



Notre Dame School
& St Boniface's College

Summer Newsletter



July 2025

Welcome to the final newsletter of academic year 2024-25. It has been an eventful year, and as this newsletter shows, full of exciting opportunities for all of our students. Almost everything you read here are opportunities created for our students by our staff, who give their time freely and generously, going above and beyond, through their commitment to our mission to build the best schools for the young to thrive in as they grow. My thanks go to them and to all who gathered these stories and images to share with you. All of us in the Plymouth CAST secondary schools send you our thanks and good wishes for the summer break. We look forward to welcoming all of our students back in September.

Mr M Antram
Executive Headteacher



As we approach the end of the academic year there is much to reflect on and be grateful for. This newsletter gives you a flavour of some of the most recent events and achievements which our students have been involved in. It is remarkable to look back at the range and variety of events and opportunities our students have participated in this year.

In September we moved from Heads of House to Heads of Year, a move which has had many benefits for students and I would like to express my gratitude to all of you for the support you offer our year leaders. We are very fortunate to have such a strong team of staff supporting the pastoral needs of our students.

Thank you for entrusting Notre Dame with the education of your child. We very much look forward to welcoming you all into school for many more events in the new academic year.

I am sure that you will also wish to join me in thanking the staff who have organised and led such a wide range of opportunities throughout the course of the past year.

I hope that you and your family have an enjoyable and safe summer and I look forward to welcoming you all back in September.

Mrs A Morgan

Head of School, Notre Dame



As we approach the end of another academic year, I want to take a moment to reflect on the year we've just completed—and to look ahead with excitement to what's next. This newsletter brilliantly captures so many wonderful achievements of our students.

The 2024-2025 academic year was one of growth, resilience, and remarkable achievement. From the enthusiastic return to School in September, to our recent year 11 prom and year 7 awards evening, our students have shown heart, purpose, and character in all they've done. Whether it was through academic milestones, athletic competition, or service to others, our 'Bonnies boys' have consistently demonstrated the values we hold most dear: Do good with Honour, integrity and service.

As we enter the summer months, I encourage our students and families to take this time to rest, explore, and reconnect. Looking ahead to the return in September, we are already looking forward to more opportunities that our students will be offered, both academically and in extra curricular opportunities.

Thank you for being such an integral part of the St Boniface's community. Your support, partnership, and trust make all we do possible. I wish you a summer full of sunshine and rest.

Mr D Clift

Head of School, St. Boniface's College



Library Services

This term a group of keen young readers attended the Plymouth School Library Service Headquarters at Burrington Way, accompanied by Mrs Bonard, Mrs Hudson and our two wonderful library volunteers.

They had the enviable task of selecting a wide range of new books to update and restock our school library.

We can't wait to get the new books registered on our system and loaned out to students. It will be exciting to see which books are most popular!



Asdan Work Experience at Notre Dame

This term a group of Year 7, 8 and 9 girls were introduced to the world of work when they were tasked with jobs in Sister Js canteen at Notre Dame. This was part of their Life Skills course which this term had an employability focus.

One of the big takeaways from one of our students was “I have learned what goes on in the canteen when we are in lessons.”

Thank you to Kerry Harper and her team!



The Carnegie Awards

A group of our Year 8 students represented Notre Dame at the annual inter-school Carnegie shadowing conference at Heles School. The day was, as always very upbeat with all of the students from different schools supporting and cheering each other on. The book allocated to Notre Dame was 'The Final Year' by Matt Goodfellow and the students, along with Mrs Jerrett read the book, prepared a drama-filled presentation and rehearsed tirelessly before sharing on the day. The other shortlisted Carnegie books were presented by the other contributing schools and the students voted for their favourite. We were thrilled, our students were placed third!

West Country author Chris Vick, who has written many teen books including 'Girl, Boy, Sea', 'Shadow Creatures' and 'The Last Whale' then gave a very interesting talk on what makes a good writer and writing techniques. The students had the opportunity to talk to Chris and get their books signed. The live announcement of the national Carnegie winners was also screened for everyone and an inter-school book quiz rounded off the fun-packed day. A huge thank you to Mrs Hardman and Miss Wintermoor from ND and Mrs Wolf from Heles School for organising.



