

THE SAINT



Weekly newsletter of ST BIRINUS SCHOOL

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www.st-birinus-school.org.uk

4 Oct 2018

Homework is important for all sorts of reasons. It was identified in last year's Parent and Carers' Survey as an area which we could make even more effective within school and we are determined that this should be the case.

It can sometimes feel for parents and carers that with Homework there is no "endpoint" or perfect place.

Is there too much or too little? Is it too easy or too difficult? Is it worthwhile and enriching, moving learning and understanding forward? What is important is that we are asking these questions; that parents and carers are part of the dialogue around teaching and learning, that they are looking at books and folders, talking to their sons about how they are getting on, seeing them work and being involved in their progress.

This seems pretty important to me. Learning is about getting the triangulation of student, school and home right and worthwhile — enriching Homework is an important part of this. A great many parents have commented on how useful the Show My Homework website is and we are continuing to refine and develop our use of it.

Homework will be one of the topics being discussed at our first Parent Champions Group (PCG) meeting of the year on Tuesday 6th November at 6pm in T11 — all parents and carers are very welcome.

Finally, I wrote about Open Evening last week and I have had many emails from prospective parents commenting on our students since then.

Here are a few quotes:

"I was amazed by the number of current students at the event willing to talk about their experiences at the school."

"I came away feeling that your team (staff and pupils) were truly authentic and cared about the 'whole person' in your coming intake."

"All the staff were friendly and enthusiastic, really taking the time to engage with my son. We were spoken to by many members of staff and really made to feel welcome."

"The boys you had representing you were fantastic. They were polite and so helpful."

"I can't remember the boy's name but he is in year 8. He was a really good guide and seemed to really love the school. I would really like it if you could thank him for me if you know who he is as we got separated when it got really busy so I couldn't thank him myself."

I am not surprised by any of these comments. I am very proud of our staff and students and they make every day in school such a positive experience.

John Marston, Headteacher

SCHOOL PHOTOGRAPHS



The deadline for placing your order for school photos for Years 7, 9 and 11 is 12 October 2018. Students should take their order to Student Services.

Any orders received after that date cannot be processed by the school.

Sporting Success Results 2018/19

Term 1: Week 4 w/b 24/9

Team	Sport	Competition	Opponents	Result
Under 13	Football	County Cup Rd 1	Marlborough	W 7 - 0
Under 16	Football	ESFA National Schools Cup Rd 1	St Bartholomew	W 4 - 0
Under 13	Rugby	Friendly	Wheatley Park	L
Under 15	Rugby	South Oxon Tournament	Various	5th



DIARY: 8 - 12 Oct 2018 **WEEK B** 15 - 19 Oct 2018 **WEEK A**

MON 8		MON 15	
TUE 9		TUE 16	
WED 10	Open morning	WED 17	Year 11 Parents' Evening
THU 11		THU 18	
FRI 12	Deadline for School Photo Orders Open morning	FRI 19	Term 1 Ends
Sun 14	British Basketball All Stars Championships Trip		



The Pearson Teaching Awards
Celebrating transformational teaching



Friday 5 October is World Teachers Day and to celebrate we would like to encourage you and your son to nominate a teacher or teacher assistant at St Birinus School who has had a real influence on your son. Please use this link for your nominations:

<https://www.teachingawards.com/thank-a-teacher/>

It will take five minutes and, I promise, you will make someone's day!

