



Oaklands News



Summer/Autumn 2024 – Highlights

THE SIXTH FORM
Oaklands Catholic School



Community – Unity – Opportunity

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From the Headteacher's Desk

Dear Parents, Carers and Students,

Welcome to the special edition of Oaklands News!
A few times each year, we compile highlights of various activities at our school.

At the conclusion of the first half of the autumn term, we celebrated Culture Week, and this year, we integrated our events with the St John's programme, which supports students in Korogocho, Kenya. Our Year 7 students were able to connect live with their peers at St John's as their school year is nearing its end.

When you ask ten different individuals to explain what culture means to them, you are likely to receive a diverse array of responses. Culture encompasses the intricate web of thoughts, relationships, values, beliefs, and behaviours characterising any human community. These cultural elements are often taken for granted and accepted without much scrutiny. While culture is a universal concept, it manifests in various forms across the globe: we can identify Western culture, Chinese culture, Asian culture and even distinct cultures from different centuries. Additionally, there are numerous subcultures, including those found in rural areas, suburbs, inner cities, and among different socioeconomic classes like the wealthy, middle-class, working-class, and those reliant on welfare.

Furthermore, cultural differences across age groups and even within specific sports all illustrate the rich tapestry of human experience.

Our cultural background plays a significant role in defining who we are. When we encounter others who share our culture, a natural connection forms. Conversely, meeting individuals from different cultures can be either thrilling or daunting.

A remarkable aspect of Western culture is its swift evolution, with constant changes in cultural and sub-cultural dynamics. It is essential for us to cultivate cross-cultural awareness and adaptability, especially since today's youth are navigating this diverse landscape. This is why initiatives like Culture Week in schools are of great importance.



As a Catholic community, we also believe in a cross-cultural God whose gospel works in every culture and sub-culture and who can be served universally. We believe in Christ, who came to save people from every culture and sub-culture. We know that Jesus told his followers to make disciples of all nations and that people from every tribe, language, and nation will worship the Lamb.

Growing cultural awareness and adaptability is a human duty and a Christian privilege; and it is an essential part of our school's mission.

Mr Quinn, Headteacher



Governors' School Development Fund

Support the Catholic ethos of the school

Improve educational facilities & provisions

Enhance the school's learning environment

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From the Governors

Oaklands has twenty Governors, of which eleven are Foundation Governors who are formally appointed by the Bishop. Two Community Governors are appointed by the school, usually to bring their expertise from the wider community. There are three Parent



Governors and four Staff Governors, including the Headteacher and the Director of Business and Finance. The Board is supported by a professional officer/clerk with whom we undertake our roles and responsibilities. Our primary role is to set the mission and strategic aims in line with the core values and ethos of the school and the Trust. With the school leadership team, we generate the annual School Development Plan and act as critical friends, holding the school leadership accountable for the delivery of the strategy and supporting and challenging them where necessary. This covers everything within the community of Oaklands School and Sixth Form College.

- **Catholic life of the school:** this includes agreeing to all the policies, including admissions, behaviour and many more. This aspect of Oaklands makes it so welcoming to all, attracting high pupil numbers and making it the most diverse school in the area. Governors are working with the staff to prepare for the imminent Catholic Schools' Inspection, a national standard for Catholic schools focusing on Catholic life and mission, education and worship.
- **Teaching and learning:** this includes ensuring the needs of all pupils are met, monitoring academic progress, appointing expert teachers, ensuring effective learning resources are available, and that appropriate extracurricular activities are offered to develop the whole young person.
- **Business:** this includes maintaining and updating the whole estate, such as the recent complete renewal of the heating system to a modern, efficient system, as well as day-to-day financial management.

We carry out our duties through department visits and meetings, exam results and progress data analysis and challenging for enhancements when necessary. Governors also attend school open evenings, Parents' Evenings, Science or Art fayres, Masses, concerts, shows and other events.

You can support Oaklands by becoming a Governor, donating to the Governors' Development Fund, or simply praying for us when you pray for all in the Oaklands community. The school applies for many grants to develop its infrastructure, and often, this requires the school to part-fund such projects, whether redecorating classrooms, the bathrooms, or the new heating system. The Governors' Development Fund contributes towards this, and all donations are essential to ensure pupils at Oaklands enjoy the best educational environment possible.

I am pleased to introduce one of our Foundation Governors, Clare Hopkins, to explain the role and why she feels it's important.

Elizabeth R Cluett, Chair of Governors

I was taken aback when Mr Quinn emailed asking if I'd like to become a Foundation Governor at Oaklands. I'd only just left the school after a long tour of duty at the 'chalk face', so surely, the school had had enough of me? And vice versa. But if you have loved your job and loved your workplace, it's an absolute joy to return to the fold on a different side of the fence. Who wouldn't enjoy finding out how things work on a corporate level and discovering how the Governing Body and school leaders work together to promote the best possible outcomes for all the students?

As the Governor assigned to the Design and Technology department, I found it exciting and rewarding to get involved again in aspects of school life that were a mystery to me during my teaching life. A Governor has the chance to meet staff and students working across the curriculum and find out how different parts of the school contribute so vitally to the academic and spiritual growth of the students.

We Governors are responsible for ensuring that the school adheres to its Catholic mission and delivers a rich and holistic curriculum. It is initially daunting to discover how much responsibility Governors must take for the strategic pathways adopted across every aspect of school life. Governors hold ultimate responsibility for the curriculum content, the school's financial performance and the ethos's clarity.

Above all, we as Governors must ensure that the school is a witness to the Catholic faith in every aspect. It is an exciting and rewarding experience to rejoin the school community from this very different perspective. Governors are supposed to be 'critical friends'; working out how to develop this role will be a very interesting new journey for all those recently recruited.

Clare Hopkins, Foundation Governor

From the Chaplain

Year 7 Teaching Masses

The Eucharist is a profoundly significant sacrament for Catholics, representing a gift from God that enables us to strengthen our relationship with Him. At Oaklands, the celebration of Mass unites the entire school community in reverence and contemplation. However, for our new Year 7 students, participating in these whole school Masses with over 1,300 students may be an entirely new experience.



To help the students with this, Year 7 have the opportunity to partake in a tutor group Mass in the Chapel during their first term at Oaklands. We are fortunate to have clergy members who lead and guide us through the Mass, providing a comprehensive explanation of each part and its significance and offering our new students a profound understanding of this sacred sacrament.

