



# THE LINK

*A fortnightly Newsletter for the pupils, parents and staff of  
St Michael's Catholic College  
Issue 225 - 29th February 2024*

## **Brilliant Year 7 Scholars Graduate at King's College, University of London!**

St Michael's is celebrating the success of fourteen Year 7 students as they graduate from The Scholars Programme, a national university access programme. These students were encouraged to think and work independently across seven tutorials with a subject expert PhD researcher. During the programme, they studied a Philosophy-focussed module on the question: "Are we living in the real world?" and then completed a challenging final essay which was given a university-level grade. All fourteen students graduated and were singled out for praise from their PhD tutor. As a reward, these students attended a prestigious graduation ceremony at King's College, University of London. Isabella C-B and Maya B further distinguished themselves by delivering articulate and inspiring speeches to an audience of academics, undergraduate students and other schools. Their speeches are linked below. Please do congratulate all these students when you see them! - Mr D. Magnoff  
<https://sites.google.com/stmichaelscollege.org.uk/challengeandmoreable/brilliant-club>



What is reality, anyway?

Ask the Year 7s who have just completed the Scholars Programme!

Is the world we live in real? Or are we living in a simulation? How could we know, and does it matter? During Autumn Term, a group of 14 curious Year 7s embarked on a philosophical exploration of these questions with PhD tutor Mandeep Sidhu, as part of the Scholars Programme by the Brilliant Club. The Scholars Programme supports students to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to secure a place at a competitive university.

Through 7 university style philosophy seminars in two groups of 7, students learnt the fundamentals of deductive logic and engaged in thought experiments to debate whether engaging with technology makes life any less real. For instance, if you could plug into an immersive 'experience machine' which guarantees happiness instead of living your current life, would you? Would your experiences be any less authentic than what we experience in the everyday?

Students put their newly developed philosophical skills to the test by completing a challenging university-style 1500 word philosophy essay over the Christmas break. The group performed exceptionally well, evidencing a particular flair for sophisticated critical thinking. They celebrated their successful completion of the Scholars Programme by attending a graduation ceremony hosted by King's College London on 7th February. Congratulations, philosophers! - *Dr Mandeep Sidhu, Kings College, University of London*

### **Please find Beau's reflections on the day below:**

I loved the Brilliant Scholars Graduation Ceremony trip because of the many great things that happened! The graduation event, the tour of the campus and the too many photos I took! I enjoyed talking to my fellow scholars and bonding on points of philosophy and memory. The campus building was really interesting both inside and outside, which as a result of bomb damage in WW2, reflected different times and histories from the past 300 years! I also loved the tour of all the amazing sights: The beautiful university chapel, the Hello-Kitty exhibition at Somerset House, the comically-sized chessboard, the statue of Sophocles and above all the lion university mascot that was bought from a charity shop for £7! I also loved the announcements set up for the ceremony and it felt wonderful to come up and be awarded our certificates as graduates of The Brilliant Scholars Program. Thank you Mr Magnoff and Dr Sidhu, I can't wait to do this again in 10 years time! - *Beau M*

## Careers Conversation

Laila in Year 13 is in conversation about her Internship Opportunities, via the Career Ready programme. This article has been published on the Career Ready Website entitled "A real confidence boost"

Laila from St Michael's Catholic College in South East London completed her internship at education charity, [Literacy Pirates](#) made possible by the [Bupa Foundation](#).



Learn more about her journey here.



Before her internship at Literacy Pirates, she didn't know what she wanted to study at university. But her time on her paid internship gave her a better idea of the work environment and what her options are. "I'm still unsure about what I want to do next, but this experience has definitely given me a better understanding about an industry I didn't know much about. I didn't know what to expect from my internship but I'm so happy with the way it turned out."

### New experiences and new skills

For Laila, her internship was her first experience of work – and she wasn't sure how she would adapt to the new environment, but she soon found she was capable of more than she initially thought.

"The thing I was most nervous about was not being able to complete the work that I was set, but I was able to do it, and that has been a real confidence boost. Everyone has been so kind and helpful."

Over the four weeks, she got to work on several skills, including using new technology and programs.

