



THE COMPANION

Mr D. O'Brien, Editor

Message from the Headmaster



Welcome to the Easter edition of *The Companion*. As I was reading through it, I felt truly inspired by the wealth of opportunities that our staff organise for our students, and it shows just how committed they are to giving students at Maria Fidelis the very best all-round education they can. This term is always a busy one and staff have been working tirelessly to support our students. The School has been open every weekend for students to get additional support to help them prepare better for their GCSE and A Level exams. We also extended the day for Year 11 students to allow them time and space to study in School with teachers available to provide additional support.

We had several guest speakers and performers in this term to give our students different perspectives on life. We were very lucky to have had Dr Stuart Lawrence come to speak to our students. Further details of his talk can be found on p9. He is a truly inspirational speaker and he gave our students and staff plenty to think about.

As part of our Lenten commitment, staff and students made donations foodbank and our 6th Form leadership team delivered these to the foodbank. This is a most worthy cause; we have worked with them for several years and will continue to do so. Our 6th Form CAFOD Young Leaders also attended a reception at the Houses of Parliament this term. Pope Francis has declared that 2025 to be a Jubilee Year of Hope. Every 25 years, the Church holds a jubilee year or holy year, with the intention that people rebuild their relationship with God and, therefore, with each other. It is most appropriate that this year the theme should be 'Pilgrims of Hope'. Whatever people's religious background, we all need to work together to bring peace and unity to our community and our School is a wonderful example of how this can be achieved. Working here with the staff and students fills me with hope and, even on more challenging days, there is always something that reminds me of how lucky we all are to be part of this School community.

I wish you all a very happy Easter and I look forward to starting again in the summer term.

Mr M. Anthony, Headteacher

Important Dates:

April 2025

- Mon 21st Easter Monday Bank Holiday
- Tues 22nd 1st day of term
- Wed 30th Camden Schools' Concert

May 2025

- Thurs 1st Year 7 Parents' Evening
- Fri 2nd Yr. 11 Leavers' Mass
- Mon 5th May Bank Holiday
- 26th - 30th Half Term

June 2025

- 16th - 27th End of Year Exams

July 2025

- Fri 11th INSET Day
- Wed 22nd Last day of term



Photo of the first ever Student Council meeting in January 2025. Each form group is represented by a student, voted in by their peers. Read more about it on page 2.

FOCUS ON: THE STUDENT COUNCIL

During the Autumn term, the student community at Maria Fidelis elected a new student council. The student council is made up of representatives from each year group from Year 7 to Year 10. Each tutor group elects a student to serve on the Student Council. Year 11 does not have representatives on the Council due to their GCSE exam commitments, however they are still represented through their form tutors and Head of Year.

The Student Council have already undertaken some very impressive and important work. During their meetings, Mr McLoughlin will compile key points that the students wish to raise which acts as feedback to the Senior Leadership Team, and they even have a section which goes into the governor's report. So far, they have given feedback on teaching and learning and the behaviour systems in the school.

The Student Council not only represent the wider student body of the school, but they also play a crucial role in the school's engagement with visitors. The students have been able to speak eloquently about the strengths of the school and the things that they would like to see improved. This helps allow students to feel that their voice is genuinely heard by staff, and emphasises that they are at the centre of all that we do at Maria Fidelis. The next edition of The Companion will feature a more specific summary of the important work that is already underway by the student council.

The Student Council:

Year 7: Amela, Leo, Manyiel, Heldana & Autumn

Year 9: Juanita, Deon, Nolwai, Shayon & La'Vae

Year 8: Mia-Anne, Kaeden, Lessiya, Bruk & Zaki

Year 10: Nazim, Alina, Fareed, Abi & Michael

Mr D. McLoughlin, Deputy Headteacher

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 to a member of staff. 2024's winner was Mr Aldridge, the Head of Art. His commitment and to his students and passion for his subject led to a large number of nominations from students. We are also incredibly proud that his work to commemorate 50 years of Maria Fidelis is now in pride of place in the reception of the school. To put a student or teacher forward for a nomination, please see Miss Sowden, Head of 6th Form.



FCJ Days

Day 1

For the last two days before the February half-term, Maria Fidelis was delighted to welcome a number of FCJ Sisters and staff from the Gaudete Trust to meet and greet both staff and students.

