



The Smithdonian



Summer 2025 Edition

Work hard, be kind and smile

Welcome to Smithdon High School

A message from the Head Teacher



Welcome to the final Smithdonian of the 24-25 Academic year - and what a year it has been! This term especially has seen so much success for Smithdon teams against other Trust schools in competitions - from sport to science to DT - and second place, for the second year running, in the WNAT Chess Competition.

I am so proud of all our students, who have engaged with so many co-curricular activities, and the staff who have taken the time to organise them. This term's newsletter is bursting with students' voices about activities and events that they have enjoyed both in school and in the local community as well on trips far and wide.

I hope all the students and their families have a restful and enjoyable summer and we look forward to seeing everyone in September when we are joined by our new cohort. We also wish every success to the class of 2025 as they await their results and make plans for their post-16 courses.

Mrs Gibbins

SMITHDON IN THE NEWS

Celebrating Achievements and Excellence at Smithdon

Trust Schools Perform New School Anthem

Not many schools have their own anthem, so it was a particularly special occasion when pupils at Heacham Junior sang theirs together for the first time - joined by the Smithdon High School Choir! The new anthem, *In Our Village by the Sea*, was specially composed by the Trust's Peripatetic Music Lead, Benjamin Howell.

"On Tuesday 18 June a collaborative sing-along took place at Heacham Junior School," said Mr Howell. "The event brought together children from three Trust schools, who joined voices to perform a special composition I had written - a school anthem for Heacham Junior reflecting the local area and the spirit of the community. My role as the Trust Peripatetic Music Lead has been to develop and coordinate this initiative, with the aim of uniting students and members of the wider community through collaborative music-making," Mr Howell explained. The event ran with smaller group rehearsals leading into a shared performance later in the afternoon. The final rendition was recorded as a memento of this wonderful collaborative effort.



The Smithdon Choir supported the younger pupils with their new anthem.

Anya Shines at Regional Athletics Finals

Anya in Year 10 delivered a standout performance at the England Schools Athletics Association Combined

Events Regional Finals held at Rockingham Sports Stadium in Corby. Representing Norfolk in the Inter-Girls heptathlon, Anya rose to the occasion achieving an incredible four personal bests across her seven events - a remarkable accomplishment in the demanding world of multi-event athletics. Her personal bests came in the 80m hurdles, high jump, 200m and long jump, demonstrating her versatility and dedication. Anya secured 11th place overall in a highly competitive field, a testament to her hard work and talent. Competing over two days in hot and tiring conditions, her outstanding performance highlighted not only her physical ability but also her mental toughness and determination.

West Norfolk AC coaches and supporters hailed her result as a "fantastic achievement" and believe this is only the beginning for this promising young athlete. Smithdon is incredibly proud of Anya's achievements both in and out of school and looks forward to seeing what she accomplishes next.



VE DAY

VICTORY IN EUROPE - 80 YEARS

On 8 May, Smithdon marked VE Day with a special event in the library. VE Day, or Victory in Europe Day, commemorates the end of the Second World War in Europe, when Nazi Germany officially surrendered on 8 May 1945. It was a day of enormous celebration across Britain with people filling the streets with music, dancing and street parties.

In our school library, Charles in Year 9 had the idea to create a display to commemorate VE day as he has an interest in WWII that goes back to when he was in primary school and enjoyed looking at war books. We used propaganda posters, photos from that historical day and made decorations. We added to the affect by using genuine wartime memorabilia which was borrowed from the NCC Library Service. We even built an Anderson bomb shelter to give a sense of life on the Home Front.

To add to the atmosphere, we held a mini street party in the library. During lunch time, we played music from the 1940s and ate a selection of food, including cake and sausage rolls. The event was a wonderful success and a fitting tribute to an important moment in our shared history.

When asked where his interest in WWII came from, Charles explained, "My great-granddad flew a bomber plane in World War II and I've heard all his amazing stories from my granddad - including one about how he got frostbite in both legs! I'd already been really interested in the world wars since primary school, when I first found some books about them, but hearing those family stories made it all feel more real to me. That's what really sparked my love for WWII history, especially the planes."

The school also held 2-minute silence to honour those who died during World War II, including the soldiers and civilians. It was a moment of reflection and gratitude for their sacrifices and the eventual peace that followed the end of the war in Europe on 8 May 1945.

Students from Smithdon played a special role in Hunstanton's VE Day commemoration, joining local dignitaries and primary school pupils at the town's Cenotaph in the clifftop gardens. It was a moment of reflection, pride and gratitude.

Mayor Mike Ruston addressed those gathered, saying,

"Eighty years ago today, the United Kingdom and its allies around the globe celebrated VE Day - the end of the war in Europe. Today, our thoughts turn to thanksgiving and remembrance of the millions who gave so much to achieve the freedom we enjoy today. We remember those we lost, those who were wounded or scarred and those whose lives were changed forever by the war."

The raising of the commemorative flags was led by Hunstanton Primary School's head students along with Smithdon's student council representatives, Miles and Bella.

Miles reflected on the meaning of the event, "We're here to remember those who died and the sacrifice they made for the country."

The ceremony was a meaningful reminder of the importance of remembrance and the enduring impact of history on our lives today.



Charles with the school library display that featured memorabilia and VE day newspaper headlines.



Honouring the Past: Students Take Part in VE Day

Harley, Lucas, Charles, Rhodri, Abigale and Eden gathered round for sausage rolls, a variety of cakes and lemonade at the mini VE Day street party - thankfully the dreaded spam sandwiches were left rationed to the past! As Vera Lynn's 'We'll Meet Again' played softly they looked mildly confused, having no idea who she was, but the grown-ups got misty-eyed all the same!

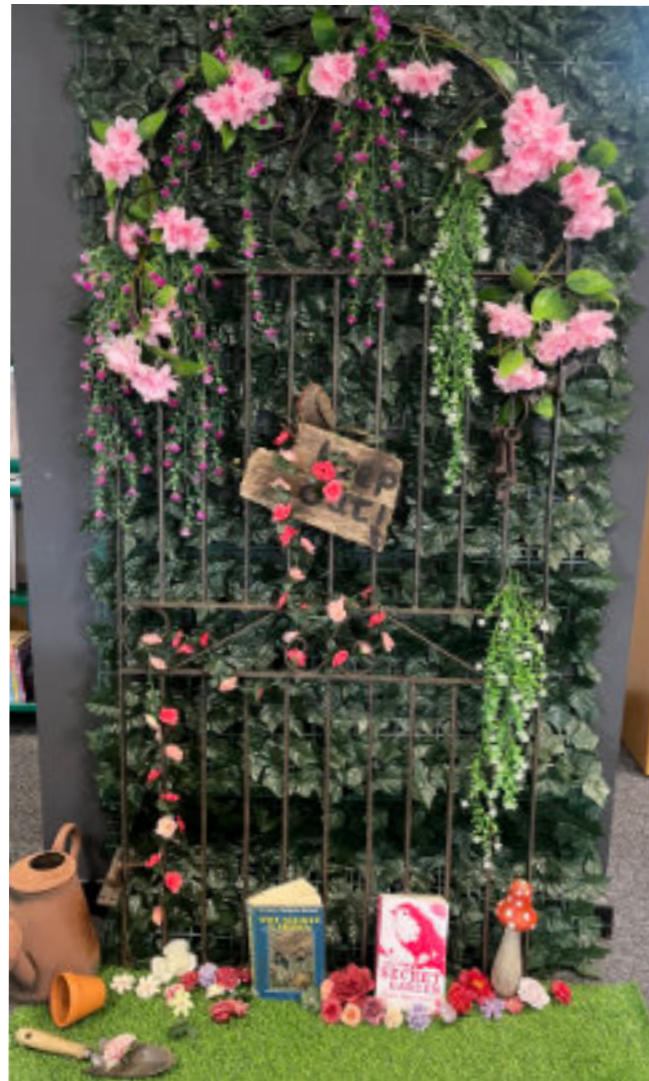


Miles and Bella proudly represented Smithdon at the Hunstanton Cenotaph. Standing with dignity under the grey clouds they stood beside Mayor Mike Ruston during the commemorative ceremony. With pride, they assisted in raising the flag, honouring those who served and reflecting the spirit of remembrance within our community.

The Secret Garden:

Re-discovering Life and Magic in the Norfolk Countryside

If you've ever read *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett (or even watched one of the films) you'll know how magical a hidden green space can feel. At Smithdon, our library's Secret Garden display reminds us just how important nature is to our lives. In the story, the main character Mary begins as a withdrawn and unhappy child. But when she discovers the secret garden - locked away, wild and forgotten - it becomes a place of healing. It's not just about growing flowers, it's about hope, renewal and finding peace in the natural world. Sometimes the best medicine is simply time spent outdoors.



Living in the Norfolk countryside, many of us have our own version of that garden. Our countryside is full of its own 'secret gardens', woods, footpaths, hedgerows and beaches that stretch for miles. Especially in spring and summer, Norfolk's big skies and open spaces offer a kind of beauty that's hard to find anywhere else. It might be a quiet patch of trees at the edge of your village, a tangled hedgerow teeming with birds or even just the silence that falls over the fields at sunset. Norfolk's natural beauty offers the

same sense of peace and possibility that Mary finds in the garden. I know we're not all stuck in large gloomy mansions like Mary was, but there's something relatable about her story, especially living in Norfolk. Because, let's be honest, sometimes it feels like there's not a lot going on here if compared to bigger towns and bustling cities, especially for teenagers, but if you slow down and actually take a look around, Norfolk is its own secret garden to explore.

The Secret Garden teaches us that healing takes time and that sometimes the best thing for us is a bit of fresh air and the patience to watch something grow. Whether it's tending to a garden, exploring a forgotten footpath, or just sitting quietly under a tree, the countryside offers something precious: a chance to breathe, to connect and to listen to the birds going about their busy days and to rediscover a bit of wonder and magic in the world.

