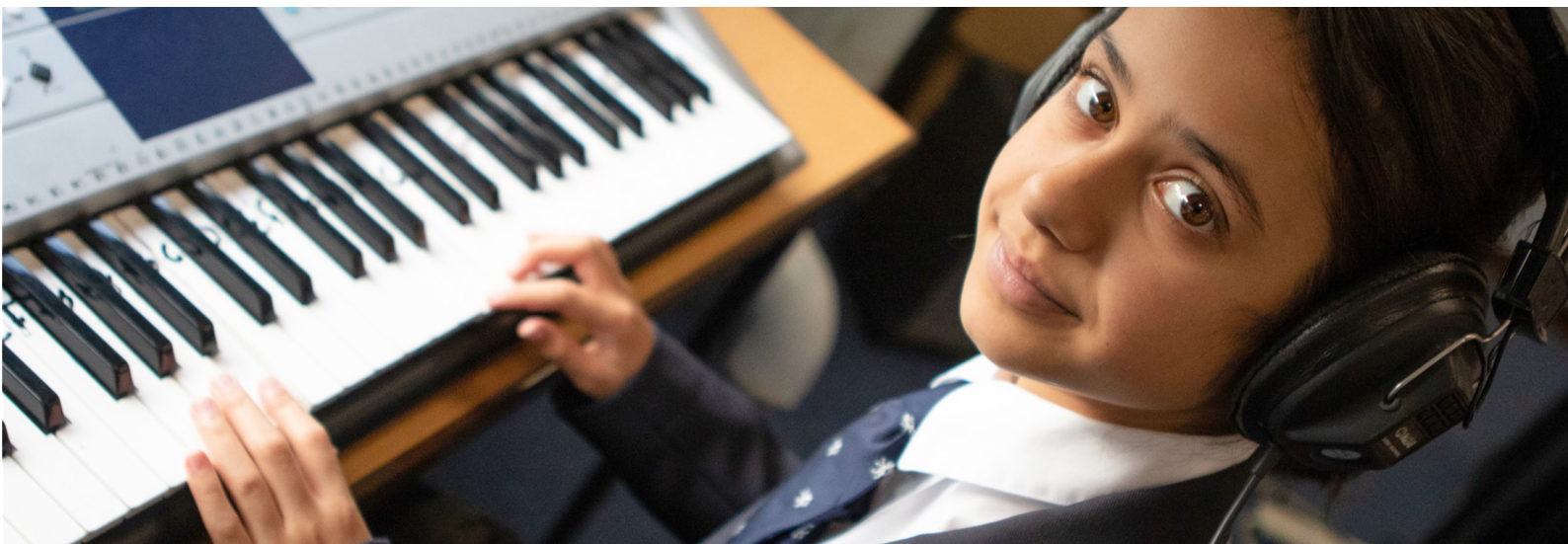


# MECEmatters

Issue 21 ♦ March 2024



Reades Lane, Sonning Common, Reading, RG4 9LN Tel: 0118 9721500

## MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD



Welcome to my very first issue of MECE matters packed full of all the things which make this such a special place to learn and work. I am really proud of the work of the students and staff here and I hope that you enjoy reading about what students are learning in each curriculum area and also the extra-curricular opportunities which are on offer.

For a small school, MECE has a brilliant range of clubs and other activities and a big thank to all the teachers who give up time at breaktimes and after school to run them.

Wishing you and your families all the best for the Easter break.

**Briony Bowers**  
Headteacher

## MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



I am pleased to be able to contribute to this edition of 'MECE Matters' and in doing so personally re-affirm the Trusts' commitment to our MECE community. The MECE community is unique within our family of schools, and I know those of you who choose our school do so because of this unique quality.

I want, therefore, to acknowledge that it has been a challenging term, and at times it has felt a bit relentless. What I am buoyed by, however, is the resilience, dedication and determination of Mrs Bowers and her team to find solutions to these challenges and lean into the wider Trust for support in doing so. As we move into the summer term there are reasons for optimism as we continue to make key staffing appointments which I know Mrs Bowers will communicate further on.

