

New Science labs near completion

No 383 Dec 2011

# Oaklands News

Progress with  
Count Read Succeed

Feedback from parent surveys

Dates for school  
production

Find out what  
BAE systems robot  
was doing in  
school



A publication for  
Oaklands Catholic School  
and Sixth Form College  
A Specialist Humanities and Science College

# Lead Stories



# Oaklands

Catholic School and Sixth Form College

A Specialist Humanities and Science College

From the Headteacher 2/3

Count Read Succeed 4

Attendance 5  
*Procedures*

Parents' Evening Booking 6

Year 11 Prom Fayre 7

BAE Visit 8

Sicily Trip 9

Pilgrimage to Cathedral 10

Term Dates 11

School Production 12  
*'Grease'*

## From the Headteacher's desk

*If ever there were a sign that the Christmas fever is on the way, the latest festive advertisement by John Lewis would be it. The advert follows a little boy who is impatiently ticking off the days until Christmas while his bewildered siblings look on. The instant reaction is to believe that his impatience is brought on by his desire to open his own presents. In the fading moments of the advertisement the scene moves to Christmas morning and it becomes apparent that he is willing time to move faster, not for the big pile of presents at the end of his bed - but the simple excitement of giving his hastily wrapped gift to his mum and dad. The exquisite cinematography and story telling all adding to a visual tear-jerking twist. The advertisement is set to music from my youth, 'Please, please, please let me get what I want', originally recorded by the Smiths in 1984.*

*The first time I saw it I honestly thought it was an advert for a children's charity until it reached the end. It is shot in soft focus without a hint of the commercialisation you would expect from one of the country's leading department stores.*

*Well done John Lewis because this advertisement focuses on the joy of giving and it is this sentiment that is wrapped up in the Christmas story. God gave his Son as the greatest gift to the world. Christmas is the celebration of God's unconditional love for you and for me. "God so loved the world, that he gave us his only Son; not to condemn the world, but to save it". So what must we do in return? Certainly acknowledging those we love over Christmas is part of the celebration, as is recognising those that are less fortunate than ourselves but above all we should also find time over Christmas to meet Him in the Eucharist.*

**This term has been exceptionally busy, on behalf of you all, I would like to thank all the staff, teachers and support staff for their commitment and hard work this term.**

**In November I was fortunate enough**

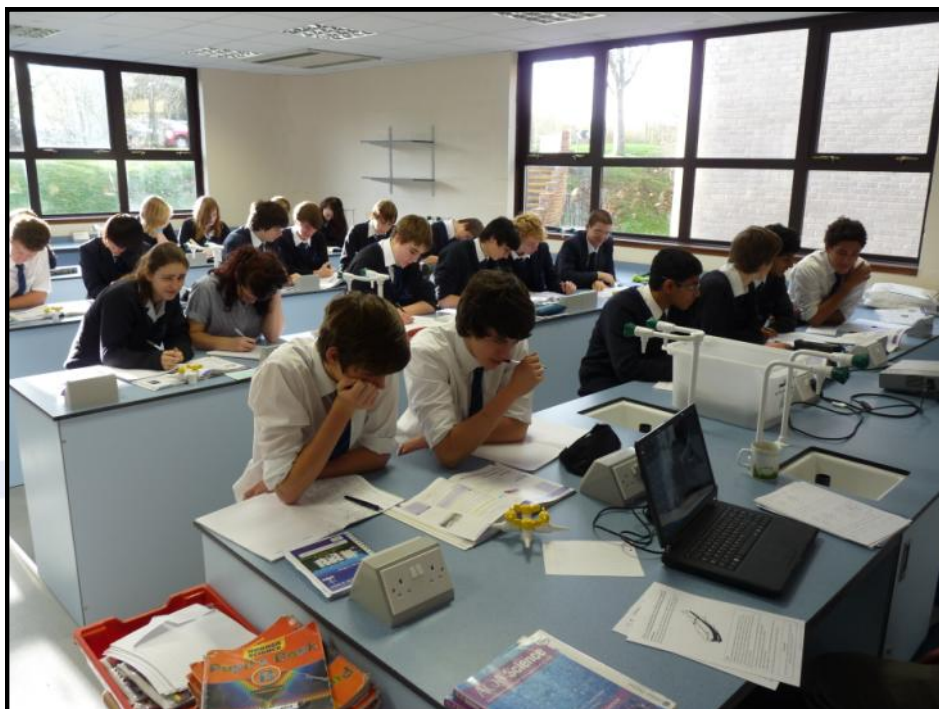


to spend time with Year 11 at **St Cassian's Retreat Centre in Kintbury**. The retreat experience was heavily oversubscribed and is an opportunity for students to do a little 'soul searching' as a community and identify God in the ordinary and everyday. It was a privilege to spend time with them and share in the celebration of the Eucharist.

