

Spring 2026

@Gryphon



New York Trip

Robotics

Oxbridge Success

Welcome



As we reach the end of a remarkably wet and windswept start to the year, I want to reflect on what has been an incredibly busy and inspiring Spring term at The Gryphon School. January and February tested us all with relentless rain and disruption, yet in true Gryphon spirit our students have demonstrated determination, resilience, and positivity. In doing so, they have truly embodied our vision of living life in all its fullness.

Our Gryphon Christian LIFE values of Leadership, Integrity, Fellowship and Exploration have been clearly visible in daily school life. Nowhere has this been more evident than in the commitment shown by our Year 11 and Year 13 students during their second round of mock examinations. Their focus and perseverance speak volumes about their character and their aspirations.

This term we are especially proud to celebrate the exceptional achievement of five Year 13 students who have secured Oxbridge offers. We are immensely proud of all our students and celebrate success in its many forms; however, offers from Oxford and Cambridge are rightly recognised as outstanding achievements. They reflect not only individual talent and hard work, but also the culture of aspiration, intellectual curiosity, and support that we strive to nurture across the whole school community. Careers education has been a major focus this term, reflecting our commitment to exploration and informed ambition. Year 13 students have taken part in practice interviews with visiting external organisations and visited the University of Exeter as part of their UCAS preparation. We have held Sixth Form interviews for our Year 11 applicants and hosted our biggest and best Gryphon Careers Fair, with over 50 local companies in attendance.

Beyond the classroom, our students have benefited from a rich programme of trips and visits that bring learning to life. Highlights have included Year 9's visit to the Imperial War Museum, our Oxbridge group's trip to Bletchley Park, Year 11 and Year 13 Drama students enjoying theatre in London, and Year 11 exploring poetry in Stratford-upon-Avon. Year 12 students visited HM Prison Shepton Mallet for Sociology and Criminology, travelled to London for Economics, and Sixth Form RE students have visited Glastonbury. Our Service students enjoyed a service community bonding trip to Mulligans in Bournemouth, while Year 10 Geographers conducted fieldwork at Cabot Circus in Bristol. Each experience broadens horizons and exemplifies our value of exploration.

Sixth Form Geographers have returned from an unforgettable visit to New York, our ski trip has departed for Austria, and over the Easter break students will travel to Berlin and the Normandy Battlefields as part of our history provision. Such opportunities develop independence, global awareness, and fellowship in abundance.

Enrichment remains a cornerstone of Gryphon life. Students have taken part in Duke of Edinburgh Gold training, KS3 Adventurous Training walks, the Battle of the Bands event, a Robotics competition, the Maths Challenge and World Book Day celebrations. On the sports field, we have enjoyed a huge number of fixtures, with notable success in county football tournaments. Through sport and competition, our students demonstrate leadership, teamwork and integrity in both victory and defeat.

What continues to impress me most is the spirit in which our young people approach these opportunities. Whether striving for academic excellence, performing on stage, competing in sport, or supporting one another through daily challenges, they show that living life in all its fullness is not simply a statement of intent, it is something we see in action every day. Thank you to our dedicated staff and supportive families who make these opportunities possible, and most of all to our remarkable students who continue to inspire us. I look forward to all that the summer term will bring.

Jim Gower
Headteacher



Algoryphons

In February our Sixth Form Robotics team – The Algoryphons – travelled to Bournemouth University to compete in the South West Regional Qualifiers of the First Tech UK Robotics Challenge. Competing against some of the strongest teams in the region for their second year, they delivered another outstanding performance.

Their robot, V-Rex, proved to be a serious contender throughout the day. After winning almost all of their qualifying matches, the team progressed to the final play-off rounds, narrowly missing out on a place in the National Finals. The level of competition was exceptionally high, making their achievement all the more impressive.

We are also delighted that the team received the prestigious 'Think Award', recognising the quality of their engineering portfolio and the depth of thought behind their design process. Their documentation captured months of design, testing, iteration and problem-solving – a real showcase of their resilience and technical excellence.

What stood out just as much as their performance, however, was their character. In the middle of a high-pressure competition, several students paused their own preparations to assist two other teams who were experiencing technical issues with their robots. That willingness to help competitors reflects the very best of Gryphon LIFE values – demonstrating leadership, integrity and a genuine sense of fellowship within the wider robotics community.

We are incredibly proud of the whole team. To reach the final play-offs and secure an award is a tremendous achievement. Another fantastic year for the Algoryphons – we are already looking forward to next season!

Particular congratulations and thanks go to Year 13 members Tom, Harry, Lucas, Rhys, Josh, Adonis and Xiang-Yao, who were instrumental in establishing the Robotics Club and have given an enormous amount of time and dedication to the team's success over the past two years – you will all be hugely missed!



David Beach Junior Awards 2026

We are incredibly proud to celebrate the success of The Addams Family, which was recognised at the David Beach Junior Awards, hosted by the Somerset Fellowship of Drama on the 6th March 2026. In our very first year entering the David Beach Youth Competition, we were thrilled to receive five nominations – and even more delighted to celebrate some fantastic achievements on the night.

Isabella M won Best Supporting Female Lead for her brilliant portrayal of Wednesday Addams.

We won Best Small Venue, recognising the creativity and talent of the entire cast, crew, orchestra and production team in bringing the show to life.

