

# Keynotes

January to February 2025



## Dear Parents and Carers

This week I have been delivering assemblies to Years 11 and 13 and focussed on the theme of 'human dignity' as this week's gospel from Mark encouraged us to do when Jesus performed a miracle with Jarius's daughter. His attention to a sick young girl who at any other time would have been overlooked by society shows the level of humility with which Jesus worked. At a time when her family were distraught with worry, Jesus urges them "do not be afraid; just believe."

This is a sentiment that he would have conveyed to the families of the hostages held in Gaza, both those released and still held. I showed the students images of the recently released captives and asked them to reflect on what that must have been like, not just for them but also for their families, desperate for news and the intense feeling of helplessness they must have felt. Catholic Social Teaching has human dignity at its core, from which all other values stem.

This half term we have celebrated our Spring Masses ahead of Lent where we come together as St Peter's community to reflect, renew and deepen our spiritual journey. Lent is a time of self-examination, repentance

and preparation, mirroring the 40 days that Jesus spent in the wilderness.

It has been a very busy half term with Years 11 and 13 both receiving their mock exam results and starting the more intense period of build up to the summer exams (starting in just nine school weeks!).

All year groups have been working incredibly hard through the dark January weeks and their resilience through the cold is admirable. As you will know, we extended the smartphone ban to Years 8 and 9 from January and I have received several emails of thanks and support. Some parents are seeing their children less fixated with their device, chatting more to their friends and siblings, and screen time reducing by default rather than by nagging! At the end of the spring term, we will do a short survey to get a general view of the changes.

I hope you enjoy reading this edition of Keynotes and would welcome any feedback on the content.

Wishing you all a restful half term break.

God bless.

Mr T Miller, Headteacher



## St Peter's Keys

This half term we presented the St Peter's Keys to four Year 12 students (Elspeth, Niamh, Andrea and Olivia) who led an initiative before Christmas to support children whose mothers are in prison.

The charity Pact aims to help vulnerable prisoners and their families. Every Christmas they run a campaign to ensure children have a present from

their mother who is in prison. The girls led assemblies to highlight the campaign, collected and purchased presents, and delivered them to Send prison.

We are very proud of their great ambassadorship for both the campaign and the school. They embodied our mission to be Christ to all and demonstrated how Catholic Social Teachings of preferential option for the poor and human dignity can be lived out. Well done to them.

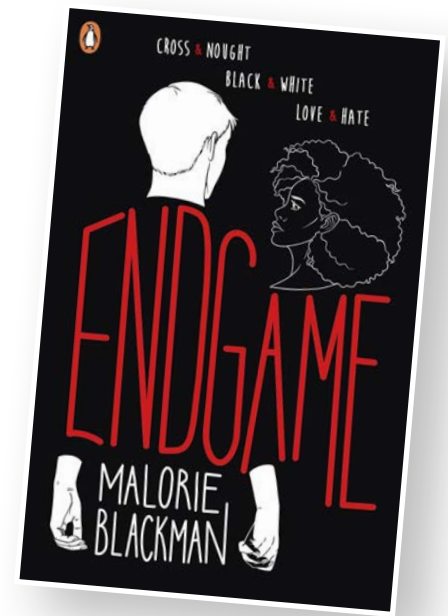
## Holocaust Memorial Day

Holocaust Memorial Day was very fascinating and useful for me because it reminded me of the 6 million Jews and others who unfairly got murdered during World War II by the Nazis. It also gave me a whole new perspective of how difficult it really was for the people who lived during that time and how they must've felt. Beatrice Gould's story about her upbringing as a Jew during Hitler's conquest made me think about how special and significant Holocaust Memorial Day really is for the survivors that are still alive today and how much it affected many lives during the war that occurred decades ago.

Throughout the entirety of Beatrice's story about her life during World War II, it was very compelling and full of adventure. It made me feel shocked particularly when she told the story of how her best friend had died from the Nazis bombing her house, just because she was a Jew when she was just a little kid around 4 to 6 years old. It especially took me aback because I couldn't have ever recovered from that if it ever happened to me. It also made me inspired to be more like Beatrice and to be brave just like her. Although she only told us little parts of her life, it gave me a huge understanding of how difficult it was to live during that time and how cruel the Nazis were to the Jews and how we must treasure all the innocent lives lost on Holocaust Memorial Day.

