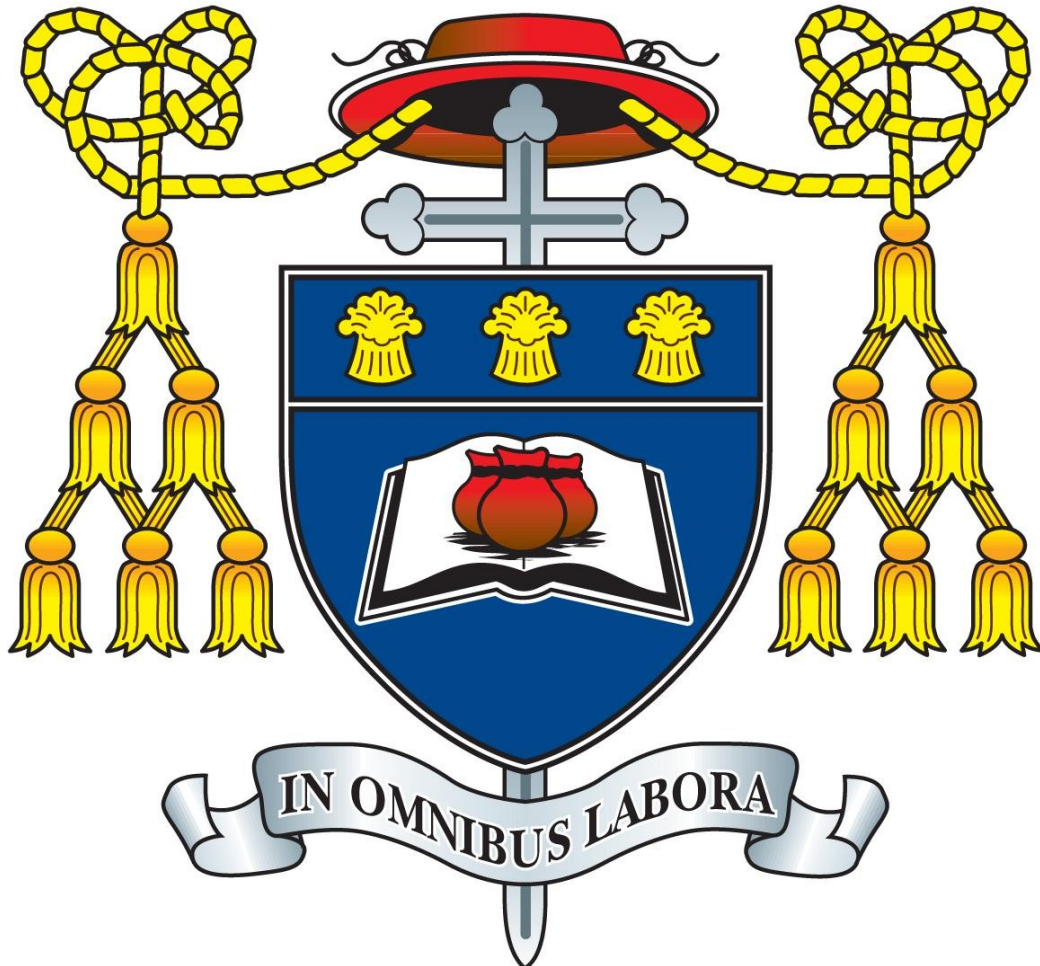


St Nicholas Catholic High School



Head's Newsletter
March 2008

Liturgy

Ash Wednesday Mass was attended by 400 students on a voluntary basis, the Mass was concelebrated by Fr Dwyer and Fr Munroe. Ashes were distributed to all who were present.

Penitential Services are taking place for each Year group during the Lenten period. Year 10 and Year 7 students are taking a lead role in the liturgy and the students from the other year groups have been most appreciative of their contribution. The school has been supported admirably by our local clergy, with up to five of them making themselves available at various times.

Staffing News

Mrs R Coney, Head of Drama, has resigned her post as from Easter
Miss P Pearce, Head's PA, moves to another post
We wish them both every success in the future

Key Stage 3: Year 9 SAT Results 2007

The DCSF recently published the SATS results and we learned that once again the students achieved the highest average points score in the County. In addition the school achieved the highest aggregate of test percentages for Level 5 and above across Mathematics, English and Science. The school has been first in this respect in three out of the last four years.

