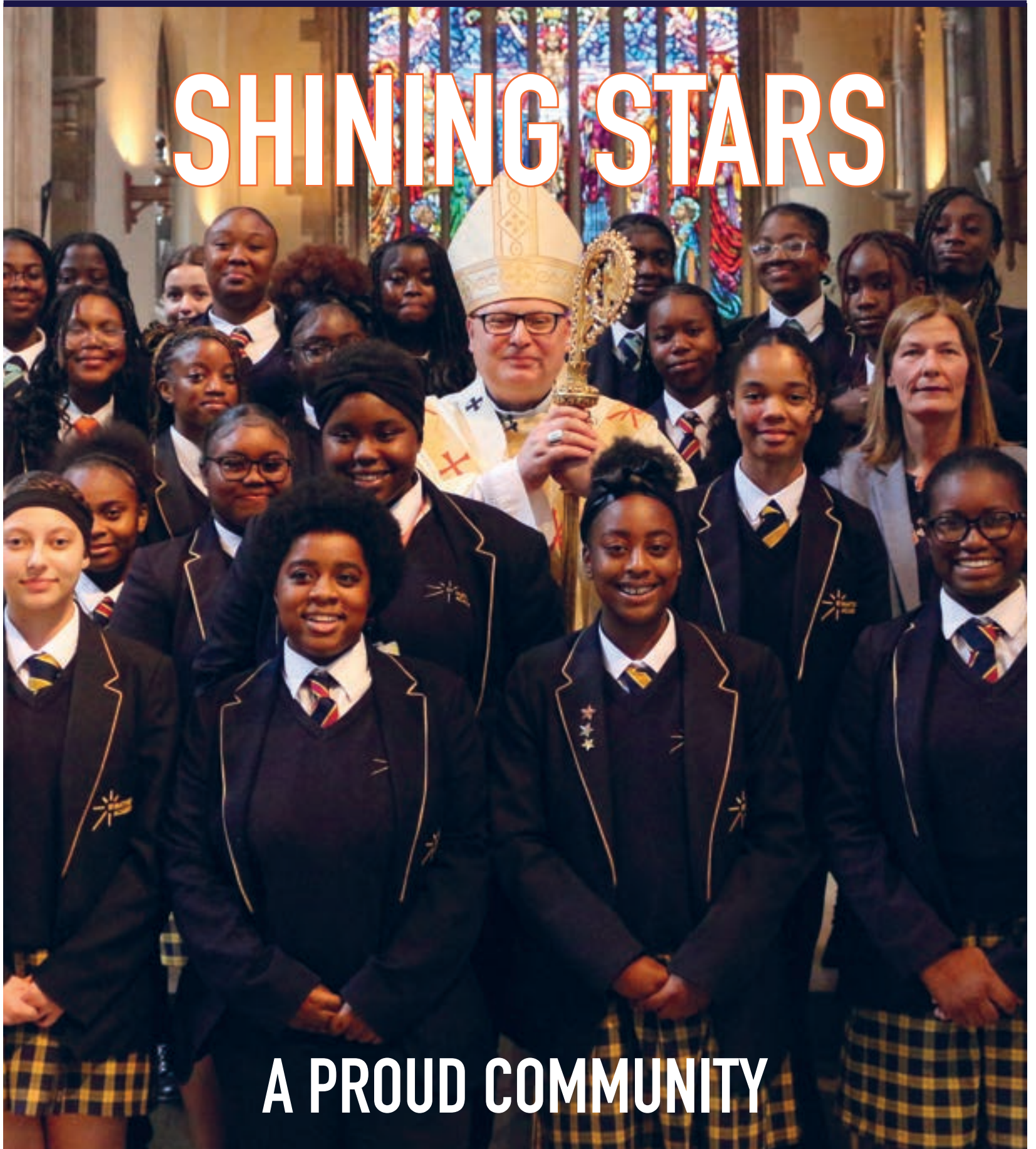


Summer term, 2024



# SMA CELEBRATES

## SHINING STARS



**A PROUD COMMUNITY**

INTEGRITY ✨ COURAGE ✨ SERVICE



# WHY WE LOVE WORKING AT SMA

Meet just three of our talented and dedicated team and hear how their career is progressing and why they look forward to every single day at school

## JOVAN OSBOURNE APPRENTICE

I joined St Matthew Academy in September 2023 as a Business Administration Apprentice. In my previous roles, I had gained a good understanding and experience of admin work, so, I decided to apply for this role and gain a business administration qualification in a school setting. When I was offered the role, I gladly accepted it and was excited at the opportunity to work in a professional environment.

