



In all things faithful

St Damian's RC Science College

Lees Road

Ashton-under-Lyne

OL6 8BH

Tel: 0161 330 5974

Fax: 0161 331 4744

Email: admin@stdamians.co.uk

Web: <http://www.stdamians.co.uk/>

Follow us on Twitter: @StDamiansRCSC

Follow us on Facebook

Headteacher

Mr S Logue BA (Hons), MEd., NPQH, NPQEL

March 2024

Dear Parents & Carers,

Welcome to my latest newsletter. In the world in which we currently live with so many challenges, constant 'bad news' and where the news offers so little optimism, I am extremely delighted that the St Damian's community continues to be a beacon of hope. The plethora of enrichment opportunities provided, see below, is a tangible example of this. The opportunities are extensive and designed to ensure that your children receive a world class education.

The Catholic Life of the School

- *Section 48 inspection:* In preparation for this, we invited Mr McCarron, our school improvement partner, to 'inspect' our provision under the 3 areas of Catholic Life & Mission, RE as a discreet subject and Collective worship. He conducted learning walks, watched assemblies, visited form time liturgies and met our wonderful GIFT team. He was extremely impressed with the way our students could articulate themselves and express with confidence what it means to live out the 'St Damian's Way'. He also met various staff including Heads of Year, Mrs Walker our SENDCo, and Mrs Taylor, who leads on our PSHE provision. This 'deep dive' was well received by the RE staff and the recommendations from the report are already being acted upon. We are ready for the inspection team and warmly welcome when we get 'the call'.
- *Grill the Priest:* A tradition at St Damian's during Lent is 'Grill the Priest'. Fr Jude kindly agreed to speak to our students and answer their questions about being a priest, life growing up in Nigeria and questions about the Catholic faith. Students were extremely respectful but did not hold back with the questions that they asked! Fr Jude explained details of the faith that could enlighten the students and staff!
- *Reconciliation:* Fr Jude has been, regularly, over the past few weeks giving students the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. This has been overwhelmingly popular, even with 8 hours of confessions, we will need to book Father Jude for more time. Students want to feel part of the Church and its great we are working with Fr Jude and the local parish to provide opportunities for spiritual development.
- *Weekly Lent Mass:* These have been added as part of our Lent observance. Each Tuesday in the school Chapel led by Fr Jude and supported by Sister Roseline giving our students a chance to develop their spirituality and have time with God, receiving the Sacrament of the Eucharist. Students have voiced how much they have enjoyed the Mass with their class and many more students asking when their turn will be. The RE team are delighted with the positive response we have had to this new addition.
- *The Way of the Cross:* The Yr7 and Yr8 GIFT team have been working very hard on The Stations of the Cross drama and reflection called 'The Way of the Cross'. During the last week of term Yrs7-9 will experience this powerful prayer activity, moving from station to station to hear about the suffering of Jesus on his way to the cross. Each reading gives students an opportunity to reflect on their own journey with God.

St. Damian's RC Science College

THE CATHOLIC COLLEGE OF ASHTON

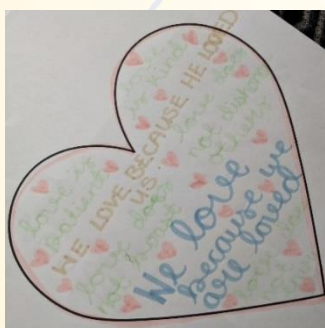


- **Lent Walk:** Staff and students have been clocking up many steps for our BIG LENT WALK for CAFOD. We are looking to raise as much as we can to help people living in poverty around the world. Students have been provided with a tracking sheet to record daily steps and a sponsorship form if you can ask family and friends for a small donation. Staff kindly donated Easter Eggs for our Easter Raffle and there will be a tuck shop at break on Wednesday 27th March 2024. Let's top the CAFOD School Leaderboard and powerwalk for poverty! We thank you in advance for your generous support with our charity fundraising!



