



St Michael's School

Society of St Pius X

Burghclere - January 2024



Domus Dei - Porta Coeli

Thirty-one years ago St Michael's School established itself in a house in Highclere. Barely a year later it moved to the current property in Burghclere. I remember well, as a teenager, painting the walls of the room that was to serve as the school chapel. On Sundays, along with boarding pupils who made up the bulk of the school register, a handful of people would assist at Holy Mass.

Over time, families began to move to the area in order to send their children to St Michael's and benefit from the availability of the sacraments. Eventually the number of day pupils surpassed the number of boarders, transforming what was principally a boarding school into a one predominately for day pupils.

The close proximity of school families, along with the steady arrival of increasing numbers of faithful who wish to live close to a place where they can receive the sacraments, has given rise to what is now the largest traditional Catholic community in the country. This happy occurrence brought with it the need for reorganisation and planning.

Despite having been enlarged twice in fifteen years, the school chapel has long been insufficient. It was not only too small to house an ever growing congregation of pupils and faithful, but it was also inadequate as a house of prayer and sacrifice. Narrow and poky, it conveyed little of the august mysteries and supernatural realities in play.

The new church building has been long in coming, but now we have it! It was blessed on the 16th December and offers two great advantages in particular: the church allows the school to retrieve the space and privacy necessary for the quiet and methodical exercise of its educational responsibilities; the church offers a space that reflect the beauty, order and purity of the divine liturgy.

Children, especially, need material and sensorial support to help them to grow spiritually. The supernatural truths of the faith are apprehended and conveyed by sight, sound and touch. Hence the importance of the place and space in which the Divine Liturgy can be adequately celebrated.

What a difference it makes to attend Holy Mass in a church, complete with a great crucifix and dome! How different to serve mass in a sanctuary large enough to accommodate the carefully choreographed movements of ministers and servers! How enthralling to hear the echo of responsories and hymns as they carry the sound of adoration and worship before the very throne of God!

St Michael's School now possesses a place of worship that is able to nourish and strengthen the minds and hearts of our children and etch into their memories the everlasting sense of awe, peace and serenity. In the same way that a happy home provides the best foundation for a happy life, so too a beautiful church provides a solid foundation for the great truth which we wish our pupils to remember above all else: that God comes before all else and that the only veritable repose in this turbulent world is at the foot of the tabernacle where He awaits us silently, patiently and with longing.

May He grant you all a very blessed and holy Christmas tide and New Year.

Fr John Brucciani, Headmaster

House Points so far.



White House Restoration



The two most damaged facades have finally been repaired and newly rendered. The outside surfaces had become porous, allowing rain and moisture to penetrate the walls. Hopefully this will put a stop to the forever-bulging plaster and persistent mold inside the building.

The White House looks wonderful, but there remains much work still to keep out the elements. The chimney stacks are a constant cause for concern - they leak in heavy rainfall.



Devilish... ..ly efficient!



Rafaël, in the Garden of Paradise

Primary Phase

The school year started with a bumper Infant class (Year 1-2). It is wonderful to see the school growing, right from the bottom up! With this larger class, a new teaching assistant joined the Primary team. We welcomed Ann Nalumansi, who has become an invaluable help. She assists Helena Waddelove, the Infant teacher who was praised by the Ofsted inspectors for her effective phonics teaching.

Junior 1 (Years 3-4) still has Rachel Dunn at the helm. They are fortunate to have Fr. Steele teach them the glockenspiel. Mrs Brucciani teaches French and history. Their termly school trip took them to Andover Iron Age Museum, which brought their history lessons very much to life.

I am form teacher of Junior 2 (Years 5-6). They are progressing very well. Some of the Year 6 children took part in the national 'Primary Maths Challenge'. The recent Ofsted inspection performed what they call a « deep dive » into the teaching of maths at St Michael's and concluded that pupils learn with enthusiasm and success! The Junior 2 termly trip took them to London to visit the Science and the Natural History Museum. It was a highly enjoyable and wonderfully educational outing.