Colleen 9RO

### Holocaust Memorial Day 2025



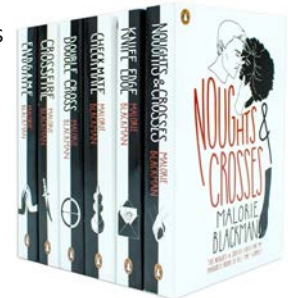
## Spotlight on Reading

I have just finished reading Endgame by Malorie Blackman, and wow, what a ride! I couldn't put this book down. It's the final book in the Noughts & Crosses series, and it totally lived up to my expectations.

First off, the characters are amazing. Sephy and Callum's story has been intense from the start, and in Endgame, things get even more dramatic. I felt like I was right there with them, facing all the challenges and dangers. The way Malorie Blackman writes makes everything so vivid and real.

The plot is very gripping. There are so many twists and turns that kept me on the edge of my seat. Just when I thought I had things figured out, something unexpected would happen. It's like a rollercoaster of emotions – excitement, fear, sadness and hope all mixed together.

One of the best parts about this book is how it makes you think. It's not just an action-packed story; it also tackles important issues like racism, inequality and justice. It made me see the world differently and think about how we treat each other.



Overall, Endgame is an epic conclusion to an incredible series. If you haven't read the Noughts & Crosses books yet, you definitely should. They're powerful, thought-provoking, and absolutely thrilling. Malorie Blackman is just brilliant, and I can't wait to read more of her work!

Jack 9JP

## Bus Reminder

Students can use their St Peter's bus Smartcard on any Stagecoach service within West Sussex, Hampshire and Surrey (excluding special services), including on weekends and in school holidays.





## Student Success Outside the Classroom

Annabel has been very busy over the last two months competing in several tennis tournaments throughout the UK and abroad. Over the Christmas holidays, she competed in three finals

in the 18U girls' doubles. She and her partner finished runners up in Taunton and Chiswick, and winners in Hull.



Based upon Annabel's success, she qualified for an International Tennis Federation (ITF) 14U competition in Oslo, Norway and won two out of her three matches. Unfortunately, she lost to the eventual overall tournament winner in a closely fought match.

In February, Annabel competed in another ITF 14U European competition in Liverpool and battled hard to win three of her four singles matches, her third match lasted almost three hours!

In half term, Annabel will compete in a 14U National Singles and Doubles Tennis competition in Sunderland before having a well-earned mini ski break.



Huge congratulations to Daniel 10ST who has been crowned the current British Champion for his category, due to his recent success at the British Short Track Championship in Nottingham. He

took first place in all his distances and was also awarded his British record certificate. He also took part in the 5000m relay and took a bronze medal. Well done, Daniel!

**We love hearing about successes outside of the classroom! If you would like your child featured in this section, please email [parents@st-peters.surrey.sch.uk](mailto:parents@st-peters.surrey.sch.uk) with details of their accomplishments.**



## Celebrating Coaching Success: Gold Award

We are thrilled to announce that St Peter's Catholic School has won the prestigious Gold Award for Coaching, Mentoring and Professional Learning in Education through CollectiveEd at Leeds Beckett University. This recognition highlights our commitment to nurturing the resilience and inquisitive nature of all our students and staff.

At St Peter's, we have worked hard to integrate structured and purposeful talk into all aspects of school life and as a result, we have witnessed how learning through oracy can drive positive and motivational change. For the past six years, our Sixth Form student coaching team has continued to grow, and we are incredibly proud of how Year 12 and Year 13 have participated in training and learnt about the power of language, active listening and effective questioning. Last year, we had over sixty Year 13 student coaches and it is incredible to see how their example has encouraged Year 12 to follow in their footsteps. In total, we have trained seventy students to be a coach in 2025.

Our Sixth Form students are first trained on how to become a coach, using Sir John Whitmore's GROW model and a solution-focussed approach. They then meet their student coachees once a week and provide guided support, in order to ensure all students are motivated to achieve their goals. When student coaches were asked about their experiences of coaching, one student shared how 'It helped me realise I can get to where I want to be' and a Head of Year described how 'Coaches make such a difference to the students' well-being.' The Sixth

Form coaches' commitment, positive approach and mature attitude are also further highlighted in their dedication to regular training. It is a pleasure to see how these students continue to develop skills in empathetic noticing, curiosity, tone and body language. As a result, these coaching meetings have become a foundation of exploratory talk and build highly positive relationships.