- **Live Simply Award:** At the beginning of the year we signed up for the CAFOD Live Simply Award. This award is about showing how we follow the Catholic Social Teachings by living simply, sustainably and in solidarity. We made a plan of actions we will do as a school to show how we do those things. So far, we have had an Interfaith Day, invited our community into school for 'fish and chips' and created a memorial garden. We are currently taking part in the CAFOD campaign The Big Lent Walk. We are aspiring to achieve this award by the end of the school year 2025, but we are on track to complete it much sooner! Keep an eye out for our next lot of actions, including collections for our local food bank and planting flowers for the bees.

- **Charity Work.** The staff at St Damian's showed off their generosity through their collective donation of Creme Eggs for the Willow Wood Bunny Hop Appeal. Supporting the local community and the more vulnerable is a strong tradition at St Damian's. Additionally, staff have generously donated Easter Eggs for our CAFOD Lent Raffle, further demonstrating their commitment to charitable causes, and making a positive impact both locally and globally. Thanks to Mrs Jinks for organising and to all who donated!



- **Faith in Action Workshops:** 15 Students have devoted much of their time over the past 5 weeks completing their Bronze Faith in Action Award. They have discussed many reflection points including: 'We Love because we are Loved', 'Loving our Neighbour is Loving Jesus' or 'Servant Leadership: A Life Lived, Not An Example Given.' They read and analysed scripture before considering how they could encourage others to do the same. Students not only dedicated time in school for this but participated in activities linked to their local parish. The workshop concluded in our beautiful Chapel where they had time for reverent reflection about what was learnt over the course. The students produced artistic depictions to showcase their ideas and created a 'Reflection Booklet' in which they can display their reflections. They should be very proud of their contributions to their Faith in Action Award!



Can I take this opportunity to formally thank Fr Jude for his time over the past few weeks. I know that the RE department appreciated his time. Furthermore, Mrs Gerschler and the members of the RE department really do epitomise catholic faith in action and are at the forefront of ensuring St Damian's is a great Catholic school in more than name.

Staff Profiles



As I have said in previous correspondence, we are expecting a Catholic inspection this academic year. Because of this I have decided to 'profile' the excellent RE department at St Damian's. I hope that you enjoy reading these. In my time here as Headteacher [10+ years], this is undoubtedly the best RE department there has been.

- *Mrs Gerschler, Head of RE Department.* I have worked at St Damian's for the past 13 years but as the saying goes 'time flies when you're having fun'. I started as Second in RE, having previously worked at St Monica's as my first teaching post. I completed my A-Levels at Loreto Grammar School in Altrincham before studying Religions and Theology at Manchester University. This wasn't my first choice [Durham University was] but my mum became unwell and to be near her I took the Manchester offer. It all worked out for the best in the end, and I loved the degree. I decided early on that I had a vocation to teach, so I applied for a PGCE at Manchester Metropolitan University. Once on the course I knew this was what I was meant to do. I love the pace of the days, the funny and engaging young people I get to work with and the GREAT school. I work with amazing staff each day. St Damian's is a truly remarkable place to work, and I am very privileged to work here.
- *Mrs Allmand, Lead Teacher of RE.* I attended Our Lady's High school, Oldham and achieved my GCSE's and A-Levels there. I then attended Liverpool Hope University to study a BA in Theology and Theatre studies before completing a PGCE in Religious Education. Throughout my studies I had a variety of different jobs to pay for university fees including a factory job, waitressing, a children's activity coordinator for Key Camp holidays in France and a summer activity teacher for Oldham Bangladesh society. My favourite summer job was teaching in India to Tibetan refugee children in the foothills of the Himalayan mountains. I have been an RE teacher in Catholic schools for 22 years and I love my job. Each day is different which keeps me on my toes and challenges my academic and creative talents.
- *Miss Bury, RE teacher and Assistant SENDCo.* I started St Damian's in 2021 after completing my PGCE. I was on placement here and I was lucky enough to be offered a job. My RE teacher at high school always told me he knew I would be an RE teacher. Well here I am and I love my job! It is my vocation. I have a passion for RE and really enjoy teaching the students here. My other passion is Special Educational Needs and I have recently been appointed the role of Assistant SENDCo. I'm really excited to support our students in both RE and in my new role.
- *Ms Yates, RE teacher:* I joined St Damian's in 2022 after completing a degree in International Relations and then an RE PGCE at Manchester Metropolitan University. I have always had an interest in the role that religion has in our everyday lives and how it shapes us as individuals. I feel very lucky to work in such a caring, supportive community and love teaching RE at St Damian's!

