

# ST CATHERINE'S NEWSLETTER

*"Be who God wants you to be, and you will set the world on fire." – St Catherine of Siena*



## Newsletter Highlights

SKI TRIP TO ITALY

PREP NEWS

LESSONS IN CHEMISTRY

CHOCOLATE WORKSHOP

SPORT

FOSC NEWS

## Ski Trip - Dolomites

In December, Year 10-12 pupils enjoyed an unforgettable six-day ski trip, with five full days of skiing in the Dolomites, where perfect snowy weather and stunning mountain views set the scene for an amazing experience.

Each day was spent skiing with professional instructors, helping everyone improve their skills while having great fun on the slopes. From beginners, to annual skiers, all had an amazing time on the slopes; racing on slaloms, ski parks and so much more. Food on the slopes was just as great, with fresh pizza and chips, pasta and plenty of Coca Cola!

Evenings were just as memorable, with a movie night in the nearby town's cinema and plenty of laughs in the hotel games room, overall making a great atmosphere throughout the week. It was a brilliant mix of sport, friendship, and unforgettable memories that we will be talking about for a long time.

Keiara, Year 12



## Ski Trip - Dolomites



# Understanding Procrastination

## Why does my child put things off?

In the therapy room, procrastination is something I hear about regularly. Pupils often describe wanting to get started, knowing the work is important, but feeling stuck or unable to begin. This can be frustrating and confusing for them, and worrying for parents who may be unsure how to help.

Procrastination is often mistaken for laziness, but more often it reflects how a pupil is feeling rather than how motivated they are. Work may be avoided when it feels overwhelming, when there is fear of getting it wrong, or when a pupil is already tired or under pressure. For many girls, procrastination is closely linked with perfectionism and self-doubt. While avoidance can bring brief relief, it usually adds to stress and guilt over time.

Parents can be most helpful by responding with calm curiosity rather than frustration. Asking questions such as, "What feels hard about starting?" or "Would it help to break this into smaller steps?" can lower pressure and make beginning a task feel more manageable. Procrastination is not a character flaw; it is often the brain's way of steering away from discomfort. With patience, reassurance, and small practical supports, pupils can learn ways of working that fit how their brains work, rather than feeling they are working against themselves.

Olivia Deakin, Independent Listener



# Preparing Girls for the 21st Century

## Digital Learning & AI at St Catherine's School

Building on the success of the Year 8 laser-cutting project at the end of last term in ICT, this area of work is now being extended further up the school, with Year 12 pupils exploring how digital design can be incorporated into their studies.

A wide range of digital tools is being used to develop, refine and manufacture products, bringing key elements of A-Level coursework to life. As the girls learn how computing and design thinking sit side by side in the creative process, they are engaging in increasingly experimental work, and gaining valuable insight into how digital skills can directly shape physical outcomes.



Alongside curriculum work, there has been much enthusiasm for the launch of the DT Club, with a clear focus on digital design. The club has a strong 'maker' ethos, giving pupils the freedom to explore ideas, test solutions and collaborate with others. Pupils are particularly enjoying the opportunity to work with new technologies in a less formal setting, where curiosity and creativity can lead the way.

Together, these developments reflect a growing interest in the intersection of computer science and design across the school. It has been exciting to see pupils engaging so positively with this blend of creativity and technical skill, and the momentum in this area continues to build as more pupils discover the possibilities of digital making.



## Lessons in Chemistry



As part of the GCSE Chemistry topic Properties of Polymers, Year 11 Triple Chemistry pupils made and investigated 'slime' supported by our Science Technician Team.

