



Bishop Vesey's Grammar School

'Inspiration and Excellence'

Headteacher: Dominic Robson BA (Hons) NPQH

DGR/sw

13 November 2015

Dear Parents/Carers

As Headteacher, one gets used to dealing with the unexpected. However, last night finished unusually! Yesterday's Sixth Form Open Evening was a big success. We had a huge turnout with an estimated 2,000 people on site in total. Sixth Formers did a wonderful job of guiding students round school and our speakers in Big School, **Sarah Quinn** and **Connor Walton**, as well as our many student presenters around the site were very impressive. I was just about to ring the closing bell for the evening when our fire bell went off. The cause was a rather embarrassed potential New Veseyan, who, while talking to one of our teachers, leant back against a wall and inadvertently set our fire alarm off. Contrary to rumour, we don't think he was a 'plant' from a competitor school Sixth Form! The site was cleared in an efficient manner. A big thank you to all staff and students, who facilitated this, especially **Ben Jesson**, our House Captain, who showed great leadership skills at the front of school. A big thank you also to all who contributed in front and behind the scenes to the success of the evening especially **Dave Goodwin** and the 6th Form team, **Julie Evetts, Kallyann Williams, Linda Pryor** and all the administration team involved, as well as the site team of **Jon Holden, Paul Boyle, Andy Tomlinson** and **Kevin Wamsley**.

The week began with the theme of 'Remembrance.' The service on Sunday at Holy Trinity was extremely well attended and **John Clarke, Kellie Brooke** and **Adam Smith** did a fine job of representing the student body. On Wednesday, our traditional simultaneous Remembrance Services in Old Big School, Big School and the Sports Hall, were conducted with great dignity and respect. It was nice to welcome some of our Governors to the services this year, including Dean Carter and Joanna Davis. Our buglers and trumpeters **Nikhil Madamsetty, Angus Carter** and **Jack O'Hara** all did a fine job. (Angus then went on to Rocklands Special School in Lichfield to play the Last Post there and, once again, performed superbly). **Ryan Bagley** also played very well on the piano. Thanks also to all our excellent readers. The services were enhanced this year by the fact that quite a few of our cadets and adventure explorers wore their uniforms. See our Twitter feed @BVGS1527 for photographic evidence. This is something that I would like to encourage and develop further in future years.

Year 11 continued with their preparations for the mock examinations this week. There was a Revision evening on Tuesday evening. A big thank you to **Ralph Brocklebank**, Head of Year 11, and **Heather Hodkinson**, Learning Mentor, for organising a focused session for parents and students.

There have been some excellent academic enrichment activities this week on the theme of STEM. We have a good number of students from Years 7-8, for the weekly BP challenge which is being led by **Lewis Graham** (Biology Department) and **Craig Guy** (Chemistry Department). Meanwhile, the weekly Scalextric Challenge for Year 7 with **Adam Belcher** (Design Technology Department) has begun. How fast will they be able to race their cars? Meanwhile, on Tuesday, we launched Engineering Society with our first guest speaker of the series led by **Peter Davies**, CEO of Birmingham engineering company, James Lister & Sons. Thank you to **Simon James** (Physics Department) who is leading on this exciting new weekly lecture series.

I have seen some great work this week being done in Art. **Mrs Heer**, Head of Art, is very pleased with the progress of the Clay Club.



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On Wednesday, I was interviewed by the formidable Y8 library team of **Sam Gill, Gabriel Plume, Matthew Connell** and **Tom Hughes** who, with the support of **Wendy Brown**, librarian, are setting up a newspaper. I wish their endeavour great success. Budding journalists should get in touch with the boys or Miss Brown or myself. On the theme of journalism, we are currently planning our new colour newsletter for autumn term and are keen to add more student quotes and views within the publication. I am on the hunt for articles!

This morning, I am looking forward to meeting with the top 10 merit winners of the first week back at breaktime Well done **Guvraj Dhillon** 10R, **Daniel Black** 10R, **Matthew Roberts** 7P, **Benjamin Frost** 7W, **Jordy Cani** 7P, **Alex Croasdale** 7W, **Cole Hancox** 7P, **Harrison Dodd** 7W, **Hugo Martin** 7P and **Matthew Monaghan** 7P. I have also sent letters this week to all the boys who received no behaviour points last half term. Well done to the 247 students from Years 7-11 who have won that accolade – just under 38% of the Main School cohort. Every half term we start the counting afresh. If you haven't had a half term letter before, let's see if this is the half term to make that breakthrough by being consistently extremely well-organised and self-disciplined.

Senior Debating is hotting up as the Sixth Form begin preparation for the ESU Mace competition on the 26th November. I will be selecting the team after hearing students speak at lunchtime on Tuesday in my office. Each student interested in competing needs to prepare three one minute speeches (either for or against) on the following three topics:

'This House would force the BBC to implement diversity quotas for casts of all their shows.'

'This House would only imprison violent offenders, and would give all non-violent offenders non-custodial sentences.'

