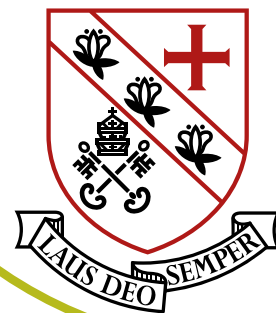


St Joseph's Newsletter



MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Normally I take time in our newsletter to reflect on recent events in the life of our school community and praise significant areas of achievement. In the run up to the general election in May, I would like to depart from my usual theme in order to focus on areas of great concern for all of us. Educational funding and the impact of the constant changes to our education system do not seem to be high on the agenda for any of our politicians at the moment and I believe this is a grave mistake.

The way in which schools are funded is very different across the country. The Dedicated School Grant for 2014/15 gave per-pupil funding ranging from around £3,950 to as much as £8,595 depending on where you live. London authorities dominated the list of highest per-pupil funding, with the City of London getting the most at £8,595 ahead of Tower Hamlets (£7,014) and Hackney (£6,680.05). Nottingham is the highest outside of the capital, receiving £5,309, while Birmingham gets £5,218. Swindon is not at the bottom but with a funding of £4102 we were below the average for all authorities across England of £4,554 (www.sec-ed.co.uk).

The current coalition government promised to protect education funding when they came to power in 2010. In fact the money that the Department for Education has provided for each student has barely changed in those five years. In this period we have also seen a 20% cut in Sixth Form funding and significantly reduced funding to support children with Special Educational Needs. There have been two modest pay increases for teachers and support staff as well as major rises in employer contributions

to pensions. These increases have not been paid for by the government; they are paid out of school funding.

This financial squeeze takes place in a context when schools are being subjected to constant short-term policy and structural changes driven by the electoral cycle. There will be an added cost to the major new structural changes to the National Curriculum and qualifications systems which are being introduced. A moratorium in the next Parliament on new schools legislation on top of existing planned reforms will be something I will be asking for from any politician seeking my vote. At least then we would have a chance to embed some of the changes already launched.

While I understand the issue of the national deficit and the expectations that we must do more with less, we are heading towards a real crisis in educational funding at a time when the government has asked schools to make dramatic changes across the curriculum. All schools will strive to make savings without lowering the standard of education that we offer the young people in our care. At St. Joseph's, our support staff and teachers are dedicated to giving our students

the best. However, we cannot provide the very best in a climate of underfunding and constant change.

During the coming months you will have a range of politicians at your door to ask for your vote. In the interests of our young people I would ask that you raise these issues with them so that they get the message that constant curriculum change and underfunding are issues of real concern to the electorate.

Finally, the Catholic Bishops of England & Wales have written a letter regarding the election. It is available in parishes and online. They point out that our Catholic schools serve over 845,000 children in England and Wales and are generally more ethnically diverse than many other schools. They make a positive contribution to society as they help pupils to become good citizens with clear moral principles to guide their lives and thereby help build up the network of relationships in society. The Bishops call for future government policy to ensure that the poorest have access to high quality education and that Catholic parents have true choice for educating their children in Catholic schools.

Paul Hughes, Principal



Dates for your Diary

- 27 MAR** College closes for students
- 12 APR** College reopens for students
- 17 APR** Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Training Day
- 23 APR** Year 7 Inter-school Gifted & Talented Day
- 23 APR** Year 8 Parents' Evening (ABLM)
- 23 APR** Year 10 Kintbury Trip
- 29 APR** Uniform Pop-Up Shop
- 30 APR** Flex Extreme Trip
- 4 MAY** Bank Holiday
- 9 MAY** Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Practice
- 13 MAY** Year 7 Parents' Evening (POP X)
- 15 MAY** Year 11 Awards Ceremony
- 21 MAY** Year 7 Parents' Evening (Pop Y)
- 21 MAY** Year 13 Leavers Mass & Study Leave
- 22 MAY** Year 11 Leavers Mass & Study Leave
- 22 MAY** College closes for students

Change of Address or Telephone Number

If you move house, or update your telephone number, please can you ensure you notify the College as soon as possible. Many thanks for your co-operation.

