

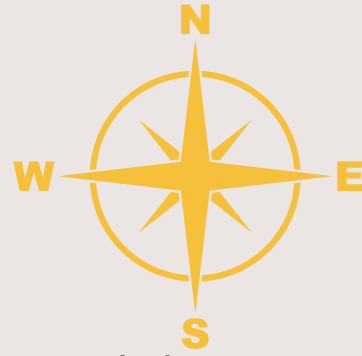
THE LORETO TIMES

DECEMBER 2023



Rooted, Responsive, Relevant

'Keeping Our Focus Fixed.'



In September, our new Pastoral Theme was launched for the Academic Year 2023–2024. *'Keeping our focus fixed.'* This theme has been interweaved across all departments and subject areas. The theme was inspired by the Mary Ward Compass for Loreto Schools which guides everything we do. Each student was also presented with a credit card sized copy of our new school prayer.



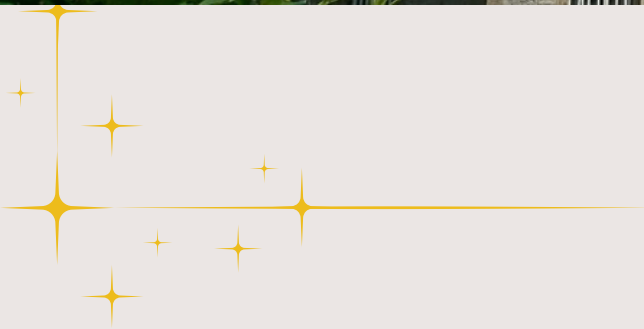
Welcome to the New Academic Year



Mary Ward

Loreto Grammar School, Omagh

2023–2024



Pastoral Theme 2023/24

Loreto Grammar
School, Omagh

Faith



Opportunity



Commitment



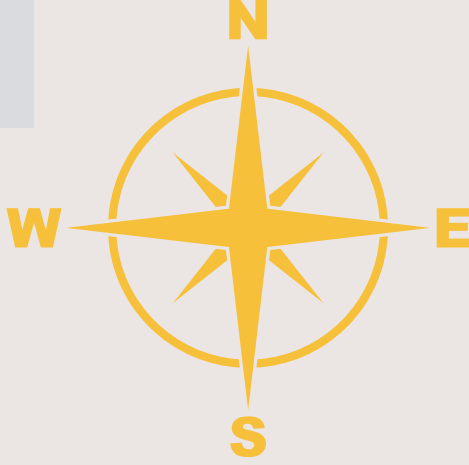
Understanding



Service



September 2023



INTRODUCING



LORETO GRAMMAR
SCHOOL

Senior Leadership Team 2024

YEAR 10 STUDENTS STUDY SPANISH FOR THE FIRST TIME

Learning Spanish for the first time has been an amazing experience. I have loved learning all about the culture, food, and the countries where Spanish is spoken. I look forward to my Spanish lessons twice a week as I am greeted warmly when I enter the classroom and the teacher creates a fun working environment. In a short time I feel that I have learned a lot.

Despite my class having the nickname "ratas", I think we are really Ms Fahy's favourite class. We chose the name ourselves and although Señora Fahy made it clear there were more pleasant names, we wouldn't budge!

Hannah Forrest 10A2

It has been amazing learning Spanish for the first time. In a few months I have learned about school items and school subjects, so when I go to Spain I could talk about that. I have also learned so much about the Spanish-speaking world and its culture. I am definitely looking forward to the rest of the year, learning Spanish with Ms Fahy and 10a2 aka "las ratas".

Katie Duffy 10A2

¡HOLA!

Friends Programme



The long established Loreto Year 12 Friendship programme returned in Term 1. Each Year 8 Student was assigned a Year 12 Friend to help them navigate the transition to Post Primary School.



Our Year 12 Students excelled in their positions of responsibility and many went above and beyond for their Year 8 Friend. ***'Truly great friends are hard to find, difficult to leave, and impossible to forget.'*** – Selena Gomez



Year 12 and Year 8 students enjoyed a 'meet up' on Wednesday 20th September during PD Class.

Year 8 Testimonials

"I am so thankful for my Year 12 friend, I have truly found a friend for life"

"My year 12 friend helped to make the move to Loreto so much easier"

"I really looked forward to my Year 12 visiting every week"

"My year 12 friend helped me to find my way"



Year 12 Friends Programme Final Celebration



September 2023

European Language Day Celebrations at Loreto

To celebrate European Day of Languages this year, on 26th September, the 10A1 French class treated the rest of the year group to a lively rendition of “Y’a une Pie” – a traditional French song, which 10A1 delivered with their usual creativity and panache - incorporating flute, violin, actions and dancing. For staff members in the audience, especially Mrs Fegan and Ms Fahy, this was a real musical blast from the past because, as pupils, they had been taught the song in their own Loreto school days by former Head of French, Mrs Anne Cassidy. Vive la musique! To watch the full performance, visit our social media pages.