Having socialised with staff upon arrival, the Sisters joined 10L in the Chapel for Holy Mass celebrated by Fr John. During his homily, Fr John emphasised that every student is made by God, and for greatness. They each have a unique calling to live out.



This theme of our individuality was also the focus of sessions that the FCJ Sisters conducted throughout the day to the different classes they visited.

10C had the privilege of listening to Sr Lynne FCJ and Sr Bernadette FCJ, who encouraged the class to reflect on their aims and ambitions for adult life.

These discussions led to the Sisters exploring the theme of vocation (from the Latin 'vocare' which means 'call'). The class were then guided through a reflection of their own gifts and talents, and the possible callings they could live out in their adult life, to serve those around them. The Sisters also explained the states of life within the Catholic Church, and offered a Q&A session about their life as Religious Sisters. This was certainly the most popular feature of the session.



Day 2

Day 2 began with sessions for Year 8 in the Hall. The classes were introduced to the Sisters, as well as a Companion in Mission (a lay person who lives the same order of life as the FCJs, but in the context of their family).

The visitors introduced themselves and then played a fun variation of Blankety Blank to test if the students were paying attention!

The Sisters then outlined that the students are part of a worldwide community, simply by being students at Maria Fidelis. It was inspiring to hear first hand testimony of the amazing work that FCJ Sisters are doing around the world, including:

- Running primary and secondary schools
- Offering Spiritual Direction
- Providing Counselling and Play Therapy for children who have experienced trauma
- Taking young people to World Youth Day
- Participating in raising awareness of the dangers of global warming for our common home
- Supporting victims of human trafficking and exploitation

The FCJ Sisters commented on how joyful their experience at Maria Fidelis had been, from the huge welcome and polite manners, to the mature questions about life as Religious Sisters.

We look forward to welcoming them back to our school community again soon!



Future Chef Competition

Keziah and I (Olivia) were fortunate enough to represent Maria Fidelis in a cooking competition called *Future Chef: Cooking up a Storm*. This competition is a nationally held competition where pupils from around the UK are invited to cook a main meal for two people which is under £5 in total. Keziah and I were able to come up with two dishes that were both under £3.50 to feed two people.

My dish was a creamy bacon and mushroom pasta and Keziah made sticky lime chicken wings with white rice and coleslaw.

We travelled to east London which was about an hour away. When we got there we quickly prepared our stations. Luckily we stationed opposite each other so we were able to help each other. It was nice to be there together. Once we were prepared our stations Miss Hodey and all the other teachers had to leave the kitchen and we were left with lots of professional chefs who were going to be our judges. At that point it felt even more scary because Miss wasn't there to remind us of any missed steps, but also the chefs were constantly on top of us and they asked a lot of questions. One of the chefs helped me with the tasting of my food because I wasn't able to taste it myself.

This was our very first time in a professional kitchen. This kitchen made us feel really small because everything was bigger than what we were used to. It was all stainless steel and the equipment was quite advanced. We felt excited but also very nervous about what we were about to do, however it was great knowing that we were the youngest in the competition and were going to represent Maria Fidelis.

We only had an hour to prepare our dishes and the time went by very quickly. The chefs did keep reminding us about how much time we had which helped a lot. We were judged on our food preparation, cleanliness in the kitchen, presentation and taste. We were the only Year 9 students, and all the other competitors were in Years 10 and 11 and were catering students with far more experience than us so the competition was intense.

Unfortunately, we did not finish first place this time which was disappointing, however we feel really lucky to have had the experience of working in a professional kitchen and to have been selected to be the faces of Maria Fidelis. We have been invited to return next year with lots of useful tips from the professional chefs who are excited to see us back next year, and we know that we have made our school proud. We had a really good time and can't wait for next year's competition.



White Rice and Honey
Lime Chicken Wings

By Keziah Sholaja-Bell



Creamy Bacon and
Mushroom Pasta

By Olivia Bradley

“You won’t frown from watching Hadestown!”

A review by Nazim Ahmed 10A, member of the Student Newspaper Club.

Who’d have thought the class that studies middle aged men fighting giant killer serpents, would end up going on so many trips? That’s right, members of the GCSE Classics class and a few other students were given an amazing opportunity to attend a performance of the Hadestown musical at the Lyric Theatre in central London.



