

Headteacher's Update

21st June 2024

I am sure that there is a sense of both joy and relief for all students in Years 11 and 13 as we got to the end of the external examinations season this week. The feedback from all of the staff who have supported the students throughout the past month is that they have been impressed with the maturity and focus of all of the students without exception. The end of the examination period means that we will be reverting to the 2-2-1 pattern of the day from Monday onwards (with only one lesson for students after the lunch break).

As is always the case, I was delighted to be able to join the staff and students at Pinewood Hotel yesterday evening. During the eleven years that I have been at Vyners, the proms have always been wonderful events and this was no exception. The students looked amazing in their formal wear and it was delightful to see them all celebrating the end of their exams as well as the time that they have spent together over the past five years. I am sure that they were still celebrating long after I was in bed! I am also very much looking forward to celebrating with the Year 13 cohort at their prom at Venue 5 next Wednesday evening. They have been a wonderful group of young people who have contributed so much to the school community.

At this time of year, I always take the opportunity to inform all of our students that they should now consider themselves to have progressed to the next academic year which, I hope, prompts them to reflect on their potential next steps. With this in mind, I was delighted to be able to hand out prefect ties to all of our successful Year 10 prefect applicants this morning. As is always the case, a significant proportion of the cohort applied for these roles, which is a testament to their willingness to serve the school community. Our group of prefects will start their Year 11 duties from this Monday through to Easter of 2025.



Jack Petchey Speak out

There are a number of students, past and present, who I would like to highlight this week. My first mention is for Leena Amin (10H) who has progressed to the national grand final of the Jack Petchey Speak Out competition. Leena is one of only fifteen students who have progressed to this stage of the competition and we wish her the very best of luck when she takes to the stage on Monday 8th July in central London.



Middlesex Golf Championships

It was fantastic to learn this week that two former Vyners students were victorious in the Middlesex County Golf Championships that took place at Sudbury Golf Club in June. Jack Neill (Men's) and Lucy Handley (Women's) won their respective events after three hard days of golf against the very best golfing talent in the county. Jack's win was his third success in the men's event with the first having happened whilst still attending Vyners. We are extremely proud of both alumni who are achieving great things both on and off the golf course.



INSET day

A gentle reminder for parents and carers that the **school will be closed to students on Friday 28th June** as this is an INSET day for all staff. The June INSET day is an important day in the school calendar as it is a time when teams come together to review their strategic plans, including curriculum planning, so that we are thoroughly prepared for the coming academic year.

Thank you to all parents and carers in advance for their understanding.

Sports days

We have our two sports days at the Hillingdon athletics venue on Wednesday and Thursday of next week. Students in Years 7 and 8 will be competing on Wednesday with Years 9 and 10 competing on Thursday. The PE department has sent a letter to all parents and carers giving details for these days. A copy of the letters can be found here ([Y7/Y8 letter](#) and [Y9/Y10 letter](#)).

The current weather forecast for these days is positive with temperatures anticipated to be in the mid to low twenties. Can I ask parents to ensure that their child has adequate supplies of food and water on the day as well as sun protection such as a sun hat or similar.

Attendance

Finally, this week, I would like to make a final plea to parents and carers to support the school and their child's progress by ensuring strong attendance through to the end of the academic year. The overall attendance for students in years 7-11 is marginally above 93% and whilst this does place the school within the top 20% of schools for attendance nationally, we must get back to pre-pandemic levels of school attendance at the earliest possible time,

which would mean attendance towards the 96% mark for a school such as Vyners. I would really appreciate the support of all families in achieving this goal.

Wishing all of our families a wonderful weekend.

Gary Mullings
Headteacher

MFL Trip to Barcelona

Bustling Barcelona

Day 1: 7th June

On Friday I woke up at the crack of dawn to catch our early morning flight to the bustling Spanish city of Barcelona. After a short coach journey from school, we arrived at Heathrow terminal 5 and promptly checked our bags in. We waited for quite a while until we eventually managed to board the plane and arrived at Barcelona airport a few hours later.

