



# Nicholas Breakspear Catholic School

## DECEMBER 2007 NEWSLETTER

### Headteacher's Report

Dear Parents

Once again Christmas is nearly upon us as we wait to celebrate the birth of Christ. At home we are fortunate as a family to have cable TV with a vast choice of TV or radio. In all the bombardment of Christmas advertising I have yet to see any mention of the real meaning of Christmas!

We live in a multicultural pluralist society with much to celebrate in terms of what this means. It just seems a shame that the good news of Christ's arrival amongst us should be hijacked and turned into a sanitized commercial event that has diverted peoples attention from the truth that Jesus, the son of man, came to live amongst us and is with us today, tomorrow and every day.

### Ofsted News

Congratulations to the PE and Sports College Staff on their recent Her Majesty's Inspectors review. We were judged to be good with many outstanding features. The leadership of the department and Sports College was judged to be outstanding and the students behaviour was "exemplary". What a fantastic team effort. Well done everyone.

I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

P Jakszta

### Road Safety

Please remember that when travelling to school by bike students should wear adequate safety equipment (helmet, night visible jacket, lights, etc). Also, please do not ride on pavements, or weave in and out of cars as this is very dangerous for you and other road users.

Students who walk to school or travel by public transport are to remember that they are ambassadors for the school and should behave as such.

### Drama Plaudits

Congratulations to Sammy Jo Harrison, Emma Quinn and Danielle Twomey of year 13 for their performance of 'CRASH'. This piece of devised theatre was completely of the girls own creation and was performed to a small audience of friends, family, staff and students in the Alex Curtis Studio last week as part of their A Level Theatre Studies Course. Well done!

### Forthcoming Events ...

- GCSE Drama Showcase - Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> January 2008 7pm
- GCSE Drama Moderation - Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2008 7pm

### ICT News

Tesco's are just about to start their Computers for Schools voucher scheme again. Please do keep these vouchers safe and bring them into the school. Last year we managed to raise enough vouchers to buy £1000 worth of Lego robotics.

Mr J A Dent

### MFL Up-date

We are looking for families to host German exchange students (aged 15), for the first two weeks in October 2008. If you are able to help us, please contact Mrs Spohn in the MFL department.

Linguascope revision! Don't forget to practise vocabulary at home for both French and German using linguascope! This site caters for all levels from yr.7 through to GCSE.

H. Wright

### Agricultural Science Department

EGGS for the first time since I took over the department in 1991 I have had to increase the price of eggs due to the rise in the price of feed. After being unchanged at 66p for 16 years, the price of half a dozen eggs has risen to 78p.

We also have the following available: Beeswax candles 60p per oz; Beeswax polish £1.50; Beeswax and ordinary wax crib figures-some painted; Spinach; Some herbs

**Firewood**-as the nights are getting chilly this will be welcome-we have kindling and logs.

### Cockerels

One of my former students, Paul Jaquemin, who works on an estate, has some cockerels which I may be taking. They will be available probably in late January for Sunday dinners. As bantam cocks, they will not be over large.

### Turkeys and Geese

These will be available on 23<sup>rd</sup> December from 10am to 12pm. If these times are inconvenient please contact Mr Short.

### GCSE Revision on the School Website

The school has been working on a very valuable resource for all our GCSE students and has recently developed a Year 11 Revision page on the school website, which has links to lots of useful information to help our students with their learning and revision.

Do log on for valuable information and advice on improving coursework and examination grades in a number of Curriculum areas. There is useful information for Parents too.

The page is found on the school website, prospectus curriculum area under the heading GCSE Revision. The link is below

[www.nicholasbreakspearschool.co.uk/curriculum/pshe/gcserevision.jsp](http://www.nicholasbreakspearschool.co.uk/curriculum/pshe/gcserevision.jsp)

### Term Dates

#### Spring Term 2008

Monday 7th January	Staff Inset Day
Tuesday 8th January	Students return
11th to 15th February	Half Term
Thursday 20th March	Term Ends

#### Summer term 2008

Monday 7th April	Staff Inset Day
Tuesday 8th April	Students Return
26th to 30th May	Half term
Wednesday 23rd July	Term Ends

#### Autumn term 2008

Monday 1st September	Staff Inset Day
Tuesday 2nd September	Students Return
27th to 31st October	Half term
Friday 19th December	Term Ends

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## German Foreign Exchange

For the second leg of our German foreign exchange / work experience, the German students came to visit us. From 29<sup>th</sup> September to 13<sup>th</sup> October our A level students (along with Mrs Spohn and Mrs Wright) were hosts to seven German students, from Nieder-Olm Grammar School near Mainz, Germany. This year, they all worked in local Primary schools as teacher aids. During the weekends, we introduced them to St Albans (along with traditional British roadworks) and to London, which they all enjoyed.



The students, most of them not accustomed to driving on the left, found crossing the road a greater obstacle than the language barrier, which was quickly overcome by some fantastic English (from them, not us). They visited us in school on 8<sup>th</sup> October, which they found an enlightening experience; especially Mr Short and his farm.



