



Newsletter

Dame Alice Owen's School

July 2026



Letter from the Head **Hannah Nemko**



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As we reach the end of another successful school year, I would like to take this opportunity to thank our students, staff, parents, alumni and wider community for the support, enthusiasm and commitment that continue to make our school such a special place; I have never felt the love that so many have for the school more than over this special 50th year.

It has been a year filled with achievement, opportunity and celebration, and nowhere is this more evident than in the pages of the newsletter that follows.

Our campus continues to evolve, with exciting progress being made on the new sports hall. The building is now clearly taking shape and remains on schedule for completion in November 2026, representing a transformational investment in the opportunities and facilities available to both current and future generations of students. Alongside this, work has begun on the replacement of the school's curtain walling, a project that will improve energy efficiency, comfort and the long-term condition of the site.

Thanks to the extraordinary generosity of families, alumni, staff and friends of the school, we are now within touching distance of our



ambitious £1 million fundraising target. We still have several exciting events and initiatives underway, including commemorative brick sales and centenary merchandise, and the recent Gala ball on 11 July. Thank you to the OSA for their unfailing support across these events and to everyone who has participated and contributed through donations, prizes, facilities, expertise or their time.

As we bring the academic year to a close, I hope you enjoy reading about the amazing achievements of our brilliant young people in this final half term. From success in national mathematics and scientific challenges, to outstanding participation in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme, students have demonstrated ambition, resilience and enthusiasm in abundance.

The same can be said of our sporting, musical and creative achievements. Teams have competed with distinction across a wide range of sports, while our musicians, artists and performers have continued to delight audiences through concerts, recitals, productions and exhibitions.

Sadly, it is at this time of year that we have to say goodbye to a number of members of staff:

Mrs Allard has worked with us for a year in the Food and Textiles Department. Over the year, she has brought a lot of fun and care to her lessons and I know that her students have enjoyed being with her in class. We wish her all the best in her future endeavours.

Ms Brealey has only been with us for a few months but has made a huge and lasting impression. Working on reception, she has greeted everyone with a smile and gone out of her way to ensure that everyone who arrives or passes through has all that they need. Ms Brealey has been a real asset to the team and we wish her congratulations and every success as she moves to another school and a promoted role.

Ms Cheung joined us straight from the 6th form to support the school administratively during this busy anniversary year. She has done a wonderful job supporting the SLT whilst we were without Mrs Hennigan and supporting the admin team whilst other members have been off sick. We wish her all the best as she leaves us to pick up her university studies.

Mr Silvey brought many things to the MFL department but who can forget Pepe the Penguin! Mr Silvey is leaving us for a role in another school and we hope that he and Pepe will be very happy there.

When I say that Mrs Kyriacou is leaving us after 3 years, many of you may not know who I mean. If I were to say Matron, I know how sad many of you will be to hear this. We were so blessed to have been able to work with such a kind, gentle and supremely qualified practitioner as Mrs Kyriacou; she has been an invaluable part of the medical/pastoral team and will be sorely missed.

Ms Sutherland has also been with us for 3 years. Not only has she brought her passion for music to our school, she has spread it around and it has been infectious. From choirs, to OwensFest via in-school musical festivals and of course playing the sax with 'The Lines', our teacher band, Ms Sutherland has left a fabulous mark across the school. We wish her the very best as she relocates. We will keep an eye out for her on the 'gigging circuit' but hope she always remembers what an amazing teacher she is too...

Ms Webb joined us 4 years ago as a receptionist before moving into learning support. Throughout her time with us she has helped countless people and students with patience and care in a variety of situations and lessons. Thank you and good luck with your next ventures.

Ms Furlong joined us in 2020 in the main school office. She then became a support for the SLT specifically before moving to the sixth form as their administrator and UCAS co-ordinator. Ms Furlong was a crucial part of the team, dealing with countless student enquiries from admission to UCAS, she was a trusted fountain of knowledge and a good friend to many.

Mrs Goodman has supported our work in the library for 7 years. She has seen us through a couple of librarians as well as periods without and her steady support has helped to keep the library a calm, welcoming space for everyone be that during lesson time or outside of it. We wish her every happiness in her retirement.

Mrs Hennigan has been my right-hand person for 8 years. She was known throughout the school for her efficiency, professionalism and seemingly endless ability to solve any problem but she was also incredibly kind and funny and a real team player, wanting to be involved with everything she could to help make the school better. As if trying to keep me under control and in the right place at the right time was not enough, Mrs Hennigan was also the 'governance professional' meaning that she had to try and do similarly with the governors – no mean feat! We wish Mrs Hennigan bon chance for her new life based mainly in France.

Mrs Davighi joined the school 11 years ago and her sparkle, colour and creativity has been felt throughout the department since that first day. An expert teacher, teacher trainer and school-mummy to many, Mrs Davighi has always spread her warmth, her smile and her enthusiasm wherever she has been. I know that she will be at least as busy in retirement as she has been throughout her working life and we wish her every happiness as she begins this next phase.

Mr Latham has been an absolute legend of a teacher, bringing on the history and politics departments in leaps and bounds. An Owenian, he is also a natural, intuitive teacher who has led his department with calm confidence and immense clarity. He has been with us, on the other side of the staffroom, for 11 years. We know he is excited for new adventures, trying something different for a while

up in the North, but we hope he finds his way back to teaching soon as the idea of the profession missing out on his input for good is a travesty!

Mrs Rutlin is probably one of the most humble individuals I have ever met. It has been such a privilege to get to know her and to learn a little more about her and her remarkable family over these years. She has worked at the school, most latterly leading the psychology department, for the last 12 years seeing a tremendous number of students through their A levels. You would always see Mrs Rutlin in her lab supporting students in whatever way they needed over a break or lunchtime, ensuring each person had just what they needed. We are so sorry to lose her calm and thoughtful presence in the school and wish her a very happy retirement.

Ms Tsiakli has taught English at Owen's for 20 years. She brings passion, excellence and a huge amount of wisdom to all her lessons. Ms Tsiakli has played an important role in setting the school's entrance exam as well as being a 'work mum' to many members of staff over the years. Her supportive, generous, effusive and warm nature has been appreciated by so many and will be hugely missed. We wish her many happy years of retirement too.

Ms McClean has been at Owen's for 23 years and she can probably name all the children she has taught and which bus (or otherwise) they took home. She has the most incredible memory for the young people who have been through her care, and, after having almost spent her entire career here in Pastoral Care, that is a lot of young people! She remembers them because she cares and cared about each one so very deeply. You can see that in the way in which she speaks to, or about, her students, the way in which she always goes the extra mile to help and the way in which her students love her back. Ms McClean is a very special person indeed. Her quick mind and quick wit will also be missed on the SLT to which she has contributed phenomenally over these last years. Ms McClean has always lived the values of Owen's and when she told me that she was basically hoping to take early retirement and maybe take things slightly easier for a while, I was not surprised at all when she then said she was actually going to go and do a PhD. Never stop learning, eh Ms McClean? We wish you every academic success and every personal happiness and we look forward to having you back as Dr McClean, talking to us about your work.

Dr Mitchell joined us 25 years ago as a teacher of chemistry, was Head of Department before joining the SLT as Assistant and then Deputy Headteacher before returning to what he loved, being in the classroom, but more importantly, being a form tutor, for a few years before (almost) completely stepping down. Dr Mitchell was an incredible support to me when I first joined the school. Having been promoted from Deputy Head myself, and Mr Godfrey, the other Deputy Head having retired with the outgoing Headteacher, I leant heavily on Dr Mitchell to show me the Owen's ropes, which he did

with gusto. I will always be grateful to him for the support he gave me at that time. Dr Mitchell has said that he is going to retire, but we all know that he won't be able to stay still for that long which is why we have agreed that he will still support the school's EPQ programme as well as the DofE expeditions and we are hugely grateful to him for that.

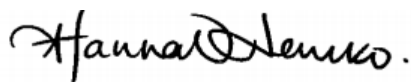
As we move into the new academic year, we are delighted to welcome Ms James, currently our Head of Year 12, onto the SLT as Head of Sixth Form and Mr Matthai, Teacher of English, into the Sixth form team as Head of Year 12/13. We are also delighted that Ms Smith will be taking over from Mr Latham as Head of History.

We are also looking forward to welcoming the following new members of staff into the Owen's family: Ms Baynes, Sixth Form administrator and UCAS manager; Mr Cook, Head of Psychology; Mr Cooper, Teacher of Maths; Ms Dobрева, Teacher of Chemistry; Ms Donnelly, Teacher of English; Dr Freil, Learning Support Assistant; Ms Hurley, Teacher of Religious Studies; Ms Katz, Teacher of English; Ms Kritz, Head of Politics, Mr Lee, Teacher of Maths; Ms Mizon, Teacher of Modern Foreign Languages; Ms Phillips, Learning Support Assistant; Ms Scott-Henson, EA to the Headteacher and Ms Ranavaya, Learning Support Assistant.

All that remains for me to do this year is to thank you, once again for your continued support, not least over this incredibly busy 50th Anniversary year.

I wish all our students and families a restful, enjoyable and well-deserved summer break, and I look forward to welcoming everyone back in September for another exciting year.

Warm regards



Hannah Nemko
Headteacher



Alumni & Fundraising Anniversary Gala Ball



What an incredible evening we had at our 50th Anniversary Fundraising Ball on 11 July!

From the drinks reception to the final song on the dancefloor, it was a truly unforgettable celebration. It was wonderful to see so many former and current parents, staff, alumni, friends and supporters come together to mark this special milestone.

The evening had many memorable moments – from hearing entertaining stories from our guest host, Arsenal and England football star Paul Merson, to dancing the night away to Martin Kemp's fantastic 80s DJ set, to celebrating England's World Cup quarter-final victory with Wonderwall on the dance floor!

