



Any Questions? Live at OPGS

Dear Students, Parents and Carers

It is always fitting to finish a busy term with a copy of @Oakwood because as I always say, it provides such an important opportunity to sit and reflect on all the amazing things which take place in the school. This is a bumper edition and it does really capture the busy but purposeful nature of our school.

Identifying highlights is always a challenge given all of the amazing things which go on in this school. I have really enjoyed the Enrichment Days for example. Seeing Year 9 learning vital first aid skills was an important session to run. I also really enjoyed the HASS and STEM ambassador assemblies. Year 11 have completed their PPEs this term and seeing them working hard and supporting each other reminds me of the very special culture in this school. I enjoyed hearing about the Lille trip and the Duxford trip. All of these amazing things cannot happen without the hard work of support staff and teachers and so to end this introduction, I would like to say a huge thank you to them.

I would also like to wish every member of the school community a very restful and a very merry Christmas.

Strive and Serve

Mrs S Craig
Headteacher

Any Questions? Live at OPGS

Students at OPGS were delighted to welcome the BBC to the school on Halloween when they broadcast live Any Questions? from the school hall. Year 11 Drama Tech students worked alongside BBC engineers as they designed the lighting for the show. As a reward, the students were treated to entry into the BBC's outside broadcast vehicle.

The presenter Alex Forsythe spent the afternoon in the Sixth Form Centre with her team researching the facts on recent events.

At 6.30pm our political guests arrived, looking apprehensive as to what was going to be asked, but our senior prefects were charming and chatty, they soon felt encouraged. We were lucky to have government minister James Murray MP, Ellen Whelan (journalist), Al Pinkerton MP (Lib Dem) and Kieran Mullan MP (Cobs).

Once the night started, Year 12 and 13 Politics students and the 'studio' audience prepared questions and posted them in the blue box in hope of





being chosen. Of the 4 questions selected, 2 came from OPGS Sixth Formers. 1.8 million listeners would have heard the voices of Ifan Bambury and Arthur Pavey, Senior Prefects, who respectively asked 'Do Labour ministers need to attend a course on managing property?' and 'Is university a worthwhile investment?'

The highlight of the evening for most students was the drinks and nibbles in the library with our guests and production staff. Students got to politely interrogate the politicians on their policies and to try to persuade them to adopt their ideas.

Al Pinkerton came top in student ratings for the most approachable and convincing. Bring on the next election when all Sixth Formers get to vote!



Thank you, Mrs Razey OBE

After ten years of service to Oakwood Park Grammar School, five of which have been as the Chair of Governors, we say goodbye to Mrs Razey, OBE.

Mrs Razey has served this school and its community diligently and built a governing body which is representative of the school. She has brought a wealth of experience to her role and holds leaders to account. Mrs Razey has asked important questions of leaders in the school and has been relentless in her pursuit of the highest standards in our school.

Mrs Razey was awarded an OBE in the King's Birthday Honours 2024; a prestigious recognition which acknowledges and celebrates her exceptional contributions to education and her unwavering commitment to promoting social mobility. Mrs Craig, Headteacher stated 'It has been an



honour to work with Mrs Razey. Her expert educational knowledge and advice have been so valuable in my first years as Headteacher. She has made a difference in our school.'

Mrs Razey will continue to serve the school community in her role as a Member.

Mrs Razey, OBE, will be replaced as the Chair of Governors by Mrs Wilde who was formally elected at a recent Full Governing Body Meeting in November. Mrs Wilde is excited to begin her new role and shares Mrs Razey's ambitions for the school.

Y11 Trip to Queen's College, Cambridge

On Enrichment Day a group of Y11 students had the opportunity to visit Queen's College, Cambridge. The day started with a session introducing the University of Cambridge and the different types of universities across the UK.

Following this, students had a tour of Queens, experiencing both its more modern amenities and the 15th Century dining hall, tutors' quarters and residences.

The most relevant session for our Y11 students was focused on choosing your A Level subjects. Olivia, the Schools Liaison Officer at Queens, gave a comprehensive presentation to OPGS students on which A Levels subjects can lead you to which degrees, covering subject specific requirements and how students can search for this information themselves. She also gave some excellent examples of where these degrees could lead, highlighting the variety of paths available.

The visit ended with a chilly 10-minute walk through Cambridge to Trinity Hall College. We were given a tour by a current first year student who was able to answer many of our students' questions, including whether or not they have to do their own laundry.



In November, Computing students from across years 7-13 took part in the UK Bebras Challenge competition. Further information can be found here: <https://bebras.uk/>

The aim of the Bebras Challenge is to tackle a series of interactive tasks, designed to encourage logical thinking and problem-solving skills appropriate for their age group in 45 minutes. The challenge is conducted online, and tasks are marked automatically by our competition system.

Tasks are categorised into three levels of difficulty: A, B, and C. Category A problems are the least challenging, while category C problems offer the most difficulty. The score for each task is influenced by its assigned difficulty level.

| Difficulty | Correct | Incorrect | Unanswered |
|------------|------------|-----------|------------|
| A | +6 points | 0 points | 0 points |
| B | +9 points | -2 points | 0 points |
| C | +12 points | -4 points | 0 points |

Year 7 students participated in the Junior category, Years 8 & 9 in the Intermediate category, Years 10 & 11 in the Senior category and Years 12 & 13 in the Elite category.

Results

- 159 year 7 students participated in the Junior category. 41 were awarded a distinction with Edward Cook from C7 being awarded best in school.
- 306 students from years 8 and 9 participated in the Intermediate category. 78 were awarded a distinction with Samuel White from C9 being awarded best in school.
- 44 Computer Science GCSE students across years 10 and 11 participated in the senior category. 11 were awarded a distinction with Elliot Ford from X11 being awarded best in school for a second year in a row.
- 15 students participated in the Elite category. 4 were awarded a distinction with Oliver Roberts from year 12 being awarded best in school and 14th in the overall challenge ranking.

85 students from OPGS were placed in the top 10% nationally in the Bebras Challenge and were awarded a gold certificate.

Congratulations to all students involved – a huge achievement!



Year 8 trip to Duxford

On the 20th November Year 8 visited IWM Duxford in Cambridgeshire. Students learnt about British aviation from the First World War to the Cold War.

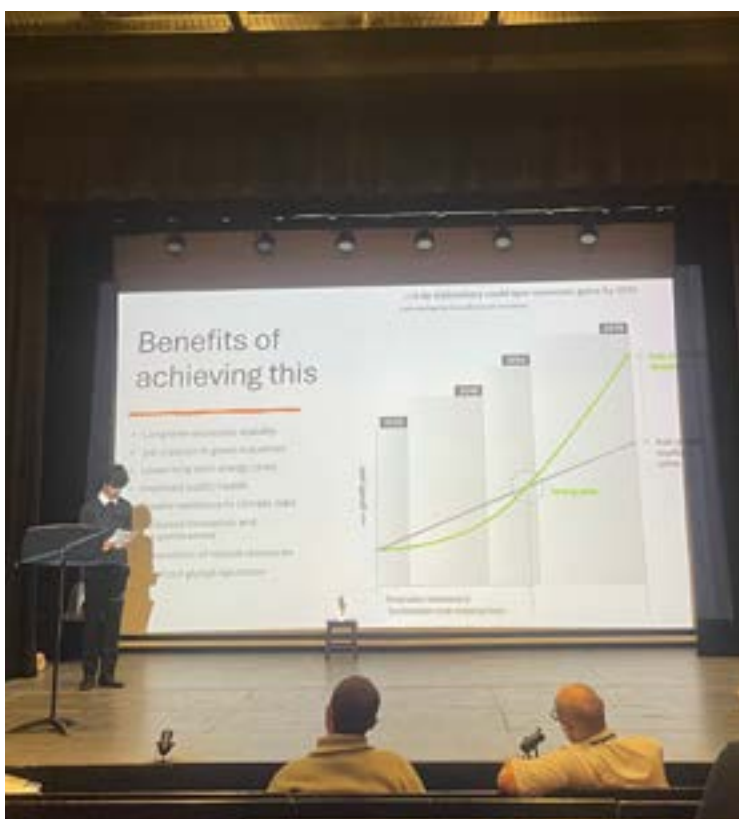
They learnt about the importance of Duxford to the defence of Britain in the Second World War and about the men and women who worked there together fighting against the Nazi regime. They saw the iconic Spitfire and Lancaster planes. In the American Air Museum students were able to see a 'Blackbird', a B52 Stratofortress bomber and a U2 spy plane. Our GCSE includes a study of the arms race during the Cold War, something for students to consider for the future. We were all very proud of how the students listened attentively to the guides and conducted themselves so well. Thank you to parents and carers for getting them all to school early and we hope they had a day to remember.





Economics Competition

On Wednesday 26th November, we took eight Economics students to Sutton Valence School for a competition on economic growth and net zero. I would like to personally thank you all for the support you provided in making this event possible. The day began in a cold school car park, where we were told to “follow the food” to find our way — and we did that well! The OPGS students were thrilled to be at SV and made excellent comments about the school environment. As 19:00 drew closer, we were called into the theatre to take our seats, with all competitors eyeing each other up and weighing



up the competition. The SV students were slightly wary that we had brought grammar school students along.

When the spinning wheel was used to select the first team, everyone looked anxious. The first draw: Oakwood Park's first team. They collected themselves and made their way to the stage, ready for battle.

From the first words spoken by the Oakwood A team, I knew we were witnessing something outstanding. As the team laid out their goals and critically evaluated the success of various policies, I could hear murmurs from the other teams. It was an exceptional presentation — thoughtful, original, and brilliantly delivered.



