



## Ofsted News

Very many congratulations to the staff and students at St Thomas More Primary School on their excellent inspection report. We are well aware of the progress the school has made and are delighted that this was recognised by the inspectors in their judgement that the school is now Good. Even more impressive is the fact that the school was judged to be outstanding for personal development, behaviour and welfare. This means yet another city school is now Good and contributes to the continuing improvement of local education provision.

## Horribly Good

Congratulations are also due to the cast and crew behind this week's production of *The Little Shop of Horrors*. A significant amount of work went into rehearsing and staging this show and I am sure that everyone who came to see it was impressed by the high standard of performance. There are many that worry that government changes are reducing students' access to the arts, and especially performing arts, but this week we have shown that at the moment they have not. I hope that one of the benefits of staging shows like this one is that more students decide to take Drama or Music for GCSE, or resolve to be involved in next year's show.

## Half Term

Next week the school is closed for the half term break, although some revision classes are running to which specific students have been invited. We are only able to provide limited access to the building as the break enables us to do maintenance work which could not be done during term time.

Please note that Monday week is a staff training day and so students return to school on **Tuesday 23 February**, which is Week 1 of the timetable.

## Pre-Public Exams

On the first six days after the break Years 11-13 have their next set of PPEs. Students have been issued with timetables for these already, and normal lessons will operate when students are not in exams.

Students are reminded to bring their own equipment for the exams as there will not be spare equipment available in the exam room.

## Term Dates 2016-17

I mentioned a couple of weeks back that dates for next year have been published for Peterborough schools, and that they differ from those for Cambridgeshire, Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire. It is also an unusual year in that Christmas Day falls on a Sunday and Easter is very late; it also seems likely that Eid will fall during the summer exam season.

We have now agreed our training days for next year and so I can now give the full list of dates. Please remember that holidays should not be booked during term time.

### Autumn Term 2016

**Begins:** Wednesday 7 September (Years 7 & 12)  
Thursday 8 September (others)

**Half term:** Monday 24 - Friday 28 October

**Ends:** Wednesday 21 December

**Staff training days:** Monday 5 & Tuesday 6 September

### Spring Term 2017

**Begins:** Wednesday 4 January

**Half term:** Monday 20 - Friday 24 February

**Ends:** Friday 7 April

**Staff training days:** Tuesday 3 January  
Friday 17 & Monday 27 February

### Summer Term 2017

**Begins:** Monday 24 April

**Half term:** Monday 29 May - Friday 2 June

**Ends:** Thursday 20 July

**Bank Holiday:** Monday 1 May

*Sean Hayes*

## Sixth Form Quiet Room

A quiet study room is now available for sixth form students to work in. This is for any student but primarily those who are below their target. This room should be used for focussed study and completion of work. There will be no talking in this room, no use of school computers and no phones allowed. Students should prepare work to complete in these sessions and are required to attend if they are underachieving. The aim of this quiet study room is to support students in the final weeks leading up to their exams.

*Mrs Wilmore*

## SJF Debating Seminar

The school's debating society recently had a special training seminar with a representative from Debate Mate, an organisation set up to get young people debating current affairs that matter to them. Students from year 7 to year 13 attended. It began with introductory activities designed to teach the fundamentals of good oracy and the art of making strong arguments.

A session on persuasive speeches followed. Students were shown the subtle differences between making an argument and responding to one as well as activities to promote active listening to support ideas through rebuttal and points of information.

The day ended with a full on debate between two teams captained by Renay-Nicole Kenton and Ryan New. It was absolutely mesmerising to see the progress all the students made in such a short amount of time. Congratulations to Ryan's team who emerged the victors. We are currently planning a rematch. The debating society meets each Friday at 1 20 in room 208 and new members are welcome. *Miss O'Connor*

## Red Day success

This week we held Red Day - Beverley House's charity day. We set ourselves an ambitious target with each tutor group needing to raise over £35. With some hard graft and students participating in mufti, we managed to reach our target. So I am delighted to say that we raised over £1000! This will be split between our two charities; EducAid in Sierra Leone and Peterborough Special Care Baby Unit. We will present the two charities with cheques shortly. A huge thank you to all involved, including parents who helped bake cakes and tutors who drove their tutees to this success. It was impressive to see that three tutor groups raising over £55 each, a huge help in reaching our goal. *Mr J Hayes*

## Learning Leaders

Congratulations go to the following students who have recently been awarded Learning Leader status:

### Product Design

Barnabas Brunner W4  
Keith De Souza B3  
Joanna Galus W3  
Filip Glapka W7  
Jade O'Sullivan W8  
Kajus Zulkus C7

### Food

George Duffy B8  
Morgan Stapleton W6

### Textiles

Hazel Goodfellow W5  
Madeline Mason B1  
Jade Paling W3  
Stella Smith W4

### Humanities

Chinazo Okeke R4

## Learning Habits – how parents can help

Good Learning Habits and understanding of Study Skills are essential for our students; if they are prepared for lessons, can complete work on time and know what they want to achieve, school life will be easier and more enjoyable. These habits and skills are also important for their future after school. This series of summaries will help you as parents understand how students learn and what you can do to help. This week we will focus on different layers of learning and the importance of doing this at home as well as at school:

1. Surface learning: this is how most learning happens in school: coping with work, getting through tasks, being able to repeat back what has been taught, memorising facts.
2. Strategic learning: learning with a specific plan, for example learning in order to get good grades in a particular subject exam. Study skills can help with this by helping students manage their time, boosting motivation, improving memory techniques and understanding how to get the most out of a lesson.
3. Deep learning: becoming fully engaged with learning by digging down into a subject. Study skills can help students do this because they give them options about how they want to learn and the tools to do so in an effective manner.

In order for students to gain the best they are capable of, they need to be equipped with the skills to learn strategically and in depth. They need the time to do this at home as well as at school. Are they able to do the following at home:

- Get a good night's sleep?
- Eat a healthy breakfast?
- Set up a routine for completing homework?
- Work somewhere at home where they are not going to be disturbed?
- Have access to essential equipment?
- Get support to begin learning and encouragement to persevere when things become difficult?
- Receive praise and reward for succeeding in learning and valuing education?

## Gymnastics News

On Tuesday 2 February, some of the school's gymnasts attended a competition at Phoenix Gymnastics Club. The competition included individual and team events, in which we had strong competitors. Bethany Bennett (Year 10) and Julena Farrimond (Year 7) both competed in the Advanced Individual category. Bethany won the Vault competition convincingly, and Julena, despite being against much older opposition placed a very respectable 4<sup>th</sup>.

In the team competition, we entered a Year 7 and a Year 9 team, both of which performed brilliantly. The Year 9s came second overall and the Year 7s came away full of confidence from their first competition, again performing brilliantly against much older teams."

*Miss Gould*