



St Michael's School

Society of St Pius X

Burghclere - Christmas 2022



Tripping to London, off to the theatre!

Lucky School!

Dear Parents, Friends and Benefactors,

The long Michaelmas term has finally given place to some well-earned holidays! This year, the school has increased in size, with twenty-eight children in the primary phase and forty pupils in the secondary phase. The Lancaster Hall boarding house is almost full thanks to the twenty-three boarders.

Despite the unsettled nature of the times, the school has gone about its business as usual, educating young minds and hearts so that they can make the most of the lives God has given them. We want our children to be able to embrace future careers so that they are able to serve their own needs but also those of society. To do this, our children need well-formed minds, but more importantly, a strong will, one that is enlightened by truth and informed by theological charity.

Schools too often focus exclusively on academia. Academics are important, but they serve little purpose if there is not a parallel focus on the training of the will in the pursuit of virtue. It is virtue that leads to happiness and contentment, and thus allows a child to mature and grow strong and confident. Virtue requires

a healthy mind shaped by truth, but it also depends on loving those things that are good for us.

God is our Sovereign Good, He who alone can satiate the need for love and service. School rules and house customs train pupils to do what is right in the natural sphere (behaving well, thinking of others, serving the common good), but the boon of a Catholic school is that we offer so much more: a sacramental life that places the child in God's presence and empowers the soul to love Him above all things. Here lies the true secret of self-fulfilment and success, of the sort that makes self-sacrifice and service a joy and pleasure. There is no better training for life.

We pray that St Michael's gathers many friends and supporters to help in our educational endeavours. The rising tide of child anxiety and depression comes from a sense of disorientation and helplessness. St Michael's strives to impart purpose and meaning to our children's lives. How lucky they are to be able to understand the words of St Augustine: *"Thou hast made us for thyself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it finds its rest in thee."*

Fr John Brucciani, Headmaster

Academic Progress at St. Michael's

A school to be proud of!

A Catholic school is always more than just exam preparation and exam results, and concern for the whole person and the attainment of Heaven is the ultimate goal. Nonetheless, academic progress is an important measure of any school and we must be cognisant of Our Lord's admonishment to use our talents well (cf. Matt. 25:14-30).

However, unless existing and prospective parents consult the school's website, they may be unaware that St. Michael's School consistently outperforms national averages, and our students are likely to achieve much better than they would have if they had been educated elsewhere. There are some headline figures worth highlighting:

- The national average for students achieving Level 4 or above in 2022 was 73.2%. It was 100% at St. Michael's, 26.8% above the national average.
- The national average for students achieving 7 or above in 2022 was 26.3%. St. Michael's achieved 44.1%, 18% above the national average.
- The national average for achievement at grade 9 in 2022 was 6.6%. St. Michael's average was 11.7%.

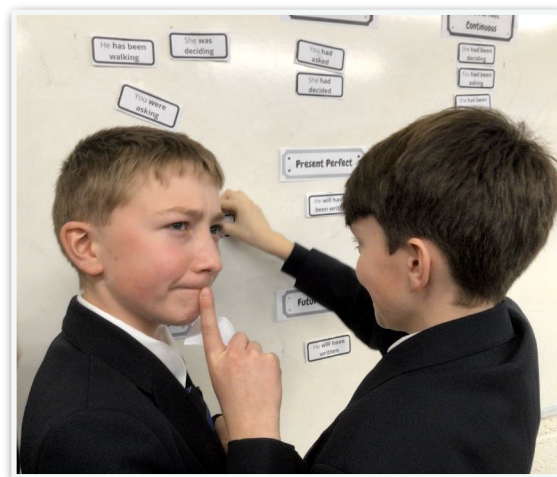
In addition to academic progress, there is another area of particular strength that is important to recognise for a small school like St. Michael's. Across England, the average number of GCSEs taken by each student in 2022 was 7.8, whereas at St. Michael's the average was much higher at 8.5. However our current GCSE students in Year 11 and below, now have access to a minimum of 9 GCSEs, and the potential to take up to 12 GCSE subjects. This is because we have both maximised what we can offer all students by deploying our small but extremely well-qualified staff effectively, and because we have developed a 'Gifted and Talented' programme for our strongest students through Economics, Further Maths and Statistics.

