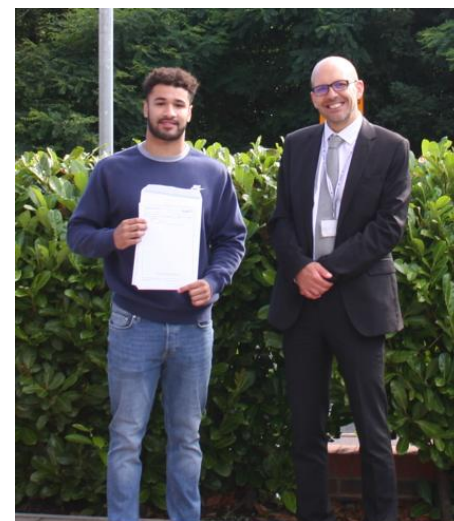
mostly at law firms but then also Tesco's (and having no luck there either). 10 months after graduating I was offered an internship at a City law firm – the day before this I had said to Mum that I had given up for this year and would just have to try again next year. I completed this internship in June this year and was offered a full-time role. I will be starting the solicitors' qualifying exam in September and will (fingers crossed) pass that and become a trainee lawyer at the firm the following year.

Having been through the lows and the highs of this process what I realised is that the most important thing is having faith in your learning – whatever it is that you want to do, it will happen in time, what you need to remember is that you are exactly what you need to be to find success, Becket Keys (as well as a lot of hard work on your part) have ensured that for you.



As I say, the job market is now severely competitive, what stands applicants apart is character. The strange part is that unlike school and university, putting effort into applications doesn't just equal results. For everyone here, you tried hard in your studies and now get to enjoy the rewards of an outstanding education – unfortunately

everyone applying for these jobs have fantastic academics to talk about. But what employers are now looking for are people they can trust to get the work done, who are respectful, caring, responsible individuals who they want as a part of their team. As well as a GCSE in Mandarin of course, which is always a great talking point and comes as a surprise whenever it comes up.



When I finally found myself in that interview and during that internship – I have no doubt, and the feedback to prove it, that it was my character and who I am, that found success. That's not something that Cambridge gave me or any grades, it's something I learned growing up here – and something we all share as a part of this community. My advice would be, have faith in that learning and go into the world with confidence that you have differentiating factors that employers are looking for.

In the same week as I got the offer for the internship, I also got a job offer, so I really went from

zero to hero in the eyes of my parents. Now I work full time (before starting my course and legal career) for a charity that supports university students from disadvantaged backgrounds to access competitive city careers. My job is to run a programme directed at a career in law. These students I work with all have a unifying factor, due to their various backgrounds, they lack confidence and feel they don't have the prospects and connections to break into such a competitive and historically inaccessible industry. As a part of my job, a few weeks ago I attended a school in a very deprived area to deliver some workshops. As the only school I have been to, other than my own, it soon became clear how privileged we all are to have been here – and it really is a privilege, to enjoy the facilities and resources we have access to. But even more so, to enjoy a supportive community that believes in you and will equip you for the world ahead.

I started out by saying how this was a great mechanism for me to reflect on how I have reached where I am today, and the conclusion I have reached is really that having faith in learning is to be confident that Becket Keys has, maybe without you knowing it, provided a community and a set of values that will stand you out in the world – and I wish you all the best of luck as you go out and discover this for yourselves.

Thank you.- Louis Stephens



Jack Petchey Awards



The Jack Petchey Foundation was set up in 1999 by Sir Jack Petchey CBE to inspire and celebrate young people. Students who have gone above and beyond are nominated by staff and peers to receive the Jack Petchey Achievement award.

Recently, the 2024-2025 academic year winners were invited to attend the Jack Petchey Achievement Awards event which was held at the Towngate Theatre. Becket Keys previous winners, George Bireleson, Noah Gray, Lyla Stevens and Miss Plunkett were celebrated during the event.





During the most recent Jack Petchey nomination process, Azaria Williams-Carnegie was selected as the worthy winner.

Azaria played a key role in organising International Day at Becket Keys. She gathered a team of organisers, managed the logistics and supported students from different year groups with preparing their performances. Azaria developed her ability to delegate effectively and mentor and support others across all year groups. As a result, the team raised £1,245 for two charities: Meningitis Now and Body & Soul.

Mr Howells was also chosen to receive the Jack Petchey Leader Award.

Since joining Becket Keys in January 2023, Mr Howells has demonstrated remarkable growth and dedication. He consistently supports the Maths team while also going above and beyond to assist other departments. He has volunteered to help with drama on a school trip, contributed to rugby in PE, and accompanied students on residential trips to Bude, Madrid, and Norfolk Lakes. His selfless attitude, reliability, and commitment to both staff and students make him an outstanding member of the Becket Keys community.



Well done to all the successful winners.