Oakwood B followed, and once again, our students stood confidently on stage demonstrating their knowledge, ideas, and passion for Economics. They presented original ideas, clearly set out their aims and objectives, and offered strong critiques on the challenges of achieving both economic growth and net zero. Another outstanding performance. After all six teams had presented, the judges took time to discuss the outcome.

I am delighted to announce that OPGS Team A won! A huge achievement — and a very well-deserved one.

It is not often I say this, nor admit it in an open email, but as I sat watching our Year 12 and Year 13 students working cohesively, I was genuinely overwhelmed with pride. People often refer to teaching as a privilege, and on this evening it truly was. I felt honoured to listen to our students — your children — present on a big stage, for some of them the first time ever. I am proud to work with students so dedicated to their studies, and it was a privilege to accompany them to this event.

A special mention must go to our guest judge, Mr Pelc. He attended to support his son, only to be invited to join the judging panel. With his experience in Economics, he took the opportunity to ask challenging questions to all teams. Thank you, Mr Pelc.

Sixth Form Quiz Night

The annual Sixth Form Quiz Night, took place on Thursday 6th November. The evening is a great opportunity for students, families and staff to come together and test their knowledge, while raising money for the Sixth Form charities - Cancer Research UK and Switch Youth Club.

The brilliant Quiz Night run by the Senior Prefects and won by a team including last year's Senior Prefects and the Senior Prefects from the year before! The Sixth Form Team were beaten to the prize by their ex-students, but that proves we did our job well!



You might ask yourself a few of these questions:

- What actually is Faith and Film Club?
- Who watches these films?
- Why should I drag myself all the way up the stairs? What does this club do for me?
- What films do we watch, why do we watch them?
- Can I earn Achievement Points?

In this article, you will read about these questions and perhaps be swayed by the many reasons why you should join.

What actually is Faith and Film?

Faith and Film Club is a film club where students have opportunities to watch movies to enrich their understanding of Religious Studies, Philosophy and Ethics. Faith and Film Club takes place regularly on

Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, 1.20pm-2.00pm. Students are encouraged to partake in this activity and enrich themselves in their studies of Religious Studies and create links with the film.

Who watches these films?

The films and programmes shown are either rated PG or 12 depending on the year group. These films are watched by a large audience. As of December, 147 people are signed up on EduLink to watch films on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. This statistic is the total number of people from Key Stage 3 that are signed up on EduLink. A total of 30.6% of all Year 7, 8 and 9.

Why should I drag myself all the way up the stairs? What does this club do for me?

This club encourages students to link religious studies with the media. It allows them to answer questions about the links between the film and religions.

What films do we watch, why do we watch them?

There are a wide variety of films and programmes we watch. These films always have links with Religious Studies, Philosophy and Ethics. We feature:

Star Wars

Has connections with monastery and Buddhists beliefs.

The Truman Show

Asks Ethical and Philosophical questions: "Are we part of a simulation?"

The Narnia Trilogy

Links with biblical references (Aslan = Jesus), contains Christian teachings.

The Simpsons

Made by a Philosopher: Matt Groening, he often includes Philosophy, Religion and Ethics in the episodes.

Can I earn Achievement Points?

Yes. You can earn achievement points by responding to challenging questions that are crafted with intention to make you examine your knowledge of world religions.

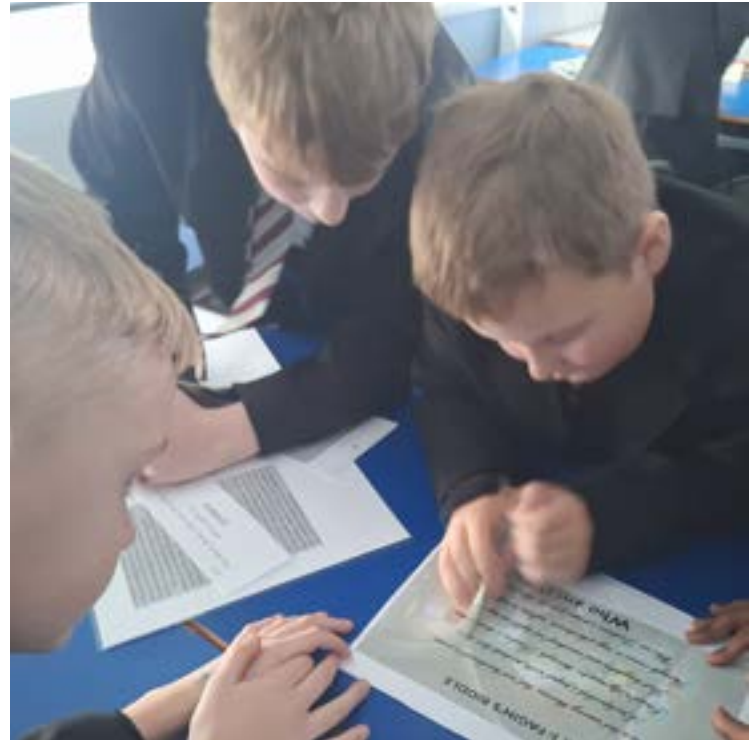
By Freddie Palmer P9



Year 7 Escape Room for Oliver Twist

Our Year 7s have been studying a C19th novel, *Oliver Twist*, this condition of England tale is used to explore issues of poverty, child labour, and the criminalisation of the poor.

The story tracks a young, orphan boy named Oliver whose journeys from a cruel workhouse in Victorian England to London's criminal underworld. The end of the novel, sees Oliver find a life of comfort, exposing societal injustices through his resilience and good nature. After escaping mistreatment and falling in with Fagin's gang of pickpockets (including the Artful Dodger and Bill Sikes), Oliver is rescued by kindly Mr. Brownlow but repeatedly dragged back by the gang and a mysterious figure named Monks, who plots to steal his inheritance. The story culminates in



the murder of the prostitute Nancy by her violent partner Bill Sikes, followed by Sikes's accidental death, Fagin's execution, and Oliver's discovery of his true parentage, leading to a happy ending with Mr. Brownlow and the Maylie family.

In light of this, having got half way through the novel this term, my Year 7 class were plotting to escape Fagin's Den, using the clues and ciphers around the room, to bring the child gang's digs to life; "a very dirty place. The rooms up stairs





with an extract from the novel, with only key letters highlighted to spell out a word. This then translated to the next number for the final lock code. Students then had to decode a riddle to identify a character. The name of the character also relating to numbers. Lastly, there was a logic puzzle for students to solve. This pointed them to pictures around the room with the final number hidden, if they managed to sort the corresponding numbers into the correct order.



The winning team earned their way into the wider world with this message: You slip quietly into the London night, leaving the dark heart of Fagin's world behind.

Oliver's future — and yours — is finally your own.

had great high wooden chimney-pieces and large doors, with panelled walls". Therefore, the premise of the game for the class, was this:

You wake in the dim, smoky attic of Fagin's Den. Around you are scraps of stolen goods, bundles of fabric, and the stench of old tobacco. Fagin has stepped out — but he'll return in 45 minutes. If he finds you here, he'll force you to become part of his gang of pickpockets.

Your only chance?

Solve the clues hidden around the den and escape before Fagin returns.

Task 1 is understanding Victorian crime, students had to work out in their group, what the most valuable item was the boys had stolen. Task 2 had them literally reading between the lines,



We went to Frédéric's restaurant for our GCSE French enrichment day.

To kick things off, we took a march of excitement from our school to Fremlin Walk. We were very optimistic on what was to come. We arrived in Fremlin Walk and we split up into groups - one going to Frédéric's first and the other on a mysterious French scavenger hunt. I was on the scavenger hunt first and I was in a group of 4 with my fellow friends and began our adventure towards France. We were given directions in French to various shops and we had a booklet to complete of the shops we found using the directions we were given. We enjoyed the pleasure of looking around shops and counting how many lampposts were in Fremlin Walk. This was only the start of our adventure as next we had the absolute pleasure to enter Frédéric's where we were introduced to the heart-warming Mr Allsebrook who is the owner of Frédéric's who was very eager to give us a taste of France with his spectacular variety of cheeses.

Before the tasting, we were given a very passionate talk of how cheeses are made and how wine was



made - obviously, we didn't drink any. We learnt that cheeses were classified based on the amount of people that made it and that champagne was made in the French region of Champagne. Now it was time for the tasting. We were given a selection of 3 cheeses - Brie de Meaux, camembert and Fromage de Chèvre (made in Normandie). We ate the cheeses and they had a very strong taste to them. It was a bit strong for me but my friends liked it and nonetheless this is a significant part of French culture so it was amazing. After eating, we bid farewell to Mr Allsebrook and then we were treated to lunch in Fremlin Walk as we missed break. Finally, after a long exciting day we took our French march of triumph back to school from our mini-French adventure.

Au revoir,

Raahil Hussain

This term the yr 7-10 HASS and STEM leaders have taken to their new roles superbly. Every Friday they have been leading expert lectures and debates in the LRC at lunchtime on a range of exciting topics, chosen by the students for their OPGS Beyond the Curriculum club.

Under the expert tutoring of senior prefects Liefer and Nova, they have honed their critical thinking skills and knowledge and understanding of a wide range of topics. Anyone who attends the student led club learn the correct structure to hold a formal debate and have even had the pleasure of inviting in subject prefect specialists to help them learn more about certain topics. Over the last 2 weeks the HASS and STEM leads have demonstrated their skills to the whole-school through some excellent assemblies, in which they hosted a formal debate and expertly took questions from the audience.

Well done to all those that took part:

Elliot A (09C)
Dominic S (09C)
Alex P (10T)
Prayonn S (09T)



Bertie B (08S)
Advaith K (10X);
Sanjeev V (10X)
Maks M (07P)

They are pleased to launch the programme for next term, with the opportunity for students to recommend ideas to the club by emailing Liefer or Nova

19lmcnab@opgs.org
19nattardmontalto@opgs.org

Where? LRC

When? Every Friday lunchtime, from 1.30pm
Student's can sign up via Edulink Clubs.



