

Dear Parents and Carers,

We find ourselves now half-way through March, with the clocks changing to British Summer Time next weekend. How welcoming it will be to have lighter evenings and hopefully some more warmth, especially after the snow last week!

With Easter only 2 weeks away, our Year 11s and 13s are finalising their revision plans as they prepare for the formal summer examinations which will be starting in only 6 school weeks from now. We continue to wish our 11s and 13s every success for the upcoming examinations and can I again urge them to please ask one of our team if they need any specific help with anything and we will provide it.

Last week we had visits from 3 senior colleagues from our Trust, looking at a range of aspects of life here at Holcombe but particularly our 'Personal Development' work. These visits were very successful, giving us the opportunity to celebrate where we are doing well and helpfully giving us one or two pointers of where we could even more.

Recently we have been increasing our focus on reading. We held a range of events in early March around World Book Day and this blog contains some fantastic KS3 reading lists which I hope will be very useful to you and your children.

My own highlight of recent weeks has been the reward lunches that I have been holding. Heads of Year each selected 10 students who are working particularly well in their year group to have a lunch with me on a Friday. That has been a lovely opportunity for me to say a big well done in person, but has also been a valuable opportunity to hear from the student body about their current experiences in School. It is always heartening to hear where they are happy with our work, but where things could be better it is also very useful for me to hear this from them, so improvements can be made. Congratulations and thank you to all those who have taken part in this.

As you will see in the blog, in the last week of this term we are looking forward to our performance of Shrek Jr. Many of you attended our Oliver Jr performance last year and I know what a fantastic event it was. Hopefully this year, with the production being held in our newly refurbished school hall, it will be as good again if not even better. Details of how to get tickets are in the blog and I look forward to seeing many of you there.

Our next edition of the blog will be our end of term 4 edition and I look forward to updating you further then.

All the very best for the next 2 weeks.

Mr L. Preston
Principal

Key Dates -

- Friday 17th March - Year 12 Biology Trip (Wakehurst Place)
- Thursday 23rd March - Year 9 Options Evening
- Wednesday 29th March and Thursday 30th March - School Production (Shrek Jr)
- Friday 31st March - Last Day of Term 4
- Monday 17th April - First Day of Term 5

Shrek Jr Production

Beauty is in the eye of the ogre in Shrek The Musical JR., based on the Oscar-winning DreamWorks Animation film and fantastic Broadway musical. It's a "big bright beautiful world" as everyone's favourite ogre, Shrek, leads a cast of fairy tale misfits on an adventure to rescue a princess and find true acceptance. Part romance and part twisted fairy tale, Shrek JR. is an irreverently fun show with a powerful message for the whole family.

Shrek JR is being performed on Wednesday 29th and Thursday 30th March at 6pm. If you would like to enjoy an evening of theatre with your family and friends, then please purchase tickets on +Pay.

Year 12 Apprenticeship Fair

On Friday the 10th of March, students from year 12 joined hundreds of students from other schools in attending the Maidstone Apprenticeship Fair. There were many stalls inside the hall, providing the students with varying information from Degree apprenticeships, jobs, careers, work experience as well as the obvious freebies.

Students learned a lot about the careers that they wanted to be involved in, and some came as quite a surprise to realise that they may have an interest in something else. With apprenticeships for everyone from McDonalds to BAE, Aldi to the Police force. Students were astonished that a starting salary for an apprenticeship at Amazon starts at the £30,000, showing the students that there are many options out there. Feedback from the venue was positive for HGS stating how well they conducted themselves asking inquisitive and mature questions.



HOLCOMBE GRAMMAR SCHOOL Presents



Shrek the Musical JR. is presented through special arrangement with and all authorized materials are supplied by Music Theatre International

Year 9 Football Fixture

On Tuesday the 28th February Holcombe's Year 9 Football team played their first fixture of Term 4 in their first round Cup match against Rainham Mark.

Holcombe enjoyed a 2-1 lead at half time before eventually running out 5 - 1 winners with a strong second half display to progress into the next round of the Cup.

