

Community news from St Joseph CMAT

(Shining a spotlight on the news, views and latest developments across St Joseph Catholic MAT)

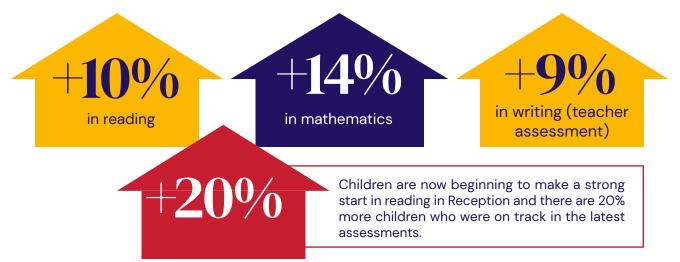


CEO Welcome

I hope that 2023 has started positively for everyone involved in St Joseph CMAT. As we leave behind the shorter days, we will soon begin to see the daffodils popping up as we get closer to spring. As we pass the half way point in the academic year, this is a time to really focus our energy on accelerating progress, particularly for pupils approaching national assessments or examinations.

It is wonderful to see that there are green shoots in the most recent assessment data thanks to the hard work of our dedicated teachers and support staff.

Across primary, the percentage of pupils at the expected standard in the standardised assessments has increased by:



At secondary, we expect to improve on the Progress 8 scores this year as well as increasing attainment.

A whole range of evidence-based raising attainment programmes have launched this term to ensure that our children have the best possible chance of success. Across the Trust, we are working with leaders to increase accountability at all levels so that we can rise to meet the challenge.

The professional development of all staff is at the heart of our school improvement strategy, which is why we are investing significantly in this area. Across the Trust, we have doubled the number of professional learning days and removed all twilight sessions, which means that all staff will benefit from the best conditions for learning. In addition to the Trauma-Informed Schools trust-wide professional development day in February, a planning group is working hard to put together a programme for our summer conference.

Enjoy the rest of the Spring Term!



Andrew Truby, Chief Executive Officer



Annual Conference

Our second annual Trust conference will take place on Friday 30th June at Liverpool Hope University. The theme of this year's conference is 'Transforming Lives' and the planning group is working hard to develop an ambitious programme for the day.

Chartered College of Teaching

St Joseph CMAT has purchased a membership to your professional body, the Chartered College of Teaching, for all teachers and support staff. We are committed to improving the development opportunities for our dedicated support staff therefore Dame Alison Peacock is going to lead a virtual session specifically for support staff. Details to follow.

This membership will support you to:

- Be appreciated for your high level of responsibility, autonomy and accountability
- Be equipped with the knowledge of the latest research in pedagogy
- Be empowered to decide what works
- Feel valued and trusted by the school community as an expert
- Contribute to shaping the future of your profession

How do I join and what do I get?

To redeem your membership please click here.

You will need to fill out a short application form that will take no longer than two minutes.

Here are some of the features of your membership:

- Access to our award-winning journal Impact from the moment you join
- Exclusive invites to over 40 webinars and events per year
- Member discounts to education organisations and major publishers, including SAGE, TES, Bloomsbury and Crown House
- The opportunity to gain recognition through our reputable Certificate in Evidence-Informed practice and Chartered Status pathway
- Access to our Early Career Hub and MyCollege, an indispensable resource packed with accessible articles, interactive content and over 50 videos of high-quality classroom footage
- Opportunity to enrol in one of our accredited online programmes and courses, including courses on education research, decolonising and diversifying the curriculum and wellbeing
- Access to one of the world's largest databases of education research journals
- Research digests, guides and reviews giving you summaries of the latest research to develop your practice with the latest evidence
- Over 100 on-demand CPD videos, hear from leading experts at a time that suits you
- Consultations, surveys and opportunities to have your voice heard and shape your profession
- The opportunity to drive the strategic direction of your professional body

We are also encouraging a number of teachers from each academy to undertake the Certificate in Evidence-Informed Practice and the Chartered College has agreed that we can run this as a St Joseph CMAT cohort. This may suit colleagues who are not currently enrolled on a NPQ.

