

more.

more than news, more than school.

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A Mental Health Week Special: *More.* News, Because Less is Boring .

ST THOMAS MORE'S OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER

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A Message From the Editor; *Jacob Morgan*

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Dear reader,

This February half-term break will mark the 3rd edition of our school newspaper, which will be my last as editor-in-chief and politics contributor, along with our other wonderful columnists in Year 13, as we prepare for A-Level exams over the coming months. However, this won't be the newspaper's last edition ever, as Oliver Cooney, our brilliant formatter, will take my role and we have appointed many new faces to the newspaper team to ensure a smooth transition.

As always, more will be discussing a variety of interesting topics. Daniel Cauchi gives an in-depth explanation of his work as Head of the Board of Governors in an interview with Neha Kooran, and we focus a lot on mental health week, getting valuable insight from Mrs Walford and Mrs McArthur.

Poppy Chambers writes of the harm climate change will do to Essex if we don't act in her environment section, whilst Oliver Abell introduces the philosophy of Buddhism, and Danny Vanner-Smith writes about the conspiracy surrounding the existence of aliens and UFOs.

New sections for this edition of the newspaper include art, psychology, music, and political science from talented columnists.

Regards,





Jacob Morgan
Editor-in-Chief

”

Napoleon's Bunny Battle:

a historical bedtime story by

Jacob Morgan

Napoleon Bonaparte is a famous French military commander who served as Emperor of France from 1804–1814, and briefly again in 1815. His rule marked the establishment of the first French Empire. He dominated the European political landscape, conquering countries including Italy, Spain, and Germany. His success on the battlefield was huge, defeating the combined Russian and Austrian forces at the Battle of Austerlitz in 1805 and defeating the Prussian forces at the Battle of Jena-Auerstedt in 1806.

However, despite his strategic brilliance, he wasn't without foolish mistakes, and a lesser known one is the Bunny Battle, in 1807.

After victory over Prussia and the Russian Empire in July 1807, Napoleon wanted to celebrate with a rabbit hunt. His chief of staff, Alexandre Berthier, acquired 3000 supposedly wild rabbits for a hunting session with the French army.

These rabbits turned out to be tame and hungry, stored near the hunting grounds, which meant they didn't flee in fear of Napoleon and his men, instead charging towards them in search of food. The encroaching aggression of 3000 rabbits proved a lot for the French army, forcing them to retreat, proving to be a foolish error from the French army.

The retreat did have an aura of foreshadowing to it, displaying Napoleon's overconfident and vulnerable nature. His overconfidence is most famously seen with the failed Russian Campaign in 1812, and his vulnerability was evident when he made a dramatic return to the French leadership in 1815, only to lose the Battle of Waterloo as a decisive defeat to the Duke of Wellington.

Despite the amusing nature of this incident, it does reportedly stray closer to legends than canon history, but nevertheless it serves as a reminder that underestimating the small can lead to large surprises, even if you're the dominant power in Europe.



more, *Politics*

Party memberships are falling, voter turnout is low, and distrust is at a record high – politics has become boring. From an earlier age, people are experiencing voter apathy, turnout has plummeted for young people, and people aren't joining political parties. But why?

There are three key factors for this drop in interest. The repetition of parties in government, constant instability, and the loss of politicians with true character.

Albert Einstein once said that “insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results”, and this can be applied to politics. The UK has had the same two dominant parties since the 1920s, with the Labour and Conservative parties winning every election since 1922, meaning every PM for the last 104 years has been from one of these parties. And now, the repetitive

electoral cycle has caused people to lose interest.

The cycle seems to have been like this for the past century, with each party having a few successful elections, then it switches to the other party's turn for a few successes, just for it to repeat again. For example, since 1979, the Tories were in government for 18 years, followed by Labour for 13 years, then another 14 years for the Tories, and now we're two years into a Labour government again – it's repetitive yet nothing seems to improve.

Another factor is the

Why Politics has Become Boring.



Jacob Morgan
Politics & Insight

constant instability. Prime Ministers come and go too quickly, elections and leadership challenges are always being discussed in the media, and no Prime Minister in the past decade has been in the job for more than three years, all five of them.

A volatile political landscape is formed from constant change and instability. PMs are frequently elected on a message of correcting the failures of the last party, rather than genuine interest in the party, seen at the 2024 election where Labour's slogan was simply “Change”, showing there was just a national desire to remove the

previous government, considering the Tories lost more seats than Labour gained.

Finally, politics has lost its character. Long gone are the days of strong politicians who could defy scandals. People like Winston Churchill, despite facing blame for the failed Dardanelles Campaign in WW1 that saw 20,000 British soldiers die, went on to serve nine years as British PM across two terms.

Characters like this are rare, especially if you have a scandal, you're gone completely. Some may be able to survive them, like John Prescott remaining as Deputy

PM for six years after punching a farmer in 2001, but it is very rare, caused by the jagged media landscape. This is most notably seen with Angela Rayner, the former Deputy PM, forced to resign in September 2025 for underpaying stamp duty in a complex housing situation, and her return seems unlikely.

Overall, politics has lost its edge, it has become repetitive and unstable, and as a result people have lost interest, and will continue to lose interest for generations to come, leading to even more voter apathy.



Photo of the House of Commons at PMQs from the Guardian



Baroness Thérèse Coffey, Deputy Prime Minister at the time, asleep leaning against the Speaker's Chair

GLOSSARY:

Voter apathy – a lack of interest from voters

Voter turnout – the number of people voting at an election

Volatile – liable to change rapidly and unpredictably, especially for the worse



Fashion in the Corridors: Confidence Never Goes Out of Style

Elegant and classic, Mrs. Spillett's style is the definition of chic. Today, she showcases her impeccable taste in a Zara longline wool jacket, a Tu draped top and a Next velvet maxi skirt, completed with Zara T-bar shoes, and brown polka dot tights that add a playful touch.

When asked about her fashion dos and don'ts, Mrs. Spillett emphasized the importance of wearing what you love, and how clothing that makes you feel comfortable and confident is the key to happiness. "People perceive you not by your outfit, but how you carry and present yourself."

Discussing her fashion don'ts, she dismissed strict style rules but warned against one common misstep – ignoring the occasion and missing the balance between under and overdressed.

When asked what clothing item she would save if her house went up in flames, Mrs. Spillett had just one answer: her Dolce & Gabbana jacket, a brand renowned for



Poppy Chambers
Fashion & Environment

statement silhouettes and elegant detailing.

Mrs. Spillett draws inspiration from the timeless style of the 90s, only investing in items she knows will remain in her wardrobe for years. Kate Moss and Victoria Beckham sit firmly at the top of her style icon list, with Victoria Beckham's collections capturing her aesthetic through their sleek silhouettes and refined detailing.

Given the chance to swap wardrobes with any teacher, Mrs. Spillett was clear: it would be Miss Rogers, whose signature mix of classic and individual pieces was already spotlighted in our debut issue.

Polished and distinctive, Mrs. Spillett shows that great style is built on confidence and individuality.



Oliver Cooney
Fashion & Culture

As English's newest addition, Mr Leftley has made a name for himself as an up and coming style icon. Renowned for his classic cardigans and playful ties, Mr Leftley's outfit did not disappoint!

Starting off strong Mr Leftley was wearing a simple pair of Clark's shoes, paired with some graphic cricket socks. If Mr Leftley's interview told us one thing about him it's that he loves Vinted. Mr Leftley was sporting a pair of grey trousers and a comfortable cream cardigan from Urban Spirit both found on Vinted. Bringing the outfit together was a simple blue button-up Primark shirt with a playful labrador tie!

