



April 2025

In all things faithful

St Damian's RC Science College

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Headteacher

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

Dear Parent/Carer

A warm welcome to my latest monthly newsletter. This is a bumper issue showcasing the range of experiences that your child is exposed to at St Damian's. Each month when I start to bring the letter together, I am in awe about the quantity and quality of opportunities that the staff here put on for the children.

Catholic Life of the School

The season of lent is always busy at St Damian's. Below are the planned formation activities including those led by the student leadership groups. I hope you enjoy reading.

- ✓ **GIFT Team.** Our GIFT Team has had a very productive term, working on a range of initiatives that contribute to our school community and the wider world. They have revitalised the Science Garden Greenhouse through cleaning, organising the space and researching new plant species that can be grown to attract wildlife during the summer months. This initiative is an important aspect of our commitment to the 'Live Simply' Award, encouraging us to care for creation and promote sustainability. In addition to their environmental work, the GIFT Team has been addressing wastepaper disposal and recycling within the school. Concerned about how paper is used and discarded, they have written an open letter to raise awareness and encourage positive change in our recycling habits. Their passion for stewardship and sustainability is helping to make a real difference in how we care for our shared environment. Another important focus for the team this term has been Fairtrade Awareness. They have been busy designing creative resources to highlight the impact of Fairtrade and why it is essential in promoting justice for workers across the globe. By educating their peers on ethical consumerism, they are encouraging a more thoughtful and compassionate approach to the choices we make. The GIFT Team continues to be a shining example of leadership, service, and faith in action. Their hard work and dedication are a true reflection of St Damian's values, and we are incredibly proud of their efforts.



- ✓ **National Down Syndrome Day.** This was marked with a strong focus on inclusion and our school community came together to celebrate the uniqueness of every individual and reflect on how we can continue to create a welcoming and supportive environment for all. The day began with a special reflection during form, reminding students of the Catholic teaching that we are all created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:27), with an information PowerPoint shared with students. During our 3pm prayer a powerful video clip was shared, highlighting the message that individuals with Downs syndrome have voices that deserve to be heard, reinforcing the idea that true inclusion means listening, understanding, and valuing everyone's contributions. To show solidarity and raise awareness, many students and staff wore odd socks, a symbol of uniqueness and difference.



St. Damian's RC Science College

- ✓ **Salford Diocese Anchor.** As part of a special initiative within Salford Diocese, the Anchor is travelling to schools across the diocese, bringing with it a powerful message of faith, hope, and unity. This journey is especially significant in the year of Jubilee 2025, a year of renewal and celebration in the Church, focused on the theme of **Hope**. The Anchor serves as a reminder of the firm foundation we



have in Christ and the strength we find in our faith community. Its visit to our school will be a time for prayer, reflection, and renewal, encouraging us to embrace the Jubilee's message of hope and trust in God's plan. During its time with us, we will come together in collective worship and take part in activities that highlight the importance of living out our faith with courage and optimism. Stay tuned for more details on how we will be marking this occasion of hope!



- ✓ **Yr11 RE Intervention.** These sessions have been extremely well attended, with students making the most of the support available as they prepare for their GCSE exams. As a core subject, we are incredibly proud of their dedication and commitment so far. We encourage even more Yr11 students to take advantage of these valuable sessions with their expert RE teacher—held every Monday after school and Thursday mornings from 8:00 am. This is a fantastic opportunity for extra guidance in the final push before exams begin.

HT4 Pastoral Theme 'Stewardship'

This half term forms in Y7 - Y10 explored the idea of Stewardship. During Lent it is especially important for us to think how can look after each other, our community, and the environment. As usual there have been a wide variety of projects going on in school ranging from a group of Y10's restoring the school green house, many plants being nurtured by form groups, 8GBS's Charity Drive and 7EAD's 'Show & Tell'.



Safeguarding: UNITE

On Friday 14th March we held a practice UNITE drill in school following on from Mrs Brophy's assemblies in February. I am pleased to report that all the children in school responded appropriately, and we were immediately able to locate every child and ensure that they were safe and with an appropriate adult. The behaviour of the children was impeccable, and it is great to see that when we come together as a community and work together quickly and minimise any potential risks. It is unfortunate that we have to practice this type of safety measure in school, but we have to prepare for any emergency that we may face. Please rest assured that St Damian's is a safe place where your child is able to be happy and thrive. We will have one practice of UNITE in the summer term.



