

NEWSLETTER

AUTUMN 2024





HEADMASTER'S MESSAGE

Dear Parents,

Recent educational research by the National Literacy Trust has pointed to a steady decline in reading habits nationally among young people, and especially in reading for pleasure.

Their data shows that the steepest declines in reading enjoyment are among secondary school students. Just 30.7% of those aged 11-14 and 29.7% of those aged 14-16 report enjoying reading in their free time.

It made me reflect on how books and access to books have been central to my own education. Thanks to stumbling across The Reader's Digest article, "It pays to increase your word power", I became hooked as a child on learning new words and their meanings. Later, encouraged by my English teachers, I set about reading around the world's great literature (Austen, Conrad, Dostoevsky, Chaucer, Dante etc), which led in turn to studying English Literature at Oxford.

The concerning national trend highlights the need to support reading habits at school and at home. Reading of any kind from a book (or e-book) is good: it enhances vocabulary and powers of expression. The KPS weekly 'Big Read' does exactly this, and long may it continue!

With very best wishes,

Mr Antony Faccinello, MA (Oxon) PGCE
HEADMASTER

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A TRIP TO THE
THE PALACE OF WESTMINSTER

SCHOOL LIFE



A Visit to UK Parliament

Our Sixth Form students began the term with a trip to the Palace of Westminster, touring its historic corridors and witnessing a live debate in the House of Commons. They also took part in an electoral workshop where they were split off into groups representing political parties and asked to propose policy solutions for issues such as education and the environment.

The trip allowed our A level Government and Politics students to take their learning from the classroom to the centre of British political life. Once again, London was our classroom.



Headline Pop Group Visit KPS

We were thrilled to host rising pop group Absnt Mind in our school theatre as they took a break from their headline tour to perform for our students and share personal insights into building a music career.

The band discussed balancing studies with their musical commitments and prioritising well-being while chasing their dreams!

It was an inspiring afternoon for our school community with both Senior School and Sixth Form students taking part.



MIXED HOUSE FOOTBALL
AT JUBILEE SPORTS CENTRE

KPS SPORTS



Yasha (Y9) Wins Double Gold in European Taekwondo Championships

This term, Yasha achieved a truly impressive Double Gold at the ITF Union European Championships competing against some of the most gifted young martial artists on the continent.

His victory follows a gold medal win at the Holland Cup and silver and bronze medals at the ITF Open Welsh Competition.

Showing the same dedication to his schoolwork that he does to his sport, Yasha continues to be an exemplary ambassador for our sports department.



Mixed House Football at a New Venue for Indoor Sports

With the winter weather now in full force, our sports department gained a new indoor venue this term at the spacious new indoor Jubilee Sports Centre in Paddington.

Within their large three-court sports hall, our students participated in a Mixed House Football Competition, highlighting the essential role that the house system plays in student life at KPS.

Between Hyde Park, the Porchester Centre, Battersea Millennium Arena, and now the Jubilee Sports Centre, there is no shortage of venues to keep our community moving!

BARBICAN
THEATRE TRIP

ARTS & CULTURE



A Visit to the Horniman Museum

Our music students visited The Horniman Museum and Gardens in Dulwich, home to one of the world's largest musical instrument collections.

Year 9 explored traditional Balinese music in a Gamelan Angklung workshop, while the younger students enjoyed an instrument scavenger hunt, uncovering clues about each instrument's origin and features.

The day ended with a tour of the museum's gardens and animal centre, featuring alpacas, rabbits, sheep, and more!



Study from the Stage

The Drama department enjoyed three inspiring trips this term to view the latest work in British theatre. At the Barbican, they saw *The Buddha of Suburbia*, exploring themes of identity and culture through a brilliant adaptation of Hanif Kureishi's classic novel.

Next, they attended the UK premiere of *Wish You Were Here* by Pulitzer Prize winner Sanaz Toossi at the Gate Theatre: a moving story of friendship and resilience set against political upheaval.

Finally, at the Lyric Theatre, students watched *Our Country's Good*, a powerful drama about justice and the transformative power of art, sparking engaging discussions on history and humanity.