**The pace of the school's work for charity continues at a pace**; this term we have focussed on our work with CAFOD following on from the visit to Korogochou in Kenya (See Page 11); this work will continue next year.

**The work in the Maths Science block is almost complete.**

The building has been re-roofed and we now have four new laboratories. This work represents a significant improvement. The new labs have replaced facilities that in many areas were over 40 years old. This work could not have been completed without the significant contribution made to the Governors' Fund by parents in recent years. We hope to start Phase 2 over the summer with the replacement and refurbishment of two more laboratories. This will bring



all of the Science department into one building and all of Maths into A block.

**The government have recently confirmed the new Ofsted** framework and the measures by which a school's success will be judged. The new framework will be used from the beginning of 2012. Similar to all schools, this will present us with a number of challenges. For example, the subjects which contribute to the Ebac will be a key measure in the Governments analysis tool. Schools will need time to respond to this and, if necessary, make curriculum adjustments.

A significant number of students will be sitting internal and external examinations shortly after the Christmas break. It is important that these go well. The secret to this is thorough and comprehensive revision over the holiday. The external examinations are very important as the results will go towards the final GCSE grade.

**On 5th January** the school will host the Presentation of Certificates Evening. If you have a son or daughter in last year's Year 11 or last year's Year 13 you should have received an invitation. If you require further details please contact the school office.

Finally, may I wish you all a happy and peaceful Christmas and I look forward to welcoming students back at the normal time on **Wednesday 4th January 2011**.

*Matthew Quinn*

### Missing Uniform

Over the holiday period parents are asked to check that their child is in possession of their own Blazer and that they have not inadvertently picked up one belonging to another student. If this has occurred, please return it to Student Services. Thank you.

### Fond Farewell

On Friday we say farewell to Mrs Tracy Finney who leaves Oaklands to head back north to her native Lancashire. We thank Mrs Finney for all she has done for the Art Department and Oaklands over the past two years and wish her well in her new post in Lancashire.

## Count Read Succeed

In our last newsletter we informed you about our new focus on Literacy and Numeracy. These two core skill areas underpin the success of a curriculum and are essential elements in raising the achievement standards at Oaklands. The new Ofsted Framework reflects this and, as a school, we need to be able to demonstrate that these skills are being developed and that any students who may need extra intervention are identified. Whole school improvement in this area will ensure that overall standards are raised and that all students will benefit. Spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPAG) will be highlighted and many new strategies for staff to use both in the classroom and in marking/assessment have been agreed. This term many exciting developments have been taking place and in the New Year you will be able to see the evidence of this work.



- All staff will be using a consistent Literacy Marking Policy which you will see in exercise books.

- At least once per half-term (or in some cases more often) a Literacy Target will be added to the assessment of writing tasks.

For example: Please check the spelling of your key words/ Please use capital letters.

- When students' exercise books are returned there will be a process called "Green Penning" whereby students review the corrections and action them in green pen

- Literacy Ambassadors – in each lesson a student will be assigned the role of Literacy Ambassador and will have to listen for good exemplification of Literacy and articulate it

to the class at the end of the lesson.

- Dictionaries! We will be promoting the use of dictionaries. Also students should use the resource [www.visuwords.com](http://www.visuwords.com) as a visual dictionary and thesaurus. Why not have a look?

- Some of our Literacy Team will be attending Inset at St Peter's to learn more about how our primary colleagues promote and develop skills.

- Using our data systems staff will identify students in their classes in both KS3 and 4 who will need extra support in Literacy or Numeracy.

- The Numeracy Team is currently surveying departments to find out how they can support and offer Inset for Numeracy skills and produce a curriculum map of when and where Numeracy is taught.

As you can see, it's been a busy and productive term so far for the Count, Read, Succeed Team. More details next term – and don't forget to ask your children how you too can help support their Literacy and Numeracy!

## Spooks in the Canteen

On 3rd November the Canteen staff prepared special healthy snacks on the theme of Halloween.