Here at Smithdon, we've taken inspiration from *The Secret Garden* by bringing the library outdoors every Friday lunchtime as a way to enjoy being outside and take a break from the computer screens. Just as Mary found peace and in the garden, our students have had the chance to step away from computers and homework and into a space where we can watch butterflies and spot the garden robin darting between the trees and the fence. Together, we've been watching the vegetables and plants grow week by week and even been helping to water them, making this time not just about reading and talking but also about caring for the world around us. For any young people, spending time outside is important - it can boost mood, reduce stress and support mental well-being. Whether you're reading *The Secret Garden* itself or getting lost in another story, summer is a chance to slow down, breathe in the fresh air and let your imagination - and the garden, flourish.

The Secret Life of Hedgerows

Like Mary, we sometimes forget how much we need nature. When life gets busy with school, social issues or family life, it's easy to overlook the power of a simple walk or bike ride through the woods or an afternoon lazing on the sand. Take hedgerows, on the surface, they may look like scruffy borders between fields. But look closer and you'll find they're bursting with life - birds, bees, butterflies, hedgehogs, mice and even rabbits. These tangled lanes of shrubs, small trees and wildflowers are some of the UK's most important habitats. Without them, well-known species like robins (my favourite) and blackbirds would struggle to survive. They're incredibly important for the environment. Their roots help hold the soil together, their leaves absorb carbon and rainwater and they provide

shelter for animals. These natural borders play a crucial role in supporting the land and our local wildlife.

Unfortunately, much like the forgotten garden in the Secret Garden, many hedgerows have been lost or left to fade over the past century. But there's reason to be hopeful. Organisations like *The Tree Council* are working hard to bring attention to their importance. Every May, they run *National Hedgerow Week* to highlight just how vital these wild borders are and to inspire more people to protect them rather than overlook them or use them as a rubbish bin!

Schools, communities and young conservationists across the UK are getting involved. *The Tree Council* is a UK charity and supports tree planting and environmental projects to make our world greener and healthier. One of their exciting programmes, *Young Tree Champions*, encourages students to connect with nature, take action on climate change and even plant trees themselves. Their goal is to empower young people to care for their environment and help create a better future - one tree (and one hedgerow) at a time.



Abigale and Jorgie enjoy their time in the garden, watering the vegetables and plants.

Discover Your Secret Garden

As we look forward to six long, well-deserved weeks away from school, remember that you don't need to have every day packed with plans to enjoy the holidays. In fact, some of the best moments can come from the quiet, unplanned ones. You don't need a big budget, just a bit of curiosity and a willingness to explore what's around you. Maybe this summer is the time to finally follow that footpath you've always walked past but never taken. Take along a sketch book to draw what you see or a camera to capture beautiful scenery, a butterfly on a flower, the sunlight through the trees, or a seagull on a wave!

Start something small that can grow over the summer, like a mini garden, even if it's just in a few old pots. Watching something you planted take root and grow can be surprisingly rewarding. Or maybe let yourself get lost in a good book (perhaps *The Secret Garden*) and take it outside, read under the shade of a tree at Sandringham, sit in a quiet area of your garden, or even on the sand of one of our local beaches.

Norfolk is the perfect place to slow down. It has a calm, peaceful vibe that invites you to reconnect - with nature and your thoughts. It may not be a bustling metropolis filled with neon lights, constant noise and crowds of people (except on a hot bank holiday along the prom!) but that's exactly what makes it special.

Here, freedom feels different. A Norfolk village or stretch of coastline offers space to breathe, think, play and dream. You can bike down quiet lanes without dodging traffic, spend the afternoon with friends by the sea, or lie back and watch the clouds drift over the fields. There's a strong sense of community here, and life feels more personal and connected. While cities impress with their size and energy, our local villages offer a kind of simplicity and authenticity that's hard to find in a crowded place. Norfolk may not be packed with shopping centres or fast-paced entertainment, but it gives you something better - room to be yourself and to enjoy the slower, quieter joys of summer.

Next time you walk past a wild, tangled hedge full of brambles and unexpected blooms, stop and take a closer look. What might seem messy or forgotten is actually full of life, just like the garden in Mary's story. At Smithdon, we've started our own little version of this in the Gardening Club and the Library Garden, where students can come together to care for plants, watch things grow, and enjoy a break from screens and stress.

So this summer, don't spend your time wishing you were somewhere else. Everything you need for adventure, creativity, and even a bit of magic might be right here in Norfolk. Find your own 'secret garden', whether it's a real place or just a quiet moment to yourself and see what grows from it. You might be surprised by what you discover.

The Story Garden

This year, The Reading Agency is also going green with their nature-inspired theme, 'Story Garden'. It's all about exploring exciting stories, encouraging creativity and diving into books with a nature twist.

Up for a challenge? Visit your local library and sign up for the Summer Reading Challenge - a fun way to discover new books and keep your mind active over the holidays. If you are aged 13 or over you can also volunteer to help run the craft activities at the library. It's a great opportunity to gain experience, build your CV and get involved in something rewarding.

Let your summer story begin!

Every Friday lunchtime, students at Smithdon have been swapping screens for sunshine. Instead of heading to the library, many of us have headed outdoors to spend time in the school garden. It has been a refreshing way to take a break from screens and connect with nature. To help promote a healthier balance between technology and outdoor activity, the school library now closes on Friday lunch times - weather permitting!

The students have been helping to water the plants and vegetables, as well as learning how to grow their own. So far, we've planted tomatoes and beetroot and enjoyed the peaceful green space we're lucky to have. One student, Eden, took a cutting from a mint plant to grow at home - and it's doing really well! It's been exciting to see how something so small can grow and thrive with just a bit of care and attention. There's something calming and satisfying about getting your hands a bit dirty and seeing real results from your work. "It's really nice to do something different at lunchtime," said Eden "we're usually indoors on the computer screens, so spending time outside, especially doing something useful, is a great change."

Lucas has taken on the important role of caring for the rhubarb, keeping it healthy by watering it regularly and composting any dead leaves. Meanwhile, Lily-May has been dashing back and forth with watering cans, making sure the entire garden stays green, vibrant and full of life during the heatwave.

Some of the students who aren't as green-fingered enjoy sitting quietly with their friends, relaxing in the shade beneath the trees. It's lovely to see them stepping out of their usual library routines and taking an interest in nature and outdoor learning. Miss Soper is always nearby, offering guidance and sharing helpful tips on how to care for the plants, making sure everyone feels confident and involved.

These Friday garden sessions have become a calm, hands-on way to enjoy nature, learn something new and take pride in helping the garden grow and thrive. The garden is not just a place to relax - it's become a space for teamwork, responsibility and learning new skills. Whether it's watering plants, checking on the progress of the vegetables, or simply enjoying some fresh air, Friday lunchtimes are quickly becoming a highlight of our week.

So if you haven't joined us yet, come along on Fridays and see what's growing in the garden!

The Garden Library



Eden has enjoyed spending time in the garden with his friends. He has helped to plant tomatoes and takes pride in looking after them.



Nathan nurturing nature – helping the school garden bloom, one drop at a time!

Reading Ambassadors:

Connecting with our Primary Schools

This term, our Year 7 Reading Ambassadors had the wonderful opportunity to return to their former primary schools – Dersingham, Hunstanton, Heacham and Snettisham – to support and encourage reading among Year 5 pupils.

For many of our ambassadors, this was a special and nostalgic experience. They were warmly welcomed back by familiar faces, their former teachers and younger siblings and cousins were all happy to see them. It was heart-warming to see their excited smiles as they stepped back into the classrooms and libraries they once sat in themselves. The purpose of the visits was to listen to Year 5 pupils read and to help inspire a love of books and reading. At Smithdon, we place great importance on literacy and wanted to show the pupils just how much we value it. These visits were also a wonderful opportunity for them to meet some of our students, so they could see for themselves how friendly and welcoming we are - helping them feel more confident and excited about joining us in the future. Our ambassadors were paired with the pupils and spent time listening and offering encouragement. The Year 5 pupils were a little nervous to read aloud to older students but they soon relaxed into their books.



As a small gift, the Reading Ambassadors brought bookmarks to share with the younger pupils which they all loved. It was a brilliant opportunity to build connections between Smithdon and our local primaries while celebrating a shared passion for reading. The visits reminded everyone involved just how powerful reading can be – not only in developing skills but also in building friendships and confidence. A huge thank you to all our Reading Ambassadors for representing Smithdon so positively and proudly and to the staff and pupils at each primary school for giving us such a warm and lovely welcome.

Year 7 Feedback:

"I really loved going back to Dersingham, they were so happy to see us and it was quite overwhelming how welcoming and friendly they all were. I got to see my little cousins in the nursery too. I knew a lot of the Year 5 pupils and it was lovely to listen to them read!" - Lucy

"I really enjoyed the opportunity to return to my old school and see all the teachers and students again. It was great fun to listen to the younger children read to us, and I think they loved having a variety of bookmarks to choose from, which encourages them to read even more. They seemed to really enjoy sharing their books with us, and it was interesting to hear them read different stories aloud." - Jasmine



Cambridge Writers' Trip

By Ms Wright

Officially known as the Cambridge Festival of Reading and Writing, the 'Cambridge Writing Prize' is an essay competition open to all Year 9s at Smithdon as well as at various schools across Norfolk, Cambridge and Bradford. We have been fortunate to participate in this competition since its launch in 2018. Organised by Cambridge University, this prestigious event allows students to study texts previously shortlisted by the BBC short story competition. Universal themes such as identity, family and anxiety are ideas students explore as they study texts such as "Ghillie's Mumby" by Lynda Clark, "Scrimshaw" by Eley Williams and "The Sweet Sop" by Ingrid Persaud.

