



The Westcliff Diary

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ISSUE 104 / SPRING 2026



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FROM THE DESK OF THE HEADMASTER

Welcome Back

At the start of 2026, and as we begin our new School term, I wish pupils, parents, staff, and friends of the School a very Happy New Year.

Extra-Curricular Opportunities at WHSB

Last term ended with some wonderful, festive Music and Drama events involving so many of our pupils and staff, and I congratulate them all on the high standard of the performances we enjoyed. We were delighted to see the School Hall filled to capacity for those seasonal celebrations, and I am grateful to the many parents and friends of the School who showed their support for our pupils in this regard.

Our Autumn Sinfonia Concert was a delight, with the School's Sinfonia in fine form and delivering superb performances of Haydn's *Symphony 101* and *Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker Suite*. On the stage, our talented actors took on the significant challenge of performing a double-bill, beginning with Pinter's one-act play *The Dumb Waiter*, followed by an AI *Christmas Carol*, a brilliantly conceived AI generated adaption of Dickens' well-known seasonal tale. We are fortunate indeed to benefit from Mr Jeffrey's drive, innovation and creativity, the superb support from his team, and from the inspiration they secure in our actors.

Returning to Music, we enjoyed a fantastic evening of upbeat festivities courtesy of

the outstanding WHSB Big Band and others, and congratulations to them all for ensuring the audience was well entertained throughout a wonderful programme of music performed to the highest standard. Our final event of the year was our traditional Service of Lessons and Carols, which I believe was our best yet; our choristers go from strength to strength, under the skilled direction of Mr Derrick, and with brilliant support from Mr Wood, who was also both organist and pianist for our Service.

Our seasonal evening events, and those taking place during the School day too,

were enhanced by the presence of our beautiful Norwegian Fir Christmas Tree generously donated, as has now become our tradition, by the Old Westcliffian Association. I would like to offer my thanks to the OWA, and to Mr Terry Birdseye (President of the OWA) who attended the presentation alongside some of our pupils from across the School.

Of course, seasonal celebrations and our vibrant art scene aside, the Autumn Term was filled to the brim with wide-ranging extra-curricular opportunities including clubs, societies, House events, subject and other competitions, the Duke of Edinburgh Award, the Combined Cadet Force events, sporting fixtures, and the list goes on. The extent of these opportunities open to our pupils is simply astonishing, and would not be possible without the commitment and dedication of our wonderful staff at WHSB, and I wish to record my thanks to them all.

And so we embark on a new term, filled with new opportunities for all pupils, and this edition of *The Westcliff Diary* sets out



Christmas Big Band



Headmasters Award for House Points September 2025

many of the activities and events that are planned for the coming weeks. I urge each pupil to take advantage of the programme available to you, to step out of your comfort zone, and to try something new, whether that is joining a club, auditioning for a play, learning a new skill, entering a competition, or extending your friendship circle. Participation is fundamental to personal development and in building self-confidence, as reflected through our Learner Profile.

Extending one's experiences, confidence, skills and knowledge, and remaining open to opportunities is also a helpful in developing a pupil's CV, and this is very much welcomed by Admissions teams at university level, and also by prospective employers. There are so many reasons to engage with the extra-curricular opportunities available at WHSB and I hope you will find this edition of *The Westcliff Diary* inspiring.

Charity and Fundraising

Those who follow the School news will know that our pupils and staff commit a great deal of their time and energy towards raising funds to support charities and to make a difference to people and communities in greater need. Some of their fundraising efforts and initiatives are recorded in this edition, and there will be further charity activities and events to come this term. I would like to record my thanks to the Charity Committee and its Chairman (Toby Dowling) for their excellent planning, enthusiasm, and support in coordinating recent events, and we wish our new Charity Committee (drawn from the Lower Sixth) well as they take over, this term. On a similar theme, I wish to thank pupils and staff for their superb efforts in raising funds for the Poppy Appeal in November; those funds too have been gratefully received by the Charity.





Presentation of the Christmas Tree Donated by the OWA



Donating Christmas presents at the Old Age Psychiatry Ward, Rochford Hospital



Celebrating the School's Wider Community

The School's extra-curricular offer is very well supported by both the Parents' Association and the School's alumni, and we are most fortunate that many parents and former pupils devote time towards ensuring our pupils benefit from enhanced educational provision. The ways in which they contribute are too numerous to mention in the Diary space available, but I would like to record our sincere thanks to those who contribute so much.

This year, we are delighted to be celebrating the centenary of the Old Westcliffian Association. The Old Westcliffians formed an Association 100 years ago and, while its structure and constitution may have changed since its inception, a strong OW network is fundamental both to the School's alumni, and to the enrichment of the educational experiences of our current pupils.

There is much to celebrate, and plans are now well underway to mark the occasion on Saturday 12 September. Westcliff High School for Boys will open its doors from 1.00pm until 6.00pm for tours of the School, and displays of achieve material and memorabilia. The highlight of our event will be a cabaret-style, sit-down tea in the School Hall, whilst enjoying a programme of entertainment delivered by members of our current School community. A pay-bar facility will be available throughout the afternoon.

During the afternoon, a commemorative plaque will be unveiled to mark the occasion, and a photographer will be on hand to capture memorable moments throughout the event. For those OWs who are keen to make the most of the weekend, an informal celebratory dinner is planned at a venue local to the School, with a WHSB School minibus shuttle service provided for those who require it.

OWs are most welcome to bring their family members and friends with them, and we know that in some cases this may include two or three generations of OWs! Further details will be circulated in the coming weeks and, in the meantime, please save the date in your diary.

Sporting Facilities

Thanks to the generous legacy of £34,000 from Old Westcliffian, Barry Coker, we are in a position to now replace the School's failing tartan surface. This replacement facility will not only benefit our top athletes who require such facilities for effective training, but all our pupils too, as this provides an important outdoor teaching area for Physical Education. Barry's legacy, which will make a difference in the lives of so many pupils to come, is a truly wonderful gift to us all, and one for which we are most grateful. We shall be recording Barry's Generosity on our Donations Board in the Centenary Room.

We have plans to further improve and upgrade our sporting facilities, including our aging pavilion, and we continue to invite your support. Regrettably, Government funding is not available to support such developments, and therefore should you or your company believe there may be potential to offer your financial support I would be very pleased to meet with you to discuss our plans.

Preparing for Higher Education and Beyond

The School is investing in the further development of provision to support preparation for Higher Education and the world of work. I am most grateful to Dr Platts, who has provided excellent support in developing our Old Westcliffian Mentor Programme, extending the programme beyond our successful Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary provision, to include mentors from top universities, including Oxbridge, and from companies and other organisations. There are further

developments in the pipeline and I look forward to sharing further details with you in due course.

I would like to close this introduction by offering my thanks to those who contribute towards *The Westcliff Diary*, and in particular to Mr Jeffreys and Mrs Shankster who provide much support in collating and preparing content for publication.

I wish you all an enjoyable and successful Spring Term 2026.

Staff Changes This Term

Last term we said farewell to Mr Kallon who is taking a short break from teaching before taking up employment closer to his home. We also said farewell to Miss Lambert who left us for a promoted position in the health care sector. We thank both colleagues for their splendid service and wish them well.

We are delighted that Miss Parkinson rejoined us during last term as our Acting Premises and Facilities Manager. We also give our best wishes to Miss Lewis (our outgoing Premises and Facilities Manager) who left us for a promoted position in October. We were also very pleased to welcome back Mrs Jenkins from her maternity leave and thank Mrs Boyton for providing cover during Mrs Jenkins' absence.

We also welcomed Ms Emmie Peterson who joined us in December to teach English, and we look forward to Mr Soares-Davidson rejoining us this term to teach Mathematics. We warmly welcome our new Modern Foreign Language Assistants too, Ms Ramirez Cortes, Ms Weber, and Ms Le Customer.

Headmaster



CAPTAIN'S LOG

The Autumn term was filled with countless stories of Westcliffians embracing the many opportunities our School has to offer, leaving me almost uncertain where to begin my review. The charitable spirit of our students was on full display throughout November, better known to us here as Movember. Many volunteered to support this global movement, which raises awareness and funds primarily for men's mental health, as well as other male health issues. Motivated to make a difference, a large group of our Sixth Form students (including myself) took part, either growing a moustache throughout the month or running for charity. Together, I am delighted to report, we raised over £1,800.

Movember is just one of many reminders of the vital importance of taking care of our mental health. In a School blessed with constant successes, the smallest setback can feel overwhelming. I always prefer to read failure, however, as an opportunity to grow. Although adages such as this can be seen as trite or overused, it is easy to forget the true weight behind such sayings. Everyone fails, but not everyone chooses to grow from it. Thankfully, at WHSB we do not have to face these challenges alone. It is well worth taking a moment to appreciate that we are, first and foremost, a community. One of the most beautiful aspects of my time at Westcliff has been witnessing, year after year, just how much support surrounds us, not only from the School itself, but also from the friends who stand beside us every day. Many of us have been in the same boat, whether it be stressing over examinations, maintaining a

work-life balance, or leaving your Mathematics homework to the very last minute. Talking to friends and leaning on each other can make it all a little easier, and if you have not yet found someone, it just means your paths have not yet crossed.

From my experience, the best way to meet supportive friends is through extra-curricular activity, and the Spring Term is the perfect time to seize these opportunities. Even in its early rehearsals, the Drama Company's production of the rock opera *Godspell* is already shaping up to be an energetic and engaging show. I highly recommend that all students come and see it, and those with a creative flair should consider joining the production themselves. As usual, the CCF has several exciting Field Days planned, offering opportunities for sailing, flying, and shooting. Alternatively, if you prefer a quieter challenge, you can try your hand at a puzzle or two during Countdown Club on a Monday lunchtime. We are truly fortunate that Westcliff is so supportive in encouraging students to get involved. With such a wide range of activities on offer, I am confident that something will speak to you.

Speaking of the ways in which our School community comes together, Speech Day stands out as a particularly memorable event. This year, our Guest of Honour, Professor Tony Young OBE, wowed us with the story of his development from being merely a "lad from Essex" to holding such an influential role within the NHS. His anecdotes served as a powerful reminder of our School's ethos, our belief that determination alongside personal



The School's Remembrance Service, November 2025

integrity is the key to unlocking your potential. I want to reinforce Professor Young's message because I believe it holds true for every Westcliffian. Taking inspiration from ex-pupils reminds us how far we are able to go. I urge you to research the inspiring stories of Old Westcliffians, and you will learn that words from your teachers that you might easily dismiss as clichéd are actually absolutely true. You really can do anything if you put your mind to it. These successful individuals are living proof of this maxim. I believe that Westcliff can unlock our potential, open the door to any future you have chosen, and help you thrive; it all depends on your own resilience and drive to succeed.

After last Term's highlights, and knowing that there are so many more ahead of us this Spring Term, it is worth taking a moment to reflect on how much our School community

achieves. As you read through this edition, you will hear from teachers and fellow students about the wide range of opportunities and successes we share, in which so many of you have played a critical part. I hope that this, alongside my own reflections and thoughts, encourages you to look back with appreciation for the experiences that you have enjoyed, and to feel motivated to make the most of every new opportunity which comes your way.

I eagerly anticipate the exciting events and achievements that will arise over the next few months, and hope that, for my next and final Captain's Log, there will be even more triumphs to reflect on and to celebrate, thanks to the efforts of our truly inspiring students of today.

Gabriel Williams, School Captain



The Box of Delights, December 2024

UPPER SIXTH TRIAL EXAMINATIONS

Monday 5 - Friday 16 January 2026

As we begin the final full term of studies for our Upper Sixth students, they will soon undertake their Trial Examinations to support their preparation for the A Level examinations in the summer. We want to reassure students and parents that they are not alone in this journey. Our Progress Leaders, pastoral staff, subject teachers, and Heads of Department are all available to assist with any questions or concerns you may have. In recent weeks, effective revision techniques have also been reviewed as part of the Upper Sixth pastoral programme, providing students with the confidence they need to succeed.

We wish all our Upper Sixth students the very best of luck with their Trial Examinations.

Mr A Dean, Senior Master Sixth Form



JACK PETCHEY SPEAK-OUT CHALLENGE

Wednesday 7 and Thursday 8 January 2026

The Jack Petchey Speak-Out Challenge is a yearly event which takes place in order to provide Year 10 pupils from London and Essex with the opportunity to gain public speaking skills. This enables pupils to become more confident and communicative, improving these vital skills as they head towards their GCSE studies and beyond.

Each pupil in Year 10 can participate in the day-long workshop, where trainers will lead pupils through skills and techniques to strengthen their persuasive speaking. Participants will then be able to draw on their own ideas to deliver a short speech to their peers by the end of the session. From this, a group of pupils, selected because their speeches are deemed to be the most impactful, are put through to an Assembly Final, in which the representative for WHSB will be selected to compete against pupils from other local schools.

Last year, Connor Grantham and Andrin Jaison, both now in Year 11, took part in the Regional Final hosted by the School. We look forward to seeing how the current pupils in Year 10 will fare this year.

The workshops will take place on 7 and 8 January for pupils in Year 10. For the successful School Representative, the Regional Final is set to take place at the King Edmund School in Rochford on 28 April 2026.

Mr S Lilley, Key Stage Four English Coordinator



SENIOR CHESS CHALLENGE

Friday 9 January 2026

On Friday 9 January, the Westcliff High School for Boys Chess Club will be attending the East Essex Regional Qualifier Tournament for the ECF Schools Senior Team Chess Challenge. This will be hosted by St Thomas More High School.

This tournament involves teams of four Westcliff players competing against other local schools using a Swiss pairing format. The typical rate of play is 10 minutes plus 2 seconds per move with a total of four rounds. Each round should last about half an hour.

Success at this tournament will qualify the team to compete at the National Finals which, last year, took place at Nottingham University.

Mr T Mansfield, Chess Club Coordinator



YEAR 9 NEXT GENERATION MAKERS ENGINEERING TALK

Wednesday 21 January 2026

On Wednesday 21 January, the Design and Technology Department will be hosting an online seminar for Year 9 pupils with an interest in the field of engineering. The event will be run by Next Gen Makers, working in partnership with the Cast Metals Federation to bring a dedicated Engineering careers experience as part of an initiative called 'Casting My Future'.

This event will include an interactive Virtual Reality Factory Tour Experience, followed by a seminar on the world of Cast Metals Engineering. The session itself will provide pupils with an opportunity to connect their learning in the classroom with real-world contextual scenarios, and to gain an understanding of the opportunities available with a career in engineering.

Mr C Wright, Head of Design and Technology





LIFE IN THE SIXTH FORM AT WHSB: YEAR 11 TASTER SESSION

Wednesday 14 January 2026

During our Year 11 Taster Session, the pupils will spend the afternoon gaining insight into life as a Sixth Form student at WHSB. They will choose four subjects of interest and attend short taster sessions to explore the differences between GCSE and A Level study. These sessions aim to help pupils make informed decisions about their Sixth Form choices. Additionally, they will have the chance to explore subjects available only at A Level, such as Politics and Psychology.

Mr A Dean, Senior Master Sixth Form

YEAR 11 PHASE 2 DATA REPORT ISSUED (FULL WRITTEN)

Tuesday 20 January 2026

This is the most important report of the year for pupils in Year 11 as it contains commentary from each pupil's subject teachers (following on from their Trial Examinations results), from their Form Tutor, and from the Headmaster. The commentary will provide advice on how to improve ahead of the Summer 2026 GCSE Examinations and the standards needed to achieve success.

Mr M Manning, Deputy Headteacher



SIXTH FORM CHEMISTRY LECTURE WITH DR JOE WILLIS

Wednesday 21 January 2026

We have been fortunate over the years to welcome guest speakers to WHSB who have presented to our A-Level Chemistry cohort. In January 2025, Old Westcliffian,

Dr Alex Baker, gave two lectures to our students titled: *Why Chemistry is More than just Chemicals - Using Lateral Flow Tests to Fight Covid-19 and Health Inequalities*, and *Not All Doctors Have a Medical Degree*.

On Wednesday 21 January 2026, WHSB will be welcoming back old Westcliffian, Dr Joe Willis, to speak to Chemistry Students in the Sixth Form. Dr Willis last visited the School in 2022 to speak to Sixth Form students on developing sustainable materials for use in solar cells and touch screen technology. This year, his

lecture title will be: *From Westcliff to Whitehall - A Career in Science and Tech Policy*.

Our Speaker

Prior to his visit, Dr Willis has kindly responded to our questions about his career path and we have included here some background on the journey taking him to where he is today.

Dr Willis' profile:

A-Level subject choices at WHSB: Chemistry, Mathematics, Government & Politics, History (AS).

Undergraduate degree: Chemistry BSc (Hons), UCL, 2015-2018. Doctoral degree: Doctorate of Engineering, Molecular Modelling and Materials Science, UCL, 2018-2023. Thesis entitled "Defect Chemistry of Novel Transparent Conductors."

Mr D Wightman, Head of Chemistry

YEAR 11 ENTRY TO SIXTH FORM EVENING

Wednesday 21 January 2026, 7.30pm to 9.00pm

Building on the Taster Afternoon from the previous week, Year 11 pupils and their parents are invited to a series of talks presenting the Sixth Form programme at WHSB. These sessions aim to provide you with a comprehensive understanding of the Sixth Form curriculum, the enrichment activities included, and the opportunities to engage in the wider School community. We hope this evening will help you make informed decisions about your post-16 education.

Mr A Dean, Senior Master Sixth Form

LOWER SIXTH CHEMISTRY FIELD TRIP TO THE UNIVERSITY OF EAST ANGLIA

Wednesday 21 January 2026

We are pleased to announce that the University of East Anglia (UEA) have made ten spaces available for Chemistry students in our Lower Sixth Form to attend the University's Chemistry programme in January. This represents an exciting opportunity to participate in engaging practical activity, working in their state-of-the-art teaching laboratories.

The day will include:

- Hands on Chemistry laboratory session;
- Chemistry taster lecture;
- 'Why study at University?' – a presentation with a focus on Science
- Tour of the UEA campus;
- Opportunities for our students to chat informally with current UEA students.

This is a unique opportunity for students at WHSB, however, students can also apply independently for summer laboratory programmes. If interested, students should research neighbouring universities and watch out for opportunities to become available.

Mr D Wightman, Head of Chemistry



SPRING CHAMBER RECITAL

Thursday 22 January 2026, 7.30pm – 9.00pm

The Spring Chamber Recital will feature Westcliff's most talented solo and ensemble musicians across the School community. The concert will showcase pupils from the youngest in the Lower School all the way to those in their final year of school. It promises to include performances of music from a range of different styles: Rock, Pop, Classical, Musical Theatre, Film Scores, and many more. Expect to see several of our most gifted pianists and vocalists performing various well-known works.

