



# The Smithdonian

Smithdon High School Magazine



The October 2023 Issue



# WELCOME

Welcome to the first Smithdonian magazine of 2023-24 school year.

We have had a busy start to the year, not only settling in our Year 7s and all students into their new year groups and timetables, but also welcoming potential new students at Open Evening and daily tours of the school. We have also welcomed some new staff this term - Mrs Sullivan in Maths, Mrs Faulkner in English, Mrs Drage (Cover supervisor), Miss Rankin (SEN Administrator) and Mr Kerr (IT technician).

All our co-curricular clubs have launched and some have got straight into competitions - from chess to writing. And our sports teams have had some early successes this year, which has made me very happy indeed.

Have a relaxing half term.

Mrs Gibbins

## SMITHDON IN THE NEWS

### Record results obtained by Smithdon GCSE students!



Students at Smithdon High School have been celebrating after receiving record GCSE results this year. The school received its best-ever exam results, with the Class of 2023 achieving grades almost 10% above the 2019 results.

Despite national warnings of lower gradings, 67% of Smithdon students achieved a standard pass of Grade 4 and above in English and Maths, while 38% attained a strong pass of Grade 5 and above in those subjects. Other subjects with improved outcomes included History, Art, and Music.

Smithdon's Head teacher Mrs Gibbins said, "Smithdon students' results are representative of the progress that the school continues to make. I am so pleased for all of our Year 11s. These results represent what students can achieve when they work hard. I am proud not only of their success but also of the efforts of our school staff who have provided high-quality teaching and pastoral care to support them in their achievements."

Mr Chapman, Smithdon's Assistant Head teacher, added, "Congratulations to all our Year 11 students who worked so hard for these fantastic results. I wish them all the best as they go on to the next stage of their education. We have all been celebrating after receiving record GCSE results this year."

The students worked very hard for these results by attending the revision sessions and also by being self-motivated to study and revise. We wish all of them the very best for their futures and we hope they left Smithdon with some great memories.

### Smithdon student performs at the Rock for Heroes show!

Harry, a Year 7 student at Smithdon, has a passion for all things music - playing the drums, acoustic and electric guitar, and singing. One of his dreams came true when he was invited to play the drums alongside a rock band in Kings Lynn.

Harry went to the *Rock For Heroes* show at Lynn's Alive Corn Exchange with his family and was delighted to be able to show off his impressive drum skills for the band and the packed-out audience - for which he received a huge standing ovation!

His proud dad stated, "He is still buzzing. He's done smaller venues before - school halls for example - but for an 11-year-old to have an audience and reaction like that - the whole family is so proud of him."

Harry, who has been playing drums for two years, is able to listen to a piece of music two or three times and is then able to play it! Harry said he will remember the moment - which his dad described as the "performance of his lifetime" - for a long time to come. Harry said, "It was my dream come true to play with a top rock band to a full house at the Corn Exchange".

Smithdon are so pleased that Harry had this amazing experience and we are so proud of him. Look out for this future star!





# OPEN EVENING

On 26 September, we welcomed prospective students and their families to Smithdon's Open Evening. We followed the usual format of having a presentation in the hall followed by student-led tours with Year 7 and 11 students leading groups around the school grounds.

All departments had rooms open to view and offered activities for the children to participate in:

The Hospitality and Catering Department had "guess the spices" and "spot the hazards" - important tasks in the cooking rooms!

The MFL Department challenged the visitors to build the Eiffel Tower with pasta spaghetti and marshmallows! For those that were not confident in their edible-construction skills, there were puzzles available that tested their knowledge on the French words for colours and numbers.

