

**SPECIAL POINTS  
OF INTEREST &  
DATES FOR  
YOUR DIARY**

Year 12 & 13 Parents  
Evening  
1st May

External Exams  
10th May

Year 7 Bushcraft  
13th May

Community Coffee  
Morning  
22nd May

May Half Term  
27th May–31st May

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## Aspire to be More

Dear Parents/Carers,

We are approaching the end of a very busy Easter term, in which much has been achieved.

Students in years 11, 12 and 13 are working hard in preparation for the public examinations in the summer. I have been very impressed by the independence and determination of our year 11 and year 13 students. There has been much improvement in mock results and most are involved in either additional intervention or taking advantage of our silent study offer after school. We wish them every success in the summer examinations and are sure that their hard work will pay off.

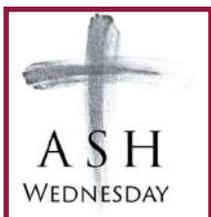
It is wonderful to see so many extracurricular activities and enrichment activities being undertaken every day by our students, including Young Enterprise, Science club, music and sport. These extra opportunities allow students so much extra learning and development; I am grateful to all our staff who run these activities, some of which are within this newsletter.

Admissions into year 7 for 2019-20 are significantly over subscribed and we will be having two days of appeals after half term. Year 12 applications have also considerably risen, with over 100 to St Thomas More and over 300 to the Trinity. This is great news as it has allowed us to expand our curriculum offer and the courses that we run. We also look forward to hosting the David Campbell Soccer School in September.

At the end of this term we say a fond farewell to Mrs Smith who has been a loyal member of staff for the last 8 years; she is moving to work at St Margaret Ward. Finally, I would like to thank everybody involved in the production of our Lenten service which was organised with our MAC partner primary schools. It certainly helped us to remember that Easter is about much more than chocolate eggs. I would like to wish you and your families a happy and holy Easter.

Mr M. Rayner  
Headteacher

## Chaplaincy Update



### Ash Wednesday

We marked the start of Lent with Ash Wednesday Mass over at St Gregory's Church which allowed students to receive the Ashes as they wished. It was a powerful start to Lent.

### CAFOD Fundraising

We had a visit from our CAFOD representative, Phil, who led an Act of Worship for our Y8s on their Lent campaign.

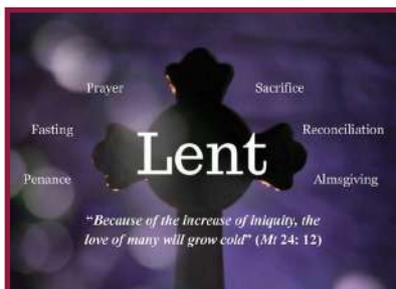


### Reconciliation Services

As part of our Lenten Journey we had a Reconciliation service led by Deacon Stephen for Year 7 & 8.

### Lourdes Meet up

Our Lourdes group met with other students in North Staffordshire to take part in Mass and team building in preparation of going to Lourdes in May.



### Y4 Lenten Retreat Morning

We enjoyed a lovely morning with the Y4s from our MAC primary schools. We focused on Lent and took part in some fun activities.

### Lenten Services

We finished our school term with Lenten Services to reflect on Holy week and the coming of Easter.

### Our Community

Mrs Rowley, Assistant Headteacher is running the London Marathon at the end of the Easter holidays fundraising for *Joe Gilligan Trust* and Bowel Cancer UK. We remember her in our thoughts and prayers over Easter.



## English Department

### **Year 12 Literature Visit to the Imperial War Museum North**

Year 12 Literature students explored the Imperial Museum North to understand the role of propaganda, the reality of war and the suffering men endured during WW1. Students were exposed to exhibition displays plus silos that projected images of the war onto giant screens with

accompanying booming sounds of trench warfare; students were definitely immersed into the reality of the war. The Imperial Museum North building was designed by Daniel Libeskind who took the concept of war fracturing the earth; this then formulated the shards of the building and industrial nature of the material that make up the impressive and moving design of the museum. Each pupil was given tasks to gather information from primary sources to have a contextual idea of life in the trenches; this will form part of their coursework that studies both poetry and drama that is from or about WW1.