I can honestly say that during my time at St Matthew Academy, the role has exceeded my expectations. Being a support member of staff has enabled me to get involved in the wider life of St Matthew Academy and I have loved going on school trips. These have varied from educational visits like visiting KPMG in Canary Wharf to going to the national rowing championships in the Copper Box arena in Stratford. These opportunities have allowed me to gain experience in behaviour management and has built up my rapport with the pupils at the academy as well as other members of teaching staff.

As well as this, I also spend one day a week in the finance department, which not only gives me invaluable experience in working in a finance setting but it enhances my understanding of business admin to a greater extent which helps me with my course. In addition, I have completed various types of training and gained a number of extra qualifications during my time at SMA, such as completing a first aid course with St. Johns Ambulance; gaining an invigilator training certificate; safeguarding training and fire marshal training using extinguishers. In my role, I work with a great team who provide good advice and guidance, which has helped me settle in very quickly and this has improved my confidence and knowledge. Other members of staff have been very friendly and made me very welcome which has made me feel like a valued member of the SMA community. I am currently on track for completing my apprenticeship as I continue to work within my role and make the most of other opportunities at St Matthew Academy.



## KERRI RAMSAMMY CHAPLAIN

I first joined St Matthew Academy in February 2022 as an Apprentice Chaplain but my journey to becoming a Chaplain started about 10 years ago. At that time, I volunteered

at my local parish and became a First Holy Communion catechist, where I assisted small groups of children during their faith formation sessions. After a couple years of being in a supporting role and leading on a few sessions, the entire ministry was handed over to myself and another catechist for us to run it. We have been doing that for about 10 years now during which time I've had the chance to learn and

teach about the beauty of our Catholic faith. Alongside this I have engaged in my own faith development through the Church's offering of the Sycamore course, retreats and self-study. My curiosity for the theological and historical aspects of the Catholic Church grew whilst working for the then Centre for Catholic Formation which was an agency which focused on supporting parishes through evangelisation, formation and catechesis.

I firmly believe that the Lord Jesus is always inviting us into a relationship with Him and His Church, but sometimes we need support to answer His invitation. That support for me came two years ago when I was approached by the same individual that handed me the First Holy Communion ministry, to ask whether or not I would consider joining an apprenticeship programme to become a Chaplain. This was a unique opportunity for me as it was a new programme being offered for the first time. It took me a while to decide whether or not this was right for me, but when I said yes I knew I had made the right decision.

Working as the Apprentice Chaplain at SMA has been a rewarding experience. I have not only been supported and have grown in my own personal journey of faith, but have seen that growth in the children as well. I am happy to be in an environment where the spirituality and faith development of the students is considered important. I enjoy working with the different year groups delivering liturgies, going on retreats, running lunchtime faith building clubs and giving the children the opportunity to experience Jesus in the Eucharist through Holy Mass. I also really value the camaraderie between staff members, although we may all be of different faiths or none. As I move forward now in my new role as the school's Chaplain, I am happy to continue building on those faith foundations for our students and staff and on my own theological knowledge, to best support St Matthew Academy's thriving Catholic ethos.

## LIAM SOLOMON SCIENCE TEACHER

I started working at St Matthew Academy in November 2019, beginning my fledgling teaching career and training through the teaching apprenticeship programme. Having previously worked as a science technician in another school, being able to dive into a classroom role straight away was daunting, yet also incredibly rewarding from the offset. As the years naturally progressed, so did my experience – I have continued to develop my practice at SMA through my initial teacher training year, ECT years, and of course up until today where I hold the position of Head of Teresa House as well as teach Science.

