



Newsletter

Guildford County School SPECIALIST MUSIC COLLEGE

November 2024



We talk a lot about custodianship at County: wanting to pass on an improved version of the school from that which we inherited.

Midway through my 17th year of service here, custodianship is something I think about a lot, not least because of an ever-emerging personal connection with the local area.

Growing up, my maternal grandparents were central figures in my life. Products of austere Edwardians, they lacked the warmth and openness we perhaps associate with grandparents of today, but what they lacked in geniality they made up for in their dedication to others, working in their communities to support the vulnerable.

Looking back, I wish I had asked them more questions about their lives.

I knew some things, like how my grandmother worked as a hospital matron in Southampton during the Second World War and would hide under beds with her most at-risk patients during air raids; and how my grandfather returned on leave from the Navy for a long weekend

in 1942 so they could be married. My grandmother never forgave him for turning up with a full beard – Navy regulation for anyone serving in the Arctic – which in her mind forever blighted the single wedding photograph they could afford.

After a chance conversation with the parent of a student a few years' back, I discovered that my grandparents' weekend wedding took place in St Nicholas' Church, that I pass on my walk to school every day. Which raised the question: why would a Southampton-based nurse travel to Guildford to be married?

The answer came during Covid-time VE Day celebrations, reading something of my grandfather's. It turns out my grandmother didn't work in Southampton. She worked at the Royal Surrey County Hospital, which at that point was based in the Farnham Road building, a place I can see out of the window as I write this now.

Was she hiding under a bed across the road on that night when a German plane strafed the front of

County, leaving a bullet in the brickwork that we would find years later? The circularity of it all constantly grounds me. For all their old-fashioned fustiness and emotional unavailability, they were good people who worked for others, passing on their world in a better state than that which they inherited. Their omnipresence in the buildings that surround me is a useful reminder that those perhaps outmoded values – like humility, courtesy, sacrifice, conscientiousness and service – are as important now as they were for them, especially if we hope to be the custodians they were.

And it's why I'm proud (a vice they would not approve of) to work at County, where our community sees worth in those old-fashioned values, whilst still embracing the future.

*Jack Houghton
Deputy Headteacher*



We are County

Culture and Standards at County

Since taking on the role of Culture and Standards Lead, I have spent time reflecting upon what this means for our students, staff and families, and indeed pondering what 'culture and standards' looks like each day. Quite a task! It has already enabled some very interesting conversations around what it really means to be part of County from across the school community. My conclusions thus far are that being part of County means many different things to every individual, and rightly so. **Our school is steeped in tradition and heritage, but with this must come the optimism for the future.**

It can be as simple, yet fundamental, as students being proud to wear the County uniform, to how we treat each other each day, every day.

Everywhere is a classroom and we are all teachers.

I have already observed students demonstrating several aspects of our CASTLE strategy through the respect demonstrated on Remembrance Day. An incredibly poignant moment for all students and staff to take part in.

Together, as one.

We have also been treated to some memorable performances during the House Drama event.

Both events are unique to County and both commemorate and celebrate others.

