

INSIDE ST GABRIEL'S

Your Christmas Update

22 DECEMBER 2021 • ISSUE 1 • VOLUME 2



Christmas is nearly here; school has broken up, the nursery is entering its final week before the break, and what a perfect time to pause and reflect on all that has gone on over the last term.

September seems like another world away now, and so much has been achieved by all the pupils and staff as they have gone about their business as normally as is possible. However, that begs the question, what is normal these days?

Well, we are hopeful that after the latest COVID spike, we will find ourselves in a time when we can really get back to what we want to be doing - community based events that bring us together. In the meantime, while we still have to be cautious, enjoy all that this newsletter has to offer and see just how much has been going on this term.

Merry Christmas to you all.

Ricki Smith



St Gabriel's
NEWBURY

A Poem About St Gabriel's (Anonymous)

The gateway to heaven is:
Red traffic lights turning green.
Tesco's on one side and fields
forever on the other.

It is fresh sprung roadsigns
and high vis jackets.
Breaking quickly to turn the
corner.

It is majestic pine trees
and green, green grass.
Walking all the way round to
see it's splendour and castle
turrets.

It is the dewy shoes and
freezing fingers.

Smiling eyes above the masks.
Warming fires and pink sun-
rises.

It is the wooden floorboards
and winding corridors.
The hugs even when you're
crying.
It is the equal love for
everyone.

It's the understanding, helping,
caring, listening always.
No one is a failure as long
as you try your best.

It's the thriving, love for
learning.

At the end of term although you're ready for a good rest;
You will always want to stay longer,
And play the glockenspiel whilst running through the halls.



St Gabriel's Christmas!

Sixth Form Panto

It has become a tradition for the students of Year 13 to put on a Christmas entertainment for the rest of the school and this year they have excelled themselves.

Dressed in stunning costumes with a superb band, the players presented the traditional mummers' play of St. George and the Dragon, introducing a new element with the arrival of St. Andrew who contributed to the demise of the fierce dragons. Villains, fools, a giant knight and doctors abounded and the proceedings were compered by a trio of Father Christmasses. The dragons were attired magnificently in green and gold with fairly intimidating claws. The doctors were able to resurrect all the characters initially defeated by St. George and St. Andrew, except the dragons who, tradition has it, have to be defeated by St. George and, in our version, St. Andrew.

The band added to the magic with an array of instruments including drums, a xylophone, and a triangle. The play concluded with a raucous Bergamask in the lovely gardens outside the Sixth Form Farmhouse, involving much clashing of swords and cheering.

The sixth form should be commended for their outstanding enthusiasm and engaging performances. Covid prevented the traditional parading of the mummers around the school, but the marvels of modern technology enabled the school to enjoy the performance on Teams.

We were grateful to Mark Laidlaw for filming the performance and to Paul Spurrett for creating the magnificent dragon's tail. It was a delightful, fun-filled ending to what has been an extremely busy term for the sixth formers with academic studies, university applications, sport, debating and a host of other activities.



Christmas Fun Run

The Christmas spirit was high among pupils and staff leading up to the end of term. The pupils took part in an array of concerts and performing arts presentations. You can see some of this talent in action on our [Facebook](#) page where our Performing Arts Advent Calendar has been extremely popular!

Thursday 9 December was our annual Christmas fun run. We witnessed some great sporting achievements throughout the day and many pupils fully embraced the festive spirit. This term has seen enthusiastic participation in the early morning running clubs organised by the PE department and the fun run was a great stage to show off their hard work. Mrs Brazendale was frequently overcome with emotion at the pupil's efforts around the course. Of course, all participants were treated to hot chocolate after completing the fun run.

Christmas Jumper Day this year was in support of Daisy's Dream, a local charity which supports children and their families who have been affected by the life-threatening illness or bereavement of someone close to them. We raised a spectacular £355 - thank you to all your donations!

After a delicious Christmas dinner, the Sixth Form Panto and final assemblies, St Gabriel's broke up for the end of term. It was a very festive final week at school, and we wish a very Merry Christmas to our St Gabriel's community!

