



ST. JOSEPH'S NEWS

October 2013 Issue 20

www.stjosephscollege.net



Dear Parents and Carers,

I would like to begin by thanking everyone who has given me such a warm welcome in my first term as Principal. There is a great community atmosphere in the College and it is this positive ethos upon which I know we can build the future success of St. Joseph's.

Paul Hughes, Principal

Exam Results

As a College, we were pleased that the number of students achieving 5 A*- C, including English and Mathematics, rose from 42% to 67%. 84% of students achieved A*- C in English and 74% achieved this benchmark in Mathematics. 82% of students achieved the 5 A*-C benchmark. There are many stories of remarkable individual achievement and success. The following students represent our 'Top Ten' highest achievers:

Deannah Blackley, Andrea Carnero Charles, Jordan Isgin, Jennifer Jurga, Kate Karpinski, Eleanor Lovejoy, Tess Pringle, Karolina Smolicz, Naomi South and Gregory Winiarski.

All these students achieved twelve or more A or A* equivalent grades, with all of them attaining at least seven A* successes. Jennifer and Tess achieved twenty five A* grades between them.

Our A2 results were in line with our expectations and show some improvements overall. Our average point score per entry was 235 for A Level or equivalent Level 3 course. Some notably successful students were:

Angelo Caruso (Winchester, History and Modern World)

Joseph Chapman (Bournemouth, English)

Beverley Collins (Coventry, Law)

Adam Davies (Oxford, St Edmund Hall, Earth Sciences)

Liwia Dekert (Swindon College, Art Foundation)

Dana Farah (Cardiff, Pharmacy)

Ofsted

Whilst we are enormously proud of the individuals mentioned above we are nevertheless all very disappointed that our Ofsted inspection result has, as

you know, placed the College into 'Special Measures'. I would like to reassure you all that the governors, the staff and I will be doing everything possible to ensure that this situation is reversed. The good results in the summer do not alter our priorities for the new College year, which remain tightly focussed on improving the progress of all our students. We are expecting another visit from Ofsted in the very near future, to look at the progress we are making through our College Improvement Plan.

Parents & Carers Forums and the College Improvement Plan

On 8th October we held our first Parents & Carers Forum. Our intention for this first meeting was to explain the Ofsted judgement, our response to the report and to engage with parents in our community. Over 130 parents attended the meeting, which lasted for three hours. Senior staff and governors discussed the judgement with parents and looked at how we aim to move the College forward. Our plan is detailed, with clear actions, outcomes, lines of responsibility and timelines. To sum it up simply, we need to do everything in our power to ensure that every child, regardless of ability, makes as much progress as possible over the five or seven years in our care. To this end my work this year, and that of others on the leadership team, will focus on what is happening in lessons. Consequently my senior team, along with external advisors, will be watching more lessons and sampling more of the students' work, with particular emphasis on monitoring the quality of what we are doing. It is also my intention that we should spend more time asking the students about their experience in the classroom, which will help us to identify best practice across the College, what works well and what is not working so well. I am absolutely clear that the main thing which will improve the outcomes for our young people is what happens in the classroom.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the parents and carers who came to the meeting on 8th October. It was uplifting to hear the kind words of encouragement you have given to me and my colleagues, as well as constructive criticisms put forward. Future forums will now focus on various aspects of our College Improvement Plan, with parents and carers having an opportunity to ask questions and comment on what

we are doing. I believe this will be a constructive move forward for the College, improving communication and strengthening our community. Dates and topics for the next forums are:

Thursday 7th November 2013: Key Stage 3 (Literacy, Marking, Homework) and progress update – Interim Executive Board.

Tuesday 14th January 2014: Key Stage 4: Achievement and progress update

Thursday 13th March 2014: Key Stage 5 and progress update

Wednesday 7th May 2014: Teaching and Learning/ Curriculum developments

Thursday 10th July 2014: Barriers to learning, SEN and progress update

All meetings will start at 6pm.

Section 48 Inspection

The College has had a visit from two inspectors appointed by the Clifton Diocese. This inspection covers the school's Catholic life and worship and its provision, work and achievements in the field of Religious Education. We have had very positive verbal feedback from this inspection and are awaiting the full written report, which will be made available to all parents.

Staffing

The start of the school year has seen several new colleagues join the College and a number of existing staff move to different posts within our staffing structure. I would like to take this opportunity to wish them every success.

