

SMA CELEBRATES



INTEGRITY

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WELCOME TO OUR SPRING ISSUE

of SMA Celebrates

THIS EDITION ONCE AGAIN showcases and celebrates all that is great about SMA. I am very proud to be leading our high-performing school on its journey to becoming a truly great school at the heart of the community we serve.

Our reputation for academic success for every pupil, irrespective of their starting point, is well known in Lewisham and beyond, as is our standing for ensuring all pupils are able to exploit the wealth of opportunities we have on offer to enrich and extend our curriculum.

In this edition I hope you enjoy our centre-spread spotlight on the literacy journey across the Academy. One of the advantages an all-through setting brings, is the opportunity for staff across phases to collaborate on curriculum planning to ensure a really joined up and sequenced approach that challenges and pushes pupils to always improve on current best.

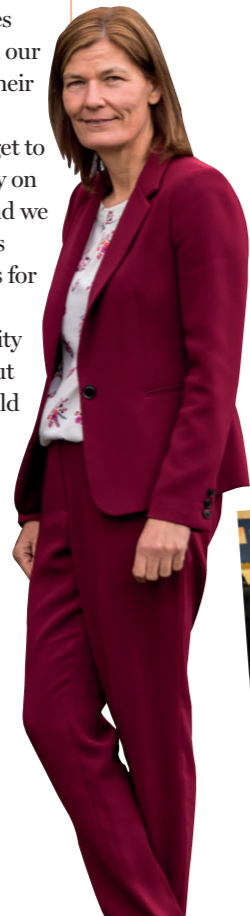
I particularly enjoyed reading the interviews with our Key Stage 3 librarians who take their roles very seriously and are doing a fabulous job promoting the joy of reading to their fellow pupils. They are brilliant examples of pupils 'letting their light shine' through service to their school.

Page 3 of this edition also looks at another curriculum area in detail - this time science. We are really proud of the first class facilities we have at the Academy and feedback from our pupils always tells us how much they love their science lessons. Once again, being an all-through school means our primary pupils get to experience 'learning in a lab' from very early on in their scientific journeys of exploration and we are delighted a large number of SMA pupils continue to choose to study science subjects for A level, university and beyond.

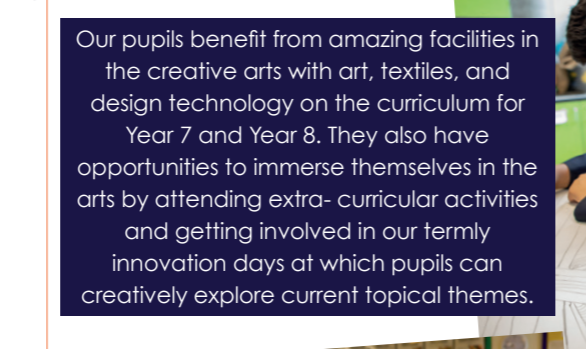
For those members of our local community that are interested in finding out more about what the school can offer their child or would just like to come and meet some of our fabulous pupils, you are always welcome. There are some incredible pupil ambassadors on hand to take you on a tour of the school and answer any questions you may have about what life at SMA is really like.

I hope to see you in school one day soon.

Miranda Baldwin
Headteacher



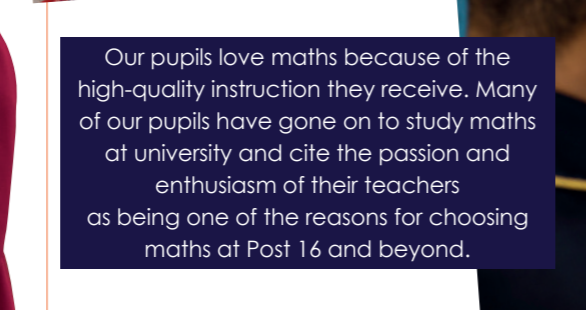
Discussion and collaboration are important strands in our approach to solving reasoning problems in primary mathematics. As a result, our pupils make outstanding progress during Key Stage 2.



