

WINTER 2024

# @gryphon



**The Addams Family Musical**

**Adventurous Training**

**New Innovation Hub**

**SAST**  
SCHOOLS ACHIEVING SUCCESS TOGETHER

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# WELCOME

As we reach the end of the autumn term, I am filled with pride as I reflect on the many accomplishments of our students, who have exemplified our school’s vision of “living life in all its fullness.” The achievements of our students this term have been extraordinary, not only in the academic sphere but also in their leadership, integrity, fellowship, and exploration: our four Gryphon LIFE Christian values.

The term began with a significant event: the Year 11 and Year 13 Prizegiving Ceremony held in the majestic Sherborne Abbey. The evening was an opportunity to celebrate the hard work and dedication of our senior students, whose leadership has been an inspiration to our younger years. Their achievements are a testament to the integrity and perseverance we encourage in all our learners.

Our Year 6 and Sixth Form Open Evenings showcased our community spirit, with many students taking on the role of tour guides or student helpers in Departments or on reception. Their enthusiasm and ability to connect with prospective students and parents truly embodied the value of fellowship. It was wonderful to see our students step up to share their experiences and love for the school, ensuring that new families felt warmly welcomed.

We also celebrated our diverse and inclusive school community with Year 7’s Diversity Day and the many events held during Black History Month. These moments of exploration provided students with opportunities to reflect on the richness of different cultures and histories, helping to foster understanding and respect for all. In addition, Hello

Yellow Day saw our community come together to raise money for the Young Minds charity, demonstrating our collective commitment to mental health and well-being, and embodying the value of integrity by caring for others in need.

Our Remembrance Day Service was a poignant occasion, with our school community coming together to honour those who have served. The Adventurous Training Awards Ceremony further highlighted our students’ bravery and determination, recognising those who have pushed themselves beyond their comfort zones.

Academically, we were thrilled to learn that our 2024 A Level exam results placed The Gryphon School in the top 25% of schools and colleges in the UK for value-added progress. This is an outstanding accomplishment, and a reflection of the exceptional dedication and hard work of our students and staff. Our current Year 11 and Year 13 students have shown resilience and focus in preparing for their Mock Exams. We are confident that their hard work now will set a strong foundation for future success.

As I write, I am looking forward to ending the term in true festive spirit. The School Carol Service will be a beautiful celebration of the Christmas season, whilst we are eagerly anticipating the upcoming performance of The Addams Family Musical.

At The Gryphon School, we believe in living life in all its fullness, and Christmas offers a special opportunity to

do just that. By embracing our Gryphon LIFE values of Leadership, Integrity, Fellowship, and Exploration, we can make a difference in the lives of others. Leadership reminds us to take initiative in helping those less fortunate, integrity guides us to act with honesty and kindness, fellowship encourages us to come together as a community, and exploration invites us to discover new ways to support those around us. As we enjoy the festive celebrations, let us also take time to reach out to those in need, whether through a kind word, a thoughtful gesture, or active involvement in our local community. In doing so, we bring the spirit of Christmas alive and embody the values we hold dear at The Gryphon School.

As we close this term, I want to express my gratitude to all our students, staff, and families for their continued support and commitment. Together, we are creating a community where students can truly live life in all its fullness: growing as leaders, acting with integrity, fostering fellowship, and exploring the world with curiosity and wonder.

May you all have a wonderful Christmas, and may the New Year bring you joy, growth, and fulfilment.

Jim Gower  
Headteacher



# THE ADDAMS FAMILY MUSICAL

The Gryphon School’s production of The Addams Family has been a resounding success, with every show selling out! The high-energy musical has not only captivated the community but also marked a significant milestone in the school’s productions.

For many, this production has been the most ambitious and challenging show that The Gryphon has ever taken on. The intricacies of the show’s quirky characters, dark humor, challenging musical score and elaborate set design required months of hard work, determination, and collaboration between students and staff. The result was a theatrical experience that exceeded expectations on every front. The Drama and Music Teams have been outstanding in leading a show of this gravity.

