



Dear parents and carers,

As Term 3 ends, here is our latest blog which again is full of updates of some of the great work going on here.

In the past 2 weeks, Year 11 have completed their final prelim examinations before their real GCSE examinations this Summer. Staff are now busy marking all the papers so detailed feedback can be given to all 150 students to aid their final preparations. Year 13 will be having their final prelims after half term and we wish them every success.

Our 6th Form continues to be incredibly popular as young people in the local area know that they will receive a high quality education here and will leave with grades that enable them to progress to the next stage in their lives. This week we passed 600 applications to join our 6th form in September 2023! That is higher than ever before and is testament to all the great work going on here.

Lower down the school, rehearsals continue for our drama production of Shrek which we are looking forward to at the end of March. Look out for ticket details soon.

Many of you have spoken to me to ask for the amount of school trips to start moving back to pre-COVID levels and I can confirm we are doing that. Last Friday the whole of Year 11 had the opportunity to attend a Poetry event in London linked to their GCSE courses and this week our A Level Art students are also in London to visit a gallery to support their studies. Soon after half term we have a University visit, Duke of Edinburgh expeditions and more.

Congratulations to our new School Captains Team who you can read about in the Blog. I am looking forward to working closely with them in the next 12 months as we continue to improve our school for our students.

Finally, you will see in the blog information about the Kent Teacher Of The Year Awards. I know many parents are very grateful to our staff for all the help they provide. If you would like to nominate one of the team for this award, please may I encourage you to do so – details inside.

My best wishes to you all for a happy half-term break. I will update you again at the start of the March.

Mr L. Preston

Principal

Key Dates -

- **Friday 10th February - Sixth Form Art and Design Trip**
- **Friday 10th February - Last Day of Term 3**
- **Monday 20th February - First Day of Term 4**
- **Monday 20th February - Cambridge Trip**
- **W/C 20th February - Year 13 Language Orals**
- **Saturday 25th February - DofE Practice Day Walk**
- **W/C 27th February - WC 6th March - Year 13 Prelims**
- **Friday 10th March - Year 12 Apprenticeship Fair**
- **Friday 17th March - Year 12 Biology Trip (Wakehurst Place)**

Captains' Team

We have been very lucky this year and are blessed with a superb Captains' Team. The applications and interviews were all strong, as they always have been, and we would like to congratulate each and every one of the team for their success in becoming a Captain.

The Captains' team are already hard at work, in assemblies, looking after the Prefects, creating events, interviewing for media coverage, speaking to all year groups, creating review panels, the list goes on.

We at HGS would like to wish them a happy and successful term in office and look forward to seeing the great work and results we are sure they will provide.



Head Boy - Timi Soyinka, Head Girl - Amy-Rose Friend, Deputy Head Boy - Joseph Button, Deputy Head Girl and Head Prefect - Angelica Ezeugwu, Sports Captain - Sam Bent, Community Liason and Senior Prefect - Oliver Tomlin, E Ambassador and Social Media - Hayden Durling, Events Co-Ordinator - Callum Riley, Head of Thinking - James Hann, Culture and Vision - Ryan Gurnett, Vice Sports Captain - Jack Lane

**Nominate ANY
member of school
staff by
28 February**

**KENT
TEACHER
OF
THE
YEAR**

www.kmcharityteam.co.uk/ktoty

LAST CHANCE TO ENTER
24TH FEBRUARY 2023

PEARSON
NATIONAL
TEACHING
AWARDS

Thank you so much for the sheer joy and pride
this Award has brought to our school community!
— 2022 Gold Winner

Supported by
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teachingawards.com

Year 12 Biology Lessons

Biology students from Year 12 got stuck into, literally, their required practical lesson involving the dissection of a lamb's heart. One of the A-Level biologists, Alfred, was greatly looking forward to carrying it out, explaining as he went, exactly what he was doing and what each part of the heart was. As you can see, the students carried out the practical safely and professionally, with Mr. Phillips very close by for supervision. The students showed such great maturity and poise that they could have been mistaken for trained surgeons!



Shrek Jr

The cast of Shrek JR rehearsed last Saturday to ensure that they are well prepared and able to provide you with an opportunity to watch a fantastic show. Tickets will be on sale soon and the cast look forward to a full house!



