



# LeysLife



## A Message from the Head

As the Lent half term approaches, I've been reflecting on how much has been woven into school life over these past few weeks. After returning from the festive season, the community quickly found its rhythm, moving with real purpose into the new year. There has been a real sense of vitality around the School - in learning, in performances, in fixtures, and in the quieter interactions that bring our community together. The genuine kindness and strong sense of belonging I felt when I first joined The Leys, continues to shine through in so many meaningful ways.

With the break now in sight, I hope you find the time and space to unwind and gather fresh energy for the weeks ahead. However you choose to spend the days, may they offer rest and a welcome change of pace.

I look forward to welcoming everyone back, renewed, and ready for the next chapter of the term.



## FEATURED NEWS

### Exceptional Inspection Outcome

We are delighted to share the results of the recent Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) inspection, which confirms that The Leys meets all regulatory standards and highlights many areas of excellence across school life.

The report commends the quality of our curriculum, the achievements of our pupils, and the inclusive, respectful environment that defines our community. Among its findings, the inspectors awarded The Leys two 'Significant Strength' ratings, one for the exceptional quality of our Art department and the other for our welcoming and inclusive environment.

Clare Ives, Head of The Leys, commented: "Reading this report, I am sure you too will be struck by how impressed the inspection team was with the achievements and progress made by Leysian pupils. I am very proud of the pupils themselves, and pay tribute to all my colleagues, both teaching and support staff, whose hard work and commitment made this outstanding outcome possible."

"To receive even one 'Significant Strength' is rare; to receive two places The Leys among a very small percentage of schools nationally. This is an achievement of which our entire community can be immensely proud."

We will continue to listen to our community and evaluate our provision to ensure that our pursuit of excellence continues.

You can read the [full report here](#) and highlights can be [viewed here](#).



## FEATURED NEWS

### Pupil Victory at Model United Nations Conference

Ten pupils from The Leys attended the annual Model United Nations Conference hosted by Stephen Perse from Friday 30 January to Sunday 1 February. The delegation, of 10 Lower Sixth and Upper Sixth pupils, joined a range of schools to explore this year's theme: "The World We Leave Behind: The Next Generation."

Across the three-day conference, pupils took part in wide-ranging debates, representing varying countries, sitting on committees such as Population and Development, Status of Women, UNICEF, UNEP, UNSC, WTO and EcoSoc.

Their preparation, confidence, and enthusiasm were evident throughout, with the delegation performing particularly strongly. The three pupils pictured, Mufaro M, Ben S and Caleb D (Left – Right) returned with 'Best First Timer' awards.

Miss Byrne, who runs Model United Nations Society and who accompanied the pupils, praised the group's focus and positive attitude throughout the weekend. "All 10 pupils approached the weekend with great maturity and curiosity, preparing thoroughly for the roles they would be playing. They gained hugely in confidence and debating skills and represented The Leys with great distinction."

The event offered pupils a chance to develop their public speaking and diplomatic skills, deepen their understanding of international affairs, and engage thoughtfully with some of the most pressing issues facing future generations.



## FEATURED NEWS

### Oxbridge Mathematics Success

The Leys is delighted to celebrate the achievements of two Sixth Form pupils who have received offers from the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, two of the most academically prestigious and competitive institutions in the world. Sharon D has been offered a place to study Mathematics at the University of Cambridge, while Misha N has secured an offer to read Mathematics and Computer Science at the University of Oxford.

Gaining an offer to study Mathematics at Oxbridge is exceptionally challenging. Both universities attract thousands of the world's highest-achieving candidates each year, and the rigorous selection process includes advanced admissions tests, interviews, and demonstrated excellence far beyond A Level curriculum expectations. Mathematics and related joint honours courses consistently rank among the most competitive subject areas.

Dr Lorna Ayton, Head of Oxbridge at The Leys, praised the pupils' dedication and resilience: "We are incredibly proud of Sharon and Misha. Their exceptional work ethic, intellectual curiosity, and determination have shone throughout the process. Securing offers in such intensely competitive mathematical fields at Oxford and Cambridge is a tremendous achievement, and they are wonderful role models for younger pupils."

Both pupils have immersed themselves in enrichment activities beyond the classroom, from problem-solving societies to advanced competitions, further strengthening their applications and demonstrating a genuine love for their subjects.