When it came to fashion "dos" Mr Leftley stressed his love for Vinted shopping and knitwear whilst citing a distaste towards the rising love for Tabi shoes (female flat shoe with a split between the toe) due to their lack of versatility. When it comes to colour Mr Leftley is all for a bit of creativity, whilst wanting male work-fashion to move away from the basic grey and blue suits.

Mrs Howe-Evans was Mr Leftley's ideal wardrobe swap candidate admiring her diverse and creative range of outfits, whilst giving an honourable mention to IT's Mr Cockel & RE's Mr Kwasnica for their collection knitted sweaters.

Mr Leftley's biggest fashion inspiration was his grandparents adding some sentimentality into the mix. If money didn't matter and he could only buy from one shop for the rest of his life, staying true to form Mr Leftley said "it'd have to be Vinted".

more, *Insight*

What are your main responsibilities as Head of the Board of Governors?

As Chair of Governors, my role is to lead the board in fulfilling its three core strategic functions: ensuring clarity of vision and Catholic ethos, holding senior leaders to account for educational performance and safeguarding, and overseeing financial stewardship. I also support and challenge the headteacher, ensure the board operates effectively and make sure we meet our statutory duties. Ultimately, my responsibility is to help create the conditions in which students can thrive academically, spiritually and personally.

Interview with the Chair of the Board of Governors, Dan Cauchi



Jacob Morgan
Politics & Insight



What processes do you use to evaluate school performance and ensure the board is meeting its duties effectively?

We use a range of structured processes, such as link governor visits, committee reviews, safeguarding audits, data dashboards, financial monitoring, and termly reports from senior leaders. We also regularly evaluate our own governance practice using national frameworks and diocesan guidance. This ensures we remain compliant, evidence-based and focused on continuous improvement. The key is to triangulate information, ask the right questions, and stay rooted in the school's mission and ambitions for every pupil.

How do you balance day-to-day issues within schools with strategic oversight?

Governors are not involved in running the school; that is the responsibility of the headteacher and leadership team. Our focus is firmly strategic. When day-to-day issues arise, we ensure they are directed to the appropriate member of staff while we look at any wider patterns, risks or policy implications. My role as Chair is to support leaders without stepping into operational management – keeping governance strategic, supportive and accountable.

How do you collaborate with fellow governors?

We work as a collective team, each bringing different skills and experiences. Collaboration happens through committee work, full governing body meetings, training, and regular communication. As Chair, I make sure everyone feels able to contribute, that we operate respectfully and that our decisions reflect shared values. We also work closely with the headteacher and leadership team so that governance supports the school's long-term success.

What improvements are you most proud of during your tenure?

I'm proud of the way the governing body has strengthened its strategic focus, increased its visibility and built strong working relationships with staff, students, and the wider community. We have sharpened our safeguarding oversight, supported curriculum and pastoral developments, and championed the Catholic life of the school. Most importantly, we've worked together to ensure students are at the heart of every decision. Seeing the school continue to grow in ambition, care and excellence has been the greatest achievement.

The January meeting was packed with exciting new opportunities and updates on the improvements the council has previously implemented.

As the summer term approaches, the meeting centred on possible school events in the future. Some suggested we organise a charity games day, which would be ideal for all year groups to create lasting memories with friends and enjoy some friendly competition.

A culture day has also been suggested by the council to celebrate our school’s

heritage and multiculturalism, which we so proudly represent. This also sparked the idea of a potential cultural committee to help organise and propose ideas for the day.

Students can also potentially look forward to a big raffle, or a teacher-student charity event, as our “pin the headteacher” game received a positive response from many.

Well done to all students who put forward these ideas and are working towards making them a reality!

If you have ideas or changes you’d like to make within the school, make sure to relay them to your Form Leader, who can help implement!



What is the School Council?

The St Thomas More School Council is the School’s only student elected, student ran body. Its primary purpose is to give a voice to every single student through their elected representative. The Council has existed in many forms throughout the history of St Thomas More, Mr Hardiman having been a member himself when he was a student! The Council meets every half-term to discuss key issues, typically along the lines of canteen prices, school hygiene and event planning. The Council offers students important transferable skills in leadership, public speaking, representation and democracy.

An “A-ha!” Half Term: A Real Epiphany for School Faith Life

The new year didn’t just begin quietly for our school’s religious life — it arrived with a *double revelation*. We launched the term with not one but two Epiphany Masses at the same time. A true double header. Double Mass. Double holy. A pretty unforgettable way to start the year and a reminder that Epiphany is all about recognising something extraordinary in the ordinary.

Since then, our faith life has stayed busy and meaningful. Weekly Masses have continued to be a central part of school life, with Fr Sylvini and Fr Jeff taking turns to celebrate with us. Their different styles but shared message have helped keep worship fresh while giving us a regular chance to pause, reflect, and come together as a community.

This half term also saw the Year 8 trips to Canterbury, where students explored the famous cathedral, visited a Catholic church for Mass, and came face-to-face with history through seeing the relic of St Thomas Becket. It was a powerful experience that brought faith, history, and pilgrimage together — and probably involved a lot of walking too.

As we move forward, we are now preparing for Lent. Don’t forget to get your ashes — this will be the first time Ash Wednesday falls in half

term, so it’s on us to make the effort. Lent also invites us to think about what we will give up or take on. Whether it’s giving up vegetables (ambitious), homework (unlikely), or something more realistic like extra screen time, the aim is to grow spiritually and make space for God.

This reflection links closely with our half-term focus on Catholic Social Teaching, especially solidarity and the common good. These ideas haven’t just stayed in the classroom. Our school community has put them into action by raising an incredible £17,000+ for the SVP, showing real commitment to supporting others and standing together in faith and compassion.

From a “double holy” Epiphany start to practical acts of service, this half term has truly been an *epiphany* —

moments of insight, generosity, and shared purpose that remind us what it means to live out our faith every day.



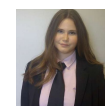
more, *Entertainment*

Why are Awards Ceremonies so Anticipated?

Award ceremonies such as the Oscar's and Golden Globes are held in high regard as they recognise 'the best' for achieving their full potential, whether that is acting, directing or a whole film crew being recognised for their combined effort and work put into a film. They are still upheld today because of their traditional values, the first Oscar's was in 1929, being the oldest entertainment award ceremonies. Alongside the fashion industry, actors and actresses showcase high-end designer's new (and old) pieces of work, ranging from glamorous dresses to watches or necklaces, such as Amanda Seyfried modelling Versace on the red carpet at the 2026 Golden Globes. Even in the most recent Golden Globes event, Dame Helen Mirren spoke of how she was raised in Leigh-on-Sea and is proud of her Essex roots, in her acceptance speech, signalling the area as where her passion for acting first started.



