

Newsletter



Wednesday
17 December

What's In This Issue?

Notice Board

House News

Achievements

English

Sports

Community

Sixth Former for a Day

Yesterday, our Year 11 students took a well-deserved break from GCSEs, mocks, and exam preparation to focus on their future plans during our annual Sixth Former for a Day event. The usual timetable was replaced with a bespoke Sixth Form programme, giving students the chance to experience A Level and BTEC courses first-hand. For those considering college or apprenticeships, representatives from Access Creative College and the Robins Foundation shared details of their Post-16 offer and delivered engaging taster sessions, alongside a highly informative talk on apprenticeships by Vanessa from Apprenticeships West.



MR FERNANDES



Important reminder: The deadline for Sixth Form applications is Monday 8 December. We strongly encourage all BFS students who are considering staying with us to apply and secure their place. If you are a student, parent, or carer and would like more information about applying to BFS Sixth Form, please visit our website or email us at sixthform@bristolfreeschool.org.uk.

A NOTE FROM MR FERNANDES



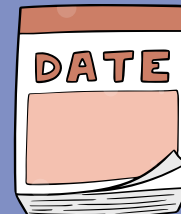
NOTICE BOARD



BFS_Bristol



BFS_Enrichment



NEXT WEEK AT BFS...

Tuesday 9 December

A Level Cyber First lectures at Bristol Cathedral School

Wednesday 10 - Thursday 11 December

Y7-11 Flu vaccinations

Thursday 11 December

Music & Drama Winter Showcase, 3.30pm and 6.30pm

Friday 12 December

Period Products Pop-up - lunchtime, Avenue Shelter

THE FOLLOWING WEEK...

Tuesday 16 December

Y7 Theatre Trip, Bristol Old Vic

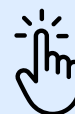
Wednesday 17 December

Christmas Lunch and Jumper Day

Friday 18 December

Last Day of School - 12.30pm finish

QUICK LINKS



Lunch Menu

Extra-Curricular Clubs

Term Dates

Student/Parent Handbook

Past Newsletters

WEX

Year 10 and Year 12 Work Experience Information Evening for parents was held this week. See the [video recording here](#).

Any queries should be sent to:

Y10workexperience@bristolfreeschool.org.uk

Y12workexperience@bristolfreeschool.org.uk

Complete the BFS Parental Survey 2025

Please complete the survey as soon as possible: [Parental Survey](#).

Nasal Flu Vaccination Consent Form

If you have a child in Years 7-11, please complete the Nasal Flu Vaccination Consent Form below to confirm if you would/would not like your child to have the vaccination next week when the Sirona Team are on site. [Flu Vaccination Consent Form](#)

Christmas Lunch and Jumper Day - Wednesday 17 December

Please pre-order Christmas Lunch for your child if they would like to have a Christmas lunch on Wednesday 17 December. Please complete this on ParentPay as soon as possible for planning purposes only. Payment will be taken from your child's dinner account on the day, so please be sure they have sufficient funds in their account to cover the cost of the lunch which is £2.85. If you have any issues with any of the above, please email admin@bristolfreeschool.org.uk

On the same day, we are inviting students to wear something Christmassy – either a Christmas jumper you already have or a Christmas hat, tinsel etc. but no face paints. Students must still wear their school trousers or skirts and school shoes, as well as their shirt, but they will not be expected to wear their tie or blazer. This is not a general non-uniform day, so if students decide not to wear something Christmassy they must wear their usual full school uniform. As a secular school, all Christmas celebrations refer to cultural rather than religious references and so we hope that all students can join in.

Governors

Please access Mrs King's short message about becoming a Governor at BFS: [Governors 2025 on Vimeo](#)

If you would like to find out more, please complete the Expression of Interest Form via this link:

[BFS Governors - Expression of Interest](#)

LOST PROPERTY

We have already accumulated a huge amount of unnamed lost property, including coats, blazers, shoes and bottles.

Please ensure all items are named so they can be returned to you. Visit Student Services to claim your property.



