



Newsletter

Christmas 2019



Welcome to the final newsletter of this academic year. It has been another great year for St Damian's. Below are some of the highlights of the Autumn term that show some of the amazing educational experiences that are on offer here. Collectively they ensure that St Damian's is living up to its Mission, which is to '*develop the whole child*'. I hope that you are as proud of these as I am!

General Election



Last week 8HTR have been taking part in Election quizzes during Form Time in preparation for a mock election that will be taking place in school. Pupils have been discussing the upcoming General Election and learnt about the political basics they need to know to be informed young citizens. I have been really impressed with their enthusiasm and hard work.

Santa Dash



Our Annual Santa Dash took place on Sunday 8th December. This year over 50 runners took part in the 'Dash', many dressed as Father Christmas and his Christmas Elves. There was a Christmas Market where members of our local community sold a variety of homemade gifts and an extremely popular Father Christmas with lots of hot chocolate and mince pies. The chocolate tombola was a huge success with both children and adults winning a selection of prizes. Monies raised this year will go towards the Tameside Scanner Appeal and RNIB Talking Book. A big thank you to all those who made this event such a resounding success. Each year it grows, and we look forward to it again being bigger and better next year [If possible 😊!]

STEM

It's been a busy period in STEM this term with students from all year groups being involved in Science related activities.



Year 7 have had a great first term in Science and as a reward they experienced the Flash Bang Show which was presented by Manchester University. The show was based on solids, liquids and gases and had many links to the current Year 7 Science curriculum.

Year 9 students represented the school at the SUBSEA UK Stem Challenge Day at the Museum of Science and Industry. Two Yr. 9 teams competed with schools across the Greater Manchester area. The students impressed the judges so much that they were **awarded overall WINNERS!** Another accolade to add to the growing list of awards at St Damian's! A big congratulations to Aldrin Weston, Lance Tuazon, Jessica Akubuo, Nikola Kubik, Ethan Gregory and Naomi Park. They will now compete in the **National finals** in Aberdeen and we wish them all the best. **Watch this space!**



Radioactivity is a big topic which is covered in Year 10 Physics. Year 10 Separate Science students visited *Heysham Nuclear Power station* where they toured the site and learnt about Nuclear Energy. Year 11 Separate Science students visited *Manchester Metropolitan University* to attend a lecture named '*The Great Moon Hoax*'. A controversial title which was hosted by the Institute of Physics. The lecture disproved the conspiracy theories that the Moon landing was a hoax with an understanding of Physics. A great evening of Physics and the pupils also enjoyed a trip to Nando's too! Mrs Baynham said that their behavior was "exceptional"!

The above shows that our STEM experiences are extensive and throughout all years of the curriculum.

Update on our GIFT team



Our GIFT team [*Growing in Faith together*] is very proactive and have been very busy since September. We have 12 dedicated and enthusiastic new GIFT members so our team is getting stronger year on year. During the month of October the team led the Rosary each day at break time in the Chapel. We invited our local community to join us and we shared stories about our own personal sets of Rosary beads and the beautiful artwork the GIFT team had produced.

November was the month of remembrance and the GIFT team led a beautiful and respectful service at the bereavement garden. A poppy wreath was laid, and the Last Post was played by Thomas Scaife. There was also a special display board for pupils and staff to remember the people close to them who had died.



December is a month of preparation during Advent. Our Travelling Nativity has been moving from form to form and allowing all of our pupils to take time to think about the true meaning of Christmas.



Preparing for the Birth of Jesus: Year 7 have been reflecting and preparing for the birth of Jesus. Form tutors have witnessed a few 'going the extra mile' so we thought we'd recognise them in assembly. Well done, you're making Mrs Brophy super proud!



The Christmas Carol Concert was a wonderful way to celebrate the true meaning of Christmas surrounded by our St Damian's community of pupils, parents, staff and governors. We saw the retelling of the birth of Jesus and heard the beautiful choir accompany the story. What made this year extra special was that parts of the play were written by the pupils in Year 7. They captured the mood, emotions and feelings of the characters through three monologues which were expertly performed! I would like to thank the pupils for their hard work and dedication to this event – they were a real credit to our school.