These pivotal and positive relationships are the result of our core values as a Catholic school and Sir John Whitmore's belief that "coaching is unlocking people's potential to maximise their own performance." Through our training programme and the dedication of our students, we have been delighted to observe the progress they make and how oracy is a powerful tool for self-inquiry. The programme thrives on the success of our student coachees who also greatly enjoy working with Sixth Form coaches, benefiting from the personalised guidance and skill development in a supportive environment. This structured support facilitates goal-oriented conversations, interpersonal skill development and preparation for life and opportunities outside of school.

Our commitment to coaching and developing oracy skills in school has fostered an inclusive and supportive environment, where every student's voice is heard and valued, creating a strong sense of belonging. We are proud to see how students are empowered to articulate their ideas confidently, leading to meaningful discussions and personal success.





1st

2nd

3rd

## St Peter's Christmas Bake Off

In December, several Year 7s and 8s took part in the Great St Peter's Christmas Bake Off. This is the first time we have organised a 'live' bake off at school as in past years, students have baked at home and sent in images, so it was very exciting to have the students in the Food Technology room creating their masterpieces!

On Monday 9th, students were tasked to make gingerbread men. The sweet

molasses smell permeated throughout the room and it became a comforting Christmas scent of cinnamon. The students planned their decorations to finish their gingerbread men and presented them ready for tasting. Their marks were carried across to the following week for the final part of the competition.

On Monday 16th, tensions were high and everyone was looking forward to a brilliant final showdown! All the participants made a yule log and the results were fantastic. They had been permitted to practise at home which was evident as every participant produced a Christmassy and well-presented yule log.

Miss Hayward, Mr Miller, Mr Blackmur and Rachel, the Head Chef of Innovate, tasted each yule log very carefully and scored each participant using a strict criteria including presentation, festiveness, taste and texture. These scores, coupled with the previous week, were totalled up and the winners were announced.

- 1st place:** Ludovika R – Year 7
- 2nd place:** Georgia H – Year 7
- 3rd place:** Mathilde O – Year 8

Well done to everyone who got involved – you were fantastic and it is brilliant to see some young bakers who are enthusiastic in cooking and baking come through the school.





## Year 10 Update

Year 10 have started their GCSEs incredibly well! Taking the step into KS4 is never an easy thing to do, but the year group have embraced the change and are already seeing the fruits of their labour. They are resilient and have demonstrated a fantastic work ethic with teachers praising how well they are adapting. So, apart from working hard and revising, the year group has been quite busy with other aspects of their education and lives too.

The students have been a driving force of positivity in the school this year. They have been receiving more house points than ever before due to teachers noticing how hard they are working. Assessments have been tough and the change of scenery from KS3 to KS4 has had a few bumps e.g. homework, but in lessons teachers have been so positive about them. Below are a few comments from teachers in relation to their Year 10 GCSE classes:

**continued...**



Teacher	Comment
<i>Mr Hartley</i>	“ 10R and 10Q Art. What a wonderful start. I am so happy with everything you have done. You have all embraced everything set with such enthusiasm and love. Your sketchbooks are looking fabulous. I am overjoyed with the amount of extra work you are doing and the personal approach. You all engaged so much at Wisley and did everything you were asked. Thank you for being wonderful and making the lessons so enjoyable. I look forward to seeing how your coursework develops. ”
<i>Miss Palmer</i>	“ Our GCSE PE classes have started the year with great routines and have been able to meet our high expectations with ease. They are working really hard, asking questions and putting in maximum effort to homework tasks. They will be an extremely high achieving group if they continue this way! ”
<i>Mr Miller</i>	“ Thank you for being brave and attacking the challenging maths. If we risk getting things wrong, we make progress together. Well done! ”
<i>Mrs Hanford</i>	“ To our amazing Year 10 Music class (the biggest class we have ever had!). You have thrown yourselves into every aspect of the course with style. Your involvement in the worship assemblies and Masses was exceptional. Your commitment to composing on MuseScore is brilliant (we can't get rid of some of you from E3). And you are all lovely, polite people. Here's to the Christmas Concerts! ”
<i>Miss Reza</i>	“ You have had such a smashing start to Year 10. It is a pleasure to teach you all. Keep up the good work! ”
<i>Mrs Campbell</i>	“ Both my RE classes 10b/4 & 10a/3 (no, they are not sets!) are working incredibly hard, completing all work promptly and show great enthusiasm with their contributions (even with a challenging topic). I look forward to teaching you every lesson! ”
<i>Mrs Heggy</i>	“ I love teaching this fabulous class! You all engage so well with the topic of human rights. Gives me hope for the future! ”
<i>Mrs Viljoen</i>	“ I have the BEST Year 10 Maths class! They already have their sights on their GCSE exams, giving each lesson their ALL to ensure their efforts are reflected in their grade! ”
<i>Miss Fagg</i>	“ You are such a pleasure to teach, I really look forward to the lessons. Great participation and work ethic! ”

