

St Monica's R.C. High School and 6th Form Centre



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Headteacher: A.Letcher, B.Ed, NLE

September 2016

Dear Parents/Carers

I hope I find you and your families well.

As is usual at the start of a new academic year, I am writing to update you on a number of matters.

New Staff

We welcome our new staff:

Mrs C Farrelly	Assistant Headteacher
Miss J Cahill	Teacher of English
Mr T Dalton	Teacher of English
Mr N Elbey	Teacher of Maths
Mr H Hayes	Teacher of Science
Mr D Healey	Teacher of Maths
Mr S Higham	Teacher of MFL
Miss R Katonha	Teacher of Geography
Miss C Letcher	Teacher of English
Miss B Mee	Teacher of Maths
Mrs Z Melia	Teacher of Maths
Miss J O'Neill	Teacher of Religious Education
Miss J Stanbank	Teacher of Science
Mrs L Clowes	Teacher of Beauty Therapy
Mr C Fletcher	Teaching Assistant
Miss L Barnes	Teaching Assistant

Examinations

The continued commitment and hard work of our staff and the strong support of parents and governors have ensured that St Monica's has continued to flourish. 2016 proved to be another successful year as far as examination results are concerned.

Sixth Form students celebrated outstanding results. Students left us to take up their places at University, Apprenticeships and employment with confidence, ambition and the skills to succeed in the wider world. A fantastic 18 students achieved a BTEC/Cambridge Technical, Level 3 specialist work related qualification, equivalent to 3 A Levels. Seven of these achieved the highest grades possible - three distinction star / distinction grades in Sport and Exercise Science, Creative Media and a combined Children's Play & Learning Development/Production Arts course. Alongside this, our students studying qualifications in Beauty Therapy, Hairdressing and Hospitality and Catering achieved remarkable success at Levels 1 – 3.

Congratulations to everyone; your hard work in our Sixth Form has been rewarded with excellent results and our reputation for success far in excess of national averages is unsurpassed.

Our Year 11 pupils attained 75% 5A*-C, with 65% gaining 5A*-C including English Language and Maths. Attainment is strong in many subjects and we are particularly delighted with Drama, Performing Arts, Polish, Russian, Biology and Physics which all achieved 100% A* - C. English and Humanities results remain strong and well above the national average with an astonishing



91% in English Language and/or English Literature and 75% for Humanities. Business and Enterprise Certificate and GCSE DT Electronics and Product Design, French, Health & Social Care, History, Maths, RE, Additional Science and Biology have shown improvements from last year.

24 out of 32 subjects studied at St Monica's are above national average for A*-C: Art and Design, Art Textiles, Business Studies GCSE, DT Electronics, DT Product Design, Textiles, English Literature, History and Biology increased the percentage of A/A* from last year.

The younger pupils' efforts were rewarded with outstanding results. Two Year 10 pupils sat a GCSE in Portuguese and Russian, achieving a Grade A* and A. In Year 9, a pupil achieved a Grade B in GCSE French and in Year 8 a pupil achieved a Grade A in Spanish. Whilst in Year 7, nine of our pupils took a MFL GCSE in either Portuguese or Polish. 78% achieved an A*/A and 100% achieved A*-B.

Congratulations to everyone concerned.

The total cost of our examination bill for 2015/16 was £80,000 of which £65,000 was for the main school and £15,000 for the sixth form.

GCSE Reforms

The Government is introducing the new GCSE's with the aim of increasing both their rigour and revising the content.

These reforms are being rolled out over the next few years and the first wave of subjects is already being taught to year 11.

By September 2017 all current GCSE subjects will have either been replaced by a new style GCSE or discontinued. Some subjects may choose to run BTEC qualifications if they are more appropriate for that particular subject.

The effect of this will be a change in the curriculum from KS2 to KS4 to meet the demands of these new GCSE's.

Key Changes

Some of the key changes are:

- All course assessment will now be at the end of the Y11. There will be no more modular examinations and there will be restrictions on which exams pupils can take early.
- Exams will form 100% of the assessment in most subjects. Controlled assessments will cease or the weighting will be significantly reduced in most subjects.
- There will be a new grading scale which uses numbers instead of letters. The scale will be from 9 to 1, with 9 being the highest.
- They are designed to be more challenging and demanding. This will be evident in the increased content, the length and number of examinations and the style of questions.

