

SUMMER EDITION

NEWSLETTER

Principal's Address



Principal's Address:

I am so proud of all the Academy has achieved over the past few years and want to thank you as parents for playing a leading role in the continued success of St Mark's. I would like to take this opportunity to remind you of some of these below:

1. The standout moment for me this year came when the Academy celebrated winning the 2020 Renaissance Lockdown Learning Awards for Going the Extra Mile. Judges' comments commended the way staff continued to transform in the face of the pandemic.
2. As a community of transformation, we regularly open our doors to inspectors to review our approach. It is with great pride I share the news with parents that, following a safeguarding review this June, the Academy's safeguarding practices were described as "world class." I would like to say a heartfelt thank you to all staff for keeping our children safe, especially our dedicated Safeguarding Team.

3. In June this year, our Student Council members received the SSAT Student and Pupil Leadership Accreditation. This formally recognises students' leadership skills, encompassing all activities students are engaged in whether it's in the classroom, across the school, or in the wider community. I am so proud of their achievement.

4. On 12th July we welcomed four visitors from Anthem Trust and our Local Governing Body into the Academy to review the Quality of Education, attendance, student behaviour and safeguarding at the Academy. We were joined by, Andy Yarrow (CEO Anthem Trust), Anne Turner (Education Director within Anthem Trust), Jane Coley (Education Director within Anthem Trust) and Elizabeth Fitzpatrick (Vice Chair of our Local Governing Board). It was a day full of things to celebrate and highlighted what an exceptional community we are with young people who behave in line with our values every day.

Two particular strengths noted were our exceptional behaviour and safeguarding practices and our commitment to decolonising the curriculum so that it does not reflect the views and experiences of one group. The message from all reviewers was that Ofsted Outstanding is ours for the taking and you have my word that I will not stop until this is achieved for the young people we serve.

Principal's Address

Next academic year we will continue to embed our ambitious and broad curriculum and bring back a vast range of extra-curricular opportunities to allow us to celebrate the unique gifts of every child. I believe I have been entrusted with the greatest responsibility as Principal of St Mark's. You have my word that I will use this gift to secure the best future for your child so that, when they leave us in Year 13, their God given potential has been realised.

I want the new academic year to mark an even closer relationship with you as parents so we can form a strong partnership for success. My vision is to develop a relationship based on trust and reciprocal feedback. In light of this, we will be launching our first Friends of St Mark's group, made up of parents and carers to allow this vision to become a reality. I look forward to coffee mornings and strategic meetings with parents to allow us to drive school improvement together.

I would advise you to all to access this new [information](#) site designed for parents to support children of all age ranges and abilities catch up on lost learning from the pandemic. I also urge you to encourage your child to read endlessly over the summer holiday to support their levels of literacy as we return.



Please have a restful Summer break and enjoy the time as a family as restrictions begin to ease. I keep you all in my thoughts and prayers and want to thank you once again for your support this year as we have managed the school through these unprecedented times.

