

### Dear Parents and Carers

What a term it has been! We've been awarded 'World Class Schools' status, designated a National Support School, accredited as a Leading Edge school from the SSAT (Students, Schools and Teachers network), supported another Catholic school and gained an 'Outstanding' in our recent diocesan inspection. This is on top of all we do on a day-to-day basis to try to provide an education to our children which is second-to-none.

We are delighted with the impact recent initiatives are having in the classroom and on the assessment front and continue to be immensely proud of all that the students achieve in and out of the classroom. You'll read much more about it in the following pages, but you'll see it has been a very busy term (and this newsletter only covers what hasn't already been reported in previous months!)

I will be able to give you an update on our consultation to convert to academy status in the New Year. In the meantime, I wanted to share with you the good news from St Mary's Catholic Primary School in Worthing; the school we are currently supporting. In a short period of time we have been able to increase pupil numbers, attract significant amounts of money for improvements to the fabric of the school, provide additional support for the children most needing it, re-organise classes to ensure all children fulfil their potential and improve on basic standards. There are already signs of great progress in the data and student outcomes. We are very fortunate to be working with St Mary's. It is a special place to be and serves a community which deserves a great Catholic school.

### Train Strikes

We've been bowled over by the commitment and perseverance of the students (and parents!) in dealing with the continuing rail chaos. Thank you for making sure your children get to school every day. It not only sends out a very clear message about the importance of school but is also great encouragement to us as educators that you are supporting us. Thank you for sorting out the lift shares, driving in early to school, picking up late and generally making considerable sacrifices to ensure we can continue to deliver an outstanding education to your children.

### Requests for Holidays

It may just be an impression; however, I seem to be getting a few more requests for holidays during term time than I have in recent years. From January, rather than having to complete an absence form for such requests please can you use Open Door (the first Tuesday of each month; no pre-booking necessary, 4pm onwards) to come into school to speak about it. Please do not book holidays prior to requesting absence. The standard absence form will continue to be used for all other requests.

As ever, thank you for your continued support and encouragement. I cannot over-estimate the difference it makes. Your encouragement may seem small to you, however, collectively with over 450 families it amounts to a great deal. We have a very special community at SPH. We are one Family and together we grow together.

Finally, for those of us who are yet to complete the Christmas shopping perhaps you could consider giving some of the following gifts....

To your enemy . . . forgiveness,  
 To your opponent . . . tolerance.  
 To a friend . . . your heart.  
 To a customer . . . service.  
 To all men . . . charity.  
 To every child . . . a good example.  
 To yourself . . . respect.  
 (Author Unknown)

Have a very happy, holy and peaceful Christmas. Spend time with those you love and don't forget to tell them that you do!

See you in January

God Bless

**David Carter, Headteacher**

## Mission Week

Our Mission Week at SPH was a wonderful opportunity for all our community to take the opportunity to reflect on the Gospel and on God's role in their lives, as well as our own personal response to God. Our team from Sion Youth led assemblies each morning, looking at different themes and used drama, mime, music, testimony, teaching and prayer to unpack the themes of Choosing Life, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

Alongside the assemblies, the team visited classes to answer questions, led a variety of workshops for each year group, offered personal prayer ministry to both staff and students, and provided opportunities to pray in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament over lunchtime, as well as hosting a social with the staff, launching the Youth Alpha programme and (alongside the efforts of our amazing performing arts department) running a successful showcase evening that was well attended by students, parents, carers, friends, family, staff, parishioners and even the odd member of the clergy joining us for that celebration. We ended our week with liturgies for all students which challenged them to take what they had learnt from the Mission forward into their own lives through personal prayer and fellowship.

It's been great to see so many students engaging with their faith in a new way over the Mission Week and beyond. We've continued the opportunity to spend some time in Adoration with Lightfever taking place on Friday lunchtimes, and will continue the Youth Alpha series in the new year.

My thanks to all those who supported us by hosting team members, attending the Showcase, supporting your children as they shared their experience with you, or praying for us during the week. You all made a massive difference to a wonderful week!

## Deanery Advent Service at Arundel Cathedral

It's always a special evening when we gather at Arundel Cathedral along with pupils from St Mary's, Bognor, St Richard's, Chichester and St Philip's, Arundel, to mark the start of Advent and reflect together on this special time of the year. This year was no exception, as Bishop Richard led us through prayer, and our schools shared reflections on important themes of the season through music, readings, prayers and dance. Our Orchestra and Choir led the music beautifully, and our A Level Dancers shared their superbly choreographed dance with great confidence and talent. All our students- musicians, dancers and readers- were a real credit to the SPH Community and were real witnesses to the importance of sharing our talents with others. Thank you to all of them!