On the same day, the Loreto French department hosted a live online Languages Facts Quiz, where some of our own pupils competed against participants from Omagh CBS, Saint Columb’s College, Derry and Thornhill College, Derry. Thanks to modern technology, over 110 players from the four schools battled it out against each other without leaving the comfort of their Languages classrooms. A pupil from Thornhill ended up as the eventual winner but Loreto acquitted themselves well, showing impressive knowledge and speed.



10A1 enjoyed a special French Treat following their wonderful performance.

Marina

Marina, our Year 11 Exchange Student arrived at the end of September to Loreto. She joined a Year 11 Form Class and immersed herself in experiences and subjects, exploring and experiencing what it means to be a 'Loreto Girl.'

Marina speaks to The Loreto Times about her Catalan Culture.



Què es el català? /What is catalan?

- El català és una llengua poc coneguda i normalment es confon amb el castellà, però té moltes coses diferents al castellà. Per exemple els accents, òbviament, les paraules canvien i algunes lletres també canvien.

- Catalan is a not very well-known language and is usually confused with Spanish, but it is very different in a lot of ways. For example accents, obviously, the words are different, and some letters also changed.

On es parla? /Where is it spoken?

- El català es parla a Catalunya, una comunitat autònoma d'Espanya.

- Catalan is spoken in Catalonia, a part of Spain.

El menjar català i espanyol /Catalan and Spanish food

- Espanya es un país amb molta cultura. Gran part d'aquesta cultura és el menjar i la cuina. Els plats més típics d'Espanya son el pa amb tomàquet, que es de Catalunya, la truita de patates, el pernil ibèric i les croquetes.

- Spain is a country with a lot of culture. A big part of this culture is food and cooking. The most typical dishes from Spain are bread with tomato, which is from Catalonia, potato omelette, Iberian ham and croquettes.

Llaminadures típiques d'Espanya /Typical Spanish sweets.

- A espanya tenim unes llaminadures que vagis a on vagis les trobaràs. Aquestes són els Chupa Chups, que són una marca espanyola, els xiclets de meló, ossets Haribo i les llengües pica-pica.

- In Spain we have some typical sweets that you can find anywhere. These are Chupa Chups, that are a Spanish brand, melon chewing gum, Haribos and salted sugar tongs.



Marina



Esports més practicats / Most played sports

- Els esports més jugats a Espanya són el futbol, el basquet, la escalada i el muntanyisme i el judo.
- The most played sports are football or soccer, basketball, hiking and climbing, and judo.

Equips de futbol / Football teams

- El futbol és l'esport número u a Espanya. Els equips més famosos són el FC Barcelona, el Real Madrid, el FC Girona i l'Atlètic de Madrid.
- Football is the number one sport in Spain. The most famous teams are FC Barcelona, Real Madrid, FC Girona and Atletico de Madrid.

Botigues de roba / Fashion shops

- Unes de les botigues més famoses a Espanya són Pull&Bear, Zara, Bershka, El corte inglés, Stradivarius, Mango, Zalando, Desigual and Benetton.
- Some of the most famous fashion shops in Spain are Pull&Bear, Zara, Bershka, El corte inglés, Stradivarius, Mango, Zalando, Desigual and Benetton.

Muntanyes d'Espanya / Mountains in Spain

- Espanya es famosa per les seves platges, els paisatges paradisiacs, la calor i l'ambient festiu. Però el que molta gent no aprecia d'Espanya es la diversitat de coses que es poden fer, per això us vull ensenyar les muntanyes més boniques d'Espanya, que moltes vegades no es tenen en compte. El Teide, a Tenerife, les Illes Canàries; la serralada de Montserrat, a prop de Barcelona; el Mulhacén, part de la Sierra Nevada, a Granada; i l'Aneto, en el Pirineus, a Huesca.

- Spain is famous for its beaches, paradisiacal landscapes, heat and festive atmosphere. But what many people don't appreciate about Spain is the diversity of things that can be done, which is why I want to show you the most beautiful mountains in Spain, which are often overlooked. El Teide, in Tenerife, Canary Islands; the mountain range of Montserrat, near Barcelona; the Mulhacén, part of the Sierra Nevada, in Granada; and Aneto, in the Pyrenees, in Huesca.

