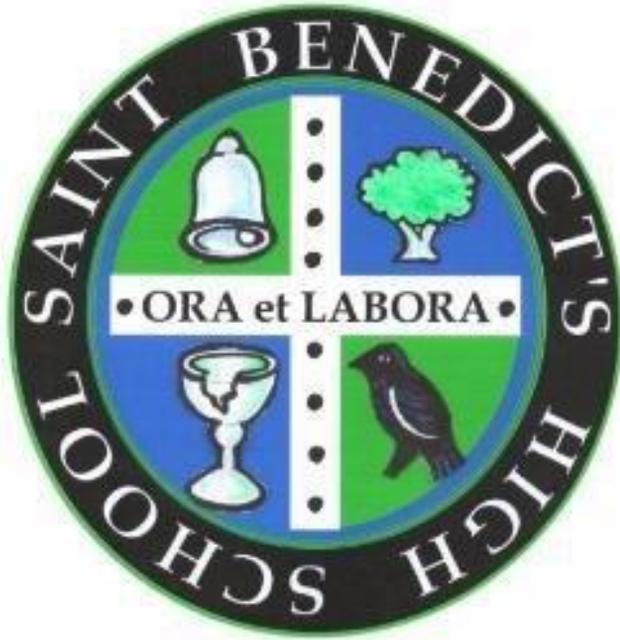


# St Benedict's High School



Winter  
Newsletter  
2020



Dear Parents/Carers

Welcome to our Winter edition of St Benedict's News. I am delighted to be sharing with you a compilation of some of the many activities, successes and achievements of our young people this session.

Recent events have ensured a busy but exceptionally positive start to the session reflecting a great deal of hard work on the part of pupils and staff.

Particular highlights include :

- The outstanding (and record breaking) SQA exam results achieved by our Senior pupils in their recent exams recognising the commitments and effort of our young people and school staff.
- The relaunch of our Vision, Values and Aims through consultation with pupils, staff and parents
- Our Fabulous awards ceremony with guest speaker and "Pop Idol" Michelle McManus
- The introduction a new house system across the school with every pupil now belonging to one of 4 house groups named after inspirational Saints chosen by our young people.
- The involvement of our school community in the visit of St Therese of Lisieux
- Our positive Authority review report

It's all go at St Benedict's !!!!!

These events and many others are captured in this newsletter.

I welcome your comments and any new information which we can share in future newsletters. I hope you enjoy.

Alan Taylor  
Head Teacher



## Authority Review - November 2019

The school recently hosted a team of Renfrewshire staff for a week as part of a planned authority review. The purpose of the visit was to provide the school with the opportunity to highlight its achievements and demonstrate examples of good practice including identified areas for future work and development.

We were delighted with the feedback and the Head teacher shared this report with staff and the Parent Council for discussion.

A summary of key points included :

- The head teacher has a very clear aspirational vision of how the school should further improve. He has made a positive start in identifying the strengths of the school and areas for development.
- Positive relationships between staff and pupils are clearly evident.
- There is a high level of commitment shared and demonstrated by staff at all levels to ensuring positive outcomes for all pupils.
- The shared vision, values and aims permeate daily practice and the Catholic ethos is well developed. The gospel values underpin the life and work of the school community.
- The school community has a strong commitment to their on-going improvement journey.
- New partnerships with employers are providing exciting opportunities for more pupils to engage in meaningful and relevant workplace learning opportunities.
- There has also been a widening of the pupil leadership opportunities Junior house captains and subject specific ambassadors are contributing to a positive ethos and development of the new house system.
- Across the entire school community, a calm and orderly environment characterised by mutual respect and tolerance was evident.
- Pupils are noticeably polite and respectful, and the high standard of uniform adds to the strong sense of community and belonging.
- A significant number of staff are committed to continuing career long professional learning and are using external and in-house opportunities to grow and develop their leadership skills.

# Dressing For Excellence

**Uniform continues to be extremely important to us in St Benedict's and we thank you for your continued support to ensure that our young people look their best.**

The wearing of school uniform

- Is invaluable in conveying a sense of community, wellbeing and purpose.
- Indicates a sense of pride in the school and helps pupils to form positive attitudes to the school and their school work.
- Protects children from the harmful effects of social distinction and competitive dressing.
- Promotes the school's identity in their community, with our immediate neighbours, local business and industry.
- Assists staff in the task of supervising pupils and keeping unwelcome visitors out of the school.

A reminder of our school uniform requirements.

St Benedict's High School's policy is that all of our pupils are required to wear the school uniform.

The School Uniform consists of :

- A white school shirt/blouse, and school tie which is visible at all times. S4, S5 and S6 will wear the Senior tie.
- Tailored black trousers or black skirt - Leggings, jeans, denim and tracksuits, are not acceptable under any circumstances.
- A school blazer with badge
- Comfortable footwear (black in colour).
- Plain black jumper or cardigan (optional).

Within this area I have identified two areas for improvement I would like to highlight and ask for your support when purchasing new items for your son/daughter.

1. Black school jumpers should be of an unbranded style that allows the school tie to be clearly seen (v neck).

2. Footwear, if not of a formal style should be **black** with **no coloured/white markings** e.g. "converse style" trainers. These are not part of our school policy guidelines and therefore will not be accepted.

It is in this area I require the support of you as a parent/carer to ensure our uniform standards are at a level that will promote the school's standing within the community.



## ATTENDANCE/TIMEKEEPING

We have been working hard this term to ensure that young people in St Benedict's High School continue to achieve and attain to their highest level. Regular attendance and punctuality at school are essential for this. Your support here as a parent/carer is crucial.

Please ensure that your child is only absent from school if they are genuinely unwell or there is a valid reason. Absences must be reported to the school office by 8.45am. If young people are absent on a regular basis or if they are late to class, this is detrimental to their education and learning. Please be aware that if your child's attendance or timekeeping falls below the expected standards we expect, we have a duty of care to inform you and to follow Renfrewshire Council procedures.



I draw your attention to our school's website [www.oraetlabora.co.uk](http://www.oraetlabora.co.uk) as an interesting and ongoing source of valuable information on events and achievements at the school, including our calendar for this session.

Our twitter feed is up and running again and is also a great source of information about the school. We now have well over 1000 followers - you can follow us on [@stbenedictsren](https://twitter.com/stbenedictsren)



A few photos from our Twitter page. Follow us: [@stbenedictsren](https://twitter.com/stbenedictsren)

# News from across the school.....

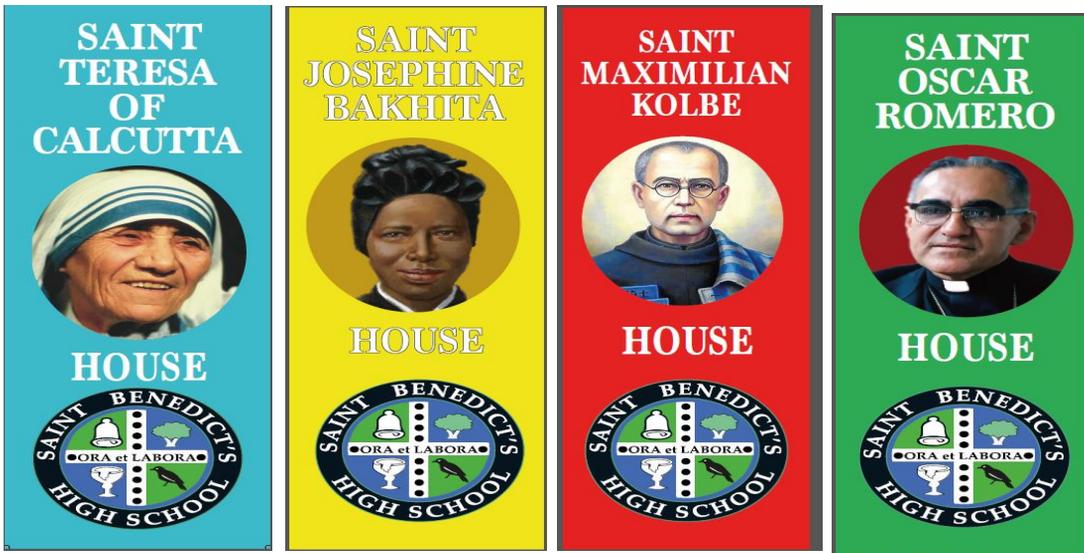
There has been lots going on in recent months. This is what makes St Benedict's High such a great school and it is experiences such as these, which enable our young people to develop their skills for life, learning and work.

