



# Spring newsletter

What's been happening this term



**The Castle School rocked! It was a show to remember and one that touched the hearts of the audience. More photos inside!**

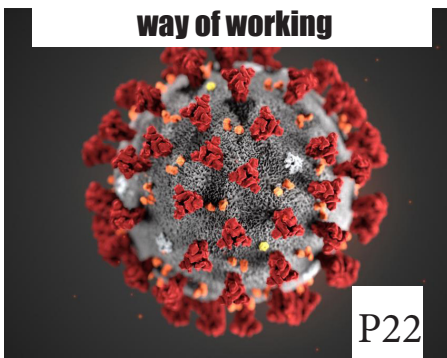
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**Goodbye to our wonderful Year 11s**



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**Coronaviru and our new way of working**



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**Ex-Sudent Jamie Edwards is making us proud!**



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**Photos from the Paris 2020 trip**



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# Our Mental Health Champions are trained and ready to go!



We are very proud to say our Mental Health Champions have completed their training with the SHARE team and were awarded their certificates today. They are looking forward to planning for children's mental health week on 3 February.

Here at The Castle School, we are committed to raising awareness of this important issue and we are looking for as many ways as possible to offer our students the help and support they need.

Children's Mental Health Week is run by the children's mental health charity Place2Be, to focus on the importance of looking after our emotional wellbeing from an early age.



THE NEXT GENERATION

# SCHOOL of ROCK

THE MUSICAL



Straight from the West End The Castle School performed the S award winning School of Rock to the community. The show was nearly 9 months in the making. Hundreds of hours of blocking, choreographing, composing and rehearsing. 110 Castle students were involved, 95 lighting cues, 115 mic cues, 105 cables, 500 programmes handed out and 1200 tickets sold. The set arrived from Southampton, scenery from Cardiff and lighting and sound was shipped in too. To stage a production of this scale is an epic feat. The Castle School didn't just perform The School of Rock they brought the house down.

After the rest of the school had gone home for their tea The School of Rock cast were grafting into the night. In the latter weeks the company of 11-16 year olds were rehearsing until 8pm each night of the week. The tireless energy and commitment was hard to rival. It is in these moments when the normal routines of the school grind to a halt, that the magic is made and the forever memories are imprinted in their hearts.

And then Castle shared the magic with the audience and invited them into the theatrical world. The cast felt the fireworks fly when the audience were brought to their feet to give standing ovations to their stars. The performers taught the audience what it is to follow your heart, to pursue your dreams and 'stick it' to anyone who tries to stop you. What a powerful and important message in today's age leaving children inspired and empowered.

It is very difficult to begin to mention individuals because where does one stop? However some individuals stole the hearts of the audience and it would be a crime not to acknowledge their outstanding contributions.

Dewey Finn's passionate love of music leaves the children in awe; changed by his teaching. Dewey Finn is the heart of School of Rock but he is also the bones and the meat and the voice. To ask a 15 year old boy to walk on to the stage at 7pm and blaze and rock and roll for 2 and a half hours straight and drive the show to its climax cannot be underestimated. Dan Holley was Castle School's very own legend. He embraced this huge challenge humbly, role modelling to the school that huge talent takes work, time and passion. Never before has a production hinged so critically on one individual. His stoic focus should be inspiration to everyone.



"I can't remember the last time I've seen such a wonderful performance. I went to see 'Fame' at the Bristol Hippodrome and your show knocked spots off of that!!! We all came away on such a high."

G Fry

There was not a dry eye in the audience when Emma Mitchell, as Rosalie Mullins, began to sing. Her soprano voice soaring across the heads of the audience like an angel. You could hear the collective gasp in the audience when Emma powered to the chorus and asked 'Where's the magic of the moments only rock could ever capture?' What a star Castle has in its midst!

Charlie Hedger's superb guitar solos left the audience aghast. In a very short time Charlie had gone from novice to an inspirational rock God – what a feat for a Year 9 student! Adam Wood kept the pit band and No Vacancy in perfect rhythm – the lynch pin that holds the cast and band together. Adam showed incredible professionalism and maturity beyond his years.

The show was Castle's biggest yet and often schools don't attempt productions of this scale. However the time and commitment paid off and the audience left feeling touched by the heart felt performances of the children. The cast were inspired by the message at the heart of School of Rock – 'We are The School of Rock – we can do anything.' So to finish... 'We are The Castle School – we can do anything.'



'Wow! What a triumph! We were blown away by the whole performance. The prowess shown by all the actors, in ALL fields, acting, singing & musical was at such a high level'

L Hedges

ARE YOU AGED 12-16?  
 WANT TO LEARN HOW TO COOK?



Jessica Mitchell, age 14, FutureChef 2019 Winner and her winning dishes

Develop a Life Skill  
 with Professional Chef  
 National Competition

GET INVOLVED  
 SIGN UP

@SBFutureChef futurechef.uk.net



We are thrilled to say that Beth Wharton in Year 9 has won the local heat of the Springboards FutureChef Competition which was held on Wednesday night. It was for students aged 12-16. She will now be entered into the regional final against students from schools in Wiltshire to Cornwall. The judges said that her dessert could be served in restaurants! What a talented girl; well done Beth!