Raising Funds

Our Shrove Tuesday sale has been a great success helping us all to prepare for Lent. Pancakes were sold in the canteen and French chocolate filled crepes for £0.50. As a community, including an 'own clothes' day, we are donating all proceeds to CAFOD.



Safeguarding: A focus on Sexual Violence/Harassment

This half term Mrs Brophy has carried out a refresher session with staff on 'pupil sexual violence and sexual harassment'. This hard-hitting topic, sadly, is becoming more prevalent in society. Staff have been educated on the definitions of sexual violence and harassment, as well as understanding who is more vulnerable to this kind of abuse and what to do if a child makes a disclosure. Furthermore, staff

have been reminded of the importance of role modelling healthy positive relationships so our children have high expectations of how they should be treated in their personal lives.

Our students have also had safeguarding assemblies on this topic, focusing mainly on sending and receiving 'nudes and semi nudes', the legalities of making, sharing and being in possession of such imagery. Students have been made aware that if they take and send a picture the ownership of the image is out of their control and could re-surface in later life. Mrs Brophy also spoke to the children about consent. It's worth watching this short YouTube clip and ask your child about the importance of asking if someone wants a cup of tea! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pZwvrXVavnQ>. If you are concerned about your child, please contact our student support officers or visit the following:

- <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/child-sexual-abuse/>.
- <https://www.barnardos.org.uk/get-support/support-for-parents-and-carers/child-abuse-and-harm/child-sexual-abuse-and-exploitation>

UKMT

On Wednesday 29th January we entered an incredible 154 students across years 9, 10 and 11 for the UKMT Intermediate Mathematical Challenge. I am delighted to report that the 'results' were simply fantastic. Students achieved 48 *bronze* awards (**13 more** than last year), 17 *silver* awards (same as last year) and 3 *gold* awards (**2 more** than last year). Shaun Shibu in Yr10 scored so highly that he was invited to complete the Pink Kangaroo follow-on round which was on Thursday 20th March. Mr Willerton said that he was *"really proud of the Maths Department and that all teachers have embraced the UKMT maths challenges"*. This is a great initiative that the Maths department use it as an opportunity to develop the problem- solving skills in our high ability students". I would like to thank Mr Willerton and Mr Wilson for leading on this initiative and giving this fantastic opportunity to our gifted Maths students, which they have obviously embraced. There are future plans to continue this excellent opportunity for students to stretch themselves in Maths.



LGBTQ+ Awareness Raising Event



Yr8 students were given the opportunity to watch a production from the Hive Theatre Company about hate crime, raising LGBTQ+ awareness and how it is 'not OK' to use homophobic words. OUTLOUD is an interactive play based on real life experiences of students in secondary schools around Manchester. Adam from Hive, commented on Yr8's exemplary behaviour during the performance and also their engagement. He said, *'It is clear you work hard on inclusion and acceptance at St Damain's as the Yr8 pupil's knowledge of key terminology was brilliant!'* Adam also provided school with information about the new LGBTQ+ youth group. The contact details for more information on the youth club is 0161 342 3954.

Yr11 Updates

When the school returns on Tuesday 22nd April there will be only **13 school days** until the start of the exams which all students will sit. This exam is GCSE English Literature on the 12th May. Time really is of the essence.

- **Easter Revision:** There is a comprehensive Easter revision program, please follow the link for details <https://tinyurl.com/3evjtus4> I ask that parents support this great opportunity to revise with teachers. It will make a difference to your child's confidence and grades this summer.
- **Attendance:** This has a massive impact on your child's attainment. I ask that you support 100% attendance between now and the exams. I can't stress enough the importance of this. Rarely, if ever, do students 'catch-up'.
- **Leaver's Liturgy.** I will send a letter regarding our plans regarding a Leaver's Liturgy at the beginning of May. This will be an excellent opportunity to celebrate their time at St Damian's.
- **Working hard.** There is **no substitute for hard work** and having a positive attitude. Yr11 students should be revising/working between 2-3 hours each night.
- **Prom tickets:** As you know, over the past few months I have been rewarding students who have been working hard for a chance to receive free tickets to the Prom. Well done to the following 2 students who won free tickets to the Prom for working hard.
- ✓ Onome Momoh won the February free ticket. She had the following 2 staff nominations
 Mrs Brophy, her Technology teacher said *"I would like to nominate Onome Momoh for a free prom ticket. She has really turned herself around in my subject this year, she actively engages in lessons, completes all the work that is set and is determined to excel in her coursework. It is a pleasure to teach Onome, she has matured greatly, she has a great sense of humour and keeps the boys in my class in their place. Onome's dedication to Food Preparation is exceptional and I am sure that she will maintain her positive attitude all the way to summer! Well done Onome and keep up the great work"* 😊

Mrs Butterworth, her English teacher said *"Onome has been working consistently hard in English. In particular, I have been extremely impressed with her creative writing. She is developing a real gift. It is beautiful to read her original descriptions and thoughtful details"*.