The children have enjoyed drawing and painting in art under the kindly eye of Veronica Pearce. They have also enjoyed cooking and poetry. National Poetry Day was celebrated by parents and children and included a poetry recital competition.

Our Christmas concert was based on the story of 'The Shepherds Coat' by Caryl Houselander. The children sang beautifully. They also sang carols for the residents of a local Care Home.

The children have worked hard and have well deserved their Christmas break. From all in the Primary School, we wish you a very happy and blessed Christmas.

Annalisa Webb, Head of Primary



An educator, whether parent or teacher, must be aware of the challenges that social media presents to the education of children, in particular adolescents. Whether the child is a heavy or light user, social media can have a profound influence, not so much because of the material to which he might be exposed, but rather because of certain modifications to personality and character that can come about through prolonged use. This is because **social media isolates users and detaches children from the influence of their educational surroundings.**

Education requires the sharing of a « common ground » between parent and child, teacher and pupil. The family home and the school make up the educational common ground. Shared space and shared interests help bond children with each other and their parents and teachers. In this way, education happens as much by way of teaching and counsel as by assimilation and imitation, whereby children acquire not just knowledge but perception, understanding and the ability to evaluate according to the very principles that regulate their educational environment.

An ordered and regulated environment also relieves educators of the need to "crack the whip" all the time. Life at home and at school is made up of rules, expectations and routines. Children are not complicated creatures, and, as long as they are loved, decently fed and occupied they will happily follow routines specifically designed to help them acquire good habits of thought and behaviour. The best education is one that is acquired by rote.

Unfortunately, the use of social media upsets the flow of this steady, quiet and often humdrum process. Unchecked, social media can lead a child in a different direction altogether.



Social media weakens and sometimes destroys the common ground and shared interests that are so important in shaping educational relationships by offering a secret space where a child can secretly develop a new persona. It offers a place from which parents and educators are excluded and only « friends » (a very loose term in the social media world) are welcome.

Now, this private portion of the child's life can all too easily become the child's real life, the life that he really cares about and is eager to maintain. It is often one of quiet self-adulation and praise which is why it must be kept hidden because it often clashes with the educational ideals imparted to him.

This is where concerns arise.

While he cultivates his online persona, the child continues to follow the routines of real life at home and school. Although generally docile to parents and teachers, the imperatives of his new *online persona* eventually begin to impose themselves. As a result, **the child develops the habit of juggling between two distinct personas:** one for online use and the other for everyday use. Duplicity thus becomes a normal mode of behaviour. The child continues to successfully interact with family and school while simultaneously cultivating a parallel life on social media where expectations, modes of behaviour and self-perception are very different.

Duplicity becomes ingrained and eventually leads to a habit of dishonesty. Although the child remains somewhat docile in his home and school environments, he is no longer influenced or motivated by their common ethos. There are things that Mum, Dad and teachers frankly just « don't get », unlike his cool social media friends. In time, the child learns to get along at home and school by playing along. Such behaviour is duplicitous.

Social media ends up becoming the real life of most of its users, a life where the user is in charge, where everyone is equal, where comments are most often complimentary and photos of self are lauded.

It is interesting to note that on social media platforms, a parent can only enter a child's virtual reality as a "friend", i.e., on terms of absolute equality with their child and with all the other teenagers who make up the list. Parents must abdicate their leadership in order to follow their child on social media. Social media is a world without hierarchy.

Subtle, innocent duplicity is perhaps the most formidable opponent of good education.



Animal Farm was staged by a select cast of volunteers from years 7 to 11. Nicholas Mc. was versatile in a range of roles from the venerable and inspiring Old Major to the naive young animal on show trial. Marcus S. was unforgettable as a begrudging and villainous Farmer Jones, not to mention his superb mastery of backstage sound effects- whilst Konrad S., with his stellar memory, honed the role of Napoleon to perfection.

