

# The Castle Magazine

2023-24

Exciting trips to Rome,  
Paris, Madrid and more...

News from  
our faculties!

Best progress  
and attainment  
results ever!

The  
Addams  
Family!



**The Castle School**  
ACHIEVE | BELONG | PARTICIPATE

# From the Headteacher

I hope you enjoy reading about the various trips and events that have taken place in the last academic year (2023-24), as well as a selection of student achievements. As a school, we are hugely proud of the opportunities that we are able to offer our students and this year we ran over 300 clubs as part of our enrichment offer, some of which are included in this magazine.

Over 60% of students have taken part in at least one enrichment activity every week since last September. During our six enrichment days, students have experienced:

- Wicked at the Bristol Hippodrome
- SEA LIFE Weymouth
- Exeter places of worship
- Chepstow Castle
- Bristol Aerospace
- Art trips to Royal Albert Memorial Museum and National Museum Cardiff
- Blackrock Outdoors
- Exmoor (as part of The Castle Challenge)
- Shepton Mallet Prison
- Wimblesball Lake
- University of Bath

There have also been a wide range of trips and activities including:

- Trip to Bristol City FC
- Trip to The Brewhouse
- Ice skating at Clarks Village
- Ninja Warriors at Cribbs Causeway
- Bristol Old Vic to watch Metamorphosis
- Oxford to watch Poetry Live
- Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra in Exeter Great Hall
- Spring Forward Dance Festival at the Tacchi Morri Arts Centre
- GCSE history trip to Glastonbury Abbey
- Theatre Royal Bath to watch Blood Brothers
- House trip to Thorpe Park
- Panathlon Athletics
- Bristol Hippodrome to watch Hamilton
- GCSE photography trip to The Eden Project
- The Castle School Pride Club receiving an award at Exeter University
- GCSE geography trip to Lyme Regis

Various residentials also took place including:

- Pinkery
- Rome
- Immenstadt
- Paris
- Berlin/Krakow
- Madrid
- Courchevel
- China

Thank you to our wonderful staff, without their commitment and dedication these trips and activities could not take place.

In February we staged our biggest show to date at The Castle School, The Addams Family. We sold a staggering 1,400 tickets, with 150 young people involved. We hosted His Majesty's Royal Marines Band back in November, who wowed us with the Corps of Drums. Surrounding schools visited to create a mass orchestra performance for our Year 7s. We were also one of only six schools to host The National Youth Orchestra (NYO) Inspire tour in July. The NYO performed to Years 7 and 8, and held workshops for our instrumentalists. A huge thank you to Somerset Music for helping to organise these outstanding opportunities. House Dance 2023 saw Sandringham crowned winners for the second year running. Our dancers performed at the Spring Forward Dance Festival in March. We have welcomed practitioners in from Somerstage, Swindon Dance CAT and Merge Dance Company. The annual variety show in December entertained our Houses with singing, dancing, magic and traditional cultural entertainment.

Our Christmas concert was a wonderful evening, full of incredibly talented musicians from Years 7-11, who put hours of hard work into creating fantastic performances from orchestra, mini orchestra, woodwind group, choir and steel pans. The hall was at capacity with friends and family, who raised over £300 for Cancer Research UK.

The Community Concert was a sell out with over 400 singers and instrumentalists from The Castle School and our local primary schools celebrating our relationship through music. May saw our rock and pop concert, The Gig, with 12 bands performing classic hits much to the delight of the audience. Years 7 and 8 also took part in Gamelan Workshops with ActionTrack in November, part of our universal offer in creative arts. We held the Summer Showcase

in glorious weather, enjoying musical performances from our students, staff stalls with homemade cakes and fairground rides.

There were some significant sporting achievements this year too. Again, this success is testament to the talent and dedication of our students. We had success in hockey with Years 7, 9, 10 and 11 being crowned area champions with Year 8 as runners up. We also had a Years 7 and 8 mixed team win the County Cup for hockey. Moving into spring, we had great success in netball with all five years winning the District Cup. The Year 10 girls won the County Cup tier two competition, which included opposition from both state and private schools. In football we had Years 7, 9 and 11 win the District Cup and the Year 11s won the double, being crowned County Champions. We had success in badminton with the KS4 girls' team becoming County Champions and the boys as runners up. In the summer term we had success as winners in the Year 7 softball County Cup and the Year 8 boys were runners up in the County Cup.

Modern foreign languages students have visited Paris, Madrid and Germany this year. We have had another successful year with the Mandarin Excellence Programme, which moves into its fourth year from September. Eleven students took part in a two-week study trip to Shanghai and we also hosted Chinese students in school.

Maintaining our strong links, Richard Huish College staff have given assemblies for Years 9 and 10 languages students. Also, several of our Year 11 students visited Richard Huish College to take part in an A-Level German lesson. We enjoyed a theatre performance in French by the Onatti theatre company for students of French in Years 8-11.

The Computing Department has been busy recruiting new Digital Leaders, who completed digital leader training and created a whole school assembly for Internet Safety Day. The school hosted an I Belong in Computing event with five other Somerset schools taking part.

Work experience continues to go from strength to strength. This is so beneficial for our students' own personal development, but also for developing strong relationships with the community. If you are able to accommodate our students or know of any employers who could accommodate our students next year, please do contact the school.

In June 2024, Year 11s (2024 Leavers) left us after a wonderful prom. They have been such an amazing year group, not only in Year 11, but during their five years with us. It is such a privilege to see them grow from children into the fine young adults that they are and to have the chance to celebrate their time here. We wish them well and will welcome them back for their GCSE certificate presentation evening in November 2024.

Congratulations to Lancaster for winning the House Trophy for the fourth year running. Following our sports day, 'O' celebrated their House Trophy win by having periods 4 and 5 off timetable on Wednesday 17th July, having fun on the 'Sizzler', the dodgems, 'Energiser' and the inflatables. Some records were also broken on Sports Day; these names will go on our Honours Board.

Finally, thank you to colleagues who work at The Castle School, but also to parents, carers, Governors, Trustees and organisations in the community that work with us during the year. Without your support many of these opportunities could not be made available.







# Rome Trip

The adventure began in the early hours of Saturday 21st October 2024, when 19 students and three members of staff from The Castle School boarded a flight and embarked on a four-day trip to one of the most iconic and influential cities in the world, Rome.

Upon arrival in Italy's capital city, the group wasted no time and headed straight off to explore an early Christian settlement, which was hidden deep within a quarry in order to protect its inhabitants from the persecution of the pagan Romans.

The next stop was the Roman Forum, the most important forum in ancient Rome, where important religious, political and social activities took place. Students were able to see the exact spot where Julius Caesar delivered many of his political speeches and celebrated his victories as well as the Arch of Constantine, a triumphal arch commissioned by the Roman Senate to commemorate the emperor Constantine the Great's victory over Maxentius at the Battle of Milvian Bridge in AD 312.

On the second day, the group visited perhaps Italy's most famous landmark, the Colosseum. Students were mesmerised by this magnificent amphitheatre, which is the largest ancient amphitheatre ever built and still the largest standing amphitheatre in the world, showcasing this ancient civilisation's accomplishments and legacy.

The third day was dedicated to the centre of Catholicism, Vatican City, where the group explored one of the biggest churches in the world and the headquarters of the Roman Catholic Church, St. Peter's Basilica. They also visited the famous museums, established by Pope Julius II in the 16th century, housing masterpieces spanning several millennia, including classical

sculptures, Renaissance art, and Egyptian artefacts. However, the highlight of the day had to be the Sistine Chapel, where the group admired the impressive paintings by Michelangelo and explored the themed galleries, including the Raphael Rooms and saw works by Raphael, Caravaggio and Leonardo da Vinci.