Our pupils benefit from amazing facilities in the creative arts with art, textiles, and design technology on the curriculum for Year 7 and Year 8. They also have opportunities to immerse themselves in the arts by attending extra-curricular activities and getting involved in our termly innovation days at which pupils can creatively explore current topical themes.



In food technology, pupils love having the opportunity to explore food and recipes from around the world and they also get to use their maths skills in a practical setting.



Our pupils love maths because of the high-quality instruction they receive. Many of our pupils have gone on to study maths at university and cite the passion and enthusiasm of their teachers as being one of the reasons for choosing maths at Post 16 and beyond.



Geography is a compulsory subject for all pupils in year 7 to 9 and a popular option choice at GCSE. The subject is brought to life through regular opportunities for fieldwork in the local community and beyond.



Above: Our Year 7s had great fun creating parachutes for their eggstronauts with Ms Adoni!
Below left: Primary science club is waiting excitedly for their seeds to grow.
Below right: Year 9 pupils exploring the structure of the heart



CREATING BRIGHT SPARKS

Students love bringing science to life in and outside our laboratory

by Mark Bradley, Assistant Headteacher

WHEN AN SMA PUPIL is asked which subject they look forward to learning and most enjoy, it is very often science. There is a good reason why - we aim to fascinate our pupils, give them the curiosity to ask why, and give them the tools to understand a world in which scientific advances continue to shape our lives.

In the primary phase, our pupils are challenged right from the start to learn complex scientific concepts and build their skills in practical science. Our pupils are so fortunate to be able to take part in awe-inspiring practical workshops in our secondary phase laboratories.

In the popular science club this term, pupils have had the opportunity to learn in depth about the lives of plants and to watch as seeds that they have sown grow into fabulous flowers.

At key stage 3, our pupils are taught in our specialist laboratories. We start the curriculum with the fundamentals of energy, particle theory and cell biology before building on these areas to give our pupils in-depth understanding and knowledge of scientific concepts.

Underpinning our lessons at KS3 is our desire to give pupils a sense of awe and wonder, bringing science to life with plenty of practical work and real-life contexts.

At key stage 4, our pupils build on their learning from KS3 in continued study of biology, chemistry, and physics through to Year 11. As pupils deepen their understanding, we continue to use practical work to build our pupils' working science skills while equipping them with the knowledge needed for success.

We bring science even further to life with learning outside the classroom. Around school, our pupils can explore our fantastic site for living things on our doorstep, experience outdoor learning in our forest school and take part in fieldwork on our playing field. In recent years, we have built into our curriculum regular visits to the nearby Royal Observatory, where our pupils have been amazed with planetarium shows and talks with real astronomers working on our doorstep.

Catch up with... Ms Eduvie, KS4 Science Co-ordinator

Why is learning science so important?

Learning science helps pupils to make sense of the world around them. It gifts them the opportunity to answer some of the

most challenging questions that life can present and find answers through investigation.

What do you love most about teaching science?

It's all about discovery! It is a joy to see how each class discovers concepts in science through experimentation in their own way.

What awe-inspiring things have your pupils experienced this year?

My Year 8 class absolutely loved their water treatment challenge. They were creative and showed great understanding of separation techniques. Through teamwork they successfully made water filters out of normal everyday objects.

What advice would you give to someone to help them succeed in the field of science?



Do not give up. The most renowned scientists are not so because they



never made mistakes but because they persevered despite them.

OUR LITERACY JOURNEY

A love of reading starts at a young age
by Tayla Roostan Primary Literacy Lead and Year 6 Teacher



IN THE PRIMARY PHASE at St Matthew Academy, reading is very much at the heart of our curriculum and is celebrated and enjoyed at every available opportunity.

We are extremely lucky to have a wealth of high quality, engaging texts available in our classrooms and in our fantastic library. On offer to the are a range of texts that promote equality and diversity and support the teaching of our PHSE curriculum.

Thanks to our amazing cohort of year 6 pupils last year, we have a brand-new reading shed that they raised money for through their enterprise week. What a fantastic legacy. The shed has been a massive hit with the children who have enjoyed lots of reading and storytelling at lunchtimes.