Gent famosa d'Espanya / Famous people from Spain

- Rafa Nadal, jugador de tennis; Paco Rabanne, propietari de la empresa de colònies; Pablo Picasso, artista; Miguel de Cervantes, escriptor del Quijote; Julio Iglesias, cantant; Salvador Dalí, artista; Fernando Alonso, conductor de formula 1.
- Rafa Nadal, tennis player; Paco Rabanne, owner of the cologne company; Pablo Picasso, artist; Miguel de Cervantes, writer of Don Quijote; Julio Iglesias, singer; Salvador Dalí, artist; Fernando Alonso, Formula 1 driver.

Cultura / Culture

- La cultura recau en les tradicions i les coses boniques que es volen recordar. Part de la cultura d'Espanya es pot representar amb el Flamenco, un ball típic acompanyat de la seva pròpia música. A la cultura catalana es tenen en compte les sardanes, un ball típic català també acompanyat amb música catalana; les festes de la Mercè, unes festes celebrades a Barcelona cada any. I una de les millors parts de la cultura catalana són els castellers, una activitat grupal en la que es fan torres humanes. Aquí us deixo un vídeo perquè veieu com són els castellers: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_nZEd3enToQ



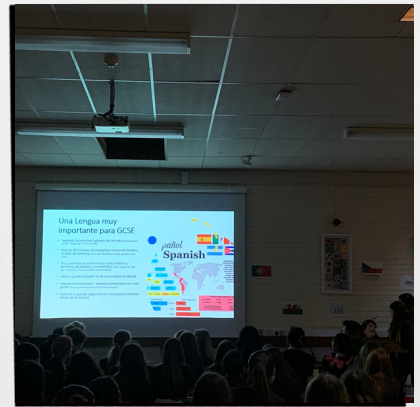
September 2023

Mrs Gavin, Vice Principal for Curriculum organised a special Assembly, celebrating the range of cultures and languages we have in our student body.

10 Students spoke in their mother tongues, telling Year 10 students about the culture, food and traditions of their home country. Students got the chance to taste some European food and broaden their understanding of global culture.



We were so lucky to have our Mandarin Chinese, tutors present from the South West College.



Marina, our exchange student, told us about Spanish Culture.



European Language Day

MODERN LANGUAGES

The Timeless Tongues

Year 11 linguist, Cara, shares her view on the importance of learning Latin, as the root of all modern languages.

“If you speak to man in any language it will go to his head, but if you speak to him in his own language, no matter how old or outdated, it will always go to his heart.” Those were the words of Nelson Mandela and are undoubtedly a far simpler and metaphorical way to dilute the speech I have prepared for you today. My most esteemed peers, in this vast world of language, there exist hidden gems, ancient and archaic, not-so-modern tongues that have and have not stood the universal test known as time. These linguistic treasures hold within them the whispers of history, the echoes of forgotten civilizations, and the wisdom of our ancestors. Preserving these less spoken languages is like safeguarding the vibrant threads of cultural diversity. These languages are the living embodiments of traditions, customs, and distinct viewpoints cherished by specific communities. By nurturing and advocating for these languages, we ensure that diverse voices and narratives thrive, fostering inclusivity, and honouring the rich tapestry of human experiences.

Regrettably, certain languages have endured the plight of neglect and marginalization throughout history. For instance, venerable languages like Latin and Ancient Greek, despite their profound contributions to literature, philosophy, and scientific lexicon, often find themselves relegated to the periphery of modern society. Similarly, indigenous languages such as Navajo, Ainu, or Nahuatl have faced the unfortunate consequences of neglect and suppression, resulting in a decline in their number of speakers and the gradual erosion of their cultural heritage. It is of utmost importance that we acknowledge and appreciate the immense significance of these linguistic treasures, as they encapsulate a wealth of knowledge and offer unparalleled insights into our world and history.

Including spoken languages in school curriculum then has numerous benefits. Firstly, it promotes cultural appreciation and understanding among students. By learning these languages, students gain insight into different cultures, traditions, and ways of thinking. Additionally, studying less spoken languages helps develop semantic skills, such as listening, speaking, and reading, which can enhance cognitive abilities and improve overall language proficiency. Moreover, it encourages inclusivity and enriches the learning environment in which students like us can strive.

Speaking old or not-so-modern languages can have a significant impact on cognitive function as I have mentioned before. When we engage with these languages, our brains are stimulated in unique ways. Research suggests that bilingualism or multilingualism, including the mastery of older languages, can enhance cognitive abilities such as memory, attention, and problem-solving skills. This linguistic exercise requires our brains to switch between different language systems, leading to improved cognitive flexibility and executive control. Additionally, the complex grammar and syntax of not-so-modern languages can challenge our working memory, leading to its enhancement over time. So, by speaking these languages, we not only connect with the past and preserve cultural heritage, but we also give our brains a scientifically proven cognitive boost!

