



In all things faithful

November 2024

Dear Parents and Carers

A warm welcome to my November newsletter to share all the great news of the St Damian's community. And what another busy month it has been!

Catholicity at St Damian's

As always, the Catholic life of the school and opportunities for formation, in terms of the range and quality of provision is, simply, fantastic. I give an overview of these below;



▪ *Interfaith Week.* A few weeks ago we celebrated Interfaith Week, which promoted respect and understanding between different religions. Students and staff participated in an Interfaith Afternoon Tea, learning about the beliefs and practices of other faiths. This celebration embraces diversity in our community, fostering a culture of inclusivity and living out *The St Damian's Way*.

▪ *Day of the Dead – Art for our Chapel.* Our students recently engaged in a creative project for the chapel, exploring the vibrant traditions of Día de los Muertos through Art. Día de los Muertos, or Day of the Dead, is a Mexican festival where families remember and celebrate their loved ones who have passed away, with colourful decorations, special foods, and by sharing happy memories. Using a range of textiles and embroidery techniques, they crafted original designs inspired by both their own identities and the colourful symbolism of this Mexican celebration. This chapel art display brightened our Chapel and helped to deepen students' appreciation for the traditions that connect us across cultures.



▪ *Diwali Celebrations.* In October we celebrated the festive spirit of Diwali, the Hindu Festival of Lights, celebrated by millions worldwide. In partnership with our friends at the local Hindu Mandir, our students learned about Diwali's themes of light triumphing over darkness and goodness over evil, which resonate with our Christian values. As part of the event, students created rangoli designs, enjoyed traditional Diwali sweets and Indian snacks and listened to traditional music. Our visitors were so impressed with our presentation of Diwali and our students embraced the opportunity to experience a different culture.



Our visitors were so impressed with our presentation of Diwali and our students embraced the opportunity to experience a different culture.

▪ *Remembrance Day.* This was a moving tribute to honour those who have served and sacrificed for peace. On 11th November, members of our school community gathered at our Bereavement Garden, creating a solemn and respectful atmosphere. Our entire school observed a two-minute silence at 11:00 am, followed by a service. Our Cadets, Guides, and Scouts, dressed proudly in their uniforms and the GIFT Team led the readings beautifully, sharing words that

St Damian's RC Science College

Lees Road
Ashton-under-Lyne
OL6 8BH

Tel: 0161 330 5974

Fax: 0161 331 4744

Email: admin@stdamians.co.uk

Web: http://www.stdamians.co.uk/

Follow us on Twitter: @StDamiansRCSC

Follow us on Facebook

Headteacher

Mr S Logue BA (Hons), MEd., NPQH, NPQEL

St. Damian's RC Science College

resonated with everyone present and reminded us of the immense sacrifices made for our freedom.

- **RED Wednesday.** On 15th November, we observed RED Wednesday, a special day dedicated to raising awareness about the persecution of Christians around the world. Students and staff wore a red accessory to show solidarity with those who suffer for their faith. Sister Roseline shared a moving reflection on the struggles faced by Christians in Nigeria.
- **Catholic Social Teaching Yr10 Letters.** In RE lessons, students have been learning about Catholic Social Teaching (CST) and putting it into practice by writing heartfelt letters to members of staff, expressing gratitude for their commitment to students' education and well-being. These letters have touched staff deeply, and the experience has taught our Yr10 students the profound impact that simple acts of kindness can have on someone's day. One of the best aspects of this activity was watching the students' expressions as they delivered their letters in person. Their smiles reflected the joy of serving others and the meaningful connections that small gestures can create.
- **Yr7 Stewardship in Action: Homework.** Yr7 students have been putting their learning into action with an exciting 'Stewardship in Action' homework project over half term. As part of their RE lessons, students chose a stewardship task to complete at home or in their community. The options encouraged them to think about caring for the environment or supporting those in need. From creating poems and posters about stewardship to donating to local food banks and researching CAFOD and CARITAS campaigns, students engaged in activities that highlighted the importance of social responsibility. Some students conducted energy surveys at home, explored fairtrade, did litter picks in their local areas or donated items to charity shops. Each task helped students gain practical experience in environmental and social stewardship, living out *Catholic Social Teaching* in meaningful ways. Students presented their experiences in a "Show and Tell" session during their RE lessons in the week beginning 4th November. This showcase allowed them to reflect on their actions, learn from each other, and see the positive impact that small acts of stewardship can make. The RE team were very proud their enthusiasm in caring for others. Well done!
- **Advent Preparations.** As Advent gets closer, our school is full of excitement as we prepare for this special time of waiting. Our RE and GIFT Teams are planning special assemblies and reflections to help us all get ready for Christmas with open hearts. This Advent, we're focusing on the theme of '**Hope**' as we look forward to the coming of Jesus. It's a wonderful way for us to feel closer to God and share the joy of this season together!