- **Hannah Fahey, Principal**

Outstanding Work

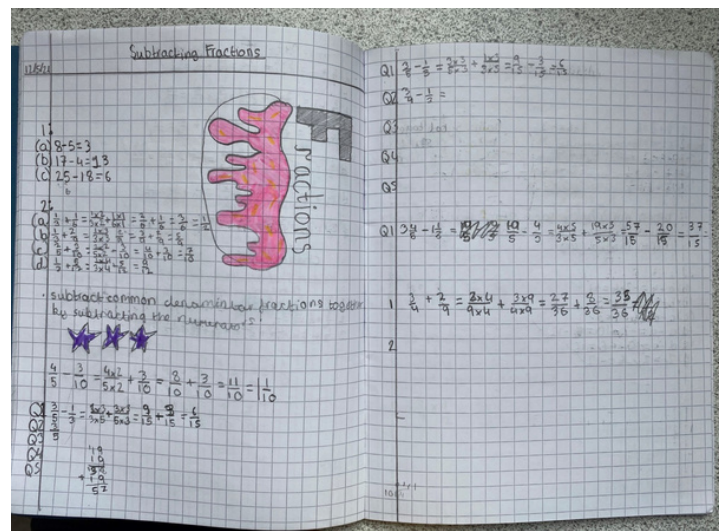
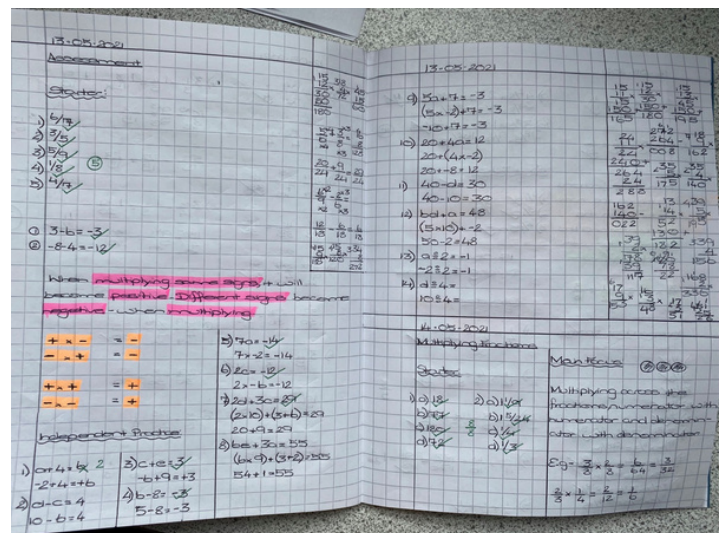
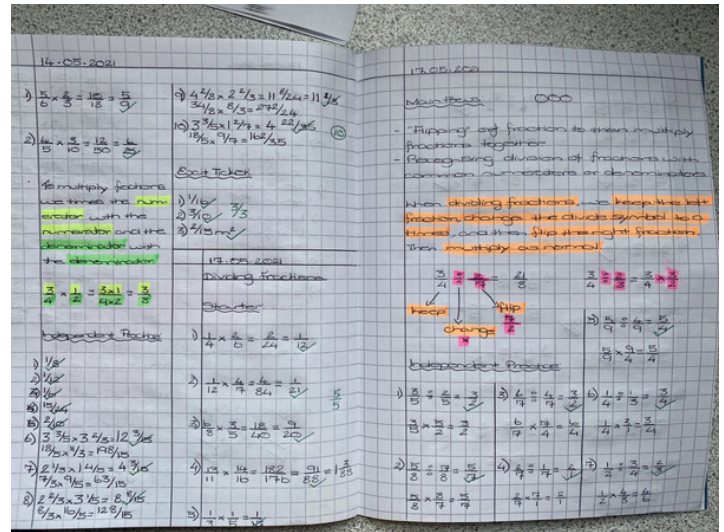
Sensational Science

Practical science is a key element in our mission to empower, promote and enrich our students in their understanding of science and the world around them. Research shows that using practical work purposefully as part of a learning sequence will help students develop an intrinsic understanding of science. This image shows students learning about how reflection works by using ray boxes and protractors, they can then apply this knowledge to the real world and explain why we can see ourselves in a mirror.



Fantastic Fractions

Year 7s smashing operations of fractions, getting all the green ticks!
#perfectpresentation



Celebrating Creativity

Design Technology

The creative juices of our students have truly been flowing!

In Design and Technology, students were taught about upcycling which is where you take an object that is no longer in use and you alter, repair or use it to make something of higher value! Give it a new lease of life – it's part of the sustainability focus in the DT curriculum which explores the 6R's: Reduce, Reuse, Repair, Recycle, Rethink and Reuse!

Students either brought in an old garment from home or used fabric that has been donated to the school to create a pouch.

The pouches could have been for a pencil case, glasses case, oyster card holder any type of storage they wanted to create.

They used the following skills: Sewing machines, Fabric Patterns, Fabric Painting and hand-sewn Applique.

Look at the amazing results!



Let's All Accelerate!

English- Accelerated Reader

As part of our commitment to ensuring that all students maximise their potential and are equipped to access the rigors of the KS3 and KS4 curriculum, all year 7, 8 and 9 students will take part in an online reading intervention programme called Accelerated Reader by Renaissance learning.

Over the course of the next academic year, all students in years 7, 8 and 9 will take termly online reading tests known as the STAR test. This is an online test which generates questions to assess the reading ability of each child. Depending on whether a child answers correctly or not, the level of the next question is adjusted, making sure that each child has a bespoke set of questions, suitable for their reading ability. This then provides teachers with a child's reading age, standardised scores and importantly a 'zpd' (Zone of Proximal Development). Once the initial testing is complete, students will be told what their reading zpd/level is, or the books in the library that match this. This is within a range and equates to a whole section of books, colour coded in the library.

Students will be given a unique username and password, which will allow students to login and take reading tests once they have read a book, they'll receive immediate feedback (passing the quiz is an indication that your child understood what was read) . Staff will also be able to access books and revision tools for KS4 using our digital library 'MyOn'. 65% of the content on the website is non-fiction and is a fantastic revision tool.

The entire school community will be able to track how many books our students read, the difficulty of each book and chart their progress. Parents and carers will also be given the login details to track their child's progress.

Generally, pupils who are offered Accelerated Reader made 3 months' additional progress in reading compared to other similar pupils. For pupils eligible for free school meals, the figure was 5 months additional progress.

We look forward to seeing our students reading abilities grow and flourish!



