

Summer 2026

Gryphon



Year 11 & 13 Proms

Adventurous Training

Dance the Night Away!



The Gryphon School



Welcome

As we come to the close of another fulfilling and successful academic year at The Gryphon School, I have once again been struck by the many ways in which our community brings our vision of “life in all its fullness” (John 10:10) to life. Throughout this term, students have demonstrated courage, compassion and ambition, embodying our Christian LIFE values of leadership, integrity, fellowship and exploration across all aspects of school life.



From an academic perspective, it has been a period of great perseverance and commitment. Our Year 13 students completed more than 600 A Level examinations, while Year 11 sat over 2,300 GCSE papers. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to our staff, whose dedication and support, through additional revision sessions and constant encouragement, have made such a difference. We were delighted to celebrate these cohorts at their respective Proms and look forward to recognising their achievements formally at our Prizegiving Ceremony in Sherborne Abbey this September.

Sport has also been a highlight this term. Our Sixth Form football team achieved an outstanding milestone by becoming the first Gryphon team to secure the U18 Dorset Schools Cup. This remarkable success showcased teamwork, determination and leadership at its very best. There is also great excitement building for our upcoming ‘Gryphon Games’ in the final week of term.

The creative arts continue to thrive within our school. The Year 13 Creative Design exhibition has been exceptional, demonstrating the high level of talent fostered by our staff. Our choir had the privilege of performing at Sherborne Abbey as part of the Sherborne Music Festival and also delighted audiences at the Summer Music Soirée. In Drama, Year 12 students led a “Dance the Night Away at the Movies” project with Key Stage 3, highlighting the strong sense of community across year groups and providing valuable leadership opportunities.

Opportunities for exploration have remained a key strength of Gryphon life. Students have taken part in enriching trips to Berlin, Normandy, and Austria for skiing, alongside a wide range of visits closer to home, including the Jurassic Coast and Longleat. Our Adventurous Training programme continues to go from strength to strength, with Bronze and Silver Duke of Edinburgh expeditions successfully completed, and a Gold expedition to Snowdonia still to come. Participation in the Ten Tors Challenge has also been impressive. In addition, all Year 10 students undertook a week of work experience, gaining valuable insight into the working world and exploring potential future pathways. Our students have also demonstrated a strong sense of social responsibility. Through the Gryphon ‘Lent Challenge’, the school community raised close to £1,000 to support the development of a secondary school in the Diocese of Ezo in South Sudan, an inspiring example of fellowship in action.

This week’s Celebration of Achievement events for Years 7, 8, 9, 10 and 12 have provided a wonderful opportunity to recognise both academic success and personal development. These occasions reflect our belief in every student’s potential to grow and succeed in their own individual way.

As we reach the end of term, we also say farewell to a number of students and colleagues. I would like to thank everyone moving on for their contribution to our school. In particular, we recognise Mrs Bugler, who has been a welcoming presence on reception for nearly 30 years since the school first opened, and Mrs Ackland, who has provided 25 years of exceptional pastoral care. Their dedication has had a lasting impact on countless students and exemplifies the very best of our values. Finally, as we look ahead to the summer break and the new academic year, I would like to thank all our students, staff and families for their continued support. Together, you make The Gryphon School a place where young people can flourish and truly experience life in all its fullness. Wishing everyone a relaxing and enjoyable summer.

Jim Gower, Headteacher

Chair of Governors

Another academic year is drawing to a close, bringing with it many achievements and celebrations. Education in our country continues to be a topic of conversation and discussion at every level. As a Governing Body, we feel privileged to see the Senior Leadership Team and all members of staff continually putting students first. Through careful monitoring, assessment, evaluation and the implementation of effective strategies, they work tirelessly to ensure that every student has the best possible school experience.

As we reflect on the year, we celebrate our successes while recognising the areas where we can continue to improve. We look forward to the opportunities, challenges and progress that lie ahead, always with the aim of providing our students with the very best foundation from which to launch into adulthood.

On behalf of the Governing Body, I would like to thank our staff and students for their dedication and commitment throughout the year, and our parents and carers for their continued support.

Wishing everyone a restful, enjoyable and well-deserved summer break.

Yvonne Bright, Chair of Governors

Pride

Staff were proud to represent the school at this year's Sherborne PRIDE parade, demonstrating our commitment to supporting the LGBTQ+ community, both within our school and across the wider Sherborne community.

It was particularly encouraging to see so many of our students lining the streets to support the parade and advocate for equality and inclusion. Their enthusiasm and encouragement reflected the values we strive to promote as a school.

We hope that next year even more of our students will be able to join us in the parade as we continue to celebrate diversity, foster a culture of belonging, and stand together as supporters for our LGBTQ+ community.



Dance the Night Away!

This year at The Gryphon, we were thrilled to run our *Dance the Night Away* project for a third successful year in the Drama department. Our incredibly talented Year 12 students worked alongside Miss Knight and Miss Paolozzi to choreograph and teach a stunning variety of dances to students from Year 7 through to Year 10.

On the 9th of July, we showcased our hard work to an audience of 200 people. The performance featured dances that were inspired by and used music from some of our favourite movies, including dance styles of Commercial Jazz, Lyrical, Ballet, Hip-hop, Irish Dance, Bollywood, Afro beats, Musical theatre and many more!



The dedication and enthusiasm from all the students were truly inspiring. Their willingness to try something new—regardless of prior dance experience—and the mutual respect shown towards the Year 12 leaders created a supportive and inclusive environment for everyone involved. A huge thank you to our amazing Year 12 dancers, Miss Paolozzi and Miss Knight, who worked tirelessly to guide and encourage younger students, helping to build confidence and create a safe, joyful space to explore dance. We're also very grateful to everyone who came to support the project. We're already looking forward to *Dance the Night Away 2027*!

Footloose Workshops



It has been a busy end of term for the Drama and Music departments! Over two days, 185 students participated in the Footloose workshops. This was a fantastic opportunity for students to immerse themselves into the fun and vibrancy of the production and give a taster of what to expect if they plan to audition. The students participated in dance sessions and singing and we were so impressed with the passion, positivity and hard work of those involved! Following this, the ensemble auditions and lead role auditions will take place in order to cast the show before the end of term. Rehearsals will begin in September ready for the performance in February 2027!

MFL Speaking Competition

On the 7th July 2026, the Languages Department ran the yearly KS3 Speaking Competition in the Quarr Hall at the Gryphon school. All students took part in a creative competition in lesson time, and in each class, a student was chosen for having prepared an excellent speech.



