



# BGN Newsletter

## A WORD FROM THE HEADTEACHER

Dear Parents, Guardians and Friends of BGN

As we reach the end of the Autumn Term, I am delighted to reflect on what has been a truly excellent start to the academic year. From September onwards, pupils have shown purpose, joy and positivity, settling quickly into routines and embracing their learning with enthusiasm. Their kindness, maturity and sense of community continue to make BGN a very special place.

This term has seen achievements across all areas of school life. Our sports teams have excelled, with unbeaten teams in both rugby and netball. These successes reflect both our pupils' commitment, and the dedication of our PE staff.

Beyond sport, our Year 7 retreat to Alton Castle strengthened friendships and belonging. Pupils impressed us with a powerful performance in the Shakespeare for Schools Festival, and we launched our new Anti-Bullying Ambassadors, who are being trained by the Pupil Leadership Team and are already promoting respect, compassion and service. Our 'Faith in Action' leaders have also been working hard to further enhance the visibility of our Catholic ethos across the school, ensuring that Christ is placed at the centre of our environment and daily life.

This term we were proud to host our Senior Citizens' Christmas Party and to see our choir sharing music and joy within the local community. A particular highlight was our pupils' contribution to the PFMAC Concert at Oxford Town Hall, where they performed with excellence, and represented BGN beautifully on a prestigious stage.

We were also delighted to celebrate achievement at our Prizegiving Evening, where Father Pascal offered an inspiring reflection on courage, compassion and using our gifts in the service of others—values that sit at the heart of our mission. Our school continues to be shaped by the Gospel values of compassion, respect, truth, service and forgiveness. These are lived daily in the actions of our pupils and staff and remain the foundation of our identity as a Christ-centred community.

I would like to welcome Megan Veres [English], Pauline Ada [Computing], Thandekile Mpofo and Francine Whitehead [Science], Matthew Freeman [Art], Karen Sargant, Lucie Smith-Childs and Nicola Baynes [NOSSP] and Antony Coggins [Assistant Headteacher]. We also say goodbye to Kate McKeever, Administrator for NOSSP and wish her well for the future.

Thank you for your ongoing support throughout this joyful and successful term. I wish you and your families a peaceful Christmas and look forward to all we will achieve together in the New Year.

Sean Masterson - Headteacher

## Diary dates

### Friday 19 December

School closes at 12.30 pm for the Christmas break

### Monday 5 January

INSET day – school closed to all pupils

### Tuesday 6 January

School re-opens at 8.40 am to all pupils [Week B]

### Thursday 5 February

Year 9 Parents' Evening

### Friday 13 February

School closes at 3.20 pm for the half-term holiday

### Monday 23 February

School re-opens at 8.40 am to all pupils [Week B]

### Thursday 26 February

Year 9 Options Evening

### Thursday 19 March

Year 8 Parents' Evening



# Christmas Mass times



## CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES IN OUR PARISHES

### **Parish of St John the Evangelist, Banbury**

Wednesday 24 December

Mass at 5 pm

Carols at 11.30 pm followed by Midnight Mass

Thursday 25 December

Mass at 8.30 am

Mass at 11.30 am

### **Parish of St Joseph the Worker, Banbury**

Wednesday 24 December

Mass at 7 pm

Thursday 25 December

Mass at 10 am

### **Parish of the Immaculate Conception, Bicester**

Wednesday 24 December

Mass at 2 pm and 6 pm, Bicester

Mass at 8 pm, Hethe

11.30 pm Carols followed by Midnight Mass, Bicester

Thursday 25 December

Mass at 9 am and 11 am Bicester

### **Parish of the Sacred Heart and Our Lady, Aston-le-Walls**

*[Please note there are no Masses at Aston-le-Walls this Christmas, but there will be the following Masses at St Augustine's, Daventry]*

Wednesday 24 December

Children's Mass at 5 pm

Carols and Readings at 8.30 pm and Mass at 9 pm

Thursday 25 December

Mass at 10.30 am

*[Please do check your Parish Newsletters for any updates]*

## AWARD WINNERS

### **'Faith in Action'**

This September fifteen BGN students achieved Gold and Silver *'Faith in Action'* Awards and one student achieved a John Paul II Gold Award. The awards were presented to the students by Bishop Timothy Menzies at Don Bosco House in Birmingham. They recognised the great efforts of the students in living out their faith in the school, parish and wider community. Some of the activities our award winners accomplished included being committed altar servers in their parishes, running charity fundraisers, supporting Diocesan events, running retreat days for primary school children and volunteering in charity shops.

Any students interested in taking part in the *'Faith in Action'* Award this year should go to Room C6 on Thursday lunchtimes at 1.45 pm.

[Mrs Harris – Head of RE]



### **Year 10 'Live Simply in Action'**

As part of our CAFOD *'Live Simply'* Award and our study of the Catholic understanding of stewardship, Year 10 students took part in a litter-picking initiative around the school grounds. They showed great enthusiasm and teamwork, living out their faith through care for God's creation. Well done to all involved!

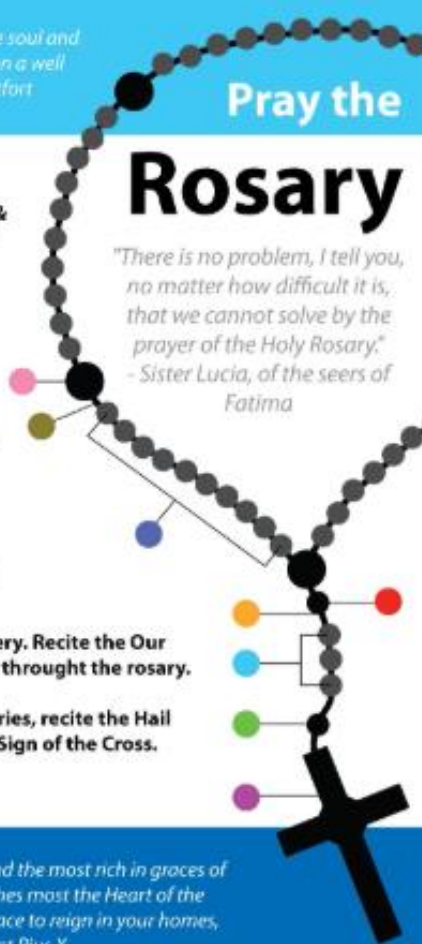
[Mrs Thompson – RE Department]

## ROSARIES FOR THE MONTH OF OCTOBER

October is traditionally a month dedicated to praying the rosary. Students have participated in this during RE lessons throughout the month, asking Our Lady for her intercession at the start of every lesson.

Alongside this, Shilpa, Catherine and Naina in Year 12 went to St John's Primary School to teach their Chaplaincy team how to pray the rosary and how to start a rosary club in school. We really enjoyed bringing our own rosary beads to show the children, and share a story of how we got them. Naina brought in some very special beads that her mum was given on her wedding day by her Uncle; and Shilpa brought some rosary beads with an unusual design, which were gifted to her by a priest who was visiting their family.

[Mrs Harris – Head of RE]

A diagram of a rosary with a black cross at the bottom. Colored dots (pink, green, blue, orange, red, purple, yellow, cyan, magenta) are placed along the beads to indicate the steps of the prayer. Lines connect these dots to a numbered list of instructions on the left.

