Dear parents,

I am delighted to write this introduction to our school newsletter. As outlined in my recent letter, Mr Walls’ serious illness has meant that we had to prioritise which elements of his work should be covered first, such as the classes he teaches, and this has delayed publication of the new edition until now. I am very grateful to Miss Smith, who kindly agreed to look after the newsletter. She has played a key part in previous editions, and it was very kind of her to agree to co-ordinate the full publication.

During Lent staff and students have been preparing for the Easter Celebrations in earnest. Each form group has attended a reconciliation service led by KS5 students and each week, during Friday lunchtime, the Stations of the Cross have taken place in the school grounds. Father Basil Pearson and Father Joseph Whisstock have kindly made themselves available so that there has been a weekly opportunity, at lunchtime, for individuals to attend Reconciliation. Year 13 students have prepared a dramatisation of Christ’s Passion which will be performed on Thursday morning during separate KS3 and KS4 services. Each year the Year 13 students perform the dramatisation of Christ’s Passion to the wider community. This year this took place at the Parish church of St John Fisher on Palm Sunday, and was very well received.

Please build on the spiritual opportunities provided in school, by taking your child to the Easter services on Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and either the Vigil Mass on Saturday evening, or Mass on Easter Sunday morning. We know that our work with your child is based on secure foundations at home, and, as you know, this extends to the spiritual as well as the academic. With this thought in mind, I wish you a happy and holy Easter.

Yours faithfully,

Mr A Sharpe
Head Teacher
PASSION PLAY & INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY
Isobel Harforth, Head Student

Since January, Year 13 have been working on the production of the annual Passion Play. It is an important tradition at St Bernard's as it allows us, as young people, to get involved in the telling of the story of the crucifixion. It is something that many of us have looked forward to since the beginning our journeys at the school. On Sunday the 25th of March, we performed the short play at St John Fisher church. This was a remarkable experience in which we brought something new to the congregation. Watching the year group come together in such a way to celebrate the Bible has been memorable for everyone involved, and I am very proud of my peers for working so hard to tell the story through the showcase of their talent.

In light of International Women’s Day, which took place on the 8th of March, we have invited year 7 and 8 students to participate in a competition in which they can celebrate feminism. It invites them to write about a woman who inspires them in 150 words or less. So far, we have had some excellent entries, successfully portraying the vision, creativity and desire for change apparent in the young women of St. Bernard’s. It is important that we continue to discover stories about women making advancements in various industries, as well as celebrating women throughout history, and in our everyday lives. I look forward to seeing some more fantastic entries.

HEAD STUDENT TEAM ELECTIONS
Amy Salmon & Beatrice Sleigh-Johnson, Yr12

This year marks the 100th anniversary of women having the right to vote and we are pleased to say that this year, students of St. Bernard’s celebrated by having the highest voter turn out ever for the student team elections. All five candidates ran successful campaigns, with the results being one of the closest on record.
The new Head Student Team for 2018-19 are:

Head Student – Catryn Thomas
Deputy Head Students – Amy Salmon and Beatrice Sleigh-Johnson.

We are thankful for the support and to all who voted. We are looking forward to the opportunities the next year will bring and we hope to serve you well as the new Head Student Team.

**INSPIRATIONAL STUDENT**

Mrs Mundy, Parent

My daughter, Sophie Mundy 9A, had an operation last November at Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH). It involved the removal of a birthmark from her forehead. Although Sophie had to attend several hospital appointments and it was obviously an anxious time, the operation was a success.

During her visits she realised that if she could inform other children of her positive hospital experience, it would benefit any other child who may be worrying about an operation or simply what to expect when visiting hospital.

Our Parish Priest, Father Paul Fox, at Our Lady of Ransom Parish, Rayleigh, regularly contributes to a BBC Essex Sunday morning radio show with Peter Holmes (6-9 a.m). The radio show discusses faith news and broadcasts interviews. Father Paul heard of Sophie’s story and thought it was ‘inspirational’. Following discussions with BBC Essex, a DJ visited Sophie and the interview was aired on Sunday 28th January.

She discussed her hospital experience and how having considerable faith aided a positive attitude. Father Paul said prayers which ultimately helped her operation become a positive experience. She is also considering submitting a diary that she kept during this time which may be considered helpful to other children attending GOSH.

**LAW AT THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD**

Mrs H. Davies, Careers co-ordinator

Former St. Bernard’s student Ruth Stillabower delivered a presentation to years 11, 12 and 13 on studying Law at Oxford, where she is a second year student.

