

From the Headteacher

Another whirlwind term draws to a close and we once again look forward to Christmas and the coming of Our Lord. The 'Outstanding' judgement that Ofsted reached in July was reinforced by the same judgement being reached by the Diocesan Inspection Team who visited in October. The spiritual life of the school was placed under great scrutiny in those two days and such a judgement was very reassuring. As a Catholic school we do believe that *who* children become is as important as *what* they become, that their spiritual development is in fact a strengthening of character and a preparation for the life to come as well as the world to come. The work done, especially in the RE department, but supported by many others throughout the school, will provide all children with a solid platform upon which to build their lives.

I continue to be indebted to parents who support the school in so many ways, not least by ensuring that your sons and daughters turn up at school every day ready and prepared to work hard and make the most of all that is on offer at St. Nicholas Catholic High School. This Newsletter will outline what has been happening in school over the past two months and I hope you enjoy reading it.

It remains only for me to wish you all a very Happy and Holy Christmas and I hope you manage to find time to relax and enjoy the whole period of Christmas time.

Kieran Kelly
Headteacher

Charities

A huge thank you for all your support for our charity work this term. The money raised from the Mini market and the non-uniform day in October has been shared between a number of good causes - £1000 went to The Children's Society in Cheshire, and £750 went to each of the following – Father Pat Clarke's support network in Brazil, the YMCA 'Sponsor a Room scheme' and to Manchester Royal Infirmary – a total of £3,250!

The hampers are currently being assembled ready for distribution through the SVP links in your local parishes. Once again, many thanks for your generosity in providing suitable goods to be shared amongst those who are less fortunate – the variety of gifts will

provide a welcome support to a large number of families and individuals in our local area.

We are hoping to start a CAFOD 'virtual village' through our fundraising between the New Year and CAFOD week in March. The idea is to collect for individual items to support a village in a developing country.

Many thanks!

Complementary Curriculum

We have been fortunate to welcome a wide range of visiting speakers this term. Year 9 were able to identify their dreams for their future careers through the 'mini me' experience run by tutors for Liverpool Edgehill. The entire year group created their dream worker in pipe cleaners and saved them to remind themselves of their aspirations. They should now build on this as they make their option choices for GCSE. There were prizes for the winners – one of these was a remarkably realistic nurse, ready to give an injection!

The school nurse, Ruth McNulty and her colleague provided an informative session to update Year 9 students on staying safe. The nurse is available in school every Wednesday at lunchtime for any student to seek support.

Year 8 was fortunate to have the expertise of members of The Children's Society to enact a role play about drugs and gangs. It was fun as well as very informative and explained very explicitly the dangers of gang culture. The team are planning to return to school to do some similar work with other year groups.

'The Riot Act' was delivered to Year 7 in November and it demonstrates the importance of responsible behaviour on the buses. Always well presented and entertaining, it nevertheless makes the message clear.

We are also part of a project 'Schools Stand up 2 Racism' which is being organised through CHAWREC . A member of staff was interviewed last term and the follow up procedure has now started in earnest. Parents of year 8 and 11 students will have received a letter about the questionnaire and students in those year groups are completing the questionnaires this week. The outcome of the project is to provide additional resources to schools to address these issues even more effectively. Further information can be found at www.standup2racism.org.uk

E- Safety – regular reminders are provided to students about safe use of the Internet, both through their ICT lessons and during PSHEE in Form Time.

We are part of 'The Sharp System'. This is a means for anyone to contact us with any concerns that will then be followed up in school. <http://stnicholas.thesharpsystem.com/>.

We are concerned about the number of students who are bringing the high caffeine drinks into school, for example Red Bull and Relentless. The very high caffeine and sugar content of these drinks is a health concern. Further information can be found at <http://www.food.gov.uk/safereating/chemsafe/energydrinks>

Learning Support Department - Irlen Syndrome

Mrs Cassell, a Higher Level Teaching Assistant, is now a qualified Irlen Syndrome assessor.

