

Message from the Senior Leadership Team

This week marks the beginning of Advent. Advent is an exciting time of the year, not just because we can start to open the doors on our advent calendars for a daily treat, or that the pre-Christmas sales have now begun, but because Advent is that special season, during which we joyfully prepare for the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ (Christmas)!

The first week of advent represents **hope**. To **hope** is to believe, with certainty, that something greater is coming! At St Matthew Academy, there is so much that we can be **hopeful** for.

A perfect example of **hopeful** preparation for remembering the birth of Christ can be seen in our primary phase, where pupils are enthused and excited in preparation for their nativity performance and carol service, **hopeful** that it will be 'alright on the night'!

From next week, our Year 10 and 11 pupils will sit mock exams. After experiencing two periods of lockdown with remote learning, these GCSE pupils have demonstrated real focus and positive attitudes towards their learning, so we can be **hopeful** of their success in the upcoming mock exams.

And finally, as increased protective measures are being introduced across the country to fight against the spread of the coronavirus, our **hope** is that you, our staff, pupils, parents and carers, stay safe and well throughout this season!

Ms V Bryan
Assistant Headteacher

Prayer and Reflection

"The Lord comes that we might find him in this world of ours."

Laudato Si' #236

Christ, come into our world of darkness

Light up our lives with your coming.

Fulfil all our longings with the joy of your birth

Strengthen our resolve to work for change in our world

And to share the hope of your birth that each Advent brings.

Amen.

Sr Bridgetta Rooney/CAFOD

Pope Francis' prayer intention for December is for catechists

Let us #PrayTogether for catechists called to announce the Word of God: that they may be courageous and creative witnesses through the power of the Holy Spirit. #PrayerIntention





Greenwich Lantern Parade



Earlier last month Year 4 took part in a workshop to make lanterns ready for the Lantern Parade in Greenwich on the 17th November. We had an amazing day and produced an array of fantastic individual lanterns on the theme of 'The Snowman'.

Pupils made the body shape and added a head shape, a carrying handle, some lights were added, white paper mache was used to cover along with some great decorations. Pupils were then ready to take their amazing lanterns to the Lantern Parade for everyone to admire!



After school on Wednesday 17th November some of the year 4 children travelled to Greenwich to join the Lantern Parade. There were lots of other schools there too and the theme for this year was 'The Snowman.' There was a real party atmosphere.

We paraded our lanterns as the Christmas lights came on around the streets of Greenwich, which was busy with people that had come to see the wonderful event. Christmas Carols were played by a live band which pupils sang along to and we ended the parade in Greenwich Market for the countdown and turning on of the amazing lights. A great time was had by all and it definitely put us in the Christmas mood.



Secondary Trips

Debate Mate Launch Trip: let the games begin! Wednesday 10th November

SMA's Debate Club went to Westminster this month for the Launch of the Debating season which includes the Debate Mate Cup and the Urban Debate League. SMA have been crowned National Champions in 2019 and 2015 and Regional Finalists in 2015 and 2017. The pupils got the opportunity to see a live Debate between Debate Mate mentors and European Champions and were given the chance to make a floor speech to a packed auditorium of over 55 London schools.