Before the Mass, each tutor group receives a lesson from our Chaplains in the Chapel, who will explore each component of the Mass and address any queries. Furthermore, students are encouraged to actively engage in the celebration by participating in activities such as reading the liturgy of the word, honing their musical talents for the ministry, or learning the duties of altar serving.

CAFOD Fast Day

The vastness of global struggles like poverty, injustice, and climate change can feel overwhelming. We might wonder how one individual can make a difference. The Gospel reminds us that we are not asked single-handedly to solve everything but to respond to the needs we see before us. A cup of water offered may seem insignificant, but Jesus tells us that it will not go unnoticed or unrewarded. When we join our efforts with those of others, recognising God's spirit at work in them, together we can respond with compassion to the needs of our global family and begin to build a more just world.

This is the purpose of CAFOD Harvest Fast Day: to do what we can to make a difference - eating more simply in solidarity with those who hunger and thirst, donating money to a good cause, and praying for those in need.

In October, a simple lunch of soup was available in the canteen, as well as a reduced snacks and treats selection, to help us all consider our own needs and be mindful of those around the world who go without.

Mrs Farrell, School Chaplain

Voices from the Chapel

Recently, we have been thinking about what makes Oaklands distinctive, what makes us stand apart from other schools. This has led us to contemplate how the Chapel is our very special sacred space. Not only does its unique architectural flair lend us a sense of tradition going back to the 1800s, but the Catholic tradition it has gifted us reaches back to when our founding sisters used it in the 1960s and beyond. Only some will have the opportunity to spend time in a building so old and unique that it has listed status. Moreover, only some have the chance to be in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament each day.



Talking with our students, it is uplifting to hear their perspectives on this very special place. It's a place where you can come and be with people of faith and Christians.

'It's a place where you can be with God, and you can just be.'

Pana, Year 10

'It is a unique place; you can socialise with people who know the Spirit more. There are places like the library and the canteen, and it [the Chapel] is very different; it is a great place to be, even if you don't know people there, and it's a tight-knit community.'

Tom, Year 8

'The Chapel is a place where you can make friends and meet people, but it is also a place where you can talk about God. It is also the thing that connects every person in Oaklands who studies here.'

Jenny, Year 9

We look forward to welcoming more people to our Chapel as the school year progresses – including local parishioners joining us for Mass and Year 6 pupils from St Thomas More's and St Peter's Primary Schools.



St John's, Korogocho Update

The summer provided an opportunity for staff and students alike to reflect on their time at school and breathe a sigh of relief – all in the knowledge that hard work, grit, and determination begins again in September. Whilst we had an opportunity to relax and recuperate, St John's have been busy throughout their second term.



Students have been engaging with their studies and the many cross-curricular activities now on offer at St John's. Many students involve themselves in sports – especially football and basketball, with the latter providing massive success in the local community. Most recently, St John's took part in a 3-on-3 basketball tournament across Korogocho and was victorious – beating competition from other schools with far more experience.

The Headteacher, Mr Mwangi, said, *'The school is happy because, with your support, we were able to stay in school, compete in tournaments such as this and enable students to participate in sports. This now means that St John's has qualified for the Kenyan National 3-on-3 Basketball Tournament, and we wish them the best of luck in their quest for further sporting glory!'*

We have just marked our annual St John's and Cultural Week (w/c 21st October). This is a week of solidifying our communal connection, partnership, and shared love for God. As a community, the week aims to expose students to how and why our partnership is meaningful and what we can do collectively to help support our friends in Kenya.



Several activities took place over the course of the week – including a Staff vs Sixth Form sports event, baking, crafts, origami, nail painting, a raffle, a cultural food market and a non-uniform day – all to help raise money and continue our worthwhile support of both communities. It is a testament to the commitment and dedication of all the staff and students and a fantastic way to celebrate our love for one another.

We hope you had a peaceful start to the new academic year and thank you for your continued support.

Mr Osbourne

Year 7 Challenge Week: Conservation & Culture

Year 7 began Challenge Week with a trip to Marwell Zoo, exploring biodiversity, environmental conservation and the protection of various endangered species.



Our focus on conservation provided us with the perfect opportunity to consider what we as a society can do to protect our ecosystem and these majestic animals from going extinct.

Here are some comments from a Year 7 student:

'On Monday, we all set off for a day at Marwell Zoo! We got to walk around as a group, looking at all the animals and taking pictures. We also got to make animal masks and top trump cards and learn calligraphy, which helped us learn about biodiversity, conservation, and free writing (my favourite). Also, we were fortunate to have people come in and teach us some West African dancing and drumming!'

Maisy

It was an enthralling week, and the energy, enthusiasm and zeal that Year 7 offered throughout made for a memorable and cultured Challenge Week. Bring on next year!

Mr Osbourne



Year 8 Challenge Week: French Fantasy

Forty-seven Year 8 students visited France during Challenge Week and stayed at the charming Château Du Baffy. The trip started with discovering the world of snail farming at Les Escargots De L'don; many L'donents tried a snail or two, and the reviews were mostly very positive! From there, students travelled to Les Vergers de Ducy cider farm, where they learnt about the process of making apple juice, again with lots of samples to enjoy with lunch.



The group had a wonderful visit to Mont-St-Michel on Tuesday. The weather was beautiful, and students enjoyed the slow climb through picturesque streets. The building was started in medieval times and made us realise how skilled the builders were. The views from the top were stunning!

On their third day, students used their best French to help them order items at the market, followed by a snack outside the beautiful Bayeux Cathedral. From there, they travelled to the 'Chèvrerie Du Mesnil' to learn about producing goat's cheese and took photos cuddling with the goats! We finished the day at Arromanches, where Mrs Cunningham taught us about the importance of the area, which looked beautiful after the D-Day 80th Anniversary commemorations.

The students visited the British World War II memorial in Normandy on their final day. There was a stunning and moving installation for the 80th commemoration, and the students took time to look around. They were incredibly respectful of others and got a lot out of the visit.

Mrs Over



Year 9 Challenge Week: Camp

During Challenge Week, some of our Year 9 students travelled to Tile Barn, Brockenhurst.

The activities included a short hike through the New Forest, where students learned or developed their ability to navigate using a map, compass, and route card. This would allow them to self-navigate a route before taking on the infamous Long Hike. Most groups, including staff, successfully navigated their way around the walk. Other activities included crate stacking, abseiling, climbing, mountain biking, low ropes and nightline. Thank you to all the staff who supported the organisation and running of the trip: Mr Smith, Mr Neil, Mrs Mitchell, Mr Semple, Mrs Semple, Mrs Beauvoisin, Mr Marshall, Mr Dawson and Mrs Jones.



