

Spring term 2022



# SMA CELEBRATES

INTEGRITY  
COURAGE  
SERVICE



**HAPPY  
NEW  
YEAR!**

CATHOLIC LIFE ✨ OUR MISSION ✨ PUPIL INTERVIEWS





# LOOKING AHEAD

## ...to our continued success

A message from *Ms Miranda Baldwin, Headteacher*



**I AM DELIGHTED** to share our second edition of SMA Celebrates with our families and local community. This issue celebrates our first term back at the Academy and it has been great to get back to having a fairly normal term. We have been pleased to lose our bubbles allowing pupils from across the school to flourish and make full use of our amazing facilities and building. Visitors have been welcomed and events have taken place – as well as a wide range of trips, sporting fixtures, educational visits and even a residential trip to the Norfolk coast for more than 100 of our Year 8 pupils.

Many of the highlights have involved parents and in particular our primary parents have greatly enjoyed getting involved with activities alongside their children. The showcase at the end of the Cultural Day was a joy to behold with parents performing in front of staff and pupils and many wearing traditional dress. The Year 7 family barbeque was another well-attended event and a



great opportunity for new SMA parents to get to meet the team and each other. Another highlight was a visit from our local MP, Janet Daby. She spent a morning in school visiting classrooms with our ambassadors and meeting representatives from our Academy Council, giving them the chance to talk to her about issues they are passionate about – black history and climate change were top of their agenda.

In this edition of SMA Celebrates I hope you enjoy our centre-spread focusing on the Catholic life and mission of our Academy. There are a range of articles including the work we did earlier this year as a school community, developing our new mission statement; information about our programme of liturgies and services and some interesting interviews with pupils who are part of our youth chaplaincy team.

This term we are looking forward to continuing the great work we started last term with our House and Academy Councils. Our pupils are passionate

about making a difference through service, both in their local communities and beyond, so I am thrilled we will be focusing on the impact of their work in our next edition of SMA Celebrates. We also have exciting plans to further strengthen parental engagement across the Academy and hope to share more news about this in our next edition.

I continue to be immensely proud to be the Headteacher of St Matthew Academy – a truly unique, inclusive all-through school serving the Catholic and local community of Blackheath, Lewisham and beyond. I hope this newsletter provides an insight into our offer for those thinking about joining us, and that our current families enjoy sharing in our successes. If you want to find out more then please get in touch – our pupils will love showing you around if you wish to visit.

## SUPPORTING OUR SCHOOL AND ITS PUPILS

Looking back on a busy term *by Ms Stephanie Guest, Deputy Headteacher*

**THE CHAPLAINCY TEAM** at St Matthew Academy was as active as ever last term, supporting and organising our charity events and initiatives alongside the Heads of House, working with our youth chaplaincy teams, the Light Bearers in our primary and secondary phases as well as planning and preparing for assemblies, the Feast of St Matthew, and the Christmas Carol Service.

Our secondary phase Light Bearers were extremely busy, first preparing a piece of drama for our Feast of St Matthew liturgy which helped us all to reflect on the Gospel of St Matthew and the account of his first meeting with Jesus. Our Light Bearers really 'let their light shine' and help others to do the same. They planned and led assemblies for the whole school at the beginning of November on the Feast of All Saints and All Souls, always helping our pupils to see how these important celebrations are relevant to their lives today.

The Chaplaincy Team is delighted to be welcoming pupils and teaching staff back to the Prayer Room on a regular basis this year and to be making plans to take our pupils on retreat to Aylesford Priory in the spring term.

