



Parents' Newsletter

Dear parents

This is always a positive end of term, with the days getting longer and the spring colours all around us. As I write, we are looking forward hugely to the school's first ever musical, Aladdin Jr. This is a great new venture for the Performing Arts and Dance teams and we really can't wait to see the results of all the hard work. I know what a special experience this will be for all the students taking part, the staff who have worked tirelessly to prepare them, and all of you who will be lucky enough to be in the audience. It really reminds us of the value of education in its broadest sense.

At this time of year, it is Year 11 who are at the front of our minds, as they enter the last few weeks of preparation for their GCSEs, and approach the end of their time with us. They have managed unprecedented levels of uncertainty and pressure over their secondary school years. We do look forward to celebrating with them at the Prom.

It's been good to have students out and about this term. We were very grateful to the Henley Youth Festival for two very special events. Firstly, they supported all of Year 9 being able to experience 'Fartology' at the Kenton Theatre. It sounded a brilliant and engaging performance, as well as covering lots of science content. Also, they enabled a professional performance of 'An Inspector Calls' at school, for Years 10 and 11 - which is one of the required texts for GCSE English Literature. Some of Year 10 also attended the Science Live show in Oxford and a performance of 'Romeo and Juliet', another set text, at The Globe. We've also had other theatre visits - 'Matilda, The Musical' and 'Metamorphosis'. Our DofE students have been getting ready for their expeditions. Alas we have had to postpone Year 7's first experience of Geography field work as the River Pang is flooded. You will find in this newsletter much other evidence of the rich diversity of school life – I do hope you will enjoy reading about all that has been going on.

Please could I also remind parents of the importance of students being properly equipped for school? However well organised they were in September, a number of students are now arriving without the basics – pens, pencils, rubber, ruler, calculator, coloured pencils, glue, whiteboard – which slows down the start of lessons and hence progress. Getting the basics sorted for the start of the new term is essential!

I hope that you and your families will be able to enjoy some relaxation over the holidays, and that the spring weather will improve during the break. But, Year 11, remember to stick to those revision timetables! We are recommending 3 hours per day, 6 days per week, as a minimum.

Catharine Darnton
Headteacher

Parent View

Parent View is an online questionnaire for parents and carers to feed back to Ofsted on their child's school. It is now the main mechanism that Ofsted use to gather parents' views at the time of an inspection. There are just 12 questions to answer. The questions look at the key areas such as happiness, safety, progress, quality of teaching, behaviour and school leadership. The final question asks if you would recommend the school to another parent. Everyone's responses are put together and are available to view on the Parent View website. In order to minimise the risk of abuse, you are required to register and create a password. We would be very pleased to have your ongoing feedback of what you think of the school – please visit <http://parentview.ofsted.gov.uk/>

School Fund

Our School Fund is an opportunity for parents to support the quality of education for their children through making regular voluntary contributions to be used directly to provide resources for use in the classroom and at home.



Why do we need your support?

Unlike many schools, Gillotts has not had a tradition of regular individual donations to support the school. However, as you will have seen from media coverage, the financial climate for all schools has become increasingly difficult in recent years. School funding is still below 2010 levels in real terms - in spite of steadily rising costs - so in real terms, our income is falling. This is making it harder for the school to deliver the excellent teaching and learning we aspire to.

How much would we like you to contribute?

There is no obligation or pressure to donate but, if you would like to, we will be grateful for whatever you can afford. Suggestions donations are below.

If you give £10 per month, this would give us £120 per year – with Gift Aid, that is £150!

If you give £1 per day, this would give us £365 per year – with Gift Aid, that's over £450 per year!

How does this work with the support provided by the Parents' Association?

The Parents' Association has provided invaluable support to Gillotts for many years. The Association fully endorses this request for individual regular contributions. However payments will be through the school, to preserve parents' anonymity.

“The PA fully supports the school in striving to maintain a high standard of education for our children in the face of reduced income. Donating to the School Fund will be a way of trying to ensure that our children continue to receive the excellent standard of education that Gillotts at present provides. The School Fund is also a way for parents/ carers who do not have time to help with the PA to be involved with the school.”

What will we spend the funds on?

