

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



13th February 2026

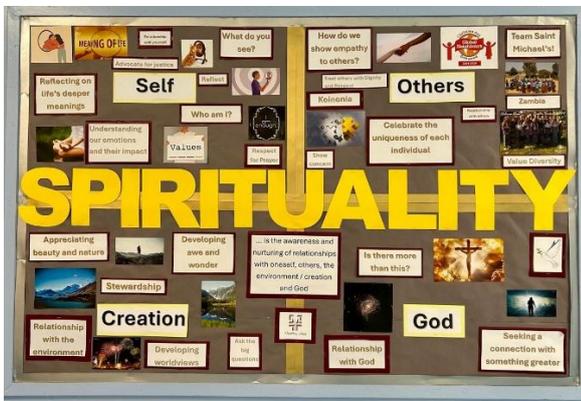
Dear Parents / Carers,

Unbelievably, another week has gone by, and we have arrived at the half term break; time really does fly when you are having fun! On Saturday my family and I came to the final performance of Chitty Chitty Bang Bang and it was just incredible. I know many of you felt the same, as we have had wonderful feedback and emails telling us how much you enjoyed it. It was one of my highlights since joining St Michael's for sure; I feel so incredibly blessed to be here.

At breacktime on Thursday, I had opportunity to see and thank everyone who had been involved in making it such a success; from the cast and band, to the costume designers, set creators, sound and lighting crew, back stage support and front of house, it really was a team effort. We treated everyone to a carton of juice and a cookie, to show our gratitude and to gather them together for a final time; there was still so much positive energy in the room; being part of the production has clearly enriched so many lives and pupils and staff have really flourished. We would also like to thank all of you who supported the production through sponsorship, advertising and donating raffle prizes as well as the time and commitment you have given to rehearsals and preparation.



This week's worship was led by 01 pupils and tutors and focused on another of our tutorial patrons- Elizabeth Fry; a British social reformer, she is best known for her prison reform work, as she campaigned for better treatment, particularly for women prisoners. Faith and prayer were a great source of strength to Elizabeth, who believed that 'no-one is beyond the reach of God'. We talk about 'courageous advocacy' here at school and Elizabeth demonstrated this in all that she did; seeing a problem, she took action to address it and in doing so really made a difference. We were left with the encouragement to be proactive and be the change in our own lives and community; what a challenge. Thank you also to our worship band for leading us in each morning.



Another thread that runs through all we do at St Michael's is 'spirituality'. That's what sets us out as a church school, that extra dimension of spiritual growth that is such a priority for us. As I've said before, I think, it's important that we all know what we mean by the term 'spirituality'. For our community, we understand it to mean our relationship with self, others, the environment and God. We even have a display board in the entrance hall to illustrate this. After half term we will be launching the prefect application process with Year 10 and making some additions to pupil leadership roles with the introduction of Pupil Spirituality Leads. We hope that pupils in these new roles will

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work alongside the Head boy and Head girl and play a key strategic role; so very important in a church school; watch this space.

Year 8 and Year 9 have had a particularly busy week this week, as we have marked National Apprenticeship week with careers talks and information galore. Mrs Hooley sent through the following,

This week, we celebrated National Apprenticeship Week with a fantastic programme of activities for our Year 8 and Year 9 pupils. Both year groups took part in dedicated careers' days designed to broaden their understanding of courses, pathways, and the employability skills they'll need for the future.

Year 9 pupils enjoyed inspiring talks with two former pupils: Eli, now a geologist, and Liam, a trained pilot working at Heathrow Airport. Their stories were captivating and offered pupils a real insight into the diverse opportunities that lie ahead. Year 9 also completed their Future Skills questionnaires and explored labour market trends, including emerging opportunities here in Lancashire such as careers in cyber security.

Our Year 8 pupils had their first taste of college life as they heard from a representative of Runshaw College who commented on how impressed they were by the pupils' conduct. They also completed the Future Skills questionnaire and took part in formal speaking and interview activities as part of their employability skills lessons.

Overall, it was a valuable, positive, and thought-provoking week, giving pupils the chance to reflect on their ambitions and begin shaping their future pathways with confidence.

Thursday continued with a Year 9 focus, as in the morning I had the pleasure of celebrating with those pupils who had achieved 'excellent reports'. So many of our young people continually shine, working incredibly hard during lessons and demonstrating exceptional behaviour and a brilliant attitude to learning. These mornings are a chance to say a massive well done to them all, celebrating by having a slice of toast and some juice together. I do so enjoy the chance to chat to each of them individually too, learning about their hobbies and ambitions; what a wealth of talent they have to share!

