

SMA CELEBRATES

REACHING FOR THE SKIES



ITALIAN SKI-SCHOOL FUN

SO MUCH SUCCESS TO BE PROUD OF

From academic accomplishments and enrichment activities to sporting triumphs, our pupils and staff have achieved so much

By Headteacher, Miranda Baldwin

IT HAS BEEN ANOTHER GREAT YEAR for everyone at SMA with so many achievements to celebrate. One of the many highlights was the Denominational Inspection in March. Four inspectors over two days spent time visiting lessons and talking to pupils and staff. They concluded that SMA is a Good school and you can read some quotes from their report on this page.

“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.**”

This edition of SMA Celebrates aims to give you a taste of some of the enrichment activities on offer to our pupils. There are reports from two overseas trips, including the long awaited SMA Ski Italy 2023 tour. These trips as well as a number of residential visits that have taken place in the UK give our pupils the opportunity to experience time away from home, to try out new

“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.”

activities, make new friends and memories that will last a lifetime. In addition, I really enjoyed reading the article about Year 7 and the progress they have made since joining SMA. It is important to recognise that transition from Year 6 to 7 is an unsettling time for pupils (and their parents and carers) so it is heart-warming to read how positive and exciting starting at SMA has been for a range of pupils.

“The **behaviour** of pupils is **exemplary** in lessons and around the school, and **strong and positive relationships** are **EVIDENT THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL.**”

As usual, we have included some articles celebrating the winning achievements of our pupils. SMA

“**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.**”

students continue to excel on the sports field and this year we have seen a huge increase in girls playing competitive netball. Track and field athletics has also seen some amazing individual successes and these pupils will go on to represent Lewisham and London in regional and national events. However, it is not just sporting success that we can be proud of. Our strong tradition

“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.**”

of public speaking continues with successes in debating and Jack Petchey Speak out and for the second year running, we made it through to the Count On Maths Challenge Final at City Hall. This year our Year 10 pupils proved they could also shine in the Business and Entrepreneurship arena – winning a national competition for 11 to 16 year olds. You can read more about all of these successes on page 6 and 7. Finally news from the primary phase focuses on our Coronation Tea Party – I hope you enjoy the photos and reading about the fantastic event on the back page.

For those members of our local community interested in finding out more about what SMA can offer their child or would just like to come and meet some of our fabulous pupils, you are always welcome. Our pupil ambassadors can 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.



Sloping off for a week

It was a first trip to the snow for our novice skiers

By Headteacher, Miranda Baldwin

IT WAS WITH A SENSE OF EXCITEMENT, fear, and a little bit of frustration that 39 pupils and six staff gathered in the school car park one afternoon in the Easter break, four days later than originally planned (but that is another story).

We were setting off on the first ever SMA ski trip, to the Italian Dolomites and had a 24-hour coach journey to tackle first.

The travelling turned out to be a pleasure – first class drivers, a brand-new coach (with personal charging points much to the relief of the pupils) and no delay at the ferry terminal. We all managed to get some sleep and woke up to snow-capped mountain views.

On arrival at the resort, we all dealt with our first challenge of the week – working out how to get ski boots on and done up. Next, we checked in at our hotel and got ourselves organised for the week ahead. And what a week we had.

The hotel food was great and enjoyed by everyone; our resort manager Eric looked after us perfectly both on and off the slopes and the great range of evening activities ensured the pupils almost forgot about their devices.

The skiing itself was superb. We were lucky enough to have a team of four young English-speaking Slovenian ski instructors in charge and they could not have been more patient and caring. Progress on the slopes was super-fast for most and it was not long before they were cruising the high mountain slopes and experiencing the great Italian hospitality in the mountain restaurants for lunch. By the end of the week, everyone had progressed to the upper slopes and our last day we all enjoyed skiing together. The weather was glorious, the snow fab and we could not have been prouder of the SMA pupils as they showed off their carving turns on the half-pipe – the last run of the week. Thank you to everyone that made this trip possible – an experience that will never be forgotten.

Our ski stars say...

What did your instructors help you learn about yourself?

“If you keep persisting in what you are doing and believe in yourself the outcome will become better than you expected.”

“Katja helped me learn that I am not actually that bad a skier. As long as I don’t panic, I will be absolutely fine. Also, that having confidence in yourself will go a long way on the slopes.”

“Both instructors helped me realise that I was getting in my head too much. They helped me mostly overcome my fears of falling on the slopes.”

