

Staying

Connected

Parent / Carer Bulletin



February 2025



ROOKS HEATH SCHOOL
Strive to be your best



I am delighted to welcome you to our updated newsletter. We hope you enjoy its new style, designed to keep you informed and celebrate our student's wonderful achievements. It has been an incredibly busy and exciting few weeks, and I am proud to share some highlights of what you can read more about in this issue.

First and foremost, a huge congratulations to our students who participated in the Jack Petchey Speak Out Challenge. Their remarkable development in oracy has been a key focus of our literacy programme, and they have truly shone, demonstrating confidence and eloquence.

We were also thrilled to host our Careers Fair, which continues to inspire our students to reach for the stars. With the support of our local MP, Gareth Thomas and a range of professionals, our students were introduced to a wealth of opportunities, helping them to shape their aspirations for the future.

This half term also marked an exciting development in our international relations, as we welcomed Chinese staff and students for their very first experience in a UK secondary school. Their visit was a resounding success, with one Chinese student expressing a strong desire to join our vibrant school community and become a fully emersed Rooks Heath student!

What truly makes our school special is our commitment to inclusion and adapting lessons to meet the needs of every student. Our teachers continually embrace professional development, ensuring that only the best in-class experiences are delivered. Additionally, our fantastic reading ambassadors have been working closely with local primary schools, supporting younger pupils through paired reading sessions—an excellent example of our students giving back to the community.

As we look ahead, I would like to remind all parents and carers that from Monday, 24th February, all payments for school activities will be managed through **My Child At School (MCAS) on Bromcom**. Please ensure you are logged into the system before the launch date, as we don't want any hungry or disappointed students due to missed opportunities. **MCAS** will provide you with a single platform for all school communications, making it easier than ever to **stay connected**.

Finally, a word of encouragement to our exam students—keep up the excellent revision over the half term! During my recent visits to Year 11 lessons, I was impressed by the high standards of note-taking and preparation. Let's keep that momentum going.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support. Wishing you all a restful and enjoyable half term.

Mrs Manderson

Careers Fair – Inspiring Future Career Paths

Mrs S. Subra

The recent careers fair held for students in Years 9 to 13, which we planned in conjunction with our local MP, Gareth Thomas, proved to be an invaluable experience, bringing together young minds with professionals from a wide variety of industries. The event was an exciting opportunity for students to explore potential career paths, gain insights into various professions, and learn about the skills and qualifications required to succeed in today's competitive job market.



The fair featured numerous companies, universities, and apprenticeship providers, offering students a chance to connect with experts across different fields. From engineering to the arts, healthcare to technology, the fair was designed to ensure that students had access to a broad range of career options. Exhibitors shared insights into their respective industries, offered guidance on further education, and provided advice on how to navigate career choices at different stages of education.



A standout session at the event was a talk on **CV and Cover Letter Writing**, led by a representative, Rikesh, from Google. This session aimed to provide students with essential skills to craft compelling applications that stand out to employers. During this session, students learned the key elements of an effective CV, including how to highlight achievements, tailor experiences to specific job roles, and make their qualifications shine. They also covered best practices for writing cover letters, focusing on how to express genuine interest in a role and company while highlighting relevant skills and experiences.

Rikesh shared valuable tips, such as the importance of keeping applications concise, maintaining a professional tone, and using clear formatting to improve readability. It was clear that students left the session feeling more confident and equipped with the knowledge to enhance their job applications in the future.

For many attendees, the careers fair was not only a chance to explore different professions but also a reminder of the importance of building the right skills early on. As students continue their educational journeys, events like this provide them with the tools and inspiration needed to make informed decisions about their futures.

The Careers Fair was also attended by sixty students from Avanti House Secondary School, along with their Careers Lead, who also happens to be Mrs Manderson's ex-student! By welcoming students from another school, Rooks Heath has once again proven to be at the forefront of fostering career development for young people. The event not only demonstrated our commitment to giving students the tools to make informed decisions about their futures, but also highlighted our role as a leader in educational innovation.

Overall, the careers fair was a tremendous success, providing valuable resources, networking opportunities, and inspiration for students looking to build bright futures. It is clear that events like this are crucial for helping young people explore their career aspirations and prepare for the exciting challenges ahead.

I would like to extend a special thank you to the incredible teamwork shown by all members of our school. A huge thank you to all tutors/teachers who helped make this year's fair a success by ensuring students were prepared with the right questions and navigated the fair in a constructive way. Also, a massive thank you to all staff members who came together and helped with looking after the visitors, those who helped with the supervision of the hall and the staffroom, the ICT team and Mr Pitchforth for their help with the technical aspects, the Sites team with setting up and keeping the hall tidy before, during and after the event, the Reception team for managing the signing in and out of nearly 50 visitors, and the list goes on. Their dedication and hard work ensured that the careers fair was a memorable and impactful experience for everyone involved.

A special thank you to Ms Green for her meticulous planning and Mrs Ahmed for her support throughout the event. We look forward to the next careers fair, where even more students will be able to gain crucial insights to help shape their career paths.

