



VERITAS

ST DOMINIC'S SIXTH FORM COLLEGE



SUMMER 2024

EDITORIAL FROM THE PRINCIPAL

The final term of the academic year is always extremely busy, and this one has been no exception. Our Year 2 students completed their time at St. Dominic's on Friday May 10th and their external examinations commenced on the following Monday. These exams are only just coming to a conclusion at the time of writing this editorial with a final Further Maths paper being taken on the morning of June 24th! Hundreds of papers have been taken and hundreds of thousands of words written by our students and we now await the outcome of their efforts in August this year when the results are published. Our second years have applied themselves to these examinations fully and wholeheartedly and despite many facing challenging circumstances, 99.9% of all papers were sat and submitted for assessment. This is a tremendous achievement and should not be underestimated.

A word of congratulations is required for our Examination Officers, Amanda Wardlaw and Susan O'Brien and our superb team of invigilators who are exemplary in their leadership and management of all our internal and external exams and provide an excellent service throughout the year.

For our Year 1 students the University Predictor Examinations at the start of May were their first big test on all the work studied this academic year and formed the basis for their UCAS predictions as they begin to look ahead to their next steps in September 2025. Results were in line with expectation and many students achieved high grades which stands them in good stead for next summer. Following the completion of the UPEs, students returned to class in late May ready to commence their second-year work which provides a firm foundation for the coming year. On July 5th, their final day of the year, they will have their UCAS Introduction Day with guest speakers from a range of employers and universities who will set the scene for the application process that begins in earnest in September. An update on this will come at the start of next year.

This term is always busy in terms of the recruitment of new staff for September and, unlike many institutions in London and indeed around the country, we are fully staffed for September – a marker of our success and reputation as a College. We hosted a New Staff Induction Day on June 21st with all new appointees joining us for a programme of training and specific departmental time and a report on this can be found inside this edition.



Andrew Parkin • Principal



EDITORIAL FROM THE PRINCIPAL

The refurbishment of the lower ground floor of the Hume Building is on-going at this time and is on schedule for an early August finish. The re-configuration of the lower ground floor will make a significant difference to our classroom offer in this building providing bright and modern teaching and learning spaces. This is an exciting development for us thanks to a £1.5 million pound grant from the Department of Education.

The Skills Seminar and Luncheon was a great success just before the May Half Term recess. We welcomed Bill Watkin, CEO of the Sixth Form Colleges Association as our keynote speaker and guests from the local Chambers of Commerce, Universities, the voluntary sector and employers from across the Capital, as well as a number of our former students who are currently doing degree apprenticeships. The event, organised by Assistant Principal, Naomi Ross, was a tremendous success and afforded our subject leaders the opportunity to connect with various employer links to start addressing the skills agenda more carefully. The LLC was packed for the lunch and, following a tour of the site by our Student Executive Team, guests enjoyed the opportunity to sit down and discuss the possible collaborative opportunities for the year ahead. The Skills Agenda will form an important part of our next Ofsted Inspection in the coming 12 months and I am grateful to all who attended and to Naomi for organising such a high-profile event.

Linked to the skills agenda, I am very pleased to report that we have, once again, been awarded the Quality in Careers Award, following a rigorous assessment process. This award, you will recall recognises 'excellence' in all that we do in terms of our Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance. It is the 'gold standard' award for the sector and acknowledges the fantastic work that goes on in all areas of the College to support the CEIAG agenda. Our Careers Leader, Anna Scarampi, and her assistant, Lisa Harper, worked tirelessly for 6 months to prepare the assessment folders ready for external verification which took place just after Easter. The whole College was delighted to achieve the award which is for another three years and I am grateful to Anna and Lisa and all our colleagues for their hard work in achieving this for St. Dominic's once again.

EDITORIAL FROM THE PRINCIPAL

This editorial is being written with just a few days to go to the General Election. The impact of the result could well 're-shape' and 're-fashion' our national education provision for at least 10 years to come.

At the end of an academic year it is always sad to say farewell to a range of colleagues who are retiring or moving on and this year is no exception. A list of colleagues is included in this edition but I know so many of you will want to thank them for their years of dedicated service to the College and wish them all the best for the future.

Finally, I was delighted to represent the College at the Episcopal Ordination of my Parish Priest, Mgr. Jim Curry on June 18th at Westminster Cathedral. It was a splendid occasion with over 250 Archbishops, Bishops and Clergy present from all over the UK involved in the Ordination which was conducted by the Cardinal, His Eminence, Vincent Nichols. Bishop Jim has been very supportive of our College for many years and I hope to welcome him back to celebrate Mass for us at various points in the coming academic year. A copy of the letter from the Holy Father appointing Bishop Jim to the Episcopacy is included in this edition of Veritas.

And so another academic year comes to an end! Thank you for taking time to read each edition of Veritas and for taking an interest in the students and staff of St. Dominic's. It continues to be a real privilege to be the Principal of this fantastic College.

A level results are published on August 15th and College resumes on Tuesday August 27th. I hope that you all have a lovely summer break and I look forward to the year ahead and all that it will hold for us, possibly in a new political era too!





FRANCIS, BISHOP, SERVANT OF THE SERVANTS OF GOD, to our beloved Son, **JAMES PAUL CURRY**, of the clergy of the Metropolitan Archdiocese of Westminster and hitherto parish priest of Our Lady of Victories in the Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, named as Auxiliary of the same archdiocese and chosen at the same time as titular Bishop of Ramsbury, greeting and Apostolic Blessing.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour (Is 61:1-2, Lk 4:18-19). Accepting our differences and rejoicing that, as children of the one God, we are all brothers and sisters (*Fratres Omnes* 279), this task has undoubtedly become more important and necessary, so in turning attention to the needs of the Westminster flock, our venerable Brother Vincent Gerard Cardinal Nichols has petitioned for a further Auxiliary Bishop to help him in the work of his diocese.

We are thinking of you then, beloved Son, who, as you are already fulfilling many responsibilities in the diocese, should now undertake episcopal duties. Therefore, on the advice of the Dicastery for Bishops and by Our Apostolic power, we appoint you Auxiliary of Westminster and at the same time, we name you as titular Bishop of **RAMSBURY**, with all the rights and obligations attached to this office.

We permit you to receive ordination from any Catholic bishop outside of the city of Rome, observing the liturgical laws; you must first make the profession of Catholic faith and swear the oath of fidelity towards Us and Our Successors, according to the Code of Canon Law.

My beloved Son, we urge you to use all your energy in working in harmony and unity to complete the work of this Sacred Church. We beseech Almighty God to grant that, with the intercession of Blessed Mary ever Virgin and St Joseph, the Christian faithful of the diocese will flourish through the Word of Christ and through active charity.

Given at Rome, at the Cathedral Church of St John Lateran, on the twenty-second day of April, in the Year of Our Lord two thousand and twenty-four, the twelfth of our Pontificate.

Franciscus



The Right Reverend James Curry

Auxiliary Bishop of Westminster

Titular Bishop of Ramsbury

STAFF FAREWELLS

We will be sad to say farewell to the following members of staff and wish them all well on their new ventures:

Colleague	Role
Christopher Bevan	Teacher of English
Susan Firth	Head of Psychology
Harinder Gill-Behl	Laboratory Technician
Sue Lugton	Senior Laboratory Technician
Robert Penney	Head of Philosophy
Damien Rajendram	Head of Chemistry
John Rubinstein	Teacher of Maths
Devshi Varsani	Head of Physics

Chris Bevan joined us in 2022, having stepped down from his post as Assistant Headteacher at Watford Girls' Grammar School. We are grateful to have benefitted from his enormous experience and wealth of knowledge accumulated in over 35 years of teaching. The students have enjoyed his warmth, his authority and his certainty, and his colleagues have had a training course in positive thinking and the power of encouragement. Chris is an erudite intellectual who speaks in anecdotal and engaging form. He is moving on to other interests and hanging up his teaching hat - we will miss him and we hope he has a rip-roaring time.



Christopher Bevan - Teacher of English

**Georgina Clyde -
Head of English & Modern Foreign Languages**

STAFF FAREWELLS

Damien joined the Chemistry Department in September 2022, after leaving St. Dominic's to study Chemistry at Durham University eight years earlier. He immediately impressed us as a first-rate Chemist and as a natural Head of Department, displaying a disciplined, mature approach that belied his years.

As a teacher, Damien swiftly established a high level of trust among his students and skillfully utilised that rapport with his classes and across the entire chemistry cohort to great success. He has been particularly good at spurring on our Chemists to use their Chemistry knowledge in a competitive environment. For instance, a record forty students gained awards - including seven gold and twelve silver - in this year's Chemistry Olympiad. He has also instituted a team of five crack-chemists to represent St. Dominic's in the prestigious Chemistry Race competition at Cambridge University - on both occasions the teams finished 25th out of 90, beating some notable schools. Also, 65 Year 1 chemists have recently put themselves forward to attempt the Cambridge Chemistry Challenge, almost a third of the cohort.

Damien now leaves St. Dominic's to teach in Japan, ten years after first arriving. He will no doubt follow closely the fortunes of his beloved Liverpool FC in their new era and we extend our best wishes to him in his.

Michael Hornby – Teacher of Chemistry



Damien Rajendram – Head of Chemistry

STAFF FAREWELLS



Susan Firth - Head of Psychology

Susan has been a Psychology teacher at St. Dominic's since 2001. She has taken on many roles during her time including setting up PE A-Level in 2004 before moving solely to Psychology teaching and becoming Head of Psychology in 2013. She has also had many other roles throughout the College during her time including Teaching and Learning Leader, Wellbeing coordinator and was a staff governor for 13 years.

Susan has always taken a keen interest in sports at St. Dominic's and along with a group of students was able to volunteer at the aquatic centre for the 2012 Olympics and join the victory parade outside Buckingham palace. Susan will be retiring from teaching at the end of the 2024 summer term to spend time with her family and grandchildren in Hampshire. We wish her a happy and restful retirement.

Robert has been Head of Philosophy at St. Dominic's for 6 years moving to sixth form teaching after completing his training teaching Religious Studies in a secondary school in Crystal Palace. As well as teaching Philosophy, during his time at St. Dominic's Robert also helped develop the excellence programme and Oxbridge preparation provision, and worked as a Teaching and Learning leader focused on the digital classroom as well as developing a classroom teaching tool called the Open Earth Academy. He will be moving to Sheffield and taking a few years out of full-time teaching to continue developing this platform. Robert will also remain head of the Association of Philosophy Teachers so will not be leaving Philosophy teaching entirely. We wish him the best of luck with his new ventures.

Sarah Halon - Head of Ancient and Modern Studies



Robert Penney - Head of Philosophy

STAFF FAREWELLS

We are incredibly grateful to John for all he has contributed to the Maths Department and College over the last three years. He is great mathematician and a wonderful teacher. His enthusiasm for the subject rubs off on everyone around him, students and teachers alike.

