



Castle Mead Christmas Newsletter 2024

Message from the Principal

Dear families,

As we head into the Christmas break, it brings me great joy to reflect on the past term and see captured in this newsletter the many wonderful moments we have shared together as a school. I couldn't be prouder of our scholars and staff for their kindness, hard work, and many, many

opportunities they have taken to build their character. I am ending my first term as Principal feeling incredibly grateful for the special community we have. A highlight for me was seeing our talented dancers perform in front of the entire school on Culture Day; the sense of pride and belonging as over a thousand scholars lined the dining room and the corridors, cheering and celebrating, was palpable! It was a very special thing to see.

An enormous and heartfelt thank you to all of our families for your relentless support. It has been wonderful to see so many of you at events such as Curry Night, Christmas Craft Workshop and Culture Day. It was also fantastic to see so many of our families at our first ever Family Forum, sharing their feedback with us. We value this so greatly, so thank you.

I hope you all have a restful break over the festive period, and a very Merry Christmas to those celebrating. We look forward to seeing you all in 2025.

Warm wishes,

Miss French

Principal



Attendance and Merits

Attendance

Congratulations to Year 10, for the best overall attendance rates this term!

More specific congratulations to the following form groups for the best attendance rates:

- **9 Lincoln** - 100%
- **11 Monmouth** - 96.43%
- **7 Monmouth** - 96.43%
- **10 Durham** - 94.83%
- **8 Lincoln** - 93.33%

Merits

Congratulations to Year 7, for the most amount of merits received this term!

- **Year 7** - 35714
- **Year 9** - 33560
- **Year 8** - 25285
- **Year 10** - 16658
- **Year 11** - 9896

Recommended Reads

Recommended Reads



Molly hates Christmas. And it's not even her fault. Her mum and dad had the biggest ever Christmas single when she was a child, complete with video evidence of Molly in a hideous Christmas costume joyfully singing the mortifying last line that EVERYBODY knows. Molly has spent her life trying to play it down but then the song is used in the hottest new Christmas film. It's only November and it's already EVERYWHERE. And when Molly meets a cute guy at the premier, how can she stop him from working out who she is?



It's the night before Hogswatch. And it's too quiet. Superstition makes things work in the Discworld and undermining it can have consequences. It's just not right to find Death creeping down chimneys and trying to say 'Ho Ho Ho...' It's the last night of the year, the time is turning, and if Susan, gothic governess and Death's granddaughter (sort of), doesn't sort everything out by morning, there won't be a morning. Ever again...



A year has passed since a boy named William Trundle had an incredible adventure with the most extraordinary dinosaur: the Christmasaurus. Now, William is about to be swept back to the North Pole, and meet the icy, mysterious and magical Winter Witch, whose power to control time allows Santa to travel all around the world on Christmas Eve. And when William learns that the fate of Christmas hangs in the balance, he and the Christmasaurus must risk everything to save it . . .

Remembrance Day



In solemn remembrance, our entire school community gathered as one to honor and pay our respects to fallen soldiers on Remembrance Day.

The poignant notes of the last post echoed through the outside MUGA area as scholars and staff stood in silence, a powerful tribute to those who sacrificed for our freedom.

It was truly moving to witness the unity and respect demonstrated by our school community during this solemn occasion. The collective silence spoke volumes about the gratitude we hold for those who served and the sacrifices made for our shared values.

Assemblies also took place for each group to honor the memory of those who gave their all for a better future.

School Visits

This term we have had many enriching experiences through partnerships, collaborations and visits with fellow schools, locally and nationally. Our staff have had the opportunity to visit and exchange ideas with colleagues from other educational institutions, fostering a culture of shared learning.

In the last few weeks, we hosted teachers from other secondary schools for a Sharing Practice visit, talking about our Culture of Critique and our open doors ethos. We also hosted an Inspiring Leaders conference for maths teachers, which went very well despite an unexpected fire alarm in the first few minutes!

As a school, we always try to be outward facing, and are always pleased to be able to show off the work of our scholars and staff. We welcome these collaborative efforts which gives us the opportunity to showcase all of the wonderful things we do at CMA.

The Mead Community Christmas Hug for Open Hands

The year, The Mead Educational Trust launched The Mead Christmas Community Hug in partnership with Open Hands Leicester. Between Monday 2 December and Friday 6 December, schools in the Trust were asked to donate what they could from a given list of items. These were all collected together and given out as part of Open Hands' Christmas Treat Collection Project

Castle Mead scholars and staff donated a huge amount that was gratefully collected by Open Hands volunteers on Friday 6 December. We are so proud of our school community coming together to help others in our local area.

Thank you to all everyone who donated.



