



The Smithdonian

Smithdon High School Magazine



The Christmas 2023 Issue





WELCOME

Welcome to the Christmas 2023 Issue of the Smithdonian.

As I write, we are preparing the final elements of our last two days of term - with Christmas lunch for all year groups, served by Senior Leaders in Christmas outfits, on Tuesday and Christmas Accessories/Jumper Day on Wednesday with a Festive Bingo competition to end the day.

This term is so long, but really seems to have flown by - I think because we have had so much going on since half term and we have packed so much into seven and a half weeks! From our Halloween Spooky Stories to Christmas creativity in the library; from Design Technology and Youth Speaks competitions against local schools to all our sporting competitions.

Then we have our Performing Arts department exceeding their own expectations and setting up a challenge for themselves for 2024. The Christmas Concert and Trust Christmas Carol Service were both fantastic - and so atmospheric at Hunstanton Town Hall and St Nicholas' Chapel King's Lynn (respectively), and this year's production - Frozen Junior - was by far the best performance and presentation I have seen to date and several tears were shed as we were immersed into the storyline of Elsa, Ana, Kristoff and Olaf. It is so lovely that Adele's memory lives on, with the production dedicated to her and (outside of school) a Drama award in her name being won by one of her friends.

We were, of course, visited by Ofsted early in the half term, and I was delighted to be able to share our successful 'Good' outcome with parents, students, staff and the public at the start of December. It was great to see the efforts of all staff and students being identified by the Inspectors and to have the progress we have made be clearly recognised. Thank you to parents who have shared their messages of support with us following the publication of the report.

Enjoy reading about all our activities as you begin the holiday period. As always, I hope you and your children have a wonderful and restful break. We look forward to seeing the students on their return to school on Thursday 4 January 2024.

Amanda Gibbins

SMITHDON IN THE NEWS

Smithdon celebrates GOOD Ofsted result!

Smithdon is celebrating after Ofsted inspectors awarded a 'Good' status across the board following a recent inspection.

The school was praised for its 'well-crafted,' ambitious programmes of study and the inspector said students, "Value the opportunities to nurture existing talents and develop new ones. This goes beyond the traditional offer of sport."

Smithdon was previously graded as 'requires improvement' in 2018. The school currently has 581 students in years 7-11. Smithdons Headteacher Mrs Gibbins took up her role in September 2022, having been deputy headteacher and head of school previously.

"This report is testament to the whole Smithdon community and the hard work of everyone involved. We have a fantastic, talented staff supporting our students on their educational journey," Mrs Gibbins said.

"We are passionate that all children are given the same opportunities to succeed, whatever their background and skills. Our students with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities achieve in line with national figures, and we have a school community extending well beyond our fences." Rebecca Walker, Deputy CEO of WNAT, added, "together we are working to continue improvements at Smithdon, and are looking forward to celebrating every future success."

The report says students are benefiting from the improvements made since the school's previous inspection, and they know teachers have high aspirations for them, and respond to those well.

Personal social and health education (PSHE) was highlighted for supporting students to develop an increasing understanding of sensitive topics.

"They are well prepared to become positive citizens in modern Britain. Students learn the importance of

difference, tolerance and respect. They use this knowledge to embrace and celebrate diversity," the report says.

"Most pupils work hard in lessons and produce high quality work. Over time, students learn well. Their achievements have increased steadily in recent years."

Mrs Gibbins added that at 67 per cent, achieving grade 4 or higher in GCSE maths and English, was in line with national figures while maths results were especially successful with progress +0.39, ahead of the benchmark.

"Progress figures in all areas have improved since 2019 and, all bar one area, are above Norfolk and national progress data. Our Progress 8 score is above both the county and national average and shows pupil achievement from their last year of primary school to when they take GCSEs," she added.

The Ofsted report says the school has worked hard to improve behaviour of pupils, and there are high expectations which pupils understand. Most adults consistently apply the expected routines and develop positive relationships. Smithdon's staff members 'are proud to work at the school' and feel both included and valued.

The school, Trust and its staff are continually striving to give the children a excellent education with a varied co-curricular timetable that features clubs from across the subjects, including, Science, DT, Drama, Food and Music.

Local MP James Wild, commented, "schools play a vital role in helping children realise their potential so it is very encouraging to see recognition by Ofsted of the improvements Smithdon has made. This progress is testament to the considerable efforts of commitment of teachers, staff and the pupils to deliver better outcomes."



LIBRARY

Season's Readings

The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe by C.S Lewis

"Always Winter and never Christmas" is the depressing and despondent quote from C.S Lewis', *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (this year's Christmas theme for the school library) which sets the scene for the classic tale - the second book from the epic, *The Chronicles of Narnia*.

Imagine thick white snow covering fir trees, a glowing lamp-post and woodland creatures. An ideal scene for the perfect Christmas card you might think. Alas, for the residents of Narnia, it is a miserable existence. This chronicle tells the story of four siblings who stumble into the enchanted land of Narnia midst a long winter, through a wardrobe. The creatures they meet live in a never-ending world of snow and servitude to the self-proclaimed monarch, Queen of Narnia - otherwise known as the Jadis, the White Witch. An ambitious sorceress who lay claim to the land and usurped the throne with magical force, she is without goodness or mercy and in the beginning of the story, has Narnia under her tyrannical reign.



Christmas, albeit forbidden in Narnia, is still significant in the story. It begins when Lucy, the first human (daughter of Eve) to stumble into Narnia, meets a faun, Mr. Tumnus. He explains the history of the forever-winter in which Narnia is lost. The White Witch's curse makes it, "always winter and never Christmas; think of that!"