FREE BUS TRAVEL

Around 150,000 children in Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol, North Somerset, and South Gloucestershire aged from 5-15 years old can benefit from free bus travel again this winter (20 December to 4 January) – just by hopping on board, with no bus pass or registration required.

Kids Go Free is being funded using some of the £13.5 million Bus Grant funding secured from the Department for Transport by the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority.

20 December to 4 January



ATTENDANCE

Unauthorised Holidays - Miss School, Miss Out!

Please do not book term-time holidays. The Department for Education does not allow schools to authorise term-time holidays. Even one or two missed days can be highly disruptive to your child's education – remember that each day they will be missing out on 6 lessons of critical learning and vital information in tutor time. They will also be missing out on social times with their friends and all the extra clubs, trips and events in school.

Parents who take unauthorised holidays can expect to receive penalty notice fines from Bristol City Council. Currently the costs of penalty notices are:

- £80 per parent/carer per child for the first offence in a rolling three-year period, rising to £160 if not paid within 28 days.
- £160 per parent/carer per child for the second offence in a rolling three-year period.
- If a third offence occurs in a rolling three-year period, alternative action such as prosecution will result.

Prosecution can result in fines of up to £2500 and / or 3 months imprisonment, as well as a criminal record.

SEND EVENING

SEND Information Evening

Wednesday 14 January (online via Teams - link to follow)

Dear parents and carers,

If you are interested in learning more regarding SEND provision at BFS, including our tiered approach and graduated response, we are holding an online information evening on Wednesday 14 January starting at 5pm.

This will also include an explanation of our ordinarily available provision (OAP) and how teaching is adapted to meet the needs of our SEND learners.

The link to join the meeting will be shared in future newsletters. We look forward to you joining us.

The SEND Team

92% attendance



is like watching all of The Traitors but missing the finale

Studybugs

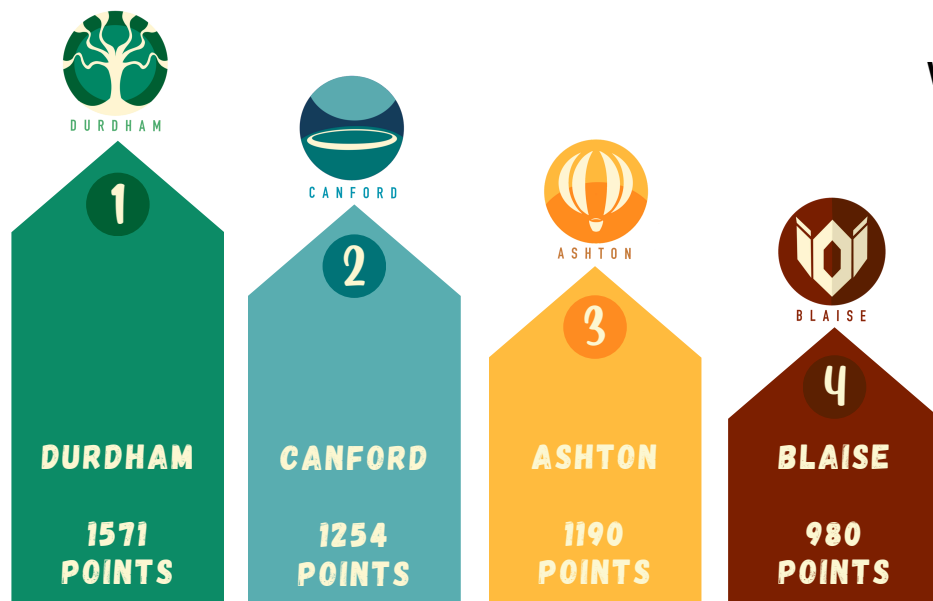
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HOUSE NEWS



HOUSE POINTS



Well done to **Durdham** House for earning the most House points this week!

Well done Durdham!

Top House Point Earners

Congratulations to our top House point earners this week!