Careers News – Autumn Term 2019 update

Careers Awards: September 2019 started extremely positively for Careers with St. Damian's achieving the **IAG Award Stage 3** following a full day assessment in July. This was followed by **WINNING** national recognition in London in the Careers Excellence Awards: '*Most Progress from a School in relation to achieving the Gatsby Benchmarks*'. Mrs Henshaw and Mrs Jones, our Chair of Governors, were very proud [and excited] to collect the award at a ceremony in London. I can state that the careers programme at St Damian's is comprehensive!

Year 8 Careers & STEM Opportunities. 15 girls were selected to take part in the Digital Her Tameside Roadshow at Dukinfield promoting the participation of girls in STEM related activities. Business sponsors for the day included GCHQ, Autotrader, Manchester Science Partnerships, STEM & Manchester Digital.

Year 9 Careers - Exploring Higher Education - Year 9 pupils attended an assembly delivered by Claire Cooper from Trafford College on the behalf of GMHigher introducing pupils to the wide range of options available in Higher Education Colleges and Universities and the range of pathways available including apprenticeships, vocational courses & Degree level study. Half of Year 9 pupils attended a day at the University of Bolton, this included Higher Education workshops, a campus tour and the opportunity to meet student ambassadors. The other half of Year 9 will visit on the 14th February 2020. See below for some pictures of the day.



Year 10 Careers - Further Education Opportunities & Work Experience

Year 10 pupils have shown great enthusiasm for attending enrichment classes at Sixth Form Colleges. Seventeen pupils have enrolled on the GMHAP Masterclasses Programme at Loreto Sixth Form College and 30 pupils are registered for the Y10 Realising Aspirations Programme at Ashton Sixth Form College studying a range of subjects including Maths & Science, Humanities, Performing Arts, Music, Business and Social Sciences.

Year 10 have attended a launch assembly held by 'Changing Education', our new partner for work experience placements, a fantastic opportunity to get first-hand experience of the world of work. *Work experience* will take place 13th-17th July 2020. All pupils are expected to have organised their self-placement by 31st January 2020. This is a great opportunity for pupils to experience the 'world of work' and raise their aspirations.

Year 11 Careers – College Applications, Apprenticeships & Meeting Employers



Year 11 pupils have attended a Post 16 Pathways assembly as well as presentations led by Tameside College, Clarendon College, Loreto Sixth Form College, Ashton Sixth Form College, Oldham Sixth Form College and Xaverian College. Pupils have been busy writing College

applications, submitting personal statements and attending interviews. Pupils have applied for a range of A Level courses, vocational courses and apprenticeships.

The Year 11 ASPIRE Day in October started with an assembly on Labour Market Information on the future potential of the job market in North West England with the development of HS2 and Airport City. This was followed by a range of workshops: Employability Skills & Apprenticeships – The Growth Company, CV Writing & Apprenticeships – Brother, Applying to Higher Education / University – Claire Cooper Trafford College, Careers in the Royal Air Force – Toby Davenport, James Conway (Ex pupil) - Rolls Royce, Jacob van Weerdenburg (Ex pupil) - Performing Arts, Lauren Moore (Junior Doctor), Dragon Football Academy, Vafa Ahmadiyeh – Solution Architect at Amazon Web Services, Mike Nevitt – Bardsley Construction Ltd, Dr Catriona Boyd – Doctor of Urology, Manchester University.



Well Done and Congratulations ...



... to Mrs Ogden, our Business Manager, Angela won '*Schools Business Leader of the Year*' at the recent National Schools Awards 2019.

This award is just recognition for her many years of great service to the community of St Damian's.

... to Mrs Jinks, our Exams Manager, Michaela has been awarded the Anthony Seddon Fund '*Mental Health Community Award*' in recognition for the work she does as wellbeing champion for the staff at St Damian's.

This award epitomises her kindness and thoughtfulness which are really appreciated by everyone here at St Damian's!

Update on our Charity Committee



We were delighted to welcome Angie Wild, Head of Fundraising at Tameside Hospital to launch the start of our fundraising for [@tandgicft](#) Scanner Appeal. Our Charity Committee are very enthusiastic and have lots of great fundraising ideas to support the appeal ... **watch this space!** At St Damian's we are extremely proud of our pupils fundraising efforts throughout the year for those less fortunate than ourselves and which is co-ordinated by our extraordinary Charity Committee which was established this year.