Goodbye and Thank You, Class of 2025!

As you turn the page to a new chapter, we just want to say thank you. Thank you for your energy, your passion, your resilience, and the unforgettable memories you've created at our schools. In whatever you choose to do, may you know the love of God and the hope that love brings. May you remember that in every dark tunnel there is always light at the end of it.

You've left your mark so positively: in the classrooms, on the fields, in the halls, and in our hearts. We're incredibly proud of everything you've accomplished and even more excited for all that lies ahead.

Go chase your dreams, make your impact, and never forget, you'll always have a home with us!



Science

It's been a busy and exciting term in the Science Department! Students have been exploring the school ponds, learning to identify wildlife and use sampling techniques as part of their investigative reports. The Year 7s from Notre Dame also enjoyed a hands-on pond dipping session during the Buckland retreat, discovering fascinating creatures such as newts and nymphs under the guidance of the science team.

We were thrilled to host guest speakers from the Plymouth University Electron Microscope Centre, who gave students a glimpse into the world of high-tech science and microscopic discoveries. In addition, some of our students had the fantastic opportunity to attend guest lectures at the university, gaining insights into cutting-edge scientific research and life in higher education.

Meanwhile, students have been busy with their end-of-year projects — KS3 explored the art and science behind creating the perfect bath bomb in chemistry, while physicists investigated the physics of pendulums, linking their findings to real-world examples like the iconic movement of Big Ben.

It's been a fantastic term full of curiosity, discovery, and scientific fun!



Pinhole Cameras

Students in Miss Crook's Physics Year 7 physics classes were recently introduced to the idea of pinhole cameras in their topic on 'light'.

Some superstar scientists chose to make their own pinhole cameras at home during the half term as part of some optional home learning. We had some incredible designs, and some even worked so well that we were able to see the blue sky and clouds upside-down on the screens of their cameras!

Well done to Goelle, Macy-Grace, Isla and Zoe for their incredible commitment to their learning.



KS3 Students Reach for the Stars!

This term, some of our KS3 Physics classes have finished their unit on space with an exciting hands-on project: building their very own models of the Solar System! Working in teams, each student took on a specialist role within their team: Project Manager, Graphic Designer, Builder, Materials Manager, or Researcher.

Before getting started, students explored and evaluated a range of existing Solar System models, considering their strengths and limitations. They then used this knowledge to carefully plan their own designs, selecting appropriate materials and sketching ideas. Once plans were approved, teams got creative during a three-lesson build phase, constructing impressive models using everything from plasticine and styrofoam balls, to aluminium foil and pipe cleaners.

The results were out of this world! From accurately scaled planetary orbits to beautifully detailed planets, each model showed creativity, teamwork, and scientific thinking. Students demonstrated excellent collaboration, communication, and problem-solving skills throughout the project.

To finish the unit, students respectfully evaluated each other's models, giving constructive feedback and reflecting honestly on the strengths and limitations of their own designs, just like real scientists. They learned that while no model is perfect, every design helps us understand space just a little bit better.

Well done to all involved - we are so proud of your stellar efforts!



Glenn Harper from Plymouth electron microscopy centre came in to talk to the boys at St Boniface's College about his work and career path that has led him to the university of Plymouth. He also shared his perspectives about being a man in today's society.

'St Boniface's College - taking boys seriously, preparing them for a successful adult life.'



PE at Notre Dame

Over two days twelve Notre Dame Sports Leaders helped the Plymouth School Sports Partnership deliver the annual Primary School Athletics Championship at Folston Park Athletics Track in Plymouth.

Over two days, three school categories, thirty-eight schools, nine hundred and twelve athletes, one hundred and seventy one races & sixteen field events, the Notre Dame students ran, measured & performed as time keepers to help the two days run smoothly & effectively.

The Notre Dame leaders were highly praised by both the partnership and the attending primary schools.



On Friday, 20th June twenty-three students from across Year 9 & Year 10 took part in completing the National Governing Body Award in cricket.

