

Newsletter

Spring 2019

St Gabriel's

NEWBURY



Message from the Principal

I am delighted to welcome you to the Spring Term edition of our newsletter. A perfect opportunity to see what has been going on at the school in the months that have turned from cold winter into sunny spring!

It seems fitting that the front cover of this edition is dominated by the success of our Year 6 sportswomen. We are immensely proud of all that they have achieved over the term. They were the winners of the Portsmouth Grammar School Year 6 Hockey Tournament, Won the regional IAPS netball final with an assured and powerful display, and then their performance in the nationals, placed them as the 16th best Year 6 netball team in the IAPS. A fantastic achievement and very much a *#proudprincipalmoment!*

With the generous support of the PTA, the Spring Term ended with a series of Easter egg hunts. The nursery hunted high and mainly low to find their eggs, the Junior School scoured the grounds for theirs and the Sixth Form arranged a charity hunt for Year 7-9. The term also saw the Junior School make their annual pilgrimage to the O2 to sing in a mass choir (with Tony Hadley, no less!).

The Dance Showcase is always a highlight in the school calendar and it was a truly wonderful production, encompassing a wide range of styles and ages, choreographed by staff and pupils alike. We also enjoyed the Drama Scholars' performance of 'terra' and look forward to their transfer to the Theatre Royal in Bath in the Summer Term.

As the school prepares for the Summer Term and the inevitable examinations, the key to any learning is balance. To achieve this we embrace what happens outside of the classroom, so that what goes on inside can quietly and effectively progress. We wish all our pupils well in their studies, particularly those who are sitting GCSE and A level examinations.

Mr Ricki Smith, Principal

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Jen Reehal - School Nurse

Editor's Note

The Spring Term involved capturing many pictures and news stories from around the school. It has also been a great pleasure working on the 20 Years of Sixth Form book with Cosima, Head Girl, and with Mrs Pasternakiewicz, PE Department, on the weekly Sports Newsletter.

If you have any features, stories or pictures you would like to see in your newsletter, please do get in touch.

Mrs Evans, Editor, bevans@stgabriels.co.uk

NURSERY



Pancake Day

Pancake Day saw the children and staff in Sandleford having lots of fun decorating pancakes with a wide variety of delicious toppings, from fresh fruit to sticky jam and sprinkles. Everyone enjoyed their pancakes as dessert with afternoon tea.

"I absolutely loved the stay and play with Abigail. Thank you."
Current Parent



Easter Egg Hunt

Bathed in warm sunshine on a beautiful spring morning, the Sandleford Nursery children, families and the Nursery staff enjoyed exploring the school grounds whilst hunting for very special Easter eggs. Each child had made their own pretty Easter egg shape and added a photo of themselves, making it a little bit easier to find in the woodland.

Once the eggs had been successfully reunited with their owners, everyone returned to claim their chocolate Easter egg prize and enjoy refreshments in the morning sunshine.

World Book Day

To celebrate World Book Day everyone dressed as one of their favourite book characters; there were Gruffalos, superheroes, princesses and even a tiger who popped in for tea! The children brought in much loved stories from home to share with their friends and Mrs Borzoni, the Librarian, must have been exhausted from reading so many stories across the whole school. The Toddler Room staff really embraced the day by dressing as the colourful characters from Alice in Wonderland.

Our youngest children are turning into little book-worms and starting to develop a lifelong love of books and reading.

Sandleford Staff



JUNIOR SCHOOL

Pancake Day

On Shrove Tuesday the children made pancakes and cooked them outside in the woods! Everybody had a turn at tossing their own pancake, and only one out of 17 was dropped. Children were told how to keep safe around the camping stove and learnt the rhyme: "Mix the pancake, stir the pancake, put it in the pan. Toss the pancake, flip the pancake, catch it if you can!"



A Journey into Outer Space

Reception pupils have been exploring outer space during the Spring Term. They have learnt all about the solar system, life as an astronaut and space travel. Our role-play corner has been taken over by a visiting space craft, where the astronauts have even met some aliens!

The children researched a planet of their choice and presented their findings to the class in a variety of forms, from 3D models, colourful pictures, diagrams and fact files, which were recorded so we can watch the video clips of them on the interactive whiteboard.

