

'A tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season'
(Psalm 1:3)



Wisdom - Hope - Service - Resilience

Issue 20

December 2025



The Deanery Way

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we approach the end of this term and prepare for the festive season, I want to take a moment to reflect on the many highlights and achievements across The Deanery. 2025 has been a particularly good year with an excellent SIAMS Inspection report in May and a fantastic set of GCSE results placing us above National average in core subjects and a high position among Swindon Schools. I am extremely grateful for the hard work of students, school staff and the support of parents in securing these achievements and enabling The Deanery to flourish.

This month has been filled with opportunities for our students to serve others and grow in wisdom, hope, resilience, and service. From the beautiful Christingle celebration and the creative Advent reflections, to the inspiring pilgrimage with Kingfisher pupils, our students have truly embodied the values we hold dear.

Academic enrichment has also been a focus. The Sparx Reader programme is helping our younger students develop strong literacy skills, while the Science Department prepares for an exciting Royal Society-funded ecology project launching in January. Congratulations to Neve for winning first place in the Rotary Young Photographer Competition, and to all students who represented us at the Swindon Youth Festival of Literature.

Our School Council and Young Carers group continues to thrive, offering vital support and organising events that make a real difference. The Shoe Box appeal was extremely successful – well done to all who supported and the Council members who made the delivery.

I would like to commend our Yr11 cohort who have sat their first round of mocks, displaying excellent exam room conduct. Following these, they showed great service and resilience in their mock results morning, supporting each other and reflecting on next steps. The Parent Subject Consultation Evening was also well attended – thank you to all those parents who took the time to attend and find out their child's progress and ways they can support going forward. Careers education remains a priority, with Year 11 students benefiting from sixth-form experiences and workshops to guide their next steps.

The Performing Arts Department has left us feeling very festive, with their amazing Christmas concert performance. We are extremely grateful for their work and service to the community and we look forward to 'Sister Act' in 2026.

Thank you for your continued support in making The Deanery a place where every child can flourish. On behalf of all staff, I wish you and your families a joyful, peaceful Christmas and a happy New Year.

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Young'.

Mr Young
Executive Principal

Chaplaincy

'May your Christmas be filled with the light of Jesus.'

Christingle – Keeping the tingle!

On Thursday 4th December of band of students including, Monalisa, Harmony, Funmi, Michelle, Victor, Maxwell, Destiny, Sophie, Kaitlin, Reuben, Ruth and Michael served local families, children, members of the school board and members of staff by helping out at our Community Christingle. They served drinks, helped others make Christingles – crafts that are a reminder of Jesus being the light of the world, sang carols, and generally helped where needed! Then we gathered around the manger to sing 'Away in a Manger,' light our Christingles and reflect on Jesus' invitation for us to stay with him.

Pilgrimage – Have you seen the special baby born to be king?

On Wednesday 10th December, William, Funmi, Reuben, Seb and Summer led Kingfisher Y1 and Y2 pupils on a pilgrimage to find the special baby born to be king by following the star (Summer) . We met Zoe the receptionist and she helped us find the palace where creepy Herod (Seb) asked his advisor (Reuben) who told us the special baby was going to be born in Bethlehem. The Star guided us there where we found Mary (Funmi) with Jesus and we brought him our gifts before going back another way to avoid Herod who we decided we didn't want to go back to. It was wonderful hosting Kingfisher children in The Deanery and all our students did us proud.

I've loved seeing Deanery children serving others over these two events, and to all of you, may the light of Christ fill you this Christmas season.

Rev. Owen Green
Chaplain



Service

"... in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others"

Update On Our Young Carers

The young carer groups for KS3/4 that takes place on week B during tutor in the chapel have proved to be most successful! Our young carers have expressed how valuable this space is for them and how much they enjoy attending and socialising with other young carers.

Our young carers have also organised and supported in some fundraising by selling ice-creams, doughnuts and ice lollies during sports day and at the end of term 6.

This term they have been involved in organising a sweet sale and these will be sold in school on Friday 19th December, prices start at only £1 a bag and all money raised will go back into funding more fun activities for our young carers in school. As a reward and some much-needed well-being time for them prior to the Christmas break, we will be holding a pizza and movie afternoon for them on Wednesday 17th of December during lessons 4 & 5.