Thank you also to all those who helped make this event such a success, including performers, prize donors, volunteers and suppliers and a huge thank you to everyone who attended, donated and bid. Your generosity will make a real difference to our Sports Hall Fundraising Campaign. We are still finalising the figures from the evening so will announce the total very shortly but it looks like we have raised a huge amount from the evening!

Thank you all once again for helping us celebrate this milestone year and for supporting the future of Dame Alice Owen's School.



**Opportunity
for all
to contribute
and enjoy ...**



OwensFest '26 **A celebration of community**

By the OwensFest team, OSA

Our fifth annual OwensFest took place on Sunday 28 June, welcoming parents, students, staff, alumni and friends of the school for another memorable day of music, entertainment and community spirit. Blessed with fine weather and a wonderful atmosphere throughout, the school grounds were filled with laughter, conversation and the unmistakable buzz that makes OwensFest such a special occasion.

The stars of the festival were, without question, our students. From lively jazz performances in the Central Arena to beautiful classical recitals in the Art Café, they entertained audiences with confidence, talent and remarkable professionalism. Their performances were a credit to themselves, their teachers and the many hours of dedication that had gone into preparing for the day.

Visitors enjoyed an excellent selection of food throughout the festival, with stalls serving everything from authentic Indian and Mediterranean dishes to freshly grilled BBQ favourites, alongside homemade cakes, refreshments and sweet treats. The food area quickly became a hub of activity, giving families and friends the chance to relax, catch up and enjoy the festival atmosphere.





The market stalls were equally popular, showcasing a wonderful mix of local businesses and our own enterprising students. Their innovative 'Dragon's Den'-style ventures demonstrated impressive creativity, enthusiasm and entrepreneurial flair, adding another dimension to the day's activities.

There was plenty to keep visitors of all ages entertained. The unlimited inflatables proved as popular as ever, while chess matches, the ever-popular tombola and a host of other games and activities ensured there was always something to discover. Together with the outstanding programme of live music performed throughout the day, there was a real sense of celebration across the school.

As this festival drew to a close, we bid a fond farewell to two pillars of the OwensFest family: Eleanor Walton and Tony Sodhi, whose dedication has helped to shape OwensFest into the event it is today. They have worked tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure every OwensFest has run smoothly. While their presence will be deeply missed, they leave behind a legacy of excellence that will inspire future festivals.

Events of this scale are only possible because of the generosity and commitment of so many people. Our heartfelt thanks go to every volunteer, performer, member of staff, the technical team, parents and students who gave their time and energy to make the day such a success. As a result of this incredible support, we raised an impressive **£12,700** for our school. OwensFest is a wonderful reminder of what can be achieved when our whole school community comes together.

Planning is already underway for OwensFest '27, and we would love to welcome new members to the organising team. If you would like to get involved, please email festival@theosa.org.uk

Thank you to everyone who attended and helped make OwensFest '26 another memorable chapter in the life of our school. We look forward to seeing you again next year.



for your diary

7 Sept '26

OSA Committee Meetings

We usually meet on the first Monday of each month during term time (excluding December and January) at 7:30pm. Meetings take place in the Old Library (above Reception in school) or online. Our next meeting will be **Monday 7 September, held in person**. After that, meetings will alternate between face-to-face and online.

Please come along to meet other parents and carers who are working together to support our young people and the wider school community. Visit [the OSA website](#) for comments, suggestions and offers of help.

More about the OSA and ways to support

OSA Easy Fundraising

Have a quick look at this please – it is the easiest way for us, friends and extended family to raise money for DAOS daily. It involves doing nothing more than we're already doing, when shopping online and with over 8,000 retailers. Please follow this link to sign up: [Easy Fundraising – why wouldn't you?](#)

OSA Nearly New Uniform and Merchandise

Please remember to recycle and donate school uniform items (and support the school's environmental sustainability efforts at the same time). Containers labelled OSA Nearly New Uniform are located through the main Reception doors, on the right-hand side walkway. Recycling of clothing helps families save costs, gives the school an additional source of funding and demonstrates environmental conscientiousness. The next sale will be in June. We will publish the exact dates on our Instagram and through WhatsApp groups, however we really need some help with organising this. If you could offer to help, please email **Sheena** at uniform@theosa.org.uk

OSA's Instagram

To keep up-to-date with all OSA events and fundraising schemes, please follow the OSA's Instagram account using the QR code below. There you will find links to ticketed events and the Online Nearly New Uniform Shop.

OSA's '200 Club'

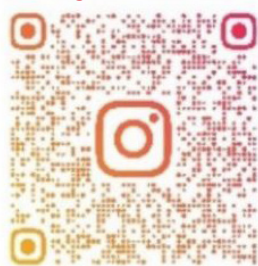
The OSA operates a lottery-style 200 Club with a £50 and a £25 prize draw every month and an extra draw in December. A one-off annual membership fee of £24 per number and nothing more to do other than wait to hear if your number is drawn. For further details, please contact OSA volunteer **Alan** at 200club@theOSA.org.uk.



OSA Match Funding

Many companies offer a Match Funding scheme for employees who volunteer time to charities, like the OSA. Match Funding is available to staff in a wide range of companies. Friends and family can match fund too – it doesn't only have to be a parent. It can make a substantial contribution to the OSA's annual fundraising for the school. We would love to hear from all of you. Please contact OSA volunteer **Nadine** at matchfunding@theosa.org.uk. Completing the form [here](#) can add you to our match funders database. Further information can be accessed through the QR codes.

Instagram



OWENSSCHOOLASSOCIATION_DAO

Match funding FAQ:



Suggested Match funding email to employer:





Window to the world beyond the classroom ...

DAOS 50th birthday celebration day

A huge thank you to everyone who took part in our DAOS 50th Birthday Celebration Day. It was fantastic to see so many students getting involved in the competitions and fundraising activities, helping us celebrate this important milestone while raising money for our new Sports Hall.



The Cake-off competition

The Cake-Off Competition was a particular highlight, with a fantastic range of creative and delicious entries. The standard was incredibly high, making judging very difficult, and entries had to be narrowed down to just six finalists. Congratulations to Isledon, who won both Best Overall Cake and Best Tasting Cake and to Goswell, whose cake was judged the best looking.



Florence - overall winner

Phoebe C - best design



Talya - best tasting cake



Phoebe W - finalist



Kay - finalist



Crest decorating competition

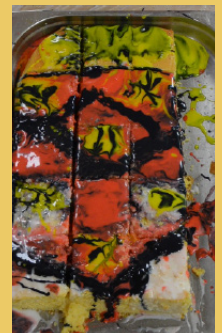
The Crest Decorating Competition was another great success, with students working together to create impressive DAOS crest cakes. Goswell were crowned the overall winners, while Hermitage won Best Looking Crest. A special mention goes to Isledon, who received the award for Teamwork and Collaboration, as they had fewer participants, students from other Houses volunteered to help, demonstrating fantastic community spirit and teamwork throughout the event.



Goswell



Hermitage



Isledon



The celebrations continue...

We were also delighted by the creativity shown in the Birthday Hat Competition. Students produced a wide range of imaginative and colourful designs, making it difficult for the judges to choose a winner. Thank you to everyone who entered and helped make the competition such a success.

The Bake Sale and Student Stalls were equally impressive. Students showcased their creativity, entrepreneurial skills and talents by selling cakes, jewellery and other handmade items, raising over £200 towards the Sports Hall Appeal.

Overall, the day was a fantastic success. It was wonderful to see students from across the school coming together to celebrate our 50th birthday in Potters Bar, demonstrate their talents and support one another.



We would also like to say a huge thank you to Mrs Nemko, Mr Leake and Mr Thompson for their support in organising and running the event and also to the kitchen staff, who donated the cakes for the crest competition. Their time, effort and enthusiasm helped make the day such a success. We are also extremely grateful to all parents and carers for their support, whether through helping students prepare entries, donating items for stalls, or encouraging participation in the various activities throughout the day.

Thank you again to everyone who participated and helped make the day so memorable.

The House Captains



Mrs Nemko looks like she had more fun wearing Dame Alice's Birthday hat than The Dame did herself!!



Genevieve with her winning birthday hat, alongside Elisabella and Dora, runners-up in the competition!



Year 7 Trip to Brewers' Hall

Mon 22 June 2026

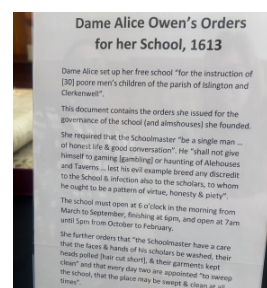
The day started off with the bustling coach ride to Islington, and we were all quite excited to learn about the origins of our school. It took about an hour and a quarter, and the air-conditioning stopped us from practically melting into puddles because of the scorching heat. You could see the places our houses are named after, Goswell Road, Clerkenwell, a historic area where the original almshouses were built. Isledon, the old name for the Islington Domesday Book, and saving the best until last, Hermitage, named after Hermitage Place and Buildings, which stood proud on the original Islington school estate lands owned by the Brewers' Company.