Mrs Lawrence,
Reception Teacher



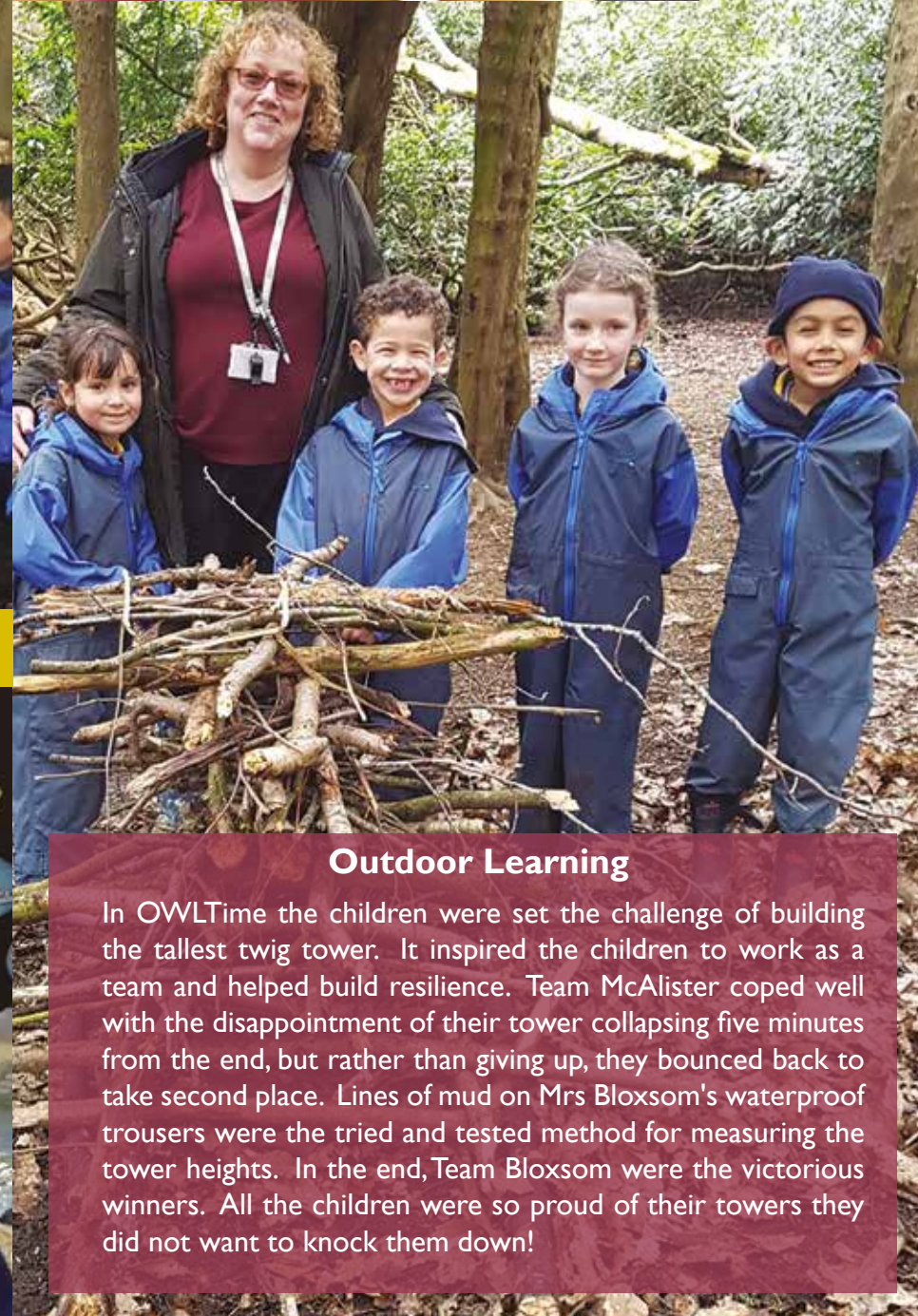
JUNIOR SCHOOL



Book Buddies

Year 6 worked on their reading skills, adding expression to create excitement. Armed with their favourite stories from when they were five years old, they visited Reception, to read to the younger pupils.

The younger children loved listening to the Year 6 pupils, who read to them with great enthusiasm, and were even more excited when the older pupils turned teacher for a while and listened and supported them reading their books back to them.



Outdoor Learning

In OWLTime the children were set the challenge of building the tallest twig tower. It inspired the children to work as a team and helped build resilience. Team McAlister coped well with the disappointment of their tower collapsing five minutes from the end, but rather than giving up, they bounced back to take second place. Lines of mud on Mrs Bloxson's waterproof trousers were the tried and tested method for measuring the tower heights. In the end, Team Bloxson were the victorious winners. All the children were so proud of their towers they did not want to knock them down!

Snip, Snip, Snip

The Reception children worked on their fine motor skills during the Spring Term. They learnt how to hold a pair of scissors with their thumb at the top, cut next to the line and move the paper as they cut. They used their new found skills to make snowflakes, snowmen, penguins and astronauts as well as creating beautiful Valentine's Day and Mother's Day cards.

Mrs Lawrence, Reception Teacher



JUNIOR SCHOOL



Chinese New Year Celebrations

Language Celebration

Year 1 very much enjoyed Chinese New Year in February. They learnt about how the festival is celebrated all around the world with traditions, holidays, fireworks and parties. They were treated to a delicious Chinese school lunch and Mrs Ducker made each child their own special red envelope to hang on our Chinese blossom tree. The children wished all visitors to our classroom 'A happy and prosperous New Year' in Mandarin.

Mrs Webb, Year 1S Teacher

Language Olympics

In March St Gabriel's hosted a Languages Olympics event in collaboration with Park House School. The Modern Foreign Languages team, with some of our Junior pupils, welcomed Year 4 pupils from John Rankin, Stockcross and Welford & Wickham Schools. The children enjoyed various activities and challenges in German, Mandarin, Spanish and French. They all rose to the challenge and received certificates in recognition of their achievement.

Mandarin Outreach

As part of our Mandarin outreach programme, we also hosted pupils from Cheam and Ashford Hill Junior School for Chinese New Year celebrations. The children enjoyed creating Chinese calligraphy and performed traditional Chinese Tai Chi.

Ms Ferretti, Head of Modern Foreign Languages

Tick Tock



an eye on the class clocks, both analogue and digital. They have played fun clock games and 'What's the time Mr Wolf?' in the playground. We are encouraging the children to wear a watch at home to practise telling the time.

Mrs Lawrence, Reception Teacher



Art Club Year 3 - 6

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JUNIOR SCHOOL

"My coat of arms has the flag of Bangladesh because my family live there."
Maquil

"I have rainbows on my coat of arms as my family always try to find the end of a rainbow."
Molly

"I have the River Thames on my coat of arms as I used to live in London."
Luca



"I liked Donnington Castle because we got to see the portcullis, which was used to stop the bad guys from coming in."
Isabelle

Donnington Castle

Year 1 children visited Newbury as part of their study of the local area in their geography lessons. They pointed out some of the local landmarks around the town, including the library, The Corn Exchange and St Nicolas Church! They also visited Donnington Castle. After a race up the hill, the children were keen to explore the ruins and spot the different features of the castle, identifying the portcullis, arrow slits and castle towers.