*"No prayer is more meritorious for the soul and more glorious for Jesus and Mary than a well recited Rosary." - Saint Louis de Montfort*

### Pray the Rosary

*"There is no problem, I tell you, no matter how difficult it is, that we cannot solve by the prayer of the Holy Rosary." - Sister Lucia, of the seers of Fatima*

- 1 **Make the Sign of the Cross & recite the Apostles' Creed.**
- 2 **Recite the Our Father.**
- 3 **Recite three Hail Marys.**
- 4 **Recite the Glory Be.**
- 5 **Announce the first mystery and recite the Our Father.**
- 6 **Recite ten Hail Marys.**
- 7 **Recite the Glory Be and the Fatima Prayer.**
- 8 **Announce the second mystery. Recite the Our Father and repeat the steps through the rosary.**
- 9 **After completing the mysteries, recite the Hail Holy Queen & end with the Sign of the Cross.**

*"The Rosary is the most beautiful and the most rich in graces of all prayers; it is the prayer that touches most the Heart of the Mother of God... and if you wish peace to reign in your homes, recite the family Rosary." - Pope Saint Pius X*

## SHARING THE MESSAGE OF ADVENT WITH ST JOHN'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

This Advent, some of our Sixth Form students who are working on achieving their John Paul II Award, visited the Chaplaincy team at St John's Primary School. The Sixth Formers led a prayer session on the theme of hope.

Students created paper chains of hope, writing on them a hope for themselves, a hope for their families, and a hope for the world. The chaplaincy team are then going to share this prayer session with other members of the St John's community. There were lots of shared hopes for the future and for our world [and a few hopes for visits from Father Christmas!].



## MERRY GRINCH-MAS!

During the Autumn term the 'Faith in Action' group have been living out our Gospel value of service by busily creating Christmas decorations for the Horton Hospital Children's Ward. The ward is being transformed into 'Who-ville' for December, with decorations being made by many local school groups. The 'Faith in Action' team hope that their contributions will brighten the days for children in Banbury who are poorly over the Christmas period.

[Mrs Harris - Head of RE]



## ADVENT RECONCILIATION SERVICES

Advent reconciliation service at BGN was a first for all our Year 7s. On Thursday 4 December and Friday 5 December, individual year groups had the opportunity to take part in a Service of Reconciliation in the Rachel Smith Hall. This is part of our Advent preparation for the arrival of Jesus in the celebration of Christmas.

During the service, students experience a time of silent reflection. There is a display to focus their attention which is lit by candles, and features a piece of artwork created by our very own Miss Veres. There is also a PowerPoint for them to follow, which asks them reflective questions about whether there might be any changes they can make in their lives to ensure they are presenting the best version of themselves. The three elements to consider are how they feel about themselves, their relationship with others, and their relationship with God.

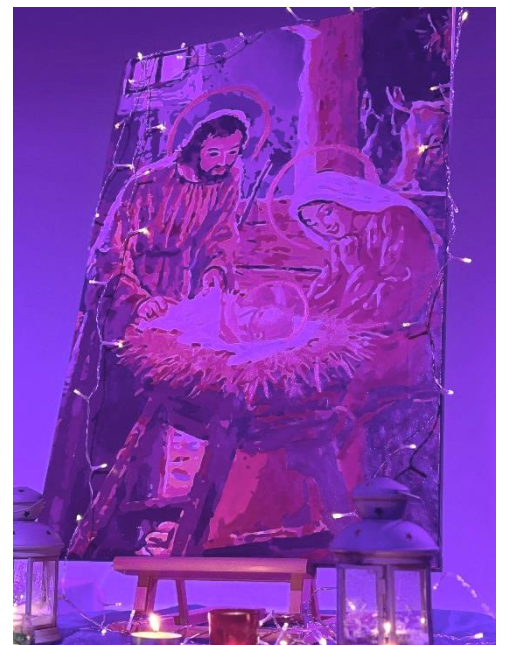
Mrs Mutton, our Chair of Governors, then offered each person an opportunity to speak to one of our priests and, if they were Catholic, they could also receive the sacrament of reconciliation. We are so grateful to have Mrs Mutton supporting the service in this role.

So, what did those Year 7s think? Here's a sample of the things they said:

- Aria 7F *"It was really peaceful and calming. I liked the 'Race Across the World' videos because they showed that even if you don't really know people, they can be so kind, so you should be kind too."*
- Emilia 7F *"I loved the videos especially 'Give into Giving'. It shows that we should always help people."*
- Samuel 7F *"I didn't expect to see a BBC TV programme in a service! This shows you can find really good guidance in the most unexpected places. I also felt that on the PowerPoint, it was easier to answer the questions (examination of conscience) than I had thought."*

A huge thank you to the RE team for setting up the display and to our clergy: Fr Pat, Fr Philip and Fr Des who were all present on the day to offer the sacrament. The demand was so high, that they never really got a break – it must be the equivalent of an Iron Man for Priests! We are so grateful to them for their time and commitment.

[Mrs Mawn – Assistant Headteacher]



## REVERSE ADVENT CALENDAR 2025



Thank you so much for responding to our Reverse Advent Calendar appeal. It is a wonderful opportunity for us to give back to our local community under the banner of Fr Hudson's Caritas.

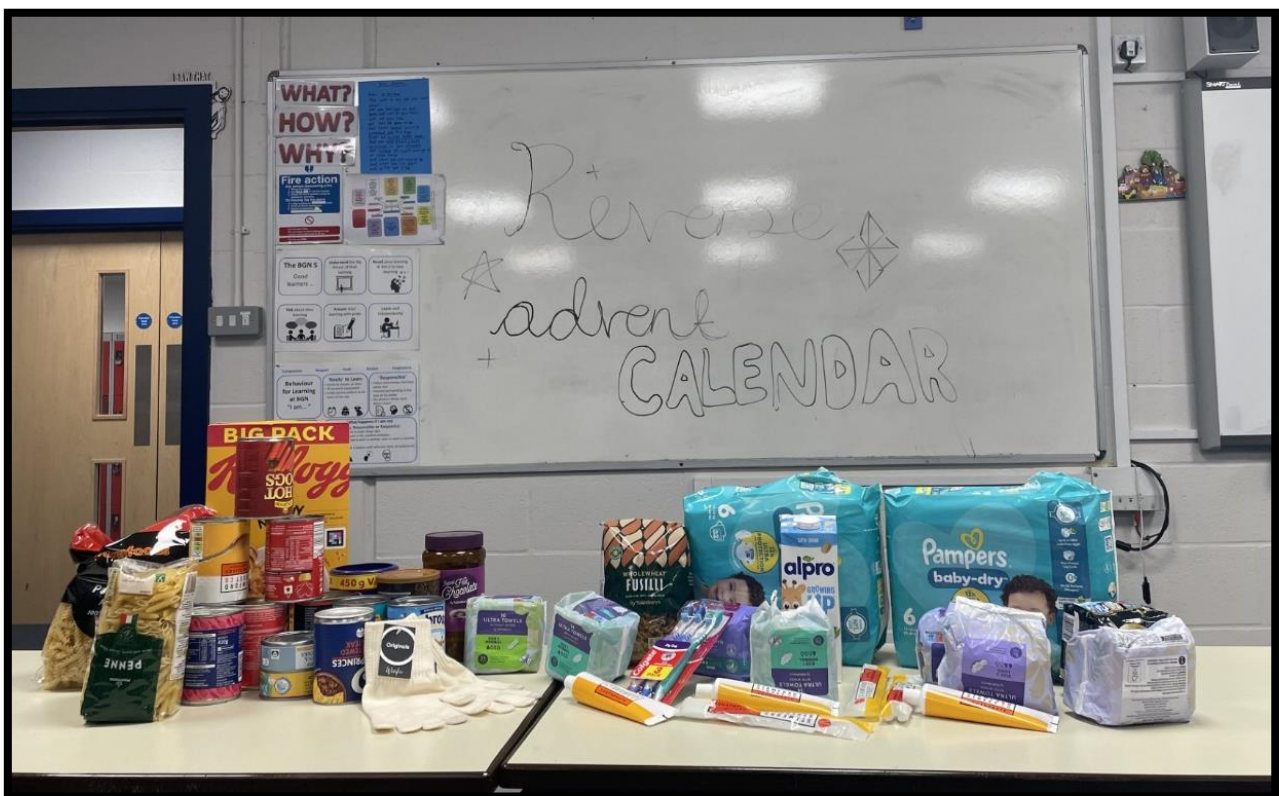
Please read the report below from 10 Edith, which details their contributions to the calendar.