The whole experience itself was amazing. Walking up the street to see the glowing theatre in the night sky; going through the doors and seeing the cast list and the whole architecture of the interior itself was amazing. That’s not even talking about the actual play, which was the most magical thing you could ever see. Let’s talk about the actual performance though.

If you’re trying to avoid spoilers, you may not want to read the rest of the article, so this is your one and only warning!

Ok you’re still with me? So the story is a modern retelling of the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice. It’s a love story about a woman who dies and goes to Hades (the underworld) and how her beloved comes to save her. There’s many obstacles in his way and the play is a tragedy so its ending is not so happy.

Although I know that most Greek and Roman myths end sadly, it was heart-breaking when Orpheus turned around and failed his test and watched Eurydice fall back down to Hades. However the play ends with a motivating message of staying hopeful and moving forward (without looking back, Orpheus!)

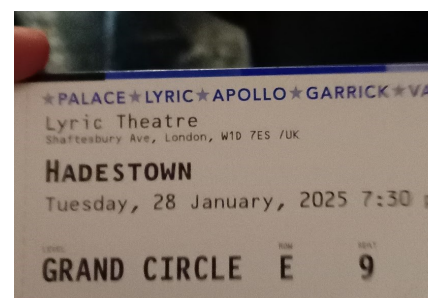
The story was an interesting pick to adapt but I think they did a great job and making it a musical was a genius move. The songs work so well and the play wouldn’t work without them. That’s no exaggeration either: there was not a long moment of dialogue without some form of singing or music accompanying it.

Something cool I liked about the play was the range of special effects. They mainly used lights but they used them so effectively to the point it felt like I was watching a music video. I specifically remember the scene where Orpheus is singing as he walks down the road back home. It was near the end and the whole stage was completely dark with only Orpheus and a few orange lights in the background.

The other cool effect was the stage. It was made up of a bunch of circles and a quarter into the show, it started to act like an elevator into Hadestown. I laughed when I saw Hades and Persephone coming up. Also during a few songs it started spinning and was really good for the dances.

This play was close to perfection, the only real complaint I might have would be about the seats. Some poor soul had half of their view blocked by a random pillar! Also we were quite far from the stage so we had a little struggle viewing the actors.

However, considering how cheap the tickets were, we got some decent seats and were still able to thoroughly enjoy the play. Overall I’d rate this play a 7.8/10 and I’d recommend getting good seats and watching it if you can!



Art & Design

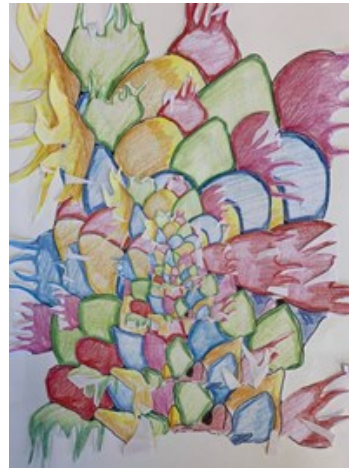
Year 9

Miss Levin's Year 9 class are currently collaborating with the Camden Arts Centre in a series of texture workshops. The experts help the students to explore the variety of textures they can use in their creative pieces. These sessions, happening over ten weeks, will culminate in an exhibition at the Camden Arts Centre in May 2025. We look forward to seeing the culmination of their work in the Summer edition of The Companion.



Year 10

Year 10 have recently started their first major piece of GCSE Coursework. The theme of this work is 'Surfaces.' Below are some initial drawings from Iramari, Grace, Skye and Christo.



Year 13

Students in their final year at Maria Fidelis have been completing outcomes for their Simple and Complex Project.

Examples here include Maya's acrylic painting of her Italian grandmother at home in Calabria, and Raa-di's depiction of a community in oil paint.



Staying Safe Online

In a digital age, the huge variety of different social networking sites and gaming platforms enables us all to be in contact with friends and family wherever they are in the world.

However, the internet can also be a very dangerous and nasty place. Many often believe that they can hide behind a phone or computer screen in order to cause harm or distress to others. This is not the case.

Throughout the year, PC Matt has run a number of information assemblies to all year groups about the dangers of the internet, and how to stay safe online.

His excellent presentations got students to reflect on their own social media/internet use, and how they can take simple but effective steps to protect themselves.

Perhaps the most important presentation was that on sexting and sharing images. Students were taught what the law says about this topic, what the consequences are if you are caught, and how they can avoid falling into danger on social media.