There were two lucky winners for the March free ticket;

- ✓ Emilia Hanley was one of the lucky winners.
 Mrs Allmand, her RE teacher said *"Over the last 3 weeks in RE lessons pupils have been asked to work independently in a retrieval booklet based on Jewish beliefs and teachings. Emilia has showed a mature and hard-working attitude every lesson when asked to spend 20 min recapping her knowledge. She also advise others who find the tasks difficult"*

And Wojciech Kurmanowski was the second lucky winner

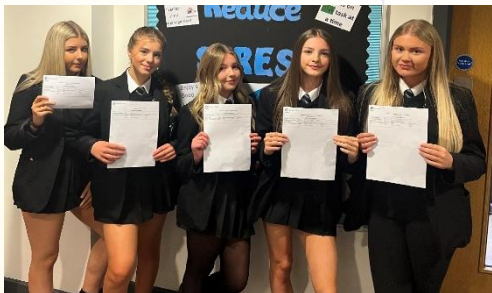
- ✓ Mrs Butterworth, his English teacher said *"Wojciech is an extremely conscientious student who always produces independent work of the highest quality both inside and outside the classroom. He has done this for the whole of Year 10 and Year 11. I am phenomenally proud of his well-deserved progress and will not be at all surprised if he exceeds his targets"*

There are still opportunities for free tickets after Easter.

- **Parental engagement.** Finally, I ask that parents ensure that they are supporting and encouraging their children to achieve. They will feel the pressure in the build up to exams and your words of support will help them greatly.

Yr11 and Results

Well done to our Yr11 students who study BTEC Construction, Child Development and Sport! They have achieved excellent results in their examinations, which account for 30% of their overall grade. These strong results are a testament to their hard work and dedication. This success has put them in a fantastic position to achieve outstanding final grades.



Can I stress that parents have a **massive impact** on your child's GCSE outcomes this summer. Please do not underestimate the role that you have in ensuring **good attendance**, a **place to study** and generally **encouraging** your child to achieve their potential. Your role is very important over the next few months.

Raising Aspirations through Careers

The past few weeks have been extremely busy for our Careers provision.

- **National Apprenticeship Week.** Our students heard from a local employer, STEPAN, about the opportunities and apprenticeships available for them in areas such as law or engineering. This then led into a series of different careers trips, focussed on raising aspirations and exploring opportunities post 16.

- **Oxford University Trip.** Fifteen students visited one of the most prestigious and successful universities in the world, Oxford University. This was a fantastic experience, with students going on a guided tour, visiting professors and lecture halls and even being taught a lesson in physics. At St. Damian's, we pride ourselves in being aspirational and this trip only underpinned our beliefs that our students can be anything they want in this world.



- **National Careers Week: 3rd - 8th March.** All students and staff enjoyed another successful and informative week. Students had the opportunity to listen and ask questions to a variety of speakers in an array of different job sectors. Lee Mason spoke to our students about running a business, we had local Tameside Colleges in to discuss post-16 pathways. We were lucky enough to host both Oxford and Cambridge Universities to talk to our students. We proudly welcomed back a myriad of St Damian's alumni who have been incredibly successful since leaving St Damian's including Oliver Cooney, ex head-boy who is now studying a PHD at Cambridge and Millie Hepplestone who works for a world-leading research science company SCOPE international. At St Damian's, we think it is incredibly important that our students get to hear from people who were in the exact same position as them some years ago and get to see the success you can make of your career with hard work and determination. Also, during the week, teachers delivered interactive and engaging lessons focussed on Careers, for example, journalism in English.

- JD UP Careers Trip.** A group of Yr10 students had the fantastic opportunity to attend a recent *JD Up Careers Event*. Our students heard from world famous content creators and CEO's about how they became successful, learning about different job roles within the world leading sports brand. They also got to experience practical, hands-on activities such as designing their own sports bag, testing themselves as personal trainers in the JD gym and learning what it takes to film and edit as a JD videographer. Mr Healey, our careers lead, said *"students had a wonderful time and benefitted in understanding whatever their talents and interests, there are plenty opportunities available for them with hard work and ambition"*. Furthermore, as has become the custom for our students, your children, Mr Healey said that *"minibus driver told me they were the best-behaved kids he has ever driven to an event"*. This is great to hear and read! Opportunities like this are all part of our extensive careers provision to raise aspirations in our students.



