



# Balfour Newsletter Easter 2015

Dear Parents/Carers

Welcome to the Spring edition of the Balfour Newsletter!

## **Big Red Fundraising Day**

I would like to start by saying a massive thank you to all members of the school community who supported in any way our Big Red Fundraising Day. As you will learn elsewhere in this newsletter, we raised over £5,200.00 which is a fabulous effort and is a key indication of the care and concern for others which is such an integral part of the Sir Graham Balfour ethos.

Please be assured the money will be sent directly to each of three very good causes - Comic Relief, Katherine House and Stafford Young Carers - and will benefit many vulnerable and needy people.

Well done to all!!!

## **Sir Graham Balfour Academy application**

Our application to convert to a Multi-Academy Trust with Sir Graham Balfour as the sole initial member has now been submitted to the Department for Education. Due to the proximity of the impending General Election, the timescales for approval have been lengthened, so the process may well take a little longer than we first anticipated. Please be assured, I will endeavour to keep everyone informed of progress.

## **School Mock Election**

You will no doubt be aware that on Thursday May 7th 2015, a General Election will be held in Britain. In terms of Citizenship Education, this is too good an opportunity for us to miss! Consequently, we intend to replicate the experience for our students by holding a Mock General Election to coincide with the actual event.

Our aims are to -

- \* Ensure the students understand fully the democratic process as it exists in Great Britain.
- \* Ensure the students are aware of significant contemporary political issues.
- \* Educate them about the policies of the three main political parties.
- \* Combat the political apathy which exists amongst many of our young people.

There will be several age-related constituencies. Each party will field candidates in all constituencies. Debates will be held on a range of relevant issues e.g. education, the environment, the economy, foreign policy etc.

Students will be encouraged to campaign actively e.g. by producing posters, holding rallies, issuing leaflets etc. During the campaign, we will permit the wearing of rosettes, party insignia and anything appropriate or reasonable.

On Election Day itself, all students will be allowed to vote. Candidates will attend the count and results will be declared later that day.

We hope the initiative will enthuse and engage all students and encourage many to take an active role in the political process.

May the best candidates win!

Mr Dave Wright

(Headteacher)

# SGB Panto

The SGB Panto was a great success. As well as the evening performances, the show was also performed to over 360 of our Primary School children during the school day. Three of the schools were transported by Yellow Buses, kindly funded by Bristol Street Motors, Pell Frischmann and SGB PTA. Prizes for the raffles on both nights were donated by local businesses and staff.

The Cambodia 2016 team organised 'Tuk Tuk Refreshments' with all profits to their impending trip in 2016.

Thank you to everyone who supported the production especially the staff and students for volunteering their time and talent! In total over £750.00 was raised, a large percentage of the funds will be used to benefit SGB Cambodia.



# Tristram Hunt Visit

Students at Sir Graham Balfour School experienced a taste of Parliament when Tristram Hunt, Labour Party politician and Shadow Education Minister visited the school to meet members of their School Parliament. Students took the opportunity to ask Mr Hunt about his role in The Houses of Parliament and his views on various aspects of education, including the changes to the school curriculum. They were also able to explain the importance of their roles in representing Sir Graham Balfour Student Voice and the fundraising events the committee supports, including funding their school in Cambodia.

Mr Hunt was very interested to hear about the activities the Parliament Students have planned in the forthcoming months and praised their enthusiasm and support to others within their school community. (Pictured; Member of Parliament, Mr Tristram Hunt, Shadow Secretary for Education and members of SGB School Parliament Committee)



# The Big Red Fundraiser

Yet again, our school has absolutely excelled itself in our recent fundraising event, The Big Red Fundraiser! A combination of our annual whole school fundraiser and Comic Relief activities three very worthwhile charities will benefit from the dedication and generosity of our staff, students and community. The three beneficiaries are Comic Relief (40%), Katharine House Hospice (40%) and Staffordshire Young Carers-CASS (20%).

In total, we raised an amazing

# £5223.76!

And here is how we did it:

## Spinathon

Organised by Miss Poole, the SGB Spinathon was officially opened at 8.00 am by The Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor Ray Sutherland. 15 Spinning Bikes, kindly loaned by MOD Stafford, ran continuously for 8 hours with staff, students and pupils from Parkside and Tillington Primary Schools taking turns to fill the sponsored 15 minute allocated slots.