The whole Leys community congratulates Sharon and Misha on these outstanding achievements and wishes them every success as they prepare for the next stage of their academic journeys.



## FEATURED NEWS

## EPQ Results

We are delighted to celebrate the exceptional achievements of our Upper Sixth, who have achieved our strongest Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) results in several years.

This year, 25% of all EPQ entries were awarded an A\*; a remarkable accomplishment that reflects the depth of scholarship and independence demonstrated across the cohort. Among these, one project achieved full marks 50/50, while another scored an outstanding 48/50, showcasing the extraordinary standard of work being produced.

In addition, 56% of all entries were graded A - A\*, our best results since 2021, when outcomes were Centre/Teacher Assessed Grades. This year's success builds on the EPQ's long-standing role in enabling pupils to lead their own research, think critically, and explore academic interests beyond the confines of examined syllabuses: an ethos reflected in the description of the EPQ.

As in previous years, pupils undertook a diverse range of topics and presented their findings to staff, family and peers, outlining the work they had undertaken.

The EPQ is a standalone qualification, equivalent to half an A Level, designed to extend and develop pupils' abilities beyond the syllabus and prepare them for university or their future career. The EPQ allows pupils to lead their own projects, planning and carrying out research on a topic that they've chosen which isn't covered by their other subjects.

Charlotte Drinkwater, EPQ Coordinator at The Leys, commented: "We are incredibly proud of the hard work, curiosity and independence shown by our pupils. Their achievements reflect both their commitment and the strength of the EPQ programme."

To find out more about the EPQ, [follow the link here](#).



A\*  
25%

A\* - A  
56%

Full marks awarded to Giselle H.

Are physical limitations or ethical concerns the primary challenge to developing Martian Agriculture?

## FEATURED NEWS



### Tom Signs to England Touch Rugby Youth Academy

Year 10 pupil Tom P has earned a place in the prestigious England Touch Rugby Youth Academy, a high-performance programme designed to develop elite players and prepare squads for major international competitions, including the European Championships later this year.

Tom explained how his preparation was instrumental in his success: "I was provided with a gym session program to work on my physical attributes; this improved my game massively. The combined training from my regional team, the Cambridge team and gym sessions lead to this achievement."

As part of the Academy, Tom will attend a series of intensive training camps leading up to the European Youth Touch Championships in August. His first camp took place last month, and he shared his excitement: "My first session went really well and was very enjoyable, although it was quite physically demanding. It motivated me to work hard for the upcoming sessions."

Director of Sport at The Leys, Ben Elston, commented: "This achievement reflects Tom's unwavering dedication and commitment to his sport. Securing a place in the England Touch Rugby Youth Academy is not only a testament to his hard work and resilience but also an exciting milestone in his journey. It marks an important step toward representing England on the international stage, and we are incredibly proud to see him embrace this opportunity to develop his skills among the country's most promising young players."

### Bursary Fundraising Target Reached

We are thrilled to announce that we have not only reached, but exceeded our £150,000 fundraising target for 2025, the School's 150th anniversary year. The total raised was £162,824 which, with matched funding included, means a final total of £312,824.

Director of Development, Sarah Proud, shared how happy the School is to have achieved this: "Setting a target of £150,000 for the 150th year was just too tempting, and when a generous Old Leysian provided £150,000 of match funding, we had to go for it! It was an ambitious number but, with the Leysian community behind us, I had faith we could pull it off. We are so grateful to our donors, who believe in the power of bursary places at The Leys and reached out to make it happen. It went down to the wire in December but, in the end, we beat our target by over £12,000, raising more for bursaries than in any previous year. This campaign will have a profound and enduring impact: for the children who will be able to attend because of it; the School community of which they will be a part; and the future world they will help to shape."

Throughout the year, the whole community – pupils, parents, staff, Old Leysians and other supporters of the School – pulled together for fundraising activities, including the pupil Pitlochry House Challenge, and a Parent Ball at Girton College, where guests took part in a very successful silent auction. Both activities brought out the competitive side in our generous Leysian community, which was great news for our bursary recipients.

We would like to thank every single person who contributed to this outstanding result, which will make a world of difference to our bursary pupils: [click here](#) to hear some of them speak for themselves.



