

WINTER 2023

Gryphon

Sister Act

Prize Giving

Remembrance

SAST
SCHOOLS ACHIEVING SUCCESS TOGETHER



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WELCOME

As I write final rehearsals are underway for our school production of “Sister Act” and for our School Carol Service in Sherborne Abbey; there is a real buzz of anticipation amongst all the students and staff involved. The commitment of our staff is second to none and I am very grateful for all that they offer to our school community.

Our newsletter provides a myriad of examples of how our students can experience “life in all of its fullness” at The Gryphon School. Many trips, visits and events have been taking place throughout this term. Please remember that The Gryphon Foundation is available to support families for whom finance is an issue in accessing trips and visits; details can be found on our website. If you can support the Foundation with funding, we would also love to hear from you.

At The Gryphon, we strive to build a school community that is kind and loving, just and equal; a community, which responds to the needs of the most vulnerable people around us. In our global community, many people in the Middle East and Ukraine are currently suffering because of war, leading to a breakdown in normal expectations for life: families are separated, homes are destroyed, and people become refugees.

While Christmas is a Christian celebration, the power of light overcoming darkness is celebrated across the boundaries of faith and belief. So, whatever faith you have, or whether you have none, it is in this life-giving light, that we must believe we can find hope for the future.

I wish each of you a Christmas of peace, happiness, and everlasting light.

Jim Gower
Acting Headteacher



PRIZE GIVING

We were delighted to celebrate the outstanding achievements of last year’s Year 11 and Year 13 students at our annual Prize Giving ceremony in Sherborne Abbey.

A huge range of achievements were recognised in the ceremony, including awards for subjects, academic achievement, contribution to school life, and personal achievement. The awards were presented by Chris Loder, MP for West Dorset, who spoke of his time as a student at The Gryphon School.

Acting Headteacher Jim Gower said “Our annual prize giving event was a fitting tribute to mark the outstanding

achievements of our Y11 and Y13 students. The setting and atmosphere of Sherborne Abbey was so very special, and we were delighted so many students and their families could join us to recognise their academic achievements and personal progress. Thank you to everyone involved who contributed to making this such a memorable event for our school community.”

Laura J and Grace B performed beautiful musical interludes delighting the audience of family and friends. In addition, readings from Beatrice in Year 11 and Neve in Year 13 shared a message of hope and positivity for the new chapter of our student’s lives they were about to embark on.

World Mental Health Day

Tuesday 10th October was World Mental Health Day with the campaign [#HelloYellow](#) encouraging everyone to wear yellow for the day. Students and staff at The Gryphon asked for donations of coins which were made into a Gryphon mosaic! £102 was raised at the school and will go to Young Minds.



CHRISTMAS SHOEBOX APPEAL

Many congratulations to Gryphon students and staff for their input into the Shoe Box appeal for the charity House of Opportunity this year. A haul of 82 boxes were collected last week so a BIG thank you! House of Opportunity combats the exploitation of vulnerable young people and communities in Southeast Europe. Working together with like-minded NGOs, they aim to implement positive change throughout the region, helping to prevent poverty and modern slavery and enabling marginalised people to realise a better future for themselves and their children. The boxes will be distributed to the many marginalised children that House of Opportunity supports.



Students wowed sell-out audiences across 4 nights with our fantastic production of Sister Act!

Sister Act is an uplifting, ‘feel-good’ musical’ which is a celebration of unity, friendship, and the transformative power of music. Through the vibrant characters and lively melodies, this production embodied the essence of joy, resilience, and the magic of finding one’s voice.

Our students have devoted so much time and effort over the last 3 months to enable our show to be such a success. Starring Josie W as Deloris, Danielle R as Mother Superior, Isabella M as Sister Mary Roberts, Ben BR as Eddie and Barney G as Curtis, these were a few of our incredible lead roles who showed each character with outstanding conviction. The show was a huge hit with audiences with rapturous applause and energy filling the room each and every night.