Alongside these wonderful wins, we were also thrilled to receive several nominations

- Best Props – Mr Lynch
- Best Effects
- Best Leading Male – Bernard O for his fantastic performance as Gomez Addams

A huge thank you to the lead cast members who attended the ceremony to represent our wonderful company, and to the staff who supported the production. These achievements are a testament to the dedication, creativity, and teamwork of our students and staff who worked tirelessly to make the production such a success. We are incredibly proud of everyone involved and delighted to see our hard work recognised.



Mulligans Trip

Thirty-one pupils from Years 7-10, all from forces families, enjoyed an exciting day at Mulligans, featuring indoor crazy golf, laser darts, and ping pong. The event, designed to foster connections across year groups, allowed students to bond over shared experiences of having a parent in the armed forces. With rising tensions in the Middle East, the timing was particularly meaningful, offering students a chance to unwind and build supportive relationships during a challenging period.



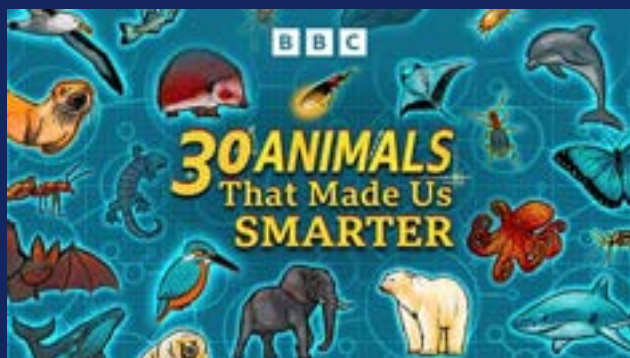
Nurture

This term, our Nurture students have achieved something truly impressive. Thanks to the determination of our pupils and the dedication of our teachers and learning support mentors, we are celebrating our strongest Nurture reading progress results to date.

Our students have been working hard to strengthen their phonics, build fluency, and deepen their comprehension skills. The results speak for themselves. Year 7 students have made an average of six months' progress in just four months. Even more remarkably, four students have made over two years' progress in that same time.

Not to be outdone, our Year 8 students have gone even further, making an average of nine months' progress in four months, with seven students achieving more than a year's worth of progress.

We are incredibly proud of every student who has committed to improving their reading. These gains are not just numbers – they are opening doors. Stronger reading skills are already having a positive impact across all subjects, boosting confidence and supporting success in lessons right across the curriculum. Well done to everyone involved!



Equality Council



Bake Sale

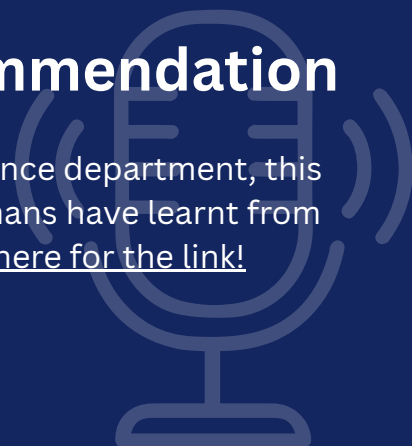
13 members from the Equality Council organised a bake sale for the Stonewall Charity and raised a total of £202.11. This is a UK human rights charity fighting for Lesbian, Gay, Bi, Trans, Queer+ equality who campaign, support and advocate for the community in the UK and beyond. Their vision is a world where everyone, everywhere, has equal rights which the Council believe reflected their values and goals. We are immensely proud of the Council members who worked hard to organise and bake some delicious cakes!

Men's Mental Health Assembly

Nine members of the Equality Council independently produced and presented a fantastic presentation about men's mental health. They confidently delivered their presentation in assemblies to Years 9-13 and encouraged students across the school to reflect, recognise and speak up about mental health. This was a particularly poignant theme as our Year 11 and 13 students are rapidly approaching their exams and the Council wanted to ensure every student, particularly boys, knew how and where to get help if needed. We are extremely grateful for the work the Council are doing and are very proud of their passion and drive to make positive changes in the school community.

Podcast Recommendation

Recommended by our science department, this podcast looks at what humans have learnt from the animal kingdom! [Click here for the link!](#)



Year 8

Year 8 have had another busy and successful term, and they've approached it all with their usual good humour and determination.

It was lovely to see so many parents and carers at Parents' Evening. The conversations were really positive, with students speaking confidently about their learning and showing a clear understanding of how they can keep improving. We're very grateful for the continued support from home – it really does make a difference.

Students also enjoyed a memorable RE trip to Southampton, where they engaged thoughtfully and represented the school brilliantly throughout. We were equally proud of how they conducted themselves at Sturminster Newton's careers event, asking sensible questions and showing real curiosity about their futures.

Year 8 continue to make us proud. They are working hard, growing in confidence and making strong progress across the board. Well done, Year 8!

-Miss Hetherington, Head of Year 8

On Wednesday 4th March, sixty Year 8 students attended a Careers Event at The Exchange in Sturminster Newton. Organised by Dorset Council, the event gave students the chance to explore a variety of future career pathways, including Construction, Health & Social Care, IT & Technology, Retail and STEM.

During the visit, students took part in hands-on workshops. Activities included website design, housing-development planning with C.G. Fry, and a retail challenge where the group styled mannequins with support from Harts of Stur. Those opting for Health & Social Care learned basic first aid and gained an understanding of some of the challenges faced by older generations. Wessex Water also delivered an engaging talk about the different roles and career routes available within their company.

The day offered students valuable insight into the world of work and helped broaden their understanding of potential future careers. Many thanks to Mr Martin for organising this brilliant opportunity!