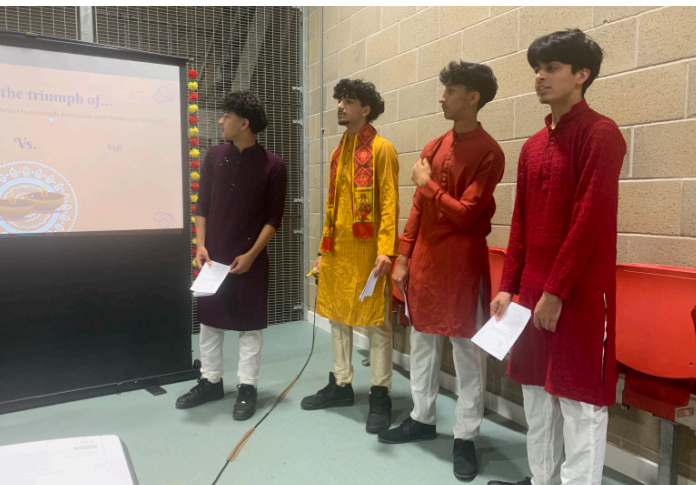
When we arrived, half of us got to go on an elaborate tour around the sites linked to Dame Alice Owen, while the other half got their souvenir coins, and attended the ceremony with The Master Brewer, The Clerk, Mrs Nemko, and The Beadle, who acts as a ceremonial officer and looks after Brewers' Hall. We got to see all around the outskirts of Brewers' Hall, and learned some facts about Dame Alice's late spouses, family, and childhood. Not only was her first husband, Thomas Owen, a brewer, but her father was also a publican, so I suppose she'd always had that sort of special connection to the brewers even before her first marriage, which is why she trusted them to manage and look after her school after her death.

Lunch for my group was around 11:30am, when we were allowed to mix with the other forms in the courtyard. A bit later, my group went into Brewers Hall. The Master Brewer gave an intellectually stimulating speech about the history of Owens and told us how the school's roots are in Islington, and how it started off as two schools, a boys' and girls', before moving to Hertfordshire. He explained how in the old days, The Beadle's coat tassels would be filled with sweet majestic aromas, so that when The Master Brewer walked through Brewers Hall to inspect the beer, instead of having to sniff all the horrid smells of experimental ale or sewers, all he would smell would be the lovely fragrance of perfume. We then received our 'beer money', and got to look around at some beautiful artefacts. One that was particularly eye-catching was the death mask. A perfect replica of Dame Alice's face and hands, quite common in those times before photography. It is a 1613 plaster cast, purchased by relatively wealthier families, to remember the deceased, in a personalised, creative, but slightly haunting way.

On the journey back, most of us were fairly tired after all that walking in the blazing sun but on our return to school we still had to persevere through period five! Overall though, the trip was a huge success, and it was great to learn about the heritage of the campus and the grounds we spend most of our time on every day and we have a special coin to treasure as Owenians.

Hazel H





Hertsmere & Arsenal Interfaith Education Day

On 19 May, eight of our current Y12 students (Aaron T, Aayushi D, Anika B, Arnav M, Eashan B, Milan K, Misha K and Paavni B) were invited to represent Dame Alice Owen's School at the Hertsmere Interfaith Education Day. This event took place at the Arsenal Hub, next to the Emirates football stadium.



The group was tasked with organising and educating pupils from local primary schools on the theme of 'Festivals of Faith'. The focus for our students was the Hindu Festival of Diwali, where they acted out musical and visual presentations in front of four different primary school audiences. Pupils were also given the opportunity to have their hands decorated with the traditional Henna. This proved popular not only with primary school pupils but also their accompanying teachers.



The purpose of this event was twofold: firstly, to provide an opportunity for a small number of 6th Formers to engage with students of multiple faiths in a neutral and relaxed space and; secondly to give primary school pupils an opportunity to learn and experience other faiths through the work of secondary school students. However, it was also a great opportunity for our students to develop important organisational, team and leadership skills – crucial for life after Owen's. Judging from the comments and feedback from the other schools that attended and participated in this event, Aaron, Aayushi, Anika, Arnav, Eashan, Milan, Misha and Paavni did themselves [and the school] proud.



Unfortunately, the proposed tour of the Emirates Stadium could not go ahead due to a last-minute corporate event, but the students did get an opportunity to have a quick kick-about on one of the inside football training grounds. Not the same as being on the actual stadium turf but nevertheless, this was still an enjoyable and rewarding day all round and I am confident that the school will be invited back again next year.

John Johnstone
Head of Religious Studies



Hertsmere & Arsenal Interfaith Education Day – A Y12 student perspective

Several Y12 students, including myself, recently had the privilege of representing DAOS at an Interfaith Day at the Arsenal Stadium. The event brought together younger pupils from many backgrounds to learn, engage and understand different faith communities and their celebrations.

Our goal was to teach primary school students about Diwali, one of the most important festivals in Hinduism. We grouped a presentation explaining how Diwali celebrates the triumph of light over darkness and good over evil and shared its significance for Hindu families around the world. We also performed a

short 10-minute role-play outlining the Hindu Scriptural story of Diwali. Paavni and Aayushi were able to do Henna/Mehndi designs on some of the students' [and teachers'] hands, to showcase the traditions of Diwali. We were also granted the opportunity to play a football match against other Y12 students during our lunch break in the Arsenal Stadium Indoor Training ground, and we had a blast!

The children were enthusiastic and engaged, asking thoughtful questions and showing great interest in learning about different cultures and traditions. At first, it was quite strange teaching younger students about culture since, typically, we are the students but throughout the day we picked up many new skills to engage audiences, and it was a rewarding experience to contribute to an event that celebrated diversity, inclusion, and understanding.

Arnav M [Y12]

LinkedIn session



On 2 July, Year 12 students had the opportunity to attend a LinkedIn workshop led by Steve MacMurray, a DAOS Alumni with more than 25 years' experience in media and broadcasting. Whether students were completely new to LinkedIn or already had a profile, there was something useful for everyone.

The session focused on how to build a professional profile, with Steve also sharing practical advice on networking with confidence and presenting achievements in a way that stands out to universities, employers and apprenticeship providers. Students also heard Steve's honest reflections about his own career journey and the importance of saying yes to opportunities. One student commented: 'Before the session, I thought LinkedIn was something I'd worry about after university. Steve showed us how it can help right now.'

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to Steve for giving his time and sharing his expertise so generously with our students.

Sixth Form Team are always keen to connect with alumni, parents and friends of the school who would be willing to share their professional experiences with our students. If you could offer a similar masterclass, careers talk, workshop or mentoring opportunity, we would be delighted to hear from you and explore how you might support the next generation as they prepare for life beyond school.



Final Ranking after 5 Rounds

Rk.	SNo	Team	Games	+	=	-	TB1
1	1	Wilson's School	5	4	1	0	15,5
2	2	Eltham College	5	3	2	0	14
3	4	Dame Alice Owen's School	5	4	0	1	12,5
4	9	King Edward VI GS, Chelmsford	5	3	0	2	12
5	5	Bristol Grammar School	5	3	0	2	11,5
6	3	King's College Lower School	5	3	0	2	11,5
7	8	Dr Challenor's Grammar School	5	2	0	3	11
8	7	Lycée Français Charles de Gaulle	5	2	1	2	10,5
9	6	Haberdashers' Adams	5	2	1	2	9,5
10	11	Westcliff High School for Boys	5	2	0	3	9
11	10	King Edwards School, Birmingham	5	2	0	3	8,5
12	15	Brentwood School	5	2	0	3	8,5
13	14	King Edward VI School, Southampton	5	2	1	2	7,5
14	16	Wilmslow High School	5	1	0	4	7
15	12	Torquay Boys' Grammar School	5	2	0	3	7
16	13	Queen Elizabeth Hospital	5	0	0	5	4,5

Chess news

It has been another exciting year of chess at school that ended in a fantastic result for our Junior Chess Team Challenge team. After qualifying for the national final in St. Albans earlier on in the year, the team that consisted of Mark L, Bella L, Sebby E and Firdaus Z travelled up to Nottingham University to compete against 16 other teams. The team only lost one game against the eventual winners Wilson's School and finished in 3rd place! What a fantastic achievement for them.

The Senior Chess Team also managed to get through to the national final of the Senior Chess Team Challenge but due to Y10 exams, the team did not travel to Nottingham to compete, which was rather disappointing.

Congratulations to Ridhuan Z for winning the Simpson Archer Chess Prize - he was selected for his continued good attitude to the game at Owen's and being a key member of a very supportive community over the past 4 years.

We look forward to chess thriving again at DAOS next year and we will welcome those new Y7 students who are eager to play this wonderful game. There will be opportunities to compete in the National Online School Chess League on a fortnightly basis on a Monday after school (supervised), as well as Battle matches that take place on Friday evenings (at home unsupervised). Students just need to sign up to the school chess team on Lichess to get involved. And remember, they can also attend Chess Club that will be in A9 on Friday next year under the supervision of Mr Korczak! Thanks to him, as well as Dr James and Mr Fry for their support with chess this year.

Have a lovely summer.

Mr Simpson

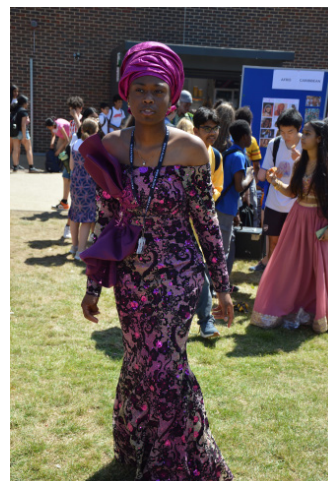
Staff vs. Students Golf

Congratulations to our young golfers who recently beat the staff team in a very close match at Old Fold Manor. Captain, Harry Carpenter, led the boys to an impressive 3 1/2 to 2 1/2 victory and played some excellent golf.



Culture day

On 6 July, the school celebrated Culture and Identity day with students sharing their cultural dress, art, dance and traditions with each other as well as lots and lots of food! We all learnt (and ate!) a lot.





Eco-committee/Sustainability team news

The summer term is always a very busy one for the eco-committee, as Mrs Knight and Mrs Chan race to complete the application process for the coveted Eco Schools Green Flag award: an opportunity to revisit and evaluate our achievements, and to update displays and to set priorities for the coming year.

