



# Becket Keys Church of England School

6<sup>th</sup> February 2026

## IN THIS ISSUE

**Mr Scott-Evans writes.....**

### Writing, Thinking and Learning in an Age of AI

"Apply your heart to instruction and your ears to words of knowledge." Proverbs 23:12  
We are living through a remarkable moment in education. In my 29 years of teaching, I have never known anything like this. Artificial intelligence and smart phones are changing how students learn, revise and complete homework at extraordinary speed. Moreover, they are changing their lives and their brains. These tools can be powerful, inclusive and time-saving but they are also dangerous and we need to explore this whole area thoughtfully.

Mrs Dowsett, showed me a recent article by [Alex Quigley \(January 2026\)](#). It has prompted an important question for schools, families and students alike: what might we lose if learning becomes entirely digital and automated? I'd like to follow this up today and next week.

Quigley reminds us that handwriting is not simply a traditional skill that a few archaic teachers like me are clinging to out of habit or nostalgia. Writing by hand is in itself an important form of thinking. The physical act of holding a pen, forming letters, annotating a text, sketching a diagram or jotting down notes engages the brain in ways that deepen understanding and strengthen memory particularly for young people who are still developing as learners.

*.....contd. on page 2*



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Church of England School

### Performing Arts Department

Audition Day! Great excitement in the Runcie Building for the auditions.  
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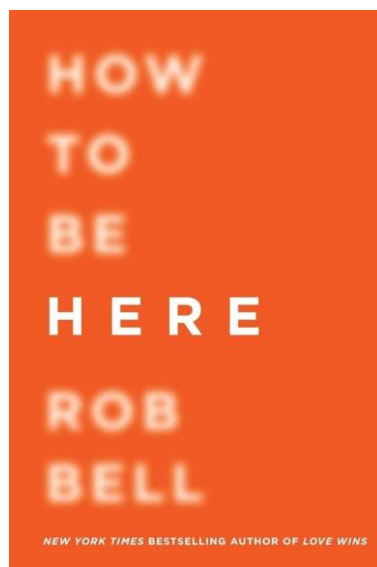
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### Book of the Month

A new book for a new month. Another excellent recommendation for February.

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This week, I re-read the book 'How to be Here' by Rob Bell. In his book, Bell talks about the importance to him (as a creative writer) of good quality paper, pens and a desk to work at. These are the tools of his trade, and he says that they are worth the investment. My son has been asking for a new top to his desk because he wants a good space to write at. Having spent hundreds of pounds on a laptop for him, why would I begrudge him £15 for a new desk top? Parents: are you equipping your son/daughter with high quality pens, notebooks and a space to write in? Students: are you looking after your stationery and respecting the role it plays in your learning? Are we investing in the tools we need for success?

Research consistently shows that:

1. handwriting supports spelling and vocabulary development;

2. note-taking by hand improves comprehension and recall;
3. drawing and annotating help students organise and remember ideas.

This is sometimes described as embodied learning (learning that involves the body as well as the mind). Musicians and athletes understand this; it applies just as much in any classroom. Writing is not an optional extra: writing is thinking.

None of this is me or Quigley making an argument against technology or AI. Although, I am tempted to suggest we switch off the internet and go back to the halcyon days of 1988! Used well, digital tools can support learning, remove barriers and extend thinking. Quigley's key insight is that technology should support thinking, not replace it. When students receive summaries rather than make notes, or rely on AI before grappling with ideas themselves, learning can become shallow even if it feels efficient. This is a warning to the teaching profession and to parents and students. How are we using AI? Is there a danger that we are not thinking for ourselves anymore?

As a school community, this matters for all of us:

- for all students who need to improve their handwriting to be neat, legible, and efficient to produce;

- for students revising for exams;
- for teachers choosing how and when to use technology;
- for families supporting learning at home.

We need balance and wisdom. We want students to be confident users of modern technology and strong, thoughtful learners who can slow down, reflect, and engage deeply.



In a fast, digital world, the simple act of writing something down may be one of the most powerful learning tools we still have.

With thanks to Alex Quigley for his thoughtful work on handwriting, embodied cognition and learning in the age of AI.

Next week, I will be writing about the school's approach to smart phones.

**Mr Scott-Evans**  
Headteacher



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In ancient Greece, Hercules is caught between worlds—too mortal for Olympus, too powerful for Earth. After being cast out of the gods' realm, he must prove himself a true hero to return home. With Hades scheming in the underworld and Thebes on the brink of disaster, Hercules sets off on an epic quest that brings him face to face with monsters, love, and what it really means to be strong. It's a journey from zero to hero—and it's going to take more than muscles to make it.