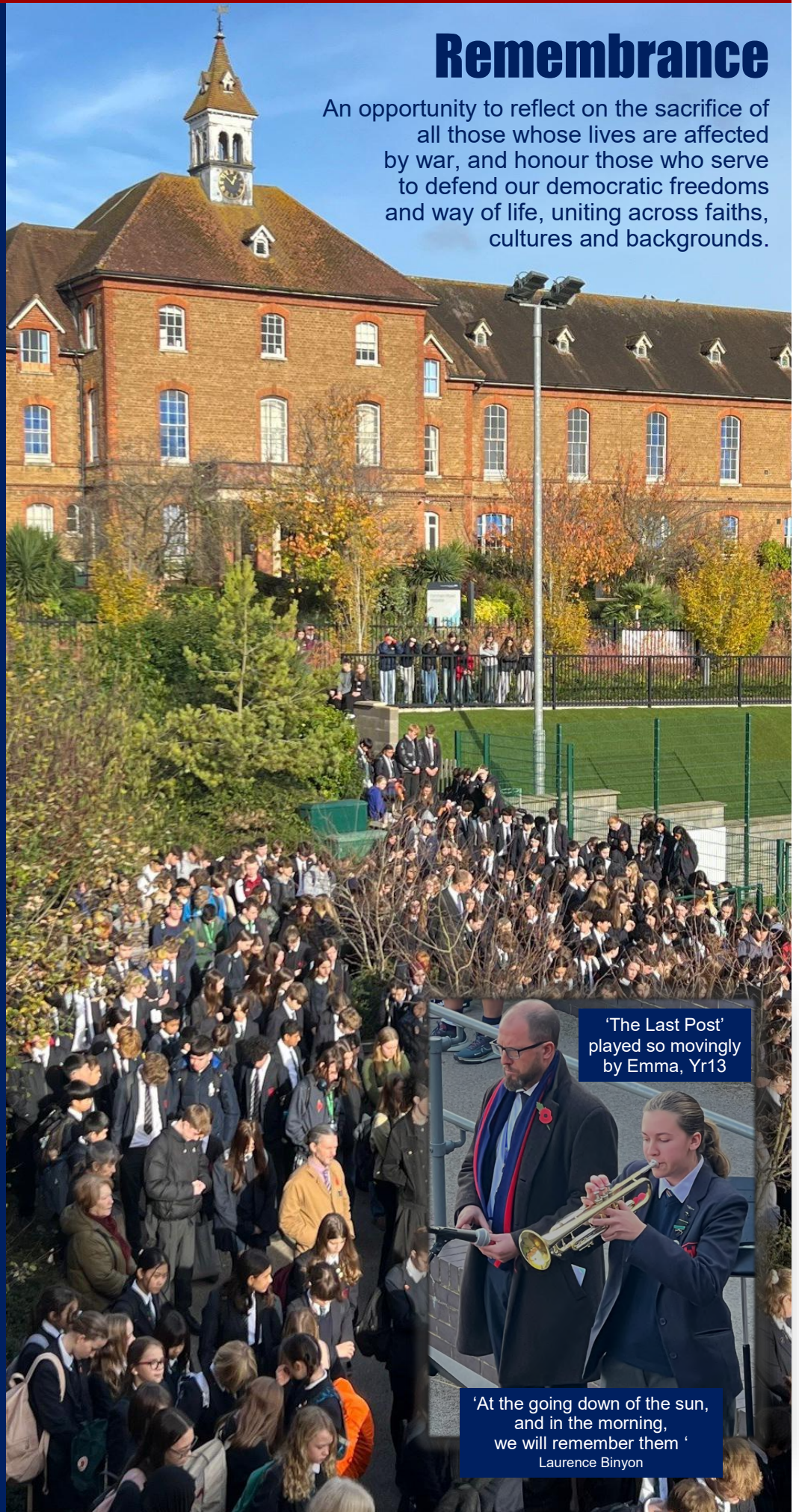
Over the coming year I will be working alongside students, staff and families, to create a narrative of the student experience. This will include a wide variety of different aspects, with **praise, celebration and recognition of achievement** being a significant focus, but with ample consideration given to other aspects of school life.

There will be opportunities for everyone to contribute, **working towards a positive and inclusive culture with high expectations and standards for all.**

Jo Thomas, Culture & Standards Lead

Remembrance

An opportunity to reflect on the sacrifice of all those whose lives are affected by war, and honour those who serve to defend our democratic freedoms and way of life, uniting across faiths, cultures and backgrounds.



'The Last Post'
played so movingly
by Emma, Yr13

'At the going down of the sun,
and in the morning,
we will remember them'
Laurence Binyon

This is our C.A.S.T.L.E.

