



A message from Mr Cooper, Executive Headteacher

As we reach the midpoint of this academic year, I encourage everybody in the school community to take a moment to reflect on their experiences since September and to consider their achievements and their goals for the future. For me, it has been a time that I have thoroughly enjoyed and also a period in which I have had the opportunity to meet so many new people in both the school and the local area. I have been really impressed with our students – they truly demonstrate our school values of respect, ambition and pride in the way that they conduct themselves and their attitude to all aspects of school life.

I have enjoyed visiting students in their lessons, talking to them around the school site, and also seeing them perform on the stage and sports field. There have been far too many moments that have made me proud to mention, but I have chosen two from the last week that perfectly demonstrate the “Spirit of MOCS” that we often talk about. Firstly, the calm and purposeful manner in which our Year 11 and 13 students have prepared themselves for their mock exams, and their excellent conduct and effort in the tests themselves. One of our invigilators, with years of experience at the school, commented to me that they are the best cohort of students they have ever seen. The second was the great pleasure of seeing our Key Stage 4 dance group perform on stage in front of a full house in The Forum in Bath as part of the West Wiltshire Festival of Dance. They showed great skill and talent, and won the audience over with their happiness and enthusiasm.

I hope that all of our students enjoy a well earned rest over the half-term holiday. Please take time to relax, and stay safe.

Drop In Immunisation Clinic - 20th February 2025 @ Pinetrees Community Centre

We are holding a drop-in Immunisation Clinic for any young person that has not received their vaccinations for HPV (Human Papilloma-virus) when they were in Year 8 or their Td-IPV & MenACWY (Diphtheria, Tetanus, Polio and Meningitis ACWY) when they were in year 9.

Date: Thursday 20th February 2025

Time: 12 noon to 3 pm

Location: Pinetrees Community Centre, The Circle, Swindon, SN2 1RF

If you are outstanding these vaccinations, please come to our Clinic.

Kind regards,

Banes, Swindon & Wiltshire Immunisation Team

Confiscated Items

Please note that if an item is confiscated from a student and is found to be in one of the categories below, we will either dispose of it or pass it to the police. Under no circumstances will the item be available for collection by the child or a parent/carer.

Items that are:

- Age restricted and therefore illegal for a minor to possess, or
- Illegal or banned in the UK



Year 10 Triple Scientists: Titration Practical – Calculating the Unknown Concentration of Sulfuric Acid

In an exciting and educational session, Year 10 Triple Science students recently conducted one of the core required practicals for their GCSE Chemistry course—titration! The experiment was designed to help students accurately determine the unknown concentration of sulfuric acid using a technique that is vital in many industrial applications, from chemical manufacturing to pharmaceuticals.

The Practical Process:

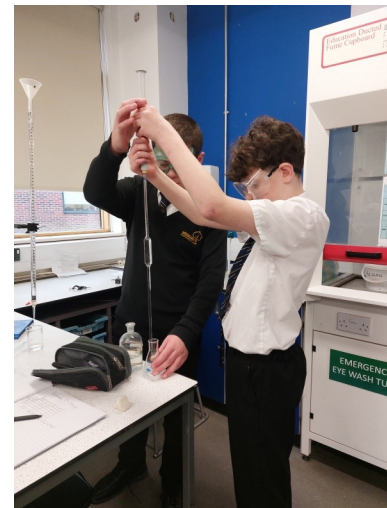
The method they used involved a carefully controlled titration process, where sulfuric acid was added drop by drop from a burette into sodium hydroxide, with phenolphthalein acting as an indicator to signal the endpoint.

Key Skills Developed:

Use of Burettes and Pipettes – The precise handling of burettes is essential for accurate titration results. Students demonstrated their ability to fill and use burettes with precision.

Data Recording and Analysis – As each drop of sulfuric acid was added, students recorded the volume, noting the exact moment when the phenolphthalein changed colour, signalling that the neutralisation reaction was complete. This crucial moment allowed them to calculate the volume of sulfuric acid required to neutralise the alkali.

Calculation of Concentration – Students then used this volume to calculate the concentration of sulfuric acid.



Why It Matters:

This is one of their required practicals. It not only reinforces understanding of neutralisation reactions but also helps students develop essential lab skills, including accuracy, observation, and analytical thinking. Moreover, mastering titration opens the door to future topics in chemistry and supports students in preparing for more advanced scientific experiments.



Year 7 Art

Year 7's Artist have been producing clay sphere's inspired by artist Carole Venables. The Under the Water theme sphere's are drying out ready for there first firing. Students will then glaze them and they will be ready to take home. They are big enough to put a tea light underneath so that they can glow of an evening. The Art department are looking forward to seeing the final pieces.






Supporting Children in Schools webinar - please share with parents/carers

We are inviting parents and carers to our upcoming webinar on **Wednesday, 26 February 2025, from 6pm to 7pm** - [Support available for learners in educational settings](#).

This [session](#) will provide valuable insights into the support available to all children in schools, including academic support, social development, and social-emotional mental health resources. [Through this survey, parents and carers can register for the webinar](#) and submit any questions they may have in advance. This session will be particularly beneficial for those who feel their child may require additional support in school.

Sparx Maths

Congratulations to the following students for their excellent effort with their Sparx Maths homework last week. Here are the Top 10 students from across the entire school... well done!