Instructional Coaching

In addition to the subject-specific training through our partners such as Ark, we are also developing classroom practice through instructional coaching which has better evidence than any other form of CPD. The theory behind instructional coaching is linked to the principles of developing expertise through the use of deliberate practice. We know that high quality teaching is the best way to improve outcomes for children therefore, as part of our trust-wide improvement strategy, every teacher will benefit from regular 1:1 instructional coaching sessions and we have already included ringfenced funds within each academy's budget to ensure that there is sufficient time for coaches and coaches to work together. The Trust has commissioned Sarah Rockliff, an experienced trainer, to build a team of instructional coaches in each school.



CFOO Update

The start of the Spring Term has been a time for new year's resolutions and renewed focus. In the central team, we have been working hard to ensure that the fundamentals are in place in all key business areas.

The beginning of the year is also a time when many of us find ourselves with increased motivation. With the on-going economic pressures we all face, it is easy for this motivation to be become deflated. However, a key behavioural habit the central business team will look to maintain is to remain upbeat and to face all challenges head-on, together, as a team.



Khalil Mohammed Chief Financial and Operations Officer

IT news

We are pleased to report that we have appointed and welcomed MGL World to operate as our Trust interim IT support partner until the process of appointing a permanent provider is made.

MGL are a company based in the North West and have significant experience of working with and supporting schools across the region. The team is headed by Carl Gibertson, who already has knowledge and experience of working with our Trust as MGL were already supporting three of our academies.

MGL are now working with colleagues across our Trust on a number of key ICT projects, one of which is to progress and finalise the Microsoft migration initiative.

Over the coming weeks, MGL will work with all academies to better understand our IT estate and infrastructure, and to arrange the next stage of the Microsoft migration with their onsite technical support to manage any issues that may arise.





Finance update

Annual Audit

The lead up to Christmas and year end was very much around finalising the statutory audits and financial statements.

All academy trusts are required to produce an annual report and accounts, which are independently audited, and submit these to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and Companies House. As well as providing assurances to the public, parents, and Parliament that funds are being used for the purposes provided, the audit is important in providing transparent evidence about the quality of a trusts' accounting and financial reporting systems.

In responding to such engagements, central finance colleagues worked tirelessly with colleagues across our schools to ensure all financial information was provided and the strict deadlines were met.

We are pleased to inform colleagues that all of our submissions were completed on time and feedback from key stakeholders has been positive.

Development Sessions

A huge thank you to our colleagues who joined the central finance team for the various development sessions. Whilst the key focus of the sessions was to discuss key processes and procedures and providing training, it is always great for staff across our Trust to come together.

The sessions formed part of a wider development programme that our Central Teams have put together, aimed at providing training and guidance across a wide range of topics to support key staff carrying out their role and particular deliverables. The development has been arranged for our School Business Managers, and our Headteachers are also involved for some aspects.

This initiative represents an exciting opportunity for our schools to take ownership of its leadership development and ensure that the role of school business managers (or equivalent) remains as a critical element of effective school leadership and school improvement.

Governance

The Trust held its first Annual General Meeting with our members at the end of December which, alongside receiving and approving the audited accounts, was a wonderful opportunity to further update members on the progress made by the Trust since the summer. They were very appreciative of the work that has been undertaken and the journey the Trust is on.

The focus for the Local Governing Bodies during the latter part of the term was operational matters, including the works in progress to support, develop and enhance key functions. Attention was given to advancing the implementation of systems, particularly WeAreEvery. The Board delegated some key activities for the Local Governing Bodies to review on their behalf in Spring 2023 and will review their findings and recommendations at the end of the Spring term.

The Trust are seeking to expand their clerking function as we progress towards the next stage of our expansion. We have part time flexible roles and if you are interested or know anyone who may be looking for a role, please do look at our advert on our website.

Clerk to Governors at St Josephs Catholic Multi Academy Trust

We are also open to volunteers seeking a governor role. Whilst the majority of our governors are foundation (individuals who protect the religious character of our academies and are practising Catholics), there are opportunities for other community members to join as non-foundation governors. Local Governing Bodies need a diverse range of skills, perspective, knowledge and experience, and we also encourage staff seeking further professional development and who may be planning to progress towards leadership, to consider applying for a governor role in another of our Trust academies.

