Weekly Newsletter

Friday 13th November 2026 | Issue 9

Dear Families

This week, we began with Jesus' reminder to "Stay awake!" It is a wonderfully simple instruction, but one that feels perhaps more relevant today than ever. Of course, Jesus is not simply telling us not to fall asleep! He is asking us to be alert, to pay attention and to think carefully about how we live our lives. In a world where our attention has become a commodity, this is an increasingly important message. We can spend so much of our lives almost sleepwalking through them, distracted by screens, endless information and the constant demands upon our attention. We are even beginning to outsource some of our thinking to artificial intelligence. But what happens when we stop paying attention? What do we miss? Who do we fail to notice? And what happens when we allow others to decide what deserves our time and thought?

In assembly, we reflected on the importance of being fully present in our own lives, recognising what matters and making deliberate choices about where we direct our attention. This connects beautifully to our continuing focus on being peacemakers and our Catholic Social Teaching theme of Solidarity.

Over recent weeks, we have thought a great deal about the relationship between our words and our actions. It is easy to say that we are kind, that we care about others or that we want peace. But the real question is: can we show it? Do our actions reflect the people we say we want to be?

This message has been particularly powerful during our week of **Remembrance**. One of the most significant moments in the Greyfriars calendar is our whole-school Remembrance Service. It is short, but extraordinarily powerful. Our entire community gathers outside, standing together in reverence and solidarity for fifteen minutes, including two minutes of focused silence.



There is something remarkable about hundreds of young people choosing to stand together in stillness, prayer and reflection. In a world filled with noise and distraction, we deliberately stop. We give our attention to something that matters.

We remember those who have sacrificed their lives in war, those who continue to suffer through conflict, and the many families and communities whose lives have been changed forever. We recognise how fortunate we are to live in a country where we can enjoy peace and access to education, but we also acknowledge that this is not the experience of everyone in our human family.

Continued on the next page…

Weekly Newsletter

Remembrance is not simply about looking backwards. It is also about recognising our responsibility for the future. If we truly honour those who have suffered through war, then we must also be committed to building peace. That begins with the choices we make, the way we treat one another and our willingness to stand alongside those who need our support. I was immensely proud of our students. Their reverence, respect and collective stillness were a wonderful testament to the values of our school.

We have also seen some excellent examples of students turning their values into action this week. Our Citizens UK students met with the director of Stagecoach in Oxford to continue their campaign around the cost of bus travel for young people. They are learning that making a difference requires more than simply identifying a problem. It requires listening, organising, speaking to decision-makers and having the courage to advocate for change. This is solidarity in action, and I am enormously proud of their determination to make our city more accessible for young people.

I have also had the pleasure of presenting £10 vouchers to the students who took up my half-term challenge to visit the Ashmolean Museum and find the Roman denarius or Guy Fawkes' lantern. It has been wonderful to hear about their adventures and see the evidence of their discoveries. I love that our students have embraced the opportunity to explore the extraordinary history and culture available to us here in Oxford. Their curiosity and enthusiasm have been a real joy.

Elsewhere, our Year 11 and Year 13 students have been working incredibly hard on their PPEs. These examinations are an important opportunity to demonstrate what they know, identify where they need to improve and build the habits that will support them in the summer. I have been delighted by their focus, determination and maturity.

Finally, we have some wonderful community events to look forward to as we move towards Advent. Please do keep three important dates in your diaries:

- 26 November – Friendship Dinner
- 30 November – Citizens Assembly
- 5 December – Christmas Fair

These are all opportunities to come together, strengthen our relationships and celebrate the joy of belonging to a community. I am particularly looking forward to seeing our students and families participating in these events.

Thank you, as always, for everything you do to support our wonderful school community. I wish you all a peaceful and restful weekend.

With every blessing
Lyndsey Caldwell
Headteacher

WHAT IS GOD'S MESSAGE FOR ME THIS WEEK?

Gospel | Matthew 25:1-13



Jesus told his disciples this parable: "The kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five were wise. The foolish ones, when taking their lamps, brought no oil with them, but the wise brought flasks of oil with their lamps. Since the bridegroom was long delayed, they all became drowsy and fell asleep. At midnight, there was a cry, 'Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!' Then all those virgins got up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish ones said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' But the wise ones replied, 'No, for there may not be enough for us and you. Go instead to the merchants and buy some for yourselves.' While they went off to buy it, the bridegroom came and those who were ready went into the wedding feast with him. Then the door was locked. Afterwards the other virgins came and said, 'Lord, Lord, open the door for us!' But he said in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, I do not know you.' Therefore, stay awake, for you know neither the day nor the hour."

