Leigh UTC Dartford

The Modular Magazine of Leigh UTC Dartford

January - February 2026 | Module 3

What's inside this issue...

Module 4 Upcoming Events

- Options Evening for Year 9 (3rd March)
- Year 7 Boys' Rugby Event (3rd & 5th March)
- World Book Day (6 March)
- International Women's Day (8 March)
- Y11 Exams Information Evening (10th March)
- Neurodiversity Celebration Week (17–23 March)
- Red Nose Day (21 March)
- Tanzania Trip - 23rd March - 4th April 2026
- Y8 STEM AR Project University Trip (25th March)

AWARENESS DAYS - MODULE 4

- Fairtrade Fortnight (25th Feb - 10th Mar)
- Ramadan (17th Feb -18th March)
- Ash Wednesday (3rd March)
- World Book Day (6th March)
- British Science Week (6th - 15th March)
- International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (21st March)
- Shakespeare Week (21st - 27th March)
- Eid al Fitr for Islam (31st March)

Contents

Principal's Message

As we reflect on Module 3, it has been shorter than most, yet rich in opportunity for the students we serve. We both began and concluded the module with INSET days, providing valuable time for us to come together as a staff body and focus on the key priorities for the academic year. These occasions allowed us to reflect on how far we have come in our ongoing journey of improvement and to consider the marginal gains that will continue to make a meaningful difference for our learners.

With the temporal landmark of the new calendar year, my January assembly centred on the concept of the fresh start effect. Using a number of icons familiar to our students, we explored the idea of micro wins rather than grand plans, concluding that a shift of just one degree in how we work can place us in a very different position over time. Each member of our community was encouraged to make a personal pledge to start a new habit, stop something they recognise is no longer serving them well, and continue with something that benefits themselves and or others.

Across the education sector there has been significant discussion around the revised Ofsted inspection framework and toolkit. Reports from schools nationally that volunteered for the pilot phase have now been published. Leigh Academy Halley were among those schools and I extend my warm congratulations to them on a highly successful inspection, clearly evidenced through their report card. It has been refreshing to read many of the published reports and, despite the distinctive characteristics of our UTC, we continue to draw strong parallels with the strengths identified in other successful schools.

Mr Kevin Watson
Principal, Leigh UTC Dartford

Message from Head of College

ALAN MATHISON TURING - COMPUTER SCIENTIST

"WE CAN ONLY SEE A SHORT DISTANCE AHEAD, BUT WE CAN SEE PLENTY THERE THAT NEEDS TO BE DONE " - ALAN MATHISON TURING

A Strong Start: Living the Values at Turing College

As we begin the new term, I have been incredibly proud of the positive and purposeful start our students in Turing College have made. Walking around the building, it is clear that students are returning with focus, ambition and a strong commitment to the values that define our college community.

At Turing College, we draw inspiration from the legacy of Alan Turing; a pioneer whose curiosity, resilience and innovative thinking continue to shape the world today. In that same spirit, we encourage our students to be inquisitive, to challenge themselves intellectually, and to take pride in striving for excellence in everything they do. Our aim is to create an environment where students feel confident to explore ideas, take risks in their learning, and develop the skills they need for future success.

Respect - Students have demonstrated high levels of respect for one another, for staff, and for the learning environment. This is evident in calm transitions, polite interactions and a shared understanding that everyone has the right to learn without disruption. Respect underpins our inclusive culture and ensures that all members of the community feel safe, valued and supported.

Relationships - Strong relationships are at the heart of effective learning, and it has been excellent to see students engaging positively with both peers and teachers. Productive classroom discussions, collaborative learning and respectful communication are helping to build a supportive atmosphere where students feel encouraged to participate and challenge themselves.

Responsibility - Our students are showing real maturity in the way they are approaching their learning. From arriving prepared for lessons to meeting deadlines and taking ownership of their progress, students are demonstrating the responsibility required to succeed both academically and personally. These habits are vital not only for success at Leigh UTC Dartford, but also for future study and employment.

Key Reminders

- **Punctuality:** Students must be on the playground by 8:20am ready for the start of the day.
- **Preparedness:** Students should arrive with all required equipment, including *2 black pens, 2 blue pens, a pencil, a ruler, a calculator, and a fully charged Chromebook*.
- **Uniform:** A professional standard of uniform is expected at all times. *Blazers must be worn when moving around the building. No makeup, false lashes or nails, fake tan or trainers.*

I look forward to another successful and rewarding term at Turing College, filled with high-quality learning, positive relationships and achievements to celebrate.

Kind regards,
Mrs Pamphlett

Message from Head of College

EBEN AND LIZ UPTON - INNOVATORS

"EXCITED TO MAKE THE TREMENDOUS BENEFITS OF ROBOTICS UNIVERSALLY ACCESSIBLE" - EBEN & LIZ UPTON

First, a sincere thank you to all of our staff for your ongoing dedication to the UTC as a place where we develop STEM professionals for the future global market.

Your professionalism, innovation and perseverance make Leigh UTC Dartford the vibrant innovative learning community that it is. This module I especially want to acknowledge our PE department for their tireless work in coordinating and delivering so many fixtures and sporting opportunities for our students this term, enriching their experience well beyond the classroom.

This module has seen our academy continue to flourish as a place of high expectations, strong achievement and truly unique pastoral care. Our teaching staff continue to work with great rigour to support Years 10-13 students through their mock examinations. The preparation, feedback and encouragement teachers have provided is already making a positive impact on pupils' confidence and performance.

We are incredibly proud of our Year 7 cohort, who continue to display *exemplary habits* in their learning and conduct. It is a pleasure to see them grow into the kind of motivated, resilient and respectful students who will help make the UTC a beacon of educational excellence – and, in time, skilled engineering graduates who make an impact in their chosen fields.

Looking beyond the everyday, it's worth acknowledging the academy's ongoing reputation for excellence in inclusive practice and supportive learning. Last year, Leigh UTC Dartford was recognised with ADHD Friendly School status for the work we do to support neurodiversity in our community – a testament to our staff's commitment to every learner's wellbeing.

We are now nearly at the mid-point of the academic year, and it is clear that we continue to make strong strides in the quality of provision we offer to our students and families. Thank you once again for everything you do – for your energy, your expertise and your unwavering belief in our students.

Wishing you a restful and well-earned break. We look forward to welcoming everyone back refreshed and ready for another successful term.

Kind regards,
Mr Alamu

Message from the Director for Learning for Post 16 - Clark College

YVONNE CLARK - ENGINEER

"ONE DAY YOU WILL THANK YOURSELF FOR NOT GIVING UP" - YVONNE CLARK

Clark college is immensely proud to look back on a module that has truly showcased the ambition and professional caliber of our students.

It has been a whirlwind of success, starting with the completion of 51 UCAS applications covering a vast spectrum of subjects from Cyber Security and AI to Law and Criminology. Simultaneously, our students are aggressively pursuing elite apprenticeships with giants like Google, Amazon, and BAE Systems, with several already securing roles in the engineering and automotive sectors.

Our commitment to industry standards was further validated at the Baker Award ceremony, where we celebrated a staggering 23 wins, including 14 Gold awards. This momentum is now carrying into our new projects, as Year 12 begins a prestigious commission to design the 9th Annual LAT Trust Trophies, tasked with a sophisticated "Grease & The Swinging 50s" brief presented by Adam Waters.

Finally, as we approach the EPQ presentations in February, our year 13 students are preparing to defend an incredible range of projects, from robotic prosthetic hands to complex sociological dissertations, to a panel of industry experts and alumni. The dedication, enthusiasm, and high-level outcomes we have witnessed this module are a testament to the bright futures these young professionals are building.

Kind regards,
Ms Martin

A Reflection: Our Assemblies

Module 3 Assemblies: A Month of Learning and Awareness at Our School

Last module, our school marked a series of important assemblies and awareness days that encouraged us to reflect, celebrate, and learn together as a community.

We began our assemblies on the 19th January with a powerful assembly on the events of the *Holocaust* to coincide with *Holocaust Memorial Day* on 27 January, where students learned about the devastating impact of the Holocaust and other genocides. The assembly focused on the theme Lessons from History, reminding us why it is essential to challenge prejudice, stand up for others, and recognise the importance of human rights. Many students said the stories shared helped them understand the past in a deeper and more personal way.

The school embraced a very different cultural experience with *German Karneval* on 17 February. The assembly explored the colourful traditions of this festival, including costumes, video presentations, student stories, and music. Pupils enjoyed learning how *Karneval* brings communities together in Germany and how celebrations can reflect national identity and joy.

During *National Apprenticeships Week*, students discovered the wide range of career pathways available beyond traditional university routes. Guest speakers and videos highlighted real apprentices' experiences, showing how hands-on learning, paid work, and professional qualifications can open doors to exciting futures. The week encouraged many of us to think more broadly about our next steps.

We also revisited one of our core *British Values: Mutual Respect*. Through discussions and examples, the assembly emphasised how respect shapes our school environment; whether in classrooms, corridors, or online. Students reflected on how everyday actions, such as listening to others and valuing different opinions, helped build a positive and inclusive community.

Finally, on *Safer Internet Day* (11 February), the focus turned to online safety. The session explored how to stay safe on social media, recognise misinformation, and protect personal information. Students were encouraged to think critically about their digital choices and to support friends who might face online challenges.

Together, these events created a month filled with meaningful learning. Each assembly offered a chance to understand the world better; its history, cultures, opportunities, and responsibilities and to think about the kind of community we want to build.

Y8 STEM AR Project with University of Greenwich

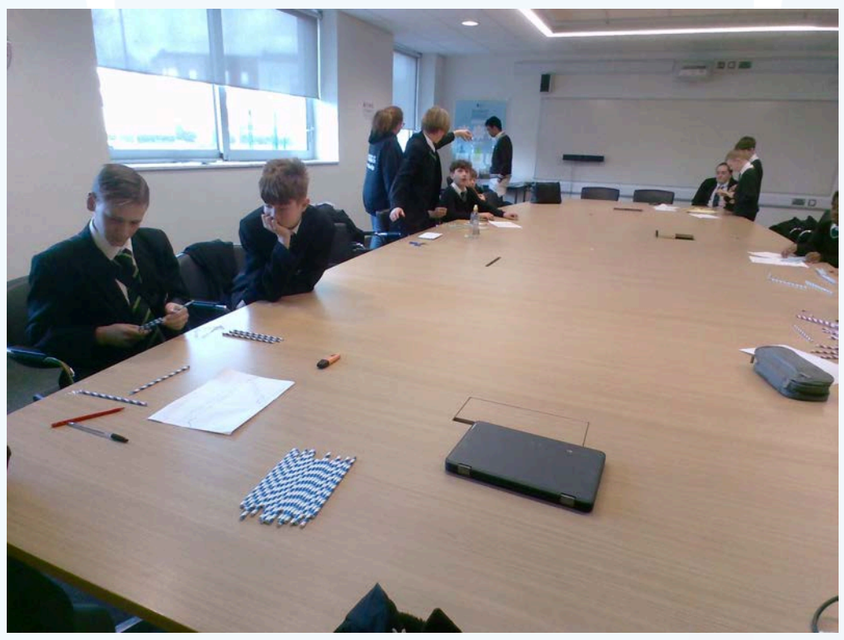
STEM Project in collaboration with University of Greenwich

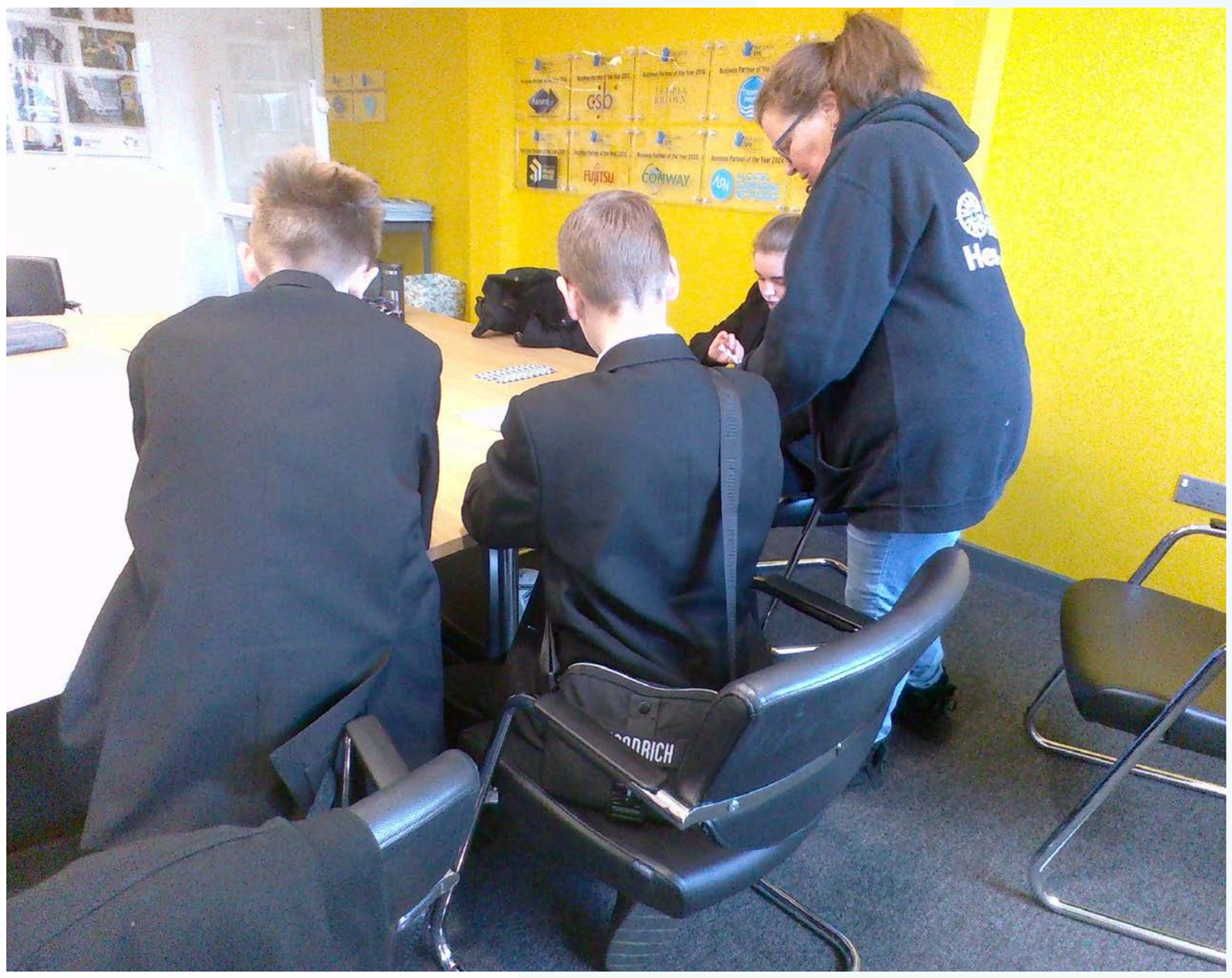
Twenty of our Year 8 students have officially kicked off an exciting STEM Attainment Raising programme, a specialised initiative delivered in partnership with the University of Greenwich and the Kent and Medway Progression Federation (KMPF). This programme is specifically designed to build our students' confidence and skills in maths and science through hands-on, high-impact learning.

The project is already in full swing, with sessions running fortnightly on Tuesdays throughout Modules 3 and 4. Each two-hour block is designed to be deeply engaging, featuring practical activities such as bridge building to bring engineering concepts to life.

To provide our students with the best possible mentorship, every session is supported by at least one University Student Ambassador. These mentors offer a unique bridge between school and higher education, sharing their real-world experience while assisting with various activities.

We are incredibly proud of the enthusiasm our Year 8s, who are participating, have shown so far and we hope they continue to develop a love for STEM and see the impact it can have on their futures.





Talk Consent Event

Talk Consent Workshops: Equipping Students with Knowledge, Confidence and Life Skills
As part of Leigh UTC Dartfords' commitment to safeguarding, personal development and student wellbeing, Talk Consent recently delivered a programme of tailored workshops across Years 7 to 11. Each session was carefully designed to reflect the age, maturity and real-world experiences of students, providing practical guidance on relationships, safety, respect and responsible decision making.

Years 7 and 8: Understanding Consent and Personal Boundaries
Year 7 and Year 8 students took part in workshops focused on consent, personal boundaries and respectful behaviour. These sessions introduced the concept of consent in a clear and age appropriate way, helping students understand that consent means giving clear, willing and ongoing permission. Students explored how consent applies not only to physical contact, but also to everyday situations such as borrowing belongings, sharing personal space and respecting others' comfort levels.

Through interactive activities and scenario-based discussions, students learned how to communicate boundaries confidently, recognise when someone else may feel uncomfortable, and understand that consent can be withdrawn at any time. The sessions reinforced the importance of empathy, listening and mutual respect as foundations for positive friendships and relationships.

Year 9: Sexting, Online Safety and Digital Responsibility
Year 9 students engaged in a workshop focused on sexting and the risks associated with sharing images or messages online. This session addressed the legal, emotional and reputational consequences of creating or forwarding explicit content, helping students understand that digital actions can have long-lasting real-world impact.

Students explored themes including peer pressure, coercion, privacy, and the permanence of digital footprints. They were encouraged to think critically about how to respond if asked to send images, how to support friends who may feel pressured, and where to seek help if they feel unsafe or concerned. The workshop promoted responsible online behaviour and empowered students to make informed, confident decisions in digital spaces.

Opportunities like this play a vital role in empowering our students to build respectful relationships, stay safe and make confident, informed decisions.

Talk Consent Event

Year 10: Active Bystander Training and Speaking Up Safely
Year 10 students took part in a session on active bystander behaviour, focusing on how to recognise harmful, risky or inappropriate situations and how to intervene safely. The workshop encouraged students to understand that they have a role in creating a safer and more respectful environment both in school and in wider society.

Students learned practical strategies for stepping in, such as challenging inappropriate comments, supporting someone who feels uncomfortable, reporting concerns and knowing when to seek adult support. The session reinforced the importance of courage, accountability and collective responsibility, empowering students to understand that small actions can make a significant positive difference.

Year 11: Coercion, Healthy Relationships and Power Dynamics
Year 11 students attended a more mature session exploring coercion, relationship dynamics and recognising unhealthy behaviours. This workshop examined how control, manipulation and pressure can appear in relationships, whether romantic, social or online.

Students discussed the characteristics of healthy relationships, including trust, equality, respect, communication and independence. They also explored warning signs of coercion, such as emotional pressure, guilt, isolation or threats. The session provided guidance on how to seek support, how to help others who may be experiencing unhealthy relationships, and how to make choices that protect their wellbeing as they prepare for adulthood.

Across all year groups, Talk Consent delivered engaging, informative and thought-provoking sessions that encouraged reflection, discussion and personal growth. The workshops aligned strongly with Leigh UTC Dartford's Personal Development curriculum and safeguarding priorities, ensuring students are equipped with essential knowledge and real-life skills.

We are grateful to Talk Consent for their professionalism, expertise and commitment to supporting young people.

LAT 5-a-side and X-Country

On the 13th and 20th January 2026, our students took part in the LAT 5-a-side Football Tournaments at the Sir Geoffrey Leigh Academy.

On the 13th January, it was the turn of our Year 7/8 Team. They were in a very tough League which included Leigh Academy Stationers, Leigh Academy Blackheath and the eventual winners; Sir Joseph Williamson's Mathematical School. The Boys played 8 games in total drawing 5 and losing 3. Unfortunately, we finished bottom of our league and didn't get a playoff game.

On the 20th January, it was the turn of our Year 9/10 Boys. Again we were in the more difficult group which included the eventual winners Leigh Academy Stationers, Leigh Academy Blackheath, Sir Joseph Williamson's Mathematical School and Tonbridge School. The Boys again did well and managed to win two games and draw one out of the eight they played. We finished 7th in our league and had a playoff against Leigh Academy Rainham who finished 7th in the other league. We managed to beat them
4-1 in that playoff and finished 14th. Joshua B was our star player on the day managing to score 7 goal's across the Tournament including a hat-trick against Leigh Academy Minster.

X- Country: A Difficult Race in Wet Weather

Leigh UTC Dartford took a team of 11 runners to the NTC District Cross Country race on the 21st January 2026. We took 5 runners from Year 7, 5 from Years 8 and 9 and one from Year 10. The results were as follows.

Year 7 Girls Race: Lola B, 1st Place. Lilly G, 10th Place. Tej A, 12th Pace.

Year 7 Boys Race: Onyx D-W, 9th Place. David O, 23rd Place.

Year 8/9 Boys Race: Zac J, 1st Place. Archie B, 4th Place. Parker C, 17th Place. Callum T, 21st Place. Mason P, 22nd Place.

Year 10 Boys Race: Seb W, 4th Place.

Outstanding effort from our students today on what was a horrible day weather wise. The next race is at Northfleet Technology College on 4th February 2026.