Hanover



House Drama 2024



Windsor

House Drama was a great success once again. From the moment it was launched, back in September, the school has been a hive of creative, dramatic activity, with rehearsals going on every lunchtime and after every school day. The standard this year was fantastic! The scripts were great and the performances were extremely slick. Our 6th Form teams have worked incredibly hard with their casts, to produce brilliant plays. We had gnomes, pirates, zombies, body swapping, robots, and lots of weddings! The enthusiasm and

Stuart



York



dedication that was shown by the different casts was inspiring. Our adjudicator, Claire Evans (theatre director and producer), absolutely loved it. She was amazed by the quality of the scripts, the inventiveness of the productions and the quality of the acting that she saw. She especially loved the Shakespearean touches that some of the plays had. At the end of the day she asked if she could come back every year!

Congratulations to everyone concerned and especially to

Tudor House

for overall first place.

Chris Bramwells, Drama

Tudor



Lancaster



Photography courtesy of James Anthony

The place where we excel

On the 17th of October, our GCSE and A Level Drama students visited the Yvonne Arnaud Theatre to watch Theatre Royal Bath's adaptation of George Orwell's iconic dystopian novel '1984'.

The cast included Mark Quartley as Winston, Eleanor Wyld as Julia, his love interest, Keith Allen as the sinister O'Brien, and David Birrell as the loyal Party member, Parsons. Their powerful performances captured the tension and fear of Orwell's totalitarian world, with minimalist staging and striking multimedia elements that conveyed the constant surveillance of the Party.

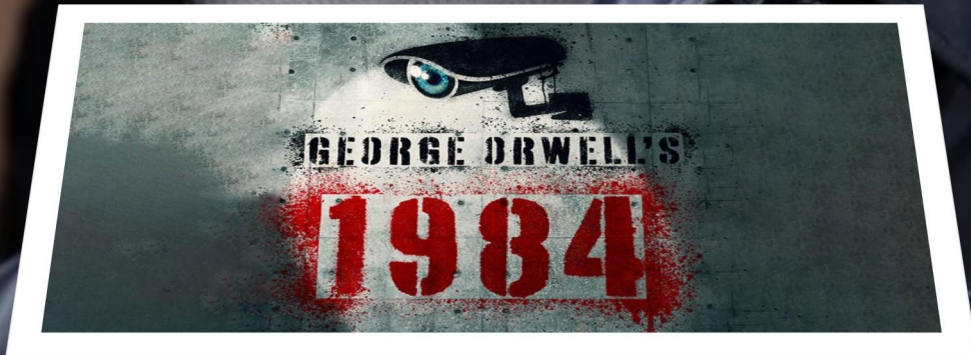
The production's striking use of lighting and set heightened the oppressive atmosphere.

Stark, industrial set designs with minimal props evoked the bleakness of a society under constant surveillance, while projections of Big Brother's image and the Party's slogans intensified the feeling of being watched. The clever use of shadows and harsh lighting reflected the psychological and emotional tension experienced by the characters, drawing the audience into the oppressive world of Oceania.

As we entered the auditorium, and during the interval, the production cleverly used live surveillance to deepen the sense of oppression. CCTV cameras were pointed directly at the audience and streamed onto a digital screen on the stage, making us feel as though we, too, were being watched by Big Brother. The camera zoomed in on individuals in the crowd, which heightened the sense of unease. During the interval, the same camera was again directed at the audience, reinforcing the idea that the Party's surveillance never stops, even when the performance pauses.

George Orwell's 1984

One of the most chilling moments of the production was the 'blackout rat' scene, a key turning point in the story. In this harrowing moment, Winston's worst fear is brought to life, when he is forced to confront a cage of rats. The production made this scene incredibly intense by dimming the lights to pitch black, amplifying the fear and claustrophobia that Winston experiences. The audience was plunged into complete darkness, mirroring Winston's terror and hopelessness, making it a truly visceral moment in the play.



The production resonated deeply with students, offering an engaging way to explore the themes of censorship, power, and freedom. Mark Quartley's portrayal of Winston's internal struggle and betrayal, alongside Eleanor Wyld's portrayal of Julia's defiance, made for a gripping and thought-provoking performance.