Whilst challenging the strongest, we are ensuring all students, regardless of ability levels, are supported. Over recent years we have developed a coherent approach to students with SEN (special educational needs) and EAL (English as an additional language), appointing individual staff to oversee the provision in these areas. We have also recently introduced a Resource Teacher to help those students without defined educational need but who need particular help in basic areas, such as handwriting, spelling, organisation, etc. beyond what they receive through the usual curriculum.

As we are a small school with dedicated, qualified and highly professional staff, who genuinely care about the well-being and progress of all students, this ensures no student 'slips through the net'. This may mean students cannot sit quietly at the back and disappear when they want to, as they might in larger

schools with larger classes, but in the long run, we hope the students who pass through St. Michael's will appreciate that they couldn't hide and will be all the better off for it.

It is always a difficult decision to uproot children from schools they know, and there is still uncertainty amongst prospective families about what they will find at St. Michael's. But if you are reading this whilst still contemplating how to educate your children, hopefully some of the above is reassuring. ✱



Grammar Exercises, making sense of tenses.

The Primary School offers a broad and balanced curriculum.

In the Infants, we focus on phonics, using the Read, Write, Inc Phonics scheme. This teaches the phonic sounds that are the building blocks to reading. At the same time, the children are learning to decode, spell and write. At the end of last year, the Year 2 children performed 13.5% above the national average in their reading tests.

"Number work" in the Infants constitutes the foundation of all the mathematics the children will learn. The results of standardised testing at the end of Year 2 show that the children perform 12.3% above the national average.

At the end of each term, year groups take standardised tests in reading and maths. This allows us to plot and monitor their progress and identify any areas of difficulty. Thanks to the tiny size of our classes we are able to target and tackle problem areas, thus giving the children the skills and confidence to improve.

Last year's Year 6 children scored 18% above the national average in their reading tests and 7.4% above National average in their maths tests.

If children are happy, they will learn. The Primary School provides a safe and cheerful environment that allows the children not only to grow in their Faith, but also to progress academically.

Primary School

Mrs A. Webb	Head of Primary	B.Sc. Hons (Victoria, Manchester) PGCE QTS NPQSL
Ms R. Dunn	Primary Teacher/Nurse	B.Sc. Hons. (Nursing), RN
Ms H. Waddelove	Primary Teacher	B.A. Hons (Leicester), PGCE and QTS
Mrs V. Pearce	Teaching Assistant	Diploma in Nursery Nursing NNEB
Mrs J. Martinez	Music Teacher	B.Mus. Hons. (London), M.Mus. (Reading), PGCE and QTS
Mrs V. Brucciani	Teaching Assistant	Bilingual Secretarial, Marketing Diploma (French Institute)



Perfect schools are the result of good teachers who are thoroughly prepared and well-grounded in the matter they have to teach; who possess the intellectual and moral qualifications required by their

Secondary School

Mr R. Malliff	Head of Secondary	B.A. (York), M.A. (London), PCGE and QTS
Ms J Murphy	Head of Humanities	B.A. Joint Hons., (Cork) Grad. Dip. in Ed. (Dublin), QTS
Mrs J. Roch	Head of Sciences	B.A. Hons (Keele), QTS.
Mr E. Friar	Science Teacher/SENCO	B.Sc. Hons, M.Sc., QTS
Mrs E. Damiani	Head of Languages	B.A. (Exeter), M.A. (Bath), QTS
Mrs E. Blatchford	Maths Teacher	B.Sc. Hons., QTS
Mrs G. Cullen	Resource Teacher	B.A. (Hons, Ulster), M.A.

important office; who cherish a pure and holy love for the youths confided to them, because they love Jesus Christ and His Church, of which these are the children of predilection. (Pius IX, Divini Illius Magistri)

This term, the boys have received weekly rugby training thanks to Jake, a local rugby coach. They are also learning the fast-paced game of handball. The new gym floor makes such a difference. Pupils play with gusto! And no more carpet burns!