Safeguarding. Educating the St Damian's Community on 'Domestic Abuse'

Over the past few weeks both students and staff have been educated on the hard-hitting topic of 'Domestic Abuse'. Mrs Brophy has sensitively delivered this topic to everyone as it is prevalent in society and highly prevalent in Tameside. Sadly, our community is not immune to this. Children and young people are 'damaged' if they see, hear or experience domestic abuse and it is the duty of all adults in school to support our students if they disclose that domestic abuse occurs in their homes. It was also used as an awareness raising activity as some children do not realise that certain behaviours are not acceptable because they have experienced it all their lives. If you are concerned about domestic abuse, please talk to a member of our safeguarding team or if you are seeking impartial advice please visit one of the following websites:

<https://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk/>, <https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/crime-info/types-crime/domestic-abuse/> , <https://mensadvice.org.uk/>

National Domestic Abuse Helpline

Speak to a member of our Helpline team at any time, day or night, for confidential, non-judgmental support and information on your options. Need to talk now? **Call 0808 2000 247.**

Attendance...Every Day Matters!

For a long period of time St Damian's has had great attendance. This reflects the fact that the children love the school and therefore want to attend. Below shows that every week since September, our attendance is above the National Average. However, since September whole school attendance has been 95.6%. This is below our target of 97%. Remember that school is the best, and safest place for your child.

Week commencing	National Attendance	St Damian's attendance
03/09/24	n/a	96.3%
09/09/24	94.2%	96.8%
16/09/24	93.0%	96.3%
23/09/24	92.3%	96.3%
30/09/24	92.3%	95.9%
07/10/24	92.6%	96.2%
14/10/24	92.2%	95.2%
21/10/24	91.4%	93.4%
04/11/24	92.5%	95.0%
11/11/24	Not yet available	96.0%
18/11/24	Not yet available	94.1%

The 'Significant Ten'

A new initiative introduced by Mrs Brophy, who leads on ensuring our more disadvantaged pupils thrive at St Damian's, is the introduction of the **'Significant 10'** in each year. Each Head of Year [HOY] has identified 10 key students in their year who they believe have the potential to excel in their academic studies with 'added' support of staff. During the year these students will be observed, mentored and guided by their HOY to support them in their studies. This initiative is about building confidence and becoming resilient, as well as building relationships with staff. The 'Significant 10' have been introduced to each other and parents informed. I am hoping that some of their successes will be celebrated in this newsletter throughout the year! Watch this space!

Yr11 Update

Firstly, I am delighted to report that the vast majority of Yr11 are working really hard in school, and they should be congratulated. However, a significant number of Yr11 students are not working to the best of their ability at home and this will be reflected in their grades next August that will have a massive bearing on their futures. I ask that parents support us by ensuring your child is working hard at home. I have said before, and I will repeat, **"there is NO substitute for hard work"**.

- ✓ *Half term revision.* Although this was deliberately limited to a few subjects/teachers, nonetheless it was a great success. All teachers, Miss Joyce, Mrs D'Rozario and Mr Gregory were impressed with both the turnout and attitude of the students. There will be more revision opportunities during the February half term.
- ✓ *Independent Learning at Home.* It is imperative that parents are supporting their children and ensuring, as a minimum, their child is doing sufficient work at home [2 - 3 hours], a quiet space to study and to take an 'interest' in their studies. Please don't under-estimate the influence you can have on their motivation to achieve well.

