



Community - Unity - Opportunity

From the Headteacher's Desk

For most brands, the Christmas season is a massive opportunity for seasonal sales and for tapping into the consumer psychology of gift-giving. But for certain brands who think bigger, Christmas is part of a larger strategy. For me, John Lewis is the undisputed king of Christmas Adverts; from a cartoon friendship between a bear and a hare to an encounter with an overgrown Venus flytrap, John Lewis somehow seems to outdo itself each year.

A bigger strategy is at play for John Lewis and other big brands with a consistent Christmas presence. John Lewis ensures that their core brand concept goes beyond the festive season. It is tied with wholesomeness, family, and tradition. So, while they get a healthy boost in sales during the festive season and benefit significantly from that specific association, these more general messages carry in the minds of shoppers year-round.

Last month, I found myself reflecting on the contrast between the product positioning of John Lewis and the Section 48 inspection, which occurred on Wednesday and Thursday. The essence of our identity as a Catholic school transcends the brief, two-day 'seasonal' evaluation. The foundation of our Catholic identity and the principles we uphold can be likened to our core. At the heart of this identity is our focus on the person of Jesus, our dedication to the mission of the Church, our commitment to holistic education, our emphasis on Religious Education, and our welcoming approach to all individuals seeking a Catholic education. These aspects and others were subject to scrutiny last week.

Mr Quinn, Headteacher

Year 8 'Big Questions' Day

On 13th November the whole of Year 8 were off timetable for the morning to be with members of the RE Department and explore some of life's BIG QUESTIONS! They moved around different classes and staff to spend time considering and discussing several ethical and philosophical issues.

All students had the opportunity to share with their peers and teachers their views on:

What it means to be moral
What it's like to be a refugee
Whether animals have souls
What is the purpose of life?

Some of their feedback is below:

'I really liked how it made us think and encouraged us to try and see other opinions and question our own'.

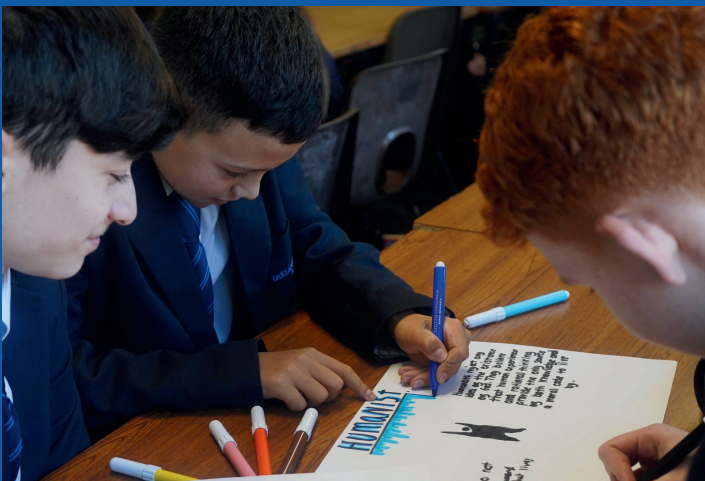
Lola

'I thought that the day was brilliant. I enjoyed the discussions the most and listening to other peoples' thoughts. I think it gave a good sense of others' personalities and what they feel about religion and the big issues in our world.'

Sam

There was some really deep thinking and a willingness to think outside the box of their everyday experiences. Students were respectful and shared inciteful and reflective views. Well done, Year 8!

Mrs Palfreyman



Young Carers: Trip to Fort Purbrook

The Young Carers group at Oaklands was first established 13 years ago and ran successfully with many trips and weekly lunchtime sessions. The group restarted last year after a bit of a break due to lockdown. We meet weekly in the Gym and students have been enjoying using the sports equipment. The group provides an opportunity for those of our students who are young carers to spend time with other students with similar experiences. We have students from all year groups attend and it is always lovely to see friendships being made within the group.



Last Friday we went on a trip to Fort Purbrook to have a go at some bouldering. The trip, which was organised by Mrs Kelly, one of the Young Carers staff members, was fantastic. The students were led through the key aspects of bouldering by their instructor and then were able to try it for themselves. All students had a good go, some proving to be naturals. The instructor also played some games with the students which was good fun.

One of the group said:

'I really enjoyed bouldering at Fort Purbrook. I found it really fun and entertaining. I especially liked playing twister and floor is lava. It was a great trip out!' We look forward to organising more trips in the future.'

If you feel that your child would benefit from being part of this group, please encourage them to come along to a lunchtime session or email me on l.jones@oaklandscatholicschool.org.

Mrs Jones



Operation Christmas Child

Well done, and thank you to all staff, students and families at Oaklands Catholic School who took part in the Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child Shoebox Appeal. As a school we managed to pack 65 shoeboxes full of Christmas gifts, toys, stationery and toiletries.



When asked what they enjoyed about helping with Operation Christmas Child, a student said:

'I felt really proud of myself for helping out with Operation Christmas Child because I spent time with my friends and we did something really important. I had a really good time too!'

Emerson, 7CA

In taking part in the Operation Christmas Child Shoebox Appeal we witnessed staff and students showing God's love in a tangible way, showing solidarity for poor families across the world.

Mrs Wheelan



The Oaklands Way

Gospel Reflection

The feast of Christ the King invites us to reflect on what it means to follow Jesus as our leader and guide. Unlike worldly kings who seek power and control, Christ's reign is characterised by love, service and humility.

This great feast is a reminder that true leadership isn't about being in charge or seeking recognition; it's about serving others and standing up for what is right. As you navigate friendships, school and personal challenges, consider how you can embody Christ's values.

What is Red Wednesday?

Red Wednesday is an annual event organised by the Catholic charity Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) to raise awareness about Christian persecution and religious freedom issues worldwide. It takes place in late November, with churches, schools, landmarks, and other buildings illuminated in red to symbolize the blood of those who have suffered and died for their faith.

Red Wednesday often includes special services, prayer vigils, and educational events alongside the lighting up of buildings. The colour red serves as a reminder of the cost many people pay for their faith, encouraging people of all backgrounds to reflect on religious tolerance and stand against discrimination.



CST Principles: Human Dignity

'Each person deserves respect because they are created in the image of God.'

Reflect on how supporting the work of the Charity Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) and RED WEDNESDAY is part of respecting the dignity of others? We live in a country where many of us are not persecuted because of our faith.

However, here at Oaklands, do we sometimes put down other students' faith?

How is this not respecting their dignity?



O God,

Give us your gifts so that we may live and work according to your vision for humanity, a vision where all are treated with respect and love because of their great worth in your eyes. May we answer your call to treat each other as we ourselves wish to be treated and to promote the healing of all persons, especially those who are most vulnerable.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.



Oaklands Catholic School and Sixth Form College

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