

From the Headteacher

We hope you enjoy exploring the highlights of academic year 2024-25, including the range of trips, events, and student achievements. As a school, we take great pride in the breadth of opportunities we offer our students. This year alone, we've been able to run over 245 clubs as part of our enrichment programme, some of which are featured in this magazine. Over 60% of students took part in at least one enrichment activity every week from September to July. During our six enrichment days, students have experienced; &Juliet at the Bristol Hippodrome, Weymouth Aquarium, Bristol Places of Worship, Chepstow Castle, Bristol Aerospace, Art Museums and Galleries in Bristol, Cardiff and Exeter, the Eden Project, Pinkery and Exmoor as part of The Castle Challenge, Shepton Mallet Prison, Wimbleball Lake and the University of Bath.

There have also been a wide range of trips and activities including: Pinkery Residentials, Somerset vs Surrey cricket at the County Ground, Blood Brothers in Weston-super-Mare, BTEC Sport visit to Crossfit Theta Wellington, Year 10 GCSE Geography visits to Bristol and Lyme Regis, the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford for Year 11 Art and Textiles, Never Let Me Go theatre trip to The Bristol Old Vic, Swan Lake Plymouth, Futurechef at Bridgwater & Taunton College, ice-skating at Clarks Village, Cologne MFL, Year 11 ten pin bowling, New York Performing Arts, Heroes & Superheroes musical concert Exeter, Year 9 and 10 Tacchi Morris Spring Forward Dance Platform, Glastonbury Abbey for Year 11 GCSE History, Year 10 Buddhist Studies Conference at the University of Bristol, Dance workshop at The Space, Courchevel skiing, Iceland Geography, Alice at Exeter Northcott Theatre, Year 10 taster days at Bridgwater & Taunton College and Richard Huish College, Southampton University visit for Mandarin students, China trip to Shanghai, Ten Tors and Duke of Edinburgh expeditions. Thank you to our wonderful staff who enable these activities to happen, particularly for those trips and visits that take place outside of the school hours.

In the Food and Nutrition faculty we were lucky enough to have some visiting chefs in to inspire students. The Royal Navy Catering Team showed Year 9 how to make a pasta dish and sticky toffee pudding, while Manveena from the Guddi and Gikki Indian restaurant showed Year 10s how to make an authentic curry and chapatis. Well done to the students who represented The Castle School in these sessions. Earlier in the year we saw our Year 10 Food students compete in the Futurechef Competition. In lesson time, all students were asked to make their own savoury dish with and the winners representing the school at Bridgwater & Taunton College.

The Arts Faculty, along with all the trips they offer, have been hugely busy with some wonderful events over the course of the year. This included the Year 7 Saxophone project, Gig on a lorry, House Dance (with Windsor the victors), Dance workshops (Spring Forward @Tacchi Morris, CAT Outreach Workshops, Merge Dance Company Workshop, The Space Workshop), The Castle Young Musician event, the Christmas Concert, the end of autumn term 'Variety show' for students, workshops and then an evening performance from Afriquoi - a project supported by the Octagon Music Hub. Year 7s and 8s also took part in Gamelan Workshops with ActionTrack, part of our universal offer in Performing Arts. As always, the Community Concert was a sell out with over 400 singers and instrumentalists from The Castle School and our local primary schools celebrating our relationship through music. We hosted The Gig, with bands performing classic hits much to the delight of the audience. We held our annual Summer Showcase, enjoying musical performances from our students, staff stalls with homemade cakes and fairground rides.

There were some significant sporting achievements this year too. This year has been another successful year in sport; we have had 84% of students take part in some form of enrichment without including sports week. Clubs

were very well attended and in the last year we have seen new clubs such as cheerleading start up. In the autumn term we had success in hockey with Years 7, 9, 10 and 11 being crowned area champions and Year 8 coming runners-up. A Year 7 and 8 mixed team won the County Cup for hockey. Moving into spring we had great success in netball with all five years winning the District Cup! The Year 10 girls won the County Cup tier two competition which included opposition from both state and private schools. In football Years 7, 9 and 11 won the District Cup and the Year 11s won the double being crowned county champions. We had success in badminton with the Key Stage 4 girls' team being county champions and the boys coming runners-up. In the summer term we had success in the softball County Cup, Year 7 winning their competition and the Year 8 boys finishing runners-up in theirs. We continue to be successful in rounders with many teams winning the District Cups. We also had lots of students perform well in sports outside of school in events such as equestrian, fencing, cross country, athletics, biathlon, tennis and trampolining. We will also be adding lots of new names onto the honours board for county, regional or international representation. As well as lots of success in school sport, we have arranged trips to watch Bristol City and Somerset County Cricket Club.

Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) students have visited Paris, Madrid and Germany this year. We have had another successful year with the Mandarin Excellence Programme (MEP), which moves into its fourth year from September. Eleven students took part in a two-week study trip to Shanghai and we also hosted Chinese students in school.

Maintaining our strong links, staff from Richard Huish College have given assemblies for Year 9 and 10 MFL students. Also, several of our Year 11 students visited Richard Huish College to take part in an A Level German lesson. We enjoyed a theatre performance in German by the Onatti theatre company for students in Years 8 to 11.

In the Computing Department Year 8 students

took part in the CyberFirst Girls competition, a national initiative led by the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC).

Work experience has been a huge success and we will build on our experiences this year for the future to ensure that offer is valuable and enriching. If you are able to accommodate our students or know of employers who could accommodate our students next year, please do contact the school.

In June, Year 11 left us after a wonderful prom. They have been such a brilliant year group, not only in Year 11 but during their five years with us. It is such a privilege to see them grow from children to the young adults they are and to have the chance to celebrate their time here. We wish them well and will welcome them back for their Presentation Evening in November 2025. Congratulations to Lancaster for winning the House Trophy for the fifth year running, celebrating their victory by spending three lessons off timetable having fun on the fairground rides as a recognition of their efforts.

Thank you to colleagues who work at The Castle School, but also to parents, carers, Governors, Trustees and organisations in the community that work with us during the year. Finally a huge thank you to Mr Wordsworth for stepping in as Head of School for much of the academic year, whilst I was supporting another school. I feel very lucky to work with such talented leaders. I hope you enjoy reading the content in this magazine, without your support and the hard work of my colleagues many of these opportunities could not be made available.

James Lamb Headteacher





GCSE Results Day 2025

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Students celebrate fantastic results!







Our 2025 leavers celebrated another year of excellent results for the school.