Many thanks, in anticipation

Rachael Warwick
Executive Headteacher



KEY DATES

Wednesday 17 October	Year 11 Parents' Evening
<i>Friday 19 October</i>	<i>Term 1 Ends</i>
<i>Monday 29 October</i>	<i>Term 2 Commences</i>
Wednesday 21 November	Didcot Sixth Form Open Evening 6.00pm-8.30pm
<i>Thursday 20 December</i>	<i>Term 2 Ends at 12.30pm</i>
Monday 7 January	Inset Day - school closed to students
<i>Tuesday 8 January</i>	<i>Term 3 Commences</i>
Wednesday 16 January	Year 8 Options Talk
Wednesday 23 January	Year 10 Parents' Evening
Wednesday 6 February	Year 8 Parents' Evening
<i>Friday 15 February</i>	<i>Term 3 Ends</i>
<i>Monday 25 February</i>	<i>Term 4 Commences</i>
Wednesday 27 February	Year 8 Options Evening
Wednesday 13 March	Year 7 Parents' Evening
Wednesday 27 March	Year 9 Parents' Evening
Wednesday 3 April	Year 11 Parents' Evening
<i>Friday 5 April</i>	<i>Term 4 Ends at 12.30pm</i>
Monday 22 April	Bank Holiday
<i>Tuesday 23 April</i>	<i>Term 5 Commences</i>
Monday 6 May	Bank Holiday
<i>Friday 24 May</i>	<i>Term 5 Ends</i>
<i>Monday 3 June</i>	<i>Term 6 Commences</i>
Monday 10 June	Inset Day - School Closed to Students except for Year 11 GCSE public examinations
<i>Wednesday 24 July</i>	<i>Term 6 Ends at 12.30pm</i>

Swanage Geography Trip

By Samir Deadman (Yr 11)

I went on a school trip to Swanage for Geography to gauge how successful the sea defences were and to study the rock formations like Old Harry. We walked **along the headland to see Old Harry and Old Harry's Wife which have been** formed by the gradual erosion of the rock over thousands of years. As well as looking at the stacks we also looked at some of the other formations like wave-cut platforms that are formed by the constant force of the waves against the base of the cliff.

After studying the cliff we walked down to the beach to look at the groynes. We split up into small groups to measure how high each groyne was above the sand — this was to see how much these groynes were preventing longshore drift along the coast. Coastal towns often use these to prevent the waves from carrying away the sand on the beach.

After completing this study on the groynes we moved on to the town to study the human geography of Swanage, including levels of litter and graffiti in the seaside town. These things are often affected by the increased levels of tourism **in these "honeypot towns" because of the number of people that the town and beach attracts.**



We had a great time on the trip and the weather was really sunny. We had a chance to get some fish and chips or any other snack once we arrived in Swanage. It was a really fun and educational trip.



St Birinus Open Evening!



On Wednesday 26th September St Birinus School hosted their annual Open Evening for prospective students and their families, and what a success it was! The school welcomed a huge number of people who were taking part in our activities and exploring the school site under the able direction of our wonderful school Ambassadors.

For many visitors the evening began with a talk from our Executive Headteacher Mrs Warwick, Headteacher, Mr Marston, Assistant

Headteacher, Mr Wood, and our two outstanding student speakers, Head Boy, Matthew Elkins and Year 8, Zack Hickton-Collins, who welcomed the families to the school and spoke passionately about their experiences here at St Birinus. We were delighted to hear Year 6 students describe **the talks as 'exciting', with their parents expressing their appreciation for** such a succinct, clear, and positive introduction to the school.



Following this, families began to explore the various departments, playing with soaring fire towers in Science, desperately trying to **escape the 'Crystal Maze' room in Maths and using similes and metaphors** to describe the delectable treats available to sample in English. That was just the beginning!

As students wove their way from Science, past the purpose-built Weightlifting Centre, they were able to test their football dribbling skills in PE and challenge each other to Table Tennis rallies. Then it was on to Food Technology for some homemade muffins. Hopefully, students got a chance to race the buggies across the dynamic dirt track in Technology and paint calligraphy in Mandarin before enjoying a complimentary curry or chilli pot from the Bistro.

This was not all — from the historical World War One Experience to the programming in the Computing Department, families were immersed in the culture of St Birinus School. We want to thank all our visitors and our current students for making the evening such an exciting experience for everyone. We look forward to seeing you during our Open Mornings and hopefully again in September to join our fantastic cohort here at St Birinus School.



