



This autumn term has gone by in a wonderful blur, I honestly cannot believe it is Christmas already!

We have been so fortunate this term to have been able to open our doors to so many new pupils and it has been inspirational to see them overcome their previous challenges and attend an education setting. The snapshot that you will see within this newsletter is only the tip of the iceberg of the achievements they have made with us so far and we all look forward to the new year to celebrate further with them.

Looking back over this term brings a huge smile to my face as there have been so many positives to draw from. The 'Character Curriculum' has given so many of our pupils the opportunity to be inspired by new and wonderful experiences alongside their individual curriculums. This wonderful mix of opportunities that we are able to provide for our pupils will continue in the new year and we continue to encourage as many pupils as possible to fully engage with them. We pride ourselves in offering the pupils experiences that will promote their resilience and confidence to be brave and take part in things that are unfamiliar to them.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all of our staff, management committee, school partners and parents who have supported us and our pupils this term in making such a positive difference to so many young lives.

Thank you for your continued support and I look forward to seeing you in the New Year.

Iain Thomas

Headteacher



Art



South Hill Park Workshops

Some of the students have attended either a spray-painting or mono-printing workshop during Autumn term in order to learn new skills, or extend their previous knowledge. Next year we will be taking some back to the Bracknell arts centre, to build large out door earthwork style sculptures on their grounds, and for the KS3's to work with another external artist on a book project.

Our next art exhibition at South Hill Park, is planned to start in February next year, and this time it will be open to both pupils and staff. We look forward to producing up to 15 pieces, which will include at least three 3D pieces.



Halloween & Marble Run Competitions

We had a fantastic response to our Halloween Competition, in which two unbiased members of staff were presented with a whopping 21 art and craft entries to judge! They found picking the winners extremely difficult due to the incredible variety and amount of effort that the pupils had put into their pieces. I was blown away by the exceptional skills and imagination shown by the pupils, the competition not only gave them a great opportunity to create their pieces in any lesson, but also made it more accessible to those working within college and receiving offsite provision. Our marble run competition encouraged the pupils to work as a team whilst using their creative, communication and problem-solving skills. It got very competitive and a great deal of fun was had.



Art



Wokingham Christmas Tree Decoration

Lastly, five art pupils have recently worked on the Wokingham Christmas Tree decoration. The theme as last year was Sustainability, and as we have a few keen fishing enthusiasts currently onsite, we studied the abstract 3D work of artist Kerry Heath, and sustainable fishing.

Pupils created a really colourful and wacky Christmas wreath with a difference! Our Grinch has been on the tree for the last two years, and he may well reappear, so don't forget to look up when venturing into Wokingham Town!



Sport



The pupils have been working consistently hard across a range of physical activities in the gym and this has shown in their positive and engaging attitudes to exercise. The pupils have been motivated by their own progression in lessons and this has spurred them on to try new things in the gym space. Pupils have also been taking part in badminton at the local leisure centre where over the half term, knowledge and skills of the game have improved every week. The boys are now playing a competitive game of badminton with each of them trying to impose their own skills and shots selections.

Pupils have been off site this half term as part of the character curriculum Fridays and took part in a mountain bike session in Swinley forest. The boys spent the whole afternoon in the forest riding the most exciting trails with great skills and attitudes. There were lots of laughs, positive praise and constructive criticism to improve each other's riding skills. We were very grateful to Siobhan for coming with us and putting us all to the sword with her riding skills!



Science



This term pupils have been learning a wide variety of key concepts in science. Key stage 4 pupils have done a series of experiments relating to rates of reaction in chemistry as well as making copper sulphate crystals and learning about bonding in ionic and covalent substances. In physics they have been learning about the particle model, changes of state and specific heat capacity. These all give the opportunity of learning through experiments. In biology movement of substances through diffusion, osmosis and active transport has been applied to plants and animals. Our current topic is homeostasis including thinking about the best way to test reaction times.

The emphasis for KS3 pupils has been on doing practical work to engage and encourage curiosity. Examples might include testing alkali and acids or burning snacks to see which has most energy.