We will spend the funds on ensuring all curriculum subjects are well resourced, including with the additional new online resources that we know students and their parents value so much. This will enable us to support students to continue to make the outstanding progress that has become the norm in recent years.

Please give whatever you can – fill in and return the form attached – thank you for your support.

Darwin News Tutee of the Term

DGS: Flo Trower

DHLS: Ellie Swanick

DAPM: Jemima Hall

DLLF: Cameron Herriot

DROM/CAG: Gemma Musgrove

DCHA: Fran Reed

DSGG: Alisa Belyaeva

DHLK: Marley Hormigo

DJLG: Will Sadler

DFMW: Tinashe Kapalamula

DDI: Katie Priestly

DRD/NFD: Lily Clegg

DADT: Jess Bigin



Orwell News Tutee of the Term



OHJS/SEL: Noah Andrews

OPCM: Ted Thomond

OJSK: Megan Foulkes

OGMO: Jas Joshi

OJJ: Ariana Nieduszynska

OHRW: Isla Howard-Jones

OCG: Issy Collins

OTWN/CST: Henry Marrison

OTL: Sophie Clarke

OACM: Mathilde Faivre

ONMW: Daisy MacKenzie

OBJB/ELD: Felix Richardson

OAD/AB: Angelika Gwiazda

Pankhurst News Tutee of the Term

PHJ: Max Bowen

PTAG: Anabelle Rogers

PLJA/LS: Aria Seylani

PFLP: Ava Partridge

PJDS: Isabella Stobie

PNGK: Adella Streater

PSJW: Rhys Herbert

PESS: Alfie Lawrence

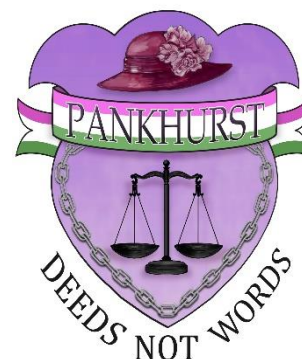
PKLO/CLF: Louisa Coultas

PWJH: Isabella Steedman

PJTP/CEC: Jake Robinson

PSMS: Sophie Price

PGDM: Eden Kent



Year 10 Art Trip to Oxford

Earlier this month, Year 10 students went to The Oxford University Museum of Natural History and The Pitt Rivers Museum to gather resources for their main GCSE Art project. These two wonderful museums hold such a wide array of inspirational objects, who could fail to be inspired?



The students represented the school very well, taking a real interest in the displays and completing some fabulous sketches. I am really looking forward to seeing how their project develops.

Key stage three extracurricular art project

A group of KS3 students had the opportunity to take part in a community art project run by Radley College. The project was called “Forest” and focussed on the incredible power of trees and forests. “Trees hold the power to make all our lives better and healthier. If a tree has power, a forest has even more; so too children working together to create a sustainable future.2

- Trees boost our mental health
- Provide homes for wildlife
- Give us shade in the heat
- They clean the air we breathe
- They lock up carbon as they grow



Here are some of the beautiful trees designed by students in Year 7. They are now on display, alongside hundreds of trees from other local schools, at Radley College.

Year 8 Ceramic Owls

Last half term, Year 8 students were inspired by birds for their art project. They started by developing their tonal and coloured pencil skills drawing sketches of owls, kingfishers, woodpeckers and other spectacular birds. They learnt how to make a ceramic owl, creating the body from a pod and adding a textured tail and wings. They coloured them using oil pastels and watercolour paint. What a fine selection of characterful creatures!



Year 10 Romeo and Juliet

On Thursday 29th February, Year 10 travelled with the English team to the Southbank in London to enjoy a truly 'authentic' rainy, riverside Globe Theatre experience. Spirits remained high as we settled into our own covered stall area overlooking the pit to watch a modern, visually powerful and punchy interpretation of Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet. It was an exciting opportunity for students to engage with our upcoming GCSE text and an excellent time was had by us all.



Maths Challenge

Some students in Year 9 and Year 10 had the opportunity of competing in the Intermediate Maths Challenge. The Maths Challenge encourages mathematical reasoning, precision of thought and fluency to make students think. Students were awarded with Bronze, Silver or Gold certificates, depending on their overall score. The results are below:

- In Year 9 we had fifteen students achieve Bronze, seven students achieve Silver and three students achieve Gold.
- In Year 10 we had twenty students achieve Bronze, ten students achieve Silver and three students achieve Gold.