Medway Council RSE Survey

Medway Council are running a survey on young people's views and experiences of Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) in Medway. This is a great opportunity for young people to have their say about RSE, while helping Medway understand what is working and what can be improved.

If your young person would like to complete the survey, please click on this [link](#). The closing date is Friday 24th February 2023.

Classcharts - Reminder

A quick reminder that all absences including appointments are to be logged on Classcharts. If the appointment is for part of the school day, this is still to be logged under 'report absence' and then click on 'report new absence'. Under 'reason for absence' you will be able to log the time frame of when your child will be absent. This will then go to our Attendance Officer who will be able to log this on our system. If you have any problems accessing this please email the office who will support.

DofE Update

The Year 9 Students have all been enrolled into the Award and should have received in the post to their home address their DofE Welcome pack. These students should by now have set up their eDofE accounts and started their chosen activities.

Year 10 students have been attending training session in preparation for their Practice Expedition on Saturday 17th February 2023. The students successfully passing this day walk will be able to then attend the Qualifying Expedition in March. A separate letter will be sent out regarding both of these expeditions.

eDofE Drop-in sessions are taking place every Thursday lunchtime from 13:25 – 13:45 in B15 for any students in Years 9 or 10 to come along to if they need any help with their eDofE online account.

Mr Giles Phillips
DofE Awards Coordinator

Thinking at Holcombe

22nd February 2023 is World Thinking Day. Holcombe will be celebrating the theme of 'Our World, Our Peaceful Future' all week through assemblies, extra-curricular activities, competitions and lessons.

See the poster on the following page for the World Thinking Day Competition entry details - with prizes to be won.

Look out for more information in school, and on teams, as to how departments will be exploring this theme.

Trips

It is great to be able to report that school trips are increasing. We have organised Geography trips to Minister and Ashford for their GCSEs, Art and Design Trips to London Galleries, Language Conferences, trips to both Buggy Malone and Wicked performances as well as educational trips to Cambridge University. In order for us to ensure the safety of each trip we must have consent forms (and payments) completed by the deadline. To ensure that paperwork is completed on time for these trips to take place we will be enforcing the deadlines and therefore if the paperwork is not completed on time the student will not be allowed on the trip. Consent forms cannot be changed once the deadline has passed.

If at any stage you (parent/carer) has difficulty with any paperwork or consent form please contact the office who will support.

Microsoft Office 365

We just wanted to provide you with an update about the access your children have access to Microsoft Office 365 through their school login. This means that they have access to a variety of tools that can help them better organise their school work and collaborate with their peers.

Office 365 is a great way for students to get the most out of their education. It includes a suite of programs such as Word, Excel, PowerPoint, OneNote, Teams and Outlook. These programs can help students stay on top of their work and become better organised.

Key benefits include;

- **Access Anywhere:** Office 365 for students can be accessed from virtually any device, including PCs, Macs, smartphones, and tablets. This allows students to access their documents and work from any location.
- **File Sharing:** Office 365 for students makes it easy to collaborate with classmates and teachers. Files can be shared and edited in real-time, helping students and faculty work together more efficiently.
- **Cloud Storage:** Office 365 for students provides 1 TB of cloud storage, which allows students to access their files from any device and share them with others.
- **Professional Tools:** Office 365 for students includes professional-grade applications, such as Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. This helps students create professional-looking documents and presentations.

Furthermore, Office 365 is cloud-based, which means that students can access their work from anywhere with an internet connection. This means that they can easily collaborate on projects with their peers, regardless of their physical location. Office 365 also makes it easy to share documents with their teachers quickly and efficiently.

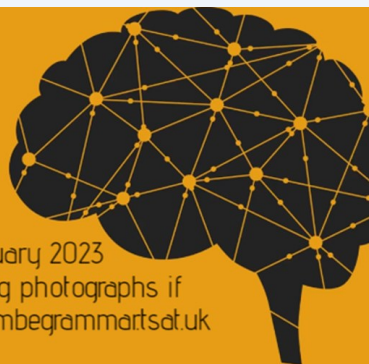
You can access a full range of free training resources at the [Microsoft Office Training Centre](#)

If your children have any problems with logging in to Office 365, please ask them to speak to their form tutor in order to get it reset.

We hope that this update has been useful in helping you understand the advantages of Office 365 for students. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.



