

Biddenham NEWS

February Half Term Edition



School News Events Sports News

YOUTH DEMOCRACY - RSA LECTURE



In January, BBC Radio 4 personality and Chief Executive of the Royal Society of Arts, Matthew Taylor visited Biddenham at the invitation of the Student Parliamentary Society.

Introduced by Maryam Yasmin and Luca Sirchia, he gave a talk on 'The Future of Liberal Democracy' to students and invited representatives from other schools in the town, which included St Thomas More, Wootton, Bedford School, and the Free School.

He argued that liberal democracy was more than just voting. It involved forms of constitutional law which restricted the powers of government, included welfare support for the most vulnerable and 'public goods' such as schools and parks that were open to all.

Despite the clear difficulties currently being experienced by liberal societies around the world, including the rise of populist and autocratic movements in Europe, Mr Taylor made a persuasive case for the future of liberal democracy, and especially 'deliberative democracy'.

This is where a representative cross-section of perhaps 100 citizens are brought together for between one and four days to consider the arguments and evidence around a particular issue. He cited the major impact that a citizens' assembly on abortion had had on the recent referendum in Ireland.

At the end students asked questions, and this was followed by a reception at which staff and students from the various schools mingled and considered the issues raised. Martin Steers from Bedford Community Radio recorded the whole event and this is now available as a podcast.

The event organiser, Mike Berrill, said, 'It was great to see staff and students from different schools come together to listen to such a prominent national speaker and discuss the important issues raised. We are already looking forward to the next Bedford-wide event which will be a 'Question Time' in advance of the Mayoral Elections in May. We hope all of these events support our aim to create a Student Parliament on the site in the near future.'

(See help-build-our-school-parliament.uk)

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A message from the Head Teacher



Dear Parents and Carers,

You may have heard of the sad passing of Wendy Cooper, who featured in our last newsletter on her retirement after 39 years at Biddenham. What has been notable since this became common knowledge has been that we have received a number of phone calls and emails from former students, who have given their condolences, have extremely fond memories of her and have been understandably upset. One student remembered how she was, 'an integral part of the school, especially in her work establishing the first sixth form and then helped in a fundraising project undertaken after university. This was an ex-student who studied at Biddenham from 1985 to 1990 and who saw Wendy as a key person in his 'very happy time at the school.' Although Wendy had less contact with students since taking on the exams officer role, her legacy as a teacher is embodied in all those students she taught, helped and inspired.

Schools are important communities and help young people to get where they want to be in life. Teaching and schools are not about the past or the future, but very much rooted in the present - what we are all doing on a daily basis as a community - creating happy memories. But we all remember teachers who helped us, taught us well and believed in us. It is a privilege to have the opportunity to do that.

Wendy was devoted to our school, she was all about doing the best for our students and she made an impact. Her life represents all that is good about education; we owe her a great debt for all that she gave us.

David Bailey
Headteacher

KEY DATES

Parents' Evenings

Year 11 Parents' Evening
Thursday 7th February

Sixth Form Parents' Evening
Wednesday 20th February

Year 9 Parents' Evening
Tuesday 19th March

Year 8 Parents' Evening
Tuesday 2nd April

Half Term

11th – 15th February 2019

NEW PAYMENT ONLINE FACILITY

To provide parents with greater convenience for school trips, clubs, uniform and school meal payments we are inviting you to use our new online payment system SIMS Agora.

Please contact the finance office about how to register for this facility

Please visit our website at www.biddenham.beds.sch.uk for all of the latest news and information about what is happening at the school



SIXTH FORM AWARDS EVENING



The autumn term ended with a celebration of the achievements of last year's Sixth Form, Year 12 (level 2 & 3) students and Year 13 and 14 leavers. The celebrations were attended by approximately 180 people consisting of current year 13 students, ex-students, parents, carers and teachers.

Students received their GCSE and A level certificates. In recognition of their achievements, students also received subject prizes and special awards; amongst these the Academic Excellence award went to Jemima Ajayi, the Most Improved student award went to Ella Bhangle, Excellence for Special Achievement went to Sumayah Bechkoum and Cherece Clarke and the Stephen White Memorial award went to Tamannah Islam.

In addition Mahima Begum, Ella Bhangle, Nazia Khatun and Shakare Ali received certificates in recognition of receiving the Harpur Trust Bursaries of £3,600 for their undergraduate courses. Students in receipt of the Connolly Foundation Scholarships in 2018 also received certificates to celebrate and mark their achievements. These were presented by Steve Lowe. The Connolly Foundation provides an Academic Excellence award which provides a sum of up to £1000 per students depending on grades achieved.

