

WALLINGFORD SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

Winter Edition - December 2022



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It has been a long and busy term and that is simply great. I always remember a previous Headteacher I worked with giving an assembly about the nature of this term and how the seasons change and the message feels particularly resonant this year: we came back in September, still in the heat of a long, hot summer, we then had what felt like weeks of rain and as I write this the temperature is below freezing and we head towards Christmas in a winter wonderland. The seasons change and the school keeps moving.

And that is the wonderful thing about a school; it never stops moving. Things change and are new, we learn and develop, we have fresh experiences and opportunities. What can seem immediate one month can feel very different a month later and that is the joy of working in a constantly changing environment with great young people and adults who are committed to their progress, welfare and development.

My message to our school community at the end of a long term is to pause for a moment and reflect on all that has happened over the past three and a half months. What do we know now that we didn't know at the start of the academic year? How have we developed and embraced something new? And how are we different? Take a moment, pause and reflect, enjoy the break and Christmas and return in January refreshed and ready for the next part of the academic year.

By Mr J Marston, Headteacher



Headteacher's Message



This year I have had the honour of being a Student Leader which has come with a breadth of opportunities such as leading Student Council, organising the fundraising for Christmas Jumper Day and going to the Teachers' Conference. One of the moments that stands out the most is the opportunity to take part in the Lord Mayor's Show.

It started off with a few trips down Saville Row to get fitted into traditional Dege & Skinner attire. Whilst we were there we had the privilege of looking around the workshop area, meeting the team and learning a little bit about their history with the Royal family (including HRH Prince Harry's uniform which he wore for his wedding). On Saturday the 12th November we had an early start and headed down to London on the coach. Once we got there we were greeted with a delicious breakfast at the Merchant Taylors' Hall and then got changed into our outfits before heading down to the start of the procession. Walking behind the camels, we received big smiles and waves from the crowd. A one-of-a-kind experience I never thought I'd be part of.

The procession was held to celebrate the new Lord Mayor of the City of London, Nicholas Lyons, who is in fact a Merchant Taylor. We were given this opportunity by being one of the many schools funded by the Merchant Taylors' Company.

By Bethany Bright, Student Leader, Year 13





The Lord Mayor's Show

Here is what some of the other Student Leaders thought:

'I felt like a celebrity!' – Jamie

'A memorable event for sure. I enjoyed the atmosphere of the whole event.' – Alex

'An amazing experience. I guess that's what it's like to be a celebrity.' – Gideon

'It was great to see so many people getting together and all the smiley faces in the crowd.'
– Thomas

We are all looking forward to the future experiences and events the Student Leader role brings!





Over the weekend of the 26th and 27th of November, I was live on air at Wallingford Radio for the 24-hour show. While raising money for the local family centre Wigod Way, we hosted live music, played games, and had a disco. Throughout the show we were constantly having visitors do interviews, bring in lots of food and appear in silly costumes to keep us going. The event was extremely successful because we managed to raise over £700 for Wigod Way.

I have been volunteering at Wallingford Radio since July 2022 and have found it an extremely rewarding experience. I would like to go on to work in radio when I finish my A-Levels as I believe it is a very important job, especially for people's mental health. Radio wakes you up when you're late for work or school and gives you a way to chill out in the evening – I believe that it is the most creative form of media as it offers something for everyone.

You can tune into Wallingford Radio locally on 107.3 FM or online at www.wallingfordradio.co.uk. Every weekday morning the Breakfast show with Ian, Andrea, and I plays out from 8-11am. The station also hosts a Ska and Reggae show on a Tuesday evening, and an 80s and 90s show on a Wednesday evening. You can find the entire schedule on our website.

Wallingford School currently offers Media Studies as an A-Level and I would encourage younger students to consider looking further into this. Through Media Studies you learn all about film, radio, advertising and countless theories that make you see the world in a new light.

By Harry Lock, Year 13

Henge22 arrived which meant the coming of the Mammoth!

The Henge22 Festival, which celebrated the rich and varied history of the Wittenham Clumps and surrounding area, took place in the foothills of the Clumps on a balmy Friday evening in September. We had volunteered to make a Mammoth - and make a Mammoth we did. Seventeen pupils were needed to steer this colossus as we led 200 people to the festival site. 'Gareth the Mammoth' looked beautiful, the weather continued to be kind and we all had a LOT of fun!

Mr Hinchliffe, Mrs Williams and the intrepid performers should all be very, very pleased with themselves.

By Mr S Bowen, Head of Art





The Mammoth at Henge22 Festival



On Friday 25th November, Year 10 Food Technology students visited the BBC Good Food Show in Birmingham. Here, there was an abundance of different stalls and vendors to purchase from, demonstrations from many famous chefs and lots of inspiration for our own cooking.

In the main hall, there were hundreds of different stalls set up, from which we were able to sample and buy lots of delicious food and culinary equipment. There were many famous and familiar brands, but also small businesses for us to discover.

Later, we watched a demonstration by the talented Michelin-star chef Michel Roux Jr, which highlighted his culinary skills and expertise. He cooked a delicious piece of fish in orange vermouth and fresh herbs. He also showed us a recipe for sweetcorn pancakes. We found the demo to be very useful and we learned lots of valuable cooking skills and techniques, which we can now use in our own cooking.

Overall, not only was the trip a fun day out, it proved to be very beneficial to the food and nutrition course we are taking for GCSE.

