

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



Therefore, choose

21st November 2025

Dear Parents / Carers,

Suddenly this week, the cold weather has arrived, bringing with it the promise of festive celebrations. I love watching the seasons change, as we see all things through a different lens, and more so as I look forward to my first Christmas at St Michael's. On Wednesday we had our initial pupil and staff brass band rehearsal for our annual 'carols in the quad' in early December; I've been excited about the prospect of this since I heard about it just before I joined the school in January; something to look forward to for sure.



Worship this week was on the theme of 'peace' and was led ably by Mrs Brotherton and Simon. They started by posing some thought-provoking questions - What is peace? Who are the peacemakers? And how can peace be created? We spent some time considering Nobel Peace Prize Winners such as Malala and Fridtjof Nansen, and reflected on some verses in the Bible, Ephesians 2:14, 'For he himself is our peace,' and John 14:27, 'Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you.' It was so refreshing to be reminded that we can find calm amidst the storms of life and the troubled world in which we live. As always, a wonderful start to the day.

I was blessed this week to be accompanied to Worship by our Diocesan Director of Education, Iain Parks. We are so fortunate to have great networks around us as a school community, and this year we are determined to strengthen these relationships even further. Being part of the Blackburn Diocese and its network of Church of England schools is a real gift, and we feel supported in so many ways. We also partner with the other local secondary and primary schools in Chorley, and of course our neighbouring churches; we are never alone. I hope that as parents and carers you know how much we value working with you too; I love the concept that, 'the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.' I hope that you would agree that we really are stronger together.

Everyone's voice matters to us at St Michael's, and on Tuesday, I was delighted to attend our school council meetings. Quite a formal affair, these are chaired by our Head Boy and Head Girl and two of their deputies. Each tutorial elects a representative to attend on their behalf, Years 7, 8 and 9 for the lower school meeting and Years 10 and 11 for upper school. We heard opinions on a range of topics including school premises, positive points and rewards, and the desire for an astroturf. Pupils showed such maturity and spoke with real confidence about these pertinent issues and were understanding when they heard that an astroturf, for example, was too costly for us to pursue at present.



After school on Tuesday, Mrs Smith popped into my office to remind me that Year 9 MasterChef club was happening with Mrs Faulkner. Not one to miss out on the prospect of food, I went to see what they were creating. They allowed me to taste some homemade tomato soup and croutons, which were absolutely delicious. I hear that next week they will be making Jammie Dodgers, so hopefully I'll be invited back again!

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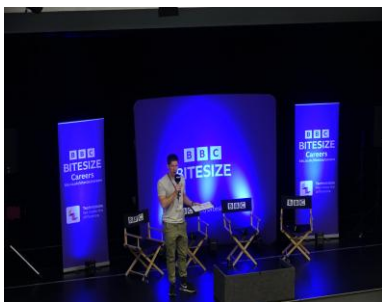


On Wednesday, Year 11 mock exams began in earnest. It is hard to not feel proud of pupils, their efforts and resilience, all of which leave me feeling incredibly optimistic for the real GCSEs in the summer. Well done to each one of them; we pray for strength and wisdom as they continue with their remaining subjects. We are also very grateful to our exams team and invigilators for all their hard work during this period.

As I stood outside my office at the start of lunch on Wednesday, Mr Cree passed by and mentioned that he was on his way to textiles club with some of his tutorial. What a creative way to spend a lunchtime! Supported by Mrs Burrow, pupils were crafting wonderful felt decorations, to make into key rings; I was so impressed with their efforts, and even more impressed that Mr Cree was joining in too!

This week in assembly, we introduced our Year 7 pupils to the Future Skills Questionnaire, a tool designed by The Careers and Enterprise Company. Over the next week, pupils have been tasked to complete this questionnaire to start thinking about their unique skills, strengths, and the possibilities for their future. The questionnaire will help us understand how best to support pupils in making confident choices about life after school and it's also about building the essential skills they'll need to flourish over the next five years and beyond. We'd really encourage you to keep the conversation going at home too, ask your child what they discovered about themselves, and talk regularly about what they aspire to be. These discussions can make a big difference in helping them feel confident and excited about their future beyond St Michael's.

