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## A NOTE FROM MR EAST

Dear Parents, Carers and Students,

Ramadan is the holiest month in the Islamic calendar, observed by Muslims worldwide as a time of fasting, prayer, charity, reflection, and community.

Beyond fasting, Ramadan also encourages increased acts of worship, including daily prayers, Quran recitation, and the Taraweeh prayers. Charity (zakat and sadaqah) is also emphasised, reinforcing the values of generosity and social responsibility. The month concludes with Eid al-Fitr, a joyous festival celebrating spiritual renewal and gratitude. Ramadan is more than a time of abstinence; it is a transformative period of self-discipline, compassion, and faith, reminding Muslims of the importance of humility, kindness, and devotion.

As part of our commitment to celebrate the diversity of the BFS family, we are pleased to provide Muslim students and staff with a space for prayer during Key Stage 4 lunch and after school during the month of Ramadan.

Innovate, our catering partner, is also offering takeaway Ramadan Grab Bags. These are designed to support students in breaking their fast at Iftar with a delicious and convenient meal. The packs will be available every school day from the first day of Ramadan until Eid Al Fitr.

All students at BFS will also have information through their tutor programme which discusses Ramadan and its importance to Muslims.

We wish all members of our school community a peaceful and blessed Ramadan.



*Ramadan  
Kareem*



MR EAST



# NOTICE BOARD

BFS\_Bristol BFS\_Enrichment



## NEXT WEEK AT BFS

### Monday 2 March

Y11 & Y13 Mock Exams (until Thursday 5 March)

### Tuesday 3 March

Y8 (and Y9 catch up) HPV Vaccinations  
Y8 Rutherford Laboratory Science Explorers Day  
Y10 BEP Student Leadership Programme

### Wednesday 4 March

Y8 Babcock Festival of Engineering  
2026 Ski Trip Parents Information Evening, 5-5.45pm

### Thursday 5 March

MFL Mock 2 Orals (until Wednesday 11 March)

### Saturday 7 March

STAGES Dance Competition

## QUICK LINKS



[Lunch Menu](#)

[Extra-Curricular Clubs](#)

[Term Dates](#)

[Key Dates](#)

[Student/Parent Handbook](#)

[Past Newsletters](#)

## PLANNED ABSENCES

For planned absences, such as funerals or participation in county or elite sport, please complete the absence request form available here: [Absence Request Form](#).

With Eid approaching, this form should also be used for religious observances, but please note that we can only authorise one day of absence per religious observance. Please submit the form at least two weeks in advance of the planned absence. Thank you for your co-operation.



## ALERT

The school is aware of a very concerning 'area wars' trend on social media that seems to have grown over the February half term holiday. We would like to share with you a joint letter from Bristol City Council, South Gloucestershire Council and Avon & Somerset Constabulary that has been written in response to this. Read the letter [here](#).

## PERIODS

Free Period Products are available to those who need them.

Just look for the **Pink Boxes** in the following locations:

- Student Services
- Sixth Form Admin Office
- PE Changing Rooms
- Mrs Gardiner's Room
- Behaviour Office
- Main Reception
- SEND Office
- Mental Health & Safeguarding Room
- Head of Year Offices
- Behaviour Room

**MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS FOR ALL**

## EID

## GOVERNMENT WHITE PAPER 'EVERY CHILD ACHIEVING AND THRIVING'

You will have likely seen the Government's announcement of proposed reforms to SEND in the news this week. This is a long-term plan, and the white paper sets out the Government's aspirations for better provision and outcomes for SEND students. There are no immediate changes, as these will be phased in over time following a period of consultation.

Links to the full document can be found here [Every child achieving and thriving - GOV.UK](#)

A shorter parent guide has also been produced that outlines the timescales for the proposed changes. [What parents of children and young people with SEND need to know](#)

## SEND

# TERM 4 KEY DATES

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

Key dates for Terms 5-6 are available on the School website's noticeboard:  
[www.bristolfreeschool.org.uk/noticeboard](http://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	Ruby B	Wilfred M	Emma W, Jessica I	Blake Z, Taylor P, Lois D
Year 8	Mina W, Leila P	Madeleine P	Isabel C	Benjamin D
Year 9	Orla S, Lauren S, Henry H, Lilia C	Naomi H	Aneri P	Jack R
Year 10	Kledis H	Bethan B	Florence P	Harriet T
Year 11	Heidi T	Nina-Mae L	Joseph P, Gwen R, Harrison L	Gabriel W, Katy S

## HOUSE FRIDAYS



# HOUSE FRIDAYS



MR JOHNSON

The House Fridays bake sale before half term was a huge success. Thank you to everyone who baked - we had an amazing array of cakes, cupcakes, cookies, muffins, rocky roads, and more! We also had some very creative decorations for the Valentine's theme. In the end, we sold out of everything and raised £305 which will be split between the four House Charities.

To determine the Star Baker Award we had three judges: Mrs King, Mrs Gardiner, and Mr Johnson.

The award for Best Tasting Cake went to Susie and Emma in Y9 (Blaise) for their two-tier red velvet cake.

