



THE LINK

*A fortnightly Newsletter for the pupils, parents and staff of
St Michael's Catholic College
Issue 239 - May 2025*



St Michael's Catholic College - Hellenstein-Gymnasium Twinning Project



On Thursday the 3rd of April, we had the pleasure of welcoming Hellenstein-Gymnasium from southern Germany to Bermondsey. They were a group of 15 students who were completing their Erasmus trip. Erasmus is the EU's programme to support education, training, youth and sport in Europe.

We were introduced to the German school through Southwark Twinning Association who aim to link schools from our local borough to others around the world.

The Hellenstein students were looking at the focus of Smart Cities. A smart city is a place where traditional networks and services are made more efficient with the use of digital solutions for the benefit of its inhabitants and business.

In conjunction with Year 10 Geography students from St Michael's Catholic College they went to various locations including Bermondsey tube station, Southwark Park and Surrey Quays Overground station. They completed fieldwork including traffic counts, environmental quality surveys and questionnaires. This was an invaluable experience for our Year 10 students in terms of completing Geographical fieldwork and broadening their school experience. They interacted with local community members and made precious personal connections with the German students.

A thank you to Egon Kartaly who is in charge of Erasmus at Hellenstein-Gymnasium and his efforts to make this trip happen. Also thanks to Mr Magnoff who has now officially been on his first Geography trip.

Mr P Fellows
Head of Geography

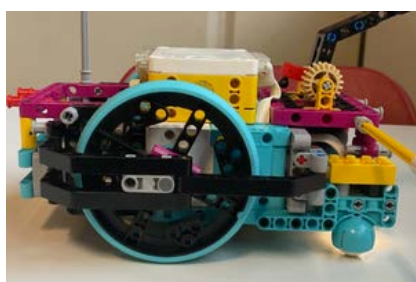
Congratulations to our STEM members for winning the First LEGO League Competition



Winners of the ROBOT DESIGN
The most Talented and Amazing STEM Team. Thank you for being the best.

On Saturday 8th March members of the STEM Club, run by Ms Roshier, had the opportunity to showcase their talent in the 2025 First Lego League Competition. The competition consisted of two presentations and a robot challenge. This year's theme for the competition was 'Submerged', each school was assigned the task of finding a problem that has affected the world's oceans and finding a solution. Thanks to our teamwork, we were able to come up with the idea of refillable glue sticks, and the judges loved our idea. Thanks to our team's robot programmer, Kassandra (Yr 9), we were able to tackle the robot challenge with ease. Although it was not easy at first, after each round we worked on and improved the programme to work better, and this allowed us to gain third place in the robot games. However, our strongest aspect was our robot design, which we won medals and a cup for. This cup now sits in the school's cabinet, on show for everyone to see. I would like to thank the whole STEM Club for being an amazing team, and Ms Roshier for always supporting us.

Janka P, 7RU

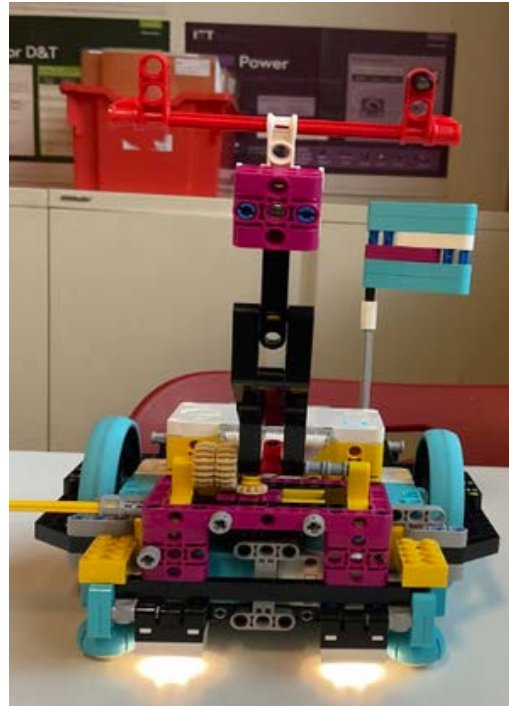
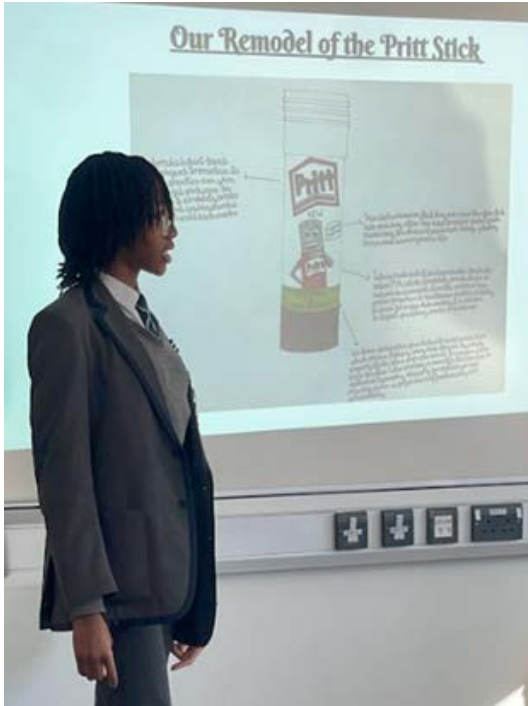