Woodgate Community Foodbank Donations

Our extremely generous scholars and families also donated to our local Woodgate Community Food Bank in December.

The Castle Mead donations were organised by Mr Gardner and dropped off on the final Thursday of term.

Here is our very own Mr Gardner and Mr Waters after delivering a car full of food donations, all thanks to the incredible generosity of Castle Mead Academy's friends and family.



Christmas Family Mince Pie and Craft Morning

Thank you to everyone who attended our Family Mince Pie and Craft Morning!

It was heartwarming to see families come together to celebrate the festive season.

The atmosphere was filled with joy, creativity, and the warmth of shared moments.

Thank you to each and every one of you who contributed to making this event a success. Your enthusiasm and participation added a special touch to our school community.





Culture Day

What a fantastic day we had at Castle Mead Academy for Culture Day on Friday, 13th December!

This long-standing tradition is cherished by many of our scholars, celebrating cultural diversity and our collective heritage under this year's theme: **"Our Stories, Our Strengths."** The event captivated our school community, creating lasting memories for all.

The day began with inspiring assemblies where scholars shared their unique stories and traditions.

"It felt amazing to share my family's story with everyone," said one Year 9 scholar.

The energy soared as **Miss Appleby** led vibrant and energetic dance performances featuring scholars from across all year groups. The captivating sounds and beats of the music brought the crowd to life.

"Watching my friends dance was so inspiring; it made me want to join in!" shared a Year 7 scholar.

During lunchtime, the excitement continued with an exhilarating fashion show, where scholars showcased clothing from around the world. The runway began in Cameroon and journeyed through Europe, Nigeria, Jamaica, and Sri Lanka before making the final stop in Poland. Hosted by **Miss Woods** and **Miss Bogdanska**, the fashion show was enriched with fascinating facts about each country, adding depth to the celebration of culture and identity. A big thank you to Miss McLaughlin for researching and collecting these facts! At the same time, **Miss Szemis** and **Miss Ponce** provided seamless support, encouraging scholars down the runway and celebrating their style with pride and enthusiasm.

Our families were also treated to a heartwarming drama performance directed by **Miss Panesar**. Our talented scholars told a beautiful story about the meaning of Christmas, perfectly aligning with our theme. It was a real joy to welcome parents into CMA so that they could join us in the day's festivities.

The celebration continued with the International Marketplace, where everyone connected and celebrated together. Scholars and families enjoyed activities such as henna art, hair braiding, face painting, exploring family histories, and savouring delicious food from around the world.

A huge thank you to everyone involved in organising this incredible day. So many of our scholars were bursting with pride at the opportunity to share and celebrate their heritage, and it wouldn't be such a meaningful day for so many of our scholars without the support of all our staff community. It was truly a whole-school effort, and a day filled with fun, learning, and community spirit, celebrating the rich diversity that makes Castle Mead Academy so special.

Best Wishes,

Miss Paw and Mr Biggs









Music Update



On Monday 9th December, we took a number of scholars to take part in the TMET concert along with many primary and secondary schools in the trust. The Castle Choir, along with The Brook Mead Choir joined forces to perform a wonderful piece in the iconic building of St James the Greater in Leicester. Stargazing may not have been the traditional Christmas song that everyone expected, but their powerful rendition of it created an upbeat and joyous atmosphere for everyone listening. A huge well done to those scholars who took part! We look forward to the next concert.

Music Scholarship

We now have a few available places on our Music Scholarship for our year 7 cohort. If your child would like to take part in weekly instrumental lessons, please can you email Mrs Baxter with your child's name and the instrument they would like to play. You should receive an email confirmation once your child has secured a place

sbaxter@castle-tmet.uk

We are incredibly proud of our scholars at Castle Mead Academy, and we look forward to watching the growth of our musical events and co-curricular provision as the academic year progresses.

Citizenship - Year 11 Mock Trial

On Thursday 5th and Friday 6th of December, as part of their Citizenship education, Year 11 had a mock trial event run by Leicester and Leicestershire magistrate's voluntary services.

During this event two magistrates from Leicester ran a trial using 9 actors from Year 11 who had volunteered to take part in the roles. This event involved them seeing their scripts the morning of the event, and then playing the parts of usher, lawyers, legal advisor, witnesses, magistrates and a defendant in front of their year group. The student magistrates then joined the real magistrate to decide if the defendant was guilty. During this time, they learned about the court system and how the courts and justice system as a whole work together. This event gave them the chance to see how a trial would play out. The event then culminated in a sentencing activity, where scholars could look at different scenarios and apply the sentencing guidelines that would be used in a real trial.

Scholars were exemplary in their conduct, and fully immersed themselves in the experience. We hope to be able to continue the mock trial event in future years.

