



Students head off on a cultural visit to Sweden

Last week, 20 of our students from Year 9 and 10 were fortunate to embark on a fully-funded school trip to Gothenburg, Sweden.

We had the pleasure of visiting a Swedish school, and students were able to learn about what life is like for a student in Sweden! As well as this, students (and some staff members) also braved a high-rope course, enjoyed a very competitive bowling match, and used their problem-solving skills in an escape room.



We also enjoyed a wide variety of cuisines during our visit (including Palestinian and Lebanese), and students were able to share aspects from their own cultures with each other.

Everyone had a truly fantastic experience, and the students behaved excellently - they were an absolute credit to the school.

Mr O Facey, Head of MFL



A message from the Head

Firstly, a huge well done to our Year 11 students on a very successful final round of mocks. They are well placed to succeed in their summer exams, starting on 28th April.

As you can see, alongside excellence in the classroom, our students have experienced a wealth of sporting, careers related and extra-curricular opportunities. At all times they represent the school brilliantly; we are very proud of our community.

A special thank you to all our staff who dedicate their time to arranging these experiences; they are lifetime memories for our young people.

Ms C Moran

Riding a dream at racing school in Newmarket!

On Friday 14th March, Ms Baatjies and I took a group of Year 9 and 10 students to visit the British Racing School in Newmarket for a Riding a Dream Academy taster day.

We had a brilliant day understanding the horse racing industry. Students were given a tour of the yard and had the opportunity to groom and ride the horses as well as to experience a mechanical simulator.

We were inspired by the story of Khadijah Mellah, a young woman from Sydenham who competed as a jockey. By the end of the day, Marques had overcome his fear of horses and Anna was declared the horse whisperer amongst us.

Ms C Moran, Headteacher





AI steals the show at STEM roadshow

BAE Systems, the Royal Air Force, and the Royal Navy worked together to present an engaging theatre roadshow celebrating STEM in Orchard Park. The theme of the 2025 show is artificial intelligence.

Artificial Intelligence is already having a significant global impact. Their presentation introduces AI as a tool that can be embraced with as much enthusiasm as Google was five years ago. The Roadshow highlighted valuable applications of AI for teachers and students, emphasising the importance of human skills in maximising AI's influence on our lives.

They demonstrated how to recognise deepfakes, the dangers associated with AI, and how AI can serve as a valuable educational resource for both teachers and students—all through their AI robotic dog, Lexi. The programme was filled with surprises and insights, aimed at promoting the safe use of AI tools in the public sphere, both now and in the future.

Mr S Alabi, Drive and STEM Coordinator

An update on Year 7

As I reflect on my first two months at the school, I am filled with immense gratitude. What an exciting and rewarding journey it has been so far! Stepping into the daunting role as Head of Year 7 has brought many challenges, but also several moments of joy and accomplishment. I have been warmly welcomed by both students and staff, and the positive atmosphere within the school has made this transition truly special.

One of the most encouraging aspects of my time here has been the positive shift in behaviour across Year 7. It has been inspiring to witness students taking ownership of their actions, showing respect for one another, and embracing the school's values with enthusiasm. The changes in attitude have been not only noticeable but also incredibly uplifting for me as I see how the students are truly growing into their potential.

The challenges I've faced in my short time here at Orchard Park have been difficult but rewarding, but they have provided valuable opportunities for personal growth. Supporting Year 7 through these early stages has been both a learning experience and a privilege. I've seen the students rise to every

challenge with resilience and determination, and it's this spirit that makes me so optimistic about the future.

The enthusiasm of the constant hunger for shoutouts have inspired students to strive for excellence, with popular rewards such as lollipops and Freddos fueling their academic growth. I would like to give a special shout out to the top character point leaders: Celeste, Lara, Holly, Abdullah and Renelle, whose hard work seriously reflects Orchard Park's learning ethos encouraged throughout the school.

I can proudly say that Year 7 regularly leads the school rankings in Sparx maths and reader, with each form group constantly battling it out weekly for bragging rights of who holds the house champion trophies. This sense of positive competition fosters an environment all students need for academic growth.

As we approach the end of term, I am excited for the continued journey ahead and I look forward to seeing them thrive even more in the months to come.

Wishing everyone a well-deserved break!