WORLD THINKING DAY COMPETITION



“Our World, Our PEACEFUL Future”

Entry deadline | 27th February 2023
Email your entry (including photographs if visual arts) to: hck@holcombegrammartsatuk or bring it to M14.

To celebrate World Thinking Day 2023, Holcombe invites your contributions to this exciting competition. Your entry on the theme of peace could be:

- A piece of artwork you have created
- A piece of music you have composed and performed
- A fashion garment you have designed
- A poem or short story you have written.
- A news report you have researched and written.
- A design for a new year 7 playground which promotes peaceful interactions.

You must submit an explanation that relates to the theme and what your inspiration was for the piece (around 200 words).

All entries will be rewarded, published in an anthology and displayed around the school. Those which are considered exceptional will also receive a gift card!



We're working towards Artsmark
Approved by Arts Council England

Commemorating Holocaust Memorial Day 2023

To mark Holocaust Memorial Day 2023 on 27th January, students at Holcombe attended a special assembly exploring the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust's theme for this year of 'Ordinary People'. In the assembly students learned about genocide and identity-based persecution and how they continue to impact on and destroy lives. They looked at examples of ordinary people's actions and their impact during the Holocaust and subsequent genocides, including those who were victims, perpetrators, bystanders and rescuers; and considered how we can all reflect on our choices, and use them to uphold the rights of ordinary people.

Our Religious Studies, Philosophy and Ethics Club, ExplORe, examined the life of Adolfo Kaminsky, who recently died at the age of 97. At just 17 years old, Adolfo had already become a master forger admirably known as 'the Technician.' Working as part of a French Resistance group called 'La Sixième' he created convincing identity papers which enabled 10,000 Jews to escape Nazi occupied France to safety. Adolfo's story provided a conduit to examine moral decision making in different contexts as students considered his actions, their intentions and consequences during WWII in comparison with those later in his life where he used his skills to forge documents for some violent groups and for young Americans hoping to avoid the Vietnam draft.

Years 7, 8, 9, and 10 all had Holocaust lessons in Religious Studies during the week of Holocaust Memorial Day, where they explored some of the extraordinary circumstances which ordinary people found themselves in during the Holocaust and how they chose to respond. Students in Year 9 wrote a home learning piece on the theme of 'Ordinary People' (either a poem, story, prose, article, or speech). Year 7 students wrote a poem inspired by the testimony of their chosen Holocaust survivor. We will publishing a selection of students' writing on the school website soon.

Holocaust Memorial Day 2023: Ordinary People



The Holocaust



Cambodia, 1975 - 79



Bosnia, 1995



Nazi persecution of other groups, 1933 - 45



Rwanda, 1994



Darfur, 2003 - present

National Apprenticeship Week (6th-12th February)

Our PD classes have included facts about careers pathways including apprenticeships, and we would like students and parents to be well informed of the current options available when leaving school.

Next week, students can sign up for a range of live online events and find out about apprenticeships here: nationalapprenticeshipweek.co.uk. These include information about careers in MI5, National Rail, Ministry of Defence, BAE Systems, PricewaterhouseCoopers and many other financial, engineering and construction pathways. We would encourage signing up to at least three of these live events during our half term to gain a wider insight into the transforming life opportunities your education has prepared you for.

Revision Workshop

The British Psychological Society are offering a free to access workshop to support students in the build up to their summer exams. This would be of particular interest to Y11 and Y13 students. Full details and a link to register are available below. The workshop will be held on 30th March 2023 at 4.00pm.

https://www.bps.org.uk/event/revision-strategies-and-coping-examination-stress?dm_i=6MRE,PT3A,3OHV37,3719H,1

Year 10 French Lessons

At the moment, Year 10 are learning about French festivals and celebrations. On Thursday 2nd of February France celebrate "La Chandeleur" (Candlemass) also known as pancake day, so students enjoyed crepes with jam and other toppings. As the rest of the group was on work experience, they spent the lesson playing games in French and had a really lovely and educational time.