Maths



Most Year 11's completed the November iGCSE exams. We wish them all the very best with their results which will arrive in January 2025.

Some of our year 10s and 11s are currently working through AQA Entry Level Certificate Papers and they have made great progress with their basic maths skills.



Our KS4 pupils have also been analysing data, looking at worded problems involving percentages and fractions and are now going on to transformations.

KS3 have been looking at Integers and place value, Interpreting data and fractions, decimals and percentages. They have now started a topic on symmetry and going onto transformations. How many lines of symmetry are in your name?



We have welcomed a number of new pupils and are looking forward to getting to know them.

We attended 2 amazing Lego workshops in October where some great builds were made and some of the most brilliant stop-motion-animation clips were created. Well done to all our pupils who took part.



Please use the QR code below to see some of the fantastic stop motion animations that were created:



LIFE



It's not always easy for pupils to discuss and talk about some of the sensitive topics and subjects that we cover in our LIFE curriculum. However, with an increase in lessons this term alongside more teachers delivering the subject we are excited to share the progress pupils have made.

We use the AQA Unit Award Scheme to allow for a flexible approach that caters to the diverse needs of our pupils. Some pupils engage with comprehensive booklets that guide them through essential topics, while others participate in dynamic discussions that focus on issues relevant to their lives.

This term, we have focused on several key areas:

Healthy Lifestyles: Pupils explore what constitutes a healthy lifestyle, including physical activity, nutrition, and mental well-being.

Personal Safety: Pupils learn the importance of personal safety in various environments and situations, equipping them with strategies to protect themselves.

Drugs Education: Pupils explore the effects and risks associated with drug use, aiming to foster informed decision-making.

Emotional wellbeing: Pupils develop knowledge and skills necessary to recognise, understand, and manage their own emotional wellbeing as well as that of others.

Personal finance: Pupils are introduced to some of the main aspects of personal finance which they may encounter in adult life.

Sexual health workshop: This term pupils had the opportunity to attend a sexual health workshop conducted by our fabulous school nurses at Woodford Park. During this session, pupils learned about healthy relationships, consent, and safe practices. This workshop provided an open forum for pupils to ask questions and gain valuable insights into maintaining respectful and healthy interactions with others.



Overall, our LIFE program aims not only to educate but also to empower pupils by providing them with knowledge and skills that are vital for their personal development. As we continue through the year, we look forward to further engaging our pupils in meaningful discussions that will help shape their understanding of these important topics.

English



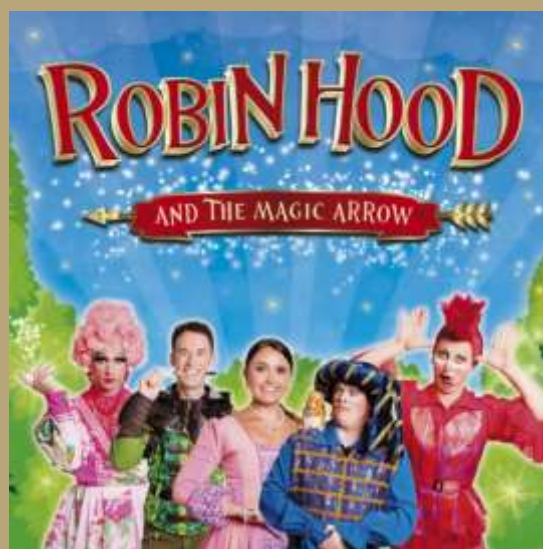
Our Year 10 and Year 11 pupils have started the year working hard to complete their first of three coursework pieces. For some this has involved writing to describe or narrate and for others writing to argue and persuade. Some Year 10 pupils have also been practising their reading comprehension skills through targeted lessons on identifying explicit and implied meanings in texts.

For those pupils studying Literature, the focus has been on tackling the words of The Bard, William Shakespeare, uncovering the plot which led to "A pair of star-cross'd lovers' taking their own lives in Romeo & Juliet. We are now moving into the seasonal favourite of 'A Christmas Carol' exploring the themes of social injustice, family, poverty and redemption.