Congratulations

Congratulations to Alex Hunns Year 11 who has been shortlisted to receive a prize at the High Sheriff's Award for Citizenship at Capesthorne Hall.

Congratulations to Mrs S Goodwin, Mrs C McKeagney and Mr S Turnbull on their starring role in the production 'Enterprise Education – Teaching Key Skills' for Teachers TV. 'St Nicholas School in Cheshire has embedded enterprise across the curriculum focusing on three different subjects to see how teachers of design and technology, English and MFL incorporate key enterprise skills into their lessons'.

Congratulations to the two winners of the Gifted & Talented Logo Design Competition. First place went to both Clare McKay Year 9P and Lucy Butterfield Year 9M.

Well done to all who participated in the County Gifted & Talented Challenge Saturdays Programme:

Art Painting and Drawing

Anne Pickering
Clare Tower
Gioria Irlam
Katie Milne
Lucy Butterfield
Siobhan Pearson
Amy D'Aray

Astronomy

Alexander Shakeshaft
Craig Milne
Florence McAllester
Katie Ross
Liam Adamson
Matthew Timm
Oliver James Rogers
Samuel Watson
Simeon Charles Head

Body Language

James Forsythe

Forensics

Andrew Zimmer
Ashlene Hudson
Helen Willway
Katherine Eddison
William Magee
Zak Trigg

Music & ICT

Georgina Fisher
James Campbell
Patrick Shaw

Saving Planet Earth

Alex Clewlow
Anna Carruthers
Brendan Corscadden
Brett Sinclair
Caitlin Arthur
Christopher McNabb
Elizabeth Ashworth
Grace Faint
Heather McNeill
Lily Doyle
Matthew Haywood
Daisy Collingwood

Congratulations to all the students listed below who represented the school in the Magistrates' Mock Trial Competition:

Sarah Jones (9Q), Dominic Page (9Q), Joshua Chawner (9Q), George Morris (9Q), Jodie Hughes (9M), Sarah Wellington (9M), John Bickerton (9M), Amy Horne (9R), Bethany Cronin (9L), Lydia Costello (9L), Nicola Wellington (9S), Emily Black (9T), Emma Wallwork (9T)

Congratulations to the year 8 Public Speaking Competition Winners:

First Prize – Daisy Collingwood

Second Prize – Harry Fitzpatrick

Third Prize – Fiona McCormack

ECDL

Congratulations to David Lloyd (13U6S) who has gained his ECDL qualification

18 & Under County Cup

Congratulations to Jordan Young, 11P, who was selected to play tennis for Cheshire in the 18 & Under County Cup from Thursday 21 to Sunday 24 February 2008. Jordan won the majority of his matches in the competition.

Sportsmark 2007

A letter has been received from the Department for Children, Schools and Families confirming that "St Nicholas Catholic High School has been awarded Sportsmark 2007. Sportsmark 2007 rewards exceptional delivery of the National School Sport Strategy".

Girls Sporting Achievements

Louise Towers – 7L achieved the following in Cross Country:

1st in Mid Cheshire when representing St Nicholas in the Vale Royal cross country

2nd in Cheshire when representing Mid Cheshire in the Cheshire cross country championship

Louise has now qualified for the London Mini Marathon in April 2008 – an outstanding achievement!

Elizabeth Hodges (11Q) won the 50m Butterfly in a time of 30.97 seconds at the North West Swimming Championship held at Macclesfield on 26 January 2008

Cross-Country

Congratulations to the following pupils who were selected to compete for Mid-Cheshire in the Cheshire Schools Cross-Country Championships in January 2008:

Year 7: Louise Tower, Emma Pyatt, Ellie Thomas, Jamie Milne, Hannah Milne, James Ikin, Russell Jones, Matthew McKay

Years 8 & 9: Fiona Weir, Nicola Wellington, Rebecca Semple, Sarah Wellington, Grace Smith, Rebecca Griffiths, Lewis Healey, Andrew Zimmer, Andrew Apanasoniak and Josh Boyce