THANK YOU Mr Clarke for accompanying us.



ZENIX competing in the Robot GAMES winning 3rd place

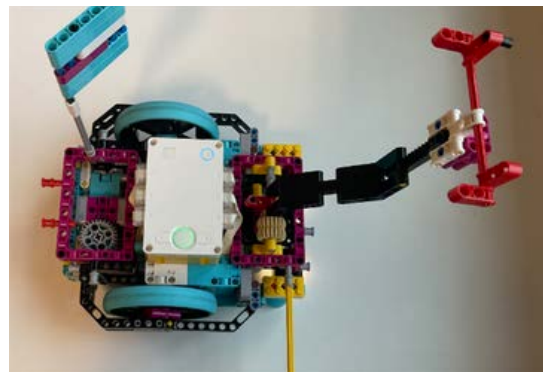




Our innovation project - reusable glue stick



STEM members presenting their Innovation project/ideas to the ECO Committee



Meet ZENIX our LEGO robot



Discussions in the boardroom as the team prepare to present to the judges

Meet My Future Self Event

A selection of Year 10 girls at St Michael's College attended the My Future Self workshop led by alumna Hannah Awonuga, that challenged us to break beyond expectations and recognise that with resilience and ambition, we have the power to define our own unique paths to success.

We had the chance to hear from three accomplished women - Hannah Awonuga, Joy Aboderin, and Winnie Annan-Forson - each of whom brought their own stories of growth, setbacks, and perseverance. Their reflections helped us realise that success does not always follow a linear or traditional route, and that obstacles can become stepping stones if faced with courage and self-belief.

A highlight of the session was an interactive activity that encouraged us to reflect on our own strengths and consider career paths we might not have explored before. It was refreshing to think about careers from new angles moving away from our previous passive understanding and to learn more about apprenticeships, work experience, and job roles we hadn't previously considered when compatible with our strengths and areas of growth.



What resonated most deeply was the powerful reminder that we are not defined by our backgrounds or confined by others' expectations. The speakers shared their journeys with unfiltered honesty – from academic setbacks to moments of self-doubt – offering advice that felt both practical and personal. Their reflections on school life, so similar to our own, made their success feel genuinely attainable. Hearing how they navigated challenges with resilience and determination gave us hope and reassurance that our goals are within reach. Their stories didn't just inspire us – they ignited a belief that we, too, can pursue ambitious futures with confidence, courage, and the drive to overcome whatever stands in our way.

Delina G, Year 10

The Meet My Future Self Event hosted by St Michael's alumna, Hannah Awonuga, was both inspiring and eye-opening. It helped us see that success doesn't come overnight - and that the school years of many successful women were full of challenges, uncertainty, and growth. Hearing about their journeys reminded us that greatness takes time, and that every step, even the hard ones, can be part of something meaningful.

Through their honest stories, these women shared how their school experiences shaped who they are today. They spoke of moments of doubt, unexpected turns, and perseverance. It was especially encouraging to learn that not all of them had clear career goals from the start - some discovered their passions later in life. I felt like it would be fine to change careers later on in life, as scary as it sounds.

