



ST. ANNE'S
R.C. VOLUNTARY ACADEMY

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Executive Headteacher
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Dear parents/carers,

A warm welcome to my last newsletter of the year. I hope that you enjoy reading it as much as I enjoyed writing it!

Update on the Catholic life at St Anne's

What another busy month for Mr Regan and his team during the season of Advent. I hope the varied range of activities outlined below give you a flavour of our catholic community.

- Our Yr8 celebrated Mass on Friday 9th December. Students showed great respect and reverence. Again, a massive thanks to Fr John for making time to lead this celebration. Mr Donnelly worked with Yr8 to teach them '*this little light of mine*' while the RE Team taught students the '*Sit-Down, Stand-Up Alleluia*'. Students are growing in confidence in their participation of mass. Each year group now takes part in mass during the academic year. Next half term Yr9 will begin the new year with mass.
- The *SVP group* from St Joseph's Reddish very kindly donated £250 of vouchers for our most in need students and families. We are deeply grateful, and this is an example of our developing relationship between school and parish.
- The Caritas Team led the Advent appeal. As a community we collected shoeboxes of practical gifts for *The Wellspring Centre* in Stockport, where a significant number of the users of the service are homeless.
- During Advent our *GIFT Team* have been running the Advent Angel prayer cards for students and staff to complete and pray for each other. The cards were then handed out at the end of Advent with a chocolate treat! The GIFT team also continued with Friday afternoon prayers with a focus on Advent also during this season of waiting for Christ's coming at Christmas.
- Reformed ex-gang member, *John Pridmore*, gave the Advent Lecture this year to Yr10 on the 7th of December. Students listened intently to John's story of a misspent youth and the transformation in his life at 27 when he experienced God's love and forgiveness. John is now an international speaker and author. We were delighted he visited St Anne's while leading a parish mission at St Joseph's Stockport. His message of God's unending love and forgiveness was a timely one during Advent.

Finally, the Advent/Christmas liturgies were celebrated in the final week with Yr10 students leading on readings and reflections and the school choir bringing some festive joy at the end of each service!

Safeguarding update

- The lead up to Christmas is always busy in schools. Whilst many are excited for the festive season, some find this time daunting. At St Annes we support as much as possible by helping families who are struggling. We have given out hundreds of pounds worth of Morrisons vouchers, food bank vouchers and staff have been busy buying presents for our most vulnerable students.





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- This half term, staff have received in depth training on ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences) which help them to understand the challenges that some of our students might be battling, enabling them to support and care for them effectively. Staff have also undertaken further Child-on-Child abuse training to encourage staff to recognise and respond to such incidences. We have held an anti-bullying conference this term in which students have created a brand-new Anti-Bullying pledge – Mean; Nasty; Bully. Additionally, a new consequence flow chart has been created and will be launched in January to students.
- St Annes unique **4Rs mantra** [*Recognise, Respond, Record, Refer*] is now fully embedded, which is demonstrated through the Record stage on our central safeguarding system CPOMS. From this our safeguarding team are then able to respond to safeguarding needs.
- On the 24th November, we welcomed the LA to conduct a whole school safeguarding audit. The findings state how calm the school felt which demonstrates the students are in lesson, learning effectively and therefore are safe. It was positive visit and staff were able to describe our 4Rs which is integral to safeguarding.
- Next term we look forward to welcoming 2 new mental health workers. One will work through the REACH programme which has identified 8 KS3 students, working on, body image, e-safety, confidence, healthy relationships, and consent. We are thrilled to announce we have been accepted as part of a scheme for further mental health support who will work with our ambassadors to raise awareness of positive Mental Health.

As a school community, we will not compromise on safeguarding your children.

