

INTOUCH

ST. AIDAN'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND HIGH SCHOOL

NO.36 - JANUARY 2024



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I am delighted and very grateful for such a fantastic start to 2024! Everyone returned to school after the Christmas break, rested and raring to go, none more so than our Year 11s who approached their Year 11 mock exams with an impressive level of maturity; well done we are very proud of you all. Thank you to the exams team, the year 11 staff and everyone else involved in supporting our students through this important time.

As the month progressed the good news seemed to keep coming in. We were delighted to hear that yet again St Aidan's has been placed in the top 200 schools nationally for the opportunities we provide in PE and school sport. We were placed at number 35 in in the School Sports Magazine's Top 200 and the 9th best state school in the country.

Our Year 13s continue to celebrate many offers from various universities, apprenticeships and places of work including a bumper 18 Oxbridge offers. We are thrilled for each and every one of our students as they plan for life beyond St Aidan's.

Our Junior Music Residential was another huge success and it was wonderful to hear the students come together in York to display their talents. Again, another big thank you to all those staff who make these opportunities possible and to all the parents for your continued unfaltering support.

Life in all its fullness is evident around every corner in school as staff and students go about their daily business and we hope you enjoy a flavour of it in this edition of InTouch.


Headteacher

Wellbeing and New Chapters

In The Beacon we have been focussing on new challenges. We reflect on that it may be the feeling rather than the goal itself that benefits us. So looking at the year ahead the questions we may wish to ask ourselves are:

How do we want to feel this year?
 What would that feeling allow me to do?
 What's currently stopping me from feeling this way?

By reframing this thinking this enables students to focus on their emotional mindset and the steps towards meeting our goals.

New Chapters - improves emotional resilience- a challenge worth taking for 2024.



Holocaust Memorial Day

Each year, 27 January is Holocaust Memorial Day. It is the day for everyone to remember the millions of people murdered in the Holocaust, under Nazi Persecution and in other genocides that followed.

In the lead up to this day, Dr Murray held moving assemblies for every year group enabling us to reflect and learn about the theme of this year's HMD – the fragility of freedom.



Crochet Club News

Crochet club have been busy creating squares to make this beautiful blanket! It will be donated to the Cone Exchange as part of their knitting project, which provides items for a Warm Bank in Scarborough. We are really grateful to The Cone Exchange who have provided us with loads of yarn and crochet hooks. PH5 is always full of happy crocheters on Friday lunchtimes, and everyone is welcome!



Applied Science Field Trip

Earlier this month, BTEC Applied Science students undertook their Biology fieldwork at Oak Beck. Everyone did really well on what was a cold day! Well done to all the students who took part and many thanks to Dr Bryant and Mrs Mortimer for guiding the students throughout.



FLG Go Birdwatching

The RSPB's Big Garden Birdwatch is the world's largest garden wildlife survey and over the past 45 years, volunteers from across the UK have helped the RSPB by tracking the birds living in their gardens and local green spaces. It takes place on the 26 – 28 January and The Foundation Learning Group joined in with the help of Mrs Connell and Mrs Ainsley. With Hot Chocolate in hand, the team roamed the school grounds logging different birds they could see in a one hour period. The data is then submitted and used by the RSPB to better understand how to help certain species.



All Staff Conference



On 8 January, the 9 schools that are proud to be part of Yorkshire Causeway Schools Trust came together at St. Aidan's for an all-staff conference. The aim was to learn, develop and connect as they started the Spring term. Keynote sessions supported thinking on equality, diversity and inclusion and how all the schools could further foster a feeling of belonging.

CEO of Yorkshire Causeway Schools Trust, Jane Goodwin said; "It was wonderful to be able to gather together in person and connect with each other. We are already an inclusive organisation, with our schools doing some great things but it was a great opportunity to have time to reflect and plan how we can develop this even further."

St. Aidan's Headteacher Sian Dover was delighted to host the gathering of schools saying; "There are exciting times ahead of all of us and it was wonderful to celebrate this with our colleagues from the other Trust schools."

