

Newsletter

Autumn Term 2014

St Gabriel's

Your Route to Success



FROM THE PRINCIPAL

I was delighted to read that PWC's *Next Generation Diversity: Developing Tomorrow's Female Leaders* Report highlights that 69% of female millennials would like to work outside of their home country during their career and 63% of female millennials feel international experience is critical to furthering their career.

As we say goodbye to our very first exchange students from St Hilda's School, Gold Coast, Australia, it is particularly encouraging to hear that female demand for international mobility has never been higher. Our three students leave for Australia next summer and this will mark the start of what we hope will be a long and fruitful relationship with St Hilda's to the benefit of many pupils in the future, with staff exchanges to follow! I have every faith that Mary-Emma, Olivia and Amelia will prove exceptional ambassadors for St Gabriel's.

It has never been more important for senior girls' schools to encourage a student's open mindedness towards travel, different languages and cultures. As we learn of our girls' success in the HSBC Mandarin Speaking Competition, we will continue to celebrate our students' ability to enjoy a mutual respect with those around them. One of our alumnae, who left us to study French and Spanish at Cambridge, told us recently that she frequently uses three languages a day in her work! Our girls gain the confidence to work effectively within a wide and diverse network; they are able to nurture positive relationships and consequently seize the opportunities afforded to them by personal mentors or sponsors in the future.

We closed our Autumn Term with joyous celebrations of the Christmas story by Sandleford, the Junior and Senior Schools and Sixth Form. I wonder how many children fully appreciate, at this stage, the longer-term effect of taking part in such occasions.



Whether they were acting, reading, playing or singing, these are skills our students will inevitably call upon when presenting to any audience in the future.

Our end of term celebrations saw our pupils work together as such a strong team - a community as one. Needless to say, our students leave us well prepared to play their part in the international arena.

Wishing you all a very happy Christmas and a prosperous 2015.

FROM THE LIBRARY

It has been a busy term in the library. In the newly painted 'reading castle' (pictured as work in progress during the summer), the Year 6 librarians have been getting to grips with using the new computerised issue system. The girls have also organised a book cover design competition and were a fantastic help at the Winter Book Fair – counting change, helping the younger girls with their choices and generally being welcoming and friendly. We sold £312.00 of books and, once again, earned some new books for our libraries. A big thank you to Sasha, Hana, Grace and Sophie for all their hard work!

It has been a pleasure to welcome some of our youngest pupils to story time in the Junior Library and share picture books, poems and short stories. Our Junior creative writers, Mini Muses, have also had a busy time. This term, we have written about the stickiest thing I ever ate, fireworks, perfect shoes and ended with pantomime (oh yes we did!).

Year 5 enjoyed being book detectives, in preparation for their project on the Tudors. We had a lot of fun finding out things such as publishers' logos, when the books were written and whether the books included glossaries, maps or an index. The girls then had a go at creating their own little bibliography, putting all the details in the correct order.

As the days have grown a little colder, the Senior Library has been the place to be, with girls curled up in front of the lovely wood burner and browsing books or magazines. We had some wonderful mornings with Year 9, who were doing background research on Gothic literature. With lights out and the fire glowing, reading

aloud Edgar Allan Poe's *The Raven* was every bit as spooky and chilling as it should be.

Looking forward to next term, the focus will be on the Senior Library as plans are getting under way for another *Murder in the Library* quiz. I have a list of willing murderers and victims and the girls will be able to find out which department will have a teacher getting the chop – and who will be doing the chopping...

Mrs Borzoni, Librarian



On 1 September, Sandleford welcomed through their doors many new members of staff and lots of children and their families. The nursery has bright refurbished rooms, a separate garden for our youngest children in the Baby Room, a lovely safe new playground surface and a wonderful large canopy, allowing outside learning to take place whatever the weather. We currently have over 80 children registered with us, from babies through to our Reception class children, and 14 members of staff. We are delighted to announce that Mrs Michelle Bullock has been appointed Deputy Manager of Sandleford, she joins Mrs Katie Noonan, Nursery Manager, and Mrs Clare Lawrence, Curriculum Manager, on the Sandleford Management Team.

Baby Room

The youngest children enjoy a wide variety of activities throughout the day, spending as much time as they can outside playing in their purpose built-garden, where the new artificial grass has proved a big hit. They enjoy using construction toys, exploring sand, water, bubbles and even jelly and pasta! Walks in the school grounds are taken regularly and they love visiting the school chickens.

During October, the children enjoyed making lovely chocolate crispie cakes and cake pops, a lot of sticky fun was had by both staff and children. The older children in the room went for a walk all the way around the lake and woods – quite a distance for such little legs. The children have also been busy developing their physical and creative skills by making nature collages and decorating trees. Miss Gunn, the Junior School Music teacher, has also visited to give the babies their first music session, which they thoroughly enjoyed.



In November, with the focus on the weather, the Baby Room children have been outside experiencing different weathers and temperatures in the school grounds and in the Baby Garden (sun, frost and rain). They have talked about putting on all the different clothes they need to keep warm and dry at this time of year.

More recently, the Baby Room has been busy making Christmas cards and the children loved getting sticky and sparkly. All of the babies enjoyed their Christmas dinner and they looked fabulous in their Christmas jumpers.

Toddler Room

Our Toddler Room has become a very busy place. The children love the indoor play-gym, taking every opportunity to climb the



ladder, crawl through the tunnel and whizz down the slide.

The Toddler Room children have been for walks in the grounds, looking at the changing colours of the leaves, and have enjoyed playing games on the tennis courts. Making playdough hedgehogs ready for winter hibernation was great fun and the children enjoyed learning the actions to the song *Dingle Dangle Scarecrow*.

Following one of their walks, when they sat on a tractor, the Toddler Room children became very enthusiastic about diggers, tractors and helicopters, many of which are seen around the school grounds. Taking the lead from the children, transport became the focus of the Toddler Room activities for November. The most exciting resource any child can have, the cardboard box, has been crafted into a bus for the children to enjoy for role-play. The children painted it and added wheels before clambering aboard for lots of fun. They have learned rhymes, including *Twinkle Traffic Lights* and *The Big Red Bus*, and thoroughly



enjoyed making their own transport shaped sandwiches.

Thoughts in the Toddler Room have now turned towards Christmas. The children have a large advent calendar on the wall, which they excitedly open each day as they count the days down until Christmas. They all enjoyed wearing their Christmas jumpers on 1 December and are busy learning Christmas carols ready for their carol concert.

Nursery Room

This term, the Nursery Room has explored the topic, *Ourselves*. The children have really enjoyed finding out about the human skeleton and the five senses. They have played a dice game, by rolling numbers they gained different parts of the skeleton. They have also looked at real x-rays and enjoyed working out which part of the body they were of.

Having had such a warm autumn, there has been a lot of outside learning and playing. The children have extended their mathematics activities to the outdoor environment by measuring the distance between two trees using their bodies. The children were very keen to do some planting so they have all sown a bean, which they are now busy nurturing and watching them grow.



During OWL Time, the Nursery children have enjoyed joining up with Reception, to explore the school grounds. They also share a weekly Shiny Star Assembly, where the children are awarded Star of the Week for being kind to their friends, trying hard and being polite.