Meanwhile, Key Stage 3 pupils have had some uncanny experiences meeting spirits at Grimstone Hall when reading 'Seven Ghosts' by Chris Priestley whilst some others are coming very close to solving the mystery of the 'Malamander' by Thomas Taylor.

Outside of the classroom, some of our Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 pupils participated in a workshop delivered by Yeah Youth with the aim of strengthening their communication skills and confidence in public speaking. Pupils had the opportunity to meet and work with two successful Rap musicians and performers (Capo Lee and Shay Mula), who introduced them to a range of careers in the world of entertainment through interactive games, explorative discussions and a fun role play! The atmosphere was purposeful, collaborative and warm. Some pupils have indicated an interest in getting involved in future Yeah Youth projects - who knows, we may be fostering the next big talent in Grime music!

Finally, we wrapped up the term by visiting the Wilde Theatre in Bracknell to watch a performance of their Christmas pantomime Robin Hood. Intentionally silly, over-the-top and full of audience participation, it was a great way to mark the end of term.



Humanities



Nearly Christmas and I find myself wondering where this term has gone. I've always found that time flies in schools as life is lived at such a frantic pace. We have no bells to signal changes in Foundry but change we have. This term we have introduced a new arrangement for enhancing our pupils' experience through our Character Education programme. Each Friday there has been a different challenge. History and Geography have been well represented in this.

The first activity just two weeks after we came back was a visit to Windsor Castle. This was spectacular and without exception, pupils were engaged and full of questions. Thanks to Jo's quick thinking, we were able to watch the Changing of the Guard and then enjoy a wander through the state apartments taking in the wonderful art and the many historical treasures on show. Regrettably for some of us, it was a case of "taking in" rather than "taking out".



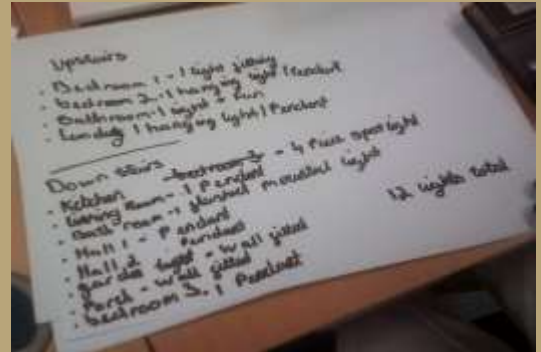
A week later this was followed by a visit to Buckingham Palace. A much-delayed train and subsequent crowds made this a rather rushed occasion, but the short bus ride with a very helpful driver, gave us spectacular views of the Houses of Parliament and Westminster Abbey. The palace is only open for a limited time and was very full, but we were able to get a taste of what it would be like living there and some took the opportunity to walk and relax in the gardens before partaking of the excellent cuisine on offer at McDonalds.

A few weeks later, we found ourselves in the British Museum. This is a marvellous place, with items from all over the world giving a glimpse into the geography and living conditions of people from pole to pole. Some of our pupils were particularly interested in the Elgin Marbles and the Assyrian remains, all giving us insights into architecture and archaeology as well as introducing us to the lives of those living thousands of years ago. We also saw the treasures that came from the Anglo-Saxon ship burial at Sutton Hoo and the largest hoard of Tudor gold coins ever to be found.



We returned home tired, happy and certainly challenged. I wonder what's next?

As we near the end of the first term, I am pleased to say that most of the pupils involved have engaged well in Occupational Studies and after a period of experimentation have found a unit they enjoy working on. Most pupils are working towards either a Level 1 or Level 2 qualification and some are mixing it up a bit in order to focus on work they enjoy. Everyone is making progress and their evidence portfolios are developing nicely.

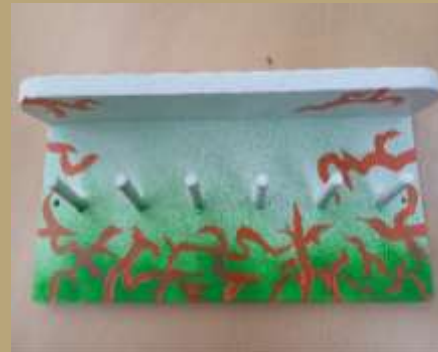


For the last two years some pupils completed Level 1 AQA Unit Awards in addition to their Occupational Studies units. These are small independent units of study and some cover aspects of study that are integral parts of the main OS units such as health and safety. I am hopeful that as the year progresses, some pupils, especially those in KS3 will choose this path.

