

20th December 2024



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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. I know that staff are.

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. We have also welcomed a number of visitors who have commented on the hardworking atmosphere in school.

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 2025.

Students have had the opportunity to be involved in a number of visits in fact since we came back to school there have been 49 visits, including a trip to the Curve Theatre to see 'Dear Evan Hansen', a Geography trip to Edale, religious retreats to Castlerigg, Nottingham Cathedral and Mount St Bernards Abbey, and a trip to Barcelona. Students have also been to see Nutcracker at Birmingham Hippodrome, visited Pepsi-Co, De Montfort Hall and Queens College Cambridge.

All Year 7 students performed at the Year 7 Concert, over 150 students performed in the St Cecilia Concert. Students also performed at the Menphys Concert at De Montfort Hall. This week, we celebrated our wonderful Christmas Carol Service with our school community. Every year group also celebrated their own Christmas Carol Service in school this week.

Sixth form students created and led assemblies for Black History Month, we held a very successful McMillian coffee morning raising over £515. Evie W in Sixth Form organised a non-uniform day for Breast Cancer Now and raised £974.58.

It has been my pleasure to meet a number of students from across the year groups to present them with an English Martyrs' Principals pen or certificate for their outstanding work and contribution to the school. In Year 8 students: Rose E, Joyce O, Arrianna D, Alexandra K, Martha V, Gisele K raised £254.07 towards a new netball kit. Year 8 Alexandra K and Year 9 Isabel J for taking part in the Public Speaking Competition, Year 9 Filip M for his Self-Regulated Learning Log, in Year 10 students Maya W, Natalia M and Conall T for promoting the English Martyrs Way value of Respect. Ana I in Year 9 for designing our Christmas Card. Congratulations to Kieran F and Naomi F who have completed their offshore certificate with the Sea Cadet Corps.

Student Voice

We recently conducted a number of student voice panels with Year 8 students in which we heard from nearly 80 students. Our students were overwhelmingly positive about their experience at English Martyrs. Students value their teachers and the wide range of subjects they are able to study. Students also singled out our school library and our annual Culture Day, where we celebrate the diverse heritages of our school community, as things they really appreciate. Students said that they felt happy and safe at school; one summed up the school by saying "it's a nice place and you can make lots of new friends." Students valued the wide range of extra-

curricular activities and clubs which take place every week. One student remarked that we are lucky that these things are all offered for free as "there is no cost to be a part of something at English Martyrs". When asked what they would say about English Martyrs to pupils at their old primary school, one group of students said: "If you want to be part of a good community, you should go to this school. It's a very good school. The school focusses on you as a whole person."

I thought I would highlight our co-curricular programme which we are very proud of, with over 25 clubs taking place each week. Thank you to all the staff that give up their time to run these activities. We have, over Advent, been collecting and raising money for a number of charities including City of Sanctuary, MIND, Rainbows, Let the Children Live and the Trussell Trust.

It was wonderful to see over 600 students from all year groups enjoying Christmas dinner, thank you to all the staff and Sixth Form who served Christmas Dinners. We were lucky to have a visit from Father Christmas which students at Christmas Dinner enjoyed.

Highlights from Departments

Art

We have launched the 'Artist of the Month' in November for our current year 8 students, celebrating the wonderful work they created whilst with us in year 7. December's Animonster characters are now on display in the St Cecilia reception space.

Students in receipt of the award receive a letter of praise home, commending their wonderful work and effort. They also receive a certificate from the Head of Art, awarded by their Head of Year during assembly. It really is a big accolade to be selected for this award, we recognise the efforts and beautiful work of all our students, but to receive this award is a special recognition of commitment to development of their creativity and skills in Art.

Students have designed their own characters, inspired by animals and monsters and the work of artist Jon Burgerman, animators Nick Park and Terry Brain. They have explored plasticine sculpture, applying their knowledge of colour theory, including mixing tertiary colours, tints, shades and tones to design and create their own unique character for animation.

We are very proud of our wonderful students and their efforts and achievements and hope our students enjoy having their work on display for all visitors to school to see.