Here is a report from a Year 9 student on the trip:

'If I had to rate camp, I would give it five stars. Not only did I enjoy the activities, but I also got to know my fellow students on a more personal level. Year 9 camp taught me many valuable lessons, such as how to read a compass, enhance my orienteering skills, and not leave your food out in the open! It also helped me step outside my comfort zone and try new things I've never tried, like rock climbing and abseiling. My favourite memory was our last afternoon together. When everyone returned from the hike, we all needed some fun when our water fight started! It was a perfect way to cool down and bond with people you never thought you would. Then, the best way to top it off was a teacher v student volleyball game. Although the teachers did make us look like absolute rookies, it still was a bunch of fun. I would recommend the camp to everyone; it was an opportunity of a lifetime. If I could go back, I would.'

Elizabeth



Iceland Escapades

Forty students from Years 10 and 11, accompanied by five members of staff visited Iceland in July.

An early start at Oaklands on Wednesday 17th July, enabled us to reach Iceland by mid-afternoon, where the students visited sites associated with the rifting tectonic plates. At Gunnuhver, we were able to experience a geothermal area where the immense heat generated by the magma at relatively shallow depths is harnessed to generate electricity and provide hot water. This was also the case at the Blue Lagoon, where we enjoyed bathing in the 37°C water - discharge from the nearby power station. The changes to the landscape since 2023 were remarkable. The recent eruptions in the area have resulted in lava flows moving inexorably towards the Blue Lagoon; the determination of the authorities to defend it at all costs was clear to see, with massive embankments built to divert any future potential lava flows.



Our first full day was spent journeying around the 'Golden Circle'. We visited the Kerid volcano - a circular depression formed by an eruption 5,000 years ago. The rifting theme from the first day was explored once more as we visited Thingvellir, where the divergence of the North American and Eurasian plates is most spectacular. The heat, which is the cause of the rifting, was evident as we watched the Strokkur geyser erupt at Geysir. We had lunch there and watched the eruptions every five minutes or so. A short drive from there was Gulfoss: a two-stage waterfall cascading 40 metres into a steep gorge carved out by the River Olfusa as the waterfall retreated. The Faxifoss waterfall, often called Iceland's Niagara, was the final waterfall we visited.

Many students on the trip had been selected for end-of-year Governor subject awards, and the recipients of both the Helen Shipman and Heads of Year Awards were with us. So, we had an award ceremony at the Ljosfoss HEP education centre, and the main event took place concurrently back at Oaklands.



On Friday, we visited the Eldfell volcano on the island of Heimaey, which erupted in 1973. It marked one of the few occasions when people actively combatted a volcanic eruption by attempting to divert the lava flowing towards the town and harbour. Following a forty-minute ferry journey, we arrived at the port and commenced our trek to the volcano's summit, where the residual heat from the eruption was still present. In the afternoon, we enjoyed a coach trip around the islands, where we visited historical sites, puffin colonies and dramatic coastal scenery. Before returning to the mainland, we spent an hour at the island's swimming pool. Our final stop was at the Gluggafoss waterfall, just a few minutes from our accommodation.



On Saturday, we travelled along the south coast towards Vik – the most southerly point of Iceland. This coastline on the route is characterised by towering cliffs, waterfalls and vast expanses of outwash plain, which emanate from the Eyjafjallajökull (the volcano that was responsible for flight disruption in 2010) and the Myrdalsjökull ice sheets. Seljalandsfoss waterfall was our first stop, where students could walk behind the curtain of water cascading from a forty-metre-high cliff. Although very attractive, Seljalandsfoss is perhaps surpassed by Skogafoss just to the east, which we visited later in the day. The coastal cliffs were at their most impressive near Vik. At Reynisfjara beach, the low tide allowed us to view the basalt columns. Just to the west was Dyrhóleifur – a huge coastal arch – which we could see from a neighbouring promontory.

The waterfalls are fed by melt water from the glaciers, which gave us tantalising glimpses as we travelled along the coast. Fortunately, the Solheimajökull glacier is an 'outlet' glacier, which descends from the Myrdalsjökull ice sheet towards the coastal plain. We had organised a guided tour on this, and after being kitted out with crampons, helmets, harnesses and ice axes, we found ourselves ascending the glacier. This was the highlight of the trip for many of our students and staff.

Our final day in Iceland, on Sunday 21st of July, was spent in the capital, Reykjavik. Whilst there, we visited the concert hall, City Hall, and the famous Hallgrímskirkja church and walked through the main shopping area and harbour. We returned home to Oaklands late that evening.

Such a trip can't be a success without the support of my colleagues. I want to thank Mrs Broadway, Mrs Over, Mrs Rucinska and Mr Horn for their efforts. Moreover, I would like to thank the students, who were a pleasure to spend time with. Hopefully, they will remember the content when learning about hazards this term!

Mr Bamford

Duke of Edinburgh Autumn Report 2024

This term has seen new groups starting their D of E awards at all levels. We have 8 Gold, 7 Silver and 37 Bronze participants who are all currently getting on with their Volunteering, Physical and Skills sections, and additionally for the Gold group planning or undertaking their Residential. Bronze and Silver groups will begin their expedition training in the next month, particularly with navigation practice and a walk on Stoughton Down. The Gold groups have already completed a navigation challenge on Iping & Stedham Common to hone their skills in using a compass.



Over the summer, several of last year's Silver and Bronze groups completed their awards. Congratulations to:

Silver Award: Alex, Rebecca, Oliver, Matthew, Jeffrey, Jack and Codrin.

Bronze Award: Ana, Amelie, Andrew, Alec and Annie.

