



LONGCROFT

— SCHOOL AND SIXTH FORM COLLEGE —

NEWS LETTER



Scientists Experience a Virtual Reality!

Through the creation of immersive, interactive environments that improve learning, simulate real-world scenarios, and enhance empathy, virtual reality is poised to play a significant role in shaping the future. It has the potential to transform how we work, communicate, and entertain ourselves.

VR fires up students' imagination, builds their sense of wonder, and plays a part in developing a life-long love of learning and curiosity to explore.

Through our relationship with the Wonder Learning Partnership we were able to secure a fantastic opportunity for a group of Sixth Form students to experience virtual reality right here in our Longcroft classrooms.

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Head of Science Mrs Scott explained, "We borrowed the Trust set of VR headsets as enrichment for our Sixth Form scientists. Students had the opportunity to walk around a coral reef, to see animals in their natural habitats and be immersed in this underwater world. Students got to analyse methods of pollution and see the impacts of humans on our planet to help understand the need for renewables and conservation."

Year 12 student Emma said, "It was good - well worth doing and I hope to use the headsets again soon." She added, "I'm hoping to use them to study the digestive system and the movement of molecules."

The headsets were undoubtedly popular and Mrs Scott added, "We are hoping to embed these VR headsets within the curriculum to give students the fantastic opportunity to apply science to the real world in situations." that they otherwise would not be able to experience."





Reward Totals

So far this term our pupils have been awarded the following rewards for acting with Great Heart, Thought and Vision:



Acts of Great

HEART

46,108

THOUGHT

241,393

VISION

169,311

GRAND

TOTAL:

456,812





Headteacher's Welcome

At Longcroft School and Sixth Form we are committed to a holistic approach to education; one which involves a distinct focus on the whole child and preparing them to become well-rounded and confident adults, ready to embrace new opportunities, develop strong and positive relationships and contribute productively to their community and society.

We unapologetically make academic excellence a focus for our young people in school. However, we also seek to ensure an appreciation of self and place in an ever changing and complex world, as well placing at the centre of all we do the importance of kindness, compassion and respect for others, and for the environment we share. A truly holistic education seeks to support the broadest development of each young person, enabling and empowering them to embrace opportunities and experience fulfilled and happy lives.

Our curriculum is the starting point for ensuring that carefully considered knowledge and skills are acquired across a range of disciplines and domains, but also that pupil and student experiences are augmented through opportunities to experiment, explore and apply learning. In this week's Newsletter you will see our sixth form students in Science for example working with virtual reality headsets, our lower school pupils coding and creating their own programmes, and amazing examples of work in Design Technology and Art from those in our upper school.

A further way in which we support personal development is through our wider enrichment programme, aspects of which are featured regularly in our Newsletters. As our understanding of cognitive science improves, the profound and widespread benefits of participation in clubs, groups and activities on physical and mental health have become increasingly clear.

Lunchtime and at the end of the school day are often highlights in my day to be around the school and amongst our pupils and students. Whether it is talking about their enrichment experiences or witnessing them in action, it is great to gain a sense of the impact of getting involved. This week I've enjoyed rehearsals for this year's production in full swing and some fabulous performances from our sports teams alongside Dungeons and Dragons, chess club, our First Story project and many others, as well as a raft of academic interventions and support. The levels of engagement and genuine joy from the many pupils and students involved are simply fabulous.

Whatever a young person's interests, there is something for them to explore and I encourage you to promote participation at home at every opportunity. It is also important to note that we always welcome new suggestions and our class and year representatives provide a great platform to feed ideas through to our school council, senior leadership team and governors.

Enjoy reading about some of the fabulous things our pupils and students have been up to this week.