If you are interested in either the clerking opportunities highlighted or are considering volunteering as a governor (foundation or non-foundation) please do not hesitate to contact Carena Graham-Benson, Governance Lead (c.graham-benson@stjosephmat.org.uk), for an informal discussion.



Estates, Facilities and Health & Safety News

Energy, Energy, Energy!

As I am sure you are aware, the cost of energy has rocketed in the last few months. Like at home, we are all trying to save energy and money. Why not have a look around in school and see what your school can do to support the Energy Saving Challenge! Simple checks like turning off lights and computer equipment can have a massive impact on saving the environment and money for your school!

Smartlog Training

The St Joseph's Board of Directors are committed to keeping all our staff safe and provide all staff with on-line Health and Safety training. Are you up to date with your training? Smartlog reminder emails will be sent directly to your St Joseph email address providing easy access. Our top performing school for compliance is Holy Family Platt Bridge. Can you support your school to be the top performer next term? If you would like to take a look at what additional training is available for health and safety, please visit our follow the links on the SharePoint Key Information pages.

Ongoing environment works

Improving our school environment is one of the ways we support education at St Joseph's. Hopefully you will all start to see and feel the improvements we are making and continuing to plan for over the summer, so watch this space! As always, if you have any ideas please use We Are Every to log a job! The more jobs we see, the easier it is to plan improvements for next academic year.

Capital investment across St Joseph CMAT

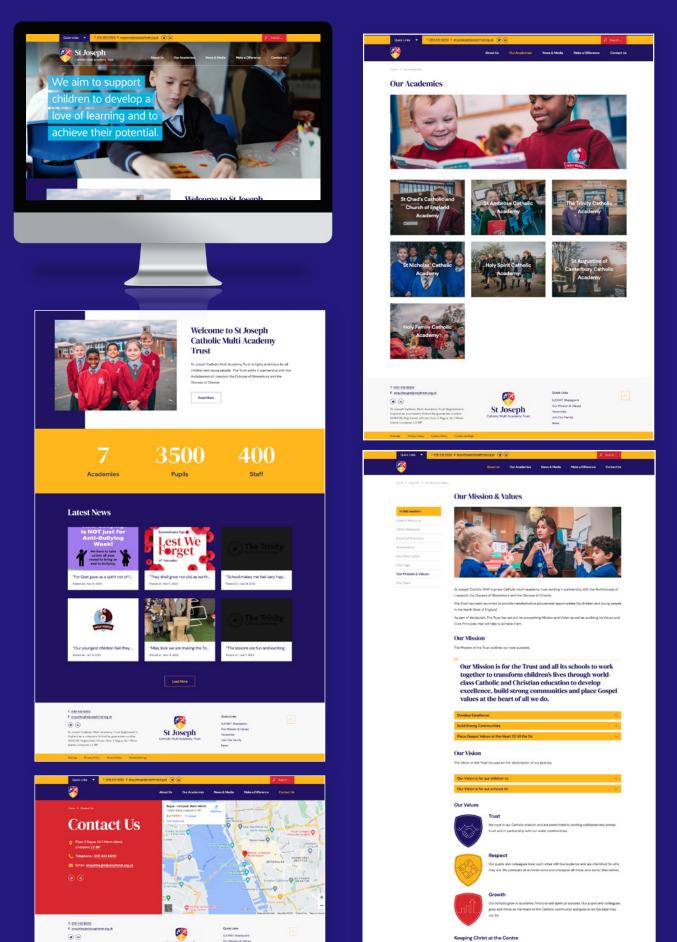
As reported in the last newsletter, you will all know some of our school buildings have already been awarded funding for major building works. We can now announce that St Ambrose is the latest school to be awarded money to improve the school, with over £700K to support a new roof alongside heating controls to help us to save money and energy!

> Pamela Di Scala Head of Estates



New Trust website launched Monday 6th February 2023!