Mr S Kalatch, Head of Year 7

An update on Year 8

As we come to the end of another exciting term, I want to take a moment to celebrate all the wonderful things Year 8 have achieved over the past few weeks.

We have had some incredible events, including International Women's Day and Sign Language Week, both of which have been fantastic opportunities to learn, celebrate, and reflect on important topics. In addition, our students have showcased their talents and determination in netball and football fixtures, achieving brilliant results—well done to everyone who participated!

It has been wonderful to see so many Year 8 students applying to be prefects. Their enthusiasm is really inspiring, and I am proud that they want to become role models for the rest of the school.

A highlight of this term has been our Big Speech Competition, with the theme of change. We heard some incredible speeches about what our students want to change in the world, and the passion and confidence

they displayed were truly commendable.

In PSHE lessons and assemblies, Year 8 have been exploring the topics of groupthink and self-worth. These are important discussions, and it has been wonderful to have so many engaging conversations with students about these topics. It's clear that these lessons are making a meaningful impact, which is fantastic to see.

As always, I am so proud of Year 8 and their continued growth and achievements. However, we still need to focus on improving attendance and completing Sparx homework consistently. Please continue to support your child at home to ensure they stay on top of their work and come to school each day ready to learn.

Year 8 is an amazing group, and they are going from strength to strength. Let's keep up the fantastic work next term!

Wishing you all a restful break.

Ms C Ruby, Associate Assistant Headteacher

An update on Year 9

As this term comes to a close, I want to take the opportunity to reflect on and celebrate the fantastic achievements of Year 9. This term, we have marked International Women's Day and Sign Language Week, both of which have been fantastic opportunities for learning and reflection. Our students have also excelled in sport fixtures, achieving outstanding results – congratulations to all involved.

One of the highlights of this term was our Big Speech Challenge, with the theme of 'change'. We heard some powerful speeches on what our students want to change in the world, and it was incredible to witness their confidence and passion and how they have improved since last year's competition, making their

speeches more insightful and mature.

In PSHE lessons and assemblies, Year 9 students have been focusing on relationships, an essential topic at this stage in their lives. I have also spent a lot of time this term speaking with students about how they conduct themselves in school, in the community, and online, emphasising the importance of keeping themselves safe, being empathetic and respectful. As they mature and approach important decisions about their GCSEs, I want them to continue growing into excellent role models for the younger years.

I am incredibly proud of Year 9 students and the progress they have made. However, it is

essential that they keep up with their extra homework, particularly as they prepare for the challenges ahead. Completing all assigned work on time will support their learning and ensure they are developing strong study habits. Please encourage your child to stay on top of their homework so they can reach their full potential.

Year 9 is a fantastic year group and I have thoroughly enjoyed being their Head of Year again this term. They have come a long way since I had them in Year 7 and are developing into impressive young people. Let's keep up the excellent work next term!

Wishing you all a restful break.

Ms C Ruby, Head of Year 9

An update on Year 10

This term, Year 10 have been demonstrating fantastic commitment to their learning, with many students making the most of the opportunities available to them. As always, one of the biggest highlights has been the excitement around character shoutouts – Year 10 will pester me on lunch duty to check whether a particular teacher has added their shoutout to the tracker! So many of the year group continuously display excellence, drive, collaboration and integrity around school. A special mention goes to Christos (444), Kamari (405), Emphyhil (405), Zachary (361) and Molly (356), who have the most Character points in the year group.

Beyond their lessons, it has been encouraging to see so many students taking responsibility for their learning by attending working lunch that runs three times a week for independent

study, as well as voluntarily staying behind after school to complete work. Ms Pain always has Year 10 students in her classroom after school. With GCSEs just over a year away, it is important that all students make the most of their time. We encourage parents and carers to support their child in attending working lunch and using this time wisely. Developing good study habits now will make a huge difference in the long run. Your child should also ensure they are managing their workload effectively by avoiding last minute homework and starting to build a habit of regular revision.

Many students have also been thinking ahead to leadership opportunities, and I have already had several students ask for support with their prefect applications. Becoming a prefect is a fantastic way to develop leadership skills and will look great on sixth form and college

applications, which students will start preparing in September.

