



ST PAUL'S ACADEMY



Dear Parents and Carers

"It was good to see both staff and students returning refreshed after the Easter break.

Many people commented on the fact that working during Holy Week and having two weeks off after Easter made the holiday seem much longer. At St Paul's, we feel that this model for the Easter break is the most successful for several reasons. The first and the most important is that we are able to celebrate the great Feast of Easter as a community. Years 7, 8 and 9 took part in a service in St Michael's Church and through readings, reflections and music they followed the events of Holy Week from Palm Sunday, when Jesus made his entry into Jerusalem, to Easter Sunday when he rose from the dead. Years 10 and 11 had services in school which allowed them time out of their busy examination schedules to think about the Easter Mystery and to re-examine its fundamental importance in our lives."

Principal: Pat Winston



Newsletter

Number 23 • May 2009

The importance of team building

The importance of team building and getting to know students and staff in different contexts was also a focus of the Year 7 trip to Arethusa, the Outward Bound Activity Centre which is situated on the banks of the River Medway, just outside Rochester. Students not only developed their physical skills but also their emotional intelligence through activities such as the 'Leap of Faith' which involved climbing a pole of about ten metres and jumping from it into mid-air to hopefully land on a trapeze. Other activities included the more traditional swimming, canoeing and rock climbing and a bonfire on the beach in the evenings. This trip was extremely successful as can be evidenced not only through the testimony of students and staff but also by the photographs which have appeared on display areas around the school.



'Debate Mate' - a new city wide scheme

Giving students confidence is vital if they are to go on and succeed to the best of their abilities in life. At St. Paul's, we are always trying to think of new ways with which to encourage students to build on their self-confidence. Since November we have been lucky enough to be a part of the first year of 'Debate Mate', a new city-wide scheme which aims to make the world of debating accessible to more state-sector students. Many students at St. Paul's have relished the weekly debating clubs run by mentors from the scheme and after the third week, it became very clear that one mentor was not enough for St. Paul's – the group had to draft in an extra two,

meaning that we had three classrooms full of debaters every Wednesday! The inaugural season culminated during the Easter holidays when Miss Gardner and a group of twelve students went to the London School of Economics to compete in The Richard Koch cup. Our students did very well, winning two of their three debates. Callum Nicholson (8E) was one of only three students city-wide to win a 'Most Improved Debater' award, which came with an iPod! St. Paul's is planning on continuing our relationship with Debate Mate and we are hoping to start participating in debating competitions independently of the scheme too.

The timing of the Easter break was a success

The timing of the Easter holidays meant that appropriate, revision sessions could be held in preparation for the forthcoming examinations and yet both staff and students had time to relax. Sometimes, it is very useful to have a few hours devoted to one subject so that knowledge can be consolidated; obviously this is not possible in the normal school week. It is also very clear that staff in particular valued the fact that they were off when other schools had returned. Many people commented that shops and other public places were much less crowded than when all the schools are on holiday together!

The pressure is on

Now the pressure is really on for those students in Years 11, 10 and 9 who are taking public examinations. As I explained in a previous newsletter, the abolition of Key Stage 3 SATs has given us much greater flexibility with the curriculum than we have had in the past and so some Year 9 students are already taking GCSE module examinations and indeed getting some fantastic results. This is obviously a much more satisfactory system than students taking SATs one year and then switching to a completely different syllabus the next. As I write there are still many teachers holding after school sessions to give students the best possible chance of success and this support will continue until the end of the public examination season. I would urge any student who has particular concerns about a subject to talk to their subject teacher as soon as possible. We understand the stress that examinations can cause and we want to do everything we can to relieve this pressure.



Goodbye to Year 11

At this time of year, we have to say goodbye to our Year 11 students and in order to do this we held a Leavers' Service which gave students an opportunity to reflect on their time at St. Paul's and share memories of their five years together. As always, it was amazing to look at pictures of the children who came to us in Year 7 and to see how they have turned into confident young adults ready to take their part in creating a peaceful and just society. On Friday, May 15th, we held our now traditional Leavers' Banquet and it was again wonderful to see the huge efforts students, and indeed staff, had made for the occasion. In the past, it would often have been fair to say that the girls spent more time preparing for this event than the boys, but this year it was obvious that the boys had spent a long time ensuring that they looked their best! At Awards' Evening in November, Year 11 students will all receive a copy of a Year Book which is being professionally printed; this will be a lasting reminder of their friends and teachers at St. Paul's.