Very well done to the following students who achieved at least eight grades at 7 to 9: Giulia, Molly, Emily, Naomi, Rosie, David, Daniel, Hanno, Reba, Max, Isabella, Holly, Ben, Jacob, Tristan, James, Erin, Gabriele, Martha, Maria, Daphne and Tom.

We also achieved significant progress across the year group compared with the national average.

For some students, even though their attainment was not as high, their results represent outstanding achievement and progress, and we are proud of every single one of them.











This year we embarked on our fifteenth visit to Courchevel in the French Alps.

We set off after school at the end of the spring term and began our journey towards the Alps. We arrived in resort on Saturday afternoon, where students checked into the lovely Hotel Les Chalets (Bride Les Bains) and collected their ski equipment in preparation for six days skiing in The Three Valleys.

Throughout the week the weather was exceptional for spring skiing, the mountains had fresh snow from days prior, and we were lucky enough to ski six bluebird days full of sunshine.

We were fortunate to have four incredible instructors, who have all have taught Castle pupils in consecutive years, one of them for fourteen years running! The students, staff and instructors loved every moment on the mountain demonstrating their skills, tricks, jumps and falls.



The days were always full-on with skiing, but we ensured that the nights were also fun and entertaining.

The students enjoyed the swimming pool at Courchevel, which included slides and jumps, where Mrs Curno created another Castle gala. We had our usual crepe night, the epic Easter egg hunt on the green outside the hotel, we watched Champions League football and on the final night we sang away in the hotel with some karaoke!

We say it most years, but this group was one of the best we have taken! They were fun, supported each other and were true a credit to us staff and the school.

Massive thanks to the staff who went on the trip for all their hard work: Mr Clapp, Mrs Curno, Mrs James, Mr George and Miss Hartwell.

The good news is that ski trip 2026 is already booked, with a very limited number of places still remaining!

Gourchevel 2025













Ten Tors Challenge

A Triumph of Endurance and Teamwork!

Over months of intensive training, and at the final event, our school's adventurous spirit was on full display as our dedicated teams participated in the renowned Ten Tors Challenge.

Held annually on Dartmoor, the event tests the physical and mental endurance of young people, pushing them to navigate the rugged terrain and unpredictable weather conditions of the moor.

What is the Ten Tors Challenge?

The Ten Tors Challenge is a prestigious event organised by the British Army, where teams of six teenagers trek across Dartmoor, covering distances of 35, 45, or 55 miles over two days. Each team must navigate to ten specified tors (rocky hills or peaks) using only their mapreading skills and teamwork, carrying all their equipment, water and supplies with them.

Training on Dartmoor

Preparation for the Ten Tors Challenge has been no small feat and our teams dedicated months to rigorous training on Dartmoor. These training sessions were crucial in building the skills and resilience needed to tackle the challenge.

During weekends, our teams ventured into Dartmoor to familiarise themselves with the terrain and practice navigation. They learned to read maps accurately, use compasses effectively, and develop strategies for dealing with the moor's unpredictable weather. We wild camped on Dartmoor after a long day walk. Training hikes varied in length and difficulty, gradually increasing to simulate the conditions of the actual event.

The training also emphasised teamwork and communication. Our students learned to support each other, share responsibilities, and make collective decisions under pressure. These experiences not only prepared them physically but also forged strong bonds and a sense of camaraderie that proved invaluable during the challenge.



THE EVENT

Day 1: Setting Off - an early morning!

The staff and adult volunteers woke up at 4am to cook a fried breakfast for the students so they were fuelled ready for a long day. At 5am, the traditional music of "The Chariots of Fire" was set off around the Army base to wake any students not already up to begin their preparations. After a good breakfast we set off for the start line at 6am with spirits high. We watched a parachute display by the Red Devils parachute team. Then, Chief of General Staff (The Head of the Army) Sir Roly Walker gave all the participants an inspirational speech before a cannon signified the start of the challenge.

We said farewell to the students and wished them luck for their adventure; now they were on their own for the weekend! The staff had to be on site on standby in case of any withdrawals, so we kept ourselves ready with plenty of cups of tea and cake while the students headed across the moor and met Army checkpoint and safety control staff along their way.

The weather was superb for the first day and both teams made excellent progress, heading to their planned camps on the Saturday night safe and well.











Day 2: The Final Push

Sunday brought its own set of challenges, with fatigue setting in and the weather turning increasingly wet; however, our teams demonstrated remarkable resilience, encouraging each other and maintaining a steady pace. As they approached the final tors, the sense of accomplishment was realised.

Crossing the Finish Line

The sight of the finish line was a moment of triumph for our teams. They crossed it together, exhausted but elated, having completed the 35-mile route. Their achievement is a testament to their hard work, perseverance, and the strong bonds they formed during training.

Reflections and Celebrations

Upon returning to school, the team shared their experiences with staff and fellow students, inspiring many to consider participating in future challenges. Their stories of overcoming obstacles and working together resonated deeply, highlighting the values of belonging, achieving and participation.

Acknowledgments

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the staff and volunteers who supported our team throughout their preparation and the event itself. A special thanks to Vicky Bartlett from Uffculme School and also to Kev Pinnell and Andy Carter from the Culm Walking Group, for the evenings and weekends they have given up in order to help us plan the training and help us on the camping trips. It has been almost ten years since The Castle School has entered a Ten Tors team, and they have all contributed to making this year such a success.

Looking Ahead

The Ten Tors Challenge has left an indelible mark on our students, fostering a sense of achievement and a love for outdoor adventures. We look forward to next year's event and encouraging more students to take on this incredible challenge!

Mr James, Mr Marshall, Mrs Norris, Mr Wilkins and the Ten Tors Team







2025 Leavers' Prom









What an amazing evening our Year 11 leavers had at their Prom, which took place at Oake Manor golf club on Wednesday 25th June 2025.

The evening always starts with plenty of excitement, as students amaze their peers with imaginative arrivals. This year they did not disappoint! We had a double decker bus, a fire engine, bikers, lots of classic cars, and - in an Oake Manor first - three students arrived with alpacas!

Photos were taken on the red carpet, before a sit-down meal, and various awards and prizes.

Then the dancefloor filled!

Oake Manor summed it up best on their Facebook page:



The students were a credit to the school, as they have been for five years. We would like to wish them all the very best, whatever their futures hold.















Meet our Senior Students

As we say goodbye to one group of Year 11s, another year group steps up!

Introducing our Senior Students for the next academic year, as voted for by their peers and school staff.

Many candidates took part in hustings, each giving a speech about how they will be leaders and role models, before the voting narrowed it down to twelve students.