Returning performers include Lower Sixth violinist Josef Machacek and Upper Sixth pianist Ethan Wan. You can also expect to see new performers take to the stage. Multiple ensembles including the String Ensemble will make their regular appearances, performing an exciting repertoire that includes music from the video game 'Genshin Impact'.

Tickets are £5.00 for adults and free for pupils.

Mr A Wood, Teacher of Music



LOWER SIXTH PHASE 2 REPORT DISTRIBUTION

Friday 23 January 2026

Students in the Lower Sixth receive their Phase 2 Report, which includes both attitudinal and attainment data, on 23 January. This report will clearly display their progress and achievements in their A Level courses since September. Additionally, a target grade for each subject, based on expected progress, will be provided. After the release of the Phase 2 report, subject and pastoral staff will meet with selected students to offer advice and support before the Parent Consultation Evening.

Mrs K Revell, Director of Sixth Form



A VISIT TO THE NATIONAL GALLERY

Friday 23 January 2026

The Art Department is excited to take Art students from Years 11, the Lower and Upper Sixth to the National Gallery in January. The National Gallery's staff will provide us with an exciting tour of some significant paintings.

The iconic gallery celebrates 200 extraordinary years of history, from its origins in a private house in Pall Mall to its current home in bustling Trafalgar Square.

The gallery is rich with history and culture, and we aim to explore historical, religious and mythological paintings to enrich our minds, and to inspire and further develop curiosity.

The main aim of this visit is to gain insight into how artists worked, and some of the stories within Art history. As part of the GCSE and A LEVEL specification students must develop ideas through investigations, demonstrating critical understanding of sources, predominantly Artwork.

Paintings such as The Execution of Lady Jane Grey by Paul Delaroche, 1833, will provide an understanding of the value of Art, and how moments in time can be captured and preserved.

Royal Academy description of The Execution of Lady Jane Grey:

Lady Jane Grey reigned for just nine days as Queen of England following the death of Edward VI in 1553: she was deposed by the faction supporting Edward's half-sister and heir, Mary Tudor. Tried for treason, the 17-year-old Lady Jane was beheaded at Tower Green on 12 February 1554.

Delaroche shows the final moments of the blindfolded Lady Jane as she pleads, 'What shall I do? Where is the block?' She is being guided towards it by Sir John Brydges, Lieutenant of the Tower. Her outer clothing has already been removed and is gathered in the lap of a lady-in-waiting, who has slumped to the ground. Behind her, a second lady-in-waiting stands facing the wall, unable to watch. To the right, the executioner stands waiting. Using a shallow stage-like space, theatrical lighting and life-size figures, Delaroche plays up the spectacle of the innocent young victim on the brink of martyrdom, compelling us to react to the scene before us.



Another exciting, powerful painting by Luca Giordano is Perseus turning Phineas and his Followers to Stone. The detail and use of colour creates a clear narrative and captures the imagination. We are very much looking forward to the trip and the inspiration it will spark!

We have also been most intrigued by the gallery's Picture of the Month for November 2025 (the time of writing) by Floris van Dijck, A Banquet Still Life, within the Gallery's main collection, and are excited to further explore this work during our visit.

Mrs C Glassock, Head of Art



SIXTH FORM GERMAN STUDY SKILLS DAY

Saturday 24 January 2026

Those studying German in the Lower and Upper Sixth have been invited to a Senior Study Skills Day at St Paul's Girls' School in London. Students will complete activities alongside A Level German students from a number of other schools, and hear speakers from various universities to learn about the experience of learning languages at University level. We are looking forward to what promises to be an informative and interesting day.

Mrs J Bennett, Teacher of German

SIXTH FORM BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE FRENCH TRIP

Wednesday 28 January 2026

On Wednesday 28 January, French A Level students will make their annual trip to the British Film Institute for an event designed to improve their understanding of the cultural importance of French cinema. The day will begin with a lecture in French on the historical and cultural significance of the French New Wave cinema movement, supporting our French heritage topic. This will be followed by a screening of *Bande de Filles* (Girlhood), directed by Céline Sciamma. This critically acclaimed 2014 film explores themes of adolescence, female friendship, identity, and empowerment through the story of Marieme, a teenager navigating life in a Paris suburb. The film aligns closely with the following A Level themes:

- Young people in France: Urban challenges, school, and family;
- Diversity: Race, gender, and stereotypes;
- Immigration: Cultural identity and integration.

We look forward to an enriching and thought-provoking experience for all involved.

Mrs J Williams, Teacher of French



Visiting the British Film Institute, January 2025

INTERMEDIATE MATHS CHALLENGE

Wednesday 28 January 2026

We are pleased to announce that our pupils will be taking part in the Intermediate Mathematical Challenge, a national competition designed to stretch and inspire pupils through problem-solving and logical reasoning. This challenge provides an excellent opportunity for pupils to apply their mathematical skills in new and creative ways, taking them beyond the standard curriculum. It encourages critical thinking, perseverance, and a love of mathematics, and we know that our pupils will rise to the occasion. This opportunity will be given to Year 11 pupils and to our top performers across Years 9 and 10.

Miss A James, Director of Mathematics



CAREERS EVENING: FINANCE AND LAW

Wednesday 28 January 2026, 7.00pm – 8.30pm

WHSB is excited to host a Careers Evening in Finance and Law, offering pupils an opportunity to gain insight into two of the most dynamic and influential professional fields. The event will feature an exceptional line-up of guest speakers, including Co-Chair of Governors Mrs Fiona Colwell, Partner at Paul Robinson Solicitors, and three WHSB alumni: Sam Drewery of Rothschild & Co; Sam Phillips of Kepler Cheuvreux; and Quinn Williams of Linklaters.

Throughout the evening, the speakers will share their personal career journeys, describe their current roles, and provide invaluable advice to pupils aspiring to enter the worlds of Finance or Law. From global investment banking and equity research to corporate law, the event promises to highlight the diverse routes available and the skills that underpin success in these competitive sectors.

Each of our guests will bring a wealth of professional experience and personal insight, demonstrating how ambition, perseverance, and adaptability can lead to rewarding and fulfilling careers. Pupils will also have the opportunity to take part in a question-and-answer session, where they can learn



more about university pathways, internships, apprenticeships, and strategies for early career development.

The Careers Evening in Finance and Law represents WHSB's ongoing commitment to equipping all our pupils with the knowledge, confidence, and inspiration to shape their futures. For those curious about how to turn academic strengths into professional success, this event will be an unmissable start to the new year.

Mr M Atkinson, Careers Adviser

We are fortunate to benefit from the support of our alumni community in extending and enriching the School's careers provision. We appreciate their generosity in dedicating their time to provide current students with invaluable opportunities which motivate and inspire young people to achieve strong academic results and to pursue ambitious professional goals.

Legal London Day

Last term, aspiring lawyers in the Upper Sixth at WHSB attended the School's annual WHSB Legal London Day. This trip, courtesy of WHSB's alumni offered an exclusive glimpse into the legal world of "Magic Circle" law firms, Barristers' Chambers, London's Inns of Court, the Royal Courts of Justice and the Old Bailey.

During a visit to the London headquarters of major international law firm A&O Shearman, arranged by Senior Lawyer and Old Westcliffian Mr Chris Poel, students were given an invaluable real-world insight into the structure of a "Magic Circle" firm, experiencing for themselves the working environment, people and culture. The trip also included a visit to Wilberforce Chambers, one of the leading commercial chancery and business law sets in the UK, as guests of Old Westcliffian Mr Ian Croxford KC. Joined by fellow Barristers and Old Westcliffians Iain Edwards, Elena Johnson and Marcus Kelly, together with Adam-Smith Anthony, Solicitor Advocate and Partner at Omnia Strategy LLP, students were able to understand more accurately the daily life and work of a barrister.

We are grateful to Iain Edwards for arranging lunch for the group in the historic Middle Temple Hall, under its sensational double hammerbeam roof dating back to 1573. The day concluded with visits to two pillars of the English legal system: the Royal Courts of Justice and the Old Bailey. While the Royal Courts handle high-stakes civil and appellate cases and the Old Bailey deals with major criminal proceedings, the proximity of these historically and architecturally significant buildings offers a fascinating study in contrast and continuity.



STUDYING PHYSICS AT WHSB

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE



A Physicists*

The Physics Department at Westcliff High School for Boys boasts over fifty years of combined teaching experience and a sustained record of academic distinction.

Since the introduction of the 9–1 GCSE grading system, the Department has guided 512 pupils to a Grade 9, 380 to a Grade 8, and 247 to a Grade 7 – a total of 1,139 pupils, representing over 85% of all candidates achieving top-tier results. At A Level, following the curriculum reform first examined in 2017, 71 students have attained an A*, 115 an A, and 90 a B, with more than 73% securing a grade B or higher.

In the past four years alone, 18 students have progressed to study Physics, Astrophysics, or related disciplines at university, while 52 have pursued Engineering courses – we believe a testament to the Department’s ability to inspire and prepare students for further study in STEM fields.

PRACTICAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The Department places a strong emphasis on practical work. Our laboratories and prep rooms are well equipped with a blend of traditional apparatus and modern data-logging technology, which interfaces seamlessly with our suite of student laptops. Most lessons incorporate



STAFF EXPERTISE

Physics lessons from Year 9 to the Upper Sixth are delivered by a team of highly qualified and dedicated teachers.

Mr Dalby is a Physics graduate with a Master’s degree and three years of postgraduate research. He joined the School in 2013, after teaching in Greater Manchester, and leads the Department. He is an A Level Physics Examiner for AQA, an Isaac Science ambassador, an author of Physics workbooks published by Isaac Science, and has a Physics YouTube channel, which is due to be successful soon.

Mr Hudson is an Engineering graduate with a Master’s degree and a distinguished career in Aerospace Engineering. He joined the School in 2010 and is both a Chartered Engineer and member of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers.

Mr Tresidder, a Physics graduate and Old Westcliffian, joined the school in 2014. He is the Progress Leader for Year 7, a Captain in the Combined Cadet Force (CCF), and leads the Duke of Edinburgh programme. Mr Mansfield is a Chemistry graduate and Old Westcliffian who joined the department in 2022, and Mr Hunt, also an Old Westcliffian, is a Natural Sciences graduate who joined the School in 2025. Ms Dawar is a Physics graduate and experienced teacher who joined us in 2022 as our Physics Technician.



Mr K Dalby, Head of Physics

hands-on experiments or demonstrations to reinforce key concepts.

A Level Physics is delivered in two purpose-built laboratories in the Sixth Form Building, designed to support the increased academic rigour of the subject.



WESTCLIFF ASTRONOMY SOCIETY

The Westcliff Astronomy Society meets weekly on Wednesday lunchtimes in SF12. Pupils explore the Edexcel GCSE Astronomy course, beginning with Earth's position in the Solar System and expanding outward to the Galaxy and Universe. The sessions are enjoyable and intellectually stimulating.

A select number of pupils have been entered for the GCSE Astronomy qualification based on their commitment and understanding. Weather permitting, the Society gathers monthly on the School Field to observe celestial phenomena using telescopes. These evening gatherings take place on the second Thursday of the month, from 7.00pm to 9.00pm.

BRITISH PHYSICS OLYMPIAD

Since 2013, approximately 130 students have entered the British Physics Olympiad, a national competition run by the University of Oxford. Upper Sixth students tackle challenging problems that often extend beyond the curriculum. Despite fierce national competition, WHSB's students regularly earn Silver and Bronze medals, with a few achieving the prestigious Gold award.

ISAAC SCIENCE COLLABORATION

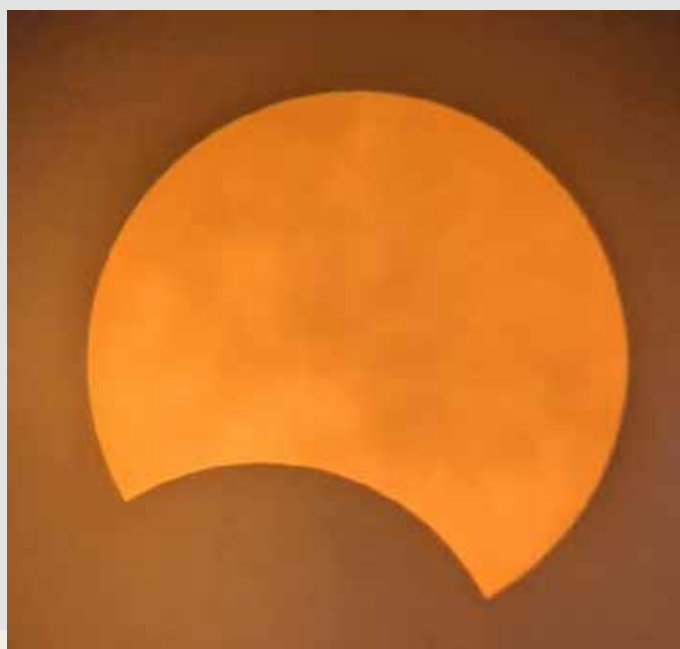


Dr A Machacek

In 2014, the Department welcomed in Dr Machacek, whose work would go on to influence Physics education nationwide. Collaborating with Professors Mark Warner and Lisa Jardine-Wright, Dr Machacek helped develop the Isaac Physics project – a national initiative aimed at equipping teachers with high-quality resources to deliver rigorous physics instruction. Westcliff High School for Boys played a pivotal role in shaping this project and was formally acknowledged in the Mastering Essential Pre-University Physics textbook.

Later, Mr Dalby and Dr Machacek co-authored the Essential GCSE Physics book and contributed to Linking Concepts in Pre-University Physics. These resources, developed in part at WHSB, are now used in countless schools across the UK, supporting teachers and enhancing student learning while reducing workload.

The pair also launched a series of A Level Boot Camps at the University of Cambridge, which continued online during the COVID-19 pandemic. Today, thousands of schools and hundreds of thousands of students benefit from the Isaac



resources. In 2025, the project expanded to become Isaac Science, incorporating Biology and Chemistry. Westcliff High School for Boys remains closely involved in its ongoing development.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR TRIPS AND ENRICHMENT

Each year, the department offers a range of extra-curricular opportunities.

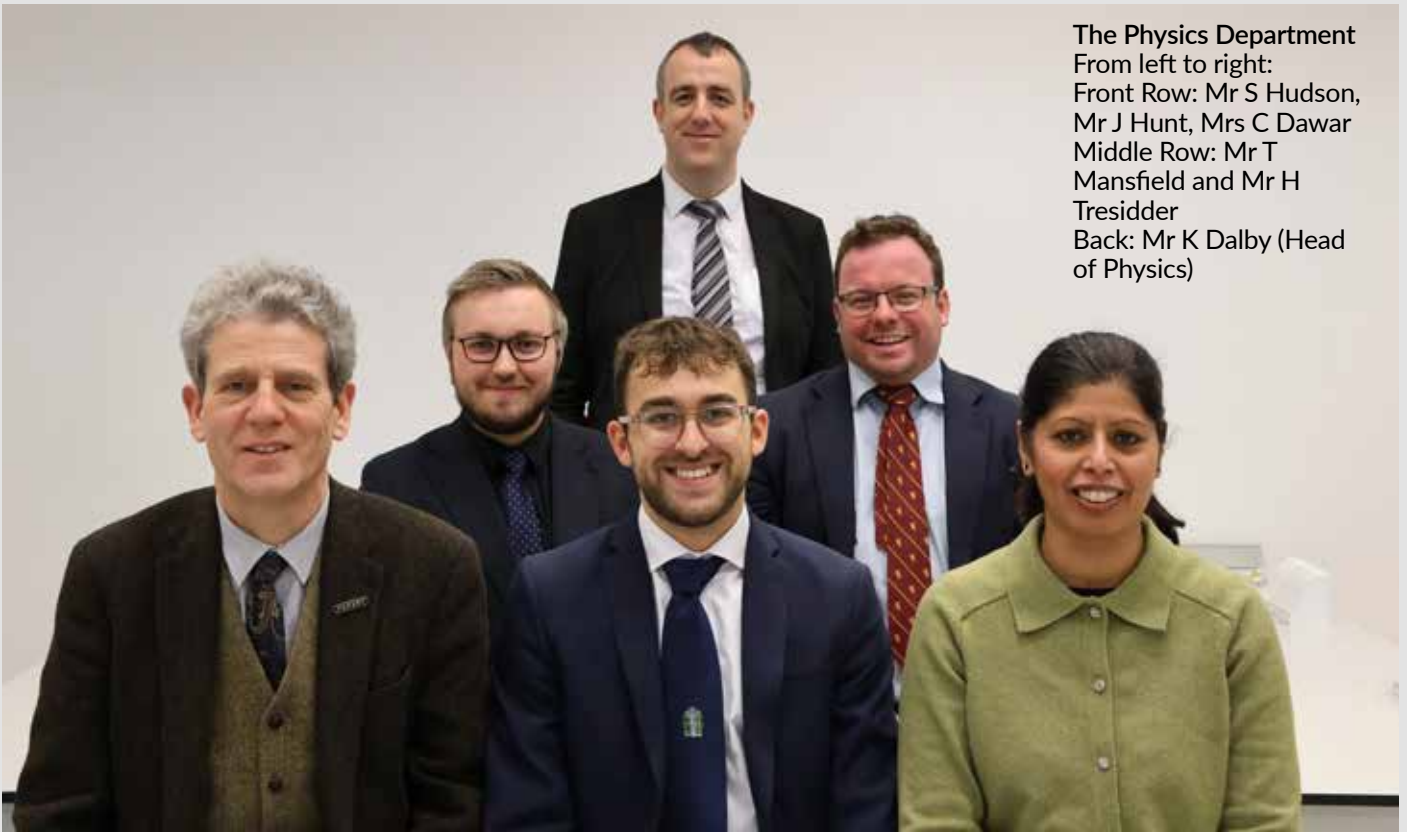
Mr Dalby leads Upper Sixth physicists on a visit to the Sizewell B nuclear power station.



Mr Hudson takes Year 9 pupils to the Imperial War Museum at Duxford.



Mr Dalby also escorts a group of Upper Sixth students to CERN in Geneva (pictured below), and Mr Hudson organises visits to Ford Dunton for Engineering Society members to attend IMechE lectures.



The Physics Department
From left to right:
Front Row: Mr S Hudson,
Mr J Hunt, Mrs C Dawar
Middle Row: Mr T
Mansfield and Mr H
Tresidder
Back: Mr K Dalby (Head
of Physics)

ENGINEERING SOCIETY

The Engineering Society meets in School weekly on a Thursday, under the leadership of Sixth Form students and the guidance of Mr Hudson. Its objective is to promote Engineering as a discipline and a potential career for WHSB pupils, and to provide material to inform that choice.

