

St Michael's Church of England High School

A Church of England Academy

Headteacher: Mrs Rachel Rongong BA (Hons) PGCE NPQH

Growing in Body, Mind and spirit



30th January 2026

Dear Parents / Carers,

The only way to start this week's letter is to pause and reflect on Holocaust Memorial Day.

Mr Tierney accompanied two of our deputy pupils to the memorial service in Astley Park on Saturday morning, and he sent through the following,

On Saturday, Year 11 pupils Ben and Hannah joined the Rt Hon Sir Lindsay Hoyle to represent St Michael's at the Holocaust Memorial Service held at the Chorley Cenotaph. They laid a wreath, took part in readings and lit candles in memory of all those who suffered during the Holocaust and the victims of all subsequent genocides. This year's service centred on the 2026 theme, "Bridging Generations," emphasising that the responsibility of remembrance does not end with the survivors themselves. It continues through their children, their grandchildren, and through all of us, as we work to ensure that the lessons of the past are never forgotten. By doing so, we build a bridge between memory and action, between history and hope for the future.



Worship this week also helped us to reflect and remember, as Mr Egelnick, head of history, led us. He explained that 27th January was the date that Auschwitz was liberated, which is why this day was chosen as a day of remembrance. We were reminded that Auschwitz was one of six death camps, representing just a small proportion of the death and suffering of the Jewish people; whole families and communities were wiped out and lost to the world. Quoting Matthew 25:40, Mr Egelnick reminded us of the words of Jesus, 'whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.' He encouraged us to show small acts of kindness to others, stating that as human beings we are capable of doing incredible things when we choose to. Do ask your children about the story of the lipstick that he shared with us and the huge impact this had. He finished with a quote from Dr Seuss, 'Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better, it's not.' Such a poignant thought, expressed in such simple words.

Before I talk too much about this week, I want to share a bit more information about the sporting event that I mentioned in my last letter. Miss Davies sent the following report,

Last Friday 12 pupils entered in St Michael's first ever Boccia and curling event. Boccia is a precision ball sport; a player propels a boccia ball towards a target jack, testing a player's muscle control and accuracy. Schools from across Chorley came to compete. St Michael's two teams were phenomenal. One team, captained by Isabelle, showed fantastic skill, working together as a team and cheering each other on. The sportsmanship in the team was highly commendable and really showed St Michael's team spirit, congratulating all their competitors. Isabelle went on to win player of the match; winning a match with her boccia ball almost touching the jack. They narrowly



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missed out on medal status, but a fantastic time was had by all learning a new sport. The other team was captained by Zain. Zain's focus and leadership was prominent throughout the games, bringing his team to the final which was a nail-biting occasion; it all came down to the final ball. Unfortunately, it did not go in our favour but out of the 14 fantastic teams, they took home silver medals. Well done to everyone who was involved; it was a brilliant event!



Pupils in Year 9 have continued exploring their options choices this week. On Monday, they attended their final options assembly, where they learnt more about dance and business. Throughout the week, Mrs Hooley has been visiting lessons to explain the process in greater detail and provide opportunities for pupils to ask questions. These sessions will continue into next week.

After school on Monday, we had whole staff training. As many of you may aware, a new Ofsted framework was released in September 2025, and we prioritise staying abreast of all educational developments. Our last inspection was in 2022, so we are likely to be visited in the 2025-26 academic year. Of course, we want to be prepared for inspection but above all, we continue to strive to do what is right for our pupils, so that they really do know 'life in all its fullness' (John 10:10) and **grow in body, mind and spirit**. We also spent time in the session continuing with our focus on inclusive teaching; integral to that flourishing that we want for all our young people.

On Wednesday, Fr Paul joined us to lead our period 1 Eucharist; always a wonderful way to start the day. Head girl, Evelyn read Matthew 28:16-20 for us, and Fr Paul explained how doubting can be purposeful at times, as it really makes us think. Reminding us again of all that Jesus did for us, he asked us to have a whole minute of silent reflection; what an impactful thing to do amidst a busy day. It was so very meaningful, and we are grateful to Fr Paul for his time and all he shares with us as a school.

