

22nd December 2023



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Dear Parents

I am writing to you at the end of a very busy and long term. I am sure that your children are feeling tired having worked so hard.

It has been a term in which students have had the opportunity to take part in a range of experiences. Students and staff have been working hard in their lessons and it has been a pleasure to walk around school, to see and hear the work that is taking place across the school.

It was also a pleasure to meet so many parents at the beginning of the school year at the information evenings.

Students in years 10, 11, 12 and 13 recently completed their mock exams. I was very impressed to see how hard students worked and how well prepared they were. Teachers have now marked over five thousand exam papers in a very short space of time and given students feedback. Thank you to teachers for all their work on exams and marking. Students will have their next set of mock exams in March before years 11, 12 and 13 take their final GCSE, AS and A Level exams in May and June 2024.

Exam Workshops

We know that sitting exams can be very stressful for students particularly for GCSE and A Level students. Please click on the link for three free workshops from Geraldine Jozefiak who has many years experience as an exams officer and working for JCQ.

[Coping with Exam Anxiety Workshops - English Martyrs' Catholic School](#)

There have been a number of visitors to the school, including the BBC Bitesize Roadshow, the Dance Group Studio 79, Zonation Dance Company, the music group Pelleas Ensemble. We have held the St Thomas Aquinas Multi Academy Trust Speaking Competition, students performed with maturity in front of their peers from other schools. The great grandson of a suffragette also visited and Mr Pemberton gave a talk on his experience of migrating from the Caribbean to the UK.

All Year 7 students performed at the Year 7 Concert, over 170 students performed in the St Cecilia Concert. Students also performed at the Menphys Concert at De Montfort Hall. We held our wonderful Christmas Carol Service.

Sixth form students created and led assemblies for Black History Month, we held a very successful McMillan coffee morning raising over £800 and Sixth Form students have been reading with Year 7 students.

Students have been on retreat to Holy Cross Church, St Patrick's Church and Mount St Bernard's Abbey, there have been visits to the National Museum of Computing, Stratford on Avon, Black Country Museum, Geography field trips to Edale and Leicester City. Year 7 went to Loughborough Town Hall for the panto, students competed in the Future Chef regional finals. In Sports, students have competed in a number of sports including netball and football. Congratulations for how well all students played, particular well done to year 9 10 and 11 football teams who have all been named as West Leicester champions who have now progressed to the county finals. Good Luck!

It has been my pleasure to meet a number of students from across the year groups to give them an English Martyrs' Principals pen or certificate for their outstanding work and contribution to the school.

In Year 8 students helped in Hospitality; Debria A, Eva B, Victora H, Sara J, Isabel J, Gabriela L, Beatrice M, Maia M, Amia P, Izabella S, Manna S received a certificate. Our Year 9 students who took part in the Future Chef competition; Maksymillian W, Dorren M. In Year 10 student's received certificates for taking part in the English Speaking Union Competition; Rita O, Jemima K, Berlinda D, Edmondson D, Jonathan F, Evie W (Yr 12). Year 11 students received pens for their effort in designing and making a personal light; David A, Ruh T, Gabriella T, Analuz C. The following music students received a pen for playing at the St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Multi Academy Trust Development Day; Calum S, Hilary L, Beatriz R, Elizabeth R, Anouk F, Jemima M, Kacper J. It is wonderful to see the range of students contributions outside of the classroom.

Student Voice

In recent student voice meetings, our students have commented on the many things they enjoy about the school. Students have found our various online homework platforms (for example Sparks Maths, Educake, Quizlet and Satchel One) to be very helpful. Older students worked very hard for their mock exams and commented on how much their teachers had done to help them prepare and on how much work they had done to give students feedback on their exams. Students were very appreciative of the wide range of extra-curricular clubs and activities which happen every week. All students commented on the many great things happening in the school library; we are very grateful to Mrs Alessandrelli for all of the exciting things she has introduced.

Sunday Times School list

It is with great pride that we were informed that English Martyrs' have been rated by the Sunday Times/The Times in the top 20 state and grammar school in the East Midlands, this is the second year running. This is testament to the work and commitment of students and staff.

I thought I would highlight our co-curricular programme which we are very proud of, with over 25 clubs taking place each week. We have over Advent been collecting and raising money for a number of charities including City of Sanctuary, CAFOD, Pax Christi and Missio. Thank you to all the staff that give up their time to run these activities. It was wonderful to see over 500 students from all year groups enjoying Christmas dinner, thank you to all the staff and Sixth Form who served Christmas Dinners.

