



LETTER FROM OUR NEW HEADTEACHER, MR WATSON

In this issue of More Life we celebrate the wonderful achievements of our students in the GCSE and A Level examinations. I was delighted back in August to see so many of our students achieve the results they so richly deserved, enabling them to go on to sixth form, college, apprenticeships, university or employment. As always the students' success is the culmination of many years of hard work, both by the students themselves and also by the fantastic team of teachers and support staff we are blessed with at St Thomas More.

We have welcomed 273 Year 7 students this term and they have settled into life at St Thomas More very smoothly. This is due, in no small part, to the extensive transition programme that begins in Year 5. I would like to thank all staff involved, both at St Thomas More and in our feeder schools, for all their hard work.

Our latest building project is now well under way and the £1.5 million project is due for completion in the spring. There are already so many excellent opportunities for our students in PE and sport at St Thomas More and these improvements to facilities can only enhance these further.

Finally, I would like to thank you for all of the good wishes I have received as I take on the role of Headteacher and I look forward to sharing with you many successes in the future.

- Mr Watson, October 2016

2016 RESULTS WORTH CELEBRATING

Once again our A Level and GCSE students achieved great success in their recent exams.

At A Level, 13% of all grades were A*, 33% of all grades were A* / A, and 81% of all grades were at Grade C or above. We wish all our talented A Level students good luck as they progress onto the next stage in life.

GCSE students celebrated another excellent set of results a week later. 44% of students achieved the EBacc and 72% achieved a good pass in English and Maths. The school's Attainment 8 figure (average score across 8 subjects) was 54.7, one of the highest in the authority. We wish all our Year 11 students the best of luck as they move on to sixth form or further training.

Year 7 Mass of
Welcome

02

Let it Rain... We'll still
shine - Sports Day 2016

05

Sound of Music
School Production

06

Ex-pupils graduate
with flying colours

08

EX-PUPIL THE RT. REV. PAUL MASON ORDAINED BISHOP

St Thomas More RC Academy is incredibly proud to report that on Tuesday 31st May 2016, the Rt. Rev. Paul Mason, an ex-pupil of St Anselm's RC High School, was ordained Auxiliary Bishop of Southwark and Titular Bishop of Skalholt. See page 2 for more details.

EX-PUPIL ORDAINED BISHOP

Paul Mason was born in North Shields, North Tyneside, on 6th November 1962, and attended St Anselm's RC High School (which later became St Thomas More RC High School and then Academy).

After gaining his BA (Hons) in 1986 and working in industry for a number of years, he retrained for the priesthood at the Venerable English College in Rome, obtaining a Licence in Philosophy from the Gregorian University, Rome. His first appointment was as assistant priest at St John the Baptist in Purley. From 2001 to 2012 he was a full time chaplain at St Thomas' Hospital, during which time he qualified for his MA in Medical Law and Ethics from King's College, London. From 2013, Fr Paul held the position of Episcopal Vicar for Kent.

On 23rd April 2016 it was announced that Pope Frances had appointed Fr Paul as an Auxiliary Bishop in the Archdiocese of Southwark.



We wish the Rt. Rev. Paul Mason all the best with his new appointment. We are very proud to call him an ex-pupil.

YEAR 7 TAKE SOME TIME TO REFLECT AT THEIR MASS OF WELCOME

On Tuesday 27th September, Year 7 were joined by Monsignor Andrew Faley to celebrate their Mass of Welcome. The service was a chance for the students to reflect on their journey so far and to think about the things in their life that they would like to thank God for.



The bidding prayers were written by students from 7T:

Dear Lord, we pray for those who are not as fortunate as we are. We also pray because we sometimes take advantage of what we have been given. Help us to be more mindful of the poor and show peace and love to all.

Dear Lord, we pray for all Year 7 students that may be struggling to settle into school life, and for those who may worry about being judged because of their race, size, personality or beliefs. Help them to find self confidence.

Final prayer read by Megan Salmon, 7M:

May we, who have received the love of God at this Mass, spread love wherever we are: we ask that in this coming year we spread the love, kindness and compassion of God in our school. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord, Amen.



'IT SHOWS THE TRUE MEANING OF ST THOMAS MORE ACADEMY'



Great North Snow Dogs is the North East's biggest ever mass participation public art event. The snow dogs and mini snow dogs will be on display across the region during autumn and winter 2016 before being auctioned for St Oswald's Hospice.

Our Snow Dog (on show at Gateshead Leisure Centre) is inspired by the mission of the school and shows the true meaning of St Thomas More Academy's community. We identified key principles of the school colours, the logo and the foundation of the Christian Values that are embedded into the daily life within St Thomas More.