Reflection

This is a famous parable that speaks of ten maidens invited to a wedding feast, a symbol of the Kingdom of Heaven and of eternal life. It is a happy image with which, however, Jesus teaches a truth that calls us into question. In fact five of those 10 maidens were admitted to the feast because when the bridegroom arrived they had brought the oil to light their lamps, whereas the other five were left outside because they had been foolish enough not to bring any. What is represented by this "oil"? St Augustine and other ancient authors interpreted it as a symbol of love that one cannot purchase but receives as a gift, preserves within one and uses in works. True wisdom is making the most of mortal life in order to do works of mercy, for after death this will no longer be possible. When we are reawoken for the Last Judgement, it will be made on the basis of the love we have shown in our earthly life. And this love is a gift of Christ, poured out in us by the Holy Spirit. Those who believe in God-Love bear within them invincible hope, like a lamp to light them on their way through the night beyond death to arrive at the great feast of life. (Pope Benedict XVI, Angelus, 6 November 2011).

Prayer for Remembrance Day

Almighty everlasting God, who sent your Son to die that we might live, grant, we pray, eternal rest to those who gave themselves in service and sacrifice for their country. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.



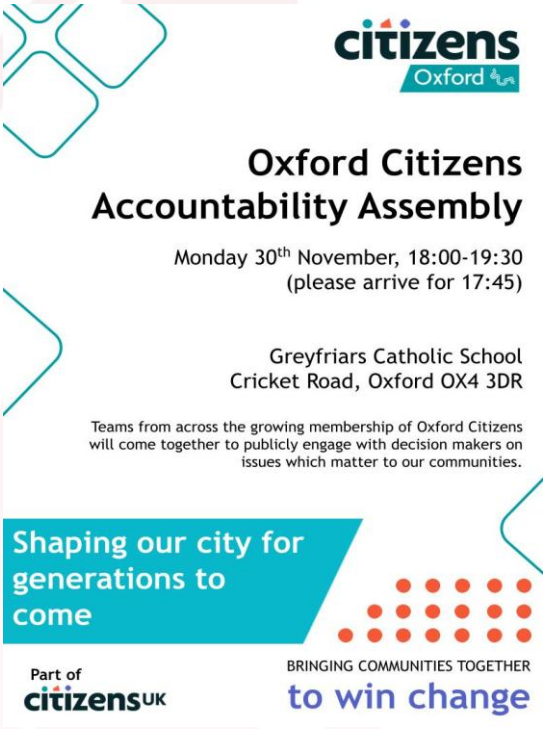
To view the St Edmund and St Frideswide (Greyfriars) parish website please click on the following link:
https://www.greyfriarsoxford.uk/

GENERAL NOTICES

Catholic Life | Mr Greer

This Wednesday, we remembered those who gave up their lives in service to our country. We are thankful for the sacrifices they made, and for the peace we enjoy now. May we not forget. We are especially grateful to our students who volunteered to read, pray, or represent their organisations in uniform on the day: it was a most reverent and reflective occasion.





We also continue to work towards our Citizens Assembly on Monday, November 30th. Everyone is invited. We would love to pack the hall with parents, staff, and students as we join with others across the city. We can confirm the presence of Oxford Bus Company, Stagecoach, County Council, and Oxford University: they will appear on stage ready to speak and make promises towards our asks for more affordable buses for young people.

If you do plan to come, please sign up using the following link:

Register your Attendance

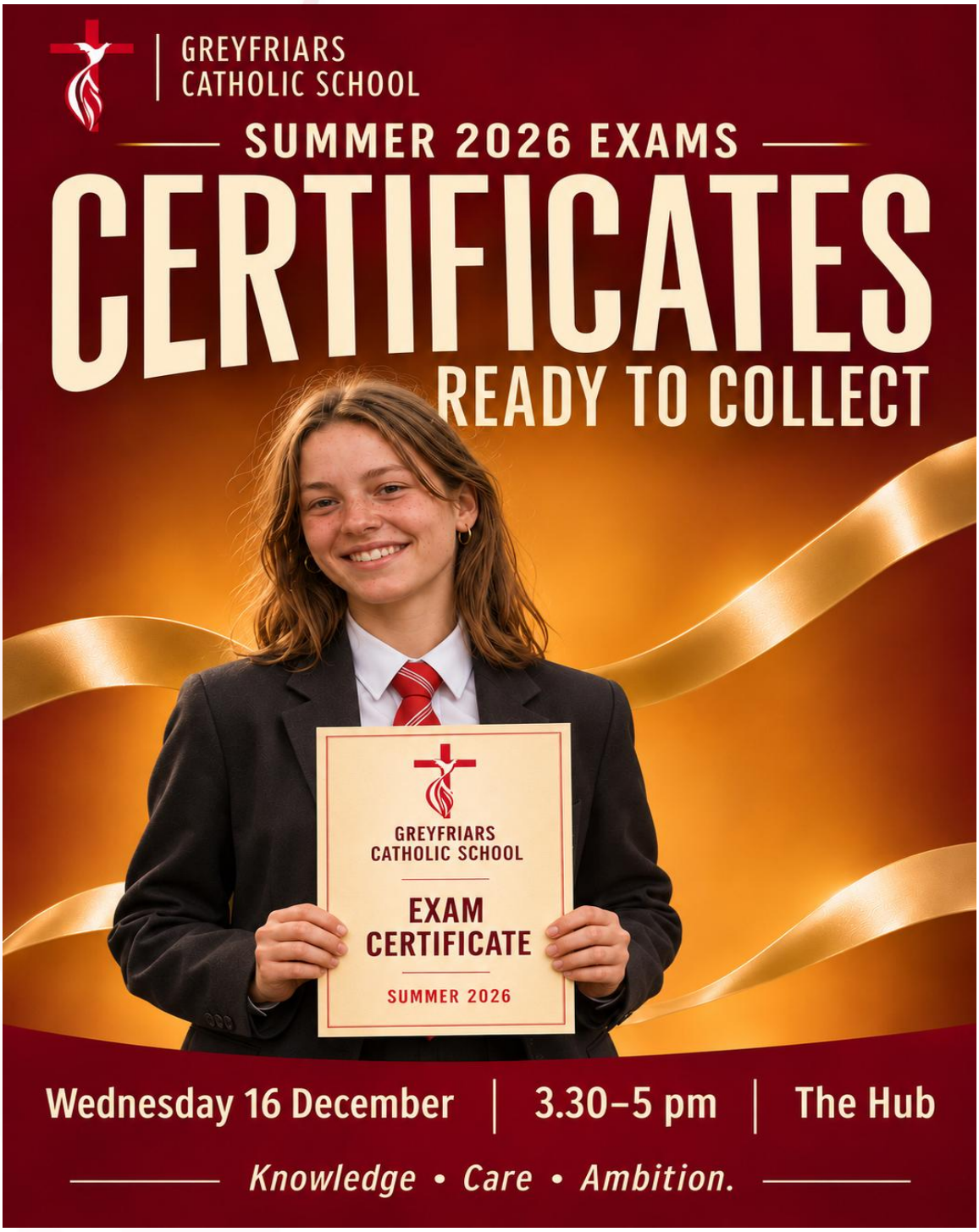
We hope to see you there.

Admissions Policy Consultation | Blessed George Napier

Blessed George Napier School is consulting on its Admissions Policy, in line with the School Admissions Code. The consultation runs from **20 October to 1 December 2026**, and parents, carers and prospective parents are invited to share their views.

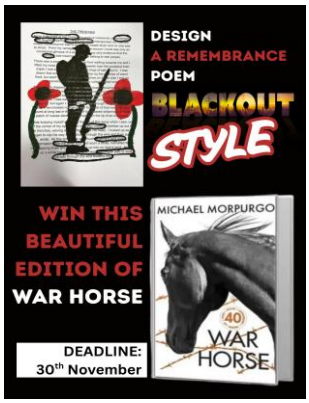
For more information and to register your view, please follow this link.

GENERAL NOTICES



GENERAL NOTICES

Library News | Mrs Brett



Hello Plot-Twist Pioneers! There's so much to share, I will probably have to save some of it for next week. .

First of all, we have lots of fiction, non-fiction, and poetry books displayed for you at the moment, to remember victims of war. Remember, knowledge is power - knowledge helps us not to repeat mistakes from history. Come and gain some knowledge! While you're at it, grab one of the pages for your Remembrance Blackout Poem. You could win this beautiful, 40th Anniversary edition of the *War Horse* by Michael Morpurgo.



As it is NON-FICTION NOVEMBER, we have also displayed lots of exciting books for you to explore (on top of all the other non-fiction displays we already have strategically placed around the library, and maybe discover some new facts. Some of those facts will come really handy on the last Friday of November, when we will test your knowledge on Kahoot.