"I've learnt so many new skills that I know will be useful in the future. For example, I had the chance to use Microsoft Teams and Excel during my internship – two programs I'd not used before."

One of Laila's internship highlights was getting to explore her creative side by working on projects where she could brainstorm and try new things – something her team saw as a key strength of hers.

"I was also given the opportunity to work on more creative tasks like creating a volunteer opportunity board – and everyone gave me really positive feedback, which was really motivating."

Laila's internship supervisor, Olivia, reflected on her experience working together over the summer:

"It was lovely having Laila on the team, she's very hard working and got stuck into everything we set her. It was really interesting to see her different approaches to tasks – especially her work on our volunteer board. Laila is very creative and that has definitely shone through. It's been really helpful to have an extra pair of hands on board to support on tasks that I just don't have time to do usually. I've also really enjoyed the opportunity to line manage someone, as it's not something I've done in the past."

### An invaluable experience

Laila feels that she's gained crucial experience in the world of work through the Career Ready programme, something she recognises isn't accessible to all young people.

"It can be really difficult for young people to find work experience so this kind of opportunity is so helpful – my internship was exciting, interesting and fun. I was confident before my internship, but this experience has boosted me for sure."

After her internship experience where she discovered her creative skills, Laila is now determined to pursue a career in fashion after she finishes school.



This year we have 25 Year 12 students who have been accepted on to the Career Ready programme, and are currently in the process of building working relationships with their Business Mentors.

- Mr I. Davis

### **St Michael's Celebrates First Diversity Week!**



Many thanks to all the staff and students who contributed to St Michael's first ever "Diversity Week" and helped to make it such success! Highlights included a visit from the Mayor of Southwark, lectures from leading academics from across the UK, lessons on intersectionality, food from across the world and an international cultural dress day. Please see below for further details. Keep your eyes open for further Diversity events across this term and the next - remember: Diversity Week is EVERY week!!

### **Mayor of Southwark visits St Michael's and Talks to the People of the Future!**

On Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2024, The Worshipful Mayor of Southwark, Cllr Michael Situ, marked our inaugural Diversity Week by visiting St Michael's for a special ceremony to bury a student time-capsule that will next be opened in 2064.

This project was inspired by the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Windrush Migration and challenged students to research their family histories and express their hopes for the future. Students presented their ideas in the style of a West Indian front room, where families traditionally curate a careful presentation of their values and stories to the outside world. Students were then filmed discussing their projects, explaining what their models expressed about their identities and familial journeys as well as their messages and hopes for the people of the future. The winning entries were selected by a panel from the National Migration Museum, who are working in partnership with St Michael's on a long-term collaborative curriculum project. Adrian N., 12DA, claimed first place with an innovative submission that not only explored the legacies of the West Indian plantations and rum industries but also linked to a further time-capsule buried under the home he was born in in Barbados. Mayor Situ told the students: "This is a wonderful project that reflects your truths and your identities. It gives me great hope that our future is in the hands of young people like you. I may not make it to when this time-capsule is uncovered but I hope that you all come back and can reflect on your life journeys and the brilliant opportunities you were given here at St Michael's."

Congratulations to all our entries!

Please find further details below:

<https://73se.short.gy/BHMPProject2023> ; [https://drive.google.com/file/d/19Tn8BIq3A0D0I4R3oc\\_w7OtSqQAuthG/view?usp=drive\\_link](https://drive.google.com/file/d/19Tn8BIq3A0D0I4R3oc_w7OtSqQAuthG/view?usp=drive_link)



### A History of Brixton and Tulse Hill Boys School

During St Michael's Diversity Week, we were pleased to be presented with the History of Brixton by Robin Whitburn of UCL. The presentation opened with the background of key figures all having involvement with Tulse Hill Boys School, including Muhammad Ali, Linton Kwesi-Johnson, Paul Stephenson and Althea Jones LeCointe. Not far from the school in 1973 police arrested 3 young black men, one of which attended the school, Robin Sterling, on the premise of them fitting the description. All three were charged and sentenced in '74 to 3 years in prison. The same year Ali made an appearance at Tulse Hill for free and sparred a student in an unexpected spectacle.



