



Nicholas Breakspear Catholic School

SEPTEMBER 2011 NEWSLETTER

Headteacher's Report

With us now settled into the new school year I can report with pride that we have achieved our highest ever success rate at GCSE with over 70% of students achieving five or more passes at A* - C. Our sixth form students have also excelled with very nearly every student achieving their target grades or higher, allowing them to access their first choice at university.

Our Year 7 students have also been very busy getting to know their new school with team building days and other activities designed to help them adjust to their new surroundings. The children have started well and will be a great asset to the school.

As always, there will be many challenges as the year progresses, however, we have much to look toward to particularly with the prospect of our all weather surface being constructed in the near future.

To all of our students, families and supporters, I wish you success and happiness in the coming year.

Yours sincerely

Phil Jaksza



GCSE Results 2011

We would like to congratulate all of our GCSE students on their excellent achievements this year. The GCSE examination results have improved again and are the best results the school has had regarding our 5 A*-C pass rate. Within these examination results there were some excellent individual performances, including Rajesh Jethwa who gained 10 A* grades. It was a real joy to see so many happy faces when the results



envelopes were opened. The results will allow the vast majority to continue their studies next year. We are sure the students would like to extend their thanks to the excellent teaching which made these results possible and we are all looking forward to another successful year next year.



Mrs M John, Assistant Headteacher

A Level Results 2011

We are delighted with both our AS and A2 results, which have risen significantly for the second successive year. There were a number of exceptional individual performances. Our 'value-added' data is well above many other schools in the local area. Despite the demand for places the vast majority of our students in Year 13 have gained places at University.



Mr D Church, Director of Sixth Form

Barbara Kozusnikova gained: A* Philosophy and Ethics, A: History, A: English and B: Art. She needed 3 A grades and will therefore be studying History at Kings College in London. She is still open minded as to what she wants to do in the future. Mrs D Domogala, her English teacher, describes her as a 'star student.'



The photo is of Marc Walsh with his Drama teacher (Mr S Borrill) Marc gained B,B,C grades (B Theatre Studies, B in Media and C in applied ICT) which is a coincidence, as he hopes to work for the BBC one day. These grades enable him to study 'Broadcast operations and production' at Ravensbourne. He has a view for a career in television and is a member of the National Youth Theatre. Marc was in the middle of a technical rehearsal on the day of the exam results so came in from Waterloo on the day to collect his results.



Also pictured is Kayleigh Horner Hughes who gained a A*, A and C with the Director of Sixth Form, Mr D Church. Kayleigh will be studying Drama at De Montford University, London.

Term Dates

Autumn Term 2011

Monday 5th September	Staff Inset Day
Tuesday 6th September	Yr 7 & 12 Return
Wednesday 7th September	All Students Return
24th-28th October	Half Term
Friday 16th December	Term Ends

Spring Term 2011

Tuesday 3rd January	Staff Inset Day
Wednesday 4th January	Students Return
13th-17th February	Half Term
20th February	Half Term
Friday 30th March	Term Ends

A comprehensive list of [term dates](#) and [weekly calendars](#) can be found in the 'For Parents' section of the school website:

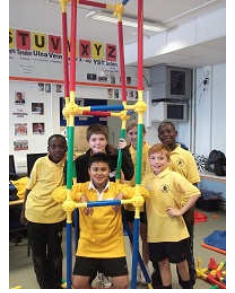
Well Done Year 7 I have been extremely impressed with the start that Year 7 have made this year. They were all thoroughly involved in the team building day developing some solid friendships. They have settled in well making excellent first impressions in all of these lessons with staff informing me that the students are keen to learn, focused and are contributing well in all lessons. An excellent start Year 7, keep up the hard work.

Meet some of our Year 7s



They participated in a leadership/team building day on Wednesday 7th September where they all proved that they are going to be a fantastic year group. They helped and supported each other during the cheerleading, problem solving, getting to know you, circuit/relays and tubes sessions. At the end of the day it was lovely to hear the children's reactions, including 'It was a great day', 'I made lots of new friends', 'The form worked really well together and communicated well with each other', 'I had lots of FUN'.