## House System

Our House System has been up and running now since August.

Pupils can win points for their House in the following ways:

- Monthly Tracking points through effort, behaviour and homework
- Attendance points for 95% and above.
- Health & Wellbeing points, walk or cycle to school!
- Departmental Awards in each subject
- House Hero Points for exceptional contribution to the ethos of the school and the local community.



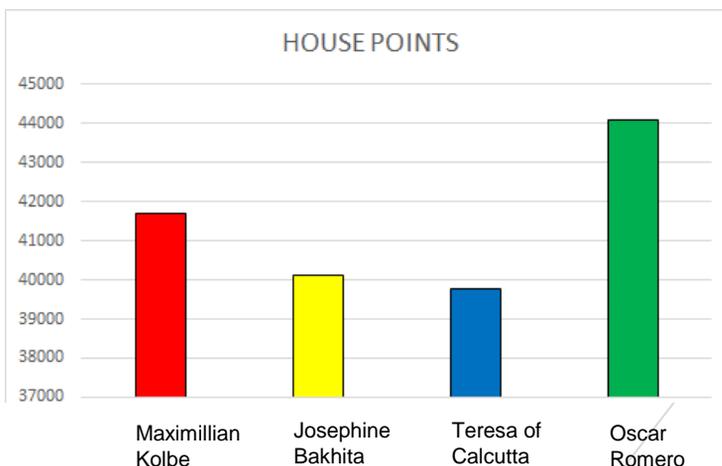
Pastoral Care  
Mrs G O'Neill

Pastoral Care  
Mrs N Shearer

Pastoral Care  
Mr D McGrane

Pastoral Care  
Mr G Harvey

## House Points - December 2019



## **Pupil Leadership**

This session, with the introduction of our House system our Leadership team has expanded to include the following roles

**Head Boy** - Josh Kerrigan

**Head Girl** - Eve Mullen

### **Whole school Captains**

Brogan Kennedy – *P7-S1 Transition leader/Employability Ambassador*

Lucy Kyle – *Celebrating Success Ambassador*

Jennifer Higgins – *Health and Wellbeing Ambassador*

Riona Reid – *Malawi Ambassador*

Jessica Turley – *Faith Ambassador*

### **House Captains**

#### **Junior House Captains**

The team is now complete and have been working well together setting a good example for others and taking forward a number of initiatives within the school and in the wider community. We are delighted to have such an enthusiastic and committed group of young people in their newly appointed roles.

Some of our Captaincy team for 2019-20

PIC

## **Pupil Voice**

We try to encourage pupils to play an active part in the school and to this end each year group elects their own Pupil Council. The Pupil Council meet monthly with members of the Senior leadership team to put forward pupils' views and discuss a variety of issues related to the school. The members of the Pupil Councils are:

S1

Lennon Duffy, Keira McGroarty, Cole McIlroy, Kate David, Ben Cunningham, Lauren Murphy, Adam McIntosh, Carys Sloan.

S2

Shannon Donnelly, Taonga Chirwa, Jamie Queen, Yaelle Dagnogo, Gabriel Cairney, Anya Leckie, Aleksandra Stasack, Moses Amaeze.

S3

Oliver Turley, Niamh Grady, Karina Wilson, Reese Sinclair, Brandon Ryan, Madison Smith, Gloria Okungbowa, Zara Black, Anthony Love, Jessica Toland.

S4

Gavin Stewart, Eilidh Taggart, Ryan Docherty , Abby McLaughlin, Martin Crawford, Kristopher Taylor, Finlay Muir, Kieran Rocks, Ange Massengo Fleury, Samantha O'Hare.

S5

Jack Elliott, Louise McDonald, Sala Bamba, Cameron Linnie, Logan Hunter, Olivia Brown, Filip Zadarnowski, Luke Smith, Suman Kandola, Katie Colligan.

S6 Brogan Kennedy, Riona Reid, Jennifer Higgins, Josh Kerrigan , Romy Donald, Taja Causevic, Christopher Blackwood, Alice Crilly.

ADD PICTURE

## SQA EXAM RESULTS 2019

The school community recently celebrated some of its best levels of attainment since the school opened across a number of measures. The hard work certainly paid off!!!!

### **S4 Year group**

Percentage of pupils achieving 5 or more awards at National 5 **45%**  
(42% in 2018)

32 pupils achieved 7 National 5 awards. 5 pupils achieved all A grade passes.

### **S5 (based on S4 roll)**

Percentage of pupils achieving 5 or more awards at Higher level – **20%**  
(17% in 2018)

Percentage of pupils achieving 1 or more awards at Higher level – **56%**  
(51% in 2018)

Percentage of pupils achieving 5 or more awards at National 5 – **51%**  
(47% in 2018)

21 pupils achieved 5 Highers!!!

4 pupils achieved 5 A's

### **S6 (based on S4 roll)**

Percentage of pupils achieving 1 or more awards at Advanced Higher – **21%**  
(11% in 2018)

As a result this good news story was picked up by a local newspaper. Well done to all of our senior pupils involved.



**'A' team** St Benedict's pupils had great success

## Top students take a bow

Linwood's St Benedict's High school is celebrating top SQA results.

Outstanding results in S4 saw 45 per cent of the year group achieving five or more National 5 awards while in S5, 19 per cent of pupils achieved 5 or more Highers – an 11 percentage point increase from 2017.

Headteacher Alan Taylor said: "Our young people, with the encouragement and support of teachers and parents, worked incredibly hard over the session to achieve these fantastic results. "We're delighted for them. We know

how much effort our pupils have put in and it is extremely rewarding that so many have achieved such excellent results and will now go on to the next stage of their learning journey with confidence that they can achieve all they want to.

"However, academic success is only part of the story.

"The school's strong ethos and wider strengths ensure all pupils leave equipped to take their place in the world of work and able to deal with all of the challenges they will encounter."