By Jasmine Martin, Year 10



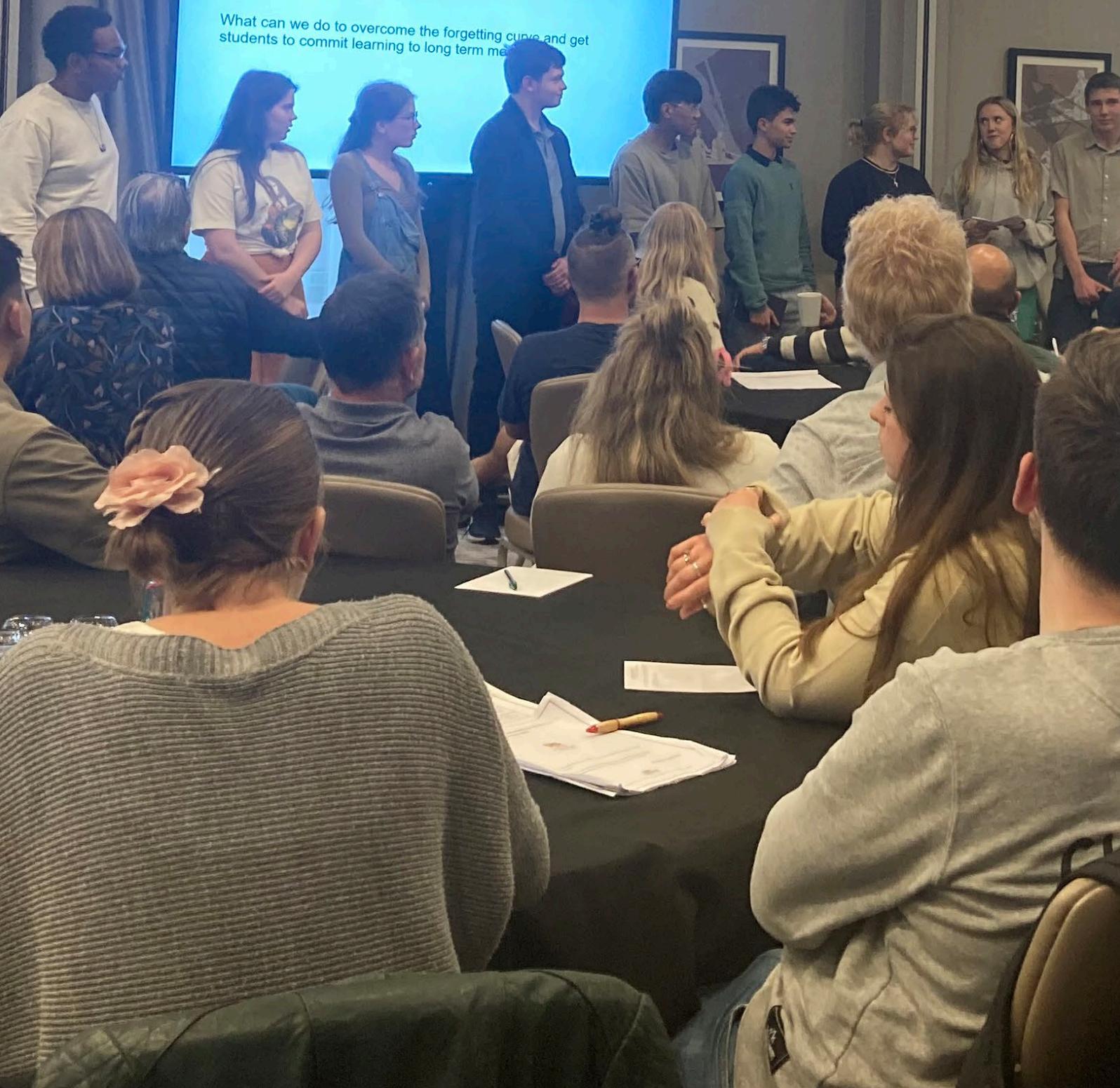


BBC Good Food Show

MTOAT Conference 2022

What role do we all play in reducing cognitive load for young people?

What can we do to overcome the forgetting curve and get students to commit learning to long term memory?



As Student Leaders, we had the privilege of attending the Teachers' Conference in October, where a variety of teaching and learning techniques were shared - all with the aim of maximising students' learning potential. Upon our subsequent return to school, we had the privilege of joining Ms Miller on some learning walks around school. This allowed us to see in person how the learning techniques theorised in the conference were put into practice in the classroom. From a student's perspective, this was an enlightening experience that gave us a unique opportunity to see "behind the scenes" how teachers plan and structure lessons.

The conference had been divided into workshops, where teachers shared their ideas and perspectives on a variety of teaching techniques. Many of these workshops focused on how to improve students' memory of content with useful revision techniques which could be incorporated into daily lessons. For instance, we learnt about how to combat the "forgetting curve," how to maximise cognitive availability and how to use the technique of interleaving to ensure content is stored in long term memory.

Following this, we observed a variety of classes around the school to see how teachers put these techniques into practice. Starting in French, we witnessed the power of live marking from mini-whiteboards. This is an assessment for learning tool which allows students to gain instant feedback on their work.

English used a similar approach, through the use of class discussions to encourage pupils to share their experiences and perspectives on the particular text and its context. By actively encouraging everyone to get involved in class discussions, it is more likely that the content covered will go into students' long term memory. Once again we saw mini-whiteboards being used – this time as an effective retrieval technique for vocabulary practice.

In DT, we saw many things put in place by the teachers to help the students succeed in the subject. For example, to reduce cognitive load, students were given a small sheet which explained what will be in their mock exams. Assessment for learning was also shown by the teacher frequently asking smaller chunked questions to make sure every student understood the content.

We also had the pleasure of observing a Science lesson in which the class were exploring 'moments' by conducting an experiment. As this was a new topic for the students, the teacher provided gap-fill worksheets and data tables for experimental data so that the students were not distracted from the purpose of the activities. This was great for preventing cognitive overload and allowing the students to focus on fully understanding the theory and creating mental associations that will improve their recall in exams.

From our observations of the conference and lessons, it has become abundantly clear that teachers spend a considerable amount of time not only planning and structuring lessons but designing and crafting them based on modern cognitive research, to suit students' needs and abilities. The ideas and perspectives shared at the teachers' conference are put into use on a daily basis at Wallingford School and the teachers are dedicated to maximising students' academic potential.

We'd like to thank our teachers for allowing us to come and see so many brilliant lessons!

By The Student Leadership Team, Year 13

Forgetting has been high on the agenda for students since September at Wallingford School. It would be more precise to say that understanding how forgetting is a normal part of the learning process has really been a focus for us all. Students have been learning about the German psychologist Ebbinghaus and his work on the way in which we commit things to our long term memory.



The forgetting curve really just formalises what we all anecdotally know – over a period of time we are likely to forget new material. That sounds quite demoralizing – the good news is that through frequent retrieval practice opportunities, we can actually overcome the forgetting curve.

COMBATING THE FORGETTING CURVE



Alongside talking about Ebbinghaus' work, we've also told students the following things about learning:

- We only learn when we think hard
- Prior knowledge helps us when we're learning something new
- Mistakes are really normal and a helpful part of the learning process
- Our brain can get overwhelmed by too much information – this is why reducing our cognitive load and distractions is so important
- We get better at things when we practice a lot over time

A group of year 11s recently spoke to me to say they didn't like the phrase 'forgetting curve' as it sounded unnecessarily negative about the learning process. They suggested we refer to it in school instead as 'the learning curve'. I think this positive approach sums up our students' attitude to learning across the school – optimistic, resilient and always willing to give things a go.

By Ms R Miller, Deputy Headteacher

Year 11 Careers Events

On Friday 18th November our Year 11s had a presentation from a member of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS). It was a very informative and detailed session covering the following:

- What surveying is and the different areas you could work in
- Different routes into surveying
- Subjects which relate to surveying
- The skills needed to start a career in surveying
- How surveying benefits all of us
- Other jobs involved in a surveying project
- The benefits of being a surveyor

Our guest also mentioned some of her career highlights which showed the reality of working as a surveyor.

These were - being involved in the projects to build Heathrow Terminal 5, Newbury Racecourse and Shepperton Film Studio.

Year 11 have had the opportunity to have 1:1 meetings with our Careers Adviser and these will continue after Christmas. They have also been able to attend presentations by The Royal Marines, The British Army and BMW.

By Mrs T Ward, Careers Adviser







Charlie Nickless, Year 8, is a Campanologist, and he regularly updates Ms Hammond on his hobby. Charlie was really pleased to ring the quarter peal on Remembrance Sunday for the first time, and he's currently preparing for Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve!

Over to Charlie:

I've been learning to ring the church bells in North Moreton for just over a year in a ring of 6 bells ranging from 200 to 660kg. Although the bells normally hang downwards, they are rung in an upright position and pulling the rope allows the bell to swing round 360 degrees with the clapper hitting the bell at both extremes of the circle. We start ringing in rounds, with the bells being rung in order of musical note, we also swap places with other bells in a process known as 'call changes'. It takes physical strength, concentration and lots of co-ordination with the other ringers to ensure that the bells sound their best.

The oldest bell in North Moreton tower is the 5th (the second heaviest one) which dates from 1350. It's incredible and quite humbling to think that a bell will have been rung to mark so many church services, special occasions, births, deaths and marriages over the intervening 670 years.

At the sad passing of Queen Elizabeth II, I helped fit muffles (leather pads attached to the clapper of the bell which dull the ringing sound, and used as a mark of respect) and rang the bells fully muffled as part of Operation London Bridge, a nationwide response to Queen Elizabeth's death.

More usually, if wanting to pay respects while ringing, the bells are rung half-muffled, when only one side of the clapper is covered. This provides alternating quieter and louder sounds when the bell is struck by the clapper. As part of Remembrance Sunday, our tower, and other towers in the area, rang half muffled, and I attempted my first quarter peal, which is a series of 1260 changes with no mistakes allowed!

