

One of the benefits of being a Headteacher in a school such as Vyners (and Trust such at the VLT) is that there is an expectation that you continue to develop and learn from the very best. Last Friday, I had such an opportunity to visit the UK Apple Headquarters at the Battersea Power Station in London. The day was part of a wider programme that I am engaged in regarding Trust leadership. As you would probably expect from a multi-billion dollar company, the architecture and general surroundings were rather impressive, as were the presentations and hospitality.

The day primarily focused on the history and development of the Apple culture, which is something that they have been able to establish across all aspects of their business world wide, as well as gaining an understanding of how Apple products have been used successfully to enhance educational experiences in schools and colleges.

Whether or not you are an Apple convert, I am sure that parents will agree that they are a remarkable organisation. I could write an entire essay on what I learnt of the day, but what was probably most evident is that they are a company that provides their employees with what they believe are the best possible conditions to be innovative and succeed in a fast paced ever changing environment. They are also a company that focuses on emotion and how people feel about their products just as much as they do their product functionality. An example of this is the focus on when customers open their products and experience them for the first time; the idea of surprise and delight. It was also interesting to learn that the boxes for iPhones are designed to close in 5-7 seconds and replicate the experiences of unboxing a birthday cake.

Whilst the demonstrations of Apple products for educational purposes was impressive, it did highlight issues around equity and the effective use of artificial intelligence (AI) going forward in the future. With regards to equity, there are genuine concerns about the affordability of technology in schools given the current financial constraints as well as the ongoing issue of some families being unable to access devices within the family home. We also know that digitisation in general is an issue for some parents as they may struggle with using technology at a time when more and more basic services are going online. This includes lots of the activities that are communicated to parents by schools.

The development of an AI strategy as part of a wider school and Trust wide digital strategy is a key area of our school improvement planning over the next 3-5 years. This will involve support for families both to access technology effectively and use AI in an efficient and ethical way. All indications are that AI advancements will be extraordinarily rapid over the next 5-10 years so it will be increasingly important that we work together with all of our stakeholders to ensure that we maximise the benefits and minimise the risks. We will share more information regarding our IT strategy as it progresses in the years to come.

On a separate note, I would like to thank parents and carers for their support for our annual Open Evening event that took place last Wednesday. We do realise that the early finish on the Wednesday and late start on the Thursday can cause disruption to some families. However, I am sure that parents understand the importance of preparing the school for such evenings as well as

providing staff with a slightly later arrival time as well as the time to prepare the school for when the students arrive for lessons.

Much of the success of evenings such as these is the students. As is always the case, we received numerous complimentary comments and emails from prospective parents with regard to just how polite and informative our student guides were in the evening. Again, the support that we receive from families with regard to allowing the children to help in the evening was very much appreciated. We hope that all families that visited the school during the evening were suitably impressed and whilst we know that not all families who select Vyners as their first choice school will gain a place in September, we are hopeful that every child within the borough is able to gain a suitable school place for the start of the new academic year.

I would also like to take the opportunity to thank all parents who have responded so positively to my plea for better use of the roads in the immediate vicinity and plea for much more considered parking at the start and end of the day. The difference since the early weeks of the term is quite considerable with far fewer cars entering Warren Road to drop off or pick up and those that do so are more often than not, heeding the advice given by members of staff as to where and where not to park their cars. It would be wonderful if this could continue for the remainder of the academic year. It is again worth reminding parents that the overwhelming majority of students live within a mile of the school and, as such, should not need to travel to or from school by car.

Linked to this, one issue that has steadily declined since the start of term is student punctuality. When speaking to students who arrive late in the mornings, the most frequent reason given is poor traffic. What I would stress is that we all know that there will be poor traffic conditions in this area on most days given the proximity to the A40. Students and parents should take this into account when planning journeys to school. There will be rare occasions where traffic is so bad that even an early start might not guarantee a timely arrival. However, these days are few and far between. Most students should be walking or cycling to school and should be arriving by 8.25am at the latest ready for a 8.30am start. Greater cooperation from families would be hugely appreciated so that we can provide a positive start to the school day for all of our children.

Finally, this week, I would like to thank all parents and carers who have taken the time to attend our information evenings to date. We believe that they are very important events as they are one of the only face-to-face events that allow us to share important information about the academic year ahead with each event specifically tailored to the needs of the Year group. As a reminder, we have our Year 10 evening next Tuesday 7th October starting at 6pm in the main hall. These will be followed in the subsequent week by the Year 8 evening on Tuesday 14th October, and the Year 11 evening on Wednesday 15th October, both commencing at 6pm. We very much look forward to seeing as many parents and carers at these events.

**Gary Mullings**  
**Headteacher**

## Arbor Parent Portal

Thank you to all the parents who have signed up to the Arbor Parent Portal so far. Next Monday we will be enabling two more features - the behaviour function and assessment function. We will be testing the functionality of this over the next few weeks. We will then enable the remaining functions of the Portal.

If you have not set up your Arbor Parent Portal please check your email as you should have log in details.

**Mr Newbey, Assistant Headteacher**

## Junior Open Evening - Year 12 with the finished Art piece

In Art this year we decided on a collaborative activity, to colour and add designs to a large scale inspirational quote. It was a busy evening, but thanks to all the visitors, prospective students, parents, siblings and Vyners helpers, we managed to get it completed.

**Mrs Teji, Teacher of Art**



## Oxford University Talk - Year 11

Pupils are given various opportunities to take part in Supercurricular events and talks and last week we were lucky to have Dom from St. Anne's College Oxford deliver a talk to a group of our Year 11 pupils. The talk is described below by Dylan from Year 11.