Even though Christmas is a lost-celebration for the Narnians, Father Christmas does make an appearance! He is still the sleigh and reindeer riding, present-bearing figure we all know and love - adorned in the familiar 'bright red robe...and a great white beard'. The children do however notice that he is not so 'jolly' and they become solemn in his presence. The appearance of Father Christmas at the end of the Long Winter was one of the first indications that Aslan's power was working and that the 'spell begins to break', meaning that the Witch's power was beginning to falter. "I've come at last. She has kept me out for a long time, but I have got in at last. Aslan is on the move. The Witch's magic is weakening." states Father Christmas. The power and un-jolliness of Father Christmas is shown by the presents that he gives them. Instead of gifting toys, books, socks and bath bombs, he gives the children weapons - that they can use in the upcoming battle between Aslan and Jadis, that familiar battle between good and evil.

In 1949 when the book was being written, life for people in the UK was still difficult. The Second World War had ended just four years before and the country and its people were still recovering and healing from the death, bombings and rationing that had destroyed families, cities and towns. The novel is set during the war, when the children in the book are evacuated from London to a big house in the English

countryside. In one of the rooms is the large, wooden wardrobe that disguises the gateway to Narnia. With the ravages of war and possibly the hunger that accompanied it still in the authors mind, food becomes a recurring theme throughout the story. With descriptions of food and cosy-settings creating the simple pleasures that seems indulgent during those war years.

Feasts and teas are enjoyed by the children. The Beavers treat the children to a "beautiful trout", "creamy milk", "lump of deep yellow butter" as well as ham, potatoes and sandwiches. Even the White Witch tempts them with a "very sweet and foamy and creamy" drink, followed with "several pounds of the best Turkish Delight". When Lucy is invited to tea by Mr Tumnus, he serves up "a nice brown egg...sardines on toast, and then buttered toast, and then toast with honey, and then a sugar topped-cake". Even Father Christmas appears with "bowl of lump sugar, a jug of cream, and a great big teapot all sizzling and piping hot".

C. S Lewis must have been thinking of all the food he had craved in those years of restrictions and shortages. There would have been several Christmases where Turkey was not the centre-piece of the Christmas dinner. With just the basic foods being hard to come by, the thought of a "gloriously sticky marmalade roll, steaming hot" would have been a great luxury.

So what reasons did the White Witch have for refraining from the wonderful celebrations and impose harsh sentences for those that disobeyed her? She certainly liked to demonstrate control over her forced-subjects. Maybe the thought of cheesy Christmas jumpers and cheery Christmas songs, mince pies and and dry turkey, just didn't appeal to her. But thankfully, her love of the cold, icy weather did create an aesthetic of glistening whiteness and beauty, fur coats and sleighs, icy palaces and powdery sweets which is perfect for Christmas cards and wintry decorations.

It seems that every year we wonder whether or not we will have a white Christmas. If the nostalgia of Christmases past, of children on sledges and having snow-ball fights on Christmas morning after opening their presents, will once again visit us. Unfortunately global warming destabilising the Gulf stream means that our winters are wetter and milder and our snowy weather comes later in the winter period towards February.

So we have to make-do with our Christmas cards and Christmas books to imagine a glistening-white festive period, and know that at least winter will come to an end and that Spring will bring with it, another celebration!





SPOOKY STORYTELLING



Ghouls, monsters and gore were the themes of the stories being told in the library on Halloween.

Sitting around a 'campfire', students and staff listened to tales of terror written by the students themselves. Read aloud using torches, the stories saw us jump with every creak of the library door. We were all impressed and terrified by the students' work!

Well done to Lily-May in Year 8 for winning, 'scary stories for a fright in the night' book for her story. All students left happy with a goody bag full of treats.

If you are interested in joining the writing group or taking part in the library events - speak to Miss Taylor or Mrs Faulkner and we will give you information on up-coming events and the writing competitions we are working towards.

The writing group not only awakens the imagination but also gives the students a chance to be published in the Young Writers books. We will also be entering the Rotary Club writing competition in the new year which will see the students up against other local schools.

The writing group meets in the library - Tuesday, lunch-time.



Spooky-Storytelling Stories

The Body Next Door

The lump in the bush started to wriggle. Slowly at first, but more and more noticeably.

It all started with me, my brothers Rowan and Oak, my sister Acacia and our best friend, Willow. My name is Elm and I am 14 years old. After school, we all (rather stupidly) decided to innocently wander over to our neighbour's house.

So, without a doubt, we all climbed over the fence separating our gardens. We found their house. It was clearly abandoned, with cardboard taped over the windows from the inside, and the house falling to bits. I scream in terror as I feel something furry brush against my leg, but then I realise it's just my fat little pug Terry.

I heard a rustle in the bushes. My twin brothers Rowan and Oak spin around, almost kicking Terry. The bush continues to wriggle as I watch maggots crawl out of the bottom. I climb into the bush and I see a rug with something big in it...

Rowan unwraps the disgusting, maggot magnet. We all scream as Terry licks the eyeballs of our dead neighbour Dave. His face is frozen into a scream, his (now licked) eyeballs covered with a thick film of dried blood. Panicking, we fold Dave back in the bush and run as far as we can...

By Pippa, Year 8

The Monster

I run, stumbling and tripping over my own feet as I try to get away from the monster, creature...whatever it is that is chasing me. My blood is burning, adrenaline running through my body as it starts to rain, it's now chucking it down. The rain gets louder, blocking out my thoughts.