Computing Trip to Google HQ

Year 10 Visit: Google HQ London

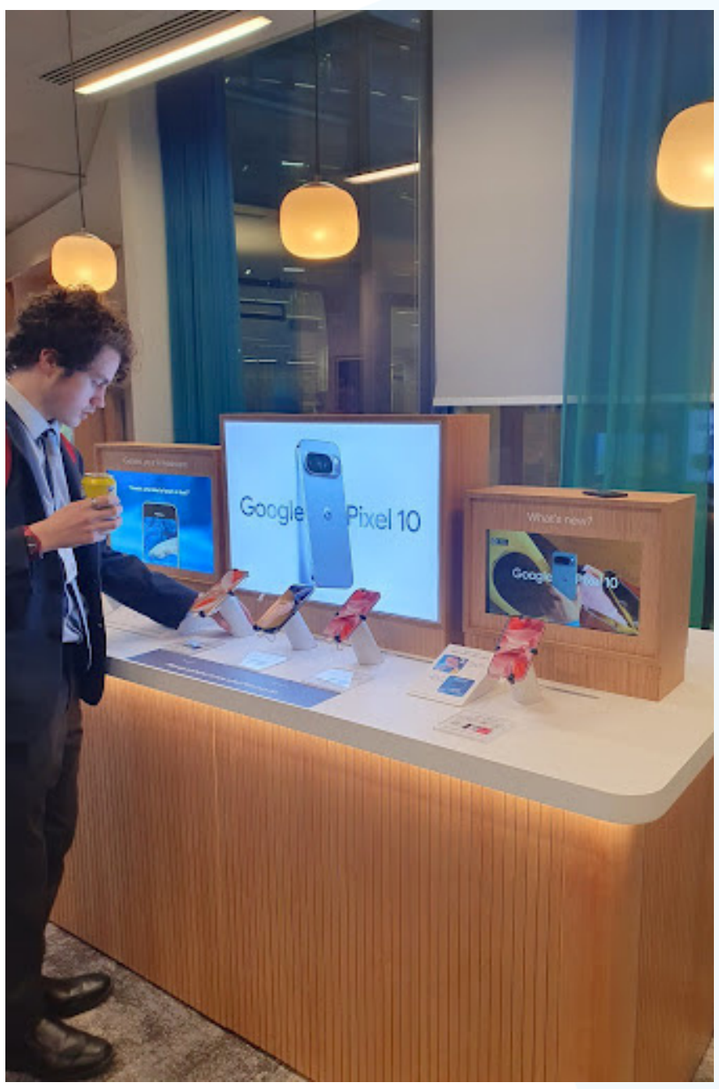
Our Year 10 Computer Science cohort recently enjoyed an exclusive trip to Google HQ in King's Cross. It was an incredible opportunity to step into the heart of the tech industry.

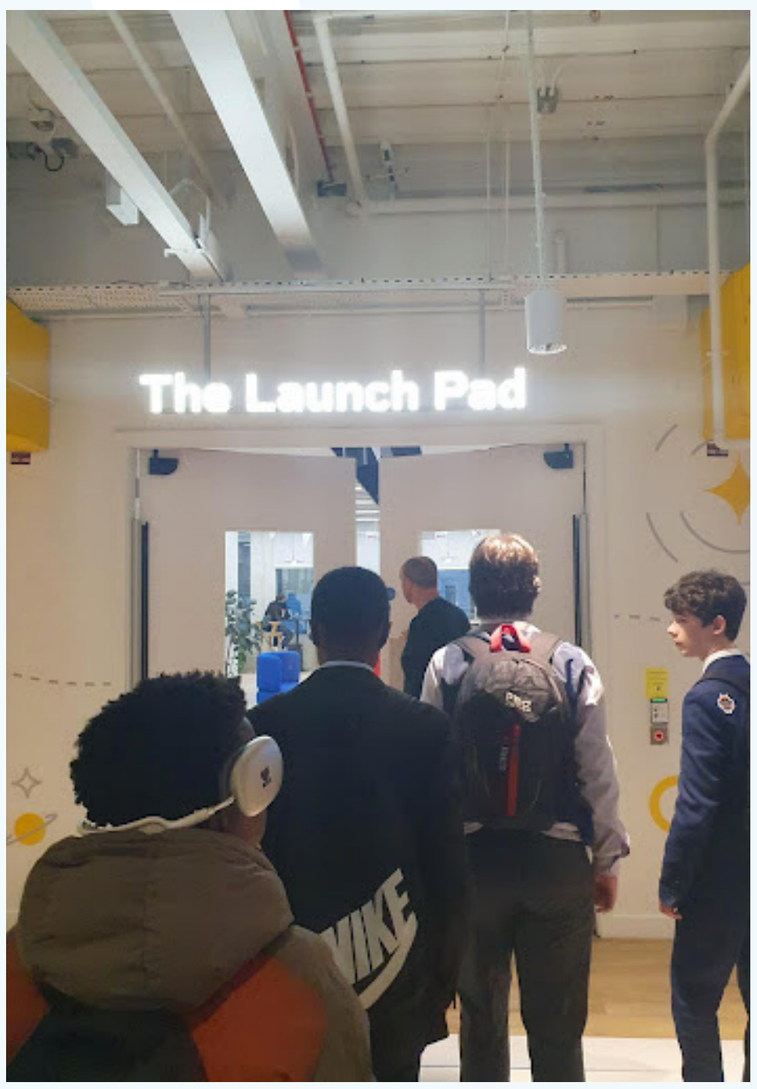
Highlights of the trip included:

The Future of AI: Students gained firsthand insight into how Google is reshaping the global landscape through AI innovation.

Exclusive Access: Our students were given a "behind-the-scenes" look at the latest tech and products currently in Beta testing, giving them a glimpse of the tools we will all be using in the future.

Career Inspiration: Seeing a world-class workspace in action has truly inspired our students as they consider their own paths in the world of technology.





NBA House: A Trip to Remember

Students recently took part in an unforgettable visit to NBA House in London, an immersive basketball experience designed to celebrate the sport, develop skills, and inspire the next generation of players and fans.

Throughout the day, students participated in a wide range of interactive challenges that tested their ability, teamwork, and competitiveness. Activities included dunk competitions, dribbling challenges, passing drills, and shooting contests, giving everyone the opportunity to showcase their skills while learning new techniques in a fun, high energy environment.

One of the standout moments came during a high pressure free throw shooting challenge, where participants had to score five baskets in 24 seconds from the free throw line. Several of our students rose to the challenge, with five students successfully completing the task, along with Mr Lawrence, earning each of them an official NBA Wilson basketball as a prize. The achievement highlighted both skill and composure under pressure, drawing plenty of attention and celebration from peers.

A major highlight of the visit was the opportunity to watch professional basketball freestylers perform live. Their incredible ball control, creativity and athleticism captivated students, demonstrating the dedication, practice and discipline required to perform at an elite level.

Students were also fortunate enough to meet Isiah Thomas, one of the most respected figures in basketball history. Isiah Thomas is a Hall of Fame former NBA point guard, best known for leading the Detroit Pistons to two NBA Championships and widely regarded as one of the greatest playmakers and leaders the sport has ever seen. Meeting him in person and hearing about his journey provided a powerful source of inspiration for our students.

To complete the experience, students had the rare opportunity to see and take photos with the Larry O'Brien Championship Trophy, the iconic award presented to the winners of the NBA Finals.

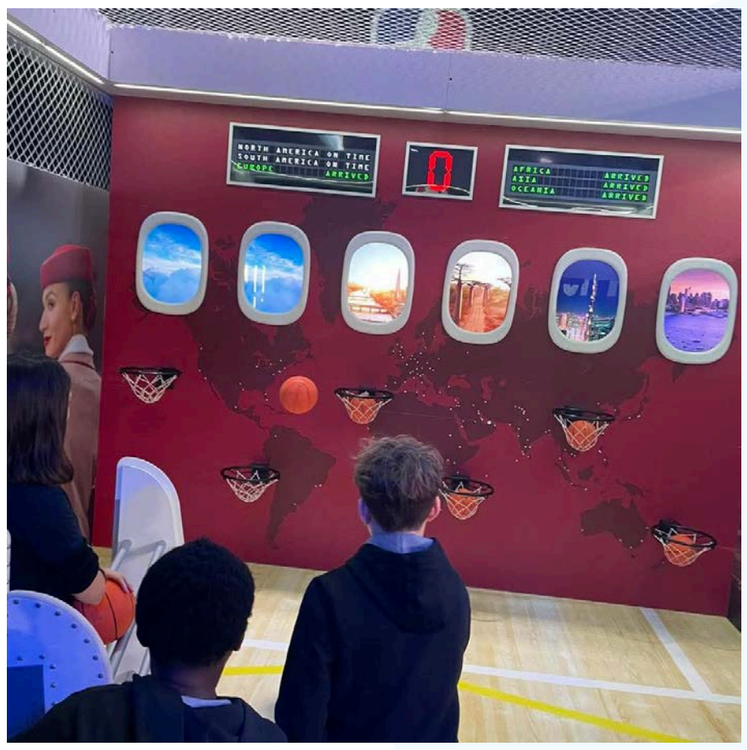
NBA House: A Trip to Remember

Students also took part in a dunk competition, where some impressed the judges and won Orlando Magic branded bags, adding to the excitement of the day.
A further free throw contest saw students compete for a range of prizes, including NBA keyrings, collectible cards and mini basketballs, ensuring there were plenty of memorable takeaways from the event.

The impact of the trip has already been felt back at school. Many students have developed a renewed passion for basketball, leading to increased attendance at our Thursday basketball club as more students look to build their skills and get involved. The experience has sparked fresh enthusiasm and strengthened the growing basketball culture within the school.

Charlie in Year 7 shared their excitement, saying, *“It was the best trip I’ve been on. The challenges were so fun and it made me want to practice more and get better at basketball.”*
Divine in Year 9 reflected on the inspiration gained from the experience, saying, *“Meeting Isiah Thomas and seeing how hard professionals work really motivated me. It has made me want to take basketball more seriously and follow my dream to play in the NBA.”*

Looking ahead, discussions are already underway about organising another trip to watch a London Lions match, following the success of previous visits. With student interest continuing to grow, this is an exciting opportunity to build further engagement in sport, teamwork and school pride. Watch this space.



Y8, Y11 and Y13 Parents' and Teacher Evenings

At Leigh UTC Dartford we recently welcomed parents and carers to our Year 8, Year 11 and Year 13 Parents' Evenings, the final formal opportunity to meet subject teachers ahead of this summer's GCSE examinations. With 74% attendance, the evening reflected the strong partnership between home and school that underpins success at Leigh UTC Dartford.

Year 8 Parent–Teacher Evening: Strong Conversations, Shared Ambitions
Leigh UTC Dartford recently welcomed families into school for the Year 8 Parent – Teacher Evening, providing an important opportunity to strengthen the partnership between home and school at a key stage in students' development. With 67% attendance, the evening enabled many parents and carers to engage in meaningful conversations with staff about their child's progress, engagement and next steps. Discussions focused on how students are developing independence and building the foundations for future academic and technical success. Staff valued the chance to share high expectations, celebrate progress and work collaboratively with families to support every student to thrive as they move further through their secondary journey.

Parents also had the opportunity to discuss next steps beyond GCSEs, including progression into post 16 technical pathways, A Levels, apprenticeships or industry linked routes, ensuring that students remain focused on both immediate outcomes and their long term ambitions. The evening reinforced Leigh UTC Dartfords' commitment to high expectations, personalised support and real world STEM education.

As Year 11 students now enter the final phase of their exam preparation, the shared message from staff and families was clear: with focused effort, resilience and continued collaboration, students are well placed to achieve their best possible outcomes this summer.

Year 13 Parent–Teacher Evening: Celebrating Progress and Looking Ahead
The Year 13 Parent–Teacher Evening marked a significant milestone at Leigh UTC Dartford, as it was the final opportunity for parents and carers to meet with staff before students move on to their next destination. The evening was reflective and celebratory, with conversations focused on progress, readiness for post school pathways, and the personal growth students have demonstrated during their time at the UTC.

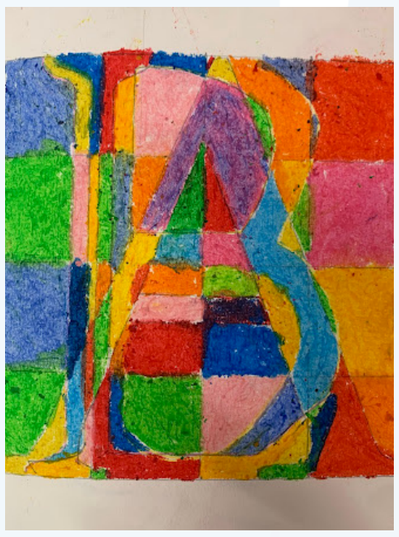
Ms Pamphlett shared her reflections on the evening, saying:

"I really enjoyed sharing the progress that my Y13 students have made."

Staff and families alike recognised the resilience, maturity and ambition shown by the cohort, and the evening served as a fitting moment to acknowledge how far students have come as they prepare for apprenticeships, higher education or employment.

Department News - Art

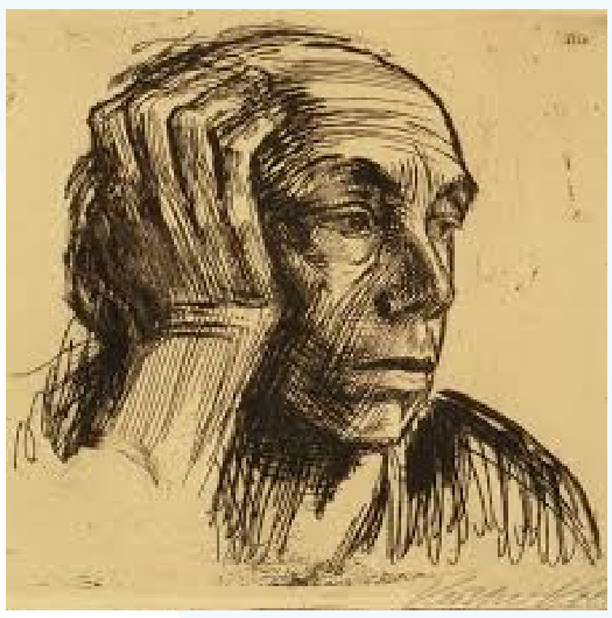
Our Year 7 students have been investigating the formal elements of Art through the lens of the Statement of Inquiry: "identity is shown through a style of pattern, shaped by time, place, and space." This exploration began with students channeling their imaginations into painting hybrid creatures, using a vibrant palette of warm colors to express personal narratives and internal worlds. Building on this, the cohort is now decoding the complexity of pattern by analysing the iconic works of Yayoi Kusama. By experimenting with intricate, mirrored designs, students are discovering how repetitive motifs can transform a physical space and reflect a unique artistic identity. Through these intricate patterns, students are discovering that art is more than just a decorative skill, it is a way to communicate who they are and how they see their place in the world.



Archie B, Year 8

Year 8 have been delving into typography, building their foundational lettering and layout skills. They are now beginning to create responses based on a social cause of their choice, selecting themes such as environmental issues or the right to vote. This project blends design thinking with creativity, encouraging students to communicate meaningful messages through strong visual language. By centering their work on advocacy, students are engaging in Service as Action, transitioning from passive learners to active global citizens. Through their typographic designs, they aim to raise awareness and inform others within the school community, demonstrating how art can be used as a tool for social change. This direct application of their classroom skills allows students to see the real-world impact of their voices, fulfilling the MYP requirement to develop international-mindedness through authentic service.

In Year 9, students have launched a poignant inquiry into Orientation in Space and Time through their latest project on War and Conflict. By examining the haunting lino prints of Käthe Kollwitz, students are exploring how personal histories and global "turning points" are etched into visual memory. As they develop their own lino-cut responses in Kollwitz's signature style, they are not merely learning a technique; they are investigating how art serves as a timeless record of human suffering and resilience across different eras and geographies. This process encourages students to reflect on the relationship between local experiences and universal themes, using their visual voice to bridge the gap between historical events and contemporary perspectives.



Kathe Kollwitz self-portrait and in photograph.

Department News - Art

Year 10:

Year 10 have made excellent progress in their Natural Forms project. They have recently developed lino prints inspired by abstracted forms, using contrast, pattern and mark-making to create striking visual outcomes. These prints will help inform the next stages of their coursework as they continue to refine their personal ideas.

Casey P, Year 10

Ryan P, Year 10

Oliver C, Year 10

Year 11:

Our Year 11 cohort has successfully concluded their Component 1 project. During a rigorous 10-hour focused study, students displayed incredible dedication and skill. Every student should be immensely proud of the sophisticated outcomes.

Justice, Year 11

Brooke B, Year 11

Minuka, Year 11

Shakayla A, Y11

Department News - Business

Year 10 Made in Bluewater Annual Competition Launch

The Made in Bluewater annual competition was officially launched at the Bluewater Management Offices, providing an exciting and inspiring opportunity for Year 10 students to engage with real-world business challenges.

A total of 15 Year 10 students attended the launch event, where they took part in three interactive sessions led by Bluewater executives.

These sessions focused on key areas essential to the successful running of a large retail destination:

- Sustainability – exploring environmentally responsible business practices and the importance of sustainable planning
- Marketing – understanding how to attract and engage customers
- Display & Logistics – learning how operations help create eye catching shop spaces and support retail success

Following these sessions, students were set a challenging and creative brief. Working in teams, they are tasked with designing a new space or shop concept for a product or service not currently available at Bluewater. Their proposals must aim to attract new customers, with sustainability placed at the forefront of their planning and decision-making.

Students have been given a six-week deadline to develop their ideas ahead of the final presentations. As part of the process, Bluewater executives will visit the school in three weeks' time to hear students present their draft ideas, offering professional feedback and guidance to help refine their concepts.

The launch event successfully set the tone for the competition, motivating students and giving them valuable insight into business, sustainability, and innovation within a real commercial environment.

The Made in Bluewater competition promises to be an engaging and enriching experience, helping students develop creativity, teamwork, and presentation skills while working closely with industry professionals.

Department News - Business

Report: Made in Bluewater Challenge – Student Idea Showcase

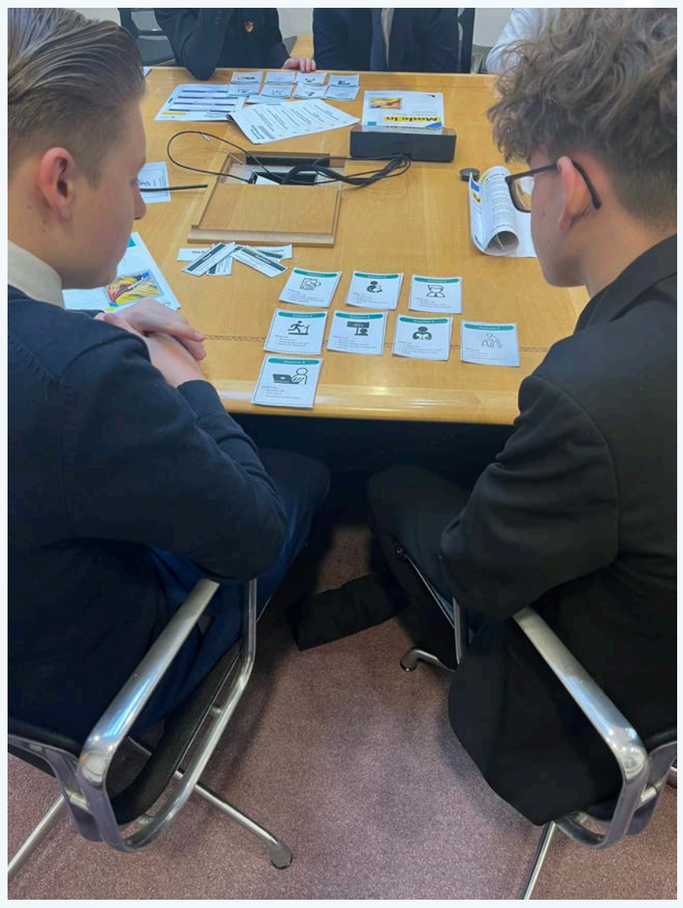
On Tuesday 3rd February, delegates from Bluewater visited the Leigh IA boardroom to meet with potential student finalists participating in the Made in Bluewater Challenge. The event provided an exciting opportunity for students to present and discuss their innovative concepts for the future of the shopping and leisure experience.

During the session, student groups shared a variety of creative ideas, including:

- A 10-pin bowling experience designed for family and social outings.
- Children's play areas that blend fun with safe, interactive environments.
- A robotic café offering hot and cold drinks, tailored specifically for teenagers.
- A teenage-focused brand of clothing.
- A range of pet supplies, catering to young animal enthusiasts.

Delegates were able to observe students designing logos and drafting floor plans, showcasing both the practical and creative thinking behind each concept. The collaborative atmosphere highlighted the students' enthusiasm and ingenuity, demonstrating promising future talent in retail and leisure innovation.

Overall, the session marked an engaging step in the Made in Bluewater Challenge, connecting young innovators with industry mentors and providing valuable feedback for their projects.



