

THE KITE

Issue 2



ODBST - WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR ME?

You may have heard that assemblies are now being referred to as 'collective worship' – but what does that mean?

Chiltern Hills has recently joined a multi-academy trust (MAT), the Oxford Diocese Buckinghamshire Schools Trust – ODBST for short – meaning we are part of a larger network of schools. Although this won't really impact how the school operates, one day-to-day change is that assemblies are now called 'collective worship'.

Faith in action

The ODBST is rooted in Christian values, but CHA has been a Church of England school since 2011, so ultimately our values are not changing – 'collective worship' is just new terminology.

How does it impact me?

The policies and workings of the school are rarely our concern as students, beyond whether we might get a cheeky snow day or whether anything is being done to alleviate the queues to get food at break and lunch. It's understandable, though, that students might be curious about what it means to join a MAT. In particular, non-Christian students might be worried about what it means to join an organisation which is closely aligned with the Church.

Around the school, it seems that not much has changed: our core values are still reflected in our Houses, and although these are values rooted in Christianity, they'll also be familiar to those of us who follow Islam or other religions. Beyond that, values like Honesty and Respect are really just what we all want to see around us, so even if we have no faith, it certainly seems like something we can agree with.

There will also be no change to the material running of the school: our teachers will still be our teachers, our uniform will remain the same, and the subjects we are able to study will remain available to us.

Assemblies

One notable difference is, of course, the inclusion of a Bible reading and prayer for assemblies. But we at The Kite appreciate what Mr Dobbs had to say on the matter: it's just something to help us to think, it can apply to people from all faiths and none, and there is no expectation to join in with prayer.

Ultimately, if the only real change is what we name our assemblies, it's very much 'business as usual' for Chiltern Hills Academy. Now, time to wish for that snow day...

Opinion

The Decline of Superhero Movies

by Benjamin Pike

Almost everyone has watched a superhero movie before; in fact, it would probably be harder to find someone who hasn't. With the genre dominating the box office across the 2000s with Christopher Nolan's gritty *Batman* trilogy and the iconic spiderman trilogy starring Toby Maguire, or the 2010s seeing the peak of the juggernaut that was the MCU. How could a titanic of an industry like this sink?

Truth is, you've lived through the fall of these movies already, not even massive IPs like the *Fantastic 4* or *Superman* have come close to what movies of the past made. In fact, *Fantastic 4: First Steps* grossed the same amount as *The Fantastic 4* movie 20 years prior, accounting for inflation; as for 2025's *Superman*, it grossed less than *Man Of Steel* released in 2013. These are big names that are making less than films starring the same characters decades prior. It's not that these new films are of less quality either, both received generally great reviews from critics and fans alike. What is worse is that these are higher grossing examples, movies such as *Thunderbolts* made even less. What happened?

Now, I find that it is not just a random happening but was rather the result of years of many factors. I'd like to start this journey to ironically call out the superhero movies that most recently made money in the billion-dollar range. *Spiderman No Way Home* (2021) and *Deadpool 3* (2024) were the last superhero movies to gross over \$1 billion. This is important to mention because both movies were sequels. Now the popularity of sequel compared to films which start new stories is significant because it shows how people have stopped caring about these new stories.

In a time where cinema tickets are increasingly expensive, it seems people would rather go to a movie they know they will likely enjoy and that used a story they were already invested in rather than risk watching a bad film with characters who have not been introduced yet with stories that general audiences have not been given a reason to care about.

Streaming only peddled this further, characters that were previously forgotten like *Aquaman* and *Black Panther* gained movies in the 2010s which grossed them over one billion dollars, these superheroes previously were relatively forgotten yet still had massive audiences who were willing to risk their cash to watch them.

Other than the increase in cinema ticket prices, streaming helped kill how willing people were to see these movies as rather than paying high prices for a better experience, they prefer to wait for the movies to come to streaming, as they have a whole library of content accessible to them for less.

It also seems that the market was so oversaturated by the genre that the public in general started to lose interest in them, superhero movies were not just plots and actors on a screen, they were very much also supposed to be about spectacle, audiences wanted to see this spectacle, resulting in the higher box office results. Yet, in an unfortunate twist, superhero movies were deemed unimpressive in public view after the movie *Avengers: Endgame*, one of the highest grossing movies of all time, managing \$2.7 billion in 2019.