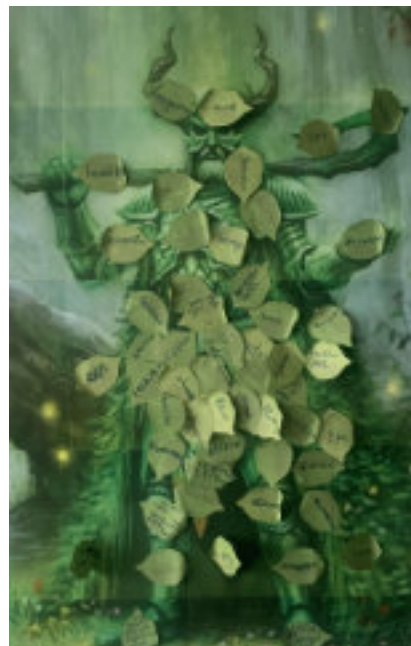
The English Department used the Year 7 set book, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, to give Year 6 pupils a taster of what they will be studying in their English lessons. They had to describe the *Green Knight* with adjectives - without the obvious "green" or "tall".

A tent and camping gear was also on display to showcase the Duke of Edinburgh Award we offer. We now have many students taking part, from Bronze to Gold, with the Year 9 students currently deciding on their *Skills*, *Volunteering* and *Physical* activities.

The feedback from the evening was very good, and our students who helped - after a busy school-day - were good examples of The Smithdon Seven, the values we all work by.

We thoroughly enjoyed meeting the Year 6 pupils and hope to see them next September in Smithdon uniform.

We also hosted a co-curricular evening for our current students and their families to come along to see which clubs we offer. There are a number of clubs operating across the school in order to help students enjoy and achieve, these include Homework Club, Dungeons and Dragons, Chess Club, a variety of Sports Clubs and subject-specific clubs. The Brilliant Club and STEMM Club also challenge our students to learn beyond the curriculum and are very successful. For more information, ask the relevant teachers or have a look on our website: [www.smithdonhigh.org.uk](http://www.smithdonhigh.org.uk)



The Year 6 students came up with some brilliant adjectives to describe the Green Knight:

*Brave*

*Majestic*

*Scary*

*Devil-like*

*Epic*

*Fierce*

*Mysterious*

*Colossal*

Just some of the words they used to describe Sir Bertilak, Lord of the castle, otherwise known as The Green Knight.

The library was also open to view on Open Evening and our visitors were invited to write a one-sentence circle poem based on the theme, *Refuge* - this year's National Poetry Day theme. They only had a few minutes to think about their one line, so we were impressed with the results:

*Where the doors are closed and the fan is on, that is my favourite place.*

*Bed is where I want to be, it is the safest place for me.*

*My safe space is dance, music and movement make me happy.*

*My safe place is the pitch because I feel comfortable playing with others.*

*I feel peaceful at home with my dog as she calms me.*

*Sailing on the lake is my favourite place, the sound of sails flapping and people shouting.*

*The sound of the sea makes me smile and feel calm.*

*Art is my haven, I love art.*

*My brick house is better than sticks.*

*I like the sea, it makes me happy.*

*I like biking because I can go anywhere.*

*Being with my mum and playing cricket makes me smile - that is wicked!*

**Thank you for taking part. It was a good demonstration that poetry doesn't have to be too structured or boring. Poems don't have to rhyme, they don't have to fit any specific format. Poetry's lack of rules can make it feel hard to define but is also what makes poetry enjoyable for so many to write and read.**

*Charles in Year 8 volunteered to help in the library. He was polite and confident - explaining and encouraging the Year 6 pupils to write their circle poetry.*



# NATIONAL POETRY DAY 5<sup>TH</sup> OCT 2023

*To celebrate National Poetry Day, we of course asked the students to write poems! KS3 English dedicated their lesson-time to reflecting on themselves, as the theme this year was REFUGE. They asked themselves the question: where is my safe place where I feel peace? Refuge can also be a person, a hobby or an object that brings a feeling of joy, safety or happiness.*

In my chair, I see a hare.  
It was not fair, it gave me a glare.  
Ignore the broom, sitting on the brick.  
I tried to make it go “Vroom”, but it made me sick.  
In my chair, something fell.  
It was a hair, but I couldn’t tell.  
I use my phone to get some dinner, chicken nuggets are the winner.  
I don’t get out of my chair, I wheel it over.  
So that's the story of me and my chair.  
But don’t you worry  
I caught that strand of hair.