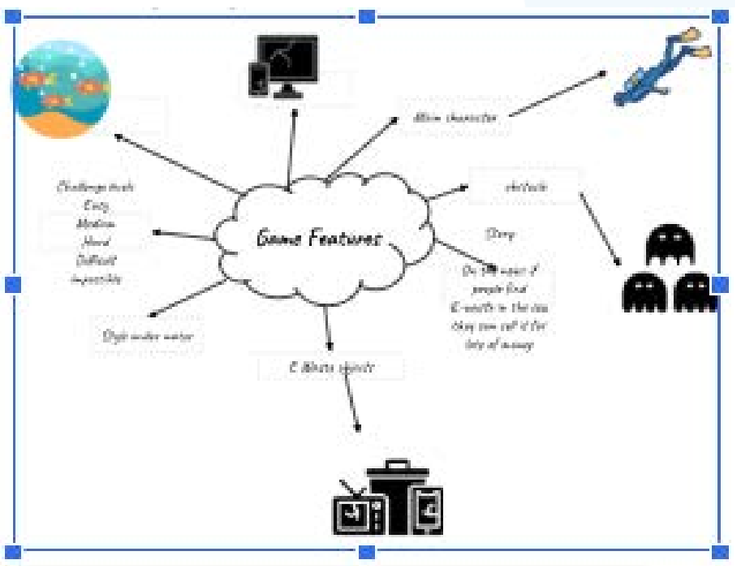
Department News - Computing

Exploring Culture & Identity

This term, our curriculum has centered on Cultural Expressions. Through the MYP framework, students have been diving deep into their own cultural identities while gaining valuable insights into the perspectives of others. By connecting technology with human experience. We are also prioritising Sustainable Development within our modules. Our Year 7 students have been investigating the environmental impact of E-Waste. They are learning the importance of responsible tech consumption and the lifecycle of the devices they use every day.

MYP

Year 7 have started exploring the impact humans have on the environment, focusing on our oceans and the issue of e-waste. They're getting a head start on their next Scratch module by mapping out their game ideas now, it's going to be exciting to see how they bring these important themes to life!



Harry S, Y7

Arthur P, Y7

Year 8 students are currently learning how to make programs interactive using the input() command and selection (if-statements). The input() command allows a program to pause and wait for a user to type information, which is then stored in a variable for later use. Students are learning that once that data is captured, selection statements allow the program to make decisions based on that data. By using if, elif, and else, students can direct the code to follow different paths - such as granting access only if a password is correct or displaying a specific message based on a user's age. Students use Python to express their identity, values, or culture, while they transition from learning "how" to code to understanding "why" we code. By using variables to store meaningful terms in their native language or print commands to share traditional stories and customs, the code becomes a digital canvas for self-expression.

Our Year 9 MYP students have been diving deep into the fascinating intersection of technology and linguistics. In a world where digital tools often do the talking for us, our students are asking a critical question: Does an app truly understand what we mean, or is it just using common words? As part of their current unit, students are investigating the diverse nature of language. They've been put to the test using MYP Criterion A to analyse how popular translation apps function. The core of their research focuses on "Cultural Nuance" , the idea that language is built on history and emotion, not just dictionary definitions. Students will look towards creating a Cultural Chatbot, an interactive bot designed to teach others the "untranslatable" parts of a language slang, idioms, and local etiquette.

Department News - Computing

Others are programming translators that aim to reflect the true, diverse nature of speech, ensuring that meaning isn't "lost in translation." Students are learning that global communication requires more than just a good algorithm; it requires empathy and cultural awareness. We are incredibly proud of how they are using their digital skills to enhance a more connected and understanding world.

GCSE Computer Science

Our Year 10 Computer Science students have reached an exciting turning point in their journey. Having mastered the fundamental programming constructs, they are now transitioning from learners to problem-solvers, preparing themselves for the rigorous demands of the GCSE curriculum. At its heart, Computer Science is about finding solutions to real-world issues. We have seen a massive surge in student confidence as they tackle complex challenges. They are no longer just "writing code", they are designing systems.

To bridge the gap to advanced programming, this module focuses on the sophisticated tools used by professional developers. Students are currently exploring:

- Arrays: Learning to manage and organize large sets of data efficiently.
- Functions & Procedures: Mastering "modular" programming by breaking complex problems into smaller, reusable blocks of code.
- SQL & Databases: In the final phase of the module, students will dive into Structured Query Language (SQL), learning how to build, query, and manage the digital databases that power the modern world. By the end of this term, our students won't just know how to code—they will understand the architecture of the digital age.

Year 11

As we bring this module to a close, our students are reaching a pivotal milestone: completing the curriculum for Paper 1. With the summer examinations appearing on the horizon, our focus is shifting from learning new content to mastering the art of the exam. In the coming weeks, students will engage in intensive retrieval practice; strengthening their memory of key concepts while refining the specific exam techniques required to excel. Our goal is to ensure every student feels confident, composed, and fully prepared when they turn over that first page.

To ensure students are studying the *right* content, we recommend these specific resources tailored to the **OCR J277 specification**:

- **Craig 'n' Dave (OCR J277 Playlist):** Widely considered the "gold standard." Their videos are bite-sized and follow the OCR specification point-by-point.
- **Computer Science Tutor:** Excellent for live paper walkthroughs and explaining how to pick up marks on difficult 8-mark "Extended Response" questions.
- **Seneca Learning:** An interactive platform that uses spaced repetition to ensure key definitions (like RAM vs. ROM) stay in long-term memory.

Department News - Design Technology and Food

Design & Technology: Strong Progress Across the Department

As the academic year continues, the Design and Technology department is going from strength to strength, with students across all key stages demonstrating growing confidence, creativity and technical skill.

KS3 Food Technology

KS3 Food Technology lessons remain vibrant and purposeful, with students developing core practical skills while exploring nutrition, flavours and presentation. Through hands-on experience, students are gaining a secure understanding of the full food production process, from planning and preparation through to execution and evaluation.

KS3 Engineering

KS3 Engineering students are showing growing confidence and curiosity as they work on increasingly ambitious projects. They are safely and effectively using more complex machinery, experimenting with new ideas and demonstrating clear progress in their design and making skills. This confidence is translating into greater innovation and a willingness to problem-solve independently.

Year 10 & 11: Innovation in Action

Our Year 10 and 11 students are making excellent progress, showing increased independence and maturity in their approach to learning. They are applying design principles with greater accuracy, engaging confidently in enquiry-based learning and refining their ideas through thoughtful iteration. The quality of work continues to improve, reflecting both their commitment and developing technical understanding. Students are building the problem-solving, resilience and creativity that will support them in future study and employment.

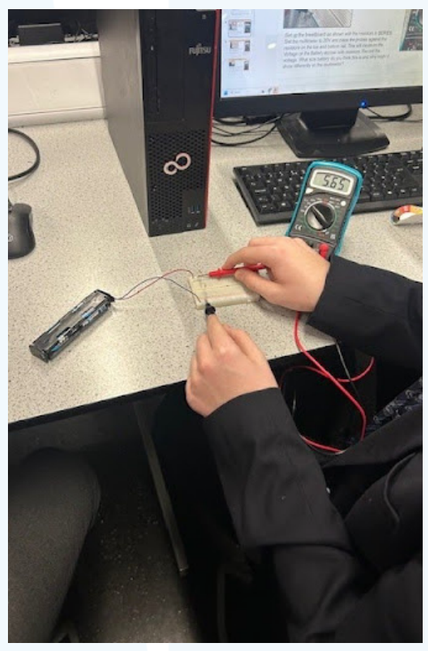
Year 12 & 13: Advanced Thinking and Professional Practice

Students in Years 12 and 13 are demonstrating impressive levels of independence, technical competence and critical thinking. They are engaging confidently with more complex design briefs, managing extended projects effectively and applying advanced subject knowledge with increasing precision. Many students are beginning to adopt a more professional approach to their work, reflecting industry practices through detailed research, testing and evaluation. This prepares them well for higher education, apprenticeships and careers within design, engineering and related sectors.

Department News - Engineering

Year 10 Electronics Students Bring Theory to Life Through Practical Investigation

Year 10 Electronics students have been developing their understanding by combining core theory with hands-on practical experimentation. At this stage of the course, students are currently working on a timing unit, where they will learn how electronic systems can be used to control and manage time; a key principle in everything from lighting systems and alarms to automation and programmable devices.



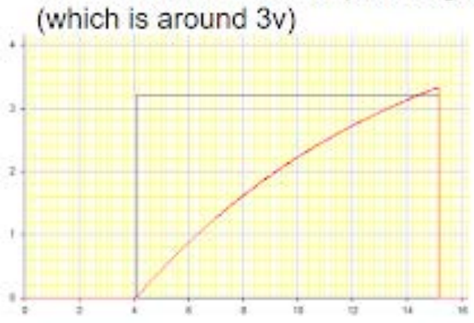
To build confidence and deepen understanding, students have begun by experimenting with breadboards, allowing them to assemble circuits quickly using real components. This approach supports highly effective learning, as students are able to compare the behaviour of real-world circuits with the results generated through computer-based circuit simulations. Students have been exploring how closely practical outcomes match theoretical predictions, while also recognising how real components can introduce variation.

As part of the practical work, students completed a structured set of experiments focused on developing accurate testing and measurement skills. They learned how to correctly measure voltage, current and resistance, while also gaining a stronger appreciation of component tolerances and how these can affect results. Students also investigated the differences between series and parallel circuit configurations, and how to connect measurement equipment appropriately depending on the type of reading required.

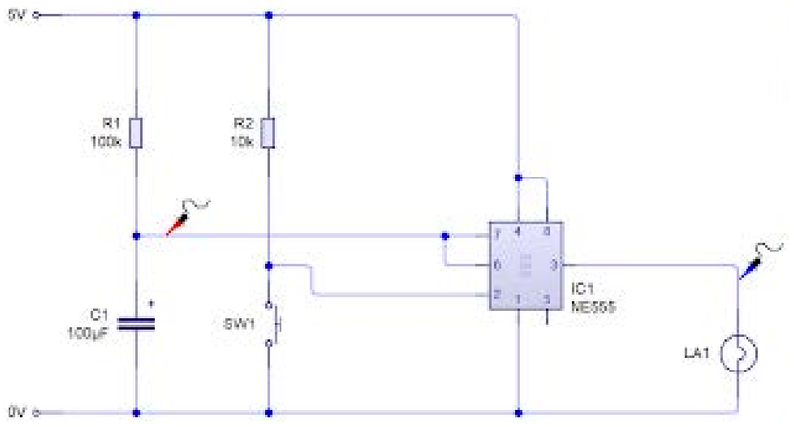
This unit is giving students a strong foundation in electronic principles, while also developing careful working habits, independent problem-solving, and the precision required for more advanced circuit design later in the course.

Investigation - Cont.

Using graphing tool and probes from circuit wizard calculate the trigger voltage at red that will turn the lamp of. Slightly above the measurement of the blue probe (which is around 3v)



What percentage of max voltage is this? (3.31/5)x100 = 66.2% or 331/500



Setup the following circuit in circuit wizard.

Describe what happens when you click the switch? The lamp turns on The red probe measures the increasing charge in the capacitor, and the blue probe measures a constant just above 3v then both measurements drop to zero approximately 11-12 seconds after the switch is pressed

Department News - Engineering

Year 11 Engineering Students Master Precision Manufacturing

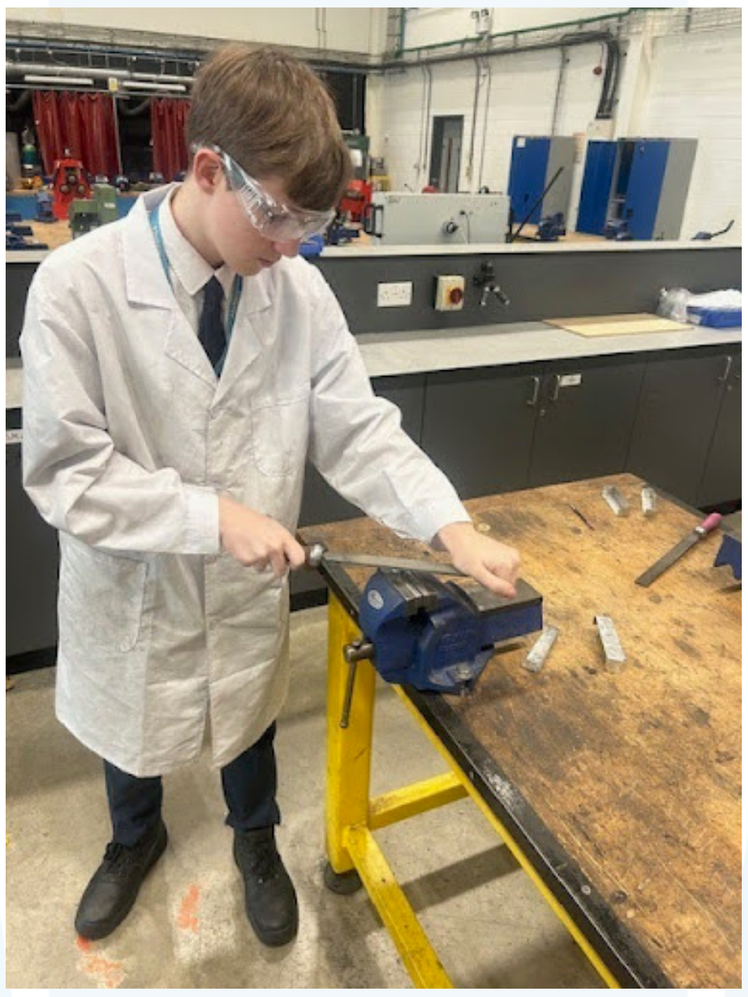
Year 11 students have been working exceptionally hard on their NEA coursework, currently focused on the manufacture of precision components for a craft roller project.

This is a fantastic opportunity for students to experience real-world engineering, as they are required to plan and produce parts using a wide range of manufacturing methods.

Students are selecting and applying an impressive combination of processes, including the use of specialist machinery such as milling machines and lathes, alongside important hand-fitting and finishing techniques.

These practical skills are further supported through careful inspection and measurement, helping students develop the accuracy and attention to detail expected in industry.

Alongside this, our department technicians have been providing expert guidance, supporting small groups of students in developing more advanced milling techniques. This additional training is helping students build confidence with complex machinery and reinforces the high-level technical learning taking place within the workshop.



Department News - Engineering

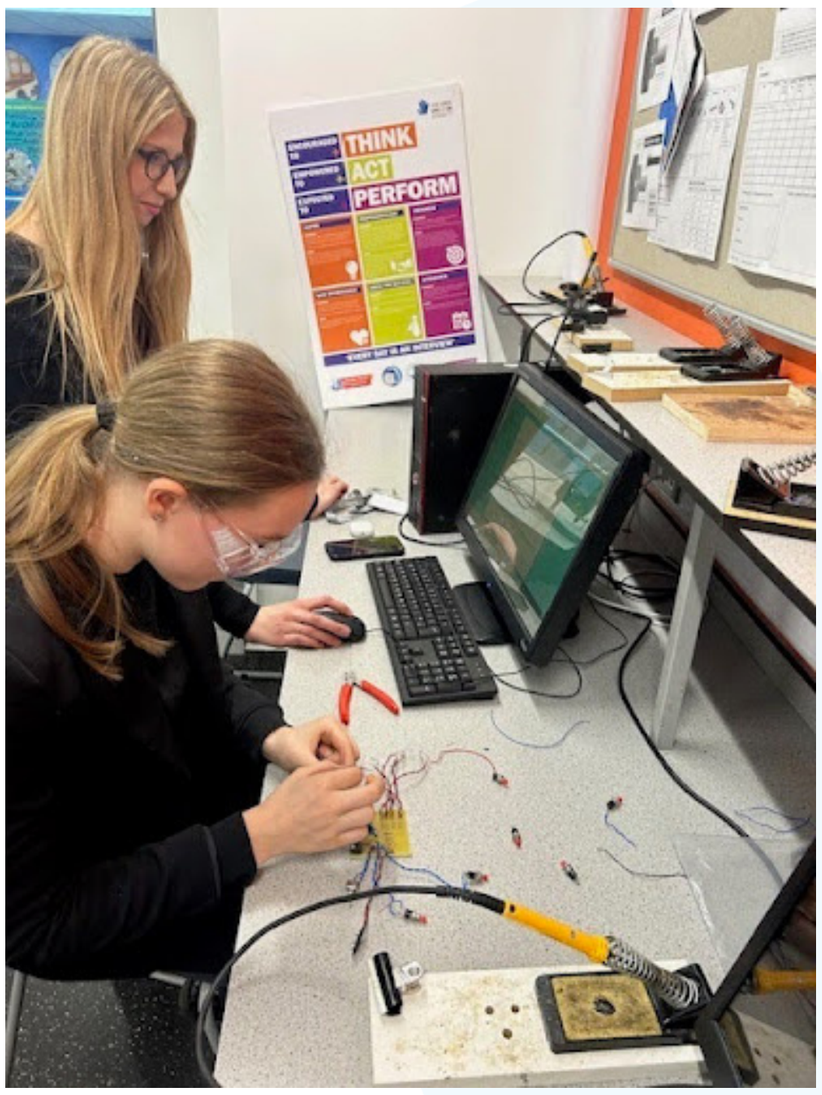
T-Level Students Create 'Moody' Microcontroller Project for Baker Award Entry

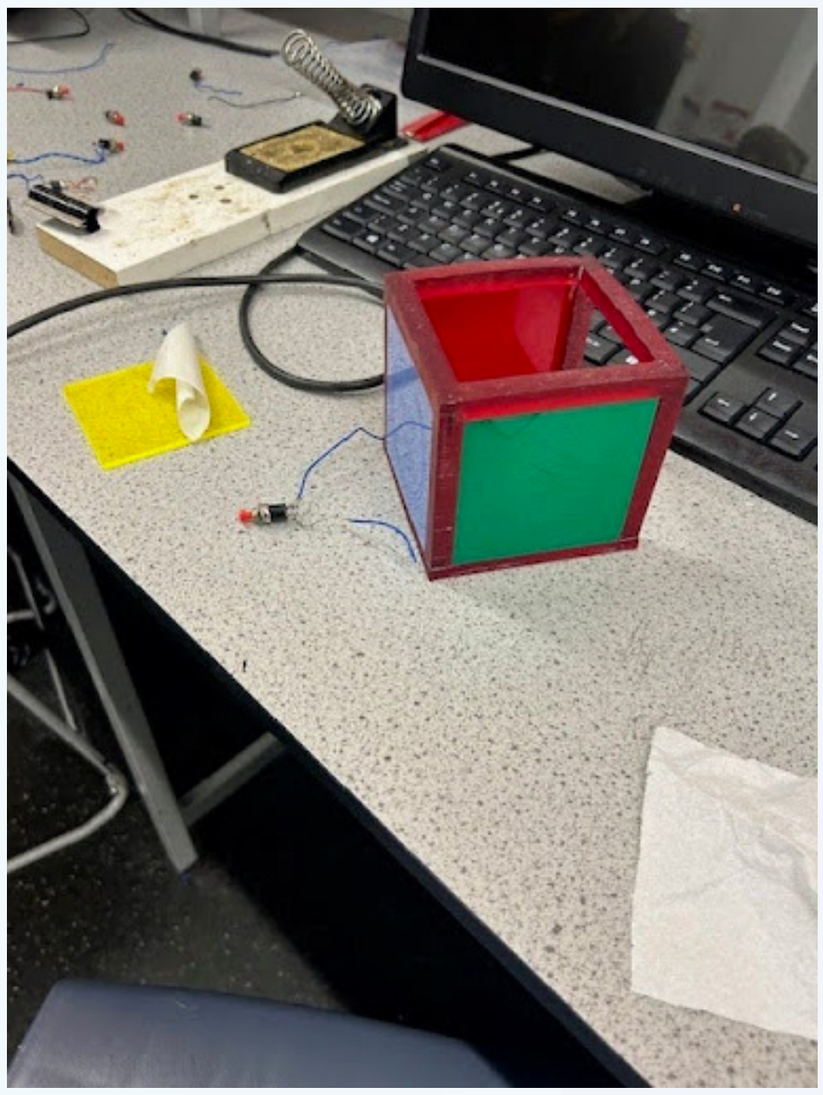
Year 12 T-Level students have been showcasing their developing Electronics skills by designing and building an innovative project as part of a Baker Award entry. As part of their course, students have been learning how to create and program microcontroller-based circuits, gaining experience in both electronics design and embedded programming; key skills in today's technology-driven industries.

Two students in particular, Sophie O and Amelia S, have put these skills to excellent use through their project titled "Moody". This thoughtfully designed device aims to support young people who may find it difficult to outwardly communicate their emotions. The concept is simple but powerful: users can pick up a cube, and depending on which side is facing upwards, the cube will light up a facial expression that best represents how the person is feeling.

This project has required a wide range of technical and creative skills, including designing electronic circuitry, programming microcontroller inputs and outputs, and building a user-friendly product that is both engaging and meaningful. Most importantly, the work demonstrates how technology can be used not only for innovation, but also to improve communication and wellbeing.