If you are interested in learning (bell ringing can also count for the skills section of your Duke of Edinburgh's Award) do contact your local tower – contact details below. It is good fun and you will be made most welcome.

Goring & Streatley: josieirving@hotmail.co.uk

Benson: john.tchighi@tiscali.co.uk

Wallingford: christophertuckett@gmail.com

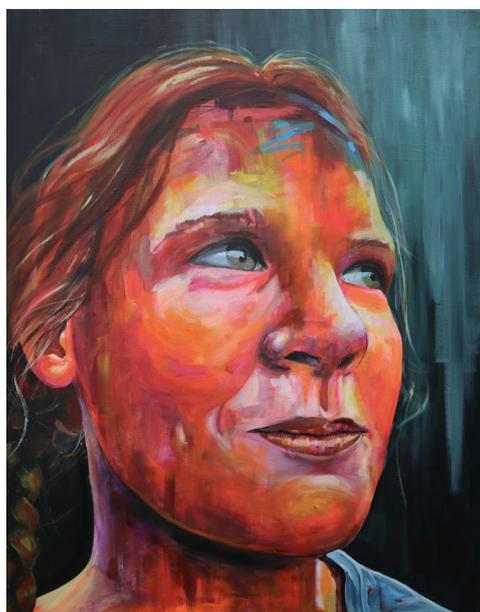
Long Wittenham: wittenhambells@gmail.com

Aston Tirrold: rachel.marffy@gmail.com

Cholsey: jennyjeskins@btinternet.com

Brightwell: johnedowling@hotmail.com

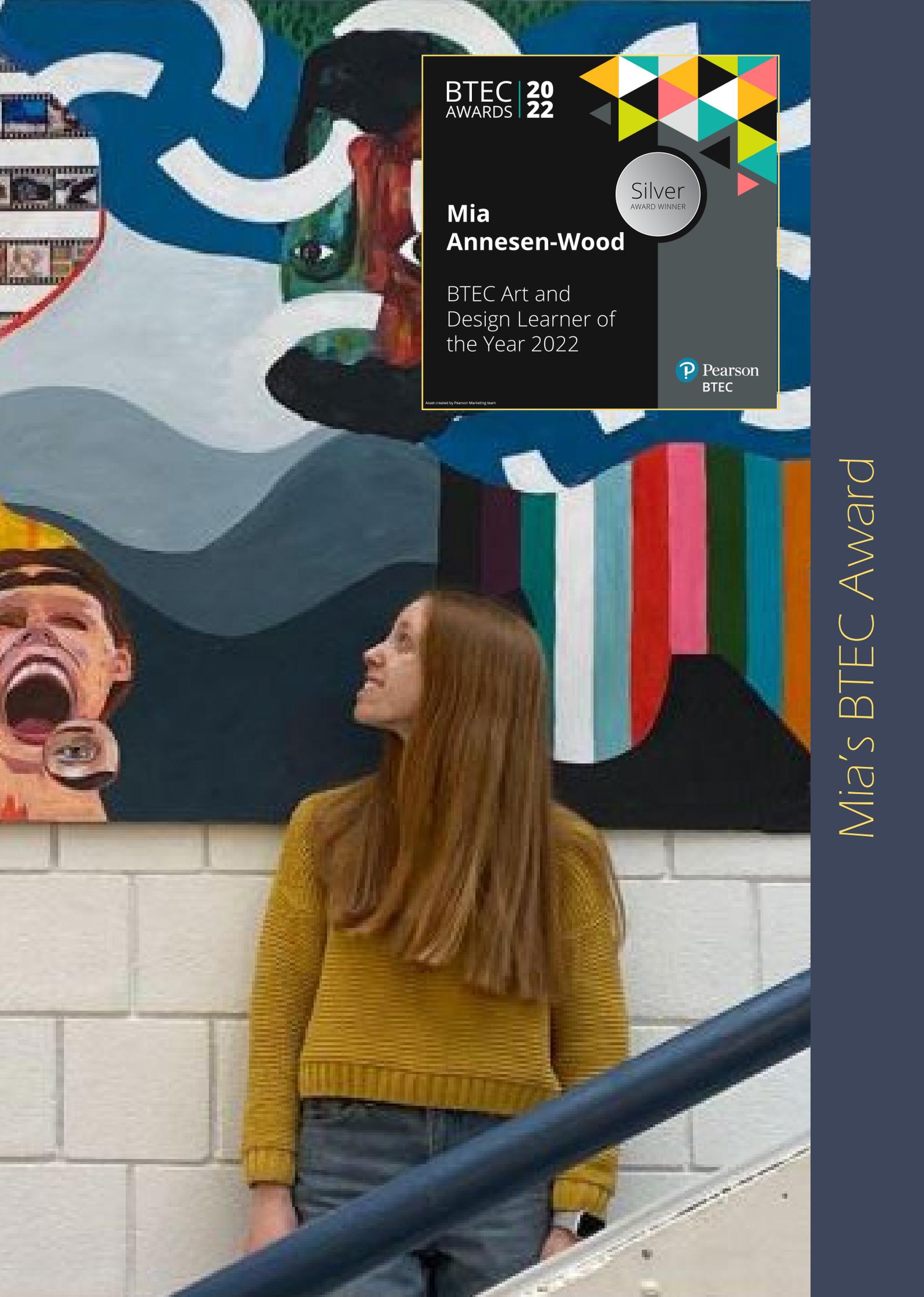
North Moreton: rob.nickless@outlook.com



Mia Annesen-Wood was one of our Star artists in Year 13 last year. We are incredibly proud of her artistic achievements over the time she spent with us. Mia experimented and produced work in every media known to mankind as well as - actually, truly, really - getting a painting exhibited in Modern Art Oxford. Which makes us even prouder that Mia's achievements have also been recognised by BTEC too!

Mia has been awarded the prestigious Silver Award for BTEC Art and Design Learner of the Year 2022! Mia's hard work and dedication wowed the judges, who felt they were left with no choice but to but to recognise them with a Silver Award. This is very, very well-deserved indeed.

By Mr S Bowen, Head of Art



BTEC AWARDS | 2022



Silver
AWARD WINNER

**Mia
Annesen-Wood**

BTEC Art and
Design Learner of
the Year 2022



Asset created by Pearson Marketing team

Mia's BTEC Award



“In September Year 9 went on the delayed Year 8 trip to Aachen! We left Wallingford late in the evening and were late getting on the ferry. After enjoying a fry up on board we were back on the coach to drive to Germany. In Aachen we explored the town, looked around the cathedral and had a traditional German lunch of schnitzel in a restaurant. After trying out our German speaking skills on the locals we visited the Lindt factory and stocked up on lots of different flavoured Lindor which my mum put away “for Christmas”. Finally we are getting to eat them!”

- Theo Sen, Year 9

“When I went to Aachen earlier this year, I had a memorable experience. Highlights were exploring the city centre, the Lindt chocolate factory and the bus trip through France, Belgium, the Netherlands and of course Germany. Although some of the people there spoke perfect English, it was a great chance to speak to a native speaker in German. The bus drive was long, but we stopped at a service station in Belgium halfway through, which provided an opportunity for speaking French when we ordered lunch. Overall a great adventure, one I’d definitely recommend.”

- Daniel Snellgrove, Year 9

“The Aachen trip was excellent. The food on the way was tasty and the trip was fun. Being in Germany for the first time was astonishingly good. The Lindt shop was cheap and was like a dream in real life. Overall I would definitely recommend going on this trip.”

- James Bradford, Year 9

“I really enjoyed my trip to Aachen. My favourite bit was walking around the town because we got to explore and look around the shops. I also got to practise my German.”

