

Longton Hall Road, Longton, Stoke-on-Trent. ST3 2NJ

Tel: 01782 882900 | Email: [office@stmca.org.uk](mailto:office@stmca.org.uk) | [www.stmca.org.uk](http://www.stmca.org.uk) | @StThomasMoreCA

Headteacher: Mr M Rayner BA(Hons) NPQH

22nd November 2021

Dear Parent/Carer,

Students have continued to make a really positive impression this half term. Visitors continue to comment on the excellent behaviour and engagement in lessons from students, and the sense of community within our Catholic school. This included during a recent visit by an Ofsted Inspector, who commented specifically on the fantastic ambassadors that our students demonstrated themselves to be, and on the Catholic ethos that permeated throughout the relationships between staff and students in our shared commitment to Aspire to be More.

Our school chaplain, Father David Newall, has been saying a weekly mass every Friday and it is wonderful to see that these have been supported by a growing number of students. He also celebrated mass for those students in the house of St Vincent de Paul; students have thoroughly enjoyed both as a time to reflect and immerse themselves in the values of our school and faith.

During October, students raised money for CAFOD Family Fast Day, raising £191.28. In November, the Faith in Action group raised £171.41 for CAFOD by hosting a community coffee morning. The Sixth Form Faith in Action group meet weekly with our Lay Chaplain, Megan McNicholl. They have begun work in Sam's Garden, working as stewards of creation in line with Catholic Social Teaching, gladly embracing their personal responsibility to care for our Common Home.

All students have been completing assessments and Year 11 are half way through their Mock examinations. We have been impressed by the students' attitudes to these tests and examinations. It is really important that students use the results to motivate, and to inform revision and independent work in the lead up to the summer. Year 7-10 also received BBC Bitesize careers innovation talks as part of our CIAG programme. Despite the disruption to last year's Year 11, we are very proud that 99% of students left with a secure destination planned based on accurate information and guidance.

The recent Sixth form open evening was really well attended and we look forward to receiving applications. It is wonderful to see students considering their post 16 futures so seriously and receiving appropriate CIAG.

We are using the additional 'catch up' funding through the National Tutoring Programme, school led tutoring and the employment of an academic mentor. We have partnered with 'mytutor' for key students.

This week has been national Anti-Bullying Week, with a slogan of 'One Kind Word'. Acts of Worship, Morning Mission PSHE lessons, 15 Minutes of Faith, Arts on Angels, and an Extended Form PSHE lesson all centred on relevant anti-bullying topics in order to raise the profile of this important issue and renew our strong commitment to work to eradicate bullying. Students and staff alike all wore their odd socks on Monday for Wear Odd Socks To school day, as did many schools up and down the country, in order to remind each other that it is good to be different and that we are all unique. As part of #DitchTheBlade Week, a national campaign led by the police in a bid to tackle knife crime, we also focused on this during the PSHE lessons. Students responded and participated brilliantly and, as ever, demonstrated their maturity when exploring such important issues.

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We are pleased to welcome a new Assistant SENCO to St Thomas More. Mrs Wheeler will begin as of Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> November and, as part of our commitment to inclusion and SEN.

While it is also reassuring to see that the school year has a welcome sense of 'normality,' please can I ask that we remain vigilant and cautious in light of the number of Covid cases both locally and nationally. Please continue to complete lateral tests twice a week and to follow government advice.

As we move towards Advent, during what has been a very challenging time and experience for us all, I would like to gently remind all parents and carers to be considerate in how you communicate to staff. I am really aware that lots of people are under immense pressure due to personal circumstances changing significantly over the last 18 months. We are here to support your child and you as much as we possibly can. However, please refrain from swearing at staff, making personal comments and undermining clear school systems and structures as this cannot and will not be tolerated. I totally understand that as parents we advocate for our children and all I ask is that you do this in a courteous way so that we are all role modelling to our children how to do this.

May I take this opportunity to remind you of some upcoming important dates:

- 29<sup>th</sup> November: Year 13 Mocks
- 14<sup>th</sup> December: Christmas Concert 5.30pm
- 13<sup>th</sup> December: Year 11 Mock results
- 17<sup>th</sup> December: Advent Services
- 17<sup>th</sup> December: school closes
- 4<sup>th</sup> January: school opens

Many thanks for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,



Mr M Rayner  
Headteacher