## SCHOOL LIFE



### A Wintry Welcome Back

In January we welcomed back all staff and pupils with a few wintry days, as we began the Lent term. We hope everyone enjoyed a restful break.



### Red January Initiative

With January underway, our Community and Wellbeing Prefects, Oliver E and Keira H, encouraged everyone to get involved in Red (Rise Every Day) January. The initiative focused on creating positive habits and getting people moving throughout the month - a fantastic way to boost wellbeing and ease into the new year.

For those involved, we hope you have a positive habit that lasts you the year.

## SCHOOL LIFE

### Aoyama Gakuin Exchange

Back in October, we were warmly welcomed by our partner school, Aoyama Gakuin, in Tokyo. In January, we had the pleasure of returning the gesture by inviting them to experience life at The Leys.

After settling into the School and Cambridge, they rounded off their first week with a welcome party, where Lucy H and Jasper C reflected on their time during the exchange. It was a lovely evening that helped the pupils feel at home, and we hope they enjoyed their time with us.



### English Teacher Mr Beeching Publishes 'Dreamer's Grid'

A big congratulations to Mr Beeching, English teacher here at The Leys, who has published his first novel, 'Dreamer's Grid.'

The story is set in a world where all but a tiny percentage of the population has passed away. It is not down to any normal infection, but because of a disease that targets the mind. Those that remain, fend for themselves until strangers appear down the roadways to tell them that they've discovered a cure using technology long-thought extinct.



## SCHOOL LIFE



### Business Tycoon Society Place Top 5 in The Tycoon Enterprise Competition

At the end of January our pupils involved in the Business Tycoon Society were rewarded after weeks of hard work. The results of their entry to The Tycoon Enterprise Competition run by the Peter Jones Foundation were released, with the pupils - who designed their brand Nomás and sold printed t-shirts - placing 5th out of 44 teams in the competition.

Through the duration of the initiative, the team set up their online presence, organised photoshoots for the product and ran pop up events to sell, ending with an overall profit of £630.00. A great achievement for the team and invaluable skills learnt in the process.



## SCHOOL LIFE

### Interhouse Debating Competition

On Thursday 22 January, the first round in the Interhouse Debating Competition took place, discussing the motion, "This House believes that rewilding is fanciful", with representatives of Granta and Moulton vs Bisseker House.

The competition began with arguments for and against the motion, with members of the team responding well to questions from the opposing side. Both teams demonstrated great evidence for their reasoning and displayed confidence in their public speaking.



### Year 9 Cooking

Our Year 9 pupils came together to bake chocolate chip cookies, in cooking recently. Cooking forms part of our wider curriculum, offering a range of opportunities to support pupils in becoming well-rounded individuals.

Under staff supervision, pupils followed recipe instructions, taking turns to combine ingredients, and portioned out the cookies, before placing them in the oven. The session provided a relaxed and enjoyable way to wind down after a day of academic learning, resulting in a sweet treat, but also rewarding pupils in their development of a valuable life skill.



## SCHOOL LIFE

### West House Masked Singer

Congratulations to the staff and pupils who participated in West House's Masked Singer event on Wednesday 28 January. The song choices showcased a wonderful variety, featuring artists such as Adele, Meatloaf and Queen. Performances were enriched with video clips from West House and commentary from the comperes, making it a truly enjoyable evening. All funds raised will be donated to the West House charity, Encephalitis International.



### Conservation Society in Barton

Following the Year 11 mock exams, our local conservation society continued their work in Barton, returning to environmental duties. The team focused on coppicing, which involves cutting trees back to their base to encourage new growth. They were also supporting a local environmental charity, at the site. The pupils enjoyed spending time outdoors and making the most of the fine weather, providing a refreshing balance after assessments.



## SCHOOL LIFE

### School Partnership Programme

As part of our Schools Partnerships programme, we were delighted to welcome pupils from Great Abington Primary, Old Buckenham Hall and Heath Mount School, for an afternoon of enriching activities this term.

The visiting pupils enjoyed specialist hockey coaching, led by our resident sports graduate Oscar Davies, while others took part in dynamic Shakespeare drama workshops, delivered by Cory Pulman-Jones, our Director of Performance Drama.