There have also been changes to the Science curriculum. All students must take combined Science and some will also take Science as an option subject. The outcome is that Year 10 have made three option subject choices. The changes mean we can allocate more time to English and Maths in Year 10, with students now having four hours per week in these subjects, providing these key subjects the time required to meet the demands of their new GCSE specifications.

GCSE grades are changing from traditional A*-G grades to new numbered 1-9 grades for 2017/18. The table overleaf summarises how the grading changes will apply to each year group.

New GCSE Grading Structure

Ofqual

NEW GCSE GRADING STRUCTURE	CURRENT GCSE GRADING STRUCTURE
9	A*
8	A
7	A
6	B
5	B
4	C
3	D
2	E
1	F
U	G
	U

GOOD PASS (DfE)
5 and above = top of C and above

AWARDING
4 and above = bottom of C and above

GCSE's for English Language, Literature and Maths. Grades will be numbers 9-1.

GCSE for other subjects. Grades will be letters A*-G.

GCSE for most subjects. Grades will be numbers 9-1.

GCSE for Business Studies, Design & Technology, Art, Music, Physical Education, Drama, Dance, Computing, Design & Technology, Languages, etc. Grades will be letters A*-G.

GCSE for all subjects. Grades will be numbers 9-1.

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GCSE for all subjects. Grades will be numbers 9-1.

The numbers that pupils receive as a final GCSE grade are equivalent to the GCSE grades being used currently as shown in the new grading from Ofqual. Holy Cross have indicated that they will accept Grade 5 and above as an entry requirement for A Level courses.

It is important that we work together to ensure that when asked to revise and prepare for these assessments as part of their homework, pupils do so diligently.

To support pupils and parents we are introducing Show My Homework, a simple online homework calendar showing homework information and deadlines. When this is launched at school you will be informed. At home please check Show My Homework regularly and ensure the work set is completed to a high standard.

You can find further information listed below:

Grading New GCSE's from 2017:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/537147/Postcard_-_Grading_New_GCSEs.pdf

The Exams Regulator - Ofqual:

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofqual

The Department for Education:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/your-qualification-our-regulation-gcse-as-and-a-level-reforms

Progress 8

You may have heard reference to Progress 8. Realistically, this will only concern you if you're a teacher, the Government, or if you're looking at league tables. It is a new performance measure which aims to compare the progress of pupils over eight key subjects

Progress 8 is a measure based on:

- Progress
- Performance in a range of subjects, not just English and Mathematics
- Performance and progress of all pupils of all abilities

As we move forward with the new qualifications and assessment, we will keep you updated as appropriate.

Year 11 Parents' Appointments

Mrs Hainsworth, Mrs Walker and I will be inviting into school, parents of all Year 11 pupils after half term to keep you informed of your son's/daughter's progress and to identify targets for successful GCSE results next summer. Pupils will be given separate letters to bring home in the next few weeks.

Parents should note that the week beginning 28th November 2016 will be a formal mock examination week for Year 11.

Welcome Mass

The current Year 7 pupils have settled in very quickly this year and are working hard and enjoying life in the "big school". The Welcome Mass on Thursday, 29th September at 6.30 pm, marks the start of their five-year journey and is a joyous celebration; clergy, staff, including Form Tutors, and members of the PTFA will be in attendance to meet and welcome you. Invitations will be sent out separately.

New Intake Evening

The New Intake Evening will take place on Thursday, 6th October to allow prospective parents and year 6 pupils who meet our admissions criteria, to look round the school, meet with our teachers, to talk to the pupils and to see the pupils learning. **In order to prepare for this event, school will close at 1.00 pm on Thursday, 6th October 2016.** A sandwich and a drink will be available for all children in receipt of free school meals. School buses will not be running in the afternoon, so pupils must make alternative arrangements to make their way home on that day.