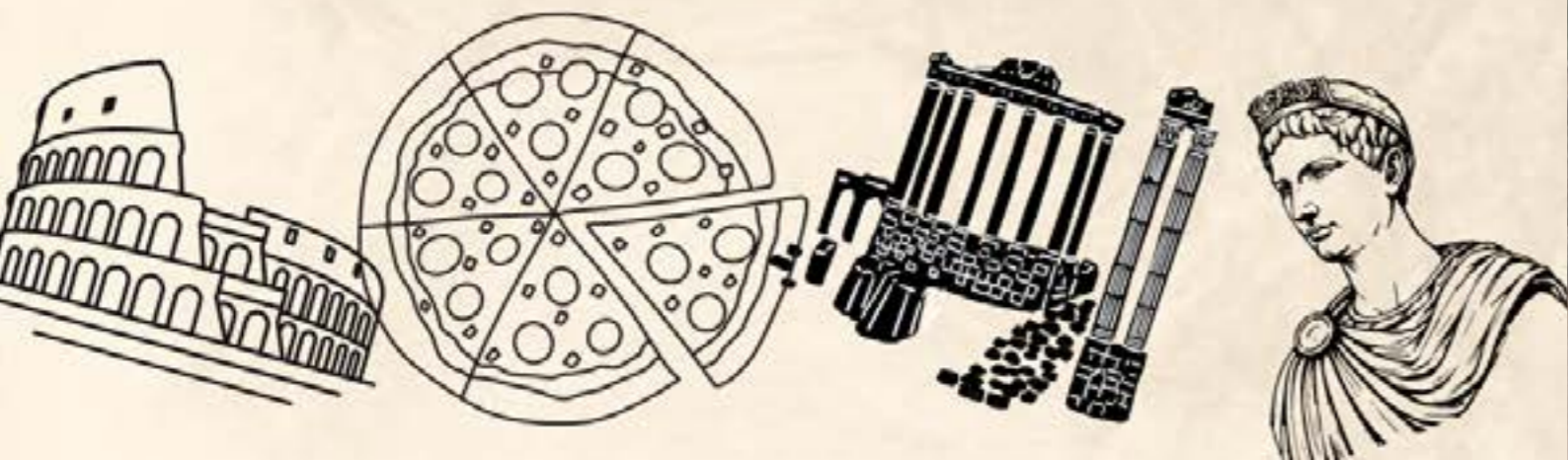
The group had plenty of opportunities to explore, seeing the largest Baroque fountain in the city and one of the most famous fountains in the world, the Trevi Fountain. They also tried various Italian delights including ice cream and pizza and also visited the Pantheon, a former Roman temple that since AD 609 has also served as a Catholic church, known as the Basilica of St. Mary and the Martyrs.

The trip ended with a visit to Ostia, an ancient city and harbour, situated on the western coast of Italy at the mouth of the River Tiber. Students explored shopping arcades, amphitheatres and houses that reflected the daily life of the Romans.

The trip gave students the unique opportunity to gain insight into pagan Rome and develop a deeper understanding into the importance of Vatican City as a central hub for Catholics. Students were also able to experience Italian culture, language and cuisine and for many it was their first trip abroad.

The staff were impressed by the students, who were perfect ambassadors of the school abroad and showed great interest and enthusiasm in this wonderful ancient city. They also praised their behaviour, cooperation, and curiosity throughout the trip.

We look forward to taking more students in October 2025.





# Pinkery Trip Poem

Two minibuses driving away,  
Children ready to spend a night and day  
At a place full of adventure and fun -  
Working together all day in the sun.

They have arrived at last,  
Their awfully long journey put in the past.  
Activities await them - all ready, ready.  
Stay on the wooden planks - steady, steady.

An obstacle course for everyone,  
Working in teams to get it done,  
Claiming points along the way  
So they don't have the worst chores on their stay.

(Dinner has passed)

Day turns to night, the moon shines bright,  
Children prepare for the night walk, armed with a light.

Crystal-like stars illuminate the night sky,  
Fields of grass almost knee high.

Bunk beds await them when they get back,  
Staying up past midnight, time for a snack!  
The birds sing songs as the sun rises -  
A new day, full of surprises.

Climbing up hills, mountainboard at the ready -  
Don't fall off. Steady. Steady!  
Next challenge: in order to achieve your goals  
Move the tyres onto the right poles.

Saying goodbyes - time to go home.  
Connecting, bonding, friendships have grown.  
Life-long memories have been made,  
These Pinkery memories will never fade.

**By Amy Vautier and Ava Taylor  
07G1**



# News From Pastoral Support

## The SMART Schools Study

Caernarfon's 9M, 11M1, their tutors and other teachers in the school were a pivotal part of the University of Birmingham's SMART Schools Study.

The study was a nationwide look into how our young people use social media and how it affects their mental health.

In total, they collected survey data from 31 schools, 83 teachers, and 1271 pupils - who also kindly wore an accelerometer for a week. In addition, they held focus groups with 45 school staff, 85 pupils, and 49 parents from seven schools, of which we were one, who provided their views on adolescent smartphone and social media use, as well as their use within the home and school environments. I would like to thank all staff, pupils, and parents for participating in the study.

YouTube, TikTok, Snapchat, and Instagram are the most widely

used social media apps by US teens (aged 13-17) according to recent research by the Pew Research Centre, with many describing their use as 'almost constant'. A recent Ofcom report released in the UK showed that teens aged 12-15 largely communicate (send messages and make calls) via WhatsApp (80%) followed by Snapchat (62%).

The results of the SMART Schools Study have been provided to the Education Committee as written evidence for the inquiry Screen Time: Impacts on Education and Wellbeing. Once the results of this inquiry have been published, we will have a better understanding of what actions we can take.



## The Rainbow Flag Award

We are pleased to announce that we have recently completed the final section of The Rainbow Flag Award, which means that The Castle School is now a proud Rainbow Flag Award holder.

The Rainbow Flag Award is a national quality assurance framework for all schools and youth-centred organisations, which focuses on positive LGBT+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, plus other related identities) inclusion and visibility.

The Rainbow Flag Award encourages a whole school approach

to LGBT+ inclusion, as well as developing strategies to effectively challenge and combat LGBTphobic bullying.

The sections that we have completed are:

- Skilled Teacher
- Supportive Governors and Parents
- Effective Policies
- Inclusive Curriculum
- Pastoral Support
- Student Voice





# Paris Trip

We began our adventure in the early hours of Friday 29th March 2024, when 39 students and five members of staff set off from The Castle School to Dover, for a five-day trip to Paris. After some delay at the ferry port, we arrived in our accommodation centre (a former château, 20 minutes outside of Paris) on the Friday evening.

Saturday was an action-packed day! After filling up on traditional pain au chocolat and croissants for breakfast, we headed straight for Montmartre, the highest point of Paris. Being Easter weekend it was very busy with people coming to visit the impressive Sacre Coeur Basilica. We wound our way through the narrow streets, exploring the artists' offerings and traditional cafes as we stocked up on souvenirs, all whilst looking down over the expanse of the city from our great height.

Then, it was a short bus ride to the Montparnasse Tower. This 210-metre-tall building was completed in 1973 and remains the tallest skyscraper in Paris. We ascended to the observation deck (at 200m) and delighted in the magnificent views across the city.

After a traditional baguette for lunch, we travelled across the city (fantastically aided by our own tour guide and Mrs Hopkins) to the base of the Eiffel Tower and awaited our boat cruise along the Seine. This passed many famous landmarks and was a wonderful way to see the city. It was particularly exciting to know that the 2024 Olympic athletes would be making their entrance to the opening ceremony in July down the Seine in the same way!

We finished our day outside the Louvre, appreciating the intricate architecture and the combination of old stone versus new glass.

Easter Sunday began with a trip to a local hypermarket, followed by a trip to a local town market. Students used their impressive language skills to buy ingredients with which to make lunch, based on this year's theme: The 2024 Paris Olympics! After bartering for local produce, we returned to the centre where students' culinary and creative minds joined forces and resulted in some truly impressive edible designs: rowing boats with cucumber oars, a diving board made of cheese, peppers turned into Olympic rings... It was a tough decision for the judges!

Sunday afternoon found us at the Stade de France, France's national stadium built for the 1998 FIFA World Cup with a capacity of 80,000 people. Our tour guide was friendly and knowledgeable, and students used their French to ask questions. We learnt that on match days, the President takes one lift up to his seat; his wife takes another lift – this is in case of a breakdown. I don't know why they just don't use the stairs...

The stadium was being prepared for the Olympics, which was exciting to see, and we were able to see other ongoing building work in preparation for the summer games, too.

After returning to the centre, it was time to make crepes! Students worked in teams and thoroughly enjoyed themselves (and the range of toppings).

