



St Damian's R.C. Science College

# ALUMNI

NEWSLETTER



## A Message from our Headteacher

It gives me great pleasure to introduce you to our first ever Alumni Newsletter. At St Damian's our Mission Statement is clear. It is to develop the whole child so that they leave our community as happily educated citizens ready to positively contribute to the common good of society. A strategically focused careers plan is integral to this. I am extremely proud to say that our careers provision, spear-headed by Mrs Henshaw, is simply exceptional.

And that brings me to say a few words about what our provision has entailed over the past few years. This has been comprehensive and permeates all years and the mantra is *'it's not just for Year 11 pupils'* is plain to see.

We have had a plethora of external employers in the school over the years which included well-known companies like Rolls Royce, Cadent and NatWest. These are massive companies and reflects our ambitions to ensure that our pupils have suitable experiences of potential employers. During National Careers Week pupils are given opportunities to develop their entrepreneurship skills through, for example Dragon's Den or the Apprentice. Part of our ASPIRE days focus on learning about Sixth Form Colleges or local apprenticeships. All of this is complemented by real life experiences. For example, Year 9 pupils have visited the University of Bolton and many of our Year 10 pupils partake in 'raising aspirations' programmes run by Ashton and Loreto Sixth Forms. To move to the next stage, we are going to be promoting work experience for Year 10 pupils.

The impact of this comprehensive provision is two-fold. Firstly, pupils are able to make informed decisions and choices about their futures. Secondly, we raise pupils' aspirations through educating them on the importance of learning and achieving their potential in school. As a school community we are proud that we have a low NEET figure, reflecting the fact that pupils have had independent and impartial career guidance. We have also amassed a range of accolades including achieving Stage Three of the IAG award and the National 'Most Progress of a School' at the Careers and Enterprise Awards. These demonstrate, if needed, our commitment to Careers education.

As the purpose of this Newsletter is to highlight and celebrate the Careers of our Alumni, I pay tribute to Careers that I believe should be recognised at this time; these are nurses, teachers and the police. These professions are classed as key workers. Nurses, during this Global Pandemic, have been on the front-line along with others working in the NHS ensuring that they are saving lives. In this inaugural Alumni Newsletter, we feature Olivia Billings, who was part of the class of 2011, who works at Tameside General Hospital. Secondly, I have to say a few words about teachers. Teachers, alongside the many support staff have continued, against all odds to keep schools open to educate pupils and keep them safe. As Headteacher I am proud to say that we feature Caitlan Bostock, who is a teacher at Our Lady of Mount Carmel school in Ashton, in this inaugural newsletter. And finally, the police service who have been out there ensuring the safety of the public during these challenging times.

Finally, I am excited about current plans that are being developed behind the scenes. So, what are you waiting for? Share your careers with us with a few words. We will be delighted to hear from you. Although the two examples above are local, I have no doubt that there are Alumni all over the world who can share your careers with us and others. You never know, it might re-kindle old friendships! Watch this space!

Mr Logue



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# St. Damian's Key workers

St Damian's recognises the outstanding hard work and dedication of all the key workers in our Alumni who have worked tirelessly to support others in our communities both at local, regional & national level. A huge thank you to you all. You have been truly inspirational! We asked some of our Alumni to share their experiences during the pandemic. We have had a fantastic response from the police, health & education. Thank you to those of you who have shared your experiences with us.

## Primary Teacher

### What does your role involve?

My role involves delivering a curriculum and providing a learning environment that will inspire, excite and nurture children through a crucial stage in their development. I aim to provide experiences that will develop children's curiosity and knowledge about the world around them. Although I now specialise in Early Years, my three years teacher training equipped me with the essential skills and knowledge to teach all areas of the curriculum. I am responsible for leading Religious Education across school. This involves ensuring the effective delivery of the RE curriculum across all year groups as well as working closely with Father Simon to support children on their own personal faith journey.

### What advice would you give to pupils considering a career in your profession?

Get involved with as much voluntary work in schools as you can. You can do this by contacting primary schools in your local area. Try to get experience across different year groups to find the age range you would love to teach. Take up leadership opportunities in school such as becoming a prefect to build your confidence and help you find your voice. Try to find new hobbies that will push you out of your comfort zone and broaden your life experience.