This Officiating Award was aimed at gifted and talented sports leaders aged 14+ (Year 9 & above) who have shown high quality leadership skills and were ready to take their first step into leading and coaching cricket. The award covered all the fundamental skills and techniques that are involved in playing cricket including batting, bowling, fielding & wicket keeping. Whilst on the course the young people applied the principles of leading/coaching through practical application and theoretical understanding of key areas of the game.



Tag rugby officiating

We are incredibly proud of three of our students — Ava G, Lily M, and Holly P — who recently helped lead and officiate the PSSP Primary Tag Rugby Festival. As part of their involvement, they earned the RFU Tag Rugby Officiating Award, a fantastic achievement that recognises their skills, leadership, and commitment to the sport.

The girls represented Notre Dame with maturity and enthusiasm, playing a key role in ensuring the festival was a fun, inclusive, and successful event for all the primary school participants. Well done, girls!



Modern Foreign Languages

Japanese Club at St Boniface's College

The Languages Department and the Japanese Club at St Boniface's College have worked very hard on the topic of Samurais and the Bushido code of honour to design their own crest.

The students then made these crests into badges or keyrings using polymer clay. They are now wearing these crests with pride. It was great fun making them!

Very much like Saint Boniface, the Samurai Code emphasises virtues like righteousness, loyalty, honour, respect, honesty, courage, and consistency.

We are looking forward to presenting you with another adventure when the time comes.



Notre Dame Spanish Exchange

The Spanish exchange has been a huge success. Our students have explored Valencia's city centre, tried the traditional horchata and fartons, enjoyed walking along the Turia river, played in the Gulliver park, discovered the City of Arts and Sciences, learned how to cook a real paella (no chorizo!) in the area where it was invented, sailed across l'Albufera, wandered along the Port of Valencia, swam at Las Arenas Beach, watched a film in Spanish and enjoyed the pool at Guadalaviar School. They have also tried real homemade Spanish food and visited many more places with their host families. We have been praised for our girls' outstanding behaviour and manners. We hope this is the beginning of many lifelong friendships. ¡Muy bien, chicas! Sois geniales.



Kaleidoscope at Notre Dame

This year, our Kaleidoscope Bereavement Support Group has supported over 70 students navigating the challenges of anticipatory loss or the loss of someone special. Through a combination of 1:1 and group sessions, we offer a safe space for students to explore their grief and find ways to learn to live with their loss.

This term, students have been making personal journals—spaces to record memories, reflect on their journey, and find hope in the process of healing. Working with St Luke's Hospice has further enriched the support we provide, offering an extended network of care and understanding.

We continue to cherish our time in the Kaleidoscope Garden – 'Little Oasis', where nature offers comfort and calm. The benefits of spending time in this peaceful space have been felt by all, reinforcing the positive impact nature has on our mental wellbeing.

We are incredibly proud of our Kaleidoscope students, who have shown remarkable strength, honesty and courage.



Notre Dame School Library Events

The Children's Book Award Ceremony

Notre Dame was very honoured to be selected to attend The Children's Book Award Ceremony in Birmingham on Saturday, 7th June. Two of our Year 9 'Book Review' readers Willow and Tomisin joined Mrs Jerrett to represent Notre Dame along with two pupils from Torpoint School and their teacher.

The Children's Book Award is the only national award voted for solely by children from start to finish. The book testing runs throughout the year and currently 18 of our students review books in the age 10-18 category, this leads to the selection of the Category Winners and Overall Winner.

Students from all over the country were invited to the annual Award Ceremony to meet the top ten authors and illustrators and present them with their prizes. This was the highlight of the year for both the students and the short-listed authors and illustrators.

Each top ten author and illustrator was thrilled to receive a hand-made portfolio with reviews, pictures and poems written by any student who has taken part in the top ten testing, chosen by the volunteer group coordinators.

Our Notre Dame students representing Plymouth, proudly presented the Older Reader Fiction portfolio to Sam Sedgman (author of *The Clockwork Conspiracy* and many other books). Each dining table had an author sitting with the students and the Plymouth table had Malcolm Duffy, who chatted to our students throughout. We were thrilled when he won the prize for older reader fiction. The girls met all of the authors and illustrators and had the opportunity to get their own books signed, decorated by illustrators and to purchase new books.