Their words helped us understand that success is not defined by immediate results, but by resilience, effort, and believing in ourselves through every stage. From missed opportunities to personal breakthroughs, their school years were a foundation for the inspiring careers they now lead.

I feel like I left the event feeling motivated, not only by what these women have achieved, but by how they got there - with patience, persistence, and self-belief. Their journeys reminded us that our current paths, however uncertain, are part of something much bigger. It's okay for us not to have exactly what we want to do planned out, as life typically doesn't work like that in finality. Therefore, I feel as if I am more aware that I'm constantly in control of who I want to be and who I will be.

Saron G, Year 10

Poetry Corner: Her Future Self Unwrapped

Her past was unwrapped slowly, deliberately and carefully; as though to do it quickly would have destroyed the precious crinkled yellowed paper in which it was entombed. Once the wrapping was peeled back, what was revealed both surprised and embarrassed in equal measures.

She was both child and woman, naïve, educated yet ignorant, she knew a little about so many things, but not enough about anything yet.

Her desires were never spoken, she knew no future self, her present all-encompassing was her comfort, for to envision anything beyond the now was a prospect she could not face.

They said she should think about her future self, of the dreams yet to be fulfilled, of the journey she would take to arrive at that place where she would sit; smile on her face - comfortably in the seat of self-actualisation.

They knew she was capable, saw in her a flicker, not yet quite the 99.95 percent carbon that she was. *They* saw her better than she saw herself. *They* knew she was afraid – not of the journey, but of what she could become.

She knew her future self was better left where it had lain undisturbed and comfortable in its value. Yet *they* had piqued her curiosity enough – she began to unwrap the gift that was her future self.

Ms P Belvett



SSLP AI Conference

St. Michael's SSLP Student Voice Ambassadors recently attended the Southwark Schools Learning Partnership AI Conference at the Dulwich College Old Library - a thought-provoking event focused on the future of artificial intelligence and its impact on society. Whilst the day included insightful talks and discussions, it was predominantly an opportunity to meet up with students from JAGS (James Allen's Girls' School) and develop our collaborative project.

We made excellent progress during the conference, finalising key elements of the art competition we've been working on with JAGS, which aims to explore student perspectives on creativity and technology.



Voting for the artworks opened on 22nd of April, giving students the opportunity to engage with the pieces in a unique and analytical manner. The conference was a brilliant opportunity to learn, collaborate, and take our project to the next level in preparation for our final presentation in May.

Yousef C; Mirabel M; Delina G; Angelica W; Sophia M, Year 10



SSLP Student Conference: The presentation that triumphed

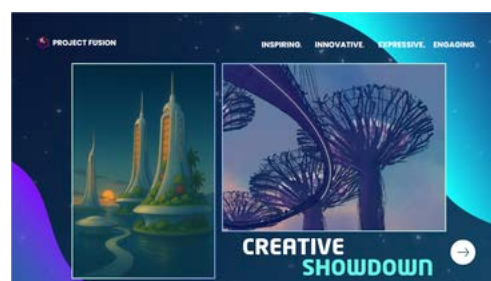
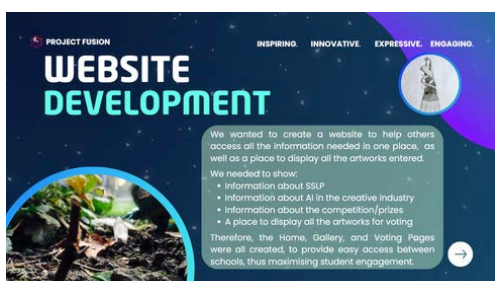
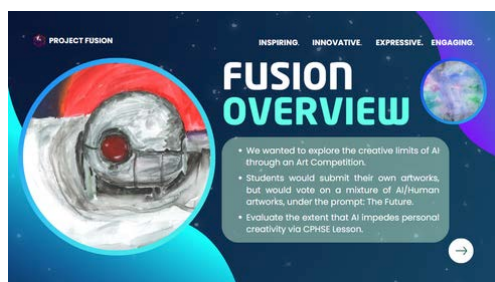


Okay, we know what you're thinking: this is the final time we'll have to write an article about an SSLP Conference - we couldn't POSSIBLY recycle the same joke 3 times in a row... Well.. Uh.. If only someone could tell that to ChatGPT...