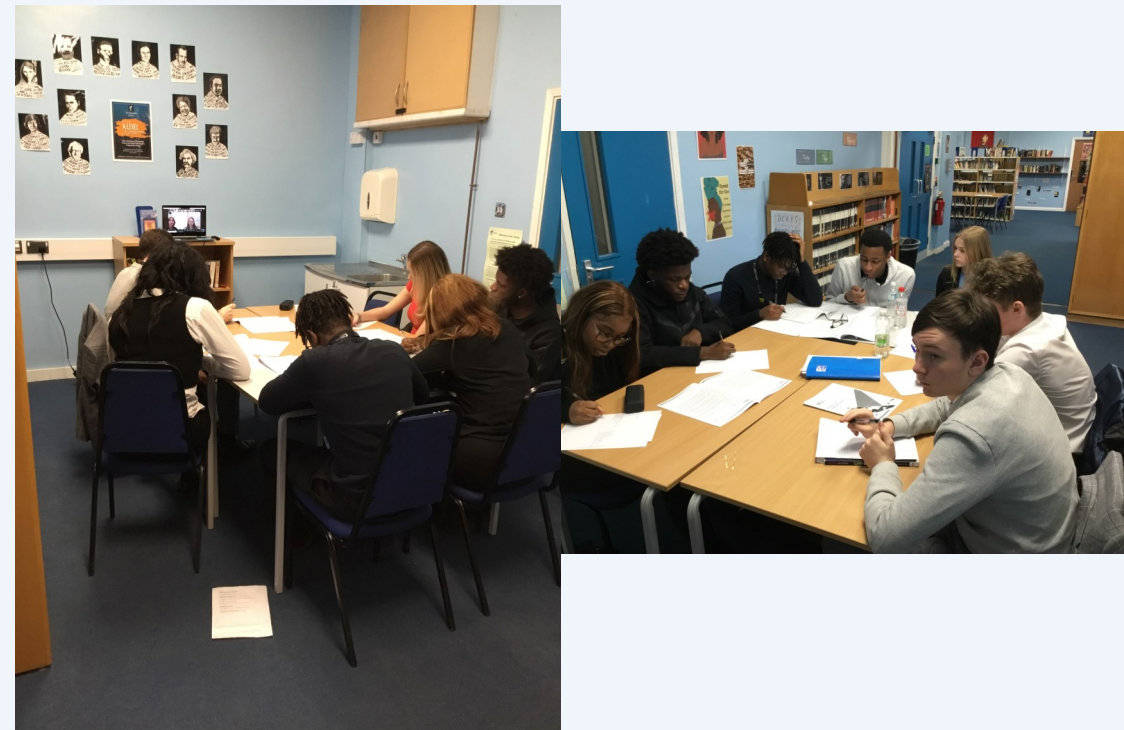


Bar Mock Trial

The Bar Mock Trial was held at Holcombe for the second year running - this is a competition run virtually where students act out a trial based on criminal case which they have prepared for. A group of our Year 12 students had been preparing for the competition since October. The trial focused on two criminal cases focusing on the area of non-fatal offences and drugs offences. Our students performed as prosecution and defence against three other secondary schools across the country. Our students chose to do this as it increases their confidence in public speaking, looks great to add on as an extra-curricular activity on their personal statement and ties in with the criminal law topic which is being studied currently for their A-Level. The students that took part found this to be an invaluable experience and a competition they would take part again in the future.

