



17 October 2025

Dear parents and carers,

There has been some considerable excitement amongst a number of the students this week as we have a pigeon's nest in one of our hedges around the quad in which there are 2 (pretty cute) baby pigeons and a very protective mum who is dutifully watching over them. There have been naming ceremonies (Delta and Charlie) and some pretty fast Googling on my behalf to get up to speed on the key wood pigeon information that might be required! Sam from our Senior Student team has agreed to design and build (with help from Mr Reskalla) a bird box that hopefully they may frequent once they are big and brave enough to leave the nest.

Thursday 16 October was "Restart a Heart Day 2025" – an annually observed day in conjunction with the British Heart Foundation & the Resuscitation Council UK to raise awareness about CPR and use of defibrillators. In school this year we were fortunate to have 5 volunteers from the South-Central Ambulance Service (SCAS) come into school and deliver CPR training for all of Y7 and Y8 as well as information on where the school defibrillators are and how to use them if an emergency arose. Our students were part of a push across Oxfordshire and Berkshire which saw around 10,000 young people being trained.



The students were impeccable for the sessions and the SCAS crews commented on how engaged and mature they had been and that they would happily come in again and train groups of the older students too. This is certainly something we will look into the logistics of doing, perhaps in January. A huge thank you to Mrs Stewart, our Medical Welfare Officer who coordinated the morning and liaised with the SCAR team to ensure we had enough volunteers and equipment. If you want to find out more including learning CPR via an online training session, you can do so via the British Heart Foundation website. The online training can be found here: <https://www.bhf.org.uk/how-you-can-help/how-to-save-a-life/how-to-do-cpr/learn-cpr-in-15-minutes>





This week in school we have also undertaken our annual QA Review lead colleagues from the Trust's School Improvement team as well as Senior Leaders from other Trust schools. We were pleased to welcome a team of 5 across the 2 days who spent time in lessons, speaking to staff and students and observing student interactions in free-association time. The focus of their observations and conversations centred around our own identified school priorities of Attendance, Behaviour (low-level disruption in lessons) and Classrooms (engaged and purposeful learning).

As part of any type of review, I always am keen for visitors to meet with our students to get a true reflection of everyday student experience. As part of this review over 150 students were spoken to in small groups or parts of student panels and it is likely that all students would have had at least one of their classes visited across the 2 days. The anecdotal feedback I have received from the review team was incredibly positive and they were particularly impressed with the students who conducted themselves with confidence, good manners, enthusiasm and honesty – they were keen to show their pride for the school and community, they feel known as individuals and know that staff want the best for them and beyond that were able to offer some real insight to their school day as well as share some ideas for what we could look at doing next! We will receive detailed feedback in due course from the review team from which the Leadership team will generate some next steps and actions which will be shared with students, staff and parents in due course.

I previously shared that we have broadened our community engagement programme this year and students from Years 10 and 11 have been given opportunities to lead on clubs and activities within Sonning Common Primary School and (hopefully from after Half Term) Kidmore End Primary School. The first of these sessions at SCPS started this week with students supporting the delivery in lunchtime PE and reading activities – Mrs Salmons (Headteacher) was very complimentary, and the students are looking forward to getting back out after the Half Term break to start building relationships with the students who attend. Further to this we have also had contact from other community initiatives in Sonning Common and from the Weller Centre to see if we can work together on upcoming projects.

This weekend we are hosting a Fundraising Table-top and Jumble sale at school on Sunday to raise funds for both CESA and for students who are signed up for the Kenya trip in 2026. The fundraiser will be open between 10am-2pm in the Main School Hall (Sunday 19 Nov) and all are welcome – cash preferred if at all possible! Next week there will be some further information from Mr Caldwell and the Kenya team on ways you can get involved in fundraising through donations of resources (e.g. school supplies) or through sponsorship opportunities that are available. We are also keen to liaise with any parent who might have contacts in printing (e.g. logos onto t shirts) and might be able to offer some advice / good rates!





Despite next week being a short one there is still plenty going on and so there will be an end of term update from me on Wednesday where I will also share the key information from Heads of Year's celebration assemblies from this week where great attendance, attitudes to learning and other highlights from the first half term were brought into the spotlight.

And finally, the Sonning Common Annual Scarecrow trail starts this weekend with entries across the village. The 2025 MECE entry was decided by pupils after a vote to be an early marketing opportunity for our annual school production (Feb 2026) which this year is Sister Act. A huge thank you to Mrs Marden, Mrs King and students working within the Hive this week for their help and perseverance in preparing our entry which from today stands proud on our front lawn!



Wishing you all a lovely weekend,

Miss E Bliss  
Headteacher