Whilst learning about the history of Newbury, Year 1 created a time-line spanning nearly 600 years from 1066-1642. They enjoyed hearing about the battles in Newbury and bad King John, who was rather fond of our town! One character that intrigued them was 'Jack of Newbury' who went from being a poor homeless boy to a wealthy cloth merchant.

The children also learnt that the Newbury coat of arms depicts Donnington Castle, the woollen industry, the River Kennet and the two battles of Newbury. They were very keen to design their own family coat of arms and exhibited them in the Square Hall.

Mrs Webb, Year 1S Teacher



St Nicolas Church Visit

In March, Year 2 visited St Nicolas Church in Newbury. This experience gave pupils the opportunity to explore the church building first-hand and to view the many artefacts they had looked at online. The children had a chance to speak with Joy Mawdesley, Curate of St Nicolas and our School Chaplain.

Joy took the pupils on a guided tour of the church, whilst Miss Smith told them about the history of St Nicolas Church and its artefacts, from the golden eagle to the font and ornate pulpit. The pupils were amazed by the age of the building and to learn of its many uses during the Civil War. The children also enjoyed looking at the stained glass windows and hearing about the bible stories that inspired the artwork. Year 2 then sat in the pews whilst Joy talked about the vestments and showed them the outfits she wears for different events in the church calendar. Miss Smith even volunteered to dress-up so that the pupils could see what the vestments looked like.

Miss Smith, Deputy Head of Junior School



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JUNIOR SCHOOL SPORT

It has been a very successful Spring Term for our Junior School sports teams, with enthusiastic participation in an array of sporting fixtures and competitions. The term began with Year 4 competing in the wind and rain in a thrilling tag rugby match. We saw our Year 5 and 6 Hockey team perform in wonderful sunshine at the Berkshire County Hockey Tournament. With superb goalkeeping from Neve and Gabby, they managed to reach the plate finals.

Although we lost to St Andrew's, the team really made progress throughout the day and are looking forward to future tournaments.



JUNIOR SCHOOL SPORT

Tennis

Tennis is really starting to thrive in the Junior School, with Year 3-6 honing their skills in PE lessons.

Congratulations to our children in Year 3 and 4 who played their first match against Cheam School recently and were victorious.

Our Tennis coaching is run by Manydown Tennis Club, who have years of experience coaching young children, achieving results whilst having fun.

The Summer Term, will see the focus on Tennis continue. The after school Tennis Club is growing and the Junior School will host a tennis tournament for children and parents.

Miss Pearmine, Year 6 Teacher



Football

Football matches against local primary school teams were very successful in the Spring Term, with Year 5 and 6 achieving draws against Francis Bailey, Kennet Valley and John Rankin and a win against St Finian's, placing them second in their group.

The Year 3 and 4 indoor five-a-side team also showed great teamwork and finished in third place at Trinity School in March. Well done, superb play.



Enrichment Activities

I would like to thank all the pupils, PE staff and supporters for their dedication and commitment during the Spring Term! In the Summer Term we are running a variety of enrichment activities including externally coached swimming lessons, rounders and a focus on tennis. If you have any sporting needs do please get in touch email: apasty@stgabriels.co.uk

Mrs Pasternakiewicz, PE Department

JUNIOR SCHOOL DANCE

Dance Showcase

I loved dancing in the show because....

"I enjoyed being sassy in front of the audience."

Kitty Year 4

"I loved skipping in a giant circle."

Abigail Year 4

"It made me more confident in myself."

Oscar Year 5

"It was FUN!"

Sienna Year 5

Mrs Hastings, Head of Dance

West Berkshire Gymnastics Competition

We had three teams perform brilliantly on the floor, vault and springboard at the West Berkshire Gymnastics Competition, gaining silver and gold medals. Our Senior School girls came along to judge each station and to coach the teams during the morning. One of our teams progressed to the county final, competing on the floor, box and trampet, and were proud to achieve fourth place.

IAPS Netball National Finals

The Year 6 Netball squad impressed as they progressed smoothly through the IAPS regional rounds to the national finals at Epsom College.

At the final they fought well and managed five wins out of eight games and progressed to the plate final, where they narrowly lost 6-7. Well done girls, a phenomenally successful achievement to be in the top 16 teams in the whole country!





JUNIOR SCHOOL MUSIC

Young Voices at the O2

Pupils sang and danced their way through a packed two-hour programme at the Young Voices concert in February. It was an experience our pupils will always remember, performing as Tony Hadley's backing singers at the O2 was pure GOLD!

During the Spring Term the Reception class finished their singing project 'Jack and the Beanstalk'. They learnt seven songs, complete with actions, and really enjoyed singing along to the story. Meanwhile Year 1 and 2 pupils composed pieces about recent trips.

Year 3 performed a fantastic programme of recorder pieces to parents and are now looking forward to their Fife and Chalumeau concert in the Summer Term. The newly formed rock band, Rock 'Til You Drop, performed three pieces to parents and the Junior School, 7 Nation Army, We Will Rock You and Smoke on the Water.

Year 5 have been learning the piano and improving their sight-reading skills. Whilst Year 6 have started work on the repertoire for their end of year production of 'Charlie and the Chocolate Factory'. We look forward to an action packed musical Summer Term.

Miss Gunn, Music Teacher

Science Week

Great fun was had by all year groups during the Junior School Science Week in March.

Pupils watched a science-based theatre show all about sound. This interactive show had the pupils using their knowledge of sound to foil a plot to blow up the Queen of England.