Springboard's FutureChef helps young people aged 12-16 to learn to cook. It inspires them to explore food and cooking as a life skill by developing their culinary talent and informing them about entry routes into the hospitality industry.

# MARK DE LISSER

## VOCAL WORKSHOP & CONCERT

We were delighted to welcome Mark De-Lisser and colleagues at The Castle School to deliver the gifted and talented program this year. Mark is a vocal coach, choral director, arranger and author who has been working in the music industry for over 18 years. He was recently the vocal coach to the stars for the Children in Need programme 'Got it Covered' and lead the choir in the BBC's acclaimed 'Our Dementia Choir' with the Line of Duty's Vicky McClure.

Mark worked with 80 of our choir for a 90 minute workshop; what a fantastic opportunity! We were delighted to host this workshop.



# PARIS

## 2020



Congratulations to the 35 students who went on this year's Paris trip. From the Stade de France to the Louvre museum, we received comments about the fantastic behaviour, engagement and enthusiasm of all on the trip. Madame Hopkins and the team hope that you all made some wonderful memories!



# The Castle School students see their new dining hall being built



Photo credits: Leo Cavill



Photo credits: Leo Cavill

**On Monday 13 January, thirty Year 7 students were given a tour by regional builders, CG Fry & Son, to see the progress of their new dining hall.**

They were joined by representatives from the project management firm, Futures for Somerset and Taunton-based architectural practice, Inspired Partnerships, who designed the new hall.

The new dining hall, which began construction at the end of 2019, will accommodate more students

for seated meals, providing an enhanced dining experience.

The project also includes the extension and modernisation of kitchen facilities to meet the increasing demand for student meals and snacks.

This significant project has been made possible through a successful capital funding bid from the Government.

Mike Pinney, Contracting Director for CG Fry & Son Contracting, said: "It was great to welcome the students of The Castle School to the site and show them their brand-new dining hall being built.

"Having completed the new Design and Technology block for the school last year we are pleased to be back at the school, improving the facilities for both the students and staff."

The new dining hall is located at the front of the school adjoining the main building. Enabling works began

in the summer holidays last year, stripping out the old kitchen, refurbishing and installing the new kitchen to avoid any disruption during school term time.

The Castle School said "We are delighted to have been successful in our bid for capital funding. The team is making excellent progress on our new dining hall. This project will add a spacious, modern, purpose-built dining space to the school which all of the students at The Castle School can benefit from."





# County Champs

## U13 Girls badminton finals

Well done to both the Under 13 Boys and Girls badminton teams competing in the Somerset Finals. Well done to the boys for coming 3rd and congratulations to the girls who were crowned county champions and progress through to the regionals. Excellent work and thanks to their superb coaches, Mr Roberts and Mr Butler.

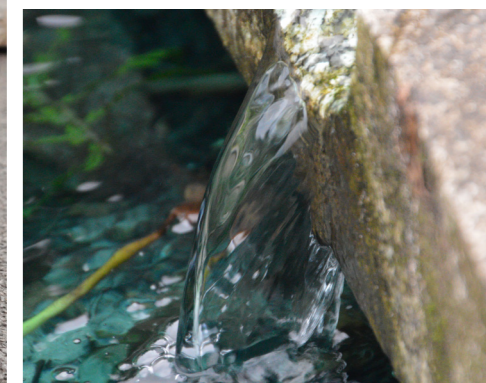
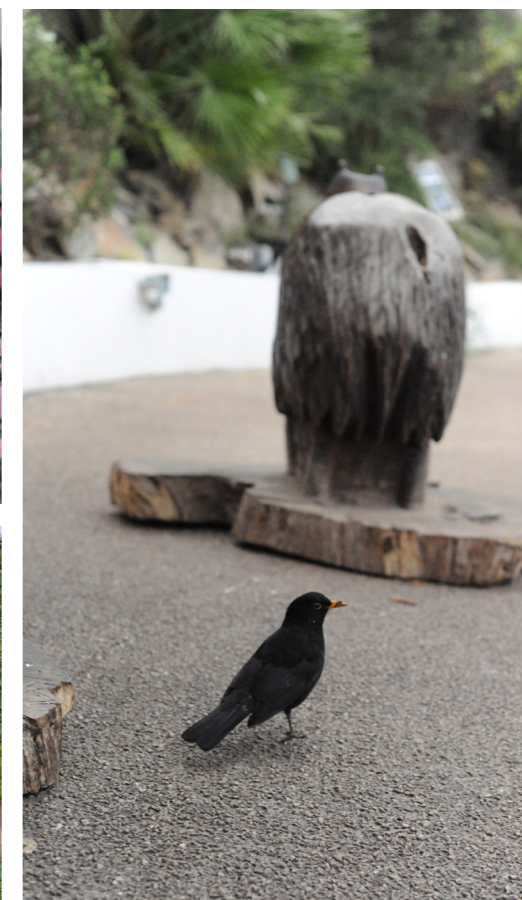


# Eden Project - Photography and Fine Art

We started early in the morning as we needed as much time at the Eden project as we could get, around 10 miles East of St.Austell it takes around 2 hours to get there from The Castle School. As we got there we walked over a massive bridge to get to the other side of the old quarry, converted to one of the UK's biggest tourist attractions. The first biome I went into was the Mediterranean biome, where you had many colourful plants and little birds flying around above your head.

