

Blessed Robert Johnson
Catholic College



Prospectus
Entry to Year 7 September 2008

ETHOS AND MISSION

The person of each individual human being, in his or her material and spiritual needs, is at the heart of Christ's teaching; this is why the promotion of the human person is the goal of the Catholic school.

Pope John Paul II

Blessed Robert Johnson Catholic College is the only Catholic secondary comprehensive in Shropshire. Situated in Wellington it serves students between the ages of 11 and 18 from Telford & Wrekin and across the county. In addition as the only maintained comprehensive school in the area to have a sixth form we are able offer a sound education and excellent pastoral care from the age of 11 to 18.

The college community is enriched by the presence of students from all faith backgrounds and welcomes applications from families who are not Catholic and who are able to support the Christian principles of the college.

The college provides all that would be expected of a school in the 21st Century but it also offers something more. As a Catholic college we are proud to offer an education that is both comprehensive and firmly based on the values of love, justice and reconciliation. Being explicitly Gospel-centred in all we do makes BRJ a very special learning community.

The college has its own chapel where students, staff and visitors are always welcome for private reflection or group prayer and provides many opportunities for individual and collective worship during tutor time and assemblies. Time to reflect on ones life in a structured and supported way is important and the college has an established programme of retreats during which students and staff can spend time away from college to reflect. The Mass is at the heart of our worship and is said every week and at particularly important times throughout the year and throughout a student's journey through BRJ. Assemblies and other liturgies give students of every faith the chance to play an active part in the spiritual life of the college.

*"The college exudes warmth and friendliness. Inspectors commented upon the purposeful atmosphere and the high quality of displays around the buildings."
Ofsted 2007*

Our mission statement

Blessed Robert Johnson Catholic College is dedicated to serving its students. We seek to achieve this by creating a community that is characterised by the teachings of Christ informing, awakening and enriching our young people's understanding of our faith and by encouraging in all a commitment to learning. Our focus is the development of the whole person, the celebration of the dignity of each individual and the recognition that we have a particular responsibility to the poor and marginalised. We aim to provide our young people with the qualities and qualifications that will enable them to lead fulfilling lives and participate actively in promoting a better world. In all that we do we value openness, seek truth and promote hope. Our ambition is summed up in the words: Contributing to a Christ-centred Community .

THE CURRICULUM

The college curriculum is designed to provide students with a broad and balanced programme of study. When students first join the college they all follow a broadly similar curriculum. As they progress from Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4 the curriculum becomes more personalised as it changes to reflect the needs, interests and aspirations of each student.

In **Key Stage 3** students follow courses in Religious Education, English, Mathematics, Science, Art, a modern foreign language (French or Spanish), Geography, History, Information & Communication Technology, Music, Physical Education, Citizenship and Technology.

The curriculum in **Key Stage 4** is much more personalised. All students follow a common core of Religious Education, English Language and Literature, Information & Communication Technology, Mathematics, Double Science, non-exam Physical Education and Citizenship. Beyond that the student follows an elective programme chosen from a range of options. These include a range of courses delivered in the college in traditional subjects such as Art, Business Studies, Child Development, Dance, Food Technology, French, Geography, Graphics, History, Music and Physical Education, Resistant Materials Spanish and Textiles. However students can also choose to follow a range of high quality vocational programmes offered by TCAT, New College and other training providers. Whether a course is studied here at BRJ or at another institution it will lead to a nationally recognised and valuable qualification.



The Oscar Romero Sixth Form Centre



Members of the Sixth Form appreciate the benefit of continuing their studies within familiar surroundings where they know the teachers and the teachers know them. The many courses available provide a sound basis for either university entrance or employment. The college offers a range of AS and A2 courses as well as a Level 3 Course in Leisure & Tourism and a Level 2 course in Business.

As well as serving those students who have been at the college for a number of years, we also welcome applications from young people who wish to transfer from other secondary schools at 16+. A copy of the Oscar Romero Sixth Form Centre Prospectus is available from the college. Please ask about our Sixth Form Open Evening.

Grouping and teaching methods

The emphasis in the college is on meeting the needs of each individual student. The students are taught in sets appropriate to their ability within two bands. More important than the setting structure is the great care our teachers take to use a variety of teaching and learning methods suited to the age, ability and individual needs of the students. These include whole class teaching, group and individual work and self-supported study.

Homework

Homework helps prepare students for lessons and reinforce what has been taught. It also develops very important self-management habits. All students are expected to complete homework in all their subjects on a regular basis. Each student is given a timetable that indicates when homework will be set and what day it is due in. Guidance is also given on how much time should be spent on homework each night. Every student has a 'College Planner' in which to record homework and any other reminders. Parents are asked to check and sign their child's planner regularly.