Red Carpets & Golden Envelopes: All things Awards



Isabelle Morgan
Film

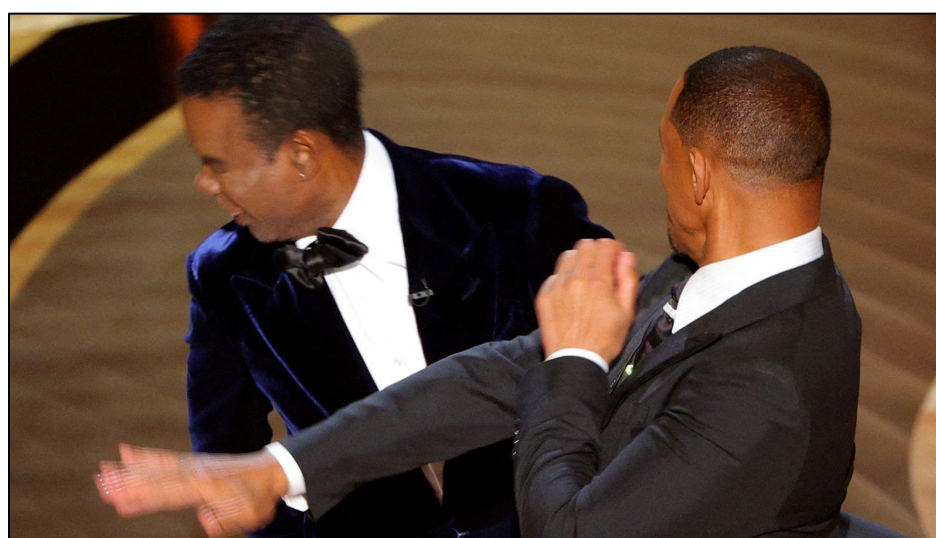
more,
Entertainment

Hamnet

Based on the novel by Maggie O'Farrell, *Hamnet* has now been classed as 'one of the greatest films of all time' after recently winning two awards at the Golden Globes. Deservingly, Jessie Buckley (playing Angus Shakespeare) won Best Actress in a motion picture drama, through being the emotional anchor of the movie with her raw and realistic acting style. Jacobi Jupe (*Hamnet*) also received significant recognition, being nominated for the critics' choice awards for best young Actor through his exceptional acting skills. The film explores a wide variation of themes including love, loss, and family, successfully portraying the typical components of a Shakespearean comedy. *Hamnet* is said to be suited to its context through an accurate set, props, and costumes. The costumes in the film also subtly guide us through the emotional storytelling, Agnes' dresses go from vibrant reds to dark and saturated reds, while William's clothing darkens with his grief. A line within the film that particularly stood out to me was "What is given may be taken away, at any time. Cruelty and devastation wait for you around corners", adding to the harsh reality presented in the film. The significance to modern day is embedded in moments like this, as many people today take what they have in their lives for granted without realising how quickly it can be stolen from them.

Significant Moments that Happened at these Award Events

- In 2002, Halle Berry became the first black woman to win the Best Actress Oscar.
- In 2014, Ellen DeGeneres broke the internet with her celebrity selfie at the Oscar's, becoming one of the most retweeted images in history.
- In 2022, Will Smith slapped Chris Rock on stage at the Oscars after a joke about Jada Pinkett-Smith, resulting in a 10-year ban.
- In 2023, Michelle Yeoh became the first Asian woman to win the Best Actress Oscar.



The concept of extraterrestrial life has been around since the 4th century BCE from the Ancient Greek philosophers Democritus and Epicurus proposing that in an infinite universe, it's more likely than not that some form of alien life is bound to exist - and with recent scientific discoveries into the nature and expansion of the universe, as well as discovery of other planets that could support life, it's certainly a compelling argument. However, due to the lack of conclusive evidence that even any kind of microorganism has ever lived on another planet or moon, some may conclude that life does not or cannot exist outside of our planet.

However, organizations like NASA have not been deterred by this lack of results and are continuously searching

for potentially habitable planets outside of our solar system. The Kepler telescope has managed to locate a handful of potentially life-supporting planets such as Kepler-452B and Kepler-186F which are at the perfect distance away from their sun to support liquid water, the basis for life. These planets, however, are millions of light years away from earth and could not possibly be witnessed by scientists, much less people. Or have they...

Unidentified Flying Objects (UFOs) are reported hundreds of times each year with 200 being reported in the first half of 2025 alone, with some sightings even being issued by the US military, ranging in appearance from the classic flying saucer to a windowless, silent, "tic-tac" shape and almost every other shape and size in

between. Because of the immense number of reports from the public and US military, on July 26th, 2023, a congress meeting discussing the continuing investigations of UFOs was held by ex-intelligence official David Grusch, which stated the government is still unsure of their origin and purpose. This confirms the existence of UFOs but not if they are inherent alien or if there is any cause for concern as to do with their presence.

The sheer number of sightings alone gives the idea more merit with some first-hand accounts being so unnatural that it is difficult to provide any conventional explanation for what these people are seeing not just in America but all over the world. Examples of anomalous behaviour displayed by these flying objects are light orbs in the sky

forming complex and moving patterns as well as things like being able to maintain the same speed in the air as well as water. Famous examples of UFO sightings include the Rendlesham forest incident (1980) in Suffolk, England where mysterious lights, landed aircrafts and scorch marks were reported and witnessed, as well as Japan airlines flight 1628 (1986) where a cargo crew reported witnessing and tracking unidentified massive objects for 50 minutes. These are only two of the thousands of convincing reports that are being made every year.

Ultimately, growing evidence and awareness about the possible existence of extraterrestrials should be viewed as an opportunity to gain more experience about our universe and the inhabitants of it.



Life With Autism

Seth Meek
Mental Health Week Feature

A Typical Day at School where my brain never stops. I am a 15 year old with ADHD and autism and most days start the same.

My alarm goes off, I hit snooze lots and next thing I'm late and trying to find my shoes but my brain is already thinking about football, a drawing I want to finish, and a random fact about the news. That's ADHD for you - my brain wakes up before me and everything feels like chaos. Getting to school is fine, unless it's noisy. Mornings are loud. I hear every noise so I usually put my AirPods on and block the world out. It helps some of the time.

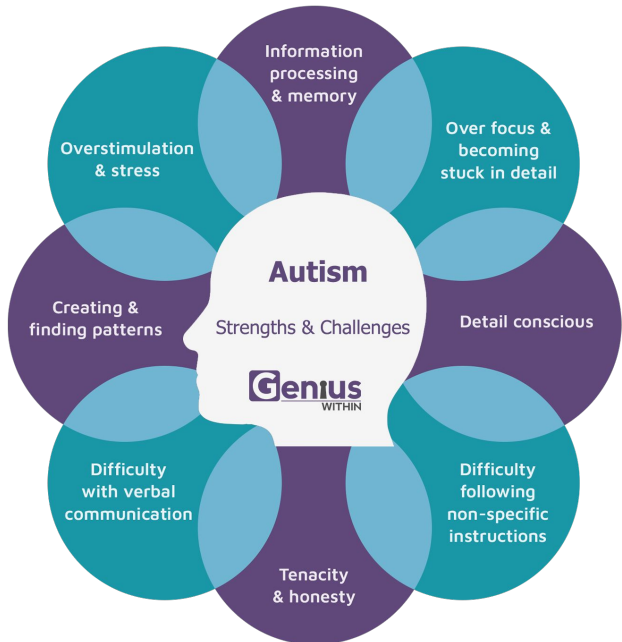
Lessons can be good and bad. If a subject interests me, I hyper-focus. I'll want to know everything about it and probably annoy the teacher by asking too many questions. But if it doesn't interest me, I get distracted. I try really hard to listen, but suddenly I'm doodling or fidgeting or thinking a thousand things. Teachers sometimes think I'm not paying attention, but doing something helps me listen.

Sport is one of the best parts of the day. PE, football at lunch, anything where I can move. I need to move a lot. Playing football makes sense. I know where to be, what to do, and I don't have to worry about saying the wrong thing.