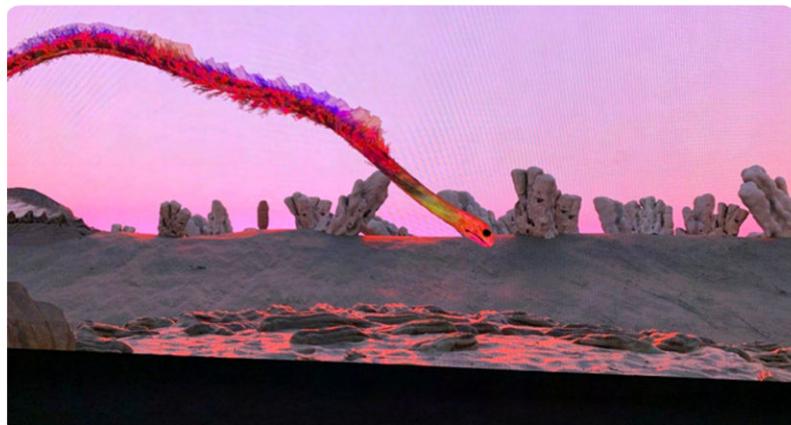
They explored how slime, a polymer, stretches under gentle pulling but breaks when stressed. They also tested how adding acid and alkali changes the slime's properties, helping them understand how polymer behaviour can be altered chemically.

The class worked together to create a large group slime, stretching and testing it collaboratively. It was lively, engaging, and fun, while reinforcing key scientific ideas about materials, structure, and properties.

Pupils are now preparing short presentations linking their observations to polymer structure and properties. It was a happy slimy smiley day.



# A-Level Art and Photography



## A Paradigm Shift

On 29 January, Sixth Form pupils visited the Paradigm Shift Moving Image Works Exhibition, which looked at work from the 1970s to now, drawing on avant-garde cinema, television, music video, performance, fashion, gaming and internet culture.

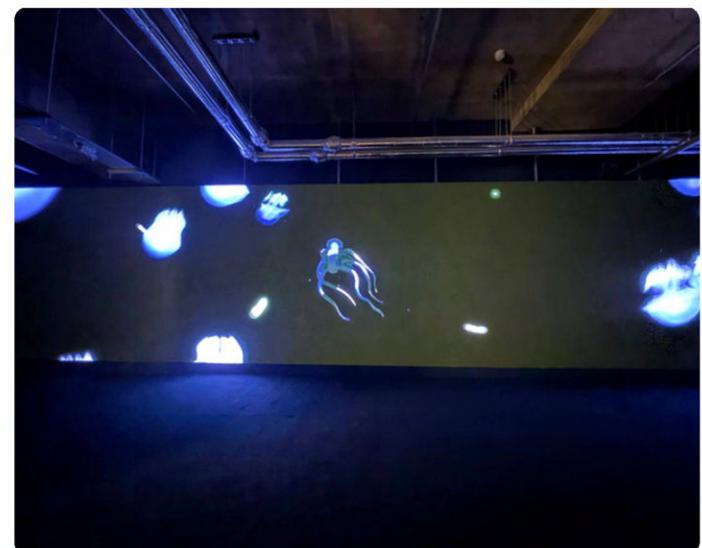
Each installation was immensely intriguing and unlike any exhibition I had visited before. With such a wide variety of installation pieces, we never knew what to expect next.



The artworks were captivating with bright colours, animated videos, entertaining game shows and symbolic images. I was particularly intrigued by the immersive animated videos created by Josèfa Ntjam. Her artwork made you feel like you were part of the experience with luminous creatures swimming around the screen and vibrant jellyfish moving up and down.

A 'paradigm shift' occurs when the traditional framework of our understanding is dismantled. By the time we walked out, the exhibition had done exactly that. It didn't just display art; it staged a confrontation with our assumptions about reality. From Ntjam's glowing deep-sea mythologies to the subversion of everyday pop culture, we were left with more questions than answers—which is precisely the point. We didn't just view the work; we left seeing the world through a shifted lens.

Imogen, Year 12



# Food and Nutrition: Chinese New Year

## Sweet and Sour Success: Year 9 Celebrate the Year of the Horse

The kitchens at St Catherine's were filled with the aroma of ginger, soy, and sizzling wok-fired chicken recently, as our Year 9 pupils celebrated Chinese New Year.

