



# THE COMPANION

## Message from the Headmaster

Welcome to the Easter edition of *The Companion*, our termly school newsletter. This has been another busy term, with our focus very much on ensuring that all students are making good progress in their studies and, in particular, that those students in Years 11 and 13 are fully prepared for the summer exams. This term, our students were lucky to get highly sought-after tickets to see David Tennant play *Macbeth* at the Donmar Warehouse, and a large group of students went to the Globe to see *Romeo and Juliet*. The 6th Form held a very successful talent show and we also had a number of students take part in the poetry Slam, and others went to Bletchley Park to take part in an IT coding workshop.

We have had four external visits to the school, all of whom have been impressed by what they saw. They found that Maria Fidelis has a “meaningful and purposeful learning environment”. One visitor commented that “this is a good school moving in the right direction. There is a positive atmosphere and a sense of community that is palpable.” Staff have worked hard to ensure that children at this school get the best education we can provide and my vision remains that every child at this school will make outstanding progress in all subjects and thoroughly enjoy their time at school. We are moving in the right direction and I am aware of what we still need to do in order to achieve this goal.

The FCJ spirit of companionship was exemplified during Lent. Families were incredibly generous with their donations for the Euston Foodbank. Thank you to Ms Whelan and the chaplaincy team for organising this and encouraging students to take part in supporting this most worthwhile cause.

I am pleased to announce that we shall have another deputy headteacher starting with us in September. Mr McLaughlin will be joining us from Islington Arts and Media School and he will work alongside Ms Masud, taking responsibility for the Pastoral System and the day to day running of the school. We are incredibly lucky to have the dedicated staff and a very supportive governing body. Staff will be coming in over the Easter holidays to provide extra lessons for our Year 11 and Year 13 students who are about to sit their external exams. We are now also looking at what we need to do to start preparing our current Year 10 students so that they start Year 11 from a position of strength that will enable them to do well in their exams next year.

I wish you all a wonderful Easter and I look forward to welcoming our students back on Monday 15th April.

Mr M. Anthony, Headmaster

## Important Dates:

### April

Mon 15<sup>th</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> day of term

### May

6<sup>th</sup> Bank Holiday

27<sup>th</sup> - 31<sup>st</sup> Half Term

### June

Thurs 13<sup>th</sup> Moving On Event

Fri 21<sup>st</sup> Sports Day

Wed 26<sup>th</sup> Pensioners' Tea Party

Thurs 27<sup>th</sup> 6<sup>th</sup> Form Prom

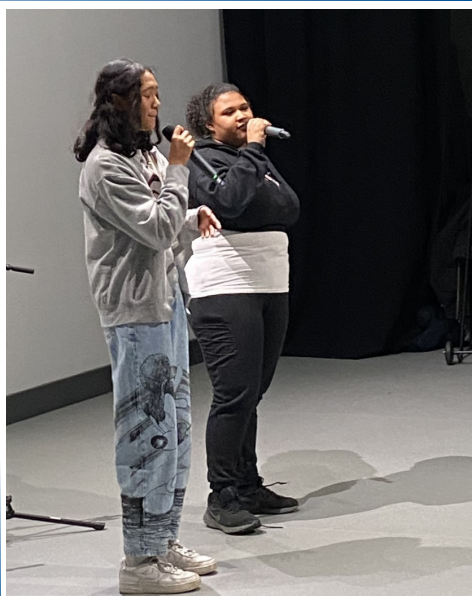
### July

Thurs 4<sup>th</sup> Yr11 Prom

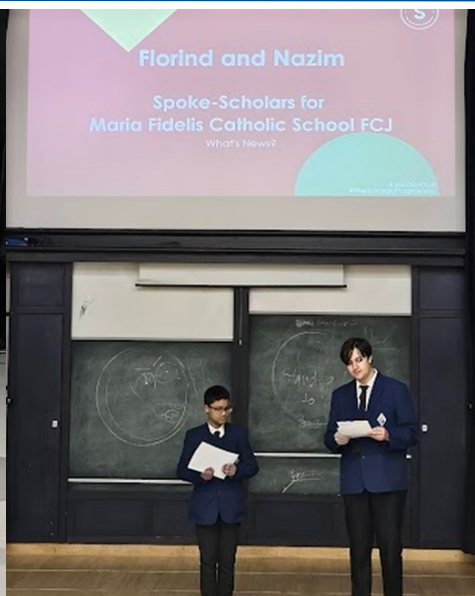
Thurs 18<sup>th</sup> Rewards Day

Fri 19<sup>th</sup> INSET Day

Wed 24<sup>th</sup> Last day of term



Nedia and Peaches perform at the School Talent Show



Florind and Nazim address an audience at Oxford University

# FOCUS ON: THE GOVERNING BODY



UK schools have governing bodies (GBs) consisting of representatives of various stakeholder groups and led by a Chair of Governors. The GB's role is to provide strategic guidance and oversight, but not to get involved in day-to-day operations. At Maria Fidelis, the GB has wide-ranging responsibility for

- ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction of the school;
- holding the Headmaster to account for the educational progress of all students;
- overseeing financial performance and making sure that money is well spent; and
- sustaining our Catholic identity by promoting Church teaching through active cultivation of the FCJ Vision and Values across all aspects of school life.

Fortunately, we have a committed group of eleven governors. Seven are Foundation Governors, nominated historically by the FCJ sisters; a further two are parent governors elected by parents and carers of our students; one is appointed by Camden to represent the local authority; and one is a staff governor elected by Maria Fidelis staff.

In all public service activities, transparency and safeguarding are mission critical. All Governors must disclose any potential conflicts of interest and undergo DBS checks prior to taking up the role. The GB has six regularly scheduled meetings per year. Sometimes extraordinary meetings are required, such as to approve the appointment of a new Head or Deputy Head.

One of the most fun parts of being a governor is attending school events like prize-giving, the pensioners' party, talent shows or the Christmas carol concert. At these events we get to see the amazing accomplishments of our students and celebrate their successes.

Being a governor is a demanding, but rewarding role. It gives us a huge appreciation of the work that Maria Fidelis staff at all levels do, day in day out, to help our students realise their talents and unique giftedness, while gaining an education grounded in faith that prepares them for what comes next.

## E. Carey, Chair of Governors

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### Jack Petchey Award

We have run the Jack Petchey Achievement Award for many years here at Maria Fidelis. The award is given to those students who may have gone above and beyond to achieve – perhaps when others thought they might fail. Some students are given the award in recognition of the fact that they are great role models for other children.

