



Bishop Vesey's Grammar School

'Inspiration and Excellence'

Headteacher: Dominic Robson BA (Hons) NPQH

DGR/sw

10 February 2017

Dear Parents/Carers

This week we marked Mental Health Week in assemblies. Our Young Well Being Leads from Year 9 (trained as part of the Birmingham Education Partnership New Start Mental Health Project), **Patrick Tyrell, James Whitehouse** and **Paavan Sehmar** have delivered assemblies to Key Stage Three. Next week **Lauren Newbould** and **Nyandavoh Foday** will be discussing 'Tackling discrimination around sexuality' with Year 11 and the Sixth Form. Additionally, on Wednesday 8 February, 20 of our students received training from Young Minds on how students can promote resilience and good mental health with their peers.

Tuesday 7 February was Safer Internet Day and there is a pack available to parents free of charge at <https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/safer-internet-day/2017/education-packs/education-pack-parents-and-carers> with ideas for conversation starters with your children. I hope you find it useful as a family.

Our Sixth Form STEMSoc are preparing for a weather balloon launch. This week their plans were boosted by the opportunity to talk live via i-pad, with **Ross Hays**, Atmospheric Scientist at NASA in America, regarding research we could undertake with this project. A fantastic opportunity and a big thank you to one of our parents who set this up for us.

Another brilliant opportunity for Sixth Formers took place at MedSoc this week with one of our Year 10 parents returning to talk about planning and managing medical provision in a conflict zone, Iraq. Thank you. If you, as a parent, would like to volunteer to speak at MedSoc or STEMSoc, please do not hesitate to get in touch with Mr Goodwin, Head of Sixth Form.

I was very jealous this week seeing the wonderful pictures from the Geography field trip to Portland in Dorset. The students were exemplary and a big thank you to all the Geography team and **Miss Egan** for an outstanding trip.



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Meanwhile our School Captain **Reiss Chahal** and fellow Erdington constituents **Mohammed Ali, Jamaal Sims, Jacob Richards** and **Aaron Pahal** represented our school with pride at the Young People's Parliament for Erdington at The House of Commons chaired by Speaker **John Bercow** and accompanied by Erdington's MP **Jack Dromey** at last week. They discussed many vital issues concerning their neighbourhood.



This week saw our KS 4 artists taking a trip to Coventry to see the magnificent Coventry Cathedral as well as the Herbert Art Gallery. It was an excellent source of inspiration for our students.



Congratulations to the Vesey students playing in the North Area Brass Chamber Concert on Tuesday: **Alex Dixon, Billy Newton, Jack Woodman, Leon Yamin-Ali, Benedict Lawrence-Pietroni, Matt Prince**. Also well done to all the Veseyans taking part in the North Area Woodwind Chamber Concert. Apparently a third of the items on the evening were from BVGS performers. Well done to **Cameron Bailey, Andre Bean, Joss Bird, Torin Bird, Archie Brookes, Stephen Huxley, Ellis McKenzie, Luke Spencer, James Whitehouse, Nathan McKenna Patel, Holly Brown, Ellie Grace, Ned Walklett, Matthew Hurley, Finn Epting, James Foxall, Adrian Lowe, Chester Powell, Oliver Chudleigh, Tom Eglesfield** and **Emmanuella Olatundun**. We have also had some lovely feedback about BVGS student involvement in the Birmingham Schools' Singers: *'All are vocalising and developing their music skills to a high standard, as well as being polite and witty members of the choir'*.

The Library, led by **Miss Brown**, have been undertaking a review of book loans by year group. I am delighted to announce that our top readers are Year 8 with 1,800 book loans since September. Year 7 are in second place with 1,500 with Year 9 in third with 830. Reading at KS3 is the foundation of future success at KS4. Please encourage your son to be an avid reader.

On Thursday 9 March the Sutton Coldfield Parliamentary Debating Competition chaired by **Andrew Mitchell MP** will be held at Sutton Coldfield Grammar School for Girls. All interested in participating should attend a meeting in Old Big School next Wednesday, 15 February at 13:15.

