



Nicholas Breakspear Catholic School

MARCH 2008 NEWSLETTER

Headteacher's Report

Dear Parents

Easter is once again upon us and winter is nearly over.

For our students in many year groups it marks the beginning of the exam preparation period. For year 9, the SATS exams are just around the corner. Years 12 and 13 have their A level exams which will determine university entrance for many.

In some ways year 11 have the greatest task as this is their first and most important test in the public examination arena. There is no hiding from this fact and it is time for action! I would ask all parents of year 11 students to join with us in driving home the message that they must start to raise their game **NOW** and work together to ensure they are prepared and ready to achieve their very best in June.

Yours sincerely

P Jaksza
Headteacher

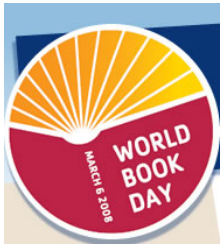


National Year of Reading

Did you know that 2008 is a *National Year of Reading*? There will be events up and down the country all year. You can look on the website www.yearofreading.co.uk for more information. We are planning to do lots of different activities at school to celebrate too – keep looking on the school website and in the L.I.C. for more information!

World Book Day

It is World Book Day on 6th March. £1 book tokens will be distributed in school. These book tokens can be used in participating bookshops and can be used for books from the March issue of *Cover 2 Cover* magazine (copies in the L.I.C.). Book tokens can be used to get £1 off normal books, or to purchase the special World Book Day £1 books.



Spring cleaning?

Are you planning a clearout over the Easter break, or already started doing your spring cleaning? Do have books, magazines or DVDs which you no longer want? The L.I.C. will gratefully accept any donated material!



Gambia Outreach - Chocolate Tombola

22nd April - Break and Lunch - in the Hall



Work Experience 2008

Year 10 students are busily preparing for their Work Experience week. Most have now selected their placements, and a special thank you to parents who have helped their children find private placements. By the time you read this, all students will know where their placement is, and will be making contact with their employers ready for the big week which is Monday 28th April until Friday 2nd May.

In preparation, students are looking at the skills they hope to develop during Work Experience, and completing their CVs and application letters. They will also be doing a Health and Safety module, and looking at how to deal with possible situations should they occur at their work place.

My thanks to Mrs Ratcliffe in the school office who has dealt with a mountain of administrative work to get the week running smoothly, and a reminder to parents that Mrs Ratcliffe is the first port of call in the unlikely event of there being a problem during the week.

Judging by past Work Experience weeks, I am sure students will have an enjoyable and worthwhile time.

Mr T Hones (Careers Co-ordinator)

TIGERS SHOTOKAN KARATE

Tigers teach both children and adults in St. Albans, Bushey, Borehamwood, Park Street and Potters Bar. If you are interested in Karate classes for further information phone 01727 840773 or visit www.tigers-shotokan.org.uk

!!! ANNOUNCING !!!

The Friends of Nicholas Breakspear will be hosting a **Summer Event on Saturday 28th June** at Nicholas Breakspear Catholic School

A taste of what to expect includes:
Helicopter Rides - Sumo Joust - Food/Barbeques
Sport - Battle of the Bands

Feelin' Good Week

February saw the celebration of Feelin' Good Week 2008. This is a week supported by the NHS, Connexions and Herts Council, which aims to promote good mental health and emotional wellbeing in Hertfordshire. The L.I.C. was given a small grant by the organisers to help promote this in school. We have done this by making information available on the school website, doing a display for the pupils about how they can keep their minds healthy, and purchasing resources. These resources are fiction with characters who deal with mental illness and information books related to the subject, available for pupils to borrow now!



Term Dates

Summer term 2008

Monday 7th April
Tuesday 8th April
26th to 30th May
Friday 18th July

Staff Inset Day
Students return
Half Term
Term Ends

Autumn term 2008

Monday 1st September
Tuesday 2nd September
27th to 31st October
Friday 19th December

Staff Inset Day
Students Return
Half term
Term Ends

Spring Term 2009

Monday 5th January
Tuesday 6th January
16th to 20th February
Friday 3rd April

Staff Inset Day
Students Return
Half term
Term Ends

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Year 10 Geography Field Trip - Barcelona 2008

DAY ONE - We arrived at Luton Airport bleary eyed but excited for our trip to Barcelona. We all wore our specially made navy sweatshirts with our names printed on the back and looked more like a European hockey team heading out for an international game rather than a school field trip. We had been warned by Mrs Evans to arrive on time for check-in, which we all managed to do, even if Mr Bunce arrived with seconds to spare!

