



## Back to Back Kent Cup Winners

Dear Students, Parents and Carers

Term 5 is traditionally known as a 'short term' but the school has managed to pack a great deal into it. This term has had it all. Excitement, emotional, intrigue, enquiry, mastery and exploration. We have said goodbye to the Year 11 and the Year 13 cohort but said hello to local primary students coming in for grammar school experiences. We have tasted success in terms of the Year 8 football team and faced the challenge of house competitions. We have celebrated our students individual successes and come together as a community to reward those who have excelled.

@ Oakwood brings all of those experiences into one place and as I read over the magazine for the 5th time this academic year I am filled with a sense of absolute pride. What this school community manages to pack into a term is nothing short of exceptional. Thank you to all the staff that makes the pages of the magazine a lived experience for our students and well done to every student who is featured within the pages of it.

Strive and Serve



Mrs S Craig  
Headteacher

STRIVE

AND

SERVE



# Back-to-Back Cup Double

Oakwood Park Grammar School's U13 football team have written themselves into the history books after securing an outstanding cup double for the second consecutive year, winning both the Kent Cup and the Maidstone Cup in back-to-back seasons.

Their latest triumph came on the Saturday of the May bank holiday weekend at Herne Bay FC's stadium, where they overcame a very strong Hurstmere side 3-2 in a thrilling Kent Cup final. Hurstmere, boasting six academy players, provided a formidable test, but Oakwood's resilience and character once again proved the difference.

The achievement reflects not only the quality of the players, but also the commitment shown throughout the season by both the squad and their families. Giving up a bank holiday weekend to represent the school is a clear demonstration of the values of Strive and Serve that run through the team.

Oakwood Park started the game brightly and took a deserved lead in the 15th minute when Sonny Dinning found space in the box and fired home confidently. Hurstmere responded well, growing into the game and using their physical presence to good



effect. After an excellent save from goalkeeper Jude Body, the rebound was followed up and slotted in from close range to bring the sides level.

With the teams going into the break at 1-1, Hurstmere struck again early in the second half. A hopeful ball into the box caused problems and resulted in their second goal, giving them a 2-1 advantage.

However, this Oakwood side has built a reputation for their determination, and once again they refused to be beaten. Trailing with just 12 minutes





remaining, they rallied impressively. The equaliser came through a moment of quality on the left wing, as Joey French drove at the Hurstmere defence, powered his way to the byline, and picked out an unmarked Andreas Koffas, who calmly tapped home.

With both teams pushing for a winner, the final moments were played at a frantic pace. It was Oakwood who found the decisive breakthrough. Koffas again found himself through on goal, and as the goalkeeper and defender scrambled to intervene, the ball broke loose just outside the area. Showing composure beyond his years, he fired home to complete a dramatic turnaround.

The Oakwood bench erupted in celebration, and the team held firm through the closing stages to secure a memorable 3–2 victory and lift the Kent Cup once again.

Just three days later, the squad were back in action for another final – a repeat of last season’s Maidstone Cup against a strong Wrotham side.

Once again, Oakwood showed their intent from the outset, starting aggressively and believing they had taken an early lead when Sammy Nwogu calmly finished off a sweeping move, only for the assistant’s flag to rule it out for offside.

Undeterred, Oakwood continued to press, although Wrotham remained a threat on the counter attack throughout. The breakthrough eventually came when Sonny Dinning found the back of the net to give Oakwood a deserved 1–0 lead at half time.

In the second half, Oakwood moved through the gears. Midfielders Bertie Hayward and Daniel Ayoubi controlled the tempo superbly,

while Costa Adrianovs marshalled the defence with authority. The introduction of Ese Makelemi and Logan Laird added further energy and attacking intent, pinning Wrotham back in their own half.

The pressure soon told, as Oakwood produced a dominant second-half display, scoring five more goals to run out 6–0 winners and secure a remarkable second consecutive league and county

*The equaliser came through a moment of quality on the left wing,*

cup double.

In a relentless second half performance goals came from Ese Makelemi (2), captain Jude Higman, Andreas Koffas, and Costa Adrianovs who also earned the Player of the Match for his outstanding all-round display.

Speaking after the game, teacher Mr Smith praised his players' resilience and attitude: "This group of boys really do not know when they are beaten. They are an absolute pleasure to coach, and they fully deserve the recognition for achieving a historic double-double. The challenge for them now is to try to emulate the previous Oakwood Park golden generation by reaching and winning a National Cup, which is an incredibly tough ask, but with this group, the sky is the limit."

This latest success confirms Oakwood Park Grammar School U13s as one of the standout school teams in the county, combining talent, resilience and a strong team ethos to achieve a historic run of success that will be remembered for years to come.



# Goodbye Class of 2026

Class of 2026 dressed in their old school uniform for their final assembly on their last day in compulsory education. It was fair to say that they broke all the uniform rules and thoroughly enjoyed graffitiing all over each other's shirts.

The assembly began with students applauding photos of themselves and their peers on their first day at primary school. Most had changed so much that they needed to stand up for us to identify them. Others had not changed at all (Stuart Kennedy). Head Students took over at that point to reveal



the results of the ballot on student awards. There were highly academic awards such as 'The Most Likely to Cure Cancer' (Nathan Peake), some prestigious awards such as 'Most Likely to Become Prime Minister' (Arthur Pavey) and some heart-warming awards like 'Most Inspiring Pupil' (Chris Asher). Some awards were not befitting of a grammar school: 'Most Likely to Be Working at McDonalds for the Rest of Their Life' went to the A\* student Liefer McNabb, and 'Most Likely to Be a Vigilante' went to Head Student Charlotte Tanner. Sixth Formers had also voted for staff awards. Several teachers gathered hopefully in the Hall with expectations of winning some recognition for their dedication. They were soon to be disappointed as it was almost a clean sweep by Head of Year 13 Mr Mayes who walked away with all the awards worth winning. He thanked his year by

*some heart-warming awards like 'Most Inspiring Pupil'*

reminding them of all the times he had had to come to their aid, whether it be to track down students hiding in the common room from Mr Turley (Most Sarcastic Teacher) or helped them explain why they were unable to complete their Biology assignment to Ms Limer (Most Strict Teacher). The