Art is good too. In art class, my weird ideas are good. No one usually tells me I'm not listening. I can just draw. Sometimes it's the only time all day my brain feels calm. Plus, it's nice when people say, "That's actually really good," instead of, "Why are you not listening again?" Group work and answering questions in class can be scary. I don't always know when to talk, when to stop, or if I'm being annoying. I also get overwhelmed easily, especially if I don't hear or understand instructions. And when I'm overwhelmed, I can shut down or get frustrated, which people sometimes misunderstand.

But there are positives too. I notice things others don't. I'm creative, kind and a good friend. I want to be helpful. I care a lot about trying hard to improve.

School isn't always easy for me, but it's not all bad either. So, that's a typical day. Loud, confusing, interesting, exhausting



more, *Environment*

2025 marked a brand-new milestone: the third hottest year ever recorded globally, but more alarmingly, the hottest and sunniest year the UK has ever experienced. Temperatures soared to unprecedented levels, with sunshine hours exceeding 1648 hours, a staggering 61.4 hours more than the previous record set in 2003. Beaches were packed, fans ran nonstop, and ice cream didn't stand a chance. But behind the enjoyment of the heat, the planet is sending a serious warning. You may already know increasing temperatures are fuelling sea levels to rise higher than ever, but this is only the beginning. Beneath the heatwaves and clear skies, changes are subtly unfolding, and the consequences are much greater than you might expect.

Record Heat, Real Consequences: The Growing Climate Threat to Essex

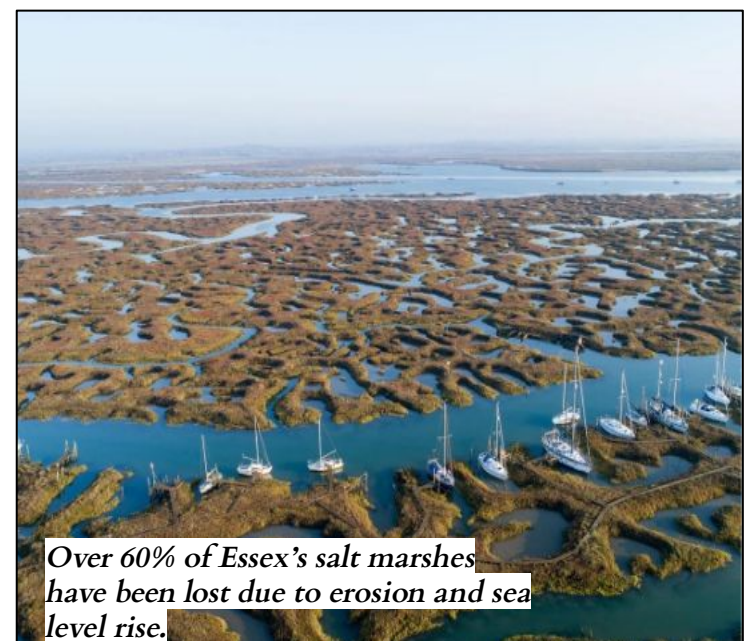
Poppy Chambers
Environment & Fashion



Across the world, the effects are obvious. Cities are constantly flooded, fragile ecosystems like the Great Barrier Reef are disappearing, and tropical cyclones are damaging homes and taking countless lives. Even though these changes are taking their toll on foreign land, the United Kingdom is realistically very unlikely to be affected from tropical cyclones and tsunamis. Although local effects of climate change may not be obvious for us in the UK now, they are gaining momentum, and it won't be long until they affect our daily lives even more than they do now. Being a voice for the changes rapidly approaching our country is one of the only ways to make a real difference.

The question is: what will the true consequences be for Essex?

Even without tropical storms, the UK faces serious threats from climate change. By 2070, summers could be as much as 6 degrees hotter and winters 4.5 degrees warmer, making heatwaves far more frequent and severe. Rising sea levels and more intense rainfall are already increasing flood risk across the county, with thousands of homes in Basildon, Harlow, Wickford, and Colchester facing heightened likelihood of flooding from heavy downpours that outdated drain systems cannot cope with. Unless action is taken, the number of properties at risk of flooding could double by 2050. Maldon's salt marshes and Northey island, which normally help protect the Essex coast against destructive wave action whilst providing habitats for birds, are currently under threat from heat fuelled erosion and sea level rise. These local impacts show climate change isn't a distant concept - it's happening on our doorsteps.



Nevertheless, collectively we can make a difference, and reduce the impact of the changes quickly approaching.

As we have already crossed critical climate tipping points, some of the effects of climate change are unavoidable. Yet there is still a lot we can do to mitigate further damage. Switching to renewable energy, reducing plastic waste, and choosing sustainable travel such as public transport or cycling can significantly cut emissions. More funding has also been spent on shielding the coast. In towns such as Jaywick and Canvey Island, major sea defence structures have been installed by the environmental agency, which will help to protect more than 3000 and 6000 homes from rising tides.

Our choices today could decide whether fragile ecosystems and homes are protected or pushed beyond repair.



more, *Art*

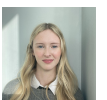
Why can art be controversial? Is it intended to be so? Or is it accidental?

Fundamentally, all art is controversial; the definition of controversial is something which causes debate or disagreement particularly when something is subjective. Art is extremely subjective.

Controversial art has been around for decades and will always be up for debate. Most people will think that art is meant to be conventional, pristine, timeless: this assumption is not exactly correct or incorrect. We are bound by societal constraints of what defines the “norm”. Art is used as the expression or application of human emotion and creativity, meaning; it is not supposed to be one thing with a set appearance.

Controversy in Art

Sylvie Range-Dye
Art

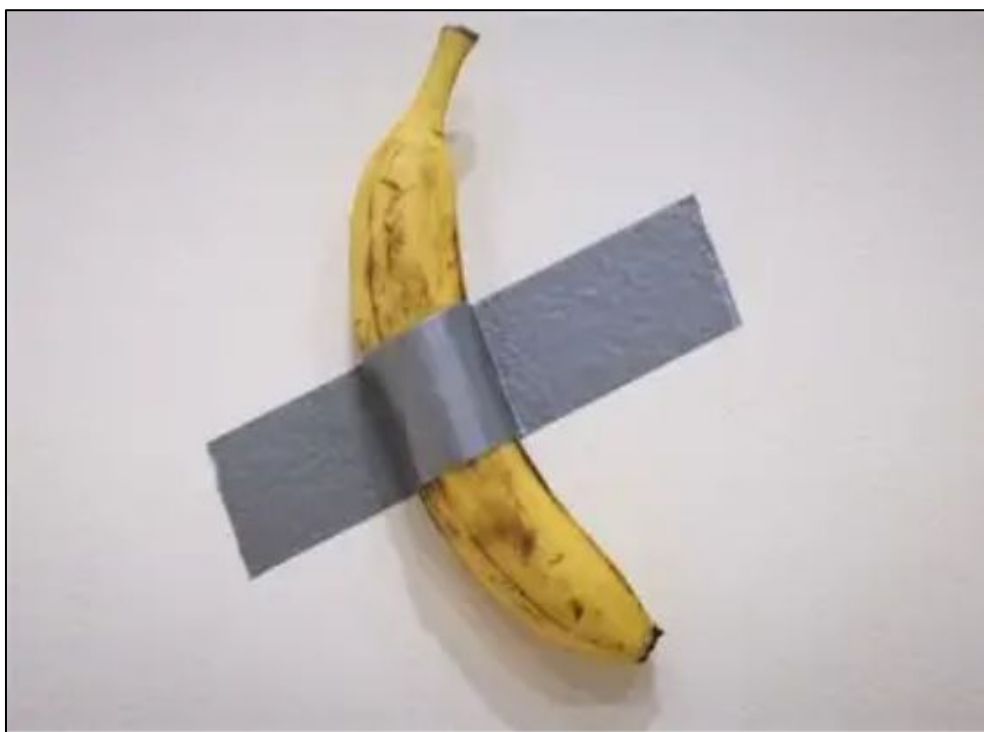


Controversy in art can be used as an artist’s tool to create emotion and feeling in the viewers mind, whether positive or negative. Art does not have to be understood, if an emotion has been created or a question asked, the artist has succeeded. Evidently, controversial art is one of the most talked about forms of art as it catalytically behaves as a form of attention which frequently appears in conversation.

