

THE ST DAMIAN'S TIMES



MERRY CHRISTMAS

See Mr Gregory's exclusive interview:
Page 3

Find out what we did to celebrate The
Day of the Dead in school: Page 9

Check out our Christmas comic strip on
the back!

Look out for Miss Jameel's notes.

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A MESSAGE FROM THE JOURNALISM CLUB

It's finally here. The most wonderful time of the year. When Mariah Carey defrosts. The time where you have to drops hints for that one present that you desperately want. When snow will (hopefully) fall gracefully from the clouds. It is a time to appreciate all the people around you for simply being there for you (and for the gifts of course).

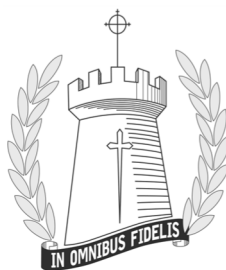
However, Christmas is also a time of reflection; a time when we think about the less fortunate. We think of the people who spend Christmas alone, the people who don't receive the gifts you have, the people who have lost somebody recently and the people suffering during this special time, what is meant to be, a time of happiness. Because of this, we should be thankful for our blessings and all that we have. A simple prayer to show our gratitude and appreciation for the people around us and to also provide support for those who are struggling right now would be a perfect way to focus on the true meanings of Christmas: Love, Hope and Peace.

On this beautiful Christmas day, Father, I pray particularly for those of us in search of hope, who need a tender touch to find you so that we will know the true meaning of love and sharing.

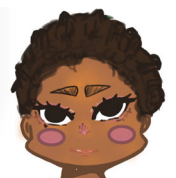
May we learn to be grateful for what God has given us and to show kindness and love through other people.

Reveal yourself to us, Father, touch our hearts in a special way. Show us how to rejoice in hope to be patient in tribulation and constant prayer.

Amen.



Written and edited by Favour A -



ST DAMIAN'S EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

Following our previous interview with Mr McHugh we have decided to interview yet another brilliant Historian and teacher loved by all; **Mr Gregory.**

1. What is the most enjoyable part of my job?

"That's easy, seeing kids come into St Damian's with no real love of History, but then after a few short lessons decide that History is now their favourite subject. I'm really lucky because all humans seem to love a good story, and if you can tell a good story; then kids will quickly start to see that History is not some dry and dusty old subject. It's actually fun and interesting".

2. What is my favourite subject to teach?

"Again that's easy. I love teaching the Industrial revolution. Being from Manchester I appreciate just how important my city is not only in the story of this country, but also the world. At one point Manchester was one of the worst places to live with the average age of people living to in one part of the city being just 19 year of age. The terrible conditions that people were forced to live in fascinates me, but I'm also proud of the fact that Mancunians from this time found their voice and started to stand up for peoples rights through movements like the Peterloo Massacre, the Chartists and of course Mrs Pankhurst. Manchester's place in the industrial revolution is like no other and I love making kids from our school proud of the city they live near"

3. What has been my most memorable lesson at St Damian's.

"I have far too many to remember, but I'm always proud of my last lesson every year with my Y11 when I get to look at them and see that they are ready to tackle their exams. It also gives me immense pride to see what fantastic human beings they have developed into during their time at St Damian's."

4. If I could go back in time in History, when and where would you go?

"It might sound boring, but again I'd go back to the day after the Peterloo Massacre in Manchester to get a sense of the anger of the people of what had occurred the day before. I'd love to sit in a pub and listen to people just talk about how unfair life was, and then walk around the slums to witness the conditions for myself. It must have been horrible"

5. If you weren't a History teacher, what job would you do instead?

"Before I was a teacher I was lucky enough to have what was my dream job, that being an archaeologist. Whilst I worked in this role, I was lucky enough to excavate sites not just across Britain, but around the world; most memorable in the Andes of Peru for seven weeks. Whilst over there I got to do things I would never have thought possible when I was a kid from a council estate in Manchester, like sleeping in a chicken shed above the clouds, take a donkey train across the Andes and obviously excavate an Inca settlement. Sadly when I returned to Britain, the company I worked for went bankrupt so I decided to pursue a career as History teacher which has also turned out to be a dream job. I've been lucky twice.

