OUR 50TH DECADE OF INSPIRATION AND EXCELLENCE

Opening words from the Headteacher

Here at BVGS our mission is simple: Inspiration and Excellence. We are honoured to have been able to provide this for students since 1527. We look forward with confidence to our 500th Anniversary in 2027. Please enjoy this snapshot of the last few weeks at BVGS.

Dominic Robson, Headteacher at BVGS.

CURRICULUM COMES TO LIFE!

- Pitt Rivers KS3 Trip
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OUR STUDENTS

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VESEY COMMUNITY

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OLD VESEYAN NEWS

From Stephen Roberts, Editor of the OVA Section of The Veseyan

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I enjoyed visiting the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford because it enhanced my learning experience and insight into not only artefacts but culture generally.

From this trip, I learnt how Pitt Rivers, whose Director is the Old Veseyan Professor Dan Hicks, provides a perspective on how people have evolved through time and how they used resources for everyday life. I especially liked the weaponry because there was lots of variation.

My favourite culture from the museum was the African culture because it was an area I didn't know much about it before. Now I know how African culture is expressed in its arts and crafts, religion, clothing, cuisine and music.


This March we are proud to present a comedy by Jon Godber OBE, the third most performed playwright in the UK behind Shakespeare and Ackbourn.

The play ‘Teechers’ is about unruly students and their stressed out teachers.

This year’s play: ‘Teechers’ by Jon Godber

The production will take place on Thursday and Friday 19th and 20th March at 7pm. Tickets are £10 for adults, £7 for children and £5 for students of BVGS. Please contact: s.foster@bishopveseys.bham.sch.uk to buy your tickets.
I’m sure that many students have a favourite subject, one that they really enjoy and look forward to more than others. Mine is English. But why? Lots of people have a way of expressing themselves, be it football, music or painting. My way of expressing myself, the time when I feel most comfortable is when I am writing. It is a way for me to be myself with no judgement. My preferred aspects of writing are creative writing and satire. In BVGS English lessons, there is more freedom than my primary school English lessons. We are given something to write, like an autobiography or a newspaper article. We are given certain guidelines like “you must include similes” and we are given a certain theme but from then on, we can pretty much write whatever we want as long as it is appropriate and follows the guidelines and theme.

Writers who have influenced and inspired me are Douglas Adams, who wrote The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy; Dan Harmon, who wrote Community and Rick and Morty which are hit TV shows; Stephen King, a world renowned horror author; Michael Schur, a TV writer who has written and created the US adaptation of The Office, Parks and Recreation, Brooklyn Nine-Nine & The Good place; John Hughes, who has written and directed countless 80’s and 90’s blockbuster films and Derrick Comedy, an internet sketch comedy group whose members have later reached great heights. It is my hope that I one day become a writer, most likely not as famous as some of these names. In my opinion, the key to good writing is an addictive plot, likeable and relatable characters, exciting vocabulary and features and something you believe in because there is no point writing something you don’t believe in. In conclusion, follow your dreams, whether that means being the next Messi, the next Picasso or the next Stormzy!

Tim Bush, a Partner at the Construction Management firm Bailey Garner and Joan Kerr, Architect at BDP, are chairing a Student Panel at school. The panel is for selected students with an interest in exploring a career in Architecture or Construction Management.

The panel provides students with the unique opportunity to gain an overview of the proposed Learning Resource Centre here at BVGS, enabling them to track and learn about the multiple considerations of undertaking a large-scale school infrastructure change. The meetings also give an insight into the career path to becoming an Architect or Construction manager.

The first session meet took place on Thursday 13th February, with a further 3 meetings scheduled.
Over the past six months our 2\textsuperscript{nd} XV have won 12/13 of their matches meaning at one point they were the top U18B team in the country. Highlights include their 26-0 win over The Crypt School, thrashing Bloxham School 33-0 and beating Queen Mary’s Grammar School 55-14.

It was the game on 22\textsuperscript{nd} January that secured their place as best in the country. After ten minutes thanks to tries from Ben Wall and Upraaj Bains, Vesey were ahead. Another try quickly followed from Stevie Davie who was beautifully set up by debutant Daniel Poller who ran 90 metres up the pitch before passing to his teammate. In the second half, there were three spectacular tries: winger Charlie Giblin scored from a solo run beginning in his own 22, James Rogers from a multiple phase attack and Jai Singh scored his first try of the season.