- Mrs Archer, English



This Term

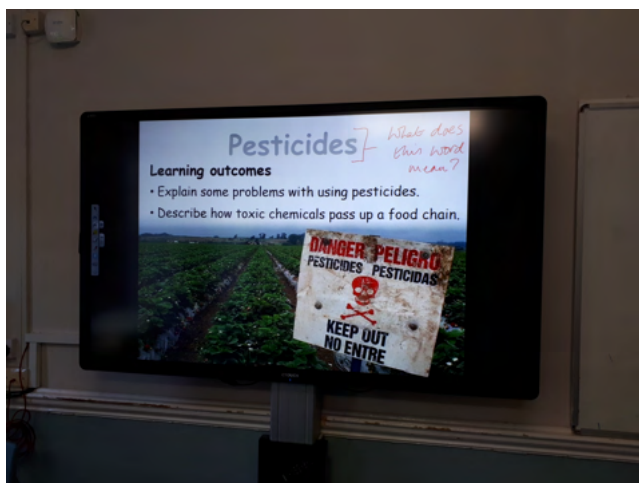
New Screens

This term we have invested in up-to-date touchscreen technology in a number of the classrooms in Main School.

The new screens from CTOUCH are a welcome addition to our teaching toolkit, enabling us to provide even more engaging and intuitive lessons, while preparing our learners for the digital world. Each screen has a large, crystal clear, anti-glare display with built-in tools including a whiteboard and web browser to support creativity and interaction. Mindful of our climate obligations, the screens' annual carbon footprint has been assessed and our sixth form sustainability prefect, Ella, has explored ways of offsetting the carbon emissions produced.

With more investment in digital tools planned in 2022, we continue to look for ways to blend the traditional and the technological to maximise outcomes for all St Gabriel's students.

- Mrs McLaughlin, Second in Science



Sixth Form Careers Spotlight Event

The Sixth Form Careers Spotlight Event was a highly anticipated event this term. Our students were given the opportunity to listen to career discussions given by our prestigious alumnae.

The virtual event was held in two separate rooms with a choice of which discussions to listen to depending on their personal career path.



The participating alumnae had a range of experiences in different fields such as clinical research, psychodynamic counselling and product development to name just a few. The sixth form eagerly listened to the experiences and advice given by our alumnae and asked some challenging and insightful questions.

Some of the key takeaways from this event included encouraging the girls to not be too disheartened with rejection from job applications. They were encouraged to keep applying to vacancies even when the application process can become demoralising. One alumnae assured the students that an opportunity will always be around the corner.

Another key piece of advice was to create a LinkedIn account to use as a resource during their career search. Many questions were asked about their individual university experiences and the alumnae keenly shared top tips such as recommending the Year in Industry scheme an opportunity which could improve their CVs and accelerate a career in a chosen field.

In one of the rooms, there was discussion of the benefits of coding as a transferrable skill. One of our alumnae enthusiastically discussed how this skill allows her to move between industries and work from anywhere in the world. She stated that she enjoys how a software-based workplace is dynamic and exciting.

Each session reinforced how the students should demonstrate real world experience in their job applications. This could be a Year in Industry

whilst at university or more generalised work experience. They were also asked to consider answering certain questions to assist them in job applications such as 'why are you applying to that company?' 'What are you interested in?' 'What do you want to learn about?'

One of the sessions focused on the importance of self-care and how prioritising your mental and physical health will help you throughout further education and as you start your career.

We would like to extend a huge thank you to the alumnae for giving their valuable time to this event. The sixth form greatly enjoyed these sessions, which have given them a lot of information and advice to consider over the Christmas break.

Keep your eyes on our social channels for the career events happening in the New Year.

Charitable Giving

Our first charity event this year was, as usual, the Macmillan Cake Sale. It was great to get back to selling cakes for real after last year, and we raised £783.

Next up was the Harvest collection for the Foodbank, which gathered in 453 kg of food and other essentials. Also in October, we held a home clothes day which raised over £800 for Swings and Smiles.

Most recently, the school community got into the Christmas spirit and donated again to the Foodbank. Then the very end of term saw our Christmas Jumper Day in aid of Daisy's Dream. We raised an amazing £355!

