



SAINT MICHAEL'S SCHOOL





ear Parents, Benefactors and Friends,

Another long and busy term has passed by.

ne Providence has steered us through a challenging

Divine Providence has steered us through a challenging time for schools and communities. Our pupils have not experienced any disruption this term, but worked and played in an atmosphere of study, piety and fun. This is what all schools should be like.

I will never cease to be amazed at what I call "Saint Michael's Miracle." Despite so much disruption, stress and apprehension, we continue to offer our families a little haven of normality and peace.

The school continues to make progress. We continue to improve the buildings and facilities. The new windows make such a difference to the White House esthetically and heating-wise. Academically, we continue to develop and fine-tune our curriculum and pupil oversight. Mr Malliff, Head of Secondary, has written a very interesting summary of the school's vision and approach to its vocation. We hope this will help families to understand the importance of our common endeavors to provide our children with a good, Catholic school.

Fr. O'Hart, Housemaster, has been thinking and working hard on how to better develop the school's approach to character building and resilience. We have transformed the Cadet sections into school houses, in order to build up a sense of belonging and responsibility.

The Primary School is also very active. Mrs Webb and her team make the children's schooling experience both challenging and enjoyable. The Christmas play was beautifully performed. No one missed a note or a line.

I hope you enjoy reading about what we have been doing this past term. None of it would be possible without the prayers and financial support of many unknown souls. May Saint Philomena bless you all!

We wish you a very happy and holy Christmas.

Fr. John Brucciani, Headmaster

hen people ask the Headmaster or a member of staff at St. Michael's how the school remains Catholic in the face of increasing hostility from the world, they often seem disappointed by the reply. They seem to expect us to reveal a complicated or even magic formula that allows us to navigate the web of government guidance and equality legislation that appears to hamstring so many other institutions. But the answer is simple. Whilst trying to understand the legislation, we are not driven by it. Instead, we simply seek to be the best example of what we claim to be: an authentically Catholic school.

Unity of purpose

How do we do this? Essentially, it requires unity of purpose. A house divided cannot stand. Every organisation with a clear mission requires all involved to subscribe to that mission. It is well documented now that when JFK visited NASA in the early 1960s every member of staff from Director to Janitor was clear about their role: they were putting a man on the moon.

At St. Michael's, every member of staff is clear about their role and they are doing something far more important. They are working to educate children, not only for the world, but for heaven. Our parents share this clear aim too. Consequently, St. Michael's enjoys a unique situation where staff and parents work in tandem to raise children with a truly Catholic spirit.

Religious practice

So how does this Catholic spirit manifest itself? To be authentically Catholic, a school must start with religious practice: weekly school Mass, daily rosary, weekly benediction, weekly form time or assembly, prayers before lessons and keeping the feast days and fast days of the liturgical calendar. It is a joy and a privilege to be involved in the religious life of the school, and to live with the liturgical rhythm of the Church.

Equitable governance

A genuinely Catholic school will not overlook the importance of a fair bursary system based upon the ability to pay, allowing those that cannot pay the opportunity to benefit. Nor will it fail to address fair terms and conditions for staff to ensure people are recognised for what they do, even if many still hold to the concept of working at the school as a vocation. The right use of money and effective administration, to protect future generations of schooling, are clear Catholic duties too.

Catholic curriculum

We have worked hard to create a curriculum that is a balance of sciences and humanities, supported by excellent departmental leadership and pedagogy, and underpinned by Religious Knowledge. We have shaped the curriculum to ensure there are clear overlaps with the wider issues that legislation requires of us — internet safety, bullying, relationships, and so on — but which a Catholic school should naturally address anyway.

Weekly form time and assemblies are linked with historical and liturgical events; the academic curriculum and Religious Knowledge are aligned, so that as certain topics are studied in Biology, they are comprehensively addressed within the context of Catholic teaching by our three resident priests. That wasn't a typo or a trick of the light by the way, we have three resident priests.

Nor does the school shy away from addressing weighty issues such as homosexuality, abortion, contraception, and so on, but rather, they are approached at the right age and within the context of what the Church teaches about them. We take a clear approach; our boys will encounter all of these issues when they leave St. Michael's, and whilst we protect them for as long as we can, from 14-15 years old, when they have the intellectual capacity, virtue and growing maturity to deal with these issues, they are given Catholic armoury for the next stage of their lives.