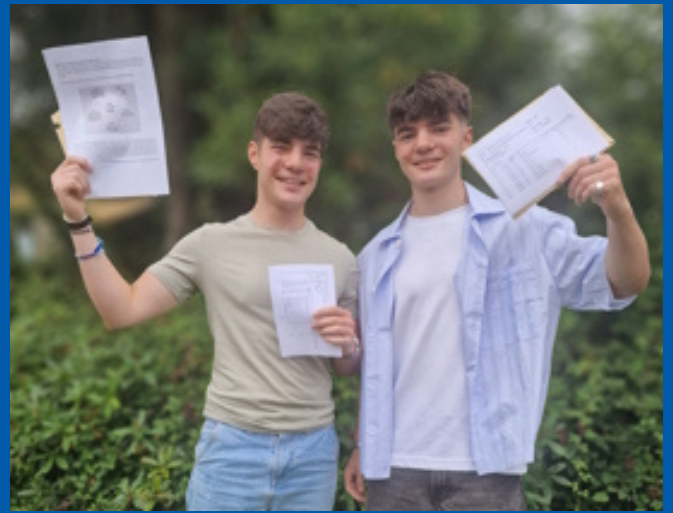
At the end of August, two Gold groups completed a successful assessed expedition to Exmoor. Over four days, they walked with full packs for about 75km. The weather was almost perfect for walking, not too hot, and just the occasional shower. Despite finding the ups and downs of Exmoor a challenge, both groups showed resilience and determination to complete it; they certainly enjoyed reaching the campsite each evening, although they were surprised at the cold nights.

Mrs Hoar



Exam Success

Year 13 achieved another high set of A Level examination results. The number of grades at A and A* rose by 4% to 21% compared with last year. A similar picture occurred at grades A* to C, rising to 70%.



Once again, students at Oaklands will be going to some of the best universities to study demanding courses, including Oxbridge. This year, twelve students successfully obtained places to study Medicine or Veterinary Science, underlining the strength of STEM subjects at the school. Students have also secured places on higher-level apprenticeships, where they will earn and gain a degree.

A week later, on 22nd August, students received their GCSE results. 73% of students at the school achieved Grade 4 or above in both English and Maths, with 53% achieving Grade 5 and above by the same measure. Several students attained Grade 9 in every subject, and significant numbers of students have chosen to stay on in the school's Sixth Form.

Headteacher, Mr Quinn said,

"The results achieved by Oaklands Sixth Form College Students were stunning – absolutely brilliant! Acknowledging the success of the highest attainers is important. However, many other students smashed their personal best, overcoming significant challenges along the way; we must not forget these youngsters either. The staff and students worked very hard. The school continues to justify its strong reputation at A Level. It is fantastic to see the progress made by many of our students from entry into Year 7 through to Year 13".



Careers News

Work Experience

In Year 10, students have the opportunity to complete Work Experience placements. The feedback our students received from their employers has been overwhelmingly positive. They were commended for their enthusiasm, work ethic, and eagerness to learn. We're excited to share some insightful reflections on their Work Experience placements.



Here are some comments from students who completed their placements in Summer 2024:

'It was really interesting to get involved in all the different aspects of life at Hampshire FC. I undertook a series of tasks based on areas including Coaching, Refereeing, Disability, Male and Female Inclusion, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Culture and Core Values.'

Kieran

'It was great working in Year R last week - I enjoyed seeing all the children learning how to count and spell as well as exploring other skills during Discovery Time!'

Esther

Careers Fair

On Thursday 26th September students in Years 10-13 had a fantastic opportunity to learn about a wide range of further and higher education and career paths at our Careers Fair. They gained valuable insights into the opportunities for education and the world of work after school.

We were thrilled to welcome visitors from many local providers, including Brighton and Sussex Medical School, Southampton Solent University, the Royal Air Force, QuinetiQ and VIVID Homes, who came to meet and engage with our students.



We hope this event has helped our students make informed decisions about their future, and we look forward to seeing where their journeys take them.

Mrs McQuiston

STEM @ Oaklands

Year 7 History-STEM Day

In September, Year 7 students took part in a History and Science STEM day. They had to put their detective hats and science lab coats on to solve a murder mystery. On our school grounds, skeletal remains had been found. Students were tasked to unravel who the remains belonged to. The police had already provided the Year 7s with some potential Historical figures whose bodies it could have been. For example, Charles James Napier, who died in Mr Quinn's office in 1853 and George Villiers, who was murdered in 1628 in Portsmouth High Street.



Students had to hunt for clues and perform DNA profiling and fingerprint tasks to narrow down the body's identity. Students finished making operation boards to identify who they believed the skeletal remains belonged to.

Chloe from 7 St Claire said, *'We had an amazing day; it was great learning new things'*. Justin from the same class echoed these sentiments: *'It was an inspiring day that taught us a lot about the school's history.'*

Overall, the History and Science STEM day was a fun, informative, and rewarding experience for both students and teachers. We are proud of our Year 7s for their enthusiasm and dedication to solving this historical mystery.

Mrs Short

Primary Science Outreach

The Science Department continues to welcome Year 5 classes from St Peter's Catholic Primary School and St Thomas More's Catholic Primary School for an afternoon of Secondary School chemistry! Students completed an experiment using filtration and evaporation to get salt crystals in their pure form from a mixture of sand and salt.



The results from both classes were fantastic, and Mrs Hardaker, Miss Lenihan and I were hugely impressed!

We look forward to welcoming further classes, and it is great to hear that many of these brilliant Scientists will join us in a year or so!

Mr Semple

Biology Olympiad

Twenty-four pupils across the Sixth Form took part in the nationwide, advanced problem-solving competition for A Level students. Designed to challenge those with an interest in Biology, to expand their talents via two multiple choice papers sat online, under exam conditions, the British Biology Olympiad requires students to use their biological intuition, logic, and imagination to answer a series of questions.



With more than 16,000 students from 800 schools across Great Britain taking part this year, we are hugely proud of all our students who took part, and particular congratulations to Natalia, who achieved a Gold medal and was in the top 5% of the country; Jithu and Jessica were our bronze medalists; Wendy, Marvel, Melissa, Maria and Anna were all Highly Commended; Veeya, Andrea and Melissa were Commended. Well done to all who participated in the event this year.

Chemistry Olympiad

Sixteen Year 12 students entered the Royal Society of Chemistry's Olympiad exam in January. This very challenging exam is aimed at Year 13 students, so all sixteen deserve praise for entering. We are happy to say that one student, Sakura, reached Silver with her score and six other students, Shane, Natalia, Maria, Wendy, Maria and Marvel, were close behind and achieved Bronze.

Our Year 13 Chemistry Olympiad participants were presented with their certificates by the Science Link Governor Nick Parker, in the Summer term.

The Olympiad truly pushes students to excel in chemistry, and this year, Oaklands students received six Bronze Awards and a Silver.