A recent highlight was the ever-popular OwensFest book stall – an annual collaboration with Dr James, the librarian. The school community once again came together to donate hundreds of pre-loved books, all in excellent condition. Students, parents and visitors flocked to the stall to grab a bargain, giving a new life to books that might otherwise have ended up in a recycling bin, and raising over £175 for the school.

Responding to students' concerns about the planned data centre in Potters Bar, Eco-committee's focus this year has been on building awareness of the environmental impact of data centres, and of ways in which we can reduce our digital footprint, especially when it comes to using AI. A team of students from years 7 to 13 researched the topic and presented their findings through a series of well-received assemblies.

They explained that AI is an impressive tool that presents us with huge opportunities, but valuable energy and water are used up with every search, and we must be mindful of this when we use it – especially for energy-intensive actions such as generating images and video.

Here are their top tips to reduce the ecological impact of our AI usage:

- Choose the right tool for the task: avoid using AI to search for information that could easily be found through a standard web search, for example.
- To disable AI assistance on Google searches, type “-ai” into the start of your search.
- Avoid using AI for frivolous purposes, especially generating images and video.
- Create clear and effective prompts to make sure you get the desired response the first time. Every tweak to your original request will use more of earth's precious resources.

Mr Tanner



LEFT Arthur A (Y8) "Sweet Sushi" Bento Box

BELOW Lauren W (Y8) created two cheerful fortune cats, symbolising good luck and happiness.



Tunnock's teacakes competition

Students in Years 8 and 10 have recently shown their creative flair in the Tunnock's Teacake Challenge. This is a national competition which is run annually and attracts entries from across the country. This year's theme was "Around the World in a Bite" and students were encouraged to decorate a Tunnock's Teacake in the most creative way possible whilst also reflecting the theme.

A huge congratulations to Arthur A in Year 8, who was crowned the **overall winner** of this year's national competition, and to Lauren W, also in Year 8, who impressed the judges with her Tian Tan entry and received a Judges' Recommendation award.

Arthur created a Japanese-inspired "Sweet Sushi" Bento Box, where every element was carefully crafted to resemble authentic sushi while secretly tasting sweet.

Lauren designed a beautiful fondant spring scene featuring a miniature Tian Tan (Temple of Heaven) in Beijing, alongside two cheerful fortune cats, symbolising good luck and happiness.

Congratulations to Arthur and Lauren on their fantastic achievements and well done to all of the students who took part in this year's competition. Their creativity, skill and attention to detail were truly outstanding.



Duke of Edinburgh Awards

It has been another busy and successful term for our Duke of Edinburgh Awards (DofE) participants, with students demonstrating resilience, teamwork and determination across a range of expeditions and events.

Bronze Award

This term, **156 Year 9 students** completed the final section of their Bronze Award with a two-day, one-night expedition in the local area, camping at Tolmers Scout Camp. Throughout the expedition, students displayed excellent navigation and campcraft skills, as well as some impressive outdoor cooking. Isabelle's homemade pancakes proved particularly popular with fellow participants! Despite facing very wet weather on the second day, everyone remained positive and completed the expedition with great enthusiasm.

Congratulations to all of our Bronze participants. We hope many of them will continue their DofE journey by beginning the Silver Award when they return for Year 10.

Gold Award

In the final week of term, **39 Year 12 students** will travel to the Lake District to undertake their assessed Gold expedition. Over four days and three nights, including one wild camp, students will face one of the most demanding sections of the DofE Award. This expedition is always a significant challenge, but our students consistently demonstrate the determination, resilience and teamwork needed to succeed. We wish them every success.

Gold Award Celebration at Buckingham Palace

In May, **7 of our students** were invited to Buckingham Palace to celebrate achieving their Gold Duke of Edinburgh's Award. It was a fantastic occasion, blessed with beautiful sunshine, where students celebrated their achievements alongside family and friends in the palace gardens.



The day included inspiring talks from a range of well-known speakers, including Hugh Bonneville, Alex Jones, Larry Lamb, Lucy Shepherd, Drew Walker and Tabitha Stoecker. Students also had the opportunity to meet His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh, making the event an unforgettable experience.

We look forward to seeing next year's Year 13 Gold Award participants enjoy their own celebration at Buckingham Palace.

Looking ahead

In September, **66 Year 11 students** (current Year 10) will complete their assessed Silver expedition in the Chilterns. This expedition should mark the final section of their Silver Award, after which we hope they will all receive their well-earned certificates.

We are also delighted to be introducing a new **DofE Awards Evening on 19 November** to celebrate the achievements of our current Year 9 and Year 10 students who have completed their Bronze and Silver Awards. Awards will be presented by the Lord-Lieutenant of Hertfordshire, and we hope award holders and their families will be able to join us for this special occasion. Invitation letters will be sent out at the start of next term.

A big thank you to all the staff who have helped on the expeditions this year, without whom the expeditions would not be able to happen: Mr Macdonald, Mr Payne, Dr Mitchell, Miss Sach, Miss Morrison, Miss Locke, Mr DeJong and Mr Jayapal.



Excellence in everything from our departments ...

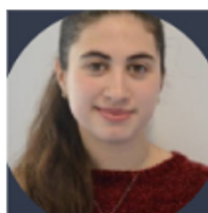
Science department

National Scientific Thinking Challenge

In May, 121 Year 10 students took part in the National Scientific Thinking Challenge. Students had to look at data, graphs and text to make deductions, spot trends and suggest hypotheses.

The school won 23 Gold awards (top 10% nationally), 29 Silvers and 23 Bronze certificates. Congratulations to William H who achieved the top score nationally out of 16,174 pupils!

Mr Jays



Biology Olympiad Success

Once again, A Level Biology students achieved great success in the British Biology Olympiad competitions.

<https://ukbiologycompetitions.org/british-biology-olympiad/>

The British Biology Olympiad is an annual advanced problem-solving competition for A Level students. Students are presented with topics and ideas which they are not familiar with and so need to use their problem-solving skills and understanding of core principles.

Last term, 39 of our A Level Biology students took part in the Olympiad competition. 49% of students achieved Bronze, Silver or Gold Certificates. Many congratulations to all students, with a particular mention to Rui, Jafar and Anika who were in the top 5% of all entrants and achieved the gold award!

The intermediate Biology Olympiad for year 12 students yielded equally impressive results, with 50% of students achieving a bronze award and above and 5 of our students achieving a gold award. Well done to Helena, Joe, Jacob, Lilian and Arjun!



Gold Award winners – top 5% in the country!





Fieldwork in Action: A Level Biologists Conquer the Jurassic Coast

Our Year 12 A Level Biologists recently traded the lab for the stunning Jurassic Coast, embarking on an intensive three-day residential fieldwork trip to Dorset. Far from a gentle holiday, this trip is a crucial milestone in the A Level curriculum, designed to bring ecology out of the textbook and into the real world.

Students worked as real-world field scientists, mastering complex ecological sampling techniques. From systematic belt transects down the rocky shore at Kimmeridge to kick-sampling in the River Piddle, they braved the summer heatwave to observe biodiversity in action.

The primary focus of the trip was investigating how fluctuating abiotic factors – including soil pH, moisture, wind exposure and salinity – dictate exactly where species can survive. Students were able to walk through time as they observed ecological succession firsthand at Studland, watching pioneer species give way to mature woodland communities further inland. A particular highlight was seeing the habitat engineering by beavers at Little Sea, where the group spotted a tree that had been felled ‘cartoon-style’ by them!

Beyond the muddy boots and physical geography, the trip provided vital data for the classroom. Students collected hundreds of data points to use for complex statistical analyses back at school, including Student’s t-tests and Spearman’s Rank correlations. Crucially, the trip allowed every student to successfully tick off core competencies for their practical endorsement (CPAC).

The Biology team would like to commend the students for their exceptional teamwork, good humour and scientific curiosity throughout the trip – especially during the challenging hike back up to Spyway from Dancing Ledge. They have returned with invaluable data, a deeper understanding of ecosystem dynamics, and memories that will last well beyond their exams.

Maths department

Maths Challenge results

Earlier this term, 42 pupils from Years 7 and 8 sat the UKMT Junior Maths Challenge follow-on rounds. In the Kangaroo round, we achieved 4 Bronze, 14 Silver and 8 Gold certificates.

Special congratulations to Cassandra in Year 7 and to James B in Year 8 who achieved best in their year groups. James gained 135 points and received the Best in School certificate.

The Olympiad results were equally impressive. Jacob in Year 7 was awarded a Merit. In Year 8, Kamran, Sebby and Jasper were awarded Merit. Aubrey, also with a Merit certificate, won Best in School with 28 points. Our Year 7 and 8 Olympiads are pictured here.

Many congratulations to them all.



Year 8 Hertfordshire Team Maths Final – 11 June 2026

Two teams took part in the Hertfordshire Team Maths Competition, having come joint first in the heats earlier in the term.

Team JICE – James B, Inara, Christopher and Ethan

Team IKEA – Izzy, Kos, Emilia and Aubrey

We worked together to complete a range of problem-solving questions, puzzles and estimations throughout the four rounds, most of which we solved despite the difficulty. In the poster round, where half the team memorised the picture and the other half drew it, we managed to draw the majority of the poster despite the limited time.

Team JICE came 7th and we (Team IKEA) came 2nd overall, narrowly missing out on first place despite a draw in points, which was an incredible achievement.

Overall, I thought it was a great experience and I really enjoyed it!

Izzy V, Year 8



Design and Technology department

Year 9 Architecture and the Built Environment Workshop

Year 9 students taking GCSE Design & Technology took part in an Architecture and Built Environment workshop on Wednesday 20 May, led by MATT+FIONA. The session focused on the proposed new “garden village”, Bowmans Cross, planned near Colney Heath, four miles northwest of Potters Bar.

