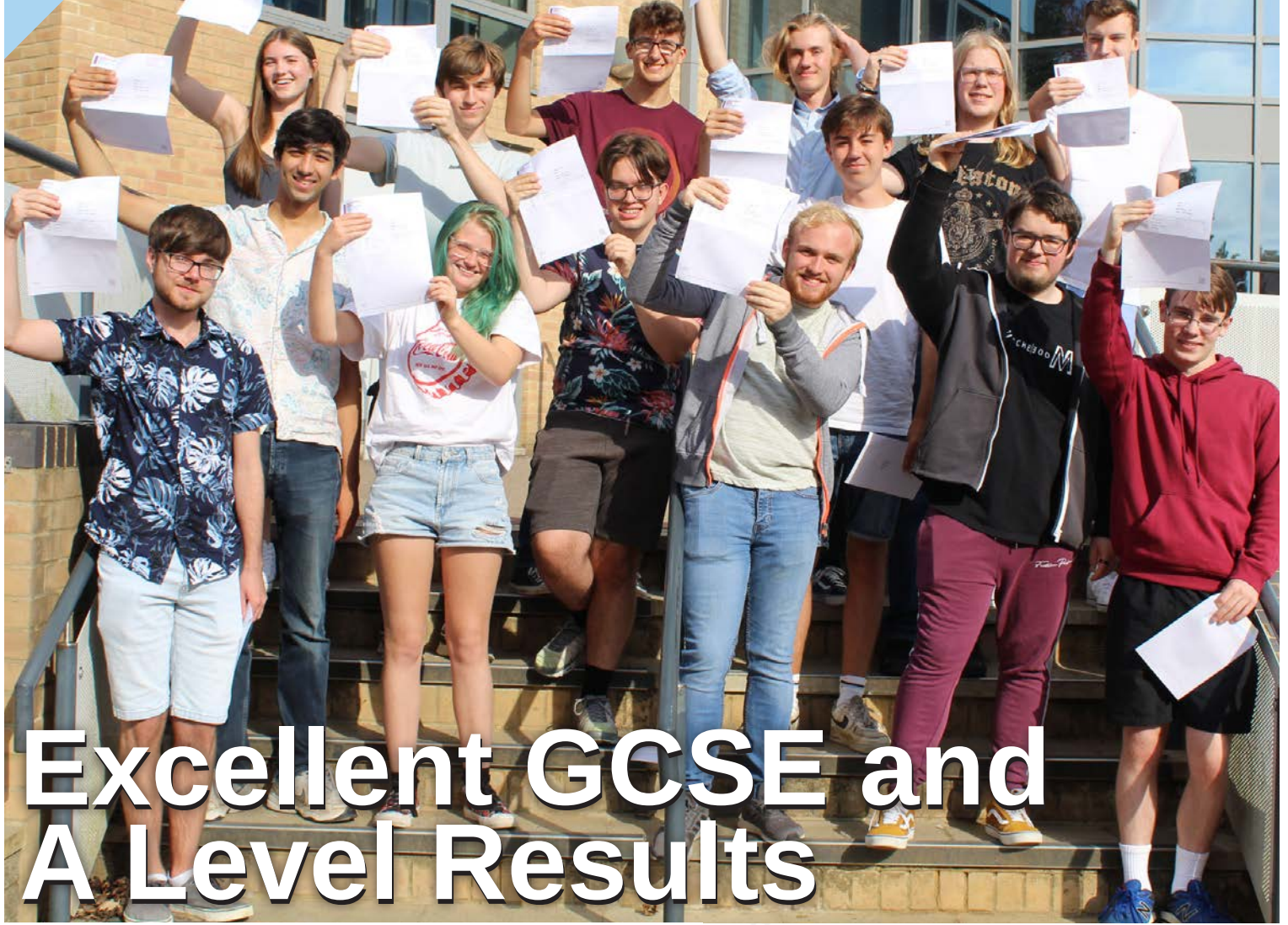


@oakwood
October - 2023



Excellent GCSE and A Level Results

Dear Parents, Carers and Students,

Welcome to the latest edition of @Oakwood. As ever I am very grateful to Mr Peacock, Miss Goodhew and Mr Solly (AKA The Publishing Team) for putting this together.

We start right back in the Summer with our Public Examination Results, and we end in colder October where Year 7 pupils have proudly put their family projects on display in the hall.

It is great to see our pupils writing poetry for National Poetry Day or acting as tour guides for our successful Open Days. It is also fantastic to see our Year 11 and Year 12 pupils acting as Mental Health Ambassadors and Year 11s assisting with the fantastic Maths Challenge Competition.

There have been plenty of sports fixtures as well as individual performances from the likes of Joe Stone. The Duke of Edinburgh Award continues to go from strength to strength.

An amazing display from the History department on Enrichment Day (the Blitz) and also on the Open Morning (Berlin Blockage) was an absolute highlight for me.

Enjoy an engaging edition.

Mr K.W. Moody - Headteacher

Staff at Oakwood Park Grammar School were delighted to welcome Year 13 back to school to collect their examination results.

These A levels were the first public examinations sat by this cohort as their GCSE examinations were cancelled due to the Covid 19 pandemic. Despite this, OPGS Sixth Form Class of 2023 have won, by their hard work, the opportunity to study a wide variety of subjects in the world's top educational institutions.

Ben Madden, who has volunteered throughout the Sixth Form with Amnesty International, continues to follow his dream to defend human rights by studying Law at Cambridge with his A*A*A with an A* in his EPQ. Another student determined to change our society for the better is Emily Speake who with A*A*A is going to study Sociology at

Bath. OPGS high flying Biologists will continue to study human sciences. Harry Randall and Rhys Wenborn will enroll in Biology degrees with their A*AA grades at Bristol and Southampton. Taylor Goodson and Trishan Sivappriyan will study Biochemistry at York and Biomedicine at Brighton with their A* and A grades. Kieran Evans, with AAA and A* in EPQ will develop his biological skills via studying Optometry in Cardiff. Fran Walker wishes to explore the human mind by studying Psychology with her A* and A grades at Reading. Our Mathematicians and Physicists, Joseph Brown, Ashwin Knight and Jack Wilson, go on to study at Warwick, Manchester and Surrey with their clutch of A* grades. Other Mathematicians are using their skills in other ways: Luca Johnson takes his AAA and A* in his EPQ to Leeds to study Accounting and Finance and Joshua Ingram takes his A*A*A*A to Staffordshire to study Computer Programming and Games Design.



Future political leaders Miles Pulsford and Poppy Seymour take their A* grades to the University of London and Leeds to study Politics and International Relations. Our resident artist Eleanor Reeve goes on to Ravensbourne Arts School and Graphic designer, Morgan Estaugh, goes on to study Art with his AAA. We look forward to welcoming all Year 13 students and parents back to school at Easter to celebrate their achievements and to hear all about their adventures. Headteacher Mr Kevin Moody said 'I am delighted for our students as they enter the next phase of their lives and congratulate them on their efforts.'



OPGS GCSE Results 2023

Congratulations go to all of our Year 11 students who collected their GCSE results today.

With so many outstanding performances at Grade 8 and above it is difficult to select individual performances of note, however, congratulations to Edward Scarr, Emil Boby, Freddie Fagg and Hallee Lou who averaged Grade 9 across all subjects. Just under half of all students averaged an average point score of Grade 7 across all subjects with 29 students averaging a Grade 8. Our most able

Mathematicians sit the FSMQ Advanced Maths qualification and they also celebrated a fantastic set of results with Bailey Barnett, Freddie Fagg, Johann Ajish, Austin Lam, Charlie Razey, Saad Ansari, Hallee Lou and Aly Ahmed all gaining an A grade, the highest grade which can be awarded. Headteacher Mr Moody commented 'I am delighted for our students. Despite the concerns that achievement at the top grades may fall this year our wonderful pupils and teachers have worked so hard to achieve these excellent results.'





Basketball Club

Year 7 and 8 Basketball Club: Building Skills and Fostering Team Spirit

This term's Year 7 and 8 Basketball Club is an incredible opportunity for budding basketball enthusiasts to delve deep into the world of dribbles, lay-ups and 3-point shots. We will look to impart the following fundamentals this year during basketball club:

Learning Tactics and Match Practice

The Year 7 and 8 Basketball Club isn't just about casually shooting hoops in the gym. Every session is planned to ensure our players acquire a comprehensive understanding of basketball tactics. We will take the time to break down complex plays, ensuring members grasp the nuances of both offensive and defensive strategies.