Monday morning heralded an early start for Disneyland Paris. We clearly timed it wisely, as it was not as busy as expected, so students were able to make the most of going on as many rides as possible – to the extent that some needed to take a time-out to recover! Disneyland Paris itself is really a magical place, with so much to see and do, and it was such a wonderful opportunity for students to experience it with their friends.

Our bus picked us up from Disneyland Paris in the evening and we made our way back to Calais, managing to get an earlier ferry, which got us back to school early on the Tuesday morning. Huge thanks to parents for getting to school four hours ahead of schedule to collect students, with only 30 minutes' notice.

Students conducted themselves fantastically, with constant enthusiasm, and they really embraced trying out their language skills, cultural activities, and the range of food – including snails!

The group returned to the UK with unforgettable memories and a deeper appreciation of the rich and diverse culture and heritage of Paris.





# Poetry Live

On Wednesday 24th January 2024, students from Year 11 travelled to Oxford to watch the spectacular Poetry Live!

We were lucky enough to watch several poets perform poems from the AQA Power and Conflict Anthology, providing fascinating contextual information that would benefit our students in their exams. We also had the opportunity to listen to a Chief Examiner discuss top tips for the Unseen Poetry portion of the exam, talking through a new poem and how the students could analyse it in their exams.

The day started with Carol Ann Duffy, who discussed her poem, War Photographer, and her reasons for writing it. She described a dear friend, his desire to make a difference in the world through photography and his frustration at his images being placed into magazines for people to flick through and ignore. It was fascinating to listen to her thought process behind the poem and her reasons for creating such a beautiful poem, something that would prove invaluable for our Year 11 students in their revision. We also had the honour of listening to some of her other well-known poems, such as Valentine and Before You Were Mine.

We then heard from Daljit Nagra, an award-winning poet. Although our students were not studying his work, he discussed the importance of having fun with language in poems and raised awareness among our students around racism and the importance of empathy and kindness. He read a poem that he wrote for the King's Coronation, When Lighting Up the Nation, a witty poem full of slang and Punjabi words, Ramayana, and a short poem entitled

X, about migrants in France that sewed their own eyelids and lips shut as a form of silent protest.

Next was the current Poet Laureate, Simon Armitage. He split his poetry readings into two categories, love and war. In his love poems, he read the beautiful Zodiac T-Shirt, a poem about the whirlwind that is first love. Using pathetic fallacy expertly, the love began during the hopeful, warm summer months and fell apart during the bleak November rain. He continued this theme of love with an untitled poem from his collection called Book of Matches. In this poem he discussed the umbilical link between mother and son, and his fear about his transition out of his family home for the first time. It was an amazing opportunity for our students to hear a raw, honest perspective on love. For his war poems, he read Remains (a poem that our Year 11 students were studying), discussing his documentary with Channel 4 that inspired the poem, and explained some of his important language choices in the poem. He continued to describe The Manhunt, a touching poem about a wife's experience with her husband's PTSD following the war and her desperate attempt to help him heal. Armitage was an excellent speaker, delivering his poems with wit and warmth, normalising the idea of writing poetry and being a poet.

Next was Imtiaz Dharker. Her poems were full of imagery and emotion, heavily influenced by her upbringing in Bombay, a place she referred to as feeling as though it was held up by string and ready to collapse at any moment. This contrast between the wealthy, booming economy and the impoverished shanty towns was the focus behind her poem Living Space, which was full of



hope for humanity and admiration for those living in poverty, rather than just surviving. She also provided a reading of her poem Tissue, which our students are studying. She described finding her name and date of birth written on some tissue paper in her father's house after his death, the type of tissue that might wrap up something precious like a Qur'an. She described this moment as a turning point in what had previously been a contentious relationship with her father; a moment to consider the fragility of human lives and what really matters in life - love and relationships, not arguments about trivial topics. This contextual information gives our students a real insight into Dharker's mind and was greatly beneficial in their analysis of this poem.

The students then heard from Owen Shears, a modern war poet inspired by the works of Wilfred Owen and other WWI poets. While his works are not included in our Year 11 poetry anthology, he is an inspirational poet and the ideas he shared will hopefully have inspired our students. He described his admiration for Wilfred Owen, the original blogger of his time, sharing information about WWI that directly contradicted the information the government was providing, and how he died in what was known as "the war to end all wars". Shears described his horror at the continuing violence around the world, and disgust at the UK claiming to be in "peace time", while being involved in multiple conflicts around the world where British soldiers lose their lives without recognition. He read the poem Mametz Wood, about Welsh soldiers being discovered by farmers, buried in a shallow mass grave, 85 years after the

end of WWI. With his work, he aims to provide the respect and recognition that soldiers in conflict deserve, not allowing them to be forgotten. He followed this with the poem Winter Swans, which was about how the natural world can lead us back to our better selves, and The Horses, about the constant pattern of saying goodbye to a version of your children, and hello to the next version as they grow up. He finished with Pink Mist, a powerful poem about tragedies and atrocities that occur in war.

The final poet was John Agard, a Guyanese performance poet. He started with a humorous poem Potato Speaks, exploring life from the perspective of a potato. He then introduced the poem from our studies, Checking Out Me History. He implored our students to see black history for more than just what they are taught in school, to research and read books about black history and not accept the colonial history that wipes out centuries of black history. He explained his horror at finding a sentence written in the front of one of his old school books: "The history of the West Indies began in 1492 with the arrival of Christopher Columbus", a sentence that omits entire chapters of Haitian history, including the Mayans and the Aztecs. He explained the importance of Nanny of the Maroons and Mary Seacole, icons in black history that have been erased and forgotten. Our students loved his performance, laughed throughout Potato Speaks and learned a lot from his discussion of black history, giving a well-deserved standing ovation at the end.

Thank you Year 11, and the poets, for an incredible day!







# German Cultural Exchange and Ski Trip

I think that it was really fun and having never skied before I was very happy with the progress I made, the instructors were supportive and fun, and I think I was put in a group of people that really matched my ability.



It was amazing and interesting.

Very fun. I had skied before, but I was able to parallel turn by the end of the week.



I found the trip very fun and entertaining.

It was very interesting and really fun going.

The German cultural exchange and ski trip was a huge success and we had a wonderful week of skiing in the sunshine, enjoying Bavarian hospitality, a trip to Munich, including a tour of the Allianz arena, as well as a day visiting Neuschwanstein Castle and shopping in Kempten.

We also visited three of the Exchange Schools in Immenstadt, even though it was during their holidays. It was a very interesting cultural trip, observing the similarities and the differences between our school systems.

The first day was spent with German host families and activities included visits to the ski jumps in Oberstdorf, escape rooms in Kempten, swimming in the local pool with a view of the mountains, ice-skating and trips to watch the Fasching/Karneval processions and celebrations. Some of our students even threw themselves into the dressing up!

The week was full of new experiences and friendships, which we hope to see endure long into the future.

Thank you to our lovely host families, host teachers and the planning team from Immenstadt. A big thanks to our lovely students, who made enormous progress on and off the slopes and to our teaching team who accompanied them - ein unvergessliches Erlebnis! Immenstadt, we'll be back in 2026, bis dann!



# DANKE





# Berlin and Krakow Trip

By James Lawson 10G1

On Tuesday 2nd April 2024, at around 2.00am, we embarked on our journey to Heathrow. Despite the early start, everybody was lively, especially at the back of the bus and we arrived at Heathrow before 6.00am. With everybody in tow, the plane set off on time. On the plane, the cloth of tiredness seemed draped over everyone, but upon arrival to a practically empty Berlin airport, even a paper towel offered an exciting football match until a stylish coach carried us to the hostel. After a brief lunch break, we had a fantastic tour with a wonderful, Australian tour guide around Berlin. Our group saw fascinating memorials, such as the Holocaust Memorial and Checkpoint Charlie, which coupled with the guide's endless enthusiasm, captivated all of us for the whole four hours. The day ended with dinner, before the hostel fell silent.

Day two commenced at the Platform 17 Memorial. It was a simple, yet tragic memorial. The numbers of Jews, who were deported from Berlin, lined the edge of the platforms, and a brief wander along the tracks helped us understand the true extent of the Nazi atrocities. Leaving the memorial after about an hour, our coach rambled along the beautiful streets of Berlin, until we arrived at Wannsee House to learn about the conference that ordered the genocide of millions of Jews. Everybody felt like the Wannsee museum was incredibly interesting, and it had countless interactive elements that focused on both the Jews and the perpetrators. An equally fascinating tour of Sachsenhausen concentration camp provided a visual representation of the Nazis' heinous crimes and how the murder was systemised and planned. We all agreed that Sachsenhausen was an awful place, where we all learnt something about 1940s Germany with the help of another inspiring tour guide from Liverpool. Ending day two at the Topography of Terror, everybody had some time to connect with the exhibition in a way that suited them. Personally, I focused on the expertly made paragraphs that described the treatment of all the different ethnic groups because it shared their stories as well.