## Lucas, Year 7

Hard, run, tackle, dive.  
Fun and a lot of laughs.  
And a bit of crying.  
This is what it is to me.  
It’s played with friends but not by myself.  
Can you guess what it is?

## Oliver, Year 7

The Tree  
Big tree, good to climb.  
Not that high, safe place to stay.  
Brown and green, the squirrels make it their home.  
Slugs leave their slime there.

## Tommy, Year 7

I am peaceful, I found love, I found Panda.  
He is my best friend, my toy.  
I have been missing him for years.  
I can’t sleep without him, he is my best friend.  
He comes on holiday with me.  
He comes on sleepovers with me.  
He is my best friend.

## Izabella, Year 7

Gives his paw, brown fur and a cute face.  
Loves going outside.  
Very friendly, joyful and cute.  
Loves playing with a ball.  
Waggy tail.  
Happy.  
YouTube channel of his own.  
Loves going for a run.  
Springer spaniel.  
Sleeps under my bed, begs for food.

## Coben, Year 7

Me, my dog and I.  
I love my dog, my second dog.  
Her name is Bella.  
She loves me, I love her.  
When I make her a cup of tea, she howls “oww!”  
It’s too hot.  
Me, my dog and I.  
I love my dog, my second dog.  
Her name is Bella.  
Me, my dog and I.  
I love her.  
She loves me.

## Daisy, Year 7

His face makes me happy.  
His big fluffy ears are so soft, I love his little run.  
Chasing after other dogs and deer, his little ears flapping in the wind.  
Looking at the sunset with the warm breeze blowing soft.  
His name is Barley Barley, the Cocker Spaniel.

## Harriet, Year 7

On Tuesdays I have football, one of my favourite times. But when it’s Christmas, my face lights up to hear the bells chime.

All the decorations and all the toffee puddings, Yum!

And I know I may be young, and I’m only small.

But the best part of it all, is hanging the stocking on the wall

## Leah, Year 7

I’m just baking and that's all that matters.

As I roll the dough with the only things in my brain being the result of what I am doing. I inhale the smell of freshly baked bread and everything goes away. It fades into the floor and deep down in to the ground.

Baking cookies is all that matters, baking cakes, flap-jacks, rocky-road and cupcakes.

I’m just baking and that’s all that matters.

## Hadleigh, Year 8

‘Grandma’, that name, my name makes my heart sing when they say it.

Arms held out, I missed you.

Sweet toothy grins and sloppy kisses from chocolate covered lips.

My spirits lift immediately, my sore heart heals in an instant.

They need me, little do they know, I need them more.

## Mrs Kirby, LSA

I miss you.

The way you danced with the clouds.

Put a smile on my face.

But that smile faded just like you did.

Come back to me please.

I always see you peeking through, but you never come out.

The sun, the sun.

The way you smile so bright, makes me want to go blind sometimes.

I wish you could come back.

I love you. I miss you.

The sun, the sun.

## May, Year 7

My mum is my refuge.

My mum is my most important thing.

She gives me cover and safety while I sing.

She is excellent at guiding me.

Although she is a teacher at my school.

I think she’s very cool.

She is fun like the sun.

She is my mum.

## Harrison, Year 7



September is always a busy month in the school library. Our new students are always excited and eager to check out the space as they begin their weekly reading lessons. It is a challenge to get over 100 students to remember new login details and passwords so that we can get them logged on to computers to complete the STAR test on Accelerated Reader. The exciting part always being receiving their scores and choosing their library books!

A new project for the Trust schools is the introduction of *The Reading Passport*. A selection of hand-picked books - which you will find in the knowledge organisers - for all Year groups and all abilities. They are easy to find in the library and with their own dedicated book shelves, they are ready to be read.

