

Word on the Street

STUDENT NEWS AND VIEWS



School Council

On March 8th 2023, the School Council celebrated International Women's Day in a number of exciting ways: we held a writing competition, created a rolling slideshow for the Street on inspirational women, and held a lucky dip in aid of ActionAid, a women's charity. I took part in the lucky dip where students had to guess an inspirational woman's name based on just one part of her face, if they got the name right they could take part in the lucky dip which included prizes such as lamps, LCD tablets, notebooks, pens, puzzles and stamps. The 50p entry fee for the lucky dip would go towards ActionAid which empowers and supports women around the world.



I remember the lucky dip stall being very busy as students gathered around us to have a guess at the names of the women on our board.

The School Council has also been holding a stationary stall every Tuesday to sell affordable stationary to pupils who may have forgotten theirs at home, or might need to top-up on a certain item. We have been selling pens, pencil, rubbers, sharpeners, pencil cases, rulers, and other essential stationary. We made the decision to bring back the stationary stall after a School Council meeting where we

realised that some of our peers did not have all of the relevant stationary for all of their classes.

One aspect of School Council which I really enjoy is being able to share my opinions. For example, we have a weekly discussion on ways in which we can contribute to the school. This makes me feel really good because I feel like I'm helping the school. This is part of the reason why I joined the School Council – to make school a fun and safe learning environment.

by Mahi Ahmed, 9F



Prefects



One thing I have noticed about our school is that some of the displays could use a little more colour and love, so I gathered a group of prefects and decided to help with this. The first display we created as a team was the 'Student Leaders' board near the school reception. It was really fun staying back after school and doing this with my friends as we had the freedom to think about what visitors would most likely to see first when they come into our



school. I also helped a teacher with making her classroom seem more lively and interesting, as I feel students learn better when their classroom environments are vibrant.

Beyond displays, prefects have also supported with after-school events such as the Winter Fayre where we helped set up the Street and registered pupils as they came in. We have also supported with some Parents' Evenings which I find personally rewarding: I felt I could use my bilingualism to support some parents find their way around, it is also so lovely to see the diversity and sense of community at our Parents' Evenings.

Being a Prefect has really helped develop my sense of belonging at this school, alongside improving my creativity and confidence.

Rise and Read is a programme which helps young people to develop their reading skills. As a prefect, I took part in this programme on a weekly basis as a reading buddy; I listened to younger pupils read, helped them correct any mistakes, encouraged them in their comprehension and helped them improve their writing. I find it really interesting to see how pupils show better understanding and confidence as the weeks progress, which is evidently due to the impact of Rise and Read. This programme was also really instrumental in my own development as a leader, and also required me to be patient as I needed to work at the same pace as the peers I read with, and had to give them feedback too. Taking part in Rise and Read as a reading mentor was certainly an invaluable and rewarding experience.

by Halima Rahman, 10D, Muhsina



Proud to Be and Wellbeing Club

During my time at MAS so far, I have taken part in lots of events and workshops which have helped me think about identity.

One of these has been the Proud to Be workshop which is all about expressing our cultural identities. In this workshop, we played decision-making activities and discussed pertinent topics, which all led up to the main activity of writing



poetry about where we are from. This was a really useful task, as I was able to use the MAS Talk Tactics to use my voice and read my poem aloud. The entire experience was so freeing, and allowed me to use my imagination without restrictions. One of the motivating factors behind why I joined this sessions is because I would like to express and discover my cultural identity more.

Another self-exploratory initiative I have taken part in is the Wellbeing Club which is every Wednesday after school.

We engage in various therapeutic activities, such as cooking, baking, walking, crocheting, and many more. One of my highlights so far was walking around Victoria Park, and ending this walk with hot chocolate and pastries. I also took lots of scenic pictures in this visit which was beneficial because I aspire to be a photographer. Being the relaxing environment of the Wellbeing Club has really helped me become calm and have more fun.

By Jaya Green, 7A



House Table Tennis

The Table Tennis Tournament included players from across years 7 to 10, which felt a bit daunting considering there were older and more experienced players.

However, I played against other boys in my year group – they were really good at table tennis and even inspired me as they kept going even though they found the game difficult at times. At one point I had to play against one of my friends; it was neck-and-neck towards the end with both of us earning 9 points each but, ultimately, I reigned victorious and was second place out of everyone in the entire tournament!

Although I was slightly dejected for

not winning, I was glad that I had reached the final and tried my best in each competition. I participated in this tournament because I've never really played table tennis competitively



I took part in the Table Tennis Tournament to represent my house, Thames, and win some points for us. I think I was one of the best players, as I reached third place in the whole tournament and I was the only person representing Thames! Although I felt anxious before the tournament I knew I wanted to place in the top three, so I was really determined going in. I play table tennis with my friends at break and lunchtime, and I've also enjoyed it so much; I've been hoping to improve my table tennis skills as a result of this, and want to become

before and it looked really fun. I really enjoyed trying out this new sport, and cannot wait for the next table tennis tournament.

by Muhammad Abdullah Al Masum



one of the best players in Year 7. This is why the tournament was so invaluable. I really appreciated the fairness of the decision-making at the tournament too and think our schools should definitely hold this tournament again.

Other than table tennis, I also play: rounders, cricket, basketball and football, and thought I could increase my skillset by taking part in the tournament. By venturing into this extracurricular activity at school, I've also discovered other opportunities like TrailFam which I'm currently really enjoying.

By Omar Romani



House Spelling Bee



On Monday 20th March, I participated in our school's Spelling Bee competition.