The following game on 5\textsuperscript{th} February saw the boys lose a close match 20-29 to Welbeck DSFC 1\textsuperscript{st} XV but they did not let this set them back and returned for their final game against King Edward’s Birmingham. It was a fantastic team display, showing teamwork, determination and discipline with a final score of 52-0.

Over the season, stand out players include Owen Boxall and Elijah Nix for their unbeatable work rates and carries, and halfback Fraser Bell whose sharp passes set up his teammates superbly.

Coach Mr Greenwood ended the season with this message for his squad: “I’m proud of the commitment and attitude the boys have shown this season. They have acquitted themselves well and are always willing to listen and improve. We’ve managed to get a good result but just like all good teams, we will need to keep improving.”

Congratulations to all the players, captain Finley Port and Mr Greenwood for an amazing season.
‘Top of the Bench’ is a national competition for KS3 and KS4 students designed to encourage and reward high achievement in school chemistry students. The competition is organised by the Royal Society of Chemists and any school in the Midlands can apply to participate.

This year, Mukilan Arunachalam, Viraj Gupta, Dominic Van Loan, Suleman Ahmed, Krishan Patel and Moonis Haider all represented BVGS.

‘Taking part in Top of the Bench was a wonderful experience. At the University of Birmingham, I had the opportunity to tackle hard chemistry problems that tested my understanding of chemistry in a competitive environment, with questions ranging from hard calculations such as finding the energy released per mole of a substance combusted, to knowing the colour of cobalt chloride when water is added (pink, as it turns out). After these questions, I got to see the University of Birmingham’s state of the art laboratory. I still remember seeing the names of endless different chemicals written up on the cupboards, a helium gas tap, and the NMR spectroscopy machine. Finally, one of the university’s PhD students gave us a presentation about the chemistry of batteries, and her own research. I had the joy of seeing a plastic tub be launched into the air, and to take part in a demonstration taking pieces out of a Jenga tower, as a metaphor for moving current in a battery. On the whole it was a fantastic day, with a combination of competition, enjoyment, and learning. I highly recommend it to anyone that has the opportunity in the future.’

The ‘Top of the Bench’ competition regionals in Birmingham was a thrilling day which enabled schools (who passed the local selections) to showcase their knowledge of chemistry, whilst enjoying various activities throughout the day. The day consisted of 2 lectures, a written test and a practical test.

The event was incredible. The diverse activities throughout the day coupled with the element of competition between the schools made the day wonderful. The practical test was fun as it allowed me and the other teammates to combine all our knowledge of chemistry together to generate the best result we can for the problem at hand. The use of teamwork by intertwining our thoughts together was different to any other exam I have done in sciences at school.

Furthermore, I really enjoyed the lectures, they gave me an insight into what careers in Chemistry have to offer.

I believe that Bishop Vesey’s Grammar School did amazingly in the Regional Heats; we came second, narrowly missing a place in national finals. We are proud of our effort and (hopefully) we can qualify for nationals next year.’
The Senior Soloists took to the stage to once again wow the audience with their stunning talents. Many of our soloists have already achieved Grade 8 in at least one instrument, and many can play more than two proficiently.

Over half the performers are engaging with Music at a Regional Level, taking part in Birmingham or Staffordshire ensembles.
"With an estimated 2 million people running regularly in the UK, the activity is fast becoming the most popular form of exercise. Fitting into almost any environment without time constraint and need for only minimal equipment, undoubtedly, those that put on a pair of trainers and run will have a far more stress-free way of life than those that don’t. From what scientists instinctively have established as a form of response to escape sources of anxiety. By all means Cross Country at BVGS allows important time to de-stress; fundamental to academic success.

Our current senior team of boys and girls years 11-13, sports a wide range of abilities, but also equally enthusiastic and friendly runners. At regular races, top runners may compete with club backgrounds, however, as league races are won from the top 6 runners in each team, the environment is always that of encouragement and respect. Camaraderie within the team is developed during Wednesday afternoon sessions that are extremely well differentiated and coached by Mr. Everett, and as a student new to the school myself, this time has been invaluable in terms of socialising too. To anybody previously afraid to represent BVGS in sport or wants to try something new, on behalf of the senior cross country team, we encourage you to give running a try."