Ruth covered the application process and talked about life at Oxford and the benefits of studying at a world renowned institution. She told students that there were 3 terms of 8 weeks per year and over 30 colleges from which to choose. She said that Oxford was a vibrant city to live in with parks, clubs, cafes, shopping, museums and cinemas.

Her advice on Personal Statements was invaluable and she encouraged students to apply.
Ruth left our students with some thought provoking questions for them to think about; Law, what is it? Why is the law what it is? Should it be the way it is? What could it be?
We are hoping that Ruth will follow this visit up and come into school in July to participate in 'Beyond 18’ Day with our Year 12 students.

UAL AT ST. BERNARD’S
Mrs H. Davies, Careers Co-ordinator

Staff from UAL who are based at the South Essex campus delivered a presentation on degrees in the Creative Arts; Interior Design, Photography, Fine Art, Graphic Design, Fashion Design, Costume Construction and Fashion Communication. The informative and interesting presentation also covered preparing portfolios and graduate destinations.

FAMILY AWARENESS DAY
Janine Brownwell, University of Suffolk

I am pleased to announce that our next Family Awareness Day will be held at the University of Suffolk on Saturday 28th April 2018.

Students in Years 7, 8 and 9 and their parents/guardians are invited along to our Ipswich campus to find out more about studying a degree at university. We understand that higher education seems a long way off but as we are sure you are aware, the choices made at school may affect their choices at 16 and 18.

This is a free event, which runs from 11.30am – 3pm and a fantastic opportunity to learn more about university and to meet with current University of Suffolk students. During the event students will take part in a fun programme of activities, while parents learn more about student finance and the benefits of higher education.

A tour of the campus and a free buffet lunch will be provided for all attendees. Students and parents can find further information and book a place via this link: http://www.uos.ac.uk/fad

For further information students and parents can email schools@uos.ac.uk
On 14th March, we went to the Tate Modern gallery in London for our current GCSE Art project ‘fragments’. After taking the coach up to London, we split into groups and started going round the gallery. We took pictures of artworks that related to our theme of fragments, then did some drawings from direct observation. It was really interesting to see the artworks in real life as it helped to understand what the artist was seeing themselves. After a quick lunch, we continued to walk around the museum thinking about what messages the artists were trying to convey by creating their artwork.

At the end of an enjoyable and insightful trip, we got on the coach back to school, where we got a chance to discuss what our favourite pieces were and how we will use them as inspiration in the development of our work for the final project in our art GCSE. Personally, I was particularly interested in the works of Piet Mondrian and Antony Gormley as their pieces really stood out to me and will therefore use them as inspiration for my final piece.
Year 7 students went to LEGOLAND during March this year on a Real Life Maths trip. Students took part in a workshop learning to program robots. Many groups successfully managed the aim of the session, to activate a satellite in a Mars simulation. Some groups even got on to the extra activity, which was to program a robot to save the Mars Rover.

After their workshop, pupils were able to explore the park and fill in a Maths Activity booklet. This involved analysing the bricks of Lego models, estimating times on rides and seeing how they could efficiently place people on a rollercoaster. Students enjoyed the Dragon rollercoaster. Special thanks to the members of staff who repeatedly rode the Pirate Ship in order for everyone to have a go!
'Nine teenagers flee North Korea, dreaming of a new life in the South. But the danger is far from over. With threats around every corner, perhaps the mysterious figure of The Big Brother can help them? Or is he the very person they’re running from? As their lives hang in the balance, could the teenagers’ fate ultimately come down to a garish South Korean game show?'

This year, the Drama Department has been very fortunate to be selected to be part of The National Theatre, Connections Festival. This is a festival which involves schools and youth theatres across the UK and celebrates the talent of new playwrights. We were given the challenging script of ‘The Free9’ by In-Sook Chappell to use as this year’s school production.

24 motivated and committed students from years 9, 10, 12 and 13 embarked on this creative challenge in November and performed the final product in the Bernardine Hall on Tuesday the 13th of March. The rehearsal process has been exciting, challenging and thought-provoking and has taught us all a lot about the conditions that many North Koreans have to live and suffer under. Influenced by physical theatre practitioners such as Frantic Assembly, we created a performance that we hoped went some way to expressing the troubles and emotions that these teenagers may have experienced.

Many thanks go to the Art Department and all of the students who helped to create a stunning backdrop which really helped to communicate and enhance the brutality of the North Korean regime.

