

Welcome to the first newsletter of the new Academic Year. I am delighted to report that our new Year 7 students have been welcomed into the St Damian's community and are settling in well. They are finding their way around and are getting used to the bigger school environment, helped by our older pupils.

**Open Evening** The school held its Open Evening on Monday 28th September 2015 and we were delighted to welcome all those who attended. This year we attracted a record crowd. Visitors were thrilled with everything from 'cooking' comets and making funky fish to making laser cut key-rings and designing and making cup-cakes.

**Primary School Visits** I am currently in the process of visiting our feeder primary schools to meet with parents and pupils. Parents have to face the very difficult decision of choosing a suitable secondary school for their child and the purpose of these meetings is to answer any questions and alleviate any concerns you may have.

### **British Food Fortnight**

The Technology department celebrated British Food Fortnight 19<sup>th</sup> September to 4<sup>th</sup> October by producing a range of food samples made with 100% British ingredients. The pupils thoroughly enjoyed the opportunities that arose during lunchtime including sampling a range of British apples, blackberry jellies, British cheeses, strawberry cheesecake & Victoria sandwich. The Year 10 Food Technology students worked extremely hard distributing the food samples and helped the celebrations go with a swing. Thank Great Britain for Great British Food!



### **Pupil Learning Forum**



In the week commencing 21<sup>st</sup> September the Year 11 students of the Pupil Learning Forum led exceptional Year assemblies on 'Successful ingredients for Learning' at the start of the new academic year with all pupils. They highlighted the importance of the following for a successful year of learning: Excellent Attendance & Punctuality, High Standards of Organisation & Presentation, establishing good Homework routines, responding positively to written Teacher Feedback, asking for Teacher support where needed, asking for help at Home and sharing achievements in learning at home. They spoke to all pupils of the importance of having high personal aspirations for learning.

**Liturgy Group** The Liturgy Group and Mr O'Loughlin were delighted to welcome local MP Angela Raynor to the school. She had heard about not only the wonderful work which was taking place in the school concerning charitable activity, but also about the award which they had recently won. She spoke passionately about the ability to help and influence the world. She awarded individual certificates to each member of the group and answered their questions. A fantastic experience!

**Defib Selfies !** NWAS launched 'SHOCTOBER' to raise awareness of the importance of public defibrillators (AEDs) and to remind those who purchase and install them to make the Service aware of their location so they can be put to good use. At St Damian's we fully support this campaign and have taken a 'defib selfie' of the two AED defibrillators we have located in school; one in the Reception Area and the other in the Sports Hall.

St Damian's defibrillators can be found in:



**School Car Park** Once again could I please remind all parents/carers ***not to use*** the school car park before or after school unless you are collecting a child who is disabled, on crutches etc. This is increasingly becoming an issue and I am now concerned for the safety of **your** children. At peak times traffic is very heavy and everyone is in a rush; parents and students alike. The car park is already extremely busy with school buses and the influx of cars at the beginning and end of the day is only adding to an increasingly dangerous situation. Pedestrians and children on bikes are particularly vulnerable and often difficult to see, please take extra special care. Indeed, I have witnessed parents drive through red lights – these are your children who are being put at risk !

It is also important to make sure that if children come to school on their bikes that the cycles are well maintained, have working lights and that students wear helmets with reflective clothing.

### **STEM - Science, Technology Engineering and Maths**



The STEM Leaders have been chosen to promote STEM within St Damian's. Their job roles include helping at science club every week and open evenings. There are regular meetings with STEM leaders where we discuss ideas about upcoming events.

The first trip for STEM leaders and separate science students is the visit to the Astronomical Society. This will be an evening in Manchester with a trip to the GODLEE Observatory and then a lecture on the Earth Moon System at MMU. We're even making time for a quick trip to Nando's!!!

STEM events like the BBC trip where stem careers are promoted. Four Yr. 9's went on the trip which they found inspiring. The wonderdome will also be coming into school for all of Year 9. This links in with their topic on Space which they will study after half term. Hopefully the STEM leaders will be releasing their own STEM newsletter. Their 1<sup>st</sup> issue will be out after half term.

After half term we will be hosting STEM café where students can have coffee and cake with people from STEM careers and there will also be some scientific films, documentaries and lectures that will be shown during lunchtime.

This is only the beginning ... there will be lots of activities and events that will inspire our students to want to further their understanding of STEM and careers which they can lead to.



**Science Club** - Science club runs every Wednesday and is open to Year 7 and Year 8 pupils. Up to now we have set our hands on fire (and learnt about combustion) and made flubber (the wonderful world of polymers)



**Domino's Pizza Reward for Year 10** Year 10 have had the fantastic reward of a pizza delivered to school for being the Year Group to have raised the most money for Share Day 2015. In total Year 10 managed to raise £1,400 (this was fundraising alone and doesn't include the £3 collected to take part!) and the overall grand total for Share Day was £5,140 !

Year 10 showed that they had outstanding leadership qualities and a fantastic team spirit to rally round and organise their form groups. Year 10 raised this through bake sales, can and ice pop sales, penny trails, 'mocktail' stalls, a staff and pupil talent show, cinema afternoon, penalty shootout and so much more! Mrs Gerschler said "They showed how caring and thoughtful they are as individuals and as a year group. As their Head of Year I am very proud of their achievements and the impact this donation will have on the lives of others"

**Year 7** Parent's are welcome to attend the Year 7 Welcome Mass on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> of October (details to follow). Year 7 will also be given the fantastic opportunity to watch the musical performance of Charles Dickens' 'A Christmas Carol' on 16<sup>th</sup> December; don't forget to return your reply slips.



