

Sacred Heart School, Swaffham  
Headteacher's Report 20th September 2016

The year has been filled with activities, events and special moments. A new venture was Kidzania, the Careers Emporium which gave years 7 – 9 the opportunity to find out about real jobs. The trip to Kentwell was re-introduced this year. It is a great historical event where everyone dresses in period costume and sample life in Tudor times. LP – 2 enjoyed a day at Hunstanton and were accompanied by the two very helpful German students from Lipstadt. Year 3 had an environmental studies day at Holkham which included pond dipping.

The numbers in the school are rising slightly, due in part to parents seeking a small safe environment where their child will not be lost in larger classes and where good behaviour is enforced. There is a rise in the number of children with particular needs. Some parents are interested in the proposal to become a Free School in 2018 and fear not being able to get their children into the school when it becomes a Free School. Much work has been done on the Application with Inspiration Trust and latterly with the Diocese of East Anglia now that the 50% faith cap has been removed by the DfE.

The numbers are increasing in the Lower School, although the Nursery remains a small cohort. There are now 35 girls and 23 boys in the Lower School, and 35 girls and 11 boys in the Senior School.

The 2016 exams results were very good with 75% A – C GCSE pass and 69% A –C English and Maths. It seems that the media are only interested in the English and Maths results and are tending to discount the overall picture. This seems a shame for a school like ours that encourages pupils to sit as wide a range of subjects as possible and wishes pupils to fulfil their potential. The results show how hard both pupils and staff work to achieve these results. 12A\* is a phenomenal result from a determined pupil. The online Psychology Course gave Niamh her 12<sup>th</sup> subject enabling her to gain one more A\* than her sister. It was good to know that the Access French Course in Year 9 enabled one of our pupils with 4 GCSE's to gain entry to a Level 3 course. (usually need 5 A –C)

Y11 pupils gained access to the Further Education Colleges of their choice. They are always warmly welcomed by these establishments because of their good work ethic.

The appointment of an unsuitable Head of Science led to many problems during the term she was in post. Fortunately both the Head of Maths and the Biology teacher were willing to reorganise their timetables and teach GCSE groups for the rest of the year. We are blessed with accommodating staff who have the pupils' best interests at heart and go the extra mile.

Our compliance issue after the Regulatory Compliance Inspection was quickly sorted and a good report ensued. Steps have been put in place to make sure that this does not happen again.

We have been very successful on the Sport's field and this year has seen greater participation in boy's events. It is wonderful that all pupils have an opportunity to excel at sport, no one is left out.

Musical events, such as House Music, the whole school Nativity and Easter plays have been both professional and full of vitality. Along with such events like the Poetry Day and Harvest Festival and other whole school events have high-lighted the Community spirit and wealth of talent amongst staff and pupils.

Pupils were motivated to work hard in Speech & Drama and Dance gaining very high results. Artistic talent and lateral thinking have become the norm for holiday challenges. Pupils' resourcefulness is always at a premium for these challenges and they learn new skills from one another. Level 1 Textiles at the Old Art Room Studio gave Year 9 and 10 pupils an insight into new techniques in creative textiles.

The biennial ski trip proved to be popular with parents and pupils and a chance to be independent and more sporty. The Work experience to Prague, once more proved to be a chance to gain confidence and expertise in teaching English to students older than themselves. The Bronze level of D of E presented the usual challenge of keeping calm under difficult situations and mastering the art of map reading for real.

The woodland is a site of special interest and play for our younger pupils who have the chance to explore nature and wallow in mud.

With ongoing changes in curriculum, staff have had to expand and renew their knowledge to give pupils the best possible opportunities. The partnership between staff, pupils and parents is an effective one.

The overall maturity, reliability and general willingness of our pupils to try new ideas and be good role models for the younger pupils gives cohesion to the school. Their spiritual awareness and desire to help the needy of the world is praiseworthy. These pupils are a credit to you, their parents and the staff. They are always willing to come up with innovative ideas at School Councils and we do our best to respond positively to their requests and enable them to move the school forward.

We are proud of our pupils' good behaviour and feel that the few lapses are dealt with swiftly and effectively. Pupils are aware of the boundaries and high expectations and generally respond accordingly.

We are sorry to lose valuable and hardworking staff like Mr David Jordan, Miss Chapman and Mrs Hilary Kenny. She was a long serving member of the school for years and Deputy Head for ten years. Her excellent teaching, sound, calm, impartial judgement was her hallmark. She was the kind of person who saw the need, or quietly assumed responsibilities, giving of her free time liberally and always used her initiative.

The PTA work tirelessly for the school, providing fun events and money for extras. Their commitment, enthusiasm and hard work is of great importance to the school and greatly appreciated.

Sr Francis Ridler