

St. Thomas' *Learns*



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Foreword

Welcome to St Thomas' Learns, the first edition of a newsletter dedicated to celebrating the learning provision experienced by pupils at St Thomas'. I would like to thank Mr O' Connor and Mr Green for strategically leading this piece of work. The school will publish 3 newsletters a year and they will be placed on the school website.

The school's vision for learning and teaching is to ensure St Thomas' is an outward looking, inclusive, and ambitious school where pupils, staff, and parents work in partnership to ensure the highest delivery of education for all pupils. I look forward to hearing the views of pupils and parents about our 1st edition of St Thomas' Learns

Christopher Santini

Head Teacher of St Thomas of Aquin's RC High School

SUPPORT FOR LEARNING

Group Work

Support for learning staff and visiting therapists have been running three groups for identified pupils in S1-3. The groups will run over a number of weeks and will focus on friendships and social skills. Through the group work, young people will develop their understanding of the rules of social interaction, both in and out of school, as they progress through the teenage years. Our young people will also learn strategies that will support their resilience, communication skills and confidence.

Assistive Technology Ideas

Technology can play an important part in helping young people who experience literacy difficulties. One handy bit of kit is the IVONA MiniReader, which will read any text that is on screen aloud for your child. Don't worry, they can use headphones! You can install this on your home PC or laptop and more information can be found on the CALL Scotland website [here](https://www.callscotland.org.uk/blog/ivona-MiniReader-free-text-to-speech-reader/):
<https://www.callscotland.org.uk/blog/ivona-MiniReader-free-text-to-speech-reader/>

Once downloaded, you will see a floating tool bar like the one above. Open the webpage or document you want it to read and highlight the text. Then simply press play – it will read the text out in a lovely Scottish accent. If you don't like Heather you can change it to Stuart with one click. This should make research and reading tasks significantly more accessible

for young people with literacy difficulties. This excellent little tool is available on school computers and your child can access it by clicking on the start symbol, going to word talk and opening Ivona MiniReader. Similar text to speech apps are available on apple and android devices and more information can be found on the CALL Scotland website <https://www.callscotland.org.uk/home/>

Home Study Support

The Home Study Club continues to run on Wednesdays from 15:30-16:30, and is open to any pupil from S1-S6. Pupils can stay for however long they choose or need to in order to complete tasks. The Club is held in Room 2.42 and gives a quiet place to work, access to ICT and the provision of material resources. A snack is also provided.

Peer Mentoring

Several of our S5 and S6 pupils have completed a Peer Mentoring training programme, delivered by our Speech and Language Therapist. Through the programme, senior pupils developed their understanding of:

- * Roles and Responsibility of a mentor
- * Additional Support Needs (ASNs) and how to support young people who have ASNs

The senior pupils involved gave positive feedback and are looking forward to using their new skills in their capacity as a mentor to younger pupils.

ART AND DESIGN

Scottish Portrait Awards 2018

In October, the Art and Design Department celebrated the fantastic news that one of our senior pupils, Eve Woehrling was announced as the winner of the SPA Young Fine Artist Award 2018. Eve's painting, "Portrait of Saul" was originally created for her Higher Art portfolio. The Art and Design Department are very proud of Eve's accomplishment, this is a very prestigious award for a secondary school pupil to win considering the age category of 16-25 years is open to those studying Art in full time further education.



Eve said: "This portrait is of my brother, Saul. I like working with oils, but I chose watercolour for this painting because I find it easier to create detail and subtlety with watercolour. I tried to keep the portrait simple, because I wanted to create a quiet atmosphere."

Eve's work can be viewed in the SPA exhibition currently in Glasgow until the 9th of February.

School Christmas card S2

Pupils from 2PG4 were happy to see their collaborative efforts for the school Christmas card become a reality. The Christmas card scene was commissioned by the school in May 2018. The brief was to make art work that reflected words taken from Luke 2. 11. *"Today in the town of David a saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord"*

Finally, the Christmas card was printed in December and over 200 cards were sent in appreciation to all friends and associates who have supported St Thomas of Aquin's over the last year.



