



Priory School of Our Lady of Walsingham
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Dear Parents

22 September 2023

This week I was pleased to share biscuits and cakes with all those pupils new to the school. On Monday I met with the new Juniors and on Tuesday I met with the new Seniors. The purpose of the meetings is to help pupils feel at ease and to find out what they like and don't like about Priory School.

Pupils like the friendly nature of the school and the kindness of staff and pupils. Respect was also mentioned by several and one pupil added that he liked how pupils stand when a visitor enters the room. It was sad to hear how many had endured unpleasant behaviour at their previous schools.

Other strengths included small class sizes and teacher attention, and the range of subjects, activities and clubs on offer. It is great to see so many excited about performing in the Christmas pantomime. Sport has also proved to be a hit and several said how little sport they did in former schools. Freedom at break and lunchtime was mentioned favourably, as was the speed with which the school deals with issues, and the mindset of learning from mistakes and failure. Interestingly, and somewhat surprisingly, the Seniors are very much in favour of handing in their mobile phones due to reduced social media pressure, and they like the planner for recording homework and preparing for the day ahead. One pupil raised a very specific issue and that was how happy he was to move away from a two-week timetable (Week A and Week B), as he found that this made planning for the school day even more complicated.

Turning to things they dislike or like less, the Juniors referenced the volume and challenge of homework and the rules on how they can have their hair. Interestingly, one (older) pupil commented that having clear guidelines on uniform, hair, jewellery and make-up made things easier in terms of choosing what to wear and reducing unhealthy competition between pupils. The Seniors struggled to come up with any negatives, but these may appear in time and the first School Council meeting is imminent.

I am a firm believer in 'pupil voice' and the School Council is comprised of representatives from each class or form. That person has a book for suggestions which he or she will bring to meetings for discussion, and if pupils want to make comments anonymously, we also have a suggestion box which is emptied before each meeting. I cannot promise that all requests will be granted but most will be given a thorough airing at Council meetings. Not only do I encourage pupils to sort out issues independently, wherever possible, but I also urge them to help us to make the school an even better place by enacting change rather than harbouring good ideas and grumbling in the wings. Actions speak louder than words but not nearly as often (Mark Twain).

This week's assembly was unusual in that it was delivered by our Prefects, of which there are 10. They introduced themselves, talked about the School Council and led us in prayer. However, their main theme was 'individuality' and how we can encourage this in school. Therefore, staff and pupils have been considering what makes us unique and how our diverse talents and skills enrich our school community. It made me think of a previous 'word of the week', *synergy*, whereby the sum of the whole is greater than the sum of the individual parts. The Prefects were fabulous and delivered their message with skill, confidence and empathy. I will develop their theme next week when I examine 'identity' and 'what makes you, you'. Finally on the topic of Prefects, we will appoint a new Head Boy and Head Girl very soon – more on this in next week's Newsletter.



Turning to our Eco-Council meeting, we had the most amazing presentation and discussion about the coral reefs. Rachel Lambert and Dan Grugeon led the presentation and the class councillors debated the topics. We focussed on what coral is, the benefits it provides to humanity, nature and the planet, the natural and man-made threats to coral, and what we can all do to preserve the world's reefs. It was so good that we hope to spend a week in the future using this issue to deliver some of the curriculum in all Junior and Senior School classes and subjects, for example, the science behind the coral, such as coral bleaching; geographical issues such as storm protection; business issues, such as the impact on tourism; ethical and political issues, such as harmful fishing techniques and coastal development; coral inspired art; and much, much more. The Eco-Council is comprised of representatives from all classes and they made us very proud this week. The reps have been asked to do some research on Lion Fish for next week's meeting.

Mrs Dale, Head of ICT, is running a new and exciting competition to change the home screen on school computers every half term. Obviously, this will be seen by staff and pupils each time they log on to a computer. Pupils should submit a photograph on a specific theme, the first of which is the *animal world*. Beyond that description, the brief is wide and pupils should use their imagination to submit an image which will appear on school computers for the duration of one half term, i.e. approximately 6 – 7 weeks. Pictures should be emailed to Mrs Dale by Friday, 20 October, to appear at the beginning of the second half of the Christmas Term. Good luck to all participants, and any questions should be addressed to Mrs Dale, emmadale@psiow.com.

Reports

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| 1. Mon 18 Sep | Prefect Lead Assembly |
| 2. Tues 19 Sep | Tuesday Talk 'Army Careers' (Sgt Cartledge) |
| 3. Tues 19 Sep | Welcome Evening for New Pupils |
| 4. Sun 24 Sep | Feast of Our Lady of Walsingham |

Future Dates & Events

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| 1. Tues 26 Sep | Tuesday Talk 'Army/Sea/Air Cadets' (Ms Nicolle IOW Army Cadet Force) |
| 2. Tues 26 Sep | S1/S2 Girls Netball Match, The Bay C of E School |
| 3. Wed 27 Sep | Senior School Open Morning |
| 4. Thurs 28 Sep | Y5/Y6 U11 TAG Rugby Match, Wootton Primary School |
| 5. Thurs 28 Sep | S5 MAST Studios 'Metamorphosis', Southampton |
| 6. Fri 29 Sep | Mufti Day & Cake Sale (in aid of Parkinson's Disease) |

Achievements

As other children broke up for their summer holidays in July, Priory School welcomed The London Academy of Music & Dramatic Arts (LAMDA) to the school for the first time. Learners took examinations in both the Performance and Communication Categories, and 7 of our pupils in Years 9, 10 and 12 secured valuable UCAS points (for university admission) with their LAMDA Level 3 Examination, amassing a total of 116 UCAS points between them. For pupils so young, this is a remarkable achievement and the whole school community is very proud of them all. We are also hugely grateful to our Speech and Drama Teacher, Jeni Law, who has worked tirelessly with pupils, inspiring and motivating them to go beyond their comfort zones. Jeni explained that since COVID Priory pupils have had to travel to Portsmouth for LAMDA exams and this has presented logistical problems and clashes with GCSEs and A Levels. 'Having exams at school meant children were able to achieve their potential in a familiar environment. I am particularly grateful to the school for being so inclusive and generous by allowing children from other schools to take their exams



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at Priory. The extra UCAS points will help with university applications and the pupils and their parents are delighted.'

LAMDA Level 3 Medal winners:

Bronze Medals for Speaking: *Kirby Simons, Joe Kirby,*

Silver Medals for Speaking: *Panashe Chibwana, Kieran Dale, Adam Farley, Ethan Peace,*

Gold Medal for Acting: *Ruby Elliott*

A Message for Catholic Families:

The Catholic Church on the Island will soon start a Confirmation Programme for young Catholics, for completion in 2024. If your son or daughter is interested, and is in Year 8 (S2) or above, please follow this link for the online registration form: <https://forms.gle/KsjNEosNqybkmjwL06> There are Priory staff involved in the programme as catechists.

Registration is also now open for the next First Communion Programme, also for completion in 2024. Eligible children should be in Year 3 and above, born on or before 31 August 2016. Please follow this link for the online application form and the closing date for applications is Sunday 24 September 2023: <https://forms.gle/DTyjqaugLkDDQhV4A>

David EJJ Lloyd
Principal



Our small classes and knowledge of your child are the key to unlocking pupil potential

David EJJ Lloyd, Principal

Senior School Open Morning

WEDNESDAY 27 SEPTEMBER 2023 ~ 9.00am to 12.00pm

- Meet pupils and staff
- Pupil led tours
- See us in operation
- Book taster days
- Years 7 to 13

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