

H a p p y E a s t e r Holidays!

Don't you just love this time of year? Bright mornings and lighter nights!

We can at last put the bad weather behind us (hopefully) and look forward to the warmer part of the year. Since our Christmas Newsletter we have been very busy both in and out of college as you will see throughout the newsletter. We have welcomed many new pupils into our PRU family as well as some of our pupils have successfully moved into new schools.

How wonderful to read the Newsletter and see the range of activities and experiences our pupils are lucky enough to participate with. My thanks as always go to all the staff who make this possible whether it be through maintaining the facilities, organising the activities, supporting the administration or working with pupils on the day itself. Everything you see within this newsletter is a whole team effort and I am really grateful for that team!

Our current Year 11s are now heading towards their final hurdle of GCSEs and from looking at all of the reports many of them are on a very positive pathway. It is really important that a revision plan is in place at this time and that pupils use past papers to familiarise themselves further with the style of questioning as well as then checking their work with the mark schemes. All past papers and mark schemes are available on line with the specific exam board as well as available from the individual teaching staff. All of our pupils also have access to GCSE Pod which is an online tool to work to the individual needs of the pupil, the more work that the individuals complete the more specific the work is that is set. Through utilising time to revise it can dramatically reduce anxieties around the examination period as pupils will feel assured in their own knowledge and understanding, so please support your child as much as possible in allocating time and space to get short periods of revision completed from today until the end of their exams.

As you will see as you go through our newsletter the pupils have been involved in lots of exciting things that have been happening such as working with Bath University and other Wokingham Schools on the 'Forest of Imagination'. In this newsletter we have also tried to give you all a flavour of many other excellent activities that have been completed that not only enhance their academic skills but also help pupils to understand the wider world and think about their own culture and capabilities not just their life here in Wokingham. We are here alongside yourselves to offer the best possible opportunities for all of our pupils on their journey through secondary school and on to Post 16 education.

Thank you for your continued support, remember we are only a phone call away if you have any concerns or questions. I hope you all have a lovely Easter.

Primary

This has been a very successful term in the Primary Classroom and we cannot express how proud we are of each and every pupil! Building trusting relationships with our pupils is fundamental to the work we do with them and this term we have seen the impact this has on our pupil's ability to engage with all we have to offer: therapeutic activities as well as academic learning.

Jack and the Beanstalk was a particularly successful topic, despite the first session where pupil's questioned whether the giant's footprints were actually just the teachers! The magic of all staff (secondary staff included!) interacting with our pupils, encouraging awe and wonder and imaginative play resulted in full engagement throughout the unit of work. Throughout the topic, pupil's demonstrated their understanding of what seeds need to grow well, explored capacity and developed fine motor skills, adapted the characters and explored alternative endings as well as using Duplo to create the Giant's castle.



Topics are chosen in response to our pupil's curiosity and interests and at the moment, our pupils are preferring more factual and scientific topics. Pupils have begun to explore our solar system and the planets' orbit around the Sun – the pupils have however found it difficult to understand and accept that our planet is always rotating, despite us not being able to feel it! The sunshine in recent weeks has enabled us to explore shadows and the reason why their position changes throughout the day.

STEM Challenge provide opportunities for pupils to develop so many fundamental learning skills such as resilience, communication, accepting support, problem-solving, creativity and critical analysis. This term pupils have particularly enjoyed the spaghetti tower and penny boat challenges. Cooking continues to be a very exiting activity and one which is enjoyed by most of our pupils. Promoting personal hygiene and kitchen safety continue to be our main priorities within these sessions along with developing mathematical and reading skills.

In computing this term, our pupils have been learning the basics of coding & programming. We have been following a unit created by the team at code.org, with particular focus on sequencing, debugging & sprite creation. Our pupils have also enjoyed partaking in our Hour of Code sessions where they have been using their newly acquired skills to take part in fun coding activities such as creating a video game from scratch and programming Minecraft characters to survive challenging scenarios.



This half term, we have welcomed a few Year 6 home-tutored pupils on-site for an hour each week. The session offers art and craft activities as well as the opportunity for social interaction and engagement, something which can be difficult to establish for our pupil's being educated off-site. We hope that these sessions will continue throughout the academic year.



Art and Craft

It's exhibition time, and not only have we had 16 pieces of art and craft in the Balcony Gallery during the month of March, but two of our pupils have also entered the annual Royal Academy of Arts Young Artist Summer Show.