If any students are affected by something they see online, or are concerned about a friends' use of social media, they can talk to any member of staff in school. We are here to help.



Sixth Form Taster Day

On Thursday 9th January, we attended a 6th Form taster day. We each picked our preferred A-Level options and had workshops/introductory lessons for these courses throughout the day. In the morning we also had an assembly where we were told what 6th Form life would look like on average, as well as what makes the 6th Form at Maria Fidelis unique.

In our introductory lessons, we learned some key concepts of the course, alongside what the course content and workload would be like. I particularly enjoyed my politics lesson with Dr. Murphy, where we spoke about different political parties and where they lie on the political spectrum, and I now hope to study A-Level Politics.

I had a good time experiencing some semblance of what my life at 6th form might look like, and overall found it very a interesting and insightful day.

Eady Parmenter 11A



Extra Curricular Activities

Chess Competition

Lunchtime is usually the loudest point of the school day, with many students playing various sports both in the MUGA and the Sports Hall. However, if one was to take a walk along the Maths corridor recently, they would have found a hushed silence in room 139. Here we see a tense stand off between Maths teacher Mr Lissowski and Sixth Form student Declan. Both had accepted the challenge of taking each other on in a lunchtime duel. In this instance, the teacher came out as victor.



Did you know:

- There are over 319 billion possible Chess combinations.
- After each move, there are 400 unique possible moves that a player could make.
- The oldest Chess manual was written in Arabic around the year 840 CE.
- A game of Chess on 9 June 1970 was played between space and Earth: it ended in a draw.
- The most expensive set (made of diamonds and emeralds) is worth over \$9.8million.

Book Club

On Friday lunchtimes, the library is closed off for the meeting of a group of students who are the first to join Miss Meier's new Book Club.

The group met initially at the start of January to choose a book to read. The students discussed a number of options available to them, before voting on the one they would all read over the coming week. When they returned the week after, they discussed what they thought about the storyline and characters, as well as if they enjoyed it or not. All of this naturally happens with a selection of snacks on offer!

This cycle repeats itself on a weekly basis over the term. The Book Club is not just an enjoyable way to get reading, but will also have a direct impact on student results at GCSE, A Level and beyond.

UCL conducted recent research on the impact of reading, comparing the progress of over 43,000 students. Their report concluded that, if a student reads every day, they will have a three month advantage compared to students who don't.



In other words, get reading!

Jiu-Jitsu Club

Jiu-Jitsu club is the fresh new after-school club that has recently been added to the busy sports timetable at Maria Fidelis! Jiu-Jitsu club takes places after school 3:15 every Monday in the Dance studio and is open to all year groups! We supply kimonos for you to wear, all you need to bring is your PE kit and a water bottle. If you are interested in giving Jiu-Jitsu a try, please pick up a information sheet from the PE office.

At the club, we focus on self-defence. This involves learning basic takedowns/throws, sweeps and keeping safe on the ground. So far this year, we are trying to master the Osotogari (大外刈) throw and the Tripod sweep when we are on the ground. It would be great for you to join us!



Extra Curricular Activities

British Museum Visit

A few weeks ago, the Year 10 GCSE Classics class went on a field trip to the British Museum, just down the road from Maria Fidelis in Holborn. The purpose of the trip, led by Miss Low, was to look at parts of an ancient Temple called the Parthenon.

The Parthenon was a temple that was built in 447BC in Athens. It was built for the Greek goddess Athena - the goddess of wisdom and war. The Museum is home to some major features of the Parthenon that have been preserved.

For example, students got to see a triangular part of the temple that exhibits a scene from ancient Greek myths, as well as parts of the metopes, and the temple's ionic frieze. These artefacts helped students to understand the myths they have been studying in class, which will be very useful for them when they are examined on them during their GCSE exams.

Students also saw reconstructions and models of what it would've looked like in 400 BC. There was also time to see statues of Greek gods or idols at the time. One of them was Hermes, displaying his winged sandals.



Dr Stuart Lawrence: Guest Speaker

On 25 February, Years 10-13 were treated to an inspirational session led by motivational speaker, Dr Stuart Lawrence.

Dr Stuart is the brother of Stephen Lawrence, who was brutally murdered at a bus stop in 1993 in a racially motivated attack. The investigation into the murder was full of failures, and there have been multiple inquiries to work out why it took so long for anyone to be brought to justice for his murder.