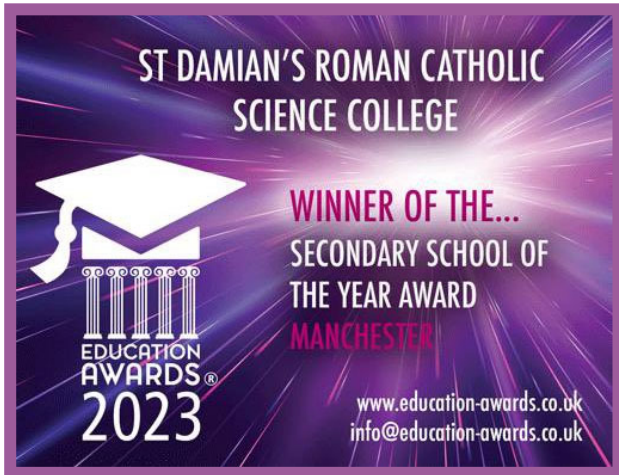
6. What is your favourite thing to do in your downtime?

"Aside from following Manchester United (the love of my life), I also have an unhealthy interest in Star Wars and collect vintage action figures. I'm a bit of a geek.

Interviewed by Leonardo M -



CELEBRATING ST DAMIAN'S



We are exceptionally proud and super excited to be shortlisted for 'Most Inspirational Secondary School' 2023 "Start with the child and you won't go far wrong". We are honoured and proud to receive such a prestigious award.

We are delighted to announce that Mrs Hartshorne, our Senior Science Laboratory Manager, has won the prestigious 'Philip Harris Science Technician of the Year 2023 Award'. WELL DONE.



WE RAISED AN ASTONISHING £1,953.53 at Macmillan Coffee Morning even Mr Logue baked cakes to sell! It was fantastic to see so many of the community join us and we are overwhelmed by your kindness and generosity THANK YOU!

The Santa Dash was full of great fun & entertainment for all the family, hot chocolate, hot dogs, waffles, mince pies, sweets; a truly magical event. We had an amazing turnout and it was an overwhelming success! A massive THANK YOU for your support and for all your donations.



Inter-Faith Week:

We started the week with a staff visit to our neighbours at the BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir on Lees Road. We were invited to share the celebration of Diwali and received the warmest welcome and hospitality.

Then, we hosted an event in which we had the opportunity to talk and connect with others on a deeper level. We invited GGA, St Christophers, and members of our community who represented different faiths to come together and celebrate our shared values.



Our week long **celebration of European Languages** started with German as our wonderful pupils were treated to a German taster lesson at lunchtime. They had the opportunity to sample a variety of traditional German delicacies, and all agreed it was *sehr lecker!*

The Technology department celebrated **British Food Week** 25th-29th September. To celebrate, taste testing was offered to pupils where they had the opportunity to taste different British foods. Each day. The canteen offered a dedicated British 'dish of the day'. Pupils also took part in an afterschool baking session where they had the opportunity to bake some tasty British scones!

British food week



STUDENTS' CORNER

This segment aims to celebrate the work of our students. 8X1 were given the opportunity to write some poetry in English. The poems were inspired by 'My Father as a Guitar' by Martin Espada. Students used extended metaphors to explore their view of their loved ones.



A Blank Book:



My sister loves to read,
Her room is filled with books.
Quotes and pages pasted on her walls

My sister loves to read,
She is always sat with a book,
Though I'm sure she would rather be there
than here

My sister 'likes' to read,
That is, if you count texts.
No longer does she sit with a book.

My sister doesn't want to read,
But my mum says she has to.
Her grades keep falling down.

My sister doesn't want to read,
Now I'm getting scared
I don't know where my sister's gone.

My sister hates to read,
She just texted me that.
I haven't seen her in days.

