



St Aidan's Catholic Academy

'We believe that God has created each person to celebrate life to the full'



18th October 2018

Dear Parent/Carer,

We have enjoyed a great first half-term. The boys have really embraced the changes that we have made and are thriving in lessons and around the school. I am immensely proud of both my staff and students when I see the quality of teaching and the levels of engagement in St Aidan's. The increased expectations in all things has resulted in a community of learners with a real drive for success.

We ran a very successful Year 6 Open Evening and again our students were excellent ambassadors for their school. A large number of prospective parents have since visited the school during the school day to see us in operation and have been very impressed with the calm, studious environment. I would like to extend this invitation to parents of current students, so that you can see how well our students apply themselves to their work. If you wish to book a visit then please telephone our reception.

I am delighted that our boys and their families have again responded magnificently to our requests to support various charitable causes. The Macmillan Coffee Morning was a real success and our shoe box appeal has just closed with an amazing response.

We've had a very busy half term in both the Music and PE departments. Our Musicians have achieved very well in practical grade exams. Our Orchestra and Folkestra have entertained visitors to the school. Year 7 sang beautifully in the inter-house singing competition yesterday with Corby House coming out on top. Our Football teams have had winning start with Year 8,9,10 & 11 all unbeaten and Year 10 are through to the 3rd round of the National Cup. Our Rugby players are growing in confidence and have attended several tournaments. Students have supported primary sports events and have received excellent feedback. The school sports hall upgrade continues with a new floor being laid during the half-term break.

In school we use the analogy of climbing a mountain to represent the hard work needed to achieve aspirational goals. All year 7 students actually did climb a mountain this half-term. They travelled by coach to the Lake District and ascended Walla Crag, Borrowdale, in very challenging weather conditions. All students were successful and this has really helped them understand what can be achieved with hard work and support.



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The new Sixth Form arrangements are now in full operation and it is especially pleasing to see so many former year 11 students choose to re-join us in the Sixth form. The boys and girls are taught across both St Aidan's and St Anthony's. Our new sixth formers gave themselves the option to progress to the sixth form due their outstanding GCSE results, with 60% achieving the Headline measure of Grade 5 and above in GCSE English & Maths. This outcome was the highest across Sunderland and Washington Local Authority and, as highlighted in the recently published performance tables, would place us towards the very top of the region.

All staff at St Aidan's try their very best to support our boys and it essential that the partnership between home and school works effectively. On occasions it may be necessary for school to contact you or arrange a meeting to discuss your son. If this is the case then we will endeavour to arrange a time that is convenient to both. If you need to contact school then usually your first port of call is the appropriate Head of House. Heads of House can be contacted by telephoning school or via email. Please note that emails sent after the end of the school day will not be read until the following day. Heads of House usually respond during the same working day, but on very rare occasions this is not possible and may not be able to respond until the following day. If you feel that you need a meeting with a Head of House then it is always preferable to arrange the meeting by telephone/email in advance. Due to the busy schedule of a school day, I hope you will understand that it is usually not possible for meetings to be arranged if a parent arrives at reception. But if you do have an urgent issue please phone ahead and we will endeavour to support you at the earliest opportunity.

Celia Woffindin, Chemistry Teacher, retires from St Aidan's today. She has worked hard for the boys for the past 18 years and we all wish her an enjoyable retirement.

Everyone at St Aidan's has earned a well-deserved break. I hope that our boys and their families enjoy their time off and return to school refreshed on Monday 29 October.

Yours faithfully,

K. Shepherd.

K Shepherd

Headteacher