The pupils also took part in a workshop, which included a short talk on how the police use forensic science. The pupils then had to solve a crime. They had to look for and analyse lots of evidence in order to work out the culprit. This included footprints, fingerprints and DNA. It was very tricky as among the line-up was a set of identical twins. They had the same DNA but different fingerprints.

Mr Havercroft, Year 5 Teacher

Maths Challenge



Congratulations to St Gabriel's (Year 5) and Elstree School (Year 4) pupils who won the DC Beagle Maths Challenge in February.

"I was greatly impressed by the speed of their mental mathematics."

Mr Ricki Smith, Principal



JUNIOR SCHOOL



Ufton Court Visit

Year 4 visited Ufton Court as part of their study of the Tudors. The children spun yarn, ground flour and made willow fences. They also enjoyed playing Tudor games and learnt about Tudor courts, their crimes and punishments.

"It was a fun experience to be in court and the punishments felt real."

Elsie



"Several of us were placed in the stocks and one of us was burnt to death!"

Anastasia



"We wove a really strong willow fence."

Stijn



World Book Day

Pupils and staff in the Junior School embraced World Book Day by dressing up as characters inspired by books they like to read.

Paul Farrell Visit

World Book Day celebrations saw us welcome local author Paul Farrell, who came in to talk to pupils from Years 5 to 8 about his latest book, 'Dragon Slayers'. Paul shared his inspiration and work as a writer and spent a long time answering questions from an enthusiastic audience. Paul also brought in some stunning illustrations of the characters in his book. He encouraged our pupils to follow their dreams, work hard and to believe they can succeed.



Victorian School Experience

"We visited Reading Museum and experienced what it was like to have lessons in a Victorian school. We put on clothes and practised handwriting. The pen had a metal nib, which we dipped in ink, it was quite messy, the writing was fancy and cursive which looked really nice. It was very interesting and we really enjoyed the day."

**Kara and Zara
Year 5**

CHARITY UPDATE

The Spring Term saw two new fundraising events by Senior School pupils. The first was Hunted - a game in which staff and students had to eliminate each other, for example, by sticking a Post-It note onto the target's school bag. This was organised by Cosima and Charlotte, our Head and Deputy Head Girl, and won by Mrs Thayer.



The Sixth Form also organised a charity Easter egg hunt for Year 7-9. They raised £50.00 for the Cyclone Idai Emergency Fund. This made excellent use of the gardens as participants spent morning break hunting for hidden lolly sticks, which they exchanged for Easter chocolate. The special golden stick was traded in for a

chocolate bunny. With a surprise visit from an Easter Squirrel, it was really enjoyable break-time and a successful way to conclude the charity events for the Spring Term.

Ms Rayner, Science Department



SENIOR SCHOOL



terra / earth

In March, the drama scholars performed their outstanding production of terra / earth as part of the NT Connections Festival. The performance was about a group of classmates torn apart by the opportunity to perform their own dance. As they disagree and bicker, two distinct physical groups emerge and separate into opposing teams.

When a strange outsider appears, out of step with everyone else, the divide is disrupted. This was a contemporary narrative dance piece about individuality, community and heritage. The girls will be taking their performance to The Theatre Royal, Bath, in late April.

Mrs Chaplin, Head of Drama

Art & Textiles



During the Spring Term Year 9 created this excellent artwork inspired by Franz Marc.

Year 11 Photography, Textiles and Art students visited the Victoria & Albert Museum. They used this experience to gather inspiration for their GCSE coursework projects; it certainly provided plenty of opportunities to explore structures, cultural development and evolution as well as design and fashion through history. The girls also explored an informative and interactive exhibition on the development of computer game concepts over the past three decades. Everyone really enjoyed the experience and came away inspired with new ideas.

Mr Spurrett, Head of Art

In Textiles, Year 10 pupils have been progressing, with their individually-themed projects. Isobel, Ellen and Molly drew their designs and learnt how to transfer an original design using a non-permanent marker. They will then add the coloured silk paints once their image has been completed. Olivia worked on her transfer printed architectural image and has spent time carefully free-machining detail onto the surface using a range of different coloured threads. All of the class have worked hard throughout the Spring Term and have spent many lunchtimes in Textiles working on their projects.

Mrs Hunter, Art Department

Red Nose Day

On 15 March, pupils in the Junior School accessorised their uniform in red and donned red noses to raise money for Comic Relief.

This event in the Junior School calendar helps support vulnerable people and communities in the UK and internationally.

Once again, our community came together to show their altruistic side, raising an impressive £209.62 for this worthy cause.

Next term, the Junior School Council have pledged their support to raising funds for the RNLI.

Miss Smith, Deputy Head of Junior School

Doughnut Drive Thru



Awareness of mental health issues inspired Year 10 to ensure that 'Blue Monday' in January was far from a blue day at St Gabriel's. The form raised over £160 for the charity Young Minds UK with their 'Doughnut Drive Thru', selling a wide range of doughnuts from the Religion, Philosophy and Ethics classroom windows.

Mrs Evans, Head of Business Studies

SENIOR SCHOOL SPORT

It has been a successful period for our Senior School sports teams. We held a Sport Scholar's breakfast with Mr James Mandry, a sports coach, he run a session where our pupils had to identify innovative ways of using their leadership skills.

We have seen great participation in Hockey, Cross Country and Netball matches throughout the term.

Hockey

Evie and Kirsten, Year 10, both Marlborough Ladies hockey players, have been training regularly with the Wiltshire County Academy. Here they were taking part in shuttles designed to develop their fitness. This was a high intensity session and tested their endurance and skill acquisition in possession of the ball.