Special educational needs

We believe that all students, including those with special educational needs, are entitled to a broad and balanced curriculum and should be involved in the full life of the college. This is so that all -not just some- can fulfil their potential as learners, and experience and contribute to the spiritual, cultural and social life of the college.

The high quality of our provision for students who have special educational needs was noted by Ofsted who said that "*Students with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress because of the high quality of care and support they receive throughout the college.*" [Ofsted 2007]

Our provision takes account of the gifts, needs, ambitions and feelings of the individual student and is delivered in partnership with parents. We identify students who are experiencing learning difficulties by using information from the primary schools, feedback from teachers and the results of our screening tests but most importantly by listening to the concerns of the students and their parents.

Additional support is matched to the student's needs and may include extra support in class, specialist teaching from learning support staff in small withdrawal groups, or input from other specialist staff.

The college takes every possible care to make the full curriculum accessible to all students. If you have any concerns about accessibility issues please contact the college so that we can discuss your child's needs.

A full copy of the college's Special Educational Needs Policy is available on request.

Gifted and Talented



As part of our commitment to meet the needs of all children, the college has a Gifted and Talented programme that caters for the most able. Some of these involve extension activities that may take place outside the normal school day or in holidays. Recent examples include musical residential weekends, visits to universities such as Loughborough University's elite sports centre and opportunities to broaden their language skills to include Greek. Students are also able to gain accreditation through extra curricular performing arts activities.

This year our programme has been extended to allow gifted artists to gain a GCSE while still in Key Stage 3 or, if linguistically inclined, to try their hand at Latin.

Sex and Relationships Education (SRE)

The church has long held the view that appropriate education in sex and relationships is an essential part of a young person's formation. The college SRE programme is based on a well respected national programme and is delivered by the Science and Religious Education departments along with specific input from other specialist workers. The programme seeks to ensure that all students accept their own and others' sexuality positively in order to enjoy relationships based on mutual respect, dignity and responsibility. A full copy of the policy can be obtained by contacting the college.

Careers Advice And Work Experience

From Year 7 students are encouraged to think carefully about future courses and their chosen career. Students are guided in making realistic assessments of their strengths and weaknesses and we arrange individual interviews, talks and visits.

Our Connexions worker is on hand to provide counselling and advice and in Key Stage 4 all students undertake a work experience placement to help prepare them for the world beyond the college. Ofsted noted that "*The development of students' work place skills is good.*"

Assessment And Communication

Children make best progress when they and their parents have a clear idea of how they are doing and what they need to do to improve. The college has developed effective ways of communicating this important information.



Reports

Each term students receive their Effort Attainment Report (EAR) to take home. This tells parents about the commitment being shown in each subject so that sustained high levels of effort can be rewarded and lack of it can be addressed. The termly report also indicates what attainment levels are being achieved in each subject so that academic progress can be monitored.

Annually, each student receives a full report to take home. This contains detailed comments from all the

student's teachers on all areas of college life together with attendance and punctuality data.

Parents' Consultation Evenings

Throughout the year we hold a range of parents' evenings. Annually, there is an opportunity for parents to meet all subject teachers to discuss individual students and their progress.

In addition an evening for Year 7 parents is held in the autumn term to meet with form tutors and the head of year to discuss how the new students have settled into the college.

In Year 9 a curriculum information evening is organised for parents during the spring term in order to find out about the Key Stage 4 Curriculum offered at the college and to explain the option system.

A Sixth Form open evening is organised for Year 11 students and parents to discuss what courses will be available in the college sixth form. If you have a child currently attending another school in years 10 or 11 please ask for a Sixth Form prospectus.

Student Care

“The quality of care, guidance and support is good. Strong pastoral support, which results in students feeling safe, provides a caring environment in which students of all ages can flourish.”

Ofsted 2007

The college's pastoral arrangements are designed to ensure that all students can make the most of the learning opportunities available. Our concern for each individual in our community is reflected in our mission statement. All students are given individual tutors who take responsibility for the progress of those in their groups. Tutors are the first point of contact for students and parents. In turn, each team of tutors is the responsibility of a head of year.

Many students will need additional pastoral support at some point in their college career and in addition to its own counsellor the college can draw on specialist support from the educational welfare service, behaviour support workers and the school nurse when necessary.

The college works effectively with a wide range of external agencies that promote students' well-being.

