



WOODBIDGE

PRIDE IN ACHIEVEMENT

Buzzy

DECEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER: AUTUMN TERM



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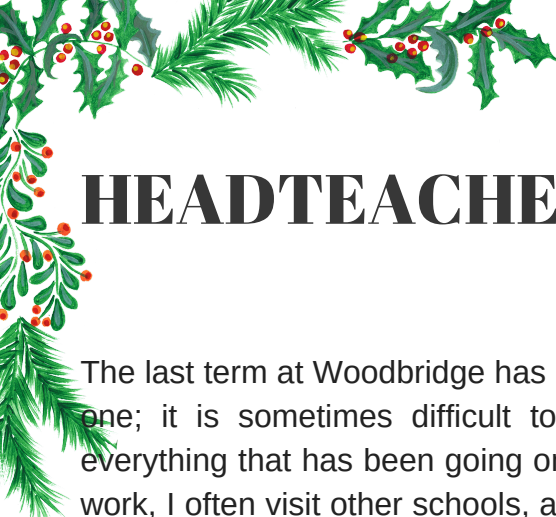
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INCLUSION

KINDNESS

EXCELLENCE

RESPECT



HEADTEACHER'S LETTER

The last term at Woodbridge has been another amazingly busy one; it is sometimes difficult to know where to begin with everything that has been going on at the school! As part of my work, I often visit other schools, and not one I have seen in the last term has lived up to the range of additional experiences that students can get involved in here on top of their academic studies. Woodbridge really is top of the league in this respect! This term alone we have seen an amazing careers fair, activities for Black History Month and Islamophobia Awareness Month, some superb Aspire Higher Masterclasses, our Bee Club winning an award at a local honey show, the Jack Petchey Speak Out Challenge, an event with a Holocaust survivor, lots of money raised for charities, our outstanding production of a Midsummer Night's Dream... and so much more besides! You can read about all of these and more inside.

I am particularly proud of those members of staff who took part in the London to Brighton Bike Ride and raised just short of £10,000 for the Great Western Air Ambulance. It is just over two years since our colleague, Moyra Whelan, passed away in an accident and the Air Ambulance attempted to save her. I am so immensely proud of my colleagues, led by Mr Archer, who did the training and endured the day's riding to raise such an amazing amount of money to honour Ms Whelan's memory. We send out heartfelt thanks to them, and to all those who donated to the cause.

That is just one example of how our beautiful Woodbridge community comes together in the face of adversity. In a world where there are so many challenges, it can sometimes be easy to despair. But every day I draw hope from our young people, from their drive and determination, and from their unfailing commitment to make the world a better place. Just spending a little time with them makes things seem brighter. That is the power of Woodbridge. Those kids are superstars, every one -- as you will see from all the pictures in this newsletter!



As we finally approach the holidays, we are all looking forward to some rest. Whether your own break will be with wider family or friends, or a quiet one at home, I would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! Let us hope and pray that 2025 will bring peace, love and joy to our Team Woodbridge community and beyond. Have a good holiday!

Mr S Hogan





By Mr Archer, Music Department

A beautiful September Sunday beckoned as Team Woodbridge took on the famous London to Brighton cycle ride in aid of the Great Western Air Ambulance (GWAA). The team, consisting of seasoned cyclists, complete novices, and our two support bus drivers, tackled the gruelling 55-mile ride, which passed out of South London and into Surrey, culminating in a huge climb up and over Ditchling Beacon before descending to the seafront.

Mr Clifton set a blistering pace, completing the ride in 3 hours 18 minutes, and finishing an astonishing 17th place overall! We are incredibly grateful for all the support we received – from the generous donations, the conversations with other staff and students, to the well-wishers on the day who saw us roll over the finish line. It all meant the world to us.

We have raised an amazing total of £9,720, only £280 away from our ambitious £10,000 target, all of which has been donated to the life-saving work carried out by GWAA. This was in memory of our colleague and friend, Moyra Whelan, who tragically lost her life in November 2022. GWAA was there to provide critical medical aid, and the money you helped us raise will ensure others will benefit from the incredible work they do every day.



REDBRIDGE PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

Winner - under 16

Redbridge hosted its first photography competition this year, featuring four categories, including the Redbridge Young People's Award.

Congratulations to Year 8 student Amber, who won the award with her artistic entry! Amber's stunning photograph of Redbridge Lakes stood out among the entries and will be featured in the autumn edition of Redbridge Life.

The shortlisted photographers were celebrated at an awards ceremony, where their exceptional work was unveiled as part of a special exhibition.

By Amber M, Year 8

I have enjoyed taking photos for a few years. I used to borrow my mum's camera (or phone).

I really like taking photos of the sky, sunsets and interesting cloud patterns. When I took the photo, it was the evening of the summer solstice, just after the sun was setting. I had taken a number of photos that evening, but this one was my favourite because of the way the sky reflected in the water and the overall feel of the picture.

It was a surprise to find out my mum had entered my photo into the first ever Redbridge photographic competition. But I was very pleased to hear my photo



Amber with her winning entry

was the winning entry in the under-16s category.

The award ceremony was interesting, as we saw all the other shortlisted and category winners' photos. I was proud to see my photo there, too. Lots of photos were taken that evening of all the winners. We also met the Mayor and other Redbridge councillors.

I enjoy photography and would love to have the opportunity to study it more, improve my photos and maybe one day make some money from it.



Redbridge Lakes - winning entry by Amber



Reflecting on *British Black History Month* Reclaiming Narratives and Celebrating Achievements

By Ms McNamee-Obi
Diversity, Equality & Inclusion Co-ordinator

This October, our school community proudly celebrated Black History Month (BHM), embracing the theme "Reclaiming Narratives." Through a series of assemblies, activities and student-led initiatives, we explored the importance of amplifying Black voices and recognising the contributions of individuals who have shaped history, challenged injustice and paved the way for future generations.

Student Leadership in Assemblies

A particular highlight this year was the powerful student-led assemblies led by our Year 9 Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Ambassadors, Hope S, Anjali B, Mayah D and Alivia S.

They took the lead on researching, preparing and presenting on the lives of influential Black British icons whose stories inspired them, shedding light on tales that have often gone untold. From Benjamin Zephaniah, Malorie Blackman and Micheala Coel to Letitia Wright, their presentations captivated and inspired teachers and their peers alike. They demonstrated the

depth of talent, passion, and knowledge within the Woodbridge community.

I extend my heartfelt thanks once again to these incredible students for their hard work, dedication and leadership. They reminded me that history belongs to everyone and that each of us have a role to play in shaping and sharing the stories that matter.

Black History Month Activities

Beyond the assemblies, thanks to the help of teachers across various subject departments, we embarked on doing our first whole school BHM Treasure Hunt.



