

# Children In Need Talent Show



## SAINTFIELD HIGH SCHOOL

Dear Parents and Carers,

As our first term of this academic year draws to a close, I would like to use this space to thank you all for your continued support. Saintfield High School has progressed in many ways, and we have had a great deal to celebrate already this year. Our work here has been rewarded by the myriad academic, sporting and personal accomplishments of our pupils; they really are a credit to you. I hope you enjoy reading about some of these accomplishments, as well as the rich and varied learning experiences that our pupils have been involved in since September. Yes, this term has been busy, purposeful, and extremely productive.

I look back fondly on our annual day of 'Celebrating Success' held at the end of October, which recognised a wide range of pupil achievements – including our pupils' excellent GCSE results from August 2019. Alongside academic success, we are proud of our many sporting and musical successes, as well as our continued high standards of attendance and uniform.

The greatest qualities of our school community are those of teamwork and collaboration, respect and tolerance; of working together in a spirit of openness and respect. It is very rewarding to be able to end 2019 with a strong sense of having completed a good year's work, and I very much look forward to renewing and developing our bonds as a community in 2020.

I look forward to welcoming our pupils back after the Christmas break when we reopen on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2020.

I wish everyone within our wider school community a restful and peaceful Christmas and all good wishes for a prosperous new year.

*Miss Hynds, Principal*

**SHS Newsletter No.67**



After a year's hiatus in 2018, our school's regular Children In Need talent show returned with a bang in 2019. Hosted by Mr McCracken, our pupils and staff were treated to a feast of entertainment from a variety of acts. Individual performers, such as pianist Kieron Dodd or singer Mia Taggart, impressed us all with their bravery in performing in front of such a large crowd. Groups such as the Year 12 Dance Troupe or the Year 11 Performing Arts class raised the tempo, whilst some acts even called on extra help from willing staff members, such as the school band's Elvis tribute (featuring The King...of the Maths corridor, Mr Murphy) or The Culchies' line-dancing spectacular (featuring help from everyone from Mr Bolton to Miss Henderson).

The stars of the show, though, were the rock n roll enthusiasts of Year 12. Jordan, Ollie and Andy, or as they styled themselves on the day, 'The Parkas', took the house down with a very loud, very talented tribute to musical icons such as Oasis or The Jam. Saintfield High School was certainly mad for it, raising more than £750 on a memorable afternoon of fun.

### **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

**Winter Term ends ~ Friday 20 December 2019 at 12.20pm**  
**Return of pupils for Spring Term ~ Monday 6 January 2020**  
**GCSE Modules for Year 12 commence Monday 13 January 2020**  
**Open Night ~ Thursday 16 January 2020**  
**Year 12 Mock Examinations ~ 20 – 24 January 2020**  
**Year 11 Mock Examinations ~ 10 – 14 February 2020**  
**Half-Term ~ 17 – 21 February 2020 (inclusive)**

# Festive Activities!



The final week of term has been a busy one at Saintfield High School, with a range of activities arranged to help pupils and staff alike get in to the festive spirit.

Our annual Carol Service, on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup>, was a definite highlight, with the school joining together in song to mark the advent period. This was followed on the morning of Thursday 19<sup>th</sup>, when the whole school were treated a memorable performance from the 'Bethlehem Rhapsody' puppet troupe. The spirit of giving was evident in school, too, as Mr Bolton and a group of senior prefects travelled to The Larder foodbank in East Belfast to hand over more than 20 boxes of donations from pupils and staff alike.

The more active among us were given plenty of opportunities to burn off a few calories before the Christmas break. Table Tennis NI came in to school on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> to give a demonstration to our school's increasing band of ping-pong enthusiasts, whilst Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> saw Mrs Hume and the GLAMS (Girls' Leadership & Marketing Squad) host a tremendously successful Step-Aerobics event for female staff and pupils. Finally, a hotly contested Staff vs Pupils basketball match was the highlight of a very enjoyable final day of term.



## 'In-Touch' Festive Lunch

Our school choir, along with our Year 12 rock group, kicked off the festive season with a pair of terrific performances at the 'In-Touch' Christmas lunch, held at 1st Saintfield Church on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> December. Pupils performed a selection of carols and seasonal songs to entertain the guests at the annual event.



