Tewkesbury School's musical production of Grease electrified audiences when it took to the stage at The Roses Theatre from 18th to 20th October this year. The eagerly anticipated show was jam-packed with fantastic scenery, iconic characters, stunning costumes and an amazing score of unforgettable hit songs including You're the One That I Want, Summer Nights, Hopelessly Devoted to You, Sandy and Greased Lightnin'. This feel-good, pick-me-up musical definitely had the whole audience singing and dancing along! A-wop-bop-a-loo-bop, a-wop-bam-bam!

Playing the lead role of T-Bird Danny was Bryn Meads-Jones (Y10 Brunel), who was thrilled to make his debut performance. Leading lady and talented vocalist, Erin Mills (Y11 Elgar) played Sandy. Other leading roles saw Craig Sipek (Y12 Priestley), Archie Watts (Y11 Keller), Callum Quinby (Y13 Priestley) and Kane Cummings (Y13 Priestley) as The T Birds. The Pink Ladies starred Grace Tyrrell (Y13 Hodgkin), Amber Fraser (Y9 Hodgkin), Sonia Tabakovic (Y12 Elgar), Jess Dash (Y10 Priestley), Amy Goodwin (Y11 Brunel) and Freya Laker (Y11 Elgar). The other supporting cast was made up of over 50 talented and energetic young performers from Years 7 to 13 who all put in memorable performances.

Mr Amphlett, the show's producer, said, “Grease was our third school production at The Roses Theatre and I have to say that it certainly created a buzz of excitement throughout the school. We have never had so many students audition for a show and it is testament to the popularity of this musical that the young people have such a deep knowledge of the songs and characters.”

Mr Watson said, “Words cannot describe the immense pride felt by parents, teachers and members of our local community who witnessed our truly professional school production of Grease at The Roses Theatre. The Box Office staff struggled to meet the demand for tickets as word spread about the polished performances by our children, staged over the three evenings. Stunning individual performances were matched by a fantastic set, vivid costumes and first class singing, dancing and even some Rydell High cheerleading!”

Our youngsters are already missing the camaraderie of the show and pressing for another production as soon as possible. Our sincere thanks go to all the staff involved in making this such a special and successful event and to our local community for showing their support.

“Audience Feedback:

“I just wanted to congratulate all the pupils and staff involved with the production of Grease, which I watched last night at the Roses. It was superb and some of the performances were jaw-droppingly brilliant. It was really refreshing to see young people being allowed to unleash their creative talents in a professional arena and their energy and enthusiasm was infectious. I am sure this experience will stay with them forever and help shape some positive futures. Well done Tewkesbury School!”

“We’d just like to congratulate all those who were part of the splendid production of ‘Grease’ at the Roses Theatre last week. We’re from Nottingham and were on holiday in Tewkesbury for a couple of days and went along as neutral spectators. It was great!”
CRAIG SIPEK Y12 (PRIESTLEY)
I can truly say that Kenickie is the most fun and dynamic character that I have ever acted as it was a complete joy to perform as him. Singing “Greased LIGHTnin’” in front of an audience three times was a particular highlight, as out of all the songs in the production it’s my favourite one. Lucky me!

Believe it or not, I have discovered a repeating cycle which has occurred during every production that I have ever taken part in. At the first rehearsal you show up and realise you only really know about 4 or 5 people there (probably even fewer depending on how young you are) and by the end of the last performance you realise that you’re all one big happy family, as you’ve all bonded from being able to relate to the same experience. Walking out of the theatre after the last performance really did feel like walking away from a home. I’ll never forget the entire experience and I hope I get the chance to come home again.

GRACE TYRRELL Y13 (HODGKIN)
The start of a new production can seem daunting at first with lines to learn in addition to dance routines and deadlines to meet. But the more I began to get into the musical the more enthralling it became. I knew this would be my last opportunity for a big performance at Tewkesbury School so I really wanted to make it a good one. I wanted to aim for the best role possible, so getting the part of Frenchy was amazing. The actors within Grease represented all of the year groups. This experience has made me realise how much I regret not taking part in other productions when I was lower down the school.

I can’t thank everyone involved enough for this great opportunity and privilege to perform with a cast which, in my eyes, clicked instantly. I have truly made some great friends from this experience.

AMBER FRASER Y10 (HODGKIN)
My experience playing Marty in Grease was amazing! It was such a great opportunity to perform on a big stage, in a professional theatre in one of the greatest musicals in history. The teachers were brilliant directors and made the show what it was. Each actor worked with such enthusiasm and dedication and it was so much fun too. The whole atmosphere at the rehearsals and the show nights had such a buzz to them, it always felt great to be there. Everyone was so close, like a massive family between all the actors, teachers, helpers and technical staff. I’m so upset it’s all over, if I could do it all again I definitely would.

ADAM COOK Y11 (BRONTE)
I have had an amazing time throughout my drama experiences at Tewkesbury School, but Grease has to be the best production I’ve ever been involved in. That isn’t because it was a well written script or the songs were fun to sing or even because Grease is a great musical. It was because of all the people involved. The support from all of the staff was unparalleled. If a scene wasn’t perfect, they wouldn’t settle for it — everything that could be done would be done to help the actors and actresses deliver their best performance they could. There was a strong family created from this production, which helped with the whole process hugely, and it showed. So as cheesy as it sounds, the people are what made this production.