- Irlen Syndrome causes eye problems for many people because it alters the way they see things. These eye problems are based on their visual perception.
- The eyes are not the main source of the problem. The problems are caused by the way in which the brain interprets the visual information that is being sent through the eyes.
- Having Irlen Syndrome prevents many people from reading effectively and efficiently.
- Individuals with Irlen Syndrome perceive reading material and/or their environment differently. They must constantly make adaptations or compensate for their eye problems.
- Individuals are often unaware of the extra energy and effort they are putting into reading and perception.

Below are some symptoms of Irlen Syndrome.

GENERAL PROBLEMS	READING
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strain working under bright lighting• Difficulty finding comfortable lighting• Poor concentration• Lack of attention• Strain working at a computer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Poor comprehension• Skips words or lines• Reads slowly or hesitantly• Loses place• Takes frequent breaks

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glare from bright objects • Eye strain • Headaches from:- reading, computers, lighting, TV, supermarkets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoids reading • Eye strain
<p>JUDGING DISTANCES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clumsy • Accident prone • Bumps into things • Difficulty catching small balls 	<p>OTHER PROBLEMS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty with number columns • Difficulty with reading music • Difficulty writing on a line • Unequal spacing when writing

The treatment for Irlen Syndrome is the use of overlays (coloured sheets that are placed over text) or tinted glasses.

If you feel your child displays any of the symptoms above, and you would like them to be tested, please email the Special Needs Co-ordinator, Miss Davidson at c.davidson@st-nicholas.cheshire.sch.uk

A decision will be made regarding each individual child and the need for testing, after a discussion with the parent/carer, the child and the child's teachers.

Learning Resource Centre

We recently held a book quiz for year 8's in the LRC in order to pick the team for the **Cheshire School's Book Quiz**. Gregory Boyce, Christopher Edwards, Gemma Martin, Rebecca Goodwin and Duncan Jackson had the winning scores and were entered into the quiz. The team have done really well in the first two rounds and we have high hopes of reaching the final in Chester next year.

The shortlist for the **Cheshire School's Book Award** has been announced and is as follows:

The Demon Collector by Jon Mayhew

My Name is Mina by David Almond

A Monster Calls by Patrick Ness

Love, Death and Gold Leather Trousers by Fiona Fodan

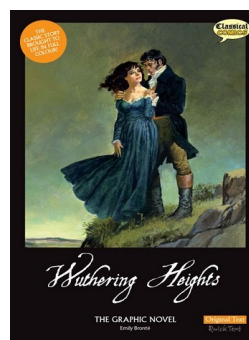
Wereworld: Rise of the Wolf by Curtis Jobling

Scorpia Rising by Anthony Horowitz

Devil's Triangle by Mark Robson

We are really pleased with the amount of pupils, staff and parents that have signed up to take part in the award and would welcome any one else who wishes to join us.

Our new Manga and Graphic Novel section has been so popular that we have signed up to take part in the 2012 Stan Lee Excelsior Award for Graphic Novels. If any pupils would like to take part in the reviewing the books shortlisted for the award, please see Miss Roberts at the LRC.



CERN 2011

From the 4th to the 7th December, 22 sixth form physics students visited Geneva in Switzerland. The main event was a trip to CERN on the Monday where we visited the two exhibitions, Microcosm and The Globe, in the morning before enjoying lunch in the CERN cafeteria. After lunch, we were given a talk by one of the scientists at CERN about the basics of what goes on there and what they are trying to achieve. Then we were given a tour of the building above ATLAS, one of the four main detectors, including a look at the control room. Unfortunately, on that day there was a fault with the beam and so not much was happening. Following this we went to the building where they test the electromagnets used in this collider and other projects around the world. The day was very interesting and we all learnt a lot, both from the exhibits and the very informative tour guides.

