

WHAT HAS BEEN HAPPENING THIS TERM?



Paris



Remembrance



Duke of Edinburgh



Southwold



Year Seven students create 2D designs



Year Seven art work

Principal's Introduction

Dear Parents/Carers



Welcome to the bumper edition of our Christmas newsletter. Even I was shocked at how much we have managed to squeeze into it this year and yet it still represents only a small selection of what our students have been involved with. We hope you enjoy!

In November, the national data for all secondary schools in England was published. You can view this data at the following link:

<https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/school/136552/goldington-academy/secondary>

Once again we have done very well as a school! You may well have seen the recently published article in the "Bedford Today" that placed Goldington Academy as the top state school in Bedfordshire for exam results. As well as this, we have been in the top 5% of schools nationally in every year since Covid, and I am sure you will agree this is a wonderful performance. I would like to pay tribute, once again, to the whole of my team and that includes not only the teachers, but all support staff as well. Great job!

One area where I believe we have enjoyed enhanced performance in 2025 is in our delivery of food, particularly lunches from our Eatery. Jasmine Keen, as our new Catering Manager, has done an outstanding job in this area, and I now believe that we can genuinely say we meet

the food standards requirements that state:

"Eating in school should be a pleasurable experience: time spent sharing good food with peers and teachers."

Reflecting on 2025, there is so much to be proud of. In the recent parental survey of our school, I was delighted to see the following response (from 261 parents).

The school is well led and managed.

91% agreed or strongly agreed

8% neither agreed nor disagreed

1% disagreed or strongly disagreed

Both the mural and new cricket wicket should bring years of happiness to many pupils and despite their cost we reach the end of the year with a very healthy reserve, and we will undoubtedly be full of a new year group of eleven-year-olds in September.

As you read this, our Year Elevens are currently in the middle of mock exams. We all wish them well and at this time of year, more than any other, may I take the opportunity to wish you, and your family, a happy and restful Christmas period.

We have a school training day on Monday, 5 January 2026 and your child should return to us for 8.50 am on **Tuesday, 6 January 2026**. Enjoy!

FXGill

Next Year's Term Dates

Autumn Term 2026	
School closed - Staff Training Day (1)	Tuesday 1 September 2026
School closed - Staff Training Day (2)	Wednesday, 2 September 2026
Start of term	Thursday, 3 September 2026
School closed - Staff Training Day (3)	Friday, 23 October 2026
Half term	Monday, 26 October - Friday, 30 October 2026
Last day of term	Friday, 18 December 2026
Spring Term 2027	
School closed - Staff Training Day (4)	Monday, 4 January 2027
Start of term	Tuesday, 5 January 2027
Half term	Monday, 15 - Friday, 19 February 2027
Last day of term	Thursday, 25 March 2027
Summer Term 2027	
School closed - Staff Training Day (5)	Monday, 12 April 2027
Start of term	Tuesday, 13 April 2027
School closed - Bank Holiday	Monday, 3 May 2027
Half term	Monday, 31 May - Friday, 4 June 2027
Last day of term	Wednesday, 21 July 2027

Note from the Governor

Once again governors were delighted to see such strong exam results in 2025. Quite a lot of changes have taken place on our governing body in 2024-25 and 2025-26, and we are currently looking forward to recruiting two new parent governors. Mr Galbraith has talked about some of the enhancements the school has undergone in 2025, and I am sure you will enjoy reading this Christmas edition of our newsletter.

Happy Christmas to all in the Goldington Community.



REMEMBRANCE

On Tuesday, 11 November, students across all year groups were invited to come in their service uniforms (cadets, guides, scouts etc) as a mark of respect and to commemorate men and women who lost their lives in service to their country during the wars. Mr Galbraith and the participating students, along with all Year Seven form groups, assembled around our memorial tree for a few moments to remember the fallen. After a short introduction by the Principal, the well-known poem "In Flanders Fields" was read. The Last Post was played followed by the two minutes' silence at 11.00 am alongside the remainder of the school who also marked the two minutes' silence in their classrooms. A wreath was placed by our youngest member of the school, at the base of the tree to mark the occasion.



Computing

The academic year is well under way and 24 students between Years Seven and Nine have put themselves forward to take part in the new annual Goldington Academy Computing competition. Each participant will independently work on a project at home that involves the creative use of technology. Project entries have been overheard to encompass hardware-based projects on Arduino and the like,

new digital designs on Photoshop or similar, game designs on Scratch or even game-within-game scopes on Minecraft. At a date to be revealed in February, all these contestants will share their innovations for their appreciation and celebration. Those judged to be the best three will receive prizes! Stay tuned for the wonderful outcomes to come from this event.

PARIS TRIP

From 8-11 October, the French department had the absolute pleasure of taking 30 of our Year Eleven linguists for a 4-day trip to Paris. After a smooth journey from Bedford to London St Pancras (no train strikes this year!) to the Gare du Nord, Paris, on the Eurostar, we had just enough time to unpack and eat, before heading out to explore Paris as the sun was setting. The highlight, of course, was our visit to see the Eiffel Tower “par nuit”, all lit up and sparkling, an iconic “Instagram-able” way to start our trip.

On day two, we met up with 27 French students and their teachers from our partner school, Lycée Pierre de Courbetin in Meaux, for a Franco-British team-building activity centring on the famous residents of the Cimetière de Montparnasse. We saw the graves of past French Presidents, war heroes, actors, singers and philosophers/writers, such as Jean Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir. In the afternoon, pupils had the opportunity to “faire du shopping” in the Les Halles mall and vintage shops near the Centre Pompidou, before we headed, by metro, to the observation deck at Tour Montparnasse, for awesome panoramic views of the city’s famous landmarks and monuments, and the iconic Parisian rooftops. Quelle belle ville!