A handful of students scored so highly that they are through to the next round. Year 9 students Reuben Densham, Tyron Kapalamula, Theo Khoury and Emma Fabri-Tascon are through to the Grey Kangaroo. In Year 10, Lillia Cottam made it through to the Pink Kangaroo.

A special mention goes to Lillia Cottam for the best score in her year, and Theo Khoury with the best score in the school.

Performing Arts News

It has been another incredible (and incredibly busy!) term in the Performing Arts Department!

KS3 Theatre Trip - Matilda

I was lucky enough to see Matilda the musical, at the West End on my birthday, with the school. When we sat down we could see the letters hanging down on us, which had hidden words amongst them. During the show there were swings that would swing out into the audience with actors on them whilst singing! My favourite character has to be Lavender, Matilda's best friend, because she put so much enthusiasm into the part!!! We got ice creams and slushies at the interval and I bought a Matilda cup as a souvenir!! I enjoyed everything about the show, especially the singing and dancing!
Ava Wareing-Small YEAR 7

KS3 Play - Charlie and The Chocolate Factory

The Gillotts' Performing Arts Department recently presented a production of Roald Dahl's Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, adapted by Richards George. Great fun was had by Key Stage 3 students from the drama club and tech crew. It was a huge team effort that was rehearsed over lunchtimes and during after school practices. Everybody worked hard to create the magic of Willy Wonka's chocolate factory in rehearsals, creating scenery from bamboo sticks and brightly coloured chocolate props. The three senior student directors supported in rehearsals and backstage during the performances.

The performances were really exciting with great receptive audiences on both nights. A special thank you must go to the tech team and Mr Grice for the sound effects, music and lighting. They even managed to display on the large projector screen in the Gillotts hall the moment when 'Mike Teavee' shrinks to pocket size. There were amazing props and extravagant costumes (who could miss Violet Beauregarde's blown-up blueberry costume?) which were kindly created by Vanessa Best and Alison Michael. A huge thank you must go to Mrs Alder for her unbelievable commitment to getting the play onto the stage. For the last 5 months, her drama studio has been overrun by orange tutu-wearing Oompa-Loompas.

Eve Chater YEAR 9



KS4 Performing Arts GCSE Showcase Evening

On the 7th March a group of Year 11 performing art students presented their various GCSE performances. The audience consisted of parents and Year 9 & 10 students who are taking or planning to take Dance, Drama and/or Music.

The evening was opened by Lily and Fran performing 'The Woman Who Cooked Her Husband', their component 2 scripted piece. Alix and Flo finished with the same performance, however through the different interpretations of the piece, students and parents were treated to the wide range of imagination GCSE drama consists of. Other Drama performances were showcased by Angelika, Cameron and Jonty (The Exam) and Dounia, Neve and Tomasz (Mother Figure). A wide range of music was played; from piano by George, to drums by Noah. Other performances included Felix playing guitar and Freddie with the trumpet. This range of instruments conveyed to future candidates the wide variety of instruments they can choose to accompany them during their course.

GCSE Dancers performed their choreography and set dance pieces. Tilly, Faye and Ella danced to Bring Me To Life as a trio, and Flo & Nuala as a duo. Here, potential GCSE dance students were shown the dance they'd be doing for their exam. Nuala and Ella both performed their choreography, a dance piece they had made themselves based on a certain stimulus. Nuala performed an emotive number themed by alcohol abuse and Ella, an inspirational piece based on the Paralympics.

Alix Maxwell YEAR 11



Aladdin

At the time of writing, rehearsals for Aladdin are well under way. Months and months of hard work will all come to an end as we take to the stage on March 25th, 26th and 27th in the school's production of Aladdin Jr. The set is looking amazing, the brilliant new lights are being programmed, wonderful costumes are being tried on, songs are sounding fantastic, dances are looking fabulous and the acting is ready to leave you on the edge of your seat. A massive, massive thank you to the many staff and students who have worked tirelessly to get this show where it is.

Mrs Charlotte Alder - Subject Leader for Performing Arts.



