

# LOOK *to the* FUTURE



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WADDESDON

*Voice*  
magazine



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This term's cover picture shows Year 13's Fred trying out a virtual reality headset during a visit by Dr Emma Williamson. You can find out more about exactly what he was doing - and the reason for Dr Williamson's visit - in the article on the opposite page.



## From the Headteacher

"Look to the future now  
It's only just begun..."

When we decided on the theme for this term's Voice, these iconic lines from Slade's Merry Xmas Everybody were not quite what we had in mind!

However, on reflection, they seem quite fitting, not only in terms of what you will read inside these pages, but also given the significance of this time of year in the Christian calendar.

The wonderful thing about working in a school is the knowledge that we are preparing our young people for their futures lives and the many ways in which they will benefit others through the learning and qualities that they acquire along the way.

It was a real honour to welcome Dr Emma Williamson back to Waddesdon in September and to enjoy the recognition given to her, as she was awarded a prestigious purple plaque. Emma made a point of telling the students how her dyslexia has enabled her to think differently and therefore positively benefit others to have more positive futures.

And just recently, we had a SIAMS Inspection which echoed the same themes. This type of inspection focuses on the impact of our work, as a Church of England School: on our ethos and culture. In the report, the Inspector wrote:

"The school's Christian vision and values are deeply embedded and thoughtfully applied to school life. This has a transformational impact on its students, helping them to live a full life."

"For many, the school has transformed their educational experience and future life chances."

We are, of course, proud to read these lines, but education is the work of a lifetime, and school is just part of that. It is grounded in supportive families, enabled by the positive influences in society, while all the time, must be filtered through the thoughtful reflections of young people themselves.

To be an educator is to be an optimist -



Matthew Abbott

and, in my daily interactions with young people - it feels like the future is bright. The inspector also noted: "Student leadership is a strong feature of school life with Sixth Form students, in particular, serving as role models to their younger peers."

They should be proud of the school of which they (and you) are firmly a part.

Finally, the words of Slade have a particular resonance for Christians at this time of year. Advent is about preparing for a future which was foretold and the promise of life in all its fullness through the person of Jesus Christ. "Look to the future now. It's only just begun..."

In this light, I wish you a joyful, blessed and hopeful end of the year.

It is my genuine hope that we can all see, and embrace, the four qualities of: Hope, Peace, Love and Joy which encircle the Christ candle, on the Advent wreath.

Happy Christmas!



# Studying SUCCESS

**When Waddesdon alumna, Dr Emma Williamson, received a top award recently, she wanted to share that achievement with the school that meant so much to her. Year 13's Isini takes up her inspiring story.**

Have you seen the purple plaque on the side of the sports hall? Well, that plaque represents the successes of Dr Emma Williamson, a previous Waddesdon student.

Dr Emma Williamson is a Consultant Clinical Psychologist who works to tackle the multiple disadvantages some people can face. Some of her accolades include being the Clinical Lead for the South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust, running the

Psychology in Hostels Project and being the CEO and founder of aneemo.com, a leading health tech company.

She returned to Waddesdon to receive the Women in Innovation Award for her work. In particular, aneemo.com delivers a nationwide training programme for Crisis UK and other leading UK voluntary sector organisations.

Sixth Formers were lucky enough to

see this in action using VR sets which simulated one-on-one patient contact. This experience gave the students an insight to the changes that Dr Emma Williamson has made to organisations such as NHS trusts, homelessness charities, the police and prison service.

Next time you walk past the sports hall, take a moment to look at the purple plaque. Yours could be there in a few years' time!





# The Power of Thank You

In October we paused for our Service of Praise and Thanksgiving, where we took time to reflect on all the things we have to be grateful for. Revd Caroline Wainman lead the service, and she really made us think about the enormous effect that remembering to say thank you can have on us and those around us.

Think for a moment: when was the last time someone thanked you personally? Not just a quick “cheers” or “ta,” but a proper, heartfelt *thank you*. How did it feel? Maybe it lifted your spirits. Maybe it made you feel seen or appreciated.

It’s extraordinary, isn’t it — that two small words can carry so much power. “Thank you” doesn’t cost anything, yet it can change everything.

Those words can turn an ordinary

moment into something special. They can change the course of someone’s day — or even their week.

In Psalm 100, it says:

“Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and bless his name.”

In other words, thankfulness is how we enter into God’s presence. It’s not something we do at the end when everything’s sorted out — it’s the way *in*.

When we give thanks, we remember who God is. We remember that every good thing — our friends, our families, our gifts, even just being alive today — is a gift.

Gratitude opens our eyes to what’s already good, already working, already full of grace. And “grace” means kindness we don’t have to earn — something freely given.