Many thanks to all members of the St Gabriel's community who have supported these events for local charities.

- Ms Rayner, Subject Leader Physics

House Banners

This project, organised by Mr Spurrett, was a collaborative project between Art & Textiles to bring back a sense of house pride here at St Gabriel's.

Year 9 pupils designed fabric squares in the house colours, to be stitched together to create beautiful patchwork banners. Elsy, in Year 9, took on the challenge of stitching the banners together and finishing them to a high standard. Each banner took four to five hours to complete, and the result is fantastic!

Projects such as these are an amazing way to reinvigorate house spirit in the school and are certainly appreciated by pupils and staff alike.

When talking to Elsy about her passions, she discussed how she wants to take her love for textiles further. She definitely wants to study the subject at GCSE. She also has a keen interest in surfing and wants to combine these two interests and focus on wetsuit design.

Thank you to everyone who took part in this project and thank you to Elsy for her excellent work. The banners are shown below and will be on display next term.



A Level Taster Day

Another great event this term was our A Level Taster Day for our Year 11 class.

The day involved individual subject taster lessons to give the pupils a taste of what they can expect during an A level lesson. This was also an opportunity to try subjects that are only offered as an A level.

Mrs Trevis organised enrichment activities to give the girls an overview of how sixth form life will be different to senior school.

The activities on offer included the incredibly popular student cooking. Our current sixth formers have the option of student cooking every Wednesday. Additionally, our Year 11 were taken to Nuffield Health Gym, one of the activities which is offered to the sixth form.

A level students are also given the option to complete an EPQ (Extended Project Qualification). This is an independent research project, allowing students to write an essay on a topic of their choice. An EPQ is a way of adding to a CV before further education or entering the workforce. Some previous titles of EPQ projects include: "How has technology affected umpiring in cricket?" and "The effects and impacts of the Glorious Revolution on the Crown and Catholics today".

The subject options available at Sixth Form are shown in the timetable below. Thank you to Mrs Trevis and all the staff for organising such a great day for our Year 11.

25 November 2021 **St Gabriel's**
SIXTH FORM


A Level Taster Day Timetable

Period 1 - 4: Subject Taster Lessons

Period 1	Art	History
Period 2	Biology	Mandarin
Period 3	Business	Mathematics
Period 4	Chemistry	Music
	Classics	PE
	Dance	Photography
	Design Technology	Physics
	Drama	Politics
	English	Psychology
	French	Spanish
	Geography	Textiles
	Graphics	

Period 5 - 10: Enrichment Activities

Period 5	Period 6	Period 7 & 8	Period 9	Period 10
Group A	EPQ Introduction	Thinking Outside the A Level Box	Nuffield Health	Student Cooking
Group B	Student Cooking	Student Cooking		Student Cooking
				EPQ Introduction
				Thinking Outside the A Level Box



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Scholars Breakfasts

Our subject scholars were invited to Breakfast with Mr Smith this term. They were treated to hot chocolate and pastries. The scholars participated in lively debate and discussion relating to current events.

Our sports scholars were treated to an inspirational talk given by Lizzie Yarnold OBE, the most successful British Winter Olympian.

Mr Ives wrote this piece about this great opportunity:

How often does one get to have a double Olympic Champion, the most successful British Winter Olympian ever and the most successful Skeleton athlete ever, come to one's school? Not very often! So when the opportunity came to listen to Lizzy Yarnold, OBE, the athlete who travels at speeds of nearing 80mph, on what she herself said is sometimes called a 'tea-tray', it was an occasion not to be missed.

In an inspirational talk to the Sports' Scholars, 'She-ra' (as she is nick-named) spoke particularly of having the grit to overcome the emotion of failure, how if things go wrong, to 're-think the plan' and concentrate not on errors, but on 'What I can do right.' Through all the preparation and training, two things stood out, which were that the answers and lessons to be learned are within, and that one must continue to think of how one can get better. However, Ms. Yarnold was also keen to stress that whilst ultimate success comes from personal drive, it is okay to ask for help, and essential to have a good support team.

From her early beginnings of loving sport from a young age, to balancing studying and training whilst at university, the importance of communicating with others as a means of maximising performance was a constant.

