



Community - Unity - Opportunity

From the Headteacher's Desk

As we conclude a fruitful Autumn term, one that certainly feels like the longest in history and I cannot remember a time when we broke up so late, it gives me great joy to witness our students embracing the true spirit of Advent. Their commitment to living out our school values, particularly those centred on Catholic Social Teaching, has been truly inspiring. In a world often focused on the commercial aspects of Christmas, our students have demonstrated a sincere appreciation for the themes of hope, peace, love, and joy that define this sacred season.

Our Christmas Carol Service was dedicated to highlighting the pressing issue of global poverty that affects so many lives. I am thrilled to share that we successfully raised over £825 for a wonderful charity called Mary's Meals, which provides essential school meals to children in some of the world's most impoverished regions. As we began the Advent season, we also participated in the Shoebox Appeal, further demonstrating our commitment to helping those in need. Moreover, our community has shown remarkable generosity by supporting various other charitable efforts. This culture of giving truly embodies our school's strong sense of social responsibility and our commitment to promoting the common good. As we approach Christmas and the New Year, let us continue to embrace the values of generosity, compassion, and community that are at the heart of our school's mission.

I want to acknowledge the outstanding work of my entire staff team over this busy term. Every member of staff continues to do so much above and beyond for our students, making personal sacrifices to ensure that our school community is successful. I would like to wish you and your loved ones a very holy Christmas and positive journey through the remainder of Advent. I very much look forward to the Oaklands family being able to rest in anticipation of a great start to 2025.

Mr Quinn, Headteacher

Reconciliation in the Chapel



Advent, a season of profound hope and heartfelt anticipation beckons Catholics to prepare their hearts for the joy and wonder of Christ's birth. It is a time to pause, reflect, and embrace God's infinite love and mercy. One of the most beautiful ways to experience this grace is through the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

This Advent, students were invited to participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, allowing them to experience God's mercy in a deeply personal way while fostering a spirit of unity and grace within the school.

A Sacred Space for Years 11 and 10

Year 11 and 10 students were given the opportunity to receive the sacrament in the serene setting of the school chapel. The atmosphere was one of reverence and warmth, as the chapel was transformed into a place of peace. During the confessions, the Blessed Sacrament was adored.

Local clergy, embodying generosity and compassion, devoted their time to hearing individual confessions, offering words of guidance and forgiveness from God to each student. It was a moment set apart from the hustle and bustle of daily school life, a space where students could find true peace.

Hope for the Future

The blessings of this Advent tradition will continue to echo throughout the school. Students in Years 7-9 will have their chance to experience the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Lent, another season of deep spiritual significance. This Advent, our students were reminded of the power of God's grace and the beauty of coming home to His love.

Mrs Semple

Year 10 STEM Day

On Monday 9th December, Year 10 had to get themselves into the mindset of a Pharmacist or Analytical Chemist, to try and work out if the concentration of their unknown 'Kalpol' samples would be appropriate for use.

Students built their own Colorimeters using LEDs, a simple circuit and a cuvette holder, which they built using Lego. They used this equipment and their scientific skills, to make a calibration curve, using standard solutions, which they could compare the unknowns against.



When asked what they enjoyed about the day, students said:

'Working in small groups as analytical chemists was actually really fun! We were judged on how well we worked together, how we presented our ideas, and how we explained our experiments, which made us realise how important teamwork is. It was cool because we all had to pitch in and help each other out.'

'One of the best parts was making posters about the experiments we did. It was a great way to share what we learned, and we had to make sure everything looked good and made sense. It was a fun challenge to explain science in a way that was easy to understand, but also interesting.'