Scholar Artwork at New Walk Museum

We've had a busy term in the Art department where scholars have been learning all about the formal elements, Cubism and Portraiture. Leicester Lending Services were also kind enough to let us borrow a real Picasso painting to take inspiration from!

Have a restful and creative break!

The Open: The People's Exhibition

The Open is an annual exhibition, which allows East Midlands residents from any background and ability an opportunity to enter their artwork for display. If successful, residents can exhibit their work at Leicester Museum & Art Gallery. The Open celebrates the creative talent of Leicester and the East Midlands and the people who make it.

A number of scholars from Castle Mead Academy have been successful in their submissions to the competition this year so make sure to head over to New Walk Museum to see the show!

14th December 2024 – 31st January 2025
New Walk Museum, 53 New Walk, Leicester LE1 7EA





Careers Update



The careers curriculum

KS3 scholars are coming to the end of their learning within their first careers modules this year. They have been discovering how everything they are learning in school now is preparing them for the wide range of future pathways and careers available to them, as well as exploring career journeys and career aspirations.

CAREERS JOURNEY KS3 AND KS4



It's been lovely to hear from our first CMA leavers about how they are getting on at college and in their apprenticeships! We have bumped into a few scholars when attending meetings and they have been surprised but delighted to see us and share how they are settling in. In school, we are approaching this year's PS16 application deadline with all year 11 scholars busy finalising their college applications!



As you will all be aware, all young people are now expected to stay in some form of education or training until the age of 18. Year 11 scholars have been working through the PS16 application process, with their tutor group, during dedicated period 7 lessons on a Thursday afternoon. As we approach the application deadline, we'd like to take this opportunity to thank families for supporting scholars throughout the process. It has been heartwarming and a real privilege to read through personal statements that scholars have written, detailing their strengths, skills, and achievements as well as aspirations of the future. We will be highlighting apprenticeship opportunities and vacancies in the spring and supporting any scholars who are also interested in applying for an apprenticeship.

Volunteers Needed! Mock Interview Day - Friday 31 January 2025

We are looking for volunteers to support this important event and provide our year 11 scholars with invaluable interview practice in preparation for their next steps.

- **Castle Mead Academy Year 11 Mock Interview Day**
- **Friday 31 January**
- **8.30am-1.30pm (however this may be shorter with lots of volunteers taking part)**
- As a volunteer you will have a short slot to interview scholars on a 1:1 basis before giving them feedback about their interview. *You do not need to have experience of interviewing to volunteer.*
- Refreshments and opportunities to network with other volunteers will be provided throughout the day.

Sign up now: <https://forms.office.com/e/Qn6zh7nnyb> or email careers@castle-tmet.uk

Volunteers Needed



Could you help?

Volunteer to interview scholars, supporting them to prepare for future college or employment interviews.



Mock Interview Day

Friday 31 January

8.30am-1.30pm

Sign up now:
<https://forms.office.com/e/Qn6zh7nnyb>
 careers@castle-tmet.uk



Inclusion

A wide array of interventions have been held this term in Inclusion, including:

- Crossing the Midline
- Growth Mindset
- Social Stories
- Telling the Time
- Understanding Anxiety
- Literacy Gold
- Creative SEMH sessions
- Zones of Regulation
- Talkabout

- Post-16 help sessions
- Switch On – Reading
- Science catch up sessions
- Handwriting
- Hidden Chimp
- Lego
- Biofeedback
- Understanding my diagnosis – Autism

... And many, many check-ins!

Safeguarding

Keeping Your Children Safe Over the Christmas Holidays: A Parent's Guide to Online and Offline Safety

As the festive season approaches, families are gearing up for holiday fun, gift exchanges, and quality time together. However, with the holiday break often involving more screen time and social gatherings, it's important for parents to be extra vigilant when it comes to the safety and well-being of their children. Below, we share helpful tips to ensure your children stay safe this Christmas, both online and offline.

1. Managing Online Safety: Setting Boundaries

While Christmas brings many joyful moments, it also means more time spent online. From social media to online gaming, kids are more likely to engage with digital platforms during the holidays. It's essential to ensure that they are safe while doing so.

- **Set Clear Limits on Screen Time:** It's easy for kids to get swept up in the excitement of online activities. Make sure to set clear rules about how much time they can spend online each day and encourage breaks to engage in other offline activities.
- **Monitor Online Interactions:** If your child uses social media or online gaming platforms, keep track of their interactions. Teach them not to share personal information, such as their location, school name, or family details. Also, remind them to be cautious when interacting with strangers online, and ensure their profiles are set to private.

