St John Fisher News

6 September 2013 No. 190

Outstanding Results at GCSE

We start the new school year by announcing record GCSE results for the school. We were expecting this to be the case, even though the governors had set a challenging target, but the students exceeded our expectations. The main national database that we use as a guide suggested that 38% of students should achieve 5 or more passes at C and above, including English and Maths, for us to be in line with similar schools. The governors set a target of 41% but the students achieved **47%**! Not only is this well above target but it is a 13% increase on the previous year.

Until a few years ago, the headline measure was the percentage of students who achieved 5 or more passes at C and above – whether or not these including English and Maths - and we still set a target for this measure. This year's target was 55% but the students achieved **69%**.

We have taken some difficult decisions in recent years in terms of deciding whether to put meeting government targets first or ensuring that the students achieve what is best for them. We have always opted for the latter and I feel that these results vindicate these decisions. I also believe that by taking this approach we are able to ensure that all the students continue to engage right to the end of their course and so we do not have students who drop out and achieve nothing. Neither do we have students who become 'NEET' – not in education, employment or training.

It was rather disappointing to see various comments in the national media concerning students taking the same subject more than once, entering early, or taking the International GCSE. For some students one or more of these approaches makes the difference, and if the result is that they have the qualifications to proceed to their next stage of choice this must be the way we should support them.

Many, many congratulations to the students on their superb achievements, and to their teachers for helping them to do so well.

A Level Results meet targets

The week before we received the GCSE results our Sixth Form students were in school to collect A Level and AS results. Our A Level results were in line with expectations and from a year group where most of the students had decided to proceed to university, despite change to funding and other pressures, most of these were accepted at their first choice. When we have a final list of which degrees are being started at which university I will include it in the weekly newsletter. Congratulations to the students and very best of luck for the future.

I hope that younger students will see this as an example to follow and appreciate what is possible if it is what you want to do. Ofsted said last year that our Sixth Form is Good and it seems that we are maintaining this.

House Cup Winners 2013

Very, very many congratulations to **Beverley House** on winning the House cup. The outcome was dependent on Sports Day results and as Cambridge House were the clear winners of both Sports Days this was enough to ensure that Westminster House did not make it a hat trick by winning the House cup for the third year running.

The announcement and presentation of the cup took place at the end of the liturgy on St John Fisher Day, which was the final day of last term. Certificates, medals and trophies were also presented to the winners of the athletics and field events from the first Sports Day. Congratulations to all of the students who were presented with these, and to **Cambridge House** on winning overall.

We also presented certificates to students with 100% attendance – something that all should be aiming for.

St John Fisher Day was a superb way to end the year: the liturgy was very powerful and my thanks to all of the students and staff involved in preparing and leading this. We then finished with our now traditional barbecue and everyone left in good cheer for a restful summer.

Remember that you can log on to our own Twitter feed for news updates from the school: **@sjfpeterborough.**

Welcome

Welcome to our new students and especially Year 7 who started on Wednesday. I hope that you enjoy your time with us and achieve excellent results when your time comes. As well as welcoming our new students we have quite a few new staff joining us this term, all of whom are very welcome:

Rachel Dunn, *English*
Alison Furnell, *Seclusion Manager*
Jenny Green, *English*
Karen Griffin, *Subject Leader for ICT*
Sian Hardiman, *French*
Conor Mannion, *Science*
Sue Mitchell, *Science*
Andrew Philpot, *Maths*
Luke Turner, *Chaplain*
Matthew Van Lier, *Assistant Headteacher*
Aurelie Verdu, *French*
Eunice Williams, *Music*
Catherine Wray, *Teaching Assistant*

I am pleased that yet again we start the year fully staffed with specialists and that we have managed to add two new posts: full-time chaplain and seclusion manager, both of which will be explained in a future newsletter. Together these appointments ensure that we have the best possible team for our students.

Word of the Week: Classify
To arrange or organise by class or type

Term Dates and Holidays

Next week we will issue details from the calendar for 2013-14. The key dates are below. Please make a note of these and keep them handy. Can I again remind parents that from this week the government no longer allows schools (and headteachers) to agree to holiday requests during term time. This includes visiting relatives, renewing passports abroad and taking days out of school to extend a holiday period. There are obvious reasons for this so please bear this in mind, and refer to these dates, before making any bookings. We usually have quite an accurate idea of term dates for the following school year and can supply details on request.

Autumn Term 2013
Starts: Wednesday 4 September
Ends: Friday 20 December
Half term: Monday 28 October – Friday 1 November
Staff Training days: Monday 2, Tuesday 3 September

Spring Term 2014
Starts: Monday 6 January
Ends: Friday 4 April
Half term: Monday 17 – Friday 21 February
Staff Training days: Monday 24 February

Summer Term 2014
Starts: Tuesday 22 April
Ends: Friday 18 July
Half term: Monday 26 – Friday 30 May
Staff Training days: Monday 21, Tuesday 22 July

Summer School

During the holiday we again ran a summer school for some of the students who are joining Year 7 this week. This was very successful and very well attended and I hope that it means that the students who took part feel they are beginning their time at St John Fisher as well prepared as they can be.

This was a new initiative last year, funded by central government. Although we cannot provide it for all students, I am pleased that we were able to run the school for many. My thanks to the staff who planned and delivered the activities: Mr Adebusuyi, Mr Baron, Mrs Davey, Mr Davis, Mr Dewdney, Mrs Grooms, Mrs Hostead, Miss Meagher and Miss Wood.

Weekly Newsletter

Please remember that this newsletter is our main channel of communication between home and school. It is issued every Friday and parents are asked to ensure that their children don't leave it festering in the bottom of a school bag. We do send text messages and will email parents if we have a correct address, but for most of the time the newsletter is king. As well as sending a paper copy home it is always available, as are past copies, from the website.

Father Bruce Burbidge

Father Bruce leaves Sacred Heart and St Oswald parish as we return to school. He is returning to Rome for another period lecturing in the seminary. We wish him well and thank him for his support over the last five years. Father Bruce's arrival at Sacred Heart coincided with mine at St John Fisher.

Sean Hayes

Literacy Corner

Word list for spelling test w/c 9 September

Key Stage 3		Key Stage 4	
1.	Acceptable	1.	Accidentally
2.	Apostrophe	2.	Accommodation
3.	Audience	3.	Advertisement
4.	Breaking	4.	Atmosphere
5.	Calendar	5.	Characterisation
6.	Category	6.	Chronological
7.	Celebration	7.	Conscience
8.	Concentration	8.	Consequence
9.	Defence	9.	Continuous
10.	Disappear	10.	Disappoint
11.	Discipline	11.	Disciple
12.	Foreign	12.	Embarrassment
13.	Grateful	13.	Experience
14.	Intelligence	14.	Guarantee
15.	Participation	15.	Humorous
16.	Reaction	16.	Immortality
17.	Recommend	17.	Involvement
18.	Straight	18.	Liaison
19.	Wonderful	19.	Mischievous
20.	Peaceful	20.	Occasionally