Every year we have the challenge of bringing something in to go towards our Reverse Advent Calendar, rather than always thinking about receiving things during Advent. We really enjoy contributing to the Reverse Advent Calendar because we know that the items we have brought in are going directly to people who need them.

This year our form brought in over 40 items! We had a big focus on personal hygiene and brought in lots of toothbrushes, toothpaste and sanitary products. It made us think about the human dignity of every person.



*[Form 10 Edith Stein]*



# BGN choir



**C**hristmas cheer spread all over the local community

**H**omes – care homes visited

**O**ut and about singing, wherever there is demand

**I**n supermarkets to fundraise for Lourdes

**R**ejoicing in spreading the message of Jesus' birth



We are hugely grateful for the efforts put in by Miss Brogden and her BGN Choir. They started off the academic year by taking part in the PFMAC Concert in Oxford and they are finishing the calendar year by singing of Christmas at every opportunity!

They have put in hours of rehearsal time to ensure they are singing at their very best, which culminated in the Carol Service on Tuesday 16 December. Every time they sing, they just get better and better.

We thank Miss Brogden for the huge effort she has put into moulding this choir into the place of joy that it is, and we look forward to seeing what 2026 has in store for them.

Thank you also to our parents for all the lifts and support they give to the wonderful choir. They will all be ready for a well-deserved rest on Friday 19 December.

*[Mrs Mawn – Assistant Headteacher]*



# A season of togetherness



## GIFTS AND LIFTS MAKE THIS ONE WORK + AN AMAZING SHIFT BY THE CATERING TEAM!

We were absolutely delighted to welcome our Senior Citizens to BGN to enjoy a spectacular Christmas lunch in our school hall on Wednesday 3 December.

All our invited guests really enjoyed their afternoon. They appreciated the welcome they received from our students as they arrived, and the entertainment provided by our BGN choir. Tucking into their delicious dinner, there was a lovely atmosphere as they chatted and laughed with each other.

What an amazing shift by our Catering team who maintained their usual dinner service, alongside 64 restaurant standard three-course Christmas dinners – phenomenal!

Santa made an appearance too and handed out the individualised Christmas cards created by BGN students and all those gifts donated by the BGN community. His journey was quite difficult, though, as his Snowman had had a meltdown!

If you know of anyone who you feel may appreciate an invitation to this Christmas lunch, please contact the school office.

Thank you for all your support in making this a success. We have received some lovely cards of appreciation in school from our guests.

*[Mrs Mawn – Assistant Headteacher]*



Faith in action

Faith in action



Faith in action



Faith in action



## YEAR 7 STUDENTS 'BARD' FROM SHAKESPEARE COUNTRY

At the end of the last academic year the English Department had the pleasure of taking the Year 7s to Stratford-upon-Avon to visit Shakespeare's birthplace. It was a hugely rewarding and interesting day despite the hot weather! Julia and Marie from Form 8 Assisi have written about their experiences:

### Shakespeare's Old House

When we first arrived, we went to Shakespeare's old house in Stratford. We saw Shakespeare's father's workshop where he worked with leather. We saw how he made gloves and purses and sold them from his window. This is where the phrase '*window shopping*' comes from! In the only bedroom all three brothers had to share one bed! They also had one bathtub in which they had to bathe together!



### Shakespeare's New House

Shakespeare's New House was much bigger. When we walked in, there were a lot of things for us to interact with: a timeline, audio equipment, drawers to open, clothes to feel, pictures to draw and even some smells to experience. We played some mix-and-match games, examined some of the clothes people wore at that time, and then wrote down some of our favourite things that we had seen.



### Shakespeare's Garden

The garden was very large and beautiful. It had lots of gorgeous flowers and some amazing statues. We were lucky to be able to sit on the grass (as it was an amazingly hot day!), eat our lunch and then play some games.

### Anne Hathaway's House

Anne's cottage (she was Shakespeare's wife) was bigger than I thought it would be. It looked amazing: old, with a beautiful thatched roof, and really large inside. We looked at the laundry room, a pantry, a storage room and their bedroom. The beds were very small because adults then all slept sitting up - they thought that if they lay down the devil would think they were dead and then take their souls! Downstairs was an amazing oven (which looked a lot like a pizza oven), This had bread inside and was very interesting to look at.



We very much enjoyed the trip and would recommend it.

*[Julia and Maria – now Year 8 students]*

## EUROPEAN DAY OF LANGUAGES 2025

BGN has celebrated 'European Day of Languages' [EDoL] since 2022 and Friday 26 September this year was no exception. Every year we aim to make it better than the one before.

For those of you that do not know, 'European Day of Languages' is a day where we celebrate the many languages spoken around the world. It is about embracing different cultures, and it aims to encourage us to explore other languages than our own.

So what was happening around school?

Leading up to the day, Sixth Formers Elizabeth, Lilia, Camilla and Taqwa went and gave assemblies to KS3 students, telling them a little bit about 'European Day of Languages' and what we would be doing to celebrate it at BGN.

This year there were a range of activities happening around school including a poster competition for Years 7, 8 and 9. This was our second year holding this competition, having held it for Year 7s only last year. However, because the students seemed to really enjoy it, this year we decided to open it up to the rest of Key Stage 3. The challenge was to create a piece of art which reflected this year's theme: '*Languages open hearts and minds*'. The winners were Jayden, Julia, Sara and Krupa, all in Form 8 Assisi, and Carly Mae in Form 8 Devereux. However, we must give a special mention to Form 8 Calcutta who submitted over 15 posters! We hope to make this competition a tradition because it is engaging and encourages the students to get involved in school activities. Another exciting activity which took place was a quiz created by Lilia in Year 13. The students completed the quiz during form time on Friday morning. It was each student for themselves, all racing against each other to try and win the prize.



We also filmed a video whereby we went around school asking some of the teachers and Sixth Form questions, such as "How has knowing another language helped you in your career or personal life?" and "What advice would you give to someone who wants to learn a language?". We received a variety of answers: some were funny stories about past experiences; others were friendly pieces of advice. Some members of staff even dressed up for the day. Overall, we had a fun and exciting time!

[Taqwa – Year 12 student]

## YEAR 8 SPANISH STUDENTS CELEBRATE 'EL DIA DE LOS MUERTOS' WITH COCO SCREENING

This term, our Year 8 Spanish pupils have been exploring the rich traditions and cultural celebrations of the Spanish-speaking world.

One of the highlights of their learning has been our lesson on 'El Día de los Muertos' — the Day of the Dead — an annual Mexican celebration that honours loved ones who have passed away. Pupils learned about colourful ofrendas, marigold petals, sugar skulls and the importance of remembering family ancestors.

