

# February to March 2024 Keynotes



## Dear Parents and Carers

As we conclude our spring term, it is lovely to have marked Holy Week whilst at school and to have finished with a whole school liturgy for Maundy Thursday. We have spent Lent revisiting our commitment to journeying with Christ as individuals and as a school, reflecting on how we sacrifice our time, wealth and energy for the good of others. Jesus is our leader and I talked to all of our students in recent assemblies about the relevance of being a disciple, listening to those who lead us towards light rather than dark and our obligation as a Christian community to banish evil for the survival of all that is good in the world.

This Easter, there are several opportunities to celebrate Mass through the Easter Triduum in the Catholic Parish of Guildford. Details of these are on the parish website [HERE](#) but the headlines can be found in this welcome message.

As well as Lent and the build up to Easter, the second half of the spring term is always focussed on preparing for the forthcoming public examinations. Whether in Year 11 or Year 13, their challenge is significant and I would like to pay tribute to all those students for 'sticking with it', 'trusting the process' and working effectively with their teachers and support staff to prepare well and peak at the right time during the six week exam window. Whilst it is the individual student's obligation to fully engage, all of you who have been through this with a child will know that it is a family effort. Structure, sleep, healthy

eating, rest and positive thinking are all key ingredients. The Easter holidays are an important milestone and I thank you for the continued support given to your children, especially if you are currently an 'exam family.'

There have been lots of highlights this half term which have no direct link with work in the classroom but are equally integral to building young people to be the best versions of themselves.

Year 8 recently enjoyed their Reflection Day at Wintershall which was very successful. It was great to be back at such a special place, giving our youngsters the space to explore their spiritual selves in peace and with just their immediate peers. We have seen St Peter's students, who are part of the 'Build a Business' club, showcasing their businesses on the local High Street during the Guildford Business Fair. If you were in town on Saturday the 23rd March, you may well have seen them.

Later in this edition of Keynotes, I have shared some outcomes of the Parent Survey that many of you completed in February. We asked similar questions to last year and it has been immensely useful to identify any trends that are consistent or changes that have occurred.

Have a good break over the remainder of Holy week and I pray you have an enjoyable Easter holiday.

God bless

Mr T Miller, Headteacher



### Easter Triduum

**Maundy Thursday 28th March**  
St Mary, St Joseph and  
St Pius X 8pm Mass

**Good Friday 29th March**  
St Mary, St Joseph and  
St Pius X 3pm

**Holy Saturday 30th March**  
St Mary, St Joseph and  
St Pius X 8pm Mass

**Easter Sunday 31st March**  
St Edward 8.30am  
St Pius X 9.15am  
St Joseph 10.30am  
St Mary 11.15am

### St Peter's Keys

Will 9FR plays hockey for his local Guildford club at an exceptional level.

He has risen from junior level and played for Surrey, followed by the South Saxons team (South of England)

where he was made captain. After doing himself proud and consistently playing to an outstanding level, Will was then selected for the UK Lions (these are the best hockey players in the UK for his age group) and represented the

team in Malaga and Ireland.

Will is a lovely lad and has a fantastic attitude towards his studies at school whilst balancing the commitment to his hockey club. Well done Will!





## Year 8 Reflection Day

In March, the whole of Year 8 went out on annual Reflection Days, this year to the Wintershall Estate. After a visit to Medjugorje, the Hutley family opened their expansive estate in 1989 to host an annual performance of 'The Life of Christ'. Through the year, they welcome groups like ours to walk their beautifully sculpted Stations of the Cross, experience short performances of well known Gospel characters including Mary Magdelene, Judas and Nicodemus.



After two exciting performances, small groups headed out for a walk in the footsteps of Jesus on the Way of the Cross with a member of school staff and a volunteer guide. Starting with a visit to the three resident donkeys, the groups prayed their way up the hill to Holly Barn for lunch and a workshop carousel.

It was fascinating to experience the local countryside together in a reflective way from an angle not normally open to the public, before returning to school tired out but reinvigorated as a community.

## Catenian Success

On the evening of Monday 4th March, Mia Donelan (Year 12) achieved second place in the prestigious Public Speaking Competition run by the Catenians.

Mia spoke on the topic: 'Is each generation getting lazier or are they just finding easier ways to do things?' In this, she hooked the audience with reminders of their childhoods and highlighted the differences with the age-old differences between children and their parents. Mia impressed the judges with her ability to link these technology-based ideas with timeless



differences through quoting Plato's famous adage: 'What is happening to our young people? They disrespect their elders and they disobey their parents. They ignore the law. They riot in the streets, inflamed with wild notions. Their morals are decaying. What is to become of them?'