People, Performance and Culture News



Lisa Kidd, our Head of People, Performance and Culture joined the Trust in late November 2022. Lisa brings a wealth of public sector experience from the Civil Service and specialises in Human Resource employment law, HR policy development, and organisational design.

Since joining the Trust, Lisa has been developing the HR strategic plan and designing a HR function which supports the Trust's ambitious aims.



Staff survey

We will soon launch a whole staff survey. We are keen to hear from everyone across the Trust to understand: what it like working in the Trust; how you are feeling; what works well; and where we need to improve.

We are keen to establish a working group to review the findings from the survey, and to agree actions on what we can do to ensure our Trust is a great place to work. Details of how to be involved will be shared soon.



Staff wellbeing

Your health and well-being is a key priority and that is why we have partnered with Life & Progress, our Employee Assistance Programme (EAP).

Our EAP can gather information and offer support on a wide range of work, family and personal issues and are available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and can be contacted in confidence on **0800 08 3375 www.lifeandprogress.co.uk.**

Please follow the link to find out more:

Employee Assistance Programme

St Joseph Catholic Multi Academy Trust HR policies We are continuing to work on the development and roll out of Trust policies and procedures. We have recently rolled out our Appraisal policies for both Teachers and Support Staff. If you have not already met with your line manager to set your objectives, then we would strongly encourage you to do so.

HR advice and support

A reminder that we are also working closely with Browne Jacobson for general HR support and advice. They are available to provide academies with HR and employment related advice and support on a range of HR topics including: absence management; capability; disciplinary and grievances.

Our consultants can be contacted directly: Key contact - Eleanor Drabble (Monday - Wednesday)

- 2 0330 045 2108 / 07748 907614
- eleanor.drabble@brownejacobson.com

In Eleanor's absence - Tracy Foster

tracy.foster@brownejacobson.com or
07890 423206





Advent preparations

During Advent, children at Holy Family Catholic Primary School enjoyed welcoming a set of nativity figures to their homes for a night. This lovely experience helped them to cherish the real meaning of Christmas and share some prayers with their families.

The knitted nativity figures were on loan from Holy Family Catholic Church and were passed from family to family around the school community. Parents and carers set up the nativity scene with their child, talked about the Christmas Story, and said prayers. Staff commented that it was a lovely advent activity and a special way to link home, school, and church.

Visit to Delamere Forest

In December, our 3-year-old Nursery and Reception class wrapped up warmly with their hats, gloves, and welly boots and went to Delamere Forest. The children enjoyed making some Christmas crafts and then spent the afternoon exploring the forest, making artwork from the natural materials they found, and toasting marshmallows on an open fire with Ranger Rob.









LiveSimply CAFOD Award

Holy Spirit are excited to be starting our journey towards achieving CAFOD's 'LiveSimply Award'. This award challenges us to Live Simply, Live Sustainably and Live in Solidarity with others. We have created an action plan so that we can see the impact of our actions on a school, local, and global level. Our Shining Lights are leading some of the actions in their classes including:

• The Big Lent Walk

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- A litter pick along the canal local to school
- A photography competition to capture the Awe and Wonder around us
- Building a community book case

The LiveSimply award is an opportunity for all Catholic communities - parishes, schools, religious orders and chaplaincies - to respond to Pope Francis' invitation in Laudato Si' to

"work with generosity and tenderness in protecting this world which God has entrusted to us"

and we are pleased that we can be a small part of this work.



Forest School with Everton in the Community

As a school, Holy Spirit have worked with Everton in the Community (EITC) for our PE lessons, tournaments, breakfast and after school clubs. It has been a wonderful partnership for the whole school community, and so we were delighted when they asked if they could set up a Forest School provision on our site. Last term, the EITC, the Everton under 21s team and a lucky group of Holy Spirit children worked together to clear the designated site and start preparing the area for outdoor learning.

This term, we have had a grand opening and our Year 1, 2 and 3 children have begun their weekly Forest School sessions. It is great to see the impact it is already having on social skills, team work and self-esteem. The site will also be accessed by other schools in the future with the EITC team leading so not only will our children benefit, but local children in other settings will too. Soon we will all be learning....The Holy Spirit Way!