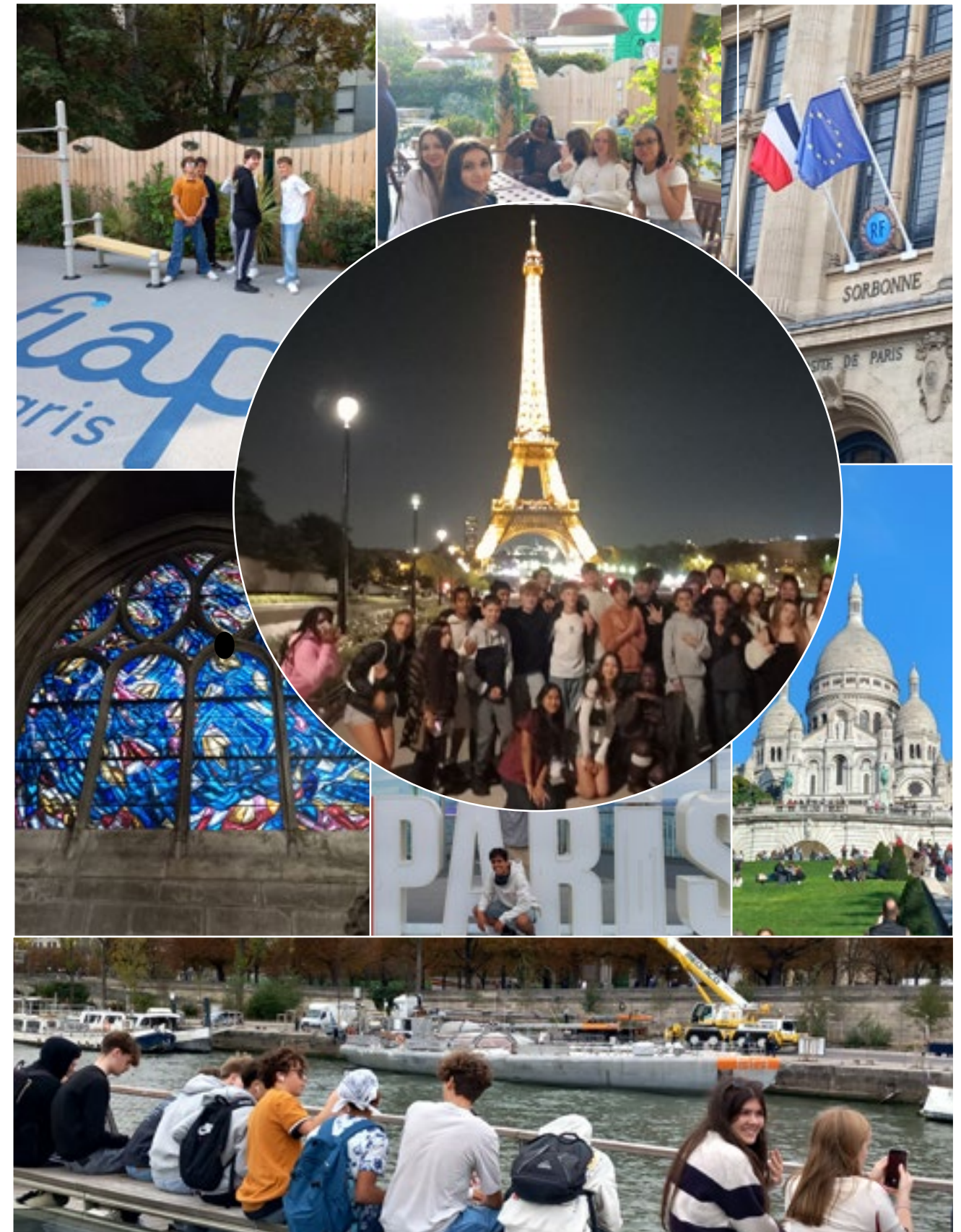
The third day started with a walking tour of the beautiful Sorbonne, Latin Quarter, Ile de la Cité and Notre Dame areas, with some excellent guides. After lunch, we then embarked on a river cruise enjoying the beauty of the Seine, with its 17 bridges and its legendary views of all of Paris’ landmarks. A quick dash, before dinner, to the Louvre for our last visit of the day, where we saw the Venus de Milo, Delacroix’s “Liberty leading the People” (commemorating the French Revolution) and, of course, the most famous painting in the world, the Mona Lisa (aka La Joconde). Une journée magnifique!

So, to our last day, Saturday, spent exploring the pretty streets of Montmartre, while the sun shone. Famously the setting for the film “Amélie” and housing the beautiful Sacré Coeur basilica, this well-known “village” of Paris attracted artists, musicians and writers, who created art while admiring views of the city from this high point of Paris.

Once again, an amazing time was had by students and staff alike – great food, great weather, great company, great location, making memories to last a life-time in a stunning city. A la prochaine fois, Paris! Until next time, Paris...



PARIS TRIP



Southwold

Our wonderful Year Eleven geographers went to Southwold on Thursday, 2 and Friday, 3 October to investigate the effectiveness of the sea defences on Southwold's beach. They explicitly studied how effective the groynes were at slowing down longshore drift. They worked hard, thinking and acting like geographers, and they proudly represented the school. They even enjoyed some fish and chips and ice cream by the sea! It was an enjoyable trip all round. Well done Year Eleven. Here are a few words about the trip from our wonderful Year Eleven geographers:

"Southwold was an amazing trip, where we investigated whether groynes were successful in managing longshore drift. We believe that it served as an impactful trip which allowed us to apply the geography of which we learnt in class into real life. Despite the chilly weather and the rain on Friday, we all really enjoyed the trip too, and it allowed

us to see geography beyond the classroom and in real-world scenarios. We were also delighted to be treated at the end with ice cream. A great finish to our trip! By using a property quality survey, orange drift test, sand height measurements and beach size calculations, we were encouraged to make and test our own hypotheses, which really helped our understanding of applying geographical knowledge. Overall, we believe that it was a great way to not only have fun on the beach but also broaden our educational understanding in preparation for our geography paper 3, section B on fieldwork enquiries".

Aleeza, Vanshi, Aleena



Southwold



Oxbridge

A group of Year Eleven students attended a special event at Bedford School, designed to help them understand how to prepare for applications to the UK's top universities. The session was led by a Cambridge University admissions tutor, who offered valuable insight into what universities look for in strong candidates. Students learned that academic curiosity, wide reading beyond the curriculum and genuine enthusiasm for their chosen subject are key qualities that admissions teams hope to see. The tutor also highlighted the importance of developing critical-thinking skills through activities such as academic competitions, independent projects and super-curricular enrichment.

The event provided a helpful overview of the Oxbridge selection process, explaining that interviews often involve discussing unfamiliar ideas, working through challenging problems aloud, and demonstrating **how** applicants think, rather than testing what they already know. Although university applications may seem a long way off, the evening encouraged students to begin building the skills, confidence and experiences that will help them shine when the time comes to apply.



KS3 Cross-curricular Trip

The annual cross-curricular trip for Year Nine to Foster Hill Road Cemetery with history, science, art and French took place on Thursday, 6 November. It was great to see the students investigating the richness of information about people, places and processes through a variety of subjects. For example, using science and geography, they investigated the type of lichen and its coverage on

gravestones to look for patterns and correlations with other factors such as weathering. Students also listened to an excellent presentation by Annie Berman about the history of key figures buried in the cemetery with links to Bedford and further afield. Once back in the classroom, they transferred this experiential knowledge into procedural knowledge.



