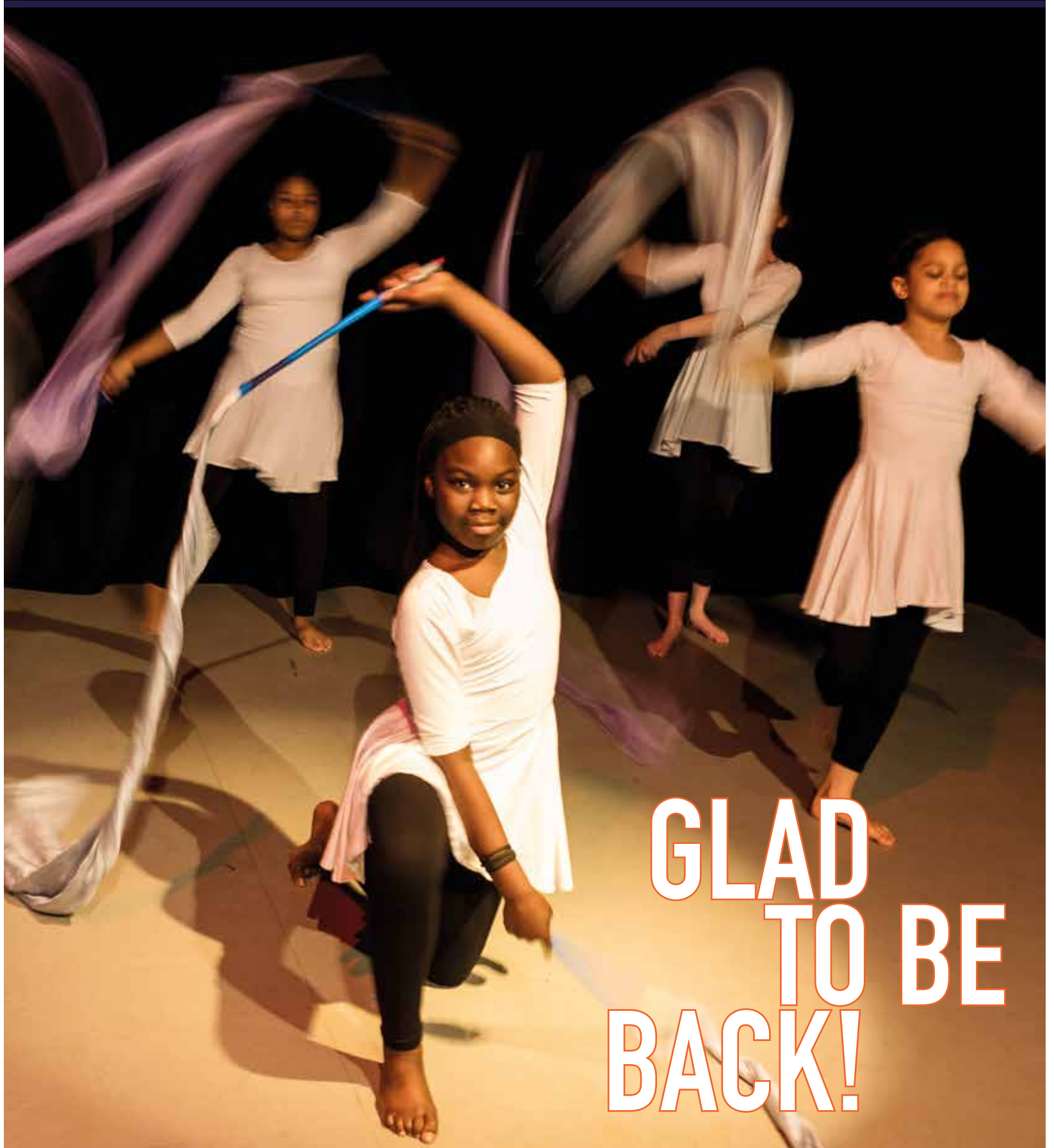


Summer issue
2021



SMA CELEBRATES



**GLAD
TO BE
BACK!**

A POSITIVE FUTURE • CELEBRATING COMMUNITY • ENRICHMENT AND INNOVATION



THANK YOU to our staff and pupils

Following a challenging year, Headteacher **Miranda Baldwin** explains her hopes for a positive and successful future

IT IS WITH DELIGHT that I welcome you to the final edition of SMA News of the 2020-21 academic year. It is fair to say that it's been a challenging year for us all including those involved in education. However I could not be prouder of the entire SMA community who have pulled together in so many ways, going above and beyond on a daily basis to ensure that SMA pupils continue to benefit from a first class offer whether face to face or virtually from beyond the school gates.

