

# Newsletter

Autumn 2015

St Gabriel's

Your Route to Success





## FROM THE PRINCIPAL

“...I’ve just been overtaken by a sprout!”

The words which left my mouth, and that were captured on video, as two members of the Sixth Form (part of a full Christmas dinner, I hasten to add!) whizzed past me during the fabulous Christmas Fancy Dress Fun Run. A remarkable and joyous end to what has been an outstanding term with a community as one.

I started the academic year encouraging our students not to hold back and we have seen so many instances throughout the term when they obviously took heed of this advice.

I have talked a great deal with our students about becoming their true self – great advice included in the opening chapter of Alex Ferguson’s book, *Leading*. Our students, as they develop as the leaders of the future, have to know who *they* are – only then will they be able to draw out the best in others.

Ferguson also believes a person’s drive is vital to success. He believes that if he had to choose between drive and talent as the most important fuel for success he would pick drive every time. A willingness to work hard, emotional strength, enormous powers of concentration and a refusal to admit defeat will prove key attributes if our young people are going to enjoy successful, fulfilled and happy adult lives.

Be it in the classroom, on the sports field, on the stage or in the concert hall, our students certainly have not held back and their



drive, whilst so apparent to us all, is beautifully packaged with their usual St Gabriel’s naturalness, warmth and integrity of course!

## AUSTRALIAN EXCHANGE



I was so excited to be chosen for the Australia exchange this year. My exchange student was called Ruby and I tried to arrange lots of interesting experiences for Ruby during her stay in England.

We went to Barcelona and visited the Sagrada Família church and the Fundació Joan Miró, and then took the cable car back to the centre. Ruby really enjoyed the art gallery and the church as they were so different from anything that she has seen in Australia. We also went to Sant Pol de Mar, where we went to the beach and explored the old town. Ruby particularly loved all the old

architecture and the cobbled streets, including the 12<sup>th</sup> Century church, and all the stories about the town.

We took Ruby to London and tried to pack in as much sightseeing as possible. We visited the London Eye, Madame Tussauds, Buckingham Palace, The South Bank, The Royal Academy and Trafalgar Square. Ruby was amazed at all the galleries and the art. She also loved the architecture of the Tudor and Victorian buildings as it is so totally different to the Gold Coast. We then went to Soho, where we had an amazing meal under the stars, later seeing the musical *Cats*. At the weekends, we visited Winchester and Oxford. In Winchester, we went to the Christmas market, Winchester Cathedral and Winchester College, where we saw graffiti from the 1700s. In Oxford, we visited some of the colleges and the Pitt Rivers Museum.

Ruby and I also went on the school trip to Bath, where we explored the Roman Baths and attended a workshop. This was great fun and we really enjoyed the day.

Ruby settled really quickly and easily into St Gabriel’s life. Everyone was extremely welcoming and included her in everything. On Ruby and Phaedra’s last day, Tara and I organised a farewell dinner. The whole of Year 10 met at Nando’s, where we had an amazing time. I think that we all made really strong bonds with Ruby and Phaedra and hopefully we can continue to be friends for many years.

I am so excited about going to Australia this summer. It will be really great seeing Ruby and Phaedra again and experiencing life at St Hilda’s.

**Tilda Leach**



## Baby Room

The children in the Baby Room continue to enjoy story time with Mrs Borzoni, the school librarian; regular walks in the school grounds searching for twigs and autumn coloured leaves, and, of course, saying hello to the chickens.



They have also joined in with all of the special days this term, getting messy with paint and developing their mark-making skills by creating firework paintings for bonfire night, and painting bold red poppies and joining in with the two minute silence, along with the rest of the school, on Remembrance Day. To celebrate the Hindu festival of Diwali they looked at artefacts brought in by one of our parents and they used brightly coloured rice to make rangoli patterns. In December, the children have looked truly festive in their Christmas jumpers. They have made Christmas cards, celebrated Christmas with a party and many of our youngest children met 'you know who' for the very first time.

## Toddler Room

This term the Toddlers have been learning nursery rhymes and reading fairy tales. Their favourite was *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*, which offered lots of fun playing with porridge and the opportunity to focus on the different vocabulary used to describe size. The story of *The Three Little Pigs* led to the children creating artwork for an interactive display with the three little pigs and their houses and a very convincing Big Bad Wolf, who huffed and puffed when you pulled the string. Thank you, David, for your engineering skills!

Exploring the outdoors and getting plenty of fresh air is always enjoyed by the toddlers. They have made mud pies in the new mud kitchen and explored the den in the garden that Reception built for everyone.

The Autumn Term is full of celebrations and festivals. The toddlers have celebrated Bonfire Night, Remembrance Day and Diwali, with one of the parents coming in to talk to the children about how they celebrate Diwali at home. In December, the focus was very much on Christmas. The children have been busy with glitter making angels, which are now fluttering outside under the canopy; decorating cards for their families; wearing their



Christmas jumpers, and eagerly practising their carol singing in preparation for the Sandleford Carol Concert.

## Pre-School Room

The Pre-School Room has been learning all about size and comparison in their maths focus time and are developing their phonic knowledge and rhyming skills in their literacy time. The children have loved being outside and playing in the new mud kitchen, where they have added some Christmas magic by using plenty of glitter in their mud mince pies.

The Pre-School children celebrated bonfire night, Remembrance Day and Diwali with the other children in Sandleford before shifting their attention to Christmas. They have made cards, calendars and decorations, learned Christmas songs and, most importantly of all, prepared for their nativity play.





# JUNIOR SCHOOL

## The Nativity

One of the delights of teaching is that you get to share in the Christmas magic with the children; it is such a wonderful time of year in our school community.

On 2 December, our pupils in the Pre-School Room stole the show with their delightful version of the Nativity. Our 3–4 years olds were able to sing and act out the Christmas story assisted by the Year 3 narrators. For many of our boys and girls this was the first time they had performed in front of such a large audience. For them, this was like performing on the West End stage. Whilst there may have been a few last minute nerves, I am sure this was a show everyone will remember. It certainly had the X factor! One memorable moment was when Mary tenderly kissed the baby Jesus and placed him in the manger—a truly magical scene.



Later in the morning, pupils in Reception to Year 2 welcomed their families into the theatre to watch their Christmas performance of *The Nativity*. The boys and girls in the lower Junior School had been rehearsing for weeks and when the time came for them to stand on the stage and retell the Christmas story they all shone like the Christmas star itself. The narrators had learned all their words off by heart and delivered them both confidently and clearly. Each time one of our pupils step on to the stage, it is wonderful to see just how far they have come on their St Gabriel's journey. Seeing Reception and Year 1 sing with such gusto, we already know that next year we will have another delightful performance in store for the school community.

A huge thank you to Mrs Bloxson for all her hard work in directing such a young cast, which is no mean feat.

## A Term in Reception

The Reception children have had a fantastic start to their year. They have fully embraced all aspects of school life. Jolly Phonics and Dough Disco have quickly become favourite activities in the classroom. They have found out about each other by sharing the contents of their treasure boxes; the children all confidently talked about their families, hobbies and favourite toys.

