

Wallingford School Newsletter

Winter Edition - December 2023



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Headteacher's Message



It is always a pleasure to write the introduction to our termly school newsletter – each one (including this edition!) is a wonderful depiction of the life of the school and this is frequently commented upon by visitors who browse through past editions in our reception. The brief for me for the newsletter is to write about the highlights of the term – and that is a pretty difficult one! Why is it so difficult? Because there is so much that I could cover and I always worry about missing something out.

There is so much to cover because Wallingford School has a great deal going on. I am fortunate to lead a team of staff who constantly want to go the “extra mile” for our young people; they don’t have to offer the incredible range of events and activities that they do but they choose to and this enriches our school community in so many ways. I am also extremely fortunate to lead over 1400 students who want to embrace every opportunity which is presented to them, to develop and grow as young people, to participate and compete and – quite often – have fun and enjoy themselves.

It is this spirit of fun and enjoyment which permeate the pages of this newsletter. Even when we are all tired at the end of a long term it is all around us – and as a school community we thrive on it.

We stop now for a well-deserved break and I would like to wish all members of the school community a very Happy Christmas and look forward to seeing everyone as we go again at the start of 2024.

- Mr Marston, Headteacher



Starting the Year with

As always, the PE calendar started with a bang this year, with rugby and hockey fixtures coming out of our ears! Some very impressive results, notably the Year 7 rugby team finishing 2nd in the Abbey RFC tournament, a couple of very tight calls from the Year 9 hockey team and a series of spectacular triumphs from the Year 8 rugby team. Mr Roberts would like to say a very special thank you and well done to the Year 7 rugby team this year, who vigilantly arrived at training every week *en masse*, one week totaling an impressive 40 people!



As we have such a fantastic array of talented sportspeople at Wallingford School, we like to ensure the variety of fixtures offered to students is vast and plentiful.

In the first week back after half term, Mr Roberts took twelve students to the annual duathlon, in which students competed in teams to complete a 2km erg row and 2km run. We are so proud that every single team managed to place in a medal position, with 5 students placing in medal positions individually too; what a fantastic result!

The following Tuesday came the annual cross-country competition, a bit of a soggy day but great fun nonetheless. Huge congratulations to the Year 10/11 boys team who won their race overall, and to the four students who placed in medal positions individually.

We've also ramped up our basketball fixture this term, with all years having round robin



h a Bang...

tournaments with local schools. Both the Year 11 and Year 8/9 teams managed some impressive wins. Well done everyone!

Finally, some outstanding results from the indoor rowing competition, with the top 6 Year 9/10 boys overall all being from Wallingford School! A special mention to Jessie who also placed 2nd in her age category and surpassed the 100% mark of the gold target; overall, an amazing set of results!



Football games have been in full swing, with both the U16 girls and the U13 boys making it to the quarter finals of the cup. Some spectacular results from the girls' football league too, including a 10-0 win for the Year 10/11s. A special mention to Gary who has been a fair and consistent referee for a number of these fixtures every week, well done!

Lastly, a HUGE thank you to our active leaders, who have been fantastic these past two terms, helping us with refereeing and coaching the primary school tournaments after school. We have had so much amazing feedback about these wonderful individuals from the organisers and primary school teachers, you have represented the school wonderfully!

- Miss Allen, PE Technician



Working with Brightwell

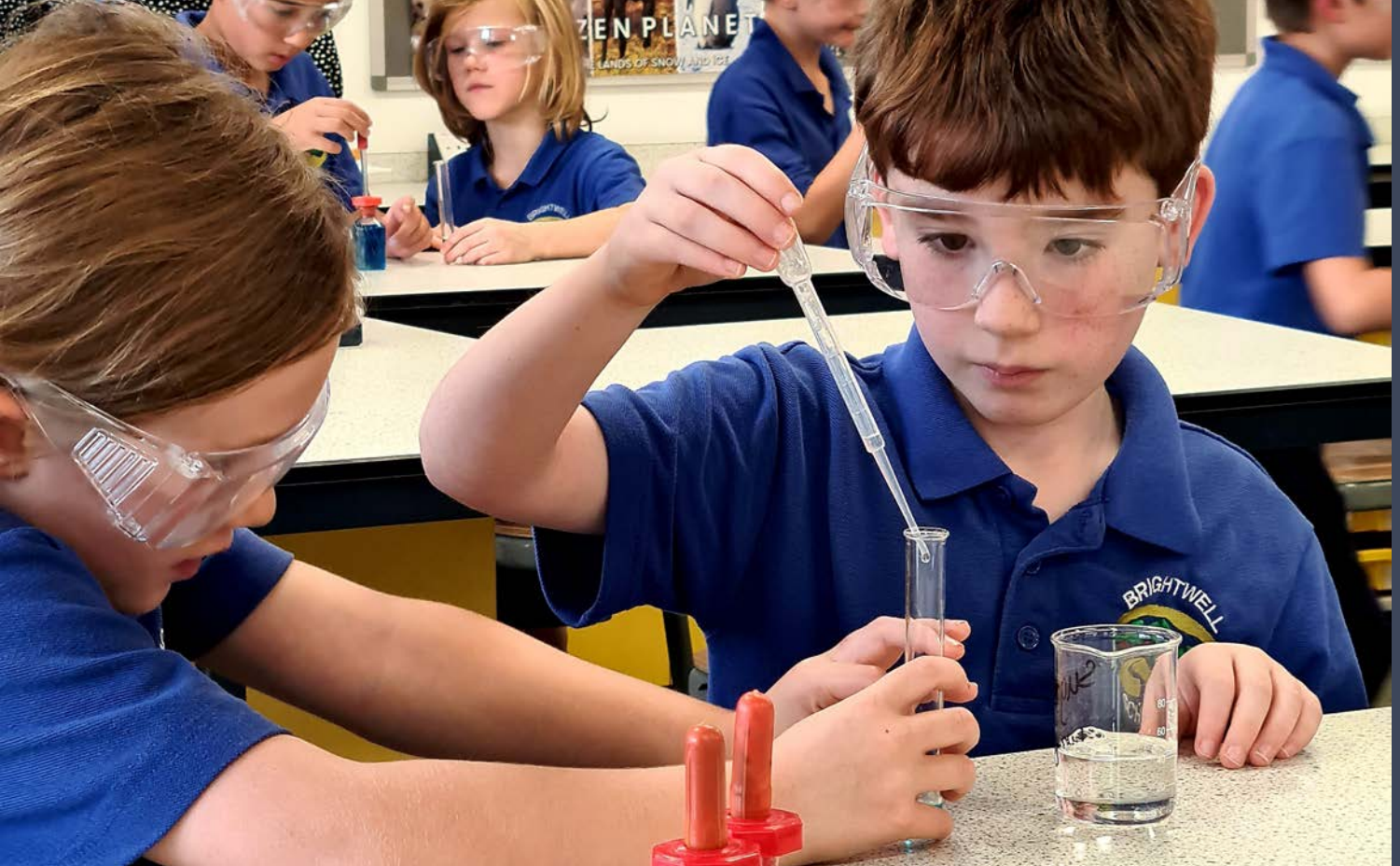
Ms Potts, Headteacher at Brightwell cum Sotwell CofE Primary School, describes how Wallingford School got involved with their 'Healthy Body, Healthy Mind Week'.