AISLING REID Y12 (BRUNEL)
There is nothing like the adrenaline and thrill you get after every performance especially when everything goes just right. You feel that all the nights rehearsing, the stressing over lines and score sheets were worth it, especially if every single show is just perfect. Every night, the performers each do a pre-show ritual, wishing each other good luck, telling each other that they will be fine and nothing will be forgotten. Then the curtains go back and the lights go up...

At the end of every show, we cheered, shouted and screamed so loudly behind the curtain in relief that the show had gone well. Lots of group hugs were had and by the end of it a lot of tears were shed. I couldn’t be prouder of my Grease “family”, what we have achieved and the amazing shows we put on. I couldn’t be more thankful to the teachers and staff who helped us achieve it!
“I wanted to say how much I thoroughly enjoyed the production of ‘Grease’ last night. As a former pupil of the school I was very much involved in drama and performing and know only too well how much time and effort it takes to put on a show. Grease was delivered with such professionalism and passion, with everything from the acting and dialogue to the set, costumes, lighting and music being well polished resulting in an overall fabulous performance.”

“Everyone on stage appeared to be enjoying themselves with some characters in particular oozing talent. I had to keep reminding myself of the age of those involved! It is so nice to see pupils being given the opportunity to get on stage and shine - the confidence it instils is so valuable for life and the overall experience I’m sure will be memorable to all involved.”

“I went to see Grease on Tuesday evening and I just wanted to say how much I enjoyed it. The cast were brilliant and acting and singing just superb. What talent there is in your school. Well done Tewkesbury School!”

“As parents we are proud that our son has been given such positive memories that he will be able to keep for a lifetime...”
**SIXTH FORM LIFE**

*Miss Johnson*

**Director of Sixth Form**

Life in the Sixth Form remains as busy as ever. The Autumn term has seen 125 Year 12 students settling in well to their new way of learning. Students are enjoying the challenges and demands of their chosen courses as well as the new found freedom of independent study. The election of our very popular Head Boy and Girl saw Year 13s Jamie Hargreaves (Priestley) and Keavi-Jo Richards (Hodgkin) elected from a strong field of 10 candidates.

Early in September, our Year 13 Business students organised another very successful Paddle Power event at Croft Farm raising money in aid of The Teenage Cancer Trust in support of fellow student Mikey Grimmett. The A Level Drama students enjoyed a visit to London to see ‘Things I Know to be True’! Mr Thomson was the lucky member of the Sixth Form team who got to accompany the Year 13s on the Royal Marines Experience Day. The trip involved a very early start but the team building activities and physical challenges were thoroughly enjoyed by all, even Mr Thomson!

Our ‘Futures’ sessions have seen guest speakers from the Hollie Gazzard Trust and Young Gloucestershire who both gave presentations and former student Steve Alderman Knight School and Mitton Primary School to support their students with various events and projects.

For those of you in Year 11 who are considering your future choices, I hope this article will give you an insight into some of the extra experiences you can enjoy as a member of our happy and vibrant Sixth Form.

Summer of 2019 all GCSE grades will have a U.

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**WHERE ARE THEY NOW?**

@Tewkes6thForm tewkschool

2nd year of studying Computer Science at Bangor University. Course is brilliant, and whilst stressful, it’s very interesting!

Josh Henderson

@Tewkes6thForm tewkschool

biomedical science at Cardiff Metropolitan University, lot of work but very interesting.

Becky Plant

@Tewkes6thForm tewkschool

Cardiff Met, Sports Studies. Couldn’t imagine doing anything else! Lots of hard work but absolutely loving it!

Bethan Skuse

@Tewkes6thForm tewkschool

I’m at UWE Bristol, Adult Nursing, very hard but loving it.

Meg Thomas

@Tewkes6thForm tewkschool

Fashion Design at Southampton Uni - currently doing a placement year, working as a design intern at Urban Outfitters - I love it!

Ashley Cameron

@Tewkes6thForm tewkschool

Birmingham City University, Fashion Business and Promotion & I couldn’t love it more 😊

Holly Walker

@Tewkes6thForm tewkschool

University of Gloucestershire, Computer Games Design, loving it - especially after joining cheerleading!

Hannah Lawton

@Tewkes6thForm tewkschool

Fashion Design at Westminster University, really hard work but amazing, lots of great opportunities 😊

Edie Kelsey

@Tewkes6thForm tewkschool

Uni of Exeter doing History - absolutely loving it!! 😊😊

Laura Rowe

**GCSE GRADINGS ARE CHANGING**

The gradings of GCSEs are changing from September 2016. New GCSEs will be graded 1-9, rather than A*-G, with 9 being the highest and 1 the lowest. Where performance is below the minimum required to pass a GCSE, students will receive a U.

Students currently in Year 11 at Tewkesbury School will get numbers for their Maths grades only in 2017, the rest of the subject gradings will remain as letters.

The new grading is aligned to the current grading as shown in the table. By the summer of 2019 all GCSE grades will have converted to the number grading system.
THE NUMBER 44 AND SIR GEORGE DOWTY

David Street
Trustee of the Sir George Dowty Trust Fund

The number 44 has a great deal of significance this year. The first thing that comes to my mind is that our British Formula 1 Motor Racing Champion, Lewis Hamilton, displays the number 44 on his car or that his win at the recent Brazilian Grand Prix was his 44th victory. It could also be that 44 is our international dialling code, however, the main reason that the number is significant at this time locally is because this is the 44th year of The Sir George Dowty Award Trust.