- Seth Conway, Year 9

“I found the German trip very fascinating! We got to see lots of buildings and we even went in the shops and got some really lovely things. I didn’t get much sleep on the bus but it was worth it! I would definitely go again!”

- Cara Peet, Year 9





“Früher dieses Jahr, Klasse 9 ist nach die deutsche Stadt Aachen gefahren. Es war ein toller Schulausflug, da wir haben mit Freunden Zeit verbracht. Trotz die lange Busreise hatten wir viel Zeit in Aachen. Der Höhepunkt war das Einkaufen und das traditionelle deutsche Restaurant. Beim Ende eines langen Tages sind wir ins Lindtfabrikgeschäft gegangen. Es war ein toller Ausflug und ich glaube, dass Klasse 8, die nächstes Jahr nach Aachen fahren, werden gute Erlebnisse haben!”

“Earlier this year, Year 9 travelled to the German town, Aachen. It was a great school trip because we spent time with friends. Despite the long and fun bus journey, we had lots of time in Aachen. The highlight of the school trip was the shopping and the traditional German restaurant. At the end of a long day, we went to the Lindt chocolate shop. It was a great school trip and I believe that the new Year 8 students who go on it will make adventures!”

By Will Venn, Year 9

The Art Department had the privilege of working with the Wallingford Community hospital this year. We donated two original artworks to their two new End of Life rooms as part of an initiative supported by Sue Ryder charity. It has been an honour to support them.

Thank you to Siobhan for the opportunity to do so. Also a huge thank you to Poppy and Lily for the phenomenal paintings.

By Mr S Bowen, Head of Art





Here are some lovely photos of our Remembrance display in the new W block building. Thank you to Mrs Williams and Art Club.





The Night Bus Hero

By Onjali Q. Raúf

What It's About:

The night bus is about a boy called Hector and his friends who are a little naughty. But robberies have been happening and Hector sees one and thinks it's a homeless man called Thomas. So he tells the police, later realising he made a big mistake and asks classmate Mei-Li for help. Now it's up to him and Mei-Li to find Thomas.

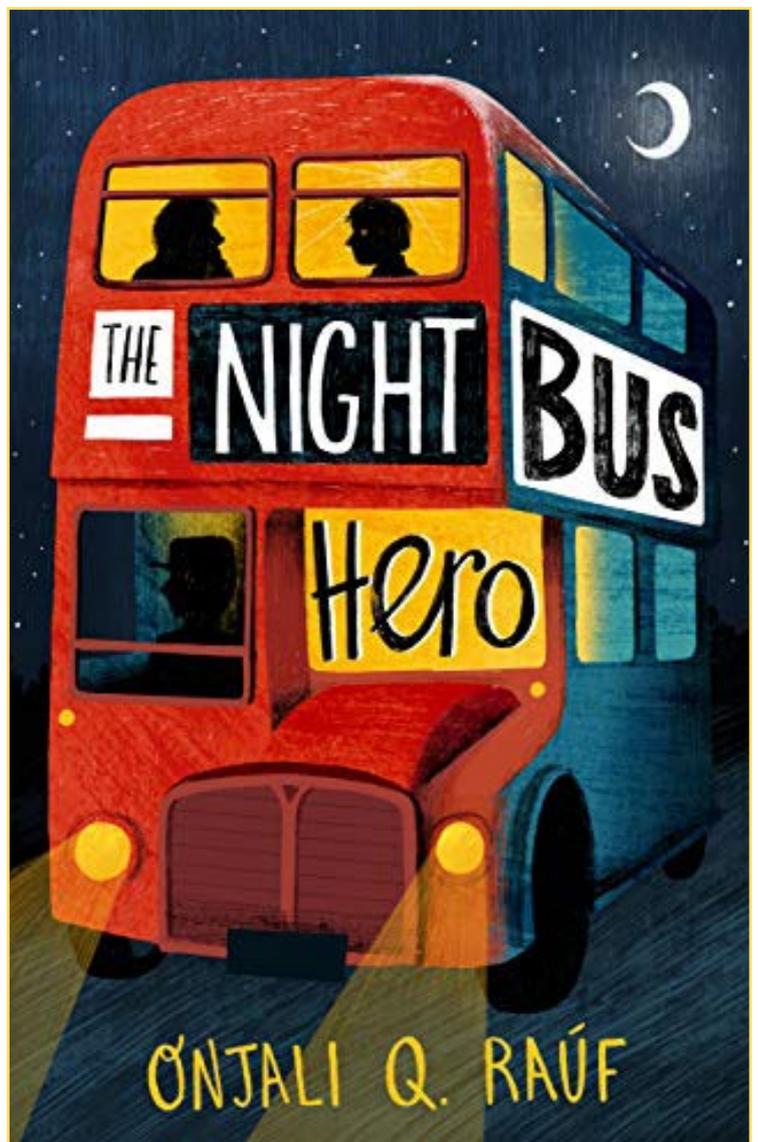
What I Think Of It:

It is a great book with adventures and plot twists. I would recommend it. I would give it 4.5 / 5.

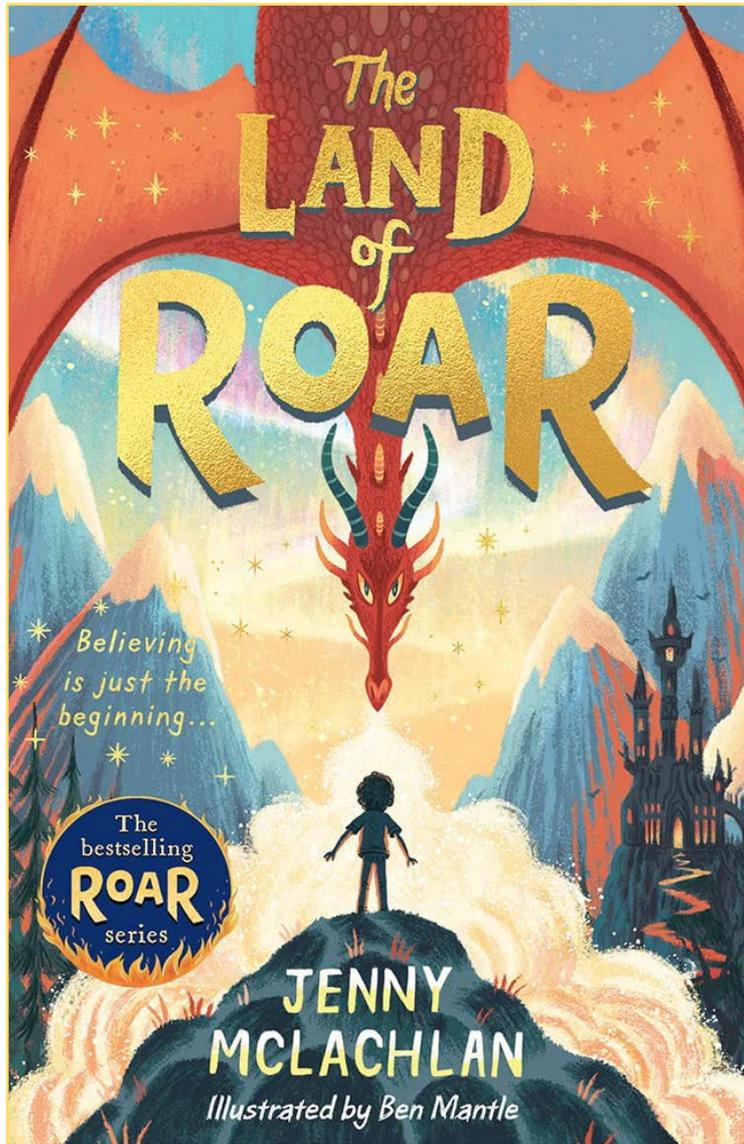
Some of the Characters:

Hector is the main character and is naughty and has 2 friends.