"Many people may wrongly assume that cross country is an individual sport, yet this is far from the truth, Mr Everett’s cross country group consists of a range of mixed abilities, from club runners to keen new starters, of a variety of ages who all support one another during races and training. Joining this group has given me an opportunity to mix with other people outside of my usual social circles, and has undoubtedly enhanced my process of settling into the school and increased my confidence considerably – if I can run in all-weather conditions against a field of boys – and enjoy the experience, what else can I do?

I would encourage more girls and boys to utilise the excellent opportunities offered by joining this cross country group, not only can physical benefits be attained as a result of participating, research also shows that the endorphins and endocannabinoids released during running improve your mental state, further the benefits of cross country extend to the positive impact that it has been shown to have on performance in exams; which is something that as a sixth form student, I consider to be of great importance. In an age where media can be so detrimental on young people’s body image, cross country has helped me to focus on what my body can do, as opposed to what it looks like."
Yusuf Ahmed 8W: British Council Mandarin

As reported in the December 2019 edition of ‘The Veseyan’ Yusuf made it to the Final Round of the British Council’s Mandarin Speaking Competition.

We are thrilled to be able to inform you that Yusuf was awarded Second Place in this challenging competition, in which he had to give a presentation to judges in Mandarin and then respond to judges’ questions, also in Mandarin. Quite a skill for someone who has only been learning this language for one year and a term!

Ethan Miller 8R: Playing at Symphony Hall

On Sunday, along with around 100 young musicians, I took part in a ‘Benedetti foundation’ orchestra at Birmingham Town Hall. This was organized and led by the world-famous violinist, Nicola Benedetti, to help inspire and motivate a new generation of string players. The day began with a warm up and fun songs, followed by exclusive performances by Nicola Benedetti and her team and later the Stringcredibles, who are an amazing Birmingham string quartet.

I was delighted to be told that, based on my audition, I had been chosen to lead the orchestra and also be involved in the group solo for one of the pieces – this meant I got to work closely with Nicola Benedetti and was the highlight of my day. The two contrasting pieces we worked on during the day were Warlock’s Basse Dance (Capriol Suite) and Mascagni’s Cavelleria Rusticana. My favourite piece was the one by Warlock as I liked the strong accents and felt I could connect with it and play it in a way that expressed the style.

At the end of the day, our parents and guests came to watch our performance. They also had the chance to join in some of the fun warm up songs and hear more about Nicola’s plans for the Benedetti Foundation. My favourite parts of the day were watching Nicola play and getting inspirational advice from her and the amazing conductor Alex Laing, who was also the adjudicator at the 2019 Junior Soloist’s Concert at BVGS. I will always be grateful for this opportunity and will remember the experience forever.
I am the proud Chair of Governors here at BVGS and I have been in the role since 2017. Initially, I was a Governor and my motivation for doing this was by way of giving back to the school after the fantastic experience my daughter enjoyed in the Sixth Form. During this time I have enjoyed working closely with Dom, my Deputy Andy O’Brien, and my fellow governors to continue to provide an Inspirational and Excellent education and experience for students.

Some highlights of being a Governor include:

- Leading on the strategic direction for the school
- Front row tickets to the Junior and Senior Soloist’s Competition where our talented musicians never fail to wow us all!
- Networking with the extensive BVGS Corporate Partners, which is a great way of learning how the local businesses are working in partnership to benefit our students
- The annual Art Exhibition at St. Paul’s Gallery, where students exhibit their work which is for sale.
- Meeting professionals from all different backgrounds and drawing on their experiences to come up with creative solutions for a school who strives to deliver Inspiration and Excellence on a shoestring!
- Knowing that the work we all do directly benefits the whole of the BVGS community

Dom and I are always interested in eating cake and drinking tea! So please do get in touch with Mary Mellor, Clerk to the Governors on: m.mellor@bishopveseys.bham.sch.uk if you would like to have an informal chat with us about the role of governors here at BVGS.
Friday 7th February saw 29 speakers and 45 exhibitors come to BVGS for the annual Careers Fair.