The next day, day three, was bound to be an exciting one. Rather than highlighting the actions of the Nazis against other minorities,

day three was showing how German people resisted Nazi rule and the ordinary life of Jews. First stop was the Jewish Museum in Berlin. I loved how grandiloquent the museum was compared with the site of Hitler's bunker now being a car park. It showed us that the victims are strong, and they now have the power. Lunch at the impossibly large Berlin mall split the Jewish Museum up from the German Resistance Museum, where Colonel Claus von Stauffenberg was killed. In this museum, we learned about his July 20th plot to kill Hitler in 1944. A tasty meal at the Hard Rock Cafe was a brief prelibation to the coach journey ahead, but before we took our seats for nine hours, we climbed up the Reichstag. At the end of day three, the coach set off to Krakow.

On the second to last day, morning began with a little look around Krakow Old Town. More importantly, the morning ended, and afternoon started with a truly harrowing visit to Auschwitz. At the time, there were little words to describe the true horror that hid within meters of barbed wire fence. Even now, only images of the memorials inside really come to mind. Without travelling to Auschwitz, it is hard to understand by just reading these letters that I type, the true nature of the Nazis' crimes. That is the reason we visited, and everyone in our group learnt something new. Ending on a high, we ventured into the depths of Krakow to dine at the Ariel restaurant. For many of my peers, this was the hidden gem of the trip, because we did not know what to expect at the restaurant and were fully immersed in a different culture. We had music, food and coffee, so we all left feeling extremely positive. Perhaps the biggest day on the trip, day four ended on a high.

The final day provided us with a wonderful, guided tour of Krakow and Oskar Schindler's factory, before allowing us to spend our money in Krakow Old Town. Everyone came back with a variety of goods, including soft toy pigeons, paintings and fridge magnets.

Upon boarding the plane home, we all felt like the trip was a huge success, but we were all ready to get back home and relax!!





# Madrid Trip

By Maria Glazov 10G2



¡Lo pasamos genial, fue flipante!

Fue una de las experiencias más emocionantes y divertidas que he tenido en mi vida. Para mí, lo más impresionante fueron las vistas de la ciudad desde el Palacio Real porque eran muy hermosas. Además vimos el templo de Debod, que fue un regalo de Egipto – fue incomparable en belleza, alucinante y extraordinario.

El primer día vimos el estadio Santiago Bernabéu y después salimos a cenar a un restaurante típico español . Comimos tapas y las croquetas

fueron mis favoritas.

El último día aprendimos a cocinar platos típicos españoles, preparamos paella, gazpacho, tortilla de patatas española y tarta de Santiago. Luego comimos lo que cocinamos y estaban muy sabrosos.

También visitamos el Museo Reina Sofía. Vimos exposiciones de arte, como por ejemplo obras de Picasso y Dalí

¡Me gustaría ir de nuevo a Madrid pronto!

*“Me encantó la paella con marisco.”* **Jessica Speller 09R1**

*“Fue un viaje inolvidable. ¡Comimos muchos helados deliciosos!”* **Ellie Chapman 10Y1**

*“Me encantó España. ¡Lo mejor fue ir a las tiendas!”* **Martha Tuff 10B**

*“¡Madrid fue increíble! Lo que más me gustó fue el parque de atracciones y sus montañas rusas, la cultura, la gente, la comida y las excursiones. Me encantó mi habitación en el hotel también. ¡Todo fue muy divertido!”* **Emily Bird 10G1**





# News From Maths

## Faraday Challenge

On Tuesday 5th December 2023, 36 Year 8 students from The Castle School became real-life engineers for the day as they took part in a Faraday Challenge Day organised by the Institute of Engineering and Technology (IET).

IET Faraday Challenge Days are run by regional delivery partners across the UK and every year students are given a different engineering-related challenge.

This year's challenge was in association with regional delivery partners The Rees Jeffreys Road Fund and National Highways,

and our students had to put their engineering and technology knowledge and skills to the test and race against the clock to solve a real-life engineering problem relating to the regional delivery partners' industry.

The students had to research, design, build and present a prototype of their idea to the rest of the group.

It was great to see such creative ideas from our students, but what was most impressive was the fantastic teamwork from all the groups throughout the whole day.



## Dr Frost Visit



Dr Jamie Frost recently came into The Castle School to give an assembly to all of our Year 9 students about his career, education and the journey of Dr Frost Maths.

During the assembly he gave our students some maths problems to solve including The Time Secret Santa Kept Going Wrong and Why Do Bees Build Their Wax into Hexagons?

In the evening, Dr Frost delivered a workshop to staff and teachers from schools in the surrounding area.

Dr Frost Maths provides an online learning platform, teaching resources, videos and a bank of exam questions and is used by over 7500 schools in 133 countries, achieving over 3 million page views a day.

## Bristol Aerospace

Science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) have a profound impact on our everyday lives and play an important role in UK industry, which is currently experiencing a shortage of these skills. In order to engage students in STEM subjects, The Castle School follows a STEM enrichment plan involving activities in and out of school. As part of this, the whole of Year 8 visited Aerospace Bristol, across two days in October.

From the earliest days of powered flight to the cutting-edge technology of tomorrow, the students were inspired by fun practical science interactives and amazing exhibits, including more than a century of aviation history, from the earliest powered flights to the last Concorde ever to fly.

As well as a tour of the museum and exhibitions, students also took part in two interactive workshop sessions. 'Mission to Mars' where they had to work as a team to design, build and test a prototype of a new Mars rover and 'The Price is Right', where students were required to become budding entrepreneurs in the aviation world. They learnt how economics played a part in the grounding of Concorde and what they could do to fix this.

An educational fun-filled day was enjoyed by all.







# Wicked!



At the beginning of the year, all the students in Year 7 were given the amazing opportunity to watch the sensational musical, Wicked at the Bristol Hippodrome, providing many of them with their first experience of a professional theatrical production.

The day provided a completely immersive experience for the students, which began with Wicked-themed singing and dancing workshops, during which students learned the two-part harmony to What is This Feeling? and the choreography to One Short Day.

Workshops complete, students embarked on a coach trip to the Bristol Hippodrome. Once at the theatre, all the students displayed impeccable performance etiquette and exemplary behaviour, which resulted in various compliments from members of the public.

This is the third year running that students have been given the opportunity to go to the Bristol Hippodrome and we are already looking forward to taking next year's Year 7s to see Romeo and Juliet.



# Royal Albert Memorial Museum

Year 8 students enjoyed their trip to the Royal Albert Memorial Museum in Exeter this January. They were able to explore artefacts from around the world as well as the local areas. They were able to interact with some of the exhibits including the dressing up areas, mosaic making and musical instruments. They spent time drawing artefacts in their sketchbooks as research and idea gathering for their 3D forms project.



# Places of Worship

As part of our Worldviews universal offer, students in Year 7 were given the opportunity to visit Exeter Mosque and Exeter Cathedral.

Our annual trip to the Mosque was filled with awe and wonder as students had the chance to sit in the Prayer Hall and some even got to observe prayer time. They had a tour of the Wudu (washing) area and then a Q&A with the Imam of the Mosque. Our students were respectful and attentive, with many of them expressing that it was the first time they had visited a Muslim place of worship and how amazing it was.

The students then had a guided tour of the Cathedral, many students had not been inside this historic building. We started on

the outside, looking up at the interesting statue of St Peter, whom the Cathedral is dedicated to (have a look next time you are in Exeter to see why it is so interesting). They looked at some of the oldest parts of the Cathedral and listened to the story about the mice, who ran up the clock and the cat who was employed by the Church to catch them.

One of the best parts about teaching Worldviews is seeing the lived experience of Christians and Muslims in the South West. Knowing the practices of believers and developing empathy for them is an important part of our offer here at The Castle School, which is why this trip will continue to be a staple part of our enrichment offering.