The Fisher House competition - Christmas card design

The Fisher house competition returned this year with the much-loved Christmas card design task. Students showed their creativity and imagination creating a variety of beautiful designs. There were traditional Christmas scenes created in a variety of materials, intricate pop-up designs, carefully crafted multimedia pieces, and entries that had humour (Santa Darth Vader wishing us a Happy Sithmas being a standout). Judging the competition was a hard task, with the standard being so high this year, but Mrs Craig was more than up to the challenge. The winner was a beautiful drawn image of Santa dressed in his Oakwood Park uniform with Oakwood Park students celebrating Christmas, by Sanjeev Vinod – Hazlitt House.

2nd place went to a carefully crafted Christmas tree constructed from ribbon, by Jude Higman from Wilberforce House, who also had a special mention for his lovely submission showing three snowmen crafted from paper

3rd was a whimsical and sweet snowman cupcake beautifully drawn by George Green of Broughton House.





Every year the submissions for the Fisher house task are extremely high showing students' artistic skill and imagination. Well done and thank you to everyone who entered!

Hazlitt House Competition – English 'November Voice'

Miss Crouch was lucky to receive a plethora of excellent entries to November's House Challenge.

From prose, to poetry, to the production of a song, the entries were exceptional, and it therefore was incredibly tough to narrow it down to three winners. After a long discussion with the A Level English prefects, Max and Joel, the following three pieces have been selected:

In 1st place for their song, is Harry Morley 11X (Broughton) and Jesus Dos Santos Espana 11T (Wilberforce).

Seasons Change

Verse 1:

All the feelings we shared now they're gone
We were in this together and now we're done
I used to blame myself but now I see
It was always you and never me

Pre chorus:

And now I understand
Change doesn't make you a better man
You're holding my hand
Let me go
Let me go

Chorus:

I can't see it
I can't 'feel' it
I can't love you anymore (anymore)
Seasons change and
Time moves on so
I can't love you anymore (anymore)

Verse 2:

Leaves come falling down
I'm leaving this old town
I'm walking from my past
And now I'm on a new path
The time has come at last
So I'm gone
I have to move on.

Chorus:

I can't see it
I can't 'feel' it
I can't love you anymore (anymore)
Seasons change and
Time moves on so
I can't love you anymore (anymore)

Coming in 2nd place for his poem is Ryan Murphy 13 JHA (Broughton).

Autumn - Ryan Murphy 13JHA

Lady autumn blows a soft chill through the crisp summer air.

Prances along eagerly with her gold orange hair.

She ambles through a vast forest of mighty oak
Each great tree kneels eager...
To hand her their cloak.

Her breath casts a cold spell over fair summer's garden.
 The flowers do canker, their petals they harden.
 The sun hides low, vacant, in morning and evening.
 Avoiding her gaze, why fear is he feeling?
 Soon as she came, she found herself leaving.
 As snow cascades down in piles that are heaving.
 Fair Autumn is gone.
 Her life always fleeting!
 Until a new beginning, shall we be meeting...

Finally, in 3rd place for his poem is Oliwier Stefanski 8C (Fisher).

Free Fall

The cool flow of the trees
 We're finally free!
 As we all flee, falling
 Feeling the healing wind
 Not having to be dealing with
 A fight for energy.
 Revealing over true colours.
 Orange, makes us look so foreign
 But is there ever any difference?
 The Earth is a storage, carries all over
 Problematic feats, yet feel so free
 Nature never beaten, so sweet
 After the changes of the season
 Soon, it will all be neat
 Hidden beauty of our nature.
 No need for it to be written
 Eyes across the globe, sights already eaten
 Signs of hope, high hopes each November
 It's gleaming orange robes
 Across the slopes, the globe!
 No need to be cross!
 Toss your bags, nobody bossing you around
 Nature's gloss, is this a loss?

Of course not! Comforting force,
 To the wind blowing, no source
 The tree grinned. Sending us away
 Lends us to Mother Nature
 In the end, no need to feel bland!

Free fall, the calls of wind,
 The trees see, with glee
 Set me free, from the tall tree.
 The key to the small me.
 Father't rest, no haul.
 Best of the West, no quest
 Nests visible, no test
 Just believe, we are all free
 I finish my descent
 Cool event though we all vanish
 Accompanying our intents
 United in one pile nothing spent
 Nature lavished us
 Now we diminish space for youngers
 We finally rest
 Knowing a thing to be proud of.
 But what is that? You may say
 So here it is, listen to it
 We have to be fair, near our peers
 We share a fair story
 This cheerful, dear story
 But yet fearful, that is clear
 We stare into the sky in pairs
 No need to care, we all cheer
 Our purpose, solved.
 To preserve nature's stable glory.

Conserving it, our role so special!

All students who entered the challenge received a bookmark, with their name, house, and an extract from their piece on it. Thank you to those who entered.



House Notices: December Competition

SADLER HOUSE CHALLENGE: PSYCHOLOGY

Why Do People Spend So Much Money at Christmas?

Your Task

Use psychology to explain why people often spend more during the Christmas season. Think about the thoughts, feelings, and social pressures that influence our behaviour.

Use these ideas to help You Think

Social Pressure: We feel expected to buy gifts, food, and decorations.

Reciprocity: When someone gives a gift, we feel we should give one back.

Emotional Spending: Nostalgia, excitement, and stress affect how we buy.

Marketing Tricks: Sales, adverts, and "limited time only" offers push us to spend.

Identity & Belonging: We want to show love, generosity, and be part of the tradition.

Your Challenge

Write 150-300 words answering this question:

Why do people spend so much money at Christmas?

Use at least two psychological concepts in your explanation.

You can include real examples from your life, adverts, shops, or family traditions.

Submissions to Mr Smith or emailed to ssmith@ogs.org by Wednesday 17th December



- September – Broughton: Physics (2025)
- October – Fisher: RS/ART (2025)
- November – Hazlitt: English (2025)
- December – Sadler: Psychology (2025)
- January – Wilberforce: Maths (2026)
- February – Broughton: Geography (2026)

- March – Fisher: History (2026)
- April – Hazlitt: Music (2026)
- May – Sadler: Biology (2026)
- June – Wilberforce: Languages (2026)
- July – House Captains: PE (2026)

December's Monthly Challenge – Psychology Challenges across the academic year.

Appointment of our Sports Captains

OPGS appointed 10 excellent candidates as House Sports Captains recently. The process was a vigorous one, and all students who applied for the role conducted themselves excellently through the written application and interview process. It certainly made the Heads of House and Mr Raye's decision a difficult one. In the end we managed to identify the

that they can bring about at OPGS.

New Year 7 Lunchtime Table Tennis challenge.

During the lunch period, our Sports Captains are now running a House Table Tennis competition for our Year 7 students. The challenge we have set is to have a 'House King of the Table' each lunch time. Students will pit themselves against each other (as long as they are not in the same house), with a House trying to maintain control of the table.

Points are awarded for each individual win as well as the house maintaining the longest streak at the table.

The current positions are:

Sadler
Broughton
Hazlitt
Wilberforce
Fisher

| | Yr 7 | Yr 8 | Yr 9 | Yr 10 | Yr 11 | Yr 12/13 |
|--------------------|------------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Broughton | Xavier W C7 | Thomas J S8 | Dexter D T9 | Jakub D T0 | Harry M X11 | Nathan M EJU |
| Fisher | Riley H C7 | Ruben A P8 | Oscar E-B S9 | Ma'ad A T10 | James S T11 | Arthur P RBU |
| Hazlitt | Lochlann O T7 | Jay H S8 | Kiran J S9 | Sanjeev V X10 | Elijah A X11 | Tristan T EJU |
| Sadler | Wilf F C7 | Suhan J C8 | Oscar W S9 | Jayce M-K C10 | Philip H T11 | Dylan W RBU |
| Wilberforce | Ahmed M T7 | Saad A S8 | Jaydon P S9 | Raahil H P11 | Elliot F X11 | Ifan B RBU |

students who we feel will be able to work together in driving Sport forward at OPGS.

The students are:

Broughton: Johan M and George H
Fisher: Samu N and Alphonse S
Hazlitt: Harry K and Olly P
Sadler: Edward B and Adewumi A
Wilberforce: Jude H and Henry C

Their first task has been to oversee the introduction of a new Year 7 table tennis challenge of a lunchtime. They have taken responsibility of organising the competition, collating the results and importantly, engaging the students in the ethos of this new competition.

Next term we will be working together to formulate an action plan on what they feel they can achieve as a group across the remainder of the academic year to support an already excellent Sporting ethos in the school. We look forward to their ideas and changes

Who will be able to break the Sadler dominance?

Overall Current Standings – Whole School:

Total HousePoints

| | Total Points |
|--------------------|--------------|
| Broughton | 7668 |
| Fisher | 7750 |
| Hazlitt | 7654 |
| Sadler | 7519 |
| Wilberforce | 8174 |

The OPGS Literacy Book Advent Calendar 2025

Fourteen students who embody the OPGS principles of kindness, tolerance, and respect have been nominated by their teachers to receive special recognition for their efforts in the run up to the Christmas break.

It has been so lovely to hear a plethora of reasons as to why our teachers believe pupils deserve to receive a book from the Literacy Advent Calendar. All nominees have one thing in common – they consistently strive for excellence. Please see below:

Year 7

Aarav C was nominated for his consistently erudite verbal and written contributions in his analysis of challenging texts in English.

Ben B received his book for always maintaining OPGS standards of excellence in the classroom in form time and beyond.



Year 8

Toby J consistently strives for excellence in his effort and attitude to learning in English.

Ozan T always does what is expected of him in form time, actively reading his book and becoming engrossed in this. He is a pleasure to have in the form, noted his form tutor.