The event was hosted by the Heads of House which was quite daunting, but comforting at the same time. I took part in the competition because I like English, and feel that spelling is one of my strengths. I felt really scared, as I counted about ten correct words from each person, but I also did really well because spelled only one word wrong. In the event, I won 2nd place so I was really proud of myself after

I participated in the Spelling Bee competition for the first time this year – one of my friends informed me about it at short notice, but I decided that I wanted to try something new.

Simply put, the Spelling Bee is a competition where people compete by spelling out words correctly. I prepared for the competition with my friend, practising possible words that could come up. When I got to the competition I found it really interesting that the judges involved the audience too, giving the spectators a chance to also win house points.

Something that I was proud of during the event was that I was placed in

the top three competitors on my first try at the Spelling Bee! I remember feeling scared afterwards about getting a word wrong and dropping from the top three. Although I spelled the word 'Versailles' wrong, I'm still amazed that I even got as far as I did. I found out things about myself that I didn't know before, and found out I do things that I didn't even think I could, and I'm very proud of that.

I took part in this event to support my friend as they weren't able to attend and have been competing in the Spelling Bee since Year 7. I believe I represented them well, and they would commend my efforts.

By Tonniann Daly, Year 10

all the trepidation at the beginning! After the students had their turn, we had a teachers' round and Ms Bracken won – I personally think Ms Bracken had an advantage because she's an English teacher. Overall, this event was incredibly fun and I would definitely do it again!

By Rochelle Wallace, 7F



TRAILFAM

TrailFam is all about running through some difficult terrain, such as the woods, and improving your running skills.

In the TrailFam event I took part in, I ran 5k, which involved navigating myself around four big laps in a course. The course was positioned around a lake and the advice we were



given was to ensure we stayed on the right side of the lake. Mr Stokes warned us that if we took a left, we would end up lost. While I listened to Mr Stokes's instructions, I ended up getting chased by a dog! It was terrifying.

The 5K run was incredibly challenging; there were times when I wanted to give up and walk the rest of the way to the end, but I persevered and continued running until the end of the course. I felt really tired towards the

end, but pushed myself to finish off the 5k run – I felt a real sense of pride when I reached the end. I was also able to help a much younger runner during the run – a mother and her child were struggling a little, so I gave them lots of words of support and they reciprocated. I took part in this event to get fitter, improve my trail running skills and explore nature – my first experience certainly gave me all of that!

By Shayla Gardner, Year 7



Joining the Debate

by Melissa Kibrom, 8D, Manohar Mbombo, 7B
and Bianca Santos Andrade, 8A



Melissa:

Following on from Debate Mate's Urban Debate League competitions, our debating team took part in the organisation's final event: the Debate Mate Cup. The Cup was held at the Convene in Bishopsgate, and we had a wonderful time.

There were three debates throughout the day: the first round was pre-seen and the motion asked about the effectiveness of strikes. We were prepared for this round and spent all weekend messaging one another interesting facts and statistics about the topic. The second round was preceded by a show debate consisting of mentors and teachers, and was about whether all young people aged 12 and above should have a bank account. It was such a stimulating debate and during the floor question I spoke to the audience about my own experiences of having a bank account, while Bianca (also on our team) questioned whether an early bank account could affect a child's credit score.

The second motion of the day was centred on non-essential cosmetic surgery, which seemed to be a really difficult topic for all the schools taking part. During lunch, we explored the Convene's beautiful spaces and views, and then returned to the main theatre for Round 3. The final motion asked about the necessity of further education; during the debate I spoke about the financial aspect of going to



university. Although we had a victory in the third round, our point for all three rounds didn't qualify us for the Grand Final. Regardless, we all enjoyed the tense debate between the final two schools in the debate: Stratford and Ark Greenwich.

I'm really proud of myself, Bianca and Rui as we offered some insightful comments during the floor speeches. Bianca won a box of chocolates for best floor question (when she asked about credit scores)! I also want to give an honourable mention to Yeasmin who faced her fears and participated in the debates, delivering some fantastic points, even though she was really nervous in the beginning.

Overall, it was a wonderful event, and I believe everyone benefitted from it. I look forward to future debates with Debate Mate.

Manohar:

I remember feeling really nervous during the Debate Mate Cup. During the first round I was shaking so much, but still stood up and shared my ideas. During the second round, the motion read 'this House believes that non-essential cosmetic surgery should be banned', and I was absolutely befuddled by the topic. However, after conversing with my team and having fifteen minutes to write up my speech, I felt more confident and delivered some valid points on the topic. The motion in the third and final round was easier to write about, and by then I felt like a debating expert! We had been through so many public-speaking activities throughout the day that the nerves weren't as intense anymore.



During the prize-giving ceremony at the end of the Cup, I won an award for the most improved debater. I was the only student among all of students that were in the theatre to win that award – I couldn't believe it! There were so many schools present and yet our mentor, Jason, had chosen me for the certificate and gift card. I left the event feeling much more confident in myself.

Bianca:

For the past 14 weeks, I have been training with Debate Mate. The training includes sessions on how to become a more skilled and articulate debater. During our recent trip to the Debate Mate Cup we focused on improving, learning and challenging our skills by taking in the useful feedback from the judges after each debate. Each round allowed students to have 15 minutes of prep time during which students could not get any help from teachers or the internet.

During the show debate on whether children should have bank accounts I asked "what if, by the time young people take responsibility for their bank accounts, they have already ruined their credit score?" for side proposition. This question won 'Best Floor Question' and I received a box of chocolates for this.

I remember feeling really nervous when we first stepped into the Convene, where this event took place but after the first debate I started to feel confident. This was certainly a valuable experience as I would like to be a music producer in the future and I would need to be a good performer for this to happen.

I would like to end by giving a little shout-out to my team: Jacob, Lisbeth and Samiha. I am so proud of us!

