



## From the Headteacher - 6 February 2026

Dear Parents

As we approach the February half-term break, in many ways it is hard to believe that we are arriving at the half-way point of the academic year. In compiling my email this week, one of the main themes of this time of year is very much about preparing and supporting our pupils to make decisions about *next* academic year, despite this still being a considerable time away.

### **Sixth Form Open Evening**

Last Thursday, we welcomed over 1,500 visitors to our Sixth Form Open Evening, a testament to the incredible interest in and popularity of our Sixth Form. Alongside the hard work of staff in preparing for and running the evening, I am enormously grateful to our many current Sixth Form students who supported subject departments, guided visitors and answered questions from prospective students and parents. I received a significant amount of positive feedback about their willingness to help and speak in depth about their experiences of studying at the School. My sincere thanks also go to members of the local community who joined the team of staff and student leaders to ensure that our visitors were able to arrive, park and depart as smoothly as possible throughout the evening.

The deadline for applications to our Sixth Form is Saturday 28 February; a reminder that we do require our current Year 11 pupils to complete an application too. The link for applications can be found on our website, and is also copied below:

[STRS Sixth Form Application](#)

### **Careers Fair and Year 11 Interview Day**

As you may have seen on the newsfeed of our website, on Tuesday 27 January we welcomed 30 Higher Education providers and over 100 organisations to our annual Careers Fair. Pupils in Years 9 – 13 were able to tour the fair, with students in Year 12 given the opportunity to sign up to bespoke talks from a variety of professions and industries. Along with our thanks to the many universities and companies that supported the fair, huge thanks also go to Mrs Manning (Head of Careers) and Mrs Morris (Head of Higher Education) for organising, coordinating and looking after the many visitors who joined us last week.

Further to this, on Tuesday this week, we welcomed parents and alumni of the School to give careers interviews to our Year 11 pupils; each received a one-to-one interview in which they were questioned on their current and emerging career aspirations. The feedback from Year 11 was incredibly positive, with each benefitting greatly from a structured conversation with an external professional. On behalf of Mrs Manning, Mrs Webb and Mrs Dempsey, who oversaw and coordinated the interviews, we are extremely grateful to all parents and alumni who gave their time and expertise to support such an important part of our careers provision.

As ever, if you would like to offer your help to our careers programme, or would like to find out more about how to do so, please contact Mrs Manning ([jam@strs.org.uk](mailto:jam@strs.org.uk)) – we would be delighted to hear from you.

### **Year 9 Options Evening**

Continuing the theme of preparing for 'next steps', our Year 9 pupils have recently benefitted from an in-house *Options Fair* led by subject representatives from Year 10 and overseen by Mr O'Neil (Head of Years 9 and 10). Year 10 students were highly impressive in their detailed, clear and well-informed descriptions of what learning and study are like in each of our GCSE subjects.

When choosing an options subject, we always advise pupils to consider the following:

1. The topic areas covered in the subject, and their own personal interest in such topics
2. Their current ability (if known) in the subject
3. The main ways in which the subject will be assessed
4. Any benefits this subject may have towards future career plans, including for A Level study, Higher Education or the world of work.

I am also grateful to Mr Tilley (Head of Year 11 and Options Manager) and Mr Dempsey (Deputy Headteacher) for leading the Virtual Year 9 Parents' Options Evening on Monday this week, allowing parents to submit and receive answers to their questions throughout the presentation.

A reminder that the deadline for making GCSE option choices is Friday 6 March.

### **Year 13 Trial Examinations**

Having recently completed the Year 11 trial examinations, our attention now also turns to the Year 13 trial examinations, which start after half-term. It goes without saying that preparing effectively for these mocks will ensure that teacher feedback can be more effectively targeted at specific topic areas or examination skills. This, in turn, will identify the most appropriate steps to improve attainment wherever needed before the summer examinations.

While using the half-term break to revise and prepare, it is important for our Year 13 students to plan in breaks and activities to break up longer periods of revision. We also make clear to our students that, alongside their preferred revision strategies and the use of departmental resources, putting their knowledge to the test with the available past papers and mark schemes for each subject is a key part of the collective preparation for any examination.

I wish Year 13 all the very best for their mock examinations.

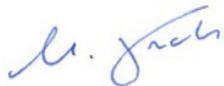
### **Netball Regional Finals**

The Netball 1st Team competed in the Regional Schools Final in Bournemouth on Saturday 31 January, following their impressive second-place finish at the County Netball Tournament. Facing strong opposition from across the region, the team delivered a fantastic performance throughout the day, coming fifth in their group and securing an overall ninth-place finish in the region - a fantastic achievement. This result reflects the hard work, commitment and quality of netball consistently shown by the team, and they should be extremely proud of their performance.

### **Half-term dates**

Finally, a reminder that we finish for the half-term holiday on Friday 13 February, at the usual time of 3.20pm; term restarts on Monday 23 February. Miss Tapscott (Deputy Headteacher) will send a further email update to parents before the end of next week, leaving me to say that I hope you have an enjoyable half-term break when it arrives.

Best wishes



Matthew Lynch

HEADTEACHER

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