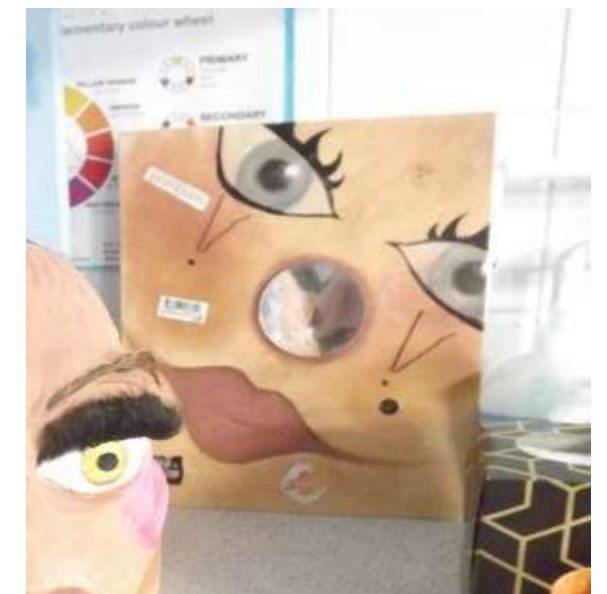
Fresh Faced Foundry College Art Exhibition 2025

From the 4th -31st March, the Balcony Gallery at South Hill Park Art Centre in Bracknell has been home to Foundry College's pupils and staff's collection of mosaic, graffiti and 3D sculpture to name a few, all under the theme of Fresh Faced. For the third year running, we are very fortunate to have such a good relationship with South Hill Park, and I'd like to thank curators Toby and Ben for all of their expertise with setting this up.



Royal Academy of Arts Young Artist Summer Show

Now in its 7th year, the Young Artist Summer show has seen two recent submissions from Foundry, and with the deadline now passed, we will be crossing our fingers to wish them the best of luck in the competition. The prize will be for them to exhibit their work within the Royal Academy of Art in London &/or on their website for an entire month.



Forest of Imagination Workshops

Over the last couple of months, some of our pupils have worked with artists from Bath University on the Forest of Imagination Schools Programme. It aimed to celebrate the biodiversity and ecological communities of Wokingham Borough, and to bring people and nature together at Dinton Pastures. During the four multi-art form workshops, pupils explored animation, lino-printing, sun art and light art using a camera and torches.

We anticipate that there will be a four day event for some of the work to be viewed on site at Dinton Pastures from the 22nd -25th of May. It has been a pleasure for us to collaborate with Oliver and Ghazala, and we look forward to working with them again in the future.



British Values in Art

The pupils have been looking at the British Values of *Tolerance of different beliefs* and *Mutual Respect*, and have completed solo and group art and craft which has been inspired by current Tik Tok artist Devon Rodriguez, Mexican artist of the past Pedro Linares and February's Dignity Month.

As you can see they have had the opportunity to explore form, colour, pattern, line and paint application off and on techniques such as layering and sgraffito.



Occupational Studies

With Easter approaching fast, I am pleased to say that almost everyone has settled on a choice of unit they enjoy and are making good progress towards achieving a Level 1 or Level 2 qualification. One or two are still mixing it up a bit and for some of the younger pupils where the time pressures are not so great, they have been learning useful plumbing, carpentry and plastering skills by carrying out supervised maintenance and repair work around the college. Most seem to really enjoy putting their developing skills into practice whether it is replacing taps and repairing leaky sinks, fixing damaged door frames and fitting new locks, repairing furniture or trying (mostly in vain) to keep the pigeons out!



For the older pupils, especially those in year 11, the pressure is beginning to build as it always does and we are supporting them to complete as much coursework as possible before the onset of the GCSEs in May. For new pupils, the most popular units seem to be Hand Carpentry and Bricklaying, however the majority of the Year 11 pupils this year have focused on the new, Level 2 Electrical Installation unit. The unit is proving interesting to the pupils and it is great to see the surprise and satisfaction on their faces when the circuits they have built, which are really quite complicated, actually work! As well as being very practical, this unit also contains quite a lot of high-level theory work that many adults would find challenging. I have been amazed and delighted by how willing and able some of our pupils have been to engage so positively with this difficult content.