The meeting usually centres around an Engineering topic or design, or a practical investigation of construction materials, for example. Recent topics have included the Aerodynamics of Arrow Flights, Modular Nuclear Reactors, and Quantum Computing. We have also heard about hydrogen trains, the home and projects of Sir William Armstrong at Cragside in Northumberland, and the experiences of one of our current members working on a placement in the Silvertown tunnel in East London, in each case looking at what an engineering approach can bring to a project. And we made a bridge out of blocks of swede.

We have also used the website of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers as a source of information, as well as looking at some of the types of Engineering course available to pupils when they move on from WHSB. Pupils are encouraged to read Engineering books to examine the wider applications of the Science and Mathematics that they are studying in School, and to that end, a Reading List for Engineering has just been published, with all the books now available in the School Library.

A future meeting will examine the design of the steam engine, using the Physics department's stationary model engine (pictured), and it is hoped that a visit to a full-size, operational one could be arranged.

Mr K Dalby, Head of Physics



AUTUMN SINFONIA





YEAR 11 PARENTS CONSULTATION EVENING,

Monday 2 February 2026, 4.00pm – 6.00pm



On Monday 2 February, we hold our online Year 11 Parents Consultation evening. This represents an important opportunity for parents to discuss their son's report and to consider what support they can give their son to maximise success in the GCSE Examinations. We would also strongly encourage pupils to join their parents for these conversations where possible. The appointments allow further exploration of Non-Examination Assessment (NEA) tasks, suitability for Advanced Level study, and, perhaps most importantly, how best to improve their general practice of academic study.

This is an incredibly important time for our Year 11 pupils and they will appreciate parental support in helping them to sustain a clear sense of purpose, and to identify for themselves achievable targets. In working towards such targets, pupils are better placed to maintain focus and achieve the best possible outcomes. The School and the Middle School Pastoral Office also appreciate parental support and input, and teachers will very much look forward to meeting with both parents and pupils for the consultation process.

Mr A Barnett, Director of Middle School

YEAR 9 IMMUNISATIONS

Tuesday 3 February 2026



Shortly before the half term break, the School Aged Immunisations Team from Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation

Trust (EPUT) will be visiting the School to administer Diphtheria, Tetanus, Polio, and Meningitis vaccinations.

The School acts as a venue only for the vaccinations, and is not involved in the arrangements, provision of information, or requesting of consent regarding the vaccinations. This is managed entirely by the NHS Immunisations Team, and the School is unable to answer any questions.

Any queries or concerns can be addressed directly to the Immunisations Team on 0300 790 0597 or epunft.SE-Immunisations@nhs.net

Mr A C Baggs, Director of Lower School

A WEST END TRIP TO WICKED

Tuesday 3 February 2026

This term, pupils in the Middle School will have the opportunity to see the spellbinding, award-winning production of *Wicked* in the West End. This reimagining of *The Wizard of Oz* focusses on the friendship and rivalry of two young witches – Glinda and Elphaba.

Following an encounter with *The Wizard of Oz*, the two witches reach a crossroad in their relationship and their lives start to take very different paths. This hit musical, turned into an award-winning film in 2024, has wowed audiences for many years, and is a must-see for pupils studying GCSE Music in particular, whose set works feature a song from this show.

Tickets for this evening event are £44.00, including travel to and from the London venue.



Mr A Wood, Teacher of Music

CCF RAF CADETS: AIR EXPERIENCE FLIGHTS IN FEBRUARY AND MARCH 2026

Tuesday 3 February and Tuesday 17 March 2026

We are pleased to announce that the RAF Section of the CCF will be taking part in Air Experience Flights (AEFs) on Tuesday 3 February and Tuesday 17 March. These flights form an important part of the RAF Section's Progressive Training Syllabus, offering young people the chance to take to the skies and develop aviation knowledge through hands-on experience.

During an AEF, cadets receive a pre-flight briefing before taking to the air with a qualified RAF pilot. Once airborne, they have an opportunity to observe real flight operations, handle the controls under supervision, and (potentially) attempt some aerobatic manoeuvres. For many cadets, this is a defining moment in their cadet journey.

These flights play a crucial role in helping cadets earn their Wings, a key milestone that recognises their understanding of flight principles and practical aviation experience. In addition, the flying time completed during these sessions can be logged toward a Private Pilot's Licence (PPL), giving aspiring aviators an early start on civilian flying qualifications.



We are delighted to offer this opportunity once again and look forward to watching our cadets build their skills, grow in confidence, and continue their progression within the RAF Section.

Mr M North, RAF Section Commander



Gilding at RAF Kenley, Surrey, Spring Term 2025

SIXTH FORM MATHS FEST 2026

Wednesday 4 February 2026

The Mathematics Department will be taking interested Sixth Form students to Maths Fest 2026, taking place at the Royal Institution. Maths Fest is a nationally recognised event that brings together leading mathematicians, educators, and students for a day of inspiring talks, interactive sessions, and problem-solving challenges. It is designed to showcase the beauty and relevance of mathematics beyond the classroom, encouraging students to think critically and creatively about the subject.

This trip will provide students with a unique chance to deepen their understanding of mathematical concepts, explore real-world applications, and gain insights into potential career paths in STEM fields. Alongside the academic benefits, the event aims to foster enthusiasm and confidence in mathematics, helping students to see how the skills they are developing can open doors to exciting opportunities in the future.

Miss A James, Director of Mathematics



UPPER SIXTH PHASE 2 DATA REPORT ISSUED (FULL WRITTEN REPORT)

Friday 6 February 2026

At this juncture, students in the Upper Sixth will have just taken their Trial Examinations and this Report will deliver to students their Examination Percentage, their corresponding Examination Grade, an Attainment Grade, and Attitudinal Indicators. Students will also receive commentary from their subject teachers outlining areas for improvement across the remaining weeks of term. Form Tutors and the Headmaster will add additional commentary.

Typically, between the Trial Examinations and their final A Level results, students can expect to improve by one or two grades

in total across three A Levels, and by two grades in total across four A Levels. For the most prestigious courses, typical offers may be A*, A*, A or A*, A, A in which case A, A, A or A, A, B should be the minimum achieved in the Trial Examinations, as students would be unlikely to make such offers from B, B, C.

Students must guard against complacency as those achieving excellent Trial Examination results are at risk of thinking they will cruise through and achieve excellent A Level results. Every year, a small number of students in this position receive an unpleasant surprise on Results Day and we hope this year to eliminate this trend.

Mr M Manning, Deputy Headteacher



CHARITY EVENTS

Friday 6 February and Friday 20 March 2026

Our Charity Committee has once again shown their dedication and hard work. In 2025, we raised an impressive total of over £3,000 for Southend Age Concern, St Vincent's, and Little Havens Hospice. This success, achieved through the efforts of our Charity Committee, Toby Dowling, Zachary Cooper, Lai Soeng Man, Maria Manoj, Daksh Yadav, and William Bater, is something we can all take pride in. We are currently recruiting for our new Charity Committee for 2026, after which we shall announce the charities to be supported this year.

Charity events are scheduled for Friday 6 February and Friday 20 March. The new Committee will provide further details during the Spring Term. We look forward to some imaginative events, alongside traditional favourites such as staff basketball and sumo wrestling, as well as the eagerly anticipated tuck shop that the whole School can enjoy.

Mrs K Revell, Director of Sixth Form



Macmillan Coffee Morning, November 2025



Charity Staff Basketball, December 2025



Colourful Charities Culture Day Festivities, Autumn 2025





Movember 2025: Raising funds for men's health (mental health and suicide prevention, prostate cancer and testicular cancer), supporting research, health projects, and programmes that aim to improve the lives of men globally.

CAMBRIDGE CHEMISTRY RACE 2026

Saturday 7 February 2026



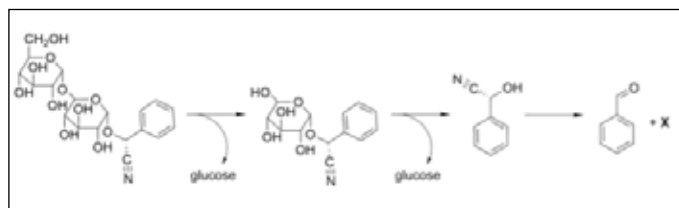
On Saturday 7 February, five students from WHSB's Upper Sixth will compete in the Cambridge Chemistry Race. This will be the second time that WHSB will have entered a team in the competition, which takes place at the Yusuf Hamid Department of Chemistry at Cambridge University.

Entry into the competition, however, is not guaranteed, owing to its popularity; participation is by random selection by the organisers. WHSB will be applying for the opportunity to compete and will know whether we are successful nearer the time. WHSB did not compete in 2025 as unfortunately we were not selected by the random ballot.

The Cambridge Chemistry Race is a chemistry competition for teams of three to five Sixth Form students, with the teams racing against each other to solve unusual chemistry problems. Problems are marked by the examiners in real-time and a live leaderboard is on display. Whoever gets the most points within the time limit wins.

All non-electronic resources are allowed as the problems are set to test understanding of principles rather than knowledge. Chemistry-themed prizes are awarded to the top three teams. Chemistry Race is an international competition that originated at the University of Pardubice in the Czech Republic. Out of 60 teams, the WHSB Chemistry team in 2024 were placed at a respectable 20th place with a score of 98 points. The 2026 team is determined to improve upon this score and will be practicing solving some past questions in their own free time.

An example of a basic level Chemistry Race question is shown below. Westcliff Diary readers are encouraged to have a go at solving it.



Amygdalin is an organic molecule found in the seeds of many stone fruits (almonds, apricots, plums, ...). Its likely purpose is to discourage fruit-eating animals from consuming the seeds in the drupes, and the metabolism of this substance is indicated in the following diagram. Write a formula of a simple molecule X that is produced in the last reaction and is toxic to the vast majority of eukaryotic organisms.

Solution:

X = HCN
The identity of the missing product can be deduced from the last reaction.

Dr M Archer, Teacher of Chemistry

WESTCLIFF CENTRE FOR GIFTED CHILDREN: GO FOR GRAMMAR!

Saturday 7 February 2026

It was exciting to restart the *Westcliff Centre for Gifted Children – Go for Grammar!* Programme for local Year 5 pupils last term. 72 children attended the first session which was on the theme of creativity and entitled "This is Me!". The days all include English and Mathematics lessons designed to stretch pupils and aid their familiarity with 11+ style work, and then lessons in Art, Technology, Music, and Languages.

In the afternoon, parents are welcomed into the School for a seminar with the Director of Lower School, to discuss how parents can best support their child through the 11+ Examinations. WHSB's Ellis (Year 7) spoke to parents about his preparations for the 11+ Examinations, speaking passionately and honestly about his experiences.

The Year 5 pupils then enjoyed the opportunity to engage with our Sixth Form student-chaperones who joined their Year 5 guests for some of their lessons.

This term, the School will welcome more Year 5 pupils for the "Bright Sparks!" Science-themed Day on Saturday 7

February. This event will see pupils engaging with Biology, Chemistry, Physics, and Earth Science activities. Finally, there will be a "Get up and Go!" Sports and Leadership Day to conclude the programme in the Summer Term.

Mr A Baggs, Director of Lower School



NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP WEEK

Monday 9 - Friday 13 February 2026



As part of National Apprenticeship Week, WHSB has organised a full and engaging programme aimed at broadening pupils' understanding of apprenticeship opportunities.

During Form Periods, pupils will take part in activities and discussions designed to help them gain deeper knowledge of the apprenticeship routes available and how these can shape their futures.

COMBINED CADET FORCE FIELD WEEK

Monday 9 - Friday 13 February 2026

Our second Field Week of the academic year will take place from Monday 9 to Friday 13 February 2026, and will comprise a series of exciting and challenging training events for Cadets from the Royal Navy, Army, and Royal Air Force Sections. This follows a highly successful Field Week in the Autumn Term, during which one hundred Cadets from Years 10 to the Upper Sixth took part in activities to develop their core training in areas such as Skill at Arms and Adventure Training.

This term's Field Week will offer our Royal Navy and RAF Sections the chance to undertake a physical and tactical training activity, whilst recruits new to the Army Section will complete a basic survival training package. Pupils from Year 10 will visit Colchester Garrison and undertake a range of military activities, including the Obstacle Course and Dismounted Close Combat Trainer, and senior Army Section Cadets will undertake a Range Day and Adventure Training.

Lt Col A Baggs, Contingent Commander



CCF Field Training, Spring 2025

Alumni will return to speak specifically to Sixth Form students, sharing their personal experiences and insights from a variety of apprenticeship programmes

On Friday 13 February, the education provider First Intuition will be presenting at lunchtime to interested pupils about the benefits of apprenticeships, primarily in accountancy. However, the presentation will also provide a broader overview of the apprenticeship process. First Intuition will then also present to our Year 9 pupils in the afternoon, providing more in-depth knowledge about the apprenticeship process. To assist in making the session meaningful, time will also be set aside for pupils to ask questions and check their understanding.

Alongside this, several visiting companies will deliver presentations throughout the week, showcasing the wide range of opportunities on offer and raising awareness of alternative career pathways beyond university.

The week promises to be an inspiring and informative celebration of practical learning and professional growth.

Mr M Atkinson, Careers Adviser



ROYAL NAVY AND RAF CADETS LASER TAG

Friday 13 February 2026

In February, Royal Navy and Royal Air Force cadets from our Combined Cadet Force (CCF) will be heading out for an exciting day of laser tag, where friendly rivalry meets practical training. The event promises to be more than just fun – it represents a unique opportunity for cadets to develop key military and leadership skills in a safe, engaging environment.

The day will see RN and RAF cadets go head-to-head in a series of fast-paced scenarios designed to test their teamwork, communication, and tactical awareness. Each team will have to plan, adapt, and execute strategies under pressure, mirroring the kinds of challenges faced in real-world operations – but with a laser-powered twist!

Beyond the competition, the exercise aims to enhance firearms-handling awareness, spatial awareness, and decision-making – all while fostering cooperation between the two sections. It is also a chance for cadets to strengthen friendships across services, building the mutual respect and understanding that reflects the spirit of joint operations within the UK Armed Forces.

Whether storming through woodland terrain or defending a base, cadets can expect a day packed with adrenaline, laughter, and valuable lessons in leadership and resilience.

At the end of the day, victory will be sweet for one side – but the real victory will be the shared experience and skills gained by all.

Lt C Hadley, Royal Navy CCF Section Commander



THE PARENTS' ASSOCIATION'S COOKIES AND SWEETS SALE

Friday 13 February 2026

A range of quality bakes and delicious seasonal treats will be on sale during morning break on Friday 13 February, as part of our fundraising programme. Cash and card payments can be taken on the day.

Thank you to pupils, parents and staff for your ongoing support.

Mrs S Ghauri, Chair of the Parents' Association



Remembrance Day, Southend-on-Sea, November 2025



SKI TRIP

Saturday 14 – Sunday 22 February 2026

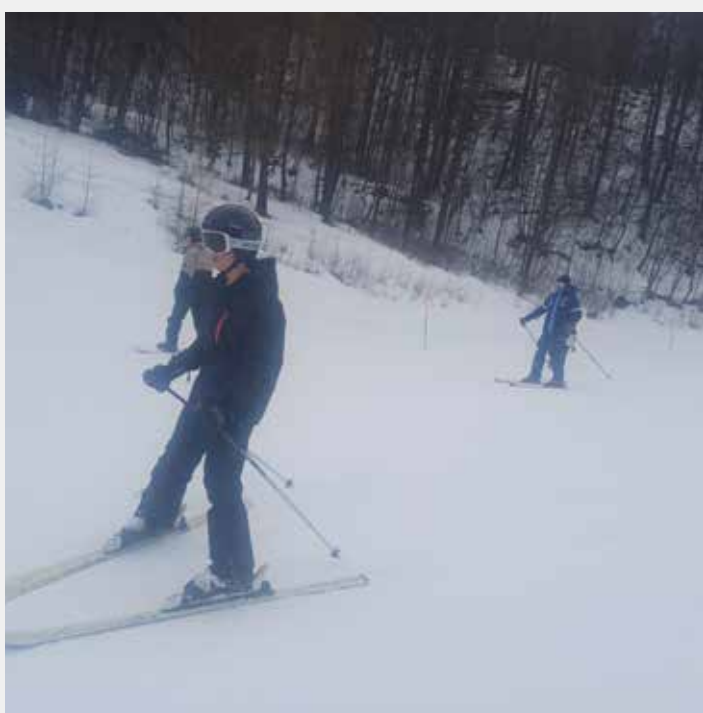
Excitement is already building for the upcoming annual WHSB Ski Trip, which will take place during the February 2026 half-term break. This year, an impressive 80 pupils will be travelling to the stunning Italian resort of Sestriere, where they will enjoy a week of skiing and Alpine adventure. The trip has been one of the highlights of the School calendar for over half a century, offering pupils the chance to develop their skills on the slopes, make new friendships, and create lasting memories in a spectacular mountain setting.

Beyond the excitement of the slopes, the Ski Trip offers pupils a wealth of valuable experiences. It encourages independence and

responsibility, as pupils learn to manage their own equipment, time, and belongings while away from home. On the slopes, they develop resilience and confidence, pushing themselves to master new skills in a challenging but rewarding environment. Above all, it provides a unique opportunity for personal growth, combining physical activity, cultural experience, and the joy of learning beyond the classroom.

Interest in the Ski Trip remains incredibly strong, with the 2027 trip already fully booked. Details of the 2028 trip will be advertised early next academic year.

Mr H Tresidder, Ski Trip Coordinator



Skiing in Bardonecchia, Italy, February 2025

HISTORY TRIP TO NORMANDY

Monday 16 February - Thursday 19 February 2026

This February, the History Department is looking forward to taking a group of GCSE Historians on a half term trip to Normandy. This will be the second trip to Normandy organised by the History Department, and our experience on the first one in 2024 means that we anticipate another interesting, lively, and historically enriching visit.

Our group of hardy travellers will depart on the Monday of half term and journey to France by ferry, seeing on the way the Agincourt battlefield site and other notable landmarks. Arriving in Normandy, there will be the opportunity to see Normandy modern and medieval. Medieval Normandy was the home of Duke William, later William the Conqueror, and the Duchy forged strong links with England in his time, providing plenty of

relevant stories to hear and sites to visit. These include Mont St Michel and Falaise Castle, William's own fortification, as well as Bayeux Cathedral where the famous Tapestry first hung. On our return, we will be delighted to see key Norman sites in this country too, accompanied by bestselling Historian Dr Marc Morris. These will include Pevensey Castle, the Hastings battlefield, and Rochester Castle and Cathedral.

There is plenty of Normandy's modern history to enjoy as well and we are looking forward to seeing the beach landing sites of D-Day, together with the American Cemetery, military outposts, and the rich array of museums and audiovisual displays that Normandy has to offer. We will be accompanied by the very knowledgeable Mr Andy Robertshaw, guide on many a Battlefields trip, who is always an informative friend on any historical visit. We may also sneak in trips to cheese and chocolate making centres as well.