Reception enjoyed finding out about Bonfire Night as an introduction to the topic, Festivals of Light. They have learned a new action song, *Here we go round the Bonfire*, sung to a very familiar tune, and found out about Guy Fawkes and the history behind 5 November. The children got messy and very creative with a display, making rockets from cones and cylinders, two of the 3D shapes they have been learning about. They then made a firework background by blowing brightly coloured paint patterns and, of course, adding a huge amount of glitter! The children



really enjoyed watching a film of one of the spectacular New Year's Eve firework displays in London and made a list of some wonderful words, whoosh, bang, crackle, sparkle, boom, to describe what they had seen and heard. In order for the children to be fully prepared for our school bonfire night and firework display, we had help from Fireman Sam to learn about fire safety considerations so that everyone could enjoy the evening and stay safe.

The children have also learned about the Hindu festival of Diwali. We started by reading the story of Rama and Sita and discovered why the diva lamps are such an important symbol of this festival. The children enjoyed retelling the story using shadow puppets and making their own clay diva lamps.

Aditi and Harrison celebrate Diwali with their families and Aditi explained that she has decorated the outside of her house with lights and had a firework party with her friends.

Shivani and Vaibhavi (Year 3) joined us one afternoon to explain how they celebrate Diwali with their family. They wore beautiful traditional clothes, sang a song and retold the story of Rama and Sita. Using their iPads, the girls showed the children lots of photos and video clips as well as telling them about some of the customs they carry out, such as giving gifts, making special sweets, having firework displays and decorating their house. Reception enjoyed showing Shivani and Vaibhavi the diva lamps they had made.

The children have finished the term by finding out about the Jewish festival of Hannukah and all the celebrations and traditions surrounding Christmas.





Every week, regardless of the weather, 11 little intrepid Reception explorers have been out in the school grounds learning about the natural world around them and having lots of fun! They have explored our beautiful woods, learned the names of different trees and filled their pockets with conkers, acorns and chestnuts. They even found leaves that were bigger than their hands, which came in very handy as umbrellas when it rained. They have balanced on logs, climbed trees and stomped in some very big muddy puddles.

This term has also seen the introduction of the mud kitchen to the Sandleford outdoor area. This has proved to be extremely popular and messy and the children have had so much fun making 'special' cakes and pies.



Finding and holding a variety of minibeasts has made the Reception children very inquisitive about where the insects live. In order to keep them safe and warm over the winter, they have spent time making bug hotels.

## Football Fanatics

In October, our Year 1 footballers took part in the Festival of Football, which was organised by Thatcham Tornadoes FC. This was their first outing in school football kit and they were all very excited at the prospect of taking part in an organised event with teams from other local schools. Lilia, Alexandra, Elsie, Lilly, Adam, Gregory and Nathan showed great team spirit and some promising skills for the future.



## Fishy Friday

This term, Year 1 had a fantastically fun and Fishy Friday! The Junior School took part in the RNLI Fish Lunch fundraising campaign. Year 1 and their mascot, Mowzer the Mousehole Cat, enjoyed sea rescue activities, yummy fish for lunch and learned about the fantastic job the RNLI volunteers do to save lives at sea.

In total the Junior School raised £130.50, which will go directly to the Penlee Lifeboat Station in Cornwall. Coxswain Patch and his crew would like to say a huge thank you to the young ladies and gentlemen of St Gabriel's for their hard work and support for the RNLI Penlee new boathouse appeal. It is so very much appreciated! They would love you to visit them in Newlyn next summer!



## Year 1 Go Back in Time at Milestones Museum

This term, Year 1 had a fantastic day of hands-on learning at the Milestones Museum in Basingstoke. The children enjoyed taking a trip back in time, walking the historic cobbled streets, looking at the old buildings and visiting the 1940s sweet shop. The day brought history to life and reinforced their history topic, *Toys in the Past*. The children played I-Spy games, guessed the age of toys using timelines, handled 100 year old dolls and dressed up as Victorians.

During the second half of term, our history focus moved on to famous people in the past. Continuing with the Junior School's RNLI charity theme, Year 1 has been learning about the famous rescuer of the sea, Grace Darling.





## Outdoor Education



This term, Year 2 have thrown themselves wholeheartedly into outdoor education. We began the term by exploring our school grounds and noticing that there are many different species of tree. Using a leaf and twig spotter, the children quickly became experts at naming many of the common trees found in our woods. They also had fun consolidating our science work by making a natural skeleton and naming the different bones correctly. Our final piece of work was based on the book, *Stickman*, by Julia Donaldson. We read the story, whilst sheltering from the rain under a giant yew tree, and then used this as inspiration to make our own stickman to star in an iMovie!

When talking to the children about what they learned this term they said, "I learned to identify pine, silver birch, yew, holly and oak trees by the shape of their leaves. I now know that red in nature often means danger and that yew trees can be poisonous. Yew trees look like lots of trees all tangled together and they are good at giving you shelter. I learned that there is no such thing as bad weather and my favourite lesson was when we went and jumped in the big, muddy puddles!"

## The WI and the Great British Bake Off

To celebrate 100 years of the Women's Institute, the Junior School decided to organise their own version of *The Great British Bake Off* hosted by one Paul 'Jones' Hollywood and Mary 'Sams' Berry. The assembly kicked off with a rousing rendition of *Jerusalem*, which the Juniors had learned especially for the occasion. Then, it was time for the technical baking challenge. One child from each class had been chosen to bake a Victoria sponge from a traditional WI recipe. This classic jam sponge cake was made popular during the reign of Queen Victoria and it would seem its popularity has not waned; our judges savoured each and every mouthful. Thankfully there were 'no soggy bottoms' just lots of originality and flair went into the designs.

At the end of the day tradition won out with Kara Scaplehorn in Year 2, becoming the first winner of the St Gabriel's Bake off. In true St Gabriel's spirit Kara decided to sell her winning cake in aid of Macmillan Cancer.

## Junior School Council

This term the Junior School Council has been as busy as ever supporting many fundraising efforts around school. As a community we have raised in excess of £1,000, showing that we truly embrace the six pillars of character, trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship.

Back in September we held a whole-school cake sale in aid of Macmillan Cancer. We were amazed by the enormous generosity of our school community in both baking and buying cakes. We raised a staggering £829.80.



In October, staff and pupils in the Junior School embraced their inner superhero for Children in Need. Everyone dressed up as their hero for the day and in doing so raised £281.85. Zara Taylor won a cuddly Pudsey Bear as the best dressed hero – who had she come as? Her Dad! Need we say more.

In November, Friends of Young Carers West Berkshire was voted by the Junior School Council as their Christmas charity. Once again, our community embraced the Christmas spirit and gave generously at all our Christmas performances. Our councillors were delighted that our nativities and the carol concert raised £599.00 for this worthy cause.

We are looking forward to another active term, where we will be led by our newly appointed chair, Freya Leighton-Jones.





## House Quiz

The annual House Quiz took place on the penultimate day of term and was, as usual, a hotly-contested event with teams trying to score as many points as possible to win the team prize as well as the House Cup.

Mr Dove's fiendish questions tested the children's knowledge on a broad range of topics, from the Table Mountain to the Taj Mahal, Justin Bieber to Elvis Presley and jodhpurs to kilns. Incredibly, two teams tied for first place but, after a tiebreaker, the winning team was Rose Clark, Anneliese Brown, Charlotte Coulson and Olivia Cole. With all the points tallied, the winning House was Aidan. Pictured is House Captain, Aggie Rose, with the cup and her victorious teammates.