Film Course for Ren



Year 12 student Ren Arnold has been accepted onto a British Film Industry course in animation and video effects. The course is a residential and based in London and course participants will make an animated film or VFX sequence and receive bespoke careers training. Ren will also attend networking events and screenings and receive one year's careers support following the experience. It takes place over February half term and we can't wait to hear all about it!

Selling Cakes for Cancer



Well done to Year 7 student Bethany Mcdonagh who raised over £300 in aid of Cancer Research! She did this in memory of her Grandma who passed away from cancer in April 2023. What an amazing thing to do Bethany – we are very proud of you!

Norland Nannying for Anieke



Congratulations to Year 13 student Anieke Van Breemen who has been accepted at the College for Norland Nannies in Bath. Founded in 1892, Norland prides itself on being world-famous for providing the very best early years training and education.

The Prince and Princess of Wales employed a Norland Nanny for their three children and they are known to be the nanny of choice for many of the rich and famous.

Anieke is studying for A Levels in Psychology, Religious Studies and Health and Social Care and her ambition is to work with children. We are thrilled for her and wish her all the best!

A Helping Hand: Year 12 AA Talk

Year 12 students attended a talk hosted by Alcoholics Anonymous in Constance Green on Wednesday 31st January. Representatives from the AA shared their personal experiences dealing with alcoholism and their inspiring road to recovery. The talk ended with representatives responding to thoughtful and perceptive questions from Year 12 students.

We're so grateful to our Year 12 teaching staff for organising important talks such as these.

Olivia Sky Diving For Frank's Fund



Olivia Parris in Year 13 and her dad, Mike, are present and past students of St. Aidan's. Frank Ashton was in the school year above Olivia and although they did not know him personally, both she and her dad have been greatly moved by his story and the way he continues to touch so many people's lives.

As Olivia prepares to leave St Aidan's at the end of this school year, 32 years after her dad left, they decided that they wanted to raise some money for Frank's Fund to contribute to the amazing work it does in funding research into bone cancer. Since Mike is terrified of heights, obviously they thought that jumping out of a plane would be an appropriate way to achieve that goal!

If you would like to donate, please click here.



Zawadi Update

by Angus Douglas
Year 13



This last couple of months, Zawadi have been very busy and continue to be in 2024! We had our hugely anticipated annual candy canes event back in mid-December. It's always popular with the lower years and teachers as well. Over the 3-day period, we managed to sell 2 bulk orders and the remaining ones from last year's event. At one point, we managed to go from around 70 candy canes to just three in the space of 20 minutes. It was hugely successful, and we broke the previous record for total profits made from this particular event, with a total of £583.05! It's now down to the lower Sixth cohort to beat that in next year's event.

Another event which is always successful and inspiring to those involved, is Primary Pounds. We have held it already; earlier in December at Pannal School, and this month we visited Richard Taylor School. It proved hugely successful and inspiring to the students at both. Primary Pounds involves going to local primary schools in the area and teaching the younger students about business, enterprise, as well as entrepreneurship. Members of Zawadi take the lead in what's an interactive and inclusive affair. Each Year 5 or 6 child is given £1 in starting capital and they collaborate in groups, and in doing so, they learn about the importance of team roles and why each is key, later doing a charity event that will fundraise for the charity Artizan International.



This year we focused on Peru, and so children were learning about how their efforts benefit Peruvians, and each child got a certificate which rewarded the teamwork and efforts.

Zawadi's upcoming dates:
 5th February week - Valentine's stall: Turns out Love hearts are hugely popular! We will also provide a delivery service, like we did for the candy canes.
 21st February - International day: This day's activities will range from teachers and languages, to cultural clothing and even a fairly unusual biscuit tombola.
 29th February - Y7 disco: Always an exciting one for the first years in school, as for many it will be a first for late partying! Food, sweets and juice provided.
 18th March week - Easter egg tombola: One of the most, if not the most, popular stalls we hold every year, people love the Cadbury chocolate eggs.



Year 8 Half Faces Exhibition

Year 8 have worked incredibly hard practising their tonal work and as a result have produced these outstanding half face drawings.

