

THE ST DAMIAN'S TIMES



MERRY CHRISTMAS

Would you recognise your teachers if they were babies? See page 11.

It's Christmas! What is St Damian's doing for Advent? Read on to find out..

Check out our new dyslexia friendly font!

Look out for Miss Jameel's notes.

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A MESSAGE FROM THE JOURNALISM CLUB

“Advent is the time we are given to welcome the lord who comes to encounter us, and also to verify our longing for God, to look forward and prepare ourselves for Christs return”-Pope Francis

The word ‘advent’ means ‘coming’. It is a time in preparation for the celebration of the birth of Jesus. Many customs involve counting the days until Christmas begins, such as a use of a chocolate advent calendar.

Some churches have an advent wreath with five candles, one for each of the four Sundays leading up to Christmas day and one for Christmas Day self, the candles all have different symbolic meanings the first one represents God’s people and is considered as the **Candle of Hope**, the second one represents The Old Testament Prophets and is considered as the **Candle of Peace**, the third one represents John the Baptist and is considered as the **Candle of Love**, and the fourth one represents Mary the Mother of Jesus and is considered as the **Candle of Joy**. Finally, the fifth one represents the **birth of Jesus Christ** it shows us that Jesus is ‘the Light of the World’. There are different readings on each one of the Sundays leading up to Christmas day.

For advent this year, there have been ad-vent staff vent staff reflections on a Monday morning, and the year 10 gift team have been leading Fri- day lunchtime ad- vent re- flections in the Chapel. All forms and departments have cre- ated a ham- per of food to do- nate to those in need in our community. We

hosting a Christmas Party for local forms will be welcoming a travelling

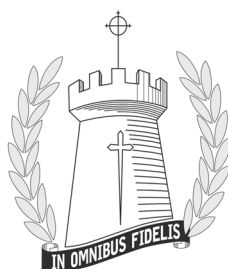
Heavenly Father,

We look forward to the celebration of Christmas and to the coming of the lord in glory. Bless this advent wreath and all of us. As we pray daily around it, fill us with your life and strengthen us for our daily tasks.

We ask through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

parishioner from St Anne’s and all nativity!



ST DAMIAN'S EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW



— MR STONELEY —

We asked Mr Stoneley the following questions:

1. Why did you choose to teach Geography?

I chose to teach Geography because it's a subject with a growing importance – in particular due to the ever-increasing need to adapt the way we live due to climate change. It's also a very diverse subject, ranging from the impacts of earthquakes to the challenges faced by global cities.



2. What do you enjoy most about your job?

It's hard to pick just one thing! I love the fact that every day is different to the previous one. I also enjoy the responsibility of shaping our students' lives, knowing that I can have such a positive impact on their future (hopefully future teachers or geographers!)

3. What do you wish more people knew about you/your subject?

An 'interesting' fact about me is that I used to play ultimate frisbee whilst studying at university (it's worth a YouTube search).

Something I wish more people knew about my subject is that it isn't just about rocks and rivers – as mentioned earlier, a number of topics we study at St Damian's are about how humans interact with the world around us and the influence they can have, e.g. the growth of cities.

4. What is your favourite hobby?

Aside from my sporting hobbies (football, cricket and running), I am (unsurprisingly) a massive fan of travelling. Whenever I get the chance, I love to jet off somewhere and explore the fascinating world in which we live in. I have visited 42 countries so far, and I hope to visit as many as I can during my lifetime!

5. What is your favourite country that you've been to?

This is a very tough question so I can't pick just one! Here is my top 3:

1. Ukraine – such a beautiful country, especially its capital Kyiv. I also had the chance to visit the site of Chernobyl – a place which was frozen in time due to the 1986 nuclear disaster.

2. Bosnia & Herzegovina – a hidden gem and somewhere which is well-worth a visit. A country which was war-torn in the 1990s during the breakup of the former Yugoslavia, but don't let this put you off. There are many

Hot air balloons in Cappadocia? Adding that to my bucket list!



CELEBRATING ST DAMIAN'S

Our diverse community is full of wonderful and talented people. An important aspect of the St Damian's way is celebration. We must recognise and celebrate members of our community and their outstanding achievements.



Congratulations to our first winner of the Caritas Catholic Social Teaching Award! The award was presented to Ms Jinks for passion and commitment to raise money for charity and promote community cohesion through outreach projects.



£2,013.57

As a school we managed to raise an astonishing £2,013.57 for Macmillan cancer support. It is a worthy cause that is close to all of our hearts at St Damian's. We were overwhelmed by the kindness and generosity shown by our community. A huge thank you to everybody to donated and supported.