Meeting Sally Gardner



Eleven Year 9 students and an eager Year 8 student had the privilege of meeting Sally Gardner at Dorcan Academy.

Sally Gardner signing 'Maggot Moon' for Swetha, Chelsea and Martina

Sally Gardner is an inspirational author! She has had many obstacles in her path to success, including her dyslexia, but these didn't stop her from reaching her goal. Never give up – this was the key to her success.

Sally Gardner was awarded the Carnegie Medal in 2013 for her book 'Maggot Moon'. She wrote this book to encourage children to read; it contains one hundred chapters! Her latest book is 'The Door That Led to Where', and St. Joseph's were given two free copies for the ILC. The book is about a boy who has a key to a door that leads to a different place, a different time. What will happen to him?

Sally Gardner gave us a message – to 'never give up' and 'keep dreaming'. Don't let anything ruin your hopes and dreams!

CADBURY TRIP

On 6th February, we went on a business trip to Cadbury World in Birmingham. We went on the trip so that we could have more information for our controlled assessments. When we arrived we went into an exhibition about the history of the cocoa bean and the history of Cadbury. It then led on to a tour of Cadbury World and how they run their factory. After that, we went on a short ride and had our pictures taken (it was like a rollercoaster but slower).

After lunch, we had a talk with Curtis, who is part of Cadbury's educational team. He gave us a talk about how Cadbury run its business and explained about different parts of the company. We then had a chance to ask questions that we may need for our controlled assessments.

Overall it was an amazing day and I would love to go back.

Sasha Brady

The Living Your Faith Summer Camps, run by the Clifton Diocese, will be held during August and are intended to encourage children and young people to engage in their faith through fun, games and spiritual input. They take place in the beautiful surroundings of the Marist Convent in Nympsfield.

Week one 3rd - 7th August (Age 7 - 11 years)

Week two 10th - 14th August (Age 12 - 15 years)

For more details contact Stephen Spurrell on 07860 849460 or livingyourfaith@hotmail.co.uk or look on www.livingyourfaith.co.uk

YEAR 9 SHOEBOX GALLERIES



Year 9 have been enjoying looking at Art galleries and curating their own!

We have had such a huge range of ideas that really develops an interest in Art as well as the historical context of that art. Students demonstrate highly independent skills in this project as they make all the decisions and review the work of others.

It's a great project as they have to use numeracy to construct and measure a net and literacy to add an audio tour to excite any visitors!

Well done, Year 9.

Sound Training



Sound Training is continuing to be a great success in KS3 intervention. Students are learning different skills in literacy, which is raising their confidence and potential across the curriculum.

'I have learnt how to spell and understand what certain syllables mean. I enjoyed the fun activities and we got a certificate at the end to show how much progress we have made. I also liked it because it was a small group.'

Molly Desay

Swindon Schools Art Exhibition



With such an abundance of talent within our Art and Design GCSE cohort, the opportunity to exhibit alongside the other schools within our borough was not to be missed.

A range of exciting GCSE pieces were exhibited in the Swindon Art Gallery and Museum, displaying everything from suits of armour and futuristic weaponry props, to sensitive portraiture and surreal depictions of the subconscious.

Joslyn Marques was identified by the judges for her outstanding, realist self-portrait, however they also commended the quality of the College's work as a whole.

The work was displayed publicly for two weeks, for most, their first taste of exhibiting their work. Congratulations to all involved for their hard work.

Chance it for Chocolate

All classes in the ILC on World Book Day were challenged to 'Chance it for Chocolate'. Any student or member of staff who could beat the clock by talking for one minute about their favourite book was rewarded with chocolate.



Swindon Young Musician of the Year



On Sunday 8th February, four of our students took part in the Rotary Club's Swindon Young Musician of the Year Competition, held at Blunsdon House Hotel.

In the Junior Section, Maximo Lopez and Sebastian Scanlon, represented us on piano and classical guitar. In the Senior Section, Sally Rudd and Henry Firth, represented the College in the vocalist class.

All students performed really well and we are very proud of their achievements.

For the second year running, Maximo won the junior section, and in his first time performing in this competition, Sebastian came second. Congratulations to both boys!

