



From the Headmaster

We have reached the end of a busy term having experienced two wonderful festive events, the Christmas Concert last week and our traditional Carol Service last night at the Holy Trinity Church in Longlevens, which was a truly moving experience. My thanks to all the staff and talented students who worked so hard to make these events so memorable.

In my final assembly of this term, this morning, I reminded the School that the story of a birth of a child in a stable for Christians is the beginning of the most significant event. The humble birth signifies the kind of life Jesus would live. For Christians, God became poor, that through his poverty, humanity might be rich. I also reminded the school that whether you are a Christian, Muslim, a member of any other faith, believe in a God of any kind or have no belief in God at all, we all should recognise the importance of sacrifice and humility in helping make the world a better place. At a time of great conflict and suffering in the world, it is more important than ever to join together as a community and spread a message of joy and hope.

Year 11 GCSE Trials

Our Year 11 students start their GCSE Trials in January, and I wish them all the very best in their endeavours. While I urge them all to enjoy the Christmas break and enjoy some downtime, I would also encourage them all to develop a realistic revision plan to aid them in their studies and help prepare them for the forthcoming examinations.

Sixth Form Open Evening

The next Sixth Form Open Evening takes place on Thursday 1 February, starting at 5.30pm with two information talks. It is an excellent opportunity for current Year 11 students and parents to hear more about study in the Sixth Form, and to speak with subject teachers and the Sixth Form Leadership Team about A Level choices. As current students at the School, there is no need to pre-register for the event, please just come along on the night.

DfE Consultation

Last week the Department for Education launched a consultation on its plans to introduce the Advanced British Standard (ABS) over the next decade, a new Baccalaureate-style qualification framework for 16-19 year-olds.

The government is inviting views from teachers, parents, young people and employers on the development of the ABS which, it states, will: "Bring together technical and academic routes into a single framework, taking the best of A levels and T Level". The new qualification aims to increase the number of taught hours for all students, and it will require students to study maths and English to the age of 18. In addition, the goal is that the ABS will allow a greater breadth of study, increasing the average number of subjects students take post-16, with students able to choose a combination of bigger and smaller subjects, called 'majors' and 'minors'.

Of course, this is a long-term plan, and the outcome of the next general election may well affect whether it progresses at all. However, I would encourage parents and students to respond to the consultation via the link below.

[Respond to the DfE Consultation](#)

Spring Term

The Spring Term starts on Monday 8 January 2024.

Finally

My warmest wishes to the entire School community for a relaxing Christmas break – whether you celebrate the season as a Christian, or simply enjoy the opportunity to take a few days off with family and friends. I leave you with Snow by Gillian Clarke, the National Poet of Wales from 2008-16, who was awarded the Queen's Gold Medal for Poetry in 2010.

Snow

By Gillian Clarke

The dreamed Christmas,
flakes shaken out of silences so far
and starry we can't sleep for listening
for papery rustles out there in the night
and wake to find our ceiling glimmering,
the day a psalter of light.

So we're out over the snow fields

before it's all seen off with a salt-lick
of Atlantic air, then home at dusk, snow-blind
from following chains of fox and crow and hare,
to a fire, a roasting bird, a ringing phone,
and voices wondering where we are.

A day foretold by images
of glassy pond, peasant and snowy roof
over the holy child iconed in gold.
Or women shawled against the goosedown air
pleading with soldiers at a shifting frontier
in the snows of television,
while in the secret dark a fresh snow falls
filling our tracks with stars.

M. S. Morgan

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