In lessons he loves to challenge students with fantastic problem-solving tasks - getting everyone engaged and thinking about Maths as soon as they enter the room. *“You know the teacher’s a legend when it’s either the usual way or the ‘John Method’ and everyone opts for the ‘John Method’.”*

In his distinguished teaching career so far, John has been a Head of Maths, Vice Principal and most recently, Principal of Woodhouse College. He has also been a Lead Inspector for Ofsted and a school governor. This wealth of experience has been invaluable. The Maths teachers have learnt so much from John to improve their own pedagogy; observing his lessons, using shared resources and listening to his ideas.

The students have benefited hugely from his teaching and advice, particularly when it comes to UCAS applications. Through the Excellence Programme, John has helped so many students to gain a place at top universities - some queuing for hours to get their personal statements checked! His trips to Oxford University have been inspirational for so many students.

We will all miss John hugely but count ourselves extremely lucky to have spent three years in his company.

“John is the G.O.A.T. I’ll always remember to draw a diagram when I don’t understand a problem in life. Best of luck in the future!”

Matthew Walsh - Head of Mathematics



John Rubinstein - Teacher of Mathematics

STAFF FAREWELLS



Sue Lugton – Senior Science Technician

After 13 years at St. Dominic's and 30 years as a Science Technician, our Senior Technician, the heart of the Science Department, our go to person for work or personnel advice, has decided to hang up her white coat.

We lose a vast amount of knowledge with her departure. Sue is our trips guru, no one can organise a trip like Sue.

Her role as staff Health & Safety Representative kept the whole College safe, especially coming back from COVID lockdown.

We will miss her jars of yummy rhubarb chutney but wish Sue a wonderful retirement. Our St. Luke's walks and warmups will never be the same.

Anita Ravji - Laboratory Technician

After eight years as a Science Technician at St. Dominic's, Harinder is leaving the College and relocating to sunny Berkshire. A new job, new house, new life and friends outside the M25. It will not be the same around here without her and we wish her every success on her new adventure.

Anita Ravji - Laboratory Technician



Harinder Gill-Behl – Science Technician

STAFF FAREWELLS

Devshi joined the Physics Department at St. Dominic's in 2014, bringing with him a wealth of knowledge and experience from his 25 years of teaching physics at Preston Manor. Throughout his time here, Devshi has diligently supported and guided countless students, helping many secure places to study Physics or Engineering at the best universities in the country.

More recently, Devshi has taken on the role of Head of Physics, effectively leading the department and providing continued support to both staff and students. He has been instrumental in offering our students the chance to visit the Large Hadron Collider at CERN in Geneva—an incredible experience that many students will remember for the rest of their lives.

Devshi retires at the end of this academic year, having contributed to the success of thousands of students over 35 years. He leaves behind a legacy that will continue to benefit our community for years to come.

Craig McDonagh – Assistant Principal/Teacher of Physics



Devshi Varsani - Head of Physics

NEW STAFF

We welcome the following staff who have joined us recently or are joining us in September:

Colleague	Role
Abdullali Abdullah	IT Technician CTS
Yasmin Burhan	Teacher of Business Studies
Stephanie Campbell	Teacher of Business Studies
Julija Dmitrijeva	Finance Assistant
Paul Eddicott	Premises Assistant
Freya Hunter	Head of Sociology
Jeyathevi Manivannan	Laboratory Technician
Nicola McGeady	Head of Chemistry
Milan Patel	Science Technician
Sanjay Patel	Security Assistant
Luke Ray	Head of Physics
Alan Ritchie	Teacher of Geography
Marissa Rule	Head of Philosophy
Anna Simonova	Teacher of Psychology
Anne Marie Thomas	Teacher of Maths
Jason Zhong	Teacher of Maths



STUDENT EXECUTIVE REFLECTION

Over the course of this calendar year as Head Boy, I have found the most rewarding aspect to be the new people I have met. I feel my own confidence and my public speaking has vastly grown with all the guests I have met this year - ranging from many of our successful alumni to a newly appointed Baroness. Throughout the year, our Student Executive has really gelled well, helping coordinate many exciting events alongside the student body. I am really proud of the work we have done as a team this year and I am looking forward to seeing what the next year holds for us!

Ben Moriuchi – Head Boy

Being Head Girl at St. Dominic's has been a truly wonderful experience. Whether it is because of the inspirational people I have had a chance to meet and converse with, or the opportunities I have had to be at the forefront of the charity work we do here at St. Dominic's, the College has been an incredibly enriching environment. In particular, the bake sale for Team Domenica where we raised £700 for the cause comes to mind. It allowed us to take action and make a difference after being inspired by Ms Monkton's visit, demonstrating that at St. Dominic's if you want to be part of the solution and take initiative anything is possible!

Zoya Horan – Head Girl

Being the Deputy Head Boy at St Dominic's College has been a profoundly enriching experience, allowing me to deepen relationships across the College community, from the lunch ladies to the security staff. One of the highlights was hosting the Easter egg hunt, where we successfully raised over £200 for St. Luke's Hospice, demonstrating our collective spirit of generosity and care. St. Dominic's has not only shaped my character but has also inspired me to give back. As I approach the end of my role, I will be committed to expressing my gratitude through actions that contribute to making our College an even better place to study each day.

Manav Bhatt – Deputy Head Boy

As the year has progressed, I have learnt to take an initiative to work harder and harder to achieve what I want and independently learned to manage my time and fight the need to procrastinate. Looking back, I have made some wonderful friendships which I hope will last a long time and have made countless memories, as well as achieving multiple milestones with the executive team in our different endeavours. Overall, I am really proud of us and I hope our second year as students of St. Dominic's will be just as wonderful as we near exam season.

Hyderia Sheikh – Deputy Head Girl

NEW PODS

Work on the new pods was completed over the February half term. Each pod comfortably provides seating for 24 students. The pods were designed by a local company based in Harrow called Educopod Limited. The design is ground-breaking - not a single brick was used in their construction.

Recycled pallets have been modified allowing them to bolt together in a Meccano style and, should the need arise, the pods can be dismantled and re-assembled in another location. The energy efficient and innovative design has been ten years in development. Educopod have been recognised for their pioneering design and have been invited to enter the Earthshot Prize, an annual awards ceremony hosted by Prince William, recognising organisations that have developed solutions to help combat climate change. There are five separate categories, the winner of each category will receive £1 million grant to further develop their product, so far over 3000 nominations have been received, with 45 projects making it to the awards finals. The new pods are the very first construction project to use the Educopod pallet system and should they reach the awards ceremony, being held in Singapore, this will put St. Dominic's on a global stage.

Tom Colgan - Director of Finance and HR



REFURBISHMENT

Work on the lower floor refurbishment started in the February half term. Unique Construction are undertaking the works and they have previously worked on numerous construction projects around the College.

The deadline for completing the works, September 2024, means we are up against a tight deadline, this has necessitated working at weekends and in the evenings. The work will be completed in two phases. The Staff Room and three adjacent classrooms were the first to be gutted. Additional teaching space in the new pods has allowed a seamless transition in so far as timetabling is concerned.

When completed, the refurbishment will have a general staff room, Humanities staff room with kitchen facilities and a further eight classrooms. The 'Fishbowl' will be replaced by an open plan meeting area.

Tom Colgan - Director of Finance and HR



CHAPLAINCY UPDATE

The Summer Term has been busy with lots of fundraising events running right up until the end of term offering plenty of opportunity for students to get involved and support charities and our local community.

Confirmation

On May 25th 2024, a beautiful sunny afternoon, at Our Lady & St Thomas of Canterbury, ten of our St. Dominic's students, experienced a profound milestone in their spiritual journey as they received the sacrament of Confirmation. This sacred ceremony, presided over by Bishop John Sherrington, marked their full initiation into the Catholic Church. It was a joy to watch this rite of passage for our young people as they committed to living out their lives as true witnesses of Christ.

"It was moving and beautiful experience that has allowed me to further develop my relationship with God and I thoroughly enjoyed the day." - Emily-Jane.



Simisola Adekugbe

Alice Camara

Emily Drazin

Karol Gromak

Jonathan Hadmon

Oliver Joseph

Ben Moriuchi

Connie O'Mahony

Leanne Sava

Amelie Stewart

CHAPLAINCY UPDATE

Baptism

Amelie Stewart, a Year 2 student, was baptised by Fr. Roger Taylor, Vocations Director at the Diocese of Westminster, on 19th April in our Chapel at the Friday Mass. The Chapel overflowed with warmth and emotion as friends, family, and staff gathered to share this special moment in Amelie's faith journey.

Rosary Group

On Wednesday lunchtimes throughout the May the month of Our Lady we gathered in the Chapel to pray the rosary. The rosary is a scripture-based prayer that summarises the great mysteries of the Catholic faith. The repetition of the rosary leads one into restful and contemplative prayer and the repetition of the words helps us to enter into the silence of our hearts.



St. George's and St. Anselm's

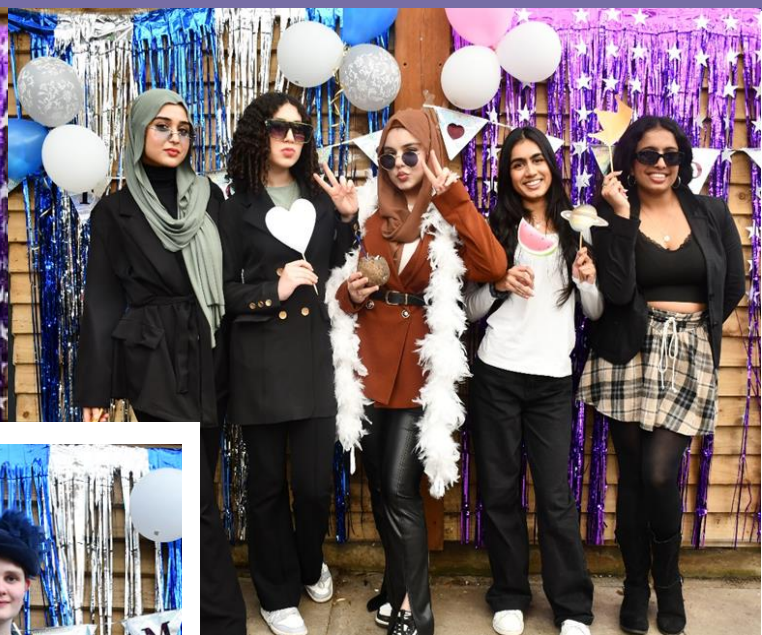
This term some of our students who are interested in a career in education have offered their time to work with primary school pupils at St. Anselm's and St. George's. For the past half term, they have been attending each week and helping with different classes. We are grateful to both schools for partnering with St. Dominic's to make this possible and I think we have found some primary school teachers for the future!



Primary Schools Volunteering Team

CHAPLAINCY UPDATE

FANCY DRESS DAY



Fancy Dress Day is always a day of fun and excitement at St. Dominic's. Students arrived in their fancy dress to raise money for our Lourdes Pilgrimage. Over £400 was raised on the day, thanks to everyone who dressed up and helped to make the day one of the highlights of the year.