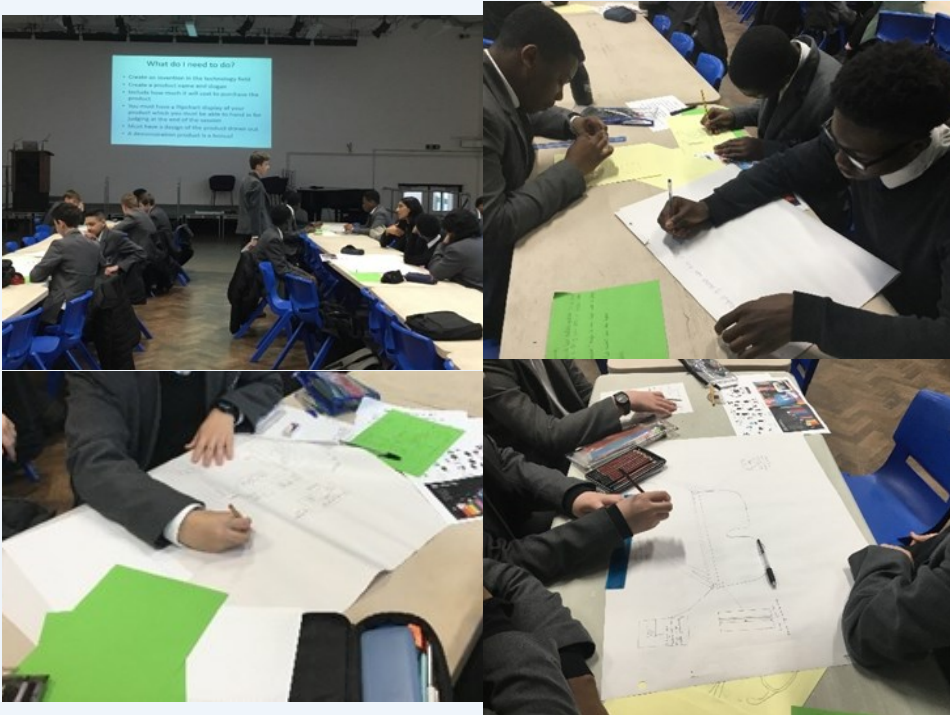
The students that took part were: Amy-Rose Friend, Chiamaka Obosi, Oliver Tomlin, Elena Carr, Tiana Sandy, Ayo Fagbesa, Rachael Akiode, Emeka Esenwa, Oliver Smith, Ayo Ajakaiye, Michal Mikolajczyk and Joshua Adebowale.

The Bar Mock Trial was organised by the Law Dept – Mrs Mohammed and Mrs Sandhu.



Year 10 Dragon's Den

Despite their peers being out on work experience, students in Year 10 rose to the challenge of applying their learning from PD this term to the challenge of designing a new piece of innovative technology. Led by Miss Lee and supported by Mrs Lyons, Miss Geldart, Mr Williams, Miss Cook, Mr Clynshaw and Miss Jhaj students in Year 10 displayed their ideas through informative posters.



Students worked in randomly selected groups, most of which did not include their usual peer groups with only one brief...

Challenge

- You must invent a brand new product in the field of technology to present to the Dragons as a single sided flipchart poster in order to win a prize!
- YES - a PRIZE will be awarded for the best invention

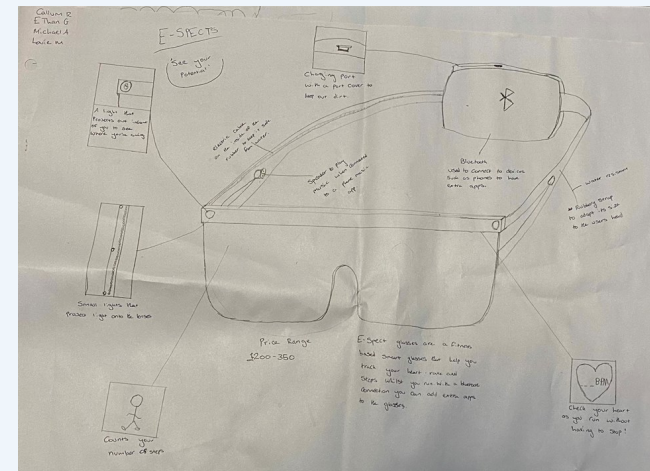


The students wowed their teachers by throwing themselves straight into the task, with each of the 6 groups producing a different product at the end. Miss Lee and Mrs Lyons completed their judging in secret after the event using the below success criteria to select the winning team. This was incredibly difficult to complete as all students showcased fantastic teamwork, ingenuity and creativity.

Success Criteria

- Create an invention in the technology field
- Create a product name and slogan
- Include how much it will cost to purchase the product
- You must have a flipchart display of your product which you must be able to hand in for judging at the end of the session
- Must have a design of the product drawn out
- A demonstration product is a bonus!

After much debate the winners were decided to be that of Callum Reynolds, Ethan Gosney, Michael Awoniyi and Louie Mosson and their fantastic invention E-Spects.



This invention aims to support users when exercising in ensuring their heartrate amongst other factors are monitored and at a consistent level to ensure the user is at peak health whilst exercising. They have included the concept of future development to allow for app connectivity and the increase of Bluetooth device use.

