

April 2025



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Dear Parents/Carers

It seems a long time ago since the start of this term. Students have over the last 13 weeks worked very hard. Year 10, 11, 12 and 13 sat their mock exams, showing a great desire to succeed through their hard work. We have held Parents Meetings for Years 12, 10, 9, 8 and 7. It was a pleasure to see so many parents. Student success is achieved by collaboration between home and school. So thank you for all your ongoing support. One of the testaments of the school is the commitment to ensuring students have opportunities outside of the classroom to enjoy new experiences. In fact since the start of the school year until now there have been over 100 trips that have taken place. I would like to thank staff for going above and beyond in offering these opportunities to students.

To give an idea of some of these experiences, students have had the opportunity to take part in visits to Leicester City Football Club as part of a Maths initiative, Sixth Form Geography students have been to Liverpool, a Music soiree was held allowing students to showcase their solo pieces. Rehearsing for the musical Grease and a visit to Jesus College, Cambridge. Year 10 have taken part in Duke of Edinburgh and a student competing in the national final for Future chef finishing fourth in the UK. Year 7 visited the Mandir Temple and Year 8 attended De Montfort University for a Life Skills Day. Year 7 students went on retreat to the Briars. Students went to the Curve to watch the Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe. Music students competed at the Youth Brass championships. This is only a small sample of the range of trips that have taken place, please see below in the Department section for more examples.

During March we held our wonderful Cultural Day. Students were dressed in clothes representing their heritage. As someone who is of dual heritage, my father being from Mauritius, I find this day to be an amazing celebration of all our heritages. What a wonderful sight to see so many different clothes and flags. At lunchtime students had a range of different cuisine to try while watching students performed a range of traditional dances. Thank you to the Sixth Form team for all their organisation and to staff for their contribution. A wonderful celebration of the school's diversity. On the day we raised £1276.00 for a Migrant Charity. Our Music Department held their Spring Concert with over 200 performers from all our ensembles.

Sixth Form students spoke at the Holocaust Memorial Event with a commendable maturity, students from Year 7 – 9 also received awards for their written work.

Praise Points awarded

A grand total of 67,364 praise points have been awarded, demonstrating how much our students are contributing to the life of the school and upholding the English Martyrs' Way.

Year 7 - 17413
Year 8 - 17336
Year 9 - 14004
Year 10 - 9098
Year 11 - 5903
Sixth Form – 3610

Congratulations to all students for their hard work.

The following awards were given:

224 Bronze awards

261 Bookmarks (for welcoming, hardworking and respect)

220 HOY praise letters

40 Silver awards

Over 500 students received a reward for achieving 100% attendance.

English Martyrs Principal Pens and Certificates

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

Year 7 – Amy D for reading her essay at the Holocaust Memorial Event. Adele TS was sworn into Leicester City Council's Young People's Council.

Year 8 – Eva A for writing a Holocaust essay.

Year 9 – Filip M for writing a Holocaust essay.

Year 10 – Doreen M who took part in the National Final of Future Chef in London. Kihara GH for espousing the English Martyrs' Way.

Year 11 – Adrian K for demonstrating maturity and representing the ethos of the school to others.

Sixth Form – Anouk FM and Karolina Z for their speeches at the Holocaust Memorial event. Paula T and Roque C who were elected to the City Youth Council.

School Highlights from Departments

Dance

Students from years 9, 10 & 11 BTEC Dance attended the Curve Theatre to see the incredible performance of the 'Romeo and Juliet' Hit Musical. The show was a fantastic opportunity to see a mix of dance, singing and acting of Shakespeare's - Romeo and Juliet but with a modern twist. A thoroughly enjoyable evening which inspired everyone.

English

GCSE Workshops

The Department ran two two-hour workshops on Writing and Reading for the English Language papers. Students worked hard in the sessions and now understand where to focus their daily revision for this vital GCSE examination.

English Martyrs' Newsletter

Ms Bhakta has recruited new reporters and editors from years 7, 8, 9 and 12 for the Newsletter. They have brought a fresh new perspective and a focus on cultural themes linked with our recent cultural day, making the Easter edition the largest so far: it's full of amazing articles and really highlights our diverse and unique school community.

Public Speaking

We were delighted to host the Regional Final of the English Speaking Union's National Public Speaking Competition in March. Berlinda, Heidi and Rita represented the values of English Martyrs exceptionally well, speaking with assurance and clarity.

For the Catenians' competition, six Year 12 students delivered excellent speeches to the Sixth Form in February. Darasimi was chosen to represent the school in the Regional Final at the Becket School, Nottingham on Sunday 23rd March, delivering a most engaging speech on the topic: 'To err is human, to forgive divine.'