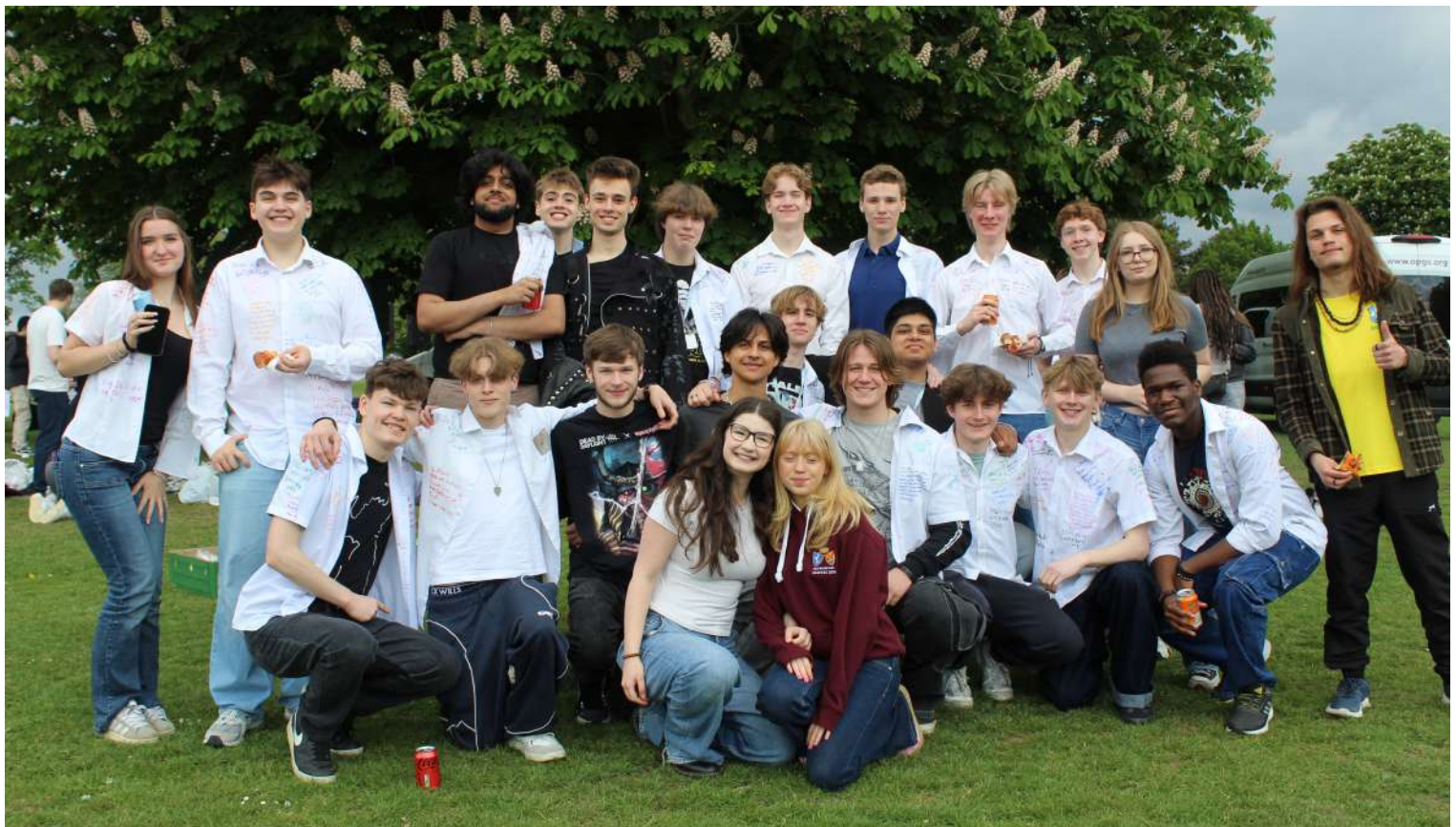


then attempting the bouncy castle obstacle course or 4 rounds of the football tournament on a full stomach. Mr Mayes catered to the needs of Gen Z by ignoring the instructions of Ms Hern (Director of Sixth Form) to provide 'cakes and crisps'. He made sure that students were provided with plenty of fruit, which the students were keen to consume.

year thanked him with a huge round of applause. Ms Craig wished them a heartfelt farewell and praised them for the way they have risen to the challenges of adulthood.

Leavers' Day is a charmed time. It sits at the end of seven years of school life and at the beginning of the examination period. It is the last time that the students will be together as a cohort, before they go their separate ways. As students drifted away across the field, clutching their year books and leavers' hoodies, they stopped to hug one another and to exchange a final insult, before heading separately into their futures.

Students made their way onto the fields to enjoy their Pizza Party, which involved choosing 4 slices from 6 different types of freshly delivered pizza and







# Year 11 Leavers' Breakfast

The Year 11 Leavers' Breakfast was a perfect send-off, filled with laughter, nostalgia, and heartfelt goodbyes. Held in the school hall, the morning began with the delicious smell of an English breakfast and cartons of orange juice as students gathered to celebrate the end of an unforgettable journey. It was a rare moment where everyone could just sit back, relax, and reflect on their chapter through secondary school — from nervous Year 7s to confident young adults preparing to face their upcoming exams.



As everyone took their seats, the atmosphere was a mix of excitement and emotion. Teachers joined in the celebration, offering their congratulations and sharing laughs with us students who had grown so much over the past five years. The highlight of the morning was undoubtedly Mr Devonald's slideshow, which brought roars of laughter and plenty of cringing. Embarrassing pictures of us as awkward Year 7s appeared on screen — from disastrous haircuts and oversized blazers to wide-eyed faces on trips and class projects. While we groaned at some of the images, it was a beautiful reminder of how far we've come and how those early, clumsy





moments shaped the people we are today.

The event continued with speeches from members of staff and the Head of Year, who each took time to reflect on the past five years at Oakwood Park. Their words were filled with pride and encouragement. They recalled memorable moments — school trips, sports victories, classroom antics, and the unique personalities that made this year group so special. Teachers spoke honestly and warmly about how much we had matured and how they genuinely wished us success in the upcoming exams and beyond.

Throughout the morning, one message rang clear:



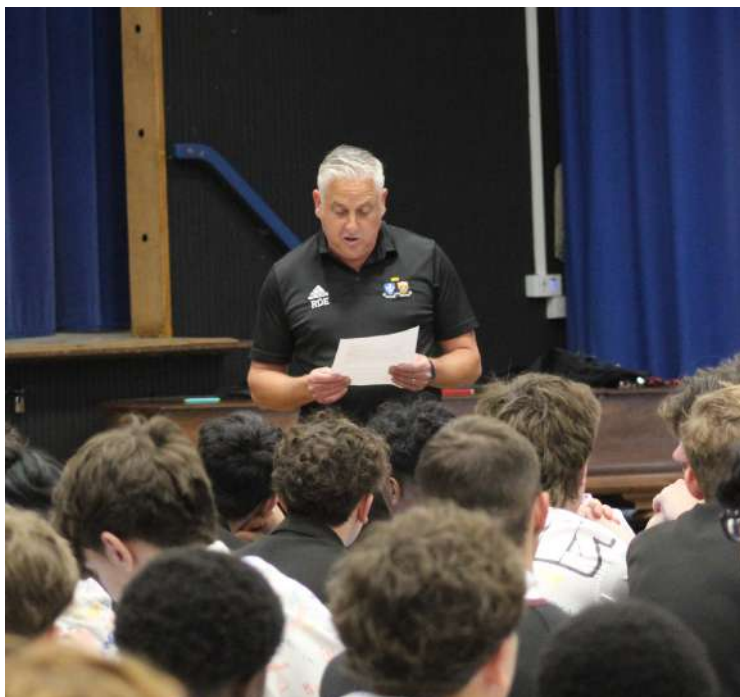
we are ready. The staff reminded us that while exams are important, they don't define us. What matters more is the resilience we've built, the friendships we've formed, and the support we have from those around us. They encouraged us to stay focused, do our best, and take pride in everything we've achieved so far.

As the event drew to a close, the laughter gave way to a few tears and long hugs between friends and teachers. The Leavers' Breakfast wasn't just about saying goodbye — it was about marking a transition.



It celebrated everything we've done, acknowledged the challenges ahead, and reminded us that we leave not just as students, but as a close-knit community ready to take on the future but always that we can be proud of what we achieved during our fun filled time at OPGS.

With our GCSEs ahead and the next chapter just around the corner, we left with full stomachs, full hearts, and the confidence to go forward.





# WSL Referee Training Inspires Year 8

Ten of our Year 8 Sport Captains recently took part in an exciting WSL Referee Training session, gaining valuable insight into the “art” of refereeing from one of the very best in the game.

The session began with students developing their whistle skills and learning the importance of using the whistle effectively during matches. From clear communication to varying the tone and strength of the whistle, students quickly discovered how referees use these skills to manage games confidently and fairly.



The training then moved on to understanding the key principles expected of a referee. Students were encouraged to think about positioning, movement, communication and decision-making, all essential qualities of an effective official.

Practical scenarios were set up throughout the afternoon, allowing each student the opportunity to referee game situations themselves. Individual feedback was provided after each scenario, helping students to refine their

***allowing each student the opportunity to referee game situations themselves.***



approach and grow in confidence.

Following the training, the students worked together to create a set of key reminders for referees. These will now be shared with other student referees who will officiate at the upcoming primary school tournament during OPGS Volunteering Day.

## OPGS Referee Reminders

- Be confident in your approach
- Communicate clearly to players
- Use variation in your whistle – how do players know the severity?
- Position yourself approximately 10 yards from play
- Make sure you are moving around
- Explain decisions to the players

The training proved to be a fantastic opportunity for our students to develop leadership, communication and decision-making skills in a sporting environment. We hope this is an opportunity that can continue and grow in the future.

# Ben Curd Makes Waves at Regional Swimming

Year 8 student Ben Curd has enjoyed an outstanding run of success at the recent Regional Swimming Championships, delivering a series of exceptional performances and personal bests that have firmly established him as one of the country's most promising young swimmers.

Competing across two championship weekends, Ben demonstrated remarkable determination, consistency and talent in both freestyle and backstroke events.

During the first weekend of competition (25–26 March), Ben produced excellent results in the freestyle events. In the 50m freestyle, he recorded a new personal best of 27.96 seconds, progressing to the final where he finished an impressive 7th overall. He followed this with another personal best in the 100m freestyle, clocking 1:01.10 and once again reaching the final to secure 7th place.

Ben also competed in the demanding 200m freestyle, setting yet another personal best time of 2:15.93 and

narrowly missing out on a place in the final by just one position.

What makes these performances even more remarkable is the progress Ben has made over the past year. At last year's championships, he did not qualify for any freestyle events, highlighting the incredible dedication and improvement he has shown in such a short space of time.

***Ben reached the final in every race and delivered a medal-winning performance***

However, it was the second championship weekend that proved truly exceptional.

Competing in all three backstroke events — 50m, 100m and 200m — Ben reached the final in every race and delivered a medal-winning performance that placed him among the very best swimmers in the British Isles for his age group.

Ben was crowned Regional Champion in the 50m backstroke, winning gold with a sensational new personal best of 30.61 seconds. This achievement now ranks him 2nd in the entire British Isles. He then secured a silver medal in the 100m backstroke, missing out on gold by the narrowest of margins — just 0.3 seconds — while setting another personal best of 1:06.70. This performance places him 6th in the British Isles rankings.

In the 200m backstroke final, Ben finished 4th despite having only a short recovery time between the heats and final. Nevertheless, he still produced an outstanding new personal best of 2:24.78, once again ranking him 6th in the British Isles.