MODERN LANGUAGES

The Timeless Tongues

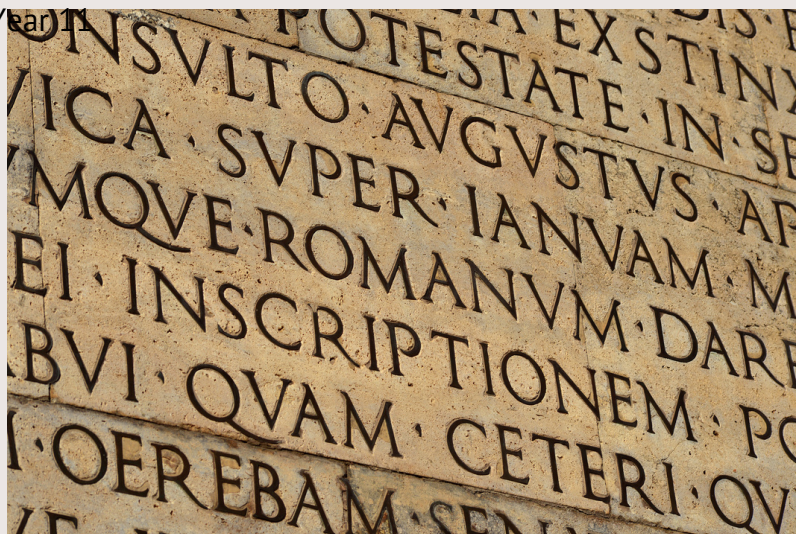
Year 11 linguist, Cara, shares her view on the importance of learning Latin, as the root of all modern languages.

One inspiring example of a successful language revitalization effort is the revival of the Hawaiian language. After years of decline due to colonization and cultural suppression, there has been a concerted effort to reclaim and revitalize the Hawaiian language. Through the establishment of immersion schools, community language programs, and the integration of Hawaiian language courses in educational institutions, the Hawaiian language has experienced a remarkable resurgence. This revitalization effort has not only helped preserve the cultural heritage of Hawaii but has also endorsed a sense of pride and identity among the Hawaiian people. It serves as a shining example of how dedicated efforts can revive and rejuvenate a less spoken language.

Learning Latin was definitely a challenge, but oh, was it worth it! As I delved into the intricacies of this ancient language, I discovered a whole new world of knowledge and connection to the past. The struggle to decipher complex grammar and translate ancient texts pushed me to develop patience, perseverance, and critical thinking skills. And you know what? Those skills have proven to be incredibly valuable in my daily life. Latin has helped me improve my vocabulary, enhance my understanding of grammar, and even deepen my appreciation for the roots of modern languages. In some angles Latin could be seen as the mother of most if not all European languages. Her seeds embedded into our own tongues and blossoming into the modern languages of today. It may come as a shock, but we use Latin words in our lives daily and you probably are able to throw a guess as to what some Latin words mean.

In conclusion, embracing and speaking not-so-modern languages is a powerful way to preserve cultural diversity, foster inclusivity, and celebrate the richness of different cultures. By learning and using these languages, we honour the heritage and wisdom of our ancestors, while also expanding our own horizons and understanding of the world. Let us continue to value and promote the beauty and significance of these timeless tongues, ensuring that they thrive and contribute to the vibrant tapestry of our global society. I would like to end my speech with a quote by Irish author and world-wide book translator Sean Ó Muirechéain. "Language. It is not a skill nor is it a talent. You cannot pick it up in a day and you can most definitely not lose it in a day. It is a gift. It is a privilege. And most of all it is a birth right."

Cara Ní Cheallaigh



YEAR 14 THINK PINK FUNDRAISING EVENTS



Martha, Year 11 was the lucky winner of our Think Pink Hamper



Year 14 Band members from 'Sile' before the concert



Year 14 listen to an informative talk from Breast Cancer nurses.

On Wednesday 18th October, in the heart of Breast Cancer Awareness Month, Year 14 and Miss Cumiskey hosted our annual 'Think Pink', Breast Cancer awareness day, to reflect on a battle that knows no boundaries.

Ciara Chambers, from the Health and Social Care Trust, gave a comprehensive demonstration to Year 14, empowering them to take charge of their own health, to encourage the women in their lives to schedule those essential screenings, and to be vigilant about any unusual changes in their bodies. Awareness saves lives.

Our Year 14 Prefects organised a variety of fundraising activities, including a Year 8 Treasure Hunt, (facilitated by the JPIC Prefects), a Pamper Hamper Raffle, sale of pink ribbons and the highlight of the week, a special concert from 'Sile'.



