

29th November 2019

Dear Parents and Carers

I hope this letter finds you well. We celebrated the start of Advent this week in Collective Worship, and reflected on what Advent and Christmas means to us. We have also started our Reverse Advent Calendar, where we have asked for donations to support families in Sierra Leone. I mentioned it in the last newsletter ([here](#)). I know how expensive this time of year can be, but I would ask that you donate what you can to help support our Advent charity. We will also be running a Christmas Jumper day on 20 December to support the Save The Children fund.

I am also asking for your support in completing the Parent/Carer survey if you have not done it already. You need to go to the website here: <https://survey.gi-assessment.co.uk/s/VGCIS/> and log on, using the password SMCHSPA748521 (the password is case sensitive).

Last night was our Key Stage 4 and 5 Annual Prize Award evening. It was my first as Headteacher and I was blown away by the show of talent from the performers and the prize winners. I want to publicly thank Mr Crosby, Mrs Peat and Ms King for their hard work in running the event and getting the performers ready for the event, but the biggest praise has to be the many, many students who received prizes and performed on the stage. Broxbourne Mayor, Cllr Steve Wortley, attended and was similarly impressed with the students – he said to me “You must be so proud” and indeed, I was.



Fig1: KS4 and KS5 Prizegiving

We had our Sixth form open evening last week and it was very well attended. If your child wants a place, please make sure they apply by the deadline (6th December 2019). If you know of other people their age thinking about applying for Sixth form, ask them to get in touch. We have a strong Sixth form offer and students flourish here.

On Monday 18th November, 120 students from Years 7 to 10 took part in a presentation and mapping workshop from Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors without Borders). The students were able to actively take part in creating maps which will be used by global charity organisations. They also heard from a Logistician who works for Médecins Sans Frontiers and has worked in conflict zones like Syria and South Sudan. Students were able to ask questions about career pathways and showed a huge amount of interest in the range of different jobs involved.

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Head Teacher: Mr Nicholas Simms B.Sc. (Hons), NPQH

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Fig 2: MSF presentation and workshop

Whilst the school were paying their respects on Remembrance Day, a small group went to Cedars Park Memorial service and laid a wreath as part of the service organised by the Park. We had some excellent comments about their behaviour and a great deal of appreciation that the 'younger generation' were involved in the Remembrance Service.



Fig 3: Cedars Park Remembrance Day group

As you may be aware, from your children or previous newsletters, we have an Eco-Action Group of students. They are a parallel group to the Student Council, working on green issues in school. Some of them went to Hemel Hempstead Cineworld to watch an IMAX film called 'Under the Sea'. The film showed how climate changes are affecting our under water habitats and the students learned a lot from the event. I have a meeting with them on 17 December to hear their ideas for making the school 'greener' and am looking forward to discussing with them what we can do.

The Performing Arts staff have been working very hard with auditions for our next school production. They auditioned a large number of students for next year's Phoenix Production: 'Bugsy Malone'. It seems the most sought-after part was Dandy Dan! Congratulations to the 40 successful students; rehearsals will start today, Friday 29 November after school in DR1.

I would also like to say "congratulations" to Ashley in Year 9 who has just passed her grade 1 piano exam. We have a great number of talented performers at school, and they share their talents willingly in collective worship, Annual Prize Giving and so many more events. I am delighted that Ashley has joined this group of excellence by passing her exam.

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The students requested we start up a book club. In response to this, we now have Year 7 Book Club running on Wednesday lunchtimes between 1.40pm and 2.10pm. They have just begun reading *The Giver* by Lois Lowry. This dystopian novel begins in a world that at first appears utopian - no war, no pain. However, when the main character Jonas is selected for a particular form of training, he realises that his perfect world is anything but perfect. Books are selected based on recommendation as well as 'teachers' choice'; perhaps there is a book you love that you think would be something we could discuss during book club? Please let us know! New members at any reading levels are always welcome. If you want to find out more, either come along on Wednesdays or speak with Mrs Attard EL8 or Mrs Evans LRC.

In an earlier [newsletter](#) I shared the work of the Year 12 Product Design Group (they built the chair designed by Frank, one of the students in the group). The students have been very busy again, this time completing an architectural model. Developing their CAD (computer aided design) skills, the students have created scale models of either an existing design or an original design of their own. Kai even managed to turn his model out before the deadline so Mrs McKinney could show off his handiwork at the recent 6th form open evening!



Fig 4: Y12 Architectural Design

Year 10 engineering students are deep in investigation of their disassembly coursework. The students have to explore existing products, in this case torches, and analyse the attributes and the areas for improvement. They will then collate this information making recommendations for a torch manufacturing company, in order for them to produce a successful product.

