



Welcome Message

I hope that this newsletter finds you well; it has certainly been a different first half of the Autumn Term, but nonetheless there have been some real highlights, as seen across the following pages.

As you will be aware, the return to school in a Covid world took a great deal of planning and I am delighted to say that the first seven weeks of the school year have been pretty much incident free. So much of that is due to the mature and responsible way the school community has embraced the imposed changes. While there is much uncertainty around examinations and education in general, pupils have clearly enjoyed their bubble contact, and the fact that they are able to work with their teachers in reality, rather than remotely.

I must take this opportunity to thank and praise the staff who have managed to create a blended learning experience for those who have had to self-isolate. They have been outstanding in their adaptability and I could not be more proud that we remain on course to finish the examination syllabuses in good time, which sets us up well for whatever might lie ahead.

Another important agenda item we have had this term is how we respond to the Black Lives Matter movement. As a school, we have always been sure to create a balanced and diverse curriculum and it has been impressive to see how the different departments have adapted what they have done in this area to ensure that they are responding to appropriate changes to the world view. Pupils in both the Junior and Senior Schools made clear their support for the ‘Show Racism the Red Card’ movement, raising £555 for this excellent cause.

As we reach half-term, I would like to thank you all for your understanding and support in these times. I hope that you are able to enjoy some time as a family over the next week.

Ricki Smith, Principal

Welcome to Year 7



On Sunday, 6 September, we welcomed our Year 7 pupils to a barbecue in our Capability Brown landscaped grounds. It was a good opportunity for the girls to forge connections in anticipation of the start of the new term. Since then, the girls have settled well, into Senior School life. Then, on Friday 9 October, they enjoyed a team Adventure Day in our woods. The aim was to build collaborative skills and have fun together, too. Some of the girls have shared what they learnt from the experience. [Read Quotes and View Gallery](#)



Interview Dr Dennis, Biology Teacher



We welcomed Dr Rebecca Dennis to the Science Department this term. We interviewed her to find out more about her passion for Biology and her desire to encourage natural curiosity and lateral thinking in her students.

What do you like about being a Biology teacher?

I love Biology and working with people, it is never boring, it is such an interesting and important subject.

The range of topics covered these days, in school, is really relevant to our health and the environment.

“ A typical day can involve anything from sharing in the excitement of Year 7 students staining leaves for starch for the first time to supporting Year 13 students adding fluorescent genes to bacteria. ”

What are interesting career paths for pupils interested in Biology?

As a teacher, what I have realised is how GCSE and A level Biology courses help students develop such a broad range of skills. It is not just being able to recall the equation for respiration. Critical thinking and problem solving are skills that set students up for any career.

At A level, in particular, a great deal of lateral thinking is required which is an invaluable life skill.

I have supported students in pursuing careers in veterinary medicine, medicine, paramedic science, midwifery, marine science, nursing and physiotherapy. Career opportunities also exist in business and industry, science communication and publishing and clinical trials to name but a few.



[Read Full Interview](#)

CHARITY

We have had to adapt to new ways of doing lots of things this term, and charity events are no exception. Just Giving has taken the place of cash, and the Macmillan cake sale became a home clothes day. The good news is that it has been an exceptional half-term of fundraising and donating.

Go Green for Macmillan

The Macmillan event, in which students and staff were encouraged to wear green, raised a record £1231. [Read More](#)



BECAUSE CANCER AFFECTS EVERYONE



Wear it Red

Changing colour to red for Show Racism the Red Card, raised £555. [View Gallery](#)



Harvest Festival

On Monday, 5 October, the Senior School held a Teams Assembly and were joined by the Reverend Joy Mawdesley, from St Nicolas' Church, who addressed the school about the importance of the harvest celebration.

“It is thanks to schools like St Gabriel's, who have reached out to their pupils and their families, that we can feel more hopeful that we will be able to support those struggling in our community as winter approaches.”

West Berkshire Foodbank

The Foodbank has seen demand for its services rise dramatically over the past few months and we will be supporting them again later in the year.

Our Harvest collection, for West Berkshire Foodbank, added up to an enormous 415kg, which is enough to provide 870 meals.

Thank you to all our community for such kind donations, across all our charitable efforts, during this term, it has been hugely successful and enjoyable to support such worthy causes. [Read More](#)



SPORTING SUCCESSES

Equestrian News

Mia, Year 9, a keen horse rider is enjoying competing in a variety of competitions on her new horse Fat Pat. [Read More](#)



Olivia, Year 12 and Clare, Year 8 represented St Gabriel's in the Schools Equestrian Games qualifier at Crown Farm recently. [Read More](#)



Hitting the Top, Driving for Success



Mollie, Year 9, has had an excellent set of results since the resumption of the golfing season. Her handicap has halved on the back of wins in both junior and senior competitions at Newbury and Crookham Golf Club.