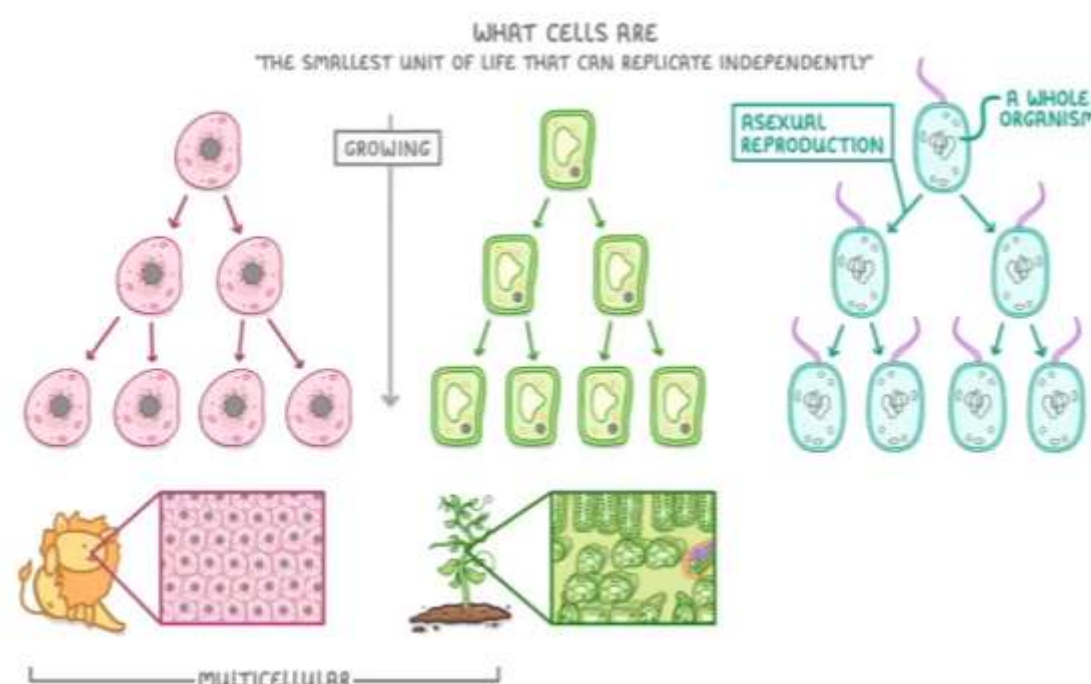


The Occupational Studies qualifications continue to provide a gateway for our pupils into vocational areas of employment and I'm pleased that we are able to open up these opportunities for them in a way that is just not possible in mainstream schools.

Science

After returning from the half term break year 11 pupils who are taking GCSE science this year are spending more time practising exam-style questions or whole GCSE papers. Where gaps in knowledge are identified we are then able to focus on that particular subject and pull out the appropriate practical equipment to help. For pupils who have not been in learning for a while we focus on the “required” practical investigations in order to give them confidence in answering questions on their papers.

An excellent resource for pupils who are revising is Cognito science, available free at <https://cognitoedu.org/> - select combined science AQA Trilogy. The videos are short and contain all of the important detail required in that topic area.



Last half term KS4 pupils were learning about waves and the electromagnetic spectrum. This gives the opportunity to experiment with light and sound waves and to think about how this is applied to their own lives.

This half term we have been covering the topic of inheritance which most pupils find interesting. It leads to a lot of discussion and gives us the opportunity to extract some DNA from an onion



Some pupils have been doing displacement reactions in chemistry and observing a demonstration of the very reactive group one metals.



New pupils in year 10 have done some practical work relating to photosynthesis and have now started the topic of digestion which gives great opportunities for practical work.



Observing the rate of photosynthesis by counting bubbles of oxygen released by pondweed.

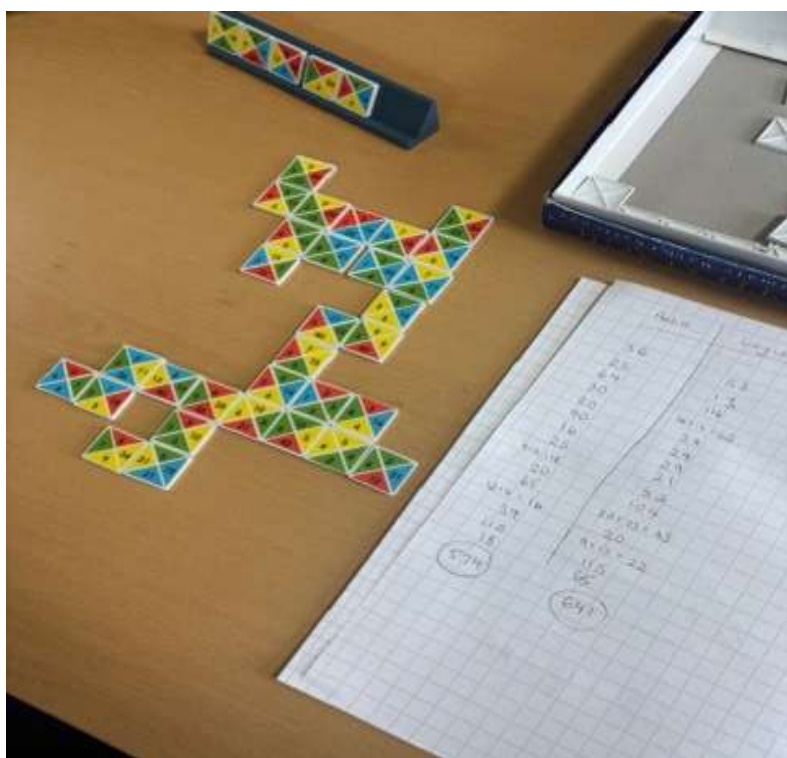


A small piece of potassium ignites as it is put in water.

Maths

Our KS4 pupils have been studying sequences, probability, set notation, spreads of data constructions and bearings. We are slowly transitioning onto past paper practice in preparation for the exams and wish all our pupils the very best of luck. A few year 10 pupils will also sit their exams. This will give them the experience of live exams and help them prepare for year 11.

KS3 have been looking at patterns, probability, Venn diagrams, averages and constructions.