## Year 4 Visit Winchester Cathedral

In November, Year 4 spent the day at Winchester Cathedral. "Year 4 went to Winchester Cathedral because in RS we are learning about Christian churches and places of worship. We arrived and met Cheryl, our guide for the day, who told us lots of fascinating stories about the cathedral. Did you know that Jane Austen was buried there? At the time of her death she was not famous because in the 19th Century people thought that girls could not be good at anything but cleaning! We also learned about the grotesques and gargoyles and made our own versions out of clay, which was really good fun. Towards the end of the day we had an



angel hunt. There were lots of angels hidden in the cathedral, each with a different word on, and we had to collect as many as possible. My group got all of them! The last activity was about us. Cheryl lit a candle and said a prayer so that we could remember her." *Charlotte Hamilton*

## Sandham Memorial Chapel

In September, Year 5 and Year 6 took part in a creative writing and poetry project at Sandham Memorial Chapel. This National Trust property houses the large scale paintings depicting WWI by internationally renowned British artist, Stanley Spencer.

We spent the morning at the chapel with an expert who guided us through the paintings and brought them to life. Everyone was full of awe at the sheer scale of the art and full of questions as they began to understand what they were seeing.

That afternoon a professional writer came to St Gabriel's to give a two hour workshop using language in written and spoken form to convey both group and individual creative responses to the paintings in the chapel. The pupils then wrote in response to their feelings.

It was a really worthwhile experience and amazing to think that this is right on our doorstep. Well worth a visit if you get a chance!



## National Young Mathematicians' Award

In November, four girls in Year 6, Amber Cowan, Tayisha Flower, Aggie Rose and Emily Woodford, took part in Round One of the National Young Mathematicians' Award.

The Young Mathematicians' Award is held annually in conjunction with NRICH. Each year, teams of four primary children from schools across the UK take part in local events then five teams are chosen to go to NRICH headquarters in Cambridge for the final. At each stage of the competition, teams work on a NRICH task and are judged on two things: how well they use their problem-solving skills to think like mathematicians and how well they work as a team. The tasks are particularly challenging and are likely to seem quite different from the sorts of maths activities you might do at school. The competition was fierce and, regretfully, our team did not make it through to Round Two. However, their teamwork was outstanding and it was wonderful to see them sharing ideas and collaborating so well together.



# JUNIOR SCHOOL

## Primary Maths Challenge

This year, 20 girls from Year 5 and Year 6 took part in the Primary Maths Challenge, a fun and exciting mathematical challenge aimed at more able mathematicians. It is not designed to be just another test in the school year, but to encourage enthusiasm, boost confidence in mathematics and show the different ways questions can be asked. The Primary Maths Challenge makes pupils aware that mathematics is not all about knowledge but rather your interpretation of the question and in some cases it is a matter of reading it properly! The challenge is designed to make pupils think outside the box. All the children who took part did very well with Year 6 improving on their results from the previous year. Particular congratulations go to Amber Cowan, who gained a gold certificate and achieved the best result in the school.



Sing Up, an international resource for singing in schools and the providers and assessors behind Singing School status alongside ABRSM, recently interviewed our Junior School music teacher, Miranda Gunn, for the Teacher Spotlight feature. To read the article visit [www.singup.org/news-local-events/news-article/view/1212-teacher-spotlight-miranda-gunn/](http://www.singup.org/news-local-events/news-article/view/1212-teacher-spotlight-miranda-gunn/)

## Junior School Singathon

On 4 December, the Junior School took part in a sponsored Singathon to raise money for Heart Research UK. Not only is singing good for your heart but this challenge gave pupils the chance to practise their Christmas repertoire as well as some subject specific songs. Teachers sang the register and used singing in their lessons. There were two singing assemblies and a karaoke club at lunch time. The day raised an amazing total of £1,317.28!

## Performance Poetry Competition

Earlier this term, 14 Year 6 pupils went to Holme Grange School near Wokingham to compete in the annual Prep Schools' Performance Poetry Competition.

Not only did the children have to learn their poems off by heart, but they also had to add movement and gestures.

The children had a really great time performing *A Smugglers Song* as a group. Ellie and Tabitha then undertook the duet piece of *The Owl and the Pussycat* and Pippa represented St Gabriel's as our soloist with *The Road Not Taken*.

## Year 6 Sing Up Filmmakers Competition

In July, Year 6 entered the Sing Up Filmmakers competition. They had to make an entertaining video to accompany a song from the Sing Up website. They recreated the opening scene from *Rocky to Eye of the Tiger*.

It took around four hours to film the video and many more were spent editing it. The children really enjoyed the process and were able to put their acting, filmmaking, singing and teamwork skills to the test.

Year 6 were thrilled to find out that they had won the national competition and are looking forward to receiving their prize of some new musical instruments and Sing Up goodies.





## Kinetic Theatre Company

Just before half term we had a visit from the Kinetic Theatre Company, who performed their latest science-themed show for the Junior School. The title of the performance was ***The Electricity Show***. It was all about a student called Tim Berners-Lee who, after receiving an electric shock, roused the evil force of Queen Electra Cute of Circuitland. It soon became apparent that something was seriously wrong: the citizens of Circuitland were refusing to move and the King's treasured lamp was not shining! In a battle for his life, Tim (with the help of a few panto favourites) had just one hour to get things working again....

We had an electrifying time and learned all about voltage and current; the effect of increasing voltage on the speed of a motor; circuit symbols as ways to represent simple series circuits; conductors and insulators, and parallel circuits.

Towards the end of the show we found out more about Tim Berners-Lee and that he would grow up to be a computer scientist and invent the World Wide Web. Queen Electra was not happy but this was short lived as she took a fancy to our head of the Junior School, Mr Dove!

## Junior Science Club

In Junior Science Club we have been having lots of fun dressing up as mad scientists and completing amazing experiments. One of our experiments was called Slime Time. We used cornflour to make our very own sticky oozing slime. The slime behaved very strangely as you could squeeze it into a solid ball with your hands but when you stopped squeezing, it turned back into a liquid and ran through your fingers. We investigated what happened when we used different amounts of cornflour and the effects of adding PVA glue. It was great fun and we learned all about non-Newtonian fluids.



A second experiment we did was called Milk Planets. We created swirling colourful patterns by pouring milk into a petri dish and adding a few drops of different food colouring. To make the mixture swirl we had to dip a cotton bud in some washing up liquid and touch it to the milk. We learned about how molecules stick together in liquids and how adding washing up liquid makes nearby molecules stop clinging together.

Some of the experiments we are planning to do next term include sinking through ice, crystal growing, exploding toothpaste and bouncing smoke bubbles.

## Brebras Computational Thinking Challenge 2015



The Bebras Computational Thinking Challenge introduces computer science to pupils. It is designed to get children excited about computing and computational thinking. Junior School pupils took part in three categories: Kits (Year 3), Castors (Years 4 & 5) and Juniors (Years 6 & 7). Kits had 6 questions to attempt and Castors had 10. Obviously, it helped that the Year 3 pupils performed their quiz in fancy dress!

Every girl who took part received a participation certificate and there were also merit and distinction certificates. Congratulations to Elsy, Julia and Vaibhavi in Year 3 for each achieving the top mark. In the Castors competition, Francesca Cunningham achieved the top mark, closely followed by Zara Peel and Claudia Pope. The top performer in Year 6 was Amber Cowan.