In a recent senior competition she even managed to achieve the lowest score, with a fantastic 61, 9 under par. Unfortunately, as a female junior, and due to competition rules, she was not allowed to take the top prize but her achievement was recognised by the Club and a special prize was awarded.



Congratulations Molly, we look forward to hearing about more golfing successes in the future.

Erin Sailing to success

Erin, Year 11, entered several sailing competitions recently (and achieved second girls and forth overall). At one event she even managed to beat the world champion, which she is delighted about. Well done, Erin, and good luck for the World Sailing Championship next year.



House Cross Country

Pupils have flown out of the starting blocks this term, taking full advantage of the fair weather and our expansive grounds. With a focus on fitness and running Year 8 covered a total of 58,000km in one lesson on 1 October, with six pupils achieving their first 5,000km run. Well done girls.

The running theme continued throughout this half-term. On Monday, 19 October, the PE Department ran a House Cross Country event with year groups competing for house points. The Cross Country House winners were: Year 7 - Aidan, Year 8 - Alban and Year 9 - Aidan.



Congratulations to Camilla, who is our **Year 7** Winner of House Cross Country.



Congratulations to Clare, who is our **Year 8** Winner of House Cross Country.



Congratulations to Poppy, who is our **Year 9** Winner of House Cross Country.

The PE Department congratulate pupils for participating; everyone has shown real effort and determination with their running. We are very proud that pupils got behind the challenge and focused on their fitness.

GCSE PE

We asked some of our Year 10 girls about GCSE PE:

Mei, Year 10, who has competed at both regional and national level gymnastics recently featured in a KD Gymnastics video. They are delighted to have won £50,000 which will help them improve their facilities. **Watch Video**

“ I have really enjoyed the start of GCSE PE as all of the teachers have made it a fun but also a hard-working environment! I feel like I have learnt so much already and I just can’t wait to learn more! ”

Mei, Year 10



“ The first few weeks of GCSE PE have been fantastic, especially learning in more depth about all the bones in the body. ”

Jessica, Year 10

“ I have thoroughly enjoyed GCSE PE this half-term. My favourite part was learning about how the musculo-skeletal structure works and how amazing our body is. ”

Isabella, Year 10



Poetry

Thursday 1 October was National Poetry Day, so we invited pupils and staff members to submit a poem for an anthology of writing.

This year the chosen theme was ‘vision’ and all teachers and tutors were sent a selection of poems to share with their forms.

Year 8 pupils chose to write their own poems based on Lorca’s ‘The Lizard is Crying’.

It was a real pleasure to read poems from some of our youngest children up to our Sixth Form students, not to mention some poetic musings from members of staff. Thank you to everyone who put pen to paper (or fingers to keyboards!). I hope you will enjoy reading our wonderful celebration of poetry from across the school.

Mrs Borzoni, Librarian
Read all poems

The Vision
(Inspired by ‘The Woman in Black’ by Susan Hill)

I would that I had never turned
At the first, faint rustle of that sad, silk gown
A gown so black yet tainted with a bloom
Like rust – or, rather, the grave’s decay.
Her face, bone-white beneath the mourning veil,
Held such a distant longing, such a sorrow,
But her eyes – oh, god, her eyes - as fierce and
fixed as nails
Met mine, beheld, loathed and impaled.

Mrs Borzoni

The dogs are crying

The dog is crying,
The female dog is crying.
The dog and his mate,
Wearing a black dress.
They have lost, accidentally,
Their house.
Oh, their house! Oh, their house!
A large, silent sky
Carries the ashes up in its orb.
The fire, rotund captain,
Is carrying a wooden wand!
Look at how shy they are!
How sad they are, and cold!
Oh, how they cry and cry,
Oh! Oh! How they are crying!

Gabby, Year 8

Visions

There once was a prophet, I’m told,
Whose visions were scary and bold.
‘I’ll play for United!’
His hopes – unrequited.
He was rubbish, unfit and too old.

‘I’ll act on the stage in a play
And win Oscars, awards every day.’
But on copious wine
He forgot every line
And would struggle with even ‘Okay’.

So he ditched trying to be all prophetic
‘I renounce it all – I’m a heretic.
Future things can’t be seen,
There’s nothing to glean.
All those visions were merely cosmetic.’