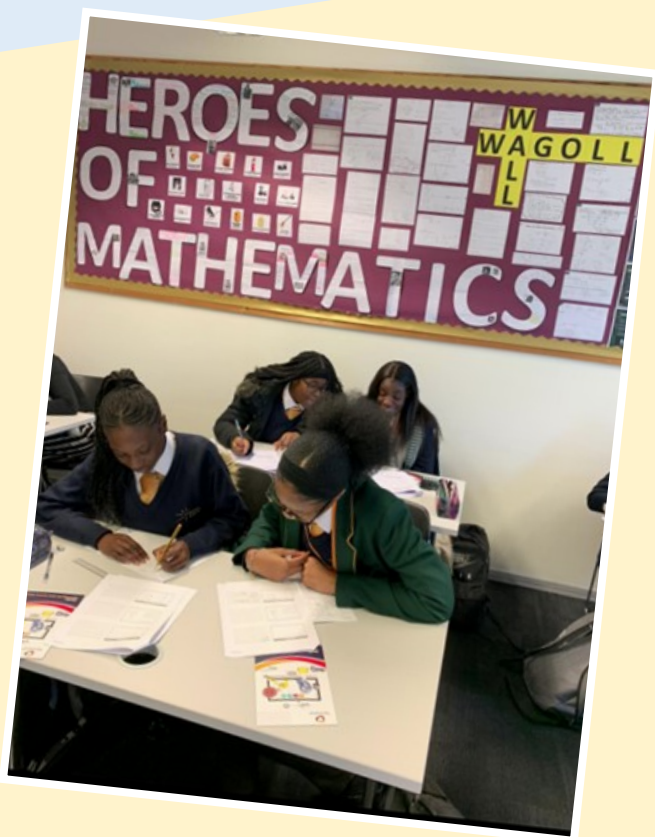
SMA's club began its first training sessions last Wednesday, led by two mentors from the London School of Economics - with so many pupils applying to the club, the sessions were split up into two classes. The mentor for the Year 8-10 pupils was very impressed with the first session and predicts "a promising and successful year - with this much talent." Good luck, debaters! If you wish to join, see Ms Purslow or Ms England in the English corridor.



Post 16 Information Visits

On Thursday 18th November, 13 Year 11 pupils attended St Thomas the Apostle Sixth Form open evening. They were given information about the range of subjects on offer, completed psychology quizzes to find out their personality type, ate croissants from the MFL department and spoke to staff employed as part of the STAC enrichment programme. Talks were delivered by Headteacher Mr Connolly and Executive Headteacher Mr Cefai, along with current Year 12 and 13 pupils discussing the successes and opportunities available including the excellent Oxbridge programme.

On Monday 22nd November, 15 Year 11 pupils visited Christ the King Aquinas Sixth Form. After a talk from Deputy Principal Ms Power, pupils took part in Maths, Politics and Film Studies A-Level taster lessons, and completed a Q and A speed dating task with St Matthew Academy alumni currently in Year 12. It was lovely to see so many of our previous pupils doing so well and enjoying their further studies!



SMA visit to The Royal Observatory

Two of our year 7 classes went on a maths trip recently to the Royal Observatory in Greenwich. Joined by Mr Olisa, Miss Hammond, Mr Blakemore and Ms Chen, the pupils had a great time learning about all things space related! One of the sessions 'Maths in the Milky Way' included using a formula to work out how long it would take a horse to run from Earth to Mars, how long it would take Usain Bolt to run to Venus and other interesting scenarios. The pupils really got to grips with working out the time taken to reach different destinations, given the distance and speed, and practiced converting their time from hours to days and years.



The second session of the day was a show in the Planetarium. If you've never been to one, I'm sure the pupils would highly recommend it! We were able to sit back and watch as a guide narrated the display on the darkened dome of the planetarium ceiling. Hushed 'ahhs' and 'oohs' could be heard from some pupils as the display zoomed in and out of different areas of the universe, giving a real sense of the size of our galaxy 'The Milky Way' and the stars, other galaxies, and space that surround it.



Overall it was a thoroughly enjoyable trip for staff and pupils, with so much learning taking place. We can't wait to take more of the year 7's to discover this excellent location which is just a short hop across the heath.



Spotlight on RE

This academic year, we have a new RE team of varied teaching experience. This has led to colleagues within the department offering a range of skills, knowledge and experiences which have been beneficial to all pupils. It is a lovely team which all members subscribe to the philosophy of Don Bosco – “Education is a matter of the heart.” It is clear from pupil voice recently conducted at the Academy, that Religious Education is a subject enjoyed by many pupils and notably one of the reasons is the love and commitment for the subject and pupils exhibited by the RE teachers and received by the pupils.