Dr Stuart did not let this traumatic situation hold him back though. He is a teacher, speaker, author and consultant with one main mission: to inspire. His specialism in personal growth is summarised, in his own words, on his website:

"I want the people of today to understand that it is all down to them – what they do with their lives, how hard they work, what they achieve – and that they have the ability to achieve all their hopes and goals."

The students were incredibly receptive to his talk and were certainly inspired by Stuart's resilience in the face of adversity.

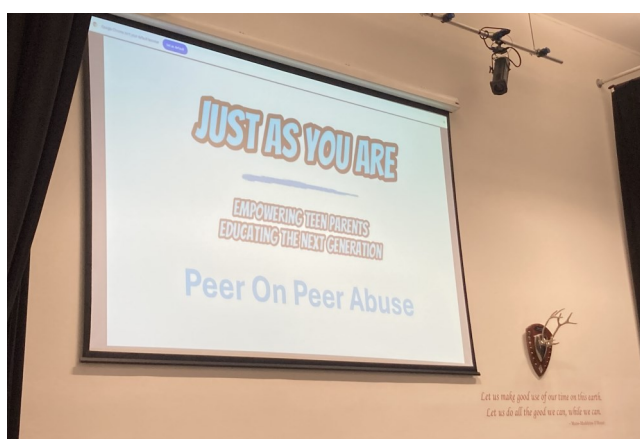
Just As You Are

On Wednesday 12 February, Year 7 to Year 10 attended workshops in the hall run by Just As You Are, a not-for-profit organisation that works to empower young people and prepare them for adult life. These workshops form part of the Lifelong Learning curriculum offered at Maria Fidelis.

Students in these year groups were asked to reflect on their relationships with their peers, focusing specifically on how healthy they are. The interactive sessions proposed different situations that young people are likely to face in the modern world, and gave them opportunities to explore how they could best respond to them.

These scenarios particularly highlighted the subtle but effective ways that friendships and relationships can be manipulated to benefit just one person, leaving the other as a victim of a violation of trust.

It is hoped that these sessions will enable our young people to be more aware of how they can positively interact with one another, fostering healthy, happy and harmonious relationships with others around them.



Love is in the Air

If you were to ask anyone if there are any significant dates that crop up during February, I'm sure the 14th would be high on many people's lists. Valentine's Day, named after the Christian martyr St Valentine, has been celebrated as a day of love and romance for decades. Tradition states that St Valentine performed weddings for Christian soldiers who, at the time, were forbidden to marry by the Emperor. By the 18th Century in England, his feast day had become a day where couples express their love and affection for each other.

At Maria Fidelis, the Chaplaincy team, led by our Sixth Form CAFOD Young Leaders, decided to honour his legacy by raising money for charity. They sold roses at £2 per rose, with all proceeds going to CAFOD, a Catholic charity that works with the most deprived and poverty-stricken communities around the world. We raised a total of £200, which will go a long way to helping these communities to improve living standards for those most in need.



Celebrating St Patrick's Day

The 17th March sees the annual celebration of St Patrick, patron Saint of Ireland. As part of the celebrations, Mrs Doody (Head of Year 9) collaborated with the PE Department to introduce Year 9 to Gaelic Football, one of Ireland's most popular sports.

The students were taught the rules of the game and the key skills and moves associated with playing. After this brief introduction, and under the watchful eye of Mrs Doody and Mr Cranny, the students competed against each other to put these newly learnt skills to the test.

It was fascinating to see such a positive attitude from all involved towards playing this new sport, one that many students had never even heard of before!



Theatre Competition

Friday 21 March saw English teachers Ms Michaels and Mr McReynolds take a group of Year 7 and 8 students to the Donmar Warehouse Theatre for the culmination of a 10 week project called 'My Future.' The day included live performances from schools in Camden and Westminster.