“Lana was my instructor. She taught me Slovenian phrases and was a perfect teacher. She allowed me freedom on the slopes. She was incredibly loved by our entire group”.

“**Making new friends** in a **YOUNGER YEAR GROUP** and just seeing **nature in general.**”

What did you most enjoy about learning to ski?
“Working with my friends to tell me what to improve and being helped up when I fell because it made me feel closer with the people there.”

“I also enjoyed going down steep slopes, even

though I fell a couple of times, in the end it was fun and rewarding being able to conquer a specific slope.”

“Making new friends in a younger year group and

just seeing nature in general.”

“Going down what felt like very steep parts of slopes. Where at the top you couldn’t see where the end was but getting down to the bottom and looking back.”



BONJOUR BUSINESS

Proving that you can mix business and pleasure our cohort headed to Paris.

Moona Green, Head of Business Studies

WHERE BETTER TO LEARN about business and computer science than Disneyland, Paris – and 40 pupils got the opportunity to do just that. There was sightseeing of course, and a whistle-stop tour of the Eiffel Tower, River Seine, Arc de Triomphe and the group stayed in a chateau for three nights. And being Disneyland, there were rides aplenty, great food and shopping – though the more serious side to the trip involved attending

lectures and talking to fascinating entrepreneurs and computer scientists. This was a truly wonderful trip with a great group of pupils who, throughout the four days reflected everything that we strive for at the academy. Pupils demonstrated our caring Catholic community spirit and they let their light shine. Now I am wondering and researching where we may go on our next learning trip.

LOOK HOW FAR THEY'VE COME

Tutor group 7R2 reflect on their first year in key stage 3

By Thirza Skelton, Director of Learning

Thinking back to that first day of Year 7 in September 2022, it feels like an eternity ago, but simultaneously feels like just yesterday.

With their cautious smiles, oversized uniform and nervous parents waving from the gate, our newest cohort embarked on the start of their journey here at SMA. That nervous energy was soon outshone however by the ever-increasing radiance of confidence and friendship.

We celebrated the end of our transition period at the end of September with a beautifully sunny BBQ for parents and students of year 7 to enjoy. It was at this point in which we saw a glimmer of the strong sense of unity and culture that was beginning to form within the year group.

With two sets of formal assessments under their belt, our Year 7s have settled well into healthy routines of hard-work and study which is always a joy to see and to celebrate. They have flung themselves into all aspects of life here at SMA and we have seen successes in a myriad of avenues. We have a healthy number of students who are regular attenders at our multitude of sporting clubs, as well as Debate Mate and the Count on Us maths challenge among others. Our Grammar+, Sporting Brilliance and Media pathways have also been a real testament to how wonderfully determined and brilliant our students are. As with all things, there have been challenges and hiccups along the way, but it is exciting to see what the next few years have in store for these bright and talented students as they learn and grow with us.



Form tutor Kirsten Glaeser-Yalen writes:



MY PROGRESSION FROM PRIMARY TO YEAR 7

By Chardonnay Beckford

I AM CHARDONNAY but better known as Angel. I have been attending St Matthew Academy for 8 years. The school allows us many opportunities to shape our character and our minds. I was confident I would be accepted to this secondary because I was already attending the primary phase and I had an older brother who also attended. I would never imagine attending any other school, because of the strong bonds I have made with teachers and pupils. I just don't know how life would be without them all here, to help me grow and make the right decisions.

On my first day of year 7, I saw many new faces, but I was greeted with love and joy. There were many obstacles and trials I went through trying to adjust to such a big change. People like prefects and teachers were always there whenever I needed them with an uplifting smile.

St Matthew Academy has a variety of different clubs, for example football, athletics, basketball, sporting excellence, rowing, Debate Mate dance and many more.

I attend dance, athletics and used to go to girls' football. Because I attend athletics, I get the chance to go to competitions with schools all around the area.

The things I like most about SMA are the extra lessons to up your skills and challenge your mind, such as food technology, computer science, drama, dance, and music. I also really enjoy using the school equipment like the trampolines, treadmill, and weights.

The teachers here teach us how to respect others and to be honest and strengthen our creative mind, so we can do incredible things.

BUILDING STRONG RELATIONSHIPS with families and students is essential for creating a supportive and thriving school community, which is why I have had open and effective communication with students and families in my form group. I am regularly engaging with families through parental meetings, parents evening, phone conversations and email in order to foster a sense of involvement and collaboration. Additionally, I have developed positive relationships with my form by creating a welcoming and inclusive environment, where they feel heard and respected which is important to support their holistic development. I am so proud of the growth that my students have made this past year, especially with the transition from primary to secondary, and I cannot wait to watch them continue their journey at SMA.

