



A community of transformation founded on love, hope & trust

St Mark's Church of England Academy

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Headteacher: Aimee Gallagher

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Dear Parent / Carer,

As you may be aware, your child has been identified as a High Prior Attainer (HPA). This means that when they joined St Mark's, they were recognised as having achieved highly in their Year 6 SATs.

Following on from a successful trial last year, we are delighted to share that Year 10 HPA students will be taking part in an exciting academic task – **The Passion Project**.

The aim of the Passion Project is to encourage independence, deepen subject knowledge, and nurture a love of learning by allowing students to explore an area they are genuinely passionate about. As a **super-curricular activity**, it goes beyond the GCSE syllabus, helping students strengthen their academic profile and broaden their intellectual horizons.

We know that students who begin secondary school as HPAs have the potential to achieve Grade 7 and above at GCSE. To support them in reaching this goal, it is vital that they develop strong independent learning habits. Projects like this also play an important role in preparing students for the future: when applying to competitive universities through **UCAS**, evidence of extra and super-curricular engagement is highly valued, as it demonstrates curiosity, initiative, and the ability to learn independently.

The final academic piece can take any form – for example, an app, a short story collection, an art portfolio, a short film, a music composition, or even match reports for school sports fixtures. The focus is on producing an outstanding academic piece of work that they will be proud to present.

Students will be given dedicated time during Wednesday coaching sessions this half term to develop their Passion Projects. However, as this is an extended piece of work, we encourage them to also commit time outside of school – either at home or in the school library – to bring their ideas to life.

At the end of the term, we will be inviting students to display their Passion Projects to staff and families at the **ACE Awards**, where staff will vote for their favourite projects. Prizes will be awarded to those with the most votes.

We are very grateful for the support you provide at home and encourage you to engage with your child's project as they work towards realising their God-given potential. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

With kind regards,

Mr Moggridge

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