



Nicholas Breakspear Catholic School

DECEMBER 2008 NEWSLETTER

Headteacher's Report

Dear Parents

As we approach the end of the longest term in the Academic Year, the return after the summer break seems light years ago.

As always in the life of a school community, much water has flown under the bridge in the time. We have had collective and personal success stories as well as our share of trials and tribulations.

On balance, it has been an interesting and enjoyable term where real progress has been made in the academic, sporting and spiritual life of the school.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those that have supported us in achieving this standard of high quality education at Nicholas Breakspear School.

I hope you have a happy and peaceful Christmas.

Yours sincerely

P Jakszta
Headteacher

Drama Plaudits

Only one term in and already it has been hectic! Back in September, 25 Gifted and Talented students from years 8-11 began rehearsals for 'Much Ado About Nothing'. This was our entry for the Shakespeare Schools Festival, an arts-education initiative. This was a national festival celebrating the work of William Shakespeare and involved 10,000 performers, 500 schools and 60 theatres.



Four weeks later and the students were performing at the Abbey Theatre, St Albans in front of a full house. Whilst it was not a competition, the students did produce some superb performance work, which was rewarded by being given the honour of the final performance on the evening. Special mention must go to Sean Cassidy (Benedick), Damilola Onamusi (Beatrice), and Ross Egan (Leonard) for their exceptional performances. In the last week of half term the students once again rose to the challenge and re-presented their work in our very own Alex Curtis Drama Studio, giving two performances in one week.

Congratulations to all those involved!



Best Examination Results ever!

The very successful examination results this year are great news for students, staff and everyone in the community.

The GCSE examination results have improved again and are the best results the school has had. Our 5 A*-C pass rate was 67% overall and 54% A*-C including Maths and English. Within these examination results there were some excellent individual performances, particularly in RE where six students received letters of distinction from the Examination Board for being within the top ten performers in the whole country at this subject. They were: Lucy Anandappa, Laura Dempsey, Hannah Hever, Barbora Kozusnikova, Charlotte Juggins and Eloise Yates.

At A Level our results were also excellent. Two students particularly distinguished themselves. They were Hannah Mittermayr in German and Christopher Bell in Italian. They received letters of commendation from the Board for being some of the highest performers within the country.



This reflects on the hard work involved in the partnership of all staff, pupils and parents. Your success is a reflection on the whole school.

The challenge the school now faces is to maintain this level of improvement, which the school is absolutely committed to doing, through Target Setting days, Mentoring programmes, extra classes and revision programmes, and the enormous amount of work carried out through the school's extra curricular programmes.

We are confident that we can improve on these results once again next year.

Congratulations to everyone.

GCSE Drama

Year 11 students have now completed the first 30% of their course having presented two devised pieces of theatre for assessment. The quality and range of ideas has been impressive, highlighting

what an imaginative and creative bunch our year 11 students are. We have seen plays about prejudice, purgatory, the representation of females in the magazine industry, and knife crime. Standards of performance have also been extremely high, with 96% of students gaining an A*-C grade for the practical component. All students should be congratulated upon their achievements, with special mention going to Kayleigh Horner Hughes and Matthew Wright for gaining full marks.

Student Pickup

For safety reasons we ask that parents/carers please drop and pick up their children using the Trinity car park not the main entrance.

Term Dates

Spring Term 2009

Monday 5th January Staff Inset Day
Tuesday 6th January Students return
16th to 20th February Half Term
Friday 3rd April Term Ends

Summer term 2009

Monday 20th April Staff Inset Day
Tuesday 21st April Students Return
25th to 30th May Half term
Friday 17th July Term Ends

Autumn term 2009 - Provisional

Wednesday 2nd September Staff Inset Day
Thursday 3rd September Students Return
26th to 30th October Half term
Friday 18th December Term Ends

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Visiting authors

We have been very excited to have 2 visiting authors this term. In September, former editor of the FA website and now teenage fiction author Dan Freedman talked to all y7 students about how he became a writer and journalist and about his current books.

In November, author KM Grant talked to a selection of y7 – 10 students about how she became a writer, where her ideas come from, her methods for writer's block and why she loves stories and thinks they are so important for all of us.



Both authors also spent time chatting to students and signing discounted copies of their books. You also can borrow copies of both authors' work from the LIC now!

On Wednesday 3rd November the author Katie Grant came to the LIC to talk to some of the students. Katie Grant has written books like "Blue Flame" and "White Heat". She told us about them and how she wrote them. She has written seven books in total. She told us that when she is writing the books she wears wigs to get into character. She also told us that when she was little the local priest told her and her siblings stories. This is what inspired her to write books.