The workshop began with an introduction to the roles of developers, architects and engineers in creating new settlements. We learnt how developers establish the vision, secure land and funding, and coordinate the project; architects design buildings and public spaces; and engineers ensure structures are safe, sustainable, and technically feasible. We were then asked to design and build our own model of Bowmans Cross. Certain features were pre-determined, including road placement, a central village green and the required amenities (including education, healthcare, leisure and play, and public transport, etc). Working in pairs, we were each assigned a building or amenity type and created scaled models using wooden blocks, sticks, glue,

model trees and bushes, and different surface materials. As a group, we then agreed on a final village layout, considering factors like noise levels, access to green space, housing mix, and proximity to roads. Our completed model included a skate park, parkland, primary and secondary schools, a food court, a library, and a range of residential, retail, and commercial areas.

The workshop encouraged us to think critically about real-world planning challenges, such as balancing green space with housing needs, reducing car dependency, and meeting the differing priorities of residents, for example, younger people valuing public transport and cheaper, smaller homes, while families and older residents opting for quieter areas and larger properties.

We would like to thank MATT+FIONA for running the workshop and Miss Chan and Mrs Stein for organising it. More information about Bowmans Cross can be found at <https://bowmanscross.co.uk/>

Somme Photography Winners 2026

History department

Year 9 History Trip to Somme and Ypres – May 2026

This year's annual Battlefields Trip to Ypres and the Somme was a thought-provoking, engaging and enlightening experience for all the 90 Year 9 students that attended. The three days included a wide variety of unique opportunities for the young people: particular highlights were Newfoundland Park, the Thiepval Memorial and Vimy Ridge. The History Department were especially proud of the questions the students asked of our expert guides and the very high levels of respect shown to all the places of memorial. The gravitas of the trip was perfectly encapsulated by the laying of the school's wreath at the Menin Gate ceremony. It was amazing for the staff to see students really immerse themselves in the history of WW1 and further enrich their love for learning. This fantastic experience allowed them to gain a deeper understanding of the war and a greater appreciation for the sacrifices made by so many during the War.

The students should be very proud of how well they conducted themselves, and the History Department is so pleased that the trip was enjoyed by all.

Finally, please take time to look at the amazing photos from the winners of the Somme trip photo competition and read some reflections of the trip from the students below.

Miss Smith and the History Department



First place, Ilinca R, Y9



Second place, Taliya D, Y9



Third place, Florence S, Y9

A reflection of the first few days of the trip, from Benedict S, Year 9 trip attendee

A lot of people were alarmed by the 3am start, but it was totally worth it! After travel, from coach to ferry, we soon found ourselves travelling down French country lanes with announcements from the brilliant guides pointing out important sites and their histories.

Soon we arrived at the first stop, the Sunken Lane. We went up to the edge of the huge crater at the top of a hill. The crater went almost as deep as the hill was tall, and its magnitude was almost incomparable to anything else! It had been created by the Brits, who had tunnelled underneath the German trenches and placed explosives there. From the top of the hill we learnt the tactical advantages of being on a hill, being camouflaged against the backdrop of the hill.

Next, we visited Newfoundland Memorial Park, which commemorates Canadian soldiers who fought in the Great War and we studied some preserved trenches. I also enjoyed visiting the Thiepval Memorial which was an enormous monument inscribed with the names of all of the soldiers who died in the Somme, whose bodies had never been recovered. There was a huge cemetery that stretched long into the distance and there was a war memorial, where we held a short remembrance ceremony and laid a wreath.

Another intriguing experience was getting to explore the Bayernwald trench system. It showed us just how confusing it was to get your bearings down there!

Later on, we got to see the results of a competition, set up to get architects and sculptors across Canada to try to make the perfect memorial to represent the Canadian Soldiers who fought in the war. The winner, Canada Bereft, features a mother looking down at her dead son; it shows how Canada mourned the loss of all of its soldiers.

Finally, why go to Belgium and not buy chocolate? I bought so much delicious chocolate that it took me at least a month to get through it all (even though I had already eaten some in Belgium before we left)! All in all, it was a fantastic trip; the guides were cheery and funny, the experiences were insightful, the museums were thought-provoking and the chocolate was delicious!

A reflection of the trip, from Ilinca R, Year 9 trip attendee

On 21 May, some Year 9s travelled to France and Belgium to learn more about WWI, visiting places such as Sunken Lane, the Notre Dame de Lorette, and a favourite among many of us, the Passchendaele Memorial Museum, where we explored uniforms and the use of medicine and military technology throughout the war.

We also saw many memorials, such as the Thiepval Memorial to the Missing of the Somme and the National Canada Memorial. For me, some of the most memorable things that we learnt from our guides were the individual stories of soldiers, the history of technology in the war and especially the trenches, which we even walked through during our time in Belgium. In addition to this, one of my favourite things was seeing the Menin Gate and taking part in the Last Post Ceremony.

As well as an amazing time seeing WWI sights and learning about the war, this trip was also a chance for us all to grasp the number of people affected, and preserve the memory of soldiers of WWI. The whole trip helped us experience the scale of the war, that before, we had only read about. It certainly helped me better understand the importance of remembering those who were affected in WWI, and I hope that in the future, many more students will get a chance to as well.



English department

June 2026 – The Globe Players

This term, students in Years 8 and 10 were treated to exciting performances from The Globe Players, a theatre company renowned for bringing Shakespeare and literary texts to life for young audiences.

Year 8 students enjoyed a performance of key scenes from Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, offering them the opportunity to revisit the play they had studied earlier in the year and experience the drama, conflict and emotion of Shakespeare's famous tragedy on stage. The Globe Players' dynamic and accessible style helped students to appreciate the power of Shakespeare's language and the impact of live performance.

Year 10 students were also treated to a performance of key scenes from Priestley's *An Inspector Calls*, their GCSE Literature set text. Seeing the play performed live provided students with a deeper understanding of characterisation, staging choices and the dramatic techniques used to communicate Priestley's important social messages.

The performances were a fantastic way to enrich students' learning, helping them to explore familiar texts from a fresh perspective while developing a greater appreciation for the power of theatre. The Globe Players once again demonstrated why they are so successful at inspiring young people to engage with literature and drama.

June 2026 – Independent Reading Day

On 30 June, A Level English Literature and English Language and Literature students took part in an Independent Reading Day, providing them with the opportunity to explore texts beyond the syllabus and develop the intellectual curiosity that is essential for university study.

Students spent the day in the Fiction Library, beginning with a selection of challenging and thought-provoking texts, including *We Have Always Lived in the Castle* by Shirley Jackson, *The Yellow Wallpaper* by Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and a range of modern poetry from diverse voices.

The morning was led by Mr Maxwell and filled with discussion, analysis and activities designed to encourage students to think critically about literature beyond the boundaries of their exam texts. Students enjoyed exploring new writers and ideas, while developing their ability to engage with unfamiliar material independently. In the afternoon, students took part in a creative writing workshop led by our visiting poet Ash Dickinson. Ash's energetic and imaginative session encouraged students to experiment with language, voice and poetic form, allowing them to approach writing from a new perspective.

After a busy day of reading, discussion and creativity (fuelled by a delicious breakfast!), students left with fresh ideas and a renewed enthusiasm for exploring literature. A fantastic opportunity for students to demonstrate their curiosity, independence and passion for English.



June 2026 – Visiting Poet Ash Dickinson and the R. F. Cholmeley Poetry Competition

The R. F. Cholmeley Poetry Competition has once again been a wonderful celebration of poetry, performance and creativity at Dame Alice Owen's School.

The competition is a much-loved school tradition, originally established by former Headmaster Mr R. F. Cholmeley, who led the school from 1909 to 1927. Mr Cholmeley was passionate about improving students' reading skills and created an inter-form reading competition which has continued to inspire generations of students.

This year, both Year 7 and Year 8 students delivered outstanding performances, showcasing a fantastic range of poems and demonstrating impressive confidence, expression and creativity. We were particularly proud of the enthusiastic support students showed for one another, creating a wonderful atmosphere of encouragement and school spirit.

A special congratulations goes to our winners:



Year 7 Top Three

1st Place: Diego RA (7S) with an outstanding original poem celebrating the beauty of nature and the power of language, inspired by a trip to Grasmere in the Lake District. Our very own Wordsworth in the making!

2nd Place: Jessica B (7G)

3rd Place: Aylin J (7N)

Year 8 Top Three

1st Place: Leo S (8W) with an original poem written in honour of his grandad – a humorous and affectionate tribute which brought a special family member to life through expressive performance and characterisation.

2nd Place: Alex M (8E)

3rd Place: Alice R (8O)

We would also like to congratulate all of the students who represented their forms. The quality of performances and original poetry was exceptional, and it was wonderful to see so many students embracing the challenge of performing poetry aloud.

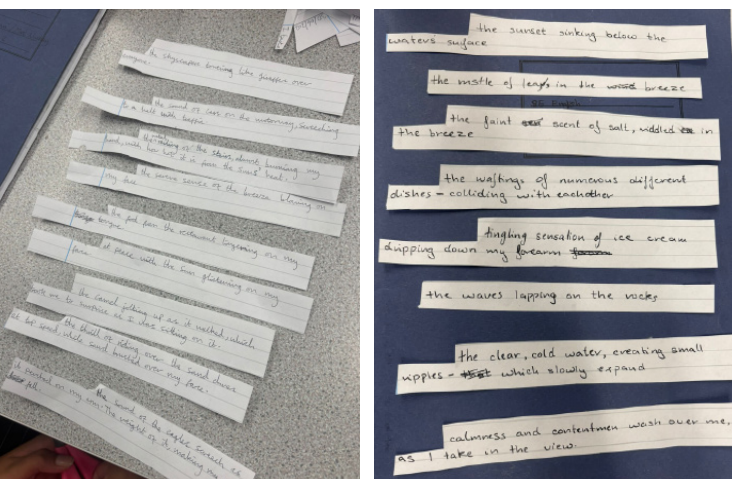


Year 8 Poetry Workshop

Ash Dickinson also worked with some students in a poetry writing workshop inspired by the experimental techniques of writer William Burroughs and his famous 'cut-up' method.