This year, students indulged in Persaud's "The Sweet Sop". It is a story about relationships, forgiveness and, perhaps the most relatable aspect: a penchant for chocolate. Victor, the narrative's protagonist, bonds with his terminally ill, estranged father, Reggie, over chocolate. Students read and interrogated the text before writing an essay about individual perspective. Three years of Key Stage 3 study culminated in this intense, academic writing, and the Smithdon's Year 9 cohort all participated in the process.

Students who fulfilled the criteria for the essay: 500-750 words, enjoyed a celebratory trip to Cambridge University. Robinson College hosted around 80 students from multiple schools and students toured the grounds via a competitive scavenger hunt (where I spotted future running club members) and a buffet lunch. The afternoon was celebrated at Lady Mitchell Hall where students listened to a university style lecture by Professor Raphael Lyne on Shakespeare's Sonnet 116. Alex da Costa, the Chair of the Faculty of English presented awards to students, including runner-up Hadleigh, and overall winner, Brayden, of Smithdon!

Brayden's essay was commended for its insightful



analysis of the subtleties of the text. The selection committee called his writing 'perceptive, interesting and incisive.' Hadleigh's essay was awarded for it being 'perceptive, well-articulated and coherent.'

The opportunity to participate in this competition is unparalleled. Students have the opportunity to spend the day at one of the finest universities, and they have access to diverse texts which expand their knowledge of English as an academic subject and broaden their understanding of the world and human experience. The competition promotes confidence and independence: students discuss literature, and how they choose to respond to the prompt of 'individual perspective' is ultimately up to them.

Congratulations to Brayden and Hadleigh - the school is incredibly proud of you both! We hope you enjoy choosing and reading your new books with your prizes.



MFL Spelling Bee

A huge well done to our fantastic Year 7 students who recently took part in the MFL Spelling Bee Trust final at Springwood High School. The competition brought together talented linguists from across the Trust, all keen to showcase their impressive spelling and vocabulary skills in French and German. Daniel and Jasmine competed in French, while Kaiden and Leo took part in the German spelling rounds. The students were chosen to represent Smithdon after the School Final held here on 23 May, where 20 students competed, each having qualified by winning their class competition. The four who went through to the Trust final were the best spellers on the day.

They performed brilliantly, demonstrating not only their excellent language knowledge but also their courage and determination in a high-pressure setting. Competing in front of an audience is never easy, but they all rose to the challenge with confidence and enthusiasm.

Events like the Spelling Bee help to build a love of languages and encourage students to develop their speaking and listening skills, while also boosting their memory and concentration. We are incredibly proud of everyone who took part and look forward to seeing their passion for languages continue to grow throughout their time at school.

Congratulations to our Year 7 students for representing our school so brilliantly! - Mrs Hawkins



Into the Wild:

Year 8's Bushcraft Adventure



Earlier this term, 10 Year 8 students and Mr Plant, traded classrooms for tents as they embarked on a three-day bushcraft expedition in Thetford Forest and King's Forest. Set among ancient woodlands and open skies, the trip offered an exciting break from screens, homework and everyday routine.

Organised in partnership with *Explore4More*, the experience focused on essential survival skills and outdoor living. From the moment they arrived, our students embraced the challenge, pitching their own tents and making a fire that would become the centre of camp-life.

During their time there, the students slept in an authentic camp environment, under canvas and surrounded by nature. They had the opportunity to cook over open campfires and immerse themselves in hands-on, outdoor experiences. All of their learning took place through engaging, fun-based challenges, which encouraged both personal growth and team development in a supportive and adventurous setting.

Learning Through Nature:

Throughout the trip, students took part in a range of activities designed to build resilience, teamwork and independence. They learned how to:

- Build shelters from natural materials
- Safely light fires using flint and steel
- Prepare and cook meals over open flames
- Navigate woodland trails using map and compass
- Identify local plants and animal tracks

Evenings were spent talking about the day and learning traditional bushcraft skills.

Beyond the Classroom:

Before setting out, students received a full safety briefing from the instructors and were then led in groups to the activity area. The journey itself became part of the experience, as students completed a challenge during the trek to engage their senses and teamwork. Upon arrival, the first task was to build shelters. Students learned a



variety of techniques for constructing effective shelters and were taught how to assess their environment to choose the best materials and structure for the situation. Once they had mastered the basics, each group was challenged to build an emergency shelter using only natural materials from the forest. The goal was to create a structure strong enough to hold two people.

Next, our students took part in an exciting camouflage and concealment activity. Working both individually and in teams, they used their surroundings to hide in plain sight - blending into the environment and using strategy to avoid detection during a final 'evade and escape' challenge.

They were also introduced to the fire triangle and learned how to safely build and manage a fire in a woodland environment. Using traditional fire-lighting techniques, they practiced creating fire as a source of warmth and for cooking. When evening fell, the camp offered a warm and inviting atmosphere. Students gathered around the campfire to talk about the day's adventures and enjoy a few games. When they were tired, they made their way to their tents for a well-earned sleep in their shelters.

Living Off the Land:

The second day began with a hearty breakfast, cooked entirely by the students over the campfire. Using locally sourced produce and simple, traditional methods, they learned how to prepare a delicious meal from scratch in the great outdoors.

After breakfast, students were introduced to both ancient and modern methods of trapping. Guided by experienced instructors, they learned how to set up basic traps, the importance of trap placement and how to camouflage them effectively. The teams also explored how to prepare fresh produce caught in the wild, gaining valuable knowledge about sustainable sourcing and food preparation.

Lunchtime brought a foraging patrol through the forest. Under supervision, the students identified edible plants, herbs and seasonal finds from the local environment. The activity emphasized sustainable living and culminated in a 'bush tucker trial,' which tested their bravery and taste buds alike!

Before the end of the day, students took time to carefully dismantle their shelters and clean the camp area, following the principle of 'leave no trace.' Every item was packed away, fires were extinguished responsibly and the site was returned to its natural state.

Navigation and Challenge:

The final day began with another cooked breakfast and a recap of the previous day's adventures. Group challenges were reviewed and scores were shared. The students then took part in a navigation and map-reading challenge. Each group, guided by a team leader, followed a planned route through the forest, stopping at checkpoints where they faced small tasks or had to process information to move forward. This exercise not only tested practical navigation and route-planning skills but also gave students a taste of the kind of experience they might encounter in the *Duke of Edinburgh's Bronze Award*, which many will have the chance to pursue in Year 9.

Feedback:

Over three amazing days our students took on all kinds of challenges - from making fire and purifying the river water to eating bugs and navigating obstacle courses blindfolded. They all showed real resilience, teamwork and leadership with the girls especially standing out in problem-solving. We took a disciplined approach and they responded to it brilliantly. Everyone stepped out of their comfort zones and came away more confident and capable. Singing the national anthem each day and learning about British Values, our students were particularly impressive in their knowledge of VE Day and its significance, as well as other key events from World War II, it was great to see such strong understanding. The trip was fun, full-on and packed with learning. It was a brilliant time for everyone! **Mr Plant**

I actually really liked the nettle tea which we made by boiling fresh nettles in water. It tasted much better than I expected! I also tried eating crickets, which was definitely a challenge... I had to take the head off first, but I don't think I'd eat them again! One of my favourite parts of the trip was making the fires as it was quite cold out, so it was fun and really satisfying to get it going and warm up next to it.

Rosie



Meet the Lifeguard!

Students in Years 7 and 8 had the opportunity to 'Meet the Lifeguard'. It was an engaging session designed to teach our students essential water safety skills and to raise awareness about the important work carried out by the *Royal National Lifeboat Institution*.

With the Norfolk coast on our doorstep and the summer holidays finally here, the session couldn't have come at a better time. Our coastline is a popular destination for local residents, tourists and of course our students and their families. Our beaches offer long sandy beaches and wide-open waters - but it also comes with hidden dangers, such as strong currents, rip tides and shifting sands. Knowing how to stay safe near and in the water can be life-saving.

During the session, the students learned vital techniques including how to float effectively in cold water which is a skill designed to help someone stay calm, conserve energy and improve their chances of survival if they unexpectedly find themselves in trouble. They also practised throwing a tow line to someone in need, learning how to help safely from the shore without endangering themselves.

As the weather improves and more people head to the beach, these skills become especially important. The RNLI's motto, 'Respect the Water,' was a key theme throughout the day, reminding students that even confident swimmers must stay alert and cautious in the water.

In addition to practical skills, students explored career opportunities within the RNLI, discovering the wide range of roles involved - from front-line lifeguards and lifeboat crew to mechanics, communications officers and safety educators.

Hopefully the session left students feeling more confident and better prepared to enjoy the coast responsibly this summer, equipped with some knowledge that could one day make all the difference to a person in danger.

Lifeboats

DANGER! DISAPPEARING BEACH

Every year, RNLI crews rescue people exploring the Norfolk coastline.

Brancaster, Scolt Head, Wells-next-the-Sea and Hunstanton are prone to interlocking sandbars that create deep water channels and fast flowing water. They may look safe at low tide but the sea floods back in very quickly, cutting sightseers off from land. Some have drowned trying to escape.

You won't outswim the powerful currents and will end up in serious danger. **Don't risk it!**

IN AN EMERGENCY call 999 or 112 and ask for the coastguard

The RNLI is the charity that saves lives at sea
Royal National Lifeboat Institution, a charity registered in England and Wales (209603), Scotland (SC037736), the Republic of Ireland (20003326), the Bailiwick of Jersey (14), The Isle of Man, the Bailiwick of Guernsey and Alderney

THE PROM

On 26 June our Year 11 students celebrated the end of their exams in style at their prom held at Knights Hill Hotel in King's Lynn. The evening was a fantastic opportunity for students to dress up, enjoy time with their friends and mark the end of their time at Smithdon. They arrived in an incredible variety of transport from classic cars and trucks to, most impressively, a helicopter which caused quite a stir! The popular sweet cart made a return and the students also enjoyed a delicious pizza buffet. Many of our staff members came along to support the students, wish them well, and even join them on the dance floor. The disco proved to be a huge hit, with the music keeping everyone on their feet and the dance floor buzzing all night! The atmosphere was full of excitement and celebration and it was clear how much the students enjoyed the chance to relax and make lasting memories together before taking their next steps into college and sixth form. We hope they can now take some time to rest and enjoy the summer before results day and we wish them all the very best for their future adventures, plans and journeys ahead.





