

Welcome to the 55th edition of our half termly newsletter. It is apparent that the last seven weeks have been a tale of two halves: 'Arts and Culture' or 'Science and Technology'.

In celebrating the arts, we've seen our GCSE pupils showcasing their drama examination pieces, we've been on theatre trips, poetry conferences, art exhibitions and our musicians have visited the Royal Festival Hall.

In terms of STEM, our students have been to Warwick University to put their laboratory skills to the test, our computing pupils have visited Oxford University and we've celebrated International Women in Science Day.

All of these trips and experiences require a considerable amount of preparation, and I want to say a huge thank you to all the staff who make these opportunities for learning beyond the classroom possible and ensure they are a success.

Our most significant achievement this half term has to be the performance of Buggy Malone. The hours and hours of rehearsals, learning lines and choreography have really demonstrated the determination and resilience of our pupils. Then you factor in the nerve-wracking performances in front of peers, the local primary schools, excerpts for grandparents and finally, the paying guests. Three sellout shows and, once again, our pupils' performances have blown us away. We thought it would be difficult to top last year's performance of Grease, but Joe, Reenie, Brayden, Keah, Matilda and all the cast put on an incredible show. A huge thank you to Mrs Chambers, the Creative Arts department and everyone who helped make this show successful. It is staggering to think that over 100 pupils have been involved in the show in one form or another, which represents one in every seven pupils in the school!

Staying with drama, you may have seen the somewhat 'unsightly' containers that have appeared on the school site. These have been repurposed from a community centre in East London and will form a new drama studio and workshops for our pupils and staff. The plan is for these to be operational later this year and provide a permanent home for drama with easy access to the hall and dance studio. They form part of a more comprehensive sustainability strategy we plan to implement over the coming years.

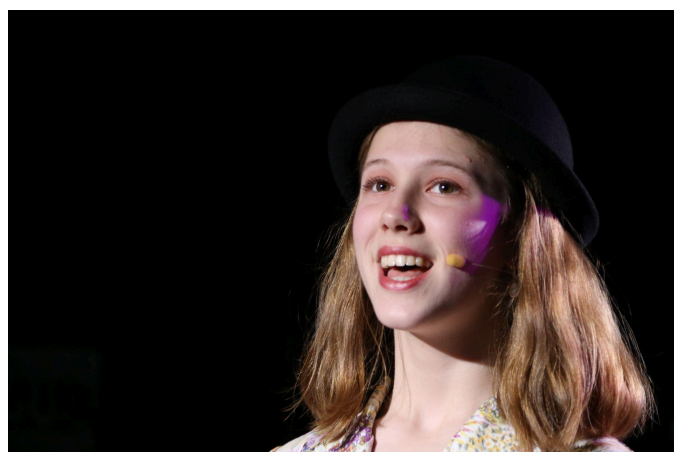
Finally, we are now well over halfway through this academic year. We have just over four weeks next half term and five weeks after Easter and then we are back into GCSE and A level examination season! Booster classes are taking place next week for those sitting exams, and revision at home should be well underway now!

Thank you for your continued support, and I hope you can spend quality time together as a family over the half term break.

Richard Booth
Headteacher



The cast of 'Bugsy Malone'



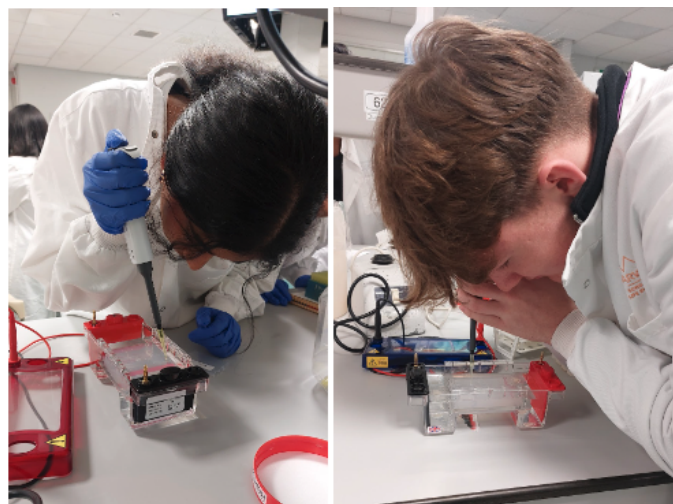
Reenie singing her heart out as Blousey



Bugsy at Fat Sams

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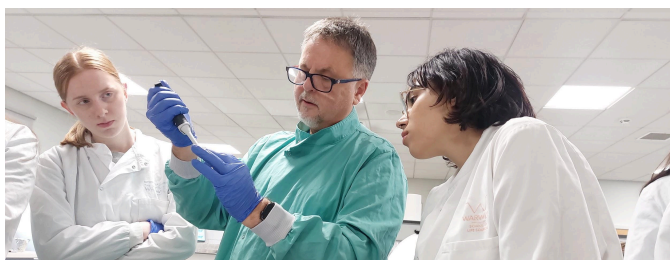


Working with precision to add DNA samples to the gel electrophoresis. Students were looking at different patients who may have a particular disease

Once our gel electrophoresis was set up and running, our students were given a tour of the campus by existing undergraduates. It was an opportunity to see the different laboratories and lecture halls, walk through the campus seeing everything from the library to the canteen and ask questions along the way about what it is like to study both a STEM subject and life at university in general.

University of Warwick Laboratory Skills Trip

On Thursday 14th December, the Key Stage 5 Chemists and Biologists were invited into the School of Life Sciences at the University of Warwick to enjoy a lesson and laboratory session on DNA, DNA replication and gel electrophoresis. This theoretical learning was then key to the practical work on Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) and gel electrophoresis which our students completed with confidence.



Watching the expert Kevin Moffat on how to use a micropipette



Practice makes perfect



Gel electrophoresis handled by experts at Warwick University



A guided tour by a medical student at Warwick University

Once our tour was complete, it was time to run our gel electrophoresis, and then to visualise using glow in the dark markers. Students were able to diagnose one of the patients with the disease based on the results.