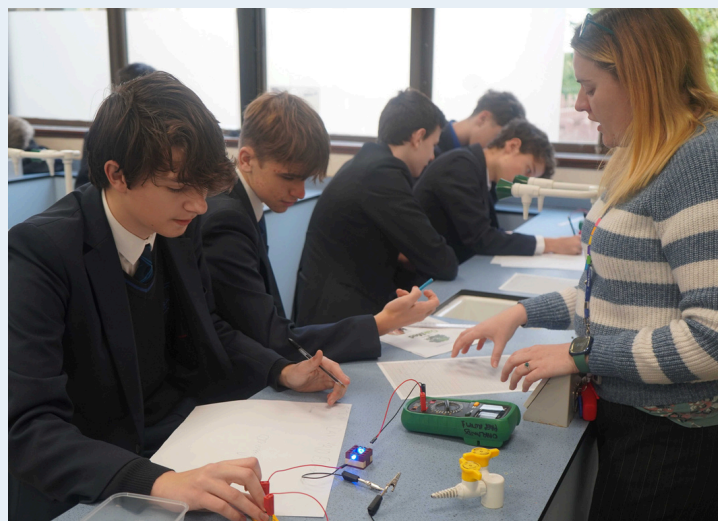
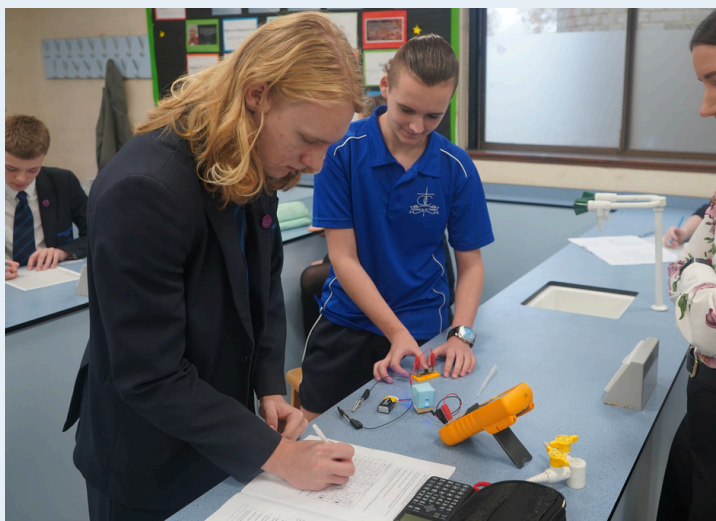
10 St Vincent

'STEM Day was amazing! Working with my friends made it even better. At first, our circuit wasn't working, but in the end, we managed to sort it out. We also had a great time building LEGO towers and using LED lights. Three hours of practical science flew by – it was so much fun! One of the most interesting activities was figuring out the correct dosage of 'Kalpol', especially when we discovered that some batches had too high a concentration. I can't wait for the next STEM event!'

St Clare

Students were successful in building their scientific equipment and using it to create some very good graphs. They now have a better understanding of quality control and its importance in medicines, realising that if the concentration of a drug is incorrect, it cannot be used, due to safety, or not being effective.

Miss Schofield



St John's Korogocho

Update

Shakespeare famously wrote in one of his comedies, 'there's time for all things.' Often, the whole concept of time alludes us; it can be our default position to suggest, "I don't have time for that" or "I need time to do this." Our support of St John's has now gone beyond a full decade of devotion, shared vision and partnership – driven towards a common goal of providing education for those most in need.



The power of education is something which evokes love and allows us to 'take stock' and reflect on what we are grateful for. For each other, for our education and our shared sense of community.

As per the educational calendar in Kenya, St John's finished their final term of learning on 25th October 2024, culminating in an inaugural graduation of each year group. Throughout the year, students have been engaging with the build-up of examinations and a key moment in our liturgical calendar: preparing for the celebration and birth of Christ. We experience this in our community here at Oaklands – focusing on bringing people together in the hope of forgiveness and renewal and preparing our hearts for the new year. It is a time to celebrate and rejoice with St John's, and we hope that as a partnership, we can support St John's throughout the process of examinations and ensure our partnership continues to be fruitful, supportive and loving.

In October, we held our annual St John's week, where we learnt a little more about Korogocho, expressing how and why our partnership is meaningful and what we can do as a community to help provide the necessary support for our friends in Kenya. Over the course of the week, we held a number of activities to help raise money and continue our worthwhile support of both communities. We raised an incredible amount of money for St John's, a true testament to the commitment and dedication of all the staff and students.

It's evident that the power of community is awe-inspiring and brings people together in a number of ways. I will leave you with this piece of scripture from Corinthians 13:11: 'Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you.'

Have a very merry Christmas, and thank you for all your support.

Mr Osbourne

2024 Maths - Paper Pi Prayer Chain



The Maths department have been looking to break a World Record for a while now and last year began looking towards paper chains for inspiration.