A special thank you to the Canteen staff for cooking Christmas dinner. Similar to last year, this was served to each Cohort by House in turn and was very well received.



**Already the first term has flown by and Christmas is around the corner! We would like to thank you all for working so hard with us to support us and bring down the absence levels.**

We have experienced some high levels of absence during this term, mostly due to illness (flu, viruses and stomach bugs). Please use our email facility to report absence on the first day:



[absence@oaklands.hants.sch.uk](mailto:absence@oaklands.hants.sch.uk) or the absence telephone line to confirm dates and reasons with Mrs Vacher (our Attendance Officer). If your child has not brought a letter in to school following an absence you will receive a reminder text from Mrs Vacher.

As a parent/carer, there are a number of practical ways in which you can help to keep absence levels low:

- Only allow your child to stay off school if they are **genuinely** ill.
- Ring the Absence Line to report that they will be absent.
- Reply to the text or email message sent by school.
- Make medical/dental appointments after school hours; this time off counts as official absence.
- AVOID booking holidays during term time – every day your child misses school affects their progress. They will miss teaching and learning time that they never fully regain.

### Punctuality Focus:

This term we have launched a big drive to improve student punctuality, both on arrival to school and for lessons. **All students are monitored and every two weeks their punctuality is examined.** Where there are concerns students will receive a warning from their Tutor or Head of Year and may have to do a detention; in instances where the levels of punctuality are unacceptable you will receive a letter from the school informing you of the exact number of learning minutes that your son/daughter has missed. This is crucial to their progress. Students will be required to “make up” this time in after school detentions – for some this may be a lengthy process. I am sure you will agree with us that persistent lateness is not acceptable nor is it good preparation for working life. *We do understand that the 40 bus from Portsmouth can often be very full however, in that case parents must ensure that students travelling from the city either make alternative travel arrangements or arrange for their child to catch an even earlier bus.* Parents/carers who would like to see a detailed breakdown of the dates and times may request this information from the respective Head of Year – this is very useful information.

Figures up to and including 8<sup>th</sup> December 2011:

| Group        | Authorised Absence % | Unauthorised Absence % |
|--------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| Whole School | 3.5                  | 0.7                    |
| Year 7       | 2.8                  | 0.3                    |
| Year 8       | 3.1                  | 0.5                    |
| Year 9       | 4.4                  | 0.5                    |
| Year 10      | 3.1                  | 0.9                    |
| Year 11      | 3.8                  | 1.1                    |



## Parents' Evening Booking Online - Your Feedback

As Year 8 parents are aware, we recently piloted a new on-line booking software for Parents Evening. For a number of years parents have expressed their concern over the reliability of the paper based solution.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to fill in a survey form for the new online booking software. The analysis of your forms has shown that a large majority of you liked the software and thought this new system was a big improvement on the old one.

You told us that you would have preferred it if the software

had 'gone live' at a more convenient time (when you were at home with your child) and also that booking all of the appointments you wanted was not always possible. There were also comments that the appointments were too spread out, resulting in waiting around and wasted time.

In response to your feedback, when we next use the software we will try to make sure the system goes live at a time when more parents are at home. We will also remove the feature that enforced a five minute gap between appointments. However, we do ask that you leave some gaps in your

schedule to build in some changeover time for the evening.

In addition to these developments, we are looking into a range of approaches we can use to make sure you have access to current information on your child throughout the year. Watch out on our website for more information on how you can access this system. The system is SLG – Sims Learning Gateway – a parental account that will allow you to access your child's current reports, curriculum and attendance data at any time.

## Student and Parent Surveys

We have had a very positive response from the surveys conducted this term.

Year 7 students really focused on how safe they feel at school as well as how much they enjoy the lessons and learning at Oaklands. The July Induction programme goes from strength to strength, with students feeling more comfortable and confident about the move from primary to secondary. The extension of additional visit days for nominated groups of students is also appreciated to make sure that all can make the best possible step up to Oaklands. The July days, however, are not nearly as exciting as the September start. When reflecting on the first half term, Year 7 students used such phrases as *'It wasn't as scary as I thought it would be and everyone is kind and helpful'*, *'It is really good being part of the Oaklands community. I enjoy coming to school because the lessons are really interesting'* and *'I feel like my mum and dad made the right choice and I am really enjoying Oaklands.'* High praise indeed from what is obviously our most valued and critical audience – the student body.



