



Head Teacher's Newsletter

AUTUMN TERM

Issue No 09 | December 2025

Mrs Frost-Briggs' message of the month!



As the autumn term comes to close, it's time to reflect on what has been achieved so far this academic year and to share with parents and carers some of things we have been doing in school!

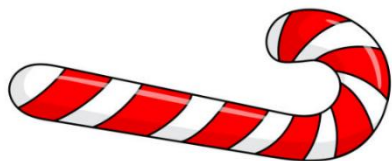
It's been a busy term for the students and staff, including residential trips, a visit from our local MP, music concerts, an Inspiration Day, Year 6 transition activities and preparing for our reverse advent calendar for charity over the last few weeks plus much, much more! A particular well done to Year 11 for conducting themselves so well during the mock exam period.

As we enter into the Christmas break, I would like to thank all parents and carers for your continued support, even in the face of adversity. I wish you all a wonderful holiday with your loved ones and a fantastic Christmas. All the very best for a healthy and Happy New Year!

★ SCORES ON THE DOORS...

★ As school performance tables have now been published, we were delighted to be published in The Derbyshire Times as the third highest-performing school in Derbyshire for our overall attainment.

★ This is testament to the attitude, work ethic and hard work of last year's Year 11 students and the fantastic teaching and support staff at the school! Well done everyone!



Year 6 Escape Room

We welcomed five primary schools to complete our pirate and witch escape rooms from Kilburn Juniors, Denby Free, Horsley C of E, Street Lane and Richardson Endowed. The Year 6 students were incredible, showing great teamwork skills and enthusiasm to work through the puzzles to escape!



Thank you so much to all the students who have sent staff and other students candy canes this week to show their appreciation. Opportunities to show care and kindness to others are so important, particularly at this time of year when we reflect on what we are grateful for in our lives.

Remarkable creative work

Resistant Materials students in Year 10 were tasked with designing and creating a product centred around 'decorative storage' using the practical skills they developed in Term 1. Here are some examples of their fantastic work!



Year 7 PGL residential trip!

Staff and Year 7 students thoroughly enjoyed their weekend residential trip to PGL earlier in the term. Students took part in a range of activities from the high ropes, zip wire, axe throwing and rifle shooting and showed their best moves at the disco. Amazing teamwork skills, bravery and resilience was shown throughout the weekend!



Meanwhile, elsewhere...in History!

Battlefields Trip

A massive highlight of the term was our trip to Belgium and northern France, where 43 pupils from Years 9, 10 and 11 explored First World War battlefields and memorials to deepen their understanding of the conflict. Three of our students had the honour of laying a remembrance wreath on behalf of the school at the Menin Gate. Well done to Sam B, Willow G and Connor T for being nothing short of remarkable! All of the pupils behaved impeccably and represented the school superbly throughout.



Remembrance

A special well done to Ruby, Sam B, Angus, Thomas B and Eva for their outstanding contributions to this year's Remembrance Day Assembly. Their thoughtful presentation helped make the occasion meaningful for everyone.

We were also delighted to welcome the brilliant Ken Robinson into school again following the success of his visit to mark the 80th anniversary of VE Day earlier in the year. Ken shared his fascinating family history from the Second World War with 9C and 9F, bringing the past to life in a way that pupils won't forget. After the talk, members of History Club had the special opportunity to share their own family stories with Ken and his daughter Hettie - a memorable moment for all involved.



A huge well done to our Year 7s for their fantastic Bayeux Tapestry competition entries. The creativity and effort on display were admirable. Special well done to the winners: Charlotte and Matthew (7R) and Maeve and Lottie (7J)



The Battlefields Visit by Sam B

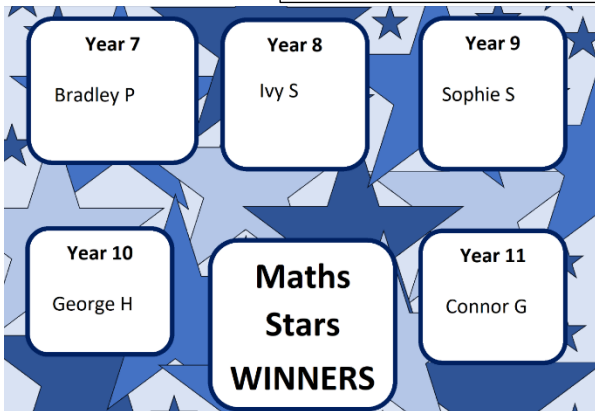
Our trip to Belgium was honestly the trip of a lifetime - four days completely packed with activities, experiences, and memories that I'll never forget. There were so many highlights, but visiting the battlefields and memorials really stood out.