Careers Fair – Creative Industries at the Portrait Gallery

Senior pupils interested in following a creative industries career path attended a creative industries careers fair. Pupils met with a film maker, gallery curators, an artist and a graphic designer. Pupils had the chance to work on a design brief with the graphic designer.



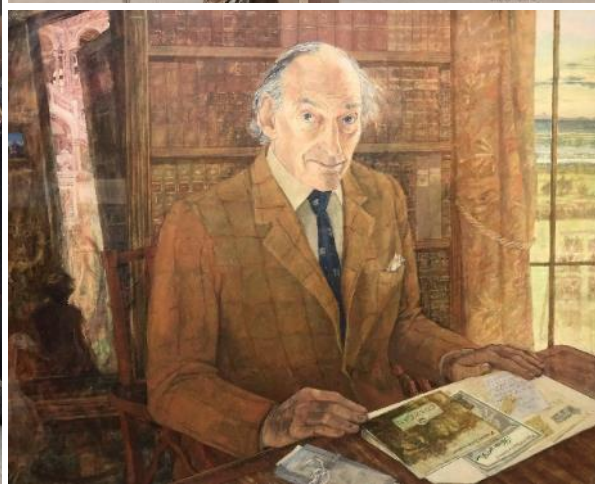
Fruitmarket Gallery Making Matters – S6

Advanced Higher pupils and Art department staff participated in the Garcia Schools Foundation programme at the Fruitmarket Gallery. This year gallery educators delivered an exciting project inspired by the work of Tacita Dean. Art works were created using a cyanotype process. The exciting part of the project was the culmination of all the artwork featuring as part of the Making Matters exhibition “A Performance of Light and Dark” at the Fruitmarket Gallery.



Beyond Likeness Exhibition

Advanced Higher Art and Higher Art and Design pupils had the opportunity to visit "Beyond Likeness" Exhibition of art work by Scottish artist Victoria Crowe. The exhibition was enjoyed by pupils and staff. *"It was interesting to see an artist's working drawings presented alongside final paintings, which is similar to our Higher Art Expressive folio."*



S2 School Mural - A Window into the world, the city and the school.

All S2 pupils participated in a screen-printing workshop in January with Artists Louise Fraser and Jo Fraser on an art project commissioned by the school. The purpose of the mural is to celebrate the centenary of Catholic Education and to reflect on what this means to the pupils and staff at St Thomas of Aquin's. The pupils proposed key themes of Jesus Christ and his teachings, being in an Edinburgh city centre inclusive school, Values/Education as the window to the future, representation of the subjects in school and the history and community of the school.



Pupil wins NMS Christmas Art Competition

Congratulations to Katherine Morrison (S1) who won 1st prize in the 12-15 age category of the National Museum of Scotland's Christmas Art Competition 2018. Katherine's beautiful drawing of Pallas' Cats demonstrates talent and a real passion for drawing.



SCIENCES

The 'Girls Into Physics' event was held on 1/05/2018 at George Watson's College – this event is run by the IOP and promotes Physics as an exciting potential career to young women. The s3 girls took part in a wide range of interesting workshops with peers from all around Edinburgh and Scotland



Physics Work Experience Week

By Alexander Boardman S4

From the 9th to the 14th of September 2018 I had the opportunity to go to Glasgow University for a Physics work experience week. The week was well organised, and we were doing something different each day. I heard from PhD students who talked to us about their day to day life, lecturers who had worked on discovering gravitational waves in 2017 and the Higgs boson in 2012. I also got a crash course in the programming language Python and a day shadowing researchers as they worked on projects puzzling physicists from all around the world.