### What have been the challenges of working during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Teaching in Early Years is an interactive experience between the teachers, pupils and learning environment. Children are encouraged to follow their own interests and take control of their own learning. It has been difficult to provide the unique learning experience online that we are

used to sharing in a classroom learning environment. Some of the activities that are so essential and so well loved in Early Years such as singing have now been limited due to COVID-19 restrictions. As a school community, we love to welcome parents and carers into our classroom to strengthen home school links and share pupil achievements. We have found alternative ways for parents to be involved in their children's journey through school.

### What have been the positives of working during the COVID-19 pandemic?

We have come together more as a school community to overcome the difficulties that COVID-19 has brought us. As a school we have placed the wellbeing of staff, pupils and their families at the centre of all we do. We believe that happy learners make successful learners.

### Finally, what did you enjoy most as a pupil at St. Damian's?

St Damian's gave me so many opportunities outside of the school curriculum that built my confidence and inspired me to achieve. I made the most of Drama, Music and PE extracurricular opportunities that gave me personal skills that I am now able to draw upon when teaching in the classroom. I particularly loved Science at St Damian's as I was taught by staff who showed such passion for their subject, inspiring me to do the same.

Caitlin Bostock  
Class of 2011

## Police Officer

### What does your role involve?

As a frontline police officer, I respond to emergency calls from members of the public. Our primary role is to protect the public and ensure the law is applied.

### What advice would you give to pupils considering a career in your profession?

I would very much encourage anybody who is considering a career in policing to sign up as a special constable or join as a PCSO to get a flavour of what the role entails. The role is both challenging yet rewarding and is different each day

### What have been the challenges of working during the COVID-19 pandemic?

At a time when the police service is already facing the challenge of responding to high demand with fewer resources, they were tasked with the key role of educating the public in the importance of adhering to the COVID-19 restrictions and enforcing the legislation in relation to this where necessary. This placed a huge extra pressure on the service, as the existing demand / usual work of a police officer still needed to be completed. As the pandemic continues and further, more prolonged restrictions are put in place, the public are becoming increasingly frustrated with the additional rules and this has resulted in a small number of people who have challenged the rules and the police.

This has brought with it, its own set of issues for the police to deal with and balancing the public health requirements with the need to maintain public trust has been a continuing and evolving challenge.

### What have been the positives of working during the COVID-19 pandemic?

The appreciation shown by members of the public towards key workers has been a rewarding part of working through the pandemic. Working through the pandemic has also been a welcome distraction from missing family members from other households who I have been unable to see due to the COVID-19 restrictions.

### Finally, what did you enjoy most as a pupil at St. Damian's?

I thoroughly enjoyed my time at St Damian's, the staff within the school were excellent and I had a very wide circle of friends who made me look forward to going to school. The people are what makes any establishment what it is and the people at St Damian's certainly make it a very special place. I have very fond memories of my time there.

Adam Payne  
Class of 2004





# St Damian's R.C. Science College

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## Critical Care Nurse

### What does your role involve?

My role as a Critical Care Nurse involves caring for patients who are very sick requiring high dependency care and ongoing medical attention in order to keep them stable and alive. My role entails working within a highly pressurised environment, making detailed head to toe assessments of the patients, administering crucial medication, overseeing and ensuring the correct use of life support machines such as ventilators, assisting doctors when carrying out high risk procedures, and monitoring the observations of the patient. I am responsible for the overall needs of my patients whilst admitted onto our unit such as maintaining their hygiene, feeding, and managing their overall comfort.

### What advice would you give to pupils considering a career in your profession?

To work within the Nursing profession, I would highly recommend that you work hard and push yourself to the best of your abilities in your GCSEs. If you are considering doing A Levels, I would definitely recommend studying Biology as it would give you an overall grounded knowledge of a huge part of the profession before starting your Degree. I would recommend picking up voluntary work within both the hospital and community setting if possible, and if possible, working as a support worker alongside registered nurses to grasp an understanding of the career you are going into. I would certainly advise pupils to pursue their career in nursing if they are passionate about helping people the way I am, as it can be a very emotionally tough job but also an extremely rewarding one.

