

Welcome one and all to our latest St John's Newsletter – an opportunity to reflect on some of the fantastic work and enriching activities that have taken place over the last five weeks at our school. It is a real testament to all of the wonderful opportunities that are available at St John's that we have anything to report at all, considering it was such a short term of just five weeks, with three and a half of those days lost due to the snow!



As Mr Walton reports, we have had some fantastic BTEC examination results to celebrate, both at KS4 & KS5 for those students undertaking vocational courses, and our Year 11 students have just given an excellent account of themselves during the most recent round of mock examinations. These mocks will allow our dedicated staff to target those last few gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding before the real examinations in the summer. We are

very proud of how well all of our examination cohorts are working and we wish them every success for the forthcoming exam period.

It would be remiss of me not to mention the tremendous achievements of our gymnastics teams who, under the expert guidance of Mrs Weller and with the support of Mr Dale, came back

from the recent National Schools Gymnastics Finals held in Stoke-on-Trent laden with trophies and top achievements – a real embodiment of our 'Excellence for All' tenet. The fact that these students also competed in such a sporting way and did much to support our primary school students, who were also competing at this event, is also to their absolute credit.

Finally, let me take this opportunity to wish you all a very Holy Easter holiday period; I sincerely hope that you are able to find the time to relax, enjoy the company of your loved ones and to reflect upon the true message of this most special of seasons within the Christian calendar.

Mr Barron

Head Teacher

The Woodville Showcase



Students from Years 7 - 13 performed at The Woodville in Gravesend on Wednesday 21st March. The students performed dance styles including lindy hop, contemporary and street dance, as well as presenting musical theatre pieces and sixth form music performances. The students were extremely professional and the Performing Arts team are very proud of the way they delivered each performance. Many students will be assessed on these performances for the summer examinations, so good luck to all for the busy months ahead!

Mrs Steadman *Dance Teacher*

Y12 Public Services trip to the Metropolitan Police Training Centre

Students studying Public Services visited the Metropolitan Police Training Centre in February to observe police officers being trained to handle public order disturbances including riots, demonstrations and football-related hooliganism.



This opportunity is not usually available to civilians and helped to put much of the students' course learning into context. This included observing key skills that are needed across the emergency and armed services, being put into practice. For example: Communication, teamwork, working to common goals and planning contingency.

Mr Murray *Head of Year 12*

Performing Arts trip to New York

During the February half term, 20 students ranging from Year 9 up to Year 13 took a trip across the pond to visit The Big Apple, accompanied by staff from the Performing Arts Department. The students were given the trip of a lifetime! They participated in lots of different activities ranging from Broadway shows to viewing NYC



from the top of the Empire State Building. Four fun-packed days of exploring, shopping and lot and lots of eating. From the word go students were beaming with excitement. Touch down was the moment the fun began. Riding through the 5 districts of New York, the students were smiling from ear to ear. As part of the trip, students were given the opportunity not only to watch 'School of Rock' on Broadway but, more excitingly, they were invited to take part in a rehearsal workshop, delivered by one of the performers. Students experienced a small insight into what it would be like to be a Broadway performer, by acting, singing and dancing their way through 'Stick it to the Man!' As part of the trip students were also given lots of opportunities to explore the sites of New York, including The Empire State Building, The Statue of Liberty and the

Ground Zero Memorial Site. Students even experienced a traditional horse and carriage ride around Central Park. The trip involved lots of walking around the blocks and avenues of Manhattan (which was needed exercise after the amount of calories consumed at each meal!). One particular mealtime, that will stay with the students forever, would have to be their visit to Ellen's Star Dust Diner, the home of the musical waiters and waitresses. Not only did the students indulge in some scarily huge desserts but they also witnessed some outstanding musical theatre performances by the staff. All in all, students had a fully enriching and exciting experience on this trip of a lifetime. Not only did they get the chance to experience New York at its best, but they also made some lasting memories that will stay with them throughout their time at St John's and beyond.

A massive thank you must go to Miss Hardy in our Dance Department, for her time and all her efforts that went into organising the trip.