Food is one of the most powerful ways to connect with global cultures, and our girls took a deep dive into the traditions of the Lunar New Year by mastering a classic: Sweet and Sour Chicken. From perfecting the balance of the sauce to practicing precise knife skills, the atmosphere was one of high energy and culinary curiosity.

This activity wasn't just about following a recipe; it was about:

- Cultural Exploration: Understanding the symbolism of food.
- Teamwork: Working together to manage timings and heat.
- Independence: Building the practical life skills that ensure our girls are ready for the world.

Seeing our Year 9 girls collaborate and celebrate together is a testament to the sense of belonging that defines our school. By the time the final dishes were plated (and very quickly enjoyed!), it was clear that these pupils aren't just learning to cook—they are becoming confident, global chefs.



## Religious Education - Mosque Visit

Year 8 travelled to Hounslow Jamia Mosque for a tour and Q&A with the Imam. The girls said "It was great to see where and how Muslims pray", and "We loved a chance to get all our questions answered." The Imam was highly knowledgeable and answered everyone's questions respectfully and thoroughly.

Thank you to the girls for giving their full attention and for being such excellent representatives of the school, and thank you to Hounslow Jamia Mosque community for making us welcome.



## Academic Enrichment

Well done to all pupils for their fantastic efforts this term, it was wonderful to see so many girls embracing our enrichment opportunities. Academic enrichment is about aiming high and challenging oneself—not just in the subjects that are already loved, but in areas that push comfort zones.

For Spring Term 2, we will be drawing inspiration from the Renaissance, a period of incredible creativity, discovery, and innovation. Just like the great thinkers of that era, we want pupils to explore, invent, and express themselves across the entire curriculum.

We encourage every pupil to enter at least one challenge, one internal competition, and one external competition this term. Whether they are investigating a mystery or designing a masterpiece, they can keep a record of every competition they have signed up for in their Academic Enrichment Booklet.

Consistent effort and participation will earn pupils House Points and Academic Enrichment Certificates. Exceptional achievements may even be selected for a special Academic Enrichment Event. And to add a touch of fun, we'll be celebrating termly success with our new selfie frame.



## Year 9 Chocolate Workshop



Year 9 pupils stepped into the 'boardroom' for a Chocolate Workshop—a fast-paced challenge that required them to build a chocolate brand from the ground up.



This immersive experience bridged the gap between creativity and commerce, tasking teams to:

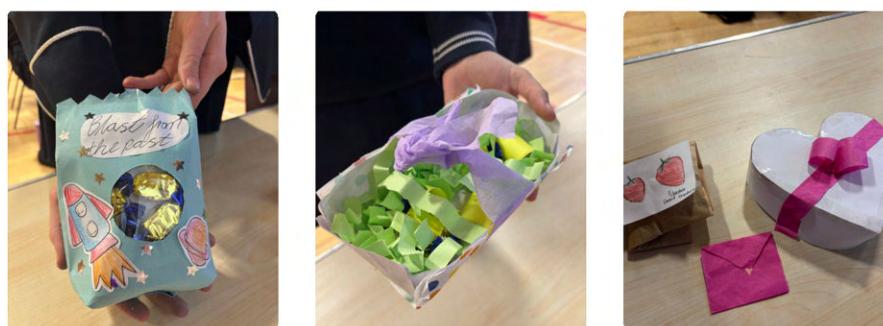
- Define a Target Market: Identifying specific consumer demographics.
- Establish a Value Proposition: Articulating what sets their brand apart.
- Brand Design: Creating shelf-ready, eye-catching packaging.
- Media Production: Conceptualising a compelling advertisement.

The innovation on display was truly impressive, with concepts ranging from eco-friendly recyclable packaging and "Women-Owned" companies to ethically sourced ingredients and Valentine's Day themed promotions.



A huge congratulations to the Game Bars team, who were crowned the overall winners for their cohesive strategy and professional execution.