### What have been the challenges of working during the Covid 19 pandemic?

For me one of the main challenges of being a front-line worker during the pandemic was being deployed to work on Critical Care with no previous experience within that field of Nursing at that time. In addition to being a new member of staff on the unit and looking after the critically unwell which was a new challenge in itself to me, myself and my team also faced the worry of catching the infection ourselves and bringing it home to our families, knowing that the infection can affect some people a lot worse than others. We have to wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). There was a national shortage of PPE during the first wave of Covid 19 which was also a huge worry. As front-line workers it was also a huge challenge enforcing social distancing in and out of the work environment. Some of the staff on our unit had to isolate on their own for a huge amount of time away from their families who were at risk of catching Covid 19.



### What have been the positives of working during the Covid 19 pandemic?

There has certainly been a lot of positives to take from working as a front line worker during the pandemic such as learning lots of new skills as a registered Nurse and also feeling well respected by members of the general public within the profession. Patients that have got better have had the upmost praise and are very grateful for the care we have given from admission to discharge, also relatives and friends of our service users are very thankful to us which is very rewarding.

### Finally, what did you enjoy most as a pupil at St.Damian's?

I enjoyed a range of subjects including Science and English Literature which I feel have been very beneficial to my career. My favourite subject was Religious Studies, I feel having a particular interest in this subject has helped me be understanding and empathetic towards my patients in my job today! I didn't achieve the highest grades but with the help of my amazing teachers and a career goal set in my head, I made sure I did everything I could, to get to the career I am in today.

Olivia Billings  
Class of 2011.



## Have you got a key worker story to share?

Our next edition of St. Damian's Alumni Newsletter will be in Summer 2021

Please tell your story & inspire our pupils!

Please email:  
[alumni@stdamians.co.uk](mailto:alumni@stdamians.co.uk)

## Are you a St Damian's pupil at university?

Please tell us about your studies, your achievements & your future plans!

Please email:  
[alumni@stdamians.co.uk](mailto:alumni@stdamians.co.uk)

## Are you a St Damian's pupil who is currently doing an apprenticeship ?

Please tell us about your work, your achievements & your future plans!

Please email:  
[alumni@stdamians.co.uk](mailto:alumni@stdamians.co.uk)

## Are you a St Damian's pupil at college?

Please tell us about your current studies, your achievements & your future plans!

Please email:  
[alumni@stdamians.co.uk](mailto:alumni@stdamians.co.uk)



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## Police Community Support Officer



### What does your role involve?

My role involves visiting victims of crime, doing initial crime enquiries such as house to house and CCTV opportunities, high visibility foot patrol around our designated beat, liaising with local schools and businesses, working with our partner agencies such as the council, housing associations etc.

### What advice would you give to pupils considering a career in your profession?

Do the best you can with your GCSEs and further education, participate in volunteering opportunities within your community, listen and learn to understand the differences people may face and why they may behave the way they do.

### What have been the challenges of working during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Working long hours and having to explain the rules to people over and over again. Trying to keep myself, my family and my colleagues safe as well as the many members of the public I meet every day.

### What have been the positives of working during the COVID-19 pandemic?

I feel privileged to have been able to help many people during this difficult time by providing food bank vouchers, donating food packages from local supermarkets to those in need and in particular preventing an illegal rave in order to keep us all safe! I feel very lucky to be in the job I am. I am lucky to not have been furloughed like many other people over the country. Our jobs don't stop, even if there is a global pandemic!

### Finally, what did you enjoy most as a pupil at St. Damian's?

I loved the support I received at St Damian's by all the teachers. I wasn't an A\* pupil but I worked hard and with the help of my amazing teachers, I got the grades I needed to do the job I'm in now! My favourite subject was definitely Drama! Oh, how I miss being creative and performing!!

Chloe Kerrison  
Class of 2013



## Detective Sergeant

### Serious & Organised Crime



### What does your role involve?

Investigation of serious and organised criminality including large scale drugs and firearms trafficking, money laundering, human trafficking. I also specialise in locating wanted people.