Year 9

Samuel W was described as extremely well mannered, conscientious, and eloquent, showing an interest in current issues and sport. His ability to express himself so clearly about various topics comes from his love of books.

Jayden M strives for excellence through his participation in form time activities, considering alternative perspectives in his answers. Jayden embodies the OPGS fundamental principles as he supports his peers in a range of ways across the school.

Year 10

Rohan D was highlighted by his Director of Study as a pupil who is also incredibly supportive of his peers, whilst also ensuring to





Year 11

Beau G was nominated for his excellent work surrounding his Spoken Language Endorsement on the British Education System. Roman W was noted as having an exceptional work ethic throughout the year, but particularly towards his first set of Year 11 PPEs.

Year 12

Jack N was described as a 'good egg' by his A Level History teacher. He consistently partakes in great discussions, asks insightful, thought-provoking questions, and generally strives for excellence in all tasks set.

Elisabeth T has been described as a well-read student of A Level English Literature. The perceptive analysis she produces in both class discussion and written work is impressive and must be celebrated.

consistently strive for excellence in lesson and around school.

Joseph R was highlighted by his history teacher for having an impressive work ethic, who also embodies the principles of kindness, tolerance, and respect.



Year 13

The perspectives that Jess T offers in her Literature lessons are refreshing, and she has lead feedback on whole stanzas / sections of the text with growing confidence in her own ability.

Ifan B has an impressive amount of cultural and intertextual knowledge surrounding 'Feminine Gospels' by Carol Ann Duffy, also often leading feedback whilst giving illuminating readings of the text.

Happy reading all!

Maths Competition Winners

Four students (Josh, Arthur, Aston, and Marcus) represented the school brilliantly at the first UKMT Senior Team Maths Challenge since the pandemic, impressively scoring the second highest score in the competition. Their outstanding result is a testament to their dedication and hard work in preparation for the competition. The entire school community should celebrate this remarkable achievement, and the team can be extremely proud of their performance.

28 silver (top 16%), and 26 bronze (top 50%) were awarded across the year groups. Particular recognition goes to Year 9 students Dexter, Surya, Noah, and Alex for their bronze achievements, while Year 10's Alfie, Kishan, Ose, and Jakub secured a mix of bronze and silver certificates. Year 11 was strongly represented by Barney, Elliot, and Tamas, all achieving silver, with Isaac progressing to the prestigious British Mathematical Olympiad. Many



The school delivered an exceptional performance in this year's UKMT Senior Maths Challenge, with students tackling demanding out-of-curriculum problems that test critical thinking and problem-solving skills against the country's top mathematical talent. An impressive 14 gold certificates (top 8%),



students also excelled in the Senior Kangaroo, where Elliot, Finley, Leo, Nova, and Sebastian earned bronze certificates, Yancy claimed silver, and Matthew achieved gold. These outstanding results reflect not only remarkable mathematical ability but the dedication and hard work students have invested. Arthur, Marcus, Aston, and Isaac now await their BMO results, and the entire school wishes them the very best of luck. Congratulations to all participants

Model UN Conference

Well done to our 6th Form students who attended the Model UN conference at Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School on Friday and Saturday.

They all performed exceptionally well and it was lovely to see Charlotte and Tomilola achieve recognition as Highly Commended Delegates. Those representing France also were acknowledged as a Highly Commended Delegation. A huge congratulations to Arthur, who was recognised as the Outstanding Delegate! Well done! However, this post would not be complete without us acknowledging Cameron. Whilst he did not achieve formal recognition, he was the only individual to deliver a speech which led to a spontaneous round of applause from the entire assembly. His passion and commitment to the process was inspiring!



MP Helen Grant Visit

On Friday 12th December, Oakwood was fortunate to receive a visit from Maidstone and Malling MP Helen Grant as part of Law and Politics Club.

Students posed challenging and well-articulated questions, demonstrating a strong awareness of current political and legal debates. Ms Grant addressed proposals to scrap the use of juries in certain trials, drawing on her 23 years of experience as a practising solicitor. While she acknowledged the seriousness of court backlogs, she argued that juries play a crucial role in ensuring trials remain fair and impartial and should not be removed.



A significant part of the discussion focused on immigration and human rights. Students explored the dehumanising language often used towards migrants and challenged Helen on the concerns and potential disadvantages of leaving the European Convention on Human Rights. Alongside national policy, Helen also spoke about local issues affecting the constituency, including housing developments in areas such as Kings Hill and West Malling.





The visit provided a valuable opportunity for students to engage directly and personally with their local MP. She responded to all questions with good grace and gave insightful answers, making the session both informative and inspiring for those considering future involvement in politics or law.



Vardy conference

On the 21st of November a group of A-level RS students had the privilege to attend the first part of the conference held by the academic and philosopher Peter Vardy.

This section of the conference would be covering the philosophy aspect of the A-level, meaning that in just 5 hours, he would cover everything from arguments for the existence of God to the question of free will.

The talk was extremely fast paced and efficient- a necessity for covering such large amounts of content in such a small amount of time. While at times it was undeniably difficult to keep up, this pace meant the conference remained constantly engaging and exciting. As I have only recently begun the philosophy course, the majority of the information was completely new to me and therefore caused me to question things I had not yet considered- such as the question of grace- despite this information being



completely new to me, the way Vardy presented was well explained and clear, meaning I did not feel overly lost or confused.

In addition to the topics covered on the specification, Vardy would often intervene with additional information or scholarship that is not tested in the A-level exams.





One thing that stood out to me specifically was his obvious interest in Islamic philosophy. This was interesting to me as my RS education has always highlighted western Christian voices- therefore I had no clue how heavily influenced it was by the Islamic scholars. Topics such as the properties of God were not restricted to Christian understanding but would branch out into the Jewish and Islamic views on the matter. This not only introduced me to fascinating philosophy but also highlighted an important yet underdiscussed community which ultimately left me with a richer understanding of both Islam but also the wider philosophical community and history.

The conference itself took place in a stunning Baptist church, right in the middle of central London. I had walked past the church many times previously and it was amazing to see it from the inside. And although the pews started to be a pain after a couple hours, there could not have been a better location. The positioning in central London also proved convenient at lunch as we were given the liberty of exploring all the food London had to offer.

The afternoon proved even more fast-paced than the morning, ending with a high spirited debate about the relationship between faith and reason. Microphones were littered around the church, with attendants waiting for people to raise their hands and argue their point. It was amazing to hear

from the other schools; all coming from different areas and background gave an incredibly diverse group of opinions and perspectives. However the highlight of the debate was clearly the points made by three different members of our sixth form, who all gave clear and well informed points and were able to deliver these with ease.

Overall the trip was not only an amazing experience, the privilege of hearing from such an accomplished scholar was outstanding, but it also has made me feel much more prepared to tackle the remainder of the course.



Year 12 Politics Students enjoyed a visit to Parliament, while it was in session, on this term's Enrichment Day.

Students were impressed by being so close to the debates in both Houses, especially the Lords which has no screen to separate the public from peers. We heard the lords discussing the recently announced changes in immigration policy and expressing concerns about the conflict it has with existing Human Rights laws.

We also learnt from our excellent guide about the evolution of a British parliament in terms of not only democracy, but also location.



Some students could be heard gasping as we entered the vast Westminster Hall, built by William the Conqueror and virtually unchanged. Was it the history that took away their breath? Or the cold?

After our tour, Year 12 donned rosettes to appear at a husting on behalf of their group's newly formed political party. Manifestos included: scrapping university tuition fees, making Britain self-sufficient agriculturally and abolishing the House of Lords.

(Ssshhhh! They might hear you!)



Remembrance Day

The Year 10 and Year 11 Assembly on the 11th November, led by Miss Aldous and the Sixth Form History Prefects, focused on the impact of the World Wars on young men from Britain and across the globe.

Students learnt about the origins of national remembrance such as the poppy and the Cenotaph. They also heard the words of 'the Last Fighting Tommy' Harry Patch, who never spoke of his experiences in the First World War until he was over 100 years of age. His views on the chaos, trauma and sacrifice the soldiers experienced gave students cause to reflect ahead of our school Remembrance Ceremony at 11am.

A huge thank you to three of our Head Students; Finn, Charlotte and Josh for leading on the whole school remembrance ceremony. It was a special moment and brought the community together in a moment of respect.

However, a special mention must go to Angus, who is in Year 12. Angus has played The Last Post as part of our service for 4 years consecutively. He is an extraordinary talent and wonderful young person. To deliver a note perfect moment of respect in front of over 1000 people was poignant and fitting of the occasion. Thank you,



Spanish Language Enrichment Day

I thought this year's Language Enrichment Day was smashing, and each period was well thought out and engaging for the students. In our first period we relaxed to the Book of Life with Miss Moreira, while picking up lots of information about the social and historical traditions that come from Mexican culture and the Day of the Dead

For instance how strong their belief in the afterlife and a day of judgement on your humanly actions is. Secondly, we embarked on a virtual field trip to Oaxaca in southern Mexico with Mr Baird where we spent time exploring via google maps, researching the weather

at this time of year and finding some of their historical contributions to Dia De Los Muertos, like Monte Alban, an important UNESCO World Heritage Site and temple dating back to 500 BC. Next, we took a more practical lesson in learning how to say some of these new things we had found out in Spanish, led by Miss Cojan. We were able to speak about what we had seen at the temples in the afterlife and how some people celebrate with large and colourful offerings to their loved ones. Following this I thoroughly enjoyed our art lesson with Mr Edwards and Miss Ria where we were divided into different groups and took to using multiple contrasting techniques and tools to create the most wonderful tributes to the Day of the Dead, including my clay skull sculpture with all the requisite features. The exciting day came to an end with Miss Hicks where we wound down by writing poems in a mix of English and Spanish about the Day of the Dead and decorating them to be fit for a proper Ofrenda in Mexico: such a great way to have fun and learn about the world around us.