	Ashton	Blaise	Canford	Durdham
Year 7	Seren G, Nir K	Freya B	Oscar J	Oliver P
Year 8	Willoughby S	Mia B-G	Sophie M	Abdurrehman A
Year 9	Harriet S	James C	Henry G, Joseph T	Aiden C
Year 10	Aidan T, Molly W, Kledis H	Isla G	Nayla A	Mabel W
Year 11	Edith K	Sonny S, Daisy H	Peter S	Libby W
Year 12	Joshua M	Madeleine H	Indigo H	Laura B
Year 13	Reuben B	Harry R, Freya S	Emily W	Isaac G

CLUBS

BFS offer a range of fantastic extra-curricular clubs that run at lunchtime and after school.

From Board Games Club on Monday, Badminton on Tuesday, Programming Club on Wednesday, Cipher Club on Thursday and Choir on Friday. There is something for everyone!

New clubs include:

- Years 7-9 **Taylor Swift Club** during Wednesday lunchtime
- Years 7-10 **Maths Challenge Club** on Wednesday after school
- Years 7-8 **Warhammer Club** on Friday after school

See our [Clubs Booklet](#) for more information.





Congratulations to this year's successful Sports Leaders!. Our 30 successful candidates will join this year's Sport Leader Programme and will be attending 12 weeks of training where they will learn how to develop into a great Sport Leader and will organise and lead sports days at local primary schools.



Darcey F



Hannah B



Katy T



Bella S



Dexter C-S



Fin S



Thomas E



Max R



Emily R



Zach O



Oli E



Oli A



Tiana M



Joey J



Joseph G



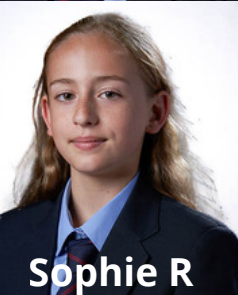
Zack M



Thomas H



Fraser B



Sophie R



Emily M



Cian D



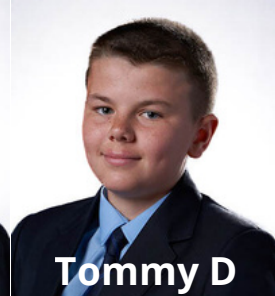
Hazel I



Pippa M



Samuel F



Tommy D



Sam R



Hattie J



Ella M



Will S

Your first session will be Thursday 15 January in the Sports Hall with Mrs Wynne-Jones.

Well done!



Subject Spotlight

English



MEET THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT



MR GOWEN



MS LUDWELL



MISS MCMURDO



MR TREEN



MS BATE



MS MARSH



MR HARRIS



MISS SAYER



MR GOWEN

Hello, I'm Mr Gowen - Head of English - and have been working at BFS since 2019. Prior to teaching, I worked in hospitality and managed a pub in Hampshire, though a raucous ASDA Christmas party put me off the idea of pub management for a long-term career. I have a first-class honours degree in English Literature that saw me specialise in graphic novels, the works of James Joyce, and Derridean deconstruction. I then completed my PGCE at the Institute of Education before working in various schools around London, including Highgate Wood where I first met Miss Sayer.

Outside the classroom, I do my best to stay in shape through cycling, gym, yoga, and football - where I play with men in their twenties who are much fitter than me - but have to let me play because I'm the only one grown up enough to book the pitch! I'm also keen on home renovations, after naively purchasing a 'doer upper', and will happily talk to anyone about tiling for hours on end having completed several courses.

If I was an animal, I'd be a goat because I have a similar temperament.



MS LUDWELL

Hi, I'm Ms Ludwell. I've proudly been part of the vibrant English team at BFS since 2018 and currently serve as Head of Year 11 - a role I absolutely love. After completing my English Literature degree at Plymouth Marjon and my PGCE at Swansea University, I discovered my passion for inspiring young people through language and literature.

In the classroom, I teach Key Stage 3 and 4 English, helping students unlock their creativity and confidence in writing. Beyond lessons, I'm deeply involved with Year 11, making sure this milestone year is memorable - from prom and leavers' hoodies to GCSE success, results day celebrations, and the legendary End-of-Year video.

When I'm not planning exciting experiences for my students, you'll find me exploring scenic trails with my adorable 8-month-old Frenchie-Shar Pei cross, Reg. We're constantly stopped on walks because, honestly, he might just be the cutest puppy ever.