A Christmas Extravaganza by our Performing Arts students

A Christmas Extravaganza took place on December 21st to a sell-out audience where our students performed in an incredible evening of music, dance, and drama. The school's new choir, *Encore*, kicked off the proceedings with the Christmas classic Sleigh Ride, followed by a plethora of singers, guitarists, pianists all keeping with the Christmas theme. The dancers did a beautiful contemporary dance performance showing the turmoil of war and finally the Yr10 GCSE Performance had us all booing and cheering for a thigh slapping performance of Puss in Boots! It was great to see our great students partaking in extra-curricular events like this. It is events like these that will make our pupils be proud of this community! I was particularly delighted that it was a sell-out, reflecting the fact that our pupils [and parents] are engaging with the many positive changes at the school. This 'ownership' is crucial for our success. Watch this space for future events.

Check out our new website

I am delighted to report that we are currently working on a new website. The purpose of the website is to share important information and to communicate the many positive strands of the holistic education provided at St Anne's such as personal development. I am hoping that the new website will go live early January. Watch this space!

Additionally, our social media is alive with all things St Anne's. I ask that you follow us on Twitter, Facebook, or Instagram to keep up to date with what's happening at St Anne's. It is also an excellent medium that



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celebrates the many incredible achievements of the St Anne's community. and to see us celebrating the incredible achievements of our pupils, staff, and community daily! The days of 'negativity' within the St Anne's community is coming to an end!

Attendance

As I have repeatedly stated, excellent attendance is key to your child being able to achieve their full potential. At information evenings this term, it has been highlighted that whilst 90% attendance seems like a large number, it in fact equates to 4 weeks off school. Attendance matters as your child's attendance is directly linked to the GCSE grades they achieve and therefore the opportunities they have when leaving St Anne's and moving on to further education and employment. We celebrated excellent attendance with a football rewards event, with 270 children being selected to watch the England v Iran football world cup game! The children behaved brilliantly during the event and enjoyed celebrating the win together! This half term, students with excellent attendance, behaviour and engagement in lessons have been rewarded with a Christmas movie morning together, along with snacks. We thoroughly enjoyed celebrating their success and we look forward to further rewards for their continued excellence.

St Anne's KS3 Reading Programme

At St Anne's we are dedicated to raising attainment and arguably, to learn effectively, you must be literate. From the beginning of Yr7 students are required to engage in our computerised reading programme, Accelerated Reader. This encourages and monitors students independent reading practice and their progress allowing teachers to identify those students who require additional support. Students identified are put into the appropriate intervention groups. These are

- *Lexia*. A computer-based programme which focuses on developing reading skills in three areas: word study, grammar, and comprehension this programme.
- *Reading Buddies*. This is a one-on-one programme where Yr10 Literacy Leaders support Yr8 students. The Yr10 students read to them, listen to Yr8 reading and generally support with difficult words. This also build confidence and leadership skills in the Yr10.
- *SLT Reading Groups*. All Senior Leaders support several of our Yr9 students by modelling reading, encouraging independent reading, understanding text, and generally building confidence.

The ability to read underpins **all** learning of **all** subjects. I quote Margaret Fuller: "**Today a reader, tomorrow a leader**". I encourage parents to ensure that their children are reading and use the great library facility that St Anne's has to offer.

Friday "SL-TEA" Breakfast

Each week subject leaders nominate their '*Star of the week*' to celebrate the great work and efforts of our students. Chosen students attend a special breakfast with members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and enjoy breakfast treats of croissants, waffles, cakes, and hot chocolate. The students discuss what they have done to merit the reward and listen to the achievements of their peers. For example, students from Key Stage



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4 showcase their achievements. One student nominated from Art for a particularly impressive portrait they produced whilst another had completed their Health and Social Care coursework to an exemplary standard. These achievements inspire the younger students. Mrs Critchlow said it was *"great to see some of the many great children we have been rewarding"*. A big well done to all those nominated!

