St John Fisher News

12 July 2013 No. 188

Quality of Teaching

One of the most important aspects of a school is the quality of teaching, and it is recognised that this has a significant impact on students' success. For this reason, when the governors restructured the senior leadership team three years ago they made this the main role of the deputy headteacher. Since that time we have operated an effective process of monitoring teaching and have focussed on this in most of the staff training time that is available to us. This is then reported to governors each term as part of their role in monitoring the effectiveness of the school.

Although this work goes on all year round it is not something that I have written about in newsletters and I thought that as we come to the end of another year it would be a good time to let parents know where we stand. And it is very good news: currently we have 77% of lessons judged Good or Outstanding and none Inadequate. To put this in perspective, Ofsted would rate the school as Outstanding overall for teaching if this figure reached 80%, and we are very close. This is despite the bar being raised significantly last September when Ofsted changed the criteria used to judge the quality of teaching.

These judgements are moderated by an external consultant who sits in on a sample and ensures that our senior staff are being accurate. For the first time this year we have observed teaching at another local school and they have observed teaching at St John Fisher. This was another successful piece of work and something that we aim to do more of in future. We aim to continue to improve on this figure next year.

Religious Education

I have written several times in previous newsletters about the concerns we have in Catholic education about the status of RE following the current government's decision to exclude it from their 'English baccalaureate' measure. Since this was introduced it has become apparent that the number of students studying the subject for GCSE has plummeted nationally, and already there has been a knock-on effect to the number of teachers training to teach it. In January I attended the national conference for Catholic headteachers and these points were put to the former schools minister, Nick Gibb, who maintained that there was no evidence to support these claims despite those present having first hand experience.

So it is with some relief, albeit belatedly, that Mr Gove admitted this week that the subject has indeed suffered as a result of government decisions. In a seminar for the Church of England the Secretary of State acknowledged that work now needs to be done to improve the current situation. Mr Gove added: *"One of the things I'm very anxious to do is to try to work with, not just the Church here, but also the Roman Catholic Church and others, to see what we can do to improve the quality and celebrate great religious education teaching."*

China links

Earlier this term two of our students, Aidan Bailey and Archie Murfitt, were able to join students from Jack Hunt School when they visited the Gold Apple School in China. This week students and staff from that school have visited Peterborough and I am pleased to welcome their headteacher to our school this morning. We hope that this will be a link that can be continued in the future.

Next Week

On Tuesday some of our choir will be singing at St John's Cathedral in Norwich for the installation of Bishop Alan Hopes as the new Bishop of East Anglia.

On Thursday we have our annual Sports Day which will again focus on participation, and then on Friday we will celebrate St John Fisher day with a liturgy and barbecue. Parents are reminded that school will end at 2pm on Friday.

Details of the arrangements for the start of term in September will be in next week's newsletter.

Sean Hayes

Congratulations to everyone on three wonderful Focus Days

Holidays during term time

Although we only revised our policy at the start of this school year, the government has announced new rules to come into force from September. They don't require us to change our policy again but it is now the case that headteachers cannot agree to any request for holidays in term time.

Word of the Week:

~~ Hyperbole ~~

An extravagant statement or figure of speech

Chelsea's Choice
Parents' Performance

We have had an invitation from Peterborough Safeguarding Children Board, for parents to attend a performance of 'Chelsea's Choice' on Wednesday 17 July at Ormiston Bushfield Academy, starting at 6.00 pm. This is a 40 minute performance aimed at raising awareness around the very sensitive issue of child sexual exploitation. The play is apparently hard-hitting and humorous in turns!

To book a place, please contact
Peterborough LSCB on 01733 863747
or email pscb.training@peterborough.gov.uk

Sixth Form Visit

On 4 July our Year 12 students visited The King's School for talks on their upcoming UCAS applications as well as an afternoon on keeping safe on the roads. On a glorious sunny day, the Year 12 students joined the Year 12 students from King's to have talks from two of the leading universities in the country, followed by an informative talk on the UCAS application.
The afternoon started with a real bang, with a staged car crash to demonstrate the dangers of drink driving. The students got to see the emergency services in action as they cut a casualty from the car. Students then had workshops on road safety. The day was a huge success and we are extremely grateful for the hospitality The King's School showed us.
Head Boy, Markus Balogun, had the following to say, *'The King's School visit was very informative about road safety as well as future preparations in terms of UCAS applications. We spent the day with firemen, head of police departments and university reps. I would recommend regular King's visits for future sixth formers on focus days for the same future purposes'.*

Mr J Hayes

Overdue Loans

Would any students who have library books outstanding, please return them by Wednesday 17 July. Thank you. *Miss Oldman*

Spelling Bee

On Monday the English Faculty held the finals of the Key Stage 3 Spelling Bee. This followed the separate Bees for each year group. This was hugely entertaining and the students coped very well with spelling words aloud in front of a very large audience, including many parents. The eventual winner was **Sayeda Mehdi** from Year 7 – many congratulations to her, and to the runners up, **Finley Allen** and **Parees Bhina**.
How would you have done? Here are some of the words the students had to spell aloud: *classification, proposition, embarrass, illusion, parliament, consequence, accommodation, possession, atmosphere, rhythm, exhibition, disassemble,, cliché, pamphlet, straight, assessment, binary, figurative, alkaline, apostrophe, parallel, soliloquy, stereotype, amenity, racism.*

Westminster News

On a glorious sunny day, as Westminster athletes started their shot at a victory in the Sports Day, Westminster celebrated their Green Day. A range of activities took place across the House, from W1 selling Ice Lollies, to W2 selling cakes, W3 playing keepy up [congrats to PCSO Kennedy for 70 kicks], W4 sold cakes, W5 and W6 did a car wash, W7 did Henna, W8 engaged in face painting and W9 sold a multitude of bead bracelets.
All in all the day was a resounding success and congratulations to all forms for excellent atmosphere and participation. *Mr Clifford*

Athletics Results

There were many excellent performances in the inter-house athletics championships which took place in school on Friday 5 July.
Individual event winners will be presented with a medal and a certificate on the last day of term. Overall results after the athletics day are as follows:

1st	Cambridge	339 points
2nd	Rochester	315 points
3rd	Westminster	284 points
4th	Beverley	240 points

Our whole school sports day will take place on Thursday 18 July, after which the Sports Day 2013 House Champions will be crowned!

Mr Baron

Focus Day Successes

As this week's newsletter goes to print we are in the middle of the final Focus Day of the year. All manner of exciting and engaging activities have been taking place this week and a significant number of visitors have helped to deliver the sessions. The students' response and behaviour has been superb. Do please ask your children about what they have done on these days.
More details next week.