



Dear Parents, Benefactors and Friends,

I often worry about the small size of our school and the financial difference it makes. Fewer pupils means less money to pay the bills. However, during the past year, it has proved a blessing in disguise. Government restrictions have made life very challenging for schools. Our small class numbers have certainly made things much easier. During the lockdown closure, we were able to provide structured online learning to our absent pupils. It is easier to keep tabs on each child when there are fewer to worry about. I dread to think of the attention and care that pupils in classes of 30+ can receive.

Our teachers have been in constant contact with pupils, setting work each week and guiding their progress. Online learning is certainly no alternative to classroom teaching, but we have been able to contain the inevitable effects on the children's learning and general education better than most schools that struggle with overpopulated classes.

Surprisingly, our primary pupils scored highly in their end of term assessments, indicating that they have progressed in their learning despite lockdown. Praise should go to their families as much as to the school. Their success is a wonderful example of fruitful and productive collaboration between the school and families.

Our secondary pupils have also managed to keep up with their studies. The long months of closure have not allowed teachers to cover as much of the curriculum as usual, but adept planning and reorganisation of certain topics and themes are allowing the pupils to catch up. We will also prolong the summer term by a week, so that our years 9 & 10 can make up for lost time, in preparation for their future GCSE exams.

I think that teachers all over the country should receive credit and recognition for the stupendous efforts they have deployed in continuing their pupils' education in such adverse circumstances. It has been a tremendous

challenge to keep them enthusiastic and motivated and to reassure and counsel those who experience difficulties and anxiety away from the classroom. As Headmaster, I would like to commend all of my teachers for their generous and cheerful efforts over the past year. They have adapted to new ways of teaching with perseverance and professionalism. St. Michael's is very fortunate to have such a strong and dextrous body of staff. Divine Providence, through our generous benefactors, makes this all possible.

However, a Catholic school is not only about administration, classes, religious instruction and fundraising! It is also about conversion.

Our little school received a wonderful grace this Easter. After months of careful preparation, two of our pupils received the sacrament of baptism. The first part of the ceremonies was performed with teachers and fellow pupils present. This made them catechumens. The second part took place at the Easter Vigil. Our two pupils are now members of Christ's Mystical Body and are thrilled to receive Holy Communion with their friends at the weekly school masses. They will soon learn to serve mass too.

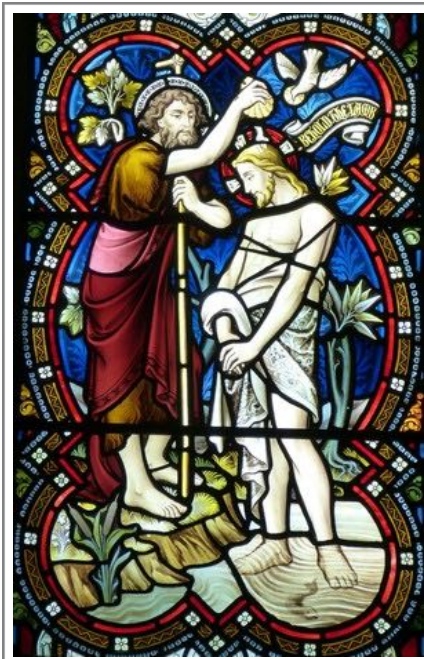
Such graces are the crowning glory of our work at St. Michael's and a token of God's special care and blessing. Our school is able not only to nurture and preserve divine grace, but it is also able to give birth to

new life. I could not help thinking that, despite all the difficulties and anxieties that come with a school, we are able, nevertheless, to answer Christ's call to preach and baptise, which is the Catholic Church's basic purpose and mission. As a school, we are extremely proud to have brought and presented two souls to Jesus Christ and to His Mother.

Please continue to help us so that we can help all our children and families to love and grow strong in their Faith and learning. Come Holy Spirit!