Mia's speech engaged the judges and audience alike, with the Catenians congratulating her for her stimulating talk. Well done Mia on your brilliant speech and for your hard work!



## Solti String Youth Orchestra Budapest - UK Tour 2024

We were delighted to host the Hungarian Youth Orchestra in March on a beautiful sunny day! Years 7 and 9 were treated to a 30 minute performance of some phenomenal music including the famous Dance of the Knights in Prokofiev's Ballet, Romeo and Juliet and Handel – Le Réjouissance (Music for the Royal Fireworks).

## Year 11 in the Spotlight

The beginning of September seems like a lifetime ago for our Year 11s, but they were ready to take on the challenge that lay before them. The students have risen admirably and set out a precedent of hard work and determination to achieve the best possible set of results.

During the winter term, they received a revision skills workshop from Mrs Miller who laid out effective revision strategies and key advice for the students. For example, "you will never want to start revising, so you may as well get on with it." The students' reaction to this session was incredible, students and parents alike were showing us flash cards, mind maps and revision timetables as the students gave themselves every opportunity for success. As a result of this preparation, the students' mock results were very promising. During the Mock Results assembly, the students were given some words of wisdom from one of the school's longest serving servants, Mr Power, who stated that "all of you has a brown envelope with your name on it, currently it is blank, you decide what numbers are placed in that envelope." This comforted all students regardless of their mock results.

It has not been all work for the students. There have been several enrichment opportunities. The students have had a talk from the National Citizen Service (NCS) offering them activities during the summer holiday in which they could pick one of three courses: 'Live it' focused on adrenaline fuelled activities; 'Boss it' focused on enterprise opportunities and



'Change it' focused on social change and a call to action.

The students have also been given the chance to play the staff at various events. The Year 11 netball team took on the staff in a lunchtime fixture watched by a large crowd. The well-skilled Year 11s beat the staff in a close fixture by scoring in the final minute of play, much to the crowd's delight. Next up was the Year 11 football team! The crowds were cheering for both teams in the Sports Hall. The game was end to end, attacking and defending, and the Year 11 goalkeeper made lots of saves. However, after a 2-2 deadlock, the staff scored with 30 seconds to go! It was a fantastic match to watch and well done to everyone who participated.

There are many more events lined up for Year 11 but the big one is their prom on Thursday 4th July at Horsley Towers. To help the students select outfits for the memorable evening, the school ran a 'Pre-loved Prom' event. A number of dresses were donated from Becca Jacks in Worplesdon with dresses worth up to £400 and several of our students walked away with new outfits for this event.

A record 164 students have secured their place at Sixth Form with an additional highest number of external applicants. The Sixth Form will be the largest it has ever been, but as planned, St Hilda's is currently undergoing an expansion and a second single

storey will be added, providing more classrooms and plenty of indoor and outdoor study space for the new students.

For some of our Year 11s, the end of the summer term will mark the end of their St Peter's journey as they seek new opportunities at other colleges and Sixth Form schools. A few choices include Godalming College, George Abbot Sixth Form, Guildford College, Woking College and Farnborough Tech.

Whilst we celebrate all our students' achievements, we would like to take the opportunity to mention three students who are pursuing their sporting ambition. Emily 11KO has been given a two year contract to continue playing with Reading Football Club and will complete her studies with them. Conor 11JP has been given a scholarship at Gordon's Sixth Form due to his rugby ability. Morgan 11BA is going to Mount Kelly in Devon to pursue swimming.

It has been a pleasure to get to know such studious and hardworking Year 11s and we wish them the best of luck with their forthcoming exams.

We hope that all of our students who are moving on to pastures new thrive in their new setting and look back at St Peter's with fond memories. For those that are staying, we look forward to seeing them in September, ready for the next exciting chapter!



# Parent Survey Feedback

I am pleased to report that 304 people completed the Parent Survey, compared to 430 last year, but it has been very useful to identify a small number of priorities that we will explore to improve the service given to your young people and also, to you as families.

As we normally find, one family's 'gripe' is often on another family's wish list. An example of this is where many people say there is not enough homework whilst others say there is too much. Clearly finding the right balance is the target and as a mainstream school, we are always aiming to provide systems that work for at least the majority, if not everybody. Some feedback references the challenge about understanding the reports that we send home. For a number of years, we have published reports in Years 7, 8 and 9 that use descriptors for progress rather than data such as grades or levels. Despite the fact that we do publish how to interpret these, we have noticed a desire to make it more overt and will endeavour to do so.

