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Dear Parents, Carers, and Students,

As we come to the end of Term 3, I want to take a moment to reflect on what has been a truly uplifting few weeks at our school. This term has showcased the very best of our community - its talent, its compassion, and its drive to lead and inspire.

One of the real highlights was our fantastic school production of Little Shop of Horrors. It was a wonderful celebration of creativity, teamwork, and perseverance, and it reminded us all of the power of the arts in bringing a community together. My sincere thanks go to Mrs Jerome, Ms Kennard, and Mr Fearon for their exceptional leadership, dedication, and countless hours behind the scenes. Their commitment ensured that the production was a memorable triumph for everyone involved.

This week, we also celebrated our very first Empathy Week, an event led entirely by our remarkable student leaders. Throughout the week they encouraged us to reflect on why empathy is such an important skill, both in school and in the wider world. They created a powerful video exploring this message, designed a thoughtful bookmark filled with practical empathy tips, and today we unveiled our Empathy Wall, a collaborative display shaped by contributions from all tutor groups. It has been inspiring to see students take ownership of such an impactful initiative.

Student leadership has also continued to flourish with the launch of the BFS Podcast, our new fortnightly student-produced and student-presented podcast. Each episode offers helpful guidance, insights, and light-hearted interviews with both students and staff. We hope it will quickly become essential listening for our whole school community in the months ahead.

A brief reminder to our Year 11 and Year 13 students: Mock 2 exams begin immediately after the half-term break. We encourage you to use the coming week to prepare carefully, revise strategically, and find moments of rest so you can return ready to do your very best.

As we approach the break, I would also like to extend my very best wishes to our Muslim families who will begin Ramadan over half term. We have sent a letter home outlining our provision and support during this important time, and we wish you a peaceful and blessed month.

Finally, I would like to wish all students, staff, and families a very happy (and hopefully dry) half-term break. Thank you, as always, for your continued support and for the energy and positivity you bring to our school community.

Warm regards,

Mrs S King
Headteacher



MRS KING



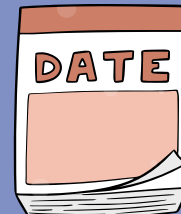
NOTICE BOARD



BFS_Bristol



BFS_Enrichment



NEXT WEEK AT BFS

Tuesday 24 February - Wednesday 4 March

Y11 & Y13 Mock Exams

Wednesday 25 February

Y7 Subject Evening

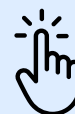
Y12 Pastoral Day

Thursday 26 February

Y7 Subject Evening

Y10 Macbeth Trip

QUICK LINKS



Lunch Menu

Extra-Curricular Clubs

Term Dates

Key Dates

Student/Parent Handbook

Past Newsletters

YEAR 11 PE

On Friday 27 February, Year 11 students will attend core PE either P3 and 4, or P5 and P6.

If students would like to revise during their core PE lesson a classroom will be available to them with a PE teacher supervising. Revision sessions are silent, independent study sessions, where students can optimise the time given to them. This will not be a chance for students to sit in groups and talk. Students should bring with them revision resources as they will not be allowed out to other subjects to get resources.

A sport option will still be provided for students who would rather be outside, getting exercise, and having a mental release from the exam period. Any questions, speak to your PE teacher.

WE'RE HIRING

Apply Now

Assistant SENDCo (Intervention)

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.

ATTENDANCE PERCENTAGES

As Term 3 ends, please check your child's attendance on the MCAS app. Remember that good attendance is 96% and above.

90% attendance equates to 18 missed days and 108 missed lessons as well as clubs, trips, events and social time with friends. Miss school, miss out!

Recent DfE research has shown that persistently absent pupils in secondary school could earn £10,000 less at age 28 compared to pupils with near-perfect attendance; and that for each additional day of absence between Years 7 to 11, the typical pupil could miss out on an average of £750 in future lifetime earnings.

The research has also shown that Year 11 pupils with near-perfect attendance are almost twice as likely to achieve grade 5 in English and Maths GCSE, compared to similar pupils attending 90-95% of the time. In other words, missing just 10 extra days a year reduces the likelihood of achieving these grades by around 50%!



ATTENDANCE MATTERS

100%	0 DAYS	0 LESSONS MISSED
99%	1 DAY	6 LESSONS MISSED
98%	3 DAYS	18 LESSONS MISSED
97%	5 DAYS	30 LESSONS MISSED
96%	7 DAYS	42 LESSONS MISSED
94%	11 DAYS	66 LESSONS MISSED
93%	12.5 DAYS	75 LESSONS MISSED
92%	14 DAYS	84 LESSONS MISSED
90%	18 DAYS	108 LESSONS MISSED

Maximise your potential.
Attend school every day.