-Mr Ross, Deputy Head of Year





Adventurous Training

What a start to 2026 — it's been wet! Despite the weather, the Adventurous Training Department at The Gryphon School has been busy getting students outdoors and exploring. Our Key Stage 3 walks have been a great success, with around 60 students heading out across 6 different days to explore the countryside. Forest and coastal walks in Wareham Forest and around Colmers Hill led to shelter building, storytelling and even some fossil hunting!

Our Nurture sessions have also been busy, with students learning first aid, trying camp cooking and our sessions have featured fun games that help support the learning. Our Gateway sessions continue to flourish with strong engagement from the students involved, and we hope to further develop our Bushcraft/Forest School area during the summer term. Watch this space!

Our Bronze, Silver and Gold Duke of Edinburgh's Award training sessions have been very well attended, with students building confidence in route planning and learning first aid skills ahead of their expeditions next term. Across all three levels, we have more than 100 students taking part!

The new Tin Award (Year 7) and Copper Award (Year 8) have launched with fantastic uptake — so much so that we have already needed to order a second print run of the booklets. These award programmes are our very own version of DofE, aimed at the younger years to offer them an introduction to the framework in the hope that we can get them on board when they reach Year 9 and Bronze becomes available to them.

Ten Tors training has also been going very well. Our students have risen to the challenge each week as we have been running two physical training sessions before school, on a Tuesday and a Thursday morning, as well as an after-school theory session each week. Training continues to ramp up as we get closer and closer to the Ten Tors Challenge in May. We are now preparing for our first wild camping weekend coming up at the end of term.

-Mr Banfield, Adventurous Training Lead



Art

In February, The Gryphon was delighted to welcome two special visitors, Eiko Ishida and Suzanne Perrin, who worked with our Year 10 Fine Art students for an inspiring day of Japanese calligraphy workshops and a lecture on Japanese art and culture. Students enjoyed the hands-on experience of using traditional materials while gaining insight into the history and cultural significance of this distinctive art form. The day was a great success, with students describing it as “a fun and unique experience on Japanese art and culture,” “really interesting to experience a different culture,” and “a fascinating and unique experience — learning about the history was particularly interesting.” We are extremely grateful to The Arts Society Sherborne, for generously funding this enriching opportunity and look forward to more exciting opportunities such as this.

Photography

Year 10 GCSE and Year 12 A Level Photography students recently had the opportunity to hear from wedding photographer Holly Hock, who visited to share insights into her career and creative practice. Drawing on her experience photographing one of the most important days in peoples’ lives, Holly spoke about how she developed her style, built her business, and learned to work creatively under the fast-paced and often unpredictable conditions of weddings. She presented a selection of her work, explaining how composition, lighting and timing work together to capture genuine emotion and tell the story of the day.



During the talk, Holly also discussed the realities of working as a freelance photographer, including preparing for shoots, managing clients and editing large volumes of images afterwards. She highlighted the importance of both technical skill and strong people skills, explaining how building trust with couples and guests helps create natural, authentic photographs. Her advice on developing a portfolio and finding a personal photographic style was particularly valuable for students who are beginning to consider creative pathways and careers in photography.

World Book Day

The English Department are in their villain era! World Book Day 2026 was a massive success with numerous teachers inspiring students by dressing up as beloved book characters. We also created a book shop in the library with incredibly generous donations from T J Jones in Sherborne, and Waterstones Yeovil, handing out over 150 free books to Key Stage 3 students.



Sixth Form Reading Mentors

We have just finished running our annual Sixth Form Reading Mentors Programme at The Gryphon which involves training our lovely Year 12 students to support Year 7 readers with fantastic results. Starting back in mid-October, this four-month programme encouraged our young people to improve their reading confidence, fluency and engagement in weekly tutor time sessions. Monitored and run by our English and Learning Support teams, students are guided to explore the types of texts that interest them, trial the use of coloured overlays and reading rulers as well as building up reading resilience over multiple sessions.



‘Wicked’ Theatre Trip



On 7th January 2026, our GCSE and A Level Drama students enjoyed an unforgettable live theatre trip to London’s Apollo Victoria Theatre to see the spectacular West End production of Wicked. The visit gave students the exciting opportunity to experience professional musical theatre in one of London’s most iconic venues.

The production impressed students with its powerful performances, striking set design, imaginative use of lighting and sound, and memorable musical numbers. Many students commented on how valuable it was to see how acting; staging, costume, and technical elements work together at a professional level—bringing learning from the classroom to life.

Reflecting on the trip, Miss Green said: “The students were a real credit to the school. Their behaviour throughout the trip was exemplary, and it was wonderful to see them so engaged with the performance. Experiencing live theatre is such an important part of drama, and we are proud to be able to offer students opportunities like this to enrich their learning beyond the classroom.”

The trip provided excellent inspiration for both GCSE and A Level studies and was a thoroughly enjoyable and an enriching experience for all involved.

Geography: Trip to New York



Our geography trip to New York City in February was nothing short of unforgettable. From the moment we touched down at JFK Terminal 4, the excitement was already bubbling. The journey into the city gave everyone their first glimpse of those iconic skyline silhouettes.

Once checked into the hotel, we headed straight to our first group dinner at Applebee's. The atmosphere was brilliant—students chatting, laughing, and soaking in the fact that they were finally in New York. A gentle evening walk to Times Square followed, and the reaction was priceless: wide eyes, dropped jaws, and a chorus of “WOW.” The neon glow and sheer energy of the place set the tone for the days ahead.

