



Diocese of St. Albans



16 December 2022

Newsletter

Dear Parents/Carers

Before I move into the newsletter, I would like to bring your attention to the email we sent earlier today about children's winter safety. Following the tragic and totally avoidable deaths of the four children in Solihull, please talk to your children about being safe and responsible playing out doors during the freezing temperatures and not taking the sort of risks that lead to the deaths of the four boys in Solihull.

As we end this autumn term and look forward to Christmas, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to our site team Mr Jeffrey, Mr Casey and Mr Malyan, who work hard every day, but especially in the last few days when they have been clearing the site of snow, and gritting paths every morning, thus ensuring staff and students can return to school this week.

I also want to commend the students whose behaviour this week when we returned after the snow has been fantastic. It hasn't been easy having no access to outdoor space but they have behaved themselves really well and I praise them for that.

Carol Service

We had to move Tuesday's Carol Service to Thursday 15 December, and relocate to St Mary's School, due to the snow. Thanks to all of you who turned out – it was a fantastic evening, with the talent of the students celebrating the birth of Christ in a moving and wonderful way. There may be some pictures in the first January newsletter!

Careers

On Tuesday 6th December, students from Year 13 took part in our mock interview day.

There was an air of nervous anticipation as the students waited patiently for their allocated interview time. With CVs tightly clenched in their hands and nervous glances at their peers the students waited to be called forward. With a few words of encouragement from me as they entered the hall, and a few deep breaths, one by one the students made their way to their interviewer. For the majority of them this was their first experience of an interview situation. As they confidently made their way to the table with their head held high they sat down to begin. 20 minutes later the students thanked their interviewer and made their way out of the hall. This time smiles of relief lit up their face and the realisation that they had just completed their interview experience gave them a newfound confidence, one student stands out in my mind as she came out of the hall with the happiest expression saying, 'that was amazing.'

It is great that we are able to build students employability skills and prepare them for the world of work, giving them the skills and confidence needed for the job application process. In a world where it is common for people to change careers 5 times during their lifetime getting the skills to navigate the job application process is invaluable.

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I hope that all of the students are proud of the way they conducted themselves during the day. I received a great deal of good feedback from our interviewers such as "...I was very impressed with the standard of interviews and the confidence of the students that I spoke with."



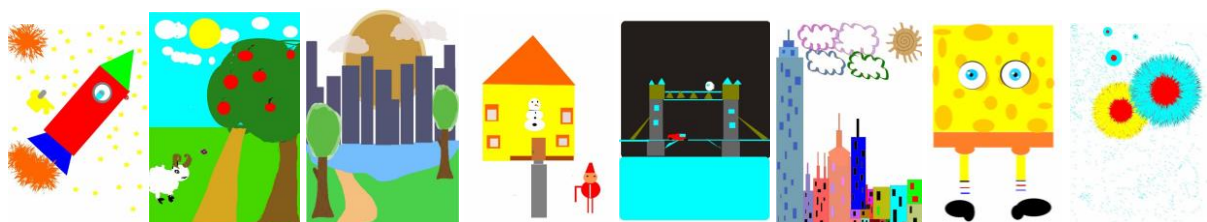
Christmas Hampers

This year we were once again able to organise Christmas hampers for a number of families, with the support of donations by St Mary's staff and the school governors. The hampers will be handed out this week and we hope this brings a lot of joy to those who receive them, and helps them have a very happy Christmas.



Computing

Some Year 8 computing students have been learning about different graphics and design capabilities this half term. To date, the students have used various software from Paint to Adobe Illustrator and Inkscape. Within Inkscape students have shown some amazing talent where they have written a plan for their graphics and then produced the graphic. Here is a snapshot of some great work from Riley, Zachary, Matilda, Marcus, Noah, Umut, Narin and Andrea. We are sure you will all agree we could have graphic designers of the future.



Drama – Mayor’s Debate 2022

On 23rd November a group of six of our year 8’s participated in the annual Mayoral Debate competition at Broxbourne Council Chambers. This is an annual event that was last held in 2019 and due to the pandemic has now restarted. Each year the local secondary schools in Broxbourne are given a title to discuss and create a speech around. This year’s title was: How can the Borough of Broxbourne build upon the legacy of Her Majesty for the benefit of Broxbourne residents?