"What if someone is stalking me?" or "what if it's a random thing that will turn into a pumpkin at midnight?" - these silly thoughts are circling round my head. I start shaking, blood pumping. My mind is spinning as I turn around to see if the thing is closer, but it has disappeared. Worried, I peer into the woods around me, through the dark shadowy trees. There is no sign of the creature. All I see is darkness. Complete nothingness around me. Except for a tree that looks like it has a human face.

Thinking nothing of it and having a little giggle of relief to myself, I carry on walking. After a while it feels like I am walking through the same part of the woods, past the same tree with that distorted face again, on the same path.

Maybe I'm just overthinking and my imagination has been sparked by the darkness and the silence. Maybe I'm just hallucinating the monster that is now straight in front of me, with glowing red eyes and a snarling grin. Maybe I'm just dreaming that it says my name in a low, growling voice. Maybe I'm...

By Anonymous

The Ghost of Manic Manor

The manor was infamous because of the strange paranormal disappearances. (but more likely deaths). In 1568 it was an asylum for the most insane of people.

You are one of the many hundreds of ghosts haunting the manor. It was Friday. Bang! Somebody had broken in, you were happy that there was a new person to horrify. You rush into the kitchen and find an unconscious man lying the floor, covered in blood.

Earlier that day, you had seen the same man bury 3 bodies in the garden. You were curious who he was.

You dragged him onto the kitchen table and tied him down. You pick up a meat cleaver, turn, he is gone. You screech in frustration and you search for him, determined to find him - when you do, he is dead meat! (quite literally).

You find him shivering in a closet and drag him back to the kitchen where you chain him down and chop of his legs and then his arms. He woke up screaming - the screaming pleased you, you felt good, you felt hungry for more pain, you chop of his head with one foul swing (the screaming was getting annoying). You package the head in the nicest box you can find and leave it on the correct doorstep. In the morning, his family is greeted by his bloody, dismembered head.

By Lily-May, Year 8 (There is a chapter 2 - if anyone is brave enough?!)

The Halloween Party

So there was Bill Burts and it was Halloween - the worst time of the year for him because he was very scared of Halloween.

He was scared of places like Sainsburys because he saw all of the Halloween merchandise. He couldn't go to his favourite shops at this time of as it terrified him so much.

So one day, his friends and brother decided to help Bill Burts get over his fear of Halloween....

They arranged a Halloween party where guests could dress up and play games and eat lots and lots of sweets - to show him that there was nothing to be afraid of.

So they all dressed up as friendly ghost with friendly faces but when Bill Burts arrived at the party, he was terrified! He soon realised that it was hi friends in costumes and that they actually weren't that scary.

They had bought him a costume for him and they encouraged him to put it on and enjoy the fun of being a friendly ghost.

He did have lots of fun at the age of 24 - you may think that's too old to have a Halloween party but you are never too old to get over your fears or to have fun!

By Oscar, Year 8

I'd like to go out tonight, on the night of Halloween.

Round all the streets, in costumes, ready to yell "trick or treat!"

I like the pumpkins and Jack-O'-lanterns that shine bright like a star in the night.

All the black cats, to the little fake rats, they all give me a bit of a fright.

I'll have Halloween parties with apple bobbing, my friends will be there too.

Then next year we'll do it all again and the sweets will be brand-new.

By Izzie, Year 7

The Glitch

The Young Writers Competition

Tick...

The clocks stopped. I checked the batteries but it didn't work. I realised the birds had stopped singing. My horse and dog were frightened. I comforted them. We were all confused but even more when we realised that it wasn't getting darker. Night hadn't come. I tried to black out the windows so we could sleep. Nothing changed for a couple of days, then I heard birdsong. Te animals became calm again and then the sun set as it had before. As night fell, the clock started to tick again. No one ever knew what happened. Tick....tock.....tick.....tock

By Emily, Year 11

It was Utopia, that is what you all thought. It was a normal day in sub-section E when The Glitch happened - a texture on the road, black and magenta. This had never happened before and so The Officials saw it as a threat to their control over your simulated paradise. You were called 467. Or Morana as you preferred. You were a Russian woman, aged about 27. You were living in the north side of sub-section E. The Glitch spread, black and magenta. It killed all in its path. And just spread. The End. Or is it?

By Lily-May, Year 8

Every clock has stopped. There is silence ringing in my ears. The people are completely frozen. Except my brother. He has a look of complete panic on his face as he runs towards me. "Frederick" I shout and he suddenly stops, as if there was a force-field separating us. I hear a blood-curdling scream. Fredrick bangs his fists on the force field. "oh dear" I say. It seems The Monster has got his throat. Literally. My brother is ripped away from the force-field by an invisible energy. He really should not have sent that message.

By Pippa, Year 8



In the English department, we set our students a challenge for November: **read as many non-fiction books as you can and achieve 100% in the AR quizzes.** This did appeal to a few students - probably due to the tub of chocolates that acted as an incentive - but we like to think they also wanted to increase and widen their reading skills!

There was some healthy competition within the Year 7 classes and amongst a couple of the English teachers who encouraged their students - hoping for a share of the prize no doubt!

In 2022, The National Literacy Trust, reported that over half of young people do actually read non-fiction books. And that children and young people who read non-fiction are more engaged with environmental issues. If they are reading about lost habitats, extinction and sustainable living on a regular basis, they are starting to think about the world they live in and how they impact their environment and the desire to help and be involved can ultimately follow with that knowledge.