The students also received goody bags with books, bookmarks, a teddy and stationery, they even had time to visit the 5 story Waterstones in Birmingham. It was a fantastic experience and Tomisin and Willow were wonderful ambassadors for the school.

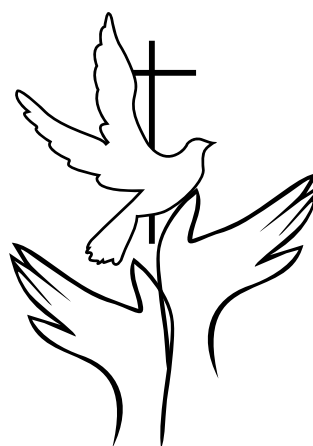


English at St Boniface's College

This term, our Year 7 students have been delving into important environmental issues through a range of non-fiction texts. As part of their learning, students have explored topics such as climate change, deforestation, and endangered species – with a particular focus on the threat of polar bear extinction.

Using what they've learned, students produced powerful newspaper reports about the environmental challenges facing polar bears; combining facts, persuasive techniques, and formal language to communicate the urgency of the issue.

This unit has helped students develop key skills in reading non-fiction, researching real-world topics, and writing for purpose and audience. Most importantly, it has encouraged thoughtful discussion about the impact of human actions on the natural world.



Year 5 English Taster Day

On Tuesday, 17th June, the English department at SBC welcomed Year 5 students from St Paul's and Keyham Barton into the school to take part in an English-themed taster day: 'A fishing net full of marine adventures'.

Activities included Norse Mythology story-telling, writing a Norse Code Alert and reporting on real-life whale and shark attacks. Led by a wonderfully encouraging and supportive team of Year 7s, the Year 5's embraced the day and had a 'whale' of a time, especially the chance to play Danish kickball on the field!



Geography

Year 10 Field Trip to Dawlish Warren

Year 10 Geographers from both Notre Dame and St Boniface's College enjoyed a sunny day at Dawlish Warren as part of their GCSE fieldwork. During the visit, students explored coastal landforms and examined the various sea defences in place, reinforcing their classroom learning. They also collected valuable primary data to investigate their enquiry question: "How effective are the groynes at Dawlish Warren?" It was a great opportunity for hands-on learning and applying geographical skills in a real-world setting.



Year 12 Field Trip to Totnes and Devonport

As part of their A-Level studies on the Changing Places unit, Year 12 Geographers took part in their second fieldwork day, visiting Totnes in the morning and Devonport in the afternoon.

In Totnes, students developed key fieldwork techniques to support their upcoming NEAs and explored the town's unique sense of place. The afternoon in Devonport included a guided tour of the Market Hall and Guildhall, as well as a climb up the Devonport Column—137 steps leading to spectacular views of the surrounding area.

These experiences helped students gain a deeper understanding of urban regeneration. The day concluded with an immersive film screening in the Market Hall's dome, offering a memorable and engaging end to their fieldwork.



7H Ask an Arctic Scientist

As part of their Fantastic Places unit, 7H have been learning about Svalbard and recently took part in the Polar Pen Pals scheme, run by the UK Polar Network. Each student wrote a question for a real Arctic scientist, and these were sent to Oli—a geologist currently working in Svalbard. The class was thrilled to receive detailed responses, giving insight into Oli's daily life, his scientific research, and even his encounters with polar bears! It was an inspiring and exciting way to connect classroom learning with real-world exploration.



Careers

Opportunity Plymouth Celebration Event

Fourteen of our Year 10 students visited the University of Plymouth as part of the Opportunity Plymouth programme. It concluded the weekly workshops they had been attending with University students.

During the sessions topics covered included; CV writing, interview skills and public speaking. The students all worked hard and contributed to the sessions, building up a great rapport with the university students and each other and growing in confidence throughout.

At the celebration, the students were given a guided tour of Plymouth University campus, found out about the opportunities and courses at Plymouth University and joined in workshops on dental hygiene, CPR and choking, as well as a visit to the marine lab with the wave machines. They were then presented with their well earned certificates and celebrated with cake!



