

INSIDE ST GABRIEL'S

St Gabriel's
NEWBURY

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As we reach the middle of February and the half-term break, it is good to be able to look back at what has been achieved, but more, look forward to a spring that will hopefully not be punctuated by pandemic issues. This half-term has been long for the Spring Term, and we seem to have moved forward a great deal, from the uncertainty of school even starting in January.

I am most grateful for the support that you have given us all during this time, and it has been nice to start having parents attend events in school. Together with a number of Year 7 & 8 parents, I enjoyed a performance of the Euphonix singing group, a delight to hear, and a delight to share the moment with others in this way. As we return to school after the break, we will move to having masks as being optional; any further changes that we think are appropriate will be announced after the break as we head, hopefully, to a summer with everything being back to normal.

This term has seen mocks for Years 11 and 13 and the confirmation that they will be sitting examinations in the summer. One cannot underestimate how difficult the uncertainty of this has been for both staff and pupils, and I am eternally grateful to both groups for the way that they have just carried on with things, knowing that the government was making decisions that were very personal to them.

Needless to say, both year groups are well placed to gain the success they deserve later in the summer. The rest of the Senior School have been getting on, engaging with all that is on offer: fixtures, trips, music, drama and other clubs and activities.

We look forward to the return of one of our set pieces of the year, the production, this year being the turn of The Dance Show (Years 3 - 10 & 12).



This will take place in school on the evening of Monday, 7 March; further details will be sent out just after the break. Events like this underline the strong sense of community that is such a special part of St Gabriel's.

Despite the stormy start to the half term, I hope that that you all manage to have some sort of a break, and we look forward to seeing you in school in the second half of term.

- Mr Ricki Smith, Principal

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read 'Ricki Smith'.



Mock Examinations

Our GCSE and A Level students had mock examinations in January. A celebratory afternoon tea was held for Year 11 when they had finished their final exam. It was such a delight to see the smiling faces in the theatre. Well done to everyone for your effort over the first few weeks of term.



GCSE Subject Fair

Year 9 had some big decisions this term as they make their GCSE option choices. They were invited to the GCSE Options Fair in the Sports Hall to immerse themselves with the subject choices available.

We are so pleased to be offering more open and busy events such as this. It was great to see so many insightful discussions and passionate, engaged pupils.



Music Department

Our Lower School choir 'Euphonix' shared their first open rehearsal with parents in the week before half term and delighted their audience with a wide range of songs and some impressive vocal harmonies and percussion skills as well! Ensemble rehearsals continue at pace for all year groups in the run up to the Easter holiday and there will be another opportunity to share our music-making with the wider St Gabriel's community...watch this space for more details!

In the classroom, Year 8 have been learning to use our new Soundtrap software to help them compose, record and produce their own pop songs using a four chord trick. We can't wait for other KS3 groups to start using this fabulous software as the year progresses!

Congratulations also go out to the following students who have achieved success in recent music exams:

Elizabeth Fearnley - ARSM Performance Diploma (Merit)

Oluchi Akosa - Grade 3 Violin (Merit)

Ismay Gallup - Voice Grade 3 (Pass)

Clare McGonnell - Grade 5 Theory (Pass)

Erin Yeung - Grade 5 Theory (Distinction)

Finally, next half term sees the relaunch of our 'Performance Platforms' where students will be able to showcase their talents in an informal lunchtime concert in the Oval Room. We will share how to sign up for tickets imminently and very much look forward to welcoming you to these events.

- Ms Woodhouse, Director of Music

Lunar New Year

All year groups got involved in the Lunar New Year celebrations. This year (2022) is the Year of the Tiger, symbolising strength and bravery.

There were numerous activities held across school as part of the celebrations. There was also a special Lunar New Year lunch served in the dining room - delicious!

Years 8 and 9 decorated 3D cut tigers in their art lessons. Both Year 8 and Year 13 got stuck in making the bubble tea!

Thank you to Mrs Clarkson and other members of staff for organising activities to mark this celebration and to Holroyd Howe for designing a special menu for the occasion.



Valentine's Day Celebrations

Congratulations to everyone in Year 11 for getting into the spirit of Valentine's Day in support of NHS Charities Together on Monday 14 February.

Year 11's Valentine's Ultimate Vending Machine charity event was supported by the whole of the Senior School at their cake and treats sale held at break and lunch time.

There were plenty of goodies to purchase and with the support of their peers, raised over £150 to donate to the NHS. An impressive achievement!