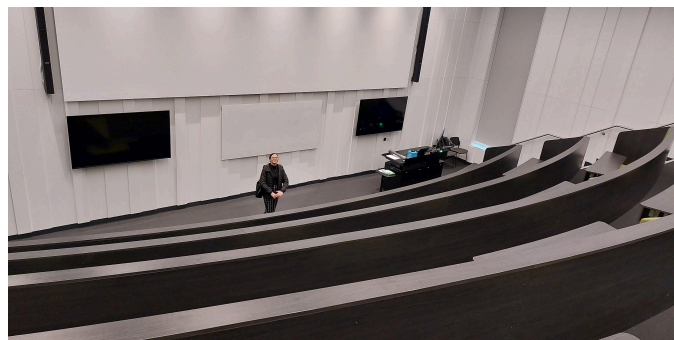


Proud of the final photography, now time to analyse the results



Team of scientists on completion: ready for lunch and a stroll of the campus

We were fortunate enough to have Ms Armitage tour us around the wider campus of the university. We spent some time in one of the lecture theatres, very different to our classrooms, but a space in which many great scientists have learned and gone on to great things. Perhaps one of our students will follow in their footsteps now they have experienced studying science at university.



One day, this will be my stage!

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It All Adds Up

On Tuesday 9th January, twelve of our year 10 girls went to Oxford to participate in the 'It All Adds Up' event at the Mathematical Institution of the University of Oxford. The day started in one of the lecture halls with a very interesting talk by an Oxford University lecturer about the links and connections between geometry, number theory and iteration. The talk was very inspiring and really highlighted how problems in different areas of mathematics have a common thread that unites them all. After a short break, the girls had the opportunity to learn about games and strategy. During this activity, the girls were able to explore some two-player games and discover how mathematics can be used to beat their opponents.



The girls explored how mathematical strategy can help them beat their opponents

The second part of the day found the girls forming small groups and testing their team-working skills by solving a variety of interesting and unique mathematical problems. This activity took place in a seminar room, and the girls were able to receive support from an undergraduate student from the University of Oxford. The girls did a fantastic job and were able to solve many of the challenging puzzles provided by the University.



The girls are working together to solve some mathematics-based puzzles and an Oxford University lecturer helping the girls come up with a strategy to guarantee a win in their game

The day ended with a question and answer session back inside the lecture hall with four undergraduate students who are studying mathematics in the University of Oxford. This allowed our pupils to gain a better insight into what the life of an undergraduate student is like at Oxford, inspiring them for the future.

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Year 9 Girls in Computing

On 25th January, our enthusiastic year 9 girls visited St Clement Danes School who hosted an afternoon of Computing and Coding activities. Pupils had the opportunity to interact with STEM ambassadors and industry representatives, who offered invaluable insight into potential career paths and a glimpse into the range of careers within the tech sector.

The afternoon was filled with coding activities involving producing an automatic alarm for a safe, with lights and sound. Pupils also created their own websites, creating digital spaces and discovering Cloud computing.

The event was organised by the charitable initiative STEMPOINT and generously sponsored by Tier 2 Prolifics, a leading company in the tech industry.



Pupils completing a coding project led by professionals in industry



Moesha D and Ruby S building a website



Year 9 pupils building an alarm for their safes

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Evening of Drama

Since the start of term, GCSE drama pupils have been working hard on their examination performances. For year 10 this involved the creation of devised drama; working in small groups they had to produce a 15 minute piece inspired by a stimulus. Year 11, on the other hand, were creating monologues and duologues from published plays. Tuesday 16th January saw both year groups perform together for an invited audience. The evening was a huge success with outstanding

performances across the board. Massive congratulations to all those involved - your practical examination marks will certainly reflect the hard work you all put into your performances!



Scarlett in 'Girls Like That' E Placey



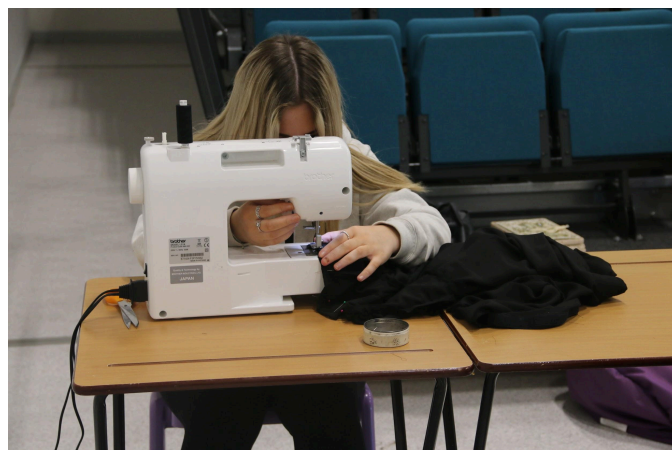
Keah-Cadey in 'An Inspector Calls' JB Priestley



Freddie and Summer in 'Lemons Lemons Lemons Lemons' S Steiner



Matilda in 'Trojan Women' Euripides



Eden sewing - she entered costume as her theatrical skill instead of acting

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La Casa de Bernarda Alba

On Friday 2nd February, our Sixth Form Spanish students embarked on a cultural adventure through the heart of London which could easily have been Andalucia (had there been a touch more sun!). The highlight of their journey was watching a fascinating

Spanish play, *La Casa de Bernarda Alba*, at the Cervantes Theatre, immersing themselves in the rich linguistic experience. The students were not only captivated by the performance at the Cervantes Theatre but also enjoyed a delightful tapas tasting at the first Tapas Bar in London, *Meson Don Felipe*, enhancing their understanding of Spanish cuisine and providing them with the opportunity to speak in the target language with the owner and members of staff. This day of real-world cultural encounters, left our pupils inspired and eager to deepen their connection with the Spanish language.



¡Una ración de chorizo por favor!



Tasting the flavour of Spain



All smiles after the theatre

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Boing, Boing, Boing!

Lots of our year 8 and 9 pupils were jumping for joy when they were invited to attend a day out at Orbital Trampoline Park in Luton due to their impeccable behaviour records. After a tasty little morning treat, we boarded the coaches with over 100 excited pupils and were on our way. Once we arrived, pupils (and staff!) didn't stop at mere bouncing. Oh no, they took on every challenge thrown their way! Scaling climbing walls, tackling obstacle courses, and diving fearlessly into foam pits – they were unstoppable! From the giggles to the adrenaline rushes, this day was packed with memories to last a lifetime. We might have even spotted a few future trampoline champions in the making. What a cracking way to end this half term! Well done to everyone who joined us, you were a credit to the school and indeed, yourselves!



Tapas together



Who was left standing?



Team work makes the dream work



Just before they landed in the foam pit



It's all about your reaction time in this game



Mrs Redmond - The Ultimate Gladiator!



