



## Parent Bulletin

21st March 2025

On Friday and Saturday last week I attended the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) annual conference in Liverpool. Whilst this might not usually be something that I would immediately write about in a parental update, I do feel that the change of government and Education Secretary does merit some commentary given that these moments do usually have a significant impact on the education landscape.

The first keynote address was made by the current ASCL president, Manny Botwe who is also the current serving headteacher of Tytherington school in Macclesfield. It was great to see Manny lead the conference as someone that I have known for several years through my work as the chair of ASCL's ethnic diversity network. Manny spoke passionately about how he had grown up in a single parent family on a council estate in south London and how it was three of his teachers in particular that saw his potential and gave him the confidence to achieve in education and progress to where he is today. He also focused on the harm that social media is doing to our children (and adults) and railed against the tech billionaires who continue to use the tired argument about free speech rather than work to protect our children. Manny's own experiences as a child led to comments about what have become known as *'the forgotten third'*. These are the children who do not achieve grade 4 or above in English and maths nationally (about 15% at Vyners) and are then forced into a demoralising series of resits at post-16 rather than recognising that a grade 3 or below at the end of year 11, is totally appropriate and worthwhile for some children.



Mr Mullings alongside ASCL President, Manny Botwe

Whilst Manny's speech was well received within the auditorium, His Majesty's Chief Inspector, Sir Martyn Oliver was less well received. Over the past year, Sir Martyn has been working on the proposals for the new inspection framework that will be implemented this coming September. I think that it would be fair to state that the framework that is being proposed currently is not gaining support from the profession. In particular, the principle of a scorecard is generally well supported but moving from the current four point grading system to a five point system is causing concern. However, as Sir Martyn pointed out, Ofsted is primarily concerned with providing accurate information to parents about the strengths and areas of improvement for each school. Ofsted continue to seek the views of different stakeholders, including parents. More information about the proposed scorecard system can be found here ([click here](#)). This page also provides access to the consultation which some parents may wish to engage with.

Another area that parents and carers may be interested in is curriculum and assessment reform, and in particular, the review that is currently taking place. The review is being led by Professor Becky Francis who is highly regarded for her research in education, particularly with the Education Endowment Foundation ([EEF](#)). The review is examining all aspects of the curriculum and assessment in England and the interim report ([click here](#)) was published this week shortly after Professor Francis' speech to the conference. It was good to note that the review will not be 'throwing the baby out with the bath water' and is recognising where things are working well. It was also good to hear that the number of examinations that are currently being sat by GCSE students are likely to be reduced. Currently, our students sit more examinations at the age of 16 than children in most other OECD countries with the exception of Singapore and there is evidence that this is greatly affecting their wellbeing. Professor Francis also noted that there are too many qualifications that contain excessive amounts of content and that the drive to complete the content is negatively impacting students' ability to master it. The final point that I would draw attention to is the recognition that the overemphasis on the English Baccalaureate may have had a negative impact on student choice and the takeup of vocational courses as well as the arts. We continue to believe that this is a correct path for some students but that the previous government target for 90% of children to be taking this specific group of subjects was an unreasonable one.

There were numerous other speakers and workshops at the conference; I draw particular attention to a very entertaining Alastair Campbell and some exciting innovations from Google. However, my final comments about the conference make reference to the speech from the Education Secretary, Bridgit Phillipson, MP who talked about higher and rising standards but was noticeably less optimistic than when she delivered her speech last year particularly when referring to the current national system for special educational needs, the recruitment crisis in teaching and the continued legacy of the pandemic, particularly on school attendance, all in the context of difficult funding decisions. However, I will finish this week with a note of optimism. The opportunity to gather annually with other school leaders from across the country continues to demonstrate the commitment that remains to children and families within our communities. I believe that it will be an interesting time in education during this parliament and, regardless of our individual political affiliations, school leaders across the country will continue to work collaboratively with the aim of ensuring that our students receive the education and support that they deserve.

**Gary Mullings**  
**Headteacher**

## Languages Week

From 25th February to 3rd March, Vyners celebrated Languages Week, alongside our fellow Trust school Ruislip High. Year 9 Students were treated to an inspiring talk from Steve Eadon on the benefits of languages for careers with a focus on his career journey at Arsenal FC. Year 9, together with KS4 classes, also enjoyed plays for their respective languages from the company Onatti Productions, who write accessible live theatre to complement students foreign language learning. KS3 students were also treated to a workshop led by our very own Language Ambassadors on constructed languages from the world of fiction.

Well done to all students who contributed to and participated in the week that was both a joy and a great success.

