

Staying

Connected

Parent / Carer Bulletin



ROOKS HEATH SCHOOL

Strive to be your best

December 2024



As we end for the festive break, the final week marks the end of another busy and rewarding Autumn term, I would like to take a moment to reflect on all that we have achieved together as a school community.

Our **Autumn concert** was undoubtedly a standout moment. The talent and creativity on display from our students were truly inspiring. It was a perfect way to come together as a school to celebrate the season and showcase the incredible dedication and collaboration of everyone involved.

In **sports**, our students have continued to impress. A special mention goes to our Year 10 basketball team, who remain undefeated to date—a remarkable feat that reflects their commitment and teamwork. Across all Year Groups, the enthusiasm and commitment to their studies have been exemplary, and we could not be prouder of their efforts.

Academically, we have seen fantastic progress this term. Our **Year 11 students** stepped up to their mock exams admirably, with many matching or even showing promise of surpassing the achievements of last year's cohort. Their focus on revision and their innovative study approaches have been inspiring to see, setting a brilliant example for younger year groups. We are also incredibly proud of our **Year 7 students**, who have settled into secondary school life with enthusiasm. Many have made new friends, embraced opportunities, and become an integral part of our school community, which is always a delight to witness. It has been a joy to see the Mandarin students excel and our Gardening Club thrive.

The continued strength of our school community owes much to the liaison of our **PTFA**, which remains a vibrant and active platform for parents to connect and contribute. Their efforts this term have enhanced school life in countless ways, and we are so grateful for your commitment and support.

As we head into the holiday season, I would like to thank all of you—students, staff, and parents alike—for the role you play in making our school such a special place. This term has been a testament to what we can achieve together, and I hope you all take time over the break to rest, recharge, and enjoy time with loved ones.

We look forward to welcoming everyone back on Tuesday 7th January for another term of learning, growth, and striving to be our best. Wishing you all a joyful and peaceful holiday season.

Mrs Manderson

The New T Block Is Open!

A special mention goes to the premises team who have visibly supported all the school building projects and developments. It is clear to see that Rooks Heath School is making improvements. One student commented “Miss, it’s like a new school!” when they saw the new T block. Whilst a bit far-fetched, we cannot underestimate the impact an environment has on the culture, ethos, attitudes and behaviour of the young minds we work with every day.



Open Evening success

This year’s Open Evening was a tremendous success. It was an absolute pleasure to address a hall filled to capacity with parents, carers, relatives, and Year 6 students, all punctual and eager for their visit. The visits to primary schools have clearly had a positive impact on the turnout, and I would like to extend a special thank you to Mrs Lamb for her excellent coordination of these visits. Our student ambassadors were incredible representatives of our school and deserve high praise. I would like to highlight the remarkable speeches written and delivered by three of our students: Musa and Zoya in Year 7 and Mohammed who was in Year 13 last year. Their words were powerful and moving. Our biggest advocates are of course parents and carers who tell their friends and family about their child’s experience at our school. Thank you, as always, for your support.

Year 7 Settling-in Evening

It was great to see so many of you in support of your children at the evening in October. Your liaison with the school is one of the best ingredients to your child’s success. Please do make a commitment to attend every in-school event we put on to share information and as a way to touch base with school staff.

PTFA news

On Tuesday 24th September and Tuesday 26th November, we had two vibrant PTFA meetings. Naturally, being the first ones of the academic year, several present were parents of children in Year 7. There were queries about homework in particular. The parents were keen that communication with the school was also good, and we are hopeful that with the improvements and tweaks made with Bromcom, this critical area of our work will be regarded as an area of good practice for the school by all our parent community.

Student Photographs

This term we have had several students spruce up and there was good reason as they, had their school photographs taken. These were instantly uploaded onto Bromcom so staff can easily identify students in their classes. The first rule of any classroom – know your students, especially by name. It is wonderful to strike the right rapport with our students and they instantly feel that you have a vested interest in them as individuals. As adaptive teaching is one of our key priorities, the more we know our students, the better we can adapt and make our lessons accessible and the better they will engage and perform.

