Message from the Principal

“This is the 11th year in a row that I have had the privilege of announcing our best ever GCSE results:

67% 5A*-C with English and maths
92% 5A*-C

These statistics put us well above average for the schools in Birmingham and in the country as a whole. We are still in the top 1% of all the schools in England for the progress our students make in maths and in the top 2% for progress in all subjects.

A great joy and reassurance for local families is that we are here to stay, continuing our mission begun in the 1870s.

This fact is clearly demonstrated by the appearance on the Highgate skyline of the steel framework for the new St Alban’s Building which will house our 800 strong 11-18 academy from 2013 and onwards for the foreseeable future.”

St Alban’s Academy Newsletter September 2011

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Success at St Alban’s!

This September sees record results for the successful students of St Alban’s.

Sanadkaan St Alban’s waa qayb ay u gaaray Natiijka aanu ebed horey u gaaray. Ardeydi sanadkan dhameyestay fasalka 11aad waxaa ay schoolka u soo horeeyeen Natijka kawanaa kuwiixii iyaga ka horeeyey. Dhamaan adrey waxaa ay wada keeneen natijida intixaananka GCSE 68% darajada C (grade C) iyo ka kor 5 GCSE, marka lagu daro math iyo English waana wax lala yaabo. Marka aad fiiriso natijidaan waa ay ka wanaagsantahay ti sanadhii tagay taasi macneheedu waa St Alban’s waxaa uu ka mid noqday schoolaadka ugu wax qabad wanaagsan wadanka. Schoolka waxqabadkiisada waxaa amaan iyo boogaduun u soo jeediyey raisuwasaaraha wadanka MR DAVID. Cameron isagoo ugu hanbalyeyey natijida wanaagsan ee uu gaaray. Hamiga schoolka waxaa uu yahay in uu ka sii saro maro halkaas sanadka soo socda. Natijida intixaanunka ay noqoto mid aad ugu sii sareysa tan hadda.

This year, St Alban’s has achieved the best exam results ever!

67% of all the students in Year 11 achieved a GCSE grade of C or above in five or more GCSEs, including English and Maths - what a fantastic result! Although last year provided some excellent grades, this year’s are a significant improvement - it seems as though the only way is up for the students of St Alban’s!

The young men and women were over-the-moon with their GCSE results, as you can see. Many of them attended extra tuition and revision sessions, as well as Saturday school - it seems as though all of their hard work and effort has really paid off. Ask David Cameron, Prime Minister, who was full of praise for both the staff and students of the Academy.

Well done and good luck to you all - you truly are climbing your mountain to university!
Farhan Mohammed has seen his hard work rewarded with a coveted place at a high performing school in the US. Farhan was selected from a number of students to represent St Alban’s at the Summer School at Phillips Exeter Academy in New Hampshire, USA, one of the top private schools in America. Of course, only students who showed impressive academic calibre, had made a significant contribution to school life and who had real potential to gain from the Summer School programme were even considered for a place.

Farhan was shortlisted due to his excellent record of involvement not only in the community, but also with the school’s Valued Youth project. He was interviewed by the Principal, Mr Gould, the Chair of Governors, Professor Marsh, and the Ark Schools Overseas Coordinator, Rose McNamee. Farhan was described as a ‘stand-out candidate.’

He’s come a long way from the shy boy who once lacked confidence! Farhan returned home to pick up his excellent GCSE results and commented that “The trip to America was amazing, I never thought I would get a place but it was a life changing event for me.” This experience will surely enhance his prospects for both his college years and beyond. Well done Farhan!

In 2003, Singapore was ranked top in the world in 4th and 8th grade Mathematics thanks to their focused and in-depth approach to the teaching and learning of Maths. In order to support ARK’s plan to adopt the exceptionally clear and simple Singaporean style of teaching Mathematics, Dr Hassan and Mrs Ali went with other ARK Maths teachers to visit a selection of primary and secondary schools in Singapore. Dr Hassan was impressed by the greater emphasis given to reasoning, applications and the use of technology, including MSN, Facebook and Twitter. He noted: “The students were able to engage in stimulating discussions and activities where they can explore possibilities and make connections.”

Look out for Maths - Singapore style in future lessons!

Work is progressing well with the new building. The foundations are finished and the steel frame is already being erected. So hopefully you will begin to see the building taking shape very soon!

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**The Book Factor**

**Collegiate Book Factor Results**

The book voted the best by the students of the Central Collegiate was ‘The Midnight Charter’ by David Whitely.