The cast and orchestra’s commitment and dedication shined through with so many talented students and also some staff supporting all the incredible musical numbers. A big thank you also to our backstage team helping with our production elements – GSL Events & Soundminds. Also, our amazing students who were in our hair and make-up team and stage crew. The show wouldn’t have

been possible without them. This year’s show has felt like a big Gryphon collective effort with a huge number of staff supporting us and offering help in the form of set and props creation, singing, front of house, promotion, costume etc. We are so thankful for this. A massive thank you has to go to Mike Fenton-Wilkinson and Luci Ward for their creation of our incredible set, it has truly given our show the wow factor! Lastly our show would not have been possible without the support of our fantastic sponsors. Their contributions have helped towards the staging, lighting and sound. We are immensely grateful. Thank you to The Gryphon Foundation, The Gardens Group, Kaleidoscope Nursery, Oliver’s Coffee House, Hunters, The Plume of Feathers & Hunt’s food group.

Miss Gabbidon said “This is my first year directing a Gryphon school musical, following my assistant director role in our previous productions. I was absolutely delighted to fulfil this role and that it was for such an exciting and uplifting show! Since September, I had the pleasure of watching our students grow and flourish throughout the rehearsal process. They have demonstrated remarkable commitment and enthusiasm, embracing their roles with dedication! They have made me so proud! The incredible Music & Drama teams have also been phenomenal. Without them this show would not have been possible. Thank you so much.



MUSIC

The Music Department would like to thank and congratulate all members of the orchestra, the cast and the crew for this term’s School production of the musical “Sister Act”. Their engagement, dedication and commitment has been outstanding overall and we wish everyone well for each of the four sold out performances (Wednesday 6th to Saturday 9th December).

On Monday 11th December our Gryphon Recorder Consort under the direction of the fabulous Miss Whittlesea, performed at this year’s Sherborne Abbey Christmas Concert - we are extremely grateful to all participating students for representing the school on our collective behalf at this wonderful celebration.

We also look forward to welcoming parents and students to this year’s School Carol Service on Tuesday 12th December at 7pm in the beautiful Sherborne Abbey. The ‘Pitch Perfect’ Choir, the ‘Aurora’ Chamber and the Staff

Choir will be singing a selection of festive carols - several with a more contemporary twist this year, including two solos sung by Danielle R and Isabella M. The school orchestra and recorder consort will also be performing Christmas music before and after the Service.

We would like to take this opportunity to say a massive “thank you” to all our visiting peripatetic instrumental and singing music teachers without whom none of the successes we enjoy throughout the year would be possible.

4. DoFE



ADVENTUROUS TRAINING

The future is bright for Adventurous Training at the Gryphon School. The Phillip Barker Charity is providing £125,000 over to kick start more activities and establish a permanent team to run the programme. Mr Cooke was appointed in September to manage the programme and we hope to tell you more about our apprentice in the next article. We plan to be offering experience days to students and work is already underway to look at UK standalone expeditions like 'Three Peaks in a Week' and Hadrian's Wall. We are looking at 'Three peaks in a week' so the students can enjoy the mountains and views rather rush to complete it in 24 hours. We have already added Mountain Biking to our offering and running First Aid Training in house will follow shortly, reducing the costs to our students. Another strand of our application to the Phillip Barker Charity was to develop character development opportunities for our students and ideas and plans are well under way for some exciting challenges.

FIRST AID TRAINING

The Gryphon School is now a First Aid Training Centre able to deliver courses like Emergency First Aid and First Aid at Work Qualifications, thanks to the Phillip Barker Charity. In the future, the school will be able to deliver in-house the 2-day Outdoor First Aid Courses. Having our own dedicated First Aid Trainer and ten complete sets of training equipment will allow the school to keep the costs down to our students. The inaugural First Aid course for students on the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and Ten Tors Challenge ran this term where over sixty students were trained each day to be safe out in the wilds of Dorset, Dartmoor and the Welsh Mountains.