The girls enjoyed the challenge and we were delighted with our first whole school set of results. We are already preparing for the Bebras Challenge 2016. Once again, well done to every girl who took part in the competition.





# JUNIOR SCHOOL SPORT

The term started with the appointment of our four House Games Captains, Amber Cowan, Brooke Asser, Scarlett Hale and Kate Newman.

**Riding for the Disabled (RDA), Lambourn:** Every Wednesday afternoon when the rest of my class are doing sport my mum picks me up and we go to RDA in Lambourn. My horse, Mr Crackles, is a bouncy boy and he looks after me as I learn to trot and steer him around the barn. I love trotting and playing games like “round the world” where I have to turn around on Mr Crackles as he walks around the barn. In the future, I would like to be able to do small jumps and enter a show jumping competition just like my sister. I really enjoy my Wednesday afternoon with Mr Crackles and look forward to going again after Christmas. *Jennifer Barrett*



**Year 3 Cross Country at The Manor:** In September, Year 3 had a promising start to their cross country career at The Manor. The girls ran well, with Clare McGonnell and Neve Wright gaining a commendable 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> place in a field of over 30. The delicious post-run tea appeared to be the highlight of the day!

**St Hugh's Cross Country Relays Competition:** 15 children took part in the pouring rain and, although there were no podium finishers, there were some strong performances. Amber, Kate and Brooke set the standard clocking the fastest ever time by a Year 6 team, which placed them just outside the medals. Year 5 had a more challenging time as the rain came down, but Georgia, Jolie, Sophie and Poppy enjoyed their mud bath and Poppy's swift time got her in the hall of fame for Year 5 performances. By the time Year 4 set off conditions were dreadful but Ava, Maddie, Charlotte and Katie-Rose managed to splashed their way round until their blue kit became unrecognisable! Then came Year 3, with Clare McGonnell getting off to a flying start to obtain the fastest ever time for Year 3, Neve and Mia also put in good performances, which really bodes well for this team.

**U8 and U9 Netball Festival at St Swithun's:** This was a new addition to our sporting calendar and, here, the emphasis was on playing and enjoying the game with no overall winner and no scores taken. At the end of the afternoon a best player from each team was selected by Katy Holland from the Surrey Storm netball team and the coaches were able to award the player with the most endeavour a certificate. Neve Wright and Ismay Gallup were awarded the Player of the Festival; Ellie Abbott and Charlotte Hamilton were given the Endeavour Award.

**Swimming Gala v St Swithun's, Leaden Hall and St Ives:** After a summer of squad training, we entered two galas at St Swithun's.

The children competed well with commendable performances from Clare McGonnell, Bella Castle, Amber Cowan and Georgia Teeluck.

**Year 5 & Year 6 Indoor Athletics:** Congratulations to our Year 5 and Year 6 athletes who competed in the West Berkshire Indoor Athletics competition at Park House. Our team came 5<sup>th</sup> out of the 19 competing schools. We are hugely proud of their achievement!

**Quicksticks Hockey:** With the help of Mrs Porter-Scott, we have been developing our training under the guidelines from England Hockey. Quicksticks and In2Hockey allow the game to be played on a netball court with control and fluency. These sessions have certainly helped to improve our competitive play.

**House Hockey:** A week of fiercely contested House hockey by children in Year 3–Year 6 culminated in Chad and Alban being the overall joint winners.

**Year 5 Netball Champions at the St Hugh's Tournament:** After an afternoon of fierce competition against 12 schools from Oxfordshire and Berkshire, the Year 5 team became the new champions at the St Hugh's tournament. This is the first time we have won this competition and credit must go to our defence, Claudia Pope, Sophie Scott and Poppy Russell, who put in solid performances to keep our opposition out of the attacking circle. Jess Collett was superb in the centre, linking our defence and attack seamlessly and our attacking force of Zara Peel, Jolie Hartland and Georgia Teeluck were able to deliver the goals when it mattered. The girls brought home the shield, a very proud PE teacher and some very excited parents.



Meanwhile, the Year 5 B team had a phenomenal result, winning their pool matches against Berkhamstead, The Manor, Rupert House and Oxford High, to play in the semi-finals. This was a closely fought match, which they lost by one goal to the eventual tournament winners. I would like to thank the Year 4 girls who supported the Year 5 team in this tournament.

**Year 4–Year 6 Indoor Alternative Sports Competition:** We replicated Robin Hood skills in the archery competition, learning to load the arrows quickly and slowly improving on our aim and shooting skills. In the boccia and curling competitions we had to work out how to play tactically as a team. Charlotte Coulson delivered several killer shots to remove the opposition's stones during the last play of each game. The girls were thrilled to be awarded bronze medals for their efforts.

**Climbing Club:** We welcomed two new instructors this term after a sudden illness prevented Mike Swann from continuing to run this popular club. Climbing will continue during the Spring Term on a Tuesday evening, with a new club starting on a Friday evening between 4.00pm–5.00pm.

*Alison Pasternakiewicz, Assistant Director of Sport*



## Year 7 to Calshot Activities Centre



As Pastoral Head of Year 7 and Year 8, I look forward to Calshot as it is an opportunity for staff and pupils to form strong relationships, which in turn enable us to provide the best pastoral care in the years to follow. Both staff and pupils 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. Highlights this year included snowboarding, team swing and a pyjama party, not forgetting walking along the beach to breakfast at 6.00 am with the backdrop of a pink sunrise! An adventurous weekend with inspirational girls.

*Mrs Trevis, Pastoral Head of Year 7 & 8*



## Roman Amphitheatre Experience

Once again, Year 7 gave an excellent demonstration of the Roman amphitheatre experience at Corinium. Not only did they have a risk assessment assured game of gladiatorial bulldog but they also managed to split into small teams and have a chariot race around the arena. (Arena from the Roman word for sand. The reason is gory: check if your daughter remembers why). This was followed by a visit to the museum and a hands on workshop, where pupils were given the opportunity to handle artefacts, translate some Latin and dress as ancient Romans. The weather smiled on us, enabling our picnic lunch to be eaten on the site of the now ruined Cirencester Abbey. The girls returned to school having run around

in the fresh air, had a picnic in the sun as well as have a teaching session and a visit to a museum. Not bad for one day!



## Charity Cake Sale



Members of Year 7T held a charity cake sale at the end of November and raised £130. This was used to buy Christmas gifts from Christian Aid (a safe house for women, piglets, mosquito nets and school essentials), The Brooke (a water trough and emergency medical essentials for working animals) and Crisis (Christmas lunch for a homeless person). Year 7 were delighted to help so many people in so many different ways!

## Dance Scholars' Breakfast

For those who are passionate about dance the festive season always starts with a performance of *The Nutcracker*. Our dance scholars got into the spirit of Christmas with an analysis of three different versions of this famous ballet using Tchaikovsky's magical score. The focus was on the *Waltz of the Snowflakes* in all its forms, from the beauty and poise of classical ballet to something a little less traditional. First up was The Royal Ballet performing a truly classical rendition of this famous work. Scholars noted the beautiful costuming, classical form and lines and the use of pointe shoes for the corps de ballet (the ensemble). Next up was Mark Morris's version, *The Hard Nut*. Scholars enjoyed watching an entirely new interpretation of snowflakes using contemporary dance, swirling glitter descending onto the stage and men in pointe shoes! Finally, scholars were treated to Matthew Bourne's updated interpretation simply called *Nutcracker!* This highly theatrical rendering of the snowflake waltz had moved a step beyond its traditional roots and had become a swirling, whirling vision of dancers on a frozen lake. Dance scholars were animated and lively in their analysis of all three versions and the debate became quite heated as to which version was the best one!