The atmosphere throughout the day was fantastic. Despite each participant being asked to raise a minimum of £2.00 sponsorship per slot, the amount of money collected throughout the day was mammoth.



# Human Hungry Hippos!

Our 4 Houses went 'head to head' literally, competing to be the winning team. Chetwynd, Sandon, Tixall and Weston, the competition between the 4 House Heads and their teams was immense. Students were given the opportunity to pay 20p to watch this very amusing human version of the popular board game, with staff being propelled on skate boards to gather as many balls as possible and score points.



Despite some underhand behaviour from some of the competitors, the very worthy winners were Tixall team; Miss Poole Miss England, Miss Brinsdon and Miss McConnachie (pictured left).



# The Balfour Bake Off

Thank you to all of the staff who volunteered their time and ingredients to take part in the Great Balfour Bake Off. Mrs Beck, Mrs Collins-Dainty and Shane Horton were the judges of the event and were left with the daunting task of sampling all 14 entries! The winner supreme was Miss Deering with her Lemon Baked Cheesecake and Mr Trenbirth's Chocolate Button Cake was awarded Runner Up! After the competition all of the cakes were cut up and sold to staff and students. The entire event raising an amazing £83.55!







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# Cake Raffle

Thank you to Mrs McKeen who very kindly made and decorated the Red Nose Cake for the Cake Raffle.

Other activities included:

- Sale of Red Noses
- Non Uniform Day
- Mr Murphy's Pork Products Sale
- Parliament Cake Sales.
- Student Sponsored Silence



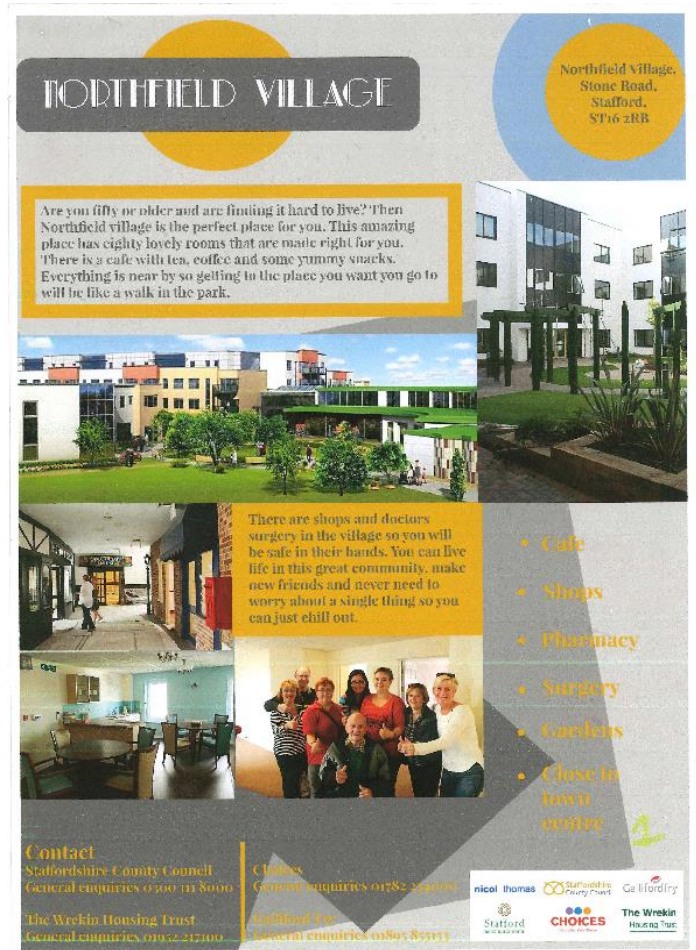
Well done and thank you to  
everyone involved!

# Northfield Village Competition

Well done to Max Rolph, Amie Timmis and Katie Brigham who were the winners of the poster competition we asked O8L/Mc2 to complete during October half term. They were each asked to design and produce a poster promoting Northfield Village.

The three worthy winners visited the development to receive their prizes, each receiving a book token.

(Pictured right - 1<sup>st</sup> Prize Entry Max Rolph)



# Limewood Grand Opening

On Friday 16<sup>th</sup> January we were invited to attend the Grand Opening of Limewood Dementia Care Home, with a selection of students and members of Vocal Elite. The choir performed a number of songs to the visitors on arrival and our students also sang some solo performances which were very well received by the residents and dignitaries. The students were an absolute credit to the school.