A challenging question indeed and a poignant one due to her Majesty’s passing in September. Students explored how they could help to create greener spaces around Broxbourne that would attract bees and to create more beehives in Broxbourne and they asked the council to set up a Queen Elizabeth Broxbourne Trust that would get more young people into volunteering in their local communities and be awarded for this.

Students had to present their speech as a team and stand up in front of the other schools and the Mayor. Projecting voices and vocal expression was key to communicating their message, which the students did extremely well. Students worked hard on rehearsing their speech and they did a great job. We are very proud of their achievements.



Geography

On Wednesday 23rd Nov 50 year 7 Humanities Club 9 students went to Enfield Cineworld for the Into Film Festival. They saw The Railway Children return and very much enjoyed the experience. Apologies the photo was missed from the last edition.



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Head Teacher's Christmas Card Competition, 2022

The Winning entries for the Christmas card competition are below. Well done to Milena in Year 9 and Ellie and Aleya in Year 7.



Winner: Milena

Joint 2nd Place: Ellie

Joint 2nd Place: Aleya

Maths

During the school closure period this week we tasked out students to use their mathematical skills in a “cool” way.

The task: Estimate the volume of snow in an outdoor space

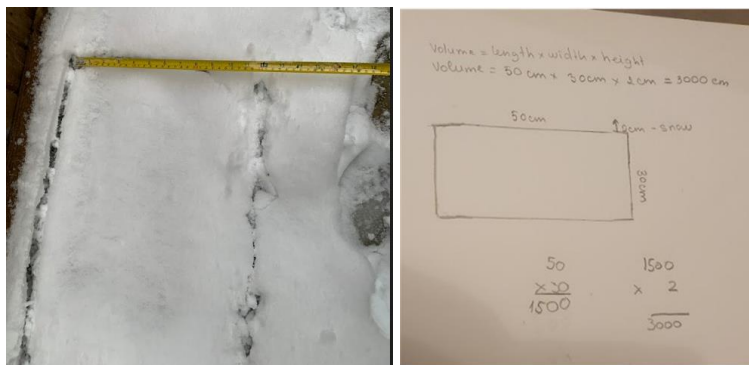
How: Choose an outdoor space such as front/back/communal garden. Use whatever measuring equipment you have available. Break your space up into shapes you can find the area (and hence volume) of. (rectangles, triangles, trapeziums, circles)

Think about what measurements you are making and what to use for the depth of the snow.

What to submit: Take photos of written work and your space you have chosen outside, draw diagrams with measurements.

Extension: Can you calculate the mass and radius of a snowball made using all the snow in your chosen space? To find the mass you will need the density of “compressed snow” - you could try google searching this information, or it will be more fun if you can find this out for yourself using weighing scales.

While we didn't get the entire garden for Jason (Year 7) We did get a calculation for a sample –



Kairu (Year 11) went for a similar technique and found a volume of a sample of his garden and “scale up” his sample.

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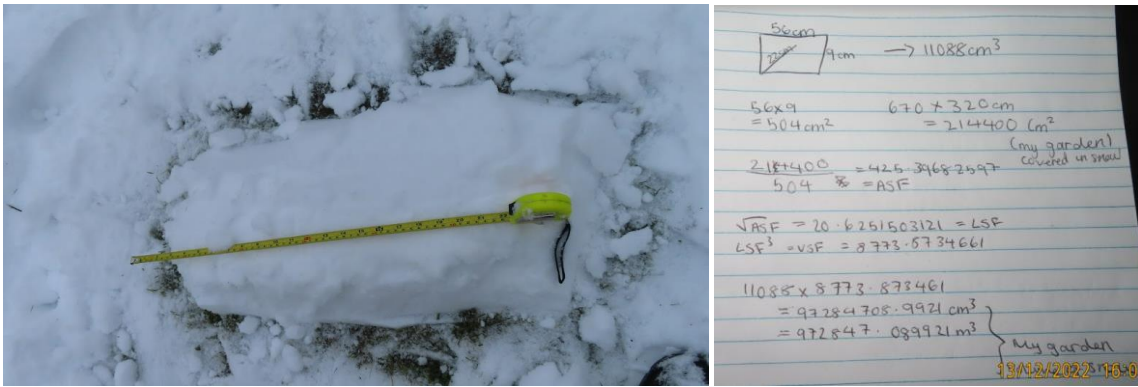
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While his sample wasn't quite in the same proportion as his garden, there was some excellent maths used.