Mr D Perry
Headteacher



LOWER SCHOOL

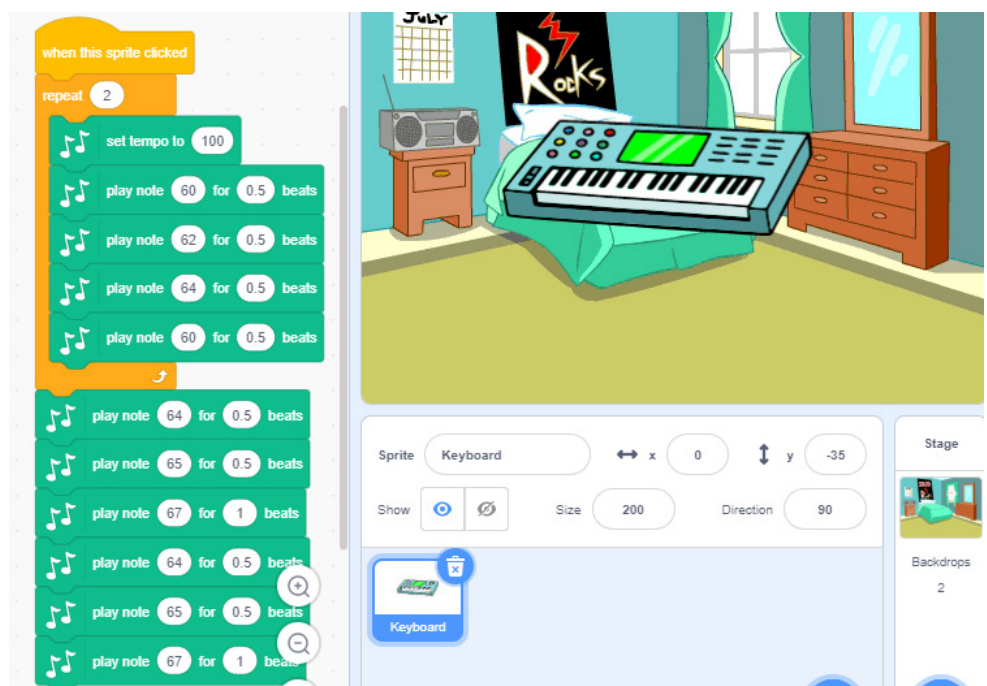


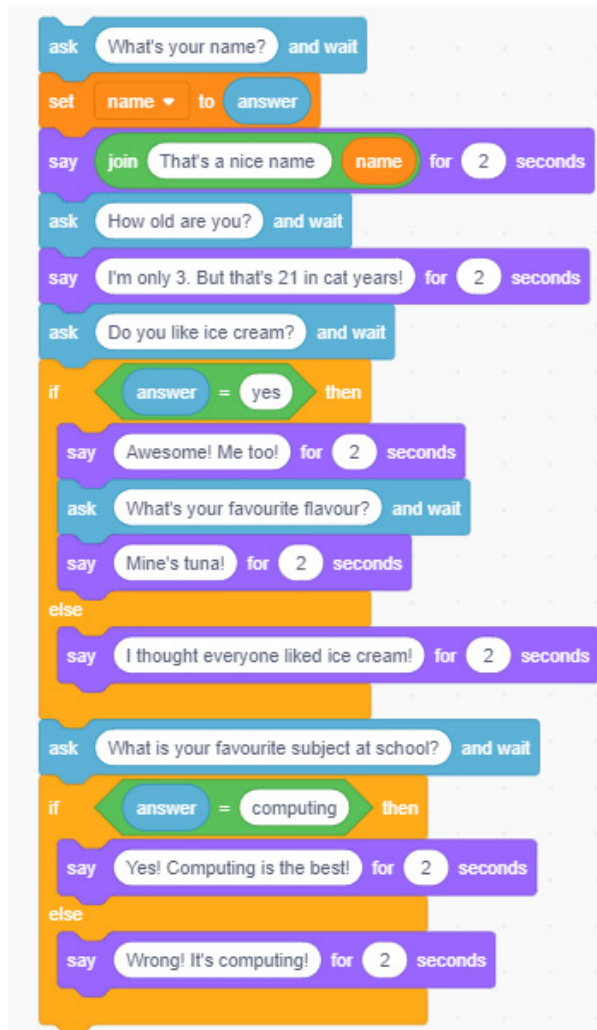
Mr Worthington writes:

We have high standards at Longcroft and expect pupils to show each other respect, always wear their uniform correctly and try their best. We want all of our pupils to do well and we are supportive in helping children to achieve their potential. We have high expectations and encourage a positive “can do” mindset towards learning in all our pupils. We create positive learning experiences which develop our pupils’ resilience in the face of a challenge and carefully scaffold learning so that all pupils make good progress.

This week, I have spent time in various different lessons across all year groups in Key Stage 3. Our teachers plan enjoyable lessons to include challenging content, to encourage wonder and discovery in each subject.

In Computer Science, pupils have been building on previous knowledge in programming to produce their own music. In a lesson about Sequencing, pupils have been coding their own songs and learning how to repeat functions. I enjoyed listening to the pupils articulate their experiences with making their own programmes, and seeing their excitement when they were successful. I also noted their resilience when operations didn't quite go to plan and they worked on fixing their sequences to make them work. Christopher, in Year 7, has even built his own games using Scratch and said that coding is one of his favourite things to do.