Brightwell cum Sotwell CofE Primary School certainly started the second half of the Autumn Term on an energetic note by holding a 'Healthy Body, Healthy Mind Week'. The aim of the week was not only to remind the children how important it is to take care of themselves both physically and mentally, but also to give them opportunities to experience things they might not normally get a chance to do - experiences which perhaps pushed them outside of their comfort zones or maybe even helped them to find a hidden talent!

Over the course of the week, we put together an exciting timetable of events for all ages in the school, which included visits from external companies - archery workshops with Robin Hood Arrows; BMX and Scooter workshops with Mike Mullen and Terry Price; and cookery lessons with Roots to Food - but also allowed us to work in collaboration with our friends up at Wallingford School!

The Science department very kindly invited our Year 3 class to spend the afternoon in one of their amazing labs. The children were taught about the human digestive system before donning the safety goggles (definitely a highlight for many children!) and being given the opportunity to carry out their own fantastic experiment using very special science equipment. It showed them what was in certain types of food they might eat – a particular favourite was testing the sugar water, which stunned our children when it magically changed through almost every colour of the rainbow once heated!

A little later in the week, we were thrilled to have the Art department, along with some of the Sixth Formers, spend the day with us. They worked on a whole school mindfulness project, with each class contributing to some giant murals that took inspiration from art based on the



local area and our school values - the murals will eventually be hung up around the school. It really was wonderful to see the mixture of age ranges working together and we can't wait to see the final results!

A huge thank you to our friends at Wallingford for helping to make the week so special for the children at Brightwell.

Here's what the children thought:

"Healthy Body, Healthy Mind Week was so much fun. The art was by far my favourite because everyone was so friendly and we could express ourselves in all the colours."


"We loved the beautiful art work. The work was inspiring and fun and we hope you can come again because you were all so kind."

"I enjoyed doing the artwork. They did beautiful sketches and it was very fun!"

"The art ninjas are very kind and really, really good at art. I made friends there and it made me feel good doing stuff for our school. It was so much fun. Thank you so much!"

"I really enjoyed your science class. We loved doing experiments! I hope I can come to your school again."

"I really enjoyed doing some science with you. I really liked the activities especially the one with the tubes where we had to pour the chemicals in that changed colours when in boiling water. I hope I can visit your school again."

A group of six students, five girls and one boy, are smiling and looking towards the camera. They are in a well-lit indoor space, possibly a school hall or event space, with balloons and other people visible in the background. The text 'A Bustling Language Department...' is overlaid in large white font on a dark background at the bottom of the image.

A Bustling Language Department...

It has been a busy couple of terms in the Languages department.

Term 1 kicked off with the very welcome return of Speed Language Learning to celebrate European Day of Languages. Mr Harpin organised this superbly and an impressive array of languages was on offer for students to learn. We are very lucky at Wallingford School to have a number of bilingual students and it is lovely to be able to celebrate their home languages in this way. I would like to say thank you to Mr Harpin and all the students who volunteered to teach their languages.



Earlier this term students studying GCSE and A Level German took part in an Oktoberfest Kneipenquiz at Radley College organised by the Oxford German Network. We didn't win this year, but we all enjoyed a German meal in the dining hall and lots of games in the cricket pavilion, including the most confusing game of Kahoot I have ever seen!

We also entered 4 teams of year 9 students into the GCHQ National Languages Challenge in November with one team – Precious Health Vulture (Joseph Rhodes, Eliza Lombos, Edward Wilcox and Thomas Pool) – coming 74th out of more than 500 teams which is a fantastic achievement! Congratulations to all our students who took part.

We were very sorry to have to postpone our German Exchange due to the adverse weather conditions at Munich airport this term, but plans are already underway to reschedule our visit in the spring. We are also looking forward to taking our A Level students to a Literature Masterclass at Oxford University at the start of next term and our annual French exchange to Grenoble at the end of January.

Lastly, I would like to share with you below an amazing achievement from Mr Bowen which goes to show that you actually can teach an old dog new tricks!

Joyeux Noel / Frohe Weihnachten

- Mrs McGarrick, Curriculum Team Leader for Languages

One Thousand and One

What does 1001 mean to you? Arabian nights? The nightmare room in Orwell's 1984 spelt wrong? To me (last week) it meant my streak on Duolingo.

Duolingo, if you don't know, is an App which helps you learn a language. By 'help', I mean an angry owl pesters you to learn a language. Bit by bit. Every day. Even when you don't want to. No, especially when you don't want to.



I've been learning Welsh, which is something I've had on my to-do-list for about 30 years. I am pleased to say that I can now confidently approach and address fellow Welshmen and discuss rivers, zoo animals and a variety of vegetables and whether or not they are cooked. I'm not so hot on asking directions and talking about things that happened last week. I'll deal with that in the next few hundred days.

I have found, for the first time, that learning a language is really fun. You know what they say... happy Owl, happy life!

- Mr Bowen, Welsh Extraordinaire



Warhammer Club



Thomas and I discovered our passion for Warhammer several years ago but we lacked the support to break into the hobby. As we were going into Year 12 we decided to re-ignite our passion and hopefully inspire others too. After all, we wanted to give younger years an experience we wished we had had in the lower school. Warhammer is a tabletop wargame where you build models, paint them and battle against others! There's so many different factions of characters and the sense of achievement you get after finishing the final coat of paint on a model, or winning a battle, is fantastic.

Games Workshop, the brand which owns Warhammer, were extremely helpful in starting the club by giving us a starter box full of paints, brushes, guides and of course the miniatures to construct. After running the club for a while we began to do occasional bake sales to raise money for the club to have more materials and new paints.

Of course we couldn't have done any of this without the amazing Art Department as well as all the other staff who have been so supportive and offered us so much help with the financial aspects of running the club. Mr Bowen, Mr Hinchliffe and Ms Williams have supported us since the beginning, giving us a place to use for the club, helping promote the club and our bake sales and inspiring the members of the club with humour and handshakes.