To bring this tradition to life, the classes enjoyed a special screening of Disney Pixar's Coco, a film that beautifully captures the spirit of the Day of the Dead. Watching the movie allowed our students to see many of the customs we had studied portrayed in a vibrant, visually stunning way: from the glowing marigold bridge to the lively scenes in the Land of the Dead, the film provided an engaging and meaningful extension of their classroom work.

Pupils were encouraged to make connections between what they saw in the film and the cultural elements we discussed. Many commented on how the movie helped them to understand the emotional significance of the celebration, especially the themes of family, memory and tradition. Others noted how hearing Spanish phrases in context boosted their confidence in the language. The highlight of the screening was when all the pupils joined Miguel and Hector, the two main characters of the movie, in singing Un poco loco, the main track of the movie.

Overall, the Coco screening was a wonderful opportunity for Year 8 to deepen their cultural understanding, while enjoying a story that is both moving and memorable. We look forward to building on this experience as we continue our journey through the Spanish-speaking world.

*[Señora Saccaro – MFL Teacher]*



## YEAR 12 SHINE FOR BGN AT OXFORD UNIVERSITY EVENT



Year 12 Performing Arts students Eleanor, Eloise and Marcel were selected by the St John's Inspire Programme to attend 'Kafka' day at St John's College, Oxford. They participated in academic taster sessions on Drama, Language, and Literature. They also took part in College tours and feedback/breakout sessions and even got a chance to work with playwright Ed Harris. The application process was highly competitive – so well done to them all!



## SOMETHING IS ROTTEN IN THE STATE OF DENMARK – BUT LUCKILY NOT THE ACTING!



On Wednesday 15 October Drama students and performers from Years 8-12 took part in a Shakespeare workshop held in the Rachel Smith Hall. The workshop was led by Emelia Hutchinson, a professional Director and Facilitator from the Shakespeare for Schools Festival.



The students explored physical theatre, acting Shakespeare's language and making an impact on stage. They were all brilliant and Emelia left saying how impressed she was! They have lots of ideas now for rehearsal and are working hard to produce a wonderful piece of theatre.



The students involved were Aleksander, Amelia, Ancelin, Arabella, Clara, Darcy, Domonkos, Eleanor, Eliana, Ella, Eloise, Elsie-Lou, Finley, Georgina, Jasmine, Jasper, Joel, Luchia, Macie, Marcel, Marcia, Michael, Millie, Millie, Nathalie, Reuben, Savanna and Sienna.

*[Mrs Stewart – Head of Drama]*

## “TO BE OR NOT TO BE”



The cast of Hamlet took to the stage at the Cornerstone Arts Centre on 20 November to perform Hamlet. Travelling by coach to the venue they were nervous and excited - many friends and family came along to see the cast in action and support them, including Mr Masterson, who came backstage after their performance to let them know they “were incredible!” A huge thank you to Miss Bisson, Miss Veres and Miss Brogden who supported the trip.



## “NOT THROWING AWAY THEIR SHOT!”



On 25 November Sixth Formers from Years 12 and 13 travelled to London's West End for an unforgettable night to watch Hamilton at The Victoria Palace Theatre. There was much excitement on the train journey there, but they were left speechless by the end of “such an amazing show”. A big thank you to Mrs O'Donnell and Mrs Mason, who accompanied us on the trip.



## “CHRISTMAS COMES EARLY FOR YEAR 12 PERFORMING ARTS”

The Year 12 BTEC Performing Arts students travelled to the Lucky Chance, in Frome, Somerset to see Emma Rice's new production entitled: ‘A Child's Christmas in Wales’. They are studying this internationally renowned practitioner for their NEA and this was a unique opportunity to see her work live. This beautiful piece of theatre explored memory, family and childhood, pushing creativity and storytelling in inspired ways. It definitely got us all in a festive mood!



[Mrs Stewart – Head of Drama]

## ROCK AND ROLL CHRISTMAS!



The BGN Christmas show went off with a festive 'bang' on 11 December.

We joined Rock and Roll angels, Roxy and Spike, on a journey to find the true meaning of Christmas. Along the way we met, Santa, Rudolph, Frosty the Snowman, some Angel Cheerleaders and some very stressed Elves... BUT ultimately the cast shared the message that this special season is all about God's love with a beautiful enactment of the Nativity.

Happy Christmas everyone!

*[Mrs Stewart – Head of Drama]*



## PHOTOGRAPHY CHALLENGE 1 'CHOMP' – A FEAST FOR THE EYES

This term, KS3 students were invited to take part in the first Photography Challenge of the year, themed '*Chomp*'. The brief was simple, yet creative: capture the beauty and artistry of food through photography. From vibrant fruits to tempting treats, students explored how lighting, composition and perspective can transform everyday meals into works of art.

The challenge was set as official homework for all KS3 students, encouraging creativity and technical skill, and the response was fantastic with students demonstrating originality and flair, proving that Food Photography is as much about storytelling as it is about aesthetics.

And the winners were...



**Year 7 winner and overall KS3 winner: Alice**

Alice's image was a standout for its vibrant colour and crisp detail. The composition drew the eye straight to the subject, and the lighting made the food look fresh and appetising.



**Year 7 highly commended: Oscar**

Oscar impressed with a well-balanced shot that combined strong contrast and appealing textures. His use of depth created a sense of dimension, making the food pop against the background.



**Year 8 winner: Jackson**

Jackson's photo captured texture beautifully, using close-up framing to highlight intricate details. The choice of angle and lighting gave the image a professional finish, making it visually striking.



**Year 8 highly commended: Benjamin**

Benjamin's entry showcased excellent use of colour and composition. The arrangement of elements felt deliberate and artistic, creating a sense of harmony that is key in food photography.

## PHOTOGRAPHY CHALLENGE 1 'CHOMP' – A FEAST FOR THE EYES



### Year 9 winner: Caeden

Caeden demonstrated creativity in styling and perspective, turning a simple dish into a bold, eye-catching image. His photo showed confidence in experimenting with angles, editing and framing.



### Year 9 highly commended: Charlie

Charlie's entry highlighted versatility, with a playful composition that added personality to the shot. It showed how food photography can be fun as well as aesthetically pleasing.

### Looking ahead: Photography Challenge 2 – 'Textures in Nature'

The next Photography Challenge is already underway! This time, the theme is 'Textures in Nature', inviting students to capture the intricate details of the natural world: think bark, leaves, stones, and more. KS3 students must submit 1–3 original digital images on the VLE by Friday, 19 December 2025, as part of their compulsory homework. The winners will be announced in January.

### Top Tips for Photography Challenge 2

Lighting is key:

Use natural light whenever possible to make your subject look vibrant and real.

Focus on detail:

Get close to your subject to highlight texture and patterns.

Think about composition:

Arrange elements thoughtfully—sometimes simplicity is best.

Experiment with angles:

A unique perspective can turn an ordinary shot into something extraordinary.

Avoid clutter:

Keep backgrounds clean so the subject stands out.

NB:

If iPhone users are struggling to upload their images, make sure they change their file settings before they take the photo from HEIC (High Efficiency) to JPEG (Most Compatible).

[Miss Williams – Head of Art]

## MEDICAL AND ALLIED HEALTH SOCIETY IN ITS THIRD YEAR!

It is lovely to welcome our budding scientists on Thursday lunchtime for a different presentation on Health every week.