Finally, a message for all scholars, for all pupils, for teachers and parents, in fact, for anyone who wants to achieve to the best of their potential.

When Lizzy first tried the Skeleton, she failed at her first go and very nearly quit then and there. Success rarely happens immediately and is always countered with a healthy dose of failure. In order to achieve, 'Don't panic', be prepared for 'a huge amount of hard work', enjoy what you do and success will come.



'Gold' in Green Tree Schools

We are absolutely thrilled that St Gabriel's has been awarded gold in the Green Tree School Award, organised by The Woodland Trust.

Miss Adams led the Year 1 class through numerous activities exploring our wildlife and environment here at St Gabriel's which contributed to achieving this award. We now have a wooden plaque to display this achievement.

if you want to learn about the award in more detail and all the activities that Year 1 were involved in, please click [here](#).



Admissions Update

This term has been incredibly busy for the admissions department. We are quickly approaching September 2022 where we welcome the first cohort of boys into the senior school.

Following on from the very successful Year 5 Taster Day at the end of the summer, external pupils were invited to join our current Year 6 to enjoy senior school taster lessons and team building exercises.

2 October was a whole school Open Day and staff gave over 80 tours of Sandleford, the Junior & the Senior School. A hugely important admissions event for our co-educational 2022 and despite the torrential rain and wind, the event was a great success.

On Saturday 6 November we invited over 70 children to participate in our 11+ & 13+ entrance examinations.

Following on from the success of these admissions events this term, we are looking forward to welcoming our prospective families to one of our Principal's Breakfasts early next year. This is a chance to take part in Q+A session with Mr Smith and Senior School Staff.

Later in the term, our second whole school Open Morning is on Saturday 5 March.

For any admissions queries, please contact our Director of Marketing & Admissions, Jane Benney, at admissions@stgabriels.co.uk

St Gabriel's | 2022
Co-Educational Junior &
Senior School

St Gabriel's
NEWBURY

National Poetry Day

We marked National Poetry Day this term. The pupils were invited to write a poem based on the theme of choice. You can find the anthology of poems written by pupils and staff [here](#).

The quality of the submissions was very high, we have some incredible literary talent at the school.

For those who are interested in some poetry recommendations, we have a post on Instagram detailing some anthologies for all ages.



Laura Farris MP visits St Gabriel's

Our Year 12 politics students invited Laura Farris MP to St Gabriel's to be questioned about the workings of our political system and local issues in Newbury/West Berkshire.

Laura explained details of political processes such as how to become an MP and how laws are written and passed in Parliament. Key issues in Newbury and West Berkshire were raised such as recycling, homelessness and disability access. Laura commended our pupils on the quality of questions asked.

We would like to thank Laura Farris MP for coming to our school and sharing her political experience with our pupils and staff.



Black History Month & Anti Bullying Week

Our Head of Diversity and Inclusion, Aspen (Year 13), gave an assembly on Black History Month this October.

The assembly discussed how Black History Month in the UK started. Aspen discussed role models making history now, such as the late Chadwick Boseman who starred as Black Panther and the footballer Marcus Rashford. The assembly covered how Marcus has become an influential activist due to his work advocating ending child poverty.

Anti-Bullying Week this year was called 'One Kind Word'. One small act of kindness can brighten the lives of our friends and family. Anti-Bullying week kickstarted with 'Odd Socks Day' and displays were up in the square hall.

Check out our social media channels to see how we marked the day and read the review of the anti-bullying week book recommendation, 'Wonder' by RJ Palacio.



Clubs & Activities

Year 9 Enterprise Challenge Winners'

Thank you to all of Year 9 for taking part in this year's Enterprise Challenge. We are pleased to announce the winners are Ellie and Megan from Miss Hunter's Tutor Group. A big well done to the girls who have made over £250+ selling biscuits outside of School. Mrs Lavasani will find both girls to give them their Amazon Voucher prize. Thank you to everybody in Year 9 for coming up with wonderful Business ideas and I hope you have all had fun over the past month. Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas!

- Mrs Lavasani, Head of Business

The Debating Society

The Debating Society has had another entertaining and successful term. We would particularly like to congratulate Charlotte and Oluchi who are through to the second round of the English Speaking Union Mace Competition.