I hope that Thomas and I can pass the torch onto our peers so they can continue this club and bring in even more people to the universe of Warhammer!

- Fred Potts, Year 13, Warhammer Club Leader





Art Beyond the Classroom...

Art Club

Fun, lunchboxes and Art Club!

Those are your basic ingredients for a successful Tuesday lunchtime.

Add a sprinkling of enthusiasm and experimentation for a true showstopper.

A massive thank you to Mrs Williams and Mr Hinchliffe for making this happen every week. And thank you Art Clubbers for making it so much fun!





Fay Ford: Artist Mentor

Friend of the Art Department and local artist Fay Ford has kindly taken time out of her busy schedule to come in and talk to our star Year 13 Artists. Over a series of Mondays this autumn, Fay offered these students a fresh perspective and gave them the benefit of her extensive experience in the field. Thank you Fay for being so generous with your time - and for offering so many brilliant ideas too!



Life Drawing

Life Drawing: learning to draw an unclothed figure.

Sixth Form artists grappled with this timeless process this term. Life drawing taught pretty much any artist you can think of how to see and how to draw properly – why fight thousands of years of successful and inspirational art history?

We love life drawing. Well done to everyone who turned up to draw and paint this term. See you in January for more!

- Mr Bowen, Head of Art

GCSE Art

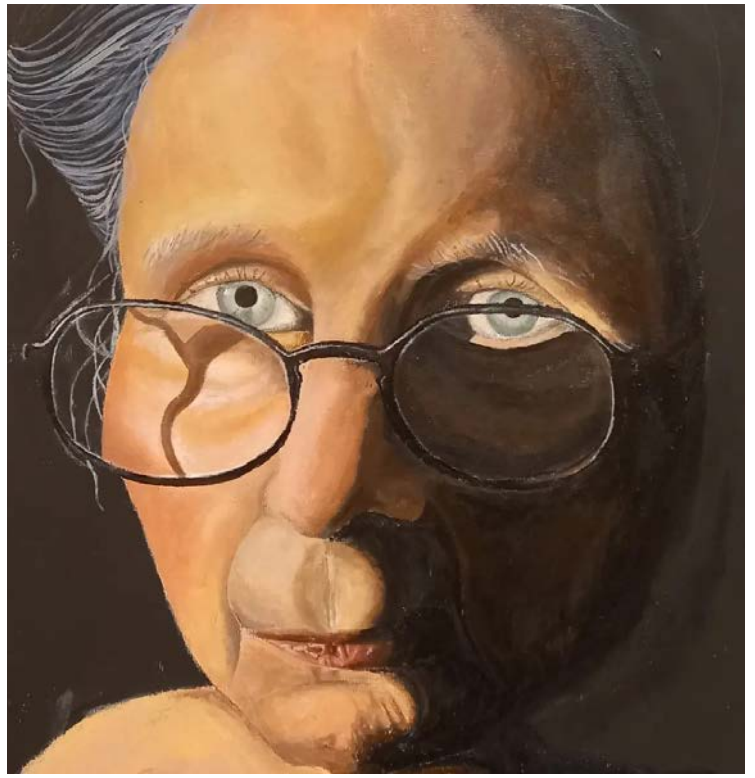


There are three GCSE Art classes in Year 11, so we have been BUSY!

For their mock exam, students spent two days creating some fantastic outcomes. The students had the theme of 'Identity' as a starting point and created a wide variety of responses including realistic portraits, botanical paintings, pencil portraits, figures in a landscape, acrylic portraits, self-portraits, landscapes, collages, graffiti, scrunched-up portraits, homages to musical heroes, paintings with mirrors... to name but a few.

We were incredibly impressed by the phenomenal quality of their work – and this was just the mock!

- Mr Bowen, Head of Art





The Music Department is invited every year to St Helen & St Katharine School for a String Workshop, and every year we can't go because we don't have a string group or indeed enough string players to warrant a trip. Not this year!! Ms Hammond was delighted to be able to take the string group and some other KS3 violinists to enjoy the 'magical repertoire'.

At the start of the day, students ran through four pieces so we could see where work was needed. Then they split into sectionals, led by string teachers and members of the Oxford Philharmonic Orchestra. After lunch, the sections came together for a full rehearsal, and finally they performed a short concert for parents, followed by afternoon tea!

The 'Magical Repertoire' included music from 'Harry Potter', 'We Don't talk about Bruno' from Encanto, 'The Can Can' (with dancing!), and 'Swan Lake Theme'.





It was a fantastic day and this is what Cressida and Tilda thought of the experience:

"I really enjoyed this trip because it was so nice to play along with other people who have a better understanding of music. They gave us some good techniques to have a better sounding violin.

I also got to play in the chapel, which was fantastic because it had hard wooden floors and a round ceiling that the sound could bounce off of, and it sounded so beautiful!

It was also a great opportunity to meet other string players from other schools and share different views of what we think about playing. As I was also quite new to my school at the time, it was also a really nice experience to meet other string players that are at my school.

The school was a good host to give up rooms for us to work in."

- Cressida Kilby-Birch, Year 7

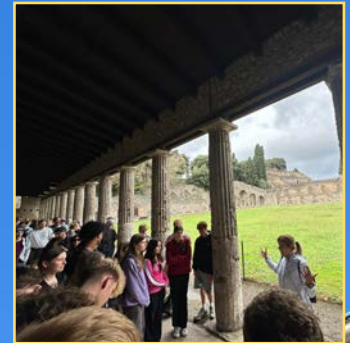
"The Oxford Philharmonic workshop was a brilliant experience I will never forget. It really reminded me how special it is to play in a group, and the teatime concert showcased all the hard work we put in today. Thank you so much for taking us!"

- Tilda Santer Year 8



Term One in Pictures...





Performance, Rehearsals & Theatre



Accidental Death of an Anarchist

This term in Drama we are really proud of our Year 13s who put on a brilliantly witty and thought-provoking production of Dario Fo's satirical play 'Accidental Death of an Anarchist' directed by Ms Mummery. Dario Fo wrote this play following the real-life events involving the Italian rail worker and anarchist, Giuseppe Pinelli, who died under mysterious circumstances while in police custody in 1969. This 1970s political comedy was written to provoke thought whilst providing many laughs, and is sadly still relevant 50 years on. The cast blew the audience away with their larger-than-life character interpretations and impressed with their ensemble skills and comic timing. Their highly energised performances and hilarious costumes made for a thoroughly entertaining evening.



- The Drama Department





The Addams Family

Rehearsals are well under way for this year's musical- we are excited to welcome back some familiar faces as well as involving many new talented Year 7 students. We have our very own Costume Club who meet each Thursday to work on the costumes for the show. It is really exciting to see the hall stage full of dancing and singing each Tuesday and Thursday after school.