Unfortunately, the World Record was 1,000,000 links long. So, we thought we would incorporate Pi (3.1415...) and write a digit on each chain, the World Record for this was 80,000 links. We then thought of implementing our work on Catholic Social Teaching and have students write a prayer on each link, but we soon found out the World Record for a prayer chain was 57,000 links long. As a last resort, we thought a Christmas themed paper chain would win us the framed certificate, but that World Record was 45,000 links long.

Therefore, we decided to invent our own World Record and include all of the above elements! We aimed to create a paper chain that contained a digit of Pi in order, a written prayer and be Christmas themed. Last year we reached 881 links. However, after a magnificent effort from students and staff our Paper Pi Prayer Christmas Chain currently contains 2428 links and measures a colossal 175m! It took pride of place around Romero Block for the end of term festivities. It is quite a sight to see nearly two and a half thousand prayers hanging over your head each day.

We say currently as we will be looking to add to this next year, and the year after that. The only trouble is, we may run out of space to hang it up!

Mr Gorman

Governors' Update

Like the rest of the school, the Governors have had a busy term. The highlight was of course achieving 'Outstanding' in all categories for the Catholic Schools Inspection. A huge thank you to all in the school who make the Catholic ethos the centre of school life every day, not just on inspection day.

The required Governance activity included six committee meetings, covering governance, Ethos, Teaching and Learning, and Business and Collaboration. Governors have visited various departments within the school, looking for evidence of high quality, inclusive and Christ-centred education, in both national curriculum requirements, and the wider school and college activities. We enjoy congratulating the whole school on all that is achieved, but we also challenge the school leaders to strive for even better outcomes, to ensure no one is left behind.

We are sorry to say goodbye to Mr Whitlock, who is stepping down from his role as a Staff Governor, and thank him for all he has contributed to the governing body. Mrs Vary now joins the Board and we are thrilled to welcome her as the new Staff Governor. There are currently two vacancies for Foundation Governors, and we are always looking out for individuals to contribute to the life of the school as governors, so if you would like to join us please contact Mrs Colley, our Clerk.

Governors were at the main school and Sixth Form open evenings this term, which were notable by the excellent attendance and feedback from parents. On a related note, the Governors now have a new banner, which has already made its first appearance at the wonderful Carol Service earlier this week. We hope this banner will make it much easier to find us at the various school events. Please do come and ask us about what we do and how you can help support the school.

Mrs Cluett, Chair of Governors

Performing Arts @ Oaklands

Christmas Concert: Sounds of the Season

On Thursday 12th December, the Performing Arts Department hosted an evening of festive cheer at our annual Christmas Concert.

The evening was a fabulous opportunity to celebrate the gifts and talents of our students whilst listening to a range of musical performances.



We saw Oaklands Band open the evening with a mixture of popular music and Christmas classics. We then heard solos from a range of instruments including drums, brass, woodwind and voice, plus performances from Chamber Choir, the Year 10 GCSE Band and the cast of our next school production, Joseph and The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat. To close the night, we were entertained by SingSquad, ending with 'What Christmas is For' which reminded us that it is not about gift giving, but the time and love we share with each other during this festive period.

All the students worked very hard in order to perform to such a high standard and we were very proud of each and every one of them.

'I thoroughly enjoyed performing in the concert on Thursday, it was full of brilliant performances. It was a good experience to help build my confidence and I have developed new friendships through the extra-curricular clubs I take part in. I was also able to support my friends who too were performing in the concert.'

Sage Saul, Year 10

'Performing in the concert was really fun. It was a great experience to be able to show others our talents and what we had been working so hard on this past term. We are grateful to have such supportive and amazing teachers who guide us every day to



success. We really enjoyed the wide range of performances and it got us in the festive spirit.'

Maddie Gissing & Isabel Kennard, Year 10

Christmas Carol Service

On Tuesday evening, we celebrated our annual Christmas Carol Service; always a real highlight of the academic year. The hall was once again packed as we sang carols, listened to readings, and reflected on the true meaning of Christmas.



Our theme this year was 'Joseph the Dreamer'; we reflected on the quiet, yet pivotal, character in the nativity story, and how St Joseph was guided by God in his dreams. His unshakeable faith in God, and his trust in and love of Mary gave him the strength to change the course of history, creating safety and a home for the Son of God and His Mother.

The Year 7 choir sang beautifully, and the chamber choir performed with excellence and professionalism. We are grateful to everyone who joined us, and all the staff and students who made the celebration possible. A retiring collection was taken for Mary's Meals, and over £800 was raised; thank you to all who gave so generously.