The reading shed would not be a success without our expert librarians, Natalee and Isabelle, who devote their lunchtimes to promote a love of reading across the whole school. They advise, share stories, and even read their own narratives to an eager audience. The girls are currently running a competition and are looking forward to picking a winner.

Each week in our celebration assembly, we love to share the successes of reading across the primary phase by awarding a Wonderful Reader award to a pupil in each class. We also have an exciting read theory award for classes in Key Stage 2 who compete to see who can gain the most knowledge points, while also improving on their reading fluency and comprehension skills. The winning class receive a trophy and biscuits to enjoy.

One of the most phenomenal things about the pupils at St Matthew Academy is how well they can articulate their thoughts and feelings about what they have read.

Teachers and pupils take great pride in sharing their reading journey through fantastic displays and illustrations. The children write small reviews, feedback verbally and draw pictures to represent their ideas.

MEET THE STUDENT LIBRARIANS

Mrs Fields, our Learning Resource Centre Manager interviewed three of our student librarians, Sara and Shaely in year 8 and Nneoma in year 9

Why did you want to become a Student Librarian?

Shaely I really enjoy reading books. It is one of my passions.

Sara Working as a student librarian is a very good experience for me and my future and I really enjoy helping pupils choose books and

make some recommendations. **Nneoma** It is a good way to help others fall in love with books and it is also interesting to understand more about how the learning resource centre (LRC) works.

What is your favourite genre of book and why?

Shaely I love fantasy fiction because it feels so magical and you feel like you are truly in the story with the characters.

Sara I really enjoy romance and adventure books as there are lots of twists and turns and these genres are really engaging.

Who is your favourite author?

Nneoma Cathy Hopkins.

Shaely Holly Black.

Sara Colleen Hoover.

Is there one book you have read which has been particularly memorable?

Nneoma When was in primary school I used to love reading Dork



Greg James, Radio 1 DJ, visiting SMA as part of the 'BBC 100, Share Your Story' project

by Kasia Debko, Secondary Literacy Lead and Teacher of English

JUST LIKE IN SMA PRIMARY, in the secondary phase, we are also extremely passionate about reading and we understand the importance of good literacy.

Our KS3 curriculum includes a range of culturally and topically diverse fiction and non-fiction texts. The pupils can also access a wide variety of books, newspapers and magazines in the Learning Resource Centre. Additionally, Y7 and Y8 pupils have structured library lessons with their English teachers once a fortnight.

Each SMA pupil has access to user-friendly apps such as Oliver (online library) and Sora – an online platform which enables pupils to



enjoy e-books and audiobooks at home from our school library.

SMA pupils have plenty of opportunities to participate in various literacy competitions, e.g. International Literacy Day, World Poetry Day, Lewisham Book Awards, etc. The students love demonstrating their knowledge of books and their passion for reading by competing in literacy quizzes which we design around the needs and interests of our pupils.

All members of staff are involved in promoting and improving literacy in our school. We understand that literacy should be taught across the curriculum, therefore, our morning literacy sessions are prepared and delivered by all subject teachers.

We strongly believe that reading should be enjoyable and engaging. With this idea in mind, during Friday D.E.A.R time, we provide our pupils with the opportunity to relax and get creative whilst listening to carefully chosen books and their authors. We also invite writers to SMA to come and meet our fabulous pupils, and to share their passion for reading and writing. Recently, our students were visited by the writer and BBC presenter Greg James and the seasoned lyricist and rap performer – Breis.

And lastly, because we know very well that good readers are quicker learners, for those of our pupils who need a bit of support, we offer Lexia intervention sessions.

MEET THE PARENTS

We welcome any EYFS and KS1 carer keen to help read with the children. Chery, Ponyo's mum, and Claudia, Maddie and Evie's mum, share their experiences

Why do you volunteer your time to read with the primary phase?

Chery: I absolutely love reading and it's just so fun to see how it works in school and seeing Ponyo in a different reading environment other than at home.