Staff, friends and families from Becket Keys enjoyed this fun-filled show last night! With dazzling costumes and a lively gospel driven score performed especially well by the group of five spirited Muses. Heroes and villains, goofy knockabout humour and a love story meant that an enjoyable evening was had by all!



## 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.




During the cold months, 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.



## Performing Arts Department - Auditions!





The graphic features a large, stylized blue and purple oval shape. Inside the oval, there is a white notepad with the text "Poster competition OPEN NOW" in blue and yellow. Surrounding the notepad are various science-related icons: a lightbulb, a magnifying glass, a microscope, a globe, a DNA helix, and a rocket. To the right of the oval, the text "Science week poster competition!" and "All year groups welcome!" is displayed. Below the oval, there is a dark grey circle containing the text "What will make a 'good/positive' childhood in the future?". To the right of this circle, there is a list of rules for the competition.

Science week poster competition!

All year groups welcome!

What will make a "good/positive" childhood in the future?

- Submit your creative poster by **10<sup>th</sup> of April 2026** to have a chance to win a prize!

Rules:

- You can participate individually or as a group (if you participate as a group, you must be from the same year group).
- Only 5 posters will be picked, make sure it is creative and that includes reference to the theme.
- 3D models are not accepted, must be in a format that can be scanned or sent digitally.



## Easter Card Competition

Do you want to see your design in print and used for the Becket Keys Church of England School Easter Cards 2026?

Templates are on Satchel One and printed versions are available from your form tutor and Art teacher.

- ✓ DO: A5 portrait or landscape designs.
- ✓ DO: Colour or black and white. You can use pencils, pen or paint.
- ✓ DO: Stay within the guidelines of the template.
- ✗ DON'T: Include any text.
- ✗ DON'T: Use glitter or stickers

Designs for the Becket Keys Church of England School Easter card 2026 must be returned to Main Reception by Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> February

### ONE ENTRY PER STUDENT

Designs which reflect our Christian ethos are particularly encouraged. Easter celebrates the resurrection of our Lord.

Please speak to Mrs Brassett or Mrs Sharp if you have any questions.



### Some Inspiration for Your Cards.



Ideas!

Use your imagination! Once you have your idea think about what art skills you can use in order to create an exciting piece.

You could:

- ❖ Print
- ❖ Draw
- ❖ Paint
- ❖ Use your own photography

(No 3-D images please, due to printing.)

## Careers Information - National Apprenticeship Week

As we approach National Apprenticeship Week (9th–15th February), we are eager to provide our students with meaningful insights into apprenticeship pathways. We believe that your involvement could greatly enhance this initiative.

If you have experience of completing an apprenticeship, or of offering apprenticeship opportunities, we would be delighted for you to join us and share your expertise. On **Tuesday 10th February**, we are hosting a working lunch, during which tea, coffee and snacks will be available to you.

A working lunch means that students will pop in to talk with you informally about apprenticeship pathways, experiences and opportunities during their lunchtime. This format gives students the chance to ask questions and gain valuable insights in a relaxed and conversational setting.

We are able to accommodate up to ten guests, and once this number is reached, we will unfortunately be unable to accept further participants. Therefore we kindly encourage parents to register interest early.



The sessions will take place as follows:

**Session 1:** 12:00–12:40 —  
Years 8, 9 and 12

**Session 2:** 12:50–1:30 —  
Years 7, 10, 11 and 13

If you have a son, daughter, or family friend currently undertaking an apprenticeship, we would also be delighted for them to join us and share their firsthand experiences.

To help us plan effectively, please confirm your availability by emailing [careers@becketkeys.org](mailto:careers@becketkeys.org).

Thank you very much for considering this opportunity to support our school community.

**DON'T  
FORGET**

If you wish to play football on the Astroturf at lunchtime, you will need to bring in your trainers.

Only trainers are allowed on there and no food is to be consumed.

Students are not permitted to play in their school shoes.



**BECKET KEYS**  
Church of England School

**Ms North**  
**Head of Careers**



## National Apprenticeship Week 9<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> February

We have an exciting schedule prepared in the Sixth Form, including Alumni students visiting to talk to the students, and a lead on apprenticeships from Deutsche Bank.

There are many ways as parents you can support your child in the Sixth Form. There is a parent workshop on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> February 6.30-7.30 with Amazing Apprenticeships click the link to register:



[NavigATE: National Apprenticeship Week parent and carer webinar: understanding apprenticeships - Amazing Apprenticeships](#)



There is a joint parent and student Unifrog Apprenticeship Fair on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> February from 4-6pm. Encourage your Year 13 child to register on Essex Apprenticeship Hub, and regularly check the government website, [Find an apprenticeship - GOV.UK](#).