University of Plymouth Trip

On Wednesday 2nd July, ten Year 10 girls, ten Year 10 boys, and the Year 12 A-level English Language class went to Plymouth University for a taster day of English lectures, seminars and creative writing workshops. We learnt about the evolution of American detective fiction, we studied the presentation of power in a short story with a twist (none of us will ever look at a scarecrow in the same way ever again), and we wrote blackout poetry. Finally, we finished with a tour of the campus, including accommodation buildings, the library, the robotics lab, and the experimental light art installation. It was brilliant to have the opportunity to look at literature in a challenging way, and learn from published writers.



Duke of Edinburgh Award

It has been a very busy term with DofE expeditions. We have seen Silver and Gold teams complete final expeditions in Exmoor and The Lake District.

We had two teams complete three days and two nights in Exmoor following their planned routes. The terrain was challenging in places with some steep hills on the coast path and navigating through wooded areas. The teams did an excellent job working well together and staying dry.

The Golds took on a bigger challenge and travelled to the Lake District for their four day/three night expedition. It was an amazing achievement which the students will have some fond memories. We have one final expedition coming up this term. The Year 9 students will be taking on the challenge of Bronze and completing a training weekend on Dartmoor.

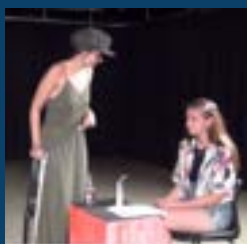


Drama & Dance

It has been a busy term in Drama and Dance. When the rest of school may be starting to wind down for summer, this is our department's time to shine!

Year 12 A-Level Drama Performances

Our wonderfully talented Y12 A-Level Drama students completed their first component performance this term. This performance was a reinterpretation of an extract from a text using the techniques and working methods of an influential theatre practitioner. The students worked incredibly hard preparing for these and really impressed us with their dedication and passion for the subject. The performances were outstanding and I am looking forward to seeing their final pieces next year.



Year 10 GCSE Dance Mock – Duo Performances

Our Year 10 Dance students have been perfecting and polishing their duo performances in preparation for their final performance exam early next year. The students were taught the challenging choreography in the Autumn Term and have since been rehearsing and adding their own stand out moments to the performance. The results have been brilliant and I look forward to seeing the final exam performances next year!



A Night of a Thousand Stars – Summer Show

Our summer show, A Night of a Thousand Stars, was an absolute success! The cast and crew were incredible and we were so proud to be able to share the high level of talent that we have at our schools. The students were committed and passionate about their performances and have worked their socks off over the past 6 months learning songs and choreography to make this a spectacular performance. This is the time of year where our whole school community pulls together to make this performance the best it can be and I would like to thank them all for their hard work and energy. We couldn't have done it without you! Roll on next year!



Notre Dame – Year 7 Retreats

In June our Year 7 students attended a residential retreat at Buckfast Abbey which was a wonderful experience filled with kindness, prayer, laughter and teamwork. The students had the opportunity to visit the Abbey itself and learn all about the history of the building. They took quiet time to worship in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel and showed great care for one another by praying for each other using their newly created prayer jars. Our students also had the opportunity to make friendship bracelets which symbolised their new bonds as Notre Dame girls. Throughout the retreat, everyone worked together as a team, building strong friendships and making happy memories.



Notre Dame Schools National Retreat

Notre Dame Schools across the UK share a unified vision rooted in Catholic values, inspired by the legacy of St. Julie and the Sisters of Notre Dame.

This year we were delighted to host the Notre Dame UK student retreat at Buckfast Abbey. Under the theme of Pilgrims of Hope we welcomed ND students from our sister schools in England and Scotland. We enjoyed worship at the Abbey, plus a full day pilgrimage walk which took us to The Shrine of St Cuthbert Mayne in Launceston, Plymouth Cathedral, Plymouth Hoe and the Barbican. Memories were made through joining each other in prayer, song, playing games and building new friendships. Ah! Qu'il est Bon, le Bon Dieu!



Staff news...