ADVENTUROUS TRAINING AWARDS

The Gryphon school held its annual Adventurous Training Awards on Thursday 23 November 2023. The evening celebrated all those who have completed their Duke of Edinburgh's Award, participated in the Ten Tors Challenge, and the Year 12 students who trained to be Assistant Expedition Leaders. Guest speakers included Colin Utting, Mountain Leaders & Motivational Speaker with "Climb higher, dig deeper – Achieving your next challenge", Alison Hitchcock, Founder of 'From Me to You' Charity and Tom M (student) on Beekeeping. The evening saw 48 students

receive their Bronze Award, with two getting their Bronze Certificate of Achievement, 26 received their Silver Award, and 24 received a school certificate for completing their Gold Award - which will hopefully be presented officially at Buckingham Palace next May. The evening also celebrated students involved in the 6 teams who entered the Ten tors Challenge 2023, students who trained to be Lowland Walk Leaders (Level 3), attended the Rotary Young Leaders Award, and the leaders who gave up their weekends to train as Moorland & Mountain Leaders.

REMEMBRANCE

On Friday 10th November, the Gryphon School once again held a two minutes silence, both in the classroom and in a formal Remembrance Service to mark Armistice Day on Saturday 11th November. We were delighted to once again welcome a number of visitors for this, including Commander Iain Baxter, who spoke and reflected on his experience of servicing in the Royal Navy over the last 40 years, along with five guests who came and represented Foster's Boys school. This year, it was also wonderful to involve students from the Gryphon who read, led the prayers and even the played The Last Post and Reveille. Foster's School was one of the schools that amalgamated to form The Gryphon School and during both the first and second world wars many of the school's alumni joined up to serve their country and consequently made the 'ultimate sacrifice'. Jesus reminds us that there is no greater sacrifice than 'to lay down one's life for one's friends' (John 15:12), and therefore we continue to remember and honour these young men by the reading of their names and the laying of wreaths, noting that their willingness to serve, along with that of others, has provided towards the freedom we enjoy today.

Reverend Jim Edie



This is the roll of honour from Foster's School which students are trying to find out more about to add some colour to their story. Early research by our two students, doing their Gold volunteering has found out lots. Early findings are that Leading Airman Noel Baker, Royal Navy perished on the SS Almeda Star on 17 January 1941. The SS Almeda Star was sunk by a German U-boat with the loss of 166 crew and 194 passengers. Sergeant John Robert Hoddinot served in 138 Squadron of the Royal Air Force Special Duties Service, delivering supplies and SOE operative across Europe at night. Captain Mitchell, 6th Battalion Green Howards died on 11 June 1944 near Bayeaux, five days after D Day on 6 June 1944. No longer just a name to be read out in Remembrance week.

LEGO CLUB

The Gryphon School Lego Club last escaped 5 or 6 years ago to a Lego Exhibition in London however when we learnt there was a Lego Exhibition at the American Museum, Bath, we just had to go...

Progress is being made on our model of Sherborne Old Castle.



BBC BITESIZE CAREERS EVENT

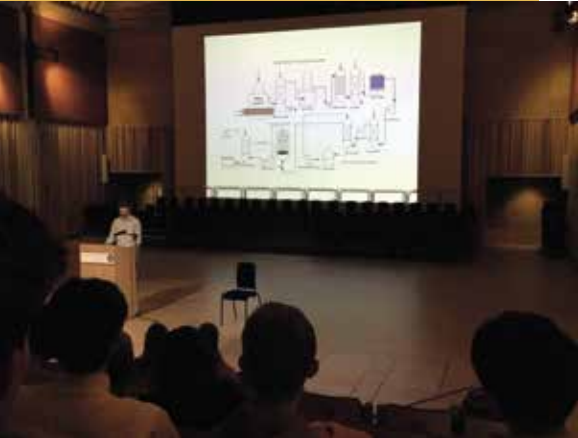
We were delighted to welcome the team from the BBC Bitesize Careers Roadshow to speak to our Year 8,9,10 & 12 students. The three panellists included Catherine Cooper, the Curator of the Archives at The Royal Navy Fleet Air Arm Museum, Liam McGuinn, a Production Apprentice at the BBC and Joe Grimstead a Technician at Wessex Water. Students were able to hear about their careers journey and about the wide range of opportunities and options available to them.