The Parents' Evening in July for future Year 7 students was warmly received. Parents were delighted at the opportunity to meet their child's tutor who will play a key role in pastoral care over the next 5 years. The information pack is starting to show signs of not keeping pace with the rapidly changing school environment, so this will be reviewed before July 2012 to ensure it is as up to date and as relevant as possible. Work will also be done to increase the signposting information for parents about the means of public transport to Oaklands School so that families can investigate the best ways to get children to the school.

As well as surveying new members of the school community, we also carried out a survey for Year 8 families at their Parents' Evening on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2011. Of note in the replies was the fact that families feel better informed about their children's well being, and that on the rare occasions where incidents of concern do take place they are dealt with effectively by school staff. In agreement with the Year 7 children above, parents of Year 8 students replied that they had confidence in the good quality of teaching delivered at Oaklands as well as a varied and challenging diet of homework tasks to extend learning beyond the classroom. Communication between school and home is always a huge area to address, and this year we are again promoting the book sharing weeks before a Parents' Evening. Of the parents surveyed, 96% had looked at their children's books before the evening. 91% of parents who responded agreed that it was a useful process in making the Parents' Evening discussion more meaningful and productive in helping their child's learning and progress in school. The exercise book and student planner are always available to parents and can always be used for home-school communication.

## Year 11 Prom Fayre

**The Prom is an occasion we all look forward to, perhaps a little too much. The Prom Fayre was no different.**

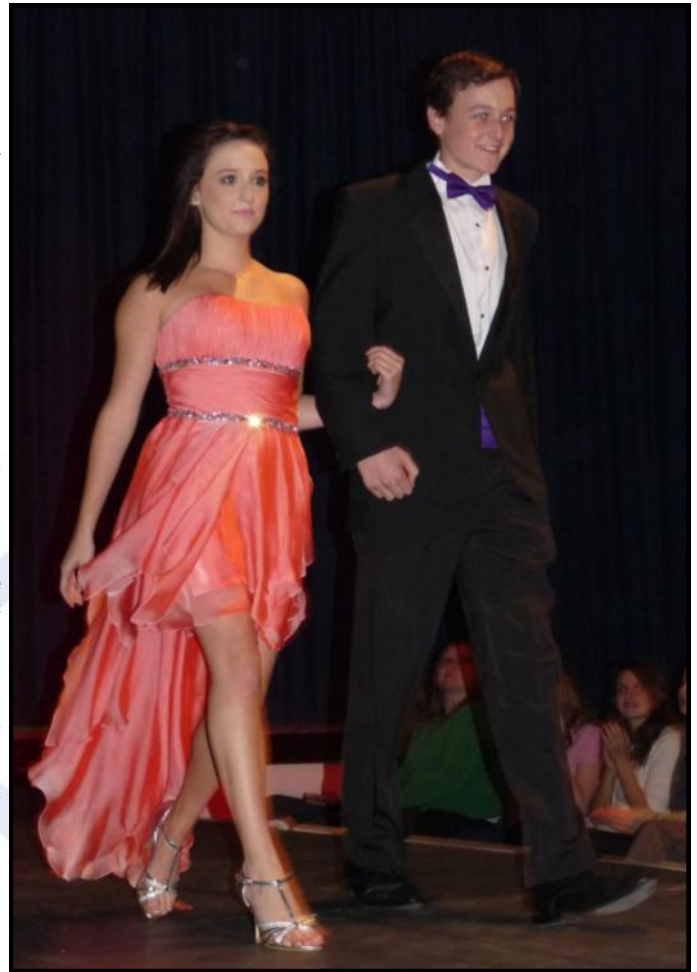
On 29<sup>th</sup> November Year 11 had their Prom Fayre. A number of different companies such as Mousetrap and Burtons got involved, supplying a range of suits and dresses for everyone to wear.

From the male perspective I have to say the girls were looking forward to it a lot more than us guys. However, after getting into the swing of things it was worrying to see that we were having a bit more fun strutting our stuff down the catwalk than the girls. After all, who would not want to be led down the runway by a group of beautiful women?

As a typical teenage girl, it is safe to say that the idea of having your hair and make-up done by the South Downs beauty students sounded like a lot of fun (although slightly daunting at times). However, the prospect of sauntering down the catwalk arm in arm with a dashing young man whilst modelling a beautiful dress made it all the more appealing.