My sister has a book,
But a book with no words.
16 empty chapters, blank pages roam free
A plain black line, not a title, not a phrase
Her endless devotion lies within it
A book dry of tears and dry of memories
A forgotten symphony

Caitlin B

My Brother as a Tree:



The sapling was planted
So small and fragile

But soon it will grow
Trying to reach the sky

My brother greets me
Asking questions about everything

Curious about the world
But soon his mind will be filled with
branches of knowledge

Sometimes I see my brother as a tree
Starting off small but being nurtured by
care

In a forest surrounded
By others like him

As the world changes around him
He changes too
Parts of him are lost
And new parts are grown

But his roots will always be the same
No storm or fire can damage them

His leaves will fall but he will always grow
them back

Callum R

A Maternal Dagger



My mum as a knife
As sharp as ever
Cuts through all my troubles
Could never be better

Able to multitask
Do anything with ease
With a smiling, sharp mask
She's able to appease

But she gets duller and duller
With everyday
My mum may be sad
But it what kind of way

She should be better I hope
Without her I couldn't cope
She always looks stainless
And I do hope she's painless

What price will I pay
What risk shall I take
A welcome or therapy
That should be the way

Millions of copies
Millions of replicas
Could never replace her
As I have a debt to her

Dominik R

WHAT'S ON IN SCHOOL?

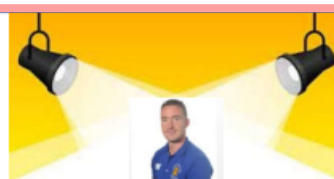
CAREERS

is in the spotlight



Our Careers Coordinator, Mr Healey, has launched a termly careers newsletter which will go out to students and staff. The newsletter may be used as a resource to discover new career paths, find out about careers events happening inside and outside of school and every term, a teacher's journey into teaching at the jobs they have done will be put under the spotlight. **We have inserted a snippet of Mr Healey's newsletter below in which he tells us about his own journey to teaching; including working at Sub-**

Careers under the spotlight



Mr D Healey
PE Teacher
Careers Coordinator

If you didn't become a teacher, what career do you think you would have pursued?

I used to want to be in the Police when I was really young, however the older I got the more I wanted to be involved in sports in some way. I initially wanted to be a sports physiotherapist and then a sports journalist before teaching. I liked the idea of watching sport, writing about it and getting paid for it so probably that.

What was the worst job you had?

The worst job I ever had was working for a company that used to ring people up to try and sell them conservatories. I was stuck in a call centre and just given a list of numbers to ring. It was so boring and I hated it. I eventually ended up leaving after I didn't sell any conservatories and I realised I didn't want to go into Sales. It actually helped me as I ended up thinking more deeply about what I wanted my career to be.

Who or what influenced your career?

Probably my PE teacher Mr Meredith. He just seemed to really enjoy his job. My Gran used to tell me "find a job you love to do and you'll never work a day in your life" and this was the first time I think I saw someone really enjoy what they do, it made me want to do it.

What's the best career advice you have ever been given?

Find a career in something you are interested in. It sounds obvious but you spend a long time working so you should enjoy what you do and have a passion for it.

What was your first job?

My first part time job was actually at Subway. I loved it. I got free subways when I was working and got to work with some great people. It taught me the importance of hard work and earning my own money.

Did you do work experience and if so, what did you do for it?

I actually worked in the PE department of another local school. This was my first experience of teaching and I was quite sporty anyway so seemed like a natural fit. I really enjoyed it and my time flew by. It was probably the moment I decided this is what I wanted to do as a career.

Once you left school, what pathway did you take?

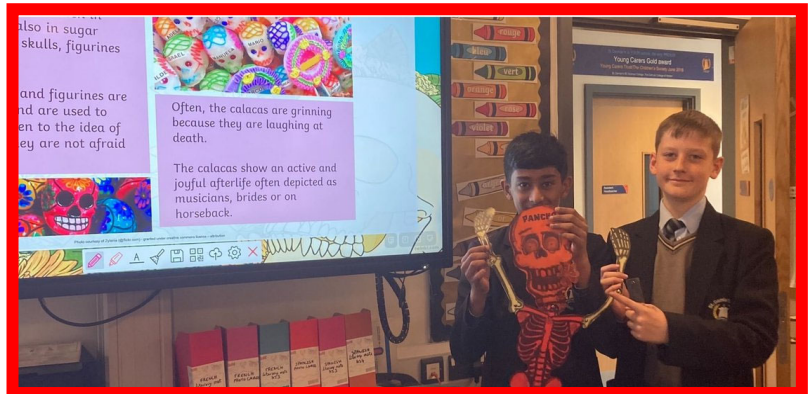
I went to a sixth form college near me called Holy Cross. There I studied 4 AS Levels in my first year - Law, Psychology, Physical Education and English Literature. In my second year, I dropped English Literature and got an A in PE and a B in Law and Psychology. From there I went to Leeds Beckett University but it was called Leeds Met at the time studying Secondary Physical Education with QTS (qualified teacher status). University was amazing and I found it such a great experience. I lived in Leeds rather than commuting and I really felt I got the full university experience.

