

June 2013

To Parents/Carers of St Stephens Pupils,

I have recently met Mr Marley, Headteacher of St Stephens and I have politely asked that he share the following information with you. This is to ensure that you are up-to-date with recent developments at St Damian's.

Academic Achievement

St Damian's received record results last year, with **70% of our pupils achieving 5A*-C grades** including English and Maths. This was a phenomenal 20% improvement since 2010. This was a tremendous achievement and was recognised by the Minister of State for Education who confirmed that St Damian's was amongst the *'most improved 100 schools in the country'*. Furthermore, we are well above National Averages for **EVERY** major indicator in terms of 'academic' success. My staff and I are determined that this continues year on year! I believe that is what your children deserve!

'High School Challenge' Winners April 2013

St Damian's were invited to attend the fourth 'High School Challenge' competition at Hyde Clarendon Sixth Form. This was a 'quiz' and the questions were based upon a range of specialist areas including English, Maths, Science, General Knowledge and Current Affairs. St Damian's competed against six other local schools and after a series of elimination rounds, one of our 'teams' **WON** the competition. This is a great achievement by any standards and the prize is £350 worth of school vouchers.

Liturgical Achievements

As a proud Catholic School we believe that true education is about *'developing the whole child'*. As a direct consequence we develop pupils' spiritual and moral education. This year we have developed a liturgy team that is led by 9 pupil chaplains who were commissioned by Bishop Terence. They have been responsible for increasing the pupil involvement in the prayer life of the school including liturgies, reconciliation services, masses and assemblies. These are now pupil centred and a prayerful, reflective experience.

Sporting Achievements

We also actively promote and develop children's sporting achievements. We offer a wide range of extracurricular clubs / activities including football, netball, rugby, rounders and athletics. We also enter Tameside and country competitions with our school teams and have had a number of successes this year. These include Tameside Swimming Champions and Tameside Year 7 League and Cup Netball Champions. Indeed at the time of writing St Damian's has just won the ***Tameside Quad Kids Athletics competition!*** We have celebrated a number of individual successes too with some of our exceptional sports performers representing and competing in a variety of sports for the borough, the country, and even Great Britain!

Expressive Arts Achievements

Again, the Expressive Arts Faculty was busy. The year started with a highly successful 'Halloween' themed Open Evening where we showcased the dance and dramatic ability of our pupils. Callum Harrison, a Year 10 pupil, has successfully developed his dance skills in Performing Arts to get him through to the next round of the Sky TV Talent Contest. Our Talent Show showcased the ability of all our year groups in all the Arts disciplines. This was then followed up with a wonderful Senior Citizens Christmas Party and Year 7 performed a dramatic version of the nativity to their peers.

Music Achievements

St Damian's is **one of only two** schools in the North West to have the HALLE Orchestra visit as part of their Educational programme. This is a massive honour and follows on from working in collaboration with The

Bridgewater Hall and The Arts Council of England in the NW 'UJudge Project': again we are **only one of two** schools in the North West to be invited to participate and involved our Year 7 - 9 Gifted & Talented Musicians. St Damian's participation at the National Festival of Music for Youth has resulted in an invitation to perform in Birmingham this summer.

St Damian's Community

As Headteacher I strongly believe that children should be at '*the heart of the learning experience*'. To facilitate this we have an active '**Pupil Learning Forum**' where a group of pupils meet every three weeks and discuss further ways to improve Teaching & Learning. This is then used to inform the '**Learning & Teaching Forum**' where teachers use pupils ideas to ensure high levels of engagement and successful learning in the classroom. These two forums are fundamental to ensuring that St Damian's becomes an outstanding Catholic School.

Quotes from St Stephens Year 7 pupils May 2013

- ✚ St Damian's is fantastic and is a very close Community full of friendly people. **Georgia Eastham**
- ✚ Teachers are very nice and will help you out if you are in trouble. **Sue-Ange Azinwi**
- ✚ I think it's an amazing school, I love being in 7T and I love being at this school. **Jack Connor**
- ✚ I think it's a great school. **Michael Seabright**
- ✚ I have a really good form tutor. **Thomas Dargan**
- ✚ I think that people that are yet to come here will really enjoy it. **Michaela Scoffin**
- ✚ It was nerve-wracking but as the weeks went along I begun to feel comfortable from how supportive the teachers and other pupils were. **Hannah Roche**
- ✚ You will enjoy the classes, they are fun but at the same time challenging. **Samantha O'Connor**
- ✚ St Damian's is very friendly. **Colin Hornsby**
- ✚ I was really nervous but there isn't anything to be nervous about: everyone is nice and welcoming. **Leigh Jennings**
- ✚ I have found St Damian's an exciting experience so far because is a very good school to come to every morning. **Olivia Higham**
- ✚ I thought that it was a good school because I have learnt lots of new things in maths, science, RE, Art Music etc. **Brandon Higham**
- ✚ I think my St Damian's experience has been good because of the extra-curricular activities like sports and choir. **Patricia Swaray-Kella**
- ✚ St Damian's is a really good school. No great. It's a great school. My first impression of St Damian's is that its friendly, caring and the teachers are really supportive. You can make new friends easily, because kind, helpful students attend the school. Enjoy the time you have in St Damian's because it is one of the best secondary schools you will ever go to. **Natasha Jackson**
- ✚ I was worried that I wouldn't remember where my classes were. However, there was always a teacher that would help me and advise me where to go. The teachers were understanding and made the classes fun. St Damian's is a great school, I learn new things every day and that's from the wonderful teachers. St Damian's welcomes anyone and everyone, I would recommend St Damian's to any year 6. **Hannah-Leigh Wightman**
- ✚ St Damian's is not a good school, it's a great school. At first I thought that the school smelt a bit funny. The teachers are very nice and the school has great facilities and is a brilliant school and the best Headteacher in the world. **Mitchell Dootson**

Finally, don't take our word for it, come and see us for yourselves!

Although St Damian's has an official open evening like all schools in Tameside, *individual* tours are available throughout the year. Indeed as Headteacher, I welcome these 'tours' as I am proud to show any prospective parents the running of the school in a typical day! If you would like a tour, then please contact Mrs Biggs, my secretary, on 0161 331 4752 who will be delighted to arrange a convenient time for you to come in. Hope to see you soon.

Yours sincerely

Mr Logue
Headteacher