LORETO TO LUSAKA

The Spirit of Paul McGirr Foundation

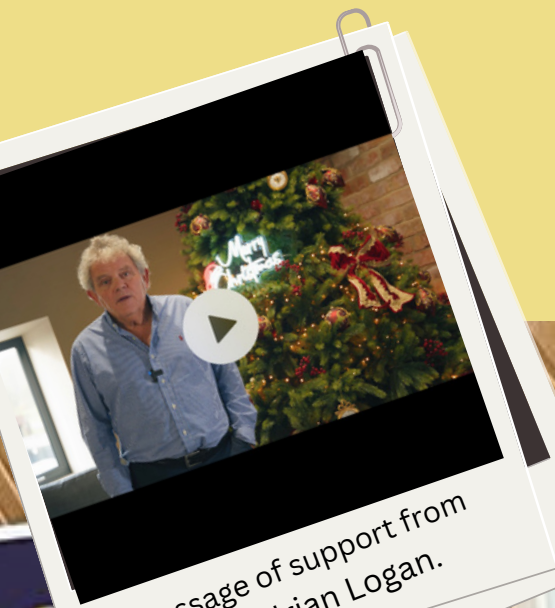
OUR VOLUNTEER TEAM ARE BUSY ORGANISING WONDERFUL FUNDRAISING EVENTS TO HELP BUILD A NEW HOME ECONOMIC'S CLASSROOM IN THE TYRONE SECONDARY SCHOOL, LUSAKA, ZAMBIA.

Our team will travel to Lusaka in 2024 and are excited to visit and experience the wonderful life and culture alongside The Spirit of Paul McGirr Foundation.

We hope our school community will support these fundraising events to help raise funds for such a worthy project.

Term 1 has launched a variety of Fundraising endeavors, including a 5K Christmas Fun Run, A B-Perfect Hamper Raffle, a Quiz night as well as a special shout out from Tyrone royalty, Adrian Logan!

On Friday 1st December Dearbhaile hosted a Quiz Night in her local parish (Aghyaran) to fundraise for the Loreto to Lusaka trip. It was a fun filled evening. Thank you to all who attended and sponsored the event. Well done also to Clara and Emer, who organised a Fun Run in their local area of Loughmacrory. The event was so well attended and supported. We are so appreciative of all the donations made on the day.



Message of support from Mr Adrian Logan.



Wonderful cupcakes, baked in the Lusaka Colours



Dearbhaile and her parents at the quiz she organised.



Maths News



Mathematician of the Month Term 1

The Mathematics department have had a highly successful Term 1, this year, welcoming our new Year 8 students into the world of Mathematic study.

This has been an enlightening experience for all. Each month, a year 8 student, from each form class is recognised as 'Mathematician of the Month.' Students are lauded across a range of skills including accuracy, presentation of work, effort in class and teacher's choice. Well done Year 8 and the Maths Department.





Home Economics Year 8

Chocolate Truffles Recipe

Ingredients

100g Margarine
15 plain biscuits
2 tblsp of chopped fruit
2 dstsp of drinking
chocolate

100ml condensed milk
25g vermicelli
25g coconut

Method

1. Crush biscuits until fine using rolling pin. Add drinking chocolate.
2. Chop fruit finely and add to crushed biscuits with condensed milk.
3. Melt margarine and add to dry ingredients and mix well.
4. Leave in refrigerator for 20 minutes. Wash dishes and tidy table.
5. Spread vermicelli on one plate and coconut on another.
6. Lift one teaspoonful of mixture at a time and roll into and dip in vermicelli or coconut. Place carefully in petit four cases and refrigerate. Place in box.





Year 14 Literacy Prefects organised a Harry Potter Evening for KS3 Students

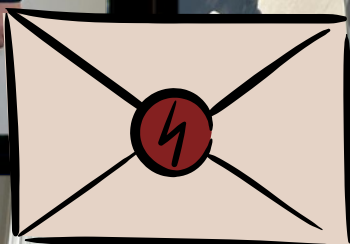
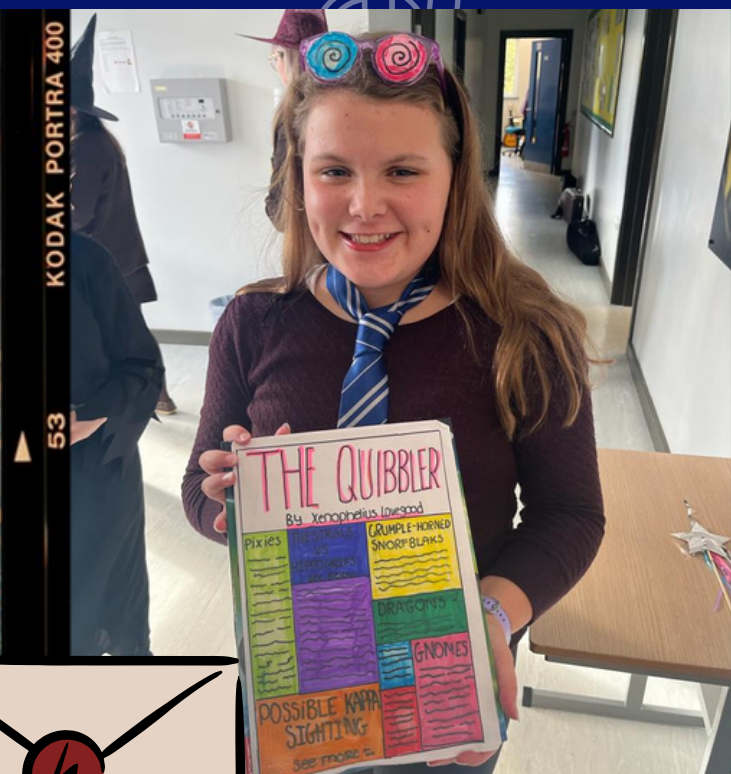
HARRY POTTER EVENING