The leavers made their grand entrances in style - from The Mystery Machine to motorbikes, trucks, sports cars and vintage classics. All dressed to impress in beautiful gowns, sharp suits and feather boas. We hope they had a night to remember!





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Preserving the Past

By Mr Chapman

I recently re-discovered a collection of local maps, most of which are over 50 years old. These maps had been stored in the Geography department storage cupboard for many years and I was concerned that they were not being looked after as they should be. I approached the Heritage Centre in Hunstanton to see if they would be interested in having the maps and I was delighted when their committee agreed to add them to their collection. The Heritage Centre, located on the corner of Northgate and Greevegate, holds a fascinating collection of local memorabilia and artefacts which the public can visit.

On Friday 11 July, I handed the maps over to Andrew Murray, Stephen Kent and Sheila Kent at Smithdon. The school looks forward to working closely with the Heritage Centre in the new academic year, with small group visits to the centre to help increase students' knowledge and understanding of local Geography and History. It is so important for students to learn more about their local area so they can develop a stronger sense of place, identity and appreciation for their community's heritage.





Exploring Italy

A Journey Through History, Art and Culture

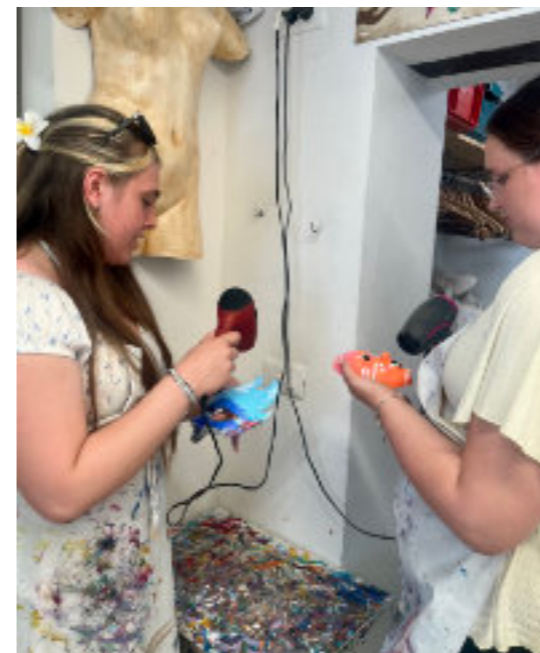


The recent trip to Italy was a tremendous success with all students and staff thoroughly enjoying a few days filled with beautiful weather, stunning scenery and unforgettable experiences.

Students had the opportunity to explore Italian culture, develop their independence and strengthen friendships in a fun, supportive and educational environment. Highlights of the trip included visits to the picturesque cities of Verona and Venice, both offering breathtaking sights and rich cultural heritage.

Throughout the week, students took part in a variety of engaging excursions and activities including: guided tours of local landmarks, visits to an art gallery, creating traditional masquerade masks, making (and eating!) authentic Italian pizza, a day at a theme park and a scenic boat ride.

Italian cuisine was a hit with pizza and ice cream proving especially popular among the group. The students participated enthusiastically in all activities and consistently represented the school with maturity and respect. It was a well-organised and thoroughly enjoyable trip that was a pleasure for all involved - Mr Plant



Italy

By Iris

Day One - Juliet's Balcony

On 27 May, myself and 30 other students went on the school trip to Lake Garda, accompanied by Ms Ruskin, Mrs Proctor and Mr Plant. We flew from Gatwick Airport on a 7:45 am flight to Verona, Italy. After disembarking and collecting our luggage, we met our coach driver and loaded up the coach. Our first destination was the beautiful city of Verona where we saw the famous Juliet's balcony. We had around two hours of free time to grab a bite to eat and explore the local shops. Afterwards, we met our tour guide who showed us many of Verona's famous and beautiful landmarks and historical sites. We returned to our accommodation, checked in, and unpacked before heading down for dinner. The food that evening was delicious – we had pizza and salad. At 10:00 pm, all our phones were collected and it was time for bed.

Day Two – Masks and Masterpieces.

We were up early on the second day, waking at 6:00 am and having breakfast to give us energy for the day ahead. Shortly after, we boarded the coach and set off for Venice. Upon arrival, we visited a famous church, but unfortunately, due to the hot weather, many of us were wearing shorts or short sleeves and were therefore not allowed to enter – a bit disappointing, but it gave us more time to explore Venice in small groups for about 45 minutes.

Later, we visited a hidden art gallery tucked away in the backstreets. It was stunning and featured a collection focused on pop art – and it definitely delivered! Afterwards, we took part in a mask-making workshop, painting handmade papier-mâché masks with acrylics. We spent about two hours there before catching a river taxi back to our coach. Back at the hotel, we had dinner at 7:30 pm, this time alongside another school. The meal consisted of cheesy risotto and pasta with meatballs – both were amazing! We then had some time to relax in our rooms before lights out.

Day Three – Gardaland!

Excitement was high on the third day as we set off to Gardaland, the largest theme park in the Lake Garda region. Once inside, we had designated check-in times to ensure everyone was safe, but otherwise, we were free to enjoy the park. Gardaland was packed with all sorts of rides – roller-coasters, drop towers, log flumes – it was such great fun! The food at the park's restaurants was absolutely out of this world – so tasty! We left the park at 3:30 pm, returned to the hotel and had dinner – chicken wings that night – before heading back to our rooms for showers and bed.



Day Four – “arrivederci”

The final day was a bit hectic as we packed our bags and had to vacate our rooms by 10:00 am. The teachers checked over all the rooms, and we spent the rest of the morning relaxing at the hotel until it was time to leave. We loaded the coach and set off for a pizza-making workshop. The pizza we made was absolutely incredible – so delicious! Afterwards, we went for a lovely walk around the area near the pizzeria, popped into a few shops and visited the beach before heading back to Verona Airport. Once there, we checked in, went through security, browsed duty free and grabbed some food. Unfortunately, our flight was delayed by an hour, but we eventually boarded and landed at Stansted. We then caught the coach home and finally arrived back at Smithdon at approximately 3:30 am!

Overall, the trip was an amazing experience. I had a fantastic time and made some unforgettable memories. It was also lovely to spend time with Ms Ruskin, even though she has now left Smithdon. A huge thank you to all the teachers who made the trip possible – your effort and patience didn't go unnoticed and I really appreciate it. I hope you managed to enjoy yourselves a little too, even if we were a handful at times!



DT Casting Competition

A group of Year 8 students from all four high schools in our Trust - Springwood, Smithdon, Marshland and St Clement's - joined forces to design and cast a medal in aluminum. Working with SKF Cooper, a specialist engineering company in South Lynn, the students used Computer Aided Design and 3D printing to create their medal patterns. The teams then gathered at Smithdon to cast their designs in aluminum, supported by Mr Willingham, Headteacher and Design and Technology teacher at St Clement's. "It was fantastic to see students from across the Trust collaborating and experiencing a process rarely seen in schools," he said.

All students received SKF water bottles, and the four winners also took home caps and chocolate bearings. Mr Hellard from SKF Cooper added, "The students have been brilliant, and we hope to see some of them applying for apprenticeships with us in the future."



On 5 June I had the most fantastic day! Me, Pamela, Phoebe and Anotida took part in the Year 8 Trust DT casting Competition. We teamed up with students from the other TRUST schools to create custom medals out of aluminium - and they turned out amazing! It was held here at Smithdon which for us made it even more exciting!

We started by designing our medals using Tinkercad, then brought those designs to life by 3D printing them to create patterns. We took things to the next level: making sand casting moulds and pouring molten aluminium to create our medals. After that, we carefully filed and polished them using emery cloth to give them a smooth, finished look.

A huge congratulations to Anotida, who won first place and Phoebe, who came in second! - Jessica

Year 8 Team Triumphs at Faraday Challenge!



A huge congratulations to Elliott, Harrison, Lexie, Olivia, Eloise and Pam in Year 8, who recently took part in the Faraday Challenge Day held at Springwood High School and came away as the winning team!

The Faraday Challenge is a national STEM competition run by the Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET), where students take on real-world engineering problems in a race against the clock. Teams have a limited time (typically one school day) to brainstorm, design and build a solution to a given brief.

The challenge incorporates elements of design thinking, teamwork, budgeting and presentation. Competing against other schools, our brilliant team impressed the judges with their creativity, teamwork and problem-solving skills. Each event has a winning team and the top teams across the country are invited to a national final, where they compete for prizes and recognition.

This fantastic achievement is a credit to their hard work and ingenuity. Well done to all involved - you've made the whole school proud!

SCIENCE

By Mrs Pike

It's been an action-packed term in Science since Easter, with highlights including the Year 9 trip to Marshland High School for the UEA Bringing Science to You event and the exciting Year 7 Race to the Line competition here at Smithdon. Here's a round-up of all the fantastic activities!

KS3 Science Dragster Event

Back in March, 15 students took part in our KS3 Science Dragster event. They had a brilliant time designing and racing their dragsters, with some even managing to travel in a straight line right across the hall! Students showed great competitive spirit, making adjustments and improvements to their dragsters between races.

National Scientific Thinking Challenge

In May, Year 10 students took part in the National Scientific Thinking Challenge, run by several top universities including Warwick, Southampton, Bristol, Newcastle, Manchester and Oxford. Although science-based, this test doesn't require any specific science knowledge to take part. This year, 15,663 students from 266 schools in 10 countries took part. All the students who entered received a certificate.

