

SMA NEWS

January 2020



Welcome

Welcome to the first St Matthew Academy newsletter of 2020. As the new year begins, we take the opportunity to reflect on an exciting last term of 2019, whilst looking forward to 2020 and embracing the year ahead of us.

I would like to take the opportunity to welcome our new Deputy Headteacher Mr Young, who joins us from St Thomas the Apostle College (STAC). As you know our teachers work very closely with staff at STAC sharing good practice and many of our high achieving year 11s move on to their outstanding 6th form provision. Mr Young has many years of experience working in outstanding schools so he knows what 'excellence for all' looks like and the importance of 'high expectations' in everything we do. We are sure he will be a great success in his new role and will quickly settle in to life at St Matthew Academy.

Read on to find out more about the fantastic achievements and activities we experienced last term, including the achievement of 'Good' status in all areas by Ofsted. Attaining this accolade cements what our whole academy community has worked hard for and combined with our excellent primary and secondary results and placing top of the league table for the second year in a row, we are thrilled that St Matthew Academy's light is truly shining for all to see.

In addition to the successes of the last term included in the newsletter, our pupils enjoyed many more including performing at the prestigious KPMG Carol Concert in front of many dignitaries; to bringing their Catholic ethos to life by raising over £1,500 for CAFOD and the Southwark Crisis Fund during their non-uniform day and celebrating many sports successes. This term, we look forward to hosting the Debate Mate Finals and the Table Tennis Championships, whilst continuing to raise our expectations in reading and literacy across the academy and excitedly preparing our Year 11 pupils to begin their GCSEs.

Elsewhere, we will welcome our September 2020 cohort and their families to our Friendship Afternoon in March to experience secondary school life first hand. This is one of several events pupils will attend before joining us full time in September and we encourage any family searching for the right secondary school for their child to visit us. We have established this process because a positive transition is crucial to our pupils' well-being and academic development and we take the time to catch up with some of our Year 7's in this edition to see how they have settled in.

I hope that you enjoy sharing in our successes and I can assure you there are many more to come. Should you want to find out more, please do not hesitate to contact us to book a tour of the school or arrange a personal meeting.

Miranda Baldwin, Head of School

**FRIENDSHIP
AFTERNOON**

**17th March 2020
at 4 - 5.30PM**



Letting our Light Shine:

St Matthew Academy celebrates OFSTED 'Good' in all areas and placing top of the league table for the second year in a row!

This term, our whole academy community celebrated the results of our glowing Ofsted Inspection. Following a two-day inspection in October, the academy has achieved 'Good' status, lauded across all categories. Inspectors praised the good quality of education, pupil progress and ambitious leadership.

Ofsted inspectors observed that *'pupils find their learning enjoyable'* and *'many involve themselves in the wide range of opportunities for learning outside the classroom'*. Ofsted also acknowledged the great journey of improvement the school has made and recognised the strong working relationships between pupils and staff.

The inspection found that the leadership team are ambitious for all pupils to achieve as much as possible, both academically and socially and have made positive changes to the curriculum and subject breadth.

The Inspection report highlighted specific areas of strength:

- Primary-aged pupils make good progress in most subjects
- Pupils in the secondary achieve strong examination results
- Leaders are putting a great deal of thought into what pupils should learn in each subject to prepare them for life after school. They focus on what helps pupil learn best
- Teachers have appropriate expertise and plan lessons thoroughly
- The [academy's] offer is much more than academic or examination subjects. Pupils enjoy a wide range of clubs.... there are many opportunities, at which pupils excel
- Subject specialists teach Year 5 and 6 pupils art, music and design and technology
- Leaders take their responsibilities for the protection and care of pupils very seriously
- [Pupils] welcome the emphasis teachers put on doing well in lessons. They also appreciate the opportunity to study a wide range of subjects

Headteacher Miranda Baldwin commented: *"I would like to praise our pupils, staff and governing body for all that has been achieved at St Matthew Academy over the last few years. Following three years of our best ever examination results that continue to improve and placing us at the top of the league table for the second year in the row, we are delighted that the report has recognised our achievements and progress, and truly captured and reflected the reality of St Matthew Academy. I am delighted to be leading this academy and look forward to continuing on this journey of success within our academy community"*.

Our whole academy is exceptionally proud of what we have achieved over the last few years and look forward to what we will continue to achieve. The findings of this Ofsted report and attainment of 'Good' status cements and recognises what our academy community has worked hard for and we are thrilled that the high expectations implemented by the Headteacher, senior leaders and staff has been praised. Moving forward, we will utilise the feedback from the Ofsted report to continually improve our provision and our upward trajectory of success, as we support every learner to flourish, be ambitious and succeed during their time with us.