Years 10 & 11: Hannah Paver, Jessica Carswell, Natasha Stevens, Mary Hunt, Ellie Taig, James Cotterill, Miles Wady

Particular congratulations to the following pupils from these groups who went on to be selected to run for Cheshire:

Year 7: Louise Tower, Emma Pyatt, Russell Jones, Matthew McKay

Years 8 & 9: Lewis Healey, Andrew Zimmer, Andrew Apanasoniak

Years 10 & 11: Hannah Paver

Girls' PE Department

Year 8 Girls reached the final of the Mid-Cheshire Netball Tournament but were beaten by one goal. The same girls reached the final of the Hockey Mid-Cheshire Tournament and again were beaten by just one goal.

Year 9 Girls reached the final of the Mid-Cheshire Hockey Tournament but were beaten by one goal.

Year 10 Girls won the Mid-Cheshire Netball Tournament.

Year 11 Girls reached the final of the Mid-Cheshire Netball Tournament.

School Routes

The crossing between Music and the Sports Hall is not manned pre-school; all students arriving must use the main crossing opposite the Sixth Form Centre,

which is patrolled. A reminder of this to your son/daughter would be appreciated.

Thank you.

CAFOD Week

CAFOD week commenced on 25 February 2008. The activities of each year group were:

- Year 7 - chains around the room, each costing 10p
- Years 8 & 9 - "people of the world" stickers, price 10p each
- Years 10, 11 & Sixth Form – perspex tubes to fill with coins

The Yr 10 Feast and Famine Lunch was excellent. Thanks to all we sent £1,000 to CAFOD.

A total of £2,000 was sent to the Catholic Children's Society, a lot of which was raised by Non-Uniform Day

Polish Day

4 February 2008 was Polish Day. There was a Polish menu on offer in the Dining Room and Polish biscuits for staff at break. Classes were greeted with Dzień Dobry (Good Morning) and the assembly began with Ojciec Nasz (Our Father). There was a superb PowerPoint displayed in the entrance hall all day on the history of Poland up to the present day. Two Year 7 drama classes had a lesson on Polish Folk Dancing. So much of the success of this busy day was down to the unstinting efforts of Mrs Sasinski (mother of Damian (11Q) and Piotr (9T) to whom we are very grateful. Thank you too to Mrs R Zarebska who helped with the dance classes.

Policy on Detention

Please see Appendix I for a draft of the revised policy on detention. If you wish to comment please write to me at the school, no later than Monday 14 April 2008.

Policy on Examination Entry

Please see Appendix II for a draft of the revised policy on examination entry. If you wish to comment please write to me at school, no later than Monday 14 April 2008.

Drivers on School Campus

I have been in contact with the Headteachers at both Greenbank and St Wilfrid's schools. In order to minimise the risk to all members of the community, anyone seen driving and using a mobile phone on the school's roads/car parks, will have their registration details/time/date passed on to the Police Community Support Officer.

Parking: please avoid making life difficult for local residents, I do receive numerous complaints about their concerns regarding how vehicles are parked whilst waiting to pick up students.

Equipment for Lessons

On occasions some of our students are arriving at lessons without the basic equipment necessary. It is vitally important to their progress that they are ready to engage in their lessons as quickly as possible. This list below is printed as a reminder of what they need to bring to school:

Black or Blue ball point pen (and a spare)	Pencil
Coloured pencils/Fine fibre tips	Pencil eraser
Compass	Pencil sharpener
Calculator	Ruler 12"/30cm
Rough notebook/jotter	Protractor
	Set Square

Tippex/liquid paper is not allowed in school and must not be used in any schoolwork.

An overall or apron is required for Technology lessons as per departmental requirements.

Text books and specialised equipment will be issued on loan and students will be required to pay for any loss or damage to property.

Business Studies

Year 11 GCSE Applied Business visit to Trafford Centre – 29th February 2008.

Two groups of Year 11 students from my class and Miss Davidson's visited the Trafford centre to gather information to help them with their Unit 2 coursework. Students watched a video which covered the reasons behind the design of the Trafford Centre, factors affecting its location and layout, new developments as well as learning about customer service policies that they have in place. The students were also able to gain access to detailed customer profiles and they found out that the average spend per visit per customer was £100! Did you know that Sunday is the busiest day and that

the Trafford centre is the only place outside of Oxford Road in London that has Selfridges, M&S, John Lewis and Debenhams all in one location!