Prize winners were: Sharun Kaur, Abdullah Abdo, Jade Pennant, Zaahir Shah and Masuma Ali

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**News in Brief**

Staff have been busy preparing their departments to deliver a range of exciting and high quality A Levels - there certainly is a buzz about the staffroom. Of course, the students need to get ready too. This term’s Year 10 will be the first cohort at St Alban’s to enter the new sixth form, continuing their high quality education with us. It will be a big step but there will be plenty of guidance along the way. Demand from our hard working and talented students is expected to be high! Look out for updates in this newsletter.
On Friday the 1st July, 15 Members of the Sisters Club took part in the ‘Art of Well-Being Project’ delivered by Fluid Space Arts.
When they arrived at Earlswood Log Cabin the thought of no television for three days was daunting. However, they soon forgot all about that! They realized there was much more out there to discover.
On Friday the girls went for a short walk with staff in the surrounding woods. Many found the thought of creepy crawlies frightening but they did not faze Ellouise Badger. The Sisters soon nominated her as Official Spider and Moth Catcher for the weekend!
The next day the Sisters learnt various artistic techniques which will help them to produce individual quilt design patterns. Saturday evening saw the girls preparing a banquet of food reflecting the cultural diversity of St Alban’s and savouring this around a campfire as they listened to a traditional scary story courtesy of Mrs Pitterson.
For many of the girls this was their first time away from their homes and families. From the outset, they met new challenges and worked outside of their comfort zone, they really lived up to the Sisters Club motto: “Caring and Sharing.”
The girls working so well together is a reminder of what a wonderful community and school we are part of.

Recommended Read

‘Truckers’ by Terry Pratchett

“To the thousands of tiny gnomes who live under the floorboards of a large department store, there is no Outside. Things like Day and Night, Sun and Rain are just daft old legends. Then they discover that the Store – their whole world – is to be demolished. It is left up to Masklin to mastermind an unbelievable escape plan that will take all the gnomes into the dangers of the great Outside....”

This is one of my favourite books. It gives the reader a chance to see the world through different eyes and see how strange the things we take for granted can appear to others. This is the first of a wonderful trilogy, which has now been made into a film, and I hope you enjoy it.

Mrs Butler

Mrs Bonham paid a visit to the shrine of St Alban during the summer holiday.
The shrine is supposed to be on the exact spot where St Alban’s severed head hit the ground, at which moment, the executioner’s eyeballs popped out!
Mathematician of the Month

Mr September Newton
1642 - 1727

Isaac Newton was probably the greatest mathematician Britain has ever produced, though it took people a long time to realise this. At the age of 12 he made a kite that could fly while carrying a lantern inside. He flew it at night time over his village in Lincolnshire, and terrified all the people there. They thought that it was a comet coming to destroy their homes!

In 1665 the Bubonic Plague swept across Britain and Newton had to go home to Lincolnshire. He became very bored and when one day an apple fell on his head it prompted him to think about wacky mathematical ideas. After discovering gravity, Isaac went on to invent the laws of motion, calculus and the rules of colours and light. Without his discoveries we would not have aeroplanes, cars, bridges, skyscrapers, fruit pie and many other things.

In the next edition:
Student UniFest experiences
St Alban’s sporting achievements
Visit from Lord Bill Morris, MP

Got something to share? Let us know!

New Feature!
Mr September Newton
1642 - 1727

Monthly Maths Puzzle
The Rules
- A copy of the question will be printed every month in the newsletter
- Provide your answer on A4 paper
- Write your name and house group clearly at the top of the paper
- Anyone at home can help you!
- Hand your answers to any member of the Maths department
- The winner and the answer to the question will be displayed on the Maths noticeboard and printed in next month’s newsletter!

Good luck!

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BMW Looking for Apprentices

Mr Higgins, Director of Engineering, and Mrs Smith, Work Related Learning Coordinator, were invited to visit the BMW plant at Hams Hall in June to see what the company has to offer young people. They were given a tour around the state-of-the-art factory by one of the plant’s senior managers who explained the philosophy of this German owned company. The factory looked more like a showroom than a place where engines are built.

Hams Hall runs apprenticeship schemes (lasting three to four years) for the following professions:
- Engineering Technician
- Quality Engineering Technician
- Business Technician

The training leads to an NVQ Level 3 qualification and Foundation Degree. Some apprentices however, will have the opportunity to progress through to Degree level.

The company currently works with Birmingham Metropolitan College where many St Alban’s students study an NVQ Level 2 in Engineering.

The company are opening the factory for school visits in October and Mrs Smith has already booked a slot for our students so that they can see what a first class manufacturing environment looks like.

Dates for your diary
11th Oct Super Learning Day
24th-28th Oct half term break
24th and 25th October Study and Revision Skills
31st Oct Ark Network Day for all staff

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