As a result of these superb performances, Ben has now qualified for the National Championships in July, where he will compete in both the 100m and 200m backstroke events.

Everyone at the school is incredibly proud of Ben's achievements. His hard work, resilience and commitment to training have been rewarded with tremendous success, and we look forward to following his journey at the national championships later this year.



# Turner Contemporary Art Trip

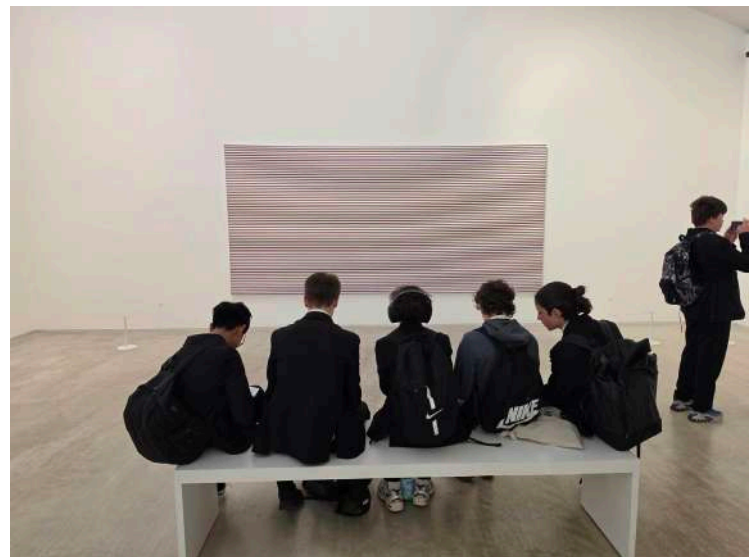
On the 29th April, the Art department took year 8 students to the Turner Contemporary at Margate during the enrichment day. We travelled by train to Margate and after a short walk from the station along the beach we arrived at the Turner Contemporary Gallery. We had a short talk about the gallery and the incredible artwork in the foyer by David Hockney: A huge digital landscape painting that had been overlaid onto the window looking out over the sea, flooding the hall with colourful light.

After spending time admiring the artwork, we went up into the main gallery to explore the exhibition by Bridget Riley. Students investigated the optical artists work, which included a range of huge wall

decals and canvas exploring shape, form, colour and motion.

The last room in the gallery housed a beautiful oil painting by Turner giving the students an understanding of the Gallery's name. Students





spent time writing about the artwork and drawing their favourite pieces as well as the views from the gallery's balcony.

After lunch by the sea, students engaged in drawing tasks as we slowly made our way back to the train station for the journey home, but before jumping on the train, students had a chance to buy a cheeky ice cream or donut by the sea. The Art department was incredibly impressed with students' excellent behaviour; engagement with the day and the work they produced.

# Sixth Form Celebration of Achievement

Staff were delighted to see the return of many of the students from the Class of 2025 for our Celebration of Achievement ceremony. Students and their parents joined teachers and Ms Craig to award A level certificates and congratulate students on their hard work. Some students were nominated by their teachers for a Subject Prize which was awarded by Ms Hern and Ms Craig.

It was wonderful for OPGS staff to catch up with their students after they had spent almost a year





at university or in their apprenticeships. We get an insight into how well we have prepared them for their courses and for life beyond school. For the students, they have the opportunity to reconnect with their classmates and to swap stories of their time at OPGS. It is always sad to bring the evening to a close, but lovely to see students reconnecting as they plan an evening out together in Maidstone, before returning to university for their end of year exams.





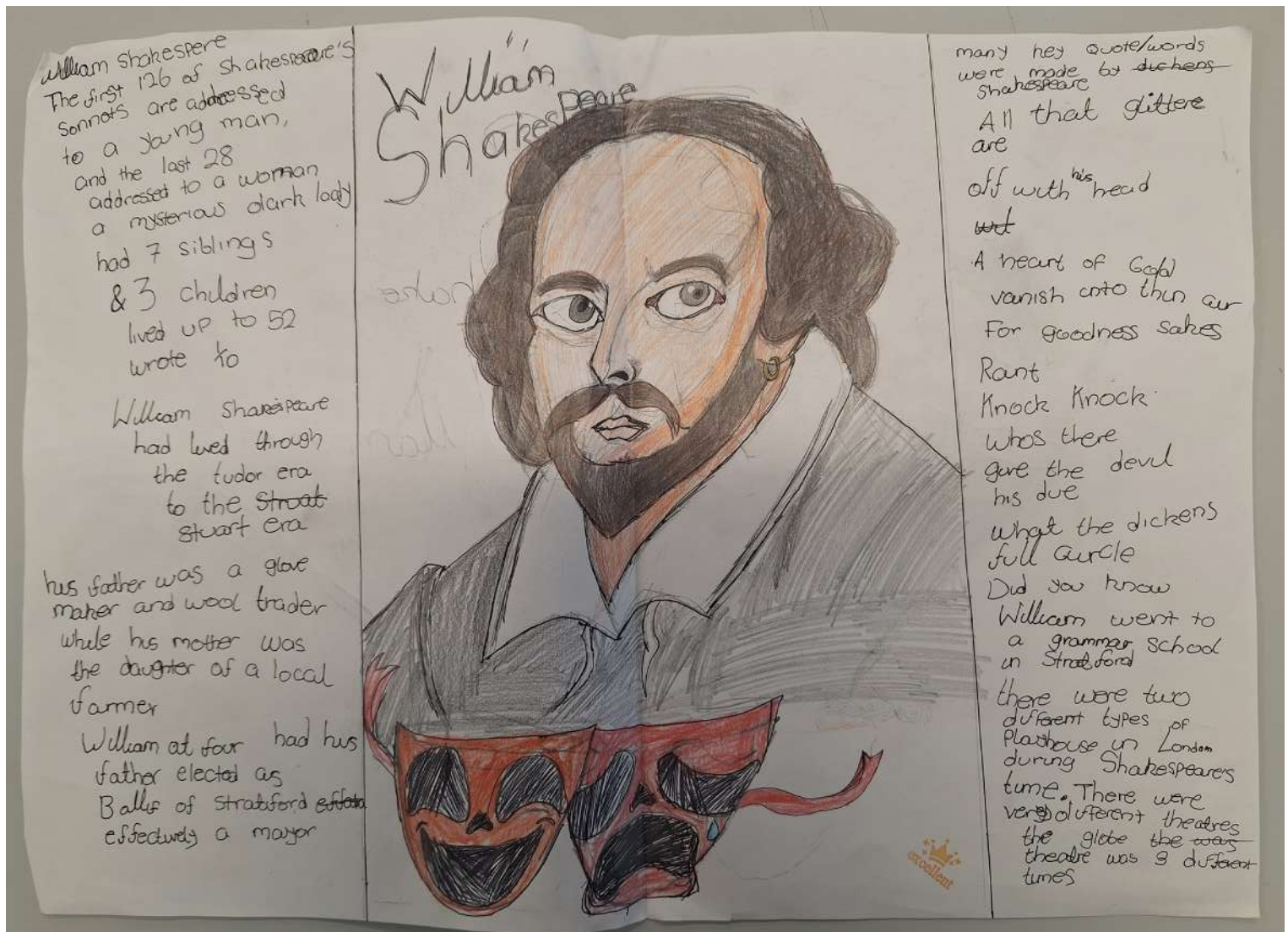
# Shakespeare Leaflets

Elizabethan England was very different from the world we live in today. In English, we know how much the contextual influences of a work can have a great bearing on how key themes and characters are portrayed.

As a cornerstone of the curriculum, we study Shakespeare every year at Oakwood: in Year 8 we study Much Ado About Nothing, in Year 9 Macbeth and at GCSE Romeo and Juliet. But in Year 7, rather than focus on just one play, students are exposed to a broader variety, so they can really understand the significance of the bard himself, as well as how he developed Renaissance theatre, as a wordsmith, a playwright and dramatist himself. As a result, to get to grips with both the linguistic and cultural impact Shakespeare had to the literary canon, students were tasked with devising their own information leaflets (taking the skills from last



term's non-fiction unit) to introduce themselves to Shakespeare. Students had to consider key words and phrases invented by him, the differences between the genres of comedies, histories and tragedies, gender expectations, class difference and the legal and social attitudes to theatre. They did exceptionally well to create some interactive, engaging and well researched informative pieces that have sparked a curiosity into this era which we hope to address across the course of the term.



# 1st XV End of Season Report 2025–2026

The 2025–2026 season marked the end of the first year under Cameron Parker as Lead Coach for the Oakwood Park Grammar School 1st XV. It has been a hugely positive season for the squad, with a full pre-season programme, regular training sessions, and the highest number of fixtures completed by an OPGS rugby side in many years. Throughout the campaign, the development of the squad, both individually and collectively, was evident, with clear improvements in structure, tactical understanding, fitness, and confidence.