The Customer Service Representative, Paul, commented on how well presented the students were in their uniforms and he also complimented them on their behaviour. Our students listened carefully during the video and asked some great questions. Both Miss Lavin and I were very proud of all the students and resultantly we had an enjoyable afternoon. Thank you and well done!

Mrs M Smart

Prison Visit

We received an offer from our police schools liaison officer to take a group of students to visit to Altcourse prison in Liverpool. It was such an unusual offer we jumped at the chance!

Since we knew lots of students would want to go (especially after a similar school trip had been featured on Waterloo road!) we decided to make the visit the prize for a Citizenship competition.

All students study Citizenship but since KS4 students take GCSE citizenship in year 10 and given the nature of the visit we decided that it would be most suitable for KS4 students

We set the question 'Is the threat of prison an effective deterrent? Discuss' Entries were judged based on GCSE criteria. This means they must include a minimum 3 points for, 3 against, state your opinion and reasons for it. Students were informed of the competition via Citizenship lessons and form time.

The competition was judged by Mrs Giles and Mrs Houghton. Standards of entries were very high but they were narrowed down to 12 winners, 5 from year 11 and 7 from year 10.

Everyone involved was really looking forward to the visit but as the hour drew closer worries started to emerge. Upon arrival our worries were not eased by the actions of some 'interesting characters' who we met outside the prison or by the prison officer who showed us around saying in his introductory talk that "if I tell you to get behind that wall do it immediately, don't ask why!!!"

We saw the booking in rooms, some of the prisoner's work places, an accommodation block and an individual cell (with 90 prisoners walking around us!!). The highlight of the visit was a play performed by a group of prisoners followed by talking to the prisoners in small groups. We were impressed by the quality of their performance and the art work around the buildings which was also done by the prisoners.

The visit was certainly interesting but also full of mixed emotions. After the visit students fed back their experiences to their peers via Citizenship lessons and form time.

Quotations below are from the reflection/evaluation session upon our return to school:

'There were lots of young people there and nearly everyone we met was in for either drug or violence related crimes' yr 10 student

'I was scared going in and sad and thankful going out' yr 11

'Most of them were in for drugs or violence (due to drugs and alcohol)' yr 11

'It was weird how much we could relate to them' yr 10

'It's crazy to think that you can be on one side of the law and if you take a small step you can be in their position' yr 10 – this reflection follows a conversation with a 19yr old who was in for a violent offence under the influence of alcohol, his account was not unlike the sort of actions that the student's brother and his friends had also taken, but this guy had ended up in prison. It was a sobering realisation!

'It felt like we were invading their privacy' yr 10 – we looked in one man's cell whilst he stood outside, we had to go into the cell in three separate groups as it was so small

'It felt strange being stripped of your freedom especially at the entrance point' yr 10

"The prisoners were allowed several luxuries however after speaking to them they said the biggest luxury is freedom" yr 10

"There are several programmes available to alcoholics and drug users" yr 10

The inmates said Altcourse is much better than other prisons yr 11

Things that the students were surprised by:

'The prisoners respected the officers' yr 10

Some of them are in prison for minor offences. Some of which people in society do too, but they were just unlucky yr 10

First impression was slightly intimidated but then I spoke to them and was surprised at how normal and nice they were yr 11

My perspective of prisoners as violent people changed because they were approachable and jovial yr 10

'You can earn money' yr 10

Most prisoners are very young' yr 10

The toilets had windows so the warders could see in!! yr 11

The artwork was amazing, they are really talented yr 11

I expected them to be wearing uniforms but they weren't yr 10

The number of prisoners re-offending was appalling yr10

Over 80% re-offend yr 10

Some of the prisoners were re-offenders, so does prison work? Yr 11

Parents – Open University PGCE

Have you ever thought of becoming a teacher?

As an Open University partner school, we are pleased to bring the Open University's flexible teacher training course to your attention. This is a unique PGCE course designed to open up opportunities for graduates who want to teach but, because of their existing personal, professional or financial commitments, require a flexible, individualised training programme.