We are incredibly proud of the time, effort and skills that have gone into the pieces by all the students. They are all currently on display in the school entrance and in the art block. Well done Year 8!



18 Oxbridge Offers for our Year 13s



We are incredibly proud of all our Sixth Form students as they receive university and apprenticeship offers, secure employment and plan gap years.

Congratulations to 18 current Year 13 students from the Associated Sixth Form who have received offers of places at Oxford and Cambridge. All our Oxbridge applicants deserve to be commended for their academic focus and commitment they showed throughout this demanding process. They are a credit to all those who have inspired and supported them.

There were nine offers from each university. Cambridge offers: Jerram Bishop, SA, Chemical Engineering and Biotechnology, Joseph Bunkle, SA, Geography, Ethan Cowell, SA, Engineering, Harry Edmonson, SA Natural Sciences, Lizzy Gibbin, SA, HSPS, Leah Helm, SA, Natural Sciences, George Papadopoulos, SA, Natural Sciences, Theo Simpson, SA, Natural Sciences. Oxford: Peter Abeyawardene SA, Chemistry, Katie Ball, SJF, Engineering, Emilia Dorojan SJF, Biomedical Sciences, Eabha Gavaghan, SJF, PPE, Oscar Gouldson, SA, Physics, Jamie Green, SA, PPE, Phoebe Hartley, SA, Biology, Stanley King, SA, Economics and Management and Maddy Wilson, SA, French.

KS3 Music Residential



The whole music department helped to deliver the 19th annual Junior Music Residential leading up to an outstanding concert on Saturday 27th January in York.

The residential creates an opportunity for all KS3 instrumentalists; wind, string and percussion players to take part in an intensive period of rehearsals and social activities designed to bring students together and create the discipline and relationships necessary to successfully work together in our junior ensembles.

Forty-five students from Years 7-10 took part over three days in hours of rehearsals as well as team building games, a scavenger hunt, ten pin bowling and a talent show. The joys of living together and sharing some domestic responsibilities also helped to create a sense of togetherness that was evident in the performances of the ensembles at the concert on Saturday. This featured the Junior Band alongside the Strings Ensemble. The Four Seasons String Quartet and a solo piano performance by Magnus Thrower. All of the items in the concert were exceptional and many schools would have been delighted to be able to muster the quality of musicianship on display from their senior ensembles.

Thanks are due to all colleagues in the music department; Mr and Mrs Elliott, Mrs Leonard and Mrs Collett as well as Miss Johns, the schools peripatetic string teacher and Mrs McDonald who led much of the trip admin and organization.

Students and parents clearly demonstrated their appreciation for these colleagues through their generous applause and many comments and messages but the stars of the show were, as always, the students who not only demonstrated their commitment and passion for making music, but also had fun and lived our schools values and mission throughout the whole trip.

We are already looking forward to next years residential which we will ensure, as the 20th edition of this annual event will be a landmark celebration.



Associated Sixth Form Information Evening



On Thursday 18 January, staff and students from the Associated Sixth Form hosted prospective students and their families for the Associated Sixth Form Information Evening.

We were thrilled to offer a warm welcome to a huge number of both newcomers and families who were already familiar with the school. All were invited to individual subject talks, to chat with Sixth Form staff, students and our careers team. We hope everyone who visited found the evening useful and would be delighted if it has encouraged many to join the Associated Sixth Form in September 2024.

Celebrating ASDAN



Ready, steady, climb!

On Friday 19th January, Year 10 ASDAN students enjoyed a lively and fun-filled afternoon of indoor roped climbing at the Parthian Climbing Centre at Hornbeam Park in Harrogate.

Students were kitted out with all the necessary climbing gear (helmets and harnesses galore!) before taking part in a dynamic warm-up routine with the wonderful Parthian instructors. From high knees to energetic star jumps, it's safe to say all students were well and truly ready to explore new heights together!

Instructors then split students into two groups to tackle different climbing walls and routes. Each student took it in turns to climb while another did a great job as "belayer" on the ground. All groups ascended the climbing wall (some to the very top!) with so much courage and determination. We were very impressed with how quickly every student found their feet, especially as this was a first-time climbing experience for most.