While the majority of my time at SMA is spent teaching science, recently I have taken the Head of Teresa House role, which has allowed me to work with a greater array of both pupils and staff members. It has been great to push myself to learn new skills necessary to organise events for the wider-life of school rather than just laboratory practicals. Chemistry



experiments, just like the pupils, will always remain the highlight of my day, however.

Throughout the course of my training years and beyond, I have been fortunate to have been supported by a great department, including two fabulous mentors. My mentors gave me regular, honest and intentional feedback which allowed me to reflect and improve my craft, whilst also giving me the space and trust in my abilities I

needed to learn and develop in a way which suited me. Outside of the Science department, I also had the opportunity to frequently observe experienced practitioners, attend training sessions in small groups with other trainees and ECTs, and attend whole-school training activities. Throughout the peaks and troughs, I have always felt there have been more experienced colleagues I can count on to give me advice. Furthermore, being given the opportunity to progress and take up an extra teaching and learning responsibility has boosted the confidence I have in my career and demonstrated SMA's belief in personal development and retaining home-grown staff.

Having grown up in South East London and attended sixth form in Lewisham, I feel a deep sense of duty in the community and pastoral aspects of education; something I strongly believe is shared by all staff here and is regularly promoted as part of our ethos. Pupils benefit from a staff body from a diverse range of backgrounds and experience, and pupils are given many opportunities to develop the more holistic aspects of education, which unfortunately can sometimes be seen peripheral to academics success. As a member of the local community myself, it gives me great pleasure to see the passionate, driven and successful young people that pupils at SMA are encouraged to become.



# FUTURE LEADERS

## MEET THE PUPILS HELPING OTHERS

Peer-to-peer advice and support shines through

By Sumita Vyas, Assistant HT

This term pupil leaders across the primary phase have been working hard to champion the voice of their peers and create a better primary school experience for them. The appointed leaders have been organising a fundraising event for the school to raise money for playground equipment. They take their roles in the school very seriously and have held meetings with their classes in order to gather ideas for their second event. Mila, the chair of last meeting, eagerly listened to the ideas brought forward by each member of the school council and following a vote, it was decided that they would be organising and hosting a sponsored basketball shootout. Here's what she had to say:

"We will be using the money that we raise to buy playground equipment that all of the school can use at break time and lunch time, for example, better climbing equipment or bars that we can practice gymnastics on. We can't wait to get started on the event, I'm glad everyone got to have their say about what we could do."

Mila, School Councillor, Year 4.

As well as raising money for their cause, they've loved learning about different styles and models of leadership and how to create a democracy. If given the chance, they'd passionately share their views of our government with the Prime Minister! Etana (Year 6) shares her experience of being part of the school council:

"Being part of the school council has really taught me how to manage different types of people and listen to



their voice. It has also taught me how to lead people and also events. Leadership is all about being able to help people by listening to them and sticking to your promises. Being part of the council has helped me to be able to speak at public events. When I first joined, I was quite shy, but now I'm ok

to speak more and share my ideas and I'm not afraid to get things wrong."

After a successful year in their role, the Year 6 sports leaders have begun to train their year 5 successors, coaching them to develop their leadership skills. Children from reception right up the school have really loved

participating in all the activities and sports that have been set up and are always excited to try new things. The highlight of the year has been watching how diligently the sports leaders have used regular feedback and pupil voice to alter the range of activities on offer



Main photo - Future leaders - the School council, above Mila, Etana and Bella



for the children, tailoring their approach to enable all children to join in and enjoy sport.

"When we spoke to some of the children in Year 3, they wanted to learn how to throw a javelin to practice for Sports Day so we have been teaching them how to do that. Being a leader has helped me to really develop my listening and teaching skills. It is important to listen to what the other children want to do more of and make sure we can provide that for them. I have really enjoyed being a Sports Leader and I will really miss my time on the playground with the younger children when I go to secondary school."