Black students from the school also marched for the release of the victims, resulting in the release of two boys the following year, and the final one after that. This allowed the Black community to become more vocal about excessive and violent policing. The Brixton community have a proud tradition of providing light in times of darkness. In the 70's and 80's, it was the home of the British Black Panther's youth collective, and a base for the operations of the British Black Panther movement. The Brockwell 3 case was mirrored in that of Olive Morris, who was sexually harassed and taken into custody by the police at age 17 following a racially aggravated incident between the police and a Nigerian diplomat. Olive died in 1979 and essentially caused the formation of the Brixton Black Women's group. The History of struggle and protest in Brixton carries on years past this, with, amongst other events, the Battle of Lewisham 1977 and the Brixton Riots and New Cross Fire of 1981, reaching a point today where Brixton is a beacon in London for Black struggle. I found this lecture both moving and empowering and it has encouraged me to conduct further research into local Black History. Looking forward to the next "Big Ideas" lecture series!

*Gibson E, 13SA*

### **St Michael's Students Lead New Exhibition in National Migration Museum**

The lecture from the Migration Museum was very interesting. They introduced us to many different museums (such as the Dog Collar Museum and the Pencil Museum), stating that there are over 2000 museums in London. I found it strange that pencils and dog collars got so much attention but migration stories did not. We learnt about the sort of work the museum, which is currently located in Lewisham Shopping Centre, does and why it is important to reflect upon our own migration stories.

They also showed us different exhibitions from the museum (such as sections of the Berlin Wall). My favorite part was when we were able to give our own opinions because it made me think about the importance of our history in our lives. I'm really looking forward to researching my family's history in the History Society on Tuesdays and having our stories exhibited in the museum later this year! *Maya B, 7SA*



### Trip to Rome

The recent expedition to Rome unfolded as a profound journey of discovery. Here the threads of history and spirituality became an intertwined tapestry of unforgettable experiences amidst the towering remnants of ancient ruins and the sanctity of sacred sites.

Our visit to the Vatican City marked the start of our incredible journey. Stepping into the hallowed halls of St. Paul's Basilica, we were immediately struck by the enduring beauty of its architecture and the profound sense of reverence that filled the air. The students were tasked with finding Pope Francis' lit portrait and take notes of others that had passed before him, which gave opportunity for reflection and prayer.

The Vatican City also held the most indelible moment of our journey, where we attended the canonization ceremony of St Maria Antonia de Paz Figueroa. Led by His Holiness Pope Francis, the ceremony unfolded as a solemn yet deeply moving occasion. Amongst a sea of devoted pilgrims from every corner of the globe, we stood witness to the formal declaration of a new saint. This humbling experience underscored the enduring legacy of faith and the rich tapestry of history woven within the Catholic Church. The students were awe stricken, to say the least, at the mere sight of Pope Francis, draped in traditional vestments, presiding over the ceremony with grace and humility. Students also had the opportunity to receive communion and reflect on the blessings that they had been given.

Our journey through Rome wouldn't be complete without a visit to the iconic Colosseum, a testament to the grandeur and ingenuity of Rome. Standing amidst the imposing arches and weathered stone, we were transported back in time to an era of gladiators and spectacles. As we walked the same grounds where history's greatest dramas unfolded, we couldn't help but feel a sense of respect for the resilience of the human spirit. The students were particularly invested in stories of Titus, who took a Jewish wife and was later killed by his brother alongside the story of Emperor Constantine, who accepted Christianity on his death bed, changing the course of history entirely.

The history of Rome cannot be spoken about without mention of The Sistine Chapel, a true masterpiece of Renaissance art nestled within the Vatican Museum. Stepping into the halls of this sacred space, we were immediately engulfed by the sheer magnitude of its beauty. Our eyes were drawn upwards to the mesmerizing ceiling, adorned with Michelangelo's iconic frescoes depicting scenes from Genesis, including the renowned "Creation of Adam." Students later questioned the lengths that the great Michelangelo would have had to stand for, at an angle, to ensure the completion of this masterpiece. Students understood that The Sistine Chapel is not merely a place of worship but a living testament to the enduring power of artistic expression and human creativity. Our time spent in its awe-inspiring presence left a permanent mark on our hearts and minds, reminding us of the profound impact that art and beauty can have on our souls.