For example, Maurizio Cattelan’s artwork titled “comedian” which consists of a banana being taped on a wall which is currently priced at \$6.2million. Why a banana taped to the wall? How is this art? How is it worth that? Cattelan’s intention to leave viewers with questions successfully worked because as soon as you define something as “art” people will become scrupulous with what is presented.

We can also see this with Yves Klein famous “blue” paintings which he named Klein Blue. Most will look at these paintings and immediately become cynical as how can a painted blue canvas be “art”? Despite the simplicity of the work, once you begin to dive into the context of Klein’s piece, you will learn that he created this shade of blue to represent the infinite and immaterial in his works; this refers to the state without limits or matter. Whilst his work created controversy, it still evokes feeling and emotion.

What people don’t understand is that controversy is the intention. Controversy stimulates sensation and gets you more interested in the context and background of the piece as well as the artist. Controversy spreads awareness of the artist and the art and makes you more intrigued. It is said the worst art is art that makes you feel nothing towards it and gives you no desire to remember it: the most valued works of art move people and resonate deeply or even make you feel angry or confused. Art is not about the actual piece, but rather how it makes you feel.



GLOSSARY:

Pristine – in its original condition; unspoilt

Constraint – a limitation or restriction

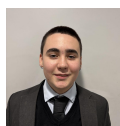
Evokes – bring or recall (a feeling, memory, or image) to the conscious mind

more, *Insight*

Early Life

When Señora Williams was growing up, she lived on a farm with her older sister. She had a horse and two cows, which she loved. She knew she wanted to be a teacher from an early age and, in 1977, studied to be a primary school teacher. For this, she had to do three years of school: 16 subjects the first year, 15 the second, and seven in her final year.

The Side We Don't See: Señora Williams, the Dancing Queen



Elijah Meek
Insight

Moving to England

After moving to England in 2000, Señora Williams was shocked to find that you could get money from the government if you're unemployed or have children, but she decided she wouldn't have anything to do with it because, in her opinion, she chose to have her children so she didn't need help. She wanted to find another Spanish speaker, so went to South Essex College, and it just so happened they needed a Spanish teacher. From there, she then moved to STM, where we all know and love her as our Spanish teacher.

Outside of School

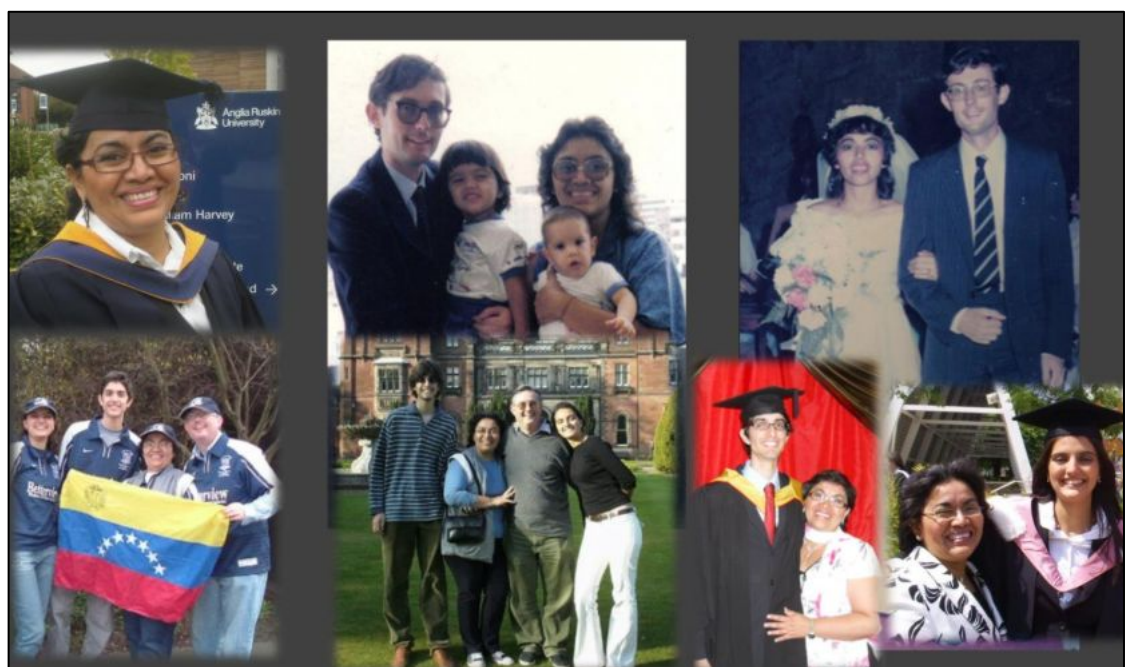
Señora Williams loves dancing, singing, and travelling around Latin America. She does lots of dancing with her friends and dance group and a few years ago, even performed a dance for the school on stage, where she did the local dance of various Latin American countries, such as the Venezuelan Joropo and Colombian Cumbia. Dance is something Señora Williams is extremely passionate about. She also enjoys travelling around Latin America and discovering what these countries have to offer.

Becoming a Teacher

Señora Williams wanted to be a teacher from an early age and constantly had people doubting her ability to do so just because she had autism. They said she was too short-tempered and loud. However, she has proven them wrong. With her goal in mind, she embarked on her journey, first learning how to be a primary school teacher. After this, she went to study law at university, where she obtained her law degree. From there, she moved to England and has worked at both the local community college and our school.

Señora Williams biggest inspiration and advice for students

Believing in what you can do and that what you're saying is of value is one of her biggest tips, alongside always being the best version of yourself and having the spirit to speak your own mind and the truth. These beliefs resonate with what Señora Williams stands for, as over the years she has always stood up for her beliefs and what she believes to be the right thing to do. An example of this is how she has formally protested the Venezuelan government in hopes of making her home a better place. Señora Williams's biggest inspiration is Simón Bolívar. He was known for leading the independence movements to free Venezuela and many other countries from Spanish colonial rule and is often referred to as "The Liberator." He inspires Señora Williams because he stood up for what was right and fought for freedom.



more, *Sport*

“VAMOS!”: Carlos Alcaraz Makes Tennis History Down Under

Spanish tennis star, Carlos Alcaraz, has engraved his name into the history books after winning the 2026 Australian Open in a thrilling final. Alcaraz came from one set down to beat Novak Djokovic three sets to one and lift the trophy.

The 22-year old's win was more than just a grand slam victory, it was the final piece to the career grand slam, meaning he has won every major tennis tournament at least once. Alcaraz is the youngest career grand slam winner in tennis history, and it seems as if there is no limit to his potential with many believing he may end his career as the best to ever do it. The win in Melbourne took Alcaraz's grand slam total to a staggering seven.

To claim his final piece to the puzzle, Alcaraz had to overcome one of tennis' best players in Novak Djokovic.