Below are some of the key stages of their development process, including the manufacture of the prototype and their impression of how the product could look if produced on a mass scale.





Department News - Engineering

T-Level Students Push Engineering Precision to Industry Standard

Our Year 13 T-Level students are now in the final stages of preparation for their Occupational Specialism in Machining and Tool Making; a demanding and highly respected component of the qualification that mirrors real industrial practice.

Throughout this stage of their training, students are working to extremely high standards of accuracy, aiming to produce components to a tolerance of 1/100th of a millimetre (0.01 mm). This level of precision requires not only excellent practical skill, but also strong understanding of measurement and inspection processes, including the careful use of specialist equipment to verify dimensions and quality throughout the machining process.

In addition to developing advanced machining techniques to shape and refine component parts, students are also focusing on a key expectation within modern engineering: efficiency. They are learning how to optimise machining processes in order to achieve the best balance of Speed, Time, and Quality; exactly the combination that industry demands. This includes making decisions around tool selection, machining strategy, cutting speeds and feeds, and planning workflows to reduce waste and improve consistency.

This final phase is an outstanding demonstration of students applying technical knowledge, precision engineering, and problem-solving under conditions that reflect the expectations of the engineering and manufacturing workplace.




Department News - Engineering

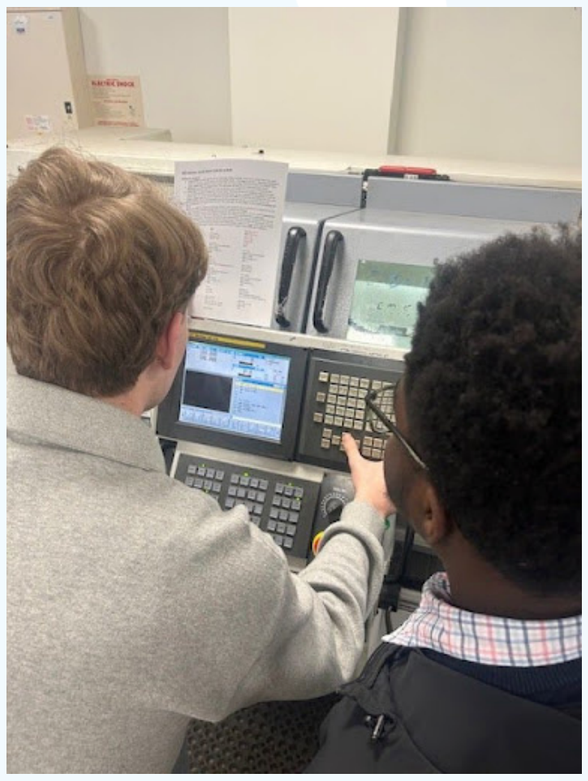
BTEC Engineering Students Take On Advanced CNC Programming and Machining

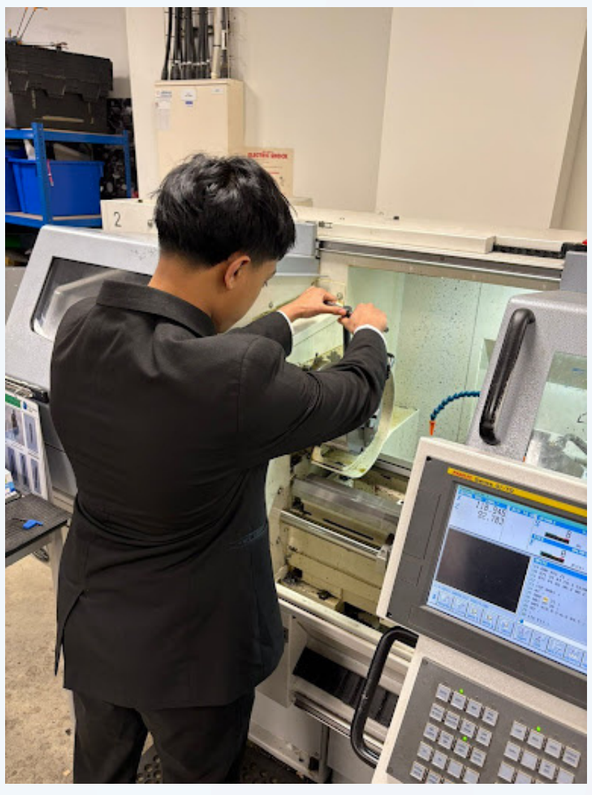
Our Year 13 BTEC Engineering students have been completing Unit 43: CNC Machining, a unit that develops many of the key skills required in modern engineering and manufacturing industries. As part of the unit, students have been learning how to program CNC machinery using simulation software, gaining a detailed understanding of how coded instructions control automated machining processes. They began by writing CNC code from scratch, developing a full program to manufacture a hammer handle component designed to be accurately fitted to a hammer head. This process required careful planning, strong attention to detail, and a clear appreciation of how machining decisions impact both accuracy and surface finish.

Once the initial program had been completed and tested, students progressed to adapting their work for use on the Harrison Alpha CNC Lathe. They transferred their program into the machine and ran a full CNC simulation, allowing them to check toolpaths, anticipate errors, and ensure safe and efficient machining; mirroring the approach taken within industry to maximise both productivity and quality.

Students then moved from virtual modelling to real-world production by machining the hammer handle on the CNC lathe itself. This gave them valuable experience in machine setup, process monitoring, and safe workshop practice, while building confidence in working with advanced equipment. Following manufacture, students carried out precision inspection and measurement, checking tolerances and quality of outcome using engineering measurement tools. Where needed, they demonstrated strong problem-solving by making manual adjustments and refinements to improve the final component.

This unit has given students an excellent insight into CNC production methods and highlights the combination of technical ability, accuracy, and professional working practices being developed through BTEC Engineering.

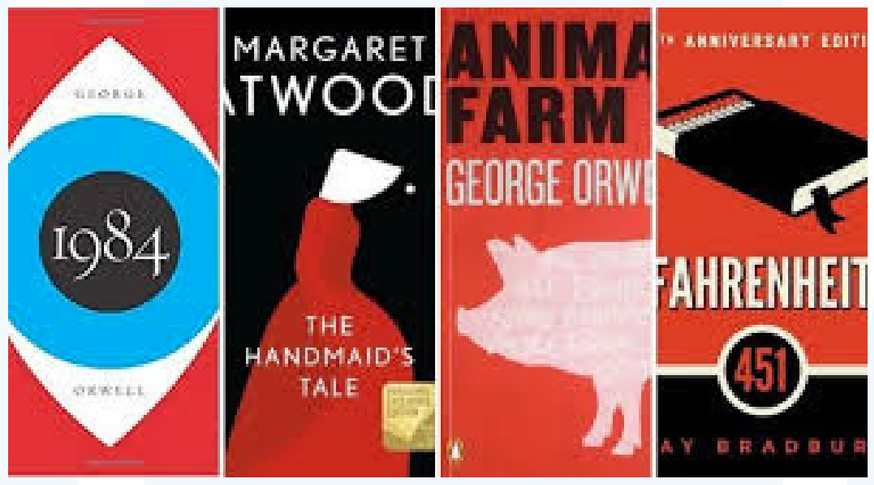




Department News - English

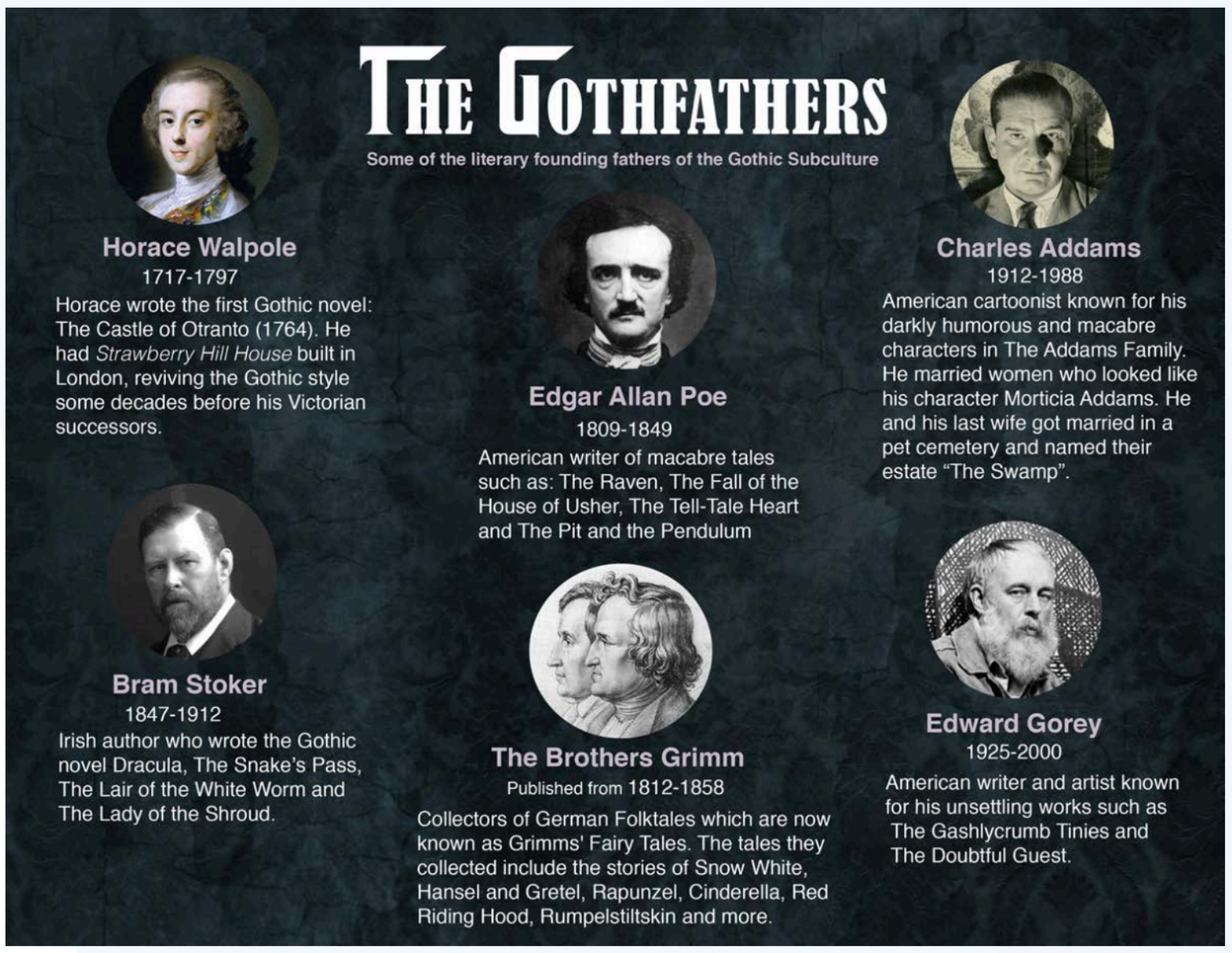
We have enjoyed another fantastic module at Leigh UTC Dartford in the English Department!

We have seen excellent engagement from both Year 8 and Year 9 as they continue to develop and refine their creative writing skills.



This module, Year 8 have focused on dystopian fiction and have produced some fantastic narratives, drawing on ideas from well-known texts spanning the last 100 years. They have studied the Dystopian genre, narrative conventions such as totalitarianism and techniques to be able to make comparisons and connections to societies that existed in the past and that exist in the world today. They looked at themes of control, facism, surveillance and misogyny in character archetypes and psychological elements within plotlines from extracts of famous texts such as '1984' by George Orwell, 'The Handmaid's Tale' by Margaret Atwood, 'Fahrenheit 451', Never Let Me Go' by Kazuo Ishiguro and 'The Hunger Games' by Suzanne Collins.

Similarly, Year 9 students have demonstrated some truly impressive creative writing in their study of gothic fiction, successfully building on the texts explored in class and confidently using key gothic conventions in their own work. They have studied popular gothic themes, motifs and techniques such as the supernatural, haunted settings, character archetypes and psychological elements within plotlines from extracts of famous texts such as 'Dracula' by Bram Stoker, 'Frankenstein' by Mary Shelley, 'Jane Eyre' by Charlotte Bronte and 'The Red Room' by H.G. Wells.



The Year 11 cohort has shown a really positive level of enthusiasm in their participation in intervention this module.
Students have engaged well with the sessions, showing commitment, focus, and a willingness to improve.

Their consistent effort and readiness to tackle challenging work have been clear, and this approach is already paying off. Continuing with this level of engagement will be excellent preparation for their upcoming mocks and will help them build confidence moving forward.

Department News - German

The German Department, focused on developing core language skills to help them progress confidently in their German learning journey. We were particularly excited to receive the details for our German 'pen-friend' scheme with our link school, the Geschwister-Scholl-Gymnasium, and can't wait for our students to start exchanging letters and learning more about life in Germany. We are now looking forward to the next module, where students in Years 7, 8, and 9 will be working on a variety of projects. These projects will give them the opportunity to use German more creatively in different contexts, while also deepening their cultural awareness.

Klasse 7: Was machst du in deiner Freizeit?

Year 7 have been busy exploring the topic of *Freizeit* in their German lessons. They have learned how to talk and write about their hobbies using the present tense, as well as how to express what they like and don't like doing in their free time. As part of this topic, pupils also discovered more about Handball, a very popular sport in Germany. They are now excited to put their language skills into practice by sharing personal details about themselves with their German pen friends from our link school, the Geschwister-Scholl-Gymnasium, helping to build confidence and cultural understanding.

Klasse 8: Wir gehen aus!

Year 8 have been developing their German skills by learning how to talk and write about items of clothing, with a particular focus on what people wear when going out. As part of this topic, they researched the German department store Otto Online and took part in some virtual shopping. Students also explored German fashion trends and discovered that they are not very different from those in the British fashion world. When comparing prices, they found that some fashion items, such as shoes and boots, were more expensive in Germany than on the UK high street. They then presented their findings in a mini project, showcasing both their language skills and cultural knowledge.

Klasse 9: Meine Ambitionen!

Year 9 have been discussing their future ambitions and what they would like to do with their lives. They have been using the conditional tense to express their plans and hopes for the future. To support their language development, students have also learned about different word order rules in German and how to justify their opinions using a range of conjunctions. This has enabled them to create more detailed and complex sentences, often changing the word order to reflect more advanced structures.

Department News - German

Klasse 10: Popular Culture

Students have been exploring Theme Two: Popular Culture, which covers a range of exciting topics. They have learned about free-time activities, discovering how people spend their leisure time in German-speaking countries. They have also explored customs, festivals, and celebrations, gaining insight into cultural traditions. Finally, students have looked at celebrity culture, discussing the influence of famous figures and comparing it to their own experiences. This theme has helped them develop both their language skills and cultural understanding in German.

Year 10 students have been working hard to improve their GCSE exam skills and recently completed a full GCSE paper testing all four skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. They have been using more complex sentence structures by incorporating high-level opinion phrases, which gives their written and spoken German more variety and helps them achieve higher marks. All students have shown great dedication in preparing for these exams, and the German Department would like to say a big well done and encourage them to keep up the excellent work!

Klasse 11: Ich drücke die Daumen!

The German expression "Ich drücke die Daumen" literally means "I press (or squeeze) my thumbs." Germans use it to wish someone good luck, similar to saying "fingers crossed" in English. The idea comes from a traditional gesture where people would cross or press their thumbs as a sign of hope or support, symbolically "holding" luck in their hands.

Year 11 students have been fully focused on exam practice and improving the skills needed to succeed in their GCSE German exams. They have continued to prepare for the speaking exam, which includes several tasks: a role-play, describing two pictures, a reading aloud task to test their ability to produce authentic German sounds, and a general conversation where they must talk freely about any topic studied over the two-year course. The German Department wishes all Year 11 students the very best of luck in their upcoming GCSE speaking exam on 28th April 2026!

Department News - History

Why Holocaust Memorial Day Matters in 2026

Every year on January 27, the world pauses to observe *Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD)*. This date marks the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, the largest Nazi death camp, in 1945. While eighty-one years have passed since that day, the lessons of the Holocaust are more vital for our society today than ever before.

The theme for 2026 is *Bridging Generations*. As we move further away from the events of the 1930s and 40s, we are entering a period where very few survivors are still with us to tell their stories in person. This makes our generation; the young people in schools today, the vital "bridge" to the future.

When we listen to a survivor's testimony or read the diary of someone like Anne Frank, we aren't just learning history; we are accepting a baton. It becomes our responsibility to ensure these stories don't fade into abstract facts in a textbook, but remain living lessons about the value of human life.

It isn't just about looking backward; it’s about looking around us right now. The Holocaust didn't start with gas chambers; it started with words, whispers, and "us vs. them" mentalities. HMD reminds us that small acts of prejudice, if left unchallenged, can grow into systemic hatred. By remembering the past, we learn to spot the "warning signs" in our own social media feeds and communities; like scapegoating or dehumanizing language.

The real importance of *Holocaust Memorial Day* in 2026 lies in what we do after the candles are lit and the silence is over. It is a call to be an upstander rather than a bystander.

In a world where misinformation and "fake news" can spread rapidly, being a "bridge" means being a critical thinker. It means standing up for a classmate who is being bullied because of their background and refusing to let hateful jokes pass unchallenged.

As we mark *Holocaust Memorial Day* this year, remember that you are part of a global community committed to a better future. By learning these stories and "bridging the generations," you aren't just honoring those who were lost; you are building a world grounded in empathy, respect, and the courage to speak out.

HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY 27/1

יד ושם
YAD VASHEM
THE WORLD HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE CENTER

Department News - Geography

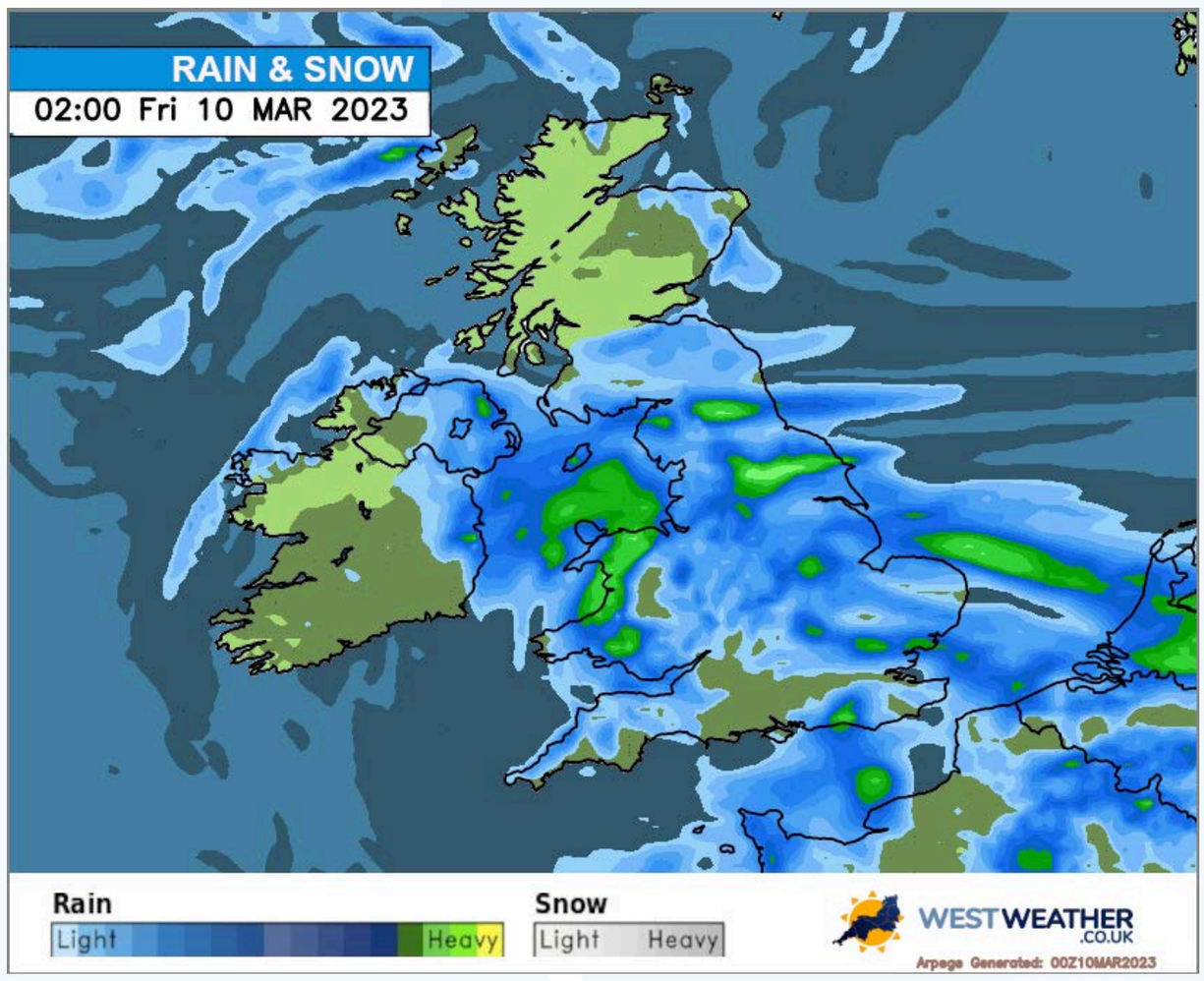
It has been an action-packed term for our KS3 and KS4 geographers, exploring the forces that shape our planet and our lives.