BHM Treasure Hunt



Clues celebrating Black British icons within specific subjects were hidden across the school, along corridors and within departments, encouraging students to engage with history in a fun and interactive way.

A big congratulations again to the students who solved all the clues for the treasure hunt and won some fantastic prizes!

I was also delighted to share a Podcast space with Hope, Anjali, Mayah and Alivia on the Beyond Excellence Team Podcast. We came together to reflect on this year's BHM theme and discussed the importance of the month and how it is portrayed by others.



BHM Podcast

It's been an inspiring platform for these students to share their voices, and we encourage parents and carers to listen via the school website. See the link here: [BHM podcast](#)

Looking Ahead

It should go without saying that celebrating diversity, challenging narratives of exclusion or misunderstandings and addressing social injustice within our society and communities is not and should not be confined to a single month. It should be our ongoing commitment.

We are now in the middle of November, which is Islamophobia Awareness Month (IAM), and as I

sit at my desk to write this piece, I am reflecting on the call to action that is embedded in the IAM theme 'Seeds of Change' and the BHM theme 'Reclaiming Narrative'. It is my hope that the voices that are often marginalised will be amplified and that together we can create a future that is rooted in fairness, respect and inclusion.

I hope that in telling our stories and in us reclaiming narratives of the past, we will begin to plant seeds of empathy, understanding and kindness. May these seeds take root, may they germinate to grow bloom and blossom; and like a whisper growing into a roar, may these seeds transform into a mighty tree.

For me, Black History Month is about celebrating black people. Enjoying and learning about their culture, being involved and interested. Not just dismissing something that may not have any personal attachment to you. It's a chance to learn more about your friends, teachers and maybe even your family. Push yourself to ask questions and don't be nervous that you will be judged.

Hope S, DEI Committee, Year 9

To me, BHM is about reflecting on the stories and achievements of the black community and recognising how we can use them to shape our futures. Many people think it's about dwelling on the past but I like to think of history as something that lives in our today, and as something that makes today better.

In the assemblies, I chose to talk about Benjamin Zephaniah, he loved to emphasise the fact that no matter our backgrounds we are all united and we are better when we are together.

Anjali B, DEI Committee, Year 9



PRAYER SPACES EVENT



RE Department with visitors

*By Mrs R Begum
Religious Education*

We recently held another session of "Prayer Spaces", a program hosted in partnership with the Church of England, where students can reflect and explore themes of spirituality and personal growth. This time, we were honoured to welcome a very special guest: William James Nye, LVO, Secretary-General of the Archbishops' Council and Secretary-General of the General Synod of the Church of England. Mr. Nye's visit was inspired by our previous school newsletter that spoke about our "Prayer Spaces" events.

The theme of this session was focused on "Making the World a Better Place" through environmental awareness and positive actions. Thought-provoking stations invited students to consider ideas such as "Acts of Kindness," "Words You'd Tell Your Younger Self," and "Not Everything is as it Seems."



Students taking part in Prayer Spaces event

Each station was designed to encourage students to reflect deeply and consider ways they can make a positive impact on the world around them.

When Harry Met Isaac...

Year 8 student Isaac received an incredible surprise from none other than Harry Kane, captain of the England national football team. Isaac was nominated by Haven House Children's Foundation for his amazing volunteer work and dedication. This unforgettable moment took place on World Mental Health Day, a cause close to Harry's heart.



By Isaac, Year 8

I went to the basketball club and Mr Hawkins was acting quite strange. He was rushing everyone in and got us to sit down. He told us that when he blew his whistle we had to sit on the floor facing the wall. Then we played 3 v 3's and then he blew the whistle. We all rushed down to the floor and Mr Hawkins asked me to stand up. He held out his phone and said that someone was ringing, he answered it and guess who was on the phone? HARRY KANE! I couldn't believe it! Harry Kane then invited me to the England match against Greece that Thursday. After the call I couldn't believe what I had heard and I was really excited.

On Thursday evening, we went to Wembley stadium and we went to HARRY KANE'S PRIVATE BOX! (Which was very fancy by the way!) There were other people there and we greeted them and I got some food. Then it kicked off. We watched the game and to our disappointment...we lost, 2-1.

After the game Harry Kane came to meet us all and I got two shirts signed! My goal was accomplished! After that we took photos and then went home! It was an incredible experience that I will never forget!

ISLAMOPHOBIA AWARENESS MONTH



Students at Cambridge Mosque

The Islamophobia Awareness Month theme for 2024 is 'Seeds of Change' – how small actions, such as starting a conversation or making an effort to learn more, can have a big impact.

By Mrs R Begum, Religious Education

Our Year 12 students visited Cambridge Central Mosque, the UK's first eco-friendly mosque, to kick off Islamophobia Awareness Month. The mosque is renowned for its sustainable design, including tree-like timber columns, solar panels, and rainwater harvesting systems, all reflecting Islamic principles of environmental care.

Students were fascinated by how each part of the mosque's design has a deeper significance, from the vibrant garden to intricate geometric patterns inspired by Islamic art. The mosque's chairman gave an insightful tour, highlighting its role as a welcoming community space locally and nationally. This experience deepened students' understanding of Islamic culture and the importance of inclusivity and respect.



The tour guide was very lovely and passionate about the mosque. The mosque was clean and calm and had amazing staff.



I enjoyed the tour guide's charisma and everyone was very welcoming.



The trip to Cambridge was incredibly informative. The fascinating history was explained in a clear and concise manner. The tour guide encouraged questions and interaction, making the visit even more enjoyable.

Students' comments



London Central Mosque



Students at London Central Mosque

Our recent trip to the London Central Mosque (Regents Park Mosque) was a fantastic learning experience for students! We had the chance to explore this beautiful mosque, which has been an important part of London since 1944. Students learned about its amazing architecture, which mixes traditional Islamic designs with British influences, and discovered how Muslims have contributed to fields like math, science and architecture.

The visit connected to what we've been learning in history and religious studies, showing how Islamic scholars helped shape the world we live in today. It was also a chance to see how faith plays a big role in people's lives and to better understand different cultures.

Overall, the trip was a great way to learn about the world, respect diversity, and think more deeply about history and society. It's a reminder of how important it is to be open-minded and curious about other cultures!

William Morris Islamic Exhibition

Students from A Level Religious Studies thoroughly enjoyed their recent trip to the William Morris Gallery for the Islamic Art Exhibition. The visit provided an excellent opportunity to explore the fascinating connection between Islamic art and William Morris's designs, leaving students amazed by how this rich tradition influenced his work.

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The gallery was well informed and interactive. It helps us better understand Islamic culture.

-Betty

Seeds Of Change Pledge

The Seeds of Change pledges are important because they encourage students to take proactive steps in making a positive impact on their community. By committing to specific actions, such as listening with an open mind or challenging misconceptions, students help create a culture of understanding and mutual respect.