***“The Achievement Awards are primarily about recognising those who put in the effort and do their best.”***

### Sir Jack Petchey CBE

To be nominated for the Jack Petchey Award is a significant achievement and we are very proud of our winners so far this year. Students are chosen by their peers and staff, and anybody can nominate a person. There is also one award given each year to a member of staff. Last year's winner was Ms

Uliwiak, our premises manager who, each day, goes above and beyond what is expected of her. We are incredibly lucky to have our site team who look after the staff, the students and the building so well. To put a student or a member of staff forward for a nomination, please see Miss Sowden.

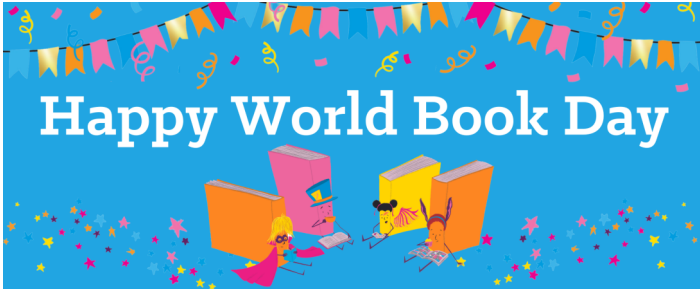
### Winners so far this year:

September – Isaiah Wanderema (Yr7)  
October – Harvest Jorge-Strikes (Yr7)  
November – Jonathan Olasunkanmi (Yr13)  
January – Rosie Cluskey (Yr11)  
February – Olha Fedun (Yr8)  
March – Michal Selestiak (Yr10)

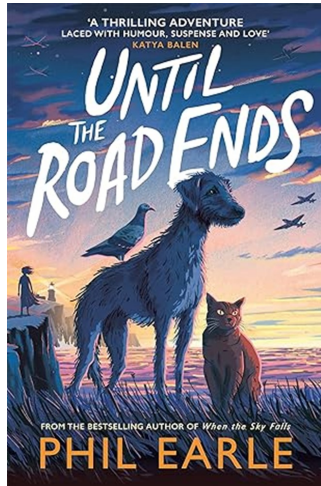


# World Book Day

Maria Fidelis celebrated World Book Day with an alternative start to the school day. The English Department arranged for all year groups to watch a video of an author talk about their latest books.



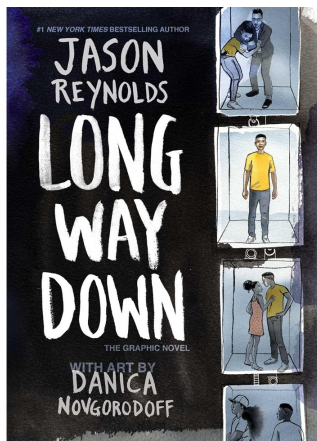
Students in KS3 watched Phil Earle discuss his new book *Until the Road Ends*, which is set during the Second World War and tells the story of a girl called Peggy, who rescues a stray dog – Beau – and takes him home. The two of them are inseparable until the unthinkable happens, and Peggy gets evacuated and separated from her beloved pet.



Beau becomes an unlikely hero of the bombings and the Blitz, but knows he must leave London and try to get to Peggy even though he has no idea where or how to begin.

This is the story of how Beau and his small group of animal friends embark on a perilous mission for the sake of two orphaned children. Written from the animals' point of view, it's gritty, exciting, funny and uplifting with some of the least likely episodes being based on real people and events.

Students in KS4 Listened to Jason Reynolds talk about his book *Long Way Down*, a novel-in-verse,



It tells the story of Will, a black American teenager. He lives in a neighbourhood overshadowed by gun crime. When his older brother Shawn is shot dead in front of him, Will is overcome with grief, despair and fury. Focusing on the Rules – no crying, no snitching, get revenge – Will takes Shawn's gun, intending to avenge his brother's murder.

However, the 67 seconds he spends in the lift from his apartment to the ground floor are life-changing for Will. He is joined by six 'ghosts', key figures from his past, whose deaths are all gun-related. Learning how and why each of them died prompts him to consider whether the perpetual cycle of revenge killing is the only way forward.



## Reading Facts

Reading for pleasure is the single biggest indicator of a child's future success. It is also possibly the single-most important activity a child can do to improve achievement in school.

Children who read for 20 minutes a day or more have a greater chance of doing better on tests than 90% of their classmates.

Research has shown that reading helps cognitive development; a recent study revealed that students who read at home do ‘significantly better’ across the curriculum – including 9.9% better in maths – than students who don’t read. Linked to this is the fact that reading is the best way to improve vocabulary, essential for success in every subject.

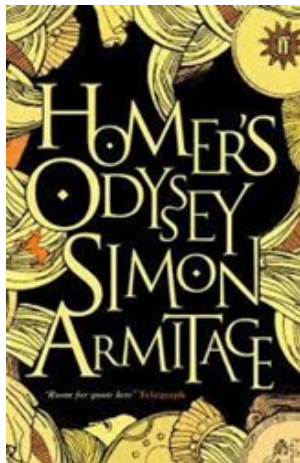
In a recent study, avid readers were found to be 10% more likely than people who don't read to have better self-esteem. However, this is raised to 18% of people who read for 30 minutes or longer. Regular reading has been shown to lower stress levels by as much as 68%.

## Recommended Reads for Easter

### Simon Armitage: *Homer's Odyssey*

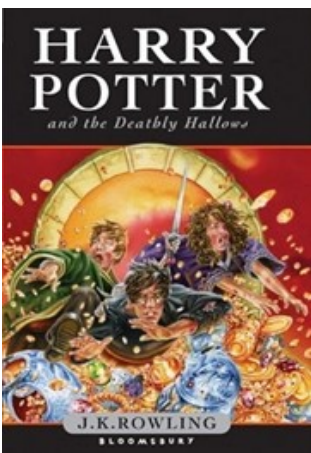
'Homer's Odyssey' is an epic tale about a heroic character who faces adversity, challenges that would bring a man to his knees and tragedy after tragedy. We are taken on a journey of Odysseus's return home, but Poseidon, seeking revenge, inflicts his everlasting wrath relentlessly, preventing Odysseus from returning to Ithaca. My favourite moment is when Odysseus finally reaches home and yet the author doesn't immediately reveal his true identity, but that moment of reunion is prolonged and in the end, well deserved. If you want to learn about a Hero's journey and what makes a true hero, read *The Odyssey*. It also takes you deeper into Greek society and unravels key Greek mythical stories that we all grew up reading and hearing.

