

Let me take this opportunity to welcome you all to our first Newsletter of the 2018-19 academic year. I sincerely hope that this first half term has been both a productive and enjoyable one, and that your child (or children) has made the most of the wide variety of activities, both academic and enrichment, that we have to offer here at St John's.

As Headteacher, I have been immensely impressed with the calm and purposeful way the vast majority of our students from across all year groups, have approached their schooling this term. In particular, I have been pleased to see that our Year 7s have quickly settled into their routines and are enjoying all of the challenges that our secondary school brings; whilst our Year 12s, many of whom have joined us from other local schools, have also done extremely well to quickly integrate themselves into our culture, whilst fully embracing our strong ethos and sense of family as they begin to undertake their 6<sup>th</sup> form studies.

Over the past two weeks, myself and Mr Walton, our Associate Headteacher, have had the great pleasure in touring the school each morning with current Year 6 students and their parents, as they look to choose a secondary school for September 2019. Mr Walton and I have been extremely heartened to see the high levels of pupil enjoyment and engagement across the entire school and our visitors have all been incredibly impressed with the high quality of provision on view. Staff and pupils alike must be congratulated for the excellent start that they have to this academic year.

Therefore, as we approach this half term period, I really do wish you all the very best for these next two weeks – as well as for the remainder of this year – and I hope that students can use this time to recharge their batteries, enjoy some quality time with their families, and reflect on the progress that they have made so far this year.

Mr Matt Barron *Headteacher*

### **Attendance Matters**

Please let the Attendance Officer know if your child has an appointment during school time. You can do this by contacting the School Office.

Please ensure that you keep your contact details up to date so that we are able to contact you quickly in an emergency. You can update your details through the student page of the school website or by following this link: <http://www.stjohnscs.com/form/?pid=9&form=17>

## Welcome Year 7

It is never easy settling into a new environment or making new friends but the Year 7s are now officially a part of the St. John's community and integrating well. The word 'community' is very important to emphasise to the Year 7s in that, we should always think of others and how the little things can make a considerable difference. One Year 7 pushing on their own will have little effect but the whole Year group pushing together will be a force to be reckoned with. I would like all Year 7 pupils to be mindful of their words and actions, in person as well as on social media. We are endeavouring daily to develop not just academically but also as well-rounded individuals. Now is the time to step up to the challenges ahead and be resilient young adults.

Year 7 students have already gained a considerable number of good comments and I have the pleasure to present our first silver certificates in assembly soon. Congratulations to the below pupils for all of their hard work and commitment to their education. If these students continue receiving this number of good comments throughout the year, records may well be broken. Always remember the first quote I shared with you 'Be humble, be hungry, and always be the hardest worker in the room;' (Dwayne Johnson).

Harry B	65
Ranjot S	64
Thomas L	57
Belle N	51

All forms are evenly matched, more so than in previous years. Congratulations to the current good comment leaders 7DBA with 554 good comments and the highest attending form 7HB with an outstanding 98.6% attendance. It goes without saying that every day counts.

Next term I will be launching an opportunity for Year 7 students to develop skills in Leadership, organisation, Resilience, Initiative and communication. The badges below can be earned if students are able to demonstrate that they are improving and investing time into these key skills. The star badge is a weekly nomination and we have already nominated our first 'Star of the Week' who has shown resilience and kindness from the moment they entered St' John's. Well done to Ranjot, 7ASP who is the first star in Year 7. There is one other badge worth mentioning and that is the red shield of the form captain. We now have 14 form captains and 2 school council representatives. Congratulations to all successful candidates; we shared the names of these students in our recent 'Meet the Tutors' evening, which was held on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> October.



Lastly, I would like to thank all parents/guardians for their continued support. Without this, the students certainly would have found the transition to secondary school far more difficult. I look forward to sharing many more successes with you as the year progresses.

Mr J. Steadman *Head of Year 7*

## Remembrance at St John's

The School diary for Remembrance week recognises the Centenary of the Armistice and the importance of Remembrance.

6/11/18 - The Poppy Appeal will be launched in the Whole School Assembly. The Mayor, Councillor David Hurley, will be in attendance and will judge the Inter-House event after the assembly. Parents and friends are welcome to attend.

7/11/18 - History Society and Mayoral visit to Gravesend Cemetery to commemorate those men of the Borough who have no known grave.

9/11/18 - Denton Parish Memorial Service. 12.30pm. The History Society are organising the event. Parents and Friends are welcome.

11/11/18 - Borough Remembrance. The History Society will be laying out the carpet and poppies from 9pm. The service commences at 11pm. Mr Murphy and two students, Joel Year 13 and Kefa Year 13, will attend the National Service of Commemoration at Westminster Abbey at 6pm on that day.

