



Oaklands News

Issue 460, July 2024



Community - Unity - Opportunity

From the Headteacher's Desk

Last week I went to the Festival of Speed at Goodwood, it is an event that stirs emotions for petrol heads. The highlight of the weekend is the Hill Climb Shoot Out; cars of various vintages and power race up the hill to achieve the fastest time. To entertain the crowd there is a background commentary, making comparisons between cars and drivers.

Comparisons can be dangerous as they are a relative measure: how often do we compare ourselves against other people? We lose sight of the notion of personal best. We are pressurised, through media portrayal, to be the same as or better than others.

Well, it can be quite liberating if we take a step back and acknowledge that some people will do things better than us and accept that God made us unique for a reason. With this thought we move from comparing or judging ourselves, relative to another, to being absolute. It is the absolute measure that is important in the eyes of God.

We are what we are for a reason, and God wants us that way. At the end of a very busy term where we have been formed by our experience, let us ask for the grace to see ourselves as He sees us. In the words of St Catherine of Siena, "If you are who you should be, you will set the world on fire."

This has been quite an extraordinary year. Almost twelve months ago we experienced the tragic death of Alan Hammond our Site Manager, this had a profound effect on all of us. A few weeks ago we invited his family to a dedication service, it was a joyous occasion. They described it as 'beautiful' and they were able to reflect on the support we gave him in life and death. There have been many examples of how the school has supported students, staff and families over recent years. Alan's passing was a reminder to us all that we are temporary both in life and the positions we have, at some point we all move on, hoping we have left our mark, Alan certainly did.

The extra-curricular life of the school has been exceptional this year. This is testament to the benevolence and dedication of staff. Not only do these activities provide a unique experience, they help build relationships. For me the school show is always one of the extra-curricular highlights. Over the course of the year I have received many positive comments, from parents by email, in the supermarket or in the vestibule leaving church about how staff enrich the lives of young people. By the time you read this the Summer Iceland trip may have come and gone.

The spiritual life of the school has developed considerably over this year. Many parents have commented on this, in particularly the inclusion of The Oaklands Way in the newsletter. One of the privileges of Headship is being able to attend the celebration of Mass as part of 'the job'. I am grateful to our priests for the ministry and service they provided this year.

It has been a pleasure to receive students who have made exceptional progress in the classroom, overcome adversity or represented the school. Again this year, I have written to many families, offering congratulations and recognising their child's endeavours at school. This week I celebrated the success of Year 10 with their practice interviews, and students who particularly impressed the interviewer will be receiving letters of commendation next week.

So, as this year draws to a close, it is always good to see prospective Year 12 students in school sampling Sixth Form life, a sobering reminder that the next academic year is just around the corner! Please take time to read this packed edition of Oaklands News. Term dates for 2024-25 can be found further down and on the school website.

Thank you for your prayers, support and encouragement over the last year. Enjoy the holiday, recharge, enjoy the long hours of sunshine (Hopefully), enjoy family and friends, and I look forward to seeing you all again in the new term. I am grateful to our priests for the ministry and service they provided this year.

I am also very grateful for the work of the Oaklands Friends' and Parents' Association (OFPA). They give a great deal of time and support to the school community through the uniform shop, providing refreshments at school events and Parents' Evenings, online raffles and also financial support to departments for additional curriculum and extra-curriculum resources for students. This year, I would particularly like to thank Nicky Woolhead and Andrea Hills who have been involved with the OFPA for almost fifteen years. From September, they will be stepping down as Chair and Vice Chair and on behalf of the whole community, I thank them for their fantastic contribution to life at Oaklands.

Mr Quinn

OFPA News

Thank you for all your support during the last academic year.

Summer Raffle

Thank you to all who purchased tickets or donated items for our Summer Raffle and congratulations to the four winners of hampers and vouchers. Our next online raffle will be at Christmas, so please look out for further details in the Autumn Term.

Uniform Donations

Please continue to bring any clean, good condition uniform items to our White House Reception. Year 11 Parents can drop any last remaining uniform items off at the Sixth Form or White House on Thursday 22nd August (GCSE Results Collection Day) from 9.00-12.00 noon. Please note that we will no longer be taking donations of girls' striped blouses.

Uniform Sale

Our next pre-owned uniform sale will be on Thursday 22nd August from 1.00-3.30pm. Pre-ordering will not be required, so please feel free to turn up at the White House Chapel during the afternoon. As usual payment for items can be made using card or cash.