Year 7: The UK's "rubbish" Weather
Students cracked the code on why we need umbrellas in Kent! By studying the five main air masses that meet over the UK, Year 7 explored how the Atlantic Ocean and the Europe-Asia continent create our famous "mixed bag" of weather.

Year 8: Science Meets Geography
In an Interdisciplinary Unit with the Science department, Year 8 investigated how urbanisation impacts the natural world. Students focused on how expanding cities disrupt animal migration, successfully transferring knowledge between both subjects.

Year 9: Measuring Development
Year 9 looked at global progress beyond just wealth. By analysing life expectancy, literacy rates, and standards of living, they compared the UK to the rest of the world to better understand global inequalities.

Year 10: Real-World Geography
Our GCSE students are connecting classroom theory to modern events. By exploring major global events and physical features, Year 10s are developing the critical thinking skills needed as future global citizens.



Department News - Mathematics

Welcome to Maths in 2026 at Leigh UTC Dartford!

This term, our students across Key Stages 3 and 4 have been making great strides across the board, with tailored approaches to help every learner thrive.

In KS3, we've been hard at work modifying our MYP assessment programme to ensure they are as rich and accessible for students as possible. These changes are helping our mathematicians engage with the subject content more confidently and meaningfully. Year 9 students, for example, are about to explore the world of angles via snooker with videos integrated to see how maths can be used in real life scenarios, including sports. Our intention is to demonstrate that while our curriculum is robust and helps students achieve mastery, education doesn't always have to feel like traditional classroom exercise.

Over in KS4, our Year 10 students are about to complete the first round of mock exams. Rather than overwhelming them with a full set of papers, we will start with just one exam in GCSE Maths and GCSE Statistics to help students get into the habit of answering questions in the format they will encounter next summer. This approach gives them a chance to familiarise themselves with exam expectations, practise time management, and start identifying areas where they might need extra support – all while building confidence in a low-pressure environment. We'll also be providing a full question level analysis for every student so they, and you, can plan for future learning.

For Year 11, the focus is now firmly on preparing for the 2026 exams. Students are ramping up practice, working through exam-style questions, and receiving targeted interventions based on the latest question-level analyses. By carefully identifying which areas need attention, we can provide support that is tailored to each student's needs, helping them consolidate knowledge, refine skills, and approach their exams with confidence.

As ever, if you have any questions about your child's progress, please feel free to reach out to the Maths team who will be happy to answer any questions.

Department News - Physical Education (PE)

Creating Movement That Matters: Exploring Aesthetics Across KS3

This term, KS3 Physical Education has been buzzing with creativity, collaboration and careful consideration of aesthetics. Across gymnastics and dance, students in Years 7, 8 and 9 have been challenged not only to develop physical skills, but also to think deeply about *how* movement looks, feels and communicates meaning. The focus has been clear: creating routines that are aesthetically pleasing, purposeful and engaging.

Year 7: Building Strong Foundations

Year 7 students have begun their gymnastics journey by exploring the fundamentals of movement. Lessons have focused on shape, balance and rotation, helping students understand the building blocks of effective routines. From tucked and stretched shapes to controlled balances and smooth rotations, pupils have learned that quality of movement matters just as much as execution.

A key highlight has been the strong cross-curricular link with maths. Students have been using mathematical vocabulary to describe their work, identifying shapes, angles and symmetry within their routines. This has helped deepen understanding in both subjects, showing pupils how learning connects beyond the classroom.

In Dance, Year 7 have explored movement through the theme of the elements: fire, water, air and earth. Each element provided a creative starting point, encouraging students to think about how different qualities of movement can communicate meaning. Sharp, powerful actions were used to represent fire, while fluid and continuous movements reflected water. Light, airy jumps and turns captured the essence of air, and strong, grounded actions helped portray earth. By experimenting with actions and levels, pupils learned how varying movement quality and height can enhance the aesthetic appeal of a routine and clearly express an idea.

Year 8: Developing Complexity and Creativity

Building on the foundations laid in Year 7, Year 8 students have progressed to linking more complex skills together in gymnastics. The challenge has been to combine skills smoothly while maintaining control, flow and visual appeal. Pupils have worked collaboratively to refine transitions and ensure routines remain aesthetically pleasing from start to finish. In dance, the focus has shifted towards timing and formations, with the exciting theme of superheroes driving creativity. Students have explored how different formations can suggest teamwork, conflict or power, while precise timing has been used to enhance impact. A key learning point has been understanding how movement choices help to create a clear narrative, transforming routines into performances that tell a story rather than a sequence of steps.

Department News - Physical Education (PE)

Year 9: Refinement, Meaning and Motif

Year 9 students have taken their work to the next level by tackling advanced gymnastics skills such as trio counter balances and counter tension. These require trust, communication and precise body control, encouraging students to think critically about weight distribution, stability and visual symmetry. The result has been routines that demonstrate both technical proficiency and strong aesthetic awareness.

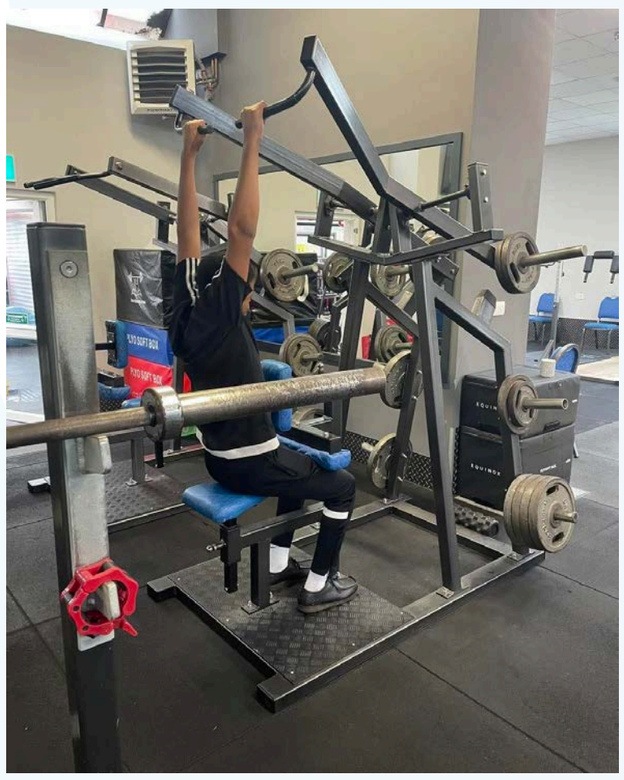
In Dance, the class has explored the work of Banksy as a motif, using visual imagery as inspiration for movement. Students have analysed how images can convey powerful messages and translated these ideas into physical expression. This has encouraged thoughtful choreography, where every movement serves a purpose and contributes to the overall meaning of the piece.

Aesthetic Education in Action

Across KS3, students are learning that aesthetics are not about perfection, but about intentional choices, creativity and expression. By linking physical skills with maths, art and storytelling, lessons have become richer and more engaging. Pupils are developing confidence, teamwork and the ability to reflect on their own work; skills that will benefit them far beyond the gym or dance studio. As the term progresses, it's exciting to see how movement continues to evolve into meaningful, visually striking performances that truly reflect students' growing understanding of aesthetics.

Year 10 and 11: Demonstrating an interest and strength in weightlifting

Year 10 and Year 11 students have had the privilege to be able to use the gym facilities at Europa Gym in Temple Hill to develop strength training skills. Real progress takes patience and persistence. Our students have engaged well with their 'muscle up' PE lessons and showed real determination through the sessions. They've learnt how to increase muscle mass in a safe way, built up their strength, technique and confidence each week and how to maintain a healthy and active routine, and they will continue working towards hitting those muscle-ups using their full body weight for resistance.



The opportunity to learn in a high quality fitness environment was really valued and their commitment to improving their physical fitness has been inspiring.

Department News - Science

KS3: Exploring synthetic and natural remedies for indigestion

Year 9 students have been thoroughly enjoying their recent science topic on indigestion, where learning has gone well beyond the textbook. Through a series of hands-on investigations, students explored how different antacids work and compared them with a range of natural remedies. During practical lessons, students tested common antacids (Gaviscon and Rennie) to see how effectively they neutralise stomach acid, recording results and discussing why some worked better than others. This gave them the opportunity to apply their knowledge of acids, alkalis and chemical reactions in a real-life context.

Alongside this, students researched natural remedies such as ginger, bicarbonate of soda and herbal teas, considering how and why these are traditionally used to ease indigestion. Students used ground peppermint as a natural remedy to investigate it's effectiveness at neutralising stomach acid. Lively discussions followed as students evaluated the benefits and limitations of both medicinal and natural approaches.

The topic has been a great success, encouraging curiosity, teamwork and critical thinking. Year 9 students have shown real enthusiasm for investigating everyday science and understanding how it links to their own health and wellbeing.

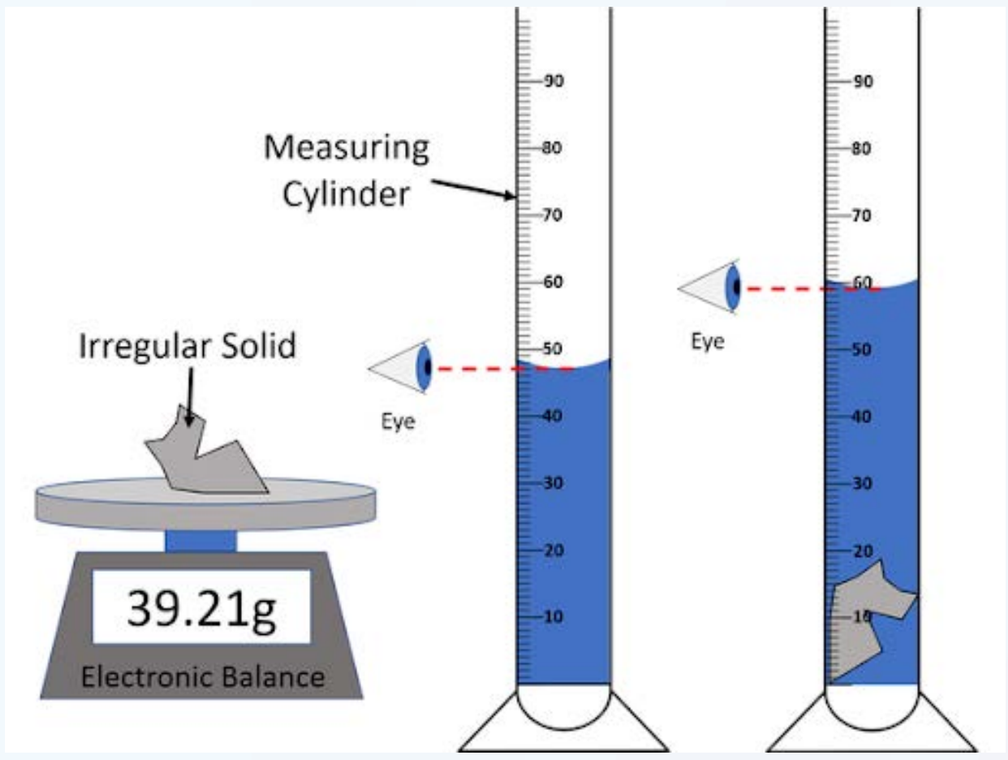
KS4:

Year 10 combined science students have been diving deep into the fascinating world of materials, discovering how the tiniest building blocks of matter shape the properties of the substances all around us. They began by exploring different types of bonding, including covalent bonding in simple molecules, metallic bonding in metals, and the unique behaviour of ionic compounds. This helped them understand why materials such as salts, metals, polymers, and giant covalent structures (like diamond and graphite) behave so differently in everyday life.

Alongside this, they revisited the three states of matter, using particle diagrams and state symbols to explain how solids, liquids, and gases differ. They examined the characteristic properties of small molecules, polymers, metals, alloys, and giant structures, connecting the microscopic world to the materials they see and use.

In physics, students moved into the particle model of matter, looking closely at density, internal energy, and how heating and cooling affect particles.

One highlight was Required Practical 17, where they used scientific apparatus to measure the density of regular and irregular solids and liquids; an important skill for any budding scientist.



Department News - Science

They also investigated changes of state, specific heat capacity, and specific latent heat, learning how energy is transferred during melting, freezing, boiling, and condensing. The topic wrapped up with an exploration of particle motion in gases, linking temperature, pressure, and kinetic theory. Finally students studied the remarkable structure and bonding of carbon, including fullerenes and graphene, which continue to transform modern technology.

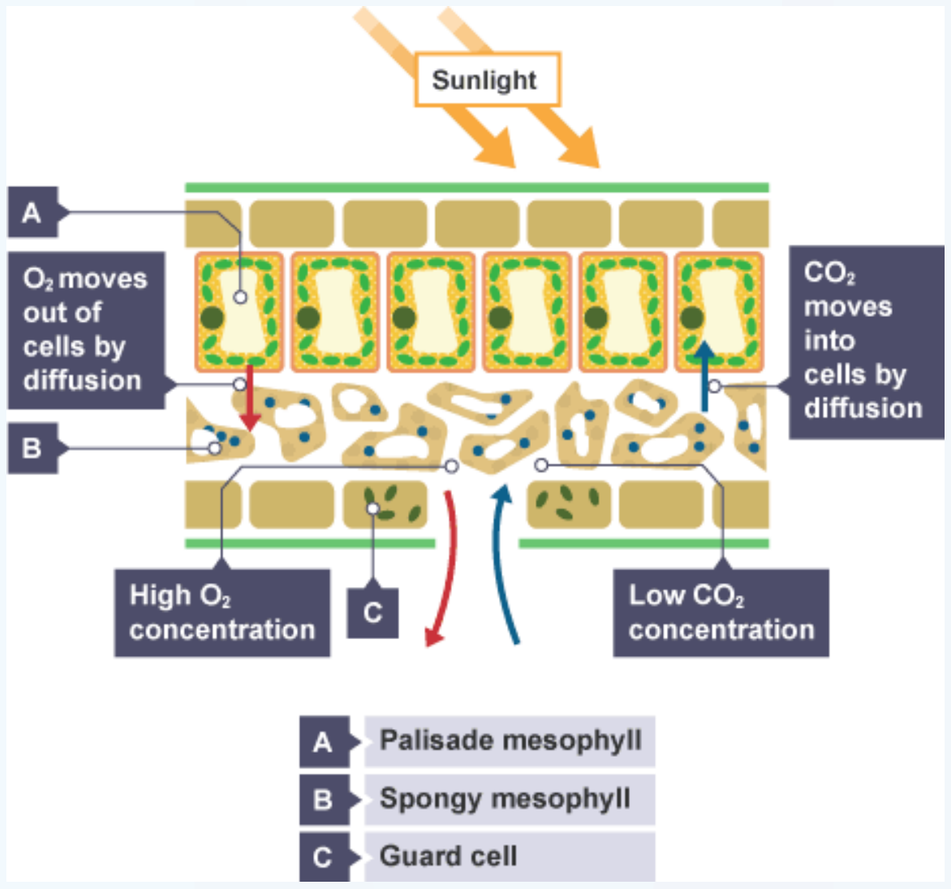
Year 10 Biology students have been uncovering how living organisms function from the inside out, investigating the systems that keep plants and humans alive, healthy, and active. The term began with a journey into plant organs, looking closely at roots, stems, and leaves and how each plays a crucial role in survival. Students explored how water moves through plants via transpiration and how dissolved sugars travel through phloem in translocation, analysing data to understand these vital processes.

Next, students examined the essential life processes that all organisms rely on. They studied aerobic and anaerobic respiration, comparing how cells release energy with and without oxygen. These ideas linked naturally to response to exercise, where classes investigated how heart rate, breathing rate, and lactic acid levels change during physical activity.

A major focus of the term was the movement of substances in and out of cells. Students explored diffusion, osmosis, and active transport, learning how cells absorb nutrients, balance water, and take in substances against concentration gradients.

A highlight of this topic was the Required Practical, where students investigated how different concentrations of sugar or salt solutions affect the mass of plant tissue; a hands-on way to see osmosis in action.

Later, students broadened their understanding of how chemical reactions keep organisms functioning by studying metabolism, discovering that every process in the body; from digestion to growth depends on chemical reactions working together.

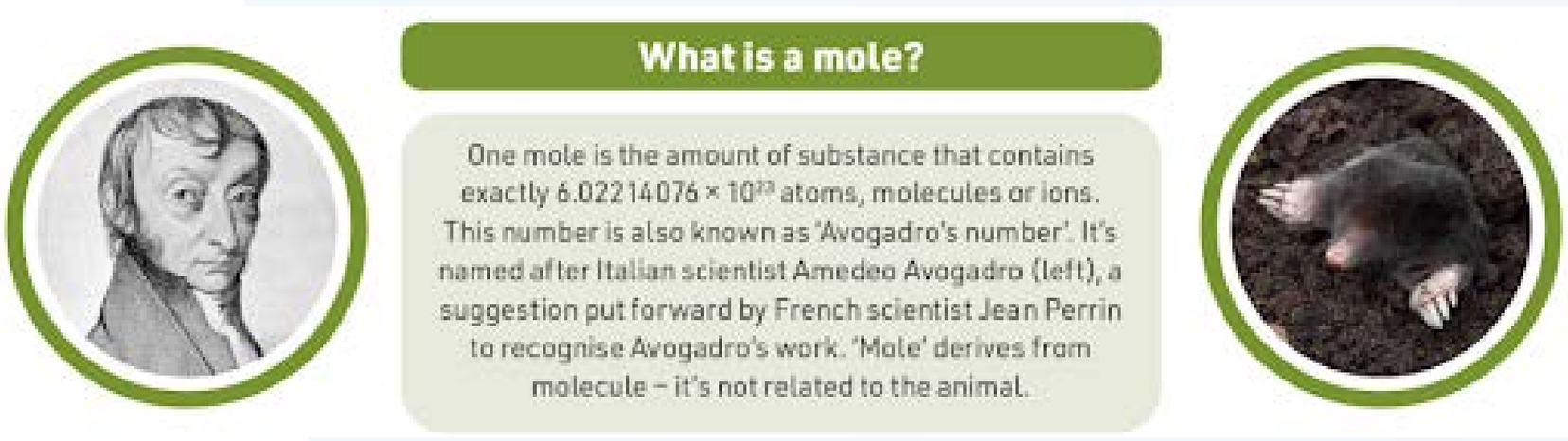


Department News - Science

Year 10 Chemistry students have been building a strong foundation in quantitative chemistry; the maths behind chemical reactions, helping them understand not just what happens in reactions, but how much of each substance is involved.

Students began by learning about the conservation of mass and how chemists use balanced chemical equations to show that atoms are never lost or gained during reactions. They then explored relative formula mass, giving them the tools to calculate the mass of compounds, and investigated why reactions involving gases sometimes appear to lose or gain mass.

A key part of this unit involved improving scientific accuracy through chemical measurements, understanding uncertainties, and learning how chemists ensure results are valid and reliable. Higher-tier students extended these ideas further with the concept of the mole, a fundamental quantity in chemistry. They applied moles to calculate amounts of substances in equations, balance equations mathematically, identify limiting reactants, and link calculations to experimental outcomes.



All students developed their skills with concentration of solutions, working out how the amount of solute dissolved in a given volume affects reaction conditions. They went on to study percentage yield and atom economy, discovering why industry must consider both efficiency and sustainability when designing chemical processes.

Higher-tier groups also deepened their quantitative skills by using concentrations in mol/dm^3 and calculating the volumes of gases involved in reactions — essential knowledge for understanding chemical processes on both laboratory and industrial scales.

Year 10 Physics students have been investigating how energy moves, changes, and affects the world around us — while also diving into one of the most fascinating areas of physics: nuclear radiation.