ATTENDANCE

TERM 4 KEY DATES

Monday 16 - Friday 20 February		Half Term - School closed to all students
	Monday 23 February	First Day of Term 4
	Tuesday 24 - Thursday 5 March	Year 11 & Year 13 - Mock Exams
	Wednesday 25 February	Year 12 - Pastoral Day
	Wednesday 25 - Thursday 26 February	Year 7 - Subject Evening
	Tuesday 3 March	Year 8 - HPV Vaccinations (+ Y9 catch ups)
	Thursday 5 March	Year 10 - RP Short Course Mock Exam
	Thursday 5 - Wednesday 11 March	Year 11 & Year 13 - Mock MFL Oral Exams
	Monday 9 & Tuesday 10 March	Year 9 - CRP Training
	Thursday 12 March	Year 13 - A Level Music Performance Exam
	Thursday 2 April	Last Day of Term 4
	Monday 30 March	Year 11 - GCSE Drama Practical Exam
	Thursday 2 April	Last Day of Term 4
	Friday 3 - Saturday 11 April	Ski Trip
Friday 3 - Friday 17 April		Easter Holidays - School closed to all students
	Monday 20 April	First Day of Term 5

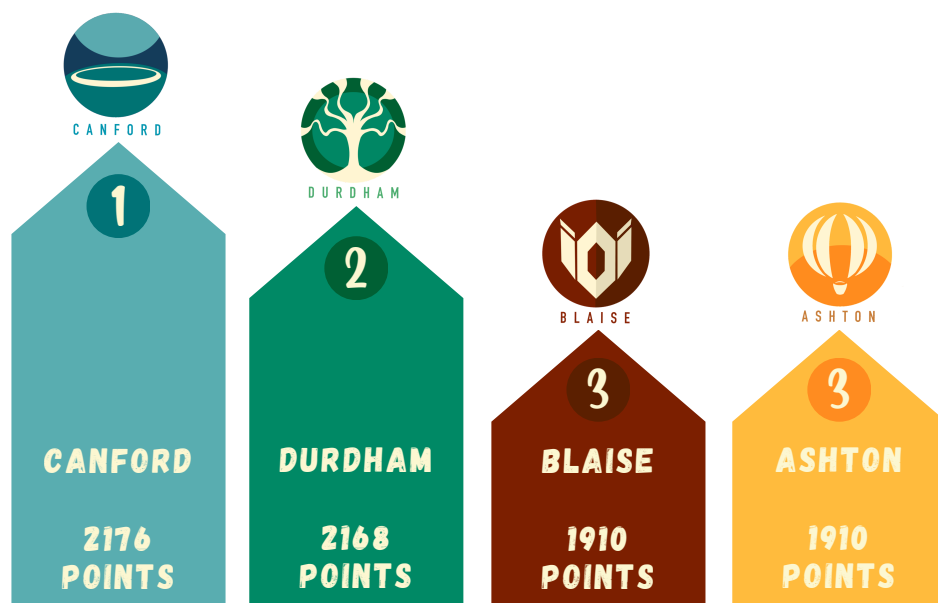
Key dates for Terms 5-6 are available on the School website's noticeboard:
www.bristolfreeschool.org.uk/noticeboard



HOUSE NEWS



HOUSE POINTS



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

Well done Canford!

Top House Point Earners

Congratulations to our top House point earners this week!

	Ashton	Blaise	Canford	Durdham
Year 7	Alice H	Freya B	Islaa G	Amara P, Armel C
Year 8	Thomas H, Willoughby S	Sophie R	Dexter T	Abdurrehman A
Year 9	Lauren S	William R	Cara S	Kushi K
Year 10	Nameera A, Miranda R	Lauren R, Alexander T	Nancy G	Ava W, Evie M
Year 11	Laila H	Omar T	Chloe D	Zakaria N



HOUSE FRIDAYS



MR JOHNSON

Last week for House Friday, students braved the rain to compete in a rugby targets competition - putting their rugby throwing skills to the test by hitting targets from distance.

Our two winners were Jacob E (Y8) for Canford and Josh H (Y9) for Durdham.



Today, to mark the end of Empathy Week, and raise some money for charity, we held a Valentines themed bake sale. See you all after half term for some more exciting House Fridays events!

HOUSE FRIDAYS



EMPATHY WEEK



This week, our students took part in our inaugural Empathy Week - a dedicated time to explore what empathy really means and why it matters in our everyday lives. Throughout the week, students learnt that empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings and perspectives of others. Unlike sympathy, which involves feeling for someone, empathy encourages us to feel with another person - an important life skill that strengthens relationships, improves communication, and fosters kindness.

Students took part in a variety of activities, including:

Understanding Empathy

They watched a short video produced by our Head Students discussing the core traits of empathy, such as active listening, kindness, compassion, curiosity about others, and perspective-taking. These conversations help students recognise how empathy shows up in their own lives.

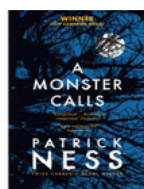


Reflection and Discussion

In their tutor groups they reflected on questions like:

- How often do we show empathy?
- Why is empathy important in the world today?
- What does it feel like when others show empathy to us?

These guided discussions encouraging self-awareness and helped students to think about how they interact with friends, family, and the wider community.