The Trust was set up in 1972 by members of Tewkesbury Chamber of Commerce in recognition of the unique contribution made by Sir George Dowty in promoting the well-being and prosperity of Tewkesbury. It seeks to support present and past students of Tewkesbury School by making financial grants to individuals to assist them in developing their own initiative, abilities and character.

Although Trustees are responsible for the care of the fund, applicants seeking assistance are asked to write to the Governors of the Personnel and Student Welfare Committee. It is the Governors and not the Trustees who will consider each application and decide the level of the award. As a general rule of thumb, depending upon the monies available, up to one third of the total cost may be awarded. In circumstances of genuine hardship more may be awarded up to and including the whole amount.

Consideration of each award usually takes place during each regular meeting of the Governors’ Personnel and Student Welfare Committee, however, should there be an urgent need for funds, applications can be considered between meetings. The award is not ‘means tested’ but generally an applicant will be asked to demonstrate what commitment they have made towards raising their own funds.

If you can meet these criteria, we will do our best to support you but one essential part of the application process is that it must be made by an individual in writing (this could be the applicant, parent or guardian). Part of the terms of the Trust also state that applications from a group or for a group scheme cannot be considered, unless several members of the same group make individual applications explaining the grounds for their application.

The funds held in the Trust are not limited and do depend upon the health of the stock market but money sitting in an account earning interest is helping nobody! So, if you think you can meet the terms of the Trust, we, The Trustees, would very much like to hear from you and help you if we possibly can.

LEVANA’S CHILDREN IN NEED RAMBLE

Lynsey Woodward
Marketing Officer

Inspiring Y11 student Levana Hanson (Elgar) was part of the BBC Country File Ramble for Children in Need earlier this Autumn. Levana, who is a double limb amputee has recently been given new prosthetic limbs. She walked across some of the most difficult terrain and landscapes of the Eskdale Valley in Cumbria which included hiking up some huge hills and negotiating down very steep drops. She was accompanied by BBC presenter Matt Baker and during her challenge she also got to meet her idol, Ellie Simmonds, the British Paralympian gold medal winning swimmer.

Following her Eskdale adventure she said, “What a great experience the ramble was. It was really amazing. I found it particularly tough in places, but I just kept on going and I’m so glad I made it.” Her challenge aired on BBC Countryfile on 6th November. The programme also features the thousands of ramblers which members of the public took on themselves for the cause. Students at the school also held a non-uniform day in November to further support Levana’s fundraising efforts and this raised £1,271.

Well done Levana. You are a true inspiration.

THE JOURNEY SO FAR

Mr G M Watson
Headteacher

It is hard to believe that it is over 5 years since I made my first association with Tewkesbury School as Headteacher – how time flies! My first experience was being invited as a guest and Headteacher in waiting to watch a school production of Oliver at The Roses Theatre. As you might imagine, I was bowled over by the quality of the acting, the singing, the set and the costumes. I have subsequently been privileged to have similar experiences with Bugsy Malone and, earlier this term, a quite superb production of Grease.

My first impressions of the school remain as vivid now as they were on interview day in 2011. I was immediately impressed by the warmth of adult-pupil relationships, the vast array of extra-curricular opportunities, the courteous students and the supportive parent body. On the flip side, the school was clearly operating well below its potential, different expectations were prevalent across subject areas and the site was worryingly insecure. I officially took up the reins on 1st January 2012 when the school, coincidentally, started life as an academy. Academy freedoms have helped us manage a budget that continues to fall by £250,000 per annum, swiftly tackle under-performance and, most importantly, raise standards.

Some key school improvement events over the last 5 years are summarised on the infographic overleaf. Threaded through the improvement journey you will see the constant meddling of politicians imposing change on schools whilst the DfE spokesperson continues to espouse the virtues of academy freedoms and increased local autonomy! Planning is incredibly difficult when successive education ministers appear to change their mind so frequently and with such little notice. Vocational diplomas came and went, GCSEs were deemed appropriate and then swiftly condemned, Y7s were to be forced to resit GCSEs with such little notice. Some GCSEs have changed, others not, some will be graded with letters A*-G, others with numbers 8-1 and others with numbers 9-1. In the Sixth Form, AS levels have been scrapped and new A level courses brought in!

It is difficult for educationalists to understand what is happening let alone those more distant from these reforms!

I know only too well the importance of change and the reluctance of individuals and organisations to change, but what I object to is ill-thought through changes which are not informed by education professionals and are rapidly repealed having consigned students to a pathway or course which is consequently deemed irrelevant.

As an increasingly confident school, the Governing Body and I are even more determined to do what we believe is in the best interests of your children, our students. The latest imposition from on high is the government’s expectation that 90% of students will complete the English Baccalaurate (EBacc). Mr Steve’s article succinctly explains what this is and what it means for you and your children. At Tewkesbury School, we will be ensuring that, whilst all children have the opportunity to study the EBacc combination of subjects, no student is compelled to do so. I strongly believe this is a stance that is in the best interests of our young people and it is what I would have wanted as a student or as a parent. The opportunity of unrestricted choice to do the subjects I enjoy and in which I believe I can achieve.