We're **DELIGHTED** to *welcome back* teachers *and* pupils to the **PRAYER ROOM**



Shameemah Tanagidah, Jamal Brown and Moriah James



Erhi Eduvie, Chaplaincy Team Member with Year 9 Light Bearers

## The Feast of St Matthew

**ON SEPTEMBER 21** each year we celebrate the Feast of St Matthew, our patron saint who gives us our motto "Let your light shine" and as each year group gathered in the main hall for our Feast of St Matthew liturgy our pupils really did let their lights shine. We enjoyed uplifting singing by a small group of Year 8 and 9 pupils who sang 'Every Praise' our Year 1 pupils sang 'Shine Jesus Shine' and we were treated to beautiful readings and prayers by our Light Bearers in the

primary and secondary

phase. Our liturgy always reflects our whole community from Reception to Year 11, with pupils from each key stage taking a lead, being of service to one another. The Light Bearers regularly prepare a piece of drama to help us with our reflection and this year's piece engaged our community, who were left clearly able to see that we are all given the chance to make amends, we are special, our light shines brightly and others can always see this.



# MEET THE LIGHT BEARERS



St Matthew Academy is proud of our Light Bearers. In these interviews three pupils explain the importance of the role and why they enjoy being involved

**What is your role as a Light Bearer?** Being a Light Bearer is like being a disciple and sharing the word of God, reading the Bible and praying to God.

**Why do you think you make a good Light Bearer?** I think I make a good Light Bearer because I praise God and worship him. I read the Bible and know the stories Jesus told.

**Why do you think this role is important to St Matthew Academy?** I think the role is important too because you have the job of sharing the word of God with other children.

**What impact do you think you have as a Light Bearer?** I think I make an impact as a Light bearer by telling stories that show how God will always be with you, like in the story of Jonah. God was with Jonah even when he was in the belly of the whale.

**How do you let others let their light shine?** I help others to let their light shine at the school by setting a good example, being helpful and caring and making sure we help each other when we are in need.

**What else would you like to do as a Light Bearer?** What I would like to do as a Light Bearer is to share the word of God more, to make sure that everyone knows that God will let you into his Kingdom and you will always be guided and protected by him.

## What is your role as a Light Bearer?

My role as a Light Bearer is to encourage people and to boost their confidence. It is also to entertain in order to put a message across.

## What does your Light Bearer role involve?

We work together to create skits for assemblies and liturgies which help everyone reflect on the readings and how they relate to us as young people. We recently worked on a poem for the Christmas Carol Concert. We also have discussions on different topics for example our 'God given talents'. We also prepare for and lead assemblies.

## What impact does being a Light Bearer have on the St Matthew Academy Community?

I think that when people watch me doing assemblies or singing then it might help to boost their confidence and it might give them the confidence to do the same.

## How does being a Light Bearer help you?

Being a Light Bearer benefits me outside of school too. I want to do something in the future that will need confidence and it also helps me to spread positive messages through acting and singing.

## How do you help others to 'let their light shine'?

The Light Bearer buddies will help Year 7 pupils take part in things in school that they might like to do and help to boost their confidence. We also help others to 'let their light shine' by the messages we share in assembly or liturgies for example that you don't need to be scared to do something.

## Why did you join the Light Bearers?

It was the last day of school and the Light Bearers did a sketch in assembly which inspired me to join.

## Why do you like being a Light Bearer?

As a Light Bearer, you learn from others. You might not always be teaching someone else something, they could also be teaching you.

## Why did you become a Light Bearer?

In Year 7 Miss Edivie was our Science teacher and she said being a Light Bearer was about letting your light shine. She explained the Light Bearers help others through drama, helping them to understand about God in a way that related to them and also have fun.

**What do the Light Bearers do?** They meet each week and in one week we plan the assemblies we are leading or the liturgies we are leading and the charity events we are involved in and we perform in the liturgies or assemblies. The following week we meet in the Chaplaincy area to learn more about ourselves spiritually through discussions and activities.