If you want to increase your chances of winning a book and achievement points, join our Fact Finding Fest that starts on the 23rd November. This term's Author in Spotlight is… surely most of you will recognise him?

There are also two great writing competitions open at the moment, Greyfriars Voices, and Young Writers' Gone. Please come and speak to me about entry requirements and rules. It is so very worth it!

We currently have **38 GOLD READERS.** To remind you - these students have been awarded 50 Achievement points each this week to celebrate their ambition and commitment to reading excellence! I am so very proud, and looking forward to awarding even more points at the end of term.

I do appreciate and celebrate all kinds of reading, however, personally, I am a great fan of a book in hand. There's just something magical about holding all those stories in the palm of your hand. That's why I'd encourage you to come up and let us help you find the perfect story for you. It does exist - I promise!

Now, for the Reading Championship… There have been many changes. Interesting…

TERM 2 | WEEK 2				
	Reading Champ		Form Reading Championship	
1	Ludozio	60	↑ 7LP	66.7%
2	Sahas	49	8ALW	64.3%
3	Karthik	28	↓ 9BMO	64%
4	Joanna	↑ 16	7PJE	63.64%
5	Ganuli	13	↑ 8BN	59.3%

Have a storyful weekend!

GENERAL NOTICES

Message for Year 8 and Year 9 | Mrs Reddy

This week, we remembered and honoured those who have made sacrifices for others. Matthew 25:14–30 reminds us that we each have gifts and talents, and it is how we use them to make a difference that truly matters. Remembrance is not simply about looking back; it is about carrying forward the values of courage, kindness, service and compassion.

A special well done to our Year 8 and Year 9 students who represented Greyfriars so respectfully during our school Remembrance Service. Their conduct and maturity were a real credit to our community.

A special shout-out to all students and parents who have already donated to our Leadership Enrichment Christmas Charity Appeal. Your generosity is greatly appreciated! If you would still like to contribute, please hand your donations in at Main Reception, for the attention of Mrs Reddy. Every act of kindness makes a difference!

Congratulations to all students with 100% attendance

Thank you to the tutors for their ongoing support.

Keep on striving to be a better version of yourself Y8 and Y9!

Students leading the way!

Year 8	Year 9
Karthink	Anne-Marie
Ludozio	Niall
Oreoluwa	Alex
Victoria	Jacob
Saveesha	Abdullah
Leandra	Ronnie
Abi	Mason
Aseda	Sabella
Mia	Abi
Bella	Azzouz

Flash Academy – Mrs Bowler

FlashAcademy®



Our Star of the Week Award goes to Yolanda for achieving over 95% in her lessons on Flash Academy!

Well done Yolanda – keep up the good work!

GENERAL NOTICES

Message for Y7 | Mr Cunningham

Another successful week is in the books, and we want to say a big well done to all of our Year 7 students for their continued hard work, positive attitudes, and great effort. It is a pleasure to see them going from strength to strength.

With the weather turning properly cold, a quick reminder about uniform expectations. Students should come to school in a warm winter coat on chilly mornings, but hoodies are not permitted as part of our uniform. Thank you for helping us by checking before the school run!

A special congratulations also goes to our first group of new rowers, who have taken to the water brilliantly. It has been wonderful to see so many students giving this new opportunity a go, and we are very proud of them. For families of students in Group 2, an email will be sent before next Wednesday with all the information you need.

We have had a remarkable week for achievement points, with 14 students receiving more than 60!

Well done everyone!

7LP	738
7CHO	606
7RHO	495
7PJE	393



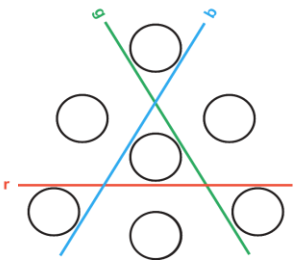
Emmanuel-Joshua	86
Duke	82
Hibba	80
Dylan	74
Lina	74
Parika	68
Orlando	67
Shayne	67
Michael	66
Leilani	66
Isreal	64
George	62
Esmae	61

Axiom Maths Problem of the Week! | Mr McCutcheon

A total treat!