Our amazing Charity Committee members have been working hard this term with our fundraising events; Macmillan Coffee Morning, Mary's Meals World Porridge Day, Non-uniform Day and Santa Dash. We will update you with the total raised for our Santa Dash and Christmas Markets in the New Year.

The Committee recently had a memorable visit to Tameside Hospital to switch on the Christmas Tree lights that St Damian's has sponsored in aid of the Tameside Scanner Appeal. As a reward for giving up their time to support the



fundraising events the Charity Committee will have a Christmas Party during Period 5 on the 19th December 2019. As Headteacher I am so proud of these fundraising efforts and dedication of both pupils and staff.

'Anti-Bullying Week'



This year was another great success with students from all year groups taking part in special assemblies designed at promoting kindness. Students were offered the opportunity to apply to become part of our '**Bully Busters**' team, a peer mentorship scheme that works to eradicate all forms of bullying at St Damian's.



This scheme alongside other initiatives already in place are allowing us to strive towards achieving the 'Bullying Intervention Group, BIG Award' for a 4th year running. Students undertook Random Acts of Kindness throughout the week and we spent time in Chapel reflecting on our actions.



A hugely successful week rounded off with fundraising by some of our students who sold Anti-Bullying wristbands. Finally, a huge thanks to our deputy prefects who played an integral part in delivering the assemblies throughout the week.'

Young Carers



Once again, our young carers were rewarded with a trip to the fantastic Manchester Christmas Markets. They enjoyed browsing the stalls and were all treated to a lovely mug of hot chocolate with marshmallows and a souvenir mug to take home.



Update on our Sporting Successes

Cross Country Results 2019

Yet again, our great pupils have excelled in the recent Tameside Cross Country and there were some super individual top 20 performances by the following pupils:

Yr7 Boys Cross Country Champion	
Yr7 Girls Cross Country Champion	
Yr 8/9 Girls Cross Country Champion	Matilda Byrnes
Sam Lomas	4 th
Maddie Stout	5 th
Lilly Howard	13 th
Maddie Ellor	15 th
Ava McKenna	16 th

Bobby Burton
Emily Bowker



Overall School Team Placings:

Yr7 Boys	4 th
Yr7 Girls	4 th
Yr8/9 Boys	8 th
Yr8/9 Girls A team	2 nd
Yr8/9 Girls B team	5 th

Tameside Schools Netball League Sept – Dec 2019:

Congratulations to our talented netball teams who have worked hard all term in the Tameside Schools Netball League Competition. Results below!

Good luck to the KS3 teams who will compete again in the Tameside Schools Cup Spring Competition in March 2020.

- Yr7 Tameside League Winners
- Yr8 Tameside League Winners
- Yr9 A team Tameside League runners up
- Yr9 B Team Tameside League 4th place
- Yr10/11 Tameside League Winners 3rd place



Senior Citizens Christmas Party

Our annual Senior Citizens Christmas party took place on the 12th December and we were delighted to welcome members of our local community. This year guests were serenaded by the very talented Lauren McGlashan. Lauren is now at Ashton 6th Form and very kindly agreed to come in to entertain our guests. Our guests were then waited on by our polite pupils who kept up a constant supply of festive food and drink. This was followed up by our delighted guests being presented with hampers and biscuits



Safety of our Pupils

Can I respectfully ask parents that they drop their children off **outside the school** and **do not use the car park** as a drop-off point. The actions of a small minority of parents are putting our great children at unnecessary risk. The carpark is exceptionally busy and as such we need to create a safer environment for pupils as they *arrive* and *leave school*. I know that time is precious, and everyone is busy but I hope that you agree that the safety of our pupils is our top priority.

Furthermore, can I highlight the following concerns.

- I have witnessed parents going through the red lights, often at speed, again putting our children's safety at risk.
- Some parents think that it acceptable to park on the bus lanes before and after school. These are clearly marked. Please be considerate and don't park here as buses can't get through and this has the effect of creating chaos, again putting children at risk.

- Finally, some parents think that it is acceptable to speak to staff in a ‘rude’ or aggressive manner when they get ‘stuck in the traffic’. Again, this is not the ‘St Damian’s way’. Please be respectful to all staff and be a role-model for your child.