**Ms Kelly, Subject Leader, MFL**

*The Conlang Workshop was held to celebrate the different languages that we study today and many, many more. There were lots of stations and two language ambassadors helped us through each one. Some of the languages we learned were: Ubidubi and Dotheraki. The experience was very enjoyable and one of our favourite things was the Ubidubi splat. Not only did we have a fun time doing the different activities, but we learned a lot of Ubidubi and tongue twisters that were linked to our MFL languages (French, Spanish and German). Overall, it was a brilliant experience and we hope to come back next year!*

**Jess, and Amelia, Year 7**

*The language events had a good amount of engagement and the vocabulary we have learned in German class was included in the play, which was great.*

**Ayrton, Year 9**

*I really enjoyed the Spanish play as the actors were very interactive and funny. The play really helped my Spanish to develop and understand words in a real life situation.*

**Ria, Year 10**



## Year 12 & 13 Food Tour of East End of London

Last Wednesday, Year 12 and 13 Food Science and Nutrition students participated in a 3 hour walking food tour of the East End of London.

Students tasted the delights of many cuisines starting at Spitalfields Market with some delicious Sri Lankan Street food. They sampled produce at one of the oldest Bangladeshi sweet and snack delis in the ever changing landscape of the eclectic Brick Lane with its incredible art and graffiti pieces splattered all over the area. Further stops included the old Jewish quarter where they tried a salted beef bagel from one of London's oldest, still family run bagel bakeries and learned about their fascinating story plus a visit to the Ghanaian 'Dark Sugar' shop with its famous hot chocolate accompanied by chocolate truffles.

Students were transported in time to hear about the old Truman's brewery, which dates back to the mid-1600s and was once the largest brewery in the world. The tour finished in Arnold Circus where, once stood London's largest and most dangerous slum in the Victorian period: The Old Nichol slum. Students learnt about the history here, whilst sampling artisan strawberry chocolate donuts to end the day!



**Mrs Davies, Design & Technology Teacher**

## Inspirational Past Student visits the HIRB

On Monday 17th March the HIRB had a visitor, Ryan Carstairs, who was at Vyners from 2016-2021. Ryan came to talk to our current students about what he has been up to since he left Vyners and what inspires him.

Ryan's passion is swimming and he now teaches swimming in Stanmore and works at the American School in London (ASL) in the Afterschool Club. Ryan has been swimming since he was very young and has won over 75 medals and trophies. He was selected to go to the Deaf Olympics, to represent Great Britain, in Brazil in 2020 but Covid happened!!

Ryan said that swimming develops his sense of self and believes that he can achieve so much more if he works hard. He has made lots of friends from across the country and visited lots of great places. When he left Vyners he went to Mary Hare, a specialist boarding school for deaf students, where he studied photography and did lots of swimming.

Ryan draws inspiration from two remarkable swimmers: Commonwealth medalist Mark Foster and Danielle Louise Joyce, a deaf swimmer representing the Deaf GB team. He admires their skill and determination, aspiring to swim as fast as they do and achieve success in competitions. Ryan looks up to their resilience and hopes to embody the same level of dedication, refusing to give up on his dreams.

Ryan told the students that they should not look back at the past but to concentrate on the future ahead of them and to work hard to achieve their goals. Ryan hopes to return to Mary Hare in the future as a swimming teacher.

Thank you Ryan for taking the time to come and visit us.



**Mrs Langley, Teacher of the Deaf and Chloe & Samer**

## Maths Challenge

Around 130 Year 9, Year 10 and Year 11 students took part in the Intermediate Maths Challenge in January 2025. 63 students earned either Gold, Silver or Bronze certificates.

6 Vyners students have qualified for the next round which is an 'Invitation Only' round. They are Ben McCormick, Suravi Sunil, Kaavye Sikka (all Y11's), Nathan Griffiths (Y10) and Zach Easton, Emma McCormick (all Y9's).

Special mention goes to Ben McCormick (11J), who has qualified for the Maclaurin Olympiad Round which invites only 600 students to take part from England And Wales every year.

The school also hosted the Team Maths Challenge this year. They showed great teamwork and resilience and finished 5th in the Regional Round. The students that made this possible are Zach Easton (9F), Millie Sowby (9J), Oscar Corcoran (8G) and Aasiyah Sultan (8H).



**Mrs Malegaonkar, Teacher of Maths**

## Equality Week: Reflect, Learn, Change

Earlier this month, Vyners school came together to celebrate the VLT Equality Week, with the powerful theme of "Empathy: Reflect, Learn, Change". It was a time for the school community to pause, consider others' perspectives, and think about how we can make our school environment more inclusive and understanding.