The trip not only provided a wealth of opportunities for live theatre analysis, but it also sparked lively discussions about 1984's themes and their relevance in today's world.

Laura Cherrington, Head of Drama

Drama & Theatre Trip



Safeguarding at County

'Keeping children safe is our number one priority at County, and all staff work together to make that happen. Some of the key names and faces in this effort are below. If you have any concerns about the safety or welfare of a child, please contact one of the team listed. If a child is in immediate danger, always call 999. Lastly, if your child wants to speak to someone about something that is bothering them, but might find it hard to begin that conversation, they can email me@guildfordcounty.co.uk.'



Jack Houghton
Deputy Headteacher
**Designated
Safeguarding
Lead**



Jemma Boddington
Senior Home-School
Link Worker
**Deputy
Designated
Safeguarding**



Steve Smith
Headteacher
**Deputy
Designated
Safeguarding
Lead**



Antonella Bosco-Reid
Senior Deputy Headteacher
**Deputy
Designated
Safeguarding
Lead**



Daryl Bond
Assistant Headteacher
Director of Sixth Form
**Deputy
Designated
Safeguarding
Lead**



Helen Nurton
Assistant Headteacher
**Deputy
Designated
Safeguarding
Lead**



Charlotte Barlow
Assistant Headteacher
Director of SEND
**Deputy
Designated
Safeguarding
Lead**

At County, safeguarding your child is our top priority, which includes raising awareness of the national **Prevent Strategy**

'Prevent' is designed to protect children from radicalisation and extremism.

While some news outlets highlight threats from Islamist extremists, research shows that most children are more vulnerable to radicalisation by extreme right-wing groups. Events of the summer provided chilling evidence of this.

Radicalisation can manifest subtly. Be vigilant for signs such as your child isolating themselves from family and friends, speaking as if rehearsed, or displaying an unwillingness to discuss their views. Sudden disrespectful attitudes towards others, heightened anger, and increased secrecy, particularly around internet use, may also indicate concerns.

It's important to note that these behaviours could simply be part of growing up. However, staying alert and open to the possibility of outside influence is crucial. If you have any concerns, don't hesitate to reach out. Early intervention can be key to keeping a child safe and preventing them from being drawn into harmful ideologies.

For more information and support, visit the NSPCC's resources on protecting children from radicalisation: nspcc.org.uk.



Georgina Young
Head
of
Year 7



Jon Thorpe
Head
of
Year 8



Rachel O'Rourke
Head
of
Year 9



Hana Stewart
Head
of
Year 10



Sam Strong
Head
of
Year 11



Mark Grimmatt
Head
of
Year 12



Chloe Kemp
Head
of
Year 13



An update on The Loft

We have made significant strides in the development of The Loft, our provision opening in September 2025, for autistic students who require a more bespoke approach to their learning. The building work is well under way and there are developments in the design and resourcing of the space. More importantly, are the opportunities for us as a school to enhance our inclusive practice. Part of this is our growing partnership with Pond Meadow School, who have delivered some fantastic training to staff before the half-term break, and who are continuing to work with us, making sure that our lessons are as clear and precise as possible. All students and staff at our school will benefit from this partnership and The Loft opening, and we look forward to sharing further developments in the coming months.

Charlotte Barlow, Assistant Headteacher, SENDCo



During November, County committed to celebrating Anti-Bullying Week, with a shared aim of kindness, respect and understanding, making sure that **inclusion is at the heart of what we do**. To acknowledge this week, the school held an Odd Socks day, a fun and powerful way to celebrate what makes us unique. Students and staff alike donned mismatched socks to send a clear message: **our differences are something to be embraced, not judged**. Just as no two pairs of odd socks are the same, neither are we - which is part of what makes our school so vibrant and special. Alongside sessions during tutor time and vital discussions on how to combat bullying, wearing odd socks reinforced the idea that **every member of our community is valued for who they are**. It's important that we keep the spirit of Anti-Bullying Week alive all year round- because celebrating diversity and standing up for kindness isn't just a one-week event; it's the County way.

