



Bishop Ullathorne Catholic School



Headteacher's message

What an incredible first term we have had this academic year. We were thrilled with this year's Summer examination results as the hard work and dedication of staff and students really paid off. This year's cohorts have a great incentive to repeat these achievements by continuing to try their absolute best.

We welcomed 190 Year 7 students into our school community in September. It was a privilege to see their enthusiasm and positive attitude as they settled in to their new school environment. As always, the rest of our school community displayed their kindness with a warm welcome.

In addition to all of the hard work going on in classrooms this term, we have also had the opportunity to extend our learning with some fabulous enrichment opportunities. Some of our incredibly gifted young people are pictured above and throughout this newsletter. I hope that you enjoy reading about all of these exciting opportunities as much as I have.

As we move through the last weeks of Advent, and head towards Christmas, we say goodbye to our long standing Headteacher, Jane Byrne, who has given years of outstanding service to our school. I would like to extend my personal thanks to Jane for her ongoing support. May I also take this opportunity, on behalf of the staff, students and governors of Bishop Ullathorne, to wish you and your family a peaceful and holy Christmas.

Chris Billings

Smooth transition

Our Year 7 students have nearly finished their first term with us. Here is what some have to say about the transition.

Yaye Bah – St Mary and St Benedict

At Bishop Ullathorne, the teachers are very welcoming. If you need any help, the teacher will be very reassuring. I really enjoy the subjects that I have not done before at primary school like Drama, Art, History, Science and PE. I am looking forward to achieving well at Bishop Ullathorne.



Max Parham – St John Vianney

I have really enjoyed starting Bishop Ullathorne. At first I was worried about having so many teachers and meeting so many new people but I quickly realised that everyone is so kind. Teachers are always willing to help you if you are worried and the other students are very supportive. It feels amazing to have made so many new friends and there was nothing to be worried about, after all. It is great!



Regina Crame – All Souls

I really enjoy Bishop Ullathorne! I especially like the fact that there are so many clubs to choose from. There was a Freshers' Fayre in September with stalls set out. There were so many clubs to choose from! This has helped me a lot in building my confidence to talk to new people. I really came out of my shell and made even more friends. Clubs can really build friendships and develop relationships.



Millie MacDonald – St Thomas More

Starting Bishop Ullathorne was a big change but now I have settled in I am really enjoying it! I played netball in primary school and was warned that I would not make the team because everyone was so good. However, the PE teachers have given me excellent training and now I am scoring goals in every match! Overall, Bishop Ullathorne is an amazing school and I have made so much progress since I started.



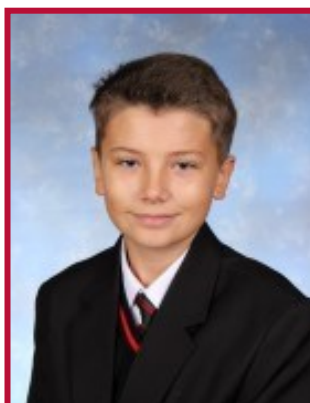
Abraham Burton – Our Lady of the Assumption

When I first started at Bishop Ullathorne, I felt a little anxious. I thought that the school was big with lots of teachers. However, I quickly realised that everyone was welcoming and made me feel at ease. I soon settled in and I am enjoying the different opportunities which secondary school has to offer.



Kewin Werens – St Anne's

I am really happy that I chose to come to Bishop Ullathorne. I really like being independent as we have to walk to our classes by ourselves, which makes me feel more grown up and more responsible. When I first started, I was helped by staff and students to find my way around but, after only two weeks, I was more confident and managed this by myself. This school has given me the opportunity to be more mature and self-reliant.



Retiring gracefully

Our Executive Headteacher, Jane Byrne, is retiring from Bishop Ullathorne at Christmas at the end of a long and successful career. Staff, students and our governors are very grateful for her dedication and commitment and wish her tremendous happiness in the next stage of her life.



Her teaching career spans over forty years, from 1977 to the present day. Jane commenced her career in Birmingham as a Teacher of English before being promoted to Head of English and Head of Year.

She moved to Cardinal Wiseman Catholic School in Birmingham in 1993 as Deputy Headteacher and was promoted to Headteacher at the same school in 1998. Jane was Headteacher at Bishop Ullathorne for 16 years.

Chris Billings, Headteacher, said: "When I first started at Bishop Ullathorne, I was given the best introduction to our school by Jane Byrne. She was warm, kind and always willing to offer me support or guidance when needed. Jane's actions were an excellent reflection of the core values of the school. Her good humour and dedication to the young people of Bishop Ullathorne will be sorely missed."



Emma Stonehouse, Deputy Headteacher, said: "Jane has been such a role model to me with her exceptionally high standard of leadership leaving no stone unturned. She has been extremely supportive on a professional and a personal level. Professionally, Jane has allowed me to develop and work in a way that has best suited my abilities and personally she has shown me great kindness. I wish Jane a fantastic and fulfilling retirement and I will miss her in so many ways."