Ofsted 2007

As we have a statutory responsibility for the welfare of all our students we are obliged to make referrals to the Social Services in very specific cases.

Code of conduct, Rewards and Sanctions

Our Code of Conduct has been reviewed in consultation with students and parents and promotes and reflects the high expectations we have of our students. It is rooted in the values of the Gospels in particular Love, Justice and Reconciliation and encourages all to be caring, courteous, co-operative and committed. All students are expected to keep to the Code at all times, including when travelling to and from college, on visits and trips and when engaged on work placements or any other off-site educational activity.

The college believes strongly in the power of praise; there are many ways that we reward students ranging from the quiet word in class to the presentation of trophies and certificates. We reward all areas of achievement from academic excellence to outstanding attendance. A structured reward system operates where “Credits” are given for meeting classroom expectations completing work that is of a very high standard, exceptional effort, perseverance and for service to the college or to the wider community.

“The celebration of students' achievement around the college is very prominent.”

Ofsted 2007

Badges, letters of commendation and lots of praise are heaped upon those who accumulate lots of Credits or achieve 100% attendance. Every summer we hold Achievement Assemblies to honour those who have distinguished themselves by means of academic achievement or effort.



The College has a very good reputation for behaviour but students are only human and on occasions some may fail to live up to our expectations. While there is an emphasis on reconciliation the college does operate a simple but effective sanction scheme that includes after-school detention. Adequate notice is always given if a child is to be kept after school.

“The atmosphere in the college is friendly. Relationships overall are very positive and students socialise well with each other and with staff.”
Ofsted 2007

In safeguarding the human dignity of students and staff we take very seriously any example of discrimination on grounds of race, gender, sexuality, disability or other status, disruption to teaching and learning, verbal or physical violence, or damage to books, equipment, the buildings or our campus. Such behaviour is not tolerated and is dealt with swiftly. We look to the support of parents when such situations arise.

Uniform

All students in Years 7 to 11 are expected to wear the college uniform. Wearing the college uniform shows that we mean business: we are ‘dressing for success’. It helps to emphasise the identity of the college and is cheaper and more convenient for parents. Our simple but distinctive uniform is available locally. Further information is included elsewhere in this pack.

Student Councils

“Students enjoy college. They feel strongly that they are listened to and that their suggestions are implemented where possible.”
Ofsted 2007

It is important that all students feel they play a part in the decisions that affect college life. Every year each tutor group elects two representatives to sit on their Year Council that makes recommendations to the College Council. This group comprises two representatives from each year and it meets regularly with senior staff and governors to consider whole school issues and to make recommendations on a range of topics. Recent consultations include reviewing the code of conduct, choosing the new blazer and forming selection panels for the appointment of senior staff.

Facilities

The college is situated on a large, mature and attractive campus. Located in five main buildings, we have an impressive range of general and specialist facilities. Our accommodation is continually being improved. Recent developments have included our fantastic Sports Hall and Fitness Suite, a luxurious Dance Studio and theatre style seating in the main hall.

Cafeteria

The students and staff enjoy the benefits of a new purpose-built cafeteria that provides a range of hot and cold dishes at lunchtime. The quality of the food is excellent and has earned the college a Platinum Healthy Eating Award. A more limited selection is available at morning break. A representative from the college council meets regularly with the catering manager.

EXTRA CURRICULAR OPPORTUNITIES

As part of our commitment to develop the whole person the college offers a range of activities for the students that take place during lunchtime, after school and at weekends.

Service to Others and Personal Growth

The college has a programme that supports students working towards their Duke of Edinburgh's Award. Students and staff work together after college and also take part in a range of residential and one-day expeditions. This is a magnificent opportunity to acquire new skills, learn to work as a team and perform a service to the community.

The contribution that students make to the community is outstanding. A particular strength of the college is the way students take responsibility, work in the community and support a range of charities.
Ofsted 2007

We also have a branch of the Saint Vincent de Paul Society. Familiar to many church-goers this organisation seeks to help others and promote understanding. The college group runs a Fair Trade stall and also runs the 'Silver Surfers' club for those who might have missed out on the rise of the internet but who want to learn more.

A number of older students give up part of their summer holiday to accompany pilgrims to the shrine at Lourdes in France. Others join in with fund raising activities in order to make this worthwhile service possible. Ofsted praised the college's 'Monday night Club' - a social club for adults with physical and learning difficulties that has been running for over 25 years.

Expressive arts

Dance and drama clubs feature regularly and individual music tuition is available for a wide range instruments. Many students reach high grades in examinations and play in the college and county orchestra and bands. The past year has seen a musical, a dance production, a carol service, concerts and several student band nights.