Writing Competition

All Year 7 students were invited to participate in Leicester City Council's 'Holocaust Writing Competition': they wrote an essay exploring the idea that despite the ongoing conflicts around the world there is hope for a better future for the younger generation. When researching this topic, they had to ensure their facts were true and their sources reliable.

All entries were judged externally. Amy, Filip, Hanna, Eva and Gabrielle were awarded for their work and invited to the annual memorial event at De Montfort University on Monday 27th January to receive prizes. Amy also read her essay aloud to a live audience. This was a real achievement for all those who participated and won.

Reading Initiatives:

- Year 7 Accelerated Reader

Students are competing in form groups to see who can read the largest total of words! For their words to count, students need to complete an online quiz about their books. We are delighted to announce that twelve students are 'Reading Millionaires' - having each read more than one million words since they joined English Martyrs: Piotr, Dien, Joseph, Andrew, Odelia, Gabrielle, Xavier, Natalie, Erin, Emmanuella, Julia and Lena.

- Year 8 Accelerated Reader

Students have continued to build on their passion for reading through the Accelerated Reader programme. 25 Year 8 students have become 'Reading Millionaires' - having read more than one million words since September: Gideon, Faith, Emmanuel, Noah, Aleks, Stella, Klara, Yu Xin, Luke, Rainer, Spencer, Crystal, Stephy Maria, Rose, Sayuli, Frayne, Raisa, Angel, Mildred, Aleksander, Raffi-Sophia, Parv, Emmanuel, Alexandra and Oscar.

Celebrating our 60th Anniversary

All students in Years 7 and 8 have been researching pop songs from the 60s and interviewing relatives in order to create a display of 'vinyl' records for the school's Open Day. They have been very creatively designing 'new' covers for old records and analysing the lyrics to some famous 60s hits.

History

We have tried to explore a range of new revision strategies, such as revision clocks and the Leitner system for cue cards. Our strategy for success, which combines making effective use of knowledge organisers, cue cards and exam practice, remains an essential revision strategy that all students should now be frequently using. There are now a large batch of past exam papers in HUI for any student to be able to pick up to assist in their revision, which we are of course happy to mark and provide feedback. We wish the very best of luck to all of our History students in their upcoming exams in May and June.

Students in the 6th form have been finishing the course on Mao's China and the Soviet Union in year 12 (and are looking forward to the Chinese Communist Party tea party before Easter - they have even promised to come in character!). Our year 13 students have now submitted their coursework on the American Civil War, and are finally approaching the end of their study on Tudor rebellions before completing the course.

Our year 11 students have now nearly finished their course and have begun the challenging task of considering race relations for the Windrush generation upon their arrival after 1948 as part of their depth study on Migrants to Britain. Our year 10 students have been nearing the end of their studies on the Cold War, which remains a sadly persistent issue to this day. In year 9 students have been looking at emerging support for extremist groups in Weimar Germany. Our course remains deeply relevant both about the past as well as pertaining to the present day.

In year 8 students have begun to explore the 'hinge years' between the World Wars, and to consider why attempts to create a world committed to 'Never again' sadly failed. We are delighted to be exploring a brand new GCSE trip to Hampton Court or the Tower of London for students who opt to take History at GCSE.

Finally in year 7 our students have been looking at the deeply important issue of religious change under the Tudors and are looking forward to the Bosworth battlefield trip next term.

Mathematics

We are delighted with the success of our Year 10 and 11 students who were entered for the Intermediate Maths Challenge - over half of the students managed to achieve a certificate including 33 bronze, 25 silver, and 16 gold certificates. Seven students did so well that they were invited to compete in the next round and one student excelled to such an extent that she was selected for invitation to a 2025 National Mathematics Summer School.

In early March, Dr Nyawako took ten year 9 students on a trip to the King Power Stadium where they took part in interactive workshops and gained expert insight into the maths involved in football.

Finally, we are very proud of our year 10 and 11 students who are being entered for multiple GCSE's in Maths (GCSE Statistics and GCSE Further Maths) and two year 13 students who have been given offers to read Maths at various prestigious universities including Warwick, St Andrews, Edinburgh and Manchester, all in the top 20 universities for Mathematics (and some in the top 5).

Music

I have included just some of the amazing activities and opportunities students have been involved in.

Our Music students have been as busy as ever this term. Over the first weekend of February half term, we hosted Leicester MusicFest's annual festival, featuring multiple free workshops for all ages, singing and instrumental competitions and masterclasses and a Gala concert featuring a performance of Bob Chilcott's A Little Jazz Mass conducted by the composer himself. Many of our students volunteered at the festival as well as taking home medals and trophies for their competition performances and taking part in the workshops and Gala concert.

