



## End of Term Letter

### Headmaster

Dear Parents, Students, and Friends,

By way of warning, this letter may sound a little pompous and pretentious, but in a school full of unbelievably intellectual students, I feel I have to do my bit. Like everyone else at the moment, I've been thinking a lot about artificial intelligence but, alongside that, about the Greek philosopher Aristotle and his theories on education. Despite the two being around 2,300 years apart, I believe these themes are increasingly linked; my sense is that Aristotle provides us with the perfect blueprint for the purpose of a school, especially now that AI is influencing so many aspects of our economy and lives. Schools will become less and less about preparing students to work in specific industries, and more and more about teaching them how to think, relate, argue, organise, govern, make decisions, and manage emotions like human beings. This is at the core of what Aristotle believed was the purpose of education.

The most important Aristotelian theory to grasp on this subject is that the marker of a successful education is not what job you get at the end of it; perhaps controversially, this was secondary. What was paramount was the concept of *eudaimonia*, which has many translations but loosely equates to ideas of flourishing, living well, and being happy. Unfortunately for our students, this state isn't achieved by playing computer games or sharing memes on WhatsApp groups, but by living virtuously, fulfilling one's potential, and acting with logic and reason over a lifetime. This will prepare students for the highest forms of *scholé* - a term from which we derive our word 'scholar', but that actually means something more akin to leisure. Like *eudaimonia*, *scholé* is not found on phones or in algorithms but, according to Aristotle, in the deep appreciation of the arts, sciences, and humanities, and in cultivating deep human connections. His implied argument then, and one that I subscribe to, is that the purpose of schools and universities is not necessarily to train students in the specifics of a particular industry, but rather to deliver a broad, academic, and moral curriculum. This will create well-rounded human beings who are able to flourish personally, intellectually, morally, and professionally in jobs that, due to the advent of AI, are well beyond our current comprehension. Our curriculum is indeed broad, with a whopping 18 subjects taught at Key Stage 3, including art, music, and drama; 11 GCSEs being taken as opposed to the 8 in many comprehensive schools; and at least four A Levels being studied by our Sixth Formers. It is also moral, with a rich pastoral curriculum made up of dedicated wellbeing lessons, full-course religious studies for all up until GCSE, and plentiful assemblies, drop-down days, house competitions, clubs, and societies. If our curriculum doesn't prepare our students to achieve *eudaimonia* and appreciate *scholé*, then I don't know what will.

Aristotle also believed that education was good for the soul, and that different forms of education nourish different aspects of our inner selves. He posited that an active education with plentiful opportunities for exercise, play, and physical expression is vital in rousing the 'vegetative soul'. Thankfully, PE, games, drama, music, art, and over 39 house competitions are central to our offer. He also believed that a moral education was essential for taming the 'appetitive soul' of the young, arguing that students need to be explicitly taught right from wrong and steered towards positive values, including courage and compassion. We agree,



## End of Term Letter

### Headmaster

and it's why we intentionally structure our entire praise policy around the values that we hold most dear as an organisation. After the vegetative and appetitive souls had been resolved, Aristotle believed that the 'rational soul' required teaching in advanced intellectual and ethical reasoning. In pursuit of this, all students at WCCGS study philosophy, politics, and economics in Y8-10. All study classical myth and religion in Y7. All must take at least one humanities subject up to GCSE. We take our responsibility to care for and nourish the souls of our students very seriously and, in my opinion, have designed an excellent curriculum that does so, expertly delivered by superb teachers.

Finally, Aristotle believed that *eudaimonia* could not be achieved without the individual being part of a healthy community, or *polis* - the Greek term for a city-state. From *polis*, we get words like politics, policy, metropolitan, and police. AI creates a risk that current trends in growing social isolation and fragmentation, resulting from the rise of social media and home-working, will continue to worsen as we interact more with flattering AI interfaces and less with more unpredictable and complex fellow human beings. The role of the school, therefore, becomes vital as a place where we can ensure direct human interaction takes place, and where students can be prepared to participate actively in the governance of our cities and our nation. This is why WCCGS gives so much curriculum time to teaching students how politics functions. It's why we invest so much in our wonderful student leaders, be captains of school, house captains, school council representatives, or rugby captains. It's why we do all we can to facilitate political debate and discourse in our co-curriculum. We do not just want our students to flourish; we see the role that schools play in helping the nation to flourish, especially when going through a change as dislocating and profound as the advent of AI.

I hope this letter has given you some food for thought and some good topics for dinner-table conversations. I would like to wish you a philosophical Easter crammed full of *scholé*, during which your entire family finds *eudaimonia*!

All the best,  
**Jamie Bean**  
Headmaster  
Wallington County Grammar School

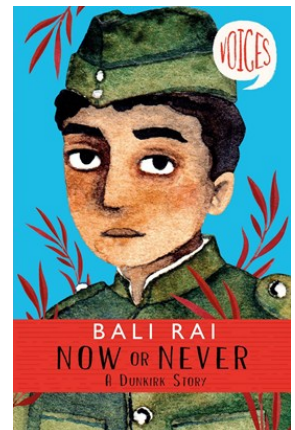


**Spring Reads 2026**

**Reminder: you'll earn commendations if you read and review these over the holidays!**

**Now Or Never: A Dunkirk Story** by Bali Rai

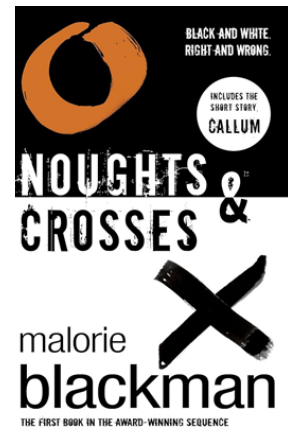
*Now or Never* brings a young soldier, Private Fazal Khan, from his home in India to the battlefields of the Second World War. Fazal's world is now focused on Company 32 and the animals he cares for during one of the most frightening times in history. And as he and his friends make their way to the beaches of Dunkirk, Fazal must deal with even more than the terrors of a dangerous trek to reach the evacuation zone. Fazal is forced to question why he is even there and why he is expected to be loyal to a king whose people don't all see him as their equal..



**Noughts & Crosses** by Malorie Blackman

Sephy is a Cross - a member of the dark-skinned ruling class. Callum is a nought - a 'colourless' member of the underclass who were once slaves to the Crosses. The two have been friends since early childhood. But that's as far as it can go. Against a background of prejudice, distrust and mounting terrorist violence, a romance builds between Sephy and Callum - a romance that is to lead both of them into terrible danger...

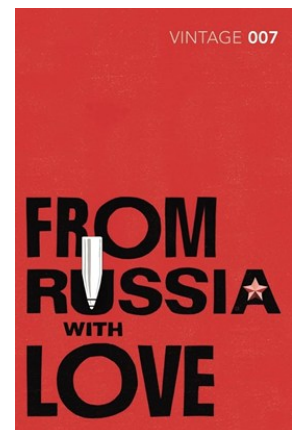
*The School Librarian says:* Malorie Blackman's classic dystopian novel turns 25 this year, and remains as powerful and relevant as ever. If you haven't read it (and the rest of the series) you're missing out.



**From Russia With Love** by Ian Fleming

SMERSH, the Russian intelligence unit, is hell-bent on destroying James Bond. His death would deal a hammer blow to the heart of the British Secret Service.

*The School Librarian says:* Probably the finest of the James Bond novels, and it has one of the best opening lines that I can think of: "The naked man who lay splayed out on his face beside the swimming pool might have been dead." It's undeniably dated but nonetheless a brilliant spy story. A good stepping stone for when you've read Alex Rider but haven't yet had your brain scrambled by John Le Carré.



**Mort** by Terry Pratchett

Death comes to us all. When he came to Mort, he offered him a job. Death is the Grim Reaper of the Discworld, a black-robed skeleton with a scythe who ushers souls into the next world. He is yearning to experience what humanity really has to offer, but to do that, he'll need to hire some help. It's an offer Mort can't refuse.

*The School Librarian says:* In the first three Discworld novels, you can tell Pratchett was still figuring out what he wanted the series to be. *Mort*, on the other hand, emerges confident in its own identity, ably balancing the sparkling humour and serious themes that would come to define Discworld. If you're not sure where to start, this is as good a choice as any.