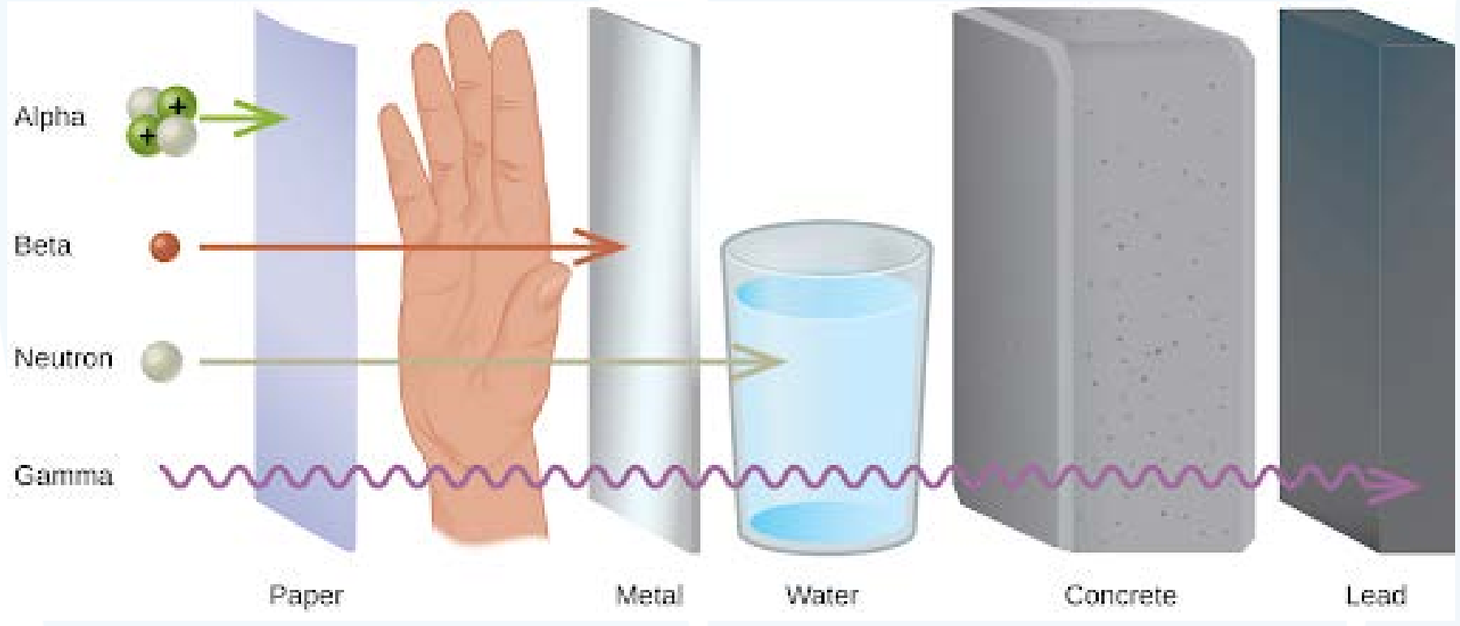
The term began with energy changes in systems, where students explored how energy is stored, transferred, and conserved in everyday situations. This included Required Practical 1, where they carried out experiments to measure energy changes and strengthen their understanding of scientific methods.

Department News - Science

Students then moved on to power, learning how quickly energy is transferred and why powerful devices need more energy each second. These ideas helped build a strong foundation for the more challenging topics that followed.

A major focus of the term was radioactivity and nuclear physics. Students explored radioactive decay, the different types of nuclear radiation, and how unstable nuclei change over time.

They learned to write and interpret nuclear equations, and studied half-life, gaining insight into the random but predictable nature of radioactive decay.



Lessons on radiation contamination, background radiation, and the many applications of radiation; from medicine to industry, helped students see both the risks and the benefits of nuclear science.

Later in the term, students returned to energy with a deeper look at energy transfers in a system, applying ideas about conduction, convection, and insulation. This linked directly to Required Practical 2, where they investigated thermal insulation and discovered how different materials reduce energy loss.

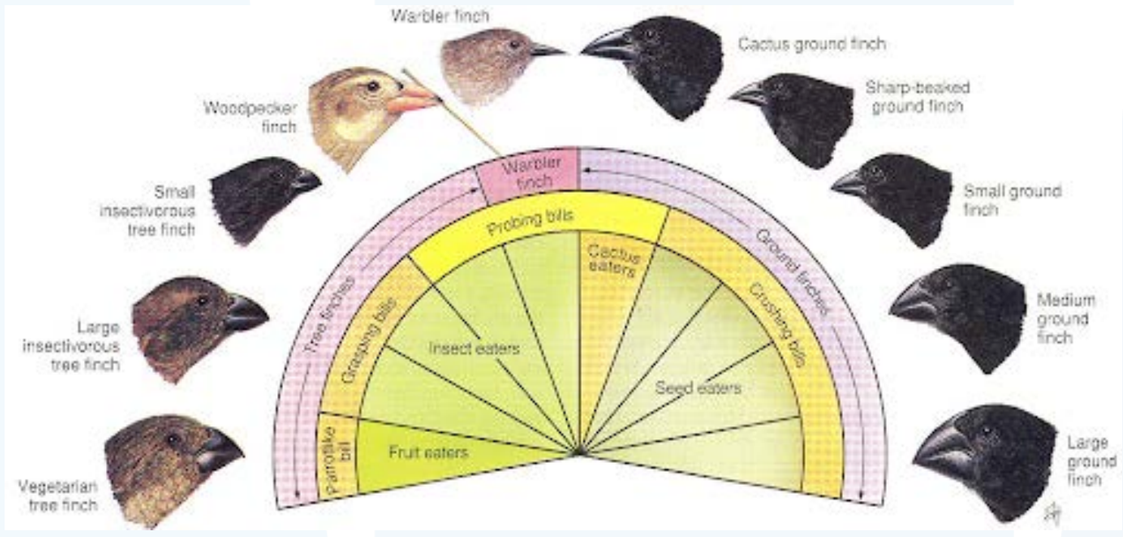
Year 11 Biology students have been delving into the fascinating science of genes, inheritance, and evolution — uncovering how life develops, adapts, and changes over generations.
The term began with a detailed look at DNA structure, exploring how the iconic double helix stores the genetic instructions for building and operating every organism. Students then moved on to genetic inheritance, learning how chromosomes, alleles, and Punnett squares explain the passing on of traits from parents to offspring.

Building on this, students explored inherited disorders such as cystic fibrosis and polydactyly, gaining insight into how genetic mutations can affect health. They also examined sex determination, understanding how X and Y chromosomes influence whether an individual develops as male or female.

Next, the focus shifted to how differences arise within and between species. Lessons on variation helped students recognise the roles of genetics and the environment in shaping characteristics. This provided a foundation for understanding selective breeding, where humans choose desirable traits in plants and animals, and genetic engineering, where scientists directly modify DNA to produce organisms with specific features. Students also investigated cloning, discovering how identical copies of organisms can be produced naturally and artificially.

Department News - Science

The second half of the term examined big ideas about the history of life on Earth. Students studied evolution and the theory of evolution, learning how natural selection drives change over long periods. They explored how populations can split and form new species through speciation, and discussed how our understanding of genetics has deepened since Darwin's time. Just how did we get so many different species of finch?



To bring everything together, students looked at the evidence for evolution, including the fossil record, which reveals how organisms have changed; and sometimes disappeared, through extinction. These topics helped students appreciate how modern biology connects ancient life forms to the species we see today.

Year 11 Chemistry students have been developing sophisticated analytical skills while exploring how humans use and protect, the Earth's resources. Their work combines hands-on practical chemistry, real-world applications, and the science behind sustainable living.

The term began with Required Practical 7, where students carried out a series of chemical tests to identify unknown substances. They investigated tests for carbonates, carried out flame tests to identify metal ions by their characteristic colours, and performed tests for halides and sulfates. These classical analytical techniques helped students understand how chemists determine the composition of substances.

Students then moved into instrumental analysis, learning why modern industries use highly sensitive technologies. They explored flame emission spectroscopy, discovering how unique emission patterns make it possible to identify metal ions quickly and accurately; vital in fields from environmental testing to forensic science.

The second part of the term focused on Earth's resources and how chemistry contributes to sustainability. Students explored what is meant by sustainable development and completed Required Practical 8, investigating how potable water is produced. They compared methods of water purification and learned about the importance of clean water worldwide.

Lessons on waste water treatment showed students how contaminants are removed before water is returned to the environment. Higher-tier students also examined alternative methods for extracting metals, including bioleaching and phytomining — innovative approaches used when traditional mining becomes expensive or environmentally damaging.

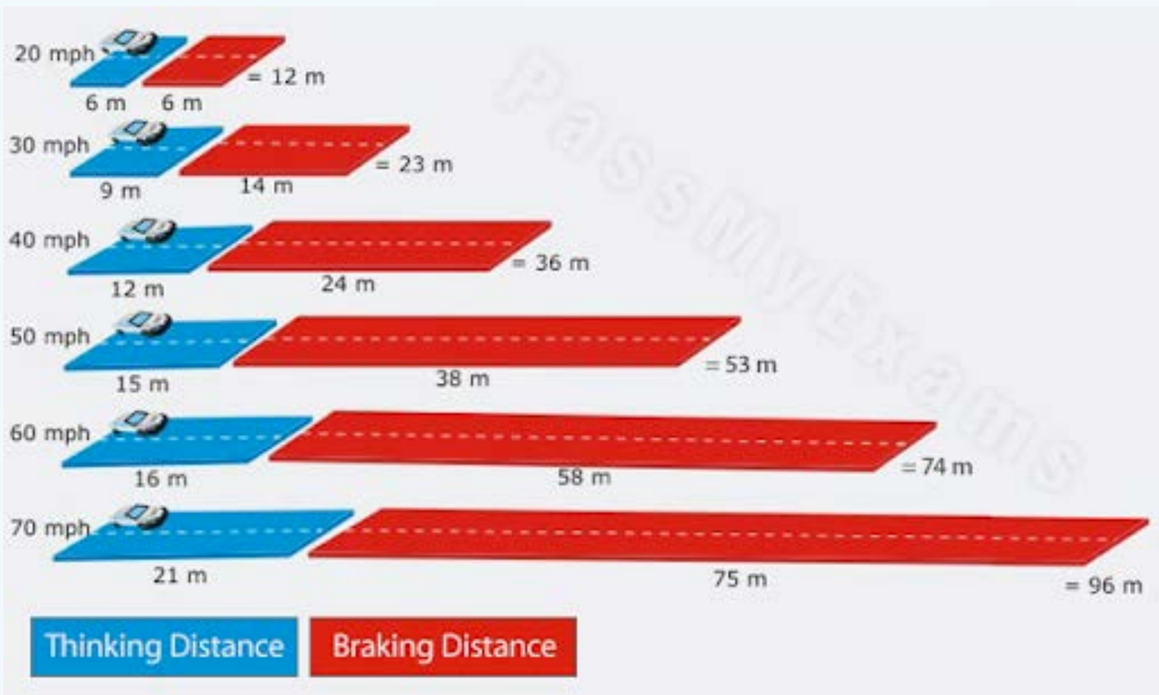
Department News - Science

After a mid-point review, students moved on to evaluating products and materials. They learned how chemists use life cycle assessments to measure the environmental impact of products and explored ways of reducing resource use, from recycling to designing more efficient manufacturing methods. Next, students investigated the chemistry of materials. They looked at corrosion and how to prevent it, the properties and uses of alloys, and the differences between ceramics, polymers, and composites, linking material structure to everyday applications.

Students concluded the term with industrial chemistry. They studied the Haber process, the industrial method for producing ammonia, and explored the production and uses of NPK fertilisers; essential for modern agriculture and global food security.

Year 11 Physics students have been applying their knowledge of forces, motion, waves, and electromagnetism as they work through some of the most engaging and practical areas of the GCSE course. The term opened with Core Practical 7, giving students hands-on experience with key ideas about forces and motion. Building on this, they explored Newton's Third Law, discovering how every force has an equal and opposite partner, and how this principle underpins real-world motion. Lessons on stopping distance and reaction time helped students understand the science of road safety, from driver awareness to vehicle braking systems.

Students then analysed the factors affecting braking distance, including tyre condition, road surface, and speed; making clear how physics links directly to everyday decision-making. This led smoothly into the topic of momentum, where they studied momentum as a property of moving objects, before learning about the conservation of momentum and how it explains situations such as collisions and explosions. They also examined changes in momentum, connecting physics principles to safety features like airbags and crumple zones.



Mid-term, students shifted into the world of waves and light. They explored how lenses form images, investigated the behaviour of visible light, and connected these ideas to real applications such as cameras, glasses, and telescopes. They followed this with lessons on the emission and absorption of infrared radiation, and for higher-tier students, the concept of perfect black bodies, objects that absorb and emit radiation in unique ways.

To end the term, students immersed themselves in the exciting field of electromagnetism. Higher-tier groups learned how electric currents create magnetic fields, applied the left-hand rule, and explored the operation of electric motors. They also investigated how loudspeakers and microphones work, discovering how electromagnetism is used to generate and detect sound, linking physics concepts directly to the technology they use every day.

Art Club enables you to develop your creativity and artistic skills!

Art Club

Art Club is starting again!

Come and practice your drawing and painting skills and develop your creativity, using some new materials and see what effect they give to your work. Feed your inspiration and see your artistic skills grow! It is open for Years 7- 9 so come along and make new acquaintances!

Join us on **Thursdays at 3:15pm in UTC room 1.01.**

Badminton Club

Badminton Club helps you to gain agility skills and play against your friends

KS3 Badminton Club is going strong!

The Badminton Club, now running on Tuesdays after school, has continued to show strong levels of commitment and enthusiasm from students. Despite the sports hall being used for fixtures, students have remained highly engaged, with sessions successfully adapted and relocated to the IA Atrium. This flexibility has demonstrated students' dedication to the club, as well as their willingness to make the most of alternative spaces. The continued positive attitude and consistent attendance highlight the popularity of badminton and the resilience of students in maintaining their involvement despite changes to facilities.

The club offers a fun and supportive environment for players of all abilities, whether they're new to the sport or looking to sharpen their skills. It's been great to see students encouraging each other, challenging themselves, and enjoying the game.

Join us on Tuesdays at 3:15pm in the IA Atrium!

Basketball Club is the place to play the game, learn resilience, skill and team spirit

Basketball Club

Basketball Club Showing Outstanding Commitment

Our Year 7 to Year 10 basketball students have shown exceptional dedication this module, putting in high quality training sessions and fully embracing a busy competitive fixture schedule. With league games taking place almost every Tuesday and Thursday, students have demonstrated resilience, teamwork and a real commitment to improving their performance. Year 7 played their first ever competitive game on 27 January, and their performance was hugely impressive. For a debut fixture, the team showed excellent passing, strong movement off the ball and good overall structure on the court. Their confidence and willingness to play together as a unit highlighted a promising future for the group.

Year 8 have now completed two competitive games and are showing clear progression with each performance. The team is beginning to gel, with improved communication, sharper transitions and stronger cohesion in both attack and defence. A standout performer has been Kamil, who has not only captained the Year 8 team with maturity and leadership, but has also stepped up to represent the Year 9 team, playing a year above his age group and performing with confidence, composure and impact.

The Year 9 team have also competed in two league fixtures and continue to work relentlessly on their development. Their commitment extends beyond lessons, with students regularly training in the gym, at break, at lunch and after school on the playground in their own time to refine their skills. In the first game, Pedro was named Most Valuable Player following an excellent all round performance. In the second fixture, Divine stood out for his rebounding, court awareness and vision, making a significant contribution to the team's play.

Across all year groups, the level of effort, enthusiasm and growth has been outstanding. The increasing number of fixtures, combined with strong training attendance, has created a positive and competitive basketball culture within the school and we cannot wait to see where basketball takes these talented young people next.

Join us on Thursdays at 3:15pm in the IA Sports Hall!

Boxing Club allows you to build resilience and learn to anticipate your partners next move

Boxing Club

Building Strength Beyond the Ring: Module 3 Boxing Club

Module 3 has seen the Boxing Club go from strength to strength, providing a powerful platform for boys to build resilience, self confidence and discipline in a supportive and structured environment. What has stood out most this module is not just the physical progress, but the personal growth shown by every student involved. Each session has focused on developing fundamental boxing skills alongside fitness based circuit training, pushing students to step outside their comfort zones and persevere when sessions become challenging. Through this, students have learned the importance of consistency, focus and mental toughness, skills that extend far beyond the boxing space and into everyday life and learning. The club has created a strong sense of camaraderie, with students encouraging one another, celebrating progress and showing respect for both peers and staff. Confidence has grown visibly week by week, with students standing taller, communicating more clearly and showing increased belief in their own abilities.

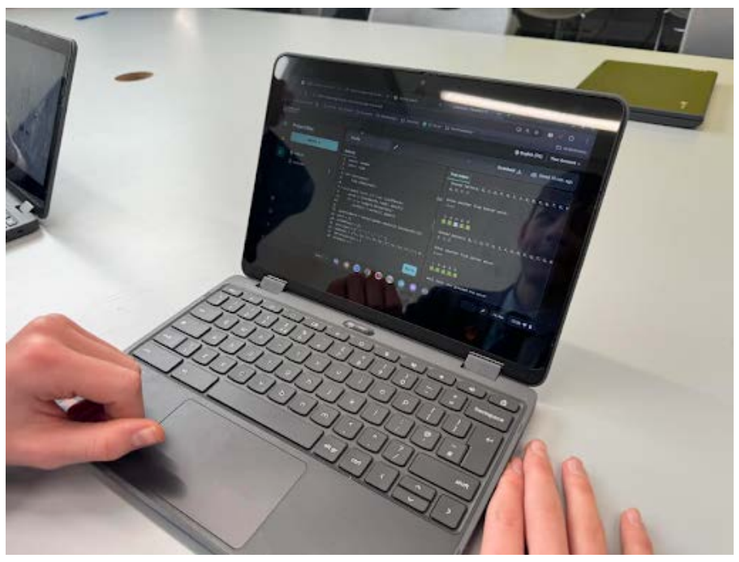
It has been fantastic to see how committed the boys have been throughout Module 3. Their attitude, effort and willingness to challenge themselves has made the Boxing Club a real success. The positive impact on resilience, self confidence and overall wellbeing highlights just how valuable opportunities like this are, and we look forward to building on this momentum in the next module.

Join us on Mondays at 3:15pm in the IA Sports Hall!

Coding Club

Coding Club is the place to learn how to code and new technologies for the future

Students are learning that text (called a string) must be enclosed in quotes - e.g., print("Hello!") otherwise, Python will search for a variable with that name instead. Students are also learning that variables can hold different types of data, such as whole numbers (integers) or text (strings), and that these values can be updated as the program runs.



By using print(my_variable), they learn that the computer doesn't print the name of the variable, but rather the content inside the container. By learning to capture user input, store it in a variable, and then display it back using a print command, students move from writing static scripts to creating interactive programs.

Join us afterschool on Wednesdays at 2:10pm in UTC Room 2.01!

Cookery Club is a great chance to have fun with food and learn important life skills for a healthy mind and body

Cookery Club

Cooking Club: Food, Fun & Flavour!

Cooking Club has been buzzing this term, with students creating a fantastic range of dishes including spring rolls, bacon turnovers and homemade doner kebabs. Each session has been filled with energy, teamwork and plenty of delicious aromas.

More than just cooking, the club offers a relaxed and enjoyable space where students build confidence, develop practical skills and work collaboratively. It's been a brilliant term and a truly tasty one!

Join us on Tuesdays and Wednesdays in the IA Cooking Room A2.05 at 3:15pm!

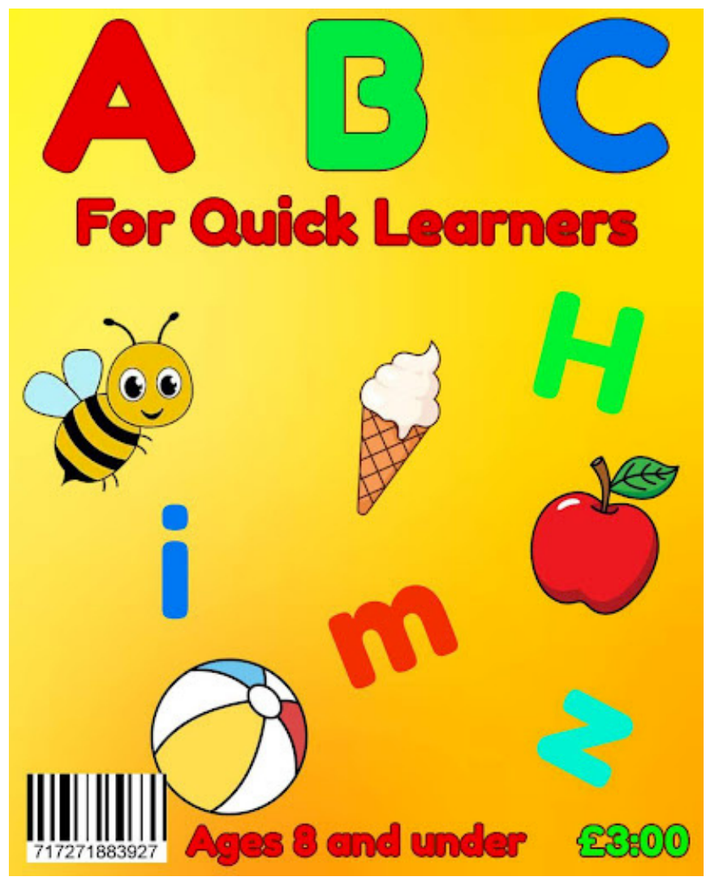
Creative iMedia Club

Creative iMedia Club allows you to learn about Information Technology in various forms and have fun with creativity

Unleash your digital creativity in our weekly Creative iMedia Club!

Our Year 10s are really beginning to showcase their digital creativity. To bridge the gap between planning and production, their recent homework challenged them to hand-draw a visualization diagram for a toddler's book. They are now bringing those sketches to life in the classroom, learning how to use Photopea to transform their initial ideas into polished digital images for R094 Task 2.

