



Nicholas Breakspear Catholic School

NOVEMBER 2011 NEWSLETTER

Headteacher's Report

Dear Parents & Carers

You may be aware that many schools in the country have converted to become a new academy. There has been significant discussion amongst the Bishops of England and Wales as to whether it would be appropriate for our Catholic Schools to become academies. There have been several hurdles to overcome regarding land issues and, more significantly, answering the question as to whether the way academy schools operate is appropriate to the teaching of the Church and conforms to Canon Law

I am pleased to say that these issues have now been resolved in our Diocese and so the way is cleared for our schools to seek academy status should they wish to do so.

The Governors have been tracking this process closely and I am a member of the Diocesan steering committee developing the policy and delivery process. This all means that our School is well positioned to be a first wave school, should our Governors in consultancy with our community decide that Nicholas Breakspear School become an academy. I wish to emphasize that no decision has been made at this point. The purpose of my report is simply to make you aware that we are taking all necessary steps required to be at the front rather than the tail end of this process.

Yours sincerely

Phil Jakszta
Headteacher



St Albans Cathedral Art trip

On Saturday 24th September Year 10 GCSE Art students went to the St Albans Cathedral to take pictures that are going to be part of their GCSE coursework. It was an enjoyable trip and it allowed us to see the Cathedral from the outside and inside. The stunning views of the Cathedral will allow us to produce extraordinary pieces of artwork and will hopefully aid us all to get an A* too.



On the day Mrs Jones, Mrs Borrill and Mr Hearn were there to explain the different types of areas we had to cover, which included the stained glass windows, texture and the solidity of the building as well as particular bits of it. The views were beautiful and the inside of the Cathedral was enormous as well as being full of breathtaking sculptures.

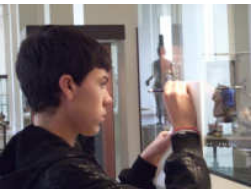
The trip was a success and it was essential as the photos taken will be a crucial part of the current project.

By Adrian Wasiolek 10MGS

Year 11 Trip to the British Museum

On Monday 26th September a number of Year 11 students travelled to the British Museum in London to gather information, inspiration and ideas for their mock examination work which is based on Similarities and Differences. With so many amazing things to look at it was difficult to know where to start so we concentrated our research into three main areas: The Far East, Africa and the Americas.

"The British Museum was a good experience for me because I saw lots of different shapes, forms and cultural art. This helped me draw my project as I am interested in patterns of animals and people. I enjoyed the trip." (Louise Graham).



Alex Lyons takes the first of what will be a huge collection of images.

"It was very interested in the Buddha statues and think that these will feature in my final pieces." (William Brewer).

"The trip to the British Museum enabled me to explore diverse themes and styles such as culture and religion to help me complete my Similarities and Differences' project. (Mhike Eborde).

"I loved the trip to the museum. It was quiet in there and there were lots of interesting things to look at. I loved the feeling when I was walking around with my sketchpad and I was observing interesting stuff. I felt like an artist." Klaudia Rubacka.

"The British Museum helped me understand the beauty of the different cultures." (Lucy Crack)

"I drew an epic picture of a bird from the Far Eastern room." (Jessica Ruane)



Illenia Davino seeks inspiration in the Eastern Gallery.



Important Notice

It is very important that we hold correct contact details for you. A copy of your child's data collection sheet will be sent home with their Autumn grades report. Please could you check the information, making any necessary changes, sign and return to the School Admin Office. Any changes to addresses, phone numbers etc. that occur during the school year should be communicated to the School Admin Office in writing or by email. For your information a copy of the Pupil Privacy Notice (formerly Fair Processing Notice) can be found on the school website.

Term Dates

Autumn Term 2011

Friday 16th December

Term Ends

Spring Term 2011

Tuesday 3rd January
Wednesday 4th January
13th-17th February
20th February
Friday 30th March

Staff Inset Day
Students Return
Half Term
Staff Inset Day
Term Ends

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

Phone: 01727 860079

Fax: 01727 848912

Nicholas Breakspear Catholic School, Colney Heath Lane, St Albans, Hertfordshire, AL4 0TT
Email: admin@nicholasbreakspear.herts.sch.uk Web: www.nicholasbreakspear.school.co.uk

Ferrets

The school has recently taken two ferrets into care. Our expert team of ferret handlers: Charlotte Raymond, Jessica Ruane, John Aguila, Jamie Jackson and Daniel Reed answered a few questions.



Where do they come from?

Charlotte and her father have been rescuing unwanted ferrets for the last two years now. The Nicky B ferrets were donated to the school by her family. They were from a batch of 22 unwanted ferrets! The 'pole-cat' is called 'Houdini' and the pale one is called 'Jack Frost'

Where are they kept?

In the Greenhouse.

Why are you the official ferret handlers?

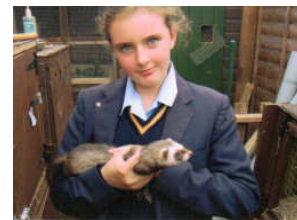
Because we're extremely cool.

What does it involve?