CHAPLAINCY UPDATE

VOLUNTEERING DAY - FAITH IN ACTION

This year students came together for a special event 'Annual Volunteering Day'. This much-anticipated day is dedicated to giving back to the local community and taking care of those less fortunate than ourselves. Students gathered at various charities and community initiatives across the borough ready to make a positive impact. Activities ranged from joining the Harrow Litter Picking team out in the local area to visiting community groups such as Crossroads Stroke Club in North Harrow. Some students also assisted at the local baby bank, sorting donations and preparing items of clothing for families in need.

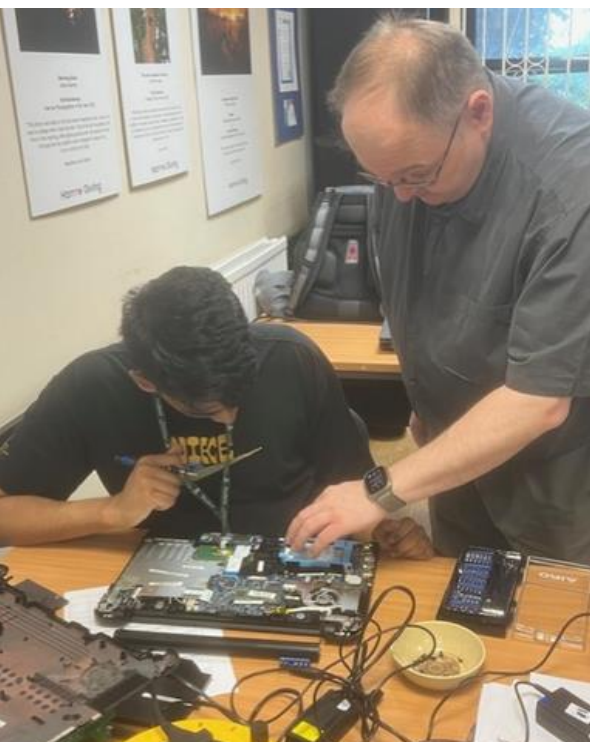
The experience provides a unique opportunity to step outside the classroom and engage with real-world issues, fostering a deeper understanding and empathy for those around them. Students returned to St. Dominic's with a sense of accomplishment and a collection of new experiences. They shared stories of their efforts, reflecting on how the day's work has not only helped the community but also enriched their own lives. The day leaves a lasting impression on the students and reinforces the value of giving back and the impact they can have on the world around them. Our thanks to all the charities and community initiatives who welcomed our students and made this day possible. We are always keen to find placement opportunities so please do get in touch if you would like students to help your community or charity with a volunteering effort next academic year.

Crossroads Stroke Club, Stanmore Country Park, Gardening Team, St. Joseph's Pastoral Centre, St. Luke's Hospice, Harrow Litter Pickers, Sustain IT, RSPB Nature Survey, Blossom Baby Bank.



CHAPLAINCY UPDATE

VOLUNTEERING DAY - FAITH IN ACTION



CHAPLAINCY UPDATE

VOLUNTEERING DAY - FAITH IN ACTION



CHARITY EVENTS

THE PASSAGE

Seventy first year students signed up for the annual fundraiser for The Passage one of the UK's largest centres for those who are homeless or insecurely housed. With their sleeping bags and wrapped up nice and warm on a chilly July evening students slept on the floors of the college grounds. Despite the cool temperature, the students' enthusiasm never waned. They bonded over the experience, gaining a deeper appreciation for the comfort and security often taken for granted.

By morning, the group had not only raised substantial funds but also heightened their collective empathy and resolve to make a difference.

The Sleepout for the Homeless event was a powerful reminder of our ability to impact lives through compassion and solidarity. Over £800 was raised on the evening!



CHARITY EVENTS

ST. LUKE'S WALK

The sun shone for the annual St. Luke's Walk on the 9th June as the St. Dominic's Team undertook the 5km walk around the hill. St. Luke's is a charity providing specialist end-of-life and palliative care to people in Harrow and Brent, enabling them to achieve the best possible quality of life.

"Our vision is a world where everyone with an incurable illness can access the care they need to live well, to know that their family and carers are supported, and to die with dignity in the place of their choice."

The walk raised over £1,000 and St. Luke's were delighted with the donation. Thanks to everyone who came along - including our four-legged friends, who seemed to enjoy the long walk as much as we did!



CHARITY EVENTS

RACE FOR LIFE



On Saturday, 15th June, the St. Dominic's Team laced up their trainers and hit the Heath for the annual Cancer Research Race for Life - a 10km run around Hampstead Heath. With our energetic psychology teacher, Celia Coleman, leading the charge, the team trained hard for this exciting event. The total raised was £2,787 – well done Team St. Dom's for a great effort and a fantastic total. You can still sponsor the team by clicking the link below.

<https://fundraise.cancerresearchuk.org/team/st-doms-runners>



CHAPLAINCY UPDATE

LOURDES PILGRIMAGE

This summer, 30 students from St. Dominic's will travel to Lourdes in South-West France to volunteer as 'Redcaps,' assisting pilgrims at the Sanctuary of Our Lady. During this weeklong pilgrimage, they will push wheelchairs, attend Masses, and serve those less fortunate. The days will be long and the work both physically and emotionally demanding, but past experiences have shown it to be life changing.

Supported by a dedicated team of staff members - Paul Logue, Sam Clarke-Henry, Sian Thorpe, Susan O'Brien, Ryan Whitehurst, and our Principal Andrew Parkin - we are confident that our students will return with inspiring stories and a deepened faith and commitment to service. We are also grateful to the Harrow Catenians and Deo Duce for their financial support, making this trip possible.

This pilgrimage is a highlight of the year, and the Lourdes group has worked hard to raise the necessary funds. If you would like a prayer intention taken to the grotto, please send it in a sealed envelope to Clare Castell and it will be placed there during the pilgrimage.

St. Dominic once said, *"Arm yourself with prayer rather than a sword; wear humility rather than fine clothes"*. His words remind us that our true strength lies in our faith, our humility, and our commitment to serving others which we have done in abundance this year. It has been a real pleasure to work with our young people at St. Dominic's who inspire me each and every day with their willingness to work together to help others. Thank you to everyone who has supported the fundraisers and joined in with the events. I will keep you all in my prayers this summer and look forward to seeing everyone after the summer break.

Clare Castell - Chaplain

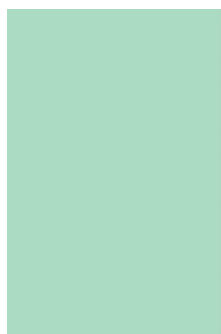


ITALIAN EXCHANGE STUDENTS



We were delighted to meet our new group of Italian students on 28th June 2024. We look forward to welcoming Augusto, Elena, Vittoria, Lorenzo, Allegra, Virginia, Anna and Diego who will be joining us at St. Dominic's in September. They are coming from various schools near Milan and this programme has taken place for over 25 years. They will join our new Year 1 cohort and study with us for six months.

Naomi Ross – Assistant Principal



LIFE AT ST. DOMINIC'S THREE PEAKS CHALLENGE

On Monday 1st July, a group of 42 seemingly random students appeared in the canteen with rucksacks and raincoats, ready to go on what would be the trip of a lifetime. After a long coach journey, we arrived at the beautiful Pen Y Pass, right at the foot of Mount Snowdon: not that we could see it! The rain clouds hiding everything, we hurried inside the hostel with our bags, and settled in for the night. Bright and (too) early the next day, we began to get ready for our first peak with group leader Avnish banging on our doors. The sun that morning was most certainly a scam: the rain set in about an hour into our climb and persisted on and off the entire way to the top. Little did we know, this would be the best weather we would have all week! The views, despite being covered by clouds half the time, were stunning, and after a long, slippery and steep climb, we reached the summit at around midday. Luckily for us, the rain held off for our descent, and we even managed to get some sunshine! After a 13km total hike, we reached the train station at Llanberis, where we were picked up by our coach driver Malcolm and began the five-hour drive to our second youth hostel in the Lake District. Exhausted by our day's hike, everyone was relieved for a good meal, shower and a comfortable bed for the night.

By 6am the next morning when Avnish made his daily round banging on doors, we were well rested and ready to get started on what we all hoped would be the easiest mountain of the three, due to it being the smallest: we couldn't have been more wrong. Scafell Pike, standing at 978m, proved to be the biggest challenge of them all. We began by walking 30 minutes from the coach to the foot of the mountain and set off for about an hour before the rain set in; after that, it didn't stop. The hike was much longer than the others, and we trudged for hours through the valley through the persistent wind and rain. As we got higher, the weather worsened, and the group had to split: the first half continuing to head for the summit, the remaining on track for the second highest peak in the area. After hours of climbing over rocks and up incredibly steep paths, both groups made it to their respective peaks and began their descent. The long path up somehow felt twice as long down, but with a bit of music, some delirious jokes, and our waterproofs on, we made it back to the coach alive. Soaked through, we sat, sweaty and damp, for over seven hours on the coach before making it to our final (and favourite) hostel in Fort William, Scotland.



LIFE AT ST. DOMINIC'S THREE PEAKS CHALLENGE

Although by the late hour we arrived, anywhere with a warm shower and a bed would have been appreciated! On Thursday, two groups set off about 45 mins apart, up our third and final mountain of the week. The rain already pouring when we set off, we hiked up Ben Nevis for about four hours before reaching the snow-capped summit, immensely proud to be at not only the top of the UK, but our final peak. Morale was sky high, not diminished by the piercing cold, the torrential rain and the 50mph winds we walked down in, and we were all incredibly grateful for the warmth of the hostel and a mini-celebratory meal when we returned! Once showered, we headed to Fort William for our official celebration dinner, where we thanked and said goodbye to our incredible mountain guides, some of whom had climbed all three peaks with us. After some free time to explore the town, we headed back to the hostel for our final relaxing evening to end our trip.

On Friday we made the 11-hour journey back to London, most of us sleeping on the way! This trip was an adventure for all, but its primary purpose was to fundraise for the charity Kujali, who support children through education in Uganda. Despite the trip being over, any donations would still be appreciated via the link below. Please donate directly to any student on this page and it will be sent to Kujali:

<https://kujaliafrica.enthuse.com/cf/stdominics3peaksin3days2024>

A huge thank you to all staff, coach drivers and mountain guides who made this trip possible. We had the most incredible time and could not have done it without you.

Lilia Annon - Year 1 Student



GEOGRAPHY

EUROPEAN BANK



On Wednesday, 3rd July 2024, 20 students visited the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. The EBRD boasts its credentials as one of the most sustainable buildings in Britain and it did not disappoint! Once kitted with ID tags, students were treated to a tour of the many floors of the Bank Street building, learning how the building has been designed in a manner to reduce energy emissions and ultimately work towards net zero emissions. Students were fascinated by the architectural plans of the buildings and strategies that have been successfully implemented and the careful planning of the layouts to ensure equity for all staff in the building.