Students comment that:-

- It feels so amazing to be part of the school's Medical Society, where I have listened to various presentations, and have done some too, learning more about health sciences and diseases.
- Med Society has helped me to develop my presentation skills and helped me learn more about my subjects. Presenting about HeLa Cells and Photodynamic Therapy allowed me to explore biology and chemistry beyond the A Level spec and has helped me decide what I want to study at university.
- Med Soc has helped to develop my confidence and presentation skills, along with my public speaking. It has helped me to learn a lot about what other people are interested in and how it motivates them throughout their A Levels.
- Med Society is a very useful and helpful community of people, where we present and listen to others about STEM topics that they are passionate about. I would recommend this to anyone and everyone even if you don't want to present. Everyone is welcome.
- I find Med Society very helpful and interesting. I also did a presentation on Arrhythmia, which was useful to write on my personal statement.
- Presenting on topics related to what I want to take at university, like Parkinson's disease, helped me understand more about the course through research. I learn new things when my friends present on different topics that they like. Definitely worth attending!
- Med Society has been a wonderful experience, learning about all aspects of the medical world being presented by so many aspirational STEM students.
- Med Society has allowed me to develop my knowledge of many diseases and procedures in fields such as dentistry, medicine and psychology. It has also helped me nurture my confidence and presentation skills; qualities which will heavily benefit my future.
- The Med Society has helped ease my nerves when talking/giving a presentation to a larger group of people. It has also encouraged me to research topics that are related to the course I want to do at university. It has also allowed me to learn more about different diseases and medical practices.
- Joining Med Society gave me an opportunity to gain confidence speaking in front of a crowd whilst talking about a topic I really enjoy – dentistry!

*[Mrs Ellul – Science Department]*



# Prizegiving



## RISING FROM THE EMBERS...

There were still embers glowing in the hearth, but they hadn't been lit for some time! It is, however, impossible to keep a good thing suppressed. So, on a choir trip to Bournemouth, a tiny flame began to flicker as three members of staff discussed the possibility and practicalities of adding the essentials of heat, fuel and oxygen to enable something to rise from those embers.

Returning to school in September, the flame started to become stronger and by Thursday 23 October 2025 it was powerfully ablaze. Prizegiving, which had lain dormant for five years, was reignited back to life. Our BGN choir opened the event and, one by one, the prizes were awarded. The PLT were our compères for the evening and had the privilege of introducing Fr Paschal from the Brentwood Diocese as our Guest Speaker.

Awards were presented for Language Leaders and achievements in academic subjects. In the second part of the evening, cups were then presented which had been donated to BGN by people long associated with the school. There is a huge range of awards, from exemplary behaviour, to academic achievement, to service to Catholic Life.

It was a joyful celebration and a real privilege to honour those students who are recognised for the difference they make to the world through the life they live out at BGN.

Fr Paschal made it very clear that their real mission is to carry that flame out into the world, into their lives when they leave BGN, and to keep the fire of hope burning.



*[Mrs Mawn – Assistant Headteacher]*



## SENIOR MATHS CHALLENGE

On 9 October we had nearly 80 Year 11, 12 and 13 students who competed in the Senior Maths Challenge. Everyone did really well and it was brilliant to see the problem-solving taking place. Well done to all who took part, particularly given that most students only had an hour for a 90-minute competition.

Special congratulations go to the certificate winners who were as follows:-

### Gold Certificate

Josemari Year 13 [Best in year and best in school]

Josemari also qualified for the follow-on competition and competed in this on 19 November – massive congratulations to every student; we are so impressed.

### Silver Certificate

Kristen Year 13

David Year 12 [Best in year]

Kamil Year 12

Benedek Year 11 [Best in year]

Maia Year 11

[Mr Pike – Maths Department]

### Bronze Certificate

Julia Year 13

Darragh Year 13

Nathan Year 13

Luke Year 13

Ailine Year 13

Jeriah Year 12

Lily B Year 12

Jeremy Year 12

Lily C Year 12

Tatenda Year 12

Jacinta Year 12

Leika Year 12

Isla Year 12

Matteo Year 11

Chris Year 11

Evin Year 11

Nicholas Year 11

Marcello Year 11

Iliana Year 11

Ishit Year 11

Dominik Year 11



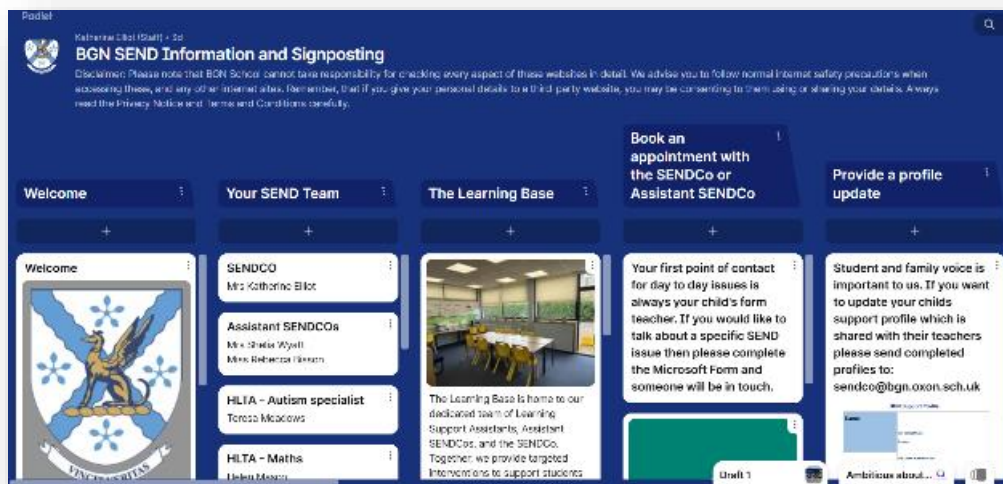
## A WARM WELCOME FROM THE NEW SENDCo AT BGN

Dear Parents and Guardians

If I haven't yet had the pleasure of meeting you, I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce myself as the new SENDCo at BGN School. It has been wonderful getting to know many of you already and spending time with our fantastic students.

Change and improvement are well underway within our SEND Department, and I'm excited to share some of the developments we've introduced to enhance our support for students. Our Learning Base has been refreshed to include a dedicated Emotional Literacy Space, a Take 10 Regulation Area to support self-regulation and The Nest—a calm, shielded social space where students can connect and feel secure. We have also appointed Miss Bisson as our Assistant SENDCo, who will share the role alongside Mrs Shelia Wyatt.

To help strengthen communication, I have developed a SEND Padlet, which provides information about our department, useful resources, and opportunities to book appointments or update support profiles.



Link: <https://padlet.com/kelliott17/bgn-send-information-and-signposting-rj10a89itewc58t8>

We are fortunate to have a wonderful team of dedicated Learning Support Assistants who have built strong, positive relationships with so many of our students. Together, we are committed to working in partnership with families to ensure that every student in our care feels supported and able to thrive.

We are excited about the journey ahead as we continue to improve our provision and strengthen inclusion across the school. Your feedback and suggestions are always welcome, and I look forward to meeting those of you I haven't yet met.

Warm regards  
Katherine Elliot  
SENDCo

## RUGBY SUCCESS ACROSS THE SCHOOL



This year has been an outstanding one for rugby at our school, with both the Year 7 and Year 9 teams finishing their seasons unbeaten. Training sessions were buzzing every week, with more than 40 students regularly attending across all year groups.