The award for Best Design went to Dhruvika in Y10 (Durdham) for her cupcakes decorated with butterflies.



House Fridays events will start again next Friday with a Book Balancing Race to celebrate World Book Day.

DREAM  
ASPIRE  
ACHIEVE

# ACHIEVEMENTS



## BRISTOL YOUTH ELECTIONS 2026

Whilst none of our BFS candidates were successful in standing to be on the Bristol City Youth Council, we have been recognised by Bristol City Council for the exceptionally high turnout from our students. It was such a privilege to see so many of our students taking an active part in democracy. Please see the feedback from the council below.

*I would just like to reach out to let you know that you were one of the top polling stations in your area during the Bristol City Youth Elections 2026. You had an exceptional percentage of votes compared to the amount of young people who attend your school. That level of engagement via voting was amazing and absolutely needs to be commended and highlighted.* - Bristol City Council

Meet Bristol's newly elected [City Youth Council](#).



Well done to everyone who entered the English department's creative writing competition. The standard of entries was very high, so huge congratulations go to our winners. Their pieces can be read at the end of the newsletter.



MISS MCMURDO

### Year 7-9 winners

*Saint Chapelle* by Rebecca J  
*My Diary* by Ellie C

### Year 10-13 winners

*Fragmented* - Rey F  
*Jewellery* - Alyssa C



## CREATIVE WRITING

# EXTRA CURRICULAR

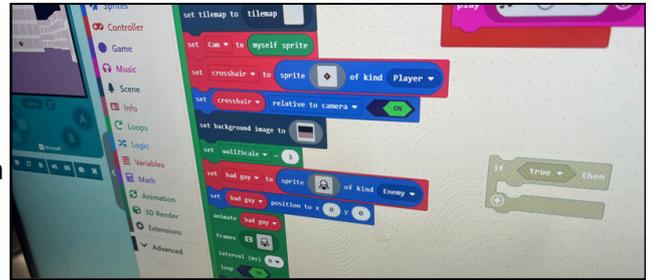
MR CAHILL

Every Wednesday after school, our Year 7-9 Programming Club comes alive with creativity and curiosity as students design, build, and play their own digital creations. The club gives pupils the freedom to experiment with coding tools - most of which are completely free - and turn their ideas into impressive projects.

Jack has been working hard on Arrow Strike, his fast-paced retro arcade game inspired by the classic 1980s style. Players will need quick reflexes to master it!

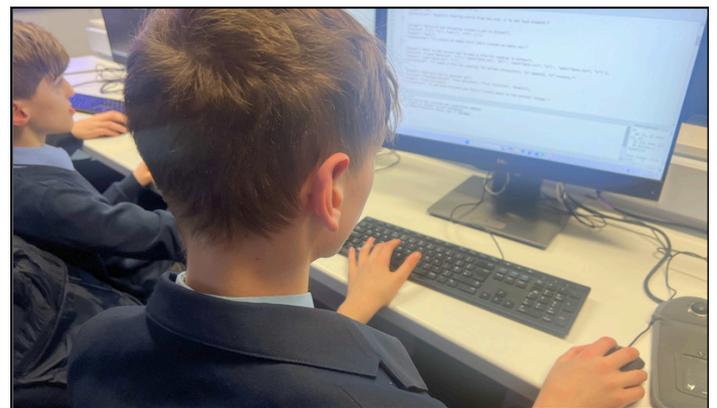
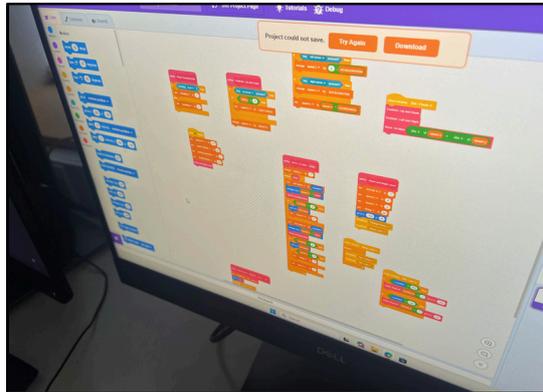
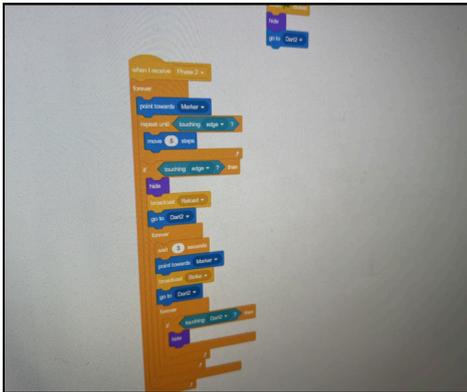
Alex is developing Dungeon Crawler, an adventure game in Scratch where you must battle enemies and survive each level. His designs are becoming more detailed every week.

Charlie is taking on the challenge of recreating the 1990s classic Doom using Microsoft MakeCode. He is learning how to build levels, create enemies, and design first-person gameplay - all using an online tool that anyone can access for free.

