

Message from the Senior Leadership Team

March 20th marked the Spring or Vernal Equinox, when the number of daylight hours equalled those of darkness and the return of longer days in the northern hemisphere. Spring has finally arrived, the clocks have gone forward making for lighter and longer evenings and even the weather feels better, albeit still raining as it does here at this time of year. In our busy modern lives, it's good to be reminded of the wonder of nature and how it renews itself after the darkness of winter. We hopefully feel more optimistic, and just like nature, have the chance to renew ourselves, dust off the winter blues and spring into action. I would encourage you all take time to appreciate the wonder and beauty of nature, to enjoy the sounds of birds singing, the sight of flowers blooming and remind yourselves of the proverb, 'No matter how long the winter, spring is sure to follow' by making the most of new opportunities ahead.

Easter is the most important feast in the Christian calendar and a reminder of the central belief and hope of the resurrection. Easter is not only the greatest Christian feast but Easter Sunday symbolises the fulfilment of our faith as Christians. Through his death, Christ destroyed our bondage to sin; through the resurrection he brought the promise of new life and through his own prayer, "Thy Kingdom come, on earth as it is in Heaven," begins to be fulfilled on Easter Sunday. Many people who made Lenten sacrifices for forty days can finally reward themselves enjoying whatever they have abstained from during this time.

Finally, our Year 11 pupils are almost at the end of their journey at SMA; GCSEs begin in May where they hopefully will reap the rewards of all their efforts over the last few years. Exam season can be a stressful time so it is important as a community we support our young people in whatever way we can. This can be in small ways such as offering encouragement or advice, giving them time out from study to unwind, small incentives or rewards and ensuring they eat well and get enough sleep to be fully prepared. We wish them every success for their GCSE exams and look forward to celebrating their results in the summer.

Mr D Quigg
Associate Assistant Headteacher

Prayer and Reflection

This coming Sunday is Palm Sunday. It is the beginning of Holy Week where we joyously anticipate Jesus' resurrection. Jesus came to Jerusalem humbly riding on a donkey to bring peace and salvation. This Holy Week we ask for him to come into our hearts and renew our love and commitment to him.

O Father, most merciful, in the beginning you created us, and by the passion of your only Son you created us anew. Work in us now, both to will and to do what pleases you. Since we are weak and can do no good thing by ourselves, grant us your grace and heavenly blessing, that in whatever work we engage we may do all to your honour and glory. Keep us from sin and empower us daily to do good works, that as long as we live in the body we may always perform service to you. After our departure give us pardon of all our sins, and receive us to eternal life; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, forever and ever.

Amen.



Primary News

Year 1

The children have been progressing exceptionally well, they have all made progress in their phonics ahead of the Phonics Screener in June. This term what has really stood out is their blossoming sense of curiosity. With whatever they are learning, be it counting to 50, grouping of animals or fronted adverbials, they consistently are trying to build connections. Some highlights of this term have been the children doing their own research in English and Geography and presenting it to the class. They really love sharing their learning!

The children's reading and writing has progressed and they are now learning about persuasive and informative texts. The children have used bossy verbs, fronted adverbials and even started writing in paragraphs!

The children have adored learning about Beebots and loved programming them and making assault courses for the Beebots to trial. This has caused lots of laughter in the classroom, when the Beebots bump into unexpected objects!

Finally, we had experience day today at Forest School. We were looking at Mini-Beasts for our Science work about Animals. Children saw slugs, centipedes, squirrels, and wriggly worms! We played games and made a Bug Hotel! We looked at the key features of Forest School and discussed how in London we are blessed with lots of greenery (Geography). For our Maths we looked at measuring with non-standard units and comparing height and length! Have a wonderful Easter from all the great young learners in Year 1!



Secondary News

English

Year 9 have recently started to study Shakespeare's 'Macbeth'.

On Thursday 23rd March, the year group were able to enjoy a performance of the play by actors from Quantum theatre company.

Seeing a live performance has helped to inspire students and bring Shakespeare's work to life for them!

Pupils also made their own crowns to help them get into character!



Year 8

Star light Star bright! Year 8 stand proud after receiving their silver stars during their recognition assembly .



Year 7

Pupils went on a retreat to the Friars at Aylesford Priory in their houses. The theme was focusing on our relationships with one another and exploring what it means for us to let our light shine through art, games, discussion, reflection and by enjoying the beautiful grounds that The Friars has to offer.