- National Apprenticeship Event.** All Yr10 visited the National Apprenticeship and Careers event at the Salford Community stadium. Our students were expected to take ownership of their own futures, explore the different careers stalls that were there including British Airways, the BBC, Astra Zeneca and many more. This was an incredibly beneficial experience as students felt empowered about their own futures and engaged fantastically well, asking thought provoking questions and deepening their understanding of what they have to do to be successful in the Career they want.
- Ashton Sixth Form.** 10 Yr10 students visited the XL academy at Ashton Sixth form. This event is aimed towards high achievers in a plethora of different subject areas. This most recent one was focussed on Maths, Physics and Computer Science where students were taught by college professors in these subjects and also heard from the Head of The XL Academy about what it takes to be an Oxbridge student and what opportunities are available in these subject areas.

The careers 'curriculum' is very strong at St Damian's and is part of our mission to deliver a true holistic education. Mr Healey said that *"St Damian's alumni have proved time and time again, that with hard work, determination and a positive attitude, they can become whatever they want to become"*.

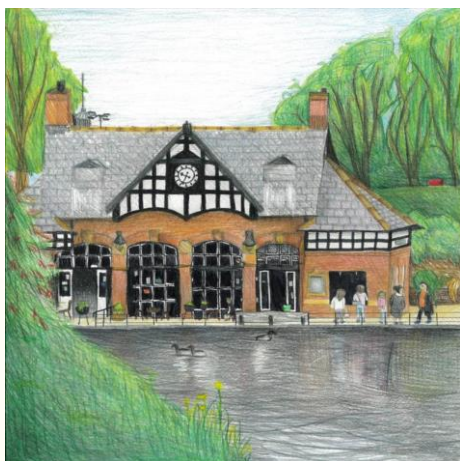
English Faculty Praise Board

Students across all year groups have continued to impress us with their conscientious homework and the quality of their independent learning. We are tremendously proud of the high standard of independent work completed and are keen to reward and recognise their efforts. Our star pupils and runners up for last half term are: YR7 Star Pupil Jovana Sijoy, runners up Caoimhe McLoughlin and Anais Parry; Yr8 Star Pupil Anqi Lin, runners up Yana Kliuchnyk and Grace Clark; Yr9 Star Pupil Victor Losinki and runners up Amelia Cookson and Favour Akinyele; Yr10 Star Pupil Mariah dos Santos, runners up Nikola Kuleszczyk and Alex Szpurka; Yr11 Star Pupil Imogen Rose Williams, runners up Amelie Barrow and Emilia Hanley. All have demonstrated a superb commitment to independent learning - a massive well done!



Pupil Artwork to Shine in Permanent Public Display

I am delighted to announce the winners of our recent Art competition, held in collaboration with local artist Chris Cyprus.



The youth-led arts initiative 'Routes to Roots,' is a platform for artwork curated by Chris Cyprus, in partnership with TransPennine Upgrade Team. This ambitious project aims to set a record as the UK's longest exhibition, stretching over 90 kilometres along platforms from Manchester Piccadilly to York. You may have already spotted artwork from Saddleworth School students at Greenfield Train Station in Oldham, displayed on large panels. We are delighted that our pupils' incredible artwork will soon join the permanent public display at Ashton Under Lyne Train Station too, bringing even more colour and creativity to our community. A huge congratulations these students; Hafsah Ahmed Yr10, Eva Danko Yr10, Carmen Cwynar Yr9, Yana Kliuchnyk Yr8 and Elijah Nathaniel Yr8. Mrs Freeman, Head of Art, shared her enthusiasm for the project: *"This is a wonderful*

opportunity for our talented artists to exhibit their work in a professional setting. We would like to thank Chris Cyprus for this incredible experience, which has helped to build their confidence." I can't wait for everyone to see their amazing work on display! Keep up the great work! Included is an example of the work, from Carmen Cwynar. The quality is outstanding and shows the talent many of our students have.