In November, Oluchi and Charlotte debated against St. Helen's and St. Katharine's. The motion was 'This House expects artists to make their work political'. One of the six schools was unable to participate in the competition so our team volunteered to take part in a second debate against Abingdon School where they debated the motion: 'This House would require fathers to take paternity leave'. The girls had a great deal of fun and were delighted to go through to the next round.

The Debating Society meets on Thursdays from 4pm to 5.30pm. This term we have been delighted to welcome new members from Year 12: Emily J, Jessica, Danny and Emily W. We begin preparation for each debate in the Scholl Library and then move down to the Square Hall to hold the debate and enjoy the delights of the open fire which has added considerably to the joys of debating.

Tara and Gabby also organised a staff versus sixth form debate with Tara and Gabby taking the role of government and Mr. Lewis and Mr. Beverley taking the role of the opposition, debating the place of religion in schools.

It was an extremely entertaining debate which was well attended by members of the Debating Society and other sixth formers and staff. We are very much looking forward to debating in the Oxford Union Schools' Debating Competition in January. We have entered 4 teams and wish them good luck as well as wishing Charlotte and Oluchi the best of luck in the second round of the ESU Mace Competition.

- Mrs Archer, English



Photography Club

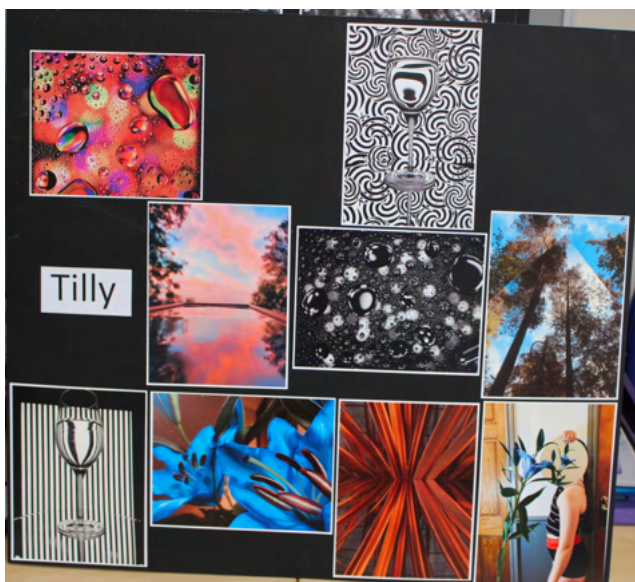
So far this year, our Year 9 photography club attendees have had a taste of life behind the lens. Workshops have included activities such as photograms, pin-hole camera making, light drawing and cloning.

We organised an exhibition called 'Mirrors and Windows' with the purpose of challenging the girls into thinking what those two words mean to them. They can be very literal - a mirror in a bathroom or a window here at school. They can also be more open to interpretation - reflecting on life or looking through into the future. As a photographer, there is always the challenge to capture things we, as an audience, tend not to notice, or see things we have never seen before. But ultimately, they bring a sense of connection to the viewer.

Pupils and staff were able to cast a vote for their favourite collection on display

Three girls received the most votes; Tilly, Elsie and Sienna. Their collections are a fantastic interpretation of the brief and the whole exhibition was an amazing display of artistic talent and imagination.

Check out their work below!



Sports This Term

In PE this term we have focused on developing teamwork and leadership skills. We have covered a range of sports such as netball, football, cross country, badminton, yoga, fitness, dance, gymnastics, and handball.

Year 9 have also completed a sports leadership course and led young people in sport. It was a warm welcome back with many fixtures this term. Each week we had 75+ students representing the school in a variety of sports including netball, football and hockey. We had inter-house sports competitions too which showcased pupils' competitiveness and team spirit.

The sixth form enjoy our connection with Nuffield Health Gym as a way to keep physically and mentally fit during their A level studies.

Attendance at clubs this term is over 90% in Years 7 - 10 with numbers increasing at the incredibly popular early morning running groups.