Prom Attire Sale

We are again planning to hold a sale for Prom attire, including dresses, suits and accessories on Saturday 26th October 2024, which we hope will attract and help next year's Year 11 students and parents.

Next Meeting

Our next meeting and first of next academic year will be on Monday 9th September 7.30pm in the Sixth Form Block. All are welcome to attend – we look forward to seeing you there!

From the Chaplain

Jesus said in the Gospel of Luke, “When you see a cloud coming up in the west, at once you say that it is going to rain—and it does.” (Luke 12:54).

This Summer Term has seen very little sunshine.



We were blessed with one week of heat, but God had other plans. Despite this, God provided us with clear skies on Sports Day, and all had much fun.

“He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, “Quiet! Be still!” Then, the wind died down, and it was completely calm. He said to his disciples, “Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?” (Mark 4: 39-40).

Amidst the chaos and uncertainty that come with life's storms, there is a profound and timeless tale of tranquillity found in the biblical account of Jesus calming the storm. This wondrous event is not just a mere old story in history. It serves as a living testimony of the extraordinary power and peace that can be discovered amid life's most tumultuous situations. It is akin to stumbling upon a hidden oasis in the heart of a scorching desert – an unexpected but most welcome discovery.

By comprehending the story of the calming of the storm, we gain insight into the principles of leading a life imbued with faith, trust, and unwavering confidence in the One who holds the universe in His hands – Jesus Christ.

Life is replete with storms – unforeseen trials and tribulations that have the potential to throw us off course and leave us struggling in their wake. Yet, amidst it all stands Jesus, unwavering and resolute, commanding the winds and waves to be still. If He can command the storms of the sea, imagine what He can accomplish in the storms of your life.

The summer holiday offers our pupils a much-needed rest and a chance for the storms in their lives to settle. It is a time to reflect on the past school year and anticipate the future. Knowing that whatever may come their way, Jesus is ever ready to calm the storm gives hope. I earnestly pray not only for the storms in our lives to be stilled but also that some sunshine would be warmly embraced.

Mrs Semple

Dear Heavenly Father,

We are grateful for the many blessings and joys this academic year has brought into our lives. We lift up in prayer all those embarking on journeys this summer, asking for your guidance and protection to keep them safe and rejuvenated. We also ask for peace and rejuvenation for all the families in our Oaklands community so that they may find solace in your presence and trust that amidst any challenges, Jesus Christ is there to bring calm and peace. Amen.

Sports Day

Despite a week of rain that almost led to the event being cancelled, the school's annual Sports Day proceeded with great enthusiasm and success.



Students from various year groups participated in a wide range of athletic activities, including running, jumping, and throwing events. A highlight of the day was the breaking of at least one school record, showcasing the exceptional talent and dedication of our students. The competitive spirit was high as students gave their best in every event.

One of the most thrilling moments was the relay race between the Sixth Form students and the staff. Despite entering an ineligible team, the Sixth Form emerged victorious against the staff. The race was particularly memorable for Mr. Wade's blistering performance on the third leg, which, despite his efforts, wasn't enough to secure a win for the staff team. A heartfelt thank you goes out to all the staff members who played a crucial role in organising and running the events. Their support and effort were instrumental in making Sports Day a memorable and successful event for everyone involved.

Mr Wade

Here are some comments from a Year 8 student:

Sports Day this year was an incredible event! First and foremost, a huge thank you to Mr Wade and all the staff for putting on such a well-organised and enjoyable day. Their hard work and dedication made this event possible and ensured everything ran smoothly.

One of the highlights for me was watching the running events, especially when our friends were competing. There was an especially memorable moment during the boys' relay. We believe we may have set a new school record! The teamwork and speed demonstrated by our relay team were phenomenal, and it was exhilarating to witness such a fantastic achievement.

Overall, Sports Day was a resounding success. The spirit of competition, the joy of participation, and the sense of community were evident throughout the day.

Nik Baker, 8CL





Staff Farewells

Mrs Wrightson

Mrs Wrightson joined us over 30 years ago and is currently the longest serving member of staff here at Oaklands. Although thought of predominately as a Maths teacher, she has also taught PE as a second subject, as well as being an Assistant Head of Year. Mrs Wrightson has also contributed to whole school extra-curricular activities in a multitude of ways.

From participating in Chamber Choir, Band, camping at Fort Purbrook and helping organise staff dance routines for several years. Most noticeably however, she has supported terrifically in our school productions, helping to organise costumes and choreograph, inspiring students for years with the same passion she has for musical theatre. Mrs Wrightson leaves us to enjoy a long-deserved retirement, and the company of her family and dogs.