Rock climbing is a great way for students to build resilience and confidence alongside essential skills such as teamwork and problem solving. Students will have the opportunity to take part in climbing sessions for the next few weeks and we look forward to seeing how they progress!

The ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network) course has run for many years at St Aidan's and aims to support young people to achieve meaningful learning outcomes through offering flexible ways of developing personal, social and work-related abilities. Each element of the programme is skill-based and is designed to elevate students to achieve their goals while raising their self-confidence. ASDAN plays a vital role in preparing students for Post 16 and work. Students can develop their CV, work on job applications and practice interview skills with our careers team. We also offer extra work experience for Year 10 students.

The programme is especially tailored to the specific needs and interests of the students who opt into it and offers a wide range of activities that aim to develop essential life skills from working with others to problem-solving.

Curriculum News: Maths



In Maths so far this academic year, Year 7 and 9 are about to explore some of the applications of number, using the techniques they have used in previous years and applying them to new situations.

Year 7 will use their arithmetic skills when solving problems with area, averages and percentages, while Year 9 will extend what they know about percentages to cover real life problems involving exchange rates and compound interest. Meanwhile, Year 8 will be expanding their algebra skills by studying brackets, equations and inequalities, this will give them an opportunity to revisit other topics such as angles, shapes and directed numbers.

All three year groups will use different representations to link what they already know to their new learning and will be given opportunities to develop their problem-solving skills.

As a department we will be having another recruitment drive for our extra-curricular activities.

We have Maths club in an IT room every Wednesday, where we use the resources provided by Simon Singh to explore new areas of Maths such as KenKen puzzles and Mathematical curiosities such as the answer to $1 - 1 + 1 - 1 + 1 - 1 + \dots$. There is also Mrs Candy's Chess club every Tuesday in MA9 where students of all abilities can develop their skills.



Oxford's Merton College Choral Workshop Day



Congratulations go to Annabel Baxter (Year 12) who has been chosen to attend Oxford's Merton College Choral Workshop Day on the 8th February. The Workshop Day is an open day for students in Year 12 interested in becoming Choral Scholars at Merton College. The day will give students a chance to experience a day of workshops with singing teachers and the Director of Music, learn more about life as a Choral Scholar, visit Merton and take a look around, as well as sing Evensong with the Merton College Choir.

9th State School in the Country for Sport



This month, the School Sport magazine released the top sporting schools for 2023. Last year we were 33rd in the list and this year we are 35th. This has put us as the 9th state school in the country (out of around 4200). The consistency of being high up in this list for the last few years is testament to the dedication and hard work of Head of PE Mr Strover, our PE department, other staff who give their time to sport in school and of course, our fantastic students. Congratulations to all involved! Mr Strover answered some questions about St. Aidan's sport for the magazine:

What recent achievements have you been particularly proud of?

We are proud of all our achievements each year. The students and staff work hard to try and be competitive in all the competitions we enter. The thing that we are most proud of is the inclusive nature of our Extra Curricular programme. It is broad so there are options for lots of students and all students are encouraged to attend.

What specific programmes have contributed to your success?

Our Athletics and Cross-Country programmes have been strong for many years, we often have multiple teams reaching the National finals. We often have teams in Football, Hockey, Netball and Basketball that do well in National Competitions. In recent years, our Squash teams have also had some success.

How much difference does a good teacher coach make to a school team?

A good teacher makes a big difference, we are fortunate to have a fantastic PE department and some other colleagues in school who run various sports. Although high quality coaching in training sessions and matches will ensure the teams progress and improve, creating the right environment that is supportive, caring, and inclusive means that all students no matter what their experience or ability are able to develop physically, socially, and mentally.

In what ways has sports provision changed and improved at the school over the years?

We have tried to add different/alternative sports to our programme that would suit different types of students. We have also found that due to pressures of teaching increasing that we have fewer teachers from other departments who have enough time to devote to supporting the programme.

What sort of sports facilities do you have?

Our school is an old site, and we have a traditional PE set up. A standard Gym and Sporthall, some field and outdoor court space. We were lucky to get a new 3G pitch built a couple of years ago which has had a massive impact.