Evie is transferring the skills learnt during the drills into her practices with our Junior School pupils.



Cheam Golf Competition

Congratulations to Mollie, from Year 7, who took part in the inaugural girls Cheam Golf Trophy in March.

Although the conditions were testing she finished a commendable fourth, with just five shots separating the top four competitors.



Netball

The Spring Term began with a strong focus on netball. Our Senior School girls ventured out in freezing cold temperatures and achieved commendable results.

We visited the Severn Stars Gloucester stadium to watch the opening netball game between Stars and Celtic. The hosts beat Celtic 57-50 in a thrilling match.

This experience inspired our own Year 7 team, who shortly afterwards played with determined effort at the St Hugh's Tournament. Five very close games were played and they refused to allow their opponents to turn over their centre pass; this showed a great team effort and the girls and staff were very proud of their stunning achievement.

U14 Netball Team



SENIOR SCHOOL SPORT

Berkshire Inter-Schools Cross Country Championships

It was another wet and windy afternoon for our hardy cross country runners as they competed against the best in the county to gain one of the coveted top places to represent the county.

All the girls ran extremely well, Izzy M, Year 12, came 6th, Gabby, Year 10, 24th and Elizabeth, Year 10, gained 45th place.



Spotlight on Sporting Talents

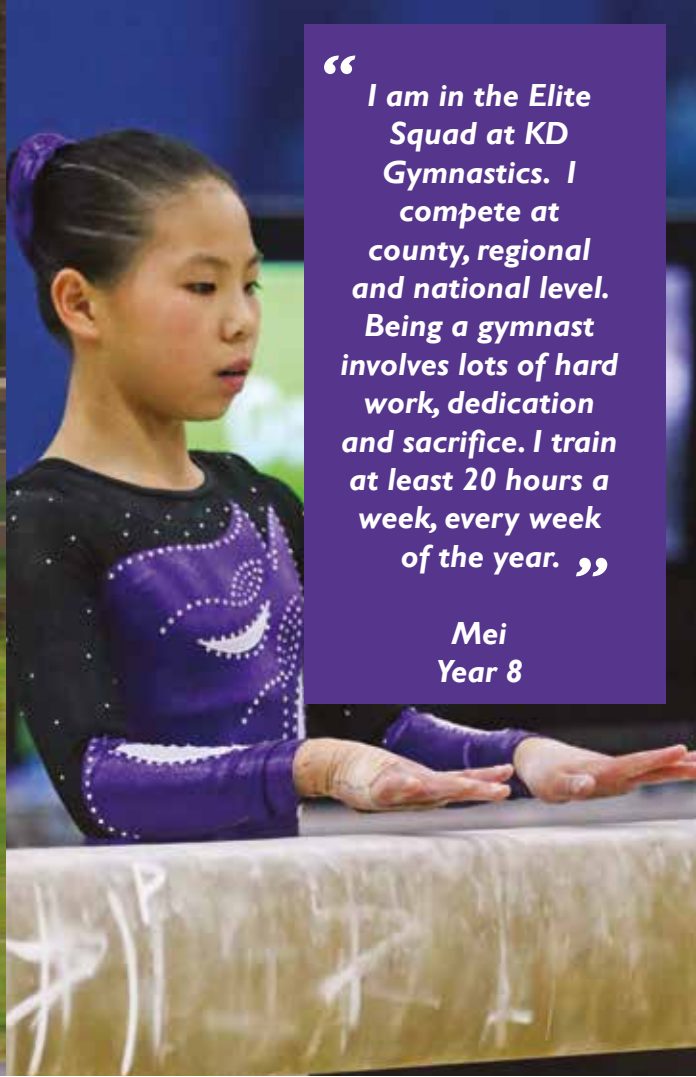
“ I compete in cyclocross, often in adverse weather and across rough terrain. My aim is to become a professional cyclist and I dream of gaining the yellow jersey. ”

Ellen
Year 8



“ I am in the Elite Squad at KD Gymnastics. I compete at county, regional and national level. Being a gymnast involves lots of hard work, dedication and sacrifice. I train at least 20 hours a week, every week of the year. ”

Mei
Year 8



Congratulations

Congratulations to Izzy, Year 9, who has been selected to join the Berkshire U15 Girls County Rugby Squad and to Sophia, Year 10, who gained qualifying times in the 100m free, 200/100 and 50m backstroke at the county championships.

We look forward to a wealth of sporting activities in the Summer Term.

Mrs Pasternakiewicz, PE Department

SENIOR SCHOOL DANCE

Dance Showcase

Energy levels were high and feet were sparkling as 133 children took to the stage in this year's fantastic Dance Showcase. Dancers in Years 3-12 wowed their audience at The Arlington Arts Centre with a magical programme of dance from ballet, hip-hop and acro to lyrical and contemporary.



Seven months of intensive rehearsals certainly paid off; performances were confident and polished and the dancers clearly took real pride and pleasure in entertaining their audience.

Several budding young choreographers had an opportunity to create their own dances for the show and their pieces were inspirational. The backstage and technical teams, made up of girls in Years 9 and 10, ran an incredibly professional and slick show.

The Dance Showcase was a huge success and we celebrate the hard work of all those involved.

Mrs Hastings, Head of Dance



Spring Equinox

Congratulations to Milly and Olivia in Year 10, who performed in Spring Equinox at Newbury Corn Exchange on 19 March. Run by Ace Dance Studios, this event is a showcase of the very best in dance that Newbury's young performers have to offer.

Choreographed by Milly and Olivia, they demonstrated their artistic skill and musicality by performing their piece 'Unsteady'. Mrs Hastings and the audience were delighted by the energy, passion and total focus of both girls in what was a truly professional performance.



