



14 March 2025

NEWS & VIEWS

Be the best you can be.

Executive Headteacher: Mr Jamie Foster



Headteacher's Comment:

Over the past few weeks, our pupils have demonstrated remarkable enthusiasm, resilience, and excellence across various academic, cultural, and sporting activities.

Our Year 10 Geography pupils excelled during their fieldwork in Stratford, confidently engaging with the public and conducting insightful research. Meanwhile, our Year 9 pupils had an unforgettable experience at Warner Brothers' Harry Potter Studios, where they explored the magic of filmmaking and learned about career pathways in the industry.

Pupils from Years 8 and 9 also had the privilege of attending West End productions, where they witnessed first-hand the power of live performance. The adaptability and positive attitude of our Year 8 pupils, following an unexpected show change, were particularly commendable.

In the sports arena, outstanding performances in the Brentwood District Netball Championships to the fantastic achievements in the New Age Kurling competition, it is evident that teamwork, dedication, and perseverance remain at the heart of our school community.

This week's Headteacher gallery goes to Ivy Turner, for recognition of her outstanding achievement in attaining 100% in the Year 7 PPE; Luke Hanreck for his excellent progress in Maths; Esme Monk for her achievement in winning their division with her cheerleading team in Dallas.



Year 10 Geography Field Trip

On Friday 28 February, Tuesday 4 March and Friday 7 March, our Year 10 Geography pupils visited Stratford for their GCSE field work. While in Stratford, the pupils collected data to help them investigate 'How successful has the London Olympic regeneration been in the Stratford area'. Our pupils conducted interviews with the public, footfall surveys, environmental quality surveys and much more! Those who attended were a real credit to St Martin's School and we were very proud of their confidence when dealing with the public and their high levels of effort shown throughout the day. Well done to everyone on completing their data collection and analysis of the results!



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Italy Year 9 Visit to Harry Potter Studios

Last week, a select group of Year 9 pupils embarked on an exciting educational journey to Warner Brothers' Harry Potter Studios. During their visit, they participated in an immersive workshop focused on diverse career opportunities within the film industry. The pupils had the unique chance to step into the roles of director and set designer, gaining hands-on experience by planning and conceptualizing scenes from "Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban."

A highlight of the experience was when several pupils had the extraordinary opportunity to examine Hagrid's original costumes up close. They learned about the innovative techniques and creative solutions the directors employed to accurately portray the dramatic size differences between characters, staying true to J.K. Rowling's original vision. This demonstration provided valuable insights into the practical aspects of bringing magical characters to life on screen.



Following the workshop, the group was treated to an extensive backstage tour where they explored the fascinating world of movie-making.

They discovered an impressive collection of authentic props, intricate set pieces, and elaborate stage designs that were instrumental in creating an enchanting atmosphere throughout the Harry Potter film franchise. This behind-the-scenes experience offered students a comprehensive understanding of the collaborative nature of film production and the various technical elements that contribute to storytelling through cinema.



Trips to West End Productions

On Thursday 6 March and Monday 10 March, Years 8 and 9 had the opportunity to see a West End Production to enrich their cultural capital and have the opportunity to see live performances including singing, acting and dancing. On Monday, Year 9 pupils visited the Shaftesbury Theatre to see *Mrs Doubtfire the Musical* based on the hit comedy film starring Robin Williams.

The pupils were amazed at the lightning quick dress changes, the comedy impressions of the lead actor and the production elements that brought the whole show together.



Last Thursday, Year 8 was due to see *MJ the Musical*, however, a last-minute show cancellation resulted in the accompanying staff having to think quickly on their feet. Instead, they managed to secure tickets to see *Back to the Future* to ensure the pupils did not miss out! The show was unbelievable with amazing technology. The acting, singing and dancing, left us laughing and dancing along with them. The behaviour of both sets of pupils was excellent and a real credit to the school, especially the Year 8s, who adapted quickly to our change of plans and also received multiple comments from the public commending them on their superb theatre etiquette.





Year 7 A & B Brentwood District Champions

Our year 7 A & B netball teams both won their respective district tournaments last week. The A team scored 36 goals in 40 minutes of play and conceded only 5 across the whole competition, held at Brentwood School.

Mrs Swan is very proud of all the girls involved. They have worked really hard as part of our Elite Netball Academy since starting at St Martin's in September. Their commitment to training and match play has been outstanding.