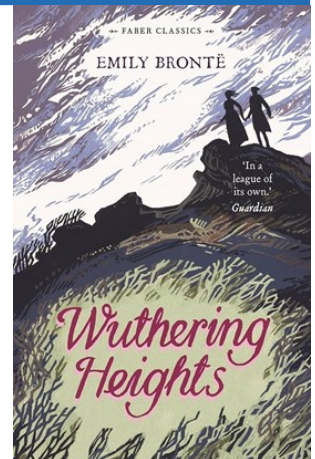


**Spring Reads 2026 (Continue)**

**Wuthering Heights** by Emily Bronte

One of the masterpieces of classic literature, *Wuthering Heights* is both the story of a wild, obsessive love and a terrible revenge. Catherine and Heathcliff's, a foundingling adopted by Catherine's father, passionate but doomed love forms the core of this extraordinary tale. Catherine's brother Hindley's hatred and humiliation of Heathcliff leads to tragedy when Catherine marries another and Heathcliff returns newly wealthy to enact his revenge on all who wronged him.

*The School Librarian says:* Now that the hype around the film adaptation has died down, it's a great time to go back to the source material, widely regarded as one of the greatest novels ever written in English.

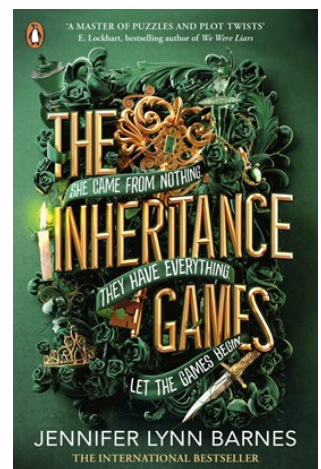


**The Inheritance Games** by Jennifer Lynn Barnes

Avery has a plan: keep her head down, work hard for a better future. Then an eccentric billionaire dies, leaving her almost his entire fortune. And no one, least of all Avery, knows why.

Now she must move into the mansion she's inherited. It's filled with secrets and codes, and the old man's surviving relatives - a family hell-bent on discovering why Avery got 'their' money.

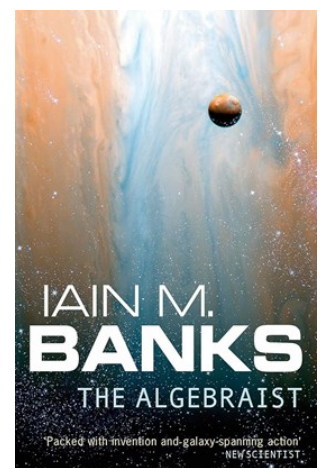
Soon she is caught in a deadly game that everyone in this strange family is playing. But just how far will they go to keep their fortune?



**The Algebraist** by Iain M. Banks

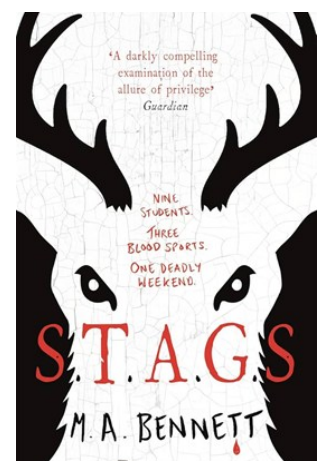
The Nasqueron Dwellers inhabit a gas giant on the outskirts of the galaxy, in a system awaiting its wormhole connection to the rest of civilisation. Seconded to a military-religious order he's barely heard of, Fassin Taak has to travel again amongst the Dwellers, in search of a secret hidden for half a billion years. But with each passing day a war draws closer - a war that threatens to overwhelm everything and everyone he's ever known.

*The School Librarian says:* I've loved Banks's science-fiction since I was at school, and *The Algebraist* perfectly illustrates why. He could have used a more ruthless editor, but his writing here is positively giddy with all the possibilities that huge-scale SF allows him. It's hard not to get caught up in his excitement



**STAGS** by M.A. Bennett

It is the autumn term and Greer MacDonald is struggling to settle into the sixth form at the exclusive St Aidan the Great boarding school, known to its privileged pupils as S.T.A.G.S. To her surprise Greer receives a mysterious invitation with three words embossed upon on it: *huntin' shootin' fishin'* - an invitation to spend the half-term weekend at the country manor of Henry de Warlencourt, the most popular and wealthy boy at S.T.A.G.S. Over the next three days, as the three blood sports - hunting, shooting and fishing - become increasingly dark and twisted, Greer comes to the horrifying realisation that those being hunted are not wild game, but the very misfits Henry has brought with him from school...



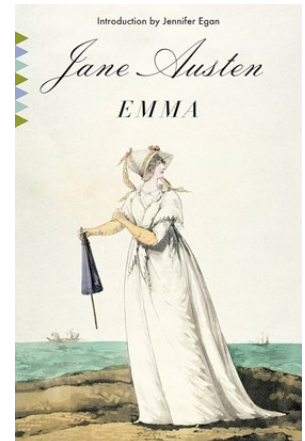


### **Spring Reads 2026 (Continue)**

#### **Emma by Jane Austen**

Emma Woodhouse comfortably dominates the social order in the village of Highbury, convinced that she has both the understanding and the right to manage other people's lives. Her interfering centers on the aloof Jane Fairfax, the dangerously attractive Frank Churchill, the foolish but sweet Harriet Smith, and the ambitious young vicar Mr. Elton--and ends with her complacency shattered, her mind awakened to some of life's more intractable dilemmas, and her happiness assured.

*The School Librarian says:* Just read anything by Jane Austen. Emma is one of her greatest creations, a spoiled, rich busybody who can't stop meddling in other people's business. You might not want to be friends with her, but she's a joy to read about.



### **MFL Department: Sevilla Spanish Trip**

#### **Up Bright and Early and Bound for Sunny Spain**

Our Spanish trip started at a painfully early meeting time at Gatwick Airport at 5:30 in the morning. I set my alarm for 4:50 am to get as much sleep as possible, rolled out of bed, and rushed to the airport on an empty stomach. Despite the early panic, we had some time to spare at the airport, giving us a chance to buy some food and wake up properly. There was a mixture of nerves and excitement in our group.

After a two and half hour flight, we landed at Seville Airport. As soon as we stepped outside, I realised I had misjudged the weather completely. I had packed for colder temperatures, so the warm Andalusian sun was a sweaty shock – but a welcome one. On the coach journey from the airport to our hostel, I saw the city gradually appear with bright buildings and orange trees greeting us. We arrived at our hostel before check-in time, so we dropped our bags and headed to a local park for lunch. It was a beautiful plaza, scented with the blossom of orange trees and surrounded by small shops. Sitting on a nearby bench with my pack lunch from home, I prepared myself for a city tour.

#### **The Hostel, Food, and Day-to-Day Life**

After we had finished lunch, we had to unpack at the hostel. Although the beds were very small, the place comfortable – with a shower and private bathroom. Each morning, we had breakfast at the hostel and collected our packed lunches for the day. The lunches were a talking point, especially the tortilla sandwiches – Spanish omelette in bread - not exactly what most people expect to find in a sandwich. Every evening, we walked to El Cabildo restaurant for dinner. It was a huge place, clearly designed to handle large groups like ours – it translates as The Town Hall, which was appropriate. The food at El Cabildo divided opinion. Some people said it was fine, but others didn't enjoy it as much. At least there was desert to finish off every meal – usually ice cream.



### MFL Department: Sevilla Spanish Trip (cont)

#### **Tour of Sevilla**

In the afternoon of the first day, we went on a guided tour of Sevilla. Our tour was in Spanish – for improving our vocabulary. Sevilla is a southern city known for its bitter oranges, which are used in marmalades, perfumes, drinks and sauces. Sevilla began as a small Roman town, overshadowed by its neighbour Córdoba. Its importance grew under Muslim rule, when it became part of the wider region known as Al-Andalus, which covered much of southern Spain. The Muslims built up the city with impressive architecture and buildings, including city walls. Our tour took us to part of the old city wall, which is still incredibly well preserved. Standing next to it, you could see the skill and craftsmanship of the early Muslim builders. Later, in 1248, the city was conquered by the Christians under King Ferdinand III, and the region eventually became known by its current name - Andalucía. Many Muslim buildings were not destroyed but repurposed, so today there is an amazing fusion of Muslim and Christian (Western) architecture all over the city. One of the most amazing examples of this blend is the Cathedral of Sevilla. It is the third-largest cathedral in the world but was originally a mosque. Over more than a hundred years, it was gradually transformed into the cathedral we see today. Almost all of the churches were built over mosques. Sevilla became a rich and powerful city thanks to its river, the Guadalquivir, which allowed trade with the Americas. As a centre of commerce and exploration, it even attracted Christopher Columbus. His remains are kept in the cathedral.

