

THE SPUR



SPRING TERM 2026

[Raynes Park High School and Sixth Form](#)



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SHEEN MEET: Students got the chance to meet top film actor Michael Sheen on the opening night of his new play. Year 10, 12 and 13 drama students attended the star-studded bash at the Rose Theatre. Our Town is about life, love and community in a quiet little town, and is a reworking of a play by American Thornton Wilder.

'Much to celebrate'

Headteacher Miss Taylor reflects on the highlights of the school term

The end of every term provides a perfect opportunity for us to celebrate the incredible achievements of all those at Raynes Park High School and it remains such a privilege to share with you the variety of events our students have taken part in since January.

There is always so much to celebrate, and I would like to acknowledge that none of this is possible without the engagement of your children, who remain such a credit to our families and the school.

Attendance remains a key focus, both at RPHS and on a national level, and thanks to the efforts of students and our Attendance Team, attendance has remained in line with national averages throughout the term. We have also seen punctuality to school continue to improve despite the great many challenges posed by public transport

and road works in the local area. We have also continued to prioritise student wellbeing, as we have done for a number of years, and this year we have decided to do the PASS Survey in the Summer Term as we appreciate that school poses increasing challenges for students as the academic year progresses.

We have a dedicated Inclusion Team, who meet each week to identify students who need additional support as we are aware that success at school is measured by meeting academic expectations, and we appreciate the anxiety this causes for many of our students.

We are also now preparing for the changes outlined in the recent White Paper 'Every Child Achieving and Thriving' and I have been fortunate enough to hear of these

plans first hand from the Secretary of State for Education at a recent conference in Liverpool.

Our Parent/Carer Evenings have remained online using SchoolCloud and there has been an opportunity for all families to meet with subject staff this term, with attendance of over 80%.

However, some families have found it more useful to have a 'go to' member of staff and with this in mind, we will be reviewing how we communicate progress with families at each key stage and will be asking for your views next term in our quest for continuous improvement.

Monday 2nd March was National Offer Day when Year 6 received information about the secondary school they had been allocated. We were delighted to have increased our first preferences this year



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'This is actually what happened'

Sixth Form students took a moving educational visit to World War II concentration camp Auschwitz.

A-level history students Enea and Christina learned more about the history of the Holocaust during the trip to Poland. They toured the camp learning about the life of the

prisoners, and later took part in an online seminar.

Year 12 Enea said: "You can study the Holocaust in the classroom but nothing prepares for seeing the camps in person. The context, the way people lived. It completely changed how I thought



about the Holocaust. It's crazy, this is actually what happened."

Christina said: "It was a surreal experience. It was very moving to be at a place which was a central point in our recent history."

'I am so very grateful to staff'

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and offer 200 places for September; with more than 160 families already accepted at RPHS. We are very much looking forward to welcoming the Year 6 students to our transition events next term.

We end the term with Year 11 attending a Mock Results Assembly while Years 7-10 will attend a School Assembly where we will be celebrating the achievements of year groups, Houses and individual students; we are also looking forward to announcing the Jack Petchey winners, which is particularly special as these winners are recognised by their peers. As always, I will be delighted to announce the Headteacher Awards for outstanding contribution to the school this term and congratulations go to the following students:

- Labeena A: Year 7
- Alicia H: Year 8
- David H: Year 9
- Maame F: Year 10
- Josh B: Year 11

We will also be saying farewell to Ms Yusuf and Mr Saitch who have both made a tremendous contribution to the school and we wish them well in their future endeavours.

As usual, we will be running an intervention programme for our exam year groups throughout the Easter holiday. I am always so very grateful to staff for leading these sessions and I know the students will find these helpful. I would also like to wish Year 11 and 13 students the very best of luck as they prepare for their public examinations that start in May.

Finally, my thanks go to the

Trust: 'We could do so much more'

**Chair of the RPHS Charitable Trust
Margaret Tulloch on seeking trustees
and how donations are put to good use**



The aim of RPHS Charitable Trust is to provide funding for projects and resources for the school and its students.

It started in 1998. The Trustees include former students, current and former Governors, and a previous Headteacher. We would be pleased to have more parents as Trustees.

Recently, we provided funds to support students who are doing the Duke of Edinburgh award and we bought a hoe for the school garden club.

We could do so much more with more donations. If you can, please sign up to Easyfundraising. It is amazing how many companies are involved. When you buy something online a small amount comes to the Trust. It does not cost you anything.