Hold on tight!



Jacob - 'It was really fun, especially 'The Meltdown!'



Year 8 & 9 Zilcho's Trip 2024



Tackling the climbing wall



Taking a break from the madness



Ready to refuel with some pizza



About to take on 'The Meltdown'!

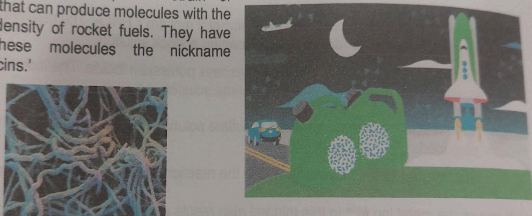
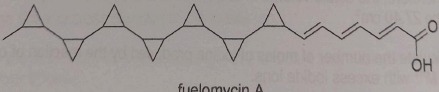
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Science Olympiads

Our KS5 students have been busy undertaking many an Olympiad this term. Olympiads provide the opportunity for our students to access the subject beyond the specification taught. They are designed to challenge and stretch our students and push them into the application of science outside of the classroom. For the third year running, we took part in round one of the UK Chemistry Olympiad and were exposed to questions which are designed to stimulate lots of debate regarding what chemistry entails and is an opportunity for us to showcase some of the skills needed at university and beyond.

Q3 This question is about fuel-producing bacteria

Scientists have developed a strain of bacteria that can produce molecules with the energy density of rocket fuels. They have given these molecules the nickname 'fuelomycins.'

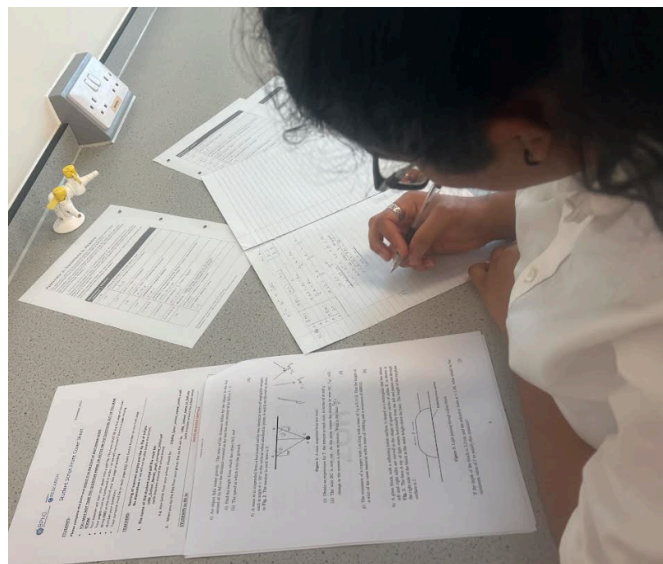
fuelomycin A

Fuelomycins contain multiple cyclopropane rings, which are 'high energy' due to a property called ring strain.

Could bacteria be our new fuel?

Meanwhile, the Physics Department at Key Stage 5 has successfully organised two prestigious competitions: The British Physics Olympiad and The Astrophysics

Challenge. These events were designed not only to test students' knowledge but also to cultivate their creative thinking skills. The British Astronomy and Astrophysics Olympiad (BAAO) competition aims to foster a deeper understanding of astronomical phenomena and encourage students to engage with the complexities of the universe. On the other hand, the British Physics Olympiad (BPhO) focuses on challenging students to apply their physics knowledge to solve intricate problems, fostering analytical thinking and problem-solving abilities. Both competitions serve as platforms for students to showcase their talents and passion for physics while honing essential skills for future academic and professional endeavours.



BPhO Challenge: Students pen their path to physics excellence

Finally, twenty-one students from years 12 and 13 completed the British Biology Olympiad Challenge. This competition challenges and stimulates students with an interest in biology to expand and extend their talents. Students were presented with topics and ideas which they are not familiar with to demonstrate their problem solving skills and understanding of core principles. Results will be released later this year for all of our Olympiads.

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International Women and Girls in Science Day

While women and girls constitute approximately 50% of the population, their representation in science employment stands at around 30%. At The Reach Free School, we're actively working to shift these statistics!

In today's technology-driven era, the influence of social media is undeniable. Our pupils harnessed this power to raise awareness about women and girls in science. They crafted Instagram posts celebrating the achievements of female scientists while shedding light on the challenges they've faced and conquered.

We received numerous impressive entries, showcasing a diverse array of female scientists—from Ada Lovelace

in the 19th century to Jennifer Doudna, the 2022 Nobel Prize winner in Chemistry. These entries served as a source of inspiration for our female scientists at The Reach Free School and offered valuable insights to our male counterparts.

Our standout winner was Darcie S from 7J, whose exceptional entry highlighted Mae Jemison, the first African-American woman to venture into space. Runners-up included Stefania M from 8S, recognising Hedy Lamarr as the inventor of wifi; Lois T from 10J, spotlighting Tu Youyou for her groundbreaking discovery of a malaria treatment during the Vietnam War; and Serena P from 7C, who celebrated our very own female scientist, Miss Horner, science teacher here at The Reach Free School.

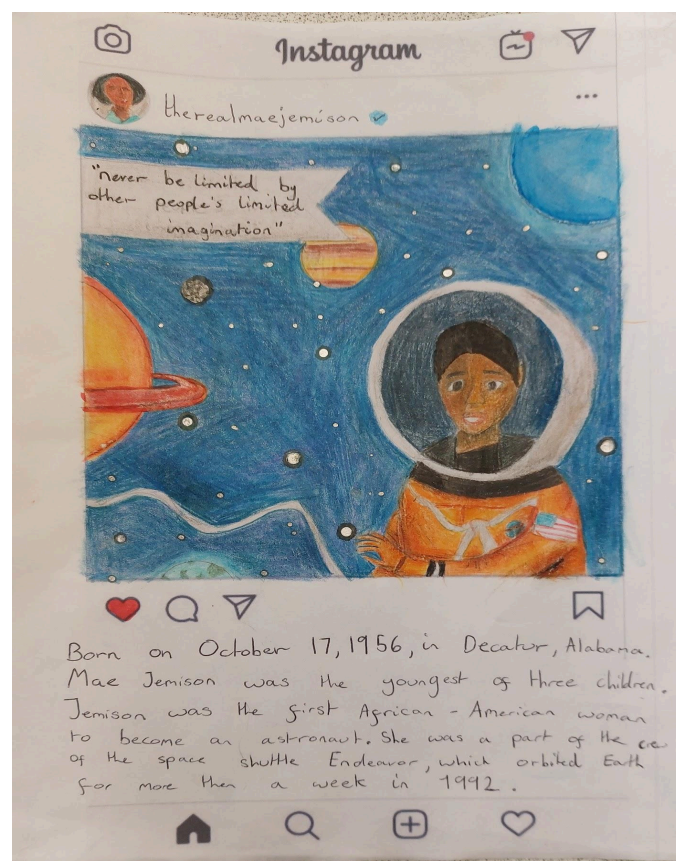
Witnessing the accomplishments of individuals who resemble us is truly empowering, serving as a reminder that we too can achieve remarkable feats.