In the second half of the term, Nursery have been busy finding out about animals. They have learned about different habitats, what animals eat, whether they have fur, feathers or scales and they have enjoyed looking at the different patterns they have on their **coats. The children's vocabulary has expanded as they have** learned the correct terminology for animal body parts (hooves, trunk, beak, claws, fins), and they have had great fun mimicking the different movements and sounds the various animals make – they made super squawking parrots! As part of a circle time game, the children took it in turns to be the Rainbow Fish, a character from one of their favourite stories, and acted out how happy it made the Rainbow Fish to share his special shiny scales with his friends.

There have been plenty of opportunities to be creative; the children really enjoyed getting mucky, using their handprints to make colourful crabs in their under the sea pictures.

The children were amazing in their nativity play, they sang beautifully and remembered all the actions. The role-play corner has been transformed into a stable, where the children are enjoying retelling the Christmas story in their own words.

Reception

At the beginning of term, to help get to know everyone in the class, the children and staff made personal treasure boxes containing five items that are important to them. All of the children confidently talked about the contents of their boxes and everyone enjoyed looking at the different things people had brought in. Family photographs featured in all of the boxes and,

who would have guessed, both Mrs Lawrence and Mrs Bloxsom sing in a Rock Choir!

There have been lots of opportunities to get out and explore the school grounds in OWL Time; the children have made bark rubbings, had a woodland storytime and collected lots of natural materials to make 2D shape pictures. The Reception children worked with the nursery children to complete a twig tower building challenge, developing their teamwork skills – what high towers and very stable constructions – well done!

In October, Reception continued with their topic of Harvest and Autumn. The children, along with many parents, thoroughly enjoyed joining the rest of the school to celebrate Harvest Festival, a lovely morning of giving thanks and musical treats from the older children.



The new cooking facilities have been busy all term. Reception have enjoyed making delicious bread hedgehogs, owl cakes, Divali sweets, popcorn and Christmas cakes.

Since half-term, the children have been finding out about festivals of light. They enjoyed Bonfire Night, made 3D rockets and glittery firework pictures. The children have also learned about the Hindu festival, Divali, and the Jewish festival, Hannukah. Shivani and Vaibhavi came to visit from Year 2 to talk to the children about how they celebrate Divali in their family. They wore traditional clothes and told the story of Rama and Sita. The Reception children proudly showed the girls the clay divas and hands with Mendhi patterns they had made. For Hannukah, the children learned the story behind the celebration, making glittery Stars of David and pictures of a Menorah.

Reception have made Advent crowns and have learned the meaning behind the different coloured candles that are lit each Sunday in the month before Christmas. Did you know that there are three purple candles representing hope, peace and love, a pink candle for joy and a white candle, which is lit on Christmas Day to represent light and the birth of Jesus.



'Tis the Season to be Warm & Fuzzy...



Year 1 and Year 2 captured the true spirit of Christmas in their own special version of the nativity. Our little shining stars channelled their energy and enthusiasm in to a unique and memorable performance. It certainly tapped in to those sentimental warm and fuzzy feelings we all get at this time of year and got everybody feeling in the festive mood.

Their tender tale about the most famous journey in history featured not only the traditional characters of Mary and Joseph, three very regal wise men, dazzling angels and serious shepherds, but also a pop group called The Dinky Donkeys!

Year 1 Visit Milestones Museum

Year 1 had an exciting day out at the Milestones Museum of Living History in Basingstoke. Our busy half term of learning about toys in the past culminated in the ever popular toys and discovery programme. The children handled toy artefacts with lots of care and played learning games involving timelines and sorting. Then, we explored the old streets of Milestones, played I-spy in a 1930s street and dressed up in old fashioned outfits!



Year 3 Spanish

Year 3 girls have been having great fun this term creating bespoke Spanish e-books using their iPads. At the end of every lesson, the children have used the iPad camera to take a photograph of something related to the theme of the lesson onto which they

have superimposed an audio recording of themselves speaking in Spanish. Each ebook currently contains songs performed by the whole class, an introduction to themselves, the numbers 1-10, words and pictures to illustrate how the key sounds of Spanish are said and written, and more! We plan to continue to build up this fantastic record of their learning achievements and, at the end of the year, we will convert the ebook into an iMovie for all the family to enjoy.

Year 3 Visit Butser Ancient Farm



This term, Year 3 travelled back in time to experience life as an Iron Age Celt at Butser Ancient Farm. We had an amazing time discovering how we would have lived if we had been alive 3000 years ago.

We started off in a roundhouse, where we gathered around the fire and learned about what it would have been like to live in a house made of wattle and daub. The wood smoke drifted through the rafters, giving the whole site an eerie, smoky feel.

We tried out wool making, where we used some wool from ancient breed sheep to make a bracelet. We discovered this was quite a challenge; many of us felt we would be rather cold, since we struggled to make one or two strands of wool – we could not imagine making enough to weave a whole tunic or blanket!

Next, we got some clay from the ground and tried our hand at pottery, which was really messy but good fun. We made some thumb pots and decorated them in a Celtic style.

After lunch, we became archaeologists, digging in pits to see what we could find. We very much enjoyed discovering what our ancestors had left behind and deciding if the artefacts we found were ancient or modern.

Finally, we tried wattling walls for a roundhouse. We used willow branches, which were very long and bendy. It was quite tricky to weave them through the posts, but we all tried our best and found we could achieve a great deal when we worked as a team.

Year 3 had a fantastic experience but were quite pleased to return to their lives in 2014!

Year 3 Light & Vision

Year 3 have been exploring the topic, light and vision. We have learned three new words: transparent, translucent and opaque. Once we had understood the meaning of the words, we went outside to find some things that belonged to each category. We are now using our pictures to make ebooks in Book Creator to demonstrate our knowledge and understanding.

JUNIOR SCHOOL

Year 4 Visit Winchester Cathedral



On 27 November, Year 4 visited Winchester Cathedral. When we arrived we were lucky enough to be able to walk through the Christmas market to get to the cathedral. Next, we dropped our bags off and got in to groups to do different things. My group had a tour of the cathedral. We saw the font containing holy water, a lectern for reading the bible, the high and low alters, the organ pipes (6000) and the Pilgrim Steps. The pilgrims used to climb up the Pilgrim Steps to pay their respects to St Swithun. We got to climb up the Pilgrim Steps on our hands and knees. Underneath the cathedral is the crypt, where there is a statue by the artist Antony Gormley. The crypt floods and the statue looks as though it is standing on the water. The more it rains, the more the water rises. In the summer, you can walk around the crypt because there is no water. We also learned how a diver saved the cathedral from falling to pieces. His job was to carry cement under the cathedral. He did this for six years to make the cathedral safer.

After we finished the tour we made gargoyles. We went outside to look at them and then we made our own. They all looked great! A gargoyle is a head of something to scare away evil spirits.

My favourite part of the day was being told about one of the stained glass windows. During the civil war, the cathedral was used as a billet and the soldiers shot out one of the windows. The villagers wanted to restore the window so collected all the bits of glass and put them back as best they could but it now looks like a huge jigsaw puzzle. I loved going on my school trip to Winchester Cathedral.

Matilda Ley (Year 4)

Newbury Weekly News Junior School Quiz

Two teams of Year 6 pupils took part in the annual Newbury Weekly News Junior School Quiz. Over 20 teams participated in rounds of questions testing their knowledge of history, geography,

sport and superheroes, amongst other categories. Although the scores were fairly even throughout the rounds, when the final scores were announced we were thrilled to learn that one of our teams had finished in first place. Pictured is the winning team of Sasha Marriage, Sophie Willcocks, Heidi Francis, Issie Burn and Chloe Balls with the David Stephenson Trophy.