At the end of February, we welcomed Foresters Brass Band to perform a joint concert with us in order to fundraise for our Senior Brass trip to compete in the National Youth Championships on Saturday 29th March. The fundraising was so successful that the trip was offered completely free of charge and the group won a Silver Award. On 13th March, we held our Music Soiree Recital which featured solo performance from all of our A level Music students and some prospective A level students as well as Senior Girls' Choir, Schola Cantorum and Jazz Band.

Schola Cantorum sang Evensong at Jesus College Cambridge on 18th March and thoroughly enjoyed meeting current students at the college for tours of the facilities as well as an organ demonstration and masterclass for our organ students. James C in Year 11 also provided the organ voluntary for the service. Schola Cantorum joined the choir of Leicester Cathedral for Christian Unity Week for a joint Evensong.

Our Spring Concert took place on Thursday 10th April and featured over 200 performers across every single ensemble in our varied co-curricular offer. The concert was a fantastic celebration of all of the Music our students have been making all year. 'Schola Cantorum joined the choir of Leicester Cathedral for Christian Unity Week for a joint Evensong.'

Alongside all of these performances, our Year 11 and Year 13 students have been completing their performance and composition coursework recordings and juggling many other academic and co-curricular commitments. We are now looking ahead to many more performance opportunities after Easter, particularly our production of Grease!

PE

All students in years 7-9 have completed their 'moving for Lent' lessons.

All students in years 7-9 have completed in football, handball, capture the flag and cross country inter form competitions.

Liz Kendall visited a year 9 girls inter form football session as part of the FA participation week.

Sebastian E in Year 12 has planned and delivered a number of sixth form after school badminton sessions, which has been attended by over 40 different students in the past few weeks.

Sporting fixtures

Boys football: Year 8 were City finalists but lost 2-1 to St Paul's School.

Year 10 were crowned City champions again, beating Orchard Mead on penalties after a 2-2 draw. They then played Wigston in the Quarter final of County cup, but were beaten 4-1

Badminton: Boys from years 8 and 11 represented English Martyrs' at the West Leicester competitions at Babington. Year 8 were placed 4th out of 8 schools, whereas year 11 placed 8th out of 8. Congratulations to all our teams!

Religious Education

Students in year 7 and 8 have been continuing their journey through our new RE curriculum. Those who have made good use of our digital support package, 'Kerboodle', have seen a real increase to their grades. Students in year 7 have been exploring the importance of the Eucharist as students in year 8 have been engaging in some philosophy and exploring the problem of suffering for religious believers. The trip to the Mandir was a great success. This provided our year 7 students with an immersive experience of the Hindu faith. We look forward to visiting the local Mosque and Synagogue with our year 8 and 9 students in the term ahead.

Students in year 9 are fast approaching the end of the KS3 course with their vocation unit. The GCSE course will commence after Easter. Students are advised to purchase a revision guide from the Eduqas exam board route B. The department would like to congratulate the winners of the RE logo design competition; Ana I, Nicol R and Victoria H. This logo will be used by the department going forwards and will appear on all student exercise books and assessment folders.

Students in year 10 and year 11 having been busy reflecting on their recent mock exam performances. The vast majority of students made use of the departmental knowledge organisers and our digital resource 'Exam Pro' in the lead up to the exams. Students have been looking over exemplar answers in class and continue to make good progress. We wish year 11 all the best in their up-and-coming exams

Science

Big Bang at School

Students in Years 7, 8, and 9 have been diving into the exciting world of engineering through our Big Bang at School event. This year's theme was all about exploring the innovative and hands-on world of engineering. Each year group kicked things off with an online assembly, where they learned about the incredible career opportunities in engineering.

Then, they rolled up their sleeves and got to work in fun, interactive workshops. From building wind turbines and creating motors to filtering water and even designing a futuristic food, students had a blast bringing engineering concepts to life!

Farmers For Schools

We were delighted to welcome representatives from Farmers for Schools who work with the National Farmers Union to increase knowledge and understanding of farming and agriculture. James and Brian spoke to our Year 9 students about their different career journeys and the importance of agriculture in providing us with our food! The Year 9 students asked lots of excellent questions.

Educake

For the third consecutive year, the Science Department have passed the 1 million question mark on Educake, an achievement reached by only the top 2% of Departments. Well done to students for setting themselves questions, as well as completing the homework questions set by teachers.