Geography Club

As always, the Geography Club have had a busy and productive start to the term. They remain committed to focusing on creative projects that aim to raise the profile about important global issues such as climate change. They are currently working on creating some festive decorations crafted from recycled materials. Their creations reflect their wider commitment to the environment. They are planning to display their creations alongside the giant snowman from last year in the main hall to educate the school about ethically-sourced presents and the need to support a circular economy through recycling. The following pictures capture the making of their projects thus far. Well done geography clubbers.



Eco Club

Eco-club has made a great impact already in this first term with aspirations to be awarded the Eco Schools Award with distinction for the second year running - see official feedback opposite.

So far, members of the eco-committee will have delivered an assembly to Year Seven by the end of the term and are also in the planning stages of identifying their key foci for this year's Eco-Schools Award. Eco-club takes place every Tuesday at 1.00 pm and it would be great to see more new faces who would like to make a positive contribution to improving the school's environmental footprint.



Macmillan Coffee Afternoon

What another great success the Macmillan Coffee Afternoon was this year! We raised £240 in support of this amazing charity during lunchtime on Friday, 26 September. A big thanks to all the bakers and cake makers who donated some wonderful cakes to make this possible and all the staff who made donations.



Year Ten Geography Bedford Fieldtrip

Our fantastic Year Ten geographers visited Russell Park and Bedford Town Centre on Thursday, 16 October to investigate the sustainability of each site using the Egan Wheel of sustainability. They had fun exploring the local area and talking to some local people about sustainability. We were really proud of them and their work. Well done Year Ten. Here are a few words from Mehraj in Year Ten about the trip and geography GCSE:

I enjoyed this practical aspect of geography as it allowed me to discover more about the geography of my local area. I think geography is an eye-opening subject because it sheds light on local issues and encourages you to think critically. I personally enjoy the subject as it relates to many aspects of my life such as, politics and environmental geography. It also makes you think about the future, and how we can shape the future of the world."

"For our human geography enquiry, we explored the sustainability of Russell Park and Bedford Town Centre using the Egan Wheel as our tool. At both locations we spoke to local people who were willing to complete our questionnaire about sustainability. We also investigated this ourselves using environmental quality surveys and traffic counts."

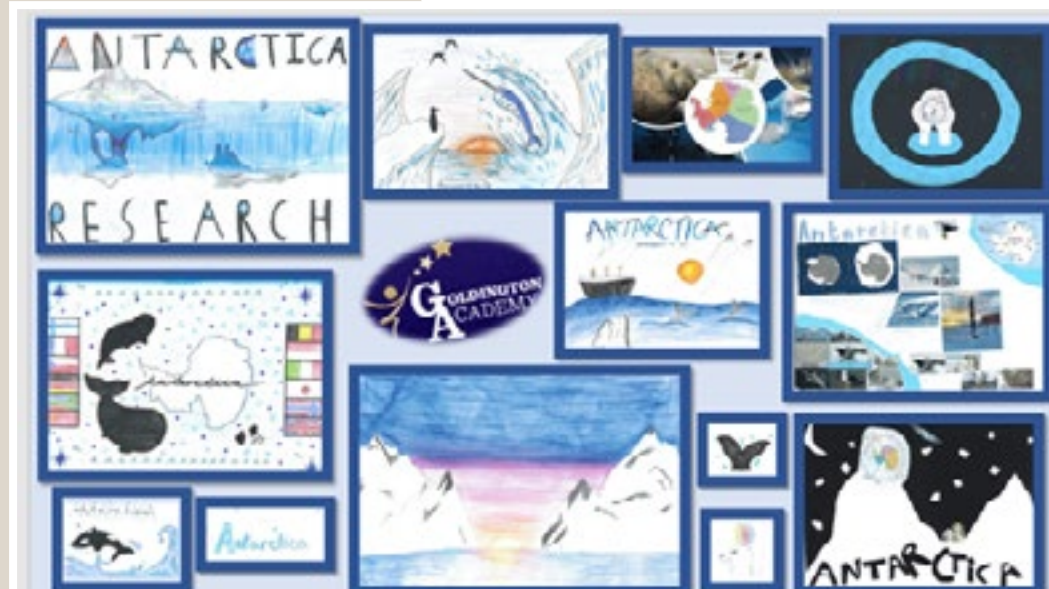


CONTACT DETAILS REMINDER

If you make any changes to your ParentMail account e.g. change of email/mobile contact details you must also contact the school office to inform the school of the changes, so your child's Bromcom account can also reflect those changes.

Antarctica Day

Following the last three year's successes of Year Eight designing a flag in support of Antarctica Day, which was celebrated on 1 December, we took part again this year and sent a flag to Antarctica with the UK Polar Network. We sent our flag on 19 October, and were so pleased to see that it reached Antarctica by 7 November! Our flag bearer was called Jack Farr from the Meteorologist Observer and he brought our flag all the way to the Fossil Bluff Station, Alexander Island. Well done, Year Eight!



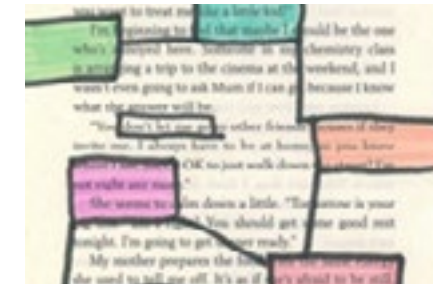
Author Visit

This term in the library, pupils have been exploring the wonderful world of poetry.

During our library lessons we looked at a variety of poetic forms, learnt some amazing poetry facts and students had the chance to develop their own creativity by using online tools to produce striking visual poems. Another highlight was our Blackout Poetry session, where pupils combined artistic flair with literary skill by selecting key words from a page of text to form their own unique poems.

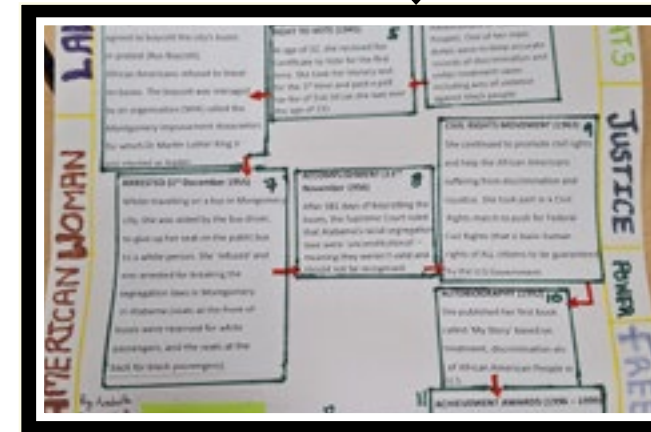


Later in the term, we were delighted to welcome the poet Kimba to our school. Kimba is a spoken-word artist who writes and performs poetry inspired by his experience of growing up in America. Throughout the day, groups of Year Seven, Eight, and Nine pupils took part in workshops with him, learning how to make their poetry magical, memorable and meaningful, as well as gaining valuable tips on performing their work with confidence.