## Sixth Form Geography Field Trip to Barcelona

Our Sixth Form Geography field trip to Barcelona was fantastic! We flew by Ryanair to Girona, and then spent the Saturday having an orientation tour, including the Gaudi Park, the Sagrada Familia church, and the Mare Magnum, a development by the coast.

We stayed at the lovely Park Hotel in Sitges, which had a great town centre (CBD for the uninitiated!), and the people were very friendly. The best day was the work we did studying a dry river bed which was a flood hazard; the scenery here was spectacular. We measured the river using new equipment. The next day we had a full industry day, visiting some of the less than salubrious parts of Barcelona. Our Spanish leader kept calling Mr Hones "Neil", (Mr Hones thought he had confused him with Neil in "The Young Ones"). The coach journeys were fun as it was a chance to catch up on much needed sleep, so don't ask anyone in the group about the last industry we visited! That evening the group went out for a tapas meal, and we will never forget the men trying to sell us toys while we were eating our tapas!

On the last day, Janet made the group walk along the coast at Sitges to study the coastal management schemes, which was very interesting. Then we visited Camp Nou, the gigantic home of Barcelona FC. We had enough time to spend visiting places along the mile long shopping area that is inside Barcelona Airport before jetting home by Easy Jet to Luton. Altogether, the trip was amazing and the places we visited were different and interesting. Our thanks go to Mr Hones and Mrs (Humberstone) Evans for organising and

taking us on this marvellous field trip.

By Leanne, Darragh, Claire, Maksim, and Kevin

*Mr Hones adds:* It was a sheer delight to take another field trip with students from this school. This group of Sixth Formers were brilliant: the Upper and Lower Sixth gelled well together, were polite to all they met, and worked very hard. Their behaviour and attitude were a credit to the school and to their parents.



Everyone involved enjoyed the experience and many of us are hoping to meet up with our new German friends again.

## Watford Double Club

Since September, 28 of our Year 8 students have been involved in this exciting pilot project run in conjunction with Watford Football Club and Herts Education. Every Friday the students have two hours of literacy and numeracy with a qualified teacher and then 2 hours sport with a Watford FC coach.



The first highlight of the term so far has been a visit from Watford FC player Tamas Priskin. The group prepared questions to ask the player and there was the opportunity for him to sign autographs and then join in the sports session.

Our second big day was a visit to Watford FC for a stadium tour and some work in the media centre.

The students are all very positive about the programme and are now looking forward to the end of term celebration event and a visit to Arsenal FC for a tour of the Emirates Stadium.



Our thanks go to Sakina de Silva our Double Club teacher and our coach Stuart who have worked so hard with the group this term



**Diploma in ICT**  
 Providing an inspiring, technology related education for young people aged 14-19

**Coming to the ICT department soon ...**

Nicholas Breakspeare Catholic School is hoping to run the Diploma in ICT from September 2009 in consortium with schools from St. Albans and Harpenden. The application made for the diploma has been agreed by Hertfordshire County Council. The school is just awaiting a final decision from the Department for Children, Schools and families. This decision is expected in April 2008. This qualification will be a radical new qualification for 14-19.

Key aims of the ICT diploma include:

- Knowledge of the blend of business, technical, interpersonal and project skills needed in modern IT and Telecoms professional roles;
- Boost students' achievements in education, by providing an inspirational, exciting context for learning which embraces academic theory, practical application and evaluation of experience;
- Boost students' employability, whether directly from the Diploma or after Higher Education, through the use of up to date industry practice and employer-endorsed content;
- Encourage more students into technology-related careers through exciting, appealing content that is equally attractive to both girls and boys.

Mr J A Dent



**Design & Technology - Food**

Students in Design & Technology made pasta earlier this term - the finished piece of pasta was over 20 feet long. The students are also wearing the new D&T Food aprons complete with department logo - the kids think they're great. Resistant Materials also have their own set, which helps unite the two parts of the department.

Mr Thomas, Head of D&T

**Girls PE Kit**

A number of students are leaving parts of their PE kit in the changing rooms after lessons, then not having it for their next PE lesson. If kit is named then it can be returned to its rightful owner. If however kit is unnamed and unclaimed, it will be used as spare kit. Please can you reinforce the importance of checking that they have all of their kit packed away before they leave the changing rooms.

Mrs Edwards (Head of Girls PE)

**Debating**

Debating is flourishing at NBS! We entered the Great Debate run by the Historical Association which took place at the Royal College of Surgeons in London on 8<sup>th</sup> November. Molly Sleane (year 12) and Ben Krishna (year 13) argued that Penicillin and DNA respectively were the Greatest Scientific Discoveries of the last 100 years. Ben was runner up and goes through to the Final in March in London. Molly was commended in the Judges' summing up for her use of anecdote. Well done to both of them and their support teams of Emma Bell, Kimberley King, Sophie Dunstan, and Nora Abero, Alexa Vargas and Dominika Rehakova.

