



ST. ANNE'S
R.C. VOLUNTARY ACADEMY

St Anne's RC Voluntary Academy
Glenfield Road,
Heaton Chapel,
Stockport,
SK4 2QP

TEL: 0161 432 8162
FAX: 0161 443 1105
EMAIL: admin@stannes.academy
WEB: www.stannes.academy
TWITTER: @stannesrchs

Executive Headteacher
Mr S Logue BA (Hons), M.Ed., NPQH, NPQEL

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Dear parents/carers,

A warm welcome to my penultimate 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

Again, it has been another busy month for Mr Regan and his RE team. I hope the following gives a flavour of the richness of our liturgical life.

- Our preparations for our Yr8 Advent Mass on Friday 9th December are now well underway. I am very grateful to Fr John for taking time to celebrate this Mass with Yr8. Mr Donnelly is working hard with Yr8 classes to teach them *'this little light of mine'* and Yr8 Form Tutors are preparing teaching their classes to sing *'blessed be the name of the Lord'*, while the fantastic RE Department are refreshing student's confidence in Mass participation post-Covid.
- Our Caritas Team have now begun their Advent appeal. As a school community we are in the process of collecting shoeboxes for The Wellspring to create Christmas necessity boxes for the homeless of Stockport.
- Our GIFT team continue to write and share the Friday afternoon prayer each week. This gives all in our community a chance to pause, reflect and pray just before the end of the school week. Furthermore, they have also been preparing the readings for our Yr8 Advent mass on the 9th December.
- Fr John visited school on Thursday 3rd November to run sessions with Yr7 classes where they had a chance to hear about the story of his vocation, his work as a parish priest and his work as a chaplain in the RAF. Students then asked him questions they had prepared in a *'grill the priest'* question and answer session. The sessions were a great success and Fr John has offered come back soon to do the same with Yr8.
- Yr11 are taking part in after school revision and intervention in large numbers to prepare for their mock exams in December! After their mock results the RE department will focus our intervention on key student groups and key knowledge needed for success in the GCSE exams. I ask that parents support us in ensuring students attend all revision sessions that are offered.

Safeguarding update

Safeguarding at St Anne's is always our number one priority. Our **4 Rs** [**R**ecognise, **R**espond, **R**ecord and **R**efer] system is being robustly embedded into how we respond to safeguarding concerns in school, with all staff members using CPOMS for monitoring safeguarding, wellbeing, and pastoral issues demonstrating the growing positive and trust-based relationships between staff and students. Our culture is reflected in the mantra, *'it could happen here'*. This is embedded and I am confident that we have an experienced and knowledgeable safeguarding team who know our/your children and care about them. We have regular training, including training of Governors, and reminders around our 4Rs, with student updates and recaps of ACEs [adverse childhood experiences] and PREVENT. Our Safeguarding Lead has attended training for our





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Looked After Students to ensure they are receiving the correct support. As a safeguarding team we are building strong relationships with external partners, for example, School Age Plus link worker or the Local Authorities Educational Welfare Officers to encourage those barriers for some students attending school can be addressed and hopefully reduced. Recently I invited the Safeguarding Lead for the local authority to visit the school to 'test' our safeguarding processes and systems. I will share the findings with you in due course, but she stated, "a real change in the right direction".

Subject and Curriculum updates

The following is a brief overview of curriculum content at St Anne's. I hope that it showcases the great work across the school.