Day 1 – Museums, High Lines, Snowy Parks & Broadway Magic

Our first full day began early with a brisk walk to Cosmic Diner. The portions were enormous, the coffee was pure New Yorker fuel, and the students loved every minute of it. Energised, we headed to Hudson Yards to see “The Hive” (the Vessel), before spending the morning exploring the Intrepid Museum. The submarine proved to be the runaway favourite—students were fascinated by the tight corridors and life beneath the waves.

Lunch at Whole Foods was an adventure in itself. Students tried everything they'd ever dreamed of from an American food hall. Next came the Guggenheim, where the architecture alone sparked plenty of conversation. But the real magic happened afterwards: a snow-covered Central Park. Students played, laughed, took photos, and enjoyed the wintery landscape. It was one of the standout moments of the entire trip.

We continued through film famous locations—Home Alone spots, the Plaza Hotel, fountains and landmarks. Dinner at Planet Hollywood was lively and fun, and then came the main event: The Great Gatsby on Broadway. The set was dazzling, the music electric, and the students were completely absorbed. We ended the night with the Times Square Midnight Moment, watching the billboards transform in perfect synchronisation.

Day 2 – Liberty, Ellis Island, Wall Street & Ice Skating

We took the subway to South Ferry and boarded the boat to Liberty Island. The moment the students stepped off the ferry and saw the Statue of Liberty up close was unforgettable—smiles, photos, and a real sense of awe.

After returning to Manhattan, we stopped for photos with the Charging Bull before grabbing lunch near the 9/11 Memorial. The 9/11 Museum was powerful and deeply moving. Students showed maturity, empathy, and respect throughout—something truly commendable. Afterwards, spirits lifted again when we headed to the Ghostbusters firehouse, and a friendly firefighter even joined us for a photo, making the afternoon. Dinner with friends rounded off the early evening, before we headed to Central Park for ice skating at Wollman Rink. The “interesting” skating techniques on display kept everyone entertained. The walk home along 5th Avenue, past glittering shop windows, felt like a scene from a movie.

Day 3 – Trams, Skylines, Whispering Galleries & Farewell

Our final morning saw us head to the Top of the Rock, where the city stretched out in every direction. From there we explored Midtown East: St. Patrick’s Cathedral, Rockefeller Center, and Grand Central Terminal. The whispering gallery in Grand Central was a particular favourite—students delighted in sending secret messages across the hall. Lunch was quick and tasty inside Grand Central before a final shopping visit to the stores around NYC. Finally, we collected our luggage and boarded the coach back to JFK for our flight home.

A Final Word

Throughout the entire trip, our students were outstanding—curious, enthusiastic, supportive of one another, and brilliantly behaved. They embraced every moment, from the early mornings to the late night Times Square lights. Their energy, humour, and sense of adventure made this trip truly special.

New York gave us memories we’ll be talking about for years, and the students made us proud every step of the way.

-Mr Woodville, Head of Geography



Geography Fieldwork



In January, Year 10 Geography students went to Bristol to complete their GCSE urban fieldwork. The trip gave students the chance to collect their own data, which they have used in lessons to help answer their fieldwork enquiry questions.

Students carried out their research in Cabot Circus and Broadmead, where they completed a pedestrian count and an environmental quality survey. This helped students to investigate the quality of the urban environment. The students also walked around the city centre looking at different types of land use, discussing how areas are used for shops, services and leisure. This helped students see how the city centre is organised and how different functions are spread across the area.

Back in the classroom, students are now using the data they collected to present their findings, create graphs and analyse their results as part of their fieldwork for their GCSE.

Visit to Shepton Mallet Prison

Our Year 12 Sociology, Law and Criminology students recently enjoyed a fascinating and highly engaging educational visit to Shepton Mallet Prison. The trip offered a unique opportunity for students to explore the history of one of the country's oldest prisons, gaining valuable insight into how systems of punishment have evolved over time. Through guided tours and interactive activities, students were able to deepen their understanding of crime, justice, and social change in a truly immersive setting.

During the visit, students examined how infamous criminals such as the Kray twins were portrayed in the media, sparking thoughtful discussions around representation, public perception, and moral panic. One of the highlights of the day was the prison escape room challenge, where students were tasked with solving clues and working collaboratively under pressure. We are incredibly proud to report that our students were praised by the prison officers for their teamwork, problem-solving skills and excellent conduct, completing the escape rooms more successfully than any other school group this year.

The officers commented that our students were “a delight to have” and described them as one of the best school groups they had ever hosted. This is a wonderful testament to the students' maturity, enthusiasm and behaviour throughout the visit. We would like to congratulate all students involved for representing the school so positively and making the most of this memorable learning experience.



Geography

In Geography this term, Year 7 have been learning about the continent of Africa. As part of this topic, students explored different cultures and ways of life across the continent. Earlier this term, Year 7 Geography students took part in a live video call with students from a Maasai community in Kenya. This was a fantastic opportunity for students to connect with young people from a different part of the world and learn more about Maasai culture and daily life.

During the call, the Maasai students shared aspects of their traditions, culture and everyday life, including their community, school life and cultural traditions. Our students were able to ask questions and compare their own experiences of school and life in the UK with those of the Maasai students.



Students were also able to handle a range of Maasai artefacts, helping them to better understand traditional clothing, jewellery and cultural items. These artefacts allowed students to engage more deeply with the culture they were learning about.