In the Gospel of Luke, there’s a story

known as *The Ten Lepers*.

Ten men are suffering from leprosy — an illness that caused pain, but also complete isolation. Back then, people with leprosy had to live away from everyone else — no hugs, no family, no friends — because others were scared, they might catch it.

They call out to Jesus: “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!”

Jesus sees them, speaks to them, and sends them to the priests. And as they go, one by one, they are healed.

Imagine how happy they would have been — being able to run home, hug family again, rejoin life after years apart. It would be like suddenly being allowed back to school and home after being shut away for years.

But only one comes back. Just one. Only one thought to return and say thank you. And he’s a Samaritan — an outsider. He turns around, praises God in a loud voice, and throws himself at Jesus’ feet, thanking him.

And Jesus asks, “Were not all ten

cleansed? Where are the other nine?”

Only one of them had come back to say thank you. All ten were healed — but only one was made whole.

He was healed on the outside like the others, but because he came back to say thank you, something changed on the inside too. His heart was healed — he found peace and joy as well as health.

Gratitude transformed his healing into something deeper — a relationship with the giver himself. He didn’t just enjoy the gift; he got to know the person who gave it. He connected with Jesus, not just with what Jesus did for him.

St. Paul writes:

“Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”

Give thanks *in* all circumstances — not *for* all circumstances, but *in* them. Even when life feels tough, gratitude changes how we see.

It doesn’t mean pretending everything’s fine — it means recognising that even in difficulty, God is still with us, and good things still exist. Gratitude is a lens — a bit like putting on glasses that help us see what’s still good and hopeful, even when things look blurry or hard.

A few weeks ago, I came into school to lead a Holy Communion service. I’ll be honest — I wasn’t in the best mood that morning. You know those days

when you just feel a bit grumpy and tired? That was me.

But as the service began, something amazing happened. There was such a sense of peace and presence in the room — I could see God at work in people’s faces. They were calm, thoughtful, and connected — a glimpse of what it looks like when God’s love fills a room.

By the end, I’d given Communion to around 150 students and staff, and it felt deeply holy — something special was happening.

Afterwards, as I was heading back to my car, a boy came across to me just in front of the school by the office, gave me a little fist bump, and said: “Thank you — great service.”

That was it. Four simple words- and a fist bump! But it meant the world. All the tiredness, the grumpiness — gone. I drove away on a cloud.

That small act of gratitude reminded me why I do what I do — to help people encounter God. It cost him nothing — but it changed my whole day.

And I thought, *he was the one who turned back*. Just like the Samaritan leper.

So here’s the challenge for you in the year ahead:

**Be the one who turns back.**  
**Be the one who notices.**  
**Be the one who says thank you.**

Think of the people who make your

everyday life work — sometimes they hardly ever get thanked. Don’t assume people already know they’re appreciated — tell them.

Here are some ideas to get you started:

- the maintenance staff who keep the school safe, clean, and warm
- the dinner staff who make sure you’re fed
- the friend who always listens
- the teacher who quietly keeps believing in you

You might think it’s a small thing — but it isn’t. You have no idea how much your words might mean.

Because gratitude doesn’t just bless others — it changes you. It opens your eyes, softens your heart, and deepens your joy.

**Thank YOU**







# Hybrid DRIVE

There was a trip to Waddesdon Manor for our Year 7 artists. They were honoured to be able to use the Manor's famous art collection to study plant and animal forms for their legendary hybrids project, as Alex and Orla explained.



More Photos

The trip to Waddesdon Manor was spectacular! It was amazing to see the artefacts and history surrounding the Rothschild family. We did the trip to find artwork about legendary hybrids and we found some statues and paintings that were beautiful. I particularly liked the elephant and circus.

We have worked on legendary hybrids which is the merging of two things,

most commonly animals. The Manor trip helped me with my project greatly.

**Alex**

We went to Waddesdon Manor to research for our Art project on Legendary Hybrids. We saw a lot of pottery and china with vibrant colour and detailed animals. I really enjoyed taking pictures of the artwork and drawing some of the animals which I

saw on the plates, vases and china.

I really enjoyed looking at, and wandering around, the artefacts and pieces. This definitely fuelled me to create my own hybrid, the Honeyland Caw (a highland cow and bee). In summary, I think we all had a wonderful time and trip!

**Orla**



On October 7th, Waddesdon welcomed the incredible Bulembu Choir from Eswatini, formerly known as Swaziland. As Year 11's Rhiannon writes, the choir's visit was a truly enriching experience which not only showcased their remarkable talents, but also stories of childhood in Bulembu.

As they took to the stage, the choir's vibrant energy and infectious enthusiasm captivated us all. Their harmonious voices blended in perfect unison. But it wasn't just their music that left a lasting impression – it was the stories they shared, the experiences they recounted, and the culture they introduced us to.