CHEMISTRY SYMPOSIUM

This term has seen the Sixth Form chemists attending two Chemistry Symposium events at Sherborne Girls and Sherborne School, where students from a range of schools have presented on chemistry related topics that they have researched. George M represented The Gryphon in the first half term, presenting on "Photosynthesis in Industry" and how industrial processes could harness the incredibly fast and sustainable reactions used in biological systems. In the second half term Rebekah and Olympia P talked about "Biochemistry and Animal Behaviour" and how the presence and concentration of different chemicals produced by the body could affect the behaviour and personality of animals. Both presentations were fantastic, showcasing diligent research and application of chemical knowledge to new situations, and all three students should be very proud of their achievement.

We also had a visit from former student Nic Greeves, who recently finished his PhD in Computational Chemistry. He talked to Sixth Form chemists and selected Year 10 students about his path to university and his current research, which gave us an insight into a totally different area of chemistry, as well as some useful advice on how to choose the right university course.



Physics meets Rock Guitar!

Year 8 and 9 students were treated to a lecture on the physics of the universe and everything through the medium of heavy rock guitar this term. Dr Lewney, an acoustic scientist and guitar virtuoso, delivered some scintillating science of sound and particle theory intertwined with some amazing guitar solos. Students got involved in the interactive performance which culminated in the strings of the universe (and the guitar) linking both Einsteins' equations of gravity with Max Planks' equations of particles through string theory. Our minds were taken to 11 dimensions and back!

Dr Otto

STEM ROADSHOW

On Monday 27th of November, our Year 7 and 8 students enjoyed an engaging theatre roadshow celebrating STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) and the careers that it can offer. The roadshow was put on by The Gryphon School working in collaboration with BAE Systems, The Royal Air Force, and The Royal Navy and it delivered a fascinating 50-minute performance to inspire and engage students with an array of STEM learning.

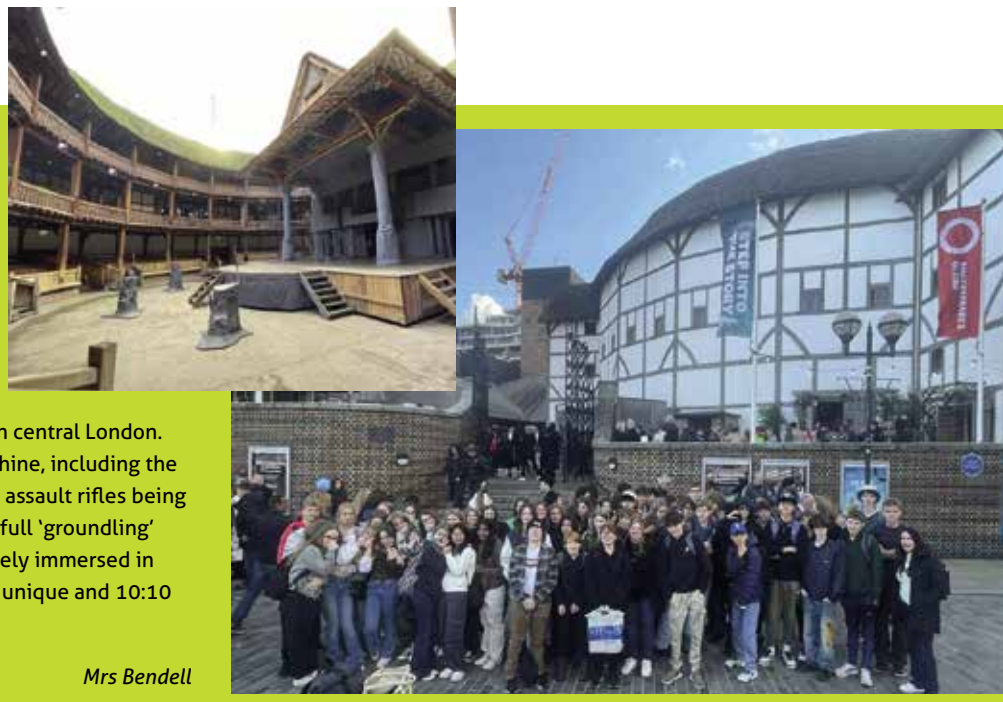
This year the theme of 'From the depths of the oceans to outer space' explored the challenges

faced in communicating in a variety of inhospitable environments and how science, engineering and technology have provided invaluable solutions. There were a range of tasks that the students participated in and demonstrations to help them understand concepts including the distances involved in the solar system and role of satellites. They also learnt a mnemonic to remember the order of the planets and finished the show with a giant inflatable Sun showing its relative size to our Earth.