On May 16th 2025, five students from St Michael's Catholic College attended the third and final SSLP Student Voice AI Conference at Kingswood House, in Sydenham. In partnership with James Allen's Girls' School (JAGS), they delivered a witty and entertaining presentation on AI in the creative arts, marking the conclusion of their joint project - an inter-school art competition featuring both AI-generated and human-made artworks. SSLP Chair Marcus Huntley was in attendance, and the presentation was widely praised for its creativity, humour, and insight. The audience found it extremely engaging, and, to celebrate their success, all students were treated to pizza and a lively disco to round off the day.

You'll be pleased to know that this marks the end of this AI Trilogy in The Link - the only pseudo-comedy article which is, in reality, comedically catastrophic...

Yousef C; Mirabel M; Delina G; Sophia M; Angelica W, Year 10



Please see the SSLP - Vision of tomorrow website to view competition artwork entries: <https://www.visions-of-tomorrow.co.uk/gallery/>

Year 12 Visit to Parliament



Year 12 students studying Politics, History, and Sociology recently visited the Palace of Westminster in London. Their visit began with a tour of Parliament, starting in the historic Westminster Hall. Here, students learned about its diverse past, including its use for events like Henry VIII's tennis matches and the significant trial of King Charles I before his execution.

The tour continued through the House of Lords, providing insights into its function within the UK's legislative system. Following this, the students had the opportunity to observe a live debate from the Strangers' Gallery in the House of Commons. This first-hand experience allowed them to witness the dynamic nature of parliamentary discussions and the process of law-making.

Adding a valuable dimension to their visit was a scheduled workshop. The class was pleasantly surprised by a visit from their local Member of Parliament, Neil Coyle. Mr. Coyle generously took time to speak with the students and answer their questions on various political topics and his role as an MP. This direct interaction offered a unique opportunity for the students to engage with a practicing politician and gain a deeper understanding of representative democracy.



Year 9 Hot chocolate Reward Morning

Congratulations to the 53 students in Year 9 who did not receive any mentions last half term. They all received a hot chocolate with marshmallows and a biscoff biscuit, as well as 30 house points from their Leader of learning.



Some of our regulars enjoying their hot chocolate. Well done, Marcel, Bernado, Adriel, Mar'Yan and Tobi

Debate Mate Success

Huge congratulations are in order for our wonderful Debate Mate teams in Year 7 and Year 10! On Tuesday they took part in the SSLP Virtual Debate Mate Competition. Over the course of the day, they took part in three debates with schools from all over Southwark and tackled issues such as AI and extreme wealth. The debate teams have been attending training with a specialist debate coach, and their hard work has paid off as our Year 7 team are Southwark debate champions! They won every debate over the course of the day, even against teams much older and more experienced than them. Year 10 also enjoyed success in their debate about if billionaires should exist. The team are looking forward to their next competition in June and can't wait to defend their title.

What do you think? Should billionaires exist? Should AI replace your teacher? If these topics sound like something you would like to debate, speak to Mr Magnoff about joining one of our fantastic debate teams!

Well done again to our champions -keep up the amazing work!

Miss E Stewart



Year 7: Isabella MO, Martha W, Janka P, Ariam G, Sebestain H



Year 10: Miley N-O, Samuela S, Esther E, Martha K, Monique M, Angel O

STEM Workshop



On the 19th of May, a group of Year 7, 8 and 9s had the privilege to attend a STEM day hosted by the Smallpeice Trust. We began the day with an introduction from our presenter, a worker from that charity. We learned the different opportunities STEM gives in adult life, opening doors to jobs like aerospace engineering or space lawyers. We started with designing three prototype landers that we would send to Mars, each with its own landing technique: a cushioned, parachuted and stabilized landing. Seeing the defects and advantages of each design, we were assigned a final task of building a prototype that would land correctly from a meter's drop, holding a 100g weight. This activity taught us how to work as a team, and how to efficiently get a task done, relying not only on yourself but others as well. We would like to thank Miss Roshier for organising this event, and also thank the Smallpeice Trust for coming in and teaching us about the chances STEM offers when going into a work life. This day has not only taught us the power of teamwork, but it also showed how experiences like this change the aspect someone has to their future, and of who they would like to become.