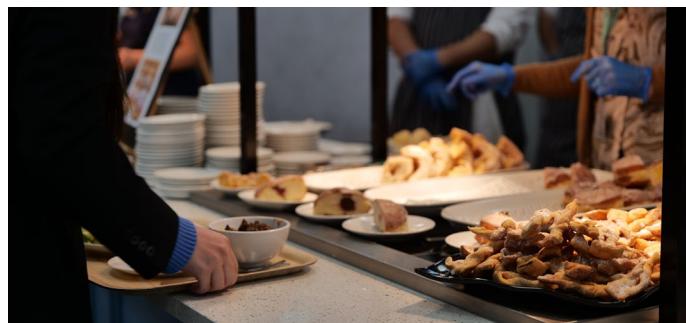
The sessions, with assistance from some of our Sixth Form pupils, offered a valuable opportunity to develop new skills and experience aspects of school life beyond their usual classroom setting.



### Celebrating Tłusty Czwartek

Tłusty Czwartek, or 'Fat Thursday', is a long standing Polish tradition celebrated on the final Thursday before Lent. To mark the occasion, chef Lucasz Wankowicz organised for staff and pupils to enjoy a selection of traditional treats at lunchtime on Thursday 12 February - most notably the sweet pastries typically associated with this day, such as doughnuts.

The tradition dates to 17th century Poland and represents a final opportunity for indulgence before the fasting period of Lent begins. We hope everyone enjoyed the delicious treats from this Polish tradition.



## TRIPS

### Affinity Group Visit The Museum of Cambridge

Members of the Affinity Group visited the Museum of Cambridge this term with Miss Robinson to view the Legacies of Windrush exhibition.

Pupils explored the oral histories of West Indian Cambridge elders who arrived during the Windrush era, which began in 1948, and reflected on what history means for Black British communities today, as well as what the future might hold.



The visit prompted many thoughtful discussions, with pupils reflecting on how the exhibition made history “feel real and personal” to them, highlighting the importance of spaces like the Affinity Group, where Black pupils can come together to discuss, learn and celebrate the rich range of Black culture within The Leys community.



### Warwick Ancient Drama Festival

Pupils studying Ancient History, Latin, and Drama travelled to Warwick University to attend the Schools' Day of the Warwick Ancient Drama Festival.

They enjoyed a series of fascinating lectures, delivered by university academics, on ancient tragedy, history, pottery, and stagecraft. The pupils were then treated to an intense and thrilling production of Aeschylus' *Oresteia* tragedy - offering an insight into how classical drama can be reinterpreted for the modern stage.

## SPORT

### Pre-Season Netball

As the Christmas break came to a close, it was fantastic to see activities starting to pick up on site. On Tuesday 6 January, our pre-season Netball players were back in action, training hard in preparation for the upcoming sports season.



### U14A Girls' Hockey Quarter Finals

The U14A Girls' Hockey Team concluded an outstanding run in the England Hockey Plate Competition on Wednesday 21 January, reaching the Quarter Finals. It was an intense and closely contested match, with both teams giving their all. A massive well done to all the girls who took part throughout the competition — it was a true team effort, and they fought right to the final whistle.



## SPORT

### **U16 Girls' Hockey Semi-Final**

A massive well done to the U16 Girls' Hockey Team who won their National Semi-Final on sudden death shuffles. It was a really tightly contested match, with both teams battling hard for the win. Well done team!

A big thank you to our opponents for their incredible hospitality.



### **Red January Football Tournament**

In support of Red January, our Wellbeing Prefect and Community Prefect organised a football tournament for the end of January to celebrate getting through what is often the toughest month of the year, while promoting positivity, activity and wellbeing across our school community.

We had 14 teams take part, with separate boys' and girls' competitions, and the turnout and enthusiasm from everyone involved was absolutely amazing. It was fantastic to see so many pupils getting involved, supporting each other and enjoying the opportunity to come together for some friendly competition and fun.

A huge well done and thank you to Keira H and Oliver E for organising such a brilliant evening. Their hard work helped make the event a real success and a great way to finish January on a positive note.