Mrs Richardson

Mrs Richardson joined us in 2008 as a Newly Qualified Teacher. In her time at Oaklands she has been an inspirational teacher of Music, Form Tutor, Head of Year and, most recently, Head of Performing Arts. During her service at Oaklands, she got married became a mum, living 'above the shop' for a time at The Prebendal School where her husband was working. Mrs Richardson applies her hallmark warmth, energy and humour to whatever she undertakes and has been an inspiration to students and colleagues alike. She is an outstanding classroom practitioner and students- natural musicians or not- thrive in her classroom.

Mrs Richardson is an innovator, bringing together Music and Drama to create the Performing Arts Department, and the team are in no doubt that they are stronger for it. Her work coordinating peripatetic music in the school has seen numbers taking lessons flourish and the range of extra curricular music activities offered is more diverse than ever before. The scope of her role is bigger than many of us ever see, coordinating everyone's music tuition, two concerts, a carol service, multiple clubs and a whole school show every year, on top of her teaching, tutor and Head of Department responsibilities. Those of us who have had the joy of participating in staff chamber choir can testify to Mrs Richardson's absolute dedication, evident love of music, skilful teaching and above all, patience! As a Musical Director for whole school shows, Mrs Richardson is 'gently relentless' in her pursuit of excellence and we owe a debt of gratitude to the whole of 'Team Richardson' for the many hours they have dedicated to making Oaklands musicals so brilliant in scope and scale.

As a colleague and friend, she will be so deeply missed by the Performing Arts team and many others in our staff who have been blessed to work with her. We send her on her way with our love as the family move to Surrey. We know she'll absolutely ace it in her new school, where she's already been promoted!

Ms Fan

Ms Fan joined Oaklands 11 years ago as a textiles specialist and has over the years made a significant contribution to the work of the Design Department, teaching a variety of subjects and year groups. Changes to the D&T GCSE forced us to change how we delivered Textiles and Ms Fan was the driving force behind this change. More recently, she has taught a significant amount of Art and Food Preparation and Nutrition, at KS3. She has been instrumental in helping to ensure the smooth running of this curriculum area, putting a variety of systems in place to help plan and resources lessons. With her quiet, calm manner she has built strong relationships with students and colleagues and contributed to Dept activities, such as trips and enrichment activities. We wish her well as she moves to another school where she will be able to focus on teaching Art.

Mrs Ellis

Mrs Ellis joined Oaklands in 2016 from South Downs College, at a time of great change in the world of Further Education. She was an addition like no other – bringing with her a vast wealth of experience, expertise and tutor guidance at KS5, to match her sheer charisma and zeal in her teaching.

Mrs Ellis has been an utter sensation in the English department and an inspiring teacher in the classroom. She has helped produce countless lessons, schemes of work, scaffolded resources and outstanding practice through her years of grit and resilience whilst at Oaklands. She persists where no one else will and is relentless in her effort to extract the most she possibly can out of each student – especially those at KS4 and KS5. To this end, Mrs Ellis has motivated, encouraged and endorsed copious students and has been the one of the most devoted, caring, charismatic and assertive tutors and classroom practitioners we have ever known at Oaklands. She will be sorely missed by the English Department and the whole Oaklands community. We wish her the best of luck in her retirement and next adventures.

Ms Wilkinson

Ms Wilkinson joined the History Department in September 2018, bringing a vast wealth of skills from her previous roles as Head of Department and through her leadership team experience. She has led the History department in her time at Oaklands, but also Politics at A level too.

Ms Wilkinson has expanded the extra-curricular offer in the Department and was instrumental in the recent modification to Year 9 Challenge Week, including trips to Portchester Castle and Fort Nelson. Moreover, History Department international trips have resumed after COVID during her tenure, with a recent trip to Berlin and WW1 Battlefield trips. In addition, Ms Wilkinson has accompanied the Year 9 and Sixth Form ski trip for the last two years and she will be missed greatly on those trips in the future.

Ms Wilkinson has forged excellent relationships with colleagues, students, and also her tutees; she will be missed by staff and students alike. She has decided to step back from teaching to spend more time with members of her family and we wish her every success for the future.