Mr. Treen's pick
(age 12+)



Mrs. Marsh's pick
(age 14+)



Ms. McMurdo's pick
(age 16+)



Ms. McMurdo's pick
(16+)



Ms. McMurdo's pick
(age 11+)



Ms. McMurdo's pick
(age 15+)



Reading for Empathy

Students are also encouraged to explore a selection of reading recommendations chosen by staff. Reading diverse stories naturally builds empathy by opening our minds to other people's experiences, thoughts, and feelings.

Empathy Wall Display

Throughout the week, each student wrote reflections, quotes, stories, or inspirations on a heart-shaped template. These are now displayed on our Empathy Wall, creating a whole-school celebration of thoughtful, compassionate ideas.



Empathy Week is a wonderful opportunity for students to build emotional understanding and strengthen our school community. We encourage parents to talk to their children about what they are learning and share moments of empathy at home too. Thank you to our Head Students for leading on such an important initiative.

STUDENT CORNER

YOUTH COUNCIL

I wanted to be part of the Bristol City Youth Council (BCYC) because I believe in making the voices of young people louder and actually listened to. After all, won't the younger generations be impacted by the decisions of our government or council for longer than those making said decisions? I wanted to be part of that movement.



Amelia F

The process started with an application form: essentially explaining my willingness to do the job. Parts of this would be put in my manifesto. I had to send off a picture of myself but, most importantly, a video, maximum one minute, to explain why young people should vote for me, what my aims were and how I wished to achieve them.

The experience was unique - I won't pretend that having the videos played on repeat in the dining hall wasn't mortifying. However, if you are even remotely considering a career in politics or would just like to speak up for young people, I would highly recommend it. If elected, you will stand for a two-year term of office. This year's candidates will receive a call on Thursday 12 February to find out if they have been successful. The presentation and announcement will be on Friday 13 February. Good luck to all the candidates.

LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS REVIEW

From 27 to the 30 of January 2026, Little Shop of Horrors, was a unique and creative production. The musical was a fun-filled story where a plant/monster grew to thrive off eating blood and humans. The Little Shop of Horrors showcased superb acting skills and talent. We are looking forward to next year's performance.



Ruby B



Lara W



Margot S



Amelia D

We interviewed Miss Kennard to get her thoughts on the show:

What was your favourite song in the play? I think it was either Suddenly Seymour or Feed Me because Suddenly Seymour was such a heartfelt song and Feed Me was such a fun song on stage.

What was the experience of working with the band like? It was so lovely to see them come together and put together such an amazing performance. They were all professional! Well done!

Was it easy to recover from mistakes made? It depends if it was onstage or in the band. If it was onstage, it was trickier to recover from because it was 10 people that needed to adjust, but they did so well to catch up. Whereas if it was a band mistake the members of the band would play on masking the mistake made.

What was your favourite scene? It was definitely 'It's just the gas' it was such a funny (and dark) scene that I really enjoyed. Well done to the whole crew cast and band members of Little Shop of Horrors!

We also asked Mrs Jerome a few questions about the play:

Out of all the amazing songs in the play what was your favourite? My favourite overall was definitely Meek Shall Inherit as it was such a fun song to set on stage.

What was your favourite scene in the play? I loved the all the death scenes in the play as they were so fun to choreograph and figure out how the plant was actually going to eat the person.

Who was your favourite character in the play? It was definitely Audrey 2 (or Toewy) because I loved the fact that it was a talking plant taking over the world!

What would you rate Little Shop of Horrors out of ten? The play was incredible and I would definitely give the production a 100/10 by far! Well done everyone! You should feel so proud!

Overall, the play was fantastic! It looked amazing, it sounded amazing, everyone who took part in it WELL DONE! A massive thank you to Miss Kennard, Mrs Jerome, Miss Humphries and Mr Fearon for putting on such a great play.



Subject Spotlight

PE



In PE, students follow our 'ME in PE' curriculum throughout KS3 and into KS4. In Year 7 students learn about the 4 components of ME in PE - Physical (fundamental movement skills), Creative (Tactics and strategies/decision making), Social (teamwork, rules and regulations) and Thinking (analysis of self and others). In Year 8 students develop their knowledge and understanding of these 4 strands and in Year 9 students enhance their learning through either a recreational PE strand or a competitive PE strand.

Moving into key stage 4, independence is promoted, with students staying in their competitive or recreational groups in Year 10, to secure their learning and understanding, with the competitive group working at a GCSE PE standard, and in Year 11 students have the opportunity to promote their independence through selecting options of a variety of different sports and activities each term.



In Term 1, all students participated in their striking and fielding unit of work, where they participated in cricket and rounders to embed the 4 key strands in the curriculum. Term 2 began the 'autumn/winter' rotation of activities, which has carried into Term 3 and will continue into Term 4 and 5. Across these terms students rotate between, net & wall (volleyball and badminton), aesthetics (dance and gymnastics) and invasion 1 & 2 (netball/basketball & hockey/touch rugby).

This year there has been a big push on developing the curriculum so that students' learning is consistent, even when weather is poor or facilities are not available due to exams or other school requirements and this has had a huge, positive impact on students' progress in PE and we, as a team, are proud to be able to keep standards high within lessons and allow for students to continue to develop their learning in this core subject.