Mei-Li is in Hector's class and helps her dad out at the soup kitchen and is friends with Thomas.



By Joseph Wiggins, Year 7



The Land of Roar

By Jenny McLachlan

11 year old twins Rose and Arthur Trout are staying at their Grandad's house for the holidays before they start secondary school. Memories long ago of playing fun and fantastical games together in Grandad's attic now seem distant as the twins grow apart. One day, when clearing out the attic, Arthur finds that fragments of the memories piece together, fragments of a game he and Rose used to play, a game set in the land... of Roar.

However, when Grandad is whisked away by the evil villain that haunts his nightmares, Arthur and Rose find that the land of their childhood playtimes may not live on only in their memories, and that to save their Grandad and Roar they must team up

with whimsical old friends in wondrous places. But most importantly, they must find the hidden strength and courage within themselves. Can two children, an imaginary wizard-ninja, a bunch of savage girls and a clumsy dragon called Pickle save the Land of Roar?

I liked this book as its beautiful description and images fully captivates and immerses the reader in this creative world. The characters are original and fun, making the perfect collaboration of tension in the plot and humour from the characters and language.

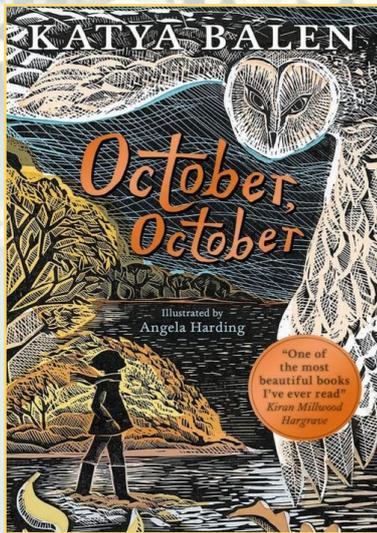
Jenny McLachlan's book is perfect for those who enjoyed The Chronicles of Narnia or The Wizard of Oz – I would highly recommend it! Overall, I would rate this book 3.5/5

By Jasmine Gibbin, Year 8



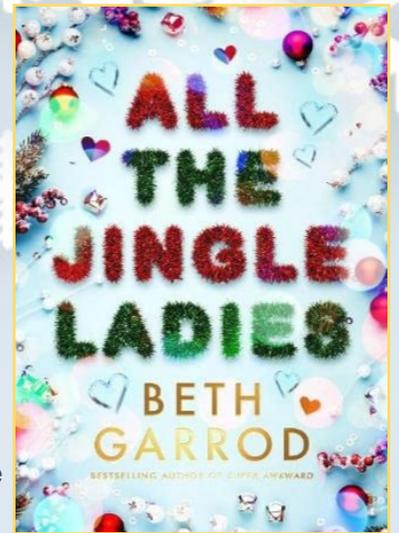
October
October
by Katya Balen

October and her dad live in the woods and they are wild. That's the way it is until the year October turns eleven. The year she rescues a baby owl. The year Dad falls out of the biggest tree in the woods. The year the woman who calls herself October's mother comes back...



All the Jingle Ladies
by Beth Garrod

Molly hates Christmas. Her parents had the biggest ever Christmas single when she was a child, and she was in the video in a hideous costume. It's only November and already it's EVERYWHERE. And when Molly meets a cute guy, how can she stop him working out who she is?



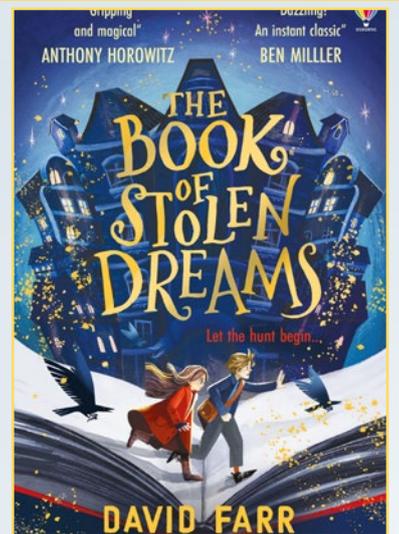
A Storm of Ice and Stars
by Lisa Lueddecke

Blood-red lights appear over the frozen island of Skane, causing a cloak of fear to fall on the village. The elders barricade its borders to keep out the plague. When Janna refuses to turn her back on people seeking refuge, she is banished to the swirling snow.



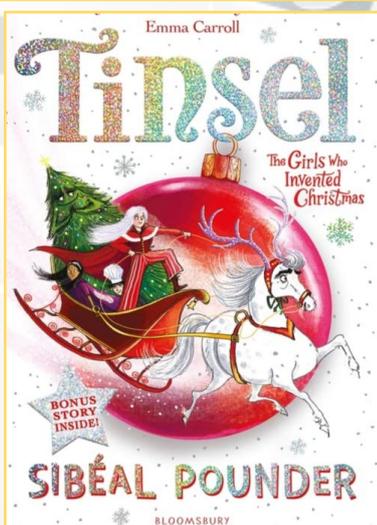
The Book of Stolen Dreams
by David Farr

When Rachel and Robert are passed a stolen book by their librarian father, they have to go on the run and protect it at all costs. With their father captured and everyone hunting for the Book, they must uncover its secrets and track down the final, missing page.



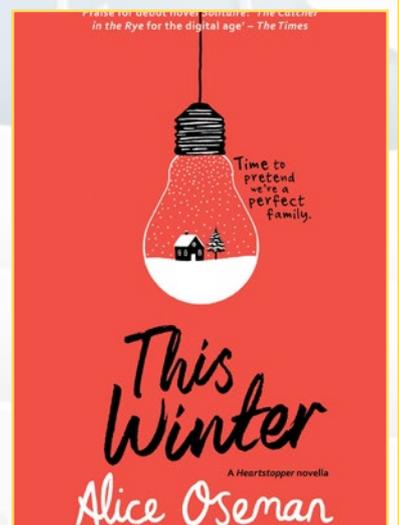
Tinsel
by Sibéal Ponder

Join Blanche Claus as she aims to deliver a Christmas gift to every child on Earth. With help from her best friend Rinki and an aspiring chef called Santa, it's a funny festive sleigh ride you'll never forget!



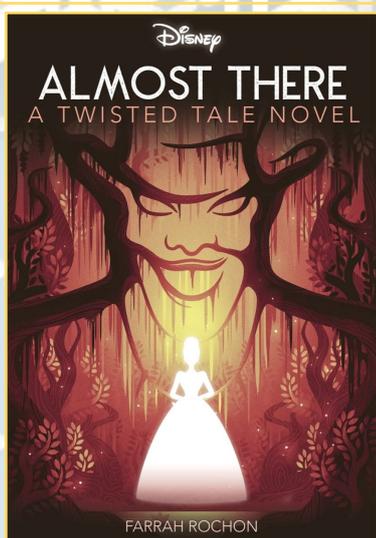
This Winter by Alice Oseman

The festive season isn't always happy for Tori and her brother Charlie. This year's going to be harder than most. "I'm not going to think about the past few months, about Charlie and me, and all of the sad. I'm going to block it all out Just for today. 'Happy Christmas,' I say."