Overall, the report found that more children and young people who read non-fiction were motivated to read for educational purposes, to satisfy their own curiosities about certain subjects (Who doesn't want to read about whether or not a worm has a girlfriend?) and to support their mental well-being. There are many books aimed at young people who want to research LGBTQ+ issues, or ways to help their own anxieties or worries about life. Many we have in the school library.

This was a fantastic way to encourage our students to explore non-fiction and celebrate the different perspectives and enjoyment it brings. Why not try a non-fiction next time you choose a book? It may surprise you how much you enjoy it and you may learn some interesting and surprising facts!

Alfie receiving his reward and a certificate.



The final winner was Alfie who read and quizzed an impressive 18 books! He learnt a lot of useful facts about animals, vehicles and the world. His determination and commitment to win the sweet prize was impressive.

Well done also goes to Harrison in Year 7 who was the runner-up and also received chocolate to celebrate his achievement.

Well done Alfie and Harrison, we hope you enjoy your rewards!



Cosy Christmas Story-telling

It's that time of year again - the festive holiday season! Our classrooms and library are decorated with tinsel, fairy lights, Christmas trees and all things merry! The contagious excitement of the students has teachers using every teaching trick to keep them on task and learning!

The Spooky Storytelling event at Halloween was so enjoyable that we decided to do it again. With the special magic in the air as Christmas draws closer, inspiration for lovely stories is all around.

Instead of a camp-fire, we had a Christmas fireplace to sit around - with hot-chocolate and mince pies to bring the cosy ambience of the festive celebration to the library. The students once again read out their own Christmas poems and stories that they had written for the occasion. The quality of their writing once again impressed us all and they all received Christmas treats as a reward and thank you for their hard work.

These story-telling events provide fantastic writing opportunities where our students can engage with the celebrations, use their wonderful imaginations, and also practise their writing skills! They write independently with very little support. The Creative Writing Group follows the Young Writers and The Rotary writing competitions as a way of motivating and focusing their writing. We find this a great way to prompt the students thinking and it helps them to organise and articulate their thoughts, words and imaginations.

The story-telling events are open to all - not just the Writing group.

Christmas Poems

The Magic of Christmas

Everyone can feel the Christmas cheer.
Snow is falling through the air.
Small white snowflakes floating to the ground.
The magic of Christmas is found.

Little children playing in the snow.
Wishing Christmas would never go.
Gardens decked with sparkling lights.
Brightening up the cold winter nights.

Shiny baubles hung upon the Christmas tree.
Such a delight for people to see.
Festive carols playing loud.
Entertaining a happy crowd.

Roasting chestnuts over the fire.
Christmas food is everyone's desire
The sweet spicy tastes of Christmas treats.
Waft out into the snowy streets.

Children lie asleep in their bed.
The night is quiet and seems dead.
But little do they know Santa is flying through the sky.
His reindeer galloping extremely high.

When children awake the very next day.
At the foot of their bed presents lay.
Christmas time is happy and fun
Sadness, sorrow, there is none.

By Isobel, Year 8

The Christmas Night

Snow, snow, falling everywhere.
With a certain magic in the air.
Stars twinkling in the night.
Shining so bright.
A crunch in the snow.
To let people know
that the reindeer's are coming by.
Flying in the sky,
with a scarlet red light showing the way,
to make Christmas Day.

Their brown fluffy fur, speckled with white.
To fill your dreams with delight.
Their eyes gleamed with stars,
as they watch the cars pass by.
Santa chuckling as the children are wriggling.
In their bed excited for the day ahead.
Santa putting presents under the tree,
to fill the children with glee.
The smell of turkey roasting in the oven for your
beloved.

Carollers are singing,
with their arms swinging.
With joy and light.
For people everywhere to enjoy Christmas night.

By Iris, Year 8



By Mr Chapman

The Year 11 Prize Presentation and GCSE Certificate Evening took place in the main hall at Smithdon on Tuesday 28 November. Those invited included students from the class of 2023, their parents, staff, school governors, representatives from Hunstanton Town council, the Hunstanton members of Hunstanton and District Rotary Club.

All students received their GCSE exam board certificates. There were twenty subject awards, introduced by Assistant Headteacher, Mr Chapman, who said "We are so proud of all our students and their personal successes. It is so important for us to celebrate with them and to acknowledge the accomplishments of their hard work". These awards were presented by our Headteacher, Mrs Gibbins, who told us "it is great to have the students return to collect their awards and for us to find out what they have moved on to do - at Sixth Form, College or in Apprenticeships." These awards were based on nominations from subject staff. Each award winner received a glass trophy, which included a plaque with details of their award.

A number of special awards were also presented including the Clare Shield for English Language, The Connie Martin Award for English Literature, the Hall Exhibition Foundation Endowed Prize for Mathematics, the Hunstanton Round Table Award for Physical Education, the NHS Shield for Health and Social Care and the Claire Shield for Art. Awards recognising further achievements including the George Raines Memorial Award for Sport, The Hunstanton Lions Prize for Service to the School and its Community and The Pastoral Leader Award. Two awards were presented by Mr Raven, the current President of Hunstanton and District Rotary Club. These were The Rotary Award for School Values and the The Rotary Young Citizen Award.

Councillor Michael Ruston, Mayor of Hunstanton, introduced a new award sponsored by Hunstanton Town Council: The Mayor's Award for the Smithdon Seven - All Round Excellence. This was given to the student who demonstrated all the aspects of the Smithdon Seven – Belief, Ambition, Responsibility, Community, Prepared, Respect and Pride.