A group of students were taken to Paris during January, 37 boarded the train and 37 returned, thankfully. They were able to expand their knowledge, learn the love of the land and test out a few new foods.

In March, 50 students are preparing for a night they will never forget! They will venture to London to watch "MJ: The Musical". A fantastic show which was definitely not chosen because Miss Pollard and I wanted to see it!

The PE GCSE classes were out on the rivers in Richmond completing their kayaking during the last term. Quite a few of them took an unexpected dip into the water which left them shivering and potentially rethinking their GCSE choices! However, the students found the whole experience quite an adventure and quite a few of them returned with the idea of potentially kayaking in their spare time. Overall, the students loved the challenge



and paddled head on towards every obstacle they faced.

With students commencing their GCSEs, they are now planning for their future careers. Initial career talks with Mrs Calvert have really been an eye-opening experience for some of them. Students are now thinking about what they want to do and how they will get there.

Year 10 is that time during a child's education when they can start their DofE journey with the school. Over 115 students have decided to do the course which is wonderful to see. As part of DofE, students are asked to complete a skill, physical activity, some volunteering and finally, an expedition. I have been asked to fill in quite a few references, so I know they have definitely started the volunteering aspect of the course. Should you pop into any of the local charity shops in the surrounding area, I would be shocked if you didn't see one of our fantastic students in there helping! Students have been proactive in sorting their groups and the excitement of their first expedition on 1st March is certainly starting to grow.

Overall, Year 10 are in a fantastic place and they go from strength to strength each week - embracing their challenges and showing they can have fun while doing it! Above is a clear example of three students loving life in Textiles and Fashion. Long may their positive efforts continue!

## Citizenship Day

On Thursday 23rd January, we had a Citizenship Day. An incredible way of teaching children about dangers and how to deal with them in a safe and effective way.

We learnt many key skills that will help us in an emergency such as CPR, fire

safety and what to do with bleeding, head injuries and more. This is important for people to learn as it can help save lives if one encounters such situations.

An example of what we learnt in fire safety is to find safe exits and how to most likely survive a house fire. Another example is learning the recovery positions and DRABC. We also learnt about friendships and what to do if something happens. This can help us currently as we are going through times where friendships aren't always smooth sailing.

We enjoyed this day as it helps us to understand the situation and how to help. We also had fun because we could do the activities and learn how to do it correctly with our peers. This was also a time to reflect on how the Catholic Social Teachings applies to us and how we can live it out every day.

Citizenship days are very beneficial and we look forward to more in the future to develop our knowledge of the real world.  
**Kaitlyn H and Larissa F 9FR**



## Whole School Careers' Day

Students took part in an exciting Careers' Day at the end of January, exploring how their lessons equip them with vital skills for the future. Each class began with a 15-minute session focusing on apprenticeships and the transferrable skills their subjects develop.

From problem-solving in maths to communication in English, students discovered how their learning connects to real-world careers. Engaging discussions helped broaden their understanding of apprenticeship pathways. The day was a fantastic opportunity to inspire students and highlight the diverse career options available.