If I were an animal, I would be a domesticated dog as I see the soft life Reg leads and I'd want that!



MISS MCMURDO

This is my third year teaching English at BFS.

My favourite topics to teach in English are novels (Jekyll and Hyde to Year 11) and creative writing. I love reading modern classics and my favourite authors are Margaret Atwood, Barbara Kingsolver and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. I am also the founder of the BFS Staff Book Club. I am really looking forward to teaching The Boxer to Year 9s for the first time in January.

I am a Year 9 tutor - Go Durdham house! - and if I were animal, I would be a dog (golden retriever).



MR TREEN

My name is Mr Treen, and I joined BFS in 2018. I studied English literature at the University of Exeter. After spending the majority of a year in North Africa, teaching conversational English, as a volunteer, I began to pursue a career in teaching. I completed my PGCE with the University of Bristol in 2017. Alongside teaching English to each Key Stage in the school, I am fortunate enough to be the school's Progression Coordinator - helping students with their applications to competitive entry courses at university.

Outside of school, I enjoy learning new skills and crafts, predominantly hedgelaying. I have competed in several competitions and came first in the Novice Pairs category of a regional competition last year. If I were an animal, I would be a brown bear so that I could enter a pleasant torpor for the winter months.



MS BATE

I was inspired to become a teacher by my own English teacher, whose kindness, support and passion for the subject sparked my love of literature and learning. Teaching allows me to share that enthusiasm and help students discover the power of language and ideas.

I studied English and trained to teach in Southampton, and I am currently completing a Master's in Teaching at the University of Oxford. I have taught for nearly a decade and have been a Head of Year for five years, which has given me the privilege of supporting students both academically and personally.

Outside the classroom, I enjoy going to gigs, reading (when I'm not studying!), and spending time with my two cats, Tom and Jerry.

If I were an animal I'd live the cat life.



MS MARSH

Hello! I'm Ms Marsh, and I've been teaching at BFS for nearly five years. I teach English and PSHE and am the proud tutor of 11TG5.

Some of my absolute favourite texts to teach include Macbeth at GCSE and Frankenstein at A Level. When I'm not in the classroom, I'm usually spending time on the sofa with a good book, alongside my Cavapoo, Arnie, and my rescue cat, (Cat)Ziki. I'm currently reading Dream Count by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie - a brilliant recommendation from Ms McMurdo (she always knows the best books!).

When I asked my tutees what animal they think I'd be, after lots of debate, the top answers were narrowed down to: a lamb, a meerkat, or a mantis (as I am often seen wearing green).



MR HARRIS

I am proud to be a teacher as I firmly believe that every child should have the best opportunities in life. English can be a crucial part in unlocking these opportunities and changing lives. Over the years I have been lucky enough to teach in London, Reading, Bristol and Mongolia.

At home I live with one wife, two children and two kittens. My top hobbies include reading, long walks in the countryside, and roast dinners. Of course, if I were an animal I would be... an alpaca!



MISS SAYER

My name is Miss Sayer and I am the Deputy Head of English at BFS. Since qualifying as a teacher in 2014, I have been fortunate to teach in a range of schools across London, Kenya and Bristol.

My favourite thing to teach is Shakespeare. Despite being written more than 400 years ago, his plays are still so relevant to society today, tackling topics from love and relationships to misogyny and racism.

Outside of the classroom, you'll probably find me cooking, reading and spending time with my cat Mona.

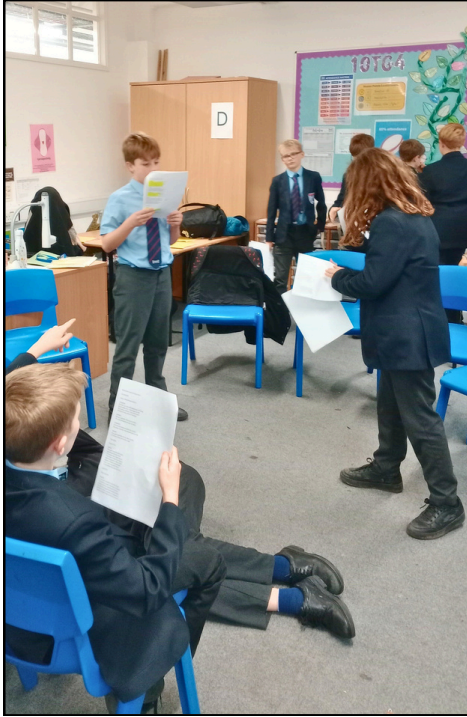
If I were an animal, I would be an octopus because I love being in the water and solving puzzles.



