

Weekly Update

Year 10 work experience

Year 10 students experienced 'the wider world' last week as they completed work experience placements.

The School is very grateful for the diverse and valuable range of placements offered to our students this year – including uncovering skeletons in an archaeological dig, digging out a basement as part of a renovations team, developing photos in a dark room, mucking out penguins in Bristol zoo, programming a sound sensor in the Toshiba research lab, recycling methane gas into energy from waste water, or old computers from schools, grooming animals, caring for the very old and very young and learning valuable and transferable life skills throughout. Students are beginning to reflect on where this experience might lead them in the future, some already having landed part time jobs for the summer. Others are coming back to school with a renewed motivation and sense of focus about their GCSE studies and where a great set of results could take them. BFS staff attempted to visit every single one of these students on placements and feedback reflected the impressive positive attitude each and every one of them displayed.

Congratulations Year 10 on a really successful work experience week!

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Words from the Headteacher

This is the final newsletter of the academic year, and the end of our first five year cycle. It closes one chapter, briefly, before a new one begins, of the sixth form and the next year group and an ever-growing school.

In the last few weeks of term, or probably throughout the school year, if honest, I fixate on the summer holiday. It's just one of the great things about being a teacher. My parents lived abroad on a tiny island in the South Atlantic because my Dad was an engineer for the BBC. I used to fly home to see them on an RAF VC10 aircraft (essentially a flying metal shed). I used to ride my BMX around the small island and clamber up and down volcanic peaks; swelter on golden sandy beaches and play with friends for the 8 week break. We'd swim in the sea every day in an idyllic setting. It was like something out of a Roald Dahl novel. But at the same time in those first days I remember feeling melancholy at the fact that it would end; I could feel the encroachment of the ending even at the beginning.

After a while I realised that counting down was futile. Everything must end, as George Harrison said, "sunrise doesn't last all morning; a cloudburst doesn't last all day". We return to school refreshed, happier, older, bigger, excited to see friends, ready to slip back into the structures and routines of school days, and into our shiny new uniform. I will enjoy my summer holiday, spending time with family, away from the pressures of work and emails which ping in every minute; adjusting to a different rhythm and pace where time seems to slow down, and I will return, refreshed, for my sixth year at BFS, ready with the staff to welcome everyone back.

Some members of the BFS community won't be here in September. Mr Wiseman is returning to his native Liverpool. Mr Harkin is also moving on, taking up a new post at another Bristol school. Mr Davies is retraining as an engineer and Mr Williams is leaving to work abroad, taking up a post at a school in Vietnam; a geographer's dream. Miss Montier is training as a teacher. I wish them all the very best of luck and we will miss them.

The holidays belong to children and are a time of freedom; but it's not a binary opposition. School also belongs to children, and is shaped and structured by them. It is a lovely place because the young people here work so hard together to make it a lovely place. Our aim now, and in September, is to continue to develop and create a school in which children thrive and become wonderful people. But for now, I want them to revel in the seemingly unending freedom of the holidays – and to help their parents.

Paul Jones

Year 10 Step up to Year 11 Maths

All Year 10 students have been issued with a "Step Up" booklet containing some essential tasks to complete in order to be ready for the challenges of Year 11 Maths. The tasks are to be found on www.mathswatchvle.com.

The booklet is also available on Show My Homework. Any students who are unable to complete the work and hand it in on the first day of term in September will be given the opportunity to catch up after school on Friday 9 September.

Dates for next year

Key dates for next year are available from the calendar on the School's website. However, we would particularly like to draw attention to the dates for the Duke of Edinburgh award expeditions. These are: Silver award - practice from 8 April to 11 April and assessed from 17 July to 19 July; Bronze award – practice from 20 May to 21 May and assessed from 10 June to 11 June.

Year 10 Art trip

Earlier this week Year 10 Art students battled soaring temperatures to enjoy a day in London visiting the Royal Academy and the National Portrait Gallery to gain inspiration as they make the transition into Year 11.

STEM

Last week Bristol Free School was recognised as STEMnet's STEM School of the Year for Bristol, Bath and Somerset. STEMNET (the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Network) is a national organisation which creates opportunities to inspire young people in STEM. They particularly admired the way that BFS were so committed to STEM events and opportunities such as the spectacular annual STEM day, our links and interactions with ambassadors from STEM industries and participation in regional technological school challenges such as the Flying Start challenge, Dress Sense and AIRBUS Industrial Cadets. We also have extra-curricular opportunities such as Science Club and last week's Discovery Prize finals to rival schools with STEM specialisms.

