



## Headteacher's Update

Advent can seem to be a season of rushing, especially in schools when so much takes place in such a small space of time. We can struggle to fit in all of the things we want to do (I have not written all of my Christmas cards yet, or iced my cake). Much of this is lovely activity, jolly Carol concerts, parties, treats, singing and silly outfits. Despite the festivities, it can be difficult to find the space and the time to really reflect on what Advent means and brings. We tried to find space in school to think about the hope of the Nativity, and the anticipation of God's kingdom, but our own world can often feel remote from the stable in Bethlehem. There is so much in our contemporary world that is alarming, scary, upsetting and dark, but looking around school at our students and staff I am struck so often by their brilliance in every sense and I feel incredibly blessed to be here in this school with them.

The hope of Christmas and the anticipation of Advent are very clear and to me, this community is always a light in the darkness of our world. I have always found the imagery of John 1:5 incredibly powerful 'a light that shines in the dark, a light that darkness could not overpower.' May we all strive to light the world around us through our lives and love this Christmas. May the celebration of the Nativity of the Lord help us to find Peace and hope.

*Wishing you all a blessed and joyful Christmas,  
Imogen Senior*

## Term Dates

**Spring Term Starts** - Thu 4<sup>th</sup> January 2024

**Half Term** - 19-23 February 2024

**Ends** - Thu 28<sup>th</sup> March 2024

**Easter** - 29 Mar - 11 Apr 2024

**PD Days** - 4 and 5 January 2024

**Summer Term Starts** - Fri 12<sup>th</sup> Apr 2024

**Half Term** - 27 -31 May 2024

**Ends** - Fri 19<sup>th</sup> July 2024

## Sixth Form Candles

The sixth form chemistry candles have been selling like hotcakes and have so far raised an impressive £602.90 for the Catholic Children's Society.

Thank you to everyone who has supported this project.

*Mr Senior*

## News from Behind the Scenes

Ms Keefe interviewed Charlie Biggin & Matthew Ekoru, otherwise known as Edna Turnblad and Seaweed J. Stubbs from the Hairspray cast.

### CK: How was the audition process?

Charlie: It was quite straightforward and very entertaining to be a part of! It was a fun and exciting process to go through with a good group of people.

Matthew: It was fun and easy.

### CK: What are the cast members like?

Charlie: There are some BOLD characters. It's a really good cast this year, lots of strong characters. Everyone's great to work with, we all work really well as a group.

Matthew: They're amazing and talented.

### CK: What are you looking forward to the most?

Charlie: Seeing all the characters come to life in full hair and make up!

Matthew: I'm looking forward to presenting my character and singing in front of adults to showcase the range of talents here at Bennies.

### Anything else to add?

Thanks for supporting the show - hope you all find it fun and entertaining!

*Mrs Keefe*

## New School Banner

The school textile club has created this beautiful new banner for use in masses.

Thank you to the following students who helped create it.

Angel Denni

Jasmine Stenning

Genevieve Dobson

Elsa Bush

Hannah Thomas

Linduli Jayaneth

Imogen Knight

Saoirse Walker

Dahlia Atwa

Alice Roper

Aly Smith

Bea Smith

Patricja Golonka

*Ms Ashcroft*



## U13 Girls Football

### West Suffolk Cup Quarter Finals

#### St Benedict's 4 - 1 Thomas Gainsborough School

On Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> December, the U13 girls had their first football fixture of the year and it was the first time playing together since last year's cup run. Despite the rain and the cold, the Bennies girls did fantastically well throughout the game. The link up play between the midfield of Amelia Smith and Polly Saade was too much for TGS, leading to multiple chances on goal for Imogen Grove, who was prolific, scoring a hatrick in the first half! Elodie Massuard also grabbed herself a goal after a great dribbling run through the defence before managing to nutmeg the goal-keeper. TGS had a lot of fight and kept attacking the defence of Lucy Murphy, Eliza Rowley and Alanna Evans, who all played outstandingly well to prevent a second half comeback. A special mention to Evelyn Scott, who played her debut as goalkeeper. She displayed a calm and composed game, making some great saves throughout! Bennies move onto the Semi-Final against Stowmarket High School.

Mr Bates



## Give to Good

Oskar Howe (8C) has raised £10 for EACH charity by baking and selling cookies using the £2 provided by the school.

Mrs Cobbold



## Language Alumni

Hello, I'm Lea, I'm a translation student at the University of Warwick and I have just finished a degree in Modern Languages with Linguistics. Before that I went to St Benedict's where I studied French and Spanish at GCSE and A Level and where I realised that languages were the field I wanted to dedicate my life to. Of course, studying languages can be challenging at times and it takes a lot of passion and dedication, but for me, it has been a constant adventure full of excitement and new discoveries. In fact, it has enhanced my life in so many ways, from being able to travel the world to understanding foreign song lyrics, so here's why you should do it too!