## Remembrance – BBC

Focusing on Remembrance, why it is done and why it should be done and what happens in the future are difficult questions to answer. On October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 12 students visited the newly created trench system at Elham, near Canterbury. On arrival they were welcomed by Andrew Robertshaw (TV personality and historian) and a BBC film crew along with Robert Hall. The outline of the day followed:

1. A tour of the trench system by Andrew Robertshaw with much focus on student question and answer. The group was continually filmed throughout the 90-minute tour.
2. After a rest and briefing, Robert Hall interviewed eight of the students. Questions focused on Remembrance; why Remember, what will future Remembrance focus on, should there be Remembrance after 2018? What is the point? Will WW1 finally fade from the memory and be an event only in history books and films?

The filmed tour and interviews will feature as part of the Remembrance programmes on the BBC Breakfast programme on November 9<sup>th</sup> and the Remembrance broadcast on November 11<sup>th</sup>.

Mr Murphy *Head of History*



### YEAR 7 RE SUMMER PROJECTS

The RE department would like to thank all of the students in Year 7, who completed RE summer projects and handed these in at the start of the academic year. We received over 80 summer projects. The work was amazing and showed great effort. The best 25 projects were awarded certificates and postcards home.

The students below handed in top quality work and received the following awards.

Lily P	Gold Certificate - Overall Winner
Katie M	Silver Certificate
Thomas L	Bronze Certificate



#### Harvest Family Fast Day Appeal 2018

On Friday 5<sup>th</sup> October 2018 the Catholic Church in the UK marked the CAFOD Family Fast Day. CAFOD's "Brighten up" campaign has been specially designed to enable schools to raise money for CAFOD Family Fast Day Appeal. Last year 300 schools in the UK took part in the "Brighten up" campaign.

To mark this important event at St John's, all Key Stage 3 classes have been completing special display work on the theme of the CAFOD Fast Day in their RE lessons. Students have produced some amazing work. They have also donated money, which will go towards the CAFOD Fast Day Appeal. Alongside this, many students have donated tinned food that will be taken to the House of Mercy Day Centre in Gravesend.

By participating in CAFOD's "Brighten up" campaign this year, our students have proudly helped make a difference demonstrating our school motto of "Inspired by Christ" and "Service to others". These students have also learnt much about CAFOD's vital work. Callum in Year 9 said "I have learnt that we should care about our disadvantaged brothers and sisters in our world."

The first Family Fast Day took place on March 11<sup>th</sup> 1960, when a group of Catholic women came together to raise funds for a mother and baby clinic in Dominica. It was from this very first Family Fast Day and the incredible efforts of these women that CAFOD was born. Today, Family Fast Day is every bit as important to us now, as it was in 1960.

Mr Juma *RE Teacher*

Welcome back from the summer holiday. Below are some topics that you might find interesting. There are also some apps to support pupils with issues they may be dealing with.

The 10<sup>th</sup> October was World Mental Health Day, so we looked at this in our whole school assembly. We are a HEADSTART school and there is a lot of information on their website that will support young people.

<http://www.headstartkent.org.uk/schools-and-practitioners/in-your-district#accordion-5>

## **Grief Support App**

The charity has also created an app aimed at 11 - 25 years olds, available on both iOS and android. The app has information about bereavement, grief, feelings and how to help. There are stories from people affected, including short films written and made by bereaved young people. The app is also useful for friends, teachers, parents and professionals who would like to know how to support bereaved young people.

### **Grief: Support for Young People (Google Play/Android)**

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=bereavementsupport.childbereavementuk.com.griefsupport>

### **Grief: Support for Young People (iOS app)**

<https://itunes.apple.com/gb/app/grief-support-for-young-people/id883195199>

## **Winston's Wish**

Another useful source of support and information around bereavement is Winston's Wish. A useful summary of their support for children experiencing loss is here: [www.winstonswish.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/ww-0112-guideforpar.pdf](http://www.winstonswish.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/ww-0112-guideforpar.pdf)

## **Help autistic children and young people cope with death (National Autistic Society)**

It can be difficult to discuss death and bereavement, or help a child or adult with autism to cope with a death.

Every autistic person, and their level of understanding, is different. The NAS have guidance here:

<https://www.autism.org.uk/about/family-life/bereavement.aspx#>

## **Timpson, Attachment, Trauma and 'Looked After Children'**

Most of you will know Timpson across the UK, for its shoe repairs and key cutting, but you might not know how much they put into support vulnerable people.