### Year 7 Rugby – ‘A History-Making Squad’

Our Year 7s showed fantastic commitment, turning up to training in huge numbers and bringing tremendous energy to every session. For the first time, we also had girls representing our Year 7 rugby team; a brilliant step forward for rugby at our school. On the pitch, the squad produced an exceptional season. They secured wins against Magdalen College, The Bicester School and Gosford, battling to a hard-fought draw in a physical, tense match against Warriner. Amari finished as our top try scorer.

Rory led the team superbly as captain, showing maturity and leadership throughout. It has been a hugely successful year, with several players even choosing to join the Banbury Rugby Club to continue developing their skills. A fantastic achievement for all involved.

### Year 9 Rugby – Dominant From Start to Finish

The Year 9 team were a force to be reckoned with, overcoming every school they faced with confidence and determination. Their high performance means they have now been entered into the prestigious Sibford 7s Tournament in March, where they will finally get the challenging competition they deserve. Well done to everyone involved.





Finally, congratulations to each and every one of our students who have trained, played and represented our school with pride this year. Your hard work, enthusiasm and teamwork have made this rugby season one of our most successful yet.

[Mr Mawle – Head of PE]



## PERFECT RECORD, PERFECT TEAM!

The Year 10 girls' netball team has had an amazing run of success this netball season. The team has gone undefeated with some great wins including:-

-  23 - 7 against The Warriner School
-  19 - 8 against North Oxfordshire Academy
-  18- 3 against Magdalen College School
-  19 -10 against The Bicester School

It has been a brilliant achievement for our students and I would like to congratulate the Year 10 girls for their hard work, commitment and unbeaten status. Long may it continue.

*[Mrs Thornton – PE Department]*



## FUNDRAISING FOR SSNAP



At BGN, we believe that it is not words but actions that truly matter, and this is why Mr Masterson is taking on a challenge to help one of the most vulnerable groups in the community.

Mr Masterson will be lacing up his running shoes once again as he embarks on a series of running challenges in support of SSNAP, the charity that helps sick newborns, their parents, and those who care for them, to flourish in times of hardship.

This term, Mr Masterson has already taken on the Oxford Half Marathon and the Great South Run, proudly representing BGN's commitment to raising awareness and much-needed funds for SSNAP, who are located at the John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford.

Next term, Mr Long will join Mr Masterson as they take on the Bath Half Marathon together, before Mr Masterson completes his challenge series with the Brighton Marathon in April.

If you would like to support Mr Masterson's runs and contribute to the charity, donations can be made via his fundraising page:

[justgiving.com/page/sean-masterson-2](https://justgiving.com/page/sean-masterson-2)

Thank you for your support.



**SSNAP**

Support for the sick newborn and their parents

## ALTON CASTLE INSPIRES CONNECTION AND REFLECTION

Father Chris and the Alton Castle Team welcomed 85 of us into their home, to enjoy a fun-filled, two-night retreat and adventure.

During our time there, we followed their Pilgrims of Hope Retreat programme for 2025 and took time out to reflect and pray for ourselves, our community, and the wider world. We celebrated mass together on the Thursday evening followed by 'Biblical Bingo' and a disco.

The weather was kind to us (I have never known it so warm!), and we enjoyed activities such as trekking in the beautiful Staffordshire countryside, mountain biking, low ropes (great for team building) and archery. The children were able to bond with each other in small groups, allowing new friendships to be formed.

The pupils enjoyed eating homecooked food together in the great dining room. It reminded them all of Harry Potter. They also learned all about the history of the castle.

A massive thank you to Miss Carter, Mrs Thornton, Mrs Morgan, Miss Veres, Mr Williams and Mr Clarke for giving up their time caring for the pupils so well and making the trip a great success.



### DO YOU CHECK YOUR CHILD'S ELECTRONIC DEVICES?

Please could I ask that you monitor your child's electronic devices regularly, paying particular attention to social media use. Some children are accessing inappropriate material and sending very unkind messages via WhatsApp, SnapChat, TikTok, Instagram, Facebook etc.

May I also remind you that children are not legally allowed on such Apps until the age of 13 years.

## THE STORY SO FAR IN YEAR 7

I cannot believe Year 7 have already completed two terms of their BGN journey. The time has flown by, and they should all be proud of themselves. Transition from primary to secondary school is never easy but together, they have done their best and made me very proud.

Our Welcome Mass back in September was beautiful. So many pupils volunteered to read and take part in the offertory, despite only having been here such a short time. Careful thought was given to their individual dreams and aspirations for the future, and every pupil designed a balloon with these on. They now have pride of place in their tutor rooms.

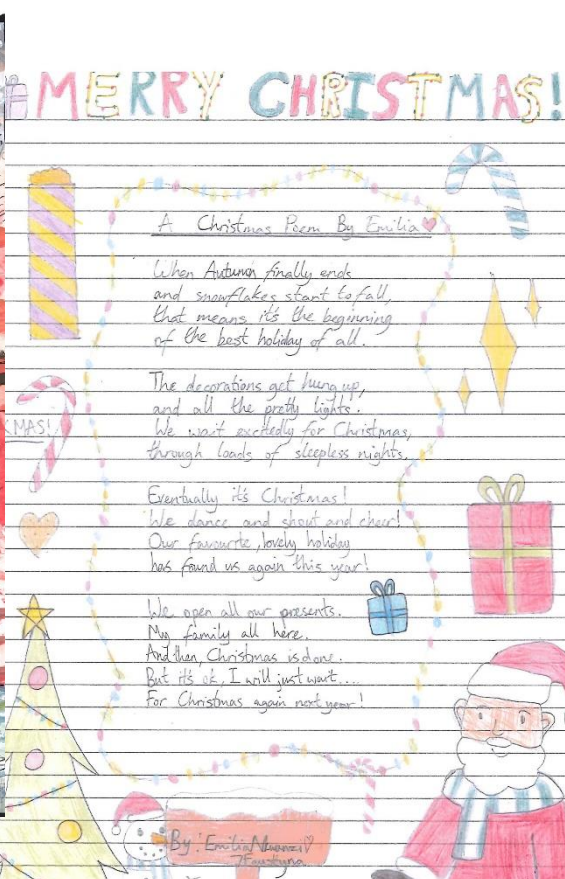
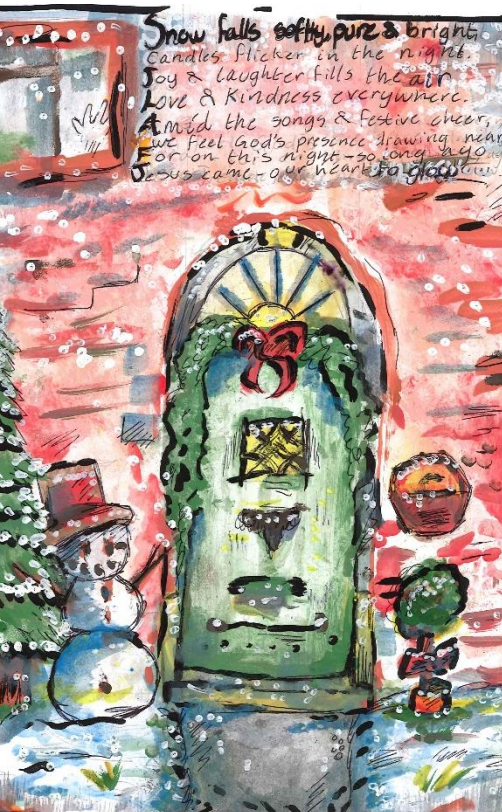
Thank you to all the families who attended our Welcome Disco, hosted by the PTFA. It was an evening of fun on the dance floor and allowed you all to mingle and meet each other. Please look out for other PTFA events coming up next year. It is a great way to meet other parents, and feel involved and part of our school.