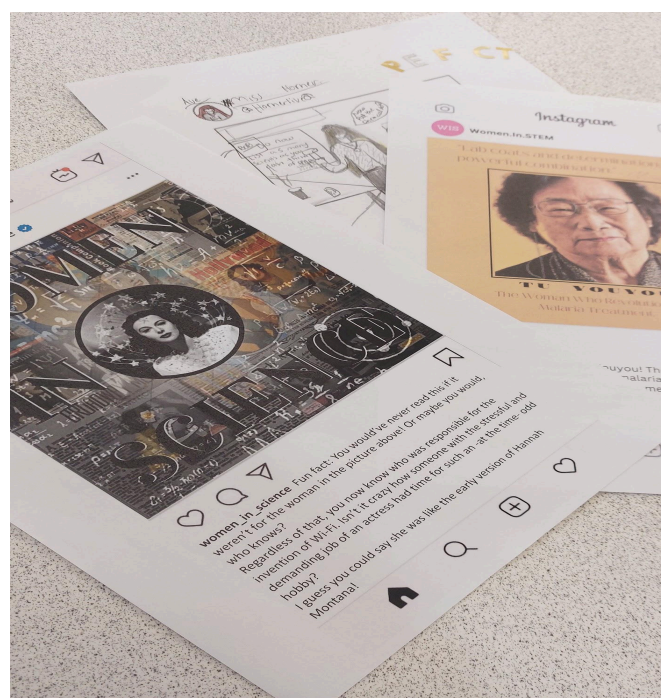
Winner: Darcie



Runners up: Lois and Serena with Stefania also backstage at Bugsy, a scientist with theatrical talents, who says you can't have it all?



1st Place - Phenomenal artistry on a phenomenal scientist



Recognition of some outstanding female scientists, including our very own Miss Horner!

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Year 8 Afternoon Tea

In CCR this half term, our year 8 pupils have been working hard towards planning an afternoon tea event for our local elderly community. Each form was tasked with taking responsibility for an element of the event such as menu designing, organising entertainment and creating handmade table decorations.

When the day came, we hosted 50 residents and carers from a number of care homes from our local community, including Meresworth, Montrose Care Home, Woodland Manor and Westerley Care Home. Then, after lunch and a quick reset, we welcomed another 65 guests who had been invited by pupils themselves. All of our guests were treated to a preview of the school production 'Bugsy Malone', as well as traditional afternoon tea refreshments, all served by our pupils.

It was a fantastic day and this was all as a result of the pupils' excellent preparation in their CCR sessions and their brilliant hosting skills throughout the event. It was lovely to receive so much positive feedback from our guests and to continue to build our connections with members of our local community. A huge thank you to all of the pupil helpers, and also the year 8 form tutors and staff who helped to make the event run smoothly.



Lewis and Bobby entertaining with Jenga!



Darcey serving tea and biscuits to her guests



Our fabulous Bugsy cast performing a sneak preview

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Sixth Form

Year 12 Financial Literacy Workshops

This term our year 12 students have attended financial literacy workshops delivered by the CEO of Sparrows Capital Limited, an FCA-regulated and authorised investment firm. The engaging session supported students with understanding basic financial literacy and topics such as investment, interest rates, stocks, trading, bias, price dynamics, supply and demand, risk and critical thinking.



Students learning about the best ways to make and keep their money

Year 10 and year 12 visit to the University of Oxford

Some year 10 and year 12 pupils were given the opportunity to visit Balliol College, Oxford to see what it would be like, but also what it takes to study at university. We started with a tour around the college by a current medical undergraduate to whom students were able to ask lots of questions about university life and studying. Pupils were then given a talk about studying at Oxford and Cambridge; advice on application and the interview process and how to pick which university is best for them. We then enjoyed lunch in the college hall surrounded by current students and lecturers. We finished the afternoon with a visit to the Natural History Museum in Oxford, with a hands-on workshop where we looked at using living artefacts for study. Students were able to stroke an owl and hold a hissing cockroach - an eclectic day out!



Post-lunch picture



Looking at preserved specimens during hands-on workshop

Year 12 Life Skills Workshop

Year 12 students are having four skills workshops that look at developing skills they will need for the next stages of their lives. This includes knowing and identifying their strengths, writing CVs and cover letters, how to be selected for an interview, and then what to say and do when in an interview. Students have also been given the opportunity to apply for a place to visit the M&G offices in London, to practise the skills they learnt in their sessions.



Preparing for life beyond school

Visiting Speakers for Sixth Form

Year 12 students have had various external speakers visit them to inspire their next steps to university, or into various different careers they may not have considered before.

Colm Murphy spoke to students about applying to Oxford, but also spoke about studying History at university as a whole and what it takes to be successful in achieving a degree - lots of reading in and around your chosen subject.



Callum Fleming discussing life at Cambridge

Callum Fleming spoke to students about applying for Cambridge university and what a day in the life of a university student looked like.