Firstly, if you can learn about how different languages work, you can understand your own language better and how communication works in general - how sounds and words fit together to become a powerful force that unites, changes and even divides the world. Everything we do relies on language as a tool for communication. Politics, sport, science... If we ever need to work with another human being to achieve something, we have to use language. So, if you know how to use the right words in the right place, you can have a huge influence in the world.

You might think there's no point in learning languages if 'everyone just speaks English' but the fact is that, even though English might be on the rise, only 17% of the world speaks it! Learning languages means you can travel the globe and speak to natives in their own tongue - that doesn't just mean you can become a more adaptable, open person but it can generate a lot of respect in the person you're talking to. From learning French, Spanish and Italian, I've been able to live in Italy and Spain and I've seen how important it is to know the language to properly integrate into different cultures. Most people I encountered did not speak English and I had to be brave and use my language skills to solve problems and actually get to know people. Not just this, but when it comes to applying for jobs, companies always see languages as an amazing skill to showcase your flexibility and cultural awareness.

Ultimately, learning language is not just about learning vocab and grammar - it's about delving into the culture. When you learn a language, you learn that it's intricately tied to culture, politics, sociology, art and history. So, by learning another language, you can be exposed to entirely new worlds of knowledge - it's like doing every school subject in one! You'll also be able to connect to people across the globe and you'll have a unique insight into how humans behave and communicate as a whole!

I hope you can now see the benefits of studying languages - ¡gracias y buena suerte! Merci et bonne chance!

Lea Rettagliati





## Library Christmas Colouring Competition

Thank you to all those who entered the Library Christmas colouring competition, after much deliberation the winners and runners up are:

- Year 7 Winner - Patrycja Golonka 7S  
Runner Up - Gabriella Pochec 7S
- Year 8 Winner - Leah Read 8X  
Runner Up - Oscar Marshall 8P
- Year 9 Winner - Jools Kennedy 9S
- Year 11 Winner - Amy John 11P  
Runner Up - Jazmin Williams 11L
- Year 12 Winner - Will Wells 12A
- Year 13 Marcia Maala 13A

Each winner and runner up won a large bag of delicious Christmas chocolates.

Mrs Oakes and Mrs  
Pickersgill



## St Benedict's Rubik's Cube Competition Results

This term we held a Rubik's cube speed competition across all year groups. We had several competitors and they could all solve the Rubik's cube in amazing times. The results table and times are listed below.

Position	Year	Name	Fastest Time
1st	11	Mario Maala	22 seconds
2nd	10	Monro Coward	40 seconds
3rd	10	Isaac Spiller	53 seconds
4th	7	Caspar Geernaert	58 seconds
5th	8	William Herlihy	1 min 12 seconds
6th	8	Wiktoria Konopka	1 min 24 seconds
7th	7	Keelan Whitehouse	1 min 32 seconds
8th	7	Sebastian Eastwood	1 min 48 seconds

Mario Maala was our school winner and was able to solve a 3x3 Rubik's cube in just 22 seconds!

A big thank you to all the competitors and the students who helped to run the heats. Prizes and certificates are on their way to you.

Rubik's cube club will continue each week on Tuesday lunchtimes, all students are welcome. We now have new sets of puzzles to solve not just cubes, so come along and test your problem-solving skills.

Mrs Eastwood

## Reporting your child's absence

Dear Parents/Carers,

If your child is unwell or has an appointment e.g. dentist/doctor could you please leave a message by 9.00am including the reason for the absence via:



Phone: 01284 753512

Choose option 1:

And then choose option 1 for students in year 7-11

And option 2 for student in the sixth form

OR



Email: [Attendance@st-benedicts.suffolk.sch.uk](mailto:Attendance@st-benedicts.suffolk.sch.uk)

If you do not telephone us, we will text you at home or at work. Please note the school operates a first-day response to absences.

If, in exceptional circumstances, you need to request permission for your child to be absent from school during term time, you should complete a **leave of absence application form (please see link below)**, at least three weeks in advance, stating the reason why the absence must be taken in term time.

<https://www.st-benedicts.suffolk.sch.uk/attachments/download.asp?file=74&type=pdf>

Thank you very much.

Mrs Wesley - Attendance Officer

## Number Day

School number day will be on Thursday 18th January. We're looking forward to a day full of number fun.

Mrs Eastwood

## Chambers - Bus Time Changes

Please note that some of the Chamber's School buses are changing their timetables in the new year, please see the updated timetables included in this newsletter.

## GCHQ Puzzles

The Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) have released their annual Christmas challenge!

At the back of this newsletter, you'll find the Challenge featuring seven complex puzzles, masterminded by the GCHQ in-house puzzlers.

They are designed to test a range of problem-solving skills and encourage the use of teamwork to reveal the final festive message.

The Director at GCHQ says:

*Our puzzlers have created a Challenge which is designed for a mix of minds to solve. Whether you are an analyst, an engineer or a creative, there is a puzzle for everyone. This is one for classmates, family and friends to try to solve together.*

So take a look at the challenge and get your friends and family to help out!

Use the Hints sheet if you get particularly stuck.

Use the QR code to check the answers once you're done.

Miss Woodruff  
Head of Computer Science