Year 7s and 8s have played two games of football against a nearby school and won them both! It is not often that we have enough pupils in a single age-group to form a team. Incidentally, we are looking for sponsors to finance a team kit...



The Cadet Force continues to drum and drill! Fourteen recruits received their beret after 3 months of training. As usual, we marched to Burghclere War Memorial to lay the annual wreath to the fallen soldiers of the Two World Wars.



We've had a busy but productive term in the maths department. Year 7 have begun to learn how to keep me happy, while the year 8s, having learnt this important skill, continue to perform it very well. My quirky year 9s keep me occupied trying to come up with different ways of delivering their syllabus. Year 10 gallop through the maths curriculum like the thoroughbreds they are and the year 11s are progressing well in their pursuit of excellent mathematical exam results. Keep up the hard work, everybody!

In other news we've all had our workloads added to in the form of an extra GCSE! After attending a head of maths conference in London in October, I was persuaded to offer **GCSE Statistics** alongside **Further Maths** as the extras to the standard GCSE Maths. There are countless benefits to these courses, both for life in general and for the many future careers the boys and girls may wish to pursue.

The spring term will see us taking part in the usual UKMT challenges and hopefully producing a promising set of results from the mock exams.

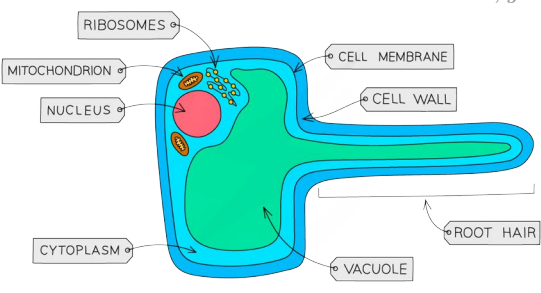
This term year 11 travelled to Woolton Hill to investigate the question 'How Effective are the Traffic Calming Measures in Woolton Hill?'. Their afternoon involved: questioning the Parish Council's Traffic Expert; looking at the mobile speed monitor and seeing how it works; taking measurements of the main road and traffic calming measures; and conducting questionnaires with local people – many of whom were collecting their children from the local Junior School.

The data collected and analysed was not only used in the Geography Fieldwork, but also fed back to the PC Traffic Expert who wrote about the findings in the local Parish Magazine. Information was also fed back to the Headteacher at the Junior School.

The pupils, as always, were a credit to St Michaels and we received very positive feedback from the Traffic Expert.


Years 7 and 8 have been developing their ICT skills and using them to produce Science posters to display and share with Years 5 and 6.

Noah and Max, yr 7



The root hairs are where most water absorption happens. They are long and thin so they can penetrate between soil particles and they have a large surface area for absorption of water.

Water passes from the soil water to the root hair cell's **cytoplasm**. They have another adaptation which is the fact that they have a very thin cell wall to help them with absorption.



This is a micrograph of root hair cells (in grey)



We are very proud to announce that Saint Michael's School is licensed to offer the prestigious Duke of Edinburgh's Award. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is a highly respected youth achievement award that helps participants to develop their physical, personal and community experience through a combination of activities that they choose to accomplish for a determined duration.

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is designed to encourage young people to develop greater self-confidence and discipline so that they can give the best of themselves, in particular in team and community settings. It provides a framework through which participants can design a program for personal achievement, log their progress and steadily steer themselves towards the personal goals they have set.

Fifteen pupils have signed up to the Bronze Award. We hope that they will gain from their choice of activities and the personal drive and motivation to successfully complete the self-set challenges.

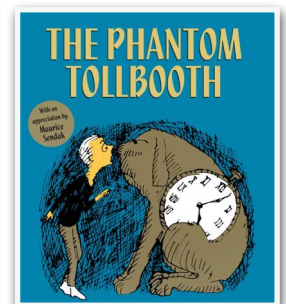
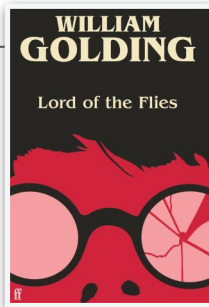


Plugging in their chosen activities

Drama Club was a very busy place this term. Years 10-11 (and a few extras) produced **Lord of The Flies**. The actors are already familiar with the book which is included in the GCSE Literature curriculum.