Wishing you all a blessed Eastertide,

Fr. John Brucciani, Headmaster



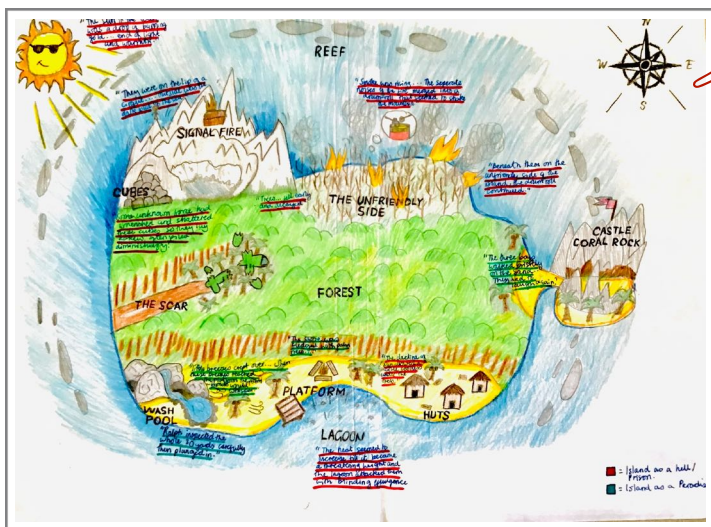
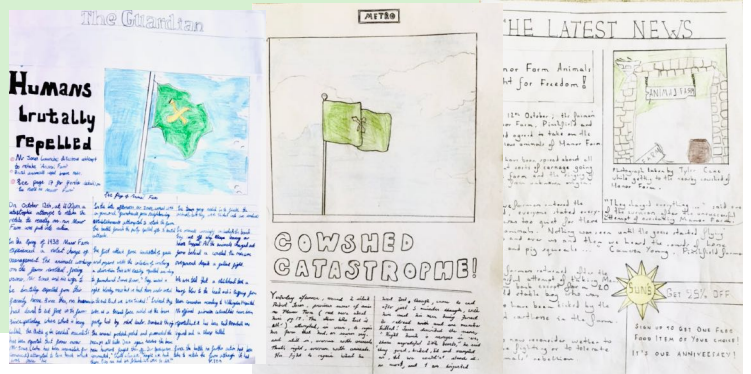
WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Work on writing across the curriculum has intensified this academic year. In a digital and image-driven age, students familiar with swift communication via memes and symbols can struggle to articulate their thoughts in logical verbal order. Teachers at St. Michael's are putting their heads together to help students become more confident writers. Beyond the usual study of grammar and vocabulary, confident writers need to develop the skills of: structuring paragraphs to compare and contrast or to make generalisations; using simple and complex structures for effect; linking points for effect; writing conclusions which do more than repeat and summarise...these skills are not intuitive, especially in an age in which rhetoric and grammar are in relative decay.

Fluent writers begin with fluent talkers, i.e. those who can adapt their message using suitable vocabulary and register for a target audience. Brief oral presentations are included across the curriculum. Students are encouraged to explain their thoughts coherently without the use of colloquialisms and pauses. This can be surprisingly challenging and enjoyable!

Students are experiencing greater and more consistent challenges across the curriculum as teachers look for and model accurate and fluent sentences in Y7, linked paragraphs in Y8 and more complex essays in Y9. Students have been provided with tools for more reflective writing, including the curriculum-wide use of a draft book and a student-friendly marking code detailing common infractions of syntax and grammar.

Together with our growing library, this curricular drive aims to develop students who can “write evaluatively and analytically in a range of forms for various audiences, using sophisticated structures and rhetorical devices” by the end of Y9. (St Michael's Writing Across the Curriculum Document 2020-2021). A new motto for students who despair of scaling the authorial heights: *labor omnia vincit!*



Forcing boys to master the details of a story! In the *Lord of the Flies*, a group of boys are stranded on an uninhabited island that can only be mapped with close reading!

Grateful thanks to the benefactors, known and mysterious, who supplied our KS3-4 library with many new and tasteful titles, beautifully bound and illustrated. Use of the library has seen uptake in recent weeks, now that the pupils are back. *“As the power of thinking is the highest test of a system of education, so the second test by which it should be tried is its successful creation of a taste for reading”* (Fr Frederick Faber)

Do megacities improve life for rural migrants?