Then, on Thursday evening we had Year 9 Consultation Evening. After being out at various events for the last two of these evenings, it was great to have the opportunity to meet and chat to parents and carers again. It was wonderful to see so many of you in school and to talk to pupils about their thoughts on option choices. This is an exciting time for this year group, but it can also be nerve wracking too. I do hope that those who attended, found the evening beneficial; we are so grateful that you were able to join us.

Gold Stamps this week went to some pupils in Year 10 who had baked the most incredible bread rolls, as well as a young lady in Year 9 for the cakes she baked during enrichment and a young man in Year 8 for his brilliant DT work and attention to detail. Well done to them all!

PE has had a variety of competitions this week and Mrs Dempster has sent through the following reports:

Tuesday saw the U15 girls' indoor cricket team enter the North Lancashire round of the English schools' competition. With some very confident bowling and batting displays the girls have qualified for the Lancashire finals in March at Horwich Arena. This will be a very tough round but we are looking forward to the challenge. Well done girls.

On Wednesday the U15s girls' football team played the next round of the English Schools' Cup, after their hard fought win last week in Fleetwood. A spirited opposition started brightly but after welcoming back some of our team from Chitty Chitty Bang Bang and from injury, the girls beat Ripley St Thomas 9-3. 5 goals from Fleur were a particular highlight and our amazing attack and midfield controlled the game from start to finish. A brilliant all-round performance. This puts us in the last 32 in the country; we await the draw to see whom we shall play in the next round.



On Thursday evening our Year 7 and 8 athletes took part in the Chorley and District Indoor Athletics event at Clayton Green Leisure Centre. This is a lovely warm up and start for the upcoming athletics season and the wonderful district athletics. The pupils all performed very well at the indoor competition coming away with lots of medals and brilliant performances in the run, throw and jump events. The Year 7, in their first visit to this competition, came away with silver in the boys' event and gold in the girls' event, with Year 8 girls improving on last year's bronze performance to claim silver and the boys retaining their excellent gold medal position from last year. Well done all, a lovely way to end the half term.



Outside of school we've heard of more sporting success:

Kai in Year 9 competed in the 300m last Saturday at the England Athletics U15 Indoor Championships in Sheffield. He ran an indoor PB of 39.34 seconds in the heats and came 6th overall in the final. Congratulations!

Rose in Year 7 took part in Lancashire County Age Group Swimming Competition qualifying as the 8th fastest 12 year old girl in the 50M breaststroke final! She is swimming in 9 races in total and swims again this weekend at the Manchester Aquatics 50M pool. Rose swims for Leyland Barracudas. Thinking of you this weekend Rose.

We have some exciting news to share about one of our Year 10 pupils, Austin, who is standing as a candidate to become a Member of Youth Parliament 2026. We'll be sharing more information about this after half term, but there's a bit of a sneak preview here:

A uniform reminder

Thank you to all parents and carers for your support in our drive for the highest standards of uniform and appearance. We ask for your continued support in helping to ensure that skirts are not rolled over at the waist. After a holiday,

Member of Youth Parliament (MYP) Elections 2026

Have Your Say. Make Change Happen.

What is an MYP?

- Represents young people in Lancashire for 2 years
- Works at local, regional and national levels
- Attends Youth Focus Northwest meetings
- Takes part in the annual House of Commons Sitting
- Meets Lancashire County Council Cabinet 4 times a year
- Helps lead campaigns on issues important to young people (e.g. mental health, Votes at 16)

Voting Day at your school:
12th March 2026

Ballot boxes delivered: 11th March
Boxes collected: 13th March

Your Chorley Candidates



Throughout my time at Chorley Youth Council and Lancashire Youth Council, I have been representing your views wherever, whether that be at County Hall or my local area, I have been your voice. To continue my work now at Parliament, I would focus on the following issues; The Cost of Living Crisis and Safety in Public Places. I have chosen these issues because of the affect they have on young people and because of the fact they impact everyone and can not be ignored.

it is particularly ear piercings, hairstyles, make-up, fake tan, false eyelashes, false nails and eyebrow treatments that have caused problems. Time spent speaking to pupils about our appearance expectations is time lost on the core purpose of education. We will start the next half term with a significant push on this aspect. Thank you again for all that you do to help reinforce our high expectations and standards.