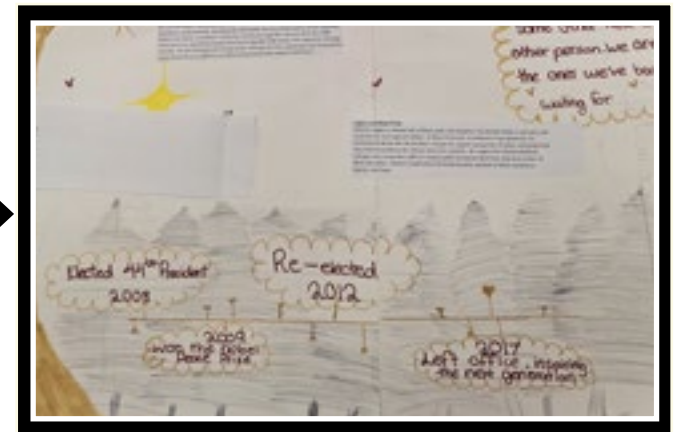
Black History Month 2025

We had some amazing entrants to this year's Black History Month competition linked to the theme for 2025: Standing Firm in Power & Pride. Pupils were asked to produce a creative piece of their choice linked to this theme if they wanted to enter; we had everything from posters to music videos submitted! Winners will be announced in the last week of term, but for now please enjoy a few of the entries pictured here which really captured the theme well.



History Club

It has been an exciting term for history club! We have spent the term researching the history of the Laxton brothers, and the orchard they once owned on the land that now holds both Goldington Academy and the University of Bedfordshire. We then turned this into a script, and have recorded some clips to insert into the daily bulletin. This has helped all pupils to learn a bit more about our school and community, and helped to explain the new artwork on playground linked to our history. See page 19.



BRONZE DUKE OF EDINBURGH



SILVER DUKE OF EDINBURGH



Design & Technology

Celebrating creativity, sustainability and innovation

This term, our Year Seven pupils have been busy exploring Design and Technology, combining creativity with responsibility. Their main project focused on designing and manufacturing personalised keyrings using HDPE plastics, a material chosen for its durability and recyclability. Pupils learned how designers, manufacturers and consumers can make choices that protect our planet. From selecting recyclable materials to reducing waste, they explored what it means to be a responsible global citizen in the design process. In addition, pupils discovered how designers use biomimicry, taking ideas from natural forms and processes to solve human challenges. I was particularly pleased at the pupils' development in regards to their practical skills, most notably in shaping, finishing and assembling their HDPE keyrings, while considering aesthetics, functionality and environmental impact. Why This Matters: Design and Technology is not just about making products, it is about thinking critically, solving problems and shaping a sustainable future.



Our Year Seven pupils have also been inspired by the vibrant work of Yinka Ilori, exploring his unique approach of using happiness and storytelling through parables to create bright, colourful patterns on 2D design. This creative journey marks the beginning of their exciting "Light me up!" project, which they will be developing throughout the term. We cannot wait to see the amazing outcomes!

Alongside their design work, pupils have been learning about thermoforming and thermosetting plastics, gaining hands-on experience with vacuum forming techniques. These skills

will play a key role in bringing their moodlight designs to life. Stay tuned for updates as their ideas transform into stunning, functional pieces! See how well their patterns transfer onto the HIPS using the heat press!

One of Yinka Ilori's latest design pieces can be seen on the floor at the entrance of Milton Keynes train station. So make sure to have a look if you are around the area! Take a photo and send it in to Mrs Hulatt! hulatte@goldington.beds.sch.uk



Design & Technology

Architecture with purpose

This term, our Year Eight pupils have been exploring the inspiring work of world-renowned architect Zaha Hadid, whose bold and futuristic designs have transformed skylines across the globe. Pupils were challenged to design a building that could serve as a safe and functional space for displaced communities around the world.

The project included several creative stages such as free-hand sketching, CAD development, collaborate model building and a final presentation. Working in teams, pupils constructed cardboard models of their final designs. This hands-on stage encouraged problem-solving, communication, and teamwork.

The creativity and empathy shown throughout this project have been fantastic. Pupils not only developed technical skills but also considered the social impact of design, an essential lesson for future innovators.



Design & Technology

Year Nine Design & Technology – creative pewter projects

This term, our Year Nine pupils have been exploring the world of art and design movements, taking inspiration from iconic styles such as Art Deco and Art Nouveau. Their challenge? To design and manufacture a unique pewter product for a chosen client.

Using Computer-Aided Design (CAD) and Computer-Aided Manufacturing (CAM), pupils transformed their ideas into reality. From initial sketches to digital modelling and finally casting their pewter pieces, students demonstrated creativity, precision and technical skill throughout the process.

Well done to all our designers!



Alessi-inspired design unit

This term, Year Ten pupils have completed a focused design unit exploring the principles behind Alessi's iconic products. The project combined research, design development and practical skills. Pupils studied the work of leading Alessi designers, examining the inspiration behind their designs and how aesthetics and functionality are combined in everyday objects. For example, Starck's form over function "Juicy Salif", how could they reflect this notion within their own work. Using these insights, pupils created concepts for a pizza cutter handle in the Alessi style. They applied design strategies including sketching, ergonomic considerations, and iterative development. To develop their prototype modelling skills, pupils learned how to use the hot wire cutter to shape styrofoam accurately, gaining experience in material handling and model-making techniques.

Year Ten created a great range of final models. The final models demonstrate strong design thinking and attention to detail. Each piece reflects the designer's interpretation of Alessi's approach while maintaining practical usability.

Well done, Year Ten!



Second-hand Uniform Shop



Second-hand school uniform can be purchased at a discounted rate via email request. Please contact Mrs Catrambone (catrambonej@goldington.beds.sch.uk) with your requests, including size requirements, to find out what we have in stock.

We are still gratefully receiving any donations of school uniform/PE kit that are clean and in good condition. Items can be dropped off at reception or brought to Student Services by your child.

Brand new school ties are available to purchase via Student Services for £7.50. Please email Mrs Catrambone on the above email address.

School Uniform Expectations

We would like to take this opportunity to remind you of our uniform policy - please see below:

Pupil non-compliance

Teachers can discipline pupils for breaching the school's rules on appearance or uniform. This should be carried out in accordance with the school's published behaviour policy. The Principal, or a person authorised by the Principal, may ask a pupil to go home briefly to remedy a breach of the school's rules on appearance or uniform. When making this decision, schools need to consider the child's age and vulnerability, the ease and time it will take, and the availability of the child's parents.