As Year 10 students walk through the corridors, they will no doubt notice the determination, focus, and sense of urgency among Year 11s, who are just weeks away from their first GCSE exam. This time next year, they will be in the same position, facing the challenge of their final exams. Their first round of PPE examinations next term will be the perfect opportunity to experience exam conditions and assess their progress. In June, they will officially step into the role of Year 11, including the start of Period 6, so now is the time to build strong habits, embrace challenges, and take ownership of their learning.

Have a well-deserved and restful break.

Ms L Goodwin, Head of Year 10

An update on Year 11

Our Year 11 students have been exceptional this year, showing great dedication to achieving the best possible grades in both rounds of the Pre Public Examinations (PPEs). Their attitude to their PPEs the first time round was impressive, but they improved significantly for the most recent exams, setting such high standards for themselves going into their GCSEs. We are really proud of them.

It is extremely important now that they build on this positivity, with outstanding focus and effort in every lesson and exceptionally hard work outside of lessons. This can be shown by attending champions hours, working

lunches, tutoring and the many additional lunchtime and after school classes that their teachers are holding. It is also important that they are committing to more independent study. We want them to take confidence from both rounds of PPEs and focus now on the actionable steps that their teachers have given them to be confident before sitting GCSEs.

The school will be open during the first week of the Easter break, with teachers putting on additional lessons for year 11 students. You will shortly receive further information about this, along with a summary of the work that they need to complete over the Easter break.

As we approach the last term that Year 11 students have at Orchard Park, we look forward to celebrating with them at their prom. This will be held at Farleigh Golf Course on Thursday 10th July and we'd love to see every one of them there. Students should speak to me if they are yet to purchase a ticket. I would also like to say a really big well done to our students who have raised money to go towards their prom. This takes a huge amount of confidence and they have really shown maturity in doing this.

I wish you all a well-rested break.

Ms J Walsh, Head of Year 11

Fostering a culture of acceptance and understanding

One of our incredible Year 8 students, Sophia, took the lead in raising awareness by teaching British Sign Language to the entire school during morning line-ups. Each day, she introduced new signs, including greetings like "How are you?", and conversational starters – helping more students feel confident in using sign language in everyday interactions.

The celebrations reached a moving highlight when our Year 7 and Year 8 students came together to perform 'This Is Me' from *The Greatest Showman* – entirely in sign language. It was a powerful and emotional performance that showcased not only their dedication but also Orchard Park's commitment to inclusivity and making communication accessible to all.

You can watch the video on our website [here](#).

At Orchard Park, we believe in fostering a culture of acceptance and understanding, and this week has been a testament to the students' enthusiasm for breaking communication barriers and spreading awareness within our wider community.

Ms C Ruby, Associate Assistant Headteacher

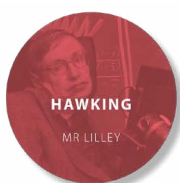
Maths by Stealth Challenge

Year 7 participated in a Maths by Stealth workshops where students planned and designed a music concert. They participated in market research using a questionnaire, interpreted data by drawing bar charts and pie charts, drew up budgets, and designed a stage set for the music concert. They used various Skillsbuilder skills, including teamwork, problem-solving and creativity.

At the culmination of the workshop, the students showcased their research in a presentation. They pitched their concert plan and honed their public speaking skills to persuade their peers why their plan was the best. This demonstrated their excellent behaviour, active participation, and enthusiasm. Importantly, they also gained a deeper understanding of the practical relevance of maths in everyday life.



ATTENBOROUGH
MISS KING



HAWKING
MR LILLEY



PARKS
MISS PAIN



RASHFORD
MR EVANS



YOUSAFZAI
MR HEADLEY

House news

This term, our school community has truly embodied our core values of Collaboration, Integrity, Excellence, and Drive. From powerful speeches to heartfelt gratitude, students have demonstrated outstanding character in so many ways.

One of the standout events this term was The Big Speech competition, where students spoke passionately on the theme of change. The level of talent and confidence on display was incredible, with participants earning valuable house points for their efforts. A huge congratulations to our year group winners Holly, Micah, and Shanai, and a special shoutout to our overall winner, Falisha, whose exceptional speech earned an impressive 1,000 points for Parks!

We also celebrated Sign Language Week in a truly special way, with the whole of Year 7 and 8 coming together to perform This Is Me in sign language. It was a beautiful and moving experience, showcasing unity, inclusivity, and dedication. We are incredibly proud of everyone who took part in making it such a memorable moment.