Over all I think that her talk was great and many of the students there will be able to go and write great stories after her excellent talk.
Cameron Wilson 8RML

Macmillan World's Biggest Coffee Morning

The LIC hosted a coffee morning for Macmillan Cancer Care this term and raised around £70 for the charity. Students, staff and visitors had a relaxing hot drink in the LIC, with biscuits made that morning by students, a good chat and the chance to win a John Lewis shopping spree, whilst browsing the bookfair. We plan to hold another one next year.

Times Books for Schools

Do you read the *Times*, or does your company or workplace have a copy in the waiting room or staffroom? From January, we are collecting tokens from the *Times* and *Sunday Times* which will mean FREE books for the school! Please send all vouchers to the LIC!

Kids' Lit Quiz

On the 3rd November 2008 we went on a trip to Broxbourne School for the annual Kids' Lit Quiz. On this afternoon we were asked to compete against other schools to win the chance to compete in the national heat of this tournament. We had to answer 10 different questions in 10 subject rounds. The subjects were; authors names, colours, creatures, classics, extra-terrestrial, fairies, dogs, ducks, felines and fire.

The members of Nicholas Breakspear 'A' were Bryan Palacio, Cameron Wilson, Hugh Lyon and Aaron Marnell-Fox whilst Nicholas Breakspear 'B' consisted of Hemesh Jethwa, Jessica Ruane, Maximilian Lawrie and Lewis Newbery.

Each team had a joker which would double the points they won on the round that they had chosen. They also had the chance to win books. Overall it was a very good competition. Unfortunately we did not win but it's not the winning that counts it's the taking part. By Bryan Palacio and Hemesh Jethwa

The New Nativity Figures

Every Year Nicholas Breakspear School displays a nativity scene in the entrance hall of the school during Advent. This year's crib is extra special as it is being crafted by someone from within our school community, the Technology technician, Mr. Chris Reeve.

These pictures show work in progress, with Chris Reeves hard at work in the CDT workshop within the school. Once complete, the new figures will be blessed in a special ceremony during the first week in December. They will be situated within the school's reception, where they will be clearly visible to visitors to the school.



Chris is working on the figures of Mary, Joseph, an Angel, and baby Jesus in a manger (not shown). The figures are made from the old teak Science table tops, (The Science labs at the school have been newly re-furbished) which have been glued together. The baby Jesus figure is being made out of a piece of mahogany, which was donated to the school.

Chris has been at the school for five years and is well known for his vast constructions for the school production stage sets, including a huge bridge for last year's 'Oliver!' He is a self taught carver and trained to be an architect at Manchester University.



Times Spelling Bee

In January, y7 pupils will be taking part in trials for the Times Spelling Bee. A top team from our school will compete against other schools in the country to find the best spellers. Get practicing over the holidays!

Red House Children's Book Award

Nicholas Breakspear is now part of the St Albans Book Group (part of the UK Federation of Book Groups) and is taking part in its voting process for the Red House Children's Award. The Book Group supply free books for this voting, so pupils have the chance to read and vote on lots of newly published books. All votes go through to the national shortlist of the top 3 which is drawn up in February. Voters will then have the chance to read and discuss all 3 books and vote for the national winner which is announced in the summer. Authors view this award highly because it is only voted for by children and teenagers, not adults. A new set of books will arrive in January for anyone who wants to join in!

Donations

Library staff would like to say a HUGE thank you on behalf of the pupils for everyone who has donated their unwanted books to the school. Donations really benefit the pupils. If you are having a Christmas clearout, please consider sending in any books, magazines or annuals to the LIC.

A-Level Drama

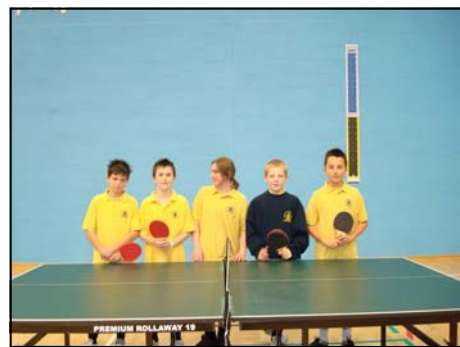
In November it was the turn of our Year 13 students to present their devised pieces upon the theme of 'Nosferatu'. All students gained an A-C grade for the practical performance and are now working hard on their structured records to ensure maximum marks can be gained overall. Congratulations to all the students involved and in particular to Cheri Still who gained full marks.

Schools in St Albans compete in table tennis contest

Pupils from St Albans Secondary schools recently experienced the first table tennis tournament organised by the St Albans & Harpenden School Sports Partnership (SSP). On November 25, students from Sandringham, Beaumont, Verulam, Loreto College and Nicholas Breakspear went head-to-head in an under-13s competition.