Year 5 to At-Bristol

This term, Year 5 had a fantastic time exploring the interactive exhibits at At-Bristol, which consolidated their knowledge of light and sound.

"I loved the At-Bristol science centre because it was so hands-on. It was the best school trip I have ever been on and I would recommend it to my family and friends. My favourite part of the trip was making my own stop frame animation video and building a magnetic filing bridge. We also had fun watching a show called *Light Fantastic*. I learned about infrared, which is light that you cannot see but can feel as heat. You can only see it through a special camera called an infrared camera. I also learned about **ultraviolet light which made Mr Havercroft's tie turn purple!"**
Rose Clark (Year 5)

"I had a lot of fun at At-Bristol. I loved making fake blood and learning about all of the things our blood is made of such as plasma and platelets. There was one exhibit which filmed you jumping and then played it back in slow motion. I learned about **the forces involved when you jump and watching people's faces in slow motion was really funny. During the show on light, I learned about light sources including some I did not know about like bio-luminescence, chemo-luminescence and electro-luminescence. **We used a laser to magnify Kate's cheek cells and it was disgusting!**"**
Eve Glitz (Year 5)



National Young Mathematician Award

Milly Ducker, Heidi Francis, Grace Glitz and Evie Williams, who are in Year 6, took part in this annual competition organised by Cambridge University in partnership with Explore Learning. In the first round they had to work together to solve a problem relating to shape and space by producing a range of possible options for the arrangement of display boards in a school hall. Having scored well, they qualified for the second round two weeks later; this involved a very different challenge, using coloured dice to investigate arrangement possibilities. These were extremely challenging problems which required strategic thinking as well as excellent teamwork.



Junior School Council

In November, the Junior School Council organised a Superhero Day for Children In Need. School uniforms were replaced by an amazing assortment of characters ranging from the well-known to the brand new. This included Supercookie, Crayongirl and Supergeek, amongst others. Thanks to generous donations, over £200 was raised to help Pudsey and friends in their work. It goes without saying that playtime games had an extra element of "superfun" that day!



The Junior School Council would also like to thank everyone who responded to their appeal to bring in a gift-filled Christmas shoebox.

We are delighted to announce that we were able to send 68 shoeboxes to Operation Christmas Child. Thank you for helping to put a smile on another child's face this Christmas.

Operation Christmas Child sends a message of hope to children in need around the world through gift-filled shoeboxes. It is the **world's largest children's Christmas project**. Since 1990, the project has brought the joy of Christmas to more than 100 million boys and girls around the world.

Oh, Yes, They Did!

On 5 December, we had a wonderful festive day! We had our delicious Christmas lunch, which would not have happened without our lovely cooks, and we also had a trip to the pantomime. We saw *Aladdin* at the Corn Exchange in Newbury, where we were seated in the balcony and had a tremendous view of the stage.

All of the children from Year 1 to Year 6 enjoyed it. Elliya said, "it was one of the best shows I have ever seen!"

We all had a giggle as well. One of the funniest moments was when Aladdin's mother, Widow Twankey, asked the audience if we could find a suitable husband for her. We all pointed to Mr Havercroft and started chanting his name. Unfortunately, he didn't get picked, although he seemed very relieved at that!

The best bit about the trip, and I think everyone would agree, were the ice creams we got during the interval!

After the pantomime, Year 5 and Year 6 went to Newbury Library for a tour and then to browse the different departments.

We all had a great day at the pantomime and we would all love to go again.

Hana Ikram (Year 6)



Cupcakes & Colour



This term, Year 7 have been exploring the formal elements in art and recently learned about colour theory and how to mix a range of colours.

I then decided to do my own twist on our class work. I am not that experienced at baking but thought I would give it a go. I baked some cupcakes and then iced them as a colour wheel in different shades of blue and green! The baking went well but the icing side of things was a little disastrous! Firstly, the green colouring ran out, but luckily there was spare blue, and, secondly, I got the colouring all over the work surfaces, my clothes and somehow in my hair, too.

The next day, I brought the cupcakes in to school for us to eat. They were delicious but the people who ate the blue ones had blue teeth and lips for the rest of the day!

Clementine Woodard (Year 7)

On 2 December, Rosemary Seymour came to St Gabriel's to do a watercolour lesson with 7G. She taught them how to make watercolour effects and how to paint an autumn leaf and holly and berries. She also showed us some of her work and told us about what she liked to paint. "The paintings were amazing," said Isabelle M. "They were beautiful and very cleverly done," said Ellie T.

The visit supported this term's Art lessons as we have been looking at colour charts and watercolours.

Calshot Activity Centre

In October, Year 7 went on a trip to the Calshot Activity Centre. We were split up into four activity groups and each group took part in a number of activities: Team Swing, mountain biking, indoor snowboarding, indoor wall climbing, a team game or team course and Peg Pole.

Most people had to conquer one of their fears! Everyone had a lot

of fun and we all developed new friendships and strengthened old ones.

Mia Foster (Year 7)

On 10 October, Year 7 went to Calshot. As I was injured, I was a journalist/photographer for the two days. When we arrived we took our bags to our rooms and got ready for our first activity. I think the majority of people would agree that the swing was the best activity. Some of the other activities were: bike skills, snowboarding, rock climbing, team skills and problem solving and peg pole.

"It was really fun especially the giant swing!" said Ria. "I had never tried snowboarding before but it was such fun," said Amelia.

Hannah Lawrence (Year 7)



As Pastoral Head of Year 7 & Year 8, I look forward to Calshot as it is an opportunity for staff and students to form strong relationships, which will enable us to provide the best pastoral care in the years to follow. Both staff and students take part in the activities, under the watchful eye of the course instructors, and it is clear to see that our girls return to school with a real sense of achievement. The course provided by Calshot is tailored specifically to St Gabriel's and it really does create a sense of community amongst Year 7.

Mrs Trevis (Pastoral Head of Year 7 & Year 8)



Christmas Shoebox Appeal



Year 7 and Year 8 contributed generously to the Samaritan's Purse Annual Shoebox Appeal. Girls chose to produce a box of gifts for either a boy or a girl in a certain age range. Whilst some students filled a box individually, many chose to work together in small groups to produce their box. Within their teams, they organised themselves to source a shoebox, wrap it in festive paper and fill it with gifts including basic essentials, which we often take for granted, such as soap, toothpaste, a toothbrush, writing equipment and simple toys. A total of 20 boxes were lovingly assembled and these are now well on their way to children all over the world with a festive wish from St Gabriel's inside.

Thank you to all who contributed and helped with this worthy cause.

Hengistbury Head

On 17 September, Year 8 went on a geography trip to Hengistbury Head. The purpose of the trip was to expand our knowledge of our current topics which include coasts, erosion, waves and tides.

On our arrival at Hengistbury Head, we were greeted by our tour guide and had a talk about the history of Hengistbury Head.



Next, we took our clipboards and information booklets and trekked up to one of the highest points above the beach to sketch the landscape and label the key landmarks we could see, such as the spits, the coast and all the rivers.

After everyone had finished sketching, we walked down to the beach where we did various experiments. We took three different areas of the beach and recorded the length, width and different properties of each section. We compared the results and looked at different ways of protecting the beach from the waves, such as groins, sea walls and headlands.