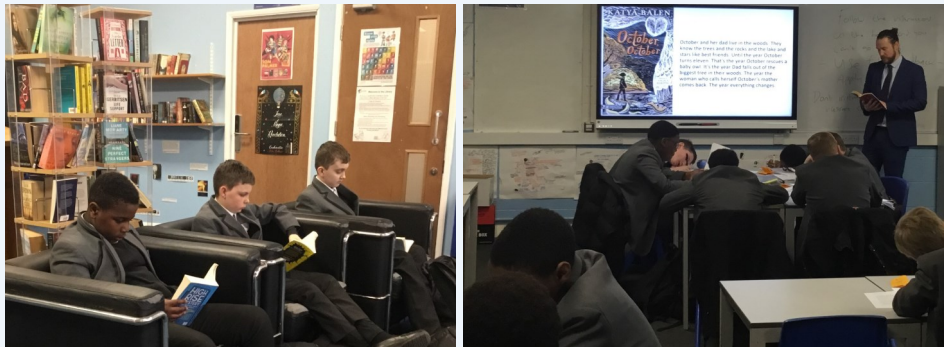
Holcombe star performances came from Simon Olabode in goal, Lleyton Armitage in defence and Jason Nsirim in midfield.

Goal scorers: Jason Nsirim (2), Finley Tranter (2) & Theo Murray (1)

World Book Day

The focus was firmly on reading and books at Holcombe on World Book Day. The 2023 tagline of 'Your World Book Day' was embraced as the whole school was challenged to think about their 'reading identity'. Students participated in quizzes, evaluated recent titles in groups and enjoyed the opportunity to be read to by staff in a range of different situations. Debate Society was once again packed as students discussed whether or not WBD actually celebrates a love of reading or has become reduced to a dressing up day.

Certainly not at Holcombe. Above all else, students were given the opportunity to read. All key stages were exposed to award winning quality fiction that might help shape their reading identity. All had the chance to write re-creatively in response to novel openings - with many opting to submit entries to win the very books they had had a taste of. Novels such as Dark Lady and October, October came out as real favourites on the day.



Personal Development

As we continue this term's PD theme on safety, students have been studying the impacts of tobacco, vaping, drugs and alcohol.

Different year groups have spent time learning about the impacts of using these substances as well as the UK laws regarding possession, use and supply. We have explored how to access further support from outside agencies and how to support one another in social situations to make the safest choices and actions. Please continue to support the wellbeing and safety of students by asking about their PD learning and continuing these conversations in the home.

Open Road is a local Medway charity which offers lots of information and support on substance use. Their Digital Hidden Harm service is specifically for young people living in Medway impacted by a parent or carer's substance use. They offer flexible online 1:1 support with a mentor or group work for peer support, as well as emotional help and fun activities to build confidence or self-esteem.

Digital Hidden Harm Support

openroad
your journey to recovery

YOU ARE NOT ALONE.

OPPORTUNITIES TO HAVE FUN,
DEVELOP SKILLS & STRENGTHS,
BUILD CONFIDENCE &
SELF-ESTEEM

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT TO
HELP BUILD RESILIENCE

PRACTICAL SUPPORT
& GUIDANCE

Get flexible
online 1-1
support from a
mentor

Digital Hidden Harm support service
for young people affected by familial
substance use.

Please contact us for more information
and how to refer into this service.

Email: hiddenharm@openroad.org.uk
Tel: 01634 566285

Medway Young Person's Service, 55 Green Street, Gillingham, ME7 1AE



Book of the Week

From killers to conservationists, Carnegie-shortlisted Chris Vick tells the story of three generations of the Kristensen family, their history as whale hunters and later their mission to save the great whales and our planet. Summer, the Present

Fiery and fierce, computer geek and eco-activist, Abi is holidaying with her grandmother on an island off the Norwegian coast. Having developed and befriended an AI device, Moonlight, she hopes to organise a global protest.

On the island, she learns her great-grandfather rejected the family's whaling livelihood, instead creating the first whale song recording. Inspired by him, Abi and Moonlight translate the whales' songs and discover their stories. Whales are under threat, their numbers rapidly dwindling. Abi is determined to help.

