



THE LINK

*A fortnightly Newsletter for the pupils, parents and staff of
St Michael's Catholic College
Issue 248 - March 2026*



Word from the Principal

We have reached the conclusion of this half-term which has coincided with the most significant time in the liturgical year. As a Catholic school with a Salesian charism we strive to ensure that academic success and faith formation go hand-in-hand, and this term has provided brilliant examples of both.

We have marked Lent with a deep sense of purpose. My sincere thanks go to the Young Salesians, and our Chaplaincy Team, led by Ms Casey for leading us through this season of reflection. From the quiet devotion of praying the Rosary in our chapel to our special assemblies and world religion events, our students have embraced the call to prayer, reflection and charity work. Our Lent House Charity Fridays have been a huge success, raising vital funds for the Catholic Children's Society.

It is also with great pride that I share two major national milestones for our school:

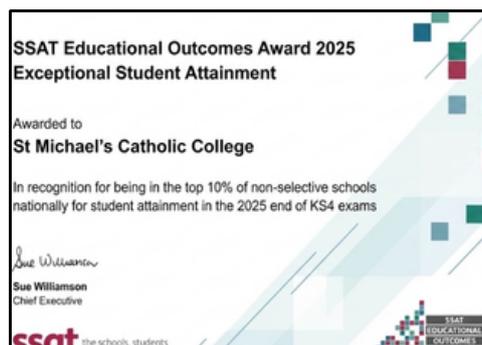
- SSAT Educational Outcomes Award: We have been recognised for our Summer 2025 results, placing us once again in the top 10% of schools nationally..
- St. Oscar Romero Developer Award: On 26th March I had the honour of attending a special Mass at St. George's with Young Salesians, members of the 6th form Chaplaincy team, Ms Casey and Mr Kelly, where Archbishop John Wilson presented us with this award. We are one of only 39 schools in the country to achieve developer level which recognises our strong commitment to Catholic Social Teaching and proves that our school is a place where faith and personal development are central to all that we do.

Beyond the classroom and the chapel, Salesian values are alive in every corner of the school. You will see further examples in this edition of The Link of the wonderful work being done with King's College, SSLP and The Brilliant Club, the continued success of our sports teams, and the joyous, inclusive atmosphere of our sold-out spring concert. These successes are a collective effort and show that when we lead with Gospel and Salesian values, our students both achieve and thrive.

As we approach Holy Week, I hope you find time for rest and reflection with your loved ones.

Wishing you a blessed Holy Week and may the joy of the Resurrection fill your homes this Easter.

Ms F. Corcoran
Principal



Year 12 Biology Students Meet Professor that Lived as a Badger

Tuesday the 24th of February at Alleyn's College was filled with the intriguing and uncanny findings and ideologies of Charles Foster; a writer and Professor of Biology at Oxford University. Although the lecture was only an hour long, his exciting findings, and stories of the largely diverse functioning of animals such as foxes, badgers and even beavers made me start questioning and comparing my way of living and interacting with the natural world with other animals.

Professor Foster started the evening off with a brief introduction explaining where his passionate interest in becoming like animals originated from. He enlightened visitors with the story of a strange encounter with a crow one day on his side of a hedgerow, which disturbed Professor Foster at the time deeply, as he believed that the crow knew more about his side of the lawn than he did. Consequently, he developed an interest in the crow, more specifically, its mind and mode of thinking. In order for Professor Foster to satisfy his curiosity, he tried various different 'unique' methods (one including him dangling the corpse of a crow on his bedroom ceiling!) to enter the brain of the crow, and obtain the information he so desperately wanted.

Despite his failures in obtaining the information he wanted, Professor Foster told us this only fuelled his interest in discovering the way that animals and other organisms think, and how to even become one. Professor Foster also told us that as he grew older, his fascination grew into a profession, and he continued reading and exploring more in depth about the way that animals function cognitively, and also learned more about their sensory adaptations (i.e. sensory adaptations such as being able to hear sounds that are at a lower frequency than what the human ear would be able to hear, or being able to see and navigate sounds using the nose).