***OPGS produced a superb 41–14 victory, demonstrating the foundations of the new playing style***

The season began with an impressive performance in Round 1 of the Continental Tyres National Vase against Gravesend Grammar School. OPGS produced a superb 41–14 victory, demonstrating the foundations of the new playing style and squad identity. The team showed excellent structure, discipline, and attacking intent, led by standout performances from Woody, Ryan, and Oscar. It was an early statement of the direction the squad was heading under the new coaching setup.

The following fixture away to Chatham & Clarendon proved to be a much tougher test. Although the result did not go OPGS's way, the game highlighted several key areas for development and provided valuable learning opportunities for the squad moving forward.

Round 2 of the Continental Vase brought Maidstone Grammar School to OPGS for a highly competitive home fixture. OPGS produced an outstanding first-half performance, playing with confidence, heart, and structure, and matching strong opposition across the field. However, tactical adjustments from Maidstone in the second half shifted momentum, allowing them to take control of the contest and progress to the next round. Despite the disappointment, the performance demonstrated how competitive and resilient the squad had become.

The Developing Schools League campaign then began with a home fixture against St George's. This was an excellent contest between two evenly matched sides, played with intensity and determination throughout. Outstanding performances from Dino, Ollie, Oscar, and others helped OPGS secure another strong performance in front of the home crowd. Unfortunately, OPGS were pipped at the final hurdle, losing by one point.

An away trip to Bennett Memorial followed and proved to be one of the more difficult afternoons of the season. Travelling with a younger squad and missing several key players, OPGS

struggled to reach their usual standards and did not perform to their potential. Fortunately, the fixture was not part of the league programme, allowing the squad to regroup and refocus.

The next match against Darrick Wood introduced new opposition and another stern challenge. The first half was closely fought, with Darrick Wood competing strongly throughout. However, OPGS's strength in depth and physicality became increasingly apparent during the second half, allowing the team to pull away and secure an impressive victory. Enzo, Ryan, Dino, and Oscar were particularly influential in the contest.

The original away fixture against Wilmington Grammar School was postponed due to player availability issues and rearranged for later in the season. Before that meeting, OPGS faced The Archbishop's School in another entertaining and competitive fixture. In the spirit of the game, OPGS loaned players to ensure the opposition could field a full side, which provided an excellent challenge for some of the younger OPGS players competing alongside Year 13 students. Ryan continually tested the OPGS defensive line with intelligent play around the offside line, but Oscar, Woody, and the wider defensive unit managed the pressure effectively. The game ended in dramatic fashion, with OPGS securing a 29–24 victory thanks to a late winning try from Fin.

Following the Christmas break, the first fixture in January saw OPGS travel to St George's once again. With Mr Raye taking charge in place of Mr Keeling-Jones, another closely contested battle unfolded. OPGS demonstrated resilience and composure to secure a narrow but deserved 14–12 victory.

Wilmington Grammar School then visited OPGS for one of the standout contests of the season. The game was fiercely competitive, featuring big collisions and relentless physicality from both sides. Most importantly, the hard work completed throughout the season in training was clearly visible in the team's performance. Team structures, set plays, communication, and overall teamwork were all executed with growing consistency and confidence.

The final weeks of the season were unfortunately disrupted by opposition withdrawals due to examinations and restrictions on students missing lessons. Despite this frustration, the squad finished the campaign strongly with an excellent 32–14 victory over Darrick Wood. It was a fitting way to conclude the season

and reflected the progress made by the team across the year.

A huge thank you must go to Cameron for his commitment and leadership throughout his first season as Lead Coach. Thanks also go to the entire squad for their effort, dedication, and willingness to improve week after week. Special recognition should also be given to Ryan, Woody, Oscar, and Ollie for their leadership and influence across the squad during the season.

It has been fantastic to witness the growth of this group, with new players joining the programme, established players stepping up, and the whole squad developing both individually and collectively.

***We will miss the Year 13 players moving onto new ventures and thank them***

We will miss the Year 13 players moving onto new ventures and thank them for their collective contribution to OPGS rugby over

the years. There is genuine excitement surrounding the future of OPGS rugby, and the team now looks forward to pre-season and the opportunities that the 2026–2027 season will bring.

# Zach Ward Wins Bronze at Kent Indoor Championships

Congratulations to Zach Ward, who achieved outstanding success at the Kent Indoor Athletics Championships held on 21 March at the Lee Valley Athletics Centre.

Competing against some of the county's top young athletes, Zach delivered an excellent performance in the 800m event to secure a well-earned bronze medal. His achievement is a testament to his hard work, dedication, and determination both in training and competition.

Everyone at school is incredibly proud of Zach's success and we look forward to hearing about many more sporting achievements in the future.



# UK Bebras – The Coding Challenge

In March, students in year 7 and 9 and selected students from GCSE and A level Computer Science took part in the Raspberry Pi Foundation Coding Challenge run by BEBRAS UK.

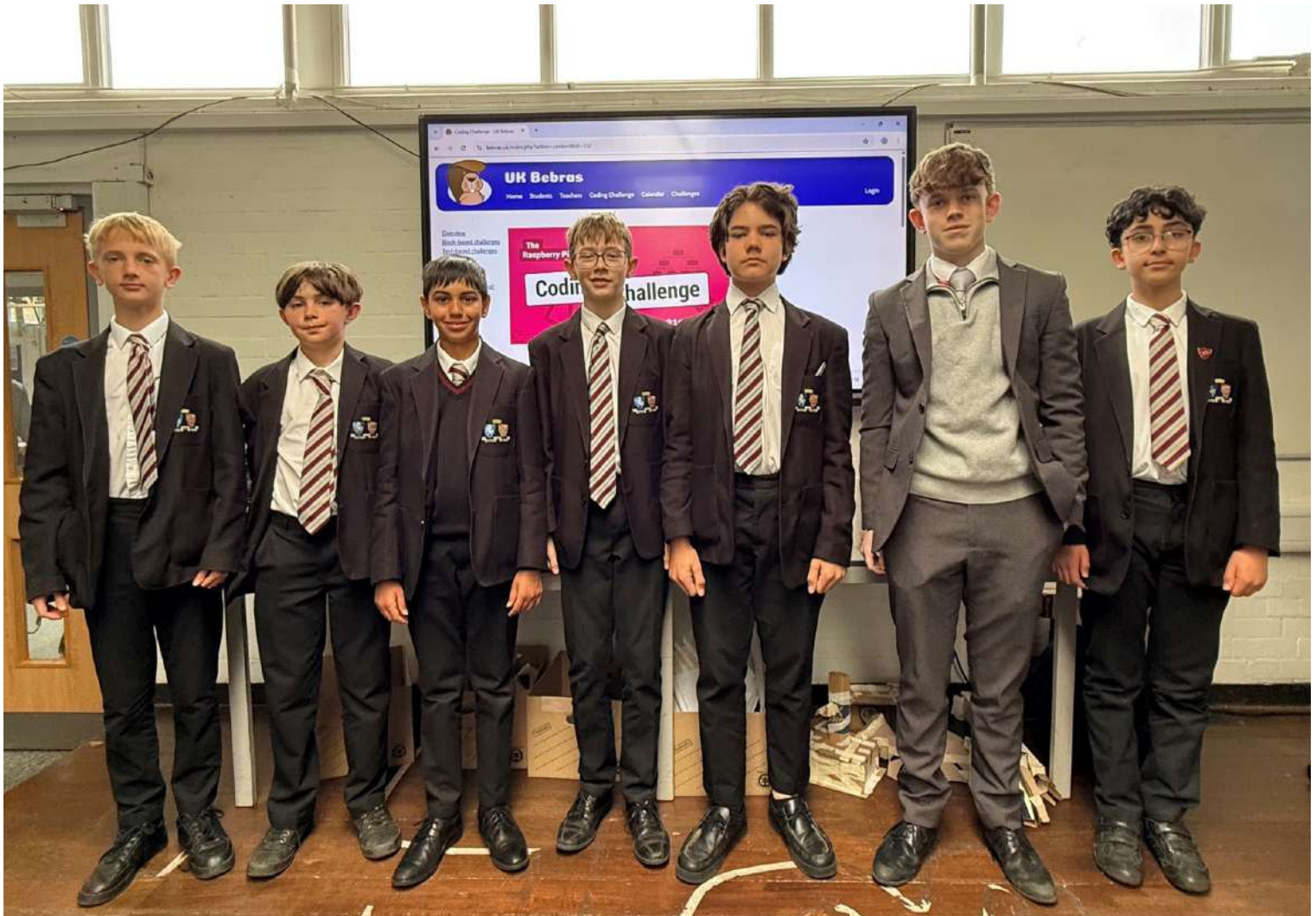
The aim of the coding challenge was to enhance skills, build confidence, and inspire students to develop programmed solutions to computational thinking problems.

11 students achieved GOLD certificates placing them in the top 10% of candidates nationally. 76 students achieved a Distinction and 105 students achieved a Merit.

Congratulations to all students involved and Bebras winners this year.



If you're interested in looking at the practice tasks for the challenges, you can visit the website [here: Challenges - UK Bebras](#).