Year 7 were extremely respectful throughout their first Service of Reconciliation in the Rachel Smith Hall. It was a beautiful candlelight setting with a thought-provoking presentation that kept the pupils engaged and focussed. It was a wonderful beginning to the season of Advent.

I am encouraging our Year 7s to get involved in as many clubs as possible, to try new activities or improve their skills. The more the pupils get involved in extra-curricular activities the better it is for their sense of belonging, meeting like-minded people and for their mental health. I hope our students will make 2026 the year for taking up a new club – you never know where it will take you!

I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and look forward to working with you in 2026.

## YEAR 7 CHRISTMAS POEM AND STORY COMPETITION



Thank you to everyone who entered our competition. It was a delight looking through all your entries with the Year 7 team. So many wonderful reads and beautiful artwork; it made us feel very festive and we really appreciate the time and effort everyone put into this.

The poem winners were: Lilla and Emilia.

The story winners were Lucy and Frederick.

[Mrs Phillips – Head of Year 7]

# Attendance DOES matter



We are incredibly proud to share that BGN has been recognised with an FFT National School Attendance Award for the 2024/5 academic year; the second year running.

This outstanding achievement reflects the unwavering commitment of our students, staff and parents in making every school day count. Attendance is a cornerstone of educational success, and these awards highlight the collective effort of our entire school community.

## The Award

We are in the top 25% of all FFT secondary schools in England. This award demonstrates our exceptional standards in attendance compared to all secondary schools nationwide, reaffirming our commitment to high-quality education for all our students.

## Why Attendance Matters

Good attendance is fundamental to success in school and beyond. At BGN we emphasise the importance of every day, on time, knowing that

regular attendance leads to better learning outcomes, stronger social connections, and the development of valuable life skills.

## A Community Effort

These awards are not just a reflection of numbers; they are a testament to the resilience and dedication of our entire school community. From the hard work of our students to the encouragement of parents, and the dedication of our staff, everyone has played a vital role in achieving this milestone.

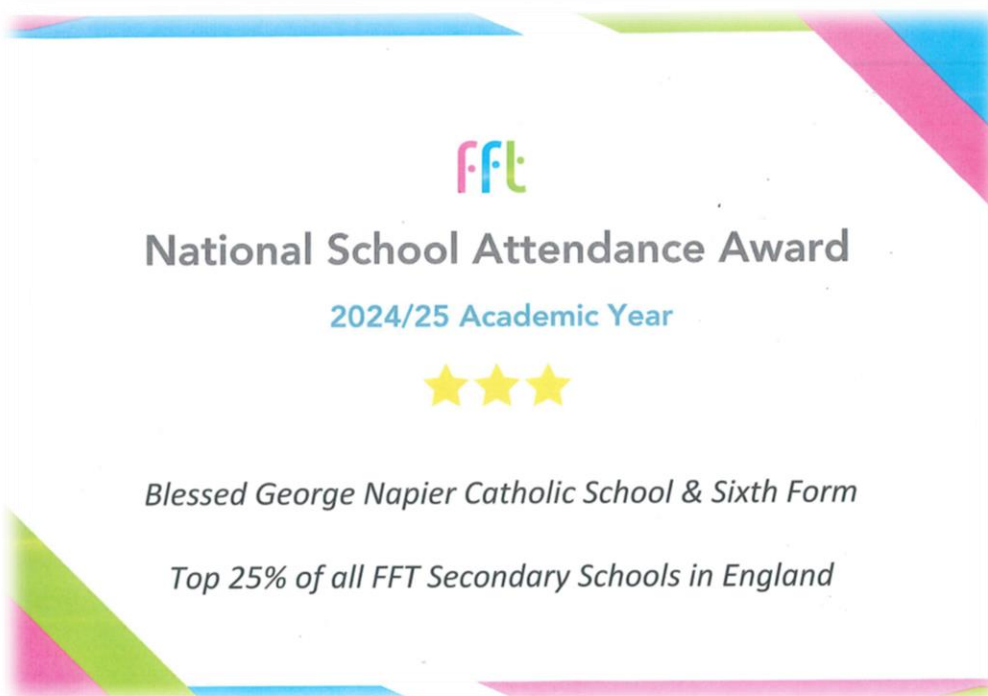
## A Word of Thanks

We want to extend our deepest gratitude to everyone who has contributed to this success. Together, we have shown what can be achieved with hard work, determination, and a shared commitment to excellence.

## Continuing the Journey

While these awards are a moment of celebration, they also inspire us to continue striving for even greater heights. At BGN we are determined to build on this success and ensure every student has the opportunity to thrive.

[Mrs Thornton—Attendance Officer]



*Evidence shows that every day of school missed can affect a pupil's chances of achieving good GCSEs, which has a lasting effect on their life chances*

# Help raise funds for BGN



## easyfundraising

Did you know that whenever you buy anything online – from your weekly shop to your annual holiday – you could be raising free donations for Blessed George Napier School with *easyfundraising*? There are over 8,000 retailers onboard ready to donate including Amazon, eBay, Argos, John Lewis & Partners, Compare the Market, ASOS, Booking.com, Sainsbury's, Debenhams, Next, Moonpig, Just Eat and M&S, to name but a few. Even better, it will not cost you a penny extra to help us raise funds.

All you need to do is follow these simple steps:-

1. Go to [BGN cause page](#) or scan the QR code below to join for free.
2. Every time you shop online, go to easyfundraising first to find the site you want and start shopping, or download the 'Donation Reminder' tool.
3. After you have checked out, the retailer will donate to Blessed George Napier School, at no extra cost to you.

There are no catches or hidden charges, and Blessed George Napier School will be really grateful for your donations.

Thank you so much for your anticipated help and happy online shopping!



## New outdoor furniture

The Friends of BGN have kindly donated £4,885 to the school so that we could purchase some new outdoor furniture for our pupils. This will enhance our external areas providing more space for pupils to enjoy. The tables and benches are comfortable and weather resistant. This is a fantastic use of funds received from Friends of BGN and we are really grateful to everyone who supports our events and helping to raise money for the school. We would encourage everyone to continue to support our fundraising events.



## CHRISTMAS CHOCOLATE BINGO BONANZA

Another wonderful evening was enjoyed by the Friends of BGN on Friday 28 November when staff and families of Blessed George Napier filled the hall to play Bingo. A massive £500 was raised! Friends of BGN would like to thank staff, parents and students for attending our biannual family bingo.

We appreciate the fabulous donation of prizes, which were made available on the night from both staff and parents. These included donations from Muffin Break, James Boswell's Hairdressers, Cake Box, Blenheim Palace, Natural Beauty by AW, Fairytale Farm, JB & Co Hairdressers, Also Known As, The Wine Vaults, Revival MK2, The Herb Centre and our very own Hannah Soiza who donated a huge teddy bear which was won by an extremely happy Kaycie in Year 8.

We are so grateful for all the hard work that went on behind the scenes in order to make this such a wonderful, inclusive and family-friendly event. We look forward to seeing many more of you at the next one.