- **Enable Parental Controls:** Many devices and platforms offer built-in parental controls that allow you to filter content and restrict access to inappropriate material. Take the time to explore these options on platforms like YouTube, Instagram, or gaming consoles.
- **Discuss Cyberbullying:** Talk to your child about the potential for cyberbullying during the holidays when children may spend more time online. Encourage open communication and let them know that they should come to you if they feel uncomfortable or encounter bullying.

2. Keeping Track of Gifts and Devices

Many families exchange gifts during the holidays, and children often receive new electronics like phones, tablets, or gaming consoles. While these gifts bring joy, they also pose safety risks if not properly managed.

- **Know the Technology Your Child is Using:** Be aware of what devices your child has received, and ensure they are set up with appropriate security measures, such as passcodes, encryption, and app restrictions.
- **Teach Your Child to Protect Their Devices:** Instruct your child not to share passwords, and encourage them to use strong, unique passwords for their accounts. Show them how to use security features, such as two-factor authentication, to keep their devices and personal information safe.

3. Know Where to Report Concerns

If at any point you feel concerned about your child's safety or encounter any issues online or offline, it's important to know where to turn for help.

CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre)

- **What it does:** CEOP is a UK government organization that works to protect children from online abuse. It provides a service where parents, children, and professionals can report online abuse, grooming, or any concerns related to sexual exploitation. **How to report:** Parents can visit the CEOP website and report any concerns directly through the "Click CEOP" button.

Website: www.ceop.police.uk

Internet Watch Foundation (IWF)

- **What it does:** The IWF works to remove harmful and illegal online content, including child sexual abuse material. **How to report:** If parents or guardians come across any child sexual abuse images or videos online, they can report them to IWF anonymously.

Website: www.iwf.org.uk

- **For Online Safety Issues:** If you discover inappropriate or concerning behaviour online (such as cyberbullying, online grooming, or inappropriate content), you can report it directly to the platform. Many social media sites, gaming platforms, and websites have reporting tools available. Additionally, the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) offers resources and a helpline (0808 800 5000) for reporting concerns about children's safety.
- **For Child Protection Concerns:** If you suspect any form of abuse, neglect, or feel that your child's safety is at risk, do not hesitate to contact local authorities. In the UK, you can reach out to your local child protection services or call the Childline helpline (0800 1111) for confidential support.
- **For General Emergency Situations:** If you encounter an emergency, always call emergency services (999) to ensure immediate help.

4. Creating an Open and Safe Environment

Above all, the holiday season should be a time of happiness and security for your child. Keep the lines of communication open, encourage your child to share their feelings and experiences, and reassure them that they are always safe when they are with you.

By staying proactive about both online and offline safety, and by keeping a watchful eye on your child's well-being, you can help them enjoy a fun, safe, and memorable holiday season.

Wishing you and your family a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Support for Families

Now more than ever, the rising cost of living is affecting many families across the UK.

As such, we wanted to signpost families to some helpful links and website.

Leicester City Council, Community Support Grant

The community support grant scheme (CSG) is available to support people experiencing financial hardship.

Applicants will need to demonstrate that they are in financial hardship brought about by a one-off and sudden misfortune.

<https://www.leicester.gov.uk/your-community/benefits-and-support/community-support-grant/>

Eyres Monsell Club for Young People.

There is a host of support available from an affordable community pantry to a food bank. Services are accessible widely and not just for residents of Eyres Monsell.

[EMCYP – Building A Brighter Future \(eyresmonsellcyp.co.uk\)](http://eyresmonsellcyp.co.uk)

BetterOff Leicester

BetterOff Leicester is a service showing Leicester residents what benefits they are entitled to, and can help them to apply online.

[BetterOff Leicester](#)

Other useful links

[Find help with cost of living | Leicestershire County Council](#)

[Cost of living easy read \(leicester.gov.uk\)](http://leicester.gov.uk)

[Grants and allowances \(leicester.gov.uk\)](http://leicester.gov.uk)

[Cost of living support - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

Dates for Your Diary



School reopens for scholars after the Christmas and New Year Holiday on Tuesday 7th January 2025

- **Half Term Break** - Monday 17th February - Friday 21st February 2025
- **Easter Break** - Monday 14th April - Friday 25th April 2025
- **Half Term Break** - Monday 26th May - Friday 30th May 2025
- **Summer holidays commence** - Monday 14th July 2025

All term dates can be found on the Castle Mead Academy website [here](#).

Parents' Evenings

Year 9 Options Evening - Thursday 23 January

Year 8 Parents' Evening - Thursday 13 February and Tuesday 25 February

Year 10 Parents' Evenings - Thursday 13 March and Tuesday 18 March

Year 11 Parents' Evenings - Thursday 3 April and Tuesday 8 April

Year 9 Parents' Evening - Thursday 8 May and Tuesday 13 May



Contact Details

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