This weekend I went in to Timpson's to get a couple of keys cut, and whilst waiting I noticed three little books and a pamphlet:

- Looking after looked after children
- A guide to Attachment and how it can affect people's lives
- How to create a positive future, Despite a difficult start; and
- A guide to attachment awareness in Schools

This set of useful books are a result of a lifetime of Alex and John's fostering work caring for over 90 children and young people. Alex Timpson MBE died in January 2016. In tribute to the huge contribution she made to championing the rights of looked after children, the Timpson family has established a new charity in her honour – the Alex Timpson Trust.

You can nip into Timpson stores and get your copies.

If you require any further information please contact Mrs Kelham *Designated Safeguarding Lead*

### Year 8

Year 8 have had a fantastic start to the new academic year. They have already set the standard for good comments, achieving the highest total in the school so far, 3527. These good comments have been awarded to students for the hard work and dedication that they demonstrate around the school on a daily basis. That said, students are not just performing well in the classroom as there has also been high numbers of students taking advantage of the new extra-curricular timetable and representing St John's in fixtures. Keep up the hard work Year 8!

Important date to remember: Year 8 Parents' Evening - Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2018.

Miss K Munns *Head of Year 8*

### RECOGNITION OF THE HISTORY SOCIETY

The work of the History Society was recognised by the Kent Archaeological Society. The Society was awarded the Ian Coulson Bursary of £1,000 for 2017/2018. The late Ian Coulson was the Kent County Schools' Advisor and his enthusiasm, expertise and work is recognised through the bursary. The History Society won the award for producing schemes of work and lesson plans (to support the creation of biographies of servicemen listed on War Memorials through various sources) that will now be used nationally. The work has been uploaded onto the KAS website.

Mr Andy Harmsworth and Mrs Marion Green handed the cheque over to Mr Murphy and Mr Barron for Society use.

Mr C Murphy *Head of History*



## Literary Legends

### Compare how the theme of love is explored in 'Love's Philosophy' and ONE other poem from 'Love & Relationships'.

In 'Love's Philosophy' the theme of love is treated as just that, a theme. Through the use of his absurd romantic hyperboles, Shelley treats the theme of love as a novelty that can be manipulated (through what he thinks is a show of literary skill) to obtain a personal desire of his own. This desire is evidently physical companionship of a possible partner who was seemingly unconvinced by his previous attempts to win her over. This desperation is comically conveyed through the use of his blatant begging, featured at the end of each stanza when he asks, 'Why not I with thine?'

The seemingly childish application of the theme of love in 'Love's Philosophy' differs greatly from its grim and mature depiction in Browning's poem, 'Porphyria's Lover,' in which the feeble attempts of seducing a possible partner are exchanged for a brooding resentment which overpowers the relationship they share in a murderous fashion. As well as the tone, the poems are seen to bear little similarity in their structures with Browning having built a lengthy dramatic monologue and Shelley writing in the form of a tongue-in-cheek witty seduction poem. The term 'dramatic' is especially apt when discussing 'PL' with its hints to the imminent displays of twisted love which can be seen in the opening when the weather, 'did its worst to vex the lake.' This pathetic fallacy in conjunction with the strong connotations of spitefulness and despair towards the noun, 'lake', draws an interesting parallel to 'LP'. In said poem, imagery of nature and how its components are seemingly paired (not only for the sake of function but for love) is used to suggest that being together especially with him, is a completely abnormal occurrence. In fact, he jokingly states that 'all things by a law divine' are physically conjoined in an intimate relationship, including the mountains and the sky and so on. This 'divine' 'law' is significant due to Shelley's distinctly atheist stance, so by involving what he thinks that God dictates to be natural in terms of love is blasphemous and disingenuous. This belittles the already flimsy authenticity of his statement, making what could have been a clever and convincing remark a crude joke which detracts from his point. When Shelley is trying and failing to establish a seductive argument, Browning dismisses the pleasant aspects of love in order to rest a spotlight on the events that follow a surge of jealousy. 'LP' discusses the efforts made to begin a shallow physical relationship whilst 'PL' evaluates the emotions which surface after a prolonged illicit one.