Students with a particular disposition to hands-on subjects will be able to follow appropriate courses, others will be more talented in the performing arts or perhaps sport and allowed to specialise in those areas. They too, will have the opportunity to follow those appropriate pathways. Some students will rightly want to take the EBacc subjects and if that is their wish, they will be encouraged and supported to do so. Our aim is to preserve the breadth of subjects available as best we can in a difficult financial climate allowing students the best possible access to courses that will lead them on to appropriate destinations and provide them with an engaging experience in Years 10 and 11.

We have no intention of standing still as a school and have created a new Strategic Plan for 2016-21 which is available on our website. As ever, I hope you enjoy this term’s edition of KUDOS and wish you and your families a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.
IEDUCATION MATTERS

Mr Steele
Deputy Headteacher

It's over a year ago now that the Department for Education set up a consultation to respond to their proposal that at least 90% of secondary school students should be entered for a specific set of GCSEs in order to gain the full English Baccalaureate or EBacc. These subjects include English (both language and literature), maths, two sciences, history and/or geography and a modern foreign language.

For our students, this means that two of their option choices are no longer really options. They will have to do history or geography and have to do French or Spanish, depending on which they have studied in years 7-9.

So what do the young people taking these qualifications get out of this?

- An extra certificate saying that they have gained a particular set of qualifications?
- Enhanced access to further education including apprenticeships?
- A fast-track to the best universities?

The answer to all of these questions is a resounding no! There is no certificate and entry requirements for higher and further education pay the EBacc no heed whatsoever — nobody is interested!

So, in return for this one-size-fits-all approach to their GCSEs, students get absolutely nothing in return, beyond the undoubted value of the individual qualifications. Instead, this is all about school performance tables, where judgements are made about which establishments are forcing their students down this path in sufficient numbers to get a pat on the head and which aren't and so have to be punished.

The impact of this has already been seen around the country — even before this changes from proposal to requirement, which isn't actually a given in these times of constant change and U-turn. School leaders have already started to adapt their curricula to boost the numbers taking EBacc subjects. As a result, there has been an 8 per cent decline in the number of students doing creative, artistic and technical subjects at GCSE since 2015. These are areas that contribute massively to the economy (over £500 billion turnover in 2011) but will continue to decline in popularity as EBacc measures really take hold.

Please don't misunderstand me. History, geography, French and Spanish are absolutely fantastic subjects. A student who chooses any one of these will learn incredibly useful skills and gain knowledge that will enrich their lives beyond their short time at school. If this had been around 30 years ago, my O levels in History and German would have made me fully EBacc compliant and I loved both subjects — although I ultimately ended up going in a different direction with my studies.

However, what's right for me and for some of our students is definitely not right for all. Based on interest and aptitude, this set of qualifications is not going to be in the best interests of everyone. Making them do subjects they're not that interested in (and that they know gives them no competitive advantage later in life) is simply a recipe for massive underachievement and does them a great disservice.

This is backed up by the views of a wide variety of stakeholders connected to the school. We have recently taken the time to gather the opinions of students, parents and businesses and they echo what we think. EBacc subjects are great but they are not the only route to success.

The alternative viewpoint is given by Nick Gibb, the education minister: "We still get resistance to the EBacc right across the education system — there is resistance to the concept of an academic education for all children. There's particularly resistance for an academic education for children from a poor and disadvantaged background. I still hear 'This isn't relevant to the pupils in my school.'"

That may be a relevant argument relating to some schools or parts of the country but is completely inappropriate for our context, where all students are encouraged to stretch themselves and do their very best. It suggests that some routes are more "academically pure" and other subjects less worthy. This just isn't the case — new, more academic, GCSEs will be in place for all students from September 2017. They're either good qualifications or not Mr Gibb!

I far prefer the recent comments from a former Secretary of State for Education. Lord Kenneth Baker proposes a broader EBacc that includes technical and creative subjects. He wrote: "We cannot educate our young people as if it is 1904. As robotics and artificial intelligence take off, creativity, engineering, problem-solving and digital skills will be increasingly in demand. We must ensure that we give every young person the opportunity to develop them."

So, what's the solution? Is this simply a case of the government imposing something that we don't like very much and it provides an article in a school magazine moaning about it... after which the school imposes it anyway?

Those of you who have read Mr Watson's piece in this magazine will have guessed the answer already. With the backing of the school's governors, we have made a choice based on what we think is right for our students and decided to completely disregard the new EBacc requirement. Any students who wish to study that combination of subjects can absolutely do that, but they will not be forced to do so. We will promote all subject pathways equally, give top-quality careers advice and ensure that students leave year 11 with high levels of numeracy, literacy and scientific understanding to go along with the skills gained in the option choices they have freely made.

This decision has potential consequences that we need the whole school community to be aware of and understand.

The first of these is that Tewkesbury School is likely to plummet in official performance tables, which assume our students are all taking EBacc subjects and reward schools for doing so. We are already investigating ways to replace these measures with other robust indicators to show we are still ensuring our students make excellent progress but, to an outsider, it will look like the school is doing badly. We will have to publicise our position on EBacc to ensure the parents of future students are not put off by misinformation — please spread the word!