Teaching School



'Teaching schools are outstanding schools that work with others to provide high-quality training and development to both new and experienced school staff. They are part of the government's plan to give schools a central role in raising standards by developing a self-improving and sustainable school-led system' - gov.uk

St Monica's Catholic Teaching School Alliance continues to make significant and positive progress. We offer training for new teachers, school to school support, research and development and provide over 50 'across the board' training courses for established teachers (Leadership, running a department, specific subjects etc.) and more courses are introduced each year. Our numerous strategic partners, National, Local and Specialist Leaders of Education are available to support schools/teachers within and outside our Alliance - we are always actively engaging more partners, especially primary schools, to provide even more diverse and innovative teaching methods. Year on year we are appointing and deploying more Specialist Leaders of Education to support primary and secondary schools. St Monica's staff are the lead providers within our Alliance in supporting high schools across Greater Manchester. Our assistance and guidance ranges from aiding teachers of specific subjects to senior leadership development. All the schools report a positive result in pupil performance and teacher/leader confidence as a result of our input. Whilst the aim of any Teaching School is to provide all pupils with an outstanding education, we as a Catholic Alliance also share faith, Gospel values and our motto of 'prayer and service' wherever we work.

Standards Cards

Following a successful pilot with year 9 pupils in the summer term, we are now rolling out the standards card system to all pupils.

They will need to carry the standards card with them every day in their top blazer pocket. These cards will monitor the following standards:

- **Correct Uniform and appearance at all times.**
- **Correct Equipment for lessons such as a pen/pencil/ruler, books, journal, P.E. Kit, Food Tech ingredients etc. Each subject will tell pupils exactly what the required equipment is.**

- **Punctuality to lessons.** If pupils are late because they have been with a member of staff, they will need their journal signed or a note.
- **Standards around school** - good behaviour on the corridors, not being in the school building during break or dinner without good reason, using the correct toilets, no fizzy/energy drinks or littering.

Form tutors will check that pupils have their card with them every morning. If pupils do not meet a required standard, then staff will sign their card. If a pupil gains three signatures in one particular row, then a standards detention will be issued.

Merits can also be issued for excellent behaviour in and around school. The school council are meeting this term to discuss how pupils with perfect standards cards should be rewarded.

TRUST

Following its introduction last year, we continue to offer the TRUST unit as a support for pupils.

The TRUST programme is designed to support pupils whose behaviour has led to a period of internal exclusion from the main school for a period of time, as an alternative or addition to external exclusion.

T=Timeout R= Reflection U= Understanding S= Support T= Try again

It is also based on the following words of Jesus in John's Gospel *"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, trust also in Me"* (John 14:1).

The aim of the programme is to look at the child as a whole, not just the behaviour that has led to the internal exclusion. Staff will work with the child and family in order to identify and remove any barriers to learning that have not yet been addressed and create a tailor-made package of support. In doing this we hope to secure long term changes to behaviour, to help each child make positive choices and to engage fully in his/her education.

The TRUST unit will be staffed by our Pastoral team including the Pastoral Manager Mr Noon, Assistant Pastoral Manager Mrs Marshall, Learning Mentor Miss Conway, SEN staff and key mentoring staff, who will also complete follow up work.

Macmillan Coffee Morning

This year staff and pupils will again have the opportunity to participate in the Macmillan Coffee Morning on Friday, 30th September. Pupils will be holding cake sales to raise funds for the Macmillan Nurses on the Teenage Oncology Unit, in memory of Ben O'Shea and in support of any pupils who are undergoing treatment. In addition, staff will be holding their usual coffee morning at break.

The Sixth Form will be holding a Macmillan Coffee and Cake Day on Thursday, 29th September between 10.00 am – 2.00 pm. Hospitality & Catering students will be offering freshly baked cakes and biscuits along with tea or coffee in the restaurant, to eat in or take away. The restaurant will be open to the public as well as students and staff. Please come along to support this event. All proceeds will go to Macmillan as with the main school.

Last year we raised £ £384.75 in total.

Parent Carer Council

The Parent Carer Council met last year to discuss how to keep children safe from radicalisation and extremism. As a follow on information was shared at Parents' evenings. If you have any suggestions for issues you would like to raise this academic year, please contact Mrs Walker at g.walker@stmonicas.co.uk.

Uniform

I am grateful for the continued co-operation and support of parents in ensuring our high standards of uniform are maintained. Please refer to the Prospectus, school journal and website for current requirements. A reminder that make-up or false nails/nail polish must not be worn, no jewellery is allowed, only natural hair colour is acceptable. No cut shorter than a N°2 for boys. Two

tone/ombre hairs styles are not permitted. Shoes should be sturdy, plain and black with a secure strap across the instep for girls. Outerwear must also be plain black or navy, without logos. Hoodies, bandanas and baseball caps have no place in school. St Monica's has two uniform suppliers – Monkhouse: 86 The Rock, Bury, BL9 0PB and PT's: 14 Market Parade, Bury, BL9 0QE / 7 New Road, Radcliffe, Manchester, M26 1LS. Please note that the school gains no financial benefit from these suppliers. If you are in any doubt, please see the visual guide on the school website, or feel free to contact the school office.