Curriculum Changes

As part of our response to the Ofsted report we have started to make some changes to the curriculum. Flexible Friday and some aspects of the enrichment programme have gone. We have also undertaken a review of our entry policy for exams at Key Stage 4. As a result we will be making some more significant changes. For example, the requirement for students to take Modern Foreign Languages exams at the end of Year 10 will be dropped so our Languages students will continue studying into Year 11 and take their exams at the end of that academic year. Further changes will follow as we undertake a full curriculum review for implementation in September 2014.

Prayer

Loving and generous Lord, help me to live in loving and generous ways that are pleasing to you. Show me ways in which I can use the gifts that you have given me to the best of my ability. And especially make me be aware to the needs of others.

I ask this in your name. Amen.

Governors' Update

The governing body welcome our new Principal, Paul Hughes, again and we hope parents and students are already seeing the impact of the changes he has implemented. The appointment of this highly experienced Headteacher reflects the aspirations of the governing body to drive change with a leader who is able to move the College forward after a difficult period. The governors were very pleased with the 2013 GCSE results, which are the College's best ever results, and reflect a great deal of work by students, staff and governors. Although we are all disappointed that the Ofsted inspection, due to the timing of the exam results, was not able to recognise this work we do wish to congratulate all staff and students for their efforts. Not only are these landmark results for the College they are some of the best results in the whole of Swindon.

Many of the items in the Ofsted action plan relating to leadership and management had already been addressed before the Ofsted inspection but, as the report noted, it is too early to see the full impact. One of the changes the governing body have made is the introduction of the executive board, who will meet regularly and support the Principal to drive the changes required to once again make St. Joseph's an outstanding school. It is intended that this smaller executive board will enable faster reactions to any changes deemed necessary over the next year. We will keep parents fully informed of any significant changes as they occur and also plan to provide regular updates through a series of parents and carers forums, the first of which has already taken place. The interim executive board will include two external education experts. The names of the board members will be listed on the College website shortly.

There is still much work to do to consolidate the improvements made in the last year but we are confident that the correct people are in place to enable this to happen. The governors recognise that this is a worrying time for parents and so please do use the parents and carers forums to speak to any Governor directly or, alternatively, contact the Clerk to Governors (in the first instance) – Michelle Ferris at mferris@stjosephs.swindon.sch.uk. The College continues to be oversubscribed and we are very grateful for the very many expressions of support that we have received from the community for the actions that we are taking.

Stephen Lake, Chair of Governors

Change of Address or Phone Number

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

Dates for your diary

25th October	College closes for students
4th November	Staff training day
5th November	College reopens for students
12th November	GCSE Music & College Singers, 7.30pm
14th November	Year 11 Parents' Evening (ABLM), 5.30pm
19th November	Year 11 Parents' Evening (CESW), 5.30pm
4th - 6th December	College production, 7.30pm
12th December	Year 12/13 Parents' Evening, 5.30pm
19th December	Christmas Services
20th December	College closes for students

Review Dates on ePortal

Year 11	Monday 11th November 2013
Year 12/13	Wednesday 4th December 2013
Year 10	Monday 9th December 2013
Year 9	Tuesday 10th December 2013
Year 7/8	Wednesday 11th December 2013

Examination Certificates

Examination Certificates awarded in August 2013 will be available for collection from Wednesday 27th November.

Current Year 10/11 students - please collect from STUDENT Reception

Current Sixth Form students – please collect from Mrs Baxter.

External candidates and students who have left – please collect from MAIN Reception

N.B. Exam certificates are often needed for job or university applications, so it is important you collect them. If you do not collect your certificates within one year, St. Joseph's reserve the right to dispose of your certificates, without any liability. It will then be your responsibility to obtain and pay for any replacements you may need in the future.



Coming soon - 'Joseph and his Amazing Technicolour Dream Coat'

Students have been rehearsing hard for the upcoming College production, the fabulously entertaining story of 'Joseph and his Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat'. The performances will be on the 4th, 5th and 6th December, starting at 7.30pm. Tickets will be available after half term from Reception.

Swindon Youth Festival of Literature, November 11th - 15th

This year sees St. Joseph's involved in its sixth year of the Swindon Youth Festival of Literature. As always there is a packed calendar of events:



Monday

Inter-school Book Quiz, Dorcan Academy

St. Joseph's teams from Years 7, 8 and 9 will be pitting their wits against teams from the other Swindon secondary schools.

Twelve Year 8 students will be at Kingsdown School to see storytelling sensation 'Annamation'.