St. Damian's RC Science College

- ✓ *Attendance.* I have said it before, but it worth repeating again (and again). Good regular attendance is vital for your child to achieve their potential. The attendance of Yr11 students from the first day in September to 26th November was 94.1%. The school target is above 97% and I ask that parents support good attendance at school. Rarely do students 'catch-up' on work missed.
- ✓ *Mock Exams.* These started on Wednesday 27th Nov and go on until Thursday 19th Dec with the main written exams taking place Monday 2nd December to Friday 13th December. These Mock exams replicate the exams in May/June. If your child does not attend one or more exams, they will get **zero** for that part of the exam.
- ✓ *Mock Exams Results Day.* This will take place on **Friday 17th January at 2.30.** Again, this experience will reflect what will happen on the real results day. It is important that your child is preparing for these by studying each evening for between 2 - 3 hours in a quiet place that is conducive to learning.
- ✓ *Prom.* The date for the Prom is **Friday 27th June.** However, students must have good punctuality and a good work rate to be invited. If your child is excluded more than once, then they will be excluded from attending the Prom. Sadly, a small number of students have had their invitation withdrawn. At the start of next term, I will be rewarding one student a month with a free ticket to the Prom for showing exceptional work each month for January, February, March, April and May. Watch this space ...
- ✓ *Prefects.* We have recently reviewed who of our Yr11 students are now working well enough to be awarded a Prefect tie. Standards remain high and only those students with excellent attendance, no behavioural issues and a recent positive progress check have been selected. These students should be congratulated, as they are clearly excellent role models within the St Damian's community. There will be one final opportunity for Yr11s to become a Prefect at the end of January, following their mock results. Keep striving to do your best!
- ✓ *Parents Evening.* This was a resounding success. Thanks to all the parents who attended. It was great to see so many there, creating a positive vibe. The responses from the questionnaires showed that we have the overwhelming support from parents. This partnership is very strong, and in the final analysis, this will ensure that your child has the best chance to achieve their potential. Out of 112 questionnaires completed, 111 would recommend the school. Only 1 parent would not recommend the school. The comments, all of which will be on the website for your perusal were, were great to read and I have shared with the staff. Thanks! We don't take this support for granted. Some of these comments are below.

"As always, my child is thriving and is pushed to do his best and the teachers are ambitious for my child and nurturing, thank you".

"Please can you let all staff know they are wonderful people, and my daughter could not be in better hands! with the supportive caring environment your school provides I am positive she will achieve her best educational outcomes, thank you!"

"An exceptional school, full of exceptional teachers and exceptional students"

"Thank you for all the 5 years teaching you have given to our daughter. She loves coming to school and that's a credit to you all!"

I loved and appreciated all the positive comments, but my favourite was the following. Its simplicity is its strength!

"I love this brilliant school, so do my children!!"

This year group has the real potential to do extremely well and smash previous outcomes. With hard work, resilience, supportive parents and a 'believe to achieve' attitude they will. I wish them nothing but the best in their Mocks and their GCSE exams in May/June.

SLT Assemblies Early November

At the beginning of November SLT delivered all the assemblies in school to impart key messages to our students. Below is a brief overview of the Key Messages delivered.