Chaplaincy

Year 8 and 10 students have planted trees in our tiny forest to develop a Prayer labyrinth. The labyrinth is based on the floor of Chartres Cathedral. This space will serve as a peaceful area for reflection, whilst also enhancing biodiversity by producing a diverse habitat for various species on the school grounds. We are pleased to see over 100 students every week at Voluntary Mass.

Dance

This term Studio 79 College of Performing Arts came in to perform and showcase their incredible talent for Years 9, 10 and 11 BTEC students. A wide array of dance styles; commercial, ballet, contemporary, tap and jazz dance. Such an amazing opportunity for our students to see what further training within the Performing Arts industry looks like. Some of the dancers from the college have secured places in prestigious Dance Colleges in and around the UK.

After Christmas we will start work on our Annual Dance Showcase for June. This will involve dancers from BTEC dance in Years 9, 10 & 11. A trip to the Curve Theatre for all dance students is also taking place in February. So looking forward to an exciting and successful new year ahead for all of our dancers.

Design and Technology

Congratulations to Year 9 students, Maksymilian W and Doreen M who were joint winners of the Leicester and Leicestershire Local Heats for the National Futurechef competition this term.

Max cooked fillet of pork wrapped in bacon, served with duchesse potatoes, butternut squash puree and honey roasted carrots and parsnip finished with a port and redcurrant jus.

Doreen cooked pan-fried French trimmed chicken supreme, potato gnocchi, wilted spinach and courgette ribbons and a spicy red pepper and tomato sauce

They will now progress onto to the regional finals for the East Midlands in January.

English

English Martyrs' Newsletter: Students from ALL years have published two editions of our 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 have enjoyed some success in public speaking. Mrs Bhakta coached students from different year groups for the Trust's Public Speaking Competition. Alexandra Kalu-Nsi from year 8 and Isabel Joseph from year 9 reached the final in November, with Isabel emerging as runner-up in the senior category. Building on their experience from last year, the Year 11 Public Speaking Team progressed to the second round of the English Speaking Union's National Churchill Speaking Competition. This year's standards were exceptionally high at this first round so we were delighted to discover that our three competitors were judged as very strong in their different roles.

Writing Competitions: Mrs Bhakta has promoted various writing competitions this term. We are delighted that 35 students are having their own creative poems published in "The Beautiful Truth- Dreams in Ink" from a competition run by Young Writers. A huge number of students have written essays on the theme of Hope for a competition run by the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, some of which we hope will be selected for the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust event in January.

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. Books have now all been distributed to much excitement!

Drop Everything and Read:

This initiative has been developed by Mrs Sheehan to ensure that every student in Years 7 to 11 is reading a suitable book - from dystopian novels to nineteenth century classics - during Accelerate.

Accelerated Reader takes place each fortnight in Year 7 and Year 8 lessons.

Students need to complete an online quiz about the books they have read and seem to enjoy the scheme. Year 7 students have amassed an impressive total of words read so far: over 26 million! Year 8 are trailing behind with 18 million – even though it is a larger year group. We hope there will be plenty of books on their Christmas lists to encourage them to read more!

High Flyers

Year 9 and 10 students worked alongside their Sixth Form Champions to learn about animal testing and the ethics of it, over a series of tutorials afterschool. Students then prepared a presentation in groups on a scenario which they presented to the Dragon's.

Congratulations to Group 12 in Year 9 and Group 7 in Year 10 for winning their presentations to the Dragon's Den panel. They researched extremely well and delivered compelling arguments for the use of animal testing.

Congratulations to the winners of the essay competition 'Should animal testing be banned?'

In Year 9 - Suzanna P (Gold), Sara J (Silver), Edward M (Bronze)

In Year 10 - Eoin K (Gold), Anneliese (Silver), Zoe P (Bronze).