Chair of Governors, Mr Crofts, who closed the event, congratulated all students on their successes. "These evenings are a fantastic opportunity to celebrate the students' successes, as well as the hard work of the staff who supported them on their journey." Refreshments followed allowing students and guests to speak to one another and end a very enjoyable evening.

Congratulations to our award winners: Hannah, Maisie, Caitlin, Roxy, Olivia, Elizabeth, George, Harvey, Asia, Callum, Daisy, Oliver, Amy, Jessie-Mae, Alfie, Phoebe, Shane, Gracie, Tommy, Fallon, Chloe, Marcell'e-Rose, Jake and Teddy.



Gracie receiving her award from Mrs Gibbins



By Mrs Pike - Head of Science

The latest Science event was very popular, with 20 KS3 students who came along to have a go at extracting DNA from Kiwi and human. The Kiwi is tricky to extract DNA from but the students all enjoyed using a pestle and mortar to break down the kiwi's cells. To extract human DNA, we swilled salt water - the response from students was "eurgh!" We did have drinks to remove the taste of salt water from our mouths!

Some of our Duke of Edinburgh students came along as part of their course to learn new skills.

The event had some great feedback:

"All in all it was loads of fun and very messy! I can't wait to see what we do next!"

"The Science Club was really fun because it was messy and cool because I made Kiwi and Human DNA! I would love to do it again!"

Pippa in Year 8 said, "the science event was very fun and a fascinating learning experience for me."

The next Science event will be building and racing Dragsters! This will be held on 13 February, 3pm-4.30pm. Look out for posters and the sign-up sheet in the new year!



Pippa, Lily-May and Erin extracting DNA from a kiwi!

Year 11 Science Help:

Tuesday 9 January – Biology

Tuesday 16 January – Chemistry

Tuesday 22 January – Physics

Tuesday 30 January – General exam technique
– gaining every available mark.

If there is anything specifically you would like me to go over please email in advance. In February, Science help will run on Wednesdays and Year 10 are also welcome to come along.

Rae, Bella, Ethan (me) and Martha performing at the Dickensian Christmas market.



The Most Wonderful (and busiest) Time of the Year

By Ethan, Year 10

At Smithdon we have a collection of shows that we perform as a school, and no more so than at Christmas time. We take pride and joy in showing the school and local community our talent while following the school values to work hard, be kind and smile. The Performing Arts Department puts on a range of shows, including visits to care homes, festivals in local towns, town hall performances, musicals performed by our students and concerts throughout the year.

This year we went to Driftwood House and Norfolk Lodge Care Homes to sing carols with the residents. It was very enjoyable to get to sing along with the older members of our community and to bring them some Christmas spirit.

We also performed at the Hunstanton Dickensian Christmas Market after having had a four hour Frozen rehearsal on Sunday 26 November, this allows our community to see the talent we have here and how hard we work. We also performed to the local community at the Hunstanton Christmas Tree Festival, singing carols for the guests.

We also perform as a member of the West Norfolk Academies Trust with the other Trust schools performing a variety of songs. On the very cold night of 6 December, Smithdon, along with students from all of the other trust schools, met at St Nick's in King's Lynn and performed a carol service for the community, all together there were about 1000 people there!

The next night we went back to the Town Hall and had our own Annual Christmas concert! The highlight from that night was being able to perform with everyone - and especially the Year 7 band rocking out to Merry Christmas Everybody!

As a student that spends most of their time with the Performing Arts Department, I am encouraged to perform with multiple students in different groups like the Choir, duets, solos, and so many more including the school musical that is performed by students once a year. This year's musical is Frozen Jr, in which I play Kristoff!

The school musicals are some of my happiest school memories and my best experiences! We certainly hope that everyone enjoyed the show!

As a Performing Arts student, the Department team is very nice and welcoming to every student that joins. The Department team consists of three teachers: Miss Miller (the Head of Music), Mrs Proctor (Head of Drama) and Miss Brown (Drama teacher). We could not do anything without them, they are such a great team to work with and to learn from and so supporting and encouraging to all of us.

We also enjoy educational (and fun) trips to different performances such as a trip to the Royal Albert Hall, Norwich theatre trips to see plays and so much more. This term the Drama Department brought in 'Box House Theatre' to do a drama workshop which aims to help develop our performance skills.

The Performing Arts Department also took the Year 7's on the annual trip to see the Hunstanton Pantomime, Jack and the Beanstalk. Overall the Performing Arts team is an amazing Department to be around and an important and key Department in the school.

Lily-Jean, one of our Year 11 students, loves everything performing Arts! She is studying GCSE drama and takes part in the school shows and performance, including Frozen JR. On top of this, she attends the John Giller Drama and Theatre Academy. Lily-Jean was a very good friend of Adele's who also attended the Academy. This year John Giller awarded a trophy for the "rising star" of the Academy. This was provided by Adele's mum in remembrance of Adele. Lily-Jean was this year's 'rising star'!

Congratulations Lily-Jean!

Peripatetic music lessons are available to all students - Please ask Miss Miller for further information.

New members to the choir are always welcome.



The care home residents enjoyed singing along with us - an annual tradition of Smithdon!



Udaesh, Harry and Sam, also known as The Unknown wowed the crowds!



Jaz has been playing the violin since she was 7 and has lessons at school.



Ethan in Year 11 sang a solo Christmas song - such a wonderful voice!



Remembrance Day

A poppy field bloomed at Smithdon as students commemorated Remembrance Day in eye-catching style. The display, set up in the lavender bed at the front of the school's entrance, was created by students across all year groups, contributing hand-made poppies.