The Open University course has training places available for secondary science, mathematics, music, design and technology, modern languages and geography. All course modules are distance learning materials that you can study in your own time. You will be expected to carry out some continuous blocks of teaching practice, but the timing of these can be agreed with your placement school – and you can take up to three years to complete the course – training at a pace that suits you and your family. If you already have experience of teaching, you may be able to claim exemption from some of the course.

Most of the students on the course are people like you – people with children who have enjoyed supporting their own children's schooling and would like the challenge of working with young people. Many of them have worked in other careers, and want a change of scene – and have valuable experience to share with the pupils they teach.

You can apply at any time, and the University has start dates throughout the year, so if you think that this might be the opportunity you have been waiting for, you can find out more about the OU PGCE course on the Open University website (www.open.ac.uk) or by phoning the Student Registration and Enquiry Service on 0845 300 6090.

Jacob Marsland

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who was involved in raising funds for Jacob Marsland. Just before Christmas, ninety-two Year 9 pupils took part in a mega sleep-over. The experience was truly amazing and they managed to raise nearly £3000. During the same weekend, the Year 7's packed bags at the ASDA store in Winsford. Just like the Year 9's they were a true credit to the school and to their parents! In just under three hours, they managed to raise almost £1000! Staff and customers at the store commented on their impeccable behaviour.

The following week, the whole school had the opportunity to take part in Gladiators. Over 400 eager spectators watched as staff took their positions...

The overall female winner was The One, The Only, Mrs Smart.

Last year's overall male winner and this year's favourite to retain his title, Mr May, was thoroughly beaten by a surprise, rank outsider...Mr Critchlow.

Overall, the school raised just over £5300 for the Jacob Marsland Appeal. My thanks must go to all the staff and pupils who were involved in these events... I think the world of them! A special "thank you" must also go to the kitchen staff who after catering tea for 92 students and 10 staff, came in at 6.00am on a Saturday morning to provide breakfast for the students taking part in the sleepover, to Mr Humphries (there is only one Mr Humphries), to Mrs Goodwin for organising Gladiators and Mr Boyle for supporting us all the way! Nicki and Anthony, Jacob's parents were very touched and asked me to thank everyone involved!

In the meantime, Jacob has proven he is a real fighter and has been an inspiration to us all. His primary tumour was removed on Valentine's Day and scans showed his bone marrow was clear from cancer. Despite this good news, Jacob still has a long way to go and the prospect of going to America to receive lifesaving treatment costing £250,000 remains. It is for that reason that I am taking part in the London marathon on Sunday 13 April 2008 with a friend of mine! We have never taken part in a half marathon, let alone a marathon, but whether we will run, walk or crawl ... for Jacob we will do anything! If you can, please sponsor us on www.justgiving.com/debsandrachel4Jacob Alternatively, you can write out a cheque to the Jacob Marsland Appeal and hand it into the Finance Office at the School. Give Anthony, Nicky, Ben (Jacob's little brother) and Jacob "Life".

Thank you once again!

Mrs D Freestone

Congratulations

Congratulations to ex-pupil Polly Firth who is in her fourth year of Product Design at Leeds University. She has created a "Shower" design which has been show cased on The One-Show, BBC and has made it to the final 10 at the Ideal Home Show. If you wish to see her design and vote for the best in the final please look at www.idealhomeshow.co.uk then go to "At this year's show" and "Innovation Nation".

Mr S Turnbull

History Christmas Competitions

Mr M Jones won the "Events of the Century" competition with 89 correct answers and he wins a £20.00 voucher for WH Smith. A number of Year 10 students – Thomas Egerton, Genevieve Darwin, Lorna O'Farrell and Andrew Morrison also made a very creditable attempt to respond to the challenge – better luck next time! Genevieve and Lorna worked out 77 correct answers between them so Mr Jones – beware! They will receive a £5.00 token each.

Mrs S Wieczowska won the Caption Competition – sadly there were no entries from the students.