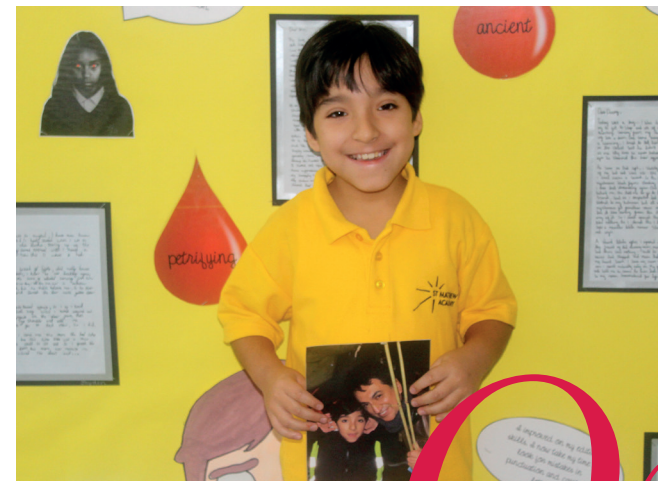
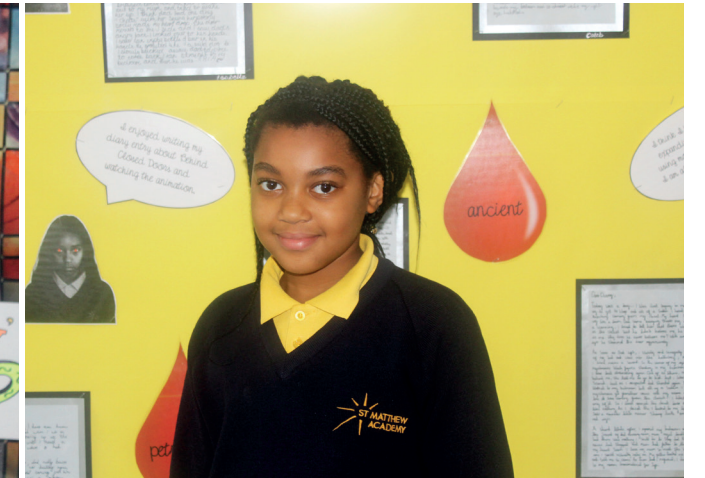
**How do you help others to 'let their light shine'?** Through the Light Bearer Buddies which supports Year 7s who may be struggling to get around school or make friends. To help them engage with school, join clubs and so they know they have a place and feel welcome here.

## What impact do the Light Bearers have on the St Matthew Academy community?

Light Bearers are role models for younger pupils. They can help younger pupils to become better people, by demonstrating respect, kindness and how to treat others well. I want to have a positive effect on other people.

## Why do you like being a Light Bearer?

We can talk, the Light Bearers are friends. It's a fun group. I enjoy attending the Light Bearers.



# Our Mission

How integrity, courage and service can be transformative

by Ms Stephanie Guest, Deputy Headteacher

**IN THE SPRING AND SUMMER** of 2021 we reviewed our school mission statement. We asked ourselves the question, what is our mission in education? The words of St Matthew, 'let your light shine' remain central to our mission at St Matthew Academy.

At St Matthew Academy we let our light shine by:

- Growing our inclusive, caring Catholic community
- Nurturing faith, discovering talents and cultivating ambition
- Transforming each other through integrity, courage and service
- Enabling everyone at St Matthew Academy to flourish.

Our school is not a place where we focus on filling our pupils with knowledge and skills as though they were empty vessels, but we work to develop their inner character, to support and guide them as they grow and flourish.

We intend for our community to be a place of integrity, of courage and of service to others. These are virtues and qualities we aspire to and must be practised over time. We have shared these virtues with our pupils this year in assemblies, form time and PSHE lessons and we are living them in our community every day. Our community of pupils and staff show integrity, doing the right thing all the time, even when no one is watching. Our community is one of courage, we do things even when it is difficult to do so, often we must show courage in our learning. Our school is also one which values service, contributing to the common good by our daily acts of kindness, by our charity work and our care for the environment.