Janka P, 7RU

Yesterday, On Monday 19th of May, Smallpeice trust came to give a selection of students in St. Michael's Catholic College a chance to explore the future. Throughout the enticing experience we learned key social skills such as teamwork and leadership. Our presenter was friendly and helpful to help guide us through our project and unite our team together. Furthermore, in this experience teams come together to build a space lander that could efficiently 'land' safely using numerous ways. We all viewed this experience as a plan for our future careers when we leave the school and the jobs we can pursue. Ultimately, this opportunity (Stem project) enlightened our minds for what the future holds and what we are able to achieve.

Conor, Year 8



On Monday the 19th of May, SS, Y5, and some Year 7s, did a workshop about STEM, provided by The Smallpeice Trust. We were presented with an opportunity to design and build our very own space lander. I was in a group of 6, which consisted of me, Conor, Oliver, Michael, Noella, and Chiamaka. The main skills that we would need for the day were speaking, listening, communication, creativity, and teamwork. We learnt about different careers in engineering, such as textile and space engineering. We began to build a prototype. Noella, Michael, and Chiamaka worked on the first prototype, whilst me, Oliver, and Conor worked on the second. For our final space lander, we merged components from both prototypes and used tissue paper as a parachute, and lollipop sticks for stability. Conor and Michael worked on the final design, whilst me and Oliver worked on the company name and slogan, and Noella and Chiamaka were responsible for finance. We presented a 2-minute pitch, which went smoothly, and our final space lander passed the 100 gram 2 metre drop test. It was very close, but in the end, 'Space Efficient' (our team name) won, and it was a very memorable experience.

By Deandee



On Monday I had the opportunity to attend the STEM Day workshop delivered by Smallpeice. The presenter welcomed us and explained the layout of the day. We were allocated our groups which included students we had not worked with before. We designed, built and tested prototypes – each one with different ways of landing. After failing many times and retrying we picked two of our favourite landing places and techniques and incorporated these into our final design which we presented. Overall, I found the workshop educational and equally as much fun with different ways to explore and learn so much so I lost track of time.

Madalena, Year 7



The Smallpiece Trust helped unite my group together. It has helped us understand space and the role of space engineers. Monday 19th was a chance for us to develop our creative skills as well as our ability to work as a group. Furthermore, the Smallpiece Trust helped allowed me to explore the creativity required in engineering careers. In the STEM project we were all given an opportunity to display our skill and improve on them. My group (Michael, Deandre, Connor, Me, and Noella, Chiamaka) won the event and it helped us to all work co-operatively to achieve victory. Our presenter did an amazing job at educating us on the topic of space and engineering with an extremely memorable performance. Overall, the day helped me develop my creative skills and teamwork as well as helped me to gain an understanding of space and engineering.

By Oliver.

On Monday 19th, 8s, 9s and the members of STEM club in year 7 came together to participate in a wonderful STEM day. They took part in a wonderful competition where they had to build and engineer a lander which could stay upright after a 2 metre drop. Teams came together during this project, mixing and presenting their innovative and problem solving skills. All teams had a great pitch when presenting, demonstrating their skills, but it was Space Efficient (Deandre, Connor, Noella, Oliver, Michael and Chiamaka) who won the competition. The Smallpiece Trust gave an amazing lecture on space and gave everyone there an opportunity to learn about it and its significance. Overall everybody there enjoyed themselves, participating as a part of STEM week.

Michael O Year 8



My STEM Workshop Experience

The stem workshop was an insightful experience where I was able to exercise my teamwork skills. I learnt about different careers in engineering which inspired me to consider making it my goal. We had created a lander using limited materials. In addition, we each considered stability, safety of the object and a secure landing. Not only did we learn about landers, but also all the efforts from different people it needs in order to be successful. It is essential for a flat/smooth terrain that the rover lands on, because without it there is risk of damage. We applied this knowledge when erecting our landers in our groups to ensure whatever object was inside would be safe and in one piece. Smallpiece has given me a great opportunity to gain new skills that could help me with my future career. After this, I feel more confident in presenting to an audience. It also helped me to expand my creativity and curiosity in careers in space. I am very grateful to be able to take part in such an educational STEM workshop. Thank you smallpiece.