Recently, I bought some seeds and the seed company was an Easyfundraising company. A donation reminder comes up on the screen when you go to the company online and you

just have to click to send money to the Trust.

Go to **easyfundraising.org.uk/support-a-good-cause** and put in Raynes Park High School Charitable Trust. If you download their donation reminder it will tell you when you go to a company website to buy if they are part of easyfundraising.

If you would like more information about us, do get in touch with me at charitabletrust@raynespark.merton.sch.uk.

JOIN THE GIVEAWAY: You can help increase Raynes Park High School Charitable Trust's entries into Easyfundraising's giveaway to win a £250 donation – every new supporter who joins counts as an entry. Sign up before midnight on 30 March, it'll only take two minutes: [join. easyfundraising.org.uk/raynesparkhs/q2m06u/s2s/J1YccjD6/SE867/facebook](https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/raynesparkhs/q2m06u/s2s/J1YccjD6/SE867/facebook).

teaching staff, the support staff and the Governing Body for their ongoing commitment to RPHS, and to all of our

families for your support of the school.

Wishing you and your families a restful Easter break.



Students visited Craven Cottage to pitch their idea

Mentoring help for mental health

GIRLS' mental health was the topic of a social action project for the Premier League Inspires mentoring programme. They came up with a targeted intervention for female students to help with wellbeing.

They pitched their idea in a Dragons' Den-style format to a panel of judges at Fulham's ground Craven Cottage.

Their idea was selected for a place in the finals to be held at Everton's new stadium.

Year 9 student Bianca said: "I think everyone just feels relieved when they have a space to talk about their feelings.

Alexis said: "I loved working

together as a group of girls to come up with an idea that would make a real difference to children's lives.

Lorina said: "It is great that we can talk about mental health because it is a subject a lot of people need support with.

Sky said: "Mental health is a topic I am passionate about. It is great our idea might help girls my age."

Lilly said: "I like to be able to help others. There are so many topics involving mental health.

Lettie said: "The girls can trust us that we will be able to listen to them and help them with any issues they may have."



AT THE PALACE: Year 11 students got a private viewing of the Royal Families' art collection during a trip to Buckingham Palace. They visited the King's Gallery learning how pieces entered the collection over many centuries. They were asked to consider the complex histories around the acquisition including ethical questions around ownership. They were also tasked with working in groups to study a specific artwork (pictured above).

BARD'S TALE: Students immersed themselves in *The Bard* during a Shakespeare's Globe workshop. They also got to see a production of *Romeo and Juliet* on a recreation of the stage where it would have been performed.

PROBLEM SOLVERS: Year 5 pupils from Aragon Primary School were tasked with building structures capable of withstanding the elements to mark STEM Week. They joined our design and technology class to problem solve and work in team to test the durability of their designs. In science, students explored how boats float. They created flotation devices to see which designs supported the greatest mass.

Kick-off for Women's Day events

OUR girls marked International Women's Day by taking part in workshops and football activities in partnership with Fulham Football Club.

Year 8 and 9 students took part in a day of football at the Premier League sides' training ground.

While there they saw former pupil Phoenix receive a community champion award from players Tom Cairney and Oliver Dale.

They also took part in a workshop focused on women in sport, empowerment, and equality.

Meanwhile, Year 7 students took part in a football workshop delivered by our own Football and



Education Sixth Form students

Finally there was a question-and-answer session with women from a range of sectors including The Metropolitan Police, The King's Trust and Fulham FC Women.

BUDDING ACTORS: Students left the stage with applause ringing in their ears after performing a modern take on *Hamlet*. Prior to the show they had taken part in an acting workshop run by The Rose Theatre in Kingston. They rehearsed ahead of a half-an-hour performance at the Exchange Theatre in Twickenham.

BATTLE READY: Our after-school dance club Step Around Town is preparing for a big show. They have been rehearsing moves they will later perform at the Royal Academy of Dance. Their performance is inspired by the Army and features army costumes and battle scene.

Dutch delights

SIXTH FORMERS spent three nights exploring Amsterdam.

They took a tour down the canal, saw Anne Frank's House and saw Rembrandt at the Rijksmuseum. They also did a spot of shopping and dined at the Hard Rock Café.

Year 13 student Alysha said: "Anne Frank's House was like stepping back in time. I knew about it but seeing it in person is another thing altogether. Amsterdam is so beautiful with all the canals, trams and bicycles but it is also incredibly busy."

