

The Holmleigh Edition

OCTOBER 2025

EDITION 1



In October's Edition:



A look back on all the fun, achievements and successes of Term 1



An insight into the launch of Enrichment 2025!



Meet the Senior Leadership team, starting with Mr Hudson



A Day in the Life of the SITE TEAM!



Some RECOMMENDED READS from staff and students



Discover some of our top sporting talent in the school

The Holmleigh Edition

WELCOME to the first edition of the Holmleigh Park School Newspaper – The Holmleigh Edition!

Enrichment began with students selecting the name for our termly publication and then pitching ideas for articles, features and interviews! I allocated roles of either an interviewer, feature writer, reporter or to be on the creative team, and then students began fulfilling their brief. Over the weeks, students have been busy contacting staff and students for information, researching online, getting out and about around the school to interview staff and students and then developing their IT and English skills putting their work together.

They have come together as a team, worked very hard and learnt about problem solving, meeting deadlines and producing an article that hopefully engages readers!

We hope you enjoy reading all or some of the features that appeal to you and we look forward to sharing the Christmas edition in December!

Ms Furleger (*Teacher of English/Head of Year 11*)

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Deep Dive into The First Term At HP

By Gracie Silvester

This term at Holmleigh Park has begun with many new thrilling activities whilst simultaneously bringing back old favourite events across the school. With new arrivals consisting of Enrichment and old events like Fun Fridays and Student Council returning. Enrichment, which launched on the second week of September, has continued to fill Wednesdays with delight throughout all year groups. Alongside Enrichment, Fun Fridays began on the 19th of September and have been open Friday lunchtimes inviting students across the school to participate in the various tasks, which are planned by teachers, to earn house points contributing to the house competition. It has been a term of tremendous, terrific and total fun!

Treacherous Journey of DofE (Duke Of Edinburgh):

Duke Of Edinburgh Gold (DofE) began with students navigating across the Peak District, which is an upland central-northern area and one of England's oldest national parks. These students travelled an average of 55 miles across their 4 day expedition, showing teamwork and resilience across their strenuous, demanding journey in hope to receive their award.



Duke Of Edinburgh Silver started with students directing themselves out of a nearby town in Cheltenham and towards their camp for the night, which continued on the following 3 days of their expedition where they walked for a minimum of 8 hours across this period before returning to camp. Great support was shown in these groups, even in the alarming circumstances of gas fires across both Silver and Bronze students.



Duke Of Edinburgh Bronze occurred in the same location as the Silver groups where the Bronze pupils completed their expedition of 2 days and 1 night. These days demanded perseverance by all students as they map-read exceptionally with minimal assistance across a 6 hour period, before they guided their peers towards the final camp feeling successful and satisfied.

Fabulous Launch of Fun Fridays:

Fun Fridays began during lunchtimes and have been earning an immense amount of house point for all houses, leaving Typhoon in the lead for the first time in a while! This remains the case as of the end of Term 1! Events ranging from Basketball shoot outs to Tug of War have taken place in the sports hall every week and have allowed the participation of all year groups from 7-13. These competitions cause teamwork within houses and a healthy rivalry between pupils of opposing houses. Fun Fridays bring students from different year groups together in unity to earn valuable houses. It really is a great opportunity for students to highlight their skills and loyalty to their house.

Exhilarating Applications for Student Council:

Applications for the student council have been steadily received since it was opened on October 1st to students of all years. Student council allows elected representatives to take responsibility and deliver ideas from pupils across the school that aspire to improve our school with positive change. Students from the previous school council have expressed their joy at having their voice and opinions heard by higher members of school staff with the ability to make a difference. We hope our new school council is eager to make change and promote teamwork in this school year.... with winners being announced on the final day of term!

Extravagant Enrichment

By Danielle Clarke

This term at Holmleigh, we've introduced a new Enrichment program with a wide variety of clubs ranging from architectural model making and intensive yoga, all the way to curious palaeontology and terrific talbot but what have students actually been learning and what are these clubs really like?

Spectacular school production starts with nervous anticipation in the air

I started my visits in the Performing Arts block where I observed a nerve-racking scene all aspiring actors will have to go through: revealing their roles. Young year 7s were side to side with students all the way to year 11 anxiously anticipating whether their hard work at the auditions paid off or not. As Mr Conway handed out the casting list, the tension in the air grew with every unturned sheet handed out- friends looking at friends terrified to turn it over until finally, when the pressure felt just about ready to burst, everyone had a sheet and they started counting down together...

Relief flooded those who had done well and tears those who didn't. However, no matter their disappointment, all the students seemed excited for the production to come and ready for the challenges that putting on a production might face.

I was also very fortunate to also observe a few weeks later a deeper look into how they were practicing – they seemed to be learning some new choreography on the bottom playground to a fun, upbeat tune presumably in their school production of *The Return to The Forbidden Planet*.