We also have designed a House competition structure, which allows students to participate during lessons in House competitions! In Term 1, we had 'battle ball', Term 2 was 'netball/basketball', there will be no event in Term 3 as not all students will have completed their learning for net and wall, so Term 4 will see House volleyball! Term 5 there will be House touch rugby and hockey competitions, alongside Sports Day in Term 6.



Not only have we had a busy year so far with all the core PE curriculum opportunities, our GCSE PE and A Level students have been working tirelessly with their coursework, alongside their academic studies, with moderation now knocking at the door for both groups, we want to wish them all the best! We believe in you!

We have also started GCSE Dance as an option for KS4 this year, which has been a great addition for our students. The class have been exploring different components of dance in their theory lessons, whilst applying them in a practical setting, with their focus this term being around developing a group dance ready for STAGES dance competition on 7 March.



We have had a great start to the extra-curricular year also. Our no-cancel culture has really come into its own this year and we are pleased to be able to provide a wide range of clubs and activities in PE, both linked to the Bristol League and beyond.

Clubs and fixtures run and attend this year include:

- Cross country (Bristol League and Avon Schools)
- Netball and Rugby (Bristol League)
- Indoor hockey
- Basketball (Bristol League)
- Year 7 dance (winter showcase performance)
- Trampolining
- Football (Bristol League)
- Year 8 & 9 girls volleyball
- Sports leaders (Year 8 & 9)
- Year 7, 8 & 9 dance (STAGES)
- Swimming (Bristol Schools competition)



We are also pleased to be able to enter competitions outside of the Bristol League or local community. This year, we have also played various independent schools in the area and have created good links with Bristol Grammar School, Redmaids' High School and QEH where we have attended rugby and netball fixtures. Our Year 10 students have also played in the 'Sisters n Sport' netball competition and our Year 11 boys will be attending the Rosslyn Park 7s tournament in Term 4 - we wish you all the luck in the world!

Towards the end of Term 2 we held our annual Sports Leaders interviews, where Year 8 and 9 students have the opportunity to apply to be part of the programme where they learn what it means to be a leader through sport. The Sports Leaders then design lunch time sessions during Term 5 and 6 for key stage 3 students to participate in that will link to the House Cup, as well as being able to support various primary school sports days in the summer term. We want to congratulate the successful students this year! You have been fantastic so far and we cannot wait to see you shine in the various sporting environments when the course is complete at the end of Term 4!



So, a busy year so far in the PE world, with so much more to come! Keep your eyes peeled each week in the newsletter for updates and celebrations.



MS SLATER



MS URCH

BFS SPORTS



BFS_TeamPE



MRS BALLARD

Last week, the Year 8 boys football team faced Orchard School. It was a wet and cold one, but the boys were absolutely incredible! Ollie A was captain and organised the team as they were a solid 11, no subs. The boys rocked up, were ready, and brought their A-game against Orchard School, finishing with a 4-1 scoreline to BFS! Well done to all the boys. Goals scored by Eddie, Charlie and Louis.

Despite the rain on Monday afternoon, our Year 10 and Year 11 boys football teams travelled to Redland Green School full of determination, ready to take on our local rivals in two fiercely contested fixtures. Well done to all players.



Year 11 - A Late Equaliser Lights Up the Rain

The Year 11s kicked off first in what proved to be a tight, hard-fought encounter. RGS enjoyed long spells of possession, but our boys showed real grit and organisation to stay in the game. Their persistence paid off late in the second half when Austin unleashed an absolute screamer, firing into the goal to level the match at 1-1. A brilliant moment of quality in tough conditions.

Year 10 - Super-Sub Seals the Win

The Year 10s followed with another incredibly well-matched game, with both sides battling end-to-end. We struck first thanks to a fantastic finish from Sam, before RGS hit back with an equaliser. But the final word belonged to Hector, our super-sub, who came on and made an instant impact, scoring the winner from open play to secure a brilliant 2-1 victory.



MRS GRANT

SIXTH FORM



MRS MORGAN-JONES

Extended Project Qualification (EPQ)

The Year 13 Extended Project Qualification cohort wrote and presented a winning set of superb projects during Tutor times in January. Students chose, researched, project managed, evaluated and presented an impressive range of topics and interest areas (list of students and EPQ titles below). The presentations demonstrated a mastery of degree level skills and noticeable confidence from our Year 13 students.

Mrs Morgan-Jones has supervised the projects ensuring students can access the highest grades. She has done a stellar piece of work and the time and commitment to facilitate this particular qualification is to be commended. The students themselves will benefit from lower university offers in some cases as a result of their EPQ commitment and all will benefit from the acquisition of the higher education and workplace skills that the EPQ imbues. Thank you to Mrs Morgan-Jones and well done to the following talented students:

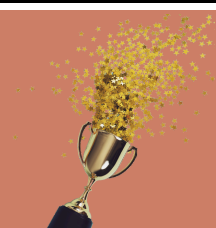
- Jacob C - To what extent has censorship reshaped rather than suppressed literary individuality from 1900 to present?
- Alyssa C - What makes a song legally original?
- Ben D - What was the most significant factor in the fall of the Roman Republic?
- Megan G - How does procrastination affect students? Causes and preventions
- Ido G - The butterfly effect. How minor policy decisions can lead to major financial crises.
- James H - What are quantum technologies and are they being used for our benefit?
- Louis J - What are the effects of academisation on schools in England?
- Colin L - Foreign influences on China from the late Qing to the Chinese 1911 Revolution: How did China respond to Western & Japanese challenges?
- Sam M - To what extent has the resilience of the financial system changed since the 2008 financial crisis?
- Oliver M - Is my green your green, can colour be objectively quantified or is it observer dependant?
- Hollie R - To what extent does the painting 'La Fiancée Hésitante' depict changing attitudes towards women in 19th century France?