Online Safety

At the end of today's letter, we have added two attachments from Knowsley City Learning Centre. One is February's newsletter which highlights safe use of AI image tools, the need for consent and responsible behaviour, TikTok safety tips, and guidance for building healthy screen-time habits, offering parents practical ways to support children's digital wellbeing. The second is around 'Safer Internet Day' which was marked on 10 February 2026, this was on the theme of *'Smart tech, safe choices – Exploring the safe and responsible use of AI'*. We would encourage all our parents and carers to take time to read the newsletters given the rapid rise of AI and the dangers associated with it for our children.

Even in the holidays, life at St Michael's doesn't stop, and we have two trips heading off - a science trip to Amsterdam and a theatre trip to London; we wish all involved a wonderful time!

I'll finish with some lines from a Chitty Chitty Bang Bang song,

*Teamwork, can make a dream work, if we all pitch in and try.
Teamwork can make a dream work, and no mountain is too high!
If the same great dream, is beating in each heart,
there's no stopping what a fighting team can start.
For, all together, a team can weather, any storm they may got through.
Yes, teamwork, can make a dream work
can make the greatest dreams come true.*

Thank you for being part of Team St Michael's; we could not do it without you!

With kind regards,



Mrs Rachel Rongong
Headteacher

Important Dates

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
Week commencing 23 rd February	Year 11 mock MFL speaking tests
Wednesday 25 th February	Lunchtime Eucharist for pupils in Armstrong Centre
Wednesday 25 th February 5.30pm	Parent Meeting for France trip
26 th and 27 th February, 2 nd and 3 rd March	Year 7 exams
26 th and 27 th February, 2 nd , 3 rd , 4 th March	Year 10 exams
Thursday 26 th February	Speakers' Day visit to parliament
Thursday 26 th February	Year 11 Revision Evening

Online Safety Newsletter

February 2026

Screen time and resilience: A psychologist's guide

The BBC have published an article with an expert in parenting and child development, Dr Martha Deiros Collado. It includes tips and advice to help you in supporting your child online.

The article explores nine ways in which you can help your child to develop their media literacy skills, for example how to encourage your child to challenge what they see online and how to start conversations using real life examples, as well as how to develop healthy screen time habits.

At the end of the article, there are links to further articles that may be of interest to you, such as how to manage your child's online world without clashing.

You can find out more here:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zwb3tcw>

Would you like to read this newsletter in a different language? You can use the translate tool on our web version: <https://www.knowsleycitylearningcentres.org.uk/february-2026-secondary/>

Using AI to alter images

AI image generator and moderator tools are widely available and often used by children. Whilst these tools can be used for creative purposes, we need to ensure our children are aware of the appropriate way in which to use them and the circumstances when they should not be used, even if harm is not intended.

What are AI image generator and moderator tools?

It is when Artificial Intelligence is used to create or modify images, for example it could be used to swap faces, change expressions or for more sinister reasons, such as to remove clothes. These images are often very realistic and therefore difficult to see that they are fake.

Privacy concerns and consent

If your child is using these tools, they need to be aware of potential loss of privacy and the importance of consent. They should know that they should only use images of other people with consent.

What does my child need to know about using these tools?

- Children shouldn't use AI tools to manipulate images of school staff. Even if the child's intention is not malicious, children should not use AI tools to create or edit photos of teachers under any circumstances.
- Manipulation of images of friends or other children – if you are using images of other people, then consent **must** always be sought.
- The tools should not be used to create images that can embarrass or hurt others - this is a form of online bullying.
- Copyright issues – who owns the copyright? These images could be reused by others, which can affect their own digital footprint.

What should I do?

- Chat to your child if they are using these tools and ascertain the reason why. Ask them to show you the images that they have created.
- Check the age ratings of any apps/websites that your child is using and set up appropriate parental controls.
- Develop your child's digital literacy by teaching them to recognise online risks and to behave responsibly online

Further information

- <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/talking-to-children-about-ai>
- <https://oursaferschools.co.uk/2025/02/18/understanding-image-consent-at-schools/>

TikTok

You must be over 13 years of age to use TikTok. TikTok is a social media platform for sharing and watching short video clips. If your child is using TikTok then make sure appropriate security / privacy settings are applied.