Islam, or people's assumptions about Islam, has become very visible in the media and in the world in general, Islam still remains a religion that is very much misunderstood. It's critical for us to try to understand values, ideals and practices that are important to other people and in the case of pupils in Year 9, from people in our wider community that identify as Muslims. The current Year 9 cohort have recently begun learning the Edexcel GCSE syllabus in preparation for their RE GCSE, which they will sit in just under 18 months. The pupils have embraced learning about Islam and have immersed themselves in the lessons. A ‘fan favourite’ is the topic of sawm (fasting). Pupils particularly enjoyed watching the fasting challenge set by celebrity musicians Krept and Konan, both of whom are Muslim to their friend who is not. The task involved the non-Muslim friend abstaining from food from dawn until dusk. They succeeded – just. More importantly for our pupils, they learned that for Muslims, sawm is in an opportunity to draw nearer to Allah and develop discipline and self – control.



Finally, it's that time of year where pupils in Year 11 and Year 10 prepare for their Pre public examinations (PPE's). Year 10 have been in fine form as they prepare for sitting three exams. One pupil commented *"I was very anxious when I found out I would have to sit three exams, but thanks to my RE teacher, I feel confident I will do well. I hope to do well in my RE GCSE as I want to study philosophy as an A Level."* Let's pray that all pupils are successful in their PPE's and feel confident come May when they sit their RE GCSE.



Literacy Corner



Welcome to the first Literacy Corner section of the SMA Newsletter. Our team of year 6 and year 7 book reviewers will be reviewing different books each month for KS1, KS2 and the Secondary phase. Henry and Caleb in year 6 began by reviewing two picture books for KS1.

Caleb reviewed 'Starbird' by Sharon King-Chai:

"The book is about the Moon King capturing Starbird, but the princess lets it go and the Starbird travels places to get home. The Moon King captures Starbird again but is persuaded by his daughter to let it go. This book would be suitable for children age 5-6. I would recommend this book because it is quite an abstract book and quite imaginative."

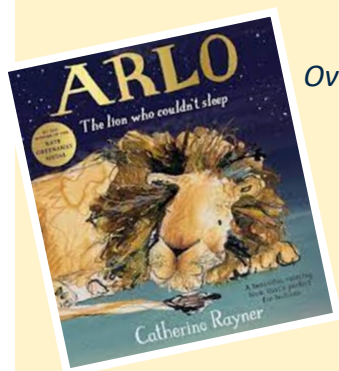


I give this book 5 stars.



Henry reviewed 'Arlo, the lion who couldn't sleep' by Catherine Rayner:

"Arlo is about a lion who couldn't sleep no matter how hard he tried. Arlo met an owl who taught him to sleep by singing a song. I liked this book because of the art and repetition. I also liked how Arlo was being taught how to sleep and then began teaching others. My favourite part of the book was the poem. The one thing I disliked about this book is it didn't have any climax and was less interesting without suspense."



Overall I enjoyed this book and would rate it 4 stars."



Our secondary team read and reviewed Boy 87 by Ele Fountain.



This is what our year 7 team thought about the book:

Boy 87 is an action-packed novel about a young refugee boy named Shif. Shif undertakes a perilous journey across a vast desert in an attempt to escape his home country. The fact that it's in the first person makes it even more moving and realistic because it's as if this refugee boy is talking to you.

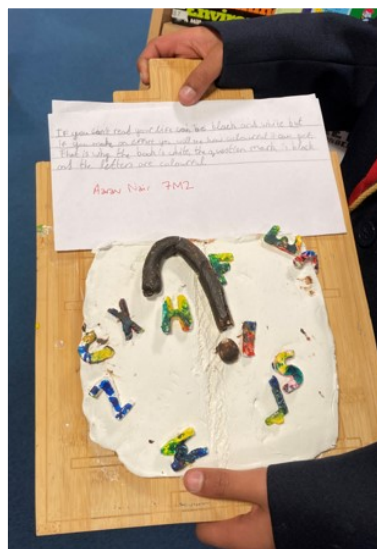
This story represents the values of endurance, loyalty and courage. I really enjoyed this book. It hooks the reader as it leaves some important details unsaid until later in the book. There isn't a single chapter without suspense and it always keeps the reader on edge wondering what's going to happen next.

The message of the book is that you may be safe and happy but some people are in constant danger of persecution and violence. Their determination and will to survive is sometimes the only thing keeping them alive. We are fortunate; some are not.