Although Sevilla is full of ancient buildings, our tour also took us to some modern landmarks, including Las Setas, also known as the “Mushrooms”. It’s like a set of giant mushrooms hovering over a plaza, and it feels completely different from the historic areas of the city.





### MFL Department: Sevilla Spanish Trip (cont)

#### **Seville Cathedral**

On Tuesday, we had the chance to go inside Seville Cathedral. The high ceilings, stained glass windows and long corridor draw your eyes up from the floor to the ceiling – demonstrating how massive the building is. Around the main area of the cathedral were side chapels, each one with its own decorations and relics of Saints. We were told that people would come to these chapels to pray to specific Saints for various reasons – most likely because of illness. We also climbed the cathedral's tower, which is one of the tallest in the world. Instead of stairs, the tower has ramps which were designed so that people could ride horses up to the top. After all, if I wanted to ring the bell five times a day to signify prayer, I would not want to have to walk! From the top, we had an incredible view over both the old town, with its historic streets and rooftops, and the newer areas of the city stretching out beyond. I was instantly in awe. Being up there made Sevilla feel both ancient and alive at the same time.

#### **Spanish School – La Giralda**

As well as sightseeing, we also attended a Spanish language school called La Giralda. We had lessons there on two days of the trip. The aim was to learn about Spanish culture, with some speaking practice too. Both the teachers and the students were expected to speak only Spanish in class, which was challenging.

On the first day, we learnt about Spanish architecture and festivals. We were taught about Las Fallas, the festival where large mannequins are paraded through the city and then burnt in huge fires. We also discussed La Tomatina in Valencia, where people throw tomatoes at each other in a giant food fight. Then there is Running of the Bulls, or Encierro, which is the highlight of the annual San Fermín festival in Pamplona. It was interesting to see how many Spanish traditions are loud, colourful, and weirdly dangerous.

On the second day, the focus shifted to Spanish food and where different dishes come from. We learnt that paella comes from Valencia, pescado frito (fried fish) from the southern Andalusian coast, and that the Serranito is a sandwich-like specialty of Sevilla. Let's just say that not every meal at the hostel or El Cabildo quite lived up to the delicious pictures of food we saw in class.





### MFL Department: Sevilla Spanish Trip (cont)

#### **Royal Alcázar and Gardens**

Another highlight of the trip was visiting the Royal Alcázar of Sevilla. An “alcázar” is a type of Muslim fortification or palace, and this one is particularly famous for its stunning architecture. From the moment we walked in, it felt like stepping into a different world, full of arches, tiles, and geometric patterns. I could see how carefully everything had been planned and crafted. It was amazing to think that Spanish rulers had valued the work of Muslim craftsmen so highly that they preserved and continued using these buildings rather than destroying them. The Alcázar was also used as a residence by the Spanish royal family when they would visit Sevilla.

The gardens of the Alcázar were just as impressive as the buildings. Full of trees, fountains and carefully laid-out paths - it felt like a green maze designed for peaceful walks and secret conversations. The garden was surrounded by a wall, and we were able to climb up and walk along part of it and view the beautiful and vibrant gardens. Probably the most exciting thing about this excursion for my friends, was not the architecture – it was the peacocks. Just a few pieces of bread and they were walking right next to us! Their exquisite feathers were incredible.





### MFL Department: Sevilla Spanish Trip (cont)

#### **Plaza de España**

My favourite monument in Spain was the Plaza de España. Even though it looks like some grand, ancient monument, it was actually built in the 20th century. The building curves in a huge semi-circle around a central square with a fountain, and a canal runs around it with small bridges crossing over. You can even hire boats and row around the moat, which makes the whole place feel like a cross between a palace and a film set. Along the edges of the Plaza are tiled sections representing the different provinces of Spain. Each one has its own decoration, colours, and scenes, and it was fun to walk along and see how many of the place names we recognised. It also made it very clear just how many regions there are in Spain. The Plaza de España was easily the most beautiful place we saw on the trip because the mixture of water, architecture, and wide-open space made it feel both grand and luxurious. I sure would like to live there! But alas, our trip was cut short by rain.

#### **Córdoba**

On Thursday, we had a 7am start to take a coach trip to Córdoba, which is about 2h drive from Sevilla. This town had a more ancient feel to it. Our first big sight was a Roman bridge, which had been part of an aqueduct system and was later rebuilt as a river crossing. It was strange, but impressive, to see something so old still standing and in use.

As we ventured further into town, we saw more Roman influences: statues, monuments, and old stone buildings that hinted at how important the city was. We went inside a building that used to be a synagogue, which, we were told, had once served as a sort of quarantine centre for people with rabies. As rabies is a fatal disease, this would have been a very serious and isolated place. Despite this, much of the decorations on the walls were still there – oddly contrasting everything else we had seen so far.



We also visited the famous Mezquita-Catedral building with rows and rows of pillars, perfectly aligned in every direction. It had once been linked to an aqueduct and then later became a mosque and, eventually, a cathedral – another example of how the buildings here can change function over time. The sight of so many columns stretching out in straight lines showed just how precise and advanced the Muslim builders were.

After a day of exploring Córdoba's history and architecture, we returned to Sevilla in time for dinner. That evening, we had a buffet, which was a welcome change from the usual routine. My favourite dish was a tuna rice bowl, which stood out because it was tasty.



### MFL Department: Sevilla Spanish Trip (cont)



#### **Bullring and Bullfighting**

On the fifth and final day of our Spanish adventure, we visited the local bullring in Sevilla.

This bullring has 30–35 bullfights every year. Although we did not see an actual bullfight, we had a tour of the arena and learned about the history and traditions.

Bullfighting remains controversial, but it is still considered part of Spanish culture. Some aspects have been made illegal over time to reduce cruelty, but the basic structure of a bullfight has stayed the same. We discovered that there are three main parts to a bullfight, and there are always six bulls for every fight. The first part is the entrance, which includes the appearance of the bulls, the matador (the main bullfighter), and the picadors (men on horseback carrying lance-like sticks used to prick the bull). The second part is where the bullfighter must perform artistic movements with the bull, such as using colourful banderillas (decorated barbed sticks) to place in the bull's shoulders. The final part is the most serious, where the matador uses a cape and sword to kill the bull. We were told that, according to tradition, the bull's death must be "honourable". There is a specific place and angle where the sword must be inserted. Occasionally, if a bull has fought especially bravely, the matador may ask the audience to spare its life. If the crowd agrees, the bull is returned to its farm often becoming a father to the next generation.

**MFL Department: Sevilla Spanish Trip (cont)**

One interesting fact we learnt is that bulls are colour-blind. This means they are not actually angered by the red of the cape; the colour is purely symbolic and traditional.

Finally, we saw the chapel area where bullfighters can choose to pray before a fight. Walking through the bullring and hearing these details made it clear that, whether or not you agree with bullfighting, it plays a complicated and deeply rooted role in Spanish culture.

**Flamenco**

A particularly memorable part of the trip was our flamenco lesson. Flamenco is a traditional Spanish dance that is full of passion, rhythm, and dramatic movements. Unfortunately for us, those are not always the natural strengths of a group of teenagers. The lesson quickly turned into one of the funniest experiences of the whole week. Many people were pushed completely out of their comfort zone. All in all, I am glad they decided to do it this year – it was very funny.





### MFL Department: Sevilla Spanish Trip (cont)

#### **Shopping Centre and the Journey Home**

As a special treat on the final day, we were allowed to explore a local shopping centre – or “centro comercial” as they say in Spanish. This was our chance to spend our remaining euros and enjoy a bit of independence. For lunch, I had a taco from Taco Bell – Mexican fast food in the heart of Spain! My friends and I wandered through various shops. One of the most unusual things we found was a Pokémon card vending machine. There was also a comic store filled with interesting books and graphic novels, the kind of place you could easily get lost in for a while.

After our shopping adventure, we took the coach back to the airport. By this point, everyone was ready to go home. The mood on the plane was loud and boisterous – possibly a bit too loud for what is considered polite.