SIXTH FORM CHRISTMAS
DINNER

CHRISTMAS COMES TO KPS



Kensington Carols

Our school community came together to mark the holiday season with a Carol Concert with performances by our talented music students. The programme included a mix of classic and modern carols, with teachers joining in for Mariah Carey's *All I Want for Christmas is You*.

The ultimate theatre venue bedecked with Christmas lights was the perfect setting for moving solo performances, duets, and larger group renditions of heart-warming music.

For standards like *Let it Snow*, everyone in attendance was invited to sing along, creating a wonderful sense of togetherness to close out a busy term.



Wrapping up the Term

The final week of the school term was full of holiday celebrations—from traditional Christmas dinners with all the trimmings, to a seasonal Wellbeing Walk through Hyde Park.

At the final assembly, students from all year groups received commendations awarded for highest achiever, greatest improvement, and the highest number of merits.

They were further rewarded for their efforts with a trip to Winter Wonderland in Hyde Park—London's largest Christmas fair, complete with thrilling rides, ice skating rinks, and festive villages!

STUDENT VOICE



I think student voice is so important because every student is different.

We have different experiences, opinions, perspectives, and in many cases, different cultural backgrounds.

ALINA, YEAR 13

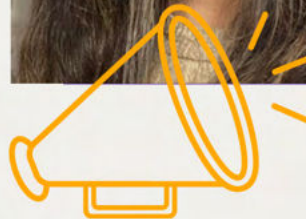


I like the feeling of being more independent.

We have more free time, but also need to be responsible for how that time is spent. I've found myself doing more self-study.

KARINE, YEAR 12

ON JOINING SIXTH FORM



My favourite thing about KPS so far is the friendships that I've made. Everyone here is very kind, and it has made it easy for me to settle in as a new student.

At this school, it feels like there is something for everyone.

AUSTIN, YEAR 7

STUDENT Q&A



This term, Rebecca, a Year 12 student, had the privilege of attending the COP16 climate conference in Riyadh—a United Nations convention where government, business, and society leaders from around the world come together to chart a more sustainable future for the planet. Rebecca shared with us the unique role she played at the conference and the valuable insights she gained from the experience:

What role did you play during your time at the conference?

I was a youth delegate for the NGO, Ambition Loop – which bridges the messages of the private sector and civil society with the public sector to drive negotiations to combat desertification. As they saw that I could type quickly, I ended up as one of their official notetakers for ministerial meetings, multi-stakeholder dialogues, and corporate negotiations.

Were there any events or speakers that you found particularly engaging? Any ideas or solutions that inspired you?

A speaker that really stood out for me was Uyunkar Domingo Peas Nampichkai, representing a coalition of 30 Indigenous communities in Ecuador and Peru throughout the Amazon. He called for businesses to truly consider indigenous populations as essential partners to combat land degradation. He emphasised indigenous people's readiness to form transformative alliances to apply traditional knowledge into business practices to accelerate respect, transparency, and fairness.

STUDENT Q&A



Learning about technology to combat land degradation was fascinating: atmospheric water generators can generate tens of thousands of litres of drinking water per day while lowering regional temperatures from reduced air moisture. Soil engineering can increase resilience, and AI can optimise water management.

What did you learn about the environmental challenges faced across the globe?

This summit's aim was to mobilise serious commitments to stop land degradation and reverse the damage significantly by 2030. Land degradation affects us all: from the chemicals that enter our food, to entire areas in the world becoming deserts or abandoned deforested land. One statistic in particular really stuck within me: by now, around 50% of the world's soils are degraded, by 2050 this could reach 90%.

What have you taken away from this experience, and has it impacted the way you think about planning your future career?

I found it very inspiring how several parties emphasised the strong role for youth in addressing land degradation: financial roles to mobilise investment, roles as pioneering land-owners, technological innovators, and medical roles to save lives in drought-ridden regions. There are so many angles for us to become entrepreneurs and innovators.

FOLLOW US

KENSINGTON PARK SCHOOL

The new year brings with it an array of opportunities: from the Drama department's groundbreaking new play, to our annual Lunar New Year celebrations, and the start of mock exams.

We want to ensure you don't miss any of it, which is why KPS provides regular updates across all our social media channels and on the school website.

To follow us, click on any of the icons below:



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