

## Assessing a unique half term

*It's great to be writing a newsletter again, but it is difficult to believe we have reached half way through the summer term. Year 13 students are about to take their leave of us and are preparing for the next step on their academic adventures. Year 11 have reached a significant milestone too as they complete their years in uniform and we look forward to seeing many of them back next year to begin their 6th form studies.*

*It has been an incredibly challenging year, and this term has been dominated by the task of assessing examination-year students for their final subject grades. The process has been rigorous as staff have worked to gather evidence, to be fair, and not to overwhelm students with additional pressure of constant assessing. We have almost finished the process now, which has included significant moderation within our own departments, within school and some external moderation. Along with all schools we will submit them by the deadline and will then wait to hear from exam boards about the sample they wish to moderate.*

*I want to thank everyone in our community for their efforts in making the process work, students for your diligence and resilience, parents for your support and patience, and staff for your effort and commitment in making this possible.*

*The half term break is most welcome, and I wish you all a safe and happy half term. Best wishes,*

*Catherine May*  
Catherine May

## Introducing Winnie the (Cocker) Poo



On 10 March a new member of the support team joined the school – Winnie the trainee therapy dog. The puppy belongs to Ms Pagliero, a languages teacher, and will grow up in the school environment becoming fully accustomed to the routines of the day.

Winnie started school in 2021 and is named after Ms Pagliero's grandmother who attended St Saviour's and St Olave's School as a pupil in 1921, exactly 100 years ago. Winnie is being raised in a puppy pen away from students while she gets used to the new environment.

'Pet therapy' is widely accepted as benefitting well-being and communication skills. Studies have shown that the presence of companion animals can lower the rate of anxiety simply by making the environment happier and more welcoming. Dogs are increasingly being used in schools and hospitals as the health benefits they bring are so vast.

No student will have to be in contact with the dog if they do not wish to be. But we are sure that most students will gain a great deal of enjoyment from having a school dog and that Winnie will become an established part of school life.

### Diary Dates

**Half Term**  
Mon 31st May – Fri 4th June

**First Day back**  
Mon 7th June Normal time

**Whole School Exam Week**  
Mon 14th June – Fri 18th June

**New Intake Evening**  
Thurs 27th June  
6.00pm

**Activities Week**  
Mon 28th June – Fri 2nd July

**Creative Arts Week**  
Mon 5th July – Thurs 8th July

**Arts Evening**  
Thurs 8th July 6pm

**Sports Day**  
Fri 9th July

**End of Term**  
Fri 16th July

# A Prayer for Our Time

Heavenly Father,

*We thank you that by your grace, we have been able to finish this school year. Thank you that amongst everything that we have had to face during this year; the pressures of our exams, the struggles of online learning and more, you've carried us into the end of this year through your mercy and love and have enabled us to wake up and breathe and come to school every morning.*

*Sometimes we don't see the blessings we have even if they are right in front of us, but with your enlightenment we as students are able to see who has helped us during this school year, who has encouraged us, and who has given us the drive and the motivation to continue even if we don't feel like it.*

*Lord, we thank you that there are teachers who have given us the will to continue, who have never given up on us and who have encouraged us until the end. Thank you that you have given them the gift of teaching and may it have an everlasting impact on our lives. We pray that these teachers will know your peace and salvation in their lives and that their work will not be in vain for in your word it says "As you teach, do not become weary of doing good for at the proper time you will reap the harvest."*

*Father, some of us will be parting, going on different journeys in life and experiencing new things. Some of us have only known each other for 4 years and some of us much more. There have been new bonds created within those years and some of them cannot be broken, may you bind us together with unbreakable chords and sew our hearts together with the Fruits of the Spirit love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.*

*Please allow your comfort to delight our souls as we face life and reality, as we come into the world of experience. Please do not allow our hearts to be disheartened and upset at the prospect of us not being together anymore because in Romans 8:28 it says "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." Father may we know your purpose in our lives as we depart and may you give us a calling and a clear insight of our future.*

*Thank you for being with us throughout this turbulent time and we pray that you will continue to lead us as we voyage into the unknown.*

*In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ we pray,  
Amen.*

Written by Dashiloh Kassongo

## Year 11s reflect upon the unique challenges of Covid education

Going into Year 11 unprepared was a very stressful and nerve-racking period, and I'm sure many others would relate especially after months at home, with no set schedule and ambiguity as to whether GCSE exams would proceed as usual. We had no idea what to expect throughout the year. There was a big theme of uncertainty surrounding us and I would say Covid had the largest role in how year 11 played out. After we came back from the 3rd lockdown in March, new challenges were faced, and the pressure began to build up as it came closer towards the time that we have been working towards from the start of secondary school.