We would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a happy, healthy and peaceful Christmas and new year.

Mrs. Matthews, Mrs. Fernades and Mrs. Eldon

On Friday 5th December our Y11 Zanzibar students teamed up with Ms Matthew's band 41 degrees to organise a "quiz with live music" to fundraise for both the school trip and the Ideas Partnership, a charity in Kosovo offering financial, educational and healthcare support to families and young people often marginalised by the state system.

It was so lovely to see all of team Zanzibar work together to organise the event, collect/make raffle prizes and create stalls for the quiz. Their motivation bodes well for the conservation and humanitarian projects they will tackle during their time away.

Collectively we raised over £735, which is incredible. Just £50 makes a huge difference to a Kosovan school child in terms of shoes, bags and required text books so thank you so much to all the family and friends who supported!

***Miss Case, Miss Wright and
Ms Matthews***



Resilience

"I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me"

Sparx Reader success!

Here at The Deanery, we recognise the critical importance and numerous benefits of reading and strong literacy skills for your child's academic success, and future careers. At the start of September, we introduced a new online reading platform for pupils in years 7, 8 and 9, called Sparx Reader, with the aim of building confident, engaged, and lifelong readers.

After an initial assessment to identify their reading age, Sparx Reader provides students with personalised book recommendations. Engaging activities check active reading and comprehension, while careful reading earns Sparx Reader Points (SRPs). It also includes accessibility features, giving students access to dyslexia-friendly fonts, colour overlays, and reading rulers.

Pupils are set weekly Sparx Reader homework of 400 SRPs, which is monitored by teachers to offer support and ongoing motivation. Each 100 SRPs equates to approximately 10 minutes of careful reading.

We are delighted with the success of Sparx Reader so far. To introduce some healthy reading competition between the English classes in each year group, we are providing them with monthly leader boards, with house points up for grabs for pupils in each winning class.



We are delighted to congratulate Neve, a year 11 student, who has been awarded 1st place in the senior category of the Young Photographer Rotary Competition. This is a fantastic achievement and a testament to her creativity and talent.

Neve's winning entry will now progress to the District stage of the competition. We wish her the very best of luck as she represents our school at the next level.

Well done Neve!



Sparx Reader

Year 7 Year to Date: 2/9/25 – 2/12/25

Rank:	English Class:	Total SRPs	Total hours reading
1 st	7/En1	112,723	188
2 nd	7/En2	110,987	185
3 rd	7/En3	99,831	166
4 th	7/En4	87,351	146

Year 8 Year to Date: 2/9/25 – 2/12/25

Rank:	English Class:	Total SRPs	Total hours reading
1 st	8/En4	115,692	193
2 nd	8/En2	111,209	185
3 rd	8/En1	90,760	151
4 th	8/En3	68,533	114

Year 9 Year to Date: 2/9/25 – 2/12/25

Rank:	English Class:	Total SRPs	Total hours reading
1 st	9a/En2	178,741	298
2 nd	9a/En4	118,109	197
3 rd	9b/En2	112,309	187
4 th	9a/En3	112,045	187
5 th	9b/En3	106,333	177
6 th	9b/En1	94,407	157
7 th	9a/En1	78,232	130

As parents and carers, your support and encouragement can make a big difference to your child's success. Encourage regular use – even short daily sessions can make a big difference. Provide a quiet space for homework. Allow your child to answer questions independently for accurate level assessment, and discuss their reading with them. By working together, we can help your child develop essential literacy skills.

Wisdom

"Blessed are those who find wisdom, those who gain understanding"

Science department

We are pleased to announce the science department **house competition** results.

Winners and runners up get house points for themselves and their houses receive the house points.

Year 8

- **Winner:** – Ethan P – for house Service
- **Runner up:** –Pranit K – for house Service



Year 7

- **Winner:** – Samuel P – for house Hope
- **Runner up:** – Abia D C – for house hope

Congratulations! *We will have more competitions in the new year for each year group.*

Ecology and climate project. – January launch.