From the very beginning, we knew this would be a challenge, we knew it would test our students and staff in every way. But the results speak for themselves — this production has been an extraordinary success. In addition to the complex musical numbers played by our outstanding orchestra, the students had to embody an array of distinct, larger-than-life characters. From the charismatic Gomez played by Bernard O and Morticia Addams played by Maddie R, to the stoic but lovable Uncle Fester played by Tom H and the darkly comic Wednesday played by Isabella M. The cast had to master both comedy and pathos in their performances. Coupled with them was our terrific ensemble who were integral in making this show so fantastic.

Behind the scenes, our elaborate set, designed to transport the audience to the Addams’ spooky mansion, required months of planning and precision from Mr Fenton-Wilkinson. His ability to create our vision but exceed our expectations has been our reminder of how fortunate we are to have such a supportive Gryphon community. Alongside him Mr Lynch was integral in making some of the key set pieces and props. We are also thankful to GSL events who provided the staging and technical elements, this elevated our show and gave it a professional feel.

As the final performance took place, the cast and crew were met with a standing ovation from the sell-out crowd, a fitting tribute to the hard work, passion, and perseverance that made this production possible.

A special mention to Tom H, who decided to shave his head for his role as Uncle Fester, and raised nearly £500 for Macmillan Cancer Support.

A big thank you also must go to our backstage team helping with our production, we had some amazing students who were in our hair and make-up team and stage crew. The show wouldn’t have been possible without them.

Lastly our show would not have been possible without the support of our fantastic sponsors. Their contributions have helped towards the staging, lighting and sound. We are immensely grateful. Thank you to The Gryphon Foundation, Sherborne Abbey Festival, The Grange, Kaleidoscope Nursery, Oliver’s Coffee House, Hunters & Timber Millers.



## EXAM CERTIFICATES

GCSE and A level Exam certificates from this summer are ready to collect from school.

If a student cannot collect them themselves, they can send someone else to collect for them - they just need to provide an email, text, note saying that they give that person permission to collect for them.

# FUNDRAISING THIS TERM

## MacMillan Coffee Morning

Staff at The Gryphon brought in cakes and other treats to raise money for the Macmillan Coffee Morning. The generous donations by staff raised a grand total of £150.70. A big thank you to all those involved with the organising of this event.

## Gryphon Table Sale

This took place on Saturday 16 November, and we were delighted to have so many people book a table to support our school fundraiser. Despite a low turn-out we did manage to raise over £400.00 for the school. A big thank you to those who supported the event and hopefully future events will draw more people to take part.



## Hello Yellow for Young Minds

The school collected 20p coins as part of our fundraiser to support the work of Young Minds who do so much for young people and parents who are dealing with mental health issues. Students and staff collected as many coins as they could, and the overall winning tutor group was 7KDI who raised over £37.00. Students were asked to wear something yellow, and many chose to do this on the day.



LEADERS CHALLENGE 2024 - NATIONAL 3-PEAKS CHALLENGE



Going to climb the three highest peaks in Scotland, England & Wales was always going to be a challenge. I don't think anyone realised how hard it would be. The plan was to do it in the summer months so to avoid the worst of the weather. The reality was we were hit by some unseasonable wet and windy weather, which makes the fact that a team of ex-students and volunteers completed the challenge even more impressive.

The Gryphon School has a large pool of qualified & trainee volunteer expedition leaders. The aim of the Leaders' Challenge 2024 was to help gain Quality Mountain Days for our trainee Mountain Leaders and raise funds for the school's AT Programme.

Over 3 days a team of 15 walkers and 3 support crew scaled the highest peaks of Scotland England and Wales these being: Ben Nevis (1344m), Scafell Pyke (977m) and Yr Wydffa (Snowdon, 1085m). To achieve this, we travelled a total of 1230 miles spending 26 hours on the minibus, consumed 60 Breakfasts (cooked in the field at 4am), 60 packed lunches and stopped at 5 motorway services along the way.

The younger group led by Will, an ex-student who is now a qualified & experienced Mountain Leader, aimed to summit Ben Nevis via the CMD Arete (Ridge line) included Mr Fielding, Elise, our AT apprentice and 6 ex-students.

The more mature group, led by Mr Cooke, set off on the standard 3-peaks route up the main track to the summit. This group include trainee Mountain Leaders & volunteers. Both teams summited Ben Nevis within 30 minutes of each other. We then came down together collecting rubbish (2 black sacks worth) on the way down to the minibus, kindly driven by Trevor, and set off on a 5-hour drive to the Lake District.