Imagine my Future

Next half term, Year 5 and Year 6 children will be working on a six-week programme to learn all about careers and the world of work. It is led by Elevate, a Sefton Education / Business Partnership who primarily work with secondary schools. However, they contacted us as they would like to begin working with Primary schools to raise these important messages even earlier.

Our school is partnered with Sovini which has many strands to its business, including construction, properties and facilities, and they have built and manage lots of the homes our children and their families live in.

Sessions will include 'Imagine my career', 'Imagine my Future Self' and 'Imagine my Future World' and will culminate in an 'Imagine my Future Opportunities' careers carousel. We are delighted that our children will be accessing this wonderful opportunity at its earliest stages and know it will help us towards our bigger vision aim of Excellence and Achievement.





Robin Hood-Whole School Panto

On Friday 13th January, children from Nursery to Year 6 enjoyed a very special 45 minute performance of 'Robin Hood' by M&M Productions. Thanks to the kind donations from Jaguar Land Rover, St Vincent de Paul Society and The Mayoral Fund, we were able to make this possible.

Varjak Paw

This term, our Year 5 class have been reading and studying 'Varjak Paw' by the wonderful SF Said. The class has been totally gripped by the adventures of the book's main character, Varjak,

and have been writing versions of their own.

One aspiring young author read out a superb piece of his writing (in the style of SF Said). Not only did SF Said get to see this video, he also replied tweet! to our Needless to say, this created quite the buzz in Year 5, with a classroom of writers hoping that their work is shared next.



That's amazing! Please congratulate that brilliant young writer for me, and tell him to keep the Way alive! And thank you for doing such great work with Varjak Paw!

Environmental Improvement Grant

Our Learning House is now complete along with an extension to our Early Years Foundation Stage unit to provide sheltered areas to maximise our outdoor learning. This week, we have had a lot of enjoyment exploring the Learning House, even our older children joined in with the fun! The Environment Improvement Grant made this possible and we cannot wait to see how our learning journey continues with this extra outdoor provision.





Mr White

The end of term marked an end of an era at St Ambrose when we sadly said our goodbyes to Mr White. We thank Mr White for nearly five years of dedicated service to our children, their families and our parish. We will never forget the difference he made to our school, and thank him for laying firm foundations upon we can build upon.

Outdoor Play and Learning

Having introduced 'Outdoor Play and Learning' into our school day, our playtimes and school day have been transformed. Children from Reception to Year 6 play together using their imagination. During play, you may observe journeys to far off lands using a bread tray and rope; children climbing Mount Everest with tyres and others swinging through the Amazon Rainforest by tying ropes to the trees! Teamwork, communication and relationships are improving daily and children come back into class happy and ready to learn. Our vision is that every child in our school has an amazing hour of high quality play every day – with no exceptions. We recently received a kind donation of a kayak...I wonder where in the world this will take us. But before we set off...maintenance is required!





Epiphany Celebrations

Epiphany – also known as Three Kings' Day – is a Christian holiday which falls on 6th January. It is a special date for many Christians as it is when people celebrate how a star led the Magi – also known as the Three kings or the Wise Men – to visit the baby Jesus after he had been born, bringing gifts of Gold Frankincense and Myrrh. In some countries 6th January is when Christmas is celebrated.



Defibrillators

St Augustine's Head Boy Reece and Head Girl Viktoria took delivery of two new defibrillators on Friday 20th January as part of a new DfE initiative. A training video has been shared with all pupils to ensure that they would know what to do if a cardiac emergency was to arise, as well as the staff team First Aiders.



Holocaust Memorial Day

Each year, people from across the UK take part in an international movement for Holocaust Memorial Day. St Augustine's lit up the Chapel to remember those who were murdered for who they were, and what they believed in. We stand against prejudice and hatred today.



Year 7, in their Library lesson are studying the book "Number the Stars"

Set in Nazi-occupied Denmark, ten-year-old Annemarie Johansen is called upon for a selfless act of bravery to help save her best friend from a terrible fate. In the lesson, reflecting on the story, students changed yellow stars, a symbol of hate and oppression, which Jews were forced to wear, into a symbol of peace.