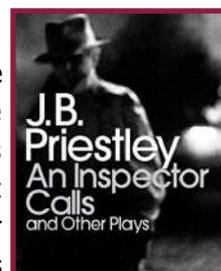
Mrs Mitchell



### **Year 10**

All students were treated to an enthralling production of *An Inspector Calls*, the last of the MANACTCO performances of the set GCSE texts. This performance was a concise version of the play, which definitely brought the plot, characters and key themes to life. A live performance of a text has a much greater impact on learning and stays in students' minds much longer than reading the text, or watching various adaptations on screen. *An Inspector Calls* is one of the classics of mid-20th century English theatre and a sure favourite amongst students. Despite pupils already being extremely familiar with the plot, gasps of shock were audible in the hall following the dramatic plot twist and students were literally on the edge of their seats!

Mrs S Beasley



### **A-Level Literature trip to Keele University**

As a part of our A-Level English Literature course, we were invited by Higher Horizons to go to Keele University where they delivered a helpful session on analysing extracts. This meant we had support when annotating different extracts from literary works to help us in our exam, where we are expected to annotate the language, form and structure of a text. The help we received was tremendous: the atmosphere was calm and most of all, we had fun while doing something productive and informative. Since going on this trip, I have become more confident analysing extracts due to the new techniques I was taught, so am very grateful that we were able to go.



Charlotte Parry (Year 13)

## English Department



### Harry Bibring's Testimony:

To commemorate the Holocaust Memorial Day, students from KS4 and KS5 had the fantastic opportunity to hear the testimony of a Holocaust survivor: Harry Bibring. Harry was born in 1925, in Vienna. His father owned a clothing shop. Harry enjoyed ice skating, learning about mechanics and spending time with his sister, Gerta.

In November 1938, Harry's father's business was destroyed during Kristallnacht and he was arrested soon after. Harry was transferred to a school that permitted Jews to attend. After his father was released from prison, the family intended to flee to Shanghai. His father was robbed on his way to pay for the tickets. Thinking of the safety of their children, Harry's parents arranged for him and his sister to flee to Britain on a Kindertransport train.

Harry came into school on the 24<sup>th</sup> January to share his experience with our students. Pupils were deeply moved by Harry's story and created individual letters to express their thanks.

Unfortunately, Harry suddenly passed away on 31<sup>st</sup> January, so we feel extremely privileged to have had this invaluable experience.

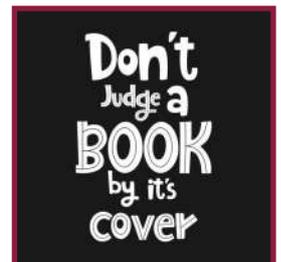
### Don't Judge a Book By Its Cover

On the 28th February, five of our Year 10 Honours Students: Charlotte Ellis, Catlin McDonagh, Katie Stanway, Ayan Mahmood and Ismeil Jala, attended the Franklin Scholars competition where they designed their own Literacy project. The students were provided with the theme of mental health and were asked to develop a literacy incentive to address the needs which mental health raises. They created the project entitled: "Don't Judge A Book By Its Cover". The basic principle is that students bring in their favourite book to wrap up, write a message and leave the book for other students to read to find comfort and an escape.

The incentive was launched in school on the 11th March- thank you Year 10!

### The Jungle Book Trip

50 of our Year 7 and 8 students have had the fantastic opportunity to visit Derby Theatre this last half term. We watched the fabulous production of The Jungle Book on 11<sup>th</sup> April.