We give them daily exercise, feed them and cater for their every need.

Can we have a picture of you holding him?

Yes



What do they eat?

They're carnivores so will eat ferret pellets, ham and other bits of meat.

What are their best features?

The white one has lovely eyes and is a cuddly kind of ferret. Houdini really likes escaping and running through the pipe. He is also very food orientated. Apparently you can get silver ferrets but they cost a lot of money because they're extremely rare. Boy ferrets are called Hobbs and girl ferrets are called Jills.

The New Justice Mural—A Journey in Pictures

Some of you may have noticed the new justice mural in the hall. This was part of the End of Year Liturgy, and although finished by the Liturgy it spent the Summer holidays in the Art rooms until it could be properly put into place by a team of experts. These pictures show the painstaking process in which the mural was created. From white-washing over the old one, a brilliant design by a former sixth former, painted way back in 2002, to drawing out the new design (Thank you Stephen in Year 10) to painting out the background and foreground. It was not all easy. The foreground had to be re-done and thanks to some very spiritual sixth formers who were able to pose in a very prayerful manner (Thank you Vincenzo and Helena, Vincenzo, you have been 'immortalized') A number of staff and pupils had a go at the painting including all the art teachers and most of the Year 9 'Gifted and Talented' art students. We hope that you agree that the new mural makes a worthy edition to the fantastic artwork that is already in the hall.



MFL Day

On Friday 30th September the whole of Year 7 in Nicholas Breakspear had a European day and got the chance to learn new greetings in different languages.



First of all we were put into groups. Our group had to match up a famous European building with a country. We had fun looking at the pictures and finding out where the places were. This was quite a challenging task.

Then, staying in our groups we changed room and listened to a sixth former who was fantastic at French! We could not believe our ears! We also got to try new foods from France. We learnt how to order the different foods we wanted in French. They were delicious.

I thought the day was great. We got to do lots of fun activities and learn new languages. I wish that we could do it all over again!

Written by Hannah Dibden and Hannah Cosgrove 7EHD.



Creepy Crawlies at NBS

Find out about our new pets in the Science Department

Dr. Sutton has purchased a number of new animals for the Science Department at Nicholas Breakspear School, including a scorpion and a very large type of stick insect

We asked him a number of questions:

What is your scorpion called?

Trevor

Why?

All my scorpions have been called Trevor.



Can we have a picture of you holding him?

Absolutely not. If it stings you it will be like a very strong bee sting, not life threatening but very painful all the same.

What does it eat?

It eats locusts and gets through about four a week. It catches them with its pincers. It hunts at night so probably gets them when they're asleep.

Where does it come from?

It is originally from sub-Saharan Africa. I bought him in London at a specialised show: the Entomological Exhibition at Kempton Park. At the same show I also bought the 'Macleay's Spectre', a very large type of stick insect which comes from Borneo and eats Eucalyptus leaves.

What has been the response from the pupils?

The pupils love it; there has been a lot of interest in Trevor since he arrived at the school.

How are the snakes?

They're good



LIC News

Firstly, I would like to thank everyone in the Nicholas Breakspear community for making me feel so welcome, it really is a pleasure to come here every day. One of the many reasons is because it is the Red House children's book award time.



This award is great for pupils to be involved with as they get to vote on which book they would like to win! The shortlist for the categories will be announced on 31st October. If you would like to know more information of how to be involved, and reading and judging the books then please come along to the LIC for further information.

Miss T Warman and Mrs De Bellis, L.I.C.

Message from Reception

Please do not reply to text messages which have been sent to you by the school as we are unable to open and read them!

Reminder: Confiscated items such as mobile phones and jewellery must be collected by a parent or carer from the school office, Closing times are **Monday - Thursday 4.15 Friday 3.45**

When paying for school trips or equipment such as text books, please make sure all cash is placed in a sealed envelope marked clearly with the pupil's name, form and what they are paying for. If you are paying by cheque, can you please make sure the same information is clearly written on the back.



Science Club

On Thursday 20th October the Science Club started. This club is on every Thursday from 1.25 to 1.55. Even if you are not very good at Science it doesn't matter, but you need to remember that Science is good fun and so are the practicals!

In our first sessions we did a practical which was seeing if some soils were either alkaline or acidic. The range is from 0 to 14 with 7 being neutral. A pH below 7 is acidic and about is alkaline.

For the practical we put on glasses, tied up our hair and the boys tucked their ties away (for safety of course). We got all of our equipment out which included test tubes, test tube holders and the three different types of soil which we called sample a, b and c.

It turned out that sample a was PH2 which had lost of acid in it. Sample b was PH5 which had moderate acid in it and finally sample c was PH7.5 which was slightly acidic. To make the test fair we did each one twice and they turned out the same. Amazingly, when we did the test sample b and c turned out a green/dark green and sample a was light red. Then, once we had finished we tried mixing sample a and b together! This turned out to be a light yellow colour.

Hannah Cosgrove, 7EHD



All in the Aid of Charity!!



November is the month where men grow a moustache, in aid of testicle cancer, so from the 1st November to 30th November our Site Manager, Graeme Rose will be taking part. If anyone would like to make a donation, however big or small, there is a collection box in the main office.