As a photography student, I was to look out for photos with Patterns, Man vs Nature, Selective Focus and a layered photo of many photos from one perspective. Next I went into the Tropical biome, and looked up at the platform at the top of the biome and decided to go up there and get an overview of the whole biome and the canopy of trees. I went to have a look at the waterfall next and had an amazing opportunity to do some long exposures that looked amazing with the white waters. The water crashed down onto the rocks below, Before I knew it, it was the end of the day and we had to go, but overall it was very good and I would take the time to go again, and would recommend anyone to go if you are considering it.

Leo Cavill - Student Reporter and Photographer



# Hannah Taunton included on British Athletics' Paralympic World Class Programme

**HANNAH Taunton has taken her place alongside some of Team GB's top talents, in British Athletics' Paralympic World Class Programme (WCP) for 2020.**

British Athletics announced on Monday that 46 athletes had been offered membership to the programme, with the 28-year-old runner from Taunton among them.

Hannah Cockroft, Jonnie Peacock and David Weir - all gold medallists at the London 2012 and/or Rio 2016 Paralympic Games - are among those to feature.

Membership onto the WCP for 2020 is based upon an athletes' potential to win a medal at Tokyo 2020 or Paris 2024.

There are two levels of membership - 'Paralympic Podium' and 'Paralympic Podium Potential' - with Taunton among 16 athletes in the latter group.

This follows her recent gradation from the British Athletics Futures Academy Programme, and her senior international debut in the T20 1500m at the World Para Athletics Championships in Dubai last November.

Hannah's mum Gill told the County Gazette: "Hannah was thrilled and excited to be worthy of such an award and, in consultation with her coach Charlotte Fisher, has accepted it.

"This means that British Athletics recognizes Hannah's potential to win a medal, in the 1500m T20 category, at the Paralympic Games be it Tokyo 2020 and/or Paris 2024.

"In order to do this she must show continued improvement in her performances in the 1500m.

"The funding offered will enable her to participate in events further afield, and to buy kit.

"Hannah will also continue to receive nutrition and lifestyle advice in order to facilitate her potential success.

"We, as parents, are proud of Hannah's dedication and commitment to a sport she is so passionate about.

"We are grateful, not only for the excellent coaching she receives from Taunton AC, but to her friends and fellow runners at TAC, Running Forever Running Club and local Parkruns for their friendship and support."



It's our very own ex-Castler, Jamie Edwards! Jamie is one of the faces representing Sports Relief this year. He is represented by a top diverse modelling agency now, and does a few castings in between his full time wheelchair racing training!

Check out our Twitter feed to watch Jamie training in a short video @WeirArcher Academy. They train and inspire a younger generation. Jamie moved to Surrey 18 months ago to focus full time on his racing.

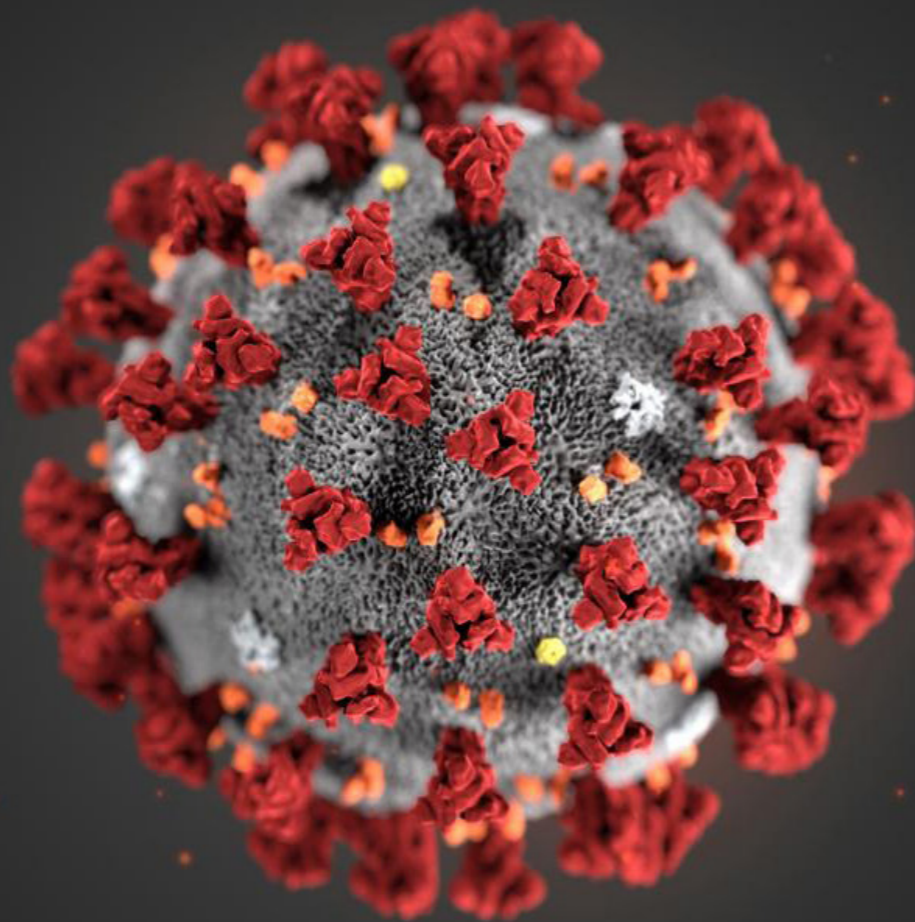
Go Jamie! We are all very proud of you! Watch this space!