## **St Benedict's High School celebrates another year of outstanding success**

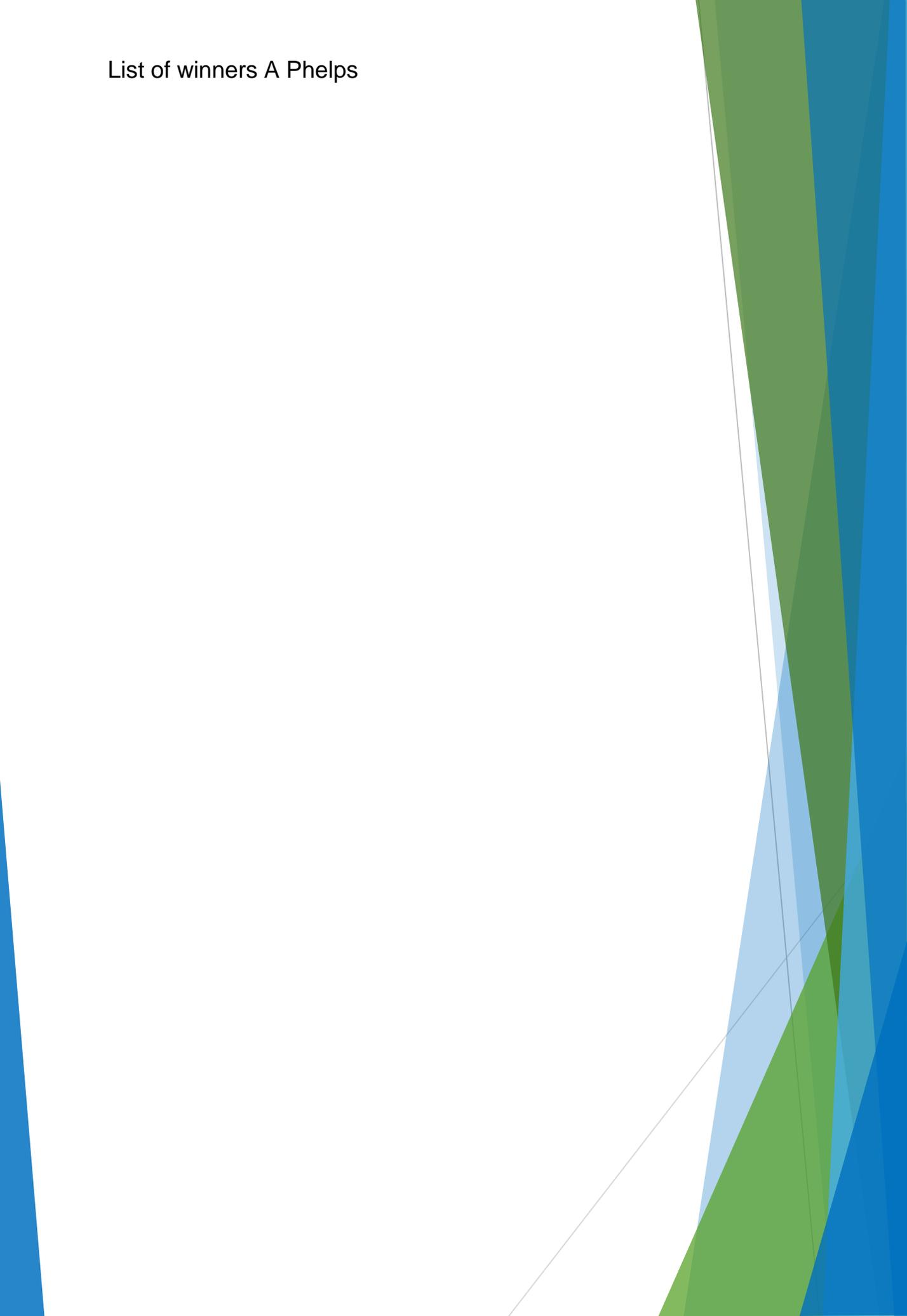
St Benedict's High School's annual senior prize giving represents the focal point of the calendar and serves, for many; parents, pupils and staff alike, as the highlight of the academic year. This year, like others, was no exception. The achievements of our young people were celebrated in front of family, friends, peers, staff and a selection of honourable guests.

We were delighted to welcome former Pop Idol winner and well known TV/radio host Michele McManus, to present the awards to our young people, and honoured that she took time to speak to the audience, sharing personal stories and memories. Michele's message to the young people was to work hard, be ambitious in everything they do, to never take anything for granted and to never settle for what they currently have and to never be complacent in life. She left the audience with two lasting words, honesty and ambition. Michele's speech encapsulated the culture of the school. Thank you, Michele.

The following pupils were recognised for their academic, sporting and wider achievements at the recent Prize giving Ceremony in the school.

PICS

List of winners A Phelps



## Cani Coaching

In November a group of twenty S3 pupils took part in a Leadership Programme called CANI coaching with three members of Staff. (Mrs Dewar, Mr Cook and Miss Campbell). Part of the programme involved a residential stay over 4 days at the outdoor centre at Dumfries House.

CANI is a programme, which empowers young people to create and steer positive change within their lives, schools and communities. The programme is designed to boost self-confidence, instil resilience and develop leadership skills, which will be of great benefit to pupils as they move towards the Senior Phase of their education.

Pupils enjoyed a variety of activities over 4 intense days which helped them to set and achieve objectives. They participated in many activities including values workshops, where pupils worked on developing their self awareness by bringing personal values into focus, goal mapping, a search and rescue mission where pupils learned that communication is vital when working under pressure and as part of a team. There was a trust exercise which involved being led blindfolded by a partner around an extremely muddy assault course. There were also other workshops such as yoga, boxing and climbing and everyone enjoyed participating in the role play activities around conflict resolution.

It was rewarding for staff to see the pupils gel as a group and see new friendships developing and confidence improving as the week went on. All pupils and staff thoroughly enjoyed their experience and returned to St Benedict's with a positive attitude, new friendships, happy but extremely tired!



## Foodbank Drive

St. Benedict' High School was involved in a food bank drive in December to help those in need over the festive period. The school community contributed a staggering amount of items, which has again showcased our incredible generosity and ethos. Big thankyou to Mr McPhee for organising this!

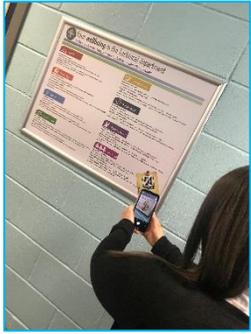


## Exchange Student Visit

C McNeil sentence



## Health and Wellbeing



The screenshot shows a Twitter profile for 'St Benedict's Health and Wellbeing' with 228 tweets. The profile picture is a circular logo with various icons. The bio reads 'St Benedict's Health and Wellbeing @StBenedictsHWB'. The main tweet is a certificate for 'Hollie David' awarded by Mr Taylor - Head Teacher in December 2019. The certificate recognizes her contributions to the 'Be Active' term focus for health and wellbeing in St Benedict's High School, awarding 10 points to her House Group. The certificate features a large gold star and a vertical bar with ten categories: Safe, Healthy, Active, Nurtured, Included, Responsible, Respected, and Achieving.

Since the start of term, we have been working hard to raise the profile of Health and wellbeing in our school. We have recently launched our Wellbeing interactive displays around the school. The wellbeing interactive displays are pupil focused and explain to pupils what wellbeing is and what it would look like in each department. Pupils can scan the QR code on the displays and this will link to up to date information on Health and Wellbeing and will give tips on how to stay healthy both physically and mentally.

Our current S3 cohort are piloting a new Mental Health Course called Living to the Full. St Benedict's HS are the first school in the authority to pilot this new innovative scheme.

It is designed to support pupils with their mental health and provide coping strategies to help them through their school years. It is a highly recommended treatment for low mood and anxiety and is widely recognised as one of the most effective ways of helping well-being and building resilience.