Sport

Our Physical Education teachers have coaching qualifications in many sports and we also make use of external coaches. Our teams regularly win local, county and regional titles and a large number of students have represented Telford and Shropshire in a variety of sports with some achieving success at national level. Students have the opportunity to take part in a range of sporting activities, competitively or just for fun, at lunch time or after college, and even before the start of the college day with our 'breakfast club'.



Trips

The world beyond the college gates is an amazing learning environment and students are given the opportunity to take part in day visits to such places as sporting events, art galleries, museums and theatres. The college makes use of the Arthog outdoor pursuits residential centre in North Wales and trips abroad are arranged regularly. Italy, Eastern Europe and the ski slopes of France are frequent destinations and the college has a successful exchange programme that sees Year 7 students swapping places with pupils from a school just outside Paris. Très bien!

PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS

We value highly the very strong links that we enjoy with our parents. If we are to ensure the very best education for our students, it is vital that the college and home establish a strong, supportive partnership. Parents are kept well informed through our regular consultation and information evenings, the regular BRJ News and the termly and yearly reports. Daily contact is maintained through each student's personal planner.

Annually, parents receive a Parents' Handbook that contains the most up-to-date information on the day-to-day policies and procedures of the college. It is a more detailed publication than this prospectus. Representatives of the students, staff, parents and governors have produced a Home-College Agreement to help all understand the partnership that exists between the students, home and college.

Increasingly the college will be making use of its web site to provide up-to-date information for parents and students.



OTHER INFORMATION

Travel

The college enjoys excellent access to Telford's road network and public transport and many of our students travel some distance daily. We take their safety and welfare very seriously.

When students travel to us in the morning we expect them to come straight onto the campus and stay until they leave at the end of the day. Students are only allowed to leave the college during the lunchtime at the discretion of the headteacher and only when they have good reason supported by a written request from their parents.

Members of staff are on duty before college begins and at the end of the day to supervise the safe arrival and departure of the students. Our Code of Conduct contains clear guidance on what is expected of students travelling to and from college.

Transport assistance

The transport policy of Telford and Wrekin Unitary Authority is that children at the college will receive full transport assistance of public services fares or equivalent if they have at least one parent who is Catholic and they live three miles or more from the college.

The transport policy of Shropshire County Council is that children at the college will receive full transport assistance of public services fares or equivalent if they have at least one parent who is Catholic and they live within sixteen miles of the college.

For those students who live beyond sixteen miles, providing that their primary school catchment area is within sixteen miles, they will receive full assistance for up to sixteen miles. It will be for parents to meet the cost of transport to the outer limit of the sixteen miles. Parents should contact the college if they have any queries about the transport policies of the local authorities.

Admission arrangements

The college's primary purpose is to serve the Catholic families of the county. However, the Governors welcome applications from students whose faith is not Catholic but whose family wish to share the Christian teachings and practices of the College. Where applications for admission exceed the number of places available, our admissions policy will be applied in order to decide which children to admit.

Details of the college's admission arrangements can be found in the insert section.

Funding Arrangements

Blessed Robert Johnson Catholic College is a state school so it does not charge for the education it provides.

However, because of its denominational nature the college is Voluntary-Aided. This means it is funded differently to other schools and the governors have to find a percentage of its costs. They rely on, and are very grateful for, the support from parents and the Catholic Diocese of Shrewsbury.

College Fund

Like many schools, the college governors ask that parents make an annual voluntary contribution to the College Fund. This helps us to maintain and develop the buildings and also to afford the extras such as the college mini-bus.

Charging and remissions

Full details of the governors' policy together with the present levels of voluntary contributions to the College Fund and Diocesan Building Fund can be obtained from the college administration officer.



Complaints

The college has a procedure whereby parents can register complaints about our curriculum. A copy of the procedure is available on request.

If you require further information about any aspect of our college life, please do not hesitate to contact us. Appointments with the Headteacher and tours of the school can be arranged by contacting the College Administration Officer.

Headteacher: Mr R Hall
Head of Year 7: Mrs A Savchenko
Head of Special Needs: Mr A Elshaw

Blessed Robert Johnson Catholic College
Whitchurch Road, Wellington, Telford,
Shropshire, TF1 3DY
Telephone: 01952 386100
Fax: 01952 417501
[email: brj.admin@taw.co.uk](mailto:brj.admin@taw.co.uk)

Blessed Robert Johnson Catholic College is a Voluntary-Aided School