Write the numbers **1 to 7** in the circles so that

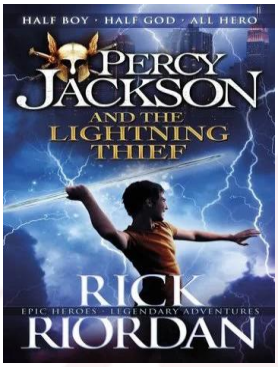
- there is the same total on each side of the **blue** line
- there is the same total on each side of the **green** line
- there is the same total on each side of the **red** line



AXIOM MATHS

GENERAL NOTICES

Weekly Book Review | Mrs Brett



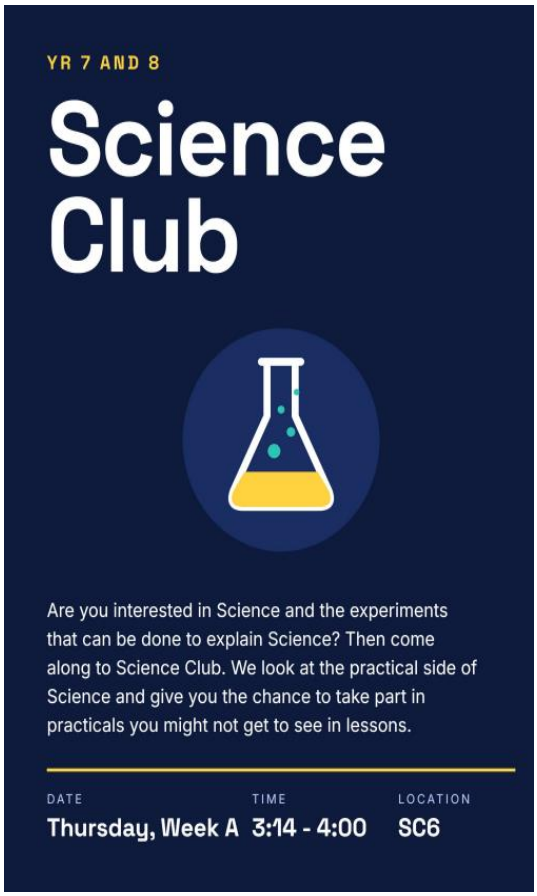
I'm sure you've heard about this one - if you haven't read it already.

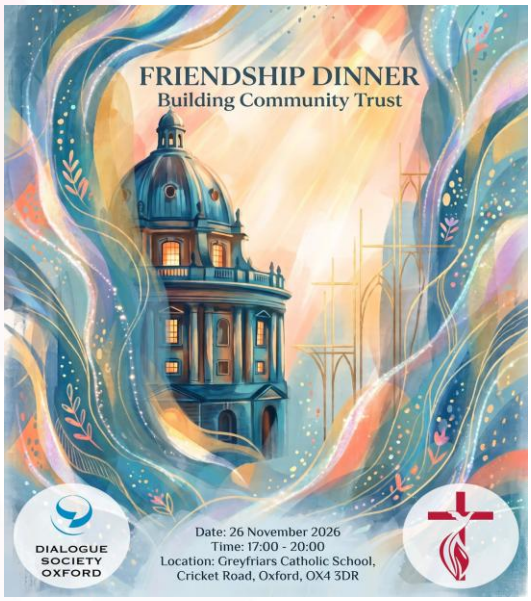
I guess the main question is: has any of your teachers ever turned into a monster and tried to eat you? And I mean literally, not metaphorically.

This is the life of Percy Jackson - a twelve-year-old boy, whose ordinary life turns into a great, and very dangerous adventure. Percy has always thought of himself as a regular boy, struggling with ADHD and dyslexia. That is, until that day - the day that changed his life forever. The day that brought gods, and mythical creatures into his life, and the very heavy burden of…

…well, that would be a spoiler :).

Borrow the book from our library and find out the rest. We have plenty of copies.





The Dialogue Society Oxford, in partnership with Greyfriars Catholic School, invites you to the Friendship Dinner, a special evening celebrating friendship, diversity, and mutual understanding across Oxfordshire's faith and non-faith communities.

To register please click:

https://Greyfriars26.eventbrite.co.uk

We look forward to seeing you there.