Mr Ives, Head of Classics

Read all poems

Delirium

Delirious visions are taboo
I won’t confess what I see
And at night when nothing is seen,
I hear shadows too.

I can’t tell what’s false and what’s true
It’s terrifying for me
Delirious visions are taboo.

Murderers coming for you
I just want to be free
And at night when nothing is seen
I hear shadows too.

Dark figures distorting my view,
Branches fall from a tree,
Delirious visions are taboo.

I see people, they come for me
– there’s nothing I can do
Then all I want is to flee
And at night when nothing is seen
I hear shadows too.

You taught me to see,
You taught me what’s true
But now you won’t hear my plea.
Delirious visions are taboo
And at night when nothing is seen,
I hear shadows too.

Tara, Year 12

Visions

Blood seeps out from under the door,
Screams echo around the stone cold wall.
I blink and it is there no more.
I have to wait for Troy to fall.

I beg and cry and weep to them,
My voice I heard but they just stare.
My vision tumbles – I don’t know when,
I have to wait for someone to care.

Rachel, Year 12



Head of Sixth Form



Mrs Trevis, began her leadership role as Head of Sixth Form at the start of the Autumn Term. Previously, she was our Director of Teaching & Learning.

Already it has been a busy period, with settling in the new Sixth Formers, leading a subject fair for Year 11 and pupils will recall her recent reading of “The Girls” by Lauren Ace in a whole school assembly.

We took the time to ask Mrs Trevis a few questions.

Can you tell us what you studied as a young adult?

I studied English Literature, Psychology, Philosophy and Art for A level and went on to read Social Anthropology at Manchester University. Social Anthropology was, for me, the perfect medley of psychology, English and philosophy; these disciplines were used to explore unique societies and cultural contexts. My dissertation centred around the psychology of Shamanism. I then went on to do a Post Graduate Certificate in Education.

How are you finding your new role as Head of Sixth Form?

“ The Farmhouse feels like home already and I am really enjoying being able to facilitate Year 13 next steps. We are receiving university offers now and I am as equally excited as the students when they get an offer. ”

Mrs Trevis
Head of Sixth Form

What is your vision for the Sixth Form?

I would like to provide an environment which is both academically and pastorally excellent and prepares each individual for the world beyond St Gabriel’s.

What are you excited about achieving as Head of Sixth Form?

Being the Giant Jenga Champion! We have a set for the lawn outside the Farmhouse and my competitive edge is bound to show!



Life in the Sixth Form

Head Girl, Elizabeth, and Deputy Head, Girl Fran, produced a video to give Year 11 pupils useful insights and a feel for what life is like in the Sixth Form. **Watch Video**

“ The Sixth Form at St Gabriel's is a truly unique environment; the teachers are really engaging and are passionate about their subjects. They know us well and support us throughout our journeys, challenging us so we can reach our potential both personally and academically. ”

Elizabeth
Head Girl



“ A level Physics has been amazing so far. I am developing a wide range of knowledge, which is paired with practicals to help solidify understanding. ”

Emily
Year 12



“ I enjoy RPE as it allows me to not only understand the beliefs and ethics of others but also to develop my own beliefs in a way which is informed and inspired. ”

Tara
Year 12



Sixth Form Prospectus

Year 11 pupils attended a socially distanced subject fair at lunch time on 7 October in the Sports Hall.

Pupils had the opportunity to talk to teachers about different subjects to support their A level choices.

Learn more about life in the Sixth Form from our Sixth Form Prospectus.

Download Sixth Form Prospectus





Music



Despite the continuing constraints on what is possible for music in school, we are doing our best to run remote musical instrument and singing lessons as normally as possible. Currently around one hundred of these lessons are happening weekly, and it has been fantastic to see students' commitment to their learning (not to mention the commitment and support of teachers and parents, which is very much appreciated).

In the classroom, it has been great to get back to working with students on keyboards, percussion and even some singing activities, as well as starting to run some smaller ensembles within bubbles. We have also decided to offer a session of ABRSM music examinations at the end of term, and numerous students, including some at Diploma and Grade 8 level, have taken up this challenge. It has been a delight to listen to the work going on towards these examinations and, in general, to see the beginnings of a return to joyful music-making within the school.

Dr Tebbs, Director of Music

Business Enterprise

Our Year 12 students have set up three different business enterprises. Fika Joggers, Better Buckets and Ink & Swords. All three teams are busy developing their products and branding.

Fika Joggers

A group of eight aspiring Year 12 entrepreneurs are planning to sell their range of stylish and comfortable joggers in a selection of sizes. Watch out for further news of this student business next term.