Bella, Year 6



Sporting excellence, teams enjoying sporting activities and below Yasmin, Shaili and Itziar



## PRIMARY CLUB ACTIVITIES THAT ENHANCE LIFE

CHILDREN IN THE PRIMARY PHASE are always excited to sign up to the rich array of extra-curricular clubs and events at St Matthew Academy. They are often able to transfer the skills and talents they have developed at these clubs to events and performances across the Academy. Our very talented 'Signing Diamonds' group performed the songs, Don't Stop Believing and Rainbow Connection, they had been learning for Deaf Awareness Week, which were thoroughly enjoyed by everyone.

We asked Yasmin from Year 4 what she's loved about the clubs at SMA.

"I love that there are always different clubs that we can try different things. We can tell the teachers what we have liked and what other clubs we want and they always listen. So far this year, I've been to gardening club, multi-sports, sign

language and I'm also part of the girls' football team. Sign language club has inspired me and has helped me to understand my mum's friend, who is deaf, when she signs and now I can even sign back to her."

Pupils have also been able to apply the skills that they've developed during Sports Clubs to compete in friendly matches and tournaments against other local schools. Over the course of the academic year, all children in KS2 are offered the opportunity to participate in a sporting tournament, representing the school.

We were thrilled to share the incredible achievement of our Year 5 students in the recent Lewisham Borough Schools mini-golf tournament, competing against 10 other schools. We sent two teams of 10 pupils, Team A secured a remarkable second place, mastering their stance,

grip on their putt and strategy.

The girls' football team have been enthusiastically training and enhancing their skills, getting themselves ready for their matches. More recently, the team were ecstatic to receive a brand new football kit, courtesy of the Premier League's initiative to empower girls across the country to believe that football is everyone's game. They are looking forward to wearing them with confidence and trying them out at our next football tournament.

Lego, gardening and sewing clubs have been firm favourites this year. The children cultivated their vegetables and potted them during spring, ready to transfer outside into their patch. They are looking forward to sampling the fruits of their labour later this term!

"I picked gardening club because I really love nature. I enjoyed potting the plants in soil and I've learnt that our plants need plenty of water to help them to grow. I can't wait to eat the tomatoes that are almost ready."

Shaili, year 3

During sewing club, the children learnt how to use the running stitch, cross stitch and over stitch, which they then applied to create their own mini fabric bugs!

"At sewing club, I learnt how to use over stitch and I used it at home to fix my skirt. My parents were really pleased that I knew how to do that by myself."

Itziar, Year 5.



SMA  
CELEBRATES  
**MEDIAWATCH**



**PUPIL VIEWPOINT:  
YUMIKO**

**Why did you want to join the scholarship?** I wanted to join the media and communications scholarship because I wanted to learn more about how films are made, and I wanted to try something very few people have the opportunity to do in other schools. I felt that it could give me unique skills not many other people have. I also wanted to improve my photography skills and learn how to use a camera.

**What has been the best part of the scholarship so far?** What I've enjoyed the most is learning how to use the many different applications, and learning how to edit and become more efficient at using the Macs. Also, it was good to work with different people I don't usually get the chance to on projects, for example with our vlogs. We worked with partners and it helped to build relationships, and we could help each other to solve any problems.

**What is one interesting thing you've learnt from the sessions?** It has been brilliant using Final Cut Pro because it has so many features, like the 'sound bank' that we are using to dub over our videos and the 'keyer' we use to remove a green screen and add any backgrounds we want. I feel like knowing this can help in the future if you want to become an editor or do video making as a hobby, which is something I most definitely would like to do in the future. **Would you recommend the scholarship to pupils joining in September?** I would certainly recommend the scholarship if you want to build up new skills that can help you in the future, and also if you want to have fun and meet and learn from different people you wouldn't usually have met. But you need to be patient and not want to rush because editing and using the camera can take a lot of time to get it right.



**TAKE ONE: SPOTLIGHT  
ON THE MEDIA AND  
COMMUNICATIONS  
SCHOLARSHIP  
PROGRAMME**

The Media and Communications Scholarship is an extra-curricular enrichment pathway. Over the course of the three-year programme, scholars undertake creative projects that explore everything from script writing, filming, editing and sound design to animation, misinformation, photography and internet safety. All of this is further enhanced by exciting media trips to the Warner Bros. Studios and the Sky Academy Studios. We hope our scholars take away with them a wide range of new skills when they go on to study GCSE film; confidence in using industry standard software, like Final Cut Pro, and a more analytical eye towards how media is utilised in the outside world.