History

It has been a busy term for our curriculum, our Year 7 students have been learning about the impact of the Norman Conquest on England as well as the challenges facing Medieval monarchs. Year 8 have been learning about the impact of the Industrial Revolution on lives in Britain and across the British Empire. In particular, many year 8 students visited the Black Country Industrial Museum to get a first-hand glimpse into aspects of daily life and the innovations of the period, seeing the first Industrial steam engine, exploring an Industrial mine, and exploring Victorian streets and shops. Year 8 had a visit from Peter Barratt, the great grandson of the

Leicester-based Suffragette Alice Hawkins, who spoke to them about the work of the Suffragettes and their impact.

In GCSE, Year 9 have been learning about how war broke out between England and Spain under Elizabeth I and Year 10 have been learning about the early causes of the Cold War. Year 11 have been learning about migration to England between c.800 to 1700.

At A-Level year 12 have been learning about how the Communist Party, Year 13 have been learning about the Tudors. Students have also begun writing their coursework on why the North won the American Civil War.

Library

Accelerated Reader in Years 7 and 8 have seen students read over 44 million words collectively! All of these will be going towards improving their range of vocabulary and setting them up for success in their GCSE's.

The Book Fair has been a massive success - we will be able to get almost £700 worth of free books, which will be used for library stock, gifting to students and for the upcoming Readathon fundraiser for children's hospitals.

10 Year 7 students have been recruited as Reading Ambassadors for the library to promote whole school reading in their year group.

The Royal Society have selected our Year 7 Reading Ambassadors to form a judging panel for their young Person's Book Award. They will be reading and reviewing the 8 shortlisted books and deciding on their winning choice.

We are always updating the stock to ensure that students have the most up to date titles that they want and need. We have purchased new non-fiction books, new titles for Accelerated Reader, new manga and lots of new fiction, so there is something for every taste.

Christmas has been celebrated in the library with a Narnia theme: We hosted a Christmas Book Swap, with over 50 books to give away and a Festive Photobooth with donations going to the school Christmas charities. Students and staff have enjoyed the library as a social space as well as a study space. We have had two Book Cafe events, Year 8 librarians have hosted a Christmas joke competition, crafting, board games, helping to decorate for Christmas and so much more! The Library is always a busy and welcoming place to be. We are very grateful to Mrs Alessandrelli for the excellent work she does in the library.

Mathematics

The Maths department are very proud of the results that our Sixth formers achieved in the Senior Maths Challenge. This is a national competition entered by hundreds of schools, and we are proud to say that our Sixth Form students managed to achieve 26 bronze and 4 silver certificates.

We are also delighted that the Maths department has been busy this term with students wanting to do extra mathematical activities. Chess club runs two lunchtimes per week due to the high demand and has 20-30 students attend each lunchtime. Maths support on a Friday lunchtime is regularly attended and we have students who attend after school lessons working towards a GCSE in Further Maths.

Music

Our Schola Cantorum has led the Music for collective worship many times across the term, starting with our dedication of studies masses in the first week. Schola also had the pleasure of singing Evensong at Queen's College, Cambridge on Wednesday 30th October, meeting up with two recent English Martyrs' Alumni, Erica L, now reading History at Cambridge and Lizzy R, reading Music and serving as an Organ Scholar at Cambridge.

Other notable performances from the Music Department in the first half term included the Macmillan Coffee Concert and the Year 7 Concert which featured many solo and duet performances from Year 7 students alongside class songs and a whole-year group performance of a specially written extended ABBA Medley accompanied by our wonderful Jazz Band.

Since half term, we have enjoyed the delights of the St Cecilia Concert featuring 150 student performers taking part in all 11 of our performance ensemble groups, Sebastian R's thought-provoking performance of The Last

Post during our 2-minute silence on Remembrance Day and our collaboration with St Paul's choir for the Menphys Concert at De Montfort Hall.

Our Sixth Form Arts Officers and other members of the SSLT also arranged a charity live lounge Christmas event in aid of City of Sanctuary.

Finally, the whole school community has been brought together through our Festival of Reading and Carols in the last week of term where Schola Cantorum, Senior Orchestra, Year 7 Choir, Junior Choir and Senior Choir have led our staff, students and special guests in collective worship for advent. For the evening service, Guitar Ensemble and Steel Pans also helped greet our guests by setting a welcoming atmosphere and performing festive music.