# News From Science

Every week at Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) Club, 20-30 keen scientists come and try STEM activities, ranging from making plastics, designing steam turbines, brass-coating coins, to creating, and trying a bug-based menu for the apocalypse...

The science team ran a Friday Challenge for Red Nose Day to see

who could best filter dirty red water using bottles, paper, gravel, straw, and sand. Congratulations to Michelle Glazov and Annabel Cameron for making the cleanest water.

Science enrichment days include designing the best rocket car (to be launched at high speed, naturally) and a trip to SEA LIFE Weymouth. Can last year's winning rocket car be beaten this year?



# Duke of Edinburgh Award 2024

The 2023-24 academic year has been another fantastic year for the Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) Award at The Castle School, with a record number of 51 Year 10 students taking part.

The expedition section concluded with all participants successfully completing their assessed expedition on the Quantock Hills early in July.

They showed real grit and determination to navigate the routes that they themselves had planned back in April.

Participants also continue to make excellent progress in the other sections of the award with activities such as volunteering in charity shops and care homes, learning to play various musical instruments and taking part in online wildlife surveys to name but a few.

Well done to all those taking part and a massive thank you to all our adult volunteers, whose dedication makes it possible for us to run the award.





# The Addams Family

The highlight of the academic year had to be the 2024 production of The Addams Family, the musical. If you have been to see previous productions at The Castle School, you will know that the standard matches those of productions that you would see in professional theatres. We transformed the school assembly hall into a West End theatre venue. Our huge set of the Addams family's hallway featured four staircases, a mezzanine, a torture chamber and the family crypt. We hired the professional support of eleven musicians as well as lighting and sound designers from Bravo Events.

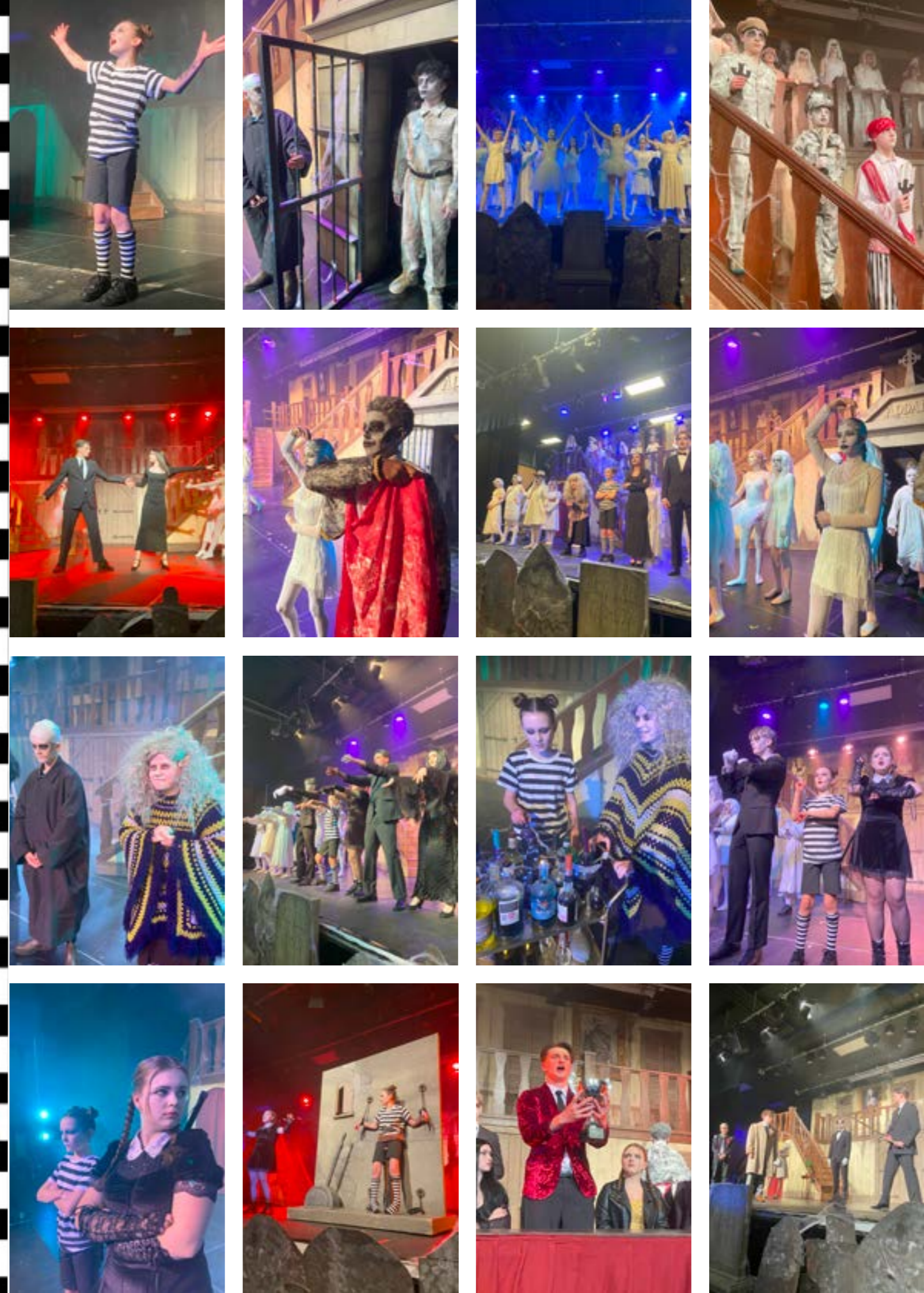
At The Castle School we push the boundaries of what is possible within a secondary school and the audience was blown away by the professionalism at all levels. Audience members showered the cast with praise, commending them for their meticulous timing, characterisation and harmony. Audience members commented that they could not believe that the oldest student on stage was only 16.

We have a legacy of creating the best possible performance opportunities for students in the creative arts department. The professional environment allows our students to flourish and hone their performance craft. There were some stunning performances on stage this year. The ensemble of ancestors stumbled out of their crypt into one of eight whole cast dancing and singing numbers, with 60 students on stage.

Special mentions go to our all-star cast. The Beineke family were played by Will, Fina and Ethan. As dinner guests of the Addams family, they were always destined for a strange evening. Will played the lovesick Lucas to perfection. Ethan captured the character of a middle-aged controlling dad with great comic timing. Fina stunned us with her operatic voice. Megan and Issy got some of the best laughs of the evenings with their confident characterisation of Grandma. Leif made an instant impression as the iconic Lurch. Spending

the longest in hair and makeup was Arthur, completely transforming into Uncle Fester. We would all agree that Emily is an up-and-coming star, she shone bright in her portrayal of Pugsley. We were blown away by Grace from the moment she auditioned in May and it was clear she was our Wednesday. Heidi and Abaigh played the deathly cold Morticia beautifully. The lead of Gomez was played by Sami and from the moment he stepped out onto stage, he oozed charisma and confidence.

We are extremely fortunate to have a very committed core team of teaching staff in the creative arts department, but we could not make shows of this magnitude without the talent and dedication of our wonderful cast.





# News From Food

## Bridgwater and Taunton College Taster Session

Year 9 students recently had the wonderful opportunity to visit The Quantock Restaurant at Bridgwater and Taunton College and have a tour of the catering classroom where students, who are training to become top chefs, were preparing for an evening event.

They also enjoyed some delicious freshly baked cakes and met celebrity chef Lesley Waters, who was visiting as a guest judge. This linked well with our work on Careers in Food and gave students an insight into the different jobs available.



## Fish Masterclass

Some of our Year 10 food GCSE students were recently given an amazing masterclass in how to prepare and cook fish by a catering lecturer from Bridgwater and Taunton College. Students were given the opportunity to fillet their very own plaice and went on to cook some stunning dishes.



# Sports and Health Day

As well as all the fabulous sporting events and opportunities available to students, the Sport and Nutrition Faculty also prioritise teaching students about the eight tips for healthy eating, laid out by the Government, which are:

1. Base your meals on starchy foods
2. Eat lots of fruit and vegetables
3. Eat more fish – including a portion of oily fish each week
4. Cut down on saturated fat and sugar
5. Eat less salt – no more than 6g a day for adults
6. Get active and try to be a healthy weight
7. Don't get thirsty
8. Don't skip breakfast.

