# Reflective Log – Tommy Woodley – St. Benedict’s School

## Week 2 – Wednesday 18th January

I began the day with a short meeting with the headmaster of the school and finalisation of HR work receiving an ID Badge.

First period was free for Richard, so we took the time to look through the Year 13 mocks that they had just done. Richard noted to me that some of the main topics that Year 13 struggled with were during their recent exams were Assembly Language, Boolean Algebra and Databases. Since Year 13 were already done with the course content this term was available for revision so we decided that I could cover and lead the lessons with them on these topics over the next few weeks up until half term. Boolean Algebra was a topic that Richard had already mentioned was challenging for the students, he noted that many of them didn’t seem to understand the purpose and often didn’t memorise or have a good system for applying the rules. We discussed the prospect of covering this topic in a more practical way when the Year 12’s and 13’s visited Imperial on the 1st February. Then we discussed his plans for the next 2 lessons.

Second period was a Year 10 class looking at Assembly Language in the form of Little Man Computer (<https://peterhigginson.co.uk/lmc/>). This was a particularly interesting lesson as Richard has asked me to lead a lesson next week on the same concept to a Year 13 class so this gave me the opportunity to understand how he would go about teaching it to a slightly younger year group. Richard led the class, and I asked as an observer to the lesson. The lesson began with a recap of how to convert Binary into Denary. This was a topic the students had covered recently, and a student volunteered their answer to this question. Then Richard went on to discuss how they might build a program to do this in Python. This part of the lesson felt quite rushed as one person answered all the questions on this when discussed. And later it was clear that not all the students had quite understood the ideas of the python program. Then Richard set them the challenge of building the same program in the LMC in Assembly. The students had only about 10mins or so to do this, so no students managed to complete it in the time available. Richard mentioned that it was his plan to continue this in the next lesson. The class was quite interactive, and it was clear that the teacher was making a conscious effort to ask everyone to answer questions to ensure engagement. The gender balance in the classroom shocked me, it was a class of roughly 20 students and only had 1 girl. She also sat on her own in the lesson which is likely to reduce motivation for the subject. One of the things I felt was missing on the lesson was the purpose of assembly language, I overheard one student say, “why are we even doing this when we just did it in python”. The first part of the lesson took longer than the eacher had planned which limited the time spent for students to actually complete and write assembly code. Many students also spent time distracted in the classroom, a small group seemed to be completing homework for another lesson and due to the arrangement of the classroom the teacher could not see this. I felt many of the students got distracted after long periods of discussion. One of my biggest takeaways will be the importance of splitting the lesson up and giving time for students to complete activities and then come back to class discussion to help ensure a smoother flow.