The boys team from Beaumont and girls team from Sandringham were crowned the winners and went on to represent St Albans SSP at the County Final on December 4. Nicholas Breakspear boys team came 3rd overall and should be congratulated on their achievements.

Tanya Angus, Partnership Development Manager for St Albans SSP, said: "It was a great opportunity for children to start playing the sport of table tennis and I hope in future more schools and more children will become involved." The competition was organised by Amanda Robinson, Competition Manager for St Albans and Harpenden, while Sandridgebury Table Tennis Coaching Club helped to coach the children before their matches, and later judged the events.



St Albans Celebrates the handover of the Paralympic Flag

The 17th of September marked the historical moment when the Mayor of Beijing handed the Paralympic flag over to the Mayor of London and London became the official host city for the 2012 Paralympic Games.

To mark this historical occasion the St Albans & Harpenden School Sports Partnership in conjunction with Oakland's College hosted a series of events for local pupils. The events were split over two venues, Oakland's College in recognition of the College being selected as a 2012 pre games Equestrian Training Camp and Nicholas Breakspear School as the District's Sports College.



250 year 4 pupils from schools across the District attended a sports festival hosted by Oakland's College. Both tutors and students from Oakland College joined Saracens, Apex and the Sport Development Team to deliver a range of activities including; tag rugby, cheerleading, boccia, horse riding, tri golf, athletics and hockey.

Mark Door, Principal of Oakland's College said 'It was wonderful to see so many enthusiastic and energetic 8 and 9 year olds at the college taking part in such a variety of activities. This event marked the beginning of an exciting 4 years leading up to the Olympics and it was clear that we can use this unique opportunity to encourage greater participation across a whole range of ages and variety of sports – even I have started riding my bike again!'

Along side the sports festival, pupils from Nicholas Breakspear School completed the Beijing to London Challenge. Over 1,000 pupils took part in the challenge to either row, run or walk the distance from Beijing to London within the space of a school day. At 2pm the Head of Nicholas Breakspear School set off on the first leg of the baton relay from the school to Oakland's College to coincide with the closing ceremony in Beijing.

Mr Jakszta, Headteacher of Nicholas Breakspear Catholic School said 'It was great to see the children so motivated, enthusiastic and at the same time having so much fun. The atmosphere was electric. A proud moment for all of us at the school and in particular myself for being involved in the relay handover from Nicholas Breakspear to Oaklands

The relay baton not only celebrated local past and future Olympic and Paralympic athletes, but marked a new partnership for Oakland's College as it formally joined the St Albans & Harpenden School Sports Partnership. We were delighted to be joined by Anne Wafula Strike one of Great Britain's wheelchair Paralympic athletes. Anne completed the baton relay ending the day's events with an inspirational speech that enthused hundreds of children to love sport for sports sake.

Tanya Angus, Partnership Development Manager said, 'A tremendous day for the School Sports Partnership, Sports College and Oakland's College. What a fantastic way to celebrate the Paralympic handover, the launch of the Education Programme "Get Set" for London 2012 and Oakland's College joining the Partnership'.

'It was great to see past and future Olympians coming together to help us celebrate this special occasion. Not many people can say they have seen a GB T54 wheelchair sprinter, a cyclist and a Paralympic equestrian rider working together at the same time to demonstrate the power of sport'

The Mayor of St Albans, Cllr Bert Pawle, joined in the days activities and proudly welcomed the opportunities that London 2012 could bring to St Albans. He said: 'You will all have been inspired by the 2008 Beijing Olympics and now it is our turn in the run up to 2012 to come together and celebrate. I ask you all to support the London Organising Committee and all of our athletes in what I believe will be a fantastic Olympic and Paralympic Games to be held in London in 2012. St Albans will I am sure, seize the opportunity with both hands, to become involved in making these London Games something special and memorable'.

Data Collection Sheet

If you have not yet returned the data collection sheet which was sent home with your child's recent report, please could you return it to the School Office before the end of term. As you will appreciate, it is very important that we have up to date contact details for you. If all the data is correct, please sign and return as confirmation. Thank you.

Exams Information

You will shortly be receiving, by post, a small green **Student Examination Handbook** giving advice and guidance to students during exams in January and in the Summer. Please look through this with your child and discuss it with them.