Senior students meet regularly to discuss the things that matter most to students and their ideas for the school. They represent all students, which is a big responsibility.

So here they are, our Senior Students for the 2025-26 academic year:



News from Maths

Year 8 trip to Bristol Aerospace Museum

Science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) have a profound impact on our everyday lives and play an important role in UK industry, which is currently experiencing a shortage of skills in these areas.

In order to engage students in STEM subjects, The Castle School follows a STEM enrichment plan involving activities in and out of school. As part of this, the whole of Year 8 visited Aerospace Bristol across two days in January.

From the earliest days of powered flight to the cutting-edge technology of tomorrow, the students were inspired by fun practical science interactives and amazing exhibits, including more than a century of aviation history, from the earliest powered flights to the last Concorde ever to fly!

In addition to a tour of the museum and exhibitions, students also took part in two interactive workshop sessions:

- 'Mission to Mars' where they had to work as a team to design, build and test a prototype of a new Mars rover
- 'Blast Off Rockets' where students had to create the most aerodynamic prototype for space travel

An educational fun-filled day was enjoyed by all.

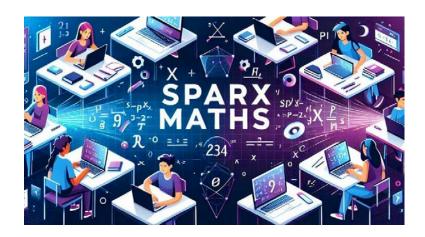
Celebrating Our Top Sparx Achievers

This year saw the exciting launch of Sparx Maths. Sparx Maths is a curriculum-aligned platform to deliver adaptive, personalised Maths homework.

It's designed to help students of all abilities progress at their own pace with questions at their current level with real time adaptation. There is also video support to help students, and it gives teachers detailed insights into student learning.

It also allows students to practice independently and build on what is taught in lessons to develop understanding further.

A huge congratulations to the students who earned the most XP points this year on Sparx Maths.



Year 7	1st – Adhrit A 2nd – Sethuja M 3rd – Rehan J
Year 8	1st – Jeff A 2 2nd – Tilly C 3 3rd – Edith W
Year 9	 1st – Haniel N 2nd – Jai P 3rd – Carter T

The Institution of Engineering & Technology Faraday Challenge

The Castle School hosted partner schools from within the trust for the Faraday Challenge. Two teams of six came from Uffculme School and three teams represented The Castle School.

All the students from both schools really enjoyed the day and showed a lot of creativity, ingenuity and teamwork to come up with their prototype toys. There was a lot of healthy competition which led to some great ideas and some very good presentations.

A team from The Castle School were eventually chosen as the winners but it was a very close call!



Industrial Bronze Cadets

Eight students signed up this year to take part in the Industrial Bronze Cadets. The project they chose was 'Design a sustainable theme park for the future'. Initial meetings showed a lot of enthusiasm for the project with a lot of great ideas being discussed and put forward.

We worked closely with Stantec, a company based in Taunton which gave the students a brilliant insight into a lot of branches of the STEM industries.

The students researched into energy sources, transport infrastructure, flood risk, sustainable food sources and a whole lot more!

By the end of the project the team had put together a good report and delivered a very good presentation, showing a lot of the skills they had picked up as well as sharing their research with industry professionals.

United Kingdom Mathematics Trust annual Maths challenge

Our students from Years 7 to 10 participated in the Junior and Intermediate UKMT challenge this year. We had fantastic results in both challenges and some students went through to the next rounds.

Here are the results for both Challenges:

Intermediate challenge - 7 students achieved GOLD, 17 achieved SILVER and 33 achieved BRONZE.

Junior challenge - 8 students achieved GOLD, 17 achieved SILVER and 46 achieved BRONZE.

The follow-on rounds, called the KANGAROO, was tough but our students achieved amazing results. We had 8 students who participated in these follow-on rounds and had 4 Silver and 3 Bronze certificates

Well done to everyone who participated in this great challenge! We are looking forward to next year's challenge already.

Iceland Trip



At Easter we took a wonderful group of Year 11 geography students to explore stunning Iceland.

With the guidance of our awesome tour guide, Rob, the students got to see a brilliant snapshot of everything that Iceland has to offer. From the city of Reykjavik, to the open country, which was once lava fields and is now home to farms.









From warm water springs to waterfalls on an epic scale, to magnificent volcanos and imposing glaciers. the fantastic behaviour of the students was also noticed by the public and our hosts who came and complemented them. Our geographers (and photographers) really relished this amazing opportunity!



News from English

What a busy year we have had!

Lots of students entered reading competitions and had their stories published: we are really proud of them and their achievements.

Our curriculum continues to evolve with a new Greek Myths unit being taught for the first time in Year 7. This has been introduced as we believe it is important for students to understand the roots of many of today's books and films. The students have really enjoyed this unit and have produced some beautiful work around The Trojan Horse and Helen of Troy, Medusa and Pandora's Box. They have presented their ideas to the class and have worked creatively to produce a representation of their favourite myth.

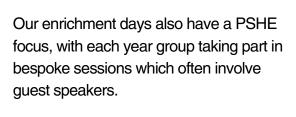
The Year 11s worked very hard in the lead up to their exams: we hope they are thrilled with their results.

We're extremely excited to be launching a new Debating Club next year and taking Year 11 to Poetry Live!



Enrichment Days

Enrichment days are a vital part of our curriculum. Every term, each year group takes part in two days of enrichment. This can range from trips to the theatre, museum or outdoor learning centres, to important life lessons such as first aid training and work experience.



Here are just some of the highlights from our 2024-25 enrichment programme.







Awards Evening

In July we held our annual Awards Evening, where students are rewarded for attainment and progress in each subject.

This is always a special occasion, marked by photos of all the award winners with their families after the event. You can see the photos on display in the school reception area.

This year's guest speaker was Joseph Heath, a former student who was diagnosed with Aspergers Syndrome at a young age. Joseph talked about how, with the right support, he has succeeded against the odds. At The Castle School he won the Most Improved Student Award, before progressing via Richard Huish College to Cardiff University, where he attained a degree in Politics and Economics. He then studied Politics and Economics at masters level, achieving a distinction. Joseph now works in data co-ordination for a leading media company.

Joseph spoke with humour and passion about his neurodiversity and the journey he has taken.

There are too many award winners to name them all, but two students deserve a special mention.

Felicity was awarded the Governors' Cup for all round commitment to The Castle School, while Hugo received the Teresa Grabham Cup for selfless support to others. Congratulations to them, and to all the award winners.