Ocean at the End of the Lane

As GCSE and A Level drama students, we were fortunate to attend Ocean at the End of the Lane at the Noël Coward Theatre in November. It was a fantastic performance that was thoroughly enjoyed by both the students and the teachers. The play was jam packed with intricate lighting and sound effects, with a detailed forest set that really enhanced the overall appearance of the show. We watched in amazement as a monster came to life with the use of fabrics, colours and a talented ensemble. Hidden behind the tense moments, it was an extremely heart-warming show that made us all think of our individual values and the impact theatre has on our society. The performance illustrated all the elements we will discuss in the live theatre section of our exam, and we are all excited to write about this memorable piece of theatre!

- Rachael Lidbetter, Year 13

Williams Racing



FW18C
WILLIAMS - RENAULT
1993
1993



“The Williams Racing trip was one of the best trips I’ve ever done! There were so many different F1 cars and you could really see the progression over the years. It’s a great opportunity and I would definitely recommend it to upcoming years. The simulator racing experience was epic! It’s definitely encouraged me to realise my dream of becoming an F1 racer.” - Imogen Acreman, Year 8

“On Wednesday 18th October, 40 students from Wallingford School went to Williams Racing in Grove. When we arrived we began a tournament on the e-sports simulators. It was radical and my favourite part of the trip! Then we went to the museum to see one of the largest collections of Formula 1 cars in the UK. We learnt about how they have changed over the years. In the afternoon, we worked in teams to create a robot car. At the end of the day we even received a Williams Racing goody bag! It was such a great day!” - Zachary Myatt, Year 7



Term Two in Pictures...







BrightSparks Music

Our Year 10 and 11 GCSE music students visited the Royal Festival Hall for the Brightsparks Music Concert.

They heard the London Philharmonic Orchestra perform a number of pieces from the GCSE set works, and were shown how the composers used repeated rhythms and leitmotifs to create their pieces. The music was analysed and the orchestra played small sections of each piece, so they could understand how the musical elements were used.

In Music GCSE there is a Listening Paper where students have to answer questions on music from the areas of study, and demonstrate they have an understanding of music terminology. But one of the areas students struggle with is recognising orchestral instruments and how they are played. Indeed some of our students will not have seen a live orchestra, so this concert was an amazing opportunity.

- Ms Hammond, Head of Music



ic Concert

Here's what two of our Year 10s had to say about the trip:

"I really enjoyed the music trip because it helped me understand what I have been learning in class. The live orchestra was great because what they played related to what we have been learning. Also I enjoyed listening to the orchestra because I don't think I would have ever seen an orchestra play live if it wasn't for this trip so it was a really great experience." - Alice Hull, Year 10

"I really enjoyed the music trip. It was a great opportunity for us to immerse ourselves in music which is something some of us aren't able to do very often. The concert itself was presented really well and didn't detract at all from the actual experience of listening to the orchestra. I think that too often we are taught things in class that we can't fully understand because we aren't able to link something tangible to it - this trip genuinely helped me to gain a greater understanding of the concepts that come up in music, and I feel much more confident talking about music as a result. I would say that this trip has had a great benefit to our class as we start on our GCSEs and would definitely have the same benefit for Year 10 classes in the future." - Harvey Brewer, Year 10



Livery Academy Awards Heat

During Term 1, 33 Year 12 students attended a workshop from a representative from the Speakers' Trust. This was the first stage of the Merchant Taylor's Livery Academy Award, a competition across the Merchant Taylor Schools where students design a product and compete in a 'Dragons' Den'-style competition. Students participated in a number of activities, concluding with them inventing products/business models and pitching these in groups. One group of six was selected to represent the school.



On Monday 4th December, the Wallingford team presented their final design, "The Compose Collective", at The Merchant Taylors' Hall in London. The team of 6 have been working on their design and pitch during terms 1 & 2 and were excited to finally share it with the panel of judges and audience members.

Despite not coming away with a win, the team were bright, poised, eloquent and presented with great accuracy and knowledge of their product.



Team member Bethan said, “Although it was disappointing not winning, I think we’ve learned so many invaluable skills through the experience as well as bonding as a team, it’s been lovely! We had such an enlightening trip to London learning about the Merchant Taylors and getting to meet so many interesting people!”



We are so incredibly proud of each and every member of ‘The Compost Collective’ - you really did put Wallingford School on the map!

Why I Love Science

Before half term, Miss Sutton helped run a science essay writing competition for the STFC Rutherford Appleton Laboratory School Science Prize.

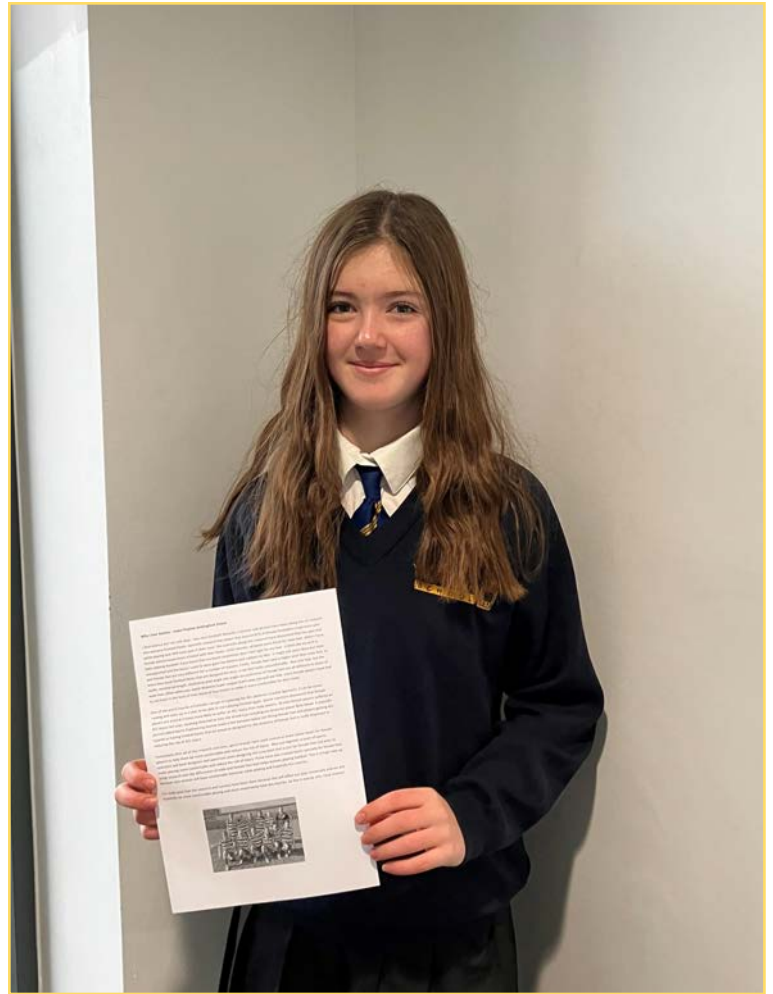
They had over 200 entries from different schools and only 16 finalists were selected. One of our Year 7 students, Isabel, was selected as one of those finalists.