After a gorgeous lunch, students were treated to three presentations. One from the building manager and lead planner for the rebuild and sustainability push; another from the director of travel to examine how the international work of the bank has been impacted by Covid and a push for reducing air miles; and finally, from the Chef who prepared our lunch. He discussed the food waste aims of the EBRD and the targets being implemented over time. After careful questioning from students, we finished our day. Thank you to Lisa Harper for all her help in putting the visit together. We hope to welcome the EBRD to the College at a later date.

Paul Logue – Head of Geography

HISTORY OF ART UPDATE

On Wednesday 20th March we took our second year History of Art students to visit a couple of galleries. We started off at the Tate Britain which houses a number of works that we study as part of our nineteenth century avant-garde topic. These include Pre-Raphaelite paintings such as 'The Awakening Conscience' and 'Claudio and Isabella' by William Holman Hunt and Powell Frith's 'Derby Day', which no-one really likes except for Queen Victoria and other Victorians! The Tate Britain is a collection of great British artists so we were also able to see more recent works such as 'No Woman, No Cry', by Chris Ofili and this made a great impression on the students because you cannot appreciate its detail until you see it in person.

After this we went to the Courtauld Gallery and, as it was such a lovely day, we were able to walk there along Embankment and take in Auguste Rodin's 'Burghers of Calais' which is outside the Houses of Parliament. The Courtauld houses some great works, collected by Samuel Courtauld, which is why there is such an eclectic mix. We saw more nineteenth century artists that we have been studying but this time from France, including Monet, Renoir and Seurat. However, the highlight of the trip (as it always is) was Manet's 'Bar at the Folies-Bergere' which is a fantastic depiction of a barmaid standing behind a bar, with a variety of drinks and commodities lined up in front of her, suggesting that she too is for sale. Our tour guide, Millie, was absolutely brilliant and she explained how she has been able to make a career through her studies of History of Art by working in the gallery.

We all had a fantastic but exhausting day and we were able to continue with the visit by discussing what we had seen in class the following day.



The History of Art Bears, Michelangelo, Bacchus and Venus really enjoyed their day too. Here they are posed in front of 'The Bath of Psyche' by Lord Leighton.

HISTORY OF ART UPDATE

On Thursday 28th March and we were visited by two of our ex-students, Jennifer Mak and Sanaer Madden, both of whom are at University studying our subject. Jen is in her second year of Art Conservation at Lincoln and this was her second visit to give advice to students about what it is like to study at University. Sanaer is in her first year at Cambridge and was happy to talk about her dissertation, which is on one of the works we study in Year 2 entitled 'Apollo', a mythological statuette by Antico (Pier Jacopo Alari Bronacolsi). She explained how she was able to handle the work and while doing so noticed how the base was made of wood, not bronze (something the gallery had missed). This is actually really important as bronze is much more expensive. As a result, the gallery unscrewed the base for her and they found out that it had been crudely attached by someone drilling into the foot of the statue! Sacrilege!!



HISTORY OF ART UPDATE

Jen also had a great story to tell. She has managed to get her a second-year work placement at the British Museum and was able to work on two important pieces. One was a Michaelangelo cartoon, which is the current high point of the exhibition currently on at the museum (until 28th July) entitled 'Michelangelo: The Last Decades'. The work is called 'Epifania' and was a charcoal drawing which is very hard to maintain and restore but Jen gave us the lowdown on how they had to fix the back with small sheets of paper in the Japanese style of preservation. The other work she restored - this time it was smaller and all down to her - was a scroll which will feature in the Silk Road exhibition which opens at the museum in September.

It is always fantastic when past students come to visit and we really appreciated them taking time out to talk to us and publicise what a great and varied subject History of Art is.

Angela Inglese – Head of History of Art



HISTORY OF ART

VISIT TO THE V&A AND NATIONAL GALLERY

On a lovely warm and sunny day we took our small group of Year 1 History of Art students to two museums in London to see works that we are studying at first hand. One of the key advantages of this is that they are able to write about their initial reactions to the works which they can then use in constructing essays during the course and, hopefully, in the exam. The examiners love to see a student's own individual and enthusiastic reflection on what a work looks like up close.

The first stop was the Victoria and Albert Museum which has a great collection of artefacts from around the world, including fashion, textiles and sculpture. It is a place that we take our History of Art students in order to introduce them to Religious Sculpture in the Renaissance as it houses a great number of plaster cast copies such as Michelangelo's colossal 'David'. As always, they were blown away by the sheer size of this work which is 14 feet tall and sits on a six-foot-high plinth. Even though it is just a plaster copy of the original, which is housed in Florence, it still packs a punch!



Other works which they made notes on were Donatello's and Verrocchio's versions of the same subject, along with the famous Baptistry Door relief panels by Brunelleschi and Ghiberti. Part of a competition, both artists had to enter the same subject, that of the 'Sacrifice of Isaac', in a work that had to include the main players (Abraham, Isaac and an angel) along with other key components of the bible story – a mountain, an altar and a ram. The Renaissance began with these works so it is interesting to compare them and see clearly how their compositions mark a change from International Gothic pattern, disproportion and drama to Renaissance balance and beauty.

HISTORY OF ART UPDATE

The museum also houses a great collection of Auguste Rodin's work, which he left to the nation in gratitude for the British soldiers who fought alongside the French in WWII. Rodin is our Specified Sculptor for our studies of Nineteenth Century Avant-Garde art and seeing HIS work on the same day as the more traditional renaissance sculptures really brings home what an experimental artist he was. His introduction of fragmentation to the figure and his exploitation of the qualities of bronze with his super smooth works really paved the way for the modernism that followed.

After this we went to the National Gallery where the students finally got to see a favourite from our Year 1 studies of Identities, the 'Arnolfini Portrait' by Van Eyck, which is great but always a bit of a letdown as it is so small! However, Renaissance portraits such as Bellini's Doge Loredan and Raphael's Pope Julius II proved very inspiring (see below for a picture of us posed in front of the latter). The students were really pleased that the day was very helpful because we saw works that they are studying right now and that brought home to them why this period is such an important and unique one in the field of art history.

Angela Inglese – Head of History of Art



HISTORY OF ART

COLNAGHI VISIT

History of Art travelled to London on June 12th as a class to visit the Saatchi and the Colnaghi galleries, the two focal locations of the long-running dispute about which is the oldest art gallery in the world. In 1760, the Colnaghi established itself as a reputable gallery in Paris, France. Under the original name, “Cabinet de Physique Experimental,” Giovanni Battista Torre opened the gallery and marketed scientific equipment, literature and prints.

Years later Torre’s son moved to London and laid the groundwork for the gallery’s current location through creating a sister location. The French Revolution’s impending threat forced the French shop to relocate and merge into one with the London site. By engraving pictures of old masters, the Colnaghi did turn into a print selling business, giving more people access to these exquisite paintings.

We made a quick stop at the Saatchi, where they were in the early stages of testing out a new contemporary oil painter, before entering our primary destination. We also happened to come into them taking pictures of a chameleon as it moved through a vibrantly abstract piece that was positioned on the floor, luring him to change colour as he went by.

90% of the work sold at contemporary art dealerships, as per the information we received, is created by contemporary artists. Dealerships usually attempt to represent a variety of artists and develop connections with museums and collectors whose interests align with the represented artists. Notably in recent years, the Colnaghi is one of the few significant galleries left that specialises in ancient to modern art, providing its customers with professional guidance and assistance through their engaging exhibitions and event schedule.

Astrid Mckenny-Engstom, Senior Sales Associate, gave us a tour of the gallery and pointed us to the current exhibitors, which featured a landscape by Claude Lorrain and a portrait by Francis Bacon- two very popular painters among the exam board! The estimate value of the two separate pieces that were in front of us exceeded \$10,000. After attending a French institution, Astrid advanced through a number of internships, one of which was at the Louvre. She underlined the value of these work experience opportunities as they helped her build her way up to work at the most prestigious art gallery in history and go on to get two Master’s degrees.

The History of Art class visit to the Saatchi and Colnaghi galleries in London offered a unique glimpsed into the history and operation of art galleries. The visit highlighted the galleries’ commitments to preserving the trade of art dealership and keeping the essence of old masters alive whilst also embracing contemporary works.

Skye-Louise Greasby - Year 1

CULTURAL DAY



PHYSICS IN ACTION

VISIT TO CERN

From 5th to 7th June, Physics students travelled to Geneva, Switzerland to visit CERN, an organisation that owns the Large Hadron Collider (LHC), the world's largest and most powerful particle accelerator.

On day 1, we were welcomed by a local tour guide, who enlightened us about the history of Geneva. For instance, we learnt about one of the Genevan founders of the Red Cross, Henry Dunant, who won the very first Noble Peace Prize in 1901 for his humanitarian efforts. We were also able to see the landmarks in the city, like the Jet d'Eau, a large water fountain that shoots water up in the air at 200 km/h! After dinner, we took a trip to the Nations area, home to the United Nations Office.

Our second day began with a visit to St. Pierre Cathedral, offering breath-taking views of the city from its north and south towers, two of Geneva's highest points. The afternoon was dedicated to CERN, featuring various exhibitions on fundamental physics topics like quantum physics and astronomy. We then took a short coach ride to France to tour the Compact Muon Solenoid (CMS).



PHYSICS IN ACTION

VISIT TO CERN



On the tour, we learnt that the LHC is a 27 km ring consisting of superconducting magnets, which has the ability to accelerate protons close to the speed of light. It contains four key detection sites: CMS, ATLAS, ALICE, and LHCb. The purpose of the LHC is to test theories and predictions made in particle physics and to discover hidden features of our universe through detecting and analysing particle collisions. The LHC started operation in 2008 and has since made monumental discoveries. Undoubtedly, the most important discovery made was the Higgs Boson in 2012. The Higgs Boson is coined the ‘God Particle’, as it exists everywhere in the universe, and is responsible for giving everything mass; stars, planets, and life can only exist through interactions with the Higgs Boson.

At CMS, we went 88 metres underground to take a look at the infrastructure used to make these ground-breaking discoveries, including the data storage room and the detector itself. The detector is 21 metres wide and 15 metres high and is designed to detect a type of particle called muons very precisely. It contains the most powerful solenoid magnet ever made, boasting a magnetic field strength 100,000 times that of Earth’s!

On the final day, we took a cable car to the 660-meter-high peak of Mont Salève, providing yet another spectacular panorama of Geneva, as well as the Alps.

Overall, the trip was surreal and inspiring as it showcased how pioneering technology and global data communication at CERN lead to new developments in physics. I would like to thank Sue, Anita, and Devshi for making this unforgettable experience possible!

