

# INTOUCH

ST. AIDAN'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND HIGH SCHOOL

NO.33 - OCTOBER 2023



Welcome to our October issue of InTouch. Reflecting on our first half term of the academic year I can truly say that St Aidan's really does promote Life in All Its Fullness. Students are working hard in lessons and learning progress is clear to see. The extra curricular clubs, trips, visits, and events continue to play a part in the rich educational experience we offer.

This month, I would like to give a special mention to our School Nurse Mrs Debbie Powell, who leaves us after working at St. Aidan's for 25 years. We know that many St. Aidan's families will have benefitted from her care during this time and on behalf of the entire school community, we would like to say a big thankyou for your service.

With such a long and full half-term I hope that you and your families take the time to relax and find peace as we all recharge our batteries ready for the lead up to Christmas.

May God's blessing go with you all today,

As we begin our half-term holiday.

Keep us safe and give us rest.

So, we start again renewed and refreshed.

Fill your homes with health, joy, and love,

And guide our hearts from above.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Aidan Owe'.

Headteacher

## World Mental Health Day

Every year we celebrate World Mental Health Day on the 10th October. The theme for 2023, set by the World Foundation of Mental Health, is 'Mental health is a universal human right'. World Mental Health Day is about raising awareness of mental health and driving positive change for everyone's mental health.

It's also a chance to talk about mental health, how we need to look after it, and how important it is to get help if you are struggling. The Foundation has promoted Tea and Talk this year - encouraging us to have a chat and promote talking.

Within school, the Beacon had an interactive display outside their doors for second half of lunchtime. There wasn't traditional tea, but they provided a fun way to share positive conversations around our wellbeing.



## Excellent exam results now confirmed

The Department for Education released the summer 2023 GCSE results last week and we were thrilled to have confirmation that our headline statistics put us in a very favourable position within both the local and national contexts. We are extremely proud of the achievements of all of our students, grateful for the continuous support of parents/carers, and want to thank our teaching and support staff for the critical role they have played throughout years 7 to 11 in educating and preparing this cohort for external exams.

Statistics in brief:

24% of all GCSE grades awarded were grades 9-8  
 41% of all GCSE grades awarded were grades 9-7  
 70% achieved a grade 5 or more in English and Maths  
 0.52 Progress 8 measure  
 59.2 Attainment 8 measure

(If you would like further information on any of these measures, they are explained on [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))

It is wonderful to see so many students who have returned to study in the Associated Sixth Form and we wish every success to those who have moved on to new places to study/work. We are looking forward to celebrating with our former year 11 students and their parents/carers on the evening of November 8th at 7pm, at the GCSE Presentation of Certificates.

## Open Day 2023



On Saturday 14 October, we threw open the doors and gave prospective students and their families a warm St. Aidan's welcome. The sun was shining, and school looked fantastic.

In the morning there was an opportunity for Year 11s thinking about joining the Associated Sixth Form to have a look around the St. Aidan's site. This was particularly useful for parents of current Year 11 students who perhaps haven't been into school for a while. It also provided an insight for students who are new to St. Aidan's; they were able to witness the fantastic facilities here along with the wealth of post-16 subjects choices and opportunities.

The afternoon session welcomed current Year 6 students and their families to meet staff and students to experience the abundance of lessons and extended curriculum clubs on offer. The Information Evening held the previous week, gave a more detailed picture of life at St. Aidan's.

Who better to describe our Open Day than Headteacher Mrs Dover who enjoyed her first ever Open Day:

"Our Open Day last Saturday was one of the most wonderful school events I have ever been involved in. We welcomed hundreds of prospective families through our doors; our choirs were singing; our orchestras were playing; our sports teams were competing; and our student helpers were showcasing the incredible work that goes on day in day out here at St Aidan's. It was a true representation of our school vision, showing how we really do strive to be a centre of educational excellence where each and every member of our community knows the gift of Life in All its Fullness"



## New Chamber Choir

Congratulations to the newest members of our school Chamber Choir who auditioned to be part of the choir and have been selected! The Year 12 students who have joined this year are: Emily Dennis, Chloe Brett, Ellora Turner, Catie Dresler, Seren Hill, Amelie Coyle, Lucy Brown, Emily Hughes, Olivia Hodgetts, Jack Brierley, Angus Bailey-Hague, Robert Smith, Cole Beadle, Kieran McQuire, Arthur Harrison, George Thomson, Kate Thompson, Flossie Davies, Annabel Baxter, Martha Ellis, Jazz Bain, Maisie Groundwater, Lucy Amos, Amelia Moran, Sophie Baker, Krish Deshra -Beerachee, Jude Bowlas, Jae Ellison, Jeannott Gantier-Houston and Frankie Jackson.