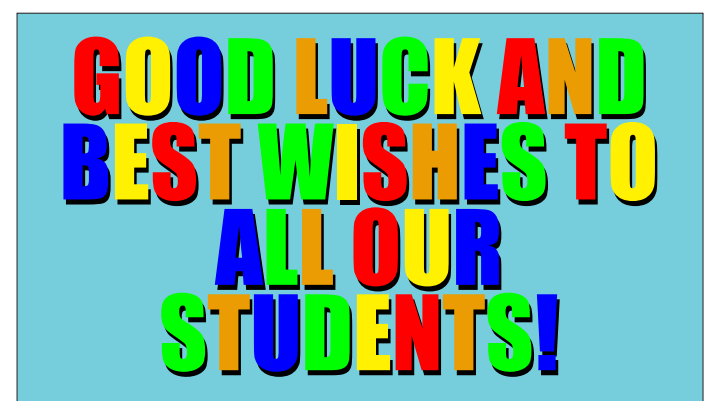
Just a couple of weeks in, we are told that GCSEs were cancelled, however a series of mini assessments would be replacing them. It was massively emphasised that these assessments mattered the most and would have a large effect on our final grade. Uncontrollable feelings of anxiety and disorientation increased, as the days for our "mini assessment's" decreased. Even though it was a difficult time, I managed to stay self-motivated and put in the hard work hoping for good results. I couldn't let these few months dictate my future. There was lots of support and guidance from teachers having understood the stress of working in lockdown. From time to time there were wellbeing checks and interventions available for us which felt quite supportive and uplifting. Teachers were also always ready to respond to emails if we had any queries. With all the support we received I feel a strong sense of relief and reassurance as the teachers here have helped us immensely. I wish the best for me and my peers who will be receiving their results in August.

**Humaira Ahmed 11B**

"As a current year 11 student, this past year has been especially difficult. Filled with uncertainty due to the events that occurred with the year 11 and 13 classes of 2020, and the rollercoaster of coronavirus cases over the span of the pandemic, we had no idea of what was in store for us - would we continue with our mock exams? Would we sit our formal GCSE exams? There was no way of knowing.

However, thanks to the supportive staff members, this feeling of uncertainty was subsided as we were reassured that, no matter what happened, they would always be there to provide any support that we required such as the study space that was created for us, and the accessibility to a member of the pastoral team granted to us at any time. At first, coming into school with the new bubbles felt very different from what we had gotten used to over the past few years, but after some time it proved to be extremely beneficial as we, the year 11s, now had our own section of the school where we could work together in preparation for our assessments without distractions from other year groups, and now spend precious time together as the end of our secondary education draws nearer."

**Miracle Johnson 11Y**



# Parting thoughts from our Year 13 Perfect Prefect Team

This last year has been one that was filled with so much ambiguity. We have had to learn how to adapt quickly to new circumstances, showcasing how resilient we truly are as a community.

Whether you are in an exam year or in lower school, your experience at SSSO has been unique and like no other, and despite all of the things you have missed out on, you have also experienced some things that will shape your attitude towards life, helping you to become more independent and resilient when faced with challenging situations. As a school community, we have strived to ensure that all members

of our community feel comfortable enough to share their experiences from this time and learn from it to help mould us into stronger people.

– **Ife Banjo, Head Girl**

It's no secret that the last year and a half has been challenging, but through perseverance, hard work and google teams, we finally made it. Even in the first lockdown where we lived in complete chaos and uncertainty, the summer passed, we came back to school and life continued. Somehow, we always seem to adapt. And whether we have to do it in masks or two metres away, I have confidence that we will all succeed. If there's one thing I've learned, it's that our school's values and sense of community will always prevail in the face of hardship and change.

– **Matilda Green, Deputy Head Girl**

Our sixth-form experience has certainly been one to remember. The initial lockdown in 2020 was a difficult time filled with uncertainty, but with the help of staff and friends we were able to get through it even though we were apart. And even when we came back to school in September with all the new guidelines and regulations, our unity and strength as a community was truly amazing to witness as we navigated these uncharted waters together. Through these unprecedented times we as individuals and as a community have grown so much and have come out the other side so much stronger. If the past year and a half is anything to go by, we know that as a school we can face any adversity thrown in our direction.

– **Anne-Elizabeth Sowah, Deputy Head Girl**

I credit two things for helping me overcome the challenges this year posed: my teachers and a regular routine. To begin with, I'm incredibly blessed to have such supportive and compassionate teachers who prioritised my mental wellbeing over arbitrarily finishing the course. Regular contact with my teachers meant that I had someone to hold me accountable over the work set and I had a sympathetic ear to voice my troubles to. Secondly, I've found that sticking as close to the school timetable as possible increased my productivity, reduced decision fatigue and procrastination and improved my mood. I also replaced the things I used to do with new activities for example, substituting my gym routine for home workouts and evening outings with walks in the park.