# Our Year 11s' last day

Good  
bye &  
Good  
Luck!



# Coronavirus



As Lenin said: "There are decades where nothing happens, and there are weeks where decades happen." Historians especially appreciate this but we are living it right now.

The arrival of the Coronavirus is definitely something that none of us could've anticipated or prepared for and yet, we are delighted to say everyone at The Castle School has risen to the challenges we have faced and continue to face. We have been overwhelmed by the support and positive feedback from parents/carers and together, our students/your children are successfully adapting and continuing with their education.

One of the biggest challenges for children during the school closure is the lack of routine. That's why we have taken the decision to ask all students to follow their normal timetables on Show My Homework, whether they are in school or at home. Teachers are online so that they can support your child's learning. We have checked that every child can do this and where they cannot, we have made alternative arrangements. We are learning all the time, so please keep talking to us about what works and what doesn't work so we can continue to make this process as productive as possible.

Ensuring that children maintain a routine throughout the coming weeks and months will be vital but Sam Cartwright-Hatton, Professor of Clinical Child Psychology at the University of Sussex, also stresses the importance of flexibility and says parents should avoid an overly top-down approach to planning.

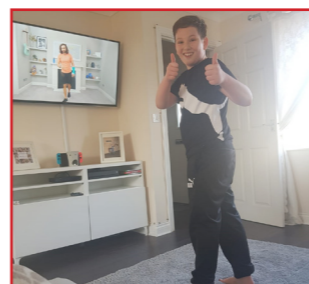
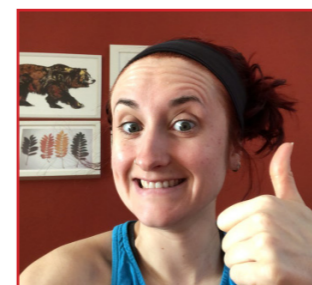
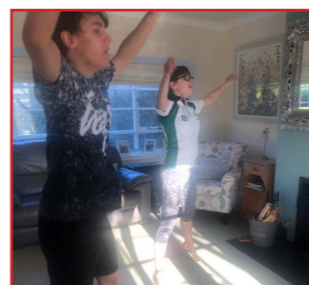
**We have lent all our safety specs to MPH. It is nice to be able to help our NHS workers.**

## Exercise and activity

Everyone knows that exercise improves physical health. But perhaps what is less known is the impact it can have on our mental health - this is especially true for children. We believe it is important for our children to have the opportunity to spend time outside, whether that's going for a walk or something as simple as playing in the garden. Children and young people need to do two types of physical activity each week in order to stay healthy, according to official NHS guidance. This includes aerobic exercise, such as running, as well as exercises to strengthen their muscles and bones.

"Aim for an average of at least 60 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity a day across the week," the advice states. "Take part in a variety of types and intensities of physical activity across the week to develop movement skills, muscles and bones." JustDance videos on YouTube are also fun exercise for children (and adults!).

On 1 April, we set homework for the whole school to join Joe Wicks' online PE lesson. There were over 500,000 people joining the live workout so it's not surprising that we didn't get a shout out! Well done to everyone who took part. We had some fantastic videos and photos sent in!



## Supporting the NHS

We have been privileged to be able to help families of NHS workers by staying open for their children. We've also donated our Safety Specs from Science to support workers in the hospital. It is nothing compared with what our wonderful NHS workers and emergency services personnel have to do I know, but the staff at The Castle have volunteered to work during the Easter holidays to look after their children so they can keep working and not worry about their families.

## Comments from NHS workers

'Thanks for all of your ongoing support during this time, it makes my life much easier knowing that I can go to work and not worry about the children.'