Congratulations to an outstanding EPQ cohort in 2026!

YEAR 13



ACHIEVEMENTS



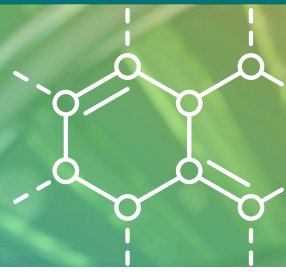
Little Shop of Horrors Celebration Breakfast

This week, the cast, band and crew of our recent school production were invited to a celebration breakfast to show our appreciation for all of their hard work and dedication in the months running up to the show.





SCIENCE



International Day of WOMEN and GIRLS in SCIENCE

11 February



Since its proclamation in 2015, this celebratory day aims to shine a spotlight on women and girls in science, highlighting not only current discovery and research, but showcasing the enormous numbers of forgotten women from scientific history.

Women currently represent less than a third of researchers in science and only 25% of the UK STEM workforce. This inequality and underrepresentation leads to a lack of research in fields such as women's health, road safety, internet algorithms and even urban planning.

We are lucky to have some amazing STEMInists in our Science department at BFS who are going to share some of their favourite female scientists, past and present, below to inspire our students to pursue study and careers in STEM!

DR CLARY

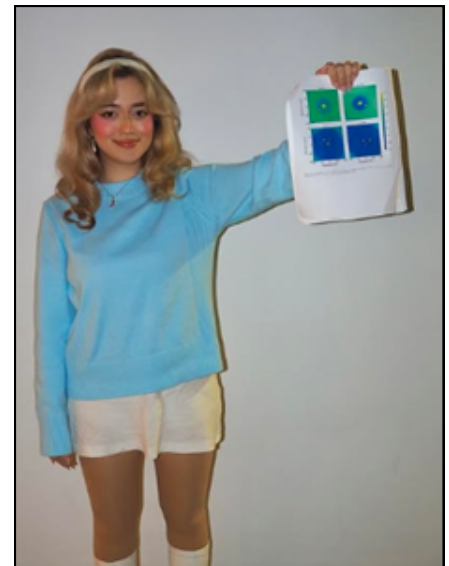
Dr Clary Rizzo Credido Do Ó – Astrophysicist

Dr Clary is the Elle Woods of Astrophysics and to me is truly iconic! Dr Clary was born in Brazil and went to University in California leading to her gaining a PhD in Astrophysics and currently works at the NASA JPL in California. She is a great example of dressing, presenting and representing your true self, even when that doesn't fit with the archaic stereotype of a scientist.

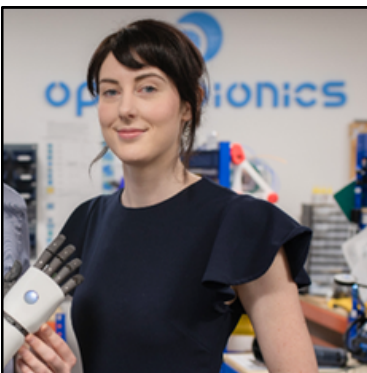
As well as her day job, she speaks at conferences, takes part in science outreach and makes super fun videos on her Instagram and TikTok about her work while spreading the word that femininity and intelligence are not opposites!



MS BOARD



MS PAYNE



Samantha Payne

Local gal Samantha Payne from Knowle West is a true STEMInist icon and an inspiration for young working-class scientists in Bristol and beyond. She co-founded Open Bionics, based in the Bristol Robotics Laboratory, where she breaks down the financial barriers that prevent access to advanced prosthetics. Open Bionics pioneered 3D-printed robotic arms that are cheaper and more functional than existing prosthetics, allowing children and adults with limb differences to regain hand function.

Samantha's work has even crossed over into popular culture, partnering with video game developers and Disney to release superhero inspired bionic arms; and teaming up with James Cameron to give influencer Tilly Lockey Alita-inspired bionic arms after she lost hers to meningitis.

Open Bionics has won lots of awards for engineering and social innovation, showing how science can truly change lives. In recognition for her incredible impact, Samantha was awarded an MBE, proving that a local Bristol student with big ideas can change the world through STEM.



MS KELLY

MS EASLEY

Annie Easley

Born in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1933, Easley grew up in a time of deep racial segregation. Easley excelled academically, graduating as valedictorian of her high school before beginning a pharmacy degree at Xavier University. She became involved in helping African Americans prepare for the discriminatory literacy tests required for voter registration - an early sign of her lifelong commitment to equity.

