

29 November 2019

Dear Parents/Carers, Students, Governors, Old Olavians and Grandparents

Headteacher's Newsletter 51



It was good to see St. Olave's Grammar School confirmed as one of the country's top state schools in the [Sunday Times Parent Power](#) analysis at the weekend. We remained as 5th best school in London, and 6th best in the country. It is great testament to the talented students, devoted staff and governors, and supportive parents. This survey takes account of performance in both A levels and GCSE and is a good indicator of comparative high-quality attainment amongst the very best schools in London and beyond.

Mr Birtchnell attended the Jack Petchey Foundation Awards night at the Churchill Theatre in Bromley on Wednesday last week, where five of our Olavians received Achievement Awards from the Mayor of Bromley. The Achievement Award Scheme is a recognition initiative enabling schools and youth organisations to celebrate the achievements of their young people. Awards are given to young people who make a wholehearted, unselfish and dedicated contribution to their club, school or community. Congratulations to Arnav, Frank, Ojas, Kudakwashe and Ciaran for their awards and representing the school.



Over the last three months, the House system has gone from strength to strength, playing a vastly more prominent role in the school community. The House Captain team have successfully run a plethora of weekly activities and events to engage all years, ranging from sporting competitions including football, dodgeball and volleyball to academic events such as the Physics and MFL competitions. This, coupled with the newly designed House notice boards as well as frequent updates in assembly about results, has led to increased engagement from all years, helping to build a greater sense of House rivalry and loyalty. With big events in the calendar like Festival and O-Factor coming up in the near future, the House system will only further increase in importance which is a very exciting prospect.



Last Saturday, around 90 Year 13 students from St. Olave's and Wren Academy, another Woodard School, took part in Interview Preparation Day. 20 expert interviewers gave up their time to put the students through their paces in their chosen subjects in advance of university admission interviews. Students also had a very informative introductory talk delivered by Mr Budds, which dispelled some of the myths surrounding these interviews.

Students were able to benefit from the school's archive of interview preparation resources whilst they waited for their appointment. We would like to thank all the interviewers for giving up their time. Anyone interested in interviewing students next year should contact Mr Birtchnell.

There has been a great deal going on in the MFL Faculty recently. We were delighted to welcome Dr Helmut Schmitz from Warwick University this week, who came to deliver a lecture on the German post-Holocaust work *Der Vorleser*, which is a text studied for German A level. The presentation was attended by students in Years 11, 12 and 13, who asked pertinent questions and contributed well to discussions in German and in English on a variety of themes including the Holocaust, characterisation in the novel, guilt, ethics and relationships. Dr Schmitz covered numerous aspects in relation to the novel, including the historical context and psychoanalytical interpretations of the work, and we are grateful to Frau Proboziak for organising this visit.



Year 9 and 10 students studying French enjoyed a performance by The Onatti Theatre Company. Two French actors performed a humorous play: *Les Garçons* in The Great Hall. Students were able to understand the play which was delivered entirely in French, and they left having learnt many new words and expressions. Some students were invited to participate, and the actors praised the quality of their spoken French. Students completed written work based on this play in classes and the experience was enriching for all who attended.

Last week, 27 students in Year 12 and Year 13 attended the French A level Study Day at the British Film Institute in London where they were given a lecture in French on the history of French film by Dr Emily Salines (University of Greenwich). Students were then asked to analyse scenes of contemporary French films and films of 'la nouvelle vague'. They were also shown the film *La Haine* (Kassovitz) which is on the A level French syllabus. The film was shot in the Parisian suburbs and depicts violence, crime and numerous problems faced by those in the suburbs.



In the recent Intermediate Biology Olympiad, Charles Anderton, Ivan Leung and Matthew Perry won Gold medals and Hailey Ashton, Louis Cavalli-Dowland, Meghana Kavarthapu and Edisa Pepa won Silver medals.



In this year's Mathematical Olympiad for Girls consisting of a demanding set of five structured problems, three students, Sophie Bata-Madden, Lucie Slater and Ishita Swaroop, achieved Certificates of Distinction placing them in the top 25% of national scores. Indeed, Ishita did so well that she qualified for the forthcoming first round of the British Mathematical Olympiad. In addition to these achievements, this year's Senior Mathematical Challenge involved 484 Olavians from Years 11 to 13 grappling with a challenging set of 25 problems. The huge cohort achieved a record-breaking,

superb set of results with 66 Gold, 182 Silver and 121 Bronze certificates being attained. In contrast to many schools who only enter their most able mathematicians, all mathematicians in the three years are entered and hence the school's achievement of significantly above the national average is all the more remarkable. Best-in-year scores were achieved by Michael Sun (Year 13), Linus Luu (Year 12) and Velian Velikov (Year 11), the last two of whom managed the amazing feat of solving all 25 problems correctly. These three students together with Lucy Saunders (Year 13), Joseph Barradell (Year 12) and Hieronim Lecybyl (Year 11), have qualified for the prestigious first round of the British Mathematical Olympiad. In addition, a record number of 66 students qualified for the follow-on round of the Senior Kangaroo problem paper.