We arrived at Barcelona and were met by Senorita Sandra from the Barcelona work study centre who was going to be our guide. She took us to the famous Gaudi Parc Guell and to the famous unfinished cathedral designed by Gaudi, the Sagrada Familia. **You can take the kids out of St Albans, but you can't take St Albans out of the kids – Next Stop – McDonalds!**

We found our rooms and unpacked and after dinner, which consisted of three courses, met in the games room where the male teachers had set up competitions in table football and pool. We are not sure for whose benefit these competitions were, but Mr Bunce and Mr Laing won the table football! We then had an evening class to go through the next days work and preparation.

DAY TWO - We were delighted to be woken by the pleasant tones of Mrs Evans' voice at 7 a.m., hammering on our doors. After breakfast we packed for our "all day" river work. This consisted of wellies, thick socks and a change of clothes and underwear in case we fell in the river.

When we arrived at the River Tordera we split up into our groups and studied the course of the river for our Geography coursework. We were loaned special equipment by the study centre such as a flow meter, ranging poles, Abney level, measuring tape and 1 metre ruler. We spent all day collecting data for our coursework and finally got on the coach back to our hotel. When we got back Mrs Evans broke the news to us that after dinner we had an evening class! All in all, an enjoyable but exhausting day.

DAY THREE - We headed off to El Raval which is close to the well known main street in Barcelona, Las Ramblas. El Raval was a run down part of Barcelona. Here we studied urban regeneration such as the residential area, cultural renewal, the industrial and the red light/criminal underworld. We observed buildings, vandalism, graffiti, broken glass windows and did a pedestrian count. We looked at the positives and negatives of the four zones of El Raval. No worksheets or photos were allowed to be taken in zone four where there were many unfortunate people hanging around street corners.

We left El Raval and went to the Barcelona Football Stadium, the Nou Camp. We had a tour and saw the conference room. Barcelona was playing Valencia that day so we were unable to go into the changing rooms. We visited the museum at the stadium and saw the history of Barcelona sport. Mr Bunce was most amused by a life size picture of an extremely tall basketball player although I think it was more his name rather than his height that he found amusing! Mrs Evans' role play at being Mother to 47 students was put to the test when Vicky Gazza became ill with a stomach bug. Every Mother has experienced the joys of clearing up after a sickly child and Mrs Evans' was not to miss out on that experience.

DAY FOUR - We all went to the beach after breakfast and took loads of photos. Brandon was buried in the sand and there were some very artistic sand sculptors created! The water was far too cold for anyone to brave a dip. A quick dash back to the hotel for our packed lunch for our trip to Montserrat and the chairlift.

The chairlift took us up to the limestone rock formations where there was a village at the top and where we saw the church with the black Madonna. We were all a bit wary of the height the chairlifts were going to. We visited the aquarium and then went on to our tapas meal which consisted of fish, fish and more fish! We had to walk through the shopping centre to get to our coach back to the hotel and someone started a football chant about NBS and we were singing it at the top of our voices, including naughty Mrs Evans who attracted the attention of the security guard who promptly ushered us out.

DAY FIVE - We thought 7 a.m was bad enough but today we had to be up even earlier! After breakfast we collected our cases to catch the coach back to Barcelona Airport. On the coach awards were given out for best this and best that. There was an award for the best working group but nobody won that as we were told that they could not choose one group as all the groups were well behaved. The "shy and retiring" Mr Laing put himself forward for the Best Teacher Award and Mrs Evans said he should get the Biggest Kid Award. Eating when he shouldn't, having his earphones in when the teachers were speaking on the microphone and not having his seat belt fastened when everyone else had theirs done up. As soon as he knew he was about to be caught out by Mrs Evans he would quickly hand the popcorn packet to a student so that they would be caught red handed! Needless to say, there was not an appropriate award in Mr Laing's category!

We would all like to now take this opportunity to say a huge THANK YOU to all the teachers, Mrs Evans, Mr Hones, Mr Laing, Miss Battram, Miss Speechley and Mr Bunce for making our trip to Barcelona such a memorable trip that we will never forget!

By Eloise Yates 10SBL

Agricultural Science Department

We have the following produce for sale
Eggs 78p half dozen; Spinach; Broccoli (purple and white sprouting) After Easter we shall have bedding plants and tomato plants.