The finalists competed against each other on stage, presenting their work with confidence and courage. The quality of the students' presentation and linguistic skills blew us all away. The variety of styles and topics, from pets, passions for sports, through life as a pain au chocolat ... meant we were thoroughly entertained.

We would like to congratulate all our contestants for their hard work and enthusiasm. They are: Harry B, Lily R, Azariah S, Evelyn P, Katie R, Joanne S, Joey F, Iarina B, Iris W, Sofia S, Flo B, Toby F, and Primrose K. With special congratulations to our three winners: Mohamed K (Year 7), Michelle B (Year 8) and Austin O (Year 9).

Year 9 Entrepreneurs in Action

Forty Year 9 students recently took part in the Launch Pad Enterprise Challenge, delivered by Dorset Young Enterprise staff. Throughout the day, students worked in teams to bid for and launch a fledgling business, creating a brand identity, developing a marketing strategy and managing a budget while competing against other teams.

The fast-paced challenge encouraged students to develop essential workplace skills including teamwork, communication, problem-solving and creativity, while gaining a valuable insight into the world of business and entrepreneurship. The students were outstanding on what was a very hot day, and everyone showed such commitment and enthusiasm, demonstrating exactly what Gryphon LIFE is all about!

A huge thank you to Carly and the team of Young Enterprise volunteers for delivering such an inspiring and engaging day. It was fantastic to see our students demonstrating such enthusiasm, resilience and entrepreneurial thinking, and they should all be incredibly proud of what they achieved. We are lucky enough to be welcoming Carly and the Young Enterprise team back for further sessions in the 2026/27 academic year where more students will get to experience the Launch Pad workshops. Find out more and keep up to date with the Young Enterprise section of the school website or visit <https://www.young-enterprise.org.uk/>.

Poetry by Heart

In 2023 the English Department launched our Poetry by Heart Competition. Every year each Year 7 student at The Gryphon has a chance to explore a series of poems in class, focusing on speaking poetry aloud, forming their own interpretations and eventually, selecting a poem of their choice to learn for performance in front of the class. From there, the class winners compete in a year group assembly. Winners from this are entered into the national competition. This year, nationally, there were 3500 entries.

On Monday 6th July, a group of Year 7 and 8 students who had been finalists in the school competition were lucky enough to travel to London and watch the Poetry By Heart Grand Finale at The Globe Theatre. For some students, this was their first time inside The Globe and even their first trip to London.

Students were treated to performances from published poets Matt Goodfellow and Kate Wakeling, whose poems are part of our Poetry by Heart anthology. Throughout the day, we watched some amazing and inspirational interpretations of poems by young people from KS2 to KS5 and even some lucky teachers performed!

We enjoyed lunch with the pigeons by the Thames and took in the sights of St Pauls and The Tate from the Millennium bridge. It was truly an experience that will stay with our students for some time to come and hopefully inspire some of them to try out for next year's competition!



Student Chaplains

As part of the LIFE leadership opportunities this year at the Gryphon School, a number of Year 8 pupils took up the opportunity to be Student Chaplains. They have been involved in planning and helping run a fundraising event for this year's Lent Project, helping lead Acts of Worship and getting involved in Sherborne in Bloom a Sherborne Town Council community event. Well done to Ethan P, Laura N, Jessie M, Oscar R, Imogen G and Lacey S, and thank you for your input this year. If current Year 7 pupils are interested in being a Student Chaplain next year do sign up!

Nurture

As another successful year comes to a close, we are delighted to celebrate the achievements of our Nurture students. Their hard work, resilience and determination have led to some fantastic successes this year.

Year 9 – Ready for Key Stage 4

Our Year 9 students are ending KS3 on a high, making an average of 14 months' reading progress in just 12 months. This outstanding achievement reflects their dedication and the importance of strong literacy skills in preparing them for the increased demands of the coming years. Their spelling has also improved significantly, with greater accuracy and confidence evident in their extended writing.

Year 8 – Learning Beyond the Classroom

Year 8 students have developed their teamwork, resilience and communication skills through adventurous training activities, including Japanese botanical printing, first aid and survival skills. Alongside these experiences, they have explored dystopian fiction, strengthened their creative writing and achieved their greatest improvements yet in reading and spelling.

Year 7 – A Fantastic First Year

Our Year 7 students have embraced the challenges of their first year at The Gryphon with enthusiasm and determination. Through fortnightly reading sessions, they have developed their fluency, accuracy and inference skills while growing in confidence as readers and learners.

Across the whole Key Stage 3 Nurture cohort, students have made an average of 10 months' reading progress this year—a fantastic achievement that reflects the commitment, perseverance and hard work shown by all our students.

Gateway

Working with The Difference: Giving Students a National Voice

This year, Gateway has continued to strengthen its partnership with The Difference, a national charity dedicated to improving outcomes for vulnerable young people and promoting inclusive education. As part of this work, The Gryphon remains an active member of The Difference's Internal Alternative Provision (IAP) Network and has contributed to national conversations about effective inclusion practice. Gateway was previously one of only 18 provisions selected to take part in a national research project exploring excellence in Internal Alternative Provision, helping to showcase the innovative and relational approaches used at The Gryphon.

More recently, a small group of Gateway students have been invited to participate in "By Us, For Everyone", a national arts project linked to the IncludEd 2027 conference. The project brings together students from schools across the country to explore themes of belonging, inclusion and community, before creating original artwork that will help shape the visual identity of a major national conference attended by school leaders, teachers and policymakers.

Students from Gateway recently took part in their first project session and engaged brilliantly, sharing their experiences and perspectives while helping to influence future thinking around inclusion. Their involvement provides a genuine opportunity for young people to have their voices heard on a national stage and highlights the creativity, resilience and insight of our students. We are incredibly proud to see them representing The Gryphon in such an important and inspiring project.

Lent Appeal

This year during Lent, The Gryphon School embarked on helping build a secondary school for pupils in the town of Ezo, South Sudan. In a town with a population of 146,000 there was no secondary school, but the Diocese of Ezo set out to change that and committed to raising the funds and to building St Paul's High School. 60,000 bricks were needed each costing 10p.

At the beginning of March, we were delighted to welcome The Right Reverend Bishop Isaac and his wife Mama Nora to school who gave us more information about the project and about life in South Sudan; one of the poorest countries in the world. The Gryphon community got behind the project with a penalty shoot-out against the Senior Leadership Team, a non-school uniform day and a 'soak a sixth former' fundraiser, plus other events. In total the school managed to raise £993 – that is 9,930 bricks towards the project! Thank you to all who got involved. Building is now underway!