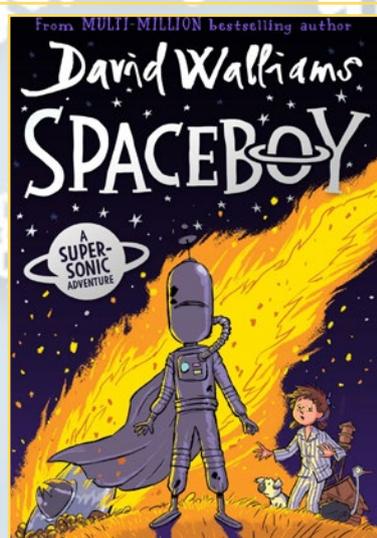
**Almost There
by Farrah
Rochon**

Tiana finds herself in a new reality where all her deepest desires are realised - she finally gets her restaurant, her friends are safe and, most miraculous of all, her beloved father is still alive. But after a while, her hometown grows increasingly eerie...



**Spaceboy
by David
Walliams**

Ruth spends her days reading comics about alien invasions. When a UFO crash lands and Ruth rushes to help, she finds a mystery - and an adventure - beyond her wildest dreams.



**The Road to
Ever After by
Moira Young**

Davy lives by his wits in the dead-end town of Brownvale. When a stray dog turns his life upside down days before Christmas, they are forced to flee. At a boarded-up museum, they meet elderly recluse Miss Flint, who has planned one last adventure before her time is up.



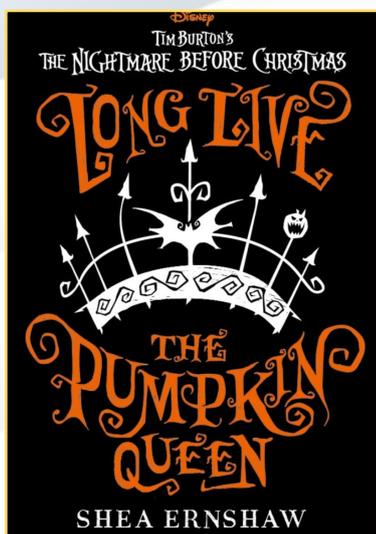
**Furthermoor
by Darren
Simpson**

Ever since his sister Evie died, Bren's only safe space is Furthermoor, an imagined world of mechanised trees and clockwork animals, where Evie is still alive. In Furthermoor, no one can hurt Bren...until the mysterious Featherly arrives.



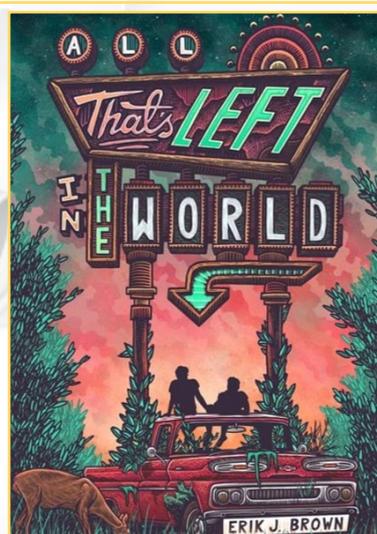
**Long Live
The Pumpkin
Queen by Shea
Ernshaw**

Jack and Sally are truly meant to be... or are they? Sally is thrown into the role of Queen of Halloween Town. Tasked with royal duties, she can't help but wonder if all she's done is swap her captivity under Dr. Finkelstein for a new cage.



**All That's Left
in the World
by Erik J.
Brown**

When the Superflu wipes out most of the population, Jamie finds himself completely alone in a cabin in the woods - until an injured stranger crosses his path.



Ms Ward writes, 'I have been extremely impressed with the quality of entries to our Creative Writing Competition. It's really exciting to see how people interpreted the theme of 'inclusion', and I found the entries thought provoking and entertaining. Huge congratulations to Alicia, Marley, and Malee, but also to everyone who entered. I look forward to seeing what you write next!'

Below, we've included some excerpts from each winner's piece. For the full versions, please see the links beneath.

In Malee Makoka's *Beyond the Wall* we find Suzy, a young girl, living an idyllic life in a city protected by a vast barrier:

Suzy was 11 years old and cared for 3 things deeply: her favourite band (Rock Out), strawberry ice-cream and her best friend Isabelle. Besides her love for dairy treats, all the children were raised by nannies: their parents were off overindulging in luxuries. Oblivious to the thought that this wasn't normal the children grew up into adults with traits much like their parents. The city was stuck in a cycle of arrogance but no one knew any better. Since anyone could remember the city had been like this. It was surrounded by thick, unbreakable steel walls and a dome, enclosing the city. This barrier was said to keep the city protected.

What the city is being protected from, Suzy doesn't know, until the day she finds a way through the barrier to the outside world:

The heat was unbearable, but she was expecting that. The floor was covered in a layer of dusty sand that filled the air like a humid mist. From where she was standing, Suzy could make out the silhouette of a shelter 100 yards away and she could hear voices coming from it. As she approached the metal structure she peered through the gap to see families crowded in a huddle, fighting for shade. As a small girl Suzy could barely imagine staying in this place for a minute longer. Their skin was burnt red and sores covered their starved, decrepit bodies. Suzy heard the voice she had heard before. It was coming from a girl her age dressed in rags. You could see the anguish in her face.

Marley Clark's poem, *The Man with 'Luck'*, tells of a homeless man outside a shop. How did he end up there? Was it bad luck?

*Who's the man with the hat,
Who is probably surrounded by rats,
Who needs warmth and shelter?*

*That guy outside the shop,
Who sometimes gets chased by a cop,
The homeless guy with a cup,
That ran out of luck.*

*Sitting in the freezing cold,
Sitting in the dark,
Can't get to sleep,
Was there even a chance?*

How should we react to people like that? Marley asks us to consider our own lives, and whether we really have so much to complain about when compared with someone in a worse situation:

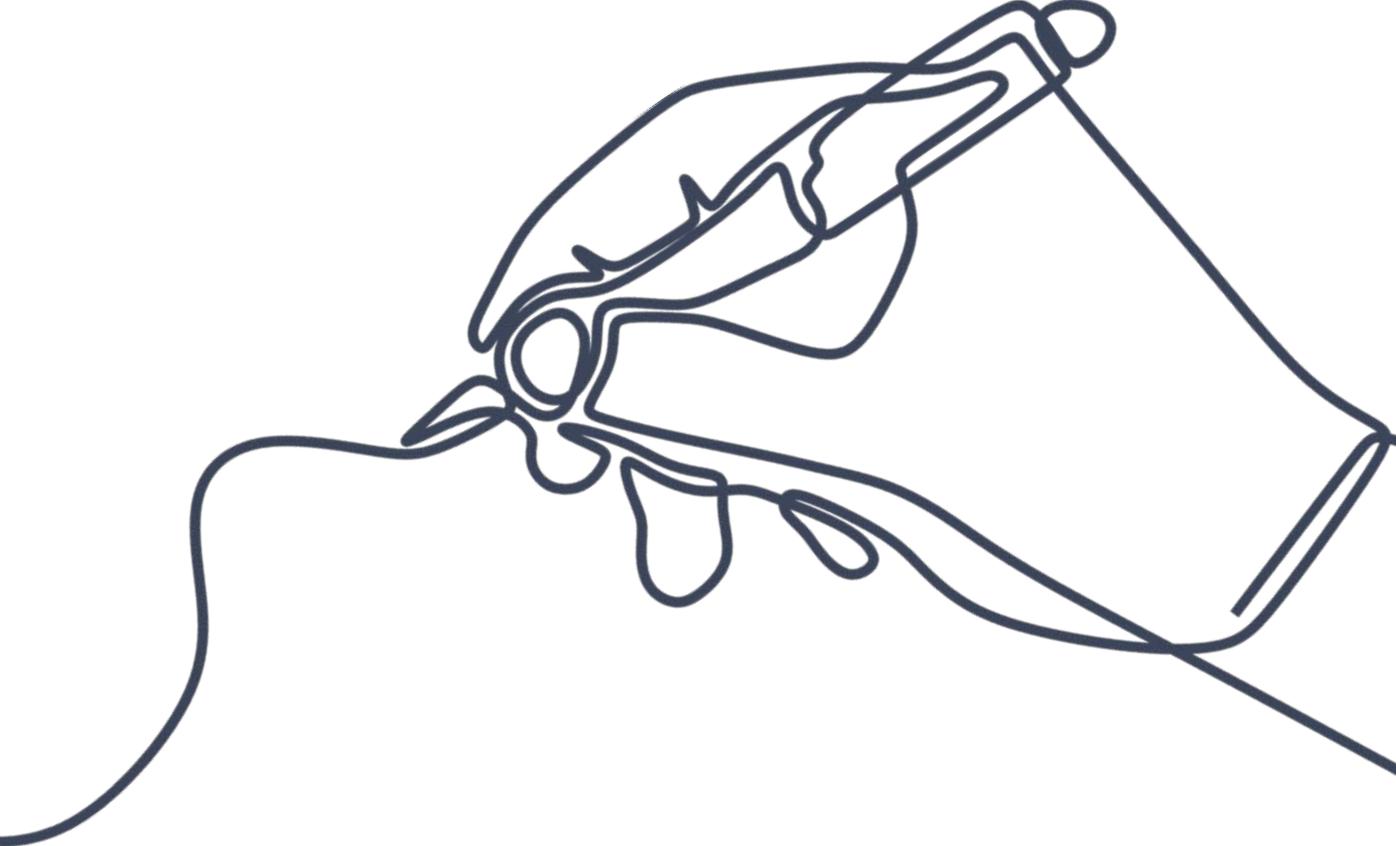
*He needs help, all of them do,
So why not help?
Or you can choose.*