The Normandy trip promises to be another fun and educational experience, although we will greatly miss the humorous contributions offered last time by the wonderful Mr Martin. We will certainly hold up a glass of Normandy apple juice to him and think with fondness of his fine and fun contribution to the History Department when we make our now infamous journey back by ferry from Ouistreham to Portsmouth. Perhaps artwork really is better than architecture.

Mr B Jeffreys, Head of History



YEAR 8 SMASHED LIVE EVENT

Tuesday 24 February, 8.50am - 10.00am

As part of WHSB's Personal Development Programme, pupils in Year 8 will be taking part in a Smashed Live Event on Tuesday 24 February. The aim of the workshop is to increase awareness amongst pupils of the risks associated with underage drinking.

The hour-long event will begin with a theatrical performance charting the lives of three teenagers and their experiences with alcohol. This is followed immediately by an interactive workshop exploring the social and emotional causes of underage drinking, the impact it has on young lives, the issues of social influence, and the effect it has on decision-making, as well as providing pupils with information on where and how to secure help for themselves and others.

Miss C Ives, Year 8 Progress Leader



JEKYLL AND HYDE TRIP TO THE PALACE THEATRE

Wednesday 25 February 2026

On Wednesday 25 February, pupils in Years 10 and 11 will be invited to attend a performance of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde at the Palace Theatre in Southend. As one of the set texts in the GCSE English Literature course, this event will allow pupils the opportunity to engage with Robert Louis Stevenson's work beyond the book. Not only will this offer an enriching experience, it should also give pupils another outlet through which to experience the text. Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde is one of the most revered Gothic texts which calls into question what it means to be a gentleman in Victorian London and asks the audience to consider a darker side to humanity. This is set to be an engaging performance that will explore Utterson's quest to establish the facts surrounding Jekyll and Hyde's true identities.

Mr S Lilley, Key Stage Four English Coordinator



DR JEKYLL & MR HYDE



WHSB DRAMA IN THE AUTUMN TERM 2025

Harold Pinter's One-Act Play *The Dumb Waiter*





Al Christmas Carol, Based on Dickens' Original Story

















Westcliff High School for Boys: Dumb Waiter and AI Christmas Carol - Hauntingly Good

As an NSTA representative, I had the pleasure of attending Westcliff High School for Boys' Christmas productions, an ambitious double bill that offered two sharply contrasting yet equally engaging pieces of theatre. Comprising Harold Pinter's *The Dumb Waiter* alongside the inventive *AI Christmas Carol*, the evening demonstrated both thoughtful artistic choices and a high level of performance skill.

The first play, *The Dumb Waiter*, is a 1957 one-act play by Harold Pinter that follows two hired gunmen, Ben and Gus, as they wait in the basement of a building for instructions about their next job. It becomes increasingly apparent that the men have been here before, and that the "job" they await may be both illegal and morally troubling. Set in what appears to be the basement of a commercial building - perhaps a café, though this is only ever implied - the production relied heavily on the dynamic between its two characters.

Ben, played by Sam, was very much in control of himself and the situation. Sam's portrayal was notably restrained and controlled, reflecting a clear understanding of the character as conceived in the playwright's original script notes. Calm and assured on the surface, Sam's portrayal gradually revealed an underlying menace as the stakes of the situation became clearer.

Conor's Gus was a younger, more volatile, and far less controlled presence, characterised by nervous energy and an underlying sense of unease. He approached the role with a restless physicality and an increasingly urgent delivery that effectively conveyed Gus's confusion and moral anxiety. He was constantly questioning their situation and trying to make sense of it. This performance provided a compelling counterpoint to Ben's restraint, and the contrast between the two characters was particularly effective in drawing the audience deep into Pinter's unsettling and ambiguous world.

True to Pinter's style, ambiguity is central to this play, and the cast handled this with confidence, trusting the text and allowing the tension to speak for itself. Performed in the round, the production created moments of striking intimacy. The denouement delivered a powerful and effective twist, and the piece as a whole was deftly directed by the school's Director of Drama, Mr Jeffreys, whose control of pace and tension was evident throughout.

The second production, *AI Christmas Carol*, offered a complete tonal shift and immediately intrigued with its title alone. In his programme notes, Mr Jeffreys explained his decision to use Artificial Intelligence to rewrite Charles Dickens's text in a style faithful to its original period, responding to the proliferation of adaptations of *A Christmas Carol* that dilute the story's central message of redemption.

At the heart of the production was Oliver's Ebenezer Scrooge, a beautifully judged performance that



combined authority, emotional depth and sensitivity. He commanded the stage whenever he appeared, anchoring the production with confidence. Oliver's performance was, quite simply, outstanding throughout.

This supporting cast was no less impressive, and several notable performances cannot go unmentioned here. Noah's ghostly Jacob Marley, while appearing only briefly as Scrooge's former business partner, was clearly defined and consistent, providing a strong spectral counterpoint to the protagonist. Particular praise must also go to Alexander as the narrator, whose assured delivery and ability to address all four sides of the stage drew the audience fully into the story from the outset. The Ghosts of Christmas Past (played by William) and Christmas Present (played by Gabriel) both possessed strong stage presences, enhanced by the excellent physical theatre representations of their voices by the puppeteers. The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come was especially effective: a complex and commanding presence. Connor's Bob Cratchit and Max's Tiny Tim were especially touching, contributing emotional resonance to their scenes, adding warmth and humanity to complement and contrast with Oliver's central performance. Indeed, the entire ensemble demonstrated impressive versatility and commitment, creating clear characterisations and maintaining a strong sense of storytelling throughout. This is undoubtedly a very talented group of young performers.

These strong performances were supported by strong design choices. The costumes were excellent and entirely appropriate to the period, as was the overall production design by Ms Cleave; this was a real strength of the piece. The rapidly changing scenes were handled smoothly using simple props and the cast themselves, maintaining momentum and clarity. Overall, *Al Christmas Carol* struck an effective balance between festive celebration and social history.

The Dumb Waiter and *Al Christmas Carol* formed a thought-provoking and accomplished double bill, showcasing ambition, skill, and originality from Westcliff High School for Boys. The two productions both demonstrated a clear artistic vision and a confident understanding of their respective texts. Strong performances, thoughtful direction, and effective design choices combined to create an evening of theatre that was both intellectually engaging and emotionally resonant. Taken together, the productions highlighted not only the versatility of the performers, but also the school's commitment to high-quality, imaginative drama.

National School Theatre Awards

www.schooltheatreawards.com

Please also see BroadwayBaby's 5-Star Review: <https://broadwaybaby.com/shows/the-dumb-waiter/831512>

GET INVOLVED: ENGLISH EXTRAS!

WORLD BOOK DAY 2026

World Book Day is an annual event dedicated to promoting the joy of reading and the importance of books in our lives. It is celebrated worldwide to encourage children and adults alike to explore stories, discover new authors, and develop a lifelong love of reading. The day reminds us that books open doors to imagination, knowledge, and creativity.

This year, we are excited to mark World Book Day with a special Assembly. During the Assembly, pupils will share

some of their favourite books with the School. They will talk about why these books are meaningful to them, what they have learned, and how the stories have inspired their thinking. It represents a wonderful chance for everyone to discover new titles and perhaps find their next great read.

We believe that sharing books helps build a strong reading culture in our School community. Whether it is a classic tale, a modern adventure, or a thought-provoking non-fiction book, every story has the power to connect us and spark conversations. Keep an eye out for other fun World Book Day activities!

Mr T Derrick, Literacy Co-Ordinator



ENGLISH DEPARTMENT TRIPS TO THE THEATRE

REVIEW: *Dracula, The Palace Theatre*

Bram Stoker's *Dracula* is, without a doubt, one of the most well-known Gothic Horror novels of all time, exploring the creatures bound indefinitely to Central European folklore as well as toying with humanity's fear of the unknown. Over the years, it has been deconstructed and reconstructed in many adaptations by numerous talented directors, and we were lucky enough to see Nick Lane's interpretation of the show at the Palace Theatre in Southend.

The tale itself follows the seemingly harmless excursion of newly qualified solicitor Jonathan Harker as he unwittingly delves deep into the black, inky heart of Castle Dracula. Along the way, the Count sows fear and discord throughout the land, creating tempestuous storms at sea, turning victims, and finally culminating in the macabre murder (and turning) of Lucy Westenra.

The play's denouement is signified when Dracula finds himself surrounded by the protagonists and, in his final moments, delivers a chilling monologue that resonates within the minds of both the narrative's characters and

the audience, before ultimately ending his own life. This subversion to the original text allows the audience to witness the spectacle of Dracula's parting thoughts, thus giving a sinister alternative ending to the 'happily ever after' of the novel.

Cass Taylor, Year 9



Why Should You Attend?

Theatre has been around for millennia, and the origins of theatre date back to sixth century Greece and, since then, has evolved and developed into what it is today. Studies show that theatre has a variety of positive effects on performance and well-being.

Personally, I believe the most impactful benefit is the range of communication skills it enhances, as the actor's voice projection, body language, and choice of words builds one's vocabulary and talent; seeing the performances can also aid academic progress as it provides the opportunity to better understand the texts being studied. Furthermore, theatre has proven to be a good source of stress relief and entertainment, boosting mental health. In addition, theatre can provide greater awareness of different time periods, whether contemporary or modern, further enhancing our global awareness.

Jayden Osho, Year 9

THE QUEEN'S COMMONWEALTH ESSAY COMPETITION

For the last four years, the English Department has entered the Queen's Commonwealth Essay Competition with increasing success. The Queen's Commonwealth Essay Competition is the world's oldest international writing competition for schools, which has been delivered

by the Royal Commonwealth Society since 1883. Each year, the theme is drawn from Commonwealth values and principles. It encourages young people to engage with pressing issues of the day, such as the environment, equality, and youth leadership, to foster an open-minded and empathetic worldview. Following on from our Gold, Silver, Bronze, and Highly Commended awards, WHSB pupils have been invited to attend the Commonwealth Day Service at Westminster Abbey in the presence of His Majesty the King and senior members of the royal family. This academic year we are looking forward to entering the new Competition in early 2026.

The Queen's Commonwealth Essay Competition is also the largest writing competition in the world, with schools from every Commonwealth country participating. The recent essays were up to 1500 words and were themed around the topic of "One Resilient Common Future" - a broad topic with several sub-prompts. I chose to write a dialogue between myself and a relative, talking about their experience as a civilian in the Russia-Ukraine War. I performed better than I expected to, leading to an invitation to a very patriotic Commonwealth Day ceremony on Monday, 10 March 2024. Hymns were sung to mark the arrival of the King and the Royal Family, before readings and speeches, interspersed with cultural musical performances. Overall, this was a rare opportunity to see the inside of Westminster Abbey, and to experience a royal event.

Misha Pelagenko, Year 11



Participating in the Queen's Commonwealth Essay Competition was an honour for me, as I am sure it was for my peers as well. Having the opportunity to compete against thousands of different people from different countries, backgrounds, and ethnicities was an honour, and I am glad to say I enjoyed every last moment of it. It is truly awe-inspiring to see how the entire Commonwealth can be united through a single essay competition, and having the opportunity to participate in such an event is not something that one should just ignore. please participate and share your own personal stories, and I guarantee that you will not regret the experience. The Commonwealth trip to Westminster Abbey was also another incredible moment, being able to see the King, and other important figures, right in front of your own eyes was amazing. Once again, I encourage everyone to at least try to participate in this challenge, and I promise that you will have the time of your life.

Stefan Petrusca, Year 10

Writing stories has always been my strength while studying English, and if I have ever wanted a way to prove myself while writing, it would be through the Queen's Commonwealth Essay Competition (QCEC). Thanks to the Gold Award that I and eight others received, I was given the opportunity to go to the Commonwealth Day Service on Monday 10 March 2025 in Westminster Abbey. I was extremely pleased as this was an important day. The Commonwealth Day Service is a great annual event in which the diversity and unity of the countries included in the Commonwealth is celebrated through cultural music, dance, and poetry. The service was led by King Charles III and recorded. I was able to look around, together with my friends, and we enjoyed seeing flags of the Commonwealth, which is a significant part of British history.

Will Gibson, Year 10



The Trinity College Cambridge Gould Essay Competition

The Gould Trinity College essay competition encourages students with an interest in English Literature to explore their reading interests further in response to questions about the subject. The questions cover a broad spectrum of literature, as well as other art forms, so there is a large opportunity to research a part of English that interests you. My experience with it allowed me to connect two of my A levels together by comparing paintings to novels and see the parallels between them. This broadened my knowledge of English to take it in a direction that fascinates me and consolidated my decision to study English at University.

Albert Payne, Upper Sixth

Entries for next year will be opening very soon and with a top prize of £600 – not to mention the academic clout that would make any UCAS stand out – we look forward to entering many more students. Please speak to your English teacher for more information.

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT SEPTEMBER ENRICHMENT DAY: WHSBBC NEWS!

The Year 10 Humanities Enrichment Day was not only enjoyable, but also deeply enriching for multiple key skills such as public speaking, inference, analysis, and collaboration which are essential for jobs in Journalism (the theme of the day) and many other career paths. We started the day by looking at several important topics in the world and significant current affairs. For example, one of my favourite topics and something we focused on was “fake news” and disinformation. During this period, we watched a political debate and had to identify whether the presented information and figures were true. Then we had to create and plan out broadcasts that summarised some of the important topics we had been informed about. Finally, after the groups to present were chosen, we watched everyone's news broadcasts which were informative and entertaining. Overall, this Enrichment Day allowed for development across multiple areas and was an engaging experience throughout.

Will Keighron-Charles, Year 10



ECHO NEWS TAKEOVER



Earlier this academic year, WHSB was offered an incredible opportunity from the Echo to have a double-page feature as part of their 'Schools Takeover' outreach programme, which offers young people from local schools the opportunity to give journalism a go. However, editors were so impressed with our contributions, they elected to publish ALL the articles submitted. A huge congratulations to Jack Gore and Harry Hasler who both played a key role. The Echo School Takeover was a significant opportunity for me and allowed me to express my journalism skills, also allowing me to grow and nurture my communication skills. The process of writing was quite simple - I just picked up my pen and used it as my paintbrush - I used it as my voice. One of the most important reasons I decided to embark on this endeavour is because I wanted to inspire others to be open to opportunities and I strongly encourage other pupils at WHSB to take on these enriching opportunities. To conclude my thoughts, I would like to include one of my favourite quotes: "What you do today can improve all your tomorrows" (Ralph Marston). As you progress through your School day, please remember; anyone can flourish if they work hard enough.

Callum Yang, Year 8

TOWER POETRY



Seb Puddick, an English Literature student in the Upper Sixth, entered the Oxford Tower Poetry Competition in 2025 and made the following comments: "The Competition not only gave me an additional creative outlet, but also means I have plenty of extra-curricular material to discuss in my upcoming Cambridge interview for Modern and Medieval Languages. I would recommend you enter the Competition this year and hopefully win the £5000 top prize!"

This year, the Competition theme is 'A Riddle' and entries need to be in by February 2026. Ask your English Teacher for more details!

CREATIVE WRITING CLUB

Do you want to turn exciting stories into life? Do you have a ton of ideas but do not know where to start? If so, then the Creative Writing Club is the perfect place for you!

Located in E21, this club welcomes all Key Stage 3 writers, whether you like a book genre or not. On Thursdays, at 1.00pm to 1.40pm, come in and boost your creativity. Create catchy titles and exciting poems.

Did you know that your work could be published? That's right! Pupils at WHSB participate in many events, such as competitions and writing newspaper articles.

All you need is a pen. Get a prompt, write about it at home, and hand it in to Miss Wood, the host of the club. So, what are you waiting for? Come along, join in, and unlock your potential.

Mahir Shaik, Year 7



STEPHEN SPENDER PRIZE

This year, Miss Arunkumar demonstrated her Lifelong Learning by entering the Stephen Spender Translation Competition and shared the following with us: "As a teacher, it can be sometimes challenging to remember that we are also learners, with interests that span farther than our day-to-day work. As a published translator and enthusiastic reader of poetry, the Teacher Laureate Prize allowed me to combine my personal interests with my role as a teacher. For my poem to be selected as the runner-up was an important reminder of how all our lives are enriched when we allow our students and teachers to grow beyond their classrooms."



Miss C Bailey, Head of English

GIFTED AND TALENTED IN ENGLISH

Pegasus Club

Now in its second year, Pegasus Club continues to be a hive of academic debate and extra-curricular inspiration. Those who finish in the top thirty in their end-of-year examinations are invited to become Pegasus members and have to prepare a brief lecture based on a choice of literary topics in order to secure their place. Pegasus meets in E20 every Monday lunch time to discuss their lectures and, after January, these will be advertised to Key Stage 3 pupils wanting to explore English Literature at a higher level.

Miss C Bailey, Head of English

Pegasus is an invitation-only club for Year 11 pupils and, this year, the Pegasus Club got off to a great start. In the club, each person delivers a speech in any form they like, from a lecture to a comedic yet informative video, covering a range of literature-based topics such as unreliable narrators and the Gothic genre. After each presentation, we discuss more developed ideas around the topic by offering our own insights into it, often linking it to current affairs and explaining the relevance English has in the world today. Later in the year, we will be attending lectures and will continue to debate in the club.

Sebastian Deprez, Year 11

In the club so far, we have had presentations regarding the use of gore and fear, exploring its presentation in stories such as “The Haunting of Hill House”, and whether or not we have become desensitized to it. Another discussed the use of masks and identity crisis in theatre and literature, such as in “Cabaret”, and explored its link to the status quo today. My own presentation discussed the effect of an unreliable narrator in “The Great Gatsby” and how it relates to modern literature, suggesting that it may be a method through which authors comment and critique certain viewpoints. No matter the topic of each presentation, however, the key aspect of each meeting is the following debate and conversation, in which we attempt to relate the lectures’ topics to current events and our own lives. This provides an opportunity to further the important debates and discussions in English lessons, and to hone our analytical and evaluative skills in a conversational manner, led by the teacher who can prompt and develop interesting talking points.”

Jamie Cassidy, Year 11

ENGLISH MOXBRIDGE SOCIETY

MOxbridge is available to all students taking English at A Level, meeting in E20 every Tuesday lunch time. It is a club designed to challenge our knowledge of literature, extending it beyond the curriculum through a variety of literary sources, from one sentence ‘poems’ to lengthy prose. As someone applying to study English at Oxford, this unique opportunity has not only been indispensable on a practical level, but personally enriching too. I have always loved looking at literature, yet attending MOxbridge has meant that, over the last two years, my passion for English has deepened and the extent of my knowledge has widened. The 10th Century poem ‘The



Wanderer’, for example, is something I never thought I would study in school. Yet, written in Old English, the questions it raised about the importance of translation and its presentation of a human experience surprisingly relevant today fascinated me. Ultimately, MOxbridge has greatly prepared me for university-level study, whilst also making me a better student of English.