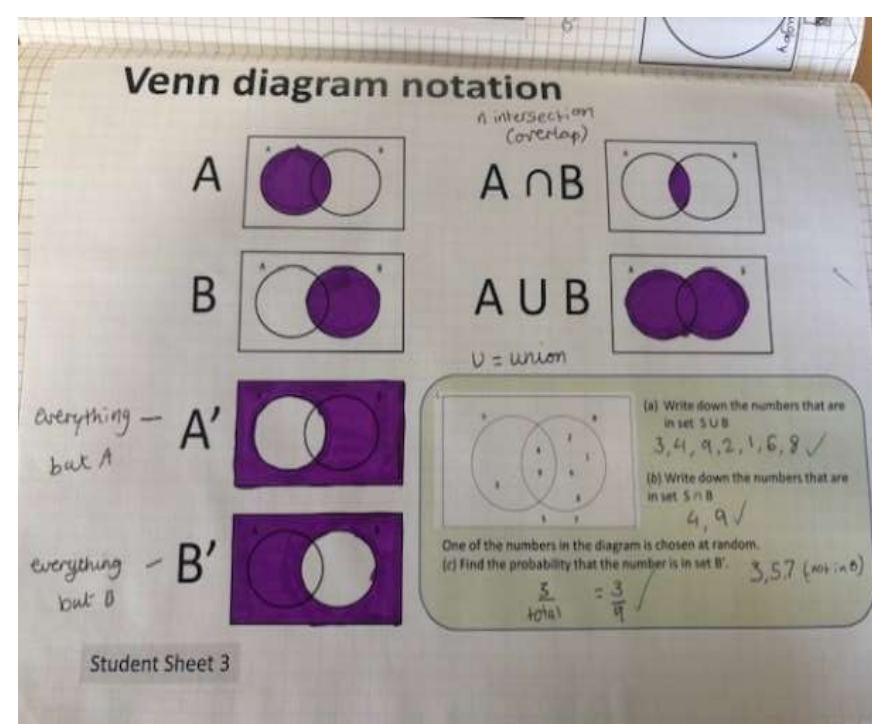
Four operations puzzle game during a KS3 lesson



Some of our Year 9 students designed a Valentines Board Game at the end of our probability unit



Problem solving jungle puzzle at the end of a Year 10 lesson



Our Year 11s received their iGCSE results and most were pleased with their results. Pupils are now revising for the summer entries with a view to building on the November results.

Summer iGCSE Maths exams

Paper 1 Thursday May 15th

Paper 2 Wednesday June 4th

A c h i e v e



This is a new subject we have introduced this year which is overseen by the King's Trust.

The King's Trust Achieve programme is uniquely designed to help young people aged 11 to 19 to re-engage with education, using a flexible, modular structure to improve young people's attendance, behaviour and attainment. It focuses on units pupils can complete that will help with life skills and, if a sufficient number of units are completed, they can receive a qualification.

We are mainly trialling this with our KS3 pupils and it has generally, been well received.

Many are choosing to do a personal project around a topic which interests them (ranging from moon landings to horses to house design) and some have started a unit on money management.

A handful of our Year 10 students are about to complete a resilience unit and this has resulted in some very thoughtful and reflective discussions.

We were very fortunate to attend an Apple workshop hosted by the King's Trust in London just before the Christmas break. Some of our year 9 students took part in designing their own apps and did some coding. They also tried out the in-house slide!