Act of Worship

During one of our Act of Worship reflection weeks this term students focused on gratitude, compassion and kindness. Mrs Rowe encouraged the students to think about other people or organisations in our communities that volunteer their time and skills to support others in the community. It could be support of their wellbeing, health, safety or helping to provide opportunities to socialise with other people.

As part of a project that week students were tasked with writing letters to people, charities and services they were grateful for. This included; primary schools, local emergency services, doctors' surgeries, foodbanks, mental health charities, education charities and services such as sports clubs and the Big Red Bus to name just a few. It was truly wonderful to read the gratitude and empathy in the words that students wrote and the response from all the recipients has been overwhelmingly positive. A wonderful example of Fellowship and Integrity in action from students across the school.





Adventurous Training

What a fantastic Summer Term it has been for the Adventurous Training Department at The Gryphon School. From sunshine and heatwaves to torrential rain, our students have experienced the full range of what the outdoors can throw at them, showing resilience, determination and teamwork every step of the way.

One highlight of this term was undoubtedly the Ten Tors Challenge on Dartmoor. After months of training, both our 35-mile and 45-mile teams successfully completed their routes in what was an incredible achievement. Thanks to excellent navigation, teamwork and determination, both teams made exceptional progress on the first day, allowing them to finish both their routes by 12:30 on the Sunday afternoon. Even more impressively, the two teams crossed the finish line just ten minutes apart. It was fantastic to see all of their hard work throughout the year rewarded, and they represented The Gryphon School brilliantly. More importantly, they returned with a level of confidence, resilience and self-belief that simply cannot be taught in a classroom. Ten Tors is an experience that changes young people, and I have no doubt that both teams came back stronger, more capable and with memories and friendships that will stay with them for years to come.

Our Year 9 Bronze Duke of Edinburgh's Award students have also had a memorable term. Their Practice Expedition took place in the local area during one of the hottest weekends of the year, requiring careful planning, additional water management and regular rest breaks to ensure everyone stayed safe whilst still enjoying the experience. Just a few weeks later, those same students faced completely different conditions on their Qualifying Expedition, over near Compton Abbas, battling torrential rain throughout much of the weekend. Experiencing such contrasting weather gave students a real appreciation for the importance of preparation, adaptability and teamwork, and it was fantastic to see so many groups rise to the challenge and complete their expedition successfully.

Our Year 10 Silver DofE participants have continued to make excellent progress throughout the term. Their Practice Expedition took them through forests and along the stunning Purbeck coastline, where a thick sea mist rolled in for much of the weekend. Whilst it limited the views, it also kept temperatures comfortable and provided students with an excellent opportunity to develop their navigation skills in reduced visibility. One student said this was their favourite thing about Silver; "walking along the coastal path and hearing the crashing waves below, but not being able to see them because of the thick fog. It was like walking through an eerie void!" Their Qualifying Expedition then presented another completely different challenge, taking place during yet another summer heatwave in the New Forest. Despite the demanding conditions, students showed great resilience, worked brilliantly as teams and demonstrated how much their confidence and independence had grown since the start of the programme.

Our Year 12 Gold DofE participants are now entering the final stages of their Duke of Edinburgh's Award journey. As this newsletter goes to print, we are preparing to head to the Brecon Beacons for their Practice Expedition before travelling to Eryri (Snowdonia) just three weeks later for their Qualifying Expedition. We wish all of our Gold participants the very best of luck as they take on the final and most demanding expeditions of their DofE journey. Away from DofE, our Nurture and Gateway sessions have continued to provide students with opportunities to get outdoors, learn new skills and enjoy the natural environment. Whether exploring local flora, taking part in team-building activities or learning practical outdoor skills such as axe-wielding, knife-whittling and fire-lighting, it has been wonderful to see so many young people benefiting from time outside the classroom.

As another busy year draws to a close, I would like to thank all of our staff, volunteers and parents who continue to support the Adventurous Training programme. None of these opportunities would be possible without their generosity, encouragement and enthusiasm. Most importantly, congratulations to every student who has challenged themselves this year. Whether completing Ten Tors, progressing through their Duke of Edinburgh's Award, or simply stepping outside their comfort zone for the first time, every achievement deserves to be celebrated.

We wish everyone a safe, enjoyable summer break and look forward to another exciting year of adventures in September!

-Mr Banfield, Adventurous Training Lead



Alumni

It was wonderful to welcome back former student Reuben B (2017–2023), who returned to school recently to host a bake sale in support of his fundraising efforts for an exciting charity challenge.

Reuben, who is now studying at the University of Exeter, will be travelling to Nepal this summer as part of a team trekking to Everest Base Camp for the charity Dig Deep. The expedition is self-funded, meaning that all sponsorship money raised will go directly to the charity's work. Dig Deep helps provide clean water, safe sanitation, and good hygiene to communities in Bomet County, Kenya, making a lasting difference to the lives of thousands of people.

Students and staff were delighted to support Reuben by purchasing cakes and treats from his bake sale, and we wish him every success with both his fundraising and his trek to Everest Base Camp. If you would like to sponsor Reuben, here is a link: <https://givestar.io/gs/everest-base-camp-68031>

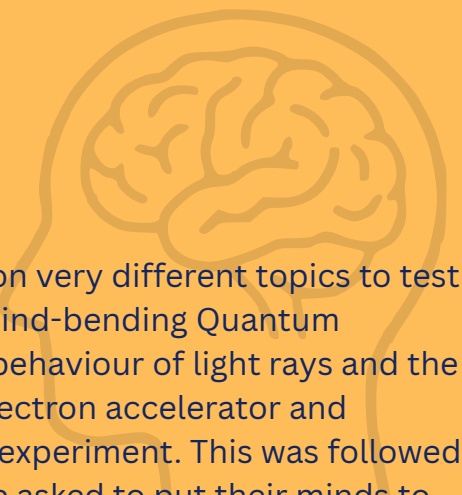


Ex-Gryphon School student Ruby White (2018–2024) will be heading to the Commonwealth Games this July to represent England in boxing! Ruby joined us in Year 7 as an already accomplished boxer, training with Sturminster Newton Amateur Boxing Club, and quickly made her mark on both the national and international stage. It wasn't long before she caught the attention of England Boxing and, more recently, GB Boxing. She now trains full-time with GB Boxing in Sheffield.

