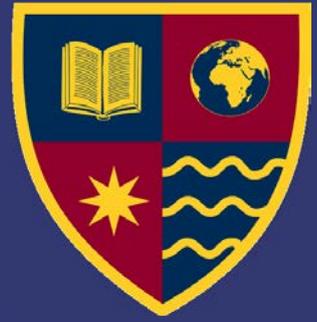


Biddenham NEWS

Christmas Edition



**MERRY CHRISTMAS TO OUR STUDENTS,
STAFF, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITY**



Students past, now teachers present wish you Seasons Greetings.

**School breaks up for Christmas on
Friday 20th December at 12.50 pm
Lunch will be served until 1.30pm
and students return on Monday 6th January
Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year**

www.biddenham.beds.sch.uk [twitter@BiddenhamIntSch](https://twitter.com/BiddenhamIntSch)

A message from the Principal



Dear Parents and Carers,

As we approach Christmas we have our traditional Christmas 'bumper' newsletter documenting lots of activities since September; I do hope your child has been involved in at least one of them.

This week the PISA tests were released which is an International assessment that measures 15 year old students reading Maths and Science, literacy and other things like 'life satisfaction' every three years. The good news was that our Maths ranking at an international level jumped 10 points, but the bad news is a long term decline in Science, whilst everything else remains above average – except for in 'life satisfaction'. Of 15 year olds worldwide we are ranked 69th out of 72 countries with boys in particular amongst the least satisfied with their lives. It has fallen massively in the last four years showing that students in the UK were much less likely to report that they have a sense of meaning in life than their peers in OECD countries. The report suggested that there is a correlation between life satisfaction of 15 year olds and them having a fear of failure - which is a sad indictment of our high stakes testing system in this country.

It is tragic to think that in the UK our 15 year olds have such low life satisfaction and that it's getting worse - so we need to be mindful of this and make sure we are taking care of our children's wellbeing, happiness and general mood. Our kids should enjoy school, be successful and go on to lead happy, healthy and satisfying lives. If they don't we are letting generations of young people down.

So here endeth the Christmas lecture. Given the above, I urge you to enjoy the family time over the Christmas break – do things together that are life affirming and bring joy.

Very best wishes,
David Bailey.

YEAR 7 ROUND UP

Our new Year 7's have made a fantastic start to their education at Biddenham.

Since September, they have demonstrated the core values and expectations of the school and shown a fantastic commitment to their studies.

The effort and progress that the year group have made has been recognised in different ways by the school.

Many have attended our 'Hot Chocolate Friday' reward session, have been awarded Housepoints or have been nominated for student of the week awards.

More recently, students from the year group have been on a Geography residential trip, took part in the Great Biddenham Bake Off competition (and raised £104 for Children with Cancer UK from selling the cakes) or have attended training as a Be Kind ambassador. It is really pleasing to see the year group wanting to take part in these enrichment opportunities.

There are many clubs and activities on a weekly basis for students to attend if they wish and I would encourage your child to try one out if they have not yet done so.

SCHOOL of ROCK

THE MUSICAL



Biddenham students took to the stage this month, with over 40 of them performing or acting as stage crew in the school's musical production of The School of Rock. Taking place on the 12th and 13th of December the performances were a great success with more than 400 audience members coming to support the show.

The performance featured students of all levels of experience, with some students, including our Year 7's, making their musical debut! The students have worked incredibly hard over the past three months to put on the production and their hard work certainly paid off in the quality of their performances. Each and everyone of them shone in the production.

The Performing Arts staff team are so proud of them all and the students have been a real delight to work with. Their commitment to rehearsals has been fantastic this year. The students have absolutely loved the experience and are already looking forward to working on next year's musical project which will be announced in the summer term. A huge thank you to everyone that helped out by lending props, organising their child's costume, watching the performances and buying refreshments. Your support, as always, is very much appreciated.

CHILDREN IN NEED 2019

In the lead up to Children in Need 2019 Tatenda, Year 10, decided he wanted to do something to raise awareness and money for this fantastic cause.

He came up with the idea of running a cake sale on the day.