# World Book Day

WORLD  
BOOK  
DAY  
5 MARCH 2015

Sir Graham Balfour held an Inter House Book Quiz on World Book Day. The quiz was hosted by Mr Gilroy who did an excellent job as quiz master. As usual this was supported by many students who came to cheer their teams on.

The winning team was Chetwynd! Well done to all involved!

# Carnegie Book Award 2015

Members of our "Starbooks Café" Reading Club are currently shadowing the CILIP Carnegie Award and have the enjoyable task of reading the 8 shortlisted books and deciding which one they feel should win the Medal.

The CILIP Carnegie Medal is one of the UK's oldest and most prestigious children's book awards and is awarded by children's librarians for an outstanding book for children and young people.

The books they have been reading are...

The ultimate Winners' announcement will be made on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> June.

(Pictured below; The group enjoying one of their after school meetings).



# Duke of Edinburgh

Congratulations to Anya Elliman, Matt Porter and Cara Hawkins for completing their Silver Award.

Well done also to the Bronze candidates who have recently finished their award: Amber Brigham, Matthew Higgs, Megan Lawrence, Eve Meara, Georgia Proctor and Eirlys Walker.

(Pictured; some of the candidates with their well-deserved certificates)



# Sainsbury's Bag Pack Cheque Presentation

Following our annual supermarket bag pack in aid of Katharine House Hospice, on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> December I am pleased to announce we raised £595.67!

Thank you to everyone who took part and also to Sainsburys for agreeing to the collection taking place.

On Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> January we revisited Sainsbury's to present the cheque to Hannah Dennis from Katharine House Hospice.



(Pictured: Hannah Dennis, Keeley Moore, Eleanor Barlow and Abigail Jones and Sarah Jackson (Sainsbury's))

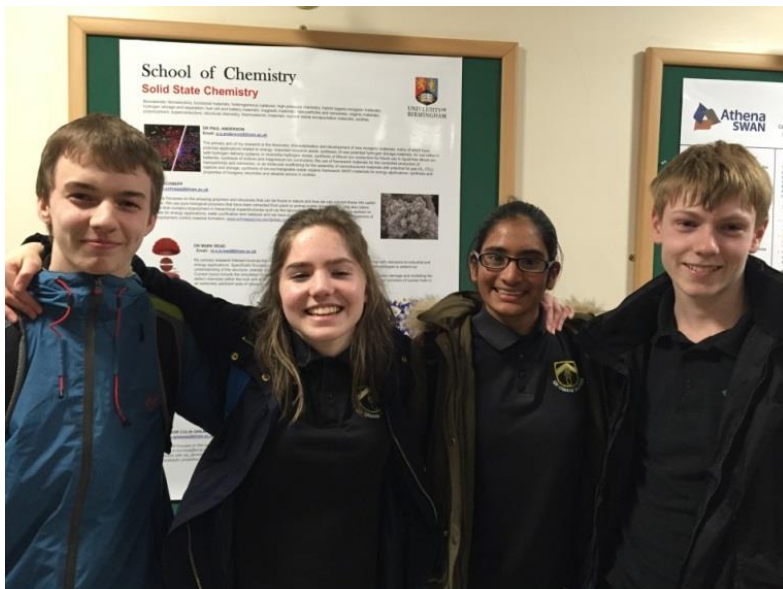


# Chemistry Students Excel in Royal Society Quiz

A team of Chemistry students from Sir Graham Balfour School participated in this year's West Midlands Royal Society of Chemistry Quiz .

In the first round they triumphed against Landau Forte Academy, Tamworth and in the semi-finals excelled against Newport Girls' School. They went on to compete in the finals on Tuesday 3rd March at Birmingham University where they were the only comprehensive school out of the 8 schools represented, which included Rugby School and King Edward VI Camp Hill School for Boys, Birmingham, the reigning champions.

In a nail-biting first round against Malvern College, the scores were close throughout. In the penultimate round, Balfour were only one point behind. In the final task, they gained the point back, leading to a draw. Unfortunately the team lost in a sudden death tie break.



Many thanks to Mrs O'Dell for entering and supporting the students, they thoroughly enjoyed the whole competition and held their own against elite schools. As finalists they all receive a certificate and a book token.

The team consisted of Kyle Chapman, Cara Hawkins, Jonty McMichael and Henna Patel.