- ✓ *English:* This term has been an exciting one for English. Mrs Vali's reading club is up and running and Yr10 and Yr11 are benefiting from links with Manchester University, who are providing us with workshops and online sessions to improve knowledge of exam texts and post-16 options. We are really impressed with the creative writing we've seen from KS3 classes too, about heroes, gothic settings, and subjugated characters to name a few.
- ✓ *Mathematics:* The department is supporting Yr11 in preparation for their mock exams through revision opportunities, including P6 on Week B Monday, form time interventions and Friday afterschool topic focused lessons and exam question practice. We are also thrilled to see so many students engaging in our exciting new online homework, Sparx. Students have commented on how engaging they find this programme to support them with their learning. Parents who have provided an email address should now be receiving weekly updates from Sparx about their child's progress. Please encourage and support your child to complete 100% of their homework every week.
- ✓ *Science:* Yr7 have started their first biology topic, the structure of cells, Yr8 are learning about electromagnets and Yr9 are learning about the structure of the atom. At KS4, Yr10 are learning structure and bonding in Chemistry, Organisation in Biology and Energy and Electricity in Physics and Yr11 are learning about the rates of chemical reactions. Triple Science students are also learning about the life of Fritz Haber, the chemist whose work allowed for the manufacture of fertilisers.
- ✓ *Geography:* It has been a busy but exciting year so far in Geography. The Key Stage 3 curriculum has been completely redesigned; Yr7 have settled well and have been learning key geographical skills, such as building on their knowledge of globes and interpreting OS maps. Yr8 and Yr9 are enjoying the new topics covering everything from deforestation to overpopulation! Miss Szymborska and Miss Riley and I are currently planning some trips for later in the year. It will be great to bring back Geography field trips.
- ✓ *History:* The department have been time travelling, crime solving and exam prepping in history lessons this term. Key Stage 4 have continued to build on their knowledge, regularly completing exam style questions and preparing for their upcoming GCSEs. The new history department has taught Yr7s the investigative skills needed to be a budding historian and Yr8s have explored the civilised continent of Africa before slavery and the injustices of the transatlantic slave trade. Developing on their knowledge from last year, Yr9s travelled to 20th Century America and Britain to understand the Civil Rights Movement and the impact of individuals such as Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King and Malcolm X. These enquiries have allowed us to discuss social issues in today's society such as racism and discrimination and prepared the students to become advocates for change.



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- ✓ *MFL:* Students have really positive attitudes to learning our robust curriculum, and all students have been awarded a massive total of 2057 points! Our highest scoring student is Yaa Obo in 7N who has shown excellent ambition and determination! Y7 & 8 students are learning all about verbs and conjugation with buzz light year – to infinity and beyond! Yr9 have really enjoyed using sentence builders to develop mini paragraphs in 2 tenses about their holidays while Yr10 have made a fantastic start to their GCSE Spanish Good luck to Yr11 who are working hard preparing for their Mock exams. More details to follow for our Barcelona trip– watch this space! A warm welcome to Miss Zakaraite, our new Spanish teacher, who is an excellent addition to the team!
- ✓ *Creative Technology:* A new and experienced Technology teacher, Mrs Bowden, has recently started and is currently working on curriculum design at key stage three. Yr7 are developing practical skills, namely a coping saw and a pillar drill, using wood in the workshop. Yr8 are exploring their practical skills using plastic and have experimented with the properties of plastic, shaping and finishing. Yr9 are learning about motion and levers, considering how this could be implemented into their shop front designs. This is a very exciting time for the Technology department as our new Subject Leader in Technology will be starting in January. Watch this space!
- ✓ *PE:* The department has enjoyed a productive start to the year. In KS3, students have been working hard in football, basketball, gymnastics, rugby, and health related fitness. Extra-curricular numbers have continued to grow, and we are proud to offer a wide range of activities. A special mention must go to our Yr9/10 girls' football team who beat Rainhill to reach the 3rd round of the English Schools. The team did St Anne's proud! We are excited and pleased to confirm our Amsterdam football tour at the end of March 2023. We have 40 confirmed students for this trip of a lifetime. More information will be sent out in due course. Lastly, a big thank you to parents that support their child in PE - it is much appreciated.
- ✓ *Drama:* It has been an amazing start to the year with students starting their curriculum with excellent attitudes to learning. Our new 'do now' starter activities have included stage directions, key words and using the imagination to create the 'next line' of a play. KS3 students have been learning about improvisation, pantomime and reading and re-enacting a play called DNA. Yr11 have been busy preparing for their GCSE coursework ahead of the exam performances in November. To complement this, Yr11 visited the Lowry to watch Blood Brothers to support the final exam paper in May and there is a trip to see Peter Pan at The Opera House in December for KS3.

Update on Yr11

On Thursday 10th November it was the final formal Yr11 Parents' Evening. The evening provided a great opportunity for constructive dialogue to ensure that students know how to improve and are in the best position to prepare effectively for their mock exams. It is crucial that students act on the advice of their teachers. I would like to say a genuine thank you to those parents who attended and support their child's education. It is the partnership between parents and the school that will ensure success next August. Feedback from the parental questionnaire was largely positive but I also acknowledge that we have a lot to do to ensure parental confidence in the school.

I intend to hold a Yr11 information evening for Yr11 parents on **Thursday 16th February at 6pm** that will focus on revision, support the school offers and expectations. The purpose of the evening is to ensure your children



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reach their potential. I will remind you of the date in due course. Please keep this date in your diary. I would love 100% attendance at the evening.