I recommend this book to children nine and above because it really spreads the message of how hard life can be for some people and how certain people just don't notice that. I think that more people should read the book to spread the word of refugees and the suffering of people.

SMA Literacy Competition Winners

Congratulations to the winners of the SMA Literacy competition. The winners were Aarav in year 7 and Demilade in year 8 for their wonderfully creative entries. They both won a prize and 30 house points for their house Mandela! Come and look at their artwork on display in the LRC.



House Points Update



Total Achievement Points

Mandela: 5pts

Teresa: 15pts

Romero: 10pts

Attendance:

Mandela: 15pts

Teresa: 10pts

Romero: 5pts

Overall House Points

1st - **Mandela: 291**

2nd - **Teresa: 267**

3rd - **Romero: 207**

With three weeks till we break up for Christmas, Mandela is still in the lead!

The Christmas Card competition has come to a close and the winner will be announced by the end of this week. Well done to all those who entered.

Christmas Cards will be available to purchase on ParentPay. Money will go to the house charities.

We launched our first reducing plastic waste house competition. The form who all managed to purchase a reusable water bottle and send Miss Barallon a picture will win a prize! (£1 SMA bottles available at reception)

SMAREDUCE PLASTIC CHALLENGE 2021

- WHAT? By the end of 2021 we want ALL students at St Matthew Academy to have a reusable water bottle.
- WHY? To reduce our daily plastic waste!
- HOW? You can purchase a SMA branded water bottle at reception for just £1
- WHO? The first form that ALL have a reusable water bottle and send a photo to Miss Barallon will win a prize!



How many PLASTIC water bottles can you spot in just ONE class?

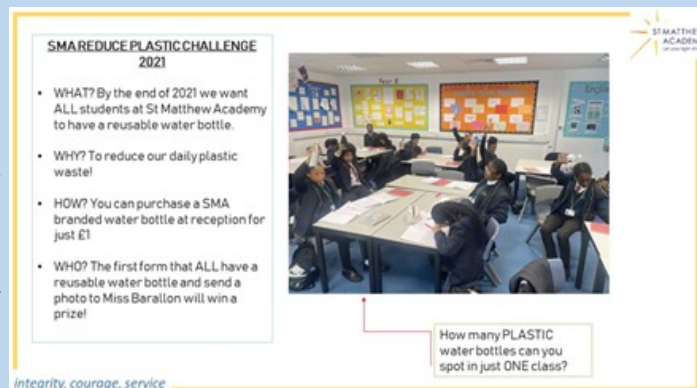
Romero Page

What a fantastic half term with so many events taking place in the Academy, including plenty of house related initiatives.

What have our ROMERO pupils been up to?

House assemblies: COP26

This week we have been developing and spreading the message as 'We want climate change!'. All houses were in assemblies led by our House Leaders and supported by our fantastic House council members. All of the Romero pupils were involved in assemblies this week and our key topic was 'COP26' with an ever growing concern for our environment. Off the back of our assemblies we have set a challenge and target for all pupils!



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integrity, courage, service

Now and Then – Young people building their agenda around anti-racism and equality in Lewisham

This year we had a fantastic number of candidates that were in the running to become LYM 2021, with three of our most dedicated pupils attending a pupil workshop at Deptford Green. Here is what our very own Romero candidate had to say in reflection of the event:



'When we visited Deptford Green school, we were surprised to see many other students from different schools around the Borough of Lewisham. It was also a new experience to go and see another school instead of your own and I think that all the students from different schools felt the same way. Going to Deptford Green was a great chance to not only talk about things like decolonizing the education system, harmful stereotypes and prejudice, it was an opportunity to hear other people's opinions that weren't from the same school as you. These were the types of things that we talked about which made me open my eyes to dozens of opinions that I would have never heard if I didn't have the experience of going to Deptford Green'.

CTK - Student Leadership Event

A fantastic online event led by Jessi Wilson from Unlock via CTK 6th Form College. 13 of our House Council were part of a great event learning how and what they can do to become stronger and more confident leaders. The pupils worked with other groups of pupils from other schools and really enjoyed the interactive nature of the 'breakout rooms'.