*Life is always hard,
So why not try get around unscarred,
That's what we are all trying to do,
Just trying to get through.*

*Just trying to get through it all,
Pain and bars, it's all quite hard.*

*But at the end of the day,
Life is a hooray,
It's a roller-coaster,
So why not enjoy it,
Don't go around sitting and feeling like it's unfair,
So what if it is,
Nothing is good, nothing is wrong,
You haven't even been given that long.*





Alicia Gould's *Pigeon Girl* is an intriguing tale about a girl who doesn't fit in with the other children:

I've always been different from the other children. An oddball. Somehow set apart. I did try to fit in for a while but I failed. Maybe I'm too weird. They all enjoy playing football in the street but I'm too clumsy and slow to play with them. Once I tried to join in but I just made a fool of myself and everyone has been making snide comments behind my back ever since. Luckily, my hobbies are reading and drawing which don't require any sporting talent. My passion is birds. I'm obsessed with watching them through my binoculars almost 24/7. My room is the best in the house for birdwatching. The window overlooks the harbour and I can see most of the rooftops in town so I can spot the house sparrows making their nests in the nooks and crannies of old buildings. I even made myself a comfy place to sit on the windowsill where I can draw the birds and read my various bird books. I'm crazy about birds! It's just the thing is, no one else understands, everyone just thinks I'm strange.

But, as she plans to run away from it all, she discovers a baby pigeon abandoned by its mother. She saves the pigeon and names him Lucky. In turn, Lucky saves her, as it teaches her she doesn't have to change who she is to fit in with others and make friends.

One day when we were watching the sunset, I noticed Lucky was more restless than normal. He was shifting from foot to foot and flapping his wings. Suddenly he stumbled to the edge of the windowsill and stepped over the edge. I cried out and watched as Lucky spiralled towards the ground. Flapping his wings frantically he rose slightly before dipping again immediately. My heart pounded but I was powerless to help. He kept beating his wings until eventually he regained control. Relief washed through me as I watched him soar about. He landed clumsily on the roof opposite where two other pigeons were sitting. Lucky shuffled over and sat next to them. My heart swelled with admiration at how Lucky had made friends, despite how different he was to them.

To read the full versions, please follow the links below:

[Beyond the Wall by Malee Makoka](#)

[The Man with Luck by Marley Clark](#)

[Pigeon Girl by Alicia Gould](#)

The Wizard of Oz



The Wizard of Oz was an absolutely fantastic school production this year - a big round of applause from the whole school! Here are a few wonderful comments from the audience:

"It was an excellent performance, well done to all involved!" - Hannah Venn

"Pure entertainment, we loved it!" - Catherine Lidbetter

"Fabulous evening, brilliant casting, extremely high standards from everyone involved. Looking forward to the next 2 performances." - Sonya Goodwin



School Production - The Wizard of Oz

"It was an extraordinary performance, well done to everyone and the teachers! We loved it." - Anett Fegyveres-Nagy

"Such a fantastic production - grandchildren & I loved it. Well done to everyone!" - Denise Ward

"Amazing performance last night! You could see how hard they have all worked. Well done to everyone!" - Jane Tyndall

Absolutely fantastic performance from Anna on Thursday (and everyone else) but I do have a soft spot for the wicked witch! - Angela Green

World Act of Kindness Day

Here is a selection of acts of kindness that were submitted by students in each House. It was lovely to see students do things out of the goodness of their hearts. We do believe a cup of tea or coffee for Mum or Dad is a must every day though!

Jacob (Bigg) made his parents cups of tea when they were ill.

Alfie (Bigg) washed his Dad's car because it was dirty.

Emily (Bigg) made her friend a bracelet.

Aidan (Blackstone) helped tie his sister's shoes.

Jessica (Blackstone) helped calm down an autistic chap she helps look after. He was very worried, and she helped him see the logic behind what was happening.

Harry (Blackstone) cleared leaves and mowed the lawn in the garden to help his parents.

Coco (Christie) helped a little boy who had got stuck in one of the activities at Go Ape. He was scared and she helped him to the bottom.

Thomas (Christie) tidied away loads of empty luggage trays at Edinburgh airport people had abandoned, earning him a smile and a thank you from security staff.

Katrina (Christie) made a cake and threw a birthday party for an adult with learning difficulties that her granny looks after. The gentleman whose birthday it was had fun, and everyone enjoyed the cake!

George (Matilda) helped a Rising Star who was scared to join in with football practice. George passed a ball to him and got him to control it and pass it back. After 10 minutes passing and chatting, he felt confident enough to join in with the other children. George got a thanks from the boy's mum.

Lily (Matilda) gave her ukulele to her cousin, which made her cousin's face light up.

Kaymon made his parents a cup of tea after they had been for a long run.

Remembrance Day



As well as performances of the *Last Post* and a minute's silence, all four Houses used their artistic talents to mark Remembrance Day in a competition to come up with the best poppy display. Although all four were excellent, this year's winners were Matilda.

Mastermind Final

Six students battled it out to become our Mastermind Champion today! We had a range of specialist subjects from The Hobbit, American Civil War to the England Women's football team (2020-present) and national flags.

| | | | |
|-------------------|--------|----------|-----------|
| Thomas Carberry | Year 7 | Christie | 13 points |
| Amy Guyatt | Year 7 | Bigg | 13 points |
| Daniel Snellgrove | Year 9 | Christie | 19 points |
| Joshua Skeels | Year 9 | Christie | 22 points |
| Edward Wilcox | Year 8 | Bigg | 13 points |
| Joseph Rhodes | Year 8 | Bigg | 18 points |



House Postcard Competition

Every year we love to set a competition that shows off the students' artistic ability, and then create something practical from it. Last year they designed bookmarks for our GetReading launch and this year we asked students to design a praise postcard for each House that could be sent home by teachers. The responses were simply stunning!

English Creative Writing Competition (My Twist on a tale)

There were some fabulous entries to this competition fronted by Ms Ward in English on the topic of "Inclusion". The winners are listed below, and you can read excerpts earlier in this newsletter.