SENIOR SCHOOL MUSIC



Spring Concert

It has been another lively term in the Music Department with a range of performing opportunities for pupils at all stages of their musical journey. We were only a few weeks into the term when we had a fantastic Spring Concert, with some delightful performances from the Orchestra, St Gabriel's Singers, the Jazz Band, Big Band, the newly formed String Trio and several soloists. Two informal lunchtime concerts followed, which showcased a wide range of performers from those about to take public examinations to beginners, who had only had a handful of lessons. A very robust Year 4 trombone group also played, giving a memorable performance - the Oval Room ceiling will never be the same again. It is a joy to see Junior School pupils engaging so enthusiastically in their instrumental learning, whether it be violins in Year 1, woodwind in Year 3 or brass in Year 4.

After half term, it was heads down for ABRSM and Trinity exams, and also to get GCSE and A level coursework completed and recorded. We had a great afternoon working with a professional string quartet on pupils' compositions, all of which were composed and recorded to an outstanding standard. Also, St Gabriel's Singers performed beautifully in Communion, the Jazz Band performed at a Senior School assembly, along with Georgina, Year 12, playing a great Corelli violin piece. On the very last morning of term, the Jazz Band again turned out to play the Monsters, Inc. theme to a very excited Junior School in their final assembly.

One delight of the term was a piano masterclass organised by the Newbury Spring Festival, where three of our more advanced pianists worked with the amazing Lithuanian virtuoso, Robertas Lozinskis. It was so rewarding for the pupils and also for us in the audience to see how responsive they were to his advice and how well they presented themselves.

Next term, as well as examinations, we look forward to lunchtime concerts, assembly performances, the Strawberries & Cream Concert, and planning our next whole school musical. What will it be this time, I wonder...

Imogen's Cello Masterclass

Cellist and music scholar Imogen, Year 7, attended a masterclass with world-renowned 'cellist Johannes Moser and Jesper Svedberg, principal 'cellist from the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra. Imogen played Bach's Sonata - Bourrée 3 and really impressed Johannes, who played alongside her. At the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra concert later that evening, he spoke about Imogen's talent and went on to play more of Bach's Sonata.

Examination Results

Name	Instrument	Grade	Result
Oluchi Akosa	Violin	1	Merit
Rachel Berkley	Singing	5	Pass
Anneliese Brown	Theory	5	Pass
Imogen Brown	Cello	7	Distinction
Sophie Butterworth	Singing	3	Merit
Rosalie Coffey	Guitar	2	Merit
Rachel Cohen	Singing	4	Merit
Olivia Dennington	Piano	5	Pass
Sophie Donnelly	Cello	1	Merit
Milly Ducker	Singing	6	Merit
Elizabeth Edwards	Guitar	8	Merit
Heidi Francis	Flute	1	Merit
Emily Hamilton	Singing	3	Distinction
Poppy Havercroft	Piano	3	Distinction
Clare McGonnell	Flute	4	Distinction
Caitlin Molloy	Cello	1	Merit
Penny Page	Piano	2	Merit
Robyn Reed	Singing	4	Merit
Talia Saltmarsh	Theory	5	Merit
Ellen Spence	Singing	4	Pass
Lucy Stirk	Drum	3	Merit
Elsy Williams	Flute	2	Distinction
Elsy Williams	Singing	2	Merit
Lily Williams	Flute	3	Pass
Zara Williams	Piano	2	Merit

Dr Tebbs, Director of Music

SENIOR SCHOOL

Creative Writing

Year 10 pupils took inspiration from our beautiful Capability Brown gardens to write about Spring. Here are some excerpts from their prose.

Mrs Archer
English Department

“The whistling never stops, piercing the calm of the bubble-gum blue sky like an aeroplane’s white streak left behind after taking flight. The white streak disappears forever, but the piercing screech never stops.”
Sophia

“The bench sits alone, day after day, watching the passers-by. He is desolate, mind as numb as his body. It must be lonely, being the bench; he is forever paralysed. He can only sit there, looking and listening, waiting for death to cripple his already immobile body.”
Jorja

“The cracks split apart the dry earth, creating bordered islands in the mud. Everything was dry. Dry leaves, dry mud, dry grass. No life dared to exist here.”
Tara

“A tree once full of life, in the grounds of an ancient monastery, now stands possessed by old age, along with acres of others, waiting for their days to end. The thick stump holds secrets of its age and memories.”
Imogen

SENIOR SCHOOL

Maths News

In February, girls in Years 9-11 entered this year’s Intermediate Maths Challenge alongside over 300,000 pupils from across the UK, only the top 6% were awarded Gold, 13% Silver and 21% Bronze. The Mathematics Department would like to congratulate the following girls on their excellent achievement.

Bronze Certificates

Tara, Year 10
Molly M, Year 10
Joanna, Year 10
Chloe, Year 10
Talia, Year 10
Milly, Year 10
Diani, Year 11

Saba, Year 11
Katherine, Year 11
Sophia R, Year 11
Jemima S, Year 11
Annabelle L, Year 11
Jemima G, Year 11

Silver Certificates

Lauren, Year 11
Bella, Year 11
Poppy H, Year 11
Anna, Year 11
Mia, Year 11
Emily, Year 10 (Best in Year 10)

Gold Certificates

Olivia Ky, Year 11
Anabelle G, Year 11 (Best in Year 11 and School, which qualifies her for the next round - Pink Kangaroo)

In March, a team of Year 8 and 9 mathematicians took part in the Regional Final of the Team Maths Challenge at Highdown School in Reading. Congratulations to Oluchi and Emily, Year 9, and Zara W and Lucy, Year 8, who were awarded certificates of participation. Good luck to Year 7 and 8 who have their Maths Challenge in late April.