Bravo to the main characters for memorising so many lines. The play wonderfully executed. Boys turning into savages is something that comes naturally to them.

Simultaneously, years 7-9 worked hard to produce a delightful and witty rendition of **The Phantom Tollbooth** by Norton Juster.



KS4 students had a wonderful time traveling to London to watch *The Woman in Black* at the Fortune Theatre.

The capital is a magical place around Christmas time and we enjoyed the walk from Waterloo to the theatre near Piccadilly Circus.

The performance was thrilling and enthralling, with a couple of cold sweats to endure. Such trips are not all for pleasure. However hard one studies a novel, it is only in its performance that a pupil can properly appreciate this art form. Pupils were delighted! The trip forms part of the English Literature curriculum.



Many, many thanks to those kind ladies who organised a bake sale to expand our library. So far, the Redwall series has been expanded, books from the Don Camillo series have been added, several new Vision books have been purchased, reluctant readers have been encouraged by some new fantasy works and the already motivated readers can tackle a few classics such as the Midshipman series. Above all, students enjoyed the possibility of making requests and suggestions.

Here is a book review by a Year Seven pupil that demonstrates the value of our little library:



Book review

Title : Flight of the Doves

Main character [s]: Finn and Derval Dove

Summary : Finn Dove [12] and Derval [7] are two children of Irish blood whose parents are, sadly, dead. Their Uncle Toby is absolutely horrible to them, so one afternoon, Finn makes up his mind and, together with Derval, flees to their beloved grandmother in the lovely country of Ireland. Then, their uncle discovers something interesting about the two children and offers a large reward to anyone who can return them to their "heartbroken" uncle.

With people unseen every step of the way reaching out to snatch them, how will they survive the long tiring journey with no-one they can safely trust?

By Marie-Clare Morris, year 7

An update on Secondary History at St. Michael's

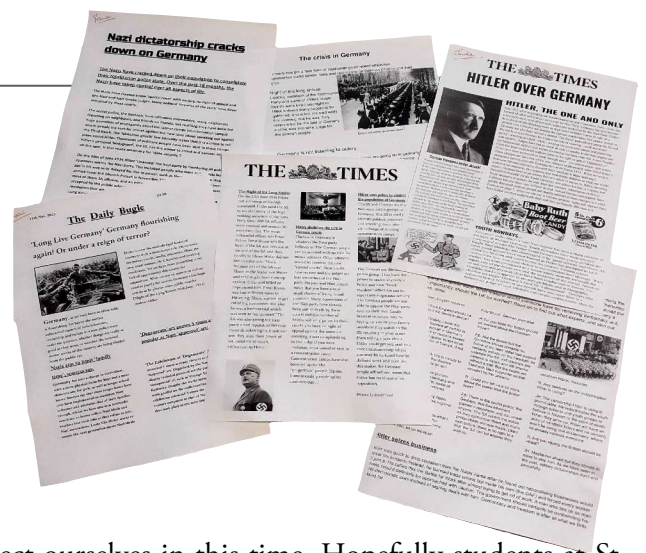
Previous newsletters have featured the *raison d'être* for History at St. Michael's, outlining the importance of the subject in helping students to make sense of the modern world by providing facts and context. It is tempting to read History as that which we have lost. But it should be more encouraging than this. No period of history has ever been perfect, but in a world that has seemingly lost its reason, it should be comforting to know that, whilst we cling on amidst the insanity around us, we are the sane ones because we think as many millions and millions of people have thought before us. Right now, History is trying to reassure us that we are not alone, and if people used to think in a more reasoned way, there's reason to hope they will again.

Year 7 are currently developing understanding of how the post-Roman western world was shaped, and especially the formation of England in the early Middle Ages. A key area of learning for students has been that England was a Catholic country before she was England. Under the Saxons, the Danes and the Normans, England remained squarely Catholic for well over 1000 years, far longer than she's not been Catholic. This is important to hold on to.