Calendar of Events

The calendar of events can be found on the parents' section of the website. You will see that there are numerous activities, trips and events planned for pupils. Success at St Monica's is not just about passing exams and we encourage pupils to make the most of all the other opportunities for enrichment and extra-curricular learning that we offer.

Buildings

During the last academic year, many improvements were made to the buildings and premises, including:

- Repair of 2 hard drives in the main school for CCTV cameras
- New overhead projectors in classrooms.
- Promethean smart board room 28
- Repair of hard drive in 6th form for CCTV cameras
- Installation and upgrade of 8 new CCTV cameras around school
- 5 new benches outside the English block (from PTFA)
- New floorings - canteen, MFL boys' toilets, corridor outside deputy's offices, room 48.
- Path from car park towards reception uneven flags removed and replaced with tarmac.
- Roof – phase 1 and 2 roof replacement completed Feb16 and Summer 16 above the ICT suites, History and Science corridors.
- Internal ceilings replaced in rooms 49,45 + 51.
- Various painting around school – including corridor outside music and maths area upstairs towards MFL.
- Transforming the dance studio in the 6th form into 2 ICT suites – including 26 new computers and 2 touch screen monitors + classroom furniture.
- Lightning protection on phase 1 and 2 of the roof.

Educational Update

As always we like to keep you up to date with our school policies and the latest developments in education. May I take this opportunity to remind parents of the following:

Government Announces Changes to the Definition of Persistent Absenteeism

St Monica's monitors pupils' attendance and punctuality on a regular basis along with our Inclusion Support Officer from The Local Education Authority (LEA).

With effect from September 2015 The Department of Education (DFE) states that if a child's attendance is 90% or below during the academic year they are considered as persistently absent and this can directly affect their progress at school. Persistent absence is a serious problem for pupils. Much of the work children miss when they are off school is never made up, leaving these pupils at a considerable disadvantage for the remainder of their school career. There is also clear evidence of a link between poor attendance at school and low levels of achievement:

- Of pupils who miss more than 50 per cent of school, only 3 % manage to achieve five A* to Cs including English and Maths.
- Of pupils who miss between 10% and 20% of school, only 35 % manage to achieve five A* to C GCSEs including English and Maths.
- Of pupils who miss less than five per cent of school, 73 per cent achieve five A* to Cs including English and Maths.

Please ensure your child attends school regularly and on time.

Holidays in Term Time

The law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must be in exceptional circumstances and I must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.

Holidays will **not be approved at all for pupils in Year 10 and Year 11**. The minimum attendance expected in Key Stage 4 is 95%; 180 out of 190 days. The school reserves the right not to provide a college or employment reference for any pupil who fails to attend school on a regular basis.

Detentions

All behaviour incidents and detentions are logged onto the school SIMS system. Parents can access information about detentions, as well as behaviour, attendance and achievement through the School Comms system. If you need a password reminder, please email the school office at stmonicas@bury.gov.uk.

Searching Pupils

Very rarely, we have to search a pupil or their belongings, in the interest of health and safety. The laws on searching pupils are as follows:

- Staff can search a pupil or his or her belongings without their consent for the following items:
 - Knives or weapons
 - Alcohol/tobacco and cigarette papers
 - Illegal drugs
 - Stolen items
 - Pornographic images
 - Any article that staff reasonably suspects has been or is likely to be used to commit an offence or to cause personal injury or damage to the property of any person (including the pupil)
 - Any item banned by the school rules, which has been identified in the rules as an item which may be searched for. (Please refer to page 16 in your child's journal or the school website, policies section within the Pastoral Care Policy).

Searches without consent can be carried out on school premises or where the staff member has lawful control of a pupil (eg, a school trip) in the UK only (does not apply to trips abroad).

In the unlikely event that your child has to be searched, their dignity and care will remain our priority. Although the Law states that parental permission is not needed for a search, we will endeavour, where appropriate, to let you know that we have searched your child and why.