## English Department

### World Book Day Celebrations

On the 7th March, books came to life at St Thomas More. Each Department embraced a different author for the day, incorporating elements of their work in lessons. Alongside the challenges for world titles in PE, a hunt for Dalmatian puppies in Maths and a tour of the globe in Geography, all teachers were dressed as their favourite character for the day. Books really can transport you!



### Library Visit

On the 25th March, all students in Year 7 attended a talk delivered by Stoke on Trent librarian, Amy. Amy introduced students to various different styles of books before delivering a reading to our students. At the end of the session all students in Year 7 were issued with their own library card for Stoke on Trent. Happy Reading!

### Readathon

Do you love to read? Get paid to do so! On the 6th April twenty students will be participating in a sponsored read to raise money to purchase books for hospitals. This is a wonderful opportunity to bring hope and kindness in to other people's lives.



## Career Ready Update

Year 10 students have been working incredibly hard with business mentors as part of the Career Ready programme. They meet during monthly workshops which offer them an insight into the world of work; the aim being to enhance their knowledge, skills and confidence, preparing them for a variety of post-16 options.



The students have been working closely with some major employers from across Stoke on Trent, including DHL, Michelin and Autonet. The feedback has been very positive from both mentors and students, and we look forward to seeing their progress continue throughout the programme.

A special thanks also goes to Caroline Emery, former STM teacher and now regional manager for Career Ready across Stoke on Trent and Staffordshire

## Science Update

### CREST Club

In Science Club, after school, we are now running the CREST Award. The Bronze group are investigating bath bombs have been finding the best recipe for producing the most gas and the longest fizzing time. In February and we won £150 in the STEM Clubs Week Competition. We posted a bathbombs picture on twitter with #STEMClubsWeek and won, so congratulations to the Bronze group!



The Silver group are all doing different projects – foaming bath bombs, scented and coloured bathbombs, investigating how lipstick is coloured and making and testing suncream. The CREST Award can be used for the Honours Programme as a 'STEM' activity.



One student commented, 'CREST Club is just amazing; you make new friends and learn new things'.

### NMSLPTN



Science Technicians from across the region met at STMCA for the first North Midland Science Learning Partnership Technicians Network meeting. The session led by Vivienne Hearts enabled technicians to share best practise in supporting school science. Technicians were able to gain advice on laboratory safety and efficient use of resources. The technicians took away a range of ideas and practical's to try out in their own schools.

The images show the thirsty bottle experiment a bottle warmed by having boiling water in and then emptied will draw water from a bowl into it. Students can then discuss the science causing this effect.



## Science Update



### British Science Week

"During British Science Week we took part in an after school session regarding an experiment with invisible ink.

First, we watched a video on crime scenes. It showed us how in World War 2 the soldiers sent secret messages to each other.

Then Miss. Dyche explained how we could make invisible ink. We used mysterious purple substances and were able to write secret messages to each other"

by Sahara and Aleena in Y7



"For British Science Week, we went to Keele University to learn about Forensic Science. It was amazing as we learnt about how real crime scenes are dealt with and we saw a real skeleton! We were tasked with the challenge of rebuilding a skeleton and identifying the remains as an individual we were given information about. I really enjoyed the activities and I would love to go on a trip like this again!" –Keith Year 9

## Outward Bound



On March 4th to 8th 2019 11 students embarked on an adventure travelling on the school minibus for 3 hours to a very beautiful area of the Gt Britain, Aberdovey in Wales!! We arrived to dull drizzle and cold conditions. The students had a variety of challenges set them. They had to hike for several hours with heavy rucksacks in the cold encountering mud and lots of water!! They had to set up tents and slept under canvas also then hiking the day after. One of the greatest challenges was gorge walking in hail and icy conditions. There were tears of pain and joy by all!!! The trip was there to inspire but also build resilience.