But they're allowed to have some fun! This is why a significant portion of our sessions is dedicated to

match practice. Players get a chance to apply the tactics they've learned in real-game scenarios.

Valuing Teamwork and Togetherness.

Basketball is not a solitary sport. No matter how talented a player might be, success is impossible without the support of a cohesive team. At the core of the club's coaching philosophy is the emphasis on teamwork and togetherness. The players will learn the value of passing the ball, relying on their teammates, and celebrating each other's successes. It's not just about scoring; it's about setting up a play, cheering for a teammate, and working in harmony to achieve a common goal.

Join Us Every Thursday!

If this sounds enticing to you, remember that the Year 7 and 8 Basketball Club awaits you every Thursday after school.

We are delighted to announce the latest read and review opportunities given to our students, to celebrate excellence in English.

We have received a box of 10 books hot off the press from the publishers, entitled Wings of Glory, it is about carrier pigeons in WWII; a funny action-adventure story with a feathery twist, from bestselling children's author, Dermot O'Leary. A tale of courage and adventure, with just a smattering of bird poo!

Our mission is simple: to thwart enemy planes by any means, be they beak, claw, or poo . . . in poo we trust!

It's 1940, and world is at war. The Royal Bird Force has been drafted in to help save the day, but there's a spy in their ranks who is determined to take them down. Can the new recruit, Linus, uncover the traitor, find his missing sister and help to win the war?

This is a heartwarming war-time tale, featuring courageous loop-the-loops and top-secret plans, all from the perspective of the pigeons.

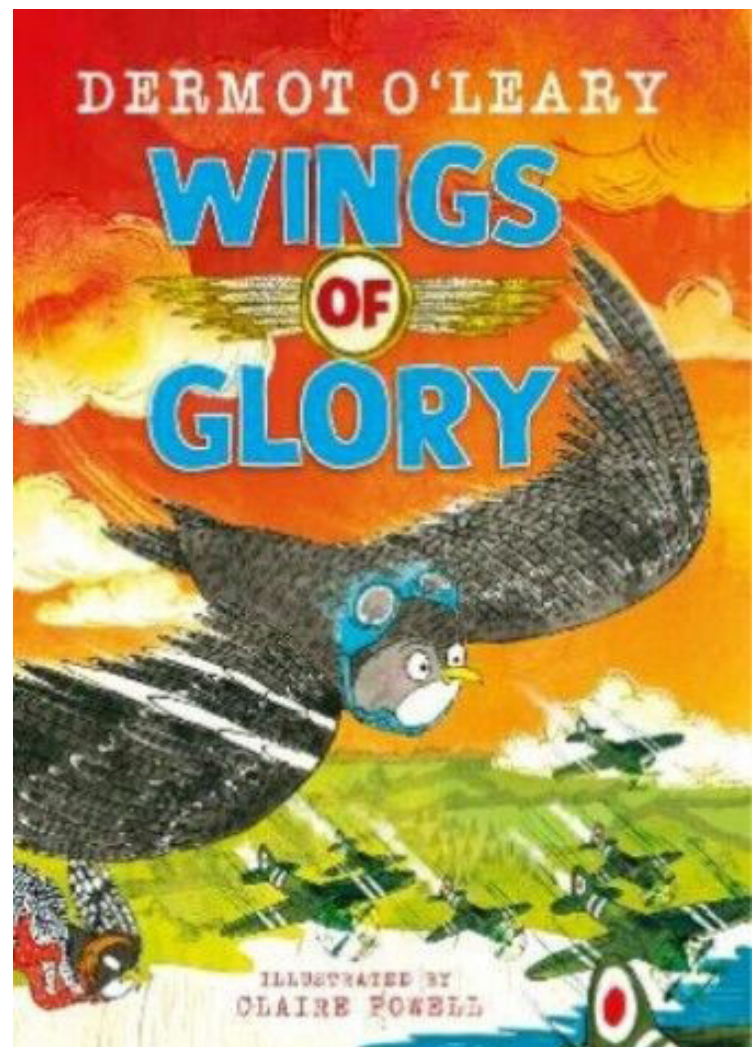
Students from Year 9 will be given the chance to read and review this beautiful hardback edition of the novels, as a way for the OPGS English Department to show we recognise their positive attitude to learning in the subject and to help fuel their passion for reading beyond the bounds of the curriculum.

Similarly, students in Yr 7 have been given the opportunity to read and review The Unmorror Curse by Jasmine Richards, from UCLan Publishing. Jasmine Richards is a former children's publisher and founder of Storymix. In her latest novel, two friends awaken a world of myth and magic in this epic fantasy; perfect for fans of Rick Riordan.

It's not every day that you find a famous weather woman bound by magic to a tree deep in the woods. Or discover that the weatherwoman is in fact Sunna, the Norse Goddess of the Sun, and one of the seven-day guardians who keep time in order. But that's just what happens to new friends

Buzz and Mari—and it's only the start of their adventure.

Now, as humanity is forced into a lockdown called the Unmorror Curse and is forced to repeat the same Saturday over and over again, Buzz and Mari must journey to collect the Runes of Valhalla and awaken the other day guardians, before vengeful god Loki can get to them first. Mixing Norse mythology with magic, this is a tale which is sure to keep our students enchanted for the coming weeks.



On Monday 16th October, as part of our comprehensive information, advice, and guidance provision, we hosted a careers fair for all students in Years 8-13.

We are delighted to welcome into school a wide range of professionals from local businesses and providers, experts from our parent community and informed alumni, all of whom shared their knowledge and experience with our students. They included representatives from the army, police, law, engineering, finance, medicine and health care, science, computing, creative careers, the media industries as well as some niche professions and pathway advisors.

The purpose of the event was to introduce students to a variety of careers and pathways and to assist them in making informed choices as they progress through the school. The visitors reported that our students were polite and engaged and asked meaningful and searching questions. It was a joy to see them getting so much out of the day. Thank you to all who took part.



Charlie and the Chocolate Factory English Enrichment

On Enrichment Day, Year 8 students had the opportunity to dabble with some infamous characters from the works of Roald Dahl.

The students had an opportunity to create their own 'horrible child' in small groups. As a result, teachers were treated to some interesting fact files and key attributes of the likes of 'Red Ellis' and 'Stealy Robert', all delivered by the Year 8 students with enthusiasm and humour. The students then went on to explore Dahl's poems about the children from Charlie and the Chocolate Factory and then move onto writing some of their own, with some impromptu raps and rhyming couplets. The students demonstrated a talent for creative writing and poetic flair in an enjoyable day for all.



Year 9 French & Spanish Enrichment Day-

On 19th September Year 9 students took part in a day celebrating French & Spanish culture.

For French, students learnt about the French revolution and the origins of a Tricolore rosette. They then used their dexterity to make one in the Tricolore colours. Students were then treated to making and eating a typical snack which French children would have after school: baguette with butter and some dark chocolate in it. Surprised comments of "That actually works!" were heard as they realised the mix of ingredients formed a perfect combination. In Spanish, students learned about other languages spoken in Spain as well as Spanish and learnt some Basque. Then the tasty part! Students sampled tortilla española with some bread to form a Spanish omelette sandwich, a typical snack sandwich in Spain which one can buy in bars etc. Again, to their surprise, they discovered the combination works.



My DofE Expedition Experience:

I had my DofE expedition on the 30th of September and the 1st of October and I greatly enjoyed it.

My group and I, walked from Frant Railway Station to Adamswell Scout Campsite on the first day (where we camped for the night) and on the second day we walked from the Scout Campsite to our final destination which was Penhurst Railway Station (I don't know why we didn't just get on the next train to Penhurst station but anyway). We carried all our supplies for the two days.

These supplies consisted of: Our tents that we slept in for the night, our Trangia which is basically a compactable stove, our clothes, our roll mat, our sleeping bag, other bits and bobs but most importantly: our food supplies for the two days- wraps and pasta and sausages and snacks and noodles and tuna etc. These were all placed (not so delicately) into our 60L rucksacks.



Fortunately, the typical English weather never came over our two days of the expedition and it remained sunny and dry: maybe even too hot but you can never say that in England. We hiked on relatively flat grounds with only a few inclines and declines on our journey, unlike the practise! It was extremely fun to go out with friends all working together in harmony as we talked instead of staring at phones the whole time. The rules were very loose and they treated you like grown-ups which is very unique and important of a group of boys at the ages of 14 and 15. They were: No phones, No alcohol, No vapes or cigarettes, in your tent by 10:00 and you have to spend six hours outdoors each day before being allowed to rendezvous at the final destinations.