The inspiring and beautiful memorial was the idea of Miss Moat, our teacher of PE and Health and Social Care and Assistant Headteacher for Years 7 and 8.

"A task was set over two weeks for students in their forms to colour and design poppies. Some have used pencil, some have used pen, and some have used their Photo-shop skills. Anyone who wished to remember someone was asked to write it on the back of the poppy. We had names mentioned from Snettisham, Dersingham, Hunstanton, Heacham and Bircham Newton"

As well as the poppy field, we marked Remembrance Day more traditionally, with Mrs Robinson and the school's head students attending the service, parade and the wreath laying ceremony in Hunstanton on Remembrance Sunday.

"It is important to us as a school to be part of this community event and support our families, many of whom have links to the armed services," said Mrs Robinson.

Mrs Gibbins also led a whole-school assembly, where a two-minute silence was held, and a wreath was laid in the poppy field. The students involved in Cadets, Scouts and other groups were invited to wear their uniforms for the occasion - they all looked proud and smart.

"It is important to remember those who died for us in war but also to celebrate all our services," added Mrs Gibbins. "It is important to remember those of our community who served and continue to do so."



For the first DT mini-makes club, we made remembrance poppies from plastic on the laser cutter - we made them in different colours to represent the different meanings:

Red - The blood of those that gave their lives during the war.

Blue - In France, a *bleuet de France* is worn instead of a remembrance poppy to commemorate military personnel who died in war.

White - Remembrance for all victims of war, both military and civilian and pacifists that wanted peace.

By Harriet, Year 7

Design Technology





Fin, Logan, Aidan and Aaron - the winning team!

The Technology Tournament

Eighteen teams across four secondary schools in West Norfolk, took part in the 7th Technology Tournament organised by the Priory Rotary Club on 14 November at King's Lynn Academy.

The teams of 4 students (in 3 age-group categories) were given the challenge of 'constructing a vehicle capable of crossing a deep river using a suspended cable.'

They all found the task challenging but in the end most teams produced vehicles which met the requirements. In the Intermediate category for Years 10 and 11, the winning team was from Smithdon! They did outstandingly well that they actually completed more than the intermediate teams were expected to and even solved the advanced level design problem that is usually aimed at the Year 12 and Year 13 students.

The awards were sponsored and presented by Tony Mallett of Product Engineering from Recipharm - a global market leader in the design, development and manufacture of drug delivery devices, based in Kings Lynn.

Mr Mallett stated, "the challenges of working together as a team to build something and make it work were really important to companies like Recipharm and he hoped everyone had enjoyed taking part and learnt something useful from it."

Congratulations to our winning team, a well-deserved win as you impressed everyone with your team-work and skills - we are so proud of you.



The team in action - focused and concentrating whilst working together as a team.



Bella, Darcie, Cameron and Miles - The Smithdon 2023 Youth Speaks Team

Youth
Speaks
By Miles, Year 9

Myself, Darcie and Cameron were the 2023 Youth Speak team for Smithdon.

Darcie was the Chairperson, Cameron the Proposer and I was the Opposer. It was my idea to speak about the topic of free university fees because I think that the fees are a problem and put students off applying.

We researched our subject from various websites, including some government websites, for the debate over the motion 'Should university be free in the UK?'. We practised for 5 weeks and worked together to build our arguments against one another. It was hard work and time-consuming but we wanted to feel confident public-speaking and know our subject.

On the evening of the debate, we arrived about an hour before every other team and were still practising right up until we had to take our seats, trying to use our notes as little as possible - with the help of Mrs Gibbins and Ms Wright who came along to support us.

I think the whole debate went very well and we didn't forget our lines which was great! The other teams were also really good and there were a variety of topics. In the end, disappointingly for us, Sheringham High School's team won. However, we really enjoyed our own debate and were proud of how well we did.



Tuesday afternoons are super fun for those lucky students that get to go to Forest School at WILDings in Snettisham. Learning in nature can be a beneficial and enjoyable experience in a natural environment, using exploration and adventure to foster resilient, confident, independent and creative learners. Oscar and Keanen would like to share their experiences with you.



We do lots of fun activities like making crafty bits using materials from the forest. We also make potions. I love raking leaves into giant piles for everyone to jump in (and burying Michaela - the Forest School Leader). We learn to cook and play on the zip-line. I am currently making a den with logs - it's epic! We learn about fire safety and how to light a fire using sticks.

We have a lot of snacks at Forest School - which is good because we work so hard! We have: beans, waffles with whipped cream, corn on the cob and pizza!

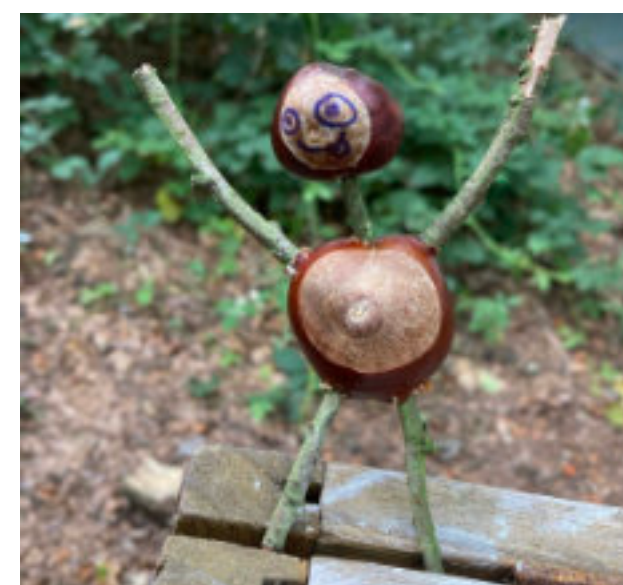
Oscar, Year 8

On the last Forest School of the term before Christmas, we toasted marshmallows on the fire using sticks that we found in the woods. We also tried to track down Corey in the forest, following a track of flour that he had laid out behind him. We made confetti using stamps to cut out patterns in the leaves.