Secondly, there is a possibility that OFSTED and other external agencies will take a position that is supportive of the government and make negative judgements about the school as a result. We have to hope that this does not happen and they see that we are simply taking control of an impossible situation for the right reasons. The fact that, in a poll last year, around 90% of headteachers were opposed to the imposition of the EBacc makes me hopeful that we won't be the only school in this position and our justifications will be viewed positively.

The final "consequence" is this: the students of Tewkesbury School will be given the choice to take subjects they are interested in, to get the best grades they can possibly get and go on to the next step of their education with the right skills to be successful. That's why L and many of my colleagues, came into education in the first place and that's why this has to be the right thing to do.
Monday was our first day at Voorhees High School, and you couldn't help but notice how different it was from Tewkesbury School, and you couldn't help but notice how different it was from Tewkesbury School and you couldn't help but notice how different it was from Tewkesbury School. Classic yellow school buses, which many of us had to ride, were parked along the entrance to the school, which in contrast to Tewkesbury, was all one single building. At the beginning of each school day, the students all recited a ‘Pledge of Allegiance’ to the American Flag, which are found pretty much anywhere you look. Our day continued with observations of the school’s television studio complete with green screen.

On Wednesday we travelled to Princeton University. In the morning, we had breakfast in a traditional American diner before hitting the road again towards the university grounds before having some free time in Princeton itself.

When signing up for the trip, the majority of us going were sceptical about staying with ‘strangers’ for ten days but in actual fact this turned out to be the highlight of our stay in America. We got the opportunity to meet lots of new people and were made to feel welcome wherever we went during our stay. The weekends were spent with our host families partaking in whatever they had planned, and many of us were lucky enough to be taken out on trips around New Jersey, into Manhattan or even to Washington D.C.

Once the ferry docked in New York we headed straight for the 9/11 memorial. This was a sobering moment for us all. The memorial itself is shrouded in a sense of quiet contemplation, each visitor paying their respects to the countless names surrounding the huge squares of rushing water, where the original Twin Towers stood. A few yellow flowers marked the names of those whose birthday it would be on the day we visited, bringing a dreadful reality to the scene. It was hard to believe that where we stood was once the site of two impressive buildings and also the site of such a terrible tragedy.

The museum only increased this feeling. Here we could see footage from the day as well as transcripts from the planes. Possibly the most poignant parts were the voicemail messages left by the victims and the bloodstained heels worn by a survivor. The lengthy bus journey across New York to Grand Central station was certainly needed before heading straight down to the Empire State Building. It was just getting dark when we arrived, and once we had got through security and reached the top floor, the lights of the city were just coming alive below us.

Through the rain we could see New York spread out almost as though we could touch it. We could make out the Macy’s sign, and the lights of Times Square and if you stopped to listen, the sounds of traffic and sirens were as clear as if you were on the streets below. It was cold, it was wet, but that did not distract from the amazing view of the city. Our final stop of the day was Macy’s. Here we were given some free time to do some shopping or walk up to Times Square. After that it was a long bus journey back to New Jersey and the perfect opportunity for a well-deserved nap.

Rebecca Preedy

After our hectic day in New York we were left to enjoy a chilled day in the historical city of Philadelphia on Friday, our last big trip as a group. We toured around the city via horse and cart seeing sights such as the Independence Hall, the Liberty Bell building and George Washington’s home. After this we walked to an indoor market to feed our appetites. The market featured an array of amazing food such as strombolis, lobsters, cheesecake, and Philadelphia’s renowned ‘Philli Cheese Steaks’. Soon after we were on route to spend the last of our dollars at Franklin Mills, one of Philadelphia’s large discount malls.

Following our relaxed day in Philadelphia, it was time for the American football game back at Voorhees. With cheering and big band performances, it was clear the Americans liked to create an atmosphere — to which we added with chants of ‘The Bottle Song’ our official trip song after endless recitals of it on the bus. The chant was adored by the students at Voorhees and hearty renditions spurred the Voorhees team to success!

Rebecca Preedy

On Thursday 22nd September 2016 we set off on our trip to Cestas in France. Everyone was really excited about meeting our partners but we were also quite nervous about it. What if they didn’t like us?

When we finally met our partners we knew that this wouldn’t be a problem as they were all really friendly and just as excited as we were. We met them at school and then went home with them to meet their families where we would stay for the week. We spent time getting to know our exchange host family and joining in with some of the activities they did outside of school.

Friday was a beautiful sunny day and we headed off to Bordeaux and saw many sights. We were even treated to breakfast by Miss Germain. Not only did we go down ‘La Rue Sainte Catherine’, the longest shopping street in Europe, but in the afternoon we met up with our exchanges who took us on a tour of the city. We managed to fit so much into one day.

The weekend followed and this meant that we spent two days with our partner families who treated us to trips and days out. Although some of us were quite nervous about this, by Monday morning everyone had huge smiles on their faces after many had visited places such as the beach at Arcachon or shopping trips.

The rest of the week was packed full of trips during the day whilst our hosts went to school. We went to many places including Saint-Émilion, La Dune du Pyla, Maison de l’Huîtres (where we sampled oysters), and the village of Cestas. They were all amazing experiences although some may argue that trying oysters wasn’t exactly fun! We also all brought something that we had baked with our exchange host family and joining in with some of the activities they did outside of school.