Year 10 Work Experience - Harry Ashby

Harry Ashby spent the week at the Royal Engineers Museum who said the following:

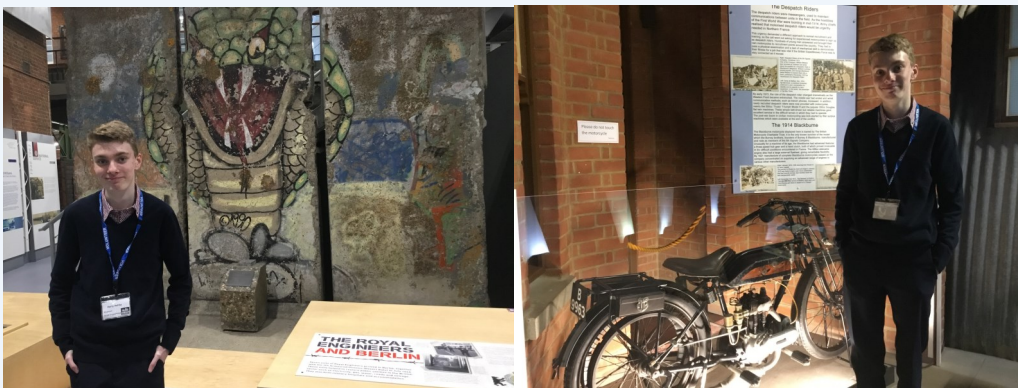
We had the pleasure of welcoming Harry Ashby for his work experience week at the Royal Engineers Museum. He spent the week getting an idea of the different roles in a museum, including collections care and management, exhibitions and engagement, digitisation and photography, and marketing, events, and social media. He learned from each of our small team about the daily tasks in a workplace, and the unique aspects of working in a museum.

As Harry has a keen interest in military history, we enjoyed pulling some archival material from the Peninsular Wars and showing him the armoury. But we also put him to work. He catalogued an item for our archive using our collections database. He also began to build a list of medal descriptions for us to hopefully use in an interactive in the future. He scanned images for our catalogue and helped take photos for our social media. We hope the week offered Harry a chance to see what a career in museum may be like, and wish him the best for the future.

Why not visit Kent's largest military museum to discover the story of the Royal Engineers and how they have helped the British Army live, move and fight for over 300 years.

[Home - Royal Engineers Museum \(re-museum.co.uk\)](http://re-museum.co.uk)

Please see across for Harry's diary of his week.



I have a brilliant week at the Royal Engineers museum, observing and helping their day-to-day activities. All the staff and volunteers were friendly and knowledgeable, and I learnt plenty from them. It was such a splendid week and I had such a lovely time that did not want it to end, however I hope in the near future to volunteer.

- Monday – I was introduced to the Office staff, with small meeting with the Director of the Museum. Afterwards, I was given the task of – after being shown and having a manual – cataloguing a Peninsular War guide. This I completed for the remainder of the day.
- Tuesday – In the morning, myself and a Visitor Services Assistant wandered the exhibitions, exchanging facts and knowledge and sharing our passion for Military History. The Collections Officer then showed me the Archives Room – a wonderful place where we both looked at various documents, for example Lt-Col Fletcher's letters to Wellington concerning the Lines of Torres Vedras. A very exciting moment for me. In the afternoon, I went on another tour with the Visitor Engagement Officer who explained to me what the Museum's plans were for later improvement of exhibitions. I was also given, which I deem to be an honour, the task of starting a record for every British Army medal, to be continued by other Work Experience students and which will eventually be on display in the Medal Rooms.
- Wednesday – For the morning I observed the team in transporting General Gordon's map into a custom-made box for transportation, seeing first hand the dedication Museums have in the safe transportation of their Collections. Afterwards, the Collections Officer and I walked around the exhibits, measuring the Collections' temperature and humidity, as well as checking the peat traps. Also, we had a discussion on the ten agents of deterioration. Continued the medals records after lunch, before the Collections Officer took me to see the Objects Archive, again a wonderful place.
- Thursday – I spent most of the day in the Scanning Room with the Digital Collections Access Officer, where I scanned and wrote the captions for a photo album of Palestine in 1936. It was amazing to be so close and personal with an incredible piece of history. For some of the remaining afternoon, I – with much help and support – edited the scans on a computer website.
- Friday – I spent the morning with the Commercial and Operations Assistant, who showed how the Museum's website is ran and how to attract visitors. Just before lunch, the Collections Officer and Visitor Engagement Officer showed me the Armoury, where I was able to hold multiple guns, swords and even four original Victoria Crosses – definitely a brilliant way to end the week. In the afternoon I have a discussion about Marketing, and continued the medals record.