Through their words, we gained a glimpse into life in Bulembu, a small town in Eswatini where Christianity is an integral part of daily life. What struck me most was the unique way the choir expressed their faith, weaving together traditional Swazi rhythms and modern Christian hymns. It was a powerful reminder that

# SING when you're WINNING

Christianity, though a single religion, can be interpreted and celebrated in diverse ways.

The Bulembu Choir's visit broadened our perspectives, encouraging us to appreciate the richness of cultures beyond our own. Their stories of community, resilience, and joy inspired us to reflect on our own lives and the world around us.

Their visit was a testament to the power of music, faith, and cultural exchange to bring people together and foster understanding.

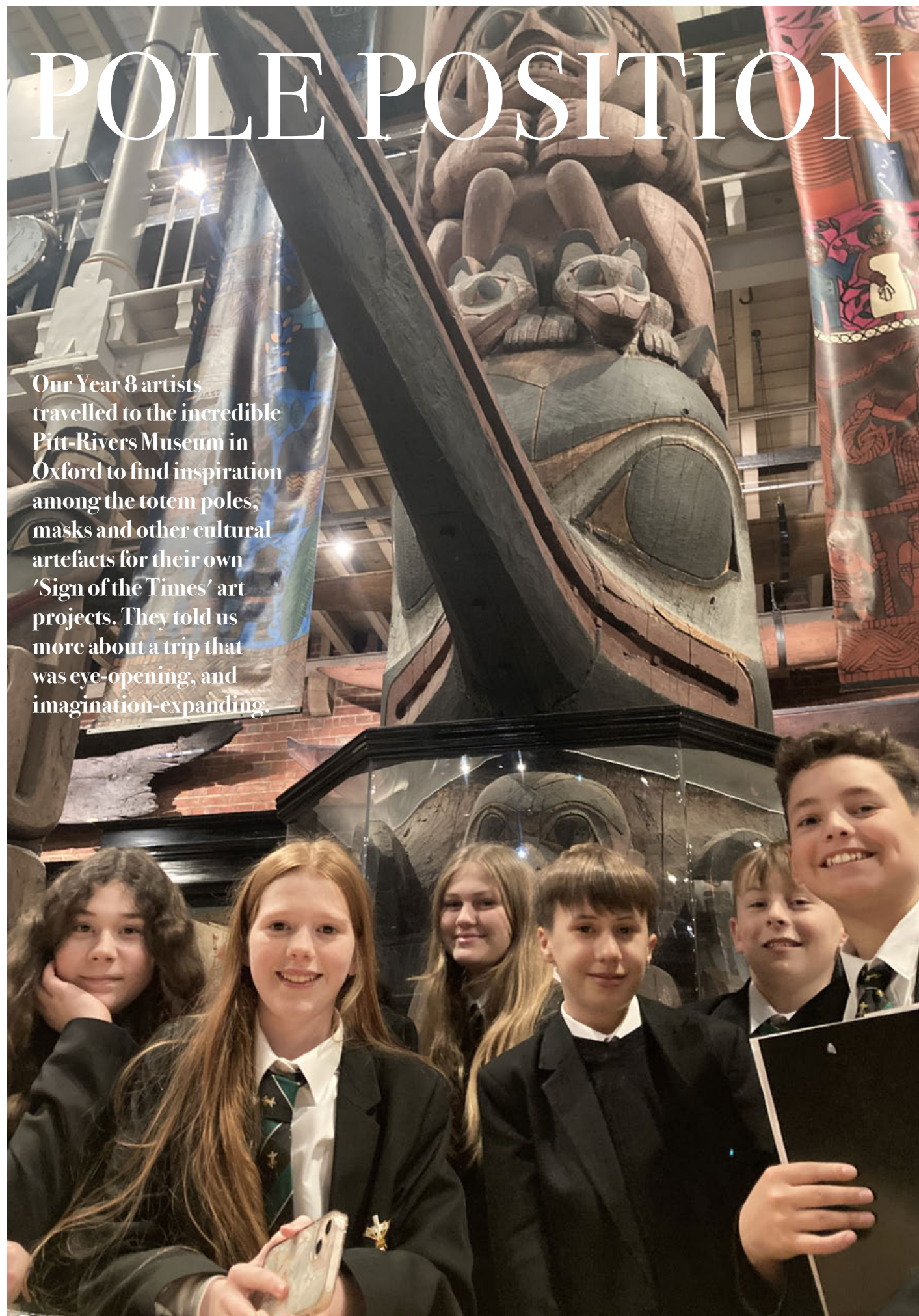
I would like to thank Mrs Khan for organising the event and the Bulembu Choir for sharing their gifts with us. Their visit will undoubtedly leave a lasting impact on our school community, reminding us of the beauty of diversity and the importance of embracing different cultures and traditions.