We are aiming to review how our school website is structured to enable ease of use and identify commonly used links so they can be accessed more effectively. It appears the content is good but the routes to finding it is not always straightforward. I am pleased that the changes made to communications by sharing a link to the weekly Student Bulletin have proven popular.

The recording and communication of homework is an element of school management that we will also be reviewing. There are a variety of methods to achieve this and we will explore



moving to an electronic process that will enable students and parents to see, monitor and review homework. The challenge will be to identify where we can incorporate this into our current systems to avoid using another login.

Frustrations around sporting fixtures and/or training cancellations came through from a small number of responses. I would like to reassure parents/carers that sporting activities are never cancelled lightly and like most schools, we are limited by the number of PE staff we have available to lead these activities. If we have a poorly member of the PE Department, there is not another member automatically able to take over as they will almost certainly be taking another group of students. Also, when a team progresses through a competition and fixtures are already published, they very often clash with a training session for another year group. I am sure you will agree that the competition must take priority.

Opportunities for extracurricular involvement has seen a positive impact from the survey results. Two factors have

impacted this including a return to a single lunch which enables more staff to be available to all year groups and secondly, a real drive to increase the number of opportunities both at lunchtime and after school.

We do spend a considerable amount of time reading all the comments and where we can, and it is appropriate, we will act. Thank you for your time in completing the survey.

4. The school has high expectations of my child	2023/24	2022/23
Strongly Agree	42	43
Agree	46	45
Disagree	4	5
Strongly Disagree	2	0
Neither A or D	6	6
AGREE	88	88

15. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities that my child can access at school	2023/24	2022/23
Strongly Agree	21	14
Agree	57	45
Disagree	8	22
Strongly Disagree	2	6
Neither A or D	12	13
AGREE	78	59

23. I am able to use the school's website to access general information	2023/24	2022/23
Strongly Agree	30	24
Agree	59	67
Disagree	6	4
Strongly Disagree	1	1
Neither A or D	5	5
AGREE	89	91

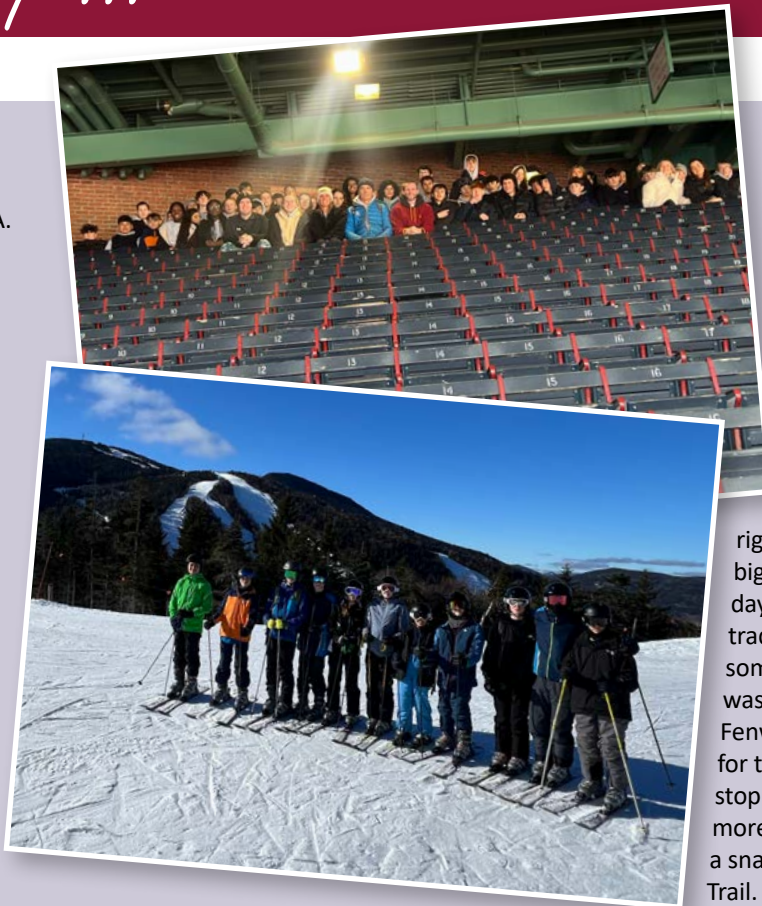
2. My child is doing well in their current year group	2023/24	2022/23
Strongly Agree	27	31
Agree	63	56
Disagree	3	5
Strongly Disagree	2	1
Neither A or D	5	7
AGREE	90	87

# School Trips...

## Boston Skiing

This year we had another successful ski trip to the USA. Our 48 students enjoyed five days of skiing at Cannon Mountain and Waterville ski resorts. All our skiers, from beginners to the advanced group, made huge amounts of progress, practising their techniques, learning some tricks or enjoying the jump parks.

