

Weekly Update

Vive La France!

Forty students and four teachers returned late on Wednesday, tired and exhilarated from an amazing four days in France. We learnt and experienced many things: Alsacien pizza is not like Italian Pizza; the Metro is very exciting; Paris is extremely warm in summer; queues for Disneyland rides can take a while but are worth the wait and Shakespeare was not born in France. We also all improved our conversational French by speaking to the friendly locals. Highlights included Le Tour de Terroir at Warner Studios and La Tour Eiffel, a super Bateau Mouche ride along the Seine, and the chaos, confusion and spectacular sights of Bastille Day in Paris, which included tanks, army people and a tricolore fly-past of French fighter jets; formidable! Any remaining euros were exchanged for delicious items from La Chocolaterie de Lachelle – we were assured the ‘chocolats au lait’ were for parents and hope that you have seen and tasted the artisan goods. It would be hard to list all of the things we managed to cram into three full days; running out onto the pitch at Stade de France, climbing the steps to Sacré Coeur, and lots of walking. Students were fantastic ambassadors for the School and everyone had a brilliant time. Vive La France! Vive la République de BFS!

Words from the Headteacher

I was very impressed with the way in which students and staff embraced aspiration week. It was a big challenge for the whole school to suspend the timetable for a week and engage in a range of activities on and off the site. For the students seeing taught curriculum activities in a different context being applied to areas of life beyond school was extremely useful in helping to shape their ambitions. Speaking to the students after they returned from visits to the universities of Bristol, Exeter and Bath convinced me that the week was a success. Next year's aspiration week will be bigger, better and, for Year 10, will involve work experience! It is already booked in to next year's calendar and we will be running the majority of the administration of the week through the School's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

As we make better use of digital media and try and reduce the amount of printing and photocopying, the students' exam broadsheets will be put on to the VLE in late August. You will be able to access them through your child's VLE account. Early next academic year we will be giving parents and carers their own access to the VLE which will include information on their child's assessments, attendance, rewards and sanctions as well as much more.

Please make sure that you keep up-to-date with the School's uniform expectations, particularly if you are buying new items for September. However, the BFS uniform does not simply include items of clothing but also expectations over hair style, jewellery and make-up. Please make sure your child is dressed appropriately at all times when they are in uniform, as they are our ambassadors.

Finally with the summer holiday about to begin and Wednesday 3 September the first day of the new academic year for all students I would like to wish you a restful summer. Much has happened over the past year, the business and busyness of BFS is in many ways like other secondary schools but very few are having to build and grow year on year. As a consequence there have been many occasions when we have all been paddling furiously under the water while trying to remain swan-like above the surface. BFS is and always will be greater than the sum of its parts but without these parts, our students, parents, governors and staff, BFS would not be the success it has been and will continue to be. This year has been tough for us all as we reeled from the loss of Buffy Furness-Smith and Nick Short yet it is the support of everyone in the BFS community which gets you through those dark days. Nonetheless, my last words are reserved for Buffy and Nick, our absent friends - I hope we've done you proud and I know that our young people will honour your memories by continuing to rise to the challenges of the future, whatever they may be.

Richard Clutterbuck



Paris, July 2014, picture by Kit Goodman (Y8)



Year 9: graffiti challenge

In the news

"It was great to get an idea of what real-life reporters get to do"



Students create their own report for the 'Bristol Free School Post'

Model United Nations

"I didn't know quite what to expect but really enjoyed learning new strategies to try to persuade others to our point of view."

Philosophy in film

"Really interesting to explore how films convey a message and link to current topics like genetic modification and how it could affect society."

Rock Band

"We were able to work with people we didn't know and instruments we weren't familiar with – so enjoyable."

Blaise Fieldwork

"It was kind of adventurous – loved walking in the river, observing the wildlife and the teamwork."

The Bristol Golf Experience

"It was wicked! It taught us quite a lot about the game."

Wilderness First Aid



Liam Griffiths will forever be in Tom Kent's debt.

3D Art Day

"I enjoyed making a range of different things – Gromit, though, he was the hardest one!"

World Cup fever

"In PE we had to decide as a team which sports we wanted to do, that best fit the group, and Science was interesting as we found out the science behind sport, measuring how high we could jump etc – interesting."



Measuring and exploring physical exertion in Science

University visits to Exeter, Bath and Bristol



The winning group in "Design your university" at Bath University

Flash Mob

"I particularly enjoyed performing in Westbury-on Trym because the audience was really supportive."

Ancient Greek

"I found the alphabet really interesting, decoding words in English into Ancient Greek and vice versa. Really interactive."

Heroes and Monsters in Myth

"It was really interesting – we researched different characters from myths and created trailers for each one."

The giant icosahedron challenge



Some successful Year 8 students

PGL Weekend

Last weekend 64 students from Year 7 and eight members of staff boarded coaches bound for the PGL outdoor activities centre in North Devon. The weather was in our favour with the rain making only very brief appearances at convenient times between activities. The students tried their hand at a range of activities from surfing and body boarding at the infamous Westward Ho! Beach...to high ropes, trapeze and zip wire, to name just a few. Many students faced their fears at some point over the weekend in the challenging activities and all pushed themselves outside of their comfort zone. When asked to describe the weekend in three words, the group summarised the trip as being: amazing, exhilarating and exhausting!