On Monday, we strolled through the serene Central Park, enjoyed a backstage tour of the iconic Radio City Music Hall, indulged in some retail therapy on Fifth Avenue and had a professional workshop session with a dancer from Sunset Boulevard. The day was capped with a lively dinner at Ellen's Stardust Diner.

Tuesday was a day of breathtaking views and poignant moments. We marvelled at the cityscape from Top of the Rock (Rockefeller Center) took a ferry to Staten Island to see the Statue of Liberty, visited the 9/11 Memorial, and ended the day with a mesmerising performance of Cabaret on Broadway.

Wednesday saw us taking in the sights from the Brooklyn Bridge and diving back into the shops of Times Square. Throughout the trip our students showcased their talents by performing acrobatics on the subway, singing on the streets, and dancing at Ellen's Stardust Diner, creating lasting memories and leaving their mark on the city.

The trip was truly a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for our students to experience the magic of New York City, surrounded by friends and immersed in the Performing Arts.

We are already looking forward to our next adventure and are excited to announce that we will be taking 50 students to New York again in 2027.





News from Creative Arts

House Dance

House Dance Competition 2025: A Night to Remember

The much-anticipated annual House Dance Competition took place in November, bringing together over 100 talented students from our six houses. This year's theme "A Night at the Musicals" set the stage for an evening filled with spectacular performances and unforgettable moments.

The competition featured dazzling dance numbers from popular musicals such as Hamilton, Cabaret, and Chicago. Each house brought their unique flair and creativity to the stage, making it a truly magical night.

Among the many highlights, Windsor House emerged victorious with their outstanding choreography inspired by High School Musical. Their energetic and well-coordinated performance captivated the audience and judges alike, securing them the top spot in this year's competition.

Congratulations to all the participants for their hard work and dedication, and a special shoutout to Windsor House for their well-deserved win! We look forward to seeing what next year's competition will bring.

Girls Like That

February Performance of Girls Like That: A Powerful Reflection on Modern Issues

This February, our school was proud to present Evan Placey's Girls Like That, an all-female ensemble play set within the familiar halls of a school. The production delved deep into themes of feminism and the harmful impact of social media on today's generation, resonating strongly with both the cast and the audience.

The play's narrative, centred around the lives of young women navigating the complexities of friendship, identity, and societal expectations, was brought to life by our talented students. Their performances were both poignant and powerful, leaving a lasting impression on everyone who attended.

Reviews of the play were overwhelmingly positive. One reviewer noted, "The cast's portrayal of the struggles faced by young women in the digital age was both authentic and heart-wrenching." Another praised the production for its relevance, stating, "This play is a must-see for anyone seeking to understand the real-world impact of social media on our youth."

Overall, the February performance of Girls Like That was a remarkable success, highlighting the importance of addressing contemporary issues through the Arts. Congratulations to the entire cast and crew for their dedication and hard work in bringing this important story to our stage.

Chicago: The Teen Edition

In February we were thrilled to announce that our next school production will be Chicago the Teen Edition!

Our dedicated team of professionals worked hard at auditioning students for this exciting show, seeking talented individuals to fill the iconic roles of Roxie Hart, Velma Kelly, and Billy Flynn.

This year, we auditioned 140 talented students from across all years, showcasing the incredible range of talent within our school. Our legacy of creating big, memorable shows continues with this production, and we have every confidence it will be one of our best yet. To bring the world of Chicago to life, we will be hiring a professional set, ensuring a visually stunning experience for our audience.

One of the most important aspects of our productions is inclusivity. We believe that everyone who wants to be involved should have the opportunity to participate, whether on stage or behind the scenes. This commitment to inclusivity ensures that our productions are a true reflection of our diverse and talented student body.

The production will take place on 10th to 13th February 2026 and we will announce when tickets go on sale. This is a show you don't want to miss!







&Juliet: A Celebration of Performing Arts

This January marked the fourth consecutive year that our school has taken 240 enthusiastic Year 7 students to the Bristol Hippodrome for a day dedicated to the Performing Arts. The day began with engaging workshops on Dance, Drama, Music and costume design, allowing students to explore their creative talents and learn new skills.

The highlight of the trip was the afternoon performance of &Juliet, a vibrant and thought-provoking musical that reimagines the classic tale of Romeo and Juliet. Instead of following the tragic ending, the story explores what might have happened if Juliet chose to live and seek a fresh beginning. Featuring popular songs like "Since U Been Gone" and "Roar", the musical captivated the audience with its energetic performances and modern twist on a timeless story.







&Juliet carries important messages for young people growing up today. It emphasises themes of self-discovery, empowerment, and the importance of making one's own choices. In a world where social media and societal pressures can often dictate one's path, &Juliet encourages young individuals to find their own voice and embrace their unique journey.

Overall, the January trip to see &Juliet was a resounding success, providing our Year 7 students with an unforgettable experience and valuable lessons in the Performing Arts. We look forward to continuing this tradition and inspiring our students through the magic of theatre.











Christmas Trees

Year 7, 8 and 9 Arts & Crafts club students designed these amazing Christmas trees for the Brewhouse Theatre!







Year 11 Fine Art and Textiles trip to Oxford

In October Year 11 Fine Art and Textiles students spent the day in Oxford exploring the Ashmolean and Pitt Rivers museums. The day was a chance for them to find some primary research for their current coursework units. The students had a great day finding lots of interesting artefacts from around the world and historical periods to inspire them.

Here are just some of the things they had to say about the day:

"Fabulous.
Absolutely amazing"





"Really informative"

"Lots of interesting trinkets"





Just a few highlights of another incredible year for live music at The Castle School!...



The Gig

Some of our wonderfully talented musicians performed at The Gig in May in front of a very appreciative audience.











Kinetika Bloco Music Workshop

The Sound of the Streets came to the school in July to hold a workshop with students. This unique group has influenced some of the UK's most dynamic new jazz talent, including the Ezra Collective.



News from Design and Technology

Innovation and creativity thrive!

The Design and Technology department has had an incredibly productive and inspiring year, with students across all year groups showcasing their creativity, problem-solving skills, and technical abilities through a wide range of exciting projects.