If you missed out on seeing the production, we will be performing it again on Tuesday the 3rd of April at The Queen’s Theatre in Hornchurch at 7.00pm. Tickets are available online www.queens-theatre.co.uk or from the box office on 01708 443333.
SET PAINTING FOR THE FREE9
Zier Mapi-Ot, Year 10

On Tuesday 6 March the gifted and talented for arts students took part in the set painting for the school production “The Free9”. The students who took part ranged from the youngest years of the school to sixth form. The day was filled with the students participating, working together and using their artistic skills to create beautiful pieces of art by the end of the day. Although not all may have known each other, the teamwork was outstanding and really benefited the production of the end result. This was an opportunity to join and see the talent of fellow students and although it was a challenge, due to the size and time frame, the paintings were successfully completed thanks to the hard work of all who took part.

A-LEVEL ART TRIP TO AMSTERDAM
Samantha Dube, Yr13

Amsterdam was an opportunity to be immersed in a completely different environment which would inspire both Year 12 and 13 Art students. Despite having a very early start on the Monday morning, we were all excited to arrive at Schiphol airport in Amsterdam. Armed with some Euros and our sketchbooks, we meandered our way to our first activity, the Canal Cruise. We were encouraged to sketch and record what we saw, and the Canal Cruise was a great opportunity for not only learning more about the city, but also capturing some sights.
Tuesday was our first opportunity to view some galleries. After a few photos in front of the famous ‘I Amsterdam’ sign, we entered the Rijksmuseum. It had lovely architecture and some of us immediately began to take photos of it. This museum provided us with a vast number of artists to explore. With two hours to study artwork as varied as 14th Century ceramic art to Van Gogh, it was not a surprise that so many of us enjoyed this museum.

The next museum was a five-minute walk away so we used some of the time to take photos during our break. Visiting the Stedelijk Museum was a great contrast from the previous one; it was filled with much vibrant contemporary art. Some of the more striking pieces were photographs, light projections and even eight-foot tall monsters. This museum was helpful to the year 13s who are planning their installation art pieces.

Travelling was a big part of Wednesday, but this also allowed us to spend a bit longer on our sketches as we journeyed by tram and train. Trams are a major aspect of Amsterdam travel and it was nice to familiarise ourselves with these. Visiting the GEM museum in The Hague was great for giving our projects some depth. There we saw photographer Michael Wolf’s work, who ventured to many cities to show how people lead their lives differently. Upon looking at his aims and how passionate he was, most of us saw how necessary it was to include a similar sense of meaning in our work. The Gemeente Museum, on the other hand, was very large and much of its infrastructure was interconnected. Here we saw pieces by Mondrian, Raoul Dufy and larger interactive works. Due to the train journey, we were able to capture some beautiful evening scenes in the city.

Thursday consisted of another coach journey, this time to the Kröller Müller museum in Otterlo. Upon arrival, we were informed we would have to present a chosen piece to the group. It was great to see such varied artists chosen by everyone, from Surrealist painters, Pointillism and even sculptures. After an opportunity to shop in the High Street we returned to the hostel to get ready for dinner. The Hard Rock Café was unanimously everyone’s favourite dinner of the week. Afterwards, some of us took the opportunity to explore the city, capturing more photos to draw from later.

On Friday, Rembrandt’s House gave us an insight into how art was created in the 1600s. Seeing the ways in which paint was created made us appreciate how easily we can use it at school. With our final lunch break almost done, we made our way to the Van Gogh museum. Although we could not take any photos, this was another museum favourite of the group. Being immersed in not only Van Gogh’s style but also his friends, gave us all inspiration on how to use colour in our development. With a short stop at the gift shop, our sight seeing in Amsterdam was done. During the journey back home, we reminisced over the great art we saw over the course of the week, and some of the funny memories too. Our art projects have benefited greatly from the trip and we’d like to thank the whole art department for making it happen.
PHYSICS TRIP TO CERN
The A-Level Physicists

Before enjoying the beautiful city and walking through the silent botanical gardens in Geneva, we enjoyed the opportunity to learn about the beginnings of the Universe. The days were filled by alternating between Switzerland and France to tour and experience as much of CERN as we possibly could, by hearing talks and watching fascinating presentations. During the stay, we met new people and made new friends, like the duck that was struggling to swim against the strong current. As we were challenged by the demanding physics work, we found ourselves relating to the duck’s struggles! Throughout our stay, we enjoyed amazing food, particularly in the CERN canteen where we were surrounded by working scientists.

