

A message from the Principal

Welcome to the Autumn Term newsletter and a very special welcome to all our new students and their families who joined us in September. It has been a very busy term with students busy completing end of term assessments, UCAS applications and participating in a whole host of complementary and additional enrichment activities. And then, just a few short weeks ago, we had the small matter of an Ofsted inspection - more about that later! I would like to thank parents and carers for your support over this term; it really does make a difference when we can work together to support our young people in reaching their potential and achieving their aspirations. I particularly look forward to challenging and inspiring our students to push the boundaries, to be curious and inquisitive and think deeply about their learning.

Finally, on behalf of everybody at the St. Francis Xavier Sixth Form College, I would like to take this opportunity, to wish you all a very happy, healthy and holy Christmas.



Congratulations to our leavers 2023

This summer's exams seem a distant memory now but I am extremely proud of our students' achievements. This year's cohort did not disappoint achieving some outstanding results, with the majority successfully gaining their places at their first choice of university. Once again, results were incredibly strong with an overall pass rate of 97% and 49% of grades awarded at A*-B or D*-D. I would like to congratulate all of our students and wish them well as they progress on to their next destinations and look forward to hearing of all their future successes. I would especially like to congratulate Zara and Rachael who secured places at Oxford and Cambridge respectively.

Zara (left) has taken up her place at Hertford College, Oxford to read English language and literature, whilst Rachael (right) is at Trinity Hall, Cambridge reading architecture



Careers and Progression

The Careers Department at the College provides advice and guidance to students to help them make informed decisions about their future career aims and successfully progress into university, apprenticeship or employment. Just as one cohort leaves us, the preparation of the next begins! Earlier this term we held our annual UCAS Stop Day, an opportunity for our Year 13 students to focus on finalising their UCAS applications and cement their plans for their next steps after college. I'm delighted to learn that the majority of those planning to apply through UCAS have now completed and sent off their application forms. Those who have yet to submit their form must do so as soon as possible if they want to stand a good chance of successfully gaining an offer for the chosen course at their preferred university. Our Careers Department had also been giving support to those applying for early entry courses (medicine, dentistry and veterinary science) and those applying to Oxbridge. This year, 11 students have applied to Oxford and Cambridge with three of these already invited to interview. I wish all our students the best of luck with their applications.

This term, the Careers Team have also arranged a whole host of speakers from a broad range of stakeholders including J P Morgan and The Brokerage.

College News and Events

Earlier this term our Yr 12 Management and Administration T level students were fortunate to receive some interview preparation tips from Phoebe and Rose from The Village People who manage The Prince of Peckham and The Queen of the South pubs in south London. The feedback will come in very handy as the students start to source their industrial placements .



Our BTEC Level 3 Sports and Exercise Science students got to experience life as a sport scientist on a visit to the Sports Science Department of Kingston University. Our students learned more about applying theory to practice in the 'state of the art' laboratory, bringing to life the physiological, biomechanical, and psychological units they are studying.



Students of A Level Economics were thrilled to welcome Nicola O' Reilly, SFX alumna and Bank of England Public Engagement and Partnerships Adviser. Nicola spent the morning delivering a Horizon Scanning workshop, where our students researched and then presented trends on the horizon which relate to young people.



At the beginning of November, students of A Level Sociology visited SOAS, University of London for the Festival of Social Science. They participated in a drama workshop to help them think creatively about language and multilingualism; they then took part in a range of social science activities organised by researchers and students from the university.



UAL Performing and Production Arts students had a fascinating 'behind the scene's' tour of the National Theatre. Students were fortunate to see many theatre professionals at work in a variety of roles and have now increased their understanding about the intricate operations



Members of the Hidden History club and other interested students were lucky enough to attend a fascinating talk by Dr Charlotte Lydia Riley. Dr Riley is Associate Professor in Twentieth Century History at the University of Southampton and author of 'Imperial Island - A History of Empire in Modern Britain'. She discussed and answered questions on the impact of the British Empire and decolonisation.