****OUR CAR PARK IS FOR STAFF / BUS STOPS / DISABLED / EMERGENCY ACCESS ONLY ****

Our 5 Simple Rules



St Damian's **five** rules are deliberately clear and simple and are unambiguous. Importantly, my great staff and I will enforce these. These are to ensure that St Damian's continues to be a place of calm and where standards are very high. Indeed, St Damian's high expectations are not negotiable. Any pupils found not following these simple rules will be dealt with accordingly. Pupils who repeatedly break these rules will put their place at the school at serious risk.

Drugs in School

Drugs are an increasingly issue in society today. However, I would also like to take this opportunity to reiterate that St Damian's has **zero tolerance** towards pupils bringing illegal drugs [or weapons] into school. If any pupil does so, then they risk permanent exclusion. Pupils have had assemblies regarding this. Drugs will not be tolerated in St Damian's.

Furthermore, as with cigarettes and smoking, e-cigarettes and vaping are also NOT allowed in school. Pupils found vaping or in possession of an e-cigarette will be excluded. In newspapers recently there have been a number of incidents involving children sharing e-cigarettes with others and becoming poorly and in some cases being admitted to hospital. E-liquids can be extremely dangerous particularly when bought from unscrupulous sources or you don't know exactly what it is. Indeed, sometimes these contain illegal drugs which are not tolerated in school.

School Buses

IMPORTANT CHANGES FOR CHILDREN BUYING STAGECOACH DAYRIDER TICKETS.



From Sunday 5 January 2020 Stagecoach are changing the way child dayrider tickets are sold on the bus.

Instead of issuing a paper ticket, the ticket will be loaded on to a Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) igo card.

Which child tickets are affected?

- Manchester child dayrider

What does this mean?

To continue to buy a dayrider ticket, children will need an igo card.

- Children aged 5 – 10 may not hold an igo card but will need to apply for an igo card to continue to buy this ticket from the bus driver.
- Children aged 11-16 will already hold an igo card to buy child tickets on the bus.

How can you apply for an Igo Card?

Visit tfgm.com/igo to download an application form or get a copy of the form from a TfGM Travelshop. For more information about this change visit our website Stagecoachbus.com

Parental Support

Years 9 and 11 have both had their parents evening this term and both were extremely well attended.

Yr 11 - Only 1 parent would not recommend the school. An example of some of the comments were; '*Brilliant teachers and fantastic school environment. Very positive evening*', '*I believe there is no better high school for my child to be at. Supporting and encouraging, I couldn't ask for more*'. Responses to the questionnaire included 741 strongly agree, 288 agree, compared to only 30 disagree or 8 strongly disagree.

Yr9 – **ALL** the parents said they would recommend St Damian's to another parent. Some of the Yr9 comments included; '*keep the good work up. I feel very content with XXX being at this fantastic school and I really mean it*', '*My daughter loves coming to school, her confidence in herself continues to grow. Thank you*'. Again, there were 555 strongly agree responses, 198 agree and only 8 disagree and 5 who strongly disagree.

Update on Year 11

Year 11's have now finished their mock exams and are looking forward to the Christmas break. We don't expect them to revise over the Christmas period and would prefer that they relax and recharge their batteries because when they return in January it will be all systems go until the exams, so really enjoy the Christmas break and be ready to start again in January.

Early Finish

School will finish at 1:30pm on Friday 20th December 2019. School buses have been arranged for this earlier time, although the Stotts 775 to Fitton Hill and the 771 to Clayton are unable to accommodate this earlier time.



Monday 6th January 2020	-	Pupils return to school at 9:am
Thursday 16 th January 2020	-	Year 10 Parents Evening
Monday 27 th January 2020	-	Year 9 exams begin
Friday 7 th February 2020	-	St Damian's Day – Aspire Day
Thursday 13 th February 2020	-	Year 8 Parents Evening
Thursday 27 th February 2020	-	Year 7 Parents Evening

Finally, may I take this opportunity, on behalf of St Damian's great staff and our dedicated and hard-working governors, to wish you a **peaceful and Holy Christmas** and we look forward to welcoming the children back to school in the New Year, Monday 6th January 2020.