Residential Retreat

As you will know since becoming an Academy, St Paul's has welcomed not only Catholic students but also students of other faiths or no faith. This diversity has, in our opinion, strengthened us as a community but every community needs time to reflect and take stock if it is to prosper and move forward. For this reason, we offer every student in the Academy - at some point in their school career - the chance to go on a residential retreat, usually to St. Vincent's in Whitstable. Students stay for two nights and, as well as talking about their beliefs and relationships with other people, they also enjoy social time and trips to the beach and local bowling alley. Generally, students go to Whitstable with their form groups and, where possible, their form tutor, at some point in Years 8 or 9; this helps students to get to know each other and members of staff in a different, more relaxed setting and it helps to create a form identity. As I write, Year 9 have just finished their cycle of visits and would like to thank all staff who have so generously given their time to accompany groups. In particular, my thanks go to our Chaplaincy Co-ordinator, Miss O'Connor, who has not only organised the whole programme but also been on most of the retreats.



Girls' Football Trip

As you will know, we are always pleased our commitment to sport is widely acknowledged and I am pleased to inform you of a new venture; a Girls' Football Trip which this year took place in Edinburgh. During the second week of the Easter holidays, three members of staff and twenty one students spent four days in Scotland undertaking a rigorous training programme and competing against local schools. As well as the sport, there were many cultural activities including a 'Ghosts and Ghouls' evening walk and a visit to the castle and the dungeons. This was a hugely enjoyable adventure which I very much hope will be repeated in the future.



Mozambique Visit

I am delighted that the partnership we have established with Escola Secundaria Zedequias Manganhela in Mozambique two years ago has been strengthened recently when members of the PE staff, Miss Forte and Miss Henry, visited Maputo, the capital of Mozambique to continue the three year development plan which was drawn up as part of London's bid for the 2012 Olympics. The aim of this was to reach twenty million children, through sport, in 12 developing countries around the world and it was anticipated that the partnerships would benefit both communities. To this end, Miss Forte and Miss Henry taught lessons and worked with the sports leaders to help them develop strategies for teaching and learning. A recent letter from the school said, 'We would like to thank Miss Henry and Miss Forte for sharing their physical education skills with us. They brought new life to our teachers in sports partnership and to the students through practical demonstrations, showing that sport can be done in a very humorous and cheerful manner.' The letter also thanks St. Paul's for the sports' equipment that was sent in advance of the visit and says, 'We are going to take good care of it.' I think that this is something we should all bear in mind as in Britain we have so much access to state-of-the-art equipment but so often we take it for granted.

Drama Examinations

Another extra-curricular activity which gives students not only confidence but also qualifications is the LAMDA (London Academy for Music and Dramatic Art) examinations. As with instrumental Music examinations, students can take grades between 1 and 8 and this year, the Drama department has entered students from grades 3 and 6 with outstanding results. Taking these examinations require considerable commitment because students have to attend lessons after school and prepare pieces which must be contrasting in style and fit the very tight examination specifications. Students have thoroughly enjoyed taking these examinations, but admit that the performance is very often a test of nerves!

Totally unacceptable behaviour

On a less positive note, I would like to remind parents and carers that unless it is absolutely necessary students are not allowed to go into Woolwich. It has been brought to our attention both by the Police and store managers that large groups of school students gathering in Woolwich Town Centre are causing considerable disruption. Groups of students from Greenwich schools, including St Paul's, have not only used threatening behaviour and abusive language to staff working in stores and members of the general public, but there have also been instances of shoplifting when groups of young people have taken considerable amounts of goods from some of the larger shops. It would seem that a group of students are "look-outs", while other students take goods. Obviously, this sort of behaviour is totally unacceptable and will not be tolerated. If our students are involved in such activities, not only will the Police be involved, but they can also anticipate the strongest possible consequences in school. I am well aware that the vast majority of our students would never behave in such an appalling way, but I feel that it is important that parents and carers are aware of the situation.

I would like to end by thanking not only staff but also parents and carers for their continued support. Without this support, St. Paul's would not continue to move forward as it does and our students would not flourish as they do. With all best wishes.