Student Voice is an important feature of our school. A good example of this is the role of students in choosing our next catering contractor. The students were: **Charlotte Frazer-Morris (Yr12), Matt Price (Yr12), Arun Murria 8W, Andy Bath 8P, Harry Vlahakis 7W** and **Ben Falkner 7W**. They received a talk from Tender Consultant Mike Neales from the Litmus Partnership and gained an understanding of the tender process to date. Students then listened to contractor presentations and were able to grill the contractors by asking questions before enjoying excellent samples of hot and cold food provided. The decision amongst the students was unanimous and they gave clear and constructive reasons for their decisions. Thank you also to **Graeme Pallister** - Parent Governor, **Graham Swindells, Lesley Overton** and **Bridie Curtis** for their support in this important business process for the school.

Talking of Student Voice, I am keen that we form a student led Eco Committee concerted with environmental issues. If any student is interested in this, please ask them to let their Form Tutor know. We really need at least one rep per form across the school.

Today our students have been taking part in the regional round of the Coca Cola Challenge Business Challenge. We await the results with interest. Well done to **Jaden Lo-Watson, Ibrahim Aliwi, Harvey Quinn, Aidan Towse, Luke O'Brien, Freddie Goodrham** and **Raul Athwall**. Thanks to **Dr Reilly** for his support and mentoring expertise with the team.

Well done to this week's top merit winners: **Hitesh Jhall, Alexander Chan, Ben Cheema, Thomas Martin, Jai Sharma, Oliver Gray-Nimmo, Amar Paul, Nektarios Kourtidis-Sextos, Jack Glover, Kai McDonald** and **Christian White**. I look forward to seeing them for hot chocolate and cookies next Thursday at break-time.

All parents should have received a letter reminding you that our whole school Academic Review Day is scheduled on Monday 13 February. Normal lessons are suspended on that day and all students are invited into school for an Academic Review Meeting. This is a great opportunity for students to take stock of their current progress and to set themselves targets for improvement. Parents are encouraged to attend where possible. Please also note that this is a normal school day from an attendance point of view, so if your son or daughter is ill on that day, you still need to call or email the school.

A reminder that proof orders for the sports/music/officers/Find Me photographs can be collected from Mrs Foster in the School Club Office. All orders need to be back to Mrs Foster by Friday 17 February. (s.foster@bishopveseys.bham.sch.uk) The school are also collecting Sainsbury's Active Kids vouchers. If you do have some, please take them to Mrs Foster in the School Club Office.

This has been an exciting week for Vesey sport. Sadly, our U15 Rugby XV narrowly lost to Sir Thomas Rich School 6-3 in a tough, physical and very muddy contest. The students were impressive in their teamwork and resilience. Meanwhile in cross-country, despite a depleted team because of the L6th Geography trip, the cross-country team still managed to win against Queen Mary's with 1st, 2nd and 3rd positions from Georgia, Jack and Gabriel. Also last week the team competed in the 46th annual King Henry VIII relay which is open to all schools nationally. Some good individual results saw a position of 40 out of 51 schools. We also have news from the Birmingham School Games. We returned with two team golds, four team silvers and one team bronze. All teams were medal winners. Well done all!



For further information on BVGS sport this week please visit: <http://www.bvgssport.co.uk/>

Currently government plans for a national funding formula penalise Midlands' grammar schools, including Bishop Vesey's Grammar School, with a 2.9% cut in funding. This is in addition to other considerable challenges facing all schools, but particularly grammar schools. I am keen to ensure that government is well informed regarding the negative impact of current proposals for national funding formula. If any parents would be happy to respond to the consultation document on funding, please visit <https://consult.education.gov.uk/funding-policy-unit/schools-national-funding-formula2>. For all interested in responding I attach a suggested response from the Grammar Schools Headteacher Association.

Another exciting development this week was our official school launch of a social network to connect our school and the community. Bishop Vesey's Grammar School (BVGS) has teamed up with ToucanTech, builder of community software for schools, universities and businesses to help develop the BVGS Alumni Network.

The platform is central to the development of the school's Corporate Partnership Programme, helping to create and maintain relationships with businesses and the local community.

The user-friendly platform is an online networking tool used by staff, alumni and Corporate Partners of the school. It encourages the flow of communication between all involved, giving them a central hub and a place to connect with other users by sharing news, advice and offers.

Brian Davies, Development Director and Deputy Director of Sports at the school, said: "The introduction of our Corporate Partnership Programme has created lots of interest within the community.