**ABOVE AND BEYOND**

Grammar+ offers lifelong skills, knowledge and confidence

*Damien Quigg, Assistant Headteacher*

**IN SEPTEMBER 2021, WE INTRODUCED** the Grammar+ programme at SMA as part of our commitment to improve the life chances of our pupils, with a focus on the most able pupils in Years 7 to 9. Our key aim is to raise aspirations and provide enrichment opportunities beyond the normal classroom experience to equip them with lifelong skills and knowledge, as well as the confidence to pursue pathways at the end of Year 11 when they leave SMA.

As part of this commitment, we

have offered many new and exciting opportunities for our pupils such as; learning Mandarin; completing The Brilliant Club or Scholars Programme, where pupils work directly with university staff as well as visiting some of the top universities in the country; public speaking development through assemblies and the Toastmaster programme; We also offer GCSE Astronomy and musical instrument lessons with teachers from Blackheath Conservatoire. Pupils also meet weekly in the Learning Resource Centre where they engage online with international organisations such as Global Education and Young Citizens as well as showcasing their talents.

Now in the fourth year of the programme, pupils are rightly proud to be part of the Grammar+ cohort and wear a badge that indicates the special status they have and as a reminder of their potential and the expectation that they will strive to maintain the highest standards.

The Brilliant Club (Scholars' Programme) raises aspirations for pupils, enables them to develop skills, knowledge and confidence to apply for top universities in the future. Pupils at St Matthew Academy are very privileged to work with the Brilliant Club, and over the last few years; we have seen a significant improvement on outcomes for pupils because of participation in the programme with

the last three cohorts achieving high marks. They have been able to study courses as diverse as 'The mind body problem in philosophy', 'Who cares and on whose time?' and this year's interesting course looking at the psychological impact of video games on young people.

On Tuesday afternoons, our Year 7 pupils have their Mandarin lessons that are taught by visiting teacher who are native speakers. They learn the basics of the language and about life culture of China.

Elsewhere pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 are learning to play the violin with a visiting teacher from Blackheath Conservatoire. This new opportunity

allows pupils to develop further skills and interests.

Each year group meets weekly in the library working on a programme to develop skills and knowledge to become independent, resilient learners and to build up their CVs over time. Year 7 were asked to assess where they are on their journey to developing the learning characteristics of SMA and to give examples of where they demonstrate these. Some of the feedback from the pupils included:

'I often use independence when teachers give us a silent task we are supposed to do on our own. I use versatility when I am given a really hard task on mathematics and try to adapt to it. I use persistence when I get a certain part of the exercise wrong and always keep trying. I use aspiration when I think about what can I achieve by learning, and try my best. I use collaboration when teachers set team tasks and I work with my group to achieve it.'

'Independence means to show a sense of responsibility and authority; for example my topic in English has inspired me to choose particular books in the library which has contributed to my understanding of institutional racism. Versatility means to be able to adapt; before secondary school I had never been in any sporting teams. Now, as a result of my fitness, I have been able to join clubs and do quite well in them. I was proud to be invited to the indoor athletic competition and the Millwall football community

tournament and I'm looking forward to the National Junior Indoor Rowing Championships. Persistence is to be able to try again and again even if it is difficult. When I joined SMA, Spanish was new to me. I found it tricky however, instead of giving up I got Duolingo on my phone to practise for ten minutes every day to improve my grammar. Aspiration means the hope of achieving something. I want to be successful and make a significant change in today's society to right the wrongs in the world. In my history class I worked hard on the opening prosecution speech and my team ended up winning the experience,

strengthened my ambitions and realised the good use of words can change the world. Collaboration means to work together as a team. I showed this in DT when we made stir-fry noodles chopped, fried and cooked together to create delicious food.'