AcceleratedTM
Reader



Flying High

Our High Attainers

This year has been an academic year like no other! With the school community adjusting to life within a pandemic, our High Attainer students also had their own adjustments to undertake. Trips to university campuses were replaced with virtual tours, UCAS interview practice and guest speakers were seen through the big screen that is Microsoft Teams.

Our High Attainer students have welcomed a wealth of different opportunities and taken part in many programmes in order to broaden their horizons. This included two of our Year 10 students, Sarah Akyeampong-Asante and Ruby Giddy, who were accepted onto a prestigious online programme run by Target Oxbridge. This programme provides Black Afro-Caribbean students and mixed-race students with Black heritage the opportunity to gain an early insight into life at Cambridge and how to secure a place in the future.

Our latest cohort of Year 7 High Attainers embarked upon the newly founded Thinker's Project. This was a year-long project that saw our students go from interviewing a journalist from The Guardian, to learning how to critically analyse film and cinema.

St. Mark's also partnered with The Brilliant Club to provide excellent programmes of study and research for our KS3 and KS4 High Attainers. The Scholars Programme was the flagship element of this partnership and during the lockdown, ten students embarked upon a STEM project where, under the tutelage of a UCL PhD student, they were tasked with writing a 2,000-essay discussing the risks and benefits of genetic testing. C.J. Skrzypczyk, who completed the programme said, "The Scholars Programme has been an amazing opportunity to learn more about genetics but also more about university style learning and how to write essays using things like footnotes and references. It's made me realise I really do want to get to university and start thinking more about what exactly my route is for the future."



Our Student Leaders Nationally Recognised

Student Leadership Accreditation

The Student Leadership Accreditation (SLA) is an innovative way of recognising students' leadership skills and the impact that they have in the classroom, across the school, and in the wider community

Ten key skills that young people need to be successful leaders are identified, and grouped them into three core themes: developing myself, contributing to my community, and working with others. Pupils can gain this award in either a Bronze, Silver or Gold Level.

Our Student Council have worked extremely hard over the year completing courses, fundraising events and implementing the new water bottle scheme in line with our environmentally-friendly ethos. The students even attended a live virtual conference over Teams whilst the school was closed.

They then had to gather evidence for each of the 10 sections and create an evidence folder to prove they have reached the level they are aiming for.

Well done to the Student Council members. They should feel extremely proud of themselves and this prestigious award is also widely recognised so will be extremely valuable in life after St Marks.



ACE Students!



St Mark's Academy has ended the academic year on a high with the ACE (Academic and Character Excellence) awards. The ACE awards are an opportunity to reflect on the previous term, share performances and recognise student excellence, whether it's academically or how they conduct themselves around the school and uphold the school's values of Love, Hope and Trust.

Just like for the Winter awards, with the, whole year group attending it meant those who were receiving awards were kept a surprise.

The performances were absolutely exceptional. We had steel pan performances from our Year 10 GCSE music group, a distinguished performance from a Year 7 pianist, and a duet and vibrant dance performances from Year 8 and 9.

The awards for the Top Conduct, Top Engagement on Teams, Best Progress and individual Subject Achievement gained much excitement and applause as scores of young people in each year group walked across the stage to receive their worthy recognition. An atmosphere of pride, celebration and success was prevalent in each ceremony.

In the midst of such an unprecedented year, we are so delighted that our students continue to excel and we are looking forward to celebrate more and more winners in the next academic year.



WE can make a difference!



The St Mark's Student Council have been working on a very important initiative that will have a great impact on our community. It is in collaboration with WE Charity, an international charity and educational partner. WE Schools is a year-long social action programme that nurtures compassion in students and gives them the tools to create transformative social change. WE Charity launched a Queens Commonwealth Trust Award (QCT) where they gave schools the opportunity to bid for some money with a project idea they would like to implement within their school.

The St Mark's Student Council put together a long proposal with the idea of designing re-usable water bottles for each student to have and to help the community and school to become plastic free and save the environment.

The Student Council were successful in their bid and secured £1000 grant money! The student council then began the research process and look into different water bottles designs. They carried out some student surveys by asking the students at St Mark's what they liked about certain bottles. The student council also held assemblies to explain the importance of being plastic free and small changes everyone can make in their daily life to help save the planet.

Once the designs and pricing had been finalised the water bottles were ordered. The students at St Mark's now have their own St Mark's branded bottle which they can fill up at break and lunch time at the hydration station. This is an initiative that will hopefully continue each year and through fundraising new bottles will be brought for the incoming year 7s. A small change can make a big difference to saving our planet.



Student Orators take virtual *Speak Up!* by storm

Speak Up!

On Friday, 2 July, St Mark's, along with the other four Anthem Trust secondary schools met online for the third annual Trust public speaking and debating competition, Speak Up!