Year 7 CATs tests

Thank you to the assessment team who facilitated the Year 7 CATs tests in September. CATs stand for Cognitive Ability Tests and they provide us with useful data to help set targets for students and understand their potential. Whilst a child's verbal skills may be obvious in the classroom, it only tells part of the story about their ability to learn and absorb information and produce materials. Although these are not shared with parents, as they do not fulfil the same purpose as subject assessments, they are useful for teachers and learning support assistants in the planning of activities and tasks as they unveil the hidden potential by assessing students' reasoning and quantitative skills.

Meeting with Gareth Thomas MP and Bus Services Representatives

On Monday 7th October I attended a meeting with Gareth Thomas, Jo Skelhorne, the new headteacher of Nower Hill High School, our Safer Schools Officer, PC Gordon and representatives from Metroline bus service and the RATP bus service. A total of 12 attendees discussed the problems raised by Rooks Heath and Nower Hill around regular and timely bus servicing to take the hoards of students home at the end of the school day. The aim was to find solutions as staff are on duty for 15 minutes each day but often students remain awaiting buses beyond this time. It was agreed to look at the surveys of zip card usage and to keep communication lines open. There did not seem to be any immediate radical solutions possible but at least it raised awareness and the profile of the issues. There will be a follow up meeting but in the meantime we ask our parents and carers to continue to support us by asking students to go straight home after the end of the school day and not loiter around at the shops. We will continue to monitor the services of the 114, H9 and H10 buses and gather any information together ahead of the next meeting to feedback any further concerns.

Mrs Manderson

Such great teamwork, as Rooks Heath staff supervise at the bus stops every day!



TEAMWORK

is a collaborative effort by a group of people to achieve a goal or complete a task.



Attendance Matters: Get ready for cold and flu season!

Tis the season to wrap up and get ready to fight those bugs. We ask our families to please look after yourselves and each other, look out for colds and keep each other healthy and well. For those who take them, the flu jabs are available as well as ensuring you have stocks of vitamin C, honey, lemon, ginger and all those good remedies.

Rooks Heath School's attendance has always been above the national average. Your child can still attend school with a minor cold. Let's continue to maintain our high levels of attendance which really helps to sustain your child's learning and progress in school. Please see here for guidance and support for good attendance <https://www.rooksheath.harrow.sch.uk/page/?title=Attendance&pid=72>

If your child cannot attend school for any reason our school policy is that you must contact the school on each day of your child's absence. A parent or carer must call our dedicated line on 0208 872 8900 or [email attendance@rooksheath.harrow.sch.uk](mailto:attendance@rooksheath.harrow.sch.uk) so that your child does not receive an unauthorised absence mark.

We wish everyone good health for 2025!

Year 7 Sponsored Walk

A huge well done to our Year 7 students who raised over £300 towards our toilet fund on Friday 11th October!



Mrs Grewal and Mrs Bharadawa

GoFundMe Toilet Fund

Help! Desperate times call for desperate measures. We are keen to continue fundraising to improve our student facilities across the school (so they can all be like the ones in the new T Block!). Our students deserve an upgrade! If you are bored, feeling flush (!), or just in a philanthropic trance, please do think of this very worthy cause.

Thank you! <https://gofund.me/0e7f8d51>

October – Black History Month

Our students were treated to presentations prepared by our Head of History Mr Wilson, and our Rookery staff prepared meals including jerk chicken and rice and peas, as part of honouring BHM. We are a school that values diversity and this year's theme **#ReclaimingNarratives** is perfect for all communities to think about correcting the wrongs of misplaced stories of people of different backgrounds.



BLACK HISTORY
MONTH 2024

Our English teacher, Ms Samms also had a special guest speaker for the BHM themed book club which runs each week!

My Child at School (MCaS)

We are almost there with the move to our new management information system. You will know it as My Child at School. Your children will refer to it as Bromcom. We have had some early teething problems which we have been working continuously with the company to fix but we now have at least 87% of students able to access Bromcom and the same number of parents too via the MCAS app. If you are having difficulties, please contact the school. We will be happy to help as we are prioritising our parent-school communication. This is a vital part of you gaining an insight into school life and for us to 'stay connected'. All information will be shared via MCaS although you will still be able to view most letters on our website and updates on school life via our social media accounts.