We are incredibly proud of everything Ruby has achieved and can't wait to follow her progress at this summer's Commonwealth Games. Her selection to represent England at such a prestigious event is a testament not only to her drive, determination and relentless hard work, but also to the integrity and leadership she has demonstrated throughout her journey. Ruby is an outstanding ambassador for her sport and a wonderful role model for our students, and we wish her every success on the international stage.

Challenge Plus

In the lower school, the Challenge Plus group have had sessions on very different topics to test and stretch their thinking. We started the term looking at some mind-bending Quantum mechanics in a Physics based session looking at evidence of the behaviour of light rays and the very structure of matter itself. Students were introduced to an electron accelerator and investigated wave particle duality with the infamous 'double slit' experiment. This was followed by some challenging work on river dynamics where students were asked to put their minds to some complex ideas in Geography in a session kindly delivered to them by Mr O'Donnell.



Art 3D



Despite the rainy weather, 50 Creative Design students enjoyed an inspiring visit to Roche Court Sculpture Park, home to the New Art Centre. Guided tours encouraged students to look beyond first impressions, developing their understanding of contemporary sculpture through discussion and observation.

The visit was designed to support students' upcoming GCSE projects, providing fresh ideas and valuable insight into contemporary artistic practice. Students explored both the outdoor sculpture park and the indoor galleries, with the inspiring Orangery proving to be a particular highlight. The experience challenged students to think creatively and engage with unfamiliar artworks, leaving them with plenty of inspiration for their own research and project development. A huge thank you goes to Mrs Lane for organising such a successful trip. Her dedication and hard work ensured an enjoyable and enriching experience for all involved.

Photography Competition

The RE Department is delighted to launch this year's Capture the Sacred summer photography competition!

Over the summer holidays, we invite all students to explore the places that inspire awe, peace, reflection, or spiritual significance and capture them through photography. Whether you're travelling abroad, exploring the local area, or visiting somewhere special with family, this is a fantastic opportunity to share your perspective.

What could you photograph?

- A place of worship from any faith or tradition
- A memorial or place of reflection
- A beautiful natural landscape that feels peaceful or spiritually significant
- Any place that you consider to be sacred, whether religious or non-religious

All photographs must be your own original work, and you must have visited the location yourself. We also encourage you to include a short caption (1–3 sentences) explaining why you chose the space and telling us where it is.

Competition Deadline: 1st September



Year 8 Interfaith Trip

Before Easter, 40 Year 8 students took part in a memorable and enriching interfaith trip, visiting an Orthodox synagogue, a mosque, and a gurdwara. The visit provided a valuable opportunity for students to deepen their understanding of different faiths, cultures, and traditions through first-hand experience.

At the synagogue, students learned about Jewish beliefs and practices and had the unique opportunity to see and take part in reading from the Torah. This was a particularly special moment, allowing them to engage directly with an important aspect of Jewish worship.

The visit to the mosque gave students insight into Islamic practices, including the chance to observe and try wudu, the ritual washing performed before prayer. Students also enjoyed a warm and welcoming meal, which was generously provided and greatly appreciated by all.

At the gurdwara, students explored Sikh beliefs and values, including the importance of equality, service, and community. They were especially interested in learning about the langar, the communal kitchen where free meals are prepared and shared with everyone, regardless of background.

Throughout the day, students showed great respect, curiosity, and enthusiasm, asking thoughtful questions and engaging positively at each place of worship. The trip was a fantastic opportunity to promote understanding, tolerance, and appreciation of diversity.



Year 10 Visit Sherborne Abbey

Recently, our Year 10 GCSE Religious Studies students enjoyed a valuable visit to Sherborne Abbey as part of their study of Christian Practices.

During the visit, students were welcomed by Rev. Jim Edie, who spoke about the importance of the sacraments within the Christian faith. His insights helped bring classroom learning to life, giving students a deeper understanding of how sacraments are celebrated and why they are central to Christian worship and belief. This will provide excellent preparation for the Christian Practices section of their GCSE course.

Students also enjoyed a guided tour of the Abbey, discovering its rich history and learning about its remarkable architecture, heritage, and role within the local community over many centuries. Seeing a place of worship first-hand allowed students to appreciate many of the features and traditions they have been studying in lessons.

The RE Department would like to thank Rev. Jim Edie and everyone at Sherborne Abbey for their warm welcome and for providing such an informative and engaging experience. Visits like these offer students the opportunity to connect their classroom studies with the lived reality of faith and worship, making Religious Studies both meaningful and memorable.



Geography

Year 7 Geographers Take Learning Beyond the Classroom

This term, our Year 7 geographers completed their first geographical fieldwork visit, travelling to The Meadows in Sherborne to put their classroom learning into practice.

Working in small groups, students used specialist equipment to carry out infiltration tests and measure hillside slopes with clinometers, investigating how factors such as vegetation and gradient affect how water enters the soil. The visit introduced key fieldwork techniques that will support their future geography studies.

The trip also provided an excellent opportunity for students to develop their teamwork, communication and problem-solving skills. Their enthusiasm, maturity and positive attitude throughout the day were a credit to both themselves and the school.

After a successful morning of data collection, students enjoyed lunch in the beautiful surroundings of Pageant Gardens before returning to school. Fieldwork is a vital part of geography, bringing classroom learning to life through real-world investigation. This was a fantastic start to our Year 7 students' geographical journey, and we look forward to many more fieldwork opportunities in the future.



Year 8 Trip to Durdle Door and Lulworth

Our Year 8 geographers enjoyed a fantastic fieldwork trip to Durdle Door and Lulworth Cove, where they brought their classroom learning to life while exploring some of the UK's most famous coastal landforms. Students carried out a range of geographical investigations, including beach profiling, environmental quality surveys and field sketches, developing their fieldwork skills while examining the physical and human processes shaping the Jurassic Coast. They also explored the geology of Lulworth Cove, investigating rock formations, coastal erosion and the processes responsible for creating this unique landscape.



Alongside the educational activities, students enjoyed lunch overlooking the coast, walked between the two sites, took part in the traditional roll down the grassy hillside, and rounded off the day with a well-earned ice cream.

Throughout the trip, students demonstrated excellent enthusiasm, curiosity and maturity, building on the fieldwork skills introduced in Year 7. It was a memorable day of learning in one of Britain's most spectacular outdoor classrooms, and we look forward to providing many more fieldwork opportunities as they continue their geographical journey.

Year 9 Geographers Investigate Wildlife Conservation at Longleat

Our Year 9 geographers enjoyed an exciting field trip to Longleat Safari Park as part of their study of the question, 'Are zoos ethical?'. The visit gave students valuable first-hand evidence to support their assessed essays, exploring themes such as conservation, animal welfare, education and tourism.