Claudia I love telling stories and I'm

grateful for the opportunity to come in and do the best thing that you can do with your time. Reading is the gateway that stays open forever.

How do you promote a love of reading with your child?

Chery: When I read to Ponyo at

home, I am really animated and like to bring the books to life with funny voices and it's lovely to share that with other children at St Matthew Academy.

Why do you think reading for primary children is so important?

Claudia: I grew up as an only child and was raised by a single mum who was a professor, so I spent a lot of time alone. Reading gave me a world of friends and I was obsessed with books. Literacy is the key to life.

Chery: Reading at school and at home should be consistent because reading helps children to understand, use their Imagination and become creative.

From your experience tell us what you think about the teaching of reading at St Matthew Academy?

Claudia: Children at St Matthew Academy are taught with purpose and get a lot of engagement from the teachers.



SMA'S GOT TALENT

Our more able pupils can take advantage of some more unusual activities

by Damien Quigg Associate Assistant Headteacher

HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT what it is like to be a bat? Twelve of our Year 9 pupils have been given this challenge as part of the mind body problem in Philosophy studied in this year's Brilliant Club programme.

This is just one example of a number of experiences we are providing for our more able pupils across the secondary phase which also include violin lessons, Mandarin lessons and our Grammar Plus groups in Key Stage 3. Pupils at St Matthew Academy have been privileged to work with the **Brilliant Club** over the last few years, an organisation aimed at raising aspirations for pupils to develop skills, knowledge, and confidence to apply for top universities in the future. We are confident that this year's pupils will continue to build on the success of the last few years. The programme has had significant impact on pupil outcomes. The previous two cohorts all achieved high marks.

The pupils had a virtual launch event in January hosted by Jesus College, Cambridge. They attended tutorials where they also studied the ideas of philosophers such as Nagel and Descartes and tackled the concepts of Dualism and Solipsism. They are soon to complete their final assignment. After their graduation they will be able to visit a university to see what it is really like.

Rapolas, in the current cohort says: 'It is a very different experience to the normal school lessons. I enjoy working in a small group and interacting with others. Everyone is able to contribute to debates and we have some control over our tasks.'

'We are learning about philosophical ideas which is new and interesting. There's lots of discussion and it challenges me to think differently and more critically.'

Fellow pupil Serena says: 'We are encouraged to achieve and to overcome challenge. I would recommend the programme to

anyone who has the chance to do it. It provides me with a whole new experience and allows me to share my opinions and engage with complex concepts I wouldn't normally study in school.'

On Tuesday afternoons, our Year 7 pupils have **Mandarin lessons** that are taught by a visiting teacher who is a native speaker. They not only learn the basics of the language but about aspects of life and the culture of China; most recently pupils celebrated Chinese New Year in class. We were delighted when the pupils received their certificates for the successful completion of the Introductory Level Mandarin Course. As well as studying in class, pupils can access online learning to continue developing at home. As part of our enrichment offer our more able cohort in Years 7, 8 and 9 are currently **learning to play the violin** with a visiting teacher from Blackheath Conservatoire. This is a new opportunity launched this year and allows pupils to further develop a skill and interest that may not normally be available to them.

Our **Grammar Plus** programme continues to take shape and pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 proudly wear their badges that identify them to their teachers and peers. Each year group meets weekly in the library working on a programme to develop skills and knowledge to become independent, resilient learners and to build up their CVs over time. Year 7 pupils have already presented an assembly to their peers on the theme of diversity and equality, an important issue for them. They took full responsibility for the presentation which included a quiz, video presentation where they interviewed older pupils on the theme of equity and diversity and a presentation on the importance of acceptance of others - even if we think they are different.

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MEET THE LEARNERS

Here, Year 7 pupils give their views of the opportunities offered by the Annie, Nana, Calvin and Phoebe, for their views on the various initiatives on offer

Annie says: "I love the challenge of learning the violin even though it is difficult. I sometimes think I am not very good at it but I still want to learn because it is fun."

Nana says: "We get the chance to do things we wouldn't normally get to do in school; it's great to work with like-minded people. I have also met and talked with pupils I wouldn't normally speak to, so this has been a positive thing for me."