After lunch, we moved down the beach to test the longshore drift by doing an experiment with oranges! We threw them into the sea and measured how far they travelled in three minutes. We repeated this three times to ensure our results were reliable.

We really enjoyed our experience at Hengistbury Head because it was great to get involved and do experiments, whilst learning at the same time! The tour guides were really nice and the activities were great fun!

Izzy Mannion & Izzi Ryder (Year 8)

The World's Biggest Coffee Morning



On 26 September, Macmillan Cancer Support held their World's Biggest Coffee Morning. To support this national fundraising day, St Gabriel's held a whole school cake sale. The support for the cause was overwhelming and we were inundated with donations from parents, students and teachers.

We sold various baked goods, including cake pops and beautifully decorated cupcakes, from 8:30am to 4:00pm! The Junior School Council helped to sell cakes at break and the Senior School, as well as staff and parents, willingly purchased what was left.

We raised a grand total of £749.37, and were able to eat some delicious treats in the process. Overall, the event was a huge success! Thank you to everyone who helped out or donated cakes.

Lily Evans (Charity Prefect)

Courtauld Gallery



On 3 December, Year 9 went to The Courtauld Gallery. This is **one of London's must-see art museums**. The collection stretches from the early Renaissance into the 20th Century and is displayed in the elegant setting of Somerset House, one of the city's most dynamic cultural venues. The Courtauld Gallery is renowned for its unrivalled collection of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist paintings, including masterpieces by Monet, Van Gogh and Gauguin and the largest collection of Cézannes in the UK.

We arrived at the gallery and went straight in to a drawing-based workshop. We were introduced to a variety of drawing and mark making techniques to investigate different ways of recording, questioning and responding to the collection and exhibition. **Then, we went around the gallery's collection and produced a number of quick drawing-based activities, such as trying to represent Van Gogh's self-portrait using only line.**

In the afternoon, we had time to further look around the gallery collection and respond to the worksheet we were given. We were fortunate enough to see on display new works by Jasper Johns, **one of the world's greatest living artists**. *Regrets* is a haunting series of 10 paintings and drawings inspired by a photograph of **Lucian Freud posing in Francis Bacon's London studio**.

We had a fantastic day and enjoyed eating our lunch underneath the Somerset House Christmas tree! We loved watching the ice-skaters, and we witnessed a news report from Channel 5 News and a marriage proposal on ice! Overall, it was a fantastic day. Thank you to the Art Department for arranging it.

Chithurst Buddhist Monastery

On 12 November, Year 9 went to Chithurst Buddhist Monastery in Sussex as part of our Buddhism studies. First, we gave food to the monks, which was a very stressful activity for some of us because

we had never done anything like this before! After this we ate our lunch and were split into two groups. One group was with a nun, called Sister Metta, and the other was with a monk. They told us about the history of the monastery and the origins of their particular Buddhist tradition. We also had the opportunity to ask lots of questions. This was followed by a tour of the grounds, where we learned that the monks and nuns have to live separately but still meditate together.

We then had a guided meditation session. While we were meditating, a Buddhist woman was pouring water from one cup into another. We were told that this was a Buddhist mourning ritual. We found the trip beneficial for our understanding of Buddhism and meditation as a way of relaxing.

Thank you to Miss Matthews, Mrs Borzoni, Mr Ives and Mr Mannion for taking us!

Anna Stirk & Isabella McLean



English Youth Ballet Success

In November, Martha Croggon auditioned for a part in the English Youth Ballet production of *Swan Lake*. There were 85 people competing for 50 places but she was one of the lucky ones who got in. Martha will be rehearsing all through the Easter holidays, ready to perform in April at the Waterside Theatre in Aylesbury. The English Youth Ballet is a professional company that puts on shows with 8-18 year olds all around the country with a different cast of approximately 100 in each theatre.



Mandarin Speaking Competition



On 5 December, six girls from Year 9 and Year 10 took part in the HSBC/British Council Mandarin Speaking Competition in London. At the competition there were students from 50 different schools across the South of England, all dressed in their Chinese costumes. It was interesting to see how many schools offered Mandarin and we particularly enjoyed listening to the A level students as they interacted with the judges.

For our group performance, we dressed in traditional red Chinese costumes and acted out a role-play about Chinese New Year. This went extremely well (we did not make any mistakes!) and the audience seemed to enjoy it!

It was a great experience and I would definitely take part in it again. Now the long wait for the results!

Savina Sangha (Year 10)

The Mandarin Speaking Competition was an amazing experience. I have never done anything like this before and it certainly was not what I expected. I never thought that I would be able to stand up and talk in front of so many people, let alone in another language!

Georgia Goddard (Year 10)

BREAKING NEWS: St Gabriel's has reached the final in the group performance category, which will be held on 9 February!

Experiencing Ancient Education

This term, Year 10 classicists went back in time, experiencing a day in the life of a typical ancient Greek school child at The **University of Reading's Experiencing Ancient Education Day**. After donning our (rather attractive!) tunics and period-replica leather sandals, we were treated to an immersive experience wherein we performed our studies, without desk or chair, on a rush-strewn floor and under the strict and unsympathetic gaze of our formidable Greek *grammatistes* (reading, writing and literature teachers). Our tasks included learning a passage of literature or a few verses of poetry and reciting them back to the stony faces of the tutors, copying out a passage without punctuation or even the luxury of spaces between the words onto wax tablets, and reading aloud a similarly perplexing text from authentically produced sheets of papyrus. The girls really enjoyed **the alien experience but left the stuffy 'classroom' relieved that their teachers at St Gabriel's were (at least a little) less severe** and their school experiences much more supportive than those which an ancient Greek student would have been used to! The

experience will certainly enrich and inform their learning when we study the topic of education in 5th Century BC Athens next term.

Tate Modern & the South Bank

On 17 September, Year 10 artists and photographers went to the Tate Modern. This was an opportunity to take photographs and produce drawings for our project on *Patterns, Shadow and Reflections*. The Tate Modern is one of the most exciting and most visited modern art galleries in the world. It opened in 2000 to house a collection of international modern and contemporary art. The building itself was converted from a disused power station.

There is a wide spectrum of modern artwork in the Tate Modern, ranging from the more traditional paintings to sculpture, photography, installation and video art. We looked around the collections on levels 3 and 5, where there are four displays: *Poetry and Dream* and *Material Gestures* (Level 3), *States of Flux* and *Energy and Process* (Level 5).

In the afternoon, we walked along the South Bank, where we took photos linking to our theme. Our aim was to create interesting compositions — getting up close, looking up or looking through, or from above, maybe to the water, a shadow or reflection. Patterns can be found in railings, windows, rows of things/objects. Shadows can be created by buildings, people, cars, sculptures, **fences, railings... we looked for reflections in glass, metal, water...**

We really enjoyed our day and it helped kick start our coursework projects. A big thank you to the Art Department for taking us.



John Laing Sailing Trip

On 17 October, a group of 12 Year 10 girls, Mrs Chicken and Miss Pitt headed off to the Isle of Wight for the John Laing sailing weekend.