#### **Conclusion – Looking Back**

Looking back on our “Viaje a Sevilla”, it’s clear that it was much more than a simple sightseeing tour. It was a week of learning – not just about Spanish history and culture, but also about travelling with friends, trying new things, and dealing with the unexpected. From the early start at Gatwick to the final coach ride back to the airport and the late arrival home, there were moments of tiredness, excitement, confusion, and laughter.

Some of my favourite memories include standing in the Plaza de España, climbing the cathedral tower and looking out over the whole city and learning about Spain’s history in places like the Alcázar and Córdoba. In the end, I’m glad I went on this trip. It helped improve my Spanish, embrace their culture, and create memories which I will cherish for years to come.



By Liam Oulton 10S



**MFL Department:**

**BFI Historical Memory Trip - Spanish**

Tuesday 10th March brought the Spanish A-level students to the BFI IMAX, accompanied by **Mrs Gabriele and Miss Hayashida**, for a study day titled "**Trauma and Memory: Filming the Legacy of Dictatorships in Spain and Chile.**" While some students went in with low expectations, expecting the warm theatre hall to be a prime opportunity to catch up on sleep, they left with deep insight into one of Spain's greatest social issues: the "**Ley de Amnistía**" (Law of Amnesty).

Part of the A-Level Spanish curriculum involves a deep dive into the Spanish Civil War and Franco's dictatorship, one of the most draconian regimes of the 20th century. Despite this, in Spain, there is often widespread ignorance over this period; historically, there has been no consistent government mandate to teach the details of the Civil War. Why have so many forgotten such a significant period?

The Spanish "Law of Amnesty" of 1977 may hold the answers. This law freed all people imprisoned by Franco for their political beliefs; however, there was a catch. Any people who had committed crimes against humanity during this period were absolved of any punishment, in an attempt to create a "pact of forgetting" and move on from the events of the dictatorship. At the IMAX, students watched a documentary about the inspiring journey activists have taken to overturn this law, bring those criminals to justice, and rename the many streets across Spain named after war criminals. A Q&A session with one of these activists revealed the difficulty of this, given the government's stubborn stance on the law as well as the increasing support for Francoism among younger generations. As the event was conducted entirely in Spanish, it was no doubt a good opportunity for practice, and perhaps even inspired some future lawyers.

By Alfie Yuille U6



**MFL Department:****New year resolutions' hats from 8G French**

8G French combined art work and their recently acquired knowledge of future and past tenses to reflect on last year and engage with this year's dreams and action plans.

The result is as ever a colourful display of hats; the entries which made the podium included amazing art work as well as insightful quotes and amazing accuracy in all 3 tenses (past, present and future).

Congratulations to the winners Jacob Nadarajah, Edward Mendi and Vidit Kumar as well as runners up Nathan Chan, Sohaib Qureshi, Salih Liyas and Jayden Chan.

Hats will remain on display in ML2 till the end of the academic year.

C Mortreuil, Teacher of 8G French





### **MFL Department:**

At the end of January, the MFL students had the invaluable opportunity of going to the BFI for a workshop centred around the "Nouvelle Vague" or the French New Wave, a post-war cinematic movement in France, leading to the creation of some of the most well-known French movies ever made, such as *La Haine*, *Les quatre cents coups* and *À bout de souffle*. We learnt a lot about the style and the techniques of the "Nouvelle Vague" and we had the chance to watch and discuss clips from some of the films that perhaps the two most celebrated founders of the movement, (along with Chabrol) Jean-Luc Godard and François Truffaut, directed. We were also able to see how the "Nouvelle Vague" has evolved over time, watching *Bande des filles*, a film released in 2014 but in the style of the "Nouvelle Vague". In fact, this workshop inspired me to research further into the "Nouvelle Vague" for my French independent research project. Overall, the experience was both inspiring and engaging, giving us a deeper appreciation of French cinema and showing how influential and relevant the movement remains today.

By Adam Craigen - U6 student, studying French at A-level





### **Pride & Allies: Building a Community of Inclusion and Support**

Pride & Allies continues to be an important and welcoming part of our school community. The group is open to LGBTQ+ students and allies who want to meet others, learn more about identity, or simply spend time in a supportive and positive space during the school week.

At its heart, Pride & Allies is about creating a sense of belonging. School can sometimes feel challenging, especially for students who may be exploring their identity or trying to understand where they fit in. Pride & Allies offers a safe and respectful environment where students can talk openly, share experiences, and support one another while promoting understanding and acceptance across the wider school community.

Pride itself is about acceptance, confidence, and celebrating who you are. It reminds us that everyone deserves to feel respected and comfortable in their own identity. Gender identity refers to a person's internal sense of who they are, whether male, female, both, neither, or somewhere in between, and everyone experiences it differently. Pride encourages people to feel confident in themselves and recognise that diversity is something to be valued and celebrated.

The group meets every Friday during lunch in MA8 (old AR2). Each week offers something slightly different, including relaxed conversations, creative activities, and student led discussions. Students can get involved as much or as little as they like, whether that means taking part in discussions, meeting new people, or simply enjoying a welcoming and supportive space.

Pride & Allies also works in partnership with Free2B Alliance, a London based organisation that supports LGBTQ+ young people and their families. Their focus on wellbeing, empowerment, and education helps strengthen the support we provide within school. Through this partnership we are pleased to welcome JC from Free2B every other week to lead discussions, offer guidance, and support students who may want to talk or ask questions.

Looking ahead, there are several exciting events planned. One of these is the **House Pride Competition**, where students will have the opportunity to creatively express what Pride and allyship mean to them within their houses. This event will encourage students to share ideas, artwork, and projects that celebrate identity, inclusion, and respect. It will be a positive and creative way for the whole school community to engage with Pride.

Another highlight will be **Pride Week in June**, which will be our second full school celebration of Pride. The week will include themed days, student led activities, and opportunities to raise awareness about diversity and inclusion. Pride Week will be a chance for students across the school to come together, learn more about Pride, and celebrate the importance of acceptance and respect within our community.

More information about these events will be shared in the coming months, and students will be encouraged to get involved and help shape what these celebrations will look like.

Pride & Allies is open to everyone, including LGBTQ+ students, those who may be questioning, and allies who want to support a more inclusive and understanding school community. If you are interested in joining, come along on Fridays at lunch in MA8 and be part of a group that celebrates respect, positivity, and the freedom to be yourself.

By Saksham Wadhwa



**WCGS Marks International Women’s Day with Student-Led AST Events**

This year, the AST proudly marked International Women’s Day with a range of meaningful and uplifting events designed to celebrate women, raise awareness, and bring our school community together. Led by students with energy and commitment, the events reflected the values of respect, equality, and action that sit at the heart of the AST’s work.

A particular highlight was the very first **Student Sing Off**, which brought students together in a joyful celebration of music and solidarity. We are delighted to share that, through this event and our wider fundraising efforts, we have raised **£425 for Sutton Women’s Centre**, supporting the vital work they do for women in our local community.

We are incredibly proud of everyone who took part, performed, supported, and donated. Thank you to all students, staff, and families who helped make this year’s International Women’s Day events such a success. Our **JustGiving page is still open**, so if you would still like to donate, your support would be hugely appreciated: [https://www.justgiving.com/team/asteam?utm\\_medium=TE&utm\\_source=CL](https://www.justgiving.com/team/asteam?utm_medium=TE&utm_source=CL)





### **The Y12 and Y13 Interview skills Workshop with Talk the Talk Company**

Students in Year 12 and Year 13 recently had the exciting opportunity to participate in a workshop on interview skills, run by the Talk the Talk Company. The session provided invaluable guidance on how to approach interviews with confidence and professionalism.

During the workshop, students learned how to structure their answers effectively, communicate clearly, and make a positive impression on potential employers. They also practiced handling challenging questions, developing their self-presentation, and building the confidence needed to succeed in real-life interview scenarios.

The workshop was both enjoyable and highly valuable, giving students practical skills that will support them in future university or job applications. Many commented on how engaging the session was, and how useful the tips and exercises will be as they prepare for their next steps.

Overall, the experience was an excellent opportunity for students to gain insight, build confidence, and improve their employability skills in a fun and interactive setting.