"I personally really like the outward bound experience, it challenged me and my skill level, my trust in others and how well I could work in a group. I think that this experience could help a lot of people overcome fears and help to develop their skill levels and mind-set - Wiktoria

It was an incredible opportunity to try new things. The instructor was supportive and encouraging. It was the best week ever!! - Lucy

My experience at outward bound was great. I learned that I could do more than I thought I could do. I can't believe what people are capable of doing. Being challenged is amazing! - Maja

## Enrichment

### Student Leadership

The new Student Leadership structure is in place and 100 students from Y7 to Sixth Form are leaders across the Academy, with responsibilities including Senior Prefect, Youth Chaplaincy Team, Academic Mentor, Peer Mentor, Literacy/ Numeracy Ambassador and Primary Transition Ambassador.

Our Student Leaders have undertaken a range of roles so far this year, such as speaking in front of staff and students at Open Evening and Awards Evening, and running Literacy projects, book clubs, YCT activities and peer mentoring sessions. We are extremely proud of our Student Leaders for the commitment, dedication and maturity that they have shown this year, and look forward to working on exciting projects with them in the future.

The full Student Leadership Structure and list of students involved is available on the school website.

### Honours Programme

A very exciting initiative called the 'Honours Programme' was launched to students and families on 23rd January. 162 students are involved in this programme across the Academy, from Y7 to Sixth Form. Students will be given a bespoke package of provision, development of key skills and enhances careers education, information, advice and guidance in order to stretch and challenge them to achieve the highest grades in examinations and fulfil their full potential. This programme is inclusive and students can earn their place on the Honours Programme at any time in the academic year if they achieve the criteria through internal assessments. Please speak to Mrs Barker or Mrs Rowley if you would like more information.

'Honours Programme' students have been provided with year group specific reading lists and a Charter of Opportunities that they must complete in order to graduate from the programme at the end of the year. All resources will be available on the school website, so any student is able to access them if they wish.

Upcoming 'Honours Programme' events include workshops with local companies including Autonet and KMF, visits to leading Universities, and a CREST Science qualification.

CREST is available to students after school on Mondays (Y7 and Y8) and Wednesdays (Y9 and 10) in room 101 with Mrs Bussell.

## Sports at STMCA

### 'This Girl Can' Partnership

The 'This Girl Can' games is in it's first year in Stoke-on-Trent and gives girls the opportunity to take part in a range of sporting activities and engage in taster sessions with coaches. Today (25th January) 10 year 8 girls represented St Thomas More Catholic Academy and did so with great enthusiasm, a resilient attitude and outstanding manners which were commented on by all session leaders. Faith, ex-



cellence and respect was demonstrated by every girl and we had a fantastic afternoon playing golf, cricket, athletics, dance, boccia and new age curling.



### Year 7 8v8 Competition

STM were proud to host the very first newly formatted Y7 Football 8v8 league tournaments. 7 secondary schools from the south of the city thoroughly enjoyed being involved.



## Sports at STMCA

**The U13 football squad** and 6<sup>th</sup> form officials braving the elements in the city cup:

From left to right: Scott Nixon, Oliver Heath, Ajay Butler, Akmal Hussain, Cian McIntosh, Ethan Smith, Shayan Flaherty, Will Lindop, Joshua Ashlee, Joshua



Ledgar, Areeb Basharat, Cody Woolridge, Cameron Knowles, Cabe Jellyman, Jensen Adams, Kevijan, Shae Balfour-Leigh.

The **Y11 STM Level 2 Sport Science students** have been spreading some festive joy with gifts and playing games of bingo at a local residential home today. Everyone had a wonderful time.



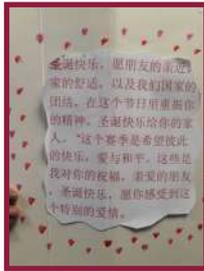
True Grit Training at STMCA

True Grit Training have started a weekly session with selected key stage 3 students.