Statutory compliance

Ironically, this approach, which integrates Catholicism in all that we do, meets Ofsted guidance to prepare students for

the wider world, and satisfies legislative requirements under the Equality Act 2010, because religion is considered to be a "protected characteristic".

Devoted staff

Beyond the unity of purpose, religious practice, equitable governance and Catholic curriculum is the daily example within the classroom and boarding house that makes such an impression on our students (and visitors). They are able to see teachers and priests who genuinely care. We sanction pupils when they step out of line, either in conduct or academic progress, but sanctions are always approached with a view to correcting and supporting them to be their best. Voices are rarely raised in classrooms at St. Michael's, but admittedly the patience of priests in the boarding house of a late evening after a long day is bordering on heroic.

The future

All of these elements explain how St. Michael's is able, not just to navigate the legislation, but to thrive in spite of it. Ultimately, it is a clear unity of purpose to be Catholic that permeates all aspects of life at the school. We're not perfect yet, but as secular authorities increasingly scramble in the dark, unclear about what should be done to remedy the social and moral chaos they have helped to create, it has been my earnest belief from my very first day at St. Michael's School that our small example of faith and reason will shine ever brighter and clearer in the years ahead as a beacon for those beleaguered parents who desire a Catholic education for their children.

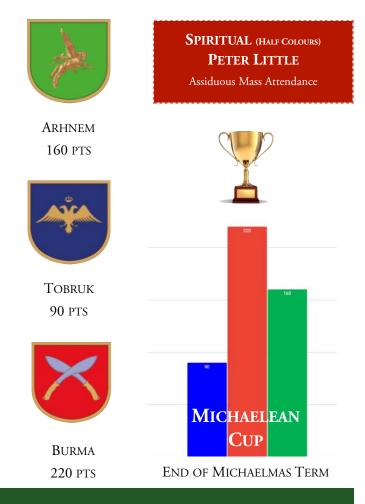
Mr Malliff, Head of Secondary

New School Houses

The school continues to develop greater opportunities for pupils to acquire a sense of belonging and responsibility. To this end, the school has founded three new "Houses". Each secondary pupil belongs to one House for the duration of his time at St. Michael's. His House is his team, - his school family! Each house competes with the others to win the yearly **Michaelean Cup** that acknowledges the House members' personal efforts and progress, but also their collective contributions to school life.

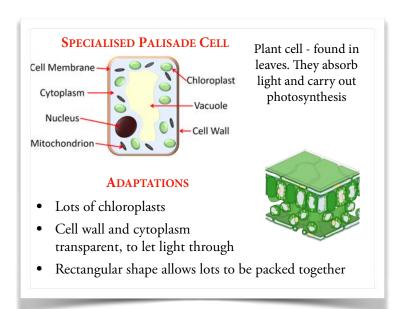
In addition to single pupil merit points that feed each House total, 20 points are awarded to the Houses of those pupils who excel in achievement and effort in the following areas: Liturgy (altar serving, Mass attendance), Sports (Best & Most Improved Player, Best Sportsman), Drama, STEM, Woodworking and Art, Band and Cadets (Best and Most Improved). The various school tournaments are also opportunities for winners to supplement their House totals.

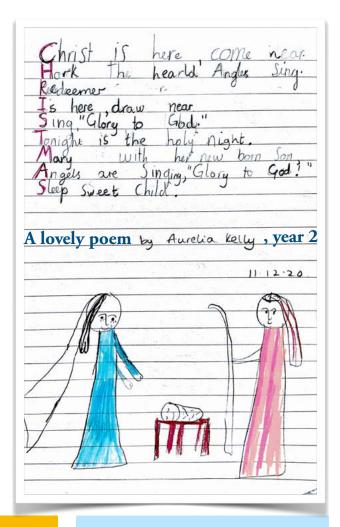
The current tallies of each House are published weekly. Pupils can see their House progress and it is a pleasure to see them look for opportunities to improve their House scores.



YEAR 7 BIOLOGY

The year 7 spent two lessons using the knowledge that they had learnt in class to make a document for display about a 'Specialised Cell'. The pupils had to work in a time frame and to a brief. Google Documents was used to create their posters. The pupils' knowledge of this topic varied greatly at the start of the exercise, but they all learnt new things about using this tool and their final posters are to be commended. The poster below, created by **Sebastian Holmes**, is informative!