By Hanman 8C



### JK Rowling: *Harry Potter And The Deathly Hallows*

The genre being fantasy, JK Rowling writes a compelling book that pulls you into a magical world of adventure. The book is part of a series where Harry is the supposed 'chosen one' and the villain Voldemort, is out to kill him. In this last book of the series, Voldemort finally meets his nemesis, a young boy and is



shamelessly defeated. My favourite moment is when Harry and Hermione rescue... when there is a huge fire. I also loved Dumbledore and the way JK Rowling builds his as such a nurturing father figure to Harry but a wise and powerful wizard at the same time. Dumbledore ultimately saves Harry and in a plot twist, lives to fight Voldemort. I would recommend this book because JK Rowling

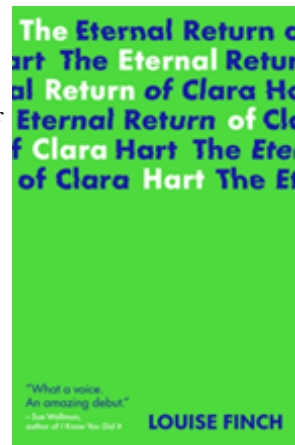
is very thorough with her characters and we are able to share the lives and experiences of the characters through the series. Although the genre is fantasy, the characters are very relatable and the story resonates with aspects of all our lives.

By Keziah 8A

### Louise Finch: *The Eternal Return of Clara Hart*

'The Eternal Return of Clara Hart' is an interesting novel about a teenager who appears to be stuck in a mysterious time loop. We are taken on this mind-twisting journey of a character called Spencer who is trying to break out of the time-loop and save Clara from dying. However, he is unaware of the secrets that lie ahead of him. My favourite moment in the story is when Clara Hart wakes up in his car for the first time and finds the supposedly dead Clara, alive and healthy.

By Lashana 8A



### Rick Riordan: *Percy Jackson And The Lightning Thief*



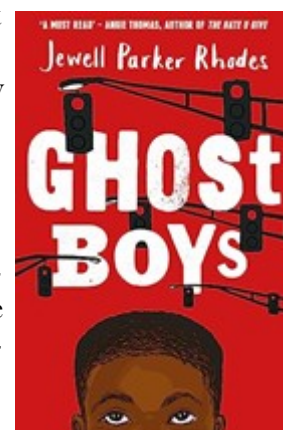
'Percy Jackson And The Lightning thief' is a book about a half blood character who is a demi-god. Percy Jackson journeys across America to prevent the Greek Gods from a looming war. My favourite moment is when the lightning thief's identity is revealed and the antagonists battle.

By Charlie 8A

### Jewell Parker Rhodes: *Ghost Boys*

'Ghost Boys' is a despondent story about prejudice against a young black boy. The story is inspired by the horrific death of Emmett Till which shook his community and the world. Similarly, Jerome's story piques the reader's interest as we experience sadness, grief and hope. Jewell Parker Rhodes cleverly turns a tragedy into a story about justice and change.

By Munashe 8A

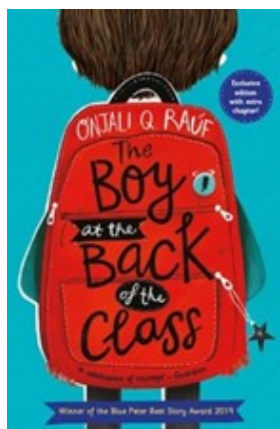


## Recommended Reads for Easter

**Onjali Rauf:** *The Boy Who Sat At The Back Of The Class*

'The boy who sat at the back of the class' is an amazing story about a boy who came to London from Pakistan and is on a journey to return home with the help of the Queen. The new friends he makes at school try to help him get back home. My favourite moment is when they finally get the letter to the Queen and she reads it. After a long wait and adventure, the boy is finally able to go home. The story teaches you about patience and resilience. If you are interested in adventure with some ups and downs, then this is the book for you.

By Yasin 8A



**Angie Thomas:** *The Hate U Give*

I recommend THUG; a powerful book about racism and the struggles come with growing up as a young, black, teenager. The story opens with the main character, a teenage girl in a car with her friend. They are pulled over by police as they head home after a party. The driver co-operates with police but impulsively reaches for a hair brush to comb his hair whilst they await further instructions. Police officers at the scene mistake the brush for a gun and tragically shoot the driver. This fatal mistake causes uproar in the community. My favourite moment in the story is when the police finally recognise how serious the situation at hand is when citizens begin to protest. This is a powerful example of using the power of your voice and presence to be heard. You should read this book as it captures the true reality of the world in this exciting story. Everyone should be made aware of the injustices and difficulties we face as communities and understand how our lives are defined but not determined by our race.

By Keziah 8A



**Neymar Rules** by Simon Mugford

'Neymar Rules' is a funny fiction book about a footballer (Neymar Jr) and his background. Neymar Jr is idolised by young people because of his unique style of football. My most enjoyable moment is when Neymar Jr is signed to PSG for a world record of £200 million. It just goes to show, it 'pays' to have skills.

By Emilio 8A



**Anthony Horowitz:** *Alex Rider*

The Alex Rider series of books is based on an adventurer helping an agency. You would have guessed it, he is a spy. The main character is a teenager, skilled at parkour arsenal and smart with stealth. There are both good and sad moments. My favourite moment is when he is hot in one of the books and the writer leaves us on a cliff-hanger and we are left wondering whether our favourite character will survive or die.

I recommend this action book because it is thrilling and there's even a comic book collection!

Jayden 8A

**Neil Gaiman:** *Coraline*

I recommend the book Coraline by Neil Gaiman. This horror book is about a girl who found another house and parents that look exactly like her own. These new parents are scary and they want her to stay with them and they want to do scary things to her. My favourite part of the book is when she wakes up at the end and is relieved to realise that it was a dream. You should read this book so you can experience a world of horror and terror. Neil Gaiman is also the writer of The Graveyard which is also an excellent gothic horror novel.

By Liora 8A



## Recommended Reads for Easter

### James Milner: *Ask A Footballer*

'Ask a footballer' is a non-fiction book where James Milner's fans ask him questions about how football works and his career. My favourite moment is when Milner goes into depth about football managers and agencies. You can really learn how the world of football works. I recommend this book because if you enjoy football, or want to be a footballer, this book contains key information. This book is both informative and enjoyable to read – you don't have to be a football fanatic to read it.

By Joshua 8A



### Cynthia Murphy: *The Last One to Die*

The book 'Last One To Die' is about a girl who newly arrives in a city for fun and freedom. But what she doesn't know is that women are being mysteriously killed. She soon begins to realise that the women look scarily similar to her. She always feels people watching her even if she's alone and she struggles to make friends because of it. This crime/thriller is suspenseful and cleverly presents conventions of thriller novels. I like the way the writer structures her book as it's mostly written in dialogue with some of the characters' actions or thoughts being showed throughout the book. My favourite moment in the book was in the first chapter when the main character, Niamh, struggles when people ask how to write or pronounce her name. I strongly recommend this book as it always hints to the theme of mystery and horror. It's also a good book if you like a terrifying plot which is nicely executed.



