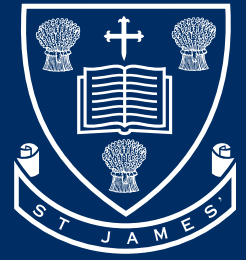


School Newsletter

Winter 2023



As I write this, it's hard to believe that we're nearing the conclusion of yet another Autumn term. It has undeniably been a whirlwind of activity, and amidst the busyness, our children have consistently embodied the core values of our school—Family, Faith, and Excellence. Witnessing their commitment to each other, active participation in charitable endeavours, and relentless pursuit of excellence has been a source of immense pride. This was embodied in our Excellence Evening back in November when we celebrated the class of 2023.

This week we have seen the God given talents of our children on display in our Christmas concert. It really was captivating and a huge thanks must go to all involved for their unwavering dedication and hard work, as well as all parents and carers who showed their support.

Our Year 7 children seamlessly integrated into life at St James', a true testament to the positive influence of their parents and carers. Getting to know this delightful group has been a pleasure, and we are confident they will continue approaching school life with enthusiasm, contributing

to the ongoing success of St James' and beyond. The Welcome Mass in October, attended by many, was a beautiful demonstration of the unity and greatness within our school family.

Emphasising our mission to “educate and develop global Catholic citizens,” this term has provided numerous opportunities for our children to actively engage in school life. Form charity events supporting CAFOD and our Foodbank collections and the school family's generosity has been nothing short of phenomenal. Caring for the most vulnerable in our society is something we believe passionately about and we can only do this with the support of our school family.

Extracurricular activities have flourished, with Faith Prefects leading a heartwarming Christmas party for local Parishioners, children participating in rehearsals for our school production of Annie and many children representing the school in sport and excelling.

At a time of year when we are so busy preparing, hurrying around and getting ready as best we can, it is important that

we do not forget the true meaning of Christmas—a time to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, a moment that changed everything. Amidst the cultural and religious celebrations, let us reflect on the profound words, “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given...” Isaiah 9:6. Christmas is a time to celebrate with whole hearts, acknowledging the transformative impact of Jesus's arrival on Earth.

For the latest updates, follow us on Twitter @StJamesCheadle and visit our website www.stjamescheadle.co.uk.

Our term concludes on Friday, 22nd December, at 12:15 pm, with various activities planned for the final day. Wishing you a peaceful, joyous, and healthy Christmas, with all good wishes for the New Year. We look forward to welcoming our staff and children back on Monday, 8th January, at 8:30am after a well earned and restful Christmas break.

With all good wishes in this joyous season.

Mr A Pontifex
Headteacher



CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

The Faith life of our school continues to go from strength to strength and this term we have been particularly focusing on the Principles of Catholic Social Teaching both through assemblies and weekly celebration of the Word in Form time. I will be sharing more about this with all families in the new year, as well as information about our prayer focus in school each week so that you too can join in prayer at home.

Our Faith Prefects have demonstrated excellent servant leadership, leading a Christmas party for our local parishioners, preparing prayers for the Advent services and attending lunchtime Mass. They are living examples of the value of Faith.



During this busy term, children have been able to take time out to reflect and pray. Years 10 and 7 have had the opportunity to participate in a retreat and in the new year, it will be the turn of Years 11, 8 and 9. Children have also been able to participate in prayer at the start of the day with their Forms either in their Form room or the Chapel and the whole school has paused at lunch and the end of the day to share in prayer. During Advent we have been focused on the Year of the Jubilee 2025 and have shared a special prayer for this.

As part of our understanding of Family, and developing ourselves as global Catholic citizens, lots of fundraising has been going on. The efforts put into raising funds for CAFOD, as well as contributions to the Foodbank are testament to the wonderful caring ethos that runs through our school.

You may wish to take an opportunity as a family to pause in prayer: Loving God, during this holy season of Christmas we ask for your blessing on our all families. Let Mary's openness to your wondrous ways be an inspiration to place all trust in you. Let Joseph's courage provide hope during times of anxiety and uncertainty. Let Jesus' life ignite all families with a spirit of light and love. May the grace that encircled the Holy Family widen to embrace all families. Amen.



I would like to take the opportunity to wish you a joyous and peaceful Christmas with all good wishes for a wonderful New Year.