He enrolled help from his fellow tutees and staff to provide cakes and support.

The response from everyone was greater than expected which resulted in the school raising £142.05.

A huge well done to Tatenda for organising such a great event.



Caring for Our Community - Christmas in a Box

This year Biddenham have donated 43 boxes to the Christmas in a Box appeal. These boxes provide local people in crisis with hampers for Christmas.

The boxes had to include 20 specific food items including essentials for Christmas, along with treats like selection boxes, a box of chocolates and mince pies. Each tutor group aims to produce a full box for a family of four.

The boxes were decorated and included a card from the tutor group for the family. Thank you to all of you that helped with this heartwarming project; our students really did well.

Students studying BTEC WorkSkills volunteer at the Bedford Food Bank



During two hour sessions, the students organised, dated and sorted many different food items for families and individuals who rely on this support and help. Through these volunteering roles, the students worked as part of a team, developing their problem solving and communication skills.

This is an essential part of the learning which has a practical application on the BTEC WorkSkills course.

In total Biddenham has given more than 150 hours of help to the foodbank this term.



SCHOOL BOOK FAIR

Students, staff and parents enjoyed browsing the Book Fair we held in the library in November.

A great selection of books were available, especially brand new publications, but old favourites too. We sold over £300 worth of books which also means we 'earned' rewards points to get a range of new books for the school. The posters and stationery items were very popular too, particularly the 3D book marks and the furry animal pencil cases!

As the Fair was so popular, we are hoping to hold another next year.

OUT AND ABOUT

Battlefields of Belgium

Four Year 12 students were lucky enough to be chosen to go on the Battlefield Tour to Belgium and France. Cristina Balogh was also chosen to lay a wreath from Biddenham at the Menin Gate before the last post ceremony.

“This was the most amazing experience as it was on 11/11/19 - one hundred and one years after the end of the First World War. Although a sombre moment it was amazing to hear the pipe and marching bands commemorate the end of the war and the Last Post never fails to be emotional. It was an experience where we learned new information about World War One, it was useful and interesting.”

The students were joined by four other schools. "We made new friends and all of the teachers engaged with us, and the trip was beneficial for the students that had no idea about the war's events"



YEAR 7 EDUCATIONAL VISIT TO STONEHENGE & THE EDEN PROJECT

Forty two Year 7 students had the amazing opportunity to visit Stonehenge and The Eden Project on a three day residential trip. The students were outstanding and a 'credit to the school' throughout the trip. They learnt about how people lived in the neolithic period and were able to explore replicas of their houses, as well as visit the stone monument. Whilst at The Eden Project students learnt about how the rainforest is used and how it is being exploited in the world's largest indoor rainforest.

"The ice skating was really fun. The different biomes and Stonehenge were simply extraordinary" said Yuki Turner.

Ineida Zaludaite said, "I really enjoyed being able to learn about the rainforest biome in an actual rainforest, it didn't feel like a lesson because it was so fun!"



SWANAGE RESIDENTIAL TRIP

A group of Year 12s and 13s went to Swanage and the Isle of Purbeck to look at a range of fieldwork activities. The students walked from Lulworth Cove over to Durdle Door to have a look at the erosional processes. They saw Swanage Bay and then travelled up the coast to Studland Bay and examined the sand dune succession. On the final day the students investigated Boscombe Pier and the town centre and how it has changed over time.

RAF COSFORD VISIT

Year 10 History students travelled to RAF Cosford to visit the National Cold War Exhibition Centre. The trip allowed them to see real Cold War artefacts and engage with interactive exhibits that linked in with their exam unit on Superpower Relations and the Cold War. As part of the trip the students also took part in a session looking at nuclear fallout and propaganda from the Cold War.



STEM ROUND UP

BizTech- Milton Keynes College

“One of the trips I have been on this term is the ‘Engineering Your Future’ trip. We went to the Open University and interviewed many innovative entrepreneurs who told us interesting stories. We then experienced what really goes into making products used daily. To finish it we listened to guest lecturers, one from the University of Bedfordshire and one from The Open University. This trip was very inspiring, it motivated us to aim high to achieve.”