Thank you to everyone who supported this worthy fundraising event, from the Year 11 food donations, to those purchasing a Valentine's Day treat. All proceeds will go to NHS Charities Together.

- Mrs Hastings, Dance



Year 7 Trip to 'Bedknobs & Broomsticks'

In January, Year 7 took a trip to see 'Bedknobs and Broomsticks' at the Mayflower Theatre in Southampton. In their Drama lesson afterwards, pupils wrote handwritten 'thank you' messages to be sent to the cast and crew. Here are a selection of the messages:

"Dear the cast and crew of Bedknobs and Broomsticks,

Thank you so much for putting on an AMAZING show! I thought it was fabulous. The special effects were so cool. I loved the bed flying, the objects moving, and the broom. I especially loved the song 'Portobello Road'. It was such a catchy song, and the staging of the song was great. I loved 'The Beautiful Briny Sea' because the actors used the fish, and it was so realistic how they moved the fish. All the actors and actresses were incredible. I loved Emelius Browne, Eglantine Price, the children, and the ensemble. I loved the comedy, fun, and joyfulness in the musical. Thank you!"

- Ellie

"Thank you so much for performing that AMAZING show! My favourite part of the entire show was the shiny briny sea song and scene. The puppets were so clever and the singing was mind-blowing. My only question is, how did you make the bed fly?!"

- Kitty

"To Mayflower Theatre,

Thank you for putting on a great show of Bedknobs and Broomsticks, it was highly enjoyable for me, and I loved every second of it. My favourite part was when the bed flew, and it still makes me confused on how you managed to do it. So, how did you make the bed fly? I also loved the songs as I thought they were all very creative. I hope you do another show soon because I would definitely try to come. Thank you again for the amazing show."

As you can tell by these reviews, Year 7 really enjoyed their drama trip. If you would like to read some more of the reviews written by Year 7, [click here](#).

Don't forget to follow [@StGabrielsDrama](#) on twitter for all the updates in the Drama Department.

Year 12 & 13 Classics Trip UCL Theatre and British Museum

The Classics Department is on the move again! The Sixth Form had a fabulous time in London, visiting the British Museum and then watching Euripides' 'Electra' at the Bloomsbury Theatre.

As always, the British Museum was wonderful, though much debate was had as to the legitimacy of the Parthenon Sculptures still being in England. We also had a fascinating insight into how to date free-standing sculpture.

The performance not only provided valuable reference points for the study of Greek Theatre (part of the 'A' level Classical Civilisation syllabus) but also had one of our very own ex-students in the cast, A level Latinist Anisa Khorassani.

- Mr Ives, Head of Classics





Year 8 Pupil raises £1000 for charity!

Year 8 pupil, Lily, rowed 50 miles and ran 50 miles in support of the charity 'The Girls' Network'!

Unfortunately, Lily finished the challenge a week later than planned as she had an accident in early December and was advised not to participate in sports.

After resting, she continued with the challenge with some adaptations, strapping her arm to her chest whilst running and rowing, so she did not sustain any further injuries. Rowing one-handed was a lot harder and so the challenge took slightly longer to complete. During the challenge, Lily was completing four miles a day!

Lily has raised over £1,000 over two events! Last year, she raised £535 for running 50 miles in 24 days and this challenge a year later. This is an amazing achievement and the school is immensely proud of her effort. Lily has said she would like to participate in the Three Peaks Challenge in the future!

Here is what Lily has to say about 'The Girls' Network' charity:

"I chose The Girls' Network because I attend an all-girls school, where I am very fortunate to have a support network around me. The teachers are amazing at giving me the right amount of guidance and support. Since starting in September 2020, my confidence has grown, and I feel I have a bright future ahead of me.

I also have a loving and supportive family who always give the best advice and allow me to pursue my goals and dreams. They take me to various clubs and always encourage me. My dream is to become a professional goalkeeper and play for England Ladies, but if I can't then I would love to work for the NHS as a doctor.

It is sad that some girls my age don't have the same support, or role models, in their life to allow them to follow their dreams, or even have dreams they want to follow. This is why I chose The Girls' Network as I absolutely love the concept of this charity.

I think having role models and mentors to engage with girls my age or older is exactly what is needed for empowerment, confidence and mental health."

- Lily

If you would like to learn more about this amazing charity, [click here](#).

Well done, Lily!



St Gabriel's Pupil Featured in Marketing for 'Surf Therapy' Charity.

We are delighted that our pupil, Elsy in Year 9, has been featured on vans belonging to The Wave Project in Northern Ireland.