**“ We had to work really closely as a team to make sure our ideas came together well. ”**



**“ We all took on different roles to bring our brand to life. Being creative under pressure was a challenge, but it was also really fun to work as a team! ”**



# Year 9 Retreat

## Reflection, Friendship and Faith

On 22–23 January, Year 9 visited SPEC Pinner for a retreat centred on reflection, friendship, and faith. Away from the busyness of school life, the girls enjoyed shared prayer, quiet reflection, and a fun movie night. The impact was deeply personal, with pupils sharing the following feedback:

“  
I found more faith and it helped me realise the person I am  
”



“ The retreat was spectacular and I loved it. ”



“  
It made me see how God loves us each individually  
”

“ I realised that taking the time to reflect and pause was very important. ”

At St Catherine's, retreats are an integral part of the journey for every year group. They provide a vital opportunity for pupils to step away from daily routines to connect with themselves, their peers, and their faith.



“  
I learned to be more loving and forgiving  
”

## A Warm Welcome: Offer Holders Afternoon

St Catherine's recently hosted a very vibrant Offer Holders Afternoon, giving prospective pupils a genuine taste of school life. From hands-on experiments in Science to diving into the swimming pool, the prospective pupils' energy across Maths, Geography, Art, and Textiles was a joy to see.

Mr McCleave joined Mrs Hennis-Rowe in an engaging Q&A with parents, three pertinent topics included:

- The All-Girls Advantage: We are proud of our school environment which is tailored specifically to how girls learn and lead, ensuring they take centre stage in every field, from STEM to the Arts.
- A "Digital Sanctuary": Our mobile phone policy protects the school day, prioritising face-to-face connection and deep academic focus in an increasingly noisy world.
- The "Right-Size" Benefit: We are large enough to provide an excellent number of facilities and co-curricular opportunities, yet small enough to ensure that every pupil is known.

It was a successful afternoon and a powerful reminder of why families choose St Catherine's.



## Galentine's Day



Year 7 and 8 pupils enjoyed a delightful Galentine's Day celebration, with some Sixth Formers. The heart of the event was the "big sister, little sister" dynamic.

The afternoon involved creativity and connection. There was a lot of laughter and chatting while the girls turned their talents to biscuit decorating—resulting in some truly impressive (and delicious) edible art—as well as some colourful and fun scratch art designs.



Beyond the icing and crafts, seeing our Sixth Formers engage with the younger girls perfectly captures the St Catherine's spirit.

It was a wonderful way to celebrate friendship, kindness, and the strength of our school community.



## Prep Movie Night



### Laughter, Popcorn, and Monsters

On Friday, 23 January, the lights went down, the popcorn came out, and the STEAM room transformed into a cosy cinema for our Prep Movie Night.

The girls gathered for a special screening of *Monsters, Inc.*, but the evening was about much more than just what was on the screen. While animated monsters provided the entertainment, the real magic happened in the audience.

We know that events like these are so important for our girls' wellbeing and independence. Providing the opportunity and space to connect, unwind and feel the warmth of a community that learns together as well as it plays together.

Seeing all the Prep girls settled in, surrounded by their soft toys and their friends, remind us that at events like these, make the best school memories.



## Year 5 Trip to the History of Science Museum



When Year 5 visited the History of Science Museum in Oxford, they were able to build on their learning and find even more about the exploration of space. They were able to discover how ancient astronomers studied the skies with Galileo's telescopes, how sailors and pirates navigated the seas with beautiful sextants and astrolabes and compare astrological charts and maps from different cultures.

Year 5 were fascinated by how early discoveries were made and enjoyed realising the studies in the classroom also happened in real life. They really enjoyed the workshops and worked well together to take on challenges and solve problems.



## Year 3 and 4 Trip to Gunnersbury Park Museum



### A Roman Adventure

Year 3 and 4 enjoyed a spectacular day at Gunnersbury Park Museum, where history leaped off the pages of their textbooks and into real life. To truly get into character, the girls looked fantastic dressed as Roman soldiers, ready for duty. The atmosphere was heightened as one pupil took on the bold role of Boudicca, leading her "troops" with spirit and helping the cohort imagine the clash of cultures in Roman Britain.