## Carols by Candlelight

The twinkling lights and festive music created a wonderful atmosphere in the school hall as we welcomed residents from a number of local care homes for our Carols by Candlelight event. Our students showcased the best of who they are as they played music, sang, smiled, welcomed and served our guests. A couple of rousing Christmas Carols got everyone involved, as our guests enjoyed mince pies and mulled wine (as well as a little Christmas gift from us) and a beautiful afternoon of entertainment. From solos to swing bands to our whole orchestra, the programme left everyone there feeling uplifted and filled with Christmas cheer! What a wonderful way to spend an afternoon!



*Clare Long, Chaplain*

## SPH Christmas Ball

Friday 2nd December saw the school hall transformed into a Christmas wonderland for our inaugural Christmas Ball. The event was black tie and everyone stepped up to the mark. A sumptuous meal expertly cooked by our caterers, Innovate and served competently by members of our Sixth Form, was enjoyed by all, whilst Nick Kabanas and Aidan Craig provided the music during the three courses. Head Boy Joe Farrell and Head Girl Georgia Dacey organised their team, taking photos and generally ensuring a good time was had by all of our guests. Jess Foster deftly ran the Fortune Tree stall, selling out in record time! Mr Carter donned his family tartan to conduct the raffle and auction and then we all danced the night away! A huge thank you to all the lovely people who made this happen, initial figures show a profit of £2,900!



*The school hall looked fabulous adorned with twinkly lights and decorations; Mr Carter also looked very fetching in his kilt!*



## Christmas Concert

On Thursday night the students of SPH performed a delightful compilation of songs, dance and musical theatre numbers which helped to get the audience in the mood for Christmas. Act 1 involved a variation of musical talents including group orchestra pieces, instrumental duets and vocal soloists all showcasing the students' musical flair. We were then treated to a showcase of dance pieces put together by Ann Careless and her dance students, all of whom performed with such passion and professionalism.



The closing Act of the show was an excerpt from the musical 'Oliver'. This showcased both musical theatre numbers and drama scenes that gave the audience a taste of the

story of Oliver Twist. The children performed with such enthusiasm and energy and brought a real enjoyment to the closing of the show.

The night was thoroughly enjoyed by all with many commenting on the wonderful atmosphere and 'Christmassy' feel in the hall. Huge congratulations must go to all the students who took part in the concert, the support of the staff who helped with front of house, bar, raffle and chaperoning and, of course, the Performing Arts team for all their hard work in producing yet another successful show.

## Our day as Headteachers .. . .



Our day as headteachers started out by going into the staffroom and being introduced. Along with Mr Carter, we visited some form groups during tutor time to see how the pupils settled into the day. We then helped Mr Jones with a Schools Direct interview. At break we monitored students' behaviour and sociability without using their phones as one of the rules we were allowed to introduce for the day, was for students to be allowed to use their phones during lunch break. After break we went on some learning walks around the school and watched Mr Binfield teach a short lesson. We also experienced how students settled into lessons and behaved. During period 5 we

monitored how the pupils behaved in lessons after they had spent their lunch break on their phones and not exercising as much. We noticed the behaviour was not as good! Today has been great fun and a good experience for both of us.

*Kyle O'Brien and Declan Green, Year 8*

## News from the English Department

It has been an extremely busy half term in the English department. Nia and Kai Edwards, and Joseph Ellis represented the school at the Rotary Club Public Speaking Competition and came a close second against sophisticated and well-reasoned debates from other schools. Their topic choice, 'Women and Inequality' was well researched and their presentation skills were smooth, but not quite smooth enough to take the shield. All three are now busily preparing for February's English Speaking Union competition and we wish them luck.



Year 9s were treated to an afternoon visit from poet Jim McCool who kept them entertained with stories of Selkies and other folklore which supported their topic on

Poetry From Different Cultures. Students are now busy writing their own performance poetry.



Storytelling was also the theme of workshop by Michael O Leary, a repeat visitor, whose tales of local myths and legends in Walberton kept our year 7s on the edge of their seats. This workshop is the first in a series where local primary and secondary schools are invited to participate in a reading festival. Keen readers are invited to track a selection of novels and vote on their favourite at the end. Students left the workshop buzzing with ideas for their own stories, so if anyone at home has a local myth, urban legend or ghost story connected to the local area, we would love to hear about it.

Dave Smith, writer (Radio 4 and various magazines) and one time stand-up comedian, spent the day working with sixth form creative writing and language students. Students were inspired to write their own pieces and we look forward to the finished versions.

Finally, our sixth form Creative Writing students have also been busy with visits to Chichester and Brighton to help them construct 'place' in their writing. We are looking forward to reading these soon.

### SPH students "take over" European and local councils!

Mid November saw a flurry of democratic activity, with students participating in 3 national and regional events.