The following students represented Maria Fidelis and made us proud of their talent, passion and dedication:

Lexi Jorgenson - 7F
Janelle Alorka - 7F
Halle Armel-Angeli - 7F
Freya Caley - 7L
Hannah El Mahdy - 7L
Eloise Doyle - 7W
Johnny (Zi Di) Zhuang - 7W
Isabelle Calle Luna - 8L
Elliot Gilchrist - 8L
John Tyler Hernandez - 8L



Brilliant Club Graduation

On Tuesday, 25th February, a group of our Year 9 students visited Royal Holloway University to celebrate their graduation from the Brilliant Club. Throughout this programme, our students worked alongside PhD researcher Emily Mantaro, exploring the fascinating topic of sleep disorders in a project titled *Mind and Mattress: Sleeping Your Way to Better Mental Health*. They developed essential academic skills, including how to research, structure, and write an academic piece – an invaluable experience beyond the standard school curriculum.

During our visit, students had the opportunity to reflect on their studies alongside peers from other schools, gaining insight into the diverse academic work taking place. They were also given a tour of the beautiful Royal Holloway campus, immersing themselves in the university environment. The trip was especially inspiring for our female students, as Royal Holloway was originally founded in 1886 as a women-only college before opening its doors to all in 1965. It is also home to the Emily Davison Library, named after the famous suffragette who studied there and played a pivotal role in the fight for women's voting rights.

Our Year 9s had a fantastic day, and we hope the trip has sparked their aspirations for higher education. The experience provided them with a real taste of university life, and many students shared that they now feel more informed and confident about the prospect of applying to university in the future. We look forward to seeing where their academic journeys take them next.

Maria Fidelis Ski Trip 2025



The February half term saw 39 students and 5 members of staff (Ms Palankai, Ms Barrett, Mr Barnwell, Ms Lawson and Mr Lissowski) set off from Maria Fidelis by coach on the annual Maria Fidelis Ski Trip. The trip is a wonderful opportunity for students across all ability levels to gain experience of this wonderful sport under the direction of experienced instructors.

Departing at 6pm on February 14th, the group travelled for 25 hours through England and France before arriving in the beautiful town of Santa Caterina in northern Italy.

Wonderfully sunny and clear weather all week, fantastic food and incredible skiing conditions made an unforgettable trip for all who went. The students participated in several evening activities too, including outdoor and indoor ice skating, quizzes and trips to the Pizzeria.

All students, some of whom had never even put on ski boots before, were able to master the necessary skills to ski independently with confidence.

Feedback from the ski instructors outlined that our students were exceptionally well behaved, even commenting that the advanced group was the best group they'd seen all winter. These praises were echoed by the staff upon their return too.

The journey back was smooth and thankfully a few hours shorter than the outbound leg, with excited parents congregated outside the school to welcome the long-awaited return. A successful trip (with no injuries) and overwhelmingly positive feedback from all involved readies us to do it all again next year!

Mr P. Lissowski



Maths Challenge

Our students recently had an outstanding day at the Count on Us Maths Challenge held at the London Academy of Excellence in Tottenham. This prestigious competition, designed to challenge students well beyond the standard curriculum, involves complex problem-solving tasks, strategic games, and advanced mathematical thinking. The content goes far beyond what is typically expected at Year 7 level, requiring strong reasoning skills, mental arithmetic, and teamwork.

Despite being one of the youngest teams in attendance – comprised predominantly of our best Year 7 HLP students – they performed exceptionally well against teams made up of Year 8, 9, and 10 students.

Although naturally at a disadvantage due to their age and experience, our students rose to the challenge with impressive skill and determination, winning the majority of their games against older competitors. This remarkable achievement is a testament to the hard work, dedication, and resilience they have shown since beginning their preparation in November.

We are incredibly proud of their performance and the way they represented our school with confidence, focus, and teamwork throughout the event.



CAFOD Young Leaders

On Tuesday 18th March, three of the Year 12 CAFOD Young Leaders were selected to attend a reception at the Speaker's House, within the Houses of Parliament. The event was to celebrate the Jubilee Year of Hope.



The aim of the evening was to discuss with parliamentarians the issue of rising debt in developing countries and how the UK government could, and should, act to relieve the pressure this debt creates on some of the world's poorest nations. Students got to meet CAFOD ambassadors from schools around the country and heard speeches on this important issue from Anneliese Dodds MP, Florence Eshalomi MP, and, perhaps most inspiringly, CAFOD partner Brian Maeba, a young farmer from Kenya.

The Maria Fidelis CAFOD Young Leaders now plan to coordinate a project at school to encourage students to contact our MP (and Prime Minister!), Sir Keir Starmer MP, with the a simple message:

"Cancel Debt...Choose Hope!"



