



St Thomas of Aquin's High School

In Focus Newsletter ~ September 2018



St Thomas of Aquin's is a learning community which ensures a safe, supportive and enjoyable environment, where pupils, staff, and parents are inspired and motivated to work hard for one another to fulfil the God-given potential of all pupils.

Self-discipline
Teamwork

Trust
High expectations
Openness
Mutual respect
Achieving excellence
Success

Dear Parent/Carer

I extend a warm welcome to all pupils, parents, and staff to the September edition of In Focus. With my weekly emails to parents and my regular tweets, the infocus newsletter is a slender edition this time. I do hope you enjoy the read.

It was a pleasure returning to the school in August to the exam results achieved by our pupils. The 2017-18 exams results were very good and I welcome all parents to attend the **Parent Council meeting on Wednesday 19th of September** to discuss the results. Our results show the school is enhancing its reputation as a learning community which delivers attainment for many of our pupils. I will be completing a school attainment report for the City of Edinburgh by the end of October and this will be shared with the Parent Council in due course. I will ensure that a copy of the report is placed on the school website.

At the end of last term St Thomas' said goodbye to Ms Megan Gardner, Depute Head Teacher, and Ms Geraldine Kelly, Pupil Support Leader. Both colleagues worked tirelessly for the school and made a huge contribution to improving the life chances of St Thomas' pupils. On behalf of the school community I wish them all the best in their new positions. The school is in the process of interviewing for a new permanent Depute Head Teacher and at the moment Mr Green our Curricular Leader of Science is the school's Acting Depute Head Teacher. I am also very happy that Ms Christian Taylor was the successful candidate for the Pupil Support Leader for St Margaret's and Ms Taylor is already supporting her pupil case load admirably.

The S6 senior school leadership team is now in place and I am very pleased with the potential in the group. The S6 leadership team have a lot to live up to and I believe they will

succeed in delivering opportunities to all pupils during 2018-19. I have written to the parents of the successful pupils to congratulate them and I have also met with the unsuccessful candidates to support their leadership aspirations.

The St Thomas of Aquin's RC High School S6 Leadership Team for 2018-19 are

Head girl:
Kirstie Cronin

Head boy:
Felix Barley

Depute Head boy:
Moray Stiven

Depute Head girl:
Molly-rose Cordiner

St Andrew's House Captain:
Fergal O Donoghue
Daniel Irvine

St Margaret's House Captain:
Dillon Boyle
Isabel Magrath-Badrena

St Kentigern's House Captain:
Joanna Hedley
Khená Dungu

Christopher Santini
Acting Head Teacher

Chinese Summer Trip Experience

Pupils from all around Scotland took part in this exciting Chinese language and culture immersion course in China over the summer. There were participants from Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee, Inverness and other Scottish cities.

Maks Kulczycki and Patrycja Chrzaszcz from St Thomas' were chosen by the Confucius Institute at Strathclyde University in Glasgow to represent the school in this life time experience. The two of us have been attending the Mandarin lunch-time club every Mondays in room 3.30 for the last two years. Mr. Montenegro also organised six Friday afternoon Mandarin classes for all the pupils from Edinburgh taking part in this trip. We all were able to revised-learn vocabulary and necessary phrases that were essential to be able to communicate with the Chinese people and in particular with our pen friends.

Throughout our journey, we did many things. Every day, we had something going on at all times. This trip had two main parts. One is the tourist one as we visited the Forbidden City, Tiananmen Square, Beijing Water Town and the Great Wall of China. These are well known sites that most people have heard about. However, we also managed to see other important Chinese landmarks like the Hutong, which are traditional Chinese building from ancient times that still survive to this day. The Pearl Market which is known as a bargain destination for tourists in Beijing. We also visited the city of Tianjin which is a small city for Chinese standards, over 15 million inhabitants. In here, we went to the city museum and we took a boat tour along the Haihe River and did our souvenir shopping at the traditional street market.

The Second part, which was the most important for us, was the academic one – We went to a school in Tianjin where we immerse ourselves in Mandarin language and culture course every morning. We practiced talking, writing Chinese characters, and at the same time learning about this ancient and rich culture. We went through multiple Culture classes in the afternoon and this gave us a close insight of what Chinese culture is really like. It ranged from Tai Chi to paper cutting classes, tea ceremony, Peking opera masks painting, fan decoration or local traditional instruments workshops. The highlight to me was that we had the opportunity to visit our Edinburgh partner school in Tianjin and we met pupils our age. Everybody was able to visit their homes and family in order to experience how Chinese people live. We are very grateful for that as we are now in contact with them all and they plan to visit Edinburgh next year

This was indeed a very exciting and at the same time exhausting experience. It is an opportunity of a life-time which I strongly recommend. I feel that this type of trips allows you to be tolerant, respectful and understanding towards different cultures and a way to value what we have around us and at the same time to see what the world is actually like.

Maksymilian Kulczycki

The Mandarin Club is on every Monday at lunch-time in room 3.30. All welcome

Team MKMT

After a successful day at HMS Caledonia where all pupils acquitted themselves well, team MKMT were crowned East of Scotland Race for the line champions and therefore qualify for the UK final.

The prizes were presented by the Commanding Officer of HMS Prince of Wales, the second of the new aircraft carriers being built at Rosyth.



Music Department

August is always a busy month for the performing arts department as there are so many of the Festival shows still in place to visit. The S4 music class visited the BBC tent to experience a recording of a live radio show ‘The Afternoon Show with Janice Forsyth and Grant Stott’ and whilst there were treated to fantastic live performances from a Mexican mariachi band and the ‘top secret drummers’ from the Tattoo.





The two pupils are Felix and Jade in S2. They are next to Javier, an indigenous tribesman from Ecuador.

We had a wonderful 'Cenerentola' workshop where professional singers came to the school and performed an edited version of Rossini's Cinderella. This culminated with many students getting free tickets to see the actual performance by Opera Lyon in the Festival Theatre.



We are hoping to take all the S3 classes to the 'Rip it Up' (history of Scottish popular music) exhibition in the National Museum over the coming weeks and the orchestra is busy rehearsing for the up-coming awards ceremony.

History & Drama Departments

St Thomas of Aquin's, each back to school year, finds itself in the middle of the world's biggest art festival. Teachers Ms Hunter and Ms Grindall are keen to see our pupils benefit from this proximity! This August we invited a broad range of performers into the classrooms, from productions focused on contemporary war to rain-forest destruction for palm oil.