THE GRYPHON GO TO THE GLOBE!

'By the pricking of my thumbs, something wicked this way comes.' Shakespeare's famous tale of witchcraft and ambition, Macbeth, is studied by all our Year 10 and Year 11 students. On Saturday 14th October, we took 55 GCSE students to watch a performance of the Scottish play at the world-famous Globe Theatre on the Southbank in central London. The students also had some time to see the sights along the river in lovely October sunshine, including the Shard and the Houses of Parliament. The play itself was a contemporary adaptation with assault rifles being used for swords and a food blender instead of a witches' cauldron! The students got the full 'groundling' experience by standing in the yard right beside the stage. As a result, they were completely immersed in the action of the play, with actors standing right next to them covered in (fake) blood - a unique and 10:10 experience for our students.



Mrs Bendell



Peer Mentor Training

On Monday 16 October, fifteen Year 12 Gryphon students, had a great day being trained as Peer Mentors, by six Year 11 students from Shaftsbury School.

The training gave our Year 12's the opportunity to undertake groups activities and role play about the role of a mentor and how they are valuable support for younger students here at The Gryphon. Issues around confidentiality and safeguarding were also covered to ensure that students are fully aware of their role and responsibility.

It was great to see the Year 11 students leading in a very confident and competent manner and I know the Year 12 students felt confident in being able to take on this role after the morning workshop.

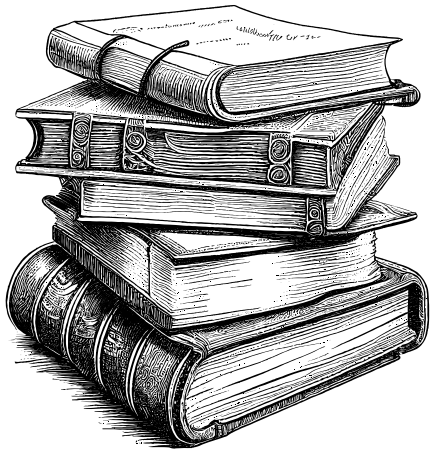
Many thanks to the staff and students who came over from Shaftsbury and to Revd Lorna Johnson, who put in a lot of hard work to get this organised.

We now look forward to using the Year 12 students to support others within school who benefit from having a peer to talk to.

Mrs Brighthouse

Reading

This year, students in Years 7, 8 & 9 have been logging what they have been reading using a new system called 'Track My Read' from the charity 'Read for Good'. We set every year group a challenge of getting to 100,000 minutes of reading by January. Year 7 are smashing this and well on the way to achieving it, with 75,000 minutes logged so far. At the moment, 7En/D are the top readers, with a total of 17,620 minutes alone. This means that each student in that class has spent 680 minutes reading since September. Simply phenomenal! Keep checking on their progress by using this link: <https://trackmyread.org/public/group-challenge/myhbDzDDBtWtDVK>.



information about what Gryphon students are reading, which will in turn, help us to understand new trends in children's books. If you are looking for ideas for your young person's next read or maybe looking for the perfect Christmas present, check out the recommendations on the Read for Good website here: <https://readforgood.org/book-recommendations/>. Thank you for encouraging students to read regularly - we value your support with this hugely.

Mrs Bendell

Research tells us that the daily act of reading - whether that be websites, blogs, books, magazines or comics - has a huge impact on a child's happiness and progress in school. Another brilliant aspect of the Track my Read site is that it collates

School Uniform

Please ensure students are arriving in proper school uniform, it is important that we maintain our high standards and tutors will be monitoring this over coming weeks. All the details about our school uniform are available on our website. A reminder that black leggings are not acceptable, students should wear trousers or skirts.

With the ever-increasing costs that we all have to face, we are looking to set up a

Uniform Outlet of used uniform that parents/ carers can purchase to reduce their costs. If you are in Year 11 please consider donating your uniform at the end of term when you leave.