Rian Chotai - Year 1 Student

BIOLOGY/CHEMISTRY

VISIT TO THE ROYAL SOCIETY

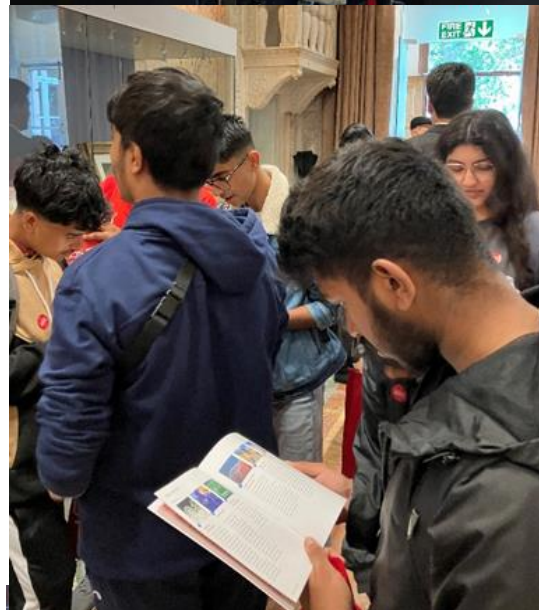
During the first week of July, some 40 Biology and Chemistry students visited the Royal Society's Summer Science Festival in the heart of St. James, which is an independent Scientific Academy, dedicated to promoting excellence in Science for the benefit of humanity.

After a stroll, taking in some of the delightful sights that Central London has to offer, such as the London Eye, the Palace of Westminster, Downing Street, and Buckingham Palace, students explored the packed halls and libraries in the Royal Society, where they discussed cutting edge science, research and careers with numerous eminent Scientists, as well as participating in a range of hands-on scientific investigations.

Amar said, "it was inspirational being able to discuss current research and careers with such great scientists". Aditya added that "all the science exhibitions were great but by my favourite was the research investigating the use of short wavelength ultraviolet light to cut away unwanted tumour cells in the brain without harming the surrounding healthy tissues".

Carol Woods - Head of Biology

Odo Avwenagha - Teacher of Chemistry



SPORTS ROUND UP

It has been a great year for sport at St. Dominic's. Gym memberships have grown and lunchtime sports have been as popular as ever. Our teams have been committed to training and as you will see, this has paid off handsomely. We are proud of all our students who have represented the College at these fixtures and are delighted by the progress they have made in the leagues!

This season we have introduced four new sports to the students at St. Dominic's. These sports comprised of Volleyball, Cricket, Pickleball and Hockey. To start the next academic year, St. Dominic's will be entering into the leagues for Badminton, Basketball, Men's Football, Women's football, Netball and Volleyball. We will also be entering Badminton and Football in the county cups due to their league successes this season.

Throughout the academic year, St. Dominic's students will also take part in intra College sport events from all the chosen sports above. We are also one week into an Archery enrichment programme and the students have really enjoyed this sport, as it is one of the few sports that they can see their progress with every arrow that they use to hit the target.



SPORTS ROUND UP

St. Dominic's sports staff are also looking forward to work with the newly appointed Sports Ambassadors who are the following year one students: Ashleigh Kinsey, Natalia Krauz, Kareena Jalan, Ireoluwa Sangosanya, Aravindha Mathota, Kornel Debicki, Ronit Puspasen and Rian Chotai. Their role will be to support the sports department during lunchtime and after-school sporting activities and other extracurricular events. Whilst being inducted into becoming Sports Ambassadors, the students will be trained in how to safely monitor people using the gym equipment and gain a First Aid Certificate.

On the 4th of July 2024, we will be hosting our annual sports day at St. Dominic's Park. Over 150 students have expressed an interest in competing on the day with another 120 students offering to volunteer. We hope that the British weather holds out so we can have another fun packed day. As last year, we will be raising money for Sporting Mind with a £1 donation to attend the sports day. Sporting Mind helps use sports to support both children and adults with mental health issues. A worthy cause indeed!

Lastly, as sport is a growing department at the College, we are pleased to announce the appointment of Bobby Hodge, who will be the College's new Sports Assistant. Bobby comes with a lot of experience in the sports industry with a degree in Strength and Conditioning and a real passion to increase sporting participation amongst our young people. With Bobby's addition to the team, we hope to put on an even bigger provision of sport for our students at St. Dominic's.

Ryan Whitehurst - Sports Coach and Co-ordinator





SPORTS ROUND UP

FOOTBALL

Football, as ever, is still extremely popular at St Dominic’s and that showed with the commitment that was displayed by the team throughout the whole season. Our students remained undefeated throughout the season playing and winning eight games, with a goal difference of 44 goals scored and only 10 goals conceded. This is an incredible achievement, and we can’t wait to receive the league trophy. We are looking forward to competing in the league and cup competitions next academic year.

FIXTURES	RESULTS	TABLE	MATRIX VIEW					FORM		
			PLD	W	D	L	+	-	+/-	PTS
s Roman Catholic Sixth Form College ST Dom's Football 1STS			8	8	0	0	44	10	34	24
es College West Thames College			8	4	2	2	24	16	8	14
llege (and Coulsdon College) Men's Football Team			8	3	3	2	21	25	-4	12
is Xavier College SFX College Team 1			7	0	3	4	9	27	-18	3
College Men's 1st XI			4	0	2	2	0	4	-4	2
lege 2nd			7	0	2	5	5	21	-16	2



SPORTS ROUND UP

WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

The Women's Football Team were a new team at St. Dominic's this academic year and the girls are absolutely loving being in a team and training well for next season. We played our first fixture against Woodhouse College. It was a nail-biting game, with our team being behind at the end of a very rough and physical first half. They produced such an incredible second half with some amazing goals to then go on to win the game 4-3. The girls also participated in their second and final fixture on 15th May 2024 against Finchley School. The girls played exceptionally well and won convincingly 3-1. Due to the success of the team and the growing numbers, we are excited to enter the women's football team into the AOC league next season and see how well we can do against other Colleges in London.



SPORTS ROUND UP

BADMINTON

The badminton team’s commitment showed throughout the season as these badminton players would travel to Harrow Leisure Centre for training sessions and some games. This paid off as their resilience and determination to succeed shone brightly with the badminton team winning the AOC Team league and going undefeated throughout the season.



FIXTURES

RESULTS

TABLE

MATRIX VIEW

FORM

TEAM	PLD	W	D	L	+	-	PTS
St Dominic's Roman Catholic Sixth Form College Badminton 1STS	4	3	1	0	32	6	10
Leyton Sixth Form College	4	2	0	2	21	19	6
Hills Road 6th Form College Hills Road Badminton Team	2	1	1	0	12	6	4
Newham 6th Form College NewVic Knights Badminton Team	4	0	0	4	3	37	0

LIBRARY AND LEARNING CENTRE UPDATE

The Library & Learning Centre (LLC) has had a busy, productive year, it has been extremely well used by students, with both our study facilities and our books and journals in high demand.

We enjoyed a busy World Book Day, celebrating with a Book Dip with monies raised going to charity, we also held a literary quiz which was completed by over 70 students, and which led to some wonderful conversations about favourite books and reading. It is so pleasing to see our books, both fiction and non-fiction being so well used.

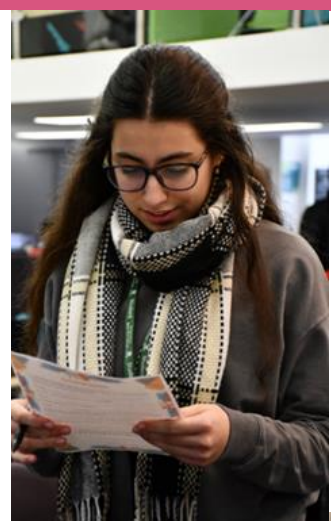
The LLC hosted the prize-giving for the College's National Poetry Day competition, there were some excellent entries by some very talented students. The winning poems were read out at break time and winners received an Amazon voucher. We also hosted the popular Law Lecture given by students and supported by Blake Morgan, and a Physics Lecture, again given by students. All presentations were excellently researched and delivered to appreciative audiences.



Our SharePoint page has been revamped, making it easier to access our catalogue, our extensive range of online databases and e-books and online journals.

Our book displays change regularly to highlight important events taking place on a local, national and global scale, to encourage students to engage with these and read more widely. This year we have highlighted National Careers week, British Science week, Careers events and most recently a football display to coincide with the Euros. Finally, a well-attended Book Club met regularly to discuss a wide range of books from classics to thrillers.

The LLC team – Helen, Lorna & Deborah



LIBRARY AND LEARNING CENTRE

BOOK REVIEWS

Little Women by Louisa May Alcott

Set in the American Civil War, the story follows four daughters - Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy - as they grow and try to find their places in society, with the support of each other and their mother's help as their father is away serving as a Chaplain in the Union Army.

The book is essentially split into two parts. The first covers the girls as they navigate the trials of growing up while holding on to their dreams and aspirations. The second, finds them negotiating and coping with the responsibilities that come with adulthood, including marriage and independence. The first thing I love about this story is how distinct the characters of the four girls are, each with their voice, aspiring for different things. What I truly loved about this book was the girl's growth and character development. As the story progresses, we see how the girls grow and change according to the events that occur in their lives. In the second part of the book, we see how the girls' dynamic shifts as they deal with trying to make those dreams come true and coming to terms with the hand that life deals them.

Alcott's writing was elegant yet haunting at moments, which, in my opinion, was perfect for the era it was written in. Whilst it was mainly about intricately describing the sisters' personalities, I found it gave you a sense of what it was like to be a normal family in the 1800s and subtly showed the feelings of each character. Yet, I found at times I was scanning the book not reading it because of its slow plot. But in conclusion, I fell in love with the book and the characters in it, as I loved their spirit and felt as if I was almost one of them, which is a clear indication of this book's greatness.

Reviewed by Yusra Budraa (Year 1 Student)

Immortals of Meluha by Amish Tripathi

Genre: Historical fantasy or mythological fiction

Summary: "The Immortals of Meluha" follows the journey of Shiva, a tribal chief who discovers that he might be the legendary Neelkanth, the prophesied saviour of the land of Meluha. Meluha is a prosperous civilization facing threats from its enemies and a mysterious plague. As Shiva grapples with his newfound identity, he embarks on a quest to understand his destiny and bring about change in a society bound by rigid rules and traditions.

Key themes in the novel include the nature of good and evil, the pursuit of truth and justice, and the importance of questioning established beliefs. As Shiva encounters different cultures and ideologies, he confronts his own preconceptions and learns valuable lessons about empathy and compassion.

Throughout the story, the clash between tradition and innovation is a central conflict, with Shiva challenging the status quo and inspiring others to embrace change. As he battles enemies and navigates political intrigue, Shiva's journey becomes a symbol of hope and transformation for the people of Meluha.