Year 6 Toby Greenaway from South Moreton School enjoying the experiments in Science!

ST BIRINUS SCHOOL

ADVANCED SPORTS PROGRAMME

It takes dedication and commitment to be an elite sports performer and each week The Saint gives an insight into one of our students on the Advanced Sports Programme. This week, Simon Davies (Year 8) explains his weekly training routine for competing at County Level in Tennis.

Sunday

Once a month I train with the County Squad at White Horse Tennis Centre in Abingdon, from 10:00-3:00. The 5 best players from each age group in the county attend this training (I am in the 12U category). We started off with an intense warm-up involving many stretches and sprinting activities. Each group rotated around the courts every 45 minutes doing different drills or playing points. We also went outside to do fitness for an hour, involving running up hills. It was a tiring but fun day – I enjoyed being with all my tennis friends. After that I came home and had time to do a bit of homework and watch TV.

Monday

After school I came home and went on the Xbox to relax for a bit, though I didn't have much time because I had tennis training (5:00-6:30). I arrived a bit late because of the heavy traffic but it didn't make much of a difference because all I was missing was the warm-up, so while the others started playing, I did my own warm-up along the baseline. We played a lot of points and practised lots of drills.

Tuesday

I had tennis training at the same time as yesterday (5:00-6:30) during which I worked on getting topspin especially by making the racket go faster. After tennis I came home and watched TV.

Wednesday

I came home and I did a bit of homework (a French quiz and some revision for a test). Next I had a piano lesson from 4:45 to 5:15 – I am working towards my grade 5. I then had enough time to beat my Mum and Dad at table tennis which we played outside.

Thursday

Once a week I have a one-on-one lesson with my tennis coach for 1 hour (5:00-6:00). Today I was particularly working on the ball toss on my serve making it in line with my toe. After a 25-minute drive back I watched TV and played a bit of table tennis again.

ST BIRINUS SCHOOL

ADVANCED SPORTS PROGRAMME

Friday

No tennis today – **this is the only day in the week that I don't train. After the shorter day at school, Jake came round to my house. We played football outside as well as on the Xbox. I did lots of reading tonight before bedtime – my current book is Gone by Michael Grant.**

Saturday

It was an early start for me today, I had a tennis tournament and my first match was at 9:30. It was a 12U Grade 4 competition in Oxford; there were 8 players and I was the number 1 seed. It took me a bit of time to warm up and get into my rhythm but when I did, I felt I played well. In my first match I beat my friend from training 4-3(3), 4-3(3). It was a hard match and took over an hour. Next, I beat another friend from my training centre 4-3(3), 4-0. The first set was tough, but I played more aggressively in the second set and it paid off. In the final, I played a boy from Cheltenham who I have seen at other competitions but not played before. I beat him 4-3(1), 2-4, 10-6 in a tough battle to get the gold medal.

It was good preparation for my tennis over the next couple of weeks. I am playing in the county finals of the Road to Wimbledon competition next week, and will represent Oxfordshire in the 12U County Cup competition the following week, which is where a few players from each county are selected to play in the nationwide tournament.

It's a busy tennis month for me!



This week is Dyslexia Awareness Week in association with the British Dyslexia Association and so students and staff at St Birinus have been learning about the difficulties experienced by people who have dyslexia, and the things that they can do to support one another.

Dyslexia causes difficulty in the skills needed for learning to read, spell and write; but it is much more than that. Dyslexia covers a wide range of difficulties and it is unique for each individual. It can also cause issues with organisation or forgetting what someone has told you, or their name. Even memorising a mobile number or multiplication fact can become a struggle. At St Birinus School we recognise that dyslexic learners will have other strengths and that having dyslexia is not a barrier to achieving your goals. Jamie Oliver, Alan Sugar and Richard Branson are amongst the many successful people who have dyslexia.