OPGS Hosts Its First Ever Maidstone Schools Table Tennis Championship

This year marked an exciting milestone for Oakwood Park Grammar School as we proudly hosted the Maidstone Schools Table Tennis Championship for the very first time in term 1.

The event provided an excellent opportunity for our students to test themselves against the strongest players in the district and gain valuable competitive experience ahead of the Kent Championships in term 2. Across all age groups, OP GS players displayed skill, composure and outstanding sportsmanship.

Year 7 Championship: A Dominant OP GS Display

With over 60 students attending trials, enthusiasm for Year 7 table tennis was at an all-time high. Three teams of four were selected to represent OP GS in what became a thrilling and highly competitive tournament. The C team faced a tough group featuring SST B and both Invicta A and B teams. Meanwhile, the A and B teams were drawn together alongside SST A and Hadlow A in Group 2. Strong performances across the board saw both OP GS A and B qualify for the semi-finals, where OP GS A faced OP GS C, and OP GS B took on SST B.

After two well-fought matches, OP GS A and OP GS B progressed to the final, guaranteeing an OP GS winner. The final lived up to expectations, with OP GS A securing victory in a high-quality match.

Congratulations to all the Year 7 students who represented the school with such pride and maturity:

James Dudgeon-Smith, Ryan Steyl, Aadi Das, David Tomuz, Charlie Gibbons, George Green, Max Pearce, Arthur Cuffey, Teddy Down, Finley Jenkins, Archie Smith and George Goad.

Years 8 & 9 Championship: OP GS B Claim a Brilliant Title Win

The Years 8 & 9 competition featured nine teams, including three from OP GS and several from local rivals Maidstone Grammar School.

In Group 1, OP GS B showed exceptional consistency, dropping only two individual matches against MGS A, SST A, MGS B and MGS C. This dominant run earned them a well-deserved place in the semi-finals.

In Group 2, OP GS A and C battled each other to a close 4–4 draw, but both secured victories over SST B and Invicta A to progress to the knockout stages.

The semi-finals brought mixed fortunes:

- OP GS C were defeated by a strong MGS A side.
- OP GS B produced one of the upsets of the day, beating OP GS A to reach the final.





The final—an OPGS versus MGS derby—saw OPGS B produce an outstanding team performance, winning 6–2 and lifting the Years 8 & 9 title in style.

Huge congratulations to the winning team: Suhan Jindal, Simon Townsend, Harry King and Eon Bobby.

Years 10 & 11 Championship: Another All-OPGS Final

The final event of the tournament was the Years 10 & 11 Championship, featuring teams from Invicta GS, Maplesden Noakes and the VIAT schools alongside two OPGS teams.

Both OPGS A and OPGS B made excellent progress through the group stages and knockout rounds, eventually meeting each other in the final—another fantastic achievement for our senior players. In a high-level match showcasing experience,

teamwork and composure, the OPGS A team secured a 6–2 victory to claim the championship title.

Well done to our champions:

Flynn Kemp, Raffaele Andretta, Jakub Druzkowski and Alfie Pearson.

A Successful Championship and a Proud Moment for OPGS

Hosting the Maidstone Schools Table Tennis Championship for the first time was a tremendous success, made even more memorable by the strong performances across all age groups. Our students competed with skill, sportsmanship and determination, earning outstanding results and valuable experience for the season ahead.

OPGS now looks forward to building on this momentum at the Kent Championships in Term 2.



OPGS make history at the U16 Kent Schools Team Table Tennis Championship

Oakwood Park Grammar School enjoyed a landmark day of competition at the U16 Kent Schools Team Table Tennis Championships, entering two strong four-player teams and ending the day with historic success.

'B' Team Show Grit and Determination

The OPGS B team faced a tough opening draw against Hadlow Community College in Round 1 of the Cup, narrowly losing 6–2. There were, however, standout wins for both Archie Spreckley and Ma'ad Salman, the latter making an impressive debut at county level.

Knocked out of the main competition but far from discouraged, the B team launched a spirited run in the Plate. Their quarter-final clash against Skinners B was a nail-biter, ending 4–4 and going to overall points difference. After a tense wait, OPGS were declared winners by just three points, earning a well-deserved place in the semi-final. Their journey ended with a 6–2 defeat to The Howard School, but the team left with their heads held high after an afternoon of resilience and competitive spirit.

'A' Team Deliver Historic Success

The A team began their campaign in style, sweeping aside Judd B with a dominant 7–1 victory. Oliver East, Raffaele Andreatta, and Flynn Kemp all delivered outstanding performances, each winning both of their singles matches.

Next up was a strong Norton Knatchbull GS side. With early wins from Raffaele, Flynn, and Jakub, OPGS led 3–1 at the halfway point. Calm under pressure, Flynn and Raffaele clinched the crucial final wins to secure a 5–3 victory and book a semi-final showdown with Skinners A.

The semi-final was equally tight. Holding a 3–1 lead after four matches, OPGS knew they would need to stay sharp to fend off a Skinners comeback. Brilliant composure from Flynn and Raffaele sealed another 5–3 win—and with it, a place in the three-team final.

A Thrilling Three-Team Final

The final would see OPGS face Rochester Maths

School and a powerful Sevenoaks School team—featuring three players who had won the U13 Kent title in 2024 and finished second nationally. Sevenoaks entered as favourites, but OPGS were ready.

In their first final-round match, OPGS faced Maths School and surged to a 3–1 advantage thanks to wins from Oliver, Raffaele, and Jakub. The second set of matches was tense and fiercely fought, with OPGS holding a narrow 4–3 lead. All eyes turned to Raffaele's deciding match, which went to a third leg. Under immense pressure, he delivered a superb 11–9 win to give OPGS a 5–3 victory.

Sevenoaks then beat Maths School by the same score, setting up a winner-takes-all clash for the Kent title. Though OPGS battled hard—four of the eight matches went to a deciding leg—the experience and depth of the Sevenoaks squad proved decisive as they took a 7–1 win. The scoreline, however, did not reflect how competitive the match truly was.

A Historic Achievement

Despite falling just short of the title, OPGS ended the day with a remarkable accomplishment: for the first time in school history, the A team qualified for the South East Regional Schools Team Table Tennis Championship to be held in Worthing this February.

Special praise goes to Raffaele Andreatta, who won nine matches across the tournament, and Flynn Kemp, who secured six crucial victories.

We now look forward with excitement to February, when our U16 squad will compete in the Individual Championships, eager to build on this unforgettable success.



U13 Table Tennis Squads Impress at Kent Schools Championships

Following the outstanding performance of our U16 squad, the U13A and B teams arrived at the Kent Schools Team Championships with confidence and high expectations.

This year group has rapidly become a powerhouse for table tennis at OPGS, with more than 50 students regularly attending Mr Gillespie's Monday after-school club. Their enthusiasm has already translated into success, with four team members winning the Years 8 & 9 Maidstone Schools Table Tennis Championships competition earlier this term after a memorable win over MGS.

Both squads faced an exceptionally tough



start, drawing the formidable Skinnners' and Judd A teams in the opening round of the main Cup competition. The A team produced some fantastic table tennis throughout their match but were edged out 6–2 in a series of tight, high-quality games. This result moved them into the Plate competition, where they would meet Hadlow Community College's A team.

The B team's opening fixture delivered even more drama. After taking a strong 3–1 lead at the halfway stage against Judd, the opposition rallied, levelling the match 4–4 after the second round of games. What followed was a tense wait as organisers calculated the total points scored by each side to determine the winner. In the narrowest of margins, Judd advanced with a total of 76 points to OPGS's 72, meaning our B team would also head into the Plate competition, opening their campaign against Hadlow Community College's B team.

The OPGS A team responded brilliantly to



victories over Hadlow Community College B and St John's Catholic Comprehensive B to join the A team and last year's U13 Cup champions, Solefields School, in a three-way final.

Both OPGS squads rose to the occasion once again, recording wins against Solefields School to set up a thrilling, winner-takes-all all-OPGS Plate final. After four fiercely contested matches, nothing separated the sides with the score tied at 2–2. With just one match remaining, the B team held a narrow 4–3 advantage. In a nail-biting finish, Simon Townsend kept his composure to edge a tense deciding leg 12–10, sealing a 5–3 victory and crowning the OPGS B team as the U13 Kent Schools Team Plate Competition Champions.

The B team, also featuring Harry King, Suhan Jindal and Eon Bobby performed superbly throughout the day. Huge congratulations also go to the talented A team squad of Tristian Kemp, Bertie Hayward, Jude Body and Jude Higman, who displayed outstanding skill and teamwork from start to finish. This is a truly exceptional year group for table tennis at OPGS, and their future in the Kent Schools competitions looks incredibly bright.

their early Cup exit, producing dominant performances to defeat both Hadlow Community College A and Rainham Mark Grammar School A by emphatic 8–0 scorelines, earning their place in the Plate competition final. The B team matched this excellence, securing convincing



Year 7 Rugby:

Oakwood Park's newest rugby recruits couldn't have asked for a better start to their journey in the Kent Schools Developing Rugby League Competition. Despite only being introduced to rugby in PE lessons this half term, the Year 7 boys have embraced the sport with enthusiasm, determination and an impressive willingness to learn. Their commitment has been clear at Tuesday lunchtime training sessions, where 15–20 players have turned up each week to develop the core skills and game understanding needed to compete.

Their hard work paid off spectacularly in their first ever competitive match: a long away trip to Ramsgate to take on Chatham & Clarendon Grammar School. Any pre-match nerves were quickly swept aside as OPGS burst into action from the first whistle. Their defensive commitment was exceptional—aggressive, brave and unrelenting—while their forward play showed maturity far beyond their short time in the sport. The team worked tirelessly to keep continuity in attack and repeatedly displayed the confidence and creativity to move the ball into space, exploiting gaps in the C&C defence.