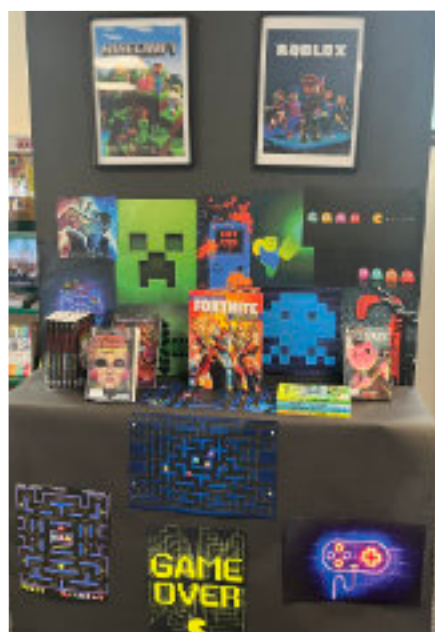
What we have discovered as the years go by, is that within the Gen Z population, 'reading for pleasure' has somewhat been replaced by social media and 'gaming for pleasure'. Books have been replaced by gaming controllers and smart phones. There was a time not long ago when we might have seen that as a cause for worry, sadness and disappointment. Now, we try to think of it as an opportunity. Instead of us promoting books as the antidote to gaming, we are now pitching them to our students as friendly companions to their much-loved hobby. It is easy to see all art forms as derivative of each other, or on opposing ends of a spectrum of cultural worthiness,

when maybe we should see them as complementary. Technology will keep evolving, our habits will keep changing. But we are hoping that Gen Z, Alpha and all the future generations after them, will still see the humble book as something relevant and important, instead of antique or outdated.

*The Epic of Gilgamesh*, reportedly the first ever book, is a series of tales, full of adventure, friendship, death and tragedy. The epic is regarded as a foundation work for religion and the tradition of heroic sagas, with Gilgamesh, the protagonist, forming the prototype for later heroes like Hercules. The writers of these stories would never have thought that the ancient clay tablets they wrote upon, thousands of years later, would evolve into a different type of tablet. That their stories would be inspirational to future story-tellers, including game designers!

This summer's annual literacy survey report by the National Literacy Trust concluded that 73% of young people who don't enjoy reading do, in fact, love video games - because it immerses them in a story. Games are being turned into TV series - you may have seen *The Witcher* and *The Last of Us*. So is gaming just another way of story-telling but with the players in control? It certainly is another way to exercise our brains, relax or escape from reality for a while. Albeit with visuals and shouting at the screens!

# LIBRARY



*Whether it be Minecraft, Roblox or FNAF that you play at home - why not try an accompanying book? They are on Accelerated Reader so you have the added benefit of being able to complete a quiz on them and keep your teacher happy!*

*We don't all want to read the classics or the epic adventures of Harry Potter; we are individuals with different hobbies and tastes, but reading is a universal skill if not a universal pleasure. So, whilst you are in school and improving your reading ability and comprehension to get you through GCSEs, A'levels, college and beyond - why not read a book that you can engage with, understand and enjoy?*

## The Creative Writing Group

Our Creative Writing Group is up and running again!