The following is important information for Yr11 parents.

- ✓ *Positive attitudes & Mock exams:* These will be starting next week. It is crucial that all students have a positive attitude towards their studies at this time and have a strong self-belief that they really **can** achieve their potential. This starts with focusing on all lessons, attending appropriate revision sessions, and working hard at home. The minimum expectation is that your child is working hard at home. I ask that parents support the school in ensuring that your child is working **at least** 2 hours a night on revision, homework, or independent study
- ✓ *Attendance.* I repeat again that there is a **strong correlation** between a student's success in their GCSE outcomes and their attendance. Put simply, good attendance equates to 'better' grades, and this opens up many more opportunities post-16.
- ✓ *Intervention.* This has taken place in various subjects this year, including the introduction of **period 6**. However, from January, after the Mock exams, this will be co-ordinated at whole school level. This will include the creation of 'Key to Success' groups during form time based on the Mock results.
- ✓ *Exclusions and Prom.* At the time of writing several students in Yr11 have been suspended since September. Yr11 students who have been suspended will have received a warning letter and if they are suspended again will have their invitation to the Prom withdrawn. **The Prom is by invite only.** Furthermore, if a student's attendance is poor, again they will have their invitation to the Prom withdrawn. However, students with poor attendance will be given an opportunity to improve.
- ✓ *Yr11 Drama exam.* On Tuesday 22nd November students in Yr11 took part in their GCSE devising exam. They worked hard to create incisive and thought-provoking pieces which contribute towards their final grades in August. A thank you to Mrs Simmons and Mrs Critchlow in ensuring that the students maximised this time to produce quality work.

Update on our wider Curriculum

- ✓ *Duke of Edinburgh [DoE] Award:* I am pleased to report that Mrs Bowden is re-starting the DoE Bronze level for students in Yrs. 9, 10 & 11. The DoE is a fantastic opportunity to provide our students with life skills, including volunteering, physical activities, and expeditions. In essence, it enhances an individual's personal development and allows students to excel outside of the formal curriculum, showing determination, ambition and dedication, all skills which future employers look out for. Mrs Bowden will give an update on how the students are getting on early next year. Watch this space!
- ✓ *St Anne's Chronicle:* The first issue of the St Anne's Chronicle was issued at the end of last half term. There are issues around school for students or you can pick up your own copy if you visit reception. This will also be on our new website which we are going to be launching soon. The student leaders worked exceptionally hard to bring this together and we are very proud of the first issue! There are interviews with teachers and a Y11 student, book reviews, information about school clubs and much more. Look out for the Christmas bumper issue which will go to press before we break up for the holidays!



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- ✓ *Music Talents Showcase.* As I said in my previous letter, don't forget to 'save the date' for the Christmas Performing Arts Showcase on 15th December. This is an evening of music, drama and dance with an Art Exhibition for the audience to view before and after. Refreshments will be available for a donation and tickets will be available at the start of December. Please support this by attending on the night, a night that showcases the talents of our students!

- ✓ *SACRED day.* On the 30th November we had our first SACRED Day of the year. This day allows students to focus on a specific area of the PSHE curriculum. We will be hosting a careers fair with over twenty education and employment providers including local colleges, universities, the armed forces, and a range of apprenticeship providers. Students will also hear from guest speakers focusing on mental health, a session looking at the dangers of gambling from '*Nowt Left To Lose*', a food taste session and a visit for Yr9 to a NHS Careers and Aspirations Day.

- ✓ *Music update.* I am delighted that music instrumental tuition has started again at St Anne's. Initially this was 3 students but within a week, this grew to 9! The choir has also restarted and had over 30 students at its first rehearsal! Watch this space as we continue to promote extra-curricular activities at St Anne's.

- ✓ *Student Leadership and Prefects.* Selection for our new prefect team is well underway with nearly 50 Yr10 students receiving nominations from staff which enables them to apply for this leadership role in school. This builds confidence, communication and creates a sense of responsibility, all attributes for success. Further details will follow in due course.

Update on behaviour

Overall, I am really impressed with the general behaviour of our students in and around school. There is definitely a calmer atmosphere in school which is the direct result of high expectations and better teaching. However, there are still a few students who believe that our rules don't apply to them. This is not the case. For avoidance of doubt, students who disrupt the learning of others or who undermine our simple rules will put their place at St Anne's at risk.