I hope you have been enjoying our new fortnightly newsletter introduced during the first national lockdown in April 2020. This initiative has been a great success and enables us to showcase the many talents and achievements of our pupils in a timely and inspirational manner. The newsletter complements this publication perfectly as it gives us the opportunity to focus on a couple of themes in more detail. This edition of SMA News throws a spotlight on the transition

process and pupil experience into both reception and year 7 and offers an insight into how we get creative beyond the confines of lesson time. I particularly hope you enjoy reading about the experiences of some of our parents who also work at the academy. I am honoured that we have teaching staff and support staff from all phases who have so much confidence in the SMA offer that they choose to send, or transfer, their children (or grandchildren) here.

As always our dedication to encouraging our pupils to *let their light shine*, is evident in all pages of this edition. Offering our pupils an outstanding learning environment alongside a range of enriching experiences remains at the forefront of our vision.

I, along with all of the staff at SMA, look forward to embarking on a new academic year in more stable and positive circumstances. I am certain our dedication will continue to grow stronger, our successes will carry on and our pupils will flourish.

Innovate and motivate

Exploring themes through the arts offers pupils the opportunity to step outside their comfort zone

DURING OUR SECOND academy-wide, Innovation Day, pupils explored a range of diverse and meaningful themes based on the title 'I am'. Across the entire academy - adults included - our names were researched and we also looked at their definition and meaning as well as discussing what our names meant to us. Names were decorated and shared and will be exhibited as a permanent art piece in our corridors at the end of this term. We were thrilled that Kenny Baraka, a well known and established spoken word artist, visited and led a workshop with year 10 music pupils. The group's powerful performance was streamed live across the academy at the end of the day. Primary pupils also enjoyed writing their own



THE BOWLS OF THE WORLD

Breakfast just got even better



TO CELEBRATE OUR DIVERSE culture here at SMA, Breakfast Club has introduced 'Breakfast from around the world' every three weeks. The breakfasts chosen reflect the demographic of our children and the local community. By taking part the children gain an understanding of different countries' traditions by sampling their food, listening to traditional music and completing activities. It is a fantastic opportunity for the staff to have breakfast with the children and for our school community to share the experience and delicious delicacies. Among the favourite breakfast dishes so far have been Spanish omelette, salt fish, and pancakes.



We feel part of a **big COMMUNITY** and we've also made so many **FRIENDS** with other *parents* of their classmates

Owen says: 'Both our girls are so happy here at SMA. Before we applied for the school we really did not know much about it but Miss Chick, Head of the primary phase, made us feel welcome from day one. Our girls have felt safe, nurtured and they were warmly welcomed. They not only love going to school but I know they feel part of a big community. Claudia and I have also made many friends with other parents which has been really enjoyable too.'

Jamai Brown in Year 8 is one of our media scholars and is frequently chosen to give visitors tours of the school. Mum Victoria is one of our 'parent champions' and a huge advocate for the school.

She says: "As a family, education is very important to us, so is the well-being of the whole person. At the open evening everything was impressive - especially the prepared students. However we wanted to speak to the unprepared pupils and found that they were equally impressive. The students were happy, engaging and driven. They felt they were challenged, sociable, given opportunities and most of all they had a voice. When Jamai entered the school she was the only one from her primary, but she was relaxed because they had events to integrate them - such as the year 7s having the school to themselves at first so they could get familiar with their new environment. That helped a great deal."

Jamai added: "My mum is right about me loving the school. I have created this list about what makes SMA so great..."

- An inclusive Christian academy with a Catholic ethos
- Lots of exposure to music, dance, sports, media, drama and many more interesting subjects
- A ranking system whereby children are placed based on capabilities
- A reward/recognition system for achievement
- Equally there is also a fair detention system
- Dedicated, approachable teachers and staff
- A place where everyone can thrive, aspire to be their best self
- A top school in Lewisham with excellent results.