The science department have been awarded a full grant of funding by the Royal Society for a two- three-year research project. We are excited to be working with Dr Marco Campera, Senior Lecturer in Conservation and Biodiversity at Oxford Brookes University School of Biological and Medical Sciences. He will be working directly with students across yr. 7-11 to explore our flora and fauna doing all sorts of exciting experiments in the grounds gathering data. The aim of the project is to ensure we conserve and protect our local wildlife and their ecosystem, we will be also gathering weather data with a new weather station to aid this project. If any parent has experience in ecology, biodiversity or meteorology or has a contact in these areas that may be of help please contact Mrs Ashley.

Careers and educational choices –(STEM)

We recognise that making the difficult choices of careers and choosing the right course for a future is challenging for many of our students. A student who has a goal and an ambition is more likely to succeed in their studies. To support students the science department will be offering the opportunity for years 9- 11 to sign up for Brightside mentoring. Students who sign up will get a FREE personal mentor who is a STEM professional. According to the Brightside Trust students who take part in this mentoring do better by 4.8 grades in their GCSEs and are 2x more likely to go to further education and complete degrees. Further details will be circulated in January and sign up will happen by the end of January. Any questions in the meantime, students can speak to Mrs Ashley or Mrs Wright.

The Swindon Youth Festival of Literature (10-14/11/25)

The Swindon Youth Festival of Literature is a collaborative project run each year by the Librarians of twelve Swindon secondary schools, delivering a week-long literary festival in November, which celebrates reading, writing and creativity to thousands of students.

The week kicked off at The Wyvern Theatre with our headline event for all schools. Best-selling and award-winning author Phil Earle entertained and inspired 50 of our KS3 pupils, with a talk about his books and life as an author.

The following day we were delighted to host sport's author Matt Oldfield who presented to all KS3 pupils, then some joined him for writing workshops about the importance of bouncing back from adversity.

Two hundred pupils from local primary schools also joined in the fun when we welcomed them to our theatre for a thrilling presentation from Fleur Hitchcock, best-selling author of mysteries and "crime novels for beginners." They were completely engaged and had lots of questions for Fleur!

We rounded off the week with the Inter-School Book Quiz at The Ridgeway School. This is always a highly competitive event and our Deanery team came in at a respectable fifth place out of twelve.

The Festival programme also includes three creative competitions. Competing against other schools on this year's theme of 'Belonging', our budding poets, storytellers and illustrators had the opportunity to let their imaginations soar and showcase their talents. Winners and runners up were presented with their awards at a Celebration Event attended by the Mayor at The Pattern Church, which was a lovely way to conclude this year's Festival. Congratulations to:

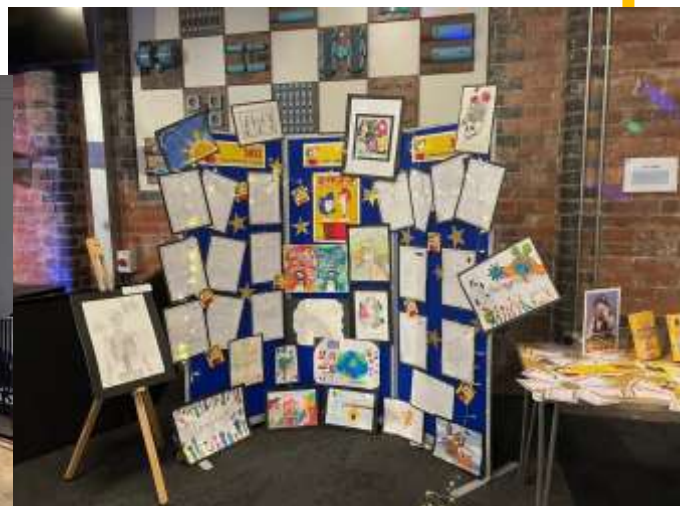
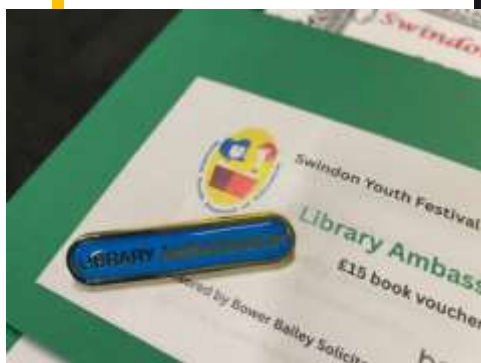
- Aleeza – 2nd Place, Illustration Competition, Year 7-8 Category
- Darwin – 3rd Place, Poetry Competition, Year 7-8 Category
- Honor – 3rd Place, Poetry Competition, Year 9-11 Category
- Ezra – 3rd Place, Short-Story Competition, Year 9-11 Category