This is not an exclusion but an authorised absence. However, if the pupil continues to breach uniform rules in such a way as to be sent home to avoid school, or takes longer than is strictly necessary to effect the change, the pupil's absence may be counted as an unauthorised absence. In either case, the pupil's parents must be notified and the absence should be recorded. If a school is considering excluding a pupil in response to breaches of uniform policy, then this must be in line with the legal requirements for exclusion.

Form Tutors and Heads of Year will routinely check the uniform and equipment of students in their year group/form group and will follow the procedure outlined below when challenging non-compliance with the academy uniform and equipment policy.

Unacceptable items of uniform/dress:

Trousers with decorative items, such as buttons or embroidery are **NOT** permitted. Trousers should be tailored and **NOT** be made of stretch, lycra, skinny or highly fashionable in style, nor should they have cargo or jeans style pockets. Dark grey shorts do not form part of the school uniform and therefore they should not be worn.

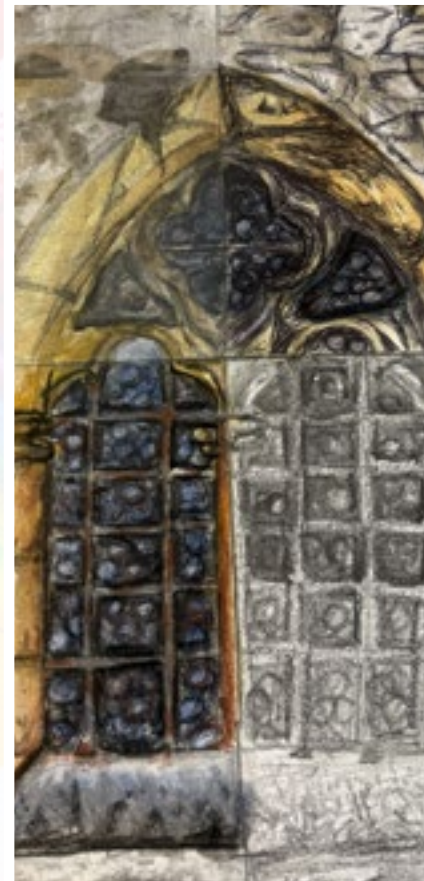
Jewellery other than that listed below is **NOT** allowed:

- ◇ One small plain stud in each ear
- ◇ One ring permitted on each hand
- ◇ Bracelets on the grounds of religious or medical needs
- Please note - piercing retainers are not allowed to be used as a substitute for piercings. Any student attending school with piercings that are not permitted will be asked to remove them, once they have healed. No other visible body piercing is acceptable. A watch may be worn provided it is marked with the owner's name.
- The wearing of wrist bands and bracelets is not permitted, unless for religious purposes.
- Only badges provided by the school are to be worn.
- Hair styles should **NOT** include unnatural colours, patterns or designs. Any student wearing unnatural colour in their hair will be asked to remove it immediately.
- No tramlines or patterns should be shaved into hair or the eyebrows.
- Hair bands should be discreet and plain in colour e.g. black, blue etc. Fashion type hair bands should not be worn in school.
- Trainers should not be worn during classroom-based lessons, unless otherwise agreed by the Academy Principal. If trainers are to be worn for an agreed reason, they should be black and discreet.
- Light make-up may be worn e.g. concealer, mascara. However, students may be asked to remove make-up if it is deemed to be inappropriate or too heavy e.g. foundation.
- Nail varnish should **NOT** be worn. Any students who are found to be wearing nail varnish will be asked to remove it. Continued wearing of jewellery, nail varnish will result in a referral to the Head of Year and may result in a consequence such as loss of break/lunch time.

Art

KS3 Artwork

We have been really impressed with the high standard of work produced this term. Well done to all young artists who have been working very hard to practice skills and techniques. Here are some of our favourite pieces so far.



Creative Arts

Year Seven Creative Arts Day

At the start of the year, Year Seven students had a day immersed in the Arts, creating artwork and performances

based on the theme of Diversity. They had a brilliant day, and we were really impressed with the overall quality of their creations and their enthusiasm for the Arts. Many have continued to impress us in lessons and through their involvement in extra curricular activities - well done Year Seven, a great start to your creative journey.



Art

Laxton Mural Artwork

This term saw the introduction of an inspiring and impressive 5m x 7m artwork installed within the school site. The artwork is a nod to the school's history as an orchard owned by the Laxton brothers and a metaphor for the growth at Goldington from all students. The artwork stands proudly on the side of the building to brighten students' days and provide the positive message of 'Keep going, keep growing'. The artwork was created by local artist, Katie Allen, who worked with students' designs to create the piece.

Bedford Christmas Tree Festival

Students from Mindful Art Club have been working hard all term to produce decorations for our tree at the Christmas Tree Festival, St Paul's, Bedford, which this year had the theme of 'Past, Present and Future'. Students have created decorations inspired by our wonderful 'Laxton mural' including sewn strawberries and apples, and lino printed roses and strawberries. A nod to our past, a reminder to our present and inspiring their futures!



Music

As this term draws to a close, I would just like to mention some of the many musical highlights.

I was very lucky to be invited to listen to some DJ sets from our hugely popular DJing Club, who meet after school every Wednesday. Each DJ had to plan their set and explain the processes involved, before displaying their turntable skills. We are currently planning some live performances for this group, in 2026. Thank you to Mr Louisy for all his hard work with this initiative.

Another delight has been the return of our much-loved Gospel Choir, following a hiatus, under the expert guidance of renowned Gospel Choir leader, Femi Ayodeji. We look forward to some exciting projects later in the academic year.

We entered three talented Year Eleven GCSE musicians into the Rotary Young Musician Competition, which was held at Bedford Modern School. In a packed field of outstanding young performers, one student won the singing class and one came second overall, meaning he will progress onto the District Finals, following his hugely impressive electric guitar playing.

On the weekend of 29 and 30 November, our fabulous Year Ten band, "Pink Spark", along with some of our DJ students, and our newest Steel Pans Group, performed on the Bedford Music Service outdoor stage, in Harpur Square, in the town centre. In addition to this, a number of our gifted rock musicians took to the stage, in their Bedford Rock School bands.

This half-term has also seen the audition process for this year's Goldington's Got Talent. Another hotly-contested final will take place in the New Year!

One of our favourite gigs of the year is when the Choir perform at the wonderful Christmas Tree Festival, in the stunning setting of St. Paul's Church. Our young singers provided an enthusiastic audience with a diverse mix of festive favourites, from 'Carol of the Bells' to 'All I Want for Christmas is You!' We very much look forward to returning again next year to continue this Christmas tradition.