During our trip we also visited the cathedral, under which we had a tour of the archaeological site, the World Meteorological Centre, where we had a delicious lunch on the top floor overlooking Geneva, and the UN building, in which we were given a tour of various conference rooms and informed about the purposes of the organisation, particularly that in Geneva. The whole trip was very worthwhile and the whole group had a brilliant time.

Hollie Bark (12M) & Heather McNeill (12M)

UKMT Senior Maths Challenge

Congratulations to the following members of Year 12 for success in the recent Senior Maths Challenge, which is a UK wide competition:

James Campbell	Best in School and Silver Certificate
James Forsythe	Silver Certificate
William O'Toole	Bronze Certificate
Oliver Rogers	Bronze Certificate
Robert Stamper	Bronze Certificate
Jonathan Moore	Bronze Certificate

Oliver!

On November 30th – 3rd December St Nicholas Catholic High School was transported into 19th Century London with a fantastic set provided by Mr G Jones. Students from Years 7 to 13 invited audiences to consider themselves their mates for the evening as they provided a magnificent night's entertainment. To help them along were the infamous songs such as, 'Consider Yourself' and 'Food Glorious Food' played by Mr M Jones and Mrs F McAvoy with their fantastic band. Every inch of Oliver was designed and delivered to professional standards thanks to hard work of the lighting company, the Drama and Music Departments and, most importantly, the very talented students.

Every single student on the stage committed themselves and sang their hearts out so that Charles Dickens classic was brought to life. It is only with the hard work and commitment of such students that such a production can happen and St Nicholas would like to take this opportunity to congratulate those students who did such a magnificent job.

OLIVER	Cameron McFeat
MR BUMBLE	Adam Bysouth
WIDOW CORNEY	Abbie Williams-Randle
MR.SOWERBERRY	Joshua Radcliffe
MRS. SOWERBERRY	Marion Head
CHARLOTTE SOWERBERRY	Olivia Bennett
NOAH CLAYPOLE	Luke Carswell
DODGER	Dan Geoghegan
FAGIN	John Fisher-Heath
CHARLIE	Matthew Radcliffe
NANCY	Jodie Hughes
BET	Nena Williams
BILL SYKES	Jack Needham
OLD SALLY	Frankie Ferguson
OLD LADY	Victoria Garner
MR. BROWNLOW	Matthew Timm
MRS. BEDWIN	Emma Hunt
DR.GRIMWIG	James Metcalfe
POLICE	Luke Carswell / Joshua Radcliffe

Fagin's Gang:

Anna Clare
Josie Cosgrove
Eve Devaney
Joshua Elchico
Rebecca Goodwin
Holly Lines
Niamh Longhorn
Noramandie McFeat
Hannah Radcliffe
Olivia Riley
Laura Timm

Dancers:

Maeve Bains
Olivia Bennett
Lizzie Dymond
Marion Head
Emma Hunt
Florence McAllester
Erin McKenna
Emma Price
Paige Grindrod

Past Pupil News

Dr Peta Angela Hayes, a past pupil of the school, is now the curator in the Palaeontology department of the Natural History Museum in London. She has filmed a piece about a specimen found by Scott of the Antarctic which will be shown on Blue Peter on Tuesday 13 December.

Congratulations to:

June Higgins, one of our kitchen staff, is retiring after working at the school for the past thirty two years. Our very best wishes to June for a long, happy and well deserved retirement.

Good Luck to:

Carl Prince, father of Helen Prince (12M), who will be cycling from the Blackpool Tower to the Eiffel Tower and back. He will set off on 27 December and is hoping to complete the journey in thirteen days, Carl is financing the challenge himself so that all funds raised will go directly to "The Cheshire Carers Centre" on London Road in Northwich. If you would like to support Carl donations can be made through the Just Giving Website: www.justgiving.com/LeTourlePrince or you can text CPBP53£ with the amount to donate to 70070.