GENERAL NOTICES

Sparx Maths WEEK 9

Total hours spent on Sparx this year	Number of questions answered correctly
2,150hrs	177,034

XP Champions THIS YEAR | 13/11/26

Name	Year	Total XP
Michael E	7	14,611
Marvelous E	8	10,496
Laurencja B	7	8,562
Isreal E	7	8,20
Miu Miu M	9	7,655
Joe F M	8	6,853
Verio H M	7	6,840
Oreoluwa A	8	6,081
Seerat S	8	2,712
Aseda K	8	2,694

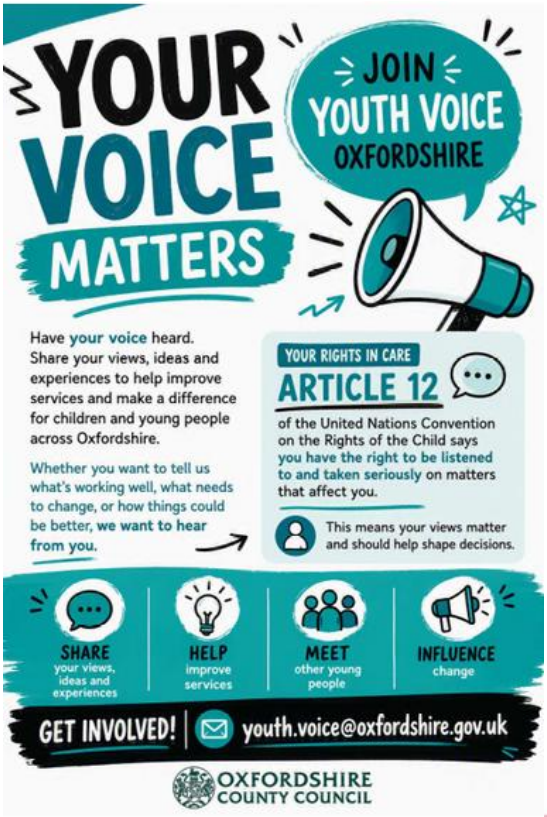
XP Champions for THIS WEEK

Name	Year	XP POINTS
Lara S	11	1,875
Sisto S G V	11	1,745
Aman A	10	1,840
Amy C	10	1,709
Emily V S	9	2,381
Miu Miu M	9	2,288
Marvelous E	8	3,418
Ludozio F	8	2,392
Isreal E	7	4,875
Sami S	7	3,345
Lara S	11	1,875

Safeguarding | Mr Daly

On Wednesday we were delighted to welcome the Engagement and Participation team from Oxfordshire County Council. Thank you to Jo, Callie and Dacey from Youth Voice who delivered an Online Safety workshop to our Year 8's as part of their social enrichment. The students worked in groups to identify the level of risk involved in using social media and discussed the future of AI. Every student was also able to provide feedback and suggestions to the council on what they think young people need to build a safer and more welcoming online environment.

You can also contact youth voice to give your feedback too using the email address on the poster below.



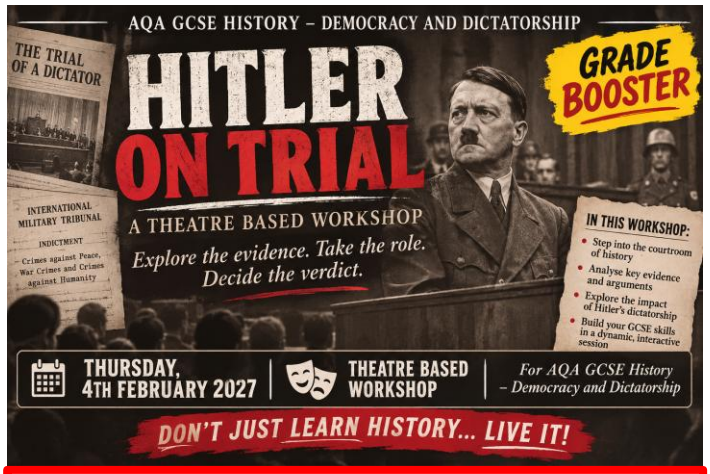
GENERAL NOTICES

Mrs Reddy's Christmas Donations

As in previous years, we are collecting donations for the Salesian Sisters to donate to families in need in our community.

Any donations would be gratefully received.





Upcoming GCSE History Trip | Ms Nash

The above theatre-based workshop is open to all Year 10 and Year 11 GCSE History students.

This workshop gives students the opportunity to attend an immersive, theatre-based revision workshop at Cornerstone Arts Centre, Didcot.

This exciting and interactive workshop has been specifically designed to support students in improving their examination performance in the Democracy and Dictatorship in Germany unit of the GCSE History specification. Students will take part in a theatrical learning experience, bringing key historical events and themes to life. They will also receive additional revision advice, guidance and resources to support their preparation for the GCSE examinations.

For students to secure their place on the trip, parents should visit their ParentPay account where the trip can be found in Payment Items, 'Hitler on Trial Workshop.