It's been an exciting week for Year 7 in English. First of all, they were mixed up into new English classes and got to meet their new classmates and teachers. And what better way to bond as a new class than to put on a performance? Rehearsals are well underway for our annual Year 7 promenade performance of A Midsummer Night's Dream. Each class is responsible for performing a scene from the play, using their acting skills as well as costumes, props and music to bring Shakespeare's story to life. The English corridor has been filled with fairies, scorned lovers and even pompous actors with the head of a donkey!



MISS SAYER



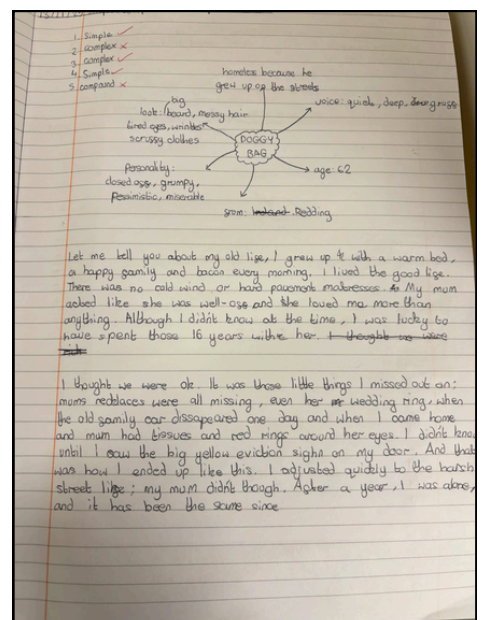
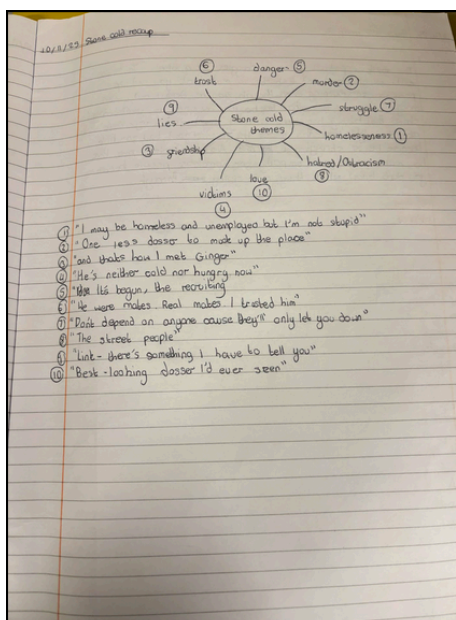
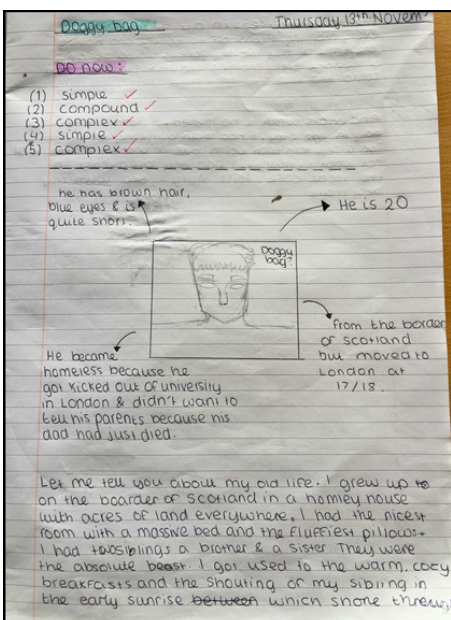
This term, Year 8 have been exploring the world of Detective Fiction alongside the gripping crime thriller Stone Cold. It's been an exciting term of creativity and critical thinking!