### DRABC mnemonic

**D** Danger

**R** Response

**A** Airway

**B** Breathing

**C** Circulation



# Mass evacuations in Los Angeles as deadly wildfires wreak havoc



Rescue efforts hindered by windstorms fanning 'unprecedented' blazes

Oliver Holmes  
Dani Anguiano and  
Gabrielle Canon Los Angeles

Fast-moving wildfires have torn through several neighbourhoods



## CLIMATE-INDUCED LOSS AND DAMAGE AND CULTURAL LOSS IN MALDIVES: A CASE STUDY

leesha Suhail  
e Officer, Ministry of  
nt, Climate Change, and  
low / SLYCAN Trust Climate  
lowship Programme

conomic zone consists of  
192 small islands and 99%  
world's seventh largest reef  
ring with marine flora and  
beaches, and year-round  
country a leading tourist  
these very elements also  
extreme vulnerability to  
tergovernmental Panel on  
2) AR6 Synthesis Report  
lead climate-induced loss  
a reality today. As global  
rack to overshoot the 1.5-  
all of the Paris Agreement,  
and damages are on the  
ountries like Maldives.

### NTAL AS WELL AS AL RISK

the Maldives' islands are  
above the mean sea level,  
west-lying nations in the  
small islands house  
dispersed communities with human settlements  
and critical infrastructure in close proximity to  
the shoreline. This vulnerable geographical nature of  
the country and its reliance on a fragile natural  
environment poses both a developmental and an  
existential threat to Maldives. The impacts of  
climate change, in particular slow-onset events  
such as sea level rise and ocean acidification,  
cause mounting economic and non-economic  
losses and damages to Maldives, even at the  
current 1.1 degrees of warming.



Image: Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, and Technology, Maldives

The rise in sea surface temperatures and ocean acidification has bleached and deteriorated the highly temperature- and pH-sensitive coral reefs surrounding the Maldivian islands. Recurring bleaching events and the increasing severity of bleaching have also hindered reef recovery, severely threatening marine biodiversity. In the Maldives Red List assessment, 23 of the 39 species assessed were found to be critically endangered, six species endangered, seven vulnerable, and three near threatened.

Not only do coral reefs provide a habitat for the rich marine fauna of the Maldives, they also act as protective shields against waves, storms, and floods, enabling safe human settlements near the shorelines. Deterioration of the reefs therefore weakens the natural protection of the islands, resulting in land loss to coastal erosion and sea level rise. Damage to public and private infrastructure, including critical infrastructure, is rising due to the increased frequency and severity of storm surges. Between July 1st to 3rd of 2022 alone, 35 islands in 11 atolls in Maldives have faced severe flooding from storm surges.

## Geography Curriculum Update

Geography is a living, breathing subject, constantly adapting itself to change and this term is no different. With social, economic, environmental and political changes around the world, our curriculum has had to keep up to date, dynamic and relevant.

Key Stage 3 lessons have had an increased literacy and oracy focus, in particular encouraging students to read and discuss extracts from broad sheet publications and news websites. Our Year 9 'Ice on the Land' topic has now been titled 'World on Fire' to symbolise the recent devastating effects of increased climate change not only in far-reaching countries such as the Maldives or Greenland, but also potential consequences for the UK. We have already had in-depth discussions about the current USA political agenda and how world climate agreements might never be the same again – we wait with bated breath!

The Key Stage 4 curriculum is drawing to a close with the current Year 11s – only a few lessons to complete prior to directed revision and Paper 3 'Issue' evaluation in April. The students have worked incredibly hard so far and with positive mock exam grade results, the Geography team have high hopes for every success in the summer.

A Level geographers have been very busy completing Non-Examination Assessments (NEA) in Year 13 alongside intense revision for mocks. This cohort has conveyed a love for learning and with continued focus and determined efforts, summer triumphs are sure to follow. Year 12s have completed the topics Tectonic Hazards and Globalisation already and have begun studying Regenerating Places and Coastal Landscapes and Change. This has allowed us to further develop fieldwork skills and have recently investigated local regeneration

projects in Sheerwater, Woking. Fieldwork is an essential ingredient of geography because it provides a 'real-world' opportunity for students to develop and extend their geographical thinking, which not only assists their class-based learning but also provides a strong foundation on which to build for their upcoming NEA planning.

**"In our changing world, nothing changes more than geography" Pearl S Buck - Nobel and Pulitzer Prize winner.**





# ¡Viva el Club de Español! – A Lively Half Term for Years 7 and 8

This term, the Spanish Lunch Club has been buzzing with excitement as students dive into the vibrant world of Hispanic culture. From festive traditions to music, films and even a prestigious translation competition, there has never been a dull moment!