Unifrog and UCAS also offer extra support to all students who are considering an apprenticeship.



Further encourage your child to set up a LinkedIn account. This is a useful way that they can make connections for apprenticeships.










The student schedule for the week can be found on the next page. If you require further information, please contact us via [sixthform@becketkeys.org](mailto:sixthform@becketkeys.org)

Mrs Knowles – Deputy Head of Sixth Form





## National Apprenticeship Week 9-13<sup>th</sup> Feb 2026

	Year 12	Year 13	Extra activities
<b>Monday 9<sup>th</sup> Feb</b>	Degree Apprenticeships Finance Talk	Degree Apprenticeships Finance Talk	<p>Amazing Apprenticeships Parent workshop 6.30-7.30</p>  <p>Unifrog Independent Research</p>  <p>Step inside the Apprenticeship Journey: insights and expert advice. Pathway ctm 6-7pm</p> 
<b>Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> Feb</b>	Tech and Start ups talk	Tech and Start ups talk	<p>Step Into The Future With AWE Nuclear Security Technologies (Virtual Event) 5.30-6.30pm Pathways ctm</p> 
<b>Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> Feb</b>	Apprenticeship Amazon	Apprenticeship Amazon	<p>4pm-6pm Unifrog Apprenticeship Fair</p>   <p>Engineering and advanced Manufacturing pathway.ctm 6.15-7pm</p>
<b>Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> Feb</b>	Apprenticeship Quantity Surveyor	Apprenticeship Quantity Surveyor	<p>Independent UCAS Apprenticeship research</p>   <p>Gerald Edelman Insight Evening – London Year 13 – Business and Finance 5.30-7pm</p>
<b>Friday 13<sup>th</sup> Feb</b>	Deutsche Bank Apprenticeship Programme	Deutsche Bank Apprenticeship Programme	<p>Register on the Essex Apprenticeship Hub, use the padlet and get apprenticeship support</p> 



## Foodbank Shopping List

### February 2026

- Tuna/Sardines
- Cornbeef
- Fruit (tinned)
- Custard (tinned)
- Macaroni Cheese (tinned)
- Milk (long life)
- Coffee (small jars)
- Rice (bags,pouches)
- Washing Powders

Find us at 56-60 Doddinghurst Road, Brentwood CM15 9EH  
Doddinghurst Road Church. Tel 01277224528



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

[office@becketkeys.org](mailto:office@becketkeys.org).

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

You can also reply directly to any message you receive from the school via Bromcom, just hit 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.

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



## A Message for Year 9 Parents

We would like to invite you to the Guided Curriculum Choices (options) evening which will take place:

**Wednesday 11th February 2026**  
**6.00pm - Main Hall**

More information will follow shortly, but for now, please put this date into your diaries. Students and parents should attend together.

## School Bags

- Year 7 and 8 must use the school bags purchased from SmartyPants.
- Year 9 and above - Rucksack and/or messenger bag: **Plain black** - no commercial logos bigger than 7cm width; prefer Becket Keys logo.
- Sports Bag: Becket Keys logo bag available from SmartyPants.



## School Shoes

- Boys - Traditional flat, black sensible leather shoes – lace up shoes to have black laces. No trainers or boots, no white or coloured laces. Lace up shoes preferable to Velcro. No kitten heels, sandals, platform shoes, ballet pumps, white or coloured laces.
- Girls - Traditional flat, black sensible leather shoes – lace up shoes to have black laces, no trainers or boots. Lace up shoes preferable to Velcro. No kitten heels, sandals, platform shoes, ballet pumps, white or coloured laces.



## Late Gate

*Early is on time  
On time is late  
And late is unacceptable!*

At Becket Keys, we look to ensure that we are preparing students for life beyond school; this includes encouraging students to attend school regularly, and of course, on time.

Remember that the school gate closes at **8.25am**. This allows students enough time to get to their first lesson on time. Period 1 begins at 8.30am.

Brentwood can be tough to manoeuvre during rush hour, so we encourage students and parents to contact the school in the case of **genuine** lateness, such as delayed public transport.

Parents can call the main school line 01277 286600 or use the "Studybugs" app.

We thank you for your support.



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Church of England School



**SATURDAY 21<sup>st</sup> FEBRUARY 2026**

**11.00AM – 12.30PM**

Pre-loved uniform sale in the Bistro.

If you have any donations of uniform that is no longer required, then please send it into reception.





Please make sure that you top-up your son or daughter's account each week so that he/she is able to access all the delicious meals in the school restaurants.