“The Maths Inspiration talk was brilliant. It enabled us to explore different areas of mathematics and their application in the real world. The speakers were humorous and really passionate about their study. We also enjoyed learning mathematics that is beyond what is required for our examinations, yet not inaccessible for our age. Overall, it was a wonderful experience and we look forward to more in the future!”

Elizabeth E and Olivia K - Year 11

Mrs Sim, Head of Mathematics

Maths Feast

Well done to Heidi, Emily, Talia and Tara in Year 10 who came third in the AMSP (Advanced Mathematics Support Programme), Maths Feast. They competed in a number of different mathematical challenges including rounds on comprehension, problem-solving and a mini relay.



Mrs Chicken, Mathematics Department

Computing Challenge

In March, several girls participated in the TCS Oxford Computing Challenge. This event aims to encourage students to develop their programming skills. Pupils who gained a top 10% score in the Bebras Challenge (the national computational thinking challenge), which took place in class in November were invited to participate, which was a great achievement.

During the challenge the girls developed their computing skills further and produced programmed solutions to computational thinking problems. A total of 12 girls took part in this second challenge and they received certificates from the Department of Computer Science at Oxford University and Hertford College, Oxford!

Furthermore, five girls achieved merit awards: Poppy and Zara W in Year 8 and Amber, Alice and Holly in Year 9. Special congratulations must also go to Talia, Year 10 and Rowan, Year 13, who both gained a distinction in their respective age categories.

Mrs Haywood-Smith
Computer Science Department

Rotary Young Chef

Congratulations to Emily, Year 9, who impressed judges to be crowned joint winner of the district final of the Rotary Young Chef Competition. Emily then progressed to the regional heat, where she cooked her delicious menu again.



The judges were very impressed with her knife skills and bravery for attempting (and succeeding) to bake a soufflé. Emily was presented with a certificate and book in recognition of her amazing cookery.

Mrs Zogaj
Design Technology Department



Chinese New Year Celebrations



Year 7 pupils celebrated Chinese New Year with a cultural enrichment lesson, where they created calligraphy, completed festival fact sheets and had fun performing a lucky Chinese dragon dance.

Other celebratory activities, included making dumplings in Food Technology and pupils were served an authentic Chinese lunch in the Dining Room.

Robotics Challenge

After many weeks of planning, preparing and programming the LEGO® Mindstorms® EV3 sets, our Year 7 and 8 Robotics Team competed in the regional final of the Tomorrow's Engineers EEP Robotics Challenge, where they were winners of the Robot Design category. They also received a special mention for their humanitarian aid research. Well done, girls.



Mrs Knott, Head of Design & Technology

SENIOR SCHOOL



World Book Day



Year 7 and 8 celebrated World Book Day in style by dressing up as their favourite fictional characters. Everyone put a huge amount of thought and effort into their fabulous costumes. Mrs Borzoni had a job to award prizes but a special mention must go to Millie, Sareena, Eve, Gabby and Maddie, Year 7, for their ensemble dress up as characters from 'Alice in Wonderland', and to Lara, Year 8, who came as The Cat in the Hat, accompanied by Jess as Thing One and Mei as Thing Two.

"We heard from members of staff about powerful books that had a big impact on them. These included 'Anne of Green Gables' for the strong female character who sees the beauty in the world, 'Animal Farm' for its timeless message about power and corruption, and a less familiar book called 'The Other Side of the Mountain' for its pure escapism. The girls went away inspired to read for pleasure and maybe even to write their own powerful stories."

**Mrs Golding
English Department**

GCSE Geography Field Trip

Year 11 Geography GCSE pupils visited Bristol to complete their second fieldwork visit. They spent the morning in and around Cabot Circus investigating whether or not the regeneration of Broadmead has had a positive impact on the locality. A number of primary methods were carried out to collect their data, including environmental quality surveys, pedestrian counts, sustainability indexes and taking photographs.

In the afternoon they visited Bristol Zoo, which caused much excitement among the girls and staff! This included a rainforest workshop where the pupils found out about the characteristics of the rainforest biome, animal and plant adaptations, uses of the rainforest and ways to protect them. The girls also got to see some real rainforest animals and those brave enough could hold a hissing cockroach, stroke a snake and touch the slightly prickly tenrec. A great day was had by all.

Mrs Harvey, Head of Geography



SENIOR SCHOOL

HYDReau - Student Business Competition



Year 10 Business students have been taking part in the inaugural Student Business Competition organised by local business people in West Berkshire. In November, the team brainstormed possible business ideas and, after several setbacks including two product changes, they were delighted to receive their first batch of stainless steel reusable water bottles and HYDReau was born. These sold quickly, enabling their profits to be reinvested in buying more stock in a wider range of colours. This challenge has allowed the team to put classroom learning into practice. They will compete in the final with other local teams in May.

"I loved the opportunity to take part in team HYDReau for the Student Business Competition. I learnt a lot about marketing and how to manage a team. I am looking forward to the final stages and competing against other teams."

Phoebe, Year 10

Mrs Evans, Head of Business

Student Investor Challenge

From October to the end of January teams of students from Year 10-13 along with three staff teams, took part in the Student Investor Challenge. Run by The London Institute of Banking & Finance this competition challenges teams of students to invest virtual money on the London Stock Exchange, trading stocks and shares to make a profit. This national online challenge involves buying and selling shares, on a system mirroring trade on the FTSE, with the aim of maximising the portfolio value by the end of January.

