



home-link

N E W S L E T T E R

FEBRUARY 2010

Headteacher's Hello

Thank you for your continued support regarding parents' evenings, sixth form opportunity evening(s) and the forthcoming school production of *Les Misérables* (25th – 27th March 2010). If the preview of *Les Misérables* is anything to go by, then this year's production will be truly outstanding.

The school received excellent news this month from the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) on the publication of the 'School League Tables'. We were all thrilled with the excellent GCSE and A level results last year but what the most recent news illustrated was how phenomenally well the students did in 2009 with regard to value added. The accompanying article in this month's Home-link gives you more detailed information. The value added for A level at our school is the best in Hertfordshire and the top 1% nationally. This information clearly demonstrates how well the students and their teachers do in developing potential and exceeding expected targets. Well done to everyone.

I would also draw your attention to important information in this month's Home-link regarding the school's future planning procedures and how you can be involved.

After the delayed sixth form charities non-uniform day held on 12th February, in lieu of the snow day in December, I can reveal the total raised by the school in 'Charities Week' was £7,248.94. This will be split equally between the school's nominated charities of:-

- DENS, a Hemel Hempstead based homelessness charity that helps hundreds of people get their lives back on track each year. Accommodation is provided at the Night Shelter and Move-On whilst at the Day Centre clients can enjoy a hot meal and get life-changing advice on benefits, housing and employment.
- The Intensive Care Unit at the Royal Free Hospital, London.
- Neema Crafts, Tanzania - which provides handicrafts training and employment for deaf and physically disabled people.
- 9 Lives Furniture, Rickmansworth - established by local people in 2003, 9 Lives collects donated furniture, white goods and household effects to make them available to people throughout the local area.

Another reminder that there has been a calendar change to the end of the spring term. The last day for students will be Tuesday 30th March and school will end at 3.40pm.

Josephine Valentine

Headteacher

Forthcoming Events

25 – 27 February	Les Misérables, Barbirolli Hall
3 March	Year 7 Parents' Evening, 5.00pm – 8.00pm
4 March	World Book Day
10 March	Battle of the Bands, Barbirolli Hall, 7.00pm
11 March	Year 12 Parents' Evening, 5.00pm – 8.00pm
17 March	GCSE Option Evening, Barbirolli Hall, 7.00pm
16 + 17 March	Year 9 Geography trip to Epping Forest
25 + 26 March	Gym and Dance Display, Barbirolli Hall, 7.00pm
26 – 30 March	Year 12 Geography field trip
30 March	Easter Concert, Barbirolli Hall, 7.00pm
	Term ends
31 March	Staff training day
	GCSE PE practicals
1 – 19 April	Easter holidays
8 – 15 April	Athletics training in Lanzarote
19 April	School re-opens for summer term

Excellent School League Table News

Recently the Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) published the 2009 GCSE and A level Attainment and Achievement Tables (previously called Performance Tables). These tables give information on schools' results in terms of attainment and value added. Although the examination results are published in August, the DCSF publish the value added data and compile the tables, after verification, in February the following year.

82% of the GCSE cohort, currently in year 12, attained at least 5 A*-C grades including English and Mathematics, which was a vast improvement on the 2008 figure of 71% and was indeed the best set of results attained by the school. These results also compare very favourably with the National Average and similar local schools.

In terms of the progress made from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 4, the GCSE cohort achieved a value added score of 1014. Schools that make expected progress from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 4 score 1000. This excellent performance at GCSE puts St Clement Danes in the top 15% of all maintained mainstream schools nationally for GCSE results.

At A level we knew from results day last August that the Year 13 results, in terms of attainment, were on a par with those of 2008, which were the best ever. The DCSF tables show that the school achieved a value added score of 1065 (as with the GCSE tables a score of 1000 is expected progress from GCSE to A Level) which puts the school in the top 1% of schools and colleges nationally. A truly fantastic achievement! These really excellent outcomes are testament to the hard work of both students and teachers alike.

Dr R Johnson

Assistant Headteacher

Strategic Development Plan

The school gives considerable thought to long term strategic planning as the context for all changes to school policy and practice. The present Strategic Development Plan comes to a successful conclusion in 2010 and the school is in process of establishing a replacement to cover the three years from 2010 to 2013.