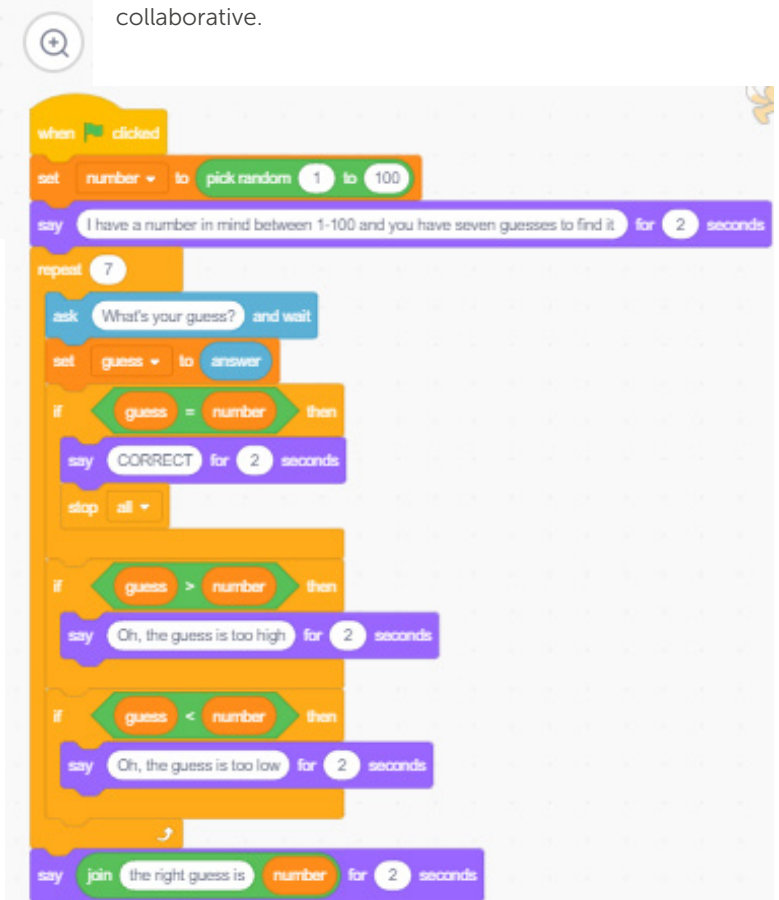
In the featured examples of coding from our pupils, what impressed me most is how the pupils reacted to high expectations and challenge in their lessons. As ever, our school has felt focused, calm and purposeful and our children are enjoying their learning.

Mr Worthington
Head of Lower School

In one class, pupils have gone on to master coding variables and are programming their own Chatbots. Chatbots are designed to mimic human conversation through text or voice interactions. Some have even made their own game to guess at a random number. I am pleased to share screenshots of their completed work.

In reality, learning to code is now less of a speciality skill. Rather, it has become a mainstream, core discipline utilised in nearly every industry; requiring more and more skilled workers every year. It is a skill we are keen to promote in our Computer Science Curriculum. Almost anyone can learn it. Aspiring coders don't necessarily need to be experts in mathematics or have vast prior experience. To get started, they simply need to be inquisitive, committed to learning, and willing to practise their coding skills regularly while learning from their mistakes.

Coding tests a variety of abilities. It hones problem-solving and analysis skills, such as finding errors and thinking logically. Further, coding often helps people develop teamwork and interpersonal skills since software and application projects are often cross-disciplinary and collaborative.





Congratulations to our Lower School pupils on the number of ClassCharts rewards they are receiving each week. The pupils who earned the most rewards last week are listed below.



Year 7

Christopher McGlone
Amelia High
Jack Orwin
Henry Coates
Fletcher Dolan
Shanice Munaku
Elizabeth Dale
Max Dixon
Sophie Clayton
Charlie Thomson

Year 8

Sienna Rasen
Lilly Pyle
Bonnie Smith
Zak Richardson
Holly Ruston
Alex Matta
Caitlin Groves
Isaac Waterson
Izzy Barwick
Lillie Wheeler

Year 9

Levi Petherbridge
Ben Carlyle-Smith
Mason David
Cody Keenan
Millie Wisher
Molly Rawson
Maisie Foster
Sienna Robinson
Annabelle Curtis
Emily Gillett

Attendance Matters!

Each week we reflect on the importance of attendance at school by giving ClassCharts rewards for Great Vision to every pupil with 100% attendance the previous week. These pupils are then entered into a draw and the winner receives a £5 Amazon voucher.