Our community of *pupils* and *staff* show **INTEGRITY**, doing the *right thing* **ALL THE TIME**







# Lest we forget

How St Matthew Academy remembered the brave

by Mr Rondell Wanza, Assistant Headteacher

At 11.00am on the eleventh day of the eleventh month, the First World War ended. The following year in 1919, King George V declared this would be the date to remember the fallen. The first Remembrance Day was held 90 years ago, when Alan Neill, Member of Parliament for Comox-Alberni, introduced a bill to observe Armistice Day only on November 11. Passed by the House of Commons, the bill also changed the name to “Remembrance Day”.

**FOR THE FAMILIES** who have lost loved ones in war, whether 100 years ago or 10 years ago, they are remembered every day. For those of us who have never been touched by war, then we remember the fallen on this special day.

Regardless of whether we agree with what they were fighting for, or whether we know someone who has died in battle, we must remember that they fought not for themselves, but for all of us, so that we can be free to live and flourish in the kind of world we want for ourselves and future generations.

On Thursday November 11, the Academy commemorated Remembrance Day by holding Remembrance services in the primary playground and at the front of the school, near our war memorial as we do every year. Monsignor Rothon from St Mary's Church in Blackheath led our service of remembrance which was attended by a Year 6 and Year 7 class. Monsignor Rothon and Mr Wanza helped us all to reflect on the importance of marking this occasion by reminding us about those who have lost their lives in the First World War and the Second World War, including old boys of St Joseph's and in conflicts which have taken place since.

Our youth chaplaincy team The Light Bearers read poems, including In Flanders



Field, beautifully and Mr Charlery played The Last Post to mark the start of our two-minute silence followed by the Reveille. Monsignor Rothon, Mr Saunders, a member of the PE department and former member of the armed forces laid wreaths alongside Ms Baldwin and our Chair of Governors, Mrs Pat Barber. The pupils who were unable to join us outside in the secondary phase also marked the occasion with poetry, prayer and the two minutes of silence from their classrooms while all of the primary children were able to participate in their service in their playground and did so with great respect and reverence.

*We will remember them.*

# FIGURE OF SPEECH



Parfaite Balande wins a place in the grand finals of the Jack Petchey Speak Out Challenge – the world's largest youth public speaking competition

by Ms Katie Purslow, English Teacher

**2021 WAS QUITE A YEAR** for Year 11 student Parfaite. It began with her attending the Speaker's Trust training workshops organised by global charity Jack Petchey along with 21 other Year 10 students. Here she was selected to represent SMA along with students from 249 other UK schools, to take part in the regional finals in June. She went onto win this final with a speech entitled 'Smile and the World Smiles with You.'

This was the third year that SMA bought the cup home at the regionals but what made this achievement even more impressive is the inclusion of schools across Essex as well as London; placing Parfaite among the top 0.2% of young public speakers in London and Essex.

And success for her didn't stop there – of the 187 regional semi-finalists – she was selected as one of the 15 speakers for the Grand Final at the Cambridge Theatre in November speaking to a live audience of more than 500 on a West End stage.

Although, Parfaite did not win the Grand Final, as a result of her amazing achievement

in the regional finals, she will be hosting the “Speak Out” Regionals in May this year in the hall at St Matthew Academy. We are looking forward to welcoming student speakers from 16 schools in the South East London area.

So what makes SMA's own champion public speaker tick? We caught up with Parfaite for a Q and A session where she shares some fun facts about herself and gives advice to future “Speak Out” contestants.

**What is your favourite saying or quote and why?** “Whatever you do, always give 100%. Unless you're donating blood”  
**What three items or people would you choose to take to a desert island and why?** An airbed – I don't think sand is very comfortable to sleep on, a mini fridge with a built-in water dispenser – a girl has to eat and a boat just in case I want to go home.

**What three top tips on life would you give a Year Seven student?** Capture as many moments as possible, they make cameras for a reason. Dream big, so you can sleep for longer.

If you want to be happy, ignore outside talk; you're too dope\* to care about what others think. (\*Dope - something really good or cool)

**You could have made a speech about anything in the world. Why did you speak about this one subject?**

So much happens in our lives that sometimes we forget to smile, even though it is one of the best feelings in the world.