The existing Strategic Development Plan implemented a range of effective changes to the quality of service provided by the school. Examples of this are the improved consistency in the quality of teaching, establishing Science as the second school specialism after MFL, updating the school's new website and the provision of a whole new Personal Development course for Key Stages 3 and 4.

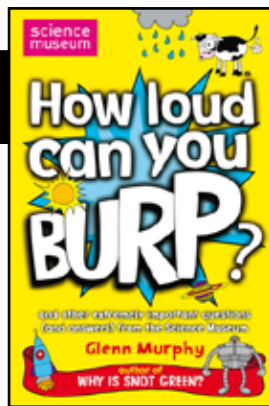
Consultation for the new Strategic Development Plan began formally on Saturday 5th December 2009 when the school's Leadership Team met with Governors. During a valuable and thought provoking discussion a draft set of proposals were put together as the basis of further discussion with all school stakeholders. From this process of discussion a final School Development Plan will be ratified by the Governors in June 2010 and presented to parents in September of the new academic year.

At present the following headings represent the key criteria for the plan

- Funding** - Economic planning in a post recession era
 - Curriculum Design** - Curriculum planning to meet student needs
 - Delivery and Outcome** - Ensure student standards remain high
 - ICT** - Transform delivery and outcome of education
 - Smarter Working Practices** - Effective use of staff skills, time & energy
 - Support Staff**
 - Engagement with the Community** - Links local, national and international
 - Premises Development** - Maintain and extend quality provision
 - 2012 – 150 Years as a secondary school** - Celebrate our history by building the future
- Have your say on the new plan by emailing your thoughts and comments to sdp@stclementdanesherts.sch.uk

Mr G Butler

Deputy Headteacher



booked up

Reading has again been a particular focus in the English Faculty this year. As teachers we are, of course, fully conscious of the academic benefits of wider reading. Students who read independently are more able to express themselves well, to spell accurately and to use sophisticated punctuation.

However, these benefits are really a side dish – the potato to the meat, the salad to the pizza, or even the cream to strawberries. We all believe that actually the best bit about reading is the fun, the pleasure of discovering new ideas and perceptions, following a character as they track through a plot, a sense of time and place created before our eyes. We encourage the willing suspension of disbelief in order to experience all that the world has to offer – from the comfort and the spark of our own imagination.

To that end we have again participated in 'Booked Up', run by Booktrust and the Dept for Children, Schools and Family. Every Year 7 student received a book from the scheme. Here are some of their views. Shreya Joshi 7L read 'The Diary of a Wimpy Kid', a humorous book which also has cartoons. Shreya thought this book was 'very entertaining'. She felt she could relate to many of the events in the book and 'couldn't stop reading it'. Cordelia Rickard 7A read 'An Urgent Message of Wowness' which she thought was a 'funny, enjoyable and a great read'. The themes of this book deal with family relationships. 'Flood Child', a novel set in the future in a post climatic change England, was read by Charlotte Edwards 7A who thought this was a very exciting book 'with lots of adventures.' James Slobom 7L read Morris Gelitzman's 'Once', a novel which deals with a Jewish orphan in Nazi occupied Poland. James felt this was a 'heartbreaking story' which was 'exceptional'.

Some Year 8 students have also been seeking out personal challenging reads. We have been impressed by the range and quality of literature they have selected. Here are some of their thoughts.

Katherine Baxter chose 'Wuthering Heights' and was impressed by the 'vivid landscapes evoked by strong description paired with a clear depiction of men and women at their best and their worst'. Michael Swain chose Kafka's 'Metamorphosis' which he felt had some 'challenging vocabulary' but also a 'simple moral'. Andrew Mason read 'Rising Sun' in order to 'discover what happened to the Japanese as they struggled against the West during WW2.' He found this book 'readable and informative'. Local writer Conn Iggulden was selected by Daniel Kosky

who enjoyed 'Emperor: The Gates of Rome'. Daniel felt this book 'offered an amazing insight into Roman politics.' The book has 'very exciting fast paced action and is also strongly, deeply and beautifully interwoven with true historical events.' Jacob Gardiner Smith enjoyed the 'modern day parable' of Steinbeck's 'The Pearl'. A number of students read 'Life of Pi', including Ella Walton who commented that the book revealed 'the challenges of the wide, wild world'. Rhoda Savin was moved by the impact of 'The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas', engaging with the 'realistic tragic story which revealed that power can take away innocent lives and family.'

