

Blessed William Howard Catholic School A Specialist Arts College



arts colleges

February 2008

Message from the head

It doesn't seem long since the Christmas break but here we are at the beginning of the second half of the Spring term. The early date of Easter this year makes it a very short term. Shorter terms have the same amount of work that needs doing but in less time!

This term will see a lot of preparation for Year 11 who will sit their exams in the summer. There have been a number of events to support them—this included an event on a Saturday on “Journeys End” - a text being studied by Year 11. The Spotlight Initiative was launched that will see a number of pupils taking part in sessions designed to improve their

performance. There are many revision sessions that will be run by departments for pupils and a whole year group event on improving study skills. We should also remember our Year 9 pupils who will be busy preparing for their SATs that take place in May. Please remember these pupils in your prayers.

We began Lent on Ash Wednesday. This year we decided to distribute ashes to all pupils. A group of staff held a small service with Fr Paul Haines and Deacon David MacCarroll. From there the ashes were taken to classrooms, a small service held and ashes distributed. This was very

successful and I was impressed with how the pupils took part. It was both prayerful and reflective.

The Year 7 and 8 disco was a great success—I was particularly impressed with Nick Hickey and Adrian Hassell of Y8 whose dancing made a great job of cleaning the hall floor! A great time was had by all the students. My thanks go to the staff, sixth form and PTA who supported this event. Special thanks goes to Mr Johnson who organized the event.

Finally, thanks to all who are working hard to take the school forward—pupils, staff, parents and governors.

A New Curriculum for the 21st Century

Parents may be aware that there is much preparation for educational reforms to begin taking place from September 2008. There are new syllabi for Post 16 courses and a move to broaden the curriculum throughout the whole of the 14-19 age range with the advent of new specialised diplomas designed to provide academic knowledge and skills more tailored to the needs of the modern world. Key Stage 3 is also under review with a

reduction in so-called prescriptive content in favour of more skills based learning through cross-curricular themed projects. At Blessed William Howard we are looking at ways to meet the demands of new proposals but, to keep you informed of the so-called ‘big picture’ you may wish to visit the following website.

<http://curriculum.qca.org.uk/developing-your-curriculum/what-has-changed-and-why/index.aspx>

Here you can download an overview document. Planning is an early stage at present with all schools sharing ideas which will take a few years to develop to full maturity. It is the Government's intention that all schools will have every aspect in place by 2013.

Volume 3

4th February 2008

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Fundraising



Fundraising

Four students from Year 10 (accompanied by Mr Johnson and Mr Richards) braced the cold, donned their Santa outfits and completed the Katherine House Santa Dash around Stafford town centre on Sunday 16th December. They raised in excess of £200 for the Hospice. The pupils were Emma Cockroft, Brittany McAdams, Ben Franklin and Tom Riley. Emma was the youngest fundraiser at the event who raised the highest amount.

A group of Year 8 volunteers are also raising funds for Katharine House Hospice by participating in the 'Flourishing Fivers' fundraiser. Katharine House has lent each pupil the sum of £5 and using their initiative and support from Mr Johnson and James Lulley from the Hospice they have to use

this to raise more money which they then donate back. One student (Dina Grinstead 8A) has already tripled the amount of money that she was given by using it to make cakes and then organising a cake sale at breaktime.



Mr Johnson will be running in the Flora London

Marathon in April 2008 to raise money for Shelter. The school already supports the charity by using it as a case study in English and also they highlight the efforts of charity in the KS3 PSME extended tutor periods during the year. Pupils are invited to use their influence and initiative to raise as much money as they can and donate it to the charity via the school. The pupils who raise the

biggest amount will receive the £30 that would have been the ballot entry as their reward.

Mr Johnson would also like to thank the school, pupils and parents for support with fundraising for Shelter and the London Marathon.

8C students raised £194.60 during the Autumn for Children in Need.

Year 8 students held a Family Fast Day Soup Lunch for CAFOD raising £90.00.

Year 8 students led by Mr Edmondson helped make over 60 shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child.

Jess Picken and Charlotte Smith of 8W along with Year 9 pupils, raised £56.84 for a Kenyan Orphanage.



School Council

Mrs Fryer and the School Council have worked together to improve the conditions of the playground, there are now secure areas for children to leave their possessions. Areas marked out for team sports and areas specifically for students to enjoy their lunch in peace. Further improvements are on the way.

The School Council have been working towards having a Mufti Day on the last day of term—Thursday 20th March to raise money for charity. The School Council

will be involved with the collection of funds and assist with the Liturgy preparation.