On Thursday we spent the morning in school after being given a guided tour by our partners. We went to two lessons and then had lunch in the canteen. It was a great morning and very interesting — the school was definitely different to ours! However, after lunch it would be the last time we saw our exchanges until they return to visit us at Easter next year. Everyone was a bit teary — the French and the English — and we couldn’t quite believe that our time was coming to an end. We said a last goodbye when it was finally time to go and set off on the long journey home.

Everyone had an amazing time on the French Exchange and some of us have made firm friends in our exchange partners. Everything about it was brilliant — the food, the experiences and the weather. It was definitely something that none of us will forget!
Paddled to Success

Mr Gardner
Head of Business Studies

On Friday 23rd September, 25 teams representing Tewkesbury School students and teachers, local primary schools and local businesses gathered at Cotw Farm Water Park in Tewkesbury for the school’s annual Paddle Power Boat Race event organised by the Year 13 Business students. This year the chosen charity was the Teenage Cancer Trust which was selected by the students in support of their friend Mikey Grimmett from Year 13. Mikey was diagnosed with Leukaemia in July 2012. Referring to his battle with cancer as “a bit of a whirlwind”, his ordeal and prolonged treatment was made easier by the Teenage Cancer Trust ward at the Birmingham Children’s Hospital. Mikey’s cancer is now in remission and he is grateful for the support the charity gave him. Mikey said, “They made a huge difference to me in a good way when my life was turned upside down. Nobody expects to enjoy their treatment from cancer but in a funny kind of way they did that for me.”

Organising an event is a module on Mikey’s Business Studies A level course. Georgia Callaghan, fellow A level student said, “We all knew what Mikey had been through and wanted to dedicate this year’s Paddle Power Boat Race in aid of Teenage Cancer Trust.”

The event was a resounding success. It was a beautiful sunny afternoon and the paddlers, many in fancy dress, battled through the heats, which one spectator described as ‘organised anarchy’. One of the teams from GE Aviation emerged victorious in a fiercely contested final. Kevin Wilson, from GE Aviation said, “Paddle Power is a great opportunity for the whole community to get together and let off some steam for a good cause.”

In excess of £2,800 was raised for the Teenage Cancer Trust and Mikey said, “Organising this event has taught me that we can make a difference. I’m proud of what we have done for the Teenage Cancer Trust.”

Class Charts Promote classy behaviour

Mr Smith
Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral)

Tewkesbury School’s rewards and sanctions system has had a complete overhaul in recent months. Central to the improvements has been the introduction of Class Charts software which provides staff with an easy way to log a wide array of positive and negative student behaviour both in and out of the classroom.

Students’ positive and negative points are tallied up and monitored through a live feed and the immediacy of this information has proved to be a very powerful tool. We can monitor individual students and classes allowing us to gauge what interventions are required and where they will have most impact. Tutors keep an eye on the progress of all individuals in their group and are the first to have a dialogue with students about their score – praising for positive behaviour and discussing areas that require improvement.

Data reveals that nearly 90% of logs recorded by members of staff are positive and this, in conjunction with other initiatives, has begun to further enhance the positive ethos around the school and contribute to an improved culture of learning. Parents and carers of Year 11 and Year 7 students have already been given login details to access the information seen in the accompanying image and they have found the information useful when discussing attitude towards learning at home. We hope to extend this facility to all parents across the whole school in 2017.

We are thrilled to announce that we already have two business partners supporting us; Judicium and Alliance in Partnership. They will soon have advertising banners placed at our All Weather Sports pitch which will help boost their company profiles with our students, their families and the wider community.

If you are interested in advertising your company or would like to know more about working with us and becoming a partner, please make an appointment. We can take you through all the benefits for your business and can tailor your membership around the needs of your company.

If you like to know more, read our Kinetic business magazine which is available on the website, or contact us on tewkesbury@school.org.

Martin Thomas
Director of Business

Tewkesbury Business Partners is a new initiative we have launched for 2016/17. The scheme is aimed at linking businesses to Tewkesbury School in a series of careers-focused events across the academic year. Our aim to work more closely with businesses ties directly into Tewkesbury School’s ethos of providing a fully rounded academic year. Our aim to work more closely with businesses ties directly into Tewkesbury School’s ethos of providing a fully rounded academic year. Our aim to work more closely with businesses ties directly into Tewkesbury School’s ethos of providing a fully rounded academic year. Our aim to work more closely with businesses ties directly into Tewkesbury School’s ethos of providing a fully rounded academic year. Our aim to work more closely with businesses ties directly into Tewkesbury School’s ethos of providing a fully rounded academic year. Our aim to work more closely with businesses ties directly into Tewkesbury School’s ethos of providing a fully rounded academic year. Our aim to work more closely with businesses ties directly into Tewkesbury School’s ethos of providing a fully rounded academic year. Our aim to work more closely with businesses ties directly into Tewkesbury School’s ethos of providing a fully rounded academic year. Our aim to work more closely with businesses ties directly into Tewkesbury School’s ethos of providing a fully rounded academic year.

We held our inaugural Business Breakfast on Thursday 3rd November and were joined by 14 local businesses who enjoyed a complimentary breakfast. The visitors had the chance to meet staff, talk with students and listen to a business cyber safety talk from Mark Godsland. We hope to run our next event in the new year.