CREST Awards

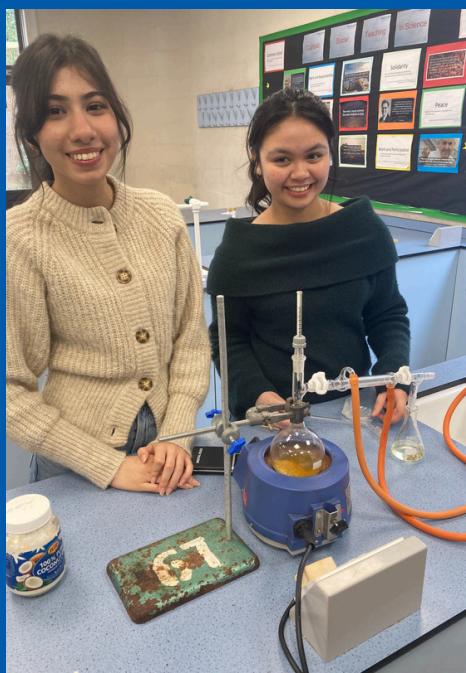
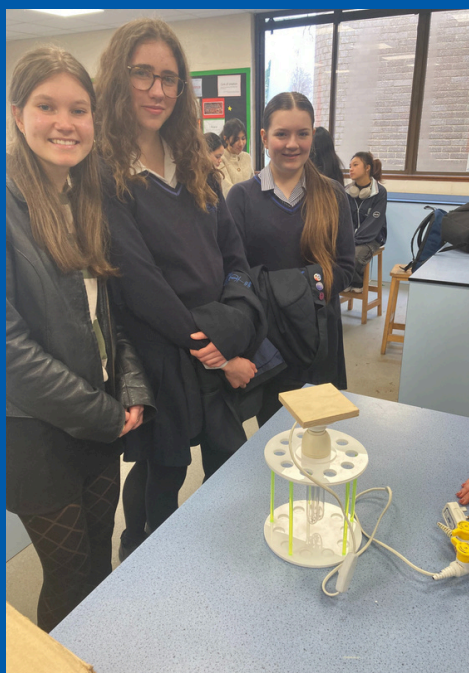
Several Year 12 students are progressing excellently with their Gold CREST projects. One group made four batches of Aspirin to test different acid catalysts and assess their effect on the yield and purity of Aspirin. This has given these students a headstart with aspects of the curriculum they would experience in Year 13. Some of these groups showcased their projects during Science Week.



A second group made a bespoke piece of equipment to test if UV light could kill bacteria in the air. This involved creating a carousel to hold tubes of nutrient broth to which a small amount of *E. coli* culture was added. Under controlled conditions, the turbidity of the broth was measured using a device they made in school. This indicated the amount of bacterial growth, so the effect of UV light could be seen by varying the tube exposure. The data generated can then be manipulated to predict how much UV light would be needed to kill bacteria in specific volumes of air.

A third group of Year 12 students are trying to extract citrus oils from fruit so that they can use them to make perfumes. The extraction process has been complex, but they have succeeded recently and confirmed the presence of limonene in diluted products. This will motivate the team to try extracting other oils and get to the perfume-making stage before long.

A fourth group of students are investigating the effectiveness of different sun creams and are just embarking on the project. They will make a piece of equipment to allow uniform testing with a suitable UV lamp to mimic harmful UV rays from the sun and UV light-sensitive beads, which will mimic the skin's surfaces.



Year 8

Faraday Challenge

On Tuesday, 16th April, Year 8 students were joined by teams from Horndean Technology College, Park Community School and Purbrook Park School for the Faraday Challenge. This national engineering competition, run by the Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET) challenges students to apply their STEM skills in a real-world setting.



The theme for this year's challenge was "The Future of Green Energy". Students delved into the world of renewable energy sources, exploring innovative ways to generate, store, and distribute clean power. The competition demanded a skilful application of STEM principles and a high degree of creativity and resourcefulness.

We commend our students for their dedication, teamwork, and unwavering commitment to the project.

Students worked in teams of six to build a prototype of a product that could be used to help road users. They had to design and build the product with their imaginations and engineering skills. One of the Oaklands teams won the event, and their score will be entered into the national league table!

Miss Schofield



Year 7 & Year 8 STEM Showcase

On Tuesday 16th April, Year 7 and 8 were lucky to have the STEM Roadshow visit Oaklands.

The roadshow works in collaboration with BAE Systems, The Royal Air Force, and The Royal Navy to deliver an engaging theatre roadshow celebrating STEM and the future career possibilities it links with.



The show's theme was electricity. This highly interactive show explored what electricity is and how we generate it. Pupils and teachers took part in activities that had them describing what it felt like to have a low amount of electricity passed through them, the different parts of a circuit and building a giant circuit, the ways we generate electricity and the positives and negatives of those. As a finale, Mr Semple powered a windmill by cycling.

The students were able to consolidate what they have been learning in the curriculum with these interactive activities and find out more about careers they could do in the future related to these areas. This wasn't your average school day - it was ELECTRIFYING. Students were buzzing with questions, and they led the charge, building and testing circuits after an essential safety briefing. There were even lightsabers. Everyone found it very fun and interesting.

Mrs McQuiston



School Community Garden, Volunteers Wanted

About seven years ago, we started transforming an area of the school grounds into a school garden to be enjoyed.

An after-school club was started and over the years students have been involved either just for enjoyment or as a way to complete volunteering for their Duke of Edinburgh awards. The beds were re-established and each year, we've been successful in growing fruit and vegetables.



For the past few years, we have taken part in the RHS Big Soup Share in the Autumn term, and students, alongside staff volunteers, have collected produce from the garden and then prepared soups, cakes and scones for staff to enjoy; this has raised funds to keep the garden going.

In 2022, we were awarded the RHS Level 4 School Gardening Award. Gardens provide people with places to relax, the opportunity to engage with nature and somewhere to get active outdoors. These opportunities, together with the joy of seeing seeds grow into plants and produce and having somewhere to chat with other people, provide a positive boost to our mental and physical well-being.

Recently, we have improved the seating area within the garden, which will provide a quiet location, away from distraction, and allow you to enjoy the garden and nature and have some quiet time when needed.

We would like to involve people from the wider school community in our school garden. So, if you or someone you know may be interested in getting involved, please email c.colley@oaklandscatholicschool.org



Leadership Training Day

As a Catholic school, we offer education to allow our young people to experience life to the fullest.