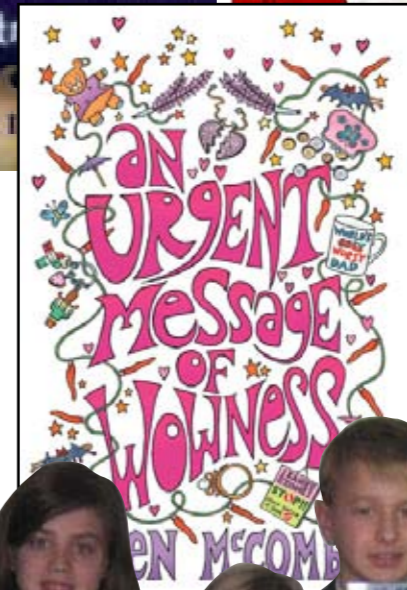
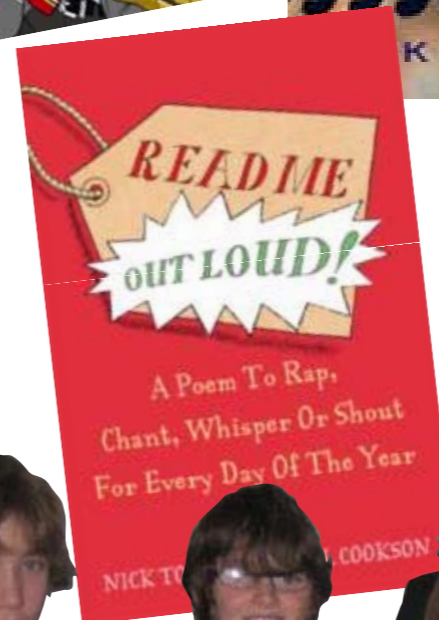
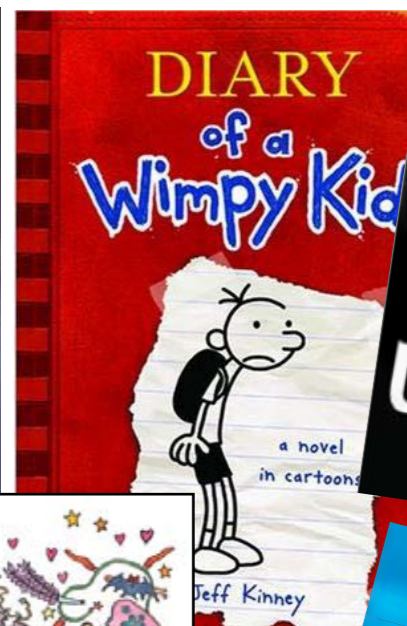
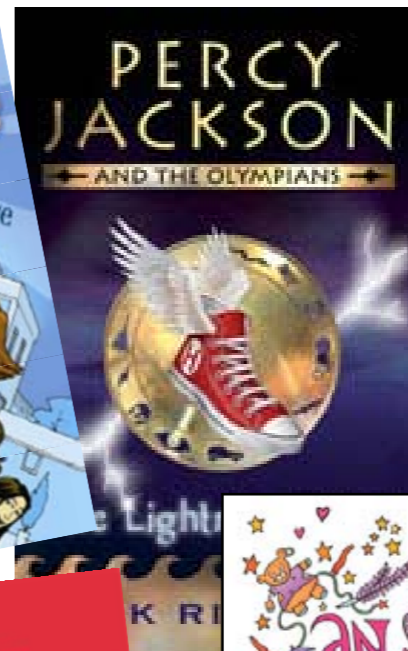
We hope that some other students might be inspired to dip into these recommended books. Students who wish to extend their reading experience can also find recommended reading lists in the Key Stage 3 Student Area English on Learning Resources.

