

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



Friday 4th April 2025

Dear Parents/Carers,

Can you believe it? It's been a whole term since I arrived at St Michael's - the time has just flown by. This week has been brilliant; what a way to finish for the Easter holidays.

Before we even got to Monday, the fun had begun, as I visited St John's Whittle-le-Woods for their 9:30am service on Sunday, along with my husband. What a delight it was to see some St Michael's pupils and their families and to join them for worship. We were made to feel so welcome and were very grateful to have had the opportunity. I am looking forward to visiting some other churches after Easter, hopefully I will see some of you there.

I visited some more local schools this week too. On Tuesday I walked to our closest primary, The Parish of St Laurence CE School and had the pleasure of meeting Year 6, many of whom will be joining us in September. Then, on Thursday, I branched further afield in Lancashire to make connections with some other secondary Church of England headteachers, visiting St Christopher's in Accrington, as well as St Wilfrid's in Blackburn. It is so important that we make these links with others.

The performing arts team was busy as usual this week. On Monday lunchtime, we had a brilliant showcase of dance highlights from last week's show and on Tuesday we had another of our lunchtime concerts. This time it was the turn of Year 8, and we were treated to five solo performances, including pianists, a flautist and a guitarist. It takes real courage to play in front of an audience and pupils all so impressed us with their confidence and musical ability. Well done to them all.

Also on Tuesday, we were delighted to welcome back one of our ex-pupils, Ben, who joined us from BAE where he is completing a degree apprenticeship in aerospace engineering. Ben presented to Year 8 pupils about apprenticeships and BAE as an employer. He also spoke to Year 10 pupils who are aspiring to apply to BAE in the future. We are very grateful to him for taking the time to come to school. Career education is so important for our young people, and we want to provide plenty of opportunities for them to think about the world of work and engage with inspirational professionals. We aim to create meaningful links between subject areas and different career pathways, so would be very interested to hear from any parents, carers or friends who would be willing to come into school to discuss their career journey. If this is

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something you might like to help us with, please contact us via Synergy, letting us know your career, the subject you feel this could link to and your general availability. Thank you in advance.

After school on Tuesday, I was working in my office when I became increasingly distracted by the most delicious of smells. Many others noticed it too and eventually, I had to go investigate. I discovered that it was the final MasterChef club of the year, and that pupils were making a curry. If it tasted as good as it looked and smelt, some of you were in for a treat for tea that night, well done to all our young chefs!

We have so many opportunities for pupil leadership at St Michael's, and this is an exciting time of year, as this week we have been shortlisting for head pupils. We have now narrowed the field down to the final few Year 10s who will be interviewed for the roles after the Easter holidays. I can only say that I was so impressed by the standard of the letters of application that were submitted, not only because they were so beautifully written, but also because they talked about all the wonderful things that pupils had done. It was a real pleasure to read them all.

Year 11 are now gearing up to the busy period of exams and earlier this week had an assembly explaining the final arrangements for the GCSE period and examination expectations and regulations. We hope our Year 11s take some time to rest over the holiday as they prepare for this busy season.

The PE team has had another successful week. Year 7 and 8 pupils took part in a table tennis tournament at Southlands on Tuesday. Year 7 boys won gold and bronze medals, Year 8 boys won silver and the combined Year 7 and 8 girls also won bronze. The Year 7 B Team Football Tournament was played at Parklands last night and our teams came first and second. As always, some brilliant performances.

Yesterday evening we had our rearranged Wellbeing Evening with our guest speaker, Sam Tyrer. This was an informative talk, highlighting to parents and carers some of the challenges young people face in our rapidly changing world. Sam spoke bluntly about the importance of monitoring and limiting screen time, as well as touching on the dangers of drugs, body image and social media. It was a very worthwhile evening designed to help us support our children's mental health. I've included a reminder of the online platform, 'Kooth' at the end of this letter, please do take a minute to read it.

Of course we have celebrated Easter this week, too. On Monday lunchtime Mrs Vivash ran an Easter quiz in the RE department and today the whole school has been to St George's Church. This really was the highlight of my term as, through the wonderful dance and drama performances and the music provided by Hughes Tutorial, the Armstrong Choir and the Worship Band, we were all encouraged to reflect upon the true meaning of Easter. Simon, our Christian Youth Worker, played a big role in the organisation of this, and gave three small talks during the service. I am very thankful for all he brings to the school. Throughout the walk in the sunshine to church, the duration of the services and the return to school, pupils showed such maturity and respect and were impeccably behaved; it really was a privilege to be part of such a wonderful event.

Lots of other activities took place in school today too. Year 7 and 8 met representatives from a range of external charities, Year 9 focused on their Duke of Edinburgh Award, Year 10 watched and reflected on the film, Selma, and Year 11 engaged in an English masterclass. All of today's

activities have required an immense amount of effort and planning from staff and I am, as always, incredibly grateful to everyone for making today such a positive experience.

Just a reminder that school is now closed for two weeks and a day. We return on Tuesday 22nd April and look forward to seeing pupils then. We wish everyone on the Germany and France visits this week wonderful trips.

I do hope you all have a restful break and thank you so very much for all your support in my first term here. I will leave you with the quote below that was on our service sheet today:

"For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans to give you a hope and a future.'"

With kind regards,



Mrs Rachel Rongong
Headteacher

Events after Easter

Tuesday 22 April	Trinity Term begins
Tuesday 22 April	GCSE MFL speaking exams commence
Friday 25 April	P1 Eucharist for pupils in the Armstrong Centre

Dear parent/carers,

With the Easter break approaching, at Kooth Digital Health we appreciate there will be some young people who may struggle during the holidays without the access to the daily pastoral support, teaching staff and friends that the school community provides.

WE ARE STILL HERE.

Kooth Digital Health offers free and anonymous therapeutic mental health and wellbeing support to young people in Lancashire & South Cumbria aged between 10- 18, (up to 25 for SEND) in Cumberland, age range is 11- 18, (up to 25 for SEND). Funded and endorsed by the NHS & local authorities. Our services remain available over the Easter period, offering 'on the day' wellbeing support from the comfort of your own home, via any web-enabled device via the following website-

www.kooth.com



Kooth offers free access to online text-based practitioner chats, self help tools and activities, journal spaces and advice from our non-judgemental, safe and moderated peer:peer communities.

With no threshold, waiting list or referral process, young people can access support for ANY issues they may be experiencing. These may include; body image, self-esteem, loneliness, bereavement, academic pressures, stress, anxiety, friendships, identity, life changes etc.

The registration process is quick, anonymous and safe, simply by registering at www.kooth.com using non-identifiable information.

Kooth delivers 1000's of online wellbeing sessions each year in Local Authorities across the UK. As 50% of referrals to CAMHS are unfortunately deemed inappropriate to their criteria, Kooth gives schools, professionals and families an alternative way of ensuring children and young people can access free support when they need it, in a way that they find comfortable to access, via any web-enabled device.

If you have any questions regarding the service, please contact a member of staff in school. Or if you would prefer to contact Kooth directly, simply email parents@kooth.com. A selection of Parent/Carer resources can be accessed using this link: [Parents/Carers resources](#).

Kind Regards and wishing you a restful holiday,

Heather

Kooth Engagement Lead across Lancashire & Cumbria