First up were Key Stage 3 teams, each comprising a Chair, Speaker and Vote of Thanks. Each trio had up to 10 minutes to introduce, speak about and summarise their team and chosen topic, which covered issues from dieting and advertising, to caring too much about our appearance.

A special mention went out to our team from St Mark's whose speaker Louis (Year 8) gave a barnstorming speech about how people's differences make the world a more interesting place. The team were beset by technical issues, so had to perform twice – which they did, with aplomb!

Next it was the turn of Key Stage 4. At this level, the competition shifts towards how well the students can engage with an argument and both ask and answer questions about the topic at hand. A Chair and Questioner from one school 'hosted' a Speaker from another, listening carefully before challenging the Speaker to answer points raised in their speech.

All the speeches were eloquently delivered, conveying a real passion about issues such quick loans and the inherent violence of oppressive language.

Speak Up! is a hugely significant event in the Trust's calendar, and we really appreciate the work of everyone involved that make it such a memorable day. Special thanks to Adam Jivraj for preparing and supporting our teams through this year's competition.



The following students from our Academy were 'highly commended'

Asha Monplaisir, Louis Gambell and Tia Jordan.

Congratulations to them all!



Sixth Form News

Endings and Beginnings

This year has presented us with yet more unexpected turns and our Sixth Form students have come out of the other side brighter, more determined and ready to shine.

We say goodbye to our Year 13s who are going off to a broad range of work, university and apprenticeship providers. Their commitment to their learning right to the end was second to none and we wish them all the best of luck for next year.

Our Year 12s have continued to work hard and ensure their voices are heard through the ever successful 'Speak out Challenge'. They have relished the opportunity to get beaten in the staff vs students football tournaments and continue to keep their heads high. After a grueling set of mocks, we wish them all the restful summer they deserve.

Finally, we say goodbye to the wonderful Mr Foster. We wish him all the best in his next endeavors and from all the students and staff say a huge thank you for all he has done for the St Mark's community.

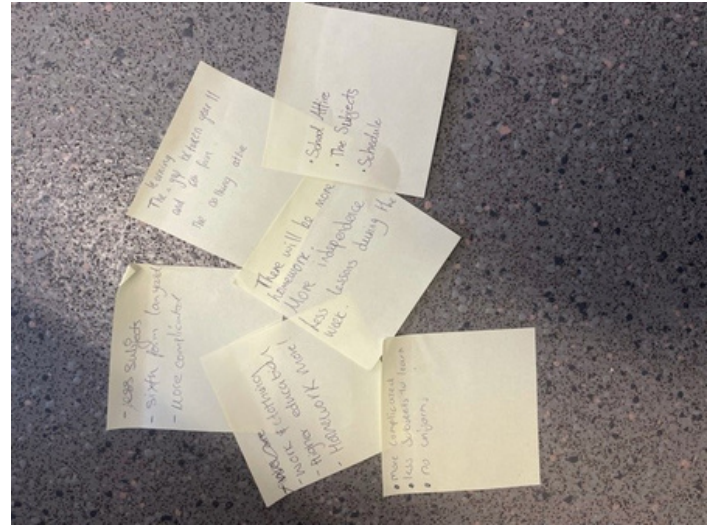
We look forward to welcoming back all the students in September and wish you all a wonderful summer.



Sixth Form News

Sixth Form Induction Day

This year we hosted a 6th Form Induction day with a difference. Due to COVID restrictions students came on site in small groups and were greeted with St Mark's 6th Form goody bags. Students took part in 'preparing for 6th Form' sessions by an external provider called Elevate and then spent the afternoon enjoying virtual taster lessons and working on their bridging projects. These posts represent some of the thoughts students shared at the start of their sessions about what it means to be a 6th Form student. We very much look forward to welcoming all these young people back as Year 12 in September.



Ipad Winner

Priyanka Pun 13A was given a IPAD for outstanding attendance to sixth form.

Throughout the entire two years in sixth form this student had not had one single day of absence!



End of Year Prayer

**At the end of this school year we
give thanks to God:**

For all the teaching and learning
that has taken place in our school,
both in and out of the classroom;
For the talents and gifts that have
been shared and the challenges that
have been faced;

For the burdens that have been
lifted and the hurts that have been
healed;

For the respect and care that has
been given.

We give thanks for the friendships
that have just begun and for those
that have grown.

For the faith that has been lived in
our daily struggles,

For the hope that has lifted our
hearts on the dark days

And for the love that has kept us going.

We give thanks for the community.

Bless all our students.

May your Spirit inspire
them with confidence and calmness.

Bless our families as we take our
holidays, may our time together
leave us with memories to cherish.

Pour out your love on us that we
may return renewed and refreshed
to continue our journey together.

We make this prayer through Christ
our Lord.

Amen



Rev Andrew Wignall
Academy Chaplain and
Director of Personal
Development