Students encountered a wide range of animals throughout the day, including giraffes, zebras, lions, tigers, rhinos and hippos during the famous safari drive. They also enjoyed the Jungle Cruise, watched the sea lions being fed, and explored other areas of the park, with the meerkats, koalas and bird feeding proving especially popular. Beyond the memorable wildlife encounters, the trip encouraged students to consider the role of modern zoos in protecting endangered species and promoting conservation. The experiences gained will help them develop balanced, evidence-based arguments in the classroom.

Throughout the visit, our Year 9 students represented the school brilliantly, demonstrating curiosity, enthusiasm and excellent behaviour. It was a fantastic opportunity to bring geography to life and inspire those continuing their studies into GCSE Geography.

Year 10 Geographers Complete Coastal Fieldwork at Chesil Beach

Our Year 10 geographers enjoyed a successful fieldwork visit to Chesil Beach as part of their GCSE Geography studies, investigating one of the UK's most distinctive coastal landscapes. Working in teams, students used a range of fieldwork equipment to produce beach profiles, measure the beach gradient, and collect pebble samples to investigate changes in size, shape and roundness. They also examined evidence of coastal erosion and deposition, applying the knowledge and skills developed in the classroom to a real-world environment.

After collecting data at several sites, students enjoyed a well-earned lunch at the Visitor Centre before completing their final investigations. The fieldwork will provide valuable data for analysis back in school and support preparation for the GCSE Geography Paper 3 fieldwork examination.

Having already completed urban fieldwork in Bristol earlier this year, this visit further developed students' geographical enquiry skills and understanding of coastal processes. Throughout the day, they represented the school superbly, demonstrating enthusiasm, resilience and excellent teamwork. It was another fantastic example of geography brought to life beyond the classroom.



Year 12 Geographers Bring Coastal Landscapes to Life

Our Year 12 geographers enjoyed a successful fieldwork visit to Studland and Swanage, using the Dorset coastline to deepen their understanding of coastal processes and explore ideas for their A Level Non-Examined Assessment (NEA).

At Studland, students investigated the impacts of tourism and evaluated hard and soft coastal management strategies before carrying out fieldwork in the sand dunes. Using specialist equipment, they collected data on dune morphology and examined the effects of visitor pressure on this fragile environment.



The afternoon in Swanage focused on coastal management and tourism, with students studying engineering schemes, exploring the seafront and considering how geographical data can be collected and analysed to support future investigations.

The visit provided valuable preparation for both the A Level examinations and the independent investigation, while giving students the opportunity to experience the landscapes they study in the classroom. Throughout the day, they demonstrated excellent teamwork, enthusiasm and curiosity, representing the school superbly and continuing the department's proud tradition of learning beyond the classroom.

Psychology



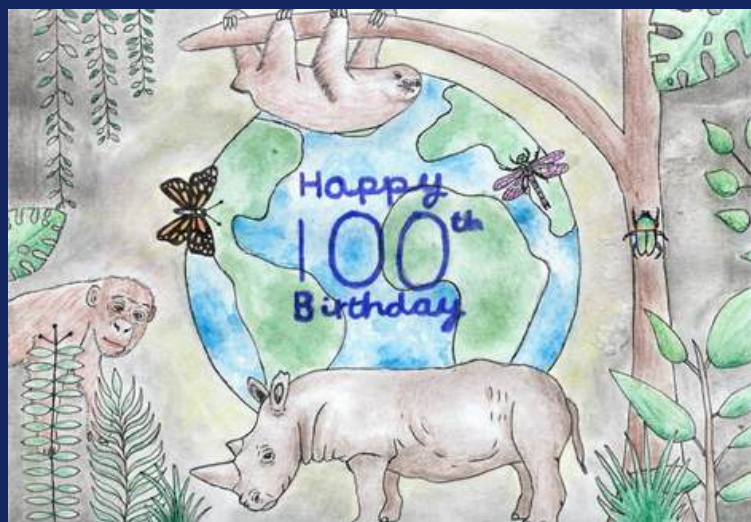
We bid farewell to our wonderful Year 13 cohort in Psychology. They have worked exceptionally hard to develop a comprehensive understanding of psychological research and theory over the last two years. We have been very fortunate to recruit such a large number of students and are confident we are on track to see a continuation of the very positive results we have achieved with our last two Psychology cohorts. Wishing all our students the very best for whatever the future holds!

Mr. Thomas, Head of Psychology

Science

Cambridge Chemistry Challenge

This term a group of our year 12 chemists stretched their Chemistry muscles to the limit by entering the Cambridge Chemistry Challenge. This is a competition from Cambridge University aimed at the top year 12 chemists in the country, which takes ideas from the specification and then applies them to situations that students will never have come across before, teaching them something new along the way. I was so impressed with the enthusiasm our students showed to try something different, and they did amazingly well! Well done to Lily C, Maxi H, Hinson K, Faseela N and Amy S who all gained silver awards, putting them in the top 30% of students that entered, and to Ryan JY was given a gold award, putting him in the top 10% of entrants - an absolutely amazing achievement!



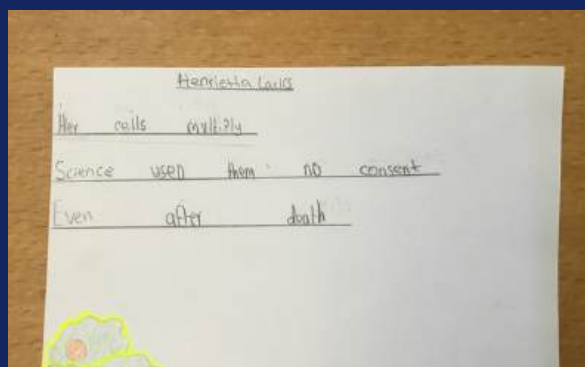
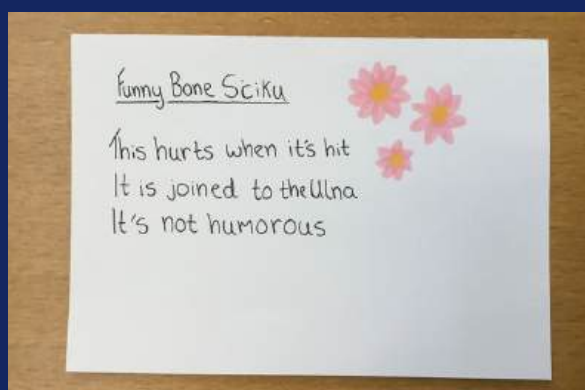
David Attenborough turns 100!