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Bugsy Malone

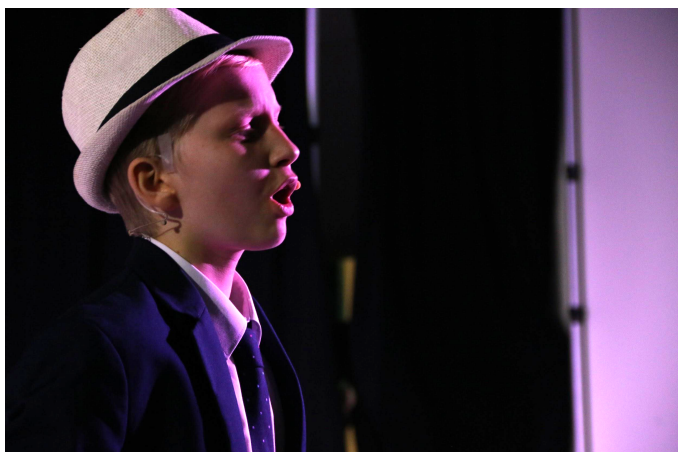
We couldn't be prouder of everything the pupils involved in *Bugsy Malone* have achieved. From those who made props and painted the beautiful pieces of set, all the way through to those that performed on stage, every pupil has developed their skills and grown in confidence. As a school, we believe in preparing pupils for life beyond the classroom and this production has done just that. It has been amazing to watch the pupils take responsibility for their own costumes and props, organise themselves, improve their timing or their technical skills and genuinely collaborate as a team. Special mentions have to be made for our award winners: Patrick D for Technical Achievement; Rosie B and William B as our Miss Congeniality winners; Finlay G and Ayyan M as Best Supporting actors; Stefania M as Best Dancer; Keah-Cadey M for Best Song; and of course, Joseph N as Best Actor. Staff and pupils alike have enjoyed being part of the show, created a fabulous production community and achieved an incredibly high performance standard. I think we can safely say - Bugsy Malone? An absolute grand slam!



Fat Sam struggles with his gang's incompetence



Smolsky struggles with O'Dreary's ineptitude



Bugsy getting the audience up to speed



Fat Sam's gang cower before Dan's Hoodlums



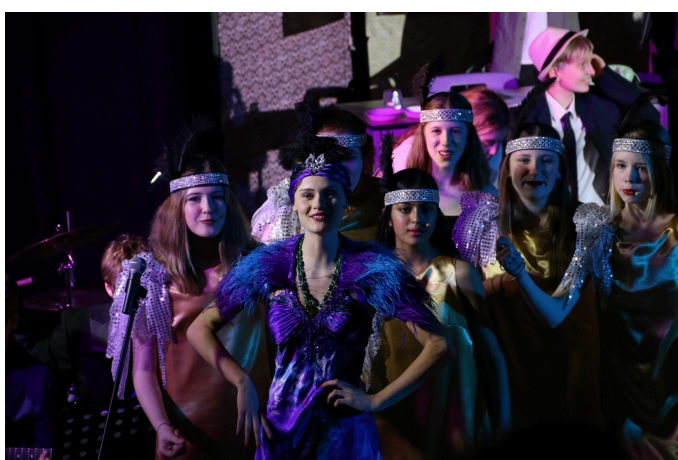
Fizzy is still waiting for tomorrow...



The death toll rises - who will save Fat Sam?



Blousey hoping to find work at the speakeasy



The girls get ready to face the music

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Sports Round Up

Inclusion Champions Training

Our Inclusion Champions attended their second training day at the University of Hertfordshire on Thursday 8th February. They had the opportunity to try out several of the games they want to include in their Inclusion Club which will start after half term. Pupils had to read an explanation card, set up the game and play. Once they had completed a round, they reflected on what they could change to make each game easier or more difficult by applying the STEP (Space, Time, Equipment, People) process. The day was a huge

success and, together with the help of our School Games Organiser (SGO) Matt Harrington, the boys want to deliver their Inclusion Club to our local primary schools in the summer term. Watch this space for further updates. Well done to Tony, James, Robert, Daniel, Harrison, Blake, Dillan and Luke on completion of their training.



Harrison concentrates on keeping the ball up



Learning to communicate in different ways

HYCA Training Day @ University of Hertfordshire

After successfully being selected to be part of this year's Hertfordshire Young Coaching Academy, our year 13 students Ceri, Katie, Jess and Elliot travelled to the University of Hertfordshire to start their coaching journey. They attended lectures exploring reasons why young people become disillusioned with sport and stop participating. A part of the day looked at ways in which

our students could increase participation within our community as young coaches. The day finished with them participating in practical sessions designed to inspire children to be more active to improve both their physical and mental health. The day was very motivating and our students all came away keen to begin coaching.



How high will Jess get the ball?



It takes teamwork to keep the ball moving

Year 6 Indoor Athletics

On Thursday 1st February we welcomed year 6 pupils from four local primary schools to take part in an indoor athletic competition. The children took part in obstacle races, over and under races as well as a number of different relay races before taking on the field events including speed bounce, javelin throw, vertical jump and triple jump. The noise in our Sports Hall was deafening as each school got behind their competitor and cheered them on. A huge thank you to our fantastic leaders, Summar, Phoebe, Tony, James, Clayton, Henry, Lucie, Louis, Katie, Josh, Violet, Chelsey,

Noel, Dylan, Gavin and Ruaria. who made the day run so smoothly and demonstrated the races so well. The winning school on the day in both the boys and girls competitions was Arnett Hills JMI School and we wish them all the best as they go on to represent our family at the District Final.



Through the tunnel then onto the next obstacle



Our leaders are taking a well earned break

Netball

Our year 9 netball team played against Parmiter's School's B team in their most recent match. Emma H and Evie H were extremely effective in the midcourt as Centre and Wing Attack, feeding some great balls into the circle. Although closely marked by her Goal Keeper, Harriet moved around the circle to put up some great shots. The girls fought well until the end, only narrowly losing. Player of the match was Harriet R for her brilliant performance as GS and GA.

We are really pleased to say that our Year 10 netball team remains at the top of the league! This half term they also played against Parmiter's School's B team, taking the victory with a final score of 26-9. This team has been really effective at working cohesively and making sure that they are constantly improving. Katie S continues to feed the ball excellently around the court as Centre and special recognition must go to Phoebe W who is really finding her feet as Goal Shooter managing to net 18 goals in this particular match!



Excellent sky after an excellent win!

Basketball

The year 8 girls had a basketball tournament hosted by Queens' School. The girls thoroughly enjoyed the basketball tournament and played very well. They each came across some tough opposition and put all their efforts into every game. The girls finished in fourth place overall. Tilly B was a star throughout; she was outstanding! She scored the majority of the baskets and handled herself very well on court.



Our year 8 girls basketball squad

Year 9 Basketball

Our year 9 basketball team also attended the Girls' District Basketball Tournament this half term. The girls played brilliantly right from the start making excellent tactical substitute changes between each match. Their efforts and determination paid off as they finished in second place, only narrowly losing out to Queens' School. The star performance came from Lilly C who scored some outstanding long range shots. Well done!



Emma H making a run!