In the Senior Class, Henry came third in the vocal class and the adjudicator, complimented him on his excellent performance.

A big well done to Sally, who just the week before was suffering from flu and lost her voice – you did so well singing on the day. A dedicated performer!

Geography: on the road again



The Year 12 geographers have been out and about recently on two trips linked to their Going Global and Rebranding topics.

The first was an impromptu visit to the Big Smoke to take part in a conference looking at London possibly becoming the world's first 'National City Park'. They were able to take part in a public forum with Alex King in particular making an excellent contribution. One of the other highlights was a bit of celebrity spotting after seeing the Prime Minister jogging along the South Bank.

More recently, the students jumped on the train to spend a day in Bristol collecting data

in the city centre as well as some window shopping in Cabot Circus. The trip gave the students an excellent opportunity to see how Bristol has improved over the last 30 years and to practise some real geography skills outside of the classroom.

Both of these excursions were a timely reminder that Geography is a subject that has to happen in the real world and a range of fieldtrip opportunities is vital for promoting a deeper understanding.

Next stop for the Year 12s – the beach at Bournemouth!

Skydive!

I have always wanted to do a Skydive from an early age and could not wait to turn 16 in December to book my first one, which I will be doing on Friday 29th May, when I have nearly finished my exams!

During a recent RE lesson, my class had a discussion about homelessness and how it can affect many different people, and I was inspired to raise money for a charity through my Skydive.

I have chosen the charity 'Alone in London', which supports young people who

find themselves in desperate need and would really appreciate you looking at aloneinlondon.org to find out about the great work they do.

If you would like to know more about my fundraising, please visit my charity page www.justgiving.com/caitlin-dooley



Chemistry Investigations



Last term the Year 13 Chemistry students carried out their practical investigations which form the coursework element of the A2 Chemistry course.

They chose an area of study and have had to plan and carry out a series of experiments. They then had to analyse and evaluate their results before producing a final written report about their work.

This is an exciting opportunity for the students to learn and develop a range of different skills. This year investigation topics include: the analysis of wine, investigating the vitamin C content of peppers and Vitamin C tablets, analysing the copper content of brass samples and, for the more mathematically minded students a range of investigations looking at the chemical kinetics of different reactions.

Students have worked closely with the Science Technicians to learn how to make up solutions, become familiar with using new equipment and manage their time effectively. In addition to their allocated lessons the students have been giving up their own time to work in the back of other science classes. This has been a brilliant opportunity for some of our younger students to see what they can aspire to and the Sixth Form students have been great at discussing their work and dealing with the many questions that have been asked.

A huge thank you to the Science Technicians, who as ever, provided invaluable support to the students throughout the term.

'It has probably been the most useful experience I've had to help me prepare for studying chemistry at university.'

'It could be challenging, frustrating and demanding at times but the experience it offered me was invaluable.'

'It gave me a chance to see how chemistry is used in the 'real world' and the techniques that are used.'

'It was a challenging but fun experience that gave us a chance to get more hands-on with practicals than we had done previously.'

'It was fun to do something so different and work so independently.'

'I was able to practise my practical techniques and because it was such an independent piece of work, I became more independent in other subjects.'

Intermediate Maths Challenge

Students from Years 9 - 11 participated in the individual Intermediate Maths Challenge recently, achieving four Gold awards, three Silver and 10 Bronze.

Impressively, three of the Gold award winners were also invited to take part in the follow-on round (called the Kangaroo papers), which took place in March and we will get the results after Easter.

Well done to Steve and Stephen Caayao, John Toop-Rose, Rahul Vital and all the other award winners.

Breakfast Maths Revision

Some hard-working Year 11s have been joining the Maths Department for breakfast on Wednesday mornings.

Fuelled by croissants, brioches and orange juice, they have been learning about scatter diagrams, grouped data and other C-grade topics.

There is still plenty of room, so come along to Y04 every Wednesday after Easter from 7.30 - 8.15am. All Year 11s should have a sticker in their exercise books with the topic list.



Gold Award for Luisana Toner

One of the main reasons young people participate in the Duke of Edinburgh award is because achieving an Award will give you skills, confidence and a view on life that everyone is looking for, from employers to Colleges and universities. Young people make a difference to other people's lives and the community, are fitter and healthier, make new friends and have memories to last a lifetime.