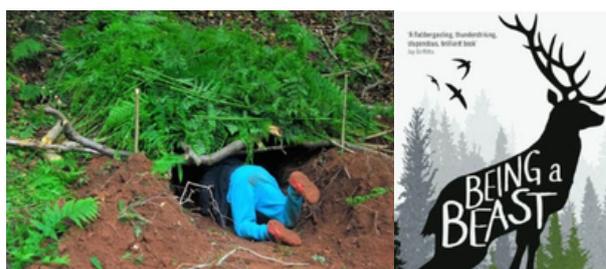
Apart from writing books exploring human-nature relationships, and the animal consciousness, Professor Foster also took time out of his day to perform 'experiments' out in the wild or in animal



habitats either by himself or even with his son to mimic the day-to-day interactions animals have with their natural environment. For example, Professor Foster occupied burrows underground for six weeks, eating worms in order to mimic living as a badger and a further six weeks living as a fox in the East End of London eating out of bins. Professor Foster then explained how all of this research extending from his childhood cultivated into a broader understanding of the nuance between animals and humans, especially in the way they interact with the natural world. His philosophy also stated how because of animals' sensory adaptations, such as the ones in foxes, badgers and even domesticated animals such as dogs or cats, they are enabled to interact or view the world on a deeper level compared to humans.

Overall, the lecture was an opportunity to develop a deeper insight into the more unusual lives of animals, and how their sensory adaptations allowed them to be more connected to their natural habitats, their companions and be more aware of their surroundings and immediate environment. Professor Foster also translated animals' connectivity with nature as meaning they have a more holistic view of the world. This is interesting, as it makes us question, just like the professor, how can we also develop a more holistic view of the world?

Ayo D (12SA)



Celebrating Success!

Year 7 Students Graduate from King's College, University of London



Congratulations to all the Year 7 students who graduated with distinction from the Brilliant Scholars programme. This term, students worked closely with Medievalist, Dr Olivia Baskerville, on the History of Art.



We studied art history, each week analysing different artworks from the Courtauld Gallery and writing an essay each week based on a different question. Our final essay was based on 'Can power be shown in portraiture?' which was 1500 words long. Our PhD tutor was Olivia Baskerville. As we progressed throughout the course, we had learnt many new facts that could help us with other school topics as well. For example, when we were learning about emotions throughout portraiture, the portrait with Van Gogh stuck out to me. It can represent the pain and suffering Van Gogh had to endure throughout his life. We learnt how the effects of an artist's mental health can affect their artstyle. For example, we learnt about Pablo Picasso's 'blue period'. What I found challenging was writing the essays and using the correct analysis to back my point. But as the course came close to the end, I gradually got the hang of it and it helped me to evolve and grow stronger at other subjects. I wish to do further education, preferable at a top university after visiting King's College. Personally, I wish to study sports, photography or maths.



Lyla Mc (7BC) and Allyson R (7VI)

With our tutor, Dr Baskerville, we developed many skills during our lessons which included composition, form and many other artistic techniques which could help us identify meaning in art. We also developed an understanding on how portraiture could help us in school. We had to write a 1,500-word essay, and this enabled a wide variety of critical thoughts which helped us expand on ideas. This essay also taught us how to analyse not just words, but paintings as well. This is why we are very thankful for having the privilege to participate in these sessions.

I would also like to thank Mr Magnoff who helped us on our journey throughout the whole of the Scholars Program by making sure we attended all of our tutorials, did our homework and most of all, he made sure we enjoyed it. He assisted us on our final assignment and made sure we got our feedback sent back to us.

Kai I (7SA) and Jacob DL (7VI)

PE Department Highlights

Mr M Laribi

Basketball Success

Basketball fever has hit St Michael's with our students taking part in lots of competitions and showcasing their best skills at home and away.

Junior NBA Year 7/8 Girls - Our students currently sit 1-1 after two games with a commanding win against Norwood School and a close 2-point loss against Ark Globe. There are 2 more games to play with a chance to secure a spot in the playoff race. This squad has a mixture of experienced players but also up and coming learners all at their own stages of basketball development. However, they all brought the energy and effort and contributed to the success this team has had so far.

Junior NBA Year 7/8 Mixed - Our mixed team currently sit 1-1 after two games after a tough battle with a well drilled STAC team where they learned many positive lessons and then had an thrilling clutch win against Haberdasher Hatcham with AJ scoring the final free throw to win the game 11-10 with 1s left. Another team with various abilities but they all worked super hard and with 6 more games are looking to chase a playoff spot.

U14 Girls Dynamik Schools - Our girls have reached the semifinal after a win against Ark globe in the quarter final. Ark Globe came prepared and fought hard to the final buzzer but St Michael's stayed together and focused winning the game 30-26. This means St Michael's are ranked top 4 in the country for u14 girls' basketball. Led by captain Sophia A.



Year 8 Rugby Success

After a long and exciting 7 months of rugby, St Michael's recaptured the Year 8 Boys' South London schools' rugby cup. This is the 3rd time in a row they have won it, and the 4th time in 5 years!