Mr B Thompson *Drama Teacher*

KENT COUNTY CATHOLIC SCHOOLS' RUGBY 7s

The annual Kent County Catholic Schools' Rugby 7s hosted by St John's was held on March 16th, the day before the final day of 6 Nations Rugby matches. This was the fourth time the competition was held and once again the Richard Challenor School, Richmond and St Columba's School, Bexleyheath proved to be the main protagonists. They duly met in the final game of the competition with Challenor coming out on top by twenty points to ten in what was a most exciting game. St Columba's led twice in the first half, which was most evenly contested. In the second half however Challenor ran in two tries without reply from St Columba's. The referees were Mr Kyle, Mr Murray and Mr Rowlinson and all did very well with the whistle ensuring the games ran smoothly and with minimum stoppage ensuring the games were played in the manner and spirit sought.

The teams were entertained afterwards with refreshments and a lunch provided by Mrs Matthews. At the end the presentations were made by Mr Walton, Associate Headteacher; he praised all concerned and was delighted to present the Tom Cahill Trophy to the Richard Challenor School, the captain of which won the Sean Maher Trophy for the best player judged by the referees.

Image shows the 'tunnel' after the St John's/St Columba's match with the St John's players clapping their counterparts from St Columba's through the 'tunnel' of players.



Mr Murphy *Head of History*

POCAHONTAS 401

The Borough commemorations focusing on Pocahontas came to St John's on March 19th with Mr Barron welcoming Councillor Harold Craske, Mayor of the Borough and Canon Chris Stone to the school along with American visitors Jamie Bosket, the CEO of the Virginia Museum of History and Culture, and Chief Anne Richardson of the Rappahannock Tribe. The visitors enjoyed a tour of the school after which they worked with students in the Art Loft.



Mrs Lal of the Art Department organised a session with 16 students from Year 7 and Year 8 working on 'Dreamcatchers'; the visitors were quite amazed at the quality of the work. There was much discussion focusing on Indigenous Americans, Pocahontas and the state of Virginia.

An invitation to the students to visit Virginia was given and may well be taken up – with Mrs Lal and Mr Murphy leading the expedition to the 'New World'!

Mr Murphy *Head of History*



Drama GCSE and Btec groups visited the Globe Theatre trip to see *Much Ado about Nothing*.



Literary Legends

The Snow does not stop progress at St John's!

The English Team were impressed by the high production of work during the "Beast from the East". It would seem that even the snow could not tempt students away from their dedication to their studies.

Curley's Wife

In the book "Of Mice and Men," John Steinbeck presents us with a character who is known as one of the most hated characters in the novella - Curley's Wife. Curley's Wife is the only female character in OMAM and she is not portrayed as one of the favourites. In fact she is the complete opposite! Curley's Wife is of course married to Curley (the son of the Boss) who she isn't very keen on.

In OMAM Curley's Wife is known for being a provocateur. They make unnecessary comments about her appearance saying, "She wears too much makeup." This statement conveys the fact that all the men are not attracted to her but instead think that she is actively seeking male attention. Despite all the negative comments that are thrown at Curley's Wife throughout the book, she still doesn't change her image at all. For example the phrase "red fingernails" implies how the colour red is usually used as a form of seduction, which is what Curley's Wife was trying to achieve. However because she was married to the boss' son, all of the other men avoided her as much as possible due to the fact that they were scared of Curley and his father. Curley's Wife knew this but that didn't stop her from trying to become extra friendly with the other men.

The author John Steinbeck made Curley's Wife one of the causes of trouble in OMAM. Nevertheless, Curley's Wife is probably one of the most misread characters in the book. The reason why I think this is because Curley's Wife was the only female in OMAM and in the era of the 1930's, women didn't have many rights; they were only seen as objects and possessions. For example Curley's Wife doesn't even have a name. Throughout the whole novel she is only known as "Curley's Wife" and nothing more. In a way Curley's Wife was dehumanised from a human being to Curley's possession. She had no choice in anything that went on in her life because it was in the hands of her husband, which is one of the reasons why she secretly despised him.

In conclusion I feel that Curley's Wife was just a lonely being who craved for attention and affection; because she was not getting that, she misbehaved and acted out. She was somebody lonely, hiding behind her own curtains.