The Sport and Nutrition Faculty hosted a Sports and Health Day for Years 7 and 8 students, which included a range of stalls set up and run by older students. The stalls included fishing, to enforce how important fish is to a healthy diet, some delicious, flavoured waters to demonstrate how important it is to stay hydrated, samples of exotic fruits and unusual carbohydrates and a hoopla game to teach students that saturated fats and sugars should only be eaten as treats. At each stall students collected relevant beads, which they made into a healthy keepsake keyring.





# News From Careers

## Careers Fair

We held our first in-school Careers Fair back in September 2023, with a great variety of employers, colleges and universities attending. There was a chance for all year groups to attend the event at various times during the school day, along with Year 10 students and their parents as part of the GCSE Launch Evening.

The feedback after the event was very positive, and as a result we are already busy planning this September's Careers Fair with even more employers, colleges and universities in attendance this time.

The overwhelmingly consistent comment from almost every exhibitor was how fantastic our students were. The engagement, focus, behaviour and interest shown really impressed them.

The following employers, colleges and universities attended:

- Army
- Balfour Beatty
- Bridgwater & Taunton College
- EDF

- Evo Agency
- Exeter College
- Exeter Maths School
- Exeter University
- Griffiths Engineering
- Hair Academy South West
- Next Steps South West
- NHS
- RAF
- Richard Huish
- RSPCA
- Singer Instruments
- SpecSavers
- Somerset Skills & Learning
- Taunton School
- The SPACE
- UK Hydrographic Office
- University Centre Somerset
- Wessex Water



## January Enrichment Days

During the January Enrichment Days there were many careers-focused activities for students across the school.

### Year 8

Students from Year 8 had a presentation from former students and Caroline Stone from the NHS on the subject of 'Achieving Your Ambition'. This included looking at how to create opportunities for yourself as well as how to deal with bumps in the road and turn them into positives in your career journey.

### Year 9

Students from Year 9 attended University Centre Somerset, where they had taster sessions in chosen subject areas ranging from criminology and media make-up to construction and sport. This was a great opportunity to experience further education and the kinds of subjects that may be available to them in the future. The feedback from the students afterwards was that they really enjoyed the taster sessions and that it opened their eyes to a variety of new possibilities.

### Year 10

Students from Year 10 had a very busy career-focused couple of days in January. Firstly, they all visited Bath University, where they were given a campus tour, a talk about university life and a chance to ask students questions about the university itself, as well as university life in general.

In addition to this, students from Year 10 also participated in a mock interview activity with a wide variety of employers coming in to support the event, including:

- Adopstar
- ALPLA Group
- Bridgwater & Taunton College
- Computeam
- Department for Work & Pensions
- Evo Agency
- Griffiths Engineering
- Hair Academy South West
- Honest Burgers
- Kennedys Law
- Richard Huish College
- Somerset NHS Foundation Trust
- South West Heritage Trust
- The Foot & Gait Clinic

- UK Hydrographic Office
- WPA Health Insurance

Our students were amazing, really impressing the interviewers.

Each employer had to select a chosen candidate to 'employ' and a runner up from those that they interviewed, and in almost every case the feedback from the interviewers was that this was an extremely hard task for them as the standard was consistently so high.

The Year 10 students commented that this activity helped improve their confidence as well as helping them to think about their transferable skills and applying these to the workplace in the future.





# China Trip



In July, students learning Mandarin in Year 9 travelled to Shanghai, China for a ten-day tour to improve their Mandarin speaking skills and cultural awareness. The trip was organised through the Mandarin Excellence Programme, a flagship initiative run by University College London on behalf of the Department for Education, which The Castle School has been a part of for the last three years.

Shanghai is a city of 24 million people, well-known for its historical landmarks, vibrant culture and impressive skyline, including the world's second highest tower. It didn't disappoint!

We spent time studying at Fudan University, one of China's top educational institutions. This included learning Mandarin, but also Tai Chi, taking part in a traditional Lion and Dragon dance performance and cooking traditional Chinese food. Students also displayed their artistic talents, taking part in workshops on Chinese painting, Chinese traditional clothing, singing, calligraphy and tie-dye.

Students were able to try a variety of Chinese food and snacks and develop their skills in using chopsticks. Meals were either in the university canteen or in Chinese restaurants. A Chinese takeaway in England won't be quite the same again!

In addition to studying, there was also the opportunity to visit some of the world's most popular tourist destinations and to do some shopping. Luggage was significantly heavier on the way back due to some amazing souvenirs.

Students visited Yuyuan, a traditional Chinese garden, which is an oasis in the middle of Shanghai's old town, and the Bund, to enjoy the views of the skyscrapers across the river and to learn about the British influence and history of the area. We also went up the 468m tall Pearl Tower, located next to the Huangpu River, with incredible views of the city and a glass floor to view the city below.

We saw giant pandas at Shanghai Zoo and learned about their pampered lifestyle. Their enclosure is air-conditioned, and as they don't like eating the local bamboo in Shanghai, bamboo is transported in from hundreds of miles away.

The week finished off with an evening river cruise to see the city lit up at night - many students described this as the most impressive experience of all.

This was a unique experience, and the memories will stay with these students for life. Students have really benefited from being able to immerse themselves in a vibrant and dynamic culture, practising their Mandarin skills, as well as their intercultural skills, and this will no doubt continue to motivate them in their study of this wonderful language and culture in the future.





# Results Day 2024

Students at The Castle School celebrated their best progress and attainment results ever.

84% of students achieved a 4 or more in both English and maths, whilst 58% gained a 5 or more in English and maths.

79% of students achieved the equivalent old measure of at least five A-C grades including English and maths (now grades 9-4). A fabulous achievement by all our students and very well deserved.

We are very proud to have some of the best teachers in the South West and our students really benefit from this. This year students have done particularly well in English, maths, combined science, history, geography, music, philosophy and ethics, modern foreign languages (especially French and German), photography, dance, food and nutrition, GCSE PE, ICT and DT.

Very well done to Saima and Abaigh, who achieved all grade 8s and 9s, and to the following students who achieved all

grade 7-9s; Yasmin, Cristina, George, Joel, Joshua, Ellie, Lorenzo, Finlay, Dylan, Thomas, Danidhu, Lala and Parsa.

For some students, even though their attainment was not as high, their results represent outstanding achievement and progress, and we are proud of every single one of them.

We are hugely proud of our students and know that these results will help them as they move into their adult life. Their success is all built on the strong relationships that they have formed within the school and this is down to the time the staff give in supporting them. We know exam performance is important and this year group have been a real credit to the school and its history, but more important are the memories and experiences that the students gain over five years with us, which they take into their post 16 education, employment or training, so they can go on to have happy lives.

We are hugely proud of all the hard work, dedication and unconditional commitment all colleagues at The Castle School show every day.





# News From Modern Foreign Languages

## 'Chinese Bridge' Mandarin Speaking Competition

Huge congratulations to Heidi, who took part in the 2024 "Chinese Bridge" Mandarin Speaking Competition for UK Schools, and reached the national final in London in May.

The final included a presentation, questions asked by judges and a 'scenario' section, all completely in Mandarin. Heidi excelled in all aspects and finished in the top ten candidates nationwide.

The topic of Heidi's spoken presentation was "My school". Here is a part of her presentation:

我的话题是我的学校。我的学校有六栋大楼，艺术楼、语言楼、数学楼等等。我最喜欢星期三，因为星期三有中文、体育和音乐课。在学校，我们有很多机会参加不同的活动，上个星期我打了乒乓球比赛，明天我要去乐队排练。我们学校还有中国交换活动，今年七月我就要去上海，我非常期待这次旅行。



## Richard Huish College Visit

19 of our Year 10 GCSE German students were recently given the opportunity to visit Richard Huish College and take part in an A-Level German lesson on the topic of Einwanderung (immigration) alongside some Year 12 college students.

We are very proud of the strong links that we have with the languages department at Richard Huish College and each year

many students from The Castle School go on to take A-Levels in French, German or Spanish.

Some of these students then go on to study a language as part of a university degree, including a year living and working abroad, and have the opportunity to use the language in their chosen career.



## Besuch aus Deutschland

We were delighted to host Frau Jaworek from Werner-von-Siemens-Gesamtschule Königsborn for a week in January via the UK-German Connection. Frau Jaworek and Frau Merschmann returned in March with a group of German students who stayed with host families and spent some time in lessons with their partners, including taking part in a debate in English and German about the pros and cons of school uniform.