Following the call, Year 7 students completed a creative homework task to design their own Maasai shields, inspired by the traditional patterns and colours used by the Maasai. This activity encouraged students to think about how symbols and designs can represent culture within the Maasai community.

There are hopes for students to exchange letters in the future with the Maasai students. This ongoing connection will help students develop a greater understanding of global communities as they move throughout KS3 and into KS4.

Lent Challenge



On the 2nd March, it was a delight to welcome two visitors from South Sudan to the Gryphon School; Bishop Isaac and his wife Mama Nora from the Diocese of Ezo. They spent time speaking to pupils from Years 7, 8, 10 and 12 about life in South Sudan, a country that has spent most of its recent history in civil war (until independence in 2011) and where access to education is limited.

This Lent, The Gryphon School is embarking on helping build a secondary school building for pupils in the town of Ezo who currently have no classroom of their own. In a town of 146,000 there is almost no access to secondary education, but the local church within the Diocese of Ezo (which is partnered with the Diocese of Salisbury and churches here in Sherborne) is looking to change that. Bricks cost just 10p each and they need 60,000! There are various fundraisers organised including a penalty shoot out against members of the SLT!

Joe's Fundraising Mission

Joe C in Year 8 is one of a handful of Somerset Scouts who have been selected to attend the World Scout Jamboree 2027 in Poland. To raise some funds, Joe independently organised a bake sale at school, managing every detail himself - even convincing some Sixth Formers to give up their social time to help him man his stall! Joe embodies our Gryphon vales of Leadership, Integrity, Fellowship and Exploration and we are so proud to share the following from him:



"I'm excited to share a quick update on my fundraising journey for the World Scout Jamboree 2027! To take part in this once-in-a-lifetime experience, I need to raise £3,650 in total. Recently, I held a cake sale in school to help reach this goal, and I'm really proud to say that I raised £258! A huge thank you to everyone who supported me by donating, buying cakes, or spreading the word.

The Jamboree isn't just about Scouting—it's also an amazing chance to explore local culture, meet Scouts from around the world, and try local food from the host country. Every fundraiser brings me one step closer to this unforgettable adventure.

Thank you again for all your support. If you would like to help towards my fundraising please visit my [Just Giving page](#)."

Axiom Maths

Starting this year, a circle of selected Year 7 students at The Gryphon have had the opportunity to explore and deepen their maths knowledge thanks to Axiom Maths.

Axiom Maths is a growing self-funded organisation that believes in the power of maths to transform lives and nations. They believe that access to that power should not depend on a child's background, and their mission is to help every child realise their maths potential.



Mrs Ingram, The Gryphon's Lead for Axiom said, 'It's been great to see students outside of the classroom setting, becoming more confident, articulate and adventurous with their maths.'

The Gryphon hopes to continue this opportunity for current Year 7 students into year 8, and begin a new cohort in Year 7. If you'd be interested in finding out more, please email ain@gryphon.dorset.sch.uk

British Science Week

We celebrated British Science Week in March with a special lesson in Year 7 celebrating the week's theme 'Curiosity' by investigating cross-linked polymers and making alginate 'worms!' We tested the worms in different solutions to explore the theory that cross-linking the polymers makes the structure stronger. We also learnt about polymers we use in real life, from wool to plastic and Teflon. We also welcomed Year 6 students from Bradford Abbas, Thornford and Yetminster Primary schools to have a taste of working in a science lab to participate in British Science Week, it was lovely to see them!



Chemistry Symposium

“This term our Sixth Form chemists have again had the chance to join students from Sherborne School, Sherborne Girls, Leweston, King's Bruton, Millfield and Clayesmore at a half termly Chemistry Symposium, where representatives from each school give presentations on topics outside the specification that they have independently researched.

Tilly and Gail presented about the chemistry of poisons at the January event, with Gail focusing on synthetic chemical poisons and Tilly focusing on biological toxins. They covered the chemical make up, the mechanism by which it effects the body and possible treatment. In March Maxi and Grace talked about polymers, thinking about the problems with disposal of polymers and whether it will be possible to design a truly green plastic that does not harm the environment but could be used in the same way as the polymers we make from chemicals from crude oil.



IRIS Research Projects

Our science IRIS projects are continuing this year with a group of enthusiastic scientists from Years 10-13. We have three projects underway; Cosmic Mining involves students using real, unseen data from the Spitzer Telescope to analyse spectroscopy of stars. The students have been incredibly committed in analysing patterns and submitting practice examples to the IRIS central team; team working skills and some high-level maths has assisted them in this analysis.

Within 'Elephants on the Move', students have worked with Google Earth Pro and data from satellites that has tracked elephants moving within Zambia Kafue National Park. These elephants have been rescued and are often orphans. Students have used high level data analysis to build graphs, looking for patterns in movement. Next year the team plans to develop research questions and use this data further.

Within the Ecosystems projects, students have been conducting a variety of wildlife studies. One pair has completed bird surveys looking at the diversity of birds within an urban environment compared to a rural environment. Statistical tests have been carried out, and students have working hard to gather real, usable data.

RE Trip to Glastonbury

Our A Level Religious Studies students recently visited the Goddess Temple in Glastonbury as part of their exploration of contemporary spirituality and new religious movements. The visit provided a valuable opportunity to experience a living example of modern Goddess spirituality and to see how beliefs and practices studied in the classroom are expressed in a real spiritual community.