Safeguarding Update

During March our great safeguarding Team have been researching and upskilling their knowledge of Child Sexual Abuse. Although this is a horrifying topic, it is pertinent that staff [and parents] are aware of this type of abuse so we can support the young people in our care who may fall victim to it. Our approach is 'it could happen here'. The legal age for a child to consent to sexual activity is 16 but the law is very specific about 3 age groups that everyone should know.

- ✓ **Under 13:** Children under the age of 13 are not deemed, under any circumstances, to have the legal capacity to consent to any form of sexual activity.
- ✓ **Between 13 & 16.** The law is clear that it is still an offence.

- ✓ **Where a child is 16 or 17.** It is an offence for an adult to have a sexual relationship with them if the adult is in a 'position of trust', for example, is regularly involved in caring for, teaching, training, supervising or being in sole charge of the child in establishments such as education and care settings.

As always, if you ever have any concerns regarding a child please do not hesitate to contact Mrs Brophy, our Designated Safeguarding Lead. I would ask parents to adopt the mantra of 'it could happen to my child'.

Reminders of our Rules

Our simple rules/procedures are transparent, fair and enforced. Let me reiterate three of these below.

- *Mobile Phones* are not allowed in school at any time. If seen, they will be confiscated and will have to be collected by a parent/adult. If your child doesn't want their phone confiscated, then simply don't take it out. There are no exceptions to this rule.
- *After School Detentions* are there for when a child doesn't follow our reasonable rules. They are not optional. Again, if your child doesn't want an after school, then the solution is to follow our simple, fair and transparent rules.
- At St Damian's we are a thriving caring Catholic community because our core value, *respect*, permeates the whole school. I ask [and expect] that parents are respectful at all times too. This does not mean that we have to agree, but we do so with respect and dignity. Sadly, a very small number of parents believe that they can be 'rude' to the great staff here. They need to reflect upon their behaviours. At this point, can I say that 99.5%+ of parents are highly supportive of what the staff here are achieving. I don't take this for granted. Can I also add that, without exception, the great staff here do a tremendous job under extreme pressures and don't deserve any form of rudeness.

I would like to thank the vast majority of students and parents who follow our rules, including the 3 above. A small number of pupils and parents believe that these rules don't apply to them. They do! Sadly, students that have repeatedly not conformed to our rules are no longer part of our school community. **For the avoidance of doubt, if your child repeatedly doesn't follow our rules, they put their place at St Damian's at serious risk.**

May I also take this opportunity to ask parents not to park where there are cones, on the yellow lines [for emergency vehicles only], in the bus lane or block these areas. It is a very busy and small place, and the actions of some parents are selfish and could lead to a serious accident. I ask again, respectfully, that you follow these simple instructions which is for the safety of *YOUR* children.

Yr11 Update

The vast majority of Yr11s are working hard in school and many are working hard at home. However, several students are not working in class or at home and are likely to regret this in August on results day. Parents of students who this applies to were informed of this at the recent Parents' Evening. Having said that, all students need to look forward and work hard. The mantra is **'don't count the days BUT make the days count'**.

Well done to the students who either achieved their targets or surpassed them in the recent results in both Btec Sport and Construction. These results will go towards their final outcomes.

As has been repeatedly said in my correspondence, the Prom is by invitation only. There are a number of students whose invitations have been withdrawn. There are more students who have received letters from the attendance team regarding low/irregular attendance and/or poor punctuality. As it states in this correspondence, if your child has not improved then they will also have their invitation withdrawn.

Below is the timetable for Easter intervention. Your child will be told which days/subjects to attend, and I ask that you please support their attendance. This is another strategy to ensure that your child achieves their potential and a zero-tolerance on behaviour and attitudes will be adopted by teachers to ensure it is effective.