This means developing all their talents and gifts. Sometimes, students need to be made aware of what they can do, so we also offer them opportunities that positively challenge them to discover what they can achieve. One of the areas we are focusing on is that of leadership. Rather than tell our students that they are leaders of tomorrow, we would like them to be leaders of today.



We have partnered with Unloc, a company that runs courses to empower young people to become changemakers. On Wednesday 19th June, one of their facilitators came to Oaklands and worked with 29 Year 9 students on how to be student leaders. Some of the activities the students engaged in were looking at different scenarios a leader might find themselves in, the posture they need to take when making a presentation, how to use persuasive language, and how to work with others. The students enjoyed the activities very much.

When asked what was good about the day, some of the students said:

'It was a nice opportunity to meet with people from the other cohort, and it helped me learn how to be a better leader.'

'I had so much fun because I learned a lot from other people, and if I had another chance to have something like this, I would come.'

'It was fun and helped improve my confidence.'

It was right and fitting that the course leader was a former Oaklands student, and she readily shared how Oaklands had contributed to her success in life.

Mr Sumba



Oaklands+ Programme & CAFOD Young Leaders

Oaklands+ Programme

Education at Oaklands Catholic School is not just education for the sake of it; instead, it is to enable young people to acquire skills necessary to live life in a certain way. This means that here at Oaklands, we aim to motivate our students to become people of challenge, change and transformation;



Challenge: to be unafraid and unashamed to challenge anything which denigrates or belittles a person; to see every person as a brother or sister made in the image and likeness of God

Change: to be advocates for change where it is needed

Transformation: to be personally transformed and work to create a world of justice and peace for all through that transformation

Our student leadership structure is designed to allow students to be actively involved in the everyday life of the college and school, thus allowing them to develop personally and making the college and school a good place for all of us. The school motto guides them:

COMMUNITY – ‘Serve more’

UNITY - ‘Love more’

OPPORTUNITY - ‘Be more’

Our student leadership team is led by a president and senior deputy, assisted by four deputies. The four deputies lead other student leaders from Years 10 – 13. They are divided into four teams, each responsible for the four critical areas of our college and school: charism, curriculum, pastoral, and co-curriculum.

Mr Sumba

‘I enjoyed being a mentor at St Peter’s as I feel like I have made an impact on Ella. I enjoyed watching Ella grow and become more confident in herself. Since starting the mentoring scheme, I have witnessed all the children involved grow and become better individuals.’

Tori, 12DMK

‘I have enjoyed being a mentor at St Peter’s, and many of my friends also participated in the programme. It felt very satisfying to help someone with problems similar to those I had experienced at that age. I enjoyed getting to know Brayia better and learning how to make someone younger than me feel comfortable around me.’

Natalia, 12CLW

CST Ambassadors Launch Event

On Monday 14th October, we were delighted to run our first Catholic Social Teachings Ambassador event. Year 5 and 6 students were invited from our feeder schools, being selected for their strength of faith and abilities to lead. These students were supported by a number of incredible Oaklands student leaders (from multiple-year groups). These small groups learned over the day about Catholic Social Teachings, who Oscar Romero is, and how to create and lead their worship.

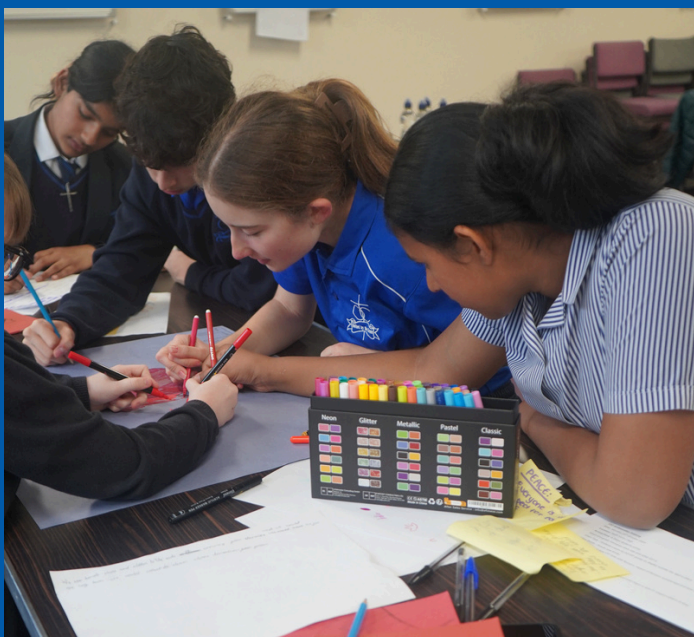


All the students involved were keen to share what their schools are already doing, and they were able to discover new ideas that they were eager to take back and try to implement. We were delighted to share this time with such role models from our feeder schools.

Our students, Chloe, Isla, Fern, Katherine, Sarah, Francesca, Henry, Rodrigo and Spike, were superb role models for the younger students, taking the lead where necessary and guiding them to create their own amazing ideas.

Staff and students from the event were incredibly positive and thankful for the opportunity and are proudly wearing their new CST Ambassador badges. We hope to meet again once a term to continue sharing great ideas, celebrate our community successes, and work together as a Catholic community.

Mrs Newbiggin



Sports Day 2024

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 breaking at least one school record, showcasing our students' exceptional talent and dedication. 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 were crucial 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.'

Nik, 8CL





Performing Arts @ Oaklands



Mountbatten Music Festival

On 8th and 9th March, the Mountbatten Festival of Music returned to the Royal Albert Hall in London. These concerts display the outstanding versatility of some of the world's finest military musicians and are given the "West End" treatment with spectacular lighting effects. The Festival sees the Royal Marines showcase their incredible musicianship and pageantry. It features a wide range of musical styles, including music from the big screen and superb solo items, as well as the traditional marches and overtures that have proved such a hit with audiences over the years.

'The Royal Marines band at the Royal Albert Hall were amazing. I loved the Iron Maiden drummer Nicko. The whole venue was extraordinary. There was a tribute to the Invictus Games where some participants appeared on stage. Katie Derham compered the event, and the band played a variety of genres of music, including Jazz, Musicals, Rock, Classical and film soundtracks. Overall, the night was spectacular. Thank you to Mr Smith, our drum teacher, who secured these complimentary tickets for our drumming students and A Level and GCSE Music students. Five families took up this wonderful opportunity.'