Alongside this, the Trust continues to invest in the school campus, with refurbishments to student toilet facilities, kitchen refurbishments, upgrades to the heating system and investment in technology. There is more to come too, with refurbishments planned to Food and Science laboratories in the pipeline. We

## CALENDAR

20 April	CESA Secondhand Uniform and Promwear Sale 10am-1pm
22 April	CESA Mobile Phone and Ink Cartridge Collection Fundraiser Week
23/24 April	Art GCSE
25/26 April	Photography GCSE
29 April	Year 10 PPE Week Commences
06 May	Bank Holiday—School Closed

would not be making these high-value financial commitments if we as a Trust were not fully committed to providing a high-quality teaching and learning environment for our students and staff. We will be here for you for as long as you, our community, want and need us.

Wishing you all a super Easter break.

**Jonathon Peck**  
Chief Executive Officer

## A MESSAGE FROM THE HEADS OF YEARS

We usually take the opportunity to highlight the great things that students from our year groups have achieved – but this time we wanted to celebrate the collective effort of our students in expressing their views on the proposal/consultation from Brighter Futures for Children to change the entitlement to free bus passes for Reading students attending MECE.

Students were presented with the facts as presented in the consultation as well as the main areas of concerns that the MECE community had identified. They then were given the opportunity to formally respond to the consultation. Over 250 students have successfully submitted their views to Mr Grady (Director of Education, Reading Borough Council). Unfortunately, Mr Grady was unable to fulfil his intention to come and meet with student representatives and a number have written personal letters to him to share their frustrations over this.

The quality of the responses that have been submitted were truly fantastic – showcasing student's ability to express themselves clearly and emotively. We have included a few quotes from the responses below.



I get that you need to save money, but is this really the best way to do it? You are supposed to support families and children – this will cause my family and lots of others big problems.

Many people don't have £500 for a bus pass or a car – I don't think it is fair that I would have to change school because of this.

I live in Emmer Green, near Highdown, but I chose MECE because I wanted to be in a smaller school. Without the bus to school I wouldn't be able to get there because the road is dangerous to walk down and I don't like riding my bike in the dark. Would I now have to attend Highdown? That makes me feel very anxious.

Getting on the bus is part of my school day and I look forward to it. I see my friends and get ready for school in my head. My mum isn't able to bring me in everyday because of work and having to walk my little brother to school.

I don't get the bus as I live in the village, but my friends rely on it and it makes me sad to think they might have to change schools.

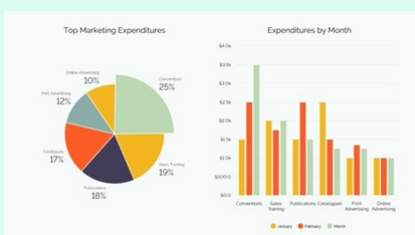
A huge thank you to all parents who have also contributed to the consultation – it has been a true MECE community effort to make our views heard.

# MATHS



Mathematics is a language of patterns and logic. This inspires secondary students by unlocking the mysteries of the universe. From the elegance of equations to the practicality of problem-solving, maths cultivates critical thinking and fosters creativity. It empowers students to unravel complexities and shapes a foundation for future discoveries and innovations.

**Year 7** students have conducted live experiments counting cars in the car park. They meticulously recorded their findings, delving into the realms of data collection and probability bringing all facets of data to life. This hands-on activity demystified abstract concepts, it enhanced engagement and understanding through practical application. They analysed trends, calculated probabilities, and graphed their results, transforming probability into tangible experiences, thereby enriching their mathematical understanding. Throughout the Spring term students learned algebra, grasping the significance of using letters in mathematics. They explored the fundamentals, transitioning from concrete to abstract thinking. From deciphering equations to solving worded problems, they embraced algebra's power to represent real-world scenarios. This journey cultivated their problem-solving skills and laid a solid mathematical foundation.