'I am a nurse at MPH, however my son is in year 11 and will not require child care. Thank you for all your input over the last few years and amazing support/communication during this difficult time.'

Please also keep an eye on our social media because we will add regular posts on mental health and well-being as well as any important updates. I do need to add that NO children have to do any school work during the holidays. Teachers may have given children extensions to deadlines to help them but no work is being set. We know everyone needs a break sometime.

Keep safe!

## Feedback

Thank you for your feedback. As we have said in our weekly letters, we have lots to do yet to make it right for every child and there has been some really helpful feedback.

PLEASE: If your child or you are finding the online work stressful,

a. Stop whatever they are doing. Nothing is so important it can't wait.

b. Reassure your child that their best is good enough

c. Let us know this is happening and what we can do to help.

d. Until we have got back to you, please feel free to stop all online work and get your child reading instead.

On the other hand, lots of positives as well:

'Can I just say a massive thank you to all the staff on what was a hugely challenging day for everyone. My son has been able to access all work easily and also talk to any of the teachers when needed. We especially liked the fact that his tutor was there for a chat during "registration!" Hoping you all stay safe, particularly those on site to support students who can't be at home.'

'Thank you so much for all the support being given during these challenging times. Communication prior to school closing and since closing has been outstanding.'



**A** team of Year 8 girls Skye, Lorelei, Abigail and Ella won through to the National Finals of CyberFirst on 15th and 16th March.

The exciting final took place in Cardiff. On Saturday the team was treated to a tour of the Royal Mint and then in the evening a banquet in Cardiff Castle. At the castle gates we were greeted by a Royal Welsh soldier and regimental goat who led us in. Inside the castle the drinks reception included entertainment again from the Royal Welsh soldiers who performed a drumming routine with special effects. At the ending of meal we were also treated to talk about the history of the castle and found that some very important people had dined in the room before.

On Monday the team had to complete on a long day of challenges as part of the competition. The mission was to solve cyber puzzles to prevent hackers from taking over the Olympics. They were a fabulous team who worked hard all day showing real commitment and teamwork to each other as well as exemplary knowledge, skills and attitudes. It was exciting for the teachers and spectators watching the leaderboard go up and down. When the final scores were delivered by Chris Ensor from the NCSC and Matt Warman MP, Minister of Digital Infrastructure, we found out that Castle students had been awarded 4th place, such a fantastic achievement. The team has also been invited to visit Number 10 Downing Street later in the year. The girls had a brilliant couple of days and it was a positive experience for us all.

The competition shows it is vital for the future of computing education and cyber security especially that all sectors and groups are represented in digital development. The competition actively encouraged girls to engage in computing activities. As a Regional Computing Hub, The Castle School is committed to this and our wonderful girls exemplify everything about the school, its ethos and its exceptional standard.



# News from the PE Department

The beginning of 2020 saw a very successful start to Physical Education and Extra-Curricular Sport at The Castle School, with a great number of students participating in clubs, fixtures and training sessions, making the most of the term which has been greatly affected by the weather. Congratulations to everybody who has taken part in any of the PE department's enrichment programme so far this year.

The spring term traditionally consists of netball and football both of which were very well represented across all year groups. It was fantastic to see both Year 7 girls and boys participating in football and netball training sessions and fixtures for the first time at secondary school, showing great potential for future years to come. Special mentions for outstanding performances go to the Year 10 boys who beat Beechen Cliff 3-1 to progress through to the county cup semi-final.



It has been another successful term for netball. The participation across all 5 years at practice sessions, house sport and school fixtures has been exceptional. This term also saw the successful introduction of social netball with lots of girls trying the sport for the first time outside of lessons. Overall there were some outstanding results in netball with the Year 7 team and the Year 8 team finishing second in the area competitions and therefore qualifying for the Somerset Games' finals. The Year 9 and 10 teams both finished the season unbeaten, winning their local area tournaments and qualifying for the Somerset Games' finals, that will hopefully be rearranged when school returns.



Boys' and girls' football clubs have been two of the most popular clubs attended during the term with over 90 key-stage 3 boys participating in training on a single night, and over 80 girls participating on a Friday after school. A great effort from the Year 7 girls' football team who progressed through into the county cup semi-final, as well as the under 16 girls' football team who made it through to the quarter-final. The Year 8 boys' football team also led their own hunt for silverware progressing through two rounds of the county cup by winning both games on penalties.



On to badminton. The students' continued commitment to the Monday evening badminton club has been outstanding. We would like to thank Mr Roberts and Mr Butler for their continued support in manging school badminton fixtures and training sessions. It was a successful season for badminton, the key-stage 3 boys' team finished third in the county and the key-stage 3 girls' team won the county championship and finished fourth in regionals, an excellent achievement. The key-stage 4 girls' team finished third in the county with the key-stage 4 team finishing fourth as well as being crowned division 2 local area champions.



House badminton was also a really enjoyable competition seeing Caernarvon House crowned the winners.