It was a new experience to me and to many others which we embraced with open arms and it was a delightful experience that I suggest many people attempt as, with enough conviction anyone can do it.

Navigating and walking was relatively easy due to the fact that you we equipped with two compasses, two maps, a set of route cards (description where you go) and bearings of the directions and how far and roughly how long it will take to walk there.

Don't worry about getting lost because you have a tracker so the fabulous volunteers that helped could find you and get you back on track and also with team work and taking a moment to relax you can realise where you are and how to get back on track; but for my group we didn't get lost on our expedition which is always a good thing.

My key things to take away would be: Do it if you have the chance, work together, widen your skill set through map reading and navigation and finally...

HAVE FUN.

By Finley Davies P10



Our recent Duke of Edinburgh expedition was an incredible journey of resilience and personal development. As we embarked on this adventure, the scorching heat tested our endurance, reminding us of the importance of staying hydrated. Undoubtedly, the intense heat left us feeling exhausted, but it was all part of the experience that pushed us beyond our limits.

Although challenging, our DofE expedition was a source of immense fun and personal growth. It allowed us to push our boundaries, both physically and mentally, and taught us valuable life lessons along the way. We returned with a profound sense of accomplishment and a deeper appreciation for nature's wonders. Our expedition served as a reminder that within challenges lie great opportunities for learning and personal development.

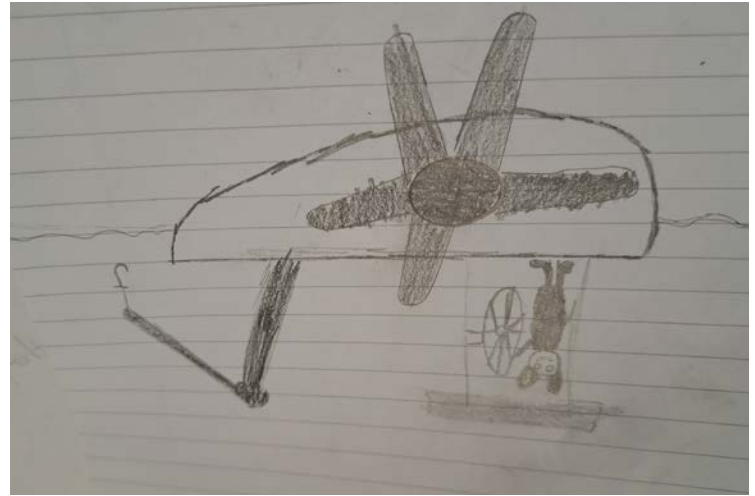
By Alex Christou

Film Club: Steamboat Willie Review

We watched the 7-minute cartoon of Steamboat Willie (the first ever appearance of Mickey Mouse!)

It was hilarious, I had to stop myself from laughing really loudly. It looked like it was a portal back to an early technological age and Mickey really resembled the emblematic character we have come to know and love from the opening credits of every Disney movie. It was amazing! 10/10.

George Bareford



Finley Armstrong secures place at BFI National Film Academy

We are thrilled to announce, one of our Yr 13 Media Studies students, Finley Armstrong, has successfully battled it out against hundreds of other applicants to secure a place on the BFI's National Film Academy, which offers a programme of study on animation and VFX.

This is a highly competitive course and Finley has done extremely well to get a place, through the exceptional skill and keen interest he has already demonstrated in his portfolio, whereby he submitted a short stop motion film.

By getting on the course, Finley will get the opportunity to work with BAFTA winning tutors



to create his own animation or effects sequence. Across the duration, Finley will also get the exciting opportunity to complete a QCF qualification NCFE Level 2 on Preparing to Work in the Film Industry. It will comprise of attending every Saturday in October, culminating in a week's intensive study during half term.

Finley has already excelled beyond the bounds of the curriculum in Media Studies; continuing to run the popular Film Club, focusing on the history of cinema, by taking a movie from each era to showcase to the lower school. The current group have already watched the 1928 film of Steamboat Willie from Disney and are now enjoying the 1933 depiction of King Kong.

Year 7 Football

Both the A and B teams are underway with their respective seasons and have had a strong start.

The A team have played three games against high level opposition. Their first game for the school was an away game against Tunbridge Wells GS in the ESFA Cup, a national competition that the school won back in 2015.

For their first game the squad adapted well and played an excellent game, edging it 2-1 with goals from Harrison Smith and Jake Pollard. Their second game was at home in a separate ESFA Cup, this time versus Norton Knatchbull. Despite having the best opportunities for much of the game and being 2-1 up, (courtesy of goals from Harry Noone and Leo Amartey) with 10 minutes remaining they were unable to hold onto the lead, eventually losing 3-2. Considering the loss, the boys were still in good spirit and Mr Lewis highlighted that they would learn much more from a game like this than an easy victory.

The final game of the term for the A team was in the Kent Cup once again, at home this time, against St Gregorys (another school from Tunbridge Wells). The opening exchanges were evenly balanced as both teams looked to build some momentum and it came from Harrison Smith who punted on a loose ball in the area to make it 1-0 to Oakwood, who never looked back. An emphatic 4-0 win, saw Smith complete his hat trick and Pollard also on the scoresheet again.

The B team had an incredibly tough draw in the ESFA B Team Cup against Ravenswood, who are one of the schools, not only in Kent but in the country who regularly compete for honours in the ESFA competitions. For their first game the boys did well, especially in the second half. Despite being down by five goals in the first half, the target set by Mr Smith was to try to win the second, leading by example was captain Freddie Brinn and despite not quite managing to win the second half, (they drew it 0-0) proved to themselves that if they work hard and show courage, they will be able to compete with any team.

The Kent Cup is still to be played and the boys will face Borden GS in round 3 after half term.



Year 8

The A team are the only team to be in action this term and have got to be the unluckiest team in the school right now. The squad continue to work incredibly hard to improve, which they have done, but their first victory is still proving to be illusive. Tough losses to Malling (2-1 Lewis Cantello with the goal) and 1-0 against Lenham have been hard to take for the boys, but if there ever was a Netflix documentary in the making, then it will be for this team's (crossing fingers) eventual first win, which I feel will be a catalyst for more success in the future.



Year 9 Football

Both A and B teams have had successful starts to the season with their B Team beating Radnor House convincingly in the end 5-0. Due to the number of fixtures, they then played against Greenacre as the A team and won 5-3 which demonstrates the ability within this year group. The A team lost against Hundred of Hoo in controversial contest in which OPGS were the better team and produced some excellent football against physical opponents and deserved to be well ahead before a penalty was awarded in the last minute of normal time to the opposition. OPGS immediately went on the attack and the referee waved away our penalty claims after the goalkeeper had clearly brought down Marli Collier in the box, as he attempted to go around him. Both teams have had the squads changed and new players introduced, and they have settled in well. We hope that both Connor Russell and Lewis Cantello (year 8) will gain opportunities to play this season in the Maidstone League matches which are up coming. Another exciting season lies ahead for year 9.

Year 10

The A team have had two tough away games, in Eastbourne and Ashford against Buckswood and Norton Knatchbull respectively.

Travelling to Eastbourne to play in the ESFA Cup took longer than the actual game, but the journey didn't affect the start to the game as Harrison Fryer pounced after 30 seconds to score the first goal. A penalty for the hosts saw them draw level before a winning goal from Kabir Mogaji.

The second game for the U15's against Knatchbull was an instant classic and rivalled the Istanbul comeback in 2005.

A very close game that went back and forth in the first half saw the score level at half time, (2-2) with both goals from Harrison Fryer. Knatchbull took the advantage in the second half and found themselves 5-2 up with only eleven minutes remaining. Goals change games and with that Oakwood managed to produce the move of the match down the left-hand side with George Francis and James Grey linking up to provide Harrison Fryer with his hat trick. A minute later and Fryer had four and the game had well and truly

swung, 5-4. Oakwood somehow managed to find an extra yard all over the pitch and created another opportunity from the left, this time Ethan Ford was on hand to poke the ball in, 5-5 with only minutes remaining. I think everyone would have been happy to take the game to extra time and regroup, but the team had other ideas, and with some of the players needing to get back for GCSE rock climbing it was a relief that a winning goal came, courtesy of Woody Lyons with only 28 seconds remaining, 6-5 and the comeback of all comebacks was complete. A breathtaking final 11 minutes, to quote Sir Alex Ferguson, 'football.....' well you know the rest.