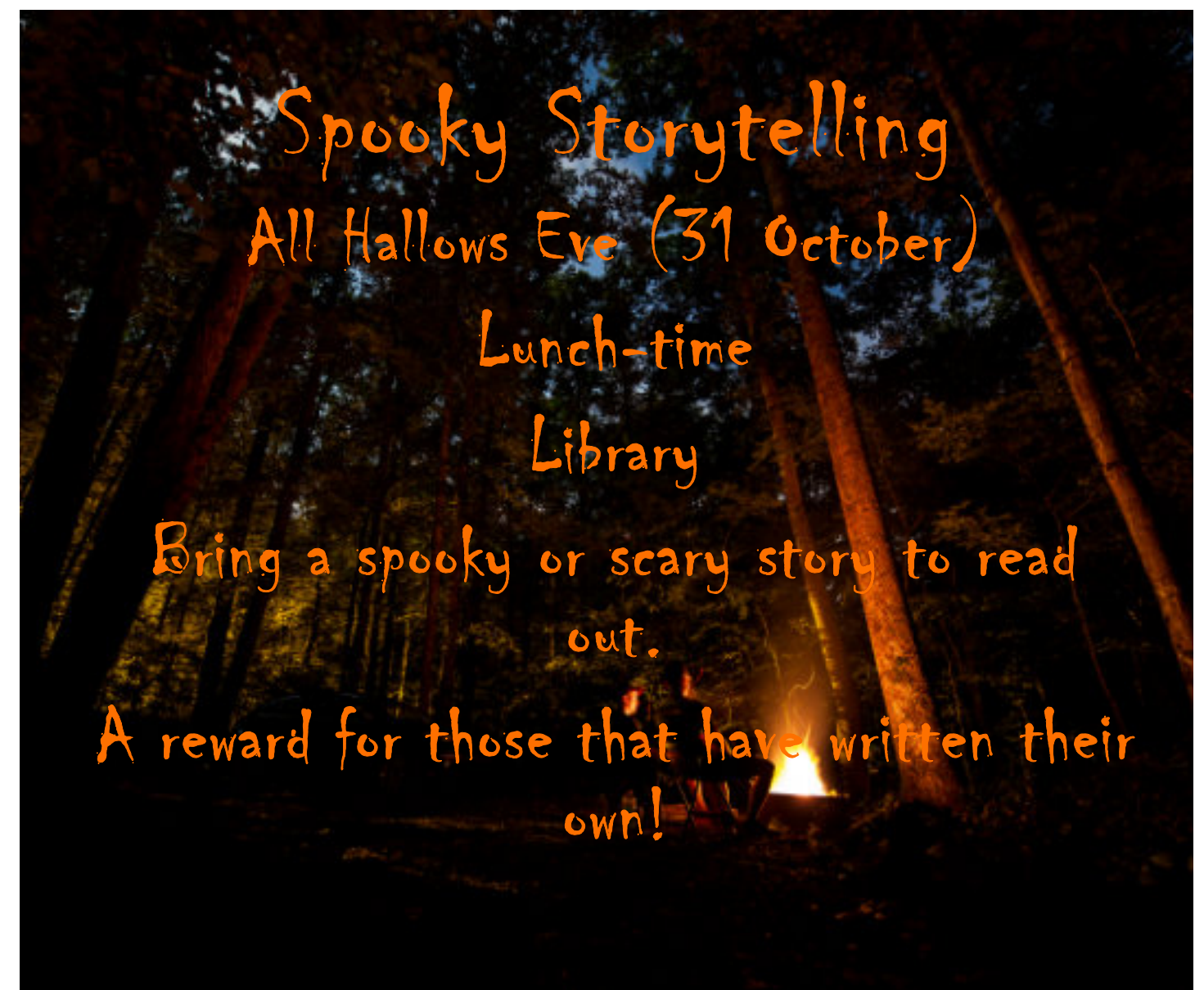
Whether you want to work on your story-writing technique, or learn about different styles of writing, or even enter your writing into various competitions, the Creative Writing Club has something to suit everyone.

The friendly group offers our students the opportunity to gain confidence in their writing in a fun environment; one that also encourages imagination and creativity. Some of our writers have won runner-up prizes in national competitions and we have also had some students' writing published in the 'Young Writers' books.

**Library**

**Tuesday, lunchtimes**

**Mrs Faulkner (one of our wonderful English teachers).**





As part of the end of summer term activities, students in Years 7-9 took the two-hour coach journey to the Pleasurewood Hills theme park near Lowestoft. Students thoroughly enjoyed a full day in the park, not leaving until almost 5pm. This gave everyone plenty of time to enjoy the rides and attractions including the ever-popular log flume and Egg-Spress coaster. The ultimate thrill seekers enjoyed Wipeout, which is the largest looping roller coaster in the Eastern region.