We arrived in Southampton on Friday night and were shown around the boat and chose our bunks. We were also given some very attractive waterproofs and were fitted with life jackets and harnesses. Saturday was an early start. After we had had breakfast and were ready, we assessed the winds and decided we would set sail for Cowes. It was windy but fortunately not raining, which was perfect weather for sailing. We all helped to put up the sails and had a go at the helm, which was so much fun! At lunchtime, we stopped for soup and bread, which was prepared by a team of us girls. We arrived in Cowes in the evening, where we got off the boat for a bit of shopping! Back on the boat, supper was followed by the best washing up session we have ever had with Disney songs, cup throwing (plastic ones) and a whole lot of laughter. Back in Southampton on the Sunday, we ended the trip with some new skills and a lot of amazing memories that we will never forget. Thank you to all the crew, Miss Pitt and Mrs Chicken for making the trip very special!

Bethan Thomas (Year 10)

Berlin 2014

The Berlin trip has been called by many, the best trip that they do at St Gabriel's; and this year's was no exception.

It was an incredibly interesting and powerful trip. We got to see for ourselves the sites that we have been learning about in our



lessons; the stark and empty concentration camp at Sachsenhausen, with the unbelievable atrocities that went on there: prisoners being drowned in footbaths and standing for hours at roll call, to name but two. The emotionally personal stories at the Holocaust Museum and Holocaust Memorial. The daring escape attempts at Checkpoint Charlie during the Cold War: digging tunnels underneath the Wall, driving through under the bonnet of a car and even flying over in the biggest parachute the world had seen till that point.

Mr Lewis really crammed full the three days that we spent in Berlin and by the end we were exhausted, but not so shattered that we could not visit the Cecilienhof Palace at Potsdam, where Churchill, Truman and Stalin signed the peace treaty at the end of WWII, marking the start of the Cold War.

Thank you to Mr Lewis, Mr Mannion and Mrs Hammons.

Philippa Lazarus (Year 10)

Textiles Club



This term we began by making our versions of the halter neck top published in the Great British Sewing Bee book. The girls who attend this club are a mixture of GCSE and A level students along with several girls in Year 10, who have always shown an interest in textiles, but were unable to include it in their GCSE options.

The second project was to design and produce a Christmas apron. **A fantastic variety of Christmas fabrics got the girls' creative juices flowing** – a couple of the girls received requests from their families to make more aprons as Christmas presents.

Next term, we will be making pyjama bottoms and using any spare fabric to customise a t-shirt to match.

St Hilda's Australian Exchange



Bright and early on 16 November, three excited yet nervous girls from St Hilda's School on the Gold Coast of Australia arrived at Heathrow Airport. Mary-Emma, Amelia and Olivia were there to greet their new friends! The girls only had a few hours to adjust to the temperature differences before being thrown into life at St Gabriel's. Alex, Abby and Jordan have been totally immersed in school life, following a GCSE timetable, participating in the school sports teams and making new friends with the Year 10 girls. This experience has been twinned with experiences in England. The Parker, Fielding and Berringer families have taken the girls to a whole host of different attractions, including Winter Wonderland, Ascot races, Newbury cinema (to see Nativity 3!), as well as a weekend away to Paris!

Our girls will be experiencing life on the Gold Coast in June 2015. Mary-Emma, Amelia and Olivia are looking forward to meeting their host families and experiencing life at St Hilda's. Send us a postcard girls!



Year 10 Visit Kennetholme Quarry

On 20 October, Year 10 geographers arrived at Kennetholme Quarry in Thatcham to visit the sand and gravel pit. We saw how the quarry is divided into separate areas for the different stages of production. The excavated materials are mainly used for the foundations of buildings and to create roads, with only a small percentage being sold to garden centres. It was fascinating to see the impact Grundon has had on the area, as they had been quarrying there for the past 10 years. The process of quarrying

takes a lot of planning (between 2-3 years) before any materials are allowed to be extracted. We were able to see the different sites and how each part is worked. One area looked like a field as the topsoil had been replaced so that plants or crops can be grown. This is the quarry we will be studying in our GCSE course.



The Great Christmas Bake Off

At the beginning of December, two girls from each House took part in the Christmas Bake Off Challenge. This year, the girls were asked to decorate a dozen cupcakes on the theme of 'Winter Wonderland'. After 45 minutes of colouring and modelling fondant icing and piping buttercream, Mrs Sams and Mrs Reeve-Howarth judged the cupcake creations. First place was awarded to Sophie Bundock and Izzy Peacock (Bede) for their snowmen, second place went to Isabelle and Madelaine Gillespie (Aidan) and joint third place was given to Poppy Adams and Lucia Mitchell (Alban) and Chad's competitors, Juliette Ashman and Alice McGonnell.

The cupcakes were then sold at break and a total of £37.50 was raised, with the proceeds going to the PFSG who supported the event.



Year 12 Geographers to Calshot

Our Year 12 trip to Calshot was definitely something to be remembered. We started our trip by meeting two students from Mary Hare and then began our journey down to Southampton. After spending the day, in relatively pleasant weather, walking around Southampton surveying the area, we eventually made it to Calshot and collapsed, exhausted into our dorm rooms. However, our day did not end there, after changing into pyjamas (and for some people onesies) we made it down to dinner and after that a further hour of study. The next day was similar in layout, only this time we spent the time standing in the River Lymington and **used a purple rubber whale to measure the river's velocity (among other things)**. After dinner, we again spent a few hours writing up and evaluating our findings from the river. As a farewell to Calshot, we explored the centre and found a climbing wall, a velodrome and a café, which we found very warm and **welcoming... Exhausted and feeling academically enriched we made our way back to school the next day.**



IBM Mentor Programme

On 16 November, students from Year 12 were at IBM's headquarters in Hursley for the launch of the IBM mentor programme.

We are extraordinarily fortunate to have the support of senior female executives for this initiative which is unique to St Gabriel's. The scheme provides bespoke, one to one support to each student on the programme. The precise details will be tailored to the needs and interests of individual students but will typically involve twice termly meetings and regular electronic communication between mentor and mentee. Areas covered in the past have included career development, interpersonal skills, time management and even sponsorship support.



The programme is of great benefit to any student, regardless of academic ability or potential career or university path; for the students to be able to say that they have been accepted on to an IBM mentor scheme while still in the Sixth Form will enhance any CV. During the day, the girls heard from third year university students who were at IBM on placement, from a graduate trainee as well as from more established executives, all of whom had a wide range of backgrounds and interests.

The students have now filled in application forms and are waiting to find out the identity of their mentor.

Physics in Action

On 9 November, Sixth Form physicists went to a Physics in Action talk at University College London. The speakers covered very interesting subjects, ranging from Simon Singh talking about the Big Bang Theory to Martin Archer explaining about the physics used in DJ-ing! In one of the talks the physicist showed the amazing characteristics of superconductors and how they levitate when covered in liquid nitrogen. Overall the day was exciting, interesting and I feel I learned a lot.

Lucia Mitchell (Year 12)

Maths Inspiration Show

In December, A level mathematicians and some Year 11 girls attended the Maths Inspiration Show in Winchester. The afternoon was hosted by Helen Arney, a star of TV science shows and founder of *The Festival of the Spoken Nerd*.

We were entertained by three speakers, who use Maths in their day jobs in various different ways. Paul Shepherd, an architect from Bath University, showed us how various mathematical curves and shapes are behind the design of many of the elegant and famous stadiums such as The Emirates, Olympic and O2 Arena as well as the new buildings for the 2016 Olympics in Rio. He also showed us what can happen if people do not get their trigonometry and moments right – the largest crane in the world recently collapsed in Rio with fatal consequences. Jen Rogers, a statistician, gave a fascinating talk about how she uses Maths when conducting clinical trials of new drugs, discovering whether a drug is effective or not, and, if so, by how much using significance tests. Rob Eastaway introduced us to Game Theory by showing how Maths can be used to help you win a game of rock, paper, scissors and other psychological mind games.