Also on Wednesday, we had one of the highlights of Mr Neville's year and another opportunity for him to sport a maths-themed bowtie: the Intermediate Maths Challenge! This is a 25 question multiple choice challenge designed to encourage young mathematicians in reasoning, precision of thought, and fluency. The questions get progressively harder and marks are deducted for incorrect answers. 60 of our Year 9 and 11 pupils entered and we eagerly await the results in the coming weeks. Year 7 and 8 will have their opportunity to enter the Junior Maths Challenge later in April.

Did you know that every week all pupils attend a Worship in the hall and an assembly (usually in the sports hall)? We make a big distinction between the two, with assembly being a time for presentations, notices and sharing updates, whereas Worship is preserved for a focus on God and spirituality - our relationship with ourselves, God, others and creation. We often use the performing arts to help us in Worship and what a gift it is to have a wealth of dancers, singers and musicians to call upon for this.

This week Year 7 had a visit from Compass Bloom in assembly. They spoke to pupils about how our bodies respond to stress particularly in times such as the run up to exams. They offered reassurance and practical strategies to manage these very normal feelings. We are always very grateful for external contributions and expertise; I hope pupils found the session as useful as I did.

Returning to the theme of Performing Arts, Mrs Burgess has been informed this week by the event organisers, that the Year 11 Dance Company has been successful in their application for U:Dance. This is a prestigious platform for young dancers to celebrate choreography and performance skills and is held at the Lowry in Salford. The event includes workshops with professionals and the opportunity to perform on an incredible stage. Our pupils will be in the show on Saturday 14th March and we will let you know about tickets nearer the time.

In sporting news, last Sunday Benjamin Year 7, Billy Year 8 and Ella Year 10 represented Lancashire at the Regional sports hall athletics finals. They had all completed in heats as part of Chorley athletics and were selected for the Lancashire team. On Sunday they competed against teams from Cheshire, Greater Manchester and Merseyside. The under 13 boys came second overall and the under 15 girls came first and are heading to the nationals. Congratulations to them all!

There has been much involvement in sport by our school teams too. Mrs Dempster sent through the following,

We've had a very busy week in the PE department. Tuesday saw the U13 girls' indoor cricket team enter the North Lancs competition. With some outstanding bowling and excellent teamwork between the wickets they came away top of the group and have therefore qualified to represent North Lancashire in the Lancashire finals at Bolton Arena in March. This was a brilliant introduction for some of the Year 7 girls who have not competed for school yet. The team were brilliant in their all round play; we wish them well in the next round. Also on Tuesday it was the annual Chorley and District Swimming Gala at All Season's Leisure Centre. St Michael's had a very big presence, with over 30 pupils representing us in individual races, relays and Aquasplash. Many of the team swam personal bests and some competed for school for the very first time; what a fabulous night of swimming it was! It was lovely on the night to see all year groups from 7-11 celebrating and cheering each other on. The St Michael's team came away with 3 bronze, 13 silver and 15 gold medals; an unbelievable haul for this exceptionally talented group of swimmers. Finally, on Tuesday the Year 7 basketball team represented the school for the first time at the annual district 3-aside festival. We took three teams to Parklands, where they played matches against other Chorley schools. The players scored plenty of baskets and represented the school superbly throughout. The 5-aside tournament for this year group will take place on Tuesday 24th March.



On Wednesday the U14 girls' football team took on a very good Broughton High School in the Lancashire Schools' Cup third round. In a very tight game with few clear-cut chances for either side, I am pleased to say St Michael's came out 3-1 winners, with goals taken superbly by Fleur, Summer and Nicole. There were some outstanding individual displays, but as a whole the team defended resolutely, attacked with vigour and took the 3 chances brilliantly, when they arose. The girls move on into the quarter-finals and we are awaiting a home game against St Bede's, Blackburn or St Christopher's. Also, on Wednesday evening the Year 10 boys visited Bishop Rawstorne in their final group game of the Chorley Cup. With one foot already in the final the boys simply needed to avoid defeat by a heavy scoreline. With two games in a week, we were keen to make a fast start and that's exactly what they did, going 2-0 up in the first 10 minutes. As we rotated, Bishops grew into the game and scored just before half time. There was no panic however, from the boys in maroon and we went on to score another two goals, while Bishops picked up another consolation goal towards the end. The final score 4-2. The boys are now in the Chorley Cup final at Westway on the 4th February!