Lilly's superb shooting skills

Girls Under 15's

The Under 15's girls football team have had one fixture this half term. We hosted a strong team from St Michael's Catholic High School and due to injury ended up playing with just ten girls. The girls showed maturity in their game denying our opposition space and time on the ball, limiting them to very few shots on goal. Any that were on target were dealt with by Maisie as she commanded her box and marshalled her defence together with her sister Phoebe. When the team had an opportunity to attack, they did so with pace and accurate passing. Violet and Evie kept playing ball after ball into space for our forwards to run onto. You wouldn't have known we were a player down. The game was drifting to a nil, nil draw when we broke again. The ball was put into St Michael's box and Lilly managed to bundle it across the line for a well deserved one - nil victory. Well played girls, we remain undefeated in the league!



Another dangerous cross into St Mick's box



Chelsey charges down a clearance

Senior Girls Football

The senior girls played their ESFA National Cup quarter final at home on Tuesday 30th January. The girls were up for the game and focused on reaching the semi-final for the first time. Our opposition was Blenheim High School. They proved to be very strong with a number of their players in the Chelsea Women's Academy. We had a strong spine to our team but Blenheim's ability to move the ball quickly with runners all over the pitch proved very difficult to play against. I was incredibly proud of the effort and commitment the girls showed throughout, never letting their heads or commitment drop even though we were on the wrong end of a high scoring game. On reflection, it is an incredible achievement for our school to reach the quarter finals of a National Cup competition and all of the girls who have played should be incredibly proud. Thank you to all of you for your commitment and effort so far this season.



All together now



Katie and Liana clearing our lines

Boys football

Y7 County Cup Football - Reach County Cup V Broxbourne Park

The year 7 squad endured a tough home defeat to a strong Broxbourne Park School. Missing some players to last minute drop outs the team battled hard to get a foothold in the game. The introduction of Louie W in midfield added some energy and determination and we started to get into the game. A wonder strike left us feeling deflated and the high energy and advanced technical ability of the opposition began to shine through. Credit to the team as they fought right up until the final whistle. Notable mentions to Hadley our goalkeeper who had a very busy afternoon and Patrick D for scoring his first goal for The Reach Free School.

Y8 Football District Tournament

The year 8 squad has finished its 11-a-side fixtures. However, the team were able to field two competitive teams in the District 6-a-side Competition. Both teams did really well against strong opposition with one team finishing in third place and the other in sixth out of eight competing schools. Olly P and Burhanuddin E were stand out performers. Goal of the evening went to Lennon T for an incredible volley on the swivel into the top corner that had supporters of all teams in amazement.



Year 8 6-a-side team

Year 9 Football - District Tournament

Year 9 finished the football season with a 6-a-side tournament at Westfield Academy. It was an extremely competitive tournament with games often being decided on one goal margins. The team lost one fixture in the tournament finishing in second place overall. The players enjoyed the afternoon and represented our school with maturity and professionalism. Notable mentions to Ollie S who stepped in to fill the goal keeper spot and George H who scored and assisted many of our goals.

Year 10 Football - District League

The year 10 football team are finishing their league campaign extremely well with a convincing win over Croxley Danes who are currently top of the league. The team had a strong line up with Archie B returning to the side to score a hat-trick. Josh C and Darragh H were solid at the back and Muhammed C and Noah B were a continuous source of energy in the middle of the pitch.

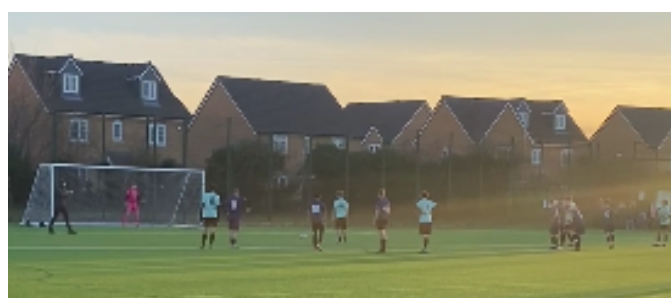
The team have one game left and are still in with a chance of making the league final after half term.



A triumphant year 10 team after beating league leaders Croxley Danes

Year 11 Football - National Cup

Year 11 squad travelled to Royston to take on King James Academy who were last year's National Cup finalists. With this in mind we knew it was going to be a tough test. After conceding an early goal, the boys did not panic and stuck to the game plan; a brilliant piece of composure from Jayson B to bring a high ball down and under control and an inch perfect through ball from Mathew P sent Ashton H racing through on goal, he side footed the ball calmly past the goalkeeper and we were back in the game. A tough first half saw us take a few knocks and concede again from a fine strike, but again demonstrating resilience we bounced back with Luca C converting from the penalty spot to make it 2-2. Unfortunately it was not to be, and as we ran ourselves into the ground we had nothing left to give in extra time and the larger squad and home advantage definitely took its toll in a fixture that had everything. A fine effort from a brilliant team.



Luca C converted his penalty to make it 2-2 as we approached extra time

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South West Herts Partnership - Family Support Workers

The South West Herts Partnership Family Support Workers are one of our key partners as a school. They offer a huge range of support available to you, our community, through the partnership that we have with them. These services include:

- In the home support
- Advice on how to have conversations with teens
- Youth mental health support
- Support for young people with Autism
- Cost of living support
- Workshops for emotional wellbeing and exam stress

You can access all the details for the South-West Herts Partnership [here](#) and services available via the links below:

- [Parenting courses](#) (New courses coming soon!)
- [Signposting](#) - Mental Health and Wellbeing support, Financial support, Parenting support, Safeguarding and online safety support
- [Directory of fantastic services available locally](#)
- [SWHP Direct Services for Children and Young People and Families](#)

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Uniform, Appearance and Equipment

We would like to remind you to check the school's expectations in our [uniform policy](#) and ensure that your child has the correct uniform and a full complement of equipment when we return after half term. This includes consideration around nails, piercings and jewellery as well as hair colour, clothing and footwear. Please be aware that hair colours permitted must be colours that are natural as opposed to those that are clearly artificial such as blue or green for example. Any pupils who do arrive with hair colour that is not natural will be asked to change it and parents will be contacted.

More information is available [here](#).

A reminder regarding facial piercings not being allowed in school, however, please be aware that your child should not be coming to school with a nose stud or ring. They will be asked to remove it if they do. As parents, guardians and carers, please carefully consider any holiday plans for piercings, nails, eyelashes or hair colouring and ensure that pupils can start the next half term positively, without being met with challenges relating to their uniform and appearance.