The movie saw pretty much every Marvel superhero Disney owned at the time going to war with a villain which had previously wiped out many well-liked characters, millions of people flocked to see the culmination of everything they had seen before. Then, once the time was over, the genre dropped in popularity. Extremely successful superhero movies started to go from being the regular, to being the exceptions, and I believe it is because people believe they had seen what they wanted and failed to see how these new films could capture the spectacle. Yet, quality of films had also declined in this time, movies like Dr Strange Multiverse of Madness and Antman Quantimania had audiences, yet when the films were unimpressive, they also discredited the works that followed.

We can also find that even sequels to successful movies like Joker and Captain Marvel, even when the sequels were questionable, made very low profit.

Overall, Superhero movies are less popular than before because of increasing cinema prices, low quality movies that ended up masking any quality projects made in future, the popularity of streaming and the unwillingness to risk being disappointed at the high cost on top of trying too hard to top the spectacle that came before. The hope of these projects gaining popularity that it once would is not dead, yet it seems increasingly unlikely.

Book review



by Ajan Kantha

Shadowhall Academy is an amazing start to horror. Want to be able to read a horror book without getting scared, without getting shivers in the middle of the book? Then Shadowhall Academy is the book for you! It perfectly combines the elements of friendship and horror; even though it isn't completely petrifying, I would still not recommend reading this in the middle of the night in your house. Especially next to a wall... Read the book to find out why. Oh, and don't stare at the pages for too long, or you might start seeing double...

It's beginning to look a lot like... only Christmas?

by Cara Thomas

In the run up to the Christmas holidays, anyone at CHA may expect to see the usual decorations: Trees bedecked in tinsel, Christmas jumpers, or speakers blasting Mariah Carey, and that's lovely, but the difference between how we celebrate Christmas and how we acknowledge other festivals highlights an issue. Some traditions consume the whole month of December, while others get a polite ten-minute assembly.

Christmas becomes the theme of every lesson, and by the second week of December it feels illegal to be taught anything that isn't accompanied by elves. For many students, Ramadan is a PowerPoint, Diwali is a poster, Hannukah is mentioned once if you're lucky, the Lunar New Year purely depends on whether your form tutor remembers, and Vaisakhi is only accessible to an elite few. So, in a school like CHA which prides itself on being inclusive of those 'of all faiths and none' (cited from the Vision and Values page of our website), and has Chesham Mosque as a prominent partner, you can definitely hear talk about inclusivity and valuing the beliefs and views of others, but as a C of E school, our identity is still very clearly Christian.

The problem is that focusing on Christmas could be teaching social values, even when it doesn't mean to. It feels 'universal', while others feel 'niche' because we never give them the credit they deserve. One is normalised; the other is optional. Familiar, outward signs of Christmas like the English Department trying to convince people that Dickens invented joy, or 'festive fractions' could become: diyas in classroom windows and floor art in colourful spirals throughout the atrium for Diwali, or baking Pan De Muerto and painting sugar-skulls for the Day of the Dead. There's so many religious festivals that never get a mention, despite diversity being valued as 'a rich resource'.

Maybe the answer isn't to celebrate Christmas less, but to recognise that other traditions shape the way that many students at CHA see the world. Why should festivals be exclusively at home for some people, but a cultural supernova during the school day for others?



International News

Pillars of Sand: Is the NATO Alliance on Shaky Ground?

by Felix Clayton

Written 15/01/2026 - the situation has changed since then!

Is the NATO Alliance on shaky ground?

The date is September 11th, 2001. A Boeing 767 has been hijacked by a group of Al-Qaeda affiliated terrorists and is on a collision course with the world trade centre. This disaster will mark the first time Article 5 of NATO has ever been invoked.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) was established with the associated signing of the North Atlantic Treaty on April 4 1949 in Washington DC following the Berlin Crisis. It was originally set up with the intention to "Maintain Peace", however as demonstrated over the next 50 years, its true purpose was to protect the Western World from the Soviet Union. This Treaty was made up of 14 articles, but the most important- was Article 5.

This stated that any direct military action against one nation within NATO, should be treated as though it was an attack against them all. This meant that every country within the Alliance, no matter how small, was protected by the cumulative military might of them all. This preserved peace amongst the countries for decades, until the 2001 attacks changed the paradigm; they forced the USA to invoke the article, and almost every NATO country to deploy troops in the Afghanistan War. This conflict resulted in the casualties of 3621 deaths among the Nato forces, over 1000 of which did not belong to the USA.