The following students received £1,000 each: Emmanuel Alabi, Farhan Gohar and Beay Rodd. In addition, the Foundation annually invites Biddenham to put forward six students for Discretionary Awards of £500 each. These awards went to Jemima Ajayi, Sumayah Bechkoum, Ammarah Din, Zain Hanif, Tamannah Islam and Leah Stanley.

Needless to say these awards were gratefully received by all of our students and we acknowledge our grateful thanks to the Harpur Trust and Connolly Foundation for helping our students.



Our students making a new friend in the recent snow.

Biddenham

This half term, despite being short, has been full of fixtures for our students. All year groups have been out in the cold weather taking part in the district cross country.

Our Year 7,8,9 and 10 girls and boys have taken part in the district and county futsal leagues, an exciting change for them in their busy football schedule. The Girls Active group have had some fantastic sessions in street dance, zumba and parkour. All of our Year 9 girls active students have thrown themselves into new and exciting opportunities. The Year 9 boys basketball had an unbelievable season only losing one game and that was in the final of the district competition. The Year 7 and 8 badminton leagues were very well attended for both boys and girls with eight teams taking part from Biddenham. Hockey is well and truly underway with all teams in all age groups starting their season with some great wins. Hockey is going from strength to strength at Biddenham.

The football leagues for Year 7-10 and netball for Year 7 & 8 start after half term if you are interested in being involved please attend practices.

F.A and Youth Sports Trust Game of Our Own Camp

Eight of our Year 8 and Year 9 girls were selected to be part of the Game of Our Own camp where they were trained to become football activators working alongside England Footballing greats Kelly Smith, Rachel Yankey and Faye White. The girls came away enthused and inspired to help develop girls football across the community.

Sixth Form BTEC Sport and Health and Social Care trip to Body Worlds in London

The sixth form BTEC Sport and Health and Social care groups visit the famous Body Worlds exhibition in London. All students and staff had a wonderful time learning about anatomy and physiology in a once in a lifetime experience. (See photo opposite).

PE Athletes of the Week Winners

**Eve Piotrowski
Razaa Ul Mustafa
Danilo Miocinovic
Kimberley Wilson
Konrad Pawlik
Attiyah Ditta
Shazmin Islam
Jaime Fernandez Hernandez**

PE Star Homework Winners

**Despina Marinova
Jasper Kellet
Anisa Begum
Amy Whitefoot
Callum Dickerson
Ayesha Begum
Haseeb Kashif
Nazo Utmanzai
Gianni Orsini**



Sports News



Well done to the Year 9 and Year 10 handball teams with the Year 10s becoming district champions.



Well done to our Year 7 and Year 8 boys finishing 1st and 2nd in their badminton league



What an amazing day our football activators had at their FA and Youth Sports Trust Game of our own Camp. With Rachel Yankey, Kelly Smith and Faye White.



A group of 14 students attended the British Basketball League Cup Finals at the National Indoor Arena. The event included a number of high quality games and events such as WBL Cup Final, BBL Slam Dunk contest, BBL Babes Cheerleaders and BBL cup final.





Year 9 Visit Boughton House

Year 9 History students spend part of this term studying the changing nature of Boughton House in Northamptonshire and several of them went to visit the property recently.

The house and the grounds provided excellent learning opportunities for our students as they explored the changing historical environment over time. As one of the few secondary schools who are privileged enough to visit Boughton House, we were pleased to hear that once again our students were considered to be polite and respectful. The house is a private residence owned by the His Grace, the Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry and is known as the “English Versailles” because of the way the exterior of the house resembles the great French palace. While there our students were given guided tours of the original part of the house and the 17th century addition that was visited by William III as well as the vast landscape with its breathtaking features, new and old.