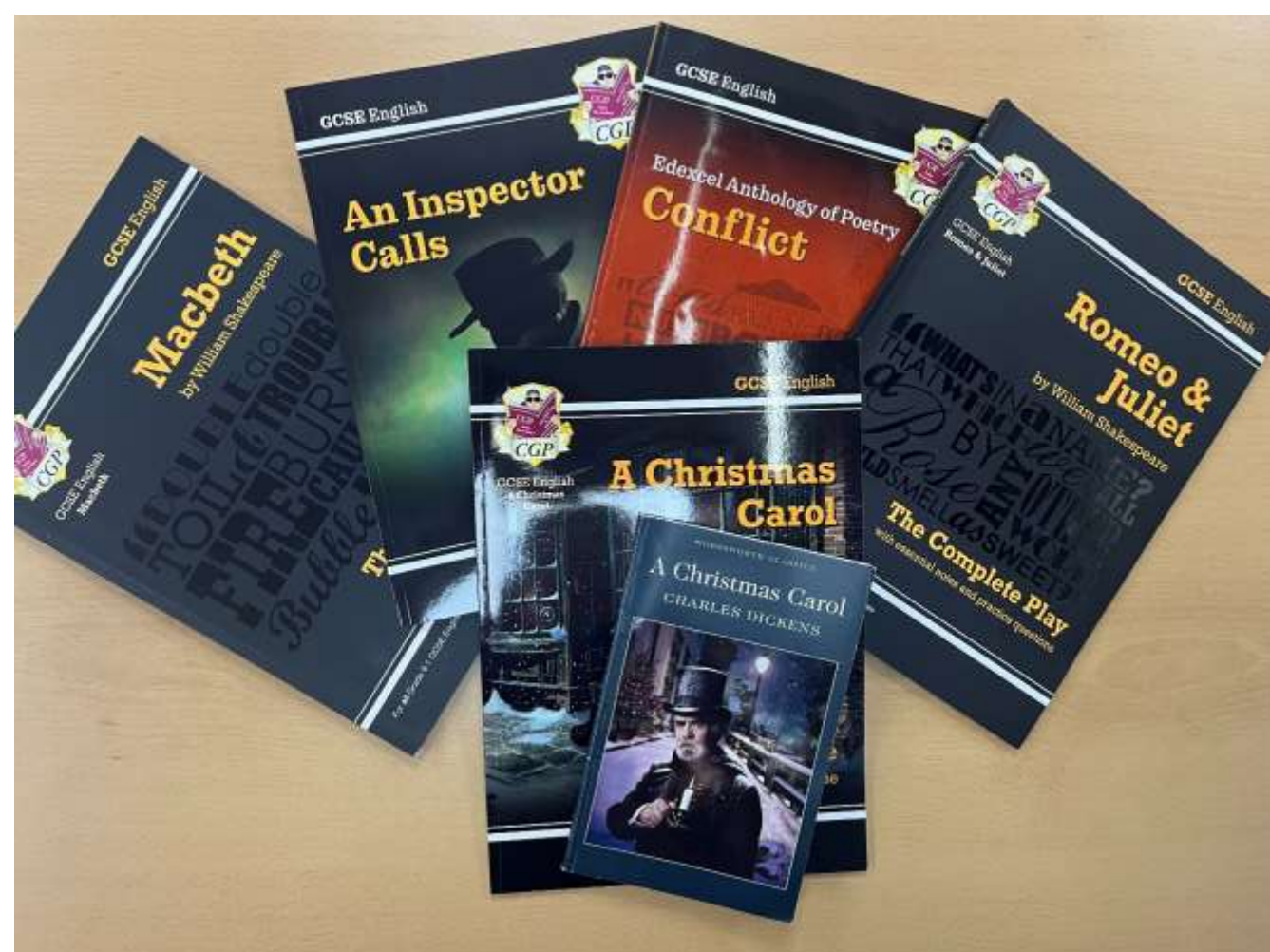
English

It's the time of the year when our Year 11 pupils are on the final push towards exams. This means that they are working hard in English Language, putting the finishing touches to coursework and practising the skills they will need for their summer exams. It also means that for some of our pupils, they have had to complete a recorded speaking and listening assessment. We are proud of all our pupils but we know that giving a presentation is daunting so we are especially proud of those pupils who have shown the resilience and maturity to complete this task. For those pupils also studying Literature the main focus is on the poetry, revision of key texts and making sure pupils know and understand key quotations. We wish all of our Year 11 pupils good luck for the summer with whatever their exam route: iGCSE, AQA, Edexcel, Functional Skills or Step Up to English.

For the majority of our Year 10 pupils, they are continuing to work on first drafts of coursework. This could be a piece of description, a persuasive piece or a short story. However, for some of our Year 10s, they have felt ready for the challenge and are having a go at their English Language exam this summer. As with our Year 11 pupils, we wish them all the best and would like to praise the courage they're displaying in being bold enough to have a go at the exam a year early.

Meanwhile this term has seen some of our KS3 pupils working off-site on functional literacy so that when they return to site they can fully engage in core learning activities. For those KS3 pupils who have remained on site we have enjoyed getting to know the characters in the novel 'Look Both Ways' by Jason Reynolds. Pupils have been exploring themes of diversity, bullying, individuality, community, fear and prejudice in an inner-city US school where the novel is set. We still haven't solved the mystery of the 'school bus falling from the sky', but Satchmo has provided us with an excellent escape route should a neighbour's dog decide to attack!

Finally, across this term, all of our pupils have been practising their oracy and speaking and listening skills – often by stealth! Every time our pupils put themselves in a new situation on a school visit or engage with a guest speaker, those questions that they are asking and answering allows them to practise vital communication skills. It means that this term, through activities as diverse as first aid, mock interviews and volunteering, and with visits ranging from the zoo to the abbey and the Tower of London, our pupils have engaged with a wide range of different talk situations, allowing them the opportunity to express themselves clearly and communicate effectively with others around them.



E n g l i s h

An Example of Year 11 Descriptive Writing.

The house still stands, sturdy and familiar, but it no longer feels like home. Once alive with laughter and loving memories, the walls now reflect the echo of a hollow silence. The front door with its peeling black paint and heart wreath creaks faintly as I push it open as if it were pushing back all the lost memories. Inside, the air is thick, weighed down by the remnants of past disagreements and the leftover tension that lingers in the air.