The noun, 'lake' describes a vast body of water which he uses as symbolising tears, conveying a dreary sense of the depths of the narrator's thoughts. With such a great mass of water being 'vex[ed]', clearly a large amount of genuine attention has been paid to Porphyria, the narrator's lover. The extent of his yearning for her (it is assumed that the narrator is male) is shown in how he does nothing but wait for her to 'glide' in and ignite his evening. Browning presents that magnitude of love that is shared between the two lovers when the silent narrator's heart begins to 'break'. Unlike 'LP' in which only the feelings of the one in this possible relationship is known, Browning (although briefly) describes, with subtlety, the stance of the other partner, this being Porphyria. Her angelic nature, which indicates warmth and comfort seen in how, 'She shut the cold out' shows that she is taking the necessary steps which will arouse her lover's interest in her. When her desires are made clear she acts on them by holding the narrator and enveloping her in a great amount of 'yellow hair' which, as well as symbolising the wealth that she may be in possession of (unlike the narrator who lives in a cottage without her) can also imply the affection she has for the narrator. The extent of this affection overwhelms the narrator to such a level that he believes that in that moment, 'Porphyria

worshipped (him)'. The detail shown in the emotional exchange between the couple greatly excels any of the possibly clever or insightful remarks made in Shelley's poem. The two poems do mention similar aspects of love, one being the physical nature of it, evident when Shelley repeatedly mentions the verbs, 'clasp' and 'kiss'. On the surface, the lack of alternative verbs make Shelley's poem come across as a desperate plea to increase the intimacy between him and the intended recipient. Added to this is the impression that the theme of his poem is a relatively shallow version of 'love' thereby showing how he is trying to manipulate a situation for his own sake. However, it can also be agreed to be a symptom of being entirely consumed by the poem's recipient, which clouds his vocabulary and slightly distorts his intentions.

To conclude, the theme of love is treated and represented in two highly varying ways in 'LP' and 'PL'. Whilst one sees it as a tool that can be manipulated to attain an object of admiration, the other (in a much more dramatic and twisted turn of events) evaluates the risks of an intense passion that is so difficult to please that it makes a former recipient of it (this being Porphyria) into an ironic victim of its sheer force.

Mark I *Year 11*

### Battle of Amiens Centenary

Six students and Mr Murphy took part in an International visit commemorating the Battle of Amiens in early August. The visit was part of an International group organised by the Institute of Education. This included students from Canada, the USA, Australia, New Zealand, Belgium, Germany, France, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Ireland and England. The Battle of Amiens is the start of the final 100 days of World War 1, which culminated in the Armistice of November 11<sup>th</sup>, 1918. Visits included the Somme Battlefield. This showed how the war was fought in 1916 through to the battle of the early Spring and Summer of 1918.

The highlights included a display at the Chateau of Flexicourt, near Amiens (scene of the planning for the Battle of Amiens). Here the Minister of Veteran Affairs, Canada addressed the gathering, the service at Amiens Cathedral and a visit to Compiègne.

Quite thrilling!

Mr Murphy *Head of History*



## Chaplain's Corner

With the start of every school year, comes the hope of a fresh start or a new beginning. We all have a need at some time to draw a line under the past and adopt a positive approach with all that we do. We live in hope that our lives are not being defined by past mistakes. Of course, often this is more easily said than done. How often do we judge others by their past? More importantly, do we allow ourselves that all-important fresh start? Our hearts are often weighed down by past disappointments and failure, which stop us from reaching our potential. This reluctance to let go of the past can have a negative impact on our relationships and own wellbeing.

Good news! We don't have to do this alone. God makes everything new. This simple thought is one of the most profound, and can carry you through any change: God is always on the throne, and He is always making all things new. Ephesians:22-24 dares us to unchain ourselves from the shackles of the past, *You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness*" This is what we do with our new life in Christ. We draw that line under the past and allow ourselves to be renewed with the strength of the Holy Spirit. The possibilities are endless!

Year 7 marked their fresh start with a 'New Beginnings' Mass, celebrated by Fr Innocent. The pupils were encouraged to think about how they could model Christ in their behaviour and relationships with others. The music was led by our talented year 12 and 13 pupils, who provided a modern approach to worship. It was an uplifting experience for all who attended. Year 8 represented St John's at St George's Cathedral for our Diocesan 'Start of Year Mass'. This gave pupils the opportunity to celebrate Mass with other schools from the Diocese of Southwark. All pupils proved to be fantastic ambassadors for the school.



Next term we dive into 'Inter Faith' week. This is a celebration of how all faiths contribute to our school community. Year 8, 12 and 13 are busy planning our advent charity appeal. I am already amazed and humbled by their efforts. Plans for our Carol Service are in 'full swing'. This takes place Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> December 7pm, St John's Catholic Church, Gravesend. All are welcome

I would like to finish with a quote from Desmond Tutu.

"Forgiveness says you are given another chance to make a new beginning."

Be gentle and kind not only with others but yourself. If God forgives our failings then we should allow ourselves to be forgiven. Only then can we live the life God has planned for us.

Let today be the beginning!

Stay Blessed,

Mrs S Gibbons *Assistant Chaplain*