The girls experienced the unique tactile sensation of writing on beeswax tablets, carefully etching their letters with a stylus just as a Roman student would have done. It was a fascinating lesson in how much—and how little—the tools of learning have changed over two millennia. The sun shone brightly and we were able to spend some time enjoying the playground in the sunshine and sharing stories about their favourite discoveries. The beeswax tablets certainly made a lasting impression!

## Year 3 and 4 - The School of Noise

During this half-term, the girls took part in an immersive, hands-on workshop with the School of Noise, transforming the steam room into a scientific laboratory. The session focused on the physics of acoustics through "object-based play," allowing the pupils to experiment with how sound is created, how it moves, and how we hear it.

The girls explored the core principles of sound through several interactive stations:

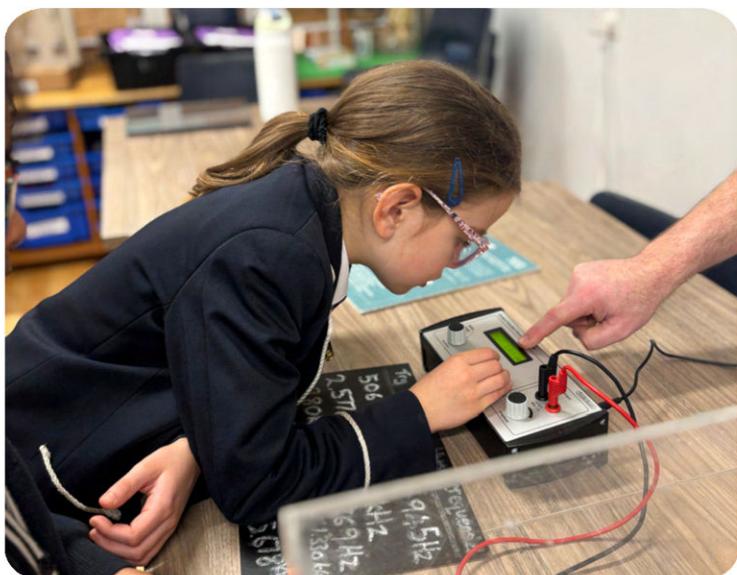
**Visualizing Vibrations:** Using Chladni plates, the girls saw sound waves turn into beautiful geometric patterns in sand.

**The Science of Waves:** They experimented with frequency (pitch), amplitude (volume), and how pressure waves travel through different mediums.

**Unique Instrumentation:** The girls played a theremin (an instrument played without touch), sent messages via Morse Code, and even used real fruit and vegetables to trigger digital musical notes.

**Biological Hearing:** Using a large model ear, they traced the journey of a vibration from the air to the brain.

This workshop bridged the gap between physics and creativity. By physically manipulating sound, the girls gained a practical understanding of STEM concepts like vibration, conductivity, and longitudinal waves in a way that was practical and fun!



# Prep Sleepover

## The Magic of Our Prep Sleepover

The Prep years are a fundamental time for building confidence, and nothing nurtures social development quite like the shared experience of a school sleepover. This half term, our Year 3 and 4 girls enjoyed a brilliant evening that was much more than just a "night away from home"—it was like a mini masterclass in connection and friendship.

Friday evening involved setting up activity setting up the "Classroom Camp" complete with sleeping bags, mattresses and cuddly toys. The girls settled into a crafting session where they designed beautiful dreamcatchers. Following a thin crust pizza tea, we snuggled up for a film and then transitioned into a mini book club, allowing the girls to share their favourite stories in a relaxed, cozy environment.



“  
The pizza and the mini umbrella straws in our apple juice was just the best. – Hattie  
”

“  
I loved the mini breakfast cereals and chose the Cornflakes!  
– Gracie  
”



“  
Waking up and having a dance party in our sleeping bags was definitely my favourite part. – Charlie  
”



“  
I loved sleeping... zzz Oh and making my beautiful dreamcatcher!  
– Xanthe  
”

# Sports News

## Netball



### U12A & B Netball v Orleans Park

On 20 January, the St Catherine's Year 7A and B Netball teams took part in a match against Orleans Park School. During the game, the Year 7s focused on moving into space and driving for the ball.