KS4 GCSE Target grades

Last half term all students in Yr10 & Yr11 were issued GCSE target grades for all their subjects. These targets are based on Yr6 data and are aspirational for all. Striving for the highest possible achievements for **all**, regardless of ability, is now part of the St Anne's culture. I ask that you support your children in their hard work towards achieving these targets. This will adequately prepare them for the next stages of education or employment, for example when applying for college places, apprenticeships, universities, or employment post 16.

Update on school building work

The initial £1.4M investment in the school building is almost complete with our new roofs now in place and the external windows and doors programme almost complete. This has transformed the look and feel of St Anne's and provides an environment that is fit for purpose. The even better news is that we are only half-way through the improvement scheme with a further £1.4M of works to be completed over the next 9



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months. Internally, all fire doors will be replaced, followed by the heating system which will make school safer, warmer, and much more presentable. Our site team have been working incredibly hard to replace lighting and painting corridors. Externally, the basketball area has been improved and new benches are available on all yards for students to enjoy and chat about their day. Parents and carers can rest assured that St Anne's aims to be outstanding in **all** we do and that includes creating an environment that students can be proud of and is conducive to learning. eve

Changes to the school day from Sept 2023

As mentioned in my letter last month, the government have announced that each school should deliver a school week of **at least 32.5 hours** by September 2023. At St Anne's we are currently slightly below this minimum expectation with 5 minutes per day needing to be added. After consultation and feedback, we will be changing the school day from September 2023. The start of the school day remains the same but there will be 5 minutes added to the end of the day. Furthermore, we will also be returning to one lunchtime for all students as opposed to the split lunch introduced during the Covid 19 period.

Yr9 parental information evening

To increase our communication and relationships with our parents, we have planned additional parent information evenings. These evenings are delivered by a member of the leadership team and their purpose is to give out essential information, such as study skills, why attendance is important or information on pastoral issues, such as mental health. The Yr9 evening took place a few weeks ago and it was a positive evening. However, I would like to see better attendance at these evenings, as working together in partnership is the best way that your child will succeed.

Staff profile

Following on from the October newsletter, I include a further 2 staffing 'profiles' for your perusal. I hope that you enjoy reading them.

- *Mrs K Corser, Inclusion Manager.* I have had the pleasure of serving the students of St Anne's for almost 20 years. My passion has always been to support students to remove barriers to learning so that they flourish as individuals, including supporting students with SEND. I studied at university as an adult learner and have been awarded a First-Class Honours Degree in Education. This has strengthened my knowledge, confidence, and ability to provide support to students through strong pastoral care. I feel in a privileged position to provide excellent pastoral care for your children and the future children of St Anne's.
- *Kate Poscha, Science Teacher.* At the age of 18, seeking adventure, I joined the Royal Air Force, passing out as a Military Policewoman. During a 12-year career, I travelled worldwide and had many amazing and often frightening experiences. I left the RAFP to start a family. I began to teach badminton to Primary School children and soon fell in love with teaching. I knew it was the career for me and completed a degree in Life Sciences BSc (Hons). My first Science teaching job was at a pioneering academy school in Oldham where I taught for 9 years before coming to St Anne's, a fabulous school which I have fallen in love with. My advice to St Anne's students; find your passion and work hard. You all have time on your side, use it wisely and be happy! Life is so much more alive if you are doing something you love!



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Finally...

I will end with an uplifting piece of news regarding our students. Mrs Bowden, along with some of our DoE students, visited St Joseph's Primary school in Reddish. They delivered an assembly to over 200 students about the Bronze DoE award. They spoke about the physical aspect, skills, and volunteering sections, as well as the expedition. They shared stories about their DofE journey and the activities they are doing within the community and the impact this has on them as individuals. The students really excelled themselves: their confidence, enthusiasm and resilience were a joy to behold. Following the assembly, students then spent the morning working with a variety of smaller groups from Yr3-Yr5 focusing on map reading skills, nutrition activities and general discussion about the award. I would like to thank Mrs Bowden and our great students who are a credit to the St Anne's community. The feedback from St Joseph's was extremely positive. The Deputy said *"Thanks again and please thank the students who came and shared their experiences. They have inspired lots of students here"* while on their Facebook it said *"their behaviour and confidence was impeccable. What a credit to St Anne's"*. As Executive Headteacher I love hearing about the great children here. It inspires me to ensure that they get the education that they deserve! I look forward to this great partnership with St Joseph's continuing.

Again, thanks for your support.

Mr Logue
Executive Headteacher