Below is one of the readings from the evening, titled 'The Hands of Joseph'; we pray that we can all open our hearts to receive the Christ Child this Christmas.

Huge thanks to all those who attended and supported the evening, to our Performing Arts Team and the Year 7 choir, who led the singing beautifully, to Fr Jeremy for a wonderful Homily and to the Tech Team for their support with all things set-up and sound related.

Wishing you all a peaceful and joyful Christmas and looking forward to seeing you in the New Year.

Mrs Farrell





THE SIXTH FORM

Oaklands Catholic School

Year 12 Geography Field Trip

The A Level Geography exam board specification states that students must study an example of a stretch of coastline where 'hard' and 'soft' engineering are employed to manage the coast.

This week, Year 12 students braved the elements on a visit to West Wittering, East Head, Selsey and Medmerry to explore the engineered coastlines in these destinations. Coastal managers at these locations have held the view that the sea wall has had a detrimental impact on the beach in front of it. The reflection of waves has resulted in a scouring effect on the beach, which has left the sea wall further exposed.



The policy now employed at West Wittering is one of 'Adaptive Management', which means that managers will not 'Hold the Line'. The sea wall and the groynes are being allowed to deteriorate: the idea being that this will produce a wider, shallower beach, which will be more effective at dissipating wave energy (in theory!). The students had mixed views on this, but it is clear that they all appreciated that there is a finite pot of money available and decisions relating to coastal protection are invariably challenging.

At Selsey, hard management is still very much employed. However, just down the coast at Medmerry is a large managed realignment scheme. This is where a new 7km embankment had been built inland and the sea has been allowed to flood the land in front, thus reducing the need to use beach management strategies.

Our students will experience further field work in June when they will attend a three-day trip to Dorset to prepare them for their A Level coursework, worth 20% of their final grade.



Trips like this are not able to take place without support from my colleagues and on this occasion, I'd like to express my thanks to Mrs Quinn and Miss Jetson who accompanied the group.

Mr Bamford

The Oaklands Way

“Students flourish in this safe, happy and authentic Catholic school and are proud of, and knowledgeable about, what makes it distinctive. Their contribution to service, volunteering and going the extra mile is exemplary.” These are the opening two sentences of the Catholic Schools Inspection Report for our school, which took place on 13th and 14th November 2024.

The report goes on to quote one of the students as saying, ‘I love this school - it is like a family. The teachers are nice to you, and you can ask for help at any time.’ The report also quotes one parent, ‘My child is not just a number, he has grown in confidence. Another said, ‘The opportunities for children to grow are amazing.’

These statements from our students and their parents paint a picture of exactly what makes us distinctive and captures the true meaning of our mission statement; Community Unity Opportunity.

This report recognises that at Oaklands, we do our very best to live out our mission statement and the Oaklands Way is one of the vehicles we use to embed our values and ethos.

Over the last three years, we have built our ethos around the principles of Catholic Social Teaching such as respect for Human Dignity, Solidarity, the Common Good, Option for the Poor, Rights and Responsibilities etc. These principles are not just to be learned in the classroom, no, they are to be put into practice and lived. The report says that our students ‘can accurately articulate the nature and importance of Catholic Social Teaching, which they really value,’ and quotes one of the students as saying, ‘I am not a Catholic but I really believe in things like care, dignity and solidarity.’

We hope that sharing The Oaklands Way with you has helped you see the things your sons and daughters have been reflecting on each week, things that are not just about academic development, but about ‘what kind of person am I called to be’. As a Catholic school, we have a certain vision of how life should be lived, and The Oaklands Way is the tool we use to help our students learn about this way of life; a life centred on love and service, as modelled to us by Jesus Christ.



Father,

We pray as a Christian Community, to be open to the gospel message of Jesus. We value the uniqueness of each other and, in respecting and supporting one another, celebrate the gifts we bring.

In unity and love we will reach out to those in need. Guide us as we work to make prayer, love, healing peace and justice a reality within our school.

Amen



**JOSEPH
AND
THE
AMAZING
TECHNICOLOR
DREAMCOAT**

Wednesday 12th

Thursday 13th

Friday 14th

February

Romero Hall

7pm



Oaklands Catholic School and Sixth Form College

Community - Unity - Opportunity