Isabel and her family will attend a celebration event at the Rutherford Appleton Laboratory where the finalists will give a 2 minute presentation on why they love science, and then an overall winner will be selected.

Read Isabel's essay below:

I love science but not only that, I also love football! Recently scientists and physios have been doing lots of research into women's football boots. Scientific research has shown that around 82% of female footballers experience pain while playing and 34% have pain in their heel. The scientists doing this research have discovered that the pain that female players experience is linked with their boots. Until recently, all boots were fitted for male feet. When I have been playing football I have found that my boots sometimes don't feel right for my feet - it feels like my arch is unsupported and the boots I used to wear gave me blisters and rubbed my feet. It might not seem likely but male and female feet are very different for a number of reasons. Firstly, female feet have a higher arch than male feet, so when they wear football boots that are designed for men, it can feel really uncomfortable. Not only that, but the width, metatarsal length, metatarsal joint angle and angle circumference of female feet are all different to those of male feet. Often when you watch Women's Super League teams play you will see that many female players have had to cut holes in the back of their boots or buy insoles to make it more comfortable for their heels.

One of the worst injuries a footballer can get is rupturing the ACL (anterior cruciate ligament), it can be career ruining and takes up to a year to be able to start playing football again. Sports scientists discovered that female players are around 3 times more likely to suffer an ACL injury than male players. 30 elite female players suffered an ACL injury last year, meaning they had to miss the World Cup including my favourite player Beth Mead. A scientific journal called Sports Engineering Journal made a link between boots not fitting





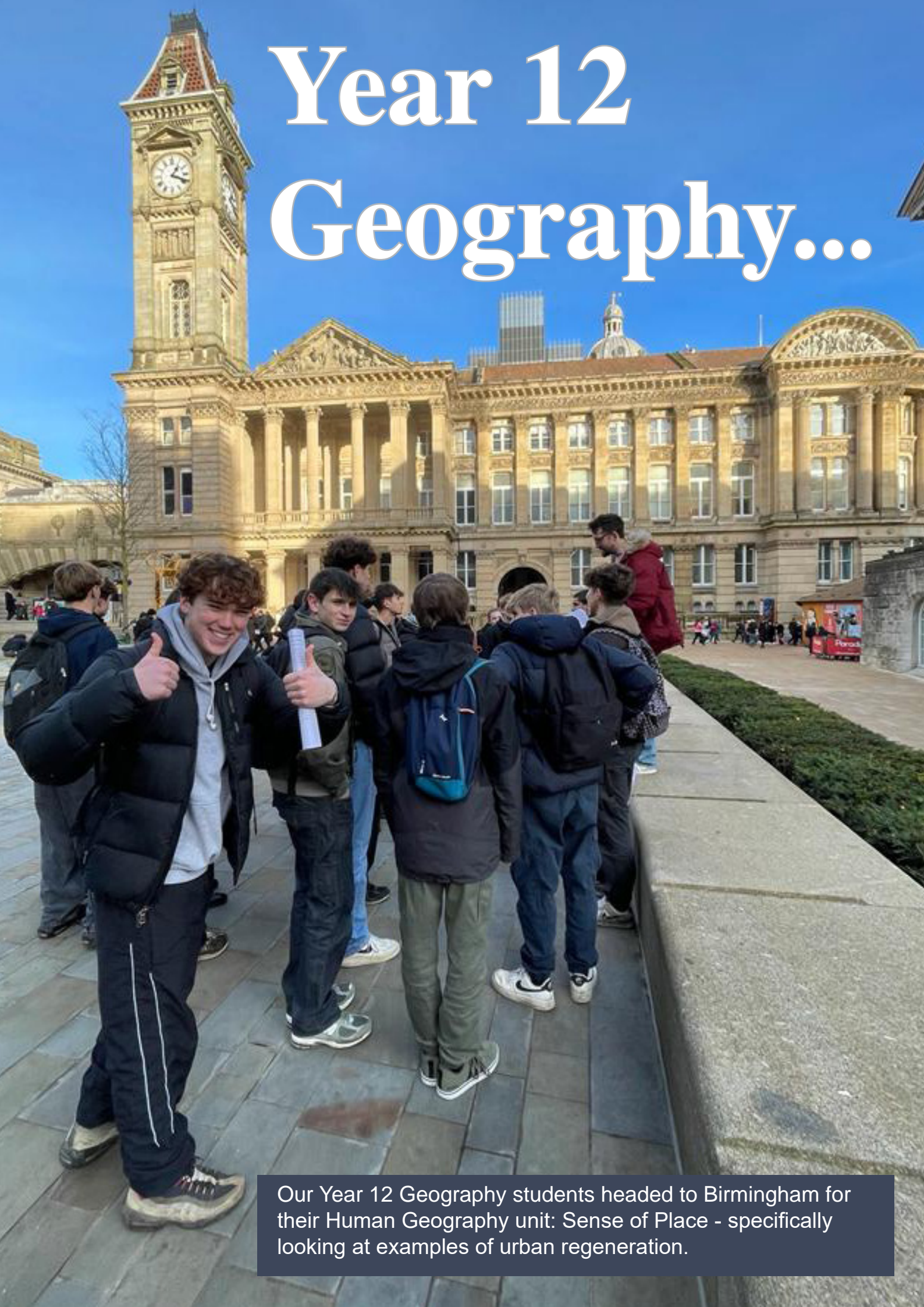
female feet and players getting ACL injuries so having football boots that are properly designed for the anatomy of female feet is really important in reducing the risk of ACL injury.

Fortunately after all of this research and tests, sports brands have used science to make better boots for female players to help them be more comfortable and reduce the risk of injury. Nike put together a team of sports scientists and boot designers and spent two years designing the Luna boot that is just for female feet and aims to make playing more comfortable and reduce the risk of injury. Puma have also created boots specially for female feet, using research into the differences of male and female feet that helps women playing football. This is a huge step up because now women will have comfortable footwear while playing and hopefully less injuries.

I'm really glad that the research and surveys have been done because this will affect our play immensely and we will hopefully be more comfortable playing and more importantly have less injuries. So this is exactly why I love science!

- Isabel Peplow, Year 7

Year 12 Geography...