By Chloe Maduda 9L

## Geography Field Trips

### Year 7

This half-term Year 7 have been investigating whether the local area is safe for cyclists as part of their first experience completing fieldwork in geography. Well done!



*'We went to 2 different sites: Charlton Street and Eversholt Street. We did this because we can learn about cyclists and pedestrian safety. We collected quantitative data by completing a traffic count and qualitative data by completing questionnaires. I enjoyed being aware of other's opinions and lives and being outside with my friends'.*

- Nyah, 7C

### Year 10

This half-term Year 10 geography students completed their first piece of fieldwork which is a GCSE requirement. Students have been studying to what extent has the redevelopment of King's Cross been sustainable. The students arrived to school keen to venture out and visit their sites despite the very wet weather. It was great to see the class take on the challenge of using and applying a variety of geographical data collection methods on the day.

Since returning from the trip the class are working hard to present their data, analyse their findings and come to a conclusion on how sustainable their local area is. The day is vital for them practising a range of skills which they will be assessed on. Well done to 10R Geography for completing their first piece of fieldwork!

## A Future Leader writes...

London, a creative hub poised to excel in every field from the arts to STEM subjects, presents an idyllic image to the world, while its secondary schools linger in obscurity. Amidst the eloquence of London's academic promises, I, a state and once international school student, witnessed the clash between these two different ideologies. Surrounded by conformists and rebels, I question the reality of a one-size-fits-all system. Does it cater to our diverse needs? Should alternative models exist?

The educational world ponders these questions, seeking paths that truly touch on individual aspirations in a city of contrasting opportunities.

I found the GCSE curriculum to be a rote and traditional system of spoon feeding knowledge to glaring students as they ponder on the hours of memorisation ahead. This form of traditional education systems prioritise the acquisition of knowledge and academic skills overshadowing "the learning of skills, of communication, collaboration, creativity and critical thinking," claims Sir Antony Gormley. I have struggled to work under the pressure of



'memorising the mark scheme' being captured in a dilemma of studies. While some might find a structured environment of mark schemes and exams beneficial, I see it as stifling the ambitions of those with dreams as lofty as the Canary Wharf only to be disillusioned by a system fixated on grades.

## The environment in which students are to be inspired should go beyond the four walls of a classroom

Evidently, since the post pandemic year of 2021 'plans to cut funding for art and design courses by 50%', during the same year of Sir Kevin Collins'

resignation he challenged the adverse impact of such cuts on a student's personality. He warned that prioritising economic considerations over such subjects will deprive students from essential assets such as critical thinking. This negligence, he argued, would result in 'failing hundreds of thousands of pupils'.

The environment in which students are to be inspired should go beyond the four walls of a classroom; it should aim towards the social and emotional dynamics of a true learning environment. In a classroom of orderly rows and 'speak when spoken to' rules where is the growing essence of life and collaboration? 78% of secondary students suffer from social anxiety as a result of built up fear lacking the skills to enrich their confidence. A.S. Neil's philosophy buzzes with a response to counteract this atrocious state, as it aims to 'replace authority with freedom, appealing to children's curiosity and spontaneous needs fostering integrity, decency and courage'; conversely an environment running on competition and lack of inclusivity subdues some students' passion to grow with a backlash of feeling disconnected from the one-way flow of 'success'.

## London doesn't just need workers; it needs citizens with a strong sense of identity and direction, it needs 'thinkers'.

Besides the flaws, I have come to terms with the true legacy of our traditional system; a system that built London's most obedient workers to industrialise the nation with the birth of 1944 Education act, as factories populated the skies needing children to occupy the controls. Winston Churchill's mindset of needing a nation of 'workers' was implemented directly to the curriculum (still alive and kicking today) which fails to address the demands of a rapidly evolving world cultivated as a 'factory model'. As technology reshapes 94% industries and social class, I strongly believe that London doesn't just need workers; it needs citizens with a strong sense of identity and direction, it needs 'thinkers'.

The question then arises: does this one-size-fits-all education system suit everyone? The answer is, undoubtedly, no. This cookie-cutter model of education is a mere hallucination of a survival game where only people of a specific category fit, and having played that game, find it a 'sinister' act against talent. The cookie-cutter shape needs to change to touch on the aspirations and pull on the heart strings of our diverse range of students which

go uncatered for. Education should never be seen as a tool but rather a wand to enrich each student; manifesting into a dynamic multifaceted process tailored for all.

## Does this one-size-fits-all education system suit everyone? The answer is, undoubtedly, no.

Greater emphasis should be placed on enlightening young people beyond the traditional pedagogical method which I have been exposed to. We can

continue to enforce outdated systems that marginalise countless individuals, or we can embrace a more inclusive and progressive version of education. As London fails to meet this call for modern educational advancements, are we cultivating a society of conformists or nonconformists?

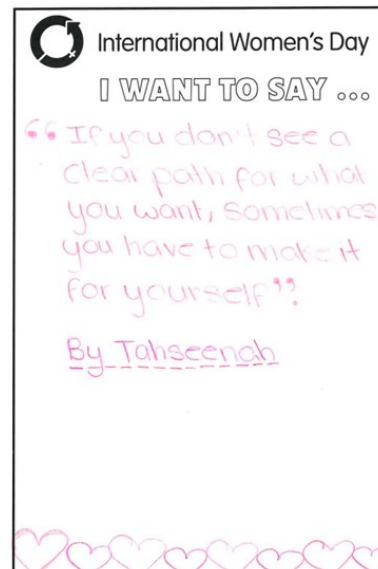
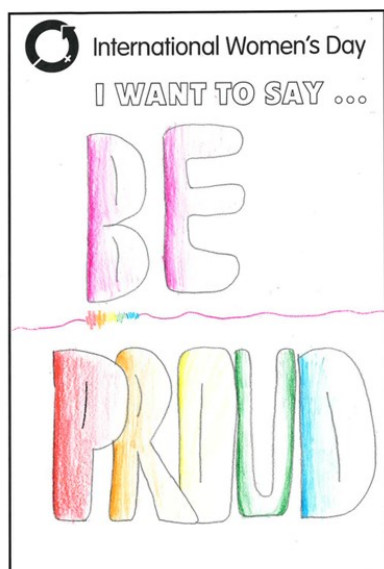
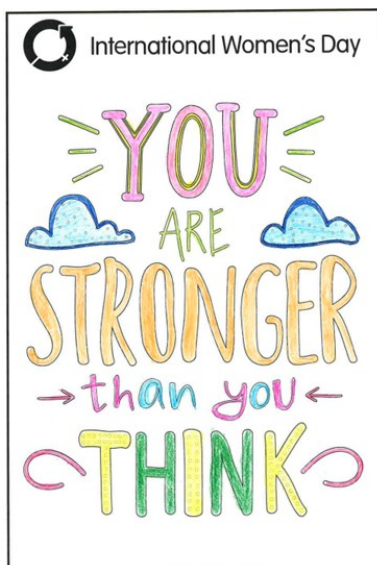
**Alessandra Tadros, Year 10**

*Alessandra wrote this article for the Guardian Newspaper Hugo Young political writing competition*

## International Women's Day

Ms Doody and some of her Year 8 students celebrated International Women's Day on the 8<sup>th</sup> of March by taking part in discussions about women's rights, notable women throughout history and powerful women in our society today. At Maria Fidelis, we celebrate women and girls around the world, and we applaud all they have achieved in the fight for equality.