Staff and students wrote personal pledges, each vowing to make a difference in ending discrimination.



Staff making their pledge

Student Pledges

I pledge to educate myself about Islam and Muslim cultures, so I can better understand and appreciate the diverse world around me.

I pledge to challenge stereotypes about Islam and Muslims when I encounter them in conversations, the media or classrooms.

*Best Pledge Competition Winner - 10Y
No room for ignorance - We pledge that every single one of us will listen with an open mind. Anything we don't know, we will learn about before we comment.*

Islamophobia Assemblies By Multi-Faith Committee



IAM Assembly



Multi-Faith Committee Members

As Islamophobia Awareness Month came to a close in November, we reflect on the incredible efforts of our school community in embracing this year's theme, "Seeds of Change". Through powerful assemblies, students explored how small actions can lead to big differences in fostering inclusivity and respect.

Special recognition goes to the girls in the Multi-Faith Committee in Year 9, Anjali, Mayah, Hope, Mishaal and Lina, for their inspiring assembly, which encouraged their peers through Years 7 to 11 to reflect on the importance of standing against discrimination.

Doing the assemblies was a very fun and educating experience. I felt privileged to be able to help educate the majority of Woodbridge on Islamophobia and its effects on people. It was also very fun as the people I did the assembly with were very good friends of mine who were also passionate about the topic, as well as Mrs Begum who reached out to us since we are part of the Multi-Faith Committee. It was a very educating experience, which I think everyone should try to do.

- Mayah

I really enjoyed doing the assembly because I love making positive changes. I think it is important for us to do this so that we can educate our community about prejudices and their effects on others.

- Anjali

I enjoyed participating in these assemblies. They helped me build my confidence and allowed me to speak in front of a large crowd. In turn, this made me braver when speaking to people, and I was able to memorise a large amount of text, which helped to improve my memory.

- Lina

I really enjoyed taking part in the assembly because it was a different experience and for a cause that was really dear to my heart. It allowed me to express my thoughts to other students and raise awareness about Islamophobia.

- Mishaal

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Dear Woodbridge High School Community,

It is with immense pride that I reflect on the recent production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by our talented students. From the first rehearsal to the final curtain call, this experience has been nothing short of extraordinary, and I am thrilled to share just how incredible our students have been in bringing Shakespeare's beloved comedy to life.

When I initially started this project last year with Shakespeare's tragedy *Macbeth*, I felt a little anxious about the adventurous nature of such a difficult project. I knew our students were talented enough to shine with challenging material, but I wasn't sure how much the original script would need to be redacted or altered. The project was an overwhelming success and showcased the true talent that Woodbridge has to offer, which, in my very biased opinion, would rival any performing arts school in the country!

Every performance showcased not only the hard work and dedication of our cast but also their ability to embrace the timeless magic of this classic play. Our student actors showed exceptional talent, bringing their characters to life with authenticity and flair. Meanwhile, behind the scenes, the crew worked tirelessly to run lines, rehearse, and add their own nuanced moments to bring the play to life. Their creativity and commitment were evident in every detail, making the production a true triumph!

A special mention goes to the student-led initiatives that made this production truly unique. The KS4/5 students stepped into directorial roles admirably, and their experience has now been passed down to the next generation of Woodbridge students.

To our students: You have once again demonstrated what makes Woodbridge High School extraordinary. Your talent, resilience and passion shine brightly, inspiring us all. Whether this was your first performance or your final bow on the Woodbridge stage, you have created memories that will last a lifetime.

Thank you to everyone who bought a ticket! In a time when drama in schools is on the decline, it is inspiring to see drama and our students leading the way for the next generation of creators.