SPORTING ACHIEVEMENTS
Luana Bull, 7M

My coach at Southend Diving club decided to challenge us to dive the height of Mount Everest. We completed the challenge in 43 minutes, diving from 10m, 7.5m, 5m and 3m boards. It was a massive achievement and I hope that there is more to come in the future.

I also took part in a regional trampoline competition in January which was held in Cambridge. I came 2nd and am really proud of myself as I had only learnt the routine a week before Christmas. I started trampolining a year ago and I really enjoy it!
This year 29 students have completed their Silver DoE Award. The DoE Team at St Bernard’s joined 22 of these students and their parents at the Civic Centre for the Local Authority presentation of these Awards.

In order to achieve their Award these students have completed Volunteering, Physical and a Skill (two of these for 6 months and one for 3 months) plus 2 Expeditions of approximately 30 miles each.

Congratulations to these Silver students who have achieved so much.

Ten of these students are currently working hard to complete their Gold Award and will be on Expedition from 17-27 July walking 50 miles over 4 days.

If there are any students who have still to finish their Award, why not complete this over the Easter Break so that you can receive your Award at the next presentation?

OUR DoE EXPERIENCE
Connie Cachia & Olivia Milner-Griffiths, Yr11

Connie & Olivia gave their presentation at the Silver Awards Presentation Evening on Tuesday 27 March.

During our time in the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award, we have spent the last three years training through each of our Bronze, Silver and soon to be Gold expeditions. At the start, we had no idea what was going to be facing us, thinking that it would just be something to ‘put on our CV’, but as we continued through our Bronze, onto our Silver and now Gold – this definitely isn't the case.

When setting out on the Bronze expeditions, there were undoubtedly some not so great moments: walking for miles in the pouring rain through grass up to our hips and the freezing cold nights we spent huddled together, struggling to get to sleep, then having to wake up at five in the morning the next day. At these moments, many of us wanted to give up, asking ourselves ‘why did we even do this in the first place?’. However, once the rain had settled, we wanted to accomplish whatever came next, whether it was getting to the next check point or getting to the very top of the next hill.

With the freezing cold nights, we got up the next morning with the stars still there in the sky and the sun just beginning to rise over the hills, warming up over breakfast and hot chocolates to fuel us for the day ahead. When on our routes, working together as a team and trying to lift the mood were quite challenging at times, however filling those gaps with songs quickly made us forget about how long we had left to walk. One of our favourite memories of Bronze was on one of our last days of walking. We realised we were one of the first teams to make it back to our destination, a small shop at the end of a long road. However, soon after collapsing on the grass, large droplets of
rain turned into yet another heavy storm. After huddling every one of us under a tiny ledge barely fit for two, we decided to kindly ask to go into the shop and cover their floor with mud and rain water. The woman kindly directed us to a fireplace shop across the road where we ended up sleeping for two hours, later restoring ourselves with a well-deserved ice cream and a pat on the back from Mr Elmes. Many memories have been just as fun to make and will forever remain with is and there are so many more to be made at Gold.

When it came to our Silver Award, route planning became easier, and with the experience from before, we had a much better understanding of what we would be facing next. The little things such as not leaving our shoes outside over night in the cold or making sure to tuck our clothes into our sleeping bags so they’re warm the next morning really improved our moods for the following day. The seclusion with walking early in the morning surrounded by open fields and the sun were one of the best views and experiences to ever wake up to. As we carried on during the day, saying good morning to people on their daily walks with their dogs felt like the middle of the afternoon, but we still ended up stopping to talk to them because of their interest in our expedition.

During one of our checkpoint stops, we decided to sit down on the grass by an old railway track and have our lunch. After about ten minutes, we saw a herd of cows coming slowly towards us from a distance. We thought nothing of it until we realised one was right behind us and Louisa was wearing all red! This was one of the memorable moments we shared as we rushed to put the checkpoint card on the post. Unfortunately, the checkpoint card fell on the ground and was licked up by a cow, however we managed to replace it and carry on. Mr Page, however, could not find this checkpoint card and to this day we still believe that a cow ate it and even have videos of the cows surrounding the checkpoint card!

Memorable experiences like this and being followed by a line of sheep imitating us walking in a line were just some of the reasons why the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award has been one of the best decisions and experiences we have ever enjoyed, and being part of a team of amazing friends was a new opportunity for all of us to connect in ways that we would not usually in school.