The whole school assembly focused on "The Power of Language: How to Be Respectful and Inclusive" exploring how the words we choose can either uplift and support or hurt and divide. We were reminded that practicing empathy means thinking carefully about how we communicate and making sure our language is inclusive and reflects kindness and respect. Through PSHE activities, students had the opportunity to reflect on their own actions and learn how small changes - like choosing more thoughtful words or standing up against harmful language - can make a big difference in creating an accepting environment.

One of the highlights of the week was our whole-school creative jigsaw puzzle activity. Each student decorated a puzzle piece with symbols, words, or artwork representing what empathy means to them. These pieces will be put together to form a beautiful, diverse, and unified artwork, a powerful visual reminder that we all have unique experiences but are connected through understanding and compassion.

Throughout the week students also participated in cross curricular activities in many lessons complementing the week's theme. Thank you to the Technology team who ran a fully booked cultural cooking session. Equality Week encouraged us to reflect on how we can make positive changes in our own lives and our school community. It was a wonderful opportunity to come together, learn from each other, and continue building an environment where everyone feels valued and respected.

We look forward to holding the Vyners diversity day in the summer term where students can attend school in outfits that best express their individuality.

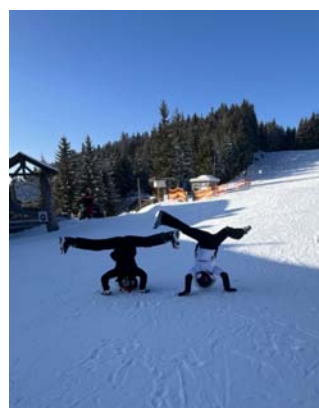


## Sports Update

### Ski Trip 2025

As the Easter holiday approaches it is time to reflect on what was a fantastic Ski Trip during February half term. 40 Year 11s and 12s took off to the sunny Austrian slopes this February for a week of ski instruction and alpine fun. The trip was a huge success with all students successfully mastering the basics with a number of students advancing their already superb skills. All students were a credit to the school and were fantastic company. Thank you to the staff who supported me in the running of the trip; Miss Hawes, Mr Harper, Miss Hockley and Miss McManus.

For the current Year 10-12 students the details of next year's trip will be out shortly after Easter. Please do take early notice that this is a hugely popular trip with only 40 places for students and will run on a first come first served basis.



Mr Hall, Subject Leader, PE

## Cross Country

Dylan Lewis competed in the English Schools Cross Country on Saturday (qualifying from the school competition). He finished 40th out of 327 athletes (and 11th of the Y10s in the race). He ran superbly placing 2nd out of the Middlesex athletes too.

An incredible effort!



## Netball

We have been informed by Blaze Netball Club that four Year 9 students have completed and passed the England Netball into Officiating course - this is a significant step and achievement! This means they have passed the first step in their Netball umpire qualification. The students are:

Sophie Hawkins  
Natalia Christodoulou  
Maisie Stirling  
Ruby Comer

Well done girls.

**Miss Hawes, PE Teacher**

## Parent Pay Update

Thank you again for all the prompt action taken by parents to get the new cashless payment system up and running in school. Now the system is live, we are investigating some of the extra functionality.

Parents who had an 'auto-top' up enabled in sQuidcard, will be pleased to learn that the same functionality seems to be available in Parent Pay [[click here](#)].

It is also possible to set up an email / text alert that your child's lunch balance has fallen below a specified level [[click here](#)]. Please note that you need to set your own threshold for the notification. Text messages are chargeable, so we would strongly recommend to limit this to an email alert

Thank you for your continued support

**Miss Williams, Business Manager**

## Spring Term Key Dates

Friday 21st March	Friends of Vyners Quiz Night, doors open 7.30pm
Thursday 3rd April	Vyners Music Festival, doors open at 6pm
<b>Friday 4th April</b>	<b>Term ends (3pm finish)</b>

## Summer Term Key Dates

<b>Tuesday 22nd April</b>	<b>Term starts</b>
Tuesday 29th April	Year 10 Parents Evening (online), 4.30pm to 7.00pm
<b>Monday 5th May</b>	<b>Bank Holiday</b>
Friday 9th May	Friends of Vyners Quiz Night
Thursday 15th May	Year 8 Parents Evening (online), 4.30pm to 7.00pm
<b>26th - 30th May</b>	<b>Half Term</b>
Thursday 5th June	Year 7 Parents Evening (online), 4.30pm to 7.00pm
<b>Friday 27th June</b>	<b>Staff Development Day (students not in school)</b>
<b>Friday 18th July</b>	<b>Terms ends (12.20pm finish)</b>