It went down to the final game where St Michael's had to beat Ark All Saints (a team they had lost to in the two previous encounters) to win the trophy. A level of determination, togetherness and desire was shown from the boys which had not been shown before and in a real back and forth affair, we came out on top winning that game 5-4 and ultimately being crowned the champions.

After the tournament, Anthony-Jacob P was named MVP for the team and Martins O was named most committed player. However, this was a super hard decision as all players contributed brilliantly to the team's success.

PE Department Highlights

continued

Sports Leadership Academy

The Sports leadership academy continue to gain invaluable experience in various sports. Currently, we have students doing sports journalism and who have been writing a lot of the link articles for Mr Laribi. All the photos shared are those taken by our sports leadership academy who come and document the events and we took a group to the London Youth Games - New Age Curling Finals where they officiated and helped run the event. Multiple teachers and organisers praised the students for how they conducted themselves and the students definitely loved their infectious energy too.

Swimming Success - Written by Sadie E, Janka P and Anna J (Junior Sports Ambassador)

On the 26th of February, students from St Michael's went to a Swimming gala. We took public transport to The Glass Mill Leisure Centre in Lewisham. 6 different schools competed in this competition such as Hatcham College, Borough Academy, Central Foundation School For Boys, Bishop Thomas Grant, Bacons College, and ourselves St Michaels! Those who competed in St Michaels were Oliver R, Laudine P, Jui T, Luca F, Aceline P, Nathaniel R, Sadie E, Olimpia J, Madalena L, Janka P, Patryk Z and Anna J. The whole event was very competitive with 28 races in total (16 of them being relays).

We all supported each other eagerly, with some Under 13s filling in for Under 15s, and competing with RUAH values always at the back of our minds. Each swimmer gave their best, and even if some were faster than others, we all put in 100% effort. It was an amazing opportunity to show how St Michaels lived by Salesian values not only in school, but also on sports trips.

Everyone in this Swimming gala was amazing and it helped us branch out into meeting each other at St Michaels and learn more about one another and our shared interest in swimming. It was a chance for us to work together and express our talent in swimming. The results were amazing and we are so happy with our scores.

In the Under 13s Boys Freestyle we placed 2nd by Nathaniel R.
In the Under 15s Boys Freestyle we placed 1st by Oliver R!
In the Under 13s Girls Freestyle we placed 2nd by Sadie E.
In the Under 15s Girls Freestyle we placed 4th by Anna J.

In the Under 13s Boys Backstroke we placed 2nd by Patryk Z.
In the Under 15s Boys Backstroke we placed 1st by Oliver R!

In the Under 15s Boys Breaststroke we placed 1st by Luca F!
In the Under 13s Girls Breaststroke we placed 3rd by Janka P.

RELAYS:

Under 15s Boys 4x25m Frontcrawl we placed 2nd,
Under 13s Girls 4x25m Frontcrawl we placed 3rd,

Under 13s Girls 4x25m Backstroke we placed 2nd,

Under 13s Girls 4x25m Breaststroke we placed 2nd,
Under 15s Girls 4x25m Breaststroke we placed 3rd.

Mixed 4x25m Free/Back Under 15s relay we placed 2nd,
Mixed Under 13s Medley relay we placed 3rd,
Mixed Under 13s Medley relay we placed 4th.

Everyone did exceptionally well and it was such a fun event to take part in. It was full of fun, determination and laughter and everybody was so grateful for this opportunity.



Spring Concert 2026



Thanks to Mr Laurence, Mrs Laurence, Mr Clement and all the peripatetic Music staff who worked with St Michael's students to ensure the Spring Concert on Thursday 19th March was the best one yet.

It was wonderful to see such a varied musical programme and so many students from all year groups sharing their gifts and talents at this sold out event.

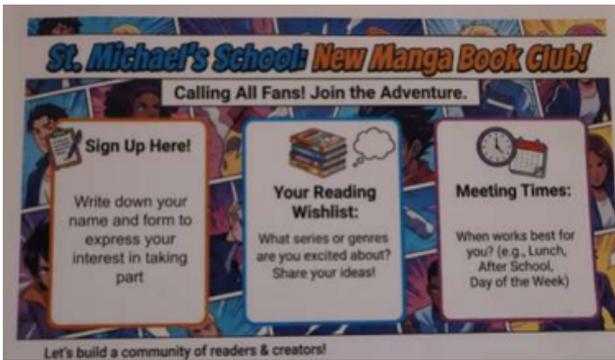
Thanks to all the students, staff and families who came along!

"Serve the Lord with gladness! Come into his presence with singing!" Psalm 10:2



World Book Day

Thanks to Ms Cumber and the Library Ambassadors for the brilliant book fair they organised to celebrate World Book Day in March. It was a fantastic opportunity to further promote the joy and benefits of reading, share recommendations and find out about new authors.