If any parents or local individuals would be interested in helping us set up our Uniform Outlet please contact Jackie.brighthouse@gryphon.dorset.sch.uk



Sixth Form

Oxbridge and Thinkers Group

This past term the Oxbridge group have been taking part in a weekly 'Thinkers Group' at Sherborne Boy's School. This group comprises of high aspiring students from The Gryphon, joining with their counterparts from Sherborne Boys' and Girls' school. The weekly meetings are designed to stimulate discussion and independent thought around more complex areas of the curriculum and beyond. Most subject groups are represented, with students dividing each week into a faculty area of their interest, e.g., History, Biology or Philosophy. Students have been given preparatory stimulus work each week and are encouraged to arrive prepared to discuss this in depth and at length with fellow faculty members under the supervision of staff from the three schools. Discussions are mainly independent, and the aim is to encourage the key verbal, analytical, evaluative, and debating skills; all of which are key components of any Oxbridge interview. The students continue to impress with their positive attitude, excellent confidence amongst new colleagues and staff and are thriving in a focused and engaging environment. I am most impressed with their willingness to contribute thorough discussion points to complex topics Some truly outstanding students!

Sixth form Charity Walk



At the end of September 20 intrepid Year 12 and Year 13 students signed up for our sponsored walk. Last year the sixth form had decided that we would support two different charities, and the international charity chosen was Medicins sans Frontieres (MSF). The students had then come up with the idea of a sponsored walk, and we worked out that the route from school, north to Cadbury Castle, then west to Yeovilton, before heading South East through Mudford and Trent back to school covered approximately 23

miles, which works out around 40,000 steps. 40,000 is the number of healthcare workers that MSF employ. Despite starting, early on a Saturday morning the students all managed to complete this epic walk, despite some dodgy footpaths and bridges. They completed it in great spirits, and through their endeavour and your support we managed to raise £823.37. We look forward to being able to complete similar challenges again.

Year 12 Volunteering

The vast majority of Year 12 have been doing voluntary work this half term. Many have been helping in their local community, for example, by supporting local Guide groups, with charities or doing village litter picks. Others have been giving their time and support to students within the school. A great number of Year 12s have been supporting our younger Gryphon students. Either as peer mentors, academic or reading mentors. The Sixth Formers engaged brilliantly with their training and have since been in a position to share their knowledge with KS3 and KS4 pupils. We're very proud of our Sixth Form Volunteers and all that they are doing to help those around them.

CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION DAY

Our Law and Criminology students took part in an interactive Criminal Investigation Day with the University of Law this week. This was a virtual session themed, 'The Big Heist' which invited students to understand the roles of the legal profession, criminologists and forensic scientists and how they interact with each other. The focus of the day was 'The Hutton Garden Heist' which is believed to have been the biggest in British history so far after stealing an estimated £35 million!



This gave students a great insight into potential career paths in these areas! We look forward to working with ULaw again in the future and offering students even more exciting opportunities!

Student Networking Event

It was fantastic to be able to welcome numerous local businesses to support Year 13 students in developing their networking and conversational skills. Each of the students were invited to take part in 3 separate interview type activities where they practised their communication skills with professional business representatives. Following these sessions students were able to gain feedback and insight into their current skill set as well as areas they could look to develop further. We are looking forward to hosting another event later in the year where students can then apply those skills they have developed in a more formal and structured interview type activity.



8. P.E.

Boys Rugby:

The Y7 boys first Rugby game was against Westfield this year. They were excited to not only play but to have their first trip away on the bus! We turned up and played amazingly, lots of brilliant tackles, awesome carries and most importantly lots of smiles on their faces which helped us take the win.

Our Y10 Rugby boys have continued to impress, having some cracking battles against Gillingham and Westfield in recent weeks. Their rugby knowledge and decision making has improved massively and despite narrowly losing both games, they can keep their heads held very high.



In the final year of rugby as a team the Y11 boys have shown what can happen when you work hard together and stay together as a group from Y7. Each player relishes every match they are involved in, and they have performed superbly on every occasion only losing one game. With many of the team being selected for the Bath Development Player Programme, this shows how talented they are as a unit, pushing each other on and working hard for the person next to them.