During the visit, students were introduced to the history and purpose of the temple, which is dedicated to honouring the divine feminine through seasonal celebrations, ritual practices and personal reflection. Students had the chance to explore the temple itself, observing the carefully created shrine spaces and learning how symbolism, colour and imagery are used to represent different aspects of the Goddess.

The visit sparked thoughtful questions and discussions, helping students to connect their academic studies with lived religious experience. Trips like this are an important part of the A Level Religious Studies course, allowing students to engage directly with diverse religious traditions and deepen their understanding beyond the classroom. We would like to thank the team at the Goddess Temple for their warm welcome and for sharing their knowledge and experiences with our students. It was an insightful and memorable visit for everyone involved.



Battle of the Bands

In January we held our first Battle of the Bands Competition in 10 years! Three bands fought it out in a closely contested competition:

- **“Alien Warfare”** (who were: Dakota-Skye P-Vocals, Aneurin W – Lead Guitar, Monica J – Bass Guitar, Finlay L – Drumkit),
- **“Working Title”** (who were: Tabi S – Vocals, Ryleigh L – Lead Guitar, Oakley J – Keyboards /Rhythm Guitar, Oskar H – Bass Guitar, Tom M – Drumkit)
- **“8-Ball”** who were: (Sol S-Vocals, Henry J – Lead Guitar, Winston G-C– Bass Guitar, Ozzy M – Drumkit)

It was wonderful to hear some original songs performed by each of the three bands. Despite the very high standards of musicianship and preparedness from all three bands, after three rounds “8-Ball” gradually emerged as the overall winners due to their more consistently polished performances, engaging stage presence and slightly greater variety within their musical arrangements. The audience’s vote however went to the Sixth Form band, “Working Title”.

We very much look forward to running a follow-up competition in the Autumn Term, next academic year.



Music

Concert

In February, 3 Gryphon Students (Ella M, Jessica T and Toby F) took part in an orchestra day organised and hosted for free by Perrott Hill School. The students took part in a rehearsal to learn and then perform within an informal concert, three famous orchestral pieces by the French composer Ravel. All of our students found it an extremely rewarding experience, having the opportunity to perform as part of a combined orchestra of 90 musicians of all ages. We are incredibly grateful to both the Director of Music, Julian Shortman and to Perrott Hill School for once again offering our Gryphon students the opportunity to participate without charge.

Sherborne Schools Symphony Orchestra

In March, 4 Sixth Form Gryphon students (Katya B, Sarah H, Oakley J and Danny M) participated in the combined Sherborne Schools Symphony Orchestra's Concert trip to the famous Cadogan Hall, in London. The orchestra, which consists of students from Sherborne Girls', Sherborne Boys', Sherborne Prep and the Gryphon School performed a varied and technically challenging programme of symphonic works which were played to a very high standard and received incredibly positively by the London audience. This experience will surely be one that will stay with each of the students who performed for the rest of their lives. We are indebted to both the Sherborne Boys' and Sherborne Girls' Schools' staff for running the weekly rehearsals and indeed the concert trip to London itself. Long may our musical collaborations continue.

Sing Up!

Over 200 Year 5 students from all 8 local primary schools participated in our 2025-2026 'Sing-Up' musical theatre showcase concert in the spectacular Sherborne Abbey.

Each school learned two different songs each from a selection of Rock-style musical theatre shows (such as "We Will Rock You", "School of Rock", "Starlight Express", "Matilda", "The Rocky Horror Picture Show", "Back to the Future", including an additional two songs that were sung by students from all 8 schools together by way of a spectacular finale. The students had been rehearsing independently since November and only put it all together on the day under the ever-enthusiastic and inspiring direction of Amy Parker, our very own Gryphon School singing teacher, who had also run each of the workshop visits to the schools over the previous 4 months. The Year 5 students sang with great commitment, engagement, enthusiasm and confidence, and the concert was very well attended by enthusiastic and supportive parents / carers. An all-round roaring success.

Thank you to Sherborne Abbey and the Reverend Martin Lee for so kindly and generously helping us out with the venue. A massive thank you to the primary school staff who were so engaged in and supportive of the whole project. We are also very grateful to the Dorset Music hub for once again so generously funding this year's 'Sing-Up' project – without which none of the workshops or showcase concert would have been possible.



Sixth Form

A Busy Term for A Level Economics

Huge congratulations go to Aisha, Ben, Malachy and Ronnie, who have successfully progressed to the West Country Regional Finals of the Economics Olympiad. This is an incredible achievement, particularly as more than 4,000 students took part in the first round of the competition. We wish them the very best of luck in the next stage. We would also like to recognise Ronnie and Noah, who have recently completed their term as Financial Times School Ambassadors. As their final activity, they organised an engaging and interactive task for our Thinkers Group, helping to encourage discussion and interest in current economic issues.

Our Year 12 Economics students also enjoyed an enriching trip to London. The day began with an insightful talk from the Bank of England, ending with a tour of Parliament, where students were able to observe a live debate in the House of Commons. While in the city, students also explored the historic Square Mile, visiting landmarks including the Royal Exchange, Leadenhall Market, Lloyd's of London, and the Guildhall. It was a packed and fascinating day that provided students with a valuable insight into the world of finance and life in the City of London.



Oxford University Trip

This term, 22 students from the Oxbridge Early Entry Programme visited Merton College, Oxford to experience life as an undergraduate at the college and gain valuable insights into the application process to Oxbridge. They were given a tour of the city and of the college, and participated in an interview workshop with Merton staff. They also met with and questioned a Merton College student ambassador panel and learnt what it takes to make it as an Oxbridge undergraduate. As always, our students were inquisitive and conscientious and a credit to the school. They all left with a positive view and will look to put in competitive applications this October, to take their own place around Tolkien's table.