Thinking outside the (padlocked) box in Religious Studies

The Year 10 GCSE Religious Studies students who were not taking part in Work Experience last week developed their problem-solving, creative thinking and team working skills through an escape room activity during their lesson. Each team had nine padlocked boxes with a series of clues which required them to work together and use what they have learned so far in the GCSE course to solve riddles and crosswords, identify incorrect statements and analyse pictures to obtain the code for each padlock. The objective was to collect the maximum number of points tokens by opening as many boxes as possible within the time. It was a closely fought contest between the teams, with each unlocking the final padlock only moments apart. Their teacher, Miss Cook, was particularly impressed with how well the group members collaborated, and their recall of the Bible verses they had learned through dual coding where the verses were paired with pictures.

Students' thoughts on the activity were:

"I enjoyed how we all cracked codes cooperatively other than doing each individual task ourselves. By doing it simultaneously it aided us to save more time and get through most of the questions with a constant pace. This enabled me to recall an array of topics we did before." Kias

"I liked the different puzzles that we had to do and how we didn't just use our past knowledge but we also had to use other some other skills." Alex

"I can't lie - it was really fun, like trying to crack the question related codes, for example the ones that asked us questions in which the answers were numbers. I think the fact we were racing as well made it a lot better as well. I had to apply knowledge from past lessons to answer some of the questions." Clinton

"I enjoyed how the task was able to involve everybody and their qualities into a team building activity. It also enabled me to apply past knowledge and recall past topics with imagery. It also enabled us to think interdependently as well as to co-operate with each other." Michael

We hope to run a similar activity for the whole class at the end of the next major unit of work.



Managing Exam Anxiety for parents

The parents' session contains content tailored to helping parents support their children. It is pre-recorded and intended to be a resource that you can point parents to in advance of exam season. It costs £15, but Communicate-ed members will be given a discount code to share with parents making it £10.

For more information please follow this link: <https://www.communicate-ed.org.uk/courses/managing-exams-anxiety>

Year 11 Art

Gurshaan Sembi, year 11, contacted an artist he was using as an inspiration on Instagram. In the first moments of the New Year the artist Lolita Lorenzo posted this wonderful message. As well as the positive message the artist also posted Gurshaan's work.



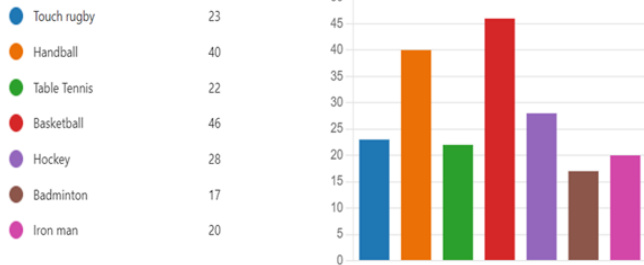
LOLITA.LORENZO.ART
Posts
lolita.lorenzo.art GRATITUDE
A couple of months ago, I received a lovely message from an art student. It coincided with my Art Drop at Lumas Gallery (MAJOR!!!). I received a drawing he had created based on my best selling (and now sold out) print "Good Hair". I was so moved by his analysis of the work and interpretation using only a 'Biro' pen and highlighters. My work inspired him. I mistakenly thought he was in a University level art course - his work is that good! Turns out he is a year away from his GCSEs. I found out we have some things in common: he is of Indian/East African/English heritage and will be pursuing an art practice - with all the nuances of a British education. He reminded me of myself at that age. In my case, artists who looked like me were few and far between. That is, thankfully, no longer the case. In this brief moment, I realized how impactful art and an artist can be - even in the most 'random' ways. Our interaction was the highlight of my year. I am grateful to you Gurshaan. 🌟 Thank you to all my

Term 4 Inter-house sports – Student voice

YEAR 7

1. Please select your preferred choices for the term 4 inter-house competitions (maximum 3).

[More Details](#)



Based on these results the three competitions taking place in term 4 will be:

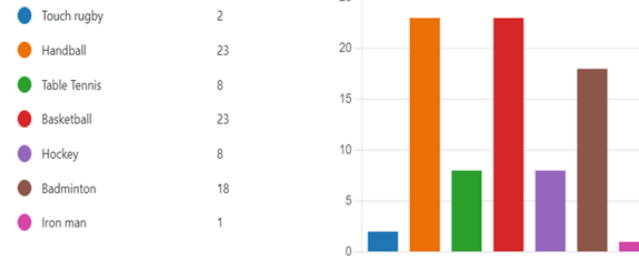
- BASKETBALL
- HANDBALL
- HOCKEY

Term 4 Inter-house sports – Student voice

YEAR 8

1. Please select your preferred choices for the term 4 inter-house competitions (maximum 3).

[More Details](#)



Taking in to account facility availability, the three competitions taking place in term 4 will be:

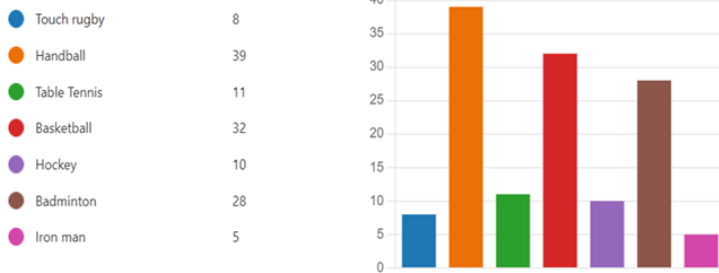
- BASKETBALL
- HANDBALL
- TABLE TENNIS

Term 4 Inter-house sports – Student voice

YEAR 9

1. Please select your preferred choices for the term 4 inter-house competitions (maximum 3).

[More Details](#)



Taking in to account facility availability, the three competitions taking place in term 4 will be:

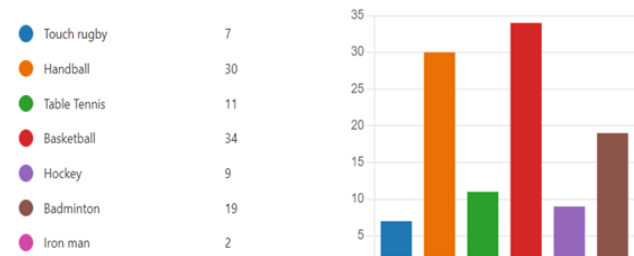
- BASKETBALL
- HANDBALL
- TABLE TENNIS

Term 4 Inter-house sports – Student voice

YEAR 10

1. Please select your preferred choices for the term 4 inter-house competitions (maximum 3).

[More Details](#)



Taking in to account facility availability, the three competitions taking place in term 4 will be:

- BASKETBALL
- HANDBALL
- TABLE TENNIS

GCSE Geography Fieldwork

This term Year 11 completed their two compulsory fieldwork days visiting Ashford to look at Urban changes and regeneration, and to Minster on Sea and Sheerness to look at coastal management and coastal processes.

Both of these topics form part of their GCSE Paper 2 exam which will be sat in June.

We were graced with glorious sunshine, if perhaps a little chilly and students walked a lot over the two days (6 miles in Ashford and nearly 8 miles along the coastline.)

Our fieldwork days were designed to prepare students for their Edexcel Geography GCSE Paper 2 which has a section on both fieldwork the students have completed, considering how they could make improvements whilst also reflecting on their experience on the trip.

As always, staff were incredibly supportive and we hope that the students got the most that they could from the experience in preparation for their GCSEs.



Thinking Hats

James Hann, Head of Thinking for the Captains' Team, headed up a host of Year 12 students to assist in producing all new "Thinking hats" posters for the entire school. James enlisted Julienne Aka-Kadjo, Alvin Edwards, Oumu Keita, Brianna Danso and Thomas Maxwell for the arduous task of completing over 300 posters. They worked together admirably showing great commitment to improving the learning environment and to helping out the whole school community.



Year 11 DT Controlled Assessment

This week Year 11 GCSE DT students were involved in a controlled assessment day. Year 11's had to produce an Orthographic drawing for their lead design and generate a cutting list for the materials that they required to make their project. The young designers then were launched into their practical in a day that saw all pupils make a start on their final prototypes. They are now in good stead for term 4 to complete their manufacturing. Well Done Year 11 DT pupils.