Other highlights included a tour of the Ajax stadium (*pictured below*) and the A'Dam Lookout where students got the chance to swing over the edge at a height of 100m.



Thinking about the future at fair

About 700 students got the chance to learn about their education and career pathways at our annual Careers and Aspirations Fair.

Year 10, 11, 12 students talked to representatives from colleges, apprenticeship providers and universities. Invited Year 9 students also attended. Employers with a stand at the fair included the RHS Royal Horticultural society, the Daily Express and Octopus Energy. They shared tips on education and career pathways on their post-16 and 18 options.

We also welcomed back a number of

former students who were representing their new employers.

Sixth Form Manager Mrs Liste said: "The aim of the fair is to encourage students to explore and research the many different pathways available to them. It supports students at different stages of their educational journey. For Years 9 and 10, it offers inspiration for future possibilities, for Year 11 it helps them consider their Sixth Form options. For Years 12 and 13, it supports important decisions about the next step – university, an apprenticeship or entering employment."

Sport report

Our students joined local MP Siobhain McDonagh for the launch of Merton Council's Borough of Sport report.

They were invited to join a panel where they discussed the sporting activities they have taken part in over the past three years.

This includes running sporting events and activities for primary school students as part of their sports leader qualification.

Year 12 Alessandro said: "It was a really interesting event, I got the opportunity to speak at the event and was part of a panel talk about sport in the borough. I told them that being a part of this has been life changing for me. It makes me feel proud to be late of this project. Showing children how to have fun with sport has helped me build my confidence.

"I have built leadership skills, it helps me remain active and develop communication and team work skills. Plus it counts toward my UCAS application for university."



GETTING INTO THE PICTURE: Year 7 students have been inspired by the bold, expressive colours of Fauvism to create their own artwork (*pictured above*).

PASSING ON MOVES: Our dance leaders have been passing on their knowledge to primary school pupils. They have been teaching Year 5 students at Hollymount alongside classroom study for their dance GCSE.

Year 10 Scarlet said: "It has been nice getting to know the primary-aged children and seeing their enthusiasm.

Olivia said: "Teaching them has been really rewarding. Seeing them get better at dance and learning has really helped grow my confidence.

SPONGE SUPPORT: Our house captains have been helping build the excitement at a host of events in support of cancer charity The Royal Marsden. House Week saw students raise money through a bake sale, renting the astroturf and, most fun of all, sponging a teacher. There is a boy and a girl captain for each house. They were selected by senior staff after filling in an application.



Novel ideas for World Book Day

RAYNES Park High School turned into a riot of colour and imagination for World Book Day as students dressed up as their favourite book characters.

The national day is dedicated to fostering a lifelong love of reading for pleasure in children.

And our students did not disappoint – bringing to life their favourite literary characters.

There was also a series of games and activities devised by students in the book club.

They included Match a Quote, Name the Book and Guess the Character

Year 7 Library Ambassador

Matthew said: “I really enjoyed the English lesson where we had a fun quiz.

“For a book lover like me it was a great day filled with quizzes and activities and load of people dressing up as their favourite character.

Year 7 Amelia said: “It is great because the library – which is usually and traditionally a quiet place – is buzzing, lots more people.”

Year 7 student Amaya said: “It is a great way to share the books you love with the whole school.

“People might read a book they never thought of because they liked the costume someone was wearing.”

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IT'S ELEMENTARY: Year 10 Dance Leaders have been working collaboratively with Year 5 students on a dance piece based on the theme of Fire and Ice (*pictured above*). They have demonstrated excellent leadership and organisation skills, receiving glowing feedback from the teachers at Hollymount.

A BLAST WITH ART: Our students have been creating artwork on the theme of "Distort, Distress, Decay". Techniques include using heat guns, bleach, stitching, and digital manipulation to create worn, broken, or abstract textures. For the project they have been researching artist including Lucas Simões and Samuel Taylor Johnson.

Year 10 student Luke said: "We researched the artists suggested by the teacher but I also did some personal research into other artists. I looked at Andre Serrano and Greg Sand, who I really like. I enjoy the chance to be creative with art."

WORK EXHIBITED: This year Summer Art Show featured work from students across year groups. The best pieces also got selected to be featured in an art exhibition.