Tuesday

Author Ali Sparkes will be at St. Joseph's talking to Years' 7 and 8 about her hugely successful writing career.

Twelve Year 10 students will be at Commonweal School working with professional artist Fred Blunt.

Wednesday

Children's author Jeremy Strong will be at the College entertaining 250 Year 6 pupils from our feeder primary schools.

Thursday

Performance poet Ash Dickinson will be regaling Year 7 with his speedy delivery in a Poetry Workshop.

The Fastest Story in the West - Year 9 will be helping to write a detective story in collaboration with teams from all of Swindon's secondary schools.

Friday

Fifty Year 8 & 9 students will go to the Wyvern Theatre to see Derek Landy. There will also be Illustration and Short Story Competitions. Please see Mrs Moss in the Independent Learning Centre for details of all events.

Dropping items into Reception

We have noticed an increase in the amount of parents dropping off forgotten lunches, books and messages recently. Although we appreciate it is sometimes necessary, please can this be kept to a minimum, as it disrupts lessons when we have to continuously interrupt the classes.

Art Department News

The Art, Design and Technology department had cause for celebration again when GCSE Art results achieved above national expectations for the fifth year in a row. Our food technologists were also very successful, with A* and A grades achieved in all ADT subjects. Well done to all concerned and best wishes for the future.

A large percentage of our A2 Art students have gone on to pursue Art based careers, gaining places on the Foundation Art course at Swindon College. Liwia Dekert, who achieved an A* in A2 Art, is now completing her foundation and applying for a place at the prestigious Ruskin College of Art in Oxford. All BTEC Engineering students achieved their target grades and one A2 graphics student managed to increase his final results by three grades in his final year. Well done to all students.

Up and coming trips

There will be a trip to London galleries on Friday 29th November: Year 10 to the V&A and Year 11 to the National Portrait. Sixth Form will also be accompanying these trips, adding to their portfolio work. Letters will be sent home after the term break. On the 23rd October, AS Photography students will also be visiting the Fox Talbot Museum in Lacock. This is a great chance to visit the birthplace of photography, as well as seeing locations used in the film industry. Look out for the locations used in Harry Potter!

GCSE Textiles

We are now offering GCSE Textiles and this has been a very popular option choice. The current class of 22 is really enjoying the opportunity to work with fibres and fabrics.

Celebrating our cultural food

Congratulations to all the (now) Year 8 students who took part in the Community Cohesion Cooking Competition at the end of last year. We had a delicious array of Indian, Polish, English, Italian and Caribbean courses, celebrating the food from the College's various cultures. Particular congratulations to Mabel Fernandes and Swizel Fernandes who walked away with the coveted Wooden Spatula.

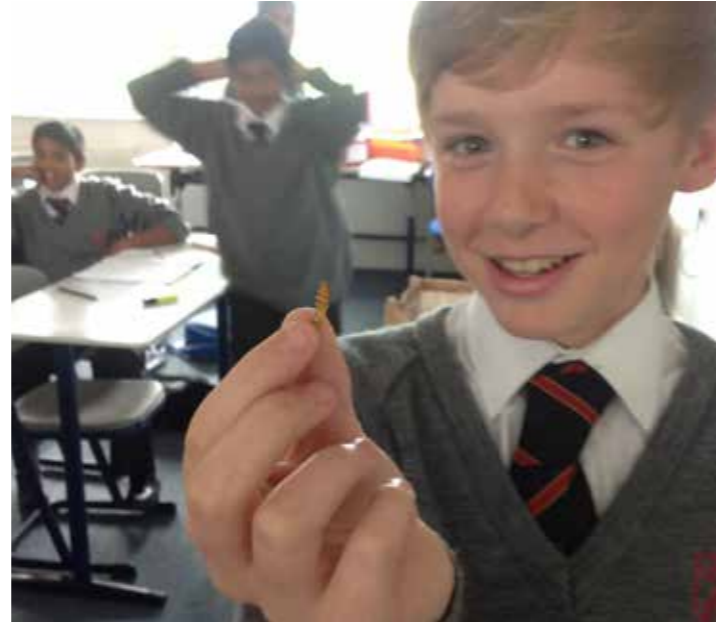


Cuisines from around the world

In the 'geography of food' this week students in Year 8 tried a range of cuisines from around the world. This included beef jerky, wasabi peas and a mixture of crickets, worms and bugs.

The students acted as food detectives to work out which country the food originated from. We are now studying how a country's geography has direct links with its food and culture.