The inability, however, in 2022 to find a religious Christmas card in the shops is not something that happened by accident. Year 8 are working through a series of revolts that get to the hub of why the modern world is as it is. This term they have been looking at the Protestant Revolt and the Scientific Revolution, both of which pave the way for Deism and Atheism through the so-called Enlightenment and the French Revolution. They have also been learning the truth of the Galileo case, one of many areas of History that has been grossly misrepresented, in the hope that they are better equipped to counter misinformation as they move on from the school.

Year 9 have been looking at the background and causes of the First World War, another consequence of the long term trends that begin in earnest in the sixteenth century and which was only possible because men had begun to lose their minds. The horror of the trenches, sadly, did not bring men back to right reason but instead further cemented the path to the Nazi dictatorship in Germany (Year 10) and Communist Russia (Year 11). Both of these regimes are the preminent examples from history of the ultimate consequence of a broad philosophy that rejects God and the subsequent dignity of man that flows from the Incarnation.

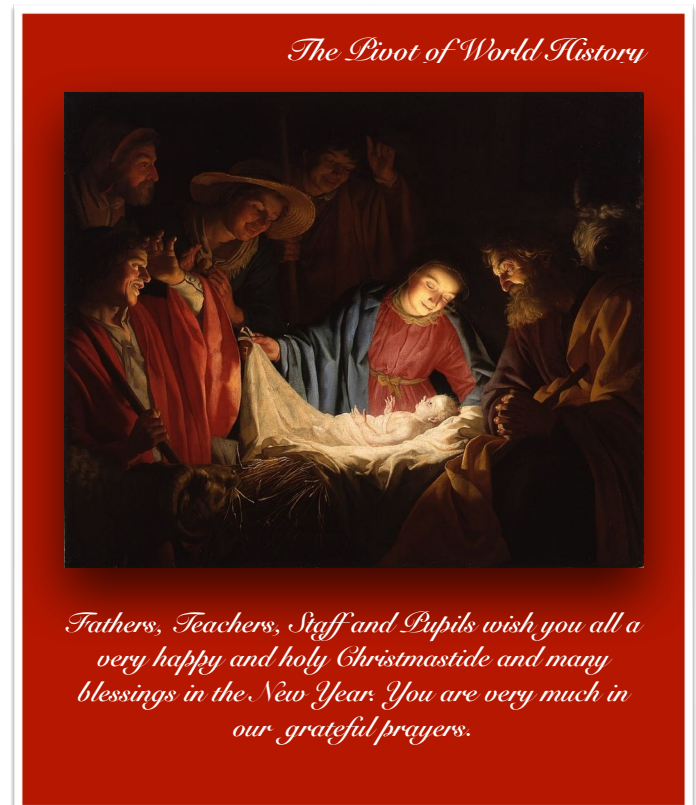
History, therefore, should be seen as part of the armour that we need to put on (cf. Ephesians 6) to



protect ourselves in this time. Hopefully students at St. Michael's will be less susceptible to deceit if they have a correct and broad understanding of history and can understand (and hopefully explain to others!) how we have arrived where we are. As Eamonn Duffy says in *The Stripping of the Altars*:

‘The myth of neutral history is just that, a myth; if it actually existed no-one would want to read it...History is an attempt to discern the past, not a bloodless chronicle of patternless events.’

It is the hope, therefore, that History at St. Michael's is, in a small way, helping to redress the balance, and in the barrage of misinformation that we face today, students at St. Michael's are being armed with intellectual ammunition for the fight. If they can better understand, especially at this wonderful time of year, why the Incarnation is central to all things, a significant part of our work will have been done. ⚙



The Pivot of World History

Fathers, Teachers, Staff and Pupils wish you all a very happy and holy Christmastide and many blessings in the New Year. You are very much in our grateful prayers.

Primary School

This term we welcomed a new teacher to the Primary School, Helena Waddlelove (below). She has taken over the Infant class and made a great start as part of the Primary team. Rachel Dunn remains in Junior 1 and I have moved to Junior 2, with the eldest primary children. Fr. Steele has also joined us and is teaching RE and music and giving a weekly assembly.