## MUSIC AND DRAMA

### Lunchtime Live - Guitar Spotlight

Our first lunchtime live back in the term and the School community was treated to a guitar-centred showcase. Several pupils across the year groups took to the stage to display their talents, some as joint performances, instrumentals and vocal pieces - a real variety for those in the audience.

The performances culminated in a solo from Mr Webb, bringing the event to a memorable close in celebrating the breadth of musical talent across the School.



### 'Inviting a Friend to Dinner' Performances

On Wednesday 23 January, 22 Drama Scholars from Years 9, 11, 12 and 13 performed scripts, screen plays, novels and poems, all with a food theme in an evening performance entitled 'Inviting a Friend to Dinner'.

The repertoire of work ranged from Joyce to Milton, Mike Leigh to Sabrina Mahfouz as well as legendary cookery writers such as Julia Child and Anna Del Conte.

The performance took place 'in-the-round' with the audience sat at dinner tables whilst watching. With each piece the audience were offered a corresponding piece of food to eat or smell, making this a multi-sensory experience.



## MUSIC AND DRAMA

### Symphonia Showcase

In preparation for February's 'Symphonia Showcase Concert,' musicians from all year groups and abilities took part in a 'Symphonia' workshop. The session was led by Emily Calderwood, Director of Music at Morehouse School in Knightsbridge, London, who opened the workshop with a vocal performance of Debussy.

Pupils were encouraged to perform, listen, and discuss their pieces - ranging from Mozart to My Chemical Romance. The workshop provided a highly productive and collaborative experience for all involved.



### School House Pop Concert

The start of February saw pupils and parents gather at the Recital Hall for the School House Pop Concert.

The concert was a fantastic event with a warm atmosphere and brilliant performances from a variety of ages and Houses at The Leys, including not only Sixth Formers but pupils in Year 10, Moulton and staff. There were covers of The Killers, Dolly Parton, Oasis, ABBA and The Smiths, leaving guests and performers alike with a spring in their step.

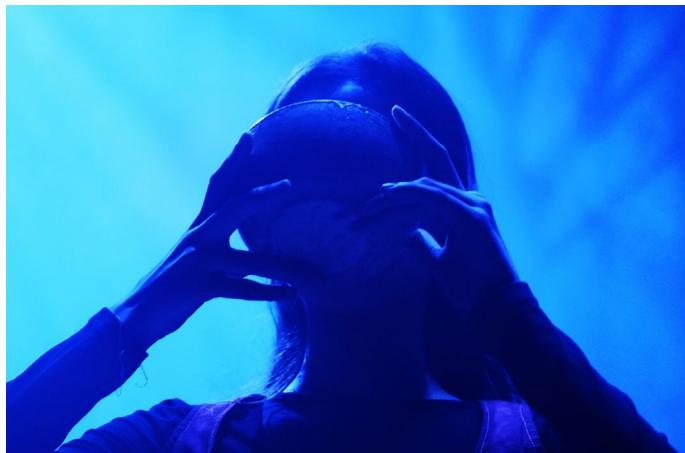
All proceeds raised from ticket sales will be go to School House's charity this year, Dementia UK.

## MUSIC AND DRAMA

### 'The Crucible' Production

Well done to the cast and crew of our Year 10 production of 'The Crucible', who performed their two night during the last week of term.

Set during the Salem witch trials, The Crucible shows how fear and suspicion spiral into mass hysteria in a small Puritan community.



## VISITING GUESTS & WORKSHOPS

### US College Scholarships Talk

On Friday 30 January, pupils attended a lunchtime careers talk delivered by Emma Bennett, athlete manager for Sports USA. As a former world-ranked junior tennis player, Director of Tennis, field hockey player and coach, it was an insightful session.

The talk explored sporting and academic pathways, training as a professional athlete and ways in which Sports USA can support pupils in securing scholarships at leading American universities. An opportunity for pupils to consider their options available and help identify the path that best suits their ambitions.



### Coaching Training

On Monday 9 February, we welcomed Kim Wells, who brings 28 years of teaching experience and International Coaching Federation (ICF) credentials, to deliver our onsite coaching training sessions.

Kim noted how staff participated with curiosity and raised thoughtful questions, throughout the engaging session. With a combination of practical tools, reflective discussion, and hands on exercises, all were designed to deepen our coaching culture. The session provided a valuable opportunity for personal and professional growth, equipping the team - regardless of their role within the School - with strengthened skills to support others.