2nd XI Football

The 2XI have had a mixed start to the season this year following a successful campaign last year as unbeaten League Champions. A convincing 5-1 win against QES was followed by a promising 2-2 draw against Simon Langton who are always strong opposition. These were then followed by losses against MGS and Borden GS and the team currently sit 3rd in the league. The team is settling down and partnerships and the teams understanding are developing. We hope that a strong second half to the season will allow us to push for second place which will be a success given the number of changes to personnel this year. The year 11's have really stepped up and Drew Kennedy, Dario Arkovski and Jacob Johnson have all cemented their places in the starting lineup following consistent performances. The addition of Kester Jones to the squad is an exciting development and this should add a different dimension to our forward play and start to convert the chances that the team has started to create.



Joe Stone - England Athletics

Joe Stone has been selected into the England Athletics - Youth Talent Programme 2023 - 2025 (YTP) for Combined Events.

The Talent Pathway programme is focused around developing a dual career for the athlete, through fulfilling their potential within the sport and also in their education and employability. The YTP contains both Practical and Theory workshops - 6 over the 2 year period and is linked to Loughborough College and University. Athletes who attend state schools will be eligible for the Diploma in Sporting Excellence (DISE) certificate, which is administered by the ESFA.

Joe attended Loughborough University for the a 2 day residential camp, where he was introduced to the Development Coaches working in their selected disciplines.

This year, Joe is one of the 220 YTP Athletes selected for the programme out of 480 applicants across all the disciplines.

The selection panel is made up of members of the England Athletics Talent Pathway Team. The following information, as well as any other factors that may be deemed relevant, will be considered by the panel when assessing selection for the programme:

- Performance ranking



- Yearly progression profile and consistency in performances
- Major competition history
- Injury and training history
- Lifestyle and training environment
- Maturation (in primary or potential future events)



Living through The Blitz in the History Department

On 4th October, Year 11 History students took part in their London in the Second World War study day in preparation for their Historic Environment component of their GCSE.

The History Department was transformed into themed rooms, each containing a set of information stations. Students researched why London was a target from 1940, the nature of the bombing raids, the way disasters and day to day hardships impacted on peoples' lives, the role of the Royal Family for morale, propaganda campaigns such as 'Dig for Victory' and the role of key individuals including Prime Minister Winston Churchill.

A combination of original artefacts, antiques, food and music set the mood, while up to date information and films from the Imperial War Museum added academic rigour to their understanding of this topic. Students learnt how there was not only one Blitz, how the Ministry of Information struggled to control media messaging, how concerns for the safety of Government led to the construction of the Cabinet War rooms, how priceless art was hidden in Welsh caves, citizens volunteered in enormous numbers to support each other through



organisations like the Women's Voluntary Service and how Hitler's V1 and V2 weapons caused fear to resurface from 1944 even once the tide of the war was turning.

It is very important to us that students have opportunities to engage with and reflect on items and stories which brought us all to study History and we were very pleased they enjoyed the day and got into the 'Blitz Spirit', while also considering whether this was to some extent a construction to enable a civilian population to cope with the horrors of modern total war.





OPGS

WINTER FAIR

SATURDAY 2 DECEMBER

10am to 1pm

**Oakwood Park Grammar
School, Oakwood Road,
Maidstone ME16 8AH**



National Poetry Day Intro.

Last week, OPGS celebrated National Poetry Day.

What day is National Poetry Day? National Poetry Day is celebrated on the first Thursday of every October, on 5th of October in 2023. The theme for this year's celebration is refuge.

Students were encouraged to make, experience and share poetry with their class, family and friends. Each year we come together because voices, words and stories help to bridge understanding in our community. The theme of 'refuge' cannot be more relevant with the real-world events unfolding that mean more people are seeking safety and sanctuary from the terrors of warzones. This campaign is designed to showcase and champion diversity.

Poetry is an important vehicle to explore individual identity and the identity of others, as researched by the CLPE The Power of Poetry (2017). Indeed, poetry is the most common way for secondary students to encounter a Black, Asian or other minority ethnic author and single poems are the easiest texts to insert into the curriculum. The Runnymede Trust and Penguin Random House Lit in Colour Report (2020). We recognise the vital role verse plays in our lives and wanted to foster love of language and the sharing of poetry throughout the school community.

Please see below the work of some of our students on this year's theme – Refuge:

Beneath the Blush-violet Sky

Angus Wong (OPGS 10X)

Beneath the blush-violet sky of a British night, I couldn't help but think of the scene of my first step on the English land.

The place that I have lived in since I was born, I shall leave. I miss that place and the people I love. It feels rather outrageous to see my motherland become a "habitat" for maniacs and criminals, seeing ridiculous news every day from thousands of miles away.

Night, ah yes, night, a moment for me to communicate with myself. Olive taught me to treasure moments with the people I love, sharing the stories of her father-in-law. Have I left without any regret? Have I tried my best spending time with the people I care? I began to think. "Yes, perhaps." "Yes." "Yes."

"This place is no longer safe for people to live." "Mmm, perhaps." Two voices in my head discussing. "Anyway, it doesn't really matter to me, to be honest," I mumbled. I felt sorry for my homeland, that it and its people shall not suffer this. "But what can I do?"

"Hello, I'm Angus. I'm from Hong Kong." This is my identity, and no one shall take that away from me.

I love our language, I love our culture, I love our place...

Our Shared Pride and Joy Favour Ochonma (OPGS 10P)

In Nigeria's embrace, a tapestry unfolds,
A land of vibrant beauty, stories yet untold.
From the savannah's golden plains to the Niger's winding flow,
A tapestry of culture and history begins to glow.

Beneath the African sun, where warmth and colors blend,
Nigeria's beauty shines, from start to endless end.
In the bustling Lagos, where life is a rhythmic dance,
To the tranquil Umuahia, where time takes a slower chance.

The people, diverse and proud, in unity they stand,
A nation's heart beats strong, across the sprawling land.

With Yoruba, Igbo, and Hausa voices that sing,
A chorus of traditions, to the world they bring.

From the ancient Benin City, where bronze tales take flight,
To the Zuma Rock's majesty, a grand and mighty sight.
Abeokuta's rocky wonders, standing tall and free,
Nature's artistry and history's decree.

In marketplaces alive with spices in the air,

Flavors blend harmoniously, a culinary affair.
Jollof rice and suya, taste sensations rare,
Nigeria's cuisine, a feast beyond compare.

The attire, vibrant hues in patterns that convey,
The stories of the past and hopes for a new day.
From Gele to Agbada, in every stitch and bead,
A tapestry of fashion, for all the world to heed.

And as the night descends with drums and songs
that soar,
The heartbeat of Nigeria echoes evermore.
From highlife's melodies to the Afrobeat's sway,
The music of Nigeria, a gift that lights the way.

In the heart of Africa, where cultures intertwine,
Nigeria's beauty and spirit forever shine.
A nation rich in history, diversity, and grace,
In Nigeria's embrace, we find a sacred place.

Though the United Kingdom is my birthplace I know
my heart belongs,
Oceans away in the blessed motherland of food
and fashion and songs.
Painted drums resound the pitter-patter of hands
carried in stride,
Then my heartbeat resonates, and I know my soul
with Nigeria is tied.

Sickeningly Beautiful World

Shayla Sutton (OPGS -Year 12JLS)

How can a piece of music heal,
yet evoke anguish of melancholy memories which
our etiquette must conceal?

As mankind steals mammals spawn,
only then we realise, nature's melody has gone.

How comes Women are the source of life and a
nurturing superior,
yet their musical voices are deemed inferior?

Society says money makes the world go round as a
life conclusion,
yet greed and materialism is a sinful delusion.

How can we have freedom of speech,
if it's consistently exploited and we're silenced to
teach?

How can we become our own healers and create a
cure,
if we are the illness ourselves and forever impure?

Even so, how can we experience ecstasy, love and
bless,
without being dissatisfied with the balanced feelings
of distress?

Loving hate, dying life, passionate aggression.
The world needs both good and bad to balance.
And when you take a further step back and glance-

Life is simply a piece of music on a piano:
The black keys; all the misfortunes and heartbreaks,
The white keys; all the optimism which fulfils us.
In the end, we need both notes to play the music.

And that is how the world is the most beautiful place
in a sickeningly, twisted way...

