

LOVE-RESPECT-FLOURISH

St. Mary's Catholic School Newsletter

Issue 13 - 15th December 2023



***'For a child has been born for us, a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named
Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.'***
(Isaiah 9:5-6)

Mr Johnston - Headteacher

This week we have celebrated the story of the nativity through music, readings and song during the Advent Carol Concert at our parish church St. Joseph's and the English Martyrs. Fr. Peter presided, and the musicians and choirs led ably by Mr Chapman (Acting Head of Music) who also played the organ for the carols.

It was wonderful to listen to the students singing and playing so beautifully and to be joined by parents, staff members and others in the congregation. I particularly enjoyed the Year 7 choir's rendition of 'Away in a Manger' sung to an alternative melody and in parts – a real delight. Thank you to everyone who participated and organised the event.

And so, we approach the end of the Autumn Term. This will be the last Headlines of the calendar year. It has, as ever, been a fulfilling and busy term and I hope that you can enjoy a well-earned rest and celebration over the Christmas holidays with family and friends, ready to return refreshed at the start of 2024.

Wishing you a wonderful Christmas and may the blessing of Christ enrich your life in 2024

God Bless.



Heavenly Father,

Heal our hearts during this season of Advent.

Help us to love more fully,

To forgive more generously,

To wait more patiently for Christmas,
embracing each day and hour knowing the joy
that awaits.

Let us Pray for peace in our world, and that all
people will seek reconciliation.

In Your name we pray.

Amen

UPCOMING EVENTS

Tuesday 19th December 2023
Christmas Dinner

Tuesday 19th December 2023
Christmas Jumper Day
(School uniform must be worn)

Wednesday 20th December 2023
Last Day of Term ~ school ends 1pm

Thursday 4th January 2024
Spring Term ~ All students return to school
Late Start—Students in school by 11:30am



St Francis of Assisi
CATHOLIC ACADEMY TRUST

SMCS Carol Service 2023

On Tuesday 12th December we held our annual Carol Service in our local Parish, at St Joseph and the Martyrs Roman Catholic Church.

The evening was a wonderful occasion of prayer and music as part of our Advent journey.



Inspirational Maths Talk



Inspirational Maths Talk for Year 11, Year 12 and Year 13 students at Saffron Walden Hall

Student Report by Ezekiel, Year 13

Starting off the talk, guest speaker Alison Kiddle introduced the audience to the concept of micromorts: a unit that represents a one-in-a-million chance of death. We learned about the usefulness of small units for making approximations for risk. Examples given were travelling by train, car, and walking, of which trains were by far the safest. Conversely, the 'reward' part of the talk looks instead at the odds of winning the lottery. A paper was shown with the misleading title of 'You need 27 tickets to guarantee a win on the UK National Lottery' (November 2023), by David Cushing and David I Stewart. In it, we were taken through the method to win at least one prize (no matter how small) and the reasoning behind how it worked. From this, it was shown that luck-based events could be predicted given a large enough size or frequency.



The next section dealt with the maths involved with arcade video games, and how it can help us visualise mathematical concepts. Led by Matthew Scroggs, a game of 'Pacman' was shown. Using an algorithm, a path was constructed to beat a level in the shortest distance possible, demonstrated through a recorded video. However, the most interesting part of the demonstration was the 'screen-warping' shown in the game. The world that arises from this 'screen-warping' were better shown on another videogame, 'Asteroids'. An audience member played a recreation of 'Asteroids' on his website, displaying the weird properties of a world that wraps around on itself. We were shown the usefulness of considering these different worlds in map making, as a 3D shape can never truly be conveyed on a 2D surface. This means maps must be designed to make some details accurate, while sacrificing other aspects.

Heads or tails...

If you think it's going to be heads, put your hand on your head.

If you think it's going to be tails, put your hand on your... tailbone.

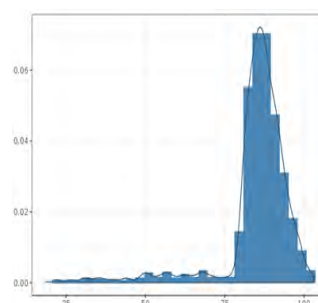
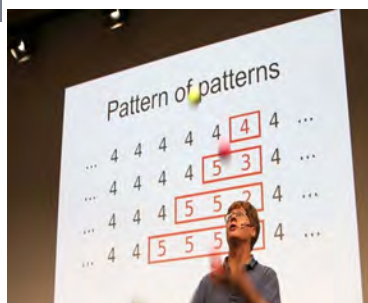
What are the chances of getting it right 20 times in a row?