Toby Dowling, Upper Sixth



THINKING ABOUT THE FUTURE: CAREERS IN ENGLISH

A Level English Literature: A Word from the Prefects

As a Department, we are known to have some of the best Subject Prefects. Not only do they mentor younger students, support Open Evenings, and run Taster Sessions, but they also spread passion for the subject like wildfire.

Miss C Bailey, Head of English

Since being an English Prefect, I have had the opportunity further to explore the subject, while also encouraging younger pupils to take English A level. On top of this, it has given me extra motivation to improve in the subject, which has led to my test scores being a gradual, consistent improvement. Also, it has helped my UCAS as being a Subject Prefect is a feature on my personal statement, which I believe will improve my chances of going to university and taking my English studies further.

Zidan Khan, Upper Sixth



Apprenticeships in English: Journalism

This year, Jack Gore (one of our Upper Sixth students) has applied for the BBC Junior Journalist apprenticeship, which offers on-the-job training for two years, shadowing some of the most experienced professionals in the field. The Apprenticeship culminates in a Level 5

qualification and can be a fast-track to a long, successful career in the field.

Miss C Bailey, Head of English

I have been sharpening my journalistic skills in my own time for several years after becoming inspired by a love of writing and my own consumption of sports and adventure journalism. I have always preferred non-fiction and want to contribute to the growing online and in-print market. I have already been published in Practical Boat Owner, Yachting Monthly, and Sailing Today, coming runner up in Young Journalist of the Year 2024. The apprenticeship application process is competitive and relies heavily on my own motivation to chase my future career, but I am optimistic!

Jack Gore, Upper Sixth

If you want to keep up with Jack's journey into his chosen field, follow his website: www.jackgoreadventures.co.uk

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



Billy Darlington, Old Westcliffian 2013-2020

Studying English Literature at A Level taught me how to communicate clearly and critically. Working in media, where storytelling and creativity are at the heart of everything I do, these abilities are particularly important. Learning to read between the lines, write

persuasively, and analyse complex ideas are all skills that all companies value, and these begin in the classroom.

Even if you do not go into a creative industry, English Literature gives you something essential - the ability to express yourself with confidence, think differently, and back your ideas up with evidence. These are skills that will take you far, no matter what path you choose when your WHSB journey closes.

Miss Wood, Old Westcliffian 2017-2019

Unsurprisingly, English always took the top spot as my favourite subject at school. However, it was studying English Literature A-Level at WHSB that cemented my thought that this was a subject I absolutely had to pursue further. As dramatic as it sounds, I have often claimed that English Literature 'opened my eyes' - a sentiment I know



many others share. Our studies extended beyond the texts themselves, allowing us to explore themes of politics, history, religion, and philosophy. We were encouraged to think evaluatively, and granted the freedom to express our own interpretations and critiques, armed with the skills to do so. I enjoy my career as a

teacher because it allows me to continue to nurture my passion for the subject and, somewhat cyclically, I hope to 'open the eyes' of my own pupils and inspire in them the same love of Literature and critical thinking that my teachers once encouraged in me.

Daniel Periera, Old Westcliffian 2013-2020

A Level English taught me what it was to write and to argue for myself. Reading comparatively across swathes of time, the course brought us close to the minds of philosophers, artists, political theorists, and activists. Classroom debates and critical theory gave me the confidence to scrutinise language in all its forms, and with Great Gatsby parties thrown at Mar-a-Lago, it is hard to miss the literary mythologies that still touch the modern day. Beyond academics, I learnt how to appreciate the beauty of the music I listen to and the films I watch more deeply - underrated, but important for life. Since A Level, I have completed a BA in English at Cambridge and a fully-funded MSt in Medieval English from Oxford, with a stint teaching English abroad for the British Council. I have published reviews, staged plays, presented at conferences from KCL to the Greek island of Naxos, and I plan to complete a PhD and remain in the glamorous world of academia.



Shane Lynch, Old Westcliffian 2014-2021

Studying English Literature at A Level inspired me to become a lawyer today. After studying Shakespearean characters like Iago in English Literature at A Level, I learned to appreciate how decisive language can be in influencing outcomes.



That fascination led me to pursue a career in Law, where I discovered that precision and creativity in language are instruments commercial solicitors use to achieve tangible commercial results for their clients. Therefore, just as Iago mastered the art of language to influence outcomes in Othello, I want to use that same power in a commercial

setting to safeguard the interests of clients. Studying English Literature, therefore, had a profound influence on the person I am today.

Furthermore, and this may come as a surprise, during my WHSB career, I was always a “Maths” guy. However, after enjoying English Literature so much at GCSE, I can conclude that it was my favourite subject at A-Level. The critical thinking, the interesting characters and the very engaging storylines and plots made it the subject I most enjoyed.



Oluwatoni Adewole, Old Westcliffian 2020-2022

I have just graduated from the University of Cambridge after studying Law. Studying A Level English Literature was a deeply enjoyable time for me. It taught me how to write clearly, persuasively, and with conviction; attributes which helped me with my degree. As for

the course itself, I particularly enjoyed studying Othello. The themes of pride, honour and masculinity were very

interesting and made for fascinating further reading. I would recommend English Literature for anyone who truly loves reading and enjoys using literature as a lens to examine society over time.



Christiana Dube, Old Westcliffian 2020-2022

I am now a researcher within the field of Politics and International Relations. English Literature helped me conceptually analyse different modes of media. Developing an awareness of different sociopolitical lenses to evaluate the meaning and application of art and

literature became increasingly valuable when conducting future research. It encouraged the exploration of theory that challenged an Eurocentric, patriarchal worldview and passivity when relating my positionality to characters and narratives I would encounter. I would recommend taking the A Level to interrogate how meaning can be shaped within literature to construct societal critiques and how to frame your thoughts on them.

Miss C Bailey, Head of English



The English Department

From left to right: Miss S Wood, Miss C Bailey, Miss E Peterson, Miss Y Arunkumar
Back: Miss C Ives, Mr S Lilley, Mr T Derrick, Mr M Wheeler, Mrs K Cook

The English Department receives outstanding support from our English Prefects



Lower Sixth English Prefects



Upper Sixth English Prefects

GCHQ COMPETITIONS IN THE AUTUMN TERM

Twenty-seven of our Year 9 students in seven teams competed nationally in a five-day challenge in November 2025, to crack increasingly complex coding and linguistic challenges. The teams were restricted to only 25 hours problem solving time on the website, using the computer rooms in School before registration, at lunch and, increasingly as the week went on, at home too. The more challenging the task, the more points were to be gained, with points being deducted if students used any hints. 2734 teams competed nationally, with our top two teams Adventurous Rattlesnake and Heroic Cheetah achieving 30th and 31st places. Our talented teams also achieved 4th and 5th places in the region, out of 260 teams. These are outstanding achievements, and we congratulate all those students involved.

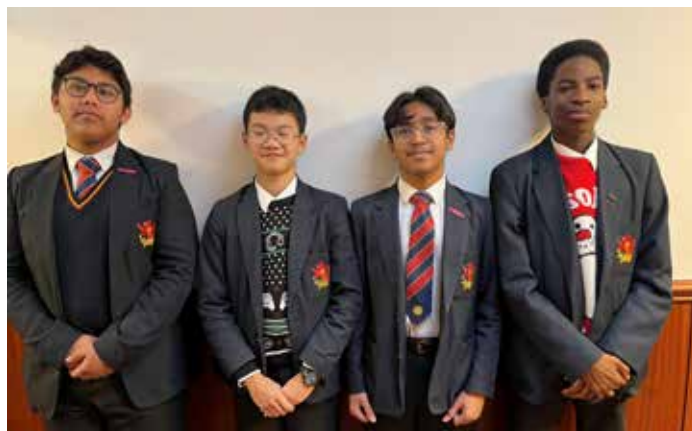
Our teams' final scores (out of a potential 8590) were:

Rank	Team	Score
1	Adventurous Rattlesnake	8,580
2	Heroic Cheetah	8,580
3	Caring Bushbaby	7,900
4	Nimble Bat	7,780
5	Big Pheasant	7,775
6	Dazzling Lobster	6,490
7	Good Goat	6,485

Students received house points and certificates for their participation in their Year 9 Assembly.



Heroic Cheetah



Caring bushbaby



Nimble Bat



Good Goat



Adventurous Rattlesnakes

Reflections from our students:

"I think the GCHQ was an amazing experience that both challenged my mind while I still had a lot of fun. I had the opportunity to grow closer with my teammates and even went away to do these questions at home."

"I found the competition very engaging as I had never done anything of the sort before, and the range of challenges was amazing. We had to approach it with strategy and spend lots of time analysing each challenge using language skills such as grammar rules, prefixes and endings, and word orders. I would recommend it to any Year 8 pupils because of the constant competition throughout the week and problem solving skills. It has been great fun to take part."

"I believe that it was an excellent experience. My team and I had a lot of fun solving puzzles together and, while some did it to try and win the prize, I genuinely thought that it was great. Although, unfortunately, our team did not end up winning, it is still one of the best language opportunities you can try out!"

"I found this competition to be quite entertaining and puzzling and it allowed me to enhance my problem solving skills. It also paved the way for collaboration between my team members and allowed us all to work as one, supporting each other along the way. We started the competition a bit later than everyone else, but this did not prevent us from enjoying the experience and broadening our understanding of different cultures and societies. I would definitely recommend this experience to other friends and would like to invite the Year 8s to take part in it next year."

"I very much enjoyed participating in the GCHQ National Language Competition. The challenge was quite challenging but still fun and engaging. It taught me about the significance of learning and understanding foreign languages and how they can be applied to real life. Most importantly, working as a team showed me how valuable communication is and how everyone brings their own strengths to different challenges. I am extremely happy with my team's final score and encourage all future pupils to participate if they ever receive the opportunity!"



"Completing the GCHQ Christmas Challenge was a wonderful opportunity, which I would thoroughly recommend to anyone who enjoys codebreaking and general problem-solving, or Lower Sixth students looking for items to add to their Personal Statement. The challenge made me look at each task from more than one perspective, before eventually finding the solution."

"It was a great opportunity to enhance my problem solving skills. Teamworking was essential as this was a really hard competition and I really enjoyed working through the questions."

"It was challenging but, if you do it as a team, it not only becomes easier but it becomes more fun, which is what I think challenges should be like."

Mrs J Bennett, Teacher of German

GCHQ Christmas Challenge, December 2025

Following up on the National Language Competition, GCHQ also hosts an annual 24-hour long Christmas Challenge on its website. It consists of seven different code breaking tasks which test understanding of patterns, logic and linguistics, plus a hidden message in a Christmas card. This was open to all Year Groups and, at WHSB, 26 students working individually and in teams successfully completed the challenge before the deadline.

Students received certificates for the successful solving of all the puzzles. Of those who answered the survey, 100% rated their experience as being either 4 or 5 stars out of 5, and 93% would be likely or very likely to recommend the challenge to others for next year.



Reflections from our students:

"I thought that it was really creative with its questions, and that the questions were in some sort of a riddle which might fascinate some people. I think that others should really give it a go."

"The GCHQ Christmas Challenge was not only great fun but certainly a memorable part of the term. Each time I solved a puzzle after having previously struggled, I was filled with excitement alongside my friends, which made it a truly amazing experience. I would definitely recommend it to more people next year!"

"Intellectually stimulating and definitely interesting for anyone who might have an interest in cryptography - how coherent words can be turned into seemingly random letters whilst still retaining their meaning."

NATIONAL CAREERS WEEK 2026: BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN THE CLASSROOM AND CAREERS

Monday 2 - Friday 6 March 2026

WHSB will be celebrating National Careers Week with careers at the heart of learning. Across the School, lessons will be tailored to highlight the skills and knowledge pupils will need to succeed in the workplace.

From English to Engineering, teachers will weave careers insights into everyday lessons. In some classes, pupils will explore soft skills such as problem-solving, time management, communication, networking, conflict resolution, teamwork, and creative thinking – essential attributes valued by employers across every industry. Other lessons will draw direct connections between subjects and careers, for example helping pupils to see how the mathematics they learn in the classroom could translate into a career in finance, engineering, or data analysis.

National Careers Week is a great opportunity for pupils to understand how what they learn at School can directly impact their future careers. It is about the relevance of learning and showing pupils the wide range of opportunities available to them.

By integrating careers into lessons, WHSB is helping pupils to build confidence, motivation, and ambition – key ingredients for future success. The School is proud to support pupils in exploring pathways that match their skills, interests, and aspirations.

National Careers Week 2026 is more than a celebration – it represents a chance to inspire the next generation, to equip them with workplace-ready skills, and to help them navigate the exciting world of careers that awaits beyond the classroom.

Mr M Atkinson, Careers Adviser



LOWER SIXTH PARENTS CONSULTATION EVENING

Monday 2 March 2026, 4.00pm - 6.00pm

Parents of Lower Sixth students will be able to book appointments via the *SchoolBooking* App, to meet with subject teachers following receipt of the Phase 2 Report issued earlier in the term. This evening provides an excellent opportunity to assess students' strengths, identify areas for consolidation, and plan for the Lower Sixth Examinations. Thorough preparation for these examinations is essential, as they form the basis of the UCAS Predicted Grades. Ongoing support remains available for all Lower Sixth students through assemblies and the pastoral programme.

Mrs K Revell, Director of Sixth Form



Enrichment Activities with the Lower Sixth, September 2025

YEAR 9 PHASE 2 DATA REPORT ISSUED (FULL WRITTEN)

Tuesday 3 March 2026

This report will inform Year 9 pupils of where they stand ahead of choosing their GCSE Option choices and is followed by the Year 9 Options Carousel on Thursday 5 March, the Year 9 Options Evening on Thursday 12 March, and the Year 9 Parents Evening on Monday 16 March.

Pupils are asked to choose the five subjects they wish to study to GCSE level alongside English Language and Literature, Mathematics, and the three Sciences. Each pupil must choose a Language and one of History or Geography. There are then three 'free' choices which could include a second language or doubling up with History and Geography for those seeking a stronger Humanities route. A full list of available courses, along with all course details, is published in the Options Handbook which pupils will receive in due course.

Mr M Manning, Deputy Headteacher

SIXTH FORM LAMDA EXAMINATIONS

Tuesday 3 March 2026

In March, our first year of Gold Medal LAMDA examinations take place. The School is now in its fourth year as a LAMDA Examination Centre, and has enjoyed considerable success in examination performance in recent years. However, this will be the first year that students in the Sixth Form will participate in LAMDA examinations.

Gold Medal students have worked extremely hard over the last 18 months to prepare for the big day. Two candidates have followed a pathway in Acting, taking on performances from Shakespeare, from Joe Orton's *What The Butler Saw* (written in 1967), and from a more modern film script, *The Shawshank Redemption*. The Public Speaking pathway has involved preparation for the performance of two speeches, together with the delivery of more spontaneous speeches from a prompt given on the day.

All students participating in this year's examination have worked very hard in preparing for these examinations, success in which garners UCAS points as well as the Gold Medal qualification. As the first cohort to undertake the examination, these students are the vanguard of our Gold Medal classes and we wish them the very best of success. Break a leg!!

Mr B Jeffreys, Director of Drama



We teach **LAMDA**
Exams & Qualifications

YEAR 9 GCSE OPTIONS PROCESS: THE OPTIONS CAROUSEL

Thursday 5 March 2026

As our Year 9 pupils approach the time to make decisions regarding those subjects they will opt to study at GCSE, there are several stages the School implements to support the pupils during this process, and to assist them in making suitable, well-informed choices.

During this term, the pupils will be receiving a series of Assemblies from optional subject departments, including presentations on Economics and Geology (subjects that are not part of the Lower School curriculum).

During the afternoon of Thursday 5 March, Year 9 pupils will participate in an Options Carousel, where they can visit subject stands, view work, and talk to current and former GCSE pupils who can offer their insight and answer questions. This afternoon of activities also includes a presentation from the School's Careers Adviser.

Mr A Baggs, Director of Lower School



Exploring History and Engineering at the Imperial War Museum Duxford, September 2025

SPRING SINFONIA CONCERT

Thursday 5 March 2026, 7.30pm – 9.00pm

Join us for an unforgettable celebration of orchestral mastery as the Westcliff Sinfonia takes the stage for a concert brimming with drama and energy; a journey through some of the most iconic works in classical music.

Tchaikovsky's "Marche Slave" opens the evening with a surge of passion and patriotic fervour. Written during a time of conflict, this stirring march combines bold brass fanfares with sweeping melodies, evoking both resilience and triumph. Its powerful rhythms and emotional depth will set the tone for a night of exhilarating music.

Next, we invite you to revel in the spirited charm of Johann Strauss Sr's "Radetzky March." A perennial favourite, this lively piece is synonymous with celebration. Its infectious energy and rhythmic vitality will have you tapping your feet and smiling

along, as the orchestra brings this beloved march to life with precision and flair.

The program concludes with the enchanting world of Edvard Grieg's "Peer Gynt" Suite. From the mysterious dawn of Morning Mood to the haunting beauty of Solveig's Song and the thrilling chase of In the Hall of the Mountain King, Grieg's music paints vivid scenes of adventure, romance, and folklore. Each movement is a masterpiece of colour and imagination, showcasing the orchestra's versatility and expressive power.

Whether you are a lifelong classical music enthusiast or discovering these works for the first time, this concert promises an evening of inspiration and joy. The Westcliff Sinfonia will transport you to a world where melody and emotion reign supreme.

Tickets are available via *TicketSource* at a price of £5.00 for adults and are free for pupils.

Mr T Derrick, Director of Music



TALK THE TALK WORKSHOP: "TALK ABOUT THE FUTURE"

Friday 6 March 2026

In March, some of our Lower Sixth students will take part in an exciting Talk the Talk Workshop, supported by the *Jack Petchey Foundation*. The session is designed to boost confidence and help students prepare for interviews as they plan their next steps.

The Workshop aims to:

- Identify employability skills;
- Develop interview techniques;
- Nurture presentational skills;
- Improve connections with potential employers;
- Boost self-esteem.

Through interactive activities and expert guidance, students will learn to make great first impressions, answer tricky questions, and present themselves with confidence – key skills for their future.

The Workshop was extremely well-received by Lower Sixth students last year and we are, therefore, very much looking

forward to welcoming the *Jack Petchey Foundation* once again.