# Amy Makes a Splash!

SGB was delighted to see one of our students Amy Grant, recently featured in the local press:

Staffordshire Newsletter - Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> March

Amy Grant is hoping to follow in the slipstream of fellow Staffordshire swimming star and team-mate Adam Peaty after qualifying for the British Swimming Championships next month.

The 15-year-old Sir Graham Balfour pupil will take part in the 50 and 100-metre freestyle at the Aquatics Centre in London (of 2012 Olympic fame) from April 14-18, with the events doubling as British selection trials for the World Championships in Kazan, Russia as well as the European Games in Baku, Azerbaijan and European Youth Olympic Festival in Tbilisi, Georgia.

Amy said: "To have qualified to swim at the British championships is very significant as it has proved to me that all the hard training is working.

"I think it will be a great experience to race in such a high level meet with Britain's best swimmers and I am really looking forward to racing in the Olympic pool.

Amy, a former Stafford Apex member, has now switched to the City of Derby team, who also nurtured the talent of double gold-winning Commonwealth Games champion Peaty, under the watchful eye of former Olympian Mel Marshall.

"I have the same coach as Adam, and training in the same squad has given me more confidence, and I believe I can progress," said the Stafford-born teenager.

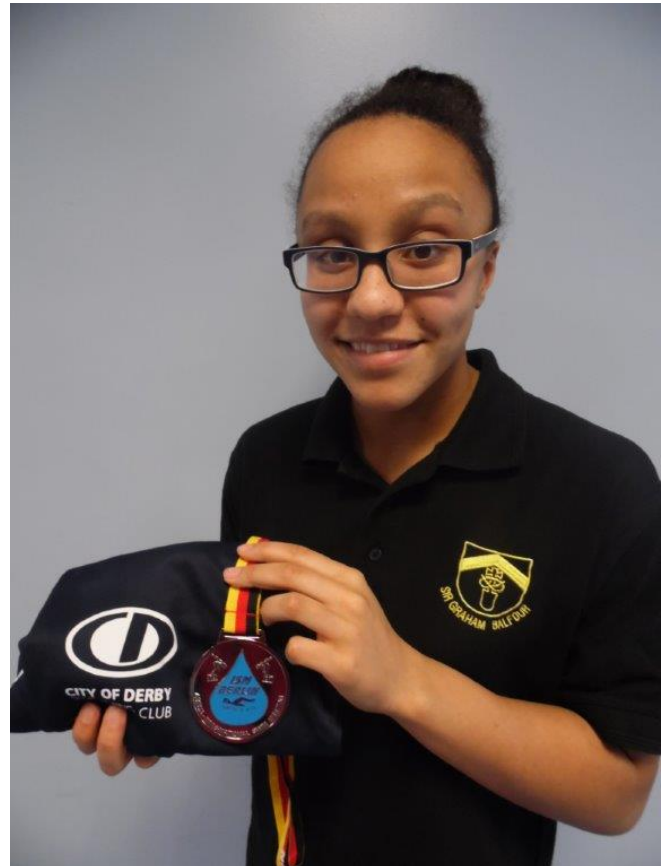
"Our team motivates each other during training and at competitions, which makes us a close unit.

"This is important as without training, no one would be able to compete at such a high level.

"Even when the training is hard, I keep in mind what I want to achieve and this drives me to success."

So far this season, Amy has won championship titles in Staffordshire and Derbyshire, as well as claiming silver in the Junior 100 Freestyle at the International Swim Meet in Berlin earlier this month.

She has also attended a week's training camp in Malta to improve her fitness, and credits this with her becoming Midlands Junior Short Course champion at 50 and 100m freestyle.





She now hopes to compete at the British Summer Nationals in July, which could potentially earn her a place on one of the British Swimming talent programmes.

The ex-Tillington Manor Primary pupil has also targeted qualifying for and competing at the National Short Course Championships - a new competition for the upcoming season.

Her mid-term goal is to compete for the GB Junior Team at international meets.

"My increase in training over the last 12 months has given me vital core fitness and the chance to expand my skills," she said.

"But most importantly it has enabled me to enhance my time management.

"Organising study for a full school timetable and my training commitments has allowed me to progress from Midlands to national level."



## Young People's Social Care Conference 2015

On Friday 13<sup>th</sup> March Miss Deaville and Miss March took Year 10 and Year 11 Health and Social care students to the 'Young People's Social Care Conference' held at The New Vic Theatre in Newcastle-under-Lyme.