Date	Time	Teacher	Subject
Tues 2nd April	9:30am – 3:00pm 9:30am – 12:00pm 9:30am – 12:00pm	ABM MJE & AHN NRN	AM - 11Y3 Comb Sci & PM* - 11X1 Comb Sci 11X3 & 11Y1 Combined Science AM -11X1 Bio & PM* 11x2 Comb Sci
Wed 3 rd April	9:30am – 12:30pm 9:30am – 12:30pm	ABM RTU, SBH, SHN& HJL	11X1 Chemistry English
Thurs 4 th April	9:30am – 12:30pm 12:30pm – 3:00pm	EML SSH	Maths Spanish
Frid 5 th April	10:0am – 3:00pm	SSH	Spanish
Mon 8 th April	9:30am – 12:30pm	DWN, SKY, EML, MJS & BWN	Maths
Tues 9 th April	9:00am – 2:00pm	JLS & SSN	French & 11A2 Spanish
Wed 10 th April	10:00am – 2:00pm	MGR	RE
Thurs 11 th April	9:00am – 12:30pm 9:00am – 12:30pm	SFE CSY	11A1 Spanish Geography
Frid 12 th April	9:00am – 2:pm	LGY	History

PM* = 12:30pm – 3:00pm

Saturday 11th May- 9.30-12.30- There will be History revision

Saturday 1st June – 9.30-12.30 - There will be Maths revision

Saturday 8th June – 9.30-12.30 - There will be Maths revision

The above timetable is comprehensive and ensures that students are given every opportunity to succeed in their exams. There will be a zero tolerance from teachers during the revision sessions and students know our expectations which are that they are there to learn. As the main doors are locked, students need to ensure that they are on time in order to enter the building ready to start the revision session.

Note. Students and parents need to know that if they fail to ‘sit’ an exam, they will get a ZERO for that part of the exam. This will have a massive detrimental impact on their overall grade. Last year, several students believed, wrongly, that they could re-sit at another time.

Yr10 Update

Yr10 are working extremely well overall, and it is hard to believe they are already a third of the way through their GCSEs. The majority of students consistently demonstrate a highly positive attitude to learning and independent study, supporting them in reaching their full potential. However, it is essential that **all** students establish a regular routine at home and complete independent study using the resources available to them on TEAMS or revision guides, as advised by their subject teachers. Yr10 exam week starts on 29th April and finishes on the 10th May and students should be revising for these exams. They are currently applying for prefects which was launched by Ms Joyce on 12th March. All students are encouraged to apply and embrace this opportunity to boost their confidence and leadership skills. It will undoubtedly be a tough decision to decide who will be the next Head Boy and Head Girl. Remember that being a prefect is a privilege at St Damian's.

Yr9 Options Update

A massive thank you to the many parents who attended our recent Options Evening. The turnout was fantastic indicating a great partnership between school and parents. Mrs Kelly delivered a very informative presentation and I hope you found our market stalls useful. We are now reviewing the courses and selections and looking at the timetable for next year. We always do our utmost to ensure that a pupil gets their preferential choices, but this is subject to the take up of a course and the constraints of the timetable. We will be in touch soon to confirm allocated subjects. The website has been updated to include the Options videos, presentation and booklet <https://www.stdamians.co.uk/year-9-options>

Yr7 Parents' Evening

Yr7 parents' evening was the last of the year. Yet again, it was a lovely evening and comments from parents reflect the confidence that they have in the school. Out of 109 returns, 108 would recommend the school and 1 would not. However, **all** responses by this 1 parent either 'agreed' with or 'strongly agreed' with the question. Therefore, this may have been a mistake. Sadly, there was no name on the questionnaire so I couldn't verify. I have included some comments below for your perusal. As always, all comments are on the website.

"Our son has changed a lot since his primary, his self-esteem has improved and he is just so happy to go to school. He loves his school life and he is very determined to do his best, thank you so much"

"The school has been amazing and very supportive from the very beginning"

"Our daughter loves school and enjoys all subjects. Thanks for all your support in helping our little girl settle in 😊"

"This is a brilliant school. Thank you to all staff, the teachers are incredible here"

Thanks again to the parents who took the time to complete the questionnaires.

*NB. In some parental returns, a small number 'tick' that they don't know what their child is learning. Can I refer you to the curriculum pages on our website which shows **clear & comprehensive overviews** of what your child is learning in each subject and when they are learning it.*

Personal Development

Developing the 'whole' child, building their character and providing a *genuine* holistic education is a key strategic aim of St Damian's. I am always proud to share the multitude of opportunities with parents in my monthly newsletter. I hope you agree that this is varied, extensive and allows your child to thrive at St Damian's!