Mr M Atkinson, Careers Adviser



YEAR 10 GEOLOGY DORSET TRIP

Saturday 7 - Wednesday 11 March 2026

Investigating Geology in the field is a compulsory requirement of the GCSE course. In March, twenty-six Geologists in Year 10 will be visiting famous locations such as Lulworth Cove, Durdle Door, and Kimmeridge Bay in Dorset in order to complete their fieldwork. Much of the Dorset coastline has UNESCO World Heritage status and a wide range of topics can be investigated including minerals, rocks, and fossils, together with larger-scale studies related to plate tectonics and the geological history of the area.

Man's impact on the environment from mining and quarrying will also be studied from our base in Swanage. This part of Dorset is a world-renowned area for geological studies and our pupils will have the opportunity to build their knowledge and understanding of field Geology throughout the week. All this can be done whilst gaining an enjoyment and appreciation of being within a beautiful landscape, itself governed by the geology of Dorset.

Mr P Marlow, Head of Geology



YEAR 7 CHARITY WEEK

Monday 9 - Monday 16 March 2026

Our Year 7 pupils have enthusiastically embraced the School's fundraising endeavours during the first term and we have been delighted to see them participating in events organised across the School, including the non-uniform Charity Culture Day celebration in October last year.

This term, the Year 7 will participate in a Charity week of their own, filled with fun and exciting events such as the Sponsored Silence, Silly Tie Day, and Cake Sales. These events will take place throughout the week, bringing all pupils in the Year Group together in charitable pursuit, and helping them to further appreciate the role and importance of charities in society.

Year 7 Form groups are invited to suggest and arrange any additional fundraising activities for the Year 7 Charity Week, to



complement the events noted. Pupils with suggestions about the charities to which proceeds should be donated should speak to their Form Tutor.

Mr A C Baggs, Director of Lower School



YEAR 10 PHASE 2 DATA REPORT ISSUED (DATA ONLY)

Tuesday 10 March 2026

In March, Year 10 Pupils will receive the second report of their GCSE course in all subjects. This will also include a Target Grade for those who study courses new to pupils at GCSE - Economics and Geology. This report will be summarised by Year 10 Progress Leader Mr Atkinson, whose commentary will provide guidance and support to all pupils in Year 10 and their parents.

*Mr M Manning,
Deputy Headteacher*



CAREERS EVENING: SHINE A SPOTLIGHT ON STEM

Wednesday 11 March 2026, 7.00pm - 8.30pm

WHSB will host the final Careers Evening of the academic year this March, and it promises to be one of the most inspiring yet. The event will focus on the dynamic and ever-expanding fields of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), which continue to capture the interest and ambition of WHSB students.

STEM careers are at the forefront of innovation, shaping the world through advancements in medicine, computing, environmental science, and engineering design. Recognising this, WHSB is committed to giving its pupils first-hand insights into these industries, helping them explore the diverse range of opportunities available.

The evening will feature a line-up of distinguished guests, including scientists, engineers, technologists, and mathematicians, each bringing their own stories of success, challenge, and discovery. From leading-edge research and design projects to technological entrepreneurship and sustainable development, speakers will share their journeys and offer practical guidance on how to thrive in these competitive yet rewarding sectors.

Pupils will also have the chance to network and ask questions, gaining advice on everything from university pathways to

essential skills and emerging trends in the world of STEM. For many, this event could be the spark that shapes a future career or deepens an existing passion.

With STEM remaining one of the most exciting areas for young people today, WHSB's Careers Evening in March will champion curiosity, ambition, and discovery. With an engaging programme and a wealth of professional experience on display, the evening promises to be an unmissable opportunity for all those looking to build their future in science and technology.

Mr M Atkinson, Careers Adviser



YEAR 9 GCSE OPTIONS PROCESS: OPTIONS EVENING

Thursday 12 March 2026, 7.30pm – 9.00pm

On Thursday 12 March, the School will host the annual Options Evening for parents and pupils. The important event is part of our support programme offered throughout the options process and provides an opportunity to discuss with parents and pupils that process in detail, and for staff to provide advice on making well-informed decisions.

Soon after this event, at the end of the Spring Term, the pupils will be required to make final choices in relation to their GCSE

options, and those choices will be then carefully considered by the School to ensure they are sensible and represent the best interests of the pupil concerned. Following that consideration the choices will be confirmed by the School.

During the evening on 12 March, guidance on how to complete the online GCSE Options form will be provided and, throughout the options process, there are many opportunities for pupils to speak with teachers and Senior Staff who can offer further support. Pupils are strongly encouraged to seek support wherever necessary and should they have any questions.

Mr A C Baggs, Director of Lower School

SIXTH FORM TRIP TO CAMBRIDGE EMMANUEL COLLEGE

Thursday 12 March 2026

On Thursday 12 March, we shall be taking fourteen selected Year 12 students to Cambridge for a Key Stage 5 Insight Day at Emmanuel College. The day typically involves a talk by the College's Outreach Team on Oxbridge and applications, a tour of the College led by student ambassadors, lunch in the Dining Hall, and an extra-curricular workshop. Emmanuel is our Cambridge "link college" and we have visited almost every year since 2003 in order to support some of our students to pursue their ambition to apply to Oxford or Cambridge.

Mr R Stevens, Higher Education Adviser



*Year 11 Emmanuel College Cambridge
Insight Day, November 2025*

THE PHILHARMONIA ORCHESTRA PERFORM SCHEHERAZADE

Thursday 12 March 2026

We are thrilled to announce an exciting opportunity for our pupils to experience the magic of live orchestral music with one of the world's leading ensembles—the Philharmonia Orchestra. This special trip promises an evening of breathtaking artistry, featuring two extraordinary works that will transport you across cultures and stories.

First, attendees will feel the irresistible energy of Arturo Márquez's Danzón No. 2 – a modern classic bursting with Latin rhythms and vibrant dance motifs. This piece is a celebration of life and movement, blending elegance with fiery passion. Its infectious spirit will have you captivated from the first note to the exhilarating finale.

Then they will immerse themselves in the exotic beauty of Rimsky-Korsakov's Scheherazade. Inspired by the legendary tales of One Thousand and One Nights, this masterpiece weaves a tapestry of vivid colours and sweeping melodies. From the shimmering strings to the commanding brass, Scheherazade's voice sings through the violin solo, guiding the audience on a journey of mystery, romance, and adventure. It is a work that showcases the orchestra at its most expressive and imaginative.

This trip is more than a concert – it is a chance to witness world-class musicianship, deepen your appreciation for music,

and share an inspiring experience with friends and classmates. Whether you are a seasoned listener or new to orchestral music, these works will leave a lasting impression.

Spaces are limited, so secure your place today! Please do not miss this opportunity to explore the wonders of live performance and discover why music speaks to the heart like nothing else. It is particularly recommended for those in Year 8, and for those studying Music at A level, for whom Scheherazade is a studied work.

Ticket prices will be confirmed early in the Spring Term.

Mr T Derrick, Director of Music



YEAR 11 PHASE THREE TARGETED REPORT

Friday 13 March 2026

The Targeted Report is designed to provide additional support and guidance to those pupils who find themselves in a less secure position as they advance towards the Summer Examinations. Selected pupils, along with their parents, will receive this Targeted Report on Friday 13 March. The Targeted Report will include a current attainment grade and a brief comment on their progress since the Trial Examinations, as well as information on how pupils can further improve in the remaining time before the GCSE Examinations.

This report is targeted at a small cohort of pupils and only in those subjects where a grade 5 or less was achieved in their Trial Examinations. It is a final opportunity for these pupils, and their parents, to ensure that the necessary adjustments in their approach to revision are made.

Mr A Barnett, Director of Middle School



YEAR 9 PARENTS CONSULTATION EVENING

Monday 16 March 2026, 4.00pm – 6.00pm

This term, our Year 9 Parents Consultation Evening take place on Monday 16 March. These Consultation Evenings, held remotely, provide valuable opportunities for parents to discuss their son's progress with some of his teachers.

Our *SchoolBooking*, online programme will allow parents to book the remote consultation meetings with teachers they may wish to see and, similarly, teachers will book appointments with parents. Regrettably, there is insufficient capacity to allow parents to meet with all their son's teachers, so we request that parents place select meetings with teachers of subjects for which they consider a discussion would be most beneficial.

For example, as this evening is timed to take place following the issue of the Phase 2 reports, and as the deadline for making the final GCSE Options choices is approaching, these meetings provide ideal opportunities for discussion around suitability and readiness for GCSE.

Instructions for the evening will be shared nearer the date of this event, and will included details of the total number of appointments parents are able to arrange, including those requests made by teachers.

Mr A Baggs, Director of Lower School



LOWER SIXTH GEOGRAPHY TRIP TO BELFAIRS PARK

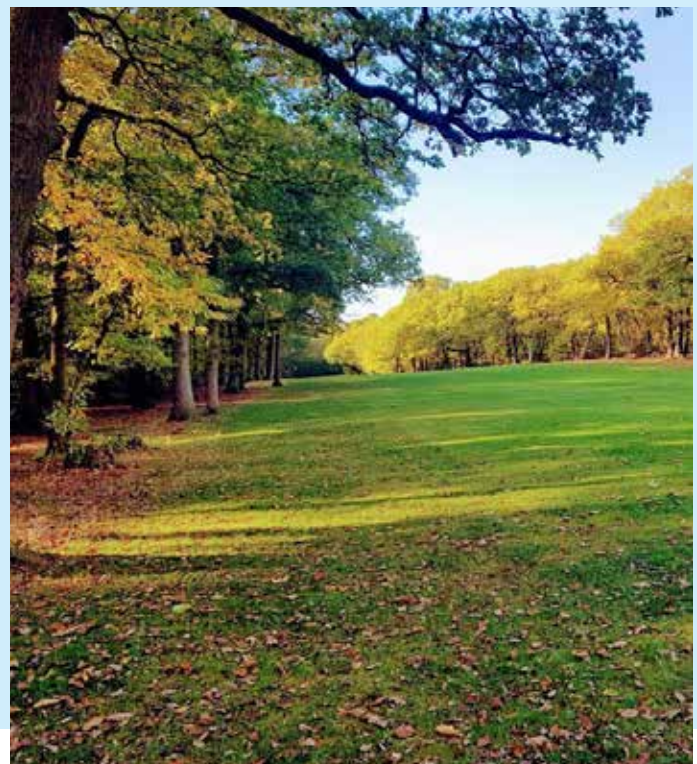
Tuesday 17 March 2025

A compulsory aspect of A Level Geography is that Sixth Form students undertake four days of fieldwork and data collection.

The first of these is a visit to Belfairs park in Leigh as part of the Physical Systems and Sustainability topic. Students will measure characteristics of Prittle Brook and use the data to calculate flood risk in the surrounding area, as well as considering the management of the local physical and human environment.

Subsequent trips will see students visit Chalkwell and central Southend, and then Brick Lane in Spitalfields, east London. These day visits develop essential geographical fieldwork and analytical skills and help students to plan an Independent Investigation for themselves on either a physical or human geography topic. Students then carry out their own fieldwork during the summer holidays and write a coursework report which counts for 20% of the total A Level marks.

Dr M Shepherd, Head of Geography



GODSPELL DRAMA PRODUCTION

Wednesday 18, Thursday 19, Friday 20 March 2026

The musical *Godspell* has in truth not always been the most in-vogue show, with some regarding it as an outdated relic of 1970s hippy culture and others pushed away by its apparent overt evangelism. And yet this wonderful emotive musical offers beautiful music, great creative opportunity, and timeless messages of community and hope - themes that we are very much looking forward to exploring in our Spring Term production.

Historically there has been a tendency to link *Godspell* with Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Jesus Christ Superstar*. At one level, this connection is easy to justify. Both stories first emerged in New York in 1971, and both appear to tell the Christian New Testament story of Jesus and his disciples, one sung-through in rock music and the other offering evangelical ballads and enacted parables. And yet in reality the two shows are complete opposites in their focus and their storytelling. *Jesus Christ Superstar* (and the clue is in the name) focuses tightly in on its central figure of Jesus, primarily dealing with the journey of a single central Messianic figure. The musical *Godspell*, however, centres around the disciples and the community that they form, a community strong enough to survive the massacre of its leader. In the former, Jesus is the rock star lead. In the latter, his primary function is to facilitate the growth of others.

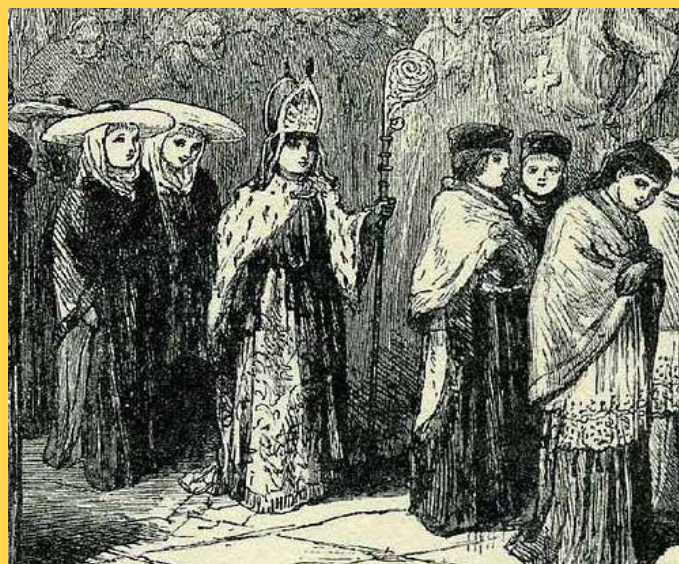
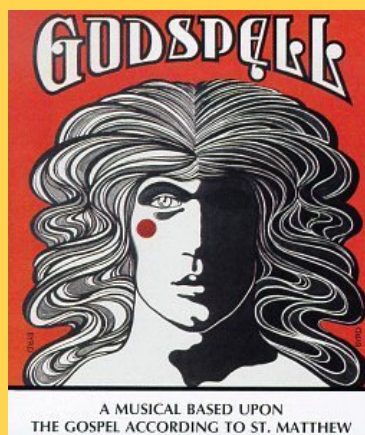
The evolution of this show is quite some tale in itself. The idea began with John-Michael Tebelak, a drama student from Ohio who aspired one day to become an Episcopal Church minister. As a student, Tebelak once attended a service at Pittsburgh's St Paul Cathedral, dressed in his customary overalls and a T-shirt. Because of his attire, he was (in his view) treated with considerable suspicion by the Cathedral authorities and even frisked for drugs by a police officer after the service. The experience left Tebelak starting to question whether hierarchy and expectation within the Church was creating a formality that stifled real expressions of joy in worship. These questions took Tebelak next to the story of the mediaeval Catholic festival of the Feast of Fools. Held on 1 January each year, this Festival created a single day where authority within the Catholic Church passed from the stern and the strict to the foolish but considerably more lenient. The result, in Tebelak's view, was to deliver (for one day in the year) an approach to worship that offered greater freedom of behaviour and helped some people make their expression of joy and belief in a more upbeat and attractive way. Tebelak decided to draw his ideas together into a show that would use biblical stories in St Matthew's Gospel to recreate this exuberance. The project first became his Master's thesis at the Pennsylvania Carnegie Mellon University, and then a first production of *Godspell* at the University in 1970.

When the show was next brought to the New York fringe in 1971, its producers were keen to improve the quality of its songs. Hunting around for a composer to sharpen up the musical side, *Godspell*'s producers met with little success until they turned in despair to a young composer who was touting his own first work around New York. That composer, also a graduate of Carnegie Mellon, was the 23-year-old Stephen Schwartz, who would go on to create the musicals *Pippin* and *Wicked*. Schwartz was attracted to the idea of a community formed by a charismatic individual, (and also perhaps in need of the chance to win friends and influence people), and he speedily put together a rich score that lifted the show considerably and launched the version of *Godspell* that we see today.

At the heart of *Godspell* is the message that shared Music and Drama can bring people together in the very strongest of bonds. *Godspell* takes, as the basis of its composite small plays, parables from St Matthew's Gospel. Religious plays are, of course, central to the emergence of theatre in England. Mediaeval England saw the evolution of mystery and morality plays relating Bible stories, from which later theatre sprang. The main cycles of religious mystery plays are those that emerged in York, Wakefield, and Chester. The most complete is the York cycle of forty-eight pageants. They were performed, in the city of York, from the middle of the fourteenth century until 1569. There are also the Towneley plays of thirty-two pageants, once thought to have been a true 'cycle' of plays and most likely performed around the Feast of Corpus Christi, probably in the West Yorkshire town of Wakefield during the late Middle Ages until 1576. The Ludus Coventriae (also called the N-Town Plays or Hegge cycle), is now generally agreed to be a redacted compilation of at least three older, unrelated plays. Finally, the Chester cycle of twenty-four pageants is thought to be an Elizabethan reconstruction of older medieval traditions. By presenting short Biblical plays in *Godspell*, we are going right back to the early days of theatre in England and illustrating how an entire dramatic tradition might emerge.

The greatest story ever told always makes for a good evening's entertainment and, when the songs are this beautiful, and the drama this rich in potential, there is the promise of plenty to enjoy. We hope that you will join us for what promises to be an uplifting evening of musical theatre.

Mr B Jeffreys, Director of Drama



INTERMEDIATE KANGAROO /MATHS OLYMPIAD

Thursday 19 March 2026

Pupils who perform exceptionally well in the Intermediate Mathematical Challenge may be invited to take part in the prestigious follow-on rounds, such as the Intermediate Kangaroo or the Intermediate Mathematical Olympiad. These rounds are designed to challenge the most talented problem-solvers and provide an opportunity to tackle advanced mathematical questions that require creativity, logical reasoning, and perseverance. Participation in these rounds is a significant achievement and is recognised nationally, offering pupils the chance further to develop their skills and to gain valuable experience for future academic pursuits.

Miss A James, Director of Mathematics

YEAR 7 PHASE TWO REPORT

Friday 20 March 2026

The Phase 2 Report for our Year 7 pupils is the first full written report the pupils and parents will receive, providing important, detailed feedback from all the pupil's teachers. This Report, which will provide a detailed insight into the pupil's progress, should be read in conjunction with the previous Report to gain an important understanding of areas of strength and relative weakness, and so that levels of progress can be ascertained.

Each subject teacher will provide the pupil with an attainment grade using the School's internal system. The expected grade at this stage is a 5c. For most pupils it is expected that they will have progressed by two fine levels since their last report, for example from 4c to 4a, or 4b to 5a. These attainment grades are a means by which parents, pupils, and teachers can assess the pupil's current level of understanding, and identify areas of strength and areas requiring development.

Within this Report, pupils will also receive four attitudinal indicators to reflect their efforts in and out of class, adherence to deadlines, and presentation of work. The indicators range from 1 (Exceptional) to 4 (Unacceptable). The expected indicator is 2 (Good), which represents a pupil demonstrating the anticipated attitude. A full explanation of the indicators can be found on the final page of the report.