Autumn, 30 years later: The world's ecosystems are collapsing. There is no sight or sound of whales. Abi, her daughter, Tonje, and a now almost conscious Moonlight live on an isolated island in the Atlantic. They search for any sign of whales, but so far there is only silence.

Winter, the Future: Tonje's search was not in vain. Despite climate crisis and the threat of extinction, there is always hope for the future, as nature and technology combine in a captivating, action-packed adventure with a powerful environmental call to arms.

Potential Year 9 GCSE Media Students

Prospective Year 9 GCSE Media students had the opportunity to attend a Q&A session this week, which was organised by Bafta and IntoFilm as part of National Careers Week. The Q&A was with Simon Stanley-Clamp, a Visual Effects Supervisor, with over 40 credits to his name having worked on films such as *Matilda the Musical*, *Avengers: Endgame* and the *Harry Potter* films!

Simon began by explaining his role and the work that he does, explaining that he is involved in every stage of production allowing him to travel the world with film crews. He explained to the students what the difference between special effects and visual effects is and explained what was involved in each stage of production of a film. Simon then explained what skillset would be required for working within a visual effects role explaining that a variety of skills were needed such as technical skills of coding or programming, as well as creative skills such as animating or life drawing.

In the Q&A session, the students came up with a range of questions to ask Stanley including asking what types of software were used for visual effects and what examples were there of when visual effects didn't work, where Stanley explained that a controlled explosion went off too early and they had to colour in thousands of pieces of polystyrene on a computer. One student asked if the skills needed for visual effects in film were transferable to other industries such as video game designers, to which Stanley said absolutely and explained that the creative industries are one of the fastest and largest growing industries in the world but an industry which is struggling with a skill shortage.

Overall the students enjoyed the session and hopefully have been motivated by the opportunities available within the creative industries.



Year 7 Reading List

A.M Dassu *Boy Everywhere*

Zana Fraillon *The Bone Sparrow*

Morris Gleitzman *Once*

Andy Mulligan *Trash*

Elizabeth Laird *Oranges in No Mans Land*

Patrick Ness *A Monster Calls*

David Almond *Skellig*

Charles Dickens *A Christmas Carol*

Malorie Blackman *Hacker*

Louis Sachar *Holes*

Michael Morpurgo *Private Peaceful*

Mitch Johnson *Kick*

Lisa Thompson *The Goldfish Boy*

Polly Ho-Yen *The Boy in the Tower*



Year 8 Reading List

S.E. Hinton *The Outsiders*

Robert Swindells *Stone Cold*

Malorie Blackman *Boys Don't Cry*

Patrice Lawrence *Orangeboy*

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle *The Hound of the Baskervilles*

J.R.R Tolkien *The Hobbit*

R.J. Palacio *Wonder*

Kwame Alexander *Booked*

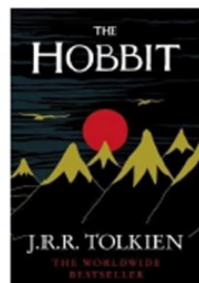
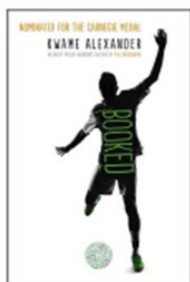
Elizabeth Laird *Welcome to Nowhere*

RM Ballantyne *The Coral Island*

Jamila Gavin *Coram Boy*

Barry Hynes *A Kestrel for a Knave*

Benjamin Zephaniah *Refugee Boy*



Year 9 Reading List

Mark Haddon *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time*

Stephen Kelman *Pigeon English*

Angie Thomas *The Hate U Give*

Adam Silvera *They Both Die at the End*

Rebecca Henry *The Sound of Everything*

George Orwell *1984*

Elizabeth Acevedo *The Poet X*

Ishmael Beah *A Long Way Gone*

Ravena Guron *This Book Kills*

Marcus Sedgwick *Saint Death*

Douglas Adams *The Hitch-hiker's Guide to the Galaxy*

Thomas Hardy *Jude the Obscure*

Neil Gaiman *American Gods*