Paul Carpenter, Business Manager, said: "Jane and I have worked together for 14 years. She has always been helpful and supportive to me and always put the school and students first. Her leadership has made Bishop Ullathorne the success it is today: a popular, oversubscribed school. She well and truly deserves a long and happy retirement and will be missed by staff and students."

Rob Ridley, Chair of Governors, said: "On behalf of all governors, both past and present, I would like to wish Jane Byrne a long and happy retirement as she leaves Bishop Ullathorne at Christmas. Jane has led our school since September 2001 and has totalled 40 years serving her profession. We have all benefited greatly from Jane's vocation and her dedication towards every single person within our school and the entire school community. She is highly respected among her colleagues and our governing body and she will be greatly missed.

"We are indebted to Jane for her superb leadership and for the continuous school improvements she has orchestrated for the good of our students. We will keep her in our prayers as she steps away from our school life in the hope that the coming years are a time of rest, relaxation and of fruitful enrichment."

Maria Doherty, Assistant Headteacher, said: "There is no one quite like Jane. Hardworking, committed, driven, resilient, compassionate and determined are just a few of the words which can be attributed. I have worked alongside Jane for sixteen years and have been incredibly impressed by her energy and passion to raise standards and move the school forward. Her influence and leadership will be long remembered. Her primary focus has always been to do the very best for every student. We owe her a debt of gratitude and wish Jane a long, happy and fulfilling retirement."



Community building

This year's Community Building Day for our Year 7 students was a brilliant opportunity for the whole year group to bond and get to know each other.



Cakes rise

Some of our teachers, and their cakes, rose to the challenge this term. Mirroring a well-loved television baking show, the Great Ullathorne Bake Off enabled teachers to showcase their best meringues, banana cakes and profiteroles. The winner was Rebecca Worthington, Teacher of English, with her elegant Victoria sponge.



Freshers fayre well

At the start of term, all of our Year 7 students were invited to our Freshers' Fayre. This showcased the wide range of clubs and activities on offer across the school. Robots, clay modelling demonstrations, science experiments and a range of sporting activities were on display. Nearly everyone signed up to at least one new activity.



Bishop Ullathorne Clubs and Activities - Autumn Term 2017				
	Art and Craft Club Develop your own pieces of work in a range of materials, whilst developing friendships and sharing skills.	A Where? Room 55 Contact: Ms Newell	When? Wednesday 3.05 - 4.05	Who? All KS3 students
	Book Club and Creative Writing Club For anyone with a love of reading or an interest in writing and illustration. We will be shadowing a variety of book awards such as the Carnegie and Greenaway awards; participating in writing workshops and producing work for a range of local and national writing competitions.	L Where? Various Contact: Ms Hurley	When? Wednesday Second Break	Who? All students
	Bush Craft Club Survive in the wild! Find the 'inner you' by learning how to: Camp craft skills How to cook outdoors Orienteering and survival skills	Y Where? Lab 1 Contact: Mrs Dimes	When? Wednesday 3.15 - 4.15	Who? All students
	Chaplaincy Do your bit to make the world a better place. 'Sometimes it falls on a generation to be great. You can be that great generation. Let your greatness blossom.' Nelson Mandela.	C Where? Chapel Contact: Miss Doherty	When? See Miss Doherty	Who? All students
	Chess Club Learn to play Chess from scratch as part of a friendly, welcoming group. Learn new moves and strategies; become an expert over time; play the best in the school, maybe even challenge other schools in competition.	Y Where? Room 8 Contact: Mr Ward	When? Friday Second break	Who? All students
	Dance Club We will explore a range of dance styles, and students will be taught some choreographed pieces using a variety of techniques. Students will then have the opportunity to create and develop their own routines.	Y Where? A Block Hall Contact: Mrs Brown	When? Friday 3.05 - 4.05	Who? All students
	Drama Club Develop friendships and explore themes and ideas through improvisation and scripts work. Develop performances and self-esteem.	A Where? Drama Studio Contact: Miss Phillips	When? Monday and Friday Second break	Who? All students
	Homework Club This is for students who want to get on, engage with their learning and succeed! Resources such as coloured pens, scissors, glue, calculators, and dictionaries will be available. You will have access to computers and be able to print your work.	Y Where? Library - am Hut - pm Contact: Mr McPhail	When? Everyday 8-8.30 and Tuesday 3.15-4.15	Who? All students
	Maths Club Need help with your maths homework? Want to improve your numeracy skills or get involved with our weekly challenges? Join our maths club!	S Where? Cross curricular room Contact: Ms McConville	When? Tuesday Second break	Who? All students
	Robotics Club Need help with your logic, programming and ingenuity to get the robots to complete different tasks related to missions in space. There is also the chance to enter a national STEM competition later in the year.	S Where? Lab 4 Contact: Mr Bean	When? Thursday 3.15 - 4.15	Who? All KS3 students
	Sports Throughout the year, there is an exciting and varied range of clubs and fixtures. This term there is the opportunity for boys to develop their Football, Softball, Cricket and Tennis skills. Girls can enjoy Netball, Football and Tennis. In addition, girls can improve their fitness and stamina by joining our training sessions.	Y Where? Boys / Girls Gym Contact: Mrs Healy / Mr Cox	When? Various	Who? All students
Key: L Learning Y Young A Arts C Community				