Women and girls have made great gains - demolishing barriers, dismantling stereotypes and driving progress towards a more just and equal world. Some Year 8 students took time to make posters for this important event and write some inspirational quotations. Here are some examples below. Well done to all involved!



## English Department Theatre Trips

### Macbeth

Year 11 had the opportunity this term to watch 'Macbeth' at the Donmar Warehouse Theatre with David Tennant in the main role. 'Macbeth' is part of the GCSE Literature Paper 1 exam, and the trip enhanced their understanding of the plot, the characters and the themes of the tragedy.



Pupils also attended the Q & A that followed after the performance and asked crafty questions to the actors about their acting skills. All our pupils were highly engaged and represented our school fantastically!

Macbeth is a spellbinding story of love and murder, the renewing power of nature, and of the internal struggles of a damaged man as he tries to control his destiny. The bracingly fresh production of the Scottish play uses binaural sound technology to place us inside the minds of the Macbeths, asking are we ever really responsible for our actions? This was a fantastic production of Shakespeare's most extraordinary psychological drama, and it was made particularly intense as the audience wore headphones, so it felt far more intimate. It was led by David Tennant, who played the title role for the first time in his career. He was joined by Cush Jumbo (*Hamlet*, *The Good Fight*) as Lady Macbeth.



### Romeo & Juliet

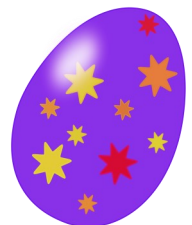
Mr Durbin organised a trip to see a very modern production of Romeo and Juliet at the Globe Theatre on the South Bank. Shakespeare's tragedy was set in modern times and it showed how the themes of violence and rivalry have always been and continue to be a major problem for society.



The play was directed with fantastic choreography and the modern retelling made it particularly relevant and engaging for a younger audience. We did not expect to see daring BMX stunts at a Shakespeare play, but it made the play a truly exciting experience without losing the passion and grit of this timeless, tragic love story.

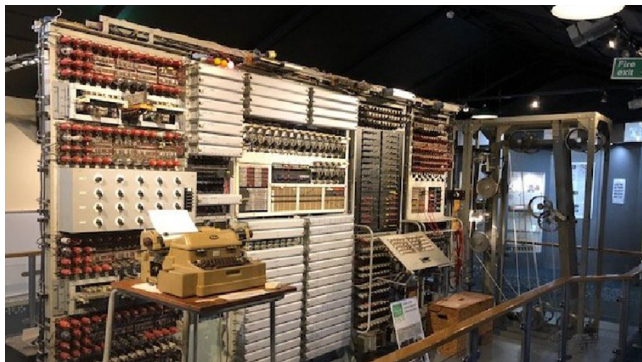


Overall, the performance, tailored for teenage audiences, successfully combined the timeless words of the Bard with modern flair, delivering a memorable and unique theatrical experience.



## Bletchley Park Visit

On March 1st 2024, my classmates and I from Maria Fidelis Catholic School went on a trip to the Bletchley Park computing museum, the home of the famous Colossus machine which was able to decode the German enigma during WW2. We were able to meet modern cryptog-



raphers who had previously worked for MI5, one of whom was named Robert who enthusiastically toured us around the museum.

We first learned the difference between what was a computer and what wasn't. He gave a quantitative sense of scale – by the 1950's, there would be 1 computer per city. In the 1970's, one computer per street. By the 1990's, everyone had a computer, and now every device has around twenty computers inside of it.



We also explored the first machine capable of a fetch-execute cycle, the WITCH. This would take in 5-bit binary information from strips of paper and skip the decode stage and execute into a 10-bit accumulator. This was interesting because at the time we were learning about fetch execute cycles at school so it was incredible to see the origin of it.



We also took part in a virtual circuit building experience, as well as exploring and using old gaming consoles and PCs, including an old rotary phone which barely anyone knew how to use.

Robert, our tour guide and former MI5 cryptologist, was so impressed with some of us that he recommended that a number of us apply for the GHQC



summer camp. Next time we write, it might be of us taking part in brain-bending tasks at the heart of British Intelligence!

Overall, the trip was a fantastic experience to take part in and the journey back was as calm as ever.



## Chaplaincy

### Thursday Morning Mass in the School Chapel

Fr John from St James's Parish (Spanish Place) has been celebrating mass in the school chapel every Thursday morning during form time since January 2024. Mass is optional and open to all students and staff and has so far seen very good attendance. Fr John also usually spends time interacting with students in the school before mass. He is a precious presence in the school.



### Lent Sacrament of Reconciliation

The Sacrament of Reconciliation was offered in school on Thursday 21st March with the help of Fr Jeremy from St Aloysius' parish and Fr Philip from the Newman House University Chaplaincy. The Sacrament was open to all baptized Christian students and represented a good opportunity to experience God's merciful love in the time of Lent. The Catholic Church particularly recommends this sacrament in the Lenten season.

### CAFOD Young Leaders

The 6th form CAFOD Young Leaders attended two training sessions led by CAFOD's staff and are working to implement educational and fundraising projects for CAFOD in the school. The Young Leaders have organized a house basketball competition on Thursday March 14th in the school sports hall. The event is a fundraiser for CAFOD.

### Justice and Peace Club for Year 7

The school Year-7 justice and peace club has been exploring themes related to Catholic Social Teaching, while also leaving time for informal conversation. The group has 10-15 students and meets every Thursday during lunchtime. It is led by Pietro Cespoli (the school chaplaincy assistant).

### Foodbank Collection

Each year we have collections for the Euston Foodbank. This is a most worthwhile cause and in bringing food into school to share with those who are struggling at the moment, students learn to develop a sense of compassion and make a visible sign of living our FCJ values. Supporting the Foodbank is more than 'doing good'; it is putting into practice the values upon which our school is founded.