This is outstanding recognition of all the hard work which the Science, Technology and Maths departments put in all year round and the fantastic enthusiasm and commitment of BFS staff.

Year 11 ball

Last Thursday I had the pleasure of welcoming our Year 11 cohort back to school for their valedictory assembly. After having held it together for most of the assembly, emotions got the better of me towards the end and I cracked. I blamed pregnancy hormones but in actual fact, it was the sight of a room full of young men and women who I have had the privilege to watch become fine young people. Welcoming them at the doors of Leigh Court in their finest attire only served to further their transformation from young Year 7 students into young adults. The driveway was awash with an array of transportation each trying to better the last. A personal highlight was Beth Doel's arrival in a classic Morris Minor.

They arrived smiling, spent the evening dancing and eating copious amounts of sweets and then left smiling. All in all, a huge

success.

I would like to thank Mrs Buckler for all her organisational support in the lead up to the event, Miss Dawson for her creative eye and handy decoration skills, Mr Pate for yet another phenomenal collection of staff voices and Mr Sillince for his help in decorating the venue moments before the students' arrival! In particular, I would like to thank John Hobbs for giving us his time and expertise, he helped make the event a huge success.

Mrs Sillince

Trip to Barcelona

After an early morning flight, we arrived in beautiful Barcelona. Our accommodation was a modern, sport themed hostel, a short walk from the metro station. With an average temperature of 30°C, we slapped on the sun cream and headed out each day, exploring the vibrant city. Nou Camp Football Stadium was a highlight of the trip for some. Seeing where their heroes had won and lost games was quite overwhelming.

Sagrada Familia, an un-finished church, designed by Gaudi, was truly jaw dropping. It features detailed stone work and large stained glass windows on all sides. Arriving at the beach, we were greeted by burning sand under our feet that were quickly cooled by the refreshing Mediterranean Sea.

Miss Ryan accompanied a small group of us to the evening 'fountain show'. A wonderful mix of water, coloured lights and music. It was an experience I will never forget, whilst Montjuic Castle, reached by cable car gave us panoramic view of the city, allowing us to take in all that we had seen so far. A long walk to Gaudi's Park Güell, provided the artists amongst us with inspiration, as the vibrant mosaic tiled works of art shone in the sunshine.

Shopping in Spanish was tricky but rewarding and there was always something to spend your Euros on! On our final day we enjoyed a fabulous picnic, that each of us contributed to from the food market, eaten as we sat near the statue of Christopher Columbus gazing out to sea.

This was a truly memorable trip that wouldn't have been possible without the care and support of Mr Wiseman, Miss Ryan and Mr Kinchin.

Alice Giddings (Y8)

Go to <http://bit.ly/treblebass> for BFS Jazz Band's, Treble Bass, music video.

Summer soiree

Well done to all students who performed at the summer soiree on Monday night. Highlights included BFS Orchestra Perfect Cadence's "Bésame Mucho", Dynamics Choir performing some summer classics including "walking on sunshine", and Treble Bass with a fantastic set as ever! Special mentions go to Shaye Stewart who filled in on drums at the very last minute, and Charlotte Baker and Izzy Phillips who led the band fantastically filling in as lead singers for Ellen Corbett. A great way to end the school year - see you for more concerts next year!

Year 7 Murder Mystery Showcase

This term in drama Year 7 students have been creating their own murder mystery pieces. Each learning group chose their favourite piece, which was performed as part of a showcase for the rest of Year 7 in the drama hall on Monday afternoon. The performances were fantastic and really impressed the 'celebrity' panel of judges with their confidence and creativity. Whilst some students received awards such as Best Actor and Future Star, I would like to congratulate all students for their hard work and enthusiasm in drama this year. Miss Clifton

Trip to North Devon

Last weekend students from Years 7 to 9 embarked on their trip to the PGL Beam House centre near Bideford. Over the course of the weekend students participated in a variety of outdoor and adventurous sessions including trapeze, which entailed climbing up a telegraph pole and standing on a small platform to take the leap of faith to attempt to grab the suspended bar, high ropes (15m high aerial assault course), survivor where students learnt bushcraft skills including shelter building and fire lighting, challenge course (army style, wet and muddy assault course) amongst many other activities. Students also had two beach sessions at the nearby Westward Ho! beach, trying their hand at surfing and body boarding. Throughout the weekend students and staff alike, faced their fears with a true BFS style growth mindset.