The Fair had two components: subject specific seminars and exhibitors set up in the Sports Hall. Students signed up to seminars to hear from professionals in their area of interest. Diverse sectors represented included: Communications and Marketing, IT and Tech, and Banking and Finance had a one-hour seminar.

In each specific seminar, there were three professionals offering their advice on how to get into their industry and other such interesting information, such as an average day in their job, their own career paths and the skills needed to get into their industry. Professionals from: Rolls Royce, the NHS, Rothschild and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (to name just a few!) gave presentations in these seminars, which concluded with student-led Q&A sessions.

The second part of the day was a Careers Exhibition in the Sports Hall. This part of the Jobs and Careers Fair was very much like a university careers fair: with exhibitors from PwC, the British Army, Birmingham Chamber of Commerce, Mitchells & Butlers and Ocado to name just a few of the national and international companies that were represented.

We were thrilled that many of our speakers were Old Veseyans, coming back to inspire and offer guidance to the current students. Thank you to all those who generously gave time to inspire our students.
BVGS has been spreading its message of Inspiration and Excellence through increased media coverage: in the Sutton Coldfield Observer, on the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce website and through our twitter reach. Here are some of our personal highlights!

**Twitter**

Carol Vorderman @carolvorders - 10h

Just watched “Le Mans 66” true story. Christian Bale as Ken Miles the motor racing HERO, a Northerner with utter commitment and soul. In it not for glory but for his passion. Best movie this yr. then you understand how lucky we are to have @LewisHamilt... @MercedesAMGF1

45 13 337

Bishop Vesey’s GS @BVG51527

Replying to @carolvorders @LewisHamilton and @MercedesAMGF1

Hi @carolvorders glad to hear you enjoyed the film! So did we. Ken Miles was in fact a Brummie! He went to our school from 1927-1935.

Carol Vorderman @carolvorders - 2h

Replying to @BVG51527 @LewisHamilton and @MercedesAMGF1

I’ve since learned about his Brummie-dome...think I was confused by Christian Bale’s accent 😂...what a great great man tho the #KenMiles

Bishop Vesey’s GS @BVG51527 - 47s

We couldn’t agree more. Was a truly inspiring man. If you would like, please read the article we wrote about Ken’s career, with a touching obituary from his brother that was published in the 1966 OVA (Oxrevnewsbag) Magazine. Here’s the link:

The film Ford vs Ferrari, or Le Mans ’66 as it is billed i... The film Ford vs Ferrari, or Le Mans ’66 as it is billed in the UK, is based on the true story of Ken Miles, an ... @alumnivbsgs.co.uk

**Birmingham Chamber of Commerce**

Lisa Kitteridge @kitteridge_Jisa - Feb 1

Thank you for your kind words @kitteridge_Jisa! Outstanding sports provision is just one of the many things that makes the #VeseyExperience

Lisa Kitteridge @kitteridge_Jisa - Feb 1

Replying to @SportiveSutton @RoyalSuitCoTC and @BVG51527

Our son does have outstanding sporting opportunities @BVGS1527. Great for the sports team to be recognised as they give so much time & dedication to the boys. Well done & thank you to Mr Howell & the team. Fab to see sport being “done properly” at school. A refreshing change.

Sutton Coldfield Observer

Gifted pupil to compete in Mandarin Speaking Competition

Vesey pupils spread the festive message with a Giving Tree
Who we are
Any Parent who has a child at the school is an automatic member but a small group of parents decide to meet regularly to discuss how to raise money to support the school’s projects which provide a memorable experience for each child.

What we do
- Raise money,
- Provide social forum for parents
- Run Lost Property
- Host events to fundraise

Some of the things we have Provided
The PTFA have raised money for many things over the years from IT equipment, to Stem Block bricks!

What we have pledged for 2020/2021
- Money to Drama - allowing access for all
- Money to Sports- so more boys can enjoy sport
- Benches/ shelter - school and pavillion

Join us contact us on our email address: bvgsparent1@outlook.com
- Committee meetings are held monthly on a Monday night 7pm – 8:30pm. It’s a way to provide any new ideas and help organise the events calendar and to hear how money raised is being spent.
- Volunteer to help at events/serve refreshments/sort lost property. Every little helps the wider mission here at BVGS: Inspiration and Excellence.