The U12A match challenged the girls' skills as we were up against very strong opposition. The A team won their game with an impressive score of 8-4. At the end of the match, each team selected a Girl of the Game, and Abi was chosen for her outstanding performance.

One aspect that went particularly well was how we took our time with our passes and moved the ball effectively down the court. However, an area for improvement would be driving into space more confidently rather than waiting to receive the ball behind our opponent. Overall, the match was a valuable learning experience and one in which we were successful.

Abi W & Lucy K

St Catherine's U12B Netball team played an exciting match against Orleans Park School, and it was a fantastic afternoon for everyone involved.

From the very start, both teams showed great energy and teamwork. Every player tried their best and supported each other all the way through the match. It was clear that everyone had been practising hard, and it really showed on the day.

Our team worked together brilliantly. Players communicated well, stayed positive, and never gave up. Whether it was attacking, defending, or cheering from the sidelines, everyone played an important part.

A special congratulations goes to Flo, who was awarded Girl of the Game. Flo gave an outstanding performance and showed great skill, focus, and determination throughout the game.

We also want to say well done to Orleans Park School for a great match. Both teams played fairly and respectfully, making the game enjoyable for everyone watching.

Marharyta & Florence, Year 7

## Netball



Our Sixth Form Netball team recently played against Richmond Park Academy. Despite trailing for three quarters, the team turned the tide and secured a 14-10 victory. Well done!



St Catherine's U13 Netball A, B & C teams travelled to Grey Court for an enjoyable afternoon of competitive Netball fixtures on 2 February. The girls demonstrated strong netball fundamentals, including sharp passing, effective movement into space, and growing confidence in both attack and defence. A fun and positive afternoon of netball was had by all.

## Netball

### Quarter finalists at U15 ISA Netball ,Leighton Park School

The U15 players delivered determined performances at the ISA Netball competition. Beginning with a 13-5 win over Cranford, where our shooters Paula, Lily S, Sophie, and Rose showed great accuracy. The momentum continued with a 10-4 victory against Holme Grange, thanks to solid defending from Sammy, Freya, Chloe, Lily H, and Anya.

After a narrow 7-5 loss to Claires Court and a defeat to Farnborough Hill, the girls refueled for the knockouts. They showed great resilience to beat Thomas's College 6-4, securing a quarter-final spot. In a final rematch against Claires Court, the team fought valiantly but fell 10-7.

The squad should be incredibly proud of their teamwork and positive attitude throughout a demanding day.



## Football



### U12 Football vs Radnor

On Thursday, 5 February, St Catherine's U12 football team faced Radnor House in a competitive and well-contested fixture. From the opening whistle, both teams showed great energy and determination.

St Catherine's started strongly, moving the ball well and creating early chances. Solid defending and excellent teamwork helped limit Radnor's opportunities, with Mollie making several important saves for St Catherine's. A well-worked team move led to Brooke scoring the first goal of the game with an outstanding strike, and St Catherine's went on to add a second goal just before half-time.

Radnor came out firing in the second half, quickly levelling the game with two goals from their Girl of the Game. This gave Radnor a surge of momentum, which unfortunately resulted in a 4-2 win for Radnor.

St Catherine's Girl of the Game was Brooke, recognised for her outstanding opening goal and her hard work throughout the match.

We would also like to thank Amali in Year 10 who volunteered to help referee the game, your help was greatly appreciated.

## Football

### U13A Football v Radnor

On 22 January, the St Catherine's U13A football team played a match against Radnor House.

During the game, the U13s focused on receiving the ball in higher areas of the pitch. The match tested the girls' skills as they faced a very energetic and physically strong opposition. The game ended in a 0-0 draw, which was a fair result for both teams.