What other questions would you ask Mr Healey regarding work and career paths?

GD \ #R I#WK H#G HD G

Recently made popular in Disney's 'Coco', Day of the Dead is a special celebration that takes place in Mexico and some other countries. It's a time when people remember and honour their loved ones who have passed away. Day of the Dead is important in Catholicism because it combines both ancient indigenous traditions and Catholic beliefs. It is celebrated on November 1st and 2nd, which are All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day in the Catholic Church. During this time, families create colourful altars called ofrendas in their homes with photos, candles, flowers, and favourite foods of their deceased loved ones. They believe that the spirits of their ancestors come back to visit and enjoy these offerings. It's a way to show love and respect for those who have died and keep their memories alive. Day of the Dead teaches us to cherish the lives of our loved ones who have passed on and to remember them with joy and love.

In RE, year 8 had the opportunity to find out some information on Día de los Muertos and its customs in Latin America. Then they built "calacas" for us to display in our classroom. Well done for a fantastic half-term Year 8!



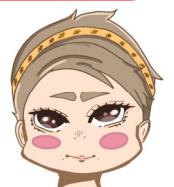
"Day of the Dead, or Dia de los Muertos, is important in Spanish lessons and Spanish culture as it offers a cultural context for language learners to understand Hispanic traditions and values. It provides vocabulary practice and engages students with Day of the Dead-themed literature and art. The holiday reflects the strong connection between life and death, showcasing vibrant artistic expressions. Overall, Day of the Dead deepens appreciation for the Spanish language, culture, and diversity of Spanish-speaking communities."

Señorita Smith, Spanish Teacher



The Yr8 GIFT team prepared 8 led special liturgy for All Souls Day. This was based around the cultural South American festival of 'Day of the Dead'. The Chapel was prepared by 8Y2 with cempasúchiles (marigolds) made from tissue paper & decorated with coloured in skulls.

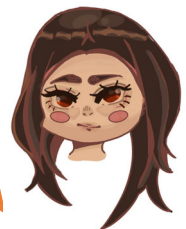
Written and edited by Freya Long



LET'S TALK ABOUT SEND

In our school community, it's super important for us to learn about Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and make sure that everyone feels included and supported. We want to break down any negative ideas people might have and celebrate the unique qualities that make each of us unique. One specific type of SEND that we must be aware of is called Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, or '**ADHD**' for short. In the UK, around 5% of children are affected by ADHD, which means there are many of us who might experience the world in a slightly different way; and that's totally okay!

I wanted to write about ADHD after Sam Thompson recently shared his experience with ADHD on "I'm A Celebrity...Get Me Out Of Here!" His openness about his diagnosis shed light on the challenges faced by neurodivergent individuals, encouraging understanding and support. Sam discussed the impact of ADHD on his personal relationships, highlighting the importance of self-awareness. His disclosure also highlighted the issue of late ADHD diagnoses among adults. Reflecting on his school days, Sam recognized the signs of ADHD in his report cards and regretted not recognizing them sooner. He aspired to become a father one day and acknowledged the need to effectively manage his ADHD. Sam's candid discussion on a widely watched platform helps destigmatize ADHD and promotes important conversations around neurodiversity and self-acceptance. His story resonates with many adults facing similar challenges, emphasizing the importance of recognition and acceptance. By sharing his journey, Sam advocates for increased support and understanding for neurodivergent individuals, contributing to a more inclusive society.



Miss Jameel

"Disability, in all its forms, represents a challenge and an opportunity to build together a more inclusive and civil society, where family members, teachers and associations like yours are not left alone but are supported. For this reason, it is necessary to continue to raise awareness about the various aspects of disability, breaking down prejudices and promoting a culture of inclusion and belonging, based on the dignity of the person."