Spectacular sister act



Sisters **Stella** and **Vivienne Egbuchulem** stole the show at the end of this year's Showcase event with their powerful and heart-warming ballad. The Year 11 and Year 8 students wowed the audience and judges alike as they mesmerised with beautiful harmonies. Scooping the £100 first prize, they were worthy winners.

In second place, **Annie Brown** and **Darcy Mills** (Year 7) left everyone in a festive mood with Annie's delicate singing and the duo's effortless ballet moves. Another Year 7 student, **Ryan Musewu**, drew in praise to take third place. His masked moves had everyone on the edge of their seat in awe.

There were also stunning musical performances from: **Annie Sharman** (Year 9), who delivered a flawless version of Hallelujah; **Diarmuid Gaffney** (Year 11), whose perfectly executed delivery was a masterclass in the art of singing; **Faith Okafor** (Year 11), who moved everyone to tears with her incredibly poignant song choice; **Thomas Hastings** (Year 7), who seemed to carry on effortlessly and very professionally despite the height of his microphone; **Agnes Kuku-Ogunfeibo** (Year 9), who used her voice to fabulous effect; **Charlyn Akame** (Year 10), who was joined by two energetic dancers **Keisha Etchu Tambe** and **Lisa Lutumba** and **Leia-Rose Strong** (Year 8). She seemed to overcome all nerves on the big stage to deliver an angelic performance.

In terms of dancing, the trio sporting black t-shirts with neon names emblazoned across the front could not be criticised for their enthusiasm and expertise. **Sarah Beech**, **Millie Hackett** and **Chrysafenla Papaspiliou's** (Year 9) moves got the evening off to a fantastic start.

Year 7, **Oliver Blackwell**, added some old-style variety to the proceedings. His polished magic act had everyone astounded. Rounded off with a two-part musical number, the evening could not have been bettered.

The Christmas-themed show was in aid of the Teenage Cancer Trust. Supported by Coventry City players Jodie Jones and Corey Addai, the event was very well attended by family and friends.

Imogen Jones, now in Year 13, also organised a raffle to support her voluntary work in Argentina next year. This again was well supported and the winning tickets were revealed during the interval.

A fabulous team event, special mention must go to **Carmen Cabrera-Mix** for her organisational skills, **Barry Morris** for arranging and making all of the wintry stage decorations and for **Mike Newell** and **Robbie Magrane** for their outstanding technical support.



Swedish recycling trip

Our Year 10 scientists left the school laboratories to learn about sustainability and recycling in a city centre store. Following a tour of IKEA Coventry, the Triple Science GCSE Chemistry students designed an eco-friendly product fit for sale in 2028.

Complementing a GCSE Chemistry unit on sustainable living, the practical experience encouraged the students to make



connections between designers, engineers, artists and marketing. Thinking about recycled materials, price, quality, logistics and marketing, the students enjoyed taking part in the challenging eco-designer competition. They presented their products to a judging panel made up of IKEA managers. The winning product was a sofa made from recycled material with storage compartments as well as chargers and lighting.

Lani Danes, former Bishop Ullathorne student and Marketing Specialist, said: "This was a great way to connect with the local community and to teach current students about IKEA's social responsibility as well as involving co-workers in a great activity."

Olivia Colleran, part of the winning student team, said: "This was an excellent practical experience. We collaborated brilliantly in groups to apply everything which we had learned during the tour. Justifying our designs to a panel of experienced judges was a real challenge and I am happy that our product, a recycled sofa, won."



Festival of science

Scientists from Year 7 to Year 10 attended an exciting festival of scientific ideas and discovery in London this term. At the New Scientist Live event, students saw live shows, took part in hands-on exhibitions and attended talks on scientific advances. Facilitated by the University of Warwick's outreach department, it allowed students to witness science coming to life.

Benjamin Cooper, Year 8, said: "The event was a great experience. As we entered, we were greeted by an array of amazing pieces of technology. There were stalls about the environment, drones and how our earth is changing. There was even an astronaut there to talk about her experiences and what it was like in space.

"As well as this, there was also a chance to play with some of the exhibits and try different things. For example, I went on a glider simulator and learnt how to take off and land."