SPORTS



Congratulations to the KS4 Netball team on their runners-up placing in the Autumn Term Tameside Tournament. Great performances throughout the term and a well deserved top 2 placing!

Well done to the Year 11 football team, although 'a long way from home' a fantastic team display saw them overcome a very determined Cardinal Langley 2-0. Stand out performances from Luca, Fran and Leo with vital strikes from Niall and Rio!



Boxercise hits St Damian's! Well done to all of the pupils in 9XSBS after an introduction into Boxercise. Working on straights and hooks the class were disciplined and energetic as they came to terms with their new skills.



7HJL's CHARITY SUCCESS:

As part of their form project on 'success', 7HJL decided to do a sponsored run/read to raise money for charity. The money went towards buying Christmas presents for children living in poverty. All together, the form managed to raise £500 ! Emme

We don't do biases here but I am particularly proud of this one.

Y7 WELCOME MASS:

The rain didn't stop us! The Year 7s enjoyed a wonderful welcome mass at St Christopher's Church. It was a wholesome and lovely mass, lead by the priest and the students. Mr McArdle played the piano whilst the Year 7 cohort sang our new school hymn for the first time in church; a beautiful morning to remember. We wish the new year 7s a fantastic and successful five years at St Damian's!

A thumbs up from Mrs Gerschler ->

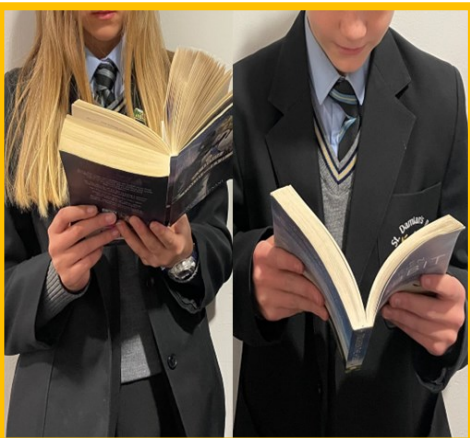


YEAR 7 & 8 STAR READERS.

The students at St Damian's have the invaluable resource of an online library and a system called Accelerated Reader (AR), which students can use to test themselves on the books that they have read at home or at school. The following students have read and quizzed on a huge number of books:

Callum R: (7DWN) 1, 427, 126 words from AR

Emma B: (8HTR) 1, 310, 791 words from AR



THE LITERACY HUB:

The Literacy Hub is the newest addition to our school! As lovers of literacy, we are delighted to have a new space dedicated to reading and learning and named after our brilliant chair of governors.

*'The literacy hub is a place for **all pupils** to read, complete homework,*

Pop in to see Ms Toole's latest display of books. (pictured top right) & grab yourself a book!
There is lots about reading on this page, I



STUDENTS' CORNER

ENGLISH: KS3 POETRY

Key stage 3 recently took part in a Tameside poetry competition. The poems were written around the title 'A Different Kind of Gift'. The poems that were written by students were fantastic. However, we have selected a few that touched our hearts. As you read these poems, take some time to reflect and be thankful for the gifts that you have in your life. Enjoy.



The given gift

The given gift, it may
Unravel the human rights
You await to receive
Or the path to faith,
You've searched far and wide for.

The given gift, it may
Unravel the care
You have deserved,
Or the key to the talents you, have
thought,
you'd never have.

The given gift, it may be
The inspirational whispers to freedom,
Or the valuable time you need,
To live your life to the fullest.

The given gift, shall be,
Unravelling as you work for it,
The gift is yours.

A different type of gift

I had always been given materialistic gifts,
From my sister,
my father and my brother,
But somehow never from my mother.
She was the only one to tell me to save not spend,
She said she'll hold my hand until the end,
I never realised until now,
When I think about it.
I never really needed the materialistic items.
Who I needed was my mother.
The one who gave me time,
And acted like I wasn't a bother.
The one who showed me love like no other,
The one that popped my fear bubbles.
The one who helped me through troubles.
The one who lead me true,
And helped me through and through.
Between me and my mother,
There was never a drift.
Because I know everything my mother gave me,
her time, her kindness, her patience and
knowledge.
Was just a different type of gift.



A different type of gift

A different kind of gift.

Maybe a family or a friendship

The precious time you spend with them,

Or a loved one.

A different kind of gift.

Maybe your faith,

Maybe your freedom,

Or a celebration

A party.

Or a present,

From someone you have missed.

A different kind of gift.

Is it the pitter-patter of children running?

Is it the cheeping of the beautiful birds hiding?

Or could it just be the silence of the word spinning?

A different type of gift.

To me is,

The individuality of everyone,

No matter how tall or small,

How smart or how sporty.