Mrs Pickles
Senior Deputy Headteacher





YEAR 7



We are delighted with the way Year 7 has settled into life at St James'. Despite a nervous start in September, the children quickly impressed us with the calm way that they adapted to all of their new routines and expectations. It was fantastic to meet our new parents at Parent Tutor Evening and to make that important home, school connection. Year 7s are already reflecting our school values of Family, Faith and Excellence in all that they do. It has been a pleasure seeing them integrate into school life so successfully.

Faith and Family

At the start of this term each Year 7 Form enjoyed a retreat day at Savio House that focused on our theme of Gifts and Talents. The day was filled with activities which helped children to recognise their own unique gifts and talents as well as celebrating the gifts of others.

The work done on the retreat days fed into the Year 7 Welcome Mass that took place at Our Lady's Church, Edgeley. Father Martin's homily inspired us all when he spoke of the importance of using our unique gifts and talents. It was a perfect way to welcome the new children and their families into our community.

The children have learnt the importance of respect, care and compassion for others this term. Their kindness has been obvious in the generous contributions to the Christmas foodbank collections and fund-raising activities that have been planned for CAFOD. Each Form has nominated a team of Form Representatives who are doing a fantastic job of coordinating the fund-raising efforts.

During Form time and PSHCE, Year 7s have displayed great character and have been working together on icebreaker and team building activities as well as focusing on healthy living, enterprise skills and diversity and prejudice.

Every opportunity to impress us and to let their talents shine has been taken this term. A large number of Year 7 contributed to the European Day of Languages Bake Off competition. The £150 raised from the sale of cakes went to Macmillan as part of the Macmillan coffee morning week.

We were overwhelmed by the number of children who put themselves forward for a place on the School Council. An anonymous vote took place within Year 7 and the children with the most votes will represent us on the School Council this year. This

is a massive responsibility and commitment which we know our Representatives will rise to.

Chromebook Club, Eco Club and Dungeons and Dragons all see many Year 7 children contributing to the weekly meetings. This reflects the genuine enthusiasm that Year 7 children have towards school life, key global issues of sustainability, stewardship, and British Values.

Excellence

The huge number of value points received by Year 7 has been celebrated each week in assembly when many children have been rewarded with the popular free lunch passes. The pizza reward cinema afternoon was a lovely celebration for the children gaining the most value points in a half term and the best ATL data from the Termly Data Report.

In the termly data, Year 7 have shown an incredible attitude to learning, with children completing work to the best of their ability and immersing themselves into new and exciting subjects. An impressive number of Year 7 children received grade 1 or 2 for their positive attitude to learning in all subjects for both homework and classwork. We were delighted that the termly data reports reflect the way Year 7 has settled in.

Sporting excellence has also been evident this term with Year 7 boys and girls representing the school at football, netball, basketball and cross country. Since joining us in September, our Year 7 children have demonstrated our value of Excellence in their sporting achievements. The Y7 football team has made strong progress in the Stockport League competition winning all 3 league games so far. They also won the Manchester United invitational tournament competing against other schools from in and around the Greater Manchester borough. During the Stockport Cross Country, we had a number of Y7 children compete and represent St James' in an extremely competitive event. Sam of 7J superbly finished in the top 10 securing his place in the Greater Manchester competition.

The Y7 girls have also made excellent sporting progress since joining us in September. We have had over 30 girls take part in netball, we came runners up in the Stockport Schools football Year 7 Tournament and they have won the Stockport Schools KS3 basketball tournament. 10 girls took part in the Greater Manchester Determination festival. Overall we have been so impressed with the amazing start.

Great music and drama skills have been in the spotlight with many Year 7 children joining the cast of Annie.

There is clearly a lot of talent within Year 7 and we are confident that the children will continue to show a passion for learning in 2023.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Form Tutors; Miss Stancombe, Miss Purkiss, Mrs Grainger, Miss Hewson, Mrs Booth and Mrs Floyd and Mr Vyas for their care and support. Their kindness and hard work have hugely contributed to the positive way in which the Year 7 children have settled.



We hope that Year 7 have enjoyed their first term as much as we have, and we would like to thank them for showing such positivity and enthusiasm.

Wishing you and your families a peaceful Christmas and a Happy New Year. We look forward to welcoming Year 7 back in the new year when Miss Hewson will take over from Mr Reid as Joint Head of Year 7. Mr Reid will have the new role of Head of Year 10. We all are very grateful for his support in this first term.