Jamai's mum Victoria added: "During the pandemic I have gained even more respect for the school community and the St Matthews family as a whole."

"I would say to parents considering St Matthew Academy that their children will be in great hands. For any parent who is still unsure I would suggest simply asking as many questions as you need and let the school to show you what it is capable of - which is a great deal. We are so pleased we made this choice for our daughter - and that we are now part of this big family."

If you are interested in finding out more about how your child can join the SMA 'family' please come along to one of our open events in september. Simply call the school office for more details.

Open mornings: September 14th, 15th, 16th, 28th, 29th, 30th 9:15-11am

Open evening: Tuesday 21st September 4:30-7:30pm



It's a family affair

Ensuring our pupils, teachers and parents feel part of a loving, safe and successful community is a priority for St Matthew Academy explains deputy headteacher **Emma Thurston**

HERE AT SMA the sense of being part of a strong and caring community is an integral part of our day-to-day life here at school. This is demonstrated perfectly by the fact that many of our teaching staff also choose to send their children to our school.

Ana Cruz, a Spanish teacher in our secondary phase first got to know our school when her son Juan began in reception five years ago. Seeing the work done by our academy, Ana decided to train to become a teacher. As part of her course she carried out her training with us and we are now proud to say she works here as a full-time teacher.

"Having my children here at the same school where I work means everything to me," Ana says. "I came to the UK from Colombia which meant I have no family support or network - soon however this school became my family. The best part for me is that I do not miss out on anything. The team here is so supportive. If one of my sons for example is starring in an assembly a colleague will support me for a short period in class so that I am able to

attend. I know this will make a difference to my boys too."

Juan agrees "It is so fun to have my mum here at school with me. I love learning at SMA, my favourite subject is Maths. It's great because every day I get to learn something new."

Margaret England, one of our talented and long standing English teachers, was excited when her son Alex joined the SMA family last year in year 7. Alex is on the Grammar+ pathway and has thoroughly enjoyed Mandarin lessons each week. "Like many parents in September, I felt a little uncertain about how my child was going to transition from the cocoon of primary school to the big world of a secondary."

"Thankfully, I could watch that transition unfold - albeit from a distance far away enough to not embarrass my pre-teen. I get to see first hand how he relaxed into school life, made new friends and is loving learning."

And it's not just our staff who get the family feeling either. Owen & Claudia Salkeld have twin daughters Evie & Maddie currently in reception. Dad



ENRICHING LIVES

This term has seen a host of exciting opportunities for pupils to get involved beyond the classroom – from after-school sports and drama clubs to the Duke of Edinburgh Awards, Debate Mate and the Jack Petchey Speak Out Challenge. Our new Year 10 into 11 Pupils House Leaders and House Councils have also been elected

Breaking news

THE Y8 MEDIA and Communications Scholars have been perfecting their journalism skills by working on an original school news bulletin for 'SMA NEWS'. Each pupil decided on which role they would undertake and have been 'putting in the hours' through researching, filming, scriptwriting, editing and chasing down members of staff and pupils during lunch and after school for comment.

Look out for the familiar faces of some of our Y10 and Y6 pupils who also got involved with the presenting.

You can watch SMA News by scanning the QR code below to watch the video.



DUKE OF EDINBURGH AWARD

DURING THE CORONAVIRUS pandemic our SMA year 9 and 10 pupils found some inventive and quite brilliant ways to complete their volunteering sections for their Duke of Edinburgh Bronze award. They worked hard within their communities helping people at supermarkets for free whilst following coronavirus safety guidelines. Some pupils helped older neighbours within their communities with outdoor tasks such as gardening, clearing, and cleaning and others worked in local charity shops and food banks. Pupils also chose to help out more in their own home by tutoring siblings with on-line learning or arts and crafts.

The Duke of Edinburgh Expedition also went ahead and pupils enjoyed a tough weekend walking through the Kent countryside expertly led by DoE co-ordinator Mr Saunders.

