



Welcome to a New School Year

I hope that everyone had a restful and enjoyable summer break and is coming back refreshed for the new year. Every year is important for students but this one is especially important for our school as we will be celebrating our 60th anniversary in April. Bishop Alan will be coming to say Mass for us and we plan to have created a Sensory Garden by then for him to open; this will be the main legacy from the anniversary.

At the same time I will be retiring as headteacher and the governors have started the process to recruit my successor: we should know who this is by half term. They will be taking over a school that is in very good shape now, as was confirmed by Ofsted last November. This summer we have again had some very good exam results and we have had a boost in the number of students joining the Sixth Form and have a waiting list for places in Year 7.

Exam Results

During August we had the two consecutive weeks of exam results. Starting with A level, we again had a very high pass rate (99%) and for the second year running the average grade was a B. Almost 60% of results were at grade B or above. But most pleasing of all was that all of the students who had applied to university were accepted, which is excellent. This means that every student continued into education, employment or training for the fourth consecutive year.

Our GCSE results are also very pleasing. At first glance they might not appear so as our attainment grades have dropped on the previous year, but this was a very unusual year group in several ways: we had a larger proportion than usual that joined the school after Year 7, we had a larger number than usual who did not have results from primary school, and those that did had, on average, lower grades when they joined us than usual. When all of this is taken into account in the performance tables, the **progress** that the students made is again expected to be well above national. Unfortunately, that information will not be available to us until the end of the month.

I would like to congratulate all of our students on their results, and thank their teachers for the support they were given to achieve them.



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New Faces

We were delighted to welcome our new Year 7 students on Wednesday. They all arrived bright and eager and I trust that the first day enabled them to settle in and find their feet. We also welcomed many new students yesterday, and especially to the Sixth Form where we have had a jump in applications.

This term we also welcome some new staff: **Matt Double** as Assistant Headteacher, **Judith Pawson** to teach Drama, **Callum Chapman** to teach History, and **Ben Etherton** as Teaching Assistant. We said farewell at the end of last term to **Father Piotr**, who has moved to a parish in the USA, and also to our Chaplain, Luke Turner. Our new Chaplain is **Rowena Goodfellow**, who is already known to many of the students as she is a parent, exam invigilator and governor.

We have also said farewell over the summer to **Laurence Davis**, who was Head of House for Westminster and led our Army Cadet unit. **Donna Maudsley** is taking over as Head of House and this week I am meeting with the Army Cadet commander to discuss leadership of our unit this year.

Term Dates

The main dates for this year will be included in next week's newsletter. Term dates are already available on the school website and should always be checked before booking holidays.



Parent Governor Elections

In July we had elections for two parent governors. The successful candidates were **Krist Pereira** and **Arthur Chapman**. I would like to thank them for offering to serve the school in this way, and also the other candidates who stood for election.

School Cup

At the very end of term we announced that winner of the School Cup for 2017-18 was Westminster House. There was huge celebration at the final liturgy as they had been neck and neck with Cambridge. Very many congratulations to Westminster! The new competition is already underway with everything to play for. Since we started the competition in 2011, Westminster and Beverley have won three times, and Cambridge twice.

Sean Hayes

Uniform

We have started the new term in a really positive way with the vast majority of students in the new uniform looking really smart. If you have had any issues with getting uniform from our suppliers we have been made aware of a slight delay with some blazer orders. At school we have some spare blazers that students could borrow, from stock from our Year 11 leavers' that could be borrowed until the orders arrive. Please let your student support officer know. Also if you have any uniform that your son or daughter has out grown then please could you donate it to the school via reception. This will help us support students in the short term. All uniform including trousers and skirts would be welcomed.

Congratulations

We were delighted to hear that a former student, William Healey, has graduated with first class honours in Animation from Lincoln University. William was already producing some very impressive animations while he was with us so it is good to hear that he has continued to be successful in this field.

If you know of other past students who have received their degrees this summer we would be pleased to share them in the newsletter.

This Sunday is Education Sunday

Education Sunday is the special time of year when the Catholic community comes together to celebrate and support our Catholic schools. Coinciding with the start of the academic term it is an opportunity for us to give thanks for Catholic schools and those who study and teach in them. On Education Sunday young people are encouraged to attend Mass in their school uniform to show the special link between Catholic schools and their local parishes. Catholic schools couldn't exist without the support of the Catholic community. This has been the case for the last 170 years. The second collection taken on Education Sunday is vital in enabling our schools to continue to thrive.

Focus Days

The end of last term was incredibly hectic with one of the highlights being the two focus days. As usual staff worked hard to plan a variety of curriculum linked activities for students. Monday saw year 7s learning Mandarin and practising Calligraphy, while the year 8s worked with the technology faculty on projects linked to a holiday theme. The deckchairs they made were particularly impressive. Year 9 went to Wicksteed Park or stayed in school to work on some practical, sports linked Maths Challenges. Year 10 successfully completed their English Speaking and Listening Endorsement, while the year 12 students had a UCAS day and began preparing their personal statements and thinking about University Life.

The second day was equally diverse. Year 7s had an amazing retreat



'A year of reading ... a lifetime of memories.'

Day, with the theme "We're on a mission from God". The RE and Expressive Arts faculties joined forces to provide a practical and unique opportunity for students to explore their faith. Over half of Year 8 left school in the middle of the night to catch the ferry to Calais and enjoyed visiting a bakery and practising their French. The rest of year 8 had a cultural day in school. Meanwhile the Science department put their own well-being at risk by allowing year 9 a day of chemical analysis, while Year 10 were with the Maths faculty, which should probably be awarded the prize for the most obscure curriculum link after taking the year group paintballing. The bruises were truly a sight to behold and gave Mrs Gilligan an unusual memento of her time at St John Fisher school. The 6th form were also out, and had an amazing day at Anglia Ruskin University.



Activity Day

We decided that, because we clearly don't have enough work to do, we would try and run an Activities Day for students. This took place on Wednesday in the last week of term. The idea was for staff to offer activities that interested them and gave students an opportunity to try different things. We ended up with nearly 20 different activities taking place, including visits to the Maize Maze, Grafham Water, Laserquest, Burghley House and the Cinema. There was a Sports festival in school and a games fest in the Maths department. Cooking on a budget was a popular option, with some amazing meals being served up by our year 10 students. Lego and African drumming was on the agenda for some, while others got creative with Art or computer programming. Some students indulged in a relaxation day or chilled out with some films in our Netflix Day. It was a great day and staff in particular really enjoyed the opportunity to spend time with students and get to know them in a different context.