# POLE POSITION

Our Year 8 artists travelled to the incredible Pitt-Rivers Museum in Oxford to find inspiration among the totem poles, masks and other cultural artefacts for their own 'Sign of the Times' art projects. They told us more about a trip that was eye-opening, and imagination-expanding.



Last term we went to the Pitt Rivers museum in Oxford to look at the exhibits to help with our 'Sign of the Times' project which we are doing in art. When we were there, we focused on objects such as masks. We drew and took notes on our favourites to help with our clay masks which we will be making in art.

My favourites included half an Egyptian wooden face on the top floor and some of the African sculptures on the second floor. I also quite liked a green checkers set made from Coke and Vimto tops and some really cool guns on the third floor. I really enjoyed the trip to the museum as it gave me ideas to implement into my mask and it was fun to see all of the exhibits throughout the museum.

**Frank**

Going to Pitt rivers was a very exciting and fun experience.

It was extremely interesting to learn about historic and current tribes and peoples. What really struck me was how nice the workers and staff were, answering all of our questions, guiding us and making sure we felt safe.

The visit helped me understand the importance of art and how it affects us today. The totem poles were incredible with so many cool designs as well as the inspiration from Star Wars because of the mask design.

I feel like all floors were fantastic, but the one that grabbed my attention was the ground floor as it had so many incredible masks on display really helping us to think about what we wanted to create ourselves.

I thank all of the teachers and staff for taking their time off to help us learn.

**Silvi**

Our delightful Year 8 went on a spectacular trip to the wonderful Pitt Rivers museum located in Oxford. We went to look at all the glorious and ancient relics for our art projects. As we entered the museum, we were greeted by the massive totem pole and the columns and rows of cases, adorned with artefacts.

The main reason we were there was to collect a range of unique pictures and to sketch the most interesting artefacts we saw, coloring them with bold and subtle colours. Although

there were vast amounts of patterned artefacts, the ones we were most amazed by were the delightful little netsuke. Netsuke are small, adorable statues made of jade from the Japanese culture, with each one being completely different and unique from the last.

I am 100% positive that this trip had a good impact on our year, we learnt, we drew and explored. Thank you for reading.

**Maya and Rosemary**







# Thinking SPACE

In November, we encouraged students to take part in Reflection and Remembrance in the Library, giving them the chance to focus on the people and events with the most meaning for them. Year 7's Ben told us about a time for remembering the past and being hopeful for the future.

*"Hope is being able to see there is light despite all the darkness"*  
(Desmond Tutu)

On Wednesday 5th November during Calm Wednesday there was a special 'Reflection and Remembrance' session. Various activities connected to 'Remembrance and Hope' were available so that people could come and commemorate people's losses, respect the choices that they had to make, or simply remember loved ones.

There was a remembrance tree "To

remember is to honour" where we could write memories of family and friends who are no longer with us. Some people made 'Unity hearts' which involved weaving wool into heart shapes. A huge map showed all the places with current conflict and suffering around the world. A 'Tree of Hope' where people could write tags about their hopes for the future. We also had colouring sheets for mindful colouring.

I liked the activities you got to do whilst reflecting on the past.



# VICTORY Dance

Year 11's Lola has been burning up the dance floor - winning a national disco dancing trophy in the process. She told us more about her amazing achievement.



My name is Lola Wertheim and I am in Y11. I've been dancing since I was 2 and competing regionally since I was 9. In October I was given the opportunity to compete in the ISTD (Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing) adapted category at the Disco freestyle dance grand finals.

This gives the chance for those with medical conditions to have a fairer way of being judged on their dancing ability, taking into consideration medical needs. We were able to choreograph our own routine which suited our strengths.

We competed these routines on the day and everyone who was in this category performed at the same time. We first performed a warm-

up to practise our routines on the floor, then we performed our routine again and 5 judges were judging our dances.

This was the first year the ISTD had this category, and I became the first ever winner for this category, making me national champion! This was an amazing opportunity and made a great end to the competition season.

Anyone who competes in any sport will know, you never know when you will win, and this can happen when you least expect it. I never expected to win, so my advice is that you should always take any opportunity, as you never know what could happen.





In November we invited everyone into our school to enjoy our production of Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*. As ever the performances were spellbinding, and orchestra, sound and lighting combined to make a truly magical experience. Year 12's Megan, a veteran of our school shows, had a major role, and she told us about the excitement and hard work that goes on behind the scenes.

# BE OUR Guest!



More Photos



Every year the Music and Drama teams come together to create a magical school show. This year, the show was *Beauty and the Beast*!