Particular Highlights (from Departments)

Dance

Within the Dance department we were pleased to welcome into school LCPA College of Performing Arts. Year 9 & 10 BTEC classes were involved in a fantastic dance and drama workshop. The students really enjoyed working with industry professionals and learning some exciting choreography that will feature in this years annual dance show in June.

Zonation Dance Company have worked with our Year 11 BTEC dance students. Zonation are an internationally acclaimed Hip Hop Company based in London's West End. They delivered professional repertoire to our students who will then perform this for their practical examinations in February and also in the annual dance show in June. The workshop was an incredibly intense but exciting opportunity to work with industry professionals and work with the best Hip Hop company around! Students were extremely excited to learn and push themselves.

English

English Martyrs' Newsletter: Students from Years 10 and 13 have published two editions of our first English Martyrs' student newspaper, which have been well-received. The team is overseen by Mrs Bhakta, but the publication is very much in the hands of the students.

Public Speaking: We hosted the first round of the Trust's Public Speaking Competition in November. Mrs Bhakta coached students from different year groups, enabling them to deliver effective speeches. Six have progressed to the semi-finals being held in February.

Five Year 10 students, coached by Miss Fones, competed in the English Speaking Union's national public speaking competition. They were competing against more experienced students from fee-paying schools in the

region, but still impressed the judge. Although they did not qualify for the next round, they are determined to try again next year.

Writing Competition: Year 7's are in the process of submitting a piece of writing for the Holocaust Memorial Day. Miss Devereux will select the best pieces to be judged by a final independent panel.

Reading Initiatives:

Book Buzz: Every student in Year 7 chose a free reading book from a list of titles. This has become a traditional rite of passage kindly funded in part by The English Martyrs' School Development Association.

Drop Everything and Read: This initiative has been developed by Mrs Sheehan to ensure that every student in Years 7 to 11 is reading an appropriate book during Accelerate.

Year 7 Accelerated Reader: Students are competing in form groups to see which form can read the largest total of words! Individual contributions are recognised too. For their words to count, students need to complete an online quiz about their books.

Theatre Visits: RSC – The Empress. A group of students from Years 10 to 13 (led by Mrs Sheehan) enjoyed a late night in Stratford watching a much-acclaimed production of 'The Empress'. Based on real life events and characters, it was a poignant exposé of prejudice and discrimination in the British Empire in the time of Queen Victoria – and still incredibly relevant today. In an initiative to encourage students to visit the theatre, the RSC kindly funded the transport costs making it much more accessible to our students. Fingers crossed for similar opportunities in the future!

Inclusion

Our Sixth Form students are doing great work in supporting our Year 7 students in their Spelling and Reading comprehension morning interventions.

We have a great new opportunity with our school Gardening Club, they meet every Wednesday afterschool in Inclusion and anyone who wishes to join in the new year will be made most welcome.

Mathematics

On Monday 4th December, Year 8 and 9 students entered the AMSP Live Online Inter-School Maths Competition. Schools from across the East Midlands, Yorkshire and Humber took part in this online Maths competition where students worked in teams of 2 - 4 to answer questions.

The competition had heats on different days, on the day that our students took part there were 140 teams taking part which would mean between 400-500 students. I am delighted to say that one of our teams came 1st on the day and we also achieved 4th and 5th place. Very well done to the students involved.

Modern Foreign Languages

Year 7 Aspire Club - a session in which Year 7 investigated some common French idioms.

Year 8 Aspire Club - where students experimented with phonetics.

A celebration of European Languages on the 26th September, when Year 7 had a lesson on language development through the ages and looked at where English comes from. Year 7 beginner's German has got off to a great start with lessons from Mrs Frackowiak.

PE

All year groups have participated in the West Leicester Netball tournaments - with our Year 7 and 10 teams performing particularly well, winning multiple matches against fellow schools.

Our boys football teams have also performed superbly this term, with all teams from years 8 - 11 qualifying for the West Leicester City finals.

Niamh B in Year 7 represented English Martyrs' in a British Gymnastics Schools Trampolining competition.

Our KS3 PE lessons for the last few weeks during mock exam period have been inter-form based, and all students have performed superbly with great attitude and teamwork - especially when we were outside on those cold and wet days.