## Parents' Consultations

This term saw the parents of pupils in two different year groups visit the school to meet with their son or daughter's teachers. The Year 8 Parent Consultations took place on 5<sup>th</sup> December. Parents or carers of pupils in Year 12 braved the cold to attend a consultation with their son or daughter's teachers on the 12<sup>th</sup> December. We wish to thank all parents for coming along to these events. Your continued support of the school is greatly appreciated. Parental Consultations for pupils in Years 9, 10 and 11 have been scheduled for 2020.

## Trip to Seamus Heaney Homeplace

On Friday 8<sup>th</sup> November Year 10 pupils embarked on an exciting trip to the Seamus Heaney Homeplace in Bellaghy. Having studied the poetry of Heaney this term, both students and teachers were delighted to be afforded the opportunity to learn more about the Nobel Prize winning poet. The amazing interactive exhibition allowed pupils and staff to meander through the great poet's world, listening to Heaney himself read some of his most famous works via the audio guides.

Led by local writers, our pupils took part in the Alphabets Education Programme, allowing them to delve into the world of language, letters and creativity. Navigating four creative writing stations, pupils explored Heaney's poem 'Alphabets', engaging with Heaney's wonderment at learning and language. The pupils then rounded off an incredible day by perfecting their own poetic offerings entitled 'HomePlace'.

A thoroughly enjoyable experience all round, pupils returned to school enthused to continue their studies of this most extraordinary poet.

*A trio of keen Year 10 scholars find inspiration at Seamus Heaney's old school desk (right)*



## Primary Six Visitors!

Primary 6 pupils from a number of local schools, such as Academy PS, Carrickmannon PS, Carr PS & Spa PS, visited our school in early December to experience a flavour of life in post-primary school. Pupils were able to enjoy a spot of festive baking



with Mrs Convill in our Home Economics Department or engage in some vigorous Scottish ceilidh dancing in PE with Mrs Hume. Mrs Elliott, who organised the visits, reported that they had been a huge success: "It was so lovely to see our guests enjoying their visit to Saintfield High School"

# Farewell, Mr Cousins!

It is with a heavy heart that we must bid farewell to Mr Alan Cousins, of the Careers Service NI. Mr Cousins has been a regular visitor to our school for many years, and has become a familiar presence at countless Careers events, assemblies and parents' consultations.

Hundreds of Saintfield High School pupils have benefitted from Mr Cousins' encyclopaedic knowledge of post-16 pathways in employment, training or education. His calm manner and wise counsel have helped to smooth many pupils' path towards life after Saintfield High School, at what can be a daunting or confusing time for pupils and parents alike.

As Mr Cousins departs for new opportunities in England, we are certain that everyone at Saintfield High School would like to thank him for all he has done, and wish him the very best for the future.



# Careers Update



Saintfield High School was the venue for a wide-ranging and incredibly busy Careers Convention on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> November. Our school's Sports Hall was transformed, as 22 exhibitors set up stalls, giving information on employment, education and training options for local Year 12 pupils. More than 200

visitors, from a variety of local schools, spent the afternoon touring the hall and speaking to exhibitors from the likes of SERC, CAFRE, NI Electricity and Mencap, amongst many others! Year 12 pupils also visited the NI Skills Exhibition at the Titanic Exhibition Centre back in November, visiting stalls and presentations from a host of employers and training establishments. The Careers Department also arranged for our Year 12s to participate in the school's annual Mock Interview programme, facilitated by Comber Rotary Club. Andi McMaster (12DE) remarked that she was "a bit nervous before the interview, but I actually think it went well and was undoubtedly a good experience for me". Pupils from Years 11 took part in a worthwhile and relevant 'Study Skills' workshop, hosted by Sentinus, during the final week of term. Thank you to Comber Rotary Club, Sentinus, and all other outside agencies and employers, for their continued support of our school's Careers programme.

# Public Speaking Event



Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> November saw Saintfield High School play host to a wealth of talent, as young ladies from schools across the local area came together to compete in the Young Soroptimist Public Speaking competition 2019. Soroptimist International is a global women's organisation, inspiring action to transform the lives of women and girls around the world. And boy, did these young ladies inspire action with their speeches!

Five of our own Year 12 pupils represented the school, delivering insightful and reflective presentations in a compassionate and witty manner. Queenie Lin, Andie McMaster, Rebekah McMinn, Lauren Houston and Sarah Douglas did us proud, informing their audience of the struggles and achievements of women in our community and across the world. A huge well done to these young ladies, who will no doubt be incredible ambassadors for Soroptimist International in the future!