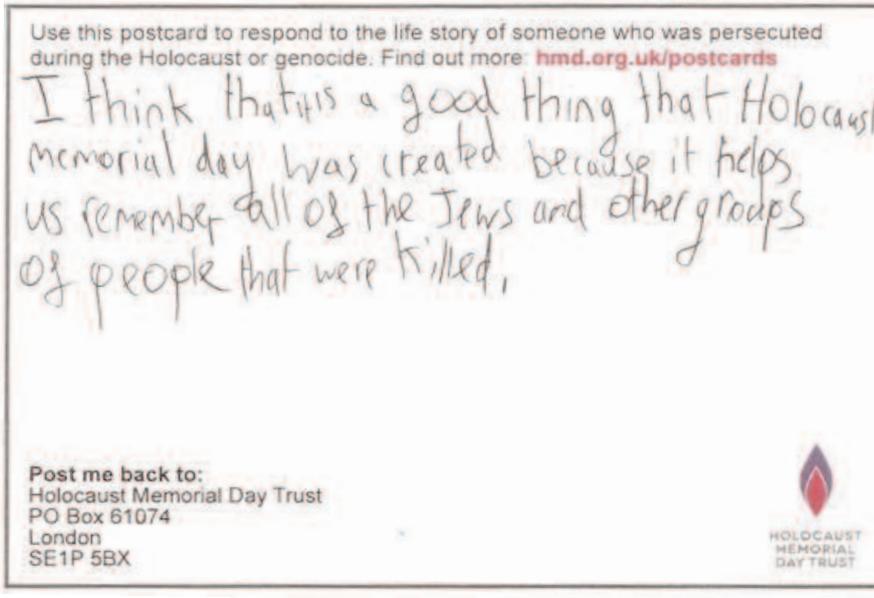
ATTENDANCE NEWS

Girls Vs Boys and our Harvard pilot

We always look at different areas of our attendance and the gender gap is one of them. In 2017 the girls had lower attendance than the boys, by 1.5% and our year 10 girls have trailed behind for a couple of years. Our boys have always been steady and generally better attenders. However, there has been a change since September. Across all years, our girls now have better attendance than the boys, the gap is finally closing. Come on boys, get into school!

We have recently begun a pilot project from Harvard University where students who had good attendance were asked to be part of the project. Their attendance was good but we wanted to get them to 100%. Attendance is an indicator of academic success - it's obvious if you miss school you miss lessons and that doesn't help achievement. As part of the project students were texted, with parents permission, giving them positive message that encourage school attendance. Whilst we are still part of the pilot the evidence from previous pilots is excellent - an increase of 4.5% attendance for those who took part in the project. If you would like to discuss your child's attendance or would like to be part of any future projects please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Holocaust Memorial Day



Every year Holocaust Memorial Day is marked on January 27th as this was the date in 1945 that the camps at Auschwitz and Birkenau were liberated. Our Year 8 students marked it as part of a special day organised by the History Department.

The day gives students the opportunity to connect with serious and emotional events in human history, focusing on the power of words to hurt and to heal as we look at the Holocaust of WWII as well as the genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur. In this, the second year of commemorating lives lost to genocide, students participated in various activities ranging from a drama workshop to a silent debate on speaking out against bullying.

One of the activities included making art from paperclips just as members of the Norwegian Resistance in WWII used paperclips to signify their defiance of the Nazis. The students also took part in a session where they could write postcards to survivors of a genocide or to explain to our local MP why it is important to learn about the Holocaust and other genocides.

Our GCSE History students study an examined unit on Superpower Relations and the Cold War.

While the Cold War may feel like recent history to many parents and carers to the students it can feel like the distant past. To help them better connect with their exam content we took Year 10 History students to visit the only Cold War museum in Britain on February 4th.

The students participated in a workshop where they learned about life during the height of the Cold War, when the threat of a nuclear war was ever present in the back of people's minds. Many of the students also were keen to see the large missiles and airplanes used to help defend Britain and her allies, as well as her enemies, during that time.



Stem News So Far This Term

Energy Quest

All Year 8 students attended the energy quest workshop sponsored by tomorrow's engineers on 9th January. Students were given different tasks to evaluate the renewable energy resources and design a hybrid car.

VEX Robotics

Year 10 and 11 students took part in the regional VEX Robotics competition organised by the local engineering company Lockheed Martin. Students had been working on design and the programming of the robot for the last couple of months.

Role Model event

On 23rd January Tina McDonald from Avalanche Coaching and Ray Hanson the founder of PSL group of companies came over to Biddenham to inspire students. Tina McDonald talk was based on CV and the application process while Ray Hanson spoke about the Common sense intelligence required to be successful in any business. *See picture below.*



Year 7 & 8 News

Our Year 7 and 8 students were involved in the Tales of the Riverbank Fabulous Finish in the main hall with the Chair of Governors as a special guest.

Previously, the Year 8's citizenship lessons had been focused on the democratic process and had by-elections in their class to represent them in the general election. On the day we had eight political parties, with various election campaigns and manifestos present to all the key stage 3 students. The enthusiasm and hard work of all the students involved in presenting was outstanding. Post 16 politics students attended and ensured the election was fair and the counting impartial. The winning party were the People's Action Party who delivered an unforgettable campaign and gained the most votes. All students developed their skills in public speaking and learnt about the process of electing people into power.