Mobile Phones

In consultation with staff, pupils and parents/carers we have made amendments to our mobile phone policy. At St Monica's we realise, that whilst parents and carers may want their child have a mobile phone on the way to and from school for safety reasons, they need to be switched off and put away before entering the school gates. Mobiles must not be used for any reason during the school day and must only be taken out once they have left the school grounds. Pupils in lower school may leave their phones for safe keeping at the school office each morning.

Pupils seen with a mobile phone during the school day, whether using it or not, will have it confiscated:

- Offence 1 - the phone will be stored in the school safe and returned at 3.00 pm the same day.
- Offence 2 - the phone will be stored securely in the school safe and parent/carer contacted to collect the phone from the school office the next school day.
- Offence 3 - the phone will be stored securely and a meeting arranged with parents/carer. The school reserves the right to confiscate the phone until the end of term on the third offence.

New legislation now allows school staff to search mobile phones if they suspect it contains, or has been used to send, inappropriate images or for cyber bullying or to check the purpose it was being used for on the premises in contravention of the stated policy.

We would like to reassure parents that St Monica's is an outstanding school with a well-earned reputation in our local area. The rules we uphold are designed to maintain the high standards that teachers, families and the community expect from those wearing our uniform, both whilst in school and whilst travelling to and from school.

Travelling to and from school

We appreciate that the bus stops and tram stations can get very busy and ask for pupils to be mindful of other members of the public using the transport systems at the same time. We expect excellent behaviour to and from school whilst pupils are in school uniform, as they need to uphold the reputation of St Monica's in the local community.

Parking

Parents are requested not to use the school car park, entrance, bus stops or the Ostrich forecourt to drop off and collect children. This compromises the Health and Safety of our pupils. If you are dropping off and collecting pupils by car at the start or end of the day, please arrange to do so at a safe location away from the school entrance, while respecting local residents/businesses. The on-site Disabled parking bays are for use by the parents of pupils who use wheelchairs or crutches. Blue badge holders may use them when attending school for interviews, meetings, Parents Evenings and functions, but not for dropping off or picking up able bodied children at the start or end of the day.

School Newsletter

You can obtain a copy of the weekly newsletter in the following ways:

- Looking on the school website
- Signing up to our social media pages
- Requesting an email copy.

School Fund

We have a tradition at St Monica's of asking for an annual donation of £10 from each family, or £10 each pupil if finances allow. This fund is an invaluable supplement to the school's finances. We are also constantly subject to budgetary constraints which limit purchase of teaching materials. Therefore, your contribution also enables us to maintain your children's school at a level which matches your expectations. The fund enabled us to purchase entry fees to competitions, rewards and school badges.

Please send the appropriate sum to school with the attached slip to be given to your son's/daughter's form Teacher, who will provide a receipt. It is important, whatever the response, that the reply slip is returned to school by Thursday 20th October 2016 in order to make sure that we know that the other important notices contained in this letter were brought to your attention.

Trips - Payment on line

Payment for school trips can be made direct to the school's bank account. Please make sure you reference your child's surname and initial and which trip the payment is for. The school's bank account is HSBC, Sort Code: 40-31-24, Account No: 11710818. Payment by cash and cheque is still accepted at this time, cheques should be made payable to St Monica's RC High School.

Please do not use the school's HSBC bank account to pay for school dinners as this falls under the Local Authority and is separate to the school. It is anticipated that the Local Authority online payment system will be introduced to St Monica's to enable school dinners to be paid online. Further details will follow.

A marathon letter to keep you informed and up to date!

Thank you for all your support. We look forward to continuing to work with you in the delivery of an outstanding education in a caring, catholic environment where your children are at the very heart of our vision.

God Bless.

Yours sincerely



A Letcher (Mrs)
Headteacher

School Fund (2016-2017)

I/We wish to/do not wish to* donate £10 to School Fund and enclose £10 (*delete as appropriate).

I/We have donated to School Fund online (**HSBC Bank, Payee – St Monica’s RCHS, sort code 40-31-24, a/c 11710818**) using the following reference:
‘Student’s Form & Student’s Surname’ e.g. 7C BLOGGS _____

Signed: _____

Parent/Carer of: _____ Form _____

Names of any brothers/sisters in school:
_____ Form _____

_____ Form _____