



September 2022

Dear Everyone,

I'm writing this letter looking ahead to September, hoping you all have a wonderful and very restful summer break, and that travelling restrictions do not unduly hinder those who venture abroad!

May I begin by welcoming the new staff, who are joining us this September. Teresa Booth joins us as Head of Maths; Katy Heeley as Head of Chemistry; Elvira Mackay as Head of Italian; Sam Rowan as Head of Transition and Deborah Muscat as Teacher of DT.

We have seven ECTs in the following departments: Mary Correia and Kate Stansfield in Maths; Sophia Saltari in Languages; Dan Hodges in Business Studies; Hope Macmillan in English; Izzy Turner in Transition; Bethaney Duke in History and Martin Woodhams in Science.

We have five SCITT trainees in the following departments: Ed Baidya in English; Doug Barns in PE; Sophie Hunnings in Geography; Timothy Knox in Maths and Thiago Rosa in Physics.

We welcome six new members of support staff to the following departments: Kavita Tandon, Elle Ntispyraki and Calogera De Grandis as LSAs, Rosie Hilton as Age Phase Coordinator; Lowenna Boeke as Science Technician, Shenaz Drury as Careers Advisor, Pat Hampshire as IT Technician and Eva Neeson as Maths Hub Coordinator.

Writing this now, looking forward to September, it feels like our return to school this September will bring new hope. The previous two returns have been tinged with several restrictions, rules, and contingency measures in place. However, for the first time in three years, it feels like we will be returning to normality (God willing!) We will have results to celebrate, new staff to welcome and no social-distancing or COVID measures to concern us. Let's pray for a continuation of normality throughout the autumn term and into winter.

Every new year brings fresh challenges and objectives to achieve. However, whatever the government's ever-changing agenda on schools is, we begin each year with two constant, immovable, and non-negotiable goals: firstly, to be an authentic Catholic school, placing Christ at the centre of all we do, and secondly, teaching the children to the best of our ability, every lesson, every day. Whatever the challenges ahead, remember the school motto, "Have Faith...Believe you can!" Have Faith in yourself because you are brilliant; Faith in each other because everyone around you is brilliant, and Faith in God because he has a plan even if we don't yet know what it is! If we do that, everything will take care of itself this year.

Have faith... believe you can





As we move into a new year, we continue to have interests in many different areas. Josie Belli continues to lead L&T across the whole Xavier CET and is helping to improve the provision in all 15 schools within the Trust. The Trust will also be growing soon, with more schools joining Xavier this year. The objective is for all Catholic schools in Surrey to be part of Xavier in the future.

Becky Shepherd and the Maths Hub team continue improving the Maths provision in hundreds of schools across the South East. The Xavier Teaching School Hub is now nearly a year old, and Emily Cavell will continue in her leadership of SJB as a Strategic Lead Delivery Partner in its Early Career Framework. As a Catholic school, it is always the right thing to help others, and it does mean with all these external-facing ventures, we have a far more significant impact on the educational landscape than just the students who come to SJB. That said, our primary focus is still to ensure our students receive the very best education, both inside and outside the classroom.

The school's leadership team (James, Anna, Damien, Lisa, Josie, Jamie, Simon, Matt, Lee and Mike) are here to support staff in serving our students and each other. We expect every member of staff and all our students to deliver, but this can only happen in the right environment. We value your feedback on how we can support you in maintaining a healthy work-life balance and keeping high expectations so that you can enjoy your job and perform to your very best. If ever you feel the balance is not right, please come and speak to a member of the SLT immediately so we can help. Working in a highly successful school does bring self-imposed pressure; some staff feel like they are not as good as everyone else but believe me, you are, and that's why we appointed you!

For some of our new staff, this may be your first opportunity to work within a Catholic or religious organisation. There are many different views on what life must be like working in such a place. However, as I told you all those joining us during the new staff induction, working in a Catholic school simply means we are really nice to each other! The school's spiritual life is at the centre of all we do, and we are proud of the variety of religious and non-religious backgrounds of our staff. So when we combine those differences, we can celebrate diversity and inclusivity within our Catholic school.

So, now we are almost ready to begin our new year. Our mission remains the same – we are still striving to be the best school in the country. Not just in terms of academic results but also in the impact we have on shaping the young people in our care so that they leave us at the end of Year 13 ready to embrace their futures and make a positive contribution to society. That is our primary aim, and it will remain so forever. Of course, we are aiming for perfection, which we will never achieve, but we hope to pick up excellence along the way!

On behalf of the leadership team, I wish you the very best of luck for 2022-23 and hope you all have a wonderful year. Thank you for all you have done and all you will do for everyone in the community in the year ahead.

James Granville Hamshar
Headteacher