**Mr Kelly, Oxbridge Coordinator**

Last week, I went to a talk about Oxford University held in the school. This provided me with a lot of fascinating information about Oxford University and especially about the way the campus system works. This was really helpful and it was interesting to see the opportunities and potential paths open to me when I leave Vyners and go into further education. The speaker was clear, engaging and helpful, going through the different opportunities available at the university and answering questions that we had about university life. I particularly enjoyed hearing about the research laboratories at the University and look forward to visiting the labs in person when I am in the sixth form.

**Dylan, Year 11 Student**

## Ypres Trip (19th & 26th September)

The Year 8 school trip to Ypres was fascinating and really, really fun. We started our day by visiting both a Commonwealth and a German cemetery, and it was shocking to see the vast number of soldiers, and others, who gave up their lives to fight in the war. Later on, we visited the Passchendael Memorial Museum, where we got to see many fascinating artefacts that were dug up from the ground, and got to go inside a replica of both the soldiers' living areas and some trenches. At Tyne Cot, we all stood in front of many names of fallen soldiers whose bodies were not recovered. We were told to turn around and remember one of the names on the column behind us. I still remember the soldier I chose: F. Ashworth.

Later on, at the Menin Gate, we saw yet another list of many soldiers whose bodies were not recovered. I had actually found an ancestor whose name was recorded there, and I got to remember them. I was also honoured to be chosen to represent the school (along with another one of my peers) at the Last Post Ceremony. It was truly a once in a lifetime experience and I felt privileged to be able to participate in it.

However, although the trip was extremely interesting and fascinating, it was also really good fun. The coach rides, though long, were a really good time to catch up with friends, listen to music, and talk about our journey thus far. Occasionally during the coach ride, one of our tour guides would share a story about the area we were passing through. The tour guides were amazing, and so knowledgeable about World War 1. Overall, the trip to Ypres was interesting, enjoyable, and an amazing experience.

**Mia, Year 8 Student**



## Year 12 Workshop - SAME Academy

Today we had a visit from SAME Academy to deliver a workshop on driving awareness and road safety training. With the alarming statistic that 38,800 deaths and injuries in crashes involve drivers with less than two years of experience, we find it so valuable to ensure our students are educated on the risks and responsibilities of being a driver. Many of our Sixth Form students will be applying for their provisional licenses and starting driving lessons. A gentle reminder that driving lessons are not to be booked during the school day. The session was incredibly interactive and delivered in an engaging way. Thank you to Walé for coming to Vyners today.



Mrs Coyle, Head of Sixth Form

## New stage lighting - thank you, Friends of Vyners!

If you have been into school since the start of term, you may have noticed that our main hall stage has had a makeover. Over the summer holiday, the existing lighting bars were refurbished, new LED stage lighting fitted and new black curtains hung. The project has brought new life to this space, enabling us to showcase future student performances.

This project was made possible by a **significant** investment from Friends of Vyners. A big thank you to them for their generosity, and to every parent who has supported them by buying raffle tickets, participating in the 100 Club and purchasing refreshments at concerts and other school events. How to support them can be found on the main school website [\[click here\]](#).



## Sports Update

### U14 Girls FA Schools Cup - Round 2

On Wednesday 1st October the girls U14 team travelled to Wokingham to take on Bohunt School in the second round of the cup. Lauren Dampha scored the winning goal in the first half taking us through to round 3 with a tough 1-0 win.

Ms John, Teacher of PE

## Information Received

Last weekend, Jacob Goodridge competed in the London boxing development finals and won. He is now classed as the best under 46kg 2010 born fighter in London and will move on to compete in the Southern Counties Championships in two weeks. If he is successful there he will go on to compete for the national title. Congratulations to Jacob.

## VLT Support Staff Vacancies

Please [click here](#) for the list of support staff vacancies across the VLT sites.

## Autumn Term Key Dates

Tuesday 7 <sup>th</sup> October	Year 10 Parent Information Evening
Tuesday 14 <sup>th</sup> October	Year 8 Parent Information Evening
Wednesday 15 <sup>th</sup> October	Year 11 Parent Information Evening
Tuesday 21 <sup>st</sup> October	Sixth Form Open Evening (applications open)
Friday 24 <sup>th</sup> October	Year 8 and Year 13 reports issued
<b>Monday 27<sup>th</sup> to Friday 31<sup>st</sup> October</b>	<b>Half Term</b>
Friday 7 <sup>th</sup> November	Year 11 reports issued
Friday 14 <sup>th</sup> November	Year 10 reports issued
Friday 21 <sup>st</sup> November	FOV Quiz Night
Thursday 27 <sup>th</sup> November	Staff Conference (school closed to students)
Friday 28 <sup>th</sup> November	Staff Conference (school closed to students)
Monday 1 <sup>st</sup> December	Occasional Day (school closed)
Monday 8 <sup>th</sup> December	Year 11 & 13 Trial exams start
Friday 12 <sup>th</sup> December	Year 9 reports issued
Wednesday 17 <sup>th</sup> December	Vyners Christmas Concert
Friday 19 <sup>th</sup> December	Year 7 reports issued
<b>Friday 19<sup>th</sup> December</b>	<b>End of Autumn Term (12.20pm finish)</b>

Please click [here](#) for the link to the Calendar page on our school website, which includes key dates for this academic year - this document will be updated regularly.