Recent Parents's Evenings Feedback

- ✓ **Yr9 Parents' Evening.** Again, this evening was a resounding success. A great turn out and as I walked around the hall I could see and hear great conversations taking place. Many parents spoke to me on the night, and I am pleased to state that out of 106 returns, 105 parents would recommend the school and 1 parent didn't complete the whole form. This, by any measure, is parental support that is overwhelmingly positive.

"Thank you so much for all the hard work to support XXX to have a strong foundation to achieve his goal to succeed".

"An outstanding school that has high expectations of its pupils"

"Proud to have my child at St Damian's"

"Staff do an amazing job. Thank you"

- ✓ **Yr7 Parents's Evening.** I was delighted with the Yr7 parents' evening. Attendance was 88%. I spoke to many parents, and without exception, **all** parents spoke highly of the school, but in particular about the teachers and the support they received from non-teachers. In fact, it was a record number of responses since we initiated parents completing questionnaires on the evening. 139 parents completed the questionnaire, and 139 parents would recommend the school. WOW! This is great to read. I was delighted with this enthusiasm and confidence for the school and it is testament to the hard-working staff at St Damian's ensuring that the children here get a world class education! This bodes well for the future. I include some comments below for your perusal. You may recognise what you have written. All comments will be on the website.

"The staff are lovely and helpful. I haven't got a bad word to say about the school".

"Very good parents' evening, well informed of my son's progress and feel very happy with my sons at this school 😊"

"Amazing school. Would definitely recommend"

"Excellent school. Our daughter has settled in well to secondary school"

On behalf of the staff, can I say 'thanks' for your support. As I have said before, we don't take this support for granted and we have shown that over many years we continue to provide an outstanding Catholic education for your children. This would be harder without your support.

Neurodiversity Celebration Week!



A few weeks ago we celebrated Neurodiversity Celebration Week! This week is a time when we are encouraged to think about and celebrate neurodiversity as well as challenge the stereotypes people might have about it. Mr. Wardle put together a series of presentations on Autism, ADHD, Dyslexia and Dyspraxia for form tutors and heads of year to deliver to students. We also held a session for students to create artwork inspired by neurodiversity and to ask any questions they had with Mrs. Lowe, our Assistant SENDCo.



Young Carers Action Day, March 2025

To celebrate the work of our young carers we treated them to a rewards trip to Hollywood Bowl. They enjoyed a game of bowling and time to relax with a game of pool or fun in the amusement arcade, followed by burger and chips for lunch. As I have said previously, the young carers are a credit to their families and as a school we are incredibly proud of all they do in their caring roles.



Socks Day



On Friday 21st March 2025, we proudly took part in “**Lots of Socks**” for World Down Syndrome Awareness Day, wearing our most colourful and favourite socks to show our support. It was fantastic to see so many getting involved in raising awareness for this important cause! 🧦 ✨

Thank you to everyone for their kind donations to support the Willow Wood Hospice Crème Egg appeal, which rewards the children of Tameside and Glossop for raising vital funds for Willow Wood Hospice via sponsorship from their Bunny Hop event.



Prefects

A massive well done to many of our Yr10 students who have now submitted their applications for being considered for a Prefect role. After Easter, Ms Joyce and Mr Burtles will consider each application carefully. Staff have also been asked to consider the applicants for Head Boy/Head Girl and vote for their preferred candidates. These votes will be used to determine a short-list and a small number of applicants will then be selected for interview. Please be mindful that with so many exceptional students who have served our community so well, this is never an easy decision and inevitably there will be some students left disappointed. Please encourage your child to give it their best shot and learn from the whole experience regardless of the outcome. Thank you to the current Head Boy/Girl and their deputies for being such positive ambassadors for St Damian's.



ASPIRE Assemblies

Each term, we set time aside to congratulate the efforts of our students with special ASPIRE assemblies. Well done to all those students who received an ASPIRE certificate this term. Celebrating improvements, consistent hard work and excellent progress made, is at the heart of 'The St Damian's Way'. I would particularly like to congratulate those students who have received awards for 100% attendance. This demonstrates resilience, effort and an enjoyment of school life. We hope those



students who are yet to obtain an ASPIRE certificate this year, will be inspired during the summer term to make any improvements necessary.