Ms Farr, Head Of Drama





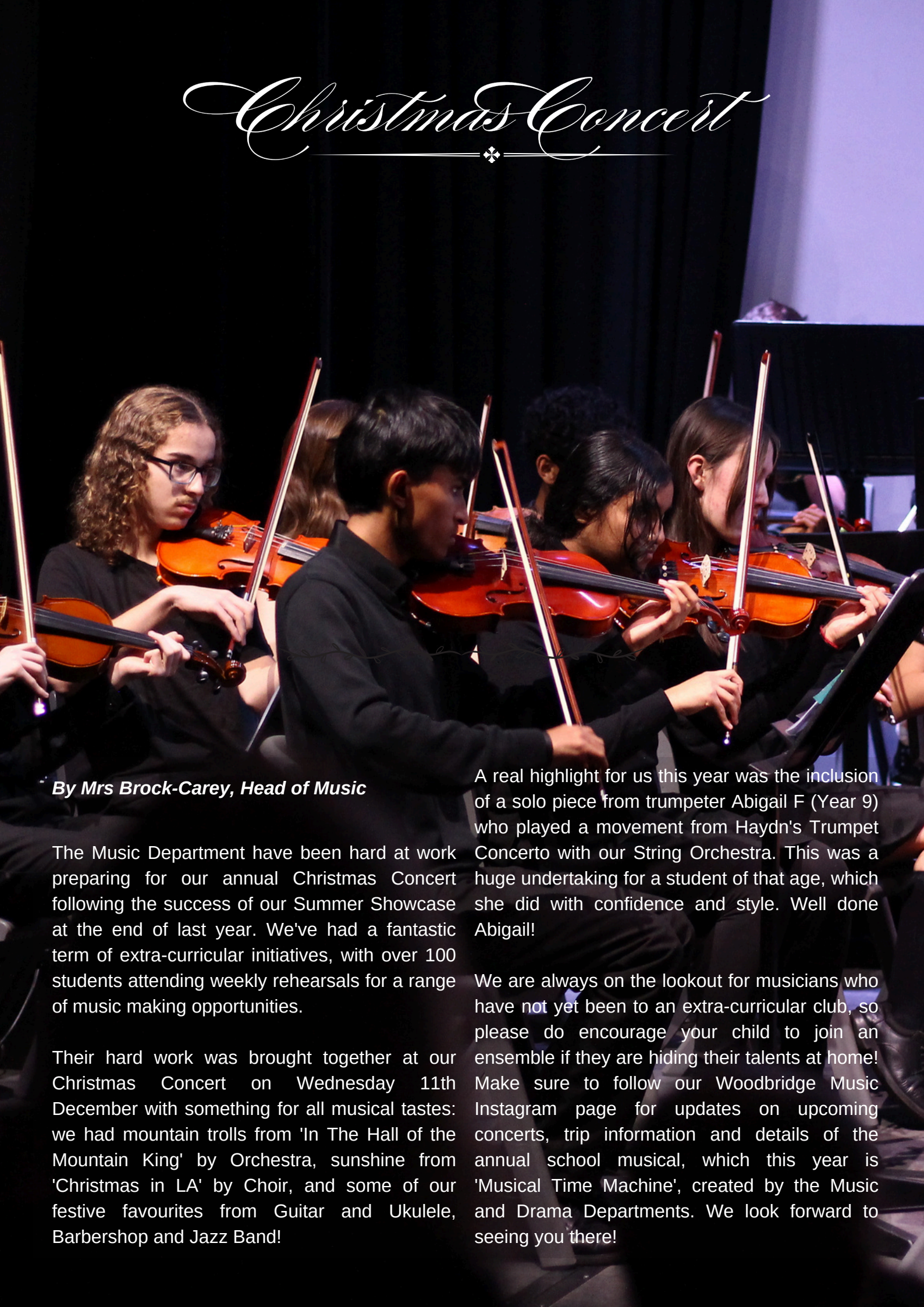
By Jake B, played Bottom

When I first heard about the play, I was a bit skeptical, as Shakespearean plays had never really interested me before, and I was worried about the language being too difficult. Many people who had done Macbeth the year before kept reassuring me that the play would be fun and better than I thought. I showed up to the auditions and received loads of help from Arthur Gilbert with my monologue, which helped me secure the part of Bottom.

The process of making the play, although difficult, was also very enjoyable, and it was one of the best pieces of theatre I have ever done. The line learning wasn't as hard as I had originally thought, and I was even able to add some of my own dialogue. I highly recommend the Shakespeare play to other students who like to act, as it's an amazing opportunity and one of the best things you'll ever do.



Christmas Concert



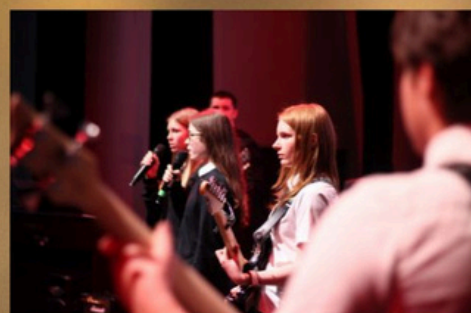
By Mrs Brock-Carey, Head of Music

The Music Department have been hard at work preparing for our annual Christmas Concert following the success of our Summer Showcase at the end of last year. We've had a fantastic term of extra-curricular initiatives, with over 100 students attending weekly rehearsals for a range of music making opportunities.

Their hard work was brought together at our Christmas Concert on Wednesday 11th December with something for all musical tastes: we had mountain trolls from 'In The Hall of the Mountain King' by Orchestra, sunshine from 'Christmas in LA' by Choir, and some of our festive favourites from Guitar and Ukulele, Barbershop and Jazz Band!

A real highlight for us this year was the inclusion of a solo piece from trumpeter Abigail F (Year 9) who played a movement from Haydn's Trumpet Concerto with our String Orchestra. This was a huge undertaking for a student of that age, which she did with confidence and style. Well done Abigail!

We are always on the lookout for musicians who have not yet been to an extra-curricular club, so please do encourage your child to join an ensemble if they are hiding their talents at home! Make sure to follow our Woodbridge Music Instagram page for updates on upcoming concerts, trip information and details of the annual school musical, which this year is 'Musical Time Machine', created by the Music and Drama Departments. We look forward to seeing you there!



By Mr Archer, Music Department

The Music Department has run exciting trips this term. The first in September took place in the Royal Albert Hall, where students saw the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra (RPO) perform 'American Classics', a concert dedicated to the most famous and successful works of American composers. We were wowed by the dexterity of the piano soloist in Rhapsody in Blue, and the beautiful harmonies in Barber's Adagio for Strings.

In December we were back to the Albert Hall to watch a very special concert - the RPO once again, but this time conducted by British composer John Rutter, leading a programme consisting of his own Christmas Music. This was the perfect way to get our students ready for the upcoming festivities, including preparations for our Christmas Concert!

JOHN HAJDU MBE

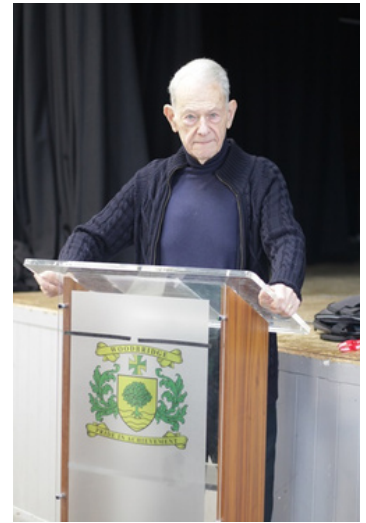
A Holocaust Survivor's Voice

We were honored and moved to have Holocaust survivor John Hajdu MBE speak at Woodbridge.

John Hajdu MBE survived the Holocaust in Hungary and lived under the subsequent socialist regime in Budapest. He believes his life was saved by his aunt, who hid him in a non-Jewish house. John's father and mother both survived the concentration camps. He fled as a refugee in 1957 and built a life for himself in the UK. During his talk, he shared his experiences under Soviet and Nazi rule and his life since arriving in the UK.

John's message was powerful: be proud of who you are, understand your heritage, and share your story. He emphasized the importance of being kind to others, regardless of background or religion.

Organiser, Ms Begum, 'We will be using information from this event to prepare for lessons leading to up Holocaust Memorial Day in January.' Keep your eyes open for more in the next newsletter.



John Hajdu MBE

LIBRARY *News*

It has been a busy term for our library committee! We have had the opportunity to visit the British Library, the Bank of England Museum, and the Palace of Westminster. We also had the pleasure of hosting three authors and holding a book fair!

Students visited the British Library, embarking on a journey through the captivating history of Black writing and literature in Britain. During the Bank of England visit, students discovered how the bank plays a vital role in ensuring you can make purchases confidently. The Palace of Westminster visit gave students the opportunity to find out more

about the roles of the House of Commons and the House of Lords. We were delighted to have authors Sam Scott, Ayaan Mohamud, and Elizabeth Okoh come and speak to our students about their books, journeys, and to hold workshops.

Our Scholastic book fair was a huge success! You can read more about this in this newsletter. We raised an incredible £186, which will go directly towards providing free books for our school. A great way to end the term!



Sam Scott, Author



Palace of Westminster

INEQUALITY

Dr Faiza Shaheen



By Mr Shaw, Head of Sociology

Dr. Faiza Shaheen delivered a masterclass on inequality and discussed the work she does at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) on the subject. Dr. Shaheen has worked for several think tanks and non-governmental organisations. LSE states on their website that: "Faiza is an economist, writer, and political commentator and activist. She is the author of a range of materials and publications covering the most salient social and economic debates of our times, including inequality, austerity, immigration, and social mobility."

Her talk focused on the cost of inequality and its rise in societal terms since the 1970s. A key point in her talk was how many states have been captured by an elite—the top five percent—who 'seem to get away with it' by arguing that their hard work should be rewarded, despite the fact

that most power is generated by (inherited) wealth, not income.