The first half was a thriller, with OPGS taking a deserved 20–5 lead into the break. Even more impressively, the boys pushed on again in the second half. Their tackling sharpened further, their physicality increased, and their pressure forced the opposition into mistakes, allowing OPGS to control territory and possession deep in the C&C half. As momentum grew, so did the scoreline, culminating in an outstanding 40–10 victory—an achievement every player should be incredibly proud of.

A special mention must go to Rohan Henwood, Zac Bellhouse, and Noam Rothschild—the latter earning Player of the Match—for setting the standard with their relentless tackling and leadership throughout. Congratulations also to the try scorers: Ryan Steyl, Noah Rekert, Noam Rothschild (2), Zack Bellhouse (2) and Brandon Guilford (2).

Buoyed by such a superb debut performance, the team then took on their next challenge: the Maidstone Schools Rugby Competition, where they once again demonstrated their growing confidence, teamwork, and determination.

Across five matches, the Year 7 squad remained unbeaten, finishing the event with four wins and one draw,





an incredible achievement for a team so new to the sport. Their results were as follows:

- 0–0 draw vs The Malling School
- 3–1 win vs Holmesdale School
- 2–0 win vs Aylesford School
- 4–0 win vs Lenham School
- 5–0 win vs Cornwallis Academy

These performances showcased not only their defensive discipline—conceding just one try all day—but also their creativity and confidence in attack. The team's progress over such a short period has been exceptional, and they should be immensely proud of what they have achieved so far.

If these first competitions are any indication, this is only the beginning of a very exciting rugby journey for our Year 7 squad.

Year 8 Rugby:

The Year 8 rugby squad began Term 2 in outstanding form, carrying confidence from an unbeaten run of victories against Charles Darwin (35–20), Harvey Grammar School (40–30) and St Lawrence College (35–20). With momentum firmly on their side, the team looked forward to testing themselves in the Kent Developing Schools Rugby League.

Sportsmanship Shines in Thrilling Win Over TWGSB
Their first fixture of the term came against Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys. Unfortunately, TWGSB arrived with only 11 players due to injuries and absences. In a fantastic display of sportsmanship, several OPGS players volunteered to join the opposition

to ensure the match could go ahead as a competitive 13-a-side contest. What followed was an exhilarating, end-to-end game featuring an incredible 18 tries. Both sides attacked with ambition, but OPGS eventually pulled ahead to claim a 50–40 victory. Beyond the scoreline, the commitment to fair play and teamwork shown by the boys was a proud moment for the school.

A Gutsy Performance Against a Formidable Gravesend GS Side.

Faced with one of the strongest sides in the competition, the OPGS team rose to the occasion superbly. They opened the match with outstanding defensive intensity and controlled possession through dominant forward play, resulting in several excellent team tries. Despite this, Gravesend GS capitalised on two moments of individual brilliance to level the scores at 20–20 at the break.

OPGS began the second half just as confidently, continuing to control possession and playing the better rugby overall. However, a couple of defensive lapses allowed Gravesend GS to edge ahead 30–20 with just five minutes remaining.

Refusing to give in, OPGS hit back through a determined try from Bertie Hayward, setting up a dramatic finale. The team camped inside the Gravesend half, applying relentless pressure in search of the equalising score, but were narrowly denied as the final whistle blew. A special mention must also go to Hamish Ran-Patabedige who was man of the match with two tries. Although the match ended in defeat, the team can be extremely proud of their performance. They showed commitment, courage, and impressive technical skill

against one of the strongest school sides in the county. Their attitude and determination throughout the game reflect brilliantly on the squad and on OPGS as a whole.

Year 10 Rugby:

The U15s experienced two contrasting performances this week, showing resilience in defeat and determination in victory as they continue their development through the season.

National Cup: Loss vs Tunbridge Wells (7–74)

The team faced a formidable Tunbridge Wells side in their National Cup fixture, ultimately falling 7–74. Despite the scoreline, the boys showed real character throughout the match. Tunbridge Wells demonstrated strong physicality, pace, and organisation, capitalising on errors and controlling territory from the early stages.

Our squad, though under pressure for much of the game, continued to tackle hard and compete at the breakdown. A well-worked team move in the second half earned us a deserved try, which was converted, giving the boys a moment to build on. While the result was tough, it offered valuable lessons in defensive structure, composure under pressure, and maintaining discipline against high-level opposition.

Friendly Fixture: Win vs Chatham & Clarendon (30–19)

The team responded superbly in their next outing, securing a 30–19 victory over Chatham and Clarendon. From the first whistle, the boys showed improved organisation and intent, particularly in the forwards who provided clean ball and strong carries throughout.

The backs utilised this platform well, moving the ball with confidence and scoring several well-constructed tries. Defence was much sharper than in the previous match, with committed tackling and improved communication helping to keep the opposition at bay. Although Chatham and Clarendon mounted pressure late in the game, the team held firm to close out a deserved win.

Across the two matches, the U15s demonstrated the ability to learn quickly and bounce back from adversity. The heavy Cup defeat highlighted areas for improvement, while the strong win later in the term showed what the squad is capable of when playing with confidence and structure. Continued focus on discipline, defensive organisation, and decision-making will help the team build further as the season progresses.

1st XV Rugby:

Oakwood Park 1st XV – Match Report

The Oakwood Park 1st XV have had a challenging but ultimately encouraging period of rugby, featuring two contrasting performances and a pair of weather-affected postponements.

Bennett Memorial (Away) – Loss 75–0

The opening fixture of this block saw Oakwood Park travel to Bennett Memorial, where they met a powerful and well-drilled opposition. Bennett controlled the match from the outset, applying relentless pressure through strong ball-carriers and quick, organised play.

Despite the difficult circumstances, the Oakwood Park players continued to show effort in defence and character throughout the game. The squad battled to the final whistle, taking valuable lessons about physicality, discipline, and structure at 1st XV level. While the 75–0 scoreline was a tough result, it highlighted clear areas for development as the team continues to grow.

Darrick Wood (Away) – Win 42–5

The team responded superbly in their next outing with an impressive 42–5 victory away at Darrick Wood. From the opening exchanges, Oakwood Park looked far more organised and purposeful, controlling possession and territory with confidence.

The forwards laid a strong platform, carrying aggressively and securing clean ball at set-piece and breakdown. This allowed the backs to play with width and tempo, resulting in several well-worked tries. Defensively, the team showed greater resilience and communication, limiting Darrick Wood's opportunities and maintaining control throughout the match.

It was a performance that demonstrated the group's ability to rebound positively and put previous frustrations behind them.

Postponed Fixtures

Scheduled matches against Beths Grammar and Canterbury Academy were postponed due to poor weather conditions. Both games will be rearranged later in the season, offering further opportunities for the squad to continue building momentum.

This period has shown both the challenges and the potential within the 1st XV squad. A difficult opening result was followed by an excellent away performance, highlighting clear progress and a growing sense of cohesion. With key fixtures still to come, the team will look to build on the positives and continue their development as the season moves forward.

Photo from enrichment day



Year 7 Football:

Yr 7 A Team Reach ESFA Last 64 After Stunning Comeback and Cup Triumph

The Year 7 A Team continued their remarkable season with a dramatic comeback victory over Cornwallis Academy followed by an impressive win against Dover Grammar in the fourth round of the ESFA Cup. Their performances have now secured a place among the last 64 teams in England, with a high-profile home tie against Alleyn's School awaiting them on Monday.

The clash with Cornwallis Academy — a strong side coached by Maidstone United staff — began in challenging fashion. Despite a bright start, the Yr 7 A Team found themselves 2–0 down by halftime, with Cornwallis capitalising on their early chances. Lesser teams might have folded, but the Yr 7 squad emerged for the second half with renewed determination and belief.

What followed was one of the most impressive turnarounds of the season. Playing with energy and precision, the team stormed back with five unanswered goals, completely overturning the deficit to seal a memorable 5–2 victory. The performance highlighted their resilience, tactical intelligence, and never-say-die attitude.

Buoyed by that comeback, the team then travelled to face Dover Grammar in the fourth round of the ESFA Cup. Showing maturity and confidence, they produced a disciplined and controlled display to secure the win and book their place in the national last 64.

They now prepare to host Alleyn's School on Monday, with a coveted place in the ESFA Cup last 32 up for grabs. With momentum firmly on their side and belief growing across the squad, anticipation is high for what promises to be an exciting contest.

The Yr 7 A Team's recent performances suggest they are far from finished on their cup journey.

Yr 7 B Team Narrowly Defeated by Simon Langton as Focus Shifts to Maidstone League

The Year 7 B Team were edged out 4–3 by Simon Langton in a thrilling, closely-fought encounter. Despite a valiant effort, the team fell just short, with the match providing plenty of lessons and positives to build on for the rest of the season.

Unfortunately, further fixtures have been cancelled due to adverse weather, limiting opportunities to gain match experience. Combined with exits from both the English Schools Cup and the Kent Cup, the squad now turns its attention to the Maidstone League, where they will compete against other schools' A Teams.

While the cup disappointments are disappointing, the Maidstone League offers the team an excellent platform to measure progress, develop cohesion, and challenge themselves against strong opposition. Coaches are confident that the resilience and commitment shown against Simon Langton will stand the team in good stead for the upcoming league campaign.

The Yr 7 B Team remain motivated and determined to demonstrate their abilities in the league, with plenty of hard work and opportunity ahead this season.