When we began to sign up our first Corporate Partners, we realised the need for a central hub - a way for the people within our network to connect with each other.

Although the platform is easy to use, ToucanTech has carried out workshops giving our staff and other users an overview of the key features and how to use them.

We've also worked closely with the ToucanTech team to personalise the platform for our use, adding useful features that will help bring the people involved in our network closer together, to build a real community spirit that benefits them, their businesses and the school.

The feedback we've received so far has been very positive. Staff and Corporate Partners have already started to connect and add content to the site.

The official launch was on Thursday and now we're up and running, we're expecting to attract BVGS alumni looking to reconnect with old school friends and staff.

Ex-students undoubtedly have fond memories of their time at the school and the close-knit community they were once part of. Some alumni have stayed in contact with the school over the years.

For those reconnecting with the school, the introduction of our platform is going to make it easier than ever to keep in touch. It's helping to build a real sense of community and encouraging long-term relationships, which are mutually beneficial to everyone who joins us."

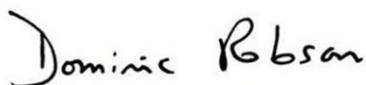
A big thank you to **Mr Davies** and all the staff responsible for the exciting launch this week.

Talking of community, I am delighted to announce the latest social offering of the BVGS Parents' Association: our Annual Quiz Night on Friday 10 March. It is always great fun and hosted by our very own quizmeister **Mr Goodwin**. Please see the attached flyer.

Looking forward to seeing a good turnout from parents on Monday for Review Day.

Wishing you all a lovely weekend.

Yours sincerely

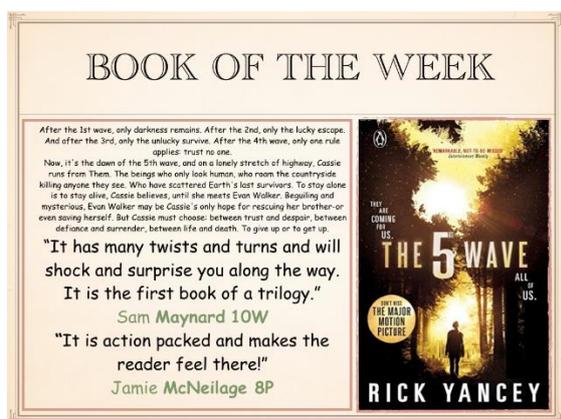


Dominic Robson
Headteacher



John Craggs DL BSc PhD HonDUniv FCMA
Chairman of Governors

Book of the Week



BOOK OF THE WEEK

After the 1st wave, only darkness remains. After the 2nd, only the lucky escape. And after the 3rd, only the unlucky survive. After the 4th wave, only one rule applies: trust no one.

Now, it's the dawn of the 5th wave, and on a lonely stretch of highway, Cassie runs from Them. The beings who only look human, who roam the countryside killing anyone they see. Who have scattered Earth's last survivors. To stay alone is to stay alive, Cassie believes, until she meets Evan Walker. Beguiling and mysterious, Evan Walker may be Cassie's only hope for rescuing her brother—or even saving herself. But Cassie must choose: between trust and despair, between defiance and surrender, between life and death. To give up or to get up.

"It has many twists and turns and will shock and surprise you along the way. It is the first book of a trilogy."

Sam Maynard 10W

"It is action packed and makes the reader feel there!"

Jamie McNeilage 8P

Art Star of the Week



Clay club has been running as a lunchtime club, for Year 7 since October 2016. The boys have shown a great commitment to this experience and have developed excellent ceramic knowledge and skills. They have made and glazed two forms each, one as a name slab and a second of a winter based sculptural form.

Quote of the Week: Knowledge is power. Information is liberating. Education is the premise of progress, in every society, in every family.