Students explored how unexpected combinations of words and phrases can create surprising images, meanings and connections. The workshop encouraged students to think differently about the writing process and showed them that poetry is not only about carefully planned ideas, but also about experimentation, curiosity and playfulness with language.

Here is a fantastic example of a poem created during the workshop by Alex M, inspired by Benjamin Zephaniah's 'The British':



stalls

filled with foods from all over the world
a kaleidoscope of colours
all contrasting, all complementing

music

people singing and cheering,
the Thames tapping a steady tune
all mixing into one another
a wave of aromas

perfumes, candles, spices, colognes
wafting, wandering through the air
mingling together

a bite of food

warmth floods my mouth
dispelling the cold and the rain
bringing me back down to Earth

the mix of emotions

of the people around me
their excitement, their sorrows
all as powerful as each other
joining to form a perfect representation of humanity

Creative writing club

Creative Writing Club has had another wonderfully imaginative year, with students producing an impressive range of work inspired by different themes, competitions and creative challenges. Tobias in Y12 continues to provide invaluable support with his engaging prompts and the students have enjoyed coming up with their own prompts for our writing sessions.

Students have entered several writing competitions, including those run by Young Writers such as the Stranger Sagas competition, Ghost Stories short fiction and I Have a Dream poetry competition, with many students achieving publication for their work. Special mention to Myra U, our most published student writer this year!

Creative Writing Club continues to be a wonderfully warm space for students to experiment with language, share ideas and develop their confidence as writers. Whether crafting suspenseful stories, imaginative worlds or thoughtful poetry, students have shown remarkable creativity and enthusiasm.

A huge well done to everyone involved – we look forward to seeing you again next year!



Art department

Trip to the Pitt Rivers Museum

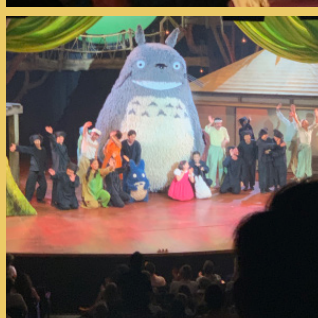
The Pitt Rivers Museum is home to over 500,000 photographs, manuscripts and objects of anthropology and archaeology from around the world. Year 10 Art students explored the atmospheric galleries and thoroughly enjoyed the experience, producing some outstanding drawings for the GCSE theme; Nature and the Environment. Panayiota described the experience as 'amazing'.

As ever, their behaviour, work ethic and attitude to learning was exemplary.

Thank you to Ms Veerayen, Mrs Simpson and Mr Leake for their support.



Trip to My Neighbour Totoro



We went to the Gillian Lynne Theatre to watch the theatre production of My Neighbour Totoro. Even though I had already seen the play before, the music, acting, sets, props and acting still amazed me! Everything was so detailed and it really helped bring the story to life. All of the teachers were so nice and made the trip even more enjoyable. Thank you from all of the Year 8s to Ms Grigson in particular for coming up with the whole idea to go and see it!

Amika B



Drama department

Our final production in July was *Floreat Featherstone's!*, an original play written and directed by Ms E Govier and starring over 100 students in Years 7 - 9 acting, dancing and singing their way through the narrative action. Set in the 1920s, the production featured our protagonist, Alicia Allison, newly arrived at Featherstone's School for Refined Young Ladies. Alicia's honest, no-nonsense attitude soon found her firm friends and admiration from the boys from St Barts. High jinks were had, an inspector tried to close the school and a giant toad was found frequenting the grounds, however our plucky heroine ensured that she saved the day thanks to her resourcefulness and a genuine 1920s lacrosse stick! Thank you to all students and staff involved in this production, it really made a colourful, humorous and enjoyable end to the dramatic year!

Ms E Govier - Director of Drama





Music department

Year 8 Music Festival 2026

Just before half term, musical attention was on Key Stage 3 with the Year 8 Music Festival 2026. The week featured an amazing 70 separate performances across 4 festival sessions as every student in the year took to the stage in the Edward Guinness Hall, each performing in a whole-class song, a whole-class instrumental piece and a small-group piece. The week was full of the spirit of collaboration and the thrilling performances were received with enthusiastic support from the audience. Some classes even managed to put on fabulous programmes in the absence of their teacher, displaying outstanding levels of preparation, self-leadership and mutual support.

Every performance earned points for their houses, scored points for their tech group with some items being awarded certificates of commendation. The Tech crew ensured that we looked and sounded our absolute best!

At the end of the week the winning half year tech groups were **8sda2** and **8owen4** with 8sda2 being declared the overall tech group winners!

The winning Year 8 Music Festival house was Hermitage.

Thank you to all the Year 8 Music teachers, Ms Bamber, Mr Page and Ms Sutherland, for their hard work in preparing and organising the festival and congratulations to all the performers!

Owen's Open Arts Evening

Thursday 4 June saw the Arts blocks hosting Owen's Open Arts Evening. Visitors enjoyed the opportunity to experience a broad range of students' artistic activity with fantastic exhibitions of Art, Textiles and Product Design, as well as performances by a wide range of musicians. In spite of the rapidly changing weather, audiences gathered outside the A block, under umbrellas and in raincoats, to hear the thrilling performances by the Samba Batteria and Samba Novata groups. The Year 12 Band, Mount Fuggi, led the EGH foyer stage, performing Michael Jackson hits to passing and gathered audiences. In addition, visitors were also treated to Year 12 singer-songwriter Oscar's performances of his own original songs, as well as Year 8 duo Leo (vocals and guitar) and Arthur (French horn) with Hotel California. The indoor acoustic stages in both the A block Atrium and the M block corridor featured brilliant performances by Junior Chamber Strings as well as an array of chamber groups and singers, including the Trombone Quartet, the Guitar Ensemble, the Flute Ensemble, the Clarinet Ensemble, the Pathos Ensemble and the Year 10 Vocal Trio, as well as Year 7 and 8 soloists, Sophie, Koby and Kendrick. Entertaining both the gathered audience and also the passing visitors to the Art, Textiles and Product Design exhibitions, this was a brilliant opportunity for our fabulous musicians to bring their performances to a wider audience!

Our thanks to Ms Bamber, Mr Crossley, Ms Makepeace Lott, Ms McChrystal, Mr Niesyto, Mr Page and Mrs Smith for their work preparing the musicians for the performances. And our congratulations to all the musicians for their excellent performances.





Music news continued

Tuesday 9 June saw the **Y10 Music** students take to the stage with their ensemble performances, one of the favourite parts of the GCSE! Complete with their Y10 groupie supporters in the audience, we enjoyed a lovely selection of styles and genres, delivered with musicality, ensemble sensitivity and panache! Congratulations to all the performers, and thank you to Ms Bamber, Ms Sutherland and Mr Southorn.

The Key Stage 3 season continues with the **Year 9 Music Festival** that brought to the stage four festival sessions, richly packed with exciting musical items, over 80 performances in all, including 15 original compositions! Once again, every student in Year 9 took to the stage in a whole-class instrumental piece, a whole-class song and a small-group piece in a week marked out by musical collaboration, courage and community. Audiences, teachers and performers alike all seemed to be having a brilliant time! Once again, the Tech Crew helped us all look and sound even better. In addition to the set pieces, we were treated to a wealth of extra items, including popular songs, classical pieces and original compositions, some live and some created on computer. The entertainment was often led by engaging and witty presenters. It was truly a Year 9 festival to be proud of!

We were excited and delighted for the festival to be adjudicated by returning Year 13 musician, Matthew. The winning Tech Groups were **9gjst2** and **9lmn1**, with 9gjst2 taking the overall crown. The winning house was Clerkenwell.



OwensFest

OwensFest on Sunday 28 June once again saw a feast of music on the Amphitheatre Main Stage and the Acoustic Stage in the café. In the brilliant midday sunlight, the Main Stage included performances from the Owen's Jazz programme: the Jazz Collective; Jazz Ensemble 1; Jazz Ensemble 2; Senior Jazz combo as well as student-directed performances by Year 11 Jazz Band, the Five and a thrilling jazz trio collaboration between Matthew, Louis and Ms Brooks in a rhythmically complex version of 'A Night in Tunisia'. The outdoor entertainment continues with performances including Leo and Arthur's (Year 8) 'Hotel California' and Year 7 solo appearances by students Rian and Koby, as well as duets from Ilinca and Sophia and the Year 9 'Valerie' band. Meanwhile, for those seeking the shade of the indoors and a cup of tea with cake, the Acoustic stage had a packed programme featuring student groups and solo items, including the All Star Singers, as well as the Sax Ensemble, Flute Ensemble, Clarinet Ensemble and a string of solos and duets from Musa, Kendrick, Dora, Elisabella, Siddhi, Bea and Rosa.

Congratulations to all the performers and thanks to Mr Crossley, Mr Kelly, Ms Makepeace Lott, Mr Hunt, Ms Bamber and Mrs Khan and, of course, to the OSA for organising such a brilliant event!