There is a small overdraft facility on the ParentPay accounts of £2 for emergency situations which covers the cost of a roll. Due to the cashless system in place, there is no other back up.

We do not want any student to miss lunch or the great choice of food available every day in our restaurants. (You can check out the menu for the next week on the next page).

If you have any queries, please contact the school – [office@becketkeys.org](mailto:office@becketkeys.org)



*St Thomas of Canterbury,  
the Parish Church for  
Brentwood*

## All Age Mass



**10.00 on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2026**

All are welcome to this family-friendly service offered on the second Sunday of the month, enabling families to worship together.

Lasting no more than an hour, the service concludes with doughnuts and drinks

St Thomas' Church, St Thomas Road, Brentwood CM14 4DF [www.stthomas.org.uk](http://www.stthomas.org.uk)

## Prayer Group

The School Community Prayer Group hosted by our Headteacher Mr Scott-Evans is every Wednesday during term time at 8.45am.

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 would like to join us for the Eucharist, then please come to reception on Fridays just before 1.00pm.

If you have any prayer intentions, please send them into the school via the office email: [office@becketkeys.org](mailto:office@becketkeys.org)

## WEEK 1

Week Commencing: 27/10/2025 17/11/2025 08/12/2025 19/01/2026 09/02/2026  
02/03/2026 23/03/2026 13/04/2026

## CLASSIC HOT &amp; HEARTY

## CLASSIC MAIN MEALS £2.85

**MONDAY**  
Beef Bolognese with Wholegrain Pasta & House Salad

**TUESDAY**  
Kung Pao Chicken with Vegetable Rice

**WEDNESDAY**  
Honey Glazed Roast Gammon or Lemon & Thyme Roast Chicken, Crisp Roasties, Seasonal Vegetables & House Gravy

**THURSDAY**  
Chicken Tikka Masala, Served with Braised Rice & Kachumber Salad

**FRIDAY**  
Chip Shop 'Fryday' Fish, Pizza or Fishcake & Chips with Peas & Tartare Sauce

## VEGETARIAN MAIN MEALS £2.85

**MONDAY**  
Plant Based Bolognese with Wholegrain Pasta and House Salad (V)

**TUESDAY**  
Kung Pao Cauliflower with Vegetable Rice (VE)

**WEDNESDAY**  
Lentil Sage & Onion Wellington (V)

**THURSDAY**  
Butter Cauliflower & Chickpea Curry, Served with Braised Rice & Kachumber Salad (V)

**FRIDAY**  
Homemade Cheese & Onion Slice with Chips & Peas (V)

## DESSERTS

Free with the main meal or £1.65 if purchased individually

## MONDAY

Spiced Pineapple Cake with Custard

## TUESDAY

Chocolate & Banana Brownie

## WEDNESDAY

Syrup Sponge with Custard

## THURSDAY

Oaty Apple Crumble with Custard

## FRIDAY

Hot Chocolate Rocky Road

Fruit and Jelly Pots Available Daily - Price £1.00

**HOMEMADE SOUP & FRESHLY BAKED BREAD Available Daily**

£1.85

**JACKET POTATOES Topped with a Choice of: Cheese, Tuna or Beans Available Daily**

Prices from £2.15

*Innovate*



**MADE YOUR WAY!**

**CHOOSE IT! ADD IT! TOP IT!**

Switch up your flavours with our street food-inspired range, available **Tuesday to Thursday**. With weekly rotating choices, there's always something tasty.

£2.85

**Choose a base, add protein, and top it your way!**

Visit the restaurant to check out what's on offer each week

**NATURally**

Hot Bowls Prices £2.65

## MONDAY

Pakistani Tarka Dhal (VE)

## TUESDAY

Vegan Singapore Noodles (VE)

## WEDNESDAY

Onion Bhaji & Vegetable Rice Bowl (VE)

## THURSDAY

The Big Plant Burger (VE)

## FRIDAY

Garlic & Chilli Noodles (VE)