GCSE Drama Theatre Trip - Metamorphosis

In February, the Drama department organised a theatre trip for both Year 11 and 10 GCSE Drama students. This took place at the Lyric Hammersmith theatre in London - which was unfortunately quite a long bus ride away, but very much worth it! The theatre was beautiful on the inside and really added to the atmosphere of the play we were seeing - "Metamorphosis". This play tells the story of a man - Gregor Samsa - in the early twentieth century whose family relies solely on him for income, which takes an extremely negative toll on his mental health. He then, suddenly, overnight, transforms into a massive cockroach, burdening his family not just emotionally, but also physically due to his grotesque appearance. They eventually grow to resent him and murder him in the end, making the story tragic for Gregor, as he was never able to achieve happiness or fulfilment, always trying to help his family at his own expense. This was performed by the theatre company Frantic Assembly, known for their physical theatre intertwined with naturalism. The acting quality was amazing and incredibly moving, especially from the lead playing Gregor, as he transformed his human movements into those of a cockroach without the use of costume - only using his voice and body to mimic an insect. His slowly diminishing sense of self and humanity in him is masterfully woven into his cockroach self, and the visceral reaction he evoked from the audience truly made the story even more devastating. All of the characters were fantastically well-played and developed, plus the story was very well adapted from the book into the style of Frantic Assembly and including some of the original play's Berkoffian style. Overall, it was a great experience that contributed very well to my view of the story and my interpretation of Frantic Assembly as a whole.

Angelika Gwiazda - YEAR 11

Careers

National Careers Week

Between 4th March and the 8th March, Gillotts celebrated National Careers Week. Each year group received a talk from a local professional about their career, during their year assembly slot. Year 11s heard all about business and product management at Ella's Kitchen, Year 10 heard from Invesco, Year 9 heard about marketing, Year 8 heard about public relations and Year 7 heard about serious crime, CID. Thank you to the following parents for giving up their time: Will Hart and Georgina Bradley.



Year 8 were also lucky enough to receive an hour's talk, by Georgina Bradley, on stereotypes in the workplace and to learn all about a career in the police.



Year 10 Mock Interviews

On Wednesday 20th March, our Year 10 cohort each had a mock interview, from a local professional, to prepare them for future post-16/job interviews. The employers were very impressed with the professional and mature way the students conducted themselves and how well they were able to answer their questions. A huge thanks to those parents that gave up their time to interview; it is much appreciated.



Year 11 German Visit to the Goethe Institut, London

On Thursday 1st February, 15 GCSE students and 3 members of staff travelled by train to London to spend the day at the Goethe Institut (GI), a worldwide cultural organisation which promotes the learning of German. We attended one of their 'Careers with German' days aimed at students in KS4.

The morning started with a glorious walk through Hyde Park. Upon arrival we went to the auditorium to listen to a presentation from a member of staff who shared her own German learning journey in the UK and the time she spent living in Germany on her year abroad. The students then went to the GI library and completed an interactive quiz on iPads in German (and also met the GI robot!). The final session before lunch was classroom based and a tutor delivered the session on Careers in German. Students had the chance to explore job websites and could search for different professions which require German language skills. After lunch, we returned to the auditorium for a showing of 'Als Hitler das rosa Kaninchen stahl', a film based on the novel by Judith Kerr, which was a poignant way to end the day.

The students represented the school outstandingly and were praised by the staff for their enthusiasm and engagement with all tasks. It was a real pleasure to lead the visit and many thanks to Mrs Hayes and Mr Jedrzejczyk for accompanying us too.



Design Technology Update

Wood Lathe Demonstration for Y10 & Y11

We are very grateful to Martin Tilbury visiting the DT department on Friday 15th March, demonstrating wood lathe techniques to our GCSE DT students. This was extremely beneficial to them, particularly our Y11 students. Many thanks to Martin for his time and volunteering to do this for us.



Library Update

Berkshire Book Award

At Gillotts we take part in the Berkshire Book Award, an award for which the books are entirely nominated by students in Berkshire and Oxfordshire schools. They choose the longlists which are then narrowed down to shortlists – one of these is for YA books and the other for younger books (for Years 7-9). This year I had the opportunity to select a group to read the books in more detail and take them on the shortlist event held at Reading Blue Coat School. The students were from Years 7 and 8 and they continue to read and rate the books; the winning book will be announced in May.