Digital Arts Box project

Sean and Andy from Digital Arts Box worked with our Year 10 Graphic Communication and Art and Design classes on a project called 'The Magic Money Tree'. They created bank notes and keyrings using Procreate, an iPad mini and a stylus as part of a larger piece of work that will highlight the dangers of loan sharks in the community. The final 'tree' will be exhibited at the World of Glass in St Helens next month.



Some finished examples...



Visit to Liverpool John Moores University

Year 11 visited Liverpool John Moores University, they took part in GCSE Chemistry revision focussing on atomic structure and bonding and ions.

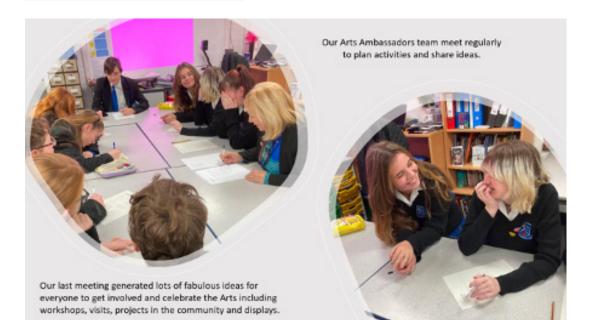


Feast Day Advent Mass

Year 10 and 11 students at Feast Day Advent Mass at St Mary Immaculate RC church with Fr. Dooley and Mrs Thompson, our school chaplain.



Art Ambassadors



Shakespeare North Theatre.

Years 10 and 11 visited the new Shakespeare North Theatre in Prescot in December. They were treated to an amazing performance of 'A Christmas Carol'



Brass Band play at Boundary Wharf



Our Brass Band performed at Boundary Wharf for the residents as part of the Extra care scheme. Well Done to our performers from years 7, 8 and 10.

Chester Zoo Visit



270 years 7 to 10 pupils visited Chester Zoo on what turned out to be the coldest day of the year brrrrr.....



🕂 St Chad's

Runaway Writers

St Chad's Catholic and Church of England Academy is home to an enthusiastic community of creative writers. Now, their prolific output has been gathered together in an anthology, Runaway Writers, launched prior to Christmas at a special event with an audience of family and friends.

St Chad's Creative Writers' Club, led by English teacher Paula Radford, is a place where students can write and share their work and gain crucial feedback to help them grow as writers. Demi Casson, a Year 9 student, says,

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"I love the friendly environment, the people in it and how there is no judgement. It enhances our English skills and capabilities."

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Students have written in a range of genres, from graphic novels to murder mysteries, and all agree that writing in such a supportive group has improved their craft enormously. Mrs Radford says, "I have been so impressed by the imaginative pieces created so far." Students, encouraged by the opportunity to share and celebrate their work, are busy this term, working on Volume Two.

Collaboration with Halton Public Library

Year 10 GCSE students at St Chad's will be working with local artists this term, supporting the creation of a new mural in the Children's Room at Halton Public Library. Our students will visit the library and talk to artists about the space and their ideas, and act as consultants at every stage of the creative process.

This exciting collaboration is part of an increasingly close relationship between St Chad's and our local public library. Later in the term, we have been chosen to host an author visit, when Andy Briggs, the Liverpool-born writer of thrilling young adult novels, will visit our academy and share his work with our Year 7 students.



St Chad's Careers Day

Students at St Chad's attended their first Careers Day on 27th January. The academy had the pleasure of hosting a range of colleges, apprenticeship providers and local employers. The day was an excellent opportunity for students to interact with professionals and experts from a variety of fields, whilst also gaining a clear understanding of the Post-16 options available in the local area. Visitors were extremely complimentary about our students, commenting on their willingness to ask questions as well as their exemplary behaviour.

Our Year 10 students gained a comprehensive understanding of all matters related to Higher Education, following engaging sessions from our colleagues at Shaping Futures.

Career Connect worked with Year 11 students to help them focus on their future goals through sessions on team work, employability and self-control.

We were also excited to introduce our students to Unifrog. The online platform provides young people with unbiased careers information and advice to help them make informed decisions about their future destinations. Unifrog also helps teachers to monitor student engagement and progress with their careers education.