Last week's winners were:

Year 7: Fletcher Dolan

Year 8: Caitlin Groves

Year 9: Alex Stork



UPPER SCHOOL

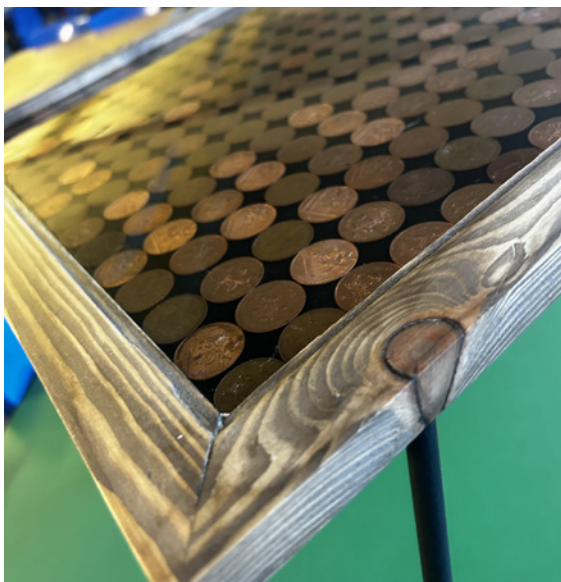


Mr Henderson writes:

This week I am pleased to commend Year 10 pupil Luke Suggitt on a wonderful table he designed and made with the support of our Design Technology teacher Mr Dyson.

Mr Dyson explained, "Year 10 have intervention sessions which run on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. These are open for students to come in and enhance their skill set making products which typically they would like to make in class. I advise and support them but the work is theirs."

He added, "Luke created a Mitre Joint frame for his table, which he treated using stain and wax. This was then filled with 2p coins and sealed using a resin, which Luke researched and sourced himself including all health and safety information. The legs are pin legs."



Full of praise for Luke, Mr Dyson concluded: "It is a truly beautiful piece - it has been amazing to watch the steady progress towards achieving a fantastic outcome. He should be proud of his efforts."

Congratulations Luke! This is just one example of the exceptional work our Upper School pupils are doing – I look forward to sharing other examples with you in future Newsletters.

Mr Henderson
Head of Upper School



Year 11 Exam Preparation Programme

This week, our form time Intervention sessions have continued for Year 11 and our pupils are working with subject specialists on areas that we have identified as being key priorities for their development. The frequency will be lifted as part of the next phase of revision and intervention to four mornings a week before half term, and this has been proven to make a real impact on progress over recent years. It has been great to see our young people engaged and benefiting from these expert inputs and many have expressed how useful they have found the model so far.

On the **1st February** we will be inviting Year 11 families to our **Exam Preparation Evening** which will follow the release of mock exam results and details of the programme of support over the coming months. There will also be a series of sessions from subject leaders across the curriculum to explain the forthcoming assessments and how best our pupils can prepare. You will soon be receiving details of how to book on to this key event and we hope to see every family represented. Looking forward to seeing you all there.





Congratulations to our Lower School pupils on the number of ClassCharts rewards they are receiving each week. The pupils who earned the most rewards last week are listed below.



Year 10

Gemma Schravessande
Grace Crook
Anna Bruton
Theo Waterson
Joe Dawson
Amy Bruton
Mathilda Smith
Charlotte Skilbeck
Anika Matta
Lydia Spratt

Year 11

Libby Wood
Alissia d'Andilly
Tristan Carlo Pineda
Samantha Thorpe
Heidi Jackson
Liam Roberts
Jake Curtis
Freddie Robinson
Samantha Meir
Connor Baker

Attendance Matters!

Each week we reflect on the importance of attendance at school by giving ClassCharts rewards for Great Vision to every pupil with 100% attendance the previous week. These pupils are then entered into a draw and the winner receives a £5 Amazon voucher.

Last week's winners were:

Year 10: Reuben Faulkner

Year 11: Evie Billaney



Mr Chapman writes:



It's been a very significant week for our Year 13 students. On Monday and Tuesday our Criminologists undertook 8 hours of their Controlled Assessments - which are worth 25% of their final grade. This was a very challenging two days where students were given questions on a brief and had to respond to them with essay-style answers.

There were nine questions in total and the assessment took place under invigilated examination conditions.

Also this week, our Y13 Art students completed their design ideas for their 15-hour mock exam. Locked away in the Art Department for 3, 5 hour days, this presented a significant opportunity for creativity and artistic flair to thrive. Jessica, a Year 13 Art student said that it was "tough, challenging but very rewarding and it gave me experience that will help me in my A Level Art exam". Jessica created a body-cast from mod-rock and was inspired by several artists who had created rib-cage style artwork previously.

