



The QM Observer

YOUR NEW PSLT



The role of the Pupil Senior Leadership Team (PSLT) is integral to school life at QMGS. However, many within the school are unfamiliar with their responsibilities. To shed light on this, the Captains of School, Nirav Kapur and Christina Johan, kindly allowed the QMO to interview them and provide insight into the PSLT.

The PSLT is, Christina says, a “bridge between teachers and students”, and is essential in making sure that students’ ideas come to fruition. The team consists of six vice-captains, each representing a year group from Year 7 to Sixth Form, as well as the House Captains. Each vice-captain supports their designated year group, whether by organizing form-time activities for Year 7 or helping Year 11 and Sixth Form students make the most of their final years at school.

Being a member of the PSLT requires several key skills. One of these is managing time between the duties of the PSLT, studying and other commitments, like part-time work. Christina reflected that “It’s a big part of your life being the Captain of QMGS, but your A-level results stay with you, and that’s what determines your future”. Communication skills are also essential, given that the Captains of School speak at events throughout the year. Nirav also noted that, at times, you need to be able to say “No”, and to “make that distinction between your friendships and your roles”.

It is key for members of the PSLT to bring something new to the table. Nirav commented “We saw what they did last year...we tried to take what we liked, but also, we wanted to put our own spin on it”. The PSLT has already begun to make changes, including a greater PSLT involvement in School Council. They also plan to make themselves more approachable, so students can communicate freely with them with their ideas.

Nirav and Christina shared their insights on what students can do to work towards a role in the PSLT. They emphasised the importance of becoming involved in the school, such as by volunteering at school events. In Nirav’s words, “do what you enjoy, stick to it, show that commitment to the school and you’ll pick up skills automatically”.

Nirav and Christina find their roles very rewarding. They agreed that their leadership positions have enabled them to engage with a diverse range of people, including teachers and fellow students. Their experiences within the PSLT and as Captains of School will undoubtedly prove invaluable in their future endeavours.

Joshua Abraham

SPEECH DAY

On October 24th, 2024, students arrived at school in high spirits to celebrate Speech Day, an occasion dedicated to recognizing outstanding individuals, hearing from inspirational speakers, and reflecting on the past year in the life of the school.

The day began with a morning thanksgiving service at St. Matthew’s Church, where students, ranging from those embarking on their QMGS journey, as well as senior Marians; exemplifying the school’s values, both coming together as true ambassadors of our community. The service featured stirring speeches from staff, interwoven with hymns and exceptional performances by the school orchestra.

This inclusive celebration allowed individuals from diverse backgrounds to connect with QMGS’s rich heritage and traditions. The Rector, Rev. Jim Trood, emphasised that school should not feel like a chore but rather a journey to embrace. He highlighted the lasting influence of teachers, recalling how his own educators guided him and left a lifelong impression.

The theme of appreciating teachers and their profound impact carried into Commodore Matthew Punch’s address during the prize-giving ceremony. He fondly recalled a QMGS teacher teaching him how to tie a bow tie, a lesson he reflects on every time he does one. He also drew parallels between the school’s core values and those of the Navy, emphasizing how such principles help build resilience and character to navigate life’s challenges with determination.

The ceremony honoured students across various disciplines, with several pupils earning multiple awards. This celebration of talent and achievement underscored the vibrant and exceptional community at QMGS.

Vivaan Kummarasetti



SUPPORTING MOVEMBER

This November, the annual movement of Movember was once again embraced by the QMGs school community amongst both teachers and students. This global initiative is dedicated to raising awareness for men's health issues, including prostate cancer, testicular cancer and mental health. Led by Mr Magee, through a variety of assemblies and activities, we all came together to show support and raise an impressive £1,431 for this vital cause.

The focus of Movember is to spark conversations and support men's health. Throughout the month, staff and students participated in the iconic Movember tradition of growing moustaches, turning them into symbols of awareness and change. The sight of these moustaches around the school helped to remind everyone of the importance of men's health and encouraged donations, as well as sparking conversation and spreading awareness surrounding the cause.

A key event in fundraising via the student body was during Taste of the World, a celebration of cultural diversity where we saw an unforgettable performance by Mohammad Aayan, who sang Katy Perry's *Firework* with passion during the open mic competition as an incentive for people to donate to his Movember cause.



Overall, Movember is a chance to come together to raise awareness about the challenges men face and to encourage open conversations about mental and physical wellbeing. Whether that was through growing moustaches, donating money or singing, we came together as a school to support this global movement and I am pleased to say that the school community embraced this movement to a great extent.