We are delighted to deliver Living Life to the Full, and will be involving senior pupils as Mental Health Ambassadors to support the younger year groups as they complete the six week course.

## Employability

### S1 Teambuilding Event



In September, all S1 pupils took part in a teambuilding event at the On-X Leisure Centre. This was delivered by the Royal Navy and Marines and pupils worked in groups to solve problems. The pupils had a great experience and lots of fun while also developing their teambuilding, communication and decision making skills. A great day for all involved (the teacher's "smashed" the teamwork challenge!) Many thanks to the Navy and Marines for their continued support.



### 5 Star DWF Solicitors Programme

Twelve S4 pupils have recently attended the DWF offices in Glasgow for 3 sessions working with staff and mentors. The aim of the sessions is to allow aspirational pupils to unlock their potential and develop their confidence and employability skills to become more work ready. The pupils were also given advice on their CVs and received feedback following a mock interview. We are very grateful to have this opportunity for the young people and feedback has been very positive. Many thanks to DWF for all their support.



**DWF is a highly acclaimed multi national law firm with 31 offices across the world.**



## SECC Careers Event – Skills Scotland

30 senior pupils attended the Skills Scotland Careers Event at the SECC. More than 30 employers, colleges and universities were in attendance and pupils had the opportunity to find out more about possible career pathways. Pupil feedback was very positive and this was a very worthwhile visit for the young people.



## Construction Opportunities

Two senior pupils have been attending West College Scotland one morning each week to take part in “taster” courses. These have included Painting & Decorating, Bricklaying and Joinery to date. They also attended an on-site visit to a demolition company and had the opportunity to use VR equipment to “demolish” a building. This allowed the pupils to find out more about the different roles within the Construction Industry and speak to staff about their careers, pathways and employment opportunities.



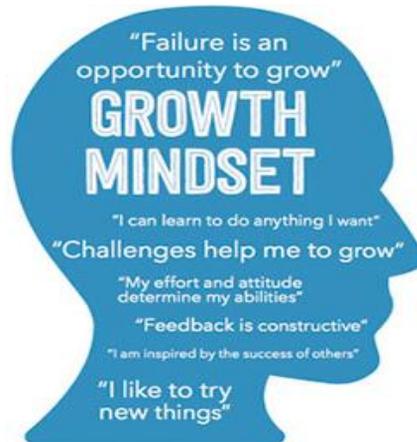
## Work Experience

S4 pupils took part in a 4 day work experience placement in September. Placements included the BBC, primary and nursery schools, construction, sports centres, lawyers, pet stores etc. Feedback from employers was very positive and pupils were complimented on their attendance, punctuality, cooperation and commitment. Pupils reported that they found their experience very beneficial and would love to return! Well done to all involved and a huge thank you to employers for their continued support.

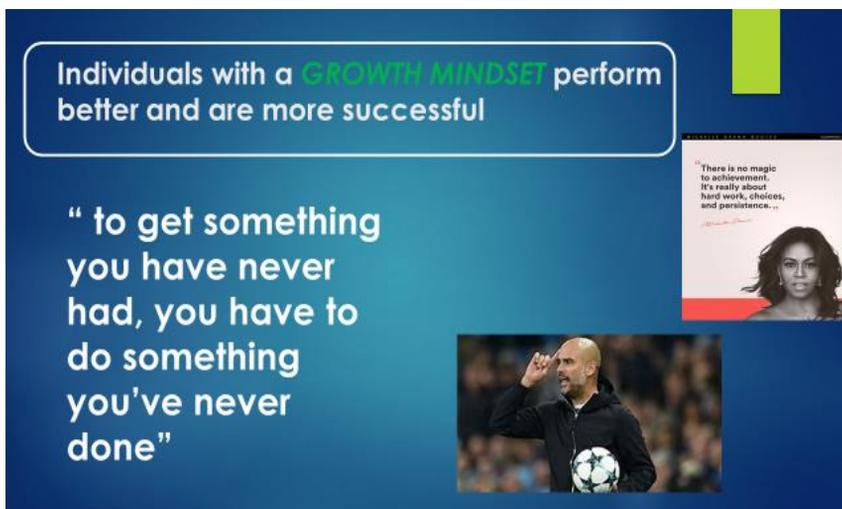


## Growth Mindset Partnership Programme

This session staff, pupils and parents at St Benedict's have started working in partnership with Growth Mindset expert, Dr John Paul Fitzpatrick who will be delivering workshops, peer-led training, coaching and mentoring across our school community.



We are really excited to continue our journey of growing **MINDSETS FOR SUCCESS** at St Benedict's High School.

An infographic with a dark blue background. At the top left, a white rounded rectangle contains the text "Individuals with a **GROWTH MINDSET** perform better and are more successful". Below this, a large white quote reads: "to get something you have never had, you have to do something you've never done". To the right of the quote is a small image of a woman with dark hair, with a quote above her: "There is no magic to achievement. It's really about hard work, choices, and persistence...". Below the woman's image is a small image of a man in a dark jacket holding a soccer ball, with his hand to his forehead in a gesture of stress or concentration.

## **St Benedict's Record Attainment**

Over the past 18 months a wide variety of strategies have been employed to raise the attainment of young people in the Senior Phase (S4-S6). By building on the excellent learning and teaching which takes place in Saint Benedict's High School we have been able to make significant improvements in attainment. This has led to Saint Benedict's recording our highest level of S5 attainment since the school opened and the second highest set of results at S5 for any school in Renfrewshire.

## **BGE Homework Club**

Our BGE Homework Club (S1-S3) takes place every Wednesday at lunchtime. Our P7/S1 Transition teacher, Mrs Gilmour, works alongside other staff volunteers and our excellent S6 leaders to provide help and support to S1-S3 pupils in their learning. Numbers attending are steadily increasing and I would ask that you encourage your children to come along for a quiet place to work and access to ICT. You can check your child's homework through the Show My Homework app. Please contact the school if you have any difficulty using this and we will be happy to help.

## **Senior Phase Mentor Programme**

Pupils have commented very positively about our ongoing mentoring programme. Mentors are volunteer staff members who serve as an additional point of contact for Senior Phase students. This enhanced support builds on the work of Pastoral and Year Head and provides young people with the opportunity to discuss their achievements and concerns as they work towards the exam diet in May. Staff offer support and advice regarding study skills, wellbeing and target setting at regular points in the school year. For example, October saw all S4 and S5 students meet with their mentor to discuss their progress and their targets for the forthcoming prelims. Mentor groups will meet again before the Christmas holidays to ensure that students have a clear study timetable, are focused and coping with the demands that prelims will bring. All meetings are designed to support young people to achieve their full potential across all of their subjects.

This session we have extended the mentoring programme to include partners from Skills Development Scotland. This new programme sees a group of S5 students working closely with our careers officer, Mrs McNab, during mentor time to prepare personal statements for college and job applications. Mrs Kerr, PT Learning and Teaching, will also work with a group who will focus particularly on developing a growth mindset and a positive mentality towards learning and achievement. This tailored programme will support our well established learning and teaching programmes to ensure optimum attainment for all of our students in S4 and S5.



## **Raising Attainment Seminars**

It is essential that all students feel fully supported and well prepared for the forthcoming prelims. To this end we recently delivered our annual S5 Raising Attainment Seminar which, once again, was a great success. The morning consisted of a motivational talk by Miss McFadden and a range of workshops such as study skills, mindsets and employability as well as team building, health and well-being and mindfulness. These workshops are delivered by volunteer staff and we are fortunate to have such committed teachers who are determined to do the best they can for all young people in Saint Benedict's High School.