Eve Piotrowski, Year 9



Science Museum, London

In September fifteen Year 10 students went to London for a trip to the Science Museum. They started the day with an exploration of the Wonderlab, with pupils engaging in a number of interactive activities, including racing staff on pulley chairs and investigating the effects of different materials on slide speeds. They then watched a 3D film, A Beautiful Planet, before participating in a science show where many of our pupils contributed to the discussion. A special mention to Amin Baaddi for volunteering to take part in a force's investigation. All pupils were a credit to the school, with many budding scientists amongst our cohort.



University of Leicester Chemistry Department

“In November, our Year 13 Chemistry class went on a trip to the University of Leicester to explore the Chemistry Department. Students were able to see how the analytical instruments work, giving them a greater understanding of the course as well as using the machines to identify compounds. Also speaking with university students, provided an insight into the lifestyle and courses available within the field. At the end of the day, we were able to see a cooler side of chemistry - literally - experimenting with dry ice and liquid nitrogen.”

Tasnim Ali, Year 13

STEM ROUND UP



Visiting the Space Museum

“To start our experience, we all competed against each other to see who could build the best rocket, we also learnt all about space history.

“To follow that we experienced the planetarium and saw how the body of an astronaut works. We then had time to explore and do activities such as present the weather, get in rockets and put on space suits. This trip was amazing, we did things we’d never done before and had loads of fun.”

Eve Piotrowski, Year 9

The Natural History Museum at Tring

“Year 8 and 9 students visited the Natural History museum at Tring. They attended a workshop on adaptation which was relevant to their science syllabus. Students also got an opportunity to see the stuffed animals and some of those which are now extinct.”

Ramima Begum, Year 9



Centre of Cell – London

“I recently visited the Centre of the Cell at Queen Mary's University as part of my education in biology.

It was a very exciting trip which allowed me to learn about lots of different things which intrigued me. We saw lots of labs and scientists who gave us an insight on what the lives of scientists looked like. I would recommend the trip to everyone as it was lots of fun and very beneficial to my A-level.”

Medinah Ahmed Year 12

SCIENCE LIVE

A level Live Biology Live

“Our A-Level students went to Birmingham for Biology Live, where they were greeted by a multitude of interesting talks and lectures, ranging from whether male and female brains are different (spoiler, they're not) to the science of dieting, where Dr Giles Yeo told us why our diets do and don't work. In addition to this, a particularly frightful talk; 'Revenge of the Microbes' brought into light the severity of antibiotic resistance in microbes, leading to more and more problems each year. Dr Jenny Rohn explained how the lack of new antibiotics being produced, and the time it takes to develop new drugs is letting antibiotic resistance catch up. All in all, the trip was both informative and fun, including a section about exam techniques for the students.”

Mauricio Tronca, Year 13

A level Chemistry Live – University of Warwick

“Chemistry students went on a trip to the University of Warwick to attend the A Level Chemistry Live talk. Speakers showed the different routes within the subject ranging from targeting cancer cells to how valuable simple chemistry is in case of an apocalypse. The talk on How to Poison someone whilst seeming strange, highlights the necessity for correct dosage and toxicology levels - an insight into a pharmaceutical degree. Also being able to meet ex students from Biddenham allowed the current students to learn about the University.”

Tasnim Ali, Year 13

A level Physics Live University of Birmingham

The trip to Birmingham University for an A-level Science Live Event was exciting, intriguing and engaging. There were some fantastic scientists giving lectures on physics topics that were based at higher than A level. One of the scientists was Dr Suzie Sheehy accelerator physicist who focuses on developing on new particle accelerators for future applications. Another scientist was Dr Jessica Wade, who is a physicist from Imperial College London. Her research is on looking at creating new electronic devices out of carbon based materials. Prof Jim Al-khalili was a nuclear



physicist who talked about the exciting field of quantum biology which is a new area of unfolding discovery. There were many more scientists including professors from the University of Oxford. I really learnt a lot and gained a good insight on higher level physics.”

Farhan Malik, Year 13

Sixth Form News

Speakers

We have had David Dein and Richard Porter in so far this year. David was the ex vice-chairman of Arsenal and was one of the founders of the premier league. Richard was a journalist and ran the BBC world service for a while before he became Head of Communications for an investment bank.