Key Stage 4 students have also been extending their reading experience, as described here by Julia Mason and Ishar Patel

"We are nearing the end of our GCSE courses and consequently have been attending a new Reading Club. This allows us to step outside the boundaries of the English GCSE specification and participate in relaxed discussions about literature in general. The texts chosen are to increase our understanding of those studied in class; they not only extend our reading but make us consider in greater depth key issues of literature and life. We are all enjoying these lunchtime seminars immensely".

Debating Success

Finally, we are very proud of our four teams which have participated in the Rotary Youth Speaks Competition. Two teams won their initial heats and proceeded to the next round. James Nicholas, Sol Gelsomino and Jess Stone wowed the judges again and now find themselves in the District Final on Wednesday 24th February in Harpenden. The senior team of David Grant, Ryan Kirwan and Laura Whibley gave an honourable second performance at Leighton Buzzard, raising some hearty laughs in the audience. Unfortunately they were pipped at the post for a place in the next round. The success of these teams has been underpinned by the development of an exciting new debating club, run by Mr Tattle and Mrs Powell in the English Faculty.



Teacher's Charity Walk



Mr. Graham Brown is walking 230 miles to raise money for the Parkinson's Disease Society. He will be leaving Pembroke in South Wales on Sunday 4th April (Easter Sunday) and will reach his home in Amersham 11 days later having averaged just over 20 miles a day. Mr Brown's older brother has Parkinson's and he is trying to raise a minimum of £5000. He is hoping to be sponsored by members of the school and local communities.

Mr Brown is also hoping that local businesses will help offset the expenses (approximately £1000) incurred in completing the walk. Sponsorship forms will be circulated in school. If you would like to contribute, donations can also be made on Mr Brown's web page www.justgiving.com/Graham-Brown, where further details of the walk can be found.

Sporting Bursaries 2010

For the fourth consecutive year, the Trustees of St Clement Danes Charitable Foundation wish to allocate funds to support outstanding sportsmen and women within the school. The fund has been set up to assist with the costs incurred by performing at an elite level. These costs include specialist equipment, clothing, travel expenses, affiliations, competition entry, club membership, coaching costs and medical support.

In order to be considered for this award we ask that students must be at least a county level performer in at least one sport or a district level performer in a number of sports. In the application please indicate the costs incurred by the student's current and future commitments, outlining how the funding will be used. To assist with our decision please also indicate the student's achievements in the past twelve months, both in and outside of school.

The applications will be considered by a panel comprising of Dr Valentine, Mrs Clarkson, a Trustee of the Foundation, Mr Birkett, Head of Physical Education and Miss Mitchell, Assistant Head of Physical Education. Only a few students will be awarded the bursary, and the amount awarded will be from 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2011.

Please submit your letter of application to Mrs Venice Kyte (Headteacher's PA) by Friday 26th March 2010. Successful applicants will receive written confirmation and be announced in a future issue of Homelink.

Josephine Valentine

Headteacher

English Revision Classes

We will be starting GCSE revision classes for English very shortly, please look out for dates in the English Faculty.

Mrs A Pickard

Head of English

Law Lecture at Dr Challoner's High School

A "Law Society" has been set up at Dr Challoner's High School. The purpose of this is to have a series of lectures and events to which all students are welcome, giving them an idea about Law as a career or simply for interest purposes. The first of these lectures will be on Tuesday 2nd March in the Lecture Room at Dr Challoner's High School. The lecture will start at 4.30pm and end at 6pm, with time for questions. There will be some refreshments afterwards.

The lecture will feature two key speakers;

David Smith is a partner and corporate lawyer in the international firm, Fasken Martineau LLP, and will be speaking about his career in corporate law, the path into law, working in a law firm, and various case histories.

David Sherwood is a businessman with 30 years experience in running his own companies, and has employed legal practices throughout his career, and has also acted as his own solicitor and advocate. He will be speaking about his experiences in mixing business and law, and also giving a simple introduction to law.

The lecture should be simple to understand and so no prior knowledge of Law is necessary. It is open to all year groups, although probably more suitable for years 10-13.

Les Misérables Musical

Last night was the first performance of our school musical, Les Misérables. The students and staff have worked incredibly hard to put together a fantastic show so I hope you will support them and the school by attending either tonight's or Saturday night's show. There are a very limited number of tickets left, the show starts at 7pm tonight and 5pm on Saturday.