Out and about in Epping Forest

On Wednesday 5 March, the next generation of Geographers stepped out of our traditional school classrooms and into the beauty and tranquillity of Epping Forest. Fieldtrips are an essential part of the GCSE Geography course, enabling students to take on the responsibility of conducting their own investigations.

With support from our own Geography department and the staff from the Epping Forest Field Centre, the Year 9s investigated the changes in river channel characteristics along the course of the River Debden.

They spent the day putting their knowledge of research methods into practice by taking a qualitative measure of river discharge; recording the depth,

width and velocity at different points along the river; as well as completing field sketches to support their data collection.

This fieldtrip was incredibly beneficial, since it linked to two of the exam papers the students will sit at the end of Year 11.



University of Cambridge HLP Trip

On Friday 28th February, our Year 10 HLP students had the incredible opportunity to visit Girton College, Cambridge as part of the Pathways Programme. This trip was designed to inform students about higher education while immersing them in the rich history and academic excellence of one of Cambridge's most significant colleges.

Girton College holds a unique place in history as the first residential college in Cambridge to admit women, playing a crucial role in the fight for gender equality in education. Founded in 1869, Girton paved the way for women's access to university-level learning at a time when higher education was largely restricted to men. Today, it remains a diverse and inclusive institution, welcoming students from all backgrounds and disciplines.

Throughout the day, our students were able to explore the beautiful grounds of the College and gain a real sense of what university life entails. Engaging talks and discussions highlighted the wide range of opportunities available, encouraging our students to think ambitiously about their future. The visit left many feeling inspired by the history and academic atmosphere of the college.

A particular highlight of the day was enjoying a delicious lunch in one of Girton's grand dining halls, where formal banquets and traditional Cambridge

feasts take place. Sitting in such an impressive setting added to the sense of occasion and provided students with a glimpse into the unique traditions of university life.



This trip was a fantastic experience, broadening horizons and igniting aspirations. A huge thank you to the Year 10 Pathways Programme and the staff of Girton College, Cambridge for making this visit possible. We hope it will be the first step in many students' journeys toward higher education.



Theatre comes to Maria Fidelis



On Thursday 6 March, all of Year 10 and the Year 9 Sociology students were treated to a visit from the Synergy Theatre Company for a production of the play *Providers*, written by Ambreen Razia.

The show was performed by a cast of professional actors and actors who have first-hand experience of the criminal justice system here in the UK. Two of the cast and crew had been in prison themselves, bringing their lived experience to life on stage.

Their newest play examines how family, love and money can lead young people to make questionable life decisions and even lead them towards a life of crime.

The story followed the experience of two families struggling with a cost of living crisis, as well as grief and mental health challenges. It vividly captured the slippery slope that can be easily followed in order just to make ends meet.



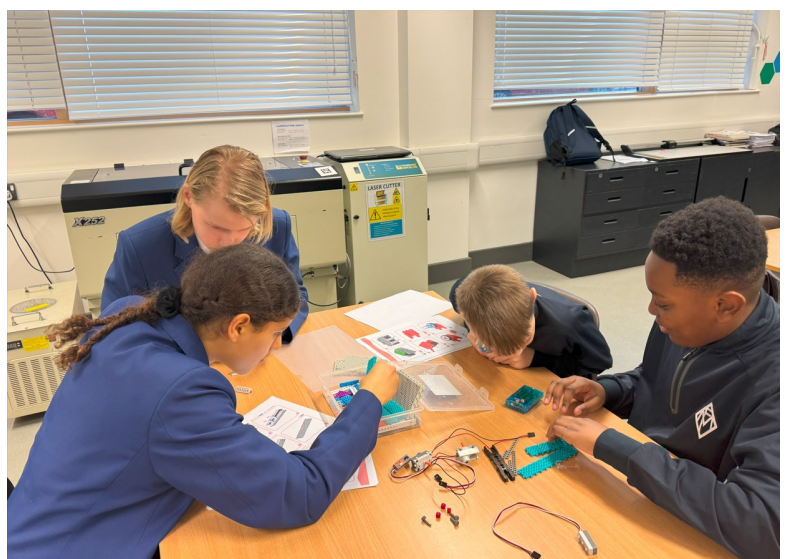
At the end of the inspirational performance, Year 10 also had the opportunity to take part in a Q&A session with the actors, which prompted a very thoughtful and purposeful discussion around life choices.