Evenings were also very busy. The first night we travelled to Plymouth State University to watch an eventful college level ice hockey match. Sunday was a chance to unwind and relax with the Superbowl in the background. On Monday night, we watched Argyll in the cinema followed by a visit to FunSpot – claimed to be the largest arcade in the world. Students were able to enjoy a variety of activities including old school arcade games, mini golf and bowling whilst winning prizes along the way. Our final night included the



traditional quiz which was based upon events that occurred during the week, the different ski runs and music.

On Thursday, students had a couple of hours to enjoy some shopping at the

Tilton Designer Outlet followed by lunch at an old school American diner. In the evening, we enjoyed a short walk from the Prudential Centre to Fire and Ice for dinner – an ‘all you can eat’ restaurant where students were able to watch their dinner being cooked

right in front of them on a big circular grill. Our final day started with another tradition, a 5km run for some students and staff. This was followed by a tour of Fenway Park, home ground for the Boston Red Sox. Next stop was Quincy Market for more shopping and lunch via a snapshot of the Freedom Trail. Each member of staff took turns giving our students an insight into some of the key locations on the trail. Every day is a school day!

The students were an absolute credit to us and the staff thoroughly enjoyed the time we spent with them. What a trip!



# School Trips...



## “We don't want to leave this trip!”

From 9th to 14th February, nine lucky Year 11 and Year 12 students from St Peter's embarked on a memorable student exchange journey to Granada, Spain, accompanied by Mrs Mortimer, Head of Spanish and Mr Hartley, Head of Art.

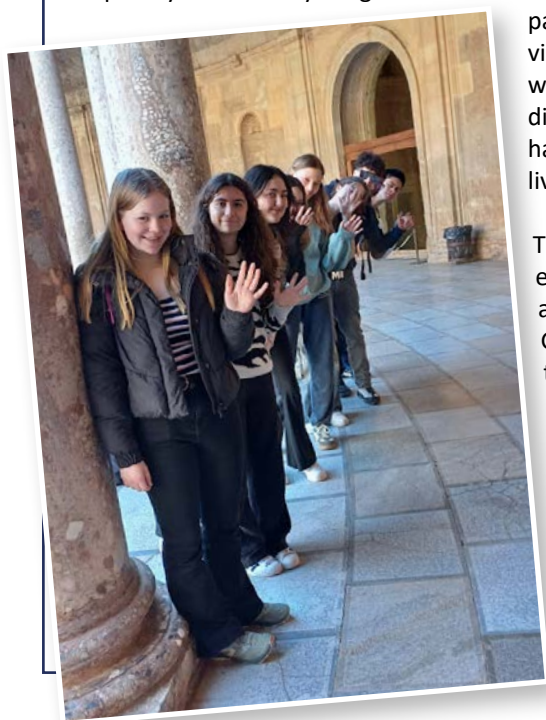
Hosted by families from Juan XXIII, our partner school, students experienced the warmth and hospitality of Spanish culture first-hand where history, hospitality and culinary delights

intertwined, leaving an unforgettable impression and the forging of exciting new friendships.

Exploring historic sites such as The Alhambra Palace, marvelling at its intricate details and rich Muslim heritage, and indulging in culinary delights such as paella and tapas left an indelible mark on the students.

We also basked in the sun at Almuñécar beach, savouring more paella with breathtaking views and visited an exotic food plantation which immersed us in 'farm to table' dining. One student remarked “we haven't eaten so healthily in our lives!”

Throughout the five day trip, everyone was looked after lovingly and fed with the most delicious Granadian food. Overcoming transportation blockages in Spain on the last day, the group reluctantly bid farewell, with one student asking, “Why do we have to leave so soon, Miss?” which encapsulated the positive energy and experience of the whole group. Another student concluded, “My Spanish host mother was just like my mum!”



Mrs Mortimer and Mr Hartley commended the students for their enthusiasm and engagement throughout the trip with everyone eagerly anticipating the return visit to the UK from their new friends in June.

# School Trips...

## Harrods

On Wednesday 7th February, Years 11 and 12 Food Science and Nutrition students visited Harrods - the famous department store in Knightsbridge, London.

Upon our arrival, we were given a VIP tour of the luxurious store including technology, children's toys, homeware and the amazing food court which boasted displays of delectable looking chocolates, enticing meat and fish counters and impressive bakery displays. We were also shown where diners enjoy caviar, fish and chips with prosecco and the very impressive artwork on the ceiling which has been adorned ever since the store was opened.