The emotional journey ended with an exploration of the subterranean depths of the Catacombs, offering us a glimpse into the early days of Christianity, where persecuted believers sought solace and refuge. As we navigated the intricate labyrinth of tunnels, we were reminded of the resilience of the human spirit and the sacrifices made by those who came before us.

As we bid farewell to the ancient city of Rome, we carry with us cherished memories that will endure for years to come. Beyond its iconic landmarks of stone and marble, Rome's true treasures lie in the stories and experiences it holds, serving as a timeless testament to the enduring power of human spirit and faith. - Ms C. Ahmed



## Chaplain's Corner

### The Word of the Lord



### Prayer for the start of Lent

Lord, as we begin a new half term with new members of our community

Help each of us make a new beginning this week.

Here among us we have so much wisdom and energy,

so much experience and optimism to take each other forward.

Remind us often that you are really with us as we work together,

not just as an idea in our heads but as a living presence among us.

May your presence, your spirit, your RUAH be with us as we breathe life and hope into our community through our many talents

and may Don Bosco continue to inspire each of us

to make holiness consist in being cheerful this year.

We ask this through Christ Our Lord.

*Miss Casey, Chaplaincy  
Co-Ordinator*



### What's been happening in the faith life of the school?



- Before Half Term, Year 12 CAFOD Ambassadors put together and led an assembly on the meaning and importance of Ash Wednesday as this would be taking place during the Half Term, they shared what they had learned from their most recent CAFOD training and the fundraising plans for Lent.
- Ms Corcoran led assemblies for all year groups on Lent and the importance of reflection, prayer and reconciliation.
- Reconciliation services will be taking place this half term and we were delighted to welcome four Priests from our local and wider community to celebrate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation with our Year 7 students. Father Gregory from Salesians in Battersea commented on how respectful, understanding and reflective our students were. Year 12 Chaplaincy Students led the morning reflection and will continue to do so during these services.
- During Lent each House will be sharing a day of fundraising and giving back as is custom during the season of Lent, starting with Mazzarello on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> February
- Vicuna house is busy preparing for their Charity Week to raise money for the "Make a wish" foundation.
- 9 Bosco shared the message of CAFOD Family Fast Day during the first Friday Mass during Lent, conducted as always by Father Keith.





# Safeguarding Officers



**Designated  
Safeguarding Lead:**

**Ms Jo Nottage**

Contact: 0207 237 6432 or  
j.nottage@stmichaelscollege.org.uk



**Safeguarding officer &  
Deputy Designated Lead:**

**Mrs Debbie Freegard**

Contact: 0207 237 6432 or  
d.freegard@stmichaelscollege.org.uk



**Safeguarding Officer:**

**Ms Tania Rughooputh**

Contact: 0207 237 6432 or  
t.rughooputh@stmichaelscollege.org.uk



**Mr Allan Daly**

Contact: 0207 237 6432 or  
a.daly@stmichaelscollege.org.uk

**Overall Responsibility:**

**Ms Felicity Corcoran - Principal**

Contact: 0207 237 6432 or  
Email: [contact@stmichaelscollege.org.uk](mailto:contact@stmichaelscollege.org.uk)

Important Notice from the Safeguarding Officer - there is a copy of our Safeguarding Policy on the College Website. A hard copy of this is available in the College Office.

## ADMISSIONS ARRANGEMENTS



### Breakfast Club Reminder

Breakfast club is running from 8am every morning

All students can get **free** porridge or toast

**Free fruit now available at the request of the Student Parliament**



## HOLIDAYS

### EASTER HOLIDAYS

From Friday 29th March 2024

To Friday 12th April 2024

### Lost property

**Please make sure your child's property has their name on**, this makes it easier to reunite lost property to its owner. **Please don't bring expensive property to school; we will not hold any responsibility for any item lost.**

Please note that all lost property that is not collected will be disposed of at the end of each half term.



Contacting the College - Direct parents access to college via email  
[contact@stmichaelscollege.org.uk](mailto:contact@stmichaelscollege.org.uk)

For absence please phone: 0207 237 6432 Option 1