Year 8 student Lisa said: "I love art, it's so peaceful and you can fully express yourself. It makes me feel free. I was pleased to have my work up on display for everyone to see. That way people can see my potential and show what am capable of doing."

A REAL BUZZ: Year 9 students designed their own insects as decoration for wallpaper in art class. They have also been studying the work of Rob and Roberto Smith, which is a pseudonym for British contemporary artist Patrick Brill.

Sruntika said: "I really enjoy getting ideas on paper and being creative with my art. I choose all different parts of bugs to create something new."



Students entitled to go to great gig

Students were treated to a lesson with a difference when rock band The Entitled Sons visited to perform concerts for each year group.

The group (*pictured above*), who performed at Glastonbury last year, consists of four brothers and their dad. They are the sons of TV presenter Sarah Beeny and Graham Swift, who also plays in the band.

The family star in Channel 4's Sarah Beeny's *New Life in the Country*. They played to students across year groups and also took part in a questions and answer session.

Year 10 Vio said: "I thought they were great – so good, in fact, that I

bought tickets for their next gig.

"They were not much older than us so they were really relatable. They talked about things we were going through and interested in.

Year 10 Molly said: "They were really cool. They talked about stuff like GCSE options, ADHD and dyslexia, stuff that is impacting us.

Year 7 Oliver said: "They were pretty good. I really liked how they used humour to get their point across."

Year 9 Tierra said: "I really like them. They play the style of music I like and we're really interesting when they talked after."



HOW ENTERPRISING:

Our students have reflected on their time working with the with Young Enterprise programme (*pictured left*). They learned teamwork and communication skills and how to share ideas, listen to different opinions, and work together towards a common goal. They gained real world experience on how to plan, market, and manage a product.

Bake Off star's food for thought

YEAR 10 GCSE food students got top tips from leading hospitality professionals including a Bake Off finalist during a west-London school trip.

They were met with canapés and mocktail reception, getting a taste of a fine dining experience.

Clanny Rodrigues, Head Pastry Chef at Sexy Fish and finalist on *Bake Off: The Professionals*, showed students how to create a showstopping dessert.

Another highlight was seafood demonstration by Executive Chef Mattia Ricci also from restaurant Sexy Fish.

Students watched as he demonstrated his knife skills, preparation techniques and the artistry behind beautifully plated dishes.

They also took part in a mocktail masterclass, led by award-winning Bar Manager Salvatore Maggio from five-star hotel One Aldwych.

They learned the science behind mixology including the precision required to perfect flavour combinations.

There was an immersive cookery demonstration by Executive Chef Santosh Ravimony from The Tower Hotel.

He stressed the importance of teamwork, communication and working under pressure – skills required for the practical GCSE assessments.



The day ended with a doughnut decoration competition, which two RPHS students came close to winning.

Head of Design and Technology Mr Harris said: "Students returned to school feeling motivated, inspired and excited about future opportunities within the hospitality industry.

"The experience not only enriched their GCSE Food studies but also gave them a valuable glimpse into the professional standards, teamwork and passion required to succeed in this dynamic field."

GYM JUDGES: Our year 8 students helped to run a gymnastics competition for primary school pupils. They were the judges in the vault, floor and partner work events held at the Canons Leisure Centre in Mitcham. In total, eight primary schools took part including Joseph Hood, William Morris and St Mary's.

Year 8 student Ella-Scarlet said: "I really enjoyed being the one doing the teaching, I can see why it can be such a rewarding profession. It was so nice to see the younger children so enthusiastic and enjoying themselves at an event we helped to organise."

ROLE MODELS: Two trainee dancers being mentored by our staff have had a big impact on our students. The pair are on placement at the school while studying at the Royal College of Dance.

They are being tutored by Deputy Head of Year 11 Mr Forrester.

He said: "They had really develop a strong bond with the students. They are both still quite young so are very relatable to the students. They had built a really beautiful connection to the students. They are great role models for the children. From our side it has been really useful having them here, having a different perspective."

LET'S DANCE: Students took part in a dance programme at the Trinity Laban Conservatoire.

Year 9 Armaan said: "We have been practising all type of different dance including contemporary, hip hop and jazz. I have really enjoyed practising at Trinity. I have often thought it would be an amazing place to go to university."

'It wasn't afraid to tell the truth about what happened'

Students watched a hard-hitting play about the dangers of drug use – based on the life of a teenager who died from taking ecstasy at a rave.