What the Form Representatives have to say about the best bits of this term:

J Our favourite bits of term were PE where we have played a variety of sports including football, rugby, netball and badminton. Some of us have also really enjoyed representing St James' in sporting events after school. We have loved German, Drama, Art and Food and Nutrition where we have made cheesecake and pasta salad. We are enjoying the variety of different activities that are on offer in these subjects.

A We have really enjoyed making lots of new friends this term and starting to study new subjects and meet our new teachers.

M We have loved taking part in the sports competitions this term.

E We really enjoyed taking part in the Year 7 Welcome Mass and representing the school at a variety of sports competitions and we also had a fantastic time at Savio. We are proud of the amazing amount of food and other essential items we collected for the foodbank collection and the impressive number of value points we have earned, over 2000.

S Meeting all the new teachers has been good and realising they're not as scary as we thought they would be!! The food is so much better than what we had at primary school!

C The thing we have enjoyed most is the exciting Science experiments and making new friends.

Ms Woods and Mr Reid
Heads of Year 7



YEAR 8



I have been incredibly impressed with Year 8 this term, behaviour is superb for the vast majority of our Year group with 42% receiving zero behaviour points and almost 75% receiving less than 2 behaviour points. Their approach to lessons is on the whole mature and sensible, and they are extremely talented in all aspects outside of the classroom with incredible achievement in football, netball and athletics and massive participation and talent in the school drama production. In doing so, it has been really evident that Year 8 have been following our school values of Family, Faith and Excellence.

Family

This year, the children are invited to a careers breakfast, a talk specifically tailored to their interests. So far there have been careers talks from Stockport County about careers in sport, and coming up are talks about careers in law and media. These career breakfasts are a great way for children to hear first hand experience of certain jobs and can hopefully inspire children to consider what they would like to do once they have left school. They will continue throughout the year.

Attendance at clubs has been brilliant with many Year 8s enjoying activities such as STEM club and Chromebook club. Twelve of our Year group read at the Service of Remembrance that was streamed into classrooms.

We also have 20 children taking part in the drama production, Annie, which is due to take place on Tuesday 6th, Wednesday 7th and Thursday 8th February 2024.

We have had 30 girls and 33 boys represent school in various sports so far this year.

Faith

We have six regular attenders at Mass from Year 8 when it is held on Wednesday lunchtime in the Chapel, I am sure those children find the serene experience of Mass a contrast to the hustle and bustle of a normal lunchtime. I hope they can find their peaceful place in school and I am sure this passes onto their peers and lessons afterwards. There is strong spirituality running through our cohort, they are the future leaders of our churches, schools and faith.

The Year group have been brilliant at bringing in food and toiletries for the Chelwood foodbank showing the warmth and kindness that they have for others. We have already completed 3 charity events for CAFOD; 8A ran a basketball competition on the 12th December, 8M ran a Christmas tombola on the 9th December and 8E ran a Crossbar challenge on the 19th December.

Excellence

In the recent termly data, a fantastic 75% of Year 8 children made it into the 1,2 club for Attitude to Learning. Seven of those children received a 1 in every single subject; a terrific achievement. Those children were:

- Katie B 8C
- Hermione R 8E
- JJ B 8E
- Fin P 8J
- Seth C 8M
- Mia T-C 8M
- Charlotte L 8S

Possessing an excellent attitude to learning is so important because it enables a greater understanding of the content of lessons and allows children to reach their potential. It has been great, therefore, to see lots of teachers praise children for their excellent work.

Since starting the year, the children have shown excellence in all manners of ways. I have been delighted to be able to reward them with 66 free lunches so far this year and am so proud of their efforts. They show the good humour, politeness and diligence

I expect from St James' children and I am sure that they will continue this in the New Year. Our attendance of 95.6%, is the second highest in school and 3.4% above national average. I hope we can hit 97% attendance in 2024. Attendance is so crucial to a child's understanding of topics and to their enjoyment of the social aspect of school. If any children are worried about catching up on work missed or any other obstacles that may impede their enjoyment of school, I am always available for a conversation, as are the Pastoral Team in Emmaus. Homework club is available every day after school in ORI.

Thank you for all your support in ensuring that our children reach these high demands. I would like to express my thanks for the hard work and care shown by my Form Tutors- Mrs Williams, Miss Delohery, Miss Adams, Miss Jeffers, Mrs Edwards, and Mr Hill. Year 8 are so lucky to have such wonderful Tutors. I hope you and your family have a restful and peaceful Christmas.