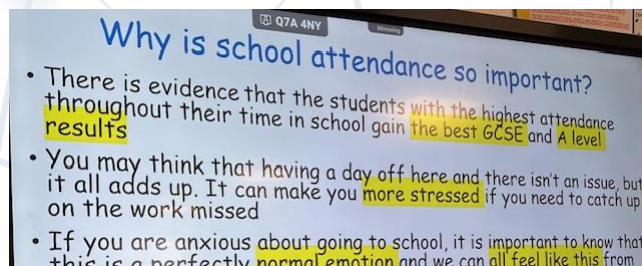
PSHE Curriculum and a Focus on Resilience



Recent studies indicate a concerning decline in resilience among young people. The negative influence of social media also exacerbates this. To support building resilience in our students we educate our students to effectively navigate modern day challenges.

Each half-term, we integrate different

aspects of resilience into our assemblies and PSHE lessons to foster emotional and mental well-being. Building resilience empowers them to navigate academic pressures, social challenges, and personal growth. Additionally, it enables students to cope effectively with setbacks, view challenges as opportunities for learning, and maintain motivation despite difficulties. Resilient students are more adaptable, open to new experiences, and possess a healthy perspective on adversity, that ultimately prepares them for success both in school and in later life. To support us, I ask that parents encourage your child to develop resilience by promoting positive thinking habits and not just to 'give up' when things are difficult. This includes promoting the importance of good school attendance and helping students to build strong social connections.



STEM Ambassadors. A Great Example of Student Leadership



Our fantastic Yr10 STEM Leaders celebrated British Science Week 2025 with its theme of 'Change and Adaptation' by researching Graphene. They chose activities inspired by the Nobel Prize winning research into Graphene conducted at the University of



Manchester. Key Stage Three students engaged in activities including: isolating Graphene using sticky tape, investigating graphite conducting electricity, a collaboration with the Art Leaders to make a graphene inspired collage. The STEM Leaders presented the findings of their graphene research in Yr7/8 assemblies. Two intrepid Yr7 students challenged their teachers to build a model of the structure of Graphene against the clock, in front of an appreciative Yr7 audience. A great victory, well done to Eniayo Kuye and Thuba Mloyi.

Yr10 Exams after the Easter Break

Year 10 examinations will take place from Tuesday 22nd April for two weeks. These exams will be across all the subjects your child has chosen and provide a valuable opportunity to assess their progress as they reach almost the halfway point of their courses. The results will help identify strengths and areas for improvement, ensuring they are well-prepared for Year 11 and their final GCSE exams.

To support your child in their revision, here are some practical tips:

- ✚ Create a revision timetable
- ✚ Breaking revision into manageable chunks helps avoid last-minute cramming. Your child should be revising for 2 - 3 hours each night.
- ✚ Use past papers and mark schemes
- ✚ Practising exam questions under timed conditions can improve confidence and technique. Your child will have been provided with lots of websites to support this from their class teachers. Active revision is key

- ✚ Encourage your child to summarise notes, use flashcards, or teach a topic to someone else.
- ✚ Minimise distractions
- ✚ A quiet, organised workspace makes a big difference. Turning off phones and social media during study time helps with focus.
- ✚ Take breaks and stay active - Short breaks between study sessions improve concentration, and regular exercise helps reduce stress.
- ✚ Get enough sleep - A well-rested brain retains information much better than a tired one!

We will share the outcomes of these assessments in our Year 10 Progress Check which will be sent home towards the end of May.

Yr7 Curriculum Update. Technology



Congratulations to Mrs Brophy's Yr7 class who have completed their biomimicry mini torches. Students have spent time researching biomimicry and have used nature to inspire their designs. During the practical element the students have familiarised themselves with Adobe Illustrator (CAD) to create their designs, cut their acrylic designs using the laser cutter (CAM) before creating a simple electronic circuit to make their LEDs light up. To finalise the project, students learnt about the industrial manufacturing process of vacuum forming and produced packing to display their torches. Mrs Brophy said 'it

has been a pleasure to watch the creativity, resilience and application of knowledge of this group! I love to hear about students engaged in their learning.

Yr9 Options Evening: Class of 2027

Recently, Mrs Kelly, Assistant Headteacher i/c of Curriculum, hosted a very successful Yr9 Options Evening for parents and students. The event featured a marketplace with valuable course information and a talk in the hall. This followed a series of assemblies from subject leaders and taster sessions to give pupils an



opportunity to learn more about Key Stage Four courses on offer. The hall was jam-packed [see picture] and this reflects the commitment of parents in their child's education. Thank you to everyone who attended and contributed to making the evening such a success. We are exceptionally proud of our academic curriculum that delivers outstanding GCSE outcomes every year. We will inform students of their allocated courses in June. It is worth noting that whilst we do our best to accommodate first choices, this may not always be possible.