Writing skills are developed across all subjects. In this example, the Geography teacher combined a question with a "linked paragraph" exercise.

A megacity is a city with over 10 million registered inhabitants. An example of a megacity is Tokyo, the world's largest city. Most megacities are in Asia. There are several different reasons that a migrant may move to a megacity; these are called push/pull factors. A push factor is something that might force a person to leave their rural area. An example of this might be a drought. If there is no water, then the person cannot grow crops and they will starve if they do not move. A pull factor is something that might draw a person into a megacity. An example of this is the variety of jobs in the city.

However, to get a good job a person will need a certain level of education and, if they do not have this, they will only get a poorly paid job. There will be competition between people moving into the city for jobs. Other problems with megacities are pollution, overused healthcare and sewerage systems, and not enough housing or the utilities necessary for normal living standards. These problems all contribute towards creating squatter settlements. Squatter settlements are areas where people live in makeshift homes, mostly made of local materials and scrap metal. The people who live in squatter

settlements do not pay tax and therefore do not get the benefits of policing, firefighters, good healthcare and education. The squatter settlements provide informal sector jobs which just pay enough money to support a family, but money is scarce and many families live on two dollars a day. An example of a squatter settlement is Dharavi in Mumbai, India.

Life in squatter settlements could be improved if the government and businesses invest into building high rise apartments for people in the squatter settlements and use the land that was cleared for factories, industries and businesses to create jobs. However, these will increase pollution and put even more pressure on the city's healthcare, sewerage and education systems. Unfortunately there are many unregistered families who live in squatter settlements and these families will not be provided for. More importantly, hundreds of jobs in the informal sector will be lost causing more competition for jobs so people will not get enough money to buy good housing and new squatter settlements may be started. But most people in squatter settlements are happy and content despite their poverty, and they consider themselves to be lucky to have a job - unlike many starving rural families.

Xavier Morley, Year 8

A NOTE FROM THE MATHS TEACHER



ARNHEM
852 PTS



TOBRUK
822 PTS



BURMA
1074 PTS

MICHAELAN CUP

END OF EASTER
TERM



The **Michaelan Cup** acknowledges the team members' personal efforts and progress and their collective contributions to school life.

There is not much to report from the maths department as the UKMT team competitions have been cancelled and all individual competitions have gone online. Years 9 and 10 all had the opportunity to take part and this was taken up by Ralph Morley and John-Michael Holmes. John-Michael just pipped Ralph to the post. I am incredibly pleased, boys. Congratulations and well done!

On the maths front we covered pretty much everything in lockdown that I had hoped to cover before lockdown was announced. This was mainly thanks to the MyMaths website which allowed me to continue online what I would have done in the classroom. It made everything much more straightforward at the teacher end and I hope it suited the boys at their end. Let us hope we do not have to face another lockdown, but should that happen, I would likely use this platform again. The last few weeks of face-to-face lessons were rather relentless to ensure everyone was ready for their end of term assessments. I would like to thank the boys who in the main have performed excellently both with online class attendance and the turning in of work! Happy Easter everyone!

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

AT ST. MICHAEL'S

In most Catholic schools, religious education is a rather nebulous subject that leaves students wondering who Jesus Christ really is, what He did and why anyone would want to be a RE teacher.

St. Michael's RE curriculum is unique in today's educational world because no one teaches religion as we do.

Religion is part of the virtue of justice whereby we give to God His due: to love Him with our whole heart, our whole soul, our whole mind and with our whole strength and our neighbour as ourselves. (Mk. 12:30-31).

RE at St. Michael's is about acquiring the truths of salvation so that we can shape our lives in a manner pleasing to God and helpful to our neighbour. God has given us clear instructions on how to structure our lives. These are contained in the Holy Gospels and Epistles and in the teachings of the Catholic Church.