Xavier and Andrew put their elocution skills to excellent use as narrators. Younger years were well represented too with Luke's flawless and seemingly effortless performance as Snowball reinforced by the sly, manipulative Squealer, excellently executed by Joseph M.

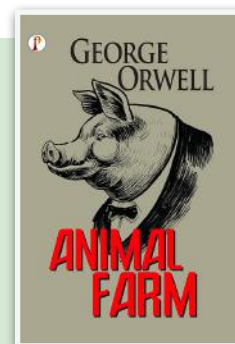
Joseph represented perfectly the stoic, tragic Boxer. Harry played a fresh and appealing Clover, whilst Arthur was equal to the task of representing all of the birds in the play- bar one, the smarmy and sinister Moses, played so effectively by Gerard. Philip was flexible as ever and able to carry off several roles, including reciting the satirical verses of the play, supporting Farmer Jones as Mr Pilkington and producing animal noises from the side. Oscar, as the cynical

Benjamin, drew laughs from the audience as he ironically proclaimed "I'm not going to start thinking at my age".

Year Sevens showed signs of great talent to come. Helena is especially to be commended for understudying the role of Mollie very effectively and at short notice due to the illness of her poor, fellow student who had worked so hard and so effectively but was bed-ridden! Marie-Claire also provided invaluable help with props.

The enthusiasm and creativity of cast and supporters were far more in evidence this year. The Drama Club's dramatic confidence and competence are now flowing beyond a director's role. Someday the students may design and produce their own play without a script. On that day, the teacher can know her job has been well done!

Bravo, St Michael's students!



It breeds cynicism and contempt for the very education that parents and teachers seek to impart. At the very least, it feeds a child's idea that they know better than their harmless but clueless teachers. It detaches children from their natural surroundings and exposes them to influences that are secretive and most often at odds with the family and school ethos. Social media allows children to grow up and express themselves as individuals rather than team players. Their point of reference is no longer the cultural and spiritual heritage of family and school but the social group to which they belong.

It is important to regulate our children's access to social media, lest it kidnap the minds and hearts of our children and weaken the influence for good that schools and families wish to accomplish. 🐷

Behaviour

Physical

Spiritual

Academic

THE FOLLOWING STUDENTS HAVE BEEN AWARDED

HALF-COLOURS

HARRY CULLEN & RAFAEL NAVARRO - promotion to Newbury Rugby Club's under 13's A team.

ELIZABETH PEARCE - achieving distinction in her Grade 2 piano exam.

HONORABLE MENTION

P. MURPHY, C. SZAROWICZ & A. BARTI - for scoring over 50 boarding house merits.



Solemn Blessing of the new Church



Blessing of the outside walls



« Almighty God who are wholly present and active in every place, hearken to our humble prayers and be the protector of this dwelling. Let no vile powers prevail here, but by the working of the Holy Spirit may a faultless service always be rendered to you in this place. »



Entrance to the chant of the Litanies of the Saints



« May you send your holy angels to guard this place, we ask Thee with supplication »



« O God, who sanctify the places dedicated to Thy name, pour out your grace on this house of prayer, so that all who here invoke Thee may experience the help of Thy mercy. »



The first mass begins



Consummatum est!



Deo Gratias!



Clothing of the new altar of sacrifice



St Michael's Cadet Force



Practice makes perfect!



A new NCO, who then becomes part of the select guest list for the NCO Xmas meal, served by the usual Oompa Loompas.



O Lord our God, manifest your glory to your saints and show yourself present in this sanctuary built in your honour; and as you work great marvels in the children you have adopted, may your praises ever resound among the people who belong to you. (from the Ritual of Blessing of a church)

SAINT MICHAEL'S SCHOOL

Harts Lane
Burghclere, Newbury
RG20 9JW
U.K.



01635 278137
headmaster@sanctusmichael.com
<https://stmichaels-school.uk>

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.

.....
Signature

.....
Date:

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.