It is also important that every pupil has a fully equipped pencil case, which supports their productivity in lessons and helps them to prepare for the expectations of their assessments and examinations, which are taking place during the next half term. Please use this holiday to replenish any items that are missing from their pencil cases.

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X (formerly known as Twitter) - 3,916 Posts

Although it has changed its name to X.com, we continue to post regularly to give an insight into life at school and helpful snippets of support and advice. Follow us

@reachfreeschool to get the latest news from our pupils and staff.

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Watersmeet Shows 2024

Please click [here](#) to view the shows for 2024 taking place at Watersmeet Theatre.

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New Faces

This half term we have welcomed Ms Millard as Examinations and Data Manager and Mr Jalland as Cover Supervisor. After half term, Miss Cook will be joining the Creative Arts Department as Art Technician and Ms Tish will be joining us as Cover Supervisor.

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Goodbyes

This February we say goodbye to Miss Gatland, our Examinations and Data Manager.

Miss Gatland, who has been at the school since 2017 is relocating to the South-West and moving to an exciting new role at Bath Spa University. We wish her well in her new role and thank her for all of her hard work and efforts with exams, Arbor, timetabling and the numerous unseen roles she has completed to ensure the school runs smoothly for everyone over the years.

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Park and Stride

Have you considered dropping off and collecting your child a little further away from the school? Park and Stride schemes aim to reduce congestion around the school gates and provide a route where children can be active, healthier, and happier. The scheme benefits children by: making it safer around the school entrance; reducing traffic and helping us to maintain positive relationships with our neighbours on Long Lane and Drayton Ford where pupils should not be dropped off or collected from.

Please do not collect your child from the service road to Thames Water in Maple Cross. This area is frequently used by large lorries and therefore it is not a safe place for parents to collect their children. Please use the Denham Way layby slightly further into Maple Cross.

The 10 minute walking zone is from Springwell Avenue or further away from the school on the Mill End side

and Duran's Cafe/ Chalfont Road on the Maple Cross side of the school.

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Cycling and Road Safety

All of our pupils who cycle to and from school must have a suitable helmet, which they must wear. Pupils will not be allowed to ride their bikes off the school site at the end of the day if they are not wearing a helmet.

We would like to encourage safe and sensible cycling to and from school, and pupils should not be riding in large groups on the road or pavement or when leaving the school site at the traffic lights.

As a reminder of other important safety measures for cyclists we have included a link [here](#) to the Highway Code for cyclists. We also have a cycle licence agreement, similar to our home school agreement, which outlines the school's expectations regarding cycling to and from school. Please take time to read through this with your child and complete the short [Google form](#) to acknowledge you have read and understood this if you wish for them to be able to cycle to and from school.

Please can you also speak to them about using their phones and having earphones in when travelling home as this hinders their ability to assess road hazards and listen to traffic, which is a vital part of keeping safe.

We provide an extensive amount of cycle parking onsite where pupils can lock their bikes during the day. We also provide a safe cycling scheme where a member of staff from the school will check your child's bike to ensure it is road safe and that they are riding safely to and from school. We are also able to provide additional information about the Highway Code for cyclists together with Bikeability courses and qualifications.

Pupils found to be breaking the Highway Code could have their permission to ride to and from school revoked.

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Attendance, Punctuality and Illness

Attendance at school remains the most important aspect of your child's day - this allows them to access the learning and wider opportunities on offer. Attendance at school remains above the national average, but is significantly below the level seen prior to the pandemic. Our [letter](#) earlier this term outlines some of the key messages the school seeks to engender regarding attendance, and we ask that you relay these to your child.

You will be contacted daily if your child does not attend school and you have not informed our Attendance

Officer of a reason for your child's absence. Please be aware that persistent absences are reported to the local authority and can incur a fixed penalty notice.

If your child is late to school (without a valid reason) they will be expected to make the time up each week on a Thursday after school. Pupils who are late to lessons during the school day automatically lose a Reach Point. If your child is genuinely unwell, please contact the school and inform us through the absence email on: absence@reachfree.co.uk or call the school reception.

We ask that you do not email the main Admin account, Form Tutors or the Pastoral Team informing them of absences, and use the absence email instead.

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The New DSPL 9 Website

We are pleased to inform you that the new [DSPL 9 website](#) is live and now accessible for school, professionals and parents to access. Within the website you will find:

- Professional Calendar
- Professional and parent/carer newsletters
- LHNF deadlines, dates and information
- DSPL 9 EBSA Support Package information
- DSPL 9 Triage support information
- Support and events for DSPL 9 parents
- Links and access to a range of additional information to support local schools and settings.

Much much more....

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Diary Dates 2024

Here are the important calendar dates for the school.

Spring Term 2024 2nd January to 28th March

February

17th to 24th February: Ski Trip to Andorra

19th to 23rd February: Half Term

26th February: Music Trip to Cecil Sharp House
26th February: Year 8/9 Rise and Thrive (Watford Premier League Inspires)

28th February: School Photo Day

29th February: Year 10 Parents' Evening

March

1st March: Parents' Forum

1st March: Welwyn Youth Drama Festival

4th to 7th March: Year 11 GCSE Food and Nutrition Practical Examination

5th March: Year 9 Careers Fair

6th, 7th and 8th March: Year 9 End of KS3 Exams

7 th March:	Year 12 'Othello' trip - The Globe
9 th March:	Parents' Consultation Day
11 th March:	Occasional Day School Closed
12 th - 15 th March:	Year 10 and 12 residential to Valencia
12 th - 15 th March:	British Science Week
12 th March:	Year 7 Trip to the English National Opera
12 th March:	Year 9 Options Evening
13 th March:	Year 12 Level 3 Food Practical Examination
18 th March:	Year 12 UCAS Discovery Trip
18 th to 21 st March:	Year 11 GCSE English and Mathematics Mock Examinations
19 th to 22 nd March:	Year 7 Residential to Granada
19 th March:	Year 8 HS2 STEM Workshop
20 th March:	Year 13 Sociology and Psychology Booster Event
21 st March:	Year 13 Geography Booster Event
21 st and 22 nd March:	Years 10 and 11 Mock Interviews with Services for Young People
22 nd March:	Pre-Loved Uniform Sale
25 th March:	Year 11 Geography Field Trip to London
26 th March:	Year 11 Geography Rivers Fieldwork
28 th March:	Terms ends at 12.45pm