Dr. Shaheen was keen to offer solutions:

- Delivering positive outcomes so that all people feel included in society.
- Building solidarity through citizens' assemblies, as has happened in Ireland.
- Persuading the rich to pay solidarity taxes.
- Moving to build more confidence in the nation's institutions and those who run them.

Her talk was framed by her personal story of overcoming the odds to attend Oxbridge as a woman of colour from a difficult home background. Dr. Shaheen also generously donated two signed copies of her book, *Know Your Place*, to our library.

Year 12 EPQ Students Research At The British Library

By Ms Evans, Assistant Headteacher

Year 12 EPQ students went to the British Library for a workshop on research skills. They also had the chance to visit the 'Treasures Gallery', where some of the greatest historical and literary treasures are on display, ranging from the pages of one of Leonardo da Vinci's notebooks to the writing desk of Jane Austen. Staff at the library commented on how impressed they were with the quality of research already undertaken by our young scholars!



EPQ Students At The British Library



Woodbridge Bee Club

Buzzing Updates

We have been buzzing with excitement since we won the Junior Honey Competition at the Epping Forest Beekeepers Association Honey Show!

By Ms Rivers, Bee Club Co-ordinator

It was an exciting end to the beekeeping season when our Woodbridge Bee Club won the Junior Honey Competition at the Epping Forest Beekeepers Association Honey Show. Anyone who has tasted the honey knows the result was well-deserved!

We have had lots of new members this term, with students wanting to try their hand at beekeeping. It is such a lovely experience to be outside, surrounded by the gentle buzzing of the bees and watching them work so hard. It always feels like a privilege to witness the workings of the hive, and it's even better when the bees choose to rest on us! The bees like to sit on us because we are warm. We are well-protected inside the bee suits, and this is a highlight for all members of the Bee Club.

Our classroom lessons have been fascinating as well. We are very lucky to have Salma as our beekeeper, as she is extremely knowledgeable and teaches us everything we need to know to care for the bees.

I hope that a number of students will sign up for and pass the Junior Certificate in Beekeeping next year. All members of the Bee Club can do this if they are interested. Now, the bees are less active, with a small core of worker bees keeping the hive warm and protecting the queen for the winter.

I am very much looking forward to Bee Club starting up again on Tuesday 25th February. All students who would like to join us are very welcome and can come to see me in W22 if they have any questions.



By Chloe, Year 7 Beekeeper

I really enjoyed Bee Club, especially when we got to observe the bees. I learned a lot, such as what a drone does and how long it takes for a queen bee to develop from a larva to an adult. Seeing the thousands of bees in real life was incredible. It was scary at first, but now I feel like I have a connection with them. The theory lessons are also fun, as we learn more about the bees indoors.

I also enjoyed the honey show we participated in because it allowed us to showcase the glory of Woodbridge honey to the judges! I can't wait to see the bees again and to see what next year has in store for us beekeepers at Woodbridge.



ANTI-BULLYING

AMBASSADORS

By Mr Laws, Anti-Bullying Lead



Woodbridge was excited to launch our most recent group of Anti-Bullying Ambassadors in association with the Diana Anti-Bullying Project. We were overwhelmed with applications this year, and I am happy to announce that we now have a full team of 32 Anti-Bullying Ambassadors. Additionally, four of our Ambassadors, who have volunteered for the last three years, have been promoted to Anti-Bullying Champions. They will each lead a team of Anti-Bullying Ambassadors and take on a number of new responsibilities and duties.

Our Anti-Bullying Programme empowers selected students to act as peer mentors, offering support and guidance to their classmates who may be experiencing bullying. The Ambassadors have received training in conflict resolution, active listening, and how to effectively address bullying behaviour, ensuring they are well-equipped to make a positive impact.

We are thrilled that the Anti-Bullying Ambassadors have already begun a new set of duties. They have set up and are running a 'games table' in the school canteen, which has already become a hub for socialising. In addition, our Anti-Bullying Ambassadors are running a space in the school library, providing students with a quieter area to engage in meditative colouring, reading and self-actualisation activities.

Through this initiative, the school aims to build on our culture of respect, kindness and empathy, encouraging students to take an active stand against bullying and promote a supportive community for all. We look forward to the Anti-Bullying Ambassadors excelling in their roles and the positive impact they will have on our wider school community.

Jack Petchey's "SPEAK OUT" Challenge!

By Mr Faisal, English Department

On Monday 25th and Tuesday 26th of November, the Jack Petchey Speak Out Workshops by the Speaker's Trust Foundation took place for Year 10 students. We had the privilege of having Jonathan Drew and Sophia Jones, who used their enthusiasm, expertise, and eagerness to engage with the students. Their efforts really encouraged the students to build on their communication skills and prepare some amazing speeches.

It is imperative that our students develop exceptional speaking and listening skills, which will be of great benefit in socialising, applying for jobs, and in their everyday lives. On each day, selected Year 10 students prepared, rehearsed, and delivered fantastic speeches on topics such as life as a teenager, Islamophobia, and sexism in sports. They were taught to focus on three key areas: content, delivery, and structure.

Almost all the students felt much more confident in delivering their speeches by the end of the day. Feedback about the workshops has been incredibly positive, and we will continue to offer this valuable opportunity to our Year 10s. We now have six students ready to compete in the assembly final for the chance to go through to the regional finals! Stay tuned!



FESTIVAL of Faiths

By Miss Begum, Religious Studies

The Festival of Faiths at Woodbridge High School was a vibrant celebration of diversity. Students thoroughly enjoyed the event, engaging eagerly with the speakers, asking thoughtful questions, and exploring the displays. They found the experience valuable, as it gave them the opportunity to learn first-hand about different traditions and beliefs.

The event created a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere, helping students to deepen their understanding of various religions and worldviews while fostering a greater appreciation for the diversity within our community.



House News

*By Miss E Jamieson and Miss J Sanderson,
House Co-ordinators*

Over the past few years, Miss Gleeson and Miss Payne have worked tirelessly to raise an impressive £7,403.33!

Red House - Honeypot: £1,468.51

Yellow House - ELHAP: £1,448.89

Green House - Lennox Children's Cancer Fund: £1,538.79

Blue House - Clowns in the Sky: £1,483.76

Purple House - Haven House: £1,448.89

This year, our five amazing charities have generously donated £50 in capital to each of the Houses. We have chosen 8 students to represent each House, who will use the £50 capital to run events throughout the year to raise as much money as possible, which will be donated back at the end of the year.

So far, we have raised money by selling refreshments during our Midsummer Night's Dream production, having a non-uniform day and running a Christmas Fayre.