Cronton College High Achievers Event, 25th January

A small group of Year 10 students identified by their teachers as high achieving in their subjects, were given the opportunity to take part in two academic master classes at Cronton College. The master classes on offer included Business, English Literature, History, Sciences and many more. Our students had a wonderful afternoon and were excitedly talking about their experiences with their friends and teachers the following day.



Hannah Davies, Schools Liaison Officer at Cronton College said of our students:

"I wanted to take this opportunity to thank you for allowing your students along to our High Achievers Event yesterday. It was such a pleasure to meet them all and they represented your school very well, you must be so proud."



It has been a very busy start to 2023 here is St Nicholas Academy, with the children producing some fantastic work (please see our Twitter feed y @stnicsliv for examples).



Year 3 pupils enjoyed classifying rocks in a recent science class

Year 6 pupils enjoying a recent Geography class

Grant Funding news!

We are fortunate to have been awarded a generous grant from the Food for Thought 'Mike Carden Health and Wellbeing Grant', which is for school health and wellbeing initiatives and projects. The funding will support two fantastic projects at St Nicholas Catholic Academy and will have an immediate and long-lasting impact on the children.



The Pupil Council recently met and considered how we can promote healthy lifestyles and care for the environment, and their views fed into our bid application. Our Healthy Minds initiative continues to encourage children to stay well hydrated as it is so important to general health and effective learning. We identified that many children do not have a water bottle of their own, so we bid for funding that will enable all pupils to have the same water bottle with their name and school logo. Re-using water bottles is of course, much more eco-friendly than placing reliance on single use plastics. The Food For Thought Grant Panel agreed and kindly offered £500 above our bid request, enabling us to order higher quality bottles than originally planned, and achieve an even greater level of sustainability.

We continue to encourage healthy lifestyles and healthy eating at St Nicolas Catholic Academy. We therefore bid for funding of a new football kit with the Food For Thought logo. The smart new kit will enable us to promote our after-school clubs and encourage healthy lifestyles both in and out of school, as well as advertising the not-for-profit school meals company brand.

We are delighted to receive funding for both important projects. We look forward to sustaining the initiatives for at least three years and showcasing them on our website and Twitter feed. Thank you once again, to Food for Thought, for the funding opportunity and the successful bid money – it will make a real difference to our pupils.



Chinese Spring Festival Gala

Our school and the children in Year 5 were selected by the Confucius Institute to perform at their Chinese Spring Festival Gala Event to celebrate the Chinese New Year. The children performed two songs and sang in Chinese at the memorable event at Tung Auditorium situated within the Yoko Ono Lennon Centre. Mr Davies, our Headteacher, gave a speech on the special links we have with the Institute, sharing the Chinese culture, and the importance of this to our local community. We welcomed tutors from Confucius Institute into school to prepare the children for the event. The children performed for our school Friday Celebration Assembly and they particularly enjoyed performing for the public at the Gala event.

Through the links we have with the Confucius Institute, an artist will come in and work with the children as part of their art topic, and we will receive visitors from China to help the children learn more about Chinese culture and arts. Pupils will participate in activities such as Chinese Calligraphy, Music, Crafts, Dance and a taster in Mandarin. We are all excited and will be sharing pictures and videos on our website and our Twitter page.







Year 5 trip to Crosby Hall Education Trust

Crosby Hall Education Trust (CHET) enabled our children to have a taste of country life away from their normal routine. CHET is a brilliant place where nature meets nurture, allowing our children to experience enriching indoor and outdoor activities in a safe and stimulating environment. The facilities were fantastic, and the staff instantly made us feel welcome and at home.

Our children enjoyed a variety of fun activities such as the adventure course, shelter building, archery, zip wire, curling and orienteering. The activities were brought to life by the amazing staff and enhanced our children's social and educational development during their stay here.

Sphero Coding Club

At The Trinity, children have been taking part and loving the Sphero coding club that is on offer. In this club, children give robots different commands and instructions for their robot to follow. The children have also been using Scratch blocks to learn more advanced logic. The children have loved this club so far, and have found a new interest in STEM subjects.







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