- ✓ Yr11. I delivered an assembly on *'Believe To Achieve'*, which is the unofficial mantra of St Damian's. The main messages were that students need to believe in themselves and their ability and that every child, regardless of ability can achieve. I also stressed the importance of working hard and having routines each day to enable effective revision.
- ✓ Yr10. The senior leader link for Yr10, Mrs Heenan, delivered an assembly on the four 'behaviours' of successful people. The emphasis was that success was not necessarily down to talent itself, but rather having the following four behaviours: Being pro-active, being pro-social and collaborate, being disciplined and being determined. If you embrace these 4 behaviours, you are more likely to succeed.
- ✓ Yr9. Mrs Kelly explored the theme of forgiveness, linking it to the gospel message of *"love thy neighbour as yourself."* She shared insights on how forgiveness plays a crucial role in building stronger, more compassionate communities. Mrs Kelly expanded on this idea, reflected on how communities often come together during times of tragedy, but also highlighted the power of forgiveness, quoting: "It is not an easy journey, to get to a place where you forgive people. But it is such a powerful place because it frees you." This message reminded us that while forgiveness can be challenging, it is essential for personal and communal healing.
- ✓ Yr8. Mrs Brophy delivered on the theme of 'kindness', inspired by Luke 6:35 *'But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil'*. Kindness is something that we all have, and the message was that being kind does make others feel good, but also gives a sense of self-fulfilment when you do something for others without being asked. Mrs Brophy encouraged Yr8 to carry out a random act of kindness. The children watched a short animation on 'taking their hands out of their pockets' to free them up to help others, something we could all learn to do!
- ✓ Yr7. Ms. Joyce delivered on the theme of *'Community & Forgiveness'*, linking with the Gospel theme of the week, where Jesus reminded the people to *'Love thy neighbour, as yourself.'* Yr7 are now full members St Damian's community and this means that as part of the same community we need to learn to forgive one another. Yr7 agreed that forgiveness was often hard but that being able to forgive people helps us to stay happy and be grateful for people we have in our lives.

SEND Updates

- **Spotlight on SEND.** Each Thursday morning, a pupil with additional needs is the focus of a cross-curricular staff meeting. Staff who work with the pupil meet to discuss their needs, share updates and focus on how best to support the child's progress. This team approach will really ensure that the pupils have the most effective support possible.

- **Revision Strategy Session.** With Yr11 mocks fast approaching, students with additional needs were invited to a session on revision strategies and given a comprehensive 'study pack' with essential revision stationery. One revision technique shown was the *Pomodoro* technique, which is a time-management method. A revision planning timetable was also shared to help students to make effective use of their time. Students were more confident about how to revise and how to use their time well. Mrs Walker said "Good luck to them in their mocks"



Stretching the More Able in Yr10 Maths



Mr Wilson and Mr McCallion are stretching Yr10 Maths more able with after school sessions on Grade 8 - 9 style questions from the GCSE curriculum, covering more challenging topics, such as equations of circles and differentiation. This cohort consists of approximately 20 students. There will also be coverage of some A Level curriculum topics. These sessions will continue into Yr11 and are designed to support their attempts to achieve Grade 9 in their GCSE in 2026. There are also plans to sit the Further Maths examination in Yr11. And it will culminate in these pupils sitting a Further Maths examination in Yr11.

Debate CLUB

The month of November saw Mr Gregory relaunch of the St Damian's 'Debate Club' with our current Yr8 students. This club gives our students the chance to debate ethical topics that have been chosen by them in front of an audience made up of their peers. It also gives students the chance to improve their confidence skills by presenting their argument to a large audience and be prepared to answer questions. The first debate of the year was entitled "whether the election of Donald Trump is a force for good". The outcome, by a narrow margin, was that his election could have negative consequences on issues like our climate. Our next debate is on Friday the 29th November "Do we have anything to fear from the increase in AI technology?"

Duke of Edinburgh [DoE] Update



This term, students in Yr9 and Yr10 were given the opportunity to apply to complete their Bronze & Silver DoE award. Every year, this fantastic programme provides students with unforgettable experiences and develops skills, such as teamwork, communication, resilience, leadership, and organisation. This year, the written applications were of an exceptionally high calibre and far more applied than there were spaces available. However, 32 students in Yr9 and 32 students in Yr10 have been awarded a place. There will be registration sessions after school for each group:

applications were of an exceptionally high calibre and far more applied than there were spaces available. However, 32 students in Yr9 and 32 students in Yr10 have been awarded a place. There will be registration sessions after school for each group:

- Silver – Tuesday 26th November 3:10 – 4:00pm (Room 28)
- Bronze – Tuesday 3rd December 3:10 – 4:00pm (Room 28)

What do our students say about DoE? Please read the comments below, taken from the Silver DoE applications:

"In Yr9, I completed my Bronze award, which I utterly loved doing – even though it was challenging at times! Participating in DoE definitely pushed me out of my comfort zone when trying new things and gaining new skills."