Charity Christmas Card competition:

As part of our continued charity work for the community, our House Charity Christmas Card competition is underway and pupils are currently voting for their favourite choices. There will be a card representing Romero with proceeds of card sales being provided to our chosen House charity (Salvation Army).



Going Above and Beyond!

Secondary phase

Pupils with the most achievement points during November

Year 7

Wahkare BLACK 7T1
Kayden DAVIS-SOBOTIE 7T1
Michael TRAORE 7M3
Cavalli FISHER 7T1
Jess CARROLL 7R2

Year 8

Sara HUSSEN 8R2
Blessing OYEDEJI 8T2
Jordan JAMES 8R3
Carolina CANDIA JAUARPENA 8M1
Hans BEECKMAN 8R2

Year 9

Mark KOUTCHEDI 9M1
Cassandra ONICA 9M2
Cassel CHAMBERS 9T3
Kyle PHILLIP 9T1
Fatima NJIE 9R2

Year 10

Wildy CABRAL DE BRITO 10R2
Lara LOPES TAVARES 10M2
Ibrakhim IUSUPOV 10T2
Charlie WAITE 10M1
Tashawna DUNKLEY 10R1

Year 11

Jessica GRACE 11EN2
Mariana BARON BECERRA 11MA1
Emilia SHERIFI 11MA1
Elisabeth AKINOLA 11MA2
Niruja RAVIKUMAR 11SCI

Well done to these pupils for all their hard work!

Staff Stars

Introducing our staff stars nominated by their colleagues...

Ms Barrallon

Ms Hylton

Ms Ryder

Mr Charlery

Ms Ferrigan

Staff Stars

Ms O'Neill

Extracurricular Clubs Autumn/Winter 2021-22



Breakfast or Lunch		After School									
M O N			Girls Fitness All Years 3-4:30 Fitness suite MMC	DoE Y9/10 3.00-4.30 Silver/Bronze LSA, NBA, TSK	Guitar Club All years 3:00:4:00 DKE	Latin American Dance All years 3.20- 4.00 S100 AMI	Table Tennis Y7/8 3-4:30 Sports Hall NCO/BSA				
T U E	Maths Club Y7/8/9 12-12:45 KNG		STAFF MEETING								
W E D	BREAKFAST MFL HW drop Y10/11 8.00 - 8.30 S103 FDE										
T H U R	WEEK A ONLY The Art of Appraisal Year 9/10 12.00-12.45 S111 MPI	KS4 Journey to grade 9 Year 10/11 (Art/Tex/Ph) 12.00-12.25 LWR/EGR	Week A ONLY Light Bearer Prayer 12.05-12.25 Led by Y8/9	Madagascar rehearsals 3.00-4.30 Drama Studio AMB, JEC, CSM	EAL HW Club 3.00-4.00 MGI	Sporting Brilliance Y7/8 3.00-4.30 Sports Hall LSA/AKG	MFL Culture + KS3 HW drop in 3.20-4.00 S102 AMA	Fitness & Rowing Y7/8 3.00-4.30 Fitness suite LSI	Step into Dance Y7/8 3.00-4.30 Dance Studio Zoe Elliot	Debate Mate Y7/8 3-4:30 E108 KPU/MEN	Week A ONLY Sports Leaders – Y9 3.00-4.30 Sports Hall BSA/AKG
F R I	Week B ONLY Light Bearer Prayer 12.05-12.25 Led by Y10		Basketball All Years 3-4:30 Sports Hall O Jackman	Strength & Conditioning All Years 3-4:30 Fitness Suite LSA	Dance Performance Group 3.00-4.30 Dance Studio CSM	Science Y7/8 3.20-4.00 N024 LSO	KS3 Creative Y7/8 3.20-4.00 LWR N1.18	Maths HW Club Y7/8/9/10 3:10-4:00 RHA/SKE/ IOL E005	Gospel Choir All years 3.00-4.00 Music Room AOM/MOC		

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



Ms Wickliffe
Assistant Headteacher

Ms Laker
Child Protection



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.