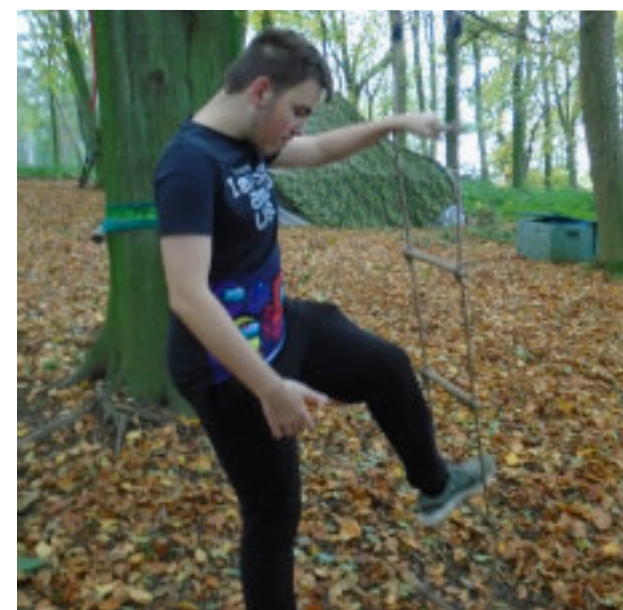
Keanen, Year 7



Keanen likes playing in the musical tent and playing *hide and seek*.



Amethyst was really proud of her conker man.



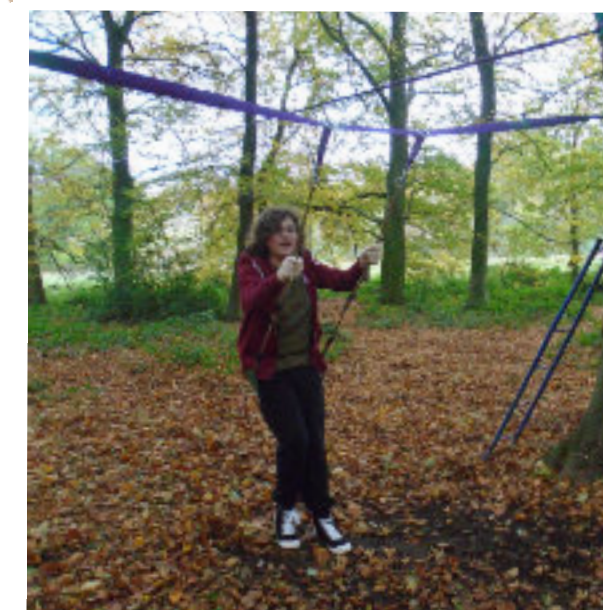
Corey has enjoyed his time at forest school, playing on the equipment.



Emily has been creative in the forest, making a poppy badge.



Oscar loved making potions - so exciting!



Brogan on the zip-line - this is a firm favourite!

Dungeons & Dragons (commonly abbreviated as D&D or DnD) is a fantasy, tabletop role-playing game - also known as RPG. It is a very popular interactive game where you get to go on epic adventures with your friends. You can become the characters that you create, battle deadly foes, find treasure and uncover secrets!

There have been many references to the game in the media, such as, in 'Stranger Things'! Some of the creatures from Stranger Things were named after D&D monsters and villains. Other TV shows that featured the game are, *The Big Bang Theory*, *The IT Crowd* and *That 70's Show*. This shows just how popular and international the game is!

We have an ever-growing club at school which was originally in Mr Duncan's room but it got very popular so we moved into the library, which is a bigger space for us to set up and spread out the games.

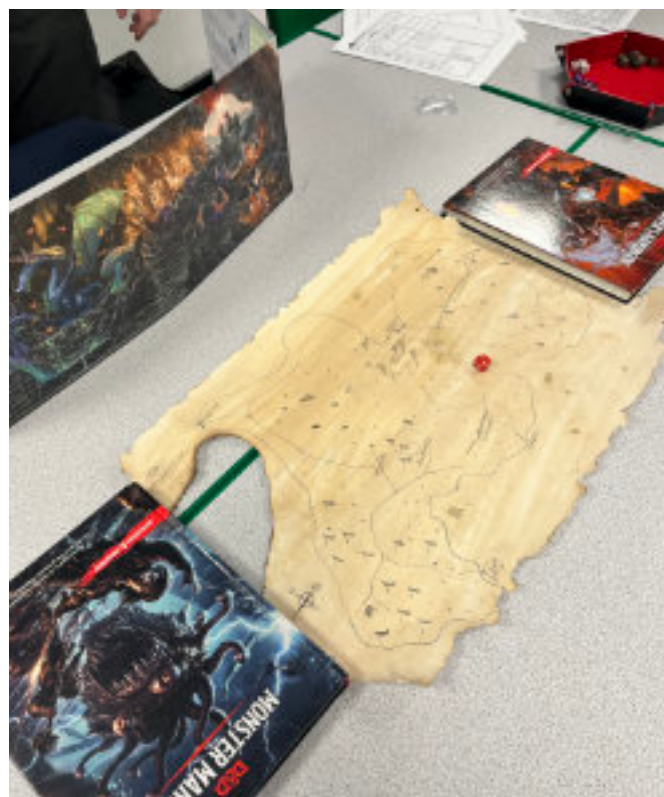
Mr Duncan and Mrs Mortoza-Cowles run the club and supervise us. I am able to run my own game as Mr Duncan taught me all the skills I needed and helped us by adding all of us into a Google classroom where he posted educational videos. If I am not sure how to do something I know I can just ask for help and support and if you want to have your idea double-checked by one of the teachers, they will be happy to take a look.