Mr Mitchell

Mr Mitchell started with us back in February 2022, as an LSA and that September started teaching both Maths and Business. Students appreciated his sense of humour and attention to detail. Mr Mitchell cared deeply for all the students in his classes and frequently went above and beyond in his support for them. He also stepped up as tutor for 8 St Teresa and will be deeply missed. He leaves us to spend more time with his young family.

Mrs North

Mrs North has been an exceptional addition to the Oaklands Chaplaincy Team and has made great connections with the staff and pupils at St Thomas Moore Primary School. She has helped to provide our staff with thoughtful resources along with beautifully lead class worship in the Chapel. Mrs North now goes on to be a Psychology teacher and we wish her many blessings. Thank you, Mrs North, for being such a kind and encouraging colleague. You will be missed!

Mr Sadler

Mr Sadler joined the Learning Support team straight from Sixth Form in order to gain some work experience before going to University. He has been a really positive influence on some of our young SEND students working across the curriculum and helping out in both J12 and Homework Club. Mr Sadler is now off to study English Literature at the University of Surrey. We wish him all the best!





THE SIXTH FORM

Oaklands Catholic School

Welcome from the Sixth Form! As we come towards the end of another busy and productive academic year, we would like to flag some of the highlights of this term.

Sixth Form UCAS and Post-18 Pathways Day

Year 12 came off the timetable for a UCAS and Post-18 Pathways Day in the Sixth Form in May. This included presentations and workshops to help students understand and prepare for their next steps after Sixth Form. The success of these events is evident in the record number of favourable offers our students have received this year for various highly competitive courses in leading universities (including Oxbridge) and other institutions. Thank you to all those colleagues who helped make this day a success.

Year 12 Enrichment Week

This year, we launched the first Sixth Form Enrichment Week, which ran in tandem with the main school Challenge Week. Our students undertook work-related learning placements and UCAS preparation sessions during the week. There was also the option of undertaking a range of extra-curricular activities, including First Aid training and Teaching English as a Foreign Language qualifications. It was also heartening to see how our Catholic ethos manifested in our students' love and service as they volunteered to help with many events within the whole school, including Fundraising Friday. This Enrichment Week has been so successful that we intend to make this a regular event on the Sixth Form calendar.

Sixth Form Taster Days and Masterclasses

The feedback from our Sixth Form Taster Days has been excellent and has given our prospective students an insight into the daily life of the Sixth Form. This year, we have also piloted a series of Oaklands Sixth Form Masterclasses, in which we have invited over 100 GCSE students (from across six other local schools) to join us for a series of 'A Level-style' lessons. These masterclasses enable us to help young people in our wider community and showcase the academic and pastoral excellence that makes our Sixth Form college such an attractive post-16 option. These taster days and masterclasses have been a great success, and it is encouraging to hear that so many are keen to join us as A Level students in the future. Thanks to all the teaching and support staff who have made these possible. Lastly, thank you to the Sixth Form students, support staff and teachers for all their hard work and dedication this term. Have a wonderful Summer holiday!

Mr Godwin

From the Governors

As another academic year approaches a conclusion, now is the time both to reflect and to look forward. Firstly, thank you to all the Governors for their work that contributes to the governance of Oaklands, particularly those who are moving on to other roles and activities, many linked to Oaklands or the wider community. A very warm welcome to the Governors who have recently joined our community, and we look forward to working with you in the coming year.



It has been a busy year, and several events stand out in my memory. The October Culture Show was a vibrant celebration of the rich diversity within our Oaklands community and brought joy to both participants and audience members. Equally impressive was the outstanding production of *Les Misérables*. However, what truly inspires me year after year is the consistent excellence displayed by our students. This year, the Year 8 science projects and the extended projects undertaken by our Sixth Form students serve as just two exceptional examples of their dedication and talent.

The Governors are responsible for setting the school's strategic aims, core values, and ethos in line with the expectations of the Government, Diocese, and Trust. Then, the school leadership should be held accountable for the delivery of the strategy, supporting and challenging where necessary. To do this, Governors have frequently visited the school during the year and conducted departmental visits, not to assess teaching but to discuss how the department is performing and how we (as Governors) can help. We have analysed teaching and learning outcomes, looked at the implementation of policies such as behaviour, participation in the Catholic life of the school and much more.

So, if you see us at the school or events in the coming year, please say hello and tell us what you think. Indeed, we are likely to ask for your opinion as we are all part of the same Oaklands community. Through the active participation of everyone, Oaklands can continue to provide high-quality, Christ-centred education to ensure every young person has the opportunity to develop their full potential in body, mind, and spirit.