- **Pope Francis** [1/4/22 at a meeting with the Italian Autism Foundation]

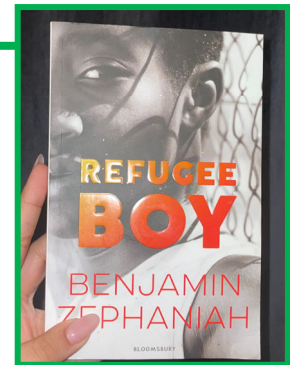
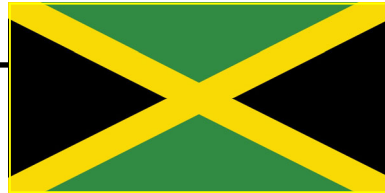
OUR VISION:
PUPILS WITH SEND THRIVE



BENJAMIN ZEPHANIAH

Benjamin Zephaniah was a hero to millions of people all over the globe. We were deeply saddened to hear of the passing of Zephaniah on the 7th December 2023. We have looked at various pieces of Zephaniah's writing in our English lessons; most notably, *Refugee Boy*. His incredible journey and dedication to making the world a better place makes him a true inspiration for young minds. Zephaniah was a performer, musician, poet, storyteller, actor, activist, martial arts teacher, and professor; making him impossible to box. Most of all, he was known as a kind soul who radiated eternal sunshine. He was loved by children, grandparents, teachers, academics, gangsters, musicians, politicians and many more.

Some of our year 8 students have read one of Zephaniah's most influential works, "*Refugee Boy*." This poignant story explores the life of a young refugee named Alem, who flees his war-torn country and seeks safety in a foreign land. Through Alem's journey, Zephaniah sheds light on the challenges faced by refugees and the importance of empathy and understanding. It's heartening to know that this book is studied in our school, as it encourages us to develop compassion and embrace diversity. That's what Zephaniah did over and over again, nudge people into seeing the world through the eyes of the oppressed.



A picture of my own copy of *Refugee Boy*; one of my favourite books to read with a class. Unfortunately, I can't publish a picture of Zephaniah because of copyright, however I suggest looking him up if you are unfamiliar with his work. I will certainly be reading his autobiography '*The life and rhymes of Benjamin Zephaniah*' soon!

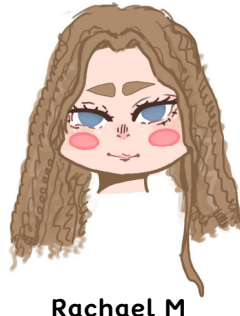
He was also one of the first Rastafarians in the public eye in 1980. He remained attached to his heritage, born in Birmingham's Jamaican community; he was heavily influenced by Jamaica's music and culture. Not only has Benjamin Zephaniah written thought-provoking books, but he has also actively worked to bring about positive change in the world. He has campaigned for human rights, animal rights, and environmental sustainability. Zephaniah's commitment to these causes shows young people that they too can make a difference, no matter their age. His spirit never aged, in his 60s, he was still playing 11-a-side football with people in their 20s!

Zephaniah strongly believed in the power of literacy and education. He showed us that reading and writing can be transformative, giving a voice to the voiceless and empowering individuals. His own journey from being a dyslexic child to a celebrated writer serves as a testament to the importance of perseverance and self-belief. Zephaniah's passion for literacy should inspire young people to explore their own creative potential and embrace the joy of reading and writing.