## Other News

### Chinese Christmas Card Competition



Congratulations to Nura who won the Foreign Language Christmas Card Competition in December with her beautifully designed Chinese themed card. Nura was inspired to research Chinese Christmas traditions as she wanted to learn about the country and she felt that Mandarin was a difficult yet interesting language to



master. Well done Nura! 做得好

### Accelerated Reader

Well done to Katelyn O'Reilly Smith for Reading and Quizzing on 30 books in her Accelerated Reading lesson and achieving 100% on her quiz results.

She has also read a total of 1,429,551 words.

Huge well done to Melissa Tempest James for Reading a total of 2,568,156 words an amazing achievement so early in Year 7.

### STM Knitting Club

The STM Knitting Club have been very busy again this term and the students are becoming extremely proficient in the basics of the craft

Our previous projects include; supporting Age UK by knitting tiny hats for the Innocent Big Knit Campaign. 25p is donated to the charity for each hat sent/ Festive and Valentine items. Twiddle bears to support Dementia.



For the latest project, the students made pompom 'hugs' and animals to give to a loved one for Mothers Day. They were very inventive with their creations and deservedly proud. Well done!

## Other News

### Marshalling for the Tittesworth Christian Aid Walk

On Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> March, some of our students marshalled at the annual North Staffordshire Christian Aid Walk around Tittesworth Reservoir. £1,000,000 has been raised so far at this event and the



CEO for Christian Aid, Amanda Mukwashi attended and praised the students for volunteering.

We had mild and dry weather and the students each received a certificate from the organiser. One student said that he will use this for his CV in the future and that he enjoyed volunteering for such a good cause.



Volunteering as a marshal can be used for the Honours Programme as 'Representing the School'.

### Year 7 Into Film Club

Year sevens are enjoying a weekly film club with the Into Film School Film Association, which provides high quality films free to schools.

Over 20 year sevens have enjoyed different genres of films such as Wonder, The Incredibles 2 and The Day the Earth Stood Still. Students have their own account on the Into Film website and can upload their reviews of the film, as well as play games and enter competitions.

The club is open to all Year 7 students. It takes place on Wednesdays from 3.15pm until 4.45pm.

Students who would like to attend should see Ms Phoenix (Room 253) for a letter to bring home.

### Year 7 Bushcraft Trip

Our year 7 Bushcraft trip is fast approaching. For those that have confirmed their place on this amazing trip, we have an information evening that will take place here at St Thomas More on **Monday 29th April at 5.30pm**. Light refreshments will be served from 5pm.



## Performing Arts



Back in January, performing arts students were given the opportunity to go to London and experience a workshop at Pineapple Dance Studios, watch a West End Performance of Matilda, go to The London Dungeons and visit some of London's famous landmarks.

Students stopped in central London for 2 nights and experienced these events with Ms. Milan and Mr Bruus, with help from a London Theatre Tour Guide.

The first day consisted of students visiting Trafalgar Square, followed by visiting some of the impressive pieces of artwork at the National Portrait Gallery.

Students visited The Tate Modern and Shakespeare's Globe on the second day before they took part in a Practical Workshop at Pineapple Studios with a recent ex member of the cast of Matilda, re-staging part of a routine from the musical.



Students then got to watch the Matilda performance at the Cambridge Theatre and witness the routine that they had practised.

On the last day students got to experience the London Dungeons Tour which brings together an amazing cast of theatrical actors, special effects, stages, scenes and rides.

One student in Year 11 told us that they had always wanted to watch a west end show and this was their first time watching one. They enjoyed everything about the show.

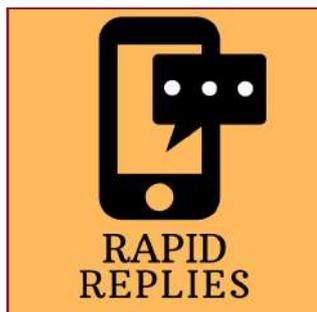
Students also mentioned how they enjoyed spending the evening in a different city with their friends and enjoyed the cultural sites that they got to see.