Miss Paradis - Year 12 Leader





### Drama Department: Year 9 GCSE Drama students

We recently had the pleasure of welcoming Kerry Frampton from Splendid Productions to deliver a drama workshop for our Year 9 students and what an inspiring experience it was.

From the very beginning, Kerry brought an infectious energy into the room that immediately engaged every student. It was wonderful to see students step outside their comfort zones, take creative risks, and truly immerse themselves in the activities. They were soon creating pan shots, tumbling and balancing at an advanced level.

What stood out most was Kerry's rapport with the students. She treated them with genuine respect and enthusiasm, listening carefully to their ideas and encouraging them to explore their creativity. Watching her work was not only a fantastic opportunity for the students, but also incredibly valuable for staff. By the end of the session, the growth in confidence, teamwork, and performance skills was clear to see.

We are incredibly grateful to Kerry for such a memorable and enriching experience. It was a joy to see her working with our Year 9 students, and we very much hope to welcome her back again in the future.



"We had an absolutely fantastic day with Kerry from Splendid! I enjoyed all the group and pair work activities and especially learned a lot of the different ways to act out scenes and build character, from creating inspiring ideas to learning and using new ones. Everything we covered that day was just terrifically phenomenal! The techniques and styles we have learned from her when it comes to paired or group work really was fascinating, useful and fun. I am so glad I got to spend time with Kerry that day learning these new things and I hope to use these techniques again and again in the future!"

Sheranka Fernando Year 9 GCSE Drama



### Drama Department:

#### Dear England- New Wimbledon Theatre, Year 10 GCSE Drama trip

Our Year 10 Theatre Studies trip to see Dear England at the New Wimbledon Theatre gave us the opportunity to experience a live professional performance based on the story of the England national football team and their journey under manager Gareth Southgate.



The play explores themes of pressure, teamwork, and national identity, showing how the team worked to overcome past failures and change their mindset. Visiting the theatre allowed us to observe how acting, staging, lighting, and sound are used in a professional production, helping us understand how the techniques we study in class are applied in a real performance.

#### Whole School Production Oliver! 2026

The whole school production of *Oliver!* by Lionel Bart was a fantastic opportunity for students from across the school to collaborate, perform, and be part of a large-scale theatrical experience. Bringing together performers, musicians, designers, and backstage crew, the production showcased an incredible range of talent and teamwork. For many students, it was their first experience of working on a full musical, while others returned with greater confidence and responsibility.





### **Drama Department: Whole School Production Oliver! 2026 (cont)**

**Joshua Wahab Year 10** - This year the cast ranged from year 7 all the way to year 13 and through the long rehearsals, tech and shows everyone truly bonded! Perhaps, the brilliant score or the beautiful plot rubbed off on us all and it really felt like we were all in one gang! The final night was really sensational and I remember turning back to the stage and seeing everyone's faces - sheer joy!

**Simon Wozniewski Year 8** - Being part of Oliver! was a really special experience for me. I was in the ensemble and also played Oliver in Act 2, which felt like a big responsibility but also something I was really proud to do. At the start rehearsals were a bit scary because there was so much to learn, but over time they became one of my favourite parts of the week. What made it most special was the friendships we made. Everyone supported each other, whether it was helping someone remember a line, fixing a costume, or just wishing each other luck before going on stage. It felt like we were all part of one big team. Being on stage in front of the audience was amazing. It was a little nerve-racking waiting to go on, but once I was there it felt really exciting, and hearing the audience react made all the hard work worth it. I learned a lot about confidence, teamwork, and not giving up when something feels challenging. I'll always remember being part of Oliver! because it wasn't just about performing, it was about the memories we made together.

**Oli Quinney Year 8** - When looking back on Oliver!, I have realised that it was more than just a production. It brought people together from across the school to perform an amazing show. I remember the last night being such a party, with everyone singing some of the main numbers altogether after the performance had ended. I remember in some of the rehearsals when it looked like the play would not be ready to be performed, however thanks to the music and drama departments, it was perfected in time. Overall, Oliver is a production I will never forget.





### **Drama Department: Whole School Production Oliver! 2026 (cont)**

**Heli Patel Year 13** - *Being part of the show required dedication, creativity, and many hours of rehearsal, but it also created a strong sense of community and shared achievement. In the reflections that follow, students share their thoughts on what it was like to take part in Oliver!, the challenges they faced, the skills they developed, and the memories they will take away from being part of such a special production.*

*I know I wanted to be on stage at least once in my life. One time as dancing, one time as singing and one time acting. I always loved how people were able to get on that stage, embody a character and bring them to life, living their life, saying their story and putting everything else behind them. Therefore when I had the chance in year 13 to be able to get on stage before I would likely not be able to after sixth form me and Gabi decided we wanted to be a part of that stage. Big or small roles, but be a part of that world, that storytelling, making the audience feel something, say something, do something because we could make a difference.*

*Picking the role made me sort of laugh and resonate with Mrs. Sowerberry. Being someone who likes to boss her close friends around and taking that motherly role felt comfortable to work in. Upon auditioning for the role, I can most definitely say that I was NOT ready. The environment was beautiful to be in. So many people rehearsing, dedicated to their role, mesmerising to the point you simply can't look away from them when they practice and when they're auditioning. I remember the nerves being really high at that time, trying to match the performances that others were giving, having only done small acts before, this seemed like a big step forward.*

*During rehearsals, working in a massive team, with a crew and other fellow actress and actresses felt amazing, it felt unique and once in a lifetime, throughout the journey I met a lot of people I would have not otherwise known, stepped out into a world and field where I was once very hesitant and nervous to belong to yet here it felt a lot more like home.*

*During performance days and the final day leading up to them everything felt surreal. From being able to wear a specialised costume for my character to how each accessory made such a difference to the representation of my character, being in this production felt much like a dream come true. Being able to get up on stage and act in front of a massive audience. Bringing that funny, bossy and yet somewhere deep down nice and misunderstood character to life felt beautiful and impactful. I enjoyed my role, it may not have been as pivotal to others yet to me it was pivotal to my life and what I wanted to achieve.*

*Overall, I learnt alot from participating. You'd think it'd have a lot to do with the techniques of a performance and how to conduct yourself as a performer, but more to do with the sense of community, of belonging and of being able to tell that story, being the person I once admired. I may not have done an excellent job, maybe not even a good one but the entire process and journey, taught me so much about the how, the what and the why of being on that stage. That journey and those moments weren't simply just a tickbox on what I want to do at least once in my life but now a collection of funny, hard, stressful yet beautiful memories that led me to being on that stage acting at least once in my life. Thank you for the opportunity.*

**James Frost Year 9** - *It was brilliant! I definitely didn't have the biggest role in the play. Nonetheless, I found it fabulous. The atmosphere that came with every rehearsal could not be replicated. I feel as though I fostered some really good friendships whilst doing it. It definitely could not have been done without the amazing guidance of Mrs Tanner, Mrs Shears, Mrs Martin and Mrs Spendlove. Their supportiveness was phenomenal!*

*Participating in the School Production is definitely something that I would recommend.*



**Drama Department: Whole School Production Oliver! 2026 (cont)**



**Ali Hadi Year 13** - As a member of Upper Sixth, this production of Oliver will always be one of my most treasured memories, I still remember playing an ensemble role in my Year 7 production of Oliver, starry eyed as I saw proper real theater for the first time, and with the help of Mrs Shears, Mrs Tanner, Mrs Martin and Mrs Spendlove who spent many sleepless nights working on the smallest of details of the play, I and my friends were able to relive those memories of Year 7, no longer delegated to supporting positions, but now as the starring roles. The sheer scale of this production, the top notch costume and the collaboration of tech, set design and musicians all made me feel that same awe from Year 7 again, thank you so much for allowing us Upper Sixth to relive that key moment from our past, as well as giving all the coming younger years a taste of real theater!

**Theo Gabriel 8T** - Oliver was a great experience, everything that happened there was just so entertaining. For example, the friendships I formed are something that I don't think would have happened if I didn't do Oliver. The older years were so helpful with everything as well as Mrs Tanner and Mrs Shears going over everything so many times it got engraved into my mind. Overall, Oliver gave me an experience that I will never forget.

**Vivienne Lim Year 13-** As someone who has not performed a school show since Yr 6 , Oliver! genuinely changed my life. From last minute rehearsals to making new friends from yr 7-13, it was an amazing experience and I am very proud to call it my first and final high school musical performance! I would like to thank especially Ms Shears and Ms Tanner who boosted my confidence throughout the journey and become the Charlotte of Oliver! 2026.