STEM

Instagram Launch

This term saw Goldington Academy Science launch their brand-new Instagram page: [goldington_sci](https://www.instagram.com/goldington_sci)

Check out our posts including the Year Sevens fabulous petri dish cell work, Y11 revision session promo and 2.5K views for STEM clubs imploding coke can slow mo!



Year Sevens Crime Scene Investigates

There has been a murder!

The specialist CSI and STEM workshop paid us their annual visit to CSI Challenge the Year Sevens to think, analyse & solve like a forensic scientist. The exhibition space was transformed into a crime scene and our students into detectives! A body has been found with blood on its hands. They had to combine critical thinking, teamwork and problem solving to work together to solve a crime. The student investigators visit the crime scene and establish who committed the crime. Using forensic techniques, fingerprinting, codebreaking, chemical analysis, logical reasoning and collaboration to piece together the mystery. Any mistakes can contaminate the evidence - the wrong suspect may be found guilty. Someone could get away with murder!



STEM club kicked off this academic new year with some shocking news.

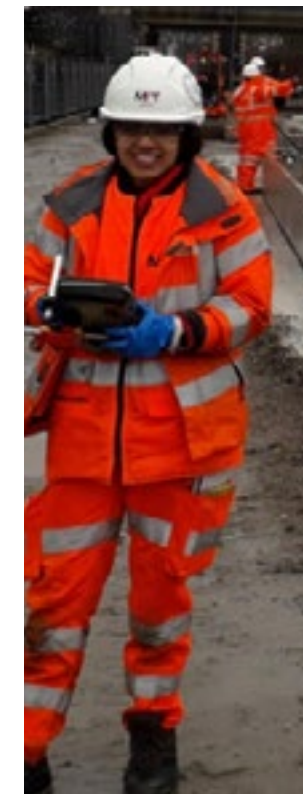
New comers to Thursday's STEM club have had lots of fun in lab 7 starting off with Static Magic! The STEMgineers as if by magic, moved coke cans without using their hands, bending water from the tap and even lit a Bunsen burner without a match, just their hand, whilst connected to the Van de Graph generator. Shocking stuff!

More recently we had a Halloween special turning empty tea bags into ghosts, setting them alight and sending them up, up and away. Spooky!

Congratulations to our STEMgineers who were awarded their STEM badge for attending ten STEM Club sessions! Amazing!

If you were an Engineer, what would you do?

GA Science were very lucky to have civil engineer, Haiqa Ahmad visit and give an inspiring Q&A session. Having previously worked on massive projects like the Manchester Metrolink and Hinkley power station, the students were invited to ask questions and discover what it's really like to design and build structures that keep our world moving.



Photographs used with permission

ACT 25!



Students from Years Eight, Nine, and Ten proudly represented our school at Bedford Modern School's Act25 Drama Festival this year. First, we took part in an engaging workshop led by a professional actor, Nav Sidhu, where our students explored the art of storytelling and devised a range of creative techniques to bring narratives to life.

Following the workshop, our group was given a selection of Sherlock Holmes stories to interpret. Using Brechtian storytelling methods, the students worked collaboratively to shape dynamic scenes that highlighted their performance skills. Their final piece was delivered with confidence, creativity and real ensemble spirit.

We were also delighted to have support from the Art Department, with some of our talented Year Seven students producing fantastic props that added flair and character to our performance.

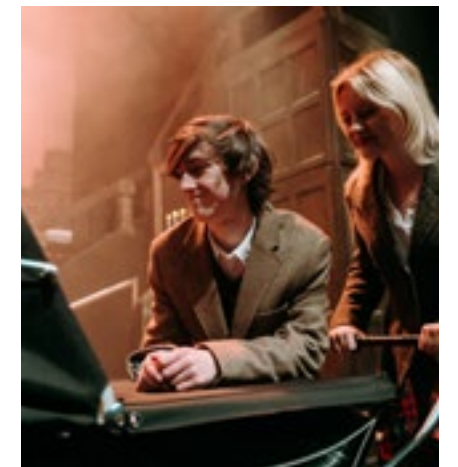
The evening showcase was a vibrant celebration of young talent, providing a brilliant opportunity for local schools to share, experience and appreciate each other's work. Our students represented the school superbly, and we look forward to taking part again in future years.



Harry Potter



Photographs used with permission



From Wednesday, 24 to Saturday, 29 November, six Goldington Academy students took to the stage in Bedford School's production of Harry Potter and the Cursed Child. This was the result of many rehearsals starting in September, and it was a fantastic opportunity for the students. The production was brilliant and a credit to all involved.



Photograph used with permission

Our Year Ten GCSE Drama students took part in a dynamic "Complicite" workshop that introduced them to the company's collaborative and physical approach to theatre-making. Students explored essential devising techniques, including ensemble movement and shared storytelling. They experimented with responding to each other's impulses, building ideas collectively and creating sequences driven by rhythm and precision. The session boosted their confidence and gave them practical strategies to develop inventive, polished devised performances. Overall, the workshop inspired students to think more boldly, work as a true ensemble and push the creative possibilities of physical theatre.

Ely Cathedral and Cambridge Central Mosque Trip

The RPE department's Year Eight trip to Ely Cathedral and Cambridge Central Mosque was a great success. Pupils were incredibly respectful and engaged in both places of worship. There were lots of intriguing questions being asked and students were making great links to their classroom learning. This was a great opportunity to bring two religions we have studied to life, engaging with worshippers and learning about their lived experience and faith. In the mosque, pupils learnt what it really means to pray as a community where everyone is welcomed in as equals (with an excellent demonstration of prayer from three of our pupils). As usual, it was amazing to see the looks on pupils' faces as they entered the cathedral to see its imposing painted ceiling and huge stained glass windows; to quote one pupil "Miss, I am in absolute awe!" What was also great is that pupils were also linking their visit to careers, with one pupil taking notes and pictures as research towards his future as an architect!

Our philosophy club has also been running every other Tuesday, led by our fantastic Year Eleven ambassadors Jessica, Delia and Aleeza - with much improvement. We have seen a huge increase in pupils from all year groups attending, which is amazing. Some of the topics debated so far this year are:

- Does the world need a saviour today?
- Selective sympathy – Why are some human tragedies almost invisible, while others dominate headlines?
- Can moral responsibility exist without conscious awareness?

The club is open to all pupils and runs on Tuesdays, second half of lunch in room 50. It would be lovely to see more pupils from all year groups getting involved.



Special Education Needs & Disability Update



SEND identification:

According to the Code of Practice, "a pupil has SEND where their learning difficulty or disability calls for special educational provision, namely provision different from or additional to that normally available to pupils of the same age."

Teachers are responsible for every pupil including those with SEND.