All in all it was a great experience and after a little bit of apprehension beforehand, an excellent time was had by everyone.

Cormac Dreelan and Anya Eastman – 11 St. Clare



## School Christmas Ball

**Many congratulations to Mrs Belinda Ludlam, Mrs Stirling, Sixth Form staff and students who spent a great deal of time and care preparing the hall and surrounding areas for an excellent Christmas Ball.**

As is tradition, the Ball was set to a theme. A very special thank you to Mrs Peel, the Art department and their talented team of artists who produced another stunning backdrop depicting a Venetian panorama.

Over 300 guests which included students, parents and friends came along to dance the night away to the live band who, together with our own disco, kept everyone on the dance floor throughout the evening.

Our thanks also to our catering team lead by Dawn Dodds who provided an outstanding traditional Christmas meal.



## BAE Systems



After Year 7's assembly, we had a special visit from members of BAE Systems Team. They gave us a 40 minute presentation on what BAE Systems is and what things they produce.

We were lucky enough to experience their summer project: BRAINS!! The robot. As soon as this robot walked on stage everyone was amazed. This amazing creation could walk, speak and even remember anything you said. This useful device is helpful because it can build things that we humans cannot, like water proof glue, studied from muscles (biomimicry) Mr Walker, one of the characters from the show embarrassed one of our maths teachers, Miss Blewett. Every time Mr Walker got the chance he would walk up to her and say "Hello tiger".

When the production finished they asked us some questions about BAE Systems to test our listening skills, and if you got a question right you would win a little toy dolphin.

Biomimicry is when you study nature. BAE systems use biomimicry to make high speed jet planes by studying a bird's wingspan.

We also learnt how UV light is used on tall buildings to protect birds. Humans cannot see the light, but birds can, therefore, they are able to avoid flying into a building.

*Written by Thomas Kingswell 7Mg + Solenn Margottin 7CI*

"The production was brilliant as well as educational I'm also glad they spent time teaching us this"

*Katie Black 7CI*

"I thought the assembly was very funny and great to watch and I couldn't stop laughing"

*"Ronan Kalinski 7Mt*

"I thought it was strange in a very amazing and good way"

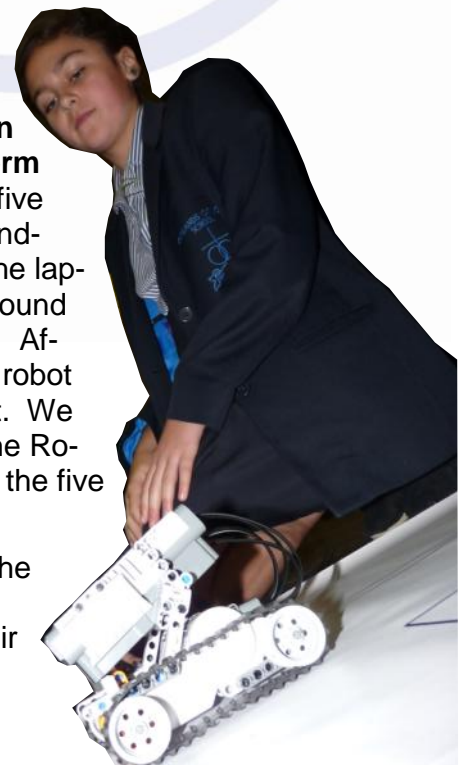
*Harry Paffett 7Do*

On Friday 11<sup>th</sup> November a team from BAE came into school as part of the STEM project. We had lots of fun programming Lego Mindstorm

Robots to drive inside a track. We were split into five individual teams, each team having a laptop and a Lego Mindstorm Robot. With a USB lead, we had to connect the lead from the laptop to the robot. We then had to give the robot directions to get around the track without going off it or making it fall too short or go too far. Afterwards we had to download our directions from the laptop to the robot and then go and test it on the track to see if our maths was correct. We then had to return to our laptops to improve our directions to get the Robot further along the track in order to become the best team out of the five and reach the finish.

After half an hour programming our robot, it was time to examine the other team's progress, accuracy, speed and distance around the track to see who had made the best progress on programming their robot.

Jake Bell and Sabrina Trigg – 8 St. Martin



## Sicily Trip

45 Year 10-13 students and 5 members of staff went on a 4 day, 3 night trip to Sicily during the October half term holiday.