### Drama Department: GCSE Exams

This year's GCSE Drama performances were a great success, highlighting not only the talented performers but also the impressive work of the costume and lighting design candidates. The students had the chance to show their skills across a wide range of texts, including the thought-provoking works of Harold Pinter, Peter Shaffer, and exciting pieces by new playwrights.



The inclusion of design candidates added an extra level of creativity and professionalism to the productions, with carefully designed costumes and striking lighting helping to bring each piece to life. The students' dedication and hard work were clear in every part of the performances, from the engaging acting to the impressive technical design.

We are extremely proud of their efforts and the way they embraced the challenges, producing work that truly showcased their talent, creativity, and commitment to GCSE Drama.



### Drama Department: A level

This year's A Level Drama performances were a powerful showcase of the students' creativity, commitment, and growing artistic maturity. The performances demonstrated a high level of skill across both acting and design, with students taking on challenging material and delivering thoughtful, engaging work.

A standout moment came from Tolga, Ali, and Luwa in their performance of *Art* by Yasmina Reza. Their work captured the sharp humour and underlying tension of the play, with excellent chemistry and clear character choices that brought the relationships between the characters vividly to life. Minwook's set design made a strong visual impact, thoughtfully supporting the performances and helping to establish the atmosphere of each piece.

Ali also delivered a masterful and commanding performance as the Ringmaster from *The Real and Imagined History of the Elephant Man*, demonstrating strong physicality, presence, and control. His performance was both captivating and unsettling, perfectly matching the tone of the piece.



Luwa and Tolga also took on material from *The Pillowman* by Martin McDonagh, creating a performance that was intense and deeply harrowing. Their work handled the difficult themes of the play with sensitivity and conviction, leaving a lasting impression on the audience.

Overall, the A Level performances showed remarkable dedication and ambition. The students embraced complex texts and demanding roles, producing work that highlighted their talent, confidence, and commitment to the craft of theatre.

### Coulsdon and Purley Festival for Speech and Drama

**Charles Wood Year 11** - March 1st was the first day for the Coulsdon and Purley Festival for Speech and Drama. It is a big competition celebrating music and drama that happens roughly during February to April. As part of my speech and drama lessons outside of school, we get entered into it every year with the pieces we are working on for our exam. This year was my ESB Grade 8 speech and drama exam so I was entered for a structured speech with a presentation and an acting piece. My speech was on oligopolies and I performed an excerpt from 'A History of Breathing' by Daniel Macdonald for the acting. I managed to get 87 and 88/100 respectively and even placed first out of my section of 10 people for both.

Well done to Charles, a wonderful achievement!





### Music Department: House Music

House Music was once again a huge success, with this year's performances arguably reaching the highest quality we have ever seen, across all of the houses. The competition was incredibly fierce; our panel of alumni judges—Barney Downer, Kyle Onyango, and Noah Findell—had a difficult task on their hands, as only a few points separated the Houses!

A huge congratulations to **Ruskin House** for taking home the trophy this year. 2nd place: Carew, 3rd place: Mandeville, 4th place: Woodcote, 5th place: Bridges, 6th place: Radcliffe

We would also like to highlight several standout individual performances that caught the judges' eyes:

**Best Solo Performance:** Alex Atananov, Y13 (Mandeville)

**Best Original Composition:** Luke Thever, Y13 (Ruskin)

**Exceptional Performance Mention:** Simon Wozniewski Y8 and Stephen Szaniszló Y13 (Carew)

I would also like to extend a special thank you to Murilo Drigo Cagliari and Bridges House. Their suggestion to use a visual projection of our instrumentalists added a layer of professionalism that made the evening even more enjoyable for our wonderful audience. Also, a special thank you to our amazing Visual Arts team; Eesa Chaudhri, Thomas Cheung, Luke Thever, Vihan Nirmal, Elliott Little and Ian Veit.

Thank you to everyone who attended and supported our students. We are so proud of the immense talent showcased on that stage!

Mrs Martin





### **Geography Department: Year 11 Trip to Stratford**

This term, the Year 11 Geography cohort had the opportunity to visit Stratford for a day that was focused on developing their understanding of fieldwork in preparation for their paper 3 exam in the summer, and particularly focused on highlighting how the concept of sports-led regeneration has been able to influence the area's development. Students were taken to a number of different sites across Stratford, including the East Village, Hackney Wick and Maryland, which offered students a varied perspective of the area. With the support of experts from the Field Studies Councils, the boys were guided through the process of conducting successful, well-thought out analysis of an area, through collecting data and thinking critically about the different locations they visited. The boys had the opportunity to go out and collect their own data, and whether it was completing an Environmental Quality Survey or interviewing members of the public, we were all greatly impressed with their enthusiasm with the process and their curiosity in the area and the changes that have taken place. Overall, a successful day of Geography was certainly had, where the Year 11's were able to learn and apply new skills and expand their Geographical horizons beyond the classroom, whilst challenging themselves and their understandings of how development can transform an area. In more great news for the Year 11's, at the end of the term they will have the chance to do this all over again as we move from the focus on human geography towards physical, as we visit the River Tillingbourne in Surrey. Despite the shift in focus, students will be able to use lots of the transferable skills that they picked up on our day in Stratford, and apply it to our fieldwork investigation into how a river's characteristics change between the upper, middle and lower courses.



### **Year 7's exploration of Geographical Information System's**

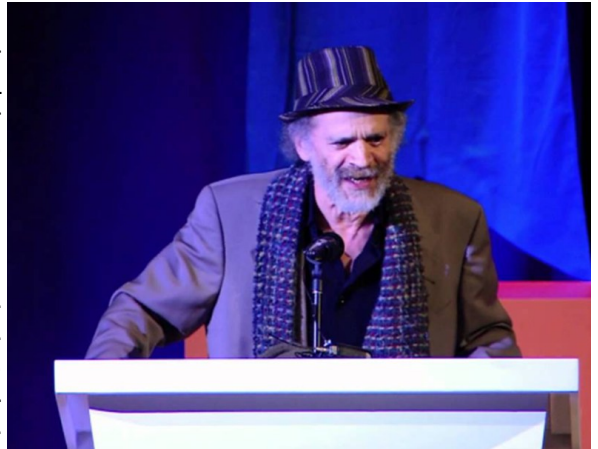
In the ever-changing world of technology, it is important that as successful geographers, we stay up to date with these developments and use the great opportunities that technology can provide us to elevate both our learning and our understanding of a place. As a result, this term the Year 7 Geography cohort had the opportunity to complete a 3-lesson project using Geographical Information Systems (or GIS), a software that brings together maps and data to provide a platform for geo-spatial analysis. As this project was started at the end of our topic on Coasts, the students were asked to use the GIS software to create a 'story map' of the Holderness coast, an area in the North East of England that we had discussed and learnt a lot from throughout the topic. It was fantastic to read the variety of students' work, including fantastic and detailed analysis of different coastal defenses, different landforms we had learnt about, or areas at greater risk of erosion. Using the software, the students were able to map their analysis and their answers to the fieldwork aims of this project onto their chosen locations along the Holderness Coast, ultimately producing an engaging, interactive map. A special mention must go to Prithvi Vinodh in 7T, Danish Ahmad in 7C, Bobby Hart in 7G, Mitesh Veerasekar in 7S and Wrangler Benny in 7W for their effort in submitting a brilliant GIS story map.



### **English Department: Poetry Live 2026**

Recently, some year 11 students had the opportunity to go to the event 'Poetry Live 2026'. We have been studying poetry for the last year and this was a great opportunity to learn more about the poems we have analysed in class directly from the poets, and also to understand more about the writing process and how they go about it. Most people including me hadn't ever witnessed a live poetry reading before, so it was definitely a new experience.

The day was split between readings, discussion and questions from poets, and a few lessons on unseen poetry analysis from the head examiner of AQA. These lessons were immensely useful in helping us understand that the unseen poetry is a test of interpretation and critical thinking as opposed to blind analysis.