Pattern of Patterns

```

      4
    5 3
  5 5 2
5 5 5 1
5 5 5 5 0
    
```

Finally, speaker Colin Wright took us on a tour of the maths of juggling. What started off as an unrelated topic about pattern recognition soon moved on to how this could be used to make predictions. To illustrate this point, the audience was treated to a spectacular showing of juggling skills, and he highlighted the underlying patterns. This culminated in the audience deciding on the final juggling trick, using a pre-established diagram, to end off the talk.



Year 9 Creative Showcase

Sweets and Treats Final Piece Drawings

Miss Nairn, Miss Ashton and Mrs Morgan-Wren would like to congratulate our fantastic Year 9 students on recently completing their final pieces for the Sweets and Treats project.

Student's artwork is a testament to the hard work and focus shown by all students in Year 9 throughout this project and we feel that quality of work is showing very exciting GCSE promise. The Sweets and Treats Art project was based on colourful, fun and nostalgic food items and has been inspired by various artists including Sarah Graham, Gunter Beier and Joel Penkman (*examples of whose work you can see to the right*).

Very well done year 9 and keep up the good work!

Miss Nairn



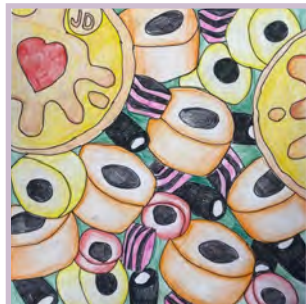
Joel Penkman



Gunter Beier



Sarah Graham



Student Artists:

Aiden, Alicja, Daniel, William
Ellie, Elsie, Evie, Gioia,
Harry, Max, Neil, Sophie

Well Done KS3 Readers!

Well Done to the KS3 Readers!

The word total for this term for students in Years 7, 8 and 9 is an amazing ...

35,531,790

This total comes from all the passes on book and article quizzes on Accelerated Reader.

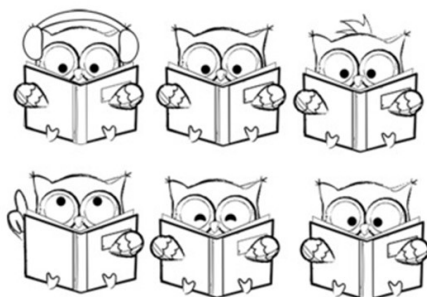
In next week's awards assemblies, the following students will receive Gold reading certificates, because they have passed quizzes on 15 or more books this term:

Luke B, Joel F, Jude C, Anton K, Orla S C, Shay D, Julia F, Tobiasz D.

What a fantastic achievement!

Here are the top three AR classes in each year with their word totals.

| Year 7 | Year 8 | Year 9 |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 st 7D 4,710,110 | 1 st 8B 3,353,309 | 1 st 9F 2,409,415 |
| 2 nd 7C 4,594,987 | 2 nd 8E 2,071,823 | 2 nd 9B 1,561,858 |
| 3 rd 7A 3,181,032 | 3 rd 8D 2,055,706 | 3 rd 9C 1,259,462 |



Extra Curricular Clubs

**This is what has been happening this term in the Extra Curricular Clubs.
The Spring Term Extra Curricular Clubs List will be in the next Headlines.**



Lexia Club

Here are some comments from students about how Lexia Club has helped them:

"It has helped my spelling and the club has nice people in it to help me."

"It has helped my reading age a lot and we have a snack."

"It has helped my reading age and grammar, the club is peaceful and I like the people in A3."



Homework Club

Here are some comments from students about how Homework Club is helping them:

"It helps me to concentrate in a school environment."

"It creates a routine where I can complete my work and have extra support that I don't get at home."

"The staff are really good and I love to go every week to do my Sparx."

"I like the club because help is available when you are stuck."

Books and Biscuits Club last Friday, when we were discussing books, films and TV programmes which feature time travel (what are the features of a good time travel story, what are time travellers usually like, when and where would you go if you could travel in time, etc.).

Here are comments from two Year 9 students about how the club challenges them (Rozalia G and Anna S):

"The club challenges me by giving us a different topic each week to discuss book wise, which therefore helps me step out of my comfort zone and talk confidently about topics I enjoy. It improves my public speaking and social skills, as well as boosting my imagination and creativity."

"Books and Biscuits challenges me whenever I have to give a summary of a book I've read; it's hard to sum up a good book in a few words. I am always challenged when persuading my fellow books-and-biscuits-goers to read an absolutely amazing book, because you only know how wonderful it is until you've read it. I definitely learn lots of rhetoric skills in doing so! I already have skills in public speaking, but it improves my articulation to be able to give people an idea of a book's plot."