However, it is not just staff who contributed. Our S6 students provided an invaluable input to the day when they shared their experience of sitting Highers with our current S5. Both positive and negative experiences are shared between students in order to ensure S5 can learn from the experience of their older peers.

Our final event of the day saw students attend an elective "Next Step" workshop where they chose from guidance in Careers, UCAS or Modern Apprenticeships. This was a new addition to the programme and student feedback would suggest this was a particularly successful part of the day with pupils gaining a clearer understanding of where their learning can take them in future.

Our attainment seminars are designed to equip our students with the skills required to achieve their potential in the forthcoming exams, but it is equally important that we support our pupils to cope with the inevitable stress and pressure which they will experience. One of the key missions of our programme is to help our students to realise that they are resilient, have the capacity to cope and, with appropriate levels of study and support, are destined to achieve.

## **Health and Wellbeing**

S5 pupils had the opportunity to be part of a very successful Attainment Seminar. During the seminar they attended a Wellbeing workshop. During this wellbeing workshop, pupils learned how their mental wellbeing could have an impact on their attainment. We looked at strategies to help manage stress and anxiety during exams. Pupils also had the opportunity to support the #TimeToTalk initiative to encourage all our pupils to take the time to talk. Our pupils at St Benedict's are encouraged to feel they can talk and seek support when needed especially when it relates to their Mental Health. We are working hard to ensure all St Benedict's pupils and staff know they are not alone, and having a support network can strengthen relationships between friends, family and peers.

## Wider Achievement Opportunities

In keeping with the ethos of our Catholic school we see attainment in its widest context and try to ensure all our young people have the chance to gain skills for life, learning and work. As such we have made a commitment to ensuring all new S6 students were provided with First Aid training to ensure they had skills which are of value and relevant to the world of work. By working in partnership with recognised workplace trainers all S6 were provided with the opportunity to gain a qualification in “Emergency First Aid at Work”. This qualification not only enhances the CVs of our young people and makes them more attractive to prospective employers but it also provides them with opportunities to show their abilities to learn in a new and very different context from the traditional curriculum.

This is the ultimate aim of all raising attainment strategies employed here at Saint Benedict’s High School – we are constantly seeking new and exciting ways for young people to develop their gifts and talents. Yes, we want our young people to achieve their academic potential but we see this as just one aspect of our mission to allow them to become the best version of themselves. By offering new courses such as the first aid course above we are providing our young people with a rich learning experience which will provide them with the best opportunity to succeed in the years ahead.



## Football News

"The senior football team are currently 4 wins from 4 in their campaign thus far. They top their league section after impressive away wins at Glennifer, Gryffe and Renfrew High. Captain Marcus Lavery has also recently led the side to a cup win against St Columbus from Gourrock. This lets the team progress to the next round of the St Mirren cup where they face a tricky tie away at Barrhead.

The boys have extended the school values throughout and this has been integral to our success. Along with some cracking goals! These performances have gained Marcus a place at the Scotland trials where he will represent the school on a National level. The teams success so far has been from a squad of players who are playing as a team and working hard for each other - this is something I have been immensely proud of"

## PICTURE

### Charity Committee News

#### Fundraiser and Quiz Nights

St Benedict's High School held a family fundraiser and quiz night in St Conval's Church Hall at the start of the new term. This was an excellent way to meet some new (and not so new) families and friends of the school and provided plenty of laughs! Thank you so much to everyone who attended, donated raffle prizes and spent all of their money at the bar! Special thanks to staff and parent helpers who so kindly helped out.

We managed to raise over £350, which will be split between our three chosen charities: St Vincent's Hospice, Cancer Research UK and St Patrick's Seminary, our Malawi partnership school.



## SNOWBALL

The annual Christmas snowball took place on Thursday 12 December for our S4-S6 pupils. As seen from the photos below, a great time was had by all who attended. A big thankyou to all involved in arranging the event!



## English and Modern Languages

@sbhslanguage



### MINI-SAGAS COMPETITION

Given the huge success of recent writing competitions, the department is providing another opportunity for any interested pupils to write a “Mini Saga”. This is a story written in 100 words or less. The theme for this year’s competition is “Hunted” – further details of which, as well as advice on how to enter, can be found from Miss McFadyen.

### PUBLIC SPEAKING AND DEBATING

Mr. McKee’s S2 class have recently been practising the art of public speaking and debating, which will lead to them eventually debating one another on the topic of renewable energies.

Pupils have engaged enthusiastically and courageously with this difficult and important life-skill, and we look forward to seeing their success be formally recognised as we move them further through the school.



### SKY ACADEMY STUDIOS

All S2 pupils recently attended Sky Academy Studios in Livingston as part of a film-making project. They firstly worked in their English classes to plan a film trailer, focusing on genre, characters and music before visiting a specialist studio to bring their ideas to life. Our relationship with Sky is one we have built over many years and will continue to strengthen this partnership in the future.



## LIBRARY IMPROVEMENT TEAM

A selection of our new S2 pupils have been working very closely with our school librarian, Miss Bortolato, as well as wider representatives from Renfrewshire Council to improve literacy across our cluster. The team recently travelled to several of our cluster primary schools in order to support younger children with their reading, and plan to continue this in the year ahead. We are very proud of the leadership they have shown.



## PARTNERSHIPS – ANNE DONOVAN VISIT

Our S4 learners experienced a special treat on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> November when Anne Donovan, author of the stories that learners are studying for their National 5 English qualification, came to visit them. Miss Donovan gave generously of her time to facilitate a question-and-answer session, offer some key advice on what to look out for in the stories and, finally, deliver a creative writing workshop to assist the students with their folio pieces. We are very thankful to Anne for the excellent opportunity she provided and look forward to welcoming her back to St. Benedict's in the near future.



## PARENTS IN PARTNERSHIP – LITERACY EVENING

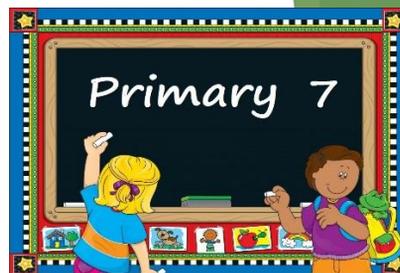
Miss Lauder (Project Leader – Literacy) planned, coordinated and presented at our first ever Literacy Information Evening for parents of S1 pupils. At this evening, Miss Lauder outlined our ambitious plans for literacy development across the school, before going on to provide interactive workshops on the most up-to-date and innovative learning and teaching strategies currently taking place in classes. There was also an opportunity for parents to get competitive during a tense game of “snappy synonyms” – a game which, while fun, allowed parents a quick and easy way to help their children improve their writing when working at home. Feedback on the evening was very positive and we look forward to further opportunities to work alongside parents and partners in the future.



## P7 INFORMATION EVENING

Faculty staff gave an entertaining and informative presentation at the recent Primary 7 Information Evening, during which staff outlined some activities that children arriving at the school next year could expect to take part in.

Once again, we thank parents and carers for their support of all of our endeavours to contribute to the strong community spirit of our school.



## LANGUAGE AMBASSADORS

A number of our senior students who have previously studied languages have been involved in our 'Language

Ambassadors' programme, whereby they have travelled to St. David's, St. Anthony's and Our Lady of Peace primary schools to support younger children with their language acquisition. The primary colleagues so appreciate our students' efforts to support their younger contemporaries, as indeed do we.