The SFX Cricket Academy, in partnership with Surrey County Cricket Club, was launched this September. Students receive 4 hours of professional cricket coaching per week alongside their main programme of study. In addition, these students gain access to ECB coaching qualifications and the chance to train and play at The Oval. During the summer term our students will join with members of Lilian Bayliss Cricket Academy and George Abbott School Cricket Academy to form A Surrey County Cricket Academy Team.

Our Criminology, Sociology and Law students welcomed Barrister Dr. Ellie Brown to the College for a fascinating presentation on prison segregation. Ellie completed a PhD at The University of Cambridge on segregation in the English prison system. In addition to her informative talk, Ellie spent time giving students valuable advice on their options after college.



As part of our Hispanic Heritage month celebrations, we were thrilled to welcome speakers from My Uncle is Not Pablo Escobar and LatinXcluded: a youth campaign group who campaign for the voice of young Latinos in London to be heard. The morning was spent inspiring our students and sharing how they can get involved with the LatinX community.



Our Year 2 Travel and Tourism students recently attended an apprenticeship awareness day with British Airways at their Heathrow Waterside Headquarters. Students were informed about BA apprenticeships and degree programmes, as well as having the opportunity to ask questions of current apprentices. Our students rated the experience as 10/10 and three students have already applied for next year's programme.



Earlier this term, five students attended a 'Model United Nations' simulation residential at The University of Cambridge. The Model United Nations is a scheme designed to help future politicians and civic leaders understand how the UN operates, develop their research skills, practice public speaking and discover how the UN impacts different countries. The students stayed at Sidney Sussex College and attended the opening ceremony at the Babbage Lecture Theatre where they heard a keynote speech given by Sir Simon McDonald, the former Permanent Under-Secretary of Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs

The students were placed in different committees and given a problematic simulation which they had to resolve using their communication, diplomacy and teamwork skills. The event culminated in a dinner at Magdalene College.

The next conference will be held in New York next March where students will have the opportunity to meet British Diplomats at the British Embassy, participate fully in the conference at the Hilton Hotel and also attend the closing ceremony which will be held at the United Nations' headquarters.



Chaplaincy

The Chaplaincy here at SFX is at the heart of our college. The Spirit of the Gospel is at the centre of our way of life, relationships and community. We want to accompany each student on their journey through college, offering support and opportunities to develop spiritually, morally and intellectually. Our recent visitors from Ofsted commented on the warm, welcoming and safe environment we have created which allows all members of the community to flourish. They also saw first-hand students living out the college values of: kindness; service; faith; honesty; courage; respect; inclusion and forgiveness.

Our Chaplaincy base (Rm 049) provides a space for students to socialise, study, play board games as well as apprise Deacon Tony of their day and find out what's happening in Chaplaincy. Chaplaincy meetings take place each Wednesday where Deacon Tony and members of the Chaplaincy Group discuss the work of the Chaplaincy, as well as plan charity events and social action activities. All members of the SFX community are welcome to join the Chaplaincy; if you are keen to get involved with the Chaplaincy, then please email our College Chaplain, Deacon Tony: a.flavin@sfx.ac.uk



Earlier this term, the Chaplaincy was overwhelmed with their request for second-hand clothes. Two dozen clothes-filled bin liners were donated to the Ace of Clubs charity shop who support those in our community who are experiencing homelessness, including those who are sleeping rough or are living in temporary or insecure housing.

12 students from the Chaplaincy group visited the charity to ascertain their priority needs in the run up to Christmas. Specific food items, toiletries and clothing items were cited which we have been collecting during Advent.



A Macmillan Coffee Morning was held on Monday 2 October. 15 students helped sell cakes which had been baked and donated by members of the Saint Francis Xavier community. There was a Rocky Road bake-off between two different types and one student's grandmother made a Jamaican Ginger and Rum Cake that proved particularly popular. A total of £110 was raised for the Macmillan Cancer charity

This September, some of the College Houses were renamed to reflect Catholic places of pilgrimage. The eight Houses are now known as : Abijan; Camino; Guadelupe; Holy Fatima; Jerusalem; Knock; Lourdes; and Walsingham. Each term, House Services are held in the Chapel. During these services, students have been learning about the origin of their house names. During the Camino House Service for example, Mr Torras (pictured below) related his experience of walking the Camino de Santiago twice.