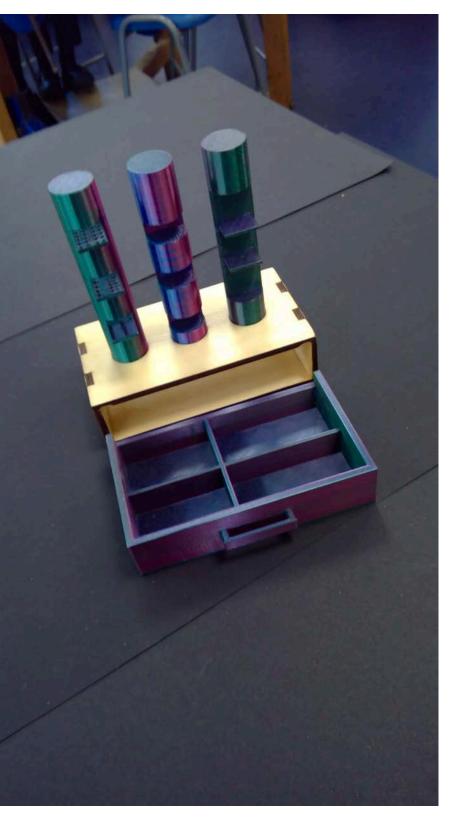
Year 7 students began their journey into design with a strong focus on sustainability and innovation. They created imaginative and eco-friendly bug hotels, using recycled materials to provide safe habitats for insects and promote biodiversity. In addition, they explored the world of electronics and design by constructing night lights and controlling robots, learning about circuits and sensors.

Moving into **Year 8**, students took on more complex challenges. They designed and built steady hand games, incorporating electronic components to test players' dexterity and patience. These projects helped students understand the principles of electrical circuits and game design. They also crafted charming wooden acrobat toys, using traditional workshop tools to cut, shape, and paint their creations with precision and flair.

Year 9 students demonstrated their growing design skills through a series of sophisticated projects. They developed stylish Swatch watch designs, showcasing their understanding of aesthetics and branding. Their creativity continued with the design of pendants, where they explored materials and form, and computer-aided phone stands, using CAD software to bring their digital designs to life with precision manufacturing techniques.







At GCSE level, students took their skills to new heights by designing and producing maze games using CAD/CAM technology. These intricate and interactive games combined digital design with hands-on manufacturing, resulting in impressive and engaging final products. Meanwhile, engineering students tackled real-world challenges by designing and manufacturing phone speaker docks, blending functionality with sleek, modern design.

The **Year 11** cohort truly impressed with their controlled assessment projects, which included a diverse array of outcomes such as games, kit cars, swimming aids, and puzzles. These projects reflected months of research, planning, prototyping, and refinement, and demonstrated the students' ability to manage complex design processes from concept to completion.

A new and exciting addition to the department this year has been the launch of the **Year 7 LEGO Club**. This creative space has become a hub of imagination and collaboration, where students have built an astonishing variety of master builds. From aliens and spaceships to insects, plants, and a whole menagerie of fantastical creatures, the LEGO Club has provided a fun and engaging way for students to explore design principles and storytelling through construction.







The Design and Technology department continues to be a vibrant and dynamic part of the school, nurturing the next generation of designers, engineers, and innovators. With such a wide range of projects and achievements, it's clear that creativity and technical excellence are thriving in every corner of the workshop and classroom.

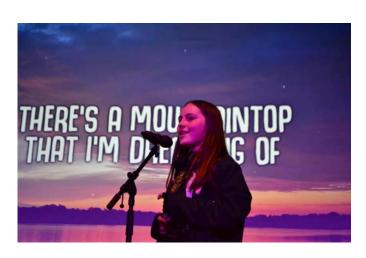


Friday Challenge

Every Friday lunch time, we celebrate Participation with a wide range of Friday Challenges. In the past year, students received house points for taking part in activities such as welly wanging, quizzes, darts, hobby horse racing, open mic shows and penalty shoot-outs!









News From Languages

'Chinese Bridge' Mandarin Speaking Competition

Will represented The Castle School in the national Chinese Bridge Mandarin Speaking Competition. This is part of his presentation: 你好我叫Will,我的学校叫Castle School, 我的学校有一千二百个学生。我的学校有大体育馆,我常常和朋友去体育馆打篮球,因为我喜欢打篮球,我觉得运动对身体好。你喜欢运动吗?我今天有中文课和历史课,我很喜欢中文课因为有意思,我不太喜欢历史课因为历史老师很严格。我们学校有图书馆,我不常常去图书馆因为我不喜欢看书。图书馆对面有校长办公室

汉语水平考试 (Year 10 HSK3 exams)

Sixteen of our Year 10s completed their HSK3 exams, the official Mandarin Chinese language test administered by Hanban (an agency of the Chinese Ministry of Education).

Extra Curricular Chinese

Miss Yang was an excellent addition to our languages team in academic year 2024-25. She spent a lot of time supporting Year 10 students in preparation for their HSK3 exams, and also supported Mandarin students in other year groups. She delivered additional lessons after school and additional Chinese culture workshops, including paper cutting and teaching Tai Chi.

Unfortunately for us, Miss Yang returned to China in the summer and we wish her all the best. We will host another Chinese Language Assistant through the British Council from September.







A Level Languages

Each year, many of our GCSE languages students go on to study A levels in French, German or Spanish. This year is no exception. We wish all of these students every success in their future language studies and travels. We are very proud of the strong links that we have with the languages department at Richard Huish College, and some of our ex-students go on to study a language as part of their university degree - including a year living and working abroad - and to use the language in their chosen career.



Mandarin Excellence Programme

As part of the national Mandarin Excellence Programme, Year 10 students at The Castle School took part in the MEP Tourism Project - an exciting initiative designed to develop language skills through real-world application. Over several days, students worked in teams to create engaging tourism campaigns promoting Taunton and the surrounding areas to Chinese visitors in Mandarin. Their projects included posters, itineraries and short videos - all produced in Mandarin. This was followed by a visit to the University of Southampton, where students showcased their videos, explored Chinese language learning at university level and celebrated their achievements alongside peers from other schools.

We are delighted that one group from The Castle School were awarded third prize for their excellent tourism campaign video!