The auditions took place before and after the summer holidays, to allow all students who wanted to take part to have a chance to audition, even if they were new to Year 7 or 12 in September. After the auditions, some people are asked to attend call-backs for main roles; I was lucky enough to be one of these people. We were given a song and some dialogue to learn. Once we had performed and, after much deliberation between the teachers, they decided on the cast of people who would make this Disney fairy tale come to life on stage.

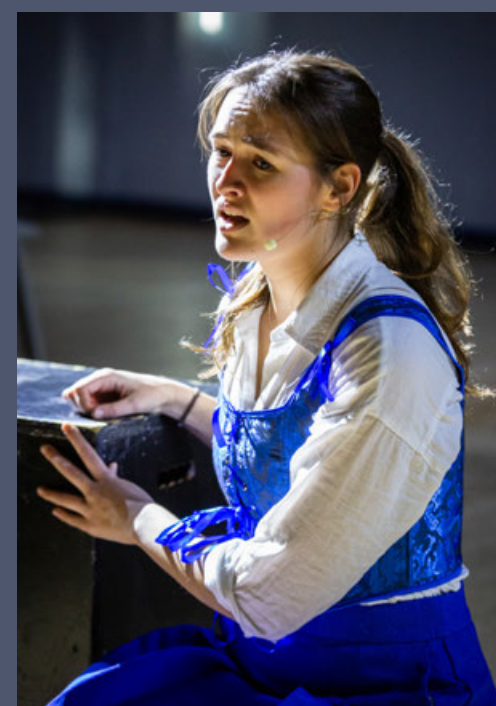
After we found out if we were in the

cast or not, the rigorous rehearsals began. Some people, such as myself, had multiple rehearsals every week leading up to the show. I vividly remember many of my evenings spent learning my lines, harmonies for ensemble songs, and going over all the choreography, as well as trying to remember the staging within all the songs and the scenes. Even for those who had far fewer rehearsals over the weeks, they still put so much hard work and energy into making the show as special and exciting as Miss Turner envisioned.

I was also fortunate enough to help with the creation of the props and masks for some characters along with my art class and the help of our teachers. Whilst this additional responsibility took lots of extra time,

effort, creativity and alterations to ensure the masks looked the best they could, to see the magical effect on the audience and to hear their amazement at the end of the show, we knew that all that time and effort had been worth it.

Other teams that were integral to the show were the live orchestra led by our music teacher Mr Dimond. The live music really made the show come alive and I know that the musicians had to spend many, many hours practising to give the audience the most outstanding experience possible. Additionally, for the first time in a Waddesdon school production, the technical team was run completely by students. This included important aspects such as lighting, microphones and sound levels for the band – a





really impressive achievement.

As most people know there are normally five show performances in total, four of which are available for ticket purchases for friends, family or anyone who wishes to see the show and then 1 show for the local primary schools. However, this year due to record ticket sales and all of our shows selling out so quickly, Miss Turner decided to have another show on the Wednesday evening which resulted in us performing six shows in total. Of course, when we all heard the news that we were opening the show a day early there was a large range of emotions around, such as nervousness, determination and trepidation, but the most prominent emotion was excitement.

As each show was performed they kept getting better and better, with the nerves falling away. We all had the best time on stage performing for everyone who had come to see us. However, when it came to the last show, it felt strange that it would be our last time performing together on stage and for those leaving in Year 11 and 13 there was some extra sadness as it was their last show with us.

I know I can speak for everyone involved, when I say that this was an enchanting experience for all and one which many of us won't forget. I would finally like to say a huge thank you to all that were involved to make this magical show happen (especially Miss Turner) and I can't wait to see what the next show will be...



### The orchestra might be out of sight but they are a huge part of the show's magic. Year 12's Joshua tells us what it's like on the other side of the curtain.

This was my first school show at Waddesdon, and it was unlike any show I've been in. From the incredibly hard-working teachers to everyone working behind the scenes, the only

difference between this and the West End is that it isn't in the West End!

Starting at the beginning of September we rehearsed every Wednesday till 5, but then this drastically went up as the show got closer, and by show week we were doing all day rehearsals working alongside the cast and technicians and

making sure everything came together perfectly. Doing this show was incredible fun and an enlightening experience learning how shows actually happen and work: the journey in the 8 weeks that we have been rehearsing has been one of my favourite things that I have ever done.

At the end there is a real sense of community, friendship and respect for everyone that took part in the show and I have made so many good friends. If you are thinking of coming and joining us, I would thoroughly recommend it.



### Not to be outdone, our Year 12 musicians took their skills out into the community, playing Christmas songs for our local senior citizens. As Imy tells us, a good time was had all round.