We kicked off the year by exploring Los Reyes Magos, the beloved Three Kings' Day celebration in Spain and Latin America. Students learned about the tradition of leaving shoes out for gifts, indulging in Roscón de Reyes (a delicious cake with hidden surprises) and the magical parades that light up Spanish streets every January.

No Spanish club would be complete without music! We have been singing along to catchy Spanish songs including Despacito, improving pronunciation while discovering different musical styles from flamenco to



**San Valentín**  
 Es el día del amor,  
 Puedes regalar una flor,  
 Margarita o rosa,  
 Elegantes cómo una mariposa,  
 Galletas o chocolate,  
 Es un grande debate,  
 Cualquier cosa se inventa,  
 Es la idea que cuenta!  
 By Francesca 8FR

reggaeton. To add to the fun, we have also enjoyed snippets of Spanish films and getting a taste of storytelling from across the Hispanic world.

But it hasn't just been about fun! We have put our language skills to the test in the prestigious Anthea Bell Translation Competition. Competing in the renowned Oxford and Cambridge Poetry contest, students worked on translating Spanish poems from Gloria Fuertes into English, honing their linguistic and creative skills. Finally, we finished this busy half term creating Valentine cards and fun poems in Spanish.

A huge ¡enhorabuena! to everyone who takes part!

With more exciting activities on the horizon, the Spanish Lunch Club continues to be the perfect place to immerse yourself in language and culture.

¡Nos vemos la próxima vez!



## Year 9 Thoughts – The 'Masking' Play

The play covered many psychological issues such as exam stress, depression, suicide, eco-anxiety and social media addiction. There were also the difficulties of things like autism, being

LGBTQ+ and being a refugee.

In our opinion, they portrayed panic attacks and the issues themselves very well, especially

the refugee and how she'd felt she was reliving the trauma she had been through. However, I think that personally, the cuts to the internal monologues were a bit abrupt and sudden, which didn't convey the idea of these issues being RECURRING.



Also, maybe they could touch on more about the challenges of homophobia.

Finally, I feel that it would have helped more if we had heard a monologue from the girl

who was on the building rather than merely having her off-screened, though I am aware having her shown would be challenging to do.

Overall, thank you very much for providing the play to us, it was very enjoyable and helpful.

**Gabe 9FR**



# School Trips...

## Murder on the Orient Express

On Wednesday 22nd January, we attended a theatre trip to see the Murder on the Orient Express performance at the Yvonne Arnaud. I had never heard of it before and I was pleasantly surprised as the moment the curtain rose, I was hooked by the set design and visuals.

The attention to detail in the passenger compartments that transformed into hallways and the dining car added a layer of authenticity and was

completely engaging for the audience to watch. I also thought the acting was equally impressive – each cast member delivered a powerful performance and despite having never heard of the characters before, I could tell that each one was depicted exactly how Agatha Christie had intended.



My personal favourite was Mrs Hubbard, who I (and the rest of the audience) found very amusing. The plot itself was gripping, and overall, I left the theatre extremely satisfied and entertained, thoroughly impressed by the talent and creativity that went into bringing the story alive on to the stage.  
**Hetty 11BA**



## Duke of Edinburgh

It was a chilly evening and the sky hung low with cloud. The car park was deserted when they arrived in the hamlet known as Blackheath. Out of the fog approached a light breaking the darkness. They held their breath as the light approached, as it came closer, they could make out the frightening and familiar outline of...Mrs Bromley!

Yes, it is that time of year again when our Gold DofE students find themselves layering up in warm clothes and go for a wander around Blackheath Forest in the dark. The aim is to practice their night navigation skills.

This year we have five groups of Year 12 students who are taking up the challenge of Gold DofE and so far, they have been amazing. We have a range of experience in our groups from students who have worked their way up through the awards at Bronze and Silver to students who are starting at Gold for the first time.

Our night navigation practice was the first real challenge for our groups to work together as a team. Reading a map and navigating during the daylight hours can be challenging enough when you can see your surroundings, never mind trying to navigate in the dark of night. All our groups

did exceptionally well and the feedback from the teachers who supported was overwhelmingly positive.

The groups are all busy planning their routes for our July practice expedition when we disappear off to South Wales for five days, where we can hopefully look forward to warmer weather.

Special thanks to Mr Miller (and his two dogs), Miss Byrne, Mr Paterson-Spir and Mr Bell who gave up their Wednesday evening to assist our groups. We could not provide this opportunity for our students without the support of our wonderful teachers volunteering their time. Until next time, all the best!