Upon arrival, we exited the airport and I was hit with a pleasant, warm breeze; a nice contrast to the chilly British weather that we had been experiencing. We met up with our tour guide Emma, and then we got on the coach and drove to Montserrat; a mountain range that encompasses a monastery with an absolutely stunning view. We drove up a very hilly path that twisted and turned for what seemed like forever until we finally reached the monastery. When I got out of the coach I was struck by an amazing view of the Spanish countryside and I was filled with a sense of awe and wonder as I gazed out across the green sea of trees and buildings below me. We were given an hour of free time and I spent my time exploring the rows of small shops and sat on a bench under a tree, taking in the stunning view. Others spent their time climbing the mountains and eating some of the delicious ice cream. When we met back up with the teachers, we took a gentle stroll to the cable car, which took us down the mountain where we got on the coach. The cable car creaked and swayed as it gently took us down the steep hills of Montserrat. Then we drove to our hotel. We stayed in the Canada Palace Hotel in Calafell just outside the centre of Barcelona. After checking in, we went down to the beach and wandered along the beachfront for a while. The views of the sea were breathtaking and I really enjoyed going into all of the little shops on the beachfront. We then walked back to the hotel, had dinner and went to sleep because I was absolutely exhausted after the long day of travelling.

Day 2 - Saturday 8th June

The next morning, we woke up bright and early to the sound of waves crashing against each other. We promptly went down to breakfast and got ready for a busy day of exploring the streets of Barcelona. After a short coach journey, we arrived in the bustling city centre and we had some time to walk around the gothic quarter and explore the shops. We made our way down the Boqueria Market

via the famous Las Ramblas and kept our phones in our bags so that we wouldn't get pick-pocketed. The Market was absolutely wonderful. It was filled with all sorts of colours and flavours; from exotic fruits to different types of meat, you could find just about anything in this iconic Spanish market. I bought one of the fruit pots and it was very tasty. Then we walked back through the Las Ramblas, to Port Vell - a waterfront harbour with picturesque views of the boats coming and going. It was a lively place with many people hanging out and spending time together. We had some free time to relax and buy some souvenirs in the local mall before heading to the Sagrada Familia; the largest unfinished church in the world. Upon arrival, we were met by a brilliant tour guide who talked us through the history of the Basilica and explained all the features of this wonderful piece of architecture by Antoni Gaudí. I found it so fascinating to see the precise details and learn about the meaning behind Gaudí's different architecture styles and what influenced his ideas and constructions. I especially enjoyed seeing the astounding stained glass windows which, when the sun shone through it, lit up the church with wonderful shades of red, blue, orange and green. After the tour, we went back to the hotel and had dinner. The food at the hotel was quite delicious; there was a buffet which had a wide variety of food to choose from, including pasta, different types of meat and a salad bar. Then we went to sleep, excited to go to the theme park the next morning.

Day 3 - 9th June

When we woke up, the weather was quite bad. It wasn't sunny anymore and looked like it was going to rain. We started off the day by heading to a small town called Tarragona where we visited the ancient Amphitheatre that was once used for brutal gladiator fights. It then started pouring down with rain and we all bolted into the nearest shop to stay dry from the horrible weather that had closed in on us. Then, the sun started to come out and we drove to Port Aventura theme park. There was such a wide variety of rides to choose from and we were spoiled for choice. Me and my friends decided to go on all of the dangerous rides with loop the loops and massive drops. We got thrown around in the air and although I did start to feel quite light headed, we enjoyed it so much that we went on some of the rides twice! We got back to the hotel quite late and started packing straight after dinner, ready to go home the next day.

Day 4 - Monday 10th June

On Monday morning I woke up and I didn't want to leave. I had so much fun the last few days that I didn't want to face the reality of going back to school. But the trip wasn't over yet! We had breakfast and then walked to a Spanish supermarket. It was interesting seeing how similar yet different the Spanish supermarkets were compared to the British supermarkets. We then went back to the hotel and got all of our suitcases and loaded it onto the bus. We set off for the museum tour of Camp Nou - Barcelona football club. I was absolutely amazed at the trophy cabinet that

they had; they had a never ending collection of trophies and medals glistening in the bright lights of the museum. The museum also contained detailed history of some of the most well respected players in the history of the club and it was quite interactive with many videos and lights. After a long while at the museum, we drove to the Montjuic viewpoint where we saw more fantastic views of the sea - known as "*vistas al mar*" in Spanish. Then we went to the airport and our flight unfortunately got delayed by an hour and a half but we eventually made it back to England after a very long wait.