In the planning stage it become obvious we could not get to the Scafell Pike campsite by its curfew time. To solve this problem Helen & Julia stepped up, collapsing the base camp with Trevor and setting off to establish the new base camp ready for the walkers, who arrived just before 2200hrs.

They did a brilliant job in the rain to ensure the walkers could sleep and then climb.

The weather for Scafell Pike was a 'yellow warning' from the Met Office and we woke to a grey overcast day and decided to set off along the main trail, dropping the harder, more exposed route, and see how far up we could get. The summit was looking doubtful. Will's group took the lead with Mr Cooke's group yomping on behind. The first group made the top just as the rain hit, followed 10 - 15 minutes later by the others. Both groups only paused briefly for a picture before dropping off the top quickly. The rain continued relentlessly and both groups had to use their river crossing drills to cross a stream which had risen considerably since crossing on the way up when it was ankle deep.

We then set off on another 5-hour journey to Snowdonia. After 2 nights camping in tents, a bunkhouse was dawning. Tim, another ML arrived and led Mr Cooke and his group up the Rhydd Du paths. Will set off to access the Crib Goch route. Having tested his group over the last 2 days, he knew their abilities and it is a credit to them that they completed the ridge walk in the weather which again was worse than predicted. Both teams summited with Mr Cooke's group patiently waiting in the café at the top drinking coffee and eating cake.

I am confident now that our leaders and the trainee leaders, having done it in poor weather, can look after our students under normal walking conditions. Through the expeditions we saw many walkers ill prepared for the environment they were in. Our training and experience allowed us to offer advice, share spare food & water and in some cases, we walked a few stray souls off the mountains. It was an amazing but tiring 4 days – but one everyone will remember! We hope to return with students next time but that would be over 5 days based on our experience.

We raised over £3000 for the AT Programme at the Gryphon.

MY FIRST YEAR AT THE GRYPHON SCHOOL

Throughout my first year as an apprentice at The Gryphon school I have continued climbing mountains, in not just the Brecon Beacons but peaks all over South and North Wales. Furthermore, I had the amazing opportunity to complete the 3 peaks challenge taking me all the way to Scotland to climb the UK's tallest mountain Ben Nevis... with not so amazing weather!



At this stage, I have now completed my Gold DofE award. Highlights of this were definitely from the expedition itself because of the beautiful views and scenery provided along the 4 days. I have also completed Mountain Leader training which I am continuing to build quality mountain days for and improving knowledge and navigation skills ready for the assessment. Significantly, I have now completed my Lowland Walk leader qualification alongside my outdoor first aid training qualification.

All these brilliant experiences and qualifications have allowed me to lead my first team teaching them all that I have learnt throughout my first year as an apprentice at The Gryphon school.

By Elise Reeve



AT PROGRAMME 2025 – A NEW COHORT

Thanks to a grant from the Philip Barker Charity, our Adventurous Training Programme continues to thrive. This year the school has 74 students working towards their Bronze Award, 24 towards the Silver Award, and 28 working towards their Gold Award.

The year has kicked off with a Ten Tors Walk in October for students new to the Challenge, a Bronze Training Day in November and lots of First Aid Training for Leaders. Thanks to Sherborne Turf, we now have a container we are slowly converting into a second store for our tentage.

AT AWARDS

We held our annual Adventurous Training Awards earlier this term. Congratulations to all who were shortlisted, and to the winners listed below:

- Bronze Award 2024: Charlotte M
- Silver Award: Jude G
- Gold Award: Ned D
- Ten Tors Award: Team PO



READING

At The Gryphon we know how important reading is for the health and happiness of every student. Reading is a key life skill, but should also be enjoyed. Sadly, we know that fewer children than ever read for pleasure regularly. This is why we are continuing with these strategies to support reading in school:

- Every Y7-9 student has a fortnightly reading lesson with their English teacher. They can make use of our fantastic library, which is well stocked with thousands of fiction and non-fiction books. Students can take out up to 3 books for 2 weeks at a time. There is also space for them to do homework and use reference books. Mrs Ross can help with recommending titles to read and keeps up to date with the latest trends - the library stock is updated regularly to reflect what young people are reading, for example recently we have increased our range of graphic novels.
- We ask every KS3 student to track what they are reading using the 'Track My Read' site. They have an easy to remember login and can access this easily from the student portal. So far, Year 7 have logged over 100,000 minutes already this term - an amazing achievement! Students can log their reading of absolutely anything: fiction and non-fiction books, comics, graphic novels, magazines, newspapers and websites.
- Every tutor group in the school also has DEAR (Drop Everything and Read) time built into their tutor curriculum. Some groups listen to an audiobook together, others read their own books. Year 9 have started a book club in the library with Mrs Bendell, where they are reading 'The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time' together and discussing it as they go.

