



October 2016

From the Chair of the Board: Mrs Joanna Griffin

On 1st October 2016 we marked the second anniversary of the formation of St Nicholas Owen Catholic Multi Academy Company. During the last two years we have been striving to establish a strong community, committed to providing the very best education for the children and young people in our schools, and we have much to celebrate.

We welcome a number of new leaders within our schools: at St Wulstan's, Mrs Kim Savage as Principal and Mrs Sue Edwards as Vice Principal, and at St Joseph's, Mrs Jo McCole as Vice Principal.

We also welcome our new parish priests: Fr Des Devenney Parish Priest of Our Lady & All Saints, Stourbridge; Fr Craig Szmidt, newly appointed Parish Priest of Our Lady of Fatima, Quinton; and Fr Richard Sharples, newly appointed Parish Priest of St Wulstan and St Thomas of Canterbury, Stourport and Holy Family, Bewdley.

Motto and Mission Statement

In Jesus we live, learn and serve

*Together we are committed to excellent education for all
rooted in Gospel values, inspiring a love for life-long learning
and following the compassion of Christ.*



In February 2016, members from all **six SNOMAC schools** came together as one community at St Chad's Cathedral. Pupils and staff gathered as one to celebrate the SNOMAC Celebration Mass together. It was the first time young people from all our schools assembled together for worship since the formation of SNOMAC. The cathedral was packed, with pupils taking full part in the Mass, responding joyfully, proudly and with gusto.

With the help of the Cathedral Dean, Very Rev Canon Gerry Breen, and Cathedral Secretary, Trish Brookes, we

filled the pews, which drew many positive comments from the congregation, who were keen to know who we were and what we were doing. Pupils explained to members of the public that they were having Mass together before heading to the Town Hall for a final rehearsal in preparation for the Pyramid Concert, which was later that night. After Mass, pupils headed to the Grimshaw Room to enjoy a packed lunch and then off to the Town Hall.



SNOMAC PRAYER

Lord, fill our hearts and guide our minds as we move forward together. Enable us to work with one another to ensure that our community continues to develop and grow, for the benefit of all.



Lourdes Pilgrimage 2016



During the May half term holiday, 27 of our Year 12 students took part in the annual Diocesan pilgrimage to Lourdes.

Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy – “Merciful like the Father”



This is the twelfth year that **Hagley Catholic High School** has participated in the pilgrimage, with ever growing numbers of students taking part in the year marking the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy. The Pilgrimage gave students the chance to work with people less fortunate than themselves as part of the Handmaid and Brancardier teams, providing meals, cleaning the Accueil ward, taking sick pilgrims out to services and social events and being a constant friendly presence. In addition to their service, members of the group were able to examine and reinvigorate their faith through Mass, Services of Reconciliation, Stations

of the Cross and Youth Liturgies. The time in Lourdes surpassed all expectations, with lessons learned and experiences shared which will remain with students forever.

This pilgrimage is not possible without the help of many people across the SNOMAC community. The 2016 pilgrims raised over £25,000, allowing the pilgrimage to take place. We are truly grateful to everyone who contributed prizes, bought raffle tickets, attended events and gave support. The new 2017 group of pilgrims are now signed up and have begun their pilgrimage journey through fundraising.

The new term started in a very special way at **St Joseph's Primary School** when Fr Des blessed every classroom in the school. To celebrate the Feast of the Holy Cross on the 14th September, children found out about their class Saint and chose a prayer for their class service.



“I chose to read the prayer because it helped us to remember about our class Saint – St Francis of Assisi.” Child in Year 5. “St Theresa is a really good class Saint because she was very kind. She always did something for the poor. If she had a mouthful of food, she would always make sure the poor had some first.” Child in Year 4.



Some children in Year 2 and 6 took part in the services when Fr Des blessed the new outside classroom, the library and the intervention room. “It made us feel special and important.” Child in Year 6. “I liked it when he blessed the school because it’s nice for the children to know they are special.” Child in Year 6. “I felt the school was blessed because Fr Des used Holy water.” Child in Year 6. Our school feels truly



blessed and ready to start the new school year!

St Nicholas Owen Mass of Thanksgiving at St Mary's Harvington

On Tuesday 28 June, on the Eve of the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul, Father Des Devenney, Parish Priest of Our Lady and All Saints Stourbridge, concelebrated Mass with Father Martin Pratt, Chaplain to Hagley Catholic High School, for all the Staff who work in our six schools—and for Representatives and Directors. The Principals/Headteachers and the Chair of the Board led the Bidding Prayers and Fr Des delighted everyone with his homily which combined lightness and wit with a serious and memorable point. Who will forget that Father Des’s ‘inappropriate’ brown shoes were the means of connecting him through a hospital patient he visited, with a nurse who had once turned to him for help at a very difficult time in her life? Our thanks to Mgr John Moran for lending us his beautiful Church for Mass and the Stable for refreshments, to Paulette Berry, Janet Rowe and Clare Van Vliet for their help with tea and coffee and to all those who read. Next year, weather permitting strawberries in Monsignor John’s Garden after Mass!



The Pyramid Concert for 2017 is on Thursday 16th February. Get your tickets quickly This year's focus will be "A Night at the Movies".



In the summer term, Year 6 of **St Mary's Catholic Primary School** began a new business venture – **Best Bites**. Class members were allocated a range of jobs such as Business Managers, Head Chefs and Marketing Team. The Business Managers had a meeting with Ms O'Beirne to apply for a start-up loan, and the ingredients were researched for value and any possible allergies. They worked hard preparing healthy snacks to sell after school. They invited feedback from their customers to improve the range of items sold. The Business Managers negotiated with Ms O'Beirne so that a donation would be made to the SVP Society instead of paying interest on the loan. Over the six weeks of the project, Year 6 raised a fantastic £180.



Alton Castle Retreat – September 2016

Year 5 and year 6 enjoyed a recent retreat to Alton Castle. As well as time for thoughtful prayer and reflection, the children enjoyed many outdoor activities including cycling, survival skills and the assault course.

During mid-September 2016 the pupils from Year 6 at **Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Primary School** spent a three day retreat at **Alton Castle, Staffordshire**. As well as the excitement of a short break with their classmates, they also took part in a number of different activities, including mountain biking, trekking, archery and survival.



With the theme of the retreat being Discipleship, each activity included reflection, discussion and prayer. Everyone was challenged and encouraged to find hidden strength, learn new skills, and show perseverance in their individual and team challenges.

A memorable activity was the Night Line where the pupils demonstrated teamwork and trust in each other, as they made their way down through the trees whilst being blindfolded. It was remarkable to see each of the children supporting those around them. The retreat offered Year 6 an opportunity to

bond and reflect upon their life and faith journey so far. It was also an occasion for the children to look ahead to their final year together at Primary School, which will conclude in July 2017 when they will receive the special Sacrament of Confirmation from Archbishop Bernard Longley.

In September Year 6 pupils of **St Wulstan's** attended a Spiritual retreat at Alton Castle, one of the Diocesan residential retreat centres. Whilst here the children took part in a variety of challenging activities and many opportunities to reflect on their journey of faith and how they will move forward spiritually in this the year of their Confirmation.

Next year the pupils of Our Lady of Fatima and St Wulstan's will visit Alton together, forging friendships for their move to Hagley High School.



SNOMAC Staff Training On Monday 7 December 2015 teaching staff at Hagley Catholic High School spent the late afternoon together enjoying a presentation by David Wells, Deputy Director of the Diocesan Education Service in Plymouth—in two parts:- "Being what we are not" and "Becoming what we are". And on Monday 4 January 2016 teaching staff from all our primary schools and from Our Lady and St Kenelm's shared a full training day together in the Chapel of Newman University on the theme of "A New Year—A Year of Mercy" led by Dan Callow, Emily Clark and Angela Moran from *One Life Music*. Both occasions culminated in the celebration of Mass and were very much enjoyed by participants.



Year 12 Retreat to Soli House

In June, Year 12 students travelled to the newly built 'Soli House' retreat centre in the small village of Alton in Staffordshire. They were there to take part in a residential retreat focusing on the theme of 'My Lighthouse', which showed how God is our guide and source of comfort even in troubled times. The school has taken year 12s on a retreat to Soli House for twenty eight years and they always have a fantastic time, leaving with great memories. This year was no different, with students thoroughly recommending the retreat to new Year 12 students.



The Hagley 90's Band release a record with some special Help



Autumn term 2015, a group of students from **Hagley High School** created a special Nineties tribute act called H90 which consisted of 16 students aged between 12-19. The line-up consists of drums, electronic percussion, bass, 3 guitars, keyboard, 2 trumpets, 2 saxophones, 3 clarinets and 2 vocalists. They performed at Sunfield Children's Homes in Clent for a charity concert and received rapturous applause. This was followed by an opportunity to be the main support act for Hardwicke Circus at the local music venue Scary Canary in Stourbridge, which was a massive success. Days later they were asked to record their version of "I'll be there for you" to create a great charity single. Overcoming a number of obstacles and cancelling a few school activities they spent two days in the studio and the track was born.

This massive achievement has benefited others and raised money for **Winston's Wish** (A Charity for Bereaved Children). With over 35,000 hits on the BBC H&W Facebook site in 4 days, interviews on BBC H&W, BBC WM radio stations and being part of the playlist for Black Country Radio with numerous news articles across the West Midlands. Check out the video www.facebook.com/hagleyrc/



The **Year Five class at St Ambrose's** has joined the Junior St Vincent De Paul Society, linking in with a number of



Worcester schools to be a part of this project. The children have completed two activities so far this year: serving local parishioners as part of the Macmillan Coffee Morning in September and then packing and delivering Harvest offering food parcels to the elderly people in our community.

In the Spring Term, **Year Six pupils at St Ambrose's and St Wulstan's** joined together with Dan Callow on a retreat as part of Confirmation. As St Ambrose's pupils had already been confirmed the children were able to share their experiences with St Wulstan's pupils who were preparing to receive this sacrament.



SNOMAC School Sports Partnership

High school pupils gain valuable experience as sports leaders in the primary schools, providing them with Duke of Edinburgh Award volunteering time, work experience and sports leadership hours that can help with personal statements and UCAS applications.

Primary school pupils have a calendar of sport throughout the year, with coaching sessions and competitive sports fixtures against other SNOMAC primary schools in rugby, basketball, cross country, athletics and rounders. These sports fixtures culminate in a final played at Hagley Catholic High School. Additionally, pupils get the opportunity to go trampolining with club links to the Hagley High Flyers club, whilst KS1 pupils attempt a wide range of multi skills.

The Chair of the Board of Directors would like to extend her sincere thanks to John Polychronakis and Mary Carns (for their service as Directors), Chris Marshall (for his service as Chair of the Academy Committee at St Wulstan's), Peter Parry, Geoff Taylor-Smith and Janet Rowe as new Foundation Directors.