Djokovic repeatedly proves his doubters wrong, with the 38-year-old still competing amongst the talented youth and even overcoming many. In the semi-final, Djokovic won a hard-fought battle against world number two, Jannik Sinner. Alcaraz applauded Djokovic's brilliance during the post-match interview saying, “beating Jannik in the semi-final, and here in the final... it's unbelievable what he's doing.” Therefore, Djokovic is certainly not passing the baton onto the next generation just yet.

Alcaraz's performance throughout the tournament showed exactly why fans and journalists believe he is

one of the most complete players the sport has ever seen. His agile movement around the court, explosive forehand and relentless mentality were on full display. His ability to perform under immense pressure is truly astonishing. Time and time again, Alcaraz found another level when it mattered most, thrilling fans with his fearless shot-making and lively energy.

The Australian Open has long been known as one of the most physically demanding tournaments on the tennis calendar, as players must hustle through long rallies in intense Melbourne heat. Alcaraz proved he not only possesses world class talent but also the endurance and

mentality needed to dominate at the highest level.

Following the match, Alcaraz was visibly emotional as he celebrated with his team, acknowledging the hard work and sacrifice that had gone into achieving such a historic milestone. In a post-match statement, Alcaraz described his win as “a dream come true,” admitting the Australian Open had been a title he yearned after previous disappointments in Melbourne, since his first appearance at the tournament in 2021.

With his victory, Alcaraz has firmly cemented his place

among tennis' all-time greats, though early in his career. Many fans and experts now believe this could mark the beginning of a new era in tennis, with Alcaraz leading the charge. If his current trajectory continues, the young Spaniard may well go on to redefine what is possible in the sport.



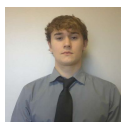
Ruben Curham
Sport



more, *Philosophy*

Buddhism comes from the Buddha, which is Sanskrit for 'Enlightened One' (बुद्ध). The Buddha was a teacher from northern India who spread Buddhism across much of Asia from the 6th century BC to today, reaching the west in the 20th century and being the 4th largest religion in the world. It was spread by word to the first priests who followed Buddha, teaching people how to become enlightened themselves, focusing on the practice rather than the beliefs, these practices are highlighted in The Eightfold Path, which included having Right understanding, intention, speech, action, livelihood, effort, mindfulness, and concentration.

Buddhism



Oliver Abel
Philosophy

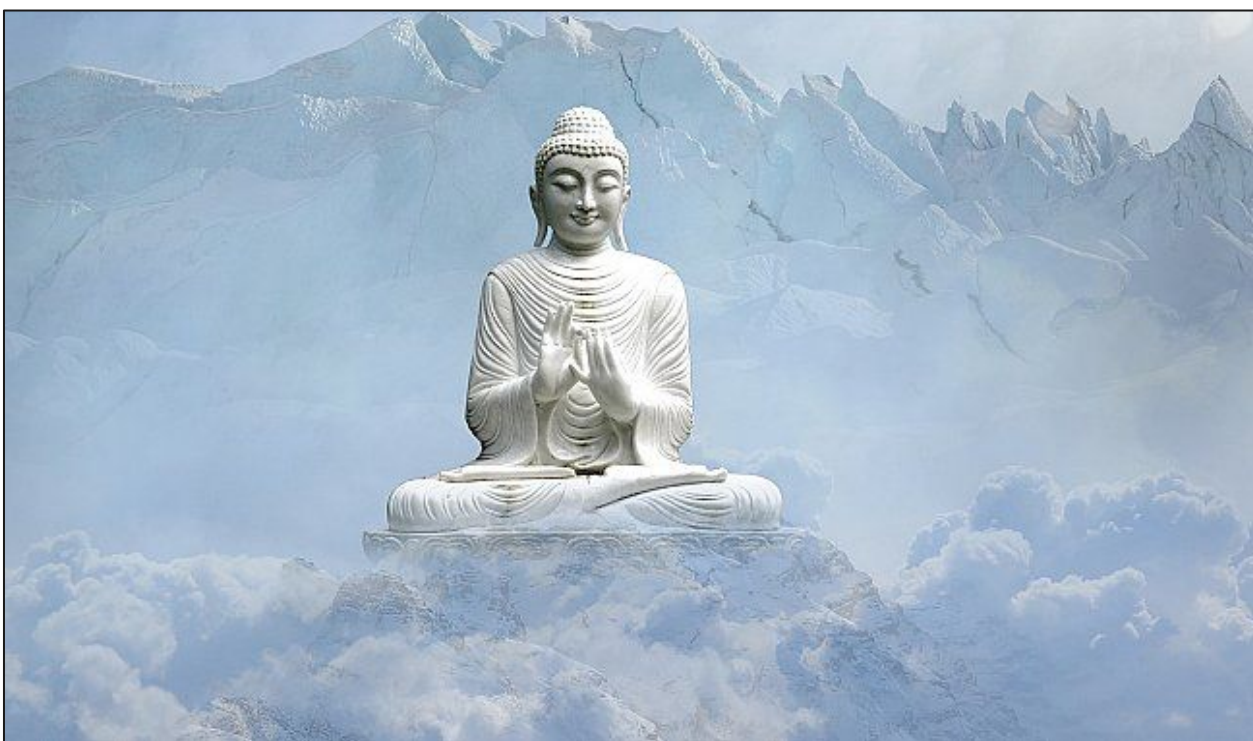
The Buddha based his teaching around the idea that existence is painful, and the way to overcome this is by learning its cause, along with guiding others to enlightenment. The most basic formulation of this path was the Threefold Way of ethics, meditation, and wisdom: practicing ethics in Buddhism is to align yourself with natural wisdom, that actions are skilful or unskilful, rather than right or wrong.

Elaborating on the threefold way, meditation is a practice of thinking deeply to attain wisdom, to remove the ignorance that obscures the truths of life. The most fundamental truths are The Four Noble Truths: the truth of suffering, the truth of the cause of suffering, the truth of the end of suffering, and the truth of the path that frees us from suffering.

Buddhism encourages free, personal exploration rather than a written doctrine, there is much to be learned from it - meditation is useful and is often associated with Buddhism, many Buddhist statues are of meditation, and Christian prayer can also work as a form of meditation.

Karma is another Buddhist idea, the law of cause and effect of actions in this life or the next, good actions get a good result, inspiring more good acts, and bad actions cause an evil result which often leads towards similarly bad acts.

The goal of every Buddhist is to achieve Enlightenment - Nirvana - where a Buddha leaves the cycle of suffering into a state beyond death, like heaven, where they are free from delusion. This person has overcome the cycle of rebirths, having learnt the truths of the world and existence and, in doing so, are enlightened.



GLOSSARY:

Enlightened - having or showing a rational, modern, and well-informed outlook

Karma - the sum of a person's actions in this and previous states of existence, viewed as deciding their fate in future existences

Doctrine - a set of beliefs held and taught by a Church, political party, or other group

more, *Political Science*

The greatest shift in recent political history is the complete divide and shift in party support in the US. The democrats now hold the most power in the urban and developed cities, supporting professionals and businessmen, whereas before, they were the socialist centres for the working man's trade unions in rural areas.