In 1955, a simple newspaper article changed everything. It described women working as "human computers" at the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (NACA), NASA's predecessor. Inspired, Easley applied and, within two weeks, she was hired. This moment marked the beginning of a 34-year career that would leave a lasting legacy.

Easley began performing complex mathematical calculations by hand, supporting early nuclear reactor research and critical aerospace missions. When digital computers arrived, she adapted quickly, becoming a skilled programmer, using her expertise on projects such as the Centaur Rocket Program and John Glenn's historic 1962 orbit.

Annie Easley retired in 1989 and passed away in 2011, but her story continues to inspire students worldwide. She showed that brilliance, resilience, and courage can overcome even the greatest barriers.



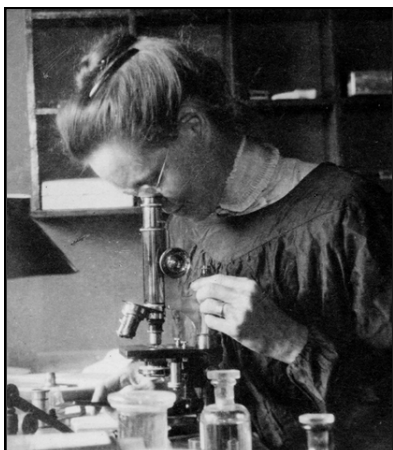
MISS CLORLEY



MS STEVENS

Nettie Stevens

MS JEFFERIES



Nettie Stevens was the geneticist who discovered that biological sex is determined by chromosomes (the XY system we still teach today). In 1905, while studying mealworms, she identified that males produce two types of sperm (one with a large chromosome and one with a small one), and this difference determines whether offspring are male or female.

Despite the clarity of her evidence, much of the credit at the time went to her male scientists, whose work often overshadowed hers. Stevens' contributions were foundational to genetics, yet her name is still left out of many textbooks.

MS KING

Mary-Claire King

Mary-Claire King is famous for discovering the BRCA1 gene, which is linked to breast and ovarian cancer risk. She is inspiring because she showed how genetics can save lives by helping doctors identify people at higher risk for cancer. She also used DNA technology to reunite families in Argentina after a period of political violence, proving science can help with human rights. Her work combines science, medicine, and compassion, making her a role model for using knowledge to help people.



MISS HAWES

DAME LONSDALE

Kathleen Lonsdale

Crystallographer, pacifist and peace campaigner, Kathleen Lonsdale was a pioneering chemist best known for using X-ray diffraction to prove that the benzene molecule is a planar hexagon. She has also made major contributions to our understanding of diamond and other crystal structures (she even has a diamond named after her!). During WWII, Kathleen refused to register for civil defence duties and was briefly imprisoned for her views on peace and has since written books expressing her views on whether peace is possible.



MR WINNER



MR INNES

Dr Helen Senn

I find Dr Helen Senn an inspirational modern-day STEM icon because she uses scientific processes to make a real and measurable difference in the world. Her work in conservation genetics shows how STEM skills can be applied beyond the classroom to protect species on the brink of extinction, including leading the successful reintroduction of the Scottish wildcat. As project lead of the Saving Wildcats partnership at the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland, Dr Senn has helped reintroduce wildcats to the Cairngorms, with over forty wild-born fluffy kittens already recorded. (Scottish Wildcats are my favourite animal!)

What inspires me most about Dr Senn is that she is a strong female leader in STEM who combines cutting-edge science, such as DNA analysis and GPS tracking, with practical conservation action. Her work proves that we are all in this together when it comes to protecting endangered species, and that teamwork and dedication can help nature make a comeback. Dr Senn shows that women can lead complex scientific projects, use STEM to drive positive change, and inspire others to protect biodiversity for future generations.

**Dr Wafaa Khater**

Dr Khater is Palestine's premier theoretical physicist. She has spent the majority of her career studying high-energy particles and Higgs physics, contributing to the work leading to the discovery of the Higgs boson.



MR MILSTEAD

Dr Khater studied for her masters in Norway but returned to the occupied west bank to continue studying for her PhD at Birzeit University, where she remains to this day. On her return, she noticed a lack of opportunities for young women in the STEM sector and worked on connecting female scientists to international projects and researchers. She has noted that Palestinian women are more likely to enrol in physics and engineering programmes than their European counterparts and is working on making sure there are research opportunities available to them. She feels it is her duty to teach the next generation of Palestinian scientists, who may otherwise lack a connection to the outside world. "We want to do science, the same as everybody else".

Rita Levi-Montalcini

Rita Levi-Montalcini grew up in Italy at a time when women were often discouraged from studying science. Despite this, she decided to study medicine and graduated from the University of Turin. Her early career was interrupted by World War II and anti-Jewish laws, which prevented her from working in universities. Refusing to give up, she set up a small laboratory in her bedroom, where she continued her research under extremely difficult conditions.



MR GILES

Levi-Montalcini's most important discovery was Nerve Growth Factor (NGF), a protein that plays a crucial role in the growth, survival, and maintenance of nerve cells. Her work showed that the nervous system is not fixed at birth but can grow and change, which was a revolutionary idea at the time.