Mrs Small, one of our LSAs, accompanied us on the trip and drove the minibus, which was much appreciated. At the event our 12 students split up and sat at tables with students from other local schools. The afternoon event included hearing the announcement of the shortlist, discussing some ice-breaker questions about the books to get to know about the reading habits of the other students at their table and then taking part in a writing workshop run by Alex Baker from Wokingham Libraries 'Igniting Writing.' They also had the chance to buy copies of the shortlisted books. Since then the students have been enjoying reading the shortlisted books. Some of them have made brilliant word clouds to celebrate the authors and books. Here is some of their work:



Grace Thompson's creation for 'The stories grandma forgot and how I found them' by Nadine Aisha Jassat

Overall, helping at the library was an enjoyable experience, and it made us feel like we were making a real difference in our school community.

Ayah and Bisan

Some students choose to continue the volunteering in Year 10; the continuity is good for them and for the library. Other students have been helping in the library this term, particularly with the refurbishment of the big library desk. We have been painting it and covering some panels with decoupage using old library books. Some students enjoy helping even if they are not doing the Duke of Edinburgh award.

Here are some photos of students hard at work doing jobs in the library:



World Book Day

There is always a big lead up to World Book Day at Gillotts. This gives students the chance to plan ahead if they want to dress up as book characters on the day. I also offer special class activities to library classes, so these are available for Years 7 -9 in the two week timetable; hence we started our celebrations on Monday 26th February. Every day is a day for books of course, but it is good to have fun and make a special feature with some new activities, as well as raising some money for Book Aid International. All donations for dressing up and for cakes at our cake sale on the day go to this important charity. You can read more about how they provide books in countries less fortunate than ours on their website: <https://bookaid.org/>

This year's activities for classes included: Friend, family or foe (pick characters from books to fit into these categories and explain why you have chosen them); Book Dating (pick two characters from different books to go on a date/outing and describe how they would get on); Batman or the Bard – this proved really popular with Years 8 and 9. It really is quite tricky deciding who wrote which memorable lines ie Shakespeare or Bill Finger (Batman creator). In addition some staff shared photos

of their bookshelves (shelfies) and these were shared with tutor groups as a quiz to guess who they belong to!

I also invited students to write why they love their library on a piece of heart-shaped brown (recycled) paper and add it to our Eco Tree. Quiet and peaceful and a love of the comfy chairs scored very high.



On the day itself we had a variety of staff and students dressing up and entering into the festive spirit of the day. The cake sale, which Year 11 Head Students and their friends helped to organise, was extremely popular at break-time. Altogether we raised £203.50 for Book Aid, which is really brilliant. Students not dressed up were invited to borrow a hat, wig or other accessory which I had brought with me on the day.





Eco Club

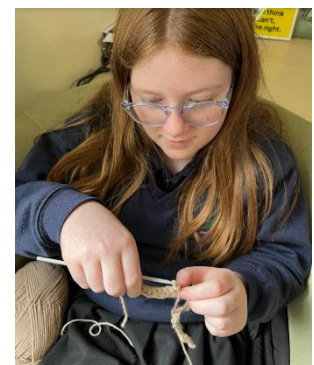
This term has been quiet so far. We hope to do more planting as the weather gets better. We have plans to try sowing some fruit and vegetables from seed, starting them off on windowsills. Our metre squared for wildlife is progressing; time will tell how successful this has been. We have plans for more planting for the big planters on the quad; we added some bulbs to them earlier in the year.

Students have been helping with other eco projects in the library, including decorating the library desk with recycled books. On cold, wet days, this works well as an activity and fits in with our ethos of recycling and upcycling.



Crochet Club

Gillotts Crochet Club is a weekly club set up by students for like-minded creative souls to meet and relax during lunch time. Phones are left at the door! As you can see from the inspiring images they are a very talented group, producing many joyous creations. The group is run by a Year 11 student (founder) and Year 9 student (group leader) with a rotating list of 6 students per term. It has proved very successful with all year groups.



PE Update

It has been a wet start to the Netball and Football season - but fortunately recently we have been able to play a few more games - especially with the days getting longer too.