Year 11 – Trip to Stratford-upon-Avon

A Weekend to Remember

Last weekend, our Year 11 students embarked on an exciting new adventure: the very first Stratford-upon-Avon trip. Designed to immerse pupils in the world of Shakespeare, the weekend was packed with unforgettable experiences that brought literature and history vividly to life.

The trip began with a lively scavenger hunt around the town, where pupils raced to uncover clues and solve riddles inspired by Shakespeare's plays and life. This activity not only tested their knowledge but also encouraged teamwork and creativity, all while exploring Stratford's charming streets.

Next was a rare treat – a behind-the-scenes tour of the Royal Shakespeare Theatre. Students were able to explore the inner workings of one of the most famous theatres in the world, gaining insight into stagecraft, production, and the magic that happens beyond the curtain. Students were even given the opportunity to watch the actors rehearse the current production of the 'BFG.'

As darkness fell, the group joined guided tours of the town, where history blended with legend. The highlight was hearing chilling ghost stories, including the terrible tale of Charlotte Clopton



– a haunting reminder of Stratford's rich folklore.

No trip to Stratford would be complete without visiting Shakespeare's birthplace. Students walked through the very rooms where the Bard grew up, connecting classroom learning with real history. They also visited Anne Hathaway's picturesque cottage, gaining a deeper appreciation of Shakespeare's family life and the Elizabethan era.



This new trip proved to be a resounding success. Students

returned inspired, having deepened their understanding of Shakespeare while enjoying a memorable weekend of culture, history, and fun. The enthusiasm and engagement shown throughout the trip was wonderful to see, and we are already looking forward to running it again in the future.

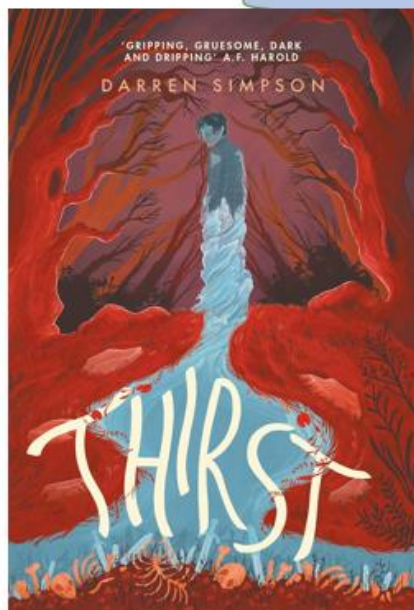
Equally impressive was the conduct of our Year 11 students throughout the weekend. Their impeccable behaviour was frequently noted by tour guides and locals alike, who praised the group for their courtesy, attentiveness, and respect. It was a proud moment for the school to see our students not only learning and enjoying themselves but also representing the school community so positively.

Miss Romano
zic/English





Book of the Month - December



Nobody talks about the strange happenings in Maimsbury. No one speaks of the hooded figures glimpsed in the woods, nor the children's game that went so horribly wrong. But most of all, nobody dares whisper their doubts about the river they have worshipped for centuries.

Like everyone in Maimsbury, Gorse is used to the sacrifices made every spring to the River Yeelde. The life of a farm animal - in return for a year of plenty - seems a fair trade. That is, until a tragedy leads Gorse to a blood-curdling discovery.

Because this year is a Brim Year, and after giving so much, the river needs more than an animal's life to sate its thirst...

Remember you can find 'The Book of the Month' in the school library

RET

CREATIVE WRITING COMPETITION 2025-6

Entries of prose fiction, non-fiction or poetry

Memento

Celebrate your writing across the six schools in the Russell Education Trust.

This year's challenge is to select a memento. Choose one as the starting point for your writing to feed your imagination.

Word limit: 1000 words.

Entries must be uploaded to [SatchelOne](#) by 9th January 2026.

Two school winners will be selected from each category: KS2-3, KS4 & Sixth Form.

All Trust-winning entries will be published in a book. The overall winner will gain a writer's visit for their school.



Your writing can take any form you would like. This is an opportunity to be as creative as you like.

A memento must feature somewhere in your writing. It should be the item which sparks the idea for your writing.

A memento is an object kept as a reminder of a person or event.

You can pick a memento that you have at home, or come and see an English teacher to see some of the examples that they have.

This writing must be typed on a word document.

Friends of Becket Keys Fundraising




Help out when you check out

Collect FREE donations for **FRIENDS OF BECKET KEYS** every time you shop online.

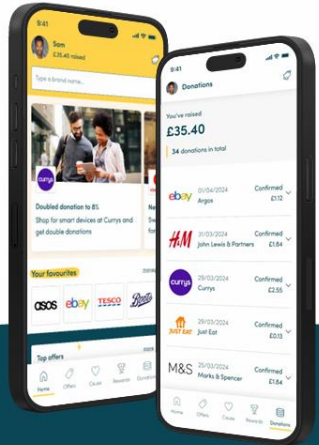



Join, shop and raise here:
[easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/becketkeysschoolbrentwood](https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/becketkeysschoolbrentwood)



The easyfundraising app

Shop with thousands of retailers, get handy reminders as you browse and track your donation progress all in one place.
Available on iOS and Android.