Patrick Winston
Principal

Cup Success for Year 8 and 9

St Paul's Academy celebrated the wonderful achievement of having two Football teams reach the finals of the Bromley & District Cup. On a sunny Tuesday afternoon in early May an impatient crowd gathered at the HSBC ground in Beckenham, first to see the Year 8s take to the field, eager for cup glory against Ravenswood School.

However, all did not initially go to plan.

Ravenswood dominated the first 10 minutes of the game and St Paul's did well to resist their early supremacy; Ryan Connolly looking secure in ensuring his goal was not breached.

After they had settled St Paul's looked a different team and in the latter part of the half they looked good for the 1-0 lead taken into half-time, courtesy of a break-away goal finally put away by Brendan Owusuh-Ansah following some pin-balling around the box.

Half-time team talk does the trick

Whatever Mr Akif said in the half-time team talk it certainly did the trick, with Year 8 coming out onto the field for the second half looking determined to get the second goal they needed to help secure the game. The impact of Mr Akif's words of wisdom were soon seen in another goal calmly put away by Brendan following the re-bound from the excellent Stephen Shote's powerful shot, saved by the Ravenswood keeper. Minutes later Brendan sealed a well-earned hat-trick and St Paul's looked to have the game all wrapped up. However, they did not rest on their laurels, with captain Nathan Davies keeping his defence tight and organised and responding well to calls for focus from Mr Winston on the side-lines.

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IMPORTANT DATES

Thursday, 4th June
Wednesday, 10th June
Tuesday, 16th June
Monday, 22nd June

Wednesday, 24th June
Tuesday, 30th June

Friday, 3rd July
Wednesday, 8th July
Friday, 17th July

INSET Day/ Science Module Tests
Year 8 Consultation Evening
Induction Evening for new students
Science module tests
Commencement of Breast Cancer Awareness Week
Summer Music Concert
Celebration of the school feast day at Catford
Broadway Theatre
Induction Day for new students
Enrichment Day
Last day of term

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Another goal looked inevitable and it followed swiftly.

Tomi Adelaye showed great composure as he ran past the defence, calmly rounded the keeper and slotted the ball home in superb style. However, the performance was not yet complete. Hat-trick Hero Brendan Owusu-Ansah turned provider for the fifth and final goal as he made a bursting run through defence and, with a deft pass, took the keeper out of the mix leaving Billy Holdsworth with the goal gaping and a ball at his feet. Billy didn't disappoint and Nathan was able to raise the cup aloft secure his team deserved their moment in the sun, following this crushing 5-0 victory. This was an excellent team performance and whilst it seems unfair to single out individuals for praise a special mention must be made of Andre Baptiste who looked calm and comfortable pushing forward from right back, appearing as if he was born with a ball at his feet. Wande Orimolusi also had an excellent game playing out of position at centre-back due to the injury incurred by Cassidy Baillie.

Unfortunately, the year 8 victory could not be replicated by the year 9s who lost 4-1 in a match much closer than the score line suggests. Whilst they did not lift the cup they can be secure that their battling spirit, hard-work and perseverance won them credit on the side-lines. I see glory in their future.

Ben Ramsland



GAA
Cumann Lúthchleas Gael



Gaelic Football

Our Gaelic Football links with Dulwich Harps continue to flourish. Many students, both boys and girls, from Years 7 – 11 have been involved in training sessions and taking part in fixtures. In fact our Girls' team has already two competitions.

During the half term break, a party of 20 students will travel to Ireland for a seven-day tour. They will play fixtures in Donegal, Down, Fermanagh and Tyrone. The party will also attend the Ulster Championship fixture between Derry and Monaghan.



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HOLIDAY DATES 2009

Summer Term
Monday 27th April 2009
Friday 17th July 2009

Autumn Term
Tuesday 8th Sept. 2009
(Year 7 only return)
Wednesday 9th Sept. 2009
(Year 8 – 11 return)
Friday 18th December 2009

Autumn Half term
Monday 26th October 2009
Friday 30th October 2009

Spring Term
Monday 4th January 2010
Wednesday 31st March 2010

Spring Half term
Monday 15th February 2010
Friday 19th February 2010

Summer Term
Monday 19th April 2010
Friday 23rd July 2010

May Day Holiday
Monday 3rd May 2010

Summer Half Term
Monday 31st May 2010
Friday 4th June 2010