- Lydia Clark, Year 13

Art club students have also been working on a competition entry for the NASUWT Arts and Minds competition judged by Gok Wan. Amelia Bewick, Freya Rippin, Lucy Surrey, Amy Hamilton and Ruby Stephenson from Year 9 and Niamh Latham, Year 7 researched the phrase 'We Are One' in all the languages spoken in our school to create a banner called 'Equality'

- Ms Edwardson, Art Department



TALENTED RE STUDENTS

Staff at St Thomas More Catholic Academy, North Shields were once again delighted with their students' outstanding GCSE and A-Level RE results. 16 GCSE students managed to get 100% in their GCSE Religious Studies paper, which accounts for 7% of the year group. Furthermore, 9 A-Level students achieved 100% in their Philosophy paper, failing to drop even a single mark! A record number of pupils gained A* and A grades with some of the students opting to continue their study of the subject at degree level. The staff in the RE department are thrilled that the students' hard work, revision and persistence in the lead up to the exams has paid off!

- Mrs Anderson, RE Department



TRIPS NEAR AND FAR...

COLOGNE, GERMANY

In July, 26 Year 10 students took part in a fantastic trip to Cologne and the Rhineland. The students are studying GCSE German and had the chance to soak up world cup fever in a country equally as passionate about their football, along with trying out their German! They embraced new cultures, food and sights. Students enjoyed visits to the chocolate museum in Cologne, Cologne Zoo, Phantasialand theme park, a trip across the Rhine in a cable car, a river cruise to the beautiful town of Boppard and some bravely climbed the steps up to the top of Cologne Cathedral's south tower – certainly not for the faint hearted!

- Miss Flood, German Department



PARIS, FRANCE

Also in July, students and staff had a wonderful time on a trip to Paris. We could not have hoped for a better time or for better weather. The weather was beautiful from the moment we arrived to the moment we left. This made the walking around the French capital very enjoyable, despite having to walk for up to 10 miles a day! Students showed an exceptionally positive attitude on the trip and were wonderful representatives of the school.

- Miss Trabichet, French Department

CERN, SWITZERLAND

The highlight of the A Level Physics trip was a tour of CERN, the centre for nuclear research. As part of the tour we were able to see ATLAS, one of the 3 monitoring stations of the Large Hadron Collider. The trip also included a tour of the United Nations building in Geneva and a day trip to the capital Bern. In Bern we went to the Einstein Museum which also included the history of Bern on the top floor, providing gorgeous views of the whole city - some were lucky enough to find the singer James Bay during the day too! As the famous Lake Geneva was minutes from our hostel we took the opportunity to swim, only to find it was colder than Tynemouth Longsands.

- Beth Robertson & Charlotte Lowery, Year 13



HOLY ISLAND

On the last weekend of our summer term 60 Year 9 students enjoyed a wonderfully enriching time on Holy Island. This truly is a unique and special place. We arrived in some style catching the boat from Seahouses, via the Farne Islands. In times when our young people so often receive negative press we spent the weekend celebrating how fantastic our students can be with singing, dancing, playing games, jumping off sand dunes and walking in amazing surroundings. All involved had a ball! I was delighted Fr Shaun O'Neill was able to join us on the Saturday to spend quality time with the students and to celebrate a lovely Mass in St Aidan's Church. Well done Year 9 for being fun loving and an absolute credit to yourselves, your school and your families.

- Mr Murray, Geography Department



LET IT RAIN... WE'LL STILL SHINE! SPORTS DAY 2016

Sports Day is always an event to look forward to and every year it lives up to our expectations. Our form, 10R with Mrs Martin, have won Sports Day for the past three years, despite there only being a few sporty people in the form. We think this is because Sports Day pulls forms together as a team and helps build teamwork. As individuals, we both broke school records this year and have competed at county level, but as a mixed relay team, we pulled together to also break that record. The atmosphere makes people push themselves to do the best they can. Even when the weather is not great, everyone still tries their best to make their form proud of them. - Jemma Rowell and Olivia Storer, Year 10



THE SOUND OF MUSIC SCHOOL PRODUCTION 2016



EMILY DAVEY

I was given the role of Liesl Von Trapp which was so fun. Rehearsals were always enjoyable throughout the year. It was great making new friendships through the cast and by the end of the last show, we were all like a family! During production week, we performed the show four times! We all had some ups and downs. The costume changes were pretty quick (but I did like the costumes!) We received 3 standing ovations which has never happened before.

- Emily Davey, Year 10



ELLEN DAVEY

This was my first show at St Thomas More so I was very timid going to audition. I was put in the chorus and we had to sing lots of confusing Latin which was great fun to learn! The teachers were very helpful and strict when they needed to be (which is a key part to a great show!) A few months before the show, I was asked to play the role of Sister Margaretta (the leader of the Postulants). I felt so honoured that they believed in me to pull off such an amazing role. The Director of the show (Miss Younger) really helped me achieve my confidence. I would love to be a part of the show next year.

- Ellen Davey, Year 8



WORK EXPERIENCE A SAMPLE OF PLACEMENTS

In July, Year 10 students took part in a week of work experience. Here is a small selection of what they got up to.