# Aylesford Bulls Crowned South Coast Festival Champions

Congratulations to Year 9 students Oliver Patton and Zach Ward, who enjoyed a hugely successful weekend representing Aylesford Bulls RFC Under 14s at the prestigious South Coast Festival of Rugby in Bognor Regis.



South Coast Festival Under 14 Champions. The tournament ended in spectacular fashion with a dominant 5-0 try victory in the final against Stow on the Wold RFC.

Over the course of the festival, the Aylesford Bulls scored an incredible 32 tries while conceding just one — a remarkable achievement that reflected the team's determination, skill, and teamwork throughout the competition.

Both Zach and Oliver played in every match and were instrumental in the team's success, demonstrating commitment, resilience, and excellent rugby ability across the tournament.

The boys also showed tremendous sportsmanship and rugby spirit by helping another club, Barnes RFC, who were short of players during some of their games — a gesture that perfectly reflected the values of teamwork and respect at the heart of rugby.

The team produced an outstanding performance across the weekend, playing five matches and winning every single one to become

***Both Zach and Oliver played in every match and were instrumental in the team's success,***

Everyone at school is incredibly proud of Zach and Oliver for their fantastic achievement and for representing both their club and school with such distinction.

# Roman Canterbury in cardboard

History Club (Year 7 and Year 8) have now completed their sustainable 'big build' of Roman Canterbury, with their models representing some of the key buildings in the city.

The students showed great creativity, patience and teamwork to create from cardboard such grand designs. Looking ahead to the next sessions, we are either making a time capsule or researching the First World War so come along if you would like to be involved. Well done to our enthusiastic students; your knowledge and interest were lovely to see.

Miss Aldous



# Ethan Sparks - Red Bull Rookies Test Jerez

Ethan Sparks has been in Jerez in Spain for the official 2026 Red Bull Rookies cup pre season test. This was his first proper time on the bikes together. A chance to learn the track, the bike, and racing against each other. Also, a way for coaches to see who is ready for the season.

The Red Bull Rookies Cup is a talent pathway for teenage motorcycle racers who want to reach the very top of the sport, like MotoGP. Think of it like a junior league for future world champions. The 26 riders are between 15–20 years old, Ethan being the youngest! The riders come from all over the world. Everyone rides the same type of bike, so it's about skill, not

money or equipment. Red Bull and KTM run the series to find, train, and test young riders who might become professional MotoGP racers one day.

The first round of the 2026 Red Bull Rookies Cup season took place at Jerez, alongside the Spanish MotoGP weekend. There were two races at that first round. The riders go from “learning” to full race pressure straight away in front of crowds of over 100,000 people!

Ethan took the whole experience in and impressed the rider coaches with his ability to adapt quickly. You can watch and track Ethan's up-and-coming race season, which is without a doubt his most elite season yet!





<https://www.redbull.com/int-en/rookiescup/races>

You can follow the races on Red Bull TV app, and their socials will include information about the races etc.

- Preseason Test: April 8–10 (Jerez, Spain)
- Rounds 1–2: April 23–26 (Jerez, Spain)
- Rounds 3–4: May 7–10 (Le Mans, France)
- Rounds 5–6: May 28–31 (Mugello, Italy)
- Rounds 7–8: June 25–28 (Assen, Netherlands)
- Rounds 9–10: July 9–12 (Sachsenring, Germany)
- Rounds 11–12: September 10–13 (Misano, Italy)
- Rounds 13–14: September 17–20 (Spielberg, Austria)





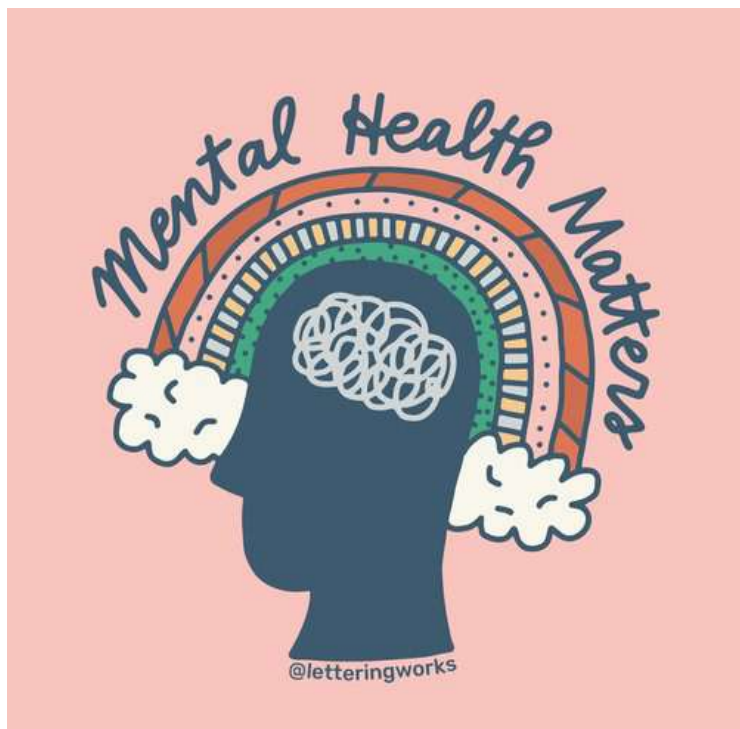
# Mental Health Matters at OPGS

Mental Health Awareness Week runs from mid-May annually, serving as a crucial reminder to prioritise mental well-being and support those navigating mental health challenges. The aim of the week is to shine a spotlight on the importance of mental health advocacy, education, and support.

As such, as part of our form time PSHE programme, students were asked to consider how do they support their own mental health. Students were also signposted to who they could turn to for support with mental health issues in school, such as Miss Wollett the Wellbeing Lead, our dedicated team of student Wellbeing Ambassadors, as well as form tutors and directors of study in their role to offer support pastorally. Following on from this, students also had an awareness session focused on the effects of sleep on mental health.



The aim is to break the stigma surrounding mental illness, and instead, promote understanding and empathy within our school community and beyond. From anxiety and depression, from stress to burnout - mental health affects us all in different ways - so it is essential to foster open conversations and supportive environments where individuals feel safe seeking help and support.



Keep a look out for the mental health matters posters which students have created on display on the Wellbeing Noticeboard in response to these sessions.



# SCIENCE CLUB

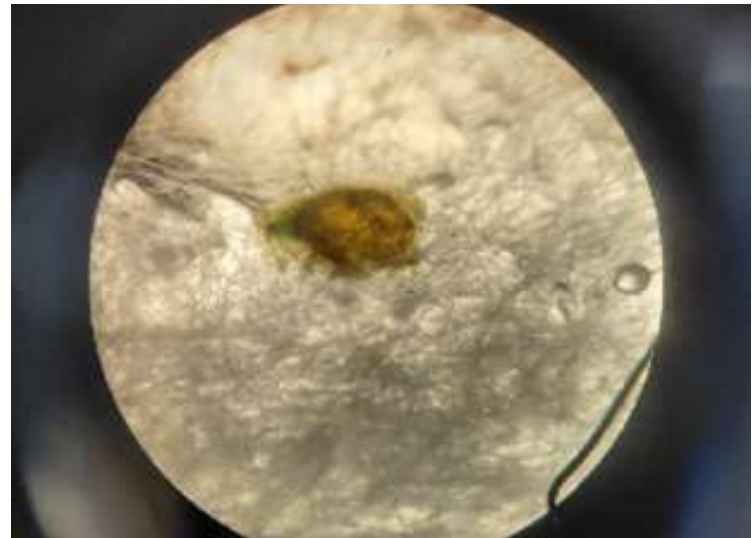
This term in Science Club we have been looking at Daphnia, which are little water fleas, and we saw that they are absolutely fascinating. They are all female and reproduce by cloning themselves. Under the microscope you can see their hearts beating, and also, if you are lucky, you can see their eggs. They live on algae, so we feed them Spirulina from time to time. We have some Daphnia still living quite happily in Room 56.

We have also made sparks and small flames by looking at how electricity conducts through wire

***Under the microscope you can see their hearts beating!***

wool. Even with a very small current, we were able to get a glow from our wire wool, and in some cases a few sparks.

Next week, for our last session before half term, we are going to have Mr Lindsay's favourite, Fuego Grande, which translates as Big Fire! Look out for Whoosh Bottle, Methane Bubbles, and Travelling Flame.



# Year 7 Local History Day: Rochester

**Miss Aldous:** On the 29th April Year 7 travelled on their first school trip to Rochester to explore the famous Castle and the Guildhall Museum.

Students could see right before their eyes the History we have studied this year about castles, the Norman Conquest and the Barons' Revolt in 1215. Nothing beats seeing students walking in the footsteps of archers or rebellious barons, trying on Medieval armour and deepening their understanding together. Year 7 excelled themselves with their conduct and the knowledge they showed in the Guildhall talk. I was very proud of them and look forward to more History trips together in the future.