We also have reading ambassadors in the Sixth Form, who facilitate weekly 1 to 1 reading sessions with some of our Year 7 students - they are brilliant role models for our lower school students!

We know how important it is for students to get support from home with their reading, so please keep talking about reading. Books also make a great Christmas present! Please find some recommendations here: <https://sway.cloud.microsoft/Nr4NF6fkREBms6oq?ref=Link>

by Mrs Bendell, Head of English/  
Associate Assistant Head i/c Literacy



THE GRYPHON INNOVATION HUB

We are delighted to unveil our brand-new *Innovation Hub*, an exciting space designed to spark creativity, foster collaboration, and bring innovative teaching ideas to life. This transformed classroom is part of the *Future Classroom* project which is already a success story at Shaftesbury School. This new space is a hub for innovation, flipped learning, and dynamic teaching methods, offering a fresh approach to learning.

The room is equipped with cutting-edge technology, including a state-of-the-art Epson Short Throw projector with multi-touch capabilities and a host of interactive features. Additionally, the Innovation Hub includes computer access, tablets, and other tools to enhance the learning environment, with plans to

introduce even more technologies, such as virtual reality headsets, in the future.

Since its opening in October, the *Innovation Hub* has already hosted a variety of activities. The Year 12 robotics team and Year 7 budding engineers have worked on exciting projects here, while it has also served as a space for school and year council discussions. Teachers have embraced the room for everything from science lessons to community projects, proving its versatility and creative potential.

The possibilities for this space are endless, and we can't wait to see how it will continue to inspire students and teachers alike!

SHERBORNE SCHOOLS LITERARY SOCIETY



Monday 11th November, as well of course as being Remembrance Day, marked an exciting new coming together of the three secondary schools of Sherborne. The first meeting of the Sherborne Schools Literary Society took place in the suitably grand auditorium of the Merritt Centre at Sherborne Girls, to consider the topic of 'Shakespearean Futures'.

Around 40 students and staff attended from The Gryphon, and we were treated to 3 inspiring 5-minute student presentations, one from each school, focusing on the place of Shakespeare's writing and ideas in world society going forward. These engaging, and impressively mature presentations focused largely on the plays each set of students were studying at A Level in their respective schools with some perceptive thoughts shared on Hamlet, Measure for Measure and – in a standout public speaking performance from The Gryphon's own Leya J – Othello.

Leya's composure, delivery and insight were praised by staff and students alike, from all three schools. A panel discussion followed with teachers from the schools, and a brief Q+A session, something we will look to build on in terms of interactivity going forward.

The next meeting of the Society is already in the pipeline for early next year, looking at the intersection of the Gothic and Science Fiction. It promises to be another stimulating evening, bringing together the best of our three Sherborne Schools.

### VISIT TO SHERBORNE FOOD BANK

We recently took a small group of students down to the Sherborne Food Bank depot (South Western Business Park, Sherborne), to help educate and raise awareness of the incredible work the Food Bank carry out in our local community. Tied in with our LIFE values at The Gryphon School, the visit enabled students to truly appreciate the impact that the Food Bank has on local families and its power to transform lives and help those most in need. Our students were a credit to our school, and they asked some curious and thought-provoking questions, which David Kemp (Chair of Trustees) and Sally Baxter (Depot Manager) were impressed by. We value our ongoing relationship with Sherborne Food Bank and thank them for their



ongoing support for our school and their work in our local community. The Food Bank are always appreciative and in need of support, so please do help if you can: <https://www.sherbornefoodbank.org/>