- **Too GREAT for hate.** St Damian's stands together with Greater Manchester against hate crime. On Thursday 29th February the HIVE theatre company attended school to perform their ground-breaking anti-bullying and hate crime play. Allowing students to experience these plays is part of our commitment to anti-bullying. It is designed to empower the LGBTQ+ community and celebrate diversity. Yr8 were impeccable throughout the



performance and asked probing questions. Two students approached the actors at the end to say how much they had learnt and how it had raised their own awareness of homophobia, bullying and discrimination. The HIVE actors commented that *'We can tell St Damian's is actively challenging homophobia and promoting diversity, we LOVE coming to this school!'*. The performance was in conjunction with Greater Manchester's Hate Crime Awareness week and LGBTQ+ History Month.



- **Media Cubs.** A group of Yr9 students have been given the opportunity to work with 'Media Cub's, which is a pop-up TV studio and newsroom. Students are being educated on all things media from photography to filming, script writing to presenting and using studio equipment. The intervention is in association with the Greater Manchester Violence Reduction Unit, as part of the 'I Am Greater' campaign. This campaign is for young people to learn about ways to improve their community by being kind and gaining new skills.
- **World Book Day, Thursday 7th March.** World Book Day at St Damian's was a resounding success! Students participated in a World Book Day Quiz during Form Time with prizes for the winners. All students were given a





'World Book Day' token to either receive a book for free or to put towards a book of their choice. Our Book Tasting Event held at The Elizabeth Jones MBE Literacy

Hub during lunchtime was bursting at the seams! Students explored a plethora of genres accompanied with some juice, biscuits and recommendations from a range of staff and peers who were on hand to support. Students described their reading diet and expressed

their opinions on what text they had 'tasted' before sharing and discussing this across the table. It was wonderful to hear discussions about reading different genres between students and staff alike. Students were excited about what they had read. They extended their enthusiasm by collecting a 'St Damian's Reading Route Map' on their way out of the hub to explore different ways of reading across the curriculum. This route map challenged students to hunt for questions in all subjects across the school. Once located, they answered a 'reading' question whether that be an image, map, diagram, text or situation. Congratulations to our winners and many thanks to our fantastic students who really got involved and put lots of effort into these events to celebrate World Book Day 2024.

- Prefects.** Ms Joyce launched the Prefect applications on Tuesday 12th March. Applying for a prefect tie demonstrates aspiration, confidence and a willingness to serve. Head Boy and Head Girl applications must be given directly to Mrs Biggs. Other applications, deputy Head Boy and Head Girl, Blue tie and Black Tie prefects are to be 'posted' through the Post Box in the Science hub by Wednesday 26th March. We strongly encourage all Yr10 students to apply to become a Prefect. If they are unsuccessful on this occasion, there are 2 further opportunities in Yr11. Interviews for Head Boy/Head Girl will take place w/c 29th April. Successful candidates will be announced in a Yr10 assembly. May I take this opportunity to thank the current Head Boy and Head Girl for being fantastic role models for our community.



- Extra-Curricular Music.** The music department is experiencing a vibrant period of growth and enthusiasm. With bustling lunchtime and after-school schedules, students eagerly participate in a variety of engaging extra-curricular music activities. This demand has led to the introduction of passes, highlighting the incredible popularity and success of the program. The interest is a testament to the dedication and passion of our students, supported by Mr McArdle, who continues to nurture and inspire the musical talents within our school community. St. Damian's takes pride in fostering a thriving musical environment, fostering creativity, and providing valuable opportunities for students to explore and excel in the world of music.