Better Buckets

Are a sustainably sourced bucket hat company. The company is made up of six. Pollyanna, the Managing Director; Aspen, the Financial Manager; Evie, the Technology & Operations Manager; Chloe, the Company Secretary; Lizzie, the Marketing & Social Media Manager and Sophie who is looking after Human Resources. Better Buckets aim to sell hats in sustainably sourced packaging to limit the impact on the environment. Their hats are able to be customised by pins and customers will have a range of categories to choose from.

Ink & Swords

Ink & Swords consists of four members: Rhiannon, Rachel, Jorja and Talia. The team are designing a children's story colouring book. It includes a series of short stories with colour-in drawings. Their target audience is age 7-11, although it is enjoyable for anyone. They plan to make it engaging in multiple ways, where you can both visualise and colour the scene, while reading the accompanying story. The book encompasses the many light-hearted adventures of a family of woodland animals.

Art, Photography & Textiles

GCSE Art, Photography & Textiles

Our usual Summer Art Exhibition was obviously not possible in 2020, however, we are delighted to share a selection of the work created by our GCSE candidates. [View Gallery](#)



Year 12 Art

Year 12 artists have undertaken a number of projects this half-term. But, with pupils restricted to bubble rooms, their artwork has not been seen by the rest of the school community. They have undertaken projects using hot wax batik on rice paper, cold wax, marbling and white on black work. [View Gallery](#)

Year 12 Graphics

Year 12 Graphics students have worked on projects involving stencil and screen printing activities. [View Gallery](#)

[View Year 8 Textiles Gallery](#)





Autumn Term Arrangements



The Autumn Term Arrangements Booklet has been a useful information hub. It details operational and medical guidance for parents and pupils. **View Booklet**

Clubs & Clinics Return



Pupils are, once again, able to join extra-curricular clubs on site, from Mr Ives' Chess Club to Ms Ferretti's Yoga and Ms Halstead's Knitting Club. Sophie, Year 12, finished her first knitting project; a scarf for the history room statue of Lenin. The Knitting Club's latest challenge is to produce red poppies for Remembrance Day. There is a wide range of clubs to cater for all interest for pupils to choose from. **See Clubs**

Drama



Mrs Chaplin has met Year 7 and Year 8 Drama Scholars each Friday lunch time to develop a community project, which focuses on recorded media to entertain various age ranges. We will find out how their project progresses and share how they get on. Older Drama Scholars are developing theatre reviews as part of their Bronze Arts Award, using our Digital Theatre + subscription.

DIGITAL
THEATRE+

Dance

Year 7 and Year 8 Dance Scholars have begun work on a brand new dance performance piece. Mia, Josie, Ellie and Issie are working hard, using contemporary and lyrical dance, to create an outstanding dance to the music of Karl Jenkins. They will eventually perform the piece for camera and we hope to share it with other students soon.



Their work will go towards their Trinity Bronze Arts Award. The award will enable them to develop their skills and share their passion for dance. Alongside a performance, the girls will also research a dance artist who truly inspires them and write a review of a live dance performance (socially distanced, of course!). We look forward to seeing their finished piece soon.

Mrs Hastings, Head of Dance

Term Dates 2020 - 2021

Autumn Term 2020

Term Begins	Monday 7 September
Half Term	Thursday 22 October - Friday 30 October (inclusive)
Dame Betty Day	Friday 27 November (school closed)
Term Ends	Friday 11 December (12.30pm finish)
Nursery Closure	Thursday 24 December - Friday 1 January (inclusive)

Spring Term 2021

Staff Inset	Monday 4 January
Term Begins	Tuesday 5 January
Half Term	Monday 15 February - Friday 19 February
Term Ends	Wednesday 31 March (12.30pm finish)

Summer Term 2021

Staff Inset	Monday 19 April
Term Begins	Tuesday 20 April
May Bank Holiday	Monday 3 May (school closed)
Half Term	Monday 31 May - Friday 4 June
Term Ends	Wednesday 7 July (12.30pm finish)
Nursery Closure	Monday 2 August - Friday 6 August (inclusive)

SECONDHAND SCHOOL
UNIFORM SHOP



Thank you to all supporters who donated uniform, our secondhand shop is now well stocked. Unfortunately, due to Covid restrictions, the shop is still unable to open to parents, however, it will be offering a personal shopping service. More details will follow after half-term.

2ndhandshop@stgabrielspta.co.uk

Story Wall

Connect with us on social; it's a window to our world. For highlights across our social platforms view our **storywall**

Featured Instagram Account
@stgabsnews

Follow us for the latest pictures and updates from around school.



Open Morning
Saturday
6 March 2021