Calvin says: "Doing the assembly was scary but I loved the challenge of pushing myself to overcome my fears about speaking in front of such a large group. It helped me improve my public speaking skills."

Phoebe (not pictured) says: "Learning Mandarin is fun. I get to learn a whole new language. My parents are really pleased that I am learning a non-European language. I have learned to persevere with challenge and it has given me confidence."

PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

Whether going on to further education or the workplace, we provide tools and help to guide our students beyond our school gates

by Stephanie Guest, Deputy Headteacher

AT ST MATTHEW ACADEMY we are committed to providing a Careers Education Programme that prepares all our pupils for their Post-16 education and beyond. We have partnerships with a number of organisations as part of this work including KPMG, BDO and the Construction Youth Trust (CYT).

In Year 9 our pupils can take part in a mentoring programme with KPMG, a global services firm with offices in Canary Wharf, which we have worked with for more than seven years.

Forty of our pupils are mentored by young professionals from KPMG who come into school for monthly sessions in our library. It is a two-year programme and so those who join the programme in Year 9 remain on the programme throughout Year 10 and all have chance during that period to visit the KPMG offices for several of their mentoring sessions.

Importantly, pupils who are not on the mentoring programme do not miss out KPMG also run employability skills sessions for a large group of pupils in Year 9 and 10 each term.



The Construction Youth Trust (CYT)

THE CONSTRUCTION YOUTH Trust are a charity whose aim is to inspire and enable young people to overcome barriers and discover a career in the construction and built environment sector. We have worked with them for a number of years. They deliver sessions to pupils across KS3 and KS4 related to the curriculum and to introduce them to the industry. Pupils learn not just about construction work itself, but all the careers that are

needed in the industry. Our partnership provides pupils with meaningful encounters with employers to widen their career horizons, challenge stereotypes, champion STEM and support young people to achieve their ambitions. The CYT were in school during National Careers Week for sessions which included Step into the World of Engineering, Maths Quantity Surveying, Maths Measuring in 3D as well as in Maths Architecture. Design.



Work experience

WORK EXPERIENCE went ahead this year and was an enjoyable and valuable insight into the world of work for many of our pupils. Their work experience may not have been in the field of their chosen future career, nevertheless pupils met new people, learnt to work independently, and developed new skills.

SMA ALUMNI SENGOVA KAILONDO RETURNS TO CLASS

During National Careers Week we were visited by several professionals who spoke with us in assembly about the journey to their current role, including the Portfolio Editor for BBC Two and Four, the CEO of the X4Group (a global recruitment firm), Chery Nguyen an illustrator and set designer and SMA Alumni Sengova Kailondo who is now a solicitor for Horgan Lovell. He spoke with our Year 10s who had lots of questions for him about his life and career.



What pupils say

ABDUL OLADEJO worked at Green's Carriage Masters.

He says "Work experience was a fun, challenging experience which helped me to really mature. I was able to learn new skills which will help me when I'm older and deciding on my future."

For example, I was doing office work at the business I worked at. This helped me get an insight into the jobs needed to run a business. This is beneficial to me as a business GCSE student, and I aim to follow business or economics as a future career path.

"Another thing I enjoyed was working outside doing work in the garage. The people guided me to help me wash cars and organise toolboxes used for the cars. This fun, engaging, hard work and was challenging. It was a new experience which made me realise it is important to adapt to be a good worker"