Teachers are responsible for the progress and development of every pupil in their class, including those who get extra support from teaching assistants or specialist staff.

The first step in supporting all pupils, including those with SEND, is high-quality teaching, scaffolded for individual pupils.

Some pupils may need additional help to access the curriculum to make expected progress. These pupils may have SEND.

Not every pupil making slower progress has SEND.

Some pupils may make slower progress for a reason unrelated to SEND, such as a gap in their learning.

Teachers regularly assess the progress of all pupils and work with the SENDCo to identify whether a pupil has SEND. Some factors to consider are the following:

- Significantly slower than that of their peers starting from the same baseline
- Failing to match or better the pupil's previous rate of progress
- Failing to close the attainment gap between the pupil and their classmates
- Widening the attainment gap

Pupil Passports:

Strategies and bespoke approaches for SEND students are shared with teaching staff via Pupil Passports. This document is co-produced with students, parents and the SEND team. Passports are sent home with the interim reports, and you have a chance to feedback if you want to review any strategies. Please contact Miss Johnstone (johnstonec@goldington.beds.sch.uk) if this is the case.

SEND consultation meetings:

A series of productive SEND meetings with parents and students took place over the course of the summer term to discuss progress, provision and Pupil Passports. If you would like to meet with the SENDCo, then please feel free to contact us to book a Monday slot from January onwards. Correspondence about the next round of SEND consultation meetings will be sent out via Parentmail. Please make your appointment times via the booking system.

Important SEND information and documents:

Local offer: we subscribe to the Bedford Borough Local Offer which offers a variety of services for young people that include behaviour support, parental support, etc. See link for the services offered: <https://localoffer.bedford.gov.uk/kb5/bedford/directory/home.page>

SEND information report: information published on the school website about how the school's SEND policy will be implemented. The latest report is available here: <https://www.goldington.beds.sch.uk/learning/special-educational-needs-and-or-disabilities>.

Would you like to join us?

We are always on the lookout for Learning Support Assistants or volunteers to support effective learning in the classroom and beyond.

Contact us

With any issues regarding pupils and their SEND, Miss Johnstone, can be contacted either by phone, in person or by email johnstonec@goldington.beds.sch.uk. A drop-in session is available to parents on Mondays between 2.50 pm-4.15 pm each week during term time.

Ofsted – February 2022: "The school supports pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) effectively. Leaders ensure that teachers understand the best strategies for every pupil with SEND. This helps these pupils to thrive and flourish studying the same curriculum as their peers."

Les recettes d'Halloween

For the October half-term, the French department challenged Year Seven students to make one of two Halloween recipes and then send in pictures of their bakes. Sound easy? The challenge was that all the ingredients and the instructions were in French!

Below you will see examples of their amazing “Brownies Fantômes” (ghost brownies) and tasty “Cookies Araignées” (spider cookies).



and the winners were Ava and Zoe, runners up Sophia P, Laila and Paolo



Houses of Parliament

In October, 31 students had the exciting opportunity to visit the Houses of Parliament in London.

Despite the temperamental weather and early start, the students made the most of the day, asking wonderful questions of our tour guides, and of our local MP Mr Mohammed Yasin who joined us.

He was truly inspired by the detail and depth of knowledge and understanding of modern political problems when he spoke to our students.

In between our tour of the Houses of Parliament and meeting our MP, students undertook a workshop all about the ‘Power of Petitions’, where we delved into how to create and push forward a petition, coming up with ideas about different petitions we may wish to submit in the near future.

All of our students were thoroughly impressed with the history and the power that the Houses of Parliament have and represented Goldington Academy wonderfully.



Photograph used with permission



Physical Education

Our sports teams have had a fantastic start to the season, with impressive achievements across athletics, basketball, football and netball.

Sports Hall Athletics

In District Athletics, the Year Seven girls had an outstanding showing, with the A team finishing 1st and the B team taking



Basketball

On the basketball court, our teams continue to excel. The Year Seven girls secured two wins out of three in their recent fixtures, and the Year Ten girls remain unbeaten in their league, earning three wins and one draw.



2nd place. The Year Nine/Ten girls also performed strongly, securing 2nd place.

The Year Nine/Ten boys achieved an excellent 1st place finish, and our Year Eight boys team secured 3rd. All of these teams have now qualified for the County Finals, which is a tremendous accomplishment for our athletes.



Girls' Rugby

Our Year Seven and Eight team came 3rd and the Year Nine and Ten team came first in the October schools' touch rugby tournament. Both fantastic results.



Physical Education

Netball

In netball, our teams have shown outstanding commitment and consistency. The U16 team remains undefeated in all league matches, demonstrating excellent teamwork and determination. The U15 team has had strong turnouts at training and matches and an unbeaten record so far in the league.



Football

In football, the Year Nine boys are currently sitting at the top of the district league and have progressed to the quarterfinals of the County Cup.

The B team also performed admirably, finishing fourth in their league. Meanwhile, the Year Eight and Year Ten boys both have important County Cup matches scheduled for next week.

Two Year Nine boys, have successfully trialled and got into the Bedfordshire FA county team. They are playing other county teams in some regional games.

The Year Eleven boys team were crowned the League Football Winners of the Plate.

The Year Ten boys are currently training to get into the U13 District team.

The Year Seven/Eight girls football team are also enjoying success, placing second in the district league and preparing for their Last 16 County Cup game next week.

Our U16 girls are top of their table and will now progress to play their district final in January.

The Year Seven boys' teams have also had a great season so far:

A team

Beat Mark Rutherford 3-1
Beat Kempston Academy 5-0
Beat Edward Peake 6-0
Beat Stratton 2-0
Beat Bedford Academy 5-2
Beat Biddenham 3-1

They remain unbeaten and qualified for the Bedfordshire League semi finals against Robert Bloomfield.

B team

They also played in the District league too.

Beat Bedford Free School 5-0
Beat Bedford Academy 5-3
Lost to Sharnbrook 5-3
Drew 2-2 with Castle Newnham
Lost to Lincroft 6-0
Beat St Thomas More 5-2

Goldington Academy is the only school in North Beds to run two teams in the District league!

Parallel

A number of keen mathematicians have cultivated their love of problem solving by joining Parallel, a wonderful free online resource which gives a weekly challenge going beyond the school curriculum. These puzzles, called Parallelograms, are designed to help build curiosity, creativity, logic and tenacity.

A recent Parallelogram required students to imagine a standard die rolling across a small grid, rotating 90° each move, then working out which face ends up on top after a sequence of rolls.

Another popular puzzle was a version of the classic "four-card problem." This involves a series of cards, plus a rule, such as: "If a card has a circle on one side, then it must have blue on the other side." Students were then shown several cards (with shapes or colours on front), and asked: which cards must you turn over to check whether the rule is being followed?