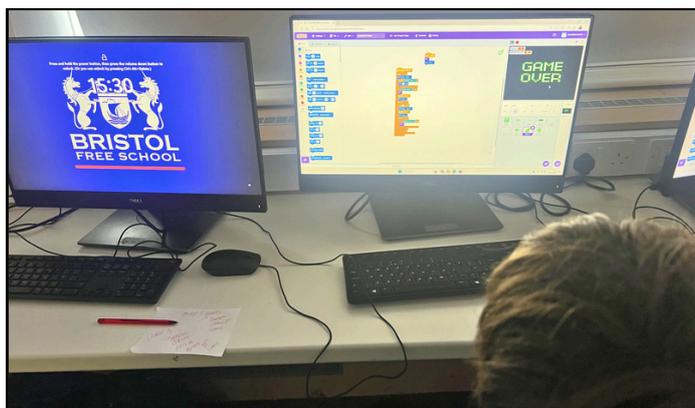


Meanwhile, our other Charlie is exploring Python programming by building his own multiple-choice quiz game. He is learning how to store questions, check answers, and give players instant feedback.

## PROGRAMMING CLUB



It is inspiring to see students taking ownership of their ideas and developing real programming skills along the way. We are excited to see how their projects evolve over the coming weeks.



# STEM

MRS RAMANANDI

We are delighted to share that a group of enthusiastic Year 9 girls recently attended the UWE Bristol "Girls in Tech" event, where they took part in a range of inspiring and hands-on workshops designed to encourage creativity, problem-solving, and an interest in future pathways within technology. The event was an excellent opportunity for students to gain insight into different areas of STEM, meet inspiring role models, and build confidence in their own digital abilities. Our Year 9 girls represented the school brilliantly and thoroughly enjoyed the activities.



Throughout the day, students rotated through a variety of sessions led by industry professionals, university academics, and cyber-security specialists. These engaging workshops gave students the opportunity to explore different areas of technology and discover how digital skills are used in the real world.

## **UWE Music Tech - Exploring Sound and Technology**

In this session, students experimented with a fascinating device called the pattern organ - a camera-based synthesiser that converts visual patterns into sound. By creating their own patterns and seeing how shape, width, and movement affected the resulting audio, students learned how technology can transform images into music. It was a brilliant combination of science, creativity, and engineering.

YEAR 9



## **Palo Alto - Introduction to Cyber Defenders**

Students were introduced to the work of Cyber Defenders and explored questions such as what do Cyber Defenders do what is "Cyber Smart" or "Cyber Triad", and what does it mean to work in tech? This workshop offered an eye-opening look into cyber-security roles and the importance of staying safe in a digital world.

## **UWE CyberWomen - Detective Challenge**

Led by the UWE CyberWomen team, students stepped into the role of cyber detectives. They examined clues, pieced together digital evidence, and explored how different characters might be involved in a cyber case. Using problem-solving skills and logical thinking, students worked to uncover the truth - an exciting and interactive way to learn how digital forensics can be used to solve real-world problems.

## **Mobile App Development Workshop with UWE Lecturer Ramya Anandan**

Students also experienced a hands-on introduction to mobile app development. In just 30 minutes, they learned the basics of designing, building, and publishing a simple mobile application. The workshop encouraged innovation and showed students that with the right tools and guidance, anyone can begin creating their own apps.

Ending Term 3 on a high, Ms Board, Mr Innes and Mr Milstead took 29 STEMtastic students to Geneva to see physics, international diplomacy and cheese fondue live in action!



MR INNES

MR MILSTEAD

MS BOARD

After a very early start at Bristol Airport, we arrived in Geneva to fresh alpine air and the prospect of an exciting four days ahead. After a few hours exploring the city and trying a range of traditional lunch options from Lidl and McDonald's, we checked in to our accommodation and made ourselves at home.



On day two we took advantage of the multiple public transport options, travelling to the sites via tram, bus and water taxi. We visited the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire to see contemporary and traditional art, visited the World's Longest Bench™ on the Promenade de la Treille and experienced the historic architecture of Geneva's Old Town. We headed off to dinner to enjoy the customary fondue and wonderful folkloric music of the alphorn and talerschwingen!



Thursday morning saw us heading off in the rain to our tour of the UN, hosted by our wonderful guides Mikel and Sylvie. We learned how the United Nations was formed, what really goes on during meetings and had a fun time at the gift shop and in-house Post Office! After this we headed out for lunch and then spent the afternoon at the History of Science Museum and observed the iconic Jet d'Eau, followed by some very competitive bowling in the evening!



Our whole final day was spent visiting CERN, the main event of the trip! Leon, our fabulous German guide, led us on a tour through the Antimatter Factory and CERN Data Center. Highlights included an interactive particle accelerator, how to create a Higgs Boson, the evolution of data storage and an excellent lunch offering to boot! We all had a fantastic time and cannot wait to visit with next year's group of Year 12 physics students!



MS NORTON

# SIXTH FORM



MR FERNANDES

On Wednesday, our Year 12 cohort took part in a dedicated pastoral day, stepping away from their normal timetable to engage in a full programme of workshops designed to support their personal development, wellbeing, and future pathways.