Of the three levels of the award, Gold is the most prestigious. It really is an enormous achievement for young people to achieve this level. In order to get to Gold, each participant must dedicate time to meet a diverse range of challenges for a period of at least 18 months, working through the five sections of the Award programme: Volunteering, Physical Activity, Skills, Expedition and Residential. To have achieved this before the age of 18 is extremely rare, but this is true of Luisana Toner.

Luisana has completed all of her three DofE awards during her time at St. Joseph's. To achieve her Gold Award Luisana has volunteered in the community by coaching young children swimming, improved her own swimming for her physical activity and the skill she developed was cooking. Her residential was a learning course she completed in Computer Science.

The most memorable section for Luisana was her Expedition. This she completed in the Lake District after a programme of training, both in school and out on expeditions in the Brecon Beacons and on Dartmoor, enduring a 4 day/3 night expedition with her team, made up of 5 students in Year 13.



Luisana has developed into a confident, resilient, dedicated student during her time in Sixth Form and we would like to think part of this is due to her participation in the Duke of Edinburgh's Gold Award programme.

We are extremely proud of all our Sixth Form students who participate in the DofE and the challenges they take on to achieve the award. All participants will want to join with us in celebrating Luisana's Gold Award achievement.

Luisana will attend the Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award presentation at St James' Palace later this year.

“The Duke of Edinburgh has been a challenging experience, but we have gained many skills and memories throughout.”

Luisana Toner

“I would recommend DofE to everyone as an experience not to be missed to develop perseverance, determination and bonds with your team.”

Eleanor Lovejoy

Sixth Form DofE

In October ten of us from Sixth Form completed our Gold Duke of Edinburgh expedition in the Lake District. It was an incredible experience that I will always remember.

One of the highlights was climbing up the side of a waterfall to reach Stickle Tarn and our wildcamp for the second night. Climbing across the rocks at the top of the waterfall and looking down to see how far we'd climbed, while carrying our rucksacks, made me realise just how much it is possible to achieve.

Being surrounded by amazing views 24/7 and surviving solely on what you can carry in your rucksack, gives you a sense of perspective about what is important; that is difficult to find normally.

Eleanor Lovejoy

On 21st October two groups of St. Joseph's Catholic College students participating in the Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award went to the Lake District where they spent 4 days and 3 nights walking, camping and navigating through the outdoors, from the easy countryside to mountainous terrain, as part of their final expedition.

They walked a total of sixty-one kilometres which is equivalent to thirty-seven miles. During the expedition the weather was mostly overcast with frequent showers. The weather was particularly challenging when they were ascending the side of Dungeon Ghyll because the footing wasn't particularly stable and became slippery when wet.

Each group chose an aim to complete during the expedition, one group chose to document what the different historical features of the Lake District the other group measured how weather affects their mood. Throughout the expeditions we have gained many memories such as Shannon's birthday, sleeping by a prison, being attacked by horses and doing the conga with fruit.

Luisana Toner & Andrea Carnero Charles

Year 11 Mock Interviews



On Thursday 5th March Year 11 students participated in the annual Mock Interview event with 23 local business partners.

The event provided students with an invaluable opportunity to prepare for and sit an interview with an employer and receive constructive feedback. The process was taken very seriously, with students required to fill out an application form describing their key skills, interests and qualities, and attend College in business dress.

The Mock Interview experience enabled students to recognise things about themselves that they might not have been aware of, such as how quietly they speak, or how well they make eye contact. They also learnt the importance of filling out the application form effectively to ensure they were invited for interview. Additionally, it gave students much to reflect on as they prepare for their exams and in considering life beyond College.

Mike Fellow, Managing Director of Mercedes Benz Swindon said: "I was delighted to take part in the mock interviews at St Joseph's today. The students were well prepared and clearly ready for the world of work. I was really impressed with their enthusiasm, smart clothes, attitude and maturity – they were a credit to the school and their parents. I am sure that these mock interviews with local Swindon business representatives will help prepare them for the real thing and I wish them well."