Mr Gallagher
Head of Year 8





YEAR 9

I have thoroughly enjoyed my first term as Head of Year 9. I have loved getting to know the children properly and watching them settle into Year 9.

Back in September, Mr Pontifex delivered the first assembly of the year and talked about opportunities and how it was important to grab opportunities when they were there. I then spoke to them about our theme for this year which is making good choices, something that I talk about a lot.

There have been lots of available opportunities for Year 9 and a very large number of children have taken them. The uptake for children wanting to participate in this year's Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award has been phenomenal with a very large number of children signing up.

At the end of September, Year 9 got involved in the European Day of Languages Bake sale and volunteered their services to sell cakes at break and lunchtimes. Archie, Eghosa and Eddie were keen cake sellers and contributed to raising money for Macmillan. In October, we had a visit from Hits Manchester Radio DJ, Hattie Pearson who led a very interesting talk about careers for Year 9. A big thank you to Mrs Rarity for organising this for us, I know the children got a lot from it.

In November we held a Remembrance Service and volunteers were needed from each Form, and I was delighted that every Form had someone that was more than willing to help out. Eghosa, Luco, Harrison, Jem, Harrison and Sam were the readers on that occasion which the rest of the school watched via Zoom. The National Poetry Day Art Competition was held at the beginning of October and children were invited to create a piece of art that was inspired by a poem that they had enjoyed. I was delighted and very proud that the overall winner across the school was Tasha.

Throughout the last few weeks, the children have been working hard to raise money for Cafod and also to provide food for the local foodbank.

In assembly they have been learning about the different parts of Catholic Social Teaching and we encourage them to relate the different aspects to their own lives both in and out of school. I am so proud that the children are helping raise money by giving up their time to help with their own Form's initiatives and also by participating in other Form's fundraising.

They are really taking on every opportunity they have been given. Finally I would like to wish all Year 9 and their families a very happy and peaceful Christmas and I will very much look forward to seeing the children back in school on January 8th.

Mrs Linford
Head of Year 9





YEAR 10

Unsurprisingly, Year 10 have approached their GCSEs with enthusiasm and maturity. Already, so many children are displaying the traits and work ethic needed for success in Year 11. The recent termly data recognised this superb attitude to learning with 79% of the cohort receiving all 1s and 2s for Attitude to Learning; an increase of 15% from last term. Incredibly, 25 children received all 1s, a fantastic feat. It is important to keep this momentum going. It is not too early for children to have an appreciation of different revision strategies and we have been discussing what works for us during Form time. For example, if a child made one revision flashcard per subject per week, imagine how many they'd have at their disposal by their Year 11 mocks in a year's time.

Of course, there will be obstacles along the way to achieving success in Year 11, and it is perfectly natural for the children to have found the jump from Key Stage 3 to 4 a difficult one. Our retreat

with the Shrewsbury Diocese focused on the resilience needed to overcome the difficulties that can come alongside change. It was a really positive day that gave the children an opportunity to consider what they want to aspire towards.

Regarding aspiration, the children have been active in their pursuit of work experience in July. Thank you to everyone for supporting with this. I encourage the children to go into any career opportunity with an open mind; the worst case scenario is that a job is crossed off the list. For example, some children had a very interesting talk with a lawyer recently.

The Year 10s continue to excel with their extra-curricular activities. We have some real leaders who have enjoyed supporting primary school children in their sport, whilst many children are heavily involved in the production of Annie. This year will see some exciting

residential, such as the ski trip and visits to Germany, Borneo, Iceland and London.

Finally, you may be aware that in order to become the Director of Humanities after Christmas, I have to step down as Head of Year. I will still be teaching many Year 10s Geography and History, and will obviously still be here to support the children in their remaining time here as any member of staff would. I will maintain a very soft spot for a remarkable group of children. It is incredibly rare to feel specific pride about such a large group of young adults, but they definitely are a source of great pride to me and I am very fond of them. It is easy to forget that they started St James' at the height of Covid, without an official goodbye from their Primary school and an official hello from us. There were no ice-breaking retreats and the majority of the first year was in the guise of online learning without the fun and socialising that a new school should

bring. Despite these unprecedented difficulties, the Year group started as they meant to go on. They have always been a pleasant, jovial and good humoured group, whose resilience should not be understated. I'm very confident that this Year group will be very successful and will achieve greatly. If they continue to adopt such a positive attitude to learning, they will leave St James' with fantastic qualifications and as wonderful human beings. Mr Reid will be a great Head of Year in these final 18 months and he will enjoy the amazing support of the Form Tutors who I am incredibly grateful for.