So far, we have enjoyed listening to you sing at the school Harvest Festival and the spectacular Golden Gala at the Royal Hall (pictured below) and we look forward to future performances. including the joint Christmas Concer with Vocalis, Light up a Life Service at St Michaels Hospice and our Carol Service at Christ Church.

Chamber Choir celebrated its 30 year anniversary last year. and rehearses after school on Monday and Friday lunchtimes led by Mrs Leonard who said, "It is an absolute privilege to direct these committed and enthusiastic Sixth Form students. Each rehearsal is a joy and I can't wait for our performances later this term with lots more planned in 2024.



## Harvest Festival

On 11 October, we joined together in Constance Green Hall and celebrated Harvest. We gave thanks for many things including our new Headteacher Mrs Dover as we sang, prayed and enjoyed the talents of our wonderful students.

Our newly formed Junior and Chamber Choirs sounded fantastic and a massive well done to all the readers, actors and dancers who contributed to the evening.

We were thrilled to welcome Wynn James one of the founding members of Harrogate Foodbank, to speak at the service; he told us all about the wonderful work they do. Harrogate Foodbank works alongside churches in our community supported by The Trussell Trust to combat poverty. Huge thanks to anyone who contributed to our collection, this has now been collected by Harrogate Foodbank for distribution to those in need.

## The Little Mermaid



Rehearsals are going brilliantly for The Little Mermaid and Director Mr McCallum and the cast are enjoying bringing the hilarious script to life! The scenery and costumes are also being created by a fantastic team of staff and students. This is a student-led production with over 100 students involved in the cast, the band, costume and set production, technical team and stage crew.

There are 5 shows to choose from: Wed 22 Nov at 7pm in CGH, Thu 23 Nov at 7pm in CGH, Fri 24 Nov at 7pm in CGH, Sat 25 Nov at 2pm in CGH (Family Matinee Special) and Sat 25 Nov at 7pm in CGH. This is a family friendly show suitable for all ages. Tickets are available on the school website.

If you wish to book accessible seats for those with mobility needs, please contact main reception on 01423 885814.

## National Poetry Day

Every year, we celebrate National Poetry Day by focusing on how language can be used to express our own feelings and explore the feelings of others.

This year, the theme was "Refuge", which was introduced by Mrs Parris in assemblies for years 7-11. Pupils were asked to consider different kinds of refuge, who might be in need of refuge and where we might find it. We explored the concept as it applies to our school community and also to the world around us, making refugees the focus of our collective worship.

Pupils were then given the opportunity to develop and express their ideas in their English lessons, writing their own poems, which some then chose to continue independently. Over 60 pupils chose to enter our poetry competition and submitted work of an extremely high standard; it was incredibly hard to choose between them, but the overall winners selected were Noah (Year 10), Lexi (Year 9) and Grace (Year 7). There were also ten entries awarded "Highly Commended" status. All of them will be receiving prizes very soon and we will be displaying them in the library. Well done to everyone who took part in this event!



# A Golden Gala to Celebrate 50 Years of the Associated Sixth Form



The Associated Sixth Form was created in 1973 as a unique venture in ecumenical education, aiming to provide a Christian environment in which all students who wish to remain at school beyond the age of 16 could experience the expertise, experience and resources of two excellent schools.

50 years on, the Associated Sixth Form is going from strength to strength and a Golden Gala was planned that would mark this occasion by bringing together exciting collaborations between the most experienced, gifted and talented performers and alumni students across both schools. Taking place at The Royal Hall, this spectacular event was performed to a packed house who entered into the celebrations with gusto.