St Damian's... More Accolades for our Community

We have some GREAT news. We're thrilled to announce that we have won two awards, **The Innovation Award and the Social Enterprise Award**,



all thanks to the incredible success of our Share Day Fundraising!



A huge thank you to all our budding entrepreneurs for not only raising valuable funds for charity but also embracing the spirit of teamwork, creativity, and generosity. Your hard work has made a real difference - and now it's being recognised!

A small but mighty group from our choir also attended the event, and as always, they were absolutely amazing! This pupil-led performance was a true credit to their dedication and talent. A huge thank you to Evie Gough for leading the choir so brilliantly—your hard work and leadership truly shone! Well done to everyone.

Yr11 Drama Update

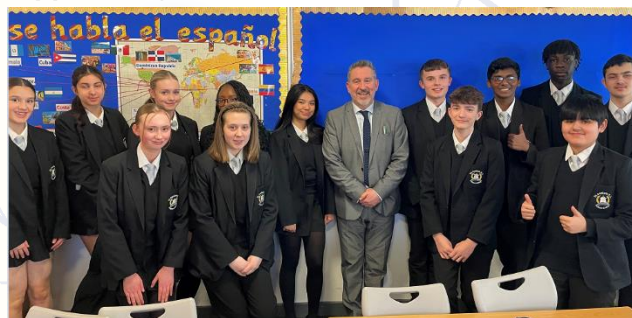
I am thrilled to share the incredible achievement of our Year 11 GCSE Drama students, who have just completed their first GCSE exam! They showcased their talent, dedication, and maturity as they performed challenging monologues and duologues from mature, thought-provoking plays.



The students bravely tackled complex themes and delivered powerful performances that left the external examiner truly captivated by their skill and commitment. Miss Brookes couldn't be prouder of the hard work, time, and effort each student put into preparing for the exam, and she was deeply impressed by the professionalism and maturity they exhibited throughout the day. Well done to all our Yr11 drama stars – you have truly shone! And well done to Miss Brookes, who has worked wonders with this cohort.

Language Leaders. A Great Student Leadership Opportunity

In February, Ms Allison, a leader in the Languages department, had the honour of reading nearly 40 applications from Yr10 students hoping to be Language Leaders. She was overwhelmed with the interest, as she said that in her previous school, she was lucky to receive 5. Furthermore, Ms Allison said that the applications were well written and conveyed a real maturity and understanding from our students about the importance of studying foreign languages. After much consideration, the language department elected 16 Language Leaders who are already donning their silver ties. This term they hope to launch a study club and vocabulary intervention programme for KS3 students to help improve their scores on their vocabulary tests. I look forward to hearing about their successes.



Confidence in the Community

Congratulations to all those Yr6 students who are starting the school in September. As has been for a sustained period of time now, St Damian's continues to be a heavily over-subscribed school. This simply reflects the confidence in our parents of the staff here to provide a first-class education. We will continue to ensure that we provide a safe environment, where there is high quality teaching of an academic curriculum, where pastoral care is exceptional and formation opportunities for our Catholic faith are strong. Sadly, there will be a significant number of parents who will be disappointed that their child didn't get a place. We had nearly 600 applications for 165 places, however, nearly 70 families who put St Damian's as their first choice didn't get a place. I will be attending 3 days of appeals in June for those parents who still want their child to attend St Damian's.

Staff Profile

In this newsletter I have included 2 great members of our support team. I hope that you enjoy reading.

- ✓ *Mrs Mistry, Learning Support Assistant.* Upon completing my degree at the University of Manchester, it was obvious to me that working in the secondary school environment was my calling. Before joining St Damian's in January 2024, I had worked at three other local schools in a variety of roles. I was extremely touched by the warm welcome I received from the SEND department, students and parents following my appointment. One thing that struck me immediately was the inclusivity of the school. Although St Damian's has Catholicism at the heart of everything it does, a huge effort is also made to recognise, understand and celebrate auspicious time periods in all

faiths. In a world that can at times seem increasingly divisive, this is wonderful to be a part of, and it is just one of many things that makes St Damian's such a special place to work. I consider it a huge privilege to be part of such a fantastic community and I will always endeavour to support and help as many students as I can. When not in work, my interests which include reading, travelling, yoga and following many sports including football, cricket and tennis.

- ✓ *Mr Chadwick, Exam Invigilator & Lunchtime Supervisor.* I joined the St. Damians community after 44yrs as a youth and community worker/ manager. I had also worked in different industries before going into youth work full time. My role as a youth worker was engaging young people into positive activities through various programs and outdoor activities.