GENERAL NOTICES



GENERAL NOTICES

Attendance at Greyfriars

At Greyfriars Catholic School, our priority is to ensure that every student has the opportunity to flourish individually and collectively. Consistent attendance plays a vital role in this success and we have high expectations for all pupils, with the aim of achieving 100% attendance.

Every day in school counts.

For more information on our attendance policy and details of how to notify the school of your child's absence or indeed, to request a term time absence, please follow the link below which will take you to our attendance page on the school website:

Attendance

Student Illness Procedure

- If your child feels unwell a member of the on-call team will be called to the classroom to assess your child in the first instance.
- If on-call believe that the student is not well enough to continue with their lesson, they will be escorted to main reception to be seen by the person on duty in the medical room.
- At this stage, parents / carers will be contacted.
- If it is decided that your child is too unwell to continue the school day, you or a named adult will be asked to collect your child from school.
- Alternatively, if you are unable to collect your child, they will likely be sent back to lessons.



School Lunch Accounts

Please remember to regularly check your child has enough funds in their ParentPay lunch accounts and if this is running low please top up. Students will be unable to purchase food in the restaurant if they do not have enough funds in their account.

Please note that we are a cashless school and cannot accept cash for lunch payments.

ParentPay
COUNT ON US

If you are having trouble accessing your ParentPay account, please contact the school.

GENERAL NOTICES

National Changes to Free School Meals from September 2026

The current transitional protection arrangements for Free School Meals will end in July 2026. This means that pupils who are currently receiving FSM will not automatically remain eligible from September 2026. To continue receiving Free School Meals, families will need to meet the revised eligibility criteria.

Expanded Eligibility from September 2026

From September 2026, **all children living in households that receive Universal Credit** will be eligible for Free School Meals, regardless of household income.

If you believe that your child is eligible for free school meals, please complete the following Google Form: Free School Meals Registration Form

5 Ways to Well-being

Click on the logo to find out more.



Building small actions into your daily life can make you feel good,and feeling good is an important part of being healthy. There are 5 ways to wellbeing that are proven to make a real difference to you.



Friends of Greyfriars (PTA)

Friends of Greyfriars is an open and important community of parent volunteers working alongside the school and teachers to benefit the school. It is like a PTA. It is a group that aims to ensure the best educational and enrichment experience for all its students. Friends of Greyfriars is a reflection of the school in the wider community.

By joining the Friends of Greyfriars you can help the school to build a far more effective and up-to-date teaching and learning environment, for the benefit of all its students. Everyone is welcome, parents, carers, staff, governors, past students, past parents, anyone and everyone who cares about the school. Please join us and be a Friend.

If you are interested, please contact Sophie Upellini via: s.upellini@gfcs.uk

GENERAL NOTICES

Dates for your Diary

Monday 16 November | Anti-bullying Week Begins

Tuesday 17 November | Laing O'Rourke Careers Trip

Thursday 19 November | Year 11 Cambridge University Visit

Thursday 26 November | Oxford Dialogue Society Friendship Dinner

Friday 27 November | Year 7 to Year 11 Flu Vaccinations

Monday 30 November | Citizens UK Assembly

Wednesday 2 to Friday 4 November | French Christmas Markets Trip

Thursday 3 December | Sixth Form Open Evening for Year 11 Students

Donations

If you wish to make a donation to the school please click on the link.

DONATE



Breakfast Club

Breakfast Club is open

Mon – Fri 8.00am - 8.30am in our restaurant.

Everyone is welcome to come and join us for breakfast club. Breakfast is free. Start your day with friends and food!



Greyfriars Vacancies

If you are interested in joining the team at Greyfriars Catholic School, please email our School Business Manager, Sophie Upellini via: s.upellini@gfcs.uk https://www.greyfriarsoxford.org.uk/join-us/vacancies or visit: to view all our current vacancies.