To finish the term on a high, we ran Gratitude Week, encouraging students to express their appreciation by writing postcards to those who have made a difference in their lives. The positivity didn't stop there – we had a record number of Zero Heroes, who were rewarded with an inflatables party on Friday! Finally, a huge congratulations to Attenborough, our overall House Champions, who celebrated their success with a well-earned rewards breakfast.

What a fantastic term it has been – well done, everyone!

Ms C Ruby, Associate Assistant Headteacher



Fun Fridays at Orchard Park

This term has seen some fantastic Fun Friday challenges. Activities for Fun Friday are usually posted on the school calendar which can be accessed on our website.

Students celebrated the year of the snake for Chinese New Year in February, with a quiz, fortune cookies and lantern making with Ms Coupland.

Also in February, there was a lovely end of the half term with sunshine, hearts and cakes. Well done to the Year 11 pupils who ran our Valentine's Day bake sale to raise funds for their prom and to Ms Baatjies for running a heart-filled Fun Friday.

The PE department recently hosted a dodgeball tournament, with all donations going to charity. The winners were the Hawking's house, with over £30 raised. Alfie and Emeka (Year 9) were the winners of the dodgeball chocolate challenge and a special shout out goes to Kate G, Matilda A, Jaya H and Evie G (Year 8) who helped run the event and lemonade stand.



Our exceptional artists!

It has been a very busy term in the art department! The department ran an art competition this term for International World Women's Day. The quality of the work was impressive and it was hard to pick a winner. The work is now on display in the school corridors. Each participant received a sweet and some art material. Dalia A in Year 7, Alex K in Year 9 and Nylah R in Year 7 were respectively first, second and third. You can see their creations pictured right.

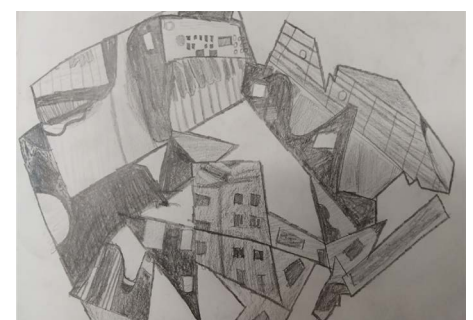
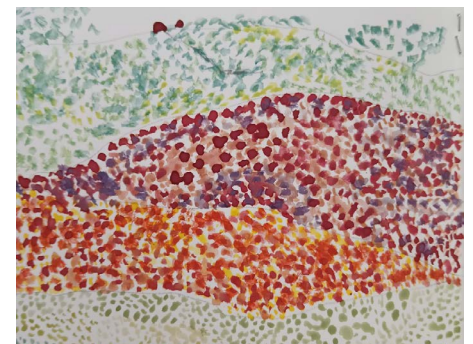
The art club also finished their first papier mâché masks and shells and started to create sculptures made of cardboard.

Year 7 students have been working on colourful landscapes, Year 8 have been learning to work in the style of Cubist artists and Year 9 students have concentrated on drawing sweets and cakes this term. All three year groups had a focus on colour.

Year 10 students have been creating work using colour pencil and clay, inspired by Ernst Haeckel.

You can take a look at the brilliant gallery of their work below.

Ms A Pain, Head of Art





Students excel in UK Maths Challenge

70 Orchard Park students took part in the UK Intermediate Maths Challenge on 29th January. They all received a certificate for their hard work on a challenging paper that pushed them to think critically and apply their problem-solving skills at a high level.

The UK Intermediate Maths Challenge is a timed challenge in exam conditions and the aim of the competition is to promote maths learning and develop children's problem-solving skills. It consists of a multiple-choice paper and students are given 60 minutes to answer the questions. In preparation, students worked diligently on past challenges both in class and at home.

Special congratulations go to Shamgar, Thomas W, Samuel, Dhimant, and Reuben W, who all earned a Silver Certificate. Samuel was the highest scorer in the school, while Shamgar was the top performer in Year 9.

We also want to recognise Mary, Samson, Alfie, Atakan, Vivaan, Finley, Ziyad, Molly, Jodie, Keetan, Sophie, Charis, and Heather, all of whom earned a well-deserved Bronze Certificate.