It provided a wide variety of stimulus for our students with workshops themed around Autism, as well as Dignity Within the Workplace.



Students were offered lots of advice for a possible career in Health & Social Care. The day also provided students with support in preparation for their coursework and any work experience they wish to pursue in the future. The conference was a fun, interactive, educational and inspirational visit for everyone involved.



# Rock, Paper, Scissors

On Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> January Sir Graham Balfour hosted a charity fundraising event in aid of children orphaned by Ebola.

Organised by former student and fundraiser for the charity Street Child, Jane Bewick Green, students paid a £1.00 to compete in a mass Rock, Paper, Scissor competition in the school hall. The event raised £233.45 with the overall winner Ruby Scott, receiving a £20.00 gift voucher.



# House of Bread

Thank you to everyone who donated towards the House of Bread collection with their surplus Christmas 'goodies'. Head Boy Toby Hollinshead presented our huge box of supplies to Mr William Morris founder of the charity.





# There is No Planet B Exhibition

Congratulations! Sir Graham Balfour was awarded a Green Star Award at the recent 'There is No Planet B!' exhibition held in St Chads Church in the centre of Stafford.

'There is No Planet B!' is an environmental arts festival which has grown into an inspirational annual event, attracting hundreds of visitors and a vast array of exhibits and performers.

It is organised by an eclectic mix of groups including Sustainability Matters, Transition Town Stafford, Stafford Borough Council, the Stafford Borough Eco-Schools Network, St Chad's Church, Konnektiv Drama and Theatre Arts, The Fairies and Quest Day Opportunities.

The event, which takes place annually during February Half Term encourages people of all ages and abilities to exhibit artwork of any form that inspires concern and respect for our planet.



This includes paintings, collages, models, sculptures, photographs, mobiles and ceramics, posters and poems showing the world how much we should care for our precious, one and only, Planet A.

So, well done to C2 - Year 7 students for their Eco model and also to our SGB Drama students who performed a thought provoking play at the closing ceremony.

A cheque for £50.00 and certificate was presented to our students and Mrs Thompson at the ceremony.

# S8 - Winners of The Sandon Bake Off Final!

During February and March Sandon ran an Inter-House Bake Off Competition.

In the first week students had to design a cake which they then pitched to other members of the House Group. The House Group then chose the cake to take forward. In S8 Kayleigh Farmer's Maltesers cake was a choc-off, getting the most votes with Ava Bell's Lemon Drizzle cake coming a close second. Each week one House Group was pitted against another with the winner going forward to the next round.



On Friday 27.3.15, S1 (Miss Austin's House Group) and S8 (Miss Massey's House Group) went head to head in the final. S1 made a scrummy Chocolate cake, S8 the famous Malteser cake alongside a new entry of the green icing Haribo cake made by Ava Bell. Miss Latimer was the impartial judge and voted for the bright colours of Ava's cake as the winner. Well done Ava!

Kayeigh Farmer - When I found out about the bake off, the first thing I thought was what cake am I going to make? I sat and thought what would be my dream cake, I just thought chocolate cake, chocolate spread and Maltesers, YUM!

When the date came about I was really nervous. I didn't want to let the whole House Group down. What if nobody liked my cake?

When it entered the teacher's mouths I was so nervous. Then the news came I had won I was over the moon, I couldn't believe it!

As the bake offs kept coming we kept winning, then the final came I had butterfly's in my tummy. S8 had won the final, we had done it!

Ava Bell - For the Sandon Bake Off, I made an Oreo cake (2 chocolate sponges with Oreo cream and Oreo crunch in the middle and the cake had Oreos on the top).

For the final I made a Haribo Cake, it was a vanilla sponge with teal butter cream and Haribos on the top and sides. S8 won all 3 bake offs!





# An Interview with Mark Cueto

## Rugby Legend

As part of our BBC School Report, members of the U15 Sir Graham Balfour Rugby Team travelled to Carrington, the training ground of The Aviva Rugby Union Premiership giants Sale Sharks. Mr Rowley contacted the club with the hope of arranging a short telephone interview with a member of the coaching staff or, rather optimistically, a player. However, to the delight of Mr Rowley and our Year 10 boys, Sale Sharks accommodated us for the day and allowed us to watch a training session, have a tour of the facilities and finish the day by interviewing rugby legend Mark Cueto.