Michelle

'I was so thrilled when we got tickets to the Mountbatten Festival of Music. Our family had never been to the Royal Albert Hall, so we were all excited. When we got there and sat in our seats, I was amazed at the decorative walls. I liked the Royal Marines Band and its drummers because they were all perfectly in sync when playing and marching. The coolest thing I think was the band and Nicko McBrain playing famous Iron Maiden metal songs. It was a wonderful experience for me, and I am very thankful to Mr Smith, who organised this.'

Spike





School Production:

Les Misérables

Last year, our school production was the global phenomenon *Les Misérables*, based on the book written by Victor Hugo, and later converted into a successful musical by Claude-Michel Schönberg.



The production saw exceptional performances from the entire cast.

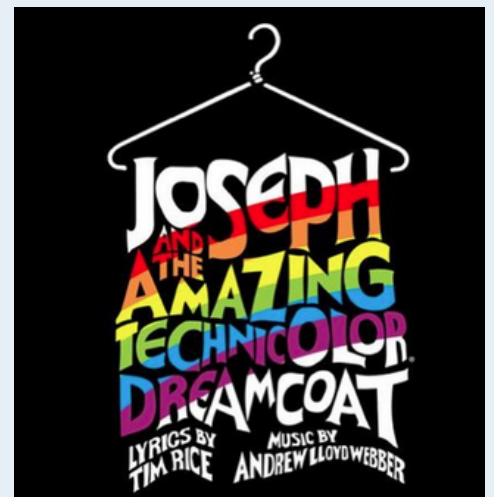
Melanie Yates gave a passionate and emotional performance as Fantine and Asti Hayes captured Marius's innocence and sentiments. Claudia Foster and Poppy Lyons gave sensitive performances as Cosette and Eponine, whilst Eloise Knight and Rowan Dodsworth pulled off the comedic roles of the Thénardiens with brilliance, and Cerys Colley led the Revolutionaries with confidence. Adam Hazell's performance as Jean Valjean was second to none, and Jacob Kift, who played the imposing Inspector Javert, was terrifyingly convincing. Both male leads embodied their characters and embraced the responsibilities of such demanding roles. Well done also to Ellen Deal, Micaela Lawson and Spike Williams in Year 7 who played Little Cosette, Little Eponine and Gavroche.

The tech team and the band contributed hugely to the show's success, and the direction and behind-the-scenes support made the performance flawless. Another superb show that will go down as one of the greatest in Oaklands history!

School Production 2025

We are excited to bring *Joseph and The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* to the Oaklands stage on February 12th, 13th and 14th 2025. Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Webber's multi-award-winning show has been performed hundreds of thousands of times, including multiple runs in the West End and on Broadway and international tours in over 80 countries worldwide, becoming one of the world's most beloved family musicals.

Rehearsals are underway, with students from Years 7-13 being part of the ensemble cast, band and crew. Tickets will be on sale soon!





Sounds of Summer

Music Concert

On Thursday 20th June we held our Peripatetic Concert. It was a wonderfully eclectic mix of performances including piano, bass, flute and violin solos and band performances from the RockBand Club, Sixth Form bands and a newly formed Year 9 band.



We had several first-time soloists as well as more experienced students, all ranging from Years 7-12. Maddie Gissing also performed a monologue, diversifying the concert further. SingSquad sang a beautiful version of 'You Raise Me Up', and the Oaklands Band played the Final Countdown with gusto.

'This was my third time performing at a music concert. I really enjoyed the opportunity. I enjoyed the variety of the instruments at the concert and the rehearsal time, seeing everyone else practice together.'

Hugo

'This was my first time performing. It was really nerve-racking but so exciting at the same time; I'm so glad I participated and will make sure to get more involved in future performances.'

Maja

Well done to all involved!



Year 12 Geography

Trip to Dorset

The advancement of Geographical skills, studying coastal case studies and experiencing fieldwork were the reasons for the recent trip to the Isle of Purbeck for our Year 12 Geography students. The students were accompanied by Mr Godwin, Mrs Sykes and Mr Bamford and stayed at Swanage YHA.



Day 1: Students studied how coastal management has been conducted along Christchurch Bay from Hengistbury Head to Hurst Castle Spit. The cliffs at Barton-On-Sea and Highcliffe suffer from rotational slumping, and this location is quoted in almost every textbook, so it was really useful for our students to see what was happening there. Following a brief lunch stop at Mudeford spit, students drove through Bournemouth and on to Studland via the Sandbanks ferry. The students studied the sand dunes there and tested the concept of vegetation succession and how effective management is in preserving them. Late in the afternoon, the geology of the Purbeck coast was explored as the students were shown Old Harry Rocks at the chalk headland of Handfast Point.

Day 2: The Geology along the coast from Exmouth in Devon to Old Harry Rocks in Dorset has resulted in the area being branded a 'UNESCO World Heritage site'. Students explored Durdle Door, Lulworth Cove and Stair Hole, although the highlight of the trip this year was the boat tour from Lulworth Cove to Durdle Door. The group visited Portland Bill, discussed the beach raised there, and examined Chesil Beach, which connects the island of Portland to the mainland. We also visited Poundbury on the outskirts of Dorchester.

Day 3: The final morning was spent around Swanage. The students surveyed the groynes along the beach to see if they were effective in building up the beach and examined rates of longshore drift.

Mr Bamford



THE SIXTH FORM Oaklands Catholic School

Getting into Medicine

The Sixth Form is now closely collaborating in the 'Getting into Medicine' initiative developed in partnership with the Dr Mike King Trust, a consortium of GPs, healthcare providers and colleges. This has included creating a brand new programme to provide our Sixth Formers with mentoring and support in preparing for medical school applications and study.



The record numbers of our students being offered places to study medicine and related courses show that this is already bearing fruit, and we are fast becoming the sixth form of choice for those interested in medical careers.

HE Plus Programme

The HE Plus programme also continues to flourish. Our Sixth Formers have attended various university-style lectures hosted by the University of Cambridge. These lectures have spanned multiple subjects and helped provide our students with invaluable insight into university study.



Sixth Form UCAS and Post-18 Pathways Day

Our UCAS and Post-18 Pathways Day in the Sixth Form in May included presentations and workshops to help Year 12 students understand and prepare for their next steps after Sixth Form. The success of these events is evident in the record number of strong offers our students have received this year for various highly competitive courses in leading universities (including Oxbridge) and other institutions.

Sixth Form Taster Days and Masterclasses

This year, we have piloted a series of Oaklands Sixth Form Masterclasses alongside our regular Taster Days, 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 showcase the academic and pastoral excellence that makes our Sixth Form college such an attractive post-16 option.