Archdiocese of Birmingham Vacancies

https://www.birminghamdiocese.org.uk/Pages/FAQs/Category/jobs

LOCAL EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES













LOCAL EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

FACE

November Timetable

All regular sessions delivered live online via zoom. 90 minutes long

£24 each or FREE with School Membership

Book online at facefamilyadvice.co.uk

Recordings available for 48 hours

Introduction to OCD	2 Nov 10am
Raising Self-Esteem	2 Nov 7pm
Supporting Healthy Sleep	3 Nov 10am
Decreasing Depression	3 Nov 7pm
Supporting a Child with ADHD	9 Nov 10am
Understanding Addictive Behaviour	9 Nov 7pm
What is ACT?	10 Nov 10am
Improving Family Communication	10 Nov 7pm
Autism: Improving Communication	16 Nov 10am
Supporting Healthy Screen Use	16 Nov 7pm
Understanding the Teenage Brain	17 Nov 10am
Understanding Anger	17 Nov 7pm
FREE - Responding to Stress & Anxiety	19 Nov 7-8pm
Anxiety Explained	23 Nov 10am
Facing Defiance	23 Nov 7pm
Cannabis & Ketamine Awareness	24 Nov 10am
School Anxiety	24 Nov 7pm







LOCAL EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES



Donnington Doorstep Family Centre has reopened its **free Youth Club** for young people in OX4.

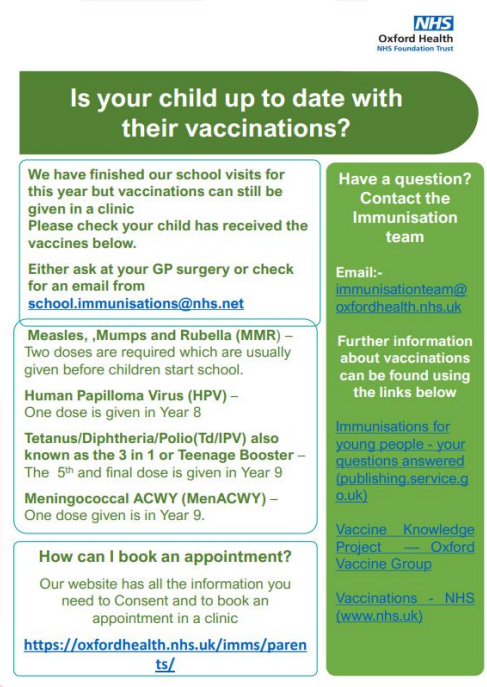
We offer a safe, welcoming space with activities, support, and a free hot meal each session.

Open **Tuesdays & Wednesdays**

Please see our poster for parental permission details.

PARENTS to COMPLETE FORM

YOUTH CLUB Registration Form – Fill out form







LOCAL EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES









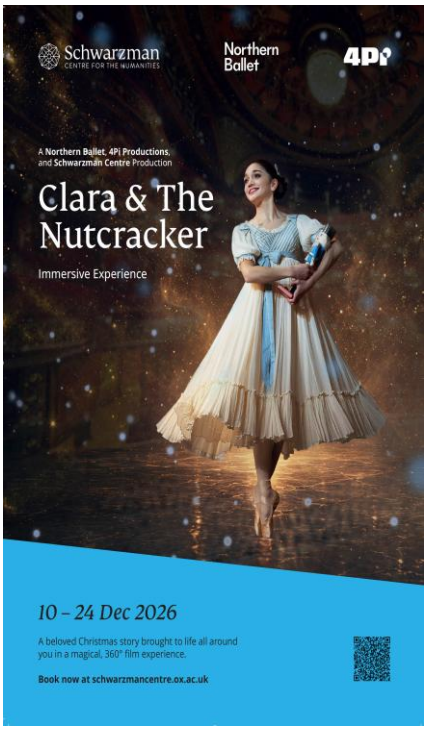




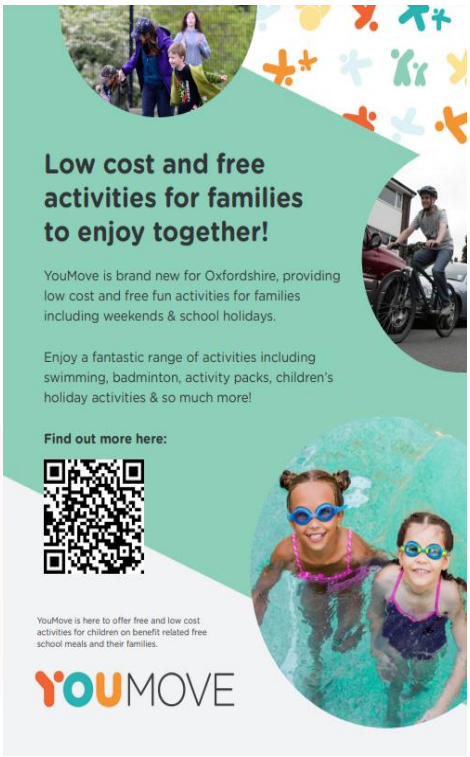
LOCAL EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES













LOCAL EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES









