



St Benedict's Catholic High School

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Headteacher: Mr T P Sara
Deputy Headteacher: Mr J M Nallen

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Maths & Computing



APPLIED LEARNING

11 December 2009

Dear Parents

As we approach the end of term I would like to remind you of a few points.

Our 6th Form is proceeding apace. You will find attached a leaflet about the International Baccalaureate (IB). This will be one of three qualification pathways we will offer. Our Year 9 and 10 pupils had a talk this week from staff and students from the Methodist Ladies' College in Melbourne about the IB; this was very interesting and warmly received. We shall be holding a meeting next term for all Year 9 and 10 pupils and parents to give more detailed information about the courses and our 6th Form.

The front of school extension will be ready for occupation after Christmas. There have been minor issues but overall we are extremely pleased with the process and results. The building is architecturally and aesthetically superb, and will give us much needed extra space and better facilities. My thanks go to staff and other parties involved, particularly the governors who have played a major part in the monitoring and evaluation of the build.

We would like to remind you of the importance of pupils' attendance at school. Our GCSE results were a very impressive 88% 5 A*-C in 2009. However, in national terms, if a pupil's attendance falls below 93%, there is only a 60% chance of achieving 5 A*-C. If a student misses seventeen days a year they are likely to drop at least one GCSE grade but you should also be aware that if students gain five or more GCSE A-C grades they can increase wages by 41%. What these statistics are really saying is that if pupils' attendance is even slightly lower than excellent, their results will probably deteriorate. This is something teachers have been aware of for years but now there is empirical evidence to prove the point.

For those of you who are entitled to free school meals we will be contacting you in January in relation to a new initiative where, if eligible, you will be entitled to apply for free computer equipment to use in the house. If you have not already applied for free school meals we would urge you to make the application so that you too will be able to benefit from this initiative. Please contact the school for further information.

The Carol Service is on Monday at 4.30 pm or 7.30 pm. The (nearly 200) pupils involved will be fed in between the two performances. Each service will last just over an hour. You can park in the Catholic Church car park, or more likely at the Hospice next door, or at St Andrew's Church further down the road. If you have not yet reserved seats please 'phone school immediately and talk to Mrs Cunningham to see whether spaces are left. The address of the church is Church Lane, Shottery, Stratford-upon-Avon, CV37 9HQ, on the western side of Stratford, between the Alcester Road and the Evesham Road

Yours sincerely

Mr T P Sara
Headteacher



TO BE RETURNED TO MR SARA (to be handed in on arrival at school)

Name of Pupil _____ form _____

I have received the letter of 10 December 2009 and leaflet on the IB.

Signed _____ Parent/Guardian



Do I have to be brilliant to take the IB?

No. It is much more important that you are a motivated, organised learner and that you like being active. IB students will be part of a dynamic group of learners who can really make a difference to St Benedict's School and the world beyond. Remember, a student who achieves the minimum pass mark of 24 points gains the equivalent of grades BCC at A Level.

Why should I carry on with English, Mathematics and a foreign language?

This is because the IBO believes that these subjects help you to develop essential skills which are prized by both universities and employers. Remember, you can pick up a new foreign language from scratch in group 2, and take Mathematical Studies in group 5. English is an important subject to pursue as you will use it for the rest of your life and what you learn now in terms of presenting your work will be invaluable to you at university.

How are St Benedict's staff preparing for teaching the IB?

Although this qualification is new to St Benedict's, all staff are required to undertake extensive training with the IB Organisation as an essential part of the rigorous authorisation procedure. We will be recruiting new teachers with IB experience, together with our excellent track record in the 11-16 school, which shows our teachers are well qualified and able to manage with the ever changing demands of the curriculum. Our staff are greatly looking forward to teaching the IB.

We would recommend and expect that potential IB students will research the IB for themselves. Below you will find websites of just some of the 200 institutions which currently offer the IB in the UK. They each have information on the IB on their website:

Barton Court Grammar School: www.bartoncourt.org
Cleeve School: www.cleeveschool.net
Notre Dame High School: www.ndhs.org.uk
Slough Grammar School: www.sloughgrammar.berks.sch.uk
St Mary's College 6th Form College: www.stmarysblackburn.ac.uk
Columbia River High School, USA: www.river.vansd.org
International School of Uganda: www.isu.ac.ug
Karinthy Frigew Gimnazium, Hungary: www.karinthy.hu

Future Events

In the summer term we will be inviting students into St Benedict's who will have recently completed the IB at Notre Dame High School in Norwich. They will give their perspective of the IB to both parents and students.

We will also be holding workshops on the IB, which will include an open forum for discussion and opportunity to ask questions. Dates of the above to be confirmed.

Further details about the International Baccalaureate Organisation (IBO) and the Diploma Programme can be found on their website www.ibo.org and also by contacting Mr Jim Nallen, Deputy Headteacher at St Benedict's Catholic High School, or Julie McCaslin, the Programme Administrator.

Other Post-16 Courses

These will include an ELEVATE course (Engaging Learning, Embracing Vocational Aspirations, Transforming Expectations) which, in one year, will move students from Level 1 to a range of Level 2 qualifications so they can access Level 3 qualifications in the following two years. We will also be offering some Level 3 qualifications for the new 14-19 Diplomas which are currently coming on-stream. More details to follow.

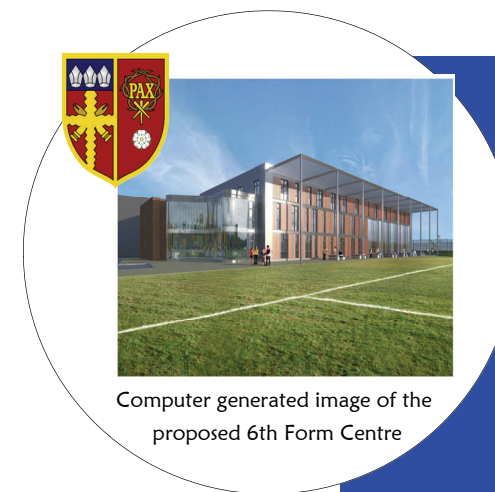
We envisage that St Benedict's will receive authorisation to be an IB World School in spring 2011.



We welcome applications from all faiths and denominations. Students applying are reminded that we are a Catholic Sixth Form and all students will follow a general course in RE in line with the recommendations of Bishop's Conference of England and Wales. Students will also be expected to embrace fully our Catholic ethos based on Gospel values.

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Computer generated image of the proposed 6th Form Centre

ST BENEDICT'S CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL SIXTH FORM



International Baccalaureate Diploma

As we move towards the opening of our new Sixth Form, we will be producing regular updates of the progress and developments as **6 September 2011** approaches – the actual date of opening.

The plans for our new Sixth Form facility are currently with the Planning Department at Stratford District Council. Once approval is given, building will start in May 2010 for completion in June 2011. This purpose-built 6th Form centre will eventually accommodate up to 200 students in Years 12 and 13.

We envisage that this exciting development will be of major benefit for all young people in South Warwickshire and the areas of Worcestershire and Gloucestershire. This new provision will enable students to pursue post-16 studies within a Christian setting and, in collaboration with other schools and colleges, offer a wider range of study options. We are currently working on our curriculum provision: the International Baccalaureate will form the core alongside a range of Level 2 and 3 qualifications.

The International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme is a world-recognised, highly respected qualification which is an excellent alternative to A Levels. The IB is popular with universities across the world

What is the International Baccalaureate Diploma?

The International Baccalaureate Diploma (IB) was developed over 40 years ago. In recent years significant numbers of UK schools and colleges have gained authorisation to deliver the two year course, which provides excellent preparation for university and other pathways.

The IB is readily accepted by **ALL UK universities** and is highly regarded for its breadth and academic rigour. The course is designed to develop just those skills in young people which will equip them to cope with the demands of both university life and employment. It encourages independent learning, the ability to think for oneself and the chance to explore the international dimension of life. It also encourages students to think of others in the community and to take part in activities which build fully-rounded, caring and responsible young people.

One of our link schools in Melbourne, Australia, has been teaching the IB since 1998 and says, **"We think it's brilliant. We have found the IB to be a fantastic option for our students as it provides an international perspective to the curriculum. It is learner-centred and promotes the need for the independent learner to be rigorous as well as authentic. Academically—it provides for a breadth of study within all the traditional disciplines and the final score converts favourably into university entry points."**

The **mission statement** of the International Baccalaureate Organisation (IBO) attempts to reflect its ideology:
'The International Baccalaureate Organisation aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect. To this end the IBO works with schools, governments and international organisations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment. These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and life-long learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right'

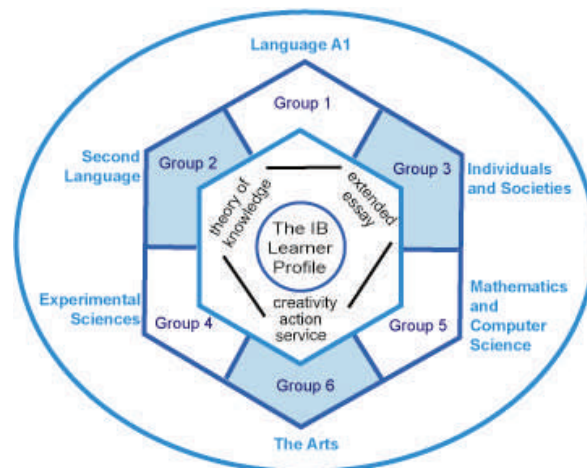
IBO November 2002

Programme of Study

Each student will take six subjects for two years. Three will be at Higher Level and should be those subjects in which they are interested for university entrance and future career options. They will also take three subjects at Standard Level. At the heart of the IB there are three central elements which make up the compulsory core:

- *Theory of Knowledge* - a mixture of Critical Thinking and Philosophy
- *Extended Essay* - a piece of personal research on a topic chosen by the student
- *Creativity, Action, Service* - This enables students to pursue extra-curricular activities, sports and involvement in community projects.

IB Hexagon



The curriculum is modelled by a hexagon with six academic areas surrounding the three core requirements. One subject is chosen from each of the groups in the Hexagon. We are currently working on our curriculum offer for the IB and will be able to advise of the exact subjects to be included in each of the hexagon groups in our next up-date.

If a foreign language has not already been studied to GCSE level at school, a language can be taken from scratch. This is called Ab Initio and counts as a Standard Level subject in group 2.

If a student has passed Mathematics GCSE but does not want to pursue it at an advanced level, Mathematical Studies can be taken which is just above GCSE Level. This also counts as a Standard Level subject in group 5.

If preferred, a second subject from group 2, 3 or 4 may be chosen as the group six subject rather than taking an Arts subject.

How are the subjects assessed?

Each subject taken (whether at Higher or Standard Level) is worth a maximum of 7 points. This gives a total out of 42 points (6 subjects x maximum 7 points). The compulsory core: Extended Essay, Theory of Knowledge and Creativity Action Service - combined is worth a maximum of 3 points. This gives a grand total out of 45 marks. The pass mark for a Diploma is 24 out of 45 points, which is equivalent to BCC at A Level. If a student achieves fewer than 24 points they will be awarded a Certificate qualification which is also accepted by universities.

Universities around the world welcome the unique characteristics of IB Diploma Programme students and recognise the way in which the programme helps to prepare students for university level education. IB students routinely gain admission to some of the best known universities in the world. Most of these institutions have established recognition policies for the IB diploma.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS BY STUDENTS

This sounds like a lot of work. Will I be able to cope?

Yes, it is a lot of work and you will be busy, but remember this is a two-year qualification with no gaps for module examinations or end of first year examinations, although there is coursework involved in each subject. Also, it will still be less than the wide range of GCSEs you are taking at the moment.