Debate Club

I have found speaking in front of people a lot easier and I have become more confident around people I don't know.



Breakfast Club

Students comments about Breakfast Club:

"I like this because it is a safe space where I can ask questions."

"We play games and sets up for the day."

"It's good to be with friends and learn information."





Inter House Quiz

All students in the school have been participating in a weekly Inter House Quiz during Form Time.

This has enabled students to work together in a bid to achieve the best possible result for their House. Each winning Form receives three positive House Points!



Below are the results from this term.

Well done to those who have achieved a high number of quiz points!

Mr Eddleston
(House Coordinator)

| OVERALL RESULTS | |
|-----------------|--------------|
| FORM | TOTAL POINTS |
| A | 486 |
| B | 738 |
| J | 711 |
| K | 438 |
| M | 757 |
| T | 686 |

| JUNIOR | |
|--------|--------------|
| FORM | TOTAL POINTS |
| 7A | 42 |
| 7B | 72 |
| 7J | 42 |
| 7K | 103 |
| 7M | 126 |
| 7T | 133 |
| 8A | 112 |
| 8B | 163 |
| 8J | 102 |
| 8K | 93 |
| 8M | 169 |
| 8T | 177 |

| INTERMEDIATE | |
|--------------|--------------|
| FORM | TOTAL POINTS |
| 9A | 91 |
| 9B | 68 |
| 9J | 118 |
| 9K | 78 |
| 9M | 54 |
| 9T | 87 |
| 9R | 0 |
| 10A | 81 |
| 10B | 59 |
| 10J | 85 |
| 10K | 52 |
| 10M | 67 |
| 10T | 54 |

| SENIOR | |
|--------|--------------|
| FORM | TOTAL POINTS |
| 11A | 68 |
| 11B | 124 |
| 11J | 112 |
| 11K | 112 |
| 11M | 76 |
| 11T | 112 |
| 12A | 130 |
| 12J | 129 |
| 12M | 143 |
| 12T | 136 |
| 13A | 88 |
| 13J | 123 |
| 13M | 122 |
| 13T | 123 |



Inter House Competition



The results of the Inter House Christmas Cake Decorating Competition!

Well done to everyone who took part.

| Forms | Judge – Mrs Crowhurst | | | Total Score |
|----------|-----------------------|----------------------|-------------|-------------|
| | Box Decoration / 10 | Cake Decoration / 10 | Advert / 10 | |
| A | 4 | 8 | 9 | 21 |
| B | 7 | 8 | 1 | 16 |
| J | 3 | 10 | 6 | 19 |
| K | 3 | 7 | 7 | 17 |
| M | 5 | 10 | 4 | 19 |
| T | 6 | 7 | 3 | 16 |
| R | 8 | 7 | 8 | 23 |

| Forms | Judge – Head Pupils | | | Total Score |
|----------|---------------------|----------------------|-------------|-------------|
| | Box Decoration / 10 | Cake Decoration / 10 | Advert / 10 | |
| A | 6 | 8 | n/a | 14 |
| B | 8 | 8 | n/a | 16 |
| J | 3 | 10 | n/a | 13 |
| K | 2 | 6 | n/a | 8 |
| M | 10 | 10 | n/a | 20 |
| T | 8 | 7 | n/a | 15 |
| R | 8 | 7 | n/a | 15 |

| Forms | Judge – Head Pupils | | | Total Score |
|----------|---------------------|----------------------|-------------|-------------|
| | Box Decoration / 10 | Cake Decoration / 10 | Advert / 10 | |
| A | 4 | 7 | n/a | 11 |
| B | 7 | 8 | n/a | 15 |
| J | 3 | 10 | n/a | 13 |
| K | 2 | 7 | n/a | 9 |
| M | 7 | 9 | n/a | 16 |
| T | 7 | 6 | n/a | 13 |
| R | 8 | 7 | n/a | 15 |

Inter House Competition

Inter House Christmas Cake Decorating Competition!

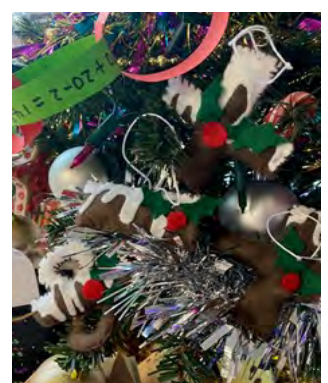
| Form | Overall Score |
|------|---------------|
| A | 46 |
| B | 47 |
| J | 45 |
| K | 34 |
| M | 55 |
| T | 44 |
| R | 53 |



Maths Christmas Decoration Competition

Here are the entries for the Maths Christmas Decoration Competition for Year 7 and Year 8 students.