During early Spring, the **Year 8s** focused their attention on probability and data, deepening their knowledge from Year 7. This has allowed them to build on the learnt concepts and layered with practical applications. During the latter part of Spring, students have deepened their understanding of algebra and learnt to write their own equations. In the top sets, students delved into graphs, exploring the intricacies of inverse and direct proportion. They deciphered patterns, plotted points, and grasped the relationships between variables, fostering a deeper understanding of mathematical concepts.

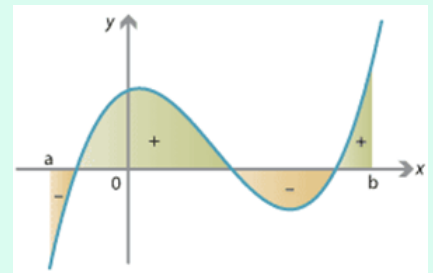
The highlight of the year in maths for **Year 9** was visiting Bletchley Park. Excitedly, we explored the historic site where codebreakers deciphered Enigma during World War II. Engaging exhibits illustrated math's pivotal role in cryptography. It was a captivating experience, igniting our curiosity and appreciation for the intersection of maths and history. This amazing day out also offered the opportunity for Mrs Bowers to get to know the students and maths teachers on a more personal level. We were very grateful to our new headteacher for taking the time to fully immerse herself in the joys of



maths.

Academically, the Year 9s have built upon their strengths in data and statistics, learned in previous years. They delved deeper into interpreting graphs, understanding variability, and calculating probabilities. This foundation enabled them to tackle more challenging problems, enhancing their analytical skills and preparing them for advanced mathematical concepts in future studies.

Our **Year 10s** are well on their way in their GCSE maths career. They have been working on linear graphs and coordinate geometry. They have enhanced their understanding and depth in quadratics, circle graphs and expanding brackets. The higher Year 10s have been deepening their understanding of reciprocals and exponential graphs.



**Year 11s** continue their journey towards their GCSEs. We've seen some great results from the mock GCSEs and are hopeful for the exams.

**Mrs Chopra**  
Head of Maths

## REGULAR MATHS CLUBS

Mon Lunch time	Puzzle Pirates with Mrs Priest in M2
Tues Lunch time	A Level Math Club for KS4 Higher Maths Students, Mrs Gopal, M3
Tues 3:15— 4.15pm	Maths Drop in, Miss Chopra, M1 (All Years)



## SCIENCE

It has been another jam-packed term in the science department.

We have just enjoyed science week at MECE, with Mrs Kirby putting on a whole program of lunchtime events and I had the pleasure of taking science week to Kidmore End and The Heights to present experiments and demonstrates on the theme of time to their students. Thank you to Grace C, Paige B, Blanka M, Dylan C & Elliot M for their help and support on these outreach sessions.

KS3 have been exploring the world of electricity, magnetism and forces, whilst KS4 have been studying energy and waves.

Year 11 have now completed their science course and are making good progress with their revision for their upcoming GCSE exams – keep up the good work Year 11!

**Mrs Sarpong**  
Head of Science



STEM club have started the crest award and are planning to have projects completed by the end of next term. The Crest is a scheme that inspires young people to think and behave like scientists and engineers – you can learn more [HERE](#).



We had a busy time during the Great British Science Week. This year the theme was 'time' to celebrate with the British Science Association's 30th birthday.

Students started the week off by flying marbles around their very own prototype roller coaster. The fastest time reaching an impressive 184 m/s! Students learned about time and how important time keeping skills are! They were tasked with building an instrument to accurately measure 10 seconds. The closest time went to Keira K and Alfie T in Year 8, with their device made from paper cups and sand. Students were able to investigate factors that can affect the rate of a chemical reaction, by altering concentration, surface area and temperature. A special prize has been awarded to Grace C, Iris J and Hayley M for attending every event!



## HUMANITIES

### GEOGRAPHY

**Year 7** students have finished their study of our 'settlement' unit, where they explored the characteristics of various settlement types and how they change over time. Their questions and insights when examining the changes of Reading and London over time were very impressive. More recently, Year 7 have moved on to our 'rivers' topic. In this unit we have been exploring the processes happening within river systems, the landforms created by these, and the ways in which flooding impacts people and the environment.