### What advice would you give to pupils considering a career in your profession?

Do it! Joining the police was never something I wanted to do but just fell across it upon graduating from university. It took a while to get to where I am now, having gone from response policing, to CID to Detective Sergeant. With technology coming to the fore in organised criminality, current pupils will probably have some skills that I don't have!

### What have been the challenges of working during the COVID-19 pandemic?

The work hasn't changed during covid-19; however, it has been challenging because I haven't been able to see my friends and family as much in my time off to release some of the stress, and I haven't been able to enjoy my hobbies as much. The worse thing has been I am a coach for the British police rugby team and our tour to Australia was cancelled!

### What have been the positives of working during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Although I haven't been able to see my extended family and friends, I have been able to spend more quality time with my partner and son. Not being able to see people I love and do things I enjoy, has helped me focus on what is important in life and is something I look to address, once Covid is behind us.

### Finally, what did you enjoy most as a pupil at St. Damian's?

Everything! I loved school and had a great time. From playing on the football, rugby, basketball and athletics teams, to doing Buggy Malone under the direction of Mr Tuck! I found all the teachers supportive and it was just a nice place to be. Being at school is a time I really enjoyed and have a lot of fond memories of.

James Gross  
Class of 2000



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# The Class of 2020

**After the unexpected early finish to their GCSE courses due to the lockdown in March 2020, we have been delighted to hear from our 2020 Leavers who have embarked on college courses and apprenticeships during the current pandemic.**

**Thank you to those who got in touch!**

**We miss you!**

## College

**Zoë Borbély** - Music Performance (BTEC), History and English Literature at ASFC  
**Leonardo Boulton** - ICT at OSFC  
**Jack Campbell** - History Computer Science English Language  
**Serena Craig** - Animal Care at Tameside College  
**Orla Donlan** - Psychology, Law, Business and Sport at OSFC  
**Ronin Giron** Biology, Chemistry, Psychology at Loreto Sixth Form College  
**Georgia Hadfield** - Psychology, Sociology and English Literature at ASFC  
**Luke Hatton** - Biology, History & Politics at Blue Coat Sixth Form  
**Robyn Kilbourne** - Psychology, Applied Science, Sports Science at ASFC  
**Hubert Kulik** - ICT at ASFC  
**Claudia Liles** - Business, English Literature & Fashion & Textiles at Loreto Sixth Form College  
**Noel Lowe** - Physics, Maths and Psychology at ASFC  
**Sophie Park** - Maths, Physics, Chemistry and Philosophy at OSFC  
**Maisie O'Donnell** - Business, Law and 3D Design & Technology  
**Mia Porter** - Early Years Education at ASFC  
**Alexandra Roberts** - Maths, Chemistry and Psychology at ASFC  
**Weronika Weiher** - Public Services, Oldham College  
**Renee Wilson** - Law, Psychology, PE and Dance A Level at OSFC

## College

**Leah Worthington** - Biology, Geography, Theatre & Drama, AS Core Maths at Loreto Sixth Form College  
**Lorell Wright** - Psychology, Religion, Sociology and Health and Social at OSFC

## Apprenticeships

**Tom Hoyle** - Football. Fleetwood Town FC  
**Harry Joynes** - Greater Manchester Police  
**Hollie Price** - Teaching assistant at a Special Needs School

## Employment

**Niamh Corcoran**  
**Cameron Barton**





## St Damian's R.C. Science College

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### What did the Class of 2020 enjoy most about St. Damian's?

'The care the teachers had for their students. Giving the best possible lessons at all time and the students there. Zero tolerance on bullying and if there was any kind of bullying it would be sorted right away'

'The teachers were always helpful and wanted you to do your best, I could always tell they wanted us to achieve great things and that they really cared'.

'The welcome of the people who work and studied there'

'Class mates'

'I personally would say the day to day life because you don't realise it whilst in St. Damian's but once you leave, you start to notice that you're missing something and I think that missing thing is the daily life in St. Damian's'

'Certain people whom I spent my 5 years with'

'The close knit classes you used to have where everyone was friends with everyone'.

'The teachers were amazing'

'I enjoyed having really close student-teacher relationships. It made the lessons much more enjoyable having built up a good relationship with my teacher and knowing I could always ask for help with anything, even matters outside of school'.