Yr11 BTEC Construction and the Built Environment

Yr11 Construction students have been working hard and have now completed 25% of their qualification (Unit 5). This required students to apply joinery and carpentry skills to produce a timber frame. They spent time mastering different joining methods and applying their knowledge to produce high quality products. Mrs Brophy from St Damian's has been in to moderate their work and was very impressed by their joinery skills! These students are now moving onto architectural units of work before their final exam in May. It is clear they have a bright future in the construction industry. Well done!

Enriching our Curriculum

On Friday 9th November, Miss Turner accompanied a group of Yr10s to a Wikipedia workshop at the University of Manchester. The aim of the day was to dispel some of the myths that surround the on-line encyclopaedia and to educate us as to how to use it critically. Through an interactive lecture, students learnt about how Wikipedia is written, who writes it and why. Our students also got a guided tour of the University by a group of student ambassadors who gave them a first-hand insight into the realities of university life. Miss Turner said that it was a real privilege to take our students out and that *"a brilliant day was had by all"*!

Amsterdam Trip

We're delighted to offer 40 students a place on an exciting football trip to Amsterdam at Easter this year. Of course, when visiting another country with a group of students we must be able to trust them 100% to behave impeccably, look after each other and to follow instructions. In essence, be ambassadors for the St Anne's community. Places on the trip are therefore dependent on the ability of the students to display these qualities not just within the PE faculty, but across all areas of St. Anne's right up until the tour departure. If any student needs to be removed from the tour for not meeting these basic expectations, we will not be able to refund the deposit. I will communicate any concerns fully with parents/carers and I reserve the right to withdraw any student from the trip.

Raising awareness of gambling

A few weeks ago, Mr Pitcher, the CEO of *'Nowt Left to Lose'*, spent the day at St Anne's educating Yr8 students on the dangers of gambling. Mr Pitcher described all the students as *"fantastic, but special kudos must go to Mrs Pearson's tutor group, who was that extra bit engaged, firing off lots of thought-provoking questions and perspectives that provided some great discussion"*. Our students reflected on what they had learned, stating how they would be a lot more mindful about their relationship with gaming and streaming content following the workshops. At St Anne's it is important that we provide a holistic education, including ensuring that they know about potential dangers, such as gambling,



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INSET day

Mrs Sutcliffe, Leader of Quality of Education at St Anne's, hosted an INSET day where the theme was of 'Raising Standards, Raising Attainment'. This professional development opportunity for our teachers was engaging, thought-provoking and inspiring where many leaders shared good practice and strategies around raising students' outcomes. Mrs Simmons, Leader of Personal Development, led a staff training session focusing on the importance of 'developing the whole child' through our PSHE curriculum which allows the St Anne's children to raise their aspirations and learn strategies to take care of their physical and mental health

SACRED day

The first SACRED Day of the academic year was a huge success. Yr9, 10 & 11 students attended a Careers Fair with over 25 different colleges, apprenticeship providers, universities and businesses represented. Yr7 looked at personal health and safety with lessons in First Aid, puberty, and a presentation from the company Kooth. Yr9 had a superb time at the NHS Careers Day putting their arms in casts and looking at different opportunities available within the NHS. Yr8 and Yr10 learnt about Mindfulness and mental health with external speakers from the charity Mind. Yr11 attended Mock Interviews and used their time to write CV's, personal statements and apply to colleges. Feedback from both staff and pupils was overwhelmingly positive and a great day was had by all! A massive thanks to Mrs Simmons, our lead for personal development, who organised and led on the range of activities. I look forward to the second SACRED day in February 2023!

Staff Profiles: Focus on Maths

In this newsletter I include the staffing profile of 2 Maths teachers for your perusal. I hope you enjoy reading them.