This is a fun reward we offer our students every year and we always have a great time!

Our Year 10 cohort were completing their work experience at this time - which was very successful. They gained valuable experience and insight into the world of work. This was important as it helped some of the students to decide which subjects or courses they will study at college and sixth form.



The staff enjoyed the day out as much as the students! Mr Tilley, Miss Brown and Mr Chapman had a great time.

# Pleasurewood Hills

by

Mr Chapman



# GEOGRAPHY

By Mr Chapman

## Madagascar

Mr John Shedrake was one of the first students at Smithdon High School. He started in 1954, which is the year that the school opened. He recently contacted us as he made a donation on behalf of Smithdon High School to the World Land Trust (<https://www.worldlandtrust.org/>). His donation will help to safeguard threatened tropical rain-forest in Madagascar, which is home to many species including rare species of lemur.

Smithdon High School Geography Department was delighted to receive the certificate and the accompanying information. Students in Year 10 study the rainforest in Madagascar as part of their GCSE Geography course.



## Geography Field Trip

All Year 10 Geographers took part in our annual Norwich field trip day on Wednesday 11 October. Students were accompanied by myself, Ms Bazeley-Smith, Mr Duncan and Mrs King.



On arrival in Norwich, we carried out a range of urban fieldwork techniques including: traffic counts, pedestrian counts, questionnaires, land use surveys and environmental quality surveys.

Mr Duncan's group also enjoyed the open top bus tour of Norwich operated by City Sightseeing. The 45-minute tour took them all over Norwich with views of the castle, cathedral, the river Wensum, the railway station and Norwich City Football Club. The highlight of the trip was a journey up Mousehold Heath to experience an amazing view across the city. A delayed bus meant that Mr Chapman's group was unable to take the tour. Instead, they walked around the mound of Norwich Castle to see a number of prominent Norwich sights including the Forum, cathedral and the football ground.

There was also time for lunch and a bit of shopping!



# C H E S S

On 29 September, the Smithdon chess team excitedly visited Marshland High School to take part in the Trust Chess Tournament. The atmosphere was tense and the hall was silent as they battled Springwood, St Clements and Marshland for the top position. Some games lasted just three moves, whilst some outlasted all the others, with all 40 players crowded around the table, eager to see how it was going to end: stalemate, resignation or checkmate?

Noah and Fletcher impressed us all by winning all three of their games. Charlie, who has only been playing for a few months, did amazingly by winning two games and drawing another. All of the students made our school proud by behaving incredibly and representing the school with maturity and good sportsmanship.

After all the schools had played each other, Springwood came out with the most points, which gave them first place. Smithdon came third but only by one point.

Now, with new Year 7 players who are eager to learn and practise every day during lunch time, we are confident that we have a solid chance next year to gain top position.

A big WELL DONE to all the players and to Springwood's team for winning!



Noah and Daniel - focused and concentrating on their game. Noah won all three games and Daniel won two of his games.

## Chess Club:

Every lunchtime in the library.

Thursday, 3-4pm - Mrs Robinson  
D05

*All year groups are welcome.*

This is getting very popular so if anyone can donate a chess set, we would be very grateful.



Martin Walker - FIDE master and chess coach - made sure that everyone was playing by the rules and kept a check on the scores.

# The Houses of Parliament



**By Mrs Pike**

On Tuesday 19 September, Mr Ward and myself were lucky enough to accompany the School Council on a trip to the Houses of Parliament. This involved catching the train and the Tube to get to Westminster before our tour and workshop at the Houses of Parliament. The students were amazing and coped brilliantly with the Tube and really enjoyed the tour.