"Together, my fellow Literacy Prefects and I, organised a 'Harry Potter Day' that brought the magic of our childhood back for one evening. To do this we allowed all who joined, to dress up as the characters that they admire, to truly submerge themselves in the Harry Potter experience. Secondly, we organised a game where they could send letters to the Ministry of Magic, via paper airplane, to notify Arthur Weasley of any magical disturbances and a few who dressed up as Mr Weasley's sons, chose to write to their father about the delightful sweets they wished for him to bring home. Thirdly, we organised a treasure hunt filled with magical clues that let the participants' imaginations run wild and strengthened their problem-solving skills. Eventually, with the great minds of all who joined, we found the final clue that led us to the very heart of our school: the library. At the library, we were led to a special corner which held one of our brilliant Literacy Prefects waiting in her witch's hat, with a copy of Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban. In her reading, of an extract from the novel, we were reminded of the power of literature as it transported us back to a time of frosty winter nights, where we cuddled up to our parents as they read to us our favourite childhood stories and remembered the comfort and hope they provided us. After the final part to our Harry Potter evening, we sent our joyous participants off with goodie bags filled to the brim with all things wonderful and inspired them to never give up on books as they can transport you to worlds that transcend the very realm of possibility."



November 2023

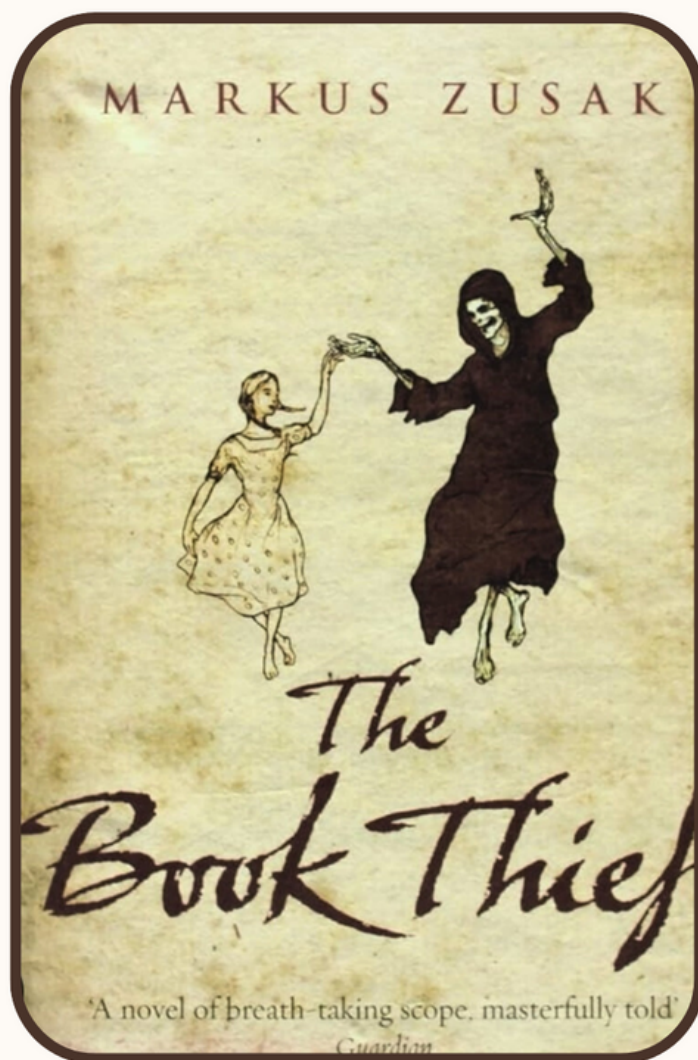
HARRY POTTER EVENING



Book Recommendations!