Eco Reps

A selection of Eco reps took part in a monitoring session at the tiny forest. Working with a representative from the council. The students pulled weeds, assessed the number of bird and insect species in the area and collected data on carbon capture in the trees growing there.

Biology Olympiad

Year 12 and 13 Biology students took part in the Biology Olympiad which is an advanced problem-solving International competition. Two students got the silver award, 7 students got bronze and 4 were highly commended.

Lent

This half term in Chaplaincy our focus has been on Lent, thinking about prayer, fasting and giving. We started Lent with our Ash Wednesday Liturgies, led by years 8 and 9. Students were given the opportunity to receive ashes and each student was given a prayer card focusing on the Gospel readings during Lent.

Students in years 7, 8, 9 and 10 have had the opportunity to reflect on the Stations of the Cross, either in the Chapel, around the school buildings or through the school gardens. Using Cafod's resources, students were encouraged to think about Jesus' journey 2000 years ago, the people of Masabiti in Kenya, and their own personal reflections. 2 students from year 10 were able to join the Chaplain, Mrs Bajarias and 2 students from St Paul's in attending the Flame Conference in London. Guest speakers included Bear Grylls and David Wells, with lively music, drama, input from Cafod and Adoration with the Bishops of England and Wales.

Students from year 7, 12 and 13 joined Bishop Patrick and the parishioners of St. Patrick's parish for their patronal feast day celebrations, along with Mr Calen and Mr McCaughey.

69 students from year 7 attended a 3-day retreat at our Diocesan Retreat Centre, The Briars.

Year 9 Drama students led our end of term liturgy with a Passion play.

Friday voluntary Mass is averaging at 96 students, with Mass celebrated by priests of our deanery.

6th Form Spiritual Life Officers have been supporting students across the school with form time prayer.

Uniform – a reminder

The following are not permitted:

- Hairstyles which are considered extreme including multi-coloured hair, shaved heads below grade 3, unnatural colours
- Coats/Jackets, must not be worn in lessons and hooded coats must not be worn up inside the school building
- Hoodies are not permitted on the school site
- Make up – Natural looking make up only, no false eyelashes or eyeliner
- Lipstick/gloss and eye mascara are not permitted
- Nails – should not be painted, no acrylics/fake/gel nails are permitted
- Jewellery, only one stud per ear. No tongue or facial piercings (including clear studs). Rings are not permitted. All necklaces or bracelets must be worn under uniform and out of sight

Please note that any student who arrives at school with incorrect uniform will be issued with a break time detention. Students wearing inappropriate make up/piercings will be asked to remove these immediately.

Pre-Loved Uniform Shop

The Pre-Loved Uniform Shop has been open every week at parent events and it's regular monthly opening. If you are having a spring clean over Easter and would like to donate toward the Pre-Loved shop then please donate through our main reception.

60th Anniversary Open Day - Saturday 3rd May 2025

On Saturday 3rd May we will be celebrating the 60th Anniversary of the blessing of the school by Bishop Edward Ellis in May 1965.

We invite you and your families to visit the school on 3rd May, anytime between 10.00am and 1pm. We will be Blessing our 60th Anniversary Prayer Garden, there will also be a range of activities taking place including a photo exhibition through the years, all departments will be open for you to visit, a range of Market Stalls, old style school games, Music, Dance, Drama, a food truck, refreshments and ice creams will be available.

Please could you let any former students, staff and parents know, we would love to see them.

We have put together a memory photo book which includes photos of staff, students and events through the years, from 1965 through to the present day. You can order a copy of our 60th Anniversary memory photo book for £15, by completing the MS Forms link below.

<https://forms.microsoft.com/e/PfQs5N7BtE>

Donations - Raffle Prizes

We will be holding a raffle at our Open Day on Saturday 3rd May and we are looking for donations; bottles of wine/spirits, boxes of chocolates, do you own a business and could offer a prize or donation.

Any donations will be gratefully received at our School Reception.

Communication

The majority of communication is coming to you by email, please can you check you are receiving emails from us. If you need to update any contact details, please email office@englishmaryrs.org

Holy Family Merger Questionnaire

Please see the attached questionnaire from Fr David Cain. Questionnaire's need to be completed by Monday 14th April and submitted by either email to holyfamilyleicester@dioceseofnottingham.uk or by post to Sacred Heart Church Presbytery, 25 Mere Road, Leicester, LE5 3HS.

I would like to thank all of our staff for their hard work over another busy term since the new year. I wish everyone the blessing of the Easter season and look forward to welcoming students at the start of the new term on **Monday 28th April 2024 at 8.25am.**

Yours sincerely



M Calen
Principal