At the end of the match, each team selected a Girl of the Game, with Brooke being chosen for St Catherine's in recognition of her outstanding performance in attack.



### U13A Football v Thamesmead

On 19 January, the St Catherine's Year 8A football team played a match against Thamesmead School. Throughout the game, the team were set the challenge of pressing high up the pitch and winning back possession as quickly as possible. The match proved to be a tough test, as the Year 8s faced a strong Thamesmead side with several highly skilled players. St Catherine's rose to the challenge and performed extremely well, but unfortunately were unable to secure a win. At the end of the match, both teams selected a Girl of the Game. Sasha was chosen for St Catherine's in recognition of her outstanding performance in goal.

### U13A Football Tournament @ Orleans Park School

On 26 January, the St Catherine's U13 A football team competed in a tournament at Orleans Park School against Orleans Park and Teddington School. The girls entered the tournament with high confidence following their recent fixture against Radnor House.

The opening match was against a strong and physical Teddington side who were impressive in possession. Despite a series of outstanding saves from Sasha, St Catherine's unfortunately conceded two late goals, resulting in a defeat in their first game.

The second and final match saw St Catherine's face a well-drilled and determined Orleans Park team. Both sides battled tirelessly throughout, but St Catherine's persistence paid off with five minutes remaining when Sophie found the back of the net after an excellent solo run. The goal proved decisive, securing the win and confirming St Catherine's place as runners-up in the tournament.

At the conclusion of the tournament, Orleans Park selected their Player of the Tournament, with Sasha being deservedly recognised for another outstanding performance in goal.

## Prep Trampolining Club

# Thank you

Since September, the Prep trampoline club has been supported by three of our wonderful Year 10s, Amali, Erin and Iman. These Year 10 girls have been coaching the Prep pupils, passing on their knowledge and understanding while developing valuable coaching and leadership skills.

Throughout the term, strong and positive relationships have been formed between the coaches and the Prep girls.

The Year 10s have been excellent role models, creating a supportive and encouraging environment where younger pupils feel confident to challenge themselves and try new skills.

Through this experience, Amali, Erin and Iman have developed lifelong skills such as communication, teamwork, responsibility and patience. They have learned how to lead by example, adapt their coaching to suit different abilities and support others in achieving their goals. These skills will not only benefit them in sport but across all areas of their future learning and lives.

A big thank you to Amali, Erin and Iman for their commitment, enthusiasm and support, and we hope their success inspires other pupils to get involved in coaching and share their skills with younger pupils.



## Badminton

Congratulations to Harshini, Year 9 who won gold at the U17 Middlesex Futures Tournament.



## Senior School Drama Production - 1984





UPCOMING FOSC DATES

REDRESS-

THURS 26<sup>TH</sup> FEB

THURS 12<sup>TH</sup> MAR

THURS 26<sup>TH</sup> MAR

THURS 19<sup>TH</sup> MAR- QUIZ & CURRY

NIGHT- TICKETS ON SALE SOON!



## Housekeeping / Notices

### SOME KEY DATES TO DIARISE

27 February	Prep Show & Share
3 March	Prep Spring Concert
6 March	Prep World Book Day
11, 12 March	Senior School Production: 1984
19 March	FOSC Parent Quiz
20 March	Year 3 and 4 Production: The Romans
30 March	Sports Awards

Please 'share the love' this February by remembering to follow, share and engage with our social media.



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READY FOR  
READATHON®

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Read for Good

Proud to support  
GO ALL IN.  
National Year of Reading 2016



### Readathon

We are running a Readathon from now until World Book Day (5 March) and we'd love your daughter to join in.

Your daughter can choose whatever she wants to read - from comics to classics and audiobooks to blogs - it's all about reading for fun!

The money raised in sponsorship will go to Read For Good, which supplies brand new books and a resident storyteller to every major children's hospital in the UK.

Please support our Readathon as much as you can. For more information, check out your daughter's sponsorship card or visit [www.readforgood.org](http://www.readforgood.org).