Our next competition is a photograph of a historic building or place – again for a WH Smith voucher. There will be two categories: Years 7 – 9 and Years 10 – 13. Your entries will need to be handed in to H1 by Monday 21 April 2008. Make sure you name the place and put your name and form on the back of your entry. Year 10 and 11 visiting Berlin have a ready made opportunity to practice their skills!

Year 12's Experience – Genetic Engineering

On Friday 7 March 2008, fourteen Year 12 Biology students were invited to attend a special workshop to learn about genetic engineering. The workshop was run by John Schollar, one of the UK's leading scientists who is the Assistant Director at the National Centre for Biotechnology Education at the University of Reading. The workshop saw the students extract their own mitochondrial DNA and carry out some of the genetic engineering techniques used by forensic scientists. This was a valuable opportunity to experience first hand some of the theory that has been discussed as part of their AS Biology course, and it is very unusual for students of this age to have this opportunity.

Miss C Farrell

School Choir

The Choir has just returned from a tour of Northern Ireland. The main purpose of the visit was to compete in the Coleraine International Choral Festival. The Choir came first in the Youth Choirs (Under 21) category. The prize was a Tyrone Crystal bowl and a cheque for £200. On the Sunday morning the Choir sang in a Mass at the Star of the Sea RC Church in Portstewart. Other events included visiting the Giant's Causeway and the Carrick-a-Rede rope bridge, spending a day in Belfast including a visit to Stormont and attending an Irish Night, complete with Folk Music and Irish Dancing. The people of Northern Ireland were very hospitable and very pleased that we were visiting County Antrim, a really beautiful part of the United Kingdom.

Mr M Jones

Music

Do you want to play a musical instrument? After Easter there will be vacancies in Brass, Drum, Violin, Flute, Clarinet, Saxophone, Piano, Acoustic Guitar and Electric Guitar. Please see Mr M Jones for details.

Conservation Work

Four of our Sixth Form students, Ciera Hulbert, Sophie Gregory, Grace Martin and Michael Maher, will be going to Australia in Summer 2009 to do conservation work with a charity, The Joshua Foundation. The charity provides holidays and experiences for children with terminal cancer. In order to do this they have to raise £3,000; half towards costs for the trip and the other for the charity. Two of the girls are organising a race night on 9 May 2008 at Northwich Victoria Stadium. For tickets please call 01606 737197 or 07769 773173 and ask for Ciera. Please see Appendix IV for further details.

Russia 11-16 February 2008

Russia? We all had different ideas about what it would be like. We didn't know what to expect. The language, culture and people were all very diverse. We got there on a moderately warm day for Russia – it was approximately -2° C! There was a quick flutter of snow which immediately excited us.

We visited both St Petersburg and Moscow and we saw many famous sites. In St Petersburg we saw the Heritage Museum, which was particularly magnificent. There were so many collections of beautiful art. We also saw the St Peter and Paul Fortress, St Isaac's Cathedral and the Aurora Ship. This was still in the same position, facing the Winter Palace ready to fire. We went to the St Nicholas Cathedral where there was a wedding taking place. It was interesting to see how different the wedding was compared to a traditional English wedding. We felt as if the ceremony should be private even though there were lots of other members of the public there. Finally we visited a war memorial cemetery; there was an eternal flame and there were no names of the soldiers.

We took the over-night train to Moscow, this was an interesting experience. We slept in cabins with four people in each, it was surprisingly comfortable but strange to wake up in a different part of Russia. In Moscow we visited Red Square where Lenin's tomb is. There is a lot of security and when we entered we could not stop. It was a really unusual site, it is very expensive to keep his body embalmed. We also visited the Kremlin which is the political heart of Russia. The Museum, which is part of this, contained many striking and remarkable works of art and treasures. We also visited St Basil's Cathedral which is very famous and prestigious. We visited the British Embassy and were on British soil. We had talks from the Head of Public Relations who explained how the British Government was dealing with the Alexander Litvinenko situation and the expulsion of the British Consulate Diplomats from Russia. An economist told us about Russia and the world oil market and how Russia is a very up and coming economy. We were also told about how visas are given to Russians and people from ex-soviet states who want to go to England.

This was an amazing trip and we would advise anyone to go to Russia to experience the culture which is fascinating. We would definitely go again!

Grace Davies, Jonathan Vale, Rianna Ikin