Over the last couple of months, as part of the Year 12 music class, we have been preparing for the Senior Christmas Concert at Waddesdon Village Hall.

Lots of preparation and time went into polishing our setlist, from choosing the songs to arranging them in order with lots of practice in between. I found it so much fun to perform with the class and it was a great opportunity to play as part of a band, with lots of musicians, building up our experience to help with our BTEC course.

Everybody put an exemplary amount of effort into their parts which made the experience a lot easier, as it was well and truly a group effort. Adam O'Connell and Sophia Davies deserve a special mention for their leadership and

organisation which permitted us to have as much fun as we did.

We assigned different people to each song, mixing up the musicians so it was as fair and diverse as possible. Additionally, we had group songs which allowed everyone to join in on the bigger numbers. A strong sense of community could be felt within these numbers and our joy was clearly felt by the Seniors who were invited to join in with percussion. It was wonderful to see our school community engage with the local community to kick off the spirit of the season!







Recently, a group of Year 9 Art students, alongside our Design Technology students, put some time towards working on a collaborative Christmas project for Waddesdon Manor.

The DT Department were tasked with building an enormous mechanical toy (similar to the ones you might

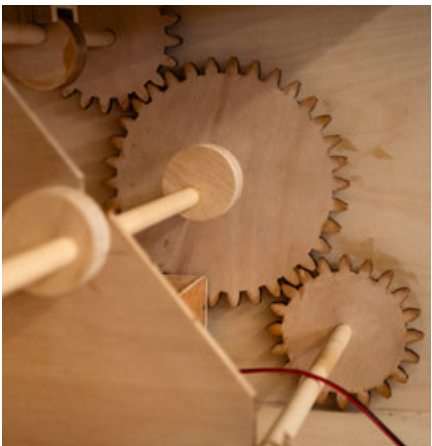
remember from Year 8 Design Technology lessons) on the theme of “I Saw Three Ships Come Sailing In” as a part of Waddesdon Manor’s Christmas Festival. Year 9 Artists were also enlisted to decorate it.

The final work can be seen displayed at the Stables at the Manor as part of the ‘Sounds of the Season’ show. Here’s what the artists, Evelynne and Mia, had to say about the experience:

“In this project we made Christmas themed flags which were split into sections filled with seasonal doodles

and then turned into the sails for the boats. We also spent a day making ink paintings of angels using embroidery hoops with a visiting artist called Jane Charles.

On a separate day we painted waves to go on the mechanism, which the DT department created. Overall this was a great learning experience and opportunity for the Year 9s and we even got some discounted tickets to go see the work at Waddesdon Manor’s Christmas show as a way of saying thanks!”



Hockey and Rugby were the sports being contested by our students in our autumn Interform competition. But which forms were the forms in-form?

# NET RESULTS



Interform Week provided a fantastic opportunity for students to demonstrate their skills in hockey and rugby through friendly and inclusive competition. It was wonderful to see pupils showing such confidence and enthusiasm, working collaboratively, and displaying the positive values that define our Waddesdon community. Despite the colder weather, students showed real

determination and resilience—qualities that will serve them well both in and beyond the classroom.

We are incredibly proud of the positive attitude and sportsmanship shown by students during the week. Interform Week is always a wonderful reminder of how sport brings our school community together, and this year was no exception.



INTERFORM RESULTS			
Year 7	1	2	3
Rugby	TN	CAR/ROL	JCO/HD
Hockey	JCO/HD	TN	BJU/ADI
OVERALL	TN	JCO/HD	BJU/ADI
Year 8	1	2	3
Rugby	EHA/VH	SB/VB	ADE
Hockey	EHA/VH	AR/AL	ADE
OVERALL	EHA/VH	AR/AL +ADE	SB/VB
Year 9	1	2	3
Rugby	FTU	KT	SC/JWY
Hockey	CSP	SC/JWY	FTU
OVERALL	FTU	CSP +SC/JWY	KT
Year 10	1	2	3
Rugby	JSM/SW	TMC	MJB
Hockey	MJB	TMC	JSM/SW
OVERALL	MJB	JSM +TMC	JTA
Year 11	1	2	3
Rugby	IOG	JDA	SR/SW
Hockey	SEV/ADI	SR/SW	SK
OVERALL	SR/SW	IOG	SEV/ADI







Over the past four academic years, ten Year 11 students have had the unique opportunity to visit the HS2 development at the Calvert Green site and witness its remarkable progression. As these visits draw to a close for them, we look back on what they have learned from the experience.

These visits have offered students a first-hand look at one of the UK's most significant infrastructure projects.

During their time on site, students have:

- Taken guided tours to observe culverts and bridges under construction.
- Participated in team-building exercises.