Charity News

Pupils across the academy from KS2 to KS4 will be taking part in the Big Lent Walk on Wednesday and Friday this week. Please support us with a small donation as we walk to help fight global poverty. The link to our fundraising page with all donations going straight to CAFOD (The Catholic Agency for Overseas Development in England and Wales) is just below. All your support is much appreciated.

<https://cafod.enthuse.com/pf/stmatthewacademy>



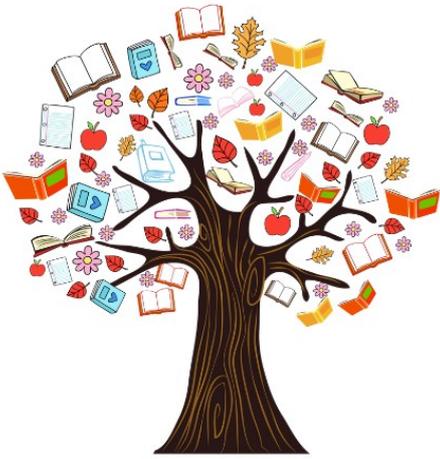
St Matthew Academy

My Story

I'm taking on the Big Lent Walk! We're going to walk together across Blackheath to Greenwich Park, through the park and back to school to raise money for CAFOD and all of the work they do.

Please sponsor us as we raise money to help fight global poverty!



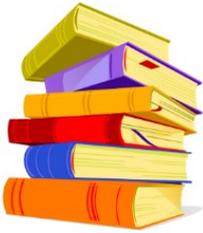


LITERACY CORNER

Library News

The whole of the primary phase were treated to some very enthusiastic and musical presentations by the author Gareth P. Jones on Primary World Book Day. Gareth has written 45 books and he entertained the pupils reading, talking and singing songs about some of his fantastic books.





BOOK REVIEWS

Primary

Alleyan, Joyce and Deneise from Year 6 reviewed three books in the Early Reader series for KS1.



Deneise reviewed 'The Loch Ness Monster Spotters' by Tony de Saulles. This book is about the McFee family who dream of seeing the Loch Ness Monster. They wore Nessie t-shirts, hats and badges. But there is a problem, they have never seen her but maybe just maybe they will. I recommend this book because it is very interesting and mysterious and I gave this book 5 stars.



Joyce reviewed 'Jenny the Pony's new friends' by Liz Kessler and Laura Tonge. Jenny is a lonely horse who has just moved to a new stable. She is determined to make new friends and will try anything to do so. The book is easy to read and I gave it 3 stars.



Alleyan reviewed 'Belinda and the Bears go shopping' by Kaye Umanksy. In this story there is a blue door and behind the door lived the bears. They came to live in Honey Bear Lane because their house in the woods got knocked down to make way for a motorway. They need to go shopping for Baby Bear's new room. This book is suitable for those in year 2. I would recommend this book as it is good for younger children to practice their reading skills. 3.5 stars



Secondary

Sienna-Rose and Liesel from Year 8 reviewed 'The Dog Runner' by Bren MacDibble. Out of five, I give this book four and a half. 'The Dog Runner' can be summarised in three words; adventurous, fast-paced and suspenseful. 'The Dog Runner' is about two children and their dogs running through a futuristic outback. They are trying to find their parents. I loved it from start to finish! Secondly, I strongly recommend this book to readers who like simple books but not over simplified and to someone who likes adventure and dogs. And actually, I don't really like dogs myself, but now I'm reconsidering.

The reason I give this book a four and a half, is because it's told in the first person through the eyes of a ten year old girl; I liked this because whatever the character was feeling, it would be explained to the reader clearly and therefore be relatable. In addition, despite the setting the book was in, the author didn't overexaggerate the description. However, when there was setting description, it would be easy to understand without too many difficult words/phrases, even though the book is told in a place on the other side of the world for us; Australia. To improve this book, I would add more twists and cliff-hangers to make it more exciting. It already consisted of adventurous themes and so on, but they weren't really the kind of plots that you held your breath on or tensely turned the next page; you mostly predicted what was going to happen and it would often be correct.

To summarise 'The Dog Runner' was a wonderful story, told in a modern day far away land and it all revolves around love, family and determination.





Governor Interview



Earlier this term, Bess in Year 10 sat down with the Chair of Governors for St Matthew Academy, Pat Barber, for an interview about her role as a Governor, why she wanted to become a Governor, and much more. Here is what happened. A video version filmed by Harry in Year 10 can also be found on the SMA YouTube Channel.