The children took part in **National Poetry Day**. It is always so rewarding seeing how well they learn a poem by heart and how enthusiastically they perform it. It was certainly hard to pick so few winners!

Junior 1 visited The Hawk Conservatory. They identified many different types of birds of prey and used the experience to improve their writing skills. Junior 2 visited Lacock Abbey to explore how life would have been lived in mediaeval times. They also carried out map work of the beautiful village to help their geography skills. The Infants have been learning about different types of houses and the materials they are made from. They investigated the different houses of Burghclere.

Cookery was an exciting feature of this term, with the children cooking sweet and savoury goodies. Each class learned to peel, chop, and slice safely, as well as to make pastry, cakes and simple meals. They are even improving their washing up skills!

With many souls from the parish resting in Burghclere cemetery, we visited their graves and prayed for the departed in the month of November.

For Christmas, the children travelled around the world learning about the different customs and ways of celebrating the birth of Our Lord. It took us some time to get some of the words pronounced in different languages! The Infants recreated the Nativity tableau and the children sang carols beautifully. Even St Nicholas was impressed and blessed and gave out his gifts accordingly!



National Poetry Winners



Thanking benefactors!



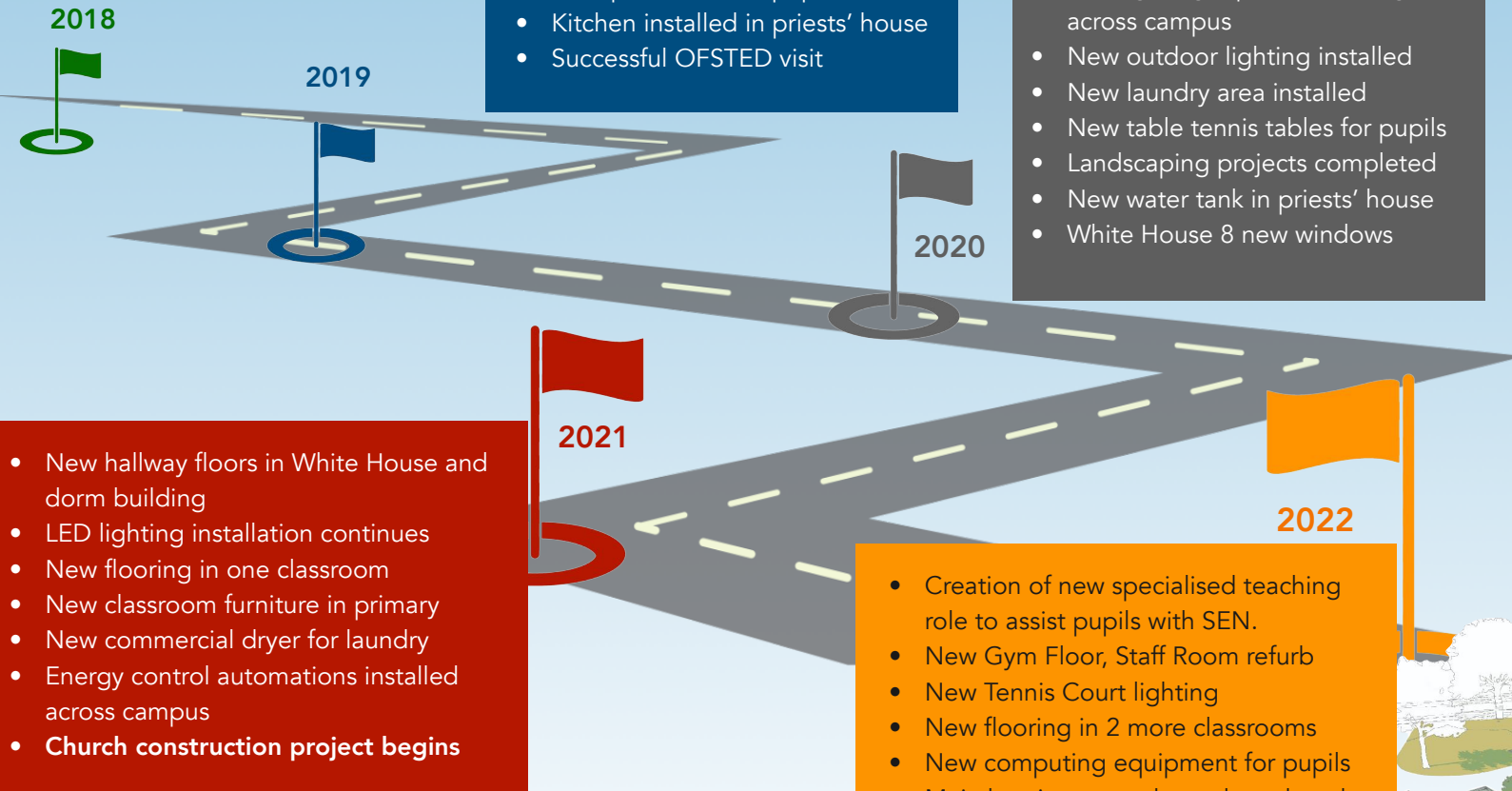
One very large birthday cake! Where to start?