Students benefitted from sessions delivered by a range of expert external speakers, each contributing to key areas of the statutory PSHE and careers curriculum:

- **Sara Dillon from the Hollie Gizzard Trust** led a powerful and thought-provoking session on coercive and controlling behaviour, helping students understand the signs of unhealthy relationships and the importance of recognising early warning indicators.
- **Kate Harvey from the Naked Truth Foundation** delivered an age-appropriate workshop addressing the damaging effects of pornography.
- **Pete Marlow and Nicky from Bristol UWE** offered valuable insight into Post-18 options, including higher education, apprenticeships, and career pathways. Their session also explored the essential skills young people need to thrive in further study and the workplace.
- **Jo Mallinson** rounded off the programme with an informative session on drugs and alcohol awareness, supporting students to make informed and safe decisions as they navigate increasing independence.



YEAR 12



Throughout the day, students engaged thoughtfully with the material, asking insightful questions and recognising the relevance of these topics as they continue through Sixth Form. The day formed an important part of our ongoing commitment to providing a comprehensive and supportive personal development programme, ensuring every student is equipped with the knowledge, confidence, and guidance they need for life beyond school.

# GEOGRAPHY

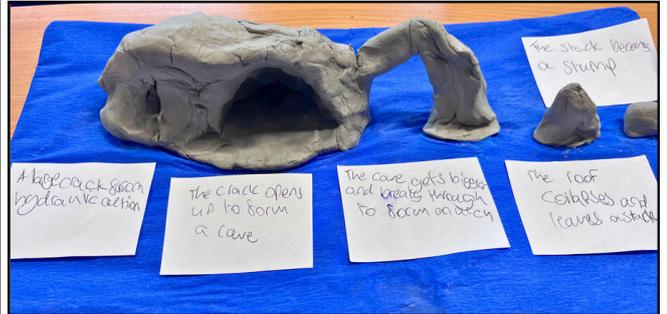


MRS GRANT

YEAR 8



In geography, 8TG7 created some delightful coastal erosion headland models in half term. Some super geographical landforms and accurate detailed labelling - well done 8TG7! Mrs Grant is very proud of your efforts.



MRS CORRIGAN

# FOOD TECH

YEAR 10

Year 10 have been cooking their own choice of meals for different life stages. Dishes ranged from homemade wraps, naans, and fajitas to a very appetising chicken pilaf. Well done to all students for their excellent research and planning.



# LIBRARY & READING



MS GRIFFITHS



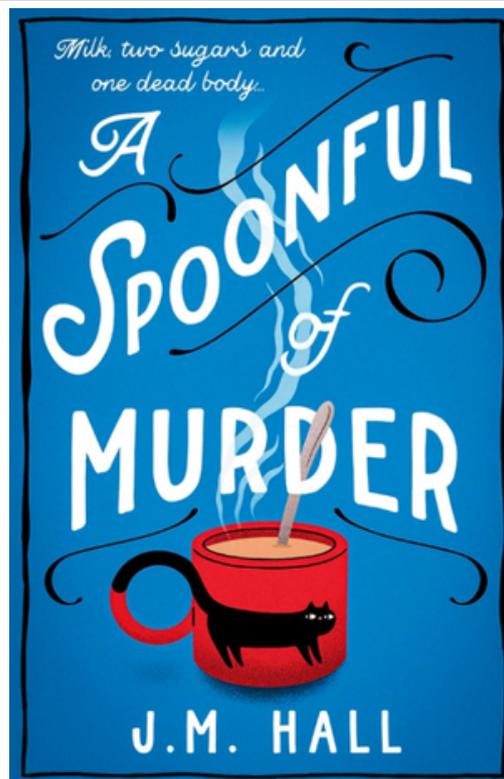
MISS MCMURDO

## BOOK REVIEW

### ***Spoonful of Murder* by Robin Stevens** **Review by Anon, Year 8**

Spoonful of Murder is a real page turner that involves high levels of suspense and mysteries. This book has two characters Hazel and Daisy who are eager to find the murderer. It was when Hazel goes to meet her family but is in shock of a change that occurred in her absence. The murder happened right where they were! That's when tragedy strikes - not once but twice. Hazel and Daisy have to solve this case because no one is safe from suspicion.

I really like this book because it has multiple twists and really draws you into the book. I highly recommend this book and especially for murder mystery lovers.



## BOOK REVIEW

### ***Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* by J.K. Rowling** **Review by Amelia, Year 8**

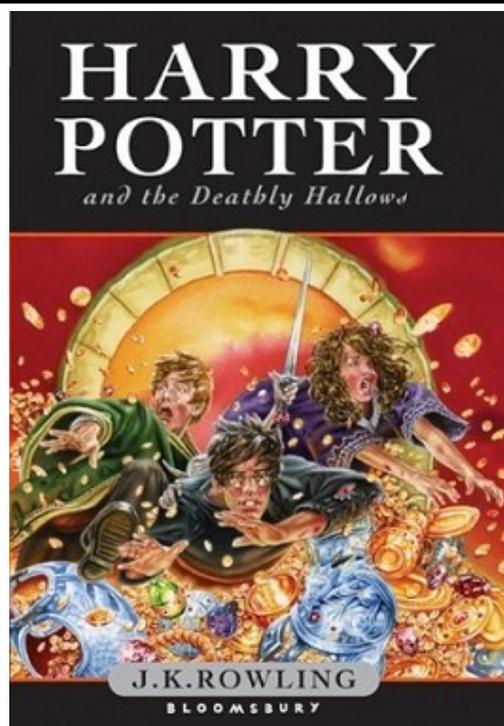
The final 5 star book in the bestselling series!