The kitchen, once the soul of the house, now feels like a reminder of broken promises and lost hope. The large oak kitchen table remains but now stripped of the homely meals and happy stories that once graced it. The warmth of togetherness replaced by a cold sterility, a place for conversations and catch-ups now feels like a place of fleeting memories. The walls lined with aged photographs resembling a museum dedicated to a life that no longer exists, smiling faces lost in time stare at me through the glass almost taunting the gaps that have developed since those peaceful days. A family photo hangs askew in front of me, the crack in its frame representing the unseen cracks in our family that grow with every cruel word spoken. I used to stare at it and only think about how much I hated my smile but now all I can see is a girl who loved her family more than anything, a girl who wanted nothing more than to be loved the same way she loved.

The living room, once the heart of the house now feels empty and detached. The carved stone fireplace, where we would all huddle around the warmth of the bright blazing fire, now cold and dusty. The large sofa sits unused with its worn seats and flat cushions like a relic of a time when we would watch movies, play games and share popcorn and an easy conversation. The big flatscreen tv standing in the corner stares like an unblinking eye reflecting the emptiness of the space.

My bedroom, once a sanctuary, feels alien now. The walls painted in hues that held late-night thoughts, whispered dreams and nightmares. My bed lays slightly sunken on one side from where I would lay too frightened to face the door, the sheets a mess showing the struggle of restless nights and heavy burdens. The floor lays unseen swallowed by the piles of clothes and rubbish mirroring the consistent chaos in my mind. My cluttered desk stands by the window with memorabilia from the past 16 years of my life comforted by a blanket of dust. An unfamiliar stillness fills the air, and though the room remains unchanged, it no longer belongs to me, like a stranger has rearranged its soul.

My home, once my only escape, now the only thing I wish to escape from. We, the family that needed nothing more than hope, have unravelled, the rope holding us together now frayed by hurt, anger and remorse. I step outside. Pulling the door shut behind me, the sound heavy and final. The house still stands, sturdy and familiar, but it no longer feels like home. Turning around, I see the house staring back at me and I realise the house itself hasn't changed – we have.

Physical Education

This half term has seen great engagement from pupils in both off site and onsite activities.

The Key stage three class has increased in number with some new pupils in the class who have shown great attitude in getting stuck in right away with the established group. The pupils have now begun to learn the rules of doubles in badminton. The team work and communication between pupils is positive with teammates often supporting and praising each other for good play. This has been a real pleasure with this group to start the week in this way. A small number of the key stage three group also attend the off site gym at Wokingham Leisure Centre where they are engaged in a range of different strength and cardiovascular activities. Our pupils have fitted right in and are showing the confidence to move around the gym and use the equipment safely with others.

The key stage four pupils have been working hard in the onsite gym where there has been a real focus on the upper body and specifically lots of sets and repetitions on the bench press! The boys have developed a friendly competition between themselves which has increased engagement and focus in the lessons.

A small group of pupils have been attending the local golf driving range where they have been developing their shot range and consistency of hitting the ball. The pupils have been working towards being ready to play a round of golf at the local course where we hope no shouts of, FORE!



LIFE

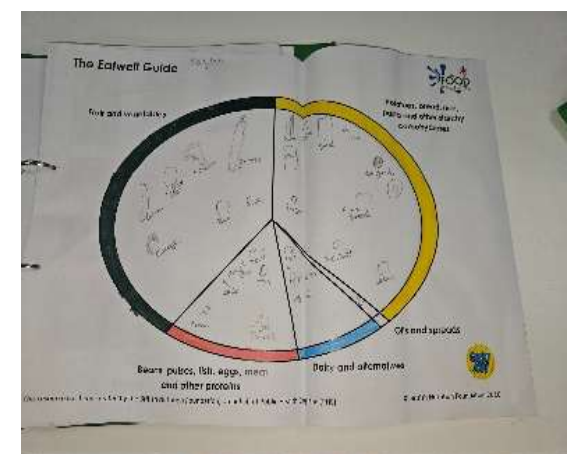
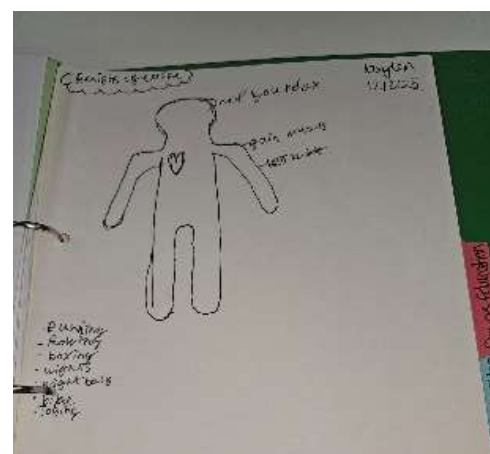
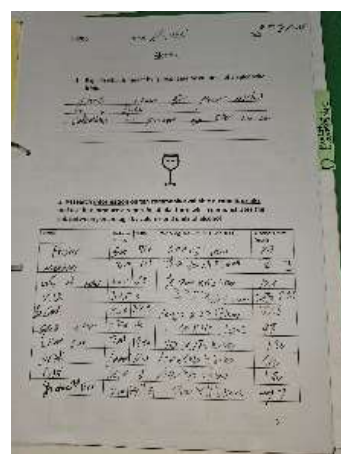
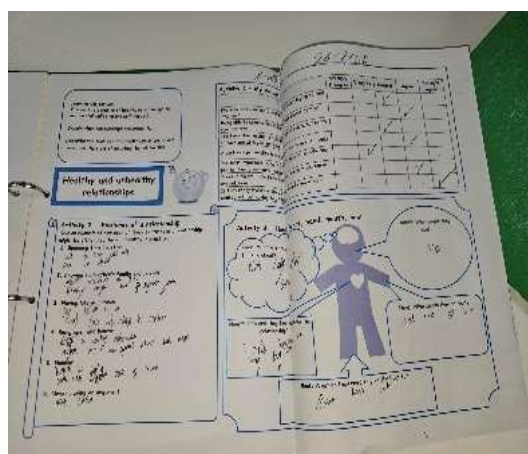
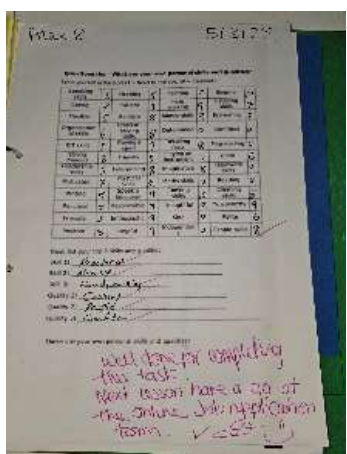
As we move into the spring term, I am excited to share with you the wonderful activities and learning experiences our pupils have been engaged in. Our focus continues to be on delivering essential life skills through the AQA Unit Awards in various topics.

