

14th March 2025

Dear Families

This week started with a very exciting opportunity for our pupils and staff. Student Leaders attended the Commonwealth Service at Westminster Abbey. The Commonwealth Day Service is an annual celebration that honours the Commonwealth's people as well as its cultures and customs. The service featured readings, hymns, reflections, and musical performances. The service concluded with the congregation affirming its respect aloud for nature and the belief in justice and peace for all. This trip was an outstanding opportunity to recognise the hard work that the students have done as leaders in our school community and to celebrate their own service. The theme for this event was 'Together We Thrive' which is part of our Catholic Social Teaching theme of Human Dignity this term. Students were amazed at the sheer beauty and size of Westminster Abbey as well as being in sight of the Royal Family and the Prime Minister. Students had a close view of the procession from their seats where Their Majesties came down the aisle followed by the Prince and Princess of Wales and the Princess Royal as they came into the Abbey. Happily, they also came across a former student from St Paul's, Deborah, who was Kenya's flag bearer. She stayed after the ceremony to speak with the students and to encourage them to keep doing good deeds. Before the ceremony, the students enjoyed a historic walking tour on the South Bank of the Thames led by Ms Markatos. All the students and staff who went on the trip felt privileged and happy to have taken part in such a prestigious Royal ceremony that lifted spirits and celebrated the diversity in our Commonwealth. Such a lovely occasion for them to share and they were even spotted on the TV news!

Year 10 have done very well this week in their PPEs. They approached them with maturity and dedication. They can relax a little this weekend now as we wait for the results to come through. I'm sure all of their hard work and revision will be recognised through the results they receive. Year 11 visited Cambridge University on Tuesday and Year 12 went to Oxford University on Wednesday.

This week, we also had the pleasure of visiting our feeder primary schools to celebrate British Science Week. Our Year 9 students led a range of hands-on Science practicals, inspiring younger pupils with exciting experiments and interactive activities. Their enthusiasm, knowledge, and teamwork were truly impressive, and they represented the school exceptionally well. It was a fantastic opportunity to share our passion for Science and encourage the next generation of scientists!

Today Year 12 Politics Student Leaders led a session with the lower school leaders to give feedback to Parliament's Select Committee on Science, Innovation, and Technology. Students were asked by our local MP, Emily Darlington, to submit topics for the committee to investigate. Year 12 Student

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Leaders explained the task and then met in small groups with the younger students to brainstorm and come up with proposals. Students submitted evidence that they would like more open days and work experience with STEM, additional training on Microcomputer Software such as Excel, Word, and PowerPoint, and an expansion on knowledge of how to safely use Artificial Intelligence. These ideas have been submitted to the Select Committee for consideration. Students are hoping to meet with Ms Darlington later this year to discuss their submissions. Students are very excited to see how they can work with their local MP to have their views presented in Parliament and it is helping them to put what they are learning in the classroom into real world scenarios. We are also very proud of the work that the older Student Leaders are doing in order to train up the younger students to be leaders in our community. Well done to all!

Today we have celebrated Pi Day with some numeracy activities but also some delicious pies from the canteen! Next week we will be celebrating Maths Week with a wide range of activities. First of all, there is a 'Baking Pies' together competition - this is a wonderful opportunity for parents to spend some time and explore Maths concepts with their children while having fun in the kitchen. A flyer has been shared via social media and a message is being shared via In Touch; best picture of their baked goods gets the chance to win an Amazon voucher. Happy baking this weekend! Pupils will also be taking part in some puzzle activities in the MGR and crafty Maths in classrooms, and we are really looking forward to a fun and engaging week. Your child may also receive green points via ClassCharts for being a '**Numeracy Star**' and teachers will be giving out lots of points for this across the curriculum. Last year we issued around 4000 throughout the whole week, I wonder if we could beat that number this year! Also, children and staff are encouraged to wear something associated with Maths on Friday 21st March – perhaps Maths badges, Pi symbols, Maths socks or ties.

Also, next week Year 9 will have the opportunity to attend the careers 'Get That Job' event to support them in thinking about future careers and how to apply for jobs. These events continue on Wednesday and Thursday. Year 7 are off to the Theatre in London on Wednesday – an opportunity to see Wicked. On Thursday evening we have online mentoring appointments for Year 9, Year 12 and Year 13. We also have a meeting of the Governors' Resources and Personnel committee. Alongside this is a parents' information evening for Year 11.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind families that during term time children are expected to be in school learning. There are very few reasons for which school can authorise absence during term time. These are detailed in the attendance policy, accessible through the [website](#). It is routine for pastoral staff to request evidence of the need for any term time absence. We are seeking to clarify that medical procedures or appointments outside of the UK, and travel to them, are not grounds for an authorised leave of absence. If families are wishing to book medical appointments or procedures outside of the UK, it is recommended these are arranged during school holidays. Thank you for your support with this.

Our Year 7 boys rugby team competed in their first ever games on Thursday evening when they took part in a tournament held at Milton Keynes Rugby Club. They won one and lost two, however Mr Cresswell was really impressed with their determination and listening skills. They will have their next chance to represent the school in a tournament run by Northampton Saints in a couple of weeks.

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Our Year 9 netball team also competed in a tournament this week, and although they didn't manage to go far in the tournament, they also played with great determination and smiles on their face which was great to see.

On 27th March the Royal Institution will be spending the day with us holding a series of Science sessions for our students and CPD sessions for our teachers. At 5pm they are doing a one hour Community Show for friends, family and the wider school community to engage with students' education, get excited about Science and have some fun. The theme of the show is based around what makes a rocket work and is suitable for all ages. The show will be held in the Maureen Grant Room and is free to attend. More details will be available next week.

Finally, on Thursday next week we will be holding interviews for a new Assistant Headteacher. We have six candidates joining us for the day. This position is to replace Mr Tillman, our Pastoral Manager, who has been promoted to a Deputy Headteacher position at a school in Northampton. He leaves us at the end of May and I am delighted for him and would like to thank him for his dedicated years of service. Mr Tillman trained to teach at St Paul's and has held a number of roles, including Head of Design and Technology and Assistant Headteacher. In his role as Pastoral Manager, he has supported many of our families during quite tricky times and I am sure we are all very grateful for this. I am very grateful for the excellent systems and processes that Mr Tillman has introduced that have improved our monitoring and evaluation of attendance and pastoral care. We wish him well for this new position.

Have a lovely weekend.

Yours sincerely



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