Join us on Mondays afterschool at 3.15pm in UTC room 2.02!



Darts Club is the place to develop precision skills and self-discipline to hit those targets, and do maths!

Darts Club

We're finally up and running! Darts Club has arrived at Leigh UTC Dartford. Mr Haynes has set up Mr Baldock's board in AG.09 and, on Monday after school, you will have the opportunity to practice your checkouts (not to mention your mental maths).

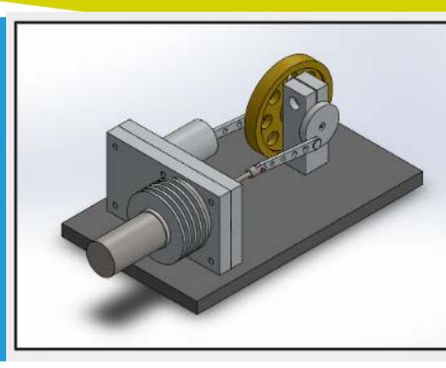
So whether it's round the clock, 301, or 501, come and have a go at throwing some little arrows. Mr Watson has already popped in and has been truly infected by darts fever.

If you want to be the next Luke Littler or Fallon Sherrock, then make sure you're making your way to the IA! See you there!

Join us on Mondays at 3:15pm in the Library!

Engineering Club

Engineering Club is the place to learn new skills and productivity with different materials



Engineering Club: Design Meets Mechatronics

KS3 Engineering Club students are currently working on an exciting project to design and build a motor-actuated lifting bridge. The project brings together mechanical design, electronics and manufacturing, challenging students to apply their skills in a real-world context.

With fantastic support from a Year 12 student through peer mentorship, pupils have completed the design stage and are now prototyping and refining their ideas. The club is developing strong problem-solving skills, teamwork and a real enthusiasm for engineering.

Join us on Mondays at 3:15pm in UTC Room G.02!

Football Club is the place to play the game, learn resilience, skill and team spirit

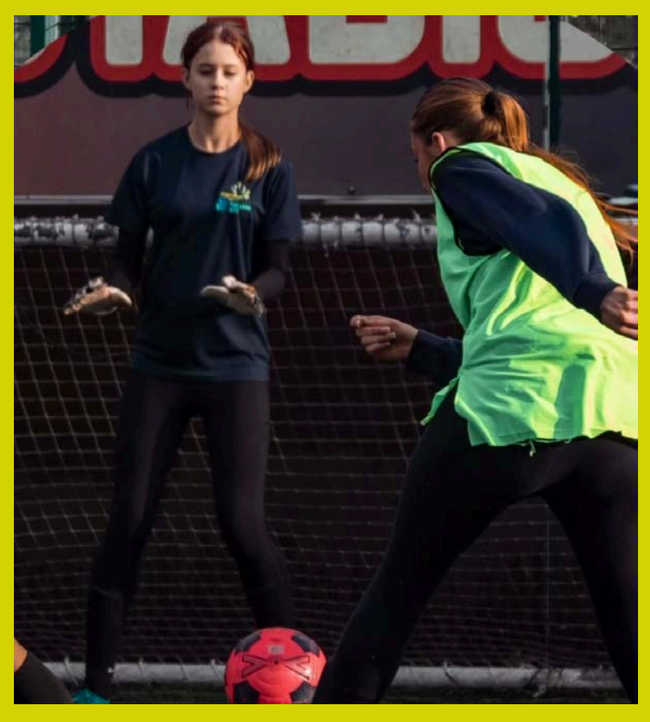
Football Club

Girls' Football Club

The Girls' Football Club continues to be a great success, with an impressive 25 girls attending every Friday morning. The club has created a positive, inclusive, and energetic environment where students can develop their skills, confidence, and enjoyment of the game. It is currently being led by Sophie and Mija from the Sixth Form, whose leadership and enthusiasm have played a key role in the club's popularity. Their commitment has helped to inspire younger students, promote teamwork, and encourage regular participation.

The growing attendance highlights the strong interest in girls' football and the positive impact of student leadership within the school.

Join us on Friday mornings at 8.25am in the IA Sports Hall!



Boys Football Club

The Boys' Football Club, held on Friday afternoons, has seen excellent engagement with over 30 boys attending regularly. The sessions are energetic, well-structured, and provide students with the opportunity to develop their skills in a competitive but supportive environment. The club has also benefited from the addition of Mr Eldridge as a new coach, who has brought a fresh perspective to training sessions. His ideas and enthusiasm have helped to further motivate students, enhance coaching approaches, and maintain high levels of participation.

The strong attendance reflects the continued popularity of football and the positive impact of dedicated staff support.

Join us on Fridays, at 3:15pm in the IA Sports Hall!

German Club is the place to learn about a new culture, a new language and represent the school!

German Club

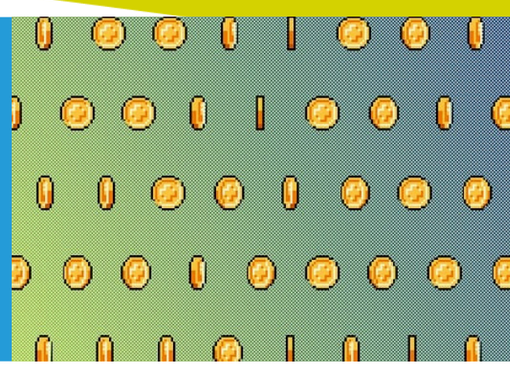
Deutsche Botschafter Bring Carnival to Life

Our German Ambassadors have been busy sharing their love of language and culture with the school, most recently by leading an assembly on Carnival, one of Germany's most colourful and exciting festivals. During the assembly, students discovered how Carnival is celebrated with elaborate costumes, masks, parades, traditional food and music, and learned about the fun traditions that make this festival so special. The ambassadors explained how celebrations vary across Germany, for example, in Cologne, Düsseldorf, and Mainz, the streets come alive with dancing, floats, and vibrant costumes, while in other regions, different customs take centre stage. They also explored the history of Carnival, from its origins as a way to enjoy life before Lent to the modern-day festivities full of laughter and creativity. A quiz was also part of the assembly, based on the knowledge students had just learned. Pupils, particularly from Years 7 and 8, were eager to win the sweets on offer and got really involved, showing off their newfound German culture knowledge in a fun and competitive way. The assembly gave everyone a taste of German culture and highlighted how learning a language opens doors to understanding traditions and celebrations in other countries. It was a lively, colourful, and educational experience that truly brought Germany to our school!

Join us on Tuesdays at 3:15pm in A2.02!

Makers Club

Makers Club allows students to explore coding and creativity simultaneously using Micro:bit!



Ready to bring ideas to life? Makers Club returns this module with more creativity, more tech, and more opportunities to invent something amazing! Students will get hands-on with micro:bits, Raspberry Pi, sensors and electronics turning code into movement, lights, sound, and real-world interaction.

From designing mini machines and smart gadgets to creating interactive games in Scratch, every session is a chance to experiment, problem-solve, and watch imagination transform into something tangible. Whether you're a curious beginner or a tech-lover hungry for a challenge, this is the place to tinker, build, test and innovate.

Join us on Wednesdays lunchtime in UTC Room 2.01!

Stem Club is a unique experience to experiment and understand the science of past, present and future

STEM Club

STEM CLUB: Module 3 – Sparks, Science & Spectacular Reactions!

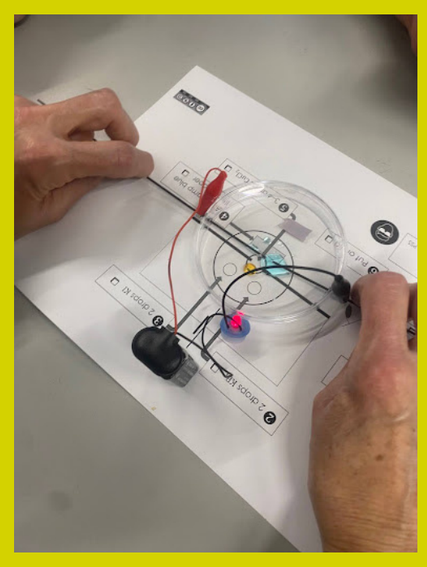
Module 3 of STEM Club was all about reactions you could see, hear, and even feel! From fizzing gases to flying cups, students dived into some seriously exciting science experiments that brought chemistry and physics to life.

Testing for Gases – Chemistry in Action

Students became real-life scientists as they tested for carbon dioxide, oxygen and nitrogen. With glowing splints, flames and lots of curiosity, they explored how each gas behaves differently. Watching flames go out, relight or change was a clear reminder that gases might be invisible, but they definitely aren't boring!

Electrolysis – Splitting Molecules Apart

Next up was electrolysis, where students set up their own equipment and observed reactions happening right before their eyes. They learned how electricity can be used to break substances down into simpler parts, producing gases and proving that chemistry can be both powerful and precise.



PH Indicators – A Burst of Colour

One of the most visually stunning experiments involved pH indicators. As students tested different solutions, the liquids transformed into a rainbow of colours. Each colour told a story; acidic, neutral or alkaline, turning science into something that looked more like art!

Van de Graaff Generator – Shocking Science!

The grand finale was the Van de Graaff generator. Students got to *feel* electricity run through them as their hair stood on end, cups leapt from their hands, and laughter filled the room. It was electrifying; literally and a brilliant way to see static electricity in action.

Science You Can See and Feel!

Module 3 proved that STEM Club is all about curiosity, creativity and hands-on learning. With sparks flying, colours changing and reactions happening everywhere, students showed once again that science is at its best when you get stuck in. Bring on Module 4!

Join us on Thursdays at 3:15pm in a2.11 science lab!

Ultimate Gaming Hub is the place to play all games and win competitions

Ultimate Gaming Club

The digital arena is heating up! Our Ultimate Gaming Hub is buzzing with activity as we launch into the new season. Whether students are looking to compete at a high level or simply find a community of like-minded gamers, there is a place for everyone in the hub.

The EA Sports FC 26 Competition

The wait is over; the EA26 Competition is officially underway! We currently have several students trailing and sharpening their virtual football skills on the pitch. The level of talent and sportsmanship shown in these early stages has been fantastic.

Coming Soon

We will be announcing the official tournament brackets and initial results in the next couple of weeks. **How to Join:** It's not too late! Students who wish to participate just need to sign up to be part of the competition. Keep an eye on the club noticeboard and school announcements for the registration link.

Whether you are a seasoned pro or just want to represent your favourite team, come down and show us what you've got! **Join us on Tuesdays at 3:15pm in UTC Room 2.13!**

Young Writers' Club

Young Writers' & Journalists Club is the place to be creative, write stories and if you're lucky get them published!

Young Writers & Journalists: Finding Their Voice

The Young Writers and Journalists club has been a hive of creativity this term, with students developing their writing skills and exploring what it means to communicate clearly and confidently. From crafting articles and opinion pieces to experimenting with storytelling and interviewing, students are learning how to shape ideas and engage an audience.

The club provides a supportive space where pupils can share their work, give constructive feedback and build confidence in their own voice. It has been fantastic to see students grow in independence, creativity and enthusiasm for writing and journalism. Several pupils have even had their writing published in two books over the past 2 modules - How amazing!

Join us on Mondays at 3:15pm in A1.11!

Employer Engagement at Leigh UTC Dartford

T-level Industry Placements – Building Skills and Business Partnerships

We are delighted to report that industry placements across both our Engineering and Digital pathways continue to be highly successful and impactful for our students.

Our second cohort of Engineering students has now started their first placement block, and staff have been busy conducting placement visits to see how they are progressing. Feedback from employers has been extremely positive, with many commenting on how much our learners are developing both new technical skills and strong workplace behaviours. It's been fantastic to see our students apply their learning and grow in confidence within real industry environments.

A highlight of the term has been visits to some of our new business partners, including Sir Robert McAlpine, a long-established construction and engineering company based in Finsbury Avenue, Central London. Learners spoke enthusiastically about their experiences so far, and the team at Sir Robert McAlpine have already expressed how valuable they feel T-Level placements are within their organisation.

I also had the pleasure of visiting Protosheet, another new partner, where I saw firsthand some of the fabrication projects our learner has been involved in. It was particularly rewarding to catch up with one of our former T-Level Engineering students, who is now working there. They are currently contributing to a metalwork installation for the Museum of London, showcasing the real impact of placement experience on employability and career progression.

A common theme across all placement visits has been the professionalism of our learners. Employers have consistently praised how interested, inquisitive and well-presented they are; qualities that reflect highly on both the students and the Leigh UTC culture.

This week also marked the start of a new group project for our Digital Design and Development students. They have begun working with Parkarounds, a multidisciplinary business with whom we are building a new partnership. We are hopeful this will develop into a high-quality, long-standing collaboration to support future Digital T-Level placements.

It's encouraging to see such strong industry engagement, and we look forward to sharing more success stories as the year progresses.

Employer Engagement at Leigh UTC Dartford

Employer Engagement Advisory Board Meeting

The employer advisory board meeting took place on 30th January. This meeting was chaired by Clive Barker, the chair of governors for the academy along with Mr Merry, assistant principal.

It was a great meeting with many business partners in attendance as well as some new companies attending the academy for the first time. In total there 32 attendees, among the attendees was Jim Dickson, Labour MP for Dartford and the Director for Innovative Curriculum from the Barker Dearing Trust.

The meeting started with Mr Merry addressing the board his warmest of thanks for attending, a quick introduction of all attendees was observed before inviting our business partners to come and observe the peer mentoring that was taking place in the soft seating area between our amazing year 12 students and our enthusiastic year 7 students. This sparked a really interesting discussion about "business mentoring" and there was an overwhelming response from businesses on how this could be developed and expanded even further following our current trial being run with DMA.

Mr Merry and Mr Wright then spoke about the UTC updates including some of the recent success stories from the T-level provision and the development of our business partner webpage.

Jim Dickson, Labour MP for Dartford, who conducted a roundtable discussion with the business partners regarding the skill shortage in the local market for engineers and technology based subjects.

Two, year 13 business studies, Daniel and Samuel presented a presentation regarding their work experience opportunity at Morgan Sindall which was a real insight into the work that they completed at the construction firm and problem solving issues impacting the project. They presented with confidence and enthusiasm for their work.

The meeting came to a conclusion with Mr Merry discussing the upcoming events where our business partners could be involved, with activities such as STEAM week and work experience for year 10 & 12 and our upcoming careers fair in Module 4.

If there is any parent/care that works for an organisation and you would like to attend a future employer advisory board meeting. Please contact Mr Merry so that he can arrange this.

Interventions and Revision

Year 11 & Year 13: From Mock Feedback to Exam Readiness

Following a successful series of mock examinations and a well-attended parents' evening, this module marks a clear transition from assessment to action. Students in Year 11 and Year 13 have now received detailed feedback on their mock performance, and teaching teams have been working carefully with this information to identify strengths, diagnose gaps, and plan targeted re-teaching where it is most needed. The quality of engagement during the mock period was strong, and outcomes provide a clear and reassuring picture of where students are on track, alongside precise guidance on what needs to improve as we move toward the March mock series in Module 4.

This phase of the year is deliberately focused on refinement and consolidation. Curriculum time is being used to revisit key content, strengthen exam technique, and address misconceptions identified through Question Level Analysis (QLAs). Students are expected to actively engage with the personalised feedback they have been given, particularly through their Personal Learning Checklists (PLCs), and to take increasing ownership of acting on this guidance both in and out of lessons. Tutor time continues to provide a valuable opportunity for focused work in English, Maths, and Science, reinforcing core knowledge and skills that underpin success across subjects.

These sessions are supported by small-group tuition, subject-specific clinics, and structured independent learning. Students in Post-16 also continue to benefit from optional Wednesday study sessions on site, alongside full access to UpLearn to support independent consolidation. In addition, February half-term intervention will play a crucial role in preparing students for the demands of the next mock series and forthcoming coursework deadlines. Intervention now becomes more important than ever. A comprehensive programme remains in place to ensure students receive the right support at the right time, with sessions increasingly targeted based on mock performance and identified priorities:

As we enter this final phase of preparation, expectations increase accordingly. Consistent attendance is essential: in lessons, intervention sessions, and during the school day. Students are strongly encouraged to commit to at least one hour of focused independent study each evening, using feedback, PLCs, and online platforms to guide their work. With clear guidance now in place, high-quality teaching, and targeted support available, students are well positioned to continue building confidence, sharpening skills, and making meaningful progress toward their final examinations.

INTERVENTION TIMETABLE

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Y11 English 2.16 15.15pm	Y11 Maths 2.24 15.15pm		SEND Homework IA Library 8.00am	Y11 Business 2.25 15.15pm
Y11 Engineering G.32 15.15pm	Maths Homework 2.19 15.15pm		Science Homework 1.21 8.00am, 12.35pm & 15.15pm	Y11 & 13 DT 2.25 15.15pm
	Y11 Engineering G.32 15.15pm		Y11 Electronics 1.04 15.15pm	
	Y11 Business 2.25 15.15pm		Humanities Homework A2.07 15.15pm	
	Y11 History 1.21 15.15pm		Y11 German 2.20 15.15pm	
	Y11 Art 1.01 15.15pm		Y11 Science 1.21 15.15pm	

Online Safety

At Leigh UTC Dartford, we are committed to working with parents, guardians and educators to help keep young people safe both in and out of the classroom. As part of this commitment, we run a #WakeupWednesday drive, which is a weekly focus on key safeguarding and online safety issues that directly affect children and young people today.

Understanding the risks of young people and sharing intimate images online:

Young people today face increasing pressure to share intimate images online, often because they want to fit in or fear being left out. What can feel like a private moment between friends can quickly become something shared, saved, or spread without their consent, causing long-lasting emotional harm. Once an image is sent, it is almost impossible to control where it goes or who sees it, and many young people underestimate how fast things can escalate. Peer pressure can make it difficult for them to say no, even when they feel uncomfortable. Parents play a crucial role in keeping communication open, helping their children understand their right to set boundaries, and reminding them that no one should ever pressure them into sharing something personal.

These free guides from *The National College* highlights the risks and share details how best to safeguard young people in our world of technology.

Being mindful of Tik Tok and 'Trends':

Many young people enjoy using TikTok, but it's important for parents to be aware of the risks that come with the app. TikTok's fast-moving content can expose children to inappropriate videos, harmful trends, or unrealistic beauty standards long before they are ready to understand them. The platform's algorithm can also pull young users into endless scrolling, making it difficult for them to switch off or recognise when something is unsafe. TikTok's culture of likes, comments, and challenges can create pressure to copy risky behaviour or share personal information for attention. Talking openly with children about what they see online, setting clear boundaries; encouraging them to come to you if something feels wrong can make a huge difference in keeping them safe.

Online Safety

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Understanding the risks of young people and social media impact on mental health:

Social media can be a positive space for young people, but it also has a real impact on their mental health. Constant exposure to filtered images, online comparisons, and the pressure to gain likes or followers can make children feel insecure or anxious about how they look or how they are perceived. Many young people also struggle with the fear of missing out when they see friends posting about events or activities they weren't part of. In addition, negative comments or unkind messages can affect their confidence far more deeply than adults often realise. Open conversations at home about what they see online, how it makes them feel, and how to set healthy boundaries can help young people build resilience and use social media in a safer, more balanced way.

These free guides from *The National College* highlights the risks and share details how best to safeguard young people in our world of technology.

Managing device stress and anxiety:

Many young people experience stress and anxiety from constant device use, often without realising how much it affects their wellbeing. The pressure to reply quickly, stay updated, or keep up streaks can make it hard for them to switch off and relax. Notifications, group chats, and social media alerts can interrupt sleep, concentration, and even family time, leaving children feeling overwhelmed or on edge.

Encouraging regular breaks, device-free routines, and healthy boundaries can make a big difference. When parents talk openly with their children about how certain apps or messages make them feel, it helps them recognise stress early and develop healthier habits around technology.

Sports Leaders

Y9 Leigh UTC Dartford vs Northfleet Technology College, Game recap

Written by Y9, Samuel O, Kent Youth County Councillor.

19/01/26, 15:22: Warm-ups and Trainings

Both teams started their training with pre-game drills such as layups and practising uncontested shots like free throws.

15:29: Final preparations: Both teams chose their starting five for the first quarter of the game, and also discussed how they plan to play in terms of Offense and Defense, having the tallest players under the baskets for rebounds, and discussing which players to guard

15:30: The tip off : The game started at 3:50 with NTC establishing dominance immediately in the first quarter with a 9–2 lead in the first quarter.

2nd quarter: NTC maintained the momentum through the 2nd quarter with a score of 19–10 at the end of the second quarter.

3rd Quarter : UTC started to play better defensively during the quarter and slowed down the quick ball movement from NTC. The final score at the end of the quarter was "NTC 30 – 16 UTC."

4th quarter: Despite the improved defensive and offensive performance in the last quarter by Leigh UTC. The final score was NTC – 32 – UTC 24. There were 6 fouls by both teams in the game.

Game end: 4:15.