The Key Stage 4 Council are organising their prom with awards and disco etc and looking at the possibility of producing a year book.



Key Stage 3 Council members are working towards getting more drinking water fountains installed around the school.

Other Key Stage 3 members are looking at designing a

colour A4 booklet style newsletter.

Four members of the Key Stage 3 Council will be attending the Staffordshire Anti-Bullying Conference for young people on 18th March at Uttoxeter Racecourse and will relay the information back to other pupils in school.

There was a Year 7 and 8 Valentine's Disco on Thursday 7th February 2008.



Changes to Home to School Transport Entitlement from September 2008



We have been advised by the Local Authority that there will be additional entitlement to free, home to school transport, which was introduced from September 2008. These changes are a statutory requirement under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and will apply to all pupils of statutory school age, at secondary schools. The changes are summarised here and are also included in the Information to Parents Booklet for the new intake to secondary schools.

- Children of secondary school age, 11–16, from low income families, will be eligible for free home to school transport to one of their three nearest qualifying schools, where they live more than two miles, but

less than six miles from that school.

- Children of secondary school age, 11–16, from low income families will also be eligible for free home to school transport to the nearest school of their religion or denomination, preferred on the grounds of the parent's religion or philosophical belief, where they live more than two miles and less than 15 miles from that school.

One of the aims of the new school travel legislation is to help to secure fair access to schools—especially for children of low income groups, where lack of affordable transport can act as a barrier to choice.

Low income groups are defined as those who are entitled to free school meals, or those families who are entitled to the maximum level of Working Tax Credit.

Eligibility for free transport on low income grounds will be subject to an annual reassessment of financial

circumstances and will be withdrawn from the start of the following academic year, should a family no longer qualify. Parents would then become responsible for making arrangements to ensure their child attends school.

Parents will need to complete an application form if they wish to apply on low income grounds and these will be available from 1st February 2008 from the website www.staffordshire.gov.uk/education/schoolsandcolleges/Schooltransport/TransportPolicy or by contacting our Admissions and Transport Service on 01785 278593. It is recommended that application forms for pupils starting at secondary school in September 2008 are not submitted until after they have received their letter from Admissions and Transport Service at the beginning of March 2008, which confirms their school place.



Home to School Transport Entitlement—September 2008

Salter's Festival of Chemistry

Four Year 8 students will be attending the Salter's Festival of Chemistry at Keele University. A great day for the chosen few, who get to spend an entire day at the Lennard Chemistry laboratories at Keele using up-to-date undergraduate equipment and supported by Keele lecturers and post-

doctorate students. We have not entered for the past two years, but the last time we entered we won!



Music Department Information



Music Department Information

Last term the music department had a very busy schedule. The Junior Choir was invited to sing carols in the Market Square. Although it was a very wet evening the choir managed to raise over £60.00 for the charity Shelter. They also visited the elderly residents of Maple Lodge and gave a much-appreciated Christmas sing-a-long concert. The orchestra, concert band, jazz band, rock band, recorder ensemble, junior choir and senior choir joined together in the Christmas Concert. This was a fabulous evening enjoyed by all. The term concluded with a visit to The New Vic Theatre in Newcastle where 50 students saw a production of 'The Wizard of Oz'.

This term's preparations and rehearsals are already underway. The Staffordshire Newsletter team have invited our Orchestra to perform at The Gatehouse Theatre in Stafford on Wednesday 5th March at 7.00 p.m. (more details will follow at a later date). Both the Junior Choir and Senior Choir are preparing for a Lent / Easter Service which will take place in St. Austin's Church on 13th March at 7.00 p.m.

Unfortunately due to the lack of time it has been decided to postpone the Spring Concert but am considering an open air / bring a picnic Summer Concert instead.

Three school rock bands took part in an audition

organised by Ingestre Hall musician John Percival—their success, to record a CD, is still unknown, but we wish them all the best.

Congratulations to Natasha Nicholson who successfully auditioned for a place to read Music at Trinity College of Music in London.

Also, congratulations to Ruta Labatt in Year 10. She successfully auditioned for a place to study the Violin at Birmingham Conservatoire Saturday Morning Junior School.

Every year, many of our students enter and pass Music Exams. Well done to the following pupils who successfully passed their music exams last term :

Philomena Vaz, Alicia Stanway, James Kendrick, Jobert Johnson all passed their Theory exam.

Thomas Lewis passed his Grade 3 Viola, Alexandra Lewis passed both her Grade 6 Viola and her Grade 5 Theory. Jessica Can passed her Grade 2 Piano and Thomas Hatton passed his Grade 3 Piano.

