



Happy New Year

The new academic year has started well. It has been unusual to be coming back to school in the second week of September; perhaps that will make the long term more bearable.

I would like to start this first newsletter by welcoming all the new students and their parents. I hope that your first week has been good and that you will enjoy your time with us. It has been especially good to welcome several new students into Year 12, a new development for us. For Year 7 students, we will have a formal Welcome Liturgy on Tuesday morning.

I would also like to formally welcome our new teachers:

Rosemari Bainbridge (*English*)

Vicky Charter (*English*)

John Dzekezeke (*Science*)

Arinze Echendu (*Business & ICT*)

Sharon Gilligan (*Assistant Headteacher*)

Emma Guppy (*Head of Art*)

Natalie Hayes (*Science*)

Helen Palmer (*English*)

Beth Sinclair (*Geography*)

Louise Thomas (*PE*)

Shannon Walker (*History*)

Natasha Wilmore (*Assistant Headteacher*)

We are very fortunate to have a full complement of staff again this year and I wish all of these new colleagues well.

We have a new development plan for the school which governors approved in July. The key foci for this year will be raising student aspirations, creating opportunities for them to develop their leadership, and to continue our journey to being outstanding school. I will say more about these in future newsletters.

Car Park Access

Over the summer a barrier was installed to help us control access to the car park. This has been prompted by growing concerns about safety at the start and end of the day, caused by parents using the car park to drop off or collect students (at both schools). Access is still possible for visitors via the intercom on the barrier but otherwise parents are asked to drop and collect students in Park Lane.

Newsletter

This weekly newsletter is our main communication with parents. Please ask your child to pass it on to you each Friday so that you have the latest news.

Summer School

Two weeks of summer schools took place at the start of the holiday for students who were due to start Year 7 this term. They were extremely successful weeks and the students that attended enjoyed a wide variety of activities and trips. I am very grateful to the staff who planned and led these events.

Exam Results

In assemblies on Tuesday morning I shared with students the news that our A level results were very good this year. It is key at that level that each individual gets the grades they need to progress to their chosen university, college or apprenticeship. Again this year, every single student did this. This is a huge achievement and I congratulate these students and on their behalf thank their teachers.

The GCSE results were rather mixed. Individual students did very well, especially the most able, but there is concern among headteachers nationally that the number of marks required for a C in English and Maths was significantly increased this year, and this meant that almost 20 students who were expecting to achieve a C in both subjects missed out on one or the other. This affects our school results but concerns me more for the individual students who may have then found their options reduced as a result. As in 2012, when this happened in English, there is much investigation and discussion going on nationally; this will continue for many weeks yet but I doubt that the results will be altered. I personally feel that this is a direct result of the government decision to not allow the number of C grades to increase from one year to another. Governors will meet to consider these points and discuss our results next week.

Parent Governor

We have a vacancy for a parent governor on our governing body. There are 14 governors in total, just over half of which are Foundation Governors appointed by the bishop. The minimum commitment is to attend approximately seven meetings on Wednesday evenings in school. If you are interested in contributing to the school in this way and would be able to attend the meetings, then please contact me and I will arrange to discuss the role in more detail.

Sean Hayes

Year 8 Visit to Sandringham

On Wednesday 8 July, Year 8 students visited Sandringham House with the English faculty. Sandringham House is the Queen's second home.

We left school at 9.00 am and it took around one hour and 15 minutes to get there. Once we arrived we split up into three groups and went to separate locations. We started at the House. It is a very grand house with beautiful paintings, chandeliers and furniture. We were intrigued to learn that the Queen has a collection of over 90 guns.

Then we visited the Sandringham House Museum. In the Museum we saw lots of cars. We were especially fascinated by the Rolls Royce. Did you know it is 19 ft 10 in long! There was also a Merry Weather fire engine which was used during WWII. Then we looked at Queen Victoria's wheelchair which was made in 1897.

After the Museum we walked to the Church in which Princess Charlotte was recently baptised. At the altar there were beautiful silver carvings that represent the last supper.

Next we had lunch on the grass then some students went to the gift shop and bought some gifts for their families.

After that we went for a walk in the woods. Soon it was time to go home. We had a lovely day and I hope other students did too.

Thank you to Mrs Winlock for organising this visit.

Stella Smith and Leila Cook

Maths News

Welcome back after the summer break! The staff in the maths faculty are looking forward to working hard to support all students in achieving their full potential again this year. With ever increasing pressure for students to achieve a grade C or better at GCSE we have taken the decision in the Maths faculty to begin preparing students for their GCSE from year 9. This is to maximise their chances of success and provides additional time in which students can familiarise themselves with the demands of the GCSE syllabus. Students will continue to sit two terminal papers at the end of Key Stage 4, one of which is a calculator paper which carries more marks towards the students' GCSE. Therefore it is essential that students are confident in using all the functions of a calculator. Students will be taught how to use the calculators efficiently in their maths lessons. It is essential that ALL students in years 7-11 have their OWN scientific calculator. We do not specify which calculator students should have for school, as long as it is scientific. We therefore request that ALL students should have a scientific calculator by Friday 18 September and should bring it to every maths lesson. We currently have 25 Scientific Calculators available to purchase from Student Services at a cost of £4.50. If you wish to purchase one then please bring the correct money. A further order will be placed once current supplies have run out, but the cost will increase.

Mrs Helcoop, Maths Faculty

Music Department

Interested in learning a musical instrument or continuing with instrumental study?

St John Fisher Music Department provides individual or paired lessons for all year groups on the following instruments:

Piano	Voice	Woodwind
Violin	Brass	Guitar Drums

Places are prioritised for GCSE/BTEC music students and students who already specialise on a particular instrument, otherwise places are allocated on a *first-come-first-served* basis.

These lessons are weekly and will commence on receipt of **payment**. **Lessons will discontinue** if students do not attend their lessons.

All peripatetic lessons are provided by professional instrumental specialists who aim to ensure outstanding progression towards musical excellence.

If your child is interested in this exciting opportunity please contact Mr McCoy (Head of Music) for information either by phone or email.

Other News from the Music Department...

Congratulations to Debora Conde who passed her Grade 5 Music Theory exam in the summer.

Mr McCoy

Syrian Refugee Crisis

During assembly this week we prayed for all those affected by this very tragic situation. We would like to respond as a school community and will be discussing this with students next week. Each year we raise money for several different charities and good causes, usually decided in advance, but this unfolding tragedy is one that students will want to respond to.

Dates for the Year

A list of dates for the year will be included in next week's newsletter. They are already on our website and will be flagged up in the weekly newsletter.

Website

Our website has been overhauled and the new version went 'live' over the summer. Please take a look, especially as there is a lot of important information there. We would welcome feedback on the new website: this may be given via any of the contact methods at the bottom of the page overleaf.

School Cup

The competition for the School Cup is now underway. Beverley House were winners last year, as announced at the end of term. This year's competition was started by Year 7 taking part in three challenges on Monday and currently Cambridge House are in the lead. Throughout the year the latest situation is displayed on the School Information page of the website.