RE is, therefore, a very clear and defined subject that gives pupils clear reference points as they begin preparing themselves for adult life. The world needs men and women of principle and conviction, shaped by a worldview that gives sense and meaning to the inevitable difficulties and sorrows that we all experience in life.

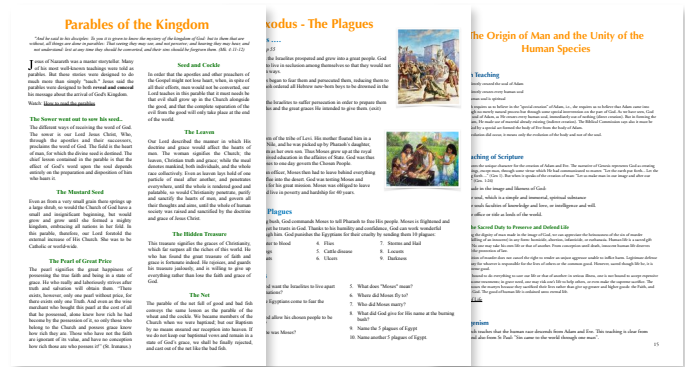
Saint Michael's Religious Education program is shaped as follows.

In Primary School, children are lucky enough to attend Holy Mass and Benediction during the week. They receive 2 hours of religious instruction each week and follow the liturgical season closely. They also learn the salient parts of the Old and New Testament Bible Stories. Their religious instruction is also enhanced with biweekly assemblies and lots of traditional hymn singing.

From Year 7 onwards, pupils receive two hours of Religious Education each week. The lessons are prepared and taught by priests who are best qualified not only to represent but also to counsel. Learning one's catechism generates many discussions in the classroom, especially as pupils grow older.

An enhanced overview of the entire catechism (Apostles Creed, Commandments, Sacraments, Prayer) is given in Year 7 using the book by Canon Cafferata: *"The Catechism Simply Explained"*. Pupils learn by heart certain parts of their catechism. Year 7 offers a chance to summarise the most important parts of their primary school catechism. Learning with a priest is a whole new experience for pupils which they often relish. By the end of year 7, pupils begin making connections between what they learn inside the classroom and what they practice at church or in the home.

In Year 8, pupils embark on a detailed tour of the Old Testament. This provides the opportunity of explaining themes and notions such as sin, the Mosaic



Law, blood sacrifice, prophecy, the Messiah and other aspects of Jewish tradition without which there can be no real understanding of the Gospel story and the teachings of Saint Paul in particular. Schuster's *Bible History* provides the narrative text which pupils must read and understand.

Year 9 is dedicated to a thorough reading of the Gospel narrative and the Acts of the Apostles (time permitting). Weaving in and out of all four Gospels, pupils learn about the life and times of Christ and his most notable teachings, in particular the parables. It is surprising how little children know of our Lord's life and teaching. Their knowledge is partial and fragmented. Year 9 is a year of New Testament exegesis.

In Years 10 and 11, pupils return to learning the various parts of Divine Revelation as a whole. They are encouraged to view the internal coherence of Revelation and to grasp how the truths of the Faith are in complete harmony with human reason. Using notes composed from Sheehen's *Apologetics and Catholic Doctrine* or the books of Fr. John Laux, the Faith is explained and presented according to the plan laid out in St. Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologica*: God's existence, His Divine Nature, Creation of Man, Sin, Redemption, Grace and the Sacraments. Pupils are able to acquire the beginnings of the Christian worldview around which they will shape their adult lives.

Religious Education is an exciting subject because it can have a profound impact on the individual child. Hence the importance of confiding this delicate subject to a trained priest. There is no doubt that self-taught Religious Education in a homeschool environment cannot match the impact and influence of religious instruction received in the classroom from the hands of a priest.