If you like to know more, read our Kinetic business magazine which is available on the website, or contact us on tewkesbury@school.org.
YEAR 7 ‘SHOWCASE’

Mrs Newcombe
Head of Year 7

For me, it has been another exciting start to the year. The new Year 7 students have been settling in well and are making full use of all the opportunities for extracurricular activities, helping to play an active role in school life. I am happy to see students getting along well and behaving responsibly in lessons and around the school site.

Already we have seen some fantastic achievements. A Year 7 ‘Showcase Board’ has been created in the Lower School Canteen, displaying a variety of both academic and sporting success. Some of the key highlights have been the Mary’s Meals ‘Smiles’ raising money for an important cause, some amazing Roald Dahl models by 7E1, well baked cupcakes by 7C6 and the Year 7 girls playing superbly well in their football matches.

I have also had the pleasure of praising and supporting our Year 7 students in regards to their academic performance as a result of their progress reports. The following 15 children were picked out as the top 15 in terms of their attitude to learning: Gani Lynch (6PRI), Katie McDowell (8BTE), Ria Nutall (2BRU), Emanuella Omu (10KEL), Freya Gardner (9KEL), Ben Marsh (10PR), Grace Freeman (7ELG), Reuben Hopkins-Brown (9KEL), Courtney Sm (2ELG), Caitlin Whitefoot (8KEL), Arabella Freeman (2KEL), Rosie Homs (2BTE), Isaac Leat (2BTE) and Joshua Williams (9HOD). A wonderful start to the academic year!

I would like to extend my thanks and best wishes to all parents and carers. Your support, patience and encouragement has enabled all students to begin their secondary learning experience in a positive way. It has been a wonderful start to what I am sure will be a fantastic first year at Tewkesbury School.

TEWKESBURY SCHOOL BAGS A £12,000 PRIZE

We are delighted to announce that we have won a grant of £12,000 in the recent Tesco Bags of Help funding scheme. Work will now begin on installing a large canopy to create a covered area next to the outdoor catering pod. Our students can use this space throughout the day and during their break and lunch times as an alfresco dining area. The addition of the external covered area will now give our students flexibility and the space they deserve to enjoy their free time with friends come rain or shine.

Our thanks go to Severn Vale Housing for supporting us in our grant application process and to all parents, students and members of our local community who voted for us. Every little helps!

BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

Mr G M Watson
Headteacher

We continue to work very closely with all the schools in Tewkesbury including our neighbours at Alderman Knight School, Clare Steel, the Head at Alderman Knight School (AKS) and I have been working towards a joint educational venture for AKS youngsters so they can access some of our Sixth Form provision but with the support of staff from a designated base. This would provide a bridge for older AKS students before they move on to further education, training or the workplace.

I am delighted to announce that the building work for a new Post-16 centre for AKS students has begun on our tennis courts. It is hoped that the centre will be completed ready for September 2017. New and improved tennis courts for our students and community users will be built within the same time frame.

The construction work is likely to cause additional complications for you when picking up your children from the main car park. If possible, I would strongly urge you to make arrangements to collect your children from areas close to the school rather than get entangled in the traffic chaos in our car park at the end of the day in particular.

MISSION IMPOSSIBLE?

Mrs Austin
D of E leader

It was 3.30am on Thursday 14th July 2016. Destination: Isle of Arran, Scotland. Our mission: Silver and Gold Duke of Edinburgh’s expedition assessment.

Ten months of planning and fundraising had finally come to an end and the students and staff were packed and ready for the long drive North. By 10am we had crossed the Scottish border making such good time that we even had chance to complete a food stop and were able to catch the earlier Arron to Brodick ferry. The sun was out giving us spectacular views of the mountains and taunting the participants as to what lay ahead. At our Kilmory base we unpacked, made beds and went for an explore before heading for bed.

Friday dawned and it was a typical Scottish day - wet! It was a good job we had a visit to Arran Distillery planned. After a long lunch and some very interesting tales, we were back on the buses again to check the assessment camp sites. We had promised lots of wildlife and a red squirrel took its life in its hands and ran in front of Mrs Wilkin-Mead’s bus. Fortunately the breaks worked well and the squirrel survived!

The Silvers finished their expedition on the coast with a well-deserved ice cream. The Golds still had another day to do, their route along the coastal path only passable at low tide. Tide timetables were consulted and they realised that they had to depart camp on day four by 6.00am, making sure of being round Brennan Head before high tide. Breakfast on the beach and the sighting of a sea otter made up for the very early start.

We all enjoyed a celebratory meal at a beachside restaurant while we watched the sun go down. The last day on Arran saw groups choosing to get wet, either sea kayaking or plummeting down waterfalls gorge walking. It was an amazing experience for all concerned and firm friendships were made between the Silver and Gold students and staff.

CHARITY TOTALS AUTUMN TERM

Tewkesbury School. Aspiration Challenge Excellence Values Community

TOTAL RAISED £6,130
UNIFORM-ULA FOR SUCCESS!

Ms De Glanville
Assistant Headteacher

To: Tewkesbury School
Re: Uniform

I felt proud to have a child at Tewkesbury School this morning.

They all looked so smart walking down the Ashchurch Road. The girls seemed to walk with pride. What a difference a skirt makes!