Our Year 12 Geography students headed to Birmingham for their Human Geography unit: Sense of Place - specifically looking at examples of urban regeneration.





WOW Award

We have introduced the new WOW (Wallingford Outstanding Work) award this year to recognise the exceptional work we see from students. The award comes with 5 House points and one of our much coveted golden book tokens to spend in the vending machine.

A WOW award might be in recognition of going beyond what was asked in or out of the classroom; it could be for redrafting a piece of work or responding to feedback in a previous piece of work; or it might be for representing the school in a particular subject area.

We are really proud of the work that our students produce and we've been delighted to introduce this award. We were inundated with nominations and can't wait to be WOWed by our students in terms 3 and 4!

- Ms Miller, Deputy Headteacher

Year 7

| | | | |
|-----------------------|---------|----------------------|-------|
| Elizabeth Andrews | Food | Cressida Kilby-Birch | Music |
| Hector Turner-Fussell | RM | Eleanor Wright | Music |
| Harry Bailey | Science | | |

Year 8

| | | | |
|---------------|----------|-----------------|-----------|
| Syrah Delabie | Graphics | Sammy Isherwood | English |
| Rocco Shaw | Maths | Sapphy Kiesel | Geography |
| Eric Baker | Textiles | Sonny Potts | History |

Year 9

| | | | |
|---------------------|--------|-------------|------|
| Charlotte Parkinson | Art | Logan Woods | PE |
| Arisha Begum | French | Aiden Marsh | STEM |
| Akira Farley | German | | |

Year 10

| | | | |
|---------------------|--------|--------------|-----------|
| Khrystyna Lutsyshyn | Food | Michael Ede | RM |
| Kye Richardson | German | Malee Makoka | Chemistry |
| Sophie Eagling | H&SC | Malee Makoka | Geography |
| Ella Ramsay | PE | Rosie Wilkes | History |

Year 11

| | | | |
|---------------------|-------------|--------------------|----------|
| Maya Salmon | Art | Selwyn Devine | Comp Sci |
| Charlotte Windebank | Business | Seren Old | Textiles |
| Orlagh Markey | French | May Bentley | English |
| Phoebe Watkins | Graphics | Liesl Collins | RS |
| Isla Mcalpine | Maths | Oliver Baskeyfield | Music |
| Ferne Organ | Photography | Madeleine Cornut | Music |

Year 12

| | | | |
|------------------|----------|-------------------|---------|
| Laura Miles | Business | Elliot Lawrence | RM |
| Jolleen Parsons | Food | Bethan Toward | Science |
| Amelie Ballinger | H&SC | Genevieve Bispham | Science |
| George Jones | Maths | Hannah Torrance | History |

Year 13

| | | | |
|----------------------|------------|-----------------|-----------|
| Layla Simpson | Art | Olivia French | Textiles |
| Mathilde Smith | French | Beatrice Tharme | English |
| Emily Gesner | German | Lewis Wood | Geography |
| Peter Clayton Chance | PE | Luke Grainge | Music |
| Eleni Somarakis | Psychology | | |

Christmas in the Library...

Following the success of our Hallowe'en event, which saw students search our Haunted Library on the VLE to reveal a spooky selection of books, our Christmas book giveaway – Blackstone Library's Wheel of Christmas Fortune – kicked off at form time on Wednesday 13th December. KS3 form tutors spun the wheel, with two students in each form winning one of the carefully wrapped books under our tree.

Now that the term is drawing to a close, we're ready to curl up with a few good festive reads this Christmas. We've recently taken delivery of a batch of what we're sure will be new seasonal favourites, and they're now available for lending at the library.

Students can browse these and a wider selection of fiction and non-fiction titles every break and lunch time with access through the Sixth Form Building.



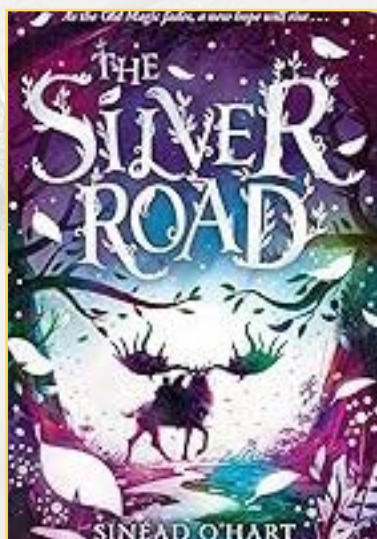
Check out some of our wonderful new Christmas books:



The Snow Girl by Sophie Anderson

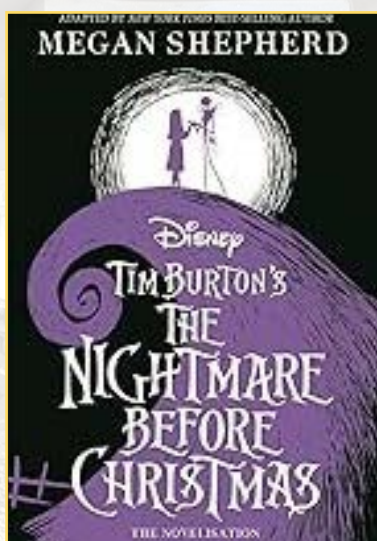
"I wish the snow girl would come to life. Then I would have a friend, a real friend I could trust, and I wouldn't feel so alone."

When Tasha builds a snow girl with her grandpa, all she wants is for her to be real. If only wishes on snow could come true... Then Tasha meets Alyana, a friend made of wishes, starlight, snowfall and magic. But when your best friend is made of winter, what do you do when spring comes?



The Silver Road by Sinéad O'Hart

The seandraiocht - the Old Magic - isn't remembered like it once was. Its power is fading... When Rose is entrusted with a powerful stone by a Frost Giant, she is swept into an adventure full of danger. The stone can be used for great good or great evil, depending on its keeper. It leads Rose to discover the magic that runs through all of Ireland. A magic that is threaded together beneath the land: the Silver Road. But the Silver Road is under threat. Now Rose must keep the stone from falling into the wrong hands and embark on a quest to find its rightful owner and keep the magic alive . . .



Tim Burton's The Nightmare Before Christmas by Megan Shepherd

Jack Skellington, the beloved Pumpkin King of Halloween Town, has grown tired of his home's annual scaring routines and longs for something new. So when he and his loyal dog, Zero, discover a series of doors in the Hinterlands leading to other holiday towns, he can't help but explore - and quickly becomes enamoured with Christmas Town, a place filled with jolly laughs, merry elves, and plenty of presents. Jack shares all of his findings with the rest of Halloween Town, and together, they devise a plan to run Christmas themselves. But not all tricks can be turned into holiday treats, and Jack's dream to organise the best Christmas ever may just turn into a nightmare. Alongside friends like the rag doll Sally, can Jack find his true purpose as a holiday king?