Finally, Governors are very aware of all the work teachers, support staff, and everyone at Oaklands put into all the events on top of their daily education and pupil support activities. So, the biggest thank you goes to every member of the Oaklands community who works so hard to make the school what it is. We wish them a relaxing and refreshing summer and look forward to seeing them, the pupils, and the parents in the next academic year.

E Cluett, Chair of Governors

Duke of Edinburgh

Summer Report 2024

Our two Bronze groups have now completed both their Training and Assessed expeditions.

On the Training expedition the groups walked from Stansted House to QE Park and camped

at Clanfield Scout Campsite and then finished in Rowlands Castle. The Assessed expedition started from Old Winchester Hill to camp at Upper Parsonage Farm returning to finish in Clanfield and both groups navigated their way successfully and demonstrated appropriate campcraft skills to complete this section of their award.



Congratulations to Katie Boundy, Esther Burrows, Gracie Carey, Matthew Clark, Eva Ng, Mishelin Mohan, Leon Newman, Joshua Love and Olivia Len-Poulton who have now completed their Bronze Award.

The Silver groups have now completed a very successful Assessed expedition which saw all groups demonstrate impressive campcraft, whilst also avoiding making any serious navigation errors. Over three days the groups did a circular walk of about 45km from Bramdean Common via the Meon Valley Trail, Exton, Kilmeston and Cheriton back to finish on the common.

Congratulations to Tia Abbinnett, Laurence, Barber Ava Bridger, Alasdair Combe, Kyle Gardner, Zoe Leslie, Samuel Mpario, Szeni Sowe, Isaac Warren, Katy Watson and Dominic Lethbridge who have now successfully completed their Silver Award.

The two Gold groups completed their Assessed expedition on Exmoor at the end of August – and the remaining five Bronze and eight Silver participants also completed their awards over the summer.

Finally particular thanks to all the supervisors/trainers who give up their weekends to ensure that the expeditions were completed: Mr Brinnen, Mr Hoar, Miss Johnson, Mr Jones, Mrs Jones, Mr Quinn, Mrs Quinn, Miss Quinn, Mr Smith, Mr Sullivan and Mr Turner.

Mrs Hoar



Year 10 & Year 12: Festival of Speed Trip

On Friday 12th July a group of Year 10 and Year 12 Design and Technology students were accompanied by Mr Smith and Mr Whitlock to Goodwood. They attended the "Better by Design" seminar hosted by Dick Powell (Co-Founder of Seymourpowell) at the Festival of Speed.

The topics discussed at the Seminar included, 'Tackling Space Debris for Our Orbital Highways', 'Building and Racing Solar Cars: Shaping Tomorrow's Engineers' and 'Beyond Performance: Designing the Ultimate Supercar Experience'.

All of the speakers spoke about their work and the variety of routes to designing as a career and provided great inspiration for our students. Students also had time to experience all the Festival of Speed has to offer, including the Red Arrows display.

Mrs Gildea



The Oaklands Way

Oaklands Mission

In September we learned about the history of Oaklands and events leading up to when, in 1971, the Sisters of Christ gave their school to Portsmouth Diocese and it became known as Oaklands Catholic Comprehensive Catholic School.

We adopted the motto from the Sisters of Christ 'O crux ave, spes unica' which translates as 'Our cross, our only hope' and adapted it to say 'United by The Cross'.

To the Sisters, everything they did was defined by the CROSS.

Their Charism and Mission is captured by the CROSS, a sign of LOVE and SERVICE.

The CROSS is also at heart of everything we do at Oaklands today

At Oaklands, the principles of Catholic Social Teaching are key to what we do and what we are about. Each of the principles helps us to realise our Charism of love and service, as they all link together. For example, by teaching our students about Rights and Responsibilities, we also help them realise that respect for Human Dignity is important, and in doing so, they can see that we all need to work together for the Common Good. This means that we must particularly pay attention to the needs of the most vulnerable in our community (Option for the Poor) and stand in Solidarity with those who need our support.

We chose these eight principles because they are a very practical way for us to fulfil our mission statement of Community, Unity, Opportunity.



Lord God,

When the Sisters started this school, they intended it to be a place where all experienced God's love.

We pray that You make our school a great place to form, inform, transform and reform our students so that they grow spiritually, physically, socially, and mentally. Make our school a place where they feel loved, where they love and learn to love.

As we come to the end of this academic year, give us the grace to keep this mission alive.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Oaklands

Catholic School and Sixth Form College

Community - Unity - Opportunity