We are thrilled to announce that we have another year of outstanding results in the UK Bebras Computational Thinking Challenge. The University of Oxford's Department of Computer Science, and Hertford College run the competition every year. All students studying Computer Science were entered into the 2019 competition and outstanding results include 138 Distinctions and 124 Merits, which is higher compared to last year.

UK Bebras Results 2019				
	Merit	Distinction	Best in School	Names of Students best in school for their age group
Junior (age 10-12)	32	33	3	Aarit Maheshwari, Jesse John, Sonny Landeman
Intermediate (age 12-14)	45	57	3	Aarav Gupta, Anton Lewis, Oscar Nowatschek
Senior (age 14-16)	37	37	5	Adam Steer, Hieronim Lecybyl, Jamie Perry, Leo Luo, Ruiqi Zhang
Elite (age 16-18)	10	11	1	William Guest

St. Olave's hosted the South East VEX EDR Regional in The Great Hall with 21 teams attending from across the region. For many of our teams, this was their first ever VEX event where they competed with their robots. All our teams performed well, discovered how to be successful at such an event and had great fun participating. Special thanks go to Dr Corlett and Mr Twose for supporting the running of the event and the Year 7 and 8 VEX IQ teams for volunteering throughout the day.



Year 8 students, Aadi and Falabomi, recently become only the second Olavian pair to win the Eton Fives Under 13 Nationals. The event was held at Eton College and the pair played brilliantly to defeat last year's champions – Summerfield's, Oxford. The pair dominated the set-piece and kept constant pressure on their hard-hitting opponents to storm ahead and win 15-6 in the Final. Congratulations on this outstanding achievement.



Congratulations to our KS3 and KS4 Badminton teams who won the Bromley Schools Tournament on Monday. Both teams were unbeaten and now progress to represent Bromley in the SE London Tournament in the new year. Congratulations also to Raphael Huille who, having won the Eastern Region qualifier, competed in the Biathlon National Finals last weekend, coming 12th in a strong class. A remarkable achievement, particularly considering it was his third ever race!



Finally, congratulations to Year 10 student, Kenji Seanor, who competed in piano at the Beckenham Festival 2019. He achieved a Distinction and won the Gwladys Pumfrey Memorial Cup for Piano Recital Class (Ages 14 and 15). He also played Beethoven's *Pathetique* in the Sonata Class (Open Age) and received a Bronze medal.



On the careers front, we are now a partner school with InvestIN Education who offer programmes of career experience across a wide range of competitive industries from architecture to politics. Students from St. Olave's are now eligible for a 10% discount on day, weekend and holiday events. InvestIN has already been a popular careers experience provider with over 25 students choosing to attend previous events. During the programmes, students have immersive professional experiences, meet experts working in the field and gain skills which will enhance their UCAS applications and increase their confidence in interviews. Further information can be found on the Careers section of MOODLE.

There is still time for Year 10 students to take part in the Morrisby Profile on-line aptitude test in January. Participation in Morrisby is voluntary and the cost per pupil for the Morrisby Profile is £85. The tests are followed up by an individual 30 minute interview with a professionally qualified careers guidance advisor. The Morrisby test was first used widely in independent schools and it is particularly suited to schools where all or most of the pupils continue into Higher Education. The Morrisby Profile is a very important addition to help students in planning Sixth Form choices and career paths. There will be other factors which will affect career choices and an opportunity to discuss all of these will be made available in Year 11 as part of the School's programme of careers and progression support and advice.

As you can see, there is a lot going on at this point in the term so thank you to everyone for supporting these events and activities.

Wishing you and your families a restful weekend.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Rees
Headteacher

The [St. Olave's website](#) and twitter page - [@saintolaves](#) has many more stories of student endeavour and success. Please do keep sending me news items and student successes either via colleagues or email. The email address is publicityteam@saintolaves.net. Do not forget to include all the details along with a hi-resolution photo you are willing to share and have published on the school website.