"I absolutely loved every minute I spent working towards and doing Bronze. Having now completed it, I am so proud of how far I have come!"



Art Christmas Card Competition Winners



I am pleased to announce the winners of our inaugural Christmas Card Competition. We received a massive 30 entries from Yr7 to Yr10 and Mrs Freeman was delighted with the quality of the entries. The quality ensured that our judges were given the tough task of selecting a winner from so many creative festive designs. Our winners, Caoimhe (Yr7), Jessica (Yr7) and Alex (Yr10), met with Mrs Freeman and I to celebrate their achievements and receive a goody bag of Art materials. Their designs will be professionally printed and available to purchase soon. Perfect for spreading Christmas cheer while supporting our chosen charities. The three winning designs are below. I hope that you agree they are worthy winners!



- Caoimhe, Yr7, who was our Governor's winner
- Jessica, Yr7, who was Mrs Gerschler, Head of RE's winner
- Alex, Yr10, who was Mrs Freeman, Head of Art's winner

Book Buzz Bonanza A few weeks ago, Yr7 students participated in 'Book Buzz' in their English Library Lesson. They listened to 16 authors describe their books and had the opportunity to choose their favourite. School gifted students their book choice and Yr7 have had time to read their books. On Friday 8th November, we transformed the Literacy Hub into 'Wonderland' and hosted a 'Book



Buzz Bonanza' to celebrate Yr7 sharing their thoughts and opinions on what they had read. There were a multitude of activities for students to participate in such as writing a 'Read Me!' book review, rating their chosen book using playing cards, and 'Following the White Rabbit' to discuss what they would like to read next.

This was accompanied with a delicious 'Golden Afternoon Tea' selection of Mad Hatter's Tea and Queen of Hearts' jam tarts to

name a few items! Yr7 students are covering the topic of 'Childhood Experiences' this term whereby they will be analysing classic children's texts, like Alice in Wonderland. Can Yr7 parents say well done to their children for attending, sharing their thoughts and being so courteous and polite. Remember that reading often is the gateway to effective learning!

Staff Profile

In my November newsletter I have chosen to profile 2 members of our great support staff who work tirelessly to support our great teachers. One ensures the efficiency of the budget and one who supports our literacy strategy, both important roles to ensure an outstanding education for our great children.

- ✓ *Mrs Maxwell, Finance Manager.* My journey with St Damian's began when I was 11 years old as I attended St Damian's as a student in the original school building under the Headship of the late Peter Jackson. I enjoyed being here then and I feel the same now, it's always been a great community and being back felt like returning home. I studied ICT at Ashton Sixth Form, then went straight into an office junior role in industry, working for the same manufacturing company for 15 years. During this time, I got married and had three children. I worked my way up through different roles and successfully applied for the role of Finance Officer at St Damian's in 2017. It really is a GREAT school and a privilege to work here. As a member of support staff, we are recognised for all the hard work we do to support the teachers and your children. I took over from someone who worked here for over 30 years, which is a testament to what a great community it is. Last year I completed a Level 4 Diploma in School Business Management and became the Finance Manager. My eldest child left St Damian's last year, surpassing his expectations and achieving the best educational outcomes he could have hoped for. He could not have done this without the love, care and support from all staff at St Damian's and the amazing foundations the St Damian's community helped him to build.
- ✓ *Susan Toole, Librarian:* I have been part of the St Damian's community for 19 years this December. I have witnessed first-hand the changes over the years from the old school premises and library to the new and latest wonderful addition of the Elizabeth Jones MBE Literacy Hub. I enjoy my role promoting reading for pleasure and having opportunities to discuss book choices with the students, as I am an avid reader myself! I love working with the amazing staff and students here and it is a great place to be! It is a privilege to witness the growth of students' confidence as they progress through the school and on to further opportunities. I particularly enjoy discussing nostalgic achievements and moments from past students who come back to visit or attend events here.