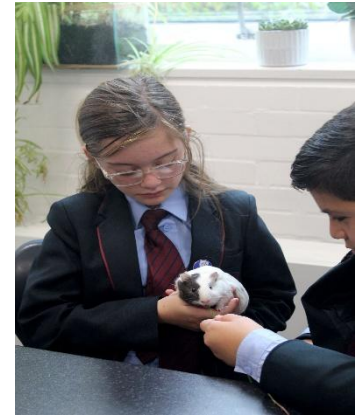
Careful care of cute, little animals



Next, I got to take a glimpse into animal care taking as I found myself in animal care club with Ms. Diaco looking after our two school guinea pigs - Queenie and Lady. Both as cute as two cuddly chicks, the students are allowed to stroke and snuggle them and are expected to feed them and look after them - learning lots of fun facts about how domesticated animals are taken care of.

The first week I was there, I observed the students creating their own yummy snacks and treats for the Guinea pigs full of natural nutrient-rich ingredients which were mixed together and moulded into cute shapes such as love hearts and stars. The students were encouraged to give them to the squeaking, squealing little Guinea pigs screaming in excitement ready for their delicious snacks prepared just for them.

A few weeks later when I got to see them again, I was greeted by a cute view of students cuddling with them and feeding them long, leafy, green grass. As they munched lazily, the lucky students who were chosen to hold them carefully stroked them careful to hold them securely as their tiny furry bodies placed all their trust in the students' hands.



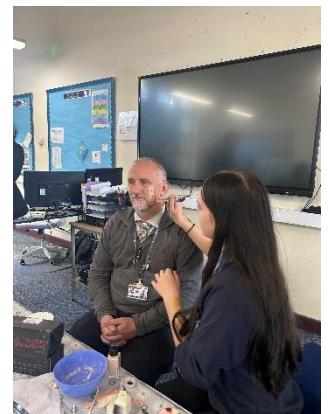
Scary Special effects in Stagecraft



Finally, I found myself in the H block discovering what it takes to be behind the scenes pulling the strings from the other side of the stage. Stage makeup, special effects and the creation of props are all made by a group of people never seen by audiences and in stagecraft club I got a glimpse into how they do it.

When I got to visit this enrichment, I was immediately struck by a terrifying group of ghoulish people who had gashes all over their faces- except they didn't. They were using a special kind of moulding material to create deformities on their faces like clay and then going over it with eyeshadows in dark bruising colours to create the illusion of disgusting, ugly cuts all over their faces.

This was only just one way the students were exposed to the artistic side of putting on a production that most people wouldn't even consider when watching a movie, despite it having such an immense effect on the outcomes of it. It was absolutely awe-inspiring to see the students transforming themselves into what seemed like completely different people but also quite scary. I also discovered that they will be helping behind the scenes of our school production, which I'm sure will be an artistic explosion.



Overall, Enrichment this term has been exciting to say the least as it has inspired, educated and evolved students' minds. Not only has it developed skills that are worked on in class, but also taught and explained new concepts that students have never heard of before. It is a space for both mental and physical growth and a time for students to enjoy building knowledge and connections - not just with people in their own years but students from all years with similar interests and hobbies as them. During my visits throughout the school, I have seen only a tiny snippet of the diverse variety of enrichment clubs that ensure all students can do one that they like and are interested in. However, it has been intriguing to observe how just a few of them work and what students have been learning in them.



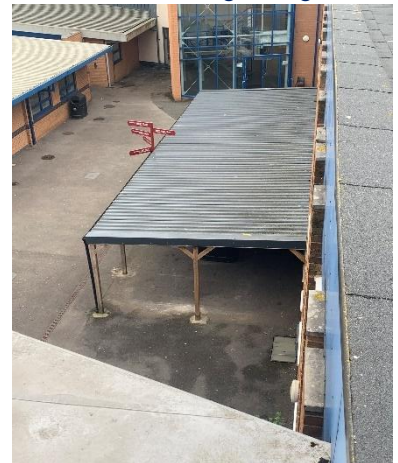
A Day in the Life: The Site Team

By Isla Van Beer, Lillie Winters and Dekota Dillon

We arrive between **7am and 10am** depending on whether it is term time or the school holidays. We use a software system where staff log any problems and site requests and this forms our 'To Do' list most days. We probably get about a dozen each day, and it can range from removing broken furniture, putting up art work and pictures, creating props for the school play, dealing with plumbing issues, emergency cleaning throughout the day, delivering parcels around the site and rescuing wildlife discovered around the site... which happens surprisingly regularly!

Some of the common jobs we do as routine around the site to maintain it include mowing the grass and other gardening maintenance, putting up displays and setting up for events, such as open and parent's evenings. Also, Sam does all the Health and Safety checks to ensure the environment is safe. We also regularly repaint and touch up areas looking a bit neglected and worn down. Another thing we do is help PE and generally move very heavy or bulky items around the site – helped immensely by the site buggy we acquired in 2020!