This role led me into managing the Duke of Edinburgh Award (DofE). Within this role I tasked myself to try and deliver the award in all schools, this included St. Damians. I started working here after leaving my youth service position. Starting as a lunchtime supervisor and as an exam invigilator, working with young people was always my passion and I now could keep working with them. I get on well with pupils and I'm here to help and support them and it makes me feel appreciated when they tell me I have helped them.

I have worked in many different types of employment and organisations but never in a place where the emphasis is on community spirit and caring for each other young or old (like myself). I feel I've been very lucky to have been accepted into this community by the staff and young people and this is without doubt the best school/organisation I have worked in with such caring people.

St Damian's has Talent!

A few weeks ago, some of our students participated in a Legacy National competition in Birmingham.



These students were Brooke Akers, Florence Rowbotham and Bonnie Waring. I am delighted to say their team won the national competition in Hip Hop U14s and Brooke was also in the team that were named national champions in U14s Lyrical Dance. The 3 girls were also in the squads placed second in Level 3 U14s Cheerleading and also in U14s Level 2 Cheerleading. I have been informed that it was an amazing weekend and the three girls will go on to compete internationally in Florida in 6 weeks time with their Cheer and Dance Company, Tycoons. I hope you will join me in saying well done to the 3 girls, who are using their talents to succeed. I wish them all the best in Florida.

World Book Day, 6th March



Special Agents of St Damian's Manor have been well and truly using their investigative skills this World Book Day! A 'Disaster at St Damian's Manor' Cluedo-style activity has been keeping our agents very busy visiting lots of different departments across the school solving clues. We hosted a 'case reveal' in our Elizabeth Jones MBE Literacy Hub, whereby students solved the final and most



important clue to solve the case! WHO DUNNIT? Final accusations have been collected. And the winners were Isaac Stewart, Elijah Nathaniel, Jacob Cafferkey and Isabella Brazier who won the book prizes. Well done to all involved as we had a plethora of accusations for what happened at St Damian's Manor! The verdict was: Reverend Green had broken in to St Damian's with a rolling pin in the Literacy Hub in an attempt to steal the World Book Day Treasure!



Celebrating International Women's Day 2025

On Friday 7th March, we proudly celebrated *International Women's Day* by inviting the incredible women in our school community to a special breakfast event. This year's theme, "**Accelerate Action**" inspired reflection on the progress made and the steps we can take to empower one another. It was great to see our female staff coming together, as they don't often have the chance, and share a moment of appreciation, conversation, and connection. A big thank you to everyone who took part and made the event so special! For the record, it is my absolute pleasure to work with such incredible women who are the backbone of all the many successes at St Damian's.



An example of service to others....

Anais Parry, in Yr7, has been making bracelets as part of her stewardship school project. She has donated the bracelets to Willow Wood Hospice. There's no charge for them, they are simply in a basket on reception with a little sign that says "*Please take a bracelet for free because I am doing it for my school project on stewardship – have a nice day*". Willow Wood are overwhelmed by her kindness and want to thank Anais for "bringing smiles to our young visitors" – Well Done Anais! A true ambassador for St Damian's.



Parent Governor

Congratulations for Mrs Katherine Hayes, who has successfully been elected onto our governing board as a Parent Governor.

There is also second vacancy on the full Governing Board for a further Parent Governor due to a term of office coming to an end, details are on the school website, closing date is 12 noon Friday 4th April '25. Please contact Mrs Biggs on admin@stdamians.co.uk if you have any queries.

Finally, St Damian's... a strong Catholic community that can transform lives

A few weeks ago, I received an email from a parent of a girl in Yr9, Gracie Hartwell, who recently joined our school. It reads as follows.

"Hello, can you pass my comments to headteacher please. Just wanted to say thank you to ALL the staff and how amazing you all are. Gracie has settled in so well she's glowing, I've never seen her so happy, she's made so many friends and commented on how teachers, admin staff have asked her if she's ok and if there is anything they can do to make her feel comfortable. The difference in her is incredible in such a short space of time. So again, thank you from the bottom of my heart"

I spoke to the Gracie's mum and she was delighted. This email is one of many the school receives from parents. I share these with the great staff of St Damian's. I hope that Gracie continues to thrive at St Damian's

And on that really positive note, have a happy, holy and peaceful Easter break!

Mr Logue
Headteacher