Phoebe, who completed her Criminology exam said that it was "very intense" but that she had "prepared well for it". Phoebe is hoping to study Bio-Medical Science at York or Hull University.

Finally, our Year 12 Criminology students have also had their first taste of examination assessments as they have also completed 8 hours of their Controlled Assessments.

I was a delighted and proud spectator last week when our Sixth Form football team took on Hymers College in the quarter final of the Humberside Schools' Cup.



Longcroft enjoyed an overwhelming victory – the final score was 8-1 and Harley Claxton and Owen Waterson both scored hat-tricks! Goals from Ben Shrimpton and Year 11 pupil Charlie Haw who came on as substitute completed the scoring.

We are looking forward to facing St Mary's College in the semi-final later this half term.

Mr Chapman
Head of Sixth Form



SAFEGUARDING



Mr Rogers writes:

The Role of Nature in Children's Mental and Emotional Well-being

In our fast-paced, technology-driven world, it's easy for children to become disconnected from the natural world around them. However, as parents, we should recognise the immense value that nature holds for our children's mental and emotional well-being. Nature has a profound impact on their development, offering a plethora of benefits that extend beyond physical health. In this article, I will explore the positive impact of nature on children's mental health and emotional development and discuss why it's essential to incorporate nature into their lives.

The Healing Power of Nature

- 1. Stress Reduction:** Nature provides a calming and tranquil environment that helps reduce stress and anxiety in children. Studies have shown that spending time in natural settings can lower cortisol levels, the stress hormone. Nature offers a break from the hustle and bustle of daily life, allowing children to unwind and relax.
- 2. Enhanced Cognitive Development:** Exposure to natural settings can significantly improve cognitive function in children. Nature encourages curiosity and exploration, stimulating their brains and fostering problem-solving skills. Nature-based activities like hiking or bird-watching can be both educational and mentally stimulating.
- 3. Improved Attention and Focus:** Incorporating nature into a child's routine can lead to better attention spans and increased focus. Nature allows children to engage in unstructured play, which enhances their ability to concentrate and be present in the moment.



Emotional Development and Well-being

1. Enhanced Creativity: Nature is a wellspring of inspiration. It sparks creativity in children and encourages them to use their imagination. Whether they are building forts in the woods or drawing pictures of animals they see on a hike, nature provides endless opportunities for creative expression.

2. Increased Empathy and Compassion: Spending time in nature fosters a sense of connectedness with the natural world and all living creatures. This connection can lead to greater empathy and compassion in children, as they learn to appreciate and care for the environment and its inhabitants.

3. Stress Coping Mechanisms: Nature offers a unique space for emotional expression and release. Children can yell, cry, or simply sit in silence in the company of trees, plants, and animals. This emotional outlet helps them develop healthier ways to cope with stress and difficult emotions.

4. Reduced Symptoms of ADHD: Research suggests that spending time in nature may alleviate symptoms of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in children. The calming and grounding effects of nature can help regulate their attention and impulsivity.

Practical Ways to Incorporate Nature

Now that we understand the benefits of nature for children's mental and emotional well-being, let's explore some practical ways to incorporate nature into their lives:

1. Nature Walks and Hikes: Take your children on nature walks or hikes in local parks, nature reserves, or trails. Encourage them to observe and interact with the natural world around them.

2. Outdoor Play: Create opportunities for unstructured outdoor play in your backyard or at a nearby playground. Let them explore, build, and use their imagination freely.

3. Gardening: Engage your children in gardening activities. Growing plants and vegetables not only connects them to nature but also teaches responsibility and patience.

4. Camping Adventures: Plan camping trips as a family. Camping allows children to experience the outdoors in a unique way, including the joy of stargazing and sitting around a campfire.

5. Nature Journals: Encourage your children to keep nature journals. They can document their observations, sketches, and feelings during their outdoor adventures.

6. Wildlife Watching: Bird-watching, insect observation, and identifying local wildlife are excellent ways to connect with nature and learn about different species.

Conclusion

Nature plays a vital role in promoting the mental and emotional well-being of children. It provides a haven for relaxation, creativity, and emotional expression while nurturing empathy and resilience. As parents, we must prioritise nature in our children's lives and create opportunities for them to connect with the natural world. By doing so, we are not only enhancing their well-being but also fostering a deep appreciation for the environment that will serve them throughout their lives.