CyberFirst Adventurers

A handful of adventurous students attended the CyberFirst Adventurers development course at the University of Warwick this month. The keen students were enthused and inspired by the activities on offer.

On another planet

A robotics workshop and visit to the planetarium were highlights of a key stage 3 visit to the Think Tank this month.



Synthetic biology

Twelve of our Year 12 and Year 13 students spent a day in the University of Warwick's Life Sciences department. They were able to explore an overview of the STEM courses offered by the university and were given a tour of the campus. More specifically, they attended a debating session on the ethics of synthetic biology and its applications as well as a biomechanics workshop.

Wired up for sound

Last month, some of our Year 11 students had the challenging task of designing and constructing a speaker which could amplify sound produced by a mobile phone or MP3 player. In teams, students soldered the components required on to an amplifier circuit board. They then designed a cabinet to house the components of the speaker. Encouraged to be as creative as possible, they were required to consider their target audience and how to retain a good level of sound quality.

Part of a Smallpeice Trust STEM Day, the interactive workshop was intended to show students some of the practical applications of science. Jackie Dines, Head of Science, said: "Designed to complement the national curriculum in science, technology and mathematics, the day continued to enhance our students' understanding and aptitude for problem-solving, creativity, design and engineering."



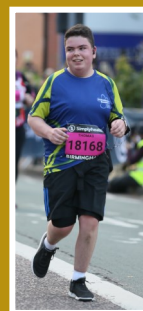
Donkey derby

Our PALS Club students raised enough money from a cake sale to sponsor a horse and a donkey for a year. Having visited the Horse Sanctuary in Stratford, the students were keen to support the charity. They raised £42 from the cake sale and were delighted with the results.



Running for fun

Continuing his quest to raise funds and awareness for a wide range of good causes, one of our sixth form students completed a half marathon. Tom Munnely, Year 13, said: "I am so grateful for all of the support and sponsorship which I have received. I completed the run and managed to raise over £1000 for the Alzheimer's Society. This money will make such a big difference to all of those affected by the disease."



Tom has previously been a guest on the GMTV sofa and at the House of Lords to speak about his personal experience of weight loss. This month, he was again invited to London to present his views. Baroness Floella Benjamin OBE, who older readers may remember from the children's TV show *Playschool*, campaigns on behalf of children. She was keen to hear what Tom had to say about keeping children active.

Field of dreams

In the New Year, a dream will come true for one of our talented students. **Charlie McCann**, Year 11, will be signing up to play professional football for a Premier League club. If this was not enough in itself, he will be agreeing to play for his favourite team: Manchester United – a team which his whole family supports.

Already with experience of representing his country, Charlie was scouted playing for England. He is proud of his achievements but is not boastful about his abilities in any way. He would prefer people to watch him play to make up their own minds about whether he is good or not. The centre midfielder is currently resting with a slight injury but is keen to get on to the training pitch again soon.

Charlie's contract will enable him to keep studying once he leaves us in the Summer. He is sensible about combining his dream with hard work in the classroom. Determined to leave with a strong set of results, he says that he is focused on revision for his upcoming GCSE examinations.

Putting pen to paper will also pay dividends for Coventry City's Academy. Charlie's move up north is a huge coup for his home town club.



Year 7 inter form competitions

At the start of the year, inter form netball and football competitions were arranged for our Year 7 students. Many competitors took part and the overall winning form was 7JC. More inter form competitions will follow in badminton and table tennis after Christmas.

Cross country

A number of Year 7 competitors entered all four city wide cross country competitions this year. **Niamh Walsh** finished in the top 10 in each one. Third place out of 70 runners was her best achievement.



Finham derby

Bishop Ullathorne won the latest tournament against Finham Park to retain the trophy for the third time in a row.

In netball, our Year 7, 10 and 11 teams all won their games.

Year	Score	Player of the match
7	Won 16-2	Mille MacDonald
10	Won 6-5	Lucy Gee
11	Won 7-4	Latoya Aboagye

In football, our Year 8, 9 and 10 boys all won their games and our Year 7 boys drew theirs.



Netball news

Chelsea Bapaga was our Year 7 player of the match in a 6-1 win against Whitley Academy.

Millie MacDonald earned the title in a 16-2 win against Cardinal Wiseman and **Kasey Evans** in the 7-4 win against Blue Coat and the 10-1 win against Coundon Court.

Vivienne Egbuchulem has been outstanding in our Year 8 netball team, having won player of the match at least five times in a row. In terms of results, the team won 15-1 against President Kennedy, won 11-3 against Cardinal Wiseman, won 14-3 against Cardinal Newman, drew 9-9 in very windy conditions against Blue Coat and drew 3-3 against Coundon Court.

Our Year 9 netballers won 19-3 against President Kennedy, drew 8-8 against Blue Coat with **Grace Brennan** player of the match and won 9-5 against Coundon Court. Again **Grace Brennan** was selected as star player.