MISS MCMURDO

Creative Writing: Students have been crafting their own detective stories and characters, building on the skills and knowledge gained in Term 1.

Stone Cold Study: In preparation for an upcoming essay, pupils have delved into the novel's context, researching themes such as homelessness and societal attitudes, whilst also developing a deeper understanding of the characters.





This term, Year 9 students have been immersing themselves in one of Shakespeare's most famous tragedies, *Romeo and Juliet*. They have not only enjoyed reading the play but have also explored its deeper themes and the complexities of its key characters. Through lively discussions and close analysis, students have considered the impact of fate, family, and conflict on the lives of the young lovers.

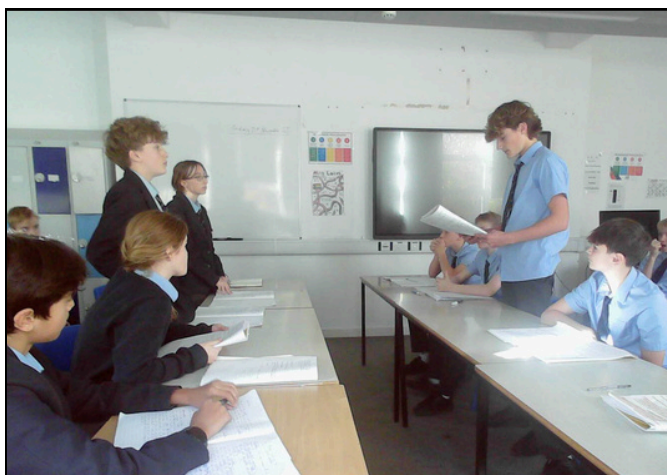


MS BATE

Alongside their study of the play, Year 9 have been refining their creative writing skills. A particular focus has been on using shifts in tone to create compelling narratives and evoke emotion in their readers. This has allowed students to experiment with style and voice, developing confidence in their own writing.

A personal highlight of the term for me was a fantastic debate led by my wonderful class, which gave students the opportunity to practise their speaking and listening skills in a dynamic and engaging way.

Looking ahead to next term, we are really excited to begin studying *The Boxer*, a powerful and thought-provoking novel. Students will continue to develop their understanding of voice and perspective in writing, exploring how authors craft authentic characters and narratives. It promises to be another term full of creativity and challenge!



Currently Year 10 are exploring "*The Scottish Play*" (*Macbeth* by William Shakespeare). Recently they were treated to – and performed in – a raucous staging by Sky Blue Theatre.



MR HARRIS

This dark tragedy is as relevant as it ever was, against an international backdrop of fear and discontent, despotic rulers and political machinations. More pertinently we can ask ourselves how far we should go to fulfil our own ambitions, who we can truly trust and whether the righteous can truly flourish in our sometimes unpredictable world?

Alongside this, we recently have been flexing our creative muscles with an eye on GCSE English Language. Here's a selection of short excerpts that I think really showcase some of the talented writers we have coming through the ranks:



"The blanket of night covered the sky, making not even the stars visible to the naked eye."

"Growing up I was very nosy, I wanted to know everything."

"His bedroom floor was a disgrace. Old clothes littered it, like a graveyard filled with lost souls."

"The streets appear lifeless; this part of Brooklyn never sees action."





This term, Year 11 have truly shone. Their dedication to mastering language skills has been inspiring, and they are well on their way to becoming confident, articulate writers. Alongside this, students have delved into the world of Victorian literature, exploring either Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde or A Christmas Carol. Through detailed analysis of characters, plot, and the writer's intentions, they have demonstrated impressive insight and critical thinking.



MS LUDWELL

Their ability to evaluate literary methods and apply them to extracts and essays has been outstanding. Class discussions have been vibrant and thoughtful, showcasing excellent oracy skills. Most recently, Year 11 approached their mock exams with resilience and determination, revising for all three English papers with admirable self-motivation. Next up: DIRT lessons, where students will respond to feedback and refine their written work to an even higher standard.