We are very proud of student achievements in sports and always like to share results and news. Please do follow us on Twitter @StGabrielsSport for all our sporting updates! We tweet about all things PE including our PE Christmas advent calendar.

It was great entertainment watching the fun run on Thursday 9 December. Our running clubs have been very popular and I was very proud to see all your hard work pay off around the course.

Have a very Merry Christmas and I look forward to all the sports, clubs and fixtures next term.

- Mrs Brazendale, Head of PE



Performing Arts & Music

Year 7 'Play in a Day'

Year 7 this term produced a 'Play in a day'. It gave year 7 a chance to share a variety of key skills, based upon the theme 'Christmas'. The students spent a day combining ideas from all 3 art forms of drama, dance and music to produce a short performance.

The storyline this year explored candidates fulfilling tasks set by Santa and his elves in an apprentice style performance in a hope to take the place of Santa in his planned retirement, however as the tasks progressed Santa realises he can never retire because of his love for his job.

The students worked incredibly well and showed an excellent sense of how a production pieces together. Well done Year 7!

- Mrs Chaplin, Head of Drama



Make use of our Digital Theatre subscription over the Christmas period and watch live streamed performances! [Click here to watch](#)

Username: Student.stgabriels
Password Gabriels21

Music Department

It's been a wonderfully busy term for students in the music department. I'm delighted that Junior Orchestra has restarted and am really pleased with their debut performances as part of our recorded Junior Carol Service.

EUPHONIX, our lower school choir have showcased their collective talents as part of senior assembly and in addition to the senior school carol service, every member of senior school music ensembles has played a starring role in our first ever digital 'performing arts' advent calendar!

Members of the sixth form have also kept the music going in their weekly enrichment sessions by rehearsing, recording and producing their own music videos inspired by the band 'Walk Off the Earth'!

January 2022 sees the exciting relaunch of our 'Junior School Instrumental Music Programme' where every child will have the opportunity to learn a new musical instrument as part of their curriculum lessons. We will also be welcoming back our 'Performance Platforms' where students can take part in informal lunchtime concerts in the beautiful acoustic of the Oval Room.

Finally, we've updated our trial music lesson form to make it even easier for students to explore the world of music making on offer at St Gabriel's. Simply scan the QR code on any device if your child is interested in exploring a new instrument, taking singing lessons in classical, pop or music theatre styles and we'll get them paired with one of our wonderful teachers for a free 15 minute trial lesson.

I very much look forward to hearing what sounds music brings to St Gabriel's in 2023 and wish you all a very happy, healthy Christmas and New Year.

- Ms Woodhouse, Director of Music

Click [here](#) to watch our senior school Christmas concert.



Trips

Pitt River Reviews

On the 11th of October, Year 8 were excited to go on our first field trip this term. We were going to Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford to complement and develop our understanding of our current Art topic, Cultural Artefacts.

The museums were incredible. There was a huge variety of different and unique items available for viewing, such as life size boats, weapons, old decoration and traditional clothing! My favourite artefact was a beautiful headdress which was decorated with bright blue and scarlet red feathers.

We took our sketchbooks so we could draw a variety of items. It was so inspiring to see so many artefacts in real life and I really enjoyed capturing them in detail in my sketchbook. It was a brilliant opportunity for us and I thoroughly enjoyed our visit.

- Penny (Year 8), Art Scholar

I really enjoyed the visit to Pitt Rivers Museum Oxford, as it was a great opportunity to expand our knowledge on cultural artefacts and become more confident with using different media for our sketchbooks. I especially loved sketching and observing the jewellery section, as it was extremely intricate and detailed to draw, along with the wide range of different textiles and types of clothing.

- Georgina (Year 8), Art Scholar

Farnham Sculpture Park Review

On October 13th We went to Farnham Sculpture Park, it was in the woods, the trip lasted the entire school day, for the whole of Year 9. It was so nice to get out of the class room and go on a trip - because of Covid we haven't been on one for months

In art we are going to make our own abstract animal sculptures, it was important for us to get inspiration from other sources and see the art in person.