Matthew Wilde Rowing Championship Winner

On Saturday 30th September 2023
Matthew went to the Coastal Amateur
Rowing Association prize giving
dinner. Matthew and the rest of his quad won
the 2023 Championships in the J14 Mixed Quad
for their club, Herne Bay Amateur Rowing Club.

This was after a season of racing against 5 other
teams and winning a total of 9 out of 11 races.
Matthew's love of rowing developed from him
being given the opportunity to attend Year 7
Rowing Club at Oakwood Park.



Our annual 11+ Open Morning was held this year on Saturday 7th October 2023 from 9am – 1pm.

It is an exciting chance for prospective families to meet teachers and learn more about the passion for their subjects and the ethos of the school, whose motto is 'An Exceptional Learning Experience'. In attending, families were able to tour the school, with existing students acting as guides, around the school site.

There was a wide range of exciting opportunities for students to get involved with, including a living museum with the History Departments' recreation of WWII 'The Blitz'; the English Department's seasonal offering of a spooky Gothic Literature room, wherein students could approach the table with the bubbling cauldron to create their own poems, akin to Edgar Allan Poe's 'The Raven' poem, inspired by similar scary images; students could also test their knowledge of movie trivia in 2023 with a film quiz in Media Studies. In the meantime, Science were conducting experiments, DT were making rulers, Drama students put on an improv performances and PE had football and rugby games in action on the Sports Field.

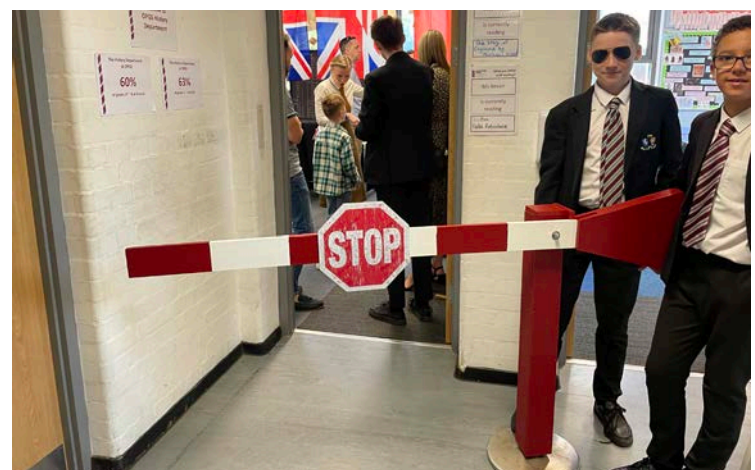
A prequel to the Headteacher's talks, which took place at 10am and 11am, was the raw student perspective given from our students with Daniel Piper from Year 8 detailing his own first impressions of OPGS and some of the school's extra-curricular opportunities like our upcoming trips to Nepal and Sri Lanka, followed by Rory Clayton who spoke about settling into the new environment from his own transition from Primary to Secondary school, and the value of having teachers you trust to have your wellbeing at the centre of their efforts, every day. Thereafter, our Head Students, Joshua Alchin, divulged the ways in which we celebrate success and the role of the support staff and Erik Ogilvy spoke about being able to break the nerves through joining the school choir.

This event showcased a real flavour of the talent and enthusiasm students have for their



educational careers at OPGS. Some of the school's core values, such as, striving for excellence in every lesson could be seen in the array of subject areas and departmental specialisms that were exhibited across the course of the morning.

This flagship event was followed by a series of Open Mornings, when families can come into the school and get a real sense of life at OPGS, watching learning take place, as lessons unfold in the everyday timetabling of the school day; asking questions of their student guides who can be counted upon to tell the truth of what lessons really look like; and observing students tackle those higher order thinking questions, deep in discussions in the middle of their topics for this term.



Port Lympne Safari Park

In September year 10 visited Port Lympne Safari Park. During the day students focused on the conservation efforts of the Aspinall Foundation both exsitu, the park itself, and insitu. They received a rangers talk discussing both aspects of conservation, primarily centred around the gorillas and other primates and monkeys. Additionally, they had a safari around the reserve to see the larger game animals such as rhinos, zebra and giraffes.



OPGS Parents' Association

Update 09/2023

This is what we need help with...

- ✓ We welcome your support at uniform sales, staffing the stall. Any help is gratefully received.
- ✓ We would also love some help with our media accounts. If you can spare any time, at any time, please get in touch.
- ✓ Would you like to be our Secretary? The role is currently shares by the committee but we'd love for more active members!

Dates for your diary...

Uniform sales will be held at upcoming parent consultations, on **Wednesday 11/10/23 & Thursday 12/10/2023** 4-7pm

Contacts Us...

Chair@OPGSPA.org.uk

Donations welcome for...

- **Pre-loved uniform & smart attire for 6th form which can be left at reception**
- **Unwanted gazebos in working order**

Reminders...

Sign up for Easy Fundraising for all your online shopping and select your cause to be Oakwood Park Grammar School Parents' Association. Each time you shop the store donate to our cause and we receive the donation via Easy Fundraising. It couldn't be easier, and is FREE to use!

Primary Teams Maths Challenge

On the Friday the 6th of October 2023, came one of the best days of the year!

The Primary Teams Maths Challenge is a day that all of us looking forward to in great anticipation. This year, the calibre of teams was higher than ever. With many of the teams having been previous winners, such as Palace Wood, Ditton, and more.

The day was split up with four rounds. The first round was a mixture of challenging questions to get the students' brains working. One question was: A large cube is made of 64 smaller cubes – how many of the smaller cubes have exactly two faces showing?

The next round was a logic puzzle, which impressively Allington Primary, Place Wood, and Roseacre Junior all got full marks in! The students were given several confusing clues and had to work out which teacher taught which subject in which room number and what their favourite shape was. A famous example of this problem would be the Einstein Zebra Riddle, which apparently only a small proportion of the world can actually solve! So for students to have done so well, really shows what little geniuses they are!

Initially, each team could work in fours, however for the third round they were split up. They worked in two pairs of two and could not talk to the other pair. The other pair would wait on the answers from the other pair before they could even answer their question – making it



incredibly difficult and stressful, feeling as though the other pair were waiting on you.

And the final round, after a long day, involved a lot of movement! The students would have to walk a long distance to a station to even pick up a question, and then walk back to their station. Some probably spent longer walking than doing maths, as they had to walk with their answer and have it correct before they could even collect their next question!

It was great to see a whole room doing maths with a smile on their face!

The final standings were so close, with not many points in it at all – with any team able to win throughout the competition. Even so close that there was a tie between 2nd and 3rd, where a tiebreaker had to happen.

The final standings were:

1. North Borough – 169
2. Roseacre Junior – 155
3. Palace Wood – 155
4. Allington Primary – 152
5. Greenfields Community – 140

Well done to all taking part, we look forward to seeing you next year,

**The Oakwood Park Maths
Department**



Year 7 Rugby

Term 1 is always for recruitment and preparation for Year 7 rugby, with training beginning at the start of the term and our first fixtures towards the back end of the term. We have had good numbers attend our weekly training sessions run. With many of the students being new to the sport, this time has been spent working on the basic skills required to play the sport. The students also experienced a lengthy training session showing their skills to our prospective new students and parents on our Open Morning. This allowed us the opportunity to select a large squad for our first fixture which was on Wednesday 11th October v Buller's Wood. The main focus for this match was to develop their understanding of game play, were they able to apply their knowledge and ability to the fixture? Whilst Buller's Wood turned out winners, the progress made with the squad was excellent, with the players listening to instructions, improving their teamwork and communication to score some excellent, worked tries in the second half. We are really excited with what we have seen in training and during this match and look forward to seeing the boys develop and improve across the season.

Year 8 Rugby

The year 8 team having been training hard during Friday lunchtimes throughout term 1 in preparation for upcoming fixtures against Bullers Wood School and Simon Langton GS. Having performed well in both friendly and Maidstone district matches last



year the boys should be excited for the season ahead. Term 2 will also see the introduction of rugby during double PE lessons, offering the chance for students to build confidence and the squad to grow as we identify new players needed for a busy fixture schedule in terms 2&3.

Year 9 Rugby

The year 9 rugby team have made an excellent start to this season. Well led by a number of club rugby players that include Jenson Clarke, Oliver Cant, Harry Morley & Austin Payne, the remainder of the team started their rugby journey in year 7 at OPGS. Despite this lack of experience, a combination of consistent training and improving performance level has seen the boys defeat teams such as Maidstone Grammar School and Sir Joseph Williamson Mathematical School last season. This provided great experience and confidence for the team to enter the U14 Kent Trophy this term.