Everyone really enjoyed the afternoon and some Year 13 students were quite sad that it was their last ever trip to the Maths Inspiration Show.

Sixth Form Team Maths Challenge

On 10 November, a team of four Year 12 and Year 13 mathematicians took part in the Senior Team Maths Challenge at Highdown School, Reading.

This was an excellent opportunity for the girls to test their mathematical prowess through three rounds, including a cross-number and a mini relay. All those involved very much enjoyed the event and rose to the challenge of applying their mathematical skills in a range of new situations.

Senior Maths Challenge

In November, some of the A level Maths students took part in the Senior Maths Challenge. Kate Gridley, Jessica Griffiths and Ione Robinson were awarded Bronze Certificates.

Safe Drive, Stay Alive

On 10 November, students from Year 12 went to a presentation on road safety, *Safe Drive Stay Alive*, at the Hexagon, Reading. Having heard some slightly alarming reports prior to our visit, some of us were a little apprehensive, however, our fears were unfounded. Safe Drive Stay Alive was a series of talks from various emergency workers: a policewoman, a paramedic, an A&E doctor as well as others who had been in car crashes or lost loved ones in accidents. This, along with a short film detailing events running up to a crash, drove home just how important being safe on the road is for both drivers and passengers. We even heard from someone in his 20s who now has prosthetic legs as a result of an accident. We left with a thorough understanding of the devastating effects of unsafe driving. I have no doubt that we will be safer drivers and more vigilant passengers as a result.

Lucy Simpson (Year 12)

The Physics of Surfing

On 12 September, a select group of sixth form scientists undertook **Mr Scobie's annual 'Physics of Surfing' trip to Bournemouth**. Under the guidance of Neil Atkin, an Advanced Skills Physics teacher and surf instructor, we spent the morning exploring the **physics of waves applying Newton's laws and learning about centre of mass and projectile motion**. After designing and building our own projectiles from fruit and vegetables, we examined how efficient our designs were by launching them on the beach. Once catapult projectiles had been launched and lunch consumed, the afternoon was spent considering the mechanics of surfing,



including buoyancy and the gravitational forces which constantly act upon the surfer and her board. We also learned how to change our centre of mass in order to change direction when on a wave, although too much mass at the nose of the board is never a good idea! Learning how to stand up on the board and how to read the waves to ensure that they contained sufficient energy for us to **'hang-ten' was great fun and allowed us to see the wider context** of the physics course that we are studying. Even Mr Scobie donned his wetsuit and undertook the challenge!

Our thanks to Mr Scobie and Ms Rayner for giving up their time and arranging this trip.

Lucia Mitchell & Jess Griffiths (Year 12)

Year 13 Residential Biology Field Course, Calshot

The Year 13 biologists enjoyed three days on the South Coast in September. They learned fieldwork techniques and enjoyed studying the flora and fauna of heathland and freshwater habitats in the New Forest. They also spent a well-earned evening of leisure on the ski slope, learning how to snowboard.



Stevensons

Term Time Opening Hours

Tuesday: 2.00pm - 5.00pm
Thursday: 8.00am - 9.30am
1.00pm - 4.30pm

Tel: 01727 814369 (during shop hours)
email: stgabriels@stevensons.co.uk

WORLD CHALLENGE

In July 2014, 10 Sixth Formers, Ms Hall and our World Challenge Leader, Tom, set off for Peru. Our trip was split into four sections: acclimatisation, project, our main trek and rest and relaxation.

Acclimatisation

This was a vital part of our journey. To prevent us from getting altitude sickness, we had to trek to a certain height and then sleep at that level before going any higher. Our first acclimatisation trek was to Colca Canyon, which we hiked down before spending a couple of days trekking at the bottom. We stayed at a luxurious oasis for one night, which had a swimming pool as well as hammocks, campfires and humming birds. With no electricity there at all it was a break from reality, even a break from the trip itself because we spent one day lounging around (giving us a chance to do some washing, which was a relief!). It was not all fun and games, however. To get out of the canyon we had to get up at 1.30am to start trekking at 2.00am so that we would miss the heat of the sun. We were walking by the moonlight and saw the sunrise. It was tough walking because the way out was so steep but it was undeniably beautiful.

On our acclimatisation treks we saw Incan sites that we might have otherwise missed. Just outside of Cusco, the Incan capital of Peru, we saw Puka Pukara, Sacsayhuaman and Tambomachay. **Puka Pukara is an Incan fortress that was vital to Cusco's defences; Sacsayhuaman is also believed to be a fortress due to its strategic position and Tambomachay's function is uncertain** — it might have been a military outpost or even a spa for the elite.



Project

We spent three days in Ollantaytambo working at a school for girls. We had to carry lots of sand in wheelbarrows to make cement for the walls of the courtyard, we painted the outside walls of the dormitories and the inside of the classrooms and sowed seeds in a field next to the school. We also taught the girls some English by playing, ***I went to the market and I bought...*** On our final day, we did a gift exchange with the girls — we performed two songs for them and vice versa. It was hard work but a fantastic experience.

Trekking

Our main trek was the Salkantay trek, which took six days to complete. We first trekked up to the base of Salkantay, which is 4650 metres high (nearly the same height as Mont Blanc). We were walking in very craggy areas to begin with that were dry and cold, with snow on the top of the mountains. It felt fantastic to climb that high. After that, we began to trek through the cloud forest, which was tropical and humid. On our last day, we trekked



for nine hours, out of the cloud forest and to the town of Aguas Calientes, located next to Machu Picchu, which we visited the following day. This rounded off our trek spectacularly.

Rest & Relaxation

Machu Picchu did not disappoint; it was beautiful and amazing, when one considers that the Incas cut the rocks to fit perfectly into each other — there was no cement to hold it together. The **Incas worshipped the sun and so all of the windows' shadows align** when it reaches the summer solstice. There are alpacas grazing all around the structures to keep the grass short because if they did not the jungle would grow over all of the ruins.

We had periods of rest and relaxation throughout the trip. When we were in Puno we visited the Uros Islands, which are made out of woven reeds that float on the water. The inhabitants live in simple woven huts of only one room and make a living by selling their brightly coloured tapestries and handmade crafts. We also visited the main island, Taquile, where the principal industry is **knitting, which is even a part of the people's romantic lives** — a woman would decide if she would marry a suitor if his knitted hat could be filled with water and not leak!

When we were in Paracas, we visited the Ballestas Islands which are a nature reserve. On a boat trip around the islands, we saw sea lions, blue-footed boobies, cormorants, pelicans and Humboldt penguins. After that we went to see the desert which had some amazing views out to sea.

This was a truly fantastic experience and one that we all really enjoyed. There were some very hard parts to it; it was not all fun and games but Peru was definitely the trip of a lifetime.

Freya Whitford (Year 13)



Junior Sport Report

What a busy term we have had! On the whole, the weather has been very kind to us with few cancelled matches and disrupted lessons. We have played 68 matches this term with 45 wins, 4 draws and 19 losses. Our Year 6 multi-sport team were gold medallists at their recent competition, Year 5 were runners up at **the St Hugh's Netball Tournament and Year 6 were 2nd in their section at the Queen Anne's Netball Tournament.**

Girls from Year 4 – Year 6 have had the opportunity to have a trial session of trampolining, using the new equipment generously funded by the PFSG. The taster sessions will run in to next term.