Winners will be announced next week!



Artist in Focus



ARTIST IN FOCUS: Irene B, Year 13

Why do you study or love Art?

Tell us about your journey and who you are...

Art is a subject that allows me to capture the intricacies of life on paper. I love Art as a form of self-expression and as a way to relax.

Who inspires you?

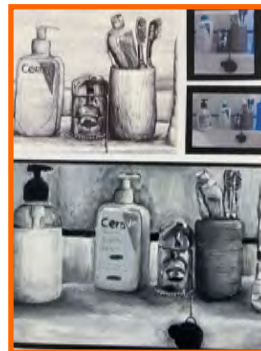
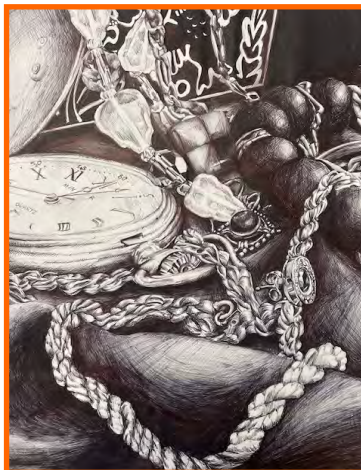
Zoey Frank is an artist that inspires me the most. Frank is an oil painter who captures everyday scenes and portrays them in a intriguing way.

Where do you want to go and what do you want to do when you leave St Mary's?

After St Mary's, I want to go to university to study Law and Spanish Law. I also want to continue to develop my own artwork in my spare time and continue to refine my level of skill with painting and drawing.

What advice would you give aspiring artists here at St Mary's?

I would say explore other artists work and different mediums to allow you to develop your personal style and skill. It takes a long time to find your creative voice and be confident with this.



Year 7 RE Project



Year 7 RE Project Making Rosary Beads

Year 7 have been making the Rosary in
Mrs Guidera's class

Book Fair ~ Thank You



EVERY BOOK PURCHASED
HELPS FILL OUR LIBRARY
AND CLASSROOMS WITH
FREE BOOKS*

A big 'thank you' to everyone who helped make the
Book Fair a success this year.

We sold over £500 worth of books, and this means we have
around £200 to spend on books for the school.



STORTFORD YOUNG SONGWRITERS COMPETITION

✉ info@stortfordsongwriters.org

This brand-new song writing competition will launch in January 2024 with the aim of discovering, encouraging and showcasing superb local talent.

Split into three categories, enter as a solo artist or group:

- KS2 (Years 3, 4, 5 and 6)
- KS3 (Years 7, 8 and 9)
- KS4/5 (Years 10, 11, 12 and 13)

The winners in each category to receive a recording studio experience.

Enter by Friday 24th May 2024



Christmas Jumper Day



On Tuesday 19th December, students are invited to come to school wearing a Christmas Jumper (with usual school uniform)





LOVE-RESPECT-FLOURISH

#DedicatedtoExcellence



**May we wish you all a
wonderful Christmas
and a Happy New Year**



**Spring Term ~ Students Return to School on
Thursday 4th January 2024
~ late start, in school by 11.30am**

**Half Term ~ Monday-Friday
19th-23rd February 2024**



The Season of Advent

**Sunday 17th December
Third Sunday of Advent**

The Third Sunday of Advent is also known as Gaudete Sunday. The word '*Gaudete*' is derived from the Latin words '*gaudium*', joy, and '*gaudeo*', to rejoice or be glad.

On the Third Sunday of Advent we light the third candle, which is a symbol of JOY.

It is sometimes called the "Shepherds Candle", and is pink because rose is a liturgical colour for joy. The Third Sunday of Advent reminds us of the joy that the world experienced at the birth of Jesus, as well as the joy that the faithful have reached the midpoint of Advent.

We are hiring!



St Francis of Assisi
CATHOLIC ACADEMY TRUST

Click Here For Latest Vacancy Information

<https://www.stmarys.net/vacancies>

Neurodiversity Support Hub

For Parents, Carers and Professionals

We can offer support, signposting and guidance about a whole range of things including but not

limited to:

- Understanding ADHD/Autism
- Distressed Behaviours
- Anxiety
- School

No
Diagnosis
Required

The phones are answered by our team of parents and carers of neurodivergent children and young people

Are you a
Parent, Carer
or
Professional?



01727 833963



We Can't:

- Give updates/ fast track places on waiting lists
- Recommend specific private assessors



supporthub@add-vance.org

Open Monday-Friday

9 AM - 1PM



Here to support, reach out for a listening ear