## BBC Ten Pieces

In October, Year 7 went to a screening at Newbury Vue Cinema of the BBC Ten Pieces film, which features the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra performing a new selection of orchestral music. A wide range of styles and eras are represented and all are relevant to the music curriculum. Each piece is introduced by a celebrity presenter known to the age group, using an engaging mix of live action and animation. The girls were inspired by, and extremely enthusiastic about, this enrichment opportunity.

## Programming Club



Talia Saltmarsh has been the driving force behind the creation of some fairly extraordinary musical instruments during Programming Club. If Dr Tebbs was impressed with the bongo drums made from oranges and the piano made from bananas, then he was bowled over by Talia's electric guitar constructed from cardboard, coins, silver foil and clips.

On 10 December, a remarkable jamming session took place involving Talia, Dr Tebbs, Mrs Haywood Smith and several Year 11 pupils, drawn to ICT1 by the mercurial sound emanating from it. Well done to Talia for being such a technology trailblazer.

As one of our new group of Tech Leaders, Talia will be using her soon-to-arrive BBC Micro:Bit to build some even more innovative creations whilst also helping others to get to grips with their own Micro:Bit.

## Annabelle Lyndon Riding for England

Endurance rider, Annabelle Lyndon (Year 8), was selected to ride for England in a Home International competition after winning the Junior Intermediate Class at The Pony Club National Championships earlier this year.

The fitness level of both pony and rider is paramount when competing in endurance; the rides are fast, over difficult terrain and map reading skills whilst cantering are really important. With each ride there is an immense amount of planning and trying to balance school work with fitness programmes means having a very detailed time schedule, especially when it also includes music practice for three instruments!

Being selected to ride for England at the age of 12 is a huge achievement and in October, Annabelle travelled to the Brecon Beacons to compete. The squad was made up of three junior riders (under16) and 12 adult riders; in addition, there was a team vet and physiotherapist (for the horses) and the crew for each rider.

It was a difficult ride; there was thick fog when the riders set off, they met sheep, barking dogs, a heather fire and were chased by wild Welsh Mountain ponies. There were hills to climb up and then come down again, streams to cross, gates to open and close and, of course, a map to follow.

The end of the ride is a very tense time, getting the pony untacked and cooled down to get the heart rate down as low as possible before vetting. Annabelle and Lacey achieved a Grade 1 (the best possible). Only five of the 15 riders in the England squad qualified and whilst England did not win, Annabelle was awarded the Cambrian Cup for the novice rider with the highest points for the whole competition (this included the Home International, Celtic Challenge and Red Dragon competition. The ride was 48km and took 4 ½ hours to complete.

At Endurance GB's National Award Ceremony, Annabelle won the Collee Cup for the pony and rider with the highest points awarded in their first year of competing with Endurance GB.



David Saunders Photography

## English Speaking Union Debating

In December, we went to Cranbourne Business & Enterprise College for the first round of the English Speaking Union competition. Our first team consisted of Kitty Byfield (Year 9) and I, and our reserve team was made up of Emily Hamilton and Elizabeth Lynes. As we knew the debate topic beforehand, Kitty and I had prepared most of our speeches – the rest to be filled in when we were responding to the other team's ideas. The motion of our debate was: "This house believes that only violent offenders should be given custodial sentences" to which we were the opposition.

Each team was made up of two speakers and one of those was also the summary speaker. Proposition speaker one spoke first and then opposition speaker one, then both of the second speakers. There was then a floor debate, where people in the audience could make any points they felt might have been missed out. The summary speakers then made their final points.

The second motion was, 'The BBC should enforce diversity quotas'.

Following the debate, there was an opportunity to talk to an experienced debater from Oxford University, who I had an interesting conversation with and he gave me a few pointers on how to improve my debating skills.

*Anna Spence*



## Year 9 Field Trip to Hengistbury Head



We had a gloriously sunny day for our field trip to Hengistbury Head, Christchurch Bay, which reinforced our coastal studies module. We visited the Field Studies Centre and investigated why Hengistbury Head is such a special place for geological, archaeological and ecological reasons.

The morning was spent climbing Warren Hill and drawing the perfect field sketch of Christchurch Harbour. We then went down to the beach for some serious data collection. The girls could see long shore drift operating and threw oranges into the sea to measure the rate.

Lunch was eaten on the beach whilst we listened to the lapping of the waves...bliss! The afternoon was spent observing the process of erosion and land loss, making sure we did not sit on the site of potential rock falls. The girls worked beautifully in groups, sharing resources, ideas and geographical equipment and learning new geographical ideas.

After a few moans and groans that we had walked far too far, we boarded the Billy Train and headed back to the coach. A fabulous day for a field trip with plenty of data and information collected to work hard upon returning to school.

## Ada Lovelace Day, Rutherford Appleton

Ada Lovelace Day involved the breakdown of a spaceship, the Ada Lovelace! Eight teams of girls, from a variety of schools, were assigned tasks to keep the crew of the spaceship alive whilst ground control attempted to get it safely back home. The St Gabriel's team, Lauren Ashworth-Donn, Jessica Palfrey, Lauren King and Natalie Carpenter, had to design a program to control the air conditioning in the spaceship. A series of lights was needed to indicate to the crew the temperature in the capsule and fans had to start as soon as the temperature exceeded a particular value. Other groups had to establish contact with ground control and devise a messaging system.

The challenges required familiarity with a new block programming language used at the laboratory and an Arduino kit. Our team got on top of the challenge quickly as this language has identical features to Scratch and Python, which are used at school. During the session the girls worked as programmers or engineers in tough conditions with a deadline to meet. The high level of cooperation and teamwork paid dividends. The solution was tested rigorously and delivered ahead of schedule before being judged a success by

the organisers. The St Gabriel's contribution to the survival of the crew of the Ada Lovelace was complete!

We also visited the computer centre at the laboratory. If you have ever peered into the computer technician's room at St Gabriel's, with its rows of black shelves and stacked servers, then this location was probably one hundred times larger with hundreds and hundreds of stacked servers. There was also plenty of space to add still more should they be needed. Data from the experiments taking place with the Hadron Collider at Cern are sent through to the computers here for scientists to analyse. This data is priceless! The employees we worked with throughout the day have the task of storing the data, retrieving it when required and maintaining it.

The day ended with a presentation from Rachel, a young employee who charted her progress from GCSEs through to a career working with scientists at the Rutherford Appleton laboratories.



## Year 9 to the Roman Baths

This trip clearly had Minerva smiling on the Classics Department, as the sun shone (for the most part) and Aquae Sulis looked as magnificent as always. Mia Ince, in particular, showed a phenomenal depth of Classical knowledge, to the extent that the wonderful James, who delivered the teaching session, asked what her sources were (apparently, Rick Riordan, amongst other things, has been very useful). The girls took photos with the Governor and Roman soldier, the waters were tasted ('it tastes of blood' and 'it tastes of metal' were the common responses) and coins were thrown into the cold plunge so that wishes could be made. Mrs Sim would have been proud of Jennifer Skelly's mental maths as she worked out how many litres of water rise per second if 1,170,000 litres rise per day. Mrs Alexander (not related to 'The Great, of Greece'... as far as we know) ensured that all ran smoothly and a good time was had by all.