Year 10 Speak Out Challenge Workshop

Ms J. Green



The English Department hosted another successful Speak Out Challenge workshop on Wednesday 29th January in which a group of Year 10 students engaged in the process of creating a speech and learning the skills to effectively deliver them under the guidance of Vanessa Dirwai, representing the Speakers Trust. After a series of paired and group activities, it was lovely to see so many students confidently presenting their speeches with appreciative peer support.

Six were selected to go forward to the Year 10 speech assembly. They are- Afnan, Andreea, Bianca, Mark, Nailah and Rhys.

Two students also offer their thoughts on the workshop:

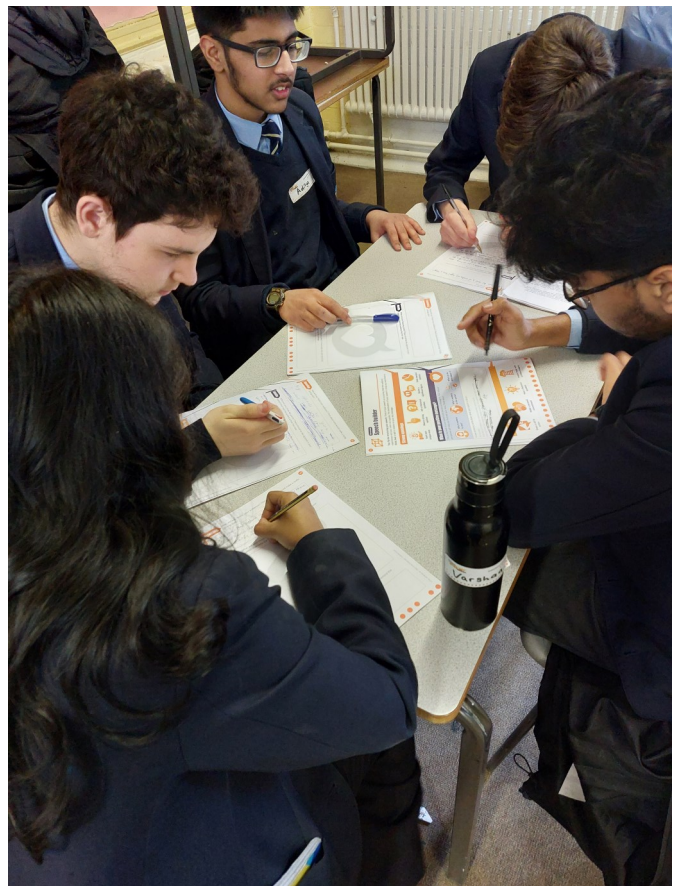
When I signed up for the workshop, I expected it to be based more about writing

speeches. But when I got there, it was more to do with gaining confidence and learning how to speak to a larger group of people. This workshop really helped me build my confidence and I learnt how to be able to address a room full of people without seeming to be nervous. The experience was really fun and I got to work with others students I don't usually work with.

Bianca

This experience was really useful for me as I have had some struggles to express my thoughts in front of an audience. It has helped me open up and be more confident, no matter who I am talking to. I am very grateful to have taken part in the workshop which many might think is only about speaking out to an audience. However, it is more than that; it is about how to look confident and how to express yourself which I learnt in the workshop. Many thanks to Vanessa (Dirwai) who ran the workshop.

Andreea



Welcoming Our Visiting Chinese Students

Ms Y. Sun

Last month, our school had the pleasure of hosting a group of 15 visiting students from China. They came to visit us during their Chinese New Year break and intended to experience the British curriculum.

The visit was marked by a warm welcome speech from our Headteacher, Mrs. Manderson, who expressed her excitement about the cultural exchange and learning opportunities this visit would bring. Year 9 MEP (Mandarin Excellence Programme) student Alesha gave a welcome speech in Mandarin. Her impressive language skills captivated the audience and set a positive tone for the visit. All Chinese students were paired up with two RHS students who study Mandarin.

Throughout their stay, the Chinese students were fully immersed in both the English language and the British curriculum. They also participated in our school's Career Fair, gaining valuable insights and experiences. In return, our RHS students had the opportunity to practise their Mandarin and build lasting friendships with their new peers.

The visit concluded with a heartfelt farewell party. Our students sang "See You Again," creating a touching moment for everyone. The Chinese students also showcased their culture by performing a traditional Chinese



dance, which was met with great enthusiasm.

Deputy Headteacher Mr Macaulay gave a farewell speech in Mandarin, whose excellent pronunciation was highly praised, and Year 11 student Shaan volunteered to give a bilingual speech (in Mandarin and English). Students wrote thank-you notes to each other and exchanged contact details and presents. All the visiting Chinese students were issued with a Certificate of Participation signed by Mrs Manderson.

This visit has not only enriched our students' educational experience, but also fostered a deeper understanding and appreciation of each other's cultures. We look forward to more such exchanges in the future.

Thank you to the Rooks Heath community for all your support and dedication to make this event successful. Thank you too for making our visitors welcome to your lessons. Thank you for getting the Rookery and hall ready for the welcome and farewell ceremonies. Thank you for printing out the certificates out for Chinese students and thank you all...