Barcelona was such a delightful city and I loved it so much. The best of all was the ambience and the life of the city; it was vibrant and filled with an abundance of history and culture. It is so difficult to say what my favourite part of my trip was but I think it's safe to say that I definitely enjoyed seeing the astounding architecture of the Sagrada Familia the most and I will without a doubt be returning to Barcelona when I am older.

However, all of these happy memories wouldn't have happened without our wonderful teacher Miss Vigo so I would like to thank her and the other two teachers that accompanied her; Miss Pape and Miss Kelly.

Marli, Year 10 Student



Year 12 Politics Trip to Parliament, Westminster & the Supreme Court

The History & Politics department took Year 12 politics students to Westminster on Tuesday 18th June.

This was a chance for them to place the various institutions of our democracy in their historic, functional and architectural context. The weather was on our side and ensured we could maximise the opportunity to explore the centre of political power in the United Kingdom.



The first event was a visit to the Houses of Parliament. By happy chance the guide for our tour was a former politics student at Vyners, Evita Nazari!

She was clearly using a lot of her GCSE History, A-Level History and Government & Politics in her fascinating tour around Westminster hall, central lobby, the House of Commons chamber, division lobbies, House of Lords & St. Stephen's chapel.



With Parliament dissolved we had the opportunity to stand on the government benches and a few students even took the opportunity to stand at the dispatch box. Student's asked

excellent questions that demonstrated their detailed understanding of government and politics that they have been learning this year. Our tour ended back in Westminster hall, where the late Queen Elizabeth II lay in state in 2022.

Mr Beale then led the students on a walking tour of Westminster. This showed the other centres of power in our democratic system.



We caught a glimpse of 10 Downing Street behind the gates and armed police, explored the locations of various government departments, investigated the location of some of the most influential pressure groups on Tufton Street and stood where big media interviews are conducted on College Green. All of this was in the shadow of Westminster Abbey, representing another source of power in this country.

We finished the tour with a visit to the Supreme Court. With the 2005 Constitutional Reform Act, the Judiciary is now separate from government and Parliament. This building is therefore incredibly important in ensuring that law is followed correctly. Students explored the exhibition of the creation of the Supreme Court and devolution before heading up to the main courtroom. Students were able to fully explore the courtroom and take turns sitting in the chairs of the 12 Justices of the Supreme Court. It was clear that a few of our students considering Law at University were imagining themselves sitting in those chairs again one day.

It was a fantastic trip and all of the students agreed it had really enhanced their understanding of what they had studied in their Government & Politics lessons.

Thanks to Mr Harvey as well for joining us on the trip.

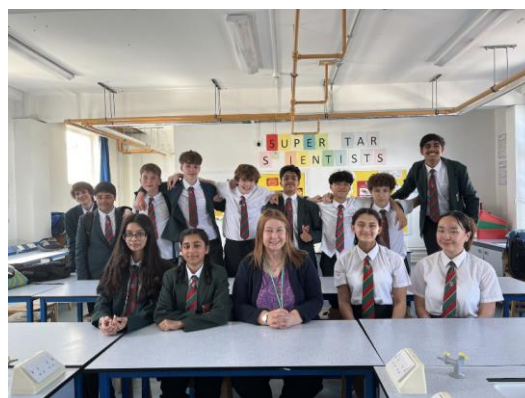
Mr Beale, Subject Leader - History

General Election Guide

Mr Beale has produced a guide to the General Election ahead of polling day on 4th July. It breaks down the key questions that staff and students might have as well as giving them the opportunity to find out about their own constituency, their own political views and the parties' manifesto pledges. Students will be using it ahead of our own mock General Election. Please click [\[here\]](#) for the guide.

Astronomy

Mrs Davies took over teaching the class independently this year. The whole Science department has been very impressed with the dedication shown by the Astronomy students especially given that all lessons have had to be after school and they have had to take readings independently to complete coursework. The students have persevered with very technical and challenging material usually reserved for Year 11 students and met this challenge well. Mrs Davies, Mrs Forde and the rest of the Science department wish every one of the Astronomy students the best of luck with their GCSE exam result.



Miss Holt, Subject Leader, Science

Design and Technology

It is creditably rewarding to see Sean Guyett a design student at Nottingham University [NTU] and from Vyners School Product design course doing so well. It is always a real boost to our current students and staff to see and follow the successes of our past students. Sean was an excellent student with a real sense of commitment to achieve and a pleasure to teach.