Examinations

As Year 11 prepare for their examinations, I thought I would take this opportunity to remind you of some key dates:

- 15 MAY** Celebration Assembly
- 22 MAY** Leavers Mass & Last day
- 23 MAY** Last Examination
- 26 JUN** Prom

Hints and Tips

Examinations can be stressful times, so here are some hints and tips:

- Make sure your child eats breakfast the morning before an exam.
- Encourage your child to bring a bottle of water to the exam.
- Your child Your child should revise in chunks of 20-30 minutes, then take a short break.
- Encourage your child to allow time to exercise.
- Have a revision timetable pinned up so all the family can see it.
- Your child should revisit topics regularly and revise different subjects during the day.
- Make sure your child eats healthily.
- Make sure your child gets enough sleep.

Sixth Form Physics Workshop

We were very pleased to have the opportunity to take a group of students to Bristol University, where they were able to experience working in an undergraduate lab.

We took our current Year 12 Physicists and a group of budding Physicists from Year 11 to Bristol where they were able to take part in workshops, including the 'Wave' workshop and discover what studying Physics at a higher level is really like.

A member of the Russell Group, Bristol University is an internationally distinguished and recognised university. We are very fortunate to have excellent links with Bristol and many of our Sixth Form students have successfully applied to study a range of degree programmes there.

We will continue to offer opportunities to visit Bristol, and other universities to Sixth Form students over the coming year.

Sixth Form Exams

All students have now been given their examination timetables. Any student who has not collected their timetable, or has any queries, can initially speak to Mrs Baxter.

As we enter the examination season, we would stress the importance of being focussed and prepared. Make sure you are using your independent study time, either in College or at home, wisely.

Sixth Form Applications

Sixth Form offer letters have now been sent to all Year 11 students who applied to study with us in September.

Any student who has not received a letter, or has any queries regarding their subject choices, can contact Mrs Baxter in the Sixth Form at jbaxter@stjosephscollege.net

We look forward to seeing lots of our Year 11 students in September and wish them all 'Good Luck' in your GCSE examinations.

U16 Football



Eilish Skeates, Evangline Rouse, Eva Marques, Grace Dabner, Kathleen Gurung and Danielle Granato.

St. Joseph's girls played against Churchfields on the 10th March.

Both sides played well but St. Joseph's won 3-1. There was a brilliant first half goal scored by Ellen Causer. The girls came in at half time and regrouped. Churchfield's came out strong in the second half however, St. Joseph's were just as strong with a wonderful goal from Danielle Granato to make the score 2-0.

Churchfields regrouped and a scored a goal to make the score 2-1. The last five minutes were tough with both teams making strong tackles and brilliant passing. With some fantastic team work Danielle Granato scored in the last couple of minutes to make the score 3-1. Congratulations to the girls!

Year 7 Football



Shannon Whitely, Liaba Khan, Riya Saiji, Megan Stallard, Megan Cole Smith, Benedicta Boadu, Charlie Burston and Megan Struve

Well done to the Year 7 girls who played excellently against Royal Wootton Bassett and Warneford. They represented the College fantastically and we are extremely proud of them. Well Done!

Year 8 Football

Well done to the Year 8 football team who have played fantastically over numerous games! We would also like to wish them good luck for their cup game against Dorcan!

Team: Charlie Tinson, Jessica Campbell, Lucia Gugliotta, Amelia Sharp, Thulani Lewinska, Melia Horgan, Shannon King and Aimee Prinzi.

Year 7 Football

Congratulations to the Year 7 Boys Football Team!

The team have had a very successful season this term and remain undefeated - with the only blemish being a 2-2 draw at Nova Hreod; a game we were winning until Nova equalised in 'extra-time'! (not that we're bitter!)

They are currently through to the Quarter Finals of the Swindon Schools Cup, where they face Braydon Forest, and the Semi-Finals of the Wiltshire Schools Cup - against Isambard.

We have rotated the squad several times to give as many players as possible a good chance to make an impact. The boys have all been very supportive of one another and hopefully by next edition you will see photos of them lifting a trophy... fingers crossed!

**On behalf of everyone
at St. Joseph's,
may I wish you all
a very Happy Easter!**

Paul Hughes, Principal