Winning forms included:

7FI
7MO
8CA
8WA
9CA
9WA

Religious Education

Students in Years 10-13 have been working hard to improve their grades in recent mock exams. Year 11 have done well to complete their GCSE course ahead of time and will be engaging in a revision programme on return to school after Christmas to boost their existing grades. Our Year 9 students have been engaging in lots of ethical discussion and debate as they have been touching on various controversial and exciting topics in recent weeks. Students in Year 8 are hard at work preparing for their Balloon Debate competition and have been focusing on script writing. Our Year 7 students are currently utilising their creative expertise as they go about designing their very own nativity scenes as part of the school's Presepe competition. Prizes will be awarded before the Christmas holidays and the winners will be posted on the school website!

Science

A group of Year 8 students have undertaken a Bronze CREST Award in Science. They made and tested their own fizzy drinks!

Science Club have been doing an array of fun Science experiments including dissecting bees, planting seeds, Whoosh bottle and Thermit demonstrations.

Society of Physics and Engineers are getting ready for Christmas with some Christmas themed engineering.

For Biology Week, Sixth Formers participated in the "Big Biology Quiz" afterschool, which for the second-year running was not won by A Level Biology students, but by Chemists instead!

As part of the High Flyers, students in Year 9 and 10 have been learning in depth about vaccinations and presented in a Dragons Den style competition about their country.

Attendance

As you will remember at the Information Evening we explained the importance of attendance and the correlation of success in exams. I am pleased to see that again we have some of the strongest attendance for a secondary school in Leicester and Leicestershire. Over 500 students have been rewarded this week for having over 100% attendance.

Reminder - English Martyrs' Way Values

We expect a high standard of behaviour from all our students in lessons and around the school. Students should always follow The English Martyrs Way and demonstrate their commitment to upholding the Catholic Ethos of the school and our Motto "May they All be One." This will be demonstrated through the following values of:

- **Excellence:** We aspire to be better every day. Success is a journey and failure is part of the learning journey.
- **Hardworking:** (of a person) tending to work with energy, commitment and diligence
- **Resilience:** be determined to never give up, regardless of setbacks. To look for solutions when facing a problem.
- **Welcoming:** We recognise and celebrate diversity while being friendly considerate and welcoming to all.
- **Respect:** have due regard for (someone's feelings, wishes, or rights)

Our staff have awarded almost 30,000 praise points since the beginning of term, congratulations to Year 7 who amassed over 8,500 praise points, however it was 8 Champion who were the highest achieving Tutor group in the whole school, well done to them! Each praise point symbolises our student's dedication to upholding he

English Martyrs Way. We are very impressed that over 20,000 points were awarded for students being hard working. Seeing these impressive figures shows just how dedicated our students have been this term.

Uniform

May I draw everyone's attention to several aspects to which we need to return in full.

- 1) Hair. Our rules are that hair may not be dyed a colour which is not a natural colour. This also applied to any extensions.
- 2) The only permitted ear jewellery is a pair of studs, one in each ear in the bottom lobe. Tattoos and body piercings are not permitted.
- 3) Hoodies are not part of the uniform and should not be worn. Blazers must be worn.
- 4) Shoes must be all black and polishable.

Pre Loved Uniform

A reminder that we are continuing with our Pre Loved Uniform shop which will be open once a month. We would welcome any clean, good quality uniform – any donations please hand in to our Reception.

Staying Safe on-line

A reminder to parents about the importance of keeping their children safe on-line. Parents should be aware of what websites their children are accessing and who they are talking to on-line including on games platforms. Please note that the school website has a range of resources for parents and students to help them keep safe on-line. These can be accessed through the e-safety button on the quick links page of the school website. Can I also remind parents that there are age restrictions on a number of social media sites and that these are there to protect children.

Start of term 2024

The school will welcome students Years 7-13 back into class on **Monday 8th January 2024 at 8.25am.**

Parents' Consultation Meetings

Year 11 – Thursday 18th January 2024, 3.30 – 6.00pm

Year 10 – Thursday 25th January 2024, 3.30 – 6.00pm

Year 9 – Thursday 1st February 2024, 3.30 – 6.00pm

Year 8 – Thursday 7th March 2024, 3.30 – 6.00pm

Year 7 - X (Alban, Champion, Clitheroe, Fisher) Thursday 14th March 2024, 3.30 – 6.00pm

Year 7 - Y (Line, More, Sherwin, Ward) Thursday 21st March 2024, 3.30 – 6.00pm

Thank you to parents, your continued support and working with the school, ensures that students have the best opportunity to succeed.

I wish you and your families a Happy Christmas.

Yours sincerely

M Calen
Principal