Mr Rogers

Deputy Headteacher

Head of Care and Achievement



Sporting Stars Inspire

This week we take the opportunity to highlight the progress and achievements of three former Longcroft students who enjoyed memorable weekends with their respective clubs.

Less than two years ago **Jack Charles** and **Will Hutchinson** were leading Longcroft to victory in the Humberside Schools' Cup. Having joined Hull FC from the club's Scholarship set up, on Sunday both featured in a youthful Airlie Birds team that kicked-off 2024 against Bradford Bulls at the iconic Odsal Stadium which saw a crowd of 102,569 enjoy the 1954 Challenge Cup Final replay between Warrington and Halifax.

Head Coach Tony Smith praised both players, saying: "I thought Jack Charles caught the eye. He was good." He also heaped particular praise on the six current academy players, including Will, who featured in the match.

"I thought they were terrific—all six of them. They enjoyed it. I thought our bench actually helped us when they came on. They lifted us. Some of those young blokes were making their first outing in a senior game. They gave a really good account of themselves."

"It's encouraging. We've got plenty more work to do there, but it's encouraging for those young players to get a crack at it. It's good for the club to push those players through and help them develop. It's certainly the way we're going to go in the future."





Experienced forward **Sophie Haywood** joined Sheffield United in the summer of 2022 after a long-term association with Women's Super League side Aston Villa.

Sophie arrived at the Blades after an ACL injury, and further surgery kept her out for a chunk of her first season at Bramall Lane, but she returned to score three goals in two games in the final month of last season and her superb individual effort against Coventry earned her a goal of the season nomination.

On Sunday United Women came so close to pulling off a huge FA Cup upset in a superb performance away from home against high-flying Women's Super League Tottenham Hotspur. Sophie scored United's first goal and the Blades stormed into a well-deserved two goal lead before two late Spurs goals from England international Bethany England and one from Rosella Ayane in the 96th minute sealed the tie for the hosts.

Mr Baker said, "This was Sophie's first goal of this season and it was fantastic to see her celebration – although she's an extremely experienced player the goal clearly meant a lot to her. I'm proud that she has shown incredible resilience."

Anyone wanting to see Sophie in action in the Women's Championship can do so when United play their first home game of 2024 against Southampton on Sunday 28th January!

Mr Baker added, "Sophie, Jack and Will are at different stages of their sporting careers but all three are an inspiration to our current pupils. Not only do they have tremendous talent – they are incredibly hardworking and dedicated to their sport. I enjoy following their progress and take great pride in the fact they came to our school."



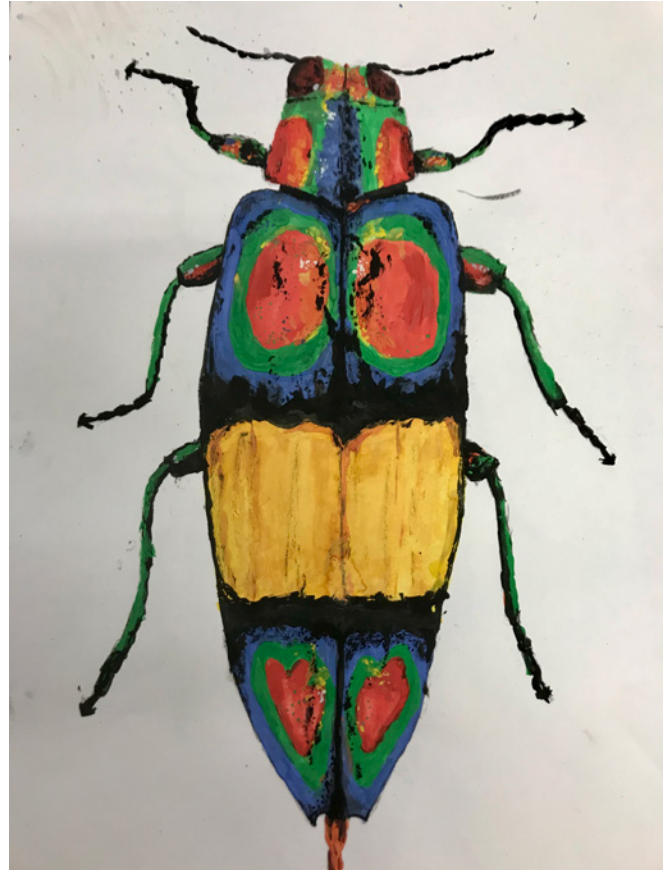


IN FOCUS

ART

Having featured a stunning piece of artwork by Year 11 pupil Summer Mulvana on the cover of last week's Newsletter, this week in our Subject in Focus we celebrate the work of Mrs Holmes' Year 9 pupils.