To celebrate David Attenborough's incredible milestone birthday, the science department ran an art competition to design him a birthday card from the whole school community. As well as celebrating his enormous contribution to science education, we wanted to thank him for inspiring so many of us, over so many generations, to take action to protect nature. We received some beautiful entries, and it was really hard to choose a winner, but Frankie S in Year 9's card was the design we chose to send to Sir David - we hope he liked it as much as we do!

Key Stage 3 "Sciku" competition

Sciku (noun) - a haiku poem about Science!

This term saw the return of the Key Stage 3 sciku competition for years 7 and 8. Students looked back at their year in Science and all of the key vocabulary that they have learnt and turned it into a haiku poem! Judged by Miss Upton and our wonderful guest judges from the English department Miss Barnes and Mr Glossop, who whittled it down to a shortlist before final voting in the Science department. As always it was incredibly hard to pick a winner thanks to the phenomenal standard of entries. A big well done to Orla-Lilly J-W who won the Year 7 prize with her "humerus" entry "Funny Bone Sciku" and to Felix B who won the Year 8 prize for his thought provoking entry "Henrietta Lacks".



History

Year 10 Berlin Trip

During the Easter holidays we took forty-four year 10 students on a trip to Berlin. Despite a 22 hour coach journey, spirits were never dampened and the whole group embraced the trip with great enthusiasm and a willingness to learn.

The time table was extremely full and included a range of visits to sites associated with the war and post-war period. Visiting Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp is always a sobering experience and one which leaves a long-lasting impression. We also explored a number of venues linked to the Cold War and especially what life was like living under the authoritarian Communist regime in East Berlin, hopefully giving the students a glimpse of how different life can be, depending on where and when you live.

Despite the serious nature of many of our activities, the group also made the most of Berlin and hopefully had a very enjoyable time exploring one of the great European capitals, including going up the Berlin TV Tower for a fantastic panoramic view of the city at night. They were all very well behaved and hopefully it will be an experience that they will remember for many years to come.



Year 9 Students Visit the Normandy Battlefields

In April, 44 Year 9 students took part in an unforgettable four-day educational visit to Normandy, exploring the sites of the D-Day landings and the Battle of Normandy. The packed itinerary provided an invaluable opportunity to bring history to life beyond the classroom.

Throughout the trip, students visited many significant historical locations, including the Airborne Troops Museum at Sainte-Mère-Église, Pegasus Bridge, Merville Battery, the British Normandy Memorial at Ver-sur-Mer, Omaha Beach, Pointe du Hoc, and both the American and German military cemeteries. They also explored the remains of the Mulberry Harbour at Arromanches and enjoyed some free time in the beautiful town of Bayeux. Standing on the beaches where thousands of Allied troops landed in June 1944 was a powerful and moving experience. Visiting the museums, memorials and cemeteries gave students a much deeper understanding of the events of World War II and the sacrifices made by so many. The trip prompted thoughtful discussions and helped students appreciate the importance of remembrance, resilience and peace.

The staff are incredibly proud of every student on the trip. Their excellent behaviour, enthusiasm and respect at each site made them wonderful ambassadors for The Gryphon School, and they should all be congratulated on making the visit such a memorable and rewarding experience.



Year 7 Sherborne Old Castle

This June, we took our Year 7 cohort to explore Sherborne Old Castle. It was a unique opportunity to take history out of the classroom and bring our local heritage to life.

Through field sketches and observations, students discovered the history of the site and identified visible changes to the building over time, becoming like Sherlock Holmes as they pieced together clues from the past. Measuring the moat and investigating the castle's defences were particular favourites, alongside learning about the site's 900-year history, from its origins as a Norman motte-and-bailey castle to its transformation into an idyllic garden feature. One student exclaimed that it was "fun exploring the ruins", and another added, "I have been to the castle before but did not know that much about it'.

Year 8 Big Pit

It was a real pleasure to take the Year 8 students to visit Big Pit Coal Mine in South Wales. Despite the long coach trip, it was a rare opportunity to actually go underground and discover the working conditions in an industry now largely lost.

The students were there to experience, or empathise, with the daily routine of a Victorian child miner, but there was also the opportunity to look how mining developed in the 20th century. Princel commented that, "how interesting it was to discover the history behind the coal mines I enjoyed the part where we went in the lift and how it turned dark." While Esme agreed saying, "Overall, it was an amazing day out. Not only did I learn fascinating new facts about coal mines and the miners, it was an epic trip down. Spending the day there and visiting how life used to be for kids our age I realised how easy we actually get it nowadays!"

While the students were fantastic as always, the Department would particularly like to thank all the many non-history staff who gave up their time accompanying us on the trip to help supervise. We would also particularly like to thank all the Admin Staff for valuable help in the logistics. That is the only way these trips can happen.

Year 7 and 8 Models

Every year the Year 7 and 8s get set the challenge of making a model to demonstrate both their research and creative abilities. The history department is constantly surprised by the huge variety of ideas as well as the incredible skills that the Students display. This year we have a pleasing number of models from the 19th century including factories, steam engines and even a coal mine. Models were constructed from crafted wood, 3-D prints, ceramic sculptures and the odd bit of lego! Please look at the photo to give a flavour of their talent.



Year 11 Prom

On Thursday 9th July, our Year 11 students gathered at Haselbury Mill to celebrate the end of their GCSE journey at this year's Prom. It was a wonderful evening, full of laughter, celebration and memorable moments, as students marked this important milestone alongside their friends and teachers.

As always, our students arrived in style, with an impressive abundance of tractors making a memorable entrance and adding to the excitement of the evening! The atmosphere throughout the evening was fantastic. Students conducted themselves with maturity, respect and enthusiasm, making the event a credit to both themselves and The Gryphon School community. It was wonderful to see everyone enjoying the occasion and celebrating the friendships and achievements that have defined their time with us. A particular highlight of the evening was the performance from our talented Year 11 band, 8-Ball, whose live music created an incredible atmosphere and ensured the dance floor remained full throughout the night. Their performance provided the perfect soundtrack to an unforgettable celebration and was a fitting showcase of the talent within this exceptional year group.

As our Year 11 students now look ahead to receiving their examination results and embarking on the next stage of their education and future careers, we would like to wish every one of them the very best of luck. We hope they enjoyed a memorable evening celebrating their time at The Gryphon School, and that the friendships and memories made at Prom will stay with them for many years to come.