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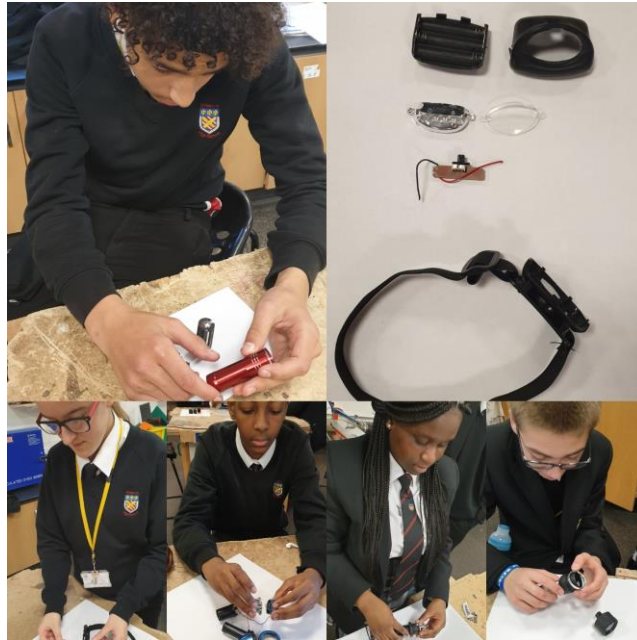


Fig 5: Y10 Engineering Students

This half term the Sixth form students have had the opportunity to take part in a series of Enrichment Workshops. Students have had the chance to experience life skills they may need in the future. They have had a broad spectrum to sign up for; Vehicle maintenance, Basic clothes repair, Household maintenance and Life coaching, also coming up we have Financial skills and Flat pack assembly. The students have really enjoyed the new experiences and continue to sign up, vehicle maintenance has proved most successful with our budding new drivers. I would like to thank the technology department for giving up their free time to plan and deliver these valuable workshops.



Fig 6: 6th Form Enrichment

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Our Year 7 Geographers entered a competition to design flags that will be sent out to Antarctica with the polar researchers. We were delighted with the standard we had in and congratulate all the entrants. There were five winners and I have selected two of them for this newsletter to show you the quality of the entries.

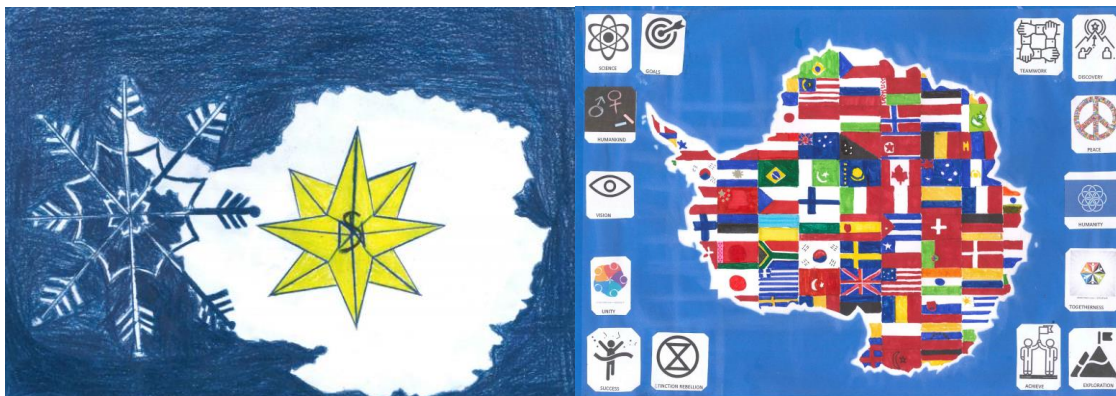


Fig 7: Polar Flags

News from the sports desk:

Our Year 8 boys Rugby team played in a Rugby Festival at Cheshunt RFC on 14 November. They played seven matches against local schools, they were all very tired by the end. However, they played exceptionally well and their Rugby skills are developing. Four of the boys were invited to join Cheshunt Rugby Club at their respective age group after a club coach noticed their outstanding performances during the games.

The Year 7 girls netball team played Goffs away this week. The girls lost 4-1 but improved during each quarter of the match. All of the girls played well but a special mention to Ari, who performed at a high standard throughout the match.

The Year 9 boys football competed in the District 6 a side tournament at Haileybury Turnford School this week. The boys played some great football and worked well as a team to finish as runners up. Special mention to Loui and Harvey for two extremely well taken individual goals. Hopefully the boys take confidence from this with a couple of district league fixtures upcoming in the next few weeks.

I will end this letter with some information about our Student Centre. It opens its doors at 7.30am every morning to welcome students who may need some extra help with homework or resolving issues. Mrs Nicholson and Mrs Picone are available until 8.15am to help students print work, understand homework tasks or deal with worries they may have about the upcoming day. Currently about 25 – 30 students drop in on a daily basis and have toast and juice to help kick-start their brains and energy levels first thing in the morning. These are some of the things they have said about the Breakfast Club:

My friend told me it was a great place to come and Mrs P printed my timetable for me. E yr 8

I like this place- it help me socialize and puts me in a good mood for the day. N yr 11

I come to the Student Centre because it builds my confidence for the day-you're not under pressure there. J yr7

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I can talk about how I feel to someone. M yr 9

You can do your homework and eat toast! D yr 9

When I need help with homework the staff there help me. M yr 7

I print my homework off and can do it on my own now. L yr 7

I meet my friend there every morning- it's warm and cosy and I get toast! S yr 9

It's a great way to start your morning, you get toast, you get juice, you get help. K yr 9



Fig 8: students working in the Student Centre

If you think your child would benefit from coming, please send them along.

As always, I wish you a very good weekend.

Yours faithfully

Handwritten signature of Nicholas Simms in blue ink.

Nicholas Simms
Headteacher

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