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Headteacher: Mr P Jakszta

Nicholas Breakspear Catholic School

Quality & Excellence



13th October 2011

Dear Parents, Carers and Friends of Nicholas Breakspear School

RE: TRANSPORT TO SCHOOL SEPTEMBER 2012

I am very pleased to announce that following consultations with a number of bus operators, we have reached agreement with Sullivan Buses to provide a network of dedicated school bus services from September 2012. With the threatened withdrawal of much of the current subsidy paid by Hertfordshire County Council for our school bus services we needed to find alternative arrangements. The Governors and I consider that the proposals put forward by Sullivan Buses meet the School's needs and provide the best chance of maintaining sustainable school bus services when the contributions from Hertfordshire largely cease.

Whilst the number of separate routes will be reduced virtually every bus stop that is currently served by our school buses will continue to be so. In the few cases where a bus stop is no longer served the walk to the nearest bus stop is only a few minutes. The principle that Sullivan Buses has applied in developing the network is that every child who currently uses a dedicated school bus to and from School will still be able to do so.

One change is that most of the buses will stop at all stops on route enabling many children to be picked up and dropped off nearer their homes. Sullivan Buses are proposing to set fares at approximately the level of their own local bus fares. In the majority of cases the fares are less than those currently charged by Hertfordshire. Another change is that there will be an increased range of ticket options and tickets may be purchased on the bus on the day. Daily; weekly, half term; term; and annual tickets will be available and I hope this will provide an opportunity for more pupils to use the buses.

We will be working with Sullivan Buses to ensure all parents and prospective parents of the School are fully aware of these bus services. We hope parents will make full use of them. Sullivan Buses will also attend open evenings and other School events to promote and provide information about the bus services. There are significant benefits for the School if the buses are well used.

All the buses will enter the School grounds and leave from there immediately after School at around 15.20. Final details of the fares and timing of the services and in some cases the exact route taken by the bus have still to be decided. We will provide these as soon as they are available. But I am sure this news will provide great comfort to many of you.

Yours faithfully

Phil Jakszta
Headteacher

Notes from Student Services

Holidays

There is clear evidence absence from school can seriously damage a child's progress. It is expected that family holidays will **not** be taken during term time. In line with government guidelines any time taken off will be classed as unauthorised absence except in extreme circumstances.



Appointments



Any medical appointments should be made where possible outside of the school day. If this is not feasible then the appointment must be written in your child's planner so they can leave the lesson.

Attendance

Students should arrive in school at **8.20** am to ensure they are on time for registration. It is absolutely vital students attend school regularly and on time. The aim of every child should be to have **no** time away at all. Absence **does** have a detrimental effect on learning and attainment, furthermore frequent absence can interfere with friendships and the child's feeling of belonging to the school, the class and various groups.



Illness



Students should only stay away from school if they are not well enough to attend. If your child is away because of illness please telephone us on 01727 860079 before 8am. Then select the absence reporting option to record the absence each day. You should then send a letter of explanation to the Attendance Officer on the day he/she returns.

An automated text messaging service is used daily and is sent to parents/carers of students who have not been registered or when a reason for their absence has not been given.

Examination Certificates

Examination certificates from the Summer 2011 series of exams will be ready for collection from the main office from Wednesday 16th November. Certificates are important documents which must be collected in person and signed for. If a student is unable to collect their certificates personally they must send a responsible adult or alternatively forward a cheque for £5 to cover the cost of posting certificates home by recorded delivery. Cheques should be sent clearly marked for the attention of the exams office.

Mrs N M Gull
Examinations Officer
Ext 238



Luke Welch—Year 8 Junior Winner of the 'Young Person of the Year Award'

Warmest congratulations go to Luke Welch who scooped the Junior Young Person of the Year Award known as a YOPEY, at last month's awards ceremony at Bushy Golf Club. We are extremely proud of Luke who won the award for his voluntary work at the Gateway Club in the Jim McDonald Centre Hatfield, where he supports people of all ages with learning difficulties. Luke was nominated by Vanessa Bunn who also volunteers at the Gateway. She said "He gives up his free time to help others and spreads a smile to all at the centre. He is an inspiration to them all."



Luke was amongst some excellent youngsters who had been nominated for the award but the judging panel decided that Luke demonstrates "excellent courage, compassion and understanding from one so young." Not only is Luke a regular fixture at the Gateway Club he also helps and supports youngsters at the St John's Youth Centre in High View, Hatfield.

Miss K Price — Inclusion Leader, Head of Year 7



Our Refurbished Maths Classrooms and Corridor

As many of you may be aware we had to undertake repairs to two of our Maths classrooms and corridor during the Summer holidays. I am now pleased to inform you that this work has now been completed and I am sure you will agree that they have been completed to a very high standard.



A Polite Request

I would like to remind parents/carers that children should be dropped off and picked up at the Trinity car park (annexe) in the mornings and afternoons. The main car park is extremely busy at these times and is potentially dangerous with buses and coaches dropping children off.