Year 8 Football:

The U13s have shown strong progress and resilience throughout a challenging but promising season. Although the squad have exited both national competitions earlier than hoped, the squad can still take huge pride from several excellent performances. With the Kent Cup and both the Maidstone League and Cup still to play for, the team remains firmly in contention for another extended cup run and will be looking to build on the double-winning success achieved last season.

The season began with real momentum as the boys produced a superb 5–1 away win against Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys in the County Cup first round. This was followed by another commanding performance at home, beating Maidstone Grammar School 6–1 in mid-October. In November, the team showed real character and determination in a dramatic 4–3 extra-time victory away at Borden Grammar School, demonstrating their ability to dig deep in tight matches.

Their National Cup journey highlighted both their quality and their frustration. A dominant 9–0 win over St Martin’s School (Brentwood) in Round 2 looked to have set the tone for a long run in the competition, but a narrow and hard-fought 0–1 defeat to Dover Grammar School for Boys brought an abrupt and unfortunate end to their campaign. A similar story followed in the ESFA competition, where despite a strong performance, they fell 1–3 at home to Redden Court School in Round 4.

Although these national exits were tough to take, the squad know that they need to be bringing their best performances and work ethic to every game. With plenty still to play for and lessons learned from tight matches, the U13s go into the remainder of the season confident, motivated, and hungry to add more silverware to their growing record.

Year 11 Football:

The Oakwood Park Grammar School U16 football team has enjoyed a remarkable first half of the 2025/26 season, maintaining an unbeaten record across all competitions. Entered solely into the Kent Cup and National Cup, the squad has shown outstanding consistency, maturity, and a strong desire to build on the successes of last year.

Their Kent Cup journey has been particularly impressive. The season began with a confident 2–0 victory away at Leigh Academy Rainham, a performance that set the standard for the months that followed. This was followed by a hard-earned 2–1 win against Tunbridge Wells Grammar School for Boys, in a match that tested the team’s character and resilience. Their most recent Kent Cup fixture, a 2–1 home win over The Lenham School, demonstrated their ability to control games and manage key moments effectively. These results take the squad into the Round of 16, where they hope to continue their push toward a second consecutive Kent Cup Final.

The team has shown equal determination on the national stage. A gritty 1–0 win away to Dover Grammar School, while a commanding 3–1 victory at home to Bede’s School in Round 3 highlighted the attacking quality that has become a hallmark of their play. Fighting back from 1–0 down against Bede’s, a crucial strike from Prantor Nath levelled the scores before captain Freddie Gibson forced the ball in from close range after a wicked delivery from the left by Ryan Kent. Nath then turned provider for super-sub Elkan Agyei-Fokuo, who slotted home the third and the celebrations would rival that of Marco Tardelli.

These performances have secured their place among the final 8 teams to progress to the quarter-finals of the Elite Schools Cup, further demonstrating their ability to compete with high-level opposition and maintain high performance across multiple competitions.

What has stood out most this season is the team’s identity. They have combined solid defensive organisation with intelligent, fast-paced attacking football, showing composure in tight fixtures and confidence when in control. The group has matured significantly, blending the experience gained from last season’s success with the energy and enthusiasm of emerging players. Their togetherness and work ethic have been crucial to their unbeaten run and remain the foundation of their current form.

As the season moves into its decisive stages, the U16s are well placed to challenge deeply in all competitions. With momentum on their side and belief growing within the squad, they will be aiming to continue their exceptional progress and make another strong push for county and national honours. It has been a superb start from a team showing both quality and character in abundance.

Year 1st XI Football:

The 2025/26 season has been an outstanding campaign for the Oakwood Park GS 1st XI, who have grown week by week into one of the strongest sides in the U19 league. After a challenging opening to the season, the squad have shown exceptional resilience, character and togetherness, qualities that have placed them firmly in the race for the U19 league title with just two games remaining. A runners-up finish also remains a strong possibility, demonstrating how competitive and consistent the team have become.

The early setback of a 3–1 defeat away to Maidstone GS on the opening day could easily have derailed momentum, but instead it sparked a reaction. A superb 3–1 win over Norton Knatchbull was followed by a dominant 4–0 victory against Queen Elizabeth’s GS. Although the team exited the National Cup in a narrow 3–2 loss to Simon Langton, the performance proved they could compete with any side in the county.

From 3rd October onwards, the squad went on a remarkable unbeaten run in all competitions, seven matches without defeat, winning six and drawing just one. This period has been the backbone of the season and reflects the outstanding commitment and mentality of the players. Key results included

a gritty 3–2 win over Borden GS, an excellent 3–0 win away at Chatham & Clarendon, and a sensational 7–2 home victory over Dane Court. There were also two strong County Cup displays, defeating Ravens Wood 5–0 and Wrotham 4–0 to progress confidently in the competition.

The team's success has been underpinned by a fantastic attitude across the entire squad. The commitment levels remained consistently high, and the unity within the group has been exceptional. This has been led brilliantly by captain Josh Bruce, whose leadership both on and off the pitch has driven performances and ensured the team set ambitious but achievable standards.

As the league table stands, Oakwood Park sit in 3rd place, with a game in hand over the two teams above them. A strong finish could see the side climb into the top two, and with fixtures still to play

against Dover GS and Harvey GS, the opportunity to push for the league title remains very real. With only four points separating OPGS from top spot and six points still available it is a challenge that feels very much within reach.

On top of this, the squad remain alive in the Kent Cup, giving them the chance to compete for silverware on two fronts. While achieving a league and cup double may once have seemed unlikely, their form and spirit this season prove that it is improbable but definitely not impossible.

Whatever the final weeks bring, this has already been a season to be proud of. The players have demonstrated maturity, determination and quality across both league and cup fixtures. With two massive matches still to come, the team are ready to finish strongly and give themselves every chance of making history.

Year 9 House Sports Enrichment Day

On Thursday 20th November the PE department ran a Year 9 House Sports Competition as part of the schools enrichment day programme.

This always provides a great opportunity for students to represent their school house, play competitive sport and utilise qualities such as

sportsmanship and teamwork. A new format was used where each house selected three squads that each played table tennis, handball, basketball & football throughout the day.

In the first morning session Wilberforce won the basketball competition, Broughton the table tennis competition, Broughton the Handball competition and Sadler the Football competition, leaving the





standings as follows:

- Broughton- 300 points
- Sadler- 300 points
- Fisher- 240 points
- Hazlitt- 200 points
- Wilberforce- 160 points

In the second session Broughton won the basketball, Hazlitt the table tennis, Broughton the football and Handball competitions, leaving the overall standings as follows:

- Broughton- 640 points
- Sadler- 600 points
- Hazlitt- 460 points
- Fisher- 420 points
- Wilberforce- 280 points

Could Broughton hold onto their lead from Sadler House in the final session of the competition?

In the final session of the competition Broughton won table tennis, Hazlitt the basketball and football competitions, leaving the final standings for the

Year 9 House Sports Competition as follows:

| Position | House | Points |
|-----------------|-------------|--------|
| 1 st | Broughton | 940 |
| 2 nd | Sadler | 820 |
| 3 rd | Hazlitt | 760 |
| 4 th | Fisher | 560 |
| 5 th | Wilberforce | 520 |

A huge well done and thank you to everyone who took part in the Year 9 House Sports Competition. It was fantastic to see so many of you representing your houses with such teamwork, respect, effort, and sportsmanship throughout the event.

Leo Shines on the International Stage for Team England

Oakwood Park Grammar School is incredibly proud to celebrate the outstanding achievements of Leo Trandaburu, who represented Team England at his first ever international gymnastics competition in Greece from 7–9 November.

Competing against athletes from countries including Singapore, Greece, Slovenia, Cyprus, Hungary, and several others, Leo rose to the occasion and delivered a series of exceptional performances. This event also gave him the chance to reconnect with England squad gymnasts he trains alongside three times a year, as well as making new friends from around the world. An unforgettable experience on and off the competition floor!

Leo's results were nothing short of remarkable. He was crowned Pre-Youth 13 International Champion, taking 1st place overall in his category.

His success continued across individual apparatus, where he achieved:

- 2nd – Floor
- 2nd – Pommel

- 6th – Rings
- 1st – Vault
- 2nd – Parallel Bars
- 2nd – High Bar

With seven international medals in total, Leo also played a crucial role in securing Team England's 2nd place finish, contributing scores on five out of six apparatus.

Although tight travel schedules meant he could not attend Sunday's closing ceremony to receive the final set of medals, these will be sent to the UK and formally presented to him and his teammates at their next England training camp in January 2026.

For those interested in seeing Leo's performances, his routines have been recorded and are available to view online.

Congratulations, Leo, on an extraordinary international debut. Your dedication, talent, and composure have made the entire OPGS community immensely proud. We can't wait to see what you achieve next!



Maidstone District X Country Championships

In October, a group of 45 students from Years 7 - 11 attended the schools' annual cross-country competition at Mote Park. This is traditionally an event OPGS dominates, and we returned this year as defending champions across some of the age groups. Wanting to try and maintain our dominance, many of the participants had been joining Ms Carlisle at the weekly running club.

All who participated enjoyed the experience and, ran with maximum effort. The three challenging distances, suited to the differing age groups allowed the runners to show Ms Carlisle how well they had prepared. Among the many determined runners, there were some outstanding performances from the different squads, whose efforts stood out amongst the runners. In the Year 7 event, Gus S ran amazingly to come in 7th overall in his first experience of this event. The Junior event (Yr8&9 combined) saw us enter two separate squads for the first time, providing more opportunity for our students. This was a great event with Zach W and Josh E battling it out first and second overall, Jayden P ran an amazing first race coming in 6th not far behind the winning group. The stand out performance for this age group was Thoms J, a Year 8 student who have been dedicated to improving his running and he came home in 9th overall. A great

showing from our Junior squad. The Senior squad, a little lower in numbers due to injury and illness on the day, saw 6 runners enter the competition. Freddie G ran an amazing race, lapping a couple of the other competitors on his way to a strong win. He was supported well by Marli C and Kian T who came home in 10th and 11th place.