LIBRARY AND LEARNING CENTRE

BOOK REVIEWS

1. **Characters: Shiva:** The central protagonist of the story, Shiva is a Tibetan immigrant who becomes the chief of the Guna tribe. He is initially portrayed as a skilled warrior with a strong sense of justice. Throughout the book, Shiva's character undergoes significant development as he grapples with his newfound role as the prophesied Neelkanth, the saviour of Meluha. His journey forces him to confront his beliefs, abilities, and ultimately, his destiny.
2. **Sati:** Sati is a Meluhan princess and the daughter of Emperor Daksha. She is introduced as a strong-willed and independent woman who challenges societal norms. Sati's character evolves as she forms a deep connection with Shiva, despite their differing backgrounds and circumstances. Her role as Shiva's companion and confidante becomes increasingly pivotal as the story progresses.
3. **Nandi:** Nandi is Shiva's loyal and devoted friend, who accompanies him on his journey to Meluha. He is depicted as a skilled warrior and a source of unwavering support for Shiva. Throughout the book, Nandi's character remains steadfast in his loyalty to Shiva, even in the face of adversity.
4. **Daksha:** Daksha is the Emperor of Meluha, and Sati's father. He is portrayed as a wise and benevolent ruler who deeply cares for his people. However, his character is also depicted as flawed, particularly in his rigid adherence to tradition and his reluctance to embrace change. As the story unfolds, Daksha's decisions and actions have far-reaching consequences for the fate of Meluha.
5. **Parvateshwar:** Parvateshwar is the chief of Meluha's army and a close confidante of Emperor Daksha. He is portrayed as a skilled strategist and a fierce warrior who is fiercely loyal to Meluha. Throughout the book, Parvateshwar's character serves as a foil to Shiva, representing tradition and duty, while also harbouring a deep respect for Shiva's abilities.

Analysis: "The Immortals of Meluha" by Amish Tripathi stands out as a significant work in the realm of Indian mythology-based fiction. Tripathi skilfully blends elements of ancient history, mythology, and fantasy to craft a narrative that not only entertains but also prompts deeper reflection on themes of destiny, identity, and the nature of divinity.

One of the book's key strengths lies in its relevance to its genre. While drawing inspiration from Hindu mythology and historical events, Tripathi offers a fresh interpretation of familiar tales, breathing new life into age-old characters and settings. By reimagining Shiva, a revered deity, as a mortal hero grappling with his own doubts and insecurities, Tripathi invites readers to reconsider the notions of heroism and divinity.

Moreover, the novel's exploration of societal structures, political intrigue, and cultural clashes adds layers of complexity to its narrative. Through the lens of Meluha's rigid caste system and its conflict with neighbouring kingdoms, Tripathi raises pertinent questions about the nature of power and the consequences of discrimination.

At its core, "The Immortals of Meluha" serves as a metaphorical exploration of human nature and the quest for enlightenment. Shiva's journey from an ordinary man to a legendary figure parallels the individual's search for meaning and purpose in life. Tripathi skilfully navigates the intricacies of spirituality and philosophy, offering readers moments of introspection amidst the thrilling adventures.



LIBRARY AND LEARNING CENTRE BOOK REVIEWS

Comparison: In comparison to other works in the genre, such as Rick Riordan's "Percy Jackson" series, "The Immortals of Meluha" stands out for its unique cultural perspective. While Riordan draws heavily from Western mythology, Tripathi offers readers a glimpse into the rich tapestry of Indian lore.

However, unlike Riordan's light-hearted approach, Tripathi adopts a more grounded and introspective tone. His meticulous attention to historical detail and philosophical musings sets his work apart, making it a thought-provoking read for those interested in delving deeper into mythology and spirituality.

Recommendation: I would highly recommend "The Immortals of Meluha" to readers who enjoy immersive storytelling, rich world-building, and thought-provoking themes. While fans of Indian mythology and historical fiction will undoubtedly find the book engaging, its universal themes of identity, duty, and the search for enlightenment make it accessible to a broader audience.

Additionally, readers who appreciate narratives that blend action and adventure with philosophical depth will find much to enjoy in Tripathi's work. Overall, "The Immortals of Meluha" is a compelling debut novel that offers a fresh perspective on age-old myths and legends, making it a worthy addition to any bookshelf.

Overall Rating: I wholeheartedly give "The Immortals of Meluha" a perfect rating of 5 out of 5 stars. This decision is driven by the book's exceptional strengths and its ability to engage readers on multiple levels.

First and foremost, the plotline is masterfully crafted, keeping readers gripped from beginning to end. Amish Tripathi seamlessly blends elements of mythology, history, and fantasy to create a rich and immersive world that feels both familiar and entirely new.

Moreover, the novel's thought-provoking themes adds layers of depth to the narrative. Tripathi explores profound questions about duty, honour, and the nature of divinity, sparking contemplation and discussion long after the book is finished.

As a lover of mythology, I found the incorporation of mythological elements to be particularly compelling. Tripathi's reinterpretation of familiar myths and legends breathes new life into age-old stories, offering fresh perspectives and insights.

While no book is without its flaws, "The Immortals of Meluha" excels in every aspect that matters most to me as a reader. Its captivating plotline, thought-provoking themes, and reverence for mythology make it a standout masterpiece deserving of a perfect rating.

Reviewed by Sahithi Manikala – Year 1 Student

It's All in Your MOUTH

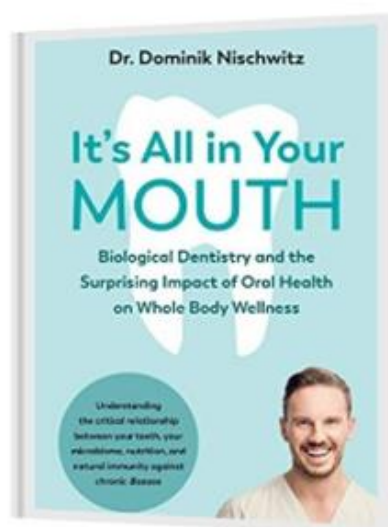
'Our mouths are the gateway to better overall health.'

—Dr. Dominik Nischwitz



Calling all Aspiring Dentists

ST. DOMINICS BOOK REVIEWS



AVAILABLE: IN LIBRARY ●

For all our aspiring dentists, a great find in the library. 'It's All in Your Mouth', is a book that discusses the understanding of the critical relationships between your teeth, your microbiome, nutrition, and natural immunity against chronic disease.

"The future of medicine- and the key to a healthier life starts in your mouth".

For any upcoming dentists this revolutionary book entails

the importance of the teeth and how they are both directly and indirectly linked to many health issues such as: obesity, Alzheimer's, heart disease etc. Dr.

Dominik Nischwitz challenges the approach of treating the body separate to the mouth because it's proven that conventional dental practice can often cause more harm than apparent good. By treating it as one entity, biological dentistry has the opportunity to

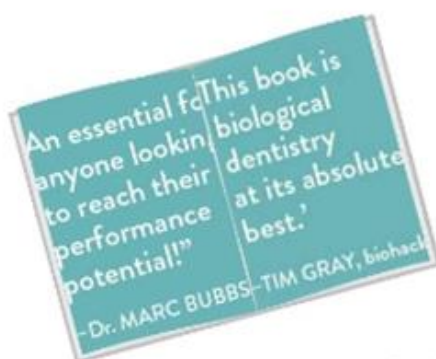
maximise patient care orally, whilst also maintaining the sufficient balance for the body to work at optimum conditions. He gives advice that not only help maintain the efficiency of teeth, but the body additionally.

"The best thing a person can do for their teeth and overall health is to eat well. Because nutrition is so immensely important but at the same time, extremely complicated". It is all linked together!

WHY SHALL I READ THIS BOOK?

Well, if you are contemplating to pursue a career in dentistry, this book will give you:

- A better insight into the dental sector.
- A wider understanding in the scope of your field.
- You most definitely will learn something new.
- You can discuss it in your personal statement.
- And most importantly of all you get to learn about your own body!



"Dentistry is changing. It has done valuable and considerable work as a repair medicine. Whereas, not so long ago, the only possible treatment was tooth extraction, today there are other options available that are not only tolerable but also aesthetically perfect. Modern dentistry is restricted primarily to its working environment: the mouth. Modern dentistry can and should look far beyond this area. A new dentistry should broaden its focus to involve the rest of the body."

CAREERS UPDATE

HOORAY! We did it!

In the last edition of Veritas, we let you all know that we had our re-assessment of the prestigious Quality in Careers Standard award on Thursday, 25th April 2024. The assessor was welcomed to the College with a full day of meetings with the Careers Team, students from both years, teaching staff and senior leaders and the SEN staff. Our Link Governor for Careers Education was also in attendance.

The assessor was very impressed with the Careers Provision across the College in providing high quality careers information, advice and guidance to all our students.

The impact of our careers provision is reflected in the success of our students, career and employment knowledge and the skills they acquire through their curriculum studies and work-related learning, work experience and careers guidance from qualified careers advisers on site.

We are very proud to have been accredited with the Quality in Careers Standard for a third time since 2015 and we look forward to working with our current students and the new 2024 cohort in September and continue working with our stakeholders and employers, alumni and training providers.

Headlines of the Assessor Feedback

"A well organised assessment visit, enhanced by high quality and informative meetings with students and professional discussions with members of SLT and other staff".

"The College strives to constantly improve students' experience – in all areas of the curriculum and seen in personalised support and mentoring, a vast programme of trips and visits including international visits. This is also seen in the approach taken in the careers team of a real sense of not standing still, which results in a positive impact on outcomes and student successes".

"Individualised attention is central to a holistic pastoral approach intended to develop students as well-rounded individuals who are independent learners benefiting from opportunities for personal and skills development beyond their academic achievement".

"Successful embedding of use of the Careers and Opportunities Portal and the system of targeted emails to students relevant to their interest areas but also notifying opportunities to broaden their horizons".

"Excellent support materials such as Student Welcome Pack and comprehensive Careers Booklets developed to accompany careers tutorials".



The College is committed to the 'Quality in Careers Standard Award'
We believe all our students deserve access to *high quality, impartial careers education information, advice and guidance*, to inform them of their choices about their future careers and educational progression.

CAREERS UPDATE

UCAS and alternative destinations

Year 1 students have begun their UCAS journey by starting their application and preparing their personal statement. We encourage all first years to spend some time over the summer researching courses, attending open days and taking part in any work experience, wider reading or activities that can support their application.

Our Year 2 students have finalised their firm and insurance choices for University and we have seen an increase in the number of students who have also been offered places on highly competitive higher and degree apprenticeship schemes. Some students were fortunate to have received multiple offers from prestigious organisations such as KPMG, Deloitte and JP Morgan.

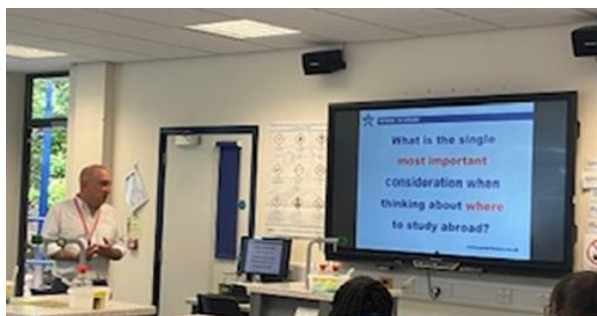
Careers Events

This term, we have been pleased to welcome a variety of speakers to inspire and inform our students about pathways that may have previously been unexplored.