**Why do you think it's important for young people, like you, to share their stories?**

It gives us the opportunity to be heard even if we aren't talking about anything serious or 'important'. The fact that we have a space to share stories and topics that we are passionate about is amazing, especially since young people can be overlooked.



You can watch Parfaite's incredible speech online, scan the QR code to watch.



## Friends in high places

During November, St Matthew Academy welcomed professional Team GB Basketball player, Orlan Jackman to work with our Sporting Brilliance cohort over two sessions. The workshop comprised of a theory session to gain an insight into the daily life of being an elite professional athlete, nutrition, and mental preparation advice. Then followed a session in the sports hall where the group took part in a host of physical and skill related practical activities by Mr Akin Goksel, Associate Assistant Headteacher

**SPORTING SUPERSTAR** Orlan Jackman lives in South London but his roots are in East London – he was born and raised in Hackney and went to Homerton Boys school (now City Academy), which has a strong reputation for sporting brilliance.

His first passion, like many boys, was football and he didn't play basketball seriously until he was in year 10. His rapid rise in the sport took him to America where he earned a sports scholarship in basketball at Oklahoma City University. Standing at 6'7", Orlan first turned professional in 2012 and he can play in a variety of on court positions including Small Forward, Shooting Guard and Power Forward. His professional career has seen him play in Germany, Portugal and the UK where he has played in the top British Basketball League (BBL) for a host of clubs across the country. This has included London teams; London City Royals and London Lions and he has won the BBL Cup for three consecutive seasons, becoming the first player to achieve such a feat. His success did not stop at club level as he has represented Great Britain on the International stage as well as England at the Commonwealth Games in Sydney, Australia.

In between sessions we caught up with Orlan to ask him some quick-fire questions.  
**What motivated you to become a sports person?** I wanted to help people who were like me when I was growing up, so I made a platform for myself to be able to do that.  
**How would you describe yourself as a player?** Hardworking, I'm a team player.  
**What mental tool do you use under pressure?** Deep breathing and thinking about

all the times I have done something right.  
**What are your three biggest achievements in life?** My family, I have an active one-year-old son who keeps me busy! And of course, playing for Great Britain and representing England at the Commonwealth Games.  
**Who is your favourite sports hero?**

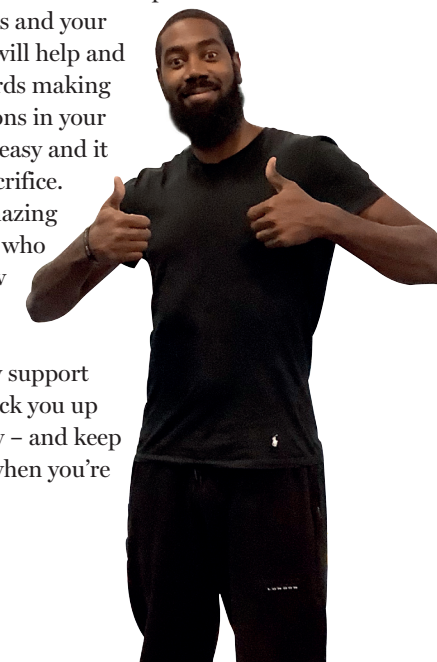
Ian Wright  
**What is your pre-match meal?** Homemade Spaghetti Bolognese (of course!) and plenty of water to stay hydrated.

**Away from basketball, what do you do to relax?** I hang out with my family and help future athletes develop through my mentoring company.

**Can you tell us one interesting fact about yourself?** My brother, Jermain Jackman won the voice in 2014.

**Lastly, what advice would you give to any young aspiring future athletes?** Listen and take advice from experienced coaches, athletes and your teachers. They will help and guide you towards making the right decisions in your careers. It's not easy and it takes a lot of sacrifice.

You need an amazing circle of friends who understand how much it means to you and an awesome family support network who pick you up when you're low – and keep you grounded when you're riding high!