Well-deserved congratulations to Destiny in Year 9, who was recognised with the 'Library Ambassador Award' for the amazing work he does supporting our school Library.

Now onwards to planning for next year's Festival!

Mrs. Cook



Hope

"I have come so that you may have life in all its fullness"

On Tuesday 9th December, the English department took 102 Year 10 & Year 11 pupils to watch a dramatic re-telling of Charles Dickens' famous novella, 'A Christmas Carol'. This timely, Christmassy play was not only a festive treat for students, but also offered them a valuable cultural and educational experience. Deanery pupils were a credit to their parents and to the school, displaying polite and pleasant behaviour throughout. We hope that pupils enjoyed the show!



Advent 2025

Advent is a time of waiting and preparation. A time of anticipation and excitement and, for Christians, a time of wonder. During our collective worship sessions this term, all students have been exploring the 4 themes of Advent: Hope, Peace, Joy and Love. Whilst taking time to be still and think about how these themes fit into and are relevant for our own lives, we have also been thinking of others and how we can bring Hope, Peace, Joy and Love to those around us and make the world a better place for everyone! Below are some examples of candles, which students designed and wrote messages of hope during this Christmas season. Students have also been busy writing thank you notes to staff, showing their appreciation and spreading some joy.

Mrs. Gallagher





Deanery Careers update

Careers Education, Information & Guidance programme



Welcome to the Term 2 Careers section!

This term has been packed with exciting opportunities for our students to explore future career paths and develop essential skills

Commonweal 6th Form Experience

On Wednesday 10th December, we took 65 Year 11 students to commonweal sixth form (C6) for the morning. This was an opportunity to sample some A Level and CTEC lessons in a range of subjects, and get a feel for what studying at a 6th form would be like. Students had a number of talks about 6th form life and then went off to sample lessons and explore the 6th form facilities. The Deanery students were fantastic and left the experience better informed about their post-16 choices.

TPAT 6th Form Experience

On the 6th November 31 Year 11 students went to Lydiard Park Academy to do a 6th form experience. Students took part in a range of A Level lessons and informative talks on career pathways and what it is like to study A Levels. Our students had full use of the facilities and enjoyed the experience, leaving with more confidence about what to do after Year 11.

New College Swindon Assembly & Workshop

Year 11 students had an assembly with New College Swindon on the 28th November. Students received lots of valuable information about their post-16 options including A Levels, T-Levels, vocational qualifications and also apprenticeships. The staff from New College were on hand afterwards to do an application workshop and answer any questions that students had.

PSHE Careers Lessons

There has been a focus on careers and post-16 planning in our PSHE careers lessons this term. Students have been learning about all the opportunities that are available to them when they leave the Deanery and focusing on careers that they have an interest in. We have been using career pilot and this has been rolled out successfully. In term 3, Year 9 students will be doing careers in PSHE, to help them with their upcoming GCSE options.

Mr. Hinson – *Careers Leader*

A huge well done to all 25 Deanery students that competed at the cross-country championships on a wet Saturday morning at Nova Hreod Academy in November – Carys, Russel, Aniyah and Annie have all qualified for the next Wiltshire round in January!

Best of luck to them!!



SEND

The festive season can be exciting but also overwhelming for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Changes in routine, sensory overload, and social expectations can create stress. Here are some practical tips to help your child feel calm and supported during the holidays:

Keep a Predictable Routine

- Maintain familiar meal and bedtime schedules where possible.
- Use a visual calendar to show upcoming events and quiet days.

Plan for Sensory Needs

- Offer quiet spaces for breaks during busy gatherings.
- Pack comfort items (headphones, fidget toys) when visiting family or friends.