Michelle K
Year 9

Junior Maths Challenge 2025 Results



Thresholds:

Gold: 91+

Silver: 73+

Bronze: 54+

Kangaroo: 100+

Olympiad: 125+

Year 8

Gold: 91+

1. Adeoluwa (Michael) O – Best in school, Kangaroo qualifier
2. Hubert -Kangaroo qualifier

Silver: 73+

1. Daniel
2. Elis
3. Isabella
4. Connor
5. Upile

Bronze: 54+

1. Maya
2. Rafael
3. Ivan
4. Alaia
5. Oliver
6. Liam
7. Joanna
8. Fleur
9. Michael O-C

Year 7

Silver: 73+

1. Marlene – Best in year 7
2. Sebastian H
3. Janka
4. Stanley
5. Michelle
6. Alba
7. Lola
8. Marco

Bronze: 54+

1. Daniel
2. Ambra
3. Mikolaj
4. Elyas
5. Martha
6. Albert
7. Sebastian C
8. Ariam
9. Antoni
10. Greta
11. Madalena
12. Lance
13. Francis
14. Joseph
15. Babatunde
16. Scarlett



Poetry Corner 2: APB Composer

His rude defiant pout is not what he's about.
I cannot reach him though I'm reaching out!
I lack the key to unlock the melody in his head
He finds the RE lesson a bore.
This lad wants so much more instead.

The plastic on his keyboard finds
Claude Debussy.
Clair de Lune is more in tune
It is now a major: he's not on the live.
Perhaps he thinks it's a D.



He yearns for grand pianos and Frederic Chopin
For Music is his passion.

'Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard Are sweeter'
He has never heard of Keats
But subscribes to his beats
And while Kendrick drops bars of 'A minor'
He drops his head on the desk and dreams of his piano test.

Bach, Beethoven and Mozart
have struck another chord
But we are not of one accord:
The book on his desk he closes
While his brilliant mind a symphony composes

Ms P Belvett

Chaplaincy Corner

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

- We started the term with a heavy heart as the death of Pope Francis was announced on Monday the 21st April. In RE all students in Years 7-10 shared in lessons reflecting on the life, the impact and the person that was Pope Francis.
- Mr Kelly led special assemblies about Pope Francis to mark his passing and what to expect in terms of the conclave and the selection of a new Pope. Young Salesians led novena prayers in the chapel before school each day during the period of mourning.
- We joined in the global Catholic community by welcoming the new Pope, Leo IV, dedicating special prayers to him as he began his important ministry. Students have been getting to know about the new Holy Father and learning about his life and experience to date in RE lessons and form time.
- Students in Year 10 Young Salesians attended the Good Shepherd Mass at St George's Cathedral, led by Dean Michael Branch. Fr Michael was very excited to see our young people and commented that it was always a joy to meet St Michael's students. Other schools from the St Benedict's Trust were also in attendance at the Mass and it was a lovely opportunity for the students to meet each other.

The Word of the Lord

John 10:11-18

11 "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. 12 The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. 13 The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

14 "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me— 15 just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. 16 I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. 17 The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. 18 No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father."

A reflection on this..

The Father's love for the Good Shepherd, expressed in verse 17 ("For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it up again"), underscores the divine approval of Jesus' sacrifice. It highlights that this act of self-giving is central to God's plan and a demonstration of perfect obedience and love. The fact that he has the power to lay down his life and take it up again emphasizes his divine nature and the ultimate victory over death.

Miss Casey
Chaplaincy Co-Ordinator





Upcoming Events



May

Fri 23rd INSET No students in the College | End of Term

June

Mon 2nd Back to College

Thu 5th Year 10 Parents' Evening - Focus on new for Year 11 at St Michael's

Mon 9th - Fri 13th Revision Week

Mon 16th - Fri 20th Years 7-10 & 12 End of Year Examinations week

Fri 20th Year 11 Leavers' Service

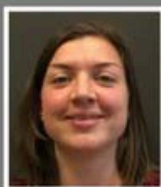
Mon 23rd Sports Award Evening

Tue 24th- Wed 25th Sixth Form Induction Day | Taster lessons

Thu 26th Year 11 Prom

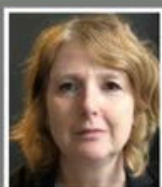


Safeguarding Officers



**Designated
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