As Lord Voldemort grows in support and power, Harry Potter (the chosen one), with his unfathomable bravery, Hermione Granger (muggle-born) with her incomparable brains and razor-sharp wit, and Ron Weasley... with his valiant efforts, strives to complete the near-impossible task Professor Dumbledore has left them. If the trio succeeds in this mission, He Who Must Not Be Named will be defeated at last!

Meanwhile, misery and terror grip the country and Dementors may not be as loyal as the Ministry for Magic hoped. Even muggles know something is wrong! The safest haven of all (Hogwarts) is under the Dark Lord's control.

Hope is scarce. Will Harry Potter, the boy who lived, triumph? Or will he end up like his parents?

There is not much else to say about this page turning novel. Except to say that J.K. Rowling did not let herself down!



## Book Review Challenge

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

Submit your book review of a recent book you enjoyed. It should be 200 - 250 words, and emailed or hand it in to Miss McMurdo, DG08.

# BTBA 2026

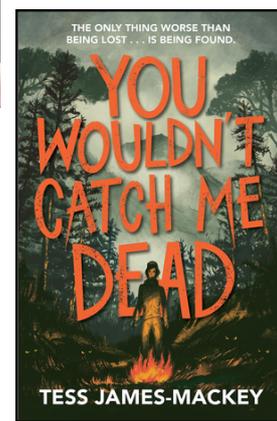
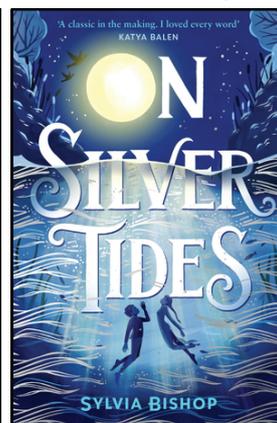
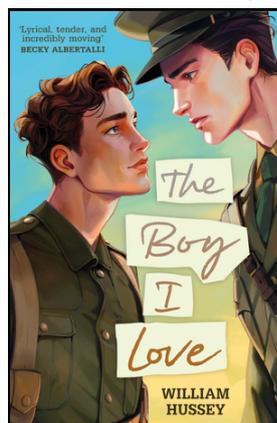
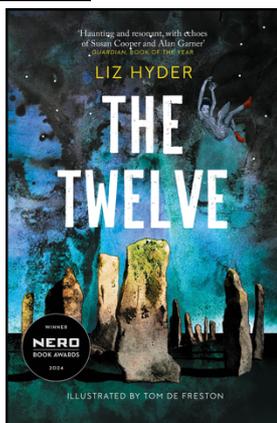
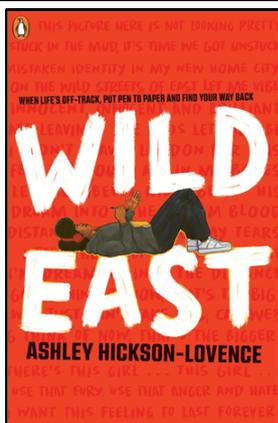
A group of enthusiastic Year 10 readers had the exciting opportunity to attend the Bristol Teen Book Awards in a vibrant celebration of young adult literature that brings together students and authors from across the country. After spending the past term reading from the six nominated titles, our students arrived at this year's host school, Redland Green, eager to meet the authors behind some of this year's most gripping books.



During the event, students took part in an eye-opening Q&A session with three of the shortlisted authors, gaining insight into their writing processes, inspirations, and the challenges of crafting stories for young readers. Afterwards, students were thrilled to meet the authors in person and have copies of the books signed.

Six books have been shortlisted for the BTBA 2026:

- *King of Dead Things* by Nevin Holness
- *Wild East* by Ashley Hickson-Lovence
- *The Twelve* by Liz Hyder
- *The Boy I Love* by William Hussey
- *On Silver Tides* by Sylvia Bishop
- *You Wouldn't Catch Me Dead* by Tess James-Mackey



While *The Twelve* was our top choice, the city-wide winning title, decided by combined votes from all participating schools, was *You Wouldn't Catch Me Dead* by Tess James-Mackey.

All six nominated titles are now available to borrow from the BFS Library. If you are looking for your next great read, or you would simply like to see what made these books award contenders, come and check them out.

## Year 9 Boys Football – A Tough Fixture, But Y9 Still Found Some Positives to Kick On

On Monday, our Year 9 boys travelled to Orchard School Bristol for their latest fixture. With no assigned goalkeeper available, the team demonstrated great flexibility by rotating players into the role throughout the match. Despite their best efforts, the boys went down early to a few quick goals and were unable to recover the deficit, eventually losing 6–0. Although the scoreline was tough, the team showed resilience, teamwork, and determination to keep battling until the final whistle. There were plenty of positives to take forward into their next game.