How important are your school/club links?

In Harrogate there is a strong junior sport club network. Lots of our students play for sports clubs outside of school. We have links with lots of those clubs and they have a big impact in the students sporting journey. It has been nice to have a community use agreement with a local football club to use our 3G pitch. The local cricket clubs are brilliant at allowing us to use their facilities as otherwise we would not be able to offer this as an option for students.

How important is competitive sport at the school?

We believe that it is important and all students at the school get the opportunity to play competitive sports. We build interform competitions in various sports into our curriculum throughout the year and as I have said previously, we try and offer all students who attend sports clubs the chance to compete for school.

If someone could do anything to improve school sport, what would it be?

Fund it properly. As we all know funding for schools has reduced significantly over the last 10 years through various means. This makes supporting an extra-curricular programme become more difficult for the school. The cost of covering lessons, transporting students, competition entry fees, officials etc have all increased and the budget is decreasing. This is making it difficult to sustain.

What are your plans for the future?

Our plans now are to try and sustain what we offer, it is of huge importance to the students and can lead to amazing outcomes when they leave school. I have a feeling we like a lot of schools will be forced to streamline our programme and reduce opportunities which will be a shame.

KS3 Squash



The boys have had a great season so far, they have dominated all of the matches they have been part of. They won the first round comfortably and played in the regional round to try and book a place in the top 8 schools in the country at the National Finals. In the regional round they again performed admirably only losing 1 match out of 15. They are hoping to have a good run in the National Final. Well done lads. The team were: Joe Thompson Year 8, Thomas Brook Year 9, David Drinkwater Year 9, Ted King Year 7 and Will Thomas Year 9.

Fencing Star



Congratulations to Year 7 student Hayes Leung who represents Yorkshire in Fencing and this month won Silver at the Yorkshire Fencing BYC Qualifier. This was in the under 12 age group at the Women's Foil event. This is fantastic news – well done Hayes!

Netball News

Congratulations to Year 10 student Jess Warren who has been selected for the Under 15s Rhinos Netball Squad. 178 girls trialled for the squad and only 20 were selected – what an achievement! Well done Jess!

Basketball



The Year 11 Basketball team went to the County Finals and finished in 2nd place with 1pt wins over Bootham and Ryedale Schools. Fulford school were the eventual winners but the boys showed excellent determination and skill to finish runners up. This has finished a great run of matches for them where they have beaten Ashville, Danum and St John Fishers. Well done. The team were: Alexander Holloway, Jack Warren, Leo Platas Buchan, Nicholas Kanatas, Otis Baker, Harry Cairns, James Brown and William Clowe.

Cross Country

15 runners from school went to Whitby for the county trials, across all age groups. Frank Darcy, Mia Hartley, Alice Turner, Arran Robson, Matthew Bunkle, Niamh Robinson, Luke Shacklock and Jack Brierley all qualified for the North Yorkshire team - very well done.

A small group of runners took on the hail and wind, as well as other schools in Aireville Park this month. Year 7, 8 and 9 runners all ran well; with Arran Robson 2nd in the Year 8/9 race, leading his team into 2nd place too. Mia Hartley was 2nd girl home in the Year 7/8 girls competition.

Badminton



The Year 10 girls played in the Yorkshire Final against Tipton School in Sheffield. They all played well to win the regional final to get to the Yorkshire final and came up against a top team and ended up losing the tie 3-2 missing out on a place in the National finals. A great effort from the players. Well done. The team were: Jemima Kingston, Lucy Parker, Millie Adrian-Horrocks and Winnie McKenzie.

Dates for your diary

Sat 3 Feb	Swing band at Great North Big Band Festival	Mon 19 Feb	Return to school
Tue 6 Feb	Jazz Night 7pm CGH	Wed 21 Feb	EPQ Showcase CGH
Fri 9 Feb	Break up	Wed 28 Feb	Year 9 Options Evening
Sun 11 Feb	Y13 Ski trip to Andorra	Thur 29 Feb	Year 7 Disco



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)