St John Fisher News

3 May 2013 No. 179

What else besides lessons?

So often talk about schools consists solely of exam results, Ofsted inspections and other measurable outcomes. But coming to school is about much more than this: students join as young children and leave as young adults. In between we aim to prepare them for the next stage of their lives, and this is where the social, moral, spiritual and cultural aspects of school come in.

Being a Catholic school we probably pay more attention to this than others and we have certainly been praised in the past for our work in these areas. Last week the teachers were discussing what else might be provided for students, what other experience could we offer? We have Focus Days in our calendar now when we take students out of the normal framework of the day to work for a longer period on a project with a certain focus. We have the usual range of clubs and activities too, and of course, a large choice of sports and music/drama opportunities.

But we are never ready to sit back and accept that we could not do more, so the teachers were thinking of other activities that might take place, especially during lunch time when students are sometimes looking for something different to do.

So now we need to ask the students what they think of the teachers' ideas and what ideas they have of their own. It would be good if small groups of students who have a hobby in common could get together in a room over lunch and share/discuss their hobby. If any of you have any suggestions please speak to your Head of House in the first instance.

Student Leadership

One of the skills that relates very well to the topic above is that of Leadership. For many years there has been a very well-regarded system for Sports Leaders in the country and many of our students qualify under this framework; they then assist when Mr Baron runs sports events for our feeder primary schools. As a school we provide other opportunities for students to lead, including reading buddies, mentoring and the various House leadership roles. We are currently looking at ways of rewarding students who take a leadership role and hope to announce something very shortly.

Primary Liaison

Our work with our feeder schools continues and this week we welcomed St Thomas More's Year 5 students for a lesson in the Technology Department. This was very successful and the students left feeling suitably inspired.

GCSE and A level Exams

These begin on Tuesday with GCSE Art for Year 11. Students in Years 11-13 need our prayers and support now as these next six weeks of exams play out. Students have their personal timetables and will need to be very organised to ensure that they are in the right place at the right time. Lessons continue until half term as explained in last week's newsletter.

Two weeks ago I was able to say that we had excellent GCSE results from the March examinations, with the result that over half of Year 11 already have at least a grade C. These students have been awarded *Mathlete* badges as a result:

Hamzah Aurangzeb	Lucy Bailey
Patryk Betlej	Mateusz Betlej
Nikisha Bhima	Luis Birbeck
Shai Brown	Balint Brunner
Lauren Buckley	Milton Carvoeiro
Rowena Cook	Dawid Czekaj
Iuri Dias	Federica Funiciello
Kieran Guest	Zulaikha Haider
Mohammed Haseeb	Kaiz Hussain
Cameron Hutchings	Tania Ilahi
Zahra Iqbal	Nidha Islam
Ellen James	Byron Jones
Karen Jones	Sumayyah Kassam
Thusneem Kauser	Patrick Kelly
Thanushiya Konesalingam	Zehra Latif
Carly Lee	Mikolaj Majcher
Mahaliah Meriales	Zahra Mohamoud
Chloe Morrison	Grace Murfitt
Olivia Murfitt	Conor Ormsby
Pawel Osieja	Szymon Osieja
Heather Porter	Amy Pragnell
Sabrina Rodrigues	Jessica Scutts
Kaisha Simons	Katie Smart
Mia Smith	Aleksandra Tetnowski
Zaneta Turczynska	Ali Ustuner
Cassandra Vida	Charlene Whittington
Sean Williamson	Jelisejs Zaicevs

Very well done.

Bank Holiday

Monday next, 6 May, is a Bank Holiday and school is closed. Lessons resume on Tuesday, which is Week 2 of the timetable.

Enjoy the long weekend.

Sean Hayes

Reporting Student Progress

Over the next few weeks we will be sending home the last of three academic progress reports for this school year. The staff have been working very hard over the last few weeks to ensure that your child's information is accurate and up to date. We will send out reports for Years 11-13 prior to half term and the remaining years' reports after half term. This term the reports for Year 7-10 students will also be sent home with their tutor's written report.

For all years except Year 9, we will be reporting the student's progress towards their target, their attainment and their attitude to learning, which is a grade for behaviour and effort (see list below). We will continue to report end of key stage target data for each subject and the student's current working level or grade for that subject. This year, however, we have introduced some innovations to the progress reports. To support your child's progress we will report a target for improvement from the list below.

Target for improvement:

A Improve your attitude to your learning
B Improve behaviour during lessons
C Complete all class work to target grade standard or better
E Ensure you have correct equipment, books or PE kit for all lessons
H Complete and hand in on time, all homework to target grade standard or better
U Student needs to meet with the teacher to receive advice on how to meet or exceed target grade

Attitude to learning:

1. Enthusiastic attitude supports high attainment and/or exceptional progress
2. Good interest in learning supports good progress
3. Current attitude to learning supports some satisfactory progress. Increased motivation in lessons will improve the child's learning
4. Current attitude towards learning is having a negative effect on progress

The report will also contain a 'forecast grade'. This is the grade that the teacher thinks the student will attain at the end of the key stage for that subject and can be used to compare to their target grade.

The Year 9 report will be slightly different as it represents their end of key stage three results and thus there will be no working grade, attitude to learning or target grade. The only grades will be the final result that the student has achieved in key stage 3 for that subject. The report will include a tutor report which will contain information about the student's attitude to learning and targets for improvement.

If you have any questions or queries regarding any aspect of the reporting system, I will be happy to meet with you at the parents evening on 21 May.

The back of the report contains a full explanation. This explanation has been translated into the following languages: Polish, Lithuanian, Czech, Portuguese, Russian and Slovak. If you would like a version of the report in any of these languages please ask your child for one from their tutor.

Daniel Berry, Assistant Headteacher

Secret Reading Circle

Would you like the chance to read and review books from other schools? Then why not join the Secret Reading Circle.

Please see Miss Oldman, in the Library for more information.

Current books to read:
Finding the Fox: The Shapeshifter 1
by Ali Sparkes
Dread Pirate Fleur and the Ruby Heart
by Sara Starbuck

Library Word of the Week:
~~ Impecunious ~~
Having little or no money

House Update	Points	Attendance
Beverley	16175	92.9%
Cambridge	18100	93.8%
Rochester	20950	92.7%
Westminster	20550	93.2%

Year 8 Spelling Bee ...
... 3 weeks to go

Year 11 Prom Friday 24 May

Tickets £15 Student Services

On sale now

Drinking Water

Water stations are situated around the school and are available for all students to use. However, students should remember to bring a bottle which can be refilled throughout the day as cups are not provided.

Parent Perception Survey

As an important part of our monitoring and evaluation process, we have sent out a Parent Perception Survey which will help us to identify areas where progress has been made and also areas where we need to improve.

If you have received a survey, (not all parents will have done) please could you take the time to complete and return it to Student Services by Friday 10 May 2013. Thank you.

Mr Reilly