Dominic Jastak worked at Willmott Dixon

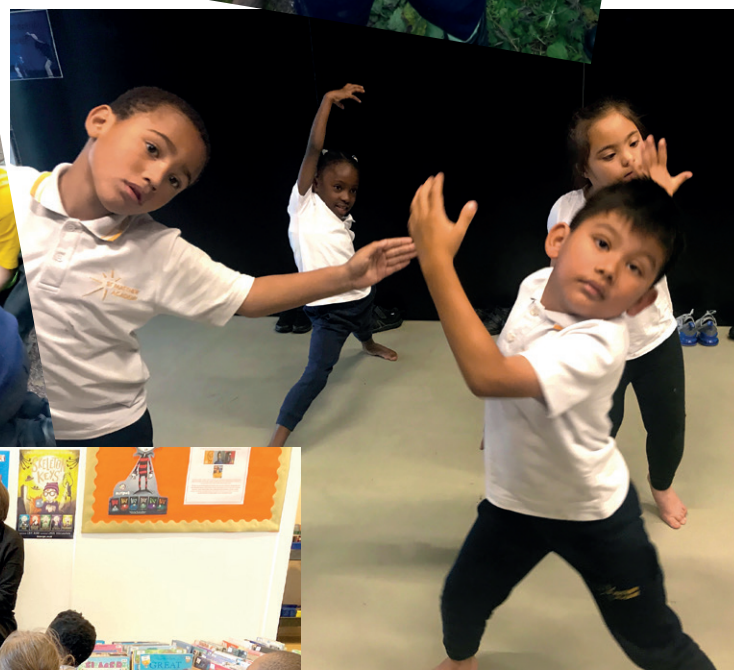
He said "My experience at Willmott Dixon has showed me paths to my future that I didn't think were available for me. It has enlightened me to try new things that are more enjoyable in the same aspect of what I loved to do in the beginning."

"I hope to return to Willmott Dixon because I believe I will be able to learn even more after further tuition."

MAKING A UNIQUE IMPACT

Our specialist lessons in the Primary Phase help children shine their light

by Adam Kholbeck, Deputy Headteacher - Primary phase



PRIMARY SCHOOL IS ABOUT more than learning English and Maths. While we pride ourselves on our provision in those areas, at St. Matthew Academy, we also embrace our responsibility to ensure that all children have a broad range of memorable, impactful, and unique opportunities. This ensures that whatever form their lights take, they are all able to shine equally as brightly in school and beyond.

At St Matthew Academy, we are blessed with access to facilities that many schools can only dream of thanks to our purposeful and collaborative relationship between the Primary and Secondary phases.

In this last half term alone, our children have had some truly unique opportunities to develop and refine their expertise in creative, sporting, and academic pursuits.

We are extremely lucky to have a dedicated Primary kitchen which has been getting an awful lot of use in the last half term. Children across the Primary Phase have been studying food in their DT lessons and have been making all kinds of healthy food from wraps to smoothies in this well-resourced space. Not only that, but children are also able to join the weekly cooking club which provides yet further opportunity to hone their culinary skills. The kitchen is also utilised for events such as

pancake day which recently saw every child in the Primary Phase prepare, make, and eat pancakes.

Forest school is one of the most significant experiences that children in any Primary school can have and we are lucky enough to have our own Forest School on site at SMA. We have our very own Forest School leader in outdoor education specialist, Mr Saunders. Children across the Primary age range have the chance to go into the Forest School regularly to supplement the learning they do in the classroom and this experience is something that we recognise as having a hugely beneficial impact on their education. In Key Stage 1, children have weekly sessions in the Forest School with Mr Saunders who makes sure that he shares stories of his adventurous past while the children go in search of mini-beasts or construct dens.

Our children love to dance. And, at SMA, there is no shortage of opportunities for children to express their passion for such a creative art form. Children across the Primary age range have dance sessions with Mrs. Smith, our specialist dance teacher. The impact of such specialist input is always evident in the performances, shows and

assemblies that children prepare.

Running alongside our other creative pursuits, drama forms an integral part of what we do at St. Matthew Academy. In the last term, Year 5 have made particular use of the dedicated drama studio and drama teacher, Miss. Barallon, to create some incredibly impressive performance pieces. All Primary children have the opportunity to use the space during their Primary journey and they all leave the Primary Phase ready to lead the way in the subject in the Secondary Phase.

Of course, learning and experience doesn't just happen during the regular school day. We have a raft of extra-curricular clubs on offer, including African drumming, cup stacking, sign language, gardening and musical appreciation. Each of our clubs are run by experienced members of staff with a specific skill, qualification, or passion for the club.