Students should speak to Mr Marston if they wish to join the Parallel group.

Year Seven Family Challenge

In November, many of our Year Seven students participated in the Goldington Academy Family Challenge, where they faced a variety of inventive and demanding tasks.

Families worked together throughout an energetic evening, earning points as they showcased their knowledge and problem-solving abilities across a wide array of activities from European geography and spatial awareness to general knowledge and mathematical reasoning.

One of the most popular rounds proved to be "Narrow it Down", which required teams to give the closest answer to questions such as "To what age did the world's oldest cat live?".

Many thanks to all families who attended, and to the staff who helped design the tasks and oversee the various sessions.



Goldington Distinction Award

This half-term, some ambitious Year Eight students have completed a series of tasks as part of the Goldington Distinction Award, in which students work towards a Bronze, Silver or Gold badge by displaying the personal qualities which reflect Goldington Academy's core values: Engaging Minds, Nurturing Success and Inspiring Futures. Doing so has given them opportunities to show creativity, develop research skills and make contributions to the wider school community.

For the Teacher Interview, Olivia T asked Miss Reynolds about her most memorable moment as a dance teacher, and received this beautiful reply: "I was practising with my Year nines and we had been building up the dance routines and perfecting it for over 3 years. One day, I decided that I would not run through the dance with them and I would just watch to see how they were getting on and, as they performed, it hit me; it was amazing. My dance that I made and I taught was amazing. I could not help myself; I began crying, not wanting to hold the tears back. This was what all

the hard work went to and I was just so proud of my students of how far they came in just three years."

A Blurb for a Book, was produced by Livvy: MILLIE MICHAELS - Fastest Sprinter in the school? Check. County Netball Trialist? Check. Lost soul? Check. Millie's always been seen as the sporty one at school, but is that all she really is? When a freak-accident puts her out of action for the rest of the term, Millie begins to question everything. So who is she, really?

In her Review of a Foreign Film, Lyra wrote: *"Heart wrenching and eye-opening, her story resurfaces the most pure and primal emotions. The fleeting, unstable course of her life houses terror, loss, and an overwhelming gratitude for the stability and ease of our own lives."*

Eleanor G produced a creative piece of artwork to represent Goldington Academy.



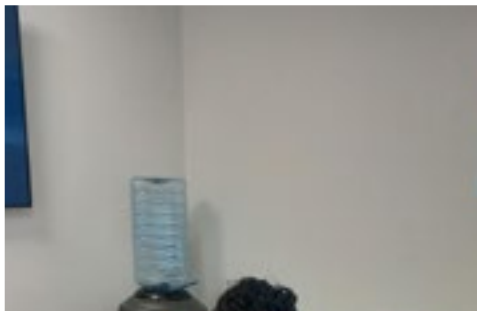
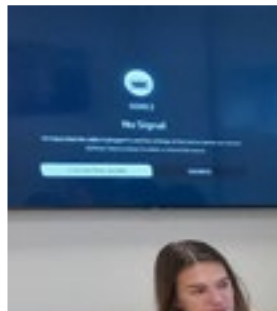
The Scholars Programme

After a highly competitive selection process, fourteen Year 9 students have begun the Scholars Programme, designed to help them build the knowledge, skills and confidence needed to progress to the most selective universities.

Over recent weeks, they have taken part in a series of university-style seminars about the formation of our solar system, led by PhD researcher Faye Davies, a leading expert in her field.

Students initially explored a relatively simplistic model of planetary formation, but soon progressed onto complex theories of gravitational collapse within giant molecular clouds. They have also looked at various past and current space missions exploring planets and moons in our solar system.

The programme will conclude with students producing a dissertation, complete with formal referencing, before "graduating" on a visit to a prestigious university. For now, the students are thoroughly enjoying the chance to learn about a fascinating topic at a very advanced level of detail.



Photograph used with permission



Attendance Figures

We have been really proud of the efforts made by our pupils to be in school as much as possible this term. Whilst our attendance figures are significantly above national figures, we would like to take this opportunity to encourage good attendance amongst our pupils. Our current percentage is 95% and our school target is 96%. Please ensure that in January your child comes to school on time as regularly as possible. We appreciate that illnesses present themselves

throughout the year, but minor illnesses can be managed in school. If you are unsure, please contact Student Services.

Please remember that the day starts at 8.50 am and ends at 3.40 pm. Students need to be onsite by 8.50 am.

Please be aware that we are unable to authorise absences for family holidays.

Condition	Absent for
Chicken Pox	Until all vesicles are crusted over
Impetigo	Until lesions are crusted/healed or 48 hours after starting antibiotic treatment
Measles	4 days
Scarlet Fever	Child can return 24 hours after starting appropriate antibiotic treatment
Sickness and/or Diarrhoea	48 hours after symptoms stop
Conjunctivitis	None
Head Lice	None
Mumps	5 days
Tonsillitis	None

Anti-bullying & Restorative Justice

Well done to this year's anti-bullying ambassadors and restorative justice ambassadors. These ambassadors have played a vital role in our anti-bullying ethos through this peer-led initiative.

Year	Anti-Bullying	Restorative Justice
Seven	Elvis, Zoe, Martyna, Ariana, Riley	Samuel, Zorawar, Max, Rayhan, Elliot
Eight	Kataleja, Andy, Amber, Tilly	Nessfa, Melody, Thea, Ethan, Zak
Nine	Emilie, Danny, Seth, Mahi, Mati	Ruqaiyah, Layomi, Arlie, Millie, Nina
Ten	Harry, Sulaiman, Mehraj, Chloe, Evie	Alex, Jacob, Gabriella, Caitlin, Tristan
Eleven	Deeran, Mahro, Liam, Aleeza, Madeea	Divjot, Andrew, Ololade, Vanshi

Need help?

The numbers below are for services which could help you should you have any worries or concerns at any time:

- **Bedfordshire Police HQ** (non-emergency) - 01234 841212

In an immediate emergency always dial 999

- **NSPCC** - 0808 800 5000 (24 hour helpline)
- **Integrated Front Door team** (safeguarding) - 01234 718700 (office hours) or ring 0300 300 8123 (out of hours)
- **National Domestic Abuse Helpline** – 0808 2000 247
- **Report abuse in education** call 0800136663 - help@nspcc.org.uk
- **Bedford Borough Early Help** call - 01234 718700 - EarlyHelpHub@Bedford.gov.uk

- **National Bullying Helpline** - 0330 3230169

- **Young Minds** - <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/>

- **CAMH Self-referral** - <https://www.elft.nhs.uk/camhs/self-referral-form-bedford-north-bedfordshire-camhs>