The Department does have a few meal worms left if anyone would like to try some...



Maths Challenge

The College is entering the individual and team Maths Challenges this year and, as with everything you do, it's better if you practise! Mr Davies will be running sessions at Monday lunchtimes in S14 or speak to your teacher if you want to take part.

The Senior Challenges are in November, with Intermediate and Junior in February and April, so plenty of time to get thinking mathematically.

ICE

Are you an Independent thinker? Are you Curious and Engaged in your learning? Come along to ICE during Monday lunchtimes in S14 to get Engaged in various different activities to promote Independent thought in Curious learners. Open to all students in all Key Stages during both lunchtimes!

Fantasy Football

The league has just re-launched and St. Joseph's is taking part, with students, teachers and parents having the chance to be crowned Champion of the League. Registrations need to be completed by 19th October if you want to score points from the start of the season, but you can join afterwards and still collect monthly awards. Go to www.schoolsfl.com, set up your team and then join the official St. Joseph's league (PIN no. 5797783). For more information please see Mr Firth.

Flexible pathway students 'Make their Mark for a Tenner' to support Cafod

At the beginning of October we had a visit from Cafod, who told us about 'Make your Mark for a Tenner', a scheme where you raise money from £10. All the money that we raise will go to children in Kenya, towards funding for schools, food, farming and other important things developing countries need in their daily lives.

This programme is known as 'Harvest of Talents'. Not only do we raise money but we also raise awareness of what Cafod does to support developing countries. St. Joseph's is also one of only eight schools to take up the challenge.

We (Flexible Pathway students in Year 10) are completing a problem solving key skill, based on an enterprising idea of how to make a profit out of £10. Our problem solving skills teach us how to plan, do and review problem solving, all within a time limit.

Make sure you check out our fundraising events - watch out for the posters plus information on student briefing.



Family Fast Day Mass

The Family Fast Day Mass was very enjoyable. The Priest was Canon John. The Choir, which was led by Miss Collins, included students from nearly all the year groups. The readings and bidding prayers were read by 9W. One of the great things about the Mass was that all the school - about 1,200 students - filled The Street. It felt like I was actually in church with everyone singing and praising God. Like Mr Hughes said, '...when we're in The Street like this, The Street becomes our church'. I think that the Mass was a good way to start the year.

Ellen Barrett



Going beyond ourselves in EL Salvador



The summer saw students and staff travel to El Salvador in South America to work on a three week project, helping the Arcatao Christian community to build a memorial to those who lost their lives during the Civil War, which ravaged the country between 1979 and 1992.

Everyone on the trip did a considerable amount of fundraising, through a mix of sponsored walks, quiz nights, cake sales and various other activities. Having worked hard to get to El Salvador, the students found it an enriching experience, culturally and personally. They got to know the local builders who they worked alongside and the community they spent time with. Hearing their experiences of the Civil War was harrowing but also brought home just why the memorial was so important.

"One woman, Rosa, who accompanied us on many occasions and soon became our 'El Salvadoran mum', said to us, 'If the rocks could speak, they would tell you of all the horrors they had seen'. She invited us to choose and take a small rock so we would remember them. Even without the rock, this is a story I will never forget."

Dana Farah, Year 13

Inspired by Charlie Higson

On the 16th September, some of the students on the Year 10 Alternative Curriculum course went to see Charlie Higson talk about his new book *The Fallen* at Dorcan Academy.

First of all some students from Dorcan performed a dance to the song 'Thriller', which tied in with the theme of the novel. Then we watched one of the trailers to the book. I thought it was pretty scary but I was intrigued. Charlie Higson came on and gave us a talk on how he came up with the plot of his new book and about how he uses his sons as guinea pigs, reading them drafts at bedtime. One night one of his sons came into his room sweating and crying after having a nightmare about *The Fallen*. He said he knew he was onto a winner after that!

I loved listening to the author because he was very funny and the trailer actually made me want to read all of *The Enemy* and the *Young Bond* series'. The talk has inspired my IGCSE coursework.

Eleanor Brown

Sixth Form Awards Evening



Congratulations to all Year 13 students who were awarded subject prizes at our annual Awards Evening in September.

Well done to Dale Nunes and Daniel Bright on winning the Phil Burchill Cup for Achievement. Both gained four 'A' grades in their AS levels this year, a fantastic achievement.