House Captains

Children In Need

The House Captains kicked off their first charitable event of the year by transforming the sports hall into a carnival. There were many different stalls, allowing the Woodbridge students to try carnival-themed games like hook-a-duck, wall toss and balloon darts. The sports hall was filled with students buzzing from game to game, all in aid of Children in Need.

Well done to the House Captains on their first successful event of the year, and thank you to all the students who donated through the games to support such an amazing charity.



*Children In Need
Fundraiser*

Christmas fayre

A big well done to the Ho-Ho-House Enterprise Captains for their amazing contribution at the Christmas Fayre.

Each of the House Teams have been selling their festive socks off in order to raise as much money as possible for their House Charities: Blue – Clowns in the Sky, Red – Honeypot, Green – Lennox Children's Cancer Fund, Purple – Haven House, and Yellow – ELHAP.

Blue, Red and Yellow took the reindeer reins with candy canes, homemade cookies, gingerbread men, mince pies and savoury snacks. Green and Purple decided to keep us all warm and cosy with hot chocolate topped with whipped cream, marshmallows and brownies!



Green House Raising Money For Lennox

future Events:

Valentine's Day
The Great Woodbridge Bake-Off
Time to Talk Day
World Book Day
Pancake Day
Summer Concert
Sports Day

Christmas Gift & food Appeal

This time of year always reminds us of how amazing our school, staff, students, parents and carers truly are. We have received an overwhelming amount of food, necessities and gifts from you all which has reiterated our purpose and highlights why we do what we do, day in day out. On behalf of those receiving the donations, thank you from the bottom of our hearts for making Christmas a little brighter.



Mr Gillard Organising Donations

NEW



*Great discounts in time
for Christmas!*

Village Vouchers

Save up to £350 at businesses across Wanstead and South Woodford.

Priced at only £4, you'll be saving more than the booklet price! Plus we receive a donation too!

Valid till end of July 2025.

Order using SCOPAY. Vouchers need to be picked up from the Finance office (cash also accepted).

SIXTH FORM

Super-Curricular Highlights

By Mrs L Khudeza

Sixth Form Super-Curricular Co-ordinator

Student Leadership

This term has been a huge success in the recruitment of our 75 Sixth Form Ambassadors. These students not only work to be the leading role models of the sixth form, but have also provided support to the sixth form by acting as school tour guides during our prospective year 7 students morning tours and sixth form open evening. In addition to this aspect of their role, Sixth Form Ambassadors are active members of the Sixth Form Student Council and are key contributors to the Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Committee. They are also working with several peer mentoring programmes throughout the school.

Leading these Ambassadors are our three Head Students, who were appointed early this term.



Sixth Form Ambassadors

The Head Students, Eyaan Wali, Rouida Elgerbi and Magdalena Rafacz, have been working to create and lead three sub-committees of the Student Council. These include Academic Societies, Wellbeing and Community. We look forward to the impact these committees will have on the sixth form, as well as the whole school.



*Rouida Elgerbi
(Head Student)*

I wanted to become a Head Student because I wanted to challenge myself and bring something new and meaningful to the life of our school community. This role has allowed me to develop essential skills like leadership, teamwork and communication, which will be invaluable as I prepare for university and my future career. By representing student voices and contributing to key initiatives, I aim to leave a positive legacy while gaining experiences that will help me stand out in higher education and beyond.



*Magdalena Rafacz
(Head Student)*

I wanted to become a Head Student as I believe this role is such a valuable and fulfilling experience. Having been at Woodbridge since Year 7, to be able to give back to the community is a great opportunity. This role allowed me a unique platform to represent the voices of my peers, work with staff, and contribute to projects that promote a positive environment for everyone. I'm passionate about making a meaningful difference to the school community and I value the opportunity to serve as a bridge between students and leadership, ensuring that concerns, ideas and feedback are heard and acted upon. I hope to influence students to support our school community and strive for excellence within all aspects. I aim to implement initiatives that work towards improving student well-being and community to leave a positive impact and influence on the school.



*Eyaan Wali
(Head Student)*

I wanted to become a Head Student because not only would it look great when applying to universities, but also to help convey the voice of my peers and improve the school environment. I feel that this role can greatly strengthen your confidence, develop essential leadership skills, and leave a lasting, positive impression on the school. Being a Head Student also means becoming a vital role model, one who can inspire especially the younger years to aspire to achieve higher and possibly take on leadership roles.

Enrichment and Masterclasses

Exploring beyond the taught curriculum is something our sixth form prides itself on, and this term has been no exception. Sixth form students have had a series of sessions delivered by Wize Up Education, tackling financial issues such as tax, pensions, reflecting on the financial impact of choosing the university route, and weighing it against the apprenticeship route. Students have also been introduced to the world of cryptocurrencies and NFTs!

Guest speakers form an integral part of this programme, and Year 13 students were lucky enough to have a session delivered by Aidan McClure, CEO of Wonderhood Studios and former Executive Creative Director of the BBC.

Masterclasses are a new addition this year to the sixth form super curriculum. The aim of these masterclasses is to give students access to leading researchers and experts in fields of study with competitive entry to university. So far this term, sixth formers have signed up for talks by Hannah Peckham, who is conducting a PhD in Immunology at UCL, and who questioned, 'How do biological sex, hormones and puberty affect the immune system?'. More recently this term, students also had a talk by British academic and economist Dr Faiza Shaheen, who is leading research in the field of economic inequality. The masterclass programme has more diverse and thought-provoking speakers lined up, which we very much look forward to in the new year!

Giving back to their community - LORIC and Volunteering

LORIC students have started fundraising as part of their Sixth Form Edge course. This year, students in LORIC are fundraising to support the British Heart Foundation, War Child, Centrepoint

and Great Ormond Street Hospital. Last year's LORIC students raised £1,600, and we are hopeful that students this year can surpass this!



LORIC students raising money for War Child

This term saw students actively engage in the volunteering fair in November. Charities, Redbridge Council and multiple local community organisations attended the fair to showcase the opportunities available to our sixth formers.

Students in our sixth form are expected to volunteer during the second term, either within school or outside school. We very much look forward to hearing about the difference we know they will make!

ATTENDANCE MATTERS

All Day, Every Day



By Mrs W Smith, Lead for Family Support and Education Welfare

At Woodbridge our aims remain focussed on home/school partnerships. This union is the strongest because working together can bring the most effective change. I can promise all families that we will work hard to understand the challenges or difficulties you and your child may be facing. A problem shared is definitely a problem halved.

Direct support can be offered to improve your child's attendance. The support can be personalised and focused on improving the areas of difficulty. We lead with a "support first approach" for all students who are facing barriers to regular school attendance. Evidence always shows that students who attend school daily enjoy better wellbeing and higher levels of school performance.

I mentioned to you in the summer newsletter that a new National Framework for Attendance will be introduced in August 2024. As a reminder, the new framework outlines actions for schools when a child is regularly absent. From August 2024, the fine for unauthorised school absences across the country is £80 if paid within 21 days, or £160 if paid within 28 days.