After our tour, the students were given a talk by the Head of Apprenticeships at Harrods with regard to opportunities they offer such as cheffing, finance, agriculture and butchery to name a few.

After our talk, the students were treated to a small food tasting from their



afternoon tea range in the Georgian restaurant. The restaurant was elegantly presented with chairs that had fabric which matched Porsche cars. As we sat on the expensive and luxurious chairs, we were presented with a pure chocolate mousse with tempered chocolate and gold leaf, apple crumble (in a glass cup), carrot cake and rhubarb and raspberry cheesecake to try. They were delicately presented and delicious, especially the chocolate mousse! The students behaved brilliantly and were given a goody bag to take home!

We were also introduced to Chef Alistair Birt and Chef Garrett Kowen who

explained how they started their career in the food industry and the recommended routes to students who were keen to become chefs.

For some students it was their first time at Harrods and they were amazed at the luxurious range of products available and the prices! Overall, our students had a brilliant time and were inspired with the food presentation, apprenticeships, careers in the food industry and how to develop their cooking skills. Thank you to Harrods for hosting us again!

## St Ives

On Thursday 1st February, a group of Year 12 and 13 art students travelled to St Ives in Cornwall to gather research for current artwork. They worked with local artist Greg Humphries who accompanied the students through the Tate St Ives and studied Dame Barbara Hepworth's work, amongst other artists, before making sculpture on the beach.

On Saturday, students explored the island before creating abstract paintings with the St Ives School of Painting. We



ended the day with Shanti Baba who took us on a ghost tour of the town. The students really enjoyed all aspects of

the busy weekend and came away feeling inspired. <https://www.tate.org.uk/visit/tate-st-ives>

# School Trips...



## Duke of Edinburgh Silver Practice

On the 21st-23rd March, the Year 11s went on their Silver Practice expedition to the rolling hills of the South Downs. Armed with maps, compasses and a sense of curiosity, they set out to explore the rugged beauty of this iconic landscape.

The teams were trained by mountain leaders and staff with expertise to hone their navigational prowess, decipher contours, trails and landmarks.

With hills shrouded in mist as their backdrop, they learned to read the landscape like seasoned explorers. Each compass bearing and triangulation point brought them closer to their destination - a testament to their determination and teamwork.

Two nights of camping tested their mettle. Rain soaked tents, chilly winds, and damp socks - these challenges were badges of honour. But amidst the

adversity, laughter echoed through the campsite. Camaraderie transcended discomfort.

To our Year 11 explorers: You did yourselves proud. May this newsletter piece inspire any student who might want to try out any of our other awards: Bronze (Year 10), Silver (Year 11) or Gold (Year 12 & 13s).

Next expedition for silver is Exmoor!



## Netball

We took Years 7-11 netball teams to George Abbot to play in some mass fixtures. All teams showed great determination, spirit and work ethic throughout their games.

Years 7 and 8 closely lost their game, whilst Years 9, 10 and 11 all won their games. A special congratulations to our Year 11s as this was their last netball fixture representing the school and finished it off with a strong win!



## Girls' Football

The Year 7 girls' football team took on Guildford County. This was their first game and they all played well whilst encouraging each other throughout the game. The girls unfortunately lost the game, but it does not take away from the effort and commitment.

## Boys' Football

The Year 9 boys' football team won 7-0 against Guildford County and displayed a fantastic level of sportsmanship and work ethic throughout the game.

## Young Leaders

On 6th March, a group of Year 9 and Year 12 students took part in Young Leaders at Guildford Spectrum. This event entailed the students teaching a range of activities to children in Year 2 from several Surrey schools. All students interacted with the children incredibly well and were so warm, welcoming, enthusiastic and encouraging to them throughout the day. Many members of staff from the schools complimented how fantastic our students were. From the moment we got there until we left, the students were an absolute credit to the school. Well done to all those involved!



## Sew what? Sew this... Sew that!

Since January, the Textiles Department has been running a lunchtime club for Years 8 and 9. 28 students have signed up and are in the process of making

personalised lined tote bags and fully reversible bucket hats. Each design is bespoke and everyone is really enjoying themselves whilst learning new skills.



## SATROFEST Stem

On 20th February, a few Year 8 students went on a STEM trip called SATROFEST at ASC Cobham International School. It was a great experience; I learned a lot about different careers and what they do. We explored different jobs by interacting with fun activities and there was one I particularly liked: we put on headsets and played and watched a sort of reality video talking about what some space related jobs do. It was really real!

Celine Chan 8JP