Year 11 Geography Residential Trip to Swanage: September 2024

On the 20th of September, we set out for the Isle of Purbeck for a three night and three day stay. It was a remarkable trip filled with countless memories. This is what we did:

Day 1:

We got to school at 8am and left at 8:30am. Along the way, we got a well-informed commentary from Mr Simpson about the surrounding areas which helped pass the time. Before we knew it, we had boarded a ferry to help us cross Poole Harbour. Not long after, we had stopped to take a break at Shell Beach to eat our lunches and have some free time. Fortunately, the beach was not crowded so we had it all to ourselves. On the drive to the youth hostel, we were treated to scenic, countryside views. We soon arrived at the hostel which had a nice, calm atmosphere. We were given clipboards by our teachers, and we crossed the high street to reach the beautiful bay where we had the opportunity to see coastal landforms and processes outside the textbook. This really helped us with our understanding and application whilst making core memories. Once we had completed our work, we took a stroll up Peveril Point where we took loads of photos of the stunning landscape. Little did we know, there was more to come. We went back to the youth hostel and got our room keys. We settled into our rooms for some time, had dinner and then did some mapwork. Finally, we got free time in which some of us dashed to the arcade and the rest stayed inside. Once it was 9:30pm, everyone gathered inside the hostel and prepared to go to sleep as tomorrow was going to be a long day.



Day 2:

We ate a hearty continental breakfast at 8am. The croissants were light and airy, and the juice was freshly squeezed to our liking. Soon after, we set off to Studland Beach to conduct a practical to enquire how wind speed and the distance from the sea affect the biomass of an area. We used sophisticated instruments such as anemometers, which are devices designed to measure wind speed. We were astonished by the heavy differences made just by the displacement of an area from the sea. We then hiked to the renowned Old Harry and were also greeted by the Pinnacles. This was where Mr Wright explained how coastal erosion changes the appearance of headlands. The journey from Studland Bay to the youth hostel was around 6 miles, this put our stamina to the test. We soon arrived at the hostel and got our well-deserved rest until dinner was served. Once again, we had classwork to complete but this time it was a poster on how to responsibly admire the environment. After this, we rushed off into the town in our groups where we enjoyed walking around in the evening.

Day 3:

We embarked on a journey to Lulworth Cove, a stunning coastal area renowned for its unique geological features. The cove offered us a fascinating glimpse into the formation of landforms along a discordant coastline, where layers of rock erode at different rates, creating remarkable natural structures. Over time, this process also creates fossils. One of the



highlights was skimming hundreds of stones across the shimmering sea. We then ventured to the iconic Durdle Door, an impressive limestone arch that stands majestically against the backdrop of the deep blue sea. Here, we captured many photographs. The experience was both educational and exciting, leaving us with a deeper appreciation for the processes that shape our coast. Exhausted, we ate dinner back at the hostel and were given a task to complete. It was a competition to see how well we knew Swanage. We went on a hunt to find oddly specific answers to very unusual questions!

Day 4 and conclusion:

We set out for the high street one last time to find out whether Swanage was a 'hometown' or a 'clone town'. It was indeed apparent that Swanage was a hometown as there were hundreds of stores and restaurants exclusive to the village. We then made our way back to school and arrived at around 3:15pm.

Overall we enjoyed this trip very much, and we cherish the memories made there to this day.

We couldn't have had all this joy without the strong commitment of Ms Rockell, Ms Wright, Mr Wright and Mr Simpson.



By Aarya 11G and Neha 11G

Year 12 v Year 13 Football

We recently saw the return of the annual 6th Form start of term football match. This fixture is a firm favorite at the beginning of every year that establishes bragging rights in the 6th Form study room! Year 12 narrowly avoided forfeiting the match by taking forever to turn up and get ready! Once we got going, both teams were performing well despite the wet pitch. However, by half time it looked like the 13s were going to take a beating despite the extra warm up time, with Year 12 six two ahead! I heard something from a Year 13 player about shooting into the evening sun being a problem!