A DM is a 'Dungeon Master'. We are the people who run and make the campaign - which is the story we make.

If you want to know more, come to one of our weekly gatherings, every Wednesday in the library, 3pm to 4pm. Or just speak to me or one of the D&D teachers. New members are always welcome, it is great fun and you will make friends from all year groups across the school.

By Will, Year 10

The D&D Club



Smithdon hits the spot for Children in Need!

What works out with Joe Wicks and is covered in spots?

The answer could be found at Smithdon on Friday 17 November when the staff and students undertook two different challenges to raise money for this year's Children in Need campaign.

The 'Spotacular' Fancy Dress Challenge invited students to swap their uniforms for the spottiest outfit! Meanwhile, the 'Bearpees' Challenge - which was instigated by The Body Coach, Joe Wicks - tasked the fundraisers with completing 1,000 burpees during their lunch break. Sports leaders were on hand to help count the repetitions. 1521 was the total amount with Year 7 achieving 100!

Smithdon takes part in Children in Need every year, and usually raises hundreds of pounds.

"Events like this are very important as Children in Need support local projects that support our cohort," said Deputy Headteacher Mrs Robinson, who organised the day. "They also give students an understanding of the challenges faced by other children around the country."

The fun-filled day raised £403 for the charity. Thank you to everyone that donated.

Macmillan Coffee Morning

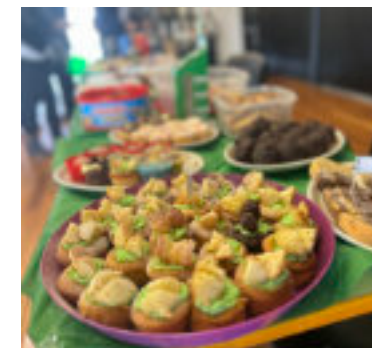
On Wednesday 18 October, after weeks of planning, the Year 10 and 11 ASDAN students hosted the Smithdon Macmillan Coffee Morning. Posters were made, cakes and brownies were baked and the table set up in the hall during break and lunchtime.

Seventeen students were involved in the annual charity event which raises much needed funds for the UK cancer care support charity. Many of the students baked and decorated the cakes themselves, producing delicious brownies, cupcakes and slabs of rocky-road. The queue for the delicious sweet treats didn't seem to dwindle as the money added up. Charging 50p - £1 - many students went back for more!

"The event is held each year and organised by Year 10 and Year 11 ASDAN students as part of their course. One of their assessment tasks is to raise funds for a charity or cause. The students advertised the event by creating posters, Twitter posts, and sending emails to liaise with key staff; they also created decorations and helped to bake and decorate cakes to be sold on the day."

The event took place in the main hall and was accessible to the entire school, both staff and students, on the day, who were able to go along and buy cakes and other yummy treats and drinks for a donation. At Smithdon, we take pride in being able to run events like these, and participate where we can in raising money for important causes, both for our local community and the wider population. It is really important for us to be able to raise awareness and money for important causes." - Miss Ruskin, teacher of Art and Design and Technology/ ASDAN teacher.

The coffee morning, supported by staff and students, raised £163.18 for the charity! Other members of staff supporting the students in their fundraising project during their ASDAN lessons, included the group's teacher, Miss Brown, and their Learning Support Assistant, Miss Thrower.





You're not alone this Christmas



Text 85258
www.giveashout.org



0300 123 3393
www.mind.org.uk



0300 7729844
www.nopanic.org.uk



0800 58 58 58
www.thecalmzone.net



0808 808 4000
www.nationaldebtline.org



116 123
www.samaritans.org.uk



0808 808 1677
www.cruse.org.uk

4 TIPS ON HOW TO FEEL A LITTLE LESS LONELY THIS CHRISTMAS:

Limit your social media usage

Volunteer in your local area

Consider scheduling a call with family or friends

Have a look at what places are open near you

For more support organisations, you can find the Everymind Mental Health Support Directory on www.everymindatwork.com.

Don't suffer in silence.

ATTENDANCE MATTERS

When making our New Year's resolutions, we could all probably add 'get organised' to our lists.

For 2024, consider that small changes can make a big difference! There are some simple steps that can help your child be more prepared for school:

- Pack their bag the night before.
- Set the alarm clock five minutes earlier.
- Create a morning and bedtime routine.

Creating these new habits will give your child a good start to the term and help them be in school on time and ready to learn.

Lets also consider that we are still in virus season. Keep a healthy routine and lets not spread those nasty bugs!

Have a lovely Christmas!

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

Year 7: Ms Wright

Year 8: Mrs Robinson

Year 9: Mrs Fysh

Year 10: Miss Fairweather and Mrs Dibble

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

Get in touch:

Phone: 01485 534541

Email: office@smithdonhigh.org.uk

Website: 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 4 January.

Have a very
Merry Christmas!