NGF is now essential in understanding how the brain develops and how diseases such as Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, and certain nerve injuries affect the body. Her discovery has helped scientists develop new approaches to treating neurological and degenerative diseases.

In 1986, Rita Levi-Montalcini was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for her discovery of NGF. She continued working in science well into her 90s and also became a senator in Italy, where she promoted education and scientific research.



**Alice Ball**

A groundbreaking Chemist and Pharmacist in the early 1900s, Alice Ball developed the first effective treatment for leprosy when she was only in her early twenties. Her work was so revolutionary that it became the global standard for decades, yet her contributions were nearly erased from history until recently.

Alice Ball was the first woman and the first Black chemistry professor at the University of Hawai'i. She mastered both chemistry and pharmacy before turning 23 and her story is a reminder that scientific revolutions often come from brilliant minds who were not given their due at the time, but whose impact endures.

**MR HAMILTON**

MODEL UN

**MR RUSTON**

BFS students show off their skills in international diplomacy at BGS MUN Conference!

Well done to BFS students who gave up their Sunday to take part in the annual Model United Nations (MUN) conference at Bristol Grammar School, representing the delegations of Denmark and Saudi Arabia across a range of historical, contemporary, and crisis-based committees.

Throughout the conference, students demonstrated impressive research, diplomacy, and public speaking skills as they debated complex global issues. In the historical committees, delegates grappled with the international response to the Japanese invasion of China in 1938 and the 1980s arms race between the USSR and the USA; balancing the perspectives of their assigned nations with the realities of global conflicts. Elsewhere, students explored forward-looking solutions while debating how the international community might secure future energy supplies through nuclear fusion, weighing scientific promise against economic and ethical considerations.

Human rights and humanitarian concerns were also central to the conference. Delegates spoke passionately on defending the rights of women and worked collaboratively to propose responses to the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Sudan, highlighting the role of international cooperation in alleviating suffering and protecting civilians.

The conference also featured fast-paced crisis scenarios, testing students' ability to think on their feet. These included an emergency situation involving a hypothetical US attempt to annex Greenland, as well as a dramatic scenario centred on an outbreak of "super rabies", requiring swift negotiation, crisis management, and coordinated international action.

Overall, the trip was an outstanding opportunity for students to deepen their understanding of global affairs while developing confidence, teamwork, and critical thinking skills. Congratulations to Ben, Matilda, Poppy, Daisy and Mia who represented Denmark and to Awura, Sama, Izzy and Indie representing Saudi Arabia. They did so with maturity and enthusiasm and can be very proud of their efforts!





EXTRA CURRICULAR



MR LANGEVELDT

GREEN FUTURES PROGRAMME

Students from the Green Futures Programme recently took part in an inspiring tree-planting initiative at Westonbirt, contributing directly to the restoration and regeneration of a local community woodland. This woodland project brings together a wide range of groups, including SEND secondary students and colleagues, youth climate groups, adult volunteers, staff and colleges, primary and secondary schools, youth clubs, and scout groups. Their shared commitment to environmental action made the day both meaningful and memorable.



Our students planted 40 new trees as part of their group contribution. They planted species such as Field Maple and Lime, chosen for their resilience and ecological value. Students learned the full planting process:

- Digging a hole large enough for the sapling
- Backfilling the soil to secure the tree
- Back-heeling the soil to firm it in place
- Using a mallet to secure a stake
- Adding protective tubing to give the young tree the best possible start

This work plays an important role in responding to ash dieback, a disease that has led to the removal of 5,000 ash trees from the woodland. The region is now focused on renewal, with an ambitious goal of planting 9,000 new trees by March 2026 across a 4.6-hectare area. The replanting plan includes a rich mix of species to boost biodiversity and strengthen the woodland's long-term resilience.

Trees being introduced include:

- Large-leaved lime
- Oak species
- Small-leaved lime
- Field maple
- Hornbeam
- Sweet chestnut
- Hawthorn
- Rowan
- Wild cherry

Plus minor species such as crab apple, aspen, whitebeam, and alder. This diverse planting strategy will help create a thriving, sustainable woodland for generations to come.





ENGLISH



MISS MCMURDO

BOOK REVIEW

Amari and the Night Brothers by B.B Alston

Review by Anon

The story starts with a young girl, Amari, who is determined to find her older brother, Quinton. Everyone else has forgotten and given up. But Amari still keeps on trying. The real story starts when she gets an unusual invitation offering her to join the Secretive Bureau of Supernatural Affairs. This is an organisation beyond the ordinary world but then Amari discovers dangerous abilities which cause horror and dismay.

But in order to find her brother she faces shocking and dangerous trials facing powerful enemies as she uncovers shocking secrets.

The book is filled with suspense, courage and mysteries - I couldn't stop reading.

That is why I highly recommend this book to anyone who likes thrilling mysteries and adventure. This is a book that proves adventure is just a page away!