The under 16 boys' basketball team played their first fixture of the year against Heathfield. The boys showed great resilience coming back from 26-17 down to win the game 42-34. A standout performance from Rafael Tavares saw him claim man of the match for scoring over 20 individual points.

Cricket continues to grow at The Castle School with 3 morning sessions running from 7:45am for different teams throughout the term. This year's competitions saw the under 13 boys', under 15 girls' and under 15 boys' indoor teams progress through two knockout rounds to reach the county finals held at Somerset County Cricket Club. Unfortunately, the competition has now been abandoned for this year, but it was a great effort from all the students who represented the school to progress so far in the tournament. Additionally, well done to the boys and girls who took part in the MCC cricket foundation at the King's College HUB, a scheme run by Mr Jones and former students Keith Parsons and Rob Woodman.

A massive individual congratulations to William Dunstan who recently won a bronze medal at the south west regional finals for fencing! William has also won a gold and silver medal in national competitions this year. All of this was ahead of a trip to Barcelona with the England fencing team. Well done William!



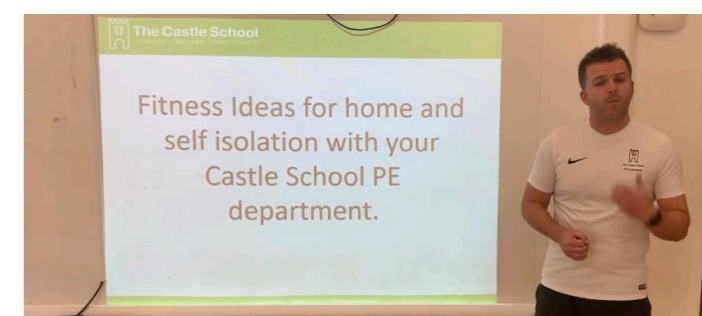
Boxing! Kingston Newstead and Dylan Macalino represented Blue Flames Boxing Club in local competitions this term. Both Kingston and Dylan won their recent fights, at the Wellsprings Centre and Barnstaple respectively. Former student, Pawel Augustynik, was crowned the new southern area light heavyweight champion, the first of many titles we are sure.



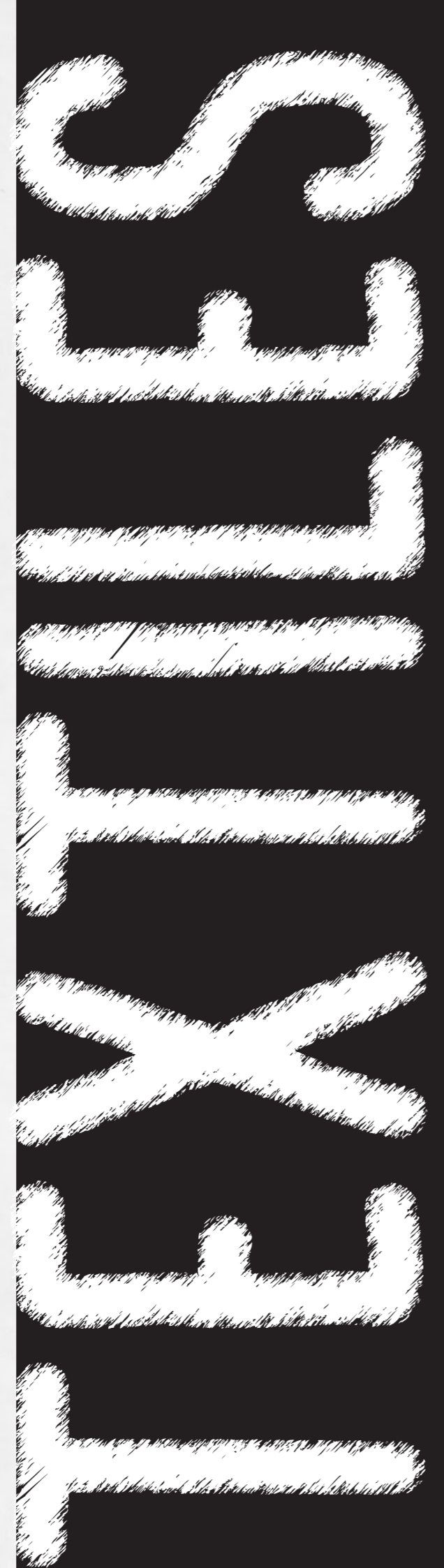
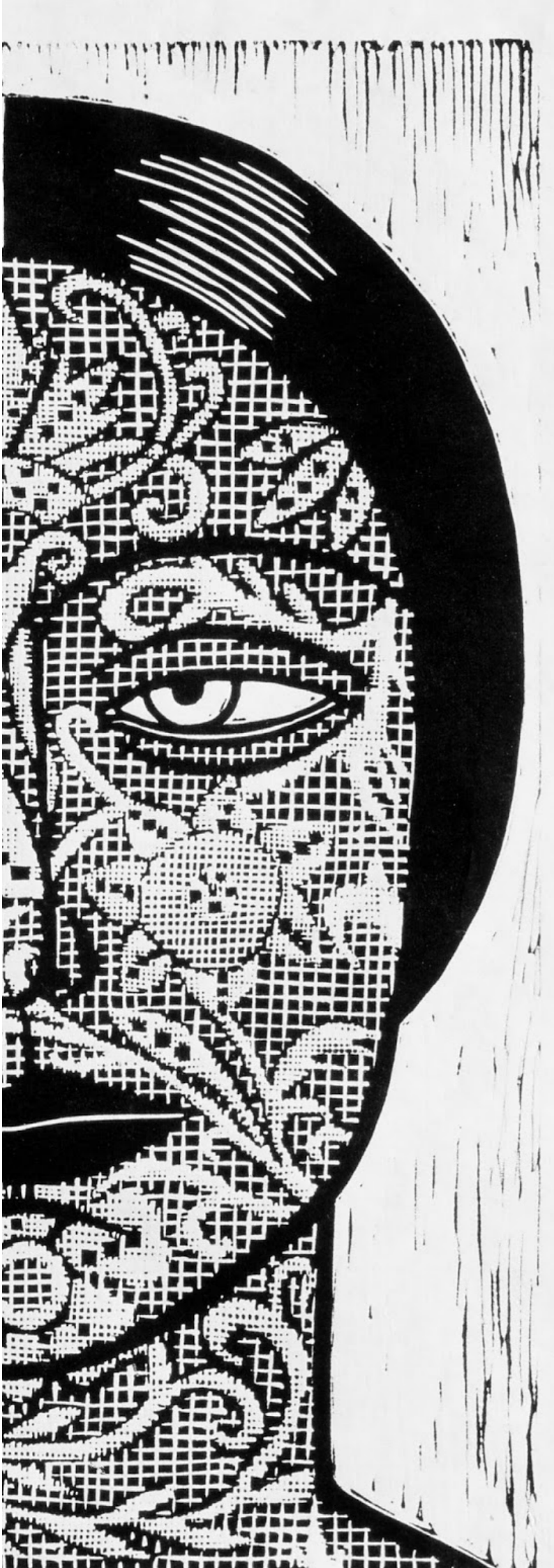
The spring term also saw the introduction of population football. Caernarvon, Lancaster and Balmoral Houses selected a team from each year group to play against a select XI from Buckingham, Windsor and Sandringham Houses. All of the games showcased the great standard of football we have at The Castle School across all year groups.

The annual swimming gala was once again a great success. Students from key-stage 3 competed in a range of different events at Taunton swimming pool. Congratulations to Balmoral House who finished overall winners of the gala, finishing just one point ahead of Lancaster House!

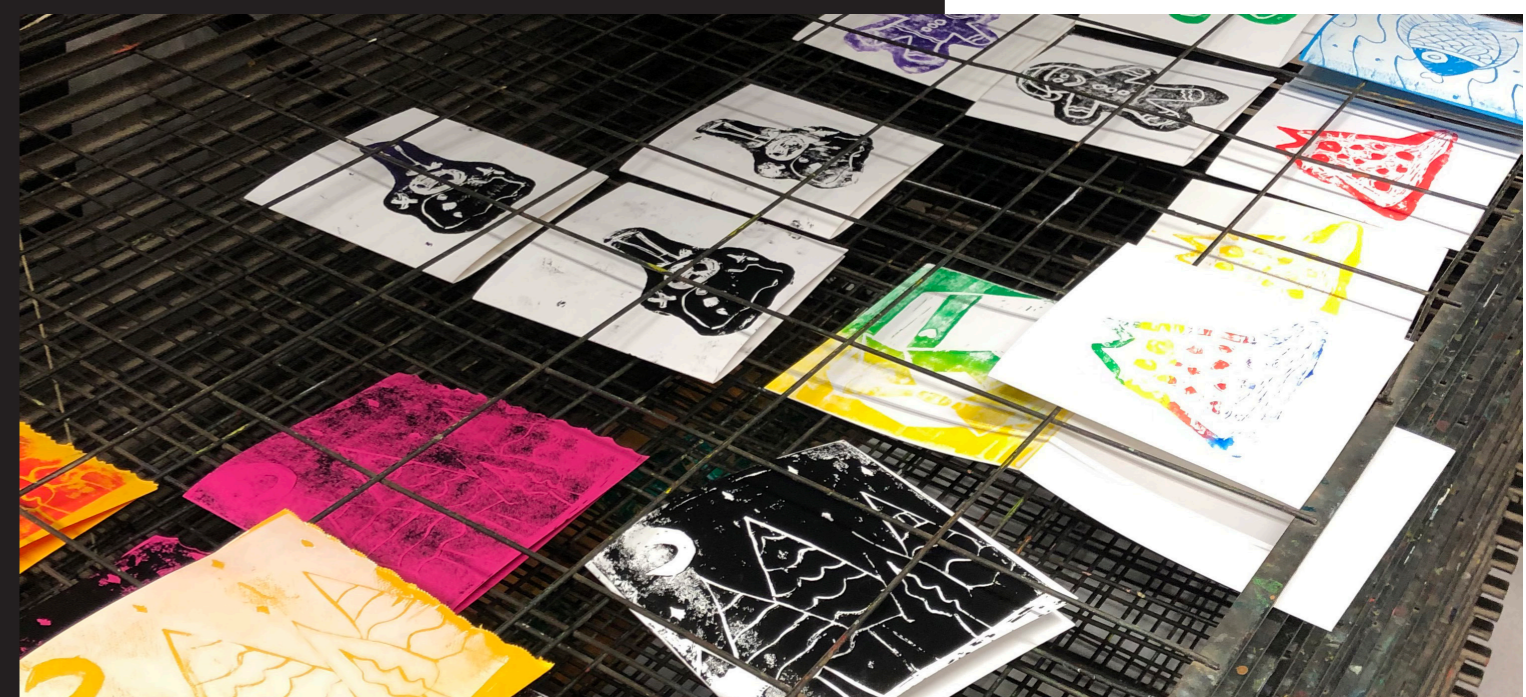
During the national school closure, The Castle School PE Department has been posting daily exercise videos and sporting challenges that students can try at home. Please stay up to date on twitter or Instagram by following @Castle\_PE.