Walking around places like Newfoundland Park and the Thiepval Memorial, a sense of reality suddenly hit me. Standing among the rows of graves of soldiers who had given their lives for their country was incredibly moving. The graves were scattered across the park, each one representing a real person with a real story. Reading some of their names and ages made it all feel very personal, and it was impossible not to feel a deep sense of respect.

A visit that really stood out for me was Sanctuary Wood. Walking through the preserved trenches felt almost unreal. We could see how cramped, muddy, and chaotic life must have been for the soldiers. It wasn't like the neat reconstructions you sometimes see - these trenches were uneven, narrow, and still full of the original twists and turns. Standing there, imagining what the soldiers experienced, made everything we'd learned so far even more powerful. A military wives choir sang "Bring him home" from *Les Misérables*. You could hear a pin drop. A truly magical moment.



A huge well done to the maths stars winners!



Axiom maths group break out of Escape Room!

On Tuesday 16th December, the Axiom maths group visited an 'Elf and Safety' escape room in Derby.

Dexter G, Alexander G, Matthew B, Oliver S, Jesse G, Harrison L and Glendon M very almost escaped with 3 locks left to open.

Vova B, Charlotte W, Sophie R, Erin G, Annabel P escaped in 49 minutes!

Harrison C, Grayson PA, Jackson R, Thomas B, James S, Flynn W and Freddie W escaped in 52 minutes!

Well done Axiom Maths Crew!

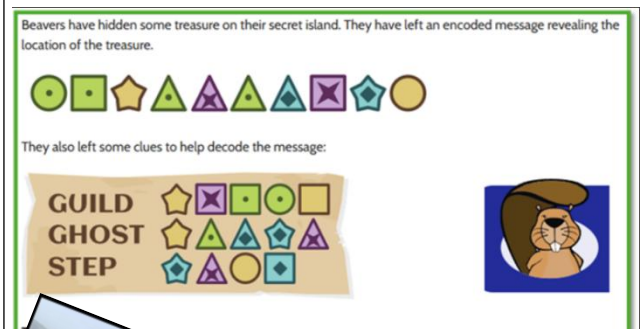
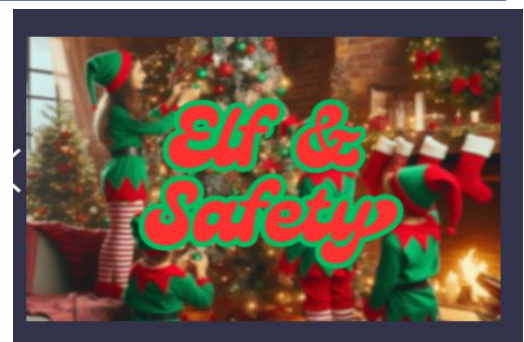


BEBRAS challenge participants

Computing students across John Flamsteed have recently excelled in the annual **BebRAS Challenge** organised by the Raspberry Pi Foundation. This online challenge takes place worldwide with a series of interactive tasks, designed to encourage logical thinking and problem-solving skills. In addition to students achieving Merit and Distinction awards, those with the highest scores in their age groups have earned the prestigious Best in School awards.

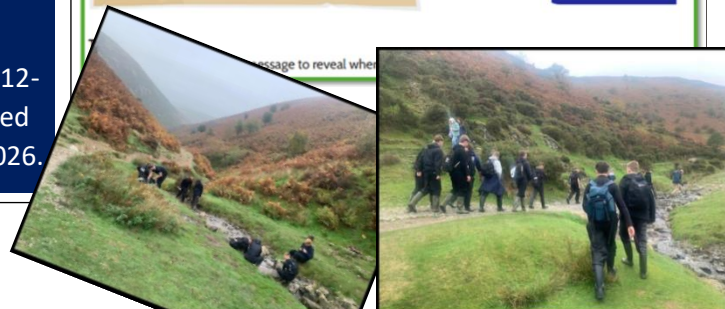
We are also proud of the commitment shown by so many of our students tackling this for the first time, especially to have 13 students achieve the Gold Award, given only to the top 10% of participants nationally, an extra well done to:

Adam, Rose, Oscar and Jesse (Juniors, 10-12), Isabelle, Albert, Hannah, George, Theo, Eleanor, Riley and Oliver (Intermediates, 12-14) and CJ (Seniors, 14-16). These exceptional achievers are invited to take part in the next round, the Coding Challenge, in March 2026.