Boys Cup Football:

The Y7 boys had their first cup fixture vs The Bishops Of Winchester Academy. After a long bus journey to Bournemouth, the boys got stuck straight in. We were losing the light quickly and with a scrappy game we ended up going into penalties. It was tense but Lewis P came away with the winning penalty as he buried it in the corner. Man of the Match went to Jamie M for being a brick wall in defence.



This very talented Year 10 team put in a cracking performance in their first County Cup match, beating Gillingham on penalties with some outstanding saves from Fin! The entire squad have been working hard to prepare for the next round of the cup!

Parkour

Y8 and 10 PE groups were fortunate enough to get the opportunity to experience a taster of Parkour with the impressive Alex Grinter. Alex showed the pupils how to perform a range of different movements onto and off equipment using a variety of body parts. It was great to witness pupils trying something new out of their comfort zone and be signposted to local parkour opportunities where they can further develop these skills.



Bryanston Leadership Day

Pupils in Y7 to 10 enjoyed a day out to Bryanston for the North Dorset Leadership festival. Despite taking on different workshops during the day, from gold ambassadors leadership training, young leaders' activities to events management tasks, they all managed to showcase their leadership qualities and mix with lots of pupils from local schools. Well done to all involved, we hope you are eager to put your skills into practice in school.



Autumn Term Netball

Although not officially the netball season, the Y7 and Y8 netballers have started the year off well with great wins against Gillingham and Shaftesbury. The older age groups have been challenging themselves with the Netball County Tournament this term and have had some amazing results. The U14 team fought hard against well drilled teams to come 7th overall. The U19's had a storming run in the first round, qualifying for the next round and taking on the top schools in Dorset. They battled hard and showed flair

and determination, narrowly missing out winning some games by 1 goal. They came a respectable 6th in Dorset.



Hockey

It has been a good year for hockey with lots of different students playing in games since September. Although the results haven't always gone our way, the students have improved immensely, which has been fantastic to see. As always, our Y11 hockey team are leading the way, and have qualified for finals on the 5th December – we wish them all the best of luck.

Sports Leadership

Y10s have been busy putting into action their leadership skills for primary school sports events. To further their leadership skills, some female students have also spent their free time completing online e-learning modules as part of the Your Time leadership programme designed at empowering students to understand the barriers to female participation and design an event to promote participation and enjoyment in sport.

Swimming

Our U16 and U18 swimmers were able to showcase their finesse and talent at the North Dorset Swimming Championships held at Bryanston this half-term. They showed fantastic confidence and bravery in individual events as well as great teamwork in the relay races.

Cross Country

It has been a pleasure to see some new faces enjoy our extra-curricular cross-country club this year. The season officially started with the first cross country race held at Leweston. Despite getting very muddy, both new and experienced female runners were a credit to the school, demonstrating their fitness, competitiveness, effort and encouragement

to each other. We look forward to many more races after Christmas!

Sports Development Programme

This is a new initiative led by Mr Fineman-Bulger, who is working with our top-level sports performers to take the next steps in their playing journey. Mr Fineman says 'We have completed the first three sessions of the programme now, looking at Strength and Conditioning for specific sports, finding imbalances and working hard to improve them. We have completed our first Sports Psychology session and have identified sports specific macro and micro goals for the season and lastly, we looked at nutrition, identifying our Basal Metabolic Rate (BMR) to ensure we are fuelling ourselves for optimal performance and recovery.'

Girls Football

Girl's football has been a huge hit this year, with Y7-13 having lots of fixtures! It has allowed the opportunity to get so many students involved. Some of the highlights being a 7-0 win for the U18s in the county cup and a 4-1 win for the U15s to move into the County Cup quarter finals. With lots of fixtures pending over the coming months, we are excited to see what they can achieve.



Girls Rugby

Girls' rugby has had a successful start to the year. Our U14s kicked off their season at home against Holyrood. All girls involved showed incredible energy and determination and came away with a great win! Our U16s also kicked off their year with a closely fought match against Holyrood, where they led for the majority of the match but unfortunately just lost out in the final few minutes. The U16s recently attended a tournament at Gillingham School, where their confidence and cohesion improved from game to game.