Congratulations to Tom, Oliver, Ksawery and Freya-Mae who achieved Bronze awards for finishing in the top 40%. A special well done to Alex, Oscar and Amelie, who gained Silver awards for placing in the top 25%.

This is an amazing achievement - well done to everyone involved!

Bringing Science to You

The UEA *Bringing Science to You* event was once again hosted by Marshland High School and 12 enthusiastic Year 9 students enjoyed a fantastic day of hands-on science. Activities they participated in included extracting DNA from strawberries, making hand cream and programming LEGO robot cars.

Student feedback:

"The UEA Science day was very good. My favourite part was using computing technology to make LEGO robots move and speak. I would definitely go again if given the opportunity." - Mercedes

"It was really enjoyable finding the DNA of a strawberry. I also enjoyed making a LEGO car move using coding. It was a very interactive day, seeing all the different schools and meeting the people who helped us with the activities. It was great to hear about different jobs that use science and to learn about the different science topics." - Morgan

"I really enjoyed this trip because we learned about the science behind various things and different careers while doing fun, hands-on practical activities. One of my favourite parts was extracting DNA from a strawberry — it was fascinating to see just how much DNA could be found in a single small strawberry." - Lyra

Kitchen Chemistry

On Friday 27 June, Years 7 and 8 were treated to the amazing Kitchen Chemistry show in the hall. Funded by the Royal Institute of Chemistry, Stephen Ashworth delivered a brilliant show using just everyday chemicals and equipment.

The highlight was certainly the whoosh bottle and the flaming icing sugar!

Here's what some students thought:

"Kitchen Chemistry was really good. He impressed me with everything he did. The best part was when he made a circle go up in a bottle by getting one half of the room to try and move it with their minds — they couldn't do it! Then he asked the other half and it worked! Everything was really good but that impressed me the most!" - Lucy

"It was shocking to see you can use any kitchen chemical to do an experiment! I found it really interesting that he was using chemicals I hadn't heard of before." - Tyler

"It was very fun and entertaining. I liked the bit where Stephen showed us how an engine runs with a large bottle and methylated spirit!" - Harry



Year 8 STEM Project

All of Year 8 took part in the Smithdon Environment STEM Project, with each class focusing on a different theme: wind turbines, cob houses or solar panels. The students researched their chosen



topic, then designed and created their own models - whether it was solar panels, cob houses or wind turbines. They then finally produced detailed project boards showcasing their work. Everyone worked incredibly hard on their projects, which were proudly displayed at Year 8 Parents' Evening. Earlier in the term, students also had the chance to vote for their favourite project board (they weren't allowed to vote for their own!).

Congratulations to the winning team: Harley, Ella, Leah, Tegan and Jacob. A huge well done to them for their fantastic work!



WHOOSH - KS3 Finale

The final KS3 event of the year was the much-loved return of water rockets and Coke and Mentos, always a firm favourite with students! In the first part of the session, students designed their own rockets, coming up with a fantastic range of ideas - from a hammerhead shark to a unicorn! The rockets were then launched outside. Although the breeze often sent them backwards, they still took off with an impressive whoosh! After a break for drinks and biscuits, it was time for the Coke and Mentos challenge. Nearly everyone managed to drop the Mentos into the bottles without getting completely covered in Coke - a great achievement in itself!

Well done to everyone who has attended the KS3 Science events this year - it has once again been great fun! Keep an eye out for posters in the new school year to find out what exciting activities we have planned



Grant Application

This term we were notified that we were successful in a grant application from the Local School Nature Climate Grant which is supported by the People's Postcode Lottery. We now have some fantastic wildlife pieces to go in the allotment garden along with a wildlife camera so that we can observe the wildlife on our site. We also have received a model wind turbine to be used when teaching about renewable energy and the STEM projects next year alongside a catapult for helping students to understand speed, distance and time calculations which we look forward to using next year!



On 30 June all of our Year 7 students took part in an exciting all-day event at Smithdon: the Race to the Line STEM Challenge, sponsored by Stannah Stairlifts in conjunction with The Learning Partnership. We were thrilled to be able to host this fantastic day! Led by Mrs Birks, Mr Plant and Mrs Pike, with the support of Miss Stevens (DT/Art Technician) and lots of other teachers on the day, the challenge encouraged students to work as engineers for the day - designing, building and racing model rocket cars. The atmosphere was buzzing with creativity and teamwork as students put their STEM skills to the test. From brainstorming aerodynamic designs to fine-tuning their builds, everyone showed fantastic enthusiasm and determination. The event was a great success, with students not only learning about science and engineering in a hands-on, practical way but also developing important skills such as problem-solving, collaboration and resilience. A huge well done to all the teams for their hard work and brilliant designs!



Winners

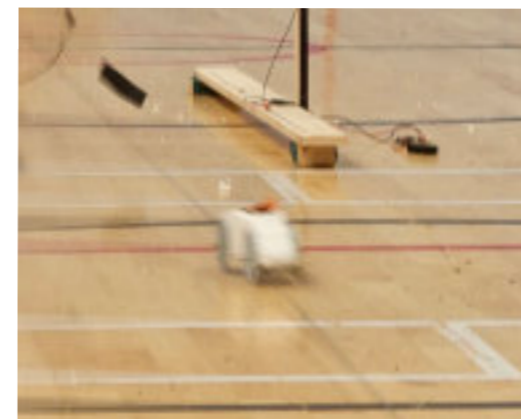
Design:

The Polos - Kiala, Poppy, Lucy, Emily, Lily-May

Fastest:

Lando Russell Racers - Evelyn, Jess, Miley, Iris and Poppy

"It was really fun to be smart and creative to create a car. Although our car didn't do well in the race, the process of making it was the best! It also made me understand the true importance of teamwork." - Tyler



"Race to the Line was very good and fun because you built your own cars then raced them to see who was fastest. I really liked the mechanical side of it, with the aerodynamics and how to make your car go fast. It was really good seeing everyone's different designs and ideas as they flew down the centre of the sports hall!" - Air

"I really liked it as we got to have our own design and shape of the cars. It was really engaging at the end when they all raced!" - Harry



Forest School:

Exploring, Learning and Growing

"I go to Forest school every Wednesday and I really enjoy it. One of my favourite activities is making crafts, especially when we make the woodland people out of natural materials such as sticks and leaves that I have been allowed to take home with me. Another part I absolutely love is toasting marshmallows over the campfire. It's so much fun to watch them turn golden brown and get all gooey and delicious. Eating them afterwards is the best treat. Forest School is always an exciting adventure and I look forward to it every week. I love spending time outdoors, exploring nature and being with my friends." - Lily, Year 9

Classmates and Checkmates

On 23 May, Smithdon held its annual school chess tournament in the school library to decide which ten students would represent us at the WNAT Chess Tournament. Twenty students from across all year groups took part. They engaged in a series of intense matches. The library was quiet throughout, the silence broken only by the tap of the chess clock and the occasional murmur of the word "check" as the tension built.

This year's tournament was particularly special as it marked the final appearance of Noah in Year 10, widely recognised as our strongest player. The top ten students then went on to represent Smithdon in the Trust tournament, aiming to match - or better - last year's fantastic performance.

The long-anticipated WNAT Chess Tournament finally arrived and our best players excitedly travelled to Marshland High School with Mrs Robinson. The day was packed with tense moments, concentration and impressive displays of skill and sportsmanship as our students faced tough opponents from across the Trust. Noah and Lucas delivered outstanding performances, each winning all of their games. Their consistency and calm under pressure were key to keeping Smithdon in the running throughout the day. In the end, it was heart-breakingly close - Smithdon finished just three points behind Springwood, earning a very well-deserved set of silver medals for the team.

Thank you Noah:

This tournament marked the end of an era, as it was Noah's final tournament representing Smithdon. His unbeaten streak over the last couple of years have been a huge part of our chess success and he leaves behind a legacy the younger players will hopefully be inspired to follow. As he moves up to his final year at Smithdon, his super calm focus and tactical skills will be greatly missed. Noah has been an important key figure in our recent chess success, including last year's first silver finish against Springwood.

We have some fantastic new chess boards! If you'd like to be part of next year's team as we aim for gold, why not join Mrs Robinson's chess club? It's a great place to learn the game or sharpen your existing skills. You can also come to the library during break or lunch - there's always someone ready for a match!

"I first learned how to play chess by watching YouTube and testing my wits on puzzles to track my progress. It was a fun way to learn the fundamentals of the game. Taking part in many school chess tournaments made me want to improve my skills so that I could become better and stronger for the following year. I was extremely nervous during all of my tournaments because I had no idea how strong my opponents were or what tricks they might be hiding. However, it was a fantastic experience, and it definitely helped me improve as a chess player." - Noah

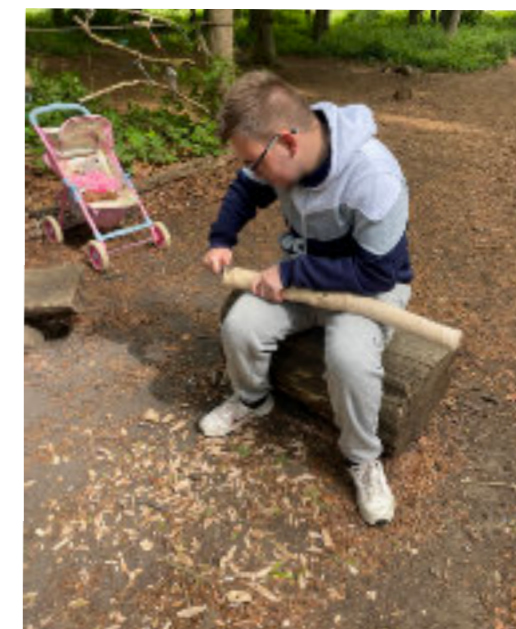


Harrison, Noah and Zane were the top three chess players with the highest scores at the end of the school tournament.

Every week, our students step outside the classroom and into the wonderful world of WILDlings Forest School in Snettisham woods. These sessions offer a fantastic opportunity for our students to learn and explore in a natural environment, encouraging curiosity, creativity and confidence.