This visit didn't come to an end with the farewell party. What is even more heart-warming is the lovely messages that students from both sides wrote for each other. Here is one of them:

Meeting the Chinese exchange students by Dhian 7G

It was a good experience having Chinese exchange students visit our school. I got to know a boy called Li Jin Ze quite well. One of the best parts was being able to practise my Mandarin with him, at the same time I tried to help him with his English. It was fun to try speaking in another language and see how much we could understand each other. It was nice how quickly everyone became friends - it wasn't awkward at all.

We spent time talking about what we like and the differences in our schools, and found out we liked a lot of similar things. We all love gaming and sports. Li Jin Ze loved basketball, and we all played in a big group at lunchtimes. We also discussed the differences between our countries. One thing he mentioned to me was that in China, they have blue traffic lights instead of green. I am really curious to see this for myself when we visit China in Year 9!

Adaptive Teaching Strategies: The Teaching and Learning Marketplace at Rooks Heath

Mrs S. Subra

Fostering an inclusive and diverse learning environment is at the heart of our educational philosophy at Rooks Heath School.

This year, we were excited to host our inaugural Teaching and Learning Marketplace, where all departments showcased the innovative strategies used in lessons to ensure that all students—regardless of background or ability can thrive in the classroom.



The event highlighted how our school is embracing adaptive teaching techniques tailored to the unique needs of our students, particularly SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) students.



St. Paul's Model United Nations

Mr M. Hutchinson

On Saturday 18th January, Rooks Heath sent a delegation to the prestigious St. Paul's Model United Nations.

Dhaniel, Aarav, Aditya, Mark, Blinart and Satyansh made their MUN debuts representing the country of Qatar in a range of committee sessions, debating weighty issues from tensions in Kashmir to future pandemic prevention. The students represented Qatar's position – and Rooks Heath (one of very few state schools in attendance) did so with courage and eloquence, while enjoying themselves immensely.

Although there were no official prizes for our students this year, the chair of Aarav's committee noted that Aarav had written “the best resolution he had ever seen” – and with a bit more experience the group are sure to pick up some awards next year. Well done students!



Before we went off for the Christmas holiday, we held the Year 7 girls inter-form football tournament. After making it through the group stages, 7 Violet reigned supreme after a thrilling victory against 7 Blue. A fantastic effort by all. Congratulations 7 Violet!

Year 10 Basketball Champions

Mr P. Todd

Having remained undefeated for the past three seasons, the Year 10 team had the opportunity to remain so for a fourth consecutive year if they were to beat Salvatorian College in this year's Borough Basketball final. When we arrived it took five minutes and a right good telling off to get their minds right for what lay ahead, before we even got off the minibus! It worried me immensely; their attitude was one that they just had to turn up to win....

We walked into the sports hall to be met by an opposition team that were going through their warmup in a very determined manner. Their coach came over and said, 'our lambs are ready for slaughter sir!'. I quickly poured scorn on this comment and said I'm not sure about that and pointed up to our end of the hall where our boys were looking more like a rabble than a team. Not the best of starts!

I pulled them together and said that attitude is only a small ingredient in a team's recipe but makes a big difference and can be a leveller and so it came to bear. Salvatorian, who we'd put forty points on last year, played out of their skins keeping the score very tight and even taking the lead. With the possibility of an upset on the cards the hall had filled up with expectant staff and students making for a frenetic atmosphere. With the final buzzer fast approaching, we somehow pulled it out of the bag winning by four points, retaining our unbeaten record and remaining unbeaten Borough champions.



Intermediate Mathematical Challenge Awards 2025

Ms. S Sritharan



47 (Years 9, 10, and 11) students took part in this year's Intermediate Mathematical Challenge on 29th January 2025 and 32 students achieved awards.

Achieved:

3 - Gold Awards **17- Silver Awards** **12 – Bronze Awards**

Important Parent Pay/ MCAS Reminder

Friday 14th February is the last day that ParentPay can be used to pay for lunches. After half term all payments will need to be made via the My Child At School platform. Please remember to activate your account.

Further information on account activation can be found [here](#).



Earlsmead Primary School – Paired Reading Programme

Once again, our Year 8 students have been invited into Earlsmead Primary school for our paired reading programme.



The programme will be for five weeks. The Earlsmead children really enjoy working with our students and look forward their time with them.

forward their time with them.

Maths Open Homework

Mrs H. Grewal

Following our open October homework, the following students presented the best poster for open homework and received a trophy and certificate in their Year Group assembly. Well done!

Year 7 – Red – Anosh

Year 8 – Blue – Oliwia

Year 9 – Orange – Romil

Year 10 – Green – Arwin



Important dates for your Calendar

FEBRUARY	
Monday 17th—Friday 21st	February Half Term
Wednesday 26th—4pm - 8pm	Year 9 Parent Consultation Evening—Online
Thursday 27 th and Friday 28 th	Year 11 Spring mock exams in English, RS and Maths.
MARCH	
Wednesday 5th March	Year 9 Options Interviews
Wednesday 12th March - 4pm—7:30pm	Year 8 Consultation Evening—In Person
Wednesday 26th March—4pm- 8pm	Year 7 Consultation Evening—Online

