

CHRISTMAS NEWSLETTER

ARCHBISHOP MCGRATH CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL



December 2017

Nadolig Llawen! Here at Archbishop McGrath Catholic High School, it has been a term full of hard work and achievement. Term began with celebration; students once again **performed superbly** in external examinations with success across subjects at GCSE and some incredible performances with the vast majority of pupils returning to us for their sixth form. At A-level, our results placed us amongst **the very top schools in the UK** and it was a joy to see so many pupils set off to fantastic university destinations.

At this time of year, our thoughts go out to the weak and vulnerable in our society. The **commitment of our pupils** to charity work and the mission of the school **to serve others** is always uplifting; they are a credit to their communities. Our festive tree in the foyer has been surrounded with items for the **food bank**. This effort, along with the **Romania appeal**, have been led as well as fantastically supported by the pupils themselves and the school chaplaincy team. They regularly run **Fairtrade** stalls, coffee mornings and, this term, have also supported **McMillan, Wish upon a Star** and **Cafod** as well as sung carols at our local nursing home. Year 12 have launched themselves into their Welsh BaccaLaureate Community Challenge and are completing valuable work in and around the community. **Visible service is also born out at Mass** and we are delighted to have pupils **Katrin Higginson, Toby Kearns** and **Ieuan Hodgekiss** serve as Eucharistic Ministers in Mass.

The **rebranding and revitalisation of the house system** has been a great success with the sixth form and house captains doing a fantastic job of galvanising the pupils along with the banners that now adorn the school. It was a **joy seeing so many pupils being so active** and throwing themselves into their winter games activities. Fixtures have taken place across year groups and it was fantastic to see the inaugural sixth form football fixture this term as well as our continued participation in events such as the **Wales Regional Cross Country championships**.

There has been **great individual successes** with International honours for **Megan Jones** (bowls) and **Ffion Higginson** (athletics). **Daniel Smith** came first in the Welsh Schools trampolining. **Rebecca Floyd** recently participated at the Dance World Cup in Spain whilst **Isabella Cater** came first in Irish Dancing. **Xander Payne** has been selected for Wales in basketball whilst **Esmee Davies, Isabella Renn** and **Jasmine David** were runners up in the British dancing competition. **Liam Evans** and **Charlie Evans** both received BridgendFM awards. There are many many more achievements and we are so **proud of them all**; please share them with us. We want our pupils and your children to feel known and celebrated.

Education is fostered both within and outside of the classroom across our departments. In English, there has been a drama trip to **Port Talbot Steelworks** and a trip to see the players in the **Globe**. The History Department journeyed to **Auschwitz**, whilst the Geography department saw **Iceland's** natural wonders. The Welsh department, remained closer to home, honing their language skills around camp fires at **Glan Llyn**. There have been trips that seek to offer guidance on pathways; mock and model **Oxbridge** and **Medicine** interviews at **Wellington College**;

apprenticeship events such as the recent trip to **Tata steel**; and the participation of our Year Twelve pupils in the **Seren Network** is aimed at targeting top **Russell Group** university destinations. We also took the pupil leadership team to the **Houses of Parliament** to speak to MPs and the **Archbishop of Cardiff, George Stack**. In school, pupils take advantage of the many clubs on offer; recent additions being the well-attended **film and code clubs**.

Music remains vibrant in school. As well as our recent festive concert, where it is fantastic to see so many youngsters taking up the opportunity to learn an instrument, a trip to **St Davids Hall** offered a fantastic evening of culture. Last week, many of our musicians represented the school in Bridgend Music Service's concert.

Always impressive is the work of the Sixth Form as **Reading Mentors** and this year has seen the introduction of **Learning Ambassadors** throughout the key stages, as part of the schools drive to improve teaching and learning across the school through **Visible Learning strategies**. Cashless catering has sped up the canteen and hopefully made buying food a hassle-free experience.

Many of the routines of school do not change. There have been huge amounts of revision and exam preparation and well as excitement about what the future holds for our young people. We were thrilled that **all our Cambridge applicants** successfully gained interviews and offers from universities are coming in thick and fast giving **students lots to savour** and look forward to in the months ahead. There have also been fond farewells to staff. **Mr Blackwell** left to take up a Deputy Headship position and this term also sees the retirement of **Mrs Sarah Margetts**, who has supported pupils as a Learning Support Assistant. We wish them both well.

I am fortunate to have fantastic staff who dedicate themselves to our pupils and often go **above and beyond helping them to achieve**. Our success is also down to you. I am ever grateful for **your support in nurturing and supporting our mission**. Today, sees our Christmas mass and it will be **wonderful to see out the school year together as a school family**.

This newsletter is somewhat Dickensian and out of step with the Digital age. Now so much of our information is beamed directly on our Twitter feed. Please **sign up @archbishopmg**.

Finally, my **personal best wishes** to everyone of you and your families. I hope you have a **calm, peaceful and joyful Christmas** and enjoy this most beautiful feast celebrating the birth of our Lord.

God bless,

A. Keller

Angela Keller
Headteacher

KEY DATES 2017-18



- Monday 8th January, **all pupils return back to school**
- Tuesday 9th January, 4.00-6.30pm: **Year 10 Parents' Evening**
- Thursday 25th January, 4.00-6.30pm: **Year 9 Parents' Evening**
- Thursday 8th February, 4.00-6.30pm: **Year 12 Parents' Evening**
- Friday 16th February, **INSET** day (*no pupils in school*)
- Friday 19th February – Friday 23rd February: **school half-term holiday**
- Tuesday 13th March, 4.00-6.30pm: **Year 7 Parents' Evening**
- Thursday 22nd March, 4.00-6.30pm: **Year 8 Parents' Evening**
- Thursday 29th March – **INSET** day (*no pupils in school*)
- Friday 30th March – Friday 13 April, **Easter Holidays**

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