– **Fatima Diallo, Wellbeing Prefect**

As someone who finds change really difficult, the past year really played with my mind and tested my patience. I was able to overcome this by focusing on the benefits of this period rather than the negatives. For example, working from home allowed me to work at my own suitable pace. Additionally, I have gained the skills to work independently, something critical for my life moving forward.

– **Le'shay Barnett, Wellbeing Prefect**

The past year has been a whirlwind in terms of the new changes society has faced due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we have learnt how to adapt quickly to a different system. Despite uncertainty, it is always good to look at the bright side of things even though it may be foggy. Studying my A-levels during a pandemic has certainly not been the easiest but I have pushed through the barriers and challenges of what life has thrown at me by motivating myself with online school and thinking about future plans. Independent study alone has given me more time to take things slow by carefully going through content at my own pace and fully understanding it in which I have felt to be very beneficial in terms of improving my grades. COVID-19 has also slowed down the fast-paced world by making me more aware of the struggles and issues happening in different countries worldwide, which has made me feel more connected globally. Overall, this past year has taught me to be patient, persistent and always have a positive outlook on life even though everything may seem to go wrong, it always works itself out in the end. These qualities have for sure made me a better version of myself.

– **Bonita Nganga, Y7 Prefect**



**Upcoming... Whole School Exam Week... 14th - 18th June**



# A Feast of Reading from our Learning Resources Centre.....

## Enjoy free eBooks & Audio Books at your fingertips anywhere, anytime!!

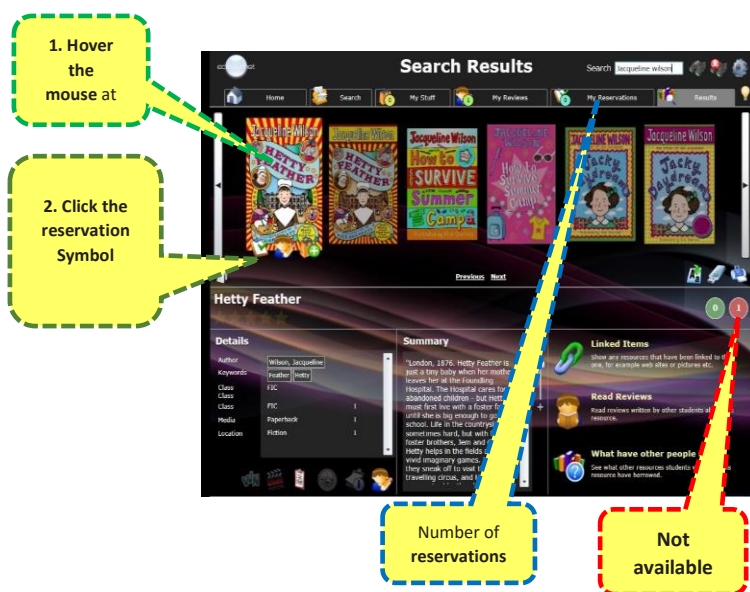
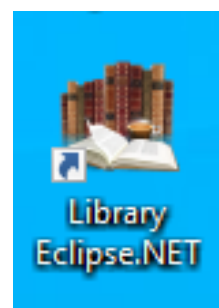
You can now browse, borrow and return hundreds of fiction & non-fiction books using "Sora App". Just download the application on your PC/laptop, phone or tablet or simply visit <https://soraapp.com/>. You will be prompted to login using your school email address and your unique password (please check your school email inbox). You will then have full access to the e-resources where you can borrow up to 4 eBooks at a time.

There are multi copies of each title. If all copies of a book are on loan, you'll need to place a hold. This will put you on a waiting list. Once a copy of the book gets returned, it'll become available for the first person on the waiting list.

## Library books

Currently, only year 7s are able to access the library due to the library being part of the year 7 bubble under the current restrictions. For all other year groups, they can borrow physical library books by making a book reservation on the library catalogue. To access the library catalogue, log into any school computer using your current login details. Double click the "Library Eclipse.NET" shortcut on your desktop and you should be logged in under your library account, (please note, this method will not work on a non-school computer).

To search for a book, use the search box at the top-right corner. You can look up a book by its title, the author name or by a keyword. Then press the search button. This will open a new tab with the search result, hover the mouse at the desired book, three icons will appear below. Select "Reserve this resource" to make the reservation. All reserved books will be distributed to students during form time as soon as possible based on the resources availability.