Y8 UTC Dartford Pistons Claim Away Win Of The Season

The Year 8 UTC Dartford Pistons secured their first away victory of the season with an impressive 27–12 win at Northfleet Technology College, playing on what is undoubtedly one of the finest courts and facilities we have visited this year. From the opening tip, the Pistons demonstrated exactly what they have been working on in training. The ball movement was excellent throughout, with unselfish passing, strong off-ball movement and a real willingness to reset and remain patient when scoring options were not immediately available. Rather than forcing plays, the team showed maturity beyond their years, working the ball intelligently to create gaps in the defence, which paid dividends as the game progressed. Nearly every player managed to get on the scoresheet, highlighting just how strong the collective performance was. It was particularly pleasing to see several new players make an immediate impact, scoring baskets on their competitive debut and contributing confidently to the team's overall performance. The rotation strategy of three players every four minutes proved highly effective, allowing players to give maximum effort on the court before earning a well-deserved rest. The intensity never dropped, with each group maintaining energy, focus and discipline, ensuring the Pistons remained in control throughout the contest. This victory was a true team effort, built on effort, trust and togetherness, and represents a significant milestone for the squad this season. A huge thank you to Northfleet Technology College for the invitation and for their outstanding hospitality. The court and facilities were exceptional, and we look forward to more competitive and challenging fixtures against them in the future. A well-earned away win for the Y8 UTC Dartford Pistons.

Wellbeing at Leigh UTC Dartford

Each module, staff are given a 'Wellbeing Wednesday', where sessions are offered by either a member of staff or an external company, for any member of the UTC to participate in if they wish to. Staff are also given the opportunity to leave at an earlier time to focus on something they enjoy to maintain that healthy work life balance.

Our social media platforms include a Wellbeing Wednesday 'tip of the week' for any of our followers to try. These are directed at staff and students, but can be taken up by any member of the UTC community and are also shared weekly for staff in the bulletin.

Below are a few examples of what we have focused on this module via *Action for Happiness*, who promote a monthly calendar of daily happiness and kindness tips, including:

- 'Friendly February' - some tips and tricks to spread friendliness everywhere!
- 'Mindful March' - tips and advice on how to practice mindfulness this March!

Sources of Support:
Mind: Telephone number: 0300 123 3393

Remploy: This is a confidential service offering advice and support for mental health issues, anxiety and stress at work. Telephone number: 0300 456 8114

Samaritans: Offer emotional support 24 hours a day via a listening service, in full confidence. Call 116 123.

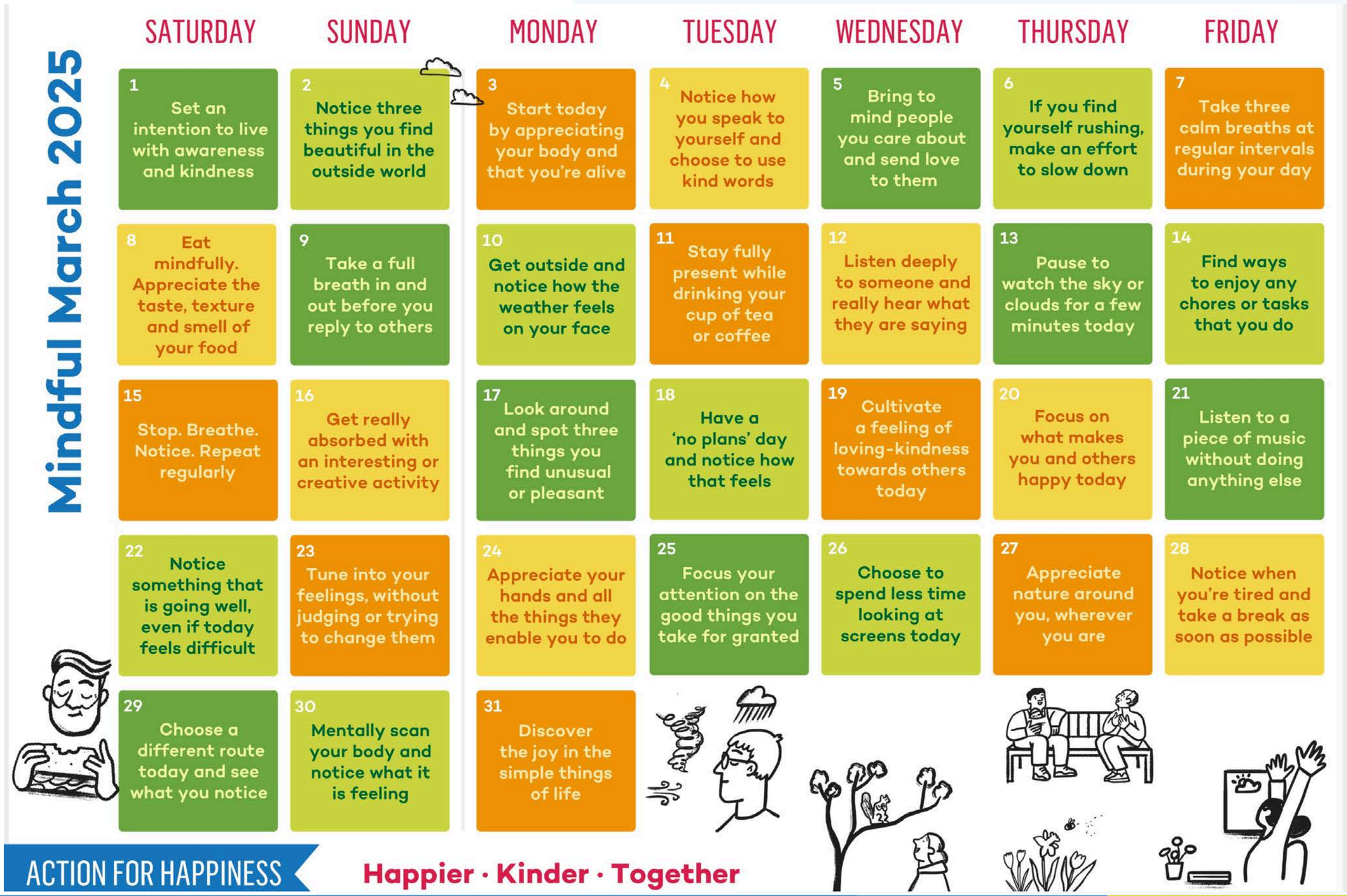
Action for Happiness
The charity *Action for Happiness* promotes calendars, webinars and other online content, to urge us to lead more empathetic and productive lives.
Their mission is to help people create a happier world, with a culture that prioritises happiness and kindness. Every month they release a new calendar with tips and tricks that we can adopt into our lives and encourage others to try. You can view these calendars on the next page.

In School
If a student is concerned about anything regarding their life in school and out of school, for example, bullying, they can contact their Student Services Manager (SSM) or email; ***stop@utcdartford.latrust.org.uk***

Wellbeing at Leigh UTC Dartford

‘Friendly February’ - some tips and tricks to spread friendliness everywhere!

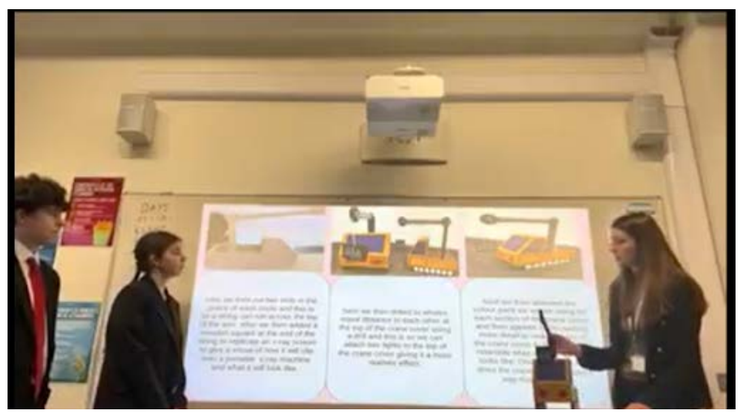
‘Mindful March’ - tips and advice on how to practice mindfulness this March!

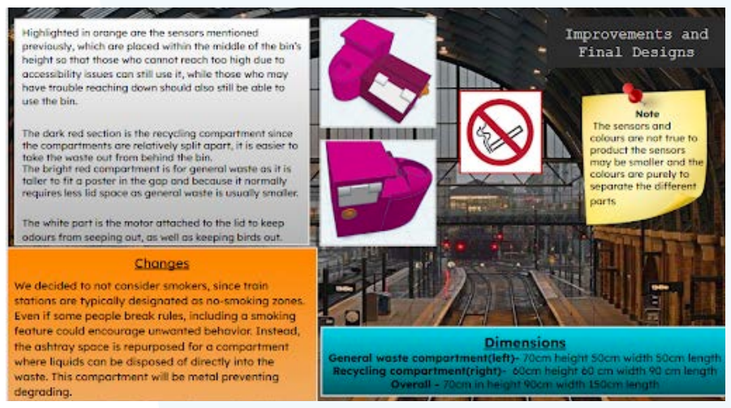


Raising the Profile of Post 16

Year 12 Launches First Major Projects: Industry Challenges Accepted!

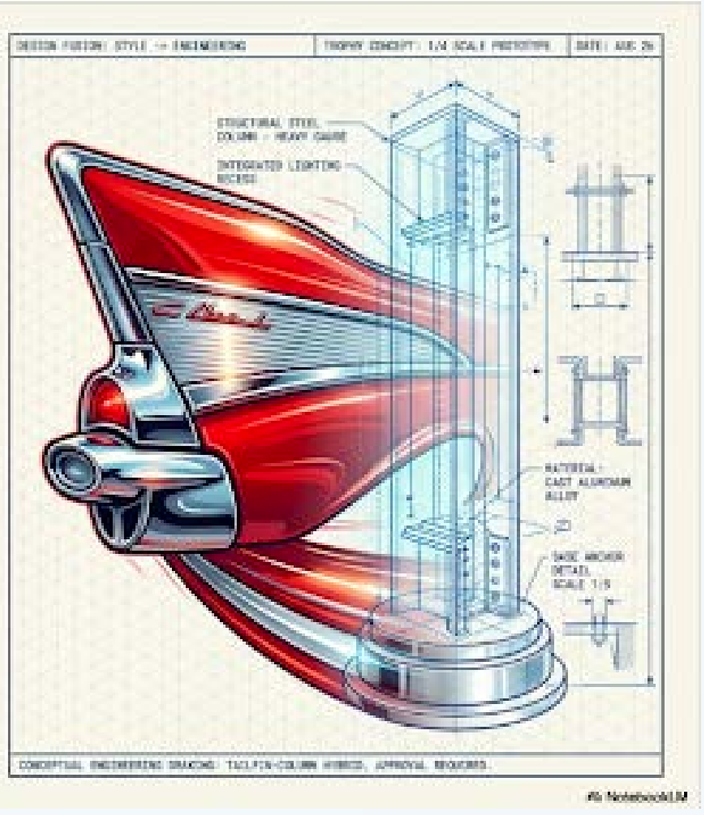
As Director of Post-16, I have been absolutely blown away by the dedication, enthusiasm, and sheer quality of outcomes from our Year 12s during their very first project. This was no simple task; students were required to deliver a professional five-minute "pitch" to prove their designs met every requirement of the brief. The level of innovation on display was truly inspiring. We saw everything from high-tech kiosk-style signing-in systems and a creative novelty children's X-ray machine, to clever new bin receptacles that use token systems to incentivise recycling. Seeing such sophisticated thinking so early in the year makes me incredibly confident in their future success.





Year 12 Launches First Major Projects: Industry Challenges Accepted!

Following the remarkable success of our Year 13 students in designing and manufacturing trophies for the FM Conway apprentices, our Year 12 cohort has officially launched their own ambitious Baker project: designing the prestigious trophies for the 9th Annual Leigh Academies Trust (LAT) Awards. This yearly event recognizes the dedication of staff across the trust, and the specific project details were presented by Adam Waters, the Trust's Learning and Development Manager. Inspired by the "Grease & The Swinging 50s" theme for the July 2026 ceremony, students must create high-energy, iconic designs that serve as a professional homage to the era through visual elements like chrome finishes, jukebox curves, and neon aesthetics. As part of a formal bidding process, the Year 12s are tasked with producing a proposal pack that includes CAD renders, a material strategy ensuring a mandatory "weighted feel," and an itemized financial breakdown to stay within a strict £50-£60 budget. This real-world challenge requires them to balance creativity with professional standards, ensuring their final products are suitable for such a high-profile ceremony.



Raising the Profile of Post 16

Inspiring the Next Generation: Year 12 Baker Award Launch

The momentum from our Year 13 success is already trickling down to the next cohort. On Friday, 30th January, we were delighted to welcome Aysen Giritli to the school to officially introduce the Baker Award to our Year 12 students. Having just crossed the finish line of their very first project, the Year 12s were given an insider's look at the road to Gold. Aysen didn't just talk shop, though; she took the time to review their recent work and awarded the "best outcomes" for their debut projects, setting a high standard right from the start. By sharing highlights and success stories from this year's main ceremony, Aysen left the group buzzing with enthusiasm and ready to tackle their upcoming employer-set challenges with professional grit.

Golden Achievements: Celebrating Our Baker Award Winners

The school is buzzing with pride following a phenomenal showing at the recent Baker Award ceremony. In total, an impressive 23 awards were presented to our talented students, consisting of 14 Gold and 9 Silver awards. Among these high achievers were seven of our Year 13 students who took to the stage to collect their Gold awards, representing the very best in technical and professional excellence. To reach this elite standard, these students had to demonstrate immense dedication, completing three employer-set projects, at least two weeks of industry work experience, and maintaining top-tier progress in their technical qualifications. The final selection followed a rigorous interview stage where our students sat before Jim Wade, Chair of the Baker Award, and Clive Barker, a long-standing governor of the UTC and school board member.

Their ability to articulate their skills and ambitions to such esteemed figures was truly outstanding. They have made the entire school community proud.

Raising the Profile of Post 16

UCAS and Future Pathways: Mapping Out Success

Our Year 13 students have officially crossed a major milestone this module, completing a total of 51 UCAS applications. The academic ambition on display is remarkable, with students applying for a diverse range of disciplines including various Engineering specialisms, Computing, Cyber Security, AI, Biomedical Science, and Mathematics, alongside professional degrees in Law, Criminology, Forensics, and Marketing. In keeping with our school's professional ethos, many students are pursuing a dual-pathway strategy by applying for both prestigious university placements and degree-level apprenticeships. With National Apprenticeship Week (9th–15th February 2026) just around the corner, our students are already making waves with applications to industry giants such as BAE, TfL, National Grid, Amazon, and Google.

Early Careers and Industry Offers

It is incredibly rewarding to see that many students have already secured their next steps before the academic year is even over. Several have received official engineering role offers from a local lift engineering company, while others have been recruited by Classics and Sevens motor vehicles. These successes are a direct result of the maturity and technical skill our students demonstrated during their industry placements, where they left employers thoroughly impressed. As Director of Post-16, I am exceptionally proud to see our students translating their classroom expertise into real-world career opportunities.

Extended Project Qualifications (EPQ)

The excitement is building as our Extended Project Qualification (EPQ) presentations fast approach, scheduled for the 9th, 10th, and 12th of February. This prestigious annual event offers our students a unique opportunity to present their findings to an esteemed audience of Alumni and industry partners from leading companies such as Kenard, Qinetiq, Thames Water, and AWE. Not only does this provide invaluable experience in professional public speaking and networking, but it also accounts for a vital 10% of their overall EPQ mark. The diversity and depth of the projects this year are truly breathtaking, showcasing both academic rigor and technical ingenuity. In the realm of dissertations, students have tackled complex societal and ethical questions, ranging from the reliability of AI and the impact of a cashless society on vulnerable populations to the psychology of neuromarketing and the history of patriarchal norms. Meanwhile, our "Artifact" projects demonstrate incredible hands-on skill; highlights include a fabricated suit of armor, a prosthetic hand controlled by muscle wires, a concussion-prevention head guard with integrated impact sensors, and even a custom-built dog wheelchair. From engineering a 3D-printed V12 engine and an automatic maze-solving robot to exploring the aerodynamics of F1 rear wings, our students have shown immense tenacity and passion. We look forward to seeing them present these innovative solutions and well-researched arguments to our visiting professionals.

Student Celebrations

How minimally invasive procedures reshaped my understanding of surgical risk.

Before engaging and exploring wider medical reading, I understood surgical risk mainly in physical terms and from my own perspective of what I could see. I assumed that the larger the incision and the more invasive the procedure, the greater the risk to the patient. From this point of view, minimally invasive procedures appeared inherently safer, as they often involve smaller incisions, reduced tissue damage, and faster recovery times. However, learning more about minimally invasive approaches challenged this simplified view. Rather than eliminating risk altogether, these procedures reshaped it, shifting emphasis away from visible physical damage towards precision, planning, and decision-making under uncertainty.

Minimally invasive procedures are frequently associated with improved patient outcomes, including reduced post-operative pain, shorter hospital stays, and lower infection rates (Aggarwal and Darzi, 2006). While these advantages are clearly significant, focusing solely on them can obscure the complexity of what surgical safety actually involves. Through independent reading, I began to understand that surgical risk is not removed by reducing invasiveness, but instead redistributed into less visible domains, particularly those relating to judgement and accuracy.

Initially, I associated surgical danger primarily with disruption to the body's structures. This meant that procedures involving extensive exposure seemed riskier than those guided through smaller access points. However, minimally invasive techniques often rely heavily on imaging and indirect visualisation. This means that clinicians must interpret two-dimensional or reconstructed images in order to operate within a three-dimensional space, often without direct sight of the tissue being manipulated. As a result, the margin for error can become smaller, and the consequences of misinterpretation more significant than I had first expected.

Furthermore, research suggests that while minimally invasive techniques reduce certain complications, they can introduce new technical and cognitive challenges. Surgeons must process visual information differently, maintain spatial awareness, and rely on pre-operative planning to a much greater extent than in traditional open procedures (Sarker et al, 2010). Learning this challenged my earlier assumption that smaller incisions automatically equate to safer procedures. Instead, I began to see safety as dependent on how well risk is anticipated and managed, rather than how visible or invasive the procedure appears.

This shift in understanding also highlighted the importance of preparation. In minimally invasive procedures, much of the management of risk occurs before the procedure itself begins. Careful analysis of imaging, patient-specific anatomy, and procedural planning becomes central to reducing harm. This means that risk is not simply encountered in the operating theatre, but constructed through decisions made well in advance. As a result, minimally invasive approaches emphasised to me that surgical competence extends beyond technical ability and includes judgement, interpretation, and responsibility.

The implications of this became particularly clear when considering procedures involving the brain.

Student Celebrations

The brain represents a uniquely high-stakes context, as even minor damage can result in permanent functional consequences. Unlike many other organs, the brain has a limited capacity to compensate for injury, meaning that the tolerance for error is exceptionally low. In this setting, the redistribution of risk associated with minimally invasive procedures becomes more pronounced.

While minimally invasive techniques may reduce physical trauma to surrounding tissue, they demand an extreme level of precision. Imaging-guided approaches require clinicians to navigate complex neural structures where millimetre-scale inaccuracies can have profound effects. This reinforced my understanding that, in brain-related procedures, risk is not defined by how invasive a technique is, but by how carefully its benefits are weighed against its potential harms. Reviews of neurosurgical and neuro-interventional practice emphasise that advances in precision increase both potential benefit and the consequences of error, further complicating decision-making (Aziz et al, 2018).

Moreover, this challenged the assumption that technological advancement alone guarantees safer outcomes. Although improved imaging and instruments allow for more targeted interventions, they also place greater responsibility on clinicians to interpret information correctly and act with restraint. In the context of the brain, this balance between intervention and preservation becomes especially ethically significant, as decisions can directly affect cognition, personality, and overall quality of life.

Reflecting on this learning reshaped how I view medicine more broadly. Rather than seeing medical progress as a straightforward reduction of risk through innovation, I now understand it as a continual rebalancing of risk and responsibility. Minimally invasive procedures exemplify this shift, as they reduce certain dangers while amplifying others that are less immediately visible. This perspective encouraged me to think more critically about how medical decisions are justified, particularly in situations where outcomes are uncertain and the consequences are profound.

In conclusion, learning about minimally invasive procedures reshaped my understanding of surgical risk by revealing its complexity. These approaches do not simply make medicine safer by reducing invasiveness, but instead redistribute risk towards precision, interpretation, and decision-making. This is especially evident in brain-related procedures, where the margin for error is minimal and the stakes exceptionally high. Engaging with these ideas before formal medical training has encouraged me to view medicine not only as a technical discipline, but as one that requires continual ethical and analytical reflection.

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Aziz, T.Z., Hariz, M. and Zrinzo, L. (2018) 'Deep brain stimulation: current status and future prospects', Brain, 141(6), pp. 1653–1667.

Sarker, S.K., Chang, A., Vincent, C. and Darzi, A.W. (2010) 'Technical skills errors in laparoscopic surgery', Annals of Surgery, 252(3), pp. 503–509.

Written by Arshan M, Year 12.

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