Have a peaceful and enjoyable Christmas.

Mr Cawley
Head of Year 10





YEAR 11

It has been great to rejoin the Year group and help support the children through the first term of the academic year. Though it is the longest term, it seems to have flown by.

Colleges and Sixth Forms have been into assemblies to give the children a whistle stop tour of the options available to them. We have had the career's convention with lots of support from outside agencies. There have been drop ins and opportunities to fill out application forms at school and lots of talk about what's next. Children have been, or will be, assigned an individual slot to discuss future pathways with our Career's Advisor here in school.

Some children visited Mercedes towards the end of the term in Stockport to find out about their apprenticeships. We had two children from our trip last year who are now employed by Mercedes so it was a good opportunity to meet key staff within the business.

Charity fundraising has also taken place from a couple of the Forms. Thanks to 11C and 11M who have raised money through cake sales.

The boys football team is performing well. They remain in the English Schools cup, the Stockport Cup and are doing well in the Stockport league.

It was an absolute pleasure to go and watch Evie and Imogen make their debut for England football U16s during half term. They both played brilliantly. England were victorious and members of the women's national team came to watch them. Long may this success continue, well done girls!

The Year 11 prefects have conducted themselves well so far this year and did themselves proud at Open Evening early on in the school year, showing round prospective parents and Year 5 pupils, looking to start their next chapter here with us. Their enthusiasm and knowledge about the school and what we have to offer was lovely to witness.

Our Head boy and Head girl Matthew and Kay have attended several whole school events and made a number of excellent speeches. At the Year 11 Prize Evening for our leavers I was able to see them talk coherently and confidently and I thought to myself, this time next year they will be sitting on the other side along with their classmates, hopefully proud and happy with their GCSE results.

The mocks are upon us as I write. For the most part children have worked hard, and seem prepared. For others there is work to do and I implore you to talk to your child about the importance of revision and dedication to their studies. This is the gateway to the next step in their journey. Examinations can be a daunting prospect, as can moving on to new ventures. This can therefore sometimes result in poor behaviour choices. We continue to maintain our high expectations and standards from our children and those children falling below our expectations will be sanctioned.

Staff are keen to give the children the best opportunities to succeed. Revision classes take place after school for a number of subjects. Miss Li is also available to support with homework every evening until 4pm at school.

The first termly data was really positive. 66% of Year 11 achieved all 1s and 2s in their Attitude to Learning scores, of which 18% scored all 1s. This is a phenomenal achievement and testament to their hard work and dedication to their studies. Well done! Keep up the hard work. There is still lots to do before the GCSEs are upon us but it will all be worth it in August.

Have a lovely restful Christmas and best wishes for the New Year.

Miss Cheshire
Head of Year 11





ATTENDANCE

With the end of term approaching, I would like to thank each child and their family for their commitment and support to attendance. Current statistics show we are currently achieving 95.3% attendance. We proudly sit 4% above the national average.

As a school, we recognise the correlation between attendance and high achievements in our grades. A high percentage of attendance and punctuality to lessons means children don't miss out on learning, gain key knowledge, and grow more confident in themselves, resulting in success. High attendance in lessons statistically lowers school-based anxiety in children.

St James' target for each child is to achieve a 96% attendance and we like to recognise high success through many different forms of rewards. Our rewards include a fortnightly attendance lottery drawer for each Year group where children can win passes such as, skip the queue at lunch, a free meal, or even a £5 Amazon voucher. Over Advent, those children with 100% attendance will each be rewarded with a Christmas treat.

Although we can celebrate successes, I want to remind you of the importance of telling the school why and when your child is absent. A child with no reason is given an unauthorised mark. Our main priority is the safeguarding of children, so please inform us daily.

Please inform the school by 9 am if your child will be absent. Please do not email your child's Form Tutor but call the absence line on 0161 482 6900 (option 1), email the Attendance Officer at: c.taylor@stjamesheadle.co.uk or via the MyEd App.

Excellent attendance at St James' is taken very seriously; our children must strive to attain 100% attendance.

Can I take this opportunity to send all of our children and their families a message of Happy Christmas. I pray for a peaceful and joyful Christmas break for you all.

Mrs C Taylor
Attendance and Family Liaison Manager

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With God all things are possible

Matthew 19:26