**Year 8** have continued to develop their confidence with the content of our geography lessons. Whilst studying the human and physical characteristics of Africa, the students demonstrated the ability to critically analyse the information being presented and make judgements on the success of development in Africa.

Furthermore, Year 8 have moved onto studying 'coasts', exploring the types of waves, processes, landforms and coastal management taking place along our shores. Their understanding of the need to protect our coastline, and the strengths and weaknesses of these strategies were particularly impressive.

**Year 9** have continued to show their strengths with their ability to grasp the content and skills we cover in geography lessons. When studying climate change, the students were able to engage effectively with the wide range of factors that have contributed to the global changes we are seeing, along with the various ways in which we can mitigate and adapt. More recently, the year group have been studying 'cold environments'. This topic covers the characteristics and features of ice landscapes, the importance of glaciers and the ever-growing threats to these vital ecosystems.

**Year 10** have continued to flourish as a year group, developing the GCSE skills and attributes we expect of our older students. They have completed the first human geography topic of 'urban challenges' where we explored the opportunities and challenges within urban areas, for example London and Rio de Janeiro. More recently we have moved on to our 'hazards' set of topics, firstly focusing on the causes and impacts of tectonic hazards. With the Year 10 PPEs fast approaching, I would like to wish the students the very best in their revision and preparation. A reminder that the best approach is to use the range of resources available to revise content, but to also practice questions from past papers. These habits will only serve them well going forward into Year 11.

**Year 11** are now close to the end of the geography course. We are close to covering the content for Paper 1 and Paper 2, with only a few lessons remaining on 'resource management'. We do also have the pre-release for Paper 3 to prepare for, which became available to students on Friday 22 March. The final few weeks are the final push to ensure students are as ready as possible, with lessons covering key skills for Paper 3, revising key content for Paper 1 and Paper 2, and ensuring they are confident with the fieldwork element.

It is also vital the students ensure they use the opportunities for intervention to develop their exam technique. Students can also do this in their own revision time by looking at past papers from the AQA website.

I would like to wish them the best of luck over the coming weeks, going into the exam season!

**Mr Sheridan**  
Head of Geography



On Monday 06 February, five geographers from Years 7-9 competed in the local Geography Association quiz held at Reading School. Our students competed against schools from across the Reading area and were some of the youngest teams entered. The students performed exceptionally well. The quiz was very challenging, putting the students through their paces! A huge well done to all #MECEpride



# Geography Club

**Every Thursday  
lunchtime  
HUM4**



## HUMANITIES

### HISTORY & RELIGION & PHILOSOPHY

HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY 2024

## THE FRAGILITY OF FREEDOM

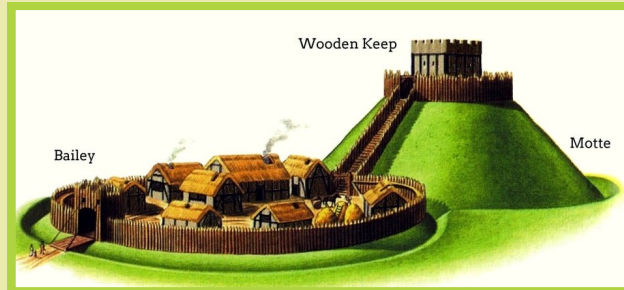
This term has been a busy one for the history department! In assemblies we have been remembering Holocaust Memorial Day which fell on 27 January.

This event is recognised across the world and each year has a new focus. This year's focus is 'the fragility of freedom'. In assembly we considered all of the freedoms that we have in this country, and we took a moment to consider those in the world whose freedoms are restricted. Every student was encouraged to reflect on how free they really are.