This shift has been defined by the ideology of Trumpism. Where after scattered right-wing opinions needed a central figure, Donald Trump created a 'cult of personality' around his unique persona and opinions on politics. Trumpism is fundamentally populist, it pits the people against the elite in society and plays on the difficult living situation of many working-class Americans with the same kind of appeal as a more socialist party. The 'us vs them' mentality gives people some political purpose and makes them feel a part of a movement

Trumpism: The strange modern world of American right-wing politics



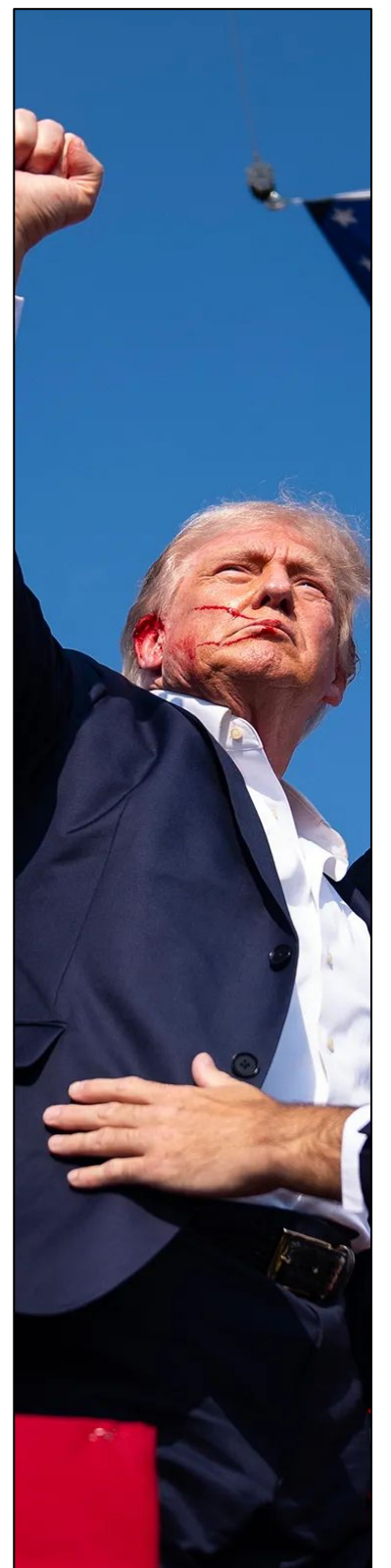
Sebastien McArthur
Political Science

which appeals to many people. He also feels very nationalistic and wants to put 'America First' this relates to his policies on tight immigration, trade tariffs, and aggressive policing, often using federal powers.

This form of ideology has been very successful for him and the Republican party as he has secured two terms of presidency and has held a united government following the 2016 election for two years and until present after the 2024 election. Hence, for 60% of his presidencies, he has held a united government which tends to be very rare in the US. The benefits of

this are the efficiency of passing legislation and the increased trust in government as the people who are on the side of Trump feel that he, and his party, are on their side and making a difference. However, it can be suggested that by having a whole government controlled under one party and ideology lacks a balance of power between both wings of politics and could lead to tyranny. The people are not blind to this and examples such as the 'No Kings' protests in 2025 led to a highlighted distaste in how the government is held seemingly over the hand of one person in seemingly authoritarian manner.

Overall, Trumpism has its benefits and drawbacks, as with any ideology, the policies within it affect the whole world with vast tariffs and a more isolationist approach to policy yet it is a very interesting testament to the shift of right and left wing voter bases in US politics. Furthermore, into 2026, it seems that the right has become more divided over certain topics and the Trumpist notion of being anti-elite/deep state is falling apart as Trump has replaced many career civil servants with political loyalists, strengthening his position but potentially putting less merited individuals in power.



more, Culture

From red carpet protests to political convention performances, in recent years the presence of celebrities in politics and activism has become more visible than ever. With award shows and social media now doubling as sites of protest and tools to boost political messaging, an endorsement can now travel faster & wider than a national campaign advertisement. Do not be misconstrued, celebrity influence in politics is nothing new, but with the digital age enabling anyone to make their voice heard, its scale and immediacy begs the question: how much influence do celebrities really have on public opinion and does it translate into meaningful change?

Celebrities differ from politicians, they don't sit behind desks and they don't attend cabinet meetings, yet whilst their power is not institutional, it remains extremely influential. Celebrities possess a unique cultural capital that gives them power not in form of policy nor decree, but in attention and emotional, intimate connections with their fanbase. This means that when superstars attend the Grammys or the Golden Globes wearing pins attached with political meaning and use their acceptance speeches to urge the public to react to politics in a certain way, it doesn't feel like a campaign, rather an emotional and personal call to action. This shift can make political topics feel more approachable, reaching audiences that may be disengaged from politics and even the youth who in the present-day will probably first encounter politics through pop-culture.

Social Media amplifies this effect. During the 2024 US Presidential Election, several high-profile celebrities emerged in support of both candidates. Kamala Harris received glowing endorsements from mega-pop-stars like Taylor Swift, Beyoncé, Megan Thee-Stallion and even the renowned talkshow host, Oprah Winfrey. These celebrities urged Americans to register to vote and support their candidate. This demonstrates how celebrity voices can rapidly bring attention to political campaigns & messages instead of relying on traditional mainstream media to do so.

Whilst celebrity endorsement can create traction, it doesn't necessarily persuade audiences to align with the message but instead primarily energises already existing supporters around support of the issue. Where some think it is paramount that celebrities use their platforms to create awareness and boost certain campaigns, you'll often hear the term "stay in your lane" when it comes to Celebrities involving themselves in politics. As we discovered in a previous article, some may deem

celebrity activism as insincere (sincerity-signalling) or as an attempt for a celebrity to brand themselves in a certain way or appeal to a certain audience. That's why celebrity endorsements are criticised to the T, who delivers it, their tone, their words, their every facial expression, and everyone will have a different reading (Stuart Hall's Reception Theory).

Even though celebrities may not be able to force policy change or sway enough people in a certain way, their voices can normalise and encourage discussion and conversation around issues typically avoided due to controversiality or fear of being "cancelled". This may not amount to material change, but it will make officials feel as though the topic is unavoidable, forcing recognition of the matter.

The real impact of celebrity politics lies in the framing of importance and visibility, not just electoral outcomes. Celebrity activism reflects larger cultural shifts in how politics is communicated, less through institutions and more through personal connection and personality.

Red Carpets & Campaign Trails: The Politics of Influence

Oliver Cooney
Fashion & Culture



more, *Psychology*

What is psychology?

Psychology is the study of the mind and behavior, aiming to understand, explain, and predict how we think, feel, and act. It covers a range of topics, from brain functions to social interactions, which are investigated through a variety of research methods, including tests and observations, to properly analyze human development. These findings can be applied to improve mental health.

Children's Mental Health Week

Recent psychologist findings for Children's Mental Health Week highlight a significant, 50% increase in youth mental health problems over the last three years, with one in six children now likely to have a mental health condition. Key findings emphasize the need for nurturing, secure relationships (especially post-Covid), the detrimental impact of loneliness on educational outcomes, and the critical importance of early intervention, self-awareness, and engaging in creative, literacy-based, or active play.

Children's Mental Health Week & Sleep

Megan Fiador
Psychology



"Tired minds
don't plan well.
Sleep first, plan later."

WALTER REICH
AUGUST 1948 - 2012

How Sleeping in on Weekends can Positively Impact Mental Health

Psychologist studies show that teenagers who sleep in on the weekends may be boosting their mental health. A new study shows that teenagers who make up for lost weekday sleep had a significantly lower risk of depression. The researchers analysed data from 16- to 24-year-olds who participated in the 2021-23 National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey. Participants reported their typical bedtimes and wake-up times on weekdays and weekends. Using this information, researchers calculated weekend catch-up sleep by comparing the average amount of sleep per weekend with the average amount per weekday. Participants also reported their emotional well-being and were classified as having symptoms of depression if they reported feeling sad or depressed daily. For many teenagers, the natural sleep window falls around 11pm to 8am, which naturally change due to different circadian rhythms as we enter adolescence. This schedule often clashes with early school start times.