'The environment; a close relationship with teachers and people in your year group'

'The relationships I formed there, with both friends and teachers. I made friends that will last me a lifetime, and I learned things at school that I try to carry into all aspects of my life'

'The sense of community. Our year group (and school in general) was very close'.

'As a pupil at St Damian's I enjoyed the continuous support from the staff during all my years at St Damian's and the advice they gave me which led me on the right path'.

'The good opportunities to take part in everything from Choir to DofE which helped us form new friendships that will last a lifetime. The close community of the school and the good relationship with the teachers which allowed us to not only achieve the best grades possible but also enjoy and get involved in every aspect of school life which will leave us with memories forever'.

I miss St Damian's a lot, I really enjoyed my school experience, school was just the best 5 years. Had the funniest and most memorable times'

'Being with my friends and learning about different real-life situations with the teachers'

Friendship and the teachers'

'I enjoyed the experience and relationships built between teachers and students'.

'I was so happy with all my friends, subjects and teachers'.

'I enjoyed the fact that the teachers would be so kind to us and how they helped us get through our subject by teaching us so well'



### Careers Support

Hearing what our alumni have gone on to do in their careers and life after St. Damian's is a great inspiration for pupils. It complements our careers programme, provides insight and real-life experiences of a variety of employment sectors.

Your experiences can make a real difference to pupils who are unsure which career path might be right for them or how to get into the field you work in.

Career Talks on a wide variety of topics are delivered on ASPIRE Days in October and July each year.

Recently, Alumni Career Talks have been included an Engineering apprenticeship with Rolls Royce & working in Performing Arts.

**Time:** 1 hour

**Group size:** Can be negotiated. Ideally a group of 32 pupils or a whole year group or a smaller group

#### Suggested Format:

Careers Workshop

- Talk
- Set a task or challenge
- Feedback to the pupils on the task
- Question & Answer session
- Pupil Reflection

If you would be willing to help, please would you email [alumni@stdamians.co.uk](mailto:alumni@stdamians.co.uk) We would love to hear from you!





# St Damian's R.C. Science College

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### What do you miss about St. Damian's?

'I never thought I'd say I miss anything about school, but it turns out I miss all of it'

'I miss all the extra-curricular activities a lot, I did a few shows at St Damian's and always loved them and the big end of year presentation evening, things like this haven't been able to happen as much recently and I made lots of friends and learnt new skills by taking part in these and other groups in the school'.

'Less responsibility and most of my mates as well as a few teachers'

'The school hours'

'The thing I miss the most about St. Damian's is probably the teachers because they are the ones who helped to shaped you into the person who you are today'

'Certain people who I don't see any more and the friendships I made'

'The support and relationship you had with your teachers'.

'Everything'

'Seeing my old friends every day'

'Honestly, I just miss the lessons more than anything. They were SO fun and actually surprisingly easy, compared to A Levels now I look back. The whole class used to get on so well and I miss the teachers more than anything'.

'The environment; the close relationship with teachers and people in your year group'

'I miss seeing people on a daily basis that were such a big part of my life (both students and teachers). There wasn't a day of school I didn't enjoy and I'm thankful for the 5 years I spent at St Damian's'.



'I miss a lot of the teachers, as they were extremely hard working allowing us to reach our full potential'.

'I miss the great atmosphere and family unit at St Damian's.

'The food - especially the brownies. I will miss the teachers and the family of a constant class. I will miss all of my friends, but college is a chance to form new bonds and I am grateful for that. I will miss the opportunities, but I am sure there are many more to come.'

'I knew I would miss going to St Damian's, but I didn't think I'd miss it this much, the people, the environment, I loved it'

'The boys and Miss Joyce'

'I miss my friends the most, but even though I went to a different college than them I am still very close with them and see them a lot'.

'I miss so many of my friends and especially the teachers as we unfortunately, due to the circumstances, didn't get the opportunity to say a proper goodbye'.

'I miss studying lots of subjects and I miss all the teachers so much. A lot of my friends I don't get to see anymore because of COVID so I miss them so much too especially because of the short end to our last year'.

'I miss the clubs and activities that they had'

'I miss my friends and teachers'.