University of Northampton, Apprenticeship Show

In October we had the opportunity to take 160 sixth formers to the University and Apprenticeship show in Northampton.

This exciting and inspirational higher education fair gave students, who are beginning to make choices about their future, a real insight into what is on offer.

The event showcased a multitude of universities, apprenticeship providers and colleges within a large exhibition hall as well as campus tours of the University of Northampton's stunning new facilities with interactive departmental demonstrations.

Worldskills UK Live

In November twenty Year 12 students attended the Worldskills UK Live at the NEC, Birmingham.

They were inspired by an enormous range of jobs and career pathways on show. They were able to get 'hands on' and have a go as well as hearing from motivational speakers they had the opportunity to speak directly with hundreds of employers, colleges and training providers.

Sixth Form Open Evening

Our November Open Evening was well attended and applications for Sixth Form for next September are well under way .

CAREERS NEWS

At Biddenham School, we believe that each child's education forms the gateway to their career.



We are working hard to embed our careers programme across the curriculum and we hope that your child is enjoying the information and careers presentations that have been offered to them so far this year.

To help our students take ownership of their future and make informed Post 16 and post 18 choices, we have invested in a new careers platform, Unifrog.

Unifrog is currently available to all students in Years 10, 11 and Sixth Form, and soon every student in the school will have their own Unifrog account.

Unifrog's mission is to level the playing field when it comes to young people finding the best opportunities for themselves; they put having a positive social impact before anything else.

Unifrog pulls data from UCAS, the National Apprenticeships Service, The National Careers Service, The Guardian, HEPI, the Cabinet Office, the Office for National Statistics, the Commission for Employment and Skills, the Department for Business Innovation and Skills, Ofsted, every UK University, UK University alumni, every college at Oxford and Cambridge, and many more places. They keep all of their data up to date, for example, apprenticeship vacancies are updated every night.

Please feel free to log on to Unifrog with your child - there is a link in the Careers section of the school website. It is a great resource and feedback so far suggests that our students are enthusiastic about its usefulness.

'Feeding Britain's Future' (FBF) is a national programme which has been rolled out at Biddenham for the past three years, predominantly in the Sixth Form.



Sainsbury's, Kempston Manager Anthony Haskell, approached Biddenham about running the programme with our Year 12 students, after his involvement in a similar programme at his former store.

Anthony came in to speak to our Year 12 level 2 students, in November, when he completed a two hour workshop on 'CV writing' with them, through the FBF programme. This programme describes the opportunities within the food industry, the career opportunities, alongside every student developing a successful CV. Thank you to Anthony for his time, energy and efforts and to Sainsbury's for the continued offer of this programme across this academic year. We are looking to run another two workshops this academic year, through this link. Students who are interested in attending should email careers@mybiddenham.com

CAREERS NEWS

SSG are a Bedford based training provider who run programmes and qualifications that provide students with access to appropriate and high quality training.



Over the coming months, Biddenham School will be working in partnership with SSG, running a weekly post 16 choices programme for a group of Year 11 students. This programme has been specifically designed for us and will be active, dynamic and engaging. It will focus on developing communication and interaction skills along with other careers management strategies. The programme will form a pathway to Post 16 education and training which we hope will prove both interesting and beneficial to all those students involved.

The Army

We have joined alliances with the Milton Keynes based army and we have had two visits from them. They have presented to Year 9 and Year 11 students about what career opportunities the army can offer. They are looking to recruit and wanted to explain that any role from a code breaker to a nurse can be achieved through the army. They have excellent apprenticeship opportunities and they want our students to be made aware of them. The sessions were great with all questions being answered. A group of students that demonstrated an interest in the session were then taken to have more in depth questioning and specific information on becoming part of the army. We are also hoping to be a part of a residential with them this summer.

Apprenticeships

Vacancies will start to appear for Year 11 students during the forthcoming months - go to Unifrog or Gov.uk and search for 'apprenticeships' to see current vacancies. Both www.unifrog.com and www.amazingapprenticeships.com have some great information for both students and parents about apprenticeships.