In April, students interested in a career in veterinary medicine, veterinary science or nursing were able to attend a talk from the Royal Veterinary College. Students learned about the qualifications, work experience and skills required for the various courses on offer and what life is like as a student at the UK's largest vet school.

On 14th May we held our annual online UCAS and Alternative Destination talk to help first-year parents and guardians best support their young people through the university and apprenticeship application process.

On 5th June we welcomed Martin Nunez, a Commodities Trader from MTALX. Martin discussed his own career path and the skills needed to succeed in this demanding role. Students were able to hear how pricing works in the commodities market and the impact of political instability and government economic policies. They were even able to handle samples of the goods that MTALX trade!



On 24th June we were pleased to welcome back Mark Huntington from A Star Future to speak to students about studying abroad. Students were able to learn about the benefits of studying overseas including developing 'cultural intelligence', an important skill for global business. Mark also talked about the application processes, fees and nationality and what to consider when applying to study abroad.

CAREERS UPDATE

Careers Ambassadors

Our Careers Ambassadors have been a great support to the Careers Department by acting as a voice for their tutor group and putting forward ideas for future careers events. Here are some of their comments about their role:

Being a Careers Ambassador at St. Dominic's has enabled me to learn in more detail about the options available to us after College, from Degree Apprenticeships to University, as well as how to apply. I also have a greater understanding of the UCAS application process by signing up early which meant I have been able to help my peers with the application process, which has allowed me to strengthen my relationships with peers while also being quite rewarding. The assigned responsibility has meant I have been an advocate in spreading awareness of upcoming specified talks and visits from external speakers, meaning more students have been able to actively make use of opportunities provided to them thanks to greater information provision. Being a Careers Ambassador has been a very insightful and enjoyable experience.

Jasmin Malik Y1

In my role as a Student Ambassador, I have had the opportunity to assist my peers by providing unbiased careers advice, advertised the numerous careers talks and guests whom we host here at St. Dominic's and helping my peers with the process of applying to UCAS. Overall, it has been a fantastic way not only to meet new people but to be a friendly face to go to for informal advice and I have loved every minute of it!

Zoya Horan Y1

As a Careers Ambassador, I gain valuable insights into the UCAS application process through career meetings. This role is particularly rewarding because it allows me to assist other students with their applications during tutorial sessions, as well as to receive early tips and advice for my own UCAS application.

My responsibilities also include acting as a voice for students. I enjoy collecting feedback from students about the types of career talks or events they would like to see at the College and communicating this to the Careers Department. This helps in organising more relevant and engaging talks or lectures, ensuring that students at St. Dominic's receive career insights from job sectors that they are passionate about. As a result, this makes them more confident when making university and career choices later in life.

Being a Careers Ambassador has also taught me effective time management, which is particularly useful given how busy life can become after Sixth Form.

Overall, I am proud to be a Careers Ambassador at St. Dominic's because it allows me to work with a department that is deeply committed to providing excellent career advice within the College.

Rian Chotai Y1

Thank you to all our Careers Ambassadors for your help and support this academic year.

CAREERS UPDATE

Alumni Network

We love to keep in touch with all our students once they have left St. Dominic's and many come back to support our various career events. We ask them to sign up to our Alumni network via Future First.

<https://www.futurefirsthub.org.uk/>



Biology Speed Networking Event

On 26th June 2024 we hosted a Biology Speed Networking Event for students interested in career opportunities in science. Students had the chance to meet academics, University students and researchers and find out about the variety of career paths within science.

We finish off the year with an event on 5th July. Year 1 students will find out about applying to apprenticeships, university choices and writing personal statements.

We wish our Year 2 students all the best in their future pathways and hope that you all have a good summer!

Anna Scarampi - Careers Leader

Lisa Harper - Careers Adviser



COLLABORATIVE CREATIVITY PROJECT

Over the past three years, St. Dominic's Sixth Form College has participated in the 'Collaborative Creativity Project,' spearheaded by St. Marylebone School. The initiative aimed to evaluate and develop teaching methods across primary, secondary and tertiary education. Thirteen schools from across the UK were involved in the project, each paired with creative sector experts from prominent organisations such as The National Theatre.

In the project's first year, Rachel Burton, the Head of Theatre Studies at St. Marylebone, observed the application of creative oracy strategies in the AMS department at St. Dominic's, with activities such as 'Probing Pairs' led by Celia Coleman during Rachel's visit.



Celia Coleman leading 'Probing Pairs' during a Psychology lesson

The following year, staff from St. Dominic's Sixth Form College presented at the National Theatre, showcasing the oracy activities introduced across the College as part of their Oracy and Active Listening initiative.



Craig McDonagh presenting 'STEM based Trio's' at the National Theatre

In the final year, Nick McIvor who designed the project as part of his work with Durham University, visited the College to interview a group of Mathematics students for their views on the use of creativity within A level Maths teaching at the College.

The project culminated in April at a final meeting hosted by the Wellcome Trust, where participating schools exhibited their creative projects. Project leaders Nick McIvor (UCL) and Peter Jordan (St. Marylebone) are now preparing to publish their findings, aiming to enhance understanding of creative development in educational settings.

Craig McDonagh - Assistant Principal

LEAVERS' AWARDS 2024

Subject	Name	Award
Business, Economics & Computing	Lila Aurora Tomkins	RBS Trophy for Business
	Michael Lloyd Joseph	Economics Award
	Rohan Bance	Yvonne Martin BTEC Business Award
	Christopher De Souza	Computer Science Award
English & Modern Foreign Languages	Zara James-Omezi	Conn Iggulden Trophy for English Literature
	Madison Neagle	French Award
	Romaissa Ennasry	Spanish Award
Humanities	Oliver Macgonigal	Geography Award
	Chinaza Iwe	Government & Politics Award
	Connie Anne O'Mahony	History Award
	Taejah Pilliner-Thompson	Law Award
Mathematics	Nachana Srikanthan	Mathematics Award
	Ashil Mehta	Further Mathematics Award
Ancient & Modern Studies	Hailey Hu	Psychology Award
	Jerrica Senganda	Sociology Award
	Alisha Faheem Rathor & Zehraa Ahmed	Philosophy Award
	Jessica Boakye	Religious Studies Award
	Greer Harkness Williamson	Classical Civilisation Award
Science	Zachary Lau	Biology Award
	Fen Lin Ng Kwet Shing	Chemistry Award
	Yurii Ostanin	Physics Award
	James Meinck	Dr Chris Chick Award for Excellence in Chemistry
Visual & Performing Arts	Amelie Stewart	Art & Design Award
	Evie Williams	Drama & Theatre Studies Award
	Erin Targett	History of Art Award
	Ella Moore-Martin	Music Award
EPQ	Anoge Arulthas	Extended Project Qualification Award
Sports	Jia Sood & Vharsan Theebaraj	Badminton Award
	Michael Quansah	Basketball Award
	Nicole Njoku	Netball Award
	Michael Alex	Volleyball Award
	Chinaza Iwe	Sports Personality – Award 1
	Mohamed Zahi Ihsan	Sports Personality – Award 2
Chaplaincy & Ethos	Katherine Donnelly	Core RE Award
	Amelie Stewart	Chaplaincy Award
	Erin Targett	Ethos Award
Principal's Awards	Parth Gaikwad	Principal's Award for Overall Contribution
	Aleesha Harte	Mario Radulescu Award for Community and Service

ART EXHIBITION 2024



This year's student A Level Art exhibition was held in the Art room on Monday 24th June and displayed a fantastic range of 2-D and 3-D skills and techniques for some very accomplished final outcomes. Student sketchbooks were also on show which documented some fascinating artistic journeys and was a great insight into their thoughts and progress.

The exhibition was very well attended by students, their parents and staff, and a good time was had by all.

Ruth Blackford, Head of Art

POLITICS DEPARTMENT HUSTINGS EVENT

On the afternoon of Monday, 17th June St. Dominic's Chapel played host to a BBC Question Time Style husting ahead of the general election on the 4th of July. There were many students, former students, staff and members of the Governing Body present. There were representatives from across the four main parties covering the two parliamentary seats that represent Harrow at Westminster. Gareth Thomas represented the Labour and Co-operative Party, Abbas Merali represented the Conservative and Unionist Party, Reetendra Nath Banerji represented the Liberal Democrats and Seb Newsam represented the Green Party.

The event was introduced and chaired by our College Principal, Andrew Parkin. There was a variety of questions asked on a range of different topics including Rishi Sunak's plans for national service, student tuition fees, taxation and public debt, education changes including reform of Ofsted, the cost-of-living crisis and how to improve political discourse at Westminster. The Principal asked follow-up questions of all the panel, did not allow them to go off-track and kept good order throughout in the tradition of Sir Robin Day and David Dimbleby. All the candidates at the end of the husting commended our staff and students for their well-informed questions, interventions, and interest in the forthcoming election.

I would just like to thank Andrew for chairing the hustings, SLT, Sanjay and reception for looking after the candidates on arrival, the LLC staff for hosting the candidates in a 'green room' style pre-hustings reception, Monika for her fabulous posters of the candidates, IT, the catering team, and premises. Above all a big thank you to the students and staff for their perceptive well-informed questions and contributions from the floor.

Kingsley R. Jolowicz - Head of Government and Politics



DRAMA DEPARTMENT UPDATE

This academic year has been exceptionally busy and successful for the Drama department, involving students and staff in numerous activities, trips, and events. Our drama students excelled in their May 2024 practical exam, impressing Polly King from Joan of Arc Catholic School with their creative and atmospheric performances of monologues, duologues, and scenes from plays like '2:22 – A Ghost Story', 'Steel Magnolias', 'Art', and 'The Memory of Water'. A notable highlight was the construction of a children's climbing frame and a free-standing door frame for a duologue, thanks to Gumtree, the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, and the kind assistance of site team staff, including Jonathan, Michael and Dominic.



Let The Right One In
(Angel Jones, Abi O'Brien)



Steel Magnolias
(Ella Drinkwater, Abigail Roche, Anna O'Sullivan, Evie Williams)

I would like to extend a very special 'Thank You' to Year 2 student Fen Lin Ng Kwet Shing, who expertly managed the technical lighting requirements for several practical exams over the last two years at St. Dominic's and significantly contributed to the College production's props while also starring as a main character. I wish Fen and all my wonderful Year 2 students the best of luck with their A Level results and future endeavours. My door will always be open (even if it's a free-standing one)!

Year 1 students are currently rehearsing for their devised performance exam on Thursday, June 20th. Inspired by the Paper Birds and 'The Laramie Project', their original political/verbatim piece will be performed for parents, staff, and students. I wish them the best of luck and look forward to your support at the performances.

DRAMA DEPARTMENT TAKE THE LEAD PROGRAMME

We were proud to participate again this year in the "Take the Lead" programme, a free employability initiative by The Old Vic Theatre, for students in years 11-13. This programme used theatre techniques and creative workshops to develop key skills such as communication, self-management, self-belief, teamwork and problem-solving. Our students and teachers found it inspiring and transformative.