This charity advocates for 'surf therapy' as a form of therapeutic support for mental and physical health. The therapy is effective for children and young people who are at risk of ill mental health. It is also used by the police and blue light services as a therapy for serving officers and professionals.

The Wave Project supports children and young people with a range of physical and mental health issues, social deprivation or social isolation. These services build the confidence and self-esteem of young people, develop resilience and make friends. It is delivered in 33 locations across the UK, in partnership with social care organisations, NHS services and schools. To learn more about this fantastic charity, [click here](#).



Sixth Form

The Sixth Form have been up to so much during this half of term. Our A Level students had their mock examinations in January, followed by a wave of University offers - congratulations!

We have also seen the launch of the peer mentoring scheme, debating competitions, 'Med Prof' group sessions and a classics trip, which Mr Ives was extremely excited about.

We had our second virtual Sixth Form Careers Spotlight Event of this academic year on 17 February. Our students were extremely lucky to hear from two accomplished alumnae.

The first careers talk came from a Senior Associate at Condé Nast. The discussion centred around making the most of your university experience if that was the chosen route post-Sixth Form. The girls were encouraged to use all careers guidance whilst at university, also noting that participation in societies can enhance your CV as evidence of leadership and organisational skills.

Based on her own experience, our alumnae encouraged the students to identify work environments that would suit them and what workplace values are important to them individually. Crucially, it was emphasised that their first job after university might not be what they want to do in the long term and that it will be a stepping stone to their desired career.

Our students asked some excellent questions, discussing the added value in studying abroad or opting for an industrial placement year. An important topic to our students was the role of women in business, and they were firmly encouraged to "break that glass ceiling".

The second talk came from a current engineering student at the University of Cambridge in her placement year at Williams Racing. This year we have a number of pupils interested in engineering, so this was a valuable opportunity to learn more about this subject and the career pathways which could be available to them.

We thank our valued speakers for giving time to participate in this event. Stay tuned to our social channels for more events like this in the future.



St Gabriel's Wins Industry Award for Video!

St Gabriel's has won an award courtesy of Inspired School Marketers for our co-ed announcement video that we released this time last year.

Thank you to everyone who was a part of this project. A huge amount of work went into making this film and it was the perfect way to launch the start of our senior co-educational journey. The strength and togetherness of the St Gabriel's community is evident throughout the video.

Many thanks to Affixxus Education for producing it. If you haven't seen the video, please [click here](#) to watch.



Outreach: Maths Challenge

We are thrilled that we are able to resume our outreach programme. This term, the Junior School welcomed local schools to participate in Year 4 and Year 5 Maths Challenges. The event was a huge success and our pupils enjoyed welcoming visitors back onto site again. Thank you to the volunteers from the Senior School for your help with these events.

Thank you to Ms Williams, Mrs Benney and all staff for organising the event. We are looking forward to resuming outreach events for the Senior School - stay tuned!



Join Us

Saturday 5 March | 9.00am - 12.30pm

St Gabriels delivers an education that is both balanced and inspiring. Pupils are motivated to achieve academic excellence, but also given the time to develop the learning and life skills that will enable them to achieve their ambitions.

Meet with Mr Rodi Smith, Principal, and members of the academic team. Tours will be available of Sandford Nursery, the Junior School, the Senior School and Sixth Form.

We look forward to sharing with you all that a St Gabriels education has to offer.



Scan here to reserve your place

stgabriels.co.uk/todayourvisit
01635 555680 | admissions@stgabriels.co.uk

St Gabriels | Sandford Priory | Newbury | Berkshire | RG20 9BD



"My teachers have given me the confidence to grow both academically and as a person; they are always there to support and challenge me intellectually. I love taking part in all the clubs, performing arts and sports. St Gabriels is a fantastic community." *Current Pupil*



Admissions Update

It was just over a year ago that we announced we would be extending our co-educational provision through to the Senior School. There has been tremendous interest over the last six months and we are delighted that 30% of candidates sitting the entrance examinations were boys. We look forward to welcoming our first co-educational cohort to the Senior School in September.

A new addition to our admissions calendar were the two very successful Principal's Breakfast events held in January and February for prospective parents. This was a wonderful opportunity for prospective parents to take part in a Q + A session with Mr Smith and Senior School staff. It was lovely to have external parents back into the school.