Monday evening Gymnastics Club and Climbing Club have proved to be extremely popular and we are now taking applications to either continue or to start these clubs after the Christmas break. Friday evening Judo will be running again next term and Mr Small would welcome anyone who wants to start in this discipline.

Year 3 and Year 4 were introduced to tag rugby this term by Michael Chard and we have some extremely talented rugby players developing. Year 1 and Year 2 continue to benefit from the expert help of Chris Chapman from KD Gym Club, who has been developing their body tension and controlled movements. In Year 4 – Year 6, as part of our Wednesday afternoon of sport, the girls have had taster sessions in rock-it-ball, basketball, fitness circuits, lacrosse, football, tag rugby and badminton. The new sport for this term has been the Indian game of Kabaddi, played with adapted English rules. This is a fantastic tactical thinking game and has proved to be very popular.

The Junior School football team has enjoyed another successful term and have taken part in more competitions than ever before. Training on Tuesday lunchtimes has proved to be extremely popular, with over 30 children regularly turning out for drills, skills and quick games with Mr Dove. Some of our Year 6 girls have also been training with the Senior School on a Friday lunchtime. We have also had a visit from Nick Lemin, Thatcham Town Ladies & Girls FC, for whom several of our girls play at the weekends.

On the pitch, we finished as runners up in the Newbury District 7-a-side Tournament and have progressed to Round Three of the Tony Mosson Cup, having won 6-0 and 7-0 in the first two rounds. We finished the term with a friendly away match against John Rankin, where some of our Year 5 players showed great promise for the future.



I would like to take this opportunity to thank the parents who come to support our teams every Wednesday, Anne and Dwayne-

Stewart-Power for their infectious enthusiasm at Running Club every Monday and to the coaches who give their time to the girls during their sessions.

Senior Sport Report

We have had an action-packed term, full of the usual team games of netball and hockey interspersed with gymnastics, trampolining, badminton and outdoor adventurous activities. The girls have had a very busy fixtures diary with a number of teams doing incredibly well.

The Autumn Term has brought many new opportunities, with the Young Ambassador Programme, rowing, a taster for polo and the newly-formed trampolining squad. In October, we hosted a GSA cross country competition, with over 100 girls running from eight GSA schools. It was a fabulous event and we won some trophies too! My thanks must go to the volunteers who helped run the event and to Mr & Mrs Stewart-Power who put the course together. It was incredibly challenging and all the schools who attended want to return again next year.

I very much look forward to what the New Year brings. Along with another full fixtures list comes the indoor ergo kayaking and activators course, with a view to taking the indoor to the outdoor on our beautiful lake come spring. The sports scholars and Young Ambassadors will launch the Leadership Academy, which will feed into the Berkshire Leadership Academy and the Young Coaches Academy.

Hockey

This term, Year 10 have had some real successes, beating both Downe House and the U16 team at The Kennet. The team is benefitting from a large number of players who attend all the practices and the majority are playing at clubs outside school. Some of the team have enjoyed eight weeks of coaching on the local Junior Development Programme, where they have been challenged by top coaches to improve their play. A special mention to Paris Howe for stepping in as the new goalkeeper and showing real potential.

Year 9 have played a high standard of hockey in several games, learning from mistakes and improving each week. At the county tournament, playing against teams from Bradfield and The Abbey proved a tough test but led to some great performances from Isabella Mitchell and Juliette Ashman, who used their dribbling skills to create space and attack at speed. The team has benefitted from brilliant individual efforts from Georgie Vile and Victoria Williams, who have tackled opponents with vigour. The team are looking forward to the upcoming term with more fixtures and more improvement.

Young Sports Ambassadors

In November, Izzy Peacock, Victoria Williams, Isabella Mitchell and Libby Stewart-Power were selected to represent St Gabriel's at the Berkshire Young Ambassadors Conference, Reading University.

The aim of the day was to learn about the role of a Young Ambassador and to take this back in to school to form a Leadership Academy. We met over 100 other Young Ambassadors from Berkshire, splitting into groups to complete a number of tasks, which included icebreakers, perseverance and motivational activities, public speaking, and discovering which areas we wanted to work in and volunteer at.

We also listened to a talk by Graham Edmunds, double gold medallist paralympic swimmer, who inspired us throughout the day.

Libby Stewart-Power (Year 9)



Taster Polo Session

On 10 November, the Equestrian Team travelled to the Hampshire Polo Club, where we met our instructor, Sean, who split us into three ability groups and told us which polo pony we would be riding. Prince William's old pony was one of the ponies we were able to ride! At lunch, Freddie, who rode for Team GB and Argentina, gave us a briefing on the basics of polo. With a mallet and a whip in one hand and the reins in the other, we had to adapt to riding one-handed! Before long, we had grown in confidence and were cantering around, attempting to hit the ball with the mallet. We even had a little match at the end – 4 v 4 with no rules – except we were not allowed to hit each other with our mallets! The ponies were really sweet and we would like to thank Sean, Freddie and, most importantly, Mrs Smiles-Cooke for organising the session and standing in the cold watching us. We all really enjoyed our time and cannot wait for the next session!

Libby & Lottie Hutton (Year 7 & Year 10)

Equestrian Team

We are delighted that so many of the new girls to the school have joined the Equestrian Team. Earlier in the term we held the **St Gabriel's Show; this was a wonderful event attended by 150 children from across the region. The St Gabriel's team were a credit to the school and many won rosettes.**

NSEA Championships 2014

A team from St Gabriel's qualified to compete at the 2014 NSEA Schools Championships. To qualify, the team won the 95cm arena eventing class at a show hosted by Cranleigh School. A few weeks later, Abi Wilson, Laura and Tori McAlister and Lottie Hutton were up at dawn travelling to Milton Keynes for the Championships.

Each of the girls had to jump a course of show jumps followed by a series of cross country fences against the clock. All the girls and their ponies were immaculately turned out and performed fantastically under pressure. It was a great day, full of team spirit, and well worth the early start!

James Cousins Dance Workshop

James Cousins is a contemporary dancer from Newbury, who trained in London and now has his own dance company, which **tours the world. At the end of September, we went to see James' latest dance creation, *Without Starts*, at The Corn Exchange.** We were all inspired and thrilled with the quality of the dancing and the choreography and were really excited to try and replicate



some of the moves. And, we were fortunate enough to have the chance to do exactly this just two days later, when James and two other dancers from his company (Gareth and Chi) arrived at St Gabriels to lead a dance workshop. We started with a set warm up; this even involved being a mermaid on the floor! Next we did some trust exercises; we had to trust our partner to lead us around the room and stop us from crashing. However, this did not stop some people from doing so! The workshop was based on the sense of partner work and trust, which came through in the end when we performed the sequence we had learned with our partner. This included some of our own actions, which had been **inspired by James' choreography. The main term which we used was 'contact', as everything we did relied on our partner to help and support us.** Over all, I believe we have all learned a lot from this amazing opportunity and that everything we created will help us with our own choreographic ideas.

Olivia Barr (Year 10)

St Gabriel's Dance Show 2015

The dance event of the year is around the corner! Rehearsals are **already underway for the St Gabriel's Dance Showcase which will take place on 17 and 18 March at Arlington Arts.** This exciting event will celebrate all the fantastic dance talent within **St Gabriel's. Tickets will go on sale after Christmas**

House Run 2014



Junior Music

The babies from Sandleford have started to come to the Junior Music Room each week for a short music lesson, they have been exploring the percussion instruments and have been practising starting and stopping playing their instruments at the same time.