Prepare for Changes

- Talk through plans in advance using social stories or simple explanations.
- Show photos of places or people they'll see to reduce anxiety.



Manage Expectations

- Limit the number of activities in one day.
- Give choices: 'Would you like to join for 10 minutes or stay in your quiet space?'

Support Emotional Regulation

- Use calming strategies like breathing exercises or sensory breaks.
- Celebrate small wins and reassure them that it's okay to take time out.

Homework and Learning

- Avoid pressure—focus on rest and recovery.
- If homework is required, break it into tiny chunks and schedule during calm times



Year 11 Preparation for Exams:

This is a vital year for our Year 11 students, however, during the pre-public (mock) and public examination periods, your son/daughter may become increasingly stressed and anxious and this is often heightened for those with special educational needs. For tips to help beat exam stress:

<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/children-and-young-adults/advice-for-parents/help-your-child-beat-exam-stress/>

It can be difficult to know what and how to revise, one tool that can be incredibly useful to support learners is retrieval practice. This will help your son/daughter to build their memory of key information over time:

<https://nasen-prod-asset.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/Retrieval%20practice%20and%20pupils%20with%20SEND%2030.08.22.pdf>

Mindfulness exercises can also support student wellbeing during this time. Please see below for strategies and tools that may be useful to help you to support your son/daughter:

<https://my.optimus-education.com/supporting-wellbeing-pupils-send>

The SEND dept is offering additional support to all year 11 students with SEND, including a 'How to cope with Year 11' intervention (including sessions on how to improve our mental health and different ways to revise). This intervention is invite-only to ensure a high staff to student ratio, however, please do email me if you would like your son/daughter to be invited.



Fiddle toys

We have introduced school-approved fiddle toys. Only these toys will be permitted. Students will be given one free and will be expected to take responsibility of their fiddle toy by ensuring the item is in school and used appropriately in lessons. Should they lose or break their fiddle toy, they will be expected to purchase another one. If you think your son/daughter needs a fiddle toy, please do email me. I will issue them one and add their name to our list.



Parents and carers play a vital role in supporting students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) when it comes to homework. Here are some practical and empathetic strategies to make homework time more successful and less stressful:



Create a Supportive Environment

- Quiet, distraction-free space: Provide a calm area for homework.
- Consistent routine: Set a regular time for homework to build predictability.
- Visual schedules: Use charts or timers to help structure homework time.

Break Tasks into Manageable Steps

- Chunking: Divide homework into smaller, achievable parts.
- Checklists: Encourage ticking off completed tasks to build confidence.

Encourage Independence

- Prompting rather than doing: Ask guiding questions instead of giving answers.
- Praise effort: Focus on what the child tries, not just what they achieve.

Communicate with School

- Stay informed: Know what support is available and what the expectations are.
- Feedback loop: Share what works at home and ask for classroom strategies.

Tailor Support to the Child's Needs

- Sensory breaks: Short breaks can help children with sensory processing needs.
- Flexible timing: Allow extra time or split homework across days if needed.

Emotional Support

- Encouragement: Celebrate small wins to build self-esteem.
- Understanding: Be patient with frustration or fatigue.

Clubs and interventions

As part of our period 6 day, the SEND department offers the following clubs and interventions between 3.30 – 4.30

- Homework Support – for both Key Stage 3 and 4 – every Tuesday and Thursday
- EAL support – every Weds

The above are invite-only to ensure a high staff to student ratio, however, please do email me if you would like your son/daughter to be invited



SIAS, The SEND information, advice and support service (previously known as SENDIASS) provides information advice and support about education, health and social care for children and young people from 0 to 25 years with special educational needs and disabilities, as well as their parents and carers.



You do not need to have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan to use this service.

- It is free, you will not need to pay for the services
- It is impartial, which means they don't take sides
- They are confidential, which means no-one will be told about the things you talk about unless you give your permission

For more information, see <https://www.swindonsias.org.uk/>

Parental meetings

Please note that parental meetings will be held Tuesday and Thursday only via appointment only, unless it is an urgent matter.



Dr Caroline Kafka-Markey Email address: kafka-markeyc@deanerycofeacademy.org.uk

Current attendance YTD - 92.2% *(in line with national average)*

Thank you for your support and recognition of the importance of school attendance.