It is also no surprise that we have a weekly walk around the school roof to retrieve all the balls that students manage to kick up there on a daily basis!



We also have responsibility for some bigger projects around the school. Some of the most significant ones include building new shelters for outside areas, we recently built a new bike shed for staff, refitted a new kitchen for Catering lessons, ripped out and refurbished some new toilets in the school and laid new carpet.

Upcoming jobs and projects will include revamping the bike shed to make it more useable and some potential new seating areas! We are currently building a new dividing wall, which is also going to enhance the health and safety of the Performing Arts block!

We do get a break in the school day around **1pm** and have a much needed recharge as our job tends to be very physical.

The final jobs of the day include some final checks of the site, but also reviewing the day and debriefing, closing the jobs and we tend to finish at **6pm**.

Recommended Reads by Staff



Two Brothers by Ben Elton

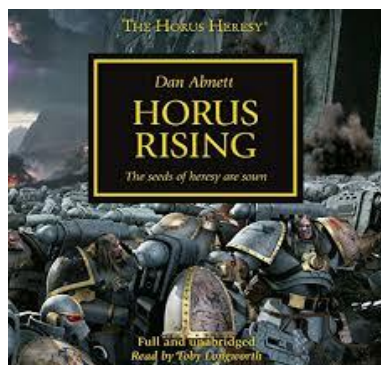
Mr Park likes this book because he says it has interesting characters and an emotional storyline. He says it is set in a period of history that looks at how ordinary people were affected by Nazism. He found the way Ben Elton wrote easy to engage with and understand, and he could hardly put it down when he started reading. Mr Park also says that this book was bittersweet as it was inspired by real events in the author's own family history.

Recommended by Mr Park (Deputy Headteacher)

Northern Lights Trilogy by Philip Pullman

Mr O'Gallagher recommends this triplet of books, giving us insights into Lyra and Will's magical adventures and jeopardy of love and hate, of wonder and despair. He says that reading these books in his teenage years meant that he was reading and growing with Lyra. Ultimately, he even used a verse for one of his wedding readings!

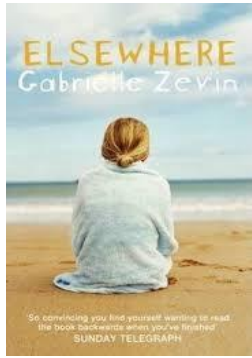
Recommended by Mr O'Gallagher (Deputy Headteacher)



Horus Rising by Dan Abnett

Dr Brown describes the book as being first in a huge series of books about a galaxy wide civil war in the far future. He says that for those who like Science Fiction and battles, it's a great read. As well as being a great introduction to the worlds of Warhammer!

Recommended by Dr Brown (Head of Religious Studies)



Elsewhere by Gabrielle Zevin

The story centres around Liz, a fifteen-year-old girl who dies in an accident and wakes up in a place called Elsewhere. In this place, people age backward until they are reborn. As Liz struggles to accept her death, she learns to find love, forgiveness, and purpose in her new life.

Ms Murray recommends reading *Elsewhere* because it explores big ideas about life, death, and growing up in a way that feels relatable and hopeful. It helps readers think about how to appreciate the present, deal with loss, and find meaning even in difficult situations. It was a book I read at school that I still remember today!

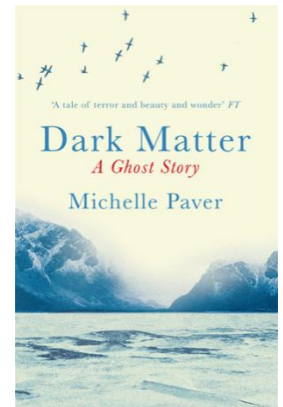
Recommended by Miss Murray (Assistant Headteacher)

Dark Matter: A Ghost Story by Michelle Paver

Dark Matter is a book I could not put down. Its eerie tension keeps you hooked with every turn of the page. The story is set in 1937, clouds of war are gathering over a fogbound London. Twenty-eight year old Jack is poor, lonely and desperate to change his life. So, when he's offered the chance to join an Arctic expedition, he jumps at it. Spirits are high as the ship leaves Norway: five men and eight huskies, crossing the Barents Sea by the light of the midnight sun.

Dark Matter is intriguing and gripping. It isn't scary whilst you're reading it, it's once you put it down that the fear sets in!

Recommended by Mr Pearce (Head of Media Studies and Criminology)





Meet the Senior Leadership Team (SLT)

An Interview with Mr Hudson

By Martha Jewell

Did you enjoy school when you were younger?

I enjoyed parts of school, like being on the school football team, having a chance to socialise with my friends at breaks and a lot of my current friends I know from secondary school and some from primary school. My

favourite subject was probably English Language, and I was lucky to be able to go to France twice for a trip with school which I really enjoyed.

What educational path did you follow to end up in teaching?