In the case of repeated fines, if a parent receives a second fine for the same child within a three-year period, this will be charged at the higher rate of £160. Fines per parent will be capped to two fines within any three-year period. Once this limit for fines has been reached, other sanctions such as a Parenting Order or Prosecution will be the next likely stage.

I would also like to remind all parents that it is important to inform the school when you are taking your child out of school during term time. You are required to request a leave of absence and outline the reasons clearly. We will always respond. Open and honest conversations enable us to understand the reasons behind absences, please place your trust in us. When children are absent and we do not have a reason, this becomes a safeguarding concern.

We are here to support you and our students. We have an open-door approach, as members of the Woodbridge family, so please do reach out to us when you need support, advice or guidance. Wishing you and your families a wonderful Christmas break. Enjoy the time to be present with each other.

Carols and Cheer AT CARE HOMES

This festive season, Woodbridge students made heart-warming visits to local care homes, bringing cheer and joy to the residents with their Christmas spirit. The students spent the days engaging with the elderly, sharing music, laughter and fun activities that brightened everyone's day. On one of the visits, the students even taught the residents how to do the Macarena!

As a thank you, the students were given chocolates by the care home residents. The students' visit brought a little extra Christmas magic to the care homes, making memorable connections filled with kindness.



Churchfields Care Home



Sherrell Care Home

VITESH'S VOICE!

By Vitesh S, Year 10

Hello, my name is Vitesh and I'm in Year 10. I am thrilled to tell you my view on the Christmas Concert, Christmas Fayre and 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'.

In the Christmas Concert I was part of the samba band and the choir singing 'Merry Christmas'. Everybody touched my heart so much!

I thought that the Christmas Fayre was 'Santastic!' I had my pal 'Santa's Ghost', which was cool. Not only was it cool, it was fantastic! I loved the Christmas Fayre.

I loved performing as 'Mustard Seed' in 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'. The audience laughed so much! I can't wait to see what is next!



NEED A PRINTER
& COMPUTER?

NEED A QUIET
PLACE?



WANT HELP
STEPPING UP?

NEED SUPPORT?

By Ms Burch, Super Study Lead

We have had a brilliant start to Super Study this year; there is a real buzz around school, especially at the end of the day on the first floor of Roding, with queues down the corridor for Super Study to open, and attendance at an all-time high. As we continue our work as a school to ensure students are completing excellent PPR, Super Study provides a quiet, safe and supportive environment for them to get help with PPR, where they also have access to printers and computers.

It has been wonderful to see so many students attending Super Study, working in collaboration with their peers to solve tricky questions, supporting each other with balancing PPR deadlines, and responding so positively to the teacher support in place.

We have also been lucky to have some wonderful sixth form students supporting in Super Study, which helps to ensure that students can get the help they need.



Our new loyalty card system has been a roaring success: well done to the 23 students who have completed their loyalty cards and collected their 5 achievement points. Special mention to Zak LB, Sara F, Amelia M, Amine M and Hannah P for completing 2 loyalty cards...and Christopher C has completed an incredible 4 loyalty cards!

Please continue to promote Super Study with your children at home. It runs from 3.10pm to 4.10pm in R6 (for Years 7 to 9) and R7 (for Years 10 and 11), and it is a wonderful place for them to get support and embed the habits needed to become the most successful learners.



This term, we held a book fair to celebrate reading! The fair was very popular with both students and staff, opening their eyes to new books and encouraging wider reading. Thank you to everyone who bought a book and supported the event. Each book sold meant that we received a reward too, allowing us to purchase even more fantastic books for the library!

SURPLUS 2 SUPPORT



Thank you to our school caterers, Innovate, who help us to reduce food waste and help our local community. Food is collected weekly and distributed to local families in need, via Olio. We are pleased to report that our Olio Food Scheme for last year provided 2,858 meals!

Aspire **HIGHER**

By Ms Watton, Aspire Higher Lead

Aspire Higher students in Years 7 to 9 have been busy developing their learning outside of lessons.

For example, our Year 9 Aspire students have been learning about political campaigning and are working on a project related to our school's local history. Our Year 7 students have been learning about robotics, and our Year 8 students have been working on a maths project.

We have also had subject masterclasses in several departments which have been very well attended by our Aspire students! The masterclasses so far have included Ukrainian language, travel writing, French fashion, religious sites and making clay pots in art. There are many more to come throughout the rest of the year!



Aspire Art Class

Our Year 10 Aspire students have been working on their HPQ, which is an independent research project that leads to an extra qualification. The students have been working hard on their research and have chosen a range of fascinating topics, including mental health, women's rights, Shakespeare's plays and doping in sport.

If you would like to get involved with Aspire Higher in the future, keep an eye out for next year's applications!

Extra-Curricular **AWARDS**



Students were awarded certificates for their hard work and dedication to extra-curricular activities. One student, Evie P., was nominated three times!

There were then lots of 'Oh yes you do!', and 'She's behind you!', as our Year 9 Early Choice

Drama students took to the stage to perform their pantomimes at our award event. The students demonstrated their exceptional talent, not only in performing but also in taking responsibility for scripting, costumes, sound, and lighting!

JUNIOR TRACK WORLD *Championships 2024*



The 2024 Junior Track World Championships took place in China.

Sixth former, Henry Hobbs, became a "World Champion", winning Gold in the Junior Men's Individual Pursuit, beating the world record holder from Australia, William Holmes. He followed this by winning a Silver in the Time Trial. Henry was also part of the British Men's Team Pursuit Squad, along with Sam Fisher, William Salter and Fin Tarling. They bagged themselves a Bronze, beating Australia and setting a new national record.

Henry is the fastest 17 year old cyclist in the world!





By Mr Allen, DofE Co-ordinator

This term, we have seen the Duke of Edinburgh Award rolled out to all Gold students (Year 12), Silver students (Year 10), and Bronze students (Year 9).

We have seen great interest again this year in all levels of the awards, which has allowed us to increase the number of students involved in the Duke of Edinburgh scheme. We have enrolled 130 students across all three levels.

Students who were completing the Duke of

Edinburgh Bronze or Silver last year have now completed these levels and have gained the full award – many congratulations to all involved!

There are also some students who are very close to completing and may just need another gentle nudge (this is your nudge) to finish your award.

Congratulations to those who have completed and passed – keep an eye out, your certificates will be on their way soon.

WOODBIDGE *Sports*

Football

Woodbridge continues to excel at football and compete in a wide range of different competitions. Our Year 7s have hit the ground running, multiple year groups are still in the Redbridge and Essex Cups, and our Year 11s are still undefeated, looking to retain their Essex Cup title from last year. Can they retain their title and even make it to the National Cup final? Results below.