Forest School is more than just playing outdoors - it is a carefully designed approach to learning that supports personal development, social skills and a deeper connection with nature. Whether building dens, identifying plants and insects or crafting, each activity helps our students develop life skills in a fun and engaging way. Spending time outdoors has been shown to improve mental well-being, boost physical health and inspire a sense of adventure in a holistic way.

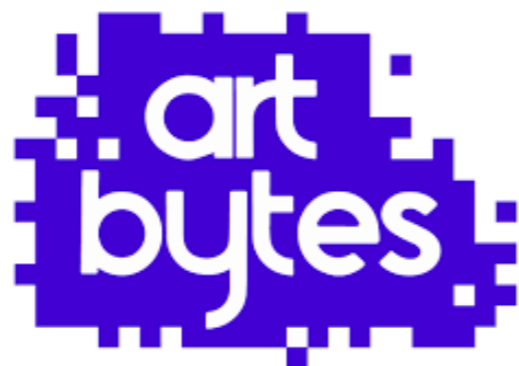
Our students return from Forest School sessions feeling energised, excited and proud of what they have achieved. We are incredibly proud to offer this enriching experience as part of our curriculum, helping our students to grow not only academically but also emotionally and socially.





Morgan and Akira receiving their well-deserved certificates.

Art Bytes is a national art and technology programme open to students in Year 5 and Year 9 across all types of schools. It combines an exciting art competition between schools with a unique online virtual gallery and special celebration events held in art venues across England. The programme is based on over 12 years of experience in the North West and has been shown to help young people discover and develop their artistic talent, boost their confidence, raise their aspirations, and support their mental well-being. It also helps build important skills that can be useful for future careers. We were proud to enter some of our students this year, and Morgan and Akira, who were Smithdon's shortlisted artists, were chosen to attend the celebration event for the day.



As a Year 9 student who achieved first place within my school, I was invited to Kettle's Yard art gallery in Cambridge to receive my certificate, along with Morgan, another winning student. Kettle's Yard is an inspiring space - an art gallery within a historic house. It felt filled with light with modern art and objects that created a calm and creative atmosphere.

During our visit, we took part in hands-on activities such as designing our own badges and creating sketches inspired by the artworks around us. We also had the opportunity to see our own art work displayed, as well as the other entrants work, which was a truly proud and exciting moment. At the end of the day, the Artbytes team announced the national winner of the programme. The whole day was inspiring and an amazing chance to look around the lovely art gallery. - Akira

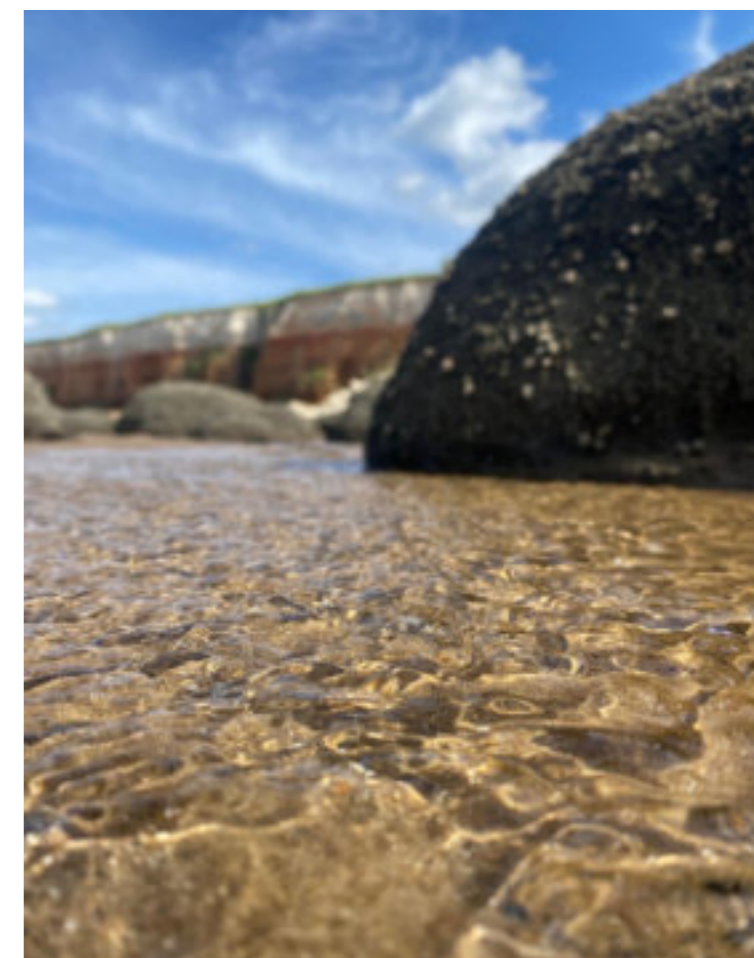


The John Crofts Art Competition, is an annual event that highlights the artistic talents of young people in the local area. Organised in partnership with Hunstanton & District Rotary and hosted at Glebe House School this competition is named in honour of John Crofts, a former headteacher at Glebe House and Smithdon's former Chair of Governors. Each year, the competition invites children and young people from our local schools to explore a new theme through art. This year the theme was 'Beside the Seaside,' encouraging the children to celebrate the beauty of our gorgeous coast through their creative work. The entries could be submitted in any medium, including painting, drawing and photography which was introduced this year.

The competition was open to students in three age categories: Reception - Year 2, Year 3 - Year 6 and Year 7 and above. It welcomed entries from the local schools, including Smithdon. Winners in each category received cash prizes generously donated by the Rotary, further encouraging the young artists to continue developing their skills. The judging panel included representatives from GroundWork Gallery in King's Lynn and local artist Nicola Hart. Beyond showcasing young talent, the competition also supports charitable causes. In recent years, proceeds and donations collected during the exhibitions have gone toward organisations like British Divers Marine Life Rescue.

We are delighted to congratulate Harriet in Year 8, who achieved an impressive 3rd place in the 7-11 age category with her stunning photograph inspired by the 2025 theme. It is a striking and beautifully composed photograph that captures the essence of Hunstanton's unique coastline. The image draws the viewer's eye to the shimmering, textured water in the foreground. The low angle perspective makes the viewer feel as though they are right at the water's edge and shows the glimmering gold of the sand beneath. In the background, the iconic red and white striped cliffs of Hunstanton rise under a vibrant blue sky and the contrast between the warm tones of the sand and cliffs and the cool blues of the sky creates a dynamic, almost painterly effect. Overall, this photograph beautifully celebrates the natural textures and colours of the Norfolk coast. It perfectly embodies the theme 'Beside the Seaside.'

Well done, Harriet - we are incredibly proud of your talent and creativity!





Over the Hunstanton Carnival weekend, we were delighted to see our GCSE Art students' work proudly displayed in an exhibition at the Town Hall. The display featured a selection of pieces from the Year 11 GCSE portfolios, offering a glimpse into the themes they've explored, including Gathering, Reflections and Similarities and Differences. There was also a paper structure created by our Primary feeder schools to admire.

Each piece reflected the individuality and creativity of the students, with a wide range of styles and techniques on show – from detailed observational drawings to bold mixed media collages, the range and depth of work on display was truly impressive.

The exhibition was a fantastic opportunity for the local community to engage with the creative achievements of our students and celebrate the hard work that goes into producing their GCSE coursework over the 2 years.

We're incredibly proud of our students and all they've achieved. We now wish them the very best of luck as they await their final GCSE grades!

Year 4 pupils from Dersingham, Docking, Heacham, Hunstanton, Ingoldisthorpe and Snettisham primary schools collaborated with our students to create this amazing sculpture. The work was inspired by the artist Charles McGee. The young pupils created patterned strips of paper, which were then mounted on black card to form 3D shapes. These were assembled at the exhibition to create one large, collaborative paper sculpture that looked striking. Many primary students visited the display to find their own contribution among nearly 400 others. The public and the Smithdon community were really impressed by the installation.



There was a wide range of artistic techniques on display including pencil drawing, painting and textiles. It was great to see how each student took the theme in their own direction, using their individual skills, creativity and style. The variety of work showed just how much talent there is and how students were free to express themselves in different ways.

We hope you had the opportunity to enjoy the outstanding work on display. These pieces represent the creativity, dedication and talent of our students and we are incredibly proud of their efforts.

At this time, the work cannot be published as these are final submissions currently being assessed for GCSE grading. Once the official grades have been released, we look forward to celebrating the achievements of our students and potentially sharing their work more widely.



The Unknown

Harry, Sam, Udaesh and Toby

As part of the Hunstanton Carnival celebrations, our very own school band, *The Unknown*, lit up the stage with a show-stopping performance that had the crowd buzzing with excitement. Band members Harry, Udaesh and Sam wowed the audience with their incredible energy, talent and passion for music. Although Toby was unable to attend, the band still delivered an unforgettable set that left everyone cheering for more. There were many staff members and students from Smithdon in the crowd, cheering them on and showing support.

Their set-list featured rock favourites from Ozzy Osbourne, Bryan Adams and Guns N' Roses – a brilliant mix that showcased both their instrumental skills on the drums, guitar and bass and their stage presence. From powerful guitar riffs to confident vocals from Harry, *The Unknown* brought real presence to the stage and represented the school with pride. There were some tech issues but they played on - like true professionals.

The Unknown have become a well-known presence on the school music scene over the past couple of years, going from strength to strength. All members are talented multi-instrumentalists, confidently switching between drums, guitar, bass and vocals delivering engaging performances. A standout moment was their unforgettable rendition of Queen's *Bohemian Rhapsody* at the annual WNAT Battle of the Bands, which showcased their impressive skills.

A huge well done to the band for their fantastic performance - we can't wait to see what you do next!