Nursery and Reception worked hard towards their interactive storytelling nativity, while Year 1 and Year 2 learned many songs with tricky lyrics for their production, *A Warm & Fuzzy Christmas*.

Year 3 have been progressing well with their recorder playing, learning the note D and using it to play *Jingle Bells* with a backing track. Meanwhile, Year 4 have been learning about *Hall of the Mountain King*, some have learned the melody; others have created a dark and spooky mood with their instrument choices. Year 5 choreographed the dance moves for *Sparkle and Shine* in their performing arts lessons. They have been learning about some of the *Ten Pieces* created by the BBC Symphony Orchestra, and have been composing short pieces based on the themes. Year 6 have also enjoyed exploring classical music, through the *Ten Pieces*, composing their own music in many different styles, based on the pieces they have heard. Their favourite so far has been the body percussion genre.

Chamber Choir have almost finished learning the repertoire for their performance at the O2. They have started to practice the dance moves and are very excited to perform to an audience of over 7000 in January!

In Theory Club, we have been exploring theory games on learnatune.co.uk, where the girls have explored how to read music.

The Juniors had a fantastic singathon day in December. We had a singing assembly to warm up, the children then used singing as part of their normal lessons, and there was also an extra lunchtime club for those who wanted to do some Christmas karaoke! We raised an amazing £728.76 for Heart Research UK.

Senior Music

Music plays a big role in life at St Gabriel's, and this term has been no exception. As well as performing in numerous lunchtime concerts and a highly successful open mic session in Gabbies, girls have been taking part in a wide variety of clubs and activities,



ranging from rock bands to classical string groups. Our concert in November showcased the wide variety of music that girls are making, with impressive offerings from (amongst many others) the Senior String Quartet, giving a first airing to their Borodin 2nd Quartet movement in preparation for the Oxford Music Competition, the Oval Orchestra and the rock bands. There were some lovely solos too, with Bach and Vivaldi from Lottie Swainston and Emily Meredith, and Rachmaninov and Larsson from Rowan Saltmarsh and Juliette Ashman. The Jazz Band reprised their exciting performance of *Moanin'*, first performed at Senior Speech Day, with some excellent improvising from its frontline.

Vocal music has been enlivened this term with the first few performances of the new Glee Club. They sang at both the November concert and the Carol Service, showing huge promise under the direction of Miss Gunn. The St Gabriel's Singers have also been busy with performances in school and out, the most moving of which was perhaps the carol performances at St Mark's, Englefield, as part of the Swings & Smiles Charity Concert.

Our term rounded off with a superb Carol Service, in which every year group performed a song. It was great to see girls offering to sing solos, suggesting additional material, and really making the music their own this year. The audience was in good voice and were persuaded to join in a four-part canon in *The Holly and the Ivy*, a wonderful musical symbol of the community spirit that so strongly underpins the St Gabriel's ethos.

Challenge & Extension

Professor Grayling. In October, we welcomed Professor Anthony Grayling, who talked to us on the topic of Ethics vs Morality. Professor Grayling, is a renowned philosopher who recently founded New College of the Humanities, London. Everyone who attended the talk found Professor Grayling to be an extremely engaging speaker and he kept us entertained with anecdotes from Greek myths and legends to the present day. He certainly gave us all a lot to think about.

Becky Brown, Public Health England. In October, Becky Brown, one of our alumnae, together with Vicki Chalker and Jo Brown, **visited St Gabriel's to talk about the work they undertake as scientists for Public Health England.** Vicki Chalker and Jo Brown gave independent overviews as to what Public Health England does. Becky Brown then described what it is like studying for a scientific PhD sponsored by a public health organisation.

Katherine Stephens gave a fascinating presentation to Year 11 and Sixth Form biologists. After completing her A levels at St Gabriel's, **Katherine studied medical microbiology at Reading University.** She is now in the final year of her PhD on the **microflora of the intestine and the role of probiotics.** Katherine's presentation covered many aspects of microorganisms and the diseases they cause. Our students will be visiting the microbiology laboratories at Reading University in the Spring Term.

University College, Oxford. On 7 November, Year 10 and Year 11 students on the Academic Challenge & Extension Programme visited University College, Oxford. They had a tour of the college and a talk explaining what studying at Oxford University is really like. They were given details as to the admissions process and some suggestions as to what they should be doing now if they are considering applying to Oxford or Cambridge in the future.

NEW YORK

I have found trying to write about my experience in New York very difficult, as I honestly do not know what words to use to do the trip justice. It was such a surreal experience as when we were there, it was so overwhelming that it felt as if you were in a movie. Looking back on it, it is incredible to think how many amazing things we did in such a short space of time. We visited galleries such as the MoMA and the Guggenheim, went on a boat tour to the Statue of Liberty, saw *Wicked on Broadway*, and that's just a few of the things we got up to!

Although I enjoyed all of these experiences, when I was thinking about my favourite to write about, two automatically popped into my mind. The first was the night we went up the Empire State Building. When we got to the top and stepped outside the feeling was incredible; it had finally stopped raining and you could see for miles. We looked out at the view and it was absolutely breath taking — it was such an amazing feeling to be standing up there looking over New York.

My second favourite experience was when we were walking back from the Guggenheim, through Central Park, and the sun was setting. It was a typical American scene with people walking their dogs and boys playing baseball. We were all singing and taking photographs. We bumped into street performers, a food cart (which sold Nutella waffles), and a rather attractive American cop, who we all had our photograph taken with! I do not know why I like this memory so much, but I think it is because it was just so spontaneous and chilled and everyone was having so much fun.

I have wanted to go to New York for such a long time and it was everything I expected and more! As you can probably tell, we **had such an amazing trip and I can't wait to go back.**



Holly Sparkes (Year 11)

I have wanted to go to New York for as long as I can remember, so when I heard there was going to be an Art and Photography trip I jumped at the opportunity to go.

On the first day we walked to the International Centre of Photography, going past Times Square. Then we went to the Hard Rock Café for dinner, which was iconic and so special. The next day we went to the Museum of Modern Art; it was so interesting and big with so much to see. Then we went to a diner on Broadway, where the waiters and waitresses sang songs while you were eating. Afterwards, we went to see *Wicked* which was one of the highlights of the trip.

The following day we went on a boat trip out to the Statue of Liberty, which was phenomenal - I never knew it was that big!



The weather was bad but that did not stop us from having a great time. Then, we walked over the Brooklyn Bridge, where we took some amazing photographs. That evening was another of my highlights — the Empire State Building. We were all so overwhelmed and I will forever remember the view and the experience I shared with my friends.

The next day we went to the Frick Collection. It was very interesting with lots of paintings to look at. Then, we went to the Guggenheim Museum. The building itself was a work of art let alone the pieces inside it! The photographers, especially, made the most of the opportunity to take plenty of photos. We made friends with a security guard who was extremely impressed that we knew how to use mechanical cameras. Then, we walked through Central Park at sunset, and saw some people playing baseball — so American! Just walking through Central Park was another highlight of the trip, as it was just beautiful. The following day was our last so we went shopping and also visited the Flatiron Building.

New York is now one of my new favourite places as there is always a buzz and the people there were all so friendly.

Harriet Adam (Year 11)