Once the reports have been shared, Form Tutors will set aside time for pupils to consider the content of their report, reflecting on their grades and setting goals for the remainder of the academic year. These discussions also address strategies to support pupils in improving their performance, particularly in circumstances where a less confident grade has been recorded. We strongly encourage parents to review the report with their son and to discuss the goals he has set, which will be noted in his planner. If there are any further concerns, parents should contact their son's Form Tutor via the School Office. The range of support available to pupils includes Pastoral Support, Subject Support, and Mentoring, and we encourage pupils to seek advice and guidance when needed.

Mr A Baggs, Director of Lower School



Year 7 at Thriftwood Camp

CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL TRIP

Saturday 21 March 2026

In March, the Religious Studies and History Departments are delighted to offer pupils in Key Stage Three an opportunity to explore one of the most iconic and historically significant sites in England.

Canterbury Cathedral is a masterpiece of medieval architecture and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It has been a centre of Christian worship for over 1,400 years and played a pivotal role in English history. Its story goes from the Anglo-Saxon period through to the Norman Conquest, when the Cathedral was rebuilt under Archbishop Lanfranc.

The Cathedral was also central to the English Reformation in the 16th century, when its role and influence were dramatically reshaped as Henry VIII broke from Rome. These events highlight how Canterbury became a focal point for both continuity and change in the nation's spiritual and political history.

Canterbury Cathedral also illustrates how Christian worship has evolved from medieval pilgrimage and services in Latin all the way to modern inclusive services and daily prayer. Its continuous use for over fourteen centuries shows the enduring importance of communal worship and sacred space in Christian life.

The visit will allow pupils to appreciate the Cathedral's stunning design, its rich symbolism, and its role in shaping Christianity and society in England. They will also gain insight into how religion and politics intertwined throughout history, influencing culture and identity. This will be followed by a guided tour of Canterbury's historic medieval centre.

The day promises to be an inspiring experience, offering pupils a unique opportunity to deepen their understanding of both historical change and religious tradition.

Mr T Hiller, Teacher of Religious Studies



YEAR 8 PHASE TWO REPORT

Thursday 26 March 2026

The Phase 2 Report for Year 8 pupils provides parents with an important insight into their son's attainment and attitude towards his studies up to this point.

Using the School's internal grading system, each of the pupil's subject teachers will award an attainment grade expressed as a letter and number. It is expected that pupils will achieve a grade 6c; grades which vary from this will indicate whether the pupil is performing above or below this level. The allocated grade will also prove useful in understanding a pupil's attainment within the context of his Year Group.

This Report will also contain the pupil's Lower School target grade, the average target grade being 7b. Therefore, if a pupil has a target above 7b, the School would anticipate that the pupils would be achieving above the current expected level. If the target grade is below a 7b, a grade 6c would be considered a strong result. This additional detail should help parents, pupils, and teachers to assess the pupil's current level of understanding, areas of strength, and those areas in which further attention may be required.

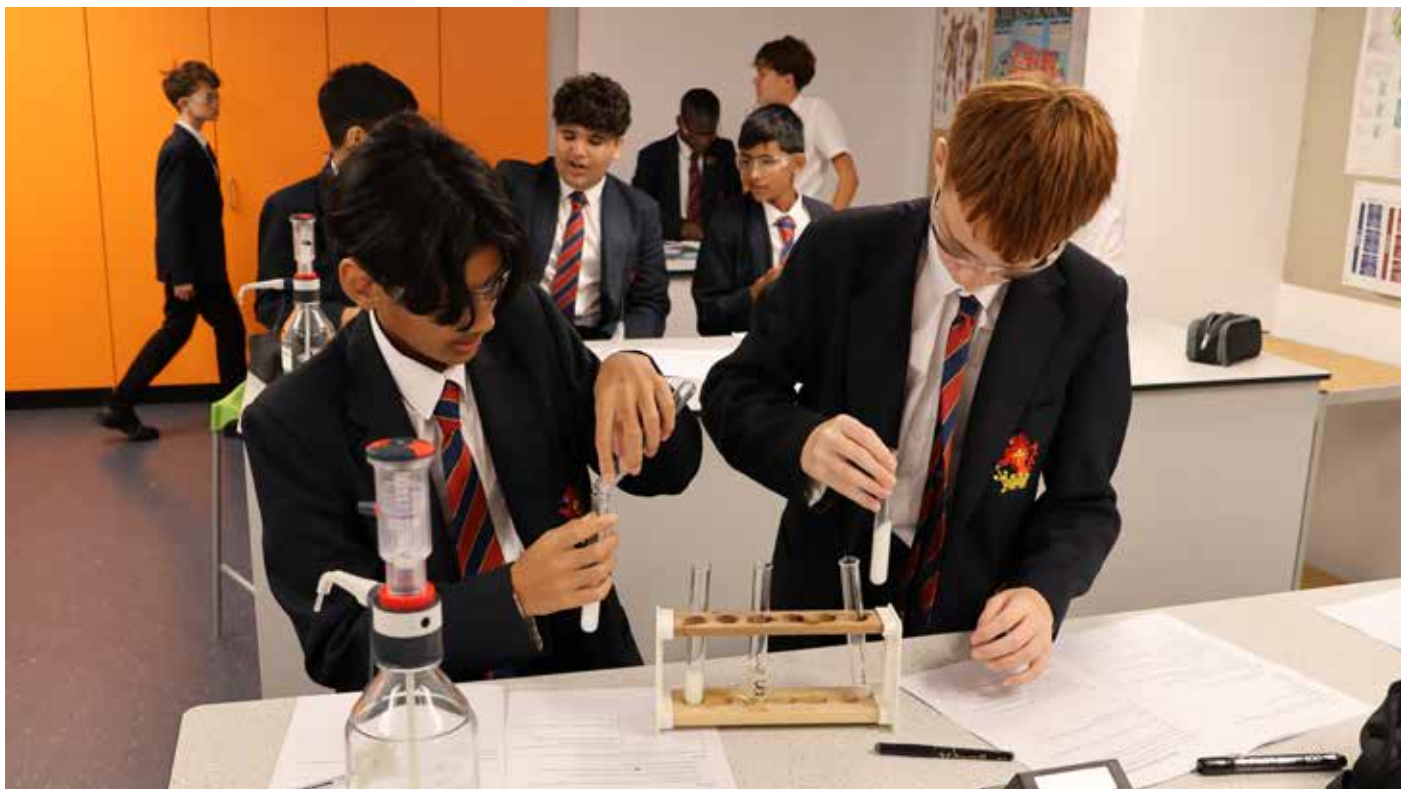
Attitudinal indicators, also included in the Phase 2 Report, are awarded on a scale of 1 (Exceptional) to 4 (Unacceptable). As

we have noted previously, the expected indicator grade is a 2 (Good). Grades of 3 or 4 require a change in attitude by the pupil, and a Grade of 1 is awarded when a pupil has exceeded the already high expectations of this School. The indicators received should be considered against the explanatory table at the back of the Report.

As with all Reports, we strongly encourage parents to discuss its content with their son, and to once again reflect on the goals he has set and recorded in his planner. If there are any concerns, parents can contact the Form Tutor via the School Office, or the Pastoral Team is on hand to assist where this may be necessary. The comprehensive range of pastoral and subject support, including mentoring, remains available to pupils in need of guidance or assistance, and they should seek that support when needed.

Following circulation of these Reports, as is usual, the Form Tutors will set aside time for pupils to review their grades and establish targets for the rest of the academic year. The Form Tutor will also work with the pupils to explore strategies to support them in strengthening their performance, especially in areas in which a lower grade has been awarded.

Mr A Baggs, Director of Lower School



UPPER SIXTH PHASE 3 TARGETED REPORTS

Thursday 26 March 2026

Following the January Trial Examinations, the Senior Master Sixth Form will identify those students who need to make accelerated progress to achieve their future goals. These students will attend extra mentoring sessions with a senior staff member, during which specific targets will be set and monitored. A Phase 3 report will then be issued to update on their progress since the Phase 2 report.

Mr A Dean, Senior Master Sixth Form

SUPPORT THE PARENTS' ASSOCIATION WITH EASYFUNDRAISING



Easyfundraising is a shopping directory listing some of the UK's favourite online stores including Amazon, John Lewis, Marks & Spencer and over 2,000 others. Just use the links on the Easyfundraising site whenever you shop online and, at no extra cost to you, the PA will receive a free donation of up to 15% from every purchase you make. It really is that simple, and it is completely FREE to register. You will not pay a penny more for your shopping when you use the Easyfundraising site. In fact, you can even SAVE MONEY as many retailers offer discounts, special offers and even 'e-vouchers' exclusive to Easyfundraising.

If you shop online anyway, then why not raise valuable extra funds for us by using this fantastic scheme. All you need to do is visit www.easyfundraising.org.uk and, when you register, select Westcliff High School for Boys as the organisation you wish to support. www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/westcliffhighschoolforboys/.

The more members of our School Community who choose to support us in this way, the more money we can raise for the School. Our thanks in anticipation.

The Parents' Association would like to thank all those who continue to support us in these and all other ways.

Mrs S Ghauri, Chair of the Parents' Association



HOUSE SYSTEM

There has been an incredibly positive and busy start to the 2025-2026 Academic Year at WHSB. A wide range of House activities have been offered to our pupils. Most of these events have taken place during the hour-long lunch break and pupils have often worked in House groups, these being Harrier (yellow), Kestrel (red), Merlin (green) and Osprey (blue). These events have helped to develop teamwork skills and build confidence in our learners.



House 'Where on Earth?' research and presentations, October 2025



House Beyblade activity, October 2025

Events that have taken place so far this academic year have included: House Rubik's Cube, House Pokémon, House Football, House Lego Masters, House 'World of Wonder' research project, House Cross County, House Flags, House Capital Cities quiz, House 'Where on Earth?' presentations, House Uno, House Autumn Halloween Art, House Bonfire Night Art, House Diwali Art and Research, House French Spelling, House German Spelling, House Spanish Spelling, House French Translation, Bee, House German Translation Bee, House Staff Basketball, House General Knowledge Quiz, House Pupil Basketball, House Remembrance Poetry, House Remembrance Art, House Christmas and Festive Cards, House Treasure Maps, and House Beyblade.

Upcoming events this New Year include:

House Higher and Lower, House Indoor Cricket, House MFL Spelling Bee Finals, House MFL Translation Bee, House University Challenge Preliminaries, House Gu-Hi-Oh, House Pokémon later rounds, House Football Cards, House General Knowledge Research, House Robert Burns Research, House Chinese New Year Art, House Chinese New Year Research, House Valentine's Day Art, House St. David's Day Research, House St Patrick's Day Research, and House Badminton. House events are pupil-centred and tailored to our pupils' interests. If any learner has a new idea for a House activity or would like to help run an event, then they are encouraged to contact a member of the House Team.

We are pleased that over 70 different clubs and societies are currently on offer at School. Most are completely free of charge and take place during the lunch hour. They are overseen by a member staff, and in many cases organised by the Senior Students themselves. These societies help pupils develop a variety of important skills and encourage them to become collaborative, supportive and independent learners. Societies are an excellent opportunity to make friends and try something new. We encourage pupils to attend at least one club or House activity a week.

CLUBS AND SOCIETIES AT WHSB

Society/Club	Day	Time	Location	Years	Leader
Animation Society	Monday	Lunch	W11	Year 10	Mr Steel and Students
Art Club Key Stage 3	Tuesday	Lunch	E26	Year 7, 8 and 9	Mr Hawkins
Art Club Key Stage 4 Support	Friday	Lunch	E28	Year 10 and 11	Mrs Glascock
Arkwright Scholarship	Thursday	Lunch	T1	Year 11	Mr Moore
Astronomy Society	Wednesday (+ various)	12.50pm - 1.35pm	SF12	All	Mr Dalby
Beyblade	Wednesday	Lunch	E8	All	Mr Barber
Big Band	Tuesday	3.45pm - 5.00pm	Music Dept M18	Grade 5 students	Mr Derrick
Brass Ensemble	Thursday	1.00pm	M18	All	Mr Wood
Board Games	Friday	Lunch	E8 + various	All	Mr Barber
CAD Computer Aided Design	Mon, Weds, Fri	Lunch	T3	Year 8	Mr Wright
CCF Army	Thursday	3.45pm	South Drive	Year 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13	CCF Staff
CCF Navy	Thursday	3.45pm	South Drive	Year 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13	CCF Staff
CCF RAF	Thursday	3.45pm	South Drive	Year 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13	Mr North
Chemistry Support	Fri A Thurs B	Lunch (+ Tuesday after school)	S1	Year 12 and 13	Mr Wightman
Chess Club	Friday	Lunch	S14	All Years	Mr Mansfield
Chess Club Year 7	Thursday	Lunch	S14	Year 7	Mr Mansfield
Creative Writing Club	Thursday	Lunch	E31	Key Stage 3	Miss Wood
Coding Club	Tuesday	Lunch	W11	Year 10, 11, 12 and 13	Mr Steel and Students
Computing Clubs	Various	Lunch	W10 /W11	Various	Dr Johnson/Mr Steel
Concert Band/Show Orchestra	Tuesday	1.00pm	M18	Grade 4 students	Mr Wood
Countdown Club	Monday	Lunch	M1	All	Mr Lo and Mathematics Prefects
Debating	Various days	Lunch	Sixth Form Block SF14	Year 12 and 13	Mr Stevens
Earth Environmental Society	Thursday	Lunch	E3	All	Mr Marlow and Year 13 Students
Economics Society	Fri (+ some Thurs)	1.00pm	SF15	Year 12 and 13	Mr North
Engineering Society	Thursday	Lunch	S17	Year 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13	Mr Hudson
English MOXBRIDGE 'Mock Ox-bridge'	Tuesday	Lunch	E20	Year 12 and 13	Miss Bailey and Miss Wood
Ethical Food Society (EFOOD)	Tuesday A	Lunch	T4	Year 8 and 9 (7 Summer Term only)	Miss Onimisi
Football Cards Society	Wednesday	Lunch	E8	All	Mr Barber
Gastronomy Society	Mon B Tues B	Lunch	T4	Year 8 and 9	Miss Onimisi
Geography Society	Monday	Lunch	E3	All	Miss Young
Horn Group	Wednesday	1.00pm	M12	All	Mrs Patterson
History Society	Thursday	1.00pm	W24	All	Dr Platts
Jazz Band	Monday	1.10pm	M18	All	Mr Derrick and Mr Barrett
Jurassic Society	Monday	Lunch	W23	All	Mrs Cook and student leaders.
Latin for Beginners	Monday	Lunch	W21	Year 7 and 8	Ms McKeow, Dr Platts and Miss J James
Law Society	Tuesday	Lunch	SF14	Year 12 and 13	Student led and Mr Stevens
Library Clubs (various)	Various	Lunch	Library	All	Mrs Oats
Linux Club	Thursday	Lunch	W11	Year 11, 12 and 13	Mr Steel and Students Leaders

Society/Club	Day	Time	Location	Years	Leader
Machine Learning and Data Science	Wednesday	Lunch	W11	Year 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13.	Mr Steel and Students Leaders
Mahjong Club	Mon and Weds	Lunch (+ Fri at 3.35pm)	M3	Year 10, 11, 12 and 13	Mr Lo and Year 13 Student Leaders
Gauss Group (Mathematics Society)	Tuesday	Lunch	M2	All	Mr Lo and Miss James
Maths Help Club Key Stage 3 and 4	Mon and Thurs	Lunch	M2	Year 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11	Mathematics Dept
Model Making	Mon A Weds B	Lunch	T2	Year 7	Mrs Seomore
Maths Help Club Key Stage 5	Tues and Fri	Lunch	M3	Year 12 and 13	Mathematics Dept
Morning Tech Club	Various mornings	Before School	T3	By appointment only	Mr Moore and Mr Wright
Medical, Dentistry and Veterinary Society (MDV)	Thursday	1.00pm - 1.40pm	W31	Year 10, 11, 12 and 13	Mrs Lo-Whitford
Music Technology Club	Friday	3.40pm - 5.00pm	Music Dept	Key Stage 4	Mr Derrick
Oxbridge	Monday	Lunch	Westcliff Theatre	Year 12 and 13	Mr Stevens
Pegasus	Monday	Lunch	E20	Year 10 and 11	Miss Arunkumar and Miss Bailey
Personal Finance and Investment Society	Tuesday	Lunch	E4 (+E8)	All	Siddharth Jayaprakash, Kevin Sijo, Mr Barber
Philosophy Society	Tuesday	Lunch	W23	Year 12 and 13	Mr Hiller
Pokémon	Thurs and Fri	Lunch	E8 or E4	All	Mr Barber
Psychology Society	Tuesday Week B	Lunch	SF13	Year 10, 11, 12 and 13	Mrs Boyton and Mrs Jenkins
Reading and Private Study Club	Monday	Lunch	E8	All	Mr Barber
RS Debate Club	Friday	Lunch	W23	Key Stage 3	Mr Hiller
Robotics Club	Friday B	Lunch	T1	Year 10	Mr Moore
Rubik's Cube	Wednesday	Lunch	E8/E4	All	Mr Barber
Scratch Club	Friday	Lunch	W11	All	Mr Steel and Student Leaders
Sport	Daily	Lunch	Field, Sports Hall, Gym	Various	Physical Education Staff
Star Wars Club	Wednesday	Lunch	E26	All	Mr Hawkins
String Ensemble	Wednesday	1.00pm	M18	All	Mr Derrick
Tamil Club	Wednesday	Lunch	E29	All	Miss Arunkumar
Technology Club Key Stage 3	By Appointment	Various Lunchtimes	Technology Block	Key Stage 3	Mr Moore and Technology Staff
Treble Choir	Thursday	1.00pm	M12	Year 7 and 8	Mr Humphrey
Uno Club	Mon and Thurs	1.00pm	E8 or E16	All	Student led and Mr Barber
Wargaming Club	Friday	3.35pm	M1-M6	All	Mrs Lo-Whitford
Westcliff Choir	Friday	1.00pm	M18	All	Mr Derrick
Westcliff Economist	Various Lunchtimes	Lunch	Economics Dept	By invitation only	Economics Dept
Westcliff Sinfonia (finish November)	Wednesday	3.45pm - 5.00pm	M18	Grade 5 students	Mr Derrick and Mr Wood
Westcliff Pride	Tuesday	1.00pm	M1	Sixth Form and Key Stage 4	Miss Arunkumar, Miss Jackson and Mr Huntington
Yu-Gi-Oh	Friday	Lunch	E8	All	Mr Barber

Please carefully listen to daily register notices during Form time, e-mails and Microsoft Teams for further details. These activities may be cancelled or amended at short notice and are run by staff and pupils in their own time, on a voluntary basis. Most are unfunded but are free of charge.