There were about 20 other students coming all the way from Aberdeen to North Berwick and everywhere in between. On the Wednesday, we were split up into pairs and we spent the day with one research group. I was working with some nuclear Physicists and learning all about sub-atomic particles and the standard model. I went in relatively unaware that you can go smaller than an electron, so I had to learn about the quarks that make up Protons and Neutrons, as well as the bosons that link all the quarks together. I did find it hard to grasp as it's so theoretical, but a university is probably the best place to learn about these complex ideas! Once I understood I was tasked with analysing data coming from the particle accelerator in Geneva. Basically, at Geneva they have an 27km ring where they send protons flying around ridiculously fast and these protons will collide with each other and splitting up

into the various quarks that form protons. Using particle decay channels, you can tell which particles are being detected as they decay in different parts of the spectrometer. The following day we made PowerPoints and posters and had a small "conference". It's fascinating seeing how specialised Physics can get – the skills involved in astronomy are so different to nuclear physics, which is in turn completely different to optics.

It was a great insight into life as an academic and there's an exciting atmosphere in the university as scientists are coming up with original theories and new ways to understand everything from the tiniest particles, to the universe as a whole. I'd definitely recommend the work experience week to anybody currently in S2 or S3 who has a passion for Physics or indeed any science as it is a great way to learn about working in a university.

STEM Trip to Croatia

Senior school pupils participated in an amazing STEM trip to Croatia where they studied animals in the wild. The expedition was split into two - with the first week on land studying many different species including reptile and amphibians, wolves, bats, birds. All of the studies were hands on and involved animal capture and recording. The second week pupils gained a PADI diving qualification with experienced PADI master divers. All passed with flying colours and the school now has a significant proportion of pupils who are qualified scuba-divers. During the dives, we studied the coral reef systems around the shores of the Adriatic Sea. The group then spent a day sightseeing in Dubrovnik soaking in all of the culture that the country had to offer.

ST. THOMAS' LEARNS



MATHEMATICS

In Mathematics, we continue to develop key numeracy skills that are used and further developed across the curriculum. We also aim to develop problem-solving strategies and enable pupils to see where 'some of the Mathematics' they learn can be applied in real life. In addition, a good number of pupils opt to take part in the Scottish Mathematical Challenge, which requires them to answer two sets of five problems, in their own time, giving clear explanations of how they solved the problems. Some pupils take part in the UK Junior and Intermediate Mathematical Challenges. The intermediate for S3/4 pupils took place on 7 February resulting in 2 gold, 13 silver and 22 bronze certificates awarded. Francesca Lee was best in school and goes through to the next round of the competition.

Five of our S2 Mathematicians attended the University Masterclasses provided by Edinburgh, Heriot Watt and Napier Universities. Here is some feedback from the pupils. 'The masterclasses were very interesting and informative, a great experience and it will be very useful for the future.' 'They did a mixture of topics, some I understood and some were quite hard. Overall it was a fun experience.' 'I enjoyed the masterclasses and they were all very interesting but the best one was on the Game of Life.'



Four of our S3 pupils attended a Mathematics enrichment event at Edinburgh University. Here are some of their comments. 'It was a complex but thoroughly entertaining experience that greatly improved my appreciation of Mathematicians.' 'We got to learn a number of different topics and had lots of interactive activities. It was a great time well spent.'



S3/4 pupils represent the school at the Enterprising Maths in the Lothians Competition each year, usually two teams of four. This took place at Murrayfield stadium and our two teams did very well and came 3rd and 5th with the top team going through to the final in Glasgow.

A problem for you to try.... In the first 20 games for a children's football team, the average number of goals per game was two. After a further 15 games the average goals

per game increased to five. What was the average number of goals per game in the last 15 games only? Hand in your completed solution with working to Miss Reid by Friday 21st May 2019 for the chance to win a calculator.

MODERN LANGUAGES

China-St Thomas Network

The Mandarin club has been very busy this term. We continue meeting every Monday at lunch-time. Everyone is welcome!

We have attended the National Mandarin Conference in Perth Conference centre; we took part in the training for the Panda boxes resources alongside Leith Academy pupils at the Edinburgh and had the opportunity to see the Panda bears. We Celebrated the Chinese New Year with our traditional dragon parade on the 4th of February here in school and most recently; all members were invited to the Leith Mandarin Hub on Friday the 22nd of February to a Chinese culture event with pupils from all around the city of Edinburgh.