CELEBRATING 2019

Our First Term

We caught up with two current students from our Class of 2023 (Year 7): Joanna and Samuel to find out how they settled in to their first term.

How have you settled in to life at St Matthew Academy?

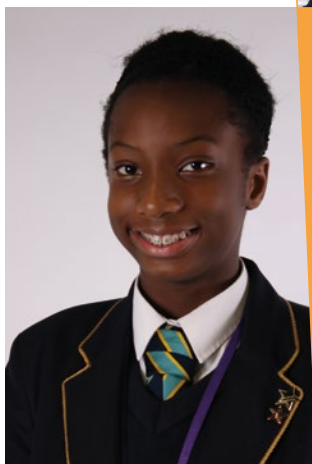
Joanna: 'When I first started, I was a little nervous, but soon realised I had no reason to be as I quickly made friends, and everybody was so welcoming. Teachers, my peers and especially Year 11 pupils who showed me the way when I was lost!

Samuel: "I really enjoy school- I feel so settled and there is always something to look forward to, like all of the clubs I go to".

What is your favourite part of coming to school?

Joanna: "I have been awarded a Computer Science star, which means I have been identified as gifted in the subject, which makes me feel proud. I am also on the Grammar+ Pathway, which has given me the opportunity to learn Mandarin which is great fun".

Samuel: "Lessons are interesting and challenging; teachers make sure that learning is exciting. There are also lots of opportunities to join clubs and the scholarships programmes for new experiences".



YEAR 5 COMPETE IN THE SCHOOLS LEAGUE!

This term, Year 5 pupils have represented St Matthew Academy in the competitive Lewisham football schools league. As we head into the new year, the team sit half way in the table after four matches; with a triumphant 4-0 win in their final match. We are very proud of their efforts and would like to say thank you for the parents and carers that have come to support them on a Saturday morning up on Blackheath Common. The season continues in 2020 and we look forward to seeing their light shine back out on the pitch, throughout: we hope to welcome them back as SMA News Reporters in the future!

CELEBRATING OUR STRONG LINKS

Following last summer's very successful Year 7 dance tour of the Brindishe School's Federation, St Matthew Academy's Dance Department has had the pleasure of welcoming Key Stage 2 children from Brindishe Lee as part of the SMA Primary and Secondary Arts Liaison Scheme. Set up to strengthen links with local Primary schools, the scheme also aims to raise the profile of Dance and the Arts across the borough and to unite children in a shared love of creative learning. Well done to the school's inspirational children who worked so hard to solve some rather trying creative dance tasks! We are looking forward to working with both Brindishe Green and Brindishe Manor in the New Year.

Year 10 Leaders in Primary

Our established mentoring programme involves Year 9 pupils buddying up with primary Year 5 pupils in a scheme to support the transition process into secondary life.

Meeting three times a week, pupils get together to chat, coach and read and will continue until pupils are settled in to Year 7 and our older pupils embark on their next chapter.

"As a secondary pupil, I do peer mentoring with pupils from Year 5 and 6. We do a variety of activities such as reading, playing games, computer time, listening to music and a general chat with the pupils. I like the responsibility of being a peer mentor, as we are seen as role models to the younger pupils and can give them advice based on our own experiences from that age"



Exploring our New Pathways

At St Matthew Academy, we pride ourselves on being able to offer pupils the opportunity to pursue their talents, with an emphasis on enriching their experience beyond the classroom; developing the whole child and boosting their career and life prospects. As such, we have developed our Pathways Programme, offering an array of opportunities to nurture individual talents.

Grammar + Pathway

As part of the Year 7 Grammar Pathway, a number of pupils have taken on the challenge of learning Mandarin. Pupils have excelled in their new subject, learning a range of basic phrases in Mandarin, familiarising themselves with the alphabet and practising pronunciation during online lessons delivered by a teacher based in China. Our pupils have not only persevered but have thoroughly enjoyed learning Mandarin; their enthusiasm is evident as they sing songs to help develop their speaking abilities. We look forward to catching up with pupils later in the academic year.

"I am so grateful to have been given the opportunity to explore such an interesting country and language and I know these skills will help me in the future".



Sporting Brilliance

Pupils on our Sports Pathway have enjoyed an exciting and practical introduction to the programme, encompassing team building activities, training sessions and building their skillset in a range of sports. The group are looking forward to their next enrichment trip in March, where they will visit Sky Sports Studios to gain a valuable insight into a mainstream sporting media giant and take part in workshops, learning key reporting skills and presenting on how to lead healthy, active lifestyles.