## Chithurst Buddhist Monastery

On 26 November, Year 9 visited the Chithurst Buddhist Monastery. When we arrived, we were invited to observe the Buddhist monks eating their only meal of the day at 10.30am. This was an interesting experience as we got to see how they blessed the food before eating it and learned how the monks rely on local people for food donations. A couple of my fellow pupils were allowed to offer some food to the monks and put it in their large steel bowls from which they eat.

Afterwards, we had an early lunch at 11.00am, as the monks do not eat after noon. We then had a guided tour of the monastery, which was conducted by one of the monks who had been living at the monastery for 17 years! He showed us a number of the sacred statues on the site, many of which were smaller versions of ones in India. The monk also explained how they have to walk for 20 minutes to reach their huts in the woods where they live. These are very basic, with no electricity, as the monks are not allowed any luxuries.

When we had finished our tour of the monastery, we attended a meditation session led by one of the monks. This was very interesting and relaxing as we learned how to stay calm in stressful situations. We also learned about different types of meditation, such as walking meditation – this is where you walk a certain number of steps between two pillars for about half an hour, in an attempt to clear your mind and become more aware of everything around you. We then took part in a Q&A session with the monk and were able to ask him about the monastery and his life as a monk. He gave some interesting answers to the questions, and it was a pleasure to talk with him.

The monk also showed us photographs of himself with some fellow monks in India. They were exploring sites such as the Bodhi Tree, where the Buddha was enlightened. These were interesting to look at as we could see some Buddhist architecture and the monks dressed in their robes outside of the monastery.

Our visit to the Chithurst Buddhist Monastery was a fun, relaxing and interesting day.

*Lauren King*



## Orion Laser Facility

After winning a nuclear science based challenge at the Teen Tech event last summer, 11 members of Year 9 and Year 10 were rewarded with a visit to the Orion Laser Facility at AWE in Tadley.

We were given the rare chance to enter one of the most secure locations in the UK. It is also one of the largest scientific sites in the UK, housing some of the most sophisticated and powerful lasers in the world. In fact, one laser is so powerful that it can recreate the conditions in the centre of the sun. The facility is mainly used for research but also tests the accuracy of the computers used to test the atomic weapons owned by the UK.

This trip was an incredible and highly interesting experience, we really enjoyed it.

*Charlotte Culley*

## Bebras Computational Thinking Challenge



Juniors (Year 7), Intermediate (Years 8 - 9), Seniors (Years 10 - 11) and Elite (Year 13)

The Bebras competition tests logic and computational thinking skills through solving a number of fun and challenging problems. The problems come in three levels of difficulty: A, B and C, with A being the easiest and C the hardest. The competition takes up to 40 minutes and this is the first year that girls in Years 7 – 9 have taken part. Distinction certificates are awarded to girls who come in the top 25% within their competition across the school and merit certificates are awarded for the group in the next 25%.

Tara Young achieved the top mark in the Year 7 category closely followed by Talia Saltmarsh, Amy Findell and Molly Montague.

In the Intermediate category, Lauren Ashworth-Donn won the Best in School category with impressive performances from Izzy Mannion, Emma Goodyer and Emerald Cundy. Congratulations should also go to several Year 8 pupils in the Intermediate category who produced excellent performances, including Jemima Garner, Anna Spence, Olivia Kynaston and Katie Hooper.

In the Senior competition, Lauren Swain was the highest achiever, closely followed by Lottie Brash, Tara Conway and Rowan Saltmarsh.

In the Elite competition, Lucia Mitchell was the outstanding performer.

We shall be entering the competition again next year so get some early training in by visiting the website, where sample questions and previous quizzes are available, along with all of the answers! <http://challenge.bebras.uk/>

Once again, well done to everyone who took part in the challenge.



## Roasted



Roasted is a Young Enterprise company founded by Year 12 with the aim to produce and sell top quality products at affordable prices. Our products cater for the little luxuries in life that everyone needs and for the past few months the Roasted team have been working non-stop to make this possible.

As most of us are coffee lovers and, if not, we all know one, Roasted felt that the perfect route to go down would be selling luxury flavoured coffee.

We started off by researching how we might go about this and then looked into flavours, brands, and accessories to go with coffee – everything and anything that is related to coffee! That is when we discovered Moonroast, an independent artisan coffee roastery located not too far from St Gabriel's. We sent three members of our team to the roastery to test the product and to see how and where it was made. We are pleased to say that our team loved the coffee and after some more taste testing and a bit of negotiation our first batch of coffee arrived at school in time to be sold at the Christmas Fair.

## Geog Squad Head South!

This October, six Year 12 students headed to Calshot for their Geography residential field trip. They were prepared to work hard and get wet and cold... it was a geography field trip after all! Renée, Amy, Emily, Harriet, Holly and Mrs Willetts headed southbound down the M3 full of enthusiasm and gumption.



The aim of the field trip was to prepare the girls for the fieldwork paper, covering both the human and physical aspects of the geography course.

Hydrological studies involved the girls getting in the river and investigating how the dynamics of river processes and characteristics change with distance downstream. At each site the girls measured the width, depth, efficiency, channel flow and velocity. Studies continued into the evening, as the students interpreted and analysed the data using statistical methods.

Our human geography studies centered around investigating the settlement of Southampton in terms of social welfare provision. This enabled us to develop our theory on settlement models and to better understand the differences between the six different wards of Southampton. Quality of environment was assessed, primary data collected and secondary data used as supportive data.

The trip was a huge success, busy and productive. The girls worked hard, had fun and learned a lot!

## Safe Drive, Stay Alive

In November, students from Year 12 went to a road safety presentation, Safe Drive, Stay Alive, at the Hexagon Theatre, Reading. We listened to a series of talks from emergency workers, a policewoman, a paramedic, an A&E doctor, as well as others who had been involved 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 twenties who now has prosthetic legs as a result of an accident. We left the presentation with a thorough understanding of the devastating effects of unsafe driving. I have no doubt that the students will be safer drivers and more vigilant passengers as a result.



## Senior UKMT Maths Challenge

In November our A level mathematicians entered the Senior Maths Challenge. The following girls are to be congratulated on their achievements:

**Bronze Certificates:** Louise Barlow, Jessica Griffiths and Ione Robinson

**Silver Certificates:** Anisha Malli, Lucia Mitchell (Best in Year 13) and Colette Bell (Best in Year 12 and Best in School)



# SIXTH FORM

## Maths in Action, Warwick University

Sixth Form mathematicians travelled to Warwick University for the **Maths in Action** show. 'It was the best one ever', said one Year 13 student. 'This was my third Maths Show and having my copy of Fermat's Last Theorem signed by Simon Singh was really amazing!'

The girls had five talks during the day and were enthralled by the passion and enthusiasm of the speakers explaining how they use mathematics in their roles and lives.

From the drama and intrigue of Fermat's Last Theorem to how mathematical modelling can save lives, how not to get hoodwinked by statistics and one man's mathematical obsession. The girls were surprised at the different career opportunities available to mathematicians rather than the stereotype accountants and bankers!

Steve Mould, the final speaker was known to some of the girls from the **Festival of the Spoken Nerd** show *Just for Graphs*, which is still touring the country.

'My favourite part of the trip was hearing Simon Singh speak. Having read several of his books, it was great to hear him talk about some of the more complex theories in person.'