GEOGRAPHY AT SAINT MICHAEL'S

MRS ROCH

W ith the retirement, at Easter 2020, of Dr Rhead, I have taken on the coordination and teaching of geography throughout the senior school. At Key Stage 3, we aim to build the knowledge and skills for pupils to successfully move into GCSE level geography. In year 7 this is done through the context of 'The UK' and in year 8 through 'The Wider World'. The skills introduced



include: using various types of maps; cartography skills, especially using Ordnance Survey maps; the interpretation of photographs and satellite images; and statistical and graphical skills. We want pupils to start building up a glossary of geographical terms which they can use with confidence and take with them into KS4.

A t KS4 we follow the AQA Geography syllabus; it will be usual for all pupils to sit this examination at the end of year 11. The course has sections on: 'The Challenge of Natural Hazards'; 'The Living World'; 'The Physical Landscape in the UK'; 'Urban Issues and Challenges'; 'The Changing Economic World'; and 'The Challenge of Resource Management'. It is an



interesting course with an emphasis on application of knowledge and use of real-life examples. There are many skills which also need to be taught and extended, as well as two pieces of fieldwork that we would plan to carry out at the end of year 9 and year 10.

WINTER MATHS REPORT

L ife continues quietly in the maths department. Year 7 have made a good start at working in the wonderful world of algebra. **Luke Sudlow** seems to have a particular enthusiasm for it. The lives of Year 8 will never be the same again now that they have been introduced to Pythagoras' Theorem. Pythagoras of Samos (570 – c 495 BC) was a Greek philosopher and is attributed with discovering that the area on the hypotenuse is equal to the sum of the areas of the other two sides.

Meanwhile Year 9 have started some trigonometry, an area of mathematics developed by the Egyptians and Babylonians around 2000 BC. Year 10 continue the consolidation of topics already learned before we launch into iteration and further trigonometry. Finally, the further maths group, comprised of four brave souls, namely Basil Seeber, Sam Sudlow, Pius Barti and Awen de Penfentenyo, have learnt about the factor theorem and the binomial theorem. They are provided with nibbles to help support them in this!

A fter another busy summer spent in rearranging the music room, Junior 2 classroom and the senior library, term began again.

We welcomed a new teaching assistant and art teacher, Mrs Veronica Pearce, who quickly settled into her role. I continue to teach the Infant class. Miss Rachel Dunn is responsible for Junior 1 and Mr John Hooley for Junior 2.

Attendance this term has been excellent, possibly a side effect of the lockdown!

We did miss one pupil who spent time in hospital. It was touching to see how concerned all of the children were and how at any opportunity, they asked to say extra prayers for his speedy recovery. The photograph shows Mikolaj in hospital with all the cards the children sent.



The children enjoyed an afternoon of activities on our patronal Feast of St. Michael. They worked and played together in their teams - St. George's, St. Andrew's and St. David's.

O ctober started with our annual poetry competition. All the children learnt a poem by heart, and the two finalists from each class performed to parents. The National theme this year was 'vision.' Several parents also recited their

favourite poems. It was a happy occasion and everyone gave an excellent performance.

Ookery was another highlight of the term. We used the cooker in the priests' house and had to hope nothing would disappear! We focused on particular skills as part of our new 'challenge and achievements' project. These consist of life skills in different categories such as safety, looking after myself, home skills, outdoor skills and economic skills. Each child has a folder of skills to work through, to develop more than just academic skills.

D uring November, the children remembered the Holy Souls and those who died in war. We were blessed to have Holy Mass and confession during lockdown and visited the local cemetery.

The school council met several times to discuss playtimes and set behaviour goals.

This gives the children an opportunity for public speaking, listening to others and learning about a voting system. They also took on the task of writing Christmas cards for our benefactors.

The Christmas play this year was based on a poem, 'A Child's Dream'. Junior 2 acted out a family on Christmas Eve, all excited for different reasons. In their dreams they are taken to Bethlehem and Christmas morning has a new meaning. The Infants portrayed the scene in Bethlehem and Junior 1 sang beautifully.



MIKOLAJ READING LETTERS FROM SCHOOL WHILE IN HOSPITAL



"BOYS KNOW NOTHING WHEN IT COMES TO COOKING!"



Ongratulations to Morgan and Joseph who took part in the National Primary Maths Challenge.