**TRATTORIA**

Pizza from £1.60, Pasta 12oz £2.25

## MONDAY

Tomato & Basil Pasta

## TUESDAY

Pasta in a Cheese Sauce

## WEDNESDAY

Margherita or Pepperoni Pizza

## THURSDAY

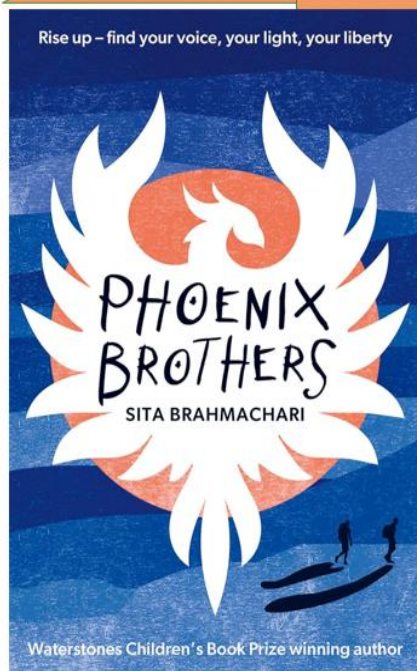
Creamy Pesto Pasta

## FRIDAY

Margherita Pizza



## Book of the Month - February



Amir has faced more challenges than any teenager should ever have to, all in the simple quest for survival. And he's finding out that life in his new country is bringing a whole new set of challenges...

When war brings horror and devastation to Amir's homeland, he is forced to undertake a gruelling and treacherous journey to safety, alone. Along with his new friend Mo, another young unaccompanied refugee, he is rebuilding his life, while dealing with the events of his past. At his new school, Amir decides to enter a prestigious public speaking competition to help others understand what he's been through. But can Amir find his voice and reclaim his story?

An inspiring tale of resilience, survival and family from award-winning author Sita Brahmachari, perfect for less-confident readers.

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

## Sports News

### Boys' Basketball Year 10



#### Team Selection:

- Issac Bendelow
- Oscar Taylor
- Drew Hodges
- Harrison Blake
- Luke Quy
- Jake Allen
- Ollie Pallett
- Dylan Haylor
- Stanley Boon
- Vicent Mutaasa-Windy
- Ope Ajao
- George Bourne

Result - 35-30 win!

#### Player of the Match

Issac Bendelow

Come Back King - Oscar Taylor

I was excited to take the Year 10 boys' basketball team for their match against Brentwood County High School. I had heard a lot about their passion and team spirit from Mr Woods and looked forward to seeing them in action. Having a squad of 12 boys playing in Year 10 is a fantastic



achievement and a difficult problem all at once. Every boy deserves game time however, rotating 12 players is never easy. The boys were incredibly supportive and honest with each other, ensuring everyone got some game time throughout the game.

Oscar Taylor made the comeback of the season with an outstanding BIG performance proving himself a very worthy member of the team! George Bourne was like a Duracell Bunny and brought incredibly energy to the team, once we has perfected his lay-ups - he will be unstoppable! Issac Bendelow, ever the athlete, showed that he has not lost his basketball talent and led the team to this successful win!

I was very proud to be coaching this team and wish them well with their season!

**Miss Schafer**  
PE Teacher

## LOST PROPERTY

Please make sure that **EVERY** item of uniform, PE Kit and equipment is named. There are over a thousand students at the school all wearing the same uniform.

There are many items that we are unable to return as we do not know to whom they belong. Lost Property can be collected from Reception.



## KS3 Basketball

- This club is for our squad training. Year 8 & 9 you are welcome to attend.
- Year 7 you will be invited to attend this club following your training on a Friday lunchtime.



## PE Extra Curricular - Jan to Feb



Day	Lunchtime (12:40-1:20)	After-School (3:10-4:30)
Monday	Year 10 and 11 Basketball Club	Year 7 & 8 Boys' Football
Tuesday	TUP Badminton	
Wednesday	GCSE Intervention	Year 7, 8, 9 & 10 Girls' Football
Thursday	TUP Basketball	Year 9, 10 & 11 Boys' Football KS3 Squad Basketball
Friday	Year 7 Basketball	

Keys:

- Astro
- Sports hall
- Main Hall
- Field
- Playground

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

### NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP WEEK

9<sup>TH</sup> – 13<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2026

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### WEDNESDAY 11<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2026

YEAR 9 OPTIONS EVENING

6.00pm MAIN HALL

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### THURSDAY 12<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2026

YEAR 7 PARENTS' EVENING

\*

### MONDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> – FRIDAY 20<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2026

LENT HOLIDAY

\*

### TUESDAY 24<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2026

EASTER CARD COMPETITION DEADLINE

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### THURSDAY 5<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2026

WORLD BOOK DAY

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

## Becket Keys Church of England School

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Brentwood, Essex

CM15 9DA

01277 286600

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[office@becketkeys.org](mailto:office@becketkeys.org)

[finance@becketkeys.org](mailto:finance@becketkeys.org)

X:

@BecketKeys

@MrScottEvans

@BecketKeys6th

@BecketKeysMusic

@BecketKeysPE

@BecketKeysArt

@BecketKeysSci

@BecketKeysDT

@BecketKeysExams

@BecketKeysTrips

[Facebook: Becket Keys Church School](https://www.facebook.com/BecketKeysChurchSchool)