Oxbridge Applications

Good luck to Dale Nunes (Medicine), Daniel Bright (Chemistry) and Ryan Perkins (Philosophy, Politics and Economics) with their applications to Oxford University for 2014.

Congratulations to Jordan Isgin and Robert Waterhouse who have secured places on the 'Access to Bristol' University scheme. Their applications were successful against thousands of applicants and we wish them well on this programme.

Destinations

We are always very pleased and proud of where our students go when they leave us. This year, as well as going onto universities, we had students taking gap years (with deferred places), working in industry (Year in Industry scheme), apprenticeships and local work placements. Below are just a selection of the places our students went on to.



Adam Davies
Earth Sciences,
Oxford University



Beverley Collins
Law,
Coventry University



Dana Farah
Gap Year
(deferred place Pharmacy,
Cardiff University)



Liam Traynor
Gap Year Placement,
Chemistry Laboratory

Are you in Year 11? Apply for Sixth Form now.

Applications to our Sixth Form are now being taken. Apply online by visiting the post sixteen section of the website (www.stjosephscollege.net) or ask your tutor for an application form. As well as being able to apply online, you can also view a photo gallery of what makes up College life for our Sixth Form students on the website and see just what is on offer if you choose to stay on for post sixteen education at St. Joseph's.

Also on the website is the new post sixteen prospectus, with information on the wide range of courses available, including A and AS Levels, BTEC and Level 2 options.

If you have any questions on applying please speak to Miss Foley, Associate Leader for Post Sixteen, or Mrs Bailey, Assistant Principal, Key Stage 5.

Attendance

Attendance at College is extremely important. Days off school add up to lost learning. The more days off school, the less likely students are to make the necessary progress with their studies. Research has shown a close correlation between attendance and GCSE results. Students with less than 90% attendance achieve on average between a half/one GCSE below that of their peers. Attendance is monitored by the Local Authority, by Ofsted and by our Governing Body.

There will be times when students are ill, have unavoidable medical appointments and unforeseen family emergencies. The College is very sympathetic to these occurrences. However, there are a significant number of requests for holidays in term time and in some cases these holidays are being taken without consent, despite previous correspondence on this matter.

I would like to take this opportunity to inform you that due to the change in Government legislation that came into effect on the 1st September 2013, I am no longer able to authorise absences including holidays in term time unless they are in exceptional circumstances.

Parents who need to request leave of absence for their children are asked to write a letter outlining the reasons for the request to the Principal. Only in exceptional circumstances will authorised absence be granted. What constitutes an exceptional circumstance is at the discretion of the Principal and may include unforeseen family emergencies, illness or bereavement. The Attendance Officer will need medical evidence for periods of illness over 3 days.

If an absence is not authorised you are at risk of receiving a Penalty Notice.

A Penalty Notice is a fixed fine issued by Swindon Borough Council at the schools request. From the 1st September 2013 the fine will be £60 if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid within 28 days. A Penalty Notice can be issued to each parent for each child. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice could result in prosecution through the courts.

St. Joseph's Catholic College regularly achieves over 95% attendance, which puts it in the top 20% of schools nationally for attendance. This is due to the consistent efforts of parents and the College working together to raise and maintain attendance.

Thank you for your support and understanding in this matter.

Sweeney Todd

Two of our students, Elizabeth Webb (Year 13) and Henry Firth (Year 10), are starring in main roles in the SALOS Production of 'Sweeney Todd' at the Wyvern on 22-26 October.

See the Wyvern Theatre website for more details.

Silver Duke of Edinburgh Expedition, Dartmoor

From Friday 27th to Sunday 29th September we went on our final Silver Duke of Edinburgh expedition. Over the three day period we had to walk approximately 50km over various terrain, such as moorland, forests, streams and endless amounts of fields! Luckily our training expedition back in July came in handy as we had to do a lot of bearing and compass work in order to avoid getting lost.

During our first evening we had to 'wild camp', which meant being completely self-sufficient and relying solely on what nature provides you with (e.g. rivers enabling you to have water). We all found this evening great fun, as we sat in a large circle and talked and shared stories until it was dark and time to sleep. Unfortunately on the second day we woke up to torrential rain and thunder and lightning. This didn't put a dampener on any of us, as we knew it was only a short day of walking until we could reach the second camp.

Overall the expedition was thoroughly enjoyable, everyone passed and, as a result, a majority of the Silver candidates are intending to do their Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award as well!