The visit was a huge success and we look forward to future links between our schools.



## Onatti Theatre Company Visit

Students of French in Years 8-11 were treated to a French theatre performance by Onatti theatre company in March 2024. The show lasted 50 minutes and was performed entirely in French. The show is delivered by native French speakers and is specially designed for students of French at secondary school level. The performance was interactive, with many of our students becoming involved either through questioning or being invited to take part as one of the characters! One of our Year 8s had a star role and embraced the chance to interact in French for the entire duration of the show - well done to Jack who brought energy, enthusiasm and humour to this unexpected opportunity!

This is just one of many in-house experiences that are offered as part of the modern foreign languages department.



## Chinese Students Visit

In July, we were delighted to host 12 students from Zunyi Number 12 School in Guizhou province for a week. The visiting Chinese students stayed with local host families and were then paired up with students from The Castle School to join in with sports day and lessons, offering both groups of students opportunities for cultural and linguistic exchange.

We host students from China each year, working with Opportunity Education. If you are interested in being involved in future years, please contact [homestay@opportunity-education.com](mailto:homestay@opportunity-education.com).





# News From Creative Arts

## Christmas Concert

A wonderful evening was had by all at the Christmas Concert this year. All the incredibly talented musicians from Years 7-11 put in hours of hard work and rehearsals, which culminated in a fantastic, festive performance.

The hall was absolutely packed with friends and family, who enjoyed performances from the orchestra, the mini orchestra, the woodwind group and the steel pans. We raised £300 for Cancer Research.



## Variety Show

The Castle School's Got Talent was the final show of 2023. The Variety Show has been a long running tradition and this year it went from strength to strength. Our amazing presenters, Latika and Arthur, took our audience through 20 talented acts to showcase all that makes The Castle School outstanding. This year's winners were Teenage Dirtbag, who had the whole school hall singing along. It was a great way to finish for Christmas and we look forward to making it bigger and better for 2024.

## Workshop with Mel Simpson

Year 10 dance students had the fantastic opportunity to work on their contemporary dance technique and learn new choreography during a five-hour long dance workshop with professional dancer and dance teacher, Mel Simpson. Mel created a powerful dance piece based around the concept of gang culture, which the students are now rehearsing and refining for their practical exam in September.

## Grease Workshop

For the fifth year running, we were delighted to once again welcome Somerstage Musical Theatre School in to deliver a workshop to our most dedicated creative arts students focusing on developing their triple threat skills, namely singing, dancing and acting.

This year our students were given the opportunity to bring the amazing Greased Lightnin' to life and once again the principals, Lisa Lynch, and Tim Bonser both commented on how professional our students were, making us very proud.

We were very grateful to Somerset Music for subsidising this offer and enabling us to provide our students with such an amazing experience, one of many we hope to be able to offer our students moving forward.

## National Youth Orchestra

A huge thank you to the National Youth Orchestra (NYO) for a professional and inspiring afternoon of music. We had the privilege of being one of a select few schools in the UK that were able to hear you play. All Years 7s and 8s had the privilege of listening to this wonderful youth orchestra. Thank you also to Somerset Music for helping to arrange the afternoon concert and early evening workshop session.

## Metamorphosis and Blood Brothers

In January we took the GCSE drama groups to the Bristol Old Vic to see Frantic Assembly's Metamorphosis. Kafka's famous Novella was beautiful to watch on stage and it explored Gregor's monotonous life using physical theatre. The themes of stress and expectation felt relevant to a modern-day audience. We also enjoyed a trip to the Theatre Royal in Bath to see our set text Blood Brothers. Willy Russell's highly acclaimed musical did not disappoint. Set in Liverpool, the play spans 30 years as we see Mickey and Eddie grow up on different sides of the social class divide.

## The Gig

Rock Band is an extra-curricular club which continues to gain in popularity and there are now 12 bands in The Castle School. All 12 took to the stage for a thrilling night of rock and pop in this year's gig!

## House Dance

House Dance 2023 was another successful evening showcasing all that is great about The Castle School. The theme of this year's event was 'A Night at the Movies.' Each House choreographed and performed two dances. The audience enjoyed the wide range of famous movies from James Bond to Moana. Winning this year's competition for the second year in a row was Sandringham House. Can they win for a third year running?





# James Cousins Virtual Workshop

As part of the GCSE dance course, the students study six different professional dance works in depth. A unique and exciting opportunity arose to participate in a virtual workshop with James Cousins, professional choreographer of 'Within Her Eyes'. The students had the opportunity to ask James questions and get responses first hand, while gaining a better understanding of his choreographic approaches.

# Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra

A lucky group of 45 music loving students had the privilege of attending The Best of Williams & Zimmer at the Exeter Great Hall, performed by the talented Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra.

This breathtaking concert features award winning soundtracks of some of the most iconic films of all time including Star Wars, Gladiator, The Da Vinci Code, Schindler's List, Harry Potter, Interstellar, E.T., Batman Begins, Raiders of the Lost Ark, The Last Samurai, Pirates of the Caribbean, Superman and many, many more.

# Spring Forward at The Tacchi Morris

Our Year 10 GCSE dance students were accepted to take part in Take Art's Spring Forward Dance Festival, at the Tacchi Morris Arts Centre in Taunton. This provided the lucky students with a fantastic opportunity to not only perform, but to watch other talented artists and performers in the local community. The event sold out very quickly and was oversubscribed with applications to perform, so our students really were privileged to be able to take part.

# HM Royal Marines

In November, HM Royal Marines, Lympstone, visited The Castle School to work with our wonderfully talented students during the day. We also experienced an exceptional evening concert. Thank you to The Bands of HM Royal Marines and all that made it possible, especially Somerset Music. Other participating schools included Trull Primary, Richard Huish College, Bishop Fox's School, Bucklers Mead Academy, Westfield Academy, Kingsmead School, Uffculme School. Thank you to Matt Sweeting Photography for these amazing photos.



# Summer Showcase

We held our annual Summer Showcase on a beautiful July evening.

This event allows students to demonstrate their musical talents; there were choir, instrumentalist and band performances.

Staff and students also ran stalls, selling homemade cakes and other treats, while there were also fairground rides for everybody to enjoy.

The Summer Showcase is an event that shows off all of the good things about The Castle School. It's an opportunity to celebrate our students' talents, and an evening when the whole community comes together. It was great to see so many family members attending.





# Year 11 Prom - 2024 Leavers



Oake Manor Golf Club



# News from PE

## Rugby

Rugby continues to grow at The Castle School, with many students joining the clubs and playing for the first time. There have been opportunities in the CVL tournaments, and we entered teams from Years 9, 10 and 11 in the County Cup. There weren't notable team achievements, but rugby is an integral and increasingly popular part of curriculum, house and school sport. It is also pleasing that many are playing rugby at club level, and we have some students in the Bristol Bears rugby programme.



## Cricket

Cricket continues to thrive at The Castle School, with ever-increasing numbers of girls and boys joining the team and sessions. Cricket runs throughout the year with indoor and outdoor competitions. The season started with the indoor competition, where all teams qualified to the County Finals with mixed levels of success. The outdoor season has seen boys and girls enter the County Cup competitions with most of the teams getting into the semifinals or higher. There have also been notable individual successes. These achievements have even got on the Honours Board; we have had two hat-tricks for Jayden Cuickshank and Alex Penny, while Joe Blunsum took a five-wicket haul against Queens College. There was also success in the "Chance to Compete" competition where the Year 7 boys were crowned county champions at Somerset County Cricket Club. The boys' under 13 team came runners up in the County Cup after a close game against Beechen Cliff. The Castle School always hosts the cricket CVL, and this year boasted the highest numbers of new children in the area getting into cricket, which bodes well for the future. Like the rugby, we have lots of students playing cricket out of school, with some being involved in the County set up.



## Football

Football is one of the most popular sports at The Castle School, with participation being high for boys and girls throughout the year. This year happens to be the most successful year the school has had in football, with success across many age groups. Girls' football goes from strength to strength, with the Year 7 girls progressing to the County Final, where they lost 2-0 in a close match. The boys performed well in the District Cup with Years 7, 9 and 11 all being crowned winners and Year 8 finishing runners-up. The school also hosted many CVLs, and B-team matches and the annual staff vs students football with the students being victorious 3-2. That topped off a fantastic season for the Year 11s, who did the treble. The highlight was winning the County Cup 2-0 in a competition where they had to win some tough games. This was a really successful year for football and hopefully more to look forward to. A special mention goes to those students who have played at a higher level outside of school.



