



St Michael's Catholic Grammar School

JANUARY 2018



Dear Parents,

St Michael's continues to impress me in many ways! In this newsletter, you will gain an impression of the enormous wide-range of trips and extra-curricular opportunities on offer. St Michael's has a tradition of taking students beyond the confines of the school buildings and out into the wider world to experience first-hand other cultures or to the places where events from History took place. The nature of modern education is that it needs to adapt to the demands of the time and respond to the wishes of students: Some of our Sixth Formers recently said they wanted to go on a ski trip – and so this is in the process of being organised!

Parents of students in Year 11 will know the challenges faced by the new GCSEs – they are designed to be harder and have greater content than before. Many of the teachers at St Michael's have been concerned about the wellbeing of our students as they try to cope with the substantial workload involved. It is for this reason that the current Year 9 (and future year groups) will study for only 10 GCSEs (rather than 11). I hope that this will reduce anxiety and provide greater scope for maintaining a balance between schoolwork and extra-curricular activities. I know from contact with university admissions tutors that they are interested only in the quality of the grades achieved, and not the number of subjects.

I want our young people to enter the world with a healthy approach to their studies – and so I encourage them to maintain interests beyond their schoolwork – and be involved in extra-curricular activities either at school or beyond.

With best wishes,

Michael Stimpson

Shout Out for the PA !

Mrs Tricia Reid looks forward to a busy year fundraising for St Michael's School and encouraging parental networking for social purposes and for the good of the school community. Mr Tricia Reid is pleased and proud of the work of the PA



St Michaels's Parents' Association (PA) consists of a group of collaborative, dedicated parents along with Deputy Head teacher Mrs Sheehy who work to extend the school community whilst raising much needed funds to improve school facilities as well as helping St Michaels pupils continue to thrive.

Current membership includes Tricia Reid (Chair), Trudy Lurshay (Vice Chair), Patricia Roche (secretary), Sylvester Esuruoso (treasurer) and Sharon French (arts coordinator) as well as several other committee members.

Our role is overwhelmingly social and involves organising events for pupils, parents, teachers and friends to enjoy. Over recent years this has included the huge Year 7 Welcome barbeque, Race night, Family challenge night, Easter raffle and of course the more competitive Quiz night which is coming up on 26th January.

Any help at these events is very valuable as many hands make light work – even if you can't attend meetings there are always roles behind the scenes.

Meetings are held once a month at the school starting at 7.30 sharp and normally finish by 8.45pm.

Over the past two years our achievements include contributing almost £30,000 to the school which was used for the refurbishment of the Curie Science lab, funding a brand new mini bus essential for educational trips, purchasing 2 gazebos, Christmas tree/lights, a fridge as well as providing funds for computers in the library and sixth forms. Recently we raised over £16,000 at our hugely successful Christmas Fayre.

All help is extremely appreciated and we would like to receive support from as many pupils and parents as possible and are always happy to engage new suggestions for future events.

The AGM (Annual General Meeting) will be held in May and people are invited to be nominated for the various positions. .

Please get in touch with us by email:
stmpan12@gmail.com



Jack Petchy Awards July 2017

Well done to the St Michael's winners of the Jack Petchy Award 2017. Young people and their families enjoyed watching the awards ceremony at the Arts Depot 19th July 2017. Adaora and Aletia raised impres-



sive amounts of money for the Kenya exchange as part of the Y8 sleepover. Anais is one of the most committed musicians in St Michael's. Mary was a technical wizard with the sound system which contributed to a successful school production, West Side Story. Ezinne has been fully committed to the liturgical life of St Michael's helping with many acts of worship in school. Anna Ward did a sky dive to raise money for Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital. How brave! St Michael's is proud of you all and delighted that your efforts and talents have been recognised in this way. As many people know Sir Jack Petchy's done good'. His back-advantages. He took found then and entrepreneurial flair helped car dealing to travel investment. Sir Jack encourage aspiration. Every individual has advantages which relate to the unique make up of each person. Sir Jack encourages us to build upon those talents, to mitigate our shortcomings and to set goals for achievement. Clear goals can turn aspiration into achievement. Nothing is achieved without action. Inaction has only one inevitable outcome, failure. The Jack Petchy Awards encourage all young people to take action to achieve and to contribute to the school and wider community and to be proud of what they have achieved. We very much hope that many more St Michael's students will take steps to be more and to achieve more and to serve more. Please nominate award winners in the Jack Petchy box situated in the library.