Geography Field Trip

Mr Wood and his team are extremely proud of the students for their behaviour, enthusiasm, and hard work throughout the recent GCSE Geography residential fieldtrip to the Field Studies Council Centre at Preston Montford. The visit formed an enrichment part of the Eduqas B fieldwork investigation, focusing on qualitative surveys, geographical cycles and flows, and it proved to be an extremely successful and enjoyable experience for all students involved. On the human geography afternoon, students carried out an investigation into the perception of need for regeneration in the town of Shrewsbury, conducting surveys, observations, and qualitative assessments to reflect on how and why regeneration priorities vary across urban environments. On the physical geography day, students explored the stunning Carding Mill Valley, where they investigated the changing characteristics of a river along its course, measuring velocity, channel width, depth, gradient, and sediment size. Extra recognition must go to one of our students who managed the whole walk on crutches having torn ligaments the day before the trip! A truly dedicated Geographer! Beyond the academic activities, students participated fully in a team-building assault course and orienteering challenge. Staff were impressed by the students' energy, cooperation, and support for one another. Mr Wood is looking forward to the next local fieldwork visit in February, where students will investigate another geographical issue to further strengthen their fieldwork experience ahead of the exam.





The SEND department enjoyed welcoming parents last month for the annual SEND Festive Coffee morning. After meeting the SEND Team with a mince pie or two, parents enjoyed our 'everyone's a winner' raffle and a Christmas Quiz hosted by our own Ms Lopez. Prizes all round!

Each day in December, a VIP guest has made a special visit to announce who has won our attendance advent calendar. Each day, Santa uses the tannoy system at lunchtime to announce to the children who should come forward to open the calendar and win a prize. The moment is then followed by a festive song. The staff often sing along!



Inspiration Day

Year 8 students had an incredible day exploring the wonders of science at Magna Science Adventure Centre in Sheffield. They explored the four pavilions (Earth, Water, Air and Fire) and saw some really great science experiments in the workshop. Our students were an absolute credit to our school community- their enthusiasm, behaviour and engagement were nothing short of remarkable.

Year 7 enjoyed an inspiring visit from Oliver at *The Art of Brilliance*, who encouraged students to embrace resilience and "be their brilliant best." They then put their teamwork to the test in a lively building challenge, using only marshmallows and straws to create the tallest possible tower! Competition was fierce and creativity was high! In the afternoon, Derbyshire school nurses delivered an engaging health and wellbeing session, offering practical advice on staying healthy and positive. Tutors also valued the opportunity to spend quality time with their form groups and get to know their new students better!



Year 9 were visited by the Rolls-Royce apprenticeship team and their current apprentices for LEGO programming through coding, virtual welding where students and staff donned headsets and tools to compete for the perfect weld and many more group projects. Throughout the day, students explored the wide range of apprenticeships and career pathways Rolls-Royce offers, asking thoughtful questions to the visiting apprentices. They even took on a STEM boat-building challenge using only recycled materials, applying principles of buoyancy and motion to create a floating, moving sailboat!



Year 10 took part in a fascinating Criminal Justice Day exploring religion, British values and careers within the justice system. Students investigated a religion-based crime scenario, gathering evidence and learning how the police approach real cases. They conducted forensic testing on urine, clothing, hair, blood and ink samples before heading to "court" to deliver their final verdict. Students also heard from SCL forensic scientist, who spoke about her career solving crime!



Year 11 had an action-packed and purposeful day. 27 local businesses held mock interviews, giving students a real taste of what a professional interview feels like. Derbyshire police and the RAF talked of their experiences and set the students challenges such as a reaction-time test to see who might make it into the top 7% of future pilots! Derby College presented information on post-16 pathways and students reviewed their personal statements and mapped out their revision.