### Extra Curricular Activities in Performing Arts

There are lots of extra curricular activities available in performing arts, from being part of the choir, drama club and even opportunities to help behind the scenes.



## Year 10



Back in January a selected group of Year 10 students worked with expert mentors from the media development and enterprise company, Digital Advantage. They were tasked with creating a digital business model and app as part of the programme, which aimed to give learners the opportunity to gain an insight into the creative industry

They came up with the idea of Rapid Replies, an app which helps students make time to revise more effectively by limiting the amount of unwanted messages and calls they receive when studying. Each student was given a job role as part of the project and pulled together to perform a Dragon's Den-style pitch to Mr Rayner and other members of the Senior Team. It was a brilliant experience for the students and they took away lots of positives from the five-day project. Please visit their website <http://stthomasmore.digivantage.co.uk/> to see what they did!

## St Thomas More Catholic Academy

Parent app is available now FREE



Sign up now to receive updates about your child's attendance, events and homework. *direct to your phone.*

*If you have not received your log on details please contact the school with your child's name, year group and your current email address and we will send you the link!  [office@stmca.org.uk](mailto:office@stmca.org.uk)*

## Sixth Form

A huge well done to Head Girl, Roshni Haque, who has won the national Career Ready Logistics Student of the Year Award.



Roshni was shortlisted for a national award after Virgin Trains were impressed with her first-class skills on an internship. The 18-year-old completed the four-week placement at Crewe rail station as part of a prestigious programme with education charity Career Ready. She was tasked with assisting disabled train passengers on the platforms and also helped at an information kiosk.

Roshni did so well that she has now gone on to land part-time work at the station. Roshni is one of 14 students from the sixth form to 'graduate' from the careers programme this month. They have all completed a year-long, intensive series of activities to help prepare them for work.



As well as completing an internship or work placement, each student has had a business mentor, gone on visits to a variety of companies, and attended master classes.

### Young Enterprise

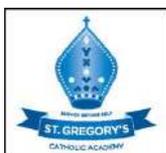
Sixth form students were at World of Wedgewood on Saturday 30th March as part of Young Enterprise where they were giving the public the chance to adopt a bear as part of their campaign. The students worked really hard at the Trade Fair and had hands on experience bringing their campaign to life. The Honeycomb Bears team have been successful in winning Staffordshire Young Enterprise Business Report. A fantastic achievement for our young entrepreneurs.



### David Campbell Soccer School

David Campbell Soccer School is coming to St Thomas More Catholic Academy Sixth Form this September. This is a unique opportunity in the City for post 16 students to study specifically within the sports industry alongside an experienced organisation with a proven track record of students going on to achieve work placements within the sports industry. There are limited places for this course. Students will be in their sports kit and complete placements with local clubs for valuable experience.





## Year 7 Intake Events

We are excited to be close to meeting the student intake for September 2019. Being oversubscribed and a large waiting list for this year group we know this can be a hectic time for many parents. For us here at St Thomas More Catholic Academy, we are delighted to be able to offer a few different events to ease this process and to make the transition to secondary school as smooth as possible.

### Afternoon Tea - Wednesday 3rd July

This is an event for students coming from a school where there are less than 5 students transitioning. This will give them the opportunity to make some new friends before starting so there are more familiar faces in September.

### 2 Days of Transition - Thursday 11th and Friday 12th July

These are 2 full days at St Thomas More for all students where you can get familiar with your classes, teachers and how the day to day operates here.

### Parents Evening - Thursday 11th July

This is a wonderful evening where we all come together to ensure everyone is prepared for the start in September. This covers a lot of areas from, meeting staff to buying uniforms. Suppliers will be set up. There will also be the opportunity to speak to staff with regards to Parent Pay, Free School Meals, Medical Concerns and much more. This is a popular event where we would encourage all parents / carers to attend .

We are excited to meet you all from all the wonderful junior schools.