## OUR SPORTING LIFE

**THIS TERM WE HAVE INTRODUCED** our new Sports Leaders to our pupils at lunchtimes. The Year 6 children who have been trained to become Sports Leaders engage pupils in a variety of sports. Football, skipping, table tennis, skittles and tennis are just some of the activities the children have been participating in. We are proud of how our Sports Leaders interact with the rest of the school and support the children. Lunchtimes are calm and enjoyable as everyone gets involved. The Sports Leaders are an asset to our school and fabulous role models for all the pupils.

### Why we love being a Sports Leader

Juan *"I feel proud to be a Sports Leader. I help all the children in Primary to play and have fun."*

Jayden *"We help children to play nicely together and learn something new."*

Devontae *"We keep them busy by having lots of things to do like football, skipping and tennis."*

Luca *"The children really enjoy lunchtimes and like learning new games and activities."*



**THIS TERM OUR CHILDREN IN EYFS** have made an amazing start on their learning journey and settled in extremely well. They really enjoy coming into school and already have made fantastic progress. It is an absolute joy to visit the reception class as you always leave with a huge smile on your face.

The children have really immersed themselves in learning with trips to the Forest School, singing with the gospel choir teacher, liturgical dance lessons and plenty of experiential learning in our outdoor classroom alongside their experiences across the 7 areas of the EYFS curriculum.

All our literacy sessions are supported by visuals, puppets, and actions, which stimulates a kinaesthetic approach to learning, so very important at this young age.

The children have also had the opportunity to experiment with rhyming in fiction and non-fiction stories and have even been experiencing a playful way of using personification to describe how the thunder, in

Elmer's Story, roared, howled, and rumbled, until it exploded like fireworks.

We were delighted to welcome our new reception parents into school for the Gruffalo Hunt in September. Children and parents spent the morning together making finger

puppets, Gruffalo masks and a delicious Gruffalo Crumble. The highlight of the session was a trip into the Forest School to hunt for the Gruffalo and all the animals in the story. Our children thoroughly enjoy their weekly lessons in the Forest School and loved sharing the experience with their parents.

Finally, the children

participated in a wonderful Cultural Day in October. We would like to thank the parents of Ian, Lucas, Tove, Nasia, and Temisan for their amazing workshops and involvement. Also, to Ms Cruz and Donovan's mum for a brilliant Colombian experience, and Mr Charlery for letting us use a fantastic selection of SMA instruments. The kids had a blast making music and dancing to music from around the world.

## Welcoming our amazing Reception children

by Ms Joanna Chick,  
Head of Primary Phase

## CELEBRATING OUR CULTURES



by Mr Adam Kohlbeck, Primary Phase Deputy Headteacher

**ON FRIDAY NOVEMBER 5,** the Primary Phase celebrated our annual Cultural Day. The day is a celebration of the diversity of our school community and an opportunity for everyone to learn about each other's culture. Our children and staff arrived at school in their traditional dress and loved showcasing their outfits to their peers – they all looked amazing.

Every class were lucky to participate in a wide range of workshops over the course of the day. Many of our parents gave up their time to come in and deliver talks, prepare

food and presentations. We had everything from Nigerian dance sessions, Ugandan cooking and dancing, traditional jewellery making, Songkran cards, lantern making, Indian dancing, African drumming, Salsa dancing, storytelling from Ireland and the Caribbean and much more. Everyone also thoroughly enjoyed sampling a wide range of traditional dishes from Poland, Africa, Jamaica and Columbia.

The day was topped off by a spectacular showcase in which we were fortunate enough to

have a performance of Indian dance and a concert from Matias' dad of Colombian music. It was a real carnival atmosphere in the hall as children, parents and staff joined in with the performances.

It was without a doubt the best Cultural Day we have had here at SMA and heart-warming to see our community really join together. We would like to give all our parent supporters once again a huge thank you. The children have not stopped talking about how much they enjoyed the day.