St. Aidan's, Head of Music Mrs Elliott and her fantastic team of Mrs Leonard, Mrs Collett and Mr Elliott, worked around the clock alongside Mr Ratcliffe and Miss Longbottom from St John Fisher to rehearse with musical ensembles including Symphony Orchestra, Senior Choir, Chamber Choir and Swing Band, performing a huge range of pieces. Miss Miller's Year 12 Dancers interpreted stunning choreography to the fitting track 'Golden' by Harry Styles. Meanwhile, Mrs Levahn's A Level drama students performed some challenging extracts from the Greek Tragedy, 'Antigone' with impressive ease and projection.

Former student, chemistry teacher and now professional musical theatre actor, Richard Upton compered the Gala expertly and even stepped in to sing 'Mack the Knife' when former student and musical theatre star, Frankie Bounds couldn't make it due to Storm Babette. Performances from other alumni students included 'Les Miserables' star, Jo Stephenson singing selections from Wicked and Joseph as well as professional clarinettist Andy Mellor with his rousing solo in the jazz classic 'Sing Sing Sing'.

Towards the end of the concert, every space was taken up with performers coming together for an Andrew Lloyd Webber medley. To end this fabulous evening, the audience were on their feet to sing together 'For All the Saints' an arrangement created specifically for the evening by former St. Aidan's Director of Music, Mark Pallant.

Well done to all who took part in the concert, one audience member felt it was 'like being at a concert at The Royal Albert Hall!' Thanks must also go to all who joined us for this celebration. We are all proud of the enduring success of the Associated Sixth Form and were thrilled to celebrate this notable milestone in style!

## Work Experience News

Following the 2024 Work Experience Programme launch in Year 11 assembly early last month, plus subsequent Form Tutorials, there has been an enthusiastic response with over 160 students signing up to take part. Six Year 12 students also came along to the Parents Information Evening to talk about their varied and hugely beneficial experiences last summer and eloquently evidencing their maturity and tangible work related skills in placements at organisations such as Leeds General Infirmary, the British Library and Specsavers.

An Infographic Evaluation of last years programme can be viewed online and includes glowing testimonials from past employers:

"...he was an absolute dream - very polite and really threw himself into the job, using his initiative in quieter times" Bettys Cafe

"...he has been really interested in everything, asked lots of questions and been a great help to us all in a very short staffed week. I am sure he will go far." Virgin Bank

"...she has been a pleasure to work with. She is enthusiastic, caring, confident and interested. A credit to the school." St James's Hospital"

"...he has produced draft responses to constituents, carried out some demographic research and was a great help in our busy constituency office" Richard Burgon MP

The deadline for consent forms to arrange a placement next summer is officially Friday 27th October but it has been a busy half term so any Year 11 student still hoping to join in this fantastic opportunity should contact the Careers Department direct.

Work Experience Handbooks have been handed out to all those already enrolled, containing lots of useful help, advice and frequently asked questions about the process. Along with our Work Experience Policy and other current documentation, this is available to download from the Work Experience page of the school website.



## Restart a Heart

Year 8 had a valuable lesson in CPR this month when visitors from the Yorkshire Ambulance Service gave a demonstration as part of their 'Restart a Heart' initiative.

Once Year 8 were able to show they could perform CPR, they were given a certificate.

CPR can double the chances of survival when someone suffers a heart attack. Huge thanks to the team who visited us.



## Dance Workshop

We have been very fortunate to have two former students come in to lead workshops teaching the repertoire of the shows that they are currently working on.

Lydia Bradd trained in Musical Theatre at Urdang Academy after the Associated Sixth Form and is currently on the UK tour of Charlie and the Chocolate Factory; she led a workshop with Year 10 GCSE Dancers and Year 13 Performing Arts BTEC group.

We have also been visited by professional musical theatre actor, Finton Flynn who trained at Trinity Laban in Musical Theatre after the Associated Sixth Form and is currently understudy the part of Jamie New in the UK Tour of Everybody is Talking About Jamie. He worked with Year 12 BTEC Performing Arts students and Year 12 A Level Dancers.