If your child is unwell please message through ARBOR or telephone the school leaving a detailed message.

With cold and flu season approaching here is some guidance relating to illness:

Coughs, Colds and Attendance

During the colder months, students may experience more coughs and colds. Most mild symptoms are manageable, and students can usually continue attending school.

Students can attend school if they have:

- A runny or blocked nose
- A mild cough
- A sore throat
- No fever and feel well enough for lessons
- Students should stay home if they have:
- A fever (38°C / 100.4°F or above)
- A severe or persistent cough
- Difficulty breathing or are too unwell to take part in lessons
- Flu-like or COVID-like symptoms



Students can return once they feel better and have been fever-free for 24 hours without medication.

Thank you for helping us support good attendance and student wellbeing. Wishing you a pleasant and restful break

Mrs. Woodfield



School Nursing
Swindon

We'd love to see you at our School Nurse Forum;

- ▶ GET TO KNOW YOUR SCHOOL NURSES
- ▶ WHAT WE CAN OFFER
- ▶ FOCUS AREAS WE CHAMPION
- ▶ OPEN Q&A AND ANONYMOUS CONSULTATIONS
- ▶ WHAT'S NEW IN SCHOOL HEALTH

SCHOOL NURSES DELIVER THE HEALTHY CHILD PROGRAMME, CHAMPIONING THE 6 HIGH IMPACT AREAS;

- SUPPORTING RESILIENCE AND WELLBEING
- IMPROVING HEALTH BEHAVIOURS & REDUCING RISK TAKING
- SUPPORTING HEALTHY LIFESTYLES
- SUPPORTING VULNERABLE YP & IMPROVING HEALTH INEQUALITIES
- SUPPORTING COMPLEX & ADDITIONAL HEALTH & WELLBEING NEEDS
- SUPPORTING SELF-CARE & IMPROVING HEALTH LITERACY



THURSDAY 22ND JANUARY 2026
10AM - 12.30PM
SPORTS HALL,
KINGSDOWN SPORTS CENTRE,
HYDE ROAD, SN2 7SH

HTTPS://FORMS.CLOUD.MICROSOFT/E/BGTWFDXIM

TO BOOK A SPACE, PLEASE REGISTER USING THE QR CODE OR BY CLICKING THE LINK



QUESTIONS? GET IN TOUCH....
SWINDONSCHOOLNURSETEAM@SWINDON.GOV.UK

Notices

Reminder: we're a **nut free school** due to serious allergies within the school community. Also, students should not be bringing and using aerosols in school as it is impacting staff and students who suffer from asthma.

Important notice: We understand that sometimes face to face meetings will be required between staff and parents/guardians. However, we respectfully request that these are pre-arranged and booked in with the relevant staff, and that parents/guardians **do not just arrive at the Academy** and expect staff to be available for a meeting. Please contact the members of staff via the academy email: admin@deanerycofeacademy.org.uk in the first instance to arrange an appointment.
Thank you for your support with this.

Absence reporting

If your child is unwell and will be absent from school, please call: **01793 236611** and leave a message, clearly stating your child's name, tutor group and reason for absence or report via ARBOR.

Dates for the diary

A copy of the term dates calendar is available on our website: <https://www.dcea.org.uk/parent-information/school-information/term-dates/>

5th January – Term 3 begins
7th January – Year 7 subject consultation evening
14th January – Year 9 options assembly
15th January – Y7/8/9 Flu immunisations
16th January – SEND coffee morning
21st January - Year 9 subject consultation evening
28th January – Disneyland trip parent meeting 7pm – 8pm
29th January – Year 9 options evening
8th–11th February – Disneyland Paris trip
13th February – End of term 3

A reminder: For queries, please use the main Academy email address:

admin@deanerycofeacademy.org.uk and your email will be *forwarded* to the appropriate person.

We aim to acknowledge all emails **within 2 working days**, and to respond in full (*or arrange a meeting or phone call if appropriate*) within 5 working days.

If you feel your query requires an urgent response, please call the academy.

Our communication policy can be found here: <https://www.dcea.org.uk/important-information/policies/>