Hi, I'm here with Pat Barber, Chair of Governors, and I'm just going to ask her some questions. So, what do you do as a Governor?

"Governors are actually the higher layer of authority within the school. We are the employers of all the staff in the school. So, actually, we have responsibility for the finances and the staffing of the school, but it's actually much, much more than that. It's about supporting the staff and getting the best possible resources from the money available because it is all about you, the students, and that's why we're really here: to support the staff to get the very best for you."

Thank you. And why did you decide to become a Governor?

"A very good question. I can't possibly remember, because I've been a governor for many, many years, from when my children were in primary school, and their children are now leaving education. So that's how many years I've been involved in governance."

What's your favourite part of the role?

"The students. Always the students. It's such a delight to see you achieve. Some of our meetings can get quite fraught over whether you should do something or not. The pleasure comes when you actually get to see things in action. It's a delight, and results day is always amazing, because it's the end of the academic year and the students have achieved so much whilst under our care."

Thank you. Outside of being a Governor, what other roles do you or have you had?

"I've been a school business manager, I've been a head of HR. I have a sort of well-rounded experience of the things required to be a Governor, around finances and management, staff management and HR."

What else do you do outside of work, like your hobbies or your interests.

"My hobbies? Reading. I do like to sit down with a good novel. And the last one I read was my favourite one ever so far, which was 'Where the Crawdads Sing', and if you haven't read it, I thoroughly recommend it to you. I read it in 24 hours, it was that good. I'm also very active in my own church as well, so I do a lot of support in the church where I attend."



Thank you very much. What would you say is your biggest achievement?

"That's a tough one. What's my biggest achievement? I don't know. When my husband was alive, we used to do a lot of voluntary work around presenting quizzes and we raised thousands and thousands of pounds for charity doing that work. As a result of that, and I wouldn't like to say a personal achievement, but because of that we were actually invited to go to the Queen's garden party. So that was a big high in my life, for being recognised for the work we were doing for charity. So yes the acknowledgement and of course the opportunity to enter into a cucumber sandwich arena, it was truly lovely."

That sounds incredible.

"It was."

What did you want to be when you were a child?

"I wanted to be a nurse! I wanted to join the Royal Navy and be a naval nurse."

Wow!

"Neither happened, but I can say that my eldest daughter is now nursing and has been since she left school. She has done a degree in nursing and she's a Nursing Sister at Lewisham Hospital. So, I live my dream through her now."

Who or what were your biggest inspirations when you were younger?

"Lots of things, I think. No one person. Obviously, my parents. My parents were extraordinary in so far as supporting me and allowing me to do whatever it was that I wanted to do, they would support whatever it was. And at that time, my love was the St John Ambulance Brigade because that was going to take me to where I wanted to be. This was from the age of seven, I was going to do this, and they supported me. And I actually carried that on for about thirty odd years before I decided I wasn't going to be a nurse, and my life had gone into a different line, and I actually studied accountancy work for a while. But lots of people inspire me, even a baby will inspire me, if I see it trying to crawl, because they're so determined. It is about determination and living your dream really. Just follow your dream."

Thank you so much for taking the time to speak with us today

"You're more than welcome. Bless you and thank you."

St Matthew Academy is a Good Catholic school

Some of the key findings:

Leaders and governors *prioritise pastoral care and the well-being of every member of the school community which impacts positively on pupils' progress and success.*

Leaders provide a *welcoming and supportive environment* where gospel values are celebrated in the physical environment and *lived out in the relationships among pupils and staff* and between school, parents and parish.

The school's pride in the diversity of the pupils and their families together with the staff that constitute the school community contributes to *the sense of belonging and inclusion enjoyed by all pupils* and supports their learning.

Catholic Life

The behaviour of pupils is exemplary in lessons and around the school, and strong and positive relationships are evident throughout the school.

Pupils respond well to the school's personal support and development opportunities. As a result, *they are happy, confident and secure in their own stage of physical, emotional and spiritual growth.*

The school mission statement is a living reality in the St Matthew Academy community and beyond the school, including among key stakeholders, because the school community contributes to it. It reflects a belief in the distinctiveness of every individual made in the image and likeness of God. Pupils demonstrate an ability to articulate this in many contexts including the respect they show for themselves and others.