The U16s basketball team bowed out of the Lancashire Cup at the last 16 stage, against a very strong Corpus Christi side on Thursday. The final score was 70-45. Well done to all players on

another impressive and hard-fought season; most of the squad will still be able to play in this competition again next year.

We are so proud of the participation in wider curricular sport at St Michael's. This week alone nearly 100 different pupils have had the chance to represent us across all years in such a variety of different sports; well done everyone for coming and participating, whether you made the final teams or not.

Gold stamps this week went to Year 7 pupils for their make and bakes and a young lady in Year 7 for her beautiful book cover home learning, Year 9 pupils for their work on the Book of the Year Awards, as well as creative responses to themes in RE. I also awarded stamps to a young lady in Year 10 for a fabulous assessment in RE and pupils for their wonderful culinary creations. This morning I was particularly delighted to celebrate with sixteen Year 7 pupils whose recent reports showed exceptional attitude to learning and behaviour across all their subjects.



Continuing with our focus on the Year of Reading, this week's staff reader is Mrs Yates, pastoral support worker,

The Let Them Theory by Mel Robbins is a practical self-help book that teaches people how to stop letting other people's opinions, reactions, or behaviour control their feelings and choices. At its heart is a simple two-part mindset: "Let Them" — accept that you can't control what others do — and "Let Me" — focus on your own actions, reactions and goals instead. By practising this shift, readers can reduce stress, set healthier boundaries, build stronger relationships, and put energy into what truly matters in life rather than trying to fix or manage everyone around them.



We'd love to know if any of our families have a favourite book!

NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP WEEK 2026

In the last week of this half term, we will be marking National Apprenticeship Week. The national campaign aims to raise awareness of apprenticeships by celebrating their benefits, showcasing real success stories, and helping young people and families understand the wide range of training and career

opportunities available. This information booklet is a guide for parents and carers. It explains what apprenticeships are, how they work, and the wide range of programmes now available at different levels. Booklet: [Parents and carers guide to apprenticeships](#).

There is also an opportunity for parents and carers to attend an information webinar facilitated by Amazing Apprenticeships on Monday 9 February from 18:30 to 19:30. This webinar is designed to help parents and carers feel confident supporting the young people in their lives as they explore these options. Registration can be made via this link: [Webinar Registration - Zoom](#).

There is a sense of excitement in the air at St Michael's as we approach show week. From what I have seen passing through rehearsals, it's going to be absolutely brilliant! This weekend is rehearsal weekend, when pupils and staff will be having a final push on preparation; the amount of commitment they have shown is phenomenal and we are so excited to see the results. The show is already a sell out for Saturday night, but we do have some tickets available Wednesday - Friday evenings, don't leave it too late to book! Tickets are available on [School Gateway Login](#)

I'll finish with a prayer for Holocaust Memorial Day,

*Eternal God, we come before You to remember the victims of the Holocaust.
We lament the loss of the six million Jews who were killed in the Holocaust, the millions of other
victims of Nazi persecution, and victims of all genocides.
As we remember and lament all those whose lives have been lost, help us to work for a better
future today.
We pray for a day when all shall be free to live in peace, unity and love.
Amen.*

With kind regards,



Mrs Rachel Rongong
Headteacher

Important Dates

Saturday 31 st January	Chitty Chitty Bang Bang rehearsals
Sunday 1 st February	Chitty Chitty Bang Bang rehearsals
Wednesday 4 th - Saturday 7 th February	Chitty Chitty Bang Bang - tickets available on Gateway
Thursday 12 th February	Year 9 Consultation Evening
Monday 16 th - Friday 20 th February	Half term
Friday 14 th - Tuesday 17 th February	Amsterdam visit
Wednesday 18 th - Thursday 19 th February	West End Theatre trip
Monday 23 rd February	Year 9 Options Form return deadline