I did my A-levels at a college because my school didn't do sixth form. I studied English and Psychology there and then left to go to the University of Reading where I studied IT. At this point, I didn't have any plans for my career and went to university because I had the grades and my Dad also went to this University. I did a L1 cricket course and coached cricket at about 25 schools over the summer in Gloucester. At the end of university, I realised I wanted to continue working within schools, which led me to training to be a Computer Science teacher.

Since you didn't have plans to be a teacher at first, what were your goals?

I didn't ever have much of a goal but I had a plan to try and get good grades at GCSE and A-level to open more doors for myself in the future. Even when I got into teaching, I could've never seen myself being a headteacher since I just enjoyed what I was doing in the moment and didn't have any plans to do anything different until I had the opportunity to later on.

Were you a good student at school?

Yes, I did okay but I think my parents would say that I could have worked harder! I think part of the reason why I didn't do as good as I could have was because I didn't know what I wanted for my future but I still worked hard and achieved.

What were your biggest achievements in your career?

There are some good achievements overall in the school like when we got our Good Ofsted in 2023 at HP. The 2024 GCSEs were the best and last year's A levels were also really good. So there has been some really great times that, as a school, we have achieved. At a school I worked at previously, there was a typhoon that hit the Philippines and we did a charity event which was a 24-hour basketball event which raised £10,000 and was mentioned by the MP at the time in the house of commons, which was really cool because it was a great achievement that gave the children really good experiences with helping out for a cause, which was different to the normal things that school is about.

What is the most challenging career moment that you have had?"

That's a hard and interesting question! I would say that one thing is this being the 4th school that I have worked in because the change is hard and you have to try and get used to it as quickly as you can, but that's also tricky to do. Having a new role is also hard because of the new and different parts to it but – overall - you just have to be resilient and adapt to the changes even though it may be challenging to get used to the new staff, routines and rules.

What goal do you have for the students and the school itself?

I think that the number one goal would be for the students to leave and look back at their achievements with pride due to you spending a massive part of your childhood at school. I want everyone to be pleased with their exam results and see it as a great achievement for themselves. I also think that everyone should be able to feel like a part of the school and be involved in everything that they want to. This is why we have Enrichment - it's for the students to learn life skills and be able to represent the school and celebrate their achievements. It prepares students for careers and enables them to look back and be proud, which is one of the main goals we had for the school.

Who decided to do Enrichment at the school?

Enrichment was a team effort. SLT and myself all meet up and think of ideas to improve and make the school better. Enrichment came from the work from the councils with Mrs Sharples, and we felt that the clubs we had weren't a wide enough range and we wanted every student to have the chance to do the clubs.

How do you think school uniform impacts learning?

I think that in life being smart is really important and first impressions matter. By looking smart and making it look like you put in the effort, you show people that you care and respect them. Secondly, taking pride in how we look is a small habit that leads to managing bigger things.

How long do you plan on staying at HP?

None of us know where anything goes in life, but I have so much written in my pad and board of things that I want to achieve so I'm not so sure how long it's going to take but I want to achieve all of those things before I consider anything different to being Headteacher here.

Do you ever miss previous schools that you have worked at?

Yes, definitely, but I am still friends with many people that I have worked with in the past and I do miss working with some and there's a lot of memories that I look back on.

What does your daily routine look like?

I arrive at school around 7:30, I have a SLT meeting at 7:45 every morning and we talk about the day. I teach a year 7 class IT most mornings and then I'm on duty at lunch in the foyer and ramp. I go on learning walks around the school, which I do just to check on everything. I also usually have meetings with other schools or the local council and Greenshaw Learning Trust to see what we have going on and, at the end of the day, I'm on duty outside of school. I check emails and documents and finish at around 5:30 to go home.

How is the money that is given by the government to the school spent?

Some of the money gets allocated to certain students throughout the school and they are given a budget for food and extra resources etc, but the bulk of the money that comes - about 85% of the money that we are given - is spent on the much needed staff at the school. We also meet up with Greenshaw and decide how much budget each part of the school will have and we give certain amounts to the adults so that they can spend money on their subject areas depending on needs.

HP FUN FACTS

By Amirah Akanbi and Lottie Bee

1. The school building was built and opened in 1971
2. The school has a sports centre onsite, including a swimming pool, which was opened back in 1974!
3. The school was the first comprehensive school in Gloucester
4. It was originally called Beaufort School and later renamed Beaufort Community School
5. In October 2013, it joined an academy and became Beaufort Co-operative Academy
6. The school became part of the Greenshaw Learning Trust on June 1st 2019
7. It changed its name to Holmleigh Park High School in September 2019
8. Our longest serving members of staff include Mrs Mason (31 years), Mrs Price (27 years) and Mr Park (24 years)
9. Originally there were no fences – this meant the fields could be used by the general public for walking dogs!
10. Ofsted last visited in 2023 and was given a GOOD rating
11. The school has approximately 1422 students – 1267 in Years 7-11 and 155 in Post-16.
12. There are approximately 202 members of staff.