 Weekly Leaderboard Monday to Sunday		
1	George 10E	2,136 XP
2	Joshua 11L	2,039 XP
3	Kenasi 10M	1,980 XP
4	Lily 7L	1,640 XP
4	Billy 10S	1,560 XP
6	Rebecca 10L	1,479 XP
7	Alana 11O	1,413 XP
8	Sofia 7M	1,401 XP
9	Curtis 10E	1,333 XP
10	Amber 9H	1,315 XP



National Maths Challenge Awards

A huge congratulations this week to all our award winners from top set Year 10 & Year 11 who recently took part in the UK Maths Trust national challenge. We're absolutely thrilled that so many of our students received bronze and silver certificates. Not only do these awards represent aptitude in maths, they also demonstrate problem solving ability, reasoning and our young people's ambition and determination to do well. Students are already talking about aiming for gold next year!

Some of the award winners are pictured and missing (due to mocks!) are Chloe, Merel, Ruby, Caitlin, Thomas, Nathaniel and Jack. Special mention goes to Merel and Daniel who were within one question of achieving a gold certificate. Well done also to Josh who achieved the highest score in Year 10.

Just a reminder that Years 7 & 8 will have an opportunity to participate in the UKMT Junior Challenge on the 1st May. Past challenges can be found online (<https://ukmt.org.uk/competition-papers/jsf/jet-engine:free-past-papers/tax/challenge-type:67/>) and come and see me in U204 for further support.

Mr Berry



Design Technology

Year 7 have now finished their bamboo spatulas. They have just started designing their birch plywood coat hooks.

Year 10 have been learning about how to buy, store and cook fish. Their dish this week was oven baked fish and wedges.





Sleep Challenges

We recognise as a community that the value of sleep is really important. The lack of sleep whether that be getting to sleep, staying asleep or not being able to establish a 'healthy' sleep routine has a huge impact on our physical and mental health whether we are children or adults.

It is a particular challenge for year 11 and year 13 as they prepare for GCSEs and A Levels and vocational assessments but also for younger students when it impacts on health and the ability to attend school and study.

It can also have a huge impact on whole families and be a real source of stress and worry.

There are several avenues of support including your GP and CAMHS. Please access your GP first or contact school where we can refer to our school nurse or the MHST-mental health in school team where sleep challenges are impacting on mental health.

CAMHS in our area can be contacted via:

[Wiltshire CAMHS](#) | [Oxford Health CAMHS](#)

The sleep charity is an excellent support network and can be accessed here:

[Home - The Sleep Charity](#)

February is Children's Sleep Awareness Month and their aim is:

Our work is based around helping people to sleep better regardless of their age, background or ability and to raise awareness around sleep and the impact on health and wellbeing.

Their month-long campaign is about emphasising the importance of sleep for children, highlighting its profound impact on their emotional, physical and mental wellbeing. Their goal is to empower parents, carers, schools, family support workers and health professionals with the tools and knowledge to create healthier sleep habits for children.

Their helpline is

03303 530 541.

Please do also reach out to school for support.

English—Key Stage 4

Using Tassomai for English and hitting the weekly goal is an excellent way for pupils to improve their understanding of key concepts. It is designed to support revision through regular practice to help embed knowledge, improve long-term recall and revisit misconceptions.

Weekly Overview

Year 11:

18328 questions answered and 73hours 38minutes spent revising.

Year 10:

20807 questions answered and 80 hours and 47 minutes spent revising.

Any problems, please find me in L1.

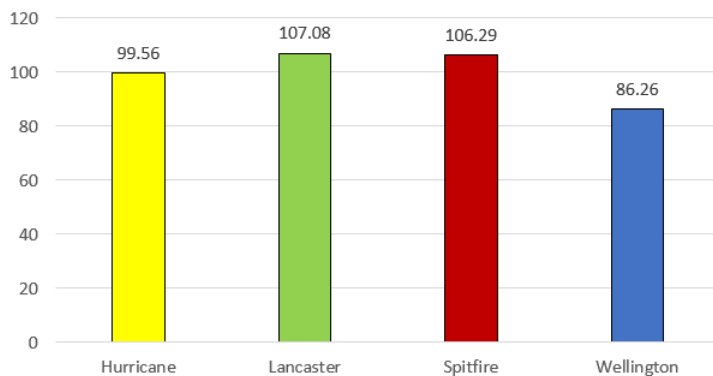
Mrs R Robinson

Head of English



Merits

Average Merits per Student



Key Contacts

In the first instance please contact your child’s tutor, who will be best placed to answer your query or direct you to the best person who can give you an answer. Details of the pastoral team are below:

Pastoral Manager

Ms A. Berry berrya@melkshamoak.wilts.sch.uk

Heads of Year

Year 7	Mrs H. Pearce	pearceh@melkshamoak.wilts.sch.uk
Year 8	Miss S. Abraham	abrahams@melkshamoak.wilts.sch.uk
Year 9	Mr L. Ballinger	ballingerl@melkshamoak.wilts.sch.uk
Year 10	Mrs C. Hughes	hughesc@melkshamoak.wilts.sch.uk
Year 11	Mr J. Oatley	oatleyj@melkshamoak.wilts.sch.uk

To e-mail any other staff member please e-mail admin@melkshamoak.wilts.sch.uk with a subject line of FAO: <staff name>

KS5 Leads

Mrs K. Jones	jonesk@melkshamoak.wilts.sch.uk
Mr C. Butter	butterc@melkshamoak.wilts.sch.uk

Head of Careers Education

Ms C. Tranter tranterc@melkshamoak.wilts.sch.uk



Upcoming Events



Monday 10th February—Friday 28th February: Year 11 and 13 Mocks
Thursday 27th February: 17:00 to 18:30 Year 9 Pathways Evening
Wednesday 5th March: Employability Ready Day (Year 10 & 12)