Other ways to contribute
- 50/50 Club - see BVGS website parents section and newsletter for details on how to apply and win
- Easyfundraising AND Matched Funding
- Come forward with Talents/ways you can help

We hope you will want to join us on our mission to support BVGS! I look forward to hearing from you.

Maxine Hanley, Chair of the PTFA.
1. HOW LONG WERE YOU AND YOUR FATHER CLERKS TO THE GOVERNORS?
I was appointed clerk in September 1977 and retired in December 2016. My father was clerk from 1947 until his death in July 1977, but he was referred to as ‘acting clerk’ in December 1938. I deputised for my father when he was ill in September 1974 and June 1977.

2. WHAT ISSUES WERE DEALT WITH AT GOVERNORS’ MEETINGS?
The governors dealt with everything relating to the school from encouraging boys to tuck their shirts in to defending the school against threat of closure by socialist politicians.

My early years were the most momentous. Shortly before I became clerk the Labour Secretary of State for Education, Shirley Williams, served a notice on the Birmingham Education Authority requiring them to submit proposals to eradicate selective entry to schools in Birmingham. The next two years were spent in trying to avoid complying with this requirement. The governors were assisted in their opposition to change by the Birmingham City Council, which luckily at that time was under Conservative control. The Council challenged the legality of the notice on the grounds that it failed to name the schools referred to. If Mrs Williams had been properly advised (or perhaps she ignored advice) she would have withdrawn the notice and issued a fresh one naming the schools, which would merely have delayed the process by six months, but instead she chose to dispute the issue in the courts. However, before the matter could come to a hearing the 1979 general election took place and the Conservatives, under Margaret Thatcher, regained power; Shirley Williams lost her seat.

4. WHY DID YOU WRITE A HISTORY OF BVGS AND HOW LONG DID IT TAKE?
The starting point was in early 1971 when I discovered the original 1527 foundation deed in a tin box under a pile of other boxes in an attic at 46 High Street Sutton Coldfield (the office of all the clerks since 1844). There were also many other documents, particularly from the 19th century. I started writing the history of the school in 1978. The first volume was published in 1990, and this led to the foundation date of the school being changed from 1540, as was previously thought to be the date, to the correct date of 1527. This means that, although the school’s 450th anniversary was celebrated in 1990, the 500th anniversary will be celebrated in 2027. My original intention was to cover the school’s history in one book, but I soon realised that the history up to 1900 made a fair-sized book. The second volume, the history of the twentieth century, was written between 1991 and 2000. I wrote the books because of my love of local history, because I had access to material not in the public domain and because no detailed history of the school had previously been written.
There is a small classroom on the left as you walk down the corridor to the dining room. In 1977 that was the form room of some of the sixth formers studying science at A Level. And they were not just scientists … they were also fans of the Beatles. The walls of this room were covered from floor to ceiling with posters of the Beatles. In fact I think they even managed to attach a few posters to the ceiling. After all these were scientists …

In truth there was a strong love for the Beatles in the sixth form of BVGS in those days. We’d sit in the common room during free periods, one lad with a guitar, and we’d sing songs by the Beatles … ‘Yesterday’, even ‘Rocky Racoon’ …

Obituaries

We are sorry to record the death of John Cameron Hill TD BSc FRICS (1939-45). He was 92 years of age.

We are also sorry to record the death of a former member of the teaching staff Enid Evans. She taught English at BVGS.

Anthony Barrymore Clark: 2nd April 1927 – 16th December 2019

It is wholly appropriate that we should pay tribute to this gentle unassuming Old Veseyan who we knew simply as Tony.

Tony was a long-time supporter of Old Veseyan activities including the Old Veseyan Golf Society, the Old Veseyan Shaggy Dogs and the relatively recent concerts by Vesey Music at the School.

However, as revealed at his funeral on Tuesday 14th January 2020, Tony had many other and varied interests during a rich and rewarding life.

The wide variety of involvement and interests was ably demonstrated by the packed congregation who attended the service at Sutton Coldfield Crematorium.