All overdue books must be returned to your Form Tutor.

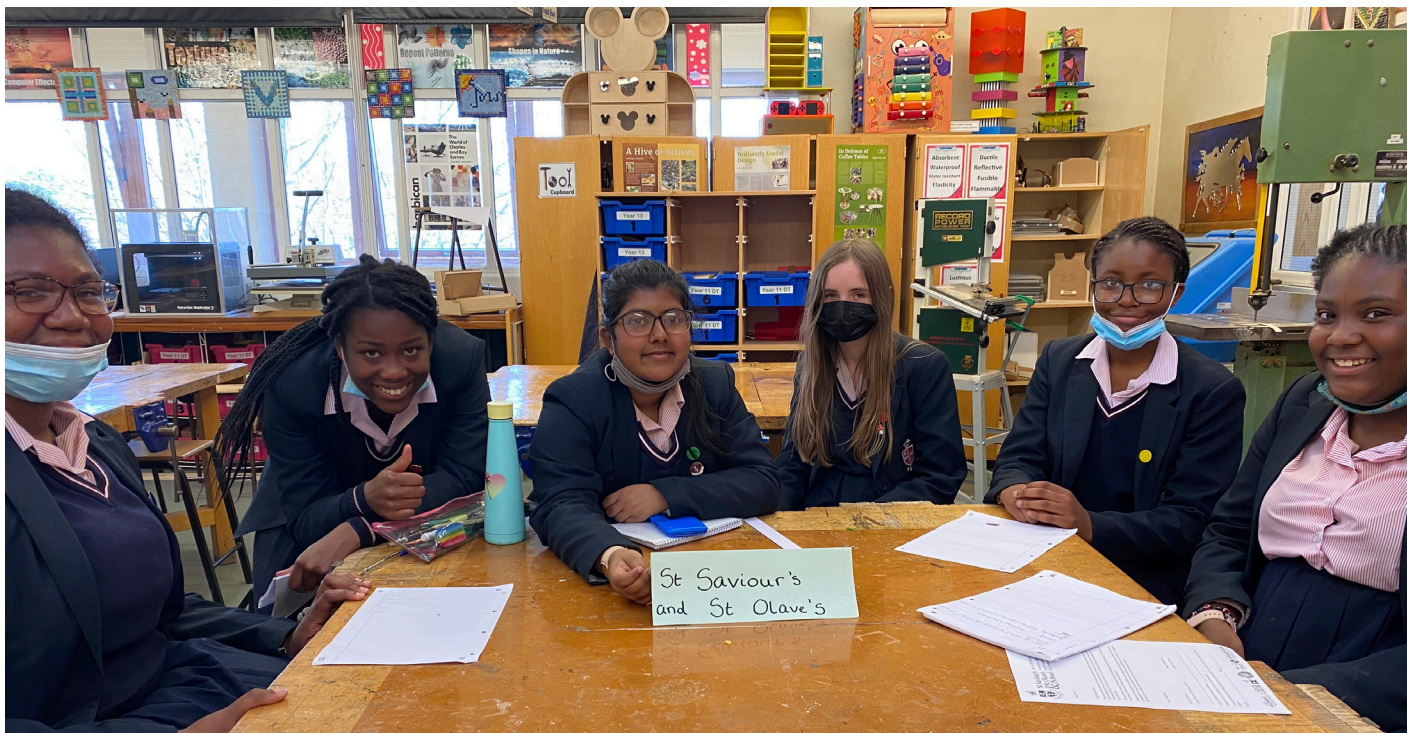


# Year 8 Quizzers face Merchant Taylors Challenge

A group of six Year 8 students participated in a virtual Zoom Quiz, put on by the Merchant Taylor's Company. About a dozen schools participated, and the students competed in answering general knowledge questions. Our Year 8 Class was represented by Nathalia and Rachael in 8 Blue, Shakthi in 8 Green, Morayo in 8 Yellow, Destiny in 8 Orange and Rosie in 8 Red. These students did a fantastic job working together to answer the questions, and represented our school very well!

*"When I was informed that I was selected to participate in the Merchant Taylors' Quiz, I was beyond thrilled. The questions were based on general knowledge, and therefore, working as a team with other student in year 8 was important and fun. The competition took place over a zoom meeting, which felt different but comforting to be in the same environment. Despite the quiz being online, the opportunity was truly amazing, and I am grateful to have taken part."*

Thank you for letting me participate! Shakthi



## Student art lights up virtual Commemoration Service

Below is a small selection of excellent artwork produced by students for our Service of Commemoration, which can still be viewed here: <https://youtu.be/ceets5kelno>