Well done Sean. Click [\[here\]](#) for the link to the article.

Mr Babra, Subject Leader, Design and Technology

STEM Taster Day at Brunel University

The students who took part in the CREST award had an amazing opportunity to attend a STEM taster day at Brunel University. This experience provided our students with real-life examples of how STEM is applied in the world outside of the classroom. The program organisers commented on how impressed they were by the attentiveness and good behaviour of our students. Overall, it was a fantastic day. Below is a full account of our day by Alicja and Amara.

Ms Ehsan, Teacher of Science



We visited Brunel university on Tuesday as a trip linked to the STEM club we attended. Over the course of the day we engaged in many activities linked to STEM run by student ambassadors from Brunel. One of these activities included making a bridge out of chocolate. We had to think about the forces that would act upon the bridges and the overall structure so that we could make it withstand as much weight as possible. Some of the other workshops we did included building cars and testing how fast they went and using coding to lead robots around a map. All of these activities were very well put together and taught us lots about science in the real world. Towards the end of the day, we got a tour around the university and the student ambassadors answered any questions we had about attending the university ourselves. Overall this was a fun and engaging event that I think everyone enjoyed.

Alicja, Year 9 Student

On Tuesday, some of us students from the CREST Club went to Brunel. We took part in many STEM related activities, as well as going on a tour of the campus. We looked at wielding chocolate into bridges to test how much they could hold. Then we built cars and tested out how stable their structure was by seeing how far they are able to travel. Finally we navigated robots through a course by commanding it with programming. Overall, it was a really fun day and we learned a lot about STEM and how it is used in the real world.

Amara, Year 9 Student

Anthea Bell Prize for Young Translators

Many congratulations to Hanif Dryden, awarded the Anthea Bell Prize for Young Translators, by Queen's College, Oxford. Judges read over 3,500 submissions (including those of other Vyners School participants) and awarded Hanif the Spanish Level 3 Greater London winner.

Very well done Hanif.

Mrs Kelly, Subject Leader, MFL

Sports Update

English Schools Athletics Championships

Two current Vyners students who will be participating in national competitions this summer are Dylan Lewis (9H) and Nathan Griffiths (9F) who have both been selected to compete for Middlesex at the English Schools Athletics Championships on 12th and 13 July at the Alexander Stadium in Birmingham. Both Dylan (1500m) and Nathan (Javelin) have had outstanding seasons to date and are both highly ranked nationally for their age group. We wish both boys the very best of luck in what should be an enriching experience for them both.

Borough Rounders Tournament

The Year 8s entered two teams in the Borough Rounders Tournament. Both teams played very well and their progress as players from Year 7 into Year 8 was clear to see. The A Team won 5 games and played Haydon, sadly losing in the final. They played very well throughout!

The B team won 3 games and lost 1 finishing 4th in the Borough - a fantastic achievement for a second team entered.

Well done all!



Miss Hawes, PE Department

Safeguarding Snapshot

Please click [\[here\]](#) for more information on this week's Safeguarding Snapshot, with advice on helping children stay safe online.

Nut-Free School

Please click [\[here\]](#) to read a letter from Miss Williams.

Sushi tasting in the school canteen!

The main school canteen is usually a place of high energy. This was particularly so earlier this month when our contract caterer, Cucina, arranged for a sushi tasting session to take place. It was great to see so many students stepping outside their culinary comfort zone to try something new. My thanks for the online catering team, and to the executive chefs from Cucina, for putting the event on.



In other news, we are hoping to stage a 'big eat' before the end of this academic year. The annual Christmas lunch is a wonderful moment in time where we get to sit down and eat a meal together as a whole school community. As Christmas only comes once a year we are hoping to stage a summer version of this event. The canteen have prepared a menu of BBQ treats, with a range of delicious salads, with a view to the whole school once again being invited to sit and eat a meal with colleagues and friends.

The cost of the menu is £2.86. Unlike the Christmas lunch, there is no need to pre-book. Free squash and some holiday tunes will also be on offer. This is a great opportunity for your son / daughter to sit and eat a meal with their friendship group - please encourage them to take part. Click [\[here\]](#) to view the menu.

Miss Williams, Business Manager