And three of our current cohort, when asked about their experience of the Brilliant Club commented:

'In Grammar+, you get to take part in a variety of experiences. One of these opportunities is the Toastmaster public speaking programme where we learnt how to write a detailed speech and how to confidently present it to an audience. The Grammar+ programme is a good opportunity to broaden your knowledge and skills.'

*Nitin, 9*

'I enjoy the Grammar+ programme because I got to go on a trip to Royal Holloway University, to tour the campus and learn about its history. I also took part in extra-curricular clubs such as Mandarin, which also encompasses learning about Chinese culture.'

*Liesel, 9*

'In Grammar+ I have really enjoyed so many opportunities to widen my academic knowledge including the Brilliant Club programme where we did a university style course with a PhD tutor. This year we did a course looking at the impact of video games.'

*Cienna, 9*



# LEADING THE FIELD ON SPORTS EXCELLENCE

The Leadership Skills Foundation offers pupils the chance to take part in two extraordinary and valuable courses

By Ali Wood, Head of PE

## YOUR TIME LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME:

Through a combination of e-learning, peer-led support and practical learning, Your Time supports girls and young women to overcome the barriers that could prevent them from taking the lead in sports. Pupils had a fantastic experience and were very well engaged throughout. The programme offered 25 female pupils a chance to take part in two separately run tournaments, here's what a few of the girls had to say:

'My experience as a Your Time leader was enjoyable. It took commitment as the modules had to be completed at home but I believe that it was worth it because I learnt new things and skills which I can carry forward and use in other areas. My favourite aspect of the programme was leading an event as I got to umpire a netball match and learnt that it is actually quite difficult to do but I had a lot of fun. I think it was a great learning opportunity. I would recommend doing the programme to other girls who are interested as it can help to build and develop a range of skills and it can also help to encourage other young women to play sports which I think is really important'.

Sian

'My journey through this program has been extremely fun and beneficial. I've learnt a lot from it and progressed in many ways including leadership, communication and listening skills. I liked the program a lot despite the challenging aspects that came along with it, and it was lovely to see girls having fun and participating while doing sports. Overall, I feel it was a good experience because as a young woman, it's not common to get the opportunity to lead in sports or encourage other ladies to enjoy sports. If I had the opportunity, I would love to do it again'.

Ayakunbe

'My journey through this programme has been great. I believe I have benefitted from it immensely. It has improved my confidence, resilience and teamwork skills. Also, I was able to experience the privilege of growing my leadership abilities and I enjoyed participating in the activities. Overall, the programme has encouraged me to be confident as a young



woman in the sports field and to be proud of playing sports. I would recommend other girls also participate in the Your Time Leadership programme as I would do it all over again if I could.

Minnesota

## YOUNG LEADERS AWARD

The Young Leaders Award is a great introduction to leadership, giving learners the experience of organising and leading small games or activities. Through this fun and flexible programme, learners will build their confidence and develop their leadership skills as they take on new responsibilities. We had some fantastic results with our Sporting Excellence Year 8 pupils who completed the course and the school three bronze, six silver, six Gold and three Outstanding Awards.

Here is what two of our outstanding award pupils had to say:

**OUTSTANDING AWARD WINNER TYLER, SAID** "Being a **SPORT LEADER** was a **great experience** as it gave me a chance to get my **VOICE HEARD** and being able to **LEAD OTHERS** and **teach** them the sports things I **excel** in. The whole point of being a sports leader is for **EXPERIENCE** and to **teach people** sports. Allowing us to teach them in our **own way** the things we've learnt in and different types of sport. Overall being a sports leader is a **GOOD EXPERIENCE** and it **teaches** you to **excel**"

**OUTSTANDING AWARD JEREMIAH, SAID,** "Throughout the journey of **COMPLETING** my **SPORTING LEADERSHIP COURSE**, I have not only been able to **experience** and **enjoy** a range of **different** topics within the **SPORTING COMMUNITY**, but I have been **EDUCATED** on a **VARIOUS** different skills which are extremely likely to be **BENEFICIAL** in the future. I now feel fully **capable** of applying these skills **whenever** and **wherever**"



Pupil leaders in action