## U14 Girls Football – Lola Bags a Hat-Trick to Keep Us Well in the Game

On Monday our U14 girls took on Orchard School Bristol in an exciting and highly competitive match. With several players missing due to illness, the girls played with just nine against an OSB side fielding a full 11-a-side team. You would not have known they were short-handed as they started brilliantly, with a flurry of early goals leading to a 2–2 scoreline at half time. The second half saw us take the lead 3–2 thanks to an absolute screamer from Lola, who went on to complete her hat-trick. OSB fought back using their player advantage, and the match became end-to-end right to the final stages. The game could have gone either way, but a 4–4 draw was an outstanding and thoroughly deserved result for a team that showed incredible fight, skill, and togetherness.



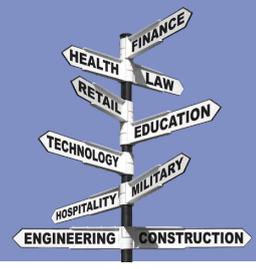
## UPCOMING FIXTURES

Monday 2 March	U14 Boys Rugby Sevens	Collegiate School
Wednesday 4 March	Y8 Boys Football vs St Bede's Catholic College	St Bede's Catholic College
Thursday 5 March	U16 Girls Football vs Oasis Academy Brightstowe	Oasis Academy Brightstowe
Thursday 5 March	Y10 Boys Football vs St Bede's Catholic College	St Bede's Catholic College
Thursday 5 March	U16 Boys Rugby Sevens	BGS Failand
Thursday 5 March	Y8 Netball Tournament	Redmaids' High School
Friday 6 March	U14 Girls Hockey vs Clifton College	Clifton College
Saturday 7 March	STAGES Dance Competition	-
Wednesday 11 March	U12 & U14 Girls Football vs St Bede's Catholic College	St Bede's Catholic College
Thursday 12 March	Bristol Schools Swimming Gala	Easton Leisure Centre



MRS SMITH

# CAREERS



## Connect With Us

Connect with us on LinkedIn! @Bristol Free School.  
Join in the conversation and help us if you can.  
**Work Experience Employer Talks Careers Day**



### CAREERS IN THE CIVIL SERVICE

Dr Stephanie Harvey, a civil servant working in the field of disability rights, spoke to students about her career, the work of the Civil Service, and how young people can help drive social change.

Dr Harvey emphasised that the Civil Service is all about identifying social issues and finding ways to improve them, wanting to make a positive difference in people’s lives, and working with a wide range of people and organisations to create real impact. Currently around 550,000 people work in the Civil Service, with staff based across the UK - not only in London but also in places like Wales and Sheffield. Civil servants can work in everything from frontline services (e.g., benefits support) to policy development, legal work, research, international relations, and private office roles supporting senior leaders or ministers.



Dr Harvey currently works in disability rights, which includes developing policy and creating action plans to improve life for disabled people, consulting with experts, researchers and lived-experience groups to understand what works and what doesn’t, working with lawyers to help write or update legislation, and contributing to key laws such as the Equality Act and the British Sign Language Act 2022, which promotes greater use of BSL, including ensuring public information is translated more often.

EMPLOYERS TALKS

Civil servants often work closely with ministers, and sometimes with members of the House of Lords. They provide answers, briefings, and evidence to help ministers make decisions - often called working “in the box”. This involves sitting in the House of Commons. A change of government can mean policies are changed or stopped, even if they are already underway (e.g., projects like bringing the Special Olympics to the UK or work on climate adaptation). Dr Harvey also mentioned being given many opportunities to visit and work in 10 Downing Street and significant events in history such as the first speech of Rachel Reeves who is the first female Chancellor of the Exchequer in the UK.

Dr Harvey’s role also involves representing the UK in international forums such as the UN, G7, and G20, making sure disability issues are raised, and working with ambassadors and supporting international development, including how the UK provides funding to other countries.

Dr Harvey also told us about the many career opportunities for young people, and that there is space in the Civil Service for any interest, including sports, arts, music, science, technology, health, and more. Entry routes include entry-level roles, apprenticeships, and graduate schemes, meaning you do not need to follow one standard path — the Civil Service offers opportunities at all stages.