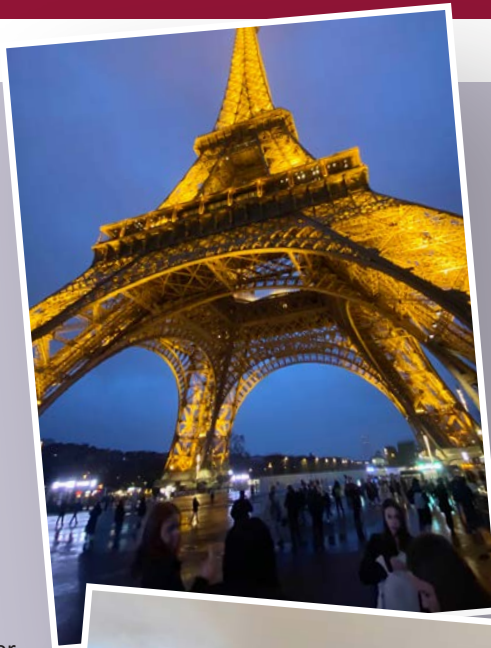
# School Trips...

## Paris 2025

Guildford station, 5am on a cold January morning. 37 bleary eyed Year 10 students gradually appear from the darkness, suitcases in tow, ready to embark on a four-night residential to Paris. Passports? Check. GHIC? Check. Spending money? Check. On y va!

Having arrived at a rainy Gare du Nord, we purchased our travel cards for the week, before heading to our hotel in the south of Paris. All checked in, our first excursion was to see the sights from the Eiffel Tower with students getting their first proper taste of navigating the Parisien metro system, as well as taking a ride on a double decker train.

Thursday was a day of culture and living the high life as we were walked in the footsteps of French VIPs on a tour through the Palais Garnier Opera House. A quick lunch break followed with some shopping time in the Haussmann district where we were able to admire the beautiful glass ceiling in Galeries Lafayette and wander the streets, surrounded by the infamous Haussmanien architecture. In the afternoon, we went to the Fragonard perfume museum and learnt about the history of perfume making and smelt scent after scent until our noses were sore. In the evening, the group bonded



over ten pin bowling before returning to the hotel for lights out.

On Friday, we took a step back in time, as we made our way to the Catacombs and ventured deep underground to weave our way through the tunnels lined with the bones of six million people transferred there around the time of the French Revolution. After lunch, we managed to visit Notre Dame Cathedral during a Mass and were able to see the newly refurbished cathedral in all its Gothic glory. A short walk along the Ile de la Cité led us to the Conciergerie, one of the most important places of the French Revolution and the prison where Marie Antoinette was held. Students saw where the prisoners were registered and the cells they stayed in. They studied the lists of people

who were imprisoned and executed at the time and made their way through the courtyard to where the prisoners were loaded onto carts before heading to the guillotine.

On Saturday, everything felt a little more sedate, as we strolled around the Musée d'Orsay, appreciating works from the Realist, Impressionist and Post-Impressionist movements. A quick hop over to the Champs Elysées for lunch and a look at the Arc de Triomphe followed, before we headed back to the Ile de la Cité for a boat trip down the Seine. An enforced detour due to the high river level meant we headed further west than planned but this allowed us to see the smaller Statue of Liberty, which the students enjoyed.

We checked out of the hotel on Sunday morning and before heading for home, we squeezed in a walking tour that passed the Moulin Rouge, the café from the film Amelie and included a visit to the Sacré Coeur. Following a quick prayer during Mass at the statue of St Peter, we made our way back to the Gare du Nord. A few hours later and the group arrived back home weary from our travels, sad it was over but full of stories and happy memories.

We have really seen our students grow in confidence on this trip and have enjoyed seeing them develop their language skills, ordering their food in restaurants and translating and interpreting key information during the guided tours. By the end of our stay, they were moving confidently around the capital using buses, trams, trains and the metro, which was great to see. They all did so well.

A huge thank you to the students for representing the school so well... I hope you enjoyed the trip. Thank you to the staff, Mme Chapman, Miss Hayward and Mrs Brown for helping me run the trip and to you the parents and carers for all your support and seeing the value in learning a foreign language.

I look forward to taking the new Year 10 group next January.