Finally, we would like to say a massive goodbye to the Year 11 school leavers. Thank you for your outstanding commitment to school and House sport over the last 5 years. It has been an absolute pleasure to teach you!! We wish you the best of luck in your next adventures in life, lots of love The Castle PE Department.



Students from Years 9 & 10 had the opportunity to work at BTC college (Taunton campus) in their amazing work room using the sewing machines and then their print room to create both mono and lino cut prints, with some amazing outcomes!



# Other news

Congratulations to Trinity Davey who has been accepted by the National Youth Music Theatre to take part in the production of Imaginary.

Trinity has to raise £1205 which pays for her course fees, food and accommodation during the residential rehearsal week, as well as additional rehearsals and the performances.

All the companies and organisations that are able to offer sponsorship will be mentioned in the production programme. Please contact the school if you would like to sponsor Trinity.

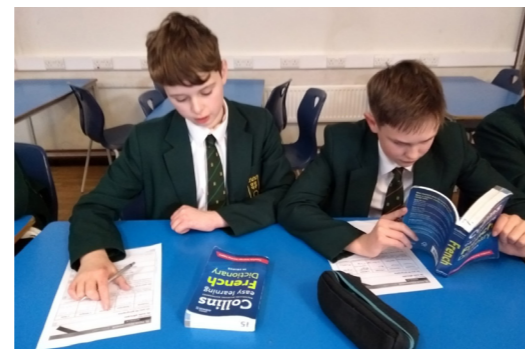
I am very excited to have been offered this exceptional opportunity out of the thousands of children who auditioned across the UK.



Year 9 Philosophy and Ethics First GCSE students were visited on 3 March by Hani, a refugee from Syria who has settled here in England with the help of a faith based charity in Devon. He told us his story of how, after his house was bombed, he and his family fled from Syria into Jordan - he was then chosen to come to Britain by the Charity and said he has been welcomed into the community with open arms, the best thing he says about living here is that everyone is treated equally no matter where you come from or how much money you have.

Hani then entertained us with his drum, before there was time for a photo call.

We were delighted to receive a visit from two visitors from the Alliance Française on 3 March at The Castle School. Each group studied a song by a French/Algerian singer before participating in activities geared towards creating their own simple song lyrics in French. Both groups did incredibly well participating in these challenging sessions which were conducted almost entirely in French. A special mention must go to the Year 8 boys who embraced the challenge from the very beginning! Bravo!



Congratulations to William Dunstan who has managed to win a bronze medal at the South West Regional Fencing Competition. He won a gold medal in Truro and a silver in Manchester in March. The gold and silver are national competitions. William is also part of the England team.

# 8 WAYS TO COPE WITH CHANGE

by @inner\_drive | [www.innerdrive.co.uk](http://www.innerdrive.co.uk)

- 1 GET INFORMATION**  
Uncertainty and ambiguity causes stress
- 2 DIP YOUR TOE IN THE WATER**  
Get a taster of what you are about to do
- 3 ASK FOR HELP**  
Who can you turn to for support and advice?
- 4 BE PATIENT**  
It takes time to adapt
- 5 BELIEVE IN YOURSELF**  
Know that you can develop skills needed to adapt
- 6 TEST YOURSELF**  
Stepping slightly out of your comfort zone helps you learn and improve
- 7 KEEP A SENSE OF PERSPECTIVE**  
Know what's important and what really matters
- 8 REMEMBER YOUR GOAL**  
Seeing the bigger picture will boost motivation





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