- Ms Hanley & Mrs Saunders, School Librarians

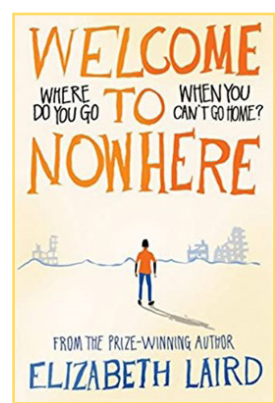
#GetReading

We love to read at Wallingford School and that is why our #GetReading campaign is so special to us!

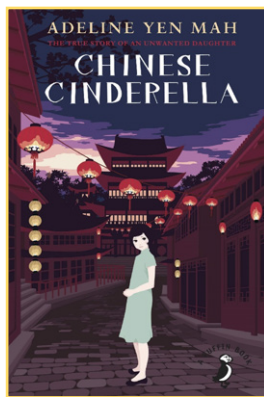
We launched this year's Get Reading campaign during assemblies back in September, where all year groups were set with their class readers for the term!

By reading a few times a week amongst our peers during form time, we are able to unlock the curriculum; create an environment that shares a love for reading; improve mental health, empathy, memory concentration, and social skills; and most importantly provide a sense of unity, identity, achievement and a calm start to the school day.

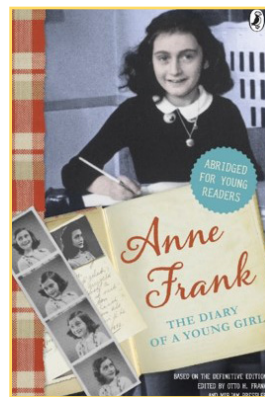
Here are our book selections for each year group:



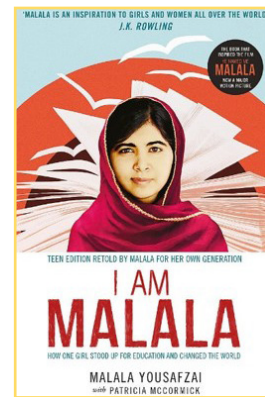
Year 7



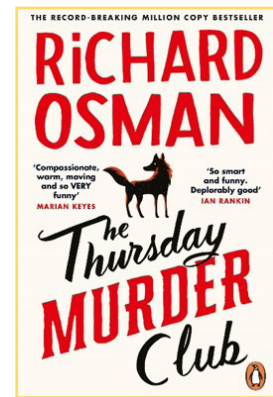
Year 8



Year 9



Year 10



Year 11

We caught-up with students and staff to find out about their #GetReading experience, here's what they had to say:

"Our book has encouraged lots of discussion in tutor periods. Chinese Cinderella has some challenging parts, but our students are really getting to grips with it. Reading in the morning creates a very calm and quiet environment – a great start to the day." - Miss Persse, HOY 8

Reading 'I am Malala'

"As this book is written and narrated by her, I can get a better understanding of the backstory of a lady who has made history."

"I think the book is inspirational!"

"We can widen our knowledge of other cultures and understand things from different points of view." - Skye, Charlie & Alexis (Year 10)

Reading 'Welcome to Nowhere'

"Reading his book helps students escape from stress and improve mental health. I am enjoying the chance to read it together."

"This is a great book. It's really interesting as it's an adventure and there are lots of things happening all the time." - Sophie & Thomas (Year 7)

Young Carers at Wallingford

We are celebrating and helping to support our “hidden superheroes” with the help of Be Free Young Carers. Students who help care for someone at home are able to access peer support groups and tailored help within school time, as well as a referral to Be Free Young Carers for additional help outside of school. Wednesday lunchtimes we meet in B12 with biscuits, games, crafts and safe space to talk.

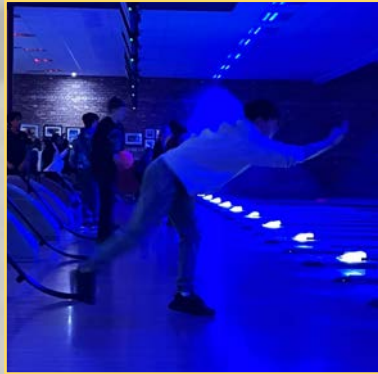


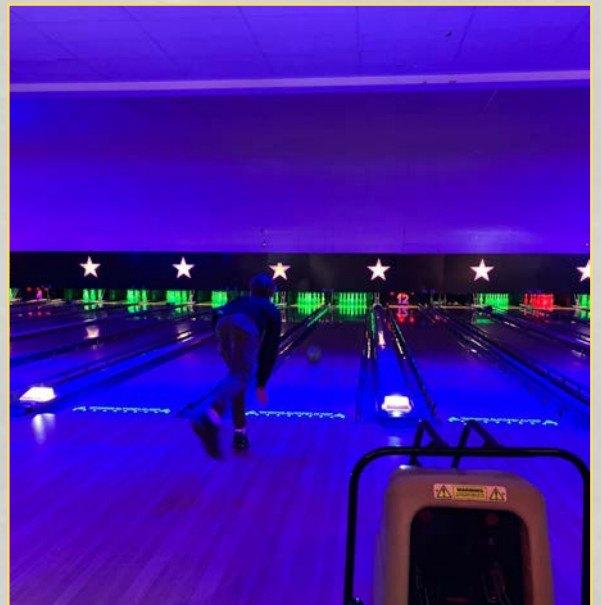
If you think your child may be a young carer, please visit the Be Free website and get in touch with your child’s tutor for more information about how we can help within school.

- Mrs Emmerson



Social Trips in Pictures...





House Events

It has been a great start to the year for all four houses and we've been really pleased to see students engaged in collected house points. One student, Joseph Rhodes, is already on 347 points after just two terms! At this rate, we expect some new records for total house points by next July!!

It has been great to see our newly appointed Sixth Form House Captains get involved in promoting their houses, competitions, as well as running their own events. The House Leaders and myself look forward to seeing how we can work together to develop the system further.



House points have been scored for a number of events so far in Term 1 and 2. Students all take part in a quiz every Friday, before PSHE, and these scores are added up, with the highest scoring tutor group in each year winning a big chocolate prize. Attendance figures are also added up at the end of the term and points awarded for their respective positions.

The World Language Day event returned in Term 1, giving students and staff who speak another language a chance to teach others some key words in their native tongue. Every student who took part earned points.



Miss Sutton launched a science essay competition linked to the STFC Rutherford Appleton Laboratory School Science Prize. Not only did we have some great entries, we also had a finalist, Isabel in Year 7, who is one of just 16 from over 200 students!!! See the full article on page 30.