All teachers at St Birinus School are aware of the needs of dyslexic learners. If you are concerned about your son's reading or spelling please contact their English teacher in the first instance. Alternatively, you can contact Mrs Bowers, Acting SENCO.



Didcot TRAIN - inspiring young people

TRAIN, [118 Broadway, Didcot, OX11 8AB](#)

Tel: 01235 519315

www.didcottrain.org.uk

facebook.com/DidcotTRAIN

TRAIN works *with* and *for* all young people in Didcot, especially those who, for whatever reason, are having a tough time.

Young people can become vulnerable and disadvantaged in a whole range of ways. TRAIN is there to help them to see they do have options.

TRAIN helps the young people in Didcot make informed choices, avoid risky behaviours, find ways out of difficult situations, discover their own voices, and be who they want to be.

Our team at Train is growing and after welcoming a new addition to our youth work staff, we are excited to be launching our new programme starting this October. All provisions are open access, so you are welcome to refer young people to these if you feel that they would benefit from engaging in them.

Programme of activities

Mondays:

- 6.30pm – 7.30pm Yoga (suitable for all young people aged 11 – 18 and young people also attend the boys' group and girls' groups at Train).
- 7.30pm – 8.45pm Girls Group – Yr 6 to Yr 8. We will be covering a range of topics such as Wellbeing, Future Career Building Skills, Gender and Society, Politics and the World, Healthy Relationships and Friendships, Exploring Creativity and more.

Tuesdays:

- 4.30pm – 5.30pm Gym and Boxing with the exercise lounge – if young people are interested in this please let us know and we'll contact them about it as there are limited spaces available. (Suitable for all young people aged 11 – 18.)
- 6.00pm – 9.00pm Detached – one of our members of staff and volunteers will be out on detached during this time which means that we go to where the young people are out and about in Didcot rather than them coming to us.

Wednesdays:

- 3.30pm – 5.00pm Youth Café Drop In – providing information and advice to young people for various elements of their lives. (Suitable for all young people aged 11 – 18.)

Thursdays:

- 5.00pm – 7.00pm Detached – one of our members of staff and volunteers will be out on detached during this time which means that we go to where the young people are out and about in Didcot rather than them coming to us.

Fridays:

- 3.00pm – 4.00pm Educational Support – young people can come to get some support with their work for school, college, etc. from a member of the TRAIN team. (Suitable for all young people aged 11 – 18.)

We will also be launching more exciting provisions in January.

Open Events in October 2018

Please check dates online before you go

May need to Register online

UTC Oxfordshire, Didcot

Saturday 6th October 2018, 10am-12pm

Tuesday 9th October 2018, 3.30-4.30pm

Thursday 18th October 2018, 10-11.30am

www.utcoxfordshire.org.uk

BCA- Berkshire College of Agriculture

Saturday 6th October 2018 10-2pm

Taster days –view dates online

www.bca.ac.uk

Henley College

Tuesday 16th October 2018 6-8.30pm

www.henleycol.ac.uk

City of Oxford College

Wednesday 31st October 2018 4-7pm

www.cityofoxford.ac.uk



Is your child in year 7 at school and interested in football? If so Grove Challengers Under 12s Football Team has space for new players!

If you know of anyone who would be interested please contact Chris Medlock 07714 210822 or email Christopher.medlock@nuvia.co.uk.

Players Needed

Grove Challengers is an FA Charter Standard Development Club and all managers are qualified FA Level 1 coaches and CRB checked.

The team currently play 9v9 football in the Oxford Mail Youth Football league on Sunday mornings and we are looking for players to join for the 18/19 Under 12's season.



Respect

www.grovechallengers.co.uk



Didcot U12, U13, U14 and U15 rugby teams are looking for new players.

Are you in years 7, 8, 9 or 10?

Want to give rugby a try?

Then come and join our club!



Training at Boundary Park, Sundays 10am



Email: join@didcotruffc.com

Facebook: Didcot Minis and Junior rugby