Year 12 have been delving deeply into Mary Shelley's Frankenstein, exploring how the novel operates on multiple levels. They have been learning new concepts such as framing narratives, the layered structure of Walton's letters and Victor's account, and how shifting settings - from the icy Arctic to the Swiss Alps - shape mood and meaning. Alongside this, they have examined the Gothic tradition, considering how Shelley uses darkness, isolation, and the sublime to heighten tension.



MR GOWEN

The class has also blended literary analysis with historical context, connecting the text to Greek myth through the Promethean allegory, and situating it within the intellectual currents of Romanticism and the Enlightenment. Their discussions have been lively and insightful, especially when tackling themes of male privilege, queer theory, and society's harsh judgments based on appearances.

Next, they will compare Shelley's nineteenth-century vision with Kazuo Ishiguro's more contemporary Never Let Me Go, exploring how both texts interrogate creation, identity, and ethical responsibility across different eras.



Our Year 13 students have been working incredibly hard this term as they prepare for their mock exams. They are also adding the finishing touches to their comparative NEA piece, exploring Pink Mist, alongside their chosen partner text.

Once mocks are complete, we will dive into Rossetti's poetry - the final taught component of the A Level course. Looking ahead to the new year, students will have the exciting opportunity to attend a lecture by Professor Green, an expert on the prose texts we study.



MS MARSH

ENGLISH



Book Review Challenge

We are asking students from all year groups to complete a book review to be featured in the newsletter.

What? A book review of a recent book you enjoyed.

How long? 200 - 250 words.

How to submit? Email or hand it in to Miss McMurdo, DG08.

Why? Miss McMurdo is choosing submissions to go in the newsletter, and you will get 5 house points for handing it in (10 house points if it is chosen to be in the newsletter). It is also a great way to share book recommendations!



MISS MCMURDO

We look forward to reading your reviews!

***The Help* by Kathryn Stockett** **Review by Mia, Year 8**

1962, Jackson Mississippi. A world where white women play bridge while black maids raise their children. Stockett transports us to a place and time where racial segregation is at its worst.

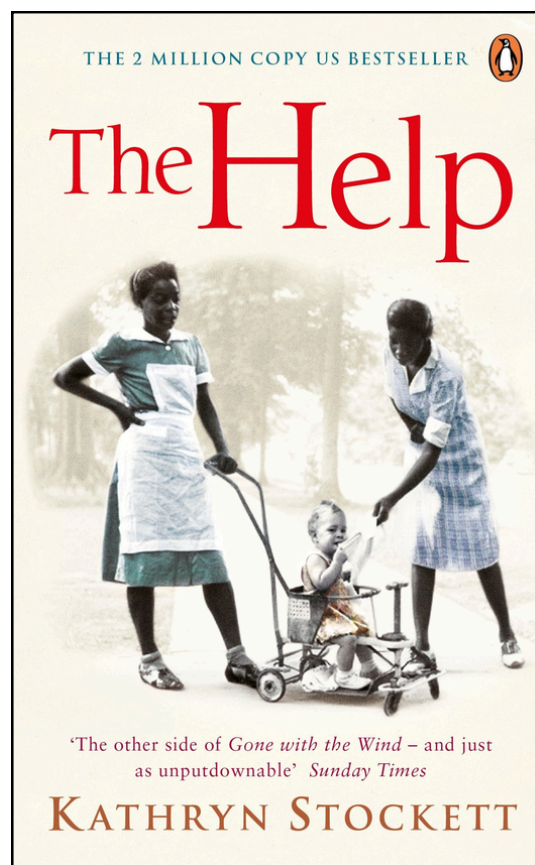
Aibileen has spent her whole life raising white babies, treating them as her own, but isn't allowed to share the bathroom. After the tragic loss of her own son, Aibileen is still forced to go to work and look after her 'second child', Mae Mobley, whose mother is too busy playing bridge to appreciate her own daughter.

Then there's Minnie. A sass-mouthed black maid, famous for her cooking but also for being fired by ringleader Hilly Holbrook for reasons too terrible to talk about. Her new boss is the only woman in Jackson who doesn't know of her reputation.