Jasroop Ghataore



THE SPIRIT OF DIWALI AT QMGs

For students at QMGs, Diwali is more than a festival—it is a chance to celebrate culture, community, and the shared values that bring us together. Known as the Festival of Lights, Diwali holds deep significance for Hindu, Jain, and Sikh communities worldwide. Each community celebrates Diwali uniquely—whether it is the return of Lord Rama to Ayodhya, Lord Mahavira's attainment of liberation, or Guru Hargobind's release of prisoners, the shared values of victory of light over darkness resonate deeply.

The spirit of Diwali brought students together in a meaningful way, here at QMGs. This year, Dhruva, Bhakti and I were privileged to lead a special assembly, sharing the essence of the festival with our peers. Through reflecting on our individual experiences, we showcased the diverse ways in which Diwali is celebrated, fostering appreciation and understanding within our school community.

It is heartwarming to see how our students bring their traditions into the fabric of our diverse environment. From lighting diyas at home to sharing sweets with friends, the celebration of Diwali extends beyond cultural boundaries, reflecting our school's values of inclusivity and respect. For many students, Diwali is a time of joy and reflection. As one student shared, "For me, Diwali is all about the food—the art of making samosas to devouring an entire plate of dhokla or ladoo. It's a time where, without fail, tons of families get together for one day of fun and laughter." Another student reflected, "Diwali is a time where families and friends get together to light lamps, exchange gifts, and celebrate new beginnings," highlighting once again how the festival is built on togetherness.

At its heart, Diwali teaches us that even the smallest acts of kindness, like a spark of light, can dispel the deepest darkness. In the halls of Queen Mary's, this festival reminds us to embrace and celebrate the vibrant diversity that defines us, not just on special occasions, but every single day.

Dylan Katwa

SIXTH FORM OPEN EVENING

Despite the snowy weather and cold temperatures, the Y12 Open Evening saw a packed hall at QMGs, with both current Year 11 pupils and external visitors eager to hear the Headmaster's speech and receive a warm welcome to our Sixth Form. Parents and prospective pupils had the chance to gather firsthand information from many current Year 12 students. These experienced pupils, who have recently started their sixth year at the school, were able to provide detailed insights into the events that occur throughout the year and assist families as they navigated different parts of the large school site. Recent Year 12 joiners were also present, sharing their first impressions of the school.

Many departments opened their classrooms to give visitors an insight into what they could expect from their Sixth Form studies and the excellent facilities available at our school. Both pupils and teachers displayed information in the main hall and annexe, not only about A-level subjects but also about the extra-curricular opportunities available to all, such as CCF, Change Your Mind, and our outstanding Sport and Music departments. Classrooms like DTI were buzzing with interested students, all keen to decide on their A-level subjects — and, in the case of DTI, perhaps hoping for a freebie in the process.

Equally important, the event provided an opportunity for students to meet potential future peers. Spaces like the annexe served as excellent collaboration areas, where groups could engage in discussions and share their thoughts on the various options ahead, including the RAF and Army sections of the CCF. We hope that our visitors left not only excited about joining our school but also eager to contribute to a thriving school community.

Leo King



QMGS ACCELERATES INTO F1 IN SCHOOLS

We are thrilled to announce that Queen Mary's Grammar School is taking part in the prestigious F1 in Schools competition! This global program challenges students to design, manufacture, and race miniature Formula 1 cars, providing an incredible platform to foster creativity, teamwork, and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) skills.

Our team, XLR8 Racing, has been hard at work crafting a car that balances speed, aerodynamics, and innovative engineering. From designing prototypes using cutting-edge software to testing models in simulated wind tunnels, the journey so far has been an exciting blend of learning and discovery. The stakes are high, as we gear up to represent QMGS at the regional finals in February.

Beyond the technical challenges, this competition also emphasizes collaboration, marketing, and real-world problem-solving. To support our efforts, we've launched an Instagram page where you can follow our progress, see behind-the-scenes updates, and celebrate our milestones. Of course, this journey wouldn't be possible without the support of our school community. We are seeking sponsorships to help cover the costs of ensuring our team can compete at its best. This is where we need your help!

If you, or someone you know, would like to sponsor our team, please get in touch with us at xlr8_racing@outlook.com. Not only is this a chance to invest in the future of our students, but it's also a fantastic opportunity to promote your business to a wide audience. Your support could make all the difference in helping QMGS succeed on this incredible journey.

For more details, please visit our [website](https://xlr8racing.wixsite.com/xlr8), <https://xlr8racing.wixsite.com/xlr8>. Thank you for being part of our team's success—we can't wait to make you proud on race day!

Eoin McAuley and Vikranth Rajkumar

CCF UPDATE

This year, the Year 9 pupils have been selected to join the QMGS CCF and have made the important decision of which section to become part of: Army or RAF.

These new cadets have already begun a range of training schemes and drills, all designed to instill discipline, teamwork, and leadership skills, which are essential for their development both within the CCF and beyond.

The training also aims to foster a strong sense of respect for the time they will dedicate to the CCF, which will continue through to Year 11.