**JOAN DUCUSIN
NORTH
SHIELDS
BASKETBALL
CLUB**

Joan is 'an extremely intelligent young man, quick and eager to learn and always follows instructions precisely'. He has a 'very strong work ethic and a high level of motivation'.



**NATALIE COOK
ST JOSEPH'S
RC PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Natalie said: 'I loved working at a primary school, it was so fun and made me realise teaching and helping out wasn't easy! The best bit was helping them with their understanding on certain topics, when they finally got it it was so rewarding.'



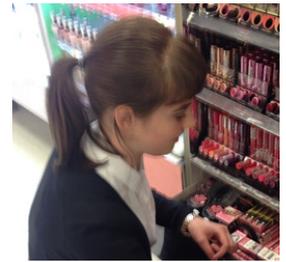
**KAY
HENDERSON
PERCY MAIN
PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

'Kay has had an excellent placement and all staff have commented positively about her mature, conscientious and good-humoured attitude throughout the week.'



**TOM
ROBERTSON
NEWCASTLE
FALCONS**

Tom said: 'My favourite was when I helped Mark Laycock (the skills coach) with his sessions with the senior team. It opened my eyes to what it is truly like to be part of a professional rugby coaching staff and what it takes to get there!'



**JESSICA
EDWARDS
BOOTS**

'Jessica has vastly improved in confidence during the week. She is a pleasant, friendly girl who is a credit to her school and family.'



BIOMEDICAL TRIP TO NEWCASTLE UNI

On September 20th, a number of Year 13 Biology students visited the School of Biomedical Sciences, attending workshops exploring real life applications of the A-Level syllabus.

Workshops included practical sessions on how body fluids can be used to diagnose diseases, the effect of drugs on enzyme activity following a mock chemical terror attack, and a crime scene investigation using DNA sampling. Students who attended the immunology session investigated the role of antibodies in the body and all found it very interesting, particularly the chance to use specialist equipment. Other students participated in a pregnancy and delivery session and enjoyed learning how specialists can determine the need for a caesarean section based on the shape of a baby's head.

- Matthew McCann, Year 13

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF LANGUAGES

On Thursday 22nd September, a group of Year 8 and 9 students attended this event at St John's, Bishop Auckland. Samantha Coates, Year 8, reports:

After 40 minutes on the coach we arrived to find hot chocolate and croissants waiting for us. The day offered a chance to learn 5 different foreign languages. We learnt French through Fairy Tales, Spanish through Music and Songs, Portuguese Conversation, the Russian Alphabet and Japanese Culture and Greetings!

We were encouraged to mingle with those around and create new friendships. The day went very fast and soon came to a close. That must only mean one thing.... That we enjoyed it so much!
- Samantha Coates, Year 8





CAMILLA MONTGOMERY

ENGLISH YOUTH BALLET

The English Youth Ballet is a ballet company created to give aspiring young dancers aged 8-18 the chance to perform on stage with professional dancers. The principals coach the young dancers the steps and choreography from the ballet which they are to perform.

In August the EYB performed Giselle at Newcastle's Tyne Theatre and Opera House. Giselle is a peasant girl who loves to dance. She dies of a broken heart after discovering that her lover is promised to someone else. The Wilis, a group of supernatural women who dance men to death, bring Giselle back from her grave. They target her lover for death, but Giselle's love frees him from their grasp. This year I played a Wood Nymph (a young Wilis) alongside Anna Fitzpatrick in Year 7, and it was so much fun! Auditions for next year are at the Sunderland Empire on 29th March 2017. - Camilla Montgomery, Year 8

EX-PUPIL SUCCESSES

We are proud to share a few successes from our class of 2012. If you or a member of your family are a former student of St Thomas More and have a story to tell, please let us know at alogie@stmacademy.org.uk and you may feature in a future issue of More Life.

BRIGITTE STENHOUSE

2005 - 2012

I have just graduated from Somerville College, Oxford with an Undergraduate Masters in Mathematics. My final year dissertation was on the mathematics of Mary Somerville, for which I have won several University prizes, as well as the BSHM (British Society for the History of Mathematics) undergraduate essay prize. I am incredibly passionate about researching the scientific contributions of women, as they are so often overlooked and undervalued by historians. I am taking a year out to work in fundraising and alumni relations at Somerville, whilst applying for PhD courses.



MICHAEL AUSTIN

2005 - 2012

I studied for a 4 year Masters in Chemistry, Resources and the Environment at the University of York. After graduating, I will be starting a 2-year graduate programme as a Nuclear Chemist working at Sellafield in Cumbria, researching new, sustainable methods of Nuclear Waste storage.



MATTHEW COULSON

2005 - 2012

Matthew also graduated with a first in Mathematics from Oxford this year. Following this success, he has accepted a place at the University of Birmingham to research for a PhD in Combinatorics.



NEXT ISSUE CHRISTMAS 2016

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