The year 10 team (Daniel Rodgers, Marc Walsh and Laura Ryan) took part in the Youth Speaks Rotary Competition at Sandringham School on 26<sup>th</sup> November. Their topic was "Education is for living not learning". They acquitted themselves well being the youngest team in their section of the competition and beat a Loreto Sixth Form team, but unfortunately did not get through to the next round.

On 5<sup>th</sup> December we hosted the First Round of the Mace Debate Competition. 6 teams took part including NBS. Our year 12 team consisted of Ian Antwi and Tom Arnold who opposed the motion "All school leavers should give a year of service to the state". they were drawn against Sir John Lawes and a very lively debate ensued. Unfortunately we did not go through to the next round but we all thoroughly enjoyed the evening. Many thanks to most of 12FWT who helped with all the practical arrangements, especially Nicola Woodman, Alex Robertson and Molly Sleane. Also a big thank you to Marc Walsh (chairman) and Conor Rodrigues (timekeeper) and Mr Shapland.

Our next competition is the ESU public speaking competition for the year 10 team in Bushey on 23<sup>rd</sup> January. We are preparing hard.

Mrs F Wright

Nicholas Breakspeare team compete in the regional heat of the ***Kids' Lit Quiz***



8 students represented the school in the regional heat of the international *Kids' Lit Quiz* 2007 which took place at the Broxbourne School. The *KLQ* takes place yearly across 7 countries for children in years 7 and 8 and is the brainchild of Prof. Wayne Mills, who flew over from New Zealand to run the heat. Answers were judged by various authors including Jean Ure, Mark Robson and Graham Marks. Team A got 65 points (out of a possible 100) and Team B followed close behind on 58.5, coming 10<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> out of 26 teams from 16 schools across the South East. Both teams managed to come top in different rounds, winning a free book each by one of the authors involved. The regional heat was eventually won by Arnold House on 79.5 points.

The students who won our school heat and therefore took part were Hemesh Jethwa, Hugh Lyon, James Conder, Tom Brophy, Rajesh Jethwa, Andrew Smailes, Daniel Ghere and Joe Conder. We will be competing again next year so there is plenty of time to get reading before the school trials next October!

Ms Swinyard (Learning Resources Manager)



For more information go to

[www.kidslitquiz.com](http://www.kidslitquiz.com)

## Dickensian Delight!

Over 120 students and staff from Nicholas Breakspear, St Alban & Stephen and St Bernadette's joined forces to perform *Oliver!*

Based upon Charles Dickens's novel, Lionel Bart's triumphant musical follows the adventures of the poor workhouse boy who dared to ask for more. With a host of well-known characters and foot-tapping musical numbers including 'Consider Yourself' and 'Oom-Pah-Pah!', a fantastic evening was had by all as the show sold out for three consecutive nights.



With all three schools involved the project provided an excellent opportunity for staff and students to learn from one another, develop existing links and ease the transition from Primary to Secondary school for the younger children. The project also allowed parents from our Primary Partners to gain first hand experience of the excellent extra-curricular offer at Nicholas Breakspear. A number of potential 'new' parents commented upon how impressed they were with the school.



Of course, these things do not just happen overnight. The preparation for the show began back in June and ever since staff and students have been working tirelessly to make *Oliver!* the resounding success it was. For all involved in this project they

should feel proud of their achievements. In particular the dedication of the Expressive Arts staff in steering the students through their paces and the design team behind the visual look of the show. Special mention must also be made of Mr. Reeves single-handed construction of a very professional looking set.

All the students involved did a fantastic job in what is a very demanding show: the performers, musicians, backstage and technical crews. Without your dedication and commitment the standards achieved would have been unobtainable. Special mention must go to Sean Brady (Oliver – Year 8), Sean Cassidy (Dodger – Year 10) and Matthew Wright (Fagin – Year 10) who did a tremendous job in what was their first school production.

Finally, as always, we must thank the parents who not only taxed and ferried students for the best part of three months, but also had to manage some very tired children – without your total support projects of this nature would never make it to an audience. Thank you.



On behalf of the production team, a big thank you to all of those who contributed or came to support and see the 2007 School Production of *Oliver!*



Mr. S Borrill, Head of Expressive Arts



## Sixth Form - Young Applicants in School Scheme - YASS.

Students on this course will undertake courses at first year undergraduate degree level alongside their AS level courses. The degree courses they study do not have to be linked to what they intend to study in University. The YASS programme gives talented and motivated students the chance to experience study at Higher Education Level and is actively supported by the Specialist Schools Trust and the National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth. All YASS pupils have personal support through their studies. Help and advice is also available through the large network of regional centres in England.

The following gifted and talented pupils have been selected to join the Young Applicants in School Scheme (YASS) run by Open University. Nora Abiero, Emilia Falcone, Penny Louise Hever, Crystel Marcos, Dominika Rehacova, Alexa Vargas and Amanda Wanniarachchi

Well done on the selection and good luck with the course.

## Thank You

To all the parents and staff who have been donating fabrics to the Textiles Department.  
Mrs Edwards

Homebase St Albans for the donation of the Christmas Tree that is currently in the Main Hall - in aid of Children in Need .

Mrs M John, Assistant Headteacher (14-19 Curriculum)