PE

School football - Years 8-11 boys football teams have competed in the local West Leicester leagues, with our Year 8 and 10 Boys teams being crowned West Leicester champions - and will progress to compete in the City Finals for a place in the County Cup. Our Year 10 and 11 Boys football teams have also competed in the ESFA National Cup this season, Year 11 made it to round 2 and Year 10 made it to round 4, with fixtures away in Market Harborough, Coventry and Rugby.

Netball - We have had teams from Year 7-11 compete in the local City netball competitions - with one of our Year 8 teams being crowned City Champions - the first team to achieve this for many years! They will now progress to compete in the County tournament in the new year. Alongside this, the Year 8 netball team organised and delivered a week of fundraising activities - whereby students from Year 8 delivered a year group netball tournament during lunch times as well as selling refreshments to raise a staggering £254.07 to go towards an English Martyrs Netball kit.

We have also had students in Years 7-10 that have participated in inter form activities in PE lessons, covering football, netball and cross country.

Science

The Science Department borrowed some of the Moon for a week in December. Different classes have enjoyed looking at the rare moon rocks and students were surprised at how heavy the iron meteorite was.

Society of Physics and Engineering (SoPE) and KS3 Science club have collaborated this year including some dramatic demonstrations with the Whoosh bottle. SoPE have recently prepared the "Chemistree" to get into the festive spirit!

Year 12 Chemistry students have started preparations for the Chemistry Olympiad. A number of Year 9, 10 and 11 students benefit from our weekly GCSE drop in session, which has helped improved their confidence.

RE

Students in years 7 and 8 have been busy this term utilising their skillset outside of the classroom. Year 7 have been exploring the deeper meaning and significance of the nativity. Students have been asked to design their own 'Presepe' which were on display in our exhibition area. Year 8 have been engaging in investigative journalism as they have been tasked with writing a biography for a former student of our school community. This challenge has been set to stretch our students and further develop their skills of interaction.

Students in year 9 have been engaging in discussion and debate within the classroom on a wide range of ethical issues. They have been reflecting on recent events such as Kim Leadbeater's assisted dying bill and considering whether this would be a positive step forwards for our society or a step in the wrong direction. We were delighted with the way in which our year 10-13 students approached their recent mock exams. Many of our GCSE students have taken advantage of Exam Pro and found this extremely beneficial in the lead up to their assessments. Our A-Level students are continuing to impress with their own initiatives and requests for further reading.

Attendance

As you will remember at the Information Evenings, 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. Congratulations to them!

Praise Points

A grand total of 129,766 have been awarded to students for demonstrating our English Martyrs' Way values (Excellence, Hardworking, Respect, Resilience, Welcoming).

Year 7 = 30088

Year 8 = 35531

Year 9 = 26404

Year 10 = 18514

Year 11 = 13718

Year 12 = 3589

Year 13 = 1922

Seeing these impressive figures shows just how dedicated our students have been this term.

Uniform

Thank you for all your support if you have any queries about uniform, please take a look at our school uniform on the website.

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.

Start of term 2025

The school will welcome students Years 7-13 back into class on **Monday 6th January 2025 at 8.25am.**

Parents' Consultation Meetings

Year 12 – Thursday 23rd January 2025, 3.30 – 6.00pm

Year 10 – Thursday 30th January 2025, 3.30 – 6.00pm

Year 9 – Thursday 6th February 2025, 3.30 – 6.00pm

Year 8 Options Fair Thursday 27th February 2025, 3.30 – 6.00pm

Year 8 - X (Alban, Campion, Clitheroe, Fisher) Thursday 20th March 2025, 3.30 – 6.00pm

Year 8 - Y (Line, More, Sherwin, Ward) Thursday 27th March 2025, 3.30 – 6.00pm

Year 7 – Thursday 3rd April 2025, 3.30 – 6.00pm.

Firstly, thank you to all staff for everything they do, in and out of the classroom, to support and develop our students.

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 Merry Christmas.

Yours sincerely



M Calen
Principal