## CLUSTER LANGUAGE CAMPS

Mr McKee, alongside Mrs Berry (Head Teacher, St. David's Primary School) and Mrs. Seddon (St. Anthony's Primary School) organised a cluster-wide trip for all Primary 5 pupils to practise their Spanish at our first ever language camp. These activities took place on 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> October and mark the official launch of our cluster Modern Languages committee's efforts to work together to engage all children in language learning. The children (as well as the staff) had a fantastic time, and we look forward to further opportunities as our collaborations continue.



### S1/S2 Winners of the Young Writers' Poetry Competition

Last year, Miss McFadyen's English class were tasked to write poems about important issues that affect young people across the world. A selection of these poems were then entered into the Young Writers' 2019 "Poetry Escape" competition. Thousands of pupils from schools across Scotland and Wales applied and ten of St. Benedict's pupils were chosen for publication! These poems covered important themes such as loss, homophobia, plastic pollution, love, acceptance and hope.

The following pupils had their work published in "Poetry Escape":

- Kaitlynn Moran
- John MacDonald
- Olivia Kinnear
- Aimee Elliot
- Karis Smith
- Murrion McGuire
- James Wheeler
- Faith Devoy
- Isla Collie
- Jenny Maguire



We are incredibly proud of our pupils' achievements and hope that they continue to express themselves creatively. If you would like to enter the next Young Writers' competition, please contact Miss McFadyen in the English Department, room F004.

# Faculty of Technologies



For the latest news from the Technologies Faculty follow us on Twitter...

@st\_bensbusiness  
@StBensComputing  
@StBenedictTech

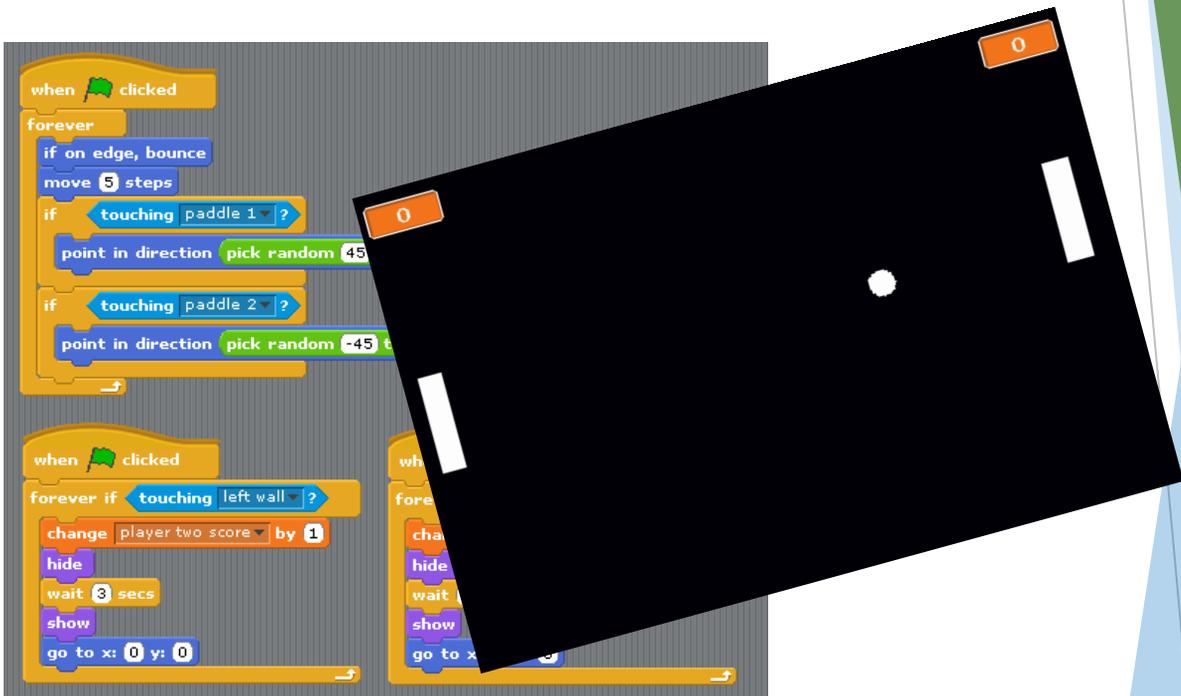
Business Education

Computing Science

Technical Education

## S2 - Computer Games Development

Pupils in S2 have been working on developing computer games using Scratch. We have been very impressed with pupil engagement and creativity during this area of study. Here is an example of pupil work (they have made the retro game "Pong"):



## Higher Business Management - CHANGE combine with Tech page

On a recent non uniform day the Higher Business Management pupils were tasked with a decision making task. Pupils were given 2 balloons, string, recycled paper and one egg! The task was to work together to create a package which would allow the egg to be dropped safely from the balcony into the street area. Pupils had a time limit and worked in groups to create their packages. As you can imagine this was a fun and memorable lesson (with a few smashed eggs along the way)! Pupils evaluated their teamwork, communication and decision skills and will remember this lesson if asked about decision making in an exam. An “eggcellent” fun lesson!

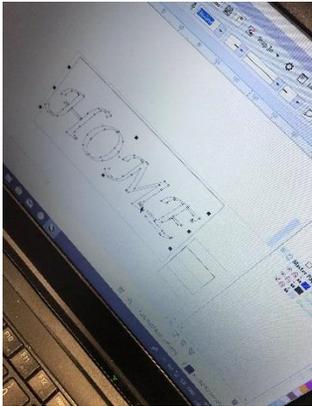


We are always looking for ways to make pupils actively participate in lessons. This aids their understanding and helps them to put into practice what they have learned in class. Here’s an example of the pupils creating a hierarchical organisational chart. We then made a few “redundancies” to demonstrate delayering and downsizing in organisations.



## Technical Department – “New equipment announcement”

The Technical Department has recently purchased a new Vinyl Cutter machine. A vinyl cutter is a type of computer-controlled machine. Like a printer it controls a nozzle, the computer controls the movement of a sharp blade over the surface of the material. This blade is used to cut out shapes and letters from sheets of thin self-adhesive plastic (vinyl). The new equipment has allowed us to modernise our BGE projects. We have also used our Vinyl cutter to support projects whole school. Below are some photographs of our pupils using the new machine.



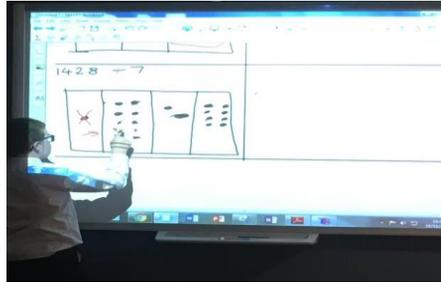
# Mathematics Department

## S1 Numeracy Club



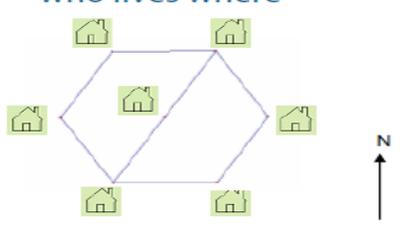
This year has seen the launch of the very first Numeracy Club for select S1 pupils in the school. These pupils are receiving targeted support (in addition to lots of healthy snacks!) to help boost their Numeracy skills which will be used across the curriculum.