Account set up

It is important that your child enters their real date of birth as accounts are tailored by age e.g., Direct Messaging is disabled for accounts aged 13-15. In addition, advertisements are tailored by age. By default, accounts for people under 16 are set to private. You can read more about the other settings available, such as switching off comments and restricted mode here:

<https://support.tiktok.com/en/account-and-privacy/account-privacy-settings/privacy-and-safety-settings-for-users-under-age-18>

Family Pairing

Family Pairing allows you to link your own account to your child's account. You can then set controls such as restricted mode or tailor your child's 'For You' feed by selecting keywords that TikTok will use to filter out posts. You can find out more here: <https://support.tiktok.com/en/safety-hc/account-and-user-safety/family-pairing>

What do I need to be aware of?

- **Inappropriate content and themes:** whilst against guidelines, explicit and inappropriate content can be found on this platform, for example nudity/sexual content and hate speech. Some of the songs available to lip sync to may contain inappropriate lyrics/themes.
- **Challenges:** We often see viral challenges on social media, some of which can be **risky/dangerous**. Sadly, there are reports that children have died whilst attempting online challenges. Children may not yet have developed the skills and ability to critically analyse that what they see online is not always safe for them to replicate.
- **Stranger contact:** chat to your child about how people may not be who they say they are when online.

Refresh your feed

You can refresh your "For You" feed to update the content recommended:

<https://support.tiktok.com/en/account-and-privacy/account-privacy-settings/refresh-your-for-you-feed>

Blocking and Reporting

Show your child how to use the safety features available.

Further information

- <https://parentzone.org.uk/article/tiktok>
- <https://www.tiktok.com/safety/en/guardians-guide>

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Balance screen time tips

Internet Matters have created simple tips to help you develop healthy online habits for your child. They also answer key questions such as "how much screentime is too much" and "is gaming bad for children." Access this information here:

<https://www.internetmatters.org/resources/creating-a-balanced-digital-diet-with-screen-time-tips>

7 Steps to Good Digital Parenting

The Family Online Safety Institute have created seven steps to assist you as a digital parent. Find out more here:

<https://fosi.org/program/7-steps-to-good-digital-parenting/>

Children's Commissioner launches new guide for parents and carers

The Children's Commissioner has released a new guide to help you in managing your child's digital life. The guide was written with direct involvement from children.

It includes advice on setting boundaries such as no devices in the bedroom and how to chat to your child. You can find the guide here:

<https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/blog/what-i-wish-my-parents-or-carers-knew-childrens-commissioner-launches-guide-for-parents-and-carers-on-managing-childrens-digital-lives/>

Established by the UK Safer Internet Centre (UKSIC), Safer Internet Day (SID) is celebrated around the world. This year, on Tuesday 10th February 2026, it will be celebrated with the theme:

‘Smart tech, safe choices – Exploring the safe and responsible use of AI’

UKSIC Resources

As usual, the UKSIC have created some fantastic resources, which includes top tips, help and advice and quizzes to help you start a conversation with your child. Find out more here:

<https://saferinternet.org.uk/safer-internet-day/safer-internet-day-2026/top-tips-for-parents-and-carers>

What is AI and is it safe?

Internet Matters has a wealth of information on their website about AI, including is it safe for children to use, privacy and data considerations, examples of popular tools and the risks that you should be aware of. You can access this information here:

<https://www.internetmatters.org/advice/by-activity/using-artificial-intelligence/what-is-ai-artificial-intelligence/>

AI Chatbots

Parent Zone have published an article highlighting what you need to know about chatbots, and the growing role of artificial companions. The article discusses what an AI friend is, the minimum age rating for using a chatbot, the appeal and the risks of AI friends as well as what you can do if your child is using them. You can access it here:

<https://parentzone.org.uk/article/ai-chatbots>

AI Tips from the NSPCC

This article from the NSPCC introduces AI tools and discusses what AI generated content is. It also includes tips on how to support your child to use AI safely. Read the article here:

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/about-us/news-opinion/2025/artificial-intelligence-safety-tips-for-parents/>

Parenting in the AI age

UNICEF have published an article discussing how to approach AI with your child. It discusses how AI can help promote learning as well as some of the dangers. You can find the article here:

<https://www.unicef.org/parenting/digital-parenting/how-approach-ai-children>

Resources for Parents and Carers from London Grid for Learning (LGfL)

LGfL have several resources on their website in support of SID, including a video about what children are being exposed to online with generative AI tools. You can find the resources here:

<https://lgfl.net/safeguarding/safer-internet-day>