Year 7 Boys:

Drew 4-4 v Beal – Redbridge Cup
Drew 4v4 v Trinity - Redbridge Cup
Won 7-4 v Kingsmead - National Cup
Won 3-1 v Caterham - Redbridge Cup
Lost 1-0 v Enfield Grammar - National Cup
Won 3-1 v Brentwood – Essex Cup

Year 8 Boys:

Lost 6-1 v Sydney Russel - National Cup
Lost 4-1 v Trinity – Redbridge Cup
Won 8-0 v Caterham - Redbridge Cup
Lost 7-0 v Trinity – Essex Cup
Lost 2-1 v Beal - Redbridge Cup

Year 9 Boys:

Lost 2-1 v Forrest - National Cup
Won 6-2 v Trinity - Redbridge Cup
Won 1-0 v Reddon Court – Essex Cup
Won 9-0 v Eastbury - Essex Cup

Year 10 Boys:

Won 3-3 (10-9 Pens) v Royal Docks - Essex Cup
Lost 2-0 v Emerson Park - National Cup
Won 2-1 v Beal - Redbridge Cup
Lost 4-2 v Trinity - Redbridge Cup
Lost 1-1 (5-4 Pens) v Langdon Academy - Essex Cup
Lost 2-1 v Caterham - Redbridge Cup

Year 11 Boys:

Won 2-1 v Trinity - Redbridge Cup
Won 4-0 v Beal - Redbridge Cup
Won 10-1 v Royal Docks - Essex Cup
Won 5-0 v Westminster - National Cup
Won 9-4 v Roding Valley - Essex Cup
Won 3-2 v Caterham - Redbridge Cup
Won 4-1 v Riverside - National Cup

6th Form Boys:

Won 6-1 v Sydney Russel - National Cup
Won 3-0 v Robert Clack - Essex Cup
Lost 1-0 v Coopers - Essex Cup
Lost 4-3 v Beal - Redbridge Cup
Won 0-0 (6-5 Pens) v American School London - National Cup
Lost 3-1 v Southend High School – National Cup

U13 Girls:

Redbridge League – Week 1
Won 6-0 v Marshalls Park – National Cup
Won 3-2 v Riverside – Essex Cup
Lost 5-2 v Davenant – National Cup
Redbridge League – Week 2
Redbridge League – Week 3

U15/16 Girls:

Won 7-0 v Woodford County – Redbridge League
Lost 9-0 v Fitzwimarc – National Cup



Netball

Woodbridge is continuing to push netball in competitive fixtures. Our Wednesday Netball club is our most popular club, with nearly 100 students in attendance every week. Our new dresses have made an appearance, making our wins not the only thing that our competitors are jealous of! We are also looking at entering the Netball Essex Cup in future competitions to extend our level of competition. Results below.

Year 7 Girls:

Won 3-2 v Wanstead – Redbridge League
Lost 16-1 v Trinity – Redbridge League
Won 6-3 v Woodford – Redbridge League

Year 8 Girls:

Won 7-6 vs Trinity – Redbridge League
Won 23-9 v Wanstead – Redbridge League
Won 19-11 v Woodford – Redbridge League

Year 9 Girls:

Lost 23-10 v Trinity – Redbridge League
Won 23-6 v Wanstead – Redbridge League
Won 21-5 v Woodford – Redbridge League

Year 10 Girls:

Lost 18-10 v Wanstead – Redbridge League
Won 13-4 v Woodford – Redbridge League

Rugby

In November, our girls were fortunate enough to have coaches from Saracens FC deliver training sessions as part of their Make Your Mark Foundation. Make Your Mark is Saracens Foundation's new project that delivers fun and engaging rugby sessions for girls aged 11-18 in the lead-up to the Women's Rugby World Cup next year in England, supported by the Mayor of London's Office and the RFU. The sessions focused on principles such as leadership, communication, and teamwork.



Three teams from Woodbridge attended a T1 Rugby 7s tournament at Woodford RFC, where one of our teams took home the trophy! Students were fortunate enough to meet current Women's Premiership players Zainab Alema of Leicester Tigers and Isla Alejandro of Saracens. They spoke about their journeys into the game, offering inspiration to the girls. We can't wait for more competitions.

This year, Woodbridge has joined the Essex County Schools' RFU affiliation, providing opportunities for our students to compete in Essex School Rugby Festivals. Our U16 Boys have started our competitive rugby journey, playing against some fantastic opposition in the county. Despite our lack of competitive experience as a school, Woodbridge won the majority of their games. Lots of experience has been gained, and lots more is to come. We look forward to playing in the Rugby 7s event later in the year and growing our presence in rugby by extending to further year groups.

Basketball

Woodbridge is continuing to expand into other sporting areas, with basketball being a major focus. This year, we have entered the boys' Junior NBA, where schools represent an NBA team when playing local schools. Woodbridge is representing the Toronto Raptors. Keep an eye on our socials to see our newly sent Toronto Raptors kits! In addition, we have entered the Redbridge leagues and organised local friendlies. Our girls' basketball team started their season off with a fabulous win against Seven Kings. Our boys' teams are battling against some fantastic opposition across multiple year groups.



Cross Country

As always, Woodbridge hosted the borough Cross Country event, inviting local schools in Redbridge to compete at Fairlop Waters. Woodbridge brought a large team and demonstrated our wide sporting skill set, bringing home many podium finishes. The Year 7 Girls' team placed 2nd, the Year 7 Boys' team placed 2nd, the Year 8/9 Girls' team placed 2nd, and our Year 10/11 Boys' team placed 1st. As a result of all our strong performances, 11 of our students were selected to represent Redbridge at the London Youth Games. A special shout-out to Nicolas R, who attended the London Youth Games and finished as the fastest finisher in the entire Redbridge team.



Panathlon Swimming

Woodbridge took an 8 person strong team to the London Aquatic Centre in Stratford to compete in the East London Panathlon swimming gala. They competed across multiple events having to show strong physical attributes as well as team work, resilience and determination. We just missed out on a medal finishing 4th overall, but for our first ever experience of the event, was a really strong performance and more importantly, a good time was had by the whole squad.



Sportshall Athletics

The Year 7 team took part in the borough indoor athletics competition, competing in a number of field and track events. The girls' team emerged victorious, scoring over 300 points and securing their place to represent Redbridge at the regional competition in February! The boys' team came 4th but still achieved a number of wins in the running events. All students performed to the best of their ability while having fun. The students not only cheered on their fellow teammates but also supported others from different schools, making for a great sporting day.



Sports clubs

Woodbridge PE continue to offer a wide range of sports clubs. Please click [HERE](#) for next term's timetable

Website»News&Events»SportatWHS»SportClubs



Wishing all of Team Woodbridge and their families a wonderful break!

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Start of Spring Term 2025
Monday 6th January, 8:35am, Week 2.



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