Your child will also have received a Statement of Entry detailing all the exams and coursework modules that they have been entered for this January. They will also have received a personal timetable for January. Please check these carefully and contact the Exams office with any queries on 01727 860079 ext 238 or email ratcliffer@nicholasbreakspear.herts.sch.uk

Nicholas Breakspear Family Key Stage 2 Festival



Over 500 KS2 students descended on Nicholas Breakspear School on Friday 19th September for the second annual Key Stage 2 Multiskills Festival. BTEC students and Year 13 Leaders had worked hard behind the scenes to create four zones that would test

the throwing and catching, running and agility skills of the competitors. An added bonus this year was that the school still had the concept 2 rowers from the Olympic Handover Day and all pupils were able to compete to see which school could row the most metres. The total number of metres rowed was added to the distance that Nicholas Breakspear pupils had rowed two days earlier to make an amazing family total of 21,337 metres.

The Year 13 leaders from Nicholas Breakspear were an absolute credit to the school, displaying excellent organisational and communication skills throughout the morning.

Park Street were eventually crowned rowing champions but unfortunately didn't manage to hold on to the trophy that they won last year. Despite a very close points tally, the eventual winners of the event were St. Bernadette's, much to Mrs Taylor's delight!!



Thank you to all of the young leaders and staff at all primary schools who assisted with this event.

Go Project

The Go Project has been set up in conjunction with Charters Gym to encourage more girls to be more active in their PE lessons. Sixteen Year 9 Girls have been chosen to take part in this project because of their apathy towards PE and will visit Charters Gym during their usual PE lesson. The girls will take part in alternative activities such as pilates or boxercise and it is hoped that these girls will improve their participation in lessons and continue with physical activity outside of school.

KS4 Multi Activity Club

Twenty girls from Year 10 have been attending the Big Lottery funded dance club, run by Cassi Muskett from Apex Multisports. The girls have spent time learning a variety of street dance routines which they now hope to perform as part of the school's annual Gym and Dance Display.

Year 4 & 5 Multiskills Club

Four Year 4 and 5 students from each primary school from the Nicholas Breakspear family were selected to attend a five week multiskills course in November and December at Nicholas Breakspear. Year 11 BTEC students planned and delivered dance, SAQ and fitness testing sessions for the younger pupils to help with the development of their physical skills. The club was finished off with a trampolining session and a table tennis tournament. All primary students worked extremely hard and received a certificate for their achievements. Well done to all those involved.

COMING AFTER CHRISTMAS!!!!!!

We have been able to use funding to provide coaches for girls Basketball and girls Football after Christmas. The Basketball club will run on Tuesdays from 3.15 – 5.15 and the football will run on Thursdays from 3.15 – 4.15pm.

Cassi Muskett from Apex Multisports will continue to run her Street Dance club on Tuesdays from 3.05 – 4.05 for all girls in KS4.

Saracens cheerleaders will be coming into school on Fridays to run a KS3 Cheerleading club as part of the Extending Schools programme. This will start on Friday 30th January and will run for 8 weeks, from 3.15 – 4.15

Ex NBS Student wows the current 13



Simone Wallace left the school four years ago, and gained a place at an Art College in Surrey. She is now an internationally renowned artist in her own right, selling and exhibiting work in Europe. Her trademark style is currently beautifully crafted black and white linear drawings of urban landscapes.



Last week she visited the Art Department and lead a Year 13 Painting workshop where she showed the current Art students her portfolio of work and got the Year 13 students to let their hair down with experimental work based on surface

texture and colour. Simone is planning more workshops with Year 10 in the near future.

Special thank you to parents and friends of the school who have contributed fabrics to the textiles department. We have been using the fabrics and do welcome any further contributions. The year 8 students focus on Recycling textiles and the ongoing contributions greatly help our cause.
Mrs D Edwards

Sports College News

Year 7 and 8 Interform

Interform is now well underway for the second year running, with Years 7 and 8 having finished their first two sets of matches. Boys and girls from all forms took part in 7 a side football during one lunchtime a week, followed by basketball after half term to gain points towards the form sport trophy. 7 DES and 8CLG were eventual winners of the football with 7 FGA and 8 RML winning the basketball tournaments. Students will take part in weekly dodge ball matches after Christmas.

Rock Challenge

We have entered the annual Rock Challenge (dance and drama competition) for the third year in a row and have a record number of 85 pupils and more boys than ever taking part! Our theme this year is 'teenage stereotypes' and pupils have been very busy attending rehearsals during lunch times and after school.

We are currently in the process of fundraising and Katie Lynch, Rebecca Pantelli, Ellie Brotherton and Francesca Turner have been very busy making a Christmas Quiz which costs £1 to buy, with a first prize of £15. Thanks again to these girls and their families for raising money at a cake sale held at Our lady and St Vincent Church in Potters Bar.

The competition is being held at the Stevenage Arts Centre on Tuesday 24th February.