This year was our most successful, with two staff teams and one pupil team finishing in the top 500 out of nearly 7000 teams. The Year 13 pupil team of Emily, Mia and Alice B successfully invested £200,000 of virtual money and progressed to the semi-finals where, although they beat teams from many top schools across the country, they missed out on a place in the final.

Mrs Evans, Head of Business

Greek Tragedy for Classics

As part of their studies of material culture, Year 10 and 13 classicists took a trip to London to study some ancient artefacts.

Year 13 began the day at the reconstructed Temple of Mithras, a Roman shrine which was discovered in London after the Second World War. The museum is designed to recreate the mystical atmosphere which accompanied cult worship of Mithras, giving visitors an idea of what it was like for Romans to stand in the sacred space and commune with the deity.

Year 10 visited the British Museum to get a close-up view of some set sources, such as the world-famous Bassae Frieze. They were able to observe and photograph the frieze in a private viewing session before visiting the other classical antiquity exhibitions around the museum.

After lunch the groups met up to watch this year's UCL Greek play, which fortunately happened to be Year 13's set play Oedipus Rex. The play initiated lively discussion and introduced Year 10 to the twists and turns of Greek tragedy.

Miss Halstead, Classics Department



SIXTH FORM

Cosima, Head Girl, created a book to celebrate 20 years of Sixth Form, which includes many quotes and pictures from students across the years. In late April, Cosima will host a book launch to celebrate the 20th anniversary of Sixth Form.



“What is so poignant is that so many alumnae expressed not just how much the Sixth Form aided them in their careers, but also the memories that they made whilst at school, demonstrating the rounded experience that the Sixth Form provides.”

Cosima

Head Girls Board



To celebrate 20 years of Sixth Form, a new Head Girls board was created and now takes pride of place above the fire place in Square Hall.

Supreme Court Visit

Year 13 students visited the Supreme Court in January as part of their PSHE programme. The visit included a tour of the court, a debating preparation session with professional lawyers, and a question and answer session. It was a wonderful day that the girls thoroughly enjoyed.



Science Laboratories

A recent Year 13 Biology lesson saw our students make immobilised lactase in our refurbished Garland Science Laboratories. The exercise was to understand the process of reducing the lactose in milk so it is suitable for those who are lactose intolerant.



A Career in Medicine

Special thanks to parent, Sarah McGonnell, who came in to talk to our students in January about careers in medicine.



ENRICHMENT



Young Enterprise

Fizz 'n' Mix is a bath bomb company created by our Year 12 Young Enterprise team. Over the course of their first year of Sixth Form, the team have met weekly, initially to generate ideas and plan, but thereafter to sell and look at ways to grow their business.

The team have focused on sustainability and minimising their carbon footprint through developing their pick and mix sweet style approach to selling a range of scented bath bombs. Their initial research indicated that parents would prefer a 'no mess, no glitter'



Fizz 'n' Mix

type product and the team have sourced these accordingly. They have sold their 'no plastic packaging' bath bombs at several events and fairs.

They participated in the Young Enterprise Trade Fair at the Kennet Shopping Centre in Newbury, where their stall proved popular with the general public. The next stage of their entrepreneurial journey will be the West Berkshire Area Showcase Final in May, where they will present their business to a panel of local business experts.

Mrs Evans, Head of Business

Sixth Form Debating Society

During the Spring Term, the Sixth Form students enjoyed debating the following motions:

- This House would censor the internet.*
- This House believes that animals should not be kept in captivity.*
- This House believes that science is a threat to humanity.*
- This House would explore the universe.*
- This House would introduce child curfews to cope with knife crime.*
- This House would ban the sale of violent video games.*
- This House would encourage universities to charge more for science courses.*
- This House believes the Easter Bunny is a myth.*



MEET THE STAFF

**Mrs Jen Reehal, School Nurse, interviewed
by Mrs Evans, Head of Business**



Tell us about your life before St Gabriel's?

I went to a girls school in Reigate Surrey that was very similar to St Gabriel's. I left there at 18 with three A levels and went on to Oxford Brookes University to study for a degree in nursing. Since qualifying, I have worked in lots of different areas of nursing including intensive care, A&E, health screening as well as two other schools.

What made you decide to go into nursing?

As a teenager I worked in a nursing home. I loved getting to know the residents and helping them with their day to day routines. It gave me great pleasure and I really felt I was making a difference.

What does your typical day involve?

At St Gabriel's, I am based in the Medical Room beside the Theatre. My day can involve minor bumps and grazes, emotional support, first aid training, various sport's injuries or children who are feeling unwell. I am also responsible for ensuring first aid kits are checked and stocked.

What were you like as a schoolgirl and what was your favourite subject?

As a schoolgirl, at times I think I may have been a teacher's worst nightmare; I was a bit of a class

clown. I did not love academic life and found some subjects really hard. As a teenager I had a fantastic opportunity to complete a challenge with the school; I was part of a six-girl team who successfully completed the Three Peaks Challenge, climbing the highest mountains of England, Wales and Scotland. A helicopter took us from one mountain to the next so there was little time for rest. We completed the challenge, ascending and descending all three mountains, in 13 hours and two minutes. I truly believe that this experience, the teamwork, the belonging, and the confidence I gained, really shaped me into the individual I am today.

What do you like doing outside of school?

I love spending time with my husband and two teenage sons. We all support Liverpool Football Club and cheer them on together. We also have a Border Terrier, named Danny, who I enjoy walking for miles. I get enormous pleasure from renovating furniture and decorating. I also enjoy travelling, and appreciate the wonderful world we live in and like to experience different cultures.

What's the best piece of advice you have been given?

Keep learning new things!



Alumnae Reunion - Saturday 15 June 2019