Miss K Price, Inclusion Leader Transition and Head of Year 7



St. Philip Howard Mural

Year 8 student from Nicholas Breakspear School in St Albans, Thomas Crowley has been working hard over the past year to create a large mural in his own time in the Art-rooms at Nicholas Breakspear School which has been donated to his primary school, St Philip Howard's Catholic School in Hatfield.

Thomas presented St Philip Howard's School with their new mural on the 19th July, which was the same day as the Year 6 Leavers Mass, with Mr Phil Jakzsta, (Headteacher of the School) Mr Barry O Sullivan (the school's Spiritual Director) Mr Paul Hearn (Assistant Head and Art Teacher at Nicholas Breakspear School). Thomas said: "I think the school will really like it. I have really good memories of St Philip Howard's, and it's a really good school - so I think it's nice to give them back something."

The Headteacher, Mrs Mairead Waugh, was delighted with the large painting: "I knew that Nicholas Breakspear was doing a mural for us, but this is much better than anything we expected. We have given it pride of place within our school."



Thomas added a few very personal touches to the painting, including part of a firework, as his dad does a lot of firework displays for the school. You have to look really hard to spot it

Thomas didn't hesitate to choose the design of St Philip Howard: "I remember seeing the original in Arundel during a school trip we went to when I was in Year 6." Father Mark blessed the mural during a ceremony at the school saying how important it was to have images of St Philip Howard around the school. St Philip Howard (1557-1595) was an English noble-man who was one of the Forty Martyrs of England and Wales. He was imprisoned (with his dog) for his religious beliefs.

Mr Hearn says: "We would like to paint a number of murals for our local primary schools, as this is a really good way of letting them know that our pupils haven't forgotten them."

RE Department News

The year of Catholic Education was announced last September by Pope Benedict XVI. We as a school decided that our end of year Liturgy would take the form of a celebration of Catholic Education. The RE department met and decided that a contribution from each department would really enhance the mass.

The **Modern Foreign Language** department took on the welcome and procession of languages and nationalities in the school. The **Drama** department interpreted the liturgy of the word. The students acted out the first reading in a modern dramatisation. The **Music** department took responsibility for organising hymns and music for the mass. The **English** department wrote some bidding prayers about being a student in a Catholic school. The **History, Science and ICT** departments completed projects that were part of the offertory procession. The **Technology** department designed and made a beautiful altar cloth which was blessed by Father Charles Sweeney MSC. (This will be used at all our masses this year).



At the end of the mass some of our Year 8 students danced to 'Joyful' which was most impressive.

Also on that day we commissioned six students as Eucharistic Ministers, distributing communion at all our school masses.

Our Start of Year Masses were held on 19th September. The masses were celebrated by our Chaplain Father Charles Sweeney and Father Dominic McKenna from Borehamwood.

Our next Liturgy will be in October for the Year 7 Welcome Mass. Parents are invited to share in this celebration at 7pm on Monday 17th October. All students will have a role in the mass. Year 7 are looking forward to their evening which will be celebrated by our Chaplain Father Charles Sweeney MSC.



'Joyful'. It was most impressive. They are now Eucharistic Ministers and will be distributing communion at all our school masses. Our Start of Year Masses were celebrated by our Chaplain Father Charles Sweeney and Father Dominic McKenna from Borehamwood.



After that we look forward to our All Saints Day Masses and our Advent reflections and celebrations.

God bless and good wishes
E McCarthy (Head of RE)

Lourdes 2011

During the summer holiday ten members of our Sixth Form headed off to Lourdes on the Westminster Diocesan Pilgrimage as 'Redcap' volunteers. They had chosen to spend a week of their summer holidays putting other people first! Each year about 900 people go to Lourdes on our diocesan pilgrimage and many of these people are elderly and sick, and without volunteer helpers they would not be able to take a full part. These people need to use wheelchairs and have to be pushed around during their week in Lourdes, especially to the various services that make up the pilgrimage week.