Well done to all our Gold and Silver Participants

The Duke of Edinburgh Silver Final and Gold Practice expeditions tramped over the wilds of Dartmoor at the end of September.

The weather varied from bright sunshine to thick mist and finally heavy rain. They continued to navigate in some very difficult condition and, despite walking in bogs, streams and getting very wet, they all maintained a sense of humour and finished the expeditions.

Overall 23 Year 11 Students have completed the expedition section of the Silver and should be congratulated on their fantastic achievement.

The nine Gold students have their final expedition in the Lake District at the end of October.

House News

Evesham

We welcomed 7B and 7W to Evesham House in September. They have really settled into the College and are a brilliant addition to the House. Well done to Years 7, 8 and 9, who are leading the House Points within their year groups. Congratulations to the following Year 10s for winning their Bronze Art Award - Moses Fernandes, Megan Webb, Caitlin Dooley, Freeanna De Braganca, Cynthia Mandel, Crisha Rodrigues, Teresa Farthing, Rachel Delahay and Laura Brown. As a result, Evesham House are ahead of the other Houses at this stage of the term. This follows on from winning the Summer Cup at the end of last year. What a fantastic welcome as your new Head of House!

We will soon need to consider charity fundraising events for the upcoming year. This year we will be raising money for Swindon Young Carers.

If you are involved with any trips, competitions or events over the year please remember to take photographs or write about your experiences. These can be shared with Mrs Hogan for the newsletter, Collective Worship or the House board.

Glastonbury

A big thank you to Mabel Fernandes (8C) and Aleesha Brewster (7C) for their excellent posters about Glastonbury House, which they made using their own initiative. Check them out on the house board.

Well done to all those Glastonbury pupils who gave up their time to help on the Year 6 tutor evening earlier this month, your efforts are greatly appreciated.

We will soon be planning our first fundraising events of the year and we will be returning to our original house charity this year, Prospect Hospice, who provide quality end of life care to people in the community. We raised a lot of money for this charity in the past so we need all Glastonbury pupils to think what you can do this year.

Buckfast

The recent plea for prayers saw one member of Buckfast pen this inspirational offering:

In our community, Lord, may we strive to achieve great heights and through your grace might become a better citizen and an independent person.

Beneath the banner proudly waving, St. Joseph's students one and all. Together we stand with our hearts united, eager to answer any moment's call. Lord, through your grace, may we continue to keep the spirit throughout our academic years.

With pride and honour ever forward, Lord may we march through life to victory. Lord may peace be our shield and love our guide. Lord teach us to love our college and wherever we may be, the knowledge we gained and the love we share; may it always remain in our hearts.

A Rodrigues, 10S

Walsingham

It has been a solid start to Walsingham's campaign in pursuit of the Christmas Cup, with all year groups contributing well to our House Point tally. Years 7, 9 and 10 have been exceptional all year at collecting rewards, achieving the highest number of praise postcards and certificates in their year groups! However, we have fared less well with commendations and generally lag behind the other year groups. Big congratulations must go to Grace Fitzgerald (7E), Glancy Crasto and Maciej Demidowicz (8M), Ruth Holliday (9E), John Ramos (10M) and Aaron Willoughby (11E) for achieving the highest number of commendations for their house in their year groups. Great efforts, but the whole House must contribute in order to catch current leaders Evesham.

There was a good response to the plea for prayers recently. Particular thanks to 7E who combined their ideas and created an excellent prayer on the theme of friendship:

Dear God,

Thank you for our friends that we have made at St. Joseph's this term. Also, thank you for our old friends too.

My friends are there for me in both the good and bad times. They cheer me up when I am down and are there to help me celebrate my successes. We are both there for one another.

My friends are funny, amazing and kind. They help guide me through my life.

Please look after all of our friends wherever they may be. Amen.

Many Walsingham students recently completed their Duke of Edinburgh awards. Battling wind and rain in their final expedition, they triumphed and should be applauded for their achievements. Well done to Jerzy Pilipczuk, Megan Nash, Lily Loughlin, William Ash, Snidon Martins, Brandon Jones, Lucy Bailey, Emma Rajska and Megan Toop-Rose. Their achievements have inspired many others within the House, with exceptional interest in the Bronze Award being shown by our Year 9 groups.

Further congratulations must go to our Bronze Arts Award students Donally Gonsalves and Daniella Granatto. During Year 9 they created a fantastic body of work exploring the Arts. Such was the quality that the examiner even commented that much of the work was of GCSE quality. High praise indeed, well done.