Drugs Education - Pupils are learning about the effects of various substances, making informed choices, and understanding the importance of seeking help when needed.

Healthy Relationships - In our healthy relationship's unit, pupils explore what constitutes a healthy relationship, including respect, consent, and communication.

Personal Finance - Understanding personal finance is crucial for our pupil's future independence. We cover budgeting, saving, and responsible spending habits.

Emotional Wellbeing - Pupils participate in discussions that promote self-awareness and coping strategies for stress and anxiety. We emphasise the importance of mental health and encourage open conversations about feelings.



Alongside the core topics covered we can be flexible in our approach and other standalone AQA units are being worked on currently such as one of our secondaries giving support and helping out in the Primary classroom, another who is very enthusiastic about creating his fantasy football team and several others learning about how food can affect our mood and the importance of eating a healthy lunch.

First Aid Workshop

At the start of the year, we hosted a first aid workshops where pupils learned essential skills such as conducting a primary survey, CPR, wound care, the recovery position and water safety and how to respond effectively in a range of emergencies. This also gave pupils the confidence to share their newly found knowledge with other peers in a mentoring session who didn't attend the workshops and it was amazing to see how much they could recall.



H u m a n i t i e s

Six weeks is a short time for a college half term. This one has been very full. Our new Character Education programme is having very positive effects across the board and no less in the Humanities subjects. As I write this, I am just about ready to take a group to the Tower of London for the day. This is always very special as we enjoy examining the gory history and wonderful treasures of this great national treasure. It will no doubt inspire pupils and teachers alike.

Teaching here at Foundry can be very different to my many years of experience in mainstream schools. We can provide breadth and choices that are not possible elsewhere. A typical conversation is, "What would you like to do in History this half-term?" The question sometimes bewilders the pupils. I have to explain that everything becomes History and therefore we can design the study programme around their choices and their likes and dislikes. This term's list has been 'A History of Horses'. This one galloped away, with lots of fun, some serious research and a canter through time. We were invaded by Roman Emperors, met gladiators and encountered scandal that would grace any modern soap opera. Vikings too played a part, though Kirk Douglas and Tony Curtis did not make an appearance. These kinds of study have a serious purpose of course. We learn to use sources, books, artifacts, letters, reports, all the tools of the historian and scientist. Pupils begin to understand the difference between fact and fiction and the necessity for evidence. They encounter 'cause and consequence', 'change and continuity'. We see evidence of growing confidence and joy in learning...it's a great job.



Food

As we approach the end of a bustling spring term here at Foundry, I am filled with pride reflecting on the incredible journey our pupils have embarked upon in their food and cookery classes. This term has been particularly vibrant, with pupils eager to explore a wide variety of sweet and savoury dishes while diligently working towards achieving their NCFE Certificate in Food and Cookery or AQA unit awards.

It has been heart-warming to witness our pupils so engaged in the kitchen. Their enthusiasm for cooking is truly inspiring, several pupils arrive excited during break and lunch to start preparing their dishes before lessons and it is lovely to see them take pride in sharing their culinary creations with one another. The atmosphere during our cooking sessions has been filled with laughter, teamwork, and a genuine passion for learning.