This is an ongoing project for our school. If you would like to contribute, you can do so at any time. In particular they need UHT milk, long-life juice, tins of meat/fish, dried fruit, pasta sauces and custard.

### Homework Club with Catholic University Students

A small group of practising Catholic university students from the Newman House University Chaplaincy (based in Gower Street) come to school and help a student each with homework and mentoring through 1-1 weekly sessions

### Stations of the Cross

Every class has been praying with the Stations of the Cross during for a small part of their Religious Education lessons. The Stations of the Cross are a form of prayer and meditation on Jesus' final journey to the cross. They are usually followed during Lent.



## School Uniform Exchange

We have a school uniform exchange at the school. Any family struggling to get a uniform can come and see if there is a uniform here that would suit their child. There is a small charge to cover the cleaning costs of the clothes we have.



We also appeal to any family who have a uniform that no longer fits—please bring it in and we can let another child benefit from it. We particularly ask Year 11 students to let us have their uniforms if they no longer wish to keep them.

## Jewellery

Over the past two years we have been working with the Creative Dimensions Trust to deliver a series of mini foundation courses at Maria Fidelis School. The charity aims to support talented young people, providing them with the skills and confidence needed to pursue careers that require core hand skills. The courses are fully funded and students must attend all five sessions after school. The courses so far have included gilding, leatherwork and jewellery making. Each session is delivered by an expert in the field and participation can open further opportunities for participants to attend other courses in the future.

Students do not need to have previous experience but usually have an interest in Art and Design, Design Technology or developing new practical skills and it is for this reason that the Science Department are supporting this initiative. This term we are running the jewellery workshop again with students making a ring and a badge both made in silver. The students are allowed to take these home.

The Creative Dimensions Trust has appointed Mr. Paul Ravn, an expert jeweller and fellow of the Insti-

tute of Professional Goldsmiths to run the jewellery making course and we are hoping that we can encourage participants to consider working in this area as a real prospect for the future.

Next year we are hoping to run four more workshops in school including leatherwork, tailoring, jewellery-making and furniture-making. Students need to be in Years 10-13 to take part and as there are only ten places available for each course, they need to apply early. They can express their interest to Ms. Gamble who will put names on the waiting list. For further information about all the workshops on offer outside of school, please visit: [www.thecreativedimension.org/workshops](http://www.thecreativedimension.org/workshops).



## University of West London

Stepping onto the campus of West London University, the slogan above our heads — ‘the careers university’ shocked us because I don’t think most of us knew how much or how little we truly thought about our life after school. So, it is safe to say that the visit offered an immersive experience, showcasing the vibrant tapestry of academic life and innovation within the university's campus.



The day began with a warm welcome from faculty members, whose passion for their respective fields was contagious. Guided tours led us through the multiple sectors of the university from the aviation stimulator to the cutlery arts. Our eyes were exposed to all possible fields that we could possibly dream of! Each step revealed a new facet of academic life,

## Enriching Students' Lives

### University of West London (cont.d)

from the serene tranquillity of the library to the dynamic buzz of collaborative spaces.



The highlight of the day was by far when we were drawn into an engaging discussion with the Aviation professor who so kindly indulged us in an enthusiastic lecture. My favourite part of the lecture was when we were asked to make paper planes and fly them across the room. The professor transformed this point of view from it just being a paper plane to it being an Airbus a360 gliding across the world. As the day drew to a close, we departed West London University with a renewed sense of purpose and determination. My visit had not only broadened my academic horizons but also instilled in me a profound appreciation for the transformative power of higher education. (Alessandra Tadros)

## Scholars Programme:

### Oxford University Trip—26th February

Some of our Y9 and 10 students have been working with a PHD student this year to write a mini disserta-



tion on "News". The programme allows students to work in small groups to develop knowledge, skills and confidence to secure a place at a competitive university.

They all worked incredibly hard and were rewarded with a trip to The University of Oxford to take part in a graduation ceremony. Well done to Florind and Nazim who bravely spoke in front of the other schools about what they had learnt from the programme. It was a fantastic experience for our students.

### 6th Form Faith and University Event

Eight students from a range of London universities (including Imperial, UCL and King's) ran a 'Faith and University' event for Year 12. The sixth formers had the opportunity to circulate and ask questions about applying for university, how study works once there and how to choose the right course. Many thanks to Pietro Cespoli for arranging this valuable event!



## Poetry Slam

We hosted our first poetry slam on the theme of 'Spoken Word Power: Hear My Voice'. After a series of workshops, pupils finally performed their pieces in an event hosted by Patrick Evans. Our three categories and winners were:

Best written piece: Esther Bamgbose Year 8  
Best performance: Peaches Year 10  
Most creative: Alfredos Year 7

We even had two honorary winners for the 'most humorous' category as they brought much needed comedic relief to the evening. Well done Elena and Abi in year 10.



# News from the Art Department

## New technician

We are very happy to welcome our new technician, Sara Vesterberg Thomas who started working for the Art and DT depts in January. Sara is an experienced designer and bookbinder in her own right and has made an instant impact on both departments.

## Year 12

Year 12 students have completed their mural entitled 'Souls Journey'. They have worked throughout the winter outside on this and the end result looks fantastic. Work by Maya, Sean, Raadi, Jumirah and Carlos.



## Year 11

Year 11 have started their final project which lasts for 10 weeks and ends with a two-day final piece in April. Themes this year include Places and Spaces and fractured. At present students are developing their ideas.