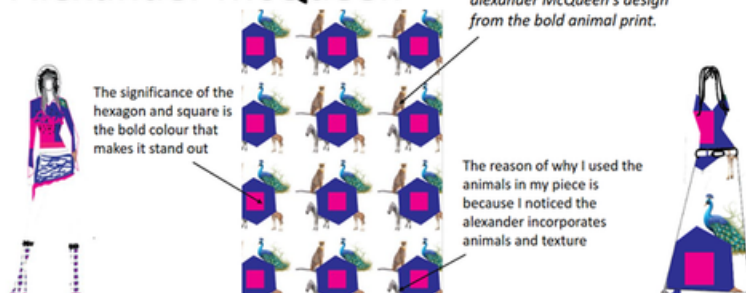
TEXTILES

YEAR 9

Year 9 fashion designers have been testing their creative direction this term through creating mini fashion collections. Here we have a range of garments showcasing their individual styles and prints. We are impressed with their resilience - using a new CAD programme in a busy term with fun and unique final outcomes. Here is a range of their final designs with a spotlight on Edward R and Aneri.



Alexander McQueen



I was inspired by Ettore Sottsass and his abstract approach to furniture. I used vibrant block colours to recreate his art. My print uses oranges and reds which feature heavily throughout his work especially during his Memphis period.

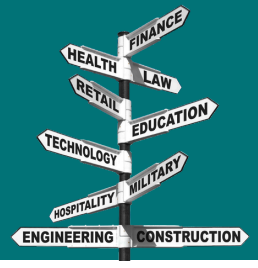
I created a curve and filled one side with red, and a yellow and orange gradient on the other.





MRS SMITH

CAREERS



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Work Experience Employer Talks Careers Day



On Friday morning last week, students learned about the wide range of exciting and rewarding careers available in the construction industry, introduced through the work of Stepnell, a major UK construction company with over 159 years of experience. Stepnell work across public and private sectors, delivering projects in care, healthcare, education, residential development, civil engineering and more.



Students heard from two experienced industry leaders:

Ian Woodward – Operations and Contracts Manager

- 25+ years in industry
- Began as a carpenter, progressing into management
- Oversees operations, contract management, and mentoring teams

Glyn Callus – Senior Site Manager

- 35 years in construction
- Previously worked in quantity surveying and project management
- Loves “the ever-changing nature of the build” and daily problem solving

Students were shown pictures and talked through some local projects that Stepnell is either currently working on or had recently completed. Stepnell holds a framework with local government who then tender projects to them.

- **St Michael's Hospital** – checking all fireproofing above ceilings
- **St Bernadette's** – Rugby club house, pitch and 3G pitch
- **New Kingsland** and **St Peter's** – council and affordable housing developments
- **Romney Avenue & Filwood Developments** - council and affordable housing developments

Ian and Glyn explained the various pathways to get into roles within construction. Both started their careers 'on the tools' and have worked their way up to management roles, gaining qualifications on the job. They explained the importance of gaining qualifications and how important it is to ensure you get good grades at GCSE and upwards.

- Apprenticeships: Carpenter, Joiner, Plasterer, Multi-Trade, Forklift Driver
- Graduate roles: Engineering, Design, Quantity Surveying
- Support roles: Marketing, Materials Buying, Estimating, Technical Support

These roles combine hands-on experience with structured training, ideal for students starting their careers. Construction is far more than building sites. Students explored a long list of roles, including Health & Safety, Business Development, IT Systems, Planning & Design, Site Management, Skilled Trades (carpentry, plastering, brickwork, electrical, plumbing), Engineering and Surveying, Graphic Design and Marketing, Business Development Manager.

EMPLOYERS TALKS

COMING UP...

27 February: Civil Service (Disability)

6 March: Planning and Sustainability

13 March: Medicine

COMMUNITY AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

WHITEHALL VALKYRIES
LAUNCH DAY



We're proud to invite you to celebrate two major milestones for Whitehall RFC, the launch of our Women & Girls rugby team and the official opening of our brand new female changing facilities.

SAT 7TH MARCH · 11AM ONWARDS

WHAT'S HAPPENING ON THE DAY

- Have-a-go rugby skills sessions for women & girls
- Women & girls rugby matches, touch & contact
- Official launch of the Whitehall Valkyries
- Special guests joining us for the celebrations
- Bar serving drinks & snacks
- Kitchen open with hot food available
- Tania's Treat Hut open for kids favourites

WHERE IS IT?
Whitehall RFC, Foundry lane, Speedwell, Bristol, BS15 3PW

 **#notjustarugbyclub**
Whitehalljuniors@gmail.com

 **Whitehallvalkyries Whitehalljuniors Whitehallrfc**

Life Cycle



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MUSICAL THEATRE EASTER CAMP WARMINSTER

30 MARCH - 4 APRIL 2026
6-DAY RESIDENTIAL FOR YOUNG PERFORMERS AGED 11-17



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britishyouthmusictheatre.org/camp/warminster-easter-camp

 **Bristol SEND News for families**
February 2026 www.bristolparentcarers.org.uk



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Session Highlights!

A spotlight on FREE information sessions brought to you by us



Upcoming Events and Webinars

Free information and support for families



Look inside for more 