### Keep in touch!

We're always keen to keep in touch with St. Damian's Alumni. Whether it's memories of your school days, stories of your travels, career details or reunions. Please email

[alumni@stdamians.co.uk](mailto:alumni@stdamians.co.uk)

- Read the Alumni section of the school website
- Join the online alumni community via Linked In
- Create an online profile
- Keep your contact details up to date
- Connect with old school friends
- Contribute to the Alumni Newsletter
- Register to receive the Alumni Newsletter



### Follow us on Social Media





# St Damian's R.C. Science College

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Miss Joyce

Assistant Headteacher

Class of 1995

**St Damian's Staff has many Alumni actively serving in the school. This demonstrates that the strong attachment and love of the school that has continued to grow from time as a pupil at St. Damian's to time as an employee ensuring that the next generations of St. Damian's pupils continue to grow, develop and be inspired by the unique ethos of St. Damian's Catholic Community.**

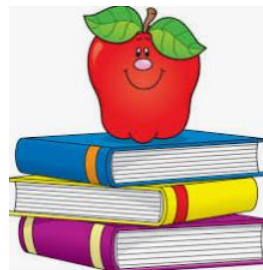
**In the inaugural Alumni Newsletter, Miss Joyce shares her journey from St. Damian's pupil to Assistant Headteacher at St. Damian's.**

Having first walked through the doors as an 11-year-old girl in September 1990, returning as a Newly Qualified Teacher in September 2002, felt like coming home. As a pupil, I had always embraced life at St. Damian's. I enjoyed all subjects, I was selected for the school Netball team, and loved being a part of numerous plays and assemblies. The pinnacle of all these things of course and for every pupil at St. Damian's in the 1990's... The Year 11 Christmas concert! Every year group trying to 'out do' its predecessor! Life at St. Damian's in the 1990's felt like a place of opportunity, excitement and fun.

In September 1995, I started at Ashton 6<sup>th</sup> Form and studied Biology, Chemistry and English Language A Levels. Here, I made lots of new friends but still maintained friendships with 3 girls who I attended St. Damian's with. I really enjoyed all 3 of my A -Levels. Initially I decided to read Law at the University of Liverpool. Then I changed my mind.

Having spent the Christmas break researching different Science based degrees, I re applied to read Biomedical Science at the University of Manchester in January 1998 and started the course the following September.

In the final year of my degree, I had to complete a research project. By this point, I knew that becoming a research scientist was not something I aspired to be, so I selected an education-based project which involved working with primary school children. This, along with returning St. Damian's to choreograph 'Bugsy Malone,' in December 2000, cemented my desire to teach. (Along with a few encouraging words from Mr. Tuck 😊)



Life as a teacher at St. Damian's has been interesting. Teachers who once inspired me to have a love of their subject, suddenly becoming my colleagues and coaching me in a completely different way. Pupils who even after 18 years and the ability to leave you speechless either with their brilliance or fragilities. Having moved through the ranks from an NQT to a Head of Year, Head of Science to an Assistant Headteacher, St. Damian's is still a place that challenges and rewards me, daily in the same way as it did as when I was a pupil.

Having worked under 4 different Headteachers, I have been part of its evolution from a 'good school to a great school.' But in the last 30 years, 2 things at St. Damian's have remained the same...

- 1) St. Damian's is a part of me; I went for another job once and cried in the interview at the prospect of leaving!
- 2) St. Damian's is and always has been about the pupils, which is why everyone I meet with any connection to St. Damian's talks of it being a 'special place'.

This is the same for all pupils past and present at St. Damian's. This is why I am still friends with the 3 girls who were my best friends when I was a pupil. St. Damian's is more than just a place to obtain GCSEs. It's a place where lifelong friendships are made, memories are formed, and life lessons are learned. Having spent a total of 23 years of my life being a part of St. Damian's, I now have to accept what a former teacher and colleague told me when I walked into the staff room 18 years ago...

'Maria, you are a St. Damian's lifer!'

**If you are a former member of staff and would like to contribute to our Alumni Newsletter, please email:**  
[alumni@stdamians.co.uk](mailto:alumni@stdamians.co.uk)