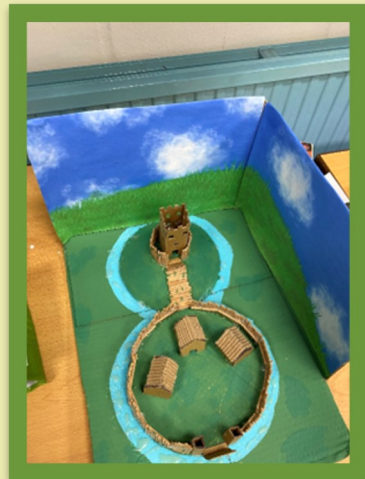
**Mrs Smith**  
Head of History and Religion  
and Philosophy



Every Friday  
lunchtime with  
Mrs Smith in  
HUMS1



In Year 7 we have been studying what life was like in Norman England. This is following on from before Christmas when we studied the Norman Conquest of England in 1066. Our topic enquiry is centred around the significance of the changes made in England under the Normans. As part of this, we have studied the building and development of Motte and Bailey Castles. The students were encouraged to create their own Motte and Bailey castles and we have been so impressed with their creations. We have had castles made from sandcastles, Lego, cake, cardboard, Yorkshire puddings and even on Minecraft! A huge well done to all students who chose to get building!



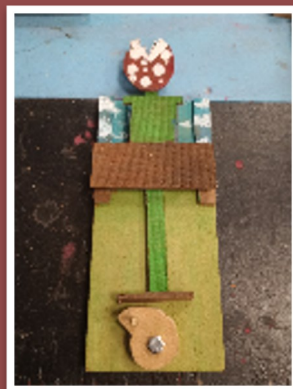
## FOOD &amp; DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY



We have welcomed our new art teacher, Ms Lategan, to the ADT department and she has enjoyed getting the students skills in art sharpened up! KS3 students have been working on their artists' projects and KS4 have been doing some fabulous media experiments. Below are great examples of work from Heidi F and Zoe T.



KS3 have just started their new tech rotations and have been working on the Computer Aided Design. Year 10 have been testing out mechanisms and cams (mini group work tasks - see images) as well as planning their new design project. Year 11 have been giving a final push for the best possible outcomes for their NEA portfolios. The 3D printer - which was kindly funded by CESA - arrived this month, so watch this space for examples of what it can produce.



## FOOD AND NUTRITION

In Food Tech, students have been working on their splendid creations throughout all year groups. Wow - they all look so delicious! Images here are from Izaak E, Georgia I, Ava G and a selection of pancakes created by Year 9.



**Mr Reskalla**  
Head of Art, Design and Technology





## PERFORMING ARTS



@MECE\_PA

## DRAMA

This term in **Year 7**, students have been developing their understanding of empathy and acceptance as they put themselves into the shoes of children being evacuated from London to the countryside – to places like Sonning Common. Through this work, we have also learnt about the structure of a performance and how to create effective endings to performances.

Two and a half thousand years ago, the ancient Greeks started to perform plays to their God Dionysia as part of a great festival in Athens. In these performances, they used masks. Now in 2024, **Year 8** are doing the same with the exploration of how to perform in the physically demanding style of mask work. It has been great to see students be able to express their characters and stories through this restrictive medium.

Up until Easter, **Year 9** are studying the play Blood Brothers by Willy Russel. This term we have been performing key scenes from the play and identifying some of the main themes of the characters and how we can communicate these themes through our characterisation skills and other performance skills. After half term, we will be rehearsing the final climatic scene of the play over a number of lessons as an ensemble.

**Year 10** continue to impress in their drama lessons. Always attentive, punctual and homework completed to a high standard, this class are making excellent progress. As part of their understanding of the context of the set text they will sit a written paper on at the end of year 11, the year 10 students have created wonderful presentations which they have then presented to the rest of the class. Topics of these include Liverpool from 1950s to 1970s, Margaret Thatcher, and Marilyn Monroe.

The **Year 11** had their final performance exam on 4th March. On this day, the examiner from the exam board visited the school and watched the Year 11 Drama students perform their extracts from the fantastical play, Ocean at the End of the Lane. This is theatrical adaptation of Neil Gaiman's novel, featuring a man revisiting his childhood home and recalling a magical and haunting encounter with otherworldly forces and a mysterious girl named Lettie Hempstock. Students rose to the challenge and wowed on the day with moving and inspiring pieces. A well done to them all!