We are also happy to announce that two of our school pupils, Krishan Chandarana and Maksymilian Kulsycki both in S5 have been appointed as **Scottish ambassadors** for the SCEN Scotland China Education network. Because of our efforts and hard work, the school Parents' association have awarded the Mandarin club a grand of £100 to encourage our determination and invite more participants to come and take these wonderful opportunities.

Edinburgh Zoo



"It was a wonderful opportunity to see Edinburgh Zoo decorated with mythical creatures as it gave a real oriental atmosphere. We learned a lot about the various regions, cities and history of China and at the same time, we had great fun. The Chinese Hanban teachers assisted us when support was needed. We also saw the real pandas and learnt about them in detail. This trip gave us the perspective that pandas are a strong part of China's history. I would strongly recommend if other pupils have the opportunity to take part in this Panda box training". **Max S5**

2My classmates and myself attended the Panda box training at the Edinburgh zoo on the 31st of January. We learnt how giant panda bears live. It was a great experience as we effortlessly got the information through jigsaws and board games".

Krishan S5

Chinese New Year parade at St Thomas

Every year the Mandarin club celebrate the Chinese New Year, showing our hand-made dragon around the school. This year we united more people to help, which was impressive, and we made workshops with Chinese calligraphy, celebrations and games. Then we did a Chinese Dragon parade with Chinese music and decorations. The students seemed to really enjoy the beautiful dragon we carried with pride. It was a great experience and I hope we continue to do these Chinese celebrations in our school, to get to know more about Chinese culture and its wonders.

Mariana Moreira S3

On the 4th of February, we held our annual Chinese New Year day parade. It was great to see so many people coming out of lessons to see the parade through the school's corridors. We had a great ovation when passing the Art Department, which felt very encouraging. We went all around the school and had a lot of support. All in all, it was a great experience for us all.

There were various different workshops to participate in such as Chinese knotting, chopsticks, Tai Chi and the Chinese tea ceremony (Just to mention a few). I feel that after this event, my knowledge about China has increased and now I am aware of some traditions that I was not aware of previously. It was also fantastic to see that pupils from the Primary Schools were showing a keen interest in these activities and getting to know more about China. At the end of the afternoon, we were even given goody bags with lots of Chinese treats inside them. I will always remember this experience!!!!



Krishan (S5)

Having Mandarin during lunch is fun. This is not just an ordinary club, but an extraordinary club. You can experience a lot of things we have never done before such as The Chinese New Year parade, Chinese calligraphy, how to use chopsticks and not only that but we also paint masks, we have been on tours to the Zoo and conferences in various part of Scotland. There are two members of the Mandarin club who are the Scottish Panda Ambassadors for the China Scottish Network and they keep us informed of all events, activities and grands across the country. We are so lucky that we even have a Chinese language assistant, Qing, who is very enthusiastic and patient. We had an amazing Chinese New Year parade for 2019, Happy New Year of the pig!



SOCIAL SUBJECTS

This session has been a very busy one with the following events taking place:

S1 pupils have been studying Scottish History and had an exciting trip to Bannockburn to investigate the Wars of Independence.



In Modern Studies pupils have participated in a 'mock election' where they decided their own policies and presented their findings to the class. Many of the policies focused on knife crime, global climate change and mental health- fantastic to see our young people so engaged in current issues!



Here are the 'Pink Flamingos'



Our S2 and S3 pupils will have the opportunity next term to participate in a number of excursions. Our Modern Studies pupils will be visiting either the Scottish Parliament or Westminster. Our Geographers will have an opportunity to practice their fieldwork skills on a day excursion.

Our senior Modern Studies pupils had the opportunity to participate in the Mini-Trails where they successfully defended the case against St Augustine's. Higher pupils also visited the Scottish Parliament and had an informative Q&A with Andy Wightman MSP for the Green Party.

Our Higher Geographers enjoyed the annual trip to the Cairngorms as part of the Higher course.





The Advanced Higher pupils also visited the Cairngorms and worked in conjunction with Lagganlia Outdoor Centre to complete Geography Fieldwork.



The N5 and Higher Business pupils participated in a STEM event at Hibs Stadium as part of workshop to understand how to market a start-up business



Good luck to all of our S6 pupils in your future studies and endeavours!