### NEW KITCHEN PROJECT

In October 2023, following a conversation with Sherborne Food Bank, we decided to begin a new project at The Gryphon School, to further support our students with complex needs and situations. Tied in with our Gateway provision, and with a huge amount of support and guidance from David Kemp (Chair of Trustees, SFB), we developed an initial idea, into a pitch, that was presented to several local businesses and organisations. Over the past 12 months, through the generosity of some of those organisations and one particular local resident, we have managed to secure funds to convert a redundant space, into a functional kitchen area. We plan to use this space to educate students and families from disadvantaged backgrounds and/or with SEND needs, on healthy living and encourage individuals to live life in all its fullness. In October 2024, the kitchen was finished. It is already in use and impacting the lives of our students; *"It's amazing! I love cooking and baking, and I have already learnt things that I have then gone on to do for my parents at home. I now want to study cooking when I finish school."*



Our Year 10 nurture hospitality & catering students have been very busy learning a variety of new cookery skills over the past term. They have started with sponge puddings, scones and short crust pastry quiche and progressed on to ice cream, meringues, flaky pastry and Swiss rolls. To get into the Christmas mood, we have finished off with some delicious orange-flavoured mince pies. All the Year 10 food is made from scratch with no shortcuts. This term has fully prepared them for their mock practical exam later on in the year.



### Year 8 Art: Enchanted Creatures Project

Year 8 created beautifully crafted mushrooms for their Enchanted Creatures project, developing skills in character design, sculpting in mixed-media and acrylic painting. Students were encouraged to lean towards realism with their designs and colour-mixing, but to keep a playful narrative style, like in traditional story books.

Warmest wishes, Mr Malone.



### TEXTILES: FELT PROJECT

From Shaun the sheep to a fuzzy felt bowl year 7 have been having great fun making their own felt. They have washed, brushed and dyed the fleece and then bonded the fibres together – great fun!!!



# Sixth Form



### CULTURE DAY

Students Melody, Ronel and Emily approached the Sixth Form team asking for some help to organise and run a Culture Day, the first of its kind for the Sixth Form and what a fantastic day it was. Throughout the day students experienced elements within lessons and bespoke sessions to explore the cultures of their peers and immerse themselves into new and exciting activities. Alongside a whole Sixth Form quiz and inter-tutor challenges, students were invited to attend the day in their cultural dress as well as participate in bespoke workshops, led by staff and students alike. Sessions of note included henna tattoos, learning to speak Japanese, cooking authentic Italian pizza, salsa dancing and drumming, to name but a few. The students truly immersed themselves in the celebration of diversity and inclusion, it was a wonderful day that will continue to be a part of the Sixth Form events calendar each academic year.

## Links with the Community

Leadership opportunities in the Sixth Form have included an addition this year that links with performing arts. A group of six Year 12 students are running a nativity performance with Year 8 students. The leadership group have run all elements of the production from publicity and auditions right up to direction of the performance itself. Tabi and Jemima, two of the students involved shared their experiences of the opportunity.

"As a Year 12, Sixth Form has allowed us to access many leadership opportunities. Alongside four others, we have had a huge role in the Year 8 nativity which has given us a look into the skill set you need to be a good leader. As

the teachers have given us creative freedom and allowed us to express our ideas, it has helped us all to develop as team players as well as work on our communication and collaboration skills. Working with twenty one Year 8s has allowed us to become more open minded as there have been challenges along the way, which as a group we have overcome. We all definitely have a new found respect for teachers after experiencing how difficult it is to get a whole class to listen and cooperate with us. As a result, this experience has allowed us to step out of our comfort zones, build a more resilient mindset and learn key life lessons which I think is a good experience as we are becoming young adults with more responsibilities".

## Developments in the Sixth Form

This academic year has seen the relaunching of the Sixth Form Committee. Each tutor group is represented by individuals that make up both the committee for each year group as well as provide the Sixth Form as a whole. It has been a really positive platform for students to be able to air their views and opinions as well as a provide opportunity for them to shape their community and how it continues to progress and develop. So far this year students have been discussing charities that they wish to support, shaping their social space in the common room and looking at opportunities and options for additional qualifications that students would like to obtain outside of their A Level studies.