A big thumbs up from us for pushing through the new uniform policy.

A wave of strict uniform regulations has swept the country this autumn as many schools have insisted on their students having a smarter appearance. Tewkesbury School, disappointed with the variety of interpretations of the previous uniform, which included black skater skirts, stretchy black tube mini-skirts and the inappropriately named “Miss Sexy” school trousers, has now reduced options on skirts and girls’ trousers to a choice of two styles for each item – both navy, both logoed and both only available from the school uniform suppliers. Unisex jumpers have also been standardised, so the range of cable knit, round neck, V-neck, black and faded items that were being worn last year has been replaced with a smart navy, logoed V-neck jumper for all students who wish to lose valuable learning time, nobody at Tewkesbury School has yet been sent home for not having the right uniform and we have chosen to use other sanctions so far.

Another school was so determined to get its students correctly dressed for school that it spent over £24,000 paying for blazers and ties for all students. We did something similar but were reluctant to divert money to the new uniform policy. Unions have also been standardised, so the range of cheap and cheerful items that were being worn last year has been replaced with a smart navy, logoed V-neck jumper for all students who want to have an extra layer during the colder months.

Introduction of these items heralded the end of a series of uniform changes that have been phased in over the last few years and, by September, virtually all students were adhering to the new regulations.

So how did Tewkesbury School’s introduction of the new policy compare to other schools’ approaches?

One school in Kent sent home over 50 students on the first day of term for not wearing correct uniform. In contrast, not wishing to lose valuable learning time, nobody at Tewkesbury School has yet been sent home for not having the right uniform and we have chosen to use other sanctions so far.

We are now developing an exciting new venture – our ‘Ready for Work’ website. This website is designed for the benefit of both businesses and students. In speaking with businesses working with us as part of our new Tewkesbury Partners initiative it was clear that many of them are extremely interested in using this new tool. It will help students organise work experience placements and mock interviews, along with businesses advertising their apprenticeships and vacancies, all being uploaded via the ‘Ready for Work’ website. We are planning to hold a Careers Fair in March/April 2017 here at Tewkesbury School and are also planning two careers trips for Year 10 and Year 12 hosted at William Gilder Ltd in February 2017.

So far this term, we have had a number of apprenticeship opportunities offered to students from businesses including:

- William Gilders Young Drivers’ scheme
- A hairdressing apprenticeship at Peter Hickman’s in Tewkesbury
- Severn Vale Housing have apprenticeships in business administration, electricity, plumbing, grounds, maintenance and multi-trades.

WORK, WORK, WORK, WORK!

Business Links Team

During the Autumn term, Year 10 and 12 students have been tasked with arranging their work experience placements for January and July. They will be off to work at a range of exciting places such as Porsche, MDOG, Tewkesbury Borough Council and local schools and nurseries.

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- A hairdressing apprenticeship at Peter Hickman’s in Tewkesbury
- Severn Vale Housing have apprenticeships in business administration, electricity, plumbing, grounds, maintenance and multi-trades.

Tewkesbury Borough Council have business administration, legal, planning and environmental-health opportunities.

RugbyFix are offering either individual students or a group of students the chance to set up a Facebook account, Twitter feed and website to help promote their sessions, working as consultants.

Positive Weighing Solutions in Malvern are looking for electronic engineers.

Thompson Banks are looking for administrative staff and legal secretaries.

Jhaa are looking for Higher and Advanced apprenticeships in Professional Services covering IT, Digital Marketing and Business Administration.

We currently have four Year 11 students who have been given an extended work placement at Severn Vale Housing Association. They spend between 1 and 3 days a week on placement with the rest of their time in school following a reduced timetable of core subjects. The scheme has made a huge difference with two of the students already being offered apprenticeships with local construction companies because they have done so well.

There are many exciting opportunities and it is hoped by working together with local companies we can help to source the best students to enhance their future workforce.

If you would like to know more about work experience, apprenticeships or our Ready to Work website, please contact Ms De Glanville.

SENDCO SURGERY

From January 2017 we are starting a SENDCO drop-in surgery every Wednesday from 1.30-4.00pm in the TL2 at Tewkesbury School.

We welcome any parents/students that may have questions about accessing the curriculum and inclusive education at Tewkesbury School. You can ring and make an appointment or just drop in to the School Reception/Student Centre.

Mrs Wilkin-Mead - SENDCO

Sports Centre Christmas Opening Hours 2016

We are open until 23rd December 2016 and re-open on 2nd January 2017

Family swim session every Sunday 10.00am to midday - last session this year on 18th December

£2.50 adult, £1.50 children, under 4s Free

Get your last-minute Christmas shopping whilst the children have fun here at Tewkesbury School Sports Centre!

We have multi-sports and Christmas craft holiday courses running on 19th, 20th, 21st, 22nd, 23rd December from 9.00am to 4.00pm. Suitable for children aged 5-13 years.

To book a place email sportcentre@tewkesburyschool.org or 01684 293953

Planning a child’s birthday party? Why not have one with us!

Prices start from just £28 per hour. Hot and cold party food packages available.

For further information, please visit the Sports Centre page at www.tewkesburyschool.org

Tewkesbury School Sports Centre | Ashchurch Road

Tewkesbury | GL20 8DF | 01684 293953

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