"Playing at the carnival was a great experience - a little nerve-racking at first, but overall really fun! The audience participation was amazing and it was great to see a few people up and dancing. I think the performance went really well and I'm proud of the boys for how we played together as a band." - Harry

"It was really exciting to play in front of such a big crowd at the Hunstanton Carnival. We don't really get nervous anymore since we've performed so many times now - we're much more confident on stage. It was a bit frustrating when my microphone stopped working; I turned up the amp to try to fix it, but there was quite a bit of feedback. These things happen sometimes, though, and we just carried on. We can play all the instruments, but Sam and I prefer the guitar whilst Harry prefers the drums. I picked up drums along the way too. We're really looking forward to performing at the summer concert and at the Hunstanton Music Festival. We're also planning to write an original song soon, which we're all excited about! At school, we have music lessons with Dan Ashby, which have really helped us improve as a band. I'd also like to sing more backing vocals in the future. We're mainly a rock band, but we also play blues and metal, and I really enjoy indie music as well. Toby is our newest member - we felt our sound was a bit empty, so we asked him to join since he plays piano and keyboard. He's been a great addition to the band." - Udaesh



Performing Arts

This academic year may be drawing to a close, but in Performing Arts, we've certainly been turning up the volume! From exciting workshops and inspiring trips to unforgettable performances and special collaborations, it's been a term filled with creativity, energy and incredible talent. Our students have thrown themselves into every opportunity, developing their skills, building confidence and sharing their passion for the arts with our school community and beyond. - Mrs Barnes



Combined Voices Event

Our school choir had the exciting opportunity to learn a brand-new piece of music: the Heacham Junior School song, specially composed by Benjamin Howell and Matthew Preston. They were joined by a group of professional string players, adding a truly special touch to the performance. Students from Heacham Infants, Heacham Junior, the Dersingham Community Choir, and our own choir all came together to record this inspiring new song, creating a wonderful sense of community and shared achievement.

Hunstanton Carnival

Our Year 8 band, *The Unknown*, gave an outstanding performance at this year's Hunstanton Carnival, impressing the crowd with a full set of rock 'n' roll classics. The students showed incredible confidence and energy on stage, captivating the audience and creating an electric atmosphere. Their passion for music truly shone through and they represented the school brilliantly - a fantastic achievement for such a young group of musicians!



Beat-boxing Workshop

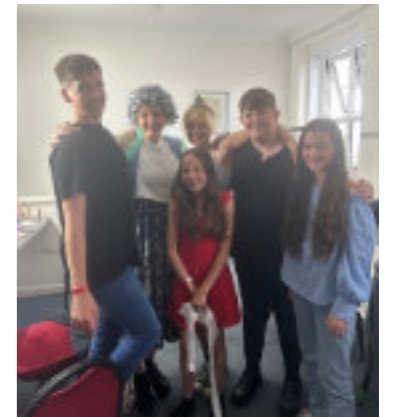
Our Year 7 students took part in an incredible beat-boxing workshop led by the talented Mide Naike. They explored how to create a variety of sounds using just their voices and discovered how to combine these sounds to produce impressive musical effects. The students had an unforgettable experience and they had an absolute blast along the way!

The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe Trip

We took 50 students to Norwich Theatre Royal to see the touring production of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. From the moment the curtain rose, students were completely captivated by the magical and imaginative world unfolding on stage. The stunning set design, breathtaking special effects and powerful performances brought C.S. Lewis's beloved story to life in a way that felt truly unforgettable. For many students it was their first time experiencing a professional theatre production of this scale, making it an especially memorable day out. The trip not only got them even more excited about the arts but also sparked their imaginations and left them buzzing with excitement long after the final curtain call.

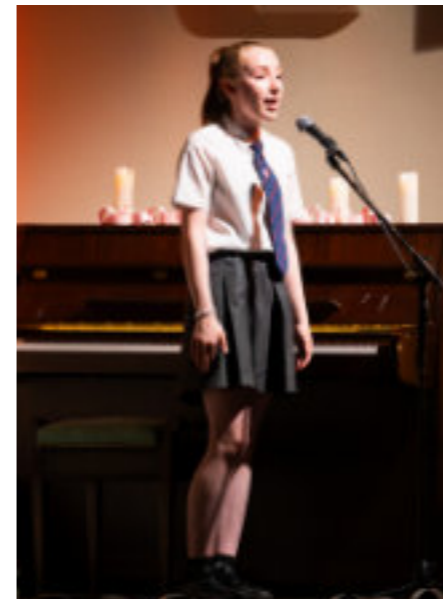
Hunstanton Drama Festival

A talented group of six students proudly represented our school at the Hunstanton Drama Festival, performing a shortened version of *Family Planning* by Frank Vickery. They had the incredible honour of taking to the stage on opening night alongside special guest Stephen Fry - a truly unforgettable experience! They also were nominated for three awards: Harry was nominated for The Jim Farr Cup for the Best Male Actor (Youth), Darcie was nominated for The Ann Munzer Cup for the Best Female Actor (Youth) and the cast were nominated for The Williamson Cup for the Best Youth Production.



Summer Concert

On 9 July 2025, we hosted our Annual Summer Concert at Hunstanton Town Hall. Students from Years 7 to 11 came together to showcase their talents, performing a fantastic variety of songs - from solo acts and bands to a special preview by the cast of next year's school musical. It was a vibrant, fun-filled evening enjoyed by everyone who attended.



WNAT Community Music Week

The last full week of term was a truly exciting and action-packed one for our performers. *The Unknown*, our talented Year 8 band, kicked things off with an electrifying set at Springwood's WNAT Community Music Week Pop and Rock Night, showcasing their energy and musical skills to the wider audience. Then, on Thursday, the cast of *Sister Act Jr* travelled to Springwood for the Vocal Celebration Evening. They wowed the crowd with three fantastic songs from their upcoming show, impressing everyone with their confidence and stage presence. To end the evening on a high, they joined over 100 other students from across the trust to perform a powerful rendition of *This Is Me* from *The Greatest Showman* - a really special moment that brought everyone together and left us all feeling happy and proud.

There's never a dull moment in the Performing Arts Department, and next year is already shaping up to be full of exciting opportunities! We have a trip planned to see *Hamilton* and we'll also be heading to see *War Horse* and *Wicked*, which will include a special musical theatre workshop with the production team from *Wicked*. Of course, we also have our annual pantomime trip for Year 7 and plenty more adventures in store!

Finally, now is a great time to sign up for music lessons for next year so that we can get students started as soon as possible in the new school year. Information about peripatetic music lessons have been sent home and you can use the following link to sign up! <https://forms.gle/hqvkHND4VoGU1Es79>

Hospitality and Catering

This term, our Year 10 students took part in a practical cooking lesson focused on mastering a variety of cooking methods and demonstrating strong organisational skills. Their challenge was to prepare and serve a full cooked breakfast - hot, well-timed and accompanied by freshly baked bread rolls made from scratch!

The students rose to the challenge with enthusiasm and maturity, managing their time effectively and working together with great coordination. The results were outstanding - not only was the food delicious, but the presentation was excellent, showing real care and attention to detail.

The idea of a hearty cooked breakfast became popular in the Victorian era, especially among the upper and middle classes, who enjoyed generous morning spreads featuring eggs, meats and breads. However, the Full English breakfast as we know it today - with eggs, bacon, sausages, beans and toast, developed more fully in the 20th Century. Although traditionally eaten in the morning, this warm, filling and comforting dish is now enjoyed at any time of day, and remains a beloved British favourite.



It was fantastic to see such teamwork, focus and creativity in the kitchen. A huge well done to all involved - an impressive effort from start to finish!



The students also put their own creative spin on their homemade bread rolls. Some shaped theirs into soft baps, others carefully wove theirs into plaits, and a few added extra texture and flavour by sprinkling poppy seeds on top. It was brilliant to see such imagination and individuality in their baking!



The Duke of Edinburgh's Bronze Award

Last month, our Year 9 students set off on an unforgettable Duke of Edinburgh's Bronze Award expedition to Southwold. With backpacks loaded and spirits high, they embarked on a two-day adventure that tested their resilience, teamwork and determination. The students navigated their way through the beautiful Suffolk countryside, enjoying the fresh sea air and stunning coastal views along the way. They worked together to set up the tents, cook their meals on camping stoves and use maps, all while supporting and encouraging each other. The expedition was not only a physical challenge with miles upon miles of walking but also an opportunity for them to build their confidence and develop their independence whilst enjoying time with their friends. Many of the students commented on how proud they felt to complete the journey and how much they enjoyed spending time outdoors away from their usual routines. We are incredibly proud of all our Year 9 students for their hard work and positive attitudes throughout the trip. Completing these expeditions is not always easy, especially when the weather is very warm and you don't have your own bed to sleep in. Home comforts can feel a world away when you have been walking all day, your legs are aching and your belly is rumbling. We are already looking forward to seeing many of them continue their Duke of Edinburgh journey by taking on the Silver Award next year!



Carrying heavy backpacks, navigating with maps and lots of walking - it's all part of the adventure!



Pippa gives a double thumbs-up to the Bronze DofE expedition!

"When we first set off on our DofE expedition we spent a long time on the coach since Southwold is about two hours away. When we finally arrived we were amazed - we hadn't expected it to be so sunny and beachy! We then got fish and chips (although some people chose to go to Tesco Express instead) and we walked back along the beach enjoying the views."

"On the second day we set off on our walk and my group was the first to finish. We felt really proud of our timekeeping and teamwork. However, there was a forecast for a thunderstorm that night so we hammered the pegs into our tents extra securely."

"When the storm arrived around midnight the lightning got dangerously close and we had to take shelter in the minibus. We ended up sitting there and watching Moana 2 until about 3 am - definitely an unforgettable experience!"