We're incredibly proud of the achievements of our Year 9 and 10 students – well done to all!

Ms N Devane, Second in charge of Maths

Local singer, Leiyah, visits Orchard Park

On Tuesday 4th March, as part of our International Women's Day celebrations, we were treated to a fantastic performance by local singer, Leiyah. She performed five songs including three of her own, in front of the whole of Year 7, our music high achievers and GCSE Year 10 music class.

Leiyah was taught music by Mr Sahl-Taylor in Years 7 to 9 before going to Brit School. She has a degree in music and spoke warmly about her educational journey and how she got into the music business. She was accompanied to Orchard Park by her new manager and during the Q&A session after the performance she gave the students advice on how to get management and what to expect.

Once again, we were proud of the questions our student asked, from 'how do you write songs?' to 'how do you get over nerves when singing in front of people?'

We are so grateful to Leiyah for giving such an inspirational performance to our students that they will never forget.

If you want to listen to Leiyah's music, her album 'Souls of September' and new single 'I never liked you anyway' are available on Spotify.

Mr Sahl-Taylor, Teacher in charge of Music



Friends of Orchard Park

It's been a really great term for the Friends of Orchard Park High School PTA group. They have continued to raise more money through easyfundraising, while refreshments at parents' evening have been really popular with both the parents and children.

Please do continue to sign up and regularly use the easyfundraising route (<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/friends-of-orchard-park>) when you shop online – it is completely free for you but the brands will give us donations simply for first going via easyfundraising. It works on mobiles, tablets and computers and is super easy to use.

We've also been making steady progress with our justgiving fundraising page. If you feel able, please consider giving a financial donation and sharing our page with friends and family:

https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/friendsfororchardpark?utm_term=PNXWkqG4V

Finally if you want to get involved, could spare an hour or so to help at a parents' evening, or just have some ideas to share with us please get in touch via fophs@orchardparkhigh.net

Friends of Orchard Park Team



"We feel so lucky to be part of this community!" – Diana, Year 11



BBC Bitesize careers tour inspires students

On Wednesday 5th February, Orchard Park High School hosted the BBC Bitesize Careers Tour. The tour was an exciting event designed to inspire and inform students about future career opportunities.

The session was led by experienced BBC presenter, Fee Mak, who welcomed three distinguished professionals for an engaging panel-style discussion: Monique Needham (Freelance Writer and Director), George Litton (Aircraft Maintenance Technician, EasyJet) and Bani Mendy (Director of Photography, BBC Crongton).

The professionals shared their career journeys, offering valuable insights into their industries, the qualifications needed, and the essential skills for success. They also provided personal anecdotes, advice on work experience, and guidance on key soft skills like communication, teamwork, and problem-solving – essential tools for any career path.

One of the event's highlights was the

interactive Q&A session, during which students could ask questions and gain first hand knowledge from professionals working in fields that could shape their future. This opportunity helped bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world careers, encouraging students to consider their aspirations.

The BBC Bitesize Careers Tour highlights career opportunities in various sectors, helping students recognise the possibilities available on their doorstep. The tour aims to inspire young minds and broaden their understanding of the working world by showcasing different paths and providing practical advice.

We thank BBC Bitesize and the guest professionals for visiting our school and sharing their expertise. Events like these play a crucial role in helping students make informed decisions about their future, and we look forward to more opportunities like this.

Mr S Alabi, Drive and STEM Coordinator

Year 11 bow out of Croydon Cup

All runs do eventually come to an end. Our year 11 football team have remained unbeaten in three years, and on Thursday they faced a very strong Riddlesdown team in the quarter finals of the Croydon Cup. Despite our efforts with a brilliant penalty from Rae, we lacked the killer instinct to take our chances to win the game early on. Nonetheless, the boys can hold their head high as they have set a very

high bar which will be difficult to emulate. I am incredibly proud of the group and honoured to have been part of their learning journey since Year 9. I have no doubt that all will go on to experience great success in their lives. These memories last a lifetime and we are incredibly lucky to have made so many positive memories.

Ms L Hansford, Head of PE

Football trial successes

► Continued from back page

Those students involved were Joe W (Year 11), Mason and Trey (both Year 7).

