

St Matthew Academy

St Joseph's Vale, Blackheath, London SE3 0XX

Headteacher: Ms Miranda Baldwin

Head of Primary: Ms Joanna Chick



21th July 2022

Dear Parents and Carers

That's more like it something close to normal - whatever that now is! A school year that, despite a whole wave of new, unexpected challenges, at least had pupils back in classrooms and out of bubbles. Concert and exam halls were full again, sports days, away days, fixtures, careers days and leavers parties all took place just like they used to. A huge thank you to all of our parents, carers and families and members of the local community that have supported our wide range of events over the last few weeks. Sports days despite the heat were a great success and as usual highly competitive with all pupils getting involved. The SMA Oscars, our Awards Evening and the Year 6 and Year 11 proms were all grand occasions giving our pupils opportunities to Let Their Light Shine beyond the classroom. My favourite event of the year was the SMA Summer Street Party Fayre – a fabulous mix of food from around the world, entertainment showcasing the wide range of talents of our pupils and parents and fundraising games, raffles and activities. A huge thank you must go to Ms Chick and Mr Gunningham who led the team of staff and parent volunteers – over £1000 was raised.

We have now said goodbye to Year 11 and Year 6. Once again almost 90% of SMA pupils will be continuing their journey with us as they transition to the secondary phase and we wish our Year 11 leavers the best of luck in their new 6th forms and colleges. It has been a brilliant year for our pupils with their national tests and assessments. Our Year 1 achieved a fantastic set of results in the Phonics Screener, resulting in us well exceeding the national standard. Year 6 SATs results were once again above the national standard, which given the children had missed time in Year 4 and Year 5 due to the pandemic made them all the more outstanding. Children in Year 2 have worked especially hard this term to successfully achieve their SATs results and we thoroughly commend their effort and achievement. Year 11 have to wait until Thursday 25th August to collect their GCSE results and we are confident they will receive results to be proud of.

At this time of year in schools we say farewell to staff that are moving on and prepare to welcome new staff that will join us in September. I am delighted that once again we will be fully staffed with a good mix of highly experienced staff and a couple that will begin their teaching careers with us.

Ms McCurdy, Miss Petrova, Ms Blake and Ms Azodo have all been with us for just a year but their contribution to school life and positive impact on the pupils they have worked with has been significant. Ms Greenhalgh, Mr Vandy, Miss Ovanesyan, Miss Simms and Miss Mangan all joined us two years ago in the midst of Covid. I am delighted that these staff will be embarking on new challenges in either promoted roles or studying at university. They will all be sorely missed by pupils and staff alike.

Mrs Baxter has decided to retire from teaching and we wish her a well-earned retirement and thank her for all her hard work and dedication to the children over the past 3 years. Mr Hawkins joined us four years ago as a trainee teacher and having successfully completed his course as a maths teacher he quickly took on new challenges including completing a Masters, teaching history alongside maths and having a real impact on student voice in his role as Head of House this year. He has now decided the time is right for him to take some time out to travel the globe. Mr Goksel joined the Academy 6 years ago as Head of PE. He has been responsible for ensuring our pupils are offered a wide range of sporting activities both in lessons and through our amazing extra-curricular programme. In the last year he has taken on the role of Associate Assistant Headteacher and I am delighted that he has now secured a post much closer to home with wider school responsibilities. Sadly, we must also say goodbye to Mr Olisa who joined the maths department over 7 years ago. He has been a real stalwart member of the team and I know all of the pupils are really going to miss him.

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Lastly, I'd like to take this opportunity to say thank you and farewell to Ms Simbi Wickliffe, Assistant Headteacher. She has worked with commitment, consistency and courage over the last 6 years. Most recently her role has focused on ensuring operations at the Academy run smoothly so that pupils get the best possible experience in the classroom and beyond. Prior to this she was KS3 Pastoral lead and in that role she built strong relationships with our parents and local primary schools and ensured the very highest of standards of behaviour for learning were in place. We all wish her the best of luck in her promoted role as the deputy head in a school closer to home.

At the end of another successful academic year I am sure parents, carers and pupils will join me in thanking all the staff for their continuing hard work, integrity and commitment to ensure all pupils at SMA 'let their light shine' and are the best they can be. Can I also take this opportunity to thank you all again for your continued support, it is most appreciated and really does make a significant difference. When we return in September we will be holding a Parent Governor election as sadly one of our current parents has had to make the difficult decision to step down. If you are interested in this opportunity, please do look out for a letter in September regarding how to put yourself for this really crucial role. Below you will find a short message from Chery Nguyen.

"It has been an absolute honour to serve as a parent Governor here in St Matthew Academy. Being able to work alongside such passionate and inspiring people to help make St Matthew an absolute success has been a rewarding experience. Something I believe will only keep on progressing in the most monumental and dynamic of ways for the benefit of its pupils. However, it is with a heavy heart that I write to inform you that I will be stepping down as Parent Governor. Reason being is that I will be embarking upon a journey to becoming a fully qualified teacher at Goldsmiths University doing a full time PGCE. Therefore, my daughter is changing schools in order to be closer to family members who play an important role in her development. I trust this is not the end of my relationship with St Matthew Academy and look forward to staying in contact and keeping an eye out for all the marvellous things SMA gets up to. I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity that was trusted to me as a Parent Governor and I sincerely look forward to what an exciting future the school has to offer its pupils and the wider community. Wishing nothing but the best, Chery."

I hope you all have an enjoyable summer break and that we get to enjoy some great British summer weather. School returns on Monday 5th September for all pupils although times do vary. Our primary pupils will start at the normal time so should be lined up by 8.45am. Our new year 7s will start at 8.35am with pupils in Year 8 to Year 11 arriving for at 9.50am for a 10.00am start. I look forward to seeing you in the autumn term at one of our calendared events for parents, face to face parent evenings or joining us at a coffee morning in the library.

Yours sincerely



Ms M Baldwin
Headteacher