No matter the disadvantages,

No matter the culture,

We are all equal,

A gift

A gift is earned,

A gift is something that is well deserved.

A gift is given,

A gift is given to you at an age,

Where your closest family and friends,

Think you deserve a gift,

A gift of worship.

A gift can be inherited at the age of birth,

Are you funny?

Are you smart?

Are you nice?

A gift can be anything imaginable,

Some different some same.

A gift can fade as we get older.

But our hearts stay for a millennium.

A gift can be created by friendship.

A gift can be a poem, writing or prayer.

A gift can be maths skills.

It's something we all have in our lives

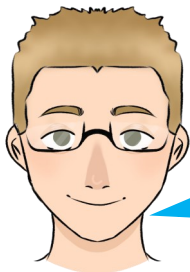
WHAT'S ON IN SCHOOL?

DEBATE CLUB

is in the spotlight

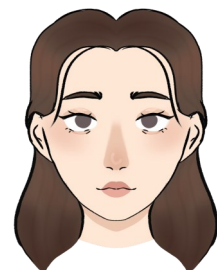


Debate club is run by Mr Gregory where all students are welcome to attend and debate anything they find topical, intriguing or controversial. Recently, some topics that have been debated are 'Should we keep the monarchy?' by Euan and Amy, and 'Does God exist?' by Garth and Reuben. Students with different opinions can respectfully discuss them with their peers, and the spectators can vote at the end to decide who wins the debate. Debate club provides students with a platform to express their opinions freely and to understand others' viewpoints on topics they are interested in. The club allows a safe place to discuss controversial topics without judgement, teachers and students alike are welcome to get involved!



"The monarchy is a link between the past and the present. It keeps politicians 'in check' as well as bring in positive economy by people coming to see Buckingham Palace. The queen had a sense of pride for everyone and played the American national anthem in September 2001."

"After the queen died, the media paid no attention to bigger issues in the world. The monarchy is undemocratic and is setting the UK back years. By having a head of state, the UK should not be considered a first world country."



In this instance, the wonderfully articulate Amy Holmes was victorious. The keen spectators voted in favour of Amy's points. If you haven't attended a debate at school before, I highly recommend that you do!

PAKISTAN

Floods in Pakistan

Almost 33 million people have been evacuated across Pakistan due to heavy flooding in the country. Also 27,000 schools were damaged and now 2 million children are missing out on school. The floods that occurred this summer were the biggest that Pakistan has ever experienced. Although it has been months since the floods first hit, many buildings are still waterlogged, or even underwater. Pakistan has been through extreme weather conditions that have led to the country's worst flooding in a decade. At least 1,100 people were killed by floodwaters and one third of the country is submerged in water.

The worst flooding occurred along the Indus River in the areas of Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan, and Sindh. Numerous public health facilities, water systems, schools and hundreds of thousands of residences have also been destroyed or damaged. Young children are exposed to a wide range of new flood-related risks and hazards, such as from damaged houses and drowning in floodwaters while living in the open with their family.

We can help by donating to charities such as the British Red Cross, UNICEF etc that are providing humanitarian relief for Pakistan delivering vaccines, medicine, mosquito nets, supplements, food, tents, drinking water etc.

The Journalism Club has recognised the natural disaster in Pakistan as something that needs to be shared so that we can raise awareness and do our bit to help.

"Don't feel ashamed when giving little for charity; that is because there is always goodness in giving no matter how little." - Islamic saying



LET'S TALK ABOUT SEND

We have introduced a SEND segment in the newspaper. SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) is at the heart of all we do at St Damian's. The school is equipped with a fantastic body of support staff that work meticulously to support and encourage our students. We would like to write about SEND in school in order to prevent stigma around SEND in society (*stigma: a mark of shame that is associated with a particular characteristic or circumstance*). We will be looking at various needs and disabilities in no particular order; starting with **autism**.

“Being autistic unfortunately means that there's stigma and misconceptions surrounding it, such as thinking that every autistic person is the same or that we need to be pitied or infantilised. When this is in fact not the case, autism is a spectrum meaning that not everybody that is autistic is different. Just because I can't stand the texture of mashed potatoes doesn't mean another autistic person will. Stereotypes and stigmas like this mean that people with autism feel the need to mask their autism; which is emotionally exhausting. Everybody should be able to embrace what makes them different.” - Anonymous, Y10

“Autism affects how people communicate and interact with the world and is lifelong. Did you know that more than 1 in 100 people are on the autistic spectrum and currently there are about 700,00 autistic adults and children in the U.K. At St Damian's, all teaching and support staff had training last year about what autism is and how we can support members of the school community who are autistic. The website for the National Autistic Society is a very helpful source for information about autism www.autism.org.uk”