**SAVE THE DATE:**

## CEILIDH AT BGN

**FRIDAY 27<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2026**

**19:30 - 22:00**

**IN AID OF LOURDES & FRIENDS OF BGN**

**MORE DETAILS TO FOLLOW AFTER CHRISTMAS**

Image by Janet McCrorie available at [www.allartdirect.co.uk](http://www.allartdirect.co.uk)

# BGN 200 Club

Why not join our 200 Club? For just **£5** a month you have the opportunity of winning **£100** every month whilst donating to a very worthy cause – your child's school.

We currently have spare numbers available, so if you are interested or require any more information, please contact our 200 Club Administrator at [finance@bgn.oxon.sch.uk](mailto:finance@bgn.oxon.sch.uk).

September's winning number is **157**

October's winning number is **74**

November's winning number is **3**

# Sport leadership



## SCHOOL GAMES MARK



We are delighted to announce that we, BGN School, have achieved the School Games Gold Level Mark Award for the 2024/25 academic year. This is the third year in a row we have achieved gold.

The School Games Mark is a Government-led award scheme launched in 2012, facilitated by the Youth Sport Trust, to reward schools for their commitment to the development of competition across their school and into the community, and we are delighted to have been recognised for our success.

As part of our application, we were asked to fulfil criteria in the areas of participation, competition, workforce and clubs. We also have a thriving leadership programme in which our students support the delivery of various competitions and festivals for The BGN Cluster of Primary Schools throughout the year.

Mr Mawle, Head of PE commented: *"We are proud to have been awarded the School Games Gold Mark for the third consecutive year. This achievement reflects the determination, enthusiasm and sporting excellence of our students, who embrace every opportunity to take part and enjoy their sport. As a Catholic school, we are committed to nurturing both character and talent, and this recognition highlights the dedication of our staff and pupils in making sport an integral and joyful part of school life."*



Year 7 Active Leaders



T1 Rugby

[Mr Mawn – School Sports Co-ordinator]



BGN Student Leaders with Caity Mattison



T1 Rugby Festival at Banbury RFC



Year 7s supporting Year 1 Multi-skills

# Sport leadership



## OUR REMARKABLE STUDENT LEADERS

64 Student Leaders have been involved in primary school festivals and competitions during the Autumn term. BGN hosted Key Stage 2 girls' and boys' football, Years 5/6 leadership training and Year 1 multi-skills.

On Thursday 9 October, 90 girls and 13 teams from four primary schools took part in The BGN Cluster Girls Football Competitions. 18 Years 7-10 BGN Student Leaders did a fantastic job in officiating games and giving guidance and encouragement to all players. It was also pleasing to see lots of smiles throughout the event. In addition, 120 Key Stage 2 boys and 19 teams from six primary schools participated in an event on Thursday 6 November. 15 Years 8/9 Student Leaders were outstanding role models, providing a positive and fun environment for all players who took part.

14 Student Leaders from Years 7-10 helped to deliver The Banbury Area T1 Rugby Mega Fest at Banbury RFC on Thursday 16 October. They were joined by Wykham Park Student Leaders and Caity Mattinson [Schools Rugby Manager]. Caity had recently returned from the Rugby World Cup, representing Scotland. 158 Years 5/6 children and 17 teams participated in a circuit of activities and friendly coached T1 games.

On Thursday 20 November 17 Year 7 and 24 Years 5/6 Student Leaders provided a range of skill-based activities for 224 Year 1 children. The activities focused on developing agility, balance, co-ordination and team challenges. 7 primary schools attended, including Bishop Loveday, Hardwick, Orchard Fields, St John's, St Joseph's, St Mary's Aston-le-Walls and William Morris.

The feedback received included:

### Football

"BGN Students were very helpful and polite. They made sure every student was included. They set a brilliant example to our younger students." [St John's]

### T1 Rugby

"Student Leaders were clear and confident in explaining activities. They engaged all children, altering activities to suit the needs of the group." [St Mary's, Banbury]

"The Student Leaders were brilliant, very encouraging, kind and respectful. They explained the games well in a way that the younger children could learn from." [Wroxton]

### Year 1 Multi-skills

"Student Leaders were engaging with the children. They supported those who were reluctant to join in." [William Morris]

"Good range of activities, well organised. Student Leaders were excellent as always." [Orchard Fields]

## Junior Active Leaders

16 Year 7 students started The Junior Active Leaders course on Thursday 4 December. Students played lots of fun, active and engaging games. They then had an opportunity to apply their skills and lead their peers in some of these games. As part of the 20-hour course, students learned about first aid, CPR training and how to deliver organised and inclusive activities. During the spring and summer term our students will run an event at a local primary school.

[Mr Mawn – School Sports Co-ordinator]





On Wednesday 12th November, I had the amazing opportunity to attend the School Games Regional Conference in Coventry. At the event, I had the chance to talk to people like Emily Reynolds - the Director of Children and Young People with Youth Sports Trust and Jim Morris the National Development Manager. Also, I had some interesting conversations with other School Games Organisers who work to arrange sports opportunities for young people.

At the Conference, I gave a speech about my personal journey with sports, where I spoke about how it's been a part of my life from an early age, and the impact it continues to have on me today. Believe it or not, my sports journey started when I was just a baby! When I was only 15 months old, a devastating earthquake hit Pakistan, affecting millions of people. Wanting to raise money for those impacted, my parents came up with a challenge for me – to swim through a hoop underwater to help raise funds. Somehow, baby me managed to do it and in the end, we raised over £700 for the victims in Pakistan.

Taqwa swims for Pakistan



Siama Ahmed is raising money for Disasters Emergency Committee

As the theme this year was “Tackling Inequalities in Sport,” I decided to carry out some of my own research. I discovered that in 2023, through a major research programme, the organisations Women in Sport and Sport England found that 59% of girls whose parents didn't like sports, also didn't enjoy it themselves, and only 30% of parents considered sports important for girls. This data showed that those around you influence your mind-set throughout your life. It also showed how even today gender stereotypes and people's attitudes limit opportunities. Unfortunately, this is a reality which exists for many people. We are lucky that there are people out there who are trying to make sport and physical activity opportunities more accessible. People do not realise how important sports are especially now when people experience so many problems such as mental health. Science has shown that those who do sports and exercise, generally have better mental health and wellbeing.

Sport has given me so much more than physical skills. It has taught me resilience, teamwork, courage, and the importance of equality. I truly believe that everyone – no matter who they are – deserves to have access to sports opportunities. It's funny how you don't always appreciate opportunities until you actually stop to think and reflect on them. Writing my speech brought back so many memories and reminded me of how lucky I am. From being homeschooled during my primary years and taking part in unique sports like rock climbing, archery and horse riding (which my mum managed to arrange at a special rate!), to going to secondary school and having so many different opportunities like learning sports I hadn't tried before (e.g. badminton, rounders, netball), playing in school matches and as previously mentioned, having the opportunity to attend the School Games Conference and speaking there to a hall full of people who are all working towards the same goal: making it easier for young people to have access to sports opportunities. I'm incredibly grateful to all the people who have supported and cheered me on throughout my journey. Especially my mum, who has always been determined to make sure my siblings and I had access to opportunities that aren't always available to families from marginalised communities.



I would like to make a special mention to some very important people, who without them, I would not have had this great opportunity to speak at the Sports Conference and meet so many interesting people. I would like to thank Mrs Jackson, the School Games Lead for North Oxfordshire School Sport Partnership, based at Blessed George Napier School. She was the one who approached me with this opportunity. I would like to thank our amazing PE teachers who worked behind the scenes to make it possible for me to attend. Words cannot express how grateful I am for all their support.

By Taqwa – 12 Calcutta