Before closing, we must not forget that RE is not confined to the classroom. Pupils also attend mass twice a week and are able to visit the Blessed Sacrament every day if they wish. Feast days are carefully prepared and celebrated. The child lives in an atmosphere that acknowledges the silent presence and tender love of Jesus Christ, His Blessed Mother and all the saints. Our religious education informs the whole person of the child, securing for our pupils a better chance of a happy life here and beyond. ✝



Despite the Covid difficulties at the beginning of the term, time has flown by and the children have made good progress with their learning. During the first weeks of January, the children studied at home, with teachers focusing primarily on English, maths and science. Fortunately, thanks to a broadening of government guidelines, many of the children were able to return to school by mid-January. This means that, overall, our pupils have not been penalized by the prolonged school closure.

They have made good progress throughout the term. Small classes and dedicated teachers certainly make a difference!

This term, the Infants have been learning about rainforests and were proud of their classroom creations.

The theme for **art** this term was textiles and the children learned how to weave in different formats and various stitches. They even learnt how to sew on a button! The children were able to put their skills to the test by making embroidered Mothers' Day and Easter cards. Surprisingly, the use of needle and thread proved therapeutic and brought about a calm and concentrated atmosphere in the classroom. And we may even have a couple of budding tailors in the making.

The children have enjoyed learning several hymns for Lent and can sing them beautifully. We celebrated St. Joseph's Feast with a writing competition about his life. During Lent, the children have been praying and giving alms for the SSPX school in Kenya.

PE offered the girls a chance to learn Irish dancing. They organised a dance routine themselves and performed in front of the school on St. Patrick's Day.

In Music, Fr. Barratt continues to teach the recorder. The Infants are having a wonderful time learning to play the glockenspiels.

The Infants completed a **Design Technology** project, each child making a land yacht. They had to learn about wheels and axles, sail design and aerodynamics. Design Technology is all about problem-solving to make things work. Fr. Brucciani and Mrs Roch then came to judge the children's creations. Zach Di Napoli's yacht won the day.

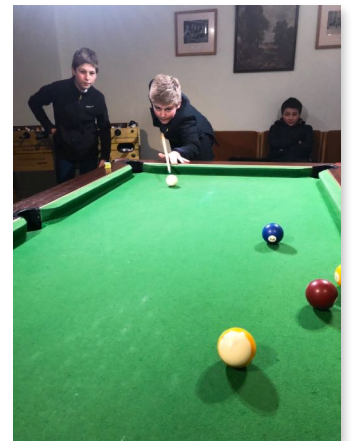


Finally, in preparation for Holy Week and Easter, Fr. Barrett preached a day of recollection to all the pupils. They listened to two short talks and learned about the importance of silence and prayer. Children learned about what it means to practice "recollection". Baby steps in the spiritual life!

The children were able to go to confession. It is at times like these that we are truly grateful for our little Catholic school that gives strength and confidence to little children at a time when the world is gripped in fear. ❖



Cadet beginners (blank stars) earned their first colors just before Easter. Cadet Sergeants Brucciani and Seeber supervised their first attempt at camping in the school grounds. Despite a night of rainfall, they managed to stay dry and relatively warm. Next morning, they embarked on a 13 mile trek, in uniform. All completed the test successfully. It was wonderful to see them utterly exhausted, betraggled and happy!



Science, Technology, Engineering & Maths
STEM CLUB
 for years 7 to 9 - Wednesday 3.30pm to 4.30pm

Rollercoasters ...
 and
 Rockets!



OLD FACES!

Dan Martin was one of the first pupils at St. Michael's. Arriving in 1991, he spent 9 years at St. Michael's and went on to join the Police Force. He is currently a detective in the Met Police Force, working on a Homicide Team! Dan is a regular visitor to St. M's. Pupils have enjoyed several of his thrilling assemblies.

Hannah Eustace was another of the original founding pupils (1991 - 1998).

Hannah graduated in Law and is now a Defense Company Contracts Manager, most recently the contracts' lead for the Aircraft Carrier Program.

Dr. Joanna Nightingale (née Flynn) is another founding pupil. After 5 years at St Michael's she went on to qualify as a medical doctor. Joanna divides her time as a busy GP and busier mother!