We departed school at 1:00pm for Gatwick airport, arriving in Sicily at around 9:00pm. We made our way to the 'Nike' hotel, where the building was themed to the god 'Nike' from mythology, with wall engravings and stained glass.

On the second day, we visited the Alcantara Gorge which was very beautiful and surrounded by lemon and olive orchards. Then we visited Mount Etna. The altitude meant that our ears were blocked and some of us were feeling sick. Mt Etna is an active volcano, and whilst we were there, one of the secondary cones was erupting. At the summit, the tour guide told us to dig the earth up a bit and sit down and the ground warmed our bottoms up, which was welcome as we experienced freezing temperatures and heavy snow towards the summit!



We could see Etna in the distance which was a massive landscape and lava was flowing, which went 300m high in the air! Considering we were about 30km away, we could see lava bombs flying out of Etna, they must have been massive! The view was even better from our hotel (7km away) where we were able to see the lava flow down the mountain.

On our final day, we visited Taormina, where there was a Greco-Roman amphitheatre where we took some group photos. We then we had some spare time in the town centre for shopping, eating ice-cream and pizza. We then made our way to airport for the four hour flight home.

A big thank you to Mr Bamford for organising the trip and to Mrs Shepherd, Mrs Broadway, Miss Lewis, and Mr Tindal for accompanying us.

**Siobhan Strange 10 St. Teresa**

temperatures and heavy snow towards the summit!

On the third day, we travelled on a boat from Milazzo to visit the Aeolian Islands of Panarea then Stromboli. The sights were beautiful and luckily it was very warm that day. Many cats live on Panarea, and on Stromboli we stopped for two hours to paddle in the water and sit on the black sand. In the evening we ate dinner on the boat (well, we tried but the swaying of the boat made most of us feel sick). When it was darker, the Strombolian eruptions became evident from the boat. However, the best part of the trip was on the way back when Mr. Bamford noticed that Mount Etna was erupting.

a mound of earth stretching widely in the

## Oaklands Parents' Association

**A huge thank you to everyone who supported the Christmas Craft Fayre on 19th November. The event was a great success with £3000 being raised for the school.**

**Two dates for your new diaries: Saturday 25th March 2012 'Kojak's Revenge' and Friday 4th May 2012 'Charity Fashion Show'. More details to follow in the New Year.**

**Merry Christmas to you all!**

**Lorraine Sutton, Chair of the OPA.**

## Year 7 Cathedral Pilgrimage

On Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> November, 112 students from Year 7 Cohort 1 departed by coach for St John's Cathedral in Portsmouth for their pilgrimage. We visited the Cathedral because in RE lessons we had been looking at 'community' and Oaklands is part of the community known as the Diocese of Portsmouth.



Whilst we were there we were given booklets and we went to different places in the Cathedral to find out what they meant. I found out that during the war the cathedral had been bombed and only one stained glass window escaped damage. I also found out the names of the four archangels whose paintings are on the walls in the Chapel of the Last Supper.



At the end of the morning we celebrated Mass. This was very special because it was Bishop Crispian's birthday and I was asked with another student, to take up a card and present it to him. We all sang 'Happy Birthday' to him. We then headed back to Oaklands in time for lunch. Thank you to the RE department and all the staff for organising the pilgrimage. I hope Cohort 2 enjoyed their trip as much as we did the week before. *Harry Oldroyd, 7 Saint Clare*

## Duke of Edinburgh Award

We have 67 participants (from Years 10 and 11) enrolled on the Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme and a further 9 participants (from Year 12) undertaking the Silver Award. This requires commitment, perseverance and organisational skills as the participants must complete four sections - Physical, Skills, Volunteering and Expedition - to gain the Award. Three sections - Physical, Skills and Volunteering have to be organised and undertaken each week for a minimum period in the participants own time. Specialised trainers undertake to prepare the participants for the Expedition section. We are very fortunate at Oaklands to be able to call upon

six fully qualified trainers as well as a further four trainers who will be gaining their qualification in the near future. Last Saturday we began the training for the expedition with a series of workshops on First Aid and Emergency Procedures; Basic Navigation; Personal Kit and How to Pack a Rucksack. Each participant was given a training booklet to remind them of what they had learnt as well as some homework!! They have to prepare a personal First Aid kit and bring this to the next training session. At the end of the session each participant was allocated to an expedition group. At the next training session, which takes place on Saturday 26th November, the participants will be working in their expedition groups with a trainer on Campcraft (erection of tent, living in a tent and care of equipment); safe



use of a Trangia stove and what to cook; navigation and writing of route cards in preparation for the day walk in the Wickham area which takes place in March.