Playing away at Hayes in round 1 provided a daunting task, added to by a crowd of five hundred 6th form spectators who were sharing the field for a school enrichment day! The boys coped with this pressure brilliantly to take a 10-7 lead at half time. With everything to play for in the second half OPGS scored a crucial third try to move 17-10 ahead. The squad then defended with real determination to absorb numerous Hayes attacks in the last 10 minutes, running out 17-10 winners. We then faced Bullers Wood in a quarter final fixture at OPGS. Unfortunately the boys were not at their best in the first half, conceding two soft tries to fall 10-5 behind at half time. Even with a battling second half performance, a lack of accuracy in the opposition half meant we couldn't score the



points needed to turn the game in our favour. The final score finished 10-5 to Bullers Wood School. Despite this result it was brilliant to see a growing squad of 26 students play this fixture, showing the increasing enthusiasm and talent for rugby in this year group. Well done to all the boys involved that are training consistently on Fridays and performing so well in fixtures. The team now looks forward to a match vs. Simon Langton GS before half term.

Year 10 Rugby

This season has started brightly for the Under 15 squad, with training now on the same day as their PE lesson we have had over 25 students attend the sessions allowing us to work in a positive way in developing teamwork and our particular style of play. We are looking to lengthen training after the October half term to provide even more time to practice and progress.

The season began with two cup fixtures in two weeks, unfortunately the friendly that was organised prior to these fixtures was cancelled, meaning we had to hit the ground running. In the Kent Shield we were drawn against Aylesford school. With a fresh new squad, with new additions we were keen to show what we could do. Fortunately for Aylesford they had two very strong players who were able to dominate the game. The lack of match play was evident, and it took much of the first half before we came together as a team. This meant that Aylesford were able to take control of the match and we were playing a little catch-up rugby. Aylesford in the end coming out on top and progressing to the next round. Our next match was away at The Marsh school in the National Schools Cup, so after a long drive to New Romney, we quickly got prepared and started the match. We were much improved to the Aylesford game; the squad were playing a better style of controlled rugby and we took the lead. The rest of the match was closely fought, both teams similar in ability. Marsh went into half time ahead, but we came back strongly in the second half, bringing the game back to 17-17 with only 10 minutes left. At this stage we were looking strong and in control. Unfortunately, the final 10 minutes did not go our way. Lack of possession and some penalties gave Marsh the upper hand and they managed to run in 2 quick tries taking the game away from us.

Despite two loses to start the season, having regular training and good numbers in the squad, we can only look forward to improving throughout the season and a potential run in the next level of the National Cup.

1st XV Rugby

We were fully aware moving into the season that this Senior team would be one of the youngest we had had at Oakwood for nearly 15 years. With only a handful of sixth form players, the squad was going to predominantly be made up of under 16 players. The advantage with this is that these boys had developed under the guidance of Mr Evans and Mr Keeling-Jones since Year 7, meaning they had a great understanding of the team and how they worked together. With the experience of the few Sixth Form players, we knew we would be able to progress across the season and use it as a development year, ready for 2024-2025.

Our first match was against Sir Joseph Williamson's school, a tough opening match and first round of the National School's Vase. The match gave a huge introduction to senior rugby for many of the squad. We played with passion and heart, never standing back from the challenge. However, it was too much of an ask for our young squad. But it gave Mr Evans and I the insight to what we needed to do to progress.

Our second match was against Trinity school, a school with a rugby academy. After a strong performance last year, we felt that this would be a great match for our squad. We arrived in the sunshine warmed up ready for a tough match. The game kicked off and the heavens opened, this would make it tricky to playing a running game, but we were up for the challenge. The game was evenly matched, our year 11 players were really taking it to the Year 12/13 players in front of them. Playing some great rugby, attacking and defending superbly, special mentions to the dominance of our centre pairing of George Rhodes and Joshua Bruce. Half time the match was drawn, 2 tries apiece. Who would step up and run out winners in the second half? We struck first in the second half, demonstrating our intent. Trinity replied after some good forwards continuity. But it was our outstanding pack turning over the ball and providing space for our backs to run that allowed us to run in two tries, taking us ahead with 5 minutes to go. It was nervy, especially as Trinity bought it back to within 1 score. Would we hold out? Thankfully under the leadership of Alex Smith, yes! We held off to take our first win of the season and a match showing the potential we have in this squad.

We have some great matches ahead of us, with regular training as a squad we will see great progress across the season. We are all looking forward to the challenges we face and the opportunities that will be presented as we get better as a squad.

Wellbeing Ambassadors

Congratulations to our 4 new Year 11 Wellbeing Ambassadors who join our Wellbeing team after a rigorous interview process (Matthew Smith, Dylan Wright, Ewan Tweddell, Luca Fernandez).

After training the ambassadors will join the rest of the team in mentoring the new year 7s this term, ensuring the students have made a successful transition and have good support systems inside school.

The Wellbeing Ambassadors have made an excellent start to the year setting up the schools Quiet Room and identifying students that would

benefit from additional support and resources at break and lunchtimes including mentoring, socialising and a quiet mental health space. To develop their knowledge and understanding further the ambassadors will take part in KCCs Big Mental Health Conversation on Tuesday 10th October with all schools across the county.

We would like to thank all the ambassadors for their hard work:

Morgan Bluck
Archie Farmer
Roderick Meriyan
Edward Scarr
Dean Spooner



Kent's Big Mental Health Conversation Trip

On Tuesday 10th October, myself and the Wellbeing Ambassador team went on a trip to Kent's Big Mental Health Conversation,

a convention that gave us tips on how to approach supporting students in the lower years so they can improve their own wellbeing and look after their mental health and cope with their stresses in life so they can learn and work well in school.

The wellbeing ambassador team aims to help give advice to people in the school struggling with looking after their own wellbeing, so going on this trip helped us gain more knowledge on how to do this effectively.

At the convention, each of us participated in activities with other schools in the Kent/Medway area. These activities included awareness of mental health through drama, exploring what emotions are, doing art to show awareness of good wellbeing and much more.

We got a lot of tips from various organisations set up in the Kent/Medway area, some of which were formed by the NHS to help support young people's mental health. There were

also some groups unrelated to the NHS whom were equally determined to help support the wellbeing of young people. Talking to these groups gave us a better understanding of how the teenage brain works and how to help improve a young person's mental health.

Using this new information, we are aiming to help raise awareness of the importance of wellbeing in the school. We also want to look for people in the lower years who may be struggling with their mental health because of having a poor wellbeing at school or at home. Over the year, we will be taking students from years 7, 8 and 9 for mentoring during form time and giving them the opportunity to reflect on their mental wellbeing. If we identify someone who needs additional support, then we will offer them a quiet room pass. The quiet room allows students to have a safe space to reflect on their wellbeing during break and lunchtimes. They can also partake in activities that help make them more aware of their mental health. Myself and the other wellbeing ambassadors look forward to being able to support the school and raise awareness of mental health and wellbeing.

Article by Luca Fernandez P11



Whole School Literacy

‘Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body’ – Richard Steele.

Therefore, at Oakwood Park Grammar School, we value reading and Whole School Literacy as extremely important from the outset of your son’s educational career.

According to the National Literacy Trust, just 2 in 5 children aged 8 to 18 said they enjoyed reading in their free time 2023, which is as low as the number has ever been since they first asked the question in 2005. However, we are keen to buck the trend by nurturing your son’s passion for the written word, from Year 7 onwards.

A celebration of the importance of literacy across the school curriculum was on display in the entrance hall for students and parents to examine at the first Year 7 Parents Evenings this October, with the focus of settling into life at the school. Ms George, as Subject Leader for English, was brimming with enthusiasm, having the chance to talk to families about why a home-school partnership is integral to ensuring success, not just within our subject but as a tool to underpin his whole schooling and indeed life skills.

The act of reading expands understanding of language, vocabulary and knowledge of the world. Reading is around 300% more effective at reducing stress than going for a walk, as found in the research paper published in the International Journal of Engineering Research and Technology. Reading books can significantly improve your communication by enhancing your vocabulary. When you read a book, it promotes your thinking ability along with imagination power; as Stephen King, the father of the horror genre rightly asserts: ‘Books are a uniquely portable magic’.

