

6th December 2024

Dear Families

Last night we enjoyed a wonderful Advent Service. Thank you to all who joined us. It was such a lovely way to mark the start of Advent and to provide a time of peaceful reflection on the true meaning of Christmas. At St. Paul's we try to focus children on the charity element of Advent as a reminder that the season is not all about the commercial side. School is a hive of activity with children doing a range of fundraising activities. All of this ties in beautifully with the 'preferential option of the poor' element of Catholic Social Teaching. Your child should be able to articulate all of this to you so please have a chat to them about what they are doing and why. In the meantime, I am trying to avoid all the many bake sales that have popped up at the moment! I know Year 8 Kolbe are holding one on Monday 9th!

Year 8 pupils attended the Network Rail engineers finals day on Friday 29th November and had the opportunity to work with senior engineers and learn about the importance of STEM and tour the Quadrant building. They worked with other schools from Milton Keynes including Shenley Brook End, Ousedale and Stantonbury, which was a fantastic opportunity for our pupils.

On Tuesday we participated in the annual Open University Christmas Lecture, this year the focus was on biological statistics. Our students had the opportunity to learn about the significance of data within many different real-world applications. It was an excellent opportunity for our Year 12 and 13 mathematicians to experience a lecture and to hear from one of Oxford University's professors.

Last week when Ms Markatos took our Student Leaders to the Houses of Parliament they were able to meet our MP Emily Darlington. She spent twenty minutes allowing the students to pepper her with questions and they were brilliant. Ms Darlington knows that we have a debate coming up with Thornton College so she sent us a good luck video which was very kind of her. It also shows the impression that our students made on her. We are very proud of them for exercising their 'rights and responsibilities' in accordance with the Catholic Social Teachings.

Congratulations to our Head of English, Mrs Jagger. She has written a book 'Neuro Diversity and Neuro Plasticity' and the book launch was on Wednesday. We are thrilled and very proud of her achievements.

Also on Wednesday afternoon, Year 11 had the opportunity to attend our very own Careers Fair in the sports hall. Families had the opportunity to explore careers in a range of fields and it was good to see such a wide variety of options on offer for them. I am very grateful to our Careers Team for providing such dynamic opportunities for them.

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Today was the final school deadline for Year 13 UCAS applications. Offers are beginning to come in for our students and it is such an exciting time for them.

In recent weeks we have noticed an increase in student lateness to school. We have been flexible and understanding during recent travel disruption due to snow and are always flexible when Z & S school buses are late. Families are reminded that students must be in school by 08:47am and in form rooms by 08:50am. When students arrive after 08:50am they are late to school and will be issued with a same day 20 minute lunch time detention.

Next week we continue with our Advent fundraising. Our fantastic musicians and choir will be representing St. Paul's at the St. Augustine's Christmas Concert next Wednesday evening.

On Tuesday, Year 11 & 13 will have their photos. On Wednesday morning there will be a Chapel Liturgy to mark the international day for disabled persons. On Thursday, Year 7 students from our Emmaus Student Support Department will be visiting Climb Quest and in the evening St. Paul's will host a Stem Lecture on 'Searching for life in our solar system'. The lecture starts at 6.15pm and all are welcome to attend.

Sporting fixtures this week have included a basketball match against Lord Grey where our Year 8 team won a thrilling game at home, 8 – 3, against a tough Lord Grey team. Both teams played tough defences, but it was the home support of the students watching that helped St. Paul's secure the victory. The U16 girls' football team consisting of a mixture of our Year 10 and 11 girls played a very strong Denbigh team. Despite missing some players due to injury, we got off to an excellent start and went 1 - 0 up, with those who stepped in played extremely well. Erinn Taylor and Tia Belony-Holland from Year 11 were playing their first ever game for the school and looked like they had been playing with the team forever. Unfortunately, we couldn't hold on to the lead and went into half time 3 - 2 down. The girls continued to show spirit throughout the second half, but the quality Denbigh had was just a little too much and they eventually won the game 6 - 2. Tia was named player of the match as she defended well, listened the whole game and grew in confidence as the game went on. The girls have two more games left in the group to try and qualify for the knockout stage.

I hope that you all have a lovely weekend

Yours sincerely



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