Summer Term 2024 15th April to 25th July

April

15 th and 16 th April:	Staff INSET
17 th April:	Pupils Return
18 th April:	Year 10 DofE Practice Walk
18 th April:	Year 8 'Woman in Black' theatre trip
19 th April:	Pre-Loved Uniform Sale
22 nd April:	Year 8 Faraday Challenge
23 rd April:	Year 11 Macbeth Theatre Trip
24 th April:	Year 12 Personal Statement workshop
25 th April:	Junior Mathematical Challenge
29 th April:	Year 12 Mock assessment workshop
29 th April to 1 st May:	Year 9 Residential to Ypres and Somme

May

1 st May:	Year 10 Biology Challenge
2 nd May:	Year 12 Preparing for Success
2 nd and 3 rd May:	Year 11 GCSE Art Practical Exam
3 rd May:	Year 9 Biology Challenge
3 rd May:	Year 7 Legoland Trip
6 th May:	Bank Holiday
8 th May:	Year 11 Leavers Assembly
9 th May:	Year 10 Studio Artist: Ian Murphy
24 th May:	Year 10 DofE Practice Day
24 th May:	Pre-Loved Uniform Sale
27 th May to 31 st May:	Half Term

June

5 th June:	Year 10 Elevate - Ace Your Exams
7 th June:	Year 12 Biology Olympiad
9 th to 14 th June:	Year 8 Watersports trip to Costa Brava, Spain
10 th to 14 th June:	Year 10 Work Experience
21 st and 22 nd June:	Year 10 Bronze DofE Assessed Expedition
24 th to 28 th June:	Year 12 Mock Exams
24 th to 28 th June:	Years 7 and 8 End of Year Exams
24 th June:	Sixth Form Induction
24 th June:	Year 13 Prom
26 th June:	Year 11 Prom
28 th June:	Year 8 Camp Out!

July

1 st to 5 th July:	Year 10 Mock Exams
8 th July:	Year 7 Progress Tests
9 th and 10 th July:	Years 8 and 9 Progress Tests
11 th July:	Secondary Transition Day
12 th July:	Sports Day
18 th July:	Attendance Party
18 th July:	End of Year Awards Ceremony (Date TBC)
23 rd July:	Term ends at 12.45pm
24 th and 25 th July:	Staff INSET

If you would like downloadable or printable versions of the school calendar you can find them on our website or via the link [here](#). The 2024/25 school calendar can be found [here](#). Please avoid booking holidays during term time as these will not be authorised and you may receive a fine.

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GCSE and Vocational Examinations and Dates

May

3 rd May:	BTEC Travel and Tourism
9 th May:	GCSE RS Paper 1
9 th May:	GCSE Drama
10 th May:	GCSE Combined Science/Biology 1
13 th May:	GCSE English Literature 1
13 th May:	CNAT Sport Studies R184
14 th May:	GCSE Business Paper 1
15 th May:	GCSE History Paper 1
15 th May:	GCSE Computer Science 1
16 th May:	GCSE Maths Paper 1
16 th May:	GCSE RS Paper 2
17 th May:	GCSE Combined Science/Chemistry Paper 1
17 th May:	GCSE Geography Paper 1
20 th May:	GCSE English Literature Paper 2
21 st May:	CNAT Business R067
21 st May:	GCSE Computer Science Paper 2
22 nd May:	GCSE Combined Science/Physics Paper 1
23 rd May:	GCSE English Language Paper 1

June

3 rd June:	GCSE Maths Paper 2
4 th June:	GCSE Spanish Listening and Reading Exams

4th June: GCSE History Paper 2
 5th June: GCSE Geography Paper 2
 5th June: GCSE Business Paper 2
 6th June: GCSE English Language Paper 2
 7th June: GCSE Combined Science/Biology Paper 2
 10th June: GCSE Maths Paper 3
 10th June: GCSE Spanish Writing
 11th June: GCSE Combined Science/ Chemistry Paper 2
 11th June: GCSE History Paper 3
 11th June: GCSE Further Maths Paper 1
 12th June: GCSE Polish Listening and Reading
 14th June: GCSE Geography Paper 3
 14th June: GCSE Combined Science/Physics Paper 2
 18th June: GCSE Polish Writing
 19th June: GCSE Food and Nutrition
 19th June: Level 2 Further Maths Paper 2
 20th June: Level 2 Hospitality and Catering

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A-Level and Vocational Examinations and Dates

May

7th May: A-Level Spanish Speaking Exams
 13th May: CTEC ICT Unit 1
 13th May: CTEC Sport Unit 1
 14th May: CTEC Business Unit 1
 15th May: CTEC Applied Science Unit 1
 15th May: CTEC Sport Unit 3
 16th May: A-Level Geography Paper 1
 17th May: A-Level Psychology Paper 1
 17th May: CTEC Applied Science Unit 2
 17th May: CTEC Business Unit 2
 17th May: CTEC ICT Unit 2
 20th May: A-Level Sociology Paper 1
 21st May: A-Level Film Studies Paper 1
 22nd May: A-Level Psychology Paper 2
 23rd May: A-Level History Paper 1
 24th May: A-Level English Literature Paper 1
 24th May: A-Level Physics Paper 1

June

3rd June: A-Level Geography Paper 2
 3rd June: A-Level Psychology Paper 3
 4th June: A-Level Film Studies Paper 2
 4th June: A-Level Sociology Paper 2
 4th June: A-Level Maths Paper 1
 4th June: Level 3 Food Science Unit 1
 5th June: A-Level English Literature Paper 2
 5th June: A-Level Biology Paper 1
 6th June: A-Level Physics Paper 2
 7th June: A-Level Spanish Paper 1
 7th June: A-Level History Paper 2
 10th June: A-Level Chemistry Paper 1
 10th June: A-Level Computer Science Paper 1
 11th June: A-Level History Paper 3
 11th June: A-Level Maths Paper 2
 11th June: A-Level Sociology Paper 3
 14th June: A-Level Biology Paper 2

14th June: A-Level English Literature Paper 3
 17th June: A-Level Physics Paper 3
 17th June: A-Level Spanish Paper 2
 18th June: A-Level Chemistry Paper 2
 18th June: A-Level Computer Science Paper 2
 19th June: A-Level Biology Paper 3
 20th June: A-Level Maths Paper 3
 21st June: A-Level Chemistry Paper 3

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