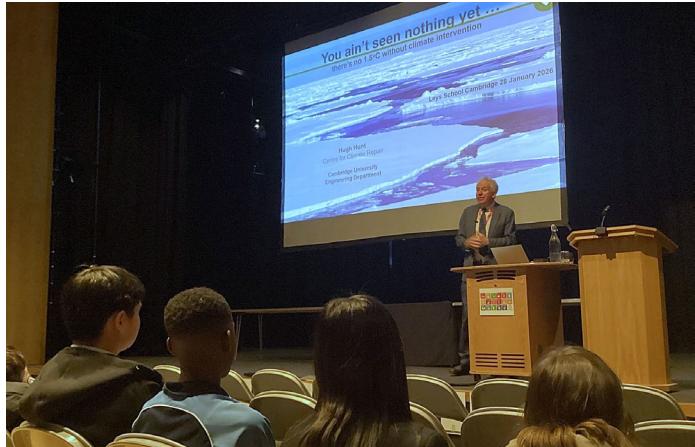
We look forward to welcoming Kim back again next month.

### Global Goals Lecture

Professor Hugh Hunt, from the Department of Engineering, University of Cambridge, joined us at The Leys to discuss our climate and its future, in his 'Global Goals' lecture.

As a leader in public engagement for science and engineering and a recipient of the RAErg Rooke Award, the talk was insightful, educational and thought-provoking into the future of our climate and the interventions needed to sustain civilisation.

Hear from pupils in attendance what they thought of the talk on our [Instagram](#) or [Facebook](#) post.



## COMMUNITY LIFE

### Parent Wine Tasting & Cheese Pairing – tickets selling fast

Join us for an indulgent evening of wine tasting and cheese pairing in partnership with Corney & Barrow fine wine merchants. Their expert sommelier will guide you through six exceptional wines, five paired with a selection of fine cheeses and one complemented with a decadent chocolate truffle.

Proceeds from the evening will [support bursary places at The Leys](#), including a percentage of wine sales on the night.

- Friday 13 March 2026, 7-9.30pm
- Great Hall, The Leys

Tickets are selling fast so book now to avoid disappointment.

You'll be able to specify seating preferences or book a table of six!

[Book tickets here](#)



### Parent Wine Tasting & Cheese Pairing

Friday 13 March 2026, 7-9.30pm

Great Hall, The Leys

**CORNEY &  
BARROW**  
INDEPENDENT WINE MERCHANTS-1780

**THE** Leys

# Follow Us

We are active on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn, and aim to post content about daily life at The Leys several times each week during term time. To receive our news stories in a timely way, and to be part of the conversation, please like our pages and follow our story using the links below.



@theleysschoolcambridge



Ten pupils from The Leys attended the annual M...  
hosted by Stephen Perse from Friday 30 January delegation, of 10 Lower Sixth and Upper Sixth pu...



@leyscambridge

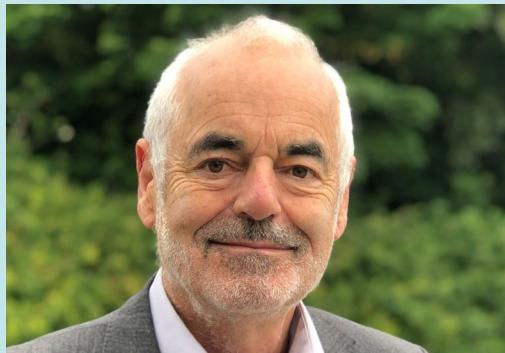


The Leys School



# What's On?

**Music Scholars' Concert**  
**Monday 2 March**  
**19:00**  
**Great Hall**



**Professor Sir David Spiegelhalter**  
**Thursday 5 March**  
**17:30 - 18:30**  
**Great Hall**

**Parent Wine Tasting & Cheese Pairing**  
**Friday 13 March**  
**19:00 - 21:30**  
**Great Hall**

Tickets: [The Leys Events Page](#)



**Decades - School Dance Show**  
**Wednesday 25 March**  
**19:15**  
**Great Hall**

Tickets for all events in Great Hall can be booked [here](#).

The Leys School, Cambridge CB2 7AD

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