Our Sixth Form students were part of a Redcap team that was made of Sixth Form volunteers from two other schools (St Gregory's School in Kenton and Gumley House School in Isleworth). Altogether there were thirty of us and because of our distinctive blue t-shirts we were known as the 'Blue Crew'. Our Sixth Form students were great at working with the rest of the team and after what seemed like a few hours everyone became really united and some strong friendships were formed.



The best part of being a Redcap is the chance to work with the sick and elderly. It is really good to be able to help people and make sure that they can have a good pilgrimage. There is a lot of hard work to do because Lourdes has lots of hills, and there are so many services and events to get people to and from. What our Sixth Form students discovered was that doing things to help people in need is really rewarding. You can look back over each day in Lourdes and have a great sense of knowing you have done something you can be proud of. The Sixth Form students from NBS were so good at caring for the sick and elderly. They spent their time not just pushing people in wheelchairs but also getting to know them really well. Some very strong bonds were made with the people who were being cared for.

Going on a pilgrimage to Lourdes is very different to any other kind of school trip or holiday. Perhaps one of the biggest differences is being able to pray together at holy places like the Grotto. A really special part of the week in Lourdes was when the whole 'Blue Crew' met at midnight to go to the Grotto. One of the reasons for doing this was to light our school candle, which was blessed at our end-of-school-year mass, and to pray for our school communities, and our family and friends back home. This year our time at the Grotto was very intense and special because it gave many people the chance to pray about important things in their life.



Another special moment from this year was when one elderly couple who had a disabled daughter described their week in Lourdes as one of the best of their whole lives because they had just loved spending time with the NBS students and the other members of the 'Blue Crew'. In fact since coming back from Lourdes many people have written to Mr Jakszta to say just how lovely they thought the students who came to Lourdes from NBS were. It is fantastic to know that so many of our Sixth Form students were putting our school mission into practice through the summer holiday.



As one of the sixth form students put it: "Going to Lourdes made me realise how powerful and inspirational this holy place is. It made me realise how special Lourdes is because it is so sacred and because of all the millions of people that visit it. Being a Redcap and helping people to have the best experience they can is so rewarding because you are really touching someone and making them happy."

I would like to say a huge thank you to all the NBS Sixth Form students who came to Lourdes this year. They did a fantastic job and it was an absolute privilege to spend a week with them in Lourdes.

Mrs B Whittle, Deputy Headteacher

Gifted and Talented

AS and A Level (or equivalent) subject choices made in Year 11 can have a major impact on the course options available at university. A significant number of very bright and capable students fail to gain places at top universities because they are not studying the right subjects.

Each autumn the University of Cambridge runs practical and informative Saturday afternoon sessions, for Year 11 students. The events, called The Subject Matters, highlight the importance of suitable A Level (or equivalent) subject choices when making an application to a top research led university, and helps students access information to make informed A Level choices.

When assessing applicants at the University of Cambridge, interviewers consider not only the individual A Level (or equivalent) subjects taken but also the combination of subjects. They generally prefer applicants to have taken certain subjects, or combinations of subjects, because they are more likely to provide an effective preparation for study at the University. This will be covered in depth in this useful.

When will the sessions be held?

- Saturday 15th October
- Saturday 22nd October
- Thursday 27th October

For further details please see Mrs John Asst headteacher and Gifted and Talented Co-ordinator.

Last year, Dr Sutton and I took 10 Year 11 Gifted and Talented pupils to Cambridge University. They found this information session extremely valuable and informed us that it really helped finalise their choice of AS and A level subjects. 2 of these pupils are now seriously considering applying to Cambridge University.

This year, 11 Gifted and Talented pupils will be invited to attend the session on Thursday 27th October. They are: Tom Brophy, Alice Fisher, Liam Gallagher, Hemesh Jethwa, Maximilian Lawrie, Neal Meswania, Bryan Palacio, Kate Sirman, Jack Turley, Belinda Achieng, Kim Wallace.