Pupils appreciate, value, and actively participate in the Catholic life and mission of the school.

Religious Education

All pupils in the lessons observed *concentrate well and have the desire to improve.*

Pupils are *engaged in and enthusiastic about their religious education.* They clearly enjoy opportunities provided to discuss and reflect spiritually, ethically, and theologically and to consider the implications of religious commitment in everyday life.

High energy levels amongst all staff teaching religious education make for a *lively focused learning environment.* They *work as a team, are well-led,* and contribute to the whole school's professional learning.

High energy levels amongst all staff teaching religious education make for a *lively focused learning environment.* They *work as a team, are well-led,* and contribute to the whole school's professional learning.

Behaviour for learning is very good reflecting strong classroom management that acknowledges the dignity of all present in the classroom. *The positive attitude to learning by pupils* is enhanced and sustained when enabled to address *challenging activities and explore complex ideas,* particularly by specialist religious education teachers. Pupils are very willing to support and be supported.

Highly effective use of questioning was in evidence and, when used, was *transformative and had an immediate impact.*

Collective Worship

St Matthew Academy is a prayerful community where pupils' response to and participation in collective worship is good. *A calm and peaceful ethos permeates the school and reflects the pupils' good behaviour and consideration for others.*

The experience of living and working in a faithful, praying community has a positive impact on the *spiritual and moral development of many pupils, irrespective of ability or faith background.* They have a well-developed sense of respect for those of other faiths. This is reflected in the manner in which many pupils participate in prayer and liturgy. Pupils expressed the view that their participation in prayer and liturgy inspires them to 'Let their Light Shine'.

From the earliest age, *pupils act reverently and show respect* when participating in acts of worship.

House Points Update

Week beginning 27/3/23

Total Achievement Points

1st – Teresa: 32290
2nd – Romero: 28135
3rd – Mandela: 26915

Attendance:

1st – Mandela
2nd – Romero
3rd – Teresa

Overall House Points

1st - Teresa: 2103
2nd - Mandela: 1660
3rd - Romero: 1642

Teresa are working hard to maintain their lead, with a massive gap between them and the other houses. Romero has managed to remain in the second position again this week while Mandela is making small but secure moves.

The applicants for the Pupil Leadership team have been shortlisted and the next stage of the process is an interview with members of SLT. All pupils have been given the opportunity to vote after watching a video from the candidates. Good luck to all of the applicants.

The SMA big quiz took place on Wednesday 22nd March in the drama studio. There was a big turn out and the pupils engaged amazingly in the three rounds and demonstrated understanding and problem solving skills. It was indeed an afternoon of fun and laughter. Congratulations to the winners from team Mandela scoring a total of 40 points for their house. Well done to all other pupils.

A massive thank you for our form representatives who were involved in planning the quiz.



Going Above and Beyond!

Primary phase

Pupils with the most achievement points during March

Reception - Ladybirds

Olivia OGBUKU

Nicolo CAMMARASANA

Tay'Mari POYSER

Year 1 - Dragonfly

Maya MARGAI

Azziah LYNCH

Ian FARINTO MARTINEZ

Year 2 - Butterfly

Evie SALKELD

Maisie HAMILTON

Nickairo POYSER

Year 3 - Cheetahs

Abiola SAMSON

Deborah OMASOMBO

Seryah ROCHESTER

Year 4 - Tigers

Thiago JACOME ASQUI

Cyril OIGBOCHIE

Doyinsola FOLASIRE

Year 5 - Lions

Michaela SEKA

Adam NGUYEN

Valentine CHAZA

Year 6 - Leopards

Ella-Rae JORDAN GRAHAM

Louise GILKES

Zainab DIALLO

Well done to these pupils for all their hard work!

Staff Stars

Introducing our staff stars nominated by their colleagues...

Ms Bassan



"for being so patient, resilient and caring with her year 11 maths class."

Ms Bryan



"For her unwavering support of the Performing Arts & always willing to help without a fuss."



REPORT IT!



If you have some information that you feel should be reported, e.g. bullying, or you are feeling low, worrying about something or if you have any safeguarding concerns you can:

Tell a Teacher



Mr Young
Deputy Headteacher

Ms Chick
Head of Primary



Mr Gunningham
Assistant Headteacher



Ms Dryden
Child Protection Officer



Staff at St Matthew Academy are always here to help and listen to pupils, if you ever want to talk to someone or share a concern please don't feel worried about doing so.