Update on Careers

- *Yr11 support.* Our Yr11 students should be well underway with their college applications and with the help of their form tutors, they have been constructing personal statements, collating their achievements and writing CV's.
- *Yr10 work experience.* Mr Healey has delivered a Careers assembly to Yr10. This is a fantastic opportunity where our students get to experience a real working environment for a week on 14th - 18th July. As a school, we strongly advise that the self-placements our students will secure will be in a job sector that they have an interest in. This will allow them to make informed decisions on their futures. The deadlines for students to find their self-placement is Friday 25th January. If you need any help or advice, please contact Mr Healey.

Recognising and Rewarding our Young Carers

Early in November, our Young Carers, along with Mrs Harrison, attended the Manchester Christmas Markets. This is now a tradition at St Damian's and recognises the selfless work that they do to help others. I salute their resilience, and I hope that this 'time-out' allows them to have a break and think about themselves for a few hours.

I received an email from a parent. The parent was asked if I could I include the email in this letter. She said her daughter was "grinning from ear to ear when she got home" but asked that I don't include her name. The email said "Hi, I just wanted to thank all involved in arranging the trip to the Christmas market last week. My daughter had an absolutely brilliant time. I haven't seen her that happy after school in such a long time. I think the chance to spend time with some of the others away from the school setting has done her the world of good. Just wanted to let you know how much it's appreciated. Thank you again". It's great to receive such lovely emails.



Spotlight on Our Talented Children

I will never tire showing off the talents of the children here at St Damian's. Below are some examples of our students excelling outside the school.

- **Lola Booth.** Lola in Yr8 has completed a 5k run and despite struggling with dizziness she was adamant that she didn't let anybody down. Her fundraising target was £200 but she surpassed this target and raised over £300, Well done Lola!



- **Lailah Gillooly, Yr7,** is a member of the **Halle Children's Choir** and has performed at the Royal Albert Hall for the BBC Proms with the Halle Orchestra. On Friday the Children's Halle Choir performed at the BBC studios in Manchester, for Blue Peter, singing 'oh I wish it could be Christmas everyday'. She sang beautifully and is also privileged enough to have been awarded a Blue Peter Badge! And will be appearing on Blue Peter on the 13th December at 5pm. Well done Lailah!

- **Leonardo Malacrino, Yr8,** was invited to the House of Commons by MP, Andrew Gwynne, Health Minister. Leonardo was given the opportunity to ask Mr Gwynne 3 questions about autism in schools. Leonardo went in his St Damian's uniform and when he introduced himself to Mr Gwynne he introduced himself as a student of St Damian's RC Science College in Ashton. Following the interview Leonardo was given the chance to go into the gallery and watch the House of Commons in action! A great day and an honour to have been invited. Well done to Leonardo who, at every opportunity, raises awareness of autism and promotes the fact that everyone can achieve anything!



- **Angel Mawn, Yr8.** plays Rugby Union for both Oldham and Trafford and also Rugby League for Waterhead. Last weekend, Waterhead had a celebration evening to celebrate the girls' performance this season and Angel won the top award of 'Player of Steel'. This was an award that was chosen by the coaches. At Waterhead there are different age groups ranging from 12 - 16 and all players could have been chosen for this

award but Angel won it! Well done, Angel! I know your mum is so proud of you, and so are we!

STEM Update

On 5th November our brilliant Yr10 STEM Leaders ran a 'bonfire night' themed activity for Yr7 and Yr8 students during lunchtime. They conducted flame tests, investigating the colours produced by different metal compounds when they burn. The STEM leaders welcomed, supervised and encouraged the younger students, who loved the opportunity to learn from these inspiring older role models. Well done these great Science ambassadors!



London 2025 Update

Students have been busy preparing for their visit this term, most notably who they would like to share a room with. We will try to accommodate all requests but meeting new people and making new friends is also an important part of our trip. Students have to complete a medical form which they will need to complete and send back to school before we finish for Christmas. This helps us plan ahead for any dietary requirements. An update for parents will take place in January, date to be confirmed. We can't wait to meet you all! A few students have been researching bakeries and ice cream shops they would like to visit whilst we are there such as 'Donutelier' in Covent Garden. If students have any suggestions, you can add them to the London 2025 TEAMS page. Watch this space.