Sixth Form

OC&C Consultation Workshop

When we were approached by one of our sixth form alumni students to run an employment-based workshop for our current Year 12s it was an opportunity we couldn't let slide. Students were offered the chance to work with OC&C, a global strategy consulting firm, on a project to support and inspire their entrepreneurial flair, and gain skills vital for the workplace.



The four-week course supported students to develop workplace skills that are not covered within the standard curriculum, building the experience and understanding required to help get their foot on to the employment ladder. Across four workshops students collaborated and developed a presentation for their chosen product that solved an issue prevalent in the world today. From sleep masks to hydration tracking bottles the students really flourish in their creativity and benchmarking industry gaps and opportunities. The highlight was the opportunity for students to experience and develop further professional behaviours and approaches in industry through the expert guidance of top industry professionals at OC&C.

HE Plus Y12 trip to Trinity Hall, Cambridge



Gryphon students from the Year 12 Early Entry Program had the opportunity to visit Trinity Hall College as part of a wider Cambridge University residential stay. They experienced life as an undergraduate at Trinity Hall, staying in student accommodation, eating in the dining hall and visiting various university department buildings including Law, Physics and Earth Sciences. They attended academic lectures from Cambridge professors on Membrane Biochemistry, 17th century economics, Behavioural Psychology and Law. They toured the College and took part in interactive interview workshops and had individual subject experiences which included practical sessions on optics and a talk on evolution through palaeontology. The students as ever were exceptionally well engaged throughout and they all took away valuable skills and insight to put forward in their future applications.



Model United Nations

Nine Year 12 students travelled to Marlborough College's to take part in the annual Model UN. The day started with a presentation from Lord Evans (former Director General of MI5) and Davina McCall, who both spoke about the charities being supported by the event. Students then spent the day working in committees with students from 34 other schools to develop resolutions and discuss and debate key issues set out by the UN organisers.

It was a fantastic opportunity for student to network and develop their wider communication, debating and analytical skills. A thank you must go to Sherborne School as they provided transport for our students to attend this fantastic event. A particular well done must go to Noah in Year 12 who organised all of the Gryphon Model UN team enabling the team to take part.

Algoryphons Fundraiser

Some of our Sixth Form students from the Robotics Team, 'The Algoryphons', organised a brilliant 'Soak a Sixth Former' fundraising event! Students and staff paid for the chance to drench willing volunteers with buckets of water – all in the name of two fantastic causes. The event raised money to support the Robotics Team's ongoing work and competitions, as well as contributing towards building a school in Ezo, South Sudan. A fantastic example of student leadership and our student community making a difference to others.

A huge thank you to everyone who took part, donated, and (of course!) got soaked.





Year 13 Ball

Our Year 13 Leavers' Ball was a wonderful celebration of the end of an important chapter for our Sixth Form students. Held at Holbrook Manor, the evening brought together 150 students and 20 members of staff for a memorable occasion filled with laughter, music and celebration. It was a fitting opportunity to recognise the hard work, resilience and achievements of our Year 13 cohort as they prepare to take their next steps beyond their sixth form journey. A huge thank you Mrs Oxford and Mrs Spencer-Smith for all their work to bring the evening and wish all of our leavers every happiness and success in the future.



Sport

Clubs

This year has been another fantastic one for extracurricular sport at The Gryphon, with students showing outstanding commitment, enthusiasm and teamwork across a wide range of activities. Our extracurricular programme has offered something for everyone, with clubs including dodgeball, basketball, football, rugby, badminton, cricket, rounders, hockey, athletics, volleyball and CrossFit. Whether students were trying a new sport for the first time or developing their skills in a familiar one, it has been fantastic to see such high levels of participation throughout the year.

A particular highlight has been the new development of our hockey provision through specialist coaching delivered by external coaches, who we are delighted to have worked with from the local hockey community. Their expertise has helped students develop their technical skills, tactical understanding and confidence, while providing an excellent pathway into the sport beyond school. These clubs have given students the opportunity to improve their fitness, build confidence, make new friendships and represent the school in fixtures and competitions. The dedication shown by those attending before school, at lunchtime and after school has been exceptional, and we are incredibly proud of their effort, commitment and sportsmanship throughout the year.

A huge thank you goes to all the staff, external coaches and volunteers who have given up their time to run clubs and fixtures, as well as to all the students who have taken part. We look forward to building on this success and welcoming even more students to our extracurricular programme next year.



School Sports Mark Award

The Gryphon School is delighted to announce that it has been awarded the School Games Silver Mark Award, recognising the school's outstanding commitment to providing high-quality physical education, competitive sport and inclusive opportunities for every student.

The School Games Mark is a nationally recognised award, delivered through the Youth Sport Trust, which celebrates schools that place physical activity, sport and student development at the heart of school life. Achieving the Silver Award demonstrates The Gryphon School's continued dedication to creating an environment where all students can enjoy the benefits of being active, whether as performers, leaders, officials or volunteers.

Throughout the academic year, students at The Gryphon School have embraced an extensive programme of sporting opportunities. From inter-house competitions and recreational clubs to district, county and national competitions, students have represented the school with pride, determination and respect. The award reflects not only sporting success, but also the school's commitment to ensuring that opportunities are accessible to students of all abilities and backgrounds.



Ski Trip

Our annual ski trip returned this year with a brilliantly successful visit to Radstadt, Austria. 84 students and 12 staff enjoyed an unforgettable week in the mountains during the Easter holidays. Students were grouped according to their ability, from complete beginners to advanced skiers, and every participant made impressive progress over the course of the trip.

It was particularly inspiring to see beginners develop their confidence so quickly, with some students who had never skied before successfully completing a black run by the end of the week. Alongside developing their skiing skills, students demonstrated resilience, teamwork and determination, supporting one another both on and off the slopes.

The trip was a wonderful opportunity for students to challenge themselves, build new friendships and create lasting memories. A huge thank you goes to all the staff who gave their time to make the trip possible and to the students for representing the school so positively throughout the week.

Basketball

The U15 Gryphon Basketball team produced two outstanding performances this term, demonstrating resilience, teamwork and determination despite facing two highly experienced opponents in Preston and KA. The opening game against Preston saw the boys compete fearlessly from the opening tip. Playing against a well-drilled side with greater experience, the team refused to be intimidated, matching their opponents with relentless effort on defence and some excellent passages of attacking basketball.