Mrs M John, Assistant Headteacher & Gifted and Talented Co-ordinator

A Snap Shot of Nicholas Breakspear Catholic School Governors

Linda Graham
Foundation Governor and Head of Governors

What is my incentive for being a Governor at Nicholas Breakspear School?

I became a Parent Governor when my daughter started at Nicholas Breakspear School and after a year became a foundation governor. I have a real interest in employability and believe it is important to help prepare our youth of the future for the workplace. I have been actively involved with the school with its work experience programme and have offered career guidance to Year 12s.

What do I do?

I have just recently been appointed Chair of Governors and it is my pleasure to be working with a professional and enthusiastic group of governors who are committed to supporting the school in all aspects. I work closely with the Head Teacher and am involved with the Finance, Staffing and Curriculum Committees.

What is the best thing about Nicholas Breakspear Catholic School?

I am going to be cheeky and have two things! The pupils for a start – they are fantastic. Just come along to our Open Evening and meet any one of the students and you will get an understanding of how brilliant they are and the pride they have in the school. There is a real sense of community spirit and you can really see the school's gospel values of Peace, Justice Truth and Love in what they do. And then there is all the staff at the school, starting with a Head Teacher who leads a dedicated team of teaching and support staff who are all committed and give so much of their time to ensure they provide the best for all the pupils. I feel very privileged to be working with them.



Ray Anderson
Foundation Governor

I was appointed by the Westminster Diocese in September 2008. I was 'encouraged' to express an interest in being a Governor by Michael Ryan, who was in the process of retiring as Chair of the Governing Body. My incentive is to use my skills to support the development and improvement of the school. I retired at the end of 2007 and I wanted to help in situations in which my skills, acquired over 37 years as a civil servant, might prove useful. I have been a practising Catholic since I was received into the Church in 1994 and I have a particular interest in catechesis which ties in very well with the Catholic ethos of the school. I am a strong believer in the importance of faith-based education and, like all Foundation Governors; I am expected to support the school in its role of supporting students in their development as responsible and caring young adults.

What do I do? I was described recently as a 'workhorse', by which I hope the person didn't mean donkey! I chair the Staffing Committee, which means I am involved in the recruitment, performance management and welfare of staff. I also chair a small group which reviews the school's policies for consistency and readability. I hope that students and parents who look up policies on this website have seen some improvements over the last few years. I also help in the early development of other important documents like the School Improvement Plan. I am the 'Link' Governor for the Humanities Department and I try to meet Mr D Carasco Morley each term.

What is the best thing about Nicholas Breakspear Catholic School? It must be the atmosphere, by which I mean the way in which students, parents and staff work together to bring joy into the lives of so many – not just those at the school but in the community. It is always a good experience to visit the school, whether the purpose is to see an event, meet students and staff or (even) the numerous meetings which are an important part of being a Governor.



Michael Larmer MTM ACA
Parent Governor

How my family became involved with Nicholas Breakspear?

Living in St Albans with our four children, we had a good choice of competing schools. What stood out with Nicholas Breakspear, in addition to the roaming sports fields, was the school's special character and the inclusive culture of personal acceptance and respect. This special character, I have seen permeates through meeting staff, parents and students in Saturday morning's sports activities and other school events.

My business experience as a management consultant and having been a governor at three schools, helps me support Nicholas Breakspear in its development. While experience is one aspect, what impresses me is the role-model the Headteacher and staff provide to our children. I regularly meet staff, parents and students on the Saturday morning side-line, however, those who inspire me, and probably all of us most, are the students. Being involved as a parent, in helping coach a team, enabled me to meet some of the students. One cold, wet, wintery Saturday morning, a Year 7 boy told me how he was glad the game was on that day as he had got up at 5:30am to catch two buses to be at school on time to play with his friends. No wonder the school succeeds to National levels.

Nicholas Breakspear recognises it is part of the wider St Albans District community. Our children are given many opportunities to support this through partnership with schools, parishes, sports and other community based organisations and activities.