These paintings of insects are based on the work of Danish artist Poul Beckmann. Poul explains, "When we notice an insect, our typical reaction is not to try for a closer look, but to recoil. Our antiseptic culture has distanced itself from nature, and most especially from insects. If we stage and present them magnified to heroic scale perhaps we can discard our preconceived notions and view them with a new sense of wonder."



Mr Baker said, "Our artists produce exceptional work and it is always a pleasure to feature it in our Newsletter. I know Mrs Holmes is rightly proud of these paintings and I am sure Art will prove popular when pupils choose their GCSE options later this term."





Extra-curricular Opportunities

We are proud to offer an extensive range of extra-curricular opportunities, a selection of which are listed here.

In addition, our **Homework Club** in A7 is open to all pupils each morning (8.15 – 8.40am) and after school until 4.15pm.

Monday

Film Society – Year 11 pupils and Sixth Form students meet to watch, discuss and explore different genres of film.

Tuesday

Dungeons & Dragons – an opportunity for pupils of all ages, Sixth Form students and staff to enjoy this fantasy table-top role-playing game.

Rugby – all year groups

Orchestra – open to all instrumentalists of all abilities

Wednesday

Netball – all year groups

Choir – an opportunity to prepare for Christmas performances.

Drama Club – in Room 65

Thursday

Girls' Football – all year groups

Hockey – all year groups

Friday

Badminton – all year groups

Table Tennis – all year groups





Memory Lane

This week we take the opportunity to return to the 1970's and feature two photographs from 1973/74.

Our pictures show Mr Curtis and Mrs Ellis with their tutor groups.





LIBRARY NEWS



Ms Carvill writes:

Author of the Month – Liz Pichon

This year we will be celebrating a different author every month. We begin with Liz Pichon, who is best known for her satirical realist comedy fiction and the Tom Gates series. Pichon's books have been translated into over fifty languages and sold more than 16.5 million copies worldwide. They are popular with lots of young people, and a wonderful way of encouraging budding readers, and engaging reluctant readers.

"It bugs me when people say it's not 'proper' reading if a book has lots of pictures."

—Liz Pichon

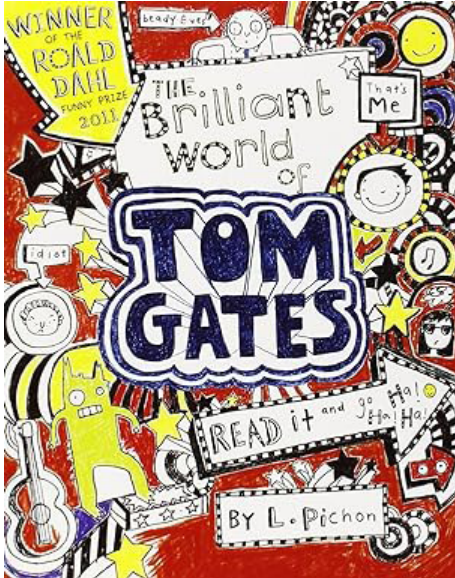
Liz, who is dyslexic, studied graphic design at Camberwell School of Art in London. She illustrates all her own books in an immediately recognisable style. For her the artwork and look of the book is an important part of the reading experience, despite the fact some educationalists can be dismissive.

Growing up in the seventies, Pichon's dyslexia went undiagnosed and because she really struggled with reading and writing it never entered her head that one day, she would be an award-winning author. It was not until she was in her mid-forties, she found the courage to write her own stories. Being dyslexic also helped her understand just how important visuals can be to the reading experience.

The Tom Gates series are accessible reads, and focus on the ups and downs of family life. They're packed with humour and fun and feature relatable plotlines that are not overly heavy. The images are also a treat, providing picture clues and enriching the reading experience.



Below are a selection of favourites from the Tom Gates series. A huge thank you to Mrs Clarke, our librarian, who donated extra copies. Please encourage pupils to visit the library display.



The Brilliant World of Tom Gates

AR Book Level 4 – Colour Code – Blue

Reading Age KS3

The winner of the Roald Dahl Funny Prize in 2011 this book launched the series. Tom Gates is every teacher's nightmare, and especially grumpy Mr Fullerman. Tom never does his homework! He is also an expert doodler, funny storyteller, and out to impress Amy Porter, who sits next to him at school.

Hilarious, honest, and a laugh aloud read.