- Engaged in talks from professionals across a range of roles, including ecologists, architects, the media team, the community engagement team and the drone operations team.

- Experienced cutting-edge technology by trying out simulators for diggers, trucks and excavators.

Each visit has provided students with

the chance to ask questions about the development and learn how HS2 is creating a lasting legacy. The Kier team explained the importance of supporting local communities affected by the project and shared insights into the measures taken to minimize impact while delivering long-term benefits.

These experiences have not only deepened students' understanding of engineering and environmental



considerations but also highlighted the diverse career paths involved in such a large-scale development.

*What have you enjoyed most about your experience?*

**Sophia:** The challenges: they facilitated healthy competition and let us apply some of the knowledge we'd learned on site visits.

**Mel:** I have enjoyed seeing the development of the site over the 4 years.

**Oliver:** I really enjoyed the simulators, driving around a fake building site on diggers and HGVs.

**Seren:** Seeing how the site has developed over the years.

*What is one thing that has stood out from the site visits?*

**Sophia:** Standing on one of the over-bridges while it was being built and being able to see most of the site from an entirely different perspective. I got a real sense of the bigger picture.

**Mel:** One thing that stood out was the many safety regulations and the different departments that work at HS2, e.g. environmentalists

**Harry:** Learning how such a big operation came together.



**Seren:** How they are trying to look after the environment e.g. by building a bat tunnel

*Has this experience changed your future career aspirations?*

**Oliver:** No not really, I already wanted to go into the engineering area, so this has been a great opportunity to gain some first-hand experience of what it would be like.

**Harry:** The opportunity has helped me have a deeper look into the side of Engineering which I am still keen to pursue.

**Penny:** Not necessarily, but it has shown me how many opportunities there are in big project such as HS2.

*What would be your advice to*

*anybody looking to get involved in future construction projects?*

**Sophia:** Keep an open mind; never dismiss an opportunity at first glance. Projects like HS2 are much more complex than they seem.

**Mel:** The advice I would give people is to take notes and to take any opportunities possible.

**Penny:** Put yourself out there as I wouldn't have thought to join this project, if it wasn't for the opportunity given by the school. Get to know people and explore opportunities.

A massive thank you to Sean McManamon and his team at Kier Transportation for hosting us over the years.



**This photo and top left:** Before and after - How our students looked at the beginning of this project.







More Photos



Our students had the opportunity to take a break from the noise and mess of life by participating in a spiritual retreat. Year 8's Wakhiwe, Matthew and Shaun enjoyed a day of serenity and calm.

# PEACEMAKERS

We were honoured to join the Spiritual Retreat which helped us reflect on ourselves mentally, physically and spiritually. The retreat was a continuation of the activities at Waddesdon such as Christian Union, Calm Wednesdays and Debating Club which are also very inclusive and welcoming.

Waddesdon School is in contact with several organisations like the BeSpace group who they partnered with for the retreat. Over the span of two days, teachers and students felt spiritually cleansed participating in the activities the BeSpace group had prepared. As the day at the church passed we partook in multiple activities including making Worry Jars, Sorry Sand and reading through famous quotes on their views on life.

Overall, the retreat was extremely calming and made us more aware of ourselves and life around us.

Other students commented:

"I really enjoyed letting loose and just relaxing. If I could, I would do it again."

"I liked how I had time to take a

moment to reflect on myself and not focus on pleasing others."

"I discovered that life can be very eye opening in quiet moments."

"I learned how important values like love, patience and stillness are. My favourite exercises were putting a message on the world map and the glitter jars."

"It made me feel grateful and calm and



able to see life more clearly."

Our Head of RS, Mrs Khan told us "I felt privileged to see our students take part so openly in each of the carefully selected activities throughout the retreat. What struck me most was how willing they were to get involved, to contribute and to reflect deeply on their own well-being and spiritual journey.

The atmosphere was both calm and uplifting, and it was moving to witness students supporting one another with such openness and sincerity. One student's reflection really touched my heart: "This day made us speak to each other in a more meaningful way and we were able to understand each other more deeply, which means I feel closer to other students at the school and realise that they are going through the same things that I'm going through and we can now help each other."

This captures perfectly why retreats of this kind are so important: they help our young people connect with themselves and with others, offering them the tools to carry greater understanding, empathy and resilience back into everyday school life."



**Year 10s who are studying HPQs in Art History were given an unforgettable opportunity to travel to Waddesdon Manor as part of our Art History Link Up.**

This term the Art History Higher Project Qualification (HPQ) got off to a great start for eighteen Year 10 students. They were introduced to the art collections of the Manor by Ludo from Art History Link Up and Sarah from the learning team at Waddesdon Manor in after-school sessions in the school's new Jacob Rothschild building.