So far pupils have worked on a Treasure Hunt, used dice to solve a BODMAS puzzle in addition to understanding division via Exploding Dots!



Just before Christmas the group became detectives and deciphered clues to solve the puzzle of 'Who Killed Santa?'

Here are some of the clues....

<p>To find out <b>Who Killed Santa?</b> you need to make a map of Santa Town Copy this picture and work out who lives where</p> 	<p>To find out <b>Who Killed Santa?</b> work out how far everybody walked on Christmas Eve. The distance between any two houses is 5 reindeer miles. People always go by the most direct route. Copy out this table and fill in your results -</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="742 1408 942 1543"> <tr><td>Santa</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>Blue</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>Green</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>Orange</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>Pink</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>Red</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>Yellow</td><td></td></tr> </table>	Santa		Blue		Green		Orange		Pink		Red		Yellow	
Santa															
Blue															
Green															
Orange															
Pink															
Red															
Yellow															
<p>Red went to see Santa and then left a present at Orange's House. Then he went home.</p>	<p>Orange went to deliver cards to Yellow, then Green, then went home.</p>														
<p>Yellow left his house and went to call for Green. They both went to watch a DVD at Orange's House.</p>	<p>Red lives in the house that is furthest West.</p>														
<p>Blue lives between Red and Orange.</p>	<p>Santa stayed at home all day.</p>														

It has been an enjoyable start to the Numeracy club and all are looking forward to what the year will bring.

## Maths Week Scotland 30<sup>th</sup> September – 6<sup>th</sup> October 2019

Maths Week Scotland was a fantastic week for everyone at St. Benedict's! Staff and pupils got involved in a variety of tasks and activities throughout the week. Not only did we have lots going on in our Maths classes and across all subjects that week but we had a range of visitors and trips for our pupils.

We had guest speakers talking to our senior pupils about using data in the areas of Sports and Retail - excellent presentations!

S5 Pupils attended a Maths Conference in Our Lady's HS, a group of S1-S3 pupils visited the Riverside Museum for a Numeracy Challenge, some of our S3 Pupils competed in an Enterprising Maths Challenge and we had visitors from Morrison's Construction presenting to S4.

In addition to this, we had a successful visit for some of our S5 Higher pupils to the Maths Conference 2019 and a great presentation by Strathclyde University on Network Theory to our senior pupils.

Hopefully the week tweaked some interest to explore Maths further!



# Physical Education Department

St Benedict's Junior basketball team did well in recent matches versus St Andrew's. The pupils won several cross court and full court matches and the games were played in an excellent spirit. Well done to all the players involved.



The S5/S6 Sports Leaders have had a busy term gaining coaching experience in local Primary Schools. They have been delivering various sports to pupils in Our Lady of Peace, Eat Fulton, St Fillan's, St Anthony's, Cochrane Castle, St Margaret's and Fordbank.

The group also visited Linwood On-X to support with the delivery of the first ever RL Disability Dance Cheer and Karate event. Everyone had an enjoyable and valuable experience.

The Sports Leaders also upskilled themselves recently when Chris Cleary took them through a basketball coaching session. Chris is a national tutor who has represented Scotland at U18, U23 and Senior level. He played for the Glasgow Rocks Pro Team and represented Team Scotland at the Commonwealth Games, Gold Coast Australia 2018. This was an excellent opportunity for our young people to work with someone with such a high level of experience.





## St Benedict's Extra-Curricular Programme 2019/20



DAY	TIME	ACTIVITY	STAFF	LOCATION
Monday	Lunchtime	Girls Football S1-S2 *active school league	Siobhan Active Schools Coach	Small Gym
	Lunchtime	Football S1-2	Jamie Active Schools Coach	Games Hall
	Lunchtime	Fitness Suite S3-S6	Mrs McCartney	Fitness suite
Tuesday	Lunchtime	Netball	Mrs Kearns	Games Hall
Wednesday	Lunchtime	Volleyball S1-S6	Mr Millar	Games Hall
	Lunchtime	Dance S1-S6 *Active Schools dance event	Active Schools Senior Pupils	Small Gym
Thursday	Lunchtime	Gymnastics	Miss Stott	Small Gym
Friday	Lunchtime	Basketball S1-S3	Mr McGeady	Games Hall
	Lunchtime	Table Tennis S1-S6	Mr Hardie/Mr Harvey	Small Gym

NB \*All clubs require a PE kit to participate EXCEPT table tennis. Ganteen queue jump passes available from PE for pupils attending clubs



# Social Subjects

Our pupils and teachers have been working hard to aim for excellence in social subjects this year. Follow us on twitter to keep up to date with all our events and to see excellent examples of our approach to teaching and learning @socsbstbens.

Exciting events in the New Year include:

- Anne Frank exhibition for all of our school community
- S2 trip to Dynamic Earth in Edinburgh
- Visit from Zoolab for all of our S2
- S3 visit to Paisley Sherriff Court
- Iceland trip in June



## S1 History Trip

The Battle of Bannockburn Experience

October 2019

For our S1 history course we have studied the Scottish Wars of Independence. 30 pupils visited the Battle of Bannockburn Interactive Experience in Stirling where Scottish history is brought to life. Pupils had the chance to try on armour and hold the weapons that the Scottish Army would have worn and used at the time. They also participated in the battle game and 3D re-enactment. Our pupils thoroughly enjoyed their experience and have gained a deeper understanding of the tactics used that led the Scots to victory in 1314.

## S4 Geography Trip

### Lochranza Outdoor Centre, Arran

September 2019

Some of our S4 geographers visited the Lochranza Outdoor Centre to take part in geography field work. This allowed them to gain a deeper understanding of geographical processes and to develop their enquiry skills. After arriving, pupils set off to study longshore drift along the bay at Lochranza and analysed their results later in the classroom. On the second day, pupils headed off for another successful day of collecting data, this time along the middle and lower course of the River Chalmadale. On the final day our geographers ventured into Brodick to examine the changes that have occurred in the village over the last century. Although tiring, our geographers found this trip very enjoyable and allowed them to experience geography first hand.



## Auschwitz

On the 7<sup>th</sup> November, we travelled to Poland with the Holocaust Educational Trust on a one day trip to visit Auschwitz concentration camp.

We arrived in Krakow at 10:30 and travelled to Oswiecim, the closest town to the camp. As we stood in the quiet town square, we were given old pictures of a bustling market place that was once present in the town, whose population was 56% Jewish before the war. This was our first example of the devastating effect of the Holocaust, as there has been no Jewish inhabitants in the town since 2000.



Wall of pictures

We then had a 5 minute bus journey to the Auschwitz camp. This camp now serves as a museum and as our tour guide took us to each room within the camp, we were confronted with stark reminders of the atrocity - with artefacts ranging from the victim's shoes, to a room full of their hair. It was shocking and heart-breaking and with pictures of many victims covering the walls, it was impossible to escape the tragic loss of so many lives

Following our tour of Auschwitz, we travelled to the second of the camps named Birkenau. This camp was over 3 times the size of Auschwitz and the atmosphere was chilling, as nothing has changed since the camp was liberated in 1945. We walked in the footsteps of the millions of victims along the railway line, an experience we both found to be extremely harrowing, and carried on into the woods where we visited the building in which prisoners were registered. Within this building, we saw walls filled with pictures that were brought by the victims themselves in their luggage. This was one of the most difficult parts of the trip as it made the millions of deaths feel personal to us as we looked at happy family pictures taken before the persecution began.