Between races, some of the boys entertained themselves by playing around with piles of leaves, while others made attempts to support other runners from different locations around the route.

It was a fantastic afternoon. Well done to all those who participated and a big thanks to all those parents who came to Mote Park to support the boys.

We must congratulate the following students as they have been selected to represent the Maidstone Schools' District Cross Country Squad at the County event in January 2026.

Archie G, Ben C, Dylan W, Freddie G, Gus S, Jaydon P, Josh E, Kian T, Lewis H, Luciana S, Marli C, Ruben D, Thomas J, and Zach W.

This is a great opportunity to showcase OPGS talent in the wider county events.

Congratulations to the students who won awards in the recent celebration of achievement assemblies



The Science Edit: An Update and What's Next

Earlier this year, we launched The Science Edit, the podcast developed within the Science Department to support students' understanding of science beyond the classroom. Since then, the project has continued to grow, with nine episodes now live and a widening range of themes being explored.

The podcast has developed into a space where students can engage with science in an accessible way. Several episodes focus directly on GCSE and A-level success, including common misconceptions, revision strategies, exam technique, and why students often lose marks despite knowing the content. These episodes are designed to complement classroom learning and help students feel more confident in how they approach assessments, particularly extended answers and unfamiliar questions.

A recent highlight has been the Science of Christmas episode, which looks at the science behind festive traditions. It explores everything from food and snowflakes to biological adaptations and seasonal myths, showing students how science connects to everyday life in engaging and unexpected ways. This episode has been particularly enjoyable to record and has sparked lots of informal discussion.

One of the most valuable aspects of The Science Edit has been the contribution of students and colleagues. Sixth form students have featured in several episodes, offering honest perspectives, thoughtful questions, and reflections on studying science at a higher level. Their involvement has added real depth and authenticity to the podcast, and I would like to thank them sincerely for giving their time and ideas.

I would also like to thank all those who have supported the podcast so far, whether through contributions, encouragement, sharing episodes, or simply listening. Projects like this grow through collective support, and that has been very evident this year.

Looking ahead, the next stage of The Science Edit will focus on expanding the careers strand of the podcast. While medicine is often the most visible pathway discussed with students, there are many other science-based careers that are less well understood but equally rewarding. I would be very keen to hear from parents or members of the school community



who work in science related fields and might be willing to take part in an interview. These conversations are informal and focused on helping students understand real routes into science, the nature of different roles, and the skills that matter most.

The podcast is now available across all major platforms, including Spotify, Apple Podcasts, Amazon Music, and YouTube. Short clips and updates are also shared on Instagram. Links to all platforms can be found via the podcast Linktree: linktr.ee/thescienceedit



If you have enjoyed listening or know someone who might find the podcast useful, please do consider sharing it or recommending it to others. Continued support helps ensure the podcast reaches students who can benefit most from it.

Thank you again to everyone who has contributed to The Science Edit so far this year. I am very proud of how the project has developed and excited about the direction it is taking next.

Miss Limer

Y13 Battle of Ideas Festival

On Saturday 18th October, Ms Rose took a group of Y13 students to Westminster to attend the Battle of Ideas Festival 2025.

The Battle of Ideas Festival features a range of events, talks and debates on diverse topics as part of its programme, allowing students to truly find something for them. A highlight was seeing how engaged OPGS students were in each session they attended, raising their hand and asking questions in rooms of academics, politicians, and more.

“At the Battle of Ideas festival, the session on old political parties showed how Britain’s main parties have hollowed out and lost the trust of the people they’re meant to represent. What stood out most was that every discussion we went to ended up

pointing to the same problem. That the shared foundations that once held society together are weakening.”



On Thursday, we left really early at 6.30, everyone was on time and excited! We got to the Shuttle terminal on time and got all our passports checked without any issues which was a relief! The crossing went really smoothly and it is so quick, it is amazing.

Once in France, it was all grey and wet, just like in Maidstone. Our first stop was at La fabrique de Nougat, where we saw Nougat being made and we even tried it- it was really interesting and delicious. Many of us bought some because it was so lovely. But it was time to eat...we were desperate to get some proper food! So, we left for Lille and arrived at the Westfield centre where there were many shops including a Carrefour supermarket where most of us found a lovely sandwich and some pastries to buy. After, we headed to the Christmas market, and we quickly spotted the Ferris Wheel- it looked like fun and we all wanted to try! First, we went to the Christmas market; there were so many food stalls- churros, waffles, pancakes, raclette potatoes, mulled wine and a magic stall- a few of us bought some magic thumbs. There was also a Christmas hat shop and a lot of us



bought a Christmas hat to get into the Lille spirit. The Ferris Wheel did not disappoint- it was fun and it was a great view of Lille too. About 6.30, we gathered up by the main square and we went to the restaurant in Le vieux Lille, the cobbled narrow streets were beautiful especially with all the shops decorated. The meal was lovely, the service was a bit slow but it was lovely to sit down for a warm meal. The next exciting moment was the hotel, discovering our rooms. We finally got to Hotel EKLO at 9.30, The hotel looked like on the pictures- modern and practical. We all settled down in our rooms, chose our beds, decided who would go for a shower first and we talked, but it had been a full long day so we quickly decided to go to sleep. On Friday, we were woken up at 7 to get ready for breakfast. Wow! It was a great spread: croissants, pains au chocolat, brioche, pommes-potes, yaourts, oeufs durs, céréales, jus de fruits, thé, café ou chocolat chaud! Everyone had a fantastic breakfast, it was amazing. We left for Lille about 9 and went to visit La Chocolaterie Lautrec in the old Lille, We tried different chocolates and the guide explained the difference and explained how to make good quality chocolate. I really enjoyed this visit and tasting different chocolates, it was certainly different from the usual chocolate I buy



in the shops in Maidstone. I couldn't resist and bought some chocolates for my family. We walked in the vieux Lille afterwards to look at the Flemish architecture and we admired the different styles in the cathedral: gothic and minimalistic, such a contrast! We were all treated to a warm lunch, a portion of chips from La Friterie, which is very popular in northern France, this was a welcome lunch as it was raining and cold. We retreated to le Centre Commercial as more rain was forecast, and it allowed us to spend a bit of time with

our friends exploring French shops and Carrefour. Sadly, it was almost the end of our French adventure, as we had to head back to England. It was a great trip to France and I enjoyed every minute of it! Vive Noël.

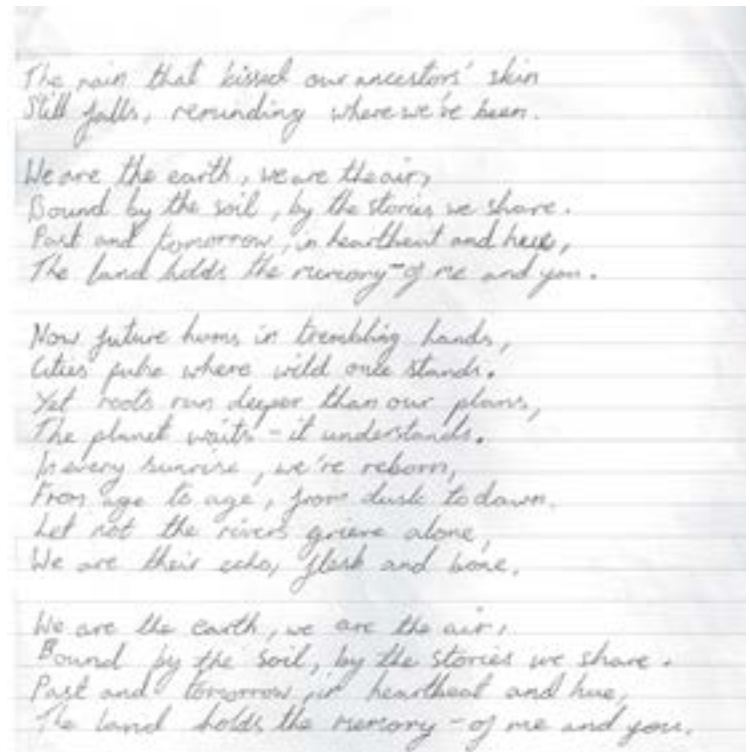
Anyone who was not in the festive mood before they left for the trip was certainly feeling extra-festive after a visit to the Christmas market. Thank you to the staff who made this trip possible.



This term, in English, Year 8 have been exploring poems from other cultures and traditions. This has looked at sensitive topics of identity and belonging, with a keen focus on hearing from a range of different poetical voices.

The students were tasked with performing their own poetry pieces in small groups. This was an opportunity for some to partake in a national competition, run by the Poetry Society and the National Trust.

The Challenge: Write a poem about our shared history and future with the landscapes we inhabit. Shannon Hogan from the National Trust says, "It is so important for us to amplify and understand young people's voices and relationships to their own landscapes and environments, to help us shape the future of our own organisation and principles. We hope this challenge provides the creative opportunity for young people to express



their own connections to history and nature, which in turn will help us learn more about the role we can play in supporting and fostering that connection now and for future generations."

With the deadline being at the end of December, we have yet to learn if our entries were successful, but the potential prizes include that the winners will be published on Young Poets Network and sent prizes such as poetry ebooks, posters and National Trust goodies.

With the themes of identity and place, can you write your own poetry on these topics?

CHECKLIST FOR SUCCESS:

- Striking 1st line
- Satisfying ending: a final thought/ hope for the future
- Emotive language; extended similes, metaphor, personification
- Compelling verbs and adjectives to convey a sense of self
- Repetition - as a chorus - (structural repetition) between verses; or as a cyclical structure at beginning and end
- Can you link your sense of identity to a particular place? Culture?