Princell Quagraine *Year 8*

INTERNATIONAL CLUB



The 'International Club' is held by Mrs Perera every Thursday with Mr Murphy in attendance. The focus is mainly on students with a background that is from mainland Europe particularly students with a background from Italy and Poland. All students are welcome however. Students practise their home language in addition to English and also explore shared heritage. Thus the recent visit to the Battle of Britain Museum in Capel-le-Ferne. This formed the focus of a study by students with a background from Poland who are exploring the role of pilots from Poland who fought in the Battle of Britain. A trip to the Woodville Halls to meet the Mayor is being planned at the moment.

All students are welcome to attend on Thursday after school in A05.

Mr Murphy Head of History

Charitable Works

On April 22nd a member of our staff, Mrs Chambers, is running the London marathon for the children's charity MACS. This wonderful charity helps to support children and adults who have one of, or a combination of, three eye conditions:

Microphthalmia, Anophthalmia and Coloboma. Some children with a MACS condition are blind, others have a degree of light perception, and some may be blind in one eye with some, or even good sight in the other eye. Many of the children may also suffer with learning and behavioural difficulties.

On Monday 19th March staff at St John's generously baked and contributed cakes in a cake sale to raise money for MACS. The day was a huge success. The next fundraising event was a staff curry day cooked and prepared by the Jamie Oliver cooking class on Thursday 22nd which was a huge success with many staff coming together to enjoy a bowl of curry and rice with a naan bread. The curry lunch cooked by the Key Stage 4 students was a great testament to the "service of others" ethos we uphold at St John's. Anybody wishing to donate can do so by following the link below.

<https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/emma-chambers-SAVMLMBONDS3332017-86614645>

Mrs Chambers PE Teacher



COMING WORLD REMEMBER ME

Coming World Remember Me is a city project based in Ieper in Belgium. Since 2014 some 660,000 clay model figures have been made, each one representing a soldier killed near the city during the Great War, 1914-1918. Visitors to Ieper have been invited to take part in the project and in the past 3 years some 300 students of St John's have each made a clay figure.

The next plan is to place them on site for the public to come and gaze at the numbers. So, from March, the task of placing each and every one of these 660,000 has been undertaken. St John's was one of five schools from the country to be so honoured to have five students selected for this part of the project; in addition to students from Bow, Stowe and Canterbury. Our five selected students placed 18,000 of these figures on a two-day tour in early March. A highlight of the tour was the presentations made by Senior Leaders of the Institute of Education with the Head of History giving a talk on bravery at Tyne Cot Cemetery.

Visitors to Ieper are recommended to visit the site.

Mr Murphy Head of History

Breaking news - Baptism at St John's Catholic Comprehensive Chapel.

My name is Bavandeep Dhesi and I have witnessed an astounding event in my school; I attended a Baptism [a mock baptism]. It was amazing watching this sacrament on Wednesday and it was led by Deacon Michael in the chapel of St John's Catholic Comprehensive School in Gravesend.

The event began with Deacon Michael greeting all the students in my class at the door of the chapel and welcoming us to join in this special event. The Godparents (Robert and Toni) and the parents (Chloe and Thomas) stood at the door with their baby girl (Julie – a doll) and their older child (Favour). Deacon Michael welcomed them to stand around the font, while he led prayer which we all joined in with.

Deacon Michael baptised the baby first, he asked the parents to tilt the baby's head over the font and he poured holy water over the baby's head three times whilst he blessed the child with the following words "I baptise you in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit". The water symbolises purity as it washes away original sin and any actual sin the child has done. He then placed special oil on the baby's head. The Oil of Chrism is about the Holy Spirit and the mission God gives them. In Baptism, the priest or deacon will trace the sign of the cross using the oil. This is known as anointing. Deacon Michael then asked the parents and Godparents to promise to guide and keep the child in God's faith as he gave them a baptism candle.

After he performed an adult Baptism [a mock baptism] on the older child (Favour). The difference between Infant Baptism and adult Baptism is that adults understand and declare their faith themselves and the Oil of Chrism happens after in Confirmation.

Thank you for reading my report.

Bavandeep Dhesi *Year 7*





Dear Parents/carers,

The NSPCC have updated their #ShareAware campaign with new resources to enable parents and carers to 'untangle' the online world and to help them to teach the children to be 'Share Aware'. The campaign focuses on the need to talk to children about online safety, much like we do "real" world safety such as crossing the road, bullying and speaking to strangers. There is a selection of new resources available, which we have detailed below.