Following a memorial service at the end of the railway line, in which we all lit a candle in remembrance, we travelled home – returning back to Glasgow at 11:30 that evening. It took a few days for us to process what we had experienced but looking back now we are so grateful to have had the opportunity to visit the camp and we look forward to passing on the things we have learned to others. The trip opened our eyes to the atrocity and we feel that we have grown and matured as individuals as a result.



Birkenau



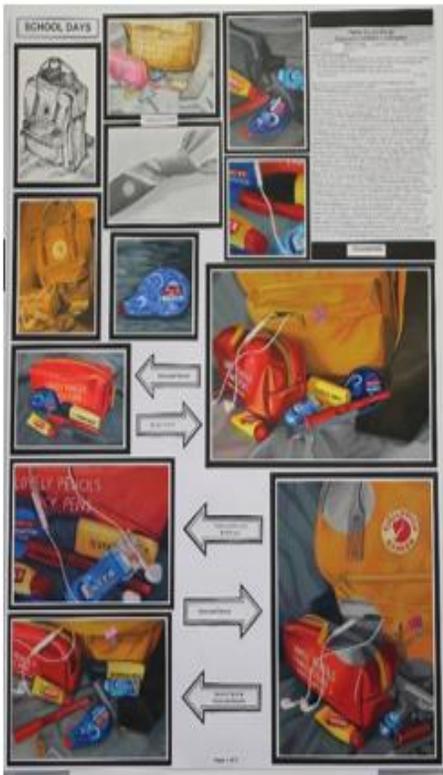
Suitcases brought by the victims

# Art and Design

 **@StBenedictsArt**



As ever, the Art & Design Department have been very busy this past term. The Awards Ceremony saw a number of students rewarded for the exam successes of the previous year; award winner for National 5 was Suman Kandola and for Higher Riona Reid both A Band 1's. Riona's Expressive Folio got 100% and Suman's Expressive Folio got 98%. Excellent achievement, well done girls.



Riona Reid's Folio



Suman Kandola's Folio

S1-S3 Art Club will start after the Christmas break. Pupils can get involved with some interesting pieces of work as well as have the opportunity to enter competitions. Pupils should bring their lunch and come to Miss McAllister's room on Wednesdays

**@StBenedictsArt** 

If you haven't already, you can follow the Art Department on Twitter [@StBenedictsArt](https://twitter.com/StBenedictsArt). This is where we can share some of the amazing work by our talented pupils.



S1 scientists were using the interactive display this week to understand the blood flow through the heart.

[#mindsetforsuccess](#) Using the interactive display this week to understand the blood flow through the heart.



The St. Benedict's S1-S4 team competed at the Royal Society of Chemistry Top of the Bench competition in November. The team won the accolade of top Renfrewshire school.



Our wonderful Science ambassadors at the P7 open evening last night who were showcasing our BGE practicals. [#mindsetforsuccess](#)



Our Higher chemists determining, through redox titration, the mass of Vit C in a tablet.

[#mindsetforsuccess](#)



Our Higher Biologists enjoying a PCR workshop  
@UofGlasgow, @ColumbaBase



Our Higher chemists determining, through redox titration, the mass of Vit C in a tablet.

[#mindsetforsuccess](#)



Our Nat 5 chemists working hard on their assignment practical. [#mindsetforsuccess](#)



## Columba Base

**WELCOME TO THE  
COLUMBA BASE**

### Reps Elected!

After the candidate's 'manifestos' were impressively presented at our Columba Base assembly, James Kelly and Aimee Morgan were elected as Senior and Junior Columba Base Reps, respectively. Their responsibilities include listening to the views of fellow pupils and proposing these at weekly Departmental Meetings.

### Columba Base Twitter

Our Twitter following continues to grow and the Tweet with Callum's music performance has now been seen over 2500 times! Follow us @ColumbaBase for updates from us.

### Clubs - Morning, Noon and Night!

All Columba Base pupils have access to our daily free Breakfast Club, very much led by our recently-qualified S3 pupil Aiden Douglas.

Lunchtime activities include board games, LEGO, reading, YouTube, Movie Club and Karaoke with Miss Adams. In the words of her hero, "it's a YES from us!". Pupils across the school are welcome.

Our Homework Club continues to run for an hour after school every Mon-Thurs.

### Cinema Trip

As part of the Nationwide IntoFilm Festival, the Columba Base pupils and staff recently went to see Captain Marvel at the Odeon, Braehead. "That was great, we should do things like this more often", said one S4 pupil. All pupils who attended behaved impeccably and were a credit to the school and the Base. The less said about the staff's behaviour the better!



***"The Columba Base...the place that gives YOU the space to be ace"***

## Asdan

Our S3 and S4 Asdan classes have been working hard this term! They have been participating in many activities to improve their communication skills, their use of technology and number handling skills. Over the next few weeks they will be creating some Christmas goodies so keep your eyes peeled for those.

We are delighted to announce that all pupils in the S4 Asdan class were awarded the Bronze Asdan award before summer. This is an amazing achievement which the pupils should be extremely proud of. This class are now well on their way to achieving their Silver award - we wish them every success!

The S3 Asdan class have enjoyed learning about the course and like the variety of tasks available. They are working towards their Bronze award and are making good progress so far. Keep up the good work!!



## **New Staff**

In August 2019 we welcomed two Newly Qualified Teachers for the 2019/2020 session. Below is a message from them on their experience so far:

“This term at St Benedict's has absolutely flew in and I can't believe I'm almost half way through my first year. Coming into a new work place is always a bit daunting but everyone has made me feel so welcome. All the staff have been so helpful and supportive. The pupils are a joy and I have loved getting to know all my classes as well as interacting with pupils around the school at some of the events, clubs and other great opportunities the school provides them. I'm of course looking forward to Christmas but also for the rest of the school year.”

**Miss McDermott, NQT Chemistry**

Graduating from University and going into the world of work will be daunting for anyone but after a few days of working at St Benedict's I quickly realised that I had nothing to worry about! All members of staff have been so welcoming and supportive and have made settling in a smooth process. The pupils are a credit to the school and I am thoroughly enjoying my time as a PE teacher in St Benedict's! I can't wait to see what the next term has in store!

**Miss Stott, NQT PE**

**..... and a Message from Mrs Daremas who retired in October:**

“A FEW VALEDICTORY WORDS .....

(from the Latin VALE meaning GOODBYE and DICTORY meaning SAYING)..... Sorry cannot help it! Really must stop this now that I am retired. However, I could not possibly depart without saying a fond farewell to the bright, shining stars who are the pupils of St Benedict's. Over the years, have worked in numerous schools and have many happy memories of them all but St Benedict's is easily my favourite. It will always have a special place in my heart because St Benedict's is such a special place. The warmth and good humour in our school community is unique and wonderful. Yes, love is in the air! So..... on this note I wish all of you brilliant Benedictinos a fantastic Christmas and New Year which brings each and every one of you your hearts desire!

Amor, Paz y Alegria a Todos,”

**Norma Daremas, Spanish**

## FEEDBACK

We welcome any feedback on the content of the Newsletter or indeed any other aspect of the work of the School.

If you wish to make an electronic reply please do so through the school email address:

**[stbenedictshighenquiries@renfrewshire.gov.uk](mailto:stbenedictshighenquiries@renfrewshire.gov.uk)**

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Pupil's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Year Group: \_\_\_\_\_

Comment:

Parent's Signature.....

Parents Name (please Print):.....