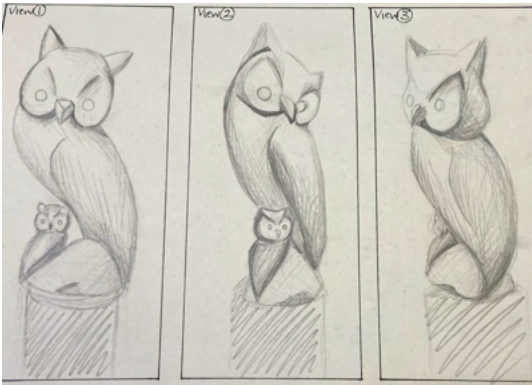
The Farnham trip linked to our project and learning in art as it taught us how to draw in different perspectives and it introduced us to different art styles.

We went on a tour around the park and stopped occasionally to draw the sculptures at different angles. We also took lots of photographs. Though there were many sculptures to choose from, we were advised to draw ones of abstract animals, as this is what our topic was all about.

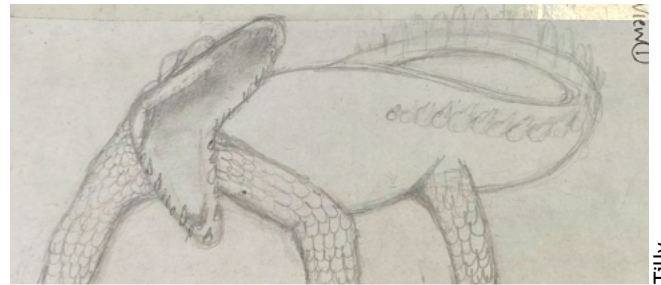
There was a large variety of sculptures varying from abstract animals to humans possessing exaggerated features. It was my first experience with an art related trip and I enjoyed all the park had to offer. I really enjoyed going to Farnham Sculpture Park because I thought it was a lovely way to explore our topic in art in a different way and see all the amazing sculptures there. I was also happy to see different materials being used so no two sculptures looked identical. I enjoyed it because we did lots of drawing.

- Tabitha, Tilly, Erin & Anna (Year 9)





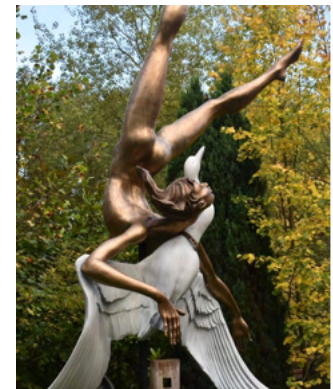
Erin



Tilly



Anna



Anna



Tabitha

It has been a busy term for trips at St Gabriel's. Our sixth form geographers visited Start Bay, Devon. The aim was to develop practical skills for their independent investigations which constitutes 20% of their final grade in this A Level. Albeit an important trip, lots of fun was had and they benefitted from some glorious weather!

The geographers examined coastal systems and sediments, and analysed human impacts on these natural processes such as coastal defences. The water cycle was carefully examined, studying the water and carbon in the soil through practical investigation.

“The coastal walk was beautiful and the trip was very informative for my future classwork” - Molly, Year 13

Our new Year 7 class were treated to a residential trip to Calshot Activities Centre in Southampton. It served as a wonderful opportunity to strengthen new friendships that have been made this half of term. The whole trip was about team building and developing confidence whilst being away from home. Many pupils mentioned how much fun was had, and the consensus was that the best activity was the 'giant swing'.

The sixth formers were able to visit Parliament this term as part of their PSHE Programme. They benefitted from a tour of the Commons and the House of Lords. The trip included a workshop explaining representation and voting systems. Aspen, Year 13, commented how interesting it was to see how the House of Lords operates and felt that the workshop examining voting systems was a relevant topic to understand given the discussion of Proportional Representation at the Labour Party Conference.

Further trips included a Year 11 Trip to Bristol and a Y12 Geography trip to Greenham.

Thank you to all the teachers organising and running these trips. They are such a crucial part of life at St Gabriel's.





It has been another fantastic term here at St Gabriel's. We would like to wish our community a very Merry Christmas & Happy New Year. Please contact ejennings@stgabriels.co.uk for pupil news and any updates you would like to share.

Emily Jennings, Marketing Assistant



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Term Begins
Wednesday 5
January