All of the Year 10 team played so well against Blue Coat in a 12-15 loss that any of the girls could have been selected for player of the match. In a close game against Coundon Court, **Niamh Cosgrove** was voted player of the match.

Wembley trip

Over 40 of our students attended a football World Cup qualifying game at Wembley this term. Watching the England v Slovenia game was the highest profile game which some had ever seen. Despite the quality of the England performance, our students' enthusiasm and excitement was not dampened.



Football focus

Our Year 10 team has progressed to the quarter finals of the West Midlands School Cup and all years will be starting their Coventry Cup campaigns soon. Our Year 7 team remains unbeaten following a 2-1 win over Cardinal Wiseman.

Karate kids

Two of our Year 10 girls have been punching, and kicking, above their weight in recent Karate championships.

Despite breaking her wrist blocking a kick, **Niamh Cosgrove** bravely carried on in a recent World Championships to come eleventh out of almost 50 competitors. Representing England in Tenerife during October half term, she was determined to keep going and do her best against all odds. She lost in the first round against the eventual winner, from Croatia, then narrowly missed out on third place in the repechage.

Now that Karate has been recognised as an Olympic sport, **Niamh** has her sights set firmly on the Great Britain team for the 2024 games. She has already faced competitors from all around the world and experienced the intensity of fighting in front of thousands of competitors.

She said: "The atmosphere in the stadium was amazing. Everyone was cheering and it was deafening. It is my ambition now to combine academic study with training for the sport which I love."

Diminutive **Mia Stokes** is currently unbeaten in all karate competitions and last month competed in the National Championships at the Alan Higgs Centre in Coventry. At only 5 feet and 1 inch tall, she beat other females in her category to become the English Karate Champion for her height category.

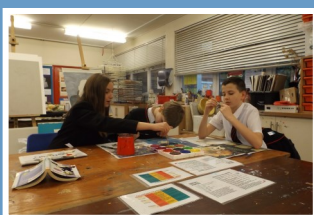


Mia was initially introduced to the sport by her godfather. Now her whole family attend fights and cheer her on vociferously.

She said: "I want to be the best that I can and eventually fight for England. I am really fortunate that sometimes up to twenty members of my family come to cheer me on and they can make lots of noise. My mum is very encouraging although she can also be quite nervous."

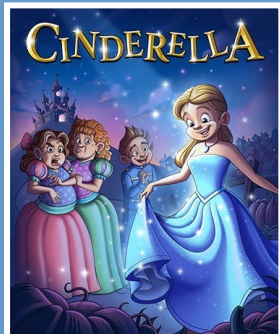
Art Club

Here are some photos from our Art and Craft Club. Students made and then glazed ceramic leaf bowls and Christmas decorations.



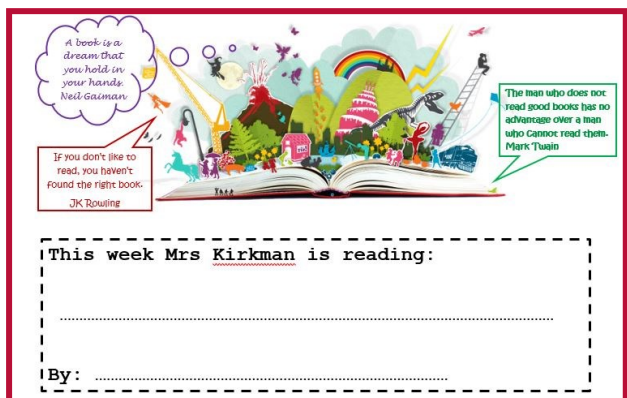
He's behind you

Several of our students are treading the boards in festive performances across the region this Christmas. **Niamh Hackett** (Year 8), **Millie Hackett** and **Sarah Beech** (Year 9) and **Charlotte Brennan** (Year 11) will be on stage entertaining audiences.



Want to talk?

Soon everyone will be talking about reading. After Christmas, every adult in school will have a laminated poster on their door or near where they work. Each time that they read a new book, they will update their poster with its name. Students will be rewarded if they notice and engage in conversation about books.



Word Mania

Our Year 8 students made it through to the finals of a national word-based challenge game. By selecting long words under pressure, the quick-witted students quickly rose up the ranks.

Books mark support

Our SENDCo, Jackie Salter, and some keen volunteers, gathered a range of used and unwanted



books to send to students in Africa. The Books2Africa organisation, based in Cambridge, was grateful for the used textbooks from a number of subject areas.

Passport to success

Our Character Passport has been launched with Year 7. It is an accreditation scheme which recognises student character and the impact which they have in the classroom, across the school and in the wider community. Value and character are an integral part of a Catholic school education and the aim of the Character Passport is to help each student recognise the gifts of God within them, to search for excellence and to foster the development of their true self.