Robotics Workshops

The Computer Science and Design Technology departments have recently teamed up to run a series of five robotics workshops over the Spring Term, delivered in collaboration with Matris Robotic, a leading company in STEM education with over a decade of experience in the field.

These workshops present a great opportunity for a group of Key Stage 3 students interested in, or considering a GCSE option in Design Technology and/or Computer Science.



During the workshops, students learn about robotics, electronics, and coding by applying principles of engineering, mechanics, and programming to bring their ideas to life, whilst also developing their critical thinking and teamwork skills. As you can see, students get plenty of opportunities during the workshops to both design and construct robots. To add to the fun, they then get to play and experiment with their handmade creations!

Jubilee Year: Pilgrims of Hope



Every 25 years, the Catholic Church celebrates a Jubilee Year: a time of renewal that all Catholics are encouraged to participate in. The theme of 2025, chosen by Pope Francis, is Pilgrims of Hope.

The practice of observing Holy Years has been continuous for around a thousand years. In 1470, Pope Paul II increased their frequency to every 25 years. A Pope can also call for an Extraordinary Jubilee Year, like Pope Francis did in 2015/16.

This Holy Year began on Christmas Eve 2024 and will conclude on the Solemnity of the Epiphany in January 2026. It is a special time for repentance, forgiveness and conversion of heart. Catholics try to restore broken relationships with both God and others. It is also appropriate to look within at how you can better yourself to be a more faithful disciple of Jesus in your daily life.



Term Dates 2025-2026

The term dates for the next academic year have now been approved as follows:

Christmas Term 2025

Monday 1st September—Friday 20th December

Half Term: 27th October—31st October

INSET Days: 1st September & 24th October

Christmas Holiday:

Monday 23rd December—Friday 3 January

Easter Term 2026

Monday 5th January—Thursday 2nd April

Half Term: 16th February—20th February

INSET Day: 5th January

Easter Holiday

Monday 6th April—Friday 17th April

Summer Term 2026

Monday 20th April—Tuesday 21st July

Half Term: 25th May- 29th May

INSET Day: 11th July

These dates are also published on the school website. Further information regarding other important dates such as Parent's Evenings, Open Evening and late starts/early finishes will be available soon.

The school day for all students begins at 8:30am and finishes at 3:05pm. Students must arrive on time and attend in full school uniform each day.

PHOTO GALLERY



January: Inaugural Student Council Meeting



January: Year 10 attending Mass in the Chapel



January: Jazz Music Workshop



January: Exploring the British Museum



February: Valentine's Day Gift Bags in Production



February: Just as You Are Presentation

PHOTO GALLERY



February: FCJ Days



February: Celebrating Valentine's Day



February: Library pre-renovation



February: Library post-renovation



February: Ski Trip to Italy



February: Ski Trip to Italy

PHOTO GALLERY



February: Year 9 Geography Field Trip



March: Students at the Story Garden



March: Synergy Theatre Project Show



March: Synergy Theatre Project Q&A Session



March: 'My Future' Drama Competition



April: Headmaster's Rewards Lunch

GAMING AND GAMBLING AWARENESS AND INFORMATION SESSIONS FOR PARENTS, CARERS AND GUARDIANS



METROPOLITAN
POLICE

Ygam are working with the Metropolitan Police to offer an online information session to help develop your understanding of gaming and gambling harms, enabling you to have open conversations with your children.

Workshop overview:

- **Gambling: exploring the influences on children and young people**
- **Gaming: discussing the benefits and concerns**
- **The blurred lines between gaming and gambling**
- **How to spot the signs of harm**
- **Useful tips to create a healthy gaming balance**
- **Where to get help and support**

WHAT
MIGHT INFLUENCE
A YOUNG PERSON
TO GAMBLE?

WHAT IS
A LOOT
BOX?

WHY ARE
IN-GAME ITEMS
SO IMPORTANT
TO YOUNG
PEOPLE?

We also have a dedicated Parent Hub which aims to provide information and guidance to help you safeguard your children against the potential harms of gaming and gambling. Find out more here: parents.ygam.org

Book your **FREE** place now!

DATE: Tuesday 29th April 2025

TIME: 19:00 - 20:15

VENUE: Online via Microsoft Teams

To register, please scan the QR Code
or click [HERE](#)