Sheep

A new departure for us. We took delivery of two on 11th March and they will be here for a short time only this year, but will be available as half lambs for your freezer soon. Callum Miller, Cieran Biss and George Mills have worked hard to put fencing in place for them.



St Albans Lions Club
Sponsored Walk in aid of
Grove House
local day hospice
Sunday 13 April 2008

Walk 3, 6, 12 or 17 miles - all ending at Nicholas Breakspear School. For details and registration form please log on to

www.grove-house.org.uk



ICT Update - Gifted & Talented

Year 7 and Year 8 students have been given the opportunity to take part in a national animation competition in association with Manchester University. Students have to develop a two minute computer animation on a topic of their choice using state of the art software provided freely available from Manchester University. A range of prizes are available! The software can be downloaded from <http://www.alice.org/>



Students have the opportunity to participate at lunch times every Tuesday in Room 56. Completed animations have to be submitted to Mr Curran by Friday 18th April

Young Leaders (CSLA)

Sixth Formers from NBS who are currently undertaking their Community Sports Leaders Award (CSLA) are putting their skills into practice at local Primary Schools.

The CSLA students are coaching youngsters in YR1 and YR5 at St Berndette RC Catholic Primary School. The Breakspear students have been working towards gaining their CSLA by coaching each other at school. However, coaching the students was a baptism of fire for some of our young coaches as they were faced with St Bernadette's YR1 class for the first time.

After two hours of coaching the CSLA students were delighted with their efforts and grateful of the positive experience. The St Bernadette's pupils really enjoyed their first session with our Young Leaders and are eagerly looking forward to the next visit.

Year 9 Humanities Trip

In the morning, we carried out the History part of the visit, and two synagogues in Northwood accommodated all of Year 9 for a morning about the Holocaust. We heard a holocaust survivor's story about growing up under the Nazi regime, and his story about his family was disturbing and sad. The group had refreshments at the interval, and then split into workshop groups to further their studies and look at prejudice in today's society. We then all met for a service, and lit candles whilst holocaust poetry was read aloud.

In the afternoon, the Geographers led the way, and the group again split up and descended upon two football stadiums, Wembley and The Emirates. We were looking the location of modern stadiums and their effect upon the local area, but most of this was lost as students were just in awe looking at these marvellous modern stadiums. The guides at both were marvellous, giving lots of information and telling funny anecdotes.

The visit was an immense success, and every Year 9 pupil enjoyed their day and gained much from it educationally. The staff at the synagogues praised our students for their excellent behaviour overall, and their insight and participation in the workshops.



Speed Stacking

Do you know your 3-3-3's from your 3-6-3's or the difference between an up stack and a down stack? If you don't then you haven't experienced Speed Stacking.

The sport of Speed Stacking (also known as Cup Stacking or Sports Stacking) has had a huge impact on the pupils of NBS over the past term. The activity was introduced as part of the Sports College initiative and the St Albans & Harpenden Schools Sports Partnership (SSP). Equipment has

been provided through Big Lottery Funding and enabled pupils to access a new and exciting challenge.

The activity helps to develop general motor skills and the hand eye co-ordination of athletes. A lot of top athletes are now using Speed Stacking as part of their training as it develops both hemispheres of the brain and enhances muscle memory. Most of all it is great fun and a really simple activity to get involved in.



Such has been the impact that NBS hosted a Partnership Speed Stacking tournament for all of the Primary Schools in the St Albans and Harpenden SSP. Over 100 primary pupils attended an afternoon session at NBS to compete against each other. Our CSLA students from YR12 & YR13 assisted at the event and helped to coach the youngsters as well as officiate at the competition.

After thousands of Up and Down Stacks, individual 3-3-3 & 3-6-3 competitions plus the exciting relay competitions Colney Heath JMI School were victorious. They then went on to represent the SSP at the County Tournament held at the Herts Sports Village. Here they claimed a third place in the 3-6-3 County Competition which was highly credible as they have only been introduced to Speed Stacking this term. Well done to Colney Heath and to our CSLA Students who also officiated at the County Tournament.

To find out more about Speed Stacking visit www.speedstacks.com or enter Speed Stacking into UTube.

Year of Food and Farming

We are having an event aimed at year 8. It will take place on two Fridays after Easter holidays. Various primary schools are coming in on Wednesday afternoons for Year of Food and Farming events until May.