New Staff

On the 23rd February we welcomed Miss Perugini to the MFL Faculty. Miss Perugini will be covering Ms Fontanella's maternity leave. We send all our best wishes to Ms Fontanella and her family.

Mrs Moore will join the support staff team on 15th March to assist with curriculum admin.

On 1st March Miss Jones joins the Drama Department until the end of term with Mr Laverty joining us next term to replace Mr Williams whose contribution to school drama has been outstanding. We wish him every success in his future career.

Josephine Valentine

Headteacher

School Polo Tops

The summer polo tops are now available in John Lewis on their shop floor.

World Book Day

World Book Day, which this year falls on Thursday 4th March, is fast approaching. We will be holding a Book Fair in the LRC on Wednesday 3rd March and Thursday 4th March.

Students in Years 7 to 9 will shortly be receiving a £1 World Book Day voucher, which they can use to select from a number of books priced at just £1. We will also be selling a wide range of regularly-priced new titles that will appeal to students in all year groups and the book tokens can be redeemed against the full cost of these titles.

Students are welcome to look at the books and make purchases at break or lunchtimes on both days of the Fair so please ensure you have some money with you if they would like to take advantage of this opportunity.

Mrs S Boniface/Mrs F Hirst

Librarians

Exams Information

Timetables have been posted home to those students doing public exams next week.

Mathematics exams	Tuesday 2 March (am and pm)
Science modular exams	Wednesday 3 March (am)
Diploma students	
(functional skills exams) – ICT	Monday 8 March (am)
English	Tuesday 9 March (am)
Mathematics	Wednesday 10 March (am)

Remember to bring a calculator and leave your mobile phone at home.

If you need to contact me I can be reached by email at scdexams164@stclementdanes.herts.sch.uk

Mrs D Harvey

Exams officer

Newsflash!

BBC News Report

On Friday 11th March pupils from Years 7, 8 and 9 will be taking part in the BBC school report. The report will be available for you to watch from 4.00pm on the BBC school report website (http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/school_report/default.stm) and includes reports on Kidscape and an orphanage in Uganda.

Miss L Morby

Drama Teacher

HPV 3rd Dose Immunisation Day

On Tuesday 4th May (day after a bank holiday) we will be doing the 3rd dose catch up for this year. This means all girls from years 8,10,11,12 and 13 again.

Mrs M Whiteman

Matron

SCD QUIZ NIGHT

IN SUPPORT OF ST. CLEMENT DANES PARENTS ASSOCIATION (CHARITY NO. 272125)

Book your tables now for St. Clement Danes Quiz Night! Everyone is welcome including guests. Your Quizmaster for the evening will be Guy Allen, and you'll enjoy a light-hearted evening which will be fun for everyone! Supper will be provided, and wine, beer and soft drinks will be on sale at the bar, with the proceeds going to St Clement Danes School via its Parents Association.

- Date:** Saturday 20th March 2010
- Time:** Bar opens at 7.30pm, quiz starts promptly at 8pm
- Venue:** The Barbirolli Hall, St. Clement Danes School
- Price:** £10 per person - limit of 8 per table
(includes supper but not drinks)

OVER HALF
OF TABLES
ALREADY SOLD
SO BOOK
NOW TO AVOID
DISAPPOINTMENT!

Please return the slip below together with a cheque (payable to "St. Clement Danes Parents Association") to the School Reception in an envelope marked "SCD Quiz Night". If you have any queries, please contact Scott on scott_picphotos@yahoo.com

I WISH TO BOOK TICKETS FOR THE SCD QUIZ NIGHT

NAME..... TEL. NO.....

EMAIL ADDRESS:.....

PUPIL'S NAME..... FORM.....

Please write in the box how many tickets you need

Any special dietary requirements?.....

Please let us know by email if you have names of guests you wish to be seated with.
No tickets will be sent out but a confirmation e-mail will be sent to you.
By this you will know that your son or daughter actually dropped the envelope into reception,
and it's not still in their pocket!
There are a limited number of tickets, please ensure your place by booking early.