Kurling at Basildon Sporting Village

Before half term, some of our pupils took part in an exciting Kurling competition at Basildon Sporting village. New Age Kurling, is an evolution of the original sport of Curling, adapted so that it can be played indoors instead of on ice. The rubber Kurling stones run on bearings, making the game accessible to everyone. It's also great fun!

SAINTS had three teams in the competition and one of our teams came out as overall competition winners! Well done for everyone involved who represented St Martin's with pride #Inclusion



Parent Communication

Local residents have requested if parents could refrain from parking and blocking their driveways when dropping off and collecting their children. *Thank you.*



Dates for the Diary

18.03.2025 – Year 7 and 8 Author Chris Bradford Visit
19.03.2025 – Year 9 Essex University Trip
Year 12 Study Skills Workshop
Year 13 Parent Workshop
20.03.2025 – Year 10 Parents' Evening – Online
Cambridge Sixth Form Philosophy Day

Word of the Week
Week 23 emendation



noun: the act of correcting or improving a text, or a change made to correct or improve a text.
Sentence: He made one tiny but significant emendation to the text.

For PE fixtures please follow twitter @STMartinsSchPE for further PE updates



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What Parents & Educators Need to Know about

ROBLOX

AGE RESTRICTION
PEGI
7

Roblox is one of the most popular video games among children. In 2020, the game's developers claimed that more than half of the USA's children had played it. As a "sandbox" title, the game lets players create their own gaming experiences with Roblox Studio to build custom levels, which can then be shared online.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

ONLINE PLAY RISKS

Because Roblox connects random players across the world, it can put younger players into an environment with anonymous users who could use the platform for nefarious reasons. For example, some role-play games are used for online dates and mature role play, which could expose youngsters to inappropriate messages in the public chat box.

MATURE CONTENT

Content is difficult to moderate throughout Roblox, due to the number of games available. This is particularly notable on smaller games and experiences, but in summary, some of the games and experiences offered on the platform contain age-inappropriate content that could easily be seen by young players.

IN-GAME SPENDING

The majority of games within Roblox have extensive monetisation options, usually through season passes or microtransactions. Purchases can range in value from a few pennies up to much larger sums of money. While some games offer a lot of content via purchases, others can offer very little for real world money, causing younger players to end up out of pocket.

ANONYMOUS PLAYERS

The anonymity of users can leave players vulnerable to bullying, harassment, and predatory behaviour. Without the right parental controls or monitoring, users can connect with each other via personal messages or friend requests, and it is very difficult to know who's behind a username in this vast online world.

RISK OF ADDICTION

Roblox games can feature rewarding or satisfying mechanics that keep players coming back – or persuade them to stay logged-in for much longer. Like most games, they focus on interactivity, with constant rewards via in-game unlocks and currencies, which can sometimes lead to an addictive need to remain online for long periods of time.

SCAMS

Many of the games on Roblox feature collectible items, pets, or characters. These objects, while digital, are worth a lot of real money on certain online markets. Scammers will attempt to trade with younger users in the hopes of getting rare items that can be sold for real money, manipulating the child into handing them over, usually via misleading information.

Advice for Parents & Educators

MONITOR THE CONTENT

While Roblox does implement plenty of moderation tools and parental controls, it's up to parents and guardians to monitor the types of games a child or impressionable player is experiencing. If a youngster wants to play Roblox, be sure to check out which specific games they want to play within it, and get a good idea of their content.

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF TOOLS

Use the parental controls within the game itself and teach youngsters how to report and block other players. Knowing the powers within their reach will make Roblox a safer, happier experience. You can set age ranges for who's allowed to contact you, close public chat boxes, block spending, and even make your Roblox profile completely private. All these options are helpful in cutting off bad actors from engaging with children.

PLAY TOGETHER

Consider playing Roblox with the children in your care. There are few more effective ways to see how monetisation works, gauge whether the game could lead to addictive behaviours, or even witness how interaction between players works, than sitting down and trying the game for yourself. This should help you figure out whether it's suitable for particular children.

TEACH ONLINE BEHAVIOURS

Have an open conversation about the risks of online play and how to spend money wisely. By being honest and giving tips on how a younger user can protect themselves, you can empower them to not only take care of themselves, but others too. Any user can be reported to Roblox moderators by other players for behaving inappropriately. With this knowledge, younger players can be aware of what to look for and help prevent it.

Meet Our Expert

Don Lipscombe is a videogame journalist and author of over 20 books on gaming, including books on Minecraft, Fortnite, Roblox, and more. For 15 years he has been writing about his passion for gaming. When he's not playing games, he's talking about them at GAMINGible.



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