"I cooked spicy Mexican rice and pasta, although the pasta turned out a bit under-cooked. My favourite parts of the trip were going to the fish and chip shop, walking along the beach and chatting with my group while we were walking. I will definitely be doing Silver as I really enjoyed Bronze. It has enhanced my school life because I gained more confidence, improved my problem-solving skills and got to know my friends even better." - Pippa

The Royal Norfolk Show

Over the course of two fantastic days, students in Years 7-9 had the exciting opportunity to attend the Royal Norfolk Show - one of the UK's largest and most celebrated agricultural events. They explored everything from livestock and machinery to food stalls and live demonstrations. A particular highlight was Pippa meeting the legendary Spudman - a moment that definitely brought a big smile and a photo-op. We're so lucky to be able to take our students on this fun, free day out every year.

"I loved seeing Spudman - I nearly bought his book, I will next time! I also went on some of the rides, which were really fun and the pizza was amazing. It was a great day!" - Dominic

"The show was a fantastic opportunity for students to get up close to over 3,000 animals on display, including majestic Shire horses, sheep, goats, cows and the beautiful Gloucester Old Spot pigs. The variety and quality of livestock on show were truly impressive. It gave our students a real insight into the importance of animal care, farming traditions and the agricultural excellence in our region." - Mr Britton



Pippa with the legendary Spudman of TikTok fame!



From Mocktails to New Friends: My College Experience!

Every year our students are given the valuable opportunity to take part in college or sixth form taster days. This is an important step in helping them explore their future options, gain confidence in a new environment and experience what life might be like after school. These taster days allow students to try out different courses, meet new people and get a real sense of what further education has to offer. By taking part, they can make more informed decisions about their next steps and feel more prepared and excited for the future.



"We recently had the chance to spend a day at college to experience college life. I chose to take part in the Hospitality and Catering course as this is the course I will be taking next year. I enjoyed the whole day even though I got lost at the start but thankfully I still arrived on time for the course to begin.

We started the day by putting on a hair net, washing our hands and finally putting on an apron. The instructor went through step by step how to make the soup and made sure we cleaned all the equipment properly. The tables and stools were also cleaned thoroughly. We also rolled out the bread rolls.

After lunch we got into pairs for activities in the restaurant. I met someone called Lucas who I was partnered with. We started by building a tower out of spaghetti and marshmallows. Both of us got frustrated as it wouldn't stay balanced but we still managed to build a tower. We then had to set up silverware for a table shown in a picture. Lucas got frustrated as he picked up the same knife four times but we eventually succeeded!

For the final activity we were able to make our own mocktails, name them and then try them. I named mine Pink Fusion because it turned pink at the end. My favourite part of the day was meeting someone new. I would like to be a head chef when I am older so this course will be my next step towards my dream job!" - Iliana



Raising Awareness: OddBalls Foundation Visit

During morning assemblies in May, our students had the chance to learn about an important health issue thanks to the *OddBalls Foundation*. Known for its bright designs and straight-talking approach, the foundation visited the school to raise awareness about testicular cancer and why regular self-checks matter.

During the assemblies, the speakers from the *OddBalls Foundation* spoke to the students about the signs and symptoms of testicular cancer, stressing how important regular self-checks and early detection can be. Their talks were honest and engaging whilst they shared personal stories and encouraged the students to break the stigma around men's health, making it clear that speaking up and looking after yourself is nothing to be embarrassed or ashamed about.

The *OddBalls* team also introduced the students to the foundation's *Check Yourself* guides and its University Ambassador Programme, which encourages young people across the country to educate their friends about testicular cancer. The assemblies were informative, serious in their purpose, but also delivered with the same light-hearted spirit that the foundation is known for, making it easier for our students to take in all the important information.

It was a fantastic opportunity for our students to learn about an issue that is often overlooked and the school is proud to have hosted the *OddBalls Foundation* for such an important cause.



SPORT @ SMITHDON

By Mr Tilley

This year has been an incredible one for sport at Smithdon, with students from all year groups getting involved, competing and excelling across a wide range of activities. From football tours abroad to local fixtures, leadership programme, and festivals, our students have demonstrated outstanding commitment, teamwork, and sportsmanship throughout.

Whether representing the school in competitive matches, leading primary school sessions, or developing their coaching skills, they've made us proud with their effort, enthusiasm and achievements and demonstrated what it means to be part of Team Smithdon. Here's a look back at some of the standout moments from a truly winning season. With so much talent and passion on display, we're already looking forward to building on this success next year - bringing even more energy, ambition and achievements to the world of Smithdon sport!

Holland Tour 2025

In 2025, the Smithdons football teams embarked on an unforgettable tour of Holland. During the trip, they faced off against local Dutch teams, gaining valuable experience and building team spirit. A highlight of the tour was a guided visit to the iconic PSV Eindhoven stadium, where the players got a glimpse behind the scenes of a top-tier football club. Staying at Centre Parcs, the team also enjoyed downtime with games of bowling and relaxing sessions in the swimming pool, making it a perfect balance of sport and fun!



Rounders Success 2025

This year, our rounders teams from Years 7 to 10 have had a fantastic season with an impressive turnout of enthusiastic players. They've taken part in numerous fixtures against local schools, consistently demonstrating a positive attitude, strong teamwork and excellent performances. Their commitment and sportsmanship have been a credit to the school - well done to all involved!



Cricket Highlights 2025



Our Year 7 cricket team has had an action-packed season, taking part in numerous fixtures and a fantastic cricket festival. Week by week, the team has shown impressive improvement, with strong attendance at cricket club sessions reflecting their dedication to developing their skills. Their hard work and commitment have truly paid off - they remained unbeaten throughout all their fixtures and the festival, showcasing outstanding batting and bowling performances. A brilliant effort from a talented and determined group!

Annabel and Lily, two of our amazing Year 10 students, brought positivity, kindness and enthusiasm to the Sports Festival. Their friendly attitudes and dedication made a real difference and we are incredibly proud to have had them representing Smithdon.



Primary School Sports Festival

Our Year 10 students showed fantastic initiative and leadership in planning and delivering this year's Primary School Sports Festival. Welcoming over 240 pupils from local primary schools, they organised and ran a wide variety of sports sessions, including handball, archery, golf and many more. The event was a great success, with the Year 10s demonstrating excellent communication, teamwork and enthusiasm throughout. A huge well done to everyone involved for creating such a fun and inspiring day for the younger students!



Outstanding Sports Leaders

Our Sports Leaders have once again done a fantastic job this year, playing a key role in organising and leading a range of events for local primary schools. From cricket and tennis to cross country, football and athletics, they demonstrated excellent leadership, communication and teamwork skills throughout. Each leader represented the school with pride and professionalism - an exceptional group of students who made a real impact on younger pupils and the wider community.



Beyond the Baseline

Our Year 8 students have taken part in the Beyond the Baseline programme, an exciting opportunity to develop their coaching skills through planning and delivering tennis sessions. Throughout the programme, they showed great enthusiasm, leadership and a willingness to learn. The experience culminated in a fantastic finale, where they successfully delivered their own coached sessions to pupils from Hunstanton Primary School. A brilliant achievement and a proud moment for all involved!



Tennis Triumph

Our tennis players recently competed in a fixture against Springwood, with some fantastic tennis on display from both schools. The Smithdon team performed brilliantly, showing skill, focus and determination throughout. Their efforts were rewarded with an outstanding result - losing only two games across all fixtures. A huge well done to the team for such a dominant and impressive performance!



Sibling Sailing Stars

Faith and Toby both sailed brilliantly at the Midlands Topper Championships, with Toby emerging as the overall winner - the first sailor from the Eastern Area ever to achieve this! In an impressive performance, Toby never finished lower than second place across all eight races. Faith also sailed exceptionally well, securing a very credible fourth place against tough competition and even claiming two race wins over her brother. They have also recently both competed at the Eastern Championships, hosted at Snettisham Beach Sailing Club.

The school is incredibly proud of Faith and Toby's achievements and wishes them the best of luck in their next competition!



As we wrap up another fantastic year at Smithdon, we couldn't be prouder of our students' achievements - not just in PE, but across all subjects. Their hard work, dedication and team spirit have truly stood out. We're excited to welcome our new Year 7 students in September and look forward to an even bigger and better year ahead, filled with more competitions, trips, events and clubs for everyone to enjoy. We will look forward to hearing all about your summer adventures when you come back.

Until then, we wish all our students and families a safe, restful and enjoyable summer break.

Attendance Matters

Next year one of the school's key focus areas will be around improving attendance and supporting parents and students to address barriers to attendance. Not only is our attendance figure well below the National and Norfolk figures, we are well aware that for students' wellbeing to be supported, to address concerns and to aid their learning, students need to attend school as frequently as possible.

Please remember to contact us to report absences with as much detail as possible, but also please be aware we may get in touch with you for more information or to offer support to help your child attend. We want to work together to ensure all our students have the best opportunities to grow and to succeed, including building relationships with others and developing confidence.

Some key facts include:

- 15 minutes late every day to school is the same as missing 2 whole weeks of school
- Missing just 2 weeks of school means the maximum attendance for the year is 94.7% (below the expected minimum of 96% and a cause for concern)
- Attendance of 90-94% makes a student ½ as likely as their better attending peers to achieve a Grade 5 in English and Maths
- 90% attendance means 19 days missed - almost 4 whole weeks of learning - 45 hours of lessons missed, 19 hours of socialisation making friendships and memories, and 9.5 hours of health & wellbeing lessons (ASPIRE curriculum)

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

Year 7: Miss Ruskin/Mrs Wheeler

Year 8: Ms Wright

Year 9: Mrs Charlton-Trewick

Year 10: Miss Soper

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

Phone: 01485 536123

Text: 07935 059774

Email: attendance@smithdonhigh.org.uk

Get in touch:

Phone: 01485 534541

Email: office@smithdonhigh.org.uk

Website: www.smithdonhigh.org.uk

**We hope you all have a
restful break - have fun and
stay safe!**

**We look forward to
welcoming you back:**

3 September - Year 7 and 11

4 September - All students