## IBM Mentoring Scheme



On 20 November, Year 12 visited IBM in Winchester to find out more about the IBM Mentoring Scheme. On arrival, they were greeted with refreshments before going on a tour of current IBM technologies. They then met some of the mentors, all Senior Executives at IBM, and found out more about the IBM programme.

The scheme is personalised and varied according to the interests and needs of individual student, but has previously included advice on time management, presentation and interview skills and help with organisation and CV writing.

In the afternoon the students had a tour of the IBM museum, where they were able to see how machines such as typewriters, computers and tablets have evolved over time. They also spent time in the Emerging Technologies Department, where they met Watson, a cognitive technology system that processes information more like a human than a computer!

The day was truly inspirational as well as being a lot of fun.

## Sixth Form Visit Southampton University

On 6 November, Year 12 and Year 13 visited Southampton University. On arrival, they were given a talk on research methods



by Richard Penny, a Teaching Fellow in Political Theory and a PhD student. Following this, they conducted some computer-based research in the ICT labs, gaining first-hand experience in how to access library e-journals and build up a reading list. They then toured the campus before spending the afternoon in the Hartley Library, exploring books and paper sources. Overall, the trip gave our students a fantastic insight into the skills that are needed for university study, whilst our EPQ students came away with a range of detailed sources for their projects.



## Biology Field Trip to Calshot

Year 13 biologists enjoyed their residential field trip to Calshot in September. They learned new fieldwork techniques and gathered data for their coursework.

Although, they spent many hours collecting data in the bog, they were rewarded with an evening on the ski slope!





Senior School artists went to Florence during the October half term. The excitement started at the airport, at about 2.00am, when Paris lost her passport down the side of the conveyor belt, which had to be taken apart in order to retrieve it!

We arrived in Florence and started our stay with food, eating lunch in a lovely restaurant overlooking a beautiful Florentine piazza.

Michelangelo's David was the highlight at the Galleria dell' Accademia. The food market in the Mercato Centrale was amazing, with loads of different stalls located in disused train station. It was full of exciting sounds, colours and smells. The atmosphere was really buzzing and we enjoyed watching the world go by while eating scrumptious Italian pizza and ice cream.



We visited the Bell Tower by the Duomo and the photographers walked up over 300 steps inside the dome to reach the viewing gallery. It was painful but worth it for the view; you could see the whole of Florence and beyond. Meanwhile the artists sat at the bottom drawing the beautiful marble buildings and avoiding having their photo taken by Japanese tourists.

We walked across the Ponte Vecchio with its amazing buildings jutting out over the river as if they might fall in. There were glimpses of stunning views between the shops.

We wandered through Santa Croce church, where Phoebe had to wrap jumpers around her waist because her skirt was too short to be allowed inside..... Sitting behind Santa Croce is the famous leather school, which we visited but struggled to concentrate on the gilding demonstration given by the hunky Francesco.



Mrs Archer did a wonderful reading of a passage from E M Forster's *A Room with a view*, which was set in the square of Santa Croce. We all sat on the steps and enjoyed her lively rendition.

Our guided tour of the Gucci Museum was one of many highlights; there were lots of clothes, shoes, and accessories on display. We loved discovering the heritage of the items and finding out how they were made. We could not believe the price tags! The portable Gucci wardrobe was added to our Christmas lists – it was fabulous!

We had lots of opportunities to sketch and take photos; we were inspired by the architecture and everyday life in Florence. It was an amazing experience and we will never forget the fun, food, and sights we saw. It will inspire our GCSE and A level projects!

*Sophie Taylor, Estelle Hiscock & Lucy Wilkins*





## Junior School

The Junior School has been alive with music and singing this term. There was a fantastic lunchtime concert for our instrumental musicians who performed their pieces with confidence.



Everyone has been enjoying the new equipment; the electric drum kit and the floor piano have proved hugely popular. Meanwhile Ukulele club has grown in numbers and successfully performed a Justin Bieber song in assembly.

Year 3–Year 6 performed beautifully in the Christmas Concert. There was a new addition, the Parent & Teacher Community Choir, which sang two fabulous carols. Junior Orchestra accompanied the congregational carols and the Senior Band gave an extra sparkle to the whole school singing. It was a brilliant evening, with the highest quality of music-making. A perfect start to the Christmas season.

## Senior School

The Autumn Term always feels as though it is the most active part of the year for the Music Department. That is until the Spring and Summer Terms arrive! I would like to say straight away how impressed the music staff have been by the happy, positive and purposeful attitude of girls throughout the term. There have been many highlights but I must mention the Year 7 music and drama piece, *Bombs and Beetroot Lipstick*, performed before half term.

The production was a collaboration between the Music, Drama and Dance Departments. It was a wonderful way of allowing the girls to work together as a cohesive and united year group. The piece was a series of linked scenes that explored a small part of the vast contribution made by women during World War 2. It was largely scripted by the girls but we inserted a section that used verbatim theatre techniques. We took the copy from a series of wartime newspaper adverts and lifted them off the page. The aim was to use the accurate language of the day as a stimulus for further



ideas and to get a sense of period. The play then returned to the story of a group of young women working the land in an attempt to help feed the rest of the country. One day when they are working the fields they mistook a Luftwaffe for a Spitfire and realise they had been waving to the enemy and are terrified they will get bombed. They then witness the German plane being shot down. Days later in the middle of a dance in the village hall an injured German enters and the girls are challenged with the moral dilemma of whether or not to shelter 'Gerry' or hand him over to the authorities. The play was a wonderful mixture of comic scenes and highly dramatic action and was a hugely successful project.

Year 7 are now the largest component year group in St Gabriel's Singers, and this choir had an exciting and challenging term learning, among other things, a new piece specially commissioned by the Girls' Schools Association. The composition, *Child of the Snows* by Philip Tebbs, was performed at the GSA conference in November. It is a piece for SSA choir with piano, plus solo flute and violin, and is a setting of a GK Chesterton poem about the birth of Christ. The music, like the poem, centres on the mystery of this event: the dark night, the lonely inn, the baby coming forth alone into the world without any ceremony.

As well as performing *Child of the Snows* at the GSA conference, there were also stunning performances from Lottie Swainston, Jess Gill and Libby Stewart-Power, with Juliette Ashman providing an excellent descant to the opening hymn. The whole service was a delight, and apart from the fact that Dr Tebbs nearly lost the entire choir in the maze of corridors at the Celtic Manor Resort, everybody found the experience very fulfilling. We were very proud of the choir's performance and behaviour, and they thoroughly deserved the praise of the congregation.

The Senior Winter Concert saw the second performance of *Child of the Snows*, with some welcome light relief for the choir coming from an arrangement of music by The Jackson Five. The concert was a huge success, with many excellent performances ranging from string quartets and classical solos to big band music and rock. And the eclectic, all-inclusive theme continued right up to the end of term, with a stunning Christmas carol service.

Next term's main event is the Senior School production of *Little Shop of Horrors*, at the Cornerhouse in Didcot. If you like rock musicals about flesh-eating plants from outer space, sadistic dentists and lonely florists, then this is the show for you.