- ✓ *Mrs Murray: Maths teacher & KS3 Maths co-ordinator.* Five years ago, I decided to follow my lifelong dream of being a teacher combined with my love of Maths and I have been at St Anne's one year in January. Following university, where I studied Sports Science, I worked in the sports coaching industry and then joined Greater Manchester Police as a research analyst. Incorporating my love of Maths and problem-solving. Alongside this I studied for a master's degree in research methods and statistics. Since I started St Anne's I have embedded the new Maths 'Scheme of Work' with members of the Maths department, along with introducing the new online homework programme *Sparx* Maths. I'm excited for 2023 and all the Maths enrichment planned in the Maths department. St Anne's is the second school that I have taught in, and I am proud to see the students growing and committing to their learning every day.
- ✓ *Mr Browne: Maths Teacher.* As a child growing up in a one parent family in North Manchester, I had a curiosity in Physics and Maths which eventually led me to study Theoretical Physics at Cambridge University. After gaining a Double Master's degree, I was unsure what to do next, but I knew I wanted to make a difference and therefore, I ended up training as a Primary School Teacher at St Joseph's Junior School Reddish. I spent over 15 happy years there, but the pull of teaching Maths led me to St Anne's. I have taught Maths here for the past seven years and I can categorically say that the school is currently in the best place it has been since I started and is on a fast trajectory to further improvement. I look forward to working with students of St Anne's to give them the best opportunities in life and to hopefully inspire a love of Maths and Science.



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Parental Evenings update

This year we introduced *extra* parental evenings to ensure better communication between school and parents. These additional evenings provide important information relevant to your child's year group. They are delivered by members of the leadership team and cover, for example, study skills, why attendance matters, key dates, and other pertinent information. Although attendance at these meetings has been mixed, it was great to see so many parents present, especially in Year 11. I ask that parents make every effort to attend future meetings as working together in partnership is the best way that your child will achieve their potential.

Advance notice for 2 important evenings next term

In the next term I am holding 2 separate evenings for parents, one focusing on Yr11 and the other for parents of students in Yr7-Yr10. Please put the dates in your diary.

- *Yr11 only* information evening for Yr11 parents on **Thursday 16th February at 6pm** that will focus on revision, what support the school offers and expectations of students. The purpose of the evening is to ensure your children reach their potential in their GCSE exams.
- *Yr7-10* information evening where I will be able to give an update of the schools' strengths and continued areas for improvement. This will largely focus on our 'Eight Pillars' which are at the heart of our school improvement strategy. This will also be an excellent opportunity for you to ask questions in an open forum. This evening will be on **Thursday 2nd March at 6pm**.

I am hoping for full houses at both these important evenings!

Update on Yr11

Yr11 students have completed their mock exams. These exams are important not only in preparation for their final GCSE exams but also, are what many colleges and apprenticeships request to allocate places on post 16 courses. The overwhelming majority of the students behaved well, were focused and will, undoubtedly achieve. Sadly, a minority didn't revise or meet our high expectations, and therefore found the mocks challenging. For the avoidance of doubt, time is now running and Yr11 students in January must be focused on fulfilling their potential. Mock exam results day will be on Friday 20th January at 2.30pm. Following these results, Yr11 forms will be reviewed to ensure targeted form time intervention in Math's, English and Science. Lesson 6 intervention will also continue in January on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. It is essential students engage positively with both these excellent opportunities.

Watch this space...

We are both delighted and excited to relaunch the St Anne's Student Council from January. Pupils have been taking part in a democratic vote during form time and have selected their form representatives. The final members will be voted for in the new year ahead of the first meeting at the end of January. This is another excellent example of building student confidence and leadership and a sense of 'ownership' AMONG our students.



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Finally...

What a year it has been for St Anne's! There have been substantial changes over the past year in terms of catholicity, leadership, teaching, safeguarding and importantly culture. These changes are irreversible. We have a long way to go but I look back and I can honestly say that the changes being made are having a direct impact on your children's education and hence future. For the avoidance of doubt, the leadership of St Anne's are determined and committed to the education of your children.

I look forward to working with you in 2023 as we continue to make sure that St Anne's is a strong catholic community that **we can all be really proud of!**

Have a holy Christmas and a peaceful new year.

Mr Logue
Executive Headteacher