Every player contributed, with strong rebounding, quick ball movement and a willingness to fight for every possession keeping the contest competitive throughout. The second game against KA proved equally challenging, but once again the Gryphon lads showed just how far they have progressed this season. They displayed impressive composure under pressure, moved the ball confidently and worked tirelessly as a team. Perhaps the biggest success of the day was not measured on the scoreboard but in the attitude and character shown by the entire squad. The players embraced every challenge, learned from every possession and continued to improve against some of the strongest opposition they have faced this season. We look forward to more games next year!



Sports Awards

The Gryphon School Sports Awards Evening provided a fitting celebration of another exceptional year of sporting success, bringing together students, families, staff and distinguished guests to recognise the outstanding achievements of our young athletes.

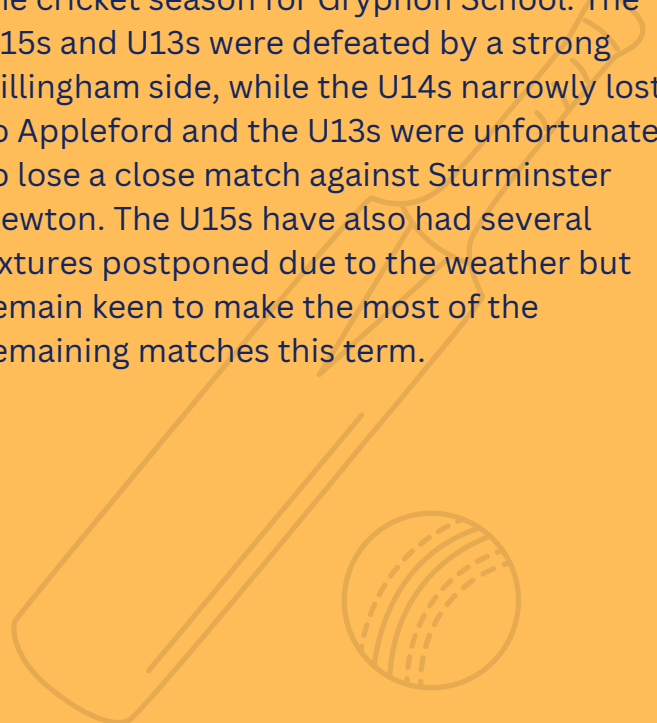
Held in front of a packed audience, the evening celebrated not only sporting excellence but also the dedication, resilience and teamwork demonstrated by students throughout the academic year. Awards were presented across a wide range of categories, recognising performances, commitment to school sport, leadership and the positive contribution students have made to our thriving sporting community.

The evening reflected the strength and breadth of sport at The Gryphon School. From county and regional representation to national success, alongside impressive achievements in inter-school competitions and fixtures, students have continued to demonstrate the values that define Gryphon sport. Equally important was the recognition of those students whose enthusiasm, perseverance and willingness to support others have helped create an inclusive and successful sporting environment.

A highlight of the evening was welcoming former professional goalkeeper Christopher Weale as our guest speaker. Christopher shared his inspiring journey through professional football, offering students an honest insight into the dedication, resilience and mindset required to succeed at the highest level. His message encouraged students to embrace challenges, learn from setbacks and always strive to be the very best version of themselves.

Cricket

It has been a challenging but positive start to the cricket season for Gryphon School. The U15s and U13s were defeated by a strong Gillingham side, while the U14s narrowly lost to Appleford and the U13s were unfortunate to lose a close match against Sturminster Newton. The U15s have also had several fixtures postponed due to the weather but remain keen to make the most of the remaining matches this term.



Rounders

Years 7 and 8

The Year 7 and 8 rounders team had an excellent season, showcasing great teamwork, determination, and enthusiasm throughout. They played two particularly strong games, demonstrating impressive skill and confidence against their opponents. Their batting was outstanding, with several powerful hits helping to score valuable rounders, while some brilliant catches in the field prevented the opposition from building momentum. The team's positive attitude and commitment made them a pleasure to watch, and they should be proud of their performances.

Year 9

The Year 9 team had a slow start to their season against Wadham, but they showed great determination to turn things around. After finding their rhythm in the second innings, they produced an impressive comeback and came agonisingly close to securing the win. Although the result didn't go their way, the performance demonstrated their potential and positive attitude.

Year 10

The Year 10 team welcomed several new faces this season, all of whom proved to be dedicated and valuable additions to the squad. They began the campaign on a high with a well-earned victory over Sexey's before suffering a narrow defeat to Huish. In that match, the team took time to settle with the bat but produced a much stronger second innings. Unfortunately, their late resurgence came just too late to overturn the result. The team were also awarded a win against King's Academy after the opposition were unable to field a team. A convincing victory over Buckler's Mead then secured their place in the area finals.

In the finals, the girls got off to a flying start, defeating Wadham 12–8.5 in an excellent performance. They knew their final match against Huish would be a tough challenge, having previously lost to them in the league. After a closely contested first innings, Huish found another level in the second half and ultimately claimed the title. Nevertheless, the Year 10 team can be incredibly proud of their achievements this season. Their outstanding fielding, determination and positive energy made them a pleasure to coach throughout the year.



Thomas Hardy Tournament

Both the Year 9 and Year 10 teams also competed in the Thomas Hardy Tournament, where we were the defending champions after lifting the trophy last year.

Unfortunately, a trip to Yeovil College meant many of our regular players were unavailable, leaving both teams with groups of talented individuals who hadn't had much opportunity to play together. Despite this, the Year 9s finished a respectable 5th, while the Year 10s narrowly missed out on the medals, finishing 4th.

Year 11

Before exam season began, our Year 11 team played one final fixture against Westfield. Although Westfield's strong batting proved difficult to contain and the result didn't go our way, it was a fitting way to round off the girls' time representing The Gryphon. To celebrate the end of their rounders journey, the team enjoyed a well-deserved ice lolly at Westfield, followed by a cheeky trip to McDonald's on the journey home.

A huge congratulations to all of our rounders players this season. Their enthusiasm, resilience and sportsmanship have been fantastic to see, and they have represented The Gryphon with pride throughout the year.

Kit Sponsors

We would like to extend a huge thank you to Battens Solicitors, Oliver's Coffee House, WH & J Henshaw, Sherborne Turf and Complete Carpentry and Building Contractors for their incredibly generous support in sponsoring our brand-new sports kits.

Thanks to their kind donations, our students will proudly represent the school in new netball dresses, rugby kits and multi-use sports tops. We are absolutely delighted with how the kits have turned out, and they look fantastic.

The continued support of our local community makes a real difference to the opportunities we can provide for our students. We can't wait to see our teams wearing the new kits throughout the coming seasons and representing the school with pride.

Thank you once again for your generosity and support.



The Gryphon School