Beekeeping

This is after school on Fridays. It is open to all



Best of Luck!
Mr Dent



Rock Challenge

The fun started at 7.17 am with a coach waiting to take us from school to go to Stevenage Leisure Centre for a long day ahead. When we got there, we went to our seats very excited. Some people had butterflies whilst others were jumping about!!

Mrs Edwards had to go on to the stage to pick a ball out of the hat which decided in what order we were going to perform. We were all crossing our fingers and hoping we weren't opening the show, but then Mrs Edwards picked out the number six which left us all very pleased and extremely relieved!!

Time passed very quickly and it was our turn to shine. The lights dimmed, the music came on and it was lights, camera, ACTION!! There was a full crowd and it was fantastic to be able to perform in front of 2000 people.

At the prize ceremony we were all nervously hoping for an award, then our name was called out not once, not twice but four times! We won awards for **Best Stage Crew** (thank you Mr Williams and team), **Best Lighting Design** (thank you Miss Winter), **Best Set Design** (thank you Ms Vahabzede and Ms



Martino for painting our set) and **Best Concept**. Each time we received our certificates we had our photo taken. We even had our school mentioned on Chiltern Radio the next day as they commented on the number of awards that we had won!

Overall Nicholas Breakspeare finished third out of nine schools, some of which have been entering the Rock Challenge for years! The feeling was overwhelming. There were shouts and clapping from all of our families and friends in the audience. It was FANTASTIC!

Without our teachers and the parents involved we would not have been able to achieve this, so a big thank you once again. Especially to Mrs Edwards!

By Katie Lynch 8DBE

A Note From Mrs Edwards....

A MASSIVE 'Well Done' to all of our students involved both on the stage and behind the scenes. A lot of hard work paid off with a fantastic performance on the night. Thank you to all of our parents who supported the event on the night and who have assisted with lifts home from rehearsals. The students were all excellently behaved all day and night, despite having to stay in the Arts and Leisure Centre for 14 hours! They were a credit to the school. A special 'thank you' goes to Mrs Pantelli and Mrs Turner who gave up their day to help with

Dragon Boat Racing

As the summer term approaches it is time to gear up again for the Dragon Boat Racing season. As usual the school will be running a 6 week course to either introduce students to the sport or for you to improve your skills. The cost of the course is £25 and includes all equipment, instruction and transport to and from Troy Lake in Rickmansworth.

Dates are as follows on Tuesday Evenings (3.05pm depart – 6.00pm Pick Up) 15th April; 22nd April; 6th May; 3rd June; 10th June; 17th June

In addition we will be entering a school team in the Henley 10 man event on Sat 26th April and the Worcester Charity Event on 22nd June.



For more information please see Mr Williams or collect a form from the PE Department.



AS German Exchange to Mainz

From 2-16th February, the week before half-term, some students from our AS German class participated in a two week German exchange. Those lucky few were us, Matthew Bridgeman, Sean Corr and Ruairi Cassidy and it has to be said that we all thoroughly enjoyed ourselves!

The first weekend was the 'high life' of the Mainz Carnival and we all got into the spirit of things. Ruairi made a particular effort, deciding to dress up as a ladybird for the proceedings! Oh the hilarity! On the following Tuesday we began work at the high quality establishment otherwise known as the IBIS Hotel and met many charismatic people. None more so than the legend that was Frau Wagner, with whom Ruairi had a special bond.

We had many good times, like the Eintracht Frankfurt football match, bowling and swimming. We stayed with very kind families and we are very grateful to them. We also enjoyed regular trips to a café called ExtraBlatt with our teacher Frau Spohn, who we would like to thank for accompanying us on the trip; as well as being treated to a guided tour around the historic city of Mainz.

But the time came to bid an emotional farewell to our partners, with the tears flowing in Sean's household as the strong attachment that had formed so quickly between him and Tobias had to be broken.

All in all, the trip has been a very good experience that will live long in the memory, and we thoroughly recommend the next AS class to grab the opportunity with both hands.

Meanwhile, we are looking forward to welcoming our exchange partners in the Autumn.

Rock Climbing

Breakspeare Students have completed a 6 week climbing course at the Herts Sports Village over the past term. The course took place at the universities state of the art indoor climbing wall where our students honed their skills. They were taught everything from safety calls, belaying and abseiling whilst having to complete 2 training routes, 2 lead wall routes and 10 boulder routes (free climbs).



Congratulations to Luke Jones, Steven Mears, Ewan Selkirk, William Visicano, Lawrence Wright, Brendan Selkirk & Tom Arnold who all completed the course.