## COMING UP...

**6 March:** Planning and Sustainability  
**13 March:** Medicine  
**24 April:** Ministry of Defence

**1 May:** Blood Sciences  
**12 June:** HM Prison and Probation Service

# 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 7<sup>TH</sup> 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

RFU **#notjustarugbyclub**  
Whitehall.juniors@gmail.com

Whitehallvalkyries Whitehalljuniors Whitehallrfc



**Bristol Parent Carer Forum**  
Shaping the Future Together

**Free online & in person support sessions**

<p>An Introduction to Makaton Online Tuesday 3rd March 7PM-9PM</p> 	<p>How to be a Strong Advocate for your Child Online Thursday 5th March 7PM-8:30PM</p> 	<p>Understanding the Health Section of an EHCP Online Monday 9th March 10AM-11:30AM</p> 
<p>Peer Support Online Tuesday 10th March 7PM-9PM</p> 	<p>Scan here for details on these sessions and more</p>  <p><a href="https://linkbristolparentcarers.org.uk/gethelp">https://linkbristolparentcarers.org.uk/gethelp</a></p>	<p>Peer Support Greenway Centre Southmead, BS10 Thursday 12th March 9:15AM-10:30AM</p> 
<p>Peer Support Fishponds Old Library Fishponds, BS16 Thursday 19th March 9AM-11AM</p> 	<p>Peer Support Inns Court Knowle, BS4 Thursday 19th March 10:30AM-12:30PM</p> 	<p>Supporting Healthy Relationships Online Thursday 26th March 7PM-8:30PM</p> 

## Young Carers Action Day 2026

# Fair Futures for Young Carers

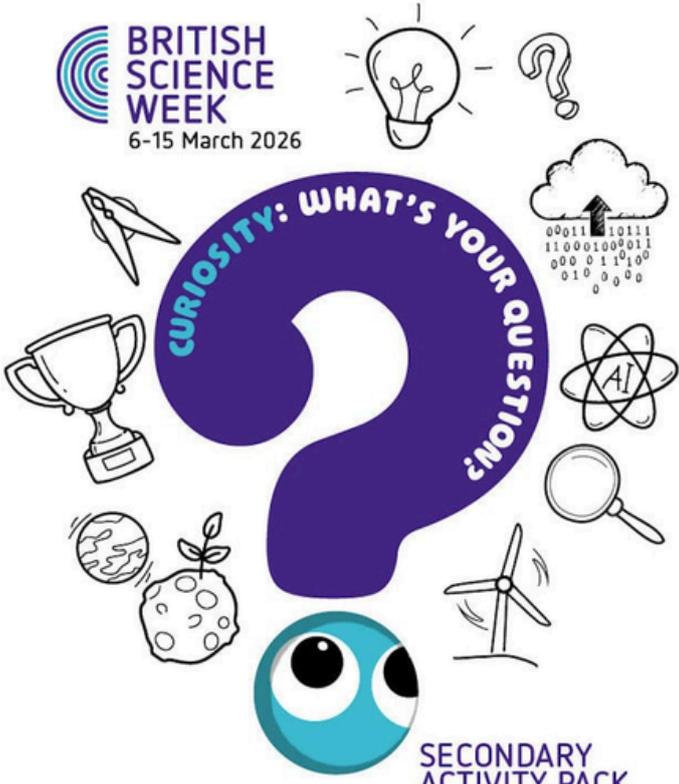


Let's make sure every young carer has the same chances to learn, grow and thrive as their peers.



**BRITISH SCIENCE WEEK**  
6-15 March 2026

**CURIOSITY: WHAT'S YOUR QUESTION?**



**SECONDARY ACTIVITY PACK**

A range of activities to be run with students aged 11-14 (approx.)

[britishscienceweek.org](http://britishscienceweek.org)

Delivered by **BRITISH SCIENCE ASSOCIATION** Supported by **UK Research and Innovation**

## *Saint Chapelle* by Rebecca J

Taking control of my nostrils, the smell of pine became my puppet master. As I began the intricate game of hanging Christmas ornaments, it coaxed me towards one handmade ornament dangling off a slanted branch. Gold velvet suffocated the cotton wool as it sealed the prison of sapphire gems, locking the wool into place with twine. Forming a towering building adorned with gems, coated in tapestries controlled by its needle-piercing spire. Then my mind focused, transfixing on the ornament in front of me: Saint Chapelle. Seated proudly in the capital of croissants and macarons, Saint Chapelle was often forgotten between the Louvre and the Eiffel Tower but in my eyes, it was the Big Ben. Saint Chapelle was my oxygen, my pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, my solar system.

Whizzing back in time my mind played back to the intricate windows, telling stories with their lips sealed. Winding around the chapel the staircase had been pondering its existence since 1248. Detailed ceilings commanded the vast space supported by thick stone blocks stacked on top of one another. Silencing all architects, this mammoth of a structure was the definition of 'never judge a book by its cover' because what lurks inside is much more precious than gold or diamonds.

Instantly I began to feel my feet lose the gravity of the Earth as I started to defy all the laws of physics. Black holes took over my hazel spheres for vision gulping in all the lights from the Christmas tree. Pine fled from my nostrils, granting me freedom from this imprisonment I had been controlled under. My mind raced faster than an F1 driver as it tried to emancipate itself from these dark cages it was trapped inside of. Shifting all my depleted energy onto my hands I attempted to release myself from the shackles that had gained control over my body. Harder. And harder. I tried to pull myself out. Quicker. And Quicker. My feet kicked. I could barely move. Taking. Only. One breath. At a time. My pulse was brisk. My heart was bounding out of my chest. What had I done? What was happening? Where was I? What had I done?