## School Production

The nights have drawn in and the weather has turned colder, but for the team of 120 students and staff here at Oaklands, the "Summer Nights" of Rydell High are never far away! We've chosen a fun, frothy and popular show this time around, to blow away those winter blues, and we're hoping to have more students involved than ever before in all areas of the production to make this show a real community event.

Students will have the opportunity to work on the technical production of the show, as well as singing, dancing and acting. We are currently taking submissions for poster designs, and we would love to have a range of designs to choose from, so get drawing!

The company and chorus are currently rehearsing alongside the Music and Drama team for a total of five hours every week, and are set to perform at the Christmas Concert and Presentation of Certificates Evening in early January. We're delighted to be working alongside such dedicated and talented young people.

This well-known show looks set to be popular- so save the date now!

## A Life Changing Christmas Gift

We have reached that time of year again when we indulge ourselves and focus on the gifts we will buy our family and friends. With all the merry festivities it can be easy to forget those around the world who will not wake up to gifts and a Christmas feast. Whilst we think about the latest fashions and gadgets that we put on our wish lists, people in Korogocho will be wishing for at least one certain meal.

We would like to ask you to consider giving a gift that will change lives this Christmas. Please could you remember the young people and community of St John's Society in Korogocho and maybe give them a gift this Christmas through a small donation towards their gym. From our fundraising activities before half term, we raised just over £2,500. We need £17,000. Although St John's will not receive their gym this Christmas, this will be a long term development gift. This gym will give opportunities that will last far longer than the Christmas period and so we ask if you will help in giving St John's the ultimate present – a life changing gift.

Of the many presents that many people receive, very few are life changing. The gym in Korogocho will offer great opportunities for the young people to 'make it' in their chosen sport and thus improve their chances of pulling out of poverty.

To contribute towards this project, you can send your donations to the school clearly marked 'The CAFOD Gym Project.' With your help, we can achieve our goal and make a difference in the lives of the young people of Korogocho.

## 2012 and 2012/2013 Term Dates

### Spring Term 2012

Wed 4th January\*\*to Fri 30th March 2012

**Half Term** Mon 13th—Fri 17th February 2012

Easter Mon 2nd April—Fri 13th April 2012

### Summer Term 2012

Mon 16th April—Thurs 19th July 2012

**Half Term** Mon 4th—Fri 8th June 2012

Summer holiday Fri 20th July—Fri 31st August 2012

The school will also be closed on the following day:  
Friday 20th July 2012. **\*\*Please note revised start date to the Spring Term.**

### Key Dates:

|                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| 04/01/12                 | <b>First day of term</b>                 |
| 05/01/12                 | <b>Presentation of Certificates Eve.</b> |
| 02/02/12                 | <b>Year 11 Parents' Evening</b>          |
| <b>13.02.12-17.02.12</b> | <b>Half Term</b>                         |
| 23/02/12                 | <b>Year 9 Courses Information Eve.</b>   |
| 27-29/02/12              | School Production 'Grease'               |
| 30/03/12                 | <b>Last day of Term</b>                  |

### Holiday Dates 2012-2013 (Inset Days to be advised) Autumn Term

Mon 3 September 2012 (phased return) to Fri 21 December 2012

**Half Term** Mon 29 October 2012 to Fri 2 November 2012.

Christmas Holiday from Mon 24 December 2012 to Fri 4 January 2013.

### Spring term

Mon 7 January 2013 to Thu 28 March 2013.

**Half Term** Mon 18 February 2013 to Fri 22 February 2013.

Easter Holiday from Fri 29 March 2013 to Fri 12 April 2013.

### Summer term

Mon 15 April 2013 to Fri 19 July 2013.

**Half Term** Mon 27 May 2013 to Fri 31 May 2013.

# Grease The Musical

By Jim Jacobs &  
Warren Casey



**27<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> February 2012**

✉ **Stakes Hill Road Waterlooville P07 7BW**

📧 **Oaklandscatholic@oaklands.hants.sch.uk**

🌐 **www.oaklands.hants.sch.uk**

☎ **023 9225 9214**



**HAVANT FEDERATION  
OF SCHOOLS**