Paul Ward

St Michael's Performs at the Chance to Dance Event

In July 2017 St Michael's pupils organised a dance group to take part in the Chance to dance event. Hats off to the Y12 pupils who shared their dance expertise with many year groups to produce an expressive and precise choreography. Keep dancing!



Chance to Dance is the annual dance show that we do at St. Michael's. We love to put on this show because it is a chance for everybody to have the opportunity to dance and express themselves,

whilst getting recognition, and really just having a fun time whilst doing it.

Chance to Dance took place on the Wednesday the 12th of July in the evening, and it was filled with amazing dances from people in years 7-12, including dances with a range of year groups. It was organised by four year 12 students Emma Sakikibara, Amelia Reeks, Sarah McDaid and Alessia Morruzi, along with the help of Mrs Heron. Many of the groups were self-choreographed dances and some were choreographed by the year 12s. We had many rehearsals in the days preceding the event, and put in a lot of effort, and this paid dividends when the show was put on as everybody performed so well. It was a great success and all the hard work really paid off.



St Michael's Pilgrimage to Lourdes 2017

In July 2017, 45 Year 11 and Year 12 students met at St. Michael's, ready to embark on what would become one of the most spiritually intense and rewarding experiences of our



lives. The Westminster Pilgrimage to Lourdes occurs every year and the Diocese provides a service to ill or elderly people that need assistance. We would be providing our service as redcaps, assigned to a specific assisted pilgrim, helping them through processions and religious ceremonies, as well as building strong relationships along the way. Miss Devlin, Mr Boardman, Miss Theodore and Mrs Casalaspro accompanied us. The coach journey to Lourdes was long but enjoyable. A few of the Year 12 students had been to Lourdes before and were able

to offer reassurance when it came to any doubts or worries that we had. At the Hotel Stella, we were given the opportunity to relax as well as practice our readings, music and dances for the Rosary Prayer Service which was to be taking place the following day. We were under pressure as Cardinal Vincent Nichols would be present and the reputation of St. Michael's was on the line. More importantly it was an opportunity to aid people in their prayer to God on pilgrimage. After numerous rehearsals, it is safe to say that the prayer service was beautiful and appreciated massively by the Cardinal, as he stated that he had never seen a more beautiful representation of the Rosary. This spurred us on for the week and filled everyone with a determination to make the most out of every aspect of the pilgrimage. Some redcaps were assigned to the local hospital called the St. Frai, while others were assigned to a group named St. Joseph's who all had an individual mental disability. Everyone had the opportunity to make the most out of the spiritual adventure; whether it was going to the Sacrament of Reconciliation or going to the famous Lourdes baths – we were able to grow and find parts of ourselves that had not yet been revealed to us. Something about devoting time, energy and love to those who desperately need it is an indescribable feeling. Perhaps the most unforgettable part was the torchlight procession. The Westminster diocese were to lead with Redcaps holding banners and guiding the assisted pilgrims, followed by all the other pilgrims that had travelled from across the world, holding candles as a symbol of their faith in the Lord. It was mesmerising seeing so many flags and nationalities united in prayer and reflection. Besides the intense work throughout the day, we had the chance to explore Lourdes in the evenings. The diocese hosted nightly socials for Redcaps to make new friends. It was lovely to be able to appreciate Lourdes as the fun, busy and vibrant town that it is. After an unforgettable week, it was time for the long journey home. This trip would not have been made possible without the commitment of the teachers, especially Miss. Devlin. The week will be treasured by all who took part for the rest of our lives.