On Friday, pupils in Years 7-10 had the brilliant opportunity to watch a live interview on our school stage, hosted by a representative from the BBC. The BBC host interviewed three guests about their careers and there was an opportunity for pupils to ask questions too; there was a real buzz in the room. The host focussed on the importance of employability skills (soft skills) and of being true to oneself. The event was incredibly engaging and gave pupils a fantastic insight into diverse career pathways, hopefully sparking curiosity and ambition for their future. We are very grateful to have had the opportunity to welcome the team to school today. Pupils are encouraged to research more about careers on [BBC Bitesize](#)



It wouldn't be a week at St Michael's, if Gold Stamps hadn't been issued. This week, I celebrated two pieces of RE work with pupils. I so enjoy taking the time to read their brilliant efforts, and I was so impressed by the two young ladies who came to see me. A massive well done to them both. On Friday lunchtime a group of Year 8 pupils came to show me some of their German breakfast menus and holiday paragraphs – echt wunderbar!

As to sporting updates this week, Mrs Dempster has sent through the following report about the U14 and U16 Lancashire netball tournaments held at Lancaster University last weekend:

The fantastic (and for the first time indoor) facilities available for the day led to some unbelievably high-level netball from our girls. The U14s played against Scarisbrick Hall, Stonyhurst, Westholme, Archbishop Temple, All Hallows and Rossall, winning against these strong netball playing schools. The squad was outstanding! U16 girls played Mount Carmel, Westholme, Scarisbrick, Rossall and

Stonyhurst and were unbeaten in their games. Again, outstanding play throughout the team. Whilst we have been Champions of both competitions in previous years, we have never been Lancashire Champions in both age groups at the same time before (or certainly in the last 25 years). What a fabulous achievement for pupils, staff, coaches and school. We will be representing Lancashire proudly in the North West round on January 31st 2026. We are so proud of all the girls for their effort, attitude, commitment, and desire to always do their best on court. A pleasure to coach, watch and be with.



Today, I have seen some of the wonderful lanterns Year 7 have made as part of their German home learning in celebration of Martinstag (St Martin's Day). The day is celebrated to commemorate St Martin of Tours, a 4th century Roman soldier, turned Christian bishop, renowned for his humility and compassion. As legend has it, St Martin cut his soldier's cloak in two to share with a freezing beggar, serving as the moral and symbolic heart of the celebration. In Germany, on 11th November, streets fill with the glow of lanterns carried by

children celebrating Martinstag and it was fantastic to see our pupils also marking the occasion.

I alluded to Christmas at the start of this letter, and I'd really like to promote some events that are coming up, so that families can get dates in diaries! On Wednesday 10th December, we have our community carol service at 6:30pm at St Peter's Church. Can I really encourage you to come along and join us? It is a wonderful opportunity to foster our 'togetherness' and partnership working. If you are uncertain what the event entails, it is a series of Bible readings and carols, accompanied by Hughes, with a real family feel. Please see the information at the end of this letter; I'd so love to see you there.

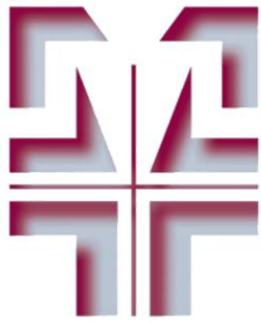
I believe it is set to warm up again at the weekend; whatever you do, may you know peace.

With kind regards,

Mrs Rachel Rongong
Headteacher

Important Dates

Tuesday 2 nd December	Careers Fair in school 11.45am-5pm (parents invited after 3.25pm)
Wednesday 10 th December	Community Carol Service at St Peter's Church 6.30pm
Tuesday 16 th December	Community Christmas Party - 12-1.15pm in school
Wednesday 24 th June 2026	GCSE contingency date – Year 11 pupils to be available up to and including this date.
Thursday 2 nd July 2026	Year 11 Prom at Rivington Hall Barn



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Community Carol Service

Wednesday 10th December 2025

6.30pm

St Peter's Church, Chorley

Parents, carers and friends of St Michael's
are all very welcome.