- UK Mathematics Trust - Intermediate Mathematical Challenge.** 137 students from Yrs 9, 10 and 11 took part in this challenge. This involved a 1 hour assessment where students answered 25 questions requiring high level analytical skills. The challenge is taken by high ability pupils from across the UK and British schools overseas. Nationally, only 8%,



16% and 25% of entrants achieve Gold, Silver and Bronze Awards, respectively. We are incredibly proud of all students who took part, and I am delighted that 53 students achieved awards: 1 Gold, 17 Silver and 35 Bronze. The number of bronze and silver has nearly doubled from last year! A special mention goes to Dawid

Drazek in Yr9 who qualified for the 'Kangaroo' follow on round. Dawid is the first St Damians student since we began participating in the challenge to qualify for this. Well done Dawid, a massive achievement. Bring on the Junior Mathematical Challenge in April! I include a picture of some of the students involved and a picture of Dawid Drazek and Serena Akinyele who scored the top mark in the school. Can I formally thank Mr Willerton for giving our gifted mathematicians this opportunity.



- **Student Council.** This continues to flourish. Students are developing their interpersonal skills, learning how to work as part of a team and learning their learning through researching key themes. They planned and delivered a presentation to Parents on Open Evening, have supported at Parents' Evenings and produced three Cultural Capital Newsletters since September. Please go to our website <https://www.stdamians.co.uk/student-council-newsletters> to test your general knowledge 😊

- **Career's Week.** It has been a real busy term for Careers with the annual Career's Week taking place from the 4th - 8th March. This was a fantastic opportunity for students to discover what different careers are available to them in their favourite subjects, learn which jobs are most sought after in the Greater Manchester region and listen to talks from Colleges and businesses. Furthermore, a previous Head Girl, who has been successful in various fields such as the Army and Biotechnology led discussions to select students. Our Yr10 cohort attended the National Apprenticeship and Education event at the Etihad Stadium on the 19th March where they met the top UK employers, universities and training providers. Watch this space for the termly Career's newsletter 'Career Compass' which will be sent out by Mr Healey before the Easter break. Mr Healey, who led and organised these activities, was really pleased with how all students and staff embraced Careers Week.

- **Art Trip.** A recent Yr10 GCSE Drama to the Royal Exchange Theatre was an excellent experience for our students. The students were in awe at some of the costumes, architecture and stories that our guide shared with us. They have also produced some lovely drawings for their coursework and have been inspired for their next project. While I was there, I discussed opportunities for St Damian's students to get involved with the theatre. They also mentioned the possibility of getting free tickets for students to see live theatre shows which will only help to increase their cultural capital.



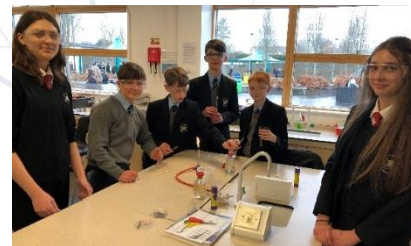
- **Young Carers.** As a school we are very proud of our young carers. These young people care and support others in the family home and this takes effort, time and dedication. I salute their resilience and compassion. We offer support to our young carers by allowing them flexibility with homework deadlines, they have time-out passes if needed and Mrs Harrison is always available for a chat. To celebrate Young Carers Action Day on Wednesday 13 March 2024 we arranged a reward trip to the Hyper bowl in Denton allowing our Young Carers to have a VIP experience away

from the stresses of everyday life. If you need more information about Young Carers contact Mrs Harrison, our Young Carers Lead at school.

- **Neurodiversity:** We recently celebrated Neurodiversity week in school. HOY delivered assemblies to their year groups, there were posters around school of celebrities who are neurodiverse to raise awareness, the library has a section dedicated to neurodiversity and Miss Bury held drop-in sessions at lunch time for students to complete artwork for a display, ask questions and talk to each other. We always support and celebrate our SEND students and are an inclusive community.
- **Trip to Barcelona.** I would like to wish all the pupils going on the Barcelona trip a 'happy holiday!'. This is the first trip abroad since the pandemic and hopefully it will be the first of many. A huge thank you to Ms Joyce, Mrs Hayworth, Mr Healey and Mrs Brophy who are giving up their Easter holiday to supervise this experience for our young people. I am looking forward to sharing photographs and stories with you in next month's letter, watch this space ...



• **British Science Week.** Our fantastic Year 10 STEM leaders have been inspiring younger pupils during British Science Week 2024. Given the theme of 'Time' they rose to the challenge of planning and promoting activities. Marco James and Eryk Zadlo invented the 'Human vs Stop Clock' Competition, where competitors estimated 30 seconds vs the stop clock. Over 60 students took part but the overall winner was Yr8 Cillian Ogden, with an impressive time of 29.9 seconds.