Scan the QR code to download the app

GET IT ON Google Play | Download on the App Store

If you are organised and already doing your Christmas shopping online. Why not see if you can help raise some funds for Friends of Becket Keys through your online purchases in a few easy steps?

Click [here](#), then:

- Click 'Sign up and support this cause'.
- If new to Easyfundraising then set up an account.
- Browse the hundreds of online shops who participate in the scheme and go shopping! As long as you go into the online sites through the Easyfundraising site, you will register a donation to FoBK. You can even get an App for your phone! It will not cost you a penny!

If already a member, then why not refer a friend? FoBK will get a bonus when each person you refer makes a purchase.

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/becketkeysschoolbrentwood>



Reminder!

School Uniform

It is important to all of us that every student who attends Becket Keys looks smart in their uniform at all times. All students are required to wear shoes and not trainers.

Girls in Year 7-9, should have their long hair completely tied up. Girls in Year 10-11 can have their hair half up/ half down. Black, purple or neutral coloured hair ties please. If boys have long hair, they too need to have it tied up.



Now that the weather is getting colder, please remember that all students will be in need of a **COAT** – Plain **BLACK** without coloured flashes, logos or slogans, no 'fashion items', no 'puffer' jackets. Please see the website, if you need more details about the school dress code.

Winter PE Options



Becket Keys
Hoodie



Becket Keys
Games Top



Becket Keys
T-Shirt



Thermal/Long
Sleeve underlayer



Becket Keys
Tracksuit Bottoms



Becket Keys
Leggings



Must be worn
together



Becket Keys
Skort



Grippped gloves



Extra socks



Warm Hat

As winter continues, we want to ensure that you are prepared for your PE lessons. We are not always lucky enough to have an indoor spaces, so please come prepared to be outside with the above kit. In extreme weather, we will endeavour to use a classroom space as an option.



Please remember that all correspondence to the school must come through the school office email:

office@becketkeys.org

Your message will be forwarded to the member of staff concerned.

You can also send a message via the contact page on the website:

<https://www.becketkeys.org/contact-staff>

You can reply directly to any message you receive from the school via Bromcom, just click the reply button and it will go to the office.

Students can contact their teachers via Satchel One if they have any queries regarding their lessons or homework.

Please do not email staff directly as any message received in this way will not receive a response.

Many thanks for your understanding.

Brentwood Foodbank

Together with Trussell

Help support your food bank this Christmas

Donate food

Donate an item or two from our shopping list, ensuring we can provide food for people facing hardship in your community.

If collecting festive food, please deliver before 24th November.

Donate money

Help to cover the costs of storing and distributing food, as well as developing sustainable projects.

Shopping list

- Christmas Cake
- Christmas Puddings
- Christmas Cakes/Biscuits
- Chocolates/Sweets
- Selection Boxes
- Biscuits for Cheese
- Sponge Puddings (syrup/ chocolate/jam)
- Tinned Custard
- Tinned Rice Pudding
- Tinned Fruit
- Tinned Salmon
- Tinned Ham
- Pickles/Cranberry Sauce
- Packet Stuffing
- Jelly's
- Carnation Milk

Just Giving

Other ways to donate money

Ending hunger together

info@brentwood.foodbank.org.uk

Facilitated by Doddinghurst Road Church. Registered Charity in England and Wales (1171227)



The School Community Prayer Group hosted by our Headteacher, Mr Scott-Evans, is every Wednesday at 8.45am. We will be back on Wednesday 7th January 2026. This is a short meeting where we pray together for local and national events and for any intentions of those in our school family. All are welcome. If you have any prayer intentions, please send them into the school via the office email: office@becketkeys.org.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

LAST DAY OF TERM
STUDENT HALF DAY
 THURSDAY 18TH DECEMBER 2025

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CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY
 FRIDAY 19TH DECEMBER 2025 –
 FRIDAY 2ND JANUARY 2026

*

INSET DAY
 (NO STUDENTS IN SCHOOL)
 MONDAY 5TH JANUARY 2026

*

FIRST DAY BACK FOR STUDENTS
 TUESDAY 6TH JANUARY 2026
 PURPLE WEEK

*

TERM DATES CAN BE FOUND ON THE
 SCHOOL WEBSITE HERE:
[Becket Keys](https://www.becketkeys.org)

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X:

@BecketKeys
 @MrScottEvans
 @BecketKeys6th
 @BecketKeysMusic
 @BecketKeysPE
 @BecketKeysArt
 @BecketKeysSci
 @BecketKeysDT
 @BecketKeysExams
 @BecketKeysTrips

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