Already this year, the boys' and girls' teams represented the school at the Year 7 Lewisham Indoor Athletics Competition; with the boys taking home the trophy and representing Lewisham in the London Youth Games at Crystal Palace Athletics stadium in February 2020. We wish them the best of luck!

What have you enjoyed about the sporting brilliance programme so far?

I have loved meeting new people from my year group, I was the only person from my primary school who came to St Matthew and it has helped me settle in quickly. The programme has been really fun so far – we have taken part in the Lewisham Sports Hall Athletics Championships, went to the Tennis ATP finals at the O2 to see the world's best tennis players compete and have learnt lots of new skills.- Jamai



Media and Communications Scholarship

Our Media scholars kick-started their programme, having already embarked on enrichment trips, grasped new skills and developed their knowledge of the media sector. We caught up with Bess, Cassel and Gracie to see how they have been enjoying the programme.

"We have learnt a lot so far, including how to use DSLR cameras in photography and cinematography. I have really enjoyed learning how to use the cameras to get good shots and create films" - Bess

"I really enjoyed going to Warner Bros. Studios as I got to see the whole process of what it takes to make a big studio film, and all the hard work that goes on behind the scenes in prop-making, set and character designs and cinematography. I have really enjoyed learning how to make movies, using different shot sizes and angles and how cinematography using different camera lens can enhance your shots on screen." - Cassel

"Being on the media and communications scholarship has been so rewarding so far. Over the October half-term, we had a two-day film camp in which we created a film for a national film competition, which was my first opportunity to direct a short film." - Gracie





Christmas performances

Last term, we were truly treated to an array of Christmas themed performances; from showcases to nativities that wowed the crowd of pupils, staff, parents and carers. Primary phase performed the Nativity and their annual Christmas Concert after weeks of rehearsals, meanwhile our Gifted and Talented Year 7 pupils collaborated with the Royal Academy of Dance in an outstanding dance showcase. We had some amazing soloists, readers and dancers across the academy, well done to all for your spectacular performance.

Christmas Spotlight

Supporting our Local Community

During December pupils contributed various gifts to the Christmas Bag Collection which Our Light Bearers donated to the Salvation Army, including over seventy bags packed with boxes of mince pies, gloves, jars of coffee and toiletries. In addition, our annual 'Christmas Giving Tree' suggests ideas for children's gifts, that our staff members generously donate to the Salvation Army to support families within our community who may not be able to provide gifts for young members of their families. A big thank you to our pupils and staff for their generosity and charitable spirit throughout Christmas!



Christmas Tea Party

St Matthew Academy held its first Tea Party for the elderly residents at Glebe Court in Lewisham in December, entertaining guests with Christmas carols sung by our Gospel Choir whilst enjoying freshly made cakes baked by our pupils. It was a wonderful community event and we look forward to inviting our guests back again next year.

Resident Artist!

Congratulations to Primary Phase pupil Ebenezer, for winning the Primary Times 'Design a Christmas Card Competition 2019'. The Primary Times is a free magazine distributed to families from schools termly and they recently ran a competition for pupils to design their own card, in aid of CLAPA; The Cleft Lip and Palate Association. We are incredibly proud that Ebenezer's design was selected as the winner among many entries from pupils across the country – congratulations! Take a look at his fantastic artwork.





Primary pupils embarked on an exploration hunt in our Forest School – searching for poppies and discussing what they symbolise on Remembrance Day.

We welcomed Blue Peter Presenter Radzi and the CBBC Stepping Out team to lead a workshop on Global News with Year 7 and 8 pupils; they all really enjoyed it and were engaged by the session.

London Cup 1st round fixture at Samuel Monteagues ground in Kidbrooke. A hard-fought 3-3 draw for SMA after having most of the play in the first half.



Media and Communications Scholars visit the Warner Bros studios to learn more about how the films were made.



Year 3 & 4 competed the Lewisham Athletics Tournament, well done all!



Pupils enjoying the opportunity to explore choreography in creative learning workshops with professional artists from York Dance.



Another successful mentoring session with KPMG and our Year 10 pupils - Each pupil that participates in the mentoring programme gain invaluable skills and first-class careers advice.

Primary Phase enjoyed learning Afro-Brazilian Samba Dancing and listening to traditional Brazilian music in their cultural day!



The Book Bus visited Primary Phase this term, allowing parents and pupils to take out books, encouraging the development of their reading and literacy skills.



During TART week, pupils became specialists in their own area, and then worked in groups to coach their peers to become masters in their knowledge!