LIFE IN JUNIOR 2!

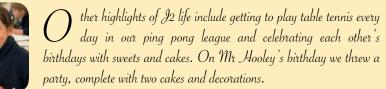
Junior 2 class comprises 8 pupils and Mr Hooley, our versatile form teacher.

Earlier this term we toured the local village during

Geography lessons, looking for physical and man-made features. We discovered the disused railway station which at one time could have taken us from school to the docks at Southampton. We then went to the manmade playground for a PE lesson.

In History, we have been learning about the Mary Rose ship and life in Tudor England. We have been using our stash of Tudor costumes to perform plays about the Monarchs. Our play about the Princes in the Tower changed history slightly to focus on Princesses in the School Gym, featuring a murderous Uncle Richard JJJ, who was foiled by the Princesses' hiding.

We've also used re-enactment to learn about King David and Goliath, and his story of sin and redemption.



As we are the oldest class in the primary school, we get four seats on the school council, including a Secretary and The Chair. School council sessions are held each month to help make the school a happy and kind environment for all pupils.

The school council has organised fundraising for an SSPX school in Kenya, All Saints day costume competitions, a Christmas decorations competition, renovating the garden grotto and purchasing school play equipment. We also make sure that letters of thanks are written to our benefactors.

The council also decides on behaviour targets, such as being kind, or including everyone.

I 've really enjoyed being part of Junior 2 and I'm excited about what next term will bring.

Amelia Jirgens

In recent terms, St. Michael's has had increasing focus on how to incorporate more technology

into the curriculum. Woodwork is now firmly established as an extra-curricular activity, and the STEM club allows for greater exposure to technology and engineering. The inspectorate recognised the 'broad and balanced' curriculum on offer at the school, but leaders were already aware that, of the 7 areas mentioned within the Ofsted Framework, we could extend the technological aspects of the curriculum in

order to work towards 'Outstanding' at their next visit.

An area that has had particular attention this year has been IT (or ICT: Information and Communications Technology). Whilst students at St. Michael's coped admirably well with online learning during the last term of the previous school year, it did highlight that our students are at very different skill levels, and all need to develop in aspects of IT. Whilst the school is not currently in a position to employ a teacher of IT and Business – an ambition for the longer term – all teaching staff have an objective in their performance management reviews to help extend the use of IT in their particular subjects.

St. Michael's remains vigilant to avoid exposing our students to hours of screen time or to unrestricted and unsupervised access to the internet. Nonetheless, there are a number of safe ways to allow students access to computers in order to develop the skills that they will invariably need in further education and the workplace. Developing typing skills and increasing students' confidence in using common software packages, such as Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Publisher have been the focus this term.

ICT and the Curriculum at St. Michael's



In History, Year 7 took the opportunity to present their Roman Empire projects

using ICT. Examples included a typed newspaper, and a PowerPoint summary of the topic's work. In Year 10, students have revised their unit on the Rise of the NSDAP by producing summaries of the work in PowerPoint slides.

In Chemistry and Physics, Years 9 and 10 have been in the school's computer room to research The History of the Atom, Year 7

for the Lifecycle of a Product, and Year 8 to research Nanoparticles and present their findings in Google slides.

In Biology, Year 7 have presented using ICT on Specialised Cells and Year 9 on Adaptations of Exchange Surfaces.

In areas of targeted support, such as EAL (English as an Additional Language), IT equipment and software has been used to support learning via specialist apps, and language apps have been used in French, all of course under the supervision and guidance of specialist teachers. ICT across humanities will be a particular focus next term.

Teaching staff are leading by example in their lessons through the use of projectors, which, due to the efforts of the PTA and the generosity of our parents and benefactors, are now in use in every classroom. **RM**

If you have a computer in good condition and no longer needed, we would be very grateful to give it a new life. The only requirement is that your computer be running on Windows 10 or MacOS

10.6 upwards, otherwise we will not be able to use current programs and apps.