While the Army and RAF sections have different areas of focus and training methods, they share the same core values, such as respect for authority, commitment to personal growth, and an understanding of the responsibility that comes with being a cadet.

This valuable extracurricular opportunity offers them the chance to develop important life skills and to build lasting friendships, as they invest significant time and effort into their training. **Abu Rayhaan Rowther**

24 HOUR MATHS CHALLENGE

While the 4th of July was being celebrated in America, 28 Year 13 students were persevering through 24 hours of maths! This challenge was led by Mr Mitchell and Mr Finch, and saw these students endure 24 consecutive maths lessons in addition to a bleep test with Mr Collins at midnight. Each hour featured a different teacher, covering topics from impossible shapes to building a functional spaghetti and marshmallow mini table! At 10pm, students enjoyed a bedtime story from Mr Lax, marking both the start of the UK General Election vote counting and just over halfway through this ambitious challenge.



This endeavour was initiated by Mr Scott during the Covid pandemic and has continued through the joint efforts of Mr Mitchell and Mr Finch to raise money for Birmingham Children's Hospital. For both our staff and students, the hospital has been significant due to personal experiences or those of loved ones. Our students pushed through from 9am on the 4th to 9am on the 5th, powered by "ample amounts of caffeine and energy drinks," as Maanav puts it. Their unwavering determination raised an incredible £13,500 for Birmingham Children's Hospital — almost double last year's target!

Many of us who have visited the hospital know its outdated main entrance. Last updated 30 years ago, it features a long, dark corridor, a reception area resembling a security desk, and limited spaces to entertain children. Additionally, unclear signage has caused confusion for first-time visitors — an unnecessary burden for those already in these stressful situations.

The "It Starts Here Project" seeks to change this, affirming that "no child should feel intimidated about walking through our front door." The £3 million project will transform the entrance into a modern, welcoming, and child-friendly space, reflecting the world-class care provided within the hospital every day and creating a comforting atmosphere from the moment families arrive. We are proud that our contributions are helping to make this vision a reality, ensuring that every child feels supported and cared for.

A massive thank you to both the students and staff who poured their hearts into the 24-hour Maths Challenge, as well as to all those who donated. Mr Mitchell is determined "to beat this year's target next time," because giving back is what we do. **Zayan Pannun**



SPORTS UPDATE

We are delighted to announce that our ongoing FutureSport@QMGS project recently received planning permission for phases 1 and 2. QMGS is committed to delivering a community asset that will continue to benefit sports teams across the Midlands, not least our own rugby, hockey and cricket teams, for decades to come by improving drainage problems, developing our existing pavilion and building a full size 2G AstroTurf pitch.

To help raise our £2.7 million target, we're still seeking contributions from our community; of course, financial contributions are welcome, whether by donating to our JustGiving page or by attending one of the QMA's many events throughout the year, but the gift of your time, by acting as an ambassador for the programme, is equally as important to us. As a school, we are generous in approach – your generosity now would be greatly appreciated.

A RUGBY GOLDEN GENERATION



Our Year 9 rugby team has embarked on a glorious run in the National Cup, reaching lengths no other QM team has ever reached. A feat that will go down in history, a historic season, in which we gained 394 points. The results attained by this record-breaking team were as follows:

A 40-22 win against Princethorpe College, with tries scored by Wodi, Baiju, Chukwuma, Gibbons, Sajana, Adeyeye, and 5 successful conversions by Tang. This was a dominant performance in QM under 14s' first ever national match. The Y9 team's first taste of victory in the National Cup, a positive sign of things to come.

A 45-12 win over Solihull School, with tries scored by Khan, Phillips-Donaldson, Fidelis, Gini (3), Adeyeye and 5 successful conversions by Tang. A commanding win over Solihull School, which gave confidence to the boys who continued their historic path in the nationals.

A 31-15 win against Rugby School, with tries scored by Gini, Gibbons, Tang, Adeyeye (2), and 3 successful conversions by Tang. The QMGS team showed why they were the history makers and came back from 0-15 to win 31-15, beating Rugby School where the sport itself was invented and on top of this beating them at their home ground.

A 21-3 defeat to Warwick School, with Tang scoring 3 points. Unfortunately, the Y9 QMGS rugby team unwillingly ended their celebrated matches here, a sad and bitter end to something QMGS had not seen in decades. However, the team still have a chance at winning silverware as they have the third round of the County Cup coming up soon which they have already won twice in a row.

The QMO had the privilege of interviewing Christo Baiju after the Warwick game.

What went wrong today?

I think what went wrong was the depth of our attack and awareness off the ball.

What do you think things will be like going forward for this record-making team?

I think we have chances to win nationally if we train consistently and a lot more.

Cohen Doherty and Jayson Tang

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