The video can be viewed on our school Facebook page, via the QR code below:







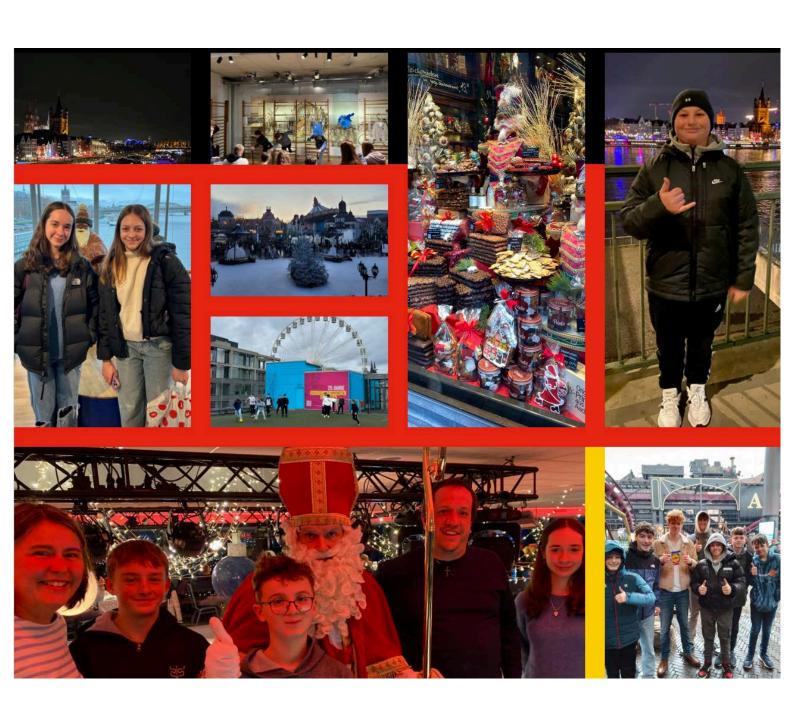




Klassenfahrt nach Köln und Aachen - Dezember 2024

In December, a group of 35 students visited the cities of Aachen and Cologne. The Vorweihnachtszeit (the time leading up to Christmas) is always a magical period in Germany. Students enjoyed the picture-perfect Christmas markets - a winter wonderland of twinkling lights, Christmas trees, festive music, and the aromas of delicious food wafting from hundreds of traditional wooden huts and stalls. They loved the opportunity to buy handmade products as Christmas presents or souvenirs and to sample a huge variety of food: fresh waffles, doughnuts, gingerbread, chocolate-dipped fruit, currywurst, and many other types of German sausage!

In the evenings, we dined at traditional German restaurants as well as a restaurant serving Middle Eastern cuisine.



Köln & Aachen



As part of the trip, students spent a day at Phantasialand theme park, enjoying rollercoasters, live shows, ice skating, and the magical Christmas atmosphere.

Cologne Cathedral, once the tallest building in the world (until 1884) is an impressive and imposing Gothic structure that is a must-see for all visitors to the city. Many of our students climbed the long, narrow spiral staircase to the top of the south tower and were rewarded with stunning views of Cologne and the Rhine.



Students also experienced an evening cruise on the River Rhine, complete with Christmas entertainment, and visited two museums: the Cologne Lindt Chocolate Museum and the German Olympic Museum. A fabulous time was had by all, and students improved both their German language skills and cultural knowledge.

The next trip to Cologne is planned for December 2026 and will be open to all students studying German.







上海-2025年7月

In July, Year 9 Mandarin learners embarked on a ten-day tour of Shanghai, China, designed to boost their Mandarin-speaking skills and deepen their cultural understanding. The trip was organised through the Mandarin Excellence Programme, a flagship initiative run by University College London on behalf of the Department for Education, which The Castle School has proudly been part of for the past four years.

Shanghai, a bustling metropolis of 24 million people, offered students a rich blend of historical landmarks, vibrant culture, and an impressive skyline - including the world's third-tallest tower. It was an unforgettable experience!

We spent time studying at 上海外国语大学 (Shanghai International Studies University), one of China's top educational institutions. Most mornings, including weekends, were dedicated to four Mandarin lessons, giving students a real taste of academic life in China.

Students also had the opportunity to sample a wide variety of Chinese foods and snacks while developing their chopstick skills. Meals were enjoyed either in the university canteen or at local Chinese restaurants a Chinese takeaway in England will never be quite the same again!





















Beyond the classroom, students explored some of the world's most iconic tourist destinations and enjoyed shopping in local markets. Tianzifang (田子坊) - a vibrant arts and culture enclave nestled in Shanghai's former French Concession - was a particular highlight, as was the 虹口商场 (Hongkou Shopping Mall).

Other highlights included a visit to 豫园 (Yu Garden), a classical Chinese garden in the heart of the old town; 静安寺 (Jing'an Temple); the China Art Museum; and 外滩 (The Bund), where students admired the skyline and learned about the area's British influence.

One of the most exciting moments was ascending the 东方明珠塔 (Oriental Pearl Tower), a 468-metre-tall landmark beside the Huangpu River. The views from the top were breathtaking, and the glass floor experience was exhilarating!

As the sun set, the group boarded a night cruise on the Huangpu River. The illuminated skyline was spectacular, with the Pearl Tower glowing pink and the historic buildings of the Bund shining across the water. It was a perfect moment to relax, reflect, and take in the beauty of the city - many students said it was the highlight of the trip.

The university also hosted several cultural workshops. Students painted traditional Chinese fans, which drew compliments from other tourists! They also attended a concert titled Telling China's Stories Through Art, featuring performances on the bamboo flute and guqin, folk dance, Kunqu opera, and calligraphy. The finale was the Chinese pop song 青花瓷, which students sang along to with enthusiasm. They also took part in an engaging question-and-answer session with British businesspeople currently living and working in China.

At the opening ceremony, our students impressed their hosts with an a cappella performance of 茉莉花 (Mo Li Hua, Jasmine Flower), a folk song dating back to the Qing Dynasty. Isabel delivered a confident speech in Mandarin on behalf of The Castle School. At the closing ceremony, Immy gave a heartfelt thankyou speech and performed a solo guitar piece. The group closed with a performance of 月亮代表我的心 (The Moon Represents My Heart), a well-known song from the 1970s.

The next study visit to China takes place for Year 9 students in July 2026.

Besuch aus Deutschland

We were delighted to host students from Werner-von-Siemens-Gesamtschule Königsborn, along with their teachers, Frau Jaworek and Frau Klingner, in April. The visiting students stayed with host families and spent time joining lessons at the school, attending the community concert, and going on local excursions. The visit was a huge success and we look forward to continuing to develop our links in the future.



Frau Klingner also joined us for a week earlier in the year as part of the UK-German Connection Host a Teacher programme. Our students had the opportunity to learn and speak lots of German and to deepen their cultural understanding.

Onatti Theatre Performance



In April 2025, students studying German in all year groups were treated to a German theatre performance by Onatti theatre company.

The show was just under an hour and performed entirely in German. It was delivered by native German speakers, specifically tailored to students of German at secondary school level.