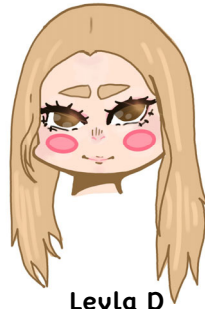
— MEET THE TEAM —



Lexi M



Rachael M



Leyla D



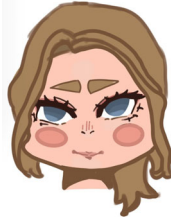
Leonardo M



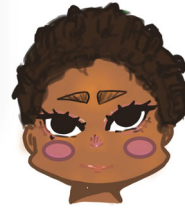
Freya L



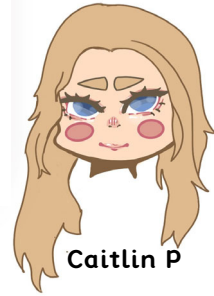
Julia G



Caitlin B

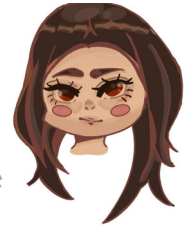


Favour A



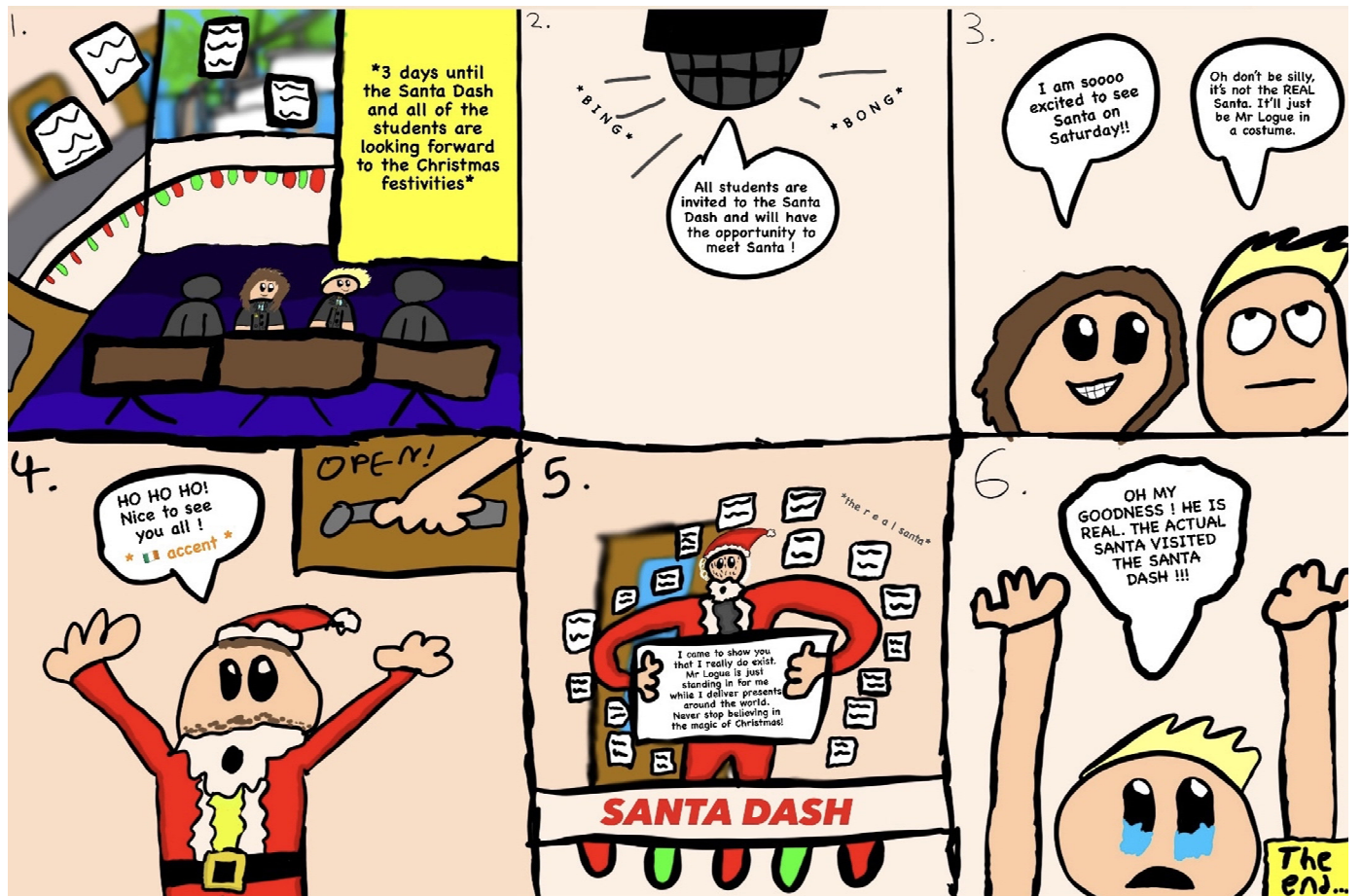
Caitlin P

I would like to thank my lovely Journalism Club (illustrated above) for their hard work and dedication to this magazine; and a special thanks to Julia in year 7 for illustrating us all! If you have any suggestions for future editions, or if you'd like to contribute; please send me a message on Teams!



Miss Jameel

Illustrated by Julia G [Y7]



Comic strip illustrated by Leonardo M [Y7]