## PEER MENTORS

Sixth Form students have grasped the opportunity to work with students within the school community with open arms again this year. On a weekly basis numerous students are leading one to one reading support sessions, as well as supporting their peers through a mentoring programme. This support programme extends outside of The Gryphon and into Sherborne Primary as part of the enrichment curriculum in Year 12.

### CHEMISTRY SYMPOSIUM

This term the Sixth Form chemists have expanded their horizons by attending a half termly Chemistry Symposium, where students from Sixth Forms in the local area present on a topic that interests them from outside the specification. In the first half term Ronel and Emelia from Year 13 talked about the artificial sweetener aspartame, covering its chemical structure, synthesis and how it is used, as well as reviewing the potential risks that have recently been mentioned in the news.

This half term Year 13 Max spoke about the role of fats in the body, comparing the chemistry and structure of essential lipids to saturated and trans fats and explaining how their bonding and shape affect the way that they are used and stored. Both presentations were built on detailed independent research, and it was so impressive to see the calm and informative way in which the students spoke in front of such a large audience.



### Christmas Carols

On Monday 16th December Gryphon Sixth Form students brought some festive cheer to the residents of Abbey View Care Home when they visited to sing some Christmas Carols as part of the home's Christmas Gala. It was lovely to see the residents and staff in good voice and joining in!

# 8. P.E.



## The Gryphon PE Department's 'Team of the Term'!

We have had roaring success throughout all our age groups this first term, right from Year 7 coming to their first ever clubs, to Year 11 and Sixth Form carrying on the Gryphon values both on and off the sports pitch!

We've had fantastic numbers attending after-school clubs, getting involved in football, rugby, volleyball, hockey, netball, cross country, badminton and so many more!

As always, we have taken part in a huge number of fixtures, allowing our students to create memories, form friendships and hopefully compete with a smile on their face...the winning does help this!

Our Team of the Term is the Year 7 Hockey Girls, coached by Mrs Rowe. She says:

"The Year 7 hockey team have gone from strength to strength this half term. It has been great to see so many students arrive at club and give hockey a go for the first time. Throughout the league fixtures the team had a mixture of results including two wins, a draw and a very close 2-1 loss. Despite this the team made it through to the semi-finals. A very close game against a strong Westfield side finished with a narrow 2-0 win in the final 5 minutes of the game, taking the team into a tough final against Ansford. Ansford took a very early lead in the first minute of the final but the teamwork, positivity and versatility of the all the players in the team really shone through, particularly after having already played nearly an hour of hockey. Slowly but surely, they built momentum and consistently challenged the Ansford defence, keeping them under pressure for much of the game. The final finished with a convincing 4-2 win and Year 7 are crowned the District Champions!



### Ruby

A huge congratulations to Gryphon alumni Ruby White who has become the first ever U19 World Boxing Champion after defeating India's Chanchal Chaudhary in the World Championship Final in the USA!

### Bo

Bo in Year 8 has an amazing passion for pony racing! She has devoted hours and hours of training to excel in her chosen sport and the results she has had over the year are truly outstanding!

Bo has travelled the length and breadth of the country to compete in a series of races in places like Bangor on Dee, Warwick and Lingfield Park. Competing in the Race Tech Point Series, as part of the UK Pony Club, involves a series of runs throughout the racing season and allows all members participating at Pony Club Race days to gain points based on placings and participation in their height race. The aim of the Points Series is to recognise members who are performing well in their race and encourage them to progress in Pony Racing.



After competing throughout the season Bo managed to achieve a 3rd place in the entire country! This is a phenomenal achievement and a true testament to her hard work and dedication.



### Liv Bowditch

Gryphon alumni Liv Bowditch was invited to attend HRH The Princess of Wales' 'Together at Christmas' carol service at Westminster Abbey. Liv was invited because of her work for the charity 'From Me to You', writing letters to people

who have cancer so that they do not feel alone. We were delighted to see Liv interviewed on BBC, ITV and Sky News about the charity and her volunteering – well done Liv!

## CHALLENGE PLUS

This year's Challenge Plus group started their series of sessions looking at logic puzzles in our new 'innovation hub'. They were challenged to solve a string of problems of increasing complexity. One group managed to solve every aspect of the most difficult puzzle, using impressive cognitive reasoning. They then were set a knowledge-based quiz to highlight the fact that sometimes, intelligence alone is not enough to succeed!