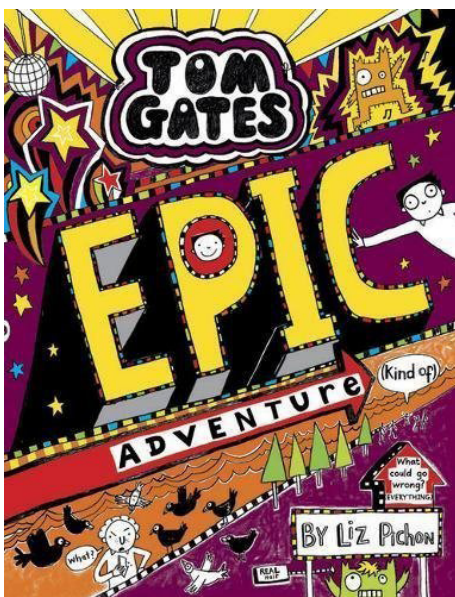
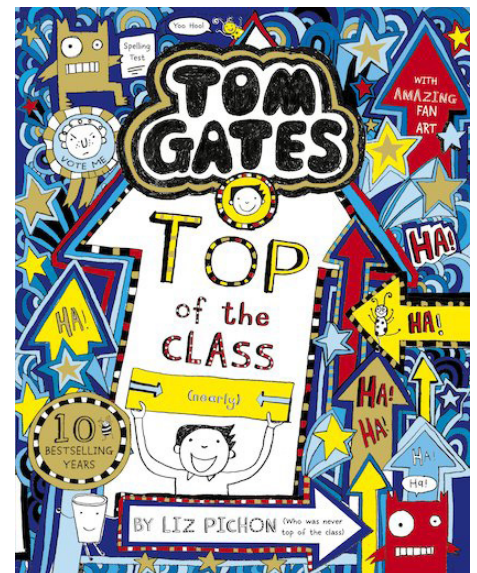
Tom Gates: Top of the Class (Nearly)

AR Book Level 3.9 – Colour Code – Green

Reading Age KS3

The ninth book in this impressive series and written in diary format sees Tom full of tips, none of which he follows himself! Stay awake in lessons, do not draw hilarious pictures of your teachers, and avoid the class bully.

Full of fun, adventure, and fabulous doodles.



Tom Gates: Epic Adventure

AR Book Level 3.9 – Colour Code – Green

Tom likes having two sets of grandparents. The Wrinkles, his Mum's parents, adore giving presents and planning epic family outings! They have just come back from travelling around the world and are full of surprises! A fun packed adventure is about to start. The only problem is, Delia wants to come too. Another highly comic read.



Reading in the News

Sir Michael Morpurgo and every children's laureate from the last 25 years have written a letter to Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer calling for the government to commit to a long-term investment in reading and books for children at nursery and primary school and recognise the impact poverty has on literacy and reading for pleasure.

The laureates state, *'For our children and for us, reading is the great pathway to knowledge and understanding and empathy.*

But we also know that sadly in this country there are still millions of young children who never have the opportunity of finding this pathway. We know, that the earlier we develop the joy and fun of reading in our children, the more likely it is that they will reap the rewards of the fulfilling education they all deserve.'

According to research by BookTrust, one in five children from birth to age four have a book read to them less than once a month. Obviously, reading to our children from an early age develops a sense of joy and fun in reading, and undoubtedly impacts on their future education.

If you have young children, please try and make the time to read to them or encourage their older siblings or friends and family to do so. It will make an enormous difference to them, and their journey through secondary school.

"I wouldn't be a songwriter if it wasn't for books that I loved as a kid. I think that when you can escape into a book it trains your imagination to think big and to think that more can exist than what you see."

— Taylor Swift



Care and Achievement Co-ordinators

Our Care and Achievement Co-ordinators work with specific year groups to ensure the welfare and progress of pupils and are the first point of contact for parents.

They support children to achieve academically by establishing a positive learning environment, visiting and working in lessons and supervising and supporting individuals and groups of pupils.

Our team, and their work mobile phone number which parents can use to contact them, are pictured below.



Year 7

Miss Fox

07342 342858

vicky.fox@longcroft.eriding.net



Years 8 and 9

Mrs Newsam

07827 587483

zoe.newsam@longcroft.eriding.net



Year 10

Mrs Ellis

07900 394085

annette.ellis@longcroft.eriding.net



Year 11

Miss Harsley

07810 416081

katie.harsley@longcroft.eriding.net



Sixth Form

Miss Taylor

07423 261292

emily.taylor@longcroft.eriding.net