

# 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

27<sup>th</sup> February 2026

Dear Parents / Carers,

After what felt like a long half-term break, it has been lovely to be back in school this week. Whilst some of us spent the holiday staying local, some pupils and staff travelled a little further afield - to London for a theatre trip and to Amsterdam for a science trip. They came back full of excitement, with so much to share; I've popped the reports at the end of this letter, if you want to hear more about all that they did.

Worship this week was led by our Social Action Team and Simon, who launched this year's Lent appeal. They started by telling us a bit more about what Lent is, explaining that it begins on Ash Wednesday and lasts 40 days, ending on Easter Sunday. For Christians, it is a time when we prepare for Easter and reflect on Jesus. It was so good to hear again of the amazing sacrifice that Jesus made for us, and to be reminded that prayer is a way of connecting with God. The team introduced us to the charity that we have chosen to support this year - SLEAP. We watched an excellent video that showcased the work that they do, explaining that it was set up by those concerned about homeless young people. Having started small, they have now grown to not only support those in crisis, but also to work towards preventing homelessness. There will be more details soon about how we can get involved in fundraising for the charity; watch this space! Finally, we had a chance to reflect on all that we had learnt as we watched a wonderful pupil dance that illustrated our need to consider our priorities; it is always a highlight for me when the expressive arts are incorporated into worship, and this was particularly special as the girls had choreographed the dance themselves; it was lovely to be able to award them a Gold Stamp for their efforts.

Unbelievably, Year 11 exams are now very much on the radar, and this week has seen the advent of mock speaking exams in French and German, as well as GCSE food and nutrition exams. I've heard French being practised on the corridor outside my office (and it was very impressive!) and smelt some delicious smells coming from the food rooms; I'm sure all this excellent work will pay off. And it's not just Year 11 who have been studying hard, our Year 7s have had their first exams in the hall at St Michael's this week and Year 10 have had opportunity to show off all they have learnt too; well done to everyone!

On Tuesday we launched Prefect and Head Pupil applications for Year 10. Miss Watson did an assembly explaining the process and what happens next; do ask your child about it. We are also very excited to have added the role of Pupil Spirituality Lead to the list of positions; this will be a high profile role, having a big involvement in leading our end of term services and Worship, amongst other things. These are exciting decisions and we would encourage you to take time to discuss with your child what they might apply for.

As I'm sure you'll know by now, partnership working is something so close to my heart and one of the reasons I take the time to write to you each week. I'm also keen to connect with other local educational establishments, particularly those that our pupils join us from or move on to. On Wednesday, I nipped out of school for an hour to head up the motorway to Cardinal Newman College. It was such a treat to have a coffee with Head, Nick Burnham and to have a tour of their wonderful campus. In working together, we really can ensure the very best experiences for our young people.

Astley Road, Chorley, Lancashire PR7 1RS Telephone: (01257) 264740 email: [admin@saint-michaels.lancs.sch.uk](mailto:admin@saint-michaels.lancs.sch.uk)



After a lovely visit, I headed back down the M61 to make sure I was in school for the first of our lunchtime Lent Eucharist services. Rev Jordan McDermott joined us to lead us for the first time, and we were so glad he did. After reading Luke 11:30, 'For as Jonah was a sign to the Ninevites, so also will the Son of Man be to this generation.' He talked about how he was using Lent as a time to reset and to be more visible about who he is; for him, that means wearing his cassock more. He ended by challenging us to think about what we are going to do today that is different because we have heard the word of God; thought provoking stuff.



Year 11 had the first of their series of revision assemblies on Wednesday led by Mr Tierney, who talked about how to revise effectively. He shared how he had been a keen fisherman at their age (I managed to persuade him to share a photo; yes, it's really him!) and how he believed he was revising because he would sit fishing and just read through his notes, thinking he was doing a great job. It was good to hear of more effective ways of remembering, such as creating revision cards and mind maps that can be used to check and test knowledge. Year 11 also got a pack of revision resources to support them as they approach these final important months. The message that stuck with me most, however, is how proud we are of pupils and how there is still time

to make a real difference - 8 school weeks, or 70 days, 'what could you accomplish in 70 days?' The overwhelming message of support left me feeling incredibly positive about what the coming weeks hold.

On Thursday, a group of Year 9 pupils led by Mrs Brotherton, Mr Banks and Mr Nelson travelled to London for Speakers' Day. The visit to Westminster included a Q&A with Sir Lindsay Hoyle in the Speaker's Apartments, time in the public gallery of both Houses to observe proceedings and visits to Westminster Hall and Central Lobby. It was a truly memorable opportunity to see democracy in action.



Yesterday evening was our Year 11 Revision evening, a chance for parents to hear some of those messages that we shared with pupils in assembly and for families to know how much we want to support and work together. We were so grateful that so many of you joined us and were so positive about the event. Thank you to all of you.