'London Town' by Glory Ngidi-Bokanga 11C

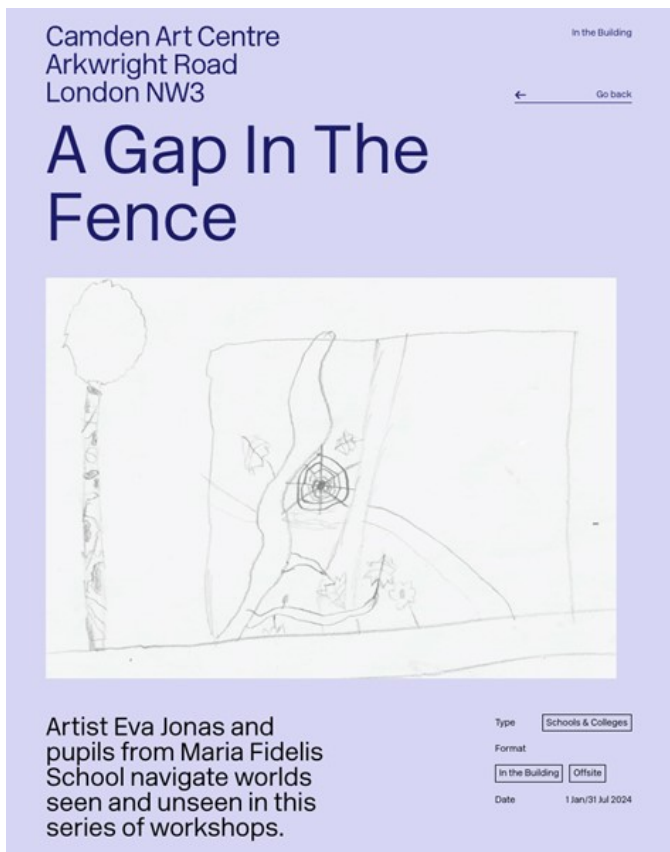


Fragments mood board by Plemilia Tampwhou-Eyab 11W

## 9C

9C are currently working on a series of workshops with Miss Levin, the artist Eva Jones and Camden Art Centre titled 'A Gap in the Fence'. The project explores the pupils' inner and outer worlds, inspired by a drawing made during the first workshop. A constellation of references and artworks will form a physical record of the project in the shape of a spider's web. In two weeks, students will be spending the day at Camden Arts centre developing the ideas they have been working on in the classroom. The work will be exhibited and open to the public later on this year.

## News from the Art Department



Promotional Material form the 'Gap in the Fence' Project

year. The studio created the Olympic torch for the 2012 Olympics, the new Route master and the architecture at Coal Drops Yard near the school. Students have been taking part in the design process, learning about careers in design and visited a large international studio. They have also taken part in a short workshop. The intention of the project is to learn how creativity is an very important part of future careers not only in design but many other areas. Students have been very impressed with the experience so far.



Students from 9A learn about the philosophy of design in Heatherwick.

Heatherwick Studios are currently working on large buildings such as the Google Campus at Kings Cross (see the model on the right of the picture below)

### Star cross Yard Mural



In November Year 11 students form Maria Fidelis worked collaboratively with Ms Byford, Camden Council and muralists Global Street Art to design a mural to go on the side of the old Gower Street School. The mural is now complete.

### Heatherwick Studio

All year 9s are due to or have been taking part in workshops at the Thomas Heatherwick Studios this



Students created their own models to design briefs and presented them to others.



## Ski Trip to Italy

Following a long coach journey through France and Switzerland, we arrived in the Italian Alps on Saturday evening. We were served dinner, given our rooms and then went straight to the ski hire to get kitted out. Our daily routine was up at 7.00am, breakfast at 7.45am, downstairs to the boot room to collect equipment, then onto the slopes for a 9.00am lesson. We returned to the hotel for a bowl of pasta and then back to the



slopes for the second lesson of the day. Skiing finished at 3.00pm and we then had down time to shower, relax, go to the local supermarket or chill in the bar. Dinner was served early and we were then ready for evening activities. These included ice skating, bowling and a competitive quiz night. We even managed an afternoon visit to a nearby village where students bought souvenirs, cake, snacks and even a football!

The students enjoyed six days of skiing and made

good progress across this time. Most were able to use the ski lift and complete red and blue runs by the end of the week; the instructors were impressed



with the progress they made. By the time we reached Friday everyone was tired and ready to return home. Once all the equipment was returned, it was time to pack, have a quick dinner and then load up the coach. It was another long journey home filled with impromptu open mike sessions, singing, make-overs and quizzes. We arrived back in Lon-



don exhausted but happy, and students were pleased to be reunited with their parents. A number of the students have expressed an interest in attending the ski trip in 2025!



## 6th Form News

### UCAS

A total of 55 applications were finally sent off in time for the 31st January deadline. At the time of writing 19 students had received all their decisions, 34 had received some, and 2 are still waiting to hear.

### New Cake Sale

On Friday 9th February a cake sale was held in the Common Room in aid of Macmillan Cancer Care. Sixth Form students set up and ran the sale. In total £132 was raised.

### Reading Champions



12 Sixth Form students are volunteering as 'Reading Champions' this term. They have received training from the English department and are working with KS3 students after school or at lunch times to

help improve their reading.

### The Politics Project

The Politics Project, an organisation which encourages young people to participate in elections, delivered an assembly to Year 13 on how politics affects their everyday lives. From the minimum wage rate for 18-year-olds to the school curriculum, students saw the impact that politicians can have. The assembly explained how to register to vote and how to apply for free voter identification.



A talent show, organised by the Sixth Form Leadership team, and supported by the Heads of Houses, was held on Friday 22nd March. This was suggested by the students and they have led the way on the organising and promotion of this event. Two rounds of auditions have already been held with a total of 22 acts wishing to perform.

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## Our Star Athlete wins again...



### He's not half fast! Illias races to long-distance win

WHEELCHAIR racer Illias Zghoundi isn't deterred by silly little things like distances. The talented teenager took on "the biggest challenge" of his career so far last month when he competed in the Brighton Half Marathon. But far from being overwhelmed by the 13.1 mile course, the 17-year-old (pictured) powered his way to victory, crossing the finish line in a little over one hour and five minutes.

"I really didn't enter the half-marathon to win it, I was just aiming to do my best," said Illias. "I felt strong on the day, and although the conditions weren't great, I managed to win it. I'm really pleased."

Next up, Illias, who lives in West Hampstead, will be donning his Team Camden colours when he bids to win the Mini London Marathon for the fourth year in a row. It would be yet another remarkable achievement for the Maria Fidelis A-Level student, who is ranked No. 1 in his age group in the UK.

Arguably Illias's biggest challenge in 2024, however, comes away from the race track. He is currently trying to raise the funds needed to buy a new racing wheelchair, which will cost upwards of £25,000.

Anyone interested in helping the speedster close in on his dream of one day competing at the Paralympics can visit [www.gofundme.com](http://www.gofundme.com) and search for: Illias Zghoundi

This article on Illias Zghoundi in Yr 12 was published in the Camden New Journal on 7th March 2024

## 6th Form News

### Jack Petchey Award

Congratulations to Jonathan Olasunkamni, our Head Boy, who was nominated for a Jack Petchey Award. Jonathan has been a true ambassador for the School and is always willing to help and get other students to help with School events.



### Sixth Form Leadership team

The process has started to recruit the next SLT. The current Head Boy and Head Girl delivered an assembly to Year 12 on their experiences of the roles and on the application process. Applicants must write a letter, deliver a speech to their peers in assembly and have an interview with Mr Coombes, Miss Sowden and a member of the current SLT. The new SLT will be announced in April and will attend the FCJ Leadership Conference.

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## St John Bosco Children's Camp

Inspired by St John Bosco, in 1935 a group of volunteers set up a summer camp to provide children from London a place to spend a week of their summer in a supportive environment with a Catholic ethos.