Jazz on a Summer's Evening

On Tuesday 29 June the Main Hall was set out with tables, cabaret-style, and the audience settled down with their refreshments (provided, as ever, by our wonderful OSA) for Owen's Jazz on a Summer's Evening. A performance showcasing, in this more intimate setting, our Jazz programme, including our very own Jazz Collective, a group of more than 30 musicians, working completely by ear and full of improvising solos in between cool and stylish head sections. The Jazz Ensemble 2 and Jazz Ensemble 1 also performed as did the Senior Jazz Combo, the Jazz Five, a student-led jazz combo of Year 11s. Once again we were treated to Matthew, Louis and Ms Brooks' thrilling 'Night in Tunisia' performance. We were thrilled that the evening featured a guest star saxophonist: DAOS alumnus Leo Richardson, who is, these days, widely acknowledged as one of the finest tenor saxophonists in the country. Leo performed as a guest with each ensemble, inspiring our students with the brilliance and sensitivity of his stylish sax playing!

Our thanks to Mr Kelly, Mr Crossley and Mr Hunt for all of their work with the musicians as well as to Ms Sutherland, for joining the performers on stage.





The Summer Concert

Monday 6 July saw hundreds of performers from Years 7 to 13 take to the stage in our final large-scale concert of the year, the Summer Concert, which was a veritable feast of music featuring performances by Concert Band, Second Band, Senior Chamber Choir, Senior Choir, Junior Chamber Choir, Junior Choir, Senior Strings, Second Orchestra and Symphony Orchestra.

Thank you, and congratulations, to all our amazing musicians for another brilliant year of Owen's music-making! As the final notes of Bizet's Carmen Suite, performed on a packed stage by the combined massed orchestras, faded, the audience, once again, erupted into applause, demonstrating their delight in the evening's performances!



Congratulations to all our performers and to the staff who help them to put on such impressive, exciting and uplifting performances: Ms Bamber, Mrs Brady, Ms Brooks, Mr Crossley, Mrs Doust, Mr Kelly, Ms Makepeace Lott, Ms McChrystal, Mr Page, Mr Southorn, Ms Sutherland and Mr Widden, as well as to the caretakers and the OSA for all of their crucial support in making the performance evenings so wonderful.

We are looking forward to our **Summer Music Tour** to the Netherlands with the Concert Band and Symphony Orchestra (18-22 July), to round off a remarkable performing year!

PE Department



Athletics

Boys

At the recent Hertfordshire County Schools Championships Aryan won the Senior Boys 100m to become champion.

The boys county league teams have continued to perform well in the County League and have progressed into the County Final.

In the final both boys teams performed well on the day with 1st place for Kanyi in the discus and James in the high jump, and 2nd place for Xavier in the pole vault and Thomas in the 100m. Well done boys, you did yourselves proud.

In the Track and Field Cup Competition both boys teams competed in the Regional B final with the Inter Boys finishing 2nd and the Junior Boys finishing 6th on the day. There were some great performances from all the boys in each of their individual events.



Girls

At the Hertfordshire County Schools Championships Isla won the Inter Girls 300m to become champion and Shenel came 3rd in the Senior Girls 100m.

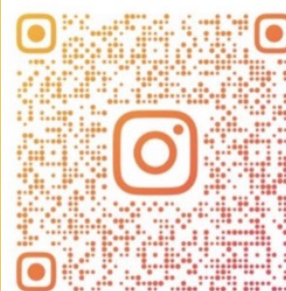
At the Track and Field Cup Competition the girls competed in the Regional B final with the Inter Girls finishing 4th and the Junior Girls finishing 10th on the day against some strong opposition. There were some amazing individual performances by the girls on the day.

In the County League the girls continued to perform well with the Inter girls progressing to the county final and the Junior girls missing out on the final to progress to the plate final.

In the Plate Final the Junior girls produced an amazing afternoon of performances with 1st place in the hurdles, 300m, high jump, shot and discus, this led them to become champions. Well done girls, you did yourselves proud.

In the County Final the Inter girls performed well on the day with wins for Isla in the 300m and triple jump and a second place for Aduago in the 200m. The girls also won the relay, well done ladies.

To keep up to date with everything Owen's PE, follow **DAOS.PE.Dept** on Instagram.



@DAOS.PE.DEPT

Cricket

Year 7 Boys

The U12 boys had a very successful season, winning three of the four matches they played, with a further two fixtures unfortunately cancelled due to poor weather conditions.

Sadly, their County Cup campaign came to an end in the first round against a strong Haileybury side. Batting first, the team posted a competitive total of 123 all out. The boys then bowled exceptionally well during the opening eight overs, putting Haileybury under real pressure. However, the quality and determination of their batters eventually saw them reach the target in the 15th over.

Overall, it has been a season to be proud of for everyone involved in U12 cricket. Throughout the season, 30 boys had the opportunity to represent the school, while a minimum of 25 boys attended training each week. Their excellent commitment, enthusiasm and hard work at training were reflected in their performances on the pitch, making it a fantastic season for the entire squad.

Year 8 Boys

The Year 8 boys experienced a season of ups and downs, with three matches unfortunately cancelled due to poor weather conditions. Of the fixtures they played, they lost two before finishing the season on a high with an excellent team performance in their final match.

The boys showed great energy and enthusiasm in the field, with every player applying themselves well throughout the game. It was particularly pleasing to see the positive attitude and support they showed for one another from start to finish, demonstrating excellent teamwork and sportsmanship.

A huge well done to all of the boys involved in Year 8 cricket this season. Their commitment to training was outstanding throughout the year, and it was fantastic to see the progress they made both individually and as a team. They should all be proud of the effort, resilience and determination they displayed across the season.

Year 9 Boys

The U14 boys have experienced a season of ups and downs this year, with two fixtures unfortunately cancelled due to poor weather. Of the three matches they have played, they have won one and lost two, including a defeat to Bishop's Stortford College in the County Cup.

Despite the results, the County Cup match highlighted the character, resilience and team spirit that the boys consistently show whenever they represent the school. Their determination and positive attitude throughout the game were a credit to both themselves and the school.

Throughout the season, the boys have worked extremely hard in training to develop their individual skills and improve as a team. Although the results may not always reflect their efforts, there has been clear progress in their performances, and they should be proud of the commitment and dedication they have shown all year.

Year 10 Boys

The Year 10 boys have had an unusual season, often finding themselves in closely contested matches right until the final moments. Regardless of the result, they have consistently played with great spirit and determination. They are a fantastic group of students who genuinely enjoy playing cricket together, and that enthusiasm has been evident throughout the season.

The team competed in the County Plate, where they were unfortunately knocked out in the first round by Aldenham. They also took part in the K-S Cup, losing both of their opening-round matches. Despite the results, there were many positives to take from these fixtures, including some excellent individual performances and outstanding energy and commitment in the field.

Overall, the Year 10 boys played four matches, winning one and losing three. They finished the season on a high with a hard-fought victory over Latymer. In a closely contested game, the boys bowled and fielded exceptionally well, ultimately seeing the game through comfortably. The team should be proud of the commitment, teamwork and resilience they demonstrated throughout the season.



A Day At Lord's With The Australian Cricket Team

Last Friday, our school cricket team was invited to go to Lord's cricket grounds for a special training session with the Australian Women's Cricket team. It was a moment we would never forget and also a very proud moment for our school.

After exiting the minibuses, we were approached by a member from Lord's and she showed us the hall where we would stay and eat before the session started. All of the staff there were very kind to us as we found our way round the stadium. Then, after we had lunch together in the hall, we were invited to go to the grounds! There, we met the members of the Australian Cricket team! All of them were very nice and approachable and took the time to answer all our questions and even gave us some tips on our cricket play.

The highlight of the visit was when we played a mini-match with the players and got to play cricket with professionals. The day was very enjoyable and fun and I would recommend signing up for the cricket club at school if you haven't yet to get to experience things like this!

Lia T, Y7





Rounders

Y7 District Tournament

The grass was fresh. The sun was burning. And us? We were ready to play our very best and enjoy our time, whether we won or lost.

The first game was one with the one and only Chancellor's. As soon as we arrived, the 15-minute innings blasted off with great batting from our own proud team. However, Chancellor's wasn't just going to sit around. Though they did not manage to catch any hits, their coordination was great, sending the ball back to the bowler as soon as they could. Things did not seem great for the Owenians. But despite this, Owens went on to field, hoping to stop as many rounders being scored as possible. Even so, this was not without hardship. Our supposed bowler was unavailable and we had to switch some of our brave fielders in. We tried our best, passionately getting batters out, yet we were not successful in stopping Chancellor's scoring rounder after rounder. In the end, Chancellor's were victorious with an astonishing score of $14\frac{1}{2} - 11$.

Still, will our Owenians give up on the tournament? Absolutely not. At times they lose, but they never yield. With the faith that if we won our next game, we could make it to the semifinals, we tread again onto the field, and this time, Monk's Walk – was waiting for us. This time, we had the advantage of fielding first. And we went for it. Our fielding was spectacular, especially our backstop's amazing strategy and second base. Although we lost a rounder due to bowling, Monk's Walk could only get half rounder after half rounder. With this momentum, we proceeded to bat. And we were awesome. 5 whole rounders in a row. By the end of the innings, we couldn't care less who won, for we knew we did amazingly. Monk's Walk won, despite our efforts, with a score of $8 - 5\frac{1}{2}$.

At the end of the day, we didn't win any tournaments or matches, but we won experience and enjoyment, proud to have uplifted the Owen's spirit. I'm sure, on the way home, we laughed triumphantly of the best bits and bobs of the match that were imprinted forever into our memory of our time at Owen's.