# 'Blue Light' Day for 8MY

Pupils from 8MY, accompanied by Mr Chisholm, were lucky enough to be invited to a 'Blue Light' day at Tollymore Outdoor Centre near Newcastle, on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> November.

# French Presentation

Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> December saw our French Department welcome Louisa Gibson from NICILT at Queen's University, Belfast, who delivered a fantastic workshop to selected Year 10 French pupils. The workshop demonstrated the benefits of learning a language for future job opportunities. Mrs Leacock reported that pupils were enthused and inspired to stay dedicated to their French learning!

Representatives of agencies such as the NI Fire & Rescue Service, the PSNI, Mourne Mountain Rescue Team and Orienteering NI arranged a full day of exciting and beneficial activities for our pupils, focused on outdoor safety and emergency response. Robbie Douglas said "My favourite bit of the day was the orienteering. We got to explore the forest and learn some important skills at the same time. Everybody loved it!"



# Pastoral Programme

It has been another busy term for our school's pastoral team. Anti-Bullying Week (11<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> November) was marked with a number of events. Mr Carter delivered a thought-provoking assembly on the topic of bullying, whilst Mrs Bradley delivered a series of anti-bullying workshops to all classes in Junior and Senior school. An art competition for pupils in Junior School, in which pupils were asked to present an anti-bullying message, was won by Sophie Rossiter (9HE), with Callum Manley (8AT) in second place and Alex Magowan (8AT) in third place. Well done to all those who took part.

We were also fortunate to have a number of visits from outside agencies in recent weeks to assist with delivering our Pastoral programme. Action Mental Health visited our school on the 22<sup>nd</sup> November to work with our Year 8 pupils, the 'Smashed' project performed a hard-hitting drama for Junior School pupils on the theme of alcohol awareness on the 6<sup>th</sup> November, and the PSNI spoke to all Year 10 pupils on the topic of Internet Safety on the 17<sup>th</sup> November.



# Mr Elliott's Sports Round-up!

**NETBALL:** Our Year 9 and Year 11 Netball teams have performed very well this term. Both sides lost narrowly in keenly contested matches against Strangford College, before going on to record impressive victories against Dundonald High School. Our Year 9s won their match 4-2, whilst our Year 11s won by the amazing score of 13-4. Mrs Hume praised the girls for the quality of their overall play, and picked out Robyn Minnis (9HE) and Rosie Lloyd (11CP) as the stand-out performers for each side.



**EQUESTRIAN:** Congratulations to Ben Cousins and Joshua McKeown who competed in the final at the Meadows Equestrian TRI Inter schools event on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2019. Both boys performed impressively, with Ben earning a 15<sup>th</sup> place finish and Joshua coming 29<sup>th</sup> out of a field of some 80 riders. Well done to both competitors. Well done also to Hannah Patterson and Lucy Kayes who, through injury, were unable to finish the League. However, both girls still finished in the very respectable positions of 33<sup>rd</sup> and 40<sup>th</sup> respectively. Thank you to Mrs Birt for her continued work with the equestrian club in school, and to all the parents and carers who support our pupils in their sport.

# Celebrating Success & Achievement

Saintfield High School held its annual day of 'Celebrating Success and Achievement' on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> October, welcoming parents and carers into the school to share in all that our pupils have achieved during the last academic year. Certificates and cups were distributed to students in Years 9-12, and to those who left in June 2019. There was a wonderful atmosphere of school pride, where academic and personal successes were celebrated and cherished.

We were honoured to welcome Aine Robinson, Director of Finance for Tourism Northern Ireland, as our guest speaker for the day. Mrs Robinson distributed prizes to pupils and spoke admiringly of our school. As always, our school choir and band performed a superb medley of songs which really added to the ambience of the event.



# Coastal Studies

Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> December saw some of our Year 11 GCSE Geography students visit Murlough beach and Newcastle town to assist with their study of coastal areas. Jo Whatmore from the National Trust spoke to the pupils on issues such as coastal protection and conservation, and how the coast is being sustainably managed. Despite some chilly conditions, an enjoyable and informative day was had by all.



# Theatre Trip!

Our Year 11 & 12 Performing Arts pupils enjoyed a recent day out at the MAC theatre in Belfast, for a festive performance of A Christmas Carol. Pupils were there to study the various aspects of a major stage production, such as costumes, lighting and special effects. Emma Miskelly (11CP) said "The show was great fun. I'd never been to the MAC before, but I was very impressed with it."