THE BOOK THIEF

Where do I begin with this book? I can honestly say that it was one of the best I've ever read (and that's quite high praise, coming from someone who reads as obsessively as me). 'The Book Thief' is a piece historical fiction written by Markus Zusak, which is set in Germany during the Second World War. Its protagonist is Liesel Meminger, who, as the title suggests, has a penchant for stealing the odd book. Yet 'The Book Thief' is a story of much greater substance than that: it delves into themes of friendship, family, and the importance of reading in a society where books are burned by the thousand. It has an amazing cast of characters and a storyline that will have you on the edge of your seat. I cannot recommend it highly enough!



By Ella Devlin, Senior
Literacy Prefect





ECO NEWS

Climate Champions

A group of Year 9 pupils attended the Climate Champions Event in Omagh, organised by Fermanagh and Omagh District Council.

They joined pupils from all the local secondary schools to hear about several environmental issues. Speakers from N.I. Water, Conservation Volunteers, Omagh Youth Forum and Environmental officials from the Council gave very interesting talks on a variety of topics impacting our local areas. This included the importance of preserving our bogs as they are the most efficient way to capture carbon; the need to conserve water usage in our homes and businesses and the impact of plastic waste in our seas and beaches. Pupils also had an opportunity to get involved in planting flower bulbs in the grounds of the Leisure Centre. This was a very enjoyable and informative day for the Loreto students.





Year 14 Life Skills

Senior Teacher for Community Links, Ms Falls developed an important and practical course of lunch time, 'Life Skills' sessions for our Year 14 Students. The aim of the four week course was to further develop our senior students' skill set and prepare them for 'Life After Loreto.'

Students were exposed to a vast range of activities and experiences.

Week 1: 'How to change a tire & car Winter checks.'

Week 2: Community of Lifesavers - Choking and Fainting

Week 3: 'Just Breathe'- Breathing strategies with Ms Lopez- McCann

Week 4: Money Management with Santander



DEBATING NEWS *Concern Debates*



Anna, a member of the Debating Team, provides 'The Loreto Times' with an overview of this term's debating endeavours.

At the start of this year, I decided to join the debate team as I have always had an interest in public speaking and honestly, it has been a highlight of starting Year 13.

For our first debate, we were up against St Louis Grammar School, Kilkeel and we were proposing the motion that "African nations will regret their reliance on China." I was the chairperson, so, luckily, I got to experience the thrill of the debate without having to deliver a speech. I was impressed by the level of talent and debating prowess displayed by both our team and Kilkeel. Considering most of our speakers had not ever done a debate before and our performance was incredible. Unfortunately, we were pipped to the post and suffered our first defeat. Hardly a motivating start to my debate career as I am sure you will agree but as they say, "The only way is up!"

We, of course, were disheartened by this result, but we did not have time to mope as Round 2 against Sacred Heart Grammar School, Newry was fast approaching! This time we were opposing the motion that "African nations must be allowed to develop fossil fuel resources to help lift their people out of poverty" and I was speaker 2. After hours of preparation, research, and meetings with the rest of the team we were finally ready, and this time we were determined to win. Despite being incredibly nervous before delivering my speech, I did my best to deliver it with conviction, but I was glad to get it said without any major hiccups. My favourite part of being a speaker in this debate was listening very closely to each of the other team's speakers and frantically jotting down points that we could use as ammunition for rebuttal and passing them across the table to deliberate. It was thrilling. Our hard work and dedication paid off and to everyone's immense joy... we won!

Finally, our last debate took place on the 19/12/23 and to our surprise it was against the CBS. It was a completely new experience to be debating against people who you know and with whom you are friends, but this familiarity just created a sense of rivalry and a fierce desire to win! It was at quite an awkward time, as both us and our CBS counterparts were knee-deep in mocks, but we managed to gradually form a team and a plan. The big day finally rolled around, and you could cut the tension with a knife. We have not received the result for this round yet so I cannot say too much but I am so proud of our performance and our level of research impressed even me.

Overall, debate has been an incredibly positive experience, encouraging us to step out of comfort zones and think on our feet while also forming close friendships. Of course, I am sad to see the end of this year's debate season, but I am optimistic for next year.

Since the publication of this article, the Loreto Debate team have been confirmed as winners of their most recent debate against the Christian Brothers Grammar School, Omagh.

66 Year 14 Sociology Trip to QUB

Year 14 Sociology students, accompanied by Mrs McElroy, attended the annual A-Level Sociology conference at Queen's University, Belfast. The conference addressed relevant examination topics. The students enjoyed this enriching subject experience.



SISTERS IN PROGRAMME

Caitlin Arruda Gallagher- Year 13

Caitlin is a Year 13 Pupil at Loreto. As part of the 'Sisters IN' Programme, Caitlin participated in the '4Voices' Competition along with 12 other incredible females, across the North. Described as one of the 'future leaders of Northern Ireland' Caitlin spoke, in Stormont on 9th December, on the pertinent topic of 'Progression in Northern Ireland' reflecting on what the next 25 years will look like for the North.