We got to hear poems from the current poet laureate Simon Armitage and former poet laureate Carol Ann Duffy, who read numerous poems including standouts from the anthology we are studying for our GCSEs. They delved into the deep history and purpose of each choice they made and why they had written each work with brutal honesty sometimes; Carol Ann Duffy stating that for one particular poem she had only written it as a commission. Many poems had a deeper purpose however, such as 'Remains' by Simon Armitage which was an artistic recount of a soldier's experience with PTSD. The headline act however was John Agard for sure - a legendary poet with a rich and wizened perspective on life which he effortlessly used to inspire the crowd. He was met with rapturous applause and immediately began reading some of his works. He spoke about his heritage and life experience that inspired the poems and it was very interesting to hear his views. As a final performance he read 'Checking Out Me History' in which he tweaked and changed certain verses to provide a novel interpretation and performance. This created a really personal connection to the live poem, because it was something that has never been heard the same before, and also provided us a slightly wider perspective. He got the crowd singing along in the closing verses, before finishing and swiftly exiting the stage to a standing ovation and applause that must have lasted over a minute. Mr Rhodes-Brandon had the privilege of serendipitously meeting him after the event, and I myself was able to pass on my appreciation to him briefly before he boarded his train.

A few students including I were deeply inspired by the event, and have consequently commenced writing our own poetic works. We have made plans to potentially start a poetry group in which ideas and interpretations are discussed, and poems are read. Overall this was a fantastic opportunity that has built on our preexisting knowledge of poetry, allowing us to be more confident in exams but also to understand and appreciate poetry more deeply.

By Elliott Little





**English Department: Poetry Sharing**

Poems from our Poet Laureate, Daniel Luck (L6BR):

**New Year's Poem**

At New Year's I find crumbled candy-canes at the back of my throat,  
scratching at the fiery-red patch of burned brandy from days-old christmas pud,  
its sweetness doesn't lend itself to the Salmon en Croûte leftovers my mum continues to make.

I find myself hugging more friends than family members,  
perhaps we lose them in the haze from Christmas up to now,  
at least that's what the radio seems to have said.

And though I've only learnt to listen to it in the car rides from place to place,  
I wasn't surprised to find myself pondering what I'd do with seven hundred and seventy seven  
in the armchair of the barbers I've been to for the last decade.

I would pay off the crippling debt, if that was only how regrets worked,  
as if the year-gone-by could be wiped with the swipe of my new credit card  
for that cold brew coffee machine with felt filter, built-in dispenser and additional glass carafe.

Really I would buy back the time spent away from my mother,  
her eyes always seemed brighter when she was with me,  
I forget we used to bake the salmon together, on a slight stove in a slanted cottage, or something of the sort.

I move past New Year's without a resolution, they'll cycle back in a half decade,  
but for now they are pop-culture trends masquerading as traditions, and I don't want to take apart  
my resolution to be indie, hip, and have niche interests.

I poured rum on my Christmas Pudding this year instead.

I don't remember learning which day it was again,  
must have been sometime in early January,  
after my birthday but before I had forgotten all about it,  
and so I no longer needed a diary to keep.



**English Department: Poetry Sharing (cont)**

Poems from our Poet Laureate, Daniel Luck (L6BR):

**Miss Easter Paw**

In overgrown grass and sun-built meadows,  
Chimes crickets and bees in a drowsy delight,  
Where petals lay soft in the hush of the shadows,  
And dew drops still cling from the whisper of night,  
There wandered, with basket and bonnet of straw,  
The sprightly, soft-padded young Miss Easter Paw.  
She skipped through the clover with ribbons of cheer,  
Her ears tied in bows of pale lavender hue,  
Humming of springtime now blossoming near,  
Counting the eggs that the morning wind blew,  
For tucked in each hollow and nestled just right,  
Were treasures she'd painted by candlelit night.  
Her neighbours - a duckling, two lambs and a wren -,  
With garlands of daisies and sprigs of fresh thyme,  
Would gather at noon by the old willow glen,  
To share sugared sweets and soft songs set to rhyme,  
And laugh at the breeze as it danced through the trees,  
With pollen and petals afloat on the seas.  
They sat in the sunbeams that flickered and played,  
While clouds drifted lazily over the blue,  
Old Mole brought out cakes in a basket he'd made,  
And cups filled with nectar the honeybees brewed,  
For even in meadows where quiet winds draw,  
Joy bloomed every Easter for Miss Easter Paw.



**English Department: Poetry Sharing (cont)**

Poems from our Poet Laureate, Daniel Luck (L6BR):

**Tiny Pink Ballet Slippers**

In tiny pink ballet slippers  
I watch my daughter grow to be 7 feet tall,  
And wonder if she will want to be a dancer when  
She's no longer so little.

In red sparkled heels  
I watch my daughter fly from Kansas  
Listening to Toto,  
And I wonder if she will want to be an actress when  
The movies come to call.

In black polished boots  
I watch my daughter fling caps in the air,  
And I wonder if she'll want to read poetry when  
Books are written about her.

In world old loafers  
I watch my daughter come back home again,  
Carrying stories in her step,  
And I wonder if she'll still remember  
Tiny pink ballet slippers,  
And the dreams we first imagined there.



**English Department: Poetry Sharing (cont)**

Poems from our Poet Laureate, Daniel Luck (L6BR):

**Backwards Smile**

and only in her backwards smile  
can I read the words her lips want to say.  
In her eyes too  
I fear she sees the best in me  
when she stares, infrequently,  
I stare back too.

Her hair which falls so perfectly  
each strand I'd brush past  
on my way I would fold  
purposefully, into her arms  
and there I would lay.

I don't need her to latch onto me  
but I want her to express comfort in movements  
not losing sight of how far she's come.

I've been thinking she's happier now;  
I want her to be.

In her rosy laugh I try not to be seen  
but the truth is she feels like someone I will always want to know.  
I have always adored the spotlight,  
I want her to be the one that's shining.

I bring her flowers on Valentine's  
to see her pride bloom, in each petal  
she comforts,  
I imagine her palm in mine,  
Begotten in time.



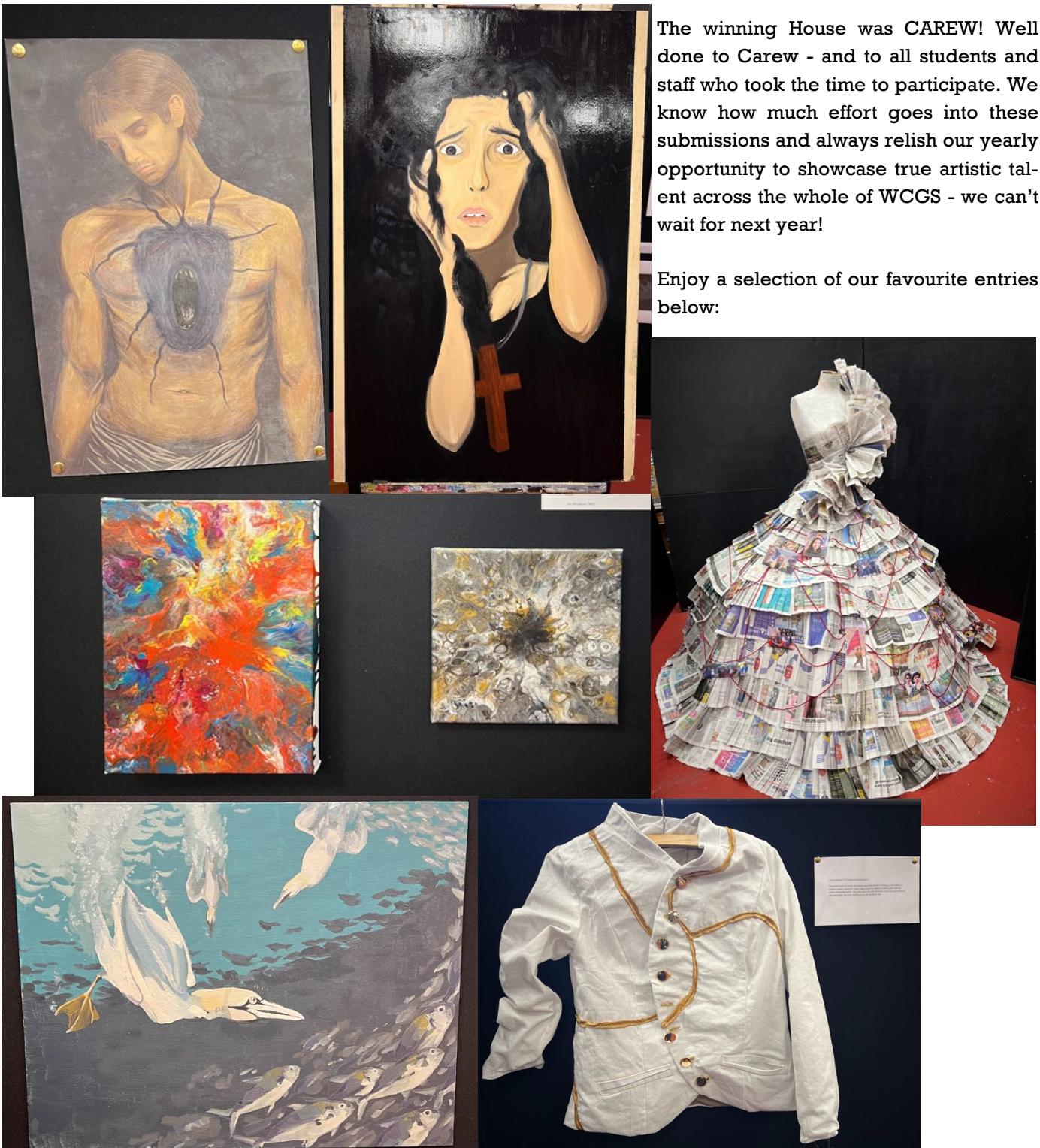
**Art Department: House Art 2026 - Chaos & Order**