It will be no surprise that there is sporting news to share again. The following reports have been sent by the PE team,

*From Mrs Brunsdon*

*On Tuesday it was the last opportunity for our Year 11 pupils to represent the school in a handball competition. What a journey it has been to teach them the skills and tactical knowledge of this great sport. As always, the pupils did us so proud with the girls' team winning gold medals in the district tournament! Well done to you all and thank you so much for your amazing commitment to practices over the years, it has been a pleasure working with you.*

*From Mr Lister*

*The Year 8 football team welcomed Thornton Millfield to Astley Road in the Lancashire Cup quarter finals on Tuesday, looking to continue their already very impressive season. As per usual the team came flying out of the start blocks and raced into a 2-0 lead thanks to a penalty from Olly and a calm finish from Arthur. The visitors, however, did not drop their heads and managed to stop us getting an important third goal before half time. Into the second half we*

*expected Thornton to come out and throw everything at us, and that is exactly what they did. A very good looping volley from distance saw them get a goal back and make it 2-1. At this point the visitors had the momentum and an equaliser seemed inevitable and some very good wing play following in at the back post saw them grab that very said equaliser just minutes after their first goal. After letting a two goal lead slip, most teams would fold but our Year 8s are not just any team and managed to wrestle back dominance of the game and did everything they could to find a winner. Thornton's defence held strong though and took the game to penalties. We were confident going into the shootout as the presence of Sam in the goal was always going to give us an advantage, and that advantage showed as Sam made two great penalty saves to see us into the semi-finals of the Lancashire Cup. Well done Year 8!*

*The Year 9 boys' basketball team entered the district competition at Parklands on Wednesday. Having a number of players who had received valuable experience playing for the U16s in the Lancashire cup this year already, there was an air of confidence amongst the boys that they could go and get some positive results. An unbeaten run on the night saw us only conceding three baskets and putting on a real display of wonderful basketball to claim the trophy and become Year 9 District Champions!*

*From Mr Holden*

*Our Year 11 boys capped off their final opportunity to represent the school with an outstanding performance, finishing as Chorley Handball Champions after a fiercely competitive tournament.*

*The team opened strongly with a 2-1 victory over Albany, followed by an impressive 4-1 win against Southlands. A narrow 4-3 loss to Parklands meant the final match became crucial, with goal difference set to decide the overall winners. Knowing they needed a big result, the boys rose to the challenge superbly. In a dominant display, they defeated Holy Cross 9-1, securing the championship title on goal difference.*



*A huge congratulations to the whole team for their determination, teamwork and resilience throughout the tournament. Special recognition goes to Jack, who was exceptional in goal and played a vital role in the team's success.*

*A fantastic achievement — well done to all!*

We've been working hard this week to remind pupils about our uniform and appearance expectations. We would really appreciate families' support with this, particularly around skirt length and make-up, this will avoid the need for us to issue detentions next week. Thank you so much for your support.

As we reach the weekend, we look forward to March and the lighter mornings and evenings. There have certainly been signs of spring this week, with milder weather and snowdrops, crocuses and daffodils starting to bloom in the school gardens. Have a wonderful weekend.

With kind regards,

Mrs Rachel Rongong  
Headteacher

### **Theatre Trip to London**

Over half-term we had the fantastic opportunity to visit the West End with almost 60 pupils. We especially enjoyed seeing Tim Minchin's *Matilda*, a magical musical based on the Roald Dahl classic. Pupils seemed especially impressed with the young people in the cast, being taken into a wonderful story with as much humour as heart. I am sure they are grateful that St Michael's is run much differently to Ms Trunchbull's Crunchem Hall!

We also found time to visit the modern replica of the Globe Theatre, where we not only got an insightful and engaging tour but also got to see the professional cast of *Romeo and Juliet* rehearsing for their fight scenes on stage - a great opportunity to see professionals at work, and hopefully inspiring for any budding performing artists!

Finally, pupils had some free time to explore Covent Garden, with several children sourcing some quite lovely knitted flowers. It was so lovely to see pupils enjoying time with their friends, as well as truly putting our school vision in action through their genuine care for one another whilst we were there.

### **Year 11 Science Trip to Amsterdam**

Over the half-term break, the Science Department took a group of enthusiastic Year 11 pupils on an exciting visit to **Amsterdam** - a trip that proved to be both highly educational and thoroughly enjoyable.

Our first stop was the **NEMO Science Museum**, where pupils explored a wide range of scientific concepts through hands-on, interactive exhibits. The museum encouraged plenty of curiosity, teamwork, and laughter as pupils experimented and investigated real-world science in action. We then visited the incredible **Body Worlds** exhibition. This fascinating display uses real human bodies preserved through plastination to show the inner workings of anatomy. With its theme of "*How Happiness Affects Health*," the exhibition linked science with everyday life and even served as excellent revision for GCSE Biology.

At **Micropia**, pupils discovered the hidden world of microorganisms. The museum showcases live microbes - bacteria, fungi, algae and more - helping pupils understand the vital roles these tiny organisms play in both ecosystems and human health. Many commented on how eye-opening the experience was.

Our trip wasn't all science, though. We also took time to appreciate the culture of the city with a visit to the beautiful **Basilica of St Nicholas**, the patron saint of the Netherlands. Its peaceful interior offered a calm and reflective moment amid our busy schedule.

A relaxing **canal cruise** gave the group the chance to enjoy Amsterdam's famous waterways, historic buildings and unique architecture while learning about the city's past.

To finish the trip on a sweet note, we visited a **Belgian chocolate factory**, where pupils learned about the chocolate-making process before enjoying the chance to sample a variety of treats - a definite highlight for many!

The visit was a fantastic opportunity for our pupils, who represented the school brilliantly throughout. We are incredibly proud of their engagement, maturity, and enthusiasm during this memorable educational adventure.



### **Important Dates**

Week commencing 23<sup>rd</sup> February  
 Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> March  
 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> March  
 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> March  
 Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> March  
 Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> March

Year 11 mock MFL speaking tests  
 Offer Day for secondary school places  
 Year 7 exams  
 Year 10 exams  
 Lunchtime Lent Eucharist in the Armstrong Centre  
 World Book Day