MEET THE PARTICIPANTS



Caitlin

I am ambitious and perceptive
I am mixed race from Brazilian
and Irish heritage
I have a passion for art, music and literature
I am focused on developing my
capabilities and potential



We wish to offer heartfelt congratulations to Caitlin who delivered her speech 'It's already been time for change' in the Senate Chamber, Stormont. We are all incredibly proud of Caitlin- she spoke with integrity, sincerity, maturity and such confidence while she delivered her vision for the future, rooted firmly in her own personal insights. Caitlin epitomised what it means to be a part of the Loreto community, taking a stand against injustice, being an agent for change while remaining encircled in hope and joy. Well done Caitlin!



Social Outreach Appeal

CONCERN
worldwide

Year 8 Concern Digital Fast

'Whatever you do will be insignificant, but it is very important that you do it.' - Mahatam Gandhi

Isabel Brennan from Concern was delighted to receive a cheque for £1005 from Year 8 students representing their Year Group. Students became real agents of social change by participating in a 24hour Digital Fast, raising much needed funds to help transform the lives of those living in extreme poverty, tackling its root causes, and building resilience. Mrs Cullinan, Principal and Mrs McElroy, JPIC Coordinator are pictured with the students.



World Kindness Day- 13th November 2023

'Changing The World, One Action At A Time.'

Beth Thornton (Year 11), on World Day of Kindness, reflects on how kindness may be the world's biggest secret weapon.



Morgan Freeman was once asked, "How do we change the world?" His answer? "One small act of kindness at a time." Kindness is a type of behaviour marked by acts of generosity, consideration, or showing concern for others without expecting praise in return. Kindness is a universal language. It transcends borders, languages, and religions. Regardless of our differences, a genuine act of kindness can bridge gaps, build connections, and remind us of our shared humanity. Kindness may have a larger impact than we believe so it poses a question, why is kindness important?

Think about the times when someone's kindness made a lasting impact on your life. Maybe it was a teacher who took the time to understand your struggles, a friend who stood by you during tough times, or even a stranger who offered a helping hand when you least expected it. These moments aren't just fleeting instances—they are threads that weave the fabric of our memories, creating a tapestry of shared experiences. In this world filled with war and bloodshed we should not let ourselves be driven by anger and violence but show compassion and integrity. Kindness not only avoids unnecessary brutality so prevalent in the world, but also promotes one's own state of mind. To be kind is to show compassion and not be marred by ugly, negative emotions. It is proven scientifically that being kind, in fact, reduces stress levels and improves our mental health.

Often kindness is perceived as naivety or weakness because it has a very gentle approach, but I believe this is a very pessimistic view. A prime example of kindness is Mother Teresa, who selflessly dedicated her entire life to serving sick children in a foreign country. By showing unwavering strength and kindness to all she encountered, she is the epitome of a kind person. We too can act upon this value by showing empathy and compassion for everyone in our lives. How does kindness make you feel? Have you ever experienced the warmth when you are the recipient of unexpected kindness? How can we make kindness a choice in our daily lives, turning it from a spontaneous act into a deliberate habit?

Every being is deserving of kindness and compassion, be it animals or humans. It is in kindness and the doing of it that will change you in unpredictable ways; it will enrich your life and the lives of those around you. Beyond the personal benefits, kindness has a transformative power on communities. It creates a domino effect, inspiring others to pay forward the goodwill they have received. It's a currency that never devalues; a gift that keeps on giving.

Kindness is not embarrassing. Kindness is not a sign of weakness. Kindness is not something to look past in life. Being kind is about showing up as your true self and inviting others to come as they are. It is meeting yourself and others with compassion and understanding in the present moment. Kindness might not make the world go round but kindness does certainly make the world a better place. Think about the power that a kind gesture, a kind hand, a kind word, or a listening ear can have on someone in a moment when they feel like their whole world is crumbling. Think about the way that it can make an already-good day that much better. Now think about the positive impact on the giver's physical and mental health. The power of kindness is remarkable. We may never know just how big of an impact our small acts of kindness can have on someone else, but we know that kind humans doing kind things are exactly what this world needs more of. I will leave you with this final thought: "In a world where you can be anything, be kind."

PRIZE-GIVING

DECEMBER 2023

Photograph Gallery





MERRY CHRISTMAS

WISHING ALL OUR READERS A HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND A PEACEFUL
NEW YEAR.

OUR CHRISTMAS CARD DESIGN, THIS YEAR, WAS TENURED TO AMY
KELLY (YEAR 9) FOR HER BEAUTIFUL PORTRAYAL OF A NATIVITY
SCENE.