**Max Damien S7:**

The Year 7s went on a trip to Rochester to see some of its beautiful buildings such as the lovely

Rochester Castle (that is 899 years old celebrating its nine-hundredth anniversary next year.) We discovered the hidden features in the Castle including a spiral staircase and an amazing view of Rochester Cathedral. We also went to the Guildhall Museum where a member of staff told us





all about Rochester Castle and we even got to see some rare artefacts that could be over nine-hundred years old. At the end of the day, we went to the sweet shop to end it off with a sweet treat.

### Jenson Theodorou P7:

We went on a trip to Rochester to see the historic buildings. Our first stop was a viewing point of the War Memorial and the Cathedral. Next we walked around the Castle walls and climbed to the top



of the tower where the view was beautiful, unlike the wind! There was a gift shop where we bought swords and dragon figures and then we went to the Museum. Here a professional guide gave us an interesting talk and we then explored the Museum looking at the models and artefacts including a replica of the Castle, a prison hulk ship and so much more. After the sweet shop we had our lunch and returned back safe and happy. Overall, this was an extraordinary trip.



# Design and Technology Model Rockets

Year 8 Design and Technology students had a cosmic day of fun, designing, building and testing model rockets. With just cardboard tubes, balsa wood, plastic bin liners and paper straws, students were challenged to build a rocket which could launch, fly as high as possible and then return to the ground safely using a parachute.

The students looked to minimise weight and maximise aerodynamics to see which rocket would fly the highest.

The rockets looked fantastic and some of them reached heights of 300m (as high as the Shard). Well done to all involved and we hope you enjoyed your day.





# Never Such Innocence Creative Writing Competition

Never Such Innocence is a registered charity and their mission statement is centred on giving children a voice on conflict. The charity began as a First World War commemoration project. Their name derives from Philip Larkin's famous poem MCMXIV, which reflects on the changes caused by the First World War. The driving force behind Never Such Innocence is Lady Lucy French OBE, great-granddaughter of Field Marshal Sir John French who commanded the British Expeditionary Forces from 1914-15.

Never Such Innocence provides tools for children and young people (9-18) to reflect on the realities of war by nurturing the next generation of thinkers, leaders and peacebuilders through

the arts; inspiring cultural exchange and dialogue.

They aim to amplify the voices of children and young people all over the world.

The theme of the poetry competition was to explore different perspectives of war and conflict, imaging what it might be like to walk in someone else's shoes. The international competition allowed students to send their voice across borders, reflect on powerful stories and help build empathy with the world around them. This competition saw them receive submissions from

***They aim to amplify the voices of children and young people all over the world.***

more than 129 different countries. The calibre of entrants was extremely high this year, and whilst we were not shortlisted as winners to be published in the e-anthology, students did receive an acknowledgement of their entries: "Congratulations to our winners and a huge well done to all who participated".



# Science Colours

Science has always interested me, but working towards the OPGS Science Colours Award invited me to engage with it in ways I never expected. I began by researching the remarkable Jennifer Doudna, the biochemist who discovered the revolutionary CRISPR-Cas9 gene editing technology, which deepened my understanding of how science can fundamentally change the world.

**Science is much broader and more inspiring than any textbook could ever cover**

topics spanning biology, chemistry, and physics. Being in that historic building, surrounded by the excitement of real scientific ideas and discoveries, made me feel genuinely connected to the wider scientific community.

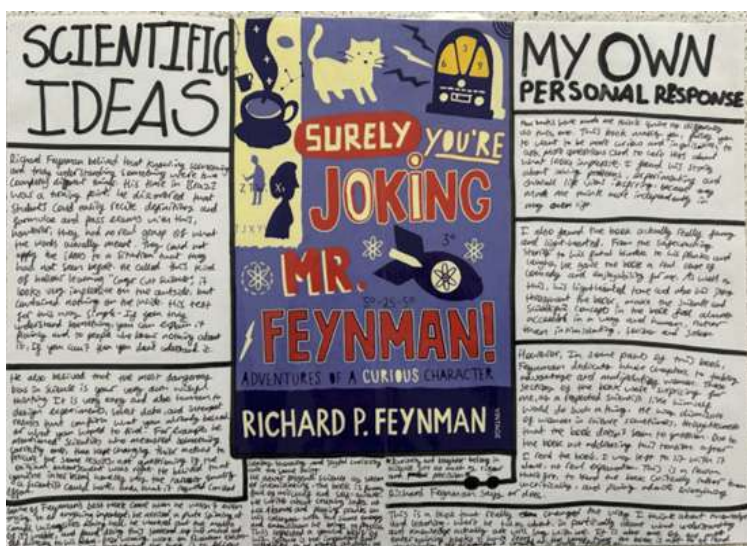
Across all four challenges, I learned that science is much broader and more inspiring than any

textbook could ever cover, and this experience has genuinely sparked a deeper curiosity for science in me that I hope to carry forward through the rest of my time at OPGS, and my life after school. My advice for students considering Science Colours next year is to complete challenges that genuinely interest them, not just to complete the task.

Kiran Joseph 9S

Alongside this, I created a science book poster based on Surely, You're Joking, Mr. Feynman!, a book that showed me science is not just about memorising facts and formulae, but about curiosity, creativity, and a passion for discovery. I also entered the Royal Society of Biology's Annual Photography Competition, which challenged me to look at the natural world through a scientific lens and communicate the "Colours of nature"- a skill I had never considered before.

However, the highlight of my journey towards the Science Colours was attending a science lecture at the Royal Institution, where the Ri Demo team covered a fascinating range of



**— OPGS —**

## SCIENCE COLOURS AWARD

EXPLORE. DISCOVER. INSPIRE.  
SHOW YOUR PASSION FOR SCIENCE.

**HOW DO I EARN MY COLOURS?**  
Complete at least 4 of the Science Colours Challenges. Submit them before **May 15th** to be considered for that academic year.

- CURIOSITY
- KNOWLEDGE
- INNOVATION
- IMPACT

**WHAT ARE THE SEVEN SCIENCE COLOURS CHALLENGES?**

- 1 SCIENCE BOOK REVIEW DISPLAY
- 2 ENTER A NATIONAL SCIENCE COMPETITION
- 3 ATTEND A LIVE SCIENCE LECTURE
- 4 DESIGN AND DELIVER A STEM CLUB SESSION
- 5 SCIENTIST RESEARCH DISPLAY
- 6 MUSEUM EXHIBIT STUDY
- 7 CHEMICAL ELEMENT MODEL AND FAMILY PODCAST

EXPLORE. DISCOVER. INSPIRE.  
SHOW YOUR PASSION FOR SCIENCE.

# OPGS Science Department News

It has been another extremely busy term in Science at OPGS. As we say goodbye to our Year 11 and Year 13 students, we would like to wish all of them the very best in their upcoming GCSE and A level examinations. They have worked incredibly hard over the past two years, and we hope that effort is rewarded over the coming weeks.

This year has also seen OPGS Science students answer more than 600,000 questions

on Educake, the highest total the department has ever recorded. Of these, over 320,000 questions have been completed by Year 11 students alone since September, reflecting the exceptional level of revision and independent study taking place ahead of this summer's examinations.

We would also like to thank our examination classes for their contribution to the department, particularly those students who have supported clubs, mentoring, competitions and enrichment activities across the year.

## OPGS Students Take on National Science Challenges

This term has seen large numbers of OPGS students taking part in two prestigious national Science competitions.

Around 60 students from Years 7 and 8 recently completed the British Physics Olympiad Year 7 and 8 Physics Challenge, designed to stretch students beyond the curriculum through complex Physics problem solving and mathematical reasoning. The competition encourages students to apply their scientific thinking to unfamiliar situations and provides an excellent opportunity for students to challenge themselves at a national level.

We are already extremely proud of all students who took part and look forward to receiving the official results next term. A huge thank you must go to Mr Lindsay for organising the event and supporting students throughout the competition.



Year 10 students also completed the UK Biology Challenge this month, a national competition aimed at recognising exceptional biological knowledge and application. Although we are still awaiting the final results, we have already received preliminary confirmation that five OPGS students have achieved Gold Awards, placing them within the top 5% nationally.

This is an outstanding achievement and reflects the strength, commitment and enthusiasm of our Biology students. Thank you to Miss Knight for organising the competition and preparing students for the challenge. We will announce the full results next term.



# Year 7 Students Compete in “Misconceptions May”

A huge congratulations to all Year 7 students who took part in this year’s “Misconceptions May” competition. Across the month, students searched for common scientific misconceptions hidden around the school and corrected them to compete for the 2026 Year 7 Science Trophy.

The final house standings were:

- 1st Place – Fisher
- 2nd Place – Broughton
- 3rd Place – Hazlitt
- 4th Place – Wilberforce
- 5th Place – Sadler

Special congratulations must go to Joseph Embleton and Timothy Lenga, who secured first place for Fisher House. Their names will now be added to the Science trophy cabinet in recognition of their achievement.