Performance Cols Beraha, EDI Lead

Model United Nations

was a fantastic opportunity for us to learn more about real life issues.

For example, as part of the environmental committee, I had to research topics such as single use plastics and the biodiversity in South America – both topics very new to me – before debating with others ...



... and hopefully coming to resolutions with the best interests of your country in mind.



The event also provided us with valuable experience in public speaking, reacting to how the debate is going, and sometimes answering unexpected questions. Overall, it's been incredibly beneficial, and the skills learnt will undoubtedly be useful in the future.

Jason Yr12

Model United Nations

United Nations



Music Ambassadors' Concert



On Tuesday 12th November, we held the annual Music Ambassadors' Concert, the first of many exciting performance opportunities this year. This was a chance to celebrate the talent of many of our Upper School students in Yrs10 to13.

We enjoyed an evening of fantastic music across a range of styles and instruments. With solos, duets, trios, quartet and band performances, from both vocalists and instrumentalists, we heard music from classical, pop, jazz and rock genres. Two original compositions and arrangements were also performed.

We thoroughly enjoyed auditioning and organising this and want to thank all the students who took part. We would also like to thank our Music Tech students for running the sound desk.

We are so proud of your creativity, dedication and motivation. We can't wait to see what the rest of the year has in store!

Emma and Amelia, Music Ambassadors, Yr13

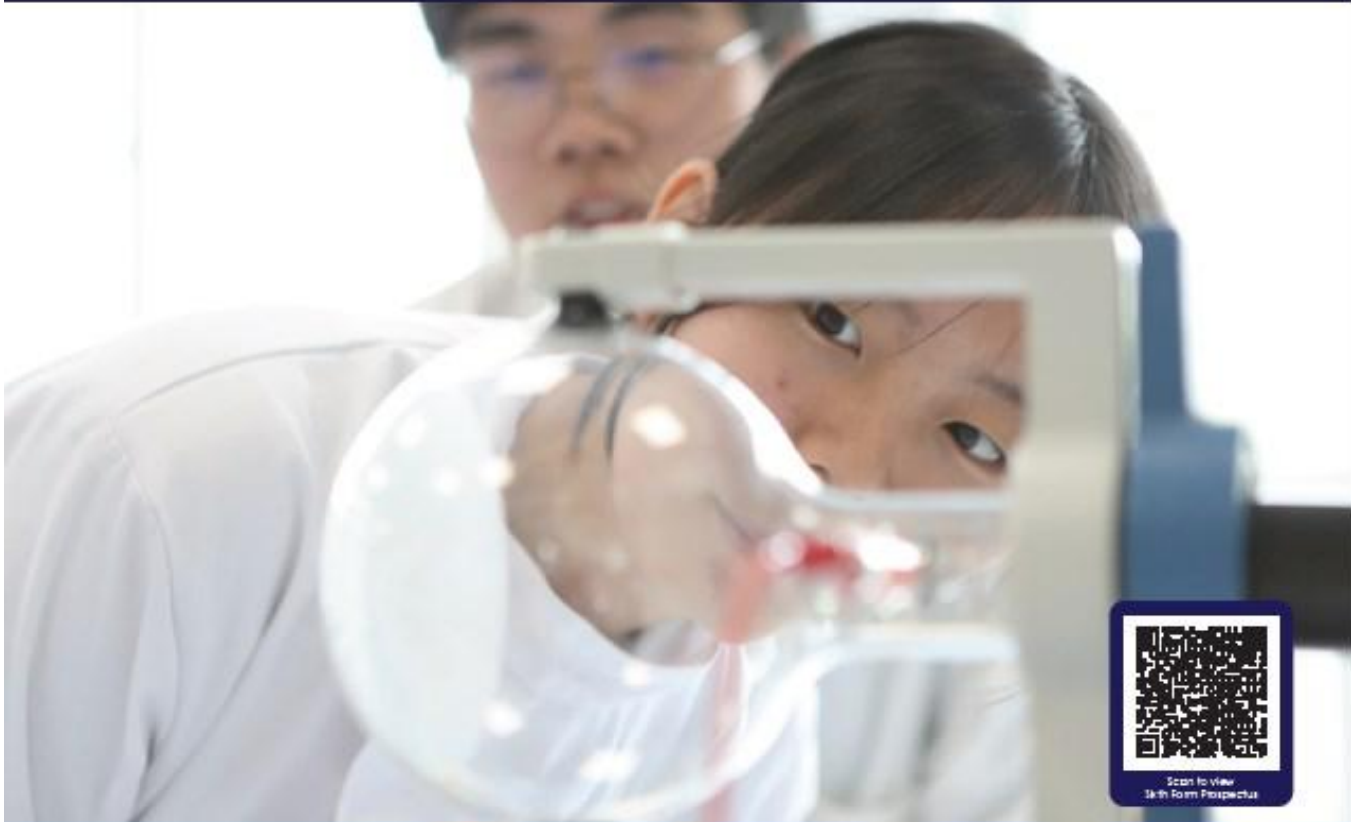


Photography courtesy of James Anthony



Guildford County Sixth Form

Outstanding Sixth Form provision in the heart of Guildford





Scan to view
Sixth Form Prospectus



Applications are now open... via the school website... deadline 29th November

For more information
www.guildfordcounty.co.uk

Phone to book a visit
01483 504089

 @GCS_SixthForm
 @gcsixth



This is our C.A.S.T.L.E.

A Busy Month in Future Destinations



Festival of Skills

In October, 180 of our Yrs11-13 students had the fantastic opportunity to attend the Festival of Skills. This event, organized by Surrey County Council, connected students with over 70 businesses, training providers, and apprenticeship opportunities. It was a great way to explore future paths and gain valuable insights. We're excited to attend again next year!