Kofi Annan

Letters issued this week:

[Year 11 English Letter](#)

Dates for your Diary

Spring Term 2017

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Monday 13 February | Review Day |
| Friday 17-24 February | Ski Trip |
| Friday 17 February | Break up for Half Term |
| Monday 27 February | Spring Term recommences |
| Monday 27 February | Y13 Articulation Prize Regional Heat at Ikon Gallery |
| Tuesday 28 February | Elevate Y10 Parents' Evening 18:00 - 19:15 |
| Thursday 2 March | Author visit from Richy K Chandler |
| Thursday 2 March | Non-uniform Day for 'Book Aid' - WBD charity |
| Thursday 2 March | Y9 Parents' Evening 16:00 - 19:00 |
| Saturday 4 March | Youth Speaks Regional Round at Bablake School |
| Tuesday 7 March | Higher Education Evening 19:00 - 20:00 |
| Wednesday 8 March | Swimming Gala 13:30 Wyndley |
| Thursday 9 March | New Year 7 Open Morning |
| Thursday 9 March | Sutton Coldfield Parliamentary Debating Competition |
| Friday 10 March | PAC Quiz Night |
| Monday 13 - 15 March | Geology Trip |
| Wednesday 15 March | Year 8 Parents' Evening 16:00 - 19:00 |
| Tuesday 21 March | World Poetry Day |
| Thursday 23 March | Spring Concert |
| Friday 24 March | Non-uniform Day for 'Red Nose Day' |
| Friday 31 March | Duke of Edinburgh Expedition Weekend |
| Thursday 6 April | Break up for Easter at 15:25 |
| Friday 7 April | Staff Training Day |
| Monday 24 April | Summer Term commences |
| Tuesday 25 April | Y7 Parents' Evening 16:00 - 19:00 |

**Summer Term
2017**

| | |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Thursday 27 April | Senior Soloists' Concert 19:00 |
| Monday 1 May | May Day Holiday |
| Friday 5 May | Annual Sports Dinner |
| Thursday 18 May | Parents' SDP Forum 19:00 |
| Friday 26 May | Break up for Half Term |
| Monday 5 June | Summer Term recommences |
| Friday 9 June | Golf Day |
| Tuesday 27 June | Open Evening 16:00 - 19:00 |
| Tuesday 4 July | Performance Evening 19:00 - 20:30 |
| Friday 21 July | Break up for Summer Holidays |

Responding to the Schools National Funding Formula Stage Two

Consultation ends: 22 March 2017. The consultation document can be found at the following link:

https://consult.education.gov.uk/funding-policy-unit/schools-national-funding-formula2/supporting_documents/NFF_Stage2_schools_consultationdoc.pdf

There are 14 questions, all listed on page 43-44. The crucial questions are Q's 1, 4, 5, and 14. In the online response form, all questions have a box for comments as well as option boxes to click on -some are Y/N whilst others contain several options.

[Commentary on the consultation questions](#)

Below are some of the key issues you might like to highlight. As always it is best to use your own words where possible, as they give less weight to lots of responses which say exactly the same thing.

Q1. In designing our national funding formula, we have taken careful steps to balance the principles of fairness and stability. Do you think we have struck the right balance?

It is a definite **No** and I recommend going in hard here. The proposed NFF fails to achieve fair funding. It fails to ensure all schools receive the viability minimum to deliver core provision. It fails to reduce unjustifiable differentials between schools and geographical areas. Under the proposed National Funding Formula around 400 secondary schools will be funded below sustainable levels. All these schools face the same challenge: how to provide a core curriculum and cover normal running costs with insufficient funds. There is an urgent need to ensure all schools receive a minimum per pupil funding amount and for secondary schools £4800 is considered viable.

Q2. Do you support our proposal to set the primary to secondary ratio in line with the current national average of 1:1.29, which means that pupils in the secondary phase are funded overall 29% higher than pupils in the primary phase?

Different schools may have different views here, but I think it is about right so would be inclined to say yes and not detract from our main concerns.

Q3. Do you support our proposal to maximise pupil-led funding, so that more funding is allocated to factors that relate directly to pupils and their characteristics?

Again you may have different views but I would say yes. The bulk of the non-pupil-led funding goes into the lump sum.

Q4. Within the total pupil-led funding, do you support our proposal to increase the proportion allocated to the additional needs factors (deprivation, low prior attainment and English as an additional language)?

Absolutely NO!

The fundamental problem is the proposal to reduce basic per pupil funding from 76.6% to 72.5%, whereas it needs to increase to at least 80%. Equally the proposals to increase low prior attainment and deprivation funding are not justified by impact evidence. Further this funding will not all be directed at these areas: schools will have to use some of it to provide core school provision. Schools in receipt of little such funding will have to reduce their curriculum and still some of these will be judged by auditors to no longer be financially secure or viable.