Students always look forward to the termly quiz, and Mr Harpin did not disappoint with the running of Mastermind again. It was a packed room for the qualifiers and, pleasingly, we had students from every year group. One student made it through from each, and the final was hotly contested.

Congratulations to the following students who made the final, and a special mention to Josh who won overall!

Year 7 - Marco Castagna (Bigg)
Year 8 - Thomas Carberry (Christie)
Year 9 - Callum Reynolds (Christie)

Year 10 - Josh Skeels (Christie)
Year 11 - Luca Watkin (Matilda)



Mr Hinchliffe launched a fantastic set of art competitions. Firstly, students designed a House crest. There were some excellent entries, and we will be sure to use some of them over the course of this year.

Second was the Big House Art Graffiti Wall, a new competition which drew a lot of attention! Students doodled on their House wall to create a large image. Matilda took the title this year!



One of the highlights for me, as the Services Champion, is the Poppy Mural competition that happens for Remembrance Day. All four houses always put together a fabulous and fitting tribute, with all tutor groups getting involved. Matilda were judged to have produced the best one this year, but everyone should be proud of their efforts.

In the last term, students enjoyed a newly introduced code-breaking competition. It really did create a buzz and it was nice to see students who maybe do not enter other events getting involved. A big thanks to Ms Miller for this event.

The Talent Show happened in the penultimate week of term. At the time of writing we don't know the winner.

As we get into the Christmas feel we finish off our terms' competitions with Christmas Doors, the House Christmas Tree decorating, and the hotly contested House Matches, for boys' Rugby and girls' Football.

The overall points will be announced on the last day whole school assembly. Who will have their noses in front at this early stage?

- Mr Lyons, Head of House System

Bigg House

It has been a fantastic start to the year for Bigg House. At half term we were top of the leaderboard thanks to some superb efforts in house competitions and collection of House points on Satchel. We really hit the ground running thanks to a terrific effort in the House Speed Language Learning competition by Armin in 7JWA. Equally, the amassing of huge numbers of house points by Years 7, 8 & 9 put us in a very strong position heading into the end of this term. A very impressive 2nd place in House Mastermind by Marco in 7VAM has equally kept us in the running. As the term has drawn to a close, we have had some very impressive entries to the House Talent Competition, our highlight being Mia & Charlotte from 7VAM with their creative and skilful dance.

As the term has drawn to a close, we have seen a Herculean effort in the Christmas door competition, as well as some solid efforts in House Matches. Thank you also to the House Captains for all that they have done behind the scenes, initially in the Poppy Mural and then more recently in designing our Christmas tree. At half term we were top of the leaderboard...can we hold onto that top spot heading into the New Year?!

- Mr Harpin, House Leader of Bigg

Christie House

Wow! What an incredible term and you have continued to show your fantastic Christie spirit through a term filled with events, competitions, achievements and celebrations. We welcomed the fabulous new Year 7s and Sixth formers into Christie house. You have embraced every opportunity. You have earned an amazing number of house points. All of your hard work during lessons, extra-curricular activities, house events and your contribution to the wider community has been rewarded with a fantastic number of you achieving your House Point badges. A huge congratulations to you all.

This term we have seen your incredible creativity through the beautiful Remembrance Day poppy display, House Crest designs, House Big Draw and the making of your Christmas tree and Christmas Door decorations. All are absolutely brilliant!

We saw the return of the House 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!

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 2024 holds for our house!

- Miss Persse, House Leader of Christie

Blackstone House

Well done to making it to the end of this term – this one can often feel the longest and hardest, with dark, wet days. However, we have had lots of things going on and you have continued to show enthusiasm and kept smiles on your faces.

In my assembly this term, I talked about traditions and how, as a house, there are lots of things we do every year, as well as brand new events. One of the traditions we all look forward to are the Christmas Doors, and now decorating our house tree. I love to see the creativity on show and there is always a buzz around it which really kicks off the festive season.

Our house captains, Alyssa and Tabby, have done a fabulous job helping me with lots of things such as the poppy mural and Christmas Doors. You will see their faces throughout the year helping with all things Blackstone and running some events of their own.

I hope you all have a wonderful Christmas and I look forward to continuing with more traditions in 2024, along with a few new ones!

- Miss Sutton – House Leader of Blackstone

Matilda House

Following on from Matilda winning the House Trophy last academic year, I want to take the time to share how amazed I have been at how well you have all embraced the new term and to share a massive welcome to the new Matilda Year 7s starting this year.

To sum up the term, I was truly impressed with the community spirit and thought that went into our House Remembrance Day mural, each of you creating part of what went on to become a very impressive and respectful final outcome that showed how well we can pull together as a house. The Big Draw was also a highlight of the term with plenty of dynamic doodling taking place.

You have continued to work hard in lessons, revision and, for Year 11s, mock exams. Matilda has had a strong turnout to all of the competitions, quizzes and events that have run so far this year, with many more exciting things to come after Christmas! With Christmas Doors to be judged and the House Christmas tree looking more yellow than ever, I have again been impressed by the participation and care put into all that you do.

Wishing you all a great Christmas break and I look forward to seeing what Matilda House can do in 2024.

- Mr Hinchliffe, House Leader of Matilda

House Totals so far...

| | | |
|-----------|------------|------|
| 1st Place | Blackstone | 4120 |
| 2nd Place | Matilda | 4055 |
| 3rd Place | Christie | 3955 |
| 4th Place | Bigg | 3925 |

Congratulations BLACKSTONE!

Top Point Scoring Students - Term 2

| | | | |
|---------|----------------------|------------|-----|
| Year 7 | Benjamin Capo Bianco | Blackstone | 99 |
| Year 8 | Tilda Santer | Christie | 109 |
| Year 9 | Joseph Rhodes | Bigg | 166 |
| Year 10 | Emelia Ratcliffe | Matilda | 66 |
| Year 11 | Daisy Sherwood | Bigg | 61 |
| Year 12 | Thea McSweeney | Blackstone | 42 |
| Year 13 | Isabelle Carty | Matilda | 36 |

Satchel Points Totals for Term 1 & 2

(This is the total number of points given out by staff during Term 1 & 2)

| | |
|-------------|-------|
| BIGG | 18920 |
| BLACKSTONE | 18652 |
| CHRISTIE | 18225 |
| MATILDA | 15869 |
| Grand Total | 71666 |

Wow, this is a huge number of points - a big well done to all students!

**Merry Christmas to students, staff
and our family community - have a
wonderfully festive break!
See you all in 2024!**





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Cover Photograph: Year 8 Ice Skating Social, December 2023