This year the theme for House Art was Chaos and order - fractured harmony; exploring the duality of structure and spontaneity. We were hugely inspired by this year's submissions, and the standard was extraordinarily high. The competition saw entries occupying a variety of mediums, using a vast array of materials, ranging from paper sculptures to textile submissions; all were carefully considered in their connection to the theme, and demonstrated a wealth of creativity and invention across all key stages.

Our judges were both impressed and overwhelmed by this feast for the eyes, but after careful consideration and a very detailed scoring system, special mentions were announced and a winning House was declared.

The winning House was CAREW! Well done to Carew - and to all students and staff who took the time to participate. We know how much effort goes into these submissions and always relish our yearly opportunity to showcase true artistic talent across the whole of WCGS - we can't wait for next year!

Enjoy a selection of our favourite entries below:





**Art Department: Doodle Club**

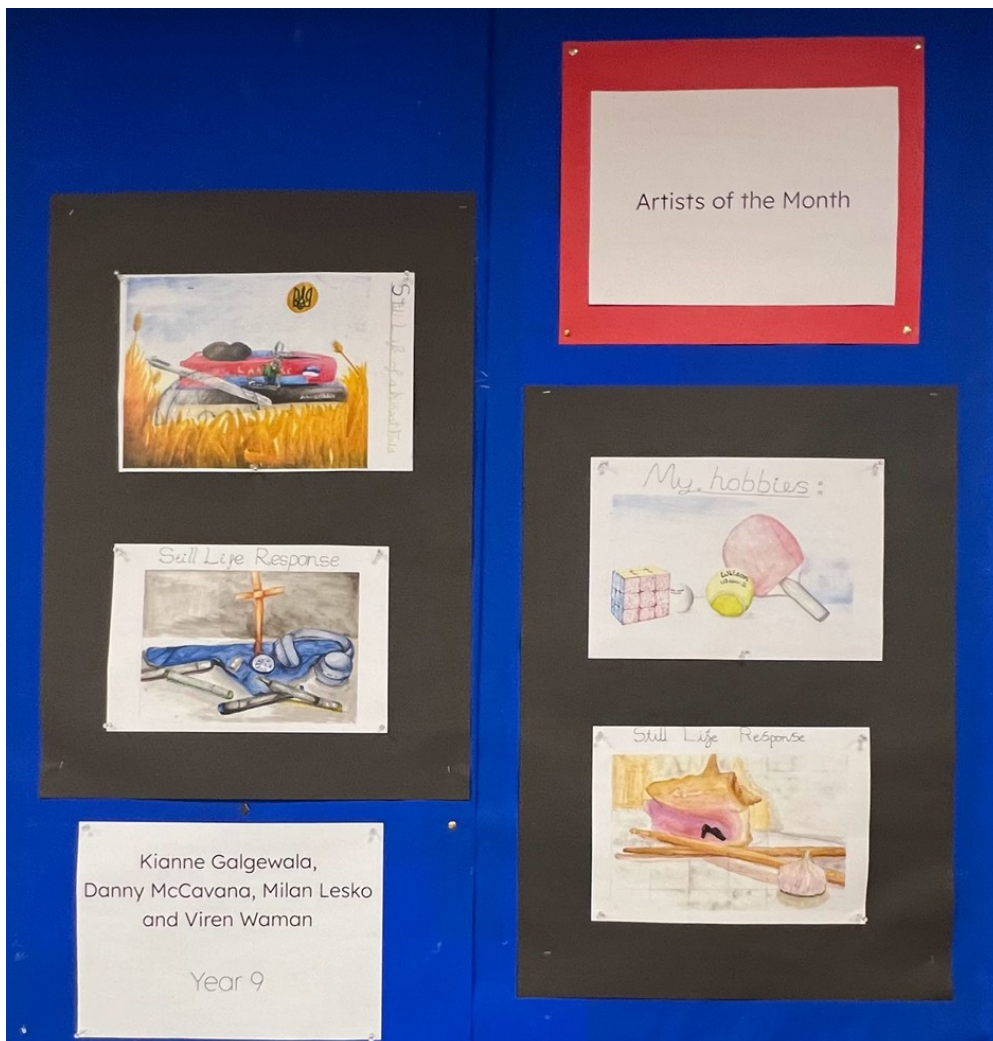
The Friday Doodle Club continues to be a popular place to be on a Friday afternoon. This club is all about providing students with a communal area in which to unwind and free draw after a busy week.

It has been fantastic to see our students connecting their spontaneous drawing styles with the work of professional artists such as Jon Burgerman, Hattie Stewart and The Doodle Boy (Joe Whale).

Our weekly sessions are a testament to the idea that creativity is the ultimate tool for unwinding and finding yourself.

**Artists of the Month**

Congratulations to Kianne Galgewala, Danny McCavana, Milan Lesko and Viren Waman in Year 9 for their thoughtful and considered pieces!



Kianne Galgewala,  
 Danny McCavana, Milan Lesko  
 and Viren Waman  
 Year 9



**Art Department: Year 8 Masterclass with Mrs Paliotta**

Year 8 Art Masterclass are beginning to embark on some adventurous new projects. Looking back this term, we have touched upon the basics of oil painting, working alongside a few of our Y9 GCSE students, and have spent time on some blind biro observational drawings, paying attention to the contours and form of our primary sources and using a continuous line. We were also inspired by the ink splattered chaotic critters of artist Ralph Steadman, and enjoyed overcoming the 'fear of the blank page' by using ink splatters, followed by nib pens to create the abstract form of a creature! Some examples of these can be found below.

As we approach next term we will be beginning a mini printing project, beginning with polyboards and moving on to drypoint etching, with a view to producing a collective piece on a large canvas that we can display at our yearly exhibition at Vellum Mill Gallery in July. Well done everybody!





### **Art Department: Articulation public speaking competition**

Aarav Ram (Year 12) represented Wallington Grammar at the regional heat of Articulation at the Dulwich Picture Gallery in London on 14th January 2026, competing for a place in the London finals. Aarav spoke eloquently and enthusiastically on the topic of Van Gogh, linking his and other artists' work to mental health, and the emotional power of painting. He confidently answered tricky probing questions from this year's formidable judge Dr Nick Makoha and was up against some extremely insightful and polished entries from a selection of other London schools. Despite missing out on a place, Aarav clearly impressed Dr Makoha and was given some extremely complimentary feedback - we are very proud of his outstanding achievement and accomplished representation at this esteemed competition.

Well done Aarav!





**Happy Holidays!**

We hope all of our students have a restful and restorative break, returning refreshed for the new term. Over the Easter holidays, we encourage everyone to take the opportunity to visit an art gallery or exhibition on a rainy day. This year, we recommend David Hockney: A Year in Normandie and Some Other Thoughts About Painting at Serpentine North and also Hurvin Anderson at the Tate Britain.



*From everyone at WCGS,  
we wish you a very wonderful  
Easter term break and look forward  
to seeing you again  
in mid April 2026.*

***\* Happy Easter!\****