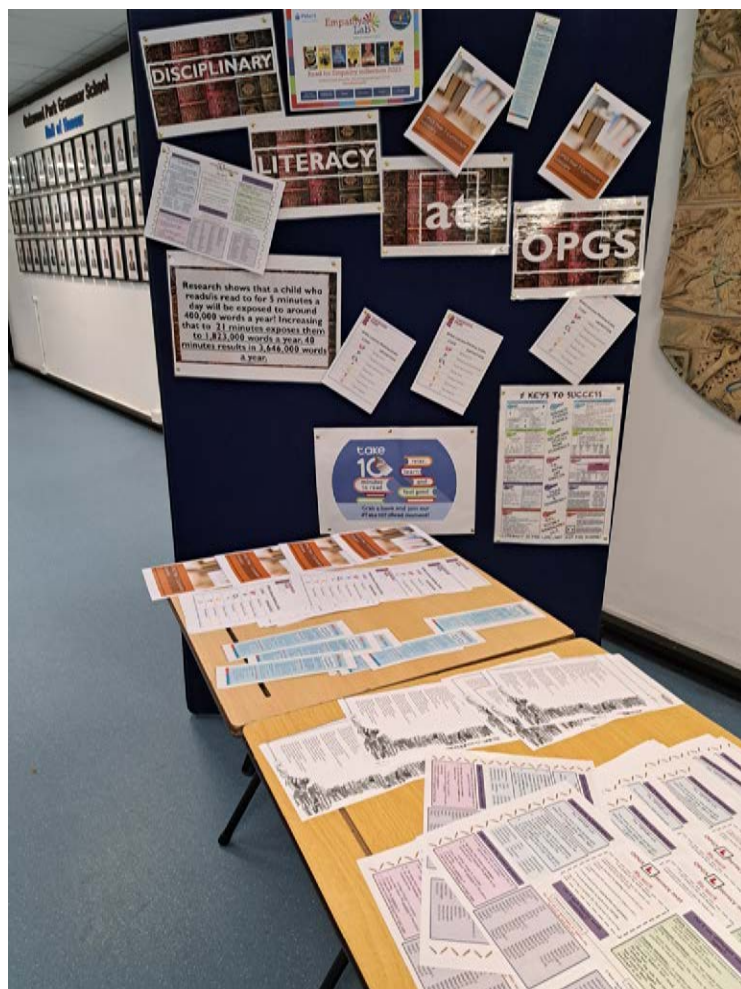
Ms George had lots of successful conversations with parents about the initiatives already in place at the school to make the transition from Primary to Secondary easier on this front, by providing students and parents with the OPGS Year 7 Curriculum Glossary, Suggested Reading Lists, Literacy Placemats and where

to access good quality reading material for your son to enjoy, using the PiXL Reading Guide as bookmarks to take home.

In fact, Ms George has recently completed her Masters in this subject, due to her passion to promote Whole School Literacy as a way to drive improvement across the board:

“For my Master’s degree (MA Education), dissertation, I conducted an Action Research which allowed me to forensically examine the theoretical and evidence-based arguments for the importance of literacy and to develop a critical insight into the policy development over the years which leads to the current situation and emphasis. It was a great pleasure to work with staff and students in promoting literacy across the curriculum.”

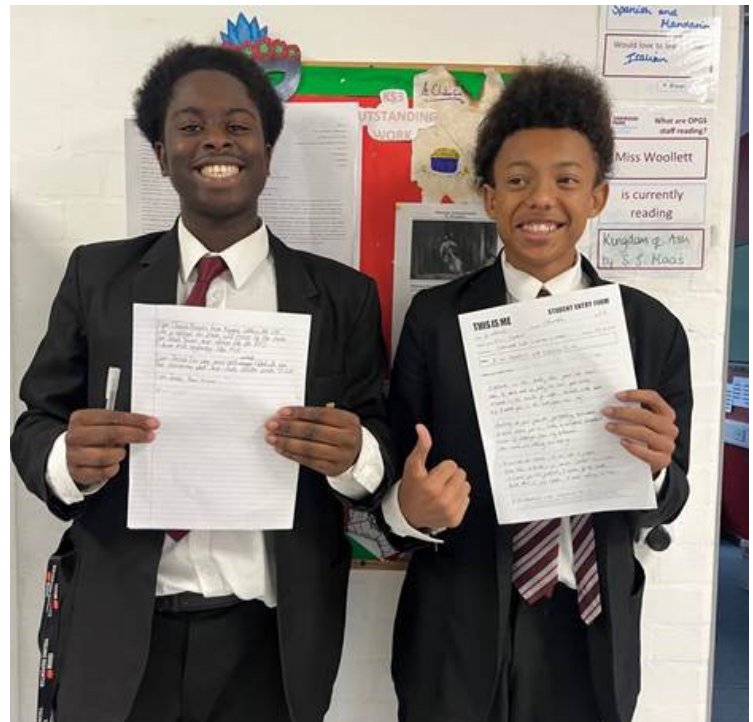
If this has sparked your interest, and would like to find out more, any questions related to Whole School Literacy, please do not hesitate to contact Ms George.



Young Writer's National Writing Competition

During the first enrichment day of the academic year, Year 11 students planned and crafted poems to enter the Young Writer's National Writing contest.

The theme of the contest was identity and OPGS students were encouraged to consider who they are, what they have experienced in the past and what they hope to achieve in the future. The result of this reflection was that the cohort produced a diverse selection of poems, exploring important issues such as race and religion, nationality and ideology. Students whose poems are selected by the Young Writer's panel of publishers and educators will have their work published in a poetry anthology entitled "This is Me". We wish them the best of luck in the competition.

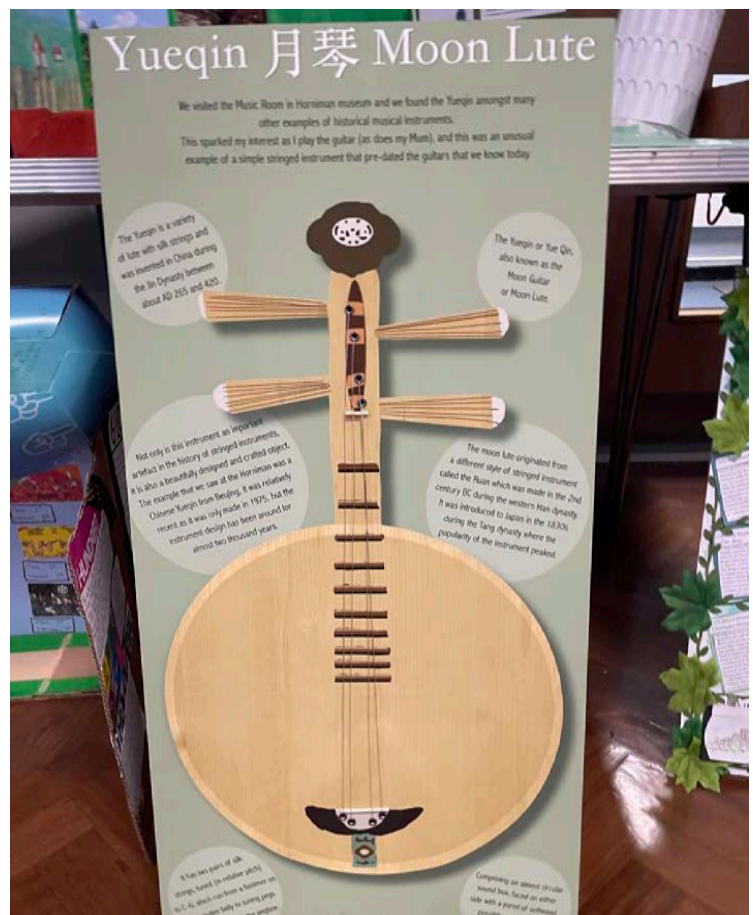


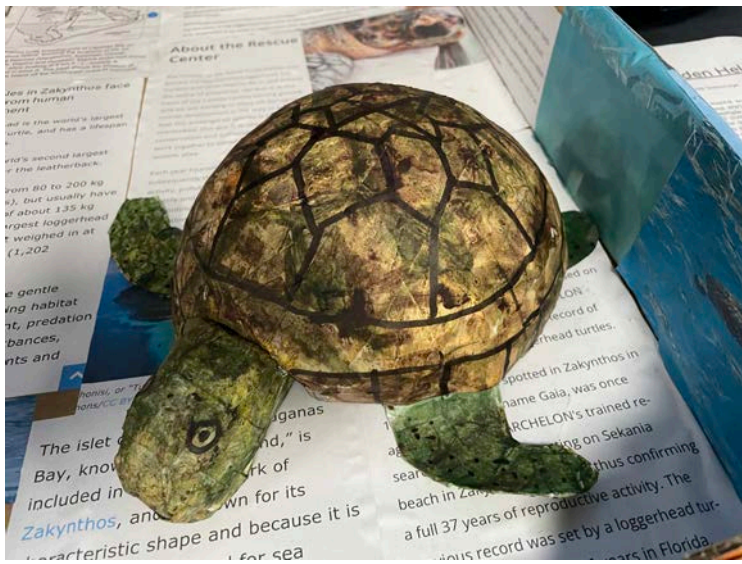
Year 7 Family Projects

To mark the transition from Year 6 to Year 7, we ask them to project manage a trip to a place of cultural significance with their family, the outcome of which is to be displayed in school, upon their start to Year 7.