These events 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. Lastly, thank you to the Sixth Form students, support staff and teachers for all their hard work and dedication.

Sixth Form's Love and Service

More than 20 of our Sixth Form students volunteer as mentors to Year 11 and Year 7. This is in addition to our mentors helping Year 6 students in local primary schools.

This plays a vital role in helping support young people both academically and pastorally across our community.



Our Sixth Formers have also continued volunteering at Rowans Hospice, and it was fantastic to see how much love, joy and laughter our Sixth Formers brought with them during their recent visit to the hospice. It speaks volumes that the hospice residents have asked that we make this a weekly event. This willingness of our Sixth Formers to volunteer and help others is a practical example of what it means to be united by the Cross and makes our Oaklands community very proud.

Magistrate visit

In September, our A Level Law students visited Portsmouth Magistrates Court for the morning and were able to meet with magistrates and sit in on a range of court proceedings. This visit gave our students a unique insight into the everyday workings of the legal system and are an invaluable first step a future career in Law. The feedback was positive, and the magistrates were so impressed by our Sixth Formers that they suggested this be a regular event. Well done to all involved, and thanks to Mr Whitlock for organising these visits.

Year 12 Enrichment Week

Last term, 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, UCAS preparation sessions and 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.

Biology Field Trip

Year 12 Biology students embarked on a field trip to Fishbourne Marshes and Dell Quay, where they gained firsthand experience in ecological surveying, led by the staff at Chichester Conservancy Educational Centre.

The trip began with students delving into the fascinating world of ecological sampling, learning techniques to measure the distribution and abundance of living organisms in both slow-flowing and fast-flowing streams. Although there were a few wet feet along the way, the diverse wildlife made the exploration worthwhile!



After lunch, we ventured into the salt marshes to investigate the unique ecology of brackish water. Students explored how differences in abiotic factors, such as seawater exposure, influence the distribution and abundance of coastal plants. The afternoon also brought some lighthearted fun, with students collecting crabs and measuring their size!

Throughout the day, students demonstrated excellent teamwork and resilience, collecting valuable data, which will be analysed to identify any significant differences in organism distribution or relationships between abiotic and biotic variables. This analysis forms a crucial part of the core practical for their A Level Biology.

The trip was a resounding success, allowing students to not only enjoy themselves but also significantly enhance their knowledge and understanding of the local harbour ecosystem.

Mrs Gamble



Meet the Sixth Form Event

On Tuesday 15th October, our Sixth Formers were out in force for the 'Meet the Sixth Form' event. All Year 11 students came down to the Main Hall to meet our students, who were acting as subject ambassadors. Our ambassadors gave the Year 11s a first-hand insight into studying at A Level and what life in the Sixth Form is like.

It was wonderful to see so many of our GCSE and A Level students being really enthused about their subjects and studying in the Sixth Form. Well done to all those who took part, and a big thanks to all those teachers who helped support this event.



Sixth Form Open Evening

On Thursday 17th October we held our annual Sixth Form Open Evening. This is an exciting highlight of the Sixth Form calendar and is always a busy and joyous occasion as we threw open the doors and invited both internal and external potential applicants to see the Sixth Form in action.

As our reputation spreads, we are experiencing a record number of external enquiries, and this, added to interest from our own Year 11 students, means that this was one of our busiest Sixth Form Open Evenings to date. Thanks as ever to all the teachers and students who work so hard and freely give their time to make these events successful.



UCAS Discovery Fair

On 27th March our Year 12 students travelled to Bournemouth to attend the UCAS Discovery. This event enabled Oaklands students to join sixth formers from across the country as they explored the exhibitions and met with representatives from over 100 different universities, colleges and employers. This event provided students with a wealth of information about potential post-18 academic and career pathways, and our students gained valuable information and inspiration for their next steps.

Being able to take part in the UCAS Discovery event is an important part of the extensive post-18 pathways programme offered by Oaklands Sixth Form College has been so successful in helping our students fully discover and plan their next steps. This is evident in the record number of successful applications we have had this year into a wide range of prestigious courses and careers. This event was also a great day out and we all came back with enough brochures and branded stationery to last a lifetime!

In other news, huge congratulations are due to Emile Hantrais-Smith, Blessing Sibanda, Emma Townsend, Bethany Woolhead, Nicola O'Neil, Esther Tuttle, Alexandra Iacob, Ayana Jino, and Skye Daniels (all photographed below, with Mr Godwin) who have all been successful in starting their courses at the University of Cambridge, or on highly competitive Medicine or Veterinary Science courses at other universities!

Mr Godwin, Director of Sixth Form



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 the 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.

We have been focusing on the school's Mission Statement and its values of Community, Unity and Opportunity.

Charism underpins the spirit of the community. It is like a powerful energy that permeates through the members of the community and is visible through our actions and words.

We can demonstrate charism by being humble, making good use of our talents, by deeds of charity, hospitality, respecting others and acts of kindness.

We can guide others, teach others, lead others, and encourage others.

All of these are ways of us expressing our charism 'United by The Cross' and 'The Oaklands Way' is how we remind ourselves of what is important to us, that we are called 'to love and serve others.' We also remind ourselves of our mission as disciples of Jesus by making the sign of The Cross.

Catholic Social Teaching - Rights and Responsibilities

The belief that the rights we have also place on us responsibilities towards others.

When the Sisters started this school, they were very clear that they wanted it to be an 11 - 18 education institution that taught young people how to be useful citizens of the world, to be good people who set out to make the world a better place for others because they had experienced love and care here at Oaklands. It means each person has rights that are respected and they too respect others.

Catholic Social Teaching Principles: Option for the Poor

This principle is central to the Christian teaching of 'love your neighbour'. It is about helping those who are most in need - 'lacking something important' to be able to live life well.

- Helping others should be at the heart of what we do here at Oaklands because we are a Catholic school.
- How do you help other students?
- Are you a student who notices when another student is not comfortable about something and reaches out to help them?
- Are you kind to others, especially those who do not have as much as you do?
- How do you think other students view you, as a helpful student or as one who does not care?

We are part of a community at Oaklands and so should always aim to help others at school, but we also work together to help people outside our community through fundraising and volunteering.



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.

Uniform Policy

Please use the QR code to access the school website page which provides further details on how to purchase our second-hand uniform.



Behaviour Policy

Please use the QR code to access the school website and ensure you are familiar with our behaviour expectations.



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