Last, but not least, there's Miss 'Skeeter' Phelan – a tall, young white woman, graduate of Ole Miss and employee of the local newspaper. She longs to become a writer, but Mama won't let anything get in the way of marrying her daughter off, regardless of her ambitions.

An unlikely friendship ignites between our three protagonists, and their bravery and tenacity change the future of Jackson forever.

I couldn't put this book down and loved learning about this vital chapter in history through such vivid and engaging characters. It was hilarious and heartbreaking, and I would thoroughly recommend it for Year 8s and above.



What will you be reading over the Christmas break?



MR LANGEVELDT

BFS SPORTS



BFS_TeamPE



MRS BALLARD

Important message for parents/carers regarding sports fixtures:

If your student cannot attend a sports fixture, as the responsible adult of the child, you are required to email admin to inform the school that the student cannot attend at least 24 hours before. This enables the PE team to fill the place of your student so that a full team can be fielded for the fixture. If you do not reply, then it is assumed your student will be attending, and that the team is full. Please do reply if your student cannot attend the fixture.

This week our Year 7, 8 and 9 teams played against Montpelier High School. All three teams fought well in the cold conditions and some extra thanks to those individuals that stepped up and played up an age group.

The results were as follows:

Year 7 won 9-0

Year 8 won 9-3

Year 9 lost 11-5 (POM - Aurelia)

NETBALL



BASKETBALL

In a highly anticipated rematch against local rivals, Cotham School, the BFS Sixth Form squad turned the tables on last year's result with a stunning performance. The team's focus and disciplined play shone throughout, delivering a dominant 57-15 win.

The highlight came late in the game when Ido and Joey teamed up for a breathtaking alley-oop that sent the BFS supporters leaping to their feet.

Well done to every player and all supporters who cheered the team on to victory!



UPCOMING FIXTURES

Tuesday 9 December	Y7 and 8 Trampolining Competition	Trinity Academy
Thursday 11 December	U16 Basketball vs Fairfield High School	Fairfield High School

COMMUNITY AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Residential Coaching Camps 2026

Marlborough College, Wiltshire

27 July - 31 July 2026: U13 Girls' Coaching Camp
27 July - 31 July 2026: U15 Girls' Coaching Camp

ESFA ENTERPRISES COACHING CAMPS

Join ESFA Enterprises for its two residential coaching camps this summer and help young players to develop their skills with incredible coaching in a stunning location. These two courses will provide players with a one-of-a-kind coaching experience, using Marlborough College's world class facilities in a safe and nurturing environment, where empowered, young players will leave with a bespoke development plan to allow them to continue with confidence in their footballing journey.

£1,200 per player for 4 night's accommodation, coaching and extra-curricular activities across a 5-day period plus all food and drink, a welcome pack and branded attire.

scan me

ESFA ENTERPRISES

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Register today at esfaenterprises.com
Contact: esfaenterprises@gmail.com

CHRISTMAS ACTIVITY CAMPS

£25 A DAY!

BLAISE PRIMARY SCHOOL

29TH, 30TH DEC & 2ND JAN

5 - 14 YEARS

10AM - 2PM

CHRISTMAS CRAFTS AND BRACELET MAKING

FUN SPORTS LIKE FOOTBALL, DODGEBALL, AND MORE!

DELICIOUS LUNCHES AND SNACKS

SWIMMING INCLUDED!

BOOK ONLINE AT [HTTPS://EEQU.ORG/BOOK/7504/DATES](https://eequ.org/book/7504/DATES) OR SCAN THE QR CODE.

CHRISTMAS ACTIVITY CAMPS

NO COST

BLAISE PRIMARY SCHOOL

29TH, 30TH DEC & 2ND JAN

5 - 14 YEARS

10AM - 2PM

CHRISTMAS CRAFTS AND BRACELET MAKING

FUN SPORTS LIKE FOOTBALL, DODGEBALL, AND MORE!

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** NO COST FOR THOSE ON BENEFIT RELATED FREE SCHOOL MEALS

BATH RUGBY

BATH RUGBY

Easter Residential Camps

Boys U12-U16

Walhampton School

30 March – 3 April
School Ln, Lymington

Prior Park

13 – 17 April
Ralph Allen Dr, Bath