STUDENTS SAY



WAYLON LEE

"We have had a good time, especially during form."



MUHAMMED AKINKUNMI

"Starting secondary was scary at first, but also exciting."



ABDUL BAH

"This year has flown by so quickly."



MELISSA HOSSEINI

"The teachers are nice; we don't feel pressured."



WORLD OF SPORT

St Matthew Academy excels with sports to suit every pupil

By Alistair Wood, head of PE

FOOTBALL

Year 8 and 9 have been standout teams for us this year with both teams reaching the latter stages of their cup competitions. Year 8 reached the Semi-Final of the Blackheath Cup, a deep cup run with a competitive loss after extra time. Year 9 reached the quarter final of the London Cup, unfortunately suffering defeat to the eventual National Cup runners up.



ATHLETICS

The school has had another successful athletics season. At the Lewisham Schools Athletics tournament all eight teams finished in the top four positions, with the Year 7 and 8 boys' teams both winning their categories. The Year 7-10 boys' teams combined, also managed to come first overall. There were a standout performances, leading to students being selected to represent Lewisham at the London Athletics Championships.

NETBALL

Participation has grown enormously throughout the year with over 40 girls across year 7-10 regularly attending. Our Year 7 and 9 teams have had some pleasing results against local schools. The most impressive results have been from Year 8, managing to go unbeaten in both A and B team games.



SMA BASKETBALL'S CHAMP MICAH EDWARDS MEADE SLAM DUNKS AMERICA

After a rigorous try-out process, Micah Edwards Meade was selected to attend a premier US junior basketball tournament with his club during May half term. This is the first time a team from outside the US has received an invite to compete in a premier US junior basketball tournament. This was a fantastic and unique opportunity for Micah, giving him a first-hand insight into the basketball world at the highest level. Whilst in the US, he was able to experience the culture, competition, exposure, and educational platforms that the US has to offer. Micah has also had further success with his SMA teammates this year, reaching the last eight of the London Youth Games competition.



MICAH TELLS OF HIS UNIQUE EXPERIENCE IN THE US

Can you describe what sort of opportunity this was for you going to America?

Micah: It was a great opportunity, it showed me the competition that exists outside of the UK and how fast and experienced the kids of my age are in the US.

What have you learned from this, that you can now take away and use within your basketball to reach the next level?

Micah: I think I need to build on my consistency throughout multiple games within a day. I have also learnt that my attitude towards my coaches has to be excellent in order to reach a higher level and keep progressing.

LEWISHAM SCHOOLS' ATHLETICS RESULTS & INDIVIDUAL TOP PERFORMERS

GIRLS

- Nevaeh Pantry** 1st 200m
- Brianna Brown Reid** 1st 200m & High Jump
- Anaya Henry** 2nd Javelin
- Elizabeth Nkwocha** 1st 200m
- Muna Mbama** 1st Long Jump & 2nd 1500m
- Marilyn Didjango** 2nd Triple Jump & 3rd 200m
- Glory Dike** 3rd 1500m
- Atilola** 3rd 300m

BOYS

- Tyler Lewington** 1st 100m & High Jump
- Waylon Lee** 1st 300m
- Obosa Asemota** 3rd 1500m
- Anjola Adebayo** 1st Javelin
- Jonathan Adekoya** 1st Shot Putt
- Jonathan Bioko** 1st 200m
- Jamil Koroma** 1st Triple Jump & 2nd 300m
- Muna Ubochi** 3rd 800m
- Ademide Oyeleye** 1st Shot Putt
- Elijah Iyegudu** 1st High Jump & 2nd 100m
- Jeremiah King** 2nd 200m
- Kieran Tyler** 1st Shot Putt
- Christian Ortiz Gomez** 2nd High Jump & 800m
- Patient Nguentha** 1st 1500m
- Sashawn Garwood** 1st Long Jump
- Jake Shelley** 2nd Javelin
- Tejiri Awverono** 1st Shot Putt

WINNING

St Matthew Academy is proud to have achieved success in so many extra-curricular areas, says headteacher *Miranda Baldwin*

DOUBLE DEBATING WIN FOR SMA'S PUBLIC SPEAKING CHAMPIONS

YET AGAIN the St Matthew Academy Debate Club marched to victory in the Regional Finals of the Debate Mate Cup hosted at Imperial College University. Four knockout rounds in a day of debating saw SMA's Year 10 team bring home the Regional Debate Mate Cup for the

However, it was Team A's outstanding point score that led them to the Grand Final - where they beat the opposition with the challenging motion: 'this house believes that successful social change must have clearly identifiable leaders.'

In addition, ranked top of the Urban Debate League 2023, this team will also go forward to the UDL national final. Co-President of the Club, Year 10's Rapolas Venctus said: "It was a momentous day. Not just for us personally, but for SMA and Lewisham."

AT

second year running.

The club has been running, in the English Department, every Wednesday evening for the last 10 years and is open to all student Years 7-10.

As regional champions (a region that covers the whole of Southeast England) they now go forward to the National Final where they will join only eight other schools, from the 350 that have entered from across the country.

Shout out to all the teams in Years 7-9 too. Lots of individual round wins and some fantastic floor speeches.

JACK PETCHEY SPEAK-OUT SUCCESS

AS WELL AS BEING on the winning team of last year's Debate Mate Cup victory, Year 10's Hawa Fofana picked up a third-place trophy in the regional finals of the Jack Petchey Speak-Out Challenge in May. The event at Prendergast School was hosted by last year's winner our own Year 11 Zillah Ofidon. Twenty-nine students from across the borough took part and the fourth year running that SMA have bought home a trophy.

COUNT ON US

IN APRIL, Ms Amrit Bassan took four students from Year 7, 8 and 9 to the first round of heats for the Count on Us Challenge Tournament at Addey and Stanhope school. The Count on Us Challenge is an inter-school competition that aims to improve

LIFE



confidence and fluency in maths.

It was an afternoon consisting of five Count on Us games ranging from the 24 game which involves students using four digits on cards to make 24 and also a real-life problem-solving scenario involving the Tate Modern.

Caleb Arogundade, Salvijus Brazdzius, Jacob Barclay and Jame Ji worked brilliantly as a team and showed great resilience in all the rounds and successfully managed to get through to the Grand Final at City Hall in July. We are continuing our preparation for the final every Thursday and the students are highly determined to win first place.

YEAR 10 MOSAIC ENTERPRISE WINNERS 2023

OUR YEAR 10 business studies pupils took part in The Prince's Trust, Mosaic Enterprise Challenge earlier this year.

The annual inter-school competition encourages a spirit of entrepreneurship among young people. Students learn about establishing and running a business through a business simulation

game, with teams pursuing their own sustainable businesses through regional and national Dragons' Den style finals.

From 700 entrants, SMA's business, REFORMED, made it to the finals, having made the top recorded profits. The next stage was to pitch a, social enterprise model to guests from a variety of companies including Apple and the Princes' Trust charity.

The idea behind REFORMED: To recycle and reuse uniforms where possible, to help those in the school and also to gain revenue by selling unusable clothing to manufacturers to recycle. The team pitched their idea in a boardroom in London in May competing against four other schools. While we nervously awaited the results, we were treated to talks with budding entrepreneurs who had been supported by The Princes' Trust in setting up their enterprise. On being chosen as winners SMA pupils were awarded £500 to continue their business idea. They also received useful feedback from professionals and took goddie bags, a medal and a magnificent trophy home.



LONG LIVE THE KING

SMA celebrated with a very British cuppa

By Stan Colomb, Assistant Head Teacher of Primary Phase



IN THE SUMMER TERM at St Matthew Academy, an eagerly anticipated event took place.

Organised to commemorate a significant milestone in the school and nation's history, our Coronation tea party was a grand celebration bringing together students and staff from across the key stages, creating a joyous and festive atmosphere.

Held in the school's newly decorated playground, with colourful bunting, parachute seating and elegant table settings, the children all came together on the Friday afternoon reflecting the regal theme of the occasion with hats and accessories.

The air was filled with excitement as everyone eagerly anticipated the festivities that would happen across the bank holiday weekend.

Throughout the afternoon, students

showcased their talents and recent work to celebrate the coronation through musical performances, dance routines, and poetry recitals, adding a touch of entertainment to the celebration. There was also a fantastic performance by the Shining Diamonds who performed God save the King along with 'Happy' by Pharrell Williams

The highlight of the event was the delicious assortment of tea, sandwiches, and cakes that were served. The donations from parents were very generous and the aroma of teacakes and scones, were truly fit for royalty.

The day was a resounding success, leaving lasting memories for all those who attended. It was a true testament to the vibrant school community and the commitment to providing enriching experiences for our pupils.