Catherine Yates passed her French Horn Grade 5 exam with Honours.

Matthew Rose passed his Grade 4 Voice exam with Distinction.

Amy James and Rachel Norbury both passed their Grade 4 Voice exam.

Dominic Jinks passed his Grade 3 Flute exam.

Charlotte Rhodes passed her Grade 4 Clarinet exam.

Francesca Oxley passed her Grade 2 Saxophone exam with Distinction.

Towards the end of this term I will be asking students to register for instrumental lessons for next year. It is important that all students wanting tuition in September register promptly, as late registration will not guarantee lessons. In response to parental request I have this year, organised an interim peripatetic report. You will be receiving this shortly. Any feedback, positive or negative, would be much appreciated.



Weekly Music Rehearsals

Monday : Orchestra in M2

Tuesday : Composition Classes for GCSE Year 11 Music Students in M2

Wednesday : Senior Choir in M1

Thursday : Orchestra in M2

Friday : Junior Choir in M1





Arts College News

The Autumn Term was a characteristically very busy one in terms of Arts College activity with, in addition to many of the regular activities such as the Christmas concert, several new, exciting and successful ventures. The musical activities are recorded under a separate heading but drama also flourished with two Y10-led productions: a superb and hard hitting play about the consequences of drug abuse which was seen by most year groups and an original production combining dance also of "A Christmas Carol".

Primary school outreach teaching in Music, Drama and Dance continues to be appreciated by our Catholic feeder schools and many parents and friends of the school took advantage of the annual Christmas shopping trip and family concert given by the Police National Orchestra in December. A particular commitment this year has been to use some of the arts college funding to promote cross-curricular activities.

One such event was the First World War Battlefields visit to the Somme and Ypres where English and History students looked at poetry in the context of the war. This was something not only to remember but completely unforgettable.

The Spring Term promises to be equally busy with a range of activities including the following:

Y11 Conference: War Poetry and Journey's End (26th January)

'Hitler on Trial' - History Department Theatre Visit and Workshop (29th January)



Dance '08 - performance at the Regent Theatre (1st February)

Y10 West End GCSE coursework theatre trip: 'Blood Brothers' and 'Wicked' (5/6th February)

Y11 & Post 16 visit to Liverpool Tate Gallery (7th February)

'Shakespeare in Schools': Y9 workshop and production day (8th February)

Onatti Theatre: French production: "Les Garçons" for GCSE French students (29th February)

Salford Quays cross-curricular activity: Art, Music, Geography and history students (12th March)

Y8 Drama Trip: Woman in Black (18th March)

Onatti Theatre: German production: "Meine Neue Schwester" for GCSE German students (19th March)

There will be other activities taking place alongside these and parents will be notified as these occur. Thanks are extended to the many staff and students who work hard to ensure that these activities are rewarding and successful.

Lent Choral Service

You are warmly invited to join us in celebrating the Passion Story in a service of readings and music.

The service will be held at St. Austin's Church in Stafford and will involve all members of the schools Junior Choir and Senior Choir.

The service will commence at 7.00 p.m. on Thursday 13th March and will be lead by Father Paul.

Year 11 History Revision Production

Was Hitler solely to blame for causing the Second World War?



The Judge

On Tuesday 29th January, the History Department took a group of 58 Year 11s to the Crescent Theatre in Birmingham, to watch the revision based play, 'Hitler on Trial'. This highly informative production was designed to both explain to us

what a history examiner is looking for, and to consolidate our knowledge and develop our understanding of the causes of WW2 and Adolf Hitler's role in it.

After the morning's 'Exam Busting Workshop', which took us through several past examination answers, the actors put on a play called 'Hitler on Trial', which featured, not surprisingly, the trial of Adolf Hitler! Not only had the actors managed to resurrect Hitler for the occasion, but they also managed to bring back many other well known 'witnesses' from the time, including Woodrow Wilson, Josef Stalin and Benito Mussolini. Despite the actors' somewhat dodgy accents (I'm sure that at the time Mussolini did not have a Welsh accent!) the actors gave very entertaining performances of the famous men, all of whom gave

testimony on Adolf Hitler.

In the end the jury (audience) found Hitler guilty of starting the war, culminating in the highly exciting assassination of Hitler, when a juror (one of the actors) ran on to the stage and shot him! It was a surprising ending to an enjoyable and highly worthwhile revision experience.

By Rachael Venables Y11



Ernst Rohm