We are delighted to announce that we have recently been awarded the 'Sainsbury's Schools Sports Mark Bronze Award'. The Sainsbury's School Games Mark is a Government led awards scheme launched in 2012 to reward schools for their commitment to the development of competition across their school and into the community. Schools in England are able to be assessed across bronze, silver and gold levels of the Mark.

#### Girls:

- Yr.10 Netball Team – Tameside Schools League Champions
- Yr.11 Netball Team – Tameside Schools Bronze medallist
- Yr.9 Netball Team – Tameside Schools League Champions
- U16's Girls Football – Tameside Schools League Runners up
- U14's Girls Football - Finals on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> October '15

#### Boys:

- Yr. 7 – 11 Boys Teams are still competing in the Tameside Schools Cup and Catholic Cup.
- Yr9 Boys Football Team made it to the English Schools 2<sup>nd</sup> round

#### KS3 Inter form:

- Yr.7 Inter form dates – the Dodgeball competition was a great success in September. The Netball and Football competitions take place this week.
- Yr.8 Inter form to take place in Half Term 2, details to follow
- Yr.9 Inter form to take place in Jan 2016, details to follow

#### Upcoming Competitions:

1. Tameside Schools Basketball Tournaments (Yr. 11 - 5<sup>th</sup> Nov / Yr. 8 19<sup>th</sup> / Yr9 26<sup>th</sup> Nov 2015)
2. Greater Manchester Catholic Schools Senior Netball tournament ( Oct 19<sup>th</sup> 2015)
3. Tameside Schools Cross Country ( 1<sup>st</sup> Dec 2015)
4. Tameside Schools Swimming Gala (14<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Dec 2015)



Well done to the Year 10 football team that defeated St. Matthews in the 1st round of the Catholic Cup on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> October. The game was eventually won on Penalties. Well done lads for holding your nerve !

**The History Department** are running a trip to Belgium to visit sites associated with the Great War. Fifty students have signed up and will experience places like Vimy Ridge, The Somme, Tyne Cot Cemetery and get into a real trench at Hill 62. There will be an opportunity to reflect on the horror of war when we join the daily ceremony at The Menin Gate. Of course, on a lighter note, no trip to Belgium is complete without visiting one of the many chocolate shops!

**Music - Ten Pieces is an exciting initiative for schools, led by BBC Learning and the BBC Performing Groups, focusing on classical music and creativity.** TEN PIECES SECONDARY begins in October 2015 with free screenings of a brand new cinematic film featuring stunning footage of the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra performing a new selection of orchestral music, representing a wide range of styles and eras relevant to the Key Stage 3/3rd Level music curriculum. On the morning of Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> October, the whole of Yr.7 went on a trip to Cineworld in Ashton to see the launch of the project with a cinema release. This was part of a national moment – giving as many children as possible the same starting point during the same week, to kick off a year of creative activities inspired by the music. Each piece was introduced by celebrity presenters known to the age group, using an engaging mix of live action and animation. It was a fabulous morning for the pupils (and staff) who went, with the cinema

manager commenting on the exemplary conduct of our pupils. On the afternoon of Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> October, 50 pupils from Yrs. 8 and 9 have been invited to attend the Premiere performance of Ashton Sixth Form Colleges' annual production 'We Will Rock You'. In addition to enjoying a performance the visit will provide an opportunity for the pupils to see the students work, skills and talent and gain an insight into the world of performing arts. Following the performance there will also be opportunity for pupils to ask questions.

Instrumental lessons are now up and running for the year with an unprecedented number of pupils learning to play an instrument. With one in every eight of our pupils learning to play or sing it is an exciting time, with the social, educational and scientific benefits of learning an instrument being well documented. If your child would like to learn to play an instrument, they can get a letter from Mrs Dickson at any time.

'Vocalise!' (Lower school choir), 'Total Voice' (Upper school choir) and 'Funk Band' (for all woodwind, brass and string players) are now well established extra-curricular activities with more than 100 pupils being involved throughout the week. All groups are working towards performances in early December at the SVP Party and the Annual Christmas Nativity.

Good Luck to Adam Scaife when he auditions for the National Children's Orchestra in the next couple of weeks. Adam is a pupil at the Royal Northern College of Music Junior School where he attends every Saturday.

**Cooking at Home** School is now actively encouraging pupils to try and cook at home at least once a month; this is because there is a clear link between good nutrition and progress at school. The Technology department is supporting this by placing on the school website a seasonal sweet and savoury recipe per month. Please visit the website, look at this month's choices 'chicken and butternut squash stew' and 'blackberry crumble' and then have a go at home! We'd love to hear your comments and see your photo's!!! ***Tweet your photos to @StDamiansRCSC***



**College Lottery Fund** Our lottery gives support to the college by raising funds which benefit the pupils in all areas of the curriculum. In the past the funds raised (over £10,000) have helped the college successfully apply for Science Specialist Status and have helped purchase equipment for the PE department, a piano for the Music department, various text books for different departments and reference books for the library, plus a range of other items.

**How you can help !** The college lottery is a very valuable source of income. The lottery is drawn every month and you can join for as little as £1 per month. There is a major prize of £100 and two minor prizes of £25 each. Every penny of profit made will be used to directly benefit pupils. Obviously the more members we have, the more profit we make. The more members there are, the more we can put into prize money. Should you wish to join, please download and complete the standing order mandate from our website, copies are also available from school.

**Communication with Parents** To keep up-to-date with events happening in school and other information in an instant you can follow us on:



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Our website <http://www.st-damians.tameside.sch.uk>

Finally, a massive thank you from both my staff and I for your continued support and loyalty to St Damian's. We really do appreciate the overwhelming support from parents to ensure that your child achieves the outstanding education they deserve ! We break up for the October half term on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2015 and return to school on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2015.