Yr7 Parental Information Evening

Our final parental information evening took place a few weeks ago. It was pleasing to see a full house and the following key messages were imparted to parents.



- ✓ *Reassurance:* Yr7 students have settled well and are now fully emerged into life at St Damian's
- ✓ *Curriculum:* Information was shared about our broad and balanced academic curriculum
- ✓ *Homework:* The importance of students developing good study routines at home
- ✓ *Assessments:* Outlining the format and timing of Yr7 assessments
- ✓ *Reports:* Explanation of what 'Standards checkpoints' and 'Progress Checks' mean for your child
- ✓ *Student well-being:* Information regarding PSHE curriculum, safeguarding and teenage anxiety

I hope that parents enjoyed the evening and understand the St Damian's Way. As always, if there's an issue, please do not hesitate to contact school.

Update on Staff Well-Being Activities

During the month of November, there were numerous examples of well-being activities for the staff. As previously mentioned, St Damian's is only as good as its staff.

- *November and Men's Health.* This month we welcomed Chris Kelly from #AndysManClub who talked how working in high-pressure roles can impact on mental health. He discussed how to empower men to break the stigma of mental health, talking about it and accessing support, which collectively improves emotional well-being and resilience.

- *Every Little Scent*. It was great to see many staff visiting Every Little Scent, where they made a start to their Christmas shopping and had time to make a Christmas wreath. A great way to unwind and meet up with other members of staff. Congratulations to Miss Allison and Miss Joseph for winning the best wreath award.
- *Yoga*. This goes from strength to strength and is very popular with many staff.



Applications from Prospective Parents for September 2025

As always, St Damian's continues to be a heavily over-subscribed school that reflects the confidence of the local community we serve. Our Pupils Admission Number [PAN] is 165 in each year group. This year we had 584 parents who chose St Damian's as one of their choices, 215 of whom were first choice and 168 as second choice. Sadly, there will be a lot of disappointed parents and children.

Last But Not Least... the wonderful Arts Extravaganza Evening



WOW! Forget 'Britain's got Talent', St Damian's really does have talent. And talent in abundance! What a great evening that showcased the amazing talent of the St Damian's children. Students performed a range of skills from playing the piano, monologues, singing, short plays, bands and not forgetting our wonderful school Choir. It was a real joy and privilege to listen to them all. The planning, preparation and delivery of each act was truly inspiring. The feedback from parents was also amazing and made me extremely proud to be associated with such young talent. Behind the scenes, Mr McArdle, Ms Brookes, Mrs Freeman, Mrs Kelly, Mrs Heenan and Mrs Maxwell ensured the evening went without a hitch. Despite the large number of students involved, they all knew what they had to do and where they had to be at exactly the right time. A truly uplifting evening that will go down in the memories of all who attended as another example of a strong united learning community. I will finish the letter with extracts from an e-mail I received from a parent who was in the audience [and whose child was in the choir] that encapsulated the evening.

Dear Mr Logue,

I'm writing to congratulate you, your staff and your extraordinary pupils on what was a truly impressive evening. Every single one of the students who performed on Thursday evening shone bright and the sheer level of talent was just jaw dropping. Both my husband and I sat there with, what can only be described as mouths wide open listening to such wonderful music being played by incredibly talented young hands.

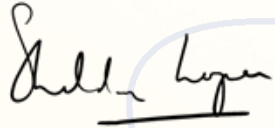
And one final thing... whilst sat in the audience watching and listening to all these incredibly talented students, I couldn't help but notice the pride on your face Mr Logue, you were beaming from ear to ear. Both you and Mrs Biggs sat there, up front and centre looking incredibly proud... and rightly so too! Congratulations everyone!

Kind regards, Mrs Sharples

I **was** incredibly proud of both the students and the staff. The evening was one of the highlights of my time at St Damian's! And if it couldn't get better, the evening raised **over £400** for Emmaus, a local charity who support people who have experienced homelessness.

I look forward to celebrating the season of Advent over the next few weeks.

Yours sincerely



Mr S Logue
Headteacher