TEAM

The NSPCC suggests parents and carers are an essential part of the T.E.A.M that helps keep children safe online:

- T = Talk about staying safe online
- E = Explore their online world together
- A = Agree rules about what is ok and what's not
- M = Manage your family's settings and controls

Top Tips to start conversations

NSPCC are suggesting that parents and carers having regular conversations about what their child is doing online is the best way to keep them safe. They have shared three top tips to help parents/carers start the conversation:

1. Explore sites and apps together and talk about any concerns.
2. Ask your child if they know how to stay safe online.
3. Talk about personal information and what to share online.

IceBreaker Emails

NSPCC have partnered with O2 and have created a series of weekly emails packed full of useful info, advice and activities to help bring parents and carers closer to their child's online world. Each week the NSPCC and O2 will email top tips to parents and carers to help them approach a particular topic with useful information to help them have regular conversations together about staying safe online.

Family Agreement

Share Aware suggests that parents/carers should consider putting a family agreement in place as a great way to start talking about online safety. Family agreements can help children understand what behaviour is appropriate when they're online and ensure that they'll know who they can turn to if they are ever worried.

The NSPCC have created a helpful agreement template, which schools and settings might want to share with their community.

Net Aware

The NSPCC has also updated their excellent Net Aware <https://www.net-aware.org.uk> tool, which can be useful to help professionals as well as parents and carers find out more about the social networks, apps and games that children may be using.

Helpline and Guru support

The NSPCC and O2 are also providing parents and carers with a free service via a helpline or O2 Gurus in O2 stores. The helpline is available via 0808 8005002 for parents and carers to ask any questions about parental controls, concerns about a social network site or other online safety relating issues.

Parents and carers can also access free online safety advice from O2's friendly Gurus (even if they are not an O2 customer) in-person at an O2 store. They can help set up parental controls, or teach parents how to make a phone safe for a child. Parents and carers can book a visit with a guru.

If you require any further information, Please do not hesitate to contact the school.

Mrs Kelham *DSL*

KS4 and KS5 Summer Examinations

We are incredibly proud of our KS4 and KS5 cohorts, each of whom have been working tremendously hard throughout the academic year. The recently released BTEC examination results were absolutely outstanding and richly deserved by the students. Congratulations to all pupils involved.

As we move ever closer to the main examination season we wish all students every success in their forthcoming revision and final examinations.

Each student has been issued with a personalised examination timetable prior to the Easter break and an overview calendar of all examinations can be accessed via the appropriate link below. You can also access the school's examination policies via the respective link at the bottom of this article.

Parents are encouraged to keep a copy of their child's examination timetable and to actively take an interest in their child's revision and examination experiences.

Thank you as ever for your support.

KS4 Examination Calendar: <http://www.stjohnscs.com/page/?title=Exams&pid=24>

KS5 Examination Calendar: <http://www.stjohnscs.com/page/?title=Exams&pid=24>

Examination Policies: <http://www.stjohnscs.com/page/?title=Exams&pid=24>

Chaplain's Corner

Are you ready? Are you ready for Easter or have you spent Lent rushing about like the rest of the year? Life does that to us doesn't it? We tend to get swept along like a canoe on the rapids; either just trying to keep afloat or sometimes perhaps enjoying the ride. But where is the current taking us and is it where we should be going? Have we used Lent to deepen our relationship with God and prepare for the most important three days in human history?



During our final week of term here at St. John's we have just celebrated our pre-Easter Mass with Fr Joe. Our musicians and singers lifted us all and we offered up the prayers of our young people to God in the sacrifice of the Mass.

Next up we have the Year 13 sleep-out to raise money and awareness for the parish House of Mercy homeless charity. Actually this effort, to be held in the Church car park next to the mother House of the charity, involves the three weapons of Lent: charity, prayer (vigil before the Blessed Sacrament) and fasting, as I predict there will be very little warmth or sleep! Please add your prayers and generosity to ours.



I pray you all have time for God this season, which is, ironically, time for ourselves, as well as some respite from the rapids of life.

Stay blessed

Deacon Michael

Chaplain