Two key points to make are:

- The proposed basic per pupil values of £3797 (KS3) and £4312 (KS4), are below the current AWPU values used by virtually all LAs and well below the DfE's 15-16 indicative values of £3950 and £4502.
- Most of the lowest funded LAs set AWPU figures above these because they recognised that they must to ensure all schools can cover core costs.

Q5. Do you agree with the proposed weightings for each of the additional needs factors?

There are several parts to this critical question. The first is about pupil based deprivation which is proposed at 5.5%. (with 3.9% for area based deprivation). Click the 'allocate a lower proportion option'. The first point to make is that the decision to increase deprivation funding from 7.6% to 9.3% is mystifying (you might want to use a stronger word). There was a clear expectation that it would reduce, as the stated government intention was that Pupil Premium would become the main means of funding deprivation. There is clear evidence that it is currently only as high as it is (7.6%) because many LAs have not adjusted their formulae to reflect Pupil Premium due to their tendency to try to maintain historic funding formula levels and the constraints of the current minimum funding guarantee. The Audit Commission report found that PP funding was having little impact, despite the requirement for schools to account for its expenditure. What evidence is there that increasing deprivation funding will have any impact on attainment?

The proposal to allocate £785 to FSM 6 pupils is double funding exactly the same pupils as the PP and contradicts previously stated government policy. The additional £440 proposed for current FSM pupils is justified, as it is intended to cover the actual meal costs.

The second part is about the proposed 3.9% area based deprivation which will be allocated on IDACI. Schools may have different views here and either opt for agreeing the proportion is 'about right' or opt for a lower proportion. It is the best way they have come up with to reflect the needs of 'JAMs' and is not direct double funding of PP. If you opt for 'about right' add the caveat that only if the pupil based % is drastically reduced so that overall deprivation funding is less than the current 7.6% as was the original intention when pupil premium was introduced.

The third part is about the proposed massive increase in low prior attainment funding. Click the 'allocate a lower proportion option'. There is no evidence to justify increasing the low prior attainment funding from 4.3% to 7.5% and £1550 per pupil. In fact, evidence shows that expensive approaches, such as smaller class size and extra adults permanently in the classroom, fail to improve outcomes. Effective approaches such as short term intensive catch up support can be delivered for well under £1000pp. Part of the argument is that this also reflects that schools have to meet the first £6000 of additional support needed for SEND pupils and this often correlates with low prior attainment. Therefore, it is worth adding that, schools, including selective ones have SEND pupils with ASD, dyslexia and a range of disabilities who do not have LPA. Consequently, it would be much fairer if at least some of the funding within the LPA factor, intended to support SEND pupils, was moved to the basic per-pupil funding.

The final part is about EAL. The proposal here is to increase total funding from 0.9% to 1.2% with, as now, 3/4s of this spent in the primary sector where the large majority of EAL pupils are. In this case the reasons for increase - some LAs not funding it or for less than the normal 3 years - seem sound and therefore you may well feel the 'proportion is about right'.

Q6. Do you have any suggestions about potential indicators and data sources we could use to allocate mobility funding in 2019-20 and beyond?

If you do please include them, if not just say no.

Q7. Do you agree with the proposed lump sum amount of £110,000 for all schools?

Schools may have different views on this one but I would be inclined to say yes. If it was higher it makes it even more difficult to raise the basic per-pupil amount, whilst a decrease won't help as on average grammar schools are slightly smaller than the average secondary school.

Q8. Do you agree with the proposed amounts for sparsity funding of up to £25,000 for primary schools and up to £65,000 for secondary, middle and all-through schools?

Q9. Do you agree that lagged pupil growth data would provide an effective basis for the growth factor in the longer term?

Again, you may have different views but I would go for Yes on both of these.

Q10. Do you agree with the principle of a funding floor that would protect schools from large overall reductions as a result of this formula? This would be in addition to the minimum funding guarantee.

Q11. Do you support our proposal to set the floor at minus 3%, which will mean that no school will lose more than 3% of their current per-pupil funding level as a result of this formula?

Q12. Do you agree that for new or growing schools the funding floor should be applied to the per-pupil funding they would have received if they were at full capacity?