Friday 15th December was Christmas Jumper Day at the College, although as the photo to the left demonstrates there were more staff who got involved than students!

There was also a Christmas dessert Bake-Off with staff culinary talents on show. Highlights included a Bailey's cheesecake, a chocolate torte, a traditional Polish biscuit cake and some delicious macarons. At this point in time, I am unable to share which was the winning dish as the winner is yet to be announced.

All money raised from the day went to The Ace of Clubs Charity

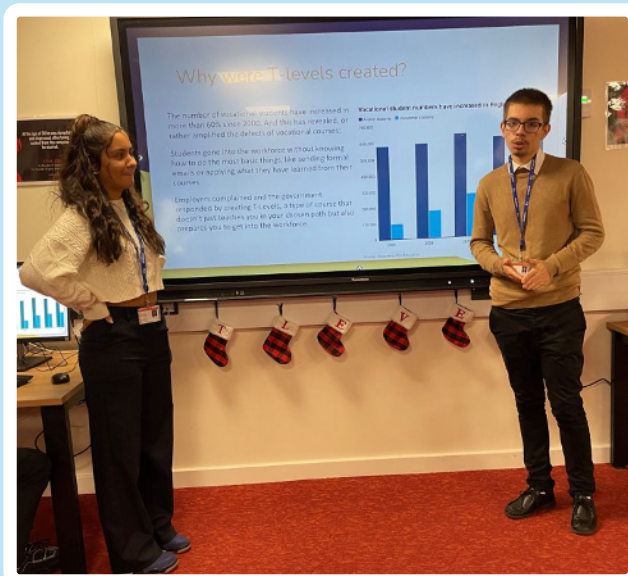
T Level update

Our T Level portfolio has expanded this year. We now have three courses on offer with a fourth planned to commence in September 2024. This year students have been able to choose from Management and Administration, Education and Early years or Accounting. All three of these courses are delivered in state of the art facilities, similar to those students might experience in the workplace. For example, students of Early Years have access to a practice nursery which they have been using to develop and hone skills such as 'play' which they will need on their industry placement.

From September 2024 we will be adding the Media, Broadcast and Production T level to our offer and have been given the go-ahead to develop an area of the college to provide a brand new film and media studio which will be kitted out with the latest industry-standard equipment.

For those of you who are not familiar with T Levels, they are a Level 3 qualification, taken as an alternative to A levels and BTECs, that enables students to develop the vocational and technical skills necessary to follow a chosen career pathway. The qualifications have been created in partnership with industry specialists and are available in a range of sectors from early years and education to accounting and the digital industries. Part of the qualification involves students undertaking a 45-day industrial placement.

The industry placements have allowed students to put what they have learned in the classroom into practice and, so far, feedback from employers that the College has worked with has been incredibly positive. Just this week, our first year management and administration students ran a networking social event with employers and other stakeholders. They shared what they have been doing on the course over the first term as well as how the course is helping them acquire and develop the essential transferable skills that are a necessary pre-requisite for the workplace. If this is a taste of things to come, these students are definitely on the path of becoming industry leaders of the future.



January Exams

Public Exams for BTEC/CTEC and the Maths Award in Number & Measure will take place from 8th January 2024. It is important that students prepare thoroughly for these exams; we are suggesting that, on average, students should be doing 2-3 hours of revision per day over the break. Students should check Dashboard for dates, times and locations of each examination. Morning exams commence promptly at 9am and afternoon exams at 1.30pm. Students are expected to arrive at least 30 minutes before the published start time for each examination. May I ask for parents'/ carers' help in ensuring that students arrive to their exams in plenty of time. Thank you.

OfSTED

As I'm sure you are aware, the College was inspected on Tuesday 21st through to Friday 24th November 2023. I am very pleased to share that we have been judged as a 'Good' college with 'Outstanding' features in Personal Development and High Needs. We are delighted with this outcome and pleased that the work of the College, especially our students' achievements, has been recognised by Ofsted. We expect the full report to be published early in the new year.