SECONDARY LIBRARY PROJECT

Without the reading of good literature, other useful studies tend to become abstractions which dry up the heart and mind and make them unfavourable to fertile growth. Good literature is the enfleshing of truth and beauty in a digestible and delightful form. As a matter of priority, then, we have set about building a library of tasteful and

suitable works for Key Stage Three to Key Stage Five. Both financially and practically, it is a vast task to assemble a range of worthwhile and interesting works which will help our maturing students, as young adults, to discern for themselves what makes a truly Good Book. Some of our desired series and titles are pretty common fare, while others are often relatively difficult to buy cheaply - and some are rare jewels indeed. Generous donors have started us off with about 80 titles which are being eagerly devoured by our KS3 students. We are launching an appeal for the following titles and series in particular, along with any other suitable titles which generous donors might consider sending:

Classic Authors and Titles

All welcome except Dickens and Shakespeare, as we have a surplus of these. In particular, the following are sought:

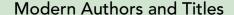
- George MacDonald (Fantasy novels with the boy Curdie as protagonist. Tweens to adult)
- O. Henry (Some of his short stories are excellent reading for
- G.K. Chesterton The Man Who Was Thursday and others.
- John Buchan (The 39 Steps, Greenmantle and other Hannay spy novels.)
- Rudyard Kipling. (The Jungle Book, Kim, If, Captains Couageous)
- R.H. Benson Reformation novels.
- James Fenimore Cooper (Last of the Mohicans and other books in same sequence)
- Baroness Orczy (The Scarlet Pimpernel)
- Sir Walter Scott (Ivanhoe)

Series

- Artemis Fowl series
- Redwall series
- Jennings series
- The Wingfeather Saga series
- esp. Midshipman Quinn books
- Ranger's Apprentice series
- Serpent trilogy
- Swallows and Amazons (younger teens)
- (younger teens)
- Tintin (graphic stories)
- Biggles series

- Bethlehem books in general,
- Vision books
- Taylor Marshall's Sword and
- My Side of the Mountain trilogy





- Susan Peek
- Louis de Wohl
- Hilda Von Stockum
- Meriol Trevor, esp. Letzenstein Chronicles
- Owen Francis Dudley
- Mr. Blue by Myles Connolly
- Outlaws of Ravenhurst by Dr. M.Imelda
- And Then There Were None, A Murder Is Announced by Agatha Christie
- Between the Forest and the Hills by Ann
- Snow Treasure by Marie McSwigan
- The Green Ember by S.D. Smith
- The Red Badge of Courage by Stephen Crane (older teens)
- Banner in the Sky by James Ramsey Ull
- PG Wodehouse (older teenagers)
- Tonke Dragt (tweens and younger teens)
- Finnian and the Seven Mountains (graphic novel)

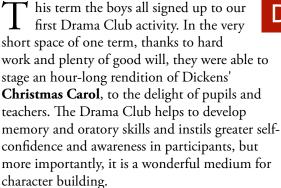


ssemblies are a privileged time to develop particular themes to help pupils better understand the world and their responsibilities towards others. This term the topics discussed were quite varied:

- New school year: Life at St. M's, expectations and the Michaelean Virtues.
- The Ugliness of Bullying
- Thinking about Careers
- Best ways to study, memorization techniques, etc.
 - History of the SSPX and Archbishop Lefebvre, on the occasion of its 50th anniversary.
- Use and importance of homework.
- Gun Powder Plot and its impact on Catholics in England.
- The Meaning of Advent and Christmas

Year 8 History Projects. Our Spanish student scored the highest mark!

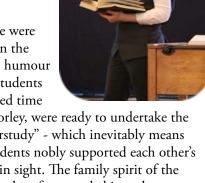
DRAMA CLUB

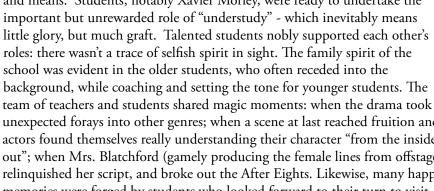


Besides the success of the play itself, there were hidden, even more pleasing results seen in the boys' character development. Teamwork, humour and resourcefulness were all on show as students and teachers gave of their best with limited time

and means. Students, notably Xavier Morley, were ready to undertake the roles: there wasn't a trace of selfish spirit in sight. The family spirit of the school was evident in the older students, who often receded into the unexpected forays into other genres; when a scene at last reached fruition and actors found themselves really understanding their character "from the inside out"; when Mrs. Blatchford (gamely producing the female lines from offstage) relinquished her script, and broke out the After Eights. Likewise, many happy memories were forged by students who looked forward to their turn to visit

the Headmaster's and Head of





Secondary's Offices to practise their lines before a convivial



₹ his year, our boarding house is small but very international, with boys from Spain, Hungary and France. The assortment makes for a family atmosphere. With Covid restrictions in place, outside visits have been very limited, but we have the great outdoors! There is nothing better than a long hike in the beautiful countryside, followed by burgers and a film! We did manage a visit to Windsor Castle.