Oxbridge Application Success

We are delighted to celebrate the exceptional success of five students who have received offers to study at the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge this September. This year has marked a particularly strong cohort, with a high success rate of offers secured. These achievements reflect not only the academic calibre of the students but also their sustained commitment throughout the rigorous Oxbridge application process.

The successful candidates and their courses are:

- Caitlin W – History (University of Cambridge)
- Jacob H – English and History (University of Oxford)
- Sofia V-B – Experimental Psychology (University of Oxford)
- Esther M – Philosophy, Politics and Economics (University of Oxford)
- Toby B – Mathematics (University of Oxford)

Dr Tony Otto, Head of the Oxbridge Programme at The Gryphon School, commented: "This has been an outstanding year for our Oxbridge applicants. The students have shown exceptional intellectual curiosity, determination and maturity throughout what is a demanding and highly competitive process. Their willingness to engage deeply with their subjects, refine their thinking and respond thoughtfully to challenge has been a pleasure to see. These offers are richly deserved, and we are immensely proud of all they have achieved."

We are particularly proud that, according to national admissions data, our Oxbridge offer success rate of 25%, puts us alongside some of the top UK schools!

Delivering Teacher Development Sessions

Year 13 Lily supported the Mid Somerset Consortium SEND conference for trainee teachers, delivering an inspiring session around experiencing learning as a visually impaired student. Lily shared her experience of the challenges her sight loss has brought about for her in the classroom and how both herself and her teachers have navigated the journey so far. She confidently shared teaching strategies the trainees could take away and helped the teachers understand learning from the perspective of a visually impaired learner with some cleverly created glasses. It was a brilliantly delivered session to support new cohorts of teachers who join the education sector in the coming years. It was wonderful to see their engagement in the session and how Lily was able to highlight the importance of inclusion in the classroom, giving all students the opportunity to thrive.

Year 12s UCAS Discovery Event

Year 12 students explored their potential career options at the UCAS Discovery Fair in Exeter. The convention gave the students the opportunity to chat to unis and colleges about their courses and uni life as well as speak to employers and apprenticeship providers about what an apprenticeship is like and the options available.

Throughout the day students also had access to talks from experts in their fields and utilise the chance to network with careers experts to gain further dedicated support with their options post ALevels.

Year 13s Building Career Experience

Year 13s grasped a brilliant opportunity with both hands this term. With the most wonderful support from over 30 external businesses, Year 13s took part in professional interviews from which they gained individualised feedback from a sector professional. From consultant surgeons, insurance brokers, solicitors, creative media specialists, the regional cyber-crime unit and physios to name but a few, students were able to access support from a huge range of professional sectors. The feedback they have received has allowed them to prepare for upcoming apprenticeship, employment and university interviews. Off the back of some of these interviews students have been offered employment and apprenticeship opportunities, which is a fantastic news.



Sport

Netball

The **Year 7** netball team has had a very positive start to the season. They have drawn one game and won all their other matches, which is a great achievement for a new team. Their commitment and effort during training sessions have clearly contributed to their success in matches. During games, the team has demonstrated excellent teamwork and determination, and there is clear improvement in their gameplay week on week. Overall, the team is developing well and continuing to grow in confidence and skill as the season progresses. Fingers crossed they can win their next game and head to the finals.

The **Year 8** netball team has been progressing well and showing a positive attitude throughout the season. The players have approached both training and matches with enthusiasm and determination, which has helped them continue to develop their skills. On the court, the players communicate effectively and support one another, helping the team play more cohesively each week. It has been great to see their confidence grow and their overall performance continue to develop as the season progresses.

The **Year 11** netball team recently took part in a tournament against several local schools in a round-robin format. The girls played with great energy and teamwork throughout the afternoon, producing some excellent passages of play. In a particularly close match against a strong Westfield side, they battled hard but were just unable to secure the win. Despite this, the team performed brilliantly across the tournament and finished a very impressive second place overall.



Our **Sixth Form** netball team have also been busy with a number of recent fixtures. They faced a well-drilled Leweston Schoolside and the girls showed real determination to fight their way back into the match. They battled hard until the final whistle but were unfortunately unable to take the win. The team also played a closely contested, last-minute fixture against Yeovil College. It was a competitive game throughout, with the girls giving it everything right until the end. Despite their efforts, the match finished in a close loss. Looking ahead, the Sixth Form team have another fixture before Easter against Clayesmore School, with the possibility of more games to follow next term.

Boys Football

The **Year 7** boys football team have made an excellent start to their football journey this year. The team have enjoyed success in multiple fixtures, showing great determination and teamwork to secure a number of impressive wins. Just as importantly, the players have developed strong relationships with one another, supporting teammates on and off the pitch. This positive team spirit has helped them grow quickly as a group and is already showing in their performances. The team also represented the school in a recent tournament, where they put in a strong performance against tough opposition. With their continued progress and positive attitude, this Year 7 group are shaping up to be a very promising team for the future.

The **Year 8** boys football team have enjoyed an outstanding run in this year's County Cup, earning themselves a well-deserved place in the quarter-finals. Their journey so far has been marked by determination, teamwork, and some truly superb football.