PE

The Year 9 boys football team lost 6-4 to Leventhorpe school this evening (28 November). The team struggled to adapt to a very difficult playing surface early on and started the game slowly. Despite having a handful of chances throughout the first half, St Mary's found themselves going in to the break 5-0 down.

The boys were told at half time to play a very 'old school' style of football in order to combat the worsening pitch. The team obliged and begun to find success scoring 4 goals in quick succession. With the score at 5-4, it looked as if St Mary's could be on for a huge comeback. However, whilst pushing on to get an equaliser, a mistake cost St Mary's another goal leaving the game to play out 6-4. A lot of character and resilience shown to come back from a 5-0 deficit, but certainly some areas of improvement before their next fixture.

Remembrance, 11 November 2022

This year students and staff gathered in the courtyard to remember those who have served, died, have been injured and/or continue to serve in the armed forces. The act of remembrance was particularly poignant with readings from the Clergy, the Head Teacher and students. The gathered school community were moved by a beautifully sung duet from Navmi and Shanay in their own arrangement of 'Fix You' that echoed timelessly around the courtyard and beyond. Father Eugene led a more intimate service in our Memorial Garden after the main act of worship, attended by a representation of the school wider community and this was to remember and celebrate the lives of those individuals, both staff and students, that we have sadly lost along the way.



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Annual Prize Awards Evening, Key Stage 4 & 5

This Year's Annual Prize Giving was hosted by sixth formers Emmily and Callum who did a marvellous job of stewarding the evening's presentations and awards. The prize winners and their family guests were treated to some outstanding performances from a selection of performing artists including a show-stopping performance from Jenai in Year 10. Each year it is a real treat to welcome back those who have just left the school and to hear about their new beginnings in their next steps, especially those that have begun university courses and further education. It is in communicating with these young alumni that one can see how St Mary's has given them the grounding and self-confidence required in order for them to take the next steps in their ambitious journeys. Some very proud moments had by all. We wish them every success in their future endeavours.



Wellbeing

A much needed return visit by Godfrey, the 7-year-old Border Collie, and his owner Pam Lucas, was enjoyed by both students and staff. Arranged by Therapy Dogs Nationwide and our Wellbeing Lead, Mrs Buxton, Therapy Dogs Nationwide is a national charity where visiting volunteers take their own dogs into establishments to provide comfort, distraction, and stimulation. The benefits of Animal Assisted Therapies have been extensively studied and results range from improvement in general health and wellbeing, increased confidence levels, to improved communication skills. Everyone is already looking forward to his next visit in the New Year.



Hertfordshire – School Governorship

Finally, a plug to support local schools by becoming a school governor and making a difference in your local community. While there are more than 250,000 school governors in the UK, we need more in Hertfordshire. Becoming a school governor brings amazing rewards and satisfaction but with over 500 schools in the county requiring 6000 governors, the search is on to find more people! Hertfordshire County Council and HFL Education (formerly Herts for Learning) have joined forces to recruit new people. Governors come from every walk of life and there is no requirement to have an educational background, just a passion to support every child to have a safe and positive school experience.

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There are many governor roles, so a diverse team with different skills, and work/life experiences is important. Governors can also be parents, grandparents, or carers of a child in a local school Help and support is provided every step of the way to becoming an effective school governor, this includes:

- a comprehensive online and face to face training programme,
- a helpdesk, five days a week, to answer any questions and to access any support
- a variety of webinars and briefings to ensure governors are kept up to date with any education changes.

For further information about becoming a school governor/trustee:

Visit <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/schoolgovernors> Call Governance team at Herts for Learning on 01438 544487 Email: governance@hertsforlearning.co.uk

I hope you have enjoyed reading this edition and I wish you and your family a joyous Christmas and New Year.

Yours faithfully



Nicholas Simms
Head Teacher

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