The Daniel Spargo Mabbs Foundation visited the school to perform *I Love You, Mum*. There was a workshop afterwards. The foundation's aim is to educate young

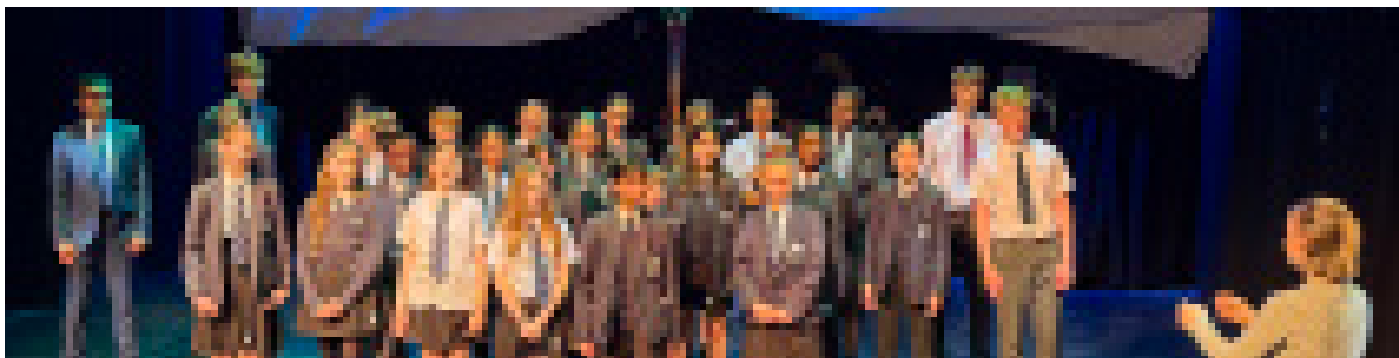
people about substances and reduce harm.

Year 10 student Alice said: "I liked the play because it wasn't afraid to tell the truth about what happened. It was an emotional play but that made it more interesting to watch. It really helped because it gave ways to manage situations where you might

be pressured into taking drugs.

Kaylee said: "It was really helpful because it was a real-life experience. I got out of it ways to handle conversations about drugs."

Gad said: "It really went into depth about what happened. It's often the person you least expect who gets into trouble."



‘Everyone has put a lot of effort into this play’

OUR school choir will take part in a cross-school play in partnership with King’s College Wimbledon.

This term, choir group Harmonies have been rehearsing songs at Raynes Park and King’s College.

They will sing Abba hit *Money, Money, Money*, Beatles classic *In My Life* and *Happy Together* by The Turtles.

Elena said: “I am excited to perform at King’s College; it is an amazing venue and there will be lots of people in the audience.

“It has been really fun mixing with the King’s College students, they are really friendly and everyone has got on really well.”

Year 8 student Szymon said: “Everyone has put a lot of effort

into this play so I am really looking forward to performing it.”

Year 12 student Gabia will be conducting the choir and the King’s College band at the performance.

She said: “It is going to be a bit scary because this is out of my comfort zone. On the other hand it will be nice to experience the music from a different perspective.

Quality cooking

YEAR 10 student Martin narrowly missed out on the grand final at a MasterChef-style cooking contest.

He had to prepare a main course and dessert for two people within a tight budget of £18 in no more than 90 minutes.

The talented chef won the regional heats with a dish taught to him by his restaurateur dad. He progressed to south-east regional heats held in Kent where he was within a whisker of the final.

Martin said: “In the first heat I cooked a dish Dad taught me, He owns a restaurant in Fulham. It got me through to the next round but the competition was very tough and I didn’t quite make it through to the next round. Even so, I was very proud of myself. It was my first time competing in a proper cooking competition, so I think I did well.

He added; “When I won my first heat I think Dad was even more excited than I was. He has been very supportive.”



Students attend huge dance party

Students spent the day at the world’s biggest dance convention.

They attended Move It, which brings together up to 35,000 students, teachers, studios and artists.

They got the chance to speak to colleges and universities offering dance courses.

The high-energy event is held at the Excel Centre in London.

Year 10 student Jayme-Leigh said: “The convention was amazing.

There were so much to see and do at the event. Everyone had a great time. One of my dream jobs is to be a dance teacher so this was a really good event to see what my options are.

“Dance makes me feel more myself. If I’m having a bad day if I dance it always cheers me up.

Year 10 student Luke said: “When you are dancing it is almost like you can be another person. You can embrace yourself.”