Scarlett L, Y7

Y7 District Rounders vs Sherrardswood

I was privileged enough to play for Owen's Y7 rounders squad against Sherrardswood. We started off with the other team batting first. We were strong in fielding and we were able to get out 7 of their players after the 15 ball inning. Then it was our time to bat. We put in a great performance, hitting the ball hard and far. They were only able to get 1 of our players out and this was on the 2nd to last ball. Unfortunately after both of our first innings we were only a few points behind. We kept the positivity up and knew we could make it to the win. In our 2nd inning we performed much better and we knew more about each batter and were able to adjust our positions depending on who was hitting the ball. When it was our turn to bat we were able to identify weaker areas amongst the fielding array to improve the chance of scoring more points. We were able to take the lead and we won the game! The score ended up being 11-14 to Owen's!!! Well done to everyone who played you all performed amazingly.

Jessica B, Y7

Y8 Rounders v Sherrardswood

On 22 June the Y8 and Y7 girls had the privilege to play a rounders game against Sherrardswood. They were a really strong team!

We started the game off by batting, whilst Sherrardswood fielded. In the first innings, I think we didn't run as much as we could have, resulting in us scoring only a few rounders. Next we fielded, where we were doing really well, communication-wise, and managed to get lots of the opposition's batters out. Then we batted again, where we managed to score a lot more. The batter of the match Anna did so well, managing to score 3 rounders overall. And then we fielded again, we started off strong again, and managed to get many batters out at 1st post (Emilia M) and 2nd post (Percy C – player of the match), but then one of the stronger batters from Sherrardswood whacked the ball so far, we all thought she was going to get a full rounder but then Lydia came to the rescue and managed to get the most incredible catch, making her fielder of the match.

In the end I think we all worked incredibly hard, especially in the heat, but unfortunately lost 6.5-8, due to a slower start compared to the opposition.

Finally, thank you Miss Rose for organising and umpiring this match!

Emilia S, Y8

Tennis

Congratulations to all of our tennis teams who represented the school so well in this year's Nicola Mabbit Competition across the district. Their commitment, teamwork and sportsmanship throughout the season have been outstanding, and we are incredibly proud of their achievements.

A special congratulations also goes to Noah, Jason, Kanghong, Laurence, Taohai, Andrew, Vishnu and Nathan, who represented the school at the County Doubles Tournament. Well done to everyone involved in another fantastic season of school tennis!

Other achievements



On Saturday 20 June Elijah F became the Midland Box Cup Champion 80kg at Class A category.

Kanyi A was selected to represent Hertfordshire in the Inter Boys Discus event at the English Schools Athletics Track and Field Championships on Saturday 11 July in Birmingham. Despite being a year younger than others competing in the category, he finished a very respectable 9th.





Sports day 2026

Our school sports day was a fantastic event filled with excitement, teamwork, and laughter. The weather was bright and sunny, making it the perfect day for athletics. Students participated in events including runs, jumps, throws and tug-of-war. The afternoon atmosphere was amazing with students cheering loudly for their house. Congratulations go to Goswell who were crowned Champions, followed closely by Clerkenwell. Although Isledon were placed last behind Hermitage, their drum support and rendition of the Nordic row was phenomenal. It was a memorable day where everyone had fun, made happy memories, and learned the importance of sportsmanship and teamwork.



Summer term library lesson challenges

As usual, the summer term in library lessons has been devoted to our reading challenges. These encourage students to try a book that is a little different to and a little more demanding than those they might usually choose, and then respond to their reading by completing a discursive or creative task. Year 7 have been enjoying children's classics; Year 8 have been exploring non-fiction books; and this year we created a brand-new challenge for Year 9 students to mark our school's 50 years in Potters Bar! **The Golden Anniversary Challenge** comprises selected landmark books published over the past 50 years, introducing students to authors, series and genres they may wish to explore further as they move into Key Stage 4. We have been really impressed with how students have tackled the challenges and with the quality of their responses.

Lesley McDowall author visit

On Monday 22 June, Year 9 were fortunate enough to have the opportunity of an author visit from new author Lesley McDowall. Lesley is writing a series of Young Adult novels combining storylines about dyslexia and bullying set in a real-world school, and an alternate fantasy world where her characters face a very different set of struggles. We all loved watching animated clips of Lesley's fantasy creatures, and Lesley guided students through a set of creative prompts to devise their own 'hybrid monsters' in turn, building their confidence in their own powers of imagination.

Never stop learning news from the library ...

Football fever hits the Library!

If you visit the Fiction Library at the moment, you can't fail to notice our giant wall display, specially created to mark the World Cup! 'Team Fiction' and 'Team Non-Fiction' book ideas are assembled around a giant football pitch, festooned with flags. There is a football book idea for everyone here, including a great selection of brand-new books such as the new book in the ever-popular 'Ultimate Football Heroes' series, *World Cup Greatest Moments*; the first in a brand-new fiction series, *Football Spy*; *Red Card* by Matt Oldfield; and the best-selling autobiographical books *All In* by Mary Earps and *Dear England: Lessons in Leadership* by Gareth Southgate.

Celebrating Culture Day

As well as marking public events like the World Cup, we also like to celebrate and support events within school through books and reading! So we have put together some displays of fiction and non-fiction books to tie in with Culture Day in early July, featuring many of the different cultures in our school, including some brilliant new books. This is part of our ongoing work to ensure that everyone in our community can see themselves reflected in their library, and to encourage students to develop their empathy and understanding of other people's points of view through reading. Amongst our recent additions with Culture Day in mind: *Cypria* by Alex Christofi, a fascinating exploration of the history and culture of Cyprus that was shortlisted for an award by the Anglo-Hellenic League for British-Greek friendship and understanding; the historical novel *The Line They Drew Through Us*, by award-winning children's writer Hiba Noor Khan, telling the story of three best friends born on the day of Partition, whose lives take divergent paths; and *The Book of Heartbreak*, a young adult fantasy novel set in the ancient streets of Istanbul, written by debut author Ova Ceren.

Make time to read this summer

As the term draws to a close, we would like to encourage students, staff and parents to take some time to read regularly over the summer! We know from our annual survey of our students' reading habits that school holidays are really important for reading, allowing young people more time to enjoy books than they perhaps usually have in term-time. Families can play a key role in taking an interest in students' reading, helping them to access books and sparking their interest with new recommendations, as well as modelling enjoyment of reading themselves. So with this in mind, we would like to invite everyone to join in this year's **DAOS Library Summer Reading Challenge!** Choose a row, column or diagonal from our grid of Golden Anniversary-themed reading ideas and see where books and imagination take you this summer! Sorry, no house points for adults, but do let us know how you got on! Students: don't forget to visit the school library before the end of term to borrow books for the challenge! Parents and carers: did you know that everyone can join their local public library to borrow books for free all year round? If you haven't visited your local library for a while, why not give it a try this summer? Happy reading everyone!



FIVE-IN-A-ROW SUMMER READING CHALLENGE

A book published in the 1970s	A school story	A book with 'gold' in the title	A book about your favourite subject	A book with a character called Alice
A book about a new start	A book with a character called Owen	A book set in London	A book published in the 1980s	A book from the Great Reads for Year 7s list
A book published in the 1990s	A book about an adventure		A book with '50' in the title	A book about differences and friendship
A book by someone who attended Owen's	A book your parent/carer enjoyed when your age	A book published in 2000-2009	A book about a birthday	A book set in Hertfordshire
A book with a golden cover	A book published in the 2020s	A book published in 2026	A book about a new home	A book published in the 2010s



MARK YOUR GRID WITH THE BOOK TITLES YOU READ OVER THE SUMMER.
 TRY TO MARK 5 SQUARES IN A ROW DIAGONALLY, HORIZONTALLY OR VERTICALLY.
 THE SQUARE WITH THE OWEN'S CREST IS A FREE CHOICE SQUARE FOR ANY BOOK YOU LIKE!
 WRITE YOUR NAME AT THE TOP, AND BRING THE SHEET TO THE LIBRARY IN SEPTEMBER.
 WILL AWARD HOUSE POINTS TO EVERYONE WHO MAKES A GOOD ATTEMPT AT THE CHALLENGE.

Supportive community bulletin board

BootstRaP study

This year, our school once again took part in the BootStRaP study, a research project exploring the relationship between mobile phone use and the mental wellbeing of young people aged 12–16. Participation in Cohort 2 has now come to an end with students completing the final measures and collecting their participation vouchers. As part of the school's ongoing involvement with the University of Hertfordshire, we are looking forward to taking part in the third and final cohort of the project next year, joining over ten other schools in the UK.

To learn more about the study visit [the website](#) or watch project features on the BBC's *The One Show* featured on [3 March 2025](#) and [26 May 2026](#).

Finished the study? It's time to collect your voucher!

Students who have completed the final set of questions can now claim their reward. It only takes a moment:

1. Scan the QR code (right).
2. Open the voucher section and in the app's main menu, look for this icon: 
3. Enter your participant ID. If you qualify, your voucher and certificate will be on their way!

If you have any questions, please contact the research team:

bootstrap@herts.ac.uk



Dates for your diary

Fri 17 July–Thu 3 Sept Summer holidays

Sat 18–Wed 22 July Summer music tour

Sat 18–Fri 31 July South Africa Trip (Group 1)

Tue 21 July–Mon 3 Aug South Africa Trip (Group 2)

Thu 13 Aug A Level results day

Thu 20 Aug GCSE results day

Tue 1 Sept Staff development day

Wed 2 Sept Staff preparation day

Thu 3 Sept Term begins (Years 7 and 12)

Thu 3–Fri 4 Sept Year 13 Window to the Working World

Thu 3 Sept Years 7 and 12 individual photographs

Fri 4 Sept Term begins (Years 8, 9, 10, 11, 13)

Mon 7 Sept OSA Committee meeting – 7.30pm

For all dates in the first half term of the academic year 26/27, please consult the [school calendar](#).



enjoy the summer holidays!