Tribute to The Pen Part 1

Poem by Ms P Belvett

Inspired to pen when there was nothing within.
 The ink a hard crust on the ball of my pen
 softened at the tip till the writing begins.
 A tube of thoughts, emotions, and personifications
 Entombed in transparent plastic
 With a careless flurry, the Pen let them slip.
 The paper already waiting,
 Needs no utterance from my lips.
 Is it a poem?
 A story?
 Or a scrawl of pigmented dyes?

Bulwer-Lytton mighty Pen emerges victorious
 Exploding
 Graffiti on paper
 Exposing
 Liberating emotions from the Pen.
 Once out, I can't force them in again.
 The battle is lost with no blood shed.



Raw emotions cascade out instead.
 No thoughts are safe nor words protected
 Once the Pen is gripped,
 It wields its conquering power, nations to
 submit.
 Declarations
 Legislations
 And
 Conventions
 From its tip are ripped.

Support for Families

www.contact.org.uk a charity for families with disabled children

www.fledglings.org.uk (Contact's online shop which has all things useful and practical for families and practitioners)

Family Fund UK charity which offers help once families have completed a form (with school and other health professionals being a referee about the child's needs) - this can be in the form of money towards a holiday, a giftcard for electrical items etc. It is targeted towards those that are in need so if you are claiming Universal Credit/Tax Credits and other benefits or have low income/low savings; it is always worth a try for all families. Parents need to provide evidence and it is a very simple process. It is currently capped every 2 years for reapplying

Little Village - help for those families who have young ones (pregnancy-birth-5 years old). This may be of help to those students with siblings in their family.

Thames Water also can help with money off bills for low income families.



Chaplaincy Corner

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

- Miss Casey, the Young Salesians and the Sixth Form Chaplaincy team led a celebration of the Jewish festival of Purim culminating in a Eco Friendly Fashion show. Congratulations the Year 7 Young Salesian David who one!
- Miss Stewart accompanied by Sixth Form Students led assemblies about Eid-al-Fitr, remarking on the fact it matches Lent this year and the many similarities between Islam and the Catholic faith. It was a great way of reflecting on what we have in common rather than what divides us.
- The Drama Department and Miss Casey are busy preparing for the final day of term liturgies, including a performance of Stations of the Cross which is a joint production between the chaplaincy team and the Drama department.
- Lent House Charity Fridays have taken place led by students to fundraise for the Catholic Children's society which is our Lent charity this year.
- Each Thursday Reconciliation services have been taking place in the hall/Chapel – Fr Gerald Wilson noted the spiritual refreshment it was seeing so many sixth formers wishing to speak with him!

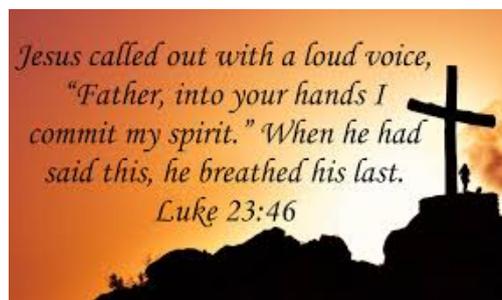
St Michael's achieved the St Oscar Romero developer award from Archbishop John Wilson at a special Mass at St George's Cathedral on 26th March.

St Oscar Romero Developer Award



Award Presentation by Archbishop John Wilson at St George's Cathedral

The Word of the Lord



A reflection on this...



Divine Father,

In moments when I feel overwhelmed or at the end of my own strength, grant me the grace to surrender as Jesus did. I release my need for control and place my spirit, my fears, and my hopes into Your capable hands.

May I find peace in knowing that You are the beginning and the end, and that in Your presence, nothing is ever truly lost.

Amen.

Miss Casey
Chaplaincy Coordinator



Upcoming Events

March

Friday 27th Easter Liturgy | End of Term

April

Monday 13th Back to College ALL students

Tuesday 14th Year 11 and 13 Results Evening

Tuesday 21st Year 9 Options Evening at St Michael's

Thursday 23rd Year 9 Parents' Evening via SchoolCloud

May

Thursday 14th Year 12 Parents' Evening via SchoolCloud

Friday 22nd INSET No student in the College

Mon 25th- Fri 29th Half term break



Parent Focus Group

Wednesday 3rd June | 16:30 - 17:30 via MS Teams

Friends of St Michael's PTA Group

Thursday 7th May | 16:30 - 17:30 via MS Teams



Safeguarding Team



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