We were lucky enough to observe the questions being asked in Parliament and also in the House of Lords. They were debating the recent issues with air traffic control: whether the company involved should pay compensation as well as the actual airlines - very topical for the time. Our tour guide was excellent and very knowledgeable. Once the tour was complete we had a workshop on how campaigns are run and what the Suffragettes did in the past. Our students then had to come up with campaigns of their own, which ranged from whether Freddos should be 10p, to free university places.

### *Some of the feedback from the students included:*

I really enjoyed being able to experience both the House of Commons and the House of Lords, especially being able to watch a debate/political conversation! The whole day was lovely. Thank you to those who planned it! **Izzy, Year 11 Head student.**

As a student of Smithdon, I knew they provided school trips, but I never thought I would have the opportunity to visit the Houses of Parliament. It was amazing and the teachers provided a supportive and fun environment. I would definitely recommend it to anyone that has the chance to go! It was an unforgettable experience. **Ethan, Year 10 School Council member.**

I would just like to thank you for giving us the incredible opportunity to visit the Houses of Parliament. It was a very insightful and interesting experience and it looked like everyone else enjoyed it as well. **Isaac, Year 11 Head student.**



# Sports and Games

*Welcome back from Smithdon Sport Stars.*

*We have got plenty of sporting fixtures coming up and celebration of successes from this term!*

## Fixtures

We had a busy term with lots of Netball and football fixtures. Here are some of the highlights...



Year 7 Netball had their first win against Terrington St Clements. They all played superbly and Lexie was awarded Player of the match.

Well done, girls!



Our Year 9 netball team played in a netball tournament at Springwood this term. They played some really good netball and came 4th out of the eight teams, which was well-deserved.



Year 10s had a packed schedule of fixtures this term, playing a total of 4 games. Even though we lost in all of them it was a learning experience - especially for those who are taking GCSE PE, as this will help in their practical assessment.



The Year 9 boys' football team played two games and won them both. They were ruthless in both and took all their chances to ensure the wins were comfortable against both Hammonds and KLA. Well done, boys: keep it up!



Year 9 boys played their first development rugby game at Springwood. These boys fought very hard and were happy to score their first try against a strong team. This is something they can move forward with into the future games next term.

## Cross Country

Smithdon took 25 runners to compete against other schools in the West Norfolk Cluster at Springwood. They all did really well, especially Emma - Year 7, Faith - Year 8, Josh - Year 9 and Seb - Year 10, who all came in the top ten for their year groups and qualified into the County Cross Country later on in the year.



And finally well done to our Year 7 boys' football team who played against a strong KLA team but managed to keep their composure and discipline and ended up scoring 8 goals. Well done to all! I know you will all do very well representing Smithdon in the future.

I was very excited to win tickets to meet two Norwich City legends, Darren Huckerby & Iwan Roberts at Northwold Sports & Social Club. Gavin Caney from Your Local Paper was the host. During the evening, I learnt a lot about their careers (although I am a Norwich fan, they were players well before my time of watching football!) They were both very funny and friendly and autographed my book, signed my shirt and posed with me for lots of photos. I had an incredible day, one I shall never forget.

**By Jess, Year 11**





# Performing Arts

What a busy start to the year! We began our student peripatetic music lessons this term. We have some brand new music teachers, which now allows us to offer music lessons on many more instruments! If you are interested in learning more about the music lessons offered at Smithdon, please email: [a.miller@smithdonhigh.org.uk](mailto:a.miller@smithdonhigh.org.uk).

We have been busy this term getting all of the clubs we offer started up again, which include: Choir, Ukulele Club, Jam Session Club, Brass Ensemble, Junior Orchestra, Just Dance Club, Keyboard Club, and (of course) our school musical: Frozen JR. All of our clubs welcome students in all year groups, so please come and join us at lunch or after school. There are some amazing opportunities and we can't wait to see you there!