What do I do? I was appointed as a parent governor in May 2011. I am the governor responsible for the PE curriculum where students have the opportunity to develop their physical, personal and leadership character. It is pleasing to see students continuing to achieve successive personal bests during their sporting season with the coaching plans provided by staff. With 2012 Olympics at our door, it was only natural that Nicholas Breakspear has been selected as a 2012 Olympic School. Nicholas Breakspear's most recent "outstanding" OFSTED sports rating is a commendation to the schools community, students and staff.



What is the best thing about Nicholas Breakspear Catholic School? My experience is that the special character is lived and reflected upon in all that is seen and unseen in the school. Nicholas Breakspear supports its students in their development as young adults and gives them the opportunity to apply this in their lives.

Links with our Local Parishes

As important members of our community, we have extended a warm welcome to our Local Parish priests. A letter was sent inviting them to attend the school's Open Evening where they could meet with our Governors, staff, students and prospective parents.

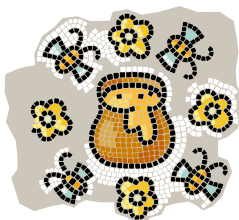
With this in mind we have linked each of our Governors with a Parish as follows:-

St Peter's in Hatfield—Mr Lawrie, Mrs Graham, Ms Ojadi, Mrs Crowley and Mrs McLellan
St Alban and St Stephen's in St Albans—Mr Larmer
St Bartholomew's in St Albans—Mr Lanham and Mr Anderson
St Mary's in London Colney and Shenley—Clear Mears
St Teresa's Borehamwood—Mrs McHugh and Mrs Bunning
St John Fisher and Thomas More in Borehamwood—Mrs Bunning
St Bonaventure/Holy Family/Our Lady in Welwyn Garden City—Father Mannion
Marychurch in Old Hatfield—Mrs Elliott.

Angela Chisholm, Business Director



Mr Short's Agricultural Science Area



Our Agricultural Science Teacher Mr Short is a great favourite with all of our students. During their time at Nicholas Breakspear School the students take part in many activities in this area, along with many afterschool activities. These include Bee Keeping and Garden Club. There are also times during the year that we have livestock at the school. Leading to Christmas we have Turkeys and Geese which are then available for sale in conjunction with a local farm. We have also in the past had pigs and sheep. We have chickens all year round which produce eggs for sale. The bees also provide honey and beeswax which are again available for sale.



In Years 10 and 11 the students grow their own fruit and vegetables which they sell on to the Teachers at the school.

Michaela Keohane, Office Manager

Repairs to Mathematic Department Roof



Currently we are in the process of repairing the roof along the Mathematic department corridor. The school is grateful for the assistance of Westminster Diocese. We hope these repairs will be complete just after the October Half Term. We thank our teachers and students for their co-operation during this time.

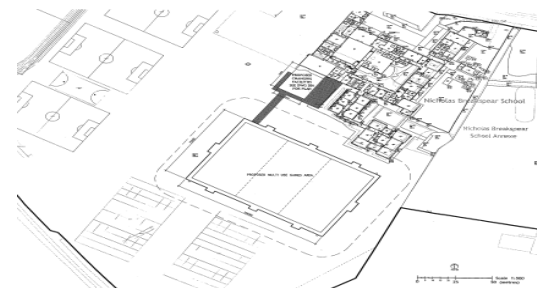
Angela Chisholm, Business Director



Update on our Multi Use Pitches

As you may be aware we now been successful if obtaining planning permission for Astro turf and changing room project. We are delighted to be working with St Albans City Youth on this project. Many thanks for all the messages of support. We hope to be starting work on this construction in the very near future.

Angela Chisholm, Business Director



Communciation

We are aware that some members of our community have found it difficult to contact us by telephone. This is because the telephone system is antiquated. We are keen to improve the effectiveness of our communication and are currently reviewing our processes. We will shortly be issuing email addresses and direct dial telephone numbers for all staff. The website is the most effective tool for you to gain information regarding the school. It is regularly updated and contains lots of useful information (www.nicholasbreakspearschool.co.uk). If you have not done so already please sign up for Parentmail® as this system is a very speedy way to receive information by email and text.

Angela Chisholm, Business Director