'This House believes that the UK government should pay reparations to countries that suffered from the slave trade.'

In Junior Debating on Wednesday lunchtime in Old Big School, we will be discussing the motion:

'This House would prefer to be taught by a computer.' In preparation, why not encourage your son to have a read of this article: <http://www.theguardian.com/teacher-network/2015/feb/24/computers-replace-teachers>.

In the world of sport this week, we have seen the Under 15s rugby beat Arden School in the Nat West trophy and the Senior Rugby first XV defeating Solihull Sixth Form in the Vase. Elsewhere, there have been good wins in hockey against QMGs. For further information about BVGS sport visit www.bvgssport.co.uk.

This week we have also marked Children in Need. We held a Question of Sport on Tuesday with the Sixth Form narrowly winning. Today, we have a non-uniform day, which has raised over a £1,000. We also have the best dressed superhero competition, Library games and our highly competitive Sixth Form Boys v Girls netball match. Thank you to our Charity leaders and all staff supporters for making these events happen.

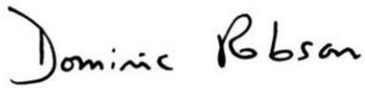
We have sent a letter to everyone this week regarding our forthcoming Senior drama production of 'Two', which has been supported by Centrestage. 'Two' is a powerful and exciting play by Jim Cartwright. It has great humour and drama. The play will be performed at 7.30 pm on Thursday 10th and Friday 11th December. Please book tickets now to avoid disappointment by ringing Mrs Foster on 0121 250 5400 or emailing her via s.foster@bishopveseys.bham.sch.uk. Tickets are priced £9 for adults and £5 for students/concessions. Please note that because of some of the language used in the play, we recommend that the play is suitable for Year 9 and upwards (and by parental approval only for Year 8 boys).

Finally, we have begun consulting this week on a new admissions policy for September 2017. This is particularly pertinent to Year 7 entry. As a School and Governing Body, we believe that an essential part of our moral purpose is that our school should be socially inclusive and representative. It has been a cause of concern to us that grammar schools are perceived by some (including former grammar school boy, Sir Michael Wilshaw, the Head of OFSTED) to be places of middle-class privilege, hard to access, unless students are coached for the entrance examination. Nationally, there have been a number of initiatives taken by grammar schools across the country to widen access to grammar schools. In our own city of Birmingham, the King Edward's grammar schools

have introduced an admissions policy that seeks to widen access. Here at BVGS, we are consulting on the idea of introducing the same policy. This means that we propose to establish a qualifying score. We propose that first priority for the 160 BVGS school places available in Year 7 would go to those who are Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children and then the next priority group would be those students who will attract funding for the Pupil Premium. We would seek to fill up to a maximum of 32 places for students, meeting our qualifying score, who attract the Pupil Premium. The remaining 128 places would then be allocated to those who have met the qualifying score by rank order. For those who would like to know more, a copy of this proposed policy will be going on our website.

Wishing you all a relaxing weekend.

Yours sincerely



Dominic Robson
Headteacher



Dr John Craggs DL PhD FCMA
Chairman of Governors

Quote of the Week

'Destiny is not a matter of chance, it is a matter of choice. It is not a thing to be waited for, it is a thing to be achieved'

Jeremy Kitson

Word of the Week

'benevolent' adj: characterised by or expressing goodwill or kindly feelings

Book of the Week



BOOK OF THE WEEK
THE FIRST BOOK IN THE 'DEMONATA' SERIES

❖ "It is gory, exciting and has a mega story line as you read this series. Epic read." **Harvey Quinn 9B**

❖ "It is gory but adventurous. I recommend it to 11 or 12 year olds". **Haris Rahman 9W**



DARREN SHAN
Lord Loss
IT'S IN THE BLOOD...

Art and Design Star of the Week



Archie Sansome, 10 W. Archie has been studying the work of Georgia O’Keeffe. He has completed this transcription, showing exceptional use of colour and form. Brilliant work!

Dates for your diary:

| NOVEMBER 2015 | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| w/c Monday 16 | Busking Week |
| Monday 16 | Finance and Estates Committee Meeting |
| Thursday 19 | Year 7 Parents' Evening 16:00 - 19:00 |
| w/c Monday 23 | Year 11 mock week |
| Friday 27 | Speech Day 19:00 at Sutton Coldfield Town Hall with Guest Speaker Lord Keith Bradley (OV) |
| Friday 27 | Senior King Maths Challenge |
| Monday 30 | GCSE Presentation Evening 19:00 at BVGS |
| DECEMBER 2015 | |
| Thursday 3 | Year 9 Options Evening 16:30 - 18:00 |
| Sunday 6 - Wednesday 9 | Dress and technical rehearsals for school play |
| Monday 7 | Governing Body Full Board Meeting |
| Monday 7 | Y12 Parents' Evening |
| Monday 7 | PAC meeting |
| Thursday 10 and Friday 11 | Performance of 'Two' |
| Tuesday 15 | Christmas Concert |
| Thursday 17 | Break up for Christmas |