The performance was interactive, and Poppy and Annabel became stars of the show, demonstrating some excellent German on stage for the duration of the show!

Coming soon

Look out for information on future trips for 2026, including Paris for learners of French, Madrid for learners of Spanish and a study visit to China for Year 9 Mandarin students. For German students, look out for opportunities for projects, trips and exchanges with our partner schools in Immenstadt and Unna.

Keep up to date with the latest news from the languages faculty by following us on Instagram: **@castleschoollanguages**



Sports Report

Cross Country Season 2024-2025 – a Celebration of Dedication and Success

Well done to all students who competed in Cross Country throughout the 2024-2025 season. Your commitment, perseverance, and sportsmanship have been truly commendable.

Our main sequence of races took place as part of the prestigious English Cross Country series. The season began with an exciting event at King's College, where our athletes delivered outstanding performances. A number of students successfully qualified for the Somerset Schools Championships held at RNAS Merryfield. Congratulations to the following students on their qualification:

- Rosie D
- Sienna
- Rosie HC
- Bethan
- Grace
- Sophie
- Albert
- Henry
- Edward
- Miles
- Thomas

Following this, the top ten students in Somerset for each age group advanced to the South West Qualification event in Newquay. Once again, our athletes rose to the occasion with a series of fantastic performances.

We are proud to announce that the following students qualified and represented Somerset at English Schools Cross Country at Ardingly, East Sussex in March:

- Bethan
- Rosie HC
- Edward
- Sophie
- Thomas

The English Schools Cross Country is certainly one of the most prestigious and toughest races in the calendar, and all of our runners should be extremely proud of their performances.

















Somerset Cross Country Championships (SCCC) – Year 7 & 8

Held at the beautiful grounds of King's College, this fantastic team competition brought together schools from across Somerset for a day of spirited racing and teamwork.

The Castle School proudly entered a number of enthusiastic and determined runners who gave it their all on the course. A huge well done to everyone who ran – your effort and sportsmanship were outstanding!

Special Mentions:

- Edward 1st place in the year 8 Boys race!
- Rosie HC 4th place in the year 8 Girls race!
- Albert 5th place in the year 8 Boys race!

A massive congratulations to the Year 8 Girls team, who were crowned Somerset Cross Country Champions! What an incredible achievement!

These achievements reflect the hard work and determination of all our runners. We look forward to seeing what the future holds for these talented athletes. Congratulations once again to everyone involved!



Boys Indoor Cricket

The under 15 boys got knocked out in the first round of the indoor competition, which was disappointing with them being a very good team who could have challenged in the competition. The under 13s flew the flag for the school by winning the County Cup! They played very well on the day and deserved to be crowned county champions out of 28 schools that entered the competition.

Boys Outdoor Cricket

The hardball season was a success with two teams progressing to the semi-finals of the County Cup. Some highlights en route were Jayden scoring an excellent 50 against Kings



and Ben taking seven wickets against Taunton School B team. In the state school County Cup the school had lots of success with both the under 13s and under 15s reaching the semi-finals. The under 15s were knocked out at the semi-final stage by the County Champions, Haygrove.

The under 13s played a brilliant final against Wellsway and won by 33 runs in a fantastic all round team performance. The under 13 boys finish the season with two County Cup wins in both the hardball and indoor competition!





Broderick's Cricket Cup

This year's Broderick's Cup saw Castle entering two under 15 teams. Both teams showed brilliant bowling and batting displays. Castle A went on to beat Wellington and Millfield to finish fifth out of twelve teams. Fantastic batting performance from Annabel, who retired in three games. Brilliant bowling from Alivia, Freya, Hannah and Eloise. Top fielder goes to Maisie, who was always committed to stopping the ball and encouraging every player on the pitch.

Lady Taverner's Indoor Cricket

Both the under 13 and under 15 girls' softball teams made it through to the County Finals at Somerset County Cricket Club. They applied great bowling and batting performances to beat multiple different teams to get to the finals. Both teams finished third in the finals, with great bowling performances on show from Gabriella, Maisie, Freya and Eloise. Fantastic batting performances from Florence and Bethan.

The under 15 girls faced Wellington School in a hardball T20 game. Castle hit 207 with a special mention to Annabel, who scored 94 not out, and Bethan with 36. They then displayed some excellent bowling, keeping Wellington to 87-7 in their twenty overs. Bowling mentions to Freya, who took two wickets in the first over, and Eloise, who in her three overs had figures of 2 maidens, 1 wicket, 2 runs!

Somerset Foundation Finals Day

The under 15 girls team continued their fine form by being crowned County Champions of the softball competition at Somerset County Cricket Club, and now go to the regional finals.

Rugby

Rugby is still continuing to grow at Castle, with many students joining the clubs and playing rugby for the first time.

Rugby continues to be an integral part in the curriculum, house, and school sport. It is also pleasing that many are playing rugby at club level, and we have some students in the Bristol Bears rugby programme!





Boys Football

The football season didn't reach the heights of last year, with no teams winning any of the major trophies. We got very close in two finals but lost to penalties. The Year 11s again got to the semi-finals of the County Cup, but unfortunately couldn't emulate he previous Year 11s who the competition. Football was very popular, with participation being very good throughout the season.

Girls Football

The Castle School has had another successful year of girls' football. Our Friday afterschool club saw over a hundred students participating on a weekly basis, and the house competition was played in great spirit.

In the County Cup competitions, our Year 7 girls beat Wadham and Crispin but narrowly lost out on penalties against Haygrove. Our Year 10/11 team were knocked out in the first round against a strong Haygrove side.

Year 8/9 had an incredible run in the County Cup, reaching the semi-final for the first time in many years, losing out 4-2 to eventual winners Hayesfield. The run of victories included one of best comebacks in school history against Millfield. With Castle trailing 3-0 ten minutes from time, the girls' determination saw them claw the game back to 3-3 with a last-minute equaliser, before keeping their composure from the penalty spot to knock out the highly-rated private school.

In the under 14 area tournament, our two teams met in the final and went to a nail-biting penalty shootout to claim both winners and runners up. A big well done to all students involved in school football this year; their commitment, sportsmanship and positive influence to help grow the game is a credit to the school. It is also pleasing to see so many girls involved in clubs within the community.







Tennis

Our tennis programme has again offered great opportunities for students to participate and compete. With fixtures against Millfield Prep School, Taunton School, Blundell's School, Wells Cathedral School and a local Central Venue League, there have been some excellent matches.

We are fortunate to have local tennis coach, John Warren, deliver our tennis club on a Monday after school, which has again been well attended and seen players making excellent individual progress.