## Year 10 Educake Knockout Competition Begins

Competition fever has arrived in Year 10 Science as the first round of the Educake Knockout Competition officially got underway this term.

Students faced a challenging 60 question Biology battle across the week, testing their GCSE knowledge, accuracy and speed as they fought for places in the next stage of the competition. With only 50 places available in Round 2, standards were high.

The competition now moves into the Chemistry round, which takes place from 1st to 3rd June, before the final Physics showdown on 1st and 2nd July, where the remaining students will compete for a place on the leaderboard and the chance to help their house lift the Year 10 Science Trophy.

A huge congratulations to all students who took part in Round 1, and special recognition goes to the five highest scoring students:

1. Alfie Wagon
2. Raahil Hussain
3. Leo Flintoff
4. Jean Pierre Le Roux
5. Sanjeev Vinod

We look forward to seeing who progresses through the next stage of the knockout competition after half term.



# Year 9 “100 Years of Attenborough” Competition Launches

To celebrate Sir David Attenborough's 100th birthday, the Science Department has officially launched the “100 Years of Attenborough” competition for Year 9 students.



Students have been challenged to design the ultimate environmentally sustainable family home, either as a poster or physical model, using scientific ideas linked to sustainability, energy efficiency, biodiversity, water management and modern environmental challenges.

***‘That lays upon us, whether we like it or not, an awesome responsibility to protect all life on Earth’***

The competition encourages students to think beyond simple recycling and solar panels, instead considering the real scientific and practical challenges involved in designing homes for the future. Students may enter individually or in house groups, with entries competing for the Year 9 Science Trophy and additional house points.

Full details and ideas have been emailed to all Year 9 students.

The deadline for entries is Friday 12th June and we are already looking forward to seeing the creativity and scientific thinking demonstrated by Year 9 students across the school.



# Year 8 Students Prepare for the OPGS Science Fair

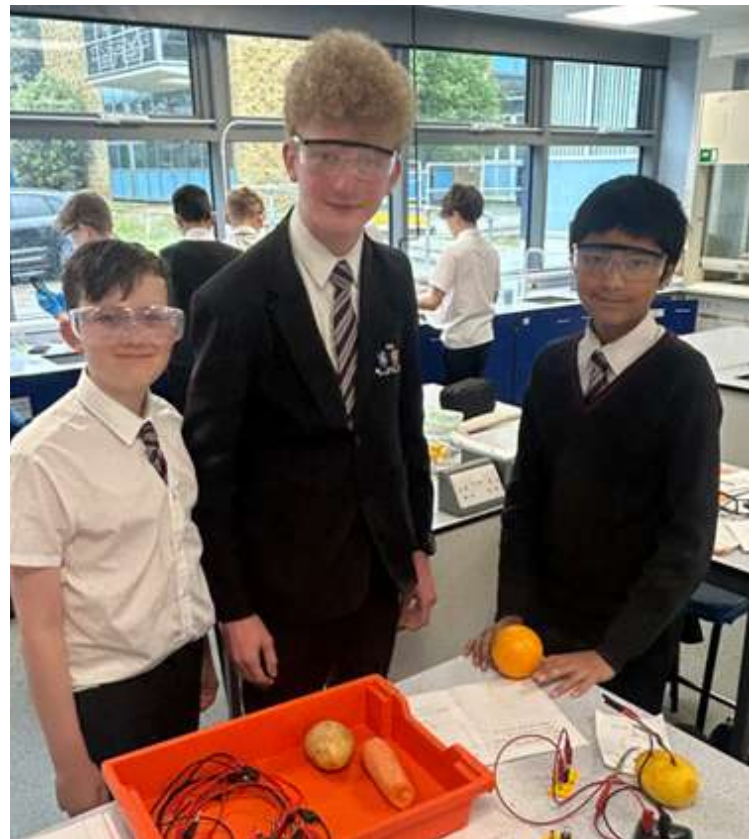
Excitement is building across Year 8 as students complete their Science Investigation Projects in preparation for this year's OPGS Science Fair on 22nd June.

Over recent weeks, students have been planning, carrying out and analysing their own scientific investigations, developing skills in experimental design, data analysis, problem solving and scientific communication. The Science Fair will provide students with the opportunity to present their findings as part of a large-scale showcase celebrating Science across the school.



The event will also welcome visiting primary school students, giving younger pupils the chance to experience the excitement of practical Science at OPGS and explore the wide range of opportunities available within the department.

Alongside the investigation displays, the evening will include interactive teacher demonstration stands, competitions, student led activities and the return of the ever popular Science Bake Off. With 100 house points available and the prestigious Year 8 Science Trophy up for grabs, competition is already beginning to build between the houses.



We are looking forward to seeing the creativity, enthusiasm and scientific thinking on display from our Year 8 students later this term.

# United we play, United we win.

Well done to the under 13 cricket squad who are celebrating their back to back victories in the West Kent 100.

Victories against MGS and Gravesend Grammar showing very positive signs for the season ahead. Exceptional batting performances today from Ted and Hamish helped bring home an impressive victory.



# JPL National Cup Winners

Huge congratulations to Jude, Logan and George and their team, Greenwich Borough on becoming the JPL National Cup Winners. We are very proud of these boys and

love sharing their success. If you have an out of school success to share with us, drop us an email at [office@opgs.org](mailto:office@opgs.org) #striveandserve



# New Cricket Team Kit

A massive thank you to the school's wonderful Parents Association, who have supported the school with the purchase of a new cricket kit for the senior squad.

Not the traditional whites usually associated with cricket, the kit captures the OPGS blue perfectly and is a hit with the players. Its first outing saw the team bring home a convincing win over C&C GS. Thank you again to the OPGS PA.



# Year 10 Prefects

Congratulations to our newly appointed Year 10 Prefect Team!

We look forward to working with you in Term 6 and throughout the next academic year.





# Volunteering Day

Thursday 21st May was our 9th annual Volunteering Day, meaning that our students have committed roughly 20,000 hours to the local community since its inception.

We are deeply proud of OPGS students and the work they do on these days; whether they've spent the day supporting the local church, litter picking, working in a primary school or tree conservation work, they have represented themselves, their school and families wonderfully.

One of the reasons why volunteering day is one of my favourite days of the academic year is because



everyone in the OPGS community comes together. It truly embodies our ethos of strive and serve.

This is what makes OPGS an outstanding and exciting environment for young people to develop into well-rounded individuals. Volunteering Day provides our students with these unique opportunities, helping them to develop among other things; team work, resilience, a sense of community, communication, wellbeing and respect.

Well done, everyone. #striveandserve



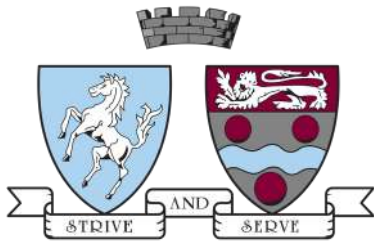












# The Science Edit Continues to Grow

The Science Department podcast, The Science Edit, continues to grow across the school, with episodes designed to support, inspire and engage students across Years 7 to 13.

Recent episodes have explored revision strategies, misconceptions in Science, careers in medicine and biology, and a range of fun scientific topics designed to encourage curiosity beyond the classroom.

The podcast is created by the Science Department and gives students access to additional support, revision advice and enrichment opportunities outside lessons.

Students can listen via the department Linktree:

<https://linktr.ee/thescienceedit>



## Science Class of the Month

This term also saw the launch of a brand new departmental award: Science Class of the Month. The award has been introduced to recognise classes who consistently demonstrate exceptional effort, engagement, progress and pride in their work across the Science Department.

Our first ever winners were the outstanding 10K Biology class, recognised for their excellent progress and consistently high standards in lessons. The class particularly impressed staff through the quality of their graph work, attention to detail and maturity shown during experimental analysis and practical design tasks.

The winning class receives the Science Class of the Month trophy, with their achievement displayed within the Science Department.



We look forward to announcing the April winners shortly and discovering which classes will earn the May and June awards next term.

# Year 12 Students Lead Rocket Launch Event

On 20th May, a team of 15 Year 12 Science students visited Allington Primary School to lead a rocket launching outreach event with around 60 Year 4 pupils.

Throughout the afternoon, primary students worked alongside OPGS sixth form volunteers to design, build and launch their own rockets, exploring ideas linked to forces, air resistance and aerodynamics through a series of exciting practical activities.

The event was filled with enthusiasm, creativity and teamwork, with the Year 4 pupils showing fantastic engagement throughout the session. Our Year 12 students were excellent ambassadors for the Science Department and demonstrated maturity, leadership and patience while supporting the younger pupils with their investigations and rocket launches.

The outreach session forms part of the department's continued commitment to promoting Science beyond the classroom and building strong links with local primary schools.

A huge thank you goes to all of the Year 12 volunteers who gave up their time to support the event and help inspire the next generation of young scientists.