Our boys are good lads, cheerful, messy and very noisy. Whatever unruly behaviour might have occurred, it is a joy to see them, kneel with the priests to pray the daily rosary, willingly and respectfully.















UNVEILING OF THE SCHOOL AND CADET HOUSES

M r. Blatchford, ex. Cadet-Lord Lieutenant of Somerset and cofounder of the school Cadet Force, kindly visited and spoke to our young recruits about the importance of their Cadet training. He congratulated recent promotions. Mr Blatchford then unveiled six new house/section wall plaques representing the school's different cadet sections and houses. These now hang in the refectory. Tea and cake were served in celebration, with proud parents in attendance.

The next day, Fr. Holden held the traditional Christmas feast for newly promoted NCOs. The event is just as exciting for the waiters and kitchen auxiliaries as for the young guests!







D ominic Finch was pupil from 1992-97. With a BEng in Aerospace engineering he served as an Officer in the Army and is now a pilot of corporate jets. His children attend St M's.

THERE AND BACK AGAIN!

It is a joy to see former pupils return as parents. It is something very special for children to attend their parents' old school and to be taught by the same teachers. Mrs Webb, head of Primary, remembers well her former pupils, now parents.

We are very interested in news from our alumni. Please do not hesitate to send in some details and photos. To date, 576 pupils have attended St. Michael's.



H annah Flynn, née Seeber, was pupil from 1992-2003. After school she qualified as a dental nurse. Anthony taught at St. M's from 2004-8. Two of their children attend St. M's.



T om Cullen attended St. Michael's from 1993 -2004. Gemma (née O'Brien), from 1998-2003. Both had time to get to know each other! Tom picked up an engineering degree and Gemma mastered in English. Now their children attend school.



hristina Jirgens (née Flynn), was a pupil from 1994-2001. She received a BA in fashion and an MA in Anthropology. Three of her children now attend St. Michael's.



I sabella Di Napoli (née Fiore) attended St. Michael's from 1992-2002. After graduating in French and Italian, she now works as a Cognitive Hypnotherapist. Zac is in year 2.

SAINT MICHAEL'S SCHOOL

Harts Lane Burghclere Newbury RG20 9JW U.K.



01635 278137 headmaster@sanctusmichael.com

23rd December 2020

Dear Friends and Benefactors,

There never seems to be enough room in the school newsletter to describe the improvements to the school facilities that your generosity makes possible.

Pollowing two successive water mains pipe ruptures, it became apparent that the existing pipe was beyond repair. I had nightmares of diggers delving ditches from the road all the way to the stopcock inside the White House. What a relief, then, to find a company that was able to lay a new pipe without digging! Using a a moling technique, their machine was able to burrow underground and buildings without intrusion or disruption, and, somehow, bring and connect the pipe to the main water stopcock. A kind benefactor covered the expense.

In July, we asked for help with the rotting window frames. Thanks to your generosity, we were able to replace eight small and large windows. We still have four more... The change has made an immense difference to temperatures inside the house... from cold to cool!

In September we were able to replace some very damaged drainage pipes around and under the old White House. We hope the replacements will finally resolve the very bad rising damp in the hallway and sacristy areas, where fungi sometimes grow from the inside wall!!

e are currently tiling the dormitory corridor, having done away with the carpet that was in a terrible condition. After that there is the property gate ground rail that needs to be re-installed and which



ground rail that needs to be re-installed and which requires rebuilding a portion of the entrance driveway to make it strong enough to withstand heavy lorries. And our heating systems are still coughing and spluttering for new components and parts. And two classrooms require new flooring. All in good time.

Please continue to help us. Our school is so important to the growing number of families in search of a good school for their children.

We pray for you every day and wish you a very holy and merry Christmas!

Fr. John Brucciani, Headmaster



SAINT MICHAEL'S SCHOOL

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



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

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on the day of each mon	otland, Newbury Branch, ath until further notice.	, 20 Market Place, Newbury, RG14 5BD ciety of St Pius X - St Michaels School"
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God bless you for your kindness! Return form to address above. Questions? Call us at 01635 278137.