From the very first round, the squad showed confidence on the ball, strong defensive organisation, and real attacking flair. Their performances have been praised not only for their technical quality but also for the positive attitude and maturity shown throughout the competition. Reaching the quarter-finals is a fantastic achievement, and the whole school community is incredibly proud of how the team have represented school.

The **Year 9** football team has experienced a mixed season, showing both strong potential and areas for improvement. Throughout the year, the team has delivered some impressive performances, securing some convincing wins and demonstrating good teamwork and attacking play. In other matches, however, inconsistency and some lapses in concentration have made results harder to maintain, leading to a couple of unfortunate losses! Despite the varied results, the squad has continued to develop, with players gaining confidence, improving their skills, and working well together on the pitch.

The **Year 10** football team has enjoyed a very positive season so far, demonstrating maturity, competitiveness, and an excellent attitude throughout their fixtures. Although their County Cup campaign ended earlier than hoped, the boys showed great character. The team quickly bounced back with a series of impressive performances, including wins against both Gillingham and Sherborne Boys. These performances are a clear reflection of the squad's determination to keep improving and competing at a high level. With tougher fixtures on the horizon in the coming weeks, the team will be looking to maintain their momentum and continue building on what has already been a promising season.

The **Year 11** boys competed in the County Cup this term, where they put in a strong effort but were unfortunately knocked out by Lytchett Minster. The group also took part in the Gillingham Astro Tournament, where the school entered two squads. This gave more players the opportunity to represent the school and both teams showed great teamwork and determination throughout the event. It has been great to see such strong commitment from the group in what has otherwise been a quieter term for fixtures.

Our **Sixth Form** boys' football team continues to produce an outstanding season, securing their place in the County Cup Final after a hard-fought 1-0 victory over Bournemouth Grammar School in the semi-final. In a tightly contested match, with both sides battling for control, the breakthrough goal proved decisive, and the boys defended resolutely to see out the win and book their spot in the final. The performance reflected the team's commitment, teamwork, and the impressive standard they have maintained throughout the season. The success does not stop there. The squad has also topped their group in the Wessex League, earning a place in the semi-finals of that competition as well. Their consistent performances across both competitions highlight what has been a remarkable campaign so far. With the season reaching its decisive stages, the team now has the exciting opportunity to achieve something special. If the boys can remain undefeated for the rest of the year, they will lift two trophies, completing an exceptional double. The whole school community wishes the team the very best of luck as they head into the final weeks of the season.





Girls Football

In what has been a fantastic first season together, our **U13** girls' football team has reached the County Cup semi-final, an impressive achievement for a squad playing their first year as a team. Throughout the competition, the girls have shown great enthusiasm, teamwork, and determination, improving with every match they play. Reaching the semi-final in their first season together is already a tremendous accomplishment. The team has represented the school brilliantly, and we wish them the very best of luck as they look to take the next step and book their place in the County Cup Final.

Congratulations to our **U15** girls' football team, who were crowned champions at the Gillingham 7-a-side tournament after a fantastic day of football. Competing against schools from across North Dorset, the girls produced a series of excellent performances, showing great teamwork, determination, and skill throughout the tournament. They remained unbeaten against strong opposition, progressing confidently through the group stages and knockout rounds to reach the final. The final proved to be a tense and closely contested match, with both teams battling hard and neither able to find the decisive goal during normal play. This meant the outcome would be decided by a dramatic penalty shootout. Holding their nerve under pressure, the girls stepped up with confidence, converting their penalties and securing a well-deserved victory. Winning the tournament is a fantastic achievement and a testament to the team's hard work, resilience, and positive attitude.

CrossFit

This term has been fantastic in the gym during our Gryphon School CrossFit sessions. It has been truly inspiring to see both familiar faces and new students getting involved, challenging themselves, and making the most of the opportunity to train together. The enthusiasm and effort from our students has been outstanding. Students have been working their socks off throughout the term.

What has stood out the most is not only their hard work, but also the way they support one another. The gym has become a positive environment where students encourage their peers, learn new skills together, and grow in confidence as well as fitness. Watching them push through tough workouts while cheering each other on has been brilliant to see. We have regularly seen students from Years 7 through to 11 attending after school sessions, using the time to decompress after a busy day of lessons while also putting in some serious effort to improve their fitness.

As we approach exam season, these sessions are becoming even more valuable, particularly for our Year 11 students. Physical activity is a great way to relieve stress, refocus the mind, and maintain a healthy balance during what can be a demanding time of year. Our Year 12 enrichment programme has also gone from strength to strength. Wednesday afternoons have become a brilliant time for students to step away from the classroom and focus on exercise and wellbeing. Overall, the commitment, energy, and positivity shown by our students this term has been exceptional.

Girls Rugby

Although fixtures have been limited this term, the girls' rugby squads have continued to show great commitment and enthusiasm in training. The players have worked hard on developing their skills, teamwork and confidence on the pitch, and it has been great to see their progress each week.



Handball

The **Year 10** Boys handball team had an outstanding fixture as they faced Gillingham in a local friendly. Despite it being their first match, the team displayed remarkable confidence, teamwork, and athleticism—earning a well-deserved victory and marking an exciting start to their handball journey. From the first whistle, the boys set the tone with sharp passing, well-timed movement, and excellent communication on court. Whether diving for loose balls, pressing hard in defence, or launching coordinated attacks, every member of the squad contributed to a dynamic and disciplined performance. As the team went into the final quarter, they were 12-10 down but pulled together and claimed a 14-12 victory. A great result for a super talented team!