JACK PETCHEY SPEAK OUT CHALLENGE



CONGRATULATIONS TO Y10 STUDENT

Parfaite Balande for coming first representing SMA in the Jack Petchey Speakout Challenge in June at a virtual evening event with a winning speech entitled 'Smile and the world smiles with you.' This is the world's largest youth public speaking competition and the third year running that SMA have won. What makes her achievement even more impressive is this year's regional final included schools across Essex as well as London. Parfaite is now among the top 0.2% of young public speakers in London and Essex and will go through to the national grand final later this summer. Special mention should go to Year 10's Tani Soyombo who came second in the first round of knockout workshops run by Jack Petchey. You can watch Parfaite's incredible speech on the St Matthew's Academy website. She will now go through to the national Grand Final in July.



Debate Mate Club Success

OUR BRILLIANT DEBATERS from Year 7: Stephano, Arune, Sam and Alex M and Y8: Paapa, David, Bess and Hawa who won both rounds of the Debate Mate Cup finals and came third in the National league, arguing the motion: This house believes that fake news is a threat to global health. They were supported by amazing team members notably: Daksh, Gracie, Jhett, Salvijus, Jolene, Alex E. A major achievement - especially for our novice teams during this difficult year.

Going to the polls



IT HAS BEEN A TERM filled with democracy, ideas and competitions. Not only were the new year 10 leaders elected, pupils also aired their voices in campaign videos for the house council elections. Two important photography competitions were held; connect with nature raised awareness of environmental issues and another addressed the importance of Mental Health Awareness Week.



ARTS EXHIBITION: FINALLY

WE WERE SUPER PROUD of our Year 11 art, DT, textiles and Photography pupils who, despite the barriers and challenges the pandemic has thrown at us, still managed to produce high quality and exciting art work which was showcased in our annual show. The work on show was of an exceptionally high standard and pupils spoke so confidently and eloquently about their work. The virtual gallery will be on the SMA website soon.



ROLL ON SEPTEMBER



THIS YEAR, more families than ever have chosen to invest their trust in St Matthew Academy by choosing us as their first or second choice of secondary school. Everyone at the Academy is immensely proud of what has been achieved - and it's no surprise the word is out in our community. We are fully subscribed next year and looking forward to welcoming 180 pupils in September.

As with many schools, it has been unfortunate that this year some transition activities had to be postponed because of the pandemic, but our *Friendship Afternoon* barbecue will go ahead early next term at which we will be making a fuss of all the new pupils.

Our meetings with year 6 teachers at the primary schools from which pupils are transitioning and our meetings with our new families have all taken place virtually - ensuring transition promises to run smoothly.

We also organised a special assembly for the children from year 6 who have chosen to stay with us in year 7 and each pupil received a certificate to mark the occasion along with a *SMA Transition Champions* badge which they can wear on their uniforms with pride.

We are also looking forward to warmly welcoming our brand-new cohort of reception children in September and we have done a great deal to help the children feel comfortable and get the chance to meet each other. Children and their families had the opportunity to attend three open mornings; a creative cooking workshop, a Gruffalo hunt and a get messy session. Parents also took part in a series of workshops including phonics, pediatric first aid and a session on the early years' curriculum.

If you'd like to know more about our reception class, look out for our 'Day in the Life of a Reception Child' video on the SMA website.

FEAST of ST PETER & ST PAUL

Our community celebrated through reading, reflection - and some incredible singing

AS A COMMUNITY we have come together on a number of occasions this year to celebrate, the Feast of St Matthew in September, Remembrance Day, the beginning of Advent, Christmas, the start of Lent, Easter and Pentecost - and we have done so through the wonders of technology virtually.

We are so pleased that as we approached the end of the school year we were able to come together in person, in our different year groups to celebrate the Feast of St Peter and Paul. Each celebration is a special event and we strive to include pupils and staff from across the whole academy community in our liturgies, reflection and prayer. Our Year 1 pupils led the wonderful singing on this occasion with 'Give me Joy in my Heart' and a fantastic group of Light Bearers from the primary phase led our prayers, whilst Light Bearers from Years 7-9 in the Secondary phase led our readings and Reflection on the importance of St Peter and Paul and the message of hope that they bring.



Top, Shamima singing to the teachers and pupils; **right,** Miss Eduvie reading from the lectern as well as Year 7 pupil Manuella, **above**

“And so I tell you, Peter: *you are a ROCK*, and on this rock foundation I will *build my CHURCH*”