As many are aware, the journey to becoming a signed academy player is not easy as one is competing with the top one per cent across the country statistically. Nonetheless it is an opportunity for students to hopefully be exposed to different pathways.

The fact that three of our students were invited speaks volumes of the abilities of our students. Well done to all three. Following positive feedback from the Head of Recruitment, Trey has officially been invited into AFC Wimbledon to start his trial and was recently involved in his first game, in which he participated in beating Fulham Football Club 6-1 last weekend. We wish Trey all the best of luck with his trial.

We have received positive feedback regarding former student Hayden Ford who recently was offered a scholarship at Premier League Club Wolverhampton. Hayden has recently been selected for the England Youth Football Team. We wish Hayden all the best of luck in his journey to the top!

Athletes of the term

At the end of each school term, the PE department meets and discusses students who have stood out for their drive, commitment, motivation and excellence within their PE lessons and the school sports clubs. With only two students from each year group selected, this is always a very difficult choice with so many students in the running, however we would like to celebrate the winners below:

- Arvanan
- Pier
- Betsy
- Jacob
- Trinity
- Keyanna
- Emyphil
- Valentin
- Kloers
- Georgia

Ms L Hansford, Head of PE



PE roundup

Girls' football tournament

On Wednesday, 5th March, our Year 7 girls' football team (*pictured*) took part in a fiercely contested seven-a-side tournament at Coloma Convent Girls' School, finishing as impressive runners-up.

The tournament began with a dramatic 1-0 victory over Coombe Wood, with Layah scoring in the dying moments. Despite a 2-0 defeat to Riddlesdown in the group stage, the team progressed to the semi-finals, where they faced Oasis Shirley. Layah put us ahead, but a late equaliser took the game to extra time and then penalties. In the shootout, Layah, Ava, and Brooke confidently converted their spot-kicks, while Brooke made three brilliant saves to send us into the final with a 3-1 win.

The final was a rematch against Riddlesdown and was another tense battle. Princess made crucial saves to keep us in the game, but Riddlesdown took the lead before Brooke equalised. With no winner in extra time, another dramatic penalty shootout followed. All ten players from both teams stepped up, with Layah, Brooke, and Eyshila scoring for us. Brooke once again made outstanding saves, but in the end, we fell just short, losing 4-3 in sudden death.

The girls were fantastic throughout, showing incredible teamwork and determination, especially as we had no recognised goalkeeper – Azra, Brooke, and Princess all stepped up to share the responsibility. A huge well done to the whole squad for their hard work and resilience: Brooke, Layah, Azra, Dara, Princess, Pier, Alika, Ava, Naim and Eyshila – you made the school proud!



Boys' rugby tournament

On Friday 7th March, a dynamic team of Year 8 and 9 students stormed the sevens rugby tournament (*pictured above left*), going head to head with some of the toughest schools in Croydon. Each match was a fierce battle, and our players left it all on the pitch. Jermaine was an absolute force to be reckoned with, showcasing his incredible ball-carrying skills that had our opponents scrambling. In our final, nail-biting game against Oasis Shirley Park, we fought hard but narrowly missed out on the win, securing an impressive third place overall.

The team displayed resilience and determination, making it a performance to be proud of, one that will serve as a solid foundation for their future rugby journeys. A special shoutout to Shay, who played in an unfamiliar position and became a vital part of the team's success. Our congratulations go to everyone involved.

Football trial successes

The PE department has been working hard to provide opportunities beyond the classroom for some of our most talented students. With Excellence being one of our school values, we aim to live and breathe this within our work, not only as teachers but as a community. We recently had three students invited to AFC Wimbledon for a player-monitoring trial game in which they were able to showcase their talents to coaches and scouts at the academy (*pictured above right*).

TERM DATES

Last day of spring term

Friday 4th April

Easter weekend

Friday 18th to Monday 21st April

Start of summer term – all student return

Tuesday 22nd April

May bank holiday (school is closed)

Monday 5th May

Half term holiday

Monday 26th to Friday 30th May

INSET day

(school closed to students)

Monday 30th June

Last day of summer term

Friday 18th July

KEY DATES

24th April

Year 11 parents' evening 2

15th May

Year 7 parents' evening

10th July

Year 11 prom

16th July

Sports day

17th July

Summer show



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