To achieve the Bronze Award, students will need to have achieved over 70 Ace Points, have attendance above 97 per cent and have achieved the Bronze Reading Award. They will also be expected to participate in at least two community events and have evidenced this using the pro forma in the booklet. The Silver and Gold Awards require a greater level of engagement in an extra curricular activity which can be in school or outside.

Reading challenge

Our Reading Challenge has been launched with Year 7 students this term. All students are charged with completing nine reading-related challenges to achieve the Bronze Reading Award. This will earn them a Bronze Reading Award certificate and the chance to challenge themselves further with the Silver Reading Award. Some of the tasks involve reading a recipe, reading three poems and reading instructions for a game. Parents are being asked to sign and date each completed challenge at home in order to verify what has been read.



Life experience

One of our Year 9 students has achieved several external qualifications due to her continued and committed work with the Belgrade Theatre's Life Stage organisation. **Leah Evans** has gained level 1 awards in three areas: personal well-being; performing arts; employability and development. Awarded by the Open College Network West Midlands, they recognise Leah's positive approach to personal development.



Spurred on by this success, Leah has recently joined the cadets and marched in this year's remembrance parade in the War Memorial Park. She also supports people with dementia as a result of studying the illness for her role in *Truth or Dare* at the Belgrade Theatre. Leah said: "I love acting. It helps me to focus and I love being busy. This experience has really given me

the confidence to try different things."

Hairspray hopefuls

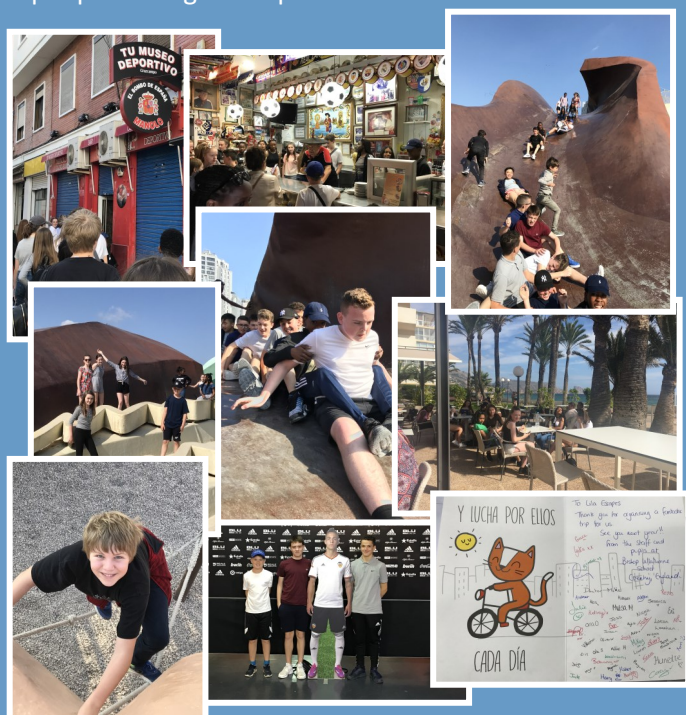
Following three days of auditions, the cast for our Summer production of *Hairspray* was announced. Over 100 dedicated and talented hopefuls filled the drama studio for the acting, singing and dance auditions. The cast for the musical includes a range of students from Year 7 to Year 13.



Spanish tour

Despite getting off to a shaky start, our annual Spanish trip was a fiesta of fun from start to finish. With Monarch cancelling flights at the last minute, the travellers' flights were re-directed to the French seaport of Marseille before they embarked on a twelve hour coach trip to their final destination: Altea in Spain.

The 48 students enjoyed the October half term excursion in good humour and benefitted from visiting two countries rather than one. Sampling local cuisine, visiting Valencia's football stadium and exploring a theme park were highlights. The students picked up several compliments from local people during the trip.



Urban field trip

Our Year 11 Geography students completed their second day of field work in September. Starting at Bishop Ullathorne, students walked towards the city centre. They stopped at six sites on the way to evaluate the environmental conditions and how these changed. At lunch, students were given the opportunity to explore the War Memorial Park and investigate the influence that it has on the surrounding area. Exploring the area also involved talking to the citizens of Coventry to find out what they thought of the park, why they were there and how far they had travelled.

Personal tour guide

A small group of our students were given a personal tour of Oxford University.

Students from Years 7 to 11 visited Christ College and were inspired to aim high. Our students enjoyed the insight and also the tremendous views of the grand buildings in Oxford.

Isabella Monsanto said: "I enjoyed learning about the rich history of Oxford. It was helpful to learn about the courses, application process and framework of the university. I have been inspired to work towards going to Oxford in the future. The architecture was impressive."

Shannon Ryan said: "I enjoyed having a tour of Christ College. I would like to go to Oxford University and it would be a great opportunity if I was accepted."