Mr R Barber, House Coordinator and Head of PSHEE

SCHOOL SPORTS

Football

Last term, WHSB Football was in full force, with all teams from Year 7 to the Upper Sixth participating in multiple fixtures throughout the term. WHSB kicked off the year with a fierce House Competition seeing our Year 7 sportsmen in action for the first time. Our Lower School teams found the early matches in the Essex Cup challenging but learnt much from their experiences. The Year 9 team had more success in the Borough cup, with an outstanding performance against Cecil Jones Academy winning 14-2. In the Middle School, our Year 10 sportsmen have been the most successful team so far, with some outstanding games, most noticeably their win over Eastbrook School, ending in a penalty shootout. The Middle School has seen some of the most competitive and entertaining football displayed by the School so far this year. Similarly, it has been a positive start for the Sixth Form team – despite mixed results, they have gone from strength to strength, starting the season with a loss, draw, and a win. The confidence and skill that the Lower Sixth players have brought has been extremely impressive, and we hope the team can now build on their great performances.

Year	Played	Wins	Losses	Draw	Goals
7	4	2	2	0	7
8	4	0	4	0	1
9	6	2	4	0	21
10	6	2	4	0	14
11	3	0	3	0	3
1 st XI	3	1	1	1	7

This term, the football continues with the 1st XI in action almost weekly, and we look forward to watching them progress from what was already a successful start to the year. With more regular games and competitive opponents, the 1st XI will have to be dedicated, ensuring they can hit the ground running in the new term. This is exciting times for the Lower School as all three teams are going to Crystal Palace, which is a fantastic opportunity for the Lower School sportsmen to develop and showcase their ability, whilst representing the School. WHSB football teams can showcase all their hard work and talent this term with the great opportunities and fixtures to come.

Mr H Marrant, Sports Coach



Rugby

Year	Played	Win	Lose	Draw	PF	PA	P/D
7	5	2	2	1	90	105	-15
8	14	8	6	0	265	195	70
9	8	3	3	2	203	194	9
10	8	1	6	1	133	196	63
11	2	0	2	0	38	54	-16
1 st XV	5	3	2	0	166	98	68

We have seen some excellent rugby played across all Year Groups so far this year, but some performances really stand out.

First, at the beginning of October the Year 7 team travelled away to Gravesend Grammar School. In what was typical of many of their first games, they triumphed 20-15 after initially going down by two tries in the first two minutes. Excellent rugby was played, particularly as many players were new to the game, in their first year at the School. However, Joshua Owusu-Amankrah in his first game of competitive rugby was brilliant in both defence and attack, scoring a couple of tries and showing some real bravery when tackling.

The next performance we would like to highlight is at the other end of the School, involving the 1st XV. On the back of some really close games in the National Vase (winning two games in a row by just two points against Saffron Walden and Coopers, and eventually losing to Bishop Stortford College in the last seconds of their third round match), the boys faced SHSB at home. A brilliant individual try from Jensen Larthe started the scoring for WHSB, and the scoring continued from there, the game ending 68-0 to WHSB. Of particular note were performances by Oba Ayegbe, Sean Pasipangodya, and Daniel Osei-Poku, who have been excellent in the 1st XV team this year; in this game they played the first half only and then switched to playing with the 1st XI football team in their fixture, helping the School to win both matches.

Reggie Herron and Oliver-Dawson Shaw should also be mentioned for their performances in the 1st XV. As Year 11 players, they have fitted in seamlessly amongst the Sixth Form players, both contributing in attack and defence when playing fixtures this year.

In the coming months, there is a great deal of rugby to come for WHSB pupils, whether moving onto the later stages of Borough and County competitions, or towards the 7-a-side season where we will have all Year Groups representing the School at county level, and the Year 8, Year 9, Year 11, and 1st XV teams playing at the National School Sevens at Rosslyn Park. They provide excellent opportunities for the boys to test their skill level against some of the best school teams in the country. We look forward to seeing how we fair against such opposition.

Mr H Marrant, Sports Coach

Year 10 Indoor Athletics Championships 2025, Lee Valley

The 2025 Indoor Athletics Championships proved to be an exciting and successful day of competition for the Year 10 pupils of Westcliff High School for Boys, who travelled to the Lee Valley Athletics Centre to compete against a strong field of schools from across the region.

Our athletes performed exceptionally well across all events, showing outstanding teamwork, determination, and sportsmanship throughout the qualification events.

Track Events

The day began with the 60m hurdles, where Michael Kushimo (Team A) and Sam Awobadejo (Team B) both demonstrated great technique and composure over the barriers, getting the team off to a confident start.

In the 60m sprint, Sam Awelewa (Team A) and Jack Kearney (Team B) displayed explosive speed from the blocks, holding their own against very competitive fields. The 200m saw impressive performances from Danyel Oladimeji (Team A) and Sochima Okoye (Team B), both running strong bends and maintaining outstanding form on the home straight.

In the 300m, Freddie Sankey (Team A) produced one of the outstanding performances of the day, recording a superb time of 40.27 seconds, while Nathan Moradeke-Johnson (Team B) ran an excellent race to support the team's points tally. The 800m competitors, Mahran Momin (Team A) and Reuben Waters (Team B), showed superb pacing and endurance in two very tactical races, finishing strongly for valuable points.

Field Events

In the high jump, Danyel Oladimeji (Team A) and Jack Kearney (Team B) represented the school superbly, clearing solid heights under pressure. The long jump saw another strong performance from Michael Kushimo (Team 1) and Sochima Okoye (Team B), with both athletes showing consistency in results. Both boys jumped within 2cm of each other; 5.35m and 5.37m respectively.

A special mention must go to Ameer Salaam, who delivered one of the day's best results with a tremendous throw of 12.86m in the shot putt, earning maximum points for the team and setting a high standard for future competitions.

Team A finished in 6th position to qualify for the B final and team B finished the first round in 10th position, out of 19 schools. Although the A Final featured schools with Year 11 athletes, WHSB's Team A produced an outstanding performance in the B Final, ultimately becoming Lee Valley Indoor B Final Champions for 2025. This is an incredible achievement for the squad.

WHSB A finished in 1st place overall, heading up the B Final leaderboard with 266 points – the highest total among all Year 10 teams. Their results across events were as follows:

- 60m: 7.83 seconds Sam Awelewa (28 points)
- 200m: 24.73 seconds Danyel Oladimeji (29 points)
- Hurdles: 9.15 seconds Michael Kushimo (29 points)
- 300m: 40.29 seconds Freddie Sankey (30 points)
- 800m: 2:23.68 Mahran Momin (28 points)
- 4 x 200m relay: 1:43.73 (28 points)
- Shot Put: 12.86m Ameer Salaam (27 points)
- High Jump: 1.60m Danyel Oladimeji (29 points)
- Long Jump: 5.55m Sochima Okoye (28 points)
- Officiating & Records: 10 points

Total Score: 266 points – 1st Place (B Final Champions)

Overall, it was an exceptional day for our Year 10 athletes, who displayed skill, effort, and unity across every event. Congratulations to all those who took part – your hard work and performances were a credit to yourselves and to Westcliff High School for Boys.

Indoor Athletics in the Lower School

WHSB delivered a strong team performance at the Indoor Championships, finishing an impressive third overall in a highly competitive field, with a score of 258 points. The event was dominated by an exceptionally strong Dartford Grammar School team, who secured first place with 277 points, closely followed by Champion A in second with 262 points.

Despite the tough opposition, WHSB produced several outstanding individual performances. George Riley was outstanding, winning the 800m in superb fashion and setting a new personal best of 1:16.10. Another highlight of the event came from William Short, who won the high jump with an excellent clearance of 1.70m.

These performances, alongside valuable contributions across all events, ensured WHSB finished the championships with a well-earned third place, reflecting the depth of talent and determination that exists within the team.

The Year 7 Indoor Athletics Championships begin this term, in March 2026, with the first round on 11 March, semi-finals on 18 March, and hopefully representation in the final on 25 March. Indoor athletics practices begin early this term, giving pupils the opportunity to develop their skills and allowing staff to identify potential athletes for the early Year 7 team. Attention will then turn to the main outdoor athletics season, culminating in the Borough Championships in June, where we look forward to seeing pupils from all Year Groups competing and representing Westcliff High School for Boys with pride and determination.



Westcliff Boys' Cross Country



The 2025 Cross Country season began with our Year 7 and 8 teams making the trip to Lee Valley for a friendly fixture. All teams performed admirably, demonstrating great spirit and teamwork throughout the day. Special mentions go to those who particularly stood out for their efforts

and results: In Year 7, Stanley Care, Max Lippe, and Gautam Sandeep; in Year 8, Fumfum Nwabueze and Ayman Sochi; in Year 9, George Riley.

The first major challenge of the season came in the English Schools' Cross Country Cup – First Round, in which WHSB faced some exceptionally strong competition. The boys rose to the occasion, giving excellent performances across all age categories. Each of the Junior Boys, Inter Boys, and Senior Boys teams secured 5th place in their respective events. Unfortunately, this meant WHSB narrowly missed out on progressing to the Regional Final – the first time this has happened in three years. Nevertheless, the effort, discipline, and sportsmanship displayed by all runners were exemplary.

The Borough Cross Country Championships took place on Wednesday 12 November at Blenheim Park. The boys faced a challenging course but gave strong performances on the

day, competing against exceptionally talented runners from across the borough.

Any boys from Years 8 to the Upper Sixth finishing within the top eight of their race qualify to represent the Borough of Southend at the Essex Schools' Cross Country Championships at Writtle College on 17 January.

The following individuals have earned their place and will go on to compete at the Essex Schools' Championships: George Riley (Year 9), Lennon Parsons (Lower Sixth), Chloe Barnard (Lower Sixth), and Oliver Beale (Upper Sixth).

WHSB finished in fourth position overall.

BOYS TEAM RESULTS BOROUGH CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIPS NOV 2025						
POS	SCHOOL	YR 7	YR 8	YR 9	YRS 10/11	TOTAL
1	SOUTHEND	1	1	1	1	4
2	EASTWOOD	2	2	2	2	8
3	ST TH MORE	4	3	3	4	14
4	WESTCLIFF	5	4	5	3	17
5	CHASE	3	5	7	5	20

In February, the teams will once again compete in the prestigious Thorpe Hall Relay. WHSB has a proud record at this event, consistently finishing in the top three, and the pupils will be keen to continue that tradition of excellence.

Overall, it has been a strong and encouraging start to the season, full of promise for the challenges ahead.

Inter Boys English Schools Team



Senior Boys English Schools Team



Borough Cross Country teams for 2025

Year 7 Team



Year 9 Team



Year 10/11 Team



Sixth Form Team



U13 Table tennis 2025

Table Tennis

The U13 Table Tennis team competed in the first round, facing teams from Eastwood Academy, St Thomas More High School, Southend High School for Boys, Thorpe Hall School, and Chase High School. The pupils performed extremely well, losing only to Southend High School for Boys, which earned them second-place in the competition overall. This strong performance meant the team progressed to the Essex Qualifier, held at BATTs Table Tennis Club in Harlow.

At the qualifier, the pupils faced tough opposition from King Edward VI Grammar School, Southend High School for Boys, Fitzwimarc School, St Martin's School, and Shenfield High School. They recorded two losses, one win, and one draw. The increased level of competition was certainly challenging, but the team gained confidence as the matches progressed. James Packer was an outstanding performer, providing a steady hand throughout and leading the team in the games won.

The U15 team did not progress beyond the first round, unfortunately, but finished third behind Southend High School for Boys and Eastwood Academy.

Badminton

The Badminton teams were outstanding in their first-round performances. Both the U13 and U15 teams were unbeaten, not dropping a single match, and emerging as convincing winners. As a result, both teams have advanced to the Essex stage of the competition, with dates yet to be confirmed. Notable performances were given by Samarth Parasher and Rishi Dash, who delivered exceptional displays throughout.

The Year 10/11 Borough Badminton Tournament took place on 10 November and proved to be a highly successful event for WHSB. Our number 1 seeds progressed through the group stage unbeaten and went on to win both their quarter-final and semi-final matches to secure a place in the final.

Samarth Parashar and Kushal Talluri then faced the strong number 1 seeds from Eastwood Academy. They demonstrated excellent skill, playing controlled, high-quality shots throughout, and never appearing under pressure. WHSB ultimately achieved the title, with Samarth extending his position as Borough Champion for the third consecutive year (remarkably, achieving this title with a different partner each time).

Mr M Fletcher, Director of Sport



Borough Badminton Squad for 2025

THE AUTUMN TERM 2025 IN PICTURES



The new Year 7 cohort



Tessa and Daniel, Giles Wilson Moot Finalists 2025



Trafalgar Day, London



Autumn Chamber Concert



Biology Trip to the London Neurodegenerative Diseases Brain Bank, King's College London



CCF at Grange Waters



Celebrating Success in UK Maths Trust National Competitions



Charity Culture Day



Charity Staff Basketball



Charity Culture Day





Christmas Big Band





Christmas Big Band



Donating Christmas presents at the Old Age Psychiatry Ward, Rochford Hospital



Noah is appointed Southend's Youth Mayor



Enrichment Day at Nuclear Races



Enrichment Day at Nuclear Races





Enrichment Day at Duxford



Enrichment Day Science







Enrichment Day in School





Pottery for Wellbeing





Pottery for Wellbeing





Enrichment Day Sports





Geology Trip to Folkestone



LAMDA Awards



Years 8 and 9 Indoor Athletics



LAMDA Awards



Macmillan Charity Coffee Morning



Mock Oxbridge Interviews with OWs



Remembrance Parade, Southend-on-Sea



Remembrance Parade, Southend-on-Sea

Remembrance Parade, Southend-on-Sea



Remembrance Parade, Southend-on-Sea



School Remembrance Service



School Remembrance Service



Six gold medals for James in the Southend Music Festival



Summer 2025 Leavers Return





Summer 2025 Leavers Return



Visiting CERN



Year 11 Design and Technology

CHRISTMAS JUMPER DAY













OUR FESTIVAL OF LESSONS AND CAROLS













CALENDAR FOR SPRING TERM 2026

Monday 5 January	SPRING TERM BEGINS, 8.40am	14 - 22 February	Ski Trip to Italy
5 - 16 January	Upper Sixth Trial Examinations	16 - 20 February	SPRING HALF TERM
7 - 8 January	Year 10 Jack Petchey Workshops	16 - 19 February	History Trip to Normandy
Friday 9 January	Senior Chess Challenge at Sir Thomas More School	Monday 23 February	STAFF DEVELOPMENT DAY
Wednesday 14 January	Next Generation Makers Year 9 Engineering Talk	Tuesday 24 February	Year 8 Smashed Live Event, Westcliff Theatre, 8.50am-10.00am
	Life in the Sixth Form: Year 11 Taster Sessions	Wednesday 25 February	Years 10 and 11 Jekyll and Hyde Trip, Palace Theatre
14 - 15 January	Lower Sixth Engineering Visit to University of Cambridge	2 - 6 March	National Careers Week
Tuesday 20 January	Year 11 Phase 2 Data Report Issued (Full Written)	Monday 2 March	Lower Sixth Parents Evening, 4.00pm-6.00pm
Wednesday 21 January	Sixth Form Chemistry Lecture with Joe Willis	Tuesday 3 March	Year 9 Phase 2 Data Report Issued (Full Written)
	Lower Sixth Chemistry Trip to University of East Anglia		Sixth Form LAMDA Examinations
	Next Generation Makers Year 9 Engineering Talk Year 11	Thursday 5 March	Year 9 Options Carousel
	Entry to Sixth Form Evening, 7.30pm-9.00pm		Spring Sinfonia Concert, 7.30pm-9.00pm
Thursday 22 January	Spring Chamber Recital, 7.30pm-9.00pm	Friday 6 March	Jack Petchey Talk the Talk Workshop (Lower Sixth)
Friday 23 January	Lower Sixth Phase 2 Data Report Issued (Data and Targets)	7 - 11 March	Year 10 Geology Field Trip, Dorset
	GCSE and Sixth Form Art Trip to National Gallery	9 - 16 March	Year 7 Charity Week
Saturday 24 January	Sixth Form German Study Skills Day, St Paul's Girls School	Tuesday 10 March	Year 10 Phase 2 Data Report Issued (Data Only)
Tuesday 27 January	Holocaust Memorial Service	Wednesday 11 March	Careers Evening: Shine a Spotlight on STEM, 7.00pm-8.30pm
	Lower Sixth Oxford Schools' Debating, Sevenoaks School, 2.00pm-10.00pm	Thursday 12 March	Year 9 Options Evening, 7.30pm-9.00pm
Wednesday 28 January	Sixth Form French at British Film Institute		Philharmonia Orchestra Music Trip
	Intermediate Maths Challenge	Friday 13 March	Sixth Form Insight Day, Emmanuel College, University of Cambridge
	Chemistry Olympiad	Monday 16 March	Year 11 Phase 3 Data Report Issued (Targeted Only)
	Careers Evening: Finance and Law, 7.00pm-8.30pm	Tuesday 17 March	Year 9 Parents Evening, 4.00pm-6.00pm
Monday 2 February	Year 11 Parents Evening, 4.00pm-6.00pm	18 - 20 March	Lower Sixth Geography Field Work
Tuesday 3 February	Year 9 DTP / ACWY Immunisations	Thursday 19 March	CCF RAF Cadets: Air Experience Flights
	GCSE Music Wicked Trip, Apollo Theatre London	Friday 20 March	Godspell (Musical) in the Library Theatre
	CCF RAF Cadets: Air Experience Flights	Thursday 21 March	Intermediate Kangaroo/Maths Olympiad
	Visit of Dr Mary Boyle (University of Cambridge) - German, 12.50pm-1.50pm	Friday 20 March	Year 7 Phase 2 Data Report Issued (Full Written)
Wednesday 4 February	Sixth Form Maths Fest 2026, London		Charity Events
Friday 6 February	Upper Sixth Phase 2 Data Report Issued (Full Written)	Saturday 21 March	History and Religious Studies Days Out Trip to Canterbury
	Charity Events	Thursday 26 March	Year 8 Phase 2 Data Report Issued (Data Only)
Saturday 7 February	Upper Sixth Chemistry Race, Cambridge	Friday 27 March	Upper Sixth Phase 3 Data Report Issued (Targeted Only)
	WCGC Go for Grammar: Bright Sparks!	Friday 27 March	End of Term Easter Service
9 - 13 February	National Apprenticeship Week	Monday 13 April	SPRING TERM ENDS, 2.45pm
	CCF Field Week	Tuesday 14 April	STAFF DEVELOPMENT DAY
Friday 13 February	CCF Royal Navy and RAF Cadets Laser Tag		SUMMER TERM BEGINS
	The Parents' Association's Cookies and Sweets Sale		

Tickets for all Westcliff Diary events can be purchased via TicketSource at <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/whats-on/westcliff-on-sea/westcliff-high-school-for-boys/>



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