We again deliver the 'Road to Wimbledon' LTA competition, which offers the students an opportunity to progress to the County final with the possibility of playing on the famous grass courts at Wimbledon. Our tennis season concluded with the house tennis competition, staff vs students matches and our annual mixed doubles staff tennis competition!







ALF MIDO

Basketball

Basketball continued to be popular again in the last academic year. The Year 7 and 8 after school session attracted a peak number of 82 attendees, whilst the Year 9, 10 and 11 session saw a peak of 33 during lunchtimes.

Various fixtures were played across the age groups, including:

- The introduction of the Junior NBA competition for Years 7 & 8 (where the Year 8 team narrowly missed out on a place in the quarter finals)
- 6 friendly CVLs for Years 7 & 8
- 5 under 16 boys' games
- 2 under 16 girls' games
- 3 skills development days, led by Richard Huish college.

Several of the current under 16 Boys are currently trialling for Huish Tigers National League Team - we wish them all best!

Finally, the highlight of the year - the Staff vs Students' game. A chance for the students to flaunt their skills on the court in front of a packed-out sports hall against the teachers. Sadly for them, the staff came out on top once again, winning the game in comfortable fashion. Better luck next year students!

Netball

Netball has been awesome this season; Netball runs throughout the spring term, with lots of students playing at local clubs throughout the season. Students took part in friendly matches in addition to county and west regional tournaments, along with local CVL tournaments, culminating in the netball area finals day at Taunton Vale. All five teams played fantastically well, with all being crowned Taunton area champions!

The under 15s were further winners of the Somerset Cup Tier 2 competition with the under 16s winning the Tier 2 under 19 Somerset Cup. The under 13s and under 15s teams further took part in the South West state school netball championships, with both qualifying for the finals in Torquay.

The following students have also gone on to represent Somerset at netball: Mya, Emily, Sophie, Annabelle, Annabel, Bethan, Charlotte, Josephine and Lola.

What a successful year of netball!





Trampolining

Good luck to Alivia, who will be representing England at the Loule Cup in October 2025 at Double Mini Trampoline.

Alivia will be travelling to Portugal for the finals.

This really is an incredible achievement. All the best Alivia!



Hockey

Hockey is continuing to grow at Castle, with an increase in numbers at club and teams being fielded for both boys and girls. Opportunities for hockey include CVL tournaments and local area league competitions, as well as Somerset hockey state school and county competitions.

Years 7, 9 and 11 were all area champions, with Year 10 finishing runners-up. Under 16 girls took part in the Somerset County competition regional round in Tier 3, coming third.

Both under 13s boys and giirls took part in a state school competition hosted by Taunton School, with the girls winning and the boys becoming runners-up. Well done all.

Biathlon

South West Schools Biathlon success at windy Millfield

Despite battling strong winds at Millfield, our students delivered outstanding performances at the South West Schools Biathlon, showcasing resilience, determination and team spirit.

The event featured both running and swimming disciplines, with Year 7 students completing an 800m run followed by a 50m swim, while Year 8 competitors tackled a more demanding 1600m run and 100m swim.

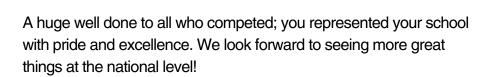
We proudly entered a Year 7 & 8 girls Team and two Year 8 boys teams, all of whom rose to the challenge with grit and enthusiasm. The conditions were tough, but our athletes remained focused and gave it their all.

Highlights of the Day:

- Edward earned a bronze medal in a fiercely competitive field
- Both the Year 7 and Year 8 girls teams secured silver medals, a testament to their teamwork and perseverance

As a result of their stellar performances, several students were invited to the prestigious National Schools Biathlon:

- Edward (6th place)
- Rosie (12th place)
- Aaron (29th place)









Badminton

Badminton continues to be one of the school's popular clubs, with over eighty members on a Monday night, Years 10 and 11 taking advantage of the club before school on a Tuesday and Thursday, and the everpopular Friday lunch club run by Mr Roberts and Mr Butler.

This year, the school has seen great success with the under 15 girls being crowned County Champions and finishing fifth in the regional finals, and the under 15 boys coming third at the County Finals.

News from Food and Nutrition

Indian cooking workshop

In May, Year we were visited by Manveena from Guddi and Gikki, who showed students how to make an authentic Indian curry and chapati bread.









Futurechef

Well done to Rocco, Ruby, Lucy and Emilia who represented the school in Futurechef, the biggest schools' culinary competition in the UK!







House Bake-off

In March we held our annual House Bake-off. Look at these delicious creations!













News from Computing

Cyberfest Girls

Seven enthusiastic Year 8 students (Hannah, Daisy, Ava, Bella, Kelsey, Axel and Edith) proudly took part in the CyberFirst Girls Competition, a national initiative led by the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) to inspire young women to explore careers in cyber security. The competition is designed to introduce girls aged 12–13 to the world of cyber through fun, interactive challenges that test logic, coding, networking, and cryptography skills. Representing their school with determination and teamwork, the students demonstrated creativity and resilience as they tackled a range of problem-solving tasks online.

We were recently presented with seventeen laptops donated by Deloitte to us through due to our work with CyberFirst. These laptops will enable us to carry on with cyber competitions but also help us with other enrichment and work with students.

Key Stage 4 Cyber Competition

Earlier in the year, sixteen GCSE students took part in a joint Cyber Competition organised by The University of South Wales, The University of the West of England and Cardiff University. The students enjoyed the challenges, and all agreed that the experience helped to highlight the importance of cyber security.

Coding/Gaming Club - Digital Leaders

On average, over 65 students attended this club every Friday. We would like to thank the Year 10 helpers; Henry, Ewan, Max and Fraser, and digital leaders Jeff, Oli, Luke and Toby who assist with organising and running this club.

The digital leaders have also contributed this year to the whole school Internet Safety assembly and used time at lunchtime to prepare this.

Somerset Computing Hub

Over the last five years, The Castle School has proudly been designated a Computing Hub for Somerset. In this time the Computing Hub has run over 220 computing courses and trained over 1600 primary and secondary teachers within Somerset and beyond.

Locally we have helped many primary schools offer a more varied computing curriculum by giving them the opportunity to borrow kit such as Crumbles and Bee-Bots. Other highlights have included the school being awarded the I Belong certification for work on improving the gender balance in computer science as well as the Computing Quality Mark.



Wellington Road Taunton TA15AU

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Nut & Bolt Garage

Oake Bradford & Nynehead C of E Primary School

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