Mark made his debut for Sale in 2001 versus Bristol, and has since gone on to represent England over 50 times as well as representing the British and Irish Lions in 2005. Recently, Mark has announced his intentions to retire at the end of the current season, which will see him end his illustrious career as the all-time top Premiership Try Scorer, so it's no surprise that we were all excited to have bagged an interview with a true rugby legend.

Within the interview, Mark told us about his beginnings as a player, how he first got into sport, and his thoughts on the current England squad's chances in the upcoming Rugby World Cup, his biggest coaching influence, plus his own personal career highlights.

Video footage of the interview can be found on our BBC School Report Webpage.



Joe, Matt, Mark Cueto, Lucas and Harry

# SGB Careers Fair

Our Year 9 and 6<sup>th</sup> Form Careers Fair took place on Futures Day 2 on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> February.

Over 30 organisations attended SGB to speak to our students and encourage them to think about their future career choices. Feedback on the event was excellent and year on year we continue to expand on the number of stands exhibiting.



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## Stafford Railway Building Society Award

Each year we nominate a student to receive the Stafford Railway Building Society Award for 'Outstanding work at school'. This year however, upon asking our staff to recommend a student who deserved this accolade we were left with a dilemma!

One of our Physics teachers, Miss Hussein nominated 3 students who were all outstanding and impossible to differentiate between them academically. Upon contacting Emma Parker at SRBS to ask if we could split the prize she was more than obliging. Our three exceptional students who each received a £10.00 cheque and certificate are; Lucas Cooper, Alexander Hall and Jordan McMennigall. The Science department also received a £20.00 cheque prize. Thank you to Stafford Railway Building Society and Emma Parker who visited the school to present the prizes to our students, pictured below left.





# Rotary Young Artist



Thank you to Archie Bennett, Sarah Horton, Oliver Lang and Katie Brigham for entering the Rotary Young Artist Competition.

All of the entrants were commended for their pieces of work including Sarah Horton who received a Highly Commended Award.

# A Message from Mrs Beck

## Mid-term assessments and Pre-public examinations (formerly known as 'mock exams')

We have been carefully reviewing our practice and procedures with regard to testing and assessment within school and it has thrown up a concern with regard to the ways in which some students approach 'mock' exams. The exams are a vital part in showing both students and staff how well they would do in a real exam; they highlight to a teacher what gaps may need to be filled or where misunderstandings need straightening out. Far more significantly, though, they are there to help students prepare for real examinations, which, as you will be aware, are now mostly terminal - ie the entire course is now tested at the end of two years, in one or two exam papers. A good number of our students take these very important tests seriously, preparing well for them, and arriving to them with the required knowledge, equipment etc. Worryingly, some students admit to spending little or no time preparing for them, giving then a much skewed and possibly erroneous picture of how the precious little time remaining in lessons should be spent. In order to encourage all students to take these vital tests more seriously in future, we plan to do the following:

- Re-name 'mock' exams: 'Mid-term assessments' in Key Stage Three and 'Pre-public examinations' in Key Stages Four and Five.
- The results of these examinations will not be given out in class - they will be collated and presented on a report which will be distributed to students and to their parents.

- The distribution to students will take place in a formal setting in the Hall; parents will receive the report via the Gateway, as normal.
- Any student whom we feel has failed to approach their examination with the required preparation will be required to attend compulsory revision sessions after school.

I am sure that you will join us in encouraging your child to approach all tests and assessments with the proper rigour and seriousness which they deserve.

### **Year 9 Options**

All Options sheets were handed in on time, and I am now in the process of analysing student choices. The final options' list will be displayed shortly after Easter, and students and parents will both be informed if second choices will need to be considered. Many thanks for your patience whilst this time-consuming task is undertaken.

### **And finally from me...**

This has been another busy but highly enjoyable term. As part of our Faculty Review process, I have had the opportunity to witness dozens of lessons, watching teachers teach and students learn. I am very proud of the immense commitment shown by our teachers and the enthusiastic engagement of our students in their learning. A visiting Headteacher from another Staffordshire school told me recently that it was a privilege to see a school so clearly hard at work, with students and teachers working so well and positively together. I very proudly agreed with him.

I wish you a happy and relaxing Easter holiday.

**Have a fabulous Easter break  
and we look forward  
to welcoming students  
back in school on  
Monday 20th April 2015!**