Sean Richards said: "I appreciated learning about the different colleges that make up the university. I also learned that it is definitely achievable if you try hard. Also you can get a three course meal for £3, which is amazing."

Maggie Keane said: "It was a great experience. It certainly made me think more positively about applying for a place when the time to go to university occurs."



Welcome to Father Stephen

Our new school chaplain, **Father Stephen Day**, joined us this term. He has been involved extensively in the school with weekly masses and reflections. Also, as part of our spiritual preparation for Advent, he led our penitential services for all of our key stage 3 students. He was joined by four other priests from the deanery who heard confessions throughout the day.

Here Father Stephen answers questions posed by members of the chaplaincy team.



What was your first reaction when you were asked to be our chaplain?

It was a bit like picking up where I had left off – I had been a secondary school chaplain in my last parish for 14 years – but it is always a little bit daunting starting in a new place with new people. That is also exciting too and it has been good slowly getting to know some of the staff and pupils. There are still many I have not met and parts of the school I have not seen! Bishop Ullathorne has a good reputation and it is a privilege to be part of that.

Have you any previous experience of chaplaincy in a secondary school?

Catholic secondary schools have been a large part of my priesthood. I am a qualified RE teacher and taught for six years both before and after I became a priest. I was a secondary school governor for 13 years, a chaplain for 15 and spent 10 years as a part time tutor on an RE teacher training course in Birmingham. I have been involved in secondary education in a variety of ways!

How do you see the role of chaplaincy with us?

The chaplaincy is not just me. The religious and pastoral life of a school is too big and should be too good for one person to run it all. The priest in school is there to provide the sacraments, of course, but not only that. He is a visible reminder of the school's Catholic character and ethos and is a support and encouragement to all who are part of it. He is there to walk with everyone on their Christian journey, however far along it they are - or are not. A lot of that is simply being around and being available.

Can you tell us a little bit about your background?

I was born in Oxford and my parents still live in Oxfordshire. I read theology at Oxford University. I became a Catholic in 1994 after being a minister in the Church of England, working in the Black Country on the other side of Birmingham. I qualified as a secondary school RE teacher and taught in the Catholic secondary school in Nuneaton for six years, both before and after I became a priest. My ordination was in 1998. I arrived at St Thomas More parish straight after Christmas 2014. I enjoy modern history (I nearly taught history but that is another story), old films, music and France.

When did you become aware that you had a vocation to priesthood?

It did not come to me as a sudden discovery. Things people had said and things that had happened to me made a voice inside me start suggesting that being a priest was what God wanted me to be.

What are the advantages of being a married priest with a family?

The house is rarely empty and there is usually someone to talk to and we share the chores. Lots of people have demanding jobs, work unusual hours or get called out at odd times.

Are you looking forward to Christmas?

Bishop Ullathorne is a friendly place with happy people who work hard. I have felt very welcome and I have loved working here during our preparations for Christmas. It is busy and hard work beforehand, lovely when it happens and beautifully quiet once the last Mass of Christmas is over. Yes - Merry Christmas to you all!

Year 11 Skills Day

Year 11 students were due to experience a taste of sixth form studies this month but this was postponed due to snow. Re-arranged for next term, over 100 students will experience four sessions. These include: Know Your Voice, Creative Thinking, Living in the 21st Century and Debate. The sessions will be delivered by Coventry University and Newcastle University.

Boys' revision sessions

Some of our Year 11 boys were invited to attend quiet study periods after school in the build-up to their recent mock examinations. Over a period of two weeks, the boys stayed at school until 7pm on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Before each two-hour session, they were given food and were able to spend time together. During the study periods, the boys were encouraged to work independently using a range of revision techniques. Senior teachers provided support and encouragement. If the trial is successful, the programme may be rolled out next year.



High tea for high attainers

Year 11 students who have shown exceptional effort all year were rewarded by our Headteacher, Chris Billings. An array of biscuits, cakes and other treats were available during the brief tea party celebration.



National Citizenship Service

Year 12 students took part in the NCS Challenge during the Summer holidays. The three-part programme for 15 to 17-year-olds aims to bring together school, community organisations, businesses and individuals to build a more cohesive society. The students all undertook a social project which they had to pitch to local business leaders.



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Joshua Hinton said: "It was an excellent opportunity. It was fun but at the same time we learned a host of skills which will last a lifetime."

Wayne Zengeya said: "It helped me to meet new people and build friendships."

Harry Stowe said: "Connecting with other people and working in a team developed our communication skills."

Alex Innes said: "The NCS Challenge was a great and worthwhile journey. It helps to build independence and gives an insight into future life choices. I would definitely recommend it!"

Work experience update

Lois Adom-Frimpong and Panashe Mupepo (Year 12) secured work experience placements at the University Hospital Coventry and Warwickshire, after an arduous selection process. Both students welcomed this experience and have gained experience of the health care system. They now hope to pursue careers in the medical field.