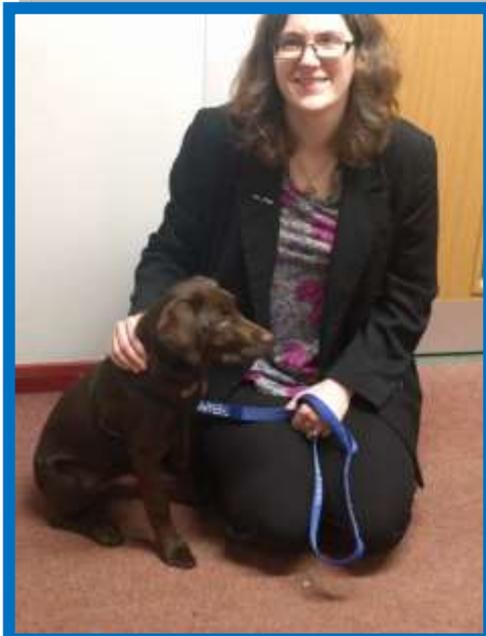
Sixth form students Charlotte Elliott and Katherine Broadhurst were selected to be members of the Mock European Council on November 17 in Westminster, negotiating UK Brexit terms with schools from across the country. The programme was opened by Lord Boswell of Aynho, Chair of the House of Lords EU Select Committee, and was led by Jacqueline Minor, Head of the EU Commission's Representation in the UK. Charlotte and Katherine presented the views of France in debates about the UK's future participation in the Erasmus scheme and the European Arrest Warrant. Charlotte gave her presentation confidently in fluent French while EU

interpreters relayed it to members of the council.

Meanwhile November 18th was designated "TakeOver Challenge Day" by the UK Children's Commissioner. 10 students took part in workshops at West Sussex County Council in Horsham, discussing such issues as the school curriculum, mental health and relationship education. A further group of 11 students, which included Arun Youth Councillors Dylan Bhopal-Myers, Jonny Elliott, Niamh Duggan and Oliver Goldsmith, spent the day debating with other local schools at Arun District Council in Littlehampton. The students were praised for their willingness to contribute to the debates and for delivering effective speeches.



### Welcome to Bonnie, our very own Therapy Dog



Bonnie is now 24 weeks old and her training is going very well. She is in school for a few hours nearly every day, getting use to her surroundings and walking around classrooms. She is learning very quickly that when she is at school she is working and needs to sit before she can be stroked. The children are really enthusiastic but are very calm when she is in the classroom.

In the first assembly of the January term Father David is coming to bless her so that she can truly be part of the school community. Her professional trainer is also coming into school to start her specific training with Mrs Leonard and other members of staff that wish to work with her.

## Great SPH Bake Off

Yet again, our students produced some amazing creations for this year's SPH Bake Off competition. Thanks to Mary 'Berry' Craig (governor) and Paul 'Hollywood' Careless for judging the competition. Congratulations to the winner Elodie Brook (9Du), 2<sup>nd</sup> place Harry Joyce (10Wi) and 3<sup>rd</sup> place Madaleine Hallam (8Ed). Awards also went to Elzbieta Brodowska (9Cu) for the most creative bake and to Harry Joyce (10Wi) for the best decorated.



*Elodie Brook 9Du 2016 Winner of 'The Great SPH Bake Off'*

*Our judges: Mary 'Berry' Craig and Paul 'Hollywood' Careless*



Some of the other outstanding bakes:



## Foodbank

Year 11 and Sixth Formers have been supporting the local foodbank in their 'reverse advent calendar'. For each day of advent a student in each tutor group was asked to bring an item from a list. The boxes of goodies were delivered to the foodbank in Bognor on the 15th in time to be delivered to those who need the support of the Food Bank at Christmas. The reverse advent calendar served as a reminder to students and staff of those in need over the festive period and seemed an appropriate Advent Challenge as they await the coming of God's son.



## Keeping our students safe

Please would all parents and carers remind students of the need to behave sensibly when around traffic. We have been made aware of a number of 'near miss' incidents this term. Please remind your children of the need to use crossings provided, be aware of the traffic, removing headphones and not to cross between vehicles that are queuing in traffic. Also, if your son/daughter cycles to school, please ensure that they have working cycle lights on their bike.

**SPH staff and  
governors wish our  
students and their  
families a very  
happy and peaceful  
Christmas**

## Forthcoming Dates for your Diary:

- 03 Jan - Return to school
- 09-20 Jan – Sixth Form mocks
- 12 Jan – Yr 8 Parents' Evening
- 16 Jan – Sixth form interviews
- 19 Jan – Yr 9 Options Evening
- 20 Jan – Sixth Form Taster Day for Yr 11s
- 24 Jan – Sixth form retreat
- 25 Jan – Yr 10 retreat
- 26 Jan – yr 11 retreat; 17:00 Yr Parents' Evening
- 09 Feb – Yr 11 Parents' Evening
- 20 -24 Feb – Half term**