Tony was born in Shirley and the family then moved to Nether Whitacre where he attended primary school. It was at Nether Whitacre that Peter Dartnell and Tony started a lifelong friendship that developed into a love of gardening in a plot of land close to the churchyard. Following a move to Walmley Tony joined Bishop Vesey’s Grammar School. At Walmley he met and became friends with Paul Worthington and John Hopkins where they played as youngsters in the fields near New Hall, building a “gang hut” amongst the “Holy trees” at St John’s Walmley. Tony became a chorister at St John’s.

After completing his schooling, Tony commenced training as an accounts clerk but by the end of the Second World War, Tony was a leading seaman in the Royal Navy and spent a year as a store accountant in Cochin, Kerala, Southern India.
Once demobilised, Tony joined the family business of W. Clark & Co based in the Jewellery Quarter. A major part of Tony’s life began, as many did in those days, at Maney Youth Club where he met Joan whom he married in April 1953.

Joan and Tony had two children, Annette and Graham and Tony was very proud and supportive of his granddaughters, Lucy and Anna.

Above all Tony was an enthusiast for all things practical and mechanical. From making sure family holidays were taken in striking distance of steam railways, rushing water or the open sea. Tony and Joan owned a cottage in Copper Hill Street, Aberdovey where the steam train passed through the top of the garden.

Tony had a keen interest in old cars with many visits to Silverstone, Curborough and Prescott Hill climb, accompanied by wonderful picnics. Motorbikes did not escape Tony’s interest, even taking his family on holiday to the Isle of Man TT races.

Tony was a third generation of family memberships of Walmley Golf Club and played there until he was 85 years old. He similarly partook in Old Veseyan Golf Society meetings often joining up with John Morrison another OV of similar vintage. Tony and Joan also enjoyed their membership of Goldieslie Bowls club.

Tony remained a keen gardener throughout his life and had a good gardening friend in John Ratledge, an OV too.

Tony and Joan would attend many Vesey concerts and Shaggy Dogs annual pre-sports day dinners before Joan sadly passed away in 2017. Tony continued to attend the Shaggy Dogs monthly luncheons and his memberships of Probus, Sutton Arts Theatre, St Paul’s Club and the Octagon Club whilst sustaining his lifelong friendships. He also went on holidays and cruises with his family to Spain, France and Belgium.

Above all Tony was a gentle, kind, courteous, optimistic, witty, loyal and generous gentleman to his family and wide circle of friends.

Sadly, Tony was taken to hospital on 18th of November and his health rapidly deteriorated while he fought cancer bravely. He received outstanding palliative care at St Giles Hospice until he died on 16th December 2019 while Annette and Graham were by his bed side. He will be greatly missed

The Old Veseyan Association, the Shaggy Dogs and Vesey Music will be the poorer for his passing. With acknowledgements to Graham and Annette for the information that enabled this tribute –

Nick Hammond
Oliver Ayto, known by many current students as Mr. Ayto, came to BVGS from 2013-2015 to study for his ‘A’ levels here. He then went on to study Economics at Worcester College, Oxford. After graduating, he came back to BVGS for a year to teach his subject to students. He keeps in regular contact with the school, coming to the 2019 OVA Dinner, and speaking at the Careers and Jobs Fair, representing the Ocado Graduate Scheme. Here he writes:

‘This Summer I’m taking on my biggest charity challenge yet and this is to cycle almost 1,000 miles from Land’s End to John O’ Groats (LEJOG). This will see me cycle 70 miles every day for a gruelling two weeks!

I’m fundraising for the MS Society to help the more than 100,000 people in the UK who have multiple sclerosis (MS), one of them being my Mum.

MS is a degenerative disease that can have symptoms that affect mobility and energy levels. MS is a condition that stays with people for life and there is currently no cure. I want to play a small part in helping those with MS.’

If you want to sponsor Oliver on this epic bike ride, and support people with MS, please do donate to his Just Giving page by following this link:

https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/aytolejog?fbclid=IwAR3S_ch3PfI6H09BLCYase_VN1CeLJWaxXuE73KHq-URkZ254lBPUPQ3ads

The author of the obituary of John Whitworth which appeared in the December issue of The Veseyan was John Carr-Whitworth and not, as stated, John Carl Whitworth

Wishing all of the BVGS Community a Happy Half Term,

Dominic Robson, Headteacher.