Q13. Do you support our proposal to continue the minimum funding guarantee at minus 1.5% per pupil? This will mean that schools are protected against reductions of more than 1.5% per pupil per year.

These are potentially tricky. On the present proposals, many grammar schools are on the funding floor. However, if the basic per-pupil amount is significantly increased or a minimum funding level per pupil introduced into the NFF, then there is a case to be harder here both to free money up to achieve these changes and to move more quickly to truly fair funding. There is a lack of transparency: there is no information in either the consultation document or the technical notes, about how much more some schools would lose if the NFF was applied without the floor and the Area Cost Adjustment ratios which have been used are not stated, although they have opted for the hybrid method. This means that you cannot work out just how much some schools, especially in inner London, will continue to be funded above the level that this proposed NFF - which has been designed and distorted to protect such schools - would give them let alone what is actually fair.

The hybrid methodology was used in the 2015-16 Fairer Schools Funding, which saw 62 LAs receive additional funding. The ACA used then for inner London boroughs was 1.1863 and 1.0838 for most outer London boroughs. These values were calculated from the higher London teacher pay scales and the higher costs for other staff. Using these ACA values the secondary per pupil sustainability minimum per pupil value, would rise from the national £4800 to £5202 for outer London and £5694 for inner London. On this NFF all inner London secondary schools would be funded well above this figure, with some continuing to receive up to over twice as much per pupil as the lowest funded schools and that is **before PP** is added. There are both gainers and losers amongst the lowest funded schools set to receive less than £4300 under NFF whilst there are inner London schools still set to receive over £8500 per pupil and many set to receive over £7000. How can a NFF which sees some schools receive over twice as much per pupil as other similar sized schools be fair?

The drastic cuts in post 16 funding saw many schools, including grammar schools, lose over 10% of their funding over 3 years. For schools set to lose 9% or less the MFG was -3%, but schools that lost more simply lost a third each year. Using this as precedent, a strong case can be made on fairness grounds, for the floor to be -10% and the MFG -3%; but only of course if the formula is made fair first, so that no low funded schools below the sustainability level, lose money.

Q14. Are there further considerations we should be taking into account about the proposed schools national funding formula?

This is the place to suggest that if they don't increase the basic per-pupil amount significantly, then they need to include a minimum per pupil floor of £4800, index linked, for secondary schools to ensure all schools are sustainable. Several groups and organisations have put forward the £4800 figure. Logically they would need to be an equivalent but lower figure for primary schools. I haven't seen a figure for Primaries, but if you use the 1: 1.28 ratio it would be £3721.

There are 3 further questions on page 73 about allocations within the central schools block which you may also want to answer as well as the separate consultation on high needs.

Jim Skinner, CEO

Consultation ends: 22 March 2017.

The consultation document can be found at the following link:

https://consult.education.gov.uk/funding-policy-unit/schools-national-funding-formula2/supporting_documents/NFF_Stage2_schools_consultationdoc.pdf



BVGS PAC

QUIZ NIGHT

FRIDAY 10TH MARCH 7:30 PM

BIG SCHOOL BVGS

£8 PER PERSON

LICENCED BAR AND SNACKS AVAILABLE

BVGS PAC invites you to their hugely popular Quiz Night. This event which will take place in Big School on Friday 10th March. With the **Head of Sixth Form, Dave Goodwin**, officiating the evening it will be a very relaxed, informal and enjoyable event – a great opportunity to meet other parents. Teams of 6/8 are invited or, alternatively, come as a couple or individual and we will allocate you to a team. Places are limited, so get your forms in as soon as possible. A licenced bar with snacks will be available from 7pm.

The Quiz will start promptly at 7.30pm.

The event will be ticketless and confirmation confirmed via email address

Cheques payable to BVGS PAC can be sent to address below or payment made on the night

BVGS PAC Annual Quiz Night

7.30pm Friday 10th March 2017

Please provide me with _____ tickets @ £8.00 each

Son / Daughter Form _____

Lead Name _____

Email _____

Tel No _____

Team Name _____

Email or return to :

Caroline Moore
26 Streetly Lane, Four Oaks, Sutton
Coldfield, West Midlands, B74 4TU

Email: carolinejmoore25@gmail.com

Mobile: 07930 888 272

Email your reservation and we will send you confirmation of your place by return.