Securing our children's future. How St Michael's has developed over the past five years.

- New Curriculum and Behaviour Policies.
- New school timetable
- Bursary System
- Complete Dormitory Refurb
- New Dormitory bathrooms
- Fire Protection overhaul
- PTA established

- Cognitive Assessment Testing (CATs) established.
- Special Educational Need Coordinator (SENCo) established
- New Primary School Curriculum
- New School Website
- 8 Classroom projectors installed
- White House top floor refurbished
- White chimney stacks repaired, 3 wood stoves installed.
- New pool table for pupils
- Kitchen installed in priests' house
- Successful OFSTED visit

- Geography becomes 9th subject offered at GCSE
- New Gym cloakroom and bathrooms
- New lockers for all pupils
- LED lighting replacement begins across campus
- New outdoor lighting installed
- New laundry area installed
- New table tennis tables for pupils
- Landscaping projects completed
- New water tank in priests' house
- White House 8 new windows



Since 2018, the school has focused on four areas:

1. Developing a fully qualified team of teachers (achieved)
2. Developing the primary and secondary curriculum (achieved)
3. Developing extra-curricular activities (Drama, STEM, woodwork, cadets, sports; soon: touch-typing, coding)
4. Repairing, maintaining and improving buildings and facilities.

We have mapped the many improvements that we have thus been able to accomplish over the past five years. These improvements could not have happened without your sustained generosity. Please continue to help us!

The most important development is the construction of the new church, complete with driveway and car-park. It is only fitting that, having received so much from the hands of Providence, we offer Our Lord a proper residence and home! It is for Him and thanks to Him, after all, that the school exists! Please support this project:

www.stmichaelarchangel.co.uk

Completion planned for June 2023!





SAINT MICHAEL'S SCHOOL

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01635 278137

headmaster@sanctusmichael.com

Name : Tel :

Address : City:

Post Code : Email :

I would like to make a donation of £50 £150 £ _____
 £100 £200



I would like to set up a monthly Standing Order

Gift Amount £10 £15 £20 £30 £40 £ _____

Pass on to your Bank or Building Society this instruction:

Please pay Royal Bank of Scotland, Newbury Branch, 20 Market Place, Newbury, RG14 5BD on the day of each month until further notice.

Sort Code 16-26-18 Acc. Number: 10191323 for the credit of St. Michael's School.

giftaid it

Boost your donation by 25p for every £1 you donate. Gift Aid is reclaimed by the charity from the tax you pay for the current tax year. Your address is needed to identify you as a current UK taxpayer.

I want to Gift Aid the following donations to the Society of St Pius X (please tick the correct boxes)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>this donation</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>all donations for the 2019-20 tax year</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>all donations for the 2017-18 tax year</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>all donations for the 2020-21 tax year</i> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>all donations for the 2018-19 tax year</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>all donations from 6th April 2021 until further notice</i> |

I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

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Please notify us if you want to cancel this declaration, change your name or home address or no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains.

God bless you for your kindness! Return form to address above. Questions? Call us at 01635 278137.

HOLY MASS OFFERED FOR ALL OUR BENEFACTORS ON THE 1ST FRIDAY OF EACH MONTH.