With in an instant, it had all ended and I all I could feel was tranquillity. Calmness entered my veins and spread like a disease around my body. As I began to regain my senses, I could feel the weight of my corpse resurrecting from the soil it had been chambered to. Blurred colours filled my eyes; I felt that I was in the middle of a paint-by-numbers drawing. Slowly my body began to observe the intricate surrounding as I felt the déjà vu swirling around my mind. The golden sun glimmered through the stained-glass windows, as it cast shapes onto the tiled floor. I felt the cold breeze from the world that had frozen in time. I could hear the clattering of those around me. I was in Saint Chapelle, but not only that; I was in Paris!

All too soon, my consciousness returned and I realised that I needed to get back to England. After almost a decade of adoring this masterpiece, I wandered out into the bustling Paris. I had never been the type of girl to wear a scarf but in this moment it's all I longed for. Towering houses enclosed me, my life flashed before my eyes when cyclists zoomed past me, heavy footsteps sounded behind me. Digging around in my pockets, my hands yearned to find my phone. Did I leave it in England? Abruptly, my brain decided to finally join the conversation as I noticed that those heavy footsteps weren't just coming from anyone. Rushing past me was a woman who had a red scarf flung over her shoulder, clutching in her hand my phone!

Years of running registered with my legs becoming a muscle memory. Focusing in on the women's blonde curls that flowed down the side of her fur coat, I continued lunging myself closer, trying to get to my prey. As we zigged and zagged through the breathtaking streets of Paris, water poured onto my pale face creating a mask of ice. Torrential weather had never stopped me from being forced into P.E and today was no exception. Enduring the monsters that kept eating away at my throbbing legs, I dodged every Parisian bullet your intellect could muster

up. From bicycle death traps, tourists wearing berets to bakers selling the famous baguettes, I continued to keep a steady eye on my target. Abruptly, I felt my feet skid under me as my face decided to plant itself on the cobblestone floor.

Beep

Beep, Beep

Beep, Beep, Beep

What is this infuriating noise and why had it decided to establish itself inside of my frontal lobe? Gradually my eyelids decided to detach themselves from my eyes, granting me the wonderful gift of sight again. Adjusting to the blinding light above me, my curiosity took control of me as I began to peer around the room. Was I still in Paris? Glancing down at the duvet I noticed how they had the same one as I do: light pick with frills on the end. That's funny I thought to myself, they also have the same light as me, and the same dresser! Puzzle pieces finally began to come together in my mind as I realised this wasn't any old room This was my room. The alarm in the corner screaming for its life, begging for attention was my alarm. Had it all been a dream?

As pine wafted up my nose, I turned my head like an owl, catching sight of a bright red scarf that had a touch of Parisian style slung across my clean vanity.

## *My Diary* by Ellie C

Beneath the baby pink cover, decorated with bows,  
Lie my deepest secrets that no one knows,  
The ink-stained paper, crumpled with age,  
A different me on every page,  
A silent witness to my biggest fears,  
Written with trembling hands, eyes filled with tears,  
Fragments of moments from the past,  
Endless feelings I wish wouldn't last,  
Flicking through, waking memories from their slumber,  
Each page, a story, a date, a number,  
I'll pour out my aching heart,  
Then turn over to a clean sheet, a fresh start,  
Scrawling letters that's don't make sense to anyone but me,  
My hand keeps writing, each word leaving me a bit more free,  
So much to say but nowhere to start,  
My own judgement clouding my heart,  
My messy thoughts, spiralling, unwinding,  
Stored neatly inside the binding,  
Each entry a silent plea,  
For someone to really understand me,  
But there's happy pages that make me smile  
Leaving warmth that lingers, just for a while,  
Whispering of love and care,  
Moments where I'm truly there,  
Raw emotions that make me complete,  
Each day feeling bitter or sweet,  
Guarding my story of joy and pain,  
My diary understands me without a need to explain.

# Fragmented by Rey F

Scattered round the house

Pieces

Snapshots of the past

- Remember?

All these things,

We've gathered throughout life

- You were there
- You did this
- Remember?

Yeah of course

(Slot their words into my head)

I remember.

I remember,

Everything.

All the things throughout the house

All the things you want to know

(You think you want to know)

I've been told I should remember.

The fragments in my hands.

But memories are memories,

They can't be held

In wood, or glass, or stone

They're slotted in your mind

Until it breaks.

Like mine

## Jewellery by Alyssa C

You bought me gold jewellery.

It's beautiful, don't misunderstand

A beautiful pattern, long slender chain,  
emerald, the colour of forests.

Gold.

The colour of the sun.

But I suppose the photos in your camera roll  
of me in black and purple,  
solely silver.

They meant little to you,  
didn't seem to cross your mind.

We could return it,  
exchange it.

But it's not about how the gold washes  
my pale skin out.

It's not about how I'm not the sun.

You were there.

New piercings in silver,  
rings in silver,  
necklace in silver,  
and yet you pick gold.

We clash just by existing.

I told you it washes my cool skin out,  
but I suppose you weren't listening.

We could return it,  
Exchange it.

That would be a shame.

Now I'm beginning to think  
gold isn't unwearable.

It's the thought that counts.

It must mean you value the sun more,  
it's not about how I'm not the sun.