But none of this could have been made possible without the never ending support of our D of E team at St. Bernard’s. With Mr Elmes telling us stories of his grandchildren, trying to work out why Mr Page is nicknamed ‘Muffin’, Mrs Clancy always reminding us of eDofE, junior Elmes always one step ahead setting up camp and Mr Clancy speeding around on his bike. There are so many other teachers that have helped on our expeditions too.
NOTICES

WORK EXPERIENCE
Mrs H Davies, Careers Co-ordinator

A reminder to all Year 10 students who have yet to secure a placement, to use the Easter holidays to visit employers, as all paperwork must be returned to Mrs Davies by Friday 18th May 2018.

KS4/5 INFORMATION EVENING
Wednesday 18 April 2018—6.00-7.00pm
Mrs L. Berridge, Director of Sixth Form Studies

For parents or carers of students in Years 10, 11, 12 & 13. The intention of the evening is to provide you with information and helpful ideas, to support your daughter or son in the run up to the examinations in May and June. Students are also welcome to attend. Please return the reply slip on the letter sent home if you wish to attend.

PARENT GOVERNOR VACANCY
Mrs S. Clancy, Clerk to the Governors

The School have a vacancy on the Governing Body for a Parent Governor. The commitment for this is 3 Full Governing Body meetings per year plus membership of two Committees which meet termly either on Tuesdays or Thursdays at 5.15pm. Further information can be found in the Governors section of the website.

If you are interested in taking this further please contact Mrs Sue Clancy, Clerk to the Governors (sjc@stbernards.southend.sch.uk).

LIBRARY OPENING TIMES
Mrs B. Middlemast-Neal, Librarian

During the school holidays the library will be open to Years 11, 12 & 13 to revise for their exams.

Opening times 8am to 4pm on:
9th, 10th & 11th April
29th, 30th & 31st May

If the library cannot be opened for any reason, parents will be informed via a Groupcall text message.

The library will also be available to students to revise on Sport’s Day. (provisionally booked for 6 June).

Please note: School uniform is not required, however you should dress appropriately (as if it was a non-uniform day).
Are you a Maths or Physics Undergraduate who will graduate in 2019?

Have you considered a career in teaching?

Why not try one of our paid teaching internships and earn £1200 for a four week placement

Benfleet Teaching School Alliance has the opportunity to offer Physics and Maths undergraduates in their penultimate year a four week paid internship in a school in Essex during June/July 2018.

If you have a genuine interest in a career in teaching and an enthusiasm for promoting STEM subjects in school. Our STEM internship programme is an excellent opportunity to gain first-hand experience in a school as well as a gateway into the profession.

Please contact Maxine Howard, Administrator Benfleet Teaching School Alliance on 01268 794215 ext. # 210 or mhoward@theappletonschool.org for more information and an application pack.

Website - www.benfleet-teaching-school.co.uk
Calendar

Thursday 29 March  Last Day of Term– Students depart at 12.35pm
Tuesday 3 April  Performance of ‘The Free9’ at The Queen’s Theatre, Hornchurch
Monday 9– Wednesday 11 April  German Oral Exam Tutorials
Tuesday 10 April  A-Level Music Composition Recording
Monday 16 April  Students Return to School
Wednesday 18 April  6.00pm  Yr10, 11, 12 & 13 Parents Information Evening– Dealing with Exams
Thursday 19 April  6.00-8.30pm  Jack Petchey Final
Thursday 19 & Friday 20 April  All day  A-Level Graphics Exam
Friday 20 April  All day  Yr12 History Visit to University of Essex History Department
Friday 20 April  Cake Sale Fundraiser for Great Ormond Street Hospital
Monday 23 April  3.30-5.00pm  Yr11 German Revision Webinar
Tuesday 24 April  11.35am-4.00pm  ‘Meet the Professionals’ Careers Fair
Thursday 26 April  Yr8 Junior Maths Challenge
Friday 27th April  Chamber Choir Perform at Chelmsford Cathedral Lunchtime Recital
Tuesday 1 & Wednesday 2 All Day  May  GCSE Graphics Exam
Wednesday 2 May  4.15–6.30pm  Yr8 Parents Consultation Evening
Thursday 3– Sunday 6 May  Departs 1.00pm– Returns 3.00pm  Silver DofE Assessed Expedition to Ashdown Forest
Friday 4 & Tuesday 8 May  All Day  GCSE Art Exam
Friday 4 May  All Day  Yr10 GCSE Drama Assessments

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