The St John Bosco Camp, although only operating in the summer school holidays, has been more than a holiday experience for many boys and girls, and volunteers too. The camp has helped shape the lives of so many young people, leading them in directions they may not have considered or experienced. The St John Bosco Camp is a week-long Catholic summer camp for children aged 9-12. The Camp offers a unique opportunity to explore the outdoors, make new friends, and deepen campers' faith.

Their experienced volunteers will guide campers

### Mark Evison Foundation

Four groups of Year 12 students have submitted applications to the Mark Evison Foundation. They are an organisation which award grants to young people who wish to complete an extracurricular challenge. The proposals submitted include the creation of a comic book series and a 'Great Northern Hike'

### Talent Show

A huge well done to the 6th Form Staff and the student leadership team, who organised and ran our annual talent show. There was a variety of acts and it was wonderful to see our students perform in front of others. The atmosphere was very supportive and congratulations go to all who took part.

The joint winners of the show were Florind Chili (Y9) and Samuel Kalamby (Y9) and Serena Orhiere (Y11) and Tanaiya Albano (Y11). Ronnie Payne (Y7) won 3<sup>rd</sup> place, and Glory Ngidi-Bokanga (Y11—below) came second.

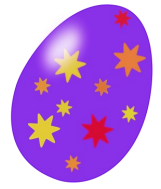


through exciting outdoor activities like swimming, climbing, and team-building games, while providing a supportive environment for them to grow in their faith. It is their mission to make St John Bosco Camp an incredible summer experience.

For an online application form, contact:

<https://boscocamp.co.uk/child-applications>

# PHOTO GALLERY



January: 6th Form Pre-Loved Campaign



January: Yr11 6th Form Taster Day



January: Stewardship Club making bags



January: English trip to see Macbeth



January: 6th Form Trip to London Zoo



February: Ski Trip to Italy

# PHOTO GALLERY



February: Form Mass with Fr John Njorteah



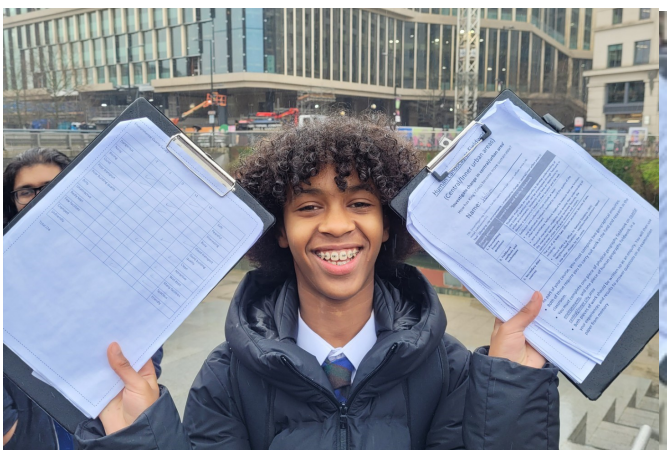
February: 6th Form Art Project on Phoenix Rd



March: IT trip to Bletchley Park



February: Poetry Slam



March: Yr10 Geography Field Trip



March Rewards Assemblies

# PHOTO



March: Trip to see Romeo & Juliet



March: Inter-House Football Competition



March: Faith and University Event



March: Spoken Word Power at The Criterion Theatre



March: Talent Show



March: Headmaster's Lunch

# What Parents & Educators Need to Know about CLICKBAIT

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

### HARMFUL MISINFORMATION

Clickbait tends to play fast and loose with the truth, opting for eye-catching content over objectivity. This is particularly dangerous for younger internet users, who are generally more susceptible to that type of material. A child could be presented with fake news, misleading articles and – in some cases – outright lies without fully understanding what they're viewing and why it's harmful.

### INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

Due to the misleading nature of many examples of clickbait, what may seem to be innocuous and child friendly could actually contain age-inappropriate material such as extremist political views or violent, pornographic or sexually explicit content. This is clearly a hazard for young people, who could be upset, disturbed or influenced by exposure to such subject matter.

### HIDDEN MALWARE

While most clickbait is simply trying to promote engagement to earn companies additional revenue, some of it does redirect to dubious sites with the potential to infect devices with viruses or malware. This could put a child's sensitive data – such as their name, their location and their date of birth – at risk of being accessed and exploited by malicious hackers.

### PRIVACY PROBLEMS

Some clickbait leads to sites which could coax a child into volunteering their personal data – using pop-ups to ask them for their email address and phone number, for example, in exchange for accessing additional content or subscribing to various services. Normally, this harvested information is then sold to third parties, who often utilise it for targeted adverts and other sales schemes.

### A DRAINING DISTRACTION

Clickbait encourages spiralling consumption of online content, which could easily result in a young person spending hours scrolling aimlessly instead of doing something productive or interacting with family and friends. This can leave them tired, asocial and lacking focus – and, in the long term, can negatively impact their social skills, education and mental wellbeing.

### IMPACT ON BEHAVIOUR

Depending on the type of clickbait a child is interacting with, you might notice negative changes in their behaviour. Weight loss scams, for example, are common among clickbait and have the potential to influence eating habits and body image – while deliberately inflammatory 'rage bait' articles can leave impressionable young people feeling irritable, restless or argumentative.

## Advice for Parents & Educators

### START A CONVERSATION

The sheer volume of clickbait can make protecting children against it quite challenging. It's vital to talk to young people regularly about the types of content they encounter online, so that they understand the risks of engaging with clickbait. If you're still concerned, it may also be wise to keep an eye on children's online activity to ensure they're not being tempted by clickbait headlines.

### PROMOTE CRITICAL THINKING

Encouraging children to question the legitimacy of sensational headlines and too-good-to-be-true promises will help them to become savvier online – and far less likely to be drawn in by clickbait content. These critical thinking skills will also serve to protect them in other areas of the digital world where misinformation is becoming increasingly common.

### SPOT THE TELLTALE SIGNS

There are certain common elements in clickbait, including headlines and images that use shock and outrage to grab people's attention – as well as numbered lists, such as "8 Facts You Won't Believe Are True". Some clickbait combines several of these tactics to snag users' interest. Learn to recognise these techniques for yourself so you can teach children to notice them as well.

### TAKE CONTROL

Many parents opt to place limits on how long their children can spend online each day, which obviously reduces the chance of exposure to clickbait. Alternatively, most internet-enabled devices have built-in controls that allow parents to manage what sort of online content their child can access – including filtering by age, which can screen out a percentage of inappropriate material.

### Meet Our Expert

Carly Page is an experienced technology writer with more than 10 years in the industry. Previously the editor of tech tabloid The Inquirer, she is now a freelance technology journalist, editor and consultant who writes for Forbes, TechRadar and Wired, among others.

