



30 January 2026

Dear parents and carers,

This week I am sharing a bumper edition of our newsletter including a roundup of the last 10 school days!

The middle of January is often associated with “*Blue Monday*” – grey skies, wet weather and flagging motivation – I’m sure there are plenty of us who are pleased that February is now firmly in our sights! At some points in the last 10 days, we were starting to prepare for the next “Beast from the East” - but seemingly we have dodged that.... for the time being! Across the school, staff and students have made a conscious effort to be upbeat and positive, recognising hard work and kindness through House Points and even sharing the occasional joke to lift spirits. The atmosphere around the site has been noticeably purposeful and positive.

On Friday we welcomed Mr Bell who will be joining MECE on secondment to our Leadership Team from Maiden Erlegh School on Mondays and Fridays for the remainder of the academic year. Mr Bell is an experienced leader having been on the MES Leadership team for a number of years with responsibility for Curriculum Standards and Careers among many other areas. As a Physics specialist he will also support with some lessons in Year 10 and will work with the science team in creating and delivering revision for Year 11 as they begin their final journey towards GCSEs in May.

As we reach the end of January, I know many of us will turn our minds to the next holiday opportunities – for those of you thinking longer term about this – please find the [Term Dates for 2026-7 here](#) including when INSET days are (when students are not required in school).

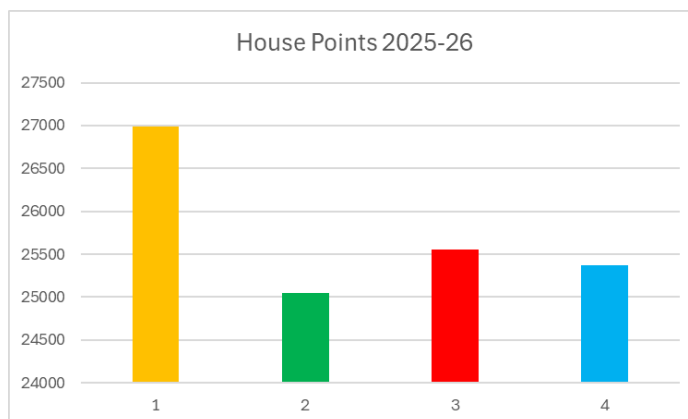
We have received the first entries for our annual Photography Competition. A reminder that the theme this year is “January” and entries should be made via the dedicated Google Classroom (**code: xqedczzm**) no later than **6pm on Sunday 1 February**. This is a fantastic opportunity for students to showcase their creativity while earning valuable House Points. Winners will be selected and announced before Half Term. To give some inspiration here is a selection of the entries to date including my own entry “Hot Chocolate on the Mountain”:





## House Assemblies and Sporting Success

House Assemblies took place in the latter part of last week. The focus was on celebrating how each House is progressing with a particular focus on positive points and attendance. These assemblies also provided an opportunity to spotlight upcoming House competition. Current standings for the 2025-26 House Competition show Abbey with a commanding lead but the other three houses are slowly starting to close the gap!





Congratulations to the top House Point contributions this term so far in each House:

**Abbey:** Libby (Y10), Charlotte (Y8), Amelia & Jon (Y7)

**Chiltern:** Anushka & Hanna (Y8), Dexter & Maggie (Y7)

**Peppard:** Laxita & Anouk (Y7) and Deanna & Noor (Y10)

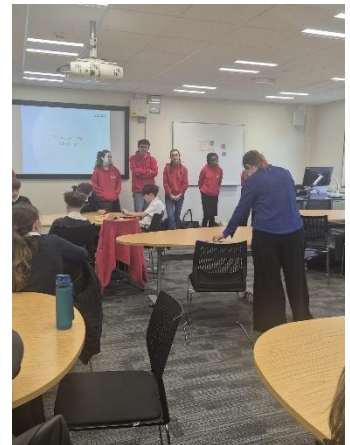
**Thames:** Hazel, Austin, Will Q & Aksel (all Y7)

Assemblies this week, led by Mrs Haycock, have marked Holocaust Memorial Day and have served as an opportunity to not only remember the victims, but honour the survivors and their families whilst also promoting themes of tolerance and respect within communities – important messages for us all. Thank you to Mrs Haycock for a most poignant and reflective assembly.

There are a number of highlights from across the last week that I am also pleased to share with you:

### **Year 8 Reading University trip**

Our Year 8 students visited the University of Reading on Tuesday last week to experience life on a university campus and to learn about the wide range of courses and opportunities available, both at Reading and across universities around the world. Students were inspired and genuinely in awe of the scale of the campus, particularly the impressive five-floor library as well as the range of courses that can be studied long after they have graduated from MECE. This visit forms part of our extensive Careers Programme at MECE, which supports students in exploring careers and education pathways at Post 16, Post 18 and into adulthood, alongside valuable interactions with employers. Through this programme, students develop key skills such as aspiration, independence, communication, resilience, decision-making and an understanding of how their learning connects to future careers.





Our year 10 cohort should now be sourcing work experience placements and letting tutors and Ms Dunn know. Anyone who is struggling should speak to Ms Dunn or Ms Jackson who will be able to share ideas and pass on contact details of some local businesses who are keen to support the school.

### **Oxfordshire Cross Country**

A group of students from Y7, 9 and 10 represented MECE at the Oxfordshire Cross Country event last Tuesday. Competing against hundreds of students in very challenging conditions, they did themselves and the school extremely proud.

### **Astronomy Evening**

On Monday we held our annual Astronomy evening in conjunction with the Reading Astronomical Society. Sadly, for the first time in many years, the weather did not play ball and sadly, even the impressive telescopes that members of RAS bring along weren't able to see through the low cloud cover and drizzle. However, those that came were not left disappointed with RAS members sharing stunning photography and facts about space and students (and parents) were able to still test out some of the telescopes.



### **Year 11 Theatre Trip**

Year 11 Drama students took a break from their preparations for their upcoming practical exam with a visit to see some live theatre with a trip to see Dear England yesterday the critically acclaimed story of how manager Gareth Southgate transformed culture of England's men's football team during his tenure. Covering themes of mental health, performance under pressure and modern masculinity within professional sport it certainly gave the group plenty to contemplate and now provides the basis for their exam where they have to analyse and evaluate staging and performance choices from the perspective of a director and audience member.





## Maths Challenge

Talented mathematicians from Years 9 and 10 sat the UK Intermediate Maths Challenge this week. Students answer 25 questions within the 1-hour paper which has been designed to encourage mathematical reasoning, precision of thought, and fluency.

Finally, I would like to thank parents and carers for your ongoing support. We have seen a noticeable improvement in students being fully equipped with their **Tools for Learning**, which is making a real difference to smooth and purposeful starts to lessons. Your support in reinforcing these expectations at home is greatly appreciated.

Thank you, as always, for your continued partnership with and support of the school and I hope you have a lovely weekend.

Yours sincerely,

Miss E Bliss  
Headteacher