## Hockey

Hockey is developing in popularity at The Castle School, with many students joining clubs and taking part in competitions. Opportunities for hockey include CVL tournaments and local area league competitions, as well as Somerset hockey development days and mixed competitions. Years 7, 9, 10 and 11 were all area champions with Year 8 coming runners up. The Years 7 and 8 mixed team were Somerset state school tournament winners, with the U13s boys and girls runners up. House hockey is a competitive event, with hockey matches in both Years 10 and 11. Numerous students went on to represent Somerset at different age groups, including Tilly Wilson, Ami Balasubramaniam and Amelie Nevell.



## Netball

Netball thrives at The Castle School, with increasing numbers at practice and playing fixtures. Netball runs throughout the spring term with lots of students playing at local clubs throughout the season. Students took part in friendly matches and CVL tournaments, culminating in the netball area finals day at Taunton Vale. All teams played fantastically well, and six teams are Taunton area champions! The under 15s went on to win the Somerset Cup tier two competition. The following students have also gone on to represent Somerset at netball: Mya Nation, Emily Bird, Evelyn Wolfenden, Sophie Bernard, Annabelle Grammer, Annabel Cameron, Bethan Silsby, Isla Melhuish, Bella Andrews and Josephine Palk. A successful year of netball and hopefully more to look forward to.



## Rounders

Interest in rounders continues to increase at the school, with tournaments and fixtures. Numbers for Years 7 and 8 coming to practice have been fantastic. Years 8 and 10 were winners of the area rounders finals and we still await the finals for Year 9.



## Badminton

Badminton has had another busy year, with many students representing the school and attending the ever-popular club. Congratulations to the Key Stage 4 girls, who were crowned county champions and then went on to represent Somerset in Bath. The boys narrowly missed out on the finals coming runners up. Special thanks to Nick Butler and Geoff Roberts for their services to badminton, which was marked on the Year 11 leavers' day with both having courts names after them.





# Athletics and Cross Country

We would like to fit more athletics fixtures into the calendar. The annual area athletics competitions have been very successful, with most of the teams winning locally against other state schools. Somerset athletes include Bethan Silsby, Anna Wright, Tom Vestey, Sophie Tinning, Nate Stuart, Finley Stuart and Nia Rodgers.

We have had many students represent the area, county and even competing nationally in athletics and cross country, with some unbelievable personal bests and school records being broken along the way. Edward Salter, Rosie Huxtable-Curno, Tom Vestey, Callum McDonald and William Tinning all took part in the South West schools' championships. Tom, Callum and Will further went on to represent Somerset at national level. Special mention to Tom for finishing 22nd out of 358 runners in the English schools' cross-country championships.



# Tennis

It has been another successful summer for tennis at The Castle School, with teams entered in the LTA Team Tennis Competition resulting in great matches against Millfield school, Clevedon School and Wells Cathedral School, along with thrilling friendly fixtures against Taunton School and Blundell's. Our popular tennis club continues to help students of all ages develop their skills and experience, with visits from local tennis coach John Warren (Trull Tennis Club) throughout the summer term. Our annual Road to Wimbledon competition saw Xander and Sophie as winners; we wish them luck in the upcoming County Finals. Sophie will be hoping to make another appearance at Wimbledon this year! To complete the summer schedule, we have our annual staff tournament and the staff vs Year 10 students fixture. Well done to everybody involved in the teams this year.



# Basketball

Basketball's popularity has steadily increased within the school, seeing more children playing all year round rather than just in the winter season. Attendance for practice sessions before school and at lunchtime have been consistent, as well as more casual players utilising the courts on the playground now that the hoops are fitted with nets. During the height of the season, over 125 Years 7 and 8 boys and girls participated in different CVL fixtures, as did 65 Years 9, 10 and 11 students. Just before the Christmas break the staff vs students game was watched by a large crowd narrowly won by the staff for the second year running. It's great to see some of our students now playing for local clubs, such as Taunton Tornadoes and Taunton Tigers.



# Notable Individual Successes Outside of School

Ollie Keenan recently came runner up in a national equestrian competition and only missed out on first place by a tenth of a second on his horse, Ned. A fantastic achievement.

Lillia recently became national champion in the category one elite school Years 7-14 trampolining competition, while Alivia Robins won in the South West trampolining championships. Well done to both!

Hannah Hughes represented England at fencing in the European Cup and finished 30th overall out of 83 participants. An amazing achievement.

Callum McDonald, Aaron McDonald, Edward Salter, Elena Kontopoulos, Lucy Bernard and Rosie Huxtable-Curno competed in the South West schools biathlon at Millfield school in November.

The Year 7s did fantastically well, with Edward gaining individual bronze and Elena, Rosie and Lucy gaining team silver. Following on from their success, these students were invited to the national schools biathlon at the University of Bath. All swam and ran well, and we are incredibly proud of their efforts at this competition. Edward came an incredible 9th and Aaron 45th among Year 7 boys; Elena finished 36th, Lucy 41st and Rosie 42nd in the Year 7 girls' competition. It was fantastic to see three of these students also compete at the national schools biathlon for the first time this year. This event is a continuous run, swim, run. Rosie finished 6th, Elena 7th and Aaron 15th in the competition.

Throughout the year it has been fantastic to see students competing in these combined events and we look forward to more taking up this opportunity.



# Sports Day and New School Records

Congratulations to Lancaster House for winning the junior sports day and Buckingham House for winning the senior sports day. Again, this year we celebrated many new school records, this year congratulations go to the following: Zach Jones, Anna Wright, Edward Salter, Gabriella Lawton, Lewis Woods, Bethan Silsby, Tom Vestey, Nate Stuart, Barnaby Hook, Mali Bate, Jack Collins, Ami Balasubramaniam and the Sandringham 4 x100m girls' relay team, as well as a new record in the 16 x100m cannon relay for Lancaster.

# House Sport and Pooley Trophy Winners

The PE department takes great pride in offering House sports, which are always well supported. Participation in House sport has been incredibly high, which contributed to a tightly contested Pooley trophy. The Pooley trophy combines all the sport across the year, which totals 22 sports. Congratulations this year goes to Mrs Matthews, Miss Curno and Lancaster House for winning this year.

House	Position	Points
Lancaster	1st	125
Balmoral	2nd	108.5
Buckingham	3rd	106
Caernarfon	4th	92.5
Windsor	5th	82
Sandringham	6th	64



# The Castle Challenge

Every year, students in Year 9 complete The Castle Challenge Award. This award was launched in the Spring term of 2022 and is based on the principles of the Duke of Edinburgh Award, as well as our commitment to students' personal development. The Castle Challenge Award provides students with planned opportunities to build resilience, to work as part of a team and to access challenges outside their comfort zone. It is also a focused plan to ensure that students value the work of the community and see their role within

it. To gain The Castle Challenge Award accreditation at a bronze level, students will need complete an expedition to Exmoor and complete challenges as a team and take part in a local voluntary/community activity that can be completed independently or as part of a tutor group. This year it included litter picking and putting together large rucksacks of treats and goodies for Taunton Open Door, a local support centre for the homeless.



# Friday Challenge!

Every week The Castle School runs a Friday Challenge during lunchtime. This year there have been a wide range of activities including darts, football, Dobble, crazy golf, open mic and pancake making. Over 90 students made, presented and ate pancakes throughout the lunch time, an amazing number of students to get through two food rooms in 45 minutes!

The most popular activity this year was running/walking around the track to raise money for charity, with a total of 333 students taking part.

Also, popular was tug of war and the egg throwing competition.

Hang Tough was seriously impressive, with a winning time of three minutes 29 seconds!







# The Castle School

ACHIEVE | BELONG | PARTICIPATE

**The Castle School**  
**Wellington Road**  
**Taunton**  
**TA1 5AU**

**Telephone: 01823 274073**  
**Email: [office@castle.bep.ac](mailto:office@castle.bep.ac)**  
**[www.castleschool.co.uk](http://www.castleschool.co.uk)**