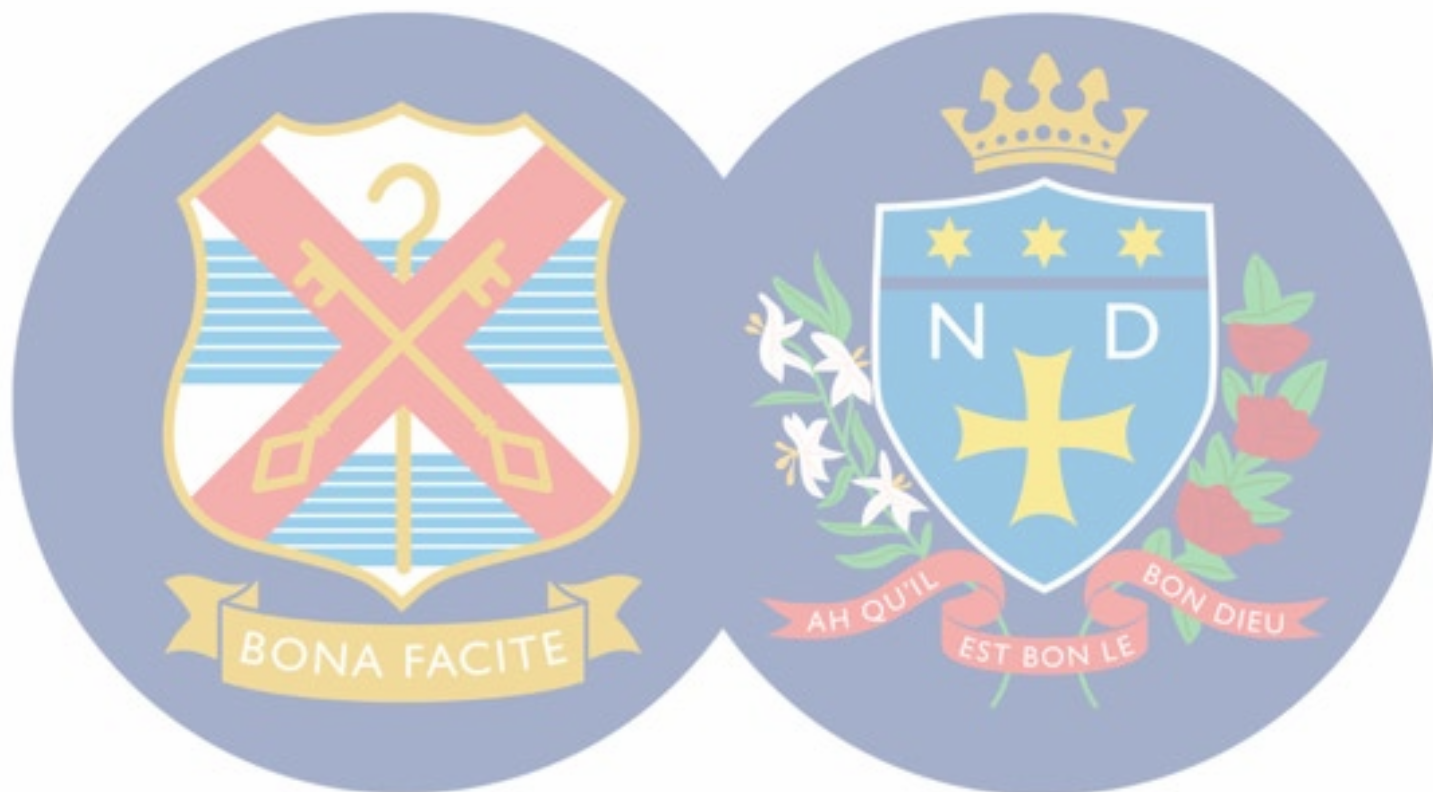
"I am very excited to say that I have received my third visa, which allows me to stay in the country for a further 2.5 years. I feel very lucky as this has been provided to me through my boyfriend, who is a British Citizen. It has not been easy to obtain and I feel I did the impossible in securing it. I look forward to continuing my journey toward permanent residency"

- Miss Cade



Prom Night





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