So far in the **Netball** league the results are as follows:

Year group	Won	Drew	Lost	Cancelled
7A	2	0	0	1
7B	0	0	0	1
8A	0	0	0	1
8B	0	0	0	1
9A	4	1	2	0
9B	5	0	0	0
10A	1	1	5	0
10B	0	0	7	0
11A	1	2	3	1
11B	0	1	5	1



In **Football** the results so far are as follows:

Year group	Won	Drew	Lost	Cancelled
7	2	2	0	1
8	4	0	1	0
9	4	2	1	0
11	1	0	0	1



The Netball and Football leagues continue right into the last week of this term which is great as the students should get more games as long as the weather is kind to us.

South Oxfordshire Indoor Athletics

We have also had the Year 7 and Year 8 Indoor athletics competitions - the Year 8 girls won and the Year 8 boys came second which meant we came 1st overall and in the Year 7's competition the girls came 2nd and the boys came 1st which meant we came 2nd overall - so very successful for both years.

We also sent 3 students to the County Cross Country event at Radley College - 2 of the students involved qualified for the English Schools cross country which is a fantastic achievement.

We also entered an **UI4 Hockey tournament** which was on Tuesday 26th March - this was a great opportunity for our students to play on an astroturf - they won their pool - winning all 6 games and were then drawn up against a very experienced Year 9 team who obviously played a lot of hockey. We drew with them 0 - 0 and then it went to flicks with us losing 3 - 2. They did so well considering we had 3 Year 7s, 1 Year 8 and 4 Year 9s.

Moving on from here the department will look forward to the summer term and Cricket, Rounders and Athletics fixtures.

Hayley Rogers
Head of PE

Charity Swimathon

4 Gillotts students swam in a charity swim event raising money for the Henley Lions and Gillotts. They swam the most lengths out of all the teams in 40 minutes - 109 lengths. They were absolutely amazing and swam their hearts out.

Term dates for 2023 - 2024

The dates set out below are the confirmed school term and holiday dates from September 2023.

Term	Dates	Number of days
Autumn Term	04 September - 20 October	35
October half term	23 October - 27 October	
Autumn Term	30 October - 21 December	39
Christmas holiday	22 December - 05 January	
Spring Term	08 January - 9 February	25
Spring half term	12 February - 16 February	
Spring Term	19 February - 28 March	29
Easter Holiday	29 March - 12 April	
Summer Term	15 April - 24 May	29
Late Spring half term	27 May - 31 May	
Summer Term	03 June - 24 July	38
Total		195

INSET days

The school will be closed to students on:

Monday 4 September 2023

Friday 29 September 2023

Monday 22 July 2024

Tuesday 23 July 2024

Wednesday 24 July 2024

Note that only Year 7 and Year 10 (and Year 11 Leaders) are required to attend on Tuesday 5 September 2023. The remainder of the school returns on Wednesday 6 September 2023.

Monday 6 May 2024 is the May Day bank holiday.

Early closures (12.30pm)

Thursday 28 September 2023

Thursday 21 December 2023

Friday 19 July 2024

Staff and students preparation for Open Evening

Term dates for 2024 - 2025

The dates set out below are the confirmed school term and holiday dates from September 2024.

Term	Dates	Number of days
Autumn Term	02 September - 25 October	40
October half term	28 October - 1 November	
Autumn Term	4 November - 20 December	35
Christmas holiday	23 December - 03 January	
Spring Term	06 January - 14 February	30
Spring half term	17 February - 21 February	
Spring Term	24 February - 04 April	30
Easter Holiday	07 April - 21 April	
Summer Term	22 April - 23 May	23
Late Spring half term	26 May - 30 May	
Summer Term	02 June - 22 July	37
Total		195

INSET days

The school will be closed to students on:

Monday 2 September 2024

Tuesday 3 September 2024

Friday 27 September 2024

Monday 21 July 2025

Tuesday 22 July 2025

Note that only Year 7 and Year 10 (and Year 11 Leaders) are required to attend on Wednesday 4 September 2024. The remainder of the school returns on Thursday 5 September 2024.

Monday 5 May 2025 is the May Day bank holiday.

Early closures (12.30pm)

Thursday 26 September 2024

Friday 20 December 2024

Friday 18 July 2025

Staff and students preparation for Open Evening