Students have been learning about how the extraordinary art collections of the Rothschild family have evolved over time. We had our first visit to the Manor as described by Akshata:

"Visiting Waddesdon Manor was an unforgettable experience. As part of our Year 10 Art and History course, we explored the stunning Manor and were lucky enough to see its

magical Christmas decorations. The grandeur of the rooms and the intricate details left me in awe. One highlight was the Treasury, filled with fascinating artefacts which showcased history and craftsmanship. We were given insights into the Treasury which contains objects of curiosity and many rarities. The festive atmosphere made the visit even more special. It was truly an afternoon to remember!"

The course continues into the spring term with the students creating their own virtual art collections to be exhibited in their own online galleries. The enthusiasm of the students is evident as they learn more about the Manor and we are looking forward viewing their own art collections!





# ...and on that BOMBSHELL...



Photos by Andy Yau

Our GreenPower team were in action recently, racing on the hallowed Top Gear track at Dunsfold in Surrey. They told us about an eventful race, some technical issues, and about their exciting plans for the future.

Last month, our school racing team took part in the Greenpower race at the Top Gear test track (at Dunsfold

Aerodrome). Greenpower is a national challenge where schools design, build, and race electric cars. The project is all about inspiring young people to learn about engineering, teamwork, and sustainability by putting them in charge of their own creations.

**Race Day at Dunsfold**  
Everyone was excited when we arrived at the Dunsfold track. Unlike a sprint race, a Greenpower race is about endurance: cars must run for a set time, and the team that covers the

greatest distance wins. This means we must adjust the gear ratio to make the car as efficient as possible.

Our team faced many challenges throughout the day. For example, a flat tyre forced us into the pits. We worked together quickly to replace the inner tube, and within minutes the car was back on track. Similarly, our Year 11 car had battery problems where the battery reading was incorrect, causing the batteries to last only 60 out of the 90 minutes. But we were not



the only ones, other teams faced their own hurdles, from batteries running low to cars flipping on their sides. But that's part of the learning process. Every obstacle teaches something new.

Year 9 student Tobias said: "We were worried when the tyre went flat, but we rushed it back to the pits and shoved a tyre on it in record time. This shows how much we've learned—it isn't all about the driving."

But the day did not end there. At the awards ceremony, officials decided to give us the Best Presented Team Award,

giving Mr Iveson more silverware to admire—and a win's a win, team!

**Learning and Improving**  
The flat tyre reminded us that playing around with small adjustments matter as much as design. We're already thinking about how to improve our car for next season: better alignment of the wheels, new gears, and experimenting with new materials. We are hoping for help from sponsors, other teams, and even some parents. This year we think our cars are going to be better (and faster) than ever.

**Plans for Next Season**  
Looking ahead to next season, we are determined to come back stronger. The goal isn't just to win; it's to keep improving our overall team position and working together. For example, next year we are working with tubed carbon fibre and 3D-printed connectors. This allows us to adjust different parts of the design based on what we need; it also means it slots together like Lego! We are also planning to design and build a race trailer to store and transport the cars to and from races. We can use it to store tools and even to hang out in during the day.



Did you manage to solve Mr Dipple's fiendish maths puzzle last term? If you didn't, here's your opportunity to test yourself with this term's mindbender.

Last term's puzzle had a few staff members guessing, and a few trying to work it out using very inelegant methods. The key, as is often the case, was to consider the prime factors of each number 1 to 9.

The number  $1^1 \times 2^2 \times 3^3 \times 4^4 \times 5^5 \times 6^6 \times 7^7 \times 8^8 \times 9^9$  is written out in full. How many zeros are there at the end of the number?

Mr Wynn came in with the correct answer of 5 zeros... eventually! He wins the chocolate.

Here's this edition's puzzle:

I am thinking of two numbers that multiply to make 1,000,000,000. Neither of them contain a zero. What are they?

Good luck. Send me your solutions on Teams please, if you just tell me in passing I'll forget!



# Little HELPERS

Since Charity Week was launched in October to students, parents and staff, we have been busy collecting items. The aim is to collect for a range of charities, raising awareness of their importance within our community, highlighting issues of social justice and learning how to be kind to others.

All year groups participated in charity-themed assemblies, activities or PSHE lessons during the week. This year we were able to support the following charities:

- Family & Elderly shoe box appeal
- Local food bank appeal
- Local animal shelter food collection
- The Hygiene Bank
- Bucks Inspires Christmas Toy Appeal

We are also grateful to Little Oaks Pre-school for their donation of items towards the appeal.

## Farewell and Thank You

We'd like to say thank you and goodbye to Revd. Werner, who has left our school this term, and to wish her all our love and best wishes for the future.



Revd. Werner

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