The programme included five main engagements:

Launch Event: Our students attended a two-and-a-half-hour event at The Old Vic Theatre, where they heard from some inspirational speakers – a published author and an employee from the Royal Bank of Canada – the programme's main sponsor. They also networked with students from other schools.

Theatre Production Visit: Students enjoyed a live production of 'Just For One Day' which told the story behind the iconic Live Aid concerts of 1985, orchestrated by Bob Geldof and Midge Ure. The production offered a mix of music and narrative, focusing on the efforts and experiences of those who organized and supported the event, rather than just the performers themselves. Performed at The Old Vic, this visit enriched our student's appreciation for the arts and contextualizing the skills they were learning.

Learn Your Part Workshop: This in-school workshop focused on physicality and communication, using actor exercises to improve non-verbal communication and teamwork.

Build Your Company Workshop: In this session, students formed theatre companies and created pitches for productions, honing their collaborative and creative problem-solving skills.



DRAMA DEPARTMENT UPDATE

Take to the Stage Workshop: At the Royal Bank of Canada's headquarters in Liverpool Street, London, students practiced networking, developed elevator pitches, and participated in mock interviews, preparing them for future job markets and educational opportunities.

This was a very popular and well subscribed course this year attended by a wide range of both drama and non-drama students (no previous drama experience is necessary to apply). Participants' feedback indicated how the workshops enhanced their confidence to approach impending university interviews and equipped them with employability skills for life. In addition, participants cited the course in their personal statements!



Due to its success in the last two years, Take the Lead will be running again next year and up to thirty students are invited to apply for a place on this highly coveted 'once in a lifetime' course. Please email Steve at stl@stdoms.ac.uk to book your place for 2025. Please note that the course will take place in a series of up to two and a half hour, one-off sessions, located both on and off the College site between October 2024 to March 2025. Please only apply if you can make a firm commitment to *all* workshops and theatre visits.

Guys and Dolls

February 2024 saw the culmination of an intensive five months of producing 'Guys and Dolls' in the Siena Hall, which received very pleasing acclaim for its hardworking and dedicated cast, crew, and creative team helmed by yours truly, Abigail Gorton and Celia Coleman (with major support from SLT, staff and sponsors). For those who were not able to see the production, a photobook produced by Angela Inglese and Toby Agerbak can be found on the reception desk in the Hume Building.

I am hoping to repeat the success of this production next year, so look out for audition announcements towards the end of term, ready for another intensive September (onwards) rehearsal period. Please be aware that this will require a lot of personal additional time commitment, so only apply if you are serious about your commitment to the production. We will also be seeking stage crew and administrative roles too.

DRAMA DEPARTMENT

THEATRE TRIPS

One of the highlights of our practical drama course is the numerous theatre trips which have been attended this year by Theatre Studies students, College production cast and crew and Take the Lead participants. This year we enjoyed a busy schedule with live performances of 'Guys and Dolls' (Bridge Theatre), 'Accidental Death of an Anarchist' (Theatre Royal, Haymarket), 'Just For One Day' (The Old Vic), 'Stranger Things – The First Shadow' (Phoenix Theatre) and most recently, 'Mamma Mia' (The Novello Theatre).

The trip to see 'Mamma Mia' was especially notable as the lead roles of Sophie (Stevie Dock) and Sky (Tobias Turley) were newly cast through the reality TV show 'I Have A Dream'. Initially timid, Stevie Dock grew confidently into her role, portraying a humorous yet troubled teenager seeking her real father, days before her marriage to Sky, from three hilarious candidates played by: Christopher Dickens (Harry); Stephen Beckett (Bill) and Haydn Oakley (Sam). This quest unwittingly reunites them with her mother, Donna, who was hilariously and sensitively portrayed by understudy Natalie Langston.

Set on a Greek island, our 'Guys and Dolls' cast was enchanted by the moving sets, witty script, skillful choreography and the seamless integration of nearly all of ABBA's back catalogue into the plot. Despite being asked not to sing along, the curtain call ABBA mega mix had us all on our feet, dancing and singing to 'Mamma Mia', 'Dancing Queen' and 'Waterloo'. And was it a coincidence that we just so happened to have watched this show, featuring one of Sweden's most successful musical groups to have conquered the Eurovision Song Contest, during the same week that the Eurovision Song Contest 2024 was being held in Sweden? I'm not sure...or maybe, 'I Do, I Do, I Do, I Do, I Do'!

Stephen Leib – Head of Theatre Studies





VEX ROBOTICS COMPETITION

The first part of this article is in fact being written in the departure hall at Dallas Fort Worth Airport, ahead of a flight back to London, following a 4-day excursion to the VEX Robotics World Championships in downtown Dallas. Three of our Year 1 students, Darius Oprea, Alexander Ciz Yori and Trishan Chudasma reached the finals following various regional and national qualifying rounds in the UK between January and March. Reflecting upon these final days now as we are about to fly home, has that almost unreal quality about it. It has been one of the most exciting and engaging experiences of my career as a teacher.

The event is 'the' robotics event of the world. Upon arrival at the largest exhibition centre I think any of us had ever been in, it was very evident, almost immediately, that we were embarking on something of extraordinary scale and size and that most definitely turned out to be the case.

We allocated our 'pit area' for the duration of the competition along with hundreds of others and the boys quickly decorated it with the national flag, College crest and a selection of handcraft keyring giveaways which were a staple at every pit. The effort and energy that goes into the preparation of the pits alone was amazing and clearly many schools and colleges from around the world are annual attendees at this global event.

Once the 'pit area' was established, the boys began fine tuning their robot and went to join an enormous queue of other young men and women with their robots to take advantage of their 10-minute practice slot at one of dozens of practice blocks that were made available to them. The process was swift and tightly managed and when the bell sounded, our 10 minutes was up and it was back to the 'pit area' for final tweaks before the qualifying competitions began after lunch.

We then gathered for the opening ceremony in the 10000-seat concert hall which just before 1.00pm was full to the rafters. We were welcomed by the CEO of the Robotics Competition Foundation and Co-Founder of VEX Robotics and heard from various inspirational speakers from the STEM and Robotics community. It was inspiring and on a grand scale. We then had the Parade of Nations where representatives from each of the 44 countries represented came on stage carrying their national flag and were introduced by the host. Our flag was carried by Trishan and was a proud moment for our College community to be visually front and centre at such a large event.

Following the opening ceremony, it was down to the competition itself and to describe this I hand over to Trishan, Darius and Alex who will give an overview of the process.

The VEX Robotics Competition is an international competition made up of over 11,500 teams from 40 countries, where high-school teams are tasked with designing, building, and coding a robot that can participate in tournaments. This tournament consisted of two parts: qualifications and knockouts. Matches are conducted in alliances, meaning your robot teams up with another from a different team to compete against another alliance. These robots must conform to strict guidelines and be purpose-built for a game that changes every year; the game for this year being called Over Under, where the main aim is to outscore the opposing alliance by scoring plastic 'acorns' into a goal and elevate the robot off the field at the end.

VEX ROBOTICS COMPETITION

The robot is primarily built using aluminium, but also makes use of custom-cut polycarbonate plastic pieces. It is made up of several different subsystems which all utilise a combination of motors and pneumatics (powered by compressed air) to perform specific tasks. These work together during matches to score points as efficiently as possible, prevent the opposition from scoring, and mitigate any potential defence we may encounter. The robot's design and functionality must follow the rules outlined in the guidelines, ensuring compliance with the competition regulations. Adhering to these guidelines contributes to fair play and establishes a level playing field for all participating teams.

Facing teams from all four corners of the world was a thrilling and humbling experience. Throughout the season, we had grown accustomed to competing against familiar faces, but at Worlds, we were up against a completely new set of opponents. Each match presented a unique challenge, requiring us to adapt our strategies on the fly and think creatively under pressure.

Competing alongside these elite teams pushed us to elevate our performance and adapt our strategies to meet the high standards they set. It was both challenging and inspiring, providing us with a unique opportunity to learn first-hand from their approaches and techniques.

Despite the fierce competition, there was a strong sense of camaraderie and sportsmanship. We exchanged tips, shared our design philosophies, and even collaborated with other teams to solve technical issues. The spirit of the event was not just about winning, but about learning, growing, and pushing the boundaries of what we could achieve.

Our robot performed admirably, and although we faced some setbacks, we were proud of how we handled the challenges. Every match, win or lose, was a learning opportunity, and we returned home with a deeper understanding of robotics and a renewed enthusiasm for the field. The challenges we faced and the knowledge we gained will undoubtedly benefit us in the future.

Attending the VEX Robotics World Championships was an unforgettable experience, and we cannot thank St. Dominic's enough for this opportunity.

Andrew Parkin – Principal

Trishan Chudasma, Darius Oprea, Alexander Ciz Yori (Year 1 students)



PARENTPAY AND SID

What is SID?

SID (Student Information Database) is a secure web based (browser) access to student records, containing:

- Biographical & contact details
- Course enrolments & group memberships
- Timetable
- Attendance
- Qualifications record
- Exams – entries, timetables & results
- Reviews (Progress Check grades)

Students & parents have the same access.

To log into SID

- <https://sid.stdoms.ac.uk>
- Usernames were emailed to parent contacts
- Passwords were sent by SMS
- Best on Windows computers with the Edge web browser
- SID works on other devices and other browsers too, but sometimes with quirks and exceptions
- Safari on Apple IOS devices (prefix username with backslash)
- Bigger screens are easier to navigate than mobile phones
- Username format: e.g. p-23exampler
- Usernames are not case sensitive
- Passwords are case sensitive

We would encourage you to regularly log into SID. Remember your son/daughter uses SID on a regular basis, so should be experts if you need a hand!

If you have problems logging in:

- Try a different browser
- Try a different device
- Try prefixing the username with a backslash: e.g. \p-23exampler
- Send an email to sid@stdoms.ac.uk (including your name & SID username, the student's name and details of the device, browser and problem)
- We will test your login and if there is an account problem we will fix it and ask you to try again
- If you still have difficulties, we will ask that your son/daughter visits us so we can try and provide further support

PARENTPAY

ParentPay is the payment vehicle that enables Staff, Students and Parents to pay monies to the College for College trips, charity collections and the canteen. Payments are made directly through the ParentPay portal.

When the student registers at the College, the parent/guardian will receive an email from ParentPay which will contain a temporary password. The password will need to be updated when logging on for the first time.

When logging onto ParentPay, the parent will be able to view a suite of options specific to their son or daughter. Some payment items, such as a theatre trip, may be limited in numbers in which case the item will only appear for a limited amount of time. Other items such as trips can be paid for in instalments.

Any ParentPay queries should be emailed to parentpay@stdoms.ac.uk



St Dominic's
Sixth Form College

MAIN COLLEGE EMAIL stdoms@stdoms.ac.uk

ABSENCE attendance@stdoms.ac.uk

STUDENT SERVICES studentservices@stdoms.ac.uk