It is always challenging to sift through the hundreds of photos capturing these memorable moments and I would like to share some highlights from this term:



Fruit Tarts: Several pupils showcased their creativity by crafting beautiful fruit tarts that were not only delicious but also visually stunning.

Fruit Pavlova: The delicate meringue topped with fresh fruits was fabulous, demonstrating our pupils' skills in balancing flavours and textures.

Profiteroles: These delightful cream-filled pastries were a hit, as students learned the art of choux pastry. This is a very technical dish that some of the younger pupils mastered.

Vegetarian sushi: A popular and very complicated dish that allowed pupils to explore cultural cuisine while honing their cooking skills and creativity.

Pasta Workshops: Our pasta making workshops encouraged resilience as pupils worked hard to create fresh pasta from scratch, with some preparing and tasting oyster and shitake mushrooms and purple sprouting broccoli for the first time!

Two-Course Meals: Pupils often teamed up to prepare two-course meals that they enjoyed feasting on during lunch, fostering camaraderie and teamwork.

Cuisines from around the world: We have cooked Italian, Spanish, African, English, Indian and Chinese dishes to name a few...but one pupil has thoroughly enjoyed introducing us to Romanian dishes that are shared with staff and pupils alike.



I would like to commend those pupils who continue to work hard on completing their coursework. Your dedication does not go unnoticed! For those who may need a little extra motivation, I encourage you to use the remaining time wisely. With focus and effort, I believe you can achieve the grades you deserve.

I am incredibly proud of each pupil's progress this term. It is wonderful to see them not only developing their cooking skills but also building confidence in themselves and working with different peers and age groups. I can only apologise that some of the wonderful dishes created here are often consumed on site before they make it home to you!

Celebrating Diversity Through Food and Culture - Character Curriculum Fridays

We are excited to share the wonderful collaboration between our Food and LIFE lessons this term. Our pupils have been actively engaged in projects that combine culinary skills with cultural education, allowing them to explore various religious festivals and special days throughout the term.

Chinese New Year

To kick off our journey we started the term with **Chinese New Year**, a festival rich in symbolism and tradition. Pupils explored the significance of this celebration, which marks the beginning of a new lunar year. They prepared traditional dishes such as chicken fried rice, spring rolls and crispy chilli beef. Pupils discovered which Zodiac animals they were and cracked open fortune cookies learning about their meanings—like prosperity and good fortune. The vibrant decorations created by our pupils transformed the hall area into a festive space that reflected the spirit of this important holiday.



Pancake Day and Shrove Tuesday

Next on our culinary journey was **Pancake Day**, also known as **Shrove Tuesday**. This day has its origins in the Christian tradition, marking the last day before Lent begins. Traditionally, it was a time for families to use up rich foods like eggs and sugar before the fasting period of Lent. Pupils learned about these traditions while preparing delicious pancakes. The joy of flipping pancakes was matched only by the excitement of eating them with their peers during lunch..



Holi: The Festival of Colour

As we moved forward, we celebrated **Holi**, known as the Festival of Colour. This Hindu festival signifies the arrival of spring and is celebrated with vibrant colours and joyous gatherings. Our students not only prepared colourful snacks and healthy pizzas but some also opted to put cucumber on their pizzas which may be more controversial than the pineapple debate! The atmosphere was filled with laughter as they decorated and laid tables with bright hues reminiscent of this beautiful festival.



Eid al-Fitr Preparations

Looking ahead to our final week of term, pupils are eagerly planning dishes and creating display posters for **Eid al-Fitr**, which marks the end of Ramadan—a month dedicated to fasting, prayer, and reflection. This celebration is an opportunity for families to come together over festive meals after a month of spiritual growth. Our pupils will learn about the significance of Eid while preparing dishes of their choice such as curry spiced drumsticks, tacos with lots of salad and sweet treats using dates and chocolate dipped fruits.

The enthusiasm doesn't stop at cooking, decorating and organising the table adds an extra layer of excitement! Pupils take pride in creating inviting spaces where staff and fellow pupils can enjoy their culinary creations during lunch breaks. By raising awareness of these special days through food preparation it has not only enhanced our pupils' culinary abilities but has also promoted cultural appreciation within our college community. This is evidenced by a new pupil asking me just this week, when the next celebration lunch is and we look forward to continuing this tradition in future terms!

Tuesdays at Action 4 Youth

Tuesdays this half term have seen some of our Key Stage 3 pupils attending weekly sessions at Action 4 Youth in Milton Keynes. This has been a really positive experience with pupils engaging in a wide range of mentoring and outdoor pursuits. From water zorbing and archery to caving and teamwork games, we have seen pupils grow in confidence, face some fears, and build resilience and trust in each other. In addition to fun outdoorsy activities, pupils have taken part in sessions with mentors, learned important first aid skills and heard from an ex-offender about the impact of detrimental life choices. It has been inspiring seeing some of our young people really stepping out of their comfort zone to learn and grow during our sessions on Tuesdays. We are looking forward to what future weeks will include...bring on the paddleboarding!