## Music Examination Results

Juliette Ashman	Singing	07	Distinction
Juliette Ashman	Piano	07	Pass
Rachel Berkley	Violin	02	Pass
Megan Bradd	Piano	02	Pass
Natalie Carpenter	Flute	04	Pass
Isabella Cunningham	Piano	01	Merit
Jessica Hake	B Flat Cornet	03	Merit
Madeleine Herd	Piano	P	Pass
Misty Leach	Singing	02	Pass
Alice McGonnell	Piano	08	Distinction
Lily Rostron	Piano	02	Merit
Sophia Rostron	Singing	05	Merit
Lana Saunders	Piano	P	Pass
Anna Stirk	Theory	05	Merit
Lottie Swainston	Piano	08	Distinction
Katherine Sylvester	Saxophone	02	Pass



The term kicked off with the Young Ambassadors volunteering at the Sainsbury's 2015 School Games in Manchester, where Phoebe Lake was awarded the teamwork baton.

## Condover Hall Netball Trip

The first fixture of the school calendar was Condover Hall, where five teams from a range of year groups travelled to Shropshire in preparation for the County U14 and U16 tournaments. The 25 girls competing were all on the PE Challenge & Extension programme. Four of the Year 8 girls who were selected were asked to compete in the Year 9 category; they enjoyed the challenges of playing with older and more experienced players. The Year 9 team, who were preparing for the county tournament, played in the Year 10 competition and were undefeated throughout the two days until they reached the final where they lost to St Gabriel's Year 10 team, who were the overall winners of the Year 10 tournament. The Year 11 team improved on their play throughout the weekend and competed well against national schools' finalists, Surbiton High. Despite narrowly missing out on a semi-final place, they showed excellent teamwork and commitment.



## Stonar School Equestrian Success

The St Gabriel's Equestrian Team competed in a one-day event at Stonar School, which involved riding a dressage test, jumping a show jumping course and completing a 2.5km cross-country course. Our team of Flora Grime, Emma Ashfield and Megan Norgate rode well and were a credit to the school. The other team of Tori McAlister, Annabelle Marbus, Philla Clifford-Jones and Abi Wilson came first in the 90cm class and our Sixth Form team, Laura McAlister, Holly Hathaway, Mille Marbus and Amie Payne, came sixth. Georgie Vile and Alice McGonnell also took part as individuals.



Stonar is hugely competitive event with hundreds of riders competing over the two days so all the girls should be very proud of themselves.

## Cross Country

On 9 October, the first round of the ESSA Cross Country Cup was held at Downe House. The Junior Girls (JG) team was made up of pupils from Year 8 and the Inter Girls (IG) from Year 9 and Year 10 students. The JGs were required to run a 2500m course through woodland and across different terrain; there were many hills which made the course quite challenging. The IGs ran a similar 3000m course but with an extra hill added on! The rules of the competition are that each school can have up to six runners, but only the top four runners' scores count. The school with the lowest score, and therefore the highest placings, wins. The St Gabriel's JGs scored a total of 133 points and finished in 8<sup>th</sup> place and the IGs scored 57 points and finished in 5<sup>th</sup> place, with Anna Perkins winning the competition by quite some way – an excellent result. Well done to all girls who took part, the individual results are:

**Junior Girls:** Fenella Jones (28), Elizabeth Hutton (34), Saba Khorassani (35), Lily Roston (36), Holly Spencer (42) and Freya Carter (44)

**Inter Girls:** Anna Perkins (1) Isobel Manion (10), Alice McGonnell (16), Libby Stewart-Power (38) and Darcy Scott (30)

## Netball

We have had a successful term in netball and huge progress has been observed in all the teams. Our Monday evening Netball Academy for students on the PE Challenge & Extension programme has been a huge success and the girls have worked extremely hard.

The U14 and U16 teams entered the county tournaments; the U16 team coming third in their section and the U14 team being knocked out in the quarter-finals. Congratulations to the Year 9 netball team who were runners-up at the district tournament.

We have a lot of girls participating in local clubs, including Newbury Netball, Weston Park Blades and Eagles. A special mention must go to Darcey Scott (Year 9), Sophie Bundock (Year 10) and Mitzi Scott (Year 11), who are representing their respective clubs in the South Regional league. All three girls are also currently training with county academies.

## Hockey

The term has been packed full of hockey fixtures for Year 10 and Year 11, with county competitions for both the U14 and U16 age groups. There have been lots of individual and team successes to celebrate throughout the term.





# SENIOR SCHOOL SPORT

The Year 10 and Year 11 teams have participated in the West Berkshire League, while the U14 team and the U16 team have also represented the school in the county tournaments, which was an excellent experience playing against some tough opposition. St Gabriel's has started competing in some of the district indoor tournaments, with the Year 11 team winning their tournament in the penultimate week of term. Mr May has worked extremely hard with the girls, regularly taking them down to Henwick to train and play.

Next term is packed with hockey fixtures for all year groups, with the Year 7, Year 8 and Year 9 teams taking part in the West Berkshire leagues. It is great to see so many of our girls participating for local clubs. Congratulations to Victoria Williams (Year 10), who has been selected to represent Wiltshire U16s JAC county hockey squad, and Mitzi Scott (Year 11), who has been selected for the Berkshire U17 JAC squad.



## Football

Mr Ives has run an extremely well attended Senior School Friday lunchtime Football Club this term. All year groups have been taking part in the district 5-a-side tournaments, with the Year 11 team being the runners up in their category. This club will continue next term with more football fixtures in the diary. Thank you to Mr Ives for his support and enthusiasm in running this club; his efforts are much appreciated.

## Climbing Club

Climbing Club has been extremely popular with the Junior School this term and, as a result, we have decided to open it up to the Senior School. Climbing continues to be on a Tuesday evening but a new club will start running on a Friday evening between 4.00pm-5.30pm. If you would like to continue with this club or join it, please send your reply slip back to school as soon as possible to secure a place.

## Sports Scholars

The Sports Scholars have been introduced to a new mentoring system this term, with each scholar being allocated a mentor in the PE department, who will be in charge of supporting the girls' development. In addition, mentors will collate termly reports from the scholar's coaches, both inside and outside of school, and these will be discussed at the end of each term.

Sports Scholars have attended a scholars' breakfast, where they were asked to set short and long term goals to scaffold their development. Next term, they will be participating in fitness tests as well as having a nutritional talk. We are also running a Challenge & Extension trip to Bath University where the girls will be coached by an England player, receive nutrition and psychology lectures, play in a fixture against a local school as well as watch a

super-league netball match in the evening – an exciting opportunity for lots of girls.

## Individual Achievements

**Swimming - National County Team Championships, Sheffield:** Ellie Cowan (Year 9) was selected to swim for the Berks & South Bucks County Swimming Team in the 12/13 year old age group. She won the 100m breaststroke event with a four second personal best and set a new Junior County Record of 1:13.48s. Ellie has another national competition coming up during the Christmas holidays for which we wish her all the best.



**Ice Skating:** Jessica Gill (Year 9) has qualified for her first British Championships and has also been selected for the National Ice Skating Association (NISA) Regional Development Programme. The NISA programme is for the top skaters in the country, with a view to producing future Olympic champions. Jessica achieved this at the Skate Southern Competition at Lee Valley Ice Centre in March and her place on the squad was confirmed in May. A month later, the Basingstoke Ice Skating Club qualified for the British Championships, where Jess will compete in the Basic Novice B class at the end of December.



I would like to thank both the girls and all the PE staff for their enthusiasm and commitment to sport this term.

**Laura Smith, Director of Sport**