Mrs Baynham's laboratory was packed at lunchtime with students having the opportunity to perform the 'squeaky pop test' where hydrogen gas was ignited with it's signature pop. Demonstrations of flame throwers wowed the crowd, where the effect of increasing surface area of a fuel on the time taken for it to combust was investigated. The week finished with incredible talks given by STEM Leaders Luka on Aerospace Engineering, Summer on Cosmetics and Marcel on Fragrances. As part of the #smashing stereotypes theme from British Science Week 2024, the STEM leaders also investigated the careers of scientists from a diverse range of backgrounds. Using their research as inspiration, they constructed their own STEM Careers display in the Science Hub where they each explained their own STEM careers interests. Mrs Robinson, who organised and co-ordinated the week was very impressed with her STEM leaders.



- **Yr10 Drama Trip.** This was an unforgettable day for our Yr10 GCSE Drama students! They had the incredible opportunity to visit the historic Palace Theatre in Manchester to watch a breathtaking performance of Shakespeare's 'Macbeth'. Miss Brookes said that she couldn't be prouder of the students' maturity and impeccable behaviour throughout the entire experience. From the moment they stepped into the theatre, the students were engaged, attentive, and respectful, showcasing a level of maturity beyond their years.

We are now on You Tube!

St Damian's has gone all 'techno' and we have recently produced a few videos that encapsulate what we are all about. To access please follow this link [St Damian's RC Science College – YouTube Channel](#). Some of the videos include;

- Yr7 students visiting the local BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir temple during St Damian's Day.
- A short student video showcasing some of our community engagement initiatives.

- A video which was part of the entry to a secondary school of the year competition, which we won.

I hope you enjoy watching them as they show happy students and happy staff, which is at the heart of making St Damian's a special place!

Celebrating the Generosity of our Caring Community Over the past few months Emily Nadin in Yr7 has been raising money for roof repairs for *Our Lady's* RC Church in Moorside. She has raised an incredible £240 through collections, donation pot at the back of church and selling unwanted Christmas gifts. Furthermore, Emily is now partaking in more fundraising, this time to raise money for MND. As a school, we will equal Emily's donations to both the Church roof and MND. Well done Emily for your selfless acts of kindness and thinking about others. Here is a picture of Emily and I at the Yr7 retreat to Castlerigg in January.



Mr Willerton raising money for Cancer Research UK

And during the February half term Mr Willerton, along with some close friends, embarked on the journey of a lifetime hiking to the summit of Mt Kilimanjaro to raise money for Cancer Research UK. The six-day trek involved hiking through rainforests, alpine desert, ice and snow to the summit of Africa highest peak, the tallest free-standing mountain in the world. With freezing temperatures and only 49% of the oxygen available at sea level, they successfully reached the summit at 6 am on the 15th February, just in time for sunrise and amazing views of Tanzania. This was a very emotional moment for Mr Willerton whose father passed away 10 years ago. I know he is incredibly proud to have raised an incredible £5449 for Cancer Research UK in his memory. Well done Mr Willerton!

Celebrating International Woman's Day at St Damian's

On 8th March, we were proud to celebrate the remarkable contributions of women in our own community and those everywhere who have created positive change and shaped a more inclusive and equitable world for future generations. It was a powerful reminder of the strength, resilience, and achievements of women in our own lives; those who have made an immense contribution and had a powerful impact shaping the people we are today. At St Damian's, the vast majority of staff are women and they have been, and continue to be, instrumental in ensuring it is an outstanding school. I would like to formally thank them for their massive support over the years.



Finally...

A few dates for your perusal.

Firstly, there are Yr7 and Yr8 exams straight after the Easter break. Students should be planning ahead in order to prepare for these exams. Secondly, our annual celebration evening will be taking place on **Wednesday 25th June**. This is my favourite night of the year where we formally celebrate both the individual successes of our children and the overall successes of St Damian's as a strong, united and caring Catholic community. The theme this year is '*Advance, Achieve, Accomplish*'. Watch this space for further details! I hope that you have a peaceful and holy Easter break and as always, thanks for your continued support.

Mr S Logue
Headteacher