*'We just wanted to say another enormous thank you to you, the other teacher and your fantastic students for your time and effort today. Our Year 4's had an absolute blast (pardon the pun!) and were full of energy after.'*

*'It's moments like this that they will remember in their time at primary school - it's so special! It wouldn't be possible without your support and effort, so it really is much appreciated.'*

**Allington Primary School**



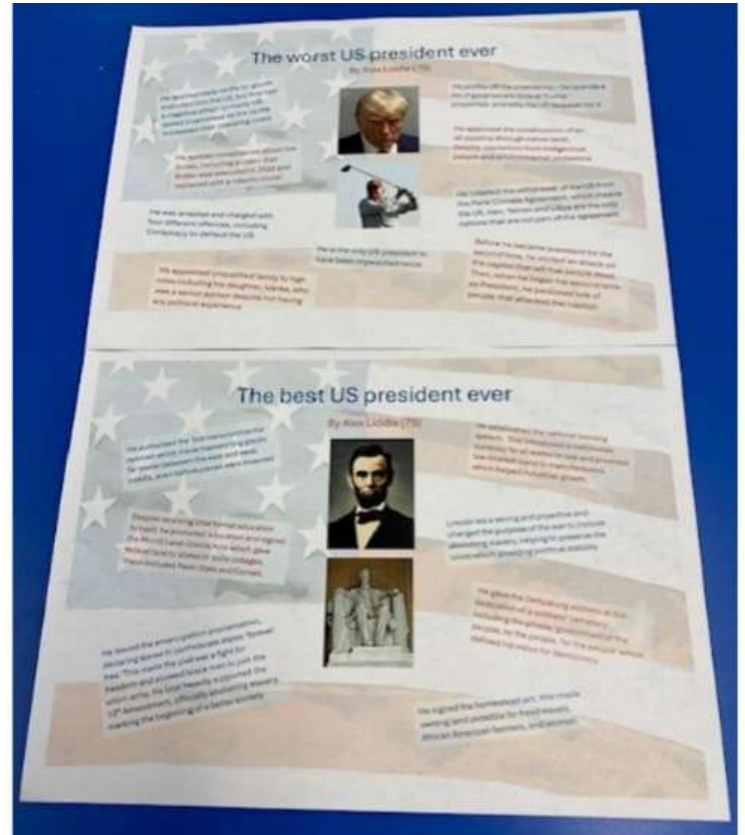


# March History House Competition

The March House History Competition celebrated the upcoming 250th anniversary of the United States Declaration of Independence with a fascinating and creative challenge. Pupils were asked to design a poster showing who they believed were the best and worst Presidents of the United States, supported with clear historical reasons and evidence.

The competition encouraged students to think critically about leadership, achievements, failures and the long-term impact of different presidents on American history. Entries included colourful designs, detailed research and thoughtful explanations, making the judging process extremely difficult.

The competition was judged by Mr Placsom and Miss Aldous, who praised the high standard of work and the effort shown by all competitors. After careful consideration, the winners were announced as follows:

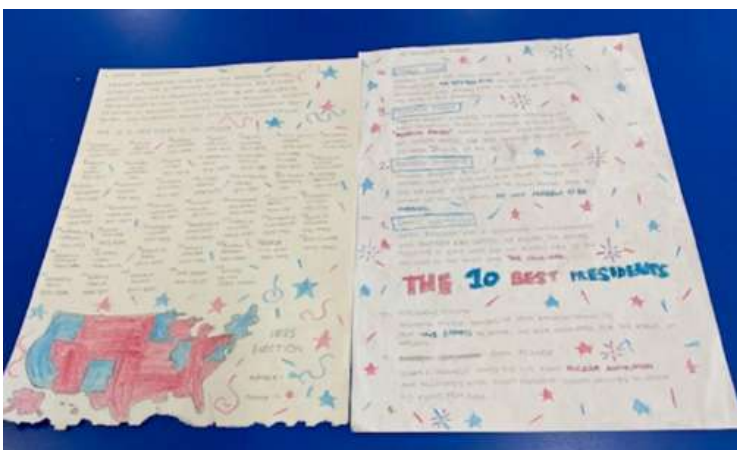
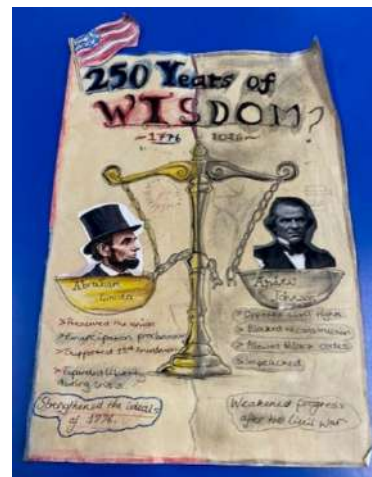


2nd Place – Alex (Broughton S7)

Joint 3rd Place – Ayush (Hazlitt S9) and Jude (Wilberforce T8)



1st Place – Tim (Fisher C7)



Congratulations to all the winners and to everyone who took part in such an engaging and informative competition. The event was a great success and an excellent way to reflect on an important milestone in American history.

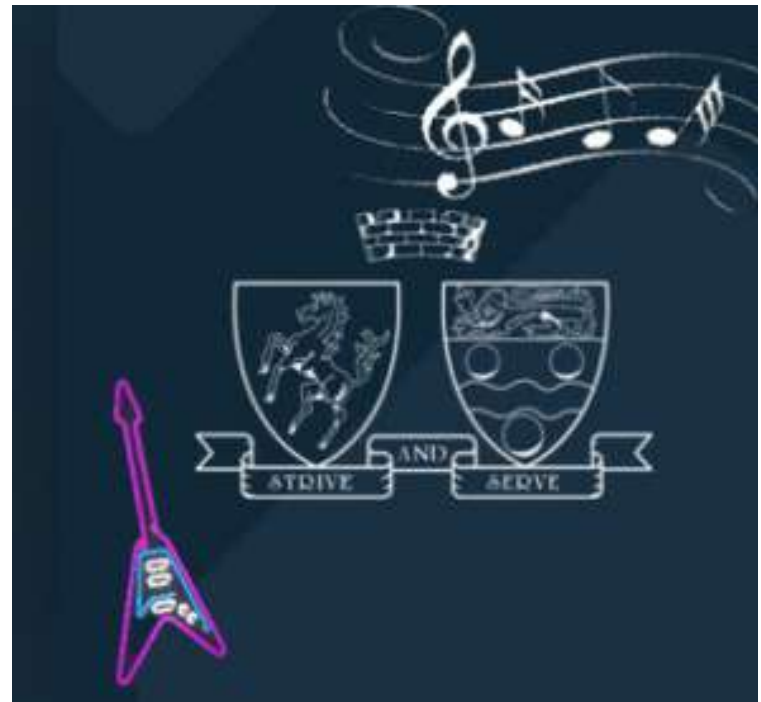
# April Music House Competition

After a range of excellent and creative entries, Daniel B 8C was victorious in securing a first place for Wilberforce, George B 9P coming closely in at second for Broughton, and finally Alex L 7S coming in third place also for Broughton.

Daniel went for the classic Brit-Pop and Rock vibe with his playlist, including songs such as 'Song 2', 'Everlong', and 'Smells Like Teen Spirit.' Not only did he create a playlist, but he also played 'Black in Black', 'Smells Like Teen Spirit', and 'Zombie' on his guitar.

Second place:  
George Bareford 9P - Broughton

Providing an uplifting mix of songs ahead of the exam season, George created his own upbeat remix ahead of the upcoming exam season, including songs such as 'I Love It' and 'thank u, next'.



Third Place: Alex Liddle 7S - Broughton

Alex provided a mix of pop anthems, such as 'I Gotta Feeling', 'Unstoppable', and 'Unwritten' to ensure all listeners remain positive and feel uplifted. Alex also provided some analysis of 'Eye of the Tiger' stating that 'The song is structured by using a story of someone's rise to glory through resilience, and for those revising for their GCSE's and A Levels, this song can be inspirational!'

As always thanks to all who entered, and best of luck to those sitting their GCSE's and A Levels this term.

Congratulations to our leading students at the end of term 5.

	Yr 7	Yr 8	Yr 9	Yr 10	Yr 11	Yr 12/13
<b>Broughton</b>	Xavier W C7	Ian L C8	Dexter D T9	Aaroj G P10	Roven F P11	Nathan M EJU Elise R PSH
<b>Fisher</b>	Timothy L C7	Oliwier S C8	Peter K C9	Ma'ad A T10	Maximus S P11	Ben S AED Josh F RBU
<b>Hazlitt</b>	Luka E T7	Jay H S8	Kiran J S9	Sanjeev V X10	Isaac W T11	Elisabeth T JLS Marcus T RBU
<b>Sadler</b>	James A S7	Suhan J C8	Surya E T9	Oliver M T10	Levie S X11	Alex B EJU George S RBU
<b>Wilberforce</b>	Ahmed M T7	Saad A S8	Jaydon P S9	Raahil H P10	Elliot F X11	Ben B JLS Ifan B RBU