Our next Whole School Open Morning is on Saturday 5 March. For any admissions enquiries, please do not hesitate to contact our Admissions Team | admissions@stgabriels.co.uk

Sport

The PE Department have also been very busy with numerous fixtures and extra-curricular clubs running weekly. Some of the sports on offer this term have included: netball, lacrosse, cross country, archery, volleyball, football and handball to name a few.

The social media team at St Gabriel's has spent some time with the PE Department this term and it has been great to see the appetite for sport in our pupils. We have joined the pupils for some of the fixtures, including the Netball League, organised by West Berkshire. Weekly netball tournaments for each age group are scheduled, where the girls can play up to four matches in one evening. The sporting performances we have seen at these tournaments have been fantastic. Additionally, there have been inspiring displays of team spirit and passion in our girls. We have been privy to some awesome examples of grit and determination - Year 7 in particular, you know who you are!

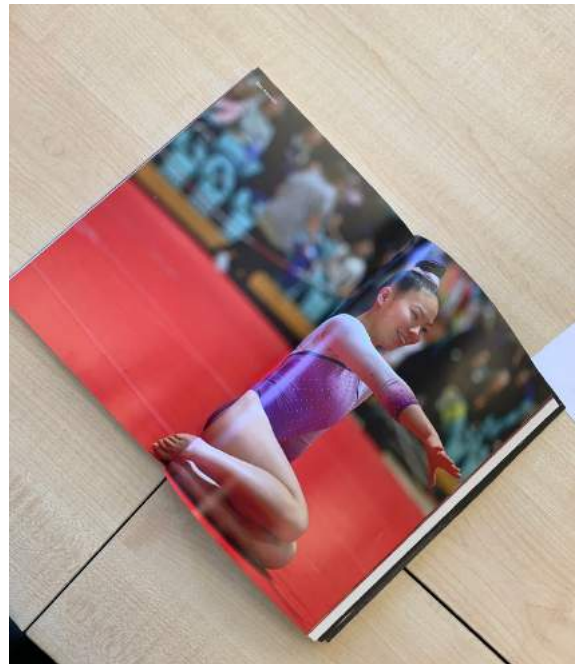
Speaking with Mrs Brazendale about the participation in clubs and sport this term, she has been overwhelmed by the uptake as well as commitment to fixtures. As she has said many times, PE is for everyone so please do get involved in as much as you can.

We are so delighted at pupil achievements outside of the school environment. In the photos opposite (top), you can see that our GCSE student, Mei, has featured in the Gymnova calendar.

We are also proud of our sixth formers (bottom), Lucy has been playing for Harlequins rugby since September and Izzy has been selected for Wasps. Well done!

We are looking forward to all the fixtures, extracurricular clubs, next half term and hopefully some nicer weather!

Please do follow the PE Department on twitter @StGabrielsSport. Mrs Brazendale is a tweeting pro and shares regular updates of what is happening within the PE department. Do also follow our [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#) accounts for sporting updates.





Upcoming Events

Black Classicists: from Slavery to Scholarship

The Black Classicists Exhibition, curated by Michele Valerie Ronnick, Professor of Greek and Latin at Wayne State University, has toured extensively in the United States. Now, courtesy of Professor Ronnick and Harvard University Press, it is coming to the UK. It will receive its opening at St Gabriel's later this spring and will then be made available to schools, universities and other institutions that would be interested.

- Mr Ives, Head of Classics

After Half Term

The highly anticipated Dance Showcase is quickly approaching, which will be great event showcasing the enormous talent within the school.

We also have Duke of Edinburgh expedition preparation and events, lunchtime music concerts, UCAS information events alongside many sports fixtures. The older Senior School year groups (Year 11 - Year 13) have also been invited to their formal Spring Dinner in March.

Keep an eye on the calendar for all the events when you return.



Term Begins Monday 28 February

It has been another fantastic half term here at St Gabriel's. We hope you have a wonderful break, ensuring time for some rest and to recharge.

I thought I would take the opportunity to introduce myself since I have now been at St Gabriel's for six months. I am the Marketing Assistant at the school and joined in the summer.

I'm sure many of the pupils know me, or at least know me as the person with the camera. I capture all things St Gabriel's as well as running our social media channels. I love hearing from our community with updates and achievements, so if you have anything to share please do contact ejennnings@stgabriels.co.uk. I am always eager to publish on social media or in the news section of the website.

I would also love it if you could take a second to write a review on the St Gabriel's Google page or on Facebook. It only takes a second and is invaluable to us as a school.

Thank you ever so much for your help and I wish all our pupils a lovely break.

Warmest wishes,
Emily Jennings, Marketing Assistant

