

St. Gregory's Catholic High School

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Headteacher
Mr E McGlinchey BSc (Hons) NPQH & NPQEL

21st December 2023

Dear Parents and Carers,

End of Autumn Term Letter 2023

I write to you as we complete a successful autumn term for our school community, which is the longest term of the year. It leads us from the end of summer, through autumn, remembrance periods and then Advent leading to Christmas, and in that time, so much happens.

The term started with the outstanding examination success from the class of 2023, who we were delighted to welcome these pupils back to school for their certificate evening in December. We celebrated mass for the last time with this year group and enjoyed an inspirational speech from a former pupil, who through hard work, now attends Oxford University.

It has been a pleasure to provide head teacher awards from our 'Ambition for All' programme for the array of talents that our pupils possess from motor racing to rugby league. This term has been particularly busy with celebration for both individual pupils but also staff and the school as a whole as we celebrate fantastic attendance rates, excellent behaviour standards and academic progress from all groups of children in school across all ability ranges.

This year we have welcomed highly skilled new staff members to our team, following some retirements and promotions in school and I am very happy with how these colleagues have settled into St Gregory's. They have really made an impact on the areas that they are leading on, including bringing fresh ideas and enhancements to what we do.

The second half of the term has been one of remembrance. The school once again demonstrated outstanding poignancy in services for those we have lost, both part of our school community and also those lost in conflict on a world stage.

Our new site developments have improved how the school day operates. The new reception is a welcoming, professional environment that has been long overdue. We are happy that we have the correct space for visitors that also enhances overall safeguarding as the school now has pupil only areas.

The new screen technology that has been installed in every classroom has been well received by staff and pupils alike and has added to the learning experience, making class time much more interactive.

Our new science lab and construction workshop are now fully opened and have been well utilised by the pupils already and I continue to work with our architects, governors, staff and pupils about more developments that will add to the current provision, including extra classroom and recreational spaces.

This term saw our school join in partnership with our parishes to celebrate important milestones. St Joseph's celebrated its centenary year and St Alban's celebrated its 200th year of serving their communities. St Gregory's pupils, staff and parents feel a very important connection to our parishes and to be part of these celebrations were very special occasions.

One family... inspired to learn.'

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A major highlight for me personally this term has been the breakfast meetings with our pupil leadership group that have taken place every two weeks. Each meeting involves an array of pupils from across all of the year groups and they come prepared and well researched. The professionalism of our pupil leaders is staggering. So far, the pupil leaders have proposed a new school podcast, which I have agreed to and we have discussed the development of the toilet blocks, circulation arrangements around school and space for additional lockers. It has been brilliant to hear their feedback on what they love about being a St Gregory's family member.

St Gregory's extracurricular activities programme continues to be full and varied and are well attended by our pupils. It has also been great to see our staff getting involved in some wellbeing activities too, from five a side football to adult fitness classes in school. I am sure that if you had the privilege to see our performing arts productions and carol concert, will agree that all involved from the staff to the stage crew and of course the performers, are absolutely packed with talent. Our performing arts team are one of the most inclusive teams I have had the pleasure of working with, ensuring all children can be involved in performances.

The staggering amount of charity work and fundraising continues to be a real benefit to the local community and beyond and in particular, our young people do so much for the elderly in our parishes. I feel that the charisms of St Gregory's are on display everyday in all that we say and do.

I offer huge congratulations to Year 7 who have now completed a full term at St Gregory's. Year 7 is a year group packed with wonderful young people who have already got stuck into school life and made some amazing contributions already. It is my opinion, Year 7 have settled in as well as any other year group I have seen in my career, a testament to our transition programme and partnership with our new families.

I want to say a huge well done to Year 11 who took their mock examinations with maturity and diligence, they continue to blow me away with their hard work ethic and I have no doubt they will be ready for the summer examinations. I would also like to make a special mention to Year 9 who are about to embark on their option choices in the spring.

All of what goes on in St Gregory's could not happen if it were not for the outstanding partnership and contributions to school life that you as our parents and carers do every day. It is you that support our school so well, it is you that ensures your children are well prepared for learning every day, being punctual with excellent attendance and it is you that engage so positively with our staff and initiatives.

The parent/carers and school partnership remains the strength of our school and I thank you for your part in this.

I want to acknowledge the outstanding work of my entire staff team this term, they have done so much above and beyond for our pupils, including adapting to new challenges in education and they have done so well. The staff are now very tired and looking forward to a well-deserved break in which they will have the opportunity to recharge their batteries for some great work in the spring term.

School will close as planned at 12.25pm tomorrow (22nd December) and the bus companies have been informed about the earlier finish time.

St Gregory's will reopen at the normal time of 8.15am on Monday 8th January 2024 and we look forward to welcoming all pupils back on that day for the start of the spring term.

I would now like to wish you and your loved ones a very holy, restful and happy Christmas period, filled with hope for 2024 and all that can be achieved in the New Year.

Yours sincerely,



Ed McGlinchey
Headteacher