Laura Williams gained work experience in a cardiology ward and a care home. She said: "The kindness that the staff display in both settings ensures that everyone feels safe. I have learned the importance of communication and teamwork in a caring profession. I also witnessed the daily routine of a doctor. I thoroughly enjoyed my time on the ward and this further motivated me to apply to study Medicine."

HE+ programme

Eight Year 12 students have begun their Higher Education programme, which runs in conjunction with other sixth form centres and is co-ordinated by Clare College, Cambridge.

Wider participation

Some Year 12 students have applied for wider participation opportunities this term. These help successful applicants to access high quality internships and develop their skills through a personal mentoring programme.



Urjosshi Ahmed said: "Participating in the Pathways to Law programme at the University of Warwick has been an enjoyable and engaging experience. It helped me to understand the legal environment and gain work experience at a Law firm in Birmingham. I also visited Oxford University where I attended a day of Law lectures. The programme helped me with my UCAS application and I have already received an offer to study Law in 2018."

UCAS update

This term, our Year 13 students have been making their UCAS applications. This involves writing a personal statement about academic interests, independent learning, work experience and enrichment activities.

Applications have been very successful so far; students are receiving excellent offers. Four students have made Oxbridge applications.

For the first time this year, one of our students had a skype interview for a nursing course. An exciting sign of the times.

Nuffield research project

Mahira Choudhary and Viresh Thakrar spent four weeks of their Summer holiday completing a research project. The students worked with postgraduates and presented their report to university professors. **Mahira** said: "Completing my Nuffield research placement at Coventry University enabled me to investigate the aerodynamics of an Airbus. In addition, my trip to the European Synchrotron Radiation Facility in France allowed me to experience cutting edge scientific research first-hand. I was also able to communicate with scientists from across the world who were working in different fields, such as archaeology and genetics. It was a brilliant experience."

Houses of Parliament visit

Our Year 13 students were unexpectedly able to speak directly with an MP during a visit to London this term. During a tour of the House of Commons and the House of Lords, they met Jacob Rees Mogg MP. He was on his way to a meeting with cabinet colleagues but was so impressed by our students that he stopped to hear about their day. The students were given the unique opportunity to hold their own formal debate in one of the Select Committee rooms. The amazing day ended with them watching MPs debating an armed forces issue in the House of Commons.



Destinations known

The majority of last year's Year 13 students secured higher education places at university. The wide spread of courses included: Art, Business, Criminology, Economics, Engineering, English, Geography, History, International Relations, Law, Marketing, Mathematics, Medicine, Psychology and Sociology. University choices are mostly central but do reach as far north as Liverpool, Leeds, Sheffield and York.

Holiday dates

We close for the holidays on

Thursday 21 December 2017 at 1.30pm

The new term starts on

Monday 8 January 2018 at 8.40am

Bishop Ullathorne Catholic School
Leasowes Avenue, Coventry, CV3 6BH
024 7641 4515

admin@bishoppullathorne.co.uk

www.bishoppullathorne.co.uk

@B_Ullathorne

Written and edited by Lea Evans Bent, Assistant Headteacher

Designed and produced by Claire Carding, School Administrator

Year 7 assembly

All Year 7 form groups are preparing assemblies and 7SN was the first to present. Sarah Newell, Form Tutor, said: "I was very proud. They worked well together despite it being a nerve wracking experience."



Online safety

At this time of year when parents are likely to buy their children an electronic device for Christmas, West Midlands Police has produced guidance about staying safe online. Maria Doherty, Assistant Headteacher, said: "If parents are buying their children gaming consoles, phones or tablets for Christmas, we would encourage them to print out the guidelines and wrap them up with the gift."



<https://www.getsafeonline.org/christmasdevices/>

Christmas giving

The season of Advent is marked by a spirit of generous giving. Our Chaplaincy team launched the school Christmas parcel appeal during the first week of Advent. Students have been busy collecting and preparing boxes for homeless people in Coventry. Christmas parcels were delivered to the Cyrenians in Coventry city centre.

Dates for your diary

Parents' Evenings

(4.30pm to 6.30pm unless otherwise stated).

Year 7	Took place in November 2017
Year 8	Thursday 19 April 2018
Year 9	Thursday 8 March 2018 – Options Evening Thursday 10 May 2018 – Parents' Evening
Year 10	Thursday 15 February 2018 – Parents' Evening Thursday 15 March 2018 – Careers Evening, 5pm
Year 11	Thursday 18 January 2018 – English and Mathematics, identified students only
Sixth Form	Thursday 25 January 2018

Other dates

Thursday 15 March 2018	Fashion Show, 6.30pm
Wednesday 4 July 2018	Year 6 Transition Day
Tuesday 10 and Wednesday 11 July 2018	School Production – Hairspray, 7pm
Friday 13 July 2018	Sports Day
Thursday 19 July 2018	Trips Day