The Drama Department has been taking students off site, including taking a group to see The Paper

Birds' performance of 'Feel Me' - an interactive theatre show that asks the audience who and what they care about, as the stories unfold live on stage while you interact through your mobile phone. Another group of students also went out to see 2:22 at Norwich Theatre Royal: a thrilling and suspenseful ghost story that made most of our students jump in their seats.

Next term, we will be taking our Year 7 students to the local Pantomime so that they can have an experience of live theatre in Hunstanton. This is always a fun day out and we can't wait!

Next half term brings the busiest time in Performing Arts. We have our annual Christmas Concert, being held at Hunstanton Town Hall this year. Then, the week after that, we have our annual school musical, Frozen Jr, being performed at Smithdon High School on the evenings of the 13 and 14 December. Look out for tickets - available soon on the school shop!

## 2.22 A Ghost Story



*Set over the course of one long evening, it brings together four characters with differing views over ghosts. Former sceptic Jenny has started having terrifying experiences at exactly 2.22am in the London house that she and husband Sam have just bought and started to renovate. Perfect for Halloween!*

2:22 was built up through a lot of suspense that had me on the edge of the seat from the moment the play started. It was very entertaining and it constantly had me hooked or panicking about what could happen next. It was very jumpy, although the occasional screams or gasps from the audience made it a little less intense after the initial shock of the scare. Overall, the play itself was incredibly well performed, everyone's acting was very credible and raw, so I thought it was an excellent performance.

My favourite character was Jenny. I thought that all of the actors onstage did an incredible job. The plot twist at the end had me in shock, and even after the show I was suddenly realising things that made sense after that had been revealed. If anyone ever gets the chance to go and watch it, I would 100% recommend it as it's one of the best plays that I've ever seen live! Very well done to the cast and crew.

**By Emily, Year 11 GCSE Drama student**

# ATTENDANCE MATTERS

The school has been buzzing with excitement as the new academic year has begun. Along with new lesson subjects and signing up to co-curricular clubs, our new Year 7 students have settled in quickly and beautifully, while those in their final year of school-life, Year 11 students, have been busy revising and taking mock exams.

We have already started to notice a few coughs and runny noses as the weather has become cooler and we head into the Autumn and Winter months. Therefore, we all need to take extra care with our personal hygiene and self-care to prevent spreading cold viruses. We are all familiar with washing our hands regularly and thoroughly and blowing our noses on tissues and throwing them away. It is now even more important as virus-season is under way. Let's keep our school community healthy!

Remember - good school attendance is reflected in school work, attitude to learning, progress and success. If there are any other issues that may be affecting your child's attendance (that isn't virus related) we are always here to help and support. We have a dedicated and understanding pastoral team that can help figure out a solution and a plan. Do not hesitate to get in contact.

### The Golden Ticket is back!

Every half-term the students have the chance to win the Golden Ticket. The reward is based on 100% attendance combined with the top 25% reward points.

The Golden Ticket winners have the opportunity to have a morning filled with: colouring, origami, puzzles, juggling, pastries and hot chocolate.

Congratulations to the 108 students who won - we hope you enjoyed your reward!

### Well done to the forms with the best attendance this half term:

Year 7: Mrs Mandal

Year 8: Mrs Charlton-Trewick

Year 9: Mrs Fysh

Year 10: Miss Fairweather

Year 11: Mrs Wheeler

**To report a student's absence, please use one of the following methods:**

**Phone: 01485 536123**

**Text: 07935 059774**

**Email: [attendance@smithdonhigh.org.uk](mailto:attendance@smithdonhigh.org.uk)**





# **Get in touch:**

**Phone: 01485 534541**

**Email: [office@smithdonhigh.org.uk](mailto:office@smithdonhigh.org.uk)**

**Website: [www.smithdonhigh.org.uk](http://www.smithdonhigh.org.uk)**

**Twitter: [@smithdon\\_high](https://twitter.com/smithdon_high)**

**We hope you all have a  
restful break and we  
look forward to seeing  
you back on 30 October.**