As ever, the most popular units have a focus on the construction industry such as Plumbing Skills, Hand Carpentry Skills, and Brickwork Operations. For the first time we are also offering a new Level 2 unit - Electrical Installation, Wiring and Circuit protection. This is a challenging unit and takes a long time to complete but despite this one of our year 11 pupils has chosen this route and is making great progress. Although the unit is designed to give learners an introduction into household wiring skills and a sound understanding of the regulations relating to this kind of work, a much more rigorous qualification is needed before pupils are allowed to undertake any electrical work. With safety foremost in our minds, the unit has been designed to be completed on either non-live circuits or those powered by a battery or school laboratory power pack.



The Occupational Studies qualifications are a great way to gain some basic vocational skills in a range of occupational areas including construction, catering, horticulture and fitness and in the past have proven to be a first-class stepping stone for our pupils into further education or apprenticeships of their choice.



Food



Food has always been a popular subject at Foundry College and this term has been no different as more keen and budding chefs have arrived, ambitious and eager to learn how to cook and develop their skills further.

Pupils have made a fabulous start to their NCFE Food and cookery course working at either level 1 or 2. Both levels of this qualifications aim to equip learners with practical skills that can be applied in everyday cooking as well as professional settings. They emphasise not only technical abilities but also an understanding of nutrition and food safety.



The range of dishes KS3 and KS4 pupils have made this term is truly impressive. They often want to challenge themselves from making pizza, pasta, gnocchi, profiteroles, duchess potatoes and vegetable sushi from scratch, to birthday brownies, sharing their own carbonara recipes, or making various vegetable soups and fresh smiley bread rolls for the first time :-)

Pupils are proud of the dishes they create in the kitchen and are often keen to share with peers at break and lunch times. Several pupils worked well together to create some delicious dishes to help us celebrate Diwali earlier in the term with one pupils' vegetarian Samosas proving a huge hit!



Food



This month all pupils have been busy designing, baking, constructing and decorating some marvellous gingerbread houses (or even an underground ginger bunker) for a wonderful winter kitchen display. The creativity, laughter and excuse for us to play Christmas songs in the background has made this month very special. Many are also looking forward to the big Christmas dinner feast where pupils and staff help prepare our own Christmas dinner to celebrate the end of term.



As the new year approaches I am very excited to see what wonderful dishes our pupils will continue to create and hope that this may encourage them to cook more at home and share their wonderful creations with you.

Wishing you all a wonderful and restful holiday

Primary



This term our focus has been on increasing pupil engagement and therefore our timetable has had to be very flexible to accommodate the needs of our pupils. Throughout the term, our primary pupils have engaged in therapeutic activities such as: Theraplay, touch talk and sensory circuits. Our pupils have enjoyed completing Lego models and taking part in STEM Challenges and have engaged well in Computing sessions with Botley!

Over the Autumn Term, pupils have developed their understanding of dogs, including how to read their body language and how to respond around them. After an extensive piece of work, adults were brought to tears when one pupil, who previously found interactions with Bella, the school dog, difficult, calmly stood still and allowed her to sniff him. He then lowered himself to her level, gently placed out his hand and proceeded to stroke her! Needless to say, we were exceptionally proud of all involved!

This week, we have seen the return of our weekly visits to Thames Valley Adventure Playground (TVAP). For some of our pupils, external visits can be anxiety-provoking and therefore it has been a slow and steady transition to fully accessing what they have to offer. We are very proud of the pupils for their resilience – even if getting in the car and driving there is all that they could manage, that's amazing! We look forward to spending more time there as we move through the academic year.

We are looking forward to seeing out this half term with lots of Christmas craft and cooking and we hope you all enjoy your Christmas break when it arrives.