**Mr Harte**  
Head of Performing Arts

## MUSIC

This term, **Year 7** have learnt about programme music, essentially music which tells a story. They have listened to music by Prokofiev and Greig and have learnt to play the theme from Hall of the Mountain King by Greig, you may have heard it in adverts for Alton Towers! They have then worked on their knowledge and understanding of rhythm and notation, culminating in their composition of group rhythm pieces which they notated and performed on percussion instruments.

**Year 8** have learnt about how repetition and development are used in music. They practiced and performed keyboard pieces including Tubular Bells by Mike Oldfield and the theme from the film 'The Truman Show.' They have also studied improvisation and have written their own melodies to be played over the 12-bar blues chord sequence.

**Year 9** have worked on both film music and comparing music from the eras of the Beatles and Britpop. Their film music centred around learning and composing music from either Western or Horror films. Their work on the Beatles to Britpop has included learning "don't look back in anger" by Oasis and "Imagine" by John Lennon – these two pieces have a surprising number of similarities.

**Becki Brown**  
Music Teacher



Music Club continues to be a popular activity on Monday lunchtimes. Choir will be starting after the Easter holidays on Tuesday lunchtimes, all are welcome. We have received a very kind and generous donation of a grand piano for the music classroom. Any other donations of nice instruments would be very much appreciated.



## TWENTY TEN ROCK HYF

Three of our Year 9 students have recently performed at the Kenton Theatre in Henley as part of the Henley Youth Festival gig night.

Jack W, Spencer W and Charlie G (Twenty Ten) performed three songs and really enjoyed the experience.



## SALVE FROM LATIN CLUB!

We've had a fabulous term of Latin club, learning about the lives of ordinary Romans, the trade (including slave trade), law and love of theatre. The grammar is getting harder and we are now able to read and understand longer texts in Latin. Our current students successfully passed the first attainment test, and they all have a University of Cambridge certificate.

## SANTA RUN RESULTS

The donations for the Sponsored Santa Run, which took place on the last day of the Winter term, are as follows:

**British Heart Foundation - £547**

**MECE Gym Refurb - £995**

**Prom Fund - £475**

Total donated a massive **£2017!!!**

### **Monies by House:**

Chiltern - £853

Thames - £718

Abbey - £231

Peppard - £215

### **Top Fundraisers:**

£178 – William N

£130 – Gabrielle P

£130 – Ben W

£125 – Gerry B

£115 – Jorgia P

£100 – Amelie H

Well done to everyone who got involved—a true MECE community effort!

## THANK YOU

Thank you, Eddie Burton of Farrans, for dropping off a donation of laptops to school—they will be put to very good use!

[www.farrans.com](http://www.farrans.com)



### Term Dates 2024

#### Summer Term

15 April – 24 May 2023

03 June – 24 July 2024

#### Professional Development Days

(school closed to students)

Wednesday 03 July 2024

### Term Dates 2024

#### Autumn Term

04 September - Year 7 & 11 only (provisionally)

05 September – 25 October 2024

06 November – 20 December 2024

#### Spring Term

06 January – 14 February 2025

24 February – 04 April 2025

#### Summer Term

22 April – 23 May 2025

02 June – 23 July 2025

#### Professional Development Days (school closed to students)

Monday 02 September 2024

Tuesday 03 September 2024

Tuesday 05 November 2024

Friday 28 February 2025

### Letters for Parents

[www.maidenerleghchilternedge.co.uk/letters-for-parents/](http://www.maidenerleghchilternedge.co.uk/letters-for-parents/)

*Click here to view recent communications*

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With you at every step of your move.

Please consider donating your children's outgrown uniform to the second-hand uniform shop by dropping items into school reception.

Or, come along to a sale, listed below, to swap your child's outgrown uniform for the next size up!



20 April

11 May

08 June

CESA Secondhand Uniform and Promwear Sale 10am-1pm

22 April

CESA Mobile Phone and Ink Cartridge Collection Fundraiser Week