Space and Defence Exploration

A select group of our students had the privilege of visiting the Space and Defence exhibition in Farnborough. They listened to inspiring talks and met with industry professionals, gaining first-hand knowledge of the sector.



Feature Lecture Series

Our popular Feature Lecture Series has kicked off! We've already hosted insightful talks on opportunities in AWE defence. The series now continues with exciting presentations from London Fire Brigade, IT, Event Management, and Social Entrepreneurship, all before the Christmas break.

Student Support and Development

We are committed to supporting students at every stage of their journey. Yr12 students are diving into Unifrog, Future Skills assessments, and LinkedIn, while Yr13 students are focused on their future pathways with meetings and support available. Yr11 students are actively exploring their options through future meetings and aspirational discussions.

Young Enterprise Initiative

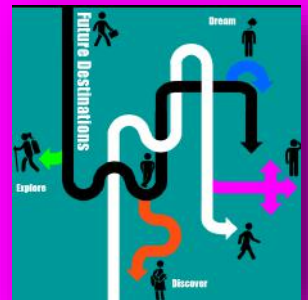
We're thrilled to announce the launch of our Young Enterprise Initiative! Fifteen budding entrepreneurs have embarked on their business ventures. Stay tuned for updates on their progress.

Parent Engagement

We are dedicated to keeping parents informed and involved. We'll be hosting Parent Talks starting on November 27th. Watch your emails for more details. In the meantime, please don't hesitate to contact us during Parent Evenings or at any other time with questions about future opportunities.

We're excited about the future and look forward to working with you to help our students achieve their goals.

Huda Gay, Future Destinations Lead



Using Creativity and Imagination

Come along with our Lower School students on an exciting journey through Computer Science . . .



This half term, Yr7 have been making their own story using PowerPoint! There are so many fun ways to achieve this and the students have had some brilliant ideas!



Yr8 students have been sharing stories about their favourite superheroes on their own websites, using HTML and CSS to style them. They look so professional!



There are only 10 types of people in the world: Those who understand binary and those who don't.

with computers, learning a new language that computers understand - BINARY!

Yr9 have been discovering how to communicate

Computer Science is a very creative subject, where students can let their imagination flow, creating amazing projects whilst having fun!