Y7 Tower of London History Trip

On Friday the 20th of October, all of year 7 and a few members of staff went to the Tower of London. We took 2 tubes to get there. When we arrived, we had a guide dressed as a knight show us around. He told us all about the history of the Anglo-Saxons and the Normans through acting that we all happily joined in with. Then he showed us a few interesting historic buildings.



Next we had our packed lunches. Then we all went to see the Crown Jewels which were beautiful. In the Crown Jewels section my favorite item was Queen Victoria's Crown, which I liked because it was different from all the other crowns as it was really small. Next we headed over to a different tower and we saw interesting armour and weapons for horses and men. We then did a worksheet in which we had to find out the names and dates of different historic places around the Tower of London.



While walking around the Tower we saw very interesting sights, we saw 2 different types of beefeaters. One type wore tall back hats, had guns and wore red jackets and black trousers. That type are deadly serious and have to stand very still. The other type wore short back hats, black trousers and red garments with gold patterning, this type shouted very loudly. Another site was the huge ravens which apparently ate bird biscuits soaked in blood and raw meat every day!

Afterwards we had a browse in the souvenir shop then headed home. I would like to thank all the members of staff who came along and Mr Ward for organising this wonderful trip that we all thoroughly enjoyed.

Tess McMorrow

St Michael's Musical Autumn Showcase November 2017

On Thursday 16th November we held our Autumn Showcase, featuring a variety of musical performances from around 100 St Michael's students.



The concert included performances from the Junior Choir, Chamber Choir, Junior Orchestra, Chamber Orchestra, Jazz Band, Brass Ensemble and Guitar



Ensemble. Two Year 9 students



also performed a piano duet from *Carnival of the Animals*. We hope to see you at our next performances on **Thursday 15th March & Thursday 3rd May 2018.** **Daniel Daly**



Gardening Club

Gardening club is a really fun club which allows you to grow your own fruit and vegetables and take them home to eat! This year, we planted courgettes, radishes, carrots, broad beans, lettuce and marigolds as well as taking care of the strawberry plants and herbs. Not everything we planted grew but some of our most successful plants were the courgettes and broad beans. Even without the produce of all our plants, we were still got to take home a fair share.

Being in gardening club means you have to be dedicated to your work because if the plants are not nurtured they will not grow. We watered the plants every morning and lunchtime of the days we were in school. Gardening club isn't just watering plants though it also involves



weeding the plant boxes. Although this activity may not seem appealing to all it all goes into the satisfaction of growing your own food. We learnt a lot about how to

combat pests, like black fly and slugs. Organic methods are less effective than chemicals but better for the environment. We plan to continue with gardening club next

year. We would welcome new members in the Spring of 2018 and we would be happy to show you some gardener's tricks.



Serafina Kiladis and Viola Sciolette July 2017

St Michael's Music Department goes to Wicked

On Wednesday 13th December the Year 10 and 11 GCSE music students went to the Apollo Theatre in Victoria to watch the musical *Wicked*. This was in order to get a deeper understanding of the set work we are studying, "Defying Gravity". 'Wicked' takes some of the themes of 'The Wizard of Oz' about good and evil and reality and falsehood and gives them a magical spin.



All students found it entertaining and informative and we learned a lot from this experience. We would definitely suggest it for future GCSE classes. We were particularly inspired by the music and singing, so much so that we couldn't stop singing after the show. It was a unique experience and we are very grateful for the opportunity to hear our set work live and first hand.

Georgia 11S

Father John's Retirement

All good things come to an end. On the 29th June 2017, Father John Ball, the school's beloved Chaplain, celebrated his last ever Mass before officially retiring after many years of service as Chaplain to St Michael's. The sheer number of friends, family, past pupils and staff that came together to mark this special occasion is an indication of how much the St. Michael's community appreciates Father John's presence and commitment towards the school. The beautiful and heart-warming Mass featured a number of reflections from both pupils and staff, expressing how kind and talented Father John is as well as how much of a positive impact he had in the lives of so many. Throughout the Mass, Father John displayed an aura of serenity and peace - a clear reflection of his gentle soul and kind heart. The absence of Father John will leave a vacuum in the St. Michael's community - he will truly be missed.

Angel Jobson