The idea behind the project is to showcase our Year 7 students' leadership organisational skills whilst also nurturing their ingenuity, creative talents and cultural curiosity.

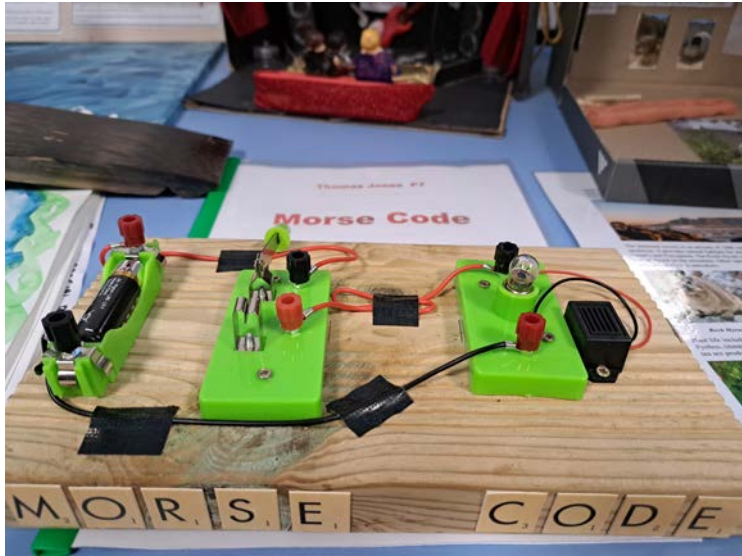
At Oakwood Park Grammar School, our ethos is centred around gaining a wider knowledge of the world and exploring new ideas as students take responsibility for their own learning. With such a wide range of possible outcomes for the project, a unique approach, resourcefulness and independence were all key attributes in the huge range of stunning and success projects we had on display at our Open Morning and the first Year 7 Parents' Evenings in October. The calibre of the projects produced is truly a





celebration of the Year 7 students' excellent efforts.

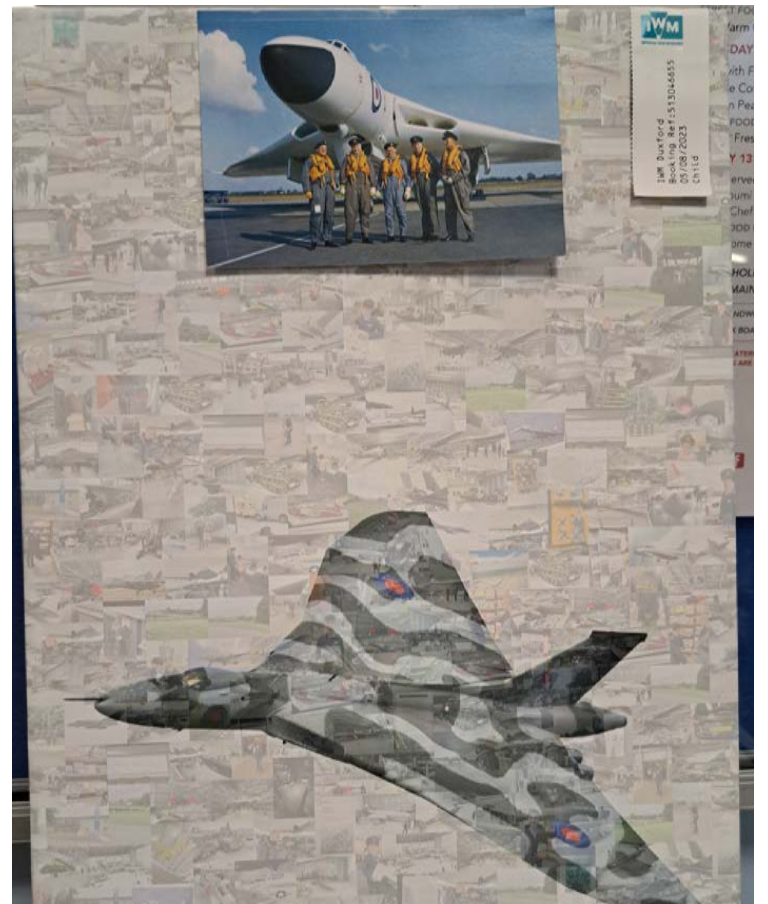
The eye-catching exhibit which ran the length of the hall, boasted a wide array of interactive displays such as a Morse Code machine, a light house and a Yueqin Moon Lute. Some of the most remarkable pieces were the mystery surrounding The Princes in the Tower, the History of Cricket, a recreation of the Minack Theatre, the Bayeux Tapestry, the Burj Khalifa

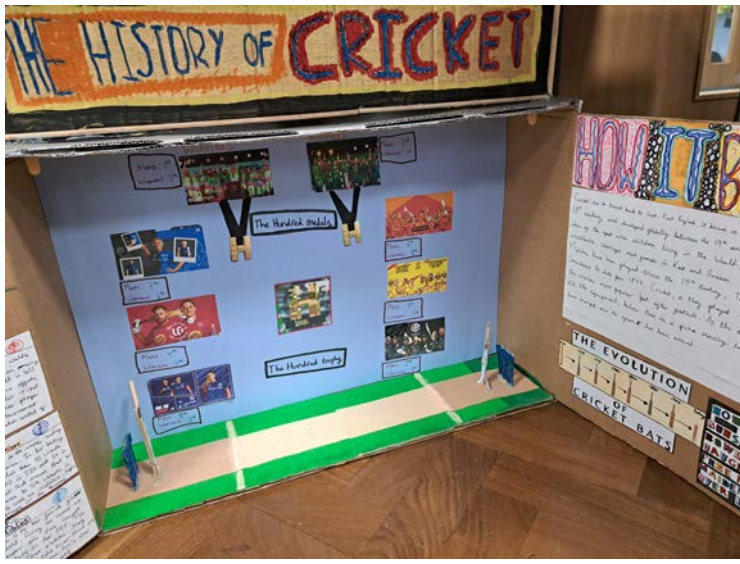


in Dubai, the Parthenon in Greece, the Morph Trail across the city of London and Ethan Turley's Totem Pole. In addition, we were able to display some truly touching family histories given to photograph, the war efforts and some local history of hop farming and the Maidstone Carriage Museum and international areas such Kerala, India which our students have family connections.

The sheer amount of time and effort which had gone into them really was overwhelming and led to some excited discussions as the students took time to see their work, as well as that of their friends, with their parents and teachers in an exhibition space they could be proud of.

Whilst the quality of the work meant it was extremely difficult to judge on who should be awarded for their efforts, it was decided the fairest way was to offer it up to a vote which students, staff and parents could be involved in. Therefore, I am delighted to announce the winner of each category will be announced, once the votes have been collected and counted at a prize giving assembly after half term, so watch this space!





Sixth Form Charity Cake Sale

On the 27th of September, the Head Students and Senior Prefect team managed to organise and raise a successful sum of £284.

All of which will be donated to support our student chosen charities: Dandelion Time and Doctors Without Borders. Thank you to those who donated, it was greatly appreciated!



**OAKWOOD
PARK
GRAMMAR
SCHOOL**

Sixth Form

Open Events

- Judged as an '*Outstanding Sixth Form*' - Ofsted in 2019
- **Excellent 2023 Outcomes** - see website for more details
- No booking necessary

Open Evening

Tuesday 5th December 6:30pm - 8:30pm
Head of Sixth Form Talks at 7pm & 8pm

Open Mornings

Wednesday 6th December 9am - 11am
Thursday 7th December 9am - 11am

- **24 A Level Courses**
- **Extensive Enrichment Programme**
- **Extended Project Qualification**

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