Maria Eleftheriadi, Head of Computer Science

in Lower School Computer Science

The place where we excel

Art for art's sake



GCSE's might seem like a distant memory. . . however, it is only now that we can share some of the wonderful work that was on show on the 15th, 16th & 17th July, in the Art, Craft and Design, Photography and Textile Exhibition.

There was a total of 41 students who worked in these disciplines. Using a rich variety of techniques and media, pupils explored their own ideas within the projects of 'Natural Forms', 'Change', 'Reflections', 'Portraiture' and 'Light and Dark'.

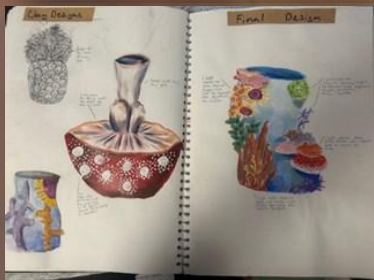
For their 'Externally Set Exam' they chose themes such as: Hands, Portraits, Places and Spaces, Fragments, Boundaries Borders and Edges, or Celebration.

Pupils worked with traditional acrylic, watercolour, gouache and ink painting techniques, as well as pen, chalk and charcoal drawings. They also produced clay work and lino, mono and polyboard printing.

Others worked on collage, photograms and photoshop.

In Textiles, students used quilting, felting, hand and machine embroidery, as well as painted and printed textiles, both sculpted and sewn together. We are really proud of their hard work and fantastic outcomes, creating an impressive and varied exhibition.

Isabel Baillie, Head of Art



House Rowing 2024

1st Windsor
2nd Hanover
3rd Stuart
4th Lancaster
5th York
6th Tudor

The first whole school House event this academic year went off with a bang, with all year groups showing great enthusiasm and determination when representing their House. It was a very tight competition this year . . . in the end there were less than 300 metres between 1st and 6th place! *PE Department*



TRIPLE HARMONY CHOIR

INVITE YOU TO OUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY
EVENING PERFORMANCE

♪ When

SATURDAY 23rd NOVEMBER 2024

7.30PM – 9.30PM

Where

♪ **GUILDFORD COUNTY SCHOOL
FARNHAM ROAD
GUILDFORD, GU2 4LU**



Triple Harmony are pleased to present
our end of term performance of popular
contemporary songs.

Welcome to Triple Harmony Choir

**Guildford County School
Mayhew Theatre
Wednesday evenings**

First session free to try!

Triple Harmony is a Contemporary Mixed Choir singing three-part harmonies with backing tracks

The ethos is simply
to enjoy all the benefits of singing together
There is no audition
You don't need to be able to read music
Just come along
Develop a love of singing contemporary songs
with beautiful harmonies
in a group of like-minded performers

Find out more at: www.tripleharmony.com

Lettings at Guildford County



Wodeland Avenue Sports Ground

2024 has been a busy year for improvement projects at County, and my favourite redevelopment has been at Wodeland Avenue Sports Ground. County School students have been enjoying the new and improved version of their sports ground - playing netball, basketball and tennis on the fantastic new courts, cricket in the new cricket nets and football, rugby, rounders and athletics on the field.

Quiet, private and enclosed, with the bonus of amazing views up to The Mount, and located just a short walk around the corner from County School, it is a great venue to hire for club training, exercise, and outdoor children's parties.

For Hire Enquiries contact: lettings@guildfordcounty.co.uk
To find out more about Guildford County School Lettings including What's On – visit our Facebook Page and follow us or our website at www.guildfordcountyschool.co.uk/venue-hire

Helen Smith, Lettings Officer

Dates for the Diary:

Thu 28 Nov	Photographic Exhibition
Thu 28 Nov	Yr13 Parents Evening
Fri 29 Nov	6th Form Applications Deadline
Fri 29 Nov	6th Form Winter Ball
Mon 02 Dec	INSET
Mon 16 Dec	House Public Speaking
Tue 17 Dec	Christmas Celebration
Fri 20 Dec	School closes for Christmas



The place where we excel