Since the conflict ended, NATO countries expected the USA to uphold any other country's plea for help just as they did, but since then, American Sentiment, especially among Republicans, has become increasingly America-centric. Many Americans argue that America is giving more to NATO than it is getting back, claiming that many NATO countries do not pay as much as the USA for military operations performed by the alliance. However, this completely ignores the fact that the majority of their fellow nations have no hope of making payments as large as the USA, as their Government Budgets are tens or hundreds of times smaller than that of the United States.

Furthermore, the current president, Donald Trump, has expressed his criticality of NATO, threatening numerous times to withdraw from the alliance completely; forgetting the debt his nation owes to the alliance for their invaluable support following 9/11. This left the entire world wondering: could the cornerstone of the alliance still be trusted to protect its allies?

This was finally tested on September 10 this year 19 Russian drones entered Polish airspace and were shot down. Thankfully, there were no casualties, being limited to the damage of a single house. Fearing a Russian invasion such as that seen in Ukraine 4 years earlier, countries throughout NATO began to ready their forces for deployment and deploy fighter jets to protect Poland, including the Netherlands and France. And America? Silence. No soldiers, no planes, no response at all. Trump, who the FBI has stated benefited from Russian interference during his first election, said he would not respond as the drones may have been sent in by mistake.

And that was it, whilst the rest of NATO readied for a military response and made it overwhelmingly clear they would not tolerate any further provocations, the US stayed suspiciously silent. Now the doubt continues to grow around whether or not America would aid Europe in the event of a war. This, along with Trump's increasingly negative foreign policy toward Europe has led to tensions rising between the two powers, and a century old alliance becoming a tenuous one.

But what does this mean for us here in the UK? Well, it essentially affirms that if the United Kingdom wants to take our national security seriously, we can no longer rely on America for protection: we must invest in our military, better relations with the nations we can trust, and condemn the USA for their failure to act, rather than trying to become more friendly with them like Keir Starmer has been doing so recently. Because the old world where NATO has to live under the protective wing of America, and in order to prevent Russia from causing more deaths than they already have, we must show that we are as strong together as we once were: with the help of the USA or not.

Greg Smith MP

On 23rd May, Conservative MP Greg Smith visited CHA to talk politics

by Felix Clayton

Last year, we had the honour of welcoming Greg Smith MP, who is the Conservative representative for the neighbouring constituency of Mid Buckinghamshire. Mr Smith visited us to talk about what it means to be a Member of Parliament, as well as to spend time debating local and modern issues with students from Mr Tsang's Politics Club, as well as some others.

It was interesting to hear Mr Smith's views on the effects of Brexit on the economy, the privatisation of the NHS, and how Britain should embrace the future of fuel by investing in renewable electricity sources.

If you are interested in debating or political issues, feel free to speak to Mr Tsang for Politics Club or Mrs Marris for Debating.




















CHA sports

One of the newest school teams this year has taken flight, with an amazing start of the season! The year 9 – 11 school rugby team saw great success last term, with them becoming the only Chiltern Hills team during the October half-term to go unbeaten on tour, with a breathtaking victory and an action-packed draw.

This progress was shown to be very promising on return to England with this season a victory against High Crest Academy, and a loss against Chesham Grammar. The loss was very disappointing for all the players and coaches involved, but showed the progress of the team, on working together and playing against higher level teams like Chesham. All members hope to reach the end of the year with more victories and a chance of being in the running for Team of the Year.



Make sure to support our school in upcoming games!!

| Day/ Time | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
|---------------------|--|---|--|--|--|
| Lunch Time | Fitness Challenge  Miss Cross | Cricket  Mr Callender & Mr McPhillips | Basketball  Mr Muddiman & Mr Sperring | Volleyball  Mr Callender & Miss Cross | Badminton  Mr Muddiman & Mr Sperring |
| After School | All Years Badminton  Mr Muddiman & Mr Sperring Year 9-11 Netball  Miss Cross, Miss Frankham & Mr McPhillips Yr 7 & 8 Rugby  Mr Callender | Year 7 Basketball  Mr Sperring Year 8 Basketball  Mr Muddiman & Mr McPhillips Yr 9-11 Rugby  Mr Callender | Year 7 & 8 Netball  Miss Cross & Miss Frankham Yr 10/11 Basketball  Mr Muddiman & Mr Sperring | Year 7 Boys Football  Mr Sperring Yr 7/8 Girls Football  Mr Muddiman & Mr McPhillips Yr 9 Basketball  Mr Callender | All Years Gymnastics  Miss Cross & Miss Bale |

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