## Students appear on BBC TV

We were excited to hear that a number of our students have been involved in the filming of BBC TV series Jamie Johnson FC including Year 8's James De Bussy (pictured here) who took part in the first episode of the series. The series is about children who dream about being a footballer and promotes the message that you must never giving up hope. The series is available to watch on BBC iPlayer.





## Girls Football News

Congratulations to the Year 9 girls football team who beat Ilkley Grammar 9-1 in the 2nd round of the English Schools Cup. A special mention to Darcey who scored 6 of those goals. The team progress onto the next round.

Later this month, they secured their place in the second round of the County Cup winning 4-1 against Tadcaster Grammar.

Meanwhile, the Under 15s have beaten Prince Henry's 6-4 in the second round of the English Schools Competition. The girls dominated the game for long spells, particularly in the second half. Immy latched on to some quality crosses and through balls from the midfield to end up with 4 goals to her name. Great performances from all the team!



## Boys Football News

The Year 7 boys football teams have had a successful start at St. Aidan's. Both A and B teams had matches at the start of the month. The A team played with great spirit in wet conditions and showed great determination to run out 6-2 winners in the first round of the County Cup. Meanwhile, the Y7 B team played their first game in the ESFA Cup against St John Fisher. All the boys played really well against a good SJF team and after coming back from 1-0 down managed to win 4-3. Well done to all!

As the month progressed, the A Team had another success in the second round of the ESFA Cup winning 7-4! Keep up the good work lads!

The Year 9 A team beat St John Fishers 2-0 in ESFA 2nd round this month. A well-deserved win and redemption for our 4-0 defeat last year. The team progress through to the next round. The Year 10 boys football team played Queen Ethelbergers in the second round of the ESFA Schools Cup. St Aidan's came back from 4-3 down in the last minute to force extra time and penalties where St Aidan's won 9-8 to go through to the third round. Special mention to Ollie who scored 3 goals and Adam who not only saved QE's penalty but also stepped up to score the winning penalty.

It's also been a great month for the St. Aidan's first eleven football team who beat Garforth 5-2 in the ESFA cup. The team played some quality football and progress onto the next round.



## Netball News

Congratulations to the Under 13s netball team who are through to next round of School Sports Magazine competition after successfully beating South Hunsley 29-1 today.

The Year 9 netball teams competed in the Area Tournament this month -The A team finished 3rd and the B team finished 2nd. Well done to all who played!

Meanwhile, the U16 girls netball team came 3rd in the Area Tournament - fantastic work girls!

# Hockey Round Up

Well done to the U13 girls hockey team who travelled to Queen Mary's in the lovely autumn weather for the Area Tournament this month. All of the games were very close with only a few goals scored and the girls finishing a well-respected 4th. Thank you to Queen Mary's School for hosting and congratulations to them and Cundall Manor for qualifying through to the County round.

Congratulations to the U18 Girls Hockey team who travelled to Queen Margaret's this month to play in the County Tournament. The team played well together to finish runners up to Ampleforth with some closely contested games against Ripon Grammar, QM and Ashville. The team progress through to the Yorkshire Semi Final round in November.



## Aaron steps up for 1st Team

We are very proud of Year 11 student Aaron Brompton who has stepped up from junior hockey straight into the Men's first team at Harrogate Hockey Club.

Aaron is on the England Hockey Player Pathway and is part of the Durham University Talent Academy U18s squad. Aaron was also voted Harrogate Hockey Club Mens Member of the Month this month!

Look out for him in this week's Harrogate Advertiser.



## Dates for your diary

|        |  |               |                                  |        |                         |
|--------|--|---------------|----------------------------------|--------|-------------------------|
| 8 Nov  | GCSE certificates presentation evening | 18 Nov        | Children in Need                 | 29 Nov | Y13 Mocks begin         |
| 9 Nov  | Y7 Meet the Form Tutor                 | 18 Nov        | Y7-9 Boys football Bolton School | 30 Nov | Y7 Public Speaking Comp |
| 14 Nov | Year 11 whole year photo               | 22 Nov-25 Nov | Little Mermaid                   |        |                         |



We hope you have enjoyed this edition of **INTOUCH**.

Thank you for your feedback so far; please do send any further comments or suggestions to Kate Caine ([K.Caine@staidans.co.uk](mailto:K.Caine@staidans.co.uk))