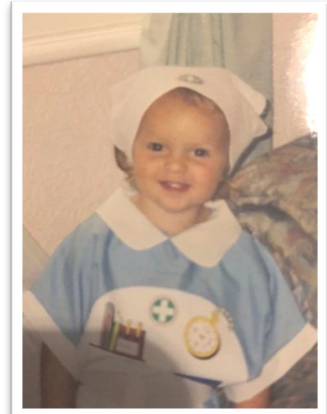
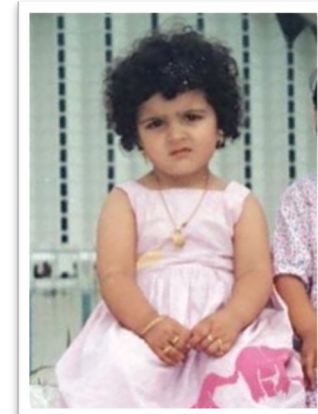
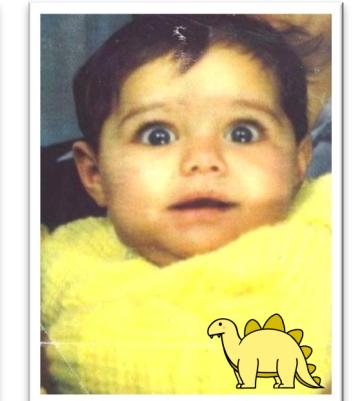
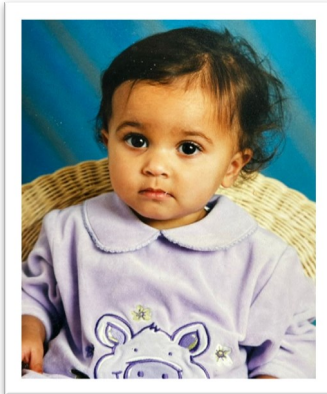
OUR VISION:

PUPILS WITH SEND THRIVE



GUESS THE TEACHER

Warning: extreme cuteness ahead. Wondering who the Christmas puddings are? Your teachers! See if you can try and figure out who is who. Clue: Teachers, support staff and senior leaders of the school can be found on this page...



Answers: Left to Right
 Miss Bury—Miss Yates—Mrs Gerschler— Ms Allmand
 Miss Danko—Mrs Kelly—Miss Smith—Mrs Burrows
 Miss Jameel—Miss Walthew—Mr Bentley—Mr Logue
 Mrs Brophy—Ms Hughes



Organised by Frankie Crookes



Illustrated by Lily Howard.

Very funny, Lily. If only I could sing like Mariah.

GAMES + PUZZLES:

CHRISTMAS WORDSEARCH

R	M	S	N	S	U	E	Y	U	L	E	L	O	G
P	N	I	T	A	L	S	A	Y	E	K	R	U	T
N	R	C	S	N	B	Y	L	L	E	S	N	I	T
E	A	E	R	T	S	A	C	E	T	T	H	C	D
S	T	T	I	A	L	S	U	O	N	N	G	A	N
N	I	E	I	N	C	E	C	B	E	E	I	R	M
O	D	L	N	V	D	K	T	U	L	S	E	O	R
W	I	V	O	N	I	E	E	O	T	E	L	L	S
F	N	E	C	N	I	T	E	R	E	R	S	S	C
A	G	S	G	Y	R	I	Y	R	S	P	E	S	L
M	S	S	N	L	R	U	D	O	L	P	H	E	A
I	O	G	G	L	A	T	F	I	G	R	L	O	U
L	N	G	U	O	C	H	R	I	S	T	M	A	S
Y	N	M	E	J	W	L	J	E	S	U	S	H	I

- REINDEER
- STOCKINGS
- YULE LOG
- TIDINGS
- SNOW
- TREE
- JOLLY
- CHRISTMAS
- TINSEL
- GIFT
- JESUS
- MISTLETOE
- TURKEY
- SLEIGH
- SANTA
- MRS CLAUS
- NATIVITY
- FAMILY
- RUDOLPH
- ELVES
- PRESENT
- CAROLS
- BAUBLES
- CRACKERS

FIND THE DINOSAUR

There are 8 dinosaurs hidden in our newspaper. The dinosaur is called a 'Thea-saurus' - *never* to be mistaken with a thesaurus.

Sometimes, they change colour to try and hide. *How many can you find?*

As the editor of the school newspaper, I would like to thank the Journalism Club for their commitment and hard work so far. Finally, special thanks to Vinnie Burrows and Lily Howard for their wonderful artistic contributions to the newspaper, you are incredibly talented!