Career Start

Career Start' is an intensive careers course currently being run in 8 secondary schools across Bedford Borough.

Made up of six sessions aiming to help year 10 students to gain a wider understanding of Post 16 career choices, it covers many areas including: skills and strengths, a breakdown of the different industries and roles included within them, behavioural skills needed in any job, and options available post year 11. Career Start focuses on giving students the information they need to make the best decisions for themselves after finishing Year 11.

Coming up next term.....

Year 10 students are going to be very busy - our aim is to give all Year 10 students experience of visiting a workplace or having an interaction with employers here at school. We have arranged opportunities with Sainsbury's, Champney's and the RAF and will keep you posted about dates and times in the forthcoming weeks.

Sport

Another Team GB International!

Well done to Ryan Bezer who is currently competing for Great Britain @UKrackleton in the Racketlon World Championships in Leipzig, Germany. Racketlon is a combination sport in which competitors play table tennis, badminton, squash, and tennis.



Rowing Initiative

On Wednesday 20th November British rowing came to take photos of our students for a new project Go Row Indoor initiative - with Biddenham students being used for online coaching resources to be used nationally.

Rugby champions.

The U15s girls attended a 7s rugby tournament. They had a slow start losing their first game but then picked themselves up and managed to win all the following games. They then passed through to the semi finals and won this convincingly. This then meant that they had to face the opposition from the first game. The girls came out strong and managed to win 35-5 with some amazing tries from Danae Smith Year 10 and some amazing tackling from Stefanie



Omorogbe Year 9.

They even bagged themselves a piece of silverware.

Round Up



BTEC RESIDENTIAL VISIT TO DERBY

Year 12 BTEC Sport students took part in a three day residential to Derby as part of their course.

The first day of the programme consisted of a cyclocross session with British Champion Tracey Fletcher, testing the stamina and determination of the students on a challenging and very muddy course, followed by a tour of Derby County Football Club. In the evening the students had a talk from ex professional rugby player Luke Sherriff, who played for Harlequins. He spoke about the impact of social media and nutrition on professional sports and an insight into what it takes at that level. The second day saw the students visit St George's Park, the home of the FAs national football centre. The students had the opportunity to use the gym to explore fitness testing using cutting edge technology and equipment. This was followed by a hydrotherapy session in the indoor pool to demonstrate the impact of cold and hot water treatment on muscle recovery. Every student had the opportunity to use the state of the art underwater treadmill to analyse their running technique and how it can be used in rehabilitation. Day three saw the students explore a different avenue of the sports industry with an indoor climbing session in a converted church.

Sport News

Fixtures

This term has seen fantastic levels of participation across all aspects of extra-curricular clubs from students trying something new for the first time to students honing in their skills in sports they enjoy. Keep this up as we move into a new term and calendar year which will also see a new extra-curricular timetable the first week back so keep an eye out to try something new.

This fantastic participation at extra curricular clubs has paid off with numerous teams entered at every competition which has led to some huge successes, with some highlights being; Year 8 table tennis team 4th in the county, U18 boys and girls dodgeball team county finalists (awaiting competition), victories and podium places at Years 7-9 swimming gala, Year 9 girls basketball team 2nd in the district, U15 girls rugby district champions, U16 boys badminton 2nd in the district.

DANAE SMITH TAKES HER TALENTS STATESIDE

Danae was invited to an initiative in October 2018 where she was part of the Football Associations drive to help young women access more football.

Danae in Year 10 has excelled in her leadership since September 2018. Danae enjoyed her time with three former Lionesses' Rachel Yankie, Faye White and Kelly Smith. Danae, and the other girls had a great time, and from this day of leadership she was invited, with three other students from Biddenham, to Loughborough for a three day training camp.

At this camp, she excelled and was presented, from



over 100 young ladies, with the inspiration award. This was chosen by the coaches running the camp and the Lionesses who were there on the day. So from the hundreds of thousands of girls who were originally invited, she was one of five who was then chosen to experience an all expenses trip to Endicott College in Boston, America. Danae literally had the time of her life.