Essential 8 Awards

In the last week of term students' achievements were recognised at The College's Essential 8 Awards. Students were nominated by their teachers and Heads of House for demonstrating aptitude in one or more of the SFX Essential 8 skills: listening; speaking; problem solving; creativity; staying positive; aiming high; leadership; and teamwork. These particular skills have been chosen by the college as we believe them to be key transferable skills that will not only contribute to students' achievements while they are with us but will also stand them in good stead for life beyond the College. My congratulations to all the award winners.



Enrichment at St Francis Xavier

The enrichment programme at St Francis Xavier provides students with the opportunity to develop new interests, become more knowledgeable and skilled in an area, boost their self confidence and benefit from doing something away from the subjects they are studying. Increasingly, employers and universities say they are looking for applicants with a wide range of transferable skills; the CBI say that over 70% of employers want employability skills to be a top educational priority. Skills such as independence, team working, communication and problem solving are developed through these extra-curricular activities which "enrich" the student experience and make our young people competitive applicants as apprentices, employees and university undergraduates. We encourage all students to get involved with the activities on offer. So far this year, students have participated in a wide range of activities including:

- Young Enterprise; Culture Cafe; Safe Space (LGBTQ+ student group); Book Club; Theatre Club; Creative Writing; Model UN; Chess Club; Puzzle Club; Drama production.
- Sport: netball, table tennis, badminton, men's/ women's football, men's/women's basketball; cricket; fitness;

New Facilities

We continue to ensure that the College estate meets the needs of the curriculum, our learners and staff. Our aim is for our students and staff to have access to high quality, modern and inspiring facilities. Several projects were completed over the summer including:

The erection of a canopy in "The Quad" to provide additional social space for students.



An upgrade of the college gym, which now provides a more contemporary space for students and staff to "work-out" in. The number of student inductions has increased significantly since the gym opened at the end of August and it is pleasing to see students being proactive with regard to their physical and mental health and wellbeing.



The entrance to the college, complete with a new ceiling, flooring, and lighting, now provides a bright welcome to the college as students and visitors. We have also had some lights installed above the mural of Saint Francis Xavier

Vaping

We have seen an increase in the number of students vaping this term, both inside the college and in the local area. It is worth remembering that it is illegal to purchase or use a vape under the age of 18 and that the College has a strict policy on vaping. Anyone caught vaping on site will be dealt with in line with the College Code of Conduct and persistent offenders can expect to be temporarily excluded from the College. Please be aware that we reserve the right to confiscate vapes if students are caught in possession of them. .

Open Day

In November, over 750 prospective students and their families visited the College to learn about all the courses on offer for those considering studying with us next year. Prospective students were greeted by our wonderful student ambassadors before having the opportunity to visit different departments to learn more detailed information about each course and participate in a range of course-related activities.



Can you or your employer help London plug its skills gaps?

Are you or your employer able to support the College in addressing London's skills deficits? If so, we would love to hear from you. We are looking for employers who would be willing to work with our students in delivering work-related skills and offering work placements or other industry experiences. We are particularly keen on hearing from you if you work in the following sectors: health and social care; hospitality; creative; construction; digital; financial; green (sustainability).

If you believe you or your employer can help please email Natalie: n.green@sfx.ac.uk

Key dates for your diary

Last Day of Term for Students : Thursday 21 December 2023 (Reading Day)

Term	First Day	Half Term	Last Day
Spring Term 2024	Monday 8th January 2024	Monday 12th February 2024 - Friday 16th February 2024	Thursday 28th March 2024
Monday 8th January 2024: January exams commence			
Thursday 11th January 2024: GCSE English and Maths results day			
Tuesday 27th February 2024: Progress review Evening: 4.30pm - 7.30pm			
Wednesday 6th March 2024 : Open Day Fair - Lessons finish at 12.50 pm			
Thursday 21st March 2024: BTEC unit results day			
18th-22nd March 2024: End of Term Exam Week			
Mon 25th March - Fri 29th March 2024: Holy Week			



Congratulations to the College netball team who recorded their first win of the season earlier this term, beating Newham Sixth Form College by 17 goals to 8.



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