The Benefits of Sleep

Sleep repairs the body, strengthens the immune system, regulates hormones, and consolidates memories. Proper sleep improves cognitive function, emotional stability, athletic performance, and reduces risks of chronic diseases like obesity, diabetes, and heart disease.

Sleep is vital for cognitive processes, including concentration, learning, and productivity. It aids in memory consolidation and processing, allowing the brain to store new information.

- **Emotional Regulation:** Quality sleep reduces stress levels and aids in emotional processing, fostering resilience and preventing anxiety or depression.
- **Disease Prevention:** Chronic lack of sleep is linked to serious conditions, including cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, and dementia.
- **Performance & Safety:** Sufficient rest improves physical coordination, reaction times, and athletic performance.

Recommendations for Healthy Sleep

- **Consistent Routine:** Establish a regular, calming bedtime and wake-up time, including on weekends.
- **Environment:** Maintain a cool, dark, and quiet bedroom.
- **Screen Time Management:** Avoid screens and blue light for at least an hour before bed.
- **Physical Activity:** Regular exercise during the day promotes better sleep quality.

more, *Music*

The music department, noise forever drifting out the corners of the door, is one of the busiest areas of the school. From early-morning rehearsal rooms to the sound of singing from Friday afternoon's choir practise, there's always something happening in the music room. With so many clubs running each week, the department has become a space where anyone can get involved, whether you are just starting your musical journey as a beginner or are an experienced musician.

Here's a closer look at what's on offer throughout the week.

Before school, rehearsal rooms are available for individuals or groups to use for practise. It's a great space to use for practising your instrument, whether practising ready for your instrumental lesson, or teaching yourself something. Additionally, groups of students may come together and use the practise rooms for group rehearsal, forming themselves into a band or ensemble. If you're interested, please speak to Mr. Dixon when entering the music room to see if any practise rooms are available.

Lunch time is when there is the most going on inside the music room. On Tuesday lunchtime, Liturgy Band is centre stage. This is the band that supports the Catholic life of the school. This band leads worship, playing weekly at Mass. This band would be ideal to join for skilled, confident students who enjoy playing for an audience. If you'd like to find out more information, speak to Mr. Dixon to arrange an audition to join the band.

On Wednesday lunchtimes, the junior rock band is rocking the school down. This is a fun and friendly band aimed at students wanting to start playing as part of a group. Come along, pick up an instrument, and jam along!

Folk Band is held on a Thursday, and you can expect a more acoustic-style group, with traditional as well as new folk songs being learnt and played together. Run by Mrs. Donoghue, it's not one to miss if you're up for some fun - expect instrumental solos! It's a great option for anyone to go and build confidence when playing.

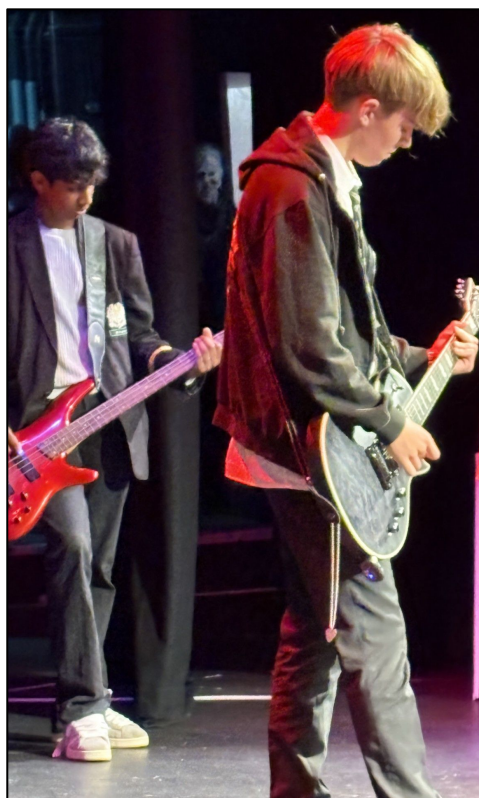
It doesn't stop there, afterschool on a Thursday, the senior rock band come together for band practise. Suited for musicians with experience, they work on more advanced pieces.

The choir meets every Friday and plays a key role in the department. As well as preparing their own pieces, they also support other groups, especially the Liturgy Band during school Masses and liturgical events.

Performance Spotlight: Southend Makes Music

This week, students from the choir and rock band took to the stage at the Palace Theatre as part of the annual Southend Makes Music showcase. It was a brilliant opportunity for the department to perform outside of school and represent us in front of a larger audience on stage. Both groups performed extremely well, with each doing a performance on their own and then a joint performance. It was a great night, and there was a buzz felt in the air as the group were applauded, the outcome of many lunchtimes worth of rehearsals.

There's always something going on in the music department, and new faces are always welcome. Why not come along to the music room to see what it's all about for yourself?



A Closer Look at Our School's Music Community



Oliver Mangion
Music

more,
Music



more, *Insight*

Why is Mental Health week important to Students?

Mental health week raises awareness of common mental health challenges students face. It encourages people to thinking about it more and causes more people to recognise if their peers may be struggling with their mental health. It is also important as it damages students' ability to learn, as they may struggle with concentration in lesson or even be too anxious to come into school. This year's theme of mental health week is "This is My Place", which helps children feel they belong, as well as raising further awareness of local services available to children

Children's Mental Health Week: with Mrs Walford & Mrs McCarthur



Jacob Morgan
Politics & Insight

more, *Insight*

What are some common mental health challenges students face that don't get talked about enough?

Exam stress and anxiety is frequently forgotten because it is expected during exam season a certain level of stress, as well as resilience.

However, there is a line that is frequently crossed where exam season damages students' everyday lives, including their eating and sleeping habits. This means that the expectation of resilience from students is much more difficult to meet and is too much for many students.

How can schools create a more supportive environment for students' mental health year-round, not just this week?

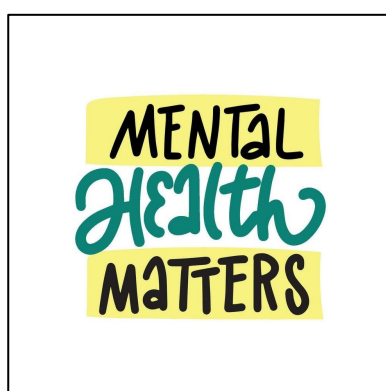
A group of wellbeing leaders, from years 7-13, meet every two weeks to run projects yearly, in a drip-feed method. This can be seen with anti-bullying week, or a project can be organised if a lot of students express similar concerns, showing the connection of wellbeing leaders to fellow students through active discussion. The main aim of the team of wellbeing leaders is to create a safe and supportive environment for students throughout the school, where active discussion can take place.

What advice would you give to a student who is struggling but unsure about asking for help?

Speak with the wellbeing leaders, as many students would also suggest from their own experience. Always remember that you're not alone too and that many options are available, both within the school and at a local level, all of which are non-judgemental.

How can students support their friends' mental health in small, everyday ways?

The best advice is to be kind generally, as small acts of kindness can go a long way, like holding the door open for someone or saying good morning to them, it can have a big impact. Another key skill is to listen and learn, you can recognise small subtle changes in your friends' behaviour, and this could help on a huge scale. So, in summary, be the best person you can be for your friends.



See more mental health
week content on pages
18 & 10!