Year 7 – Pigeon Girl by Alicia Gould, Bigg

Year 8 – The Man with "Luck" by Marley Clark, Christie

Year 9 – Beyond the Wall by Malee Makoka, Christie



Mr Hinchliffe's exciting Art Quest competition had students attempting to break a code to unveil a piece of a famous artistic picture. The clues were all around the school, to keep the students active as well!

1st Matilda – (first to crack the code)

2nd Christie – (first to get all the pieces)

3rd Blackstone

4th Bigg



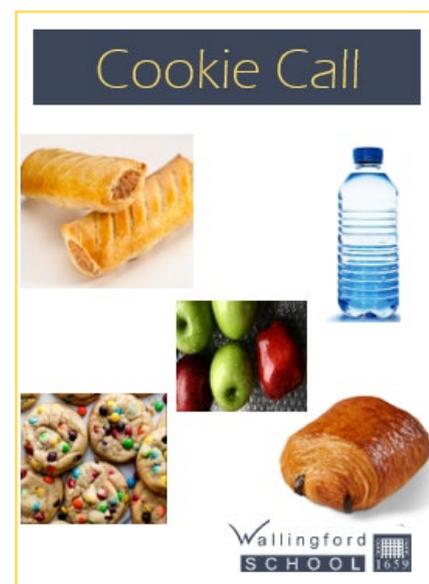
Advent Calendar Competition

Here is a selection of the drawn, hand crafted, sewn and electronic advent calendars we received this year. The standard was high and showed some real creativity, including interesting facts inside the doors!

Cookie Call

We introduced a Cookie card this term, where teachers get one card every two weeks to hand out to students when they do something amazing!

Students can take the card to the canteen and choose something free from a list of goods!



Term 1/2 Overall House point winners by Year group

Each term the top House point earner from each year group receives an Amazon voucher for their efforts. Well done to these 10 students for taking the title in Term 1 and Term 2:

Term 1

| | | | |
|---------|----------------|------------|----|
| Year 7 | Elizabeth Wood | Christie | 91 |
| Year 8 | Thomas Pool | Blackstone | 78 |
| Year 9 | Malakai Stow | Bigg | 79 |
| Year 10 | Bethan Lewis | Blackstone | 56 |
| Year 11 | Fin Green | Bigg | 43 |

Term 2

| | | | |
|---------|-------------------|------------|-----|
| Year 7 | Olivia Hermsen | Blackstone | 102 |
| Year 8 | Isabel Treherne | Christie | 96 |
| Year 9 | Summer Comber Lye | Bigg | 94 |
| Year 10 | Elizabeth Pannett | Blackstone | 46 |
| Year 11 | Samuel Shaw | Bigg | 37 |

And now for the big one...a huge well done to Christie House for staying on top of the leader board!

House Point Totals

| | | |
|-----|------------|----------|
| 1st | Christie | 3570 pts |
| 2nd | Matilda | 3250 pts |
| 3rd | Blackstone | 3090 pts |
| 4th | Bigg | 2985 pts |



Bigg House

It was great to have the opportunity to talk to you during our first Bigg House assembly this week. For those that missed it, the assembly opened with 2 pictures: one of Lionel Messi and one of Emiliano Martinez – the goalkeeper for the Argentine national team. What was the significance of these two individuals for us as a House? Undoubtedly, if Argentina go on to win the current football World Cup, this will no doubt go down as 'Messi's World Cup', arguably cementing him in history as the greatest player ever to have played the game.

Nevertheless, it was thanks to Martinez (the goalkeeper) and his penalty shootout heroics that Argentina now find themselves in the next stage of the competition. I personally had not heard of Emiliano Martinez before this World Cup. Martinez will have spent years of his life in training, completing goalkeeper drills, watching footage of penalty shootouts. Mostly this will go unrecognised relative to when Messi has played poorly, yet is still remembered. This translates into the spirit of Bigg House because it underlines the message that we all have our part to play, which is what makes us a House.

Competitions are important and we have met overwhelming success in this term's House Mastermind Competition. Congratulations to our finalists who were absolutely superb in researching their specialist topics: Amy in Year 7 (England national women's football team), Joseph in Year 8 (Dr Who), Edward in Year 8 (Blue Peter), Sid in Year 10 (Pokémon), Marta in Year 10 (The life of Che Guevara), Xander in Year 13 (Kanye West).

Another theme in the assembly was recognising that, as a House, competitions are important, but our contribution to the school & local community is equally so. The House serves as an effective medium for this. Our contributions to the Poppy Appeal, the upcoming Sleigh2Give scheme and the Random Acts of Kindness are all examples of this.

I would like to thank the Year 12 House Captains who led on our House Poppy Mural and are currently leading on the House Christmas tree.

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and we look forward to moving up the overall House points table next term!

Mr W Harpin, House Leader of Bigg

Blackstone House

We've made it to the end of 2022! This year we have got off to a flying start with house events. At the start of the year we elected three Blackstone House captains from Year 12 to help run house events. They are Eleni Somarakis, Anna Facey and Erin Connor. So far they have done a fabulous job helping me to advertise House events and coordinating Blackstone students to produce things such as our House poppy mural for Remembrance Day. You will be seeing their faces pop up a lot over the next year!

We've had a variety of events running this term, from Mastermind to art puzzles and I hope that every student has found something that they can get involved with. If you have not yet taken part and earned a House point (or more!) for Blackstone, look out for the events we will be running next term as we have lots of fun things planned.

I hope you all enjoyed the last couple of Christmassy weeks. I'm looking forward to seeing all the form room doors decorated and for the first time we will also have a Christmas tree to decorate in our house colours! Christie may have had the advantage with the red poppies, but I'm sure our Christmas tree will be a beautiful explosion of green!

Have a rest over the holidays and I look forward to seeing you all bright eyed and ready to go again in January.

Miss Sutton, House Leader of Blackstone

Christie House

Wow! What an incredible term we've had. A term filled with events, competitions, achievements, and celebrations.

This term, the Christie spirit has come back bigger and better than ever! You have all embraced every opportunity and have earned a huge number of House points. All your hard work during lessons, extracurricular activities, and House events, plus your contribution to the wider community, have been rewarded with an amazing number of you achieving your House Point badges. Very well done!

This term you have continued to show your incredible creativity through the beautiful Remembrance Day Poppy display, the incredible praise postcard designs which wonderfully captured the spirit of Wallingford – and some amazing Christmas advent calendar designs.

There have been some amazing stories being created through the English writing competition – and enormous congratulations to Marley Clark and Malee Makoka who are the Year 8 and Year 9 winners.

We also saw the introduction of a new House Event this term: Mastermind, where our students fought it out to become Champion of a range of topics. Three very talented Christie students made it to the final, and congratulations to Joshua Skeels for his victory!

And finally, you all continue to show your kind and caring nature through Random Acts of Kindness. There have been some lovely stories being shared of things you have been up to.

I am very proud of every member of Christie and everything you have achieved over the last two terms. I wish you all a wonderful Christmas break and I look forward to seeing you in the New Year and see what 2023 holds for our house!

Miss Persse, House Leader of Christie

Matilda House

What a fantastic term Matilda House! You have all shown a marvellous amount of commitment, enthusiasm, and community spirit so far this year which is reflected in the amount of House points you have all been awarded.

2022 has seen some breath-taking efforts from members of our House. From the designers of some amazing House Postcards, the Winners of ARTquest, some beautifully thought-out advent calendars and a truly impressive whole House Poppy Mural for Remembrance Day. Not to mention the flurry of festive fun in the final week of term, there is something for you all to be proud of!

I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a well-earned break over the festive period. I look forward to seeing what amazing things you get up to in the New Year!

Mr Hinchliffe, House Leader of Christie

Merry Christmas!