The rain threatened to come down throughout the second half, but we mostly avoided the annual soaking. By the time the whistle blew the 13s had failed to take advantage of the change in end and the 12s had consolidated their lead, the final score being 9-4 to Year 12.

A big thank you, as always, to Mr Dix for stepping in as ref. We hope to see you next time!



Watch this space for more inter-Year Group games between the Year 12s and 13s over the year. Hopefully the Year 13s can claw back some dignity next time!

Mr Pitchforth

Debate Club Mock Election

Alongside several activities occurring around school to mark UK Parliament Week, Tuesday 19th November saw the Rooks Heath Debate Club Mock Election taking place in the theatre, where candidates set out their manifestos and fielded questions from the moderator and an engaged audience. Standing for election were Dhaniel (9W), Mark (10I), Aarav (10V), Blinart (10R) and Aditya (10W). All candidates made convincing and eloquent cases for their election, addressing and debating real and urgent issues from NHS reform to international relations. Ultimately, judges and audience were agreed in their final vote: Mark was duly elected based on the content and quality of his remarks. A huge well done to all candidates, and a special thank you to Ms Henderson, Ms Green, and Ms Cohen, who helped organise and judge the speeches.

Mr Hutchinson



Year 9 Volleyball

At the end of November, the Year 9 Boys Volleyball team played in the Borough semi-final at Nower Hill. They played both Nower Hill and Park High, with the top team going forward to the final. The boys played so well that both opposing PE teachers commented on how technically amazing the team was, and that they were the best they had seen at their age group in the Borough ever. Needless to say the boys sailed into the final beating both teams comfortably. We have it on good authority that volleyball is the new basketball at RHS!

If you see the boys, please congratulate them. They are:- Youssef , Preslav, Rian, Igor, Meyrick, Raul & Reuben.

Mr Todd



Remembrance Poetry

It's been wonderful to see how Remembrance Day has inspired our students to write some wonderful poetry.....

This one was a runner up in the Mayor's Remembrance Day Poetry Competition, for which the theme was 'Conflict and Remembrance'. Aditya's (10W) poem 'Silent Graves' was selected from a large number of entries from schools across the borough. Congratulations Aditya!

SILENT GRAVES

I took an evening stroll,
among the rambling graves;
where you can almost feel the essence,
of all the restless souls.
Whatever place you chose to tread,
seems oddly preoccupied.
It's almost like,
You don't feel in your place.
Living mingling with the dead.
The atmosphere turns from tranquil to a restless air,
Which makes shivers go up your spine.
A nervousness rises rapidly in your nerves.
The wind howls through the trees.
Then the eerie chant of crickets.
Every voice of nature of nature is warning you.
You soon go,
but the graves remain, now numb,
and all goes back to sleep.

Aditya

Autumn Music Concert

The month of marvellous music culminated with the annual Autumn Music concert on Thursday 28th November. Around 60 students had spent the entire month rehearsing after the auditions back in October. A number of extremely helpful students had also



signed up to help backstage and with sound and lighting. It was a wonderful occasion to see the talent and passion of students expressed in front of a sold out audience. The atmosphere was incredible and the students were able to enjoy the opportunity and felt encouraged and empowered by the support shown. There were many highlights to the evening.



A couple of notes include a lighting blackout resulting in a sea of star-like phone lights being waved in time with the music as the performance continued. Thanks to the technical brains of Mr Pitchforth and Mr Sharp this problem was rectified and the show went on. Another highlight to mention was the Year 11 performers who did so well, and were joined on stage by Mrs Manderson at the end of the night for an impromptu encore. A big thank you to Mr Whyte, Mr Pitchforth, Mrs Logan, and the numerous staff who helped to organise and run these events – it is hard work but really a proud privilege to be able to give our amazing students these inspirational opportunities.



Mr Turner



Important dates for your Calendar

Date	Parent Consultation Evening	Online or In person
Wednesday 15th January	4:30pm - 7:30pm	Year 11
Wednesday 29th January	4pm—8pm	Year 12 and Year 13
Wednesday 26th February	4pm - 8pm	Year 9
Wednesday 12th March	4:30pm—7:30pm	Year 8
Wednesday 26th March	4pm- 8pm	Year 7

