



SBy/esk
7th April 2017

Dear Parents and Carers

At last, after what has seemed like a long winter, Easter will soon be here.

Magna Learning Partnership & School Improvements

As you will know from my earlier letter, Magna Learning Partnership came into being on 1st April 2017. We look forward to working closely with our partner schools to ensure excellent education for the young people of Salisbury and the surrounding area. Of course, unlike our two partner schools, St Edmund's has been an academy for over five years. It's now quite hard to remember a time when we weren't! From time to time I'm asked by parents about the benefits of being an academy. I usually respond by talking about choice and the opportunities we have to choose what's best for our school, whether it is the curriculum for students, the access to educational support or the range of services that any school needs to function efficiently.

The most obvious visible benefits to us as a school, however, come from access to the Education and Skills Funding Agency's Conditions Improvement Fund. A number of successful bids over the last five years have allowed us to reroof the main building, refurbish the hall and dining hall, and completely refurbish and update six Science labs, amongst other projects.

Currently, our new project is what will be known as the Magill Building, named after the late Bobby Magill, our Head of RS who died a year ago this month. This 18 classroom block will transform the school. From September, English, Languages and Humanities subjects will be housed in this wonderful new building, together with other accommodation including a 7th Science laboratory.



The Magill building will be linked to the main building on each of the three floors and for the first time, St Edmund's will be able to accommodate staff and students who are wheelchair bound. Hammonds, our builders are making good progress with the building and we are getting excited about it!

All in all, St Edmund's has benefitted to the tune of almost £5 million in capital building projects since becoming an academy.

Funding

We hear much in the news about schools and a funding crisis. The government plans to introduce a new national funding formula from 2018 – 19 in order to address long-standing variations in the funding of schools in different parts of the country. Whilst the formula has not yet been finalised, we share the concerns of the professional educational bodies and other schools that the proposed basic levels of funding are too low. Here at St Edmund's we are no different from any other school and we have to spend our money wisely to meet rising costs. We are fortunate that we are a popular school and that inevitably helps as the main source of funding for a school comes from the numbers on the school roll. However, our popularity means that for this year's intake in Year 7 we saw an unexpected increase, meaning that we currently have class sizes larger than we would like. I am pleased to say that in September we will add an additional teaching group to that year group, thus lowering class sizes in all groups across what will be the new Year 8. In addition, we are reducing class sizes in Years 10 and in Year 11 and employing more teachers. We are able to do this because of the excellent work and strategic planning of our Business Team, led by Mrs Inman. I believe we are very fortunate to be able to invest our money where it counts, to support good outcomes for all our students. As part of Magna Learning Partnership, we will continue to do so.

It has been a busy term ...



This term has been a long and busy one. As well as a sharp focus on academic work and in Years 10 and 11 preparation for public examinations, there have been many activities taking place. These range from two wonderful Language Immersion residential trips to Spain and to France to a day trip to Bath for our Choirs who returned with first and third places in their classes for the Chamber Choir and Main Choir respectively at the mid Somerset Festival. Students have taken part in field trips to Lulworth Cove, Dance workshops with professionals and theatre workshops on a range of PSHE themes.

This term Football tournaments have been won, netball teams have achieved great things and fencing competitions have seen St Edmund's Girls beating off the opposition. Year 10 had a very successful work experience week with an avalanche of praise from employers coming back from the employers who were kind enough to take them on.

I want to extend a hearty thanks to the staff who have made these trips and events happen, thus truly enriching the experiences for all our students. The next event is the much anticipated ski trip, which leaves today! We wish them good snow and a tremendous week.

Year 11 are of course approaching the final working weeks pre GCSEs and inevitably the pressure is mounting. There are some revision classes going on for students over the course of the holiday and we hope that all girls in the year group will be achieving a good balance of work and relaxation over the holiday period, but with the balance tipped in favour of revision work, please!

Uniform: New Skirt in September 2017

Over the last few weeks we have been surveying students to find out whether they prefer the St Edmund's check pattern, or a similar pattern in blue (called Bedford check).

The results are in! The majority of the girls chose the St Edmund's check (see right) and so we can now formally announce that the new skirt will be introduced from September 2017.



From September 2017 the new skirt will be compulsory for Years 7, 8 and 9 (i.e. girls who are currently in Years 6, 7 and 8). Girls in the older year groups will be able to wear the old navy skirt or the new skirt if they wish, although it will be compulsory for our senior prefects to wear it. The school blouse can be worn tucked in if the girls would like to; this is optional. All girls in all years will continue to have the option of wearing navy blue trousers.



The new skirt will be available through Scholars, a reputable and reliable school wear company, who will have regular sales events here at school. The remainder of the uniform will continue to be available online through Price & Buckland.

The skirt is easy to wash (no fabric conditioner please) and can be hung up to dry; if this is done, the skirt will require no ironing. Although more expensive than the old navy skirt, the new skirt is of excellent quality and should represent better value for money in the long term; it will also look much smarter. The price for smaller sizes will be £26.50, and for waist sizes 30" upwards the price will be £29.00.

New Staff

After Easter we will welcome Mr Paul Cutts, who is joining us as Subject Leader, Science during Mrs Evans' maternity leave. Mr Cutts is an experienced Head of Department. We will also be welcoming Miss Jane Hibbert as Deputy Subject Leader, Science.

And Finally

I would like to say a very big thank you to The Friends of St Edmund's, who organised a fantastic fashion show which was enjoyed by all, and to all the students, staff and parents who helped to make the show a great success.

I wish you all a very happy Easter.

Yours sincerely



Sarah Busby
Headteacher