HOUSE UPDATES

By Daniel Jennings and Theo Russell

If I'm being honest the house updates are really cool! The challenges, the sports and the competition make it a really fun-filled time!

At the end of Term 1, the scores are:

1st: Typhoon with 3534 house points
2nd: Hurricane with 3407 house points
3rd: Javelin with 3272 house points
4rd: Meteor with 3049 house points

However, it is tight and things change all the time. Keep working hard to get more house points!

Well done to 7H1 and 9J1 for collecting the most house points this term. They won the tutor reward in October, and enjoyed an afternoon of quizzing to celebrate their hard work over the term.

There are lots of house things to win this year like the house cup (overall winners), sports day (which Javelin are the holders for) and the attendance cup.

Last year, Javelin won the house cup but that doesn't mean that everyone else can't challenge this year so keep working hard, taking responsibility and being kind to get house points.

It has been a term filled with house competitions and activities and there is only more to come!

Mr Caffull, the Head of Hurricane, said, "we may not be in the lead, but we are planning a serious comeback".

Mr Mortimer said, "Meteor have made a really good start to the year and we have a long history of being the front runners".

Mr Addis said that 'Javelin have had a fantastic start to the year, continuing on from their success of winning the house cup last year! We've had a fantastic group of year 7s join the best house in the school and I can't wait to see the amazing things they will do for our house!'

Finally, Miss Grinham gave a fighting talk: "The #GreenArmy of Typhoon students have come out fighting this year! A big welcome to the new year 7s in our house - our team will keep turning up to every house event and earning those house points to go for the win!"



A spotlight on Sport – Romeo Tobias

By Promise E. Odiase

Why and when did you start this sport?

I started 7 years ago – Dad was a big fan of tennis. I enjoyed watching Wimbledon on TV. Started playing at the park and then trained at the Oxstalls sports centre. I played my first tournament at Oxstalls in 2019 and came last unfortunately (all 5 matches). There was lots of repetitive cheating and I lost the love for the sport. Dad got me back into Tennis in lockdown – we played in the park every day. I found my rhythm again and played a lot better.

What is your biggest motivation when things get tough and you don't feel like you're doing your best?

Take a week rest – if I'm having a mental breakdown, I would talk to my coaches (they would give advice on how to cope with the challenges). I would take my mind off tennis and play additional sports.

What is the most challenging aspect of your sports fixtures?

There are a few: underperforming in front of parents and coaches- letting down my County team. Losing to someone with a lower UTR (Universal Tennis Rating), travelling abroad and getting knocked out first round and then travelling all the way back home! Playing a tournament and not being physically fit enough and performance anxiety is also normal.

What level of your sport are you at now?

I am 264th ranking Under16s in the UK. My highest ranking was 114 u14s.

What other sports do you play additionally?

I play basketball, table tennis, paddle and football. All for fun.

How do you balance your life in year 11 with your dedication to the sport?

A timetable which tells me what activities I do in a day. For example, an hour revision, strength and conditioning and homework. I play tennis every day.

It is challenging because of the longer days in Year 11 and a lot of homework demands, and I don't get a lot of free time to relax.

What advice would you give to people trying to get into Tennis?

Start with basic equipment and join a local club. Watch videos of professionals (analyse the way they play). Idolise your favourite Tennis player as this motivates you to keep going and never give up and make sure you enjoy it and have fun.

What is your best achievement playing this sport?

I played at Wimbledon (play your way to Wimbledon U14s). Played at TE 14 Ireland 6 (category 3 tournament) and beat Max Naughton currently ranked number 3 in Ireland. The main draw round of 32 score was 3-6, 6-4, 7-5 to me. I have also been the County Champion 4 times.

What Tennis teams do you play for?

Gloucestershire, NET Academy, Painswick.

Who is your favourite tennis player?

My favourite male tennis player is Nick Kyrgios. The reason why I look up to him is because he came from a humble background and he was naturally talented and he shows his frustrating emotions on court with a controversial attitude. He also is known as "the bad boy of tennis" and is very entertaining with his incredible tricks, as well as his behaviour and his swearing and racket smashing on court.

My female favourite tennis player is Serena Williams. The reason for this is also because of her humble background, but also the fact that her father - known as "King Richard"- coached his daughters, which is similar to when my father coached me. Not only that, she is a fighter on court and is an aggressive baseliner which is the same as my game-style.



CAREER CORNER – A spotlight on Miss Parker

By Emmanuella Ogundiran

What inspired you to become a teacher?

I have been working in schools for many years in lots of different roles, so I am used to being in a school environment. I didn't have much to do with students when I first started but I became a tutor in my previous school then started working in the Art and Drama department helping and teaching small groups of students. I'm passionate about my subject and enjoyed watching students succeed in it. Giving students the opportunity to build confidence in my subject and foster a love of art is important to me.

Why did you choose to teach at HP?

I was fortunate to do some of my training at HP and got to know the school well. I particularly liked how welcome I felt not just by my department but by the school as a whole. Students I found to be enthusiastic and had a willingness to learn which makes our jobs easy! When the opportunity arose to stay, I jumped at the chance and was fortunate enough to be able to.

Why did you choose to teach the subject you teach out of all the other subjects?

After leaving school I got a degree in illustration, and alongside my work in schools I have worked for a number of years as a freelance artist/illustrator. I would like all students to have the best Art education and to gain enjoyment out of the subject.

How do you balance teaching and everyday life?

I try to be really organised and do work at work so when I get home I can meet up with friends, watch TV, spend time with family and do normal things like that. (You also become very good at meal prepping!)

What are some of the biggest challenges and successes you have faced in your teaching career?

I'm still fairly new to teaching so I have not got a long history of teaching behind me where I can pinpoint an exact moment, but every day you have challenges that you might not have realised would be challenges. Equally, on the flipside, you also have successes every day that you might not realise are going to be successes.

How would you describe your teaching style?

I think I would describe my teaching style as calm and encouraging, art is a subject where students need confidence and self belief in what they are doing, so I think it's important to be as encouraging as possible.

Term 1: A round up of Fun Fridays

By Theo Russell

Brilliant Basketball-September 12th

A simple but popular Fun Friday – the basketball shoot out! Anyone can get involved and students lined up to take a shot and score a point for their house. It was exciting, thrilling and competitive but Meteor took the trophy.

Testing Tug of war- September 19th

An enjoyable action-packed fight for the house points – the tug of war! Everyone fought and battled until their muscles couldn't take it anymore – determined to get some valuable house points that would make such a big difference to the house cup at the end of the year. In the end, it was Typhoon who came through with the win.



Magnificent Music quiz- September 26th

All the houses tried to guess their way to victory in the Fun Friday- guess what country the music is from! Everyone rushed eagerly to the middle of the sports hall and they had to then sprinted to the correct country's flag that the music was from! Javelin came through victorious!

Decisive Dingbats- October 3rd

Every student from every house tried to figure out the pictogram! It was tough but only one house could guess their way to triumph and the winner got 15 house points and 1 house point for entry. The house that came through under pressure was Typhoon.

The House Competition: Spelling Bee – October 9th and 10th

There were 2 days of fierce competition between some of the top spellers in the school. Thursday saw the houses in Years 7 and 8 go head to head tackling some challenging words – it was impressive. Lucy and Connor from Hurricane, as well as Finley from Typhoon, made it to the finals. The KS4 spelling bee concluded the week on Friday with Matthew from Hurricane and Joseph from Meteor winning, and Oscar from Typhoon finishing 3rd.



The house charity vote – October 17th

This Fun Friday saw students voting for the new house charities that the school will support for the next 2 years. This is a vital part of our school community and students show kindness and compassion with all charity events. We are thrilled to announce the chosen charities and look forward to our community coming together to make positive impact on very deserving causes.



How has your term been?

We asked a Year 7 student, a Year 11 student and some Year 12 students how their term has been. Each step into these year groups signifies an important transition – beginning secondary school, starting the very important year of actual GCSE exams and the start of more independence but hard work in the sixth form. It felt only right to check in!

On the first few days of Year 7, it was quite confusing. I say this because getting to know teachers and students was very challenging but most importantly getting to the right classes. My challenges were adjusting to a newer and bigger environment with older people, but also making friends. Over the term, I have settled in quite well and quickly - I now know everyone's name in the tutor and have multiple friends and homework has been very easy (for now). I have enjoyed Enrichment and my favourite subject is PE. For Enrichment, I have cooking. I have cooked Spaghetti Bolognese, lasagne, sweet or savoury scones but the most exciting cooking lesson is coming up as we are making Halloween truffles that we get to decorate. One struggle I had on the first Enrichment lesson was making friends as there were no year sevens in my class, but I quickly made a friend. In primary school, I grew up thinking secondary school was a place with really scary teachers and big students, but I'm now happy to say that this is incorrect: teachers are strict when they have to be and students are helpful and friendly.

Raquel Okhionpanwoyi Agbongiasede 7H2

The prospect of year 11 was dreaded to say the least. The idea of longer days, more homework and the looming threat of exams meant that for many Year 11 was not a year to be looking forward to. However, now 7 weeks in and settled, the truth of the year has now become clearer. As mentioned, the idea of staying an extra hour was unpopular, yet now they have simply become routine. The realisation of the benefits of period 6 have helped many to appreciate the extra time with teachers to learn and excel. In addition, Champion's hour has been a success. The 4-5pm slot of help with subject teachers has aided many in their battles with revision and homework, and the biscuits and rewards available has motivated a growing number of people to attend. Furthermore, the addition of Enrichment was a welcome change to my Wednesday afternoon. It is an excellent way to break up the sometimes monotonous hours of classroom work by participating in fun activities. Many Year 11 students (including myself) also completed their silver DofE expedition, which was a motivating challenge. Overall, they walked close to 50 kilometres over 3 days. I have come to the realisation that, whilst year 11 is a challenge, it should be welcomed and faced head on through hard work and determination to succeed.

Jack Grinnell 11H1

At first, the idea of starting sixth form seemed daunting to me, and – honestly - I wasn't sure I'd ever feel confident that I would succeed. However, throughout this term, I have learned significant lessons about effective revision and most importantly smoothly transitioning from a GCSE style approach to school work to a more refined, mature A level approach. Since September, I have been adapting to a new environment, as a previously external student, as well as learning important skills such as time management and resilience. I will admit that the freedom which comes with being in sixth form has been positive to me as I find it easier to produce effective materials and polish my homework during free periods which I did not have during secondary school.

Diana Canadas Ortiz 12T1

A Spotlight on sport - Isla Van Leer

By James Cox



Why did you start kickboxing?

My Dad always used to watch martial arts on TV and went to multiple forms of martial arts classes such as BJJ, taekwondo, and Muay Thai. When I was 4, I began to do taekwondo, which I did for a year and a half until I lost my passion for the sport. My Dad joined Urban Martial arts in 2019, and 4 years ago in 2021 is when my kickboxing journey began. A major reason to why I started was the transfer from year 6 to Year 7. My mum thought a key way for self-defence would be to begin a form of martial arts and what better way to start where my Dad goes. I have now been doing kickboxing for 4 years.

What's your biggest achievement?

My biggest achievement in my kickboxing journey so far would be achieving my black belt. I tested for it in November 2024. This belt testing lasted for 6 hours and it consisted of fitness, bag work, line work, horse stance, shadow boxing, sparring, block and counter, control and restraint etc This all took place on a Sunday. I have also been invited to the world championships in Australia.

What level are you right now?

I am British champion for my age and weight division in ISKA competitions.

What advice would you give to people who are trying to get into kickboxing?

A big way to start is to join a local club and never think you're too old, as it's never too late to start. Watching videos of people on YouTube can be very helpful to advance your skills and techniques. Also, being consistent with your commitment to training is a key aspect.

What is the most challenging aspect of your fights?

The suspense before your fight and not knowing who you're fighting can create lots of nerves. Some competitions you wait for hours for your fight so waiting round all day can increase tension.

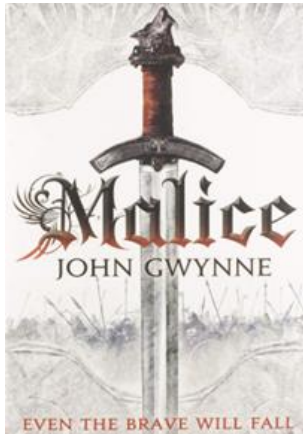
What other sports do you play?

I play for the City of Gloucester in football, and Cricket, Badminton, rounders for fun inside and outside of school.

My biggest motivation in kickboxing when things don't necessarily go the way I want to would probably be my dad. He helps me learn from my mistakes and always supports me at every fight - good or bad.



Recommended Reads by Students



Malice by John Gwynne

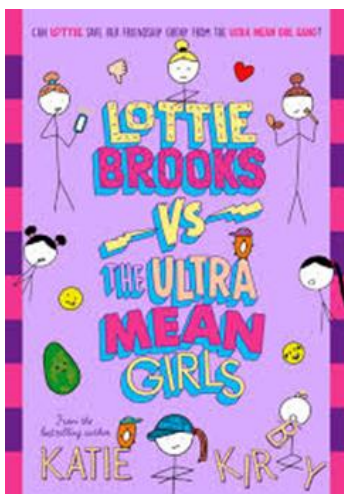
Sonny Keogh said that he liked this book because of how it is written and the fact that each chapter focuses on a different character, even though there are only six or seven characters to switch. He says it would be very hard to dislike this book and somehow each six or seven storylines that take place in this book's world all interact with one another. Sonny says that aside from the way the book is laid out, it is a magnificent book and definitely one of the best books he has read.

Recommended by Sonny Keogh

Wildlands by Brogen Murphy

Maisie Roberts says she likes this book because it is a captivating and exciting story that is about environmental themes and surviving. The book has a sense of adventure and shines light on what would happen if we neglected and didn't take care of the animals and their environment.

Recommended by Maisie Roberts



Lottie Brooks vs the ultra-mean girls by Katie Kirby

Pip Morris likes this book and the rest of the series because it is very amusing and makes you laugh out loud. The book follows Lottie Brooks (obviously) a teenage girl, and her funny dramas in her life. It is a page turner!

Recommended by Pip Morris





Six of Crows by Leigh Bardugo

Ryan Faulkner speaks highly of the Six of Crows, rating it 5 stars! His insight to the book included it being a high fantasy, which can be read at any reading level as it's not too hard for lower years, yet good enough to keep higher ones captivated. This book is said to teach lots of lessons on self- respect, coming of age and other parts of growing up despite being in an entirely different world. This proves the book to be a perfect read for many people of the school due to needing a few lessons on self- respect and guidance in the growing of age.

Recommended by Ryan Faulkner

Strange Pictures by Uketsu (translated by Jim Rion)

Greeshma Ravikumar's insight on the book tells us about this Japanese mystery bestseller, revolving around a series of creepy drawings, in which the reader is a detective, meaning this more than the normal book. If you enjoy mystery puzzles, games where you have to pay attention to detail, and stories that gradually reveal a larger, darker interconnected truth, Strange Pictures is definitely the right book for you.

Recommended by Greeshma Ravikumar





HALLOWEEN

By Angel Seriki

1. The origins of Halloween began 2000 years ago and can be traced back to the Ancient Celts
2. Halloween derives from All Hallow's Eve
3. A full moon on Halloween is extremely rare – on average every 19 years with the last one being in 2020!
4. Trick or Treating dates back to the Middle Ages where people left out food for unwelcome spirits. By the 19th Century, trick or treaters would typically do a singing, dancing or telling jokes performance for a treat.
5. Samhainophobia is a fear of Halloween
6. Celebrating Halloween is even bigger in the USA with an estimated £4.3 billion spent on it
7. The popularity in the UK is growing with an average of £474 million spent
8. The song 'Monster mash' was once cancelled on BBC for being "too morbid"
9. Classic costume options include witches, vampires and skeletons.
10. More modern costume trends include superheroes such as Spiderman and popular celebrities such as Taylor Swift.

S'mores Cookie

1. Preheat your oven to 190C/170C Fan and line a 9x9inch square tin with parchment paper, and leave to the side for now.
2. Whisk/Mix the plain flour, bicarbonate, salt and cornflour together so its evenly distributed – leave to the side.
3. In a larger bowl, melt the butter. Add in the two sugars, and whisk for about 2 minutes so the sugar starts to dissolve and the mixture is smooth. Add in the egg and the vanilla, and whisk again briefly until smooth. (I used an electric whisk)
4. Add in the dry Ingredients, and mix until a cookie dough is formed. Add in the chocolate chips and mix with a spatula until they're spread through the cookie dough evenly.
5. Press two thirds of the mixture into the bottom of the tin. Microwave the marshmallow fluff for 20-30 seconds and spread over the cookie dough.
6. Spread/cover the marshmallow fluff layer in the other third of the cookie dough. It might be hard to spread it, so I rolled it out onto some cling film, and then turned it onto the marshmallow layer to make it even. Bake the traybake in the oven for 20-25 minutes, until the top of the cookie bake looks 'dry'!
7. Leave the cookie bake to cool for about 10 minutes, then leave to cool fully on a wire rack. Cut the bake into 4x4 for decent sizes, or 5x5 for smaller ones! Enjoy!

Ingredients

- 275 g plain flour
- 1sp bicarbonate of soda
- ½ tsp salt
- 1 tbsp cornflour
- 115g unsalted butter
- 100g granulated sugar
- 100g light brown sugar
- 1 medium egg
- ½ tsp Vanilla Extract
- 300g milk/dark chocolate
- 1 tub marshmallow fluff



Tainted Violet

A poem by Isla Haines

The peak of a waterfall, the water gushing down.
My eyes glancing up at the green leaves turned brown.

A delicate walk on a tight rope of mystery,
a history of voices telling me what I shouldn't be
wishing for me not to succeed.

I savour the sweet symphony of the songs I like to hear,
they erase my fear and smear the dissatisfaction that I wipe from my tears.

It's a temporary cure to an everlasting pandemic.
The disease that is spread through every student, students who aren't all academic.

Raising your hand to ask why the violet pencil is restrained from the sharpener?
Left buried under the red, green and blue that rest at the top of the drawer.
But they're ready and standing to be exercised
in a lifestyle fit for violet.

Violet isn't everyone's favourite colour but it remains drawn on the rainbow.
Suggesting the question; Why is it oppressed and hidden in a shadow?
But only recognised in collaboration or commemoration on few occasions we share a celebration.

Still, the water keeps flowing and the leaves keep falling.
Time sprints on, on the thin pavement of misery that it torments and decorates
like a birthday cake on Halloween.

For now I'll rest in the era where the souls of us sing like saints and watch the